CHAPTER III

Learning Style and Social Behaviour Disposition

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LEARNING STYLE AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR DISPOSITION

Introduction:

Two of the significant aspects of education are development of social behaviour and developing a proper style. Any impact of social stratification has to be examined with regard to social behaviour and learning style. In the present chapter the concept of social behaviour and learning style are elaborated.

Learning Style:

The phenomena by which the brain organises information from the environment is termed as sensory integration. The quality of function of human learning process depends both on the environment and sensory integration. The term Learning Disabilities differentiate those children whose neurophysiological dysfunction, although not manifested by obvious motor irregularities, interfered with academic learning from those children whose learning problems stem from a variety of negative environmental factors. Sensory integrative dysfunction is regarded to be one aspect of learning disabilities (Silberzahn, 1982).

Dyslexia (reading disability), dyscalculia
(arithmetic disability), dysgraphia (writing disability), Learning Disabilities (LD), Minimal Brain Dysfunction (MBD), Hyper Kinetic Reaction Syndrome (HKS) are all included in the term Specific Learning Disabilities in recent literature. A few writers use all these terms interchangeably though they have different historical and etymological rule (Lynn, 1979). These terms are generally applied to people of normal or superior intelligence whose learning performance such as reading, writing, speaking and calculating is surprisingly poor. Learning deficiencies due to physical impairment like blindness, deafness, paralysis and the like are excluded from the range of disabilities, denoted by the term specific learning disabilities; also excluded impairment in performance due to laziness, emotional problems, inadequate training and variation in economic, social or cultural background.

Children with specific learning disabilities rarely show definite signs of neurological impairment. However they do show varying difficulties in reading, writing, spelling, speaking deficit attention, frequent change of mood, perceptual and cognitive deficits which are normally associated with children with brain damage. Since their behaviour resembles that of brain injured adults and children it can be assumed that the etiology
is of some kind of neurological impairment. Since these children usually do not present independent evidence of neurological impairment, it is possible that the biological disorders may be functional, a difference in the way the brain works, rather than structural damage to the specific areas of the brain. (Farnham-Diggory, 1979; Levine et al., 1980; Shepherd, 1985).

The term learning disability was first used by Kirk and Bateman (1962). The term has gained currency since it focuses on the educational needs of the child not on the issues of etiology and brain function which are more strongly related to the field of medicine. More recently (1968) the National Advisory Committee to the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, Office of Education, USA has come out with definition of Specific Learning Disability (SLD). The education for all handicapped children Act (of USA) of 1975 have given the following definition for SLD and the definition is the most uniformly used in USA today to identify pupils eligible for special educational SLD services and also for getting financial support for research and teacher training in their important area of special education.
"The children who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Such disorders include such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. Such term do not include children who have learning problems, which are primarily the result of visual, of emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage." PL 94-142 5(b)

A child to qualify under the above definition should meet the requirements of three criteria.

(i) "Normal intelligence": The child should be able to perform at or above the normal range on nonverbal measure which involve language concepts.

(II) Academic achievement deficit: The child should exhibit an academic achievement deficit, in at least one subject area, such as oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, mathematics reasoning, and spelling,
with deficit defined as the inability to score above a given percentile on standardized achievement tests measuring proficiency in that subject area. Although it is not presently possible to specify exactly all components of each specific learning disability, there must be a major discrepancy between expected achievement and ability which is not the result of other known and generally accepted handicapping conditions or circumstances.

(iii) The absence of other primary handicapping conditions: The child should show no evidence of visual or hearing impairment, mental retardation, severe cultural neglect, or a severe emotional disturbance." (Adamson, 1979).

The operational definition given by the Office of Education cited earlier has been criticized by some clinicians and educators. They suggest that the definition is impractical for use, not specific enough for well defined research sample and too broad to allow specific prescriptions for educational and clinical learning programme planning for a particular child. (Ross, 1976).

Ross (1976) has suggested that the use of the term "minimal brain dysfunction" or "Psychoneurological learning disability" are residuals of historical origins.
of the field and that there is little evidence to support the notion of brain dysfunction other than difficulty in learning or poor performance on a psychological test. He favours limiting the term "learning disability" to those children whose learning problem is associated with difficulties in sustaining selective attention, which probably is a derivative of a delay in the child's development.

A Behavioural Analysis of Learning Disabilities

Stott (1974) has presented a new behavioural approach to learning failure. He proposes that major reorientation is needed in our assessment of learning disabilities and suggests that we need new techniques for dealing with learning disabilities. It is generally held that each individual is endowed with a number of abilities which in the main determine the level of one's mental functioning and in any case set its limits. Stott contends that the attribution of an observed response or behaviour to the operation of an ability is a breach of the empirical discipline of thought, since it infers more than can be observed or verified. Stott argues that just because a child does not produce the right response one is not justified in assuming that the
child cannot, that he has not the right ability. One could only at best say that the response did not occur, under such circumstance. Notions of abilities, or of intrinsic qualities of mind not infrequently result in the condemnation of the individual who is capable of normal mental functioning to the role of a retardate. In contrast to the ability hypothesis, Stott invokes 'learning style hypothesis' to account for the differential degree of educational attainment found among individuals.

