



Research Article

EFFECT OF AWARENESS PROGRAMME ON KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNING DISABILITIES OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS, WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Learning disability is a complex phenomenon, not just a health problem. A pre-experimental study was undertaken to evaluate the effect of awareness programme on knowledge of learning disabilities of school children among primary school teachers. The conceptual framework adopted for the study was based on system model. **Materials and methods:** Non-probability convenience sampling technique was adopted to select 72 primary school teachers in selected primary schools of Tehatta I and II circle under Tehatta-I block, Nadia district. A structured knowledge questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge of learning disabilities of school children. **Results:** The study result revealed that mean post-test knowledge score was significantly higher than mean pre-test knowledge score at 0.001 level of significance ('t' value at $df_{71} = 38.52$ $P < 0.001$). The obtained chi square value revealed that there was a significant association was found between pre-test knowledge scores of primary school teachers with age, year of experience and special training on learning disabilities. It is recommended that further study can be done on learning disabilities among primary school teachers by using standardized tools.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning disability is defined as a neurobiological condition which manifests as the inability to read, listen, spell, write and do mathematics calculations. It also refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of reading, writing, speaking, listening, reasoning or mathematical abilities. Learning disabilities are intrinsic to individual and probable causes of it is due to central nervous system damage.¹

The prevalence of learning disabilities is estimated from 3 to 12 percent in different regions of the world. The teachers who have classes of 20 to 25 students in each, may have seen at least one or several students with learning disabilities. The estimate occurrence of learning disabilities among school children ranges from the lowest estimation about 2% to the highest estimation about 20-40%.²

It is identified that most of the children with learning disabilities have a low attention period, have difficulties to give their best and have no interest in the academics and other activities because it's caused by processing, receiving and communication, but not based on intelligence. Learning disabilities can affect the academic performance of individual and relationship with family, friends and the workplace that can also affects their life. Therefore, if their problems are not

recognized and suitable interfering programs are not provided, the risk of some disorders like depression, anxiety and delinquency increases for these children.³

For early identification of students with learning disabilities in the class and to take appropriate and timely educational and rehabilitation measures, school authorities, especially primary school teachers are required to be familiar with learning disabilities more than others, as abundance of students with learning disability in every school and the possibility of the existence of one, two or more children with incapable of reading, spelling, calculating math and writing in each class. Role of parents, teachers, as well as primary care physician is most important for the early identification and management of learning disabilities like dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and dysgraphia.

Statement of the problem

Effect of awareness programme on knowledge of learning disabilities of school children among primary school teachers in selected schools, West Bengal.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the knowledge of learning disabilities among primary school teachers before and after awareness programme.

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2. To determine the effect of awareness programme on knowledge of learning disabilities of school children among primary school teachers by comparing mean pre-test and post-test knowledge score.
3. To find out the association between knowledge level with selected demographic variables of primary school teachers.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference between mean pre-test and post-test knowledge scores regarding knowledge of learning disabilities of school children among primary school teachers at 0.05 level of significance.

H₁:The mean post-test knowledge scores of primary school teachers after administration of awareness programme on knowledge of learning disabilities of school children is significantly higher than the mean pre-test knowledge score at 0.05 level of significance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A pre-experimental one-group pre-test post-test research design was adopted during February to March 2023 in selected SI offices and government primary school premises under the block of Nadia district, West Bengal. A total of 72 government primary school teachers from selected 21 government primary schools were included in this study using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Pre-testing and an awareness program were conducted among the 72 primary school teachers on that day, and the post-test was administered after seven days. Confidentiality of the samples was positively ensured.

A structured knowledge questionnaire was prepared to assess the knowledge of primary school teachers, and the data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Sample characteristics were described through frequency and percentage distribution. The level of knowledge was described using frequency and percentage, as well as range, mean, median, standard deviation, and skewness coefficient of pre-test and post-test knowledge scores.

The effect of the awareness program was assessed through a paired t-test between pre-test and post-test knowledge scores. Chi-square was calculated to identify the association between pre-test knowledge scores and selected demographic variables.

RESULTS

Sample characteristics

Socio-demographic characteristics (Table 1) of primary school teachers shows that 43.06% belongs to 30-40 years of age group, 83.33% respondents did not take any special training on learning disabilities and 50% primary school teachers had below 10 years of working experience.

Major findings

Data presented in table 2 depicts that in pre-test 58.33% primary school teachers had poor knowledge regarding learning disabilities of school children whereas in post-test 61.11% primary school teachers had very good knowledge regarding learning disabilities of school children.

Data presented in table 3 depicts that in pre-test the skewness coefficient was 0.8. Hence it can be inferred that the data was slightly skewed (positively skewed) and mildly dispersed. In post-test the skewness coefficient was -0.37. So, it can be inferred that the data was negatively skewed and post-test knowledge score was normally distributed and less dispersed than pre-test knowledge score.

Findings related to effect of awareness programme on knowledge of learning disabilities of school children among primary school teachers

Data presented in Table 4 depicts that the mean post-test knowledge score (24.72) was significantly higher than mean pre-test knowledge score (12.73) among primary school teachers at 0.001 level of significance as evident by paired ‘t’ test. So, the research hypothesis (H₁) was accepted. Computed paired ‘t’ test was found 38.52 was statistically significant at 0.001 level of significance. The primary school teachers significantly gained knowledge regarding knowledge of learning disabilities of school children after administration of the awareness programme.

