

Occupational Therapy among High and Higher Secondary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: To create awareness about Occupational Therapy among High and Higher secondary school teachers through awareness programme. **Method:** The study was conducted on a group of 13 high and higher secondary school teachers who were gathered from selected schools around SRM University i.e. between Tambaramtown to Potheri village. The sample consisted of 10 female high school teachers and 3 male higher secondary school teachers. Awareness program consisted of lecture with audio-visual aids, discussion, visit to Occupational Therapy clinic and College within the University campus. **Outcome Measure:** Occupational therapy Awareness Questionnaire which consisted of 22 Questions was developed and standardized by 6 pioneers in the profession from various parts of India. All the participants filled the questionnaire before and after the program. Participants feedback was collected at the end of the program through Program evaluation form. **Results:** Statistically significant change was found ($p < 0.05$) in the awareness level of the participants as measured by the questionnaire. Moreover all the teachers provided positive feedback about the program. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that the program has created awareness about Occupational Therapy among High and Higher secondary school teachers participated in the study.

KEY WORDS: Awareness about Occupational Therapy, Occupational therapy Awareness Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

For both parents and their children, the HSC or Higher School Certificate Examinations is considered to be a crucial stage for deciding an individual's path of career. This is the stage that everyone says can make or break a student's life. As a result, it becomes essential for the student to think, plan and execute their aspirations in the right manner so as to avoid any confusion. Choosing a

career is a multi-step process. Before arriving at a conclusion, it's very important to gather information from various sources about the knowledge of various fields that suit to the student's aptitude and interests. Much away from the traditional career options like medicine and engineering, the current scope for better career options is huge. For students with aspiration in the field of health care, there are wide ranges of career options that hold good scope and render a progressive bright future. This area of health care with a large bunch of varied professions is termed as Paramedical Science or Allied Health Science.

Paramedical Science or allied health science plays an important role in diagnosis, treatment & rehabilitation. According to WHO recommendations, the doctor-population ratio should be 1: 1000. One doctor needs a minimum of 8 support health personnel. This means, India requires more than 12 Lakhs doctors and about 96 Lakhs support staff. We have only 4 Lakhs doctors presently (Jaya Kumar A., 2009). Strength of support personnel is also too inadequate. Healthcare science is a vast and varied filed. Increasing use of technology in the field of medicine and health care rehabilitation has resulted in large number of specialization, sub specialization and super specialization. There are more than 50 specializations in the allied and paramedical area which are thoroughly job oriented and give ample job opportunities. Knowledge of specific professional roles and needs in the field of paramedical science is a must before a student makes a decision.

As a Para-medical science Occupational therapy is becoming an attractive career option for youth as awareness of the importance of wellness and well-being spreads worldwide. Occupational therapists help individuals with mental or physical illness/ disabilities attain the highest level of efficiency and wellness possible in their daily lives. In short, an Occupational therapist is a skilled professional who helps challenged people to

achieve independence in all facets of their lives, including performance of normal daily activities related to work, play, leisure etc..OT's area of work includes giving customized treatment programs for specific disabilities, evaluating home and work environments and giving recommendations for necessary adaptation, recommending adaptive equipment for permanent/temporary loss of function, such as wheel chairs, splints, aids for eating and dressing needed for the patient and training them in its use. Occupational therapy syllabus is an admixture of inputs from medicine, surgery, anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, psychiatry, psychology, orthopedics combined with occupational therapy, ergonomics and a foundation course in research methodology. After four years, students have to undergo a six-month internship, comprising a full-time clinically oriented training program (IndraGidwani, 1999). Occupational therapists are in high demand all over the country and world. Occupational therapists are in high demand in the conventional medical and fitness areas also. Especially in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, special and integrated schools, vocational rehab workshops, pediatric and neonatal clinics, infirmaries, geriatric nursing homes, hospices, child guidance clinics, de-addiction centers, prosthetic limb training centers, and industry.(IndraGidwani, 1999).

The number of qualified occupational therapists is grossly disproportionate to the growing number of patients suffering from stress disorders and disabilities. We need many more occupational therapists. (IndraGidwani, 1999). So we need more people to take up this career to meet the growing demands of the disabled people.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:In 1981, the total number of disabled in Tamil Nadu was 87,431. In 2001, as many as 16 lakh people in the State (2.63 per cent of the total population) are handicapped, a disability census has revealed (Chandramouli, 2004). This shows that there is increased awareness about various disabilities and in turn their need for rehabilitation services. This has led to increase in the demand for need for rehabilitation professionals especially Occupational Therapists. Occupational Therapists are dwindling in number among other healthcare professions. Hence there exists a need for more people to take up this career to meet the growing demands of the disabled people. This recession can be attributed to the lack of awareness of our Profession and its scope among the people especially those who are involved in deciding the career of the budding generation. Parents, teachers, professionals & other significant well wishers are

those who influence the selection of future career of a high or higher secondary school student. Among them Teachers play a key role in shaping the attitude and interest of a student in towards his/her future career. Teachers are the better persons who guide every student's future according to their skills and capacity. (Nilesh, 2009). Hence this study has been taken up as a humble effort to create awareness about Occupational Therapy & its Scope among high & higher secondary school teachers so as to woo the ambitious students to take up this challenging noble profession in health care.

