

A Study to find the perceptions of teachers towards child with dyslexia

Subhash Chandra Basu^{1*}, Poonam² and Anita Beniwal³

¹School of Education, IGNOU, New Delhi-110068, India.

²Maharaja Surajmal Institute, C-4 Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058, India.

³University of Delhi, New Delhi-110007, India.

*Corresponding author: Subhash Chandra Basu, forensic.subhash@gmail.com

Abstract

The present study was conducted with the objective of finding out the perceptions of teachers towards child with dyslexia. This study was conducted at schools in Delhi region. Many misperceptions were also identified based on how long teachers had taught, whether teachers had specialist certificate or training to teach child with dyslexia, the school from which teachers earned their teaching degree, and overall beliefs' about child with dyslexia. Significance of the findings in relation to the wider inclusive educational ideology is discussed and suggestions are made about the child with dyslexia.

Keywords: Child with dyslexia, Dyslexia, Learning disability, Perception of teacher.

Learning to read is quite clearly the most important thing that we all learn at school. It is a well-established fact that every individual is unique but some of them are so unique that they do not fit into the typical group. One such difference is associated with behavior *i.e.* dyslexia. With no visible features or symptoms, dyslexia is a complex condition to understand. It is a lifelong developmental disorder that affects a child's learning ability.

According to the International Dyslexia Association (2002), dyslexia is defined as a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin that affects as many as one in five children. Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Dyslexia is characterized by an unexpected difficulty in reading in children and adults who otherwise possess the intelligence, motivation, and schooling considered necessary for accurate and fluent reading (Shaywitz 1998). It has been recognized for many years that dyslexic people often have creative talents and this is reflected in the high incidence of dyslexia amongst students studying art and design courses at higher education (Graves and Steffert 1999).

Everatt (1999) investigated the relationship between creativity and dyslexia, using a range of tasks. They found that dyslexic adults consistently demonstrated greater creativity. Graves, cited by Carson (2005) believes there is good reason to believe that dyslexics may possess extra talent in the area of visual-spatial ability and have the ability to see all sides of a problem at the same time.' It is unclear, however, whether dyslexic people are naturally creative because of their neurological make-up or whether heightened lateral thinking abilities and visual spatial awareness develop to compensate for areas of difficulty.

This study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of teachers towards children with dyslexia.

Statement of the Problem

The problem selected for the present study is, "To study the perceptions of the teachers towards children with dyslexia."

Objectives

- To study the perceptions of teachers towards children with dyslexia.

Methodology

In order to obtain empirically dependable answer to the research question, focused group interview design was adopted. The present study the survey method and focused interview along with filling of the questionnaire was adopted. And for this a questionnaire was developed.

Sample

The population for the present study comprised the school teachers teaching in selected government and private schools of Delhi region who teach to the children with dyslexia. The sample for the present study comprised all of 37 teachers who taught the children with dyslexia in schools.

Tools and Techniques

A semi-structured questionnaire as per the research objective was developed to explore the teachers' perceptions towards the child with dyslexia from the perspective of the teachers. The questionnaire was developed in semi-structured form which comprised the question that should be answered categorically or straightforwardly.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Teachers' perception towards children with dyslexia

Item No.	Question	Response (in%)		
		Yes	No	Not sure
1	What do you know about dyslexia? What are the manifestations in the child that make you identify the disability?			
	- Appear bright and able, but can't get their thoughts down on paper	36.67	43.33	20
	-Have areas in which in which they excel, particularly in drama, art and debating	60	23.33	16.67
	-Be clumsy	36	63	1
	-Act as the class clown to mask what they see as their academic failure	36.66	53.33	10
	-Become withdrawn and isolated, sitting at the back and not participating	40	50	10
	-Be able to do one thing at a time very well but can't remember an entire list	63.33	23.33	13.33
	-Look glazed when language is spoken too quickly	36.66	46.67	16.67
	-Go home exhausted at the end of a normal day because they have had to put so much effort into learning	73.33	16.67	10
	-Be bullied	23.33	46.67	30
2	What are the areas in which they have difficulties?	Yes	No	Not sure
	-Short term memory problems with poor retention of information	40	46.67	13.33
	-Difficulties with processing information quickly	70	20	10
	-Organisational skills and time management	66.67	23.33	10
	-Difficulties with sequencing	56.67	33.33	10
	-Difficulties with spoken language	26.67	63.33	10
	-Problems with motor skills	26.67	56.67	16.66
	-Difficulties with orientation	70	30	
	-Problems with concentration and distractibility	70	23.33	6.67
	-Inconsistencies of performance	70	26.67	3.33
3	What support and differentiation do you think students with dyslexia need in the class?	Need recognition		16.67%
		Need motivation		26.67%
		Need special care		13.33%

