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## **INCLUSIVE INTERVENTION FOR SLOW LEARNERS TO TURN INTO SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS**

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### **Abstract:**

*Human being is the supreme creation of God and all humans are different. They are different in their physical appearance and also distinct in their mental, emotional, social, linguistic, and other aspects. Some people are more intelligent than others and some are less creative. All cannot gaze on the same scale. But all have the right to get the opportunity to access education as it is one of the fundamental rights. Education is the process to modify knowledge, skills, behaviour, personality, attitude etc. so that they can live a stable life. UNESCO also advocated Education for all. Every child has an equal right to access education. In India, all Government policies recommended inclusive classrooms set up for children with special needs. Educating special children is not only the duty of special teachers but also the joint responsibility of school management, class teacher, subject teacher, resource teacher, parents and society.*

*Slow learners are one of the major problems in every school in the world. Slow learners are not those who have learning disabilities, rather they are the pupils who cannot cope with the traditional setup of education due to some adverse socio-cultural background. The objective of this article is to analyse the various issues of slow learners in an inclusive classroom setup. This paper also highlights the challenges faced by the teachers for inclusive setup and the best practices opted for slow learners. The enrolment, identification, retention, and pedagogical implementation are the major concern to be discussed in this paper.*

### **Keywords:**

*Slow learners, Issues, Challenges, Responsibilities, Best Practices.*

### **Introduction:**

“The best education does not happen on a desk but rather engaged in everyday living – hands-on exploring, in an active relationship with life.

-- Vince Gowmon

Rationality is the unique feature of human which make them human being and create a difference from other animals. Learning helps to modify behaviour, inculcate values, develop attitudes and skills, shape personality and make a complete man to live in a society.

Reasoning power and thinking ability help humans to learn things quickly. Learning plays a vital role to determine behaviour and attaining success in life. Learning is the base of education on which human-built their future. But learning gets hampered by some obstacles. The causes of obstacles may depend on physical, mental or environmental factors. Some learners have less ability to deal with abstract topics and symbolic material, language, numbers and others skills. They have less reasoning power, mental and emotional issues or some socio-economic environmental problems. They are not similar to normal students. Generally, we call them 'Backward Children or Slow Learners' Educational backwardness has many reasons. These children face learning difficulties in a regular classroom setup. The predominant cause of learning backwardness is related to the upbringing of the child in a particular socio-environment setup. But physical defects, poor mental ability, and personal and emotional issues are also responsible for educational backwardness.

### **Objectives:**

- To find out the ways to identify slow learners.
- To find out the issues of slow learners in the Inclusive classroom.
- To find out the challenges faced by teachers with slow learners.
- To find out the best practices with the inclusive intervention of teachers, parents and society for slow learners in the inclusive classroom.

### **Slow Learners:**

According to De Hann and Kaugh(1956) “ The slow learning child is a child whose mental ability is high enough to justify keeping him in the regular classroom but low enough to not to keep him in a regular classroom since he has considerable difficulty in keeping up with the average speed of the class. According to Panda (2003) “Slow learners most accurately describe children and adolescents who learn in one or more academic areas at a rate that is below average yet that not at the level considered comparable to that to that of an educable mentally retarded student.

Don Esteemed M.D (2004) said “Being a slow learner is a lifelong problem. A slow learner is a child whose IQ is low enough to cause considerable difficulty in keeping up in the classroom. An average IQ is 100. Slow learners score between 70 to 90 on IQ tests. Less than 70 is considered mentally retarded. Slow Learners are not mentally retarded.”

According to the above definitions, it can be considered that slow learners have subnormal intellectuality with deferred learning capacity. It causes the failure to pace up with their peer group in a normal classroom setup. Slow learners are not considered to need inclusive education as their problems can be solved in a normal classroom. They need additional assistance which is required to be planned identically. Slow learners are not related all the time to underachievers or learning disabled. Learning disabilities and underachievers are related to mental disabilities. Many other factors are also related like low motivation, negative attitude towards study, improper study habits, poor method of teaching, unavailability of competent teacher, unstable environment of home, poor attention towards the child, and poor physical health. Learning disabilities are related to the brain's procession of information.

