Work Readiness Skills among Students with Mild Mental Retardation

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the present study was to determine the percentage of male and female students with mild mental retardation (MR) in exhibiting different levels of work readiness (WR) in Karnataka state. The major result of the study was that the majority of students with mild MR (75%) exhibited independent level of performance in WR. Less than 25% of students with mild MR exhibited dependent level of performance in WR- (a) leading peer group in simple activities under social behaviour skills, (b) numbering, purchasing, financing and timing subskills under functional academics skills, (c) washing cloths and cooking subskills under domestic behaviour skills, (d) understanding and completing a task under occupational skills. In all the skills of WR, more percentage of students with mild MR exhibited independent level of performance compared to female students with mild MR. Where as, female students with mild MR exhibited more independent level of performance compared to male in cooking and washing cloth subskills under domestic behaviour skills. Hence it can be concluded that more percentage of the students with mild MR were able to perform at independent level in WR. Only in certain skills of WR, more percentage of male performed at independent level compared to female students with mild MR. There is a need to identify the reasons for their dependent level of performance in the skills. For their difficulty in certain skills of WR, more training is required to enhance their level of performance.

Keywords – Mental retardation (MR), work readiness (WR)

I. INTRODUCTION

An adult has to work to earn his livelihood for his existence. However persons with mental retardation (MR) who are at present not given the opportunity for such employment, possess the potential to work, earn and live in the community as respectable citizens, if provided with necessary skills and training.

Thus a systematic training is required to develop individual personality to a worker. Further, Pre-vocational training is one which is a systematic training by which an individual acquire such skills and behaviour which are necessary for a particular vocation. The main objectives of pre vocational training are- to develop skills needed for functional living, to prepare students for outside work experience, to maximize independence and to promote survival skills, to facilitate success in every accomplished course and developed skills, and to prepare for vocational course.

Ultimately, pre-vocational training aims to provide prerequisite skills required for work to be carried out. The prerequisite skills required for work is called as Work readiness (WR) skills. This includes cognitive, personal,

social, emotional, physical and sensory motor, life survival, and work related skills.

There are well documented research studies that assessed the performance of the students with MR on these skills.

Reference [1] studied on the communication skills of the students with MR and found out that they were significantly impaired in the use of nonverbal pragmatics than students without mild MR.

Several studies found out that students with MR can acquire minimal literacy level. Reference [2] studied on the literacy performance of the students with mild and moderate MR and found out that they can recognize words, comprehend a narrative passage, write at least two letters and write at least two words. Reference [3] found out that the majority of students with MR made at least one error in their attempts to identify the numerals from both sources. Reference [4] assessed the reading skills of the students with MR and found out that 29.3% do not read at all, 6.8% read at a logographic stage, 31.9% at an orthographic level and writing achievements are lower on average.

Reference [5] analysed the variability in performance of the children with MR in cognitive tasks and found out that there is no relation between performance on the cognitive tasks and children's IQ scores.

Reference [6] studied the social skills adult with MR and found out that 48% of adults are found to have functional social skills, 4% are found to be moderately functional, 34% show poor functional social skills and 14% are very poor in functional social skills. No one is non-functional.

Reference [7] compared the motor performance of children with mild MR and borderline, and found out that both groups demonstrated a relative weakness in the area of manual dexterity. Reference [8] assessed the physical performance of the individuals with MR and found out that there was a static balance and manual dexterity improved from early to late adolescence and decline during adulthood.

Reference [9] studied the relationship between work behaviour and work performance among subjects and found out that there was statistically significant relationship between work behaviour and work performance among adults with mild and moderate MR.

Thus from review of related literature it was found out that students with mild MR perform better in literacy, reading, number and social skills than physical and communication skills. But, a very limited study conducted at the state level especially in Karnataka state. This type of bottom level of study helps in accurate measurement of the deficits and to a grater extent negative adult outcome on this population may be reduced. It helps the special educators, parents, school personnel and higher authorities to determine the students' level of performance on work readiness and plan for improvement. So the investigators were interested to conduct a study at this level. The main objective of the study was to determine the percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of work readiness in Karnataka state.

II. Materials and Method

A. Research design

Exploratory and descriptive study

B. Population of the study

All the 70 special schools for MR in Karnataka state comprised population of the study. They are from the following districts- Bangalore, Mysore, Mandhya, Kodagu, Hassan, Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Kolar, Ramanagara, Koppal, Davangeri, Gadag, Haveri, Dharwad, Raichur, Belgaum.