		Need help and support					20%
		Need equality					3.33%
		Need encouragement					3.33%
		Need proper treatment					6.67%
		Not specified					10%
4	What do you think are the personality traits of child with dyslexia, which according to you are different from other children? Please tick in order of preference	Order of preference (all response in%)					
		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	
	-Openness	33.33	30	6.67	13.33	16.67	
	-Contentiousness	23.33	16.67	30	13.33	16.67	
	-Extraversion	16.67	16.67	26.67	16.67	23.33	
	-Neuroticism	13.33	10	20	26.67	30	
	-Agreeableness	20	20	10	23.33	26.67	
5	What's the reaction of the classmates to their problems? Do they understand their problems? Are they helpful to each other?	Friendly and helpful					23%
		Cooperative and helpful					20%
		Competitive					13%
		Competitive and cooperative					17%
		Teasing					10%
		Not specified					17%

Item no.1 of the questionnaire dealt with the manifestations in the child that make teacher identify the disability. The study found in the response of the 1st point ‘child with dyslexia appear bright and able, but can’t get their thoughts down on paper’, 36.67 percent of the teachers were agreed, 43.33% of the teachers were not agreed and rest 20 percent of the teachers were not sure. On 2nd point ‘child with dyslexia have areas in which they excel’, 60% of the teachers were agreed, 23.33 percent of the teachers were not agreed and 16.67% of the teachers were not sure. On 3rd point ‘child with dyslexia be clumsy’, 36% of the teachers were agreed, most of the teachers 63 percent were not agreed and 1% of the teachers were not sure. On 4th point ‘Child with dyslexia act as the class clown to mask they see as their academic failure’, 36.66% of the teachers said yes, 53% of the teachers said no and 10 percent of the teachers were not sure. On 5th point ‘child with dyslexia become withdrawn and isolated, sitting at the back and not participating’, 40 percent of the teachers were said yes, 50% of the teachers said no and 10 percent of the teachers were not sure. On 6th point ‘child with dyslexia be able to do one thing at a time very well but can’t remember an entire list’, most of the teachers 63.33% were agreed, 23.33% of the teachers were not think so, and 13.33% of the teachers were not certain on this point. On the 7th point ‘child with dyslexia looked glazed when language is spoken too quickly’, 36.66% of the teachers were agreed, 46.67% of the teachers were not agreed and 16.67 percent of the teachers

