

Knowledge Regarding Learning Disability among Primary School Teachers

Rosemary Jolly^{1*}, Christina Mariam Chacko²

ABSTRACT

Learning disability is a heterogeneous group of disorders and is manifested as significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of basic academic skills like reading, writing, spelling, mathematics or language (Hammill, 1990). Teachers play a very important role in diagnosis of disorders related to learning disability. Unfortunately, most of the symptoms of learning disability is either ignored or blame it on the child's personality branding it as laziness, an attitude problem or aggression. This is due to lack of adequate knowledge about specific learning disability among primary school teachers. This study aims to assess the knowledge of primary school teachers regarding learning disability and also compare the knowledge between private school teachers and government school teachers and based on their experience. The sample for this study includes 100 primary school teachers (50-private school teachers, 50-government school teachers). A structured knowledge questionnaire on learning disability has been used for the collection of data (by Anju George, 2015). Appropriate statistical tools are used for the analysis of the study. The results of this study indicates that the level of knowledge regarding learning disability is moderately adequate among primary school teachers. Also, there is no significant difference in level of knowledge among teachers based on their year of experience and nature of employment.

Keywords: *Learning Disability, Primary School Teachers, Knowledge*

Learning disability is a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant problems in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are innate to the selves and inferred to be due to Central Nervous System Dysfunction. (NJCLD, 1988)

Types of Learning Disabilities

1. Dyslexia – Reading, writing, spelling, and speech difficulties
2. Dyscalculia – Math issues, time management, and money management are all areas where people struggle.
3. Dysgraphia – Handwriting, spelling, and arranging ideas are all challenges that people have when it comes to writing.

¹Bachelor of Science in Psychology of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, India

²Assistant Professor, Rajagiri Centre for Behavioural Science and Research, Kalamassery, India

*Corresponding Author

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4. Dyspraxia (Sensory Integration Disorder) – Struggles with fine motor skills, problems with hand-eye coordination, balance, manual dexterity
5. Dysphasia/Aphasia – Trouble with language Problems understanding spoken language, poor reading comprehension
6. Auditory Processing Disorder – Difficulty hearing differences between sounds, problems with reading, comprehension, language
7. Visual Processing Disorder – Difficulty interpreting visual information, problems with reading, math, maps, charts, symbols, pictures
8. Nonverbal Learning Disorder-A Nonverbal Learning Disorder is demonstrated by motor coordination, visual-spatial organization, and social skills.

Causes for Learning Disability

The causes for learning disabilities are not well understood, and sometimes there is no evident reason for a learning disorder. However, some causes of neurological disablements include:

- **Heredity and genetics**

Learning disabilities are often linked to biology and run-in families. Children with learning disabilities also have parents who struggle with the same issues. Reading disabilities are more common in children whose mothers have less than 12 years of schooling. Spontaneous mutations (those not present in either parent) can cause developmental disorders, including learning disabilities, in some children. Johnson and Beena are a couple (2013). According to Nadia (2017), one out of every 300 children have such random mutations, such as a defect in the CDK13 gene, which has been linked to learning and communication disorders in the children affected. Fergus Walsh (2017)

- **Problems during pregnancy and birth**

A learning disability may result from birth defects, disease, or damage to the developing brain. Foetal exposure to alcohol or narcotics, as well as low birth weight, are risk factors (3 pounds or less). These children are more likely to have a math or reading disorder. Children born prematurely, late, or with a longer labour than normal are more likely to have a learning disability. Johnson and Beena are a couple (2013)

- **Accidents after birth**

Head trauma, malnourishment, and chemical exposure may all cause learning disabilities (such as heavy metals or pesticides)

- **Environmental Factors**

Environmental factors may play a direct role in the development of learning disabilities. Malnutrition, prematurity, inadequate maternal and postnatal health care, stress, poor parenting, and poor teaching, according to research, may have a detrimental effect on learning by causing conditions that make brain dysfunction more probable.

