



LEARNING DISABILITY IN JUVENILE DELINQUENTS- AN INTERVENTION STRATEGY

Law

Ronu Thomas

Asst. Professor, St Joseph's Training College, Mannanam

ABSTRACT

The children who have inclination towards juvenile delinquency due to various reasons, add on their difficulty to lead a normal life if they are diagnosed with Learning Disability. Such children may tend to go back to their life of crimes which will give them easy access to money and pleasure. This article is based on the study carried out to find effectiveness of the developed Intervention Strategy to help Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability in their academic achievement. The findings of the study revealed that intervention strategy designed based on the Multi Sensory Strategy where multiple senses are employed in learning, Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability could attain more in the area of academics.

KEYWORDS

Juvenile Delinquents, Learning Disability, Multi Sensory Strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

In India, with a population of over a billion, problems like poverty, illiteracy and unemployment are very common. Rapid population growth, the unavailability of housing and support services, poverty, unemployment and underemployment among youth, overcrowding in poor urban areas, the disintegration of the family, and ineffective educational systems are some of the pressures young people must deal with. Young people form the future of the country. Hence it is essential to provide them with all the guidance needed to grow into a good citizen. But everyone is not getting the same opportunity and not all young people end up as successful adults. In fact some of them are falling into the track of crimes. The rate of juvenile crimes is not negligible. It is a harsh reality our country faces. Juveniles were found to be involved in most heinous of the crimes such as murder and gang rape which took place in recent times. It is indeed a disturbing trend and society as a whole is anguished by such criminal acts by children.

The juvenile IPC (Indian Penal Code) crimes have increased by 47% in the last five years according to the government (The Times of India, 2016). The figure is alarming. Even though lot of measures are taken by the government and NGO's for their rehabilitation and intervention, certain areas like learning disability which may be a cause for low achievement and escape from schools, one of the cause behind juvenile delinquency, is being neglected.

Learning disability is a disorder that affects people's ability to either interpret what they see and hear or to link information from different parts of the brain. These limitations can show up in many ways- as specific difficulties with spoken and written language, coordination, self-control or attention. Such difficulties extend to school work and can impede learning to read or write, or to do arithmetic calculations. National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD, 1981) defined Learning Disability as a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities (as cited in Hammill, Leigh, McNutt & Larsen, 1981).

In the United States, Learning Disability has been associated with juvenile delinquency. McKay and Brumback (1980) found that the children rejected by social institutions (such as school), may seek alternative, frequently delinquent, activities. Hence they suggest that learning disabled children must be identified so that programs which minimize the disability while emphasizing the children's strengths can be instituted. Report or study focussed on these lines, learning disability and juvenile delinquency is found rarely in Indian context. Also, the investigator while doing her research on developing a multisensory strategy for learning disabled children at primary level found that a lot of children with learning disability especially from financially backward families quit schooling as a result of frequent encounter with failure. Some of these children who are again neglected by the family and society end up in anti-social activity groups paving path to juvenile delinquency. If such children are given proper remediation, they can be led to success in learning which in turn can make them interested in schooling and thereby earn a living. Hence the investigator decided to develop an intervention strategy to help the juvenile delinquents with learning disability.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were formulated to carry out the study:-

- To identify Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disabilities.
- To design and develop an intervention strategy for Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disabilities.
- To find out the effect of the developed intervention strategy on the academic achievement of children with learning disability among Juvenile Delinquents.

3. METHOD ADOPTED IN THE STUDY

The research design followed by the study includes both survey and experimental study. Survey method was employed to identify Learning Disability among Juvenile Delinquents. The experimental method was found to be the most appropriate design for finding out the effectiveness of the developed Intervention Strategy. The design used for the present study was pre test-post test single group design.

4. SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The sample for the survey consisted of a total of 98 juvenile delinquents residing in the two observation homes in Thrissur and Kottayam. The sample for the experimental study consisted of the 23 juvenile delinquents identified as learning disabled, residing in observation home, Thiruvanchoor, Kottayam.

5. TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY

The tools used for the collection of data in the present study are

- i. Diagnostic test for identifying Learning Disabilities (DTLD)
- ii. Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices (RPM) to assess the general intelligence of the students
- iii. Adapted form of Learning Disability Checklist Published by National Centre for Learning Disability.
- iv. Academic Achievement Test.

6. Intervention Strategy

Intervention strategy is a systematic plan of action consciously adapted in an attempt to address and reduce the causes of academic failure. It has been developed to offer an additional assistance thus promoting future success in studies. In the present study, the intervention strategy is used as a remedial measure for learning disabled. Liberman (1982) provides the following principles for the guidance of the teachers of the learning disabled children.

- Students are better motivated when things are meaningful. This can be accomplished by explaining the relevance to them.
- Students are more likely to learn if formats and mode of presentation are varied.
- Students need to have the prerequisite skills to accomplish more complex tasks. Teachers should analyse the tasks and sequence them from easy to difficult, including all the skills.
- Children often learn more effectively if they have a model to observe and imitate. Modeling includes a variety of multi-sensory demonstrations.
- Students are more likely to learn if they are active learners, that is, if they participate in the activities designed to reach the varied objectives.
- Students learn more easily if the learning conditions are pleasant.

