



Perception Of Parents Of Children With Learning Disability About School Facilities And Provisions

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ABSTRACT

Learning disabilities are complex neuro-developmental conditions that significantly impact a child's academic performance and socio-emotional well-being. The support and involvement of parents in remedial therapy play a crucial role in enhancing the child's overall development and educational progress. The purpose of this research is to explore the diverse perspectives of parents who have children with learning disabilities and their experiences with the school in terms of provision of services. The data for the study was gathered from 12 parents who agreed to participate in the study via a self-created Google form. The analysis reveals what all provisions, facilities and support the parents get from the school. Most of the parents responded positively reporting that the school provided the provisions and necessary facilities along with a motivating environment for the child. However, the evident fact was that there were few parents who were aware of the complete framework of legal facilities and services that a student with a learning disability has a right to.

Key Words: Learning disability, parental perception, school facilities, legal provisions.

Introduction

A neurological disorder known as a learning disability impacts a child's capacity to acquire, process, or utilize knowledge in the manner in which most of the children would be able to function. This can make learning and academic success challenging (Mathew, 2016).

Learning disabilities are a group of neuro-developmental disorders that can significantly hamper a person's ability to learn new things. As a result, the person may have trouble with tasks such as speaking, reading, writing, paying attention, understanding information, remembering things, performing mathematical calculations, or coordinating movements. Learning disabilities typically develop at a young age and are often diagnosed during the person's school years, since the primary focus at school is learning. However, it is important to understand that people with learning disabilities generally have average to superior intelligence and are often gifted in fields such as science, math, fine arts, and other creative mediums. The person is often bright and intelligent, but there may be a gap between their potential and the skills expected from a person of their age (Jena, 2013; Nakra, 1998)..

Literature Review

Children with disabilities have the right to free and compulsory education from the age of six to fourteen, according to the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009 (RTE Act). This includes the right to participate in the creation of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), a written document that details the child's educational objectives and the assistance and support they will require to meet those objectives (India Code, 2016).

Parents are also essential participants in the process as they are crucial in supplying details regarding the child's learning preferences, aptitudes, and deficiencies. They should be allowed to participate in choosing the services and supports their child will require as well as other decisions pertaining to their schooling or remediation (Abed & Shackelford, 2023).

Research has also shown that those schools that ensure greater involvement of parents in school activities and their broader educational policies have proven to be more successful in making students better performers. Parental involvement in early education is specifically important and key to building a strong base for life-long learning.

Objectives :

- Explore parental perceptions about the facilities and provisions provided by the school for their children diagnosed with learning disability.
- Identify parental perceptions about the impact of schooling on the child and their expectations from the school.

Materials and Methods:

The present research used a quantitative design to collect data from the participants.

Study area: The participants were from the city of Mumbai, especially the suburban localities.

Participants: The participants were approached using the snowball technique. Parents, either mother or father, of children who were diagnosed with learning disability were approached and explained about the research. Once they agreed to participate, a link was shared with them which had the google form.

There was no specific criteria for inclusion of the parents except for the fact that one of their children should have been diagnosed with learning disability during their school years.

Tool: A questionnaire was constructed. The items focused on the concessions availed by children at school, schools' impact on children, their expectations from the school and parental involvement. The questionnaire was then converted into a google form and the link was shared with parents who agreed to participate in the research.

Ethical considerations: The participants were assured that no personal information would be shared and nowhere would their or their children's name be mentioned. Complete confidentiality would be maintained.

Analysis: The data was transferred into excel sheets and graphs based on the objectives of the study.

Findings and Analysis:

The study participants were parents (12), either father or mother, whoever was willing to participate. The children in focus were all girls between the age of 13 to 22 years, diagnosed with learning disability during their school years. The study presents the responses of the parents as experienced and perceived by them.

