

EFFECT OF AWARENESS PROGRAM ON LEARNING DISABILITY FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN RAIPUR, CHHATTISGARH

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ABSTRACT

According to the survey done by National Centre for Education Statistics in 2020-21, 7.2 million kids, or 15% of all public-school pupils, aged 3 to 21 received special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Specific learning difficulties were the most prevalent type of disability among kids receiving special education services (33 percent). Our schools are practicing inclusive education in view of providing equality and equity to the students irrespective of the caste, gender, race, minority, and disability. Every college of Education (B.Ed.) comprises of teaching pre-service teachers about towards inclusive education in their curriculum and wanted them to know the basics about the disabilities which they might face while joining the educational institutions for teaching. In view of this, there are awareness programmes which are held by the Rehabilitation council of India (RCI) and various other institutions to equip students with some of the common disabilities they should have knowledge about the concept, needs, characteristics and skills to help them to cope during the classes. This research was carried out to check the impact of awareness program on learning disability through experimental research where control and experimental group contained 60 pre-service teachers each. A special educator of school was appointed to conduct the awareness program as an intervention for our experimental group. The results of the present study have shown a positive effect of the awareness program on pre-service teachers. It signifies that pre-service teachers should be equipped with more awareness programmes in real life scenario other than just dealing with what' is written in course books.

Keywords: Learning disability, awareness program, pre-service teachers

INTRODUCTION

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act) was

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enacted by the Government of India to achieve the goal of providing access to free education in an appropriate environment to all learners with disabilities until the learner reaches the age of eighteen. By offering inclusive education, the Act aims to enhance the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular schools. Inclusive education rejects the practice of separation and is founded on the concept of equity. The needs and rights of children, particularly their right to an education, are prioritized. It accepts all children as they are, offering them with the resources and assistance they require. When we talk about integration, we are referring to the integration of a person into a school where the learner was previously not accepted. Inclusive education is concerned with the circumstances that allow all children to be educated properly, rather than just placing children with impairments in regular classrooms (Barton, 1997).

According to Priyadarshini &Thangarajathi (2017), the positive attitude of a teacher in regular classrooms plays a vital role in providing inclusive environment in schools. The positive attitude of a teacher helps all the students gain the confidence to participate in the teaching learning environment promoting inclusion amongst all. To acquire this kind of attitude, the educational institutions should promote in-service training to promote training and developing skills for implementing the practice of inclusive environment. This training should include the knowledge and identification of characteristics of special children and appropriate role of teachers in classrooms towards accessibility of needs of special children.

COURSES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Several universities, affiliated colleges, private and open institutions in India provide teacher education courses at various levels, as well as internship programmes in practical classroom settings, to aspiring teachers. Teacher education courses are divided into three levels.

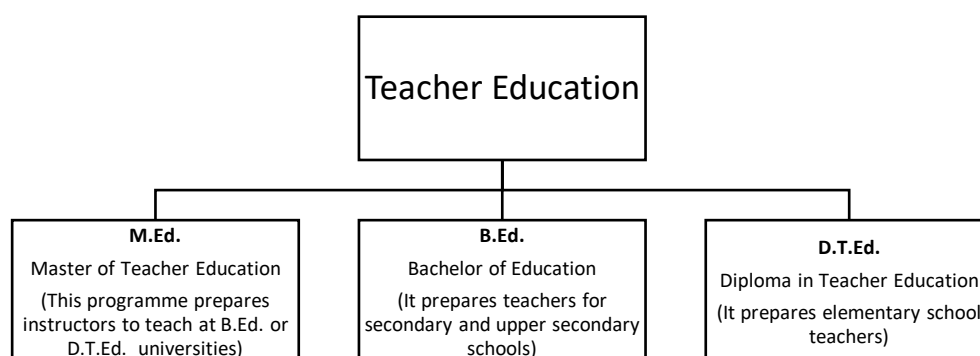


Figure 1: Levels of teacher education courses

LEARNING DISABILITY

Learning impairments, which include difficulties in the acquisition and use of skills such as reading, writing, spelling, mathematics, and social skills, are among the most well-known conditions that affect schoolchildren. Learning issues might interfere with speaking, listening, reading, writing, spelling, remembering, recognising information, and doing well in school. Learning difficulties are frequently referred to as a weakness amid a sea of positives because every person has a unique blend of abilities, qualities, strengths, and weaknesses.

