

IMPACT OF SCHOOL READINESS TRAINING PROGRAMME ON VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

(PRE-BRAILLE ACTIVITIES)

* *Minati Rani Mohapatra*

*Assistant Professor in Special Education – Visual Impairment, Department of Disability Studies, Rabindra Bharati University, 56A, B. T. Road, Kolkata-700 050, W.B. INDIA.

“Research is a careful enquiry or examination to discover new information or relationships and to expand and to verify existing knowledge”

-- By *Frances Rummel*

ABSTRACT

The present study was experimental in nature. The study was conducted to explore the reading readiness skills (Pre-Braille activities) of the standard I & II visually impaired students' studying in inclusive setup. Total 12 students were selected purposefully for the study. Out of which 06 were boys and 06 were girls. Objective of the study was to identify and analyze the impact of reading readiness programme on visually impaired students within inclusive setup. Three Pre-Braille activities such that, using Creative Album, Hand Movement, & Turning of Pages were taught practically during the intervention. Arithmetic Mean (M), Standard Deviation (S.D.), and t-test were calculated to analyze the significance of the study. The study revealed that, both boys and girls were benefited from the intervention; yet, boys were performed well and better than girls. Intervention helped both gender to improve their reading readiness skills.

KEYWORD: *Pre-Braille Activities, Turning of Pages, Hand Movement, Zigzag direction, up-down, Creative Album.*

INTRODUCTION

The persons with disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) act was initiated in 1995 and came in to reality through Right to Education Act in 2009 which spells out that, 'Education' is the birth right of every children and children having age between 6 to 14 must be admitted in to primary schools located in their locality. An amendment in 2010 extends these benefits towards special children in India. 'Education for all' is the aim and goal of UNESCO and the scheme allowed children with special needs in to normal set up for their education and learning. Visually impaired is as odd as life itself. Blindness includes poking the eyes, rocking, spinning, and gazing at bright lights, behaviours that are often observed in institutionalized children (Biswas, 2004, pp: 34). Most legally blind individuals have some residual vision, which in many cases, is still insufficient for reading print. Braille codes represent an alternative. Braille is the only reliable communication mode since last 200 years for visual impairment persons though it is harder to read than print. It is because Braille letters are more confused. It is found that,

experienced Braille readers read at half the speed of average sighted readers (pp: 36). At the same time absence of eye contact hinders the interaction between visually impaired children and their sighted peer group including their teachers. Due to this cause, facial expression can not able to put any impact on blind children. So teacher should instruct them verbally in the inclusive set up during teaching and other academic activities. Teacher should be trained to identify and access visually impaired children since each are different from others. More activities based flexible curriculum should be implemented and one can not deny the role of non-disabled sighted peers towards visual impaired children.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The readiness programme helps special children to cope up with their non-disabled sighted peers during the teaching learning process. It helps these students to adjust themselves in including setup without any difficulties. But it is seen that, most of the parents in our society are not aware of the 'Readiness Programme' and its benefits towards their special children. Children from all disabilities including visually impaired children face same difficulties. This problem of special children especially visually impaired children encouraged the scholar to do research on it.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Visually impaired students have some limitation, needs and problems with regard to their adjustment in inclusive set up for which they required some technique to cope up with their non-disabled sighted peer groups during teaching and learning process. But many visually impaired students with out pre-Braille training facing difficulties in inclusive set up. Hence the investigator realized the importance of the schooling readiness programme with reference to Pre-Braille Activities and hence the title chosen for the present problem of the study as "**Impact of School Readiness Training Programme on Visual Impaired Students (Pre-Braille Activities)**".

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Objectives of the present study are given below.

1. To identify the impact of reading readiness programme on visually impaired students within inclusive setup.
2. To identify the impact of 'Turning of Pages' training on visual impaired students.
3. To identify the impact of 'Hand Movement' training on visual impaired students.
4. To identify the impact of 'Identify and Discriminate Different Objects in Creative Album' training on visual impaired students.
5. To Study the performance of visually impairment students in Pre-Braille activities with respect to gender before and after intervention Programme.

HYOPTHESES OF THE STUDY

Hypothesis plays a vital role in research since all the research activities revolves around the hypothesis. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following hypothesis are formulated.