Clustered Column Graph for Response of Item no.1

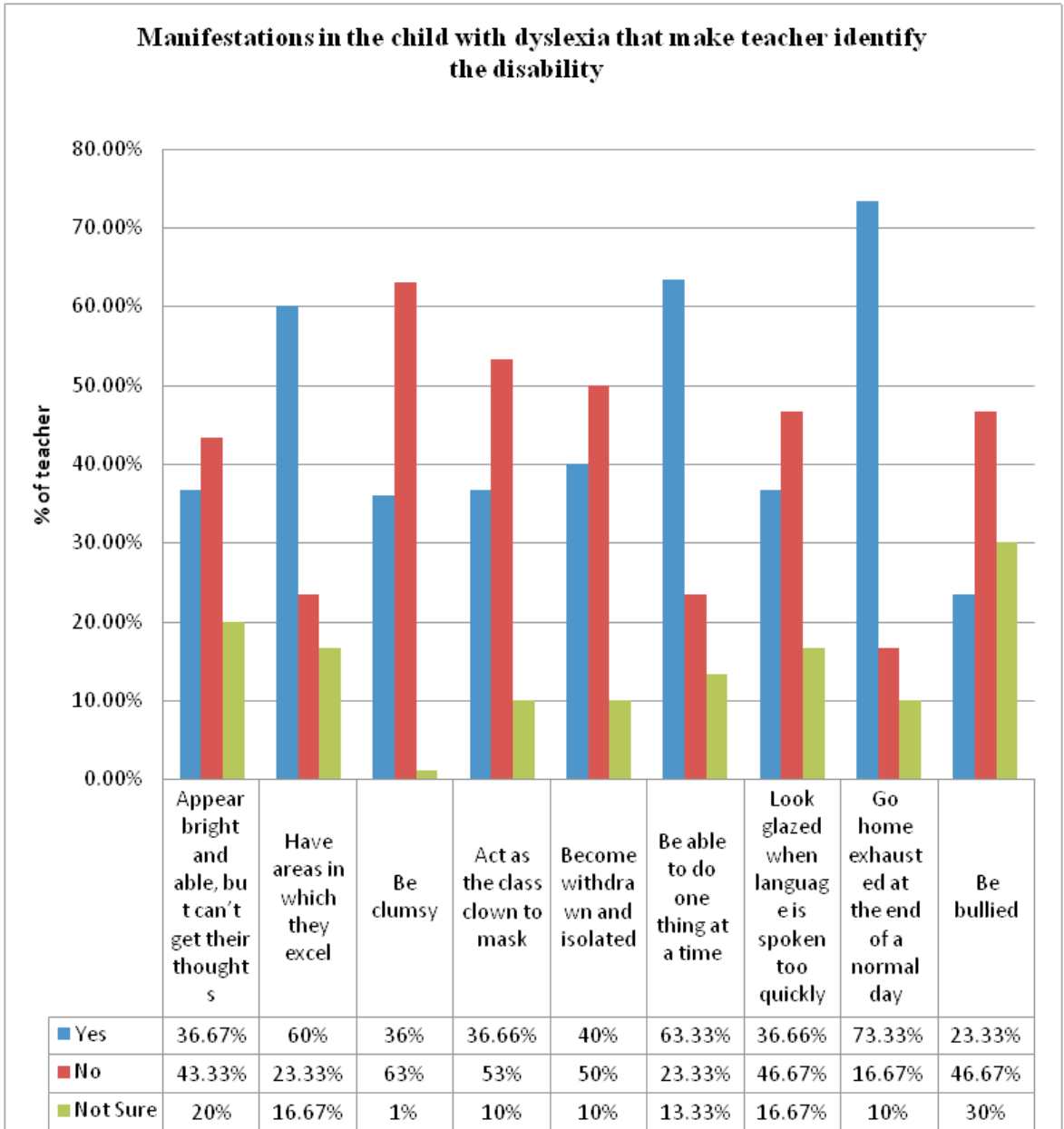


Fig. 1 Teacher's view on the manifestation in the child with dyslexia to identify the disability

were not sure about the same. On 8th point ‘child with dyslexia go home exhausted at the end of a normal day because they have had to put so much effort into learning’, most of teachers 73.33% were agreed, 16.67% of the teachers were not agreed and 10 percent of the teachers were not sure about. On the last (9th) point ‘child with dyslexia be bullied’, 23.33 percent of the teachers were said yes, 46.67% of the teachers said no, and 30% of the teachers were not sure about the same.

