



## **Comparison Of Awareness Of Special Educators Regarding Persons With Disabilities Act, 1995**

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***Abstract:***

*The present investigation is meant to compare the awareness of different categories of special educators about persons with disabilities act, 1995(PWD Act 1995). Normative Survey Method was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 149 Special Educators belonging to Hearing Impaired (HI), Visually Impaired (VI), Mentally Challenged (MC), and Orthopedically Handicapped (OH), from four Districts of Kerala viz-Alappuzha, Calicut, Ernakulam and Kottayam. The sample was selected using stratified sampling technique. To collect data required for the study, an awareness questionnaire on persons with disabilities act, 1995 was used. The analysis of the data was carried out by employing appropriate statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentage, ANOVA, and Scheffe's test. The results revealed that the special educators teaching HI, VI, MC&OH have very low awareness in persons with disabilities act, 1995 and there exist significant differences between and among four groups with respect their level of awareness regarding persons with disabilities act.*

***Key words:*** Special Educators, Persons with Disabilities Act.

### **1. Background Of The Study**

Education is a powerful instrument of social change and often initiates upward movement in the social structure. There by, helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of society. The educational scene in the country has undergone major change over the years, resulting in better provision of education and better educational practices. Recent educational developments and the seventy third and seventy fourth Constitutional Amendments outline the possibility of entrusting basic education to the local elected bodies in towns and villages. This would allow for community participation in education at the elementary level and would introduce radical change, leading to the empowerment of learners with Special Educational needs.

The education of persons with disabilities in India has been recognized as an integral part of the educational system. Hence the policies and programmes adopted in recent years should come in the attention of Special Educators. So Special educators and Special schools should go hand in hand for empowerment and better future of the disabled. In 1992, India adopted the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region. As a signatory of this proclamation, India's Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs proposed an act to safe guard the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWD). On the 1st of January 1996 the Government of India passed the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995. In this act disability is defined as blindness, low vision, leprosy-cured, hearing impairment, loco-motor disability, mental retardation and mental illness. The act calls for the forming of two central committees and two state committees: The central coordination committee and the central executive committee; the state coordination committee and the state executive committee. The coordination committees are responsible for insuring the rights of the PWD by advising the correct bodies about changes that need to be made in policy and programmes with regard to the rights of PWDs These committees are the central and state respectively focal points on disability matters. The respective executive committees are responsible for carrying out the decisions of the larger coordination committee. The act calls for the government to take the necessary steps to ensure the prevention of disabilities. In accordance with this agenda, the government must screen all the children at least once a year to determine risk factors that lead to disability and attempt to protect the child from such factors. It is also necessary for the state to take measure to reduce risks to prenatal and post natal mothers and child.

According to chapter V, children with disabilities should be provided free education by the appropriate government. The government must take steps to integrate children with disabilities into regular schools, but also make space for special schools that cater expressly to the needs of these children. In addition to the basic education schools, government are also required to make non-formal education programmes for children with disabilities that help attain literacy, rejoin school, impart vocational training, and provide them with free books and educational material. Teachers need to be specially trained to educate and see to the needs of children with disabilities. The government must also set up schemes that provide children with disabilities grant and scholarships and also provide funds for making buildings disabled friendly. Educational institutions are also required to provide visually challenged students with aids who will write for them. The government is also responsible for making the general environment non-discriminatory towards PWD by adapting and adding to railways, buses, road signals pavement slopes, warning signals, building ramps, Braille signs and auditory signals, etc. The act also provides for non-discrimination of PWD in employment that can be taken up by them, in government and non-government offices. Institutions that aid people with disabilities are required to be registered by the government and the government is also required to set up a number of institutions to cater to the needs of people with severe disabilities. The act calls for the appointment of a chief commissioner who will hear complaints or pleas made with regard to the deprivation of rights of PWD. It is also the governments' economic responsibility to take care of any PWD who cannot provide for themselves or does not have family support system to do so through unemployment allowances. Under this act there are also penalties doled out to people without disabilities who use services meant for PWD. Most of the disabled persons and special educators are not aware of the provisions for the disabled. In this study, the investigators made an attempt to compare the awareness of special educators belonging to different categories regarding Persons with Disabilities Act 1995.

