

# Perceptions of educational experiences among Sinhala speaking adolescents with dyslexia in Sri Lanka

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**Background:** This study focuses on the perception of adolescents with dyslexia and experiences in educational settings, the online educational system, and the accommodations provided in educational settings. Evidence shows that dyslexia is heavily influenced by educational, social, and emotional experiences across the life span. It appears that mainly environmental factors influence children's academic success.

**Objectives:** The general objective is to explore thoughts and views of adolescents with dyslexia on their educational experience in Sri Lanka. The specific objectives of the study were to explore the perceptions of experiences in an educational setting of adolescents with dyslexia (age 10-19), to explore the experiences related to the current online school system, and to describe the perceptions of educational accommodations provided by educational settings for adolescents with dyslexia.

**Methods:** A qualitative study design was used as the study design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom or WhatsApp video call in the Sri Lankan context. Twelve (12) adolescents with dyslexia aged between 10-19 years were interviewed through purposive sampling. The researcher also contacted speech therapists through private clinics and the Ayati centre. Data were analysed by using the IPA analysis method.

**Results:** In educational contexts, participants have both positive and negative experiences. Most of them have negative academic experiences than positive. However, rather than focus on academic work, their tendency was to focus on extracurricular activities. As a Low Middle-Income Country (LMIC), attending to online classes was a significant challenge. Some children don't have access and the majority have connectivity problems. While some of them benefit from accommodations provided by their educational environment, others lack access to a well-regarded accommodation program.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, most children with dyslexia perceive negative experiences. However, it has been possible to succeed in their lives with more help from family and from education settings, which depends on the perception of the adolescents, teachers, and parents. Participants from rural areas and lower economic families report typically negative experiences. This study exposed that family support is essential to their educational success.

**Keywords:** *Dyslexia, Educational experiences, Accommodations, Online education, Adolescents*