1. There is no significant difference in acquired reading readiness skills among visually impaired students during their placement before and after the training programme.
2. There is no significant difference in acquiring 'Turning of Pages' training by visual impaired students with respect to gender.
3. There is no significant difference in acquiring 'Hand Movement' training by visual impaired students with respect to gender.
4. There is no significant difference in acquiring 'Identify and Discriminate Different Objects in Creative Album' training by visual impaired students with respect to gender.
5. There is no significance difference in Pre-Braille activities with respect to gender before and after intervention Programme.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The present study is conducted in the "The Welfare School for the Blind" located in Balasore district of Odisha. Students were selected purposefully from standard I & II of the school. Total 12 students were selected for the study.
2. I have taken those children for the present study, whose vision is so limited / defective that he can not be educated through visual methods. This category includes children with light dark and gross-form discrimination only, as well as the totally blind.
3. Only Pre-Braille activities (using Creative Album, Hand Movement, & Turning of Pages) were taught during intervention training programme.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to the field of study. To obtain the required information for the study following tools and techniques has been used.

Turning of Pages (Book)

At the top right corner of the cover page, there will be a small cut to help the visually impaired children for identifying correct position of book taken for reading. '1' mark given for right performance and '0' mark given for wrong performance

Hand Movement

There are three activities for training. These are ‘

1. Movement of finger tip from Left to Right in a Straight Line
2. Movement of Finger tip from Up to Down perpendicularly.
3. Movement of Finger tip in Zig Zag Line

‘1’ mark given for right performance and ‘0’ marks given for wrong performance

Identify and Discriminate Different Objects in Creative Album

There are ten activities in ‘Creative Album’ to identify and discriminate different objects used in day to day life. These activities are given below.

1. To identify different ‘Shape (Simple & Complex Shapes)’
2. To identify different ‘Buttons’ used in Creative Albums.
3. To identify different types of ‘Cloths’ used in Creative Albums.
4. To identify different types of ‘Threads’ used in Creative Albums.
5. To identify ‘Ruff & Smooth’ materials used in Creative Albums.
6. To identify ‘Long & Short’ sizes.
7. To identify ‘Big & Small’
8. To identify ‘Above & Below’
9. To identify ‘Pens & Pencils’
10. To identify various types & sizes of Spoons.

‘1’ mark given for right identification and ‘0’ marks given for wrong identification

Design of the Study

The layout of the design followed in the study is given below:

$$R : O_1 \times O_2$$

Where, ‘O₁’ and ‘O₂’ represent the pre-test and post-test experiment observations respectively while ‘R’ represents the randomizations.

Statistical Technique Used

Arithmetic Mean (M), Standard Deviations (S.D), and 't - test' were conducted to identify the significance of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test of 'Reading Readiness Skills' scores of total students taken for the study with respect to Pre-Brail Activities.

The data in respect to analysis of pre-test and post-test scores of 'Reading Readiness Skills' with respect to total sample were obtained separately before and after training program. The data analysed with the help of t-test and the results are given in the following table.

Testing	Number of Students	Arithmetic Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (S.D)	Calculated t - value
Pre-test	12	4.42	1.38	6.802**
Post-test	12	8.50	1.50	

** - Significant at 0.01 Level

The critical value of 't' for degree of freedom (d.f.) = 11 at 0.01 level of significance is 2.718. Since the calculated value (6.808) of 't' is greater than the critical value, 't' is significant at 0.01 level. It indicates that there is a significant improvement on the 'Reading Readiness Skill' of over all sample differ significantly. It means that, there was a significant improvement on the 'Reading Readiness Skill' of overall sample after the intervention training programme. This contradicts the null hypothesis. In the light of this, the null hypothesis that, "*There is no significant difference in acquired reading readiness skills among visually impaired students during their placement before and after the training programme*" is rejected. Therefore, it may be concluded that, intervention training programme helped in improving reading readiness skills of the students.

2. There is no significant difference in acquiring 'Turning of Pages' training by visual impaired students with respect to gender.

The data in respect to analysis of pre-test and post-test scores of 'Turning of Pages Skill' with respect to total sample were obtained separately before and after training program. The data analysed with the help of t-test and the results are given in the following table.

Testing	Gender	No. of Students	Arithmetic Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (S.D)	Calculated t - value
Pre-test	Girls	06	0.67	0.816	1.808*
	Boys	06	0.50	1.225	
Post-test	Girls	06	0.83	0.408	0.000 ^{NS}
	Boys	06	0.83	0.909	

* - Significant at 0.1 level

^{NS} - Not Significant

It is clear from the pre-test section of the above table that the calculated t- value is significant at 0.1 level. It indicates that, girls were performed well and better than boys in ‘Turning of Pages’ activities before intervention programme. The post-test section indicated that there was no difference in performance of the said activities between boys and girls after the intervention programme and both boys and girls benefited from the training programme. In the light of this, the null hypothesis that, “*There is no significant difference in acquiring ‘Turning of Pages’ training by visual impaired students with respect to gender*” is accepted. Therefore, both boys and girls were benefited from the intervention programme.

