

# Cartoons – A major reason for increase in Learning Disabilities among children of the era

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**Abstract- Background-** The term “learning disabilities”, sometimes referred to as specific learning disabilities, is an umbrella term that covers a range of neurologically based disorders in learning and various degrees of severity of such disorders. Predecessor terms include minimal brain damage and minimal brain dysfunction. Broadly speaking, these disorders involve difficulty in one or more, but not uniformly in all, basic psychological processes: input (auditory and visual perception), integration (sequencing, abstraction, and organization), and memory (working, short term, and long-term memory), output (expressive language), and motor (fine and gross motor).

**Objective-** The objective of this research is to find out the effect of cartoon in a child’s brain and how it is leading to increase in learning disabilities.

**Methods-** The age group of the children was ranged from 5years to 15years of age. All the participants went through an experiment and the parents filled a questionnaire form. Thirty-Four Participants participated in this survey based experimental research

**Results–** Children who were shown cartoons like Angry birds showed a much lesser competence in activities such as speaking, concentration and writing properly, whereas children who saw show like MAD were better in listening the instructions with concentration and performing the further activities like coloring, buttoning and writing alphabets in boxes

**Discussion-** With the above discussion it is clear that the cartoons are genuinely affecting the minds of children in a drastic way, even though parents have no relation with their learning problem, yet it is seen from the above results that cartoons like Tom and Jerry, SpongeBob and Mr. Bean create an ill effect on the subconscious mind which further makes it difficult for the child to communicate and understand others properly.

## INTRODUCTION

The term “learning disabilities”, sometimes referred to as specific learning disabilities, is an umbrella term that covers a range of neurologically based disorders in learning and various degrees of severity of such

disorders. Predecessor terms include minimal brain damage and minimal brain dysfunction.

Broadly speaking, these disorders involve difficulty in one or more, but not uniformly in all, basic psychological processes: input (auditory and visual perception), integration (sequencing, abstraction, and organization), and memory (working, short term, and long-term memory), output (expressive language), and motor (fine and gross motor).

Learning disabilities vary from individual to individual and may present in a variety of ways. Learning disabilities may manifest as difficulty: processing information by visual and auditory, means, which may impact upon reading, spelling, writing, and understanding or using language, prioritizing, organizing, doing mathematics, and following instructions, storing or retrieving information from short- or long-term memory, using spoken language, and clumsiness or difficulty with handwriting. Learning disabilities are not emotional disturbances, intellectual disabilities, or sensory impairments.

They are not caused by inadequate parenting or lack of educational opportunity. Cognitive assessment, including psycho educational or neuropsychological evaluation, is of critical importance in diagnosing a learning disability. Learning disabilities may be diagnosed by qualified school or educational psychologists, by clinical psychologists, and by clinical neuropsychologists who are trained and experienced in the assessment of learning disabilities.

## TYPES OF LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities are due to genetic and/or neurobiological factors that alter brain functioning in a manner which affects one or more cognitive processes related to learning. These processing problems can interfere with learning basic skills such as reading, writing and/or math. They can also

interfere with higher level skills such as organization, time planning, abstract reasoning, long or short-term memory and attention. It is important to realize that learning disabilities can affect an individual's life beyond academics and can impact relationships with family, friends and in the workplace.

1. Dyscalculia - A specific learning disability that affects a person's ability to understand numbers and learn math facts.
2. Dysgraphia - A specific learning disability that affects a person's handwriting ability and fine motor skills.
3. Dyslexia - A specific learning disability that affects reading and related language-based processing skills.
4. Non-Verbal Learning disabilities - Has trouble interpreting nonverbal cues like facial expressions or body language and may have poor coordination.
5. Oral/Written Language Disorder and specific reading comprehension Deficit - Learning disabilities that affect an individual's understanding of what they read or of spoken language. The ability to express oneself with oral language may also be impacted.
6. Dyspraxia - A disorder which causes problems with movement and coordination, language and speech.

#### HOW CARTOONS AFFECT THE BRAIN OF A CHILD

In a study, researchers divided 60 four-year-olds into three groups. Each group was put into a room and directed to do one of the following activities: draw with crayons, watch a PBS show called (Caillou), or watch a fast-paced commercial TV show called *SpongeBob*. After 9 minutes, the children took a battery of tests that required focus, concentration, patience, working memory, and manipulation. Researchers were hoping to capture the "executive function" of a child's brain.

