



## **DYSLEXIA AWARENESS AMONG MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KANNIYAKUMARI DISTRICT**

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### **Abstract:**

The present study was intended to find out the awareness of dyslexia among middle school teachers in Kanniyakumari district. The objective of the research study was to study the significant difference in the mean scores of awareness of dyslexia among middle school teachers with respect to gender, locality, type of management, type of school, and educational qualification. The study used normative survey method. Dyslexia Awareness Test was used to conduct the study. The data were collected from 100 middle school teachers working in various schools in Kanniyakumari district. For the analysis of data, the statistical techniques used were t test and ANOVA. The findings of the study reveal that middle school teachers having educational qualification as UG and PG differ significantly in their awareness on dyslexia and suggest the need for teachers of all levels to be aware of the coping strategies that help to develop the academic skills of dyslexic learners.

**Key Words:** Dyslexia Awareness & Middle School Teachers

### **Introduction:**

In schools, teachers come across different students having different patterns of strengths and weaknesses. They differ considerably in their cognitive abilities. Some students learn quickly while some others struggle even to master basic concepts and academic skills. This difficulty in learning may be observed mostly in the academic areas such as reading, writing or arithmetic. This inability might be the result of a learning disability. Disorders like reading and writing disabilities or arithmetic disabilities are either ignored or not understood and the children suffer for no fault of theirs. Children with learning disabilities are low achievers and they are found to be unable to cope with the school work (Raja & Kumar, 2011). Dyslexia is a learning disorder that involves difficulty in reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words. Also called reading disability, dyslexia affects areas of the brain that process language. The term 'dyslexia' refers to difficulty with words spelt, words pronounced, words written and association of meanings with words (Pollock & Waller, 1997). It is a learning disability that causes reading and language difficulties, in terms of spoken or written. Dyslexia is a term associated with specific learning disabilities in reading. It is a language-based learning disability (Faritha et al., 2018). Dyslexia is characterized by trouble with reading despite normal intelligence. The specific deficits in the majority of dyslexics are in phonological coding, although visual-spatial problems can be found in a majority of poor readers (Dutta, 2000). Different people are affected to varying degrees. The problems of dyslexia may include difficulties in spelling words, reading quickly, writing words, sounding out words in the head, pronouncing words when reading aloud and understanding what one reads. Often these difficulties are first noticed at school (Chadha, 2001). Dyslexia is not due to either lack of intelligence or desire to learn. With appropriate teaching methods, students with dyslexia can learn successfully.

### **Need and Significance of the Study:**

Teaching of all subjects has been a challenge to the teachers, since the dawn of the human race. The basic knowledge of the subject is very important which is taught to a child when he/she enters the school. Good teachers should not only teach their pupils but also analyse and find out the problems felt by the pupils in the process of learning. In class room teaching, teachers come across many pupils who experience difficulty to keep pace with the progress made by other pupils or to understand what is taught in the classroom. A wise teacher should locate the difficulty and administer remedial measures. Today, there are many researches actively taking place in the area of special education and in particular, in the area of learning disabilities. The present study investigates whether the school teachers are having awareness of dyslexia. With proper diagnosis, appropriate and timely instruction, hard work, and support from teachers, individuals who have dyslexia can succeed in school and later as adults. If children succeed in school, they will develop positive feelings about themselves and believe that they can succeed in life.

Teachers should have more awareness regarding students with dyslexia. It is essential for teachers to identify such children and provide remedial teaching to them. If they are trained properly, such students can overcome their problems and prove to be assets to society. Early assessment and intervention result in the best outcome. So it is the need of the hour to identify such academically disabled learners in the school and provide remedial instruction to them to overcome their learning problems. The reasons for dyslexia which causes

problems in learning all school subjects and nature of dyslexia are also found necessary to be explored. Hence a study on dyslexia awareness among middle school teachers in Kanniyakumari District is found to be significant.

**Statement of the Problem:**

In the present context, dyslexia awareness is very necessary for all teachers. Teachers can play an important role in dealing with students having dyslexia. Also they can educate these students to overcome their reading and spelling problems only if they have proper awareness regarding it. The present investigation is an attempt to study the dyslexia awareness of middle school teachers working in different schools of Kanniyakumari District in Tamil Nadu and is entitled as “Dyslexia awareness among middle school teachers in Kanniyakumari District”.

**Objective of the Study:**

The objective of the research study was to study the significant difference in the mean scores of awareness of dyslexia among middle school teachers with respect to gender, locality, type of management, type of school, and educational qualification.

**Hypotheses Framed:**

- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of dyslexia awareness of male and female middle school teachers.
- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of dyslexia awareness of middle school teachers of rural and urban locality.
- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of dyslexia awareness of middle school teachers of government, aided and private schools.
- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of dyslexia awareness of middle school teachers with educational qualification as UG and PG.
- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of dyslexia awareness of middle school teachers of boys’ school, girls’ school and co-education school.

**Methodology in Brief:**

- Method Used: Normative survey method was used for the study.
- Sample: The sample for the study comprised of 100 middle school teachers in Kanniyakumari district.
- Tool Used: The tool used for the study is Dyslexia Awareness Test constructed and validated by the investigators.
- Statistical Techniques Used: In the present study the following statistical techniques used were t- test and ANOVA.

**Result and Discussion:**

Table 1: Comparison of dyslexia awareness among middle school teachers based on gender

Gender	Mean	SD	N	t	p	Remark at 5% level
Male	21.82	6.53	44	0.483	0.630	NS
Female	22.48	7.08	56			

From Table 1, it is known that the calculated p-value is greater than 0.05(5 percent level of significance). Hence there is no significant difference in the mean scores of dyslexia awareness of male and female middle school teachers.