Many kids, teens, and adults struggle with learning issues, which hinder their academic success and social integration. There are students that struggle with learning in every classroom. Early diagnosis of the disability is essential in order to start the child on the path to recovery. If ignored, children could have emotional and behavioural problems as well as upset and loss of confidence. They should get support in overcoming their interpersonal and academic problems. The use of cutting-edge educational strategies to deal with such children presents a considerable challenge for teachers.

Table 1: Different types of learning disability given by Learning Disability Association of America, 2017

Name	Affected Area(s)	Characteristics
Auditory Processing Disorder	Processing or interpretation of sound in brain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty in making sense of sounds• Problems with blocking out background sound• Trouble telling where the sound is coming from
Dyscalculia	Numbers and mathematic skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty in learning maths facts such as symbols and place values• Problems with counting• Trouble telling time
Dysgraphia	Fine motor skills and handwriting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illegible handwriting• Inconsistent use of letters• Difficulty with special planning on paper

Dyslexia	Reading and language processing skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading slowly • Difficulty in reading words • Problems in recalling known words
Language Processing Disorder	Language processing skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in understanding the meaning of spoken language • Poor in reading comprehension • Problems with verbal expression
Nonverbal Learning Disability	Non-verbal skills such as motor, visual-spatial and social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in interpreting body language or facial expression • Poor motor coordination • Trouble with multistep instruction
Virtual Perception/ Visual Motor Deficit	Interpreting visual information or drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistakes in writing such as reversing letters • Too-tight grip on pencil or other writing tools • Poor hand/eye coordination

TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The primary players in implementing inclusive education are believed to be teachers. Therefore, it is believed that adopting a positive mindset is crucial to successfully executing this educational transformation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes teachers have toward inclusive education, the factors that are associated with those attitudes, and whether or not these factors have an impact on how socially active students with special needs are in ordinary schools. The majority of teachers have indifferent or unfavourable attitudes toward include students with special needs in standard primary education, according to a survey of 26 studies. Studies didn't consistently show good outcomes. It is discovered that a number of factors, including training, experience with inclusive education, and the type of impairment of the students, are related to instructors' attitudes. Regarding the impact of teachers' views on the social involvement of students with special needs, no conclusions could be drawn.

According to Mukhopadhyay et.al., (2005) in India, Teachers claim that they need extra time to teaching these students because they do not feel prepared to teach children with disabilities. In an effort to examine institutional changes, many government programmes now incorporate a teachers training component. However, a "special needs" emphasis and a lack of management training, combined with a didactic training methodology, do little to change the status quo in the classroom, particularly when responsibility is transferred to a specialist resource teacher rather than methods adjusted to suit all students. However, even if a teacher is properly certified, bad training will still have a negative influence on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, as opposed to under qualified, poorly paid teachers who are creative and use innovative methods.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To compare the impact of awareness program on learning disabilities within the experimental and control group of pre-service teachers.

NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference in experimental and control groups post-test scores on awareness of learning disability for pre-service teachers.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

The present study was an experimental study. The research method used for the present study was true experimental, post-test only method. Below mentioned are two B.Ed. colleges of Raipur, Chattisgarh were chosen for study using purposive sampling:

1. Kalinga University
2. Pandit Ravi Shankar college

Sample for the present study consists of 60 pre-service teachers in the experimental and control group each.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Table 2: Design of the post-test only research method

Experimental Group	Randomization	Intervention (Awareness program on learning disability)	Observation 1
Control Group	Randomization	No Intervention	Observation 2

TOOLS OF RESEARCH

A self-constructed questionnaire on Awareness of Inclusive Education was used by the researcher. It comprised of 38 questions covering dimensions like concept of inclusive education and basic knowledge about disabilities. This questionnaire contained multiple choice questions. For each correct answer, the score given was “1” and for incorrect answer, the score given was “0”. Reliability of the tools was calculated by Split –Half method was 0.81.

PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

The data collection process of this research was conducted online. Online collection is necessary because, during the data collection, the students are in different phases of their programs. Both groups may not have completed the necessary learning processes at collection time. However, to identify the respondents accurately, the names and contact information of students were recorded.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The experimental study being conducted by the researcher yielded the results as below.

Table 3: Comparing the results of post-test between experimental and control group after the intervention

		N	Mean	S. D	t-ratio	P values	Level of Significance
Awareness of Inclusive Education	Experimental	60	5.48	12.59	3.63	0.02	Significant at 0.05
	Control	60	1.13	6.60	1.22		

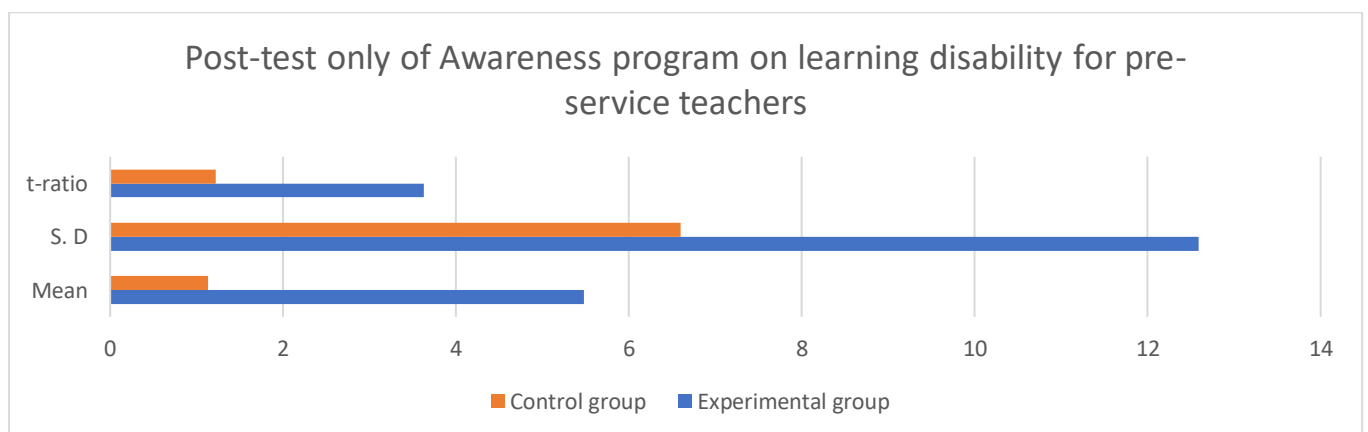


Figure 2: Graphical representation of the result of the experimental study

The significant difference of scores was obtained in which the scores of experimental groups was higher than control group after the intervention of awareness program.

This shows that the experimental group's pre-service teachers have improved their knowledge and understanding of inclusive education. It indicates that the treatment provided to the experimental group in the form of an awareness programme was productive.

According to the results, we obtained significant difference in experimental and control groups post-test scores on awareness of learning disability for pre-service teachers, and we have rejected the null hypothesis.

CONCLUSION

Our education system is continuously trying to cope up with the needs and abilities of students. The curriculum is also been evolved and modified in such a way that it could fulfill the needs and desire of the students, society, and stakeholders of the education system. Educational institution following only the pre-designed curriculum will not allow the students to think out of the box, reducing the creativity and curiosity in students. The subject "Towards the inclusive education" is not confined to mere few pages and theory knowledge being imparted to pupil teachers, they need to be exposed to the practical field where they can realize the nature, characteristics, and treatments of various common disabilities in students which is expected to be faced in mainstream education. Specially, learning disabilities is very common and as per the research done above the control group teachers were not aware about what common characteristics the learning-disabled students can have and what simple remedy in classroom can help them to cope up with all other students. There are various opportunities residing outside the books and classroom. Educational institution should focus on providing the students some external knowledge through awareness programs which are being held by various government and private institutions about inclusive education and disabilities. This will help the future teachers to be aware of the needs of students with special needs and helping them to feel like a part of actual inclusive mainstream classroom.

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