

A Study to Assess the Knowledge and Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Children with Learning Disabilities in Selected Schools at Lucknow

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Abstract: *Objectives 1)To assess the knowledge of school teachers regarding learning disabilities among children. 2)To assess the attitude of school teachers towards learning disabilities. 3)To find the relationship between knowledge and attitude of school teachers regarding learning disabilities among children. 4)To find the relationship between the knowledge and attitude of school teachers with selected demographic variables. (i.e. Age, Sex, Marital Status, Teacher- Parent Educational Qualification, Years of teaching experience) Methodology A descriptive study design was adopted to assess the knowledge and attitude among 100 school teachers in selected schools in Lucknow. The sampling technique used was Nonprobability Convenient Sampling technique. A semi-structured web based questionnaire on the knowledge and attitude was used as a tool among primary school teachers towards learning disabilities. Questionnaire was mailed to primary school teachers who met the inclusion criteria and responses were received through email. The content validity of the tool was established in consultation with experts from the field of Psychiatry and Paediatrics. Reliability of the tool was tested by using Karl Pearson's correlation co-efficient and it was found to be reliable. Pilot study was conducted on 10 samples to find out the feasibility of the study. Data collected from the samples were analysed by descriptive and inferential statistics. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS The study revealed that out of 100 samples, 37% were in the age group 31-40 yrs and maximum 94% were female teachers. It is also evident that 70% the teachers were graduates and 15% had undergone teachers training program. . As per previous experience of teaching depicts that more than half (67%) primary school teachers had previous experience of teaching children with learning disabilities. There is significant association found between knowledge and previous experience of teaching children with Learning Disabilities.*

Keywords: Learning Disabilities, Primary Schools, Primary School Teachers

'A good teacher must be able to put himself in place of those who find learning hard'

Eliphaz Levi

1. Introduction

For over 100 years it has been recognized that seemingly normal children can have impairment of learning to read and write. In 1886, Morgan described a 14 - year - old boy who was bright and intelligent, but had great difficulty to read, and termed this syndrome as "congenital word blindness". However, it was not until 1962 that Kirk first used the term "learning disabilities"¹

Learning disabilities are one of the important issues in primary care in India. India is thought to have approximately ninety million people with varying degrees of learning disabilities and an average class in schools has about five students with learning disabilities out of 55 children in the class.²

Specific learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of neurobehavioral disorders manifested by significant unexpected, specific and persistent difficulties in the acquisition and use of efficient reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia) or mathematical (dyscalculia) abilities despite conventional instruction, intact senses, normal intelligence, proper motivation and adequate socio - cultural opportunity. The term LD does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of

subnormal intelligence, of emotional disturbance, or of socio - cultural disadvantage. Although, still a matter of debate, this exclusionary definition was adopted by the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM - IV) and the international classification of diseases (ICD - 10), classification of mental and behavioural disorders.^{3, 4} Children with Learning Disability are often referred as dumb, lazy or unintelligent in terms of school grades which is commensurate with their intelligence which largely affect their self - esteem, self - image, peer and family relationships and social interactions. Primary teachers have the onus of identifying children at an early stage of life with varied learning difficulties since they are the one who can identify and provide necessary support in obtaining basic primary education. The indifferent attitude and lack of knowledge of primary school teachers towards learning disability will have a significant impact on the educational experience of children with learning disability in later part of life

1.1 Aim

To assess the knowledge and attitude of primary school teachers towards learning disabilities among children in selected primary schools of Lucknow.

1.2 Objectives

- To assess the knowledge of school teachers regarding learning disabilities among children.
- To assess the attitude of school teachers towards learning

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disabilities.

