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A study on assessment of Non-Scholastic Abilities in Primary School Children

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to assess the non – scholastic abilities in primary school children of a co-educational school in Andhra Pradesh. Students of class I to IV were selected by simple random sampling method . A questionnaire pertaining to each student and containing parameters of non-scholastic abilities was given to the class teacher for assessment . The anthropometric measurements of each student were also taken. Seconday data relating to students scholastic performance, family details like income and occupation were collected from students records maintained in the school .About 35(44.8 %) of the students showed highest non-scholastic score of 55-60. Females showed a higher score compared to males which was statistically significant. Nutritional status was not seen to have any association with non – scholastic & scholastic abilities of the students. There was a significant association between occupation of the parents of students and non scholastic abilities of the students. Non scholastic abilities are not learned by rote as done with scholastic abilities. There have to be fostered and the onus rest with the parents and the teachers.

KEY WORDS : Non –scholastic abilities, occupation, nutritional status

INTRODUCTION

Non scholastic abilities are important in shaping the personality of the individual which is not evaluated in examinations. Ability is defined as the power and skills , especially to do, think, act and make. The word scholastic means "of or concerning schools and teaching" . By implication , the term non-scholastic can be taken to mean , "not of or concerning schools and teaching". In general , non scholastic abilities include those abilities which are not traditionally taught and evaluated in schools. These abilities reflect the later performance of the student as professionals. Our assessment systems in school level are mainly based on percentages the student gets in a test . On basis of this we try to certify the child as intelligent or a slow learner. These days lots of schools are focusing on the holistic development ,which is also known as all round development of the child.[1] The school has now emerged as a place where a student acquires various skills. Effective schools follow a holistic approach to education ie an integrated development stresses on physical, mental, moral and social aspects. A holistic approach to education at the elementary level is a must, as it is the most important subsection of the whole education system. Non-scholastic abilities are concerned with the learner's attitude, interest, values, feelings, habits, social interactions which cannot be assessed directly. This can be done indirectly by observing the behavior of the learner and his experiences, through biographies, self reports , check lists etc. The tool or technique can be a subjective or objective method or projective technique.[2] A small and a modest attempt was made in this study to review various possible abilities and non scholastic abilities in early schooling.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES :

1. To study the non scholastic abilities in primary school children.
2. To study the factors which influence the non scholastic performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional ,descriptive study was conducted in a co- educational school , selected randomly from the list of primary schools in town in Andhra Pradesh. The classes 1 to V where numbered of the selected school and class III was selected by simple random sampling technique. Permission for conducting the study was taken from the class teacher and the principal of the school. All the parents / guardians of the students were informed about this study and informed consent was procured from them. All the students of both sections A and B of class III were taken as t study subjects. A total of 78 students were covered. A pretested, predesigned questionnaire was used to collect the information about the students from the teachers of the respective classes. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Secondary data like grades and percentages of marks scored in the previous tests, details of the family like occupation and income were collected from students' record book maintained in the school. Objective methods like check list and rating scale were used as tools to assess the non-scholastic aspects of learners behaviour.[3] Twenty key non - scholastic aspects covering physical and social dimensions appropriate and relevant to primary graders were considered in preparing the questionnaire.[1] The class teachers were requested to grade the students based on observation using the 5 - point Likert scale. The socio-demographic details were also collected. The anthropometric measurements like height, weight were recorded and BMI calculated.[4] The data collected was analyzed by using statistical software SPSS version 13 and

the result was interpreted using the various statistical tests.

RESULTS

A total of 78 students were covered , out of which 48 (61.54%) were boys and 30 (38.46 %) were girls. The students were in the age group of 7-9 yrs. Highest number of males and females were seen in the age group of 8 yrs (83.33%) . Occupation of the father of the student was considered and grouped into different categories like professionals, business, service and skilled .Majority(33.3%) of the students have their fathers in business field followed by professionals (29.49%) . Nutritional assessment was done taking height ,weight and Body Mass Index(BMI) . 60.25% of the students were normal,29.49% were undernourished and 10.25% were overnourished. 43.33% of the females were undernourished whereas only 20.84% of males belonged to this group. Males were more overnourished(14.58%) compared to females (03.33%).Scholastic assessment was done taking the first test marks scored by the students. As per Scholastic grades students were grouped into three categories, 'Excellent', 'Good' and 'Require Improvement'. 56.41% of the students belonged to 'Good' category, only 10.26% of students were under 'Required Improvement' and a very satisfactory proportion ie 33.33% were 'Excellent' . Among females 50% belonged to 'Excellent' category and 6.67 % were under 'Require Improvement', whereas many males 64.58 % were 'Good' and 12.51% were under 'Require improvement'. There is no correlation between scholastic grades and sex of the student (Spearman correlation = - 0.268). Non scholastic assessment was done using twenty key parameters and then the score were calculated for each student. Majority (44.87%) of the study population showed

high non scholastic scores ie 55-60. 26.92% were near to this high score ,50-54. There was no student with least score and just 1.28% showed score of 25-29 .High non scholastic scores(55-60) are seen in females 17(56.66%) where as in males it was 37.50%. The mean for non scholastic scores in 48 males was 49.27 $\pm$8.3 and that in 30 females is 54 $\pm$ 6.44. (z =2.378 , $p < 0.05$).This shows an association that non scholastic abilities are higher in females compared to males.**Table-1** shows the relation of scholastic grades with non scholastic mean score. Kruskal Wallis Test statistic shows with an increase in the scholastic performance , the non-scholastic abilities also increase.($p< 0.0001$).

