Skill Training and Special Children during Lockdown

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Abstract:
Covid-19 has brought unprecedented challenges in India. People have developed stress, fear, and apprehensions about corona virus. Lockdown has created many hurdles to all of us and mostly the impact is seen in the lifestyle of children with disabilities. Lockdown has disrupted the regular routine of school hours, therapeutic sessions and educational interventions of our children with special needs (cwsn). Our cwsn are forced to stay at home. They have developed physical, emotional, and behavioural problems due to non availability of centre based services and therapeutic interventions which is a dire necessity for them. The role of educational and training institutions, special schools now have become more indispensable. The special educators and therapists such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and psychologists are rendering their devoted and unconditional online services for cwsn. Special educator and therapists are creating activity based worksheets, developing videos depicting learning of various skills and also explanation of the skills through audio mode. These strategies have been implemented by special teachers and therapists to train the parents of our cwsn, so that they can in turn train them at home efficiently. The home of the special children has become a special school and parents, siblings and other family members have become special teachers to carry out their duties judiciously by rendering training to them. The present paper focuses on how Aakanksha Lions Institute of Learning and Empowerment (ALILE) Raipur, Chhattisgarh, has taken effective initiatives in the conduction of online trainings to our cwsn during this lockdown period by our team of special educators and therapists. A questionnaire was developed by the authors to find out the effect of skill training by the special teachers and therapists utilizing the online mode of teaching for our cwsn during the lockdown period. The results of the impact on the skill training using on line mode shows a positive response and is explained using percentage based analysis.

Keywords: Lockdown, Skill Training, Special educators, and Online mode of teaching.

Introduction
Covid-19 has brought unprecedented challenges in India. People have developed stress, fear, and apprehensions about corona virus. Lockdown has created many hurdles to all of us and mostly the impact is seen in the lifestyle of children with disabilities. Lockdown has disrupted the regular routine of school hours, therapeutic sessions and educational interventions of our children with special needs (cwsn). Our cwsn are forced to stay at home. They have developed physical, emotional, and behavioural problems due to non availability of centre based services and therapeutic interventions which is a dire necessity for them. The role of educational and training institutions, special schools now have become more indispensable as they have the responsibility of rendering intervention services to our cwsn even at home. The special educators and therapists such as speech therapists, occupational therapists and psychologists are rendering their devoted and unconditional online services for cwsn. The home of the special children has become a special school and parents, siblings and other family members have become special teachers to carry out their duties judiciously by rendering training to them during this lockdown

Review of Literature
1. Simonetta Paneri et.al, (2018) had utilised virtual reality (VR) as a tool for teaching independent living skills for sixteen adolescent and young intellectually disabled. The effectiveness of remote home based rehabilitation was focussed using virtual apps installed on the tablets of the selected sample. Statistically significant improvements were found in pre and post tests on VR training sessions.
2. Rodríguez et.al, (2014) had focussed on the use of mobile devices such as iPads. The study shows a positive impact on the skills and academic engagement of students with disabilities. This study also provides ideas for classroom implementation and suggestions to overcome common challenges.
3. Jin Y. Shin et.al, (2009), had conducted the study to examine the impact of one year intervention for thirty preschool children with intellectual disability. Intervention consisted of training the parents on various areas of Portage curriculum using modelling technique. The training was rendered by special teachers during their weekly visits to the homes of the special children. The results were promising with significant improvement in most domains of adaptive curriculum.

Skill training to special children during lockdown
The present study focuses to find out the effect of skill training rendered by special educators and therapists such as speech therapists, occupational therapist, psychologist to children with special needs (cwsn) during the lockdown. All special teachers and therapists are from our Aakanksha Lions Institute of learning and Empowerment, Raipur Chhattisgarh.

Methodology
Sample: 30 special educators and therapists of ALILE, had conducted the skill training to parents of cwsn during lockdown.

http://ijesc.org/
**Tools**: A questionnaire was developed by the authors to find out the effectiveness of the special educators and therapists on skill training to the cwsn during lockdown.

**Procedure**
The dedicated team of special educators and therapists had developed strategies using online modes in rendering skill training to the parents of cwsn, such as

- Audio messages
- Video clippings
- Verbal narrations
- Activity worksheets

On the following areas for skill training.
1. Activities of daily living
2. Physical activities, yoga and dance
3. Concept formation
4. Speech therapy
5. Occupational therapy
6. Behaviour modification strategies
7. Household chores and Vocational skills.