Table 2: Comparison of dyslexia awareness among middle school teachers based on locale

Locale	Mean	SD	N	t	p	Remark
Rural	20.76	6.98	45	1.910	0.059	NS
Urban	23.36	6.51	55			

From Table 2, it is known that the calculated p-value is greater than 0.05 (5 percent level of significance). Hence there is no significant difference in the mean scores of dyslexia awareness of middle school teachers of rural and urban locality.

Table 3: Comparison of dyslexia awareness among middle school teachers based on educational qualification

Educational Qualification	Mean	SD	N	t	p	Remark
UG	20.23	6.54	35	2.174	0.032	S
PG	23.25	6.78	65			

From Table3, it is known that the calculated p-value is less than 0.05 (5 percent level of significance). Hence there is significant difference in the mean scores of dyslexia awareness of middle school teachers with educational qualification as UG and PG. Middle school teachers with educational qualification PG are found to have more awareness on dyslexia compared to the teachers with educational qualification UG.

Table 4: Comparison of dyslexia awareness among middle school teachers based on type of school

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Remark
Between Groups	194.54	2	97.27	2.141	0.123	NS
Within Groups	4406.85	97	45.43			
Total	4601.39	99				

From Table4, it is clear that  $p < 0.05$  and is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore the middle school teachers from boys' school, girls' school and co -education school do not differ significantly in their awareness on dyslexia.

Table 5: Comparison of dyslexia awareness among middle school teachers based on type of management

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Remark
Between Groups	265.2	2	132.59	2.966	0.056	NS
Within Groups	4336.2	97	44.70			
Total	4601.4	99				

From Table5, it is clear that  $p < 0.05$  and is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore the middle school teachers from government, aided and self-financing schools do not differ significantly in their awareness on dyslexia.

#### **Educational Implications of the Study:**

The findings of the study contribute to day-to-day classroom teaching and suggest certain implications in improving dyslexia awareness among middle school teachers. The results indicate the need for middle school teachers to be more aware of the learning disabilities like dyslexia which hamper the performance of children in academics. Certain academic accommodations can be implemented to help the dyslexic children to catch up with the rest of the class. The following accommodations may provide a framework for helping children with dyslexia to achieve in their academic performance.

- It is highly desirable that schools sensitize their staff to develop in dyslexic children the skills they normally fail to develop. The school administrators can seek help from qualified professionals in consultation with the parents of the pupils concerned and special education services can be organized to help the dyslexic learners to overcome their problems.
- Staff training, continuing education and ongoing professional development are very much essential. School teachers at all levels could be given in-service training related to so that they get equipped with the adequate knowledge and skills in dealing with children having learning disabilities like dyslexia. Administrators can support teachers in inclusive schools by providing in-service training that addresses teacher-identified needs. Competent personnel may be employed to impart this training, with the use of diverse methods.
- The dynamics of teaching has changed with the times. It is necessary that teachers have to change their roles and understand the psychology of each child rather than considering them as herd. The teacher has to identify the challenges faced by the children instead of discouraging them with senseless homework and needs to be a facilitator rather than be a mere instructor. Special educational programmes can be designed by teachers to meet the special needs of dyslexic learners. With proper care and teachers' guidance, dyslexics can be made to do develop their academic skills.
- It is very essential for schoolteachers to adopt different learning styles to meet the needs of dyslexic learners. Most learners with dyslexia need help from a teacher specially trained in using multisensory or structured approach to teaching. It is important for them to be taught by a systematic and explicit method that involves several senses at the same time with visual, auditory and kinesthetic elements. Various technological devices may also provide learners with visual, auditory or kinesthetic experiences. Adopting different learning styles can help engage such academically backward children to learn in an enjoyable and meaningful way.
- Apart from teaching the children to do develop their academic skills, teachers must also provide various learning experiences to children in order to develop their physical, mental, and emotional abilities. There is no greater gift the teachers can give to their students than laying the foundation for their emotional health and positive self-esteem. Appropriate guidance and counselling may also be required for learning-disabled children to reduce their anxiety and frustration and to develop confidence, positive outlook and high self-esteem. Teachers have a great role to play in moulding the mindset of children with learning disabilities in such a way as to enable them to convert their challenges into opportunities for their intellectual and emotional development.

**Conclusion:**

Learning disabilities like dyslexia is very much prevalent these days and does a lot of harm through delay in intervention. Early intervention programmes help in the provision of services to such educationally handicapped children for the purpose of lessening the effects of this disorder. Dyslexia is a cognitive disorder, not a problem with intelligence. People with dyslexia have normal intelligence and usually have normal vision. Most children with dyslexia can succeed in school with tutoring or a specialized education programme. Emotional support also plays an important role. Awareness of the difficulties that dyslexic children face in learning can enable teachers to open their eyes more to the ways of helping them. Teachers have to become aware of the compensatory strategies that they can use to make these students complete their and to learn successfully and joyfully. Awareness programmes could be organized for the school teachers to develop their knowledge about learning disabilities and the ways of making the learning disabled to overcome or mitigate their problems in learning. Hence it is the responsibility of the policy makers and school authorities take necessary steps to conduct orientation programmes or in-service training to the teachers and ensure that every teacher could identify the children with dyslexia in his/her class. Therefore it is the duty of the teachers to offer support to dyslexic children in order to manage their behaviour and achieve success both socially and academically.

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