STUDY HABITS OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENT TEACHERS

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Abstract

The research paper is about the investigation done on the study habits of the visually impaired student teachers pursuing B.Ed. course from Government and Government aided colleges of Education from Chennai district. The investigator has constructed a tool with the guidance of the research supervisor for assessing the study habits of the visually impaired student teachers. The findings revealed that several factors influence the study habits of the student teachers having total or partial visual impairment .They include individual differences in note taking habit, reading time, number of hours spend for studying, usage of assistive devices used, learning environment at home and school, preferable study time ,influence of peer group and adopted memorising techniques.
Keywords: Study Habits, Visually Impaired, Student Teachers.

Introduction

In Tamil Nadu, the students with total or partial visual impairments are eligible for a reservation/quota for admission in B.Ed. and M.Ed. course in Colleges for Education. The specific percentage of seats reserved for visually impaired students, along with other reservation categories, is determined by the guidelines of admission framed by the state government and affiliating University. In the guidelines issued by Tamilnadu Government for government /government aided /self-financing colleges of Education for B.Ed. admission (academic year of 2025-2026),5% of seats have been allotted for visually impaired students. The investigator from the Teacher Education field has felt the need for writing the research article based on the investigation done on the study habits of the visually impaired student teachers in the academic year (2018-2020). The study throws light on the need for increasing knowledge, understanding, attitude, awareness about the study habits of the visually impaired student teachers among the Teacher educators in Colleges of Education. This will help them to work for attaining the mission of Education for all in the Colleges of Education with inclusive settings.

Need and Significance of the Study

Visually impaired students, despite having the same cognitive capacity and cognitive development characteristics as sighted students, learn without the sense of sight [Okcu B, Yazıcı F, Sözbilir M, 2016]. In this context, the information needs of visually impaired

individuals are attempted to be met through various information sources. The resources, tools, and methods used to meet this need are inevitably developed to appeal to the sense of touch and hearing. Individuals in the visually impaired group can benefit from their sense of sight to varying degrees [Aydın EA., 2011].

From this perspective, services and technologies necessary for the social participation and access to information of individuals with visual impairment have been developed today. Using the Braille writing system would significantly facilitate the education process for visually impaired students, but this may vary depending on the degree of visual impairment [Okur MR, Demir M, 2019]. Therefore, the ability to read Braille is acquired after learning sounds and also learning the abbreviation system. This situation may lead visually impaired students to learn to read later compared to their sighted peers. The student teachers having total visual impairment are allowed to use audio recording devices, taking braille notes and reading notes taken in braille format for taking seminar and preparation for examination.

Visually impaired students may encounter difficulties in some subjects due to factors arising from their disabilities. While it is assumed that students are equal in the classroom environment, the ways they access and acquire information vary. In this context, teachers need to pay attention to these differences when delivering their lessons [Demir T, Şen Ü.,2009].

By following norms meant for conducting examinations for visually impaired students, identifying the difficulties they encounter, taking measures to overcome these challenges, and making necessary adjustments, these students can effectively showcase their achievements in educational settings [Kamış Ö, Demir E.,2018]. In the Colleges of Education, the visually impaired student teachers are permitted to have scribe during examination. Separate room with calm atmosphere is provided for them with an invigilator for assisting them. The scribe is given remuneration for writing the examination for the visually impaired students. Both the student teachers having total and partial impairment are given additional one-hour time for writing the examination.

Many studies have been conducted on the challenges faced by the visually impaired school children in the global context. Bahadır S, Bahadır O. (2024) attempted to identify the challenges encountered by 25 visually impaired students studying at Ertuğrul Gazi School for the Visually Impaired in Onikişubat district of Kahramanmaraş province in Turkey, from grades 5 to 8. The study revealed that visually impaired students face difficulties in the learning process at school, primarily stemming from the inadequacy of the school's physical conditions, lack of auditory cues and routes. understanding the materials used in classes and challenges in the measurement and evaluation practices for visually impaired.

