

AWARENESS PROGRAMS TO OVERCOME LEARNING DISABILITIES AMONG CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Underdiagnoses and inadequate assistance are common outcomes of the widespread failure to recognize learning disorders, which impact about 10% of the world's population. In the end, awareness initiatives are a lighthouse for changing educational environments, spreading an accepting attitude, and giving every kid a chance to succeed. In order to understand more about children's learning difficulties and possible solutions, a mixed-method approach was used. Data were mostly gathered via focus groups with educators and parents, as well as through the use of a multiple-choice questionnaire comprising 30 items. We used a sample size of 80. Teachers and parents were not adequately informed about their children's learning difficulties, according to the study's results. Various platforms should educate parents and teachers on how to diagnose learning difficulties so that children with these conditions may have the opportunity to acquire language skills.

Keywords: Learning disability, Children, Parents, Teachers, Awareness

I. INTRODUCTION

The recognition of children's various learning requirements is more prominent than ever before in today's dynamic educational scene. Disabilities in learning may hinder a child's academic progress and are often misdiagnosed or unrecognized. Learning impairments are all too common; as a result, communities and schools must take action to raise awareness of the issue and implement strategies to help those affected. Educators, parents, and communities will be better equipped to handle the complexities of learning impairments if this all-encompassing project succeeds in its goals of creating a more welcoming and accepting classroom climate.

In its broadest sense, "learning disabilities" refer to a variety of neurological conditions that impact a child's capacity to learn new material and apply what they've learned. Problems with reading, writing, arithmetic, or paying attention are common manifestations of these impairments. On the other hand, learning difficulties aren't indicative of a lack of drive or intellect; rather, they highlight the need of individualised lessons that cater to different types of learners. Approximately 10% of the world's population is believed to encounter some kind of learning difficulty, indicating a high incidence of learning disorders. Regardless, there is still a huge knowledge vacuum, which causes underdiagnosis and inadequate assistance for children who are impacted.

Programs that specifically aim to raise awareness of learning impairments and provide correct information about these conditions may help close this knowledge gap. By debunking common misunderstandings about these disorders, these programs help teachers, parents, and students develop a more compassionate and understanding outlook. The many forms that learning impairments may take, how they appear, and the best ways to help those who suffer from them can be better understood via awareness campaigns that use a variety of mediums, such as workshops, seminars, and online resources.

Teachers are on the front lines of the fight against learning disorders since they are the main people who help students learn. All students, regardless of their individual learning profiles, may succeed in classrooms that are welcoming and accepting of all students. This can be achieved via teacher-led awareness initiatives. Workshops that teach teachers to see the warning signs of learning difficulties, create individualized lesson plans, and make good use of assistive technology may help schools better meet the needs of students with a wide range of abilities. Additionally, a less stigmatizing school climate for kids with learning impairments may be achieved by school-wide efforts to promote acceptance and understanding.

Another essential component of effective awareness initiatives is parental engagement. Being knowledgeable about learning disorders allows parents to better help their children at home, since they are the main advocates for their well-being. Campaigns to raise awareness may help parents see the warning signs of learning disabilities, work with teachers to create individualized education programs, and encourage an optimistic outlook that highlights a child's abilities rather than dwelling on their weaknesses. In order to establish an effective support system that goes beyond the confines of the classroom, it is essential that schools and parents work together.

Everyone in the community, not just teachers and parents, is important in raising people's consciousness and encouraging acceptance. Local companies, civic groups, and community leaders may be engaged in community-based awareness campaigns to promote inclusive learning settings that emphasize the different needs of students. Educational institutions may maximize their impact by collaborating with community members to advocate for inclusive policies and secure funding for targeted educational initiatives.

No amount of emphasis can be placed on the use of technology in awareness efforts. Online platforms provide a potent means of knowledge dissemination, audience reach, and virtual workshop facilitation in this age of digital communication. Webinars, social media campaigns, and educational websites may help get the word out to parents, teachers, and the general public, allowing awareness initiatives to transcend geographical boundaries and make a lasting impression.

