



A Study on Awareness and Attitude of Secondary School Teachers towards Slow Learners

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The children with slow learning are identified easily as they exhibit the learning difficulties at the early stage. These children are not mentally challenged, with proper diagnosis the learning difficulties can be addressed. The slow learners are usually facing difficulty in learning English, mathematics and science subjects. The students with such difficulties have various problems may the influence of mother tongue illiteracy of the parents', lack of personal attention at home and at school. To bring them into main stream teachers working at primary schools especially those who are teaching English, mathematics and science subject need to show kind attention for such children and also, they need to be aware of their psychological and emotional ambiguities. Teachers should have positive attitude towards such children. The present paper spreads light on the awareness and attitude of Primary school teachers who are teaching English as a second language. The survey method is followed in the present study. Primary school teachers were the sample of the study. The findings revealed that there is need of kind attention and individual care by the teachers towards such children to bring them into main stream.

Key Words: Slow learners, Attitude, Awareness,

Introduction:

Slow-learning children are not special education students but they represent a group of educationally retarded. The contributing factors are culture, poverty, family inadequacy, parental disharmony, and in a few cases, unfavorable school conditions, and school absences. Hence, these children need suitable arrangements in regular schools. Although some of these children receive education in special schools and special classes, they finally move to regular schools after backwardness is removed. Identification of slow-learning children is not obvious except for educational backwardness. These children display weaknesses in thinking, finding, out relationships, similarity, familiarity, reasoning, poor development of concepts, language, number concepts, and memory. Socio-emotional characteristics include feelings of insecurity, withdrawal, immaturity, regression, and fantasy.

Causes of Slow Learning

Every behavior has a cause, meaning and significance. The behavioural characteristics of slow learners are symptoms of conditions or some factors present either within the child or outside the child. Slow learning is caused by a variety of factors such as:

- (i) Low intellectual abilities such as subnormal intelligence.
- (ii) Personal factors such as long illness,
 - long absence from school,
 - Undetected physical defects
 - Poor cognitive entry characteristics.
- (iii) Environmental variables such as poor home facilities for learning skills,
 - low quality and quantity of food,
 - shortage of sleep,
 - adverse parental attitudes towards education,
 - poor or inappropriate opportunities in school (large classes), poor quality of teaching,
 - choosing inadequate or advanced materials,
 - incompatibility between home and school,
 - Repeated changes in school and consequent changes in
 - teaching styles and content.

Review of Related Literature:

Kirk, (1972) took 'the rate of learning as the basis for identifying slow learners. According to him, slow learners, gifted and average children can be classified according to their 'rate of learning also strictly refused to equate slow learners with mentally retarded because the former is capable of achieving a moderate degree of academic success even though at a slower rate than the average child. Vijayalakshmi(2019) suggested that meta-cognitive strategies help in enhancing the English language learning of slow learners. Ruhela (2018) discussed three important methods of helping slow learners become average students and these are a positive attitude of teachers, the support of parents, and the role of society in uplifting slow learners by providing mental awareness of the pain they face and support and encouragement towards them. Patil (2020) observed through his study how the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) strategy can be used as a successful measure for making the slow learners to learn better and this strategy also brought successful results in improving their performance. Sharma (2012)⁵¹ in her research found out that the academic performance of slow learners improved through music therapy programme.

Need and Importance of the study

A competent teacher should be alert about the general characteristics of the students' classroom behaviour related to learning difficulties. The slow learner needs more time to acquire the skill than his average peer the slow learner will rely on concrete learning rather than abstract learning. This calls for early identification, diagnosis of their learning difficulties and proper instructional precisions for them. Adolescent slow learners are usually benefitted from carefully guided instruction.

Objectives of the study:

1. To gain understanding with respect to the level of awareness and attitude of Secondary school Teachers towards Slow learners.
2. To identify the problems and needs of slow learners in the English Language.

Hypothesis:

1. The teachers have a significantly low level of awareness about students with Slow learners in the English Language.
2. The teachers have a significantly biased attitude towards students with Slow learners.

