

Original Article

Assessment of Knowledge Regarding Learning Disabilities in Children Among Primary School Teachers.

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Abstract

Background : Learning disability belongs to a heterogeneous group of disorders which exhibits with significant difficulties in acquiring and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical calculation. This condition broadly affects the scholastic and functional skills of the children. The Aim of this study is To know the level of understanding on learning disabilities in children among primary school teachers in R.L.Jalappa central school at Kolar.

Setting and Design: A descriptive survey approach with non-experimental research design was adopted .The study was conducted on primary school teachers at R.L Jalappa central school, Tamaka, Kolar.

Materials and Methods: The samples were chosen by using non-probability convenient sampling technique with the sample size of 30 primary school teachers. A structured knowledge questionnaire on learning disability with 35 items by using self- administration method.

Statistical Analysis: The data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and chi-square test.

Results: Majority 14(46.6%) of the primary school teachers were in the age group of above 31-35 years and 19 (63.3%) were female .Most of the primary school teachers 11(36.7%) were qualified with B.Sc, B.Ed; Regarding total years of experience as a teacher 12(40%) of them have less than 5 years of experience. In regard to level of knowledge; Out of 30 primary school teachers, 18(60%) of them had inadequate knowledge, 11(36.7%) had moderately adequate knowledge and 01(3.3%) of them had adequate knowledge.

Conclusion : Since learning disabilities were accepted as a major problem in school going population in today's world. The findings of the study suggested that there was a need for giving structured teaching programme as well as some training for the primary school teachers.

Keywords: Learning disability, Knowledge, Primary School Teachers.

Introduction

Learning disabilities is defined as a heterogeneous group of disorders which has a significant impact in acquiring and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical difficulties .

This condition mainly affects the academic and functional skills of the children. "Learning disabilities" is an unexplained difficulty in a person with average intelligence in learning basic academic skills. These skills are important for achieving success at school and work, as well as for coping with life in general.¹

There are many rationales for school failure, but a common one is a specific learning disability. Children with learning disabilities will have a normal level of intelligence and finds tough to follow instructions, concentrate and be good at home as well as in school. Yet, despite this effort, he or she is not performing the school tasks correctly and fails in it.² Learning disabilities, prevails one in ten school children. In this aspect, early identification and interven-

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tion by the teachers and parents will bring lots of changes if they are acquired with adequate knowledge and appropriate skills in taking care of these children which helps the child to improve in the near future.³

Significance of The Study

Every child has the right for quality education and learning as each child's education is important. An estimated 93 million children worldwide live with disabilities, like all children, children with disabilities have ambitions and dreams for their futures, like all children they need quality education to develop their skills and realize their full potential.⁴

Study skills are very important for any students in their learning process. And this study skill benefits the students to be more efficient, where as children with learning disabilities require more time to inculcate this approach in their learning process.⁵ Early identification of children with various learning disabilities is very important for the early intervention in the prevention of learning disabilities.

Inclusive education (IE) is a new approach towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones with in the same roof.⁶ Earlier these children are sent to special schools for learning process, now in order to address the needs of these children in normal school itself; hence the primary school teachers should be aware of learning disabilities and its concepts in order to meet their challenges.

Objectives

1. To estimate the level of knowledge regarding learning disabilities in children among primary school teachers.
2. To determine the association between the knowledge scores and selected socio-demographic variables of primary school teachers.

Material and Methods

A descriptive survey approach with non-experimental research design was selected. The study was carried out on primary school teachers at R.L Jalappa central school, Tamaka, Kolar. The samples were chosen by using non-probability convenient sampling technique with the sample size of 30 primary school teachers. A structured knowledge questionnaire on learning disability with 35 multiple choice questions was used. The questionnaire discuss on the general concepts of learning disability, types and characteristics about each type of learning disability. The questionnaire was validated with nursing experts. The

right answer was scored as one and the wrong answer as zero which is interpreted as adequate knowledge (>75%), moderately adequate knowledge (50-75%) and inadequate knowledge (<50%).

Formal permission was obtained from the institutional ethics committee and permission was taken from the authority of the school. The group members briefed on the purpose of the study to the primary school teachers and got written informed consent from the participants. The school teachers who were willing to participate in the study were gathered in the class room after their working hours. The structured tool was distributed to all the 30 primary school teachers who showed interest to participate in the study and had curiosity to know about what is learning disability. The responses were collected from all 30 primary school teachers through self-administered method. Confidentiality and anonymity was preserved during the process of data collection. Later the data was coded and processed for statistical analysis by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Further a pamphlet on learning disability was distributed to all the primary school teachers, irrespective of their results.

