A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING LEARNING DISABILITIES AMONG CHILDREN IN SELECTED SCHOOLS AT CHURU.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Today's children are tomorrow's citizens. They are in a continuous process of growth and development. Any alteration in its course leads on to developmental disorders. The developmental disorders learning disability plays a significant role as a silent handicap among children. It is estimated that 4-5% of students in school have learning disability.

Methods & Material: A descriptive research design was adapted to conduct the study. Target population was primary school teachers in Churu District. A structured questionnaire for knowledge and attitude scale for attitude assessment was used. 120 samples were selected from the target population by convenient sampling. Data was collected and analyzed using mean, median, percentage, SD, Chi square and Coefficient correlation and presented in the form of tables and diagrams.

Results: The study revealed that major portion (35%) of primary school teachers belonged to the age group 30-35 and of these 93% were females. Majority of them (75%) possessed B.Ed degree. Nearly half of them (48.33) had less than 5 years of teaching experience. 91.67% studied child psychology in their curriculum but very few (8%) had opportunity to attend in service educations on problems of learning. No teachers had opportunity to teach such children. Chi square revealed a significant association (P<0.05) between knowledge and Educational qualification. Significant association was identified between attitude and age of the subjects also.

Interpretation and Conclusion: A positive correlation was identified between knowledge and attitude score of teachers on the subject. The study concluded that need for providing knowledge on learning disability is an important strategy to utilize teachers as effective contributors towards child mental health services.

Keywords – Leaning disability, Attitude, Knowledge, Disabled Children, School teacher

INTRODUCTION

According to Mahatma Gandhi, ''Education means an all round drawing out of the best in child and men – body, mind and spirit''[1.] Only an efficient and an understanding teacher can identify the capacities, strength, and weakness innate in each student.

Jones Elizabeth Pryce states that children are at school for a large part of their vital time for the emotional and physical development. School provides a setting for the development of friendship, socialization and for the introduction and reinforcement of behavior [2]. Change of behavior in the desired direction is termed as learning. Learning is a very complex brain function of understanding, recalling, and utilization of this knowledge in the future. The capacity to learn varies from individual to individual - even among children of the same age and intellectual ability.

METHODOLOGY

The research approach used for the study is descriptive in nature.

Research Approach: The research approach used for the study is descriptive in nature.

Research Design: The study is designed in the form of non experimental descriptive type.

Sample and Sampling technique:

The sample for the present study will be comprised of 120 primary school teachers selected by Convenient sampling technique from selected schools at Churu. Convenient sampling is a strategy in which the researcher's knowledge of the population and its elements are used to select samples which are typical of the population

Data Collection:

Structured Questionnaire for Knowledge Assessment Rating scale for attitude measurement.

RESULTS

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from sixty school teachers from selected schools in churu district regarding their knowledge and attitude towards Learning Disabilities among children.

Kerlinger (1976) has defined analysis as "the categorizing, manipulating and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research hypothesis question"[3].

Abdellah and Levine mentioned that interpretation of tabulated data can bring light to the real meaning of the findings[4].

The data were collected through structured questionnaire and entered in

master sheet. The obtained data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics, which were necessary to describe Socio – demographic variables, the knowledge and attitude level, and the relationship between the selected demographic variables and knowledge and attitude[5].

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the level of knowledge of teachers regarding learning disabilities among children

2. To measure the attitude of teachers towards children with learning disabilities.

3. To associate the knowledge of teachers with selected socio demographic variables.

4. To associate the attitude of teachers with socio demographic variables.

5. To correlate the knowledge and attitude of school teachers regarding learning disability.

SECTION I

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY SUBJECTS BY SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC VARIABL ES

In this section the researcher analyzed and categorized the subjects of study into various groups based on the socio demographic variables.

