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Awareness of The Baslp As A Professional Career Option Among Higher Secondary Students from ICSE and CBSE

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Abstract: Bachelor of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (BASLP) is an emerging Allied Health Science profession concerned with the assessment and management of communication disorders. Despite its wide scope and increasing career opportunities, awareness regarding BASLP among higher secondary students remains limited. The present study aimed to assess the awareness of BASLP as a professional career option among higher secondary students from ICSE and CBSE schools in Kerala. The study included 40 randomly selected students aged between 16 and 18 years from various CBSE and ICSE affiliated schools in Kerala. A validated self administered questionnaire consisting of 12 closed ended (Yes/No) questions was distributed online to assess awareness regarding BASLP, its scope, career opportunities and factors influencing career choices. Descriptive statistics and the binomial test were used for analysis. The findings revealed that 82.5% of students were aware of BASLP as a career option and 92.5% showed interest in medical-related careers. Awareness regarding the role of Speech-Language Pathologists was relatively high, whereas knowledge about BASLP being a part of Allied Health Sciences, its affiliation with the Rehabilitation Council of India, availability of colleges and career opportunities was limited. Only 30% of students reported receiving information regarding BASLP as a career option. The study highlights the need for improved career guidance and awareness programmes to enhance the visibility of BASLP among higher secondary students in Kerala.

Keywords: Bachelor of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (BASLP), Allied Health Sciences, Career Awareness, Higher Secondary Students, Audiology, Speech-Language Pathology.

INTRODUCTION

Bachelor of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (BASLP) is a four-year undergraduate programme in India, consisting of three academic years followed by a compulsory one-year internship. The programme provides comprehensive training in both the normal development and disorders of speech, language and hearing. Students are equipped with the knowledge and clinical competencies required to assess, diagnose and manage communication disorders effectively. The curriculum integrates theoretical instruction with extensive clinical practice enabling students to gain hands-on experience under the supervision of qualified professionals. The programme is recognized and regulated by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) and encompasses two major domains: Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP).

Audiology as the profession that focuses on the prevention, identification, diagnosis and evidence-based treatment of hearing, balance and other auditory disorders across the lifespan. Audiologists

provide patient-centered care to individuals of all ages including assessment of hearing and balance function recommendation and fitting of hearing aids and other devices, auditory rehabilitation and counselling. (American Speech Language Hearing Association, ASHA).

According to the American Academy of Audiology (AAA,2004) an audiologist is a qualified professional who through academic training, clinical expertise and appropriate licensure or certification provides comprehensive services related to the prevention, identification, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of auditory and vestibular disorders. Audiologists play a crucial role in newborn hearing screening, early identification of paediatric hearing loss and evaluation of auditory problems in children. They also determine the need for hearing aids, cochlear implants and other assistive listening devices ensuring appropriate fitting and rehabilitation.

SLP as the discipline that deals with the prevention, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication and swallowing (dysphagia) disorders in paediatric and adults. SLPs work to improve communication effectiveness and support safe swallowing often in collaboration with audiologists and other health professionals [ASHA, 2016].

SLPs manage conditions related to speech sound production, fluency, language development, cognition, voice, resonance, feeding and swallowing. Professional responsibilities include identification, assessment, diagnosis, intervention, counselling, consultation and follow-up services. They also select and recommend assistive, prosthetic and augmentative communication devices to facilitate effective communication. Although audiology and SLPs originated from a common foundation in communication disorders have developed into distinct yet closely related professions that frequently collaborate in clinical practice.

Collaboration between audiologists and SLP is particularly important in cases such as children with hearing impairment, where adequate hearing is essential for speech and language development. Children with auditory processing disorders are often associated with receptive language difficulties, learning disabilities and attention deficits and older adults with stroke or other neurological conditions affecting both hearing and communication abilities. While hearing impairment does not necessarily result in speech or language disorders and vice versa. Comprehensive assessment of both auditory and communicative abilities is especially important in paediatric populations.

Byrne (2010) highlighted that lack of awareness regarding the scope of speech-language pathology influenced students' decisions not to pursue the profession. Collectively, these findings indicate the necessity for structured awareness programmes to ensure adequate workforce development in communication sciences.

Griffin, Hutchins and Meece (2011) reported that students from rural and low-income backgrounds often relied heavily on teachers for career-related information.

