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SENSE OF WORTHINESS AMONG THE CHILDREN WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

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Abstract

Sense of worthiness is a psychic experience. It is individual's self-worth, self respect, self-regard and self-integrity. Children with Specific Learning Disability often left alone and end up with low sense of worthiness. The objective was to assess the level of low sense of worthiness among the Children with Specific Learning Disability. An explanatory study was conducted at Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu, India. 268 Children with Specific Learning Disability were selected through the stratified random sampling process. The tool which was applied to measure their low sense of worthiness though Rosenberg (1965). The study found that majority of the Children with Specific Learning Disability (76.6%) was found with low sense of worthiness. Therefore they experienced poor academic performance in their academic task. Socio-economic factors like age, parent's education and income are not influenced the low sense of worthiness among the Children with Specific Learning Disability. It also reflected on that their academic backwardness reflect as low self-esteem.

Keywords: Specific Learning Disability, Low sense of worthiness, Academic backwardness, Academic tasks.

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Introduction

Education is the only tool to produce the potential human resources in the competitive global world. As per United Nations Millennium Development Goal is "Education for all" must be attained before 2015.[1] But to achieve the target, major challenges exist in the field of education of the Children with specific learning disabilities.

The process of learning proceeds right from the birth of a child. The child explores the surrounding environment and gradually begins to understand the elements around, recognize his/her mother and care givers who satisfy his/her needs. Though all children go through the developmental stages and acquire tasks appropriate to the given stage, each child is unique with his/her own physical appearance and characteristics, abilities and talents, personality pattern as well as learning styles. The specific learning disability children' characteristics affect their scholastic performances positively or adversely. The teachers must take into account the strengths of a learner while correcting or remedying his/her limitations and then only the educational plan will be viewed in the right perspective. In this context, a teacher should know how learning process occurs in the children with academic backwardness (Deng, Ling 2005).[2] Learning is a multidimensional phenomenon. There tends to be a relationship between the processing of information and the functioning of the system which enable a child to learn. All children make an effort to learn, but some, due to specific reasons, fail to learn effectively.

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In the present scenario of education system 12-13 per cent of the children with specific learning disability are often left alone without any intervention provisions. Failure to meet out age appropriate academic standard has created low self-worthiness among these children. Prolonged state of feeling low self-worthiness will be converted into behavior problems. Finally, it will be reflected as academic backwardness and leads to more of low self-worthiness among the specific learning disability children.[3]

Self-esteem is also part of sense of self-worth of the individual. It focuses the personality and psycho-social perspective on academic environment of specific learning disability children. It increases the gap between the academic achievement and academic difficulties. The academic difficulties and low self worthiness of specific learning disability children are due to dyslexic, dysgraphic or dyscalculia sometimes co-morbid of above all. The specific learning disability children low self worthiness and difficulties are seen as a lazy child and are given punishment, isolated from other children and are forced to dropout from school. The main reason behind this due to lack of awareness about the specific learning disability among the parents and teachers. The children become victimized and these children are mostly deprived of basic rights to get education in academic accommodations with activity based learning and learning disability supportive systems. Lack of awareness about the specific learning disability is prevalent among the teachers, parents and students. Fear of situation, repeated academic failure, day dreaming, gap existing between the existing efficiency and their academic performance, low self image, demands from the parents, self-concept, and locus of control, loneliness, and depression and mood states further intensify the problem. Poor understanding on the psycho-social based approach, especially the developing countries like India, the specific learning disability children academic accommodation was ignored by their own parents (Margalit & Shulman, 1998).[4]

Most of the studies related to low self-esteem and difficulties of learning among such children are more only in western countries. In Tamil Nadu and India very few studies have been reported in the area of specific learning disability. To fill the research gap, the present study was selected, to know about the low self worthiness and difficulties of the specific learning disability children in school set up in Coimbatore district. The objectives of the present study was to study the socio-economic conditions of the specific learning disability children; to know the academic difficulties faced by the specific learning disability children and to assess self worthiness level of the specific learning disability children.

Methods

Objectives of the study

- To study the socio-demographic profile of the children with Specific Learning Disabilities.
- To assess the psycho-social problems of the children with specific learning disabilities.
- To examine the influence of the socio-demographic variables on psycho social problems of the children with specific learning disabilities.

Operational Definitions

Specific Learning Disability

It is a disability in one more of the basic psychological process involved in understanding or in using, language spoken or written, which may manifest itself in imperfect in listen, think, speak, read, write, and spell or mathematical calculation . It includes perceptual disability, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia.

