

A Study to Assess the Knowledge and Attitude of Parent towards Child with Learning Disabilities in Selected Special Schools

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Abstract: A study was carried out to assess the Attitude and knowledge of parent towards child with learning disabilities in selected special schools of Karnataka, India. A non-experimental descriptive survey design was used with sample of 80 parents who met the inclusion criteria. Convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. The study findings shows that majority of the subjects (75%) had average knowledge, 15% had good knowledge and 10% had poor knowledge regarding learning disabilities. Majority of the subjects (50%) had favorable attitude towards child with learning disabilities and the mean percentage of knowledge among parents towards child with learning disabilities was 40.91%.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Learning disabilities, Parents

1. Introduction

In every moment the healthy survival of the children is threatened. Problems of child health are shocking and alarming throughout the world especially in developing countries. In total population children under 15 years of age constitute about 40%. As per WHO 1 in 5 children in the world have disability, which is a serious obstacle to a child's development. Disabilities in learning constitute 1 in 10 children. In 2004 10% boys and 6% girls age 3-17 had a learning disability.² About 4 million school children have learning disability, 7.7% of children never been told that they have learning disability. Prevalence of reading disabilities is conservatively estimated to range between 4% and 10% in general school aged population in US. According to Statistics Canada, of all the children with disabilities in this country, more than half (59.8%) have a learning disability. In India prevalence estimate of learning disability ranges from 9-39% and incidence of dyslexia in school children in India has been reported to be 2-18%, dysgraphia 14% and of dyscalculia 5.5%²

"Learning disability" was first coined by Dr. Samuel Kirk. The term refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifesting as difficulty in reading, writing, reasoning and mathematical abilities. It is the discrepancy between a child's capacity to learn and his or her level of range from 10% to 17.5%. It is presumed to be due to a dysfunction in central nervous system. Children with learning disability also have aberrant behavior which is difficult to regulate and is stressful for both the child and family members. Parents of children with learning disabilities often need to overcome conceived ideas among other people about their ability to being a parent.¹

An exploratory study was conducted on Strain of Parents and their coping in caring for children with disabilities in learning in Ireland among 32 parents. Participants given the caregiver strain questionnaire and an adapted version of the careers' questionnaire. It included care task/ behavioral difficulties; caregiver attitudes; service provision; and coping strategies. Analysis examined factors affecting

careers' ability to cope. Participants depicted high levels of objective and subjective caregiver strain and most were receiving inadequate support. The data highlighted the difficulties and rewards of care giving and the inadequacies of current service provision.³

A phenomenological study was conducted on understanding of lived experiences of 6 Iranian mothers who have children with learning disabilities attended a special school in Tehran. The semi structured interview method was used and responses were recorded on audiotape. The study revealed that two main themes were abstracted; being the center of stress circles and being in the midst of life and death. Majority of the mothers experienced a stressful life. As it concludes that mothers' lived experience of children with learning disabilities can be like between two polarities of positive and negative feelings.⁴

A study was conducted among 60 parents of exceptional children in Mehsana city, Gujarat, India. Therefore, data analyzed by calculating frequency and percentage. The result shows that 100% of respondents know about school and hostel facilities for exceptional children. 68.33 % of respondents had a knowledge regarding educational facilities for exceptional children. And also depicts that average 71.50 % of respondents had positive attitude towards their exceptional children and 28.5 % respondents had false opinion about their exceptional children. Hence, it is concluded that average 68.33 % of respondents had a knowledge regarding educational facilities for exceptional children and 71.50 % of respondents had positive attitude towards their exceptional children. 28.5 % of respondents had false opinion about their exceptional children.⁵

2. Methodology

The research design adopted for the present study was non experimental descriptive survey design for collection and analysis of data. The study sample consists of 80 parents of children with learning disabilities from selected special schools of Mangalore Taluk. In this study non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to draw the

sample. As per the convenience of data collection some special schools were selected. Demographic proforma, a structured knowledge questionnaire and a parental attitude scale were used to collect data from the parent towards child with learning disabilities in selected special schools. The knowledge level was categorized arbitrarily as follows:

Table 1

Level of knowledge	Score	Percentage (%)
Poor	0 – 6	0 – 25
Average	7 – 12	26 – 50
Good	13 – 18	51 – 75

The parental attitude scale consists of 24 items, out of which 12 were positive statements and 12 negative statements. The maximum possible score was 120 and minimum score was 24. The Attitude level was categorized arbitrarily as follows:

Table 2

Level of Attitude	Score	Percentage
Highly Unfavorable	0 – 6	0-25
Unfavorable	7 – 12	26 – 50
Favorable	13 – 18	51 – 75
Highly Favorable	19 – 24	76 – 100

Permission was obtained from the concerned authority before data collection. The researcher explained the purpose of data collection to the parents of children with learning disabilities after a self-introduction. Then the investigator collected data from the sample after obtaining their consent. The respondents were assured the confidentiality of the data provided by them.

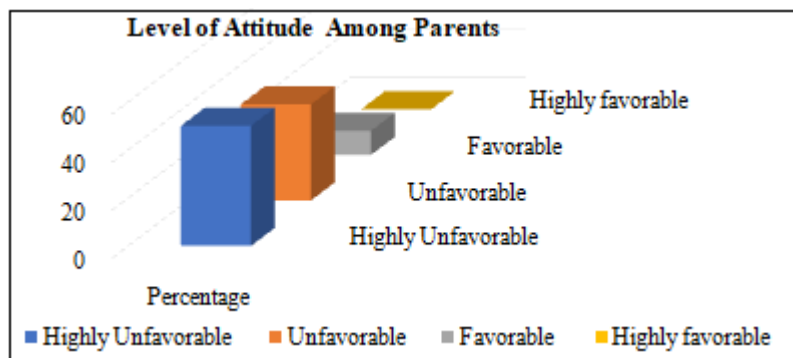


Figure 1: Bar diagram showing the level of attitude of parent towards child with learning disabilities

Table 5: Mean, median, mean percentage and standard deviation of parental attitude score

Subjects	Maximum possible scores	Range	Mean	Median	Mean percentage	S. D
Parent with learning disability children	120	84-28	50.41	50	42.008	15.49

Table 6: Correlation between knowledge and attitude score

Variables	Mean	SD	r value	Remarks
Knowledge	9.82	1.64	-0.0766	Negative correlation
Attitude	50.41	15.49		

Table value $r_{(78)} = 0.220$; $p < 0.05$

3. Results and Discussion

Table 3: n=80

Subjects	Maximum possible scores	Range	Mean	Median	Mean percentage	S. D
Parents with learning disability children	24	15 – 5	9.82	10	40.91	1.648

The data presented in Table 3 shows that the mean percentage of parents had average knowledge (40.91%) regarding learning disabilities. The data presented shows that maximum score was in the area of Manifestations, diagnosis and effect of learning disabilities (42.8%) followed by definition and cause for learning disabilities (40.14%). and the minimum score was in the area of Management and prevention for learning disabilities (37.42%).

Table 4: n= 80

Level of attitude	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Highly Unfavorable	40	50
Unfavorable	32	40
Favorable	8	10
Highly favorable	0	0

The data presented in Table 4 shows that majority of parents had highly unfavorable attitude (50%) towards child with learning disabilities, 40% of parents had unfavorable attitude and only 10% had favorable attitude towards child with learning disabilities.

Data from Table 6 reveals that there was negative correlation between knowledge and attitude ($r_{(78)} = -0.0766$, table value $r_{(78)} = 0.220$; $p < 0.05$) of parent towards child with learning disabilities. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted and inferred that the correlation exists between knowledge and attitude.

4. Conclusion

The study findings have revealed that the level of knowledge regarding learning disabilities was average among parents but in general most of them had unfavorable attitude. A negative correlation was identified between knowledge and attitude scores of parents. Therefore, parents need to be prepared to bring the awareness and change their attitude

with their children with an information booklet.

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