Clustered Column Graph for Response of Item no.2

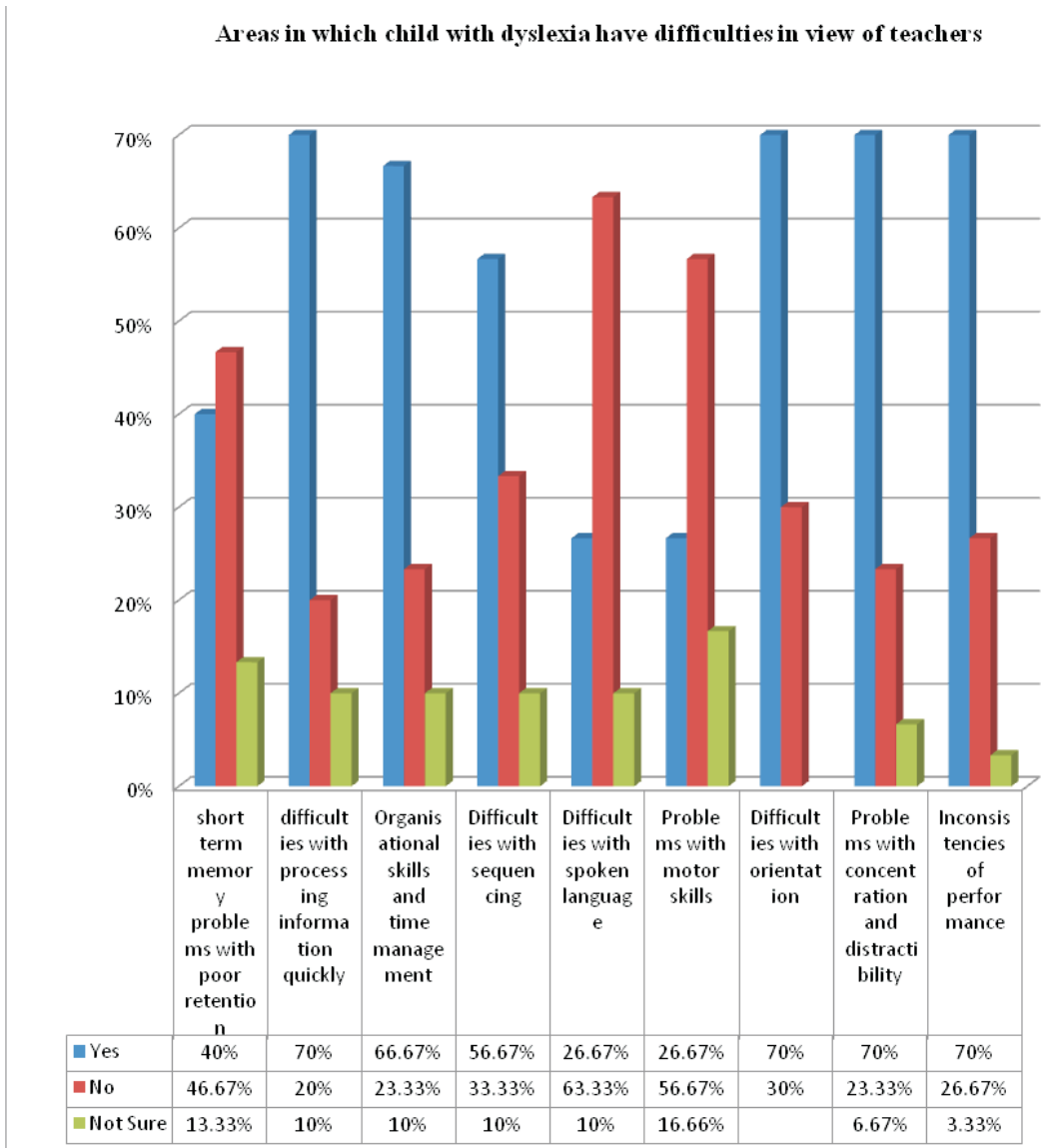


Fig. 2 Teacher’s view on area of difficulties to children with dyslexia

Item no. 2 of the questionnaire dealt with the teacher’s view on the areas in which child with dyslexia have difficulties. The response revealed that 40 percent of the teachers were accepted and 46.67% of the teachers were not accepted the short term memory problems with poor retention of information as an area of difficulty for child with dyslexia. Rest 13.33% of the teachers was not sure on this point.

On the difficulties related to processing of information quickly, the study revealed that 70 percent of the teachers accepted that the children with dyslexia faced difficulties in processing information quickly but 20 percent of the teachers were not agree on difficulties in processing of the information faced by children with dyslexia and around 10 percent of the teachers were not sure on this topic.

On the organizational skills and time management with child with Dyslexia, the study revealed found that about 66.67% of the teachers agreed and 23.33% of the teachers not agreed and 10% of the teachers were not sure about this point.

On the difficulties with sequencing, the study found that 56.67 percent of the teachers were agreed, 33.33% of the teachers were not agreed and 10 percent of the teachers were not sure about this point.

On the difficulties with spoken language, the study found that 26.67% of the teachers were agreed that children with dyslexia do have problem in speaking and language, 63.37% of the teachers were not agreed. And remaining 10% of the teachers were not sure about the areas in which children with dyslexia have difficulties.

