PROLOGUE

“I firmly believe that deep in their soul everyone has a champion that can overcome obstacles and do great things.”

—William Bruce Jenner, former Olympic Gold medallist, diagnosed with dyslexia as a young child

Neuropsychological aspects of developmental disability in general and learning disability in particular has been one of the most interesting and challenging area of research for psychologists since decades. Learning disabilities (LDs) refer to a heterogeneous group of disorders where significant difficulties occur in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mathematical skills. Executive functions (EFs) are a cluster of various components that consists of attention, working memory, set shifting, planning, fluency, and inhibition/interference control. It is found that children with LDs have deficits in one or other EFs. Children with LDs are shown to have difficulty in focusing attention on a particular academic task, planning and preparing the assignments and working memory related to academics.

As children enter school, success depends increasingly on mastery of EF processes such as goal setting, planning, organizing, prioritizing, memorizing, initiating, and self-monitoring. In the elementary grades, teachers now require children to complete lengthy reading and writing assignments, as well as long-term projects, both of which rely heavily on these EF processes. Children are also expected to become proficient at note taking, studying, and test taking, all tasks that require the simultaneous organization and synthesis of multiple sub processes. Academic success
is thus dependent on children’s ability to plan their time, organize and prioritize materials and information, distinguish main idea from details, shift approaches, flexibly, monitor their own progress, and reflect on their work (Meltzer, 2007).

Just as people do physical exercise to be healthy and strong, mind/brain exercises are equally important to be mentally healthy and active in life. Individualized or one-to-one training programme on a particular task plays an important role in training the child. In one-to-one setting, child gets full attention of the trainer and can engage in activities as per his/her abilities. Thus, there is an immense need to think, prepare and develop training programme or package to enhance executive functions in children with LDs in our country. Till date, very few studies have been conducted in the area of EFs related to LDs in India. In the present study, an attempt is made to explore the EFs and impart individualized training in such children; owing to these children have poor executive functions.

The report of the present study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter covers an introductory overview of LDs, EFs, neuropsychological intervention, significance and need for the study. The subsequent chapter covers various studies pertaining to LDs and EFs. The third chapter deals with the materials and method that the researcher adopted in the present study. The results are presented and interpreted in the subsequent chapter. The fifth chapter covers discussion of the result. Finally, researcher has discussed the summary, conclusion, implication, utility, limitations and future directions of the study.

Sanjeev Kumar Gupta