

PREVALENCE OF LEARNING DISORDER AMONG STUDENTS OF SOCIO- ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED FAMILY IN MANIKANDAM BLOCK OF TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT- A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT--Various research studies have proved that Disability is generally more common among children living in poverty than among those not living in poverty. In the education system, the disproportionate recognition of learning disorders in such socio demographic groups, especially, the already disadvantaged group is viewed as a chronic issue. Students who are misidentified with a learning disorder may be extremely limited in their academic and social environments, while the students with a learning disorder who are never identified are less likely to obtain the adaptations and modifications required to explore out their full potential. Therefore, the poverty and learning disorders can decrease the likelihood of completing the high school education which is considered as great barrier in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. **Aim:** The main aim of the present study is to understand the different type of learning disorder among students of socio-economically disadvantaged family. The objectives of the study are: to describe the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents, to identify the different type of learning disorder among students of socio-economically disadvantaged family. descriptive research design has been adopted. The universe of the study consists of students of socio-economically disadvantaged family in Manikandam block of Tiruchirappalli district. There are about 190 sample were selected. The module NIMHAANS index for specific learning disabilities (modified version) has been adopted to identify the various learning disorder. More than half (51.0 percent) of the students of socio-economically disadvantaged family are identified with different types of Learning Disorders so they should be given appropriated intervention by psychologist in order to overcome the leaning disorder of the students of socio-economically disadvantaged family.

Key Words--student of disadvantaged family, Learning disorders/ disability, Below Poverty Line

I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of learning disorders as being applied in a disadvantaged demographic group with high poverty. The identification of Learning disorder or disability is a complex process

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because the children develop new skills as they age, however, it is found that poverty plays a significant role in impairing the learning abilities of the children in BPL families. Data review shows the existence of poverty greatly impacts the living style of the family and extend further impacting the learning style of the students in the disadvantaged demographic area. Recommendations include offering information to counter traditional assumptions about people living in poverty, including socio-economic change in school settings, assisting teachers in their attempts to address the needs of all students in their classrooms and incorporating assessment strategies designed to help students achieve the assistance they need in the early stages of school education.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

a) Poverty and Learning disability

Lustig & Strauser, (2007) made a straight quote that the relationship between childhood disability and poverty is best described as complex and interactive. Houtrow et al.,(2014) mentioned in his study that “ the same is true for disabilities associated with mental health disorders; children living in or near poverty have higher rates of disability associated with mental health disorders than other children”.Above all, Bauman et al.,(2006) & Evans (2004) pointed out that “ It is clear that poverty is also associated with other social disadvantages, such as minority status, single parenthood, and poor education, which have a cumulative effect on child health and disability.

b) Identification of Learning Disability

Disability identification has come into the lime light and it is demanding people to use innovative measures even in teaching with integrated methods (Vasanthan.R and Nandhini.R, 2014). With regard to learning disability, at the early stage, educationalists strive to identify and address this issue by activating the kinesthetic style preferences among the children (Vasanathan.R, Balaji.P and D. Khriereizhunuo, 2019). Learning disorder identification poses serious challenge as it is not easy to convince people of the same. Bateman (2005) stated that “The definition of LD has been a controversial topic since the late 1960s”. In addition, the statement “There is significant evidence that the lack of a consistently applied definition has led to misidentification of LD in the U.S. given by Dombrowski, Kamphaus & Reynolds (2004) made clear the complexity of diagnosing a person with Learning disability.

Weintraub (2005) pointed out that Lack of consistency in how learning disabilities are defined is evident. For example, a student may qualify for services because of a learning disability in one state but not in another. While the overall incidence rate of students receiving disabilities, services is consistent across states, there are apparent differences in how diagnostic criteria or practices are used within each state to determine who is or is not learning disabled. In other words, the same percentage of students are identified as having a need for special education, but states differ in the labels they assign students.

