

# General Awareness Skills at Higher Order Level among Prospective Teachers at Secondary level: A Research Report

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## Abstract:

The study was conducted to find out the level of General Awareness Skills and whether there exists any significance difference among secondary level prospective teachers based on gender. Subsamples based on locale of the respondent, subject of specialization and type of management of the institution. Survey method was adopted by selecting 360 prospective teachers from secondary level Teacher Education colleges in Kerala. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted. A standardised Questionnaire on General Awareness Skills (Prajiba, P.V., & M. Jesa, 2017) and a Test on Reading Comprehension were used to find out the level of general awareness skills. Study was found that the secondary level prospective teachers possess adequate or satisfactory level of general awareness skills and there existed no significance difference in general awareness skills in total among secondary level prospective teachers based on gender, locality, type of management and subject specialisation. Study also revealed that there existed significant difference in the categories of general awareness skills on Thinking and Communication skill among prospective teachers based on gender.

**Key words:** General awareness skill, Gender, Prospective teachers.

## Introduction

The modern concept of an educated person is that he could accomplish his life through the acquisition of knowledge and behaving accordingly. Knowledge has a vital role in all individuals to succeed in their life. A born baby starts to earn the knowledge at his home itself; afterwards through school life. Education being the subsystem of society plays a key role in moulding, shaping, reforming and restructuring it from time to time. Even though knowledge is not only related to books, it is all related to our surroundings and larger environment. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century all should have multi dimensional skills to lead their life in a proper way and it may be helpful to tackle the hurdles in their life. We cannot attain the Multi dimensional skills such as soft skills, personality, intelligence etc. through academics alone. In this endeavour one has to acquire certain skills to lead a happy life in the present democratic society that encounters a number of challenges in economic, social, political, and technical fields. Every teacher has to keep these skills in his/her mind while creating optimum and challenging learning environment in the classroom context. General Awareness is operationally defined as broad knowledge about particular situations, developments, routine happenings in all walks of life. General awareness means knowledge about the present happenings. It includes national affairs, international affairs, politics, sports, persons in news and the day to day events. Theoretical studies on knowledge gathering, acquisition, retention, and application process have analysed the various skills associated with skills of general awareness acquisition and development. The areas include; communication skill, thinking skill, analysis skill, and comprehending skill. Such skills increase the confidence level of the student.

### **Need and significance of the study**

Anyone who cannot keep abreast of the moment by moment developments in the world at large will surely be a fish out of water. A teacher, who is the overall guide in the personality development of the learners, should know the world of the learner also. General awareness could be improved by practising the skills to acquire it. There are various skills with many component skills. Not only the skills, the nature of the media, the 'how' of the process of acquisition are also important. Reading comprehension, especially in the lingua franca becomes too difficult a process for many graduates and post graduates in our country. Teachers who are lifelong learners, and who are responsible to mould future citizens should have developed the skill adequately. Again, it is common belief that there exists a gender gap in the general awareness acquisition process. Thus the present study on gender quest in general awareness skills among secondary level prospective teachers.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study was conducted keeping in view the following objectives.

- (i) To find out the level of general awareness skills among prospective teachers.
- (ii) To find out whether there exists significant difference in general awareness skills among secondary level prospective teachers with respect to gender, locale of home, type of management, and subject of specialisation.
- (iii) To find out whether there exists significant difference in the levels of the categories of general awareness skills among prospective teachers with respect to gender.

### **Methodology of the study**

#### *Method*

Survey method was adopted for the study.

#### *Sample:*

The sample consisted of 360 secondary level prospective teachers in North Kerala by giving due representation to gender, local of home, type of management and subject specialisation.

#### *Tools used:*

Questionnaire on general awareness skills and a Test on Reading Comprehension were developed by the investigators. Questionnaire was used to find the level of the skills as it is not feasible to directly test the same. The items in the questionnaire were constructed based on four components of general awareness skills: Communication, Thinking, Analysing and Comprehending. Content validity of the tool was established by experts in the field.

### **Mode of Data collection and Data analysis**

The investigator selected the representative sample 360 were taken from secondary level prospective teachers from Government, Government-aided, and self financing training colleges. The students were informed about the purpose of the study in order to get the support from them. Investigator supplied sufficient copies of tool with response sheets to the students. After giving the general instructions the method of answering as explained. The students were requested to read the items carefully, and respond appropriately. The investigators analysed the response sheets of questionnaire. Then the responses from students were scored according to scoring procedure. One score was given to correct response and zero for the incorrect. The total of these scores were taken and was consolidated as the scores of general awareness skills of each student. The maximum and minimum scores on general awareness skills were 44 and 0 respectively. For analysing Test on reading comprehension, there were three questions for assessing the reading comprehension skills of prospective

teachers. The skills tested were vocabulary skill, guessing the meaning and discovering the main ideas from the passages. Scoring points based on these skills were also prepared. All the scores were classified, tabulated and analysed. Mean, median, mode were calculated for the total sample. The scores obtained from 360 students were subjected to statistical treatment. On the major analysis part Two tailed test of significance of difference (T-test) between means for large independent samples and One-way ANOVA were applied. One-way ANOVA was used to find out whether there exists any significance difference in the mean scores on general awareness skills and to compare the categories of general awareness skills among secondary level prospective teachers.

