

# A Comparative Study Between the Phonetic Approach and the Whole-Word Approach on Reading Performance Among Children with Mild Intellectual Disability: A Pilot Study

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Children with intellectual disability (ID) experience difficulties in reading, which leads to challenges in achieving their academic and functional skills. There is an ongoing debate on the best approach to teach Hindi to children with intellectual disabilities.

**Aim:** The current study aims to compare the effectiveness of the 'whole-word' and 'phonetic approach' on reading performance among students with mild intellectual disabilities.

**Method:** Twenty students (N = 20) with mild intellectual disabilities were assessed to determine their reading skills in Hindi using a validated prerequisite checklist. Based on the evaluation, ten participants (N = 10) were selected using a non-probability purposive sampling procedure and randomly assigned to two experimental groups, each with five participants (N = 5). An intervention using the phonetic approach (E1) and whole-word approach (E2) was conducted for 20 sessions.

**Result:** An independent t-test was conducted to compare post-test mean scores of subjects who were taught reading Hindi using a phonetic and whole-word approach. The t-value 0.39 ( $p > .05$ ), with a post-test mean difference of only 1.8, indicates no significant difference in the post-test mean scores of subjects taught using the phonetic approach compared to the whole-word approach. This result suggests that both methods are equally effective.

**Conclusion:** The research findings suggest that both approaches are equally effective in teaching reading in Hindi. It depends on the ability of educators to judge their students' learning styles and use the most suitable method to teach them to read Hindi in a classroom.

**Keywords:** Mild Intellectual Disability, Phonetic Approach, Reading, Whole-word Approach