Table 1 : Frequency and Percentage distribution of subjects according to age in years N = 120

S.n.	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Age in years		
1.	25 – 29	32	26.67
2.	30 – 34	42	35
3.	35 - 39	28	23.33
4.	≥ 40	18	15
	Gender		
1.	Male	8	6.67
2.	Female	112	93.33
	Educational Qualification		
1.	Teacher's Training Programme	6	5
2.	BED	92	76.67
3.	M. Ed	4	3.33
4.	Others	18	15
	Years of Experience		
1.	0-5	58	48.33
2.	6-10	38	31.67
3.	11-15	20	16.67
4.	≥16	4	3.33
	Marital Status		
1.	Married	104	86.67
2.	Unmarried	14	11.67
	Child Psychology		
1.	Studied Child Psychology	110	91.67
2.	Not Studied Child Psychology	10	8.33
	In service Education		
1.	Attended In service Education	110	91.67
2.	Not Attended In service Education	10	8.33
	Teaching children with Learning Disability		
1.	Taught children with Learning Disability	0	0
2.	Not Taught children with Learning Disability	120	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of teachers based on their age, Gender, Educational Qualification, Years of Experience, Marital Status, Child Psychology, In service Education, Teaching children with Learning Disability.

SECTION II

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SELECTED SOCIO – DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES WITH THE KNOWLEDGE SCORES

Association between the knowledge of school teachers regarding Learning Disability and the base line characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, years of experience Child Psychology in the curriculum, In-service education, and Experience in teaching children with learning disability received. In order to determine the significance of the relationship, chi – square and Fisher's Exact Test were used. Teachers were divided into two groups based on the knowledge score. Those who scored the below or equal to the median score (20) and those who scored above the median score (20).

Table 2 Statistical Inference based on Chi Square test between above and below median of knowledge score of the subjects based on each demographic variable.

S.N.	Socio demographic variables	Frequency of subjects ≤ median value(20)	Frequency of subjects > median value(20)	Total Frequency	Chi Square	Result
1	**Age in Years** ≤ 34 years > 34 years	36 18	38 30	74 46	0.752	Not significant
2	**Gender** Male Female	4 52	4 60	8 112	0.641*	Not Significant
4	**Education Qualification** B.Ed&M.Ed Others	36 20	58 4	96 24	0.042*	Significant
5	**Years of Experience** ≤10 Years > 10 Years	38 10	27 5	45 15	3.214	Not significant
6	Marital Status Married Others	48 8	56 8	104 16	0.576*	Not significant
7	Studied Child Psychology Not studied Child Psychology	64 10	46 0	110 10	0.798*	Not Significant
8	Attended In service Education Not Attended Inservice Education	0 54	10 56	10 110	0.05*	Not Significant

* Fisher's Exact Test Significant at 5% level(P<0.05)

Table 2 presents the substantive summary of Chi- square analysis, which was used to bring out the relationship between

knowledge of teachers on learning disability and socio demographic variables.

SECTION III

Relationship between the Selected Socio – Demographic Variables with the Attitude Scores

In this section, the researcher brings out the association between the attitude of school teachers regarding Learning Disability and the base line characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, years of experience, Child Psychology in the curriculum and In service education. In order to determine the significance of the relationship, Chi – square and Fisher's Exact Test were used. The teachers were categorized into two groups based on the median attitude score (80.5) on Learning Disability, namely those who were below or equal to median score and those who were above the median score.

Table 3 Statistical Inference based on Chi Square test between above and below median of Attitude score of the subjects based on each demographic variables.

S. No	Socio demographic variables	Frequency ofsubjects ≤ median value(80.5)	Frequency ofsubjects >median value80.5	Total	Chi Square	Results
1	**Age** ≤34 years >34 years	44 14	30 32	74 46	4.87	significant
2	**Gender** Male Female	4 54	4 58	8 112	0.66*	Not significant
4	**Educational qualification** BEd& MEd Others	44 16	52 8	96 24	0.27*	Not significant
5	**Years of Experience** ≤10 years >10 years	44 14	46 16	90 30	0.02	Not significant
6	Marital status Married Others	58 8	46 8	104 16	0.52*	Not significant
7	Learned Child Psychology Not learned Child Psychology	52 6	58 4	110 10	0.46*	Not significant
8	Attended In-service education Not attended In-service education	2 56	8 54	10 110	0.36*	Not significant

* Fisher's Exact Test Significance at P<0.05

Table 3 shows analysis used to bring out the association between attitude of school teachers towards learning disabled children and socio demographic variables. Chi square test and Fisher's Exact Test (where sample size is less than five), were used to calculate the significance in the association between

attitude and socio demographic variables.

