

KNOWLEDGE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING LEARNING DISABILITIES IN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Background of the study: Learning disorders are caused by genetic and/or neurological factors that disrupt one or more cognitive processes associated to learning via altering brain functioning. These processing issues might make it difficult to master basic abilities like reading, writing, and math. **Purpose:** The study is intended to assess the knowledge of primary school teachers regarding learning disabilities in children. **Methods:** The descriptive study used convenient sampling to identify 90 primary school teachers' understanding of learning impairments in children. TOOL 1: Structured questionnaire to assess the socio demographic variables. It includes questions related to age, gender, educational qualification, year of experience, previous exposure to children with learning disabilities. TOOL 2: Structured knowledge questionnaire to assess knowledge regarding learning disabilities. It consists of 30 questions. After receiving ethical approval from the Institution's Institutional Review Board. The subjects gave their informed consent after being informed about the study as well as how the data would be used. Data was collected using Google forms, and descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse it. **Results:** The result showed that, 29 (32.2%) of teachers had insufficient knowledge, 54 (60%) of teachers had moderately adequate knowledge, and 7 (7.77%) of teachers had adequate understanding about learning difficulties in children. **Conclusion:** Teachers have a significant role in early detection of learning problems in schoolchildren. Children with learning disabilities should be assisted at an early age and given appropriate instruction and support. Teachers must be made aware of these children's issues and build a positive approach toward them.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge; learning disabilities; Children; Primary school teacher.

INTRODUCTION

A learning disability is a neurological disorder that impairs the ability of the brain to send, receive, and process information. Reading, writing, speaking, listening, understanding mathematical ideas, and general comprehension may be challenging for a youngster with a learning disability. Dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia are all examples of learning difficulties. Each illness can coexist with the others.^[1] Learning is a method of acquiring a variety of skills in a methodical and organized manner. When these skills are put to use in everyday situations, the learning is regarded successful and acceptable. Learning difficulty is a nervous system problem that makes it difficult to learn abilities like writing, reading, and calculating.^[2]

Many children face with certain areas or skills in school from time to time. It could be a symptom of a learning issue if a youngster tries hard but still struggles with a certain set of skills over time.^[3] Having a learning disorder means a child struggles from one or more areas of learning, even if his or she of or motivation is unaffected. Around the world, 15% of the population has some form of impairment. Learning difficulties affect 10 out of every 100 schooling children around the world.⁴ According to statistics on children with impairments, 7.1 million students receive special education assistance. Another important factor to keep in mind is that kids with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence. Dyslexia (reading trouble), dysgraphia, dyscalculia (math problem), and dyspraxia are some of the learning disorders (difficulties in balance and eye-

hand coordination). The signs and symptoms differ from one individual to the next. Teachers are uninformed about children's learning issues.^[3]

Children with learning disabilities require more attention because they may be frustrated. Every human being will, at some point in their lives, be disabled, whether temporarily or permanently. Over one billion people - almost 15% of the world's population - live with a handicap, and the number is growing.^[5] In India, 90 million children suffered from learning difficulties, and five students in a class in normal schools have learning disabilities.^[6]

According to several studies on the subject of learning disabilities in India, the prevalence of various types of scholastic skill deficits ranges from 3 percent to 10% of the student population. In this country, many faculty members have insufficient expertise about Specific Learning Disabilities. Teachers must be able to recognise their students' issues and provide support through influencing their understanding of learning disorders. They must comprehend their students' problems. Administrators from at least five cities noted in one report that teachers needed instruction and professional development since many teachers were confused whether their children had learning problems.^[2]

In the areas of cognitive, verbal, emotional, social, and moral development of children, schools play a significant and formative role. There is a growing understanding that schools play a key role in mental health promotion. Teachers are powerful individuals who have examined the dynamics of individual growth as part of their educational process. As a result, they are better suited to mould and modify appropriate behaviours.^[7]

All of the previous studies indicate to the significance of conducting a current study on primary school teachers' understanding of learning difficulties. In developing countries like India, school teachers and children make up the bulk of the literature population, and they have a huge influence on community attitudes and behaviour patterns, including health belief systems. In a similar manner, teachers can only detect children with physical and mental disabilities if they are properly trained. As a result, early detection and intervention are critical. The

RESULTS

Table1: Distribution of subject based on socio-demographic variables.