Diagnosed Condition

As reported by the parents, the children were all diagnosed with specific learning disability during their school years. Three of the children also had associated ADHD

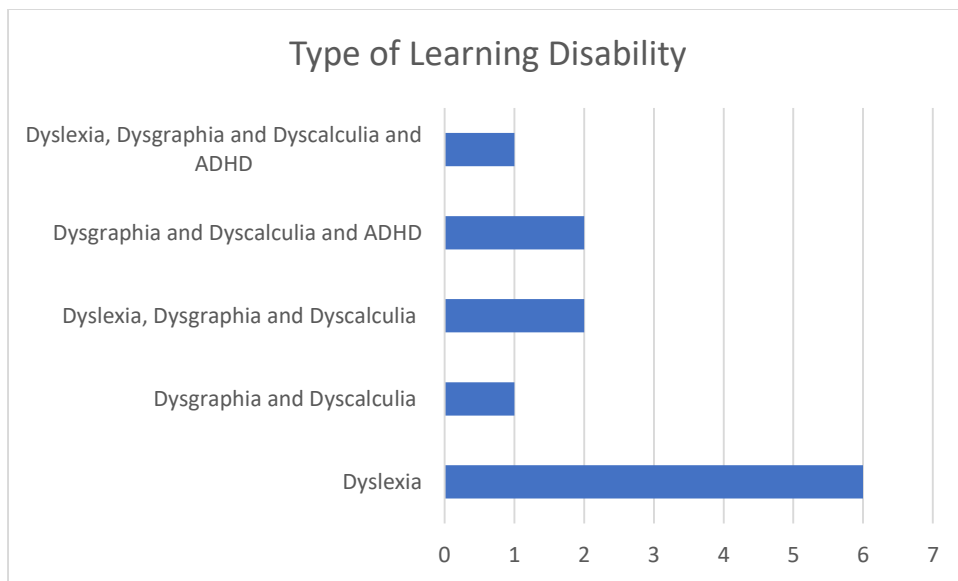


Fig.1 Condition that the child was diagnosed with

Parent Involvement in School

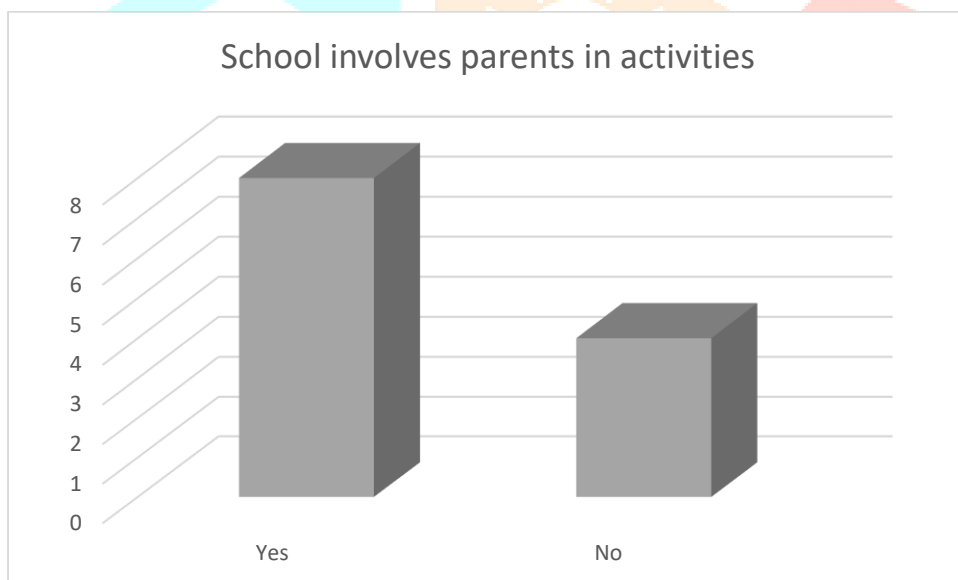


Fig. 2 Parental report of their involvement in the school

When asked about their involvement in the activities organised by school, the parents (8) reported that they were involved in discussions and decisions regarding specific provisions or services provided to the child. However, there were four parents who said that there was no involvement.

Parental perceptions about the provisions and services provided by the school

The parents reported that there were regular meetings organised by the school, however, they did not specify whether these were routine meetings or specific meetings for their individual child. 23 percent of parents reported that there were no special meetings organised for their children at the school.