Therefore, the teacher must plan tasks in such a way that they are sufficiently challenging but not beyond the capabilities of the student (as cited in Mathew, 2013).

Considering the above stated principles and consultation with experts the investigator decided to design a multi-sensory intervention strategy as remediation for the juvenile delinquents identified as learning disabled. The diagram depicting the Intervention Strategy designed for the study is given below.

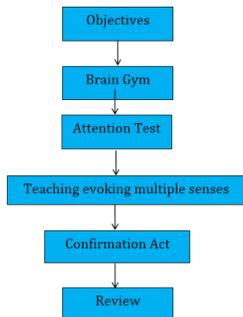


FIGURE 1.1 Design of Intervention Strategy

The Intervention Strategy based on multi-sensory approach was designed incorporating mainly six elements. They are:

I. **Objectives** - Objectives are observable and measurable behavioural changes brought about in learners. These objectives ensure proper designing of learning activities and evaluation strategies for assessment.

II. **Brain Gym** - Brain Gym activities are claimed to improve eye teaming (binocular vision), spatial and listening skills, hand-eye coordination, and whole-body flexibility. Doing this manipulates the brain, improves learning and recall of information. Exercises involving right and left hemispheres of the brain were practiced as brain gym.

III. **Attention Test**- To increase the capacity of attention, attention tests were provided. The attention tests used in this study were letter cancellation test and number cancellation test.

IV. **Teaching evoking multiple senses**- Teaching evoking multiple senses were included in explaining lesson content to students through multi-sensory strategy.

V. **Confirmation Act**- Confirmation act is included to confirm the content taught. This is done to increase the capacity for storing information in long-term memory. Here worksheets/ exercise/puzzles were given to practice independently.

VI. **Review**- The purpose of review is to find out whether the learner has understood the new teaching points introduced in the lesson. Here the students were encouraged to demonstrate what they learned and what they remember with the help of worksheets, picture card, puzzles, games etc.

7. **Statistical Techniques Used**

To test the effectiveness of the Intervention Strategy, paired ‘t’ test was done using the pre test and post test scores.

8. **Data Analysis**

To identify the juvenile delinquents with learning disability, Diagnostic Test for Learning Disability (DTLD), Raven’s Standard Progressive Matrices (RSPM), and Learning Disabled checklist were administered in two out of the fourteen observation homes in Kerala. The comparison between non learning disabled and learning disabled juvenile delinquents in both the observation homes in Thrissur and Kottayam is given below.

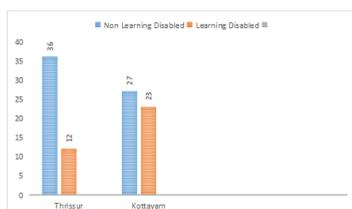


Figure 1.2 Chart showing the comparison between non learning disabled and learning disabled juvenile delinquents in the observation homes in Thrissur and Kottayam.

To find the effectiveness of the developed intervention strategy on the academic achievement of juvenile delinquents with learning disability test of significance of difference between the mean pre-test scores and the mean post-test scores was employed. Data and results of the test of significance are given in table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Data and Results of Test of Significance of the Difference between the Mean Pre-test Scores and Post-test Scores on Academic Achievement of Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability

Score	N	Mean	Critical Ratio	Level of significance
Pre-test	23	13.26	5.487	15.289
Post-test	23	27.00	5.760	P<0.01

For df= 22, the obtained value of Critical ratio (CR= 15.289) is greater than the table value of Critical ratio (CR= 2.82) at 0.01 level of significance. This means that there is significant difference between the mean pre-test scores and the mean post-test scores of juvenile delinquents with learning disability. Since the mean post-test scores is greater than the mean pre-test scores, it is tentatively interpreted that teaching through the Intervention Strategy have helped the juvenile delinquents with learning disability to achieve more with respect to academic achievement.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The child with Learning Disability, who has decided to leave the path of crimes often finds herself/himself in a poor unsatisfactory environment, and start realising that he/she cannot achieve success due to his/her Learning Disability. Such children may tend to go back to their life of crimes which will give them easy access to money and pleasure. Hence it is very essential to address the problem of Learning Disability among Juvenile Delinquents.

The analysis carried out to find the effectiveness of the developed Intervention Strategy revealed that the intervention brought significant changes in the academic achievement of Juvenile Delinquents with Learning Disability. The Intervention Strategy based on the multi sensory strategy revealed that when multiple senses are employed in learning, children with Learning Disability could attain more in the area of academics especially in the area of language and mathematics.. The study revealed that if Learning Disability is addressed in a proper way, the children affected can attain more in their academics. This implies that an effort to change the life style of Juvenile Delinquent must include some training in this line too. The correctional rehabilitation programme should address learning problems like Learning Disability. This will in turn motivate the inmates of such observation homes to pursue education.

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