The results were remarkably in tune with what common sense has been telling us for years. Children who watched the fast-paced cartoons did significantly worse on the attention and memory testing than the children in the other two groups. There was no difference in performance between the educational TV (*Caillou*) group and the drawing group. *What the*

*researchers concluded* was that the *unnatural pace* of the cartoon sequences was over stimulating and stressful to the child's brain.

#### OBJECTIVES

The objective of this research is to find out the effect of cartoon in a child's brain and how it is leading to increase in learning disabilities.

#### METHODS

- ❖ Total number of participants  
Thirty-Four Participants participated in this survey based experimental research
- ❖ Type of Interview  
I used two types of data collection method; one is questionnaire and second is experiment upon children.
- ❖ Population type and survey  
The age group of the children was ranged from 5years to 15years of age. All the participants went through an experiment and the parents filled a questionnaire form. The participants i.e. Children with learning disabilities were from 3 schools of Pune, 10 from one school along with their parents. It was a detailed discussion with the participants by forming a rapport with them; all of them were clearly informed about the confidentiality of their information and was assured about their information being safe with me.

- ❖ The Interview Technique  
The participants were first asked about their Age and gender and the place they are currently staying. Then the participants were divided among 2 groups of 15 children in each. One of the groups was sent to a room to show Animated Mr. Bean and Tom and Jerry episode and the other group was sent in another room to show MAD (Music, Art and Dance) and F.A.Q.

#### RESULTS

The following are the results after the above experiment; Questions answered by participant's parents –

Q1. The children were asked about their favorite cartoon TV Show?

- A. Oggy B. Tom and Jerry C. Mr. Bean D. SpongeBob

According to parents nearly 60% of the children favor SpongeBob among the other options.

Q2. What are your daily hourly rate watching cartoons?

A. 1 - 2 hours B. 2 - 3 hours C. 3 - 4 hours D. More than 4 hours

According to parents more that 30% of samples pass more than 4 hours watching TV Series.

Q3. Do you think cartoon characters have psychological effects on children?

A. Yes B. No C. Some time

According to parents nearly 80% children have been affected psychologically after watching cartoons.

Q4. Do Children behave differently after watching cartoons?

A. Yes B. No C. Some time

According to parents 60% children behave differently after watching cartoons, as much as children give attention to the cartoon and the characters, their behavior vary.

Q5. Do children change their spoken language or accent after watching the cartoon?

A. Yes B. No C. Some time

According to parents 60% of the children are changed their language and accent after watching cartoons that is because children get affected with the cartoon character and start copycatting them in every possible way including the way of speaking.

Q6. Have you noticed increase in fighting between children after they watched the cartoons?

A. Yes B. No C. Some time

According to parents 60% of the children behavior changed after watching cartoons, as they start fighting with each other using the same skills and techniques applied by the cartoon characters.

Q7. Do children prefer watching cartoons to outdoor games?

A. Yes B. No C. Sometimes

According to parents nearly 60% of the children prefer watching cartoons to outdoor games this means that the entertainment gained by the cartoon is much higher than the physical entertainment the children enjoy from outdoor playing or going to a picnic.

RESULT 2 – Children who were shown cartoons like Angry birds showed a much lesser competence in activities such as speaking, concentration and writing properly, whereas children who saw show like MAD were better in listening the instructions with concentration and performing the further activities like coloring, buttoning and writing alphabets in boxes

#### DISCUSSION

With the above discussion it is clear that the cartoons are genuinely affecting the minds of children in a drastic way, even though parents have no relation with their learning problem, yet it is seen from the above results that cartoons like Tom and Jerry, SpongeBob and Mr. Bean create and ill effect on the subconscious mind which further makes it difficult for the child to communicate and understand others properly. As the cartoons have very bad language, either stammering or such language which is difficult to understand or gain any knowledge, unknowingly damages the brain functioning of a child, it is necessary to limit the child's exposure to such cartoons or there would be more increase in children with learning disabilities.

The above research made it pretty much visible that children develops a certain amount of learning disability through cartoons, spending a time period more than 4hours every day is enough to make one addicted to a certain show, but if the show is such which has some or the other kind of speech or handwriting deformity( for. Ex in Doraemon, Nobita is shown with being constantly bad at school, with bad handwriting and being dependent on Doraemon) this creates an ill effect on the child's brain to be dependent on someone else all the time. As Children have a habit of copying others and so does TV show characters, their behavior, accent, understanding level changes, most of the time it deteriorates therefore it is necessary to have a certain limit on these cartoons and instead encourage them to watch shows such as MAD, FAQ, Balti Boy etc, which not only have a good language but possess good amount of knowledge for children

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