- To find the relationship between knowledge and attitude of school teachers regarding learning disabilities among children.
- To find the relationship between the knowledge and attitude of school teachers with selected demographic variables. (i.e. Age, Sex, Marital Status, Teacher - Parent Educational Qualification, Years of teaching experience)

2. Methodology

A descriptive study design was adopted to assess the knowledge and attitude among 100 school teachers in selected schools in Lucknow. The sampling technique used was nonprobability convenient sampling technique. A semi-structured web based questionnaire on the knowledge and attitude was used as a tool among primary school teachers towards learning disabilities. Questionnaire was mailed to

primary school teachers who met the inclusion criteria and responses were received through email. The content validity of the tool was established in consultation with experts from the field of Psychiatry and Paediatrics. Reliability of the tool was tested by using Karl Pearson's correlation co-efficient and it was found to be reliable. Pilot study was conducted on 10 samples to find out the feasibility of the study. Data collected from the samples were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics.

3. Discussion

Children with learning disabilities are found in all nations, language groups, and cultures of the world. Accumulative research shows that in all cultures there are children who seem to have normal intelligence but they have severe difficulties in learning oral language, acquiring reading or writing skills or doing mathematics.

Table 4.1: Distribution of samples as per their Sociodemographic variables

S. No	Characteristics	Groups	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
1	Age	Less than 25 years	5	5
		26 - 30 years	23	23
		31 - 40 years	37	37
		More than 41 years	35	35
2	Gender	Male	6	6
		Female	94	94
3	Marital Status	Single	23	23
		Married	72	72
		Divorced/ separated	3	3
		Widow/Widower	2	2
4	Educational Qualification	M. Ed	8	8
		B. Ed	70	70
		D. Ed	7	7
		Teachers training Program	15	15
5	Teaching Experience	< 2 years	10	10
		2 - 5 years	22	22
		5 - 10 years	31	31
		>10 years	37	37

The major findings of the study are summarized as follows

- 37% of the primary school teachers were in the age group 31 - 40 yrs.
- Majority (94 %) of the teachers were females.
- Majority (72 %) of the teachers were married.
- Nearly two third (70 %) of the teachers were graduates.
- More than one third (37 %) of the primary school teachers had more than 10 years of teaching experience.
- More than half (67%) primary school teachers had previous experience of teaching children with learning disabilities.
- More than half (67%) of the primary school teachers had only average knowledge about Learning Disabilities.
- 71% of primary school teachers had knowledge regarding the prevalence of early childhood learning disabilities.
- 87% primary school teachers were aware that laziness doesn't cause LD.
- In symptomatology, less than half (43%) primary school teachers had awareness about poor scholastic performance being most important symptom of learning disabilities in children however more than half of the total samples 56% had knowledge that children with LD usually have normal IQ.
- 91% were aware about positive reinforcement being instrumental in management of LD
- More than two third of samples ie 72% had positive attitude towards children with learning disabilities.
- More than half teachers i. e.56% suggests limited distractions help in improving the condition whereas 66% recommends extra coaching.
- (47%) of the primary school teachers with the special training/ courses attended on learning disability had positive attitude towards children with LD
- **Significant association** found between knowledge and previous experience of teaching children with Learning Disabilities
- There was no significant association of professional qualification of Primary school teachers with their knowledge regarding LD.
- Also no statistical relationship was found between knowledge and attitude LD with other selected variables such as age, marital status, previous training etc.

