

AWARENESS ON LEARNING DISABILITIES AMONG REGULAR SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Education is an essential human virtue. Without it, man is a splendid slave and reasoning savage. Education is to humanize humanity. If is to make man becomes “man” through education. The human life can only be glorified through education and it is only the cultural or social aspect of human life, which signifies his supreme position and thus constitutes the noblest work of God.

Good education therefore should connote a wholesome growth in the direction of the physical, self and social self, the aesthetic say, the religious self and the philosophical say. It is in the pursuit of these ideals that progressive educators should seek to keep the individual busy in a wholesome programme at this highest natural level of successful achievement in order that he may be happy, successful and good.

In a class there are high achievers, low achievers and average children. Depending upon the factors present in the learning environment in the school, at home and all around him, his intellectual and psychological maturity develops. Learning differs in children and their academic achievement is of much importance, particularly in the present socioeconomic and cultural context. Obviously in the school, great emphasis is placed on achievements, right from the beginning of formal education.

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In general, children with learning difficulties are found in all classes and ages. Such children need some help. When the teacher discovers these children, they must decide as to how much help they can give them.

The term learning disabilities is a puzzling one. Some people say these children have hidden disabilities, because their strength in some areas often masks or hides learning problems in other areas. Some of these had trouble in reading; others were poor in spelling. Still others could read and spell well but made frequent errors in mathematics. These are identified as students with learning difficulties. Teachers tell us that these children do not learn in the same way or as early as others of their age. They say that these students perform reasonably well with only minor assistance. The goal of these teachers is to modify instruction method so that all their students will learn. There is no doubt that the teacher and the instructional environment also play an important role. An effective teacher can maximize students' strengths and minimize their weaknesses in ways that reduce or eliminate the discrepancy between achievement and potential.

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of the present study were to:

- ❖ Assess the knowledge existing among regular school teachers on learning disabilities
- ❖ Organize an awareness programme for regular teachers
- ❖ Give knowledge about the identification and remediation methods of the children with learning disabilities
- ❖ Evaluate the impact or effect on knowledge gained by regular school teachers on learning disability

METHODOLOGY:

The sample of the study was selected from 60 teachers from 60 Government schools in Dindigul and Gudalur districts covering the primary level to higher secondary level teachers. Among the 60 samples 15 male and 15 female teachers from Dindigul and 15 male and 15 female teachers from Gudalur districts. A questionnaire was prepared by the investigator which had 30 questions given for jury opinion. Pilot study was conducted. A final questionnaire was organized to assess the knowledge existing among regular school teachers on characteristics,

identification, remediation, roles and responsibilities of teachers and parents in handling them etc., before the awareness programme. Then the awareness programme was organized and knowledge and methods / techniques was imparted about the identification and remediation for teachers of the children with learning disabilities. During the awareness programme the various remedial package materials like charts, pamphlets, publications, sentence makers, finding words, flash cards, number strips, mathematics puzzles, number discrimination concepts, Diagnostic tools etc., were used to explain the identification and remediation techniques for children with learning disabilities in specific areas like reading, writing, arithmetic areas. The score card was also prepared for assessing the remedial materials and distributed to teachers and results are recorded. Finally, the post test questionnaire was given to the regular school teachers to evaluate the impact of awareness programme and knowledge gained on learning disability area. The age levels of the sample were 20 – 30 years (13%), 31 -40 years (47%), 41 – 50 years (27%) and 51 – 60 years (13%). The years of experience of the teachers were 1 – 8 years (62%) 9 – 16 years (18%), 17 – 24 years (12%) and 25 – 32 years (8%). Qualification of the teachers were T.T.C, D.T.Ed, S.G.T.T (52%), UG with B.Ed., Degree (25%) and PG with M.Ed., & M. Phil., degree (23%). The classes handled by the teachers were I – II Standard (37%), III – VI Standard (32%), VI – IX Standard (23%) and IX – XII Standard (8%).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

To find out the effectiveness of the awareness programme the pretest and posttest scores of the teachers were compared by using the 't' – test.

Table – 1: Comparison of Scores of the Regular School Teachers.

| S. No | Type of test | Mean | S.D | 't' value | Level of significance |
|-------|--------------|---------|--------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Pretest | 19.4167 | 5.515 | 35.92 | 0.01** |
| 2. | Post test | 65.4833 | 11.488 | | |

** Significant at 1% level.

The above table depicts that the post test mean scores are higher than pretest mean scores. The difference between the two tests are significant at 0.01 level. The obtained 't' value is 35.92. Therefore, it is concluded that the awareness programme is very effective for the regular school teachers.

