

A Study on Teachers' Perceptions And Learning Difficulties of Dyslexic Students At School Level In Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the difficulties faced by dyslexic students in schools and their teachers' perceptions and practices in teaching them. A mixed-method approach was used, involving a survey of 80 dyslexic students and interviews with 50 teachers from public and private schools in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh. The findings highlight significant challenges in reading, writing, and comprehension faced by dyslexic students, alongside the perceptions and instructional strategies employed by teachers. The study provides insights into the need for targeted interventions to support dyslexic learners.

Key words: Dyslexia, Teacher Perception, School Level

1-Introduction:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disorder characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and spelling abilities. Despite being commonly associated with reading challenges, dyslexia affects language processing skills more broadly, influencing how individuals interpret and manipulate language sounds, written symbols, and even spoken words. This disorder is neurobiological in origin, meaning it arises from differences in brain function and structure, rather than from external factors like inadequate teaching or lack of intelligence. In fact, dyslexia can occur in individuals with normal or above-average intelligence and access to effective educational opportunities.

Definition of Dyslexia:

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) defines dyslexia as: "A specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction."

Characteristics of Dyslexia:

The symptoms of dyslexia can vary depending on age, developmental stage, and these verity of the condition
Common signs includes:

- ❖ Difficulty in learning spelling of simple words.
- ❖ Trouble in learning the names of letters.
- ❖ Problems telling apart letters with similar shapes, such as “d” and “b” or “p” and “q.
- ❖ Facing Problem in mirror images such as "M" in place of "W" or "b" in place of "d" etc.
- ❖ Trouble in rhyming.
- ❖ Reluctance to read aloud in class.
- ❖ Trouble sounding out new words.
- ❖ Trouble associating sounds with letters or parts of words.
- ❖ Trouble learning how sounds go together.
- ❖ Mixing up the position of sounds in a word.
- ❖ Difficulty with sound recognition and manipulation, which is essential for learning to read.

Impact of Dyslexia:

Dyslexia's effects go beyond academic difficulties. It can impact self-worth, belief in oneself, and mental health, particularly if not detected and dealt with early on. Children who have dyslexia might experience frustration or shame due to their difficulties with reading, resulting in feelings of anxiety, a lack of drive, or a fear of not succeeding. These emotions may lead to hesitancy to join in classroom tasks, shy away from reading out loud, or refuse to interact with written assignments.

Statement of the study:

A Study on Teachers' Perceptions and Learning Difficulties of Dyslexic Students at School Level in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

3. Objectives of the Study:

- ❖ To identify the types of difficulties dyslexic students face while learning at the school level.
- ❖ To explore teachers' perceptions and practices when teaching dyslexic students.

Literature Review:

Early identification of dyslexia is crucial for effective intervention. However, diagnosing dyslexia can be challenging due to the variability in symptoms and the overlap with other learning disabilities. Assessment typically involves a comprehensive evaluation, including cognitive and academic testing, phonological processing assessments, and an examination of family history (Snowling & Hulme, 2012). Screening tools and teacher observations can also aid in identifying children at risk for dyslexia.

The causes of dyslexia are complex and involve both genetic and environmental factors. Twin and family studies have consistently demonstrated a heritable component to dyslexia, suggesting that genetic factors play a significant role (Grigorenko, 2001). Specific genes, such as DCDC2 and KIAA0319, have been associated with dyslexia, though the exact mechanisms remain under investigation. Neuroimaging studies have revealed differences in brain structure and function among individuals with dyslexia, particularly in areas related to language processing, such as the left hemisphere's posterior regions (Shaywitz et al., 2008).

Dyslexia is often described as a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects the phonological component of language. According to the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), dyslexia is not due to poor instruction, lack of intelligence, or vision problems. Individuals with dyslexia typically exhibit difficulties with phonological processing, which includes phonemic awareness, phonological memory, and rapid naming skills (Shaywitz, 2003). These difficulties contribute to challenges in reading fluency, comprehension, and spelling.

4. Methodology:

Research Method- Mixed Method Approach (Qualitative and Quantitative)

Population of the study: The study was conducted in public and private schools in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

Sample Size: 80 students with dyslexia and 50 teachers (20 males, 30 females).

Tools Used: Questionnaires for students to assess learning difficulties and interview schedules for teachers to gather their perceptions and teaching practices.

Data Analysis: Statistical analysis using frequency distribution and percentage analysis. Data visualizations were created using charts to display key findings.

Demographic Details:

Teachers' Demographics:

Gender Distribution:

Male: 20 (40%)

Female: 30 (60%)

Students' Demographics:

Age Distribution:

8-10 years: 20 students (25%)

11-13 years: 40 students (50%)

14-16 years: 20 students (25%)

School Type Distribution:

Public Schools: 40 students (50%)

Private Schools: 40 students (50%)

5-Data Analysis and Findings:

A. Difficulties Faced by Dyslexic Students:

Students reported facing significant challenges in various academic tasks. Key difficulties identified are as follows:

- ❖ Reading Difficulties: Struggles with phonetic decoding, slow reading speed, and difficulty understanding text.
- ❖ Writing Difficulties: Issues with spelling, grammar, punctuation, and organizing thoughts coherently.
- ❖ Comprehension Difficulties: Challenges in understanding instructions, word problems in language, and content in other subjects.

B. Teachers' Perceptions and Practices:

Interviews revealed varying levels of awareness and strategies used by teachers:

- ❖ Awareness and Training: 50% of teachers were aware of dyslexia but lacked specific training. Only 30% had received professional development in special education.
- ❖ Teaching Strategies: Common practices included providing extra time, one-on-one support, and simplified instructions, though few used specialized dyslexia-friendly teaching methods.

- ❖ **Challenges Faced by Teachers:** Teachers reported difficulties in managing mixed-ability classrooms and a lack of resources to adequately support dyslexic students.

6-Discussion:

The study highlights significant gaps in the support provided to dyslexic students at the school level. While students face multiple learning challenges, teachers' perceptions and lack of specialized training often hinder effective instruction. There is a need for targeted teacher training, resource provision, and the implementation of evidence-based teaching strategies to enhance learning outcomes for dyslexic students.

7-Conclusion and Recommendations:

This study emphasizes the importance of improving teacher training and awareness of dyslexia to create an inclusive learning environment. Schools should consider adopting specific instructional techniques such as multisensory learning, personalized support, and integrating assistive technologies. Further research could explore the effectiveness of such interventions in improving academic performance among dyslexic students.

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