## **2.Objectives**

1. To assess the awareness of special educators teaching hearing impaired, visually impaired, mentally challenged and orthopedically handicapped students regarding persons with disabilities act, 1995.

2. To compare the awareness regarding persons with disabilities act, 1995, among special educators teaching hearing impaired, visually impaired, mentally challenged and orthopedically handicapped students.

### 3. Methodology In Brief

The present investigation is meant to assess the awareness of different categories of special educators about persons with disabilities act, 1995. Normative Survey Method was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 149 Special Educators belonging to Hearing Impaired (HI), Visually Impaired (VI), Mentally Challenged (MC), and Orthopedically Handicapped (OH), from four Districts of Kerala viz-Alappuzha, Calicut, Ernakulam and Kottayam. The sample was selected using stratified sampling technique. To collect data required for the study, an awareness questionnaire on persons with disabilities act, 1995 was used. The analysis of the data was carried out by employing appropriate statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentage, ANOVA, and Scheffe's test.

### 4. Analysis

The details of the analysis are given in table no.1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Percentage score
HI	42	24.07	5.47	43.8
VI	33	17.88	5.78	32.5
MC	42	24.33	7.58	44.2
OH	32	21.03	7.36	38.2
Total	149	22.12	7.036	40.2

*Table 1 : Mean Standard deviation and Percentage score of Awareness of Special Educators, teaching HI, VI, MC & OH students, about PWD Act, 1995*

From the above table, it can be summarized that special educators teaching HI, VI, MC&OH have very low awareness in persons with disabilities act, 1995 since the maximum score being 55.

Dimensions	No. Of Qns	HI			VI			MC			OH		
		%	Mean	SD	%	Mean	SD	%	Mean	SD	%	Mean	SD
Preliminary aspects	8	61.0	4.8	1.31	36.0	2.88	1.29	51.5	4.12	1.77	48.9	3.91	1.33
Administration	13	30.2	3.93	2.82	10.	1.30	1.85	28.0	3.64	2.63	22.6	2.94	2.94
Education	6	44.0	2.64	0.91	31.8	1.91	0.98	48.3	2.90	1.25	36.0	2.47	0.98
Employment	8	35.4	2.83	1.43	42.4	3.39	1.60	47.6	3.81	1.17	40.7	2.88	1.19
Non discrimination	6	48.8	2.93	1.31	34.8	2.09	1.16	40.5	2.43	1.13	37.1	1.59	1.01
Prevention & early detection	4	57.3	2.29	1.04	78.8	3.15	1.28	71.5	2.86	1.07	67.3	2.69	0.78
Recognition of institution for persons with disabilities	5	52.4	2.62	1.38	25.4	1.27	1.13	42.8	2.14	1.32	31.8	1.59	1.29
Social security	5	39.0	1.95	0.58	37.6	1.88	0.82	48.6	2.43	0.86	32.4	2.12	0.75

*Table 2: Mean Standard deviation and Percentage score of awareness of special educators in each dimension of PWD Act, 1995*

#### *4.1. Comparison Of The Awareness Among Special Educators Belonging To Different Sections About Persons With Disabilities Act, 1995*

Special educators are classified into four sub sample according to their teaching sections viz., hearing impaired, mentally challenged, visually impaired and orthopedic handicapped. As there are four sections, one way analysis of variance was used for comparing the awareness of special educators belonging to different categories.

Source	Degrees of freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-value
Between Groups	3	997.223	332.408	7.616**
Within Groups	145	6328.603	43.646	
Total	148	7325.826		

Table 3 : Summary of ANOVA score of awareness score of PWD act, 1995 among special educators teaching different categories

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The computed F-value (7.616) is greater than the table value (4.01) at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore it is inferred that there exist significant differences between and among four groups with respect their level of awareness regarding PWD Act 1995. So, further analysis was necessary to locate the exact groups which show the differences and Scheffe's test was done for the purpose. Result of Scheffe's test for the significance of group pair is given in table 4.