In terms of assessing the students with Learning disorders from the disadvantage family and while designing the remedial program, the assessor need to consider the point given out by Fletcher and Navarrette (2003). There is also evidence that the “ exclusionary clauses” of LD definition (i.e environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage) are often ignored. To substantiate the same, the study conducted by Harris, Gray, Davis, Zaremba & Argulewicz (1997) found that less than half the school psychologists who surveyed considered exclusionary criteria when making a diagnosis of LD and 37 percent admitted ignoring or trying to get around the exclusionary

clauses. Also, Shepard (1983) states that “There is evidence to suggest that these practices serve to provide struggling students with services, even if the diagnosis is incorrect.

The relationship between childhood disability and poverty is best described as complex and interactive (Lustig and Strauser, 2007). Socio economic status serves as the strongest single indicator of students’ educational outcomes. Based on a comparison and analysis of test scores, generally children attending high poverty schools perform at much lower levels in reading and mathematics than their peers who attend low poverty (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). In addition, economic development in rural areas is hindered by many elements: low population, lack of infrastructure, dependence upon one employment sector, fewer resources, and lower levels of educational advancement (Jensen, 2006).

III. METHOD AND MATERIAL

The main aim of the present study is to understand the different type of learning disorder among students of socio-economically disadvantaged family. The objectives of the study are: to describe the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents, to identify the different type of learning disorder among students of socio-economically disadvantaged family. Descriptive research design has been adopted. The universe of the study consists of students of socio-economically disadvantaged family in Manikandam block of Tiruchirappalli district. There are about 190 sample were selected. A module (adapted from) has been adopted to identify the various learning disorder along with self-prepared questionnaire was used which contains socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The collected data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

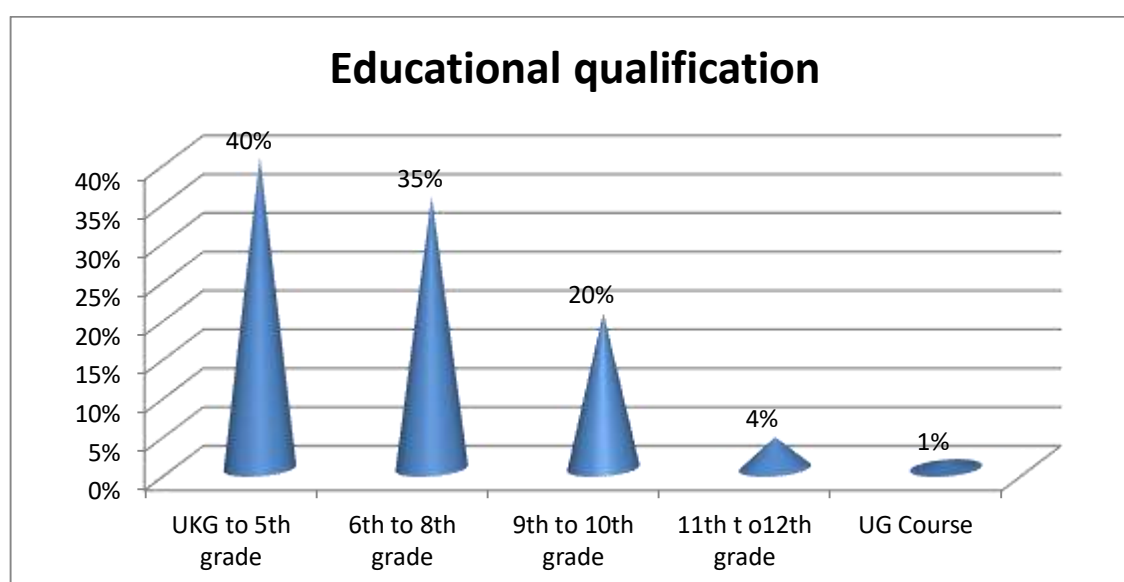


Figure 1: Distribution of the respondents by their educational qualification

The above figure 1 illustrates that more the one third 40.0 percent of the students were studied UKG (Upper Kindergarten) to 5th standard, more than one third 35.0 percent of them were studied 6th to 8th standard, considerable 20.0 percent of them were studied 9th to 10th standard, meager 4 percent of them were studied 11th to 12th standard and remaining 1 percent were studies Under Graduation.

