

# IDENTIFICATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CO-MORBIDITY OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY AT PRIMARY LEVEL

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**Abstract:** The problem of Specific Learning Disability is more complex in the presence of Psychological Co-morbidity Disorders. This study was conducted to determine the Psychological Co-morbid Disorders with Specific Learning Disability. In the present study investigator used the tools were: Learning disability diagnostic test, Dyslexia identification test, Dysgraphia identifying test, dyscalculia identifying test and psychological co-morbidity assessment rating scale. All tools were prepared and standardized by the investigator. Normative survey method was used for data collection. The result reveals that 60% of the students have ADHD, 57% of the students have ODD, 64% of the students have CD 65% of them are Depression and 68% of the students are Behavioral And Emotional Disorder. Most of the students have Behavioral and Emotional Disorder. Identification of the prevalence of co-morbidity with learning disability will help for the development of necessary remedial measure for the condition of learning disability and associated condition of learning disability too.

Key Notes: Specific Learning Disability, Psychological Co-morbidity.

## Introduction

In India, around 13% to 15% of all school children suffer from learning disabilities. Unfortunately, most of the schools are fail to lend a sympathetic ear to their problems. As a result, these children are branded as under achievers. According to the National Center for Learning Disabilities, Learning Disorder is a neurological disorder that affects the brain's ability to receive, process, store and respond to information. The term learning disability is used to describe the seeming unexplained difficulty a person of at least average intelligence has in acquiring basic academic skills. These skills are essential for success at school and at workplace and for coping with life in general. Learning Disability is not a single disorder. It is a term that refers to a group of disorders in listening, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics. Learning Disabilities also can encompass problems in the area of Social-Emotional skills and Behaviour, and some individuals with learning disabilities struggle with peer relationships and social interactions in addition to academic challenges. Learning disabilities are often co-morbid with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Behaviour Disorder, and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

## Specific Learning disability and psychological co-morbid condition

Specific Learning disability to be a type of Neuro developmental Disorder that impedes the ability to learn or use specific academic skills (e.g., reading, writing, or arithmetic), which are the foundation for other academic learning. The learning difficulties are 'unexpected' in that other aspects of development seem to be fine. Early signs of learning difficulties may appear in the preschool years (e.g., difficulty learning names of letters or counting objects), but they can only be diagnosed reliably after starting formal education.(DSM-5)

Co-morbidity is described as a situation where two or more conditions that are diagnostically distinguishable from one another tend to occur together. Learning disabilities are frequently associated with psychological problems. John A. (1989) found that one-third of scholastically backward children had a co-morbid psychological problem. Of these, 16% had disorder of emotion, 6% had conduct disorder (CD) and 12% had mixed disorders of emotion and conduct. Muthukumar *et al.*(1997)found that 79% of children with learning disabilities had co-morbid psychological disorders, in which 32% had internalizing disorders(Depression, Anxiety, Behavioural and Emotional Disorder, Suicide, and Substance Abuse), 28% had externalizing disorders(Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder(ADHD), Oppositional and Defiant Disorder(ODD), and Conduct Disorder (CD) and 19% had other disorders.

## Need and Significance of the study

Learning disability is a neurobiological disorder. It is a lifelong condition, which is not diagnosed before school age. Proper diagnostic and remedial measures are very essential for their successful life. A lot of research and effort are being done in the field of Learning Disability in the western world. In India, researches conducted in the field of learning disability are limited. Learning disabilities are associated with psychological co-morbidities. Approximately 30% of children have behavioural and emotional disturbances. Students with specific learning disability are at an increased risk of hyperactivity. The co-morbidity of ADHD in children with Learning Disability varies from 16% to as higher as 60%. The co-morbidity of learning disability implicates the need for the behavioural, meditational and cognitive approaches in the remedial intervention programme.

The above mentioned reviews states that the importance of the present study. Each individual with specific learning disability have even one or two externalizing and internalizing co-morbid conditions. Through this study investigator find out the most common psychological co-morbid condition of students with specific learning condition.

### Objectives of the study

1. To identify school aged children with learning disabilities among primary school students of Kerala.
2. To identify the specific learning disability among school aged children at primary level.
3. To identify psychological co-morbidity with specific learning disabilities among school aged children at primary level.

### Methodology

This study was intended to identify school aged children with learning disabilities among primary school students of Kerala. And to identify the specific learning disability and psychological co-morbidity among school aged children among primary level. So normative survey method was used

### Sample for the Study

The investigator selected seven Malayalam and English Medium schools of Standard V, VI and VII students with specific learning disability. The total sample of the survey consisted of 1135 pupils. From the survey the investigator selects 108 students with Specific learning disability having Psychological co-morbid condition.

### Results and Discussion

To identify school aged children with learning disabilities among upper primary school students of Kerala. For this investigator surveyed 1135 Malayalam and English Medium schools of Standard V, VI and VII students from different school in Kerala. The results show below table.

Table 1: Number and percentages of children with learning disabilities among primary school students in Kerala

	Standard V	VI	VII	Total
Number of students	315	407	413	1135
Number of LD	75	110	115	300
Percentages of LD	23.81%	27.03%	27.85%	26.0%

From the table shows that 23.81% of the 5<sup>th</sup>Std students are learning disabled, 27.03% of the 6<sup>th</sup> standard students are Learning Disabled and 27.85% of the 7<sup>th</sup> Standard students are Learning Disabled from this it is concluded that most of the learning disabled students are in Class 7<sup>th</sup> std. More over 26.0% are learning disabled in Kerala from this observation revealed that students not aware about their disability during the earlier classes and the contents of the curriculum are also simple but gradually content are tough and awareness also increased. So they can easily identified the problem in higher classes

**To identify Specific learning disability among school aged children at primary level. After the identification of specific learning disability of the students, the investigator identified with specific learning disabilities with psychological Co-morbidity.**

Table 2 Number and percentages of children with specific learning disabilities among upper primary school students in Kerala

	Standard V	VI	VII	Total
Number of specific learning disabilities	29	43	36	108
Percentages of specific learning disabilities	38.67%	39.09%	31.30%	36.00%

From the above table shows that 38.67% of the 5<sup>th</sup>Std students are specific learning disabled, 39.09% of the 6<sup>th</sup> standard students are specific Learning Disabled students and 31.30% of the 7<sup>th</sup> Standard students are specific Learning Disabled from this it is concluded that most of the specific learning disabled students are in Class 6<sup>th</sup> std. More over 36.0% of students have specific learning disability in Kerala

Table 3 Number and percentages of children with specific learning disabilities having psychological among upper primary school students in Kerala

	COMORBIDITY				
	ADHD	ODD	CD	Depression	Behavioral And Emotional Disorder
Number of specific learning disabilities	68	62	70	71	74
Percentages of specific learning disabilities	60%	57%	64%	65%	68%

From the above table shows that 60% of the students have ADHD, 57% of the students have ODD, 64% of the students have CD 65% of them are Depression and 68% of the students are Behavioral And Emotional Disorder. Most of the students have Behavioral and Emotional Disorder.

### Findings

The result of the study reveals that, the students with learning disability have the presence of one or more psychological conditions. These psychological co-morbid conditions will affect their education, carrier and personality too. Timely identification and implementation of intervention will help reduce the severity of excited psychological co-morbid condition with learning disability.

### Conclusion

This study highlights the prevalence of the psychological co-morbid condition of students with learning disability. Psychological co-morbid condition will affect the performance of the students with learning disability. Identification of the prevalence of co-morbidity with learning disability will help for the development of necessary remedial measure for the condition of learning disability and associated condition of learning disability too.

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