



AWARENESS OF LEARNING DISABILITIES AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

Learning disabilities is a heterogeneous group of disorder. Learning disability refers to delays, deviations and performances. Learning disabilities can be lifelong conditions. Learning disabilities are due to genetic or neurobiological factors or injury that alters brain functioning in a manner which affects one or more processes related to learning. The study aimed to identify the exposure Awareness of learning disabilities among Elementary school teachers. The present study is to find out the awareness of learning disabilities among Elementary teachers with respect to their marital status, additional qualification, location of the school, type of the school, teaching experience and monthly salary. The simple random sampling method was adopted to select the sample. The investigator used Learning Disability questionnaire which is constructed and standardized by Dr. K. Jayaraman & Dr. V. Jeevanantham (2023) for data collection. To fulfil the objectives of the study, descriptive analysis and differential analysis were used. The result of the study concluded that the elementary school teachers had lower level of the awareness of learning disabilities.

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Introduction

The learning disabilities differently, often depending on the focus of the organisation. Learning disabilities is a neurological disorder. Learning disabilities persons is little differing from other common person. Learning disabilities look very different from one child to another. One child may struggle with reading and spelling, while another loves books but cannot understand mathematics. Still another child may have difficulty in understanding what others are saying or communicating out loud. The problems are very different, but they are all learning disorders. It is not always easy to identify learning disabilities. Because of the wide variations there is single symptom or profile that you can look to as proof of a problem. However, some warning signs are more common than others at different ages.

An increasing number of children were found unable to cope with school work especially with reading, writing and arithmetic. These children were otherwise bright, fairly articulate in their verbal expression and did not appear to have any form of Intellectual disability, sensory different abled or visual impairment.

Review of Literature

Kurian and James (2018) concluded that 10% of children in India have learning disability delayed identification leads the way to mental health problems and delayed interventions. They also suggested that mental health education. Program would promote the early interventions and it will be beneficial to create awareness among parents and teachers to facilitate early identification and appropriate estimate of LD in India.

Aladwani and Shaye (2013) investigated Kuwaiti primary school teachers knowledge of the early signs of dyslexia and their awareness level of the related difficulties that dyslexia children suffer. They concluded that Kuwaiti teachers are aware of this problems, but lack of time, and being overloaded with daily school routines and responsibilities, prevent them from helping and assessing these children.

Malusu & Kamau – Kangethe (2010) assessed the teacher awareness and intervention for pupils with Learning Disabilities in inclusive education in Makadra Division. The study concluded that teachers were aware of inclusive education in their schools,

teachers had different interventions in place to ensure the success of inclusive education. (e.g) the use of corrective approaches, direct instructions, systematic phonics and using connectivity with pupils Individual Learning needs and that teachers were not professionally prepared to cope with pupils with Learning Disabilities in inclusive education.

The research conducted by K. Padhy et al (2016) found that elementary school teachers knowledge of Learning Disabilities is average and there is a need to improve their knowledge of learning disabilities teachers must be familiar with the term, attributes and symptoms of various forms of Learning Disabilities. The also recommended that state-wide learning disability awareness programmes for all school teachers be implemented.

Significance of the Study

A good teacher is the one who analyses the academic activity of the students and finds their problem and helps them to overcome them. A elementary teacher finds out the abilities and disabilities of the students and gives proper guidance and remedial things. Elementary level teachers leave an added responsibility in shaping the career of the students as they work with the basement of the students' career.

Learning disability is the most affected problem among the students that affect their academics. It is easy to locate the learning disability in a higher-level learner but it is very hard to locate the learning disability in the elementary level learner as they fail to express their fullest potential level have to spend their effort to find that. But unfortunately, the learning disability that prevent them in teaching of the learners to a questionable one. The researcher through their study tries to create awareness of learning disabilities among elementary school teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Education is an indispensable demand for each and every one. In elementary level children are mostly affected by learning abilities. In education, the vital role is played by teachers. Teachers are the main source for providing education and carries over the students learning process. Teachers only find out their students activities, learning process, reading process, behaviour, adjustment and special needs. Learning is a basic need for students in education. In elementary level, students are mostly suffered by learning problems.

An elementary level students, they are not aware of their problems in learning. Students with learning difficulties mostly need specialized support in mainstream classroom. If the learning disabilities are ignored, unnoticed and unanswered, such children's needs are not met in regular classrooms or special education within the school. They cannot fulfil the education of the students are elementary level. Learning disabilities plays an important role in education at current scenario. It is more crucial to bring awareness regarding learning disabilities among elementary school teachers. Hence, the researcher has planned this research work.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out if any significant difference among elementary school teachers in their awareness of learning disabilities.

Hypotheses of the Study: Keeping in view the objectives of the study the following null hypotheses have been framed as follows:

1. There is no significant difference between married and unmarried elementary school teachers in their awareness of learning disabilities.
2. There is no significant difference between graduate and post graduate elementary school teachers in their awareness of learning disabilities.
3. There is no significant difference between rural and urban elementary school teachers in their awareness of learning disabilities.
4. There is no significant difference among government, aided and unaided elementary school teachers in their awareness of learning disabilities.
5. There is no significant difference among the elementary school teachers whose experiences are below 10 years, 10-20 years and above 20 years in their awareness of learning disabilities.
6. There is no significant difference among the elementary school teachers whose salary below Rs. 25,000, 1000 to 50,000, and above 50,000 rupees in their awareness of learning disabilities.