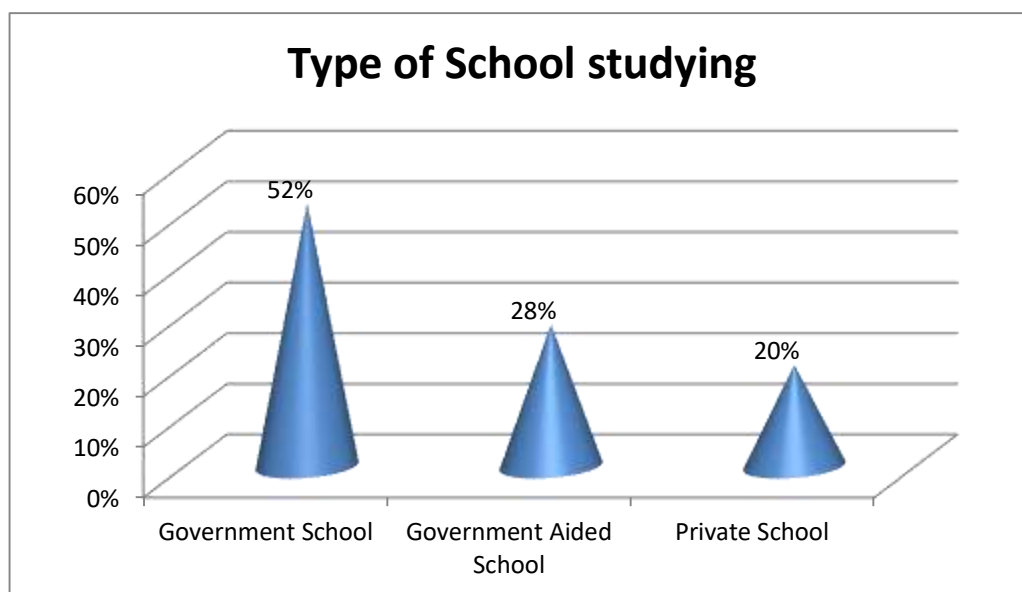


Figure 2: Distribution of the respondents by their Type of school studying

The above figure 2 shows that more than half 52.0 percent of the students are studying in the Government school, more than one fourth 28.0 percent of the students are studying in Government aided school and remaining 20.0 percent of the students are studying in Private school.

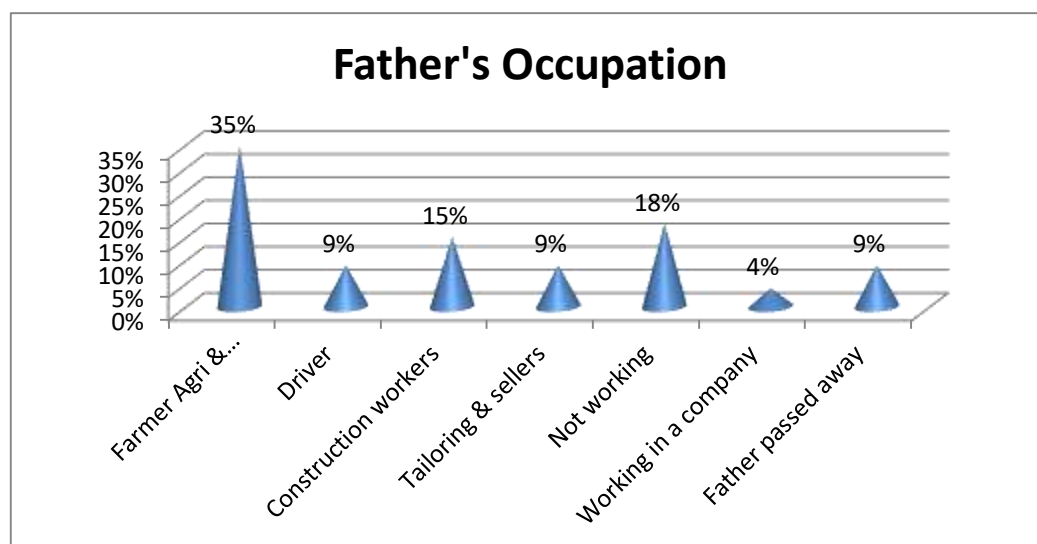


Figure 3: Distribution of the respondents by their father's occupation

The above figure reveals that more than one third 35.0 percent of the students' father are marginalized farmers or Livestock holders, considerable 18.0 percent of them are jobless, meager 15.0 percent of them are construction

