



**“AWARENESS AMONG GRADUATE AND POST GRADUATE SPEECH  
LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS REGARDING THE  
DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AVAILABLE  
FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY”**

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**ABSTRACT**

To promote equality and justice among individuals with disabilities, the Governments of India has initiated several acts and policies. Awareness regarding these acts and schemes among speech language professionals are questionable. Even though these acts are available and easily accessible, persons with disability utilizing the provisions of these acts are less. This can be due to lack of awareness among the professionals who are involved in rehabilitation and service providing. Considering the fact, the present study entitled “Awareness among graduate and post graduate speech language pathologist regarding the different government schemes available for person with disability” was under taken. Qquestionnaire regarding different government schemes were given to the subjects, and awareness regarding the same was assessed. Awareness scale was divided into Mild, Moderate and Higher level of awareness. Overall level of awareness was observed, difference in awareness between graduates and post graduates showed that graduates had moderate level of awareness (65.8%) where in post graduates had higher awareness level (44.4%). Awareness based on work experience revealed that higher the work experience better was the awareness of government schemes (62.60%).

**Key Words:** Legislations, Provisions, Persons with Disabilities

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## INTRODUCTION

India being a developing nation is aiming at ensuring good quality services for person with disabilities, according to the census 2011, 2.21% of total populations are persons with disability and there is a need to have a target intervention for uplifting these individuals. India being signatory to UN instrument, have recognized the need to fulfill the commitments as per UN declaration and mandates, thus creating enormous work on rehabilitation programme. It has introduced many programmes and schemes for empowering individuals with disability (Kumar, D. N. 2017).

Indian government ensures equality and non-discrimination among its citizens. People with disabilities require intervention to remove environmental and social barriers. These acts mainly focus on aiding the families with disabled individuals and help them live comfortable life in the community. In India there are several acts, policies and provisions in the area of disability. Article 45 refers to Education for all while article 41 “refers to Right to education and work” for persons including those with disabilities. Person with Disability Act (PWD act, 1995), Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992), the National Trust Act for welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act in

1999 are several major acts relating to persons with disability in India. RCI Act regulates standardized training policies, and programmes in the field of disability rehabilitation. PWD Act ensures the rights of person with disabilities, which is an important landmark and is a significant step in ensuring equal opportunities for people with disabilities and their participation in nation building. The act provides for both prevention of disability and rehabilitation like education, employment, allowance for the disabled, vocational training, research, reservation, manpower development, creation of barrier free environment and NT Act focuses on providing guardianship to person with disabilities (Kuppusamy. B. B., N., Jayanthi , N., Deepa, 2012).

In addition to these acts, Government of India, established national institutes and special schools for persons/ children with disabilities. Some children here may be physically disabled, may have intellectual functioning deficit and emotional disorders and may not be able to socially adjust in schools and community (Gautham, P., & Chandra, S, 2017).

On an average within a year family with persons with disability will have contacts with different professionals whom they would have

visited for seeking interventions. This includes general practitioner, pediatrician, speech language pathologist, neurologist, psychologist, physiotherapist and social workers (World Health Organization, 2011). Every professional has his/her own domains to be worked upon; the services will be reached easily to those individuals who are economically stable, whereas some individuals solely depend on government provisions. Social workers and also the Speech, Language Pathologist (SLP)s take active role in identifying these individuals with disability and provide sufficient information on schemes and provisions available in the country. SLPs working with children and adults with disability should have the knowledge regarding different government schemes such as educational placement, transport facilities for physically handicap, provision for accessing free hearing aids, examination concessions, and available monetary benefits from the governments.

Even though these acts are available and easily accessible, persons with disability utilizing these acts are less (Narayan, C. L., & John, T., 2017). This can be due to lack of awareness within family members of disabled individuals and also due to lack of awareness among the professionals who are involved in rehabilitation of these individuals with disability. Considering the fact, present study

entitled “Awareness among graduate and post graduate speech language pathologists regarding the different government schemes available for person with disability” was undertaken to find the level of awareness in SLPs regarding different government policies and schemes.