Emanuel, Donai and Araj (2012) found that only a small percentage of students could accurately describe the role of an audiologist.

Atherton, Davidson and McAllister (2016) emphasized the importance of professional collaboration and global support in advancing speech-language pathology services in underserved communities.

Deshpande (2019) found that only about 25 percent of adolescents were aware of the audiology profession before participating in an educational programme, though awareness improved significantly afterward.

Chu, Tang, McConnell, Rasdi and Yuen (2019) reported that although respondents demonstrated generally favourable attitudes toward speech-language pathology there remained a need for enhanced awareness and education initiatives.

Richburg (2022) observed that students were generally more familiar with SLP than audiology prior to entering higher education with variations across gender and demographic groups.

Tom, Kumaraswamy and Binoe (2022) investigated the awareness of BASLP as a career option among higher secondary students in Kerala. The study revealed that students had a low level of awareness regarding BASLP despite the wide range of career opportunities available in the field of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.

Biju, Kalaiah and Usha Shastri (2023) investigated the factors influencing Indian students to choose Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (ASLP) as a career. The study included 380 undergraduate ASLP students from various Speech and Hearing colleges across India. A validated 20-item questionnaire was distributed through email and social media platforms. The findings revealed that students who had a desire to work in a helping profession, prior exposure to individuals with communication disorders, influence from academic curriculum, and those who had not applied for other courses were more likely to select ASLP

as their first career choice. The study emphasized the importance of career awareness and counselling in promoting ASLP as a professional career option among Indian students.

Kumari, Rathi, Kumar and Gautam (2025) state that around 19.98 lakh people in India have speech disorders indicating high demand for audiologists and speech-language pathologists with key roles played by the Rehabilitation Council of India and Indian Speech and Hearing Association.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Evaluating the degree to which prospective college students particularly students from CBSE and ICSE schools in Kerala are aware of BASLP as a career option, its scope and the factors influencing their career choices is essential. Research findings indicate that only a limited number of students are familiar with BASLP and the professions of Audiology and SLP. Therefore, increasing awareness among CBSE and ICSE students in Kerala is important for promoting informed career decisions and for supporting the future growth and development of the field.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The aim of the study is to understand the level of awareness of BASLP profession in students in the age range of 16 to 18 years in Kerala.

Subjects

A total of 40 students aged between 16 to 18 years were selected randomly from various CBSE and ICSE affiliated schools in Malappuram, Kerala. All 12th-grade students from the science stream were selected.

Inclusion criteria

- Higher secondary students studying in private ICSE and CBSE schools in Kerala.
- Students studying in classes XI and XII.
- Students within the age group of 16-18 years.

Exclusion criteria

- Students studying in State syllabus schools or other educational boards.
- Students below 16 years or above 18 years of age.
- Students studying in Malayalam Medium schools.

Procedure

Phase 1: A developed and validated questionnaire (Tom et al, 2022) was used for the assess awareness program.

A self-administered questionnaire consisting of 14 close-ended yes/no questions was modified and used to understand awareness to suit the present study. The modified questionnaire included 12 close-ended yes/no questions and the remaining 2 close-ended questions were excluded because they appeared irrelevant.

Phase 2: Administration of the questionnaire

A set of 12 close-ended questions was administered to 40 students from ICSE and CBSE schools in Kerala. The students were asked to respond "yes" or "no" based on their level of awareness.

Instruction: Students were instructed to provide appropriate response after going through the questionnaire.

Statistical analysis

The collected data were summarized by using the Descriptive Statistics: frequency and percentage; The Binomial test was used for the awareness levels on BASLP career using observed proportions and significance testing. The p value < 0.05 was considered as significant. Data were analyzed by using the SPSS software (SPSS Inc.; Chicago, IL) version 29.0.10.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION**Table 1:** Shows the students percentage of yes /no responses regarding BASLP.