Low self-worthiness

Self-worthiness is also known as the evaluative dimension of the self that includes feelings of own, prides and discouragement. One's self-esteem is also closely associated with self-worthiness.

Hypothesis

- Better the socio-demographic profile, lesser would be the low self-worthiness faced by the students with specific learning disabilities.
- Higher the low self worthiness experienced by the students with specific learning disabilities, lesser would be the academic achievements

Study Design

A explanatory research design was used. Here the cause and effects of the respondents was explained.

Study area and Population

The study was conducted in between 2010-2011 in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu, India. The state is located in south part of India. The study participants were Children with Specific Learning Disability who were studying in 7th std and 8th std under SSA schemes (Serva Sikhsha Abhyian).

Table No. 01: Sample Size and Sample Technique

S.No	Name of the selected schools	No. of 7th and 8th standard students	No. of 7th and 8th standard identified students	% of SLD population	No. of sections
1	Sulur boys higher secondary school	398	59	14.8	6
2	CSI School	308	78	25.3	6
3	Sulur girls higher secondary school	316	31	9.81	4
4	Panchayat union middle school (south)	355	64	20	8
5	Panchayat union middle school (north)	179	36	20	8
6	Total	1556	268	18 (Average)	32

Sample size s was 268 Children with Specific Learning Disability those who were already identified by the Tamil Nadu Government Serva Sikhsha Abhiyan Schemes(SSA) in sulur Block, Coimbatore District. Multi-stage stratified disproportionate random Sampling Technique was adopted to conduct the study.

In Tamil Nadu totally 31 districts were exist. Among 31 districts 49,919 Children with Specific Learning Disabilities were found as per 2010-2011 censuses. Coimbatore District was selected based random tippet method by using random table. In Coimbatore 19 Blocks were exist. Sulur Block was selected again on the same random tippet method. In Sulur Block 10 schools are functioning under the direct guidance of SSA Schemes(Serva Sikhsha Abhiyan) to provide service to the Children with Specific Learning Disabilities. Five schools out of 10 schools were selected randomly. Furthermore, 268 samples were picked up out 1556 samples from five schools based on random sampling procedure. Later the researcher identified that 268 picked up samples were from the 7th std and 8th std among five selected schools.

Data Collection

Rosenberg self-esteem measurement scale was administered among the selected respondents to know their self-worthiness. This is a 10-item scale developed by Rosenberg in the year 1965 that captures positive or negative attitude towards a uni-dimensional self. Each subject rated on each item on a 2 point scale. This scale ranges from low to high. Higher scores indicate a more positive sense of self. Higher self-esteem expresses the feeling that one is "good enough". The individual feels that he is a person of worth, he respects himself for what he is, but he does not stand in awe of himself or expect others to stand in awe of him. The 10-item self-esteem scale is a widely used measure with strong reliability with the internal consistency ranging from 0.77 from 0.88. The researcher constructed the reliability test by using split of method that yields 0.82 to 0.85.[5]

Data processing and analysis

Collected data were checked for completeness and entered into SPSS version 16 statistical package for analysis. Incidence of self-worthiness among the Children with Specific Learning Disability was calculated.

Results

Socio-demographic variables of the study subjects

Table No. 02: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Age

Students' Age	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
12-13 years	192	71.6		
14 & above	76	28.4	12.57	0.91
Total	**268**	**100.0**		

The table no. 02 implies that majority (71.6%) of the respondents belonged to the age group of 12-13 years, more than one fourth (28.4 %) of the respondents belonged to the age group of 14 years and above. The mean of the age of the respondents was 12.57 and standard deviation was 0.91.

Table No. 03: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Education Status

Education standard	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
7^{th} Std	119	44.4		
8^{th} Std	149	55.6	7.56	0.50
Total	**268**	**100.0**		

The above table no. 03 shows the educational background of the respondents. Majority (55.6 percent) was in 8^{th} standard, and the remaining 44.4 percent of them were in 7^{th} standard.

Table No. 04: Distribution of the Respondents by their Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	224	83.6
Female	44	16.4
Total	**268**	**100.0**

The table no. 04 indicates that majority of the respondents (83.6 percent) were males, and the remaining 16.4 percent of the respondents were females.