Javeed Ahmad Puju & Mehmood Ahmad Khan (2017) carried out an investigation with the objectives to study the learning styles and study habits of 200 specially abled students (100 visually impaired and other 100 orthopedically challenged from various

Government Colleges in Kashmir province. The findings revealed that there is significant difference between visually impaired and orthopedically challenged college going students on their learning styles and study habits.

Sunita Sharma (2006) conducted a study to find out the efficacy of emotional stability on the study habits of visually disabled students. The results revealed that children with high emotional stability have better study habits than their counterparts with low emotional stability. These results are quite alarming as the quality of study habits determines the level of educational performance of the children. It is suggested that training centres for parents, guidance and counseling centres need to be established where parents, siblings, teachers and members of the society can be taught the techniques of dealing with visually disabled children.

Mulat Alebachew Belay(2020) studied the challenges and opportunities in an inclusive education of visually impaired students at Bedlu, Ethipiaby conducting a case study. Content analysis was done on the transcriptions of the interview data and the field notes. The interview results indicated that inadequate budget, lack of necessary materials, absence of qualified professionals, shortage of professional growth, and development trainings were some of the major factors that hinder the full implementation of inclusive education.

In the global context, there was a dearth of investigation in the colleges of Education especially about the study habits of visually impaired student teachers. Henceforth the investigator decided to conduct investigation on the "**Study habits of visually impaired student teachers".**

Objectives of the Study
- To find out the level of the study habits of the visually impaired student teachers.
- To study the nature of the study habits of the visually impaired student teachers.

Hypotheses of the Study
1. The level of the study habits of the visually impaired student teachers will be moderate in nature.
2. There will be differences in the study habits of visually impaired student teachers.

Methodology of Investigation
The investigator used normative survey method for selecting the samples from Government, Government aided Colleges of Education of Chennai district. The total sample consists of 42 student teachers studying B.Ed. course. Both first year and second year students were taken as samples.

Delimitation of the Study

The sample includes Visually impaired student teachers studying B.Ed. course in government and government aided colleges of Education from Chennai district. Bothfirst and second year students will be taken as samples.

Description of the Tool

Based on the review of related literature, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, expert opinions from special educators and Teacher Educator, the investigator under the guidance of the research supervisor constructed a questionnaire for assessing the study habits of visually impaired student teachers. The tool was given to the Teacher Educators in Colleges of Education and National Institute of Education Physical and Visual impairment (NIEPVD), Poonamalle, Chennai district, Tamilnadu. The tool initially had 35 items. Based on the expert opinion and suggestions the tool was reframed to be having 25 questions (17positive and 8 negative in nature) .The maximum score was 25, minimum score one. The total score is 25.

Pilot Study

The tool was given to 32 samples. Reliability of the tool has been established by using Cronbach alpha formula. The reliability value was 0.76. The items had content and face validity. The square root of reliability was computed. It was 0.84 and found to be highly valid.

Main Study

The tool was given to 42 student teachers studying in Government and Government aided colleges of Education of Chennai district after getting prior permission from the Head of the institution. The sample included student teachers with total or partial visual impairment. The teacher educators in the colleges of education gave instructions regarding the tool given, read out the questions and acted as scribes for those who had total visual impairment. The percentages were calculated for the responses given by the sample related to study habits.

Findings of the Study

- The study habits of the student teachers with visual impairment was moderate in nature.
- There were significant differences in the student teachers with visual impairment in their study habits. Based upon their responses to each question, percentages were calculated for both positive and negative responses.
- 78.13% of students often read books by using apps to understand the concept.21.87 % of students do not read books often by using apps to understand.

- 96.88% of students prepare important notes from books. 3.12% of students do not prepare important notes from books.

- 93.75% student recalls the concepts from what they have read and 6.25% student do not recall the concepts from what they have read.

- 37.50% student have the habit of reading aloud and 62.50 % student do not read aloud.

- 34.38 % students studying along with their friends from main stream feel that they help them in studying, 65.62 % Students studying with friends feel that they do not help them.

