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“TEACHER’S AWARENESS OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN RELATION TO ITS USAGE IN HEARING IMPAIRED SCHOOLS”.

Ms. Shakunthala N.D.¹ and Dr. G. Sheela²

¹Research Scholar, DOS in Education, Manasagangothri, University of Mysore, Mysore.

²Assistant Professor, DOS in Education, Manasagangothri, University of Mysore, Mysore.



ABSTRACT

Assistive technology (AT) is an area of the curriculum, as well as a tool for learning, in which teachers must demonstrate their own awareness and capacity for learning. In other words, for effective and meaningful teaching in the present information age, the demonstration of teachers' awareness for instructional use of AT cannot be underscored. The ability of the teacher to be aware of available technology that could be adapted to the classroom is a key to an effective and productive learning environment. This awareness deals with physical, academic and relational factors. Awareness of AT followed by teacher action form the key to a successful teaching process.

KEY WORDS- Teacher's Awareness of Assistive Technology, Usage of Assistive Technology, Hearing Impaired Schools.

INTRODUCTION

“The real miracle of technology may be the capacity it has to remove previously insurmountable barriers faced by persons with disabilities”

-Simon

Education is a lifelong process and it permeates every aspect of an individual's life. Education is the process to shape the quality of life which in turn enhances the quality of the society and the universe as a whole. Primary education and its universalization is a natural commitment and an important concern all over the state of India. A school is an institution designed for teaching the students under the direction of teachers. Education is mainly concerned with the ways and means of teaching and learning. Even of these two, the latter appears to be more vital as it is not only concerned with what the teacher does but also with what awareness he transmits to the students and what the student does to assimilate the awareness. For a very long time, it was understood that more information transfer was teaching.

Teaching is becoming one of the most challenging professions in Indian society where awareness is expanding rapidly and much of it is available to students as well as teachers at the same time. As new concepts of learning have evolved, teachers are expected to facilitate learning and make it meaningful to individual learners rather than just to provide awareness. Recent developments in technology have provided new possibilities to teaching profession but at the same time have placed more demands on teachers to learn how to use these technologies in their teaching.

These educational systems are under great pressure to adopt innovative methodologies and to integration technology in the teaching and learning process, to prepare students with the awareness they need in

the 21st century. Apparently, teaching profession is evolving from an emphasis on teacher-centered, lecture-based instructions to student-centered interactive learning environments. technology integration is understood as the usage of technology seamlessly for educational processes like transacting curricular content, students working on technology to do authentic tasks and developing technology-supported products, providing authentic assessments and institutional development. Today, a variety of technology can facilitate not only delivery of instruction but also learning process itself.

Assistive technology (AT) is a generic term incorporating technology, equipment, devices, appliances, services, systems, processes and environmental modifications for used by people with disabilities or older people to overcome social, infrastructural barriers, to actively participate in society and to perform activities easily and safely.

Hearing impairment is a second large type of disability in the world. It refers to a defect in or damage to the hearing mechanism. This defect or damage may occur in any part of the ear-outer ear, middle ear or inner ear. Hearing impairment leads to hearing disability or loss of hearing. Hearing disability may range in severity from mild to moderate to profound. A person may become deaf or hard-of-hearing depending upon the nature of impairment and the degree of hearing loss.

However AT can enable students who are hearing impaired to achieve educational success by providing tools for increased independent access to listen and for effective communication. In order to utilize the technology available teachers need to be aware of these technology which could be used to make the teaching and learning process more efficient and effective.

Therefore the present study was conducted to find whether a significant difference in Awareness of Teacher's of hearing impaired with respect to Assistive Technology exists and also to find if there is difference in usage of assistive technology in different types of hearing impaired schools. The data was collected from 63 hearing impaired school teachers from Bengaluru. Survey method was adopted for the study. Both Checklist of Usage of Assistive Technology and Test for Teacher's Awareness of Assistive Technology were administered Head of the Institutions and Teachers of Hearing Impaired Schools for collection of data. Percentage analysis and ANOVA were used for analysis of data. The results show that private aided schools possessed most of the usage of AT than private unaided schools, Schools managed by parent's associations and NGOs for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru. Results also show that there is a significant difference in awareness of assistive technology among teachers belonging to private aided, private unaided schools and those managed by NGOs and parent's associations also it was find that

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study has been entitled as,

"Teacher's Awareness of Assistive Technology in relation to its Usage in Hearing Impaired Schools".

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Nowadays the education of hearing impaired children is a highly prioritized concern of both central and state governments. In India, most of the hearing impaired school teacher training courses offer little or no input in dealing with the hearing impaired children. Lack of awareness, training and competence in dealing with the AT could subsequently result in apprehensions and anxieties in the hearing impaired school teachers. Favourable and positive attitude of teachers towards usage and awareness of AT is a major and important aspect for the growth and development of children with in special classrooms. This condition necessitates the need to conduct this study.