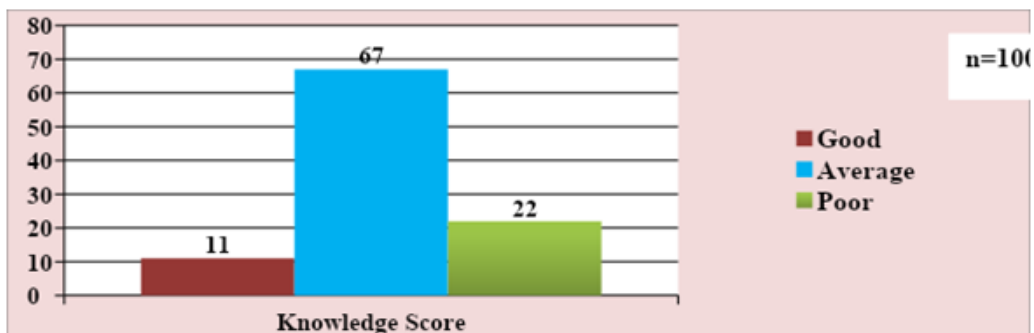


Figure 4.1: Distribution of samples as per their Knowledge score regarding LD



Figure 4.2: Distribution of samples as per Knowledge related to etiology Of LD

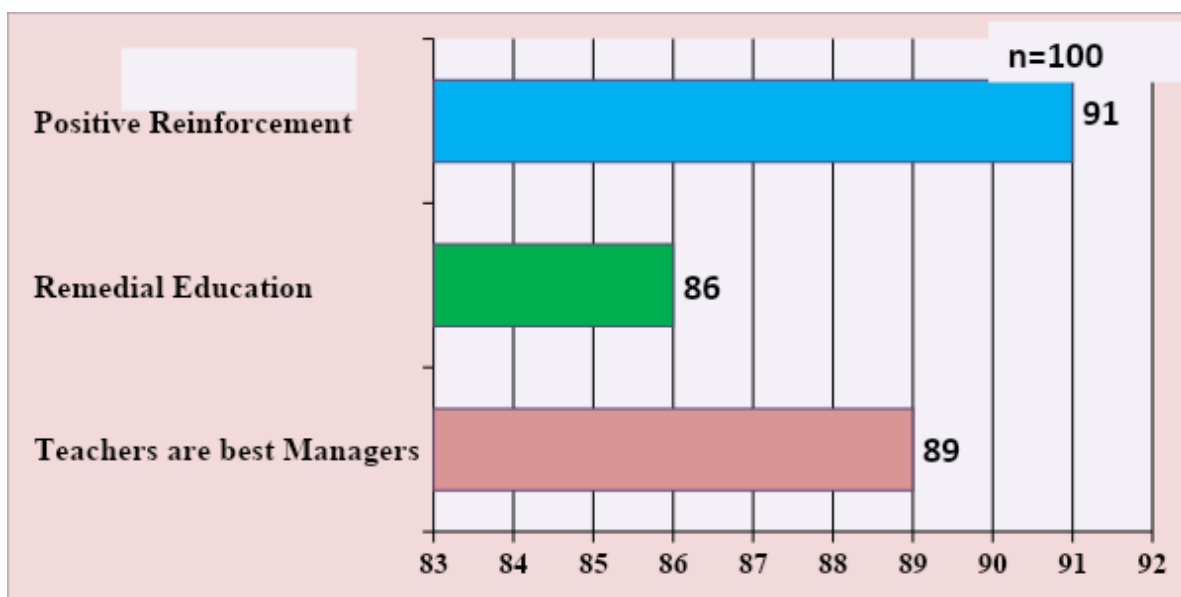


Figure 4.3: Distribution of samples as per knowledge regarding management of children with LD