C. Selection of sample

From the population of 70 special schools, 42 from 6 districts were considered. The reason was, as the population being very large in number and vastly distributed. It was very

difficult to conduct within the limited resources of the investigator. Hence only 42 special schools were considered. They are from Bangalore 27, Mysore 7, Kodagu 1, Hassan 1, Udupi 3, and Dakshina Kannada 3.

Among these special schools, those met the criteria were only selected as sample. For this a preliminary survey was conducted with the following criteria.

1) The criteria were,

i. Special schools should be recognized by the Department for the Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens, Government of Karnataka.

ii. There should be students with mild MR studying with valid IQ certificate from authorized institution.

iii. All the components of Life centered career education (LCCE) should be provided in the special schools. (LCCE a curriculum designed to prepare special needs learners for adult life success- it is imparted to the students with mild mental retardation which consists of 3 major components such as daily living skills, personal-social skills and occupational skills with 22 competencies and 102 sub competencies. For students with moderate mental retardation, it consists of 3 major components with 20 competencies and 75 sub-competencies.

iv. The special educators concerned with LCCE should be qualified. (The minimum qualification for special educator under Rehabilitation Council of India- SSLC/PUC with certificate course in special education for pre primary, Diploma in special education (MR) for primary, Bachelor degree in special education (MR) for secondary level).

v. Necessary facilities should be available in the special schools.

vi. Special schools meeting above mentioned criteria with prevocational training were considered for further study.

With these criteria for selection of sample, investigator visited special schools and conducted preliminary survey. Through survey, it was found out that, 4 special schools- do not exist, 3 special schools - changed their location, 6- only for the students with severe and profound MR, 1- changed from MR to other disabilities, 7- not providing all the components of LCCE and 2- changed from LCCE to other programmes.

Hence these 23 special schools not met the criteria and so excluded from the study. While, remaining 19 special schools met all the criteria and were retained (details given in Table1).

TABLE 1

Retained and excluded special schools

Districts	No. of Retained Special Schools	Number of Excluded Special Schools
Bangalore	9	18
Mysore	5	2
Kodagu	1	-
Hassan	-	1
Udupi	2	1
Dakshina Kannada	2	1
Total	19	23

The retained 19 special schools were selected as sample for the study. As 19 special schools were providing pre-vocational training, to determine the WR skills among students with MR all these schools were only considered. In these special schools, there are 117 male and 89 female students with mild MR with 12 to 22 age range. Since maximum special schools were starting pre-vocational training at 15 years of age. So in the study, students with MR above 15 years of age were only considered. The number of students above 15 years of age enrolled in pre-vocational training is given in Table 2.

TABLE 2

No. of students with MR in pre-vocational training

Age Range	Students with Mild MR	
	Male	Female
15 – 22	59	40

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D. Sampling Technique

Multi stagic purposive sampling

E. Tool and technique of the study

The following Table 3 includes variable, source of data, method of data collection and tool used.

TABLE 3
Tools and technique of the study

Variables	Informant/ Source of data	Method of data collection	Tool used
Work readiness skills among students with mild MR (Reference this	Vocational trainers concerned with pre-vocational training	Administering the tools orally with explanation where required	Generic skills assessment checklist. [10] developed checklist)

F. Description of the Tool

Generic skills assessment checklist developed by Kutty in 1998. It assesses the independent or dependent performance of generic skills of the students with MR above 15 years of age. It provides information on WR skills which are prerequisite skills for vocational training for persons with MR. The checklist consists of 8 skills and 80 sub-skills (given in Table 4).

TABLE 4
Skills and Sub-skills of the Generic skills

Skills	No. of Sub-Skills
Personal Skills	4
Communication Skills	5
Social Behaviour Skills	10
Functional Academics Skills	30
Safety Skills	7
Domestic Behaviour	3
Mobility and Hand Functioning Skills	5
Occupational Skills	6

G. Procedure of data collection

The skills and sub-skills in the Generic skills assessment checklist were read out to the informants- vocational trainers. If the students with MR independently perform WR skills (without the help of special educators or any one else) or dependently perform WR skills (with the help of special educators or any one else) then response was noted as 'Yes' or else 'No'. This was recorded by the investigator itself.

H. Analysis of data

The analysis was done qualitatively. On the basis of the responses by the informants (Yes) or (No), an arbitrary score of '1' and '0' were allotted. For each sub-skill, independent or dependent level of performance of the students was calculated and percentages were computed separately.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The percentages of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of work readiness are discussed in Table 5.

It was observed from the above Table 5 that all the male and female students with mild MR exhibited independent level of performance in personal skills. Reference [11] contradicts this finding, i.e., they noticed that many individual with MR have significant limitation in social responsibility and personal independence.