Effect of Learning Disability

The consequences of having a learning impairment or discrepancy are not limited to academic outcomes: people with learning disabilities can also have social issues. The correct interpretation of social cues with peers may be influenced by neuropsychological differences. According to researchers, people with learning disabilities suffer negative consequences not only as a result of their learning differences, but also as a result of wearing a stigmatising mark. Because of evidence and statistical limitations, determining the effectiveness of special education programmes has been difficult. According to new studies, teenagers with learning

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disabilities have worse academic results than peers who started high school with equivalent levels of achievement and behaviours. It seems that their weaker results are due, at least in part, to their teachers' lower standards; national statistics suggest that teachers have expectations for students with learning disabilities that are incompatible with their academic ability (as evidenced by test scores and learning behaviours).

Diagnosis

Learning disorders may be identified through a combination of intelligence tests, academic achievement testing, classroom performance, and social interaction and aptitude by physicians, speech language pathologists, school psychologists, behavioural psychologists, counselling psychologists, neuropsychologists, speech language pathologists, and other learning disability specialists. A learning disorder is diagnosed when a child's cognitive capacity is significantly higher than his or her academic output. Despite the fact that the difference paradigm has dominated the educational system for many years, scholars have been critical of it. There is no evidence that a gap between formally assessed IQ and achievement is a direct predictor of LD, according to recent studies. Furthermore, a diagnosis based on a disparity does not predict treatment efficacy. Low academic achievers who do not have an IQ difference (i.e., their IQ scores are also low) tend to gain just as much from care as low academic achievers who do have an IQ difference (i.e., their IQ scores are higher than their academic performance would suggest).

The number of children suffering due to learning disability is increasing. Unfortunately, these children are not getting enough care and support from both family and schools. Sometimes, they are ignored blaming them lazy in their studies and they are ignored in the classrooms. This is because these children's difficulties are not identified. Identification of learning disabilities may be delayed or missed for several reasons. One of the main causes is the lack knowledge in the primary school teachers. Several studies were reviewed on teachers' perception, knowledge and awareness about learning disabilities. Most of the studies reported that school teachers did not have enough perception or knowledge about learning disabilities. A study conducted by Menon K, among elementary school teachers in Kerala found that the school teachers possess an average level of knowledge regarding concepts of learning disability. Students, on the other hand, will spend the bulk of their time with their school mentors. As a result, mentors, especially teachers, play a critical role in early detection of mental health issues, making medical recommendations, and promoting mental health among students in their schools.

Rationale of the study

Learning disorders continue to be "one of the least understood and most debated disabling conditions that affect children." (Lyon, 1996, p. 3) In India issues regarding learning disorders accrued importance only during the 1990s. Recognition and the need for remedial services for children with disabilities has improved (Thappa, 2008). The needs of students with learning disorders are best met with initial identification, by eliminating barriers to learning, improving expectations and goal levels and embrace collaborative approaches. Primary identification is the most productive form of labelling the special requirements of children. Education is the most important key to a beaming future for children with special educational needs. Therefore, all teachers and mentors should be trained to teach children with special needs and schools should take steps to support such students. A study conducted by R. Kamala on knowledge of specific learning disabilities in school teacher educators in Puducherry concluded that teachers who participated in the study have an average level of knowledge about the specific learning disorders. Unfortunately, there is no much studies done

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regarding knowledge of learning disability among teachers in Kerala and the limited studies done in Kerala is bounded to certain districts and to selected schools. Mehta (2006) in his study reported that there is a significant difference in the level of awareness of learning disorders in teachers of different boards. However, a structured study based on knowledge regarding learning disability have not carried out in Kerala. To date there haven't much comparative study done among private school teachers and government school teachers. Therefore, with the help of this study we can figure out the level of knowledge regarding learning disability in primary school teachers and figure out whether there is a significant difference in the level of knowledge between private school teachers and government school teachers. A greater understanding of learning disabilities among primary school teachers will help to improve educational quality and learning conditions. It also aids teachers in the early detection of children with learning disabilities in their classrooms, as well as the provision of appropriate learning resources, guidance, and counselling to the children. Menon K.P. S (2016)

Research problem

1. What is the level of knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teachers of private schools of Kerala?
2. Will there be a difference in the level of knowledge between private school teachers and government school teachers?
3. Will there be a difference in the level of knowledge based on their year of experience?