Pie Chart representation for Response of Item no.3

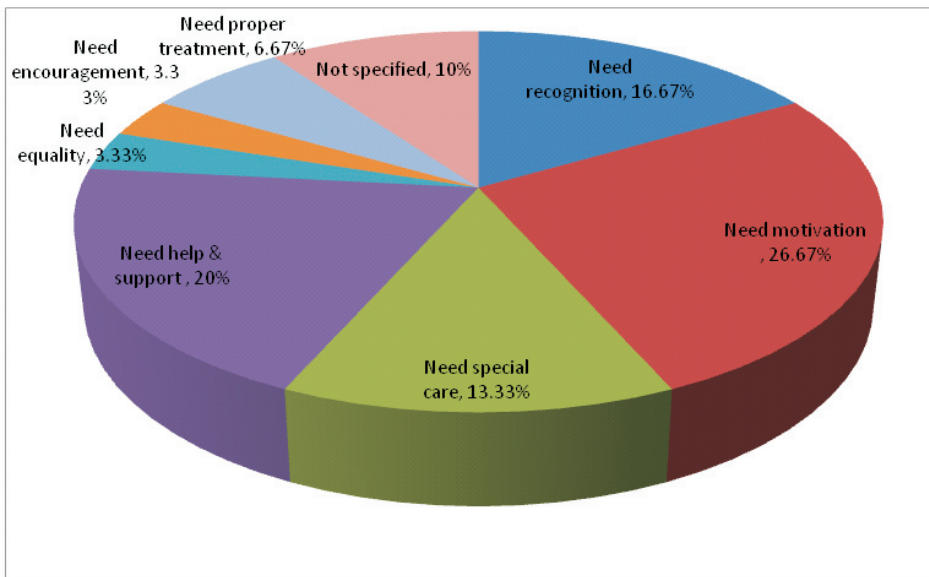


Fig.3 Teacher’s view on support and differentiation to child with dyslexia

Item no. 3 of the questionnaire dealt with the thought of teacher for the need of support and differentiation to child with dyslexia in the classroom. In response 16.67 percent of the teachers mentioned the need of recognition, 26.67% of the teachers mentioned the need of motivation, 13.33% of the teachers mention that the child with dyslexia needs special care, 20 percent of the teachers mentioned the need of help and support, 3.33% of the teachers mentioned the need of equality and the another equal 3.33% of the teachers mention the need of help and encouragement, 6.67% of the teachers mention about the need of proper treatment to child with dyslexia. And, the study also found that rest 10 percent of the teachers was not sure about any specific type of support and differentiation to the child with dyslexia.

