ABSTRACT
In spite of varied efforts like the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), quality of primary education in India is still wanting. Poor achievement in reading and comprehension and basic mathematical functions were and continue to be issues of concern. Not withdrawing the factors associated with the home and socio-cultural environment and individual factors of ability and motivation, lack of sufficient teaching-learning instructions and instructional materials, continue to affect the learning outcomes of children. The whole classroom approach of the intervention in a school where children hail from lower socio-economic strata was utilised. The premise of such an approach would not label as those “lagging behind”, “learning disabled”, “mentally retarded” and single them out for intervention. Combining a Vygotskian premise of an active learner, making sense of his content/learning throwing peers in learning and helping them out at the ‘Zone of Proximal Development’, the intervention was planned by training the class teacher for the use of story mapping technique and creating conceptual maps for the enhancement of reading comprehension abilities of children. The study was implemented on Class IV children in a Hindi medium private school.

To demonstrate that a whole classroom approach benefits every child, children through the use a screening device, intelligence tests, and a learning disability test were assessed and grouped as ‘children with learning disability’ (N=5), ‘children with low IQ’ (N=2) and ‘children without learning problems’ (32). Before-after assessments on reading comprehension and school achievement scores were compared to know the impact of the intervention programme.

Qualitative documentation of the teacher training and case approach of children with LD and those with LP (or reading problems) was also utilised in the study. During the pre-testing, it was found some children were poor at decoding and processing skills, which in turn affected their word-recognition and reading. Therefore, the intervention was provided in enhancing basic reading skills (e.g., word recognition, decoding and reading fluency). Post-
interventions for the children with LD showed improvement in the domain of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. Though there were individual differences in nature, speed and extent of improvement based on the children’s capacities. Results showed an improvement in children’s reading comprehension of narrative as well as expository text. In addition, improvement in children’s learning was also supported by their increased performance in final examination conducted by the school after the completion of the intervention programme. The premise of such an approach was to demonstrate that strategies which are inclusive; whole classroom approach is possible to be used efficiently by the regular teacher in the classroom without labelling children and pulling them out for special interventions. The present study has demonstrated such an approach.