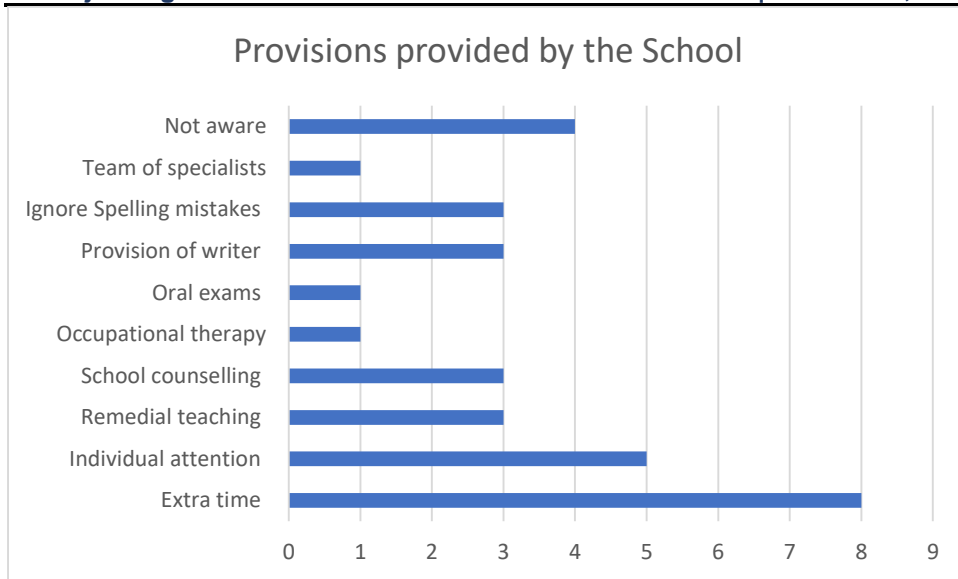


Fig. 3 Parental awareness of provisions provided by school

The figure__ represents that most (7) of the parents reported that the school did provide specific Provisions such as support in class, attention from special team, extra time for activities and exams, inclusion in all activities as well as occupational therapy. 2 parents reported the child received motivation for all activities which was very supportive to their growth.

Awareness on legal provisions

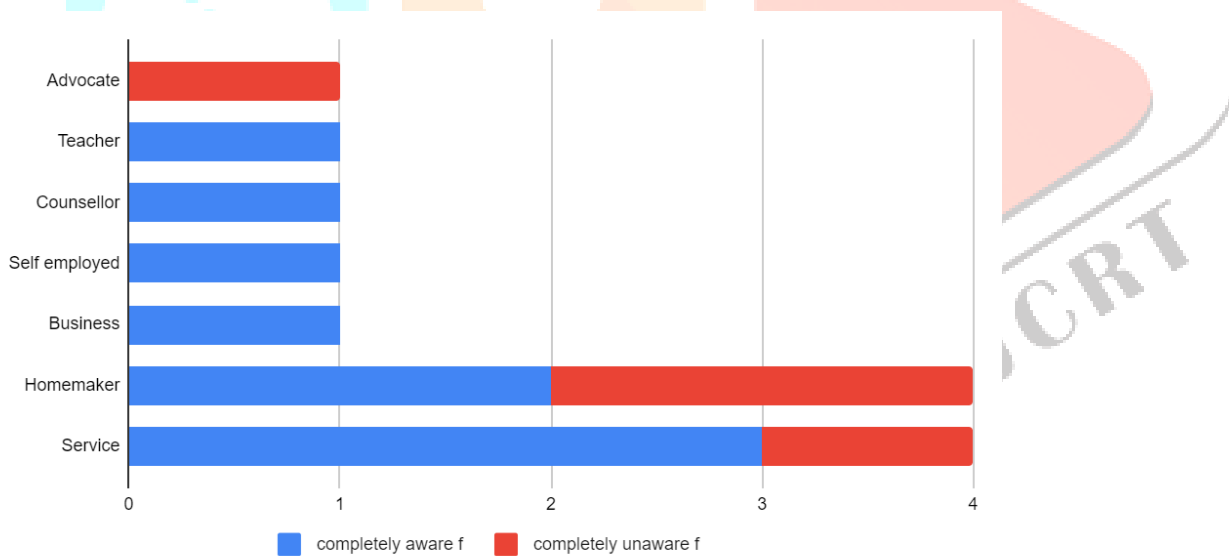


Fig. 4 Parents’ professions and awareness of legal provisions for a child with Learning Disabilities

The figure 4 indicates that there were some parents who were completely unaware about the interventions provided by the school. The occupation of the parent did not make any difference to their awareness. As evident in Figure 4 legal awareness of the provisions was also low. A parent who was an advocate was also not aware of the legal provisions for children with learning disability.