#### **AIM AND OBJECTIVES:**

Government has set many schemes to promote equality and justice among persons with disability. SLP’s play important role in providing information on these schemes to the parents and caregivers. When these professionals are fully aware of the specifications of the scheme and know how to approach it, they can help the children with disability to reach their rights easily.

Thus the present study took forth a step to find the awareness among SLPs regarding the schemes available from the government under different disability acts. The objectives of the study includes

- To find the overall awareness level in SLPS regarding different government schemes
- To find the difference in awareness among graduate and post graduate speech language pathologists
- To find how the work experience influences the awareness regarding different government schemes

**METHODOLOGY:**

The focus of the present study was to explore the level of awareness among SLPs regarding different provisions that are available from the government for persons with disability. Descriptive research design was followed where in survey method was used to collect the data from the subjects.

100 speech and language professionals including 44 graduates with BASLP degree and 26 post graduates with MASLP degree working at different rehabilitation services and institutions were selected as sample through convenience sampling method.

Exclusion criteria: Subjects working in private clinics, PhD scholars and SLPs working with experience above 4years were excluded from the study to control the variables.

The method had two steps, preparing the questionnaire and administering the questionnaire

**Preparing the questionnaire:**

Questionnaire for assessing the awareness was prepared, where demographic record sheets was formed to avoid information which acts like sub variables to the study such as age, gender, email Id, qualification, working set up, year of work experience. 40 questions

regarding various government policies were formed by the investigators after thoroughly studying about the acts and schemes. This included 15 close ended questions and 25 multiple choice questions. The questionnaire was then given to 5 senior SLPs to scrutinize the content and relevance of questions based on 4 point rating scale (0 to 3), where 0 being 'not applicable' to 3 being 'strongly applicable to the topic'. Based on the ratings 19 most appropriate questions which had 80% consensus were taken. Among these 6 close ended questions and 13 multiple choice questions were selected for survey.

**Administering the questionnaire:**

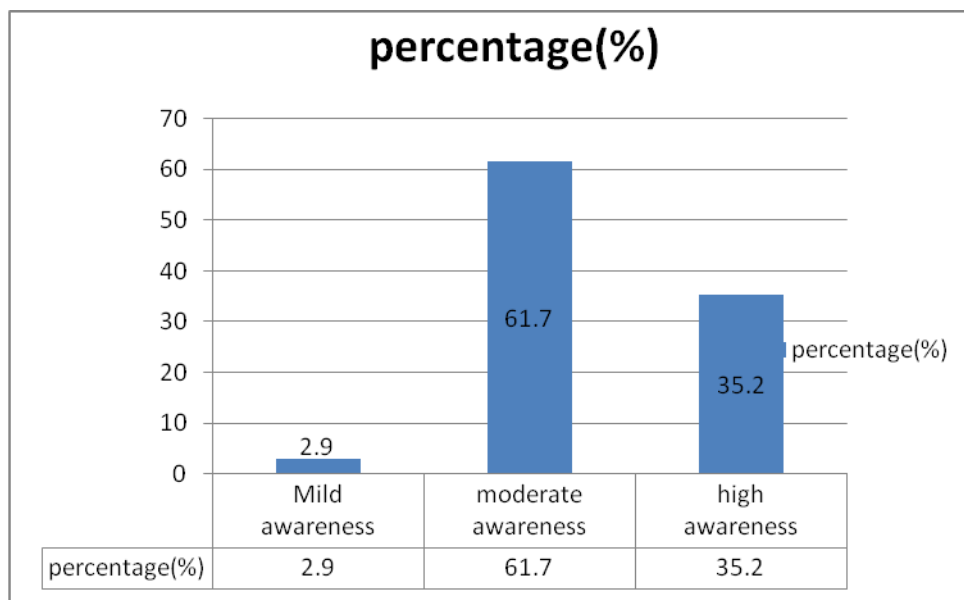
The questionnaire was then fed into Google forms and was distributed to the professionals via email. Responses were analyzed using simple scoring method where each correct response was given a score of '1' and wrong response was scored as '0'. The maximum score was , '19.