Methodology

Method Used: The investigator has chosen descriptive survey method for the present study. Population and sample of the study. Elementary teachers those who were working in Trichy district were considered as Population of this study. In this study, the investigator used simple random sampling technique. One hundred and Five (105) elementary school teachers were selected as the samples for this study.

Tool used: In order to measure the learning disabilities, the investigator used the “Learning disabilities Questionnaire” which is constructed and standardized by Dr.K.Jayaraman and Dr.V.Jeevanantham (2023). The learning disabilities questionnaire consists of 35 items. The tool was in the form of objectives type. The author established the content validity for the tool and the reliability of the tool has established by using test-retest method. It was found to be 0.79.

Statistical techniques used: The investigator employed descriptive statistics (Mean and SD), parametric statistics (students “t” test and ANOVA) to process the data collected from the samples.

Analysis of Data

Descriptive Analysis: The main objective of this study is to identify the awareness of learning disabilities among elementary school teachers.

Table 1
Awareness of Learning Disabilities of Elementary School Teachers

Variable	N	M	S.D	Level
Awareness of Learning disabilities	105	15.51	0.68	Low

The elementary teachers those who are working in Trichy district had low level of level awareness of learning disabilities.

Table 2
Mean Difference between the Awareness of Learning Disabilities of Elementary School Teachers Based on Marital Status, Additional Qualification and Location of the school

Variable	Sub variables	N	M	S.D	“t” value	Remarks
Marital Status	Married	85	15.7	7.20	0.46	NS
	Unmarried	21	15.01	5.71		
Additional Qualification	Graduate	68	16.8	7.01	1.31	NS
	Post Graduate	37	16.87	7.24		
Location of the School	Rural	33	16.28	8.10	0.201	NS
	Urban	72	16.51	6.87		

(At 5 % level of significance, the table value of ‘t’ is 1.96)

From the table 2, the calculated ‘t’ values between the awareness of learning disabilities of elementary school teachers with respect to marital status, additional qualification and location of the school are 0.46, 1.31 and 0.201 respectively. These ‘t’ values are less than the table value 1.95 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 are accepted. The background variables marital status, additional qualification and location of the school didn’t influence the awareness of learning disabilities among elementary school teachers.

Table 3
Mean difference among awareness of learning disabilities among elementary school teachers based on the types of school, teaching experience and monthly salary

Variables	Source of variation	df =(2,102)		Calculated ‘F’ value	Remarks
		Sum of squares	Mean square variation		
Type of School	Between	581.258	258.129	5.43	S
	Within	4894.884	48.94401		
Teaching Experience	Between	12.42915	6.714577	0.105	NS
	Within	5301.712	50.4146		
Monthly Salary	Between	286.71	192.35	3.89	S
	Within	5026.42	48.77		

(At 5% level of significance, the table value of ‘F’ is 3.10)

From the table 3, the calculated 'F' value between the awareness of learning disabilities of elementary school teachers with respect to teaching experience is 0.105. This 'F' value is less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis 4 is accepted. The background variable teaching experience didn't influence the awareness of learning disabilities among elementary school teachers.

The calculated 'F' values between the awareness of learning disabilities of elementary school teachers with respect to their type of school and monthly income are 5.43 and 3.89 respectively. These 'F' values are greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis 5 and 6 are rejected. It may be deduced that there is significant difference among the awareness of learning disabilities score of elementary school teachers based on the types of school and monthly income.

Major Finding of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between married and unmarried elementary school teachers in their awareness of learning disabilities.
2. There is no significant difference between graduate and post graduate elementary school teachers in their awareness of learning disabilities.
3. There is no significant difference between rural and urban elementary school teachers in their awareness of learning disabilities.
4. There is no significant difference among government, aided and unaided elementary school teachers in their awareness of learning disabilities.
5. There is no significant difference among the elementary school teachers whose awareness of learning disabilities.
6. There is no significant difference among the elementary school teachers whose salary below Rs. 25,000, 10,000 to 50,000, and above 50,000 rupees in their awareness of learning disabilities.

Interpretation of Findings

1. Private school teachers are having more awareness of learning disabilities than government and unaided elementary school teachers due to the fact that they have the opportunity to handle disabled students. They are monitored by the management too. Hence their awareness on learning disabilities is higher than others.
2. The learning disability of elementary teachers who are earning Rs. 25000 to 50000 is more than others because they are handling middle class family students. Since the middle class disabled students are not able to spend for special education, they are studying in regular schools. The created an awareness for teachers in the schools with optimum strength.
3. The other variables like marital status, educational qualification, locality of the teachers and years of experience are not having any significant effect on the awareness of learning disabilities.

Educational Implication of the Study

On the basis of the present findings, the investigator has given the following recommendations to educational administrators.

1. The teacher education should include special education as a subject in their curriculum.
2. Practice teaching period should include practice in special schools also.
3. Co-curricular activities of the problems of disabled students may enrich the knowledge of elementary teachers.
4. In-service training can be given to elementary teachers on the methods of teaching disabled students.
5. Elementary teachers shall be motivated to attend seminars, conferences and workshops related to learning disabilities.

Conclusion

The present study awareness of learning disabilities among elementary school teachers in Trichy district. The researcher framed objectives and hypotheses on the basis of the above contact. The research was carried out in Trichy (Tamil Nadu) 105 samples were selected randomly. A standardized questionnaire was used to collect the relevant data. After collecting the data they were analyzed using statistical tests such as t-test and ANOVA. The result concluded that the elementary school teachers had low level awareness of learning disabilities.

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