N=90

Sl.No.	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age		
	20-25 years	17	18.9
	26-31 years	28	31.1
	32-37 years	26	28.9
	Above 37 years	19	21.1
2	Gender		
	Male	25	28

ultimate goal of this research was to assist teachers by creating a manual which might aid in the identification of children with learning impairments.^[8]

When compared to healthy controls, children with chronic illnesses have approximately twice the rate of learning difficulties. Approximately 5% of school-aged children in the world have learning difficulties. According to the National Survey of Children's Health, a lifetime prevalence of 10% is estimated in the United States. Around 13-14 percent of all school children in India suffer from learning disabilities. Unfortunately, most schools are uninterested in listening to their concerns. A family history of Learning Disability, poverty, premature birth, prenatal alcohol exposure, Traumatic Brain Injury, and other neurodevelopmental abnormalities are all risk factors. Dyslexia is the most prevalent Learning Disability, accounting for at least 80% of all cases. Learning Disabilities are frequently associated with other conditions such as oppositional defiant disorder, ADHD, and anxiety.^[10]

The importance of detecting learning difficulties in children at an early age cannot be overstated. Children spend a big portion of their crucial time for emotional and physical development in school. School provides an environment for the formation of friendships, socialisation, and the introduction and reinforcement of appropriate behaviour.^[11]

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive study in which 90 primary school teachers knowledge were identified regarding learning disabilities in children using convenient sampling. TOOL 1: Structured questionnaire to assess the socio demographic variables. It includes questions related to age, gender, educational qualification, year of experience, previous exposure to children with learning disabilities. TOOL 2: Structured knowledge questionnaire to assess knowledge regarding learning disabilities. It involves 30 questions. After obtaining ethical clearance from the Institutional Review Board of the Institution. Informed consent was taken from the subjects and explanation given about the study and use of the data. After data collection through Google forms, it was analysed by descriptive and inferential statistics.

	Female	65	72
3	Educational Qualification		
	TTC	8	8.9
	B. Ed	58	64.4
	M. Ed	14	15.6
	Others	10	11.1
4	Teaching experience		
	1-3 years	29	32.2
	4- 6 years	26	28.9
Sl.No.	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
	7-9 years	17	18.9
	10 years and above	18	20.0
5	Nature of the employment		
	Temporary	27	30.0
	Permanent	63	70.0
6	Any previous exposure of child with learning disabilities		
	Yes	43	47.8
	No	47	52.2

Table 1 shows that distribution of subject based on demographic variables of the school teachers.

With regard to the distribution of age of the school teachers, 17 (18.9%) belongs to 20 -25 years, 28 (31.1%) were belongs to 26 - 30 years, 26(28.9%) were belongs to 31 - 36 years, 19(21.1%) were belongs to > 36 years.

While considering the gender of the school teachers, 25(27.8%)were female teachers and 65 (72.2%) were male teachers. About qualification of teachers, 8(8.9%) teachers were completed TTC, 58(64.4%) were completed B. Ed, 14(15.6%) were completed M.Ed and 10(11.1%) were completed other degrees. Looking to the years of experience, 29 (32.2%) were having below 3 years of experience, 26(28.9%) were having 4-6 years of experience, 17(18.9%) were having 7-10 years and 18(20.0%) were having above 10 years of experience.

In nature of employment 27(30.0%) of the teachers are temporary and 63(70.0%) of the teachers are permanent. With regard to teachers identified children with learning disability, 43(47.8%) teachers identified learning disability and 47 (52.2%) teachers did not identified learning disability.

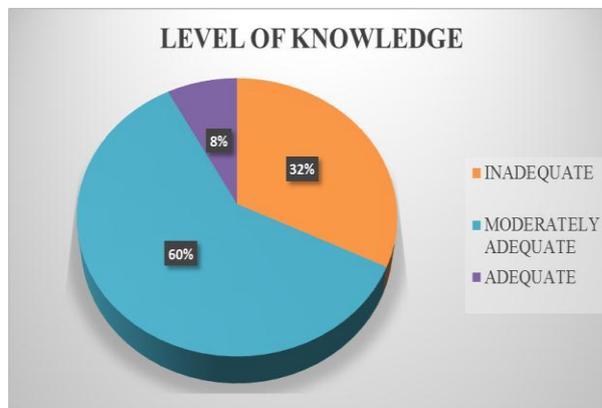


Figure 1: Distribution of subjects based on level of knowledge regarding learning disabilities.

