

Executive Summary of the findings of UGC funded Minor Research Project titled *LEARNING DISABILITY- ROLE, IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION*

Submitted By

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The juvenile IPC (Indian Penal Code) crimes in 2013 have increased by 13.5% over 2012 as 27,936 IPC crimes by juveniles were registered during 2012 which increased to 31,725 cases in 2013. In Kerala, the total number of juvenile delinquents reported was 723 under IPC and 50 under SLL (Crime in India, 2013). The figure is alarming. Even though lot of measures are taken by the nation and NGO's for their rehabilitation and intervention, certain areas like learning disability which may be a cause for low achievement and escape from schools, one of the cause behind juvenile delinquency, is been neglected.

In India a report on prevalence of Learning Disability claimed that at least 10% of children in the country have a Learning Disability (The Times of India, 2012). Unfortunately, most of the schools fail to lend a sympathetic ear to the problems of learning disabled. As a result, these children are branded as failures. To cope up with these problems and overcome them, the first step should be early detection, acceptance by parents and broad awareness among the academic community and above all by a mature handling of the problems (Sakhuja, 2004). It is no secret that many students find learning a painful and tiring process. Learning is made more difficult by a number of factors, like inadequate prior knowledge, poor study skills, problems with maintaining attention, cultural or language differences, and the presence of a hidden handicap namely Learning Disability. Students who have Learning Disability are often overwhelmed, frustrated and disorganised in the learning situations. Learning can become a nightmare when there are memory problems, trouble with the visual or auditory perception of information, difficulties in following directions, and an inability to perform paper-pencil tasks (like writing compositions, note taking, doing written homework, taking tests etc).

In the United States, Learning Disability has been associated with juvenile delinquency. McKay and Brumback (1980) found that the children rejected by social institutions (such as school), may seek alternative, frequently delinquent, activities. Hence they suggest that learning disabled children must be identified so that programs which minimize the disability while emphasizing the children's strengths can be instituted. Since adjudicated delinquents of normal intelligence show a significant degree of academic underachievement, correctional programs must recognize the possibility of learning disability. Report or study focussed on these lines, learning disability and juvenile delinquency is found rarely in Indian context. Also, the investigator while doing her research on developing a multisensory strategy for learning disabled children at primary level found that a lot of children with learning disability especially from financially backward families quit schooling as a result of frequent encounter with failure. Some of these children who are again neglected by the family and society end up in anti-social activity groups paving path to juvenile delinquency. If such children are given proper remediation, they can be lead to success in learning which in turn can make them interested in schooling and thereby earn a living. It is essential to find the relationship between learning disability and juvenile delinquency. Hence the investigator decided to take up a study on the same.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives formulated to carry out the study:-

1. To construct and standardize a Diagnostic test to identify Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disabilities.
2. To find out the prevalence of Learning Disability among Juvenile Delinquents.
3. To estimate the percentage of juvenile delinquents having learning disability.
4. To design and develop an intervention strategy for Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disabilities.
5. To find out the effect of the developed intervention strategy on the academic achievement of children with learning disability among Juvenile Delinquents.
6. To examine the role of learning disability as a factor in causing juvenile delinquency through case study.
7. To find out the level of achievement motivation in Juvenile Delinquents before and after the intervention.

Methodology in Brief

The research design followed by the present study includes both survey and experimental study. Survey method was employed to identify Learning Disability among Juvenile Delinquents. The experimental method was found to be the most appropriate design for finding out the effectiveness of the developed Intervention Strategy. The experimental design used for the present study was pre test-post test single group design.

Major Findings of the Study

The major findings of the present study are

1. The presence of Learning Disability was found among Juvenile Delinquents. In both the observation homes where the study was conducted more than 25% of the inmates were identified with Learning Disability.
2. The comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores ($t= 15.289$) of Academic Achievement revealed a significant difference at 0.01 level. Thus it can be tentatively interpreted that teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the juvenile delinquents with learning disability to achieve more with respect to academic achievement as a whole.
3. The comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores ($t= 13.754$) of Achievement in Malayalam revealed a significant difference at 0.01 level. Thus it can be tentatively interpreted that teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the juvenile delinquents with learning disability to achieve more with respect to achievement in Malayalam.
4. The comparison of the a pre-test and post-test scores of Achievement in Malayalam under the component- Grahnam revealed that the scores differ significantly. The obtained 't' value ($t=11.037$) is significant at 0.01 level. This shows teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability to achieve more with respect to their achievement in Malayalam on the basis of its component- Grahnam.
5. The comparison of the a pre-test and post-test scores of Achievement in Malayalam under the component- Padaprayogam revealed that the scores differ significantly. The obtained 't' value ($t=8.853$) is significant at 0.01 level. This shows teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability to achieve more with respect to their achievement in Malayalam on the basis of its component- Padaprayogam.
6. The comparison of the a pre-test and post-test scores of Achievement in Malayalam under the component- Vyakaranaparam revealed that the scores differ significantly. The obtained 't' value

($t=10.5$) is significant at 0.01 level. This shows teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability to achieve more with respect to their achievement in Malayalam on the basis of its component- Vyakaranaparam.