AIM of the study is to create awareness about occupational therapy among school teachers through awareness program. **OBJECTIVES** of the study is To draft the protocol of the program, Conducting the program in front of high and higher secondary school teachers and to evaluate effectiveness of the program. **METHODOLOGY:** This study is a quantitative research with quasi experimental design done with 13 high and higher secondary school teachers who were from Tambaram town to Potheri village in that 10 female high school teachers and 3 male higher secondary school teachers. **Inclusion Criteria's** are All teachers teaching High and higher secondary school students and they all from schools between Tambaram to Potheri. **Exclusion Criteria's** are Teachers working in tutorials and Guest lectures in schools. **Awareness Questionnaire:**

Occupational therapy Awareness Questionnaire consisted of 22 Questions. Questionnaire was developed by the authors (Mr. R.V. Benielraja & Mr. B.S. Ganesh Kumar). Questionnaire focused on four aspects of Occupational Therapy. They are the definition, nature of practice, scope of practice and career perspective. A set of 26 questions with 4 choices of answers for each question were framed based on these aspects of the profession. For the purpose of standardization, the questionnaire was sent to 10 pioneers in Occupational Therapy for evaluation of appropriateness of the questions. Among them, 5 senior Professionals viz., (Mr. Vaithi M. Perumal, HOD, Occupational Therapy College, IIMS, Indore; Mrs. Zarine D. Ferzandi, Vice President, AIOTA, Mumbai; Mrs. Anita Gupta, Senior Occupational Therapist, AIIPMR, Mumbai; Mr. Jegadeesan, Principal, JKK College of Occupational Therapy, Erode and Mrs. Neelima Punithan, Principal, Saveetha College of Occupational Therapy, Chennai Mrs. Sujathamissal, Principal, K.M.C.H College of Occupational Therapy Kovai) responded and guided the authors with their valuable critiques and

suggestions. Based on their views the questionnaire was revised incorporating some modifications and deletion of few questions or choices of answers. Finally the questionnaire was reduced to 22 standard questions.

Scoring pattern:

The questionnaire is scored using a dichotomous likert scale. All the CORRECT choices/ answers are awarded '1', while the WRONG answers are awarded '0'.

Program evaluation form:

Program evaluation form was adapted by the authors from the program evaluation form devised by Joseph A. Balogun et al., ChicagoStateUniversity in 2005. Program evaluation form includes the details of the teachers (i.e., the grade of students & the subjects they teach) and questions pertaining to their level of satisfaction of the program, their awareness of the profession and their willingness to suggest their students to take up this career.

Awareness program:

Occupational therapy awareness program was conducted at SRM General Hospital seminar Hall (H Block) on 27th June 2009 (Saturday). High and higher secondary school teachers from various schools around SRMUniversity were invited for the Awareness program. All the teachers were picked up from their respective places to our campus by the Transport arranged by SRMUniversity. Awareness program presentation was done by the first author viz., Mr. R.V. Benielraja. It dealt with definition of occupational therapy, roles of occupational therapy in health care management, nature of Occupational Therapy practice, clinical conditions dealt by Occupational Therapist, eligibility for the course in Occupational Therapy, scope of Occupational Therapy as a career.

After the presentation, question hour by both the authors and summarizing the session by the second author viz., Mr. B.S. Ganesh Kumar

was done. Then all the teachers were taken to visit Occupational Therapy clinic in the SRMHospital. Clinic Orientation was given by Mrs. Kavitha, Senior Occupational Therapist, Clinic In-charge. All the teachers were gathered for a tea meeting to share their views and have one to one discussion with the faculties and students of Occupational Therapy in the clinic. After refreshment teachers visited the academic section of the Occupational Therapy College. At the end of the visit all the teachers were gathered in a lecture hall and were asked to fill up the awareness questionnaire again along with program evaluation form. Finally all the teachers were taken back to their respective places in bus arranged by SRM University.

