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**INFLUENCES OF LEARNING DISABILITIES AND SOCIO-
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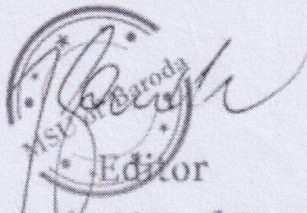
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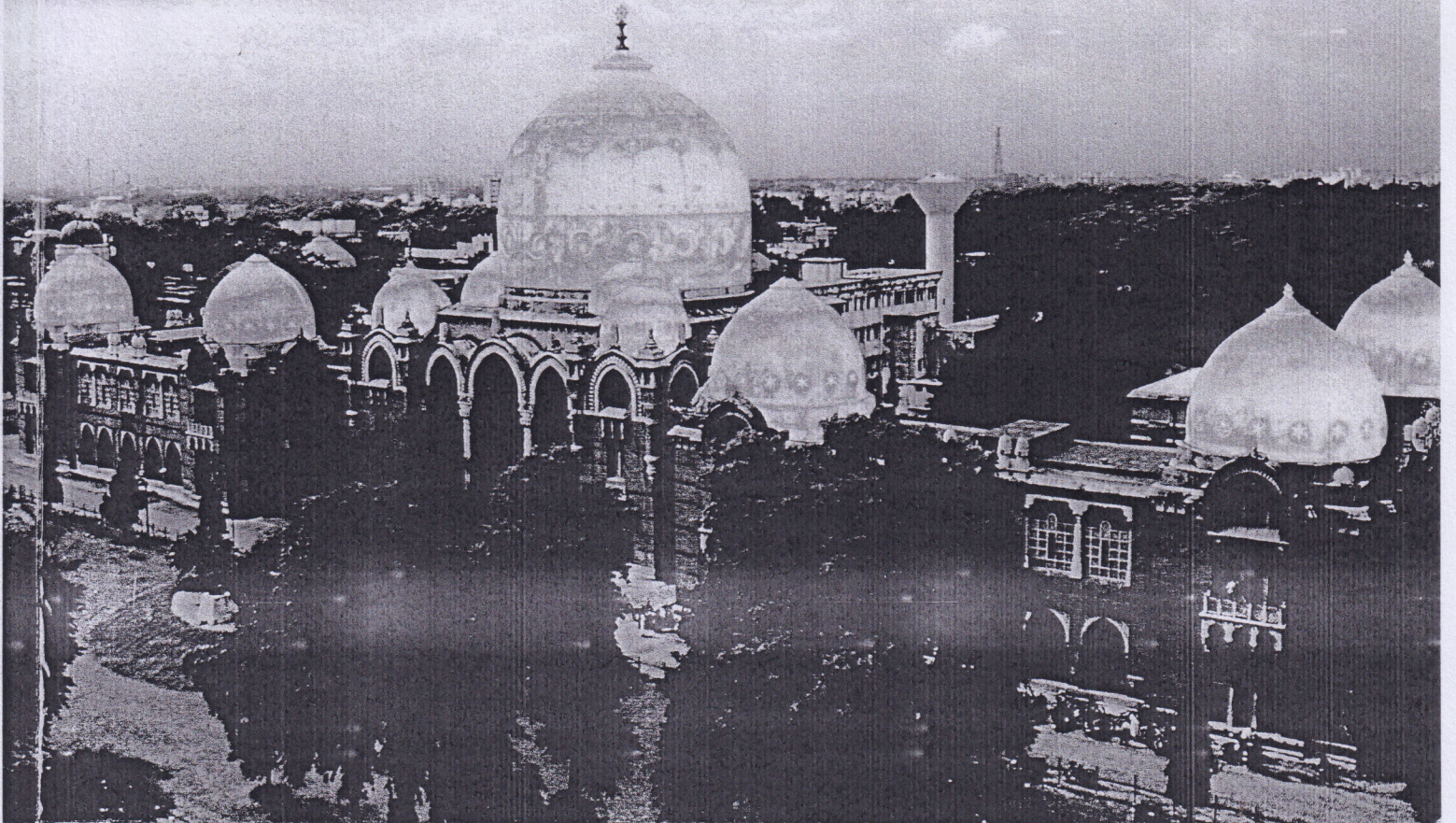