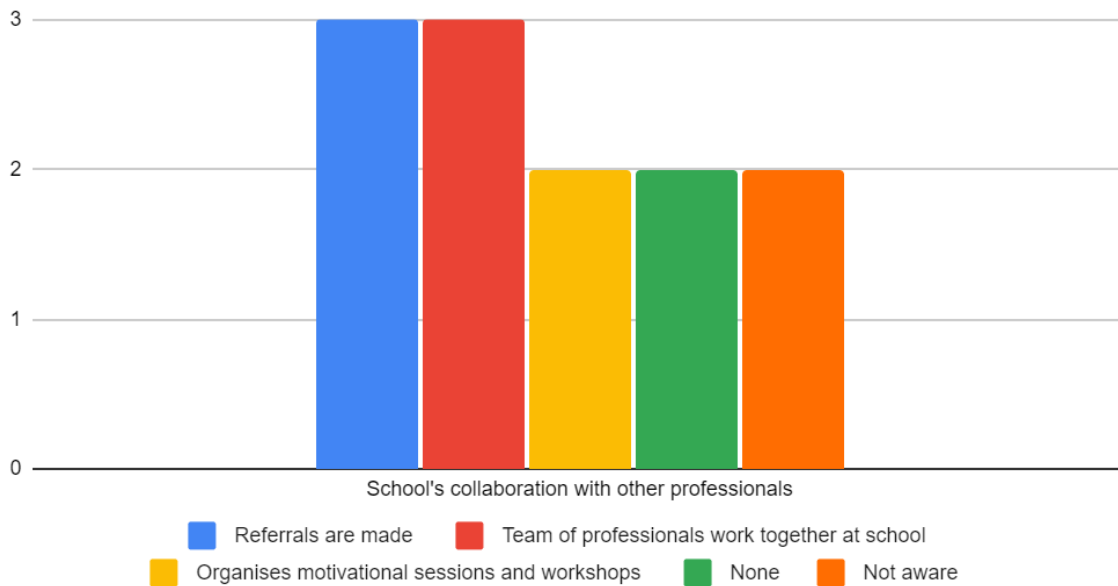


Fig. 5 Parental perceptions about school’s collaboration with other professionals

Figure 5 displays parents' perceptions of how the school collaborates with other professionals. They said that regular referrals were made if necessary, whereas 3 of them reported that the team of professionals work together at the school itself. and 2 of them reported that the school organised motivational sessions and workshops for the children. However, there were 2 parents who were not aware of any such collaborative activities and 2 of them who said that the school has no such facilities for the children with learning disability.

