Peer Victimization among Children with Special Needs: A Review Paper

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ABSTRACT
All the children are not same. They were having different learning style as well as different area of interest. Some of them were good at academics while others were good at play. It is necessary for every child to acquire with basic skills like reading, writing, listening and speaking. When the child faces any kind of difficulty in any of these areas it is consider to be a problematic situation and termed as learning disability. Not only the child faces problem in learning but also deals with other psychological problems. Nowadays peer victimization is a common practice prevailing in schools. Many researchers found that peer victimization occurs due to lack of proper supervision or guidance to the victim. Also the study found that peer victimization affect more to the learning disability children groups. Children with learning disability were easily targeted and were victimized by their peers when compared with the children without learning disability. It was found that girls with ADHD are more likely affected by peer victimization than compared with the boys with ADHD.

Key Words: Peer Victimization and Children’s with Special Needs

INTRODUCTION
Every child is unique. In the very first stage of his/her schooling a child is totally dependent on the support of the parents, teachers etc. their guidance provide a basic foundation to child. Due to the individual differences some children are good at academics, and some are good at play. Thus, all children are not alike. It is necessary for every child to acquire with basic skills like reading, writing, listening and speaking. When the child faces any kind of difficulty in any of these areas it is consider to be a problematic situation. The condition where child faces any learning difficulty it is said to be learning disability. Learning disability is a development disorder of speech, language, communication skills and reading which were essential in the social interaction. Children with sensory disabilitysuch as blindness, deafness and mental retardation are not included (kirk, 1963).

Now- a- days peer victimization is a common problem in schools, colleges, or any work place. Peer victimization occurs when the supervision or the guidance to the victim is low (Vaillancourt et al., 2010).But the Peer victimization found to affect more to the learning disability children groups. Children with learning disability were easily targeted and were victimized by their peers when compared with the children without learning disability. Children with learning disability were victimized in many ways by their peers such as hitting physically, abusing or calling names, isolating from the groups etc. Children with learning disability were having low self- esteem, they were more isolated and depressed and also having low social interaction. Due to low personality disabled children were more prone to the victimization. Peer victimization is a serious problem which hinders the psychosocial development of children which results in low academic performance, increase absenteeism, withdrawal from the social groups, fear of being targeted by everyone, lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem and dissatisfaction from the life.
Peer victimization was first coined by Dan Olweus in 1993. Olweus (1999) defined peer victimization as, “a constellation of behaviours that can be characterized as (a) aggressive or intended to harm, (b) performed repeatedly and over time, and (c) occurring in interpersonal relationships in which a power imbalance exists”. Peer victimization is an act done intentionally to harass the victim child verbally, physically or abuse psychologically to cause harm to the child(Olweus, 1993). Hawker and Bolton (2000) explain peer victimization as, “the experience among children of being a target of the aggressive behaviour of other children, who are not siblings and not necessarily age mates”.

Learning disabilities was first coined by Dr. Samuel Kirk on 6th April, 1963. Kirk proposed a label which was “enthusiastically received and helped to unite the participants into an organization known as the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, the forerunner of today’s Learning Disabilities Association” (Lerner, 2000). Kirk (1963) defines learning disabilities as, “a group of children who have disorders in development in language, speech, reading, and associated communication skills needed for social interaction. In this group children who have sensory handicaps such as blindness or deafness and children with mental retardation are excluded”. Merriam-Webster(2012) defines learning disability as, “Any of various conditions (such as dyslexia or dysgraphia) that interfere with an individual’s ability to learn and so result in impaired functioning in language, reasoning, or academic skills (such as reading, writing, and mathematics) and that are thought to be caused by difficulties in processing and integrating information- called also learning difference”.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Berntson (2003) conducted a research on the peer victimization of high school students. It was found that student of both schools reported lower level of victimization. It was found that in school A there exist no significant role of gender difference but in school B boys experience more peer victimization than the girls. Also, the boys from both the school were facing overt victimization and the girls were facing relational victimization.

Storch, Nock, Warner, and Barlas (2003) examined the relationship of peer victimization with social-psychological adjustment of Hispanic and African-American children. Results of the study found that overt and relational victimization were positively related to depression, social avoidance, loneliness and fear of negative evaluation. Boys reported high experiences of overt victimization as compared to girls whereas no gender difference exists in case of relational victimization.

Nowick (2003) conducted a research to measure the social competence of children with learning disabilities and compare them with low and average to high achievement peers. Results of the study concluded that according to teacher perception about children with learning disabilities were low in academic achievement and greater risk of social competences as compared to their counterpart. Children with learning disabilities receive negative peer nomination as compared to their comparison group.

Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, and Kernic (2005) conducted a study on the occurrence of bullying in elementary school. The findings of the study reveal that 22% of children were indulge in bullying practice either as a bully or a victim, or both and bully-victims and victim children were having lower academic achievement. The students from all three groups reported of not feeling safety at school and bully-victims and victims reported that they were having no feelings of belongings towards school.
Sveinsson (2005) found that “students with disabilities may have some of the characteristics identified as risk factors for victimization. Hispanic students who have disabilities report higher rates of victimization in comparison to their non-disabled peers.

Sullivan, Farrell, and Kliewer (2006) conducted a study on, “Peer victimization in early adolescence: association between physical and relational victimization and drug use, aggression, and delinquent behaviours among urban middle school students”. Both the males and females reported physical and relational forms of victimization. Whereas, the study reports that males experience higher rate of victimization than girls except the act of hair pulling and kicking act.