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INFLUENCES OF LEARNING DISABILITIES AND SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS ON COGNITIVE ABILITIES OF SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN

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Abstract:

Learning disabilities is the new concept on our context and it is one of the important causes for poor academics of school children. Learning disabilities is developmental disorder that usually manifest during the period of normal education. Socio-economic status is multidimensional construct that includes not only measure of material wealth but also educational and social prestige. Parental socio-economic status affects every individual development from upbringing to study also. The purpose of the study was to find out impact of factor of sex and factor socio-economic status on cognitive abilities. Objectives: to study impact of sex on the cognitive abilities and to study the effect of SES on cognitive abilities. Hypothesis: the male Ss had less severity of cognitive abilities than the female Ss. The Ss from HSES exhibited less severity of cognitive abilities than the Ss from LSES. 100 sample were selected from the school and male and female ratio was 1:1. Design: 2x2 factorial design was used. Result: male Ss and female Ss differ significantly from each other on cognitive abilities. Conclusion: The male Ss had less severity on cognitive abilities than the female Ss. The Ss from HSES had significantly better cognitive abilities than the male Ss from LSES.

Keywords: Cognitive abilities, HSES, LSES and learning disabilities.

Introduction:

Learning disabilities among the children is relatively a very old problem. However, not much attention was paid to the learning disabilities among the children even in the developed countries. Obviously, in a developing country like India only during the last two decades little awareness is seen about the learning disabilities among the children. The field of study involving learning disabilities is a relatively new and very lively area of great challenge and possibilities.

Prior to this, attempts were made to understand the field of learning disabilities. However, these attempts were noted as political events. It was John F. Kennedy who was president of USA publically acknowledge mental retardation as a family reality. His sister Rosemary was retarded Kennedy created a national office, the division for handicap children in the united state office of health, education and welfare took areas fund for research on individuals with disabilities. This tentatively opens the door for public funding services for research into the problems of students with a variety of disabilities (Kirk, 1988).

Under Kirk leadership the following definitions of learning disabilities was proposed by this community, "children with special learning disabilities exhibited a disorder in one or more basic of psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written languages. These may be manifested in disorders of listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referring to as perceptual handicap, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia etc. They don't include learning problems which are view primarily to visual, learning or motor handicaps or mental retardation, emotional disturbance or environmental disadvantage (Kirk, 1988).

Researchers in this field recognized that, the cognitive processing perspectives were on medically base in that the learning than in the interaction between the child and the learning environment. Of course, their do seem to be several types of neurological disabilities (Leonard, 2001).

One cognitive characteristic that required extended review for prospective teachers of the learning disabled is the area of language (Sousa, 2006). Although, not all children with learning disabilities demonstrates deficit in language, language delay in appropriate use of language have been concerned in the field of learning disabilities historically and many such students do have some problems in this area (Silliman & Scott, 2006).

Socio-economic status and learning disability:

A drawback to low social acceptance is the fact that it may negatively affect academic performance. In many elementary classrooms, various educational activities are based on group work, group studying, and other academic tasks for which a certain minimum level of social acceptance is desirable. The same low socially accepted child with disabilities who is rarely chosen for the softball team may well be the last student in class chosen for a class debate. Numerous studies have found children with learning disabilities to experience social difficulties with peers. Using different definitions of learning disabilities and diverse methodologies for assessing social status, learning disabled children in mainstreams class rooms consistently have been found to be less accepted and more rejected than their non learning disabled peers (Bruininks, 1978; Bryan, 1974, 1976; Garrett & Crump, 1980; Gresham & Reschly, 1986; Horowitz, 1981). Bryan's (1976) studied that learning disabled children's peer acceptance over a 12 month period, the composition of the children's peer group changed substantially, yet the learning disabled youngsters retained their poor social status. A case is presented to reveal the existence of a relationship between learning disabilities and cultural-economic disadvantage. Evidence from a variety of sources is presented suggesting that the problem is most properly viewed as a complex interrelationship among the phenomena of learning disabilities, brain dysfunction, and cultural-economic disadvantage. The arguments presented reveal a strong association between learning disabilities and cultural-economic disadvantage. A comparison

of the learning disabled and culturally disadvantaged groups in terms of symptomatology found them to be more alike than different. Finally, the question is asked as to why disadvantaged children are excluded from service within the learning disability framework. A reexamination of the relationship is called for since the services provided learning disabled children appear appropriate for meeting the educational needs of culturally-economically disadvantaged children (Kawale, 1980).