Design of the Study**Methodology:**

The investigator has followed the descriptive survey method. the researcher has collected qualitative data on different types of research questions based on the objectives. The survey pave way for the opinions and thought processes of samples selected by the researcher.

Population, Sample, and Sampling technique:

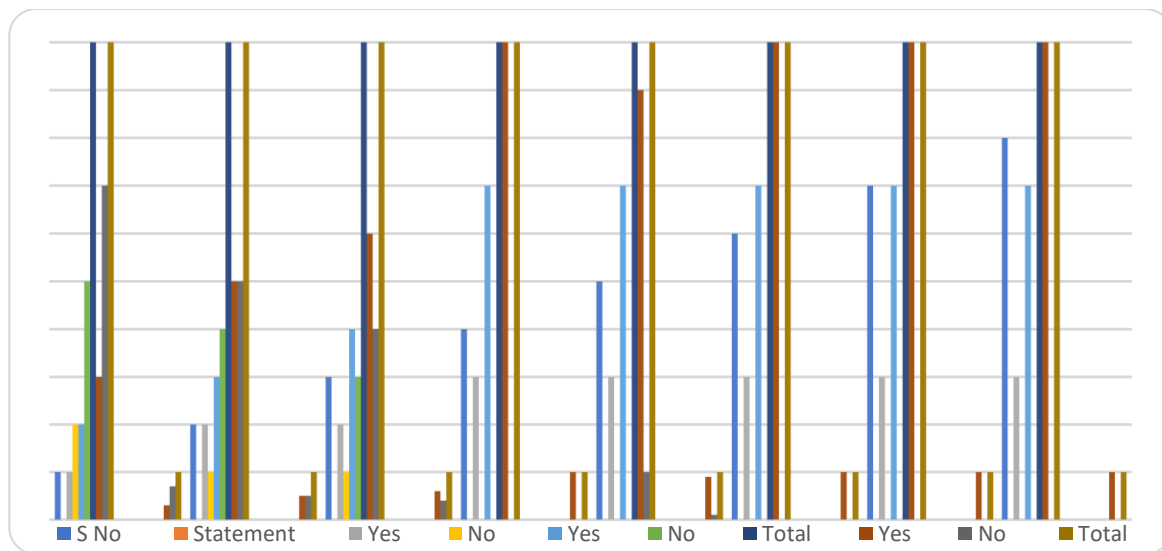
The teachers working in primary schools of Belagavi city are considered as population of the study, the sample of the study was teachers of Urdu schools, ten teachers were given the questionnaire where a greater number of slow learners are identified in learning English as a second language. The random sampling technique was applied in the present study.

Data Analysis and Results:

The data has been collected from the ten English language teachers working in different schools in Belagavi city of Karnataka state. Out of these ten schools two government, four private, and four aided schools.

The result of the question about the availability of resources and facilities at school.

S No	Statement	Male		Female		Total	Yes	No	Total
		Yes	No	Yes	No				
1	Is there a self access centare at your school?	1	2	2	5	10	3	7	10
							30%	70%	100%
2	Is these a language lab in your school	2	1	3	4	10	5	5	10
							50%	50%	100%
3	Is there a counselor at student advisor in your school?	2	1	4	3	10	6	4	10
							60%	40%	100%
4	Do you try to identify slow learners in your class?	3	0	7	0	10	10	0	10
							100%	0%	100%
5	Does your school have a Compresible plan to support th Low Achivers?	3	0	7	0	10	9	1	10
							90%	10%	100%
6	Do you Conduct remedial lessons for the low achievers in your class?	3	0	7	0	10	10	0	10
							100%	0%	100%
7	Do you use teaching aids inth classroom?	3	0	7	0	10	10	0	10
							100%	0%	100%
8	Have you attended any wookshe or orientation or specialized training to teach language skills?	3	0	7	0	10	10	0	10
							100%	0%	100%