TABLE-1 Association between scholastic grades and non-scholastic abilities

Scholastic grades	**No. of students and %**	**Non–Scholastic score mean**	**S.D.**
Excellent	28 (35.90)	56	3.9294
Good	44(56.41)	49.8864	8.6137
Requires improvement	8(7.69)	41.7500	6.8191
Total	78	51.0897	8.2889

1. $X^2=21.185, p<0.0001$

Table -2 shows the relation between nutritional status and the non-scholastic achievements. Anova test was done and it was found that there is no significant statistical association (F=0.785, p = 0.460)between BMI and non scholastic scores.

TABLE-2 **Association between BMI and non scholastic scores**

BMI (Kg /m^2)	**Total no and %**	**Non-scholastic score mean**	**S.D.**
Under nourished	23(29.48)	50.9565	9.1427
Normal	47 (60.25)	51.7234	7.9145
Over nourished	8 (10.27)	47.7500	8.1196
Total	78(100)	51.0897	8.2889

1. **F=0.785, P=0.460**

Table-3 shows the relation between occupation of parents and non scholastic scores. We can see an increasing trend in non scholastic scores with increase in occupational levels. Higher mean scholastic scores were seen in students whose parents were professionals and least among those whose parents were agriculturists and salesmen (X^2=16.338, p<0.01), which proves that there is statistical significance between occupation of parents and non –scholastic scores.

TABLE-3: Association between occupation and non-scholastic scores

Occupation	**No.of students %**	**Non-scholastic mean score**	**S.D**
Professionals	23(29.55)	54.9565	5.6687
Business	26(33.33)	52.1538	9.1144
Service	17(21.8)	49.2941	9.9610
Skilled	10(12.82)	44.5000	8.1138

Others	2(2.56)	41.0000	8.4853
Total	78(100)	51.0887	8.2889

1. **X^2= 16.338, p<0.01**

The distribution of scholastic grades among students having parents at different occupational levels shows a diagonal trend (**Table-4**), that is a decrease in scholastic grades with decreasing occupational levels. There is a significant statistical association between scholastic grades of children and parents occupation.(Pearson's R=0.464,P< 0.0001).

TABLE-4 Association between scholastic grades and occupation

Occupation	Excellent %	Good%	Require improvement %	Total
Professionals	**12(15.38)**	11(14.1)	0(0)	23
Business	**8(10.25)**	**18(23)**	0(0)	26
Service	5(6.41)	**10(12.82)**	**2(2.56)**	17
Skilled	1(1.28)	4(5.12)	**5(6.52)**	10
Others	----------	1(1.28)	1(1.28)	2
Total	26	44	8	78

1. **Pearsons R= 0.464 , p<0.0001**

DISCUSSION :

The cross sectional study conducted on primary school children to assess the non scholastic abilities showed a larger fraction of study population (44.87 %) with highest non –scholastic scores .The study population mainly belonged to higher socio-economic strata where the

parents' education and occupation were favourable for the intellectual and the psychomotor development of children. An analysis of epidemiological studies in US showed that psychopathology in general was found to be at least 2 ½ times more prevalent in the lower socio-economic group than in higher classes.[5] A comprehensive study by Achenbach et al [6] also showed higher frequencies of behavior problems among the low-socio economic status groups. This study showed a significant association between occupation of parents and non scholastic scores. Similar findings were reported by BV Adikoli, B Vishnu Bhat , KK Puri .[7] Doughlas et al [8] Rutter et al [9] have found a close association between occupational status and conduct disorders among children . However Cullen and Boundy [10]found that non manual occupations in fathers were related to aggressive disorders in children. Most of these researchers however unanimously agree that low income , poor housing facilities and large families are together associated with poor non scholastic scores.In a similar study done by BVAdikoli and et al [7]the relationship between the nutritional status and non scholastic achievements was not significant which substantiates our study. We see a clear trend of increase in scholastic grades with improvement in non –scholastic scores. Cognitive development in a child increases the child's ability to understand moral principles that may guide their behavior in variety of settings.

CONCLUSION

Apart from scholastic activities, importance should be given to co-scholastic activities too for student's development. Previously co-curricular activities were not given due importance But now, the psychological, ethical, academic, social, civic, moral , cultural and recreational values of co-curricular

activities have been emphasised and so due attention should be given on their effective organisation and management .These days lack of proper planning, paucity of various facilities, lack of proper qualified staff, over emphasis on academic programmes are some of the hitches which need to be addressed out for ensuring success of these activities. Teachers should make child feel secure in the class environment. They should be familiar with group dynamics if they are to be effective in promoting academic learning as well as social development. A democratic social climate is more conducive to effective learning and group relations than is an autocratic atmosphere.

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