The comprehensive process of understanding, segregation and generalisation of information. It depends on how cognitive schema is assimilate, accommodates, generates and transfers the information. It differs from person to person as the processing problems are not the same in individuals. Problem related to slow learners predominantly environmental rather than intellectual. Educational backwardness of slow learners has some vital issues regarding family background, cultural aspects, parental dispute and poverty. Here environmental factors are major than of heredity.

### **Characteristics of Slow Learners:**

There is some characteristic trait by which slow learners can be identified. Generally, it is found that their attention span is less than average students. They are inattentive in class and have a lack of interest in their studies. Their participation in games, sports and co-curricular activities is also low. There is a lack of creative and critical thinking, imagination power, low retention capability, and concentration found in slow learners. They do not have good interpersonal skills so they cannot make many friends. They do not accept people easily.

Their achievement age lag behind chronological age. They produce low consistently in achievement tests. They do tasks slowly and do not achieve mastery level of learning. They have problems with abstract concepts, symbols, and numerical. They have low stock of vocabulary and reasoning power. The ability to explain and illustrate is less on them. They have problems in defining, discriminating, analysing, synthesis and evaluating the concept. They have difficulty with multi-step concepts and cannot solve complex problems. They are dependent on others and also slow reactors, unstable, shy, and under confident. They can't do time management properly and procrastinate their tasks. They have limited power to the adaption to new situations. They face problems in self-direction, decision-making and judgement. They have lack of foresight and want to do things in their own way. They live in present and are not very futuristic so don't have a goal in life. They seem to be confused, fearful, anxious, lazy, impulsive, and immature in nature. They have average physical development with some health issues.

### **Identifying the Slow Learners:**

**Observation** - It is one of the major techniques to identify slow learners. Formal and informal observation techniques can be used by teachers, parents, counsellors and researchers. Teachers can observe inside and outside the classroom daily. Parents and neighbours can observe their activity in day-to-day life

**Achievement test** – It is also used to identify slow learners. It may be taken on all subjects or in particular one subject. General backwardness shows if the student achieves low in all subjects and specific backwardness shows if he achieves low in any particular subject. Analysing the result and score, learning standard can be identified.

**Personality Inventory and case History** - Personal adjustment inventory of a student can be used to identify the area of maladjustment. Check the school record and case study of a particular child is important to recognize the cause of backwardness.

**Diagnostic Test** – Tools like diagnostic test is also useful to understand the particular weakness and strength of the students. Children may face difficulty in a particular learning area of a subject or topic which need specific skill.

**Physical and Medical examination** - Although slow learning mostly depends on the social environment, sometimes it is necessary to find out a child's developmental history from childhood which root out the cause of learning backwardness regarding physical ailments, disabilities and defect.

**Psychological Test** – Standardised psychological tests may be used to identify the mental ability and emotional balance of slow learners. It includes Individual and group intelligence and personality test and anecdotal records. Interview of learner, teacher and parents can also be used.

**Stoichiometric techniques** – Sociometric techniques also assess social participation of slow learners. Peer nomination data can be used to ascertain whether the child is accepted or rejected. Other techniques like sociometric ranking and social cognitive mapping are used to find the learners social status.

#### **Issues of Slow Learners in the Inclusive Classroom:**

Learning focuses on acquiring new knowledge and acquisitions of new skills in regular classroom set-up. Slow learners cannot cope with fast pace learning so they cannot adjust to a rigid curriculum. There is a gap developed between their ability and performance. They also lag behind the average learner which creates an inferiority complex and frustration. If they cannot get the assistance of resource material required to develop the understanding of the concept it is difficult for them to grasp the topic.