Aim of the study:

The aim of the study to measure the effect of sex and socio-economic status on the cognitive abilities

Objective:

To study the effect of sex on the cognitive abilities
To study the impact of SES on the cognitive abilities.

Hypotheses:

Cognitive ability is significantly better among the male Ss than the female Ss.
The subjects from high socio-economic background have significantly better cognitive abilities than the subjects from low socio-economic background.

Material and Method:

Sample:

The total sample comprised of 100 Ss only; of which 50% were males and 50% were females. Their age range was 8 to 10 years, and their educational standard was either 3rd or 4th. The Ss represented two SES stratum, namely LSES and HSES.

Tools used:

Diagnostic Test of Learning Disability:

The scale was constructed and developed by Swaroopa and Dharmistha. It consisted of ten different types of learning disability and each sub test is measuring different areas of learning disabilities. Cognitive abilities measure the ability to manipulate the stimuli in reversed order. The reliability coefficient obtained by the test retest method is 0.79.

Socio-Economic Status Scale:

This scale was constructed by Janbandhu. It is a short scale consisted of 14 questions only. The reliability coefficients measured by test-retest method was 0.89 and validity coefficient was 0.69.

Procedure:

For collecting the data the Ss were called in a small group consisted of 5 to 10 each. Their seating arrangement was made in a classroom; sufficient distance between the two Ss was kept, so, that one cannot peep into the answers written by the other. Once the Ss had taken their seats rapport was formed through informal conversation. The important instructions were given to the Ss regarding the test.

Research design:

The design of the study is 2x2factorial design and each variable was varied at two levels.

Statistical Treatment:

It was first treated by descriptive statistics i.e. the means and SDs; later on it was treated by inferential statistics i.e. Two Way Analysis of Variance. Since, the two independent variables varied at two levels.

Results and Discussion:

In the present investigation an attempt had been made to understand the problems of learning disabled students and to examine the effect of sex, and SES on cognitive abilities, memory measure.

The first factor of the study was cognitive abilities. The data related to this factor when analysed statistically to describe the data, it gives following results.

Table 1.1 Means and Standard Deviation of Cognitive Abilities

	A1B1	A1B2	A2B1	A2B2
X	7.48	6.20	6.56	5.08
S	1.12	0.95	1.22	1.38

A1: Male A2: Feamle B1: HSES B2: LSES

From the means table, highest mean score obtained by group A1B1 ($X = 7.48$; $s = 1.12$) and lowest means score indicated by the group A2B2 ($X = 5.08$; 1.38). It means that group A1B1 shown better cognitive abilities than other three groups. It is not possible to conclude on the it so further data were treated by Two Way ANOVA.

Table 1.2 Complete Summary of Four Way ANOVA for Cognitive Abilities

Sources of Variance	SS	Df	Mss	F
A: Sex	26.01	1	26.01	18.07**
B: SES	47.61	1	47.61	34.01**
AxB	0.25	1	0.25	0.18
Wss	134.24	96	1.38	
Tss	208.11	99		

*Significant at 0.05 ** Significant at 0.01

From the summary of ANOVA, it could be seen that main effect A, which represents the factor of sex, brought out highly significant results [$F = 18.07$; $df = 1 \text{ \& } 96$, $p < 0.01$]. It means that, the two broad groups namely; males and females differ from each other significantly. Main effect B which represents the factor of socio economic, was varied at two levels namely HSES and LSES. It has yielded an F value of 34.01 which for 1 & 96 is highly significant. It indicates that, HSES Ss is differ from LSES Ss. Interaction AxB was found non significant [$F = 0.18$; $df = 1 \text{ \& } 384$, $p > 0.05$]. This non significant interaction effect denotes that, the factor of sex and the factor of socio economic factor were functioning independently.

Suggestions:

Following suggestions were drawn for the study:

- Psychologist, counselor and special educator must work for the learning disabled students.
- Schools must have take serious action to help the learning disabled students.
- Special educator must give weekly plan to the students and take follow up from the parents.
- Parents and special educator and students have at least two or three sessions in a one week.
- Once in a week, class teacher must interact with parents for the progress of the students.

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