workers, few 9.0 percent of them are working as drivers, few 9.0 percent of them are tailors and salesmen, few 9.0 percent of the students' father are not alive and remaining 4.0 percent of them are working in a company.

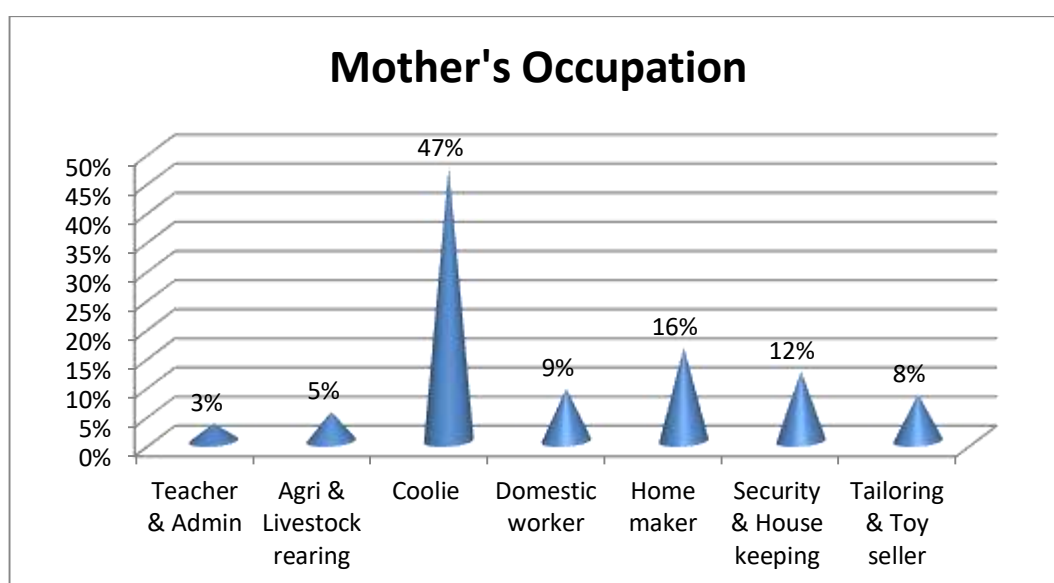


Figure 4: Distribution of the respondents by their mother's occupation

The above Figure.4 reveals that nearly half 47.0 percent of students' mothers are working as a coolie, meager 16.0 percent of them are working as a home maker, few 12.0 percent of them work in a security and housekeeping department, very few 9.0 of them are working as a domestic worker, very few 8.0 percent of them are working as Tailor & toy seller, very few 5.0 percent of them are working in the field of agriculture and livestock rearing and remaining 3.0 percent of the student's mothers are working as Teacher & Admin.