Also, a great resource for learning disability information may be created online using technology and made available to teachers and parents. Interactive modules, video lessons, and downloadable toolkits are all examples of tools that might help with learning difficulties. Educators and parents of children with learning difficulties may find a supportive community online via virtual support groups and forums where they can talk to one another, get answers to their questions, and work together.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dhama, Varsha et al., (2023) Individuals with learning disabilities may struggle to develop and apply skills in areas such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, thinking, and mathematics. According to published studies, 10% of the population in India has some kind of learning impairment, and another 90 million individuals in the country have some kind of learning disability. Finding and treating learning problems requires effective coping solutions, which teachers may provide. The purpose of this research is to examine how well educators understand learning difficulties and how they cope with their pupils who have these conditions. We used a handy selection procedure to choose 250 educators from a subset of Jodhpur schools; these educators were responsible for instructing pupils in grades 1–5. Among educators surveyed, 62.4% had insufficient knowledge and 37.6% had sufficient understanding of learning disorders, according to a self-structured knowledge assessment. Out of the seven categories that made up the self-structured dealing strategy rating scale, instructors are most likely to apply the one that deals with preventative dealing methods. A significant need exists to develop and execute an awareness program for educators addressing learning difficulties, since the study found that the majority of educators had insufficient understanding on the subject.

Zhang, Jingyuan et al., (2022) Among the student body at public schools, 14% are people with disabilities, who make up 26% of the total. In addition to physical and mental disabilities, members of this minority group may face prejudice and discrimination from the general public, which may diminish their social support system and heighten their risk of social isolation. Increasing people's understanding of disability and their impact may help shift public perceptions and foster greater acceptance and inclusion. Disability awareness programs in schools may help kids develop good attitudes toward people with impairments, according to research. Doctoral students from our program facilitated age-appropriate activities to teach elementary and preschool-aged children about impairments. The program's community partners worked together to create, tweak, and finalize the activities for each age category. Eighty kids, ranging in age from two to seven, participated in this program. Students at both institutions reported improved knowledge of disability and skills in communicating with and accommodating those who have impairments.

Ashok Bishnoi et al., (2021) If children are emotionally and physically well, they have the potential to succeed in every area of life, and they are a nation's most valuable asset. A child's psychological well-being is impacted by learning impairments since these conditions hinder the development of fundamental abilities including organization, time management, abstract thinking, memory, and

attention. As a result of widespread ignorance of learning difficulties, this condition is often ignored in its early stages, making a solution impossible. In April 2017, researchers in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India, surveyed elementary school teachers to find out how much they knew about students with learning difficulties. The instructors were part of a descriptive cross-sectional study. Using a total enumeration sampling approach, seventy primary school teachers from grades one through five from four different schools in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India, were chosen for the study. In order to gather this information, a self-structured questionnaire was used. Primary school teachers' knowledge of learning disabilities was found to be average (70%), poor (27.14%), and good (2.86%). Interestingly, there was no significant association found between primary school teachers' knowledge and socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, religion, educational qualification, school type, teaching experience, in-service education on learning disabilities, or having a friend or family member with a learning disability. The research showed that elementary school educators knew very little about children with learning difficulties. Consequently, they, along with parents of children, should be provided with awareness programs.

Yadav, Anjali & Kaur, Navleen (2015) The world's responsible citizens of future will be today's youth. There is a correction to this observation: between 35 and 40 percent of the world's population is young. Roughly 65% of India's population consists of young people. These youths will determine our nation's fate. One out of ten kids and teens deal with health issues, IQ below average, ADD/ADHD, emotional issues, a dysfunctional family life, or mental health issues, according to findings from studies. If a kid wants to do well in school, he or she has to work on reading and learning. In overcrowded classes, teachers often turn a blind eye to the academic and extracurricular difficulties that children with learning disabilities face. It is very uncommon for instructors and parents to be unaware of the existence of "learning disorders," which may lead to missed opportunities for students with exceptional abilities. Teachers often don't know how to spot a vulnerable student since they don't have the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience. The current research aims to investigate the degree of consciousness held by elementary school educators in Chandigarh's public and private institutions.