QUESTIONS	YES		NO	
	n	%	n	%
Are you aware about the career option 'Bachelors in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology'?	33	82.5	7	17.5
Are you aware that Allied Health Science consists of a wide variety of paramedical courses?	23	57.5	17	42.5
Are you aware that this course is a part of Allied Health Science?	10	25	30	75
Are you aware that BASLP is a Rehabilitation Council of India affiliated course?	2	5	38	95
Are you aware that sixty-four colleges in India alone provide this course?	2	5	38	95
Are you aware that Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists play an important role in a medical team?	19	47.5	21	52.5
Are you aware that Audiologists play an important role in assessing hearing, balance and related disorders?	19	47.5	21	52.5
Are you aware that Speech Language Pathologists play an important role in assessment and management of speech, language and swallowing problems?	32	80	8	20
Are you aware that this course has job opportunities abroad and in the public and private sectors?	18	45	22	55
Are you aware that the areas of recruitment are-Hospitals, Clinics, Rehabilitation Centres, Research Firms, Schools and Special schools?	22	55	18	45
Are you interested in choosing a medical option?	37	92.5	3	7.5
Have you been provided with information about this career?	12	30	28	70

From the above table inferred that most students responded “Yes” to being aware of BASLP and having interest in medical fields. However, many responded “No” to questions related to detailed course knowledge, affiliation, availability and prior career guidance, indicating limited awareness about BASLP.

Figure 1

Shows the overall percentage of awareness of BASLP.