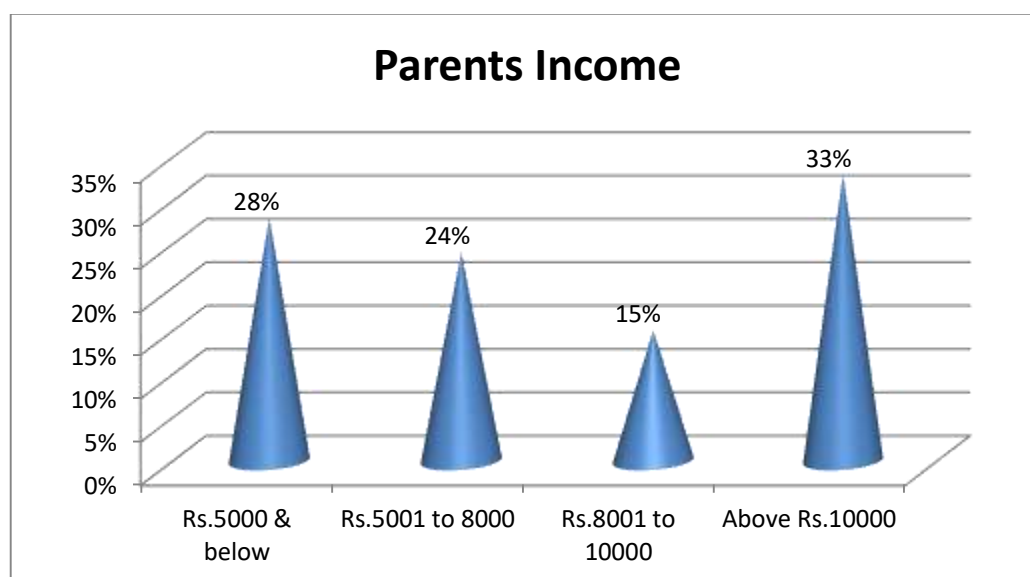


Figure 5: Distribution of the respondents by their students' parental income

The above Figure.5 demonstrates that one third 33.0 percent of students parents are earn wages above Rs.10000, more than one fourth 28.0 percent of the students parents are earning wages of Rs.5000 & below, nearly

one fourth 24.0 of them earn wages in the range of Rs.5001 to 8000 and remaining 15.0 percent of them earn wages in the range of Rs.8001 to 10,000.

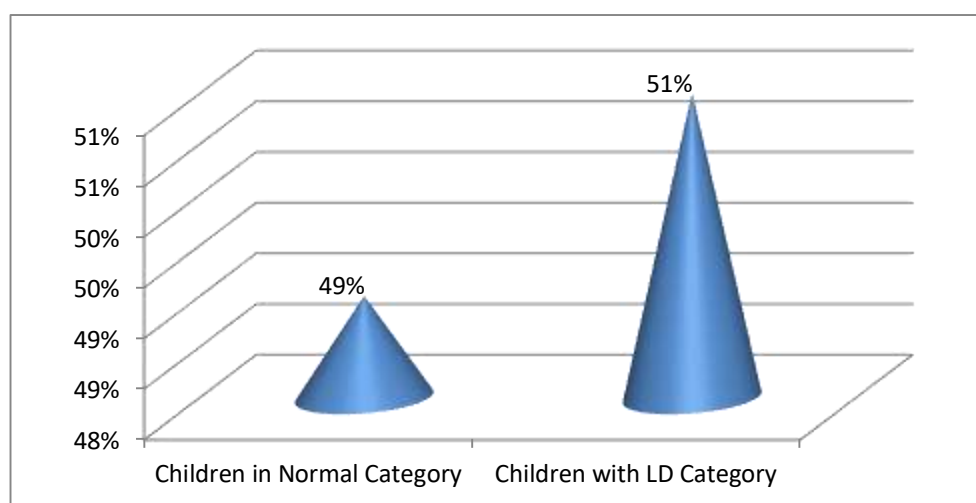


Figure 6: Distribution of the respondents by their students' category

The above figure portrays that more than half 51.0 percent of the students are identified with different types of Learning Disorders and remaining 49.0 percent of the students were identified in Normal category.