Agrawal, Gaurav (2015) Primary school educators' familiarity with learning difficulties is the target of this research. Education institutions and educators face a significant obstacle in the form of students with learning difficulties. If the needs of children with learning impairments are not addressed in mainstream classrooms or via special education programs, we will not achieve our goal of basic education universality and educational opportunity equality. The primary school teachers' knowledge and understanding of LD is the focus of this research. A total of 68 elementary school teachers from 15 different schools in the Haridwar area were chosen at random for this exploratory study. The results showed that the majority of elementary school teachers had a limited understanding of learning difficulties.

Sawhney, Neena & Bansal, Sneha (2014) Disabilities in core academic areas such as math, reading, writing, spelling, and speaking that cannot be explained by factors such as mental retardation, sensory impairments, emotional disorders, or learning disabilities are known as learning disabilities. This phrase encompasses a wide range of circumstances and is used in education generally. Sadly, the majority of these kids will never get a diagnosis of learning disability. Teachers, parents, and school administrators often fail to recognize these students' strengths and abilities, leading to negative labels such as sluggish, behind, unable, and failure. Finding out how much primary school instructors know about learning difficulties is the main goal of this research. To that end, we have created a test to gauge the degree of familiarity that educators currently have with learning disabilities in the classroom. The first issue that requires fixing is the general public's and educators' and education department officials' lack of understanding. The study's results showed that educators' understanding of learning disabilities was limited. It has been suggested that in order to identify the issue with these kids and take appropriate action, orientation programs and seminars should be held.

Sharma, Monika & Samuel, Sanish (2013) An estimated 13–14% of India's school-aged youngsters have some kind of learning disability. We live in a culture that labels these kids as failures, but the truth is that the educational system has failed to acknowledge and assist them; not the kids themselves, but the system. The future of these students is shaped by the knowledge and awareness of their professors, who serve as a bridge between the students and the educational system. The purpose

of this research was to determine how well-informed these educators are about learning disabilities and the support services offered by the government and the CBSE board. A total of one hundred educators working in Ludhiana, Punjab's private English medium schools participated in the cross-sectional research. The study's findings were consistent with those of earlier investigations. The instructors seemed to know something about learning disabilities, but in reality, they just had a general notion, and even fewer knew about the government services that helped those with disabilities. The majority of educators felt that pupils' negative attitudes and family life were to blame for their low academic performance. Teachers want greater training on these topics and regular updates on new government and CBSE board initiatives, according to the findings.

Lindsay, Sally & Edwards, Ashley (2012) When kids don't learn about impairments, it might affect how they feel toward others who have them. Examining what works in disability awareness initiatives is the main goal of this research. In order to determine what aspects of disability awareness programs for kids and teens work, researchers performed a systematic review. We used OVID, CENTRAL, PsychInfo, ERIC, GreyNET Scopus, Google Scholar, and the Social Science Citation Index to look for this information. (I) a published article or grey literature addressing disability; (ii) school-aged children (average age 5–19 years old); (iii) a minimum of one measurable outcome pertaining to understanding of disability or attitudes towards and acceptance of individuals with disabilities; and (iv) participation from school-aged children were all considered for inclusion. Only 42 out of 1031 articles were deemed suitable for inclusion in the review. I. Social interaction; II. simulation; III. curriculum; IV. multi-media curriculum; and V. numerous components were the five main categories into which we sorted the disability awareness interventions. The attitudes and acceptance of peers with impairments improved in 34 research. Persons with impairments were better understood in eight of these investigations as well. There was no evidence that any of the five treatments helped increase understanding or tolerance of persons with impairments. Effective disability awareness programs for children use a variety of strategies taught over the course of many sessions that aim to increase students' understanding of and tolerance for their disabled classmates. In order to increase the social inclusion and engagement of students with impairments in regular classes, these results are being used to refine disability awareness programs.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The ease Sampling was employed. The study's sample size was 80 participants. Researchers used a mixed-method approach. Secondary data came from various websites and research papers, while primary data came from in-depth interviews with parents and teachers as well as a survey consisting of 30 statements completed by the chosen parents, physicians, professors, and teachers. Selected parents, physicians, academics, and educators were asked to fill out a survey that included 30 items pertaining to children's learning problems. All of the data was entered into an Excel file after collection so that it could be easily analyzed.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Children Suffering From Learning Disorders

