

## **A Review on Behaviour Problems among Learning Disabled Children**

**Dr. Nisha Chhabra**

Assistant professor of Psychology, GNDU College Verka, Amritsar

Email Id: nisha.verka@gndu.ac.in

### **Abstract**

The present work is an attempt to explore the behavioural affects of having a learning disability. These effects may stem from various factors including frustration, anxiety, low self esteem and social difficulties. The common behavior problems exhibited by these children are ADHD, emotional regulation difficulties and avoidance behaviours. Recognising behavior problems early on can help in identifying underlying learning disabilities and can also inform targeted interventions to support these children. Therefore, by studying behavior problems among LD children, we can better understand their needs, develop effective support strategies, and promote their overall well being and academic success. This being the main objective of the present research, the available literature concerning correlation of behavior problems with LD has been reviewed.

### **Behaviour Problems among Learning Disabled Children**

Hall & Elliman (2003) define psychological, emotional and behaviour problems as “behaviours or distressed emotions which are normal in children at some stage of development, but become abnormal by virtue of their frequency or severity, or their inappropriateness for a particular child's age compared to the majority of ordinary children”. Behaviour problems seen in children are often a manifestation of deeper emotional or psychological issues. Commonly reported behaviour problems in children are emotional disorders like depression, anxiety and obsessions, hyperactivity involving attention and over activity and conduct disorder involving awkward, troublesome, aggressive and antisocial behaviour.

There is strong empirical evidence that supports the relationship between literacy achievement and behavioral problems. DuPaul, Gormley & Laracy (2013) state that learning disabled children-specifically children with reading disabilities were at an increased risk of a range of psychiatric disorders including ADHD and conduct disorder. In another study that explored the relationship between literacy skills and behaviour problems it was reported

that there was a strong link between poor language skills and aggressive behaviour in children, and that this association tends to strengthen over time (Clark et al.,2021).

In another such study, Sridevi et al. (2015) reviewed that a significant percent of children with intellectual disabilities demonstrate challenging behaviors, such as low frustration tolerance and aggression at a rate higher than the normative population. Other researchers have also shown that conduct behaviour problems have a link to difficulties in school learning or academics (Kallitsoglou, 2018).

The co-occurrence of learning disabilities and behaviour problems may also be the result of other co-morbidities. Literature reveals that learning disabled children are particularly prone to co-morbid disorders, often with behavioral or emotional components (Bagner & Eyeberg, 2007). Both externalizing and internalizing behaviour problems are often associated with learning disabilities. The existence of a high percentage of association between learning disabilities and behaviour problems like ADHD etc is well documented (Willcutt,et al.,2019). Such an association may add to the learning disabled child's woes as studies show that a great percentage of children with ADHD present some type of a learning difficulty (Genizi, et al.,2013). Such a scenario would increase the likelihood of such children to receive special education services, be expelled or suspended from school or repeat a grade.

ADHD very often is highly disruptive and adversely affects many areas of a child's psychosocial functioning (Oerbeck, 2017). It was also noted that majority of the children with ADHD display significant academic under achievement. Empirical evidence suggests that behavior problems and learning disability together can result in low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and other emotional problems (Aro, et al.,2022). As Cristofani, et al. (2023) stated that children with LD demonstrate more behavioral problems, somatic problems and withdrawn behaviour than do typically developing children". Thus, we can form an assumption that behavioral and psychosocial co-morbidities may be assured to be part of a diagnosis of learning disabilities

When behaviour problems accompany learning problems it may give rise to other social and emotional issues. Research evidence clearly points to behaviour problems as a significant cause of social exclusion for people with learning disabilities. Outwardly directed behaviour is a significant part of problem behaviour presented by people with learning disabilities. Such behaviours are there to stay for the long run and are considered important contributors of social exclusion of such children (Hassiotis & Hall, 2008).

In a similar study in India, Kumar et al. (2013) quoted that significant associations have been obtained consistently between learning disabilities and behaviour problems. Rėklaitienė, et al.(2014). found that elevated problem behaviour was found in the group of girls with learning disabilities as compared to their non learning disabled counterparts.

Thus, it can be stated that when a learning disability is accompanied by co-morbid behavioral problems, this dual diagnosis presents a greater challenge to the individual and the family as a whole. A combination of learning disabilities coupled with behaviour problems in a child can pose a great challenge to any parents parenting capabilities. Gupta et al.(2007) reported that behavioral and developmental disability was associated with high parenting stress. Breevaart & Bakker (2011) examined how behavioral problems in children were related to parental well being of working parents, and how raising a child with behavioral problems is stressful. Empirical research also suggests that behavioral problems seem to add to parental stress (Hastings, 2002).

A study by Anthony *et al.* (2005) examined whether parenting stress in the home context is related to the children's behaviour while in preschool. The findings revealed that parenting stress was directly related to teacher ratings of social competence, internalizing behaviours and externalizing behaviours and the effect of parenting behaviour do not appear to mediate this relationship. Parenting stress was mostly strongly related to children's social competence. Parents reports of expectations for their child's behaviour appear to weakly moderate the relationship between externalizing behaviour and parenting stress. Previous research has suggested that children with learning disabilities have lack of social skill acquisition which in turn affects their social competence and gives rise to parental stress leading to unproductive parenting behaviour.

Research also shows how parenting stress is linked to parenting behaviours (Briggs - Gowan *et al.*, 2001). In other words where parenting behaviors may act as risk factors and lead to an increase in problem behaviours, whereas certain parenting behaviours may also function as a protective factor for the development of these behaviours (Haggerty, McGlynn-Wright & Klima , 2013). Studies have shown the existence of a reciprocal relationship where the child's behaviour is shaped by the parents behaviour and vice-versa, and negative reinforcement may result in sustenance of such unwanted behaviour in both the parent and the child ( Burke *et al.*, 2008).

Thus a learning disabled child frustrated by repeated school failures may eventually manifest those frustrations through disruptive behaviors. The above mentioned research clearly establishes a relationship between learning disability and behavioral problems in children and its effect on the parents. The inability on part of the parents to appropriately manage the added strain caused by the child's behaviour problems can further enhance such problem behaviours. It is to be noted that all learning disabled children do not exhibit behavioral problems. Therefore, one can conclude based on the empirical evidence that it is important to understand the variables that cause these behavioural manifestations in learning disabled children. This can help in planning intervention strategies for both the child and the parents.

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