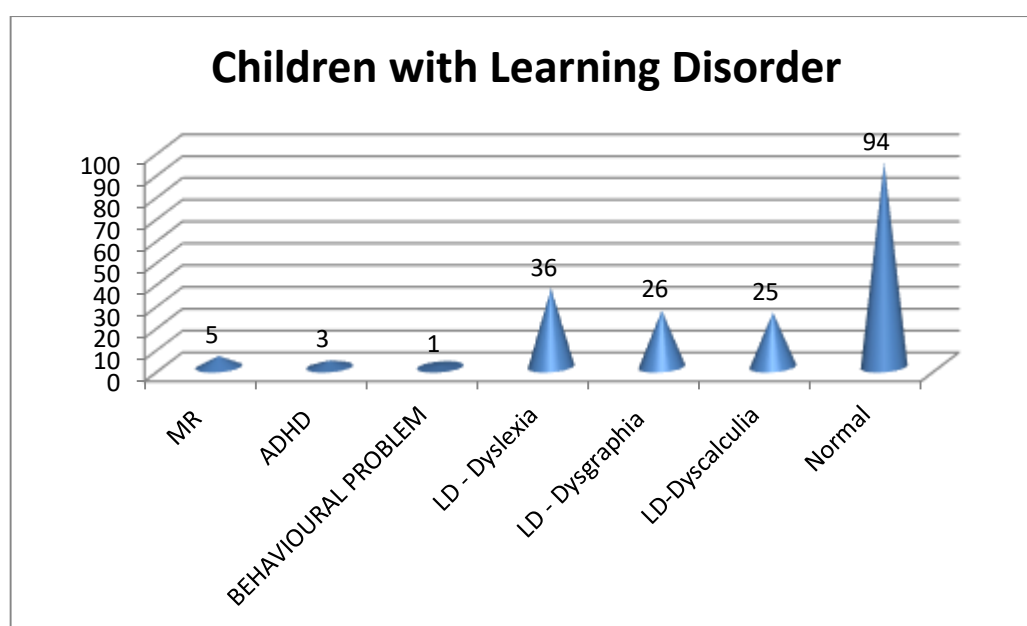


Figure 7: Distribution of the respondents by their type of learning disorder

The above Figure.7 reveals that out of 190 students of students of socio-economically disadvantaged family, 94 students are normal in learning, 36 students has Dyslexia, 26 students has Dysgraphia, 25 students has Dyscalculia, 5 children were assessed with Mental Retardation (MR), 3 students has Attention Deficiency Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) problem and reaming 1 student observed having behavioral problem.

V. MAJOR FINDINGS

- More than half 51.0 percent of the students are identified with different types of Learning Disorders.
- 36 students of socio-economically disadvantaged family has Dyslexia, 26 students has Dysgraphia, 25 students has Dyscalculia
- More the one third 40.0 percent of the students were studied UKG (Upper Kindergarten) to 5th standard, more than one third 35.0 percent of them were studied 6th to 8th standard, considerable 20.0 percent of them were studied 9th to 10th standard
- More than half 52.0 percent of the students are studying in the Government school
- More than one third 35.0 percent of the students' father are marginalized farmers or Livestock holders
- Nearly half 47.0 percent of students' mothers are working as a coolie.
- One third 33.0 percent of students parents are earn wages above Rs.10000

VI. SUGGESTIONS

1. The follow up assessment session is suggested for the children, after a year to find the improvement in their academics through intervening the students in a well-designed remedial program.
2. Remedial programs can be arranged for the primary school students with the help of volunteers on regular basis, teaching them the basic concepts in reading proficiency with letter identification, writing and mathematical skills.
3. Most of the children who are studying in Government and Government aided schools are not given adequate attention and assistance through any special methodology or technique. Therefore, the teachers should be oriented through workshops and seminars about Learning Disability and the adaptive techniques in identifying and teaching the students with Learning Disorders.
4. Most of the parents are working hard and spent most of hours in work. They are unable to support economically as well as psychologically and that in turn affects the self-esteem of the children. Awareness on the importance of child development, economic and educational resource mobilization has to be promoted to prevent the probability of school drop-outs in the demographic area.
5. The Government should establish a flexible curriculum for the children with Learning Disorders with extra provision of benefits for such disadvantaged demographic group of people to attain better standard of living.

VII. CONCLUSION

Children living in Poverty are more likely to have learning disorders than other children, and that those disorders are likely to be serious. In contra, the learning disorder of these children will be considered as the risk factor for the long-term economic hardships and poverty of the family. For these students in BPL families, remedial program should be designed not just to keep them from dropping out of high schools but to teach them about career opportunities. The children in the BPL families should be well oriented about the value of education in breaking

the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Most importantly, the education system should allow a flexible curriculum and adaptive methodologies for the educational empowerment of children in BPL families.

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