Objective

1. To assess the level of knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teachers in Kerala.
2. To compare the level of knowledge of learning disability among private school teachers and government school teachers.
3. To compare the level of knowledge among teachers based on their year of experience.

Hypotheses

1. HO1. The level of knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teachers will be significant.
2. HO2. There will be a significant difference in the level of knowledge between private school teachers and government schoolteachers.
3. HO3. There will be a significant difference in the level of knowledge based on the experience of the teachers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following series of articles examines how the concept of this research has been studied upon in the past. These studies can be used to understand the research gap and the feasibility of the study.

Kamala and Ramganes (2013) conducted a study among teacher educators in Puducherry and the results of the study reveals that the teacher educators have an average level of knowledge regarding the specific learning disabilities notwithstanding their gender and teaching experiences. The study concluded that the reason may be that the teachers were not properly trained to teach the special needs of the children in an inclusive school particularly the invisible disability, Specific Learning Disabilities.

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A similar research was carried out by Ghimire, Sasmita. (2017) in 16 schools in Nepal, among 150 primary school teachers. The result of the study indicates that majority of the teachers who participated had moderately adequate knowledge regarding learning disabilities. The researchers also concluded that teachers of the study did not pose adequate knowledge regarding learning problems, and don't know what should be done when encountering a child with learning disorder. The results of this study also evidenced that their knowledge about learning disorders is superficial, because they did not have any courses about learning disabilities during their academic session.

A study done on the topic Managing specific learning disability in schools in India in the year 2011 found that Over the last years, awareness about learning disability has grown increased in India. Therefore, it is important to ensure that each affected student has the opportunity to achieve his or her maximum academic potential in standard mainstream schools. To achieve this acceptable scenario, all 'regular' classroom teachers should be alerted to the possibility of this disability and trained to screen for it while the child is in primary school. School administrations should take greater responsibility for establishing resource rooms and hiring special educators to ensure that these children receive regular and accessible remedial education, as well as be vigilant in ensuring that these children receive the necessary requirements both during school and during board exams.

An article published in International Journal of Contemporary Paediatrics examined students from English medium schools in the 8-12 years age range for academic problems, with a significant delay in finding medical assistance. The majority of the students in the study had all three disabilities: dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. ADHD was diagnosed in 38.56 percent of children. In certain cases, psychological maternal stress, developmental problems, and multiple co-morbidities were present, with speech delay and fine motor issues becoming more prevalent in children with comorbid ADHD. This study concluded that dealing with the challenge of learning disability requires recognition, early diagnosis, and referral to appropriate resources. This study indicates that health providers should look for early signs of ADHD in children during regular visits, and that co-morbidities, especially ADHD, should be adequately addressed. Furthermore, the role of the media and education system in community de-stigmatization is critical.

A study conducted by Woodcock (2013) reveals that, Primary trainee teachers have a slightly more optimistic outlook toward students with particular learning disabilities than secondary trainee teachers. The amount of contact trainee teachers had with students with particular learning difficulties had no impact on their attitudes toward them, nor did it have any bearing on their opinions on curriculum differentiation.

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 intervention and it will be beneficial to create awareness among parents and teachers to facilitate early identification and appropriate estimation of LD in India.

Padhy et al., (2016) conducted a research in a northern Indian city to determine the prevalence and trends of learning disabilities (LD) in school-aged children. According to the study's findings, about 3% of 3rd and 4th grade students have a learning disability. The most common problems endorsed by the teachers were missing words or sentences when reading, misplacing letters or words while reading or writing, making letters or words while reading or

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writing, and making repeated spelling errors, while visual memory deficiency was the most common symptom found. This means that children should be assessed on a regular basis, with at-risk children identified and special education classes implemented. The fact that fewer than 5% of parents are aware of a learning disability shows that there is still a need to raise awareness about learning disabilities so that children with these problems can be diagnosed early and receive adequate treatment.