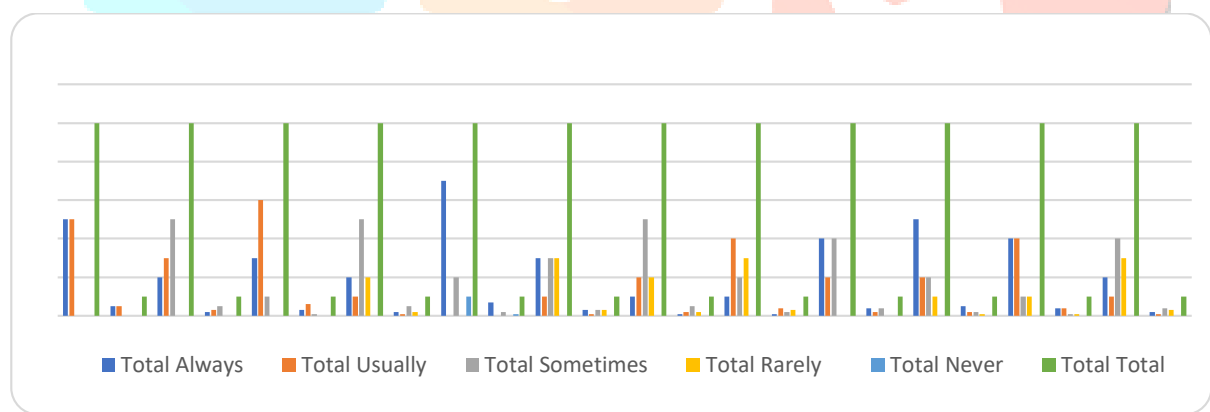


The data presented in the above table and figure clearly shows that most of the schools in the state of Karnataka do not have a comprehensive mechanism to promote students' independent learning. 70% of respondents state that their schools do not have a self-access centre. Although a language lab is considered to be an essential part of second language teaching and learning, 50% of respondents say that such a facility does not exist in their schools. The majority of teachers admit that they do not make any efforts to identify slow learners in their classes nor conduct any remedial lessons for the low achievers. In short, it is evident from this survey that many schools do not have adequate infrastructure to provide quality education. Most school managements do not make any plans in their curriculum to identify and support students who have various learning difficulties. All these facts justify the common belief that slow learners are destined to fail. This underlines the need to have a comprehensible plan to identify and accommodate slow learners in the regular classroom and to develop a curriculum that matches the learning styles of the digital natives and promotes learner autonomy.

The below table of the questionnaire is about the various strategies teachers employ to identify slow learners in English Language classrooms. The results of the findings are presented in the table and graph.

Table 3
What are your strategies to identify slow learners?

No	Statement	Male					Female					Total								
		Alwa ys	Usua lly	Som etim es	Rare ly	Neve r	Total	Alway s	Usual ly	Somet imes	Rarel y	Neve r	Total	G Totsl	Alway s	Usual ly	Somet imes	Rarel y	Never	Total
1	I use classroom observation.	1	2	0	0	0	3	4	3	0	0	0	7	10	5	5	0	0	0	10
														50%	50%	0	0	0	100%	
2	I use students' exam results.	0	2	1	0	0	3	2	1	4	0	0	7	10	2	3	5	0	0	10
														20%	30%	50%	0	0	100%	
3	I use continuous assessment reports.	1	1	1	0	0	3	2	5	0	0	0	7	10	3	6	1	0	0	10
														30%	60%	10%	0	0	100%	
4	I use students' previous records.	0	1	1	1	0	3	2	0	4	1	0	7	10	2	1	5	2	0	10
														20%	10%	50%	20%	0	100%	
5	I use an entry test at the beginning of the	3	0	0	0	0	3	4	0	2	1	0	7	10	7	0	2	0	1	10
														70%	0	20%	0	10%	100%	
6	I use diagnostic tests.	1	0	1	1	0	3	2	1	1	3	0	7	10	3	1	3	3	0	10
														30%	10%	30%	30%	0	100%	
7	I use IQ/EQ tests.	0	1	1	1	0	3	1	0	5	1	0	7	10	1	2	5	2	0	10
														10%	20%	50%	20%	0	100%	
8	I conduct parent interviews.	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	3	2	2	0	7	10	1	4	2	3	0	10
														10%	40%	20%	30%	0	100%	
9	I consult my co-teachers.	1	1	1	0	0	3	3	1	3	0	0	7	10	4	2	4	0	0	10
														40%	20%	40%	0	0	100%	
10	I use students' self-assessment reports.	2	0	1	0	0	3	2	3	2	0	0	7	10	5	2	2	1	0	10
														50%	20%	20%	10%	0	100%	
11	I use my classroom evaluation diary.	3	0	0	0	0	3	4	1	0	2	0	7	10	4	4	1	1	0	10
														40%	40%	10%	10%	0	100%	
12	I use case studies.	0	0	2	1	0	3	2	1	2	1	1	7	10	2	1	4	3	0	10
														20%	10%	40%	30%	0	100%	