Data collection procedure:

Consent forms were given to the concern school Principals and teachers to be invited for the awareness program. Occupational therapy awareness program was held in SRM General Hospital seminar Hall (H Block). The High and higher secondary school teachers from various schools around SRM University were invited for the program. On the day of the Program all the participants were assembled in seminar hall. They were asked to fill OT awareness questionnaire as pre test. It was followed by audio visual presentation, and Question Hour for discussion. As a part of the programme they were taken for a visit to the Occupational Therapy clinic and college. At the end of the visit, they were assembled in a lecture hall where they were asked to fill OT awareness questionnaire as post test and Program evaluation form to provide their feed back.

Statistical method used: The Data was analyzed using the statistical package for the social science (SPSS 12 version).

The chapter deals with the master charts and statistical analysis of the scores on the Occupational Therapy awareness level among the High and Higher secondary school teachers.

Table – 1: Master Chart 1- Occupational Therapy Evaluation Questionnaire

No.	Name	Sex	Subject	Marks		Percentage	
				Pre test	Post test	Pre test	Post test
1	<u>P.Prabu</u>	Male	12 th (commerce)	9	17	42%	81%
2	<u>Nagarajan</u>	Male	12 th (biology)	10	12	47%	57%
3	<u>Premkumar</u>	Male	12 th (accountancy)	9	10	42%	47%
4	<u>M.Rekha</u>	Female	10 th (Bio science)	15	17	71%	81%
5	<u>K.Mageshwari</u>	Female	10 th (English)	9	13	43%	62%
6	<u>S.Yogambal</u>	Female	10 th (Tamil)	8	16	38%	76%
7	<u>A.FrancisRequis</u>	Female	10 th (history)	13	18	61%	85%
8	<u>J.Sagayamary</u>	Female	12 th (English)	16	20	76%	95%
9	<u>B.Kalaiarasii</u>	Female	10 th (maths science)	14	18	66%	85%
10	<u>Epciba</u>	Female	10 th (English)	7	12	33%	57%
11	<u>A.Shamshad Sultana</u>	Female	10 th (Science)	14	18	66%	85%
12	<u>Geena Solomon</u>	Female	10 th (English)	7	11	33%	52%
13	<u>K.L.Parimalavalli</u>	Female	10 th (Tamil)	12	14	57%	66%

Graph – 1: Comparison of Pre test and Post test scores of Occupational Therapy Awareness Questionnaire:

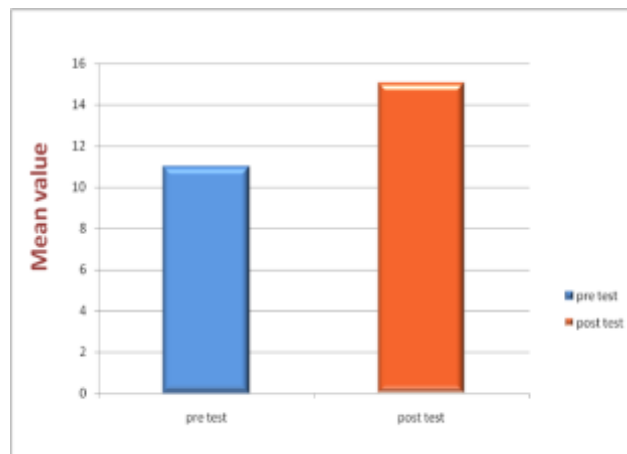


Table – 2: Comparison Between Pretest and Post Test Scores of Occupational Therapy Awareness Questionnaire:

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value	'p' value
Pre test	13	11	3.13	6.87	0.00
Post test	13	15.07	3.22		

Table – 3: Master Chart 2 – Program Evaluation Form:

No.	Name	Sex	Level of Satisfaction	OT awareness Y /N	Will to Suggest Student Y / N
1	P.Prabu	Male	Satisfied	Yes	Yes
2	Nagarajan	Male	Verysatisfied	Yes	Yes
3	Premkumar	Male	Satisfied	Yes	Yes
4	M.Rekha	Female	Very satisfied	Yes	Yes
5	K.Mageshwari	Female	Satisfied	Yes	Yes
6	S.Yogambal	Female	Satisfied	Yes	Yes
7	A.FrancisRequis	Female	Verysatisfied	Yes	Yes
8	J.Sagayamary	Female	Very satisfied	Yes	Yes
9	B.Kalaiarasii	Female	Very satisfied	Yes	Yes
10	Epciba	Female	Satisfied	Yes	Yes
11	A.Shamshad sultana	Female	Satisfied	Yes	Yes
12	Geena Solomon	Female	Satisfied	Yes	Yes
13	Parimalavalli K.L.	Female	Satisfied	Yes	Yes

RESULTS:

According to Table-1 shows the scores of pre test and post test on Occupational Therapy Awareness Questionnaire. It is found that post test scores are more than pre test scores for all the teachers. Almost all the teachers have scored above 50% in post test scores.