19 points were then divided into three parts to find the level of awareness, any score between 1 -6 was considered as 'Mild level of awareness', 7 - 12 was considered as 'Moderate level of awareness' and 13 -19 as 'Higher level of awareness'.

**RESULT:**

Descriptive statistics was used and the overall percentage of results were as follows. The study included 68 participants out of which 2.9% (2) had low awareness, 61.7% (42) of them had moderate awareness and 35.2 (24)

had high level of awareness. Qualitative analysis through observation was done the result reveals that there is a significant overall difference of awareness among the SLPs.

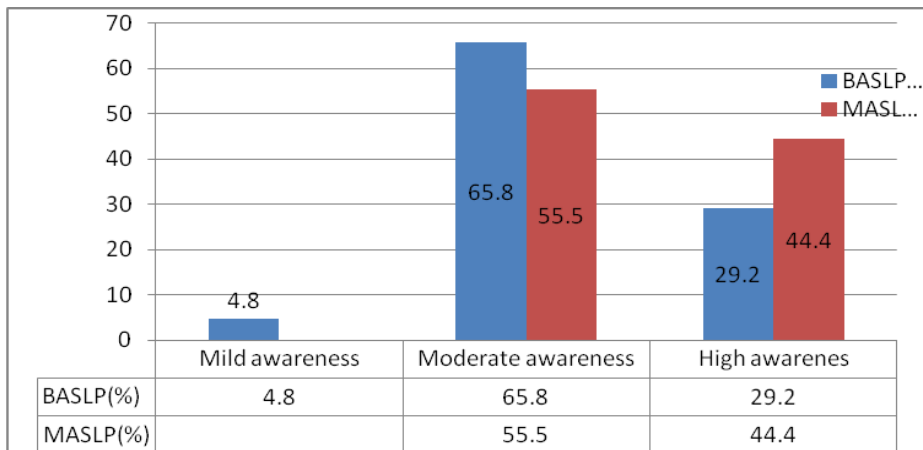


**Graph 1: Overall percentage of awareness among SLPs**

**Awareness Based on Qualification among Professionals:**

Participants included both Graduates and Post-graduate qualified SLPs. The results here indicated that among BASLP qualified subjects 2% (2) had mild level of awareness, 65.8% (27) had moderate level of awareness, and 29.2% (12) had higher level of

awareness. Wherein the MASLP qualified SLPs had no participants who had mild level of awareness (i.e. scoring of all the participants were above 6), 55.5 % (15) had moderate level of awareness and 44.4% (12) had higher level of awareness level.

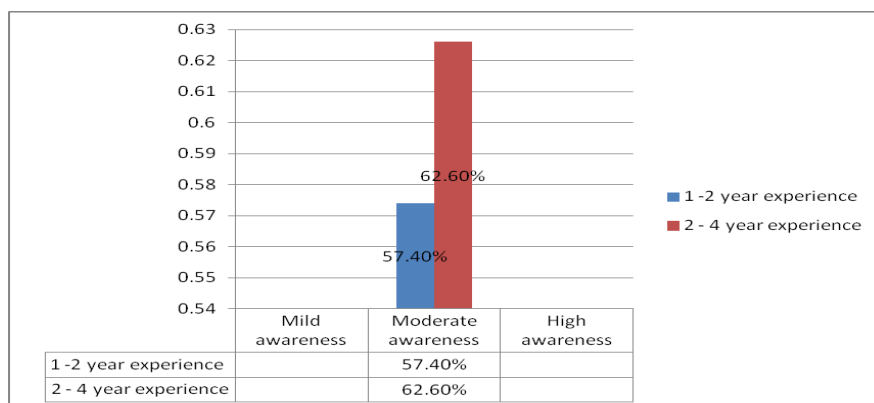


**Graph 2: Difference in awareness level among BASLP and MASLP qualified professionals.**

**Awareness Based on Work Experience:**

Participants in the study include both MASLP and BASLP qualified subjects who were divided based on work experience of 1 to 2 years and 2.1 to 4 years. The responses based on work experience were as follows. There were total of 47 participants who had work experience of 1 to 2 years and the average response was 10.9 (57.4% correct response), i.e. moderate level of awareness and there were 21 participants who had work