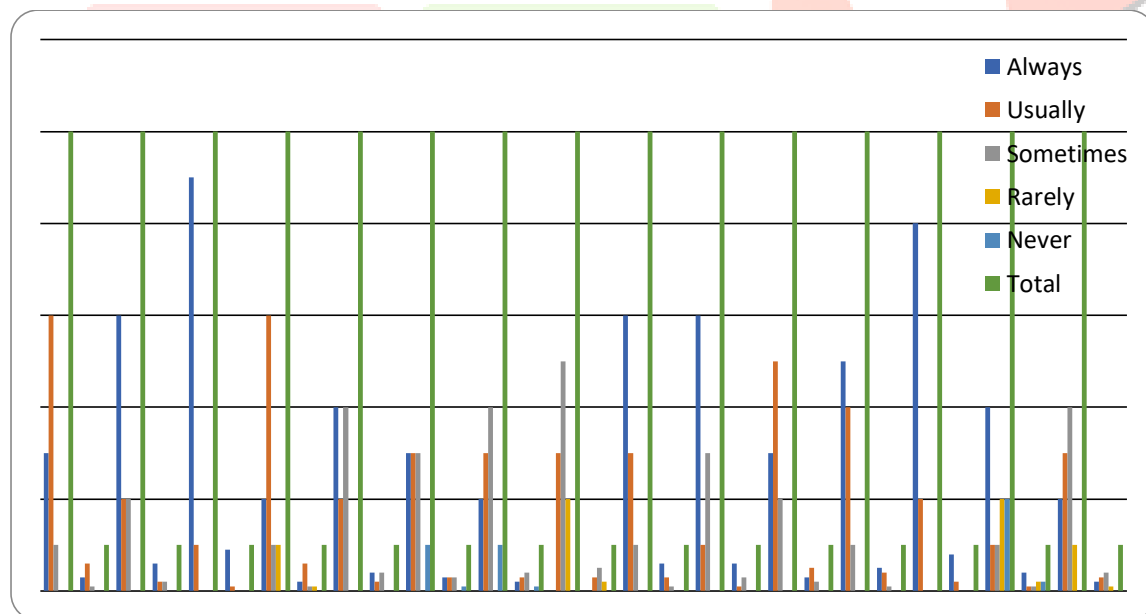
As presented in the above table and figure, most teachers do not use any scientific tools to know more about their students' learning difficulties. Majority of them just depend on classroom observation, exam results and continuous assessment records to categorize students as good, average and weak. 30% of the respondents state that they don't use any standard evaluation and assessment tools such as diagnostic test, IQ/EQ test, and students' self-assessment reports to understand the causes of learning difficulties. The percentage of respondents who analyze their students' previous records is just 3. Only 10% of respondents stated that they consult parents to know more about each student. All these data point to the fact that most schools in the public sector in Belagavi lack a system that supports the low achievers who struggle with various learning difficulties.