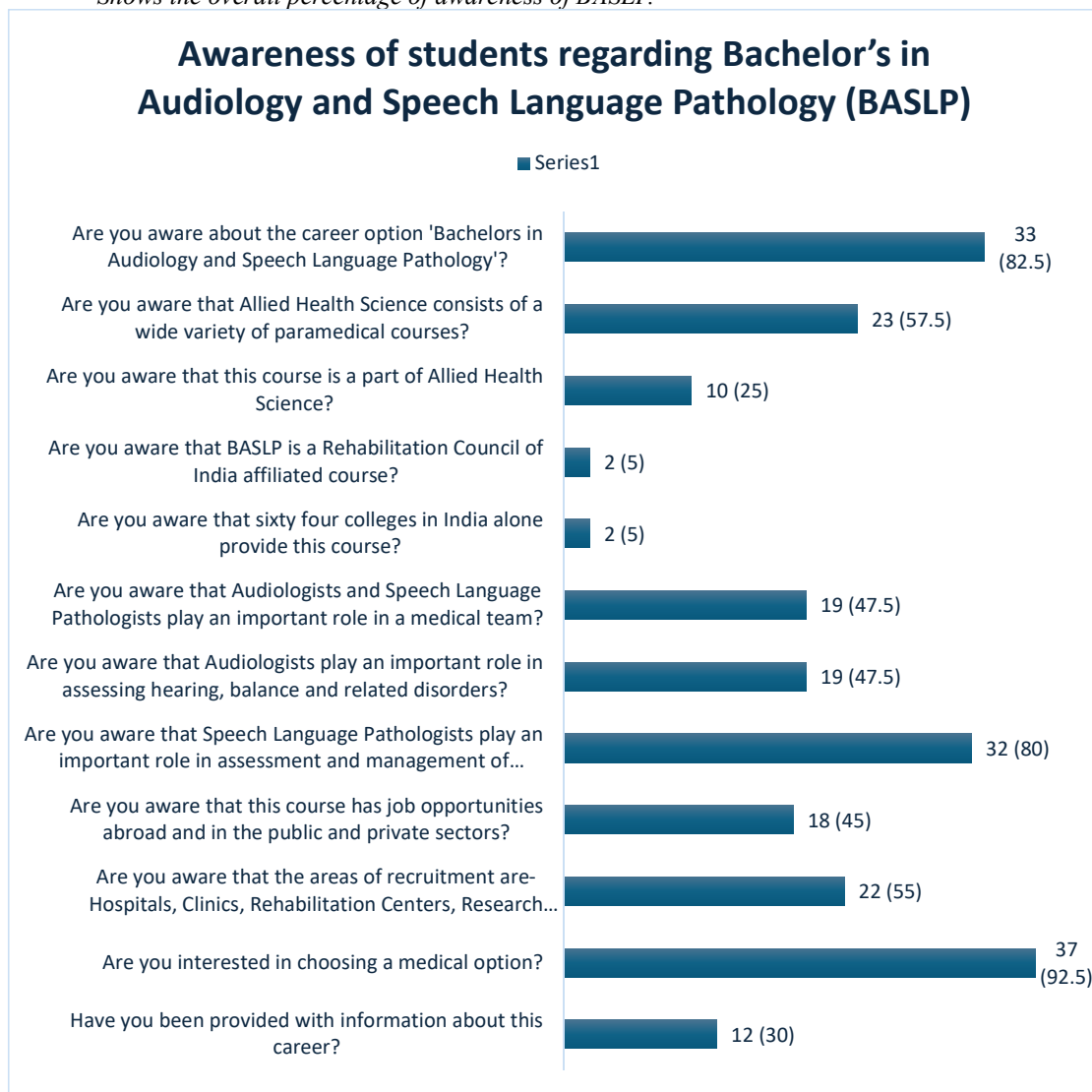


Fig 1: indicates that students had better awareness of BASLP as a career option and medical careers, while awareness regarding its scope, affiliation and career opportunities remained limited.

Table 2

Shows the significance values for questions.

	Observed proportions		p value	Significance
	Present	Absent		
Are you aware about the career option 'Bachelors in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology'?	0.83	0.18	< 0.001	S
Are you aware that Allied Health Science consists of a wide variety of paramedical courses?	0.57	0.43	0.430	NS
Are you aware that this course is a part of Allied Health Science?	0.25	0.75	0.002	S
Are you aware that BASLP is a Rehabilitation Council of India affiliated course?	0.95	0.05	< 0.001	S

Are you aware that sixty-four colleges in India alone provide this course?	0.95	0.05	< 0.001	S
Are you aware that Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists play an important role in a medical team?	0.48	0.53	0.875	NS
Are you aware that Audiologists play an important role in assessing hearing, balance and related disorders?	0.48	0.53	0.875	NS
Are you aware that Speech Language Pathologists play an important role in assessment and management of speech, language and swallowing problems?	0.80	0.20	< 0.001	S
Are you aware that this course has job opportunities abroad and in the public and private sectors?	0.45	0.55	0.636	NS
Are you aware that the areas of recruitment are-Hospitals, Clinics, Rehabilitation Centres, Research Firms, Schools and Special schools?	0.55	0.45	0.636	NS
Are you interested in choosing a medical option?	0.93	0.07	< 0.001	S
Have you been provided with information about this career?	0.30	0.70	0.017	S

Findings from the significance analysis reveal that students had significantly higher awareness about BASLP as a career, its RCI affiliation, course availability, the role of Speech-Language Pathologists and medical career interests. In contrast, awareness regarding Allied Health Sciences, Audiologists' roles, employment opportunities, recruitment settings and career guidance information was comparatively limited and showed no significant difference.

DISCUSSION

The present study explored the awareness of BASLP as a professional career among higher secondary students from ICSE and CBSE schools in Kerala. The findings revealed that students showed comparatively better awareness regarding BASLP as a career option and demonstrated high interest in medical-related professions. Awareness regarding the role of Speech-Language Pathologists was also relatively high. However, knowledge about BASLP being a part of Allied Health Sciences, its affiliation with the Rehabilitation Council of India, availability of colleges and career opportunities remained limited. Previous studies by Alitta Tom et al. (2022), Deshpande (2019) and Emanuel et al. (2012) reported low awareness regarding Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology among students. In comparison, the present study demonstrated improved awareness levels which may be due to increased exposure through social media, educational resources and career guidance activities. However, only a small percentage of students had received formal information regarding BASLP as a career option indicating the need for structured awareness programmes and career counselling to improve understanding about the scope and opportunities in the field.

CONCLUSION

BASLP is an Allied Health Science programme concerned with the assessment and management of speech, language, hearing and swallowing disorders. The present study aimed to explore the awareness of BASLP as a professional career among higher secondary students from ICSE and CBSE schools in Kerala. The study included 40 students aged between 16 and 18 years from various schools in Kerala. A validated self-administered questionnaire consisting of 12 closed-ended questions was used to assess awareness regarding BASLP, its scope and career opportunities. The findings revealed that most students were aware of BASLP as a career option and showed interest in medical-related professions. However, awareness regarding its scope, affiliation, availability of colleges and career opportunities remained limited. The study concludes that although awareness regarding BASLP has improved compared to previous studies, there is still a need for structured awareness programmes and career guidance initiatives to enhance knowledge and visibility of BASLP among prospective college students.

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