7. The comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores ($t= 10.265$) of Achievement in Mathematics revealed a significant difference at 0.01 level. Thus it can be tentatively interpreted that teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the juvenile delinquents with learning disability to achieve more with respect to achievement in Mathematics.
8. The comparison of the a pre-test and post-test scores of Achievement in Mathematics under the component- Operations revealed that the scores differ significantly. The obtained 't' value ($t=7.686$) is significant at 0.01 level. This shows teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability to achieve more with respect to their achievement in Mathematics on the basis of its component- Operations.
9. The comparison of the a pre-test and post-test scores of Achievement in Mathematics under the component- Algebra revealed that the scores differ significantly. The obtained 't' value ($t=7.358$) is significant at 0.01 level. This shows teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability to achieve more with respect to their achievement in Mathematics on the basis of its component- Algebra.
10. The comparison of the a pre-test and post-test scores of Achievement in Mathematics under the component- Word Problem revealed that the scores differ significantly. The obtained 't' value ($t=9.892$) is significant at 0.01 level. This shows teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability to achieve more with respect to their achievement in Mathematics on the basis of its component- Word Problem.
11. The analysis of the case study revealed that Learning Disability is the direct cause of juvenile delinquency although it maybe a indirect element which leads to it.
12. The comparison of the level of Achievement Motivation before and after intervention revealed that the scores differ significantly. The obtained value of χ^2 (23.761) is significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that the level of Achievement Motivation of the Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability varied significantly after the intervention strategy.

Conclusions of the Study

The present study revealed the prevalence of Learning Disability in Juvenile Delinquents. It is an alarming situation. The children who have inclination towards juvenile delinquency due to various reasons, add on their difficulty to lead a normal life if they are diagnosed with Learning Disability. In the present world, education is the key to success, be it financial, mental or social success. The child with Learning Disability, who has decided to leave the path of crimes often finds herself/himself in a poor unsatisfactory environment, and start realising that he/she cannot achieve success due to his/her Learning Disability. Such children may tend to go back to their life of crimes which will give them easy access to money and pleasure. Hence it is very essential to address the problem of Learning Disability among Juvenile Delinquents.

The analysis carried out to find the effectiveness of the developed Intervention Strategy revealed that the intervention brought significant changes in the academic achievement of Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability. The Intervention Strategy based on the multi sensory strategy revealed that when multiple senses are employed in learning, children with Learning Disability could attain more in the area of academics.

The analysis also revealed that the developed Intervention Strategy could improve the achievement in Malayalam among Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability; especially in the areas of Grahnam (reading comprehension), Padaprayogam (vocabulary) and Vyakaranaparam (grammar). The results

obtained indicated that the developed Intervention Strategy was also beneficial to improve achievement in Mathematics especially in the areas of Operations, Algebra and Word Problems.

The analysis of the case study revealed that the presence of Learning Disability is adding the difficulty of the case, even though it is not playing a direct link with the life of crimes. Frequent failures in examinations is forcing the case to rethink on education, that is, whether to continue his education or not. Because without proper education he doubts to attain success unless he adopts short cuts like engaging in the business of drugs which in turn will give him easy access to lots of money, more that which he need to lead a luxurious life of his choice.

The analysis of the level of Academic Motivation before and after the intervention revealed that the developed Intervention Strategy was effective in raising the level of achievement motivation of Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability. That is, they dreamt of a better future once they encountered academic success with the developed new strategy of learning. This means that when a Juvenile Delinquent is assured about ones' ability to attain success, he/she is willing to achieve his/her dreams through hard working and not through the short cuts provided by the crimes.

Suggestion evolved from the Study

From the present study it is clear that there is prevalence of Learning Disability among Juvenile Delinquents. The study reveals that if Learning Disability is addressed in a proper way, the children affected can attain more in their academics. The developed Intervention Strategy proved to be effective in helping these children to achieve more especially in the area of language and mathematics. This implies that an effort to change the life style of Juvenile Delinquent must include some training in this line too. The correctional rehabilitation programme should address learning problems like Learning Disability. This will in turn motivate the inmates of such observation homes to pursue education.

Eventhough the case study implied no direct influence of Learning Disability on Juvenile Delinquency, it revealed the connection of Learning Disability with education of the particular child. The presence of Learning Disability was acting as a catalyst for the child to escape from school. He was frequently absent from the school since he did not find any pleasure there and almost everyone at school was blaming him for his failure in academics especially in reading and writing.

The study also revealed that the developed Intervention Strategy had a positive influence on the level of Achievement Motivation of Juvenile Delinquents. This indicates that, if treated, the feel of success can bring changes in Juvenile Delinquents. He/she can be motivated to learn and set a goal giving more importance to education.

The observation homes aims at re-positioning it inmates in normal life. It is indeed a big task and the government is providing much help in terms of human resources and financial aid. But training specifically to address learning problems like Learning Disability are seldom carried out. The trainers should be provided professional development programmes which enable them to implement training programmes especially in Learning Disability. The peculiarity of Learning Disability is that eventhough it is not an erasable situation, proper training can make changes in the life of the affected.

The realisation of importance of education lies on ones' ability to deal with it successfully. Learning problems like Learning Disability act as a hindrance for it. Hence it is essential to provide remedial programmes to overcome such learning difficulties. This will lead to the rehabilitation of Juvenile Delinquents in the true sense.