School’s impact on child: Parental perceptions

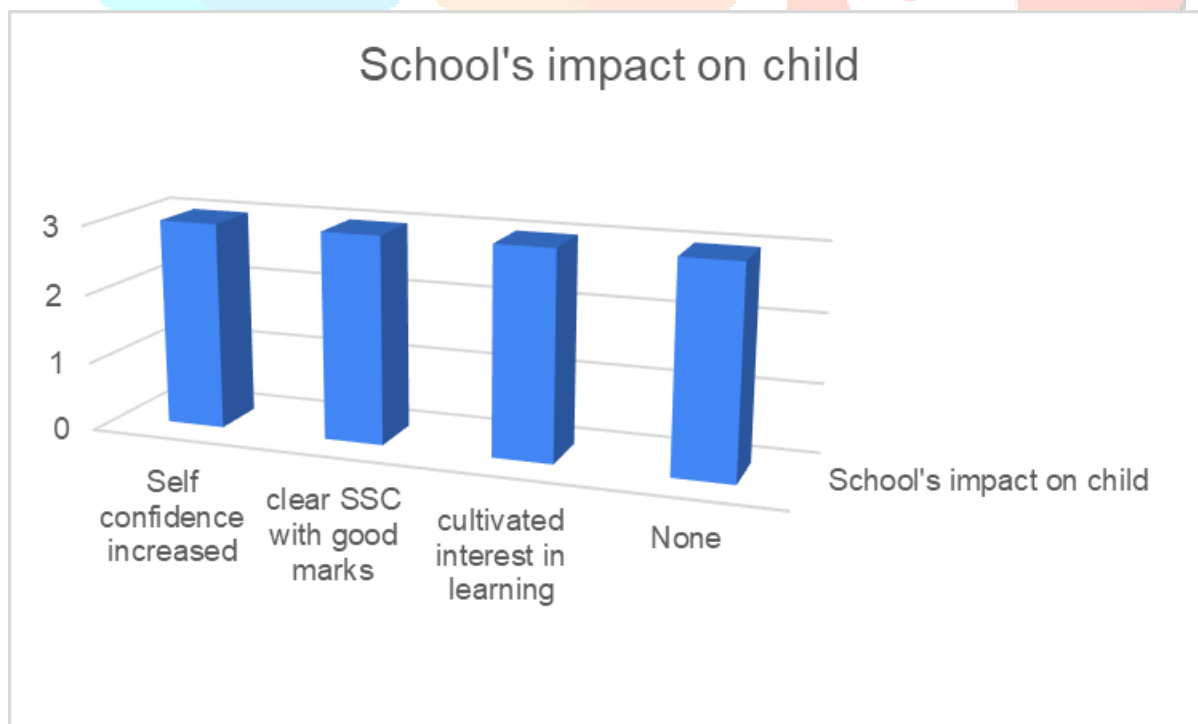


Fig. 6 Parental perceptions about school’s impact on the child

When asked about the impact of the school program on the children, there were 9 parents who reported that the school helped the children build their confidence and cultivate interest in learning and pass their matriculation exam with good marks. whereas there were 3 parents who said that the school had no impact on the child.

Parental Expectations from School

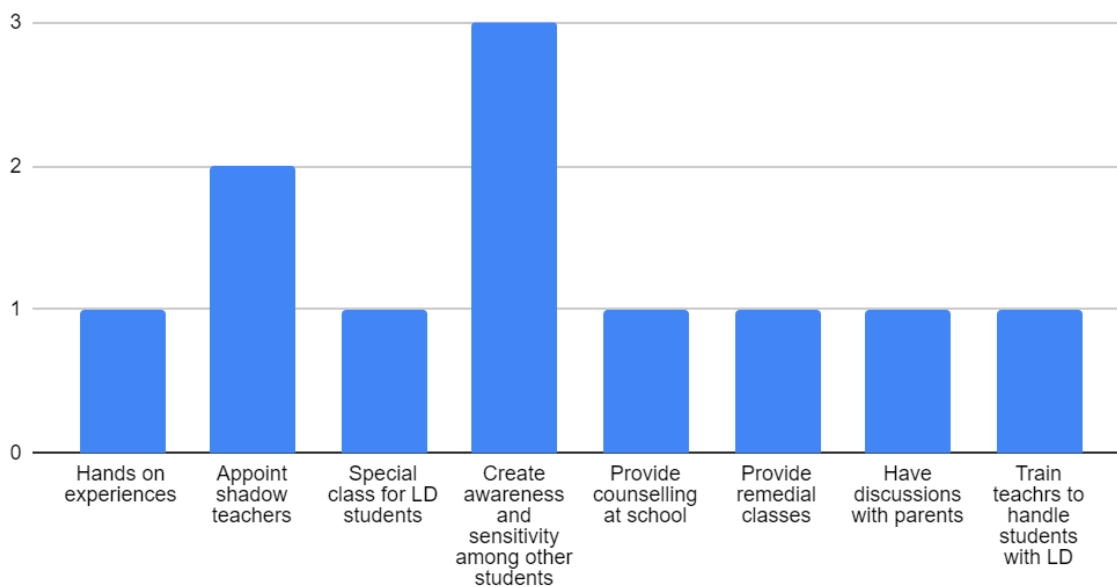


Fig. 7 Parents' expectations from the school

When parents were asked about their expectations from the school, they had a few suggestions. They said that hands on experiences, remedial classes and counselling could be provided at the school itself, regular discussions with parents could be done, the teachers should be trained to handle students with learning disabilities, the school should appoint shadow teachers, and the most important of all they said was that to create awareness among other students about learning disability so that they are sensitive towards them and their needs.

Recommendations:

The area of learning disability in India requires a deeper understanding in terms of its perception in the larger society. There needs to be more qualitative studies to understand how aware people are about the condition and requirements of children with disabilities. sensitisation programs and training also need to be carried out simultaneously, especially for school teachers, all parents and other children.

Conclusion:

The study focused on parental perceptions about the school's impact on their children's development. Most of the parents reported being involved by the school, however the level of involvement differed. Many of the parents weren't even aware about the school facilities being provided where the child and their condition was concerned. some of them were not even aware of the legal provisions for learning disabilities. yet there were parents who said that the school did make efforts for the child and they could see a positive impact on their children's academic performance as well as personal growth.

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