**Data analysis and results**
The analyses of the information gathered from the 30 special teachers and therapists were based on the questionnaire. The analyses are based on percentages achieved. The special teachers and therapists responded to each question by either ticking to all three options or any one or two as per the discretion of the special teachers and therapists and also depending on the question.

**Sample**
- 15 male special teachers and therapists
- 15 female special teachers and therapists

**Result and discussion**

1. According to the graphical representation the parents were more interested to get information on the skill training of their children rather than to the guidelines on safety and security of COVID 19.

The results reveal that due to the sudden lockdown the parents of cwsn were not prepared for this lockdown and their immediate concern was the therapeutic and intervention aspects of their children.

2. Problem and Hypothesis

2 P. To find the effect of the information to parents by phone or by whatsapp on skill development training to cwsn during lockdown

2 H. It is hypothesised that special teachers and therapists shall utilise telephone services in informing parents on skill development training to cwsn during lockdown.
2. Result and discussion

The results on this question revealed that the parents were more comfortable in getting information about the skill training strategies through telephone rather than whatsapp.

This result indicates that parents are have more confidence speaking over the phone and also some parents were not android mobile friendly in using the functions aptly. Some parents do not have android mobiles.

3. Problem and Hypothesis

3 P. To find the effect of the developing skill training content for cwsn by special teachers and therapists taking prior considerations for planning the skill activities during the lockdown.

3 H. It is hypothesised that the special teachers and therapists would develop the skill training content according to the functional group of cwsn eg. pri-primary, primary, secondary, prevocational and vocational groups.

3. Result and discussion

According to the hypothesis, the special teachers and the therapists would consider the skill training content depending on the functional group to which the cwsn belonged eg. pre primary, primary etc. But the results revealed that the special teachers and therapist rather chose the interest of the cwsn.

This result indicates that during the sudden lockdown the interest of the skill training has become a priority and need as the cwsn can get more resources of learning environment at home. Hence the skill training will be more beneficial when interest is focussed.

4. Problem and Hypothesis

4 P. To find the effect of the various on-line teaching modes such as audio messages, video clippings, and activity sheets to parents of cwsn.

4 H. It is hypothesised that activity worksheets shall be more effective mode of training the parents of cwsn by the special teachers and therapists.
4. Result and discussion
The results indicates that from the various on- line teaching strategies, special educators and therapists found that the parents willingly learned the skill training for cwsn through telephone more effectively than activity worksheets.

This kind of result indicates that learning through telephone was more comfortable and comprehensive for parents to learn skills as parents did not possess the android phones or were not android phone friendly.

5. Problem and Hypothesis
5 P. To find the effect of making the Teaching Learning Material (TLM) by special teachers and therapists for using the on line teaching for cwsn during the lockdown.

5 H. It is hypothesised that special educators and therapists shall find difficulty in making the TLM in teaching to the cwsn during lockdown.

The result to this hypothesis revealed that the special teachers and therapists did utilise the available resources from their homes in developing the TLM to train the various skill to cwsn during the lockdown.

The result indicates that the special educators and therapist have shown devotion, dedication and responsibility in developing the TLM which is a dire need to cwsn as due to sudden lockdown there shall be long gap in the regular and continuous training to our cwsn.

6. Problem and Hypothesis
6 P. To find the effect of the support rendered by parents to teach the cwsn at home during lockdown.

6 H. It is hypothesised that mothers shall support the special educators in teaching the cwsn at home.
6. Result and discussion
It was hypothesised that mothers would support in rendering skill training to cwsn at home during the lockdown. As hypothesised the results also indicated that mothers were very helpful in rendering skill training to the cwsn. Fathers too have shown a vital responsibility in rendering training after mothers. The siblings too were involved in this activity. Sisters have shown more interest than brothers. The aunts, uncles and grandparents too were involved themselves in the training aspects but at a minimum level. This kind of mutual cooperation, coordination of the entire family relates that due to this lockdown, the whole family has got the opportunity to render training to our cwsn in a unique manner and have shown love care and support to our cwsn during this lockdown.