TABLE 5
Percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Personal Skills

Personal Skills	Student with Mild MR Male		Female	
	I	D	I	D
1. Anticipates needs, uses toilets independently	100%	0	100%	0
2. Maintains cleanliness unaided (brushing, bathing, combing)	100%	0	100%	0
3. Eats properly and observes manners in a family situation without supervision	100%	0	100%	0
4. Manages dressing unaided and maintains a neat appearance	100%	0	100%	0

I - Independent *D - Dependent*

TABLE 6
Percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Communication Skills

Communication Skills	Student with Mild MR Male		Female	
	I	D	I	D
1. Can use gestures as an adjunct to verbal communication	100%	0	100%	0
2. Communicates Using words	100%	0	100%	0
3. Gesturally or verbally makes himself understood to others	100%	0	100%	0
4. Communicates properly in sentences	100%	0	100%	0
5. Engages in meaningful Conversation	100%	0	100%	0

It was observed from the above Table 6 that all the male and female students with mild MR exhibited independent level of performance in communication skills. Reference [12] finding a generally well developed level of conversational competence in adults with mid MR, found out that specific deficiency in the use of indirect speech acts. Reference [1] also contradicts this finding.

TABLE 7
Percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Social Behaviour Skills

Social Behaviour Skills	Student with Mild MR Male		Female	
	I	D	I	D
1. Sits properly in class room situation	100%	0	100%	0
2. Greets peers and elders appropriately	100%	0	100%	0
3. Cooperates in group situation	100%	0	100%	0
4. Offers help when needed without prompting	100%	0	100%	0
5. Behaves acceptably and makes visitors feel welcome	100%	0	100%	0
6. Recognizes and protects his own property	100%	0	100%	0
7. Asks permission to use the property of others	100%	0	100%	0
8. Maintains discipline in a given situation	100%	0	100%	0
9. Leads peer group in simple activities	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5
10. Follows routine	100%	0	100%	0

It was observed from the above Table 7 that more percentage of male students with mild MR (90%) and female students with mild MR (83%) exhibited independent level of performance in social behaviour skills. Less than 10% of male students with mild MR and 18% of female students with mild MR exhibited dependent level of performance in the sub-skill – Leads peers group in simple activities. This shows that more percentage of male exhibited independent level of performance compared to female student with MR. Reference [13] contradicts this finding. i.e., they found out that children with MR, by nature of their cognitive impairments and deficits in adaptive behavior, are at risk for a number of negative outcomes, including social-emotional problems.

TABLE 8
Percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Functional Academics Skills

Functional Academics Skills	Student with Mild MR			
	Male		Female	
	I	D	I	D
1. Reads his/her name	100%	0	100%	0
2. Reads his/her address	100%	0	100%	0
3. Reads survival words	100%	0	100%	0
4. Comprehends what is read by him/her	100%	0	100%	0
5. Reads simple sentences	100%	0	100%	0
6. Writes his/her name	100%	0	100%	0
7. Writes his/her address	100%	0	100%	0
8. Copies simple sentences	100%	0	100%	0
9. Writes simple sentences	100%	0	100%	0
10. Counts meaningfully up to 10	100%	0	100%	0
11. Identifies and writes the numbers up to 10	100%	0	100%	0
12. Counts up to 100	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
13. Identifies and writes the numbers up to 100	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
14. Does simple single digit addition	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
15. Does simple double digit addition 16. Does simple single digit subtraction	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
17. Does simple double digit subtraction	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
18. Identifies coins of all denominations	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
19. Identifies rupee notes of all denominations	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
20. Exchange coins for one rupee	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
21. Makes purchases and gets balance for 1 rupee	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
22. Makes purchases and gets balance for 5 rupees	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
23. Makes purchases and gets balance for 10 rupees	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
24. Answers correctly day or night, morning or afternoon, yesterday, today or tomorrow	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
25. Tells the position of the long and short hand on the clock	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
26. Reads the numbers on the clock	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
27. Tells his/her date of birth	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
28. Tells time to the minute on the clock	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
29. Tells hours, 30 mnts, 15 mnts, 45 mnts.,	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
30. Associates time to the daily routine	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%
. Counts up to 100	89.8%	10.2%	82.5%	17.5%

It was observed from the above Table 8 that more percentage of male students with mild MR (90%) and female students with mild MR (83%) exhibited independent level of performance in the subskills- reading and writing. Less than 10% of male students with mild MR and 18% of female students with mild MR exhibited dependent level of performance in the subskills – mathematics, financing and timing skills. This shows that more percentage of male exhibited independent level of performance compared to female student with MR. Contradictory to the finding, it was observed from earlier studies that- Reference [14] found out that adult with MR have rare ability to read and comprehend text, References [15], [16] noticed that individuals with MR are weak understanding

of basic financial concepts, References [17], [18] found out that individuals with MR are weak in mathematical problem solving. Where as, Reference [2] support the findings of the present study.