Chi square test of association between pre-test knowledge level with selected demographic variables of primary school teachers

Data presented in Table 5 shows that a significant association was found between pre-test knowledge scores on learning disabilities of school children and age of primary school teachers at df₁ at 0.01 level of significance.

Table 1 Frequency and percentage distribution of primary school teachers according to their age, special training on learning disabilities and year of experience

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age in years		
<30	8	11.11
30-40	31	43.06
41-50	19	26.38
51-60	14	19.44
Special training on learning disabilities		
Yes	12	16.67
No	60	83.33
Year of Experience		
<10	36	50
10-20	21	29.17
21-30	15	20.83

Table 2 Frequency and percentage distribution of primary school teachers according to pre-test and post-test knowledge of learning disabilities of school children

n=72

Knowledge	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Very good	Nil	--	44	61.11
Good	Nil	--	28	38.89
Average	30	41.66	Nil	--
Poor	42	58.33	Nil	--

Maximum possible score = 30 Minimum possible score = 0

Table 3 Range, Mean, Median, Standard Deviation and Skewness Coefficient of pre-test and post-test knowledge score of primary school teachers on learning disabilities of school children

n=72

Variables	Obtained Range	Mean	Median	SD (±)	Skewness Coefficient
Pre-test knowledge	9-18	12.73	12	2.55	0.8
Post-test knowledge	20-30	24.72	25	2.27	-0.37

Maximum possible score = 30 Minimum possible score = 0

Table 4 Paired 't' test between pre-test and post-test knowledge score of primary school teachers regarding knowledge of learning disabilities of school children

n=72

Knowledge	Mean	Mean difference	SD (±)	SD Difference	't' value
Pre-test	12.73		2.55		
		11.99		0.28	38.52** *
Post-test	24.72		2.27		

t' (df₇₁) = 3.435, P<0.001

Table 5 Chi square test of association between pre-test knowledge score and age and year of experience

n=72

Variables	Knowledge		χ ² Value
	<Median	≥Median	
Age in years			
Below 40 years	9	30	8.951**
Above 40 years	19	14	
Year of experience			
<20 Years	15	36	6.608*
≥20 Years	13	8	

χ²(df₁)= 3.841, P<0.05, χ²(df₁) = 6.64, P<0.01

Table 6 Chi square test of association between pre-test knowledge score and special training on learning disabilities

n=72

Variables	Knowledge		χ ² Value
	<Median	≥Median	
Special training on learning disabilities			
Yes	9	3	6.183*
No	19	41	

χ²(df₁) = 3.841, P<0.05

Yates' correction done

Data presented in Table 6 also shows that a significant association was found between pre-test knowledge scores on learning disabilities of school children and year of experience and special training on learning disabilities of primary school teachers at df_1 at 0.05 level of significance.

DISCUSSION

The present study result depicted that Majority (58.33%) of primary school teachers obtained poor knowledge score in pre-test regarding learning disabilities of school children. The findings of the present study in this area were supported by the findings of another research study conducted by Chicholkar J (2022) on “A study to assess the effectiveness of Self-Instructional Module on knowledge regarding learning disabilities in children among primary school in selected schools of Indore” among 100 primary school teachers. The result of the study depicted that majority (52%) of primary school teachers obtained poor knowledge score in pre-test regarding learning disabilities of school children.⁴

The present study findings were in contrast with a study conducted by John MJ (2015) on “Assess effectiveness of video assisted teaching programme on learning disabilities of school children among primary school teachers in selected schools of Palvoncha” among 60 primary school teachers. The result of the study revealed that in pre-test majority (88.3%) of primary school teachers had inadequate knowledge regarding learning disabilities of school children.⁵

The result of the present study depicted that the mean pre-test knowledge score was 12.73 with SD 2.55 and post-test knowledge score was 24.72 with SD 2.25 and among primary school teachers. Calculated ‘t’ value was 38.52 which was significantly higher than tabulated ‘t’ value (3.435) at df of 71 at 0.001 level of significance. Therefore, the study result revealed that the awareness programme was effective for increasing knowledge of learning disabilities among primary school teachers.

The findings of the present study in this area were supported by the findings of another research study conducted by Ambika A et al. (2021) on “Effectiveness of Planned Teaching Programme among primary school teachers regarding awareness of learning disabilities in children in selected schools of Chennai, India” among 40 samples. The result of this study depicted that mean pre-test knowledge score was 11.05 with SD 2.06 and mean post-test knowledge score was 25.27 with SD 1.96 among primary school teachers. Calculated ‘t’ value was found 30.076 which was significantly higher than tabulated ‘t’ value (3.55) at df of 39 at 0.001 level of significance.⁶

Limitation

The Study was limited to non-probability convenience sampling technique and structured questionnaire was used for data collection therefore the responses were restricted.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that the level of knowledge regarding learning disabilities was low among primary school teachers and there was significant gain in knowledge in post-test. Thus, the study result revealed that awareness programme was effective to improve knowledge level of primary school teachers on learning disabilities of school children.

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