Table No. 05: Distribution of the Respondent's Father's Education Status

Father's Education	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
Illiterate	32	11.9		
Primary Education	139	51.9		
High School	36	13.4		
Collegiate Education	31	11.6	19.60	28.62
No Father	30	11.2		
Total	**268**	**100.0**		

The above table no. 05 shows that more than half of the (51.9 percent) respondents' fathers had completed primary education; 13.4 percent had high school education; 11.6 percent had collegiate education and 11.9 percent were illiterates.

Table No. 06: Distribution of the Respondent's Mother's Education Status

Mother's Education	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
Illiterate	59	22.0		
Primary	148	55.2	9.46	5.18
High School	61	22.8		
Total	**268**	**100.0**		

The table no. 06 indicates that more than half (55.2 percent) of the respondents' mothers had primary education; 22.8 percent of the respondents mothers had high school education, and the rest of them (22 percent) were illiterates. It was inferred that the education level of the respondents' mothers was up to primary school. The mean education status of the respondents' mothers was 9.46 and standard deviation was 5.186.

Table No. 07: Distribution of the Respondent's Father's Occupation

Father's Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Coolies	166	61.9
Self Employment	30	11.2
Skilled Employees	42	15.7
No Father	30	11.2
Total	**268**	**100.0**

The table no. 07 shows that more than three-fifth (61.9 percent) of the respondents' fathers were coolies; 15.7 percent were skilled labourers like weavers, plumbers and electricians, etc. 11.2 percent of the respondents' fathers were self employed owing petty shops, hotels, call taxies etc.

Table No. 08: Distribution of the Respondent's Mother's Occupation

Mother's Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Housewives	76	28.4
Coolies	115	42.9
Skilled Employment	43	16.0
Self Employment	34	12.7
Total	**268**	**100.0**

Table no. 08 clearly shows that more than two fifth (42.9 percent) of the respondents' mothers had employment as coolies in textile mills; 28.4 percent of the respondents' mothers were housewives; 16.0 percent of the respondents' mothers were skilled employees and the remaining 12.7 percent of the mothers had self-employment through self-help groups like mobile hotels, running canteens, and pickles making, etc.

Table No. 09: Distribution of the Respondents Family Income

Family Income	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
Low (upto Rs 5000)	100	37.3		
Medium (Rs 5001 to 9000)	126	47.0	6340	2.691
High (above Rs 9001)	42	15.7		
Total	**268**	**100.0**		

The Table no. 09 shows that nearly half of the respondents (47.0 percent) were in medium income group; 37.3 percent of the respondents' families were in low income group; and the remaining 15.7 percent of them were in high income group. The mean monthly family income was `6340 and standard deviation was 2.69. Out of 268 respondents, 42 respondents were coming under income of `9001and above.

Table No. 10: Factor Analysis : Self-esteem of the Respondents

S. No.	Items on Self-esteem Check List	Yes	No
1	I am not happy about the good relationship I have with my parents	268 (100)	-
2	I am not sure that others give me much importance	262 (97.8)	6 (2.2)
3	I do not expect others to respect me as much as I respect them	244 (91.0)	24 (9.0)
4	I am not proud of my family	231 (86.2)	37 (13.8)
5	I have no mental ability to pass the examinations easily	228 (85.1)	40 (14.9)
6	I have no self-confidence	223 (83.2)	45 (16.8)
7	I am not happy about my conduct and behaviour	165 (61.6)	103 (38.4)
8	I can not maintain my concentration always	54 (20.1)	214 (79.9)
9	With my abilities and skills I am not sure I can achieve more	199 (74.3)	69 (25.7)
10	I hesitate to put forward my thoughts and ideas in any group	116 (43.3)	152 (56.7)

The respondents were asked to respond to the check list keeping in mind their self esteem. The above table found that all (100 percent) of them had not maintained good relationship with their parents; majority (97.8 percent) of them felt that others were not giving importance to them, and majority (91 Percent) of the respondents did not expect others to respect them. The study revealed that majority (86.2 percent) of them was not proud of their family. The item analysis revealed that majority (85.1 percent) of them did not have the mental ability/skills to pass the examination easily. More than one fourth (83.2 percent) of them were not having self-confidence on their performance, majority (61.6 percent) of the respondents were not happy about their conduct and behavior, and 79.9 percent of them were not able to maintain their concentration on studies. Majority (74.3 percent) of the respondents were doubtful about their abilities and skills to achieve more in academic area. More than half (56.7 percent) of them hesitate to put forward their thoughts and ideas in any group. In general, majority of the respondents, self-esteem was poor.