Groups compared 1	Groups compared 2	Mean difference	F-value
HI	MC	0.26	0.0325 <sup>ns</sup>
HI	VI	6.19	16.2233**
HI	OH	3.04	3.8457 <sup>ns</sup>
MC	VI	6.45	17.6148**
MC	OH	3.30	4.5316 <sup>ns</sup>
VI	OH	3.15	3.6934 <sup>ns</sup>

Table 4: Scheffe's a, b test results for comparison of awareness of special educators in persons with disabilities act, 1995

In Scheffe's test result, it is clear that Hearing impaired (HI) and Visually impaired section has got the F value 16.2233 is significant whereas in Hearing impaired and Mentally Challenged(MC) has got the F value 0.0325 is not statistically significant. In Mentally Challenged and Visually impaired (VI) section has got the F value 17.6148 is significant. In Mentally Challenged and Orthopedic Handicap section has got the F value 4.5316 is not significant. In Visually impaired and Orthopedic Handicap (OH) section has got the F value 3.6934 is not significant.

### **5. Conclusion**

- Awareness of special educators, teaching Hearing impaired students, about persons with disabilities act, 1995 is low. They also possess low awareness in Administration, Social security and Employment sections, moderate awareness in Non discrimination, Education and high awareness in Preliminary aspects, Prevention and early detection, and Recognition of institution for persons with disabilities sections.
- Awareness of special educators, teaching visually impaired students, about persons with disabilities act, 1995 is very low. They have low awareness in Administration and Recognition of institution for persons with disabilities sections, moderate awareness in Non discrimination, Education, Social security, Preliminary aspects, and Employment sections, and high awareness in Prevention and early detection sections of persons with disabilities act, 1995.
- Special educators teaching mentally challenged students have very low awareness in persons with disabilities act, 1995. They have very low awareness in Administration section, moderate awareness in Non discrimination, Education, Social security, Preliminary aspects, Employment sections and Recognition of institution for persons with disabilities sections and high awareness in Prevention and early detection sections of persons with disabilities act, 1995.
- Special educators teaching orthopaedic handicapped students have very low awareness in persons with disabilities act, 1995 and also have very low awareness in Administration section, Employment, Recognition of institution for persons with disabilities Social security sections, moderate awareness in Non discrimination, Education, Preliminary aspects, sections and high awareness in Prevention and early detection sections of persons with disabilities act, 1995.
- There exists significant difference between and among four groups of special educators with respect to their level of awareness regarding PWD Act, 1995.

### **6. Implications**

PDA can be an effective statute if there is better implementation. Guidelines should be formulated and implemented. All efforts must be made to disseminate information on the rights of the disabled. Pressure groups and advocacy groups should actively work towards the implementation. The voice of the disabled is weak and society has to come

out stronger. The participation of the disabled is imperative to the movement. Information on the rights of the disabled should be disseminated through assistance manuals, question answer booklets, media campaigns etc. Every disabled person and his family should be armed with a manual (preferably approved by the concerned government authority) listing their rights. They should know their rights as they encounter day to day situations at the railway stations, post offices, cinema theatres, and libraries and as they seek admission to educational institutions or seek employment. Each time they encounter discrimination, there should be agencies assisting them and taking up the issue for them. The access needs all forms of boarding options, cost effective methods are all being constantly studied. Thousands of projects are continuously taken up aimed at improving the conditions of the disabled. Chapter IX of the PDA deals with research and manpower development. The Chief Commissioner and Commissioners are required to submit reports to the Central Government and the respective state governments. However research is hardly done and reports are never submitted. A strong research agenda is required to study the ways and means of better realizing the rights of the disabled. The reports bring in more accountability.



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