- 59.38% students look back on the course title more than once;40.62% students do not look back on the course title more than once.

- 62.50 % student's attention is easily distracted by the noise in the environment,. 37.50 % student's attention is not easily distracted by the noise in the environment.

- 68.75% students listen to the lesson often through the audio recording device and the course will stick in their mind constantly. 31.25 % students do not prefer listening the lesson often through the audio recording device.

- 59.38 % students will write and read important notes in Braille while studying during exam time.40.62 % student's do not write and read important notes in Braille while studying during exam time.

- 93.75 % students like to study in a calm environment.6.25 % students do not like to study in a calm environment.

- 87.50% students find it annoying when others interrupt or talk while they read.12.50% students do not find it annoying when others interrupt or tale while I read.

- 81.25 % student study as a group. They divide the course into separate units to read and discuss each unit thoroughly. 18.75 % student do not study as a group. They prefer individualized learning or learning the units one by one after mastering each one.

- 62.50 % students like to study alone. They need calm environment so that they will not get distracted easily.37.50 % students do not like to study alone.

- 62.50 % students like to listen and recall what others are reading for them .37.50 % students do not like to listen and recall what others are reading for them.

- 93.75 % students will force themselves to complete a particular job within the specified time. 6.25 % students do not will force them self to complete a particular job within the specified time.

- 34.38 % student spend many hours studying the same subject.65.62 % student do not spend many hours studying the same subject.

- 43.75 % students read the lessons before they were taught by the teacher in the classroom. 56.25 % students do not read the lessons before they were taught in the classroom.

- 43.75 % students tend to read guide books rather than books.56.25 % students do not tend to read guide rather than books.

- 75 % student will make use of the important notes of their fellow friend reading the course.25 % student will not make use of important notes of their fellow friend reading the course.

- 71.88 % students will record the lesson one reads on the tape and then read the lesson by listening back to it in their leisure time. 28.12 % student's do not record the lesson one reads on the tape and then read the lesson by listening back in their spare time.

- 65.63 % students will write notes in the braille format .34.37 % students do not not write notes for course in Braille.

- 93.75 % students like to read by understanding the lesson related discussion with others ,6.25 % students do not like to read by understanding the lesson related discussion with others.

- 90.63 % students will memorize and read the topics in the course.9.37 % student's will not memorize and read the topics in the course. They prefer meaningful learning.

Limitation of the Study

Since 5% of the seats are allocated for the visually impaired students every year, the investigator was able to collect data from 42 student teachers. The investigator with the guidance of the research supervisor and the opinion of field experts decided to calculate the percentages for the kind of responses given to the items in the questionnaire

Conclusion

The student teachers prefer calm and conducive learning environment for sustaining attention in classroom environment and for preparation towards exam. They get influenced by their peer group to study and recall important points. They use braille method for taking notes. They use audio recorder for recording the classes taken by the teacher with prior permission, listen to the recorded classes and prepare notes for studying. They use mobile apps to record and listen to notes.

Educational Implications

The teacher educators should understand the study habits of especially visually impaired student teachers who study in inclusive setting. They should give permission for recording their classes using assistive devices, taking braille notes and using braille notebook for studying. The teacher educator must realize their accountability in taking classes for

them and catering to their needs as far as possible. They should teach the concepts with adequate pace and pause as their classes are being recorded through audio recorder devices by them. Few of them have the habit of note taking in Braille format. They should create congenial atmosphere for the visually impaired student teachers to learn without any barriers.

The government should ensure that all the basic amenities pertaining to inclusive setting and education for visually impaired student teachers are being provided in the Colleges of Education. Since most of the visually impaired student teachers cannot afford purchasing assistive devices for studying, the government should allocate fund to meet their needs. The libraries must have talking books and reading screen in monitors of the computers meant specially for them. Magnifying lenses must be provided for the partially impaired student teachers. The teachers must be given training through workshop about the ways and means of educating visually impaired student teachers in the inclusive settings.

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