S. No.	Particulars	Percentage
1	Yes	92.0
2	No	8.0

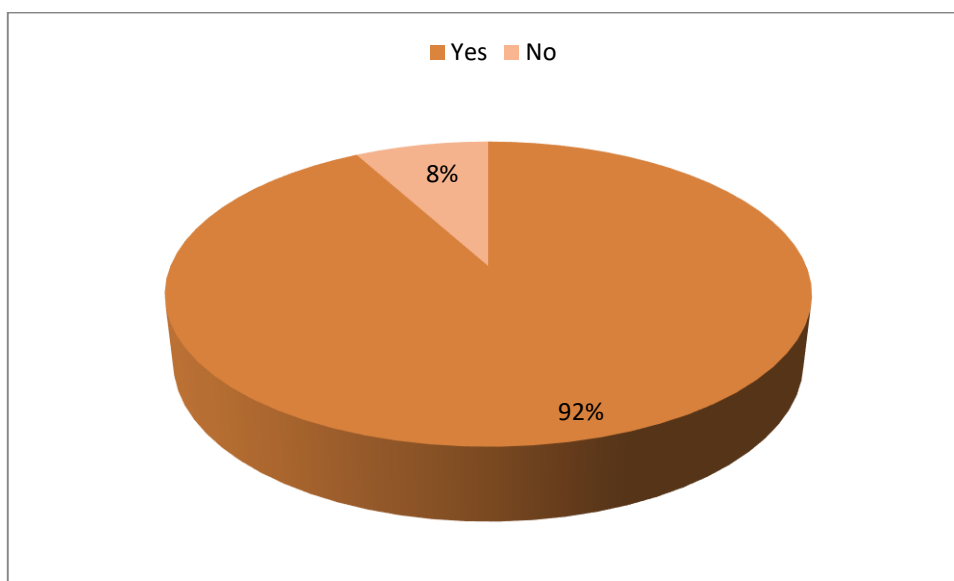


Figure 1: Children Suffering From Learning Disorders

According to Table 1, a staggering 92% of youngsters have some kind of learning difficulty. Reading, writing, arithmetic, pronunciation, spelling, and other fundamental abilities might be hindered by these processing difficulties. Coordination, abstract timing, long-term and short-term memory, timely preparation, and other higher-level talents are also negatively impacted.

Table 2: Disability awareness programs at schools

S. No.	Particulars	Percentage
1	Yes	90.0
2	No	10.0

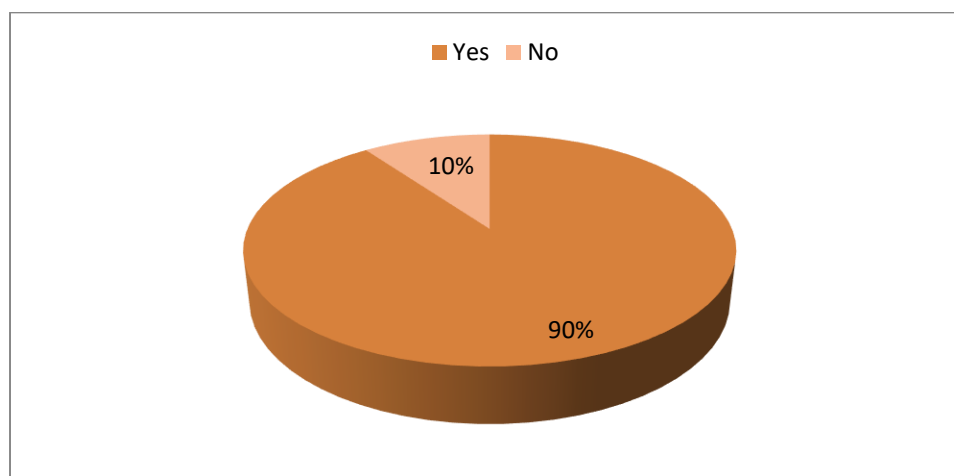


Figure 2: Disability awareness programs at schools

Table 2 shows that there are now disability awareness programs in schools; 90% of those who took the survey said that there are programs, while 10% said that there are none. What this means is that 90% of the population believes that special accommodations should be given for kids who have learning difficulties.