TABLE 9
Percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Safety Skills

Safety Skills	Student with Mild MR			
	Male		Female	
	I	D	I	D
1. Uses stairs and corridors in a safe manner	100%	0	100%	0
2. Aware of hazards in the Environment	100%	0	100%	0
3. Knows dangers of fire	100%	0	100%	0
4. Aware of traffic signals	100%	0	100%	0
5. Crosses street safely	100%	0	100%	0
6. Uses sharp objects safely	100%	0	100%	0
7. Uses household electrical items safely	100%	0	100%	0

It was observed from the above Table 9 that all the male and female students with mild MR exhibited independent level of performance in the safety skills. Reference [19] support the finding of the study, who reported that students with disabilities competent to bandage real-life injuries of siblings and treat self injuries as reported by their parents.

TABLE 10
Percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Domestic Behaviour Skills

Domestic Behaviour Skills	Student with Mild MR			
	Male		Female	
	I	D	I	D
1. Sweeps rooms	100%	0	100%	0
2. Dusts the furniture	100%	0	100%	0
3. Sets a table for lunch	100%	0	100%	0
4. Washes and dries dishes	100%	0	100%	0
5. Operates a grinder or mixie	100%	0	100%	0
6. Washes clothes	79.7%	20.3%	95%	5%
7. Dries clothes	100%	0	100%	0

TABLE 10 (CONT)
Percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Domestic Behaviour Skills

Domestic Behaviour Skills	Student with Mild MR			
	Male		Female	
	I	D	I	D
8. Buys necessary things for cooking if listed and given	100%	0	100%	0
Prepares coffee	79.7%	20.3 %	95%	5%
10. Prepares and serves a meal	42.4%	57.6 %	75%	25%
11. Rides a bicycle	86.4%	13.6 %	52.5%	47.5%
12. Can retain verbal messages and convey to the respective person	100%	0	100%	0
13. Can attend to telephone call	100%	0	100%	0

It was observed from the above Table 10 that all the male and female students with mild MR exhibited independent performance in the subskills- washing and cleaning, drying clothes, buying, retaining and conveying verbal message and attend telephone call. While a small percentage of students exhibited dependent performance in the subskills- washing clothes, cooking, riding bicycle. Reference [20] found that students with MR along with other specific skill deficits, 80% of these individual who failed in living independently lacked meal preparation skills and found from five year follow up that cooking skills as essential variable for successful placement.

Table 11 presents the percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Mobility and Hand Functioning Skills.

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TABLE 11
Percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Mobility and Hand Functioning Skills

Mobility and Hand Functioning Skills	Student with Mild MR			
	Male		Female	
	I	D	I	D
1. Walks independently	100%	0	100%	0
2. Climbs and descents with alternate feet	100%	0	100%	0
3. Can pour without spilling	100%	0	100%	0
4. Can cut a drawn rectangle with scissors	100%	0	100%	0
5. Can pick up pins from a surface using fingers	100%	0	100%	0

It was observed from the above Table 11 that all the male and female students with mild MR exhibited independent level of performance in the Mobility and hand functioning skills. Reference [21], [7] contradicts this finding, i.e., they found that person with MR as motor and affective deficits.

TABLE 12
Percentage of male and female students with mild MR in exhibiting different levels of WR in Occupational Skills

Occupational Skills	Student with Mild MR			
	Male		Female	
	I	D	I	D
1. Attends to an assigned task without disturbing others for one hour	100%	0	100%	0
2. Goes to an assigned area without reminder in a routine daily programmes	100%	0	100%	0
3. Understands and completes a task	86.4%	13.6%	80%	20%
4. Increases speed of work when guided	100%	0	100%	0
5. Rises and leaves from residence to school on time	100%	0	100%	0
6. Travels by bus independently	100%	0	100%	0

It was observed from the above Table 11 that more percentage of male students with mild MR (86%) and female students with mild MR (80%) exhibited independent level of performance. Less than 14% of male students with mild MR and 20% of female students with mild MR exhibited dependent level of performance in the subskills – Understands and completes a task. This shows that more percentage of male exhibited independent level of performance compared to female student with MR. Reference [22] also found out that young adults with MR can maintain work quality.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the results obtained in the study, it can be concluded that more percentage of the students with mild MR were able to perform at independent level in WR. Only in certain skills of WR, more percentage of male performed at independent level compared to female students with mild MR. There is a need to identify the reasons for their dependent level of performance in the skills. For their difficulty in certain skills of WR, more training is required to enhance their level of performance.

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