A research conducted by K.P (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. She also recommended that state-wide learning disability awareness programmes for all school teachers be implemented.

Barga. N K (1996) investigated the factors that have led to the academic performance of students with learning disabilities (LD) and how these students handle their disabilities from kindergarten to college. Over the course of six months, the study used a qualitative analysis approach that included analysing academic documents, conducting interviews, and observing classrooms. Students claimed they did not fit in academically with their peers due to labelling, stigmatisation, and gatekeeping. As a result, the students used a variety of coping strategies in order to effectively handle their disabilities at school.

Michael (2010) looked at whether curriculum modifications predicted student and teacher behaviour in relation to the general education curriculum, as well as whether there were variations in ecological, student, and teacher variables based on the existence of such modifications. During core subject area training, 45 high school students with disabilities were observed. There were substantial variations in student and instructor variables depending on the existence of curriculum changes, according to the findings. Students engaged in more academic-related responses and fewer competing behaviours when instructional changes were provided, and teachers engaged in fewer classroom management activities. The significance and implementation of curriculum changes for students with disabilities in general education settings are discussed, as well as the consequences and guidelines arising from these results.

Mehta. D (2006) in her research, she discovered that teachers from various boards, such as SSLC, CBSE, and ICSE, had varying levels of knowledge of learning disabilities. Teachers from the ICSE board were more knowledgeable of learning disabilities than those from the CBSE and SSLC boards. During data collection, the researcher noticed that more ICSE schools had special educators on staff, as well as seminars for teachers. This may be one of the main reasons for the increased knowledge among ICSE board teachers. In addition, the researcher discovered that ICSE board teachers were able to distinguish a few cases of learning-disabled students in their classroom. Since special educators are present in most ICSE classrooms, teachers have been having sessions with them, and these special educators have been identified as school.

A research conducted by Keivan et al. in 2012 based on the experience and capacity of primary school teachers in Kermanshah province in recognising students with learning disabilities found that more than half of the teachers in the study have sufficient knowledge of the essence of learning disability and 82/1 have awareness of the aetiology of learning disability. Furthermore, more than 90% of teachers had insufficient capacity to recognise

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students with learning disabilities. They also discovered that there are substantial differences in gender and level of awareness of the aetiology of learning disabilities among teachers.

METHODOLOGY

The method that has been adopted in this research was carefully designed so as to go well with the inquiry. This chapter describes the research design that was chosen for the purpose of this study and also mentioned the research question and objectives of the study. It provides information on participants, that is, criteria for inclusion in the study, how they were sampled and who the participants were. The researcher mentions operational definition so as to get a clear understanding about the variables that the study focuses on. The instruments that were used for data collection and the method used to analyse data is also mentioned in this chapter. Finally ethical consideration in the process is also discussed.

Aim

To assess the knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teacher

Research design

A comparative study was done using convenience sampling. This is a type of non-experimental research in which the researcher finds the level of knowledge of learning disability in primary school teachers and compares this level using demographic variables such as nature of employment and year of experience. This study was conducted on primary school teachers from various districts of Kerala. Teachers from both private and government schools were taken for the study. Comparison was done by using independent sample t-test.

Sample and sampling

Based on the exclusion and inclusion criteria, a group of 100 primary school teachers (n=100) was chosen for the study, 50 from private schools and 50 from public schools. Convenience sampling was used, which is a method of non-probability sampling in which a sample is taken from a population segment that is close to hand.

Inclusion area

- Teachers who are teaching in primary classes (LKG – VIII)
- Primary school teachers from Kerala.
- Primary school teachers of government schools.
- Primary school teachers of private schools.