There is a severe lack of specialized facilities to care for the many youngsters who suffer from learning difficulties. In order to help identify and assist kids who may have a learning impairment, schools should use multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), according to the National Centre for Learning Disabilities.

Table 3: Early intervention effects on Learning disabilities

S. No.	Particulars	Percentage
1	Yes	75.0
2	No	20.0

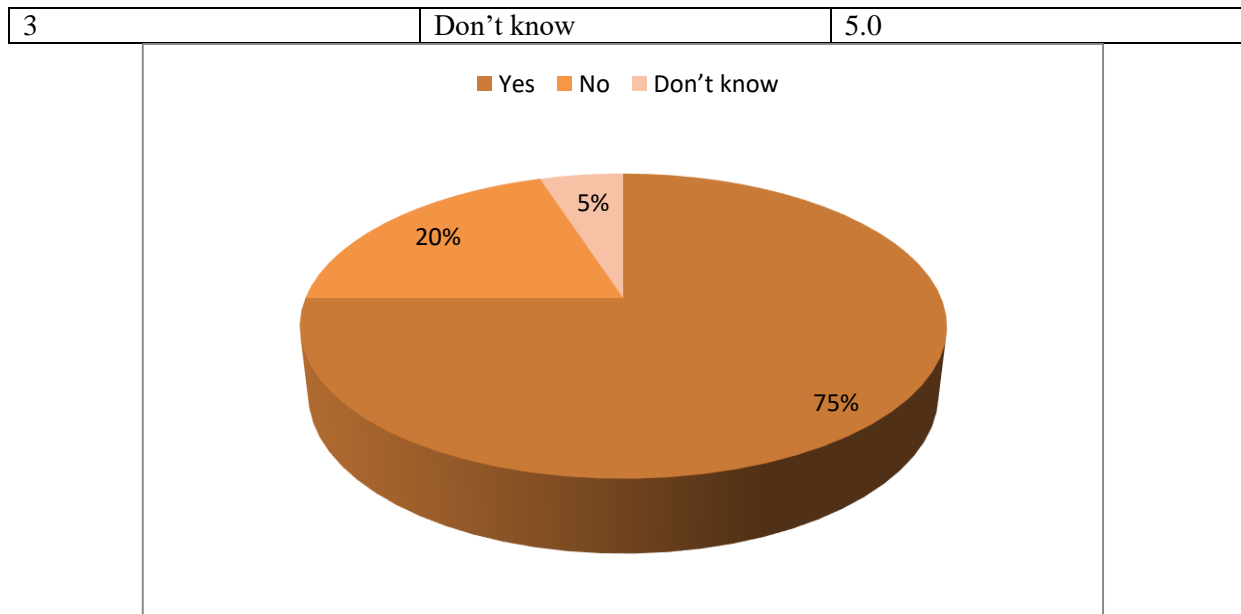


Figure 3: Early intervention effects on Learning disabilities

In order to help their children overcome their challenges, teachers and parents must take action, according to 75% of respondents (see Table 3). Love, encouragement, support, and undivided attention are essential for every kid. A youngster who struggles academically might acquire strategies to manage their condition. The likelihood of success in school and beyond is enhanced with early mentoring. While 20% were unsure of how they felt about the remark and 5% strongly disagreed with it.

V. CONCLUSION

Awareness initiatives shine a light on a future where learning challenges do not limit a child's potential. They promote an inclusive education model guided by the community and help debunk misconceptions and prejudices. Every child's unique skills may be acknowledged and promoted in an educational setting that embraces the diverse character of these programs. Educators, parents, communities, and lawmakers must all work together to ensure that all children, regardless of their learning disability, have equal access to quality educational and personal development opportunities. Ultimately, we can create a better, more inclusive future for every kid by raising consciousness, gaining understanding, and working together.

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