According to Table-2 shows the analysis of the pre & post test awareness scores using the paired sample 't' test. It is found that there is statistical significant change in the Occupational Therapy awareness score following the program ($p < 0.05$). Based on the observation of the means, it

is found that the awareness level/ score has increased following the Awareness program.

According to Table-3 shows the feed back of the teachers after the Awareness Programme. It shows all that teachers were satisfied with the Programme, and all the teachers have responded positively to the questions like Awareness level after the programme and willingness in suggesting students by marking 'yes'.

Discussion

The rate of disabled population is on the raise in our country. This necessitates the need to have more Rehabilitation professionals like

Occupational Therapists to meet their demands for rehabilitation. The purpose of this study is to create awareness about Occupational Therapy as Career with good scope among the high and higher secondary school teachers so as to enable them to encourage many potential candidates to take up this profession. The awareness program had a collective positive response from the teachers.

Background of the Study:

Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. As per WHO, 10 per cent of the world's population is disabled. As per United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 80% of people with disabilities live in developing countries. Disability rate is alarmingly increasing in all the conditions in India. Eight per cent of the Indian population is disabled. This means that for every 100 persons sitting in a theatre, there will be eight disabled sitting along. Growth in the population of 75 years and older – an age group that suffers from high incidences of disabling conditions also will increase demand for therapeutic services including Occupational therapy in India.

The number of qualified Occupational Therapists is grossly disproportionate to the growing number of patients suffering from stress disorders and disabilities. This recession can be attributed to the lack of awareness of our Profession and its scope among the people especially those who are involved in deciding the career of the budding generation. Since, teachers play a key role in shaping the attitude and interest of a student in towards his/ her future career, they are the better persons to guide every student's future according to their skills and capacity. So this study was taken up to create awareness about Occupational Therapy among teachers to enhance their awareness about Occupational Therapy.

Awareness Level Among Teachers:

Table 1 shows that all the teachers have scored better in post test compared to their pre test. The highest score is been scored by Science subject teachers in both pre & post tests. This may be due to their general awareness about the health care field through their past students or the like. Interestingly, the Non-Science subject teachers had a huge increase in their post test scores i.e. almost all of them scored > 50% in their post test. This may be attributed to the clarity of the information provided through the program.

Table 2 shows that statistically significant change in awareness level of the teachers has occurred. Moreover, the mean value signifies the increase in the level of awareness. This means that the teachers have been benefitted in terms of their awareness about Occupational Therapy as a health care profession. This positive result on awareness level may be due to the ingredients of the program.

The program involved detailed presentation about the Profession followed by summarizing the contents enriched with evidences to reveal the rising demand for Occupational Therapists in the country in general and in the Chennai city in specific. The visit to the clinic and the one-to-one level discussion with the faculty and students of Occupational Therapy College have provided room for them to understand better and clarify their doubts thereby enhancing their awareness. Thus the ingredients of the program were more cohesive towards the goal of creating awareness about the profession among the teachers.

Joseph A. Balogun et al. (2005) found in his study 88% of participants got aware about the careers in health care through the lecture accompanied with video presentation. They also suggested to include visits to hospitals and clinics to get 100% awareness. In the current study, both lecture with video and visit were included. This might be the contributor for the 100% awareness among the teachers. Table 3 also confirmed the total awareness in terms of subjective feedback from the teachers. Moreover all of them were willing to guide potential candidates to take up this noble profession. Hence the Null hypothesis is rejected.

Implications of This Study:

The study has created awareness about Occupational Therapy as a career of good scope among teachers from 7 different schools around SRM University. Moreover they were oriented to the Occupational Therapy services provided in our hospital.

- This would enhance the number of potential candidates taking up the Occupational Therapy course in SRM University which is near to their school i.e. in their relatively local area. This might aid in meeting the rising demand for Occupational Therapists in our country.
- Orientation to Occupational Therapy services has made the teachers to refer their school children with difficulty in learning to our Hospital for Occupational Therapy services.

Conclusion of The study was conducted to create Occupational Therapy Awareness among High and Higher school teachers from selected various schools from around SRM University. So that the teachers will guide their potential students to take up this profession to meet the demand of Occupational Therapists in our country. The results revealed that Occupational Therapy awareness program had a positive impact on awareness level of the teachers and improved it significantly well.

Limitations of the study are Teachers came for the program were less in number. But we had teachers representing from various schools, Almost two-third of the participants taught subjects other than science. They might have relatively less interest in learning about a professional career based on Science subjects and Many higher secondary school teachers should have been included in this study as they are the ones who will be in immediate touch with Higher secondary students.

RECOMMENDATIONS of the Future studies can be conducted in schools for the parents and teachers of higher secondary students. Prospective studies can be conducted among school students from eight grade to twelfth grade to create a more focussed awareness among the potential students and Similar study can be done among Higher secondary students in future.

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