**Result and Interpretation of Data**

The details of statistical analysis and interpretations are presented as six sections:

*(i) Preliminary Analysis*

Table 1

*Details of Preliminary Analysis of Test scores*

Variable	No	Mean	Median	Mode	Skewness	Kurtosis	SD
General Awareness Skills	360	28.79	29	31	-.257	.219	3.88

From Table 1 it can be seen that the measures of central tendency namely mean, median and mode were almost equal. The value of Skewness is 0.-257, shows that the distribution was negatively skewed. The obtained value of Kurtosis was 0.219 shows that the curve is Lepto kurtic. This indicates that the distribution of scores approximately is closely what is expected for a normal curve and variable can be considered to be normally distributed.

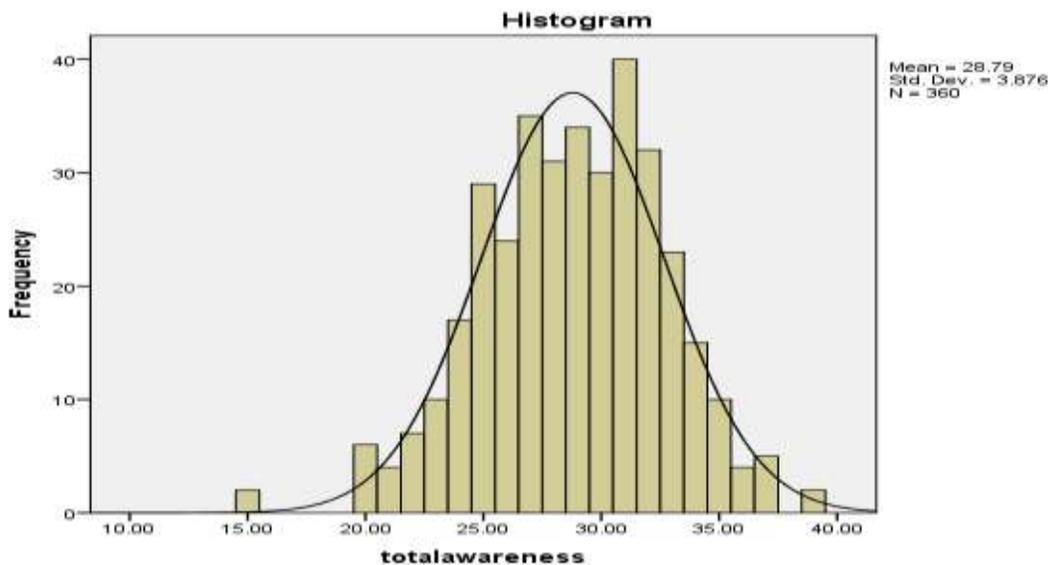


Figure 1

*Graphical representation of the scores of the variable general awareness skills among secondary level prospective teachers for the total sample.*

*(ii) Percentiles on General Awareness Skills*

**Table 2**

*Mean and Percentile Scores of General Awareness Skills among Prospective Teachers.*

Mean	Percentile	Score
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M=28.9	P <sub>90</sub>	33.90
	P <sub>80</sub>	32.00
	P <sub>70</sub>	31.00
	P <sub>60</sub>	30.00
	P <sub>50</sub>	29.00
	P <sub>40</sub>	28.00
	P <sub>30</sub>	27.00
	P <sub>20</sub>	25.00
	P <sub>10</sub>	24.00

Table 2 reveals that the mean score of general awareness skill of prospective teachers in the total sample is 28.79. It means prospective teachers possess adequate /satisfactory level of general awareness skill as the mean score 28.79 is above the half of the total score 44. Table 4 also shows percentile scores for the total sample. For total sample the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of the scores of general awareness skills of prospective teachers' is 24.00. It means that only 10 percent of prospective teachers lie below the score 24.00.

### (iii) Gender Difference in General Awareness Skills

Table 3

Data and result of two-tailed test of significance of difference between mean score of general awareness skills based on Gender.

Gender	No	Means	SD	t- value	Level of significance
Male	76	29.09	4.16	0.76	Not significant
Female	284	28.70	3.79		

From Table 3 it can be seen that, the calculated t- value is 0.76. It is less than the table value 1.96 required to be significant at 0.05 level. From this, it was concluded that there is no significant difference in general awareness skills among male and female at secondary level prospective teachers.