Baumeister et al. (2008) found a positive relationship between peer victimization and learning disabled. Also, the learning-disabled children who had the co morbid psychiatric condition shows higher risk of peer victimization than children without a co morbid psychiatric condition.

Wiener and Mak (2008) explored the higher rate of victimization by peers among children with “attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder”. Moreover, it was observed that girls with ADHD are more likely affected by peer victimization than compared with the boys with ADHD.

Didden et al. (2009) examined cyber bullying among children with development and intellectual disabilities and they face victimization at least once in a week. There exists no significant relationship between cyber bullying and age and gender. Cyber bullying found to be significantly associated with intellectual and development disability of student in special education programme.

Rose, Espelage, and Monda-Amaya (2009) conducted a study on “bullying and victimization rates among children of special and general schools”. Findings of the study reveals that there is significantly higher rate of aggression, victimization and bullying perpetration noticed in children studying in special education than children in general class room. In the special education the younger and older children experience higher rates for bullying perpetration whereas, in general education older children experience low rate of victimization.

Turner et.al. (2011) suggested that children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder are more prone to peer victimization where children with internalizing psychological disorder face greater risk in terms of sexual victimization and maltreatment. Furthermore, the researcher found the relationship of interpersonal and behavioural difficulties with the peer victimization. National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), explain learning disabilitiesasasa state in which a victim person is unable to perform the daily activities.

Lindsay and Mcperson (2012) conducted study on children/ youth with cerebral palsy and examined the effect of exclusion and bullying at school on these children. Results indicates that these children experience more social exclusion from both peers and the teachers. The attitude of teachers for children with disability and the socio-contextual environment more or less become the cause for social exclusion of these children by peers. Results also showed that bullies use both form of socialexclusion may be implicit or explicit which leads them to use verbal and physical victimization.

Ates, Rasinski, Yıldırım, and Yıldız (2012) conducted a study on dyslexic children and the problem faced by them and their parents in school. The findings of the research indicate that students with learning disability were treated more negatively by their teachers, peers and parents. Female Dyslexic students are more prone to such problems than males. Also, results found that parents of dyslexic students pointed the other problems which are contributing for above mentioned causes.

Kouwenberg et al. (2012) conducted a study on the role of parents in reducing the peer victimization and social problems, among children with hard to hearing or deaf hearing.
It was found that children with deaf or hard of hearing are more victimized by their peers as compared to those of hearing children. There is no significant role of gender on peer victimization. Also, children with deaf hearing who were studying in special school were more prone to victimization as compared to children with deaf or hard hearing who were studying in regular school.

Frerichs, Maag, Siebecker, Swearer and Wang (2012) conducted study on bullying dynamic among students in special and general education. Findings of the study indicated that there is no significant role of gender on victimization and bullying. Moreover, grade difference found to be exist in student of general education and no grade difference found to be exists in students of special education. Also, students with disabilities depict poor pro social behaviour than peers in the general field of education.

Dhillon and Babu (2013) conducted a study to measures the perception of children about their peer conflicts. The findings of study indicate that peer conflicts have lower intensity and that too for short interval on the younger children who experienced it, whereas peer conflicts have more intensity for a longer interval on older girls who experienced.

Shekhar, Senha, and Bhagat (2014) found a relationship between peer victimization and psychosocial factor. The study was conducted on sample of 200 school children of age 10 to 14 years studying in Govt. and private schools of Jammu region. The study indicated that peer victimization influence differently to the students studying in govt. and private school. Govt. school children victimized more as compared to private school children. Also, the two groups differ significantly on loneliness and depression. Whereas there exists no gender difference in any of the variable.

Son, et. al. (2014) found that the children with disabilities are more venerable to peer victimization. These students spend more time in special education classroom settings which leads to children external problem behaviours and very less interaction with the peers due to which they face more peer victimization.

Marjorie and Mcgee (2014) examined the relationship between disability, psychosocial distress mediated by peer victimization. It was found that peer victimization was a partial facilitator of the association between disability and psychosocial distress. However, the study did not find any significant effect of gender on peer victimization and psychosocial distress.

Kavnak, Lepore, Kliewer, and Jaggi (2015) conducted a study on peer victimization and aggressive behaviour in school and investigated whether the coping mechanism reduces the significant relationship between aggressive behaviour and peer victimization. It was found that peer victimization and anger regulation had a significant effect on teacher-rated aggressive behaviours.

L.T.M.G. Hospital, Mumbai (2016) conducted a study on learning disability. Results found that children from different socioeconomic strata of society i.e., the lower, middle and the upper middle strata are more likely to suffer from learning disability.

Fogleman et al. (2019) examined the relationship between peer victimization, attention defect hyperactive disorder and emotion regulation. The findings of study suggested that there was significant relationship between peer victimization and emotion regulation for both children with ADHD and children without ADHD. Furthermore, the study found the association between peer victimization and ADHD through emotion regulation.

**CONCLUSION**

On the basis of above reviews, it can be conclude that there exists a positive relationship between learning disability and peer victimization, it was found that girls with ADHD are more likely affected by peer victimization than compared with the boys with
ADHD. Dyslexic students were treated more negatively by their teachers, peers and parents. Female Dyslexic students are more prone to victimization problems than males. Furthermore, researchers found that children belongs to different socio-economic strata in society i.e., the lower, middle and the upper middle strata are more likely to suffer from learning disability, also there was positive relationship between peer victimization and emotion regulation both for children with ADHD and children without ADHD and researcher found the relationship of interpersonal and behavioural difficulties with the peer victimization.

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