Exclusion area

- Teachers those who are teaching in schools for differently abled children
- Teachers teaching in higher secondary level

Operational definitions

- Learning Disability- Difficulty to store, process, or produce information related to academic skills
- Primary School Teachers- Professionals who have completed a diploma or similar degree in education and are accredited by the Kerala Government to teach students from kindergarten to eighth grade.
- Assess- The researcher's plan is to use a standardised questionnaire to assess the awareness of primary school teachers about learning disabilities.

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Tools

- Informed consent form (it contains details of the study and consent of the participant)
- Socio-demographic data sheet (age, gender, qualification, year of experience and nature of employment,)
- Structured questionnaire for assessment of knowledge by Anju George (2015)
The questionnaire consist of 30 multiple choice questions with 4 options in which one option is correct. The maximum score is 30 and minimum score is 0. Reliability of the tool is +0.98

Procedure

The sample for the study includes 100 primary school teachers. The selection of samples was based on the inclusion-exclusion criteria. Informed consent was obtained from all the respondents before collecting the data. The study had responses from Kerala. Convenience sampling has been used for the collection of data. Socio-demographic sheet and a structured questionnaire was used for the collection of data. This was administrated to the participants through google forms. Appropriate statistical tools have been used for the analysis of the data.

Data Analysis

The data obtained included responses from 100 primary school teachers, 50 private school teachers and 50 government schoolteachers. The data was processed in Microsoft Excel and the statistical analysis was done using IBM SPSS. The first step of the analysis was to eliminate any sort of data that did not meet the criteria for inclusion. Non genuine data was not considered for the study. The reliability of the test was calculated using the SPSS software and it was found to be .704, which indicates that the scale used is reliable. The normality of the test was found using Shapiro-Wilk test and was found to be 0.53 which indicates that data is normally distributed. Therefore, parametric test was used for further analysis of data.

The frequency distribution and measures of central tendency based on socio-demographic data which included nature of employment and year of experience was tested. Later, descriptive statistics such as t-test was used to provide information regarding the demographic variables.

Ethical Consideration

The participants were given a brief idea about the study. Informed consent was taken from each participant. The details of the subject are kept highly confidential and it has been used only for academic purposes. The subject had all the freedom to quit the study at any point of time.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data is statistically analysed to discuss and interpret the results. The statistical methods are based on the objectives of the study. The data is collected from primary school teachers of Kerala. The objectives were (1) To assess the knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teachers; (2) To compare the level of knowledge of learning disability among private school teachers and government school teachers; (3) To compare the level of knowledge among teachers based on their qualification

RESULT

Table 4.1 Information based on the nature of employment of the participants.

| Nature of employment | N | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------|----|-----------|------------|
| Government/Aided | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| Private | 50 | 50 | 50 |

Table 4.1 shows the results from the socio-demographic data sheet corresponding to the nature of employment of the participants. The total responses were 100 out of which 50 were from government/aided sector and 50 from private sectors.

Table 4.2 Information based on the year of experience of the participants.

| Year of experience | N | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|----|-----------|------------|
| 1 to 6 | 37 | 37 | 37 |
| 7 to 12 | 63 | 63 | 63 |

Table 4.2 shows the result from socio-demographic data sheet corresponding to the year of experience of the participants. Majority of the respondents (63%) have 7 to 12 years of experience whereas 37% of respondents had 1 to 6 years of experience.

Table 4.3 Reliability of the structured questionnaire on learning disability

| Cronbach's Alpha | No. of items |
|------------------|--------------|
| .704 | 30 |

Table 4.3 shows the reliability of the scale used in the study. The Cronbach's alpha value is .704. Therefore, the scale has high reliability.

Table 4.4 Shapiro-Wilk test of normality for the scale used.

| Shapiro-Wilk Statistic | df | Sig. |
|------------------------|-----|------|
| Totals .975 | 101 | .053 |

Table 4.4 shows the test for normality using Shapiro-Wilk test for the scale used in the study. The result indicate that the questionnaire has a significance of 0.053 which means that the data is normally distributed.