Clustered Column Graph for Response of Item no.4

Teacher’s view on the personality traits of child with dydlexia

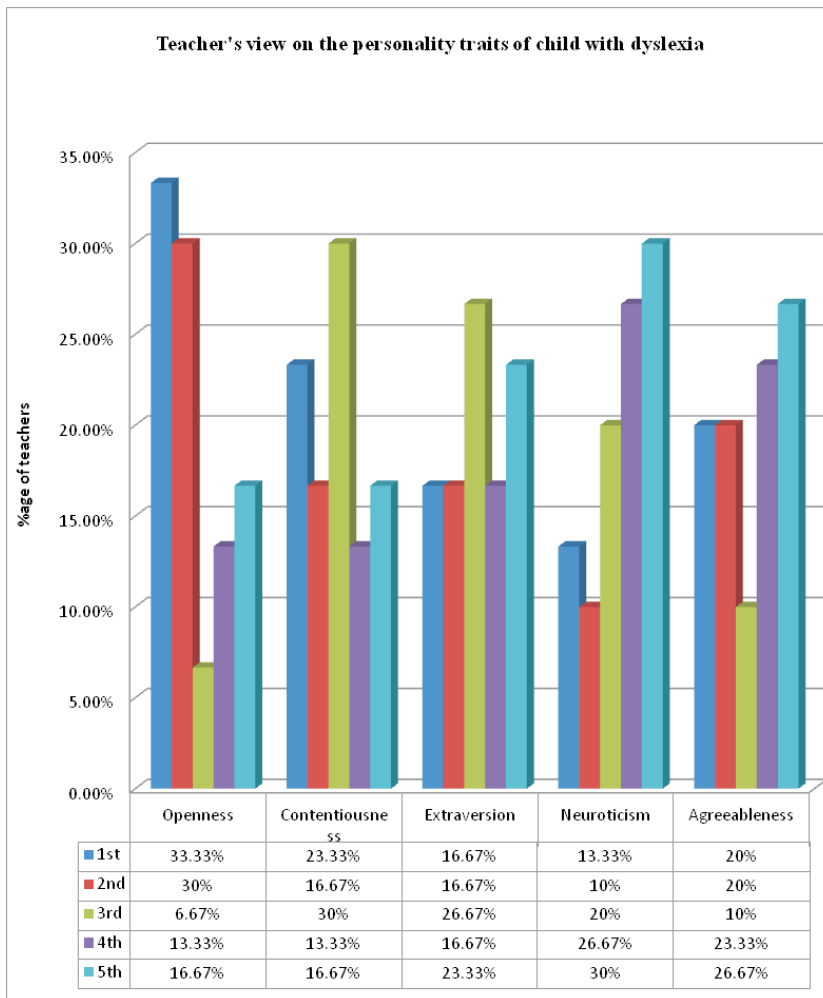


Fig.4 Teacher’s preference for personality and traits of the children with dyslexia

Item no. 4 of the questionnaire dealt with the thought of the teachers about the personality and trait of the children with dyslexia in order of openness, contentiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and agreeableness. In response of the openness of personality and trait of children with dyslexia, 33.33 percent of the teachers ordered it first, 30% of the teachers ordered it at second, very few only 6.67% of the teachers ordered it third, 13.33% of the teachers ordered it at fourth position and rest 16.67% of the teachers ordered it fifth with respect of other factors *i.e.* contentiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and agreeableness.

In response of the contentiousness of the personality and trait of the children with dyslexia, 23.33 percent of the teachers ordered it first, 16.67% of the teachers ordered it second, 30 percent of the teachers ordered it third, 13.33% of the teachers ordered it fourth and the 16.67% of the teachers ordered it fifth with respect of other factors *i.e.* openness, extraversion, neuroticism and agreeableness.

In response of the extraversion of the personality and traits of children with dyslexia, 16.67 percent of the teachers ordered it first, and similar number of the teachers *i.e.* 16.67 percent of the teacher ordered it second, 26.67% of the teachers ordered it third, 16.67 percent of the teachers ordered it fourth and 23.33% of the teachers ordered it on the fifth with respect of other factors *i.e.*, openness, contentiousness, neuroticism and agreeableness.

In response of the neuroticism of the personality and traits of the children with dyslexia, 13.33 percent of the teachers ordered it first 10% of the teachers ordered it second, 20% of the teachers ordered it third, 26.67% of the teachers ordered it fourth and 30% of the teachers ordered it fifth with respect of other factors *i.e.* openness, contentiousness, extraversion and agreeableness.

In response of the agreeableness of the personality and traits of the children with dyslexia, 20 percent of the teachers ordered it first, and another 20% ordered it second, 10% of the teachers ordered it the third, 23.33% of teachers ordered it fourth and 26.67% of teachers ordered it fifth with respect of other factors *i.e.* openness, contentious, extraversion and neuroticism.

**Pie Chart representation for Response of Item no.5
% of teachers**

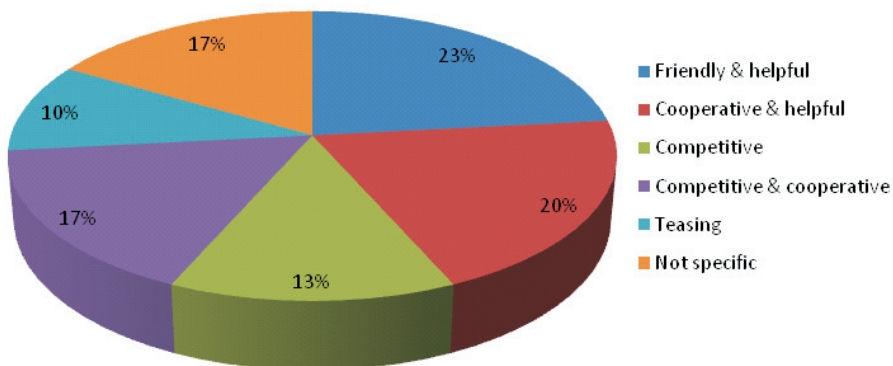


Fig.5 Teacher's view on the reaction of classmates towards the children with dyslexia

Item no.5 of the questionnaire dealt with the teacher's view on the reaction of the classmates to the problems of the children with dyslexia. The response revealed that most of the teachers *i.e.* 23% thought the reaction of the classmates to the problems of children with dyslexia is friendly and helpful, 20% of the teachers mentioned it is cooperative and helpful, 13% of the teachers mentioned it is only competitive, 17% of the teachers mentioned it is competitive and cooperative both, 10% of the teachers mentioned it is teasing. And, rest 17% of the teachers were not specified the nature of reaction of the classmates to the problems of the children with dyslexia.