They avoid to mingle with normal children. Poor performance in achievement test decreases confidence levels. They might consider themselves lesser than their peers, which affect their self-esteem and constraint to build a strong self-image. They feel left behind when they do not get a chance to participate in extracurricular activities, sports, games, presentations etc. They face difficulty in making a bond with their age group as they feel they are neglected by their peers. Due to Peer's negative attitude sometimes, they become aggressive and stubborn.

The majority of times shows that teachers' perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and unacceptance create a barrier to the way of the progress of slow learners. In rigid curriculum slow they face teacher's ignorance and indifferent behaviour.

Lack of adequate training and knowledge of teachers failed to shape the learner's personality. In a big size classroom, the learners cannot get individual attention which is highly required for them. Inappropriate communication and interaction develop vogue concepts in them. Some learners are socially exclusive for their poor family environment, caste barrier and other issues which create social discrimination among children and produce isolation for them. For all these causes they are prone to anxiety and develop a negative approach towards life.

### **Challenges faced by Teachers:**

The classroom is a playground where teachers need different strategies to win the game. Teachers' achievement is based on students' achievement. In an inclusive setup where slow learners accommodate normal students, teachers' challenges increase.

- Teachers have to give extra effort so that slow learners can cope with the syllabus with normal students. Sometimes they lose patience in balancing the pace of study.
- Time is stipulated for the regular courses so teachers have the burden to complete the syllabus. Completing the curriculum aim is a big challenge.
- Remedial classes after general class is also burdensome if the number of teachers is less in the institution as teachers already have 5 or 6 classes in a day.
- Teachers face numerous excuses for unfinished work done by slow learners which develops a negative attitude towards learners.
- Misunderstanding can be developed if a teacher becomes judgmental towards the learners. Generally, teachers presume that students are giving excuses knowingly for their undone or half-done work.
- Students are different in needs, intelligence, motivations, attitude etc. Their emotional and cognitive requirements also differ. Teachers have to keep patience all the time for understanding their requirements which is really challenging.
- In an overcrowded classroom with 60/70 students, identifying and paying attention to every individual is a difficult task.
- Lack of flexibility in the evaluation system is also a problem to assess students' development.
- Untrained teachers cannot choose the proper technique for the diverse requirement of teaching in the class.
- Selection of the appropriate teaching technique among the diverse method is difficult for teachers.
- Teachers have the responsibility to diagnose the weakness and provide the remedy for slow learners and disabled and normal children. For this teacher should be very alert and have to put extra effort.
- Sometimes parents' acceptance and support are missing and for that rapport could not be developed between teacher and family which creates constraints for learning.

### **Best Practices with Inclusive Intervention:**

Slow learning is not a disorder. It can be overcome by the teachers and parental support, love and compassion. All are required to handle the student with patience and perseverance. It is the joint responsibility of the class teacher, subject teachers and parents to work together to help slow learners to fulfil their necessities and aspirations.

They have to give constant motivation and support to the educationally backward children. They have to understand the knowledge capacity, learning style, and interest of the slow learner. For these, they have to pursue certain techniques which are best practices to remove educational backwardness. Here are they:

- **Praise** – Everyone loves to be praised. To enhance motivation slow learners need to be praised when they accomplish their tasks. Even a small achievement should be acknowledged and praised.
- **Reward** – Rewards and reinforcement are important for the encouragement of learning. It stimulates students to hit the goal. It helps the student to focus on the course.
- **Support and Care** – Slow learners should be encouraged to learn at their own pace. Parents and teachers should be vocally supportive to accept the competency of the learner. They should take care of learners' minds. The teacher should allow small assignments preferably oral so that they can tune in with their capability.
- **Small Targets** – Slow learners need to give a small target. They can progress only by achieving small targets. As they have low foresight, they cannot able to see the big goal or aim of life.
- **Remove the Fear of Failure:** It is important to remove the fear of failure from the mind of a slow learner. All have to develop the faith that failure is not the end of anything, it is not bad. It is only the learning experience for the next planning.
- **Healthy Environment:** A healthy, conducive, safe environment should be given to the inclusive classroom where students get freedom and experience joyful learning.
- **Patience:** Patience is an important criterion to deal with slow learners. Even if it is a slower rate allow them to hit the milestone at their own pace.
- **Comparison and Abusing:** Parents, teachers and others stop abusing the slow learner for their inability and do not compare them with other children
- **Overcome Inferiority complex** – In usual practice slow learners study in regular classes along with their age group. But if they fail the annual examination and stay back with the newly promoted student, they may develop an inferiority complex. This can develop frustration and aggressive behaviour in slow learners. Teachers and parents need to be empathetic with these children.
- **Oral interaction:** Parents and teachers should develop more oral interaction with slow learners. They should allow to voice their thought and ask the questions. Discussion should be done on various issues like their liking and dislikes, hobbies, interest, they're though towards the nation and world, favourite books, movies, Tv shows, food places, sports etc.
- **Reading Skill and Homework:** Reading should be encouraged for slow learners. Reading practice should be scheduled and a silent reading timetable should be made on a daily basis. A variety of reading material with different topics, stories, graphics cartoon should include in reading habits. Homework also should be given and checked on daily basis.
- **Teaching with Aids:** Audio visual aids like movies, pictures, model, maps, videos, worksheets etc. are very effective assistance to enhance the understanding of a concept. It arouses an interest of learning. Teachers seek the attention of learners by using innovative materials.
- **Group studies/Peer Tutoring** – Group teaching is an effective strategy for slow learners. Peers can help their members who are slow in academic progress.
- **Repetition and Example**– Learning points should be repeated several times to remove conjunction of mind as slow learners have a problem getting the concept the first time.
- **Example:** The topic should be connected with real-life examples. Introduce the concept by giving them a situation which they can apply to their own understanding.

- **Mnemonic Technique:** The use of the mnemonic technique is highly effective to recall information. It also helps to retrieve new information and increase vocabulary.
- **Checking Truancy and Absenteeism:** Parents and teachers have to jointly take the responsibility to check the truancy and absenteeism of slow learners from school. It increases the learning gap, destroys the learning habit and reduces the interest towards study.
- **Individual study plan** – The study plan should be developed on the basis of individual needs. Problems are different so the Teaching strategy should be different for educational backwardness. The topic could be broken down in small parts so that slow learners feel less burdened for learning.
- **Regular Test:** Regular tests should be conducted to diagnose the problem area and improvement of slow learners. Regular test is important to connect will learning for the whole year. It breaks the burden of the syllabus.
- **Co-curricular Activities** – Slow learners should be involved in co-curricular activities where multiple intelligence boost up. It raise the confidence level of the learners.
- **Project method** – The project method of teaching can be used for slow learners where they get hands-on Experience which helps them to build their concept. The project method encourages learning by doing where passive learners turn to active learners.
- **Remedial Teaching** – Remedial teaching is an essential part of inclusive education. After diagnosing the problem of educational backwardness reteaching should be given to removing the weakness. By applying techniques, activities and practices remedial teaching reduced or eliminates the deficiency of learners.

## **Conclusion:**

Education produces a civil society with knowledge, values and skills. A strong civil society is essential for a nation's development. Equity and equality are the most important features of any civil society and so the inclusion of every individual is essential for this. Slow learners who are a little backward in the scholastic area deserve special education needs but generally they do not get the limelight from strategy planners or policymakers. If they have taken care properly, they can overcome their inefficiency. For that early detection, diagnosis and remedial measurement are required. The intervention of teachers, parents, administration and society is required for the retention and stability of these children. All have to boost the motivation of these learners to make them feel important for the individual and society. Teachers have to update their knowledge, work on methods and techniques, understand psychology, and follow the philosophy to help those who are alternatively special to society. Every child is special in their way. Teachers, parents and society must keep patience to encourage slow learners' perseverance to turn them into successful learners. We just have to hold their hands and raise the faith that they can also do wonders.

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