Table 4.5 Knowledge of learning disability among the participants

| N | S.D | Mean | Interpretation |
|-----|------|-------|---------------------|
| 100 | 4.34 | 16.37 | Moderately adequate |

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Table 4.5 shows the average level of knowledge of learning disability among the participants are found to be 16.37 which is interpreted as moderately adequate knowledge. The standard deviation is 4.34. Therefore, we accept the HO1

Table 4.6 Independent sample t-test comparing the nature of employment

| Nature of employment | N | Mean | df | Sig. |
|------------------------------|----|-------|-------|------|
| Government/ Aided Schools | 50 | 15.80 | 97 | .207 |
| Private Schools | 50 | 16.91 | 92.56 | |

Table 4.6 shows the result of independent sample t test comparing the nature of the employment. From the table we can conclude that the significant value is .207 which is greater than 0.05, which indicates that there is no significance difference between government and private school teachers. Therefore, we reject the HO2.

Table 4.7 Independent sample t-test comparing year of experience.

| Year of experience | N | Mean | df | Sig. |
|--------------------|----|-------|-------|------|
| 1 to 6 years | 37 | 17.0 | 97 | .251 |
| 7 to 12 years | 63 | 15.95 | 85.37 | |

Table shows the result of independent sample t-test comparing the year of experience. From the table we can conclude that the significant value is .251 which is greater than 0.05, which indicates there is no significant difference based on the year of experience. Therefore, we reject the HO3.

DISCUSSION

Learning disability is a neurological condition in which the brain's ability to absorb, process, store, and respond to information is impaired. It can have an effect on a person's ability to listen, talk, read, compose, and solve problems. As a result, learning disabilities are one of the leading causes of low academic success in classrooms. As a result, the number of school dropouts increases due to lack of adequate remedial training and support. Learning disorder is, sadly, one of the most misunderstood and debated disabling disorders that affects children. In today's competitive world education is given more priority. Moreover, teachers are the guiding lights of the children. Parents and teachers play a vital role in moulding the child in their earlier stages of life. So it is important for the teachers to know about various problems that the child may face and help the child as well as the parents to fight against those problems. Teacher's knowledge regarding learning disability helps them to find and figure out any abnormalities in the child within the classrooms and can guide the children to overcome these problems in their earlier stages of their life so that they can cope up with the realities and situation that they face in their further life

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The present study aimed to find out the knowledge of learning disability among primary school teachers. The data was collected from 100 primary school teachers. The structured questionnaire was used for the collection of data. The reliability of the scale was measured and it was found to be .704 which indicates that this scale is highly reliable. The normality of the data was found by using Shapiro-Wilk normality test. The value obtained was .503 which indicates that the data is normally distributed. The questionnaire was administered and the average score obtained by the participants was 16.37 which indicates that the sample population had moderately adequate knowledge on learning disability. Therefore, we accept the HO1. This finding supports the research conducted on this field. Kamala and Ramganesha (2013) conducted a research among teacher educators in Puducherry and the result of their study was that the teachers had an average level of knowledge on learning disability. Similarly, Saravanabhavan and Saravanabhavan (2010) claims that the teachers have limited knowledge of Specific Learning Disabilities. They also noted that one of the many barriers to providing services to children with disabilities in India has always been a shortage of qualified staff. This might be the result of inadequate training received by teachers during their curriculum. The Indian curriculum has drawbacks, such as the inclusion of special education as an optional subject in general teacher education rather than as a required subject. However, the system's flaw is that these students with Specific Learning Disabilities attend public schools. Inadequate awareness about disabilities has also been related to derogatory attitudes against people with disabilities, according to reports (Saravanabhavan & Saravanabhavan, 2001). In India, there is no special module in the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) training programme for teachers to recognise and resolve learning difficulties in children (Chatterjee and Madhusree, 2009)

Many classroom teachers in standard conventional schools in India have little knowledge of SpLD (Karande, 2008; Saravanabhavan and Saravanabhavan, 2010), and the majority of parents, educators, and members of the local school board have limited knowledge and understanding of learning disabilities (Karande, 2008; Saravanabhavan and Saravanabhavan, 2010). As a result of this lack of awareness, negative attitudes against people with disabilities develop (Saravanabhavan and Saravanabhavan, 2001).