Findings

The study revealed that:

- Most of the teachers (60%) presumed that child with dyslexia excel, particularly in drama, art, debating etc.
- Some teachers (37%) presumes that child with dyslexia appear bright and able, but can't get their thoughts down on paper.
- Most of the teachers (63%) believed that child with dyslexia is not clumsy.
- Some teachers (40%) believed that child with dyslexia become withdrawn and isolated.
- Most of the teachers (63%) believed that children with dyslexia are able to do one thing at a time very well but can't remember an entire list.
- Some teachers (37%) visualized that children with dyslexia look glazed when language is spoken too quickly.
- Most of the teachers (73%) presumed that children with dyslexia went home exhausted at the end of a normal day because they have had to put so much effort into learning.
- Some teachers (23%) believed that children with dyslexia are bullied.
- Most of the teachers (47%) presumed and some teachers (40%) do not presumed that children with dyslexia have short term memory problems with poor retention of the information.
- Most of the teachers (70%) presumed that children with dyslexia have difficulties in quick processing of information.
- Most of the teachers (67%) reckoned that children with dyslexia have skills to organize and manage the time.
- Most of the teachers (57%) considered that children with dyslexia have difficulties with sequencing.
- Few of the teachers (27%) considered that children with dyslexia have difficulties in speaking in language and problems with motor skills.
- Most of the teachers (70%) presumed that children with dyslexia have difficulties in orientation, problems with concentration and distractibility and inconsistencies of performance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that most of the teachers thought children with dyslexia have difficulties in orientation, problems with concentration and distractibility and inconsistencies of performance. The study also concludes that most of teachers admitted that normally child with dyslexia become withdrawn and isolated, have difficulties in quick processing of information and have difficulties in speaking in language and problems with motor skills.

Almost every teacher has at least one student or child with dyslexia. This situation leads many school personnel to wonder why their articulate, clearly bright student has so many problems with what appears to be a simple task – reading a text that everyone else seems to easily comprehend. Imaging research has demonstrated that the brains of children with dyslexia show different, less efficient, patterns of processing (including under and over activation) during tasks involving sounds in speech and letter sounds in words. Understanding this has the potential to increase the confidence teachers feel when designing and carrying out instruction for their children with dyslexia (National Centre for Learning Disability).

Therefore, the following suggestions were made on the basis of the study.

- Teachers should be aware of intelligence of the children with dyslexia.
- Teachers should develop emotional stability with children with dyslexia.
- The attitude of the teachers should be sympathetic towards children with dyslexia

References

- APA 1995. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV). Washington, DC: APA. American Psychiatric Association
- British Dyslexia Association, www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
- Carson, C. 2005. The Creative Dyslexic. *Creative Review*. **25**(1) 36-38
- Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities. 2001. “*Types of L.D*”. Retrieved from www.ldonline.org
- Disabled World - Disability News for all the Family: http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article_2130.shtml#ixzz2AjFiM3MT
- Everatt, J. 1999 (Ed) *Reading and Dyslexia: Visual and Attentional Processes*, London: Routledge.
- Graves, J. 1999 *Visual Spatial Ability and Dyslexia* in, Padgett I and Steffert B (ed) *Make dyslexia your friend not your enemy*. London: Central Saint Martins
- International Dyslexia Association. 2002. “*Definition of Dyslexia*” Baltimore, MD, Retrieved from www.interdys.org.
- International Dyslexia Association. 2011. “*Teacher Preparation Key to Effective Instruction*”. *The Examiner*. Retrieved From, www.interdys.org.
- Shaywitz, S. 1998. Current concepts: Dyslexia. *N Engl J Med* 338:307–312
- Venkateshwarlu, D. and Shah, Beena 2002 *Concept of learning disability, Disabilities and Impairments* **16**(1) : 29-36