Stott recognises the existence of 'learning style' and regards the child's response in learning, or test, situation as primary datum. This is done as a first step in a systematic diagnosis or assessment of poor mental functioning, both of the type conventionally attributed to mental retardation or to special learning disability in children of so-called normal IQ. Succinctly put, Stott holds that the immediate antecedent of any failure to learn, whether mild or severe, is incorrect regularly, becomes an inappropriate learning style. The inappropriate learning style results in the non-use or ineffective use of cognitive and perceptual abilities. Every child is regarded to acquire and adopt a preferred style of coping and learning by the age of five. Stott
contends that it is probably not the only style in the child's behaviour repertoire but one which, by temperament or the modelling of his culture, the child is using. Learning failures in children experiencing specific learning disabilities lead to such intense feeling of self failure and self doubt, that the problems in learning become inextricably entwined with associated behaviour problems in the social and emotional development. Adamson and Adamson (1979) has put forth the thesis that the chronic learning and socialisation problems in specific learning disabilities children are so intertwined that it is impossible to assign one facet of the problem to the educator and another to the clinician.

**Social Behaviour Dispositions:**

As roles and statuses represent a patterned body of habits, traits, attitudes and ideas of individual's personality represents externally oriented pattern, internally to motivation, goals and various aspects of selfhood; called Personality. Sum total of the organisation of those traits which determine the role of individual in the group is regarded as personality. (Park and Burges). The integration of social psychological behaviour of the human being represented by habits
of action and feelings, attitudes and opinions constitutes personality. F.H. Alport (1924) views that personality traits accelerates social and that a hermit has no personality. Parsons (1963) views that the main content of the personality is derived from social system and culture through socialisation. He contends that personality is not a mere epiphenomenon of the society but rather there is interpenetration between uniqueness of organisations, life experiences and the structure of the society.

Individual's personality is constituted by behaviour disposition learned by him in his interactions. The basic patterns of behaviour dispositions are also called the primary personality trait or source traits (Cattell, 1957, 1931). Stott (1957, 1974) suggests that it is possible to identify a set of variables that represent significant behaviour disposition among children. She further assumes that each variable in the human personality constitutes a contribution on which individuals vary as a zero amount of the trait to a maximum or from the extreme negative end of contribution to the extreme positive end.

Stott (1974) contends that the behavioural aspect of the individuality are perhaps more meaningful
and more vitally important in human living than are the other areas of uniqueness and are also more fluid, more subject to change, and therefore more dynamic in relation to effective personal and social adjustments.

One of the useful ways of conceiving personality is to regard personality as consisting of a cluster of traits uniquely organised in each individual. Trait approach provides assessment of personality in terms of well defined traits. A personality trait refers to any characteristic in which one individual differs from another in a relatively permanent and consistent way. Cattell has conceived a series of traits and has arrived at a meaningful description of personality. He has identified source traits and surface traits of personality and has also developed a set of instruments. The source traits refers to a basic structure of personality which is more based on genetical and physiological factors that contribute to behavioural disposition. The surface traits refers to a set of personality traits connoting to temperamental characteristics learned by the individuals, Surface traits though are relatively long enduring are flexible and modifiable. Since personality traits
are not static they are regarded as continua. Each end of continuum representing a trait is given a name and a cluster of traits are named using alphabets. Cattell has designated personality factors identified by him using alphabets A, B, C, D and the like. The sixteen factors identified by Cattell include the following traits.

**Factor A** Reserved, detached, critical, aloof, stiff - warm hearted, outgoing, easygoing, participating.

**Factor B** Less intelligent, concrete thinking of lower scholastic mental capacity - More intelligent, abstract thinking, bright, of higher scholastic mental capacity.

**Factor C** Affected by feelings, emotionally less stable, easily upset, changeable, of lower ego strength - Emotionally stable, mature, faces reality, calm of higher ego strength (not the same as 'egotistical!')

**Factor D** Undemonstrative, deliberate, inactive, stodgy, phlegmatic - Excitable, impatient, demanding overactive, unrestrained.

**Factor E** Obedient, mild, easily led, accommodating, submissive - assertive competitive, aggressive stubborn, dominant.

**Factor F** Sober, taciturn, serious - enthusiastic, heedless, happy-go-lucky.
Factor G Disregards rules, expedient, has weaker superego strength—conscientious, persistent, moralistic, staid, has stronger super ego strength.

Factor H Shy, timid, threat sensitive—adventurous, "thick skinned", socially bold.

Factor I Tough-minded, rejects illusions—tender minded, sensitive, clinging, over protected.

Factor J Zestful, likes group action—circumspect individualism, reflective, internally restrained.

Factor O Self-assured, placid, secure, complacent, untroubled—apprehensive, self-reproaching, insecure, worrying, guilt prone.

Factor Q2 Socially group dependent, a "joiner" and sound follower—self-sufficient, prefers own decisions, resourceful.

Factor Q3 Uncontrolled, lax, follows own urges, careless of social rules, has low integration—controlled, socially precise, self-disciplined, compulsive, has high self concept control.

Factor Q4 Relaxed, tranquil, torpid, unfrustrated, composed—Tense, driven, overwrought, frustrated, fretful.

Stott has investigated personality factors comparable to the personality factors identified by Cattell,(1957, 1971) among primary school children.
using the factor analysis. The findings of the investment have resulted in identification of eight factors of personality mentioned below.

Factor A Social ascendance - lack of leadership

Factor B Personal responsibility - irresponsible impulsiveness

Factor C Introvertive self-sufficiency - need for the presence and support of others.

Factor D Social effectiveness (sociability) - social ineptitude

Factor E Personal attractiveness - lack of personal appeal

Factor F Personal security; stability - emotional inability (dependency)

Factor G Compulsive domination - complaint, retiring (adaptability)

Factor H Dependability - nondependency.

Stott has shown that it is useful and feasible to use the eight factors above cited to obtain useful description of personality. Admittedly it will not be valid to apply the Stott's scheme of personality developed in a Western Cultural milieu, as it is to obtain valid and reliable measures of personality in another cultural setting. However, the Stott's scheme
provides a worthy starting point for conceiving personality of primary school children as well as for assessing personality traits which could be found valid and reliable.