What are your strategies to uplift slow learners?

Table 4

What are your strategies to uplift slow learners?

No	Statement	Male					Female					Total								
		Alwa	Usual	Some	Rarel	Neve	Total	Alwa	Usual	Some	Rarel	Neve	Tota	G	Alwa	Usua	Som	Rare	Neve	Total
1	I break down the tasks into smaller units for them.	2	1	0	0	0	3	1	5	1	0	0	7	10	3	6	1	0	0	10
														30%	60%	10%			100%	
2	I give them more time to do their learning tasks.	2	1	0	0	0	3	4	1	2	0	0	7	10	6	2	2	0	0	10
														60%	20%	20%			100%	
3	I give simple and clear instructions.	3	0	0	0	0	3	6	1	0	0	0	7	10	9	1	0	0	0	10
														90%	10%				100%	
4	I make them sit with excellent students.	0	3	0	0	0	3	2	3	1	1	0	7	10	2	6	1	1	0	10
														20%	60%	10%	10%	0%	100%	
5	I give them remedial lessons and tutorials.	2	0	1	0	0	3	2	2	3	0	0	7	10	4	2	4	0	0	10
														40%	20%	40%	0%	0%	100%	
6	I train them in using self learning strategies.	0	2	1	0	0	3	3	1	2	0	1	7	10	3	3	3	0	1	10
														30%	30%	30%	0%	10%	100%	
7	I give them additional home assignments.	0	1	2	0	0	3	2	2	2	1	0	7	10	2	3	4	0	1	10
														20%	30%	40%	0%	10%	100%	
8	I conduct parent interviews.	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	2	5	0	0	7	10	0	3	5	2	0	10
														0%	30%	50%	20%	0%	100%	
9	I encourage and motivate them by giving regular progress feedback.	2	1	0	0	0	3	4	2	1	0	0	7	10	6	3	1	0	0	10
														60%	30%	10%	0%	0%	100%	
10	I try to maintain a good rapport with them.	1	0	2	0	0	3	5	1	1	0	0	7	10	6	1	3	0	0	10
														60%	10%	30%	0%	0%	100%	
11	I identify their areas	0	2	1	0	0	3	3	2	2	0	0	7	10	3	5	2	0	0	10
														30%	50%	20%	0%	0%	100%	
12	I make the best use of available technology in classroom instruction.	1	2	0	0	0	3	4	2	1	0	0	7	10	5	4	1	0	0	10
														50%	40%	10%	0%	0%	100%	
13	I encourage them to participate in extracurricular activities.	2	1	0	0	0	3	6	1	0	0	0	7	10	8	2	0	0	0	10
														80%	20%	0%	0%	0%	100%	
14	I advise them to focus more on fluency than accuracy.	1	0	0	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	7	10	4	1	1	2	2	10
														40%	10%	10%	20%	20%	100%	
15	I add variety in instructional techniques to suit the variability in learning styles.	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	3	1	0	7	10	2	3	4	1	0	10
														20%	30%	40%	10%	0%	100%	



The question asked about the different strategies teachers adopt to support slow learners in English Language classrooms is presented in the above table and figure, the majority of respondents do not employ the strategies that are essential to make a lesson more student-centered, and engaging. Self-regulation, which is the key to independent lifelong learning, is not promoted by the majority of respondents. Only 3% of respondents admit that they always train their students using self-regulated learning strategies. Tutorials and remedial lessons, which are some of the important measures that teachers should take to uplift the low achievers, are not done by 4% of respondents. The majority of respondents admit they neither add variety to their instructional methods nor use conducive technology in their classes.

Discussion and Conclusion:

From these responses, one can assume that English language instructions in schools by language teachers need a radical change toward learner-centeredness. Most of teachers still rely on the techniques and tools of the past that really do not work well with the twenty-first century learners. Instructional strategies and learning materials need to be modified to ensure the active involvement of all students in the class. Teachers need to focus more on inclusive strategies to better accommodate slow learners in the regular classroom.

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