- A slow learner builds up lot of defense mechanism to cover up their failures and frustrations and these, in turn, build up a lot of worry and anxiety.

Education of the Slow Learner:

In every classroom there are slow learners. While presenting lesson, the teacher should keep the following important things in mind.

- **Patience:** Slow learners acquire knowledge at a much slower rate than that of other children they make mistakes in listening, speaking, reading and writing. All these demands great patience on the part of the teacher.
- **Praise:** Slow learners often get beating, scolding, disapproval from teachers and such treatment make them apathetic to academic life. The teacher should, therefore develop the habit of praising the slow learners wherever an opportunity for doing so arises.
- **Simple assignment:** While giving assignments for classwork and homework, the teacher should try to frame simple questions and problems for slow learners.
- **Repeated drill:** Slow learners need repititions for understanding. The teacher, therefore should arrage repeated drill for the slow learners.
- **Use of audio-visual aids:** Abstract thoughts and ideas are relatively more dificult to grasp than the qualities of concrete objects. Therefore, as far as possible, the teacher should use simple audio-visual aids in his teaching for the benifit of the slow learners.
- **Special Classes:** For the slow learners, special classes can be arranged from time to time to explain difficult topics of the syllabus.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1. Who is an 'exceptional child'?

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Q.2. What are the different types of exceptional children?

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Q.3. What are the principles to be followed in the education for exceptional children?

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8.4 CLASSIFICATION OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

In the previous section, we have learnt the meaning of exceptional children. Now we shall discuss its types. Psychologists have classified exceptional children into many broad categories, each of them having one or more types. Some of the major divisions are discussed below:

(1) Intellectually exceptional- a) the Gifted child. b) Slow learner, c) Mentally Retarded Child.

(2) Physically exceptional- a) visually impaired, b) Speech Impairment, c) crippled.

(3) Emotionally and socially exceptional- the delinquent child.

They should be educated in such a manner that they gain self confidence and become self reliant. Even after leaving school, the progress and development of the children must be looked into and assistance provided whenever needed.

8.5 INTELLECTUALLY EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

In this section, we shall first discuss the intellectually exceptional children, the backward childrenand then we shall refer to the slow learners

with particular reference to educational programmes needed for categories of each children.

8.5.1 Gifted Children and Educational Programme

Children who have very high I.Q. or those who have special abilities in different fields like sport, music, literature etc. are called gifted children. Gifted children show proficiency in the activities that they are involved in.

According to Havighurst "the talented or gifted is one who show consistently remarkable performance in any worthwhile line of endeavour".

Hollingworth also offers a comprehensive definition. "By a gifted child we mean one who is far more educable than the generality of children are. The greater educability may lie along the lines of one of the arts, as in music or drawing, it may be in the sphere of mechanical aptitude or it may consist in surpassing power to achieve literacy and abstract knowledge." Our conception of gifted children will be clear if we go through the characteristies of such children.

Characteristics of Gifted Children:

Some of the main characteristics of gifted children are:

- They have very high intelligence, their I.Q. is above 140.
- The gifted children have varied interests and are usually inquisitive in nature.
- The gifted children can concentrate on any activity for a longer period, and can adjust well in the environment.
- The gifted children always aspire to excel in whatever they do; they have the ability to judge things rationally and can reason letter.

Education Programme for the Gifted:

The education which are suitable for the gifted children are as follows:

- **Individual attention:** Each individual backward child has his own academic problems. Therefore, the teacher should pay attention to these children individually.
- **Use of concrete teaching strategy:** Backward children can't understand the learning material easily. Therefore concrete objects or different types of teaching aids should be used in teaching
- **Framing special curriculum:** There should be simpler curriculum for such children with less of abstract concepts and of more facts and information, less of scholastic material and more of non scholastic components.
- **Establishing separate schools:** There should be separate schools for backward children where rigour of academic curriculum will be less and emphasis on pleasant co-curricular activities will be more.

8.5.3 Slow learner and Educational Programme

The backward child, as we have seen above, is mentally retarded, that means he or she has low I.Q. The slow learner, on the other hand is educationally retarded, not due to low I.Q but due to some other reasons.

The problems of a slow learner are as the following:

- A slow learner has limitted cognitive capacity. He or she finds it dificult to adjust himself to the classroom situation.
- A slow learner has poor memory. It occurs due to lack of concentration.
- A slow learner fails to get adequate motivation for learning due to either emotional problems arising out of situations at home or due to the lack of necessary facilities.
- A slow learner is unable to express ideas through language. He or she also lacks imagination and foresight.
- Due to frequent experience of failure, a slow learner can't bring necessary determination to bear upon any situation of facing new challenges.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5. Whom do you call a backward child? What are the main characteristics of a Backward Child?