Figure: 1 showed that distribution of level of knowledge of primary school teachers regarding learning disabilities, 32.2% (29) showed inadequate knowledge, 60% (54) showed moderately adequate knowledge and 7.77% (7) showed adequate knowledge.

Table 3: Association of demographic variables with knowledge regarding learning disabilities among the school teachers.

N=90

Socio-Demographic Variables	Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Significance
Age	20-25 years	17	14.53	5.149	0.824
	26-30 years	28	13.89	5.921	
	31-36 years	26	12.96	6.315	
	Above 36 years	19	14.11	4.795	
Socio-Demographic Variables	Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Significance
Gender	Male	25	13.76	6.320	0.976
	Female	65	13.80	5.380	

Educational Qualification	TTC	8	14.62	5.317	0.179
	B. Ed	58	14.47	5.995	
	M. Ed	14	10.86	3.820	
	Others	10	13.30	4.945	
Teaching experience	1-3 years	29	15.21	5.778	0.368
	4-6 years	26	12.58	5.398	
	7-9 years	17	13.29	6.192	
	10 years and above	18	13.72	5.050	
Nature of the employment	Temporary	27	14.67	5.046	0.335
	Permanent	63	13.41	5.847	
Any previous exposure of child with learning disabilities	Yes	43	13.47	6.254	0.601
	No	47	14.09	5.021	

This table: 3 showed that there was no significant association between age, gender, qualification, year of experience, nature of employment and previously identified learning disability with knowledge in primary school teachers.

DISCUSSION

The present study shows that 29 (32.2%) of teachers had insufficient knowledge, 54 (60%) of teachers had moderately adequate knowledge, and 7 (7.77%) of teachers had adequate understanding about learning difficulties in children.

Joshua Yeldose (2010) study claimed that teaching was effective in increasing the level of knowledge and practice of teaching.

Bhavya, Bhavya S, Chinnu CM, Joseph CE, Thomas D et al (2015) found no significant relationship between knowledge score and selected demographic variables such as age, gender, educational qualification, years of experience, marital status, child psychology in curriculum, in service education, and family history of learning disabilities in a descriptive study of 50 school teachers. Few demographic variables had a significant relationship with attitude score.^[12]

According to a study, 19% students were suffering from learning disability in the schools. Children with learning difficulties had significant behavioral problems than other children, such as hyperactivity and aggressiveness.^[13]

Another study found that most teachers had a good attitude toward students with learning disabilities despite having a low degree of understanding about learning disabilities, and that a higher level of knowledge was connected with a positive attitude.^[14]

It is clear from the foregoing findings that there was no correlation between knowledge scores and any of the demographic factors of primary school teachers. This could be due to a lack of timely in-service education programmes for instructors or a failure to properly handle children with learning disabilities. As a result, it

is recommended that school teachers in educational settings undergo rigorous updating programmes in terms of instruction and management of children with psychological difficulties.

Learning Disabilities” is an “umbrella” term describing a number of other, more specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia and dysgraphia.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that teachers have moderately adequate knowledge of learning difficulties. A child's impairment can be one of the most marginalizing aspects of his or her life. Learning difficulties can have an impact on an individual's life outside of the classroom, affecting connections with family, friends, and coworkers. Teachers must be made aware of these children's issues and establish a positive attitude toward them. Workshops, conferences, and webinars for teachers should be held across the country to improve their ability and proficiency.

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Limitation of study

1. Generalization of the findings is limited to small sample size.
2. The study was confined to a specific schools.
3. The study has used non probability convenient sampling technique which limits the generalization of the results.

Recommendations

1. A similar study can be replicated on a large sample in different setting- Government, Privet sector.
2. A study can be replicated on large sample with long duration.
3. A follow up study can be conducted to determine the effects of information booklet in term of gain in knowledge to improve the knowledge of teachers

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