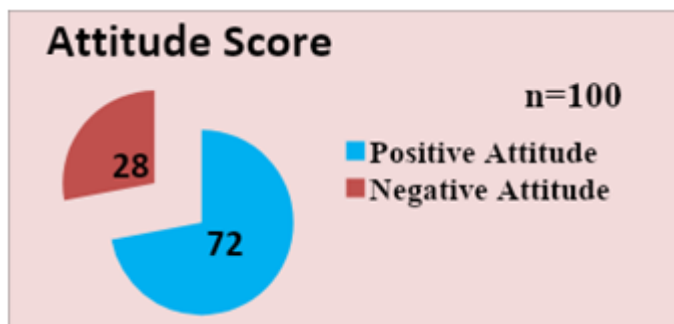


Figure 4.4: Distribution of samples as per attitude score towards LD

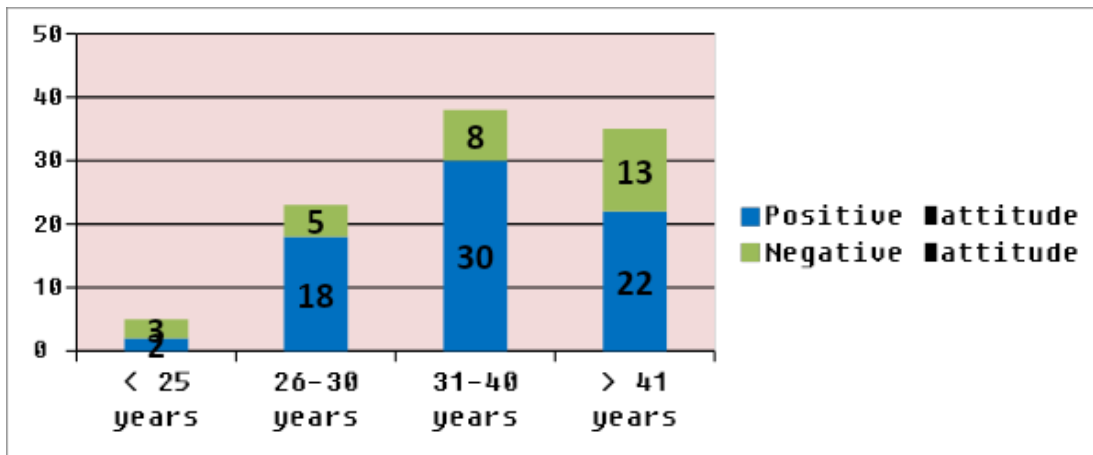


Figure 4.5: Age wise distribution of samples as per attitude score towards LD

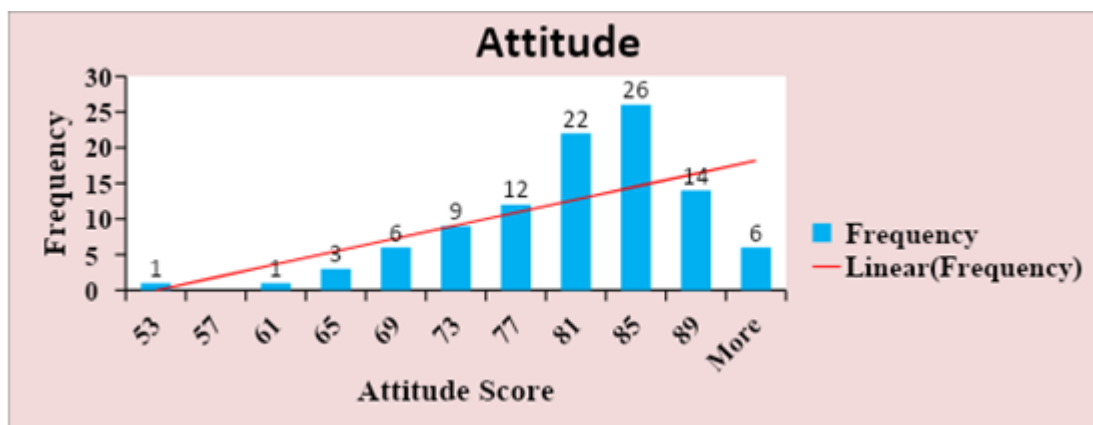


Figure 4.6: Distribution of samples as per attitude score towards LD

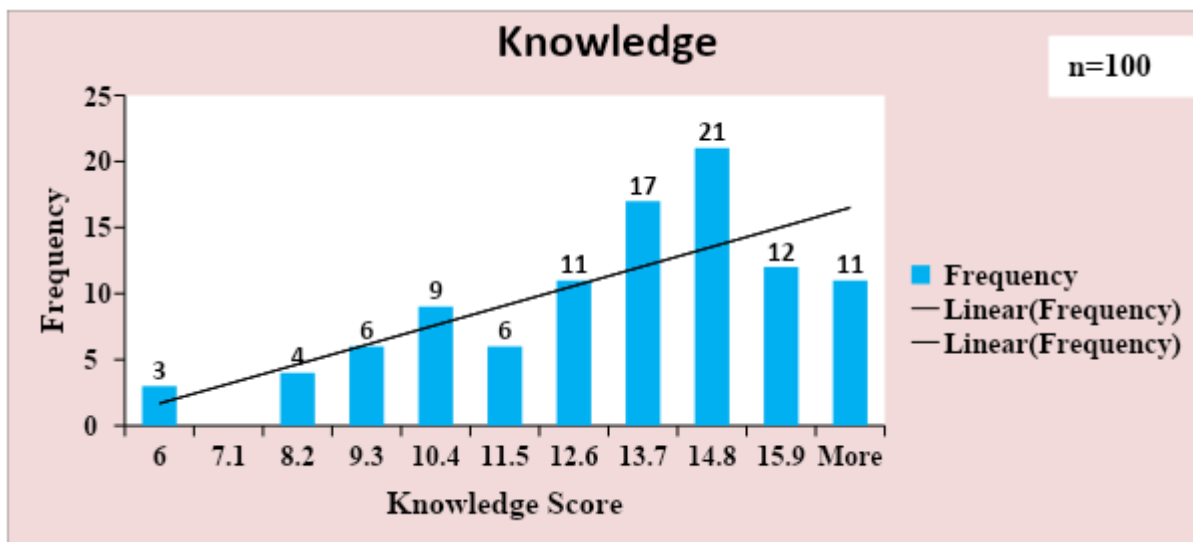


Figure 4.7: Distribution of samples as per knowledge score towards LD

Experience of Teaching with LD	Knowledge				X2	p - value
	Poor	Average	Good	Total		
Yes	14	50	3	67	9.7273	0.007722
No	8	17	8	33		
Total	22	67	11	100		

Table Value 5.99, df 2

Table – 4.2 Association between knowledge and previous experience of teaching children with Learning Disabilities

The data presented in Table – 4.2 represents that there is a

Significant association between Experience of Teaching with LD and Knowledge as the Calculated Value (X2 =9.7273) is greater than the Tabulated Value (5.99) and also the p - value (0.007722) is lesser than 0.05 at 95% Confidence Level with df as 2.)

The average knowledge score of 100 samples is 12.65 (Max Score=20) with standard deviation of +2.52 and the Average attitude score is 79.46 (Max score =100) with a standard deviation of +7.00. The distribution of samples as per attitude score towards LD where mean score 79 is less than

median score 81 and as per knowledge score towards LD where mean score 12.65 is less than median score 13. A cross sectional Study conducted on Knowledge and Perception Regarding Learning Disabilities in Children among Primary School Teachers in Thiruvallur District by Dr Varsha K S, and Dr Gomathy Parashuraman in 2019 which reveals that there is significant relation between experience of the teacher and their practice. Teachers with more years of experience have good practices compared to teachers with less years of experience.5

4. Recommendations

- Induction of special training program for primary school teachers related to learning disabilities.