SECTION IV

LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECTS

In section IV, researcher analyzed the knowledge level of teachers regarding learning disability. Teachers were divided into three groups based on the knowledge score. Those who scored above 75% of the total score were considered as good knowledge, 50-75% as average and below 50% as poor knowledge. Mean, Mean Percentage score and SD were estimated. The knowledge level of teachers on various aspects of the topic is estimated by dividing the questions into 6 areas, Meaning, Incidence, Cause, and Clinical features Diagnosis and Management. Mean percentage score and Standard deviation were calculated.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage distribution of teachers according to the knowledge score on learning Disability

Good knowledge–>75%

Average knowledge – 50-75%

Poor knowledge-<50%

S. No.	Level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean score	Mean percentage score(%)	SD
1	Good	0	0	0	0	0
2	Average	70	58.33	24.6	61.5	2.8
3	Poor	50	41.67	16.16	40.4	2.2

Table 4 indicates that, majority of teachers (58.33%) had average knowledge on learning disability. Out of 120 samples, 50 (41.67%)had poor knowledge regarding learning disability. No teachers possessed good knowledge on the subject. Mean score obtained for average knowledge level was 24.6 and mean percentage score 61.5% with a SD 2.8. For poor knowledge level, mean score was 16.6 and mean percentage score 40.4% with SD 2.2.

Table 5 Mean and SD distribution of knowledge score on various areas of learning disability

S. No	Areas of knowledge	Maximum score	Range of Score	Mean score	Mean %Percentage score	SD
1	Meaning	9	0-7	3.45	38.33	1.98
2	Incidence	2	0-2	1.27	63.50	0.71
3	Causes	6	0-5	2.7	45	1.31
4	Clinical features	12	0-9	4.23	35.25	2.05
5	Diagnosis	2	0-2	1.7	85	0.49
6	Management	9	2-9	6.95	77.22	1.75

Table 5 shows that mean score percentage for knowledge regarding Diagnosis and management of learning disability were high (85% and77.22%respectively). They were

found to have the least knowledge (35.25%) on idea regarding clinical features. Other areas like Meaning Causes, Incidence and causes carried 38.33, 63.5 and 45% respectively.

SECTION V

LEVEL OF ATTITUDE OF THE SUBJECTS

Teachers were divided into three groups based on the attitude score. Those who scored above 75% was considered as having highly favorable attitude, 75-50% as favorable and below 50% as unfavorable attitude.

Table 6 Frequency and Percentage distribution of subjects according to the Attitude score on Learning Disability

Highly favorable Attitude – >75%
FavorableAttitude-75-50%
Unfavorable Attitude –<50%

S. No	Level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean score	Mean percentage Score(%)	SD
1	Highly favorable attitude	118	98.33	80.71	89.6	6.61
2	Favorable attitude	2	1.67	68	75.55	0
3	Un favorable attitude	0	0	0	0	0

Table 6shows that out of 120 samples 118 (98.33%) had Highly favorable attitude towards problem children. Only 2 (1.67%) in Favorable level and none in Unfavorable attitude level. Mean score for highly favorable attitude was 80.71 and mean percentage score 89.6 %with a SD of 6.61.For favorable attitude, mean score was 68 and mean percentage score 75.55%.

SECTION VI: CORRELATION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE

In the section VI, correlation between knowledge and attitude of teachers towards learning disability is analyzed using Karl Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. From that value Test of significance was done to estimate the level of significance.

Table 7 Mean and Correlation between Knowledge and Attitude score of teachers regarding learning disability

Particulars	Mean	SD	Coefficient of Correlation
Knowledge	21.08	5.93	+0.833
Attitude	80.5	6.59	

Table7 shows that there is positive correlation between knowledge of teachers regarding learning disability and their attitude towards such children. Correlation Coefficient is found to be +0.833 with test of significance 6.3.

Hence H3 is accepted at $P < 0.05$.

CONCLUSION

The study was a Descriptive type to assess the knowledge and attitude of school teachers regarding learning disability among children in selected schools at Churu District. Analysis was done and the following conclusions were drawn.

➤ Majority of the primary school teachers had inadequate knowledge on learning disability.

➤ Most of the subjects possessed highly favorable attitude towards learning disabled children.

➤ Educational qualification of teachers and their knowledge regarding learning disability was found to be significantly associated. Other socio demographic variables had no significant association with knowledge of teachers on learning disability.

➤ Age of the teachers had significant association with attitude. Other socio demographic factors have no significant association with attitude of the teachers.

➤ There is significant positive correlation between knowledge and attitude of teachers on learning disability.

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