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Objectives of Education for Backward Children:

The following are the main objectives of the education for backward children:-

- One major objective is to help the backward child to develop his limited qualities to make him self reliant.
- Education must be such as to make the child to become socially adequate, or in other words, to help the child to conduct himself properly in the society.
- The education programmes for backward children should include those subjects which have practical implications. Opportunities should be provided to develop certain skills through repeated instructions and guidance and careful training.

Education for Backward Children:

Before any education is designed, the backwardness of a child must be ascertained. Today, there are different psychological tests and methods to examine and observe the levels of backwardness and consequently design the education programme for such children. The following are some of the ways and means by which the backward children in our schools can be helped.

- **Provision for remedial teaching:** The backward children should be given remedial teaching in a separate section or as a small separate group in the same section.

Suitable Curriculum: The curriculum for the gifted should be designed differently from the one for the average student. The curriculum should include more activities which help to bring forth the creative abilities of the children, it must motivate the children to investigate and explore and lay greater emphasis on critical thinking and logical analysis.

Provision of double promotion: There should be provision for double promotion or early promotion for the gifted children. This will help to place each child in the class where he can express his potential to the best of his abilities. However, care should be taken while promoting, as maturity and health conditions of the child should be taken into consideration.

Enrichment opportunities: Programmes, both curricular and cocurricular should be stimulating, must lay greater emphasis on their creative expressions and proper insight into learning situations. The child must be given individual assignments within a stipulated time limit. This will enable the teacher to evaluate his progress properly. The curriculum should be flexible enough to cater to a gifted child's abilities to development him to the maximum possible extent.



CHECK YOUR PROGESS

Q.4. Who are the gifted children? Describe their characteristics.

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8.5.2 Backward Children and Educational Programme

In total contrast to the gifted, the backward children are those who lag behind the normal children in their capabilities. The backward children are usually identified with failure to answer simple classroom questions, inattention, inability to complete relatively easy activities. They are therefore considered to have low I.Q.

Burton Hall stated that "backwardness in general, is applied to case where their educational attainment falls below the level of their natural abilities".

Burt C. has defined a backward child, "as one who in mid-school carrer is unable to do the work for the class next below which is normal for his age."

Backward children are of different types-some who have very low. I.Q. (between 30/35 and 50/55) are called mentally retarded and those who are called 'dull' have almost normal I.Q between 70 and 90.

Characteristics of Backward Children:

The backward children have the following characteristics:

- They cannot learn as speedily as the normal children.
- They learn mostly through initiation and more suggestible than average children.
- The ability of critical thinking and logical analysis is lacking in backward children.
- Unlike the gifted children who have varied interests, the backward children have limited interests.
- In backward children it is usually found that there is a lack of physical and mental coordination.
- Backward children have adjustment problems. They cannot complete the assigned tasks easily and must fall behind the desired level of achievement.
- They also lack motivation to learn and become worried at trivial matters.

- The backward child may sometimes become quite aggressive as he may suffer from feelings of insecurity and inferiority.

Causes of Backwardness:

Backwardness can be caused by the following factors:

- **Physical Condition:** Poor physical growth, sight and hearing impairment, speech impairment are the causes of backwardness. A physically challenged child may find it different to keep pace with the achievements of the normal children.
- **Mental or intellectual Condition:** Intellectual deficiency or low I.Q. is an important cause of backwardness. Children with intellectual backwardness, lack the capacity of critical and abstract thinking and find it difficult to correlate between different experiences and also to analyse the intricacies of problems rationally.
- **Emotional Condition:** Usually, backward children are emotionally unstable. They become unusually excited or worried about the simplest of things. They suffer from frustration and depression as they are not capable of solving their problems. They also resort to telling lies most of the time**.**
- **Home Environment:** Undesirable home environment causes backwardness in children. Poor economic condition, separated parents or broken homes, uneducated parents, alcoholic family members, unusually strict parents, negligence towards the children can cause backwardness even if they may be of normal intelligence.
- **School Environment:** Inefficient teaching procedures, poor and ill organised school administration, partial behaviour of teachers, absence of proper guidance and counseling for students are the factors which further the cause of backwardness in children.
- **Social Condition:** Unsympathetic attitude from the other members of the society, undesirable friends, discrimination of the child along the lines of caste, class, religion, sex etc. cause backwardness in children.