This paper, therefore, tries to find out the extent to which teachers of hearing impaired children in special school system are aware of the existence and use of the AT resources to promote children's instruction. Specifically, the study tries to find out if any differences exists in the private aided, unaided, schools managed by NGOs and parents association teachers awareness as to the existence and the use of AT for students with hearing impaired.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To study the level of awareness among teacher's of Hearing Impaired Schools in Bengaluru
- To assess the Usage of Assistive Technology in Hearing Impaired Schools of Bengaluru
- To compare the Usage of Assistive Technology in Hearing Impaired Schools belonging to the following types of hearing impaired schools- Private Aided School, Private Unaided School, Schools Managed by NGOs and Parent Associations
- To compare the level of awareness among teacher's of Hearing Impaired Schools belonging to the following types of hearing impaired schools- Private Aided School, Private Unaided School, Schools Managed by NGOs and Parent Associations.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were framed it:

1. There is no significant difference in Usage of Assistive Technology among Private Aided, Private Unaided Schools, Schools Managed by NGOs and Parent Association Schools.
2. There is no significant difference between Teacher's Awareness of Assistive Technology among those belonging to Private Aided School, Private Unaided School, Schools Managed by NGOs and Parent Association Schools.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

Main variable

- Teacher's Awareness of Assistive Technology
- Usage of Assistive Technology

Background variable

- Type of Schools

METHODOLOGY

Survey method was adopted for this study. Data was collected from all the Heads of the Institutions and teachers from ten schools for hearing impaired in Bengaluru.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

10 schools for hearing impaired in Bengaluru formed the population of the study. All the 10 schools were included as the sample of the study. All the teachers (63) from these 10 hearing impaired school formed the sample of the study.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

Check List of Usage of Assistive Technology for Heads of the Institution and Teachers: The Check List of Usage of Assistive Technology for Heads of the Institution and Teachers was constructed by the researcher. The Check List of Usage of Assistive Technology for Heads of the Institution and Teachers consists of a list of AT that is to be used for the benefit of education of hearing impaired students. The devices are categorized into three categories namely; Hearing technology, Alerting devices and Communication supports.

Test for Teacher's Awareness of Assistive Technology: Test for Teacher's Awareness of Assistive Technology was constructed by the researcher to measure the Teacher's Awareness of Assistive Technology.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The investigator approached the Heads of the Institution of the hearing impaired schools and got permission for data collection. The investigator personally administered Head of the Institutions and Teachers of Hearing Impaired Schools, to both Checklist of Usage of Assistive Technology and Test for Teacher's Awareness of Assistive Technology, before administering the test to the Head of the Institutions and Teachers, investigator informed the them about the need and purpose of the data collection.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF DATA

Percentage analysis and ANOVA were used for analysis of the data.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table No-1 ‘F’-value of *Teacher’s Awareness of Assistive Technology in Hearing Impaired Schools of Bengaluru.*

Table No-1

Source of Variances	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	‘F’-value	Significant Level
Between group	14600	4	8	30.92	0.05*
Within group	472.05	59	26		
Total	15072.05	63			

*Significant at 0.05 level.

The table shows that the obtained ‘F’ value (30.92) is greater than the tabled ‘F’ value of 19.45 hence the null hypotheses stating that there is no significance difference between teacher’s awareness of assistive technology among those belonging to private aided, private unaided schools, schools managed by NGOs and parent association schools is accepted. Therefore it is concluded that there is a significance difference between teacher’s awareness of assistive technology among those belonging to private aided, private unaided schools, schools managed by NGOs and parent associations.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- + The results show that private aided school teachers possessed most of the awareness of AT than private unaided school teachers, teachers of school managed by parent’s associations and NGOs for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru.
- + The results show that most (58.076%) of the assistive technology were usage always in private aided schools for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru. 16.53% of the assistive technology were usage sometimes, 8.69% of the assistive technology were usage rarely and 16.69% of the assistive technology were never use in private aided schools for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru.
- + The results show that most (55.76%) of the assistive technology were usage always in private unaided schools for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru. 15.384% of the assistive technology were usage sometimes, 26.923% of the assistive technology were usage rarely and 1.923% of the assistive technology were never use in private unaided schools for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru.
- + The results show that most (45.19%) of the assistive technology were usage always in schools managed by NGOs for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru. 9.61% of the assistive technology were usage sometimes, 6.73% of the assistive technology were usage rarely and 38.46% of the assistive technology were never use in schools managed by NGOs for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru.
- + The results show that most (23.07%) of the assistive technology were usage always in schools managed by Parents’ Association for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru. 15.38% of the assistive technology were usage sometimes, 3.84% of the assistive technology were usage rarely and 57.69% of the assistive technology were never use in schools managed by Parents’ Association for hearing impaired children in Bengaluru.

IMPLICATION:

During implementation of the AT, it is essential to locate equipment where instruction and learning has to take place, preferably selecting low-tech applications, the accessibility and integration of the use of AT into lessons should be ensured in a purposeful and meaningful way. The necessary training and technical support

should be provided to classroom teachers and HM, considering the initial fiscal and human resources as an investment and at the same time avoiding reinventing the wheel each year, preferring technology that is already in place whenever possible.

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