### (iv) General Awareness Skills for the Subsamples

Table 4

Data and result of ANOVA for the mean comparison of General awareness skills among secondary level prospective teachers based on Locality, Type of management and Subject of specialisation.

		Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Locality	Between groups	50.81	3	16.93		
	Within groups	5343.14	356	15.01	1.12	Not significance
	Total	5393.95	359			
Type of	Between					

management	groups	87.02	3	29.01		
	Within groups	5306.92	356	14.90	1.94	Not significance
	Total	5393.95	359			
Subject specialisation	Between groups	34.08	3	11.36		
	Within groups	5359.87	356	15.05	0.75	Not significance
	Total	5393.95	359			

Analysis of data wide table 4 reflects the result of One way ANOVA for the mean comparison of general awareness skills among secondary level prospective teachers based on locality, type of management, and subject specialisation. From the table it can be seen the F value obtained 1.12, 1.94 and 0.75 respectively with respect to locality, type of management, and subject specialisation. Here the F value (1.12, 1.94, & 0.75) is less than the F value required for significance at 0.01 level with (3,356) degrees of freedom 4.68. It means that the three groups have no significantly differ in their locality, type of management and subject of specialisation.

(v) *Categories of General Awareness Skills based on Gender*

Table 5

*Data and result of test of significance of difference between means scores of categories of general awareness skills based on gender*

Category	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T- value
Thinking	male	76	5.76	1.00	1.97*
	female	284	5.51	.96	
analysis	male	76	5.43	1.09	0.33
	female	284	5.38	1.08	
communication	male	76	2.3	.72	2.18*
	female	284	2.17	.74	
comprehension	male	76	2.30	.7	0.56
	female	284	2.35	.71	

\* significant at 0.05 level.

Table 5 reveals that there exists significant difference in the thinking skill and communication skill of prospective teachers based on gender as the t values obtained 1.97 and 2.18 are above 1.96 the required value for significance at 0.05 level. An estimation of mean scores indicates that thinking skill and communication skill of male prospective teachers are higher than those of females.

(vi) *Reading Comprehension Skill based on Gender*

Table 6

*Percentage analysis of reading comprehension skill among prospective teachers based on Gender.*

Gender	No.	Percentages		
		Above 60	Between 40-60	Below 40
Male	76	26	38	36
Female	284	59	29.57	11.43

Table 6 shows that the percentage analysis of comprehension skill among prospective teachers. 26% of males and 59% of females scored above the mark 60. The percentage of male and female students who scored between 40 and 60 is 38% and 29.57% respectively. The percentage of male and female students who scored below 40 is 36% and 11.43% respectively. Table also indicates that female students possess higher comprehension skill than that of male.

### Major findings of the study

1. The mean score of general awareness skills of prospective teachers possess satisfactory level of general awareness skills as the mean score 28.79.
2. With respect to gender, locality, type of management and subject specialisation, there was no significant difference in general awareness skills among secondary level prospective teachers.
3. Study revealed that there exists significant difference in the thinking skill and communication skill of prospective teachers based on gender.
4. Study indicated that female students possess high reading comprehension skill than male.

### Educational implications of the study

When knowledge expands at exponential rate, teachers who serve and lead the budding creative brains should themselves be alert to have access to the latest. That alone doesn't guarantee the efficiency of a facilitator. He/she should be capable to disseminate the new knowledge and yet more, he should himself be the cause for creation of knowledge. A Twenty first century global teacher thus must have the skills of original thinking, analysis, communication and comprehension to engage himself in the meaningful process of moving from data to the level of wisdom. The same skills associated with the development of General Awareness by being active with the data providing media and other sources should be inculcated among the students also. Therefore the findings of the study are significant for the curriculum developers of teacher education programme. It is generally believed that there is wide difference in the level of such skills with respect to gender. The finding that male teachers excel in thinking and communication, suggests that the fair sex is to be trained in this direction, more importantly because school teaching has now become a she profession. It is alright that they showed greater comprehension skill towards gathering general awareness through reading.

The value of any piece of research in education lies in the implications of the study. Secondary level prospective teachers it is important for them to possess general awareness skills in the present educational context. For that the investigator likes to suggest some programmes to develop general awareness skills among secondary level prospective teachers based on the conclusion of the study. ,

- Provide sufficient facilities in the educational institutions such as resourceful library, reading corner etc.
- Organising debate, quizzes to inculcate the general awareness skills among prospective teachers.

- Provide awareness programmes among prospective teachers on the need to update general awareness skills.
- Organize variety discourses for prospective teachers to develop higher order skills related to communication, thinking, analysis, and comprehension.
- Curriculum should be updated to inculcate the general awareness skills among prospective teachers.

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