Table No. 11: Summary of Self-esteem of the Respondents

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	S.D	Range (max-min)
Self-esteem score total	7.41	8.0	9	2.528	9(0-10)

The respondents score ranged from 0-10 on the self-esteem test with a mean of 7.41 and standard deviation of 8.00. This indicates that the self-esteem check list of the respondents was fairly low on the self-esteem. Lower the score, the lower Self-esteem.

Table No. 12: Socio-demographic Variables Vs Respondents Self Esteem

Variables	Category	Self Esteem			Total	Chi-square value
		Low	Moderate	Severe		
Father's Education	Illiterates	7 21.9%	5 15.6%	20 62.5%	32 100.0%	Chi-square X^2=6.506 p=0.591 Not-sig
	Primary School	21 15.1%	42 30.2%	76 54.7%	139 100.0%	
	High School	5 13.9%	10 27.8%	21 58.3%	36 100.0%	
	Collegiate Education	8 25.8%	5 16.1%	18 58.1%	31 100.0%	
	No Father	6 20.0%	9 30.0%	15 50.0%	30 100.0%	
	Total	47 17.5%	71 26.5%	150 56.0%	268 100.0%	
Mother's Education	Illiterates	12 20.4%	14 23.7%	33 55.9%	59 100.0%	Chi-square X^2=0.780 p=0.941 Not-sig
	Primary	25 16.9%	39 26.4%	84 56.7%	148 100.0%	
	High school	10 16.4%	18 29.5%	33 54.1%	61 100.0%	
	Total	47 17.5%	71 26.5%	150 56.0%	268 100.0%	
Family Income	Low	23 23.0%	24 24.0%	53 53.0%	100 100.0%	Chi-square X^2=3.995 p=0.407 Not-sig
	Medium Income	17 13.5%	34 27.0%	75 59.5%	126 100.0%	
	High	7 16.7%	13 31.0%	22 52.3%	42 100.0%	
	Total	47 17.5%	71 26.5%	150 56.0%	268 100.0%	
Parent's opinion on Respondent's Psychological Well-Being	Low	27 14.8%	42 23.0%	114 62.2%	183 100.0%	Chi-square $\chi 2$=12.214 p=0.016 sig
	Moderate	9 18.0%	17 34.0%	24 48.0%	50 100.0%	
	High	11 31.4%	12 34.3%	12 34.3%	35 100.0%	
	Total	47 17.5%	71 26.5%	150 56.0%	268 100.0%	
Parent's opinion on Respondents Child Development Delay	Low	13 27.1%	22 45.8%	13 27.1%	48 100.0%	Chi-square X^2=23.630 p=0.000 sig
	Moderate	8 25.8%	8 25.8%	15 48.4%	31 100.0%	
	High	26 13.8%	41 21.7%	122 64.5%	189 100.0%	
	Total	47 17.5%	71 26.5%	150 56.0%	268 100.0%	
Parent's opinion on Genetic Disorder	Low	7 36.8%	6 31.6%	6 31.6%	19 100.0%	Chi-square X^2=8.898 p=0.179 Not-sig
	Moderate	10 16.4%	18 29.5%	33 54.1%	61 100.0%	
	High	24 15.1%	38 23.9%	97 61.0%	159 100.0%	
	No Father	6 20.7%	9 31.0%	14 48.3%	29 100.0%	
	Total	47 17.5%	71 26.5%	150 56.0%	268 100.0%	
Parent's opinion on Behavior of the Respondents	Low	7 18.4%	15 39.5%	16 42.1%	38 100.0%	Chi-square X^2=14.210 p=0.007 sig
	Moderate	13 27.7%	16 34.0%	18 38.3%	47 100.0%	
	High	27 14.8%	40 21.9%	116 63.3%	183 100.0%	
	Total	47 17.5%	71 26.5%	150 56.0%	268 100.0%	

The table no. 12 shows the association between respondents' self-esteem and socio-demographic profiles of the respondents. Chi-square test indicated that there was significant association between self esteem of the respondents and parents' opinion on psychological wellbeing of the respondents (X^2=12.214, p=0.016), association between self-esteem of the respondents and parents' opinion on child developmental delay (X^2=23.630, p=0.000) and also found association between self-esteem of the respondents and parents' opinion on the behaviour of the respondents (X^2=14.210, p=0.007). There was no association between family profiles on father's education, mother's education, family income, parents' opinion on genetic disorder and self-esteem of the respondents.

