

A Study on Improving Attention through Educational Strategies of Children with Attention Deficit Hyper activity Disorders (ADHD)

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For a long time educators have deliberated upon the causes of school drop-outs. By and large, school drop-outs have been attributed to poverty and the circumstances of a poor family. Child labour has been another significant cause of school drop-outs.

But rarely has it been realized that 10% of the child population may suffer from some physical or mental impairment. Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders are impulsive, distractible and inattentive. Lerner and Lowenthal (1995) describe the primary characteristics of ADHD as follows: " Individuals with ADHD have difficulty focusing their attention and concentrating on tasks. The three primary characteristics of ADHD are inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity.

It is only in the recent decade it has been realized that ADHD could be the result of slight brain damage. Hence, usually medicines are used to deal with this problem. But these have side effects. Therefore, this investigator felt that there was an imperative need for exploring a safer and a more convenient alternative, which could be of more use to teachers, parents and children in the Indian setting. Hence, this study was taken up. It was felt that the effectiveness of a safer option could be best determined by adopting an experimental design. Thus, control and experimental groups were formed.

The Universe of the study was intended to be 12 schools in South Delhi. But permission was granted only in 6 schools to conduct the study. Therefore, the study was limited to 6 schools, 5 Govt. and one private. The total universe was 1505 students. This comprised 871 boys and 634 girls.

Objectives:

The following objectives were adopted:

- To identify children in primary schools reported to have ADHD by the teachers
- To design appropriate educational interventions to be given to children with marked inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity
- To measure the efficacy of educational interventions on the experimental groups
- To gauge the extent of benefit accruing to the experimental group from the interventions given.

Hypothesis:

Based on these objectives, the following three hypothesis were tested:

- No difference shall be found in the level of attention of children before and after they are given the designated educational interventions

- No difference shall be found between boys and girls in the prevalence of ADHD
- Differences in various age groups and the level of ADHD shall be found

The total number of children identified as having ADHD was 96. This number was arrived at by using the criterion of 10 or more than 10 symptoms on the checklist used in the study. A control group and an experimental group were formed. The experimental group had 52 children and the control group had 44 children. They were matched on teacher rating and performance in the last examination.

Specially illustrated teaching learning material was developed to teach children in the experimental group. After giving these interventions for 2 weeks, an interval of 2 weeks was given. At the end of the interval, both the experimental group and the control group were tested on their performance in English and Maths using a paper and pencil test.

Major Findings:

- The prevalence of ADHD in the six schools studied was 6.38%.
- The prevalence was significantly higher among boys than among girls i.e. 75 boys and 21 girls with ADHD were identified, the ratio of boys to girls with ADHD being 3.6:1. This means that ADHD is 3.6 times more in boys than in girls
- The teaching strategies used brought about significant improvement both among boys and girls in the experimental group as compared to the control group.
- Girls performed better in English than boys
- The range of mean improvement varied from 28.55–40.29 and 27.00–50.67 in English
- No relationship between age and ADHD was discovered.