Table – 2: Comparison of Scores of Concepts of Learning Disability.

| S. No | Type of test | Mean | S.D | 't' value | Level of significance |
|-------|--------------|---------|--------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Pretest | 19.4167 | 5.515 | 35.92 | 0.01** |
| 2. | Post test | 65.4833 | 11.488 | | |

** Significant at 1% level.

The above table shows that the mean scores of the post test higher than the mean score of pretest. The difference between the two tests is significant at 0.01 levels. The obtained't' value is 29.39. It is found that the awareness programme has made an impact on the regular school teachers of concepts of learning disability.

Table – 3: Comparison of Scores of the teachers on children committing errors in reading, writing and arithmetic.

| S. No | Type of test | Mean | S.D | 't' value | Level of significance |
|-------|--------------|--------|-------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Pretest | 2.1500 | 1.005 | 22.77 | 0.01** |
| 2. | Post test | 7.6000 | 1.543 | | |

** Significant at 1% level.

The mean scores of the post test is higher than the pretest. The differences between the two tests are significant at 0.01 level. The obtained value is 22.77. It is due to the effective organization of awareness programme given to the regular school teachers.

Table – 4: Comparison of Scores of the teachers on remediation in reading, writing and arithmetic

| S. No | Type of test | Mean | S.D | 't' value | Level of significance |
|-------|--------------|--------|-------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Pretest | 1.7167 | 0.904 | 31.82 | 0.01 |
| 2. | Post test | 7.5667 | 1.332 | | |

The mean value of the post test score is higher than the pretest score and it is significant at 0.01 level. The obtained 't' value is 31.82. So it is concluded that awareness programme and remedial instructional materials are very effective for the teachers to use it in their classrooms to give remediation for children with learning difficulties.

Table – 5: Comparison of Score of the teachers' attitude towards the children with learning difficulties.

| S. No | Type of test | Mean | S.D | 't' value | Level of significance |
|-------|--------------|---------|-------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Pretest | 9.3667 | 3.654 | 33.13 | 0.01 |
| 2. | Post test | 28.9500 | 6.135 | | |

The above table depicts that the mean value of post test scores is higher than the pre test score. The difference between the two tests are significant at 0.01 level. The obtained value is 33.13. So, it is concluded that the attitude has changed positively after the awareness programme.

Table – 6: Comparison of Scores of Teachers in relation to Gender

| S. No | Sex | Mean | S.D | 't' value | Level of significance |
|-------|--------|---------|--------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Male | 71.3000 | 6.778 | 4.52 | 0.01 |
| 2. | Female | 59.6667 | 12.352 | | |

The above table shows that the post test scores of the male and female teachers are compared. The mean value of the male teachers are higher than the female teachers. The difference between the two values are significant at 0.01 level. The obtained 't' value is 4.52. So, it is concluded that male teachers have performed better than female teachers in the awareness programme.

Table – 7: Comparison Scores of the Teachers from Urban and Rural Areas.

| S. No | Type of Area | Mean | S.D | ‘t’ value | Level of significance |
|-------|--------------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Urban | 68.4667 | 9.0580 | 2.07 | 0.05 |
| 2. | Rural | 62.5000 | 12.9630 | | |

The
post
test

scores of the teachers from urban and rural areas are compared. The mean value of the male teachers from urban area is higher than the teachers from rural area. The difference between the two values are significant at 0.05 level. The obtained ‘t’ value is 2.07. So it is concluded that the teachers from urban area have performed better than the teachers from rural area in the awareness programme.

Table – 8: Comparison of post test scores of the teachers from Dindigul and Gudalur Districts.

| S. No | Districts | Mean | S.D | ‘t’ value | Level of significance |
|-------|-----------|---------|--------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Dindigul | 71.7333 | 6.3780 | 5.00 | 0.01 |
| 2. | Gudalur | 59.2333 | 12.125 | | |

The above table depicts that the post test scores of the teachers from Dindigul and Gudalur districts are compared. The mean value score of the teachers from Dindigul district is higher than the Gudalur District. The difference between the two values are significant at 0.01 level. The obtained ‘t’ value is 5.00. So, it is concluded that the teachers from Dindigul district are performed more than the teachers from Gudalur district

CONCLUSION

The number of children identified as learning disabled has increased greatly in recent years, making this category the largest in special education. The increase has helped fuel an ongoing debate among professionals over the very nature of the learning disability concept. Some of the most innovative teachers and scholars in special education have devoted their careers to learning disabilities. Methods of assessment and instruction that were first developed for learning disabilities have influenced that entire field of education and students of all kinds.

Children with learning difficulties need extra support in a specific skill and consistent discipline coupled with respect for the child as a person. This means clear limits and appropriate rewards and penalties. It is therefore important that parents and teachers provide solid structure. Parents and teachers may wish to give the child some latitude in making up this schedule, including a time for home work, study and so forth.

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