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Self Esteem and Academic Achievement: A Study of Special Children in Rural Kashmir (J&K) India

Shafia Nazir
Associate Professor, Faculty of Human Development,
Institute of Home Science, University of Kashmir (J&K) India.

(Corresponding author: Shafia Nazir)
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ABSTRACT: The study explores the level of self- esteem and its influence on academic achievement in special school children (boys only) in rural areas of Kashmir (J&K). The sample of special children was selected purposively from identified government and private schools. The total sample size was 90 comprising of equal number of visually impaired, hearing impaired and orthopedically crippled adolescents. The tool employed to ascertain the self esteem of special children was Self- esteem Inventory devised by Cooper Smith (1967) [1]. Academic achievement of the sample was assessed using percentage of marks obtained by the subjects in their previously held annual examinations. Hearing impaired school children possessed a positive self- esteem followed by visually impaired children who had average self esteem, however orthopedically crippled children were found to have low level of self-esteem. Unexpectedly, all the three categories were found to have low academic achievement. Although academic achievement of the subjects was not influenced by their self-esteem but dwelling variable was significantly associated with the participants.

Keywords: Academic achievement, children, disability, rural, self esteem

I. INTRODUCTION

Children are the spark of hope and happiness for the parents and important asset for the society as well. However all parents are not fortunate enough to have the normally developing children. Significant developmental differences may be found in all populations. Globally, around 785-795 million persons aged 15 years and older are living with disability on 2010 population estimates. Of these, the World Health Survey estimates that 110 million people (2.2 %) have very significant difficulties in functioning while the Global Burden of Disease Survey estimates 190 million have (3.8%) have severe disability. Including children over a billion people (about 15% of the world's population) were estimated to be living with disability. The WHO estimates that 10% of the world's population has some form of disability. (World Report on Disability, 2011) [2]. Children with disabilities differ in their characteristics, attitudes, interests, behavior, needs and achievements. Definitely there are differences in their self- esteem and academic success at school. The limitations and demands imposed by their disabling conditions have a definite impact on their lives. As the limitations imposed by their disabilities directly affect the psychological makeup of the physically challenged children, therefore they are less likely to perform well in their academics [3].

Raising self-esteem in children and adolescents is the most important tasks for parents and teachers (Afrooz, 1994) [4]. In addition to it creating a desire to attain success in education is equally challenging for today's parents. This role of parents is determined by how responsible they are towards the children and their development. Self esteem is the sum of one's positive and negative reactions to all the aspects of one's self- concept. People who intend to have high self-esteem in one area also tend to have high self esteem in the other areas (Larsen & Buss, 2005) [5]. On the other hand, Academic performance reflects the learning outcome of the students. Academic success or failure in schools varies from society to society. Children experience limited educational opportunities in rural areas so they get less chances of strengthening their self esteem which in turn would help them be steadfast in life and to attain a good academic and vocational career.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Indian Research

Nazir. S *et al* (2016) in their research on self-esteem in physically challenged and typically growing school going children in Srinagar (J&K) using Self esteem inventory by Cooper Smith found no significant difference in the two groups on the levels of self-esteem [6].

Lakshimi and Anuradha (2014) in their research assessed self-esteem of 120 adolescent boys and girls(60 crippled and 60 visually impaired) using Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Inventory and analyzed data using T-test and found a

significant difference in self-esteem between the crippled and visually impaired subjects. Visually impaired adolescents reflected more self-esteem than their crippled counter parts [7].

Gulhane (2014) investigated the academic achievement of 480 visually impaired and hearing impaired boys and girls selected purposively from 40 schools belonging to five districts of Maharashtra. Data was collected using a check list to enquire about the educational facilities available for disabled students in the institutions. To measure the scholastic performance of the students in language and mathematics a separate test was constructed. The findings indicated a significant difference in visually and hearing impaired boys and girls on academic achievement in language and elementary academics. Hearing impaired boys and girls performed better in language and elementary mathematics than their visually impaired peers [8].

Raj Knowar *et al.* (2014) studied the adjustment, level of aspiration, self-concept and academic achievement of 400 visually handicapped school children (200 boys and 200 girls) in the age group of 12-16 years selected randomly from six special schools in Assam and found no significant difference in academic achievement based on gender. It was evident from the findings that the academic achievement of the children was not at all influenced by their self-concept [9].

A study on academic achievement of 150 hearing impaired, visually impaired and crippled secondary school students of district Baramulla (J&K) was conducted by Pandith (2011). The sample was selected from 90 higher secondary schools. Academic achievement represented the total marks obtained by the students in two previous classes. Data collected was statistically analyzed using mean, S.D and t-test. The findings revealed no significant difference in hearing impaired, visually impaired and crippled secondary school students on academic achievement [10].

Chandra and Koul (2006) analyzed the visually impaired and orthopedically crippled children on academic performance, level of education and level of aspiration in Northern Assam. The findings revealed no significant difference on level of aspiration and level of education of visually impaired and orthopedically crippled children. Also, no significant difference was found with respect to academic performance of visually impaired and orthopedically handicapped children [11].

Gagandeep and Verma (2004) assessed the real self, ideal self and reflected self of 50 hearing impaired and 50 crippled female adolescents selected randomly from Southern part of Guwahati. Data was