

## Learning disability and academic backwardness among rural school children

■ MANDEEP KAUR MAKKAR AND DEEPIKA VIG

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See end of the paper for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to :

**MANDEEP KAUR MAKKAR**

Department of Human  
Development, College of  
Home Science, Punjab  
Agricultural University,  
LUDHIANA (PUNJAB) INDIA  
Email:kitty\_ajay@yahoo.com

■ **ABSTRACT** : The present study was conducted to assess the incidence of learning disability among academically poor rural school children in Ludhiana district. The study was based upon the sample of 100 children. The subjects for the sample were drawn randomly from four rural government schools located on Block I of Ludhiana district. The standard progressive matrices (Raven, 1969) was used to screen the children with poor intellectual abilities and A diagnostic test of learning disability (Swarup and Mehta, 2005) was used to assess the incidence of learning disability. The incidence of learning disability was found to be 11.90 per cent. Out of various dimensions figure constancy (92.86%), figure ground perception (69.05%) and eye-hand co-ordination (61.90%) were found to be the strongest areas of perception among academically poor children and expressive language was found to be severely affected in majority of children.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Learning disability, Academic performance

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Prevalence of learning difficulties is one of the factors responsible for poor academic achievement in children. Chadha (2004a) explained that children with learning difficulties have problems in all areas of learning and development. In school, learning is significantly influenced by reading, writing skills and ability of the child to perform mathematical operations. In other words, language and mathematical abilities determine a child's success in school performance. Children can have problem in any of these areas or he/she can feel difficulty in more than one area. Children with difficulties in reading, writing and mathematical calculations are known as learning disabled children. Learning disability is defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations. Anjana (2005) reported the prevalence rate of learning disability to be 8.68 per cent among pre-school children. It is a disorder in which the child has difficulty in learning or assimilating information that is easy for other children. These problems in learning may happen to

children who are as intelligent, or even more intelligent than most children of the same age. Generally, these children also do not show any problem in seeing and hearing. There is no serious brain damage. Moreover, they also get the same opportunity to learn in the class like other children.

These children may also be receiving enough environmental or emotional support. Their difficulty in learning is due to a problem in that part of the brain, which is involved in processing or understanding information/things that are happening around them. However, scholastic failure is one of the telling signs of learning disability since these children, despite being intelligent, are unable to process information in a way that is required for good academic performance.

These problems may be attributed to a variety of factors e.g. poor teaching methods, inability of the teacher to make math interesting, problems in memory, reading, language and logical thinking. Regardless of the cause of these problems, the teacher should use joyful teaching methods (Chadha, 2004b). Therefore, keeping these factors in view the present study was planned with the following objectives to assess the incidence of learning disability among academically poor