By using independent sample t-test it was found that there is no significant difference in the level of knowledge between private school teachers and government school teachers. Therefore, the HO2 is rejected. However, the mean difference between the two groups indicates that private school teachers have more knowledge than government school teachers. This may be due to the result of awareness and training programmes conducted by private schools. While interpreting the average scores of each group, it can be stated that both private school and government school teachers have moderately adequate knowledge.

Moreover, this study compared the level of knowledge regarding learning disability based on the year of experience by using independent sample t-test. From the result it can be concluded that there is no significant difference based on the experience. Therefore, we reject the HO3. However, the mean difference between the groups indicates that teachers with 1 to 6 years of experience have more knowledge than teachers with 7 to 12 years of experience. This might be because the curriculum of teachers training of recent years address the learning issues faced by the students to sensitize teachers to the needs of each student. This might have helped the teachers who have received training in the recent years compared to the ones who got training years ahead. From this we can conclude that year of experience do not have any role in the awareness on learning disability. This indicates that experience of a teacher does not determine his/her knowledge in learning disability.

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Furthermore, it was found that majority of the sample population do not know the concepts of dysorthographia and dysgraphia. 77 percent of the teachers gave wrong answers for the question related to accommodation for learning disability. Also, presentation format and response format were not a familiar concept among the teachers. This results indicates that the teachers are not aware about the concepts of learning disability and they lack adequate knowledge in this field.

Additionally, it was also found that 18% of the population of teachers did not encountered with any learning-disabled children in their carrier. This might be due to the lack of their awareness in the field of learning disability. Also, 36% of the teachers responded that their schools are not conducting any seminars or classes for teachers regarding learning disability. This itself shows that the schools are not giving importance to learning disability and in these cases students with learning disability receives least care and guidance from the management of the school and also from the teachers. Unfortunately, it is surprising to notice that nearly half of the participants (48%) responded that their schools are not having a psychologist or a counsellor in their school. This sample result represents the majority of the schools in Kerala. Schools are not providing a psychologist or a counsellor to guide and support the students. Most probably this is the reason for least identification of children with learning disability in Kerala. This result shows that mental health is given least importance in the academic curriculum of Indian Schools. Most of the symptoms of learning disability is either ignored or blamed it on the child's personality branding it as laziness, an attitude problem or aggression. This is due to the lack of attention given to children in school setting. If problems like learning disability are ignored this may lead to personality disorders and can affect the mental health of an individual. Therefore, mental health and problems of students must be given priority in school environment for that all the school management must ensure that the mental health issues are being addressed and proper guidance and support must be given importance along with academics.

The findings of this study reinforce the previous researches done in the field of learning disability. There is a substantial amount of evidence that teachers and parents in India are unaware of the particular learning disorder. (Karande,2008; Karande, Mahajan, Kulkarni, 2009; Crawford, 2007; Saravanabhavan, & Saravanabhavan, 2010). Additionally, this study finds that there is no much significant difference in level of knowledge based on the nature of employment and year of experience of the teachers. The primary school teacher has an average or moderately adequate knowledge regarding learning disability. This finding suggests that even among society's educated members, especially teacher educators, those who are considered to play a critical role in identifying student problems in the teaching-learning process lack knowledge of learning disability. If the situation persists, students with particular learning difficulties are more likely to perform badly in school and become drop outs. This can lead to depression, stress and anxiety. Researches suggests that depression is associated with poor academic performance and this can have a negative effect in relationships and lead to long-term consequences in student's life. Eisenberg,D et al., (2007). Therefore, government and school management should take measures to provide awareness among teachers regarding specific learning disability.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the present study 'Knowledge regarding Learning Disability among primary school teachers. The study was aimed to assess the level of knowledge about learning disability and to compare this knowledge based on selected demographic variables.