7. Problem and Hypothesis
7 P. To find the effect of the response of the parents on skill training by special teachers and therapists.
7 H. It is hypothesised that parents shall complete the training and respond about the training through phone call to the special teachers and therapists.

6. Result and discussion
As per the hypothesis, the parents response to the skill training for cwsn at home during lockdown was by making video clippings of the skill taught by them and reporting the same to the special teachers and therapists. This result definitely indicates the interest and attitude of learning the skill by the parents and in turn teaching the same skill to the cwsn at home with utmost care and devotion. The parents also learnt to make a video clipping of the skill taught to their cwsn and report accordingly. Here this remarkably indicates that our parents have become the special teachers and therapists for our cwsn during this lockdown.

8. Problem and Hypothesis
8 P. To find the effect of the learning response of special teachers and therapists using on line teaching modes during the lockdown.
8 H. It is hypothesised that special educators and therapists shall experience a new learning strategy by using on line teaching modes to train the cwsn during lockdown.

8. Result and discussion
The present hypothesis and the result also indicate that the special teachers and therapists shall experience a new learning of using on line teaching modes to train the cwsn at home during lockdown. This result emphasises the interest and curiosity of special teachers and therapists in learning a new skill which not only enhances their behaviour repertoire but also shall be utilised in future endeavours too.
9. Problem and Hypothesis
9 P. To find the effect of the evaluation of the skill training to cwsn by special teachers and therapists during the lockdown.

9 H. It is hypothesised that the evaluation of the skill training to cwsn by special teachers and therapist is by furnishing the evaluation reports in the prescribed formats.

9. Result and discussion
As reported in the hypothesis as well in the results indicate that special teachers and therapists had compiled all the evaluation reports in the prescribed formats for further use and follow up. But some of the special teachers and therapist have also reported the evaluation of the skills learnt by cwsn to the parents. This information of evaluation shall bring motivation, confidence, and act as a reward to continue rendering skill training by parents in future too.

10. Problem and Hypothesis
10 P. To find the effect of personal experience of special teachers and therapists in conducting the skill training to cwsn during lockdown.

10H. It is hypothesised that the special teachers and therapists would have no problems in conducting skill training to cwsn during lockdown.

10. Result and discussion
It was hypothesised that special teachers and therapists shall face no problems in conducting the on line skill training to cwsn. But the results indicate that the special teachers and therapists had no time to spend for themselves in any kind of leisure activities.
The special teachers and therapists were most of the time preparing TLM, making video clippings or talking to parents of cwns over phone. They even gave minimum time to their own children and family members. The house hold chores were also affected during this lockdown due to the involvement of special teachers and therapist for skill training to cwsn. It is the dire necessity of special teachers and therapist to work without stress and at ease as this might reflect in their behaviours in a negative manner while rendering training.

Conclusion
The present study on the skill training to the cwsn by the special teachers and therapists through the training of parents of cwsn during this sudden lockdown was very challenging and adventurous too.

It was a new experience to all of us to face this challenge in a more cooperative, supportive and as a team work with a strong backbone coordination and bondage established by our Aakanksha Lions Institute of Learning and Empowerment, Raipur Chhattisgarh.

The lockdown has taught us all many positive perspectives
1. Family unity
2. Parents as teachers and acceptance of parents as teachers by cwsn.
3. Quality and Quantity time for each other
4. Sibling bondage
5. Respect towards each other
6. Learning of new skills and technology
7. Mutual support, appreciations and team work
8. Sharing of responsibilities
9. Enjoying the recreational and leisure time together for parents and cwsn.
10. Learn to live safely, hygienically and securely.
11. Developing good eating habits with balanced and nutritious food
Limitations

- Unpreparedness of sudden lockdown has created undue pressure on the special teachers, therapists, parents of cwsn, and also cwsn.
- Lack of TLM and other educational resources during lockdown
- Time management skills.

Recommendations

- To train special teachers and therapists on use of latest technology.
- To teach cwsn to use technology.
- To render parent training programmes.
- To render home based training programmes.

Examples of the various teaching strategies, worksheets given to parents for skill training during lockdown.
Completed worksheet sent by parents through Whatsapp.

Extracurricular activities given to parents to teach the cwsn at home during lockdown.

Learning with fun and recreation activity for cwsn given to parents during lockdown. A video of how to play this learning with fun and recreation game was made for parents to understand and sent through whatapp.

**References**