Regression analysis

Table No. 13: Predictors for the Dependent Variable on Self-Esteem

Model	Un standardized Coefficients		Std. Co-efficients	t	Sig	R^2
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Self esteem (Constant)	5.041	2.661		1.894	.059	.386
Respondent's education standard	-.542	.298	-.107	-1.822	.070	
Respondent's age	.273	.159	.098	1.718	.087	
Father's Age	-.028	.029	-.211	-.991	.323	
Mother's Age	.046	.035	.083	1.312	.191	
Father's Education	.015	.018	.165	.815	.416	
Mother's Education	.014	.024	.029	.579	.563	
Overall teachers' opinion	-.040	.017	-.198	-2.348	.020	
Academic anxiety	-.264	.087	-.256	-3.056	.002	
Psycho-social adjustment	.402	.067	.357	6.030	.000	
Self esteem	.347	.065	.315	5.317	.000	
Multiple regression (R)	**= .621**		**Adjusted R square**		**= .362**	
R square	**= .386**		**Std. error**		**=2.019**	
F-value	**= 16.173**		**Significant at**		**= 0.000**	

Multiple Regression Analysis was carried out to determine which of the predictor variables such as respondents' age, education standard, father's age, mother's age, father's education, mother's education, overall teachers' opinion, academic achievement, academic anxiety and psycho-social adjustment. From the Table 69, it could be seen that the R^2 – value was found to be 0.386, which means 38.6 % of total variation in the dependent variable was explained by all the independent variables. Further, the obtained F-value of 16.17 was found to be significant.

Hypothesis testing and interpretations

First hypothesis was that 'better the socio-demographic profile, lesser would be the psychosocial problems faced by the Students with Specific Learning disabilities'. Fathers' education (X^2=6.595; & p=0.581), mothers' education (X^2=0.861; & p=0.930), family income (X^2=7.187; & p=0.126). Thus, the current hypothesization was not supported by the chi-square analysis for association between socio-demographic variables and psychosocial problems.

Second hypothesis was that 'higher the psychosocial problems experienced by the Students with Specific Learning disabilities, lesser would be the academic achievements'. In order to test this hypothesis, total scores on psychosocial problems was correlated to academic achievement using Pearson's correlation. The result reveals that there is a significant positive correlation between psychosocial problems and academic anxiety (r = .476; & p<.001). The result indicates that when psychosocial problems increase, academic anxiety of children with special learning disability also increase, therefore, alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

In the present study respondents' score ranged from 0-10 on self-esteem scale with a mean of 7.41 and a standard deviation of 2.528. The current study shows that a larger number of them scored between 0-3. Lower the score indicate lower self-esteem. The result of the present study is concordance with the study of whitely and Jessica Lynn McKenna (2007).[6] They reported that poor social skills,

interpersonal skills and their self-concept made them to have poor self-image.

There was no mean significant difference between socio-demographic items like age, education, family type, family income and religion showed no significant difference in its means on the psycho-social problems. The result of the study is confirmed with the earlier studies of Ramankutty and Krishnan (2003). [7] They observed that specific learning disability children were not influenced by the socio-cultural environment.

Multiple regression shows that the independent variables such as father's age, mother's age, father's education, mother's education, father's occupation, mother's occupation, religion, caste, marriage type , family type, father's drinking habits, overall teachers' opinion on respondent's academic performance and academic anxiety, self-esteem and academic achievement account for 40.2 % variance in the dependent variable adjustmental problems (R square=0.402). From the regression analysis it is clear that academic achievement, self-esteem and anxiety are predicting each other. The results of the present study concur with the study of Bevington et al. (1991).[8] They studied the association between the academic achievement and adjustmental difficulties like behaviour and emotional difficulties.

Conclusion

The study found that psychological problems like low self-worthiness were found very high among the Children with Specific Learning Disability. Moreover, the Children with Specific Learning Disability experienced marked level of poor Academic performance in their academic tasks. It created stress and strain in their academic life. Besides, the current study found that significant difference and variance of low self-worthiness and academic achievement of the Children with Specific Learning Disability.

Recommendations

For improving self-worthiness of the Children with Specific Learning Disability the study recommend the following

1. An Awareness programme on coping mechanism should be conducted among the Children with Specific Learning Disability in every school.
2. To overcome the academic backwardness among the Children with Specific Learning Disability supportive systems like video conferencing, reading soft ware's, audio and video recording instruments, computer aided programme to be used. It will increase their self confidence about their understanding and reproducing abilities.
3. In each school educational councelor should be appointed to deal with the Children with Learning Disability to reduce their inferiority' complex.

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