experience between 2.1 to 4 years, have the moderate level of awareness. (62.6%). The result thus indicates both the groups with 1 to 2 years and 2.1 to 4 years of experience had on an average ‘Moderate level‘ of awareness however the percentage of awareness slightly was higher among the subjects with higher work experience compared to low work experience subjects.



**Graph 3: Difference in awareness level among SLPs with respect to years of work experience**

**DISCUSSION:**

The study revealed that there was a limitation in awareness among the SLPs regarding the government schemes, wherein, most of the professionals (61.7%) had moderate level of awareness compared to very few (35.2%) who had higher awareness levels. The study also revealed that qualified MASLP professionals were more aware regarding different schemes. The result showed that work experience did not have much effect on the awareness levels where in slightly higher (62.6%) amount of awareness was seen in higher experienced 2.1 to 4 years subjects, compared to low experience (57.4% in 1 to 2 years) subjects.

The result in present study thus indicates that SLPs are lagging behind in the awareness and knowledge regarding the schemes and provisions from government. SLPs are the major part of rehabilitation service who actively involve in school placement of child with disability, assisting in counselling the hearing impaired and calculating disability percentage for disability certificate etc (Al-Hassan, S., & Gardner III, R, 2002). In their study they stated that it is the responsibility of the professionals to bridge the gap between the home and school of a child with disability, they have to initiate a step towards up lifting immigrants parents to be more actively involved in education process. Collaborative

team work is considered to be one of the most effective ways of providing quality inclusive schooling (McGregor & Vogelsberg, 1998; Stainback & Stainback, 1996; Villa & Thousand, 1995). Although there are number of examples of related service providers who give excellent support and service to student with disabilities, sometime it does not match standards provided by government (Giangreco, Prelock, Reid, Dennis, & Edelman, 2000). It is now the responsibility of both parents and SLPs to help the child to avail his rights which will be hindered when a SLP is not aware of government policies itself (Tiwari, P, 2017).

Our study included questions such as awareness regarding the percentage of placement for job for disabled, integration of special children in a normal school, what is the disability percentage for hearing impaired and intellectual disability to avail the certificate, what are the restructured curriculum options for children with disability, what are the transport facilities provided by government for person with disabilities etc. These were all most relevant and necessary questions which SLPs should be aware of. If a SLP lacks information and knowledge on these aspects there are high chances that the individual with disability will fail to access the provisions.

As per the Census 2011, in India out of the 121 Cr population, 2.68 Cr persons are 'disabled' which is 2.21% of the total population. Persons in rural areas and 0.81 Cr in urban areas). Thus it is the duty of SLPs along with other professionals to guide these individuals towards procuring the provisions.

### CONCLUSION:

The study revealed that there was lack of awareness among SLP's regarding different government schemes and provisions. Overall working professionals had moderate level of awareness which suggested that these professionals did not have in depth knowledge regarding the government schemes. Awareness based on qualifications revealed,

professionals who had finished their post graduation had higher awareness than compared to graduates. Awareness based on work experience showed that higher the work experience better was the awareness regarding different government schemes. Thus the overall study results show that the SLP's are lagging behind in indepth knowledge and awareness on these schemes and policies which are necessary when working with children with disability. Thus more awareness programmes and inservice workshops or seminars would be recommended for these professionals to update on personal and professional boundaries. Further continuous assessment of awareness of SLP's also recommended for the betterment of services.

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