- There is no significant difference in acquiring ‘Hand Movement’ training by visual impaired students with respect to gender.

The data in respect to analysis of pre-test and post-test scores of ‘Hand Movement Skill’ with respect to total sample were obtained separately before and after training program. The data analysed with the help of t-test and the results are given in the following table.

Testing	Gender	No. of Students	Arithmetic Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (S.D)	Calculated t - value
Pre-test	Girls	06	0.67	0.516	0.596 ^{NS}
	Boys	06	0.83	0.408	
Post-test	Girls	06	1.83	0.753	0.424 ^{NS}
	Boys	06	2.00	0.632	

NS - Not Significant

It is clear from the pre-test and post sections of the above table that the calculated t- value is not significant. It indicates that, there was no difference in performance between boys and girls during pretest and posttest assessment in ‘Hand Movement’ activities before and after intervention programme. It also indicated from mean scores of the data that both gender got benefited from the reading readiness training programme. In the light of this, the null hypothesis that, “There is no significant difference in acquiring ‘Hand Movement’ training by visual impaired students with respect to gender” is accepted. Therefore, both gender equally benefited from the training programme.

4. There is no significant difference in acquiring ‘Identify and Discriminate Different Objects in Creative Album’ training by visual impaired students with respect to gender.

The data in respect to analysis of pre-test and post-test scores of ‘Identify and Discriminate Different Objects in Creative Album’ with respect to total sample were obtained separately before and after training program. The data analysed with the help of t-test and the results are given in the following table.

Testing	Gender	No. of Students	Arithmetic Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (S.D)	Calculated t - value
Pre-test	Girls	06	2.83	1.72	0.642 ^{NS}
	Boys	06	3.33	0.82	
Post-test	Girls	06	5.17	1.17	1.688*
	Boys	06	6.33	1.21	

* - Significant at 0.1 level

^{NS} - Not Significant

It is clear from the pre-test section of the above table that the calculated t- value is less than the tabulated t-value at degree of freedom 11. It indicates that both boys and girls were performed up to same extent before the intervention training programme. The post-section of the above table indicates that, the calculated t-value is less than the tabulated ‘t-value’ at level 0.1. It indicates that, t- value is significant at 0.1 level. It means that there was a significant difference in performance during posttest between boys and girls. It contracts the Null hypothesis that, “There is no significant difference in acquiring ‘Identify and Discriminate Different Objects in Creative Album’ training by visual impaired students with respect to gender during post test. In the light of this the null

hypothesis is rejected for post-test condition while the null hypothesis is accepted for pre-test condition. Therefore, though both gender benefited from the intervention; yet, boys were benefited better than girls in Identify and Discriminate Different Objects in Creative Album' training programme.

5. Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test of 'Pre-Braille Activities' scores of students with respect to their Gender.

The data in respect to analysis of pre-test and post-test scores of 'Total Pre-Braille Activities with respect to Gender' were obtained separately before and after training program. The data analysed with the help of t-test and the results are given in the following table.

Testing	Gender	No. of Students	Arithmetic Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (S.D)	Calculated t - value
Pre-test	Girls	06	4.17	1.237	0.610 ^{NS}
	Boys	06	4.67	0.816	
Post-test	Girls	06	7.83	1.213	1.577*
	Boys	06	9.17	1.462	

* - Significant at 0.1 level

^{NS} - Not Significant

Pre-test section of the table indicated that the calculated value less than the critical tabulated t-value. It means that both boys and girls perform up to same extent and there is no difference in their performance activities during pre assessment before giving intervention, which validates the null hypothesis during pretest. Therefore the null hypothesis that, "*there is no significance difference in Pre-Braille activities with respect to gender before intervention Programme*" is accepted. But, the post-test section of the table indicates that, the t-value is significant at level 0.1. It indicates that, boys were performed well and better than girls in overall Reading Readiness training activities. It contradicts the null hypothesis. In the light of this the null hypothesis that, "*there is no significance difference in Pre-Braille activities with respect to gender after the intervention Programme*" is rejected. Therefore, though the 'Reading Readiness programme' improves the performance of both genders yet, boys performed well and better than girls during post-test.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Findings revealed that, Intervention helped in improving the Reading Readiness Skills of the total sample. Boys performed well and better than girls. The real problem is not the loss of eye sight. The real problem is un-awareness about the blindness and ignorance of the society towards visually impaired students' capability. Psychologically, there is no difference between visually impaired students and their non-disabled sighted group. The only deficit of visually impaired is they are limited to see. So, they need proper care and empathy to address such crucial situation. Otherwise, it results poor academic achievements and eventually affects badly on their independency and dignity of life. Special educators should heed on it. Blind

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