

THE PREVALENCE OF READING RETARDATION  
(DYSLEXIA) IN A SCHOOL POPULATION IN SRI LANKA

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Reading retardation is a learning disorder recognised to be common in childhood in the West. Rutter et al found an incidence of 4% in rural England and 7% in London. This is a report of the findings in a survey conducted among the 5th graders in a middle level school in Kandy.

There were 92 students in the grade 5 classes & all were given a reading test selected from the 3rd and 5th grade reading books. Their reading was timed, and rated for fluency, number of errors and repetitions. Comprehension and vocabulary were also assessed by standardized questions based on the reading material.

A low fluency group was identified that consisted of 9 children out of 92. Males were predominant in the low fluency group. High repetition rate and poor comprehension were notable in this group.

Reading retardation is an extremely handicapping learning disorder that leads to failure at school despite good intelligence and later leads to behavioural and emotional disorders. In the population studies 9.7% have serious reading retardation. The majority of such children are males and they have a higher incidence of emotional and behavioural disorders. These children also come from lower social classes. The findings are very consistent with those described in children with reading retardation in the West.

There is a sizeable group of children with severe reading difficulties in our schools and they need special help. These children go unrecognized at present and they are likely to drop out of school and develop behavioural disorders in the absence of special help.

## SECTION A

	TIME	FLUENCY	REPETITION	ERRORS	COMPREHENSION
1.	3 min 10 sec	2	23	22	2
2.	3 min 5 sec	2	20	29	2
3.	5 min 55 sec	2 (Phonetic)	16	30	2
4.	-	0	-	-	-
5.	9 min 30 sec	2 (Phonetic)	21	45	0
6.	7 min 30 sec	2 (Phonetic)	18	31	2
7.	7 min	2 (Phonetic)	19	36	1
8.	5 min 15 sec	2 (Phonetic)	38	36	3
9.	6 min 30 sec	2	15	26	2