Results

Regarding the distribution of socio-demographic variables, Majority 14(46.6%) of the primary school teachers are found to be in the age group of above 31-35 years and 19(63.3%) were female. Most of the primary school teachers 11(36.7%) were certified with B.Sc, B.Ed; maximum of the teachers belongs to Hindu religion 29(96.7%). With regard to total years of experience as a teacher 12(40%) of them have less than 5 years of experience.

The study findings with regard to Level of knowledge on learning disabilities in children among primary school teachers states that the most of the school teachers 18(60%) had inadequate knowledge on learning disabilities and 11 (36.7%) of them had moderately adequate knowledge, and 01(3.3%) was identified to have adequate knowledge (fig-1).

The Overall mean knowledge score was 17.7 with standard deviation of 5.58 respectively among the primary school teachers on learning disabilities in children, (Table-1)

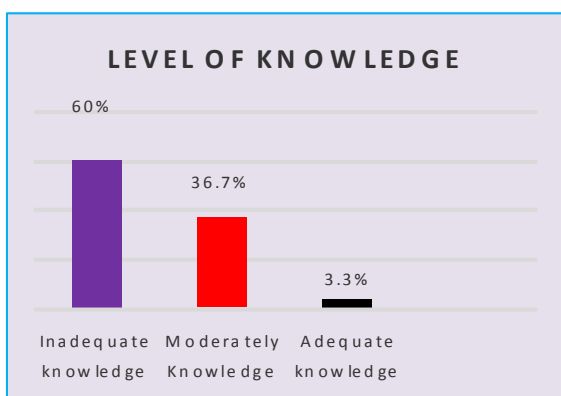
On determining the association between the knowledge score and selected socio-demographic variables of primary school teachers by using chi-square test, it was found that there is no statistically significant association between the knowledge score and socio-demographic variables at $p < 0.05$.

Table 1: Over all Mean and standard deviation of knowledge scores on learning disabilities in children among primary school teachers.

N=30

Variable	Statement	Maximum score	Minimum score	Over all Mean score	Over all Standard deviation
Overall knowledge score of learning disabilities in children among primary school teachers.	35	26	10	17.7	5.58

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of level of knowledge on learning disabilities in children among primary school teachers.



Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that most of the primary school teachers, 18(60%) of them had inadequate knowledge, 11(36.7%) had moderately adequate knowledge and 01(3.3%) of them had adequate knowledge on learning disabilities in children.

The present study findings are similar to the findings of a study conducted by Arifa S, Siraj SS, (2019) disseminated that most of the primary school teachers 44(73.3%) had moderate knowledge, 12 (20%) had inadequate knowledge and only 04(6.7%) had adequate knowledge on learning disability in children.⁷

A similar study finding by Ghimire Sesmita (2017) was carried out in 16 schools of Dharan, Nepal, with 150 primary school teachers were selected by convenience sampling technique. Structured knowledge questionnaire was used to collect needed data on knowledge of primary school teachers. The results revealed that majority, 79 (52.67%) of the primary school teachers had moderately adequate knowledge and 71 (47.33%) had inadequate

knowledge regarding learning disabilities. There was a significant association of knowledge of primary school teachers with demographic variables such as class involved in teaching.⁸

Another related cross-sectional survey study by Layla alkhunizi, Khadija Alnas, Olfat janabi (2019) was conducted in female governmental primary integrated and non-integrated schools in Dammam, alkhobar, Qatif and other cities among 448 teachers, the findings were About two-thirds (75.4%) of participant's teachers had low Knowledge about learning disabilities. As well as, 65.6% of participant's teachers had low Knowledge about learning disabilities. Age, nationality, marital status, having children and teaching grade of participants teachers did not significantly ($P \geq 0.05$) affect the teacher's knowledge.⁹

On determining the association between the knowledge scores and selected socio-demographic variables of primary school teachers by using chi-square test, it was found that there is no statistically significant association between the knowledge scores and socio-demographic variables at $p < 0.05$.

This finding is compared to many similar Indian studies with the same objectives of association between knowledge scores and socio-demographic variables of primary school teachers. One such study by Shari, M. & Mysore Narasimha, Vrandu. (2015) explored that there no statistical association in overall knowledge score with the socio-demographic variables like class, training of the teachers, year of experience and educational status.¹⁰

Limitation

The study findings cannot be generalized since very minimal sample was taken for the present study and due to lack of time constraints, the group members adopted non-probability convenient sampling technique.

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