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Research problem

To assess the level of knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teachers and to compare this knowledge based on nature of employment and year of experience.

Objective

1. To assess the level of knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teachers in Kerala.
2. To compare the level of knowledge of learning disability among private school teachers and government schoolteachers.
3. To compare the level of knowledge among teachers based on their year of experience.

Hypotheses

- HO1. The level of knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teachers will be significant.
- HO2. There will be a significant difference in the level of knowledge between private school teachers and government school teachers.
- HO3. There will be a significant difference in the level of knowledge based on the experience of the teachers.

Sample and sampling

Based on the exclusion and inclusion criteria, a group of 100 primary school teachers (n=100) was chosen for the study, 50 from private schools and 50 from public schools. Convenience sampling was used, which is a method of non-probability sampling in which a sample is taken from a population segment that is close to hand. The participants were given a brief idea about the study. Informed consent was taken from each participant. The details of the subject are kept highly confidential and it has been used only for academic purposes. The subject had all the freedom to quit the study at any point of time.

Tools

The following tools were used to collect the data:

1. Informed Consent Form
2. Socio-Demographic Sheet
3. Structured questionnaire for assessment of knowledge of learning disability (George. A, 2015)

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out using the SPSS (version 17.0). Microsoft word and Excel were used in order to generate tables. The hypothesis was tested using the average scores of the participants. Independent sample t-test was administered for comparing knowledge based on the demographic variables.

Findings

1. The level of knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teachers are moderately adequate.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of knowledge based on the nature of employment among the primary school teachers.
3. Private school teachers have more knowledge than government school teachers.
4. There is no significant difference in the level of knowledge based on the year of experience.

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5. Teachers with 1 to 6 years of experience has more knowledge than teachers with 7 to 12 years of experience
6. Half of the schools does not have a psychologist or a counsellor.

CONCLUSION

The present study intended to assess the level of knowledge regarding learning disability among primary school teachers. The study was conducted by using convenient sampling method. The data was collected from 100 primary school teachers (50 private school teachers and 50 government school teachers). Knowledge regarding learning disability was measured using a structured questionnaire on learning disability. The data was analysed using Independent Sample T-test. It was found that the teachers had moderately adequate knowledge regarding learning disability. There was no significant difference in the level of knowledge based on the nature of employment and year of experience among the primary school teachers.

Implications of the study

The following recommendations are made based on the results of this report for enhancing current educational standards.

1. According to the findings of this report, primary school teachers have a modest level of knowledge about learning disabilities. As a result, this study stresses the importance of raising their understanding of learning disabilities.
2. Teachers should have a proper understanding regarding the concept, features and symptoms of different types of learning disabilities.
3. Teachers should be familiar with the characteristics of children with learning disabilities, as well as the challenges they face.
4. Early detection of learning disabilities is only possible if teachers are aware of the issue.
5. The school administration should provide adequate instruction to students with learning disabilities.
6. Schools must ensure that they provide a psychologist or a counsellor to guide the children and to address their mental health issues.
7. Awareness programmes and seminars can be conducted in schools for making the teachers and parents aware about the symptoms and remedial training for learning disability.
8. This study suggests that B.Ed. curriculum should include concepts of learning disability and remedial training in the course plan.
9. To promote positive attitudes toward children with learning disabilities, the government should initiate national and state-level awareness campaigns.

Limitations of the study

1. Due to time constraints the research could be administrated only to a small sample.
2. Non-Probability sampling technique minimizes the generalization of the study.
3. The data was collected entirely by online mode through Google forms. This reduces the quality and reliability of the data.

Suggestions for Further Research

- Future researchers should consider parents for assessing their knowledge regarding learning disability, this can help the parents to identify children with learning disability.

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- Researches that address the mental health issues can be conducted in schools. This can help to improve the psychological well being of school children
- Data can be collected using different means such as personal interviews among the teachers.
- Further research can be done based on the issues faced by children specific learning disability.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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