- Adoption of learning disable student friendly methodology of teaching practices rather than conventional blackboard method
- Suggestion for school authority to have small batch of children in primary classes so that teacher is able to focus on each and every child more diligently
- Ensure inculcation and recruitment of only such primary school teachers with certain certified education degree from recognised university.
- Refreshment Capsule course training related to Learning Disabilities for teachers

5. Conclusion

The study was aimed at understanding the knowledge and attitude of primary school teachers towards children with Learning Disabilities. It can be concluded from this study that among the sample (n=100) majority (67%) of primary school teachers had average knowledge and only 11% had good knowledge about Learning Disabilities. It was also found that 72% had positive attitude towards children with learning disabilities.

Regarding the association between the knowledge and attitude of school teachers regarding Learning Disabilities, it was found that there is no statistically significant association between knowledge and attitude of teachers regarding the learning disabilities. The present study reveals that more than half (67%) of the primary school teachers had previous experience of teaching children with learning disabilities. The association between the knowledge and previous experience p - value (0.007722) which is lesser than 0.05 and it shows that there is a significant relationship between these variables.

Hence it is indicative of the importance and the need of in - service special training program and Refreshment Capsule course training programme for updating the knowledge of teachers regarding Learning Disabilities. The study also emphasizes upon the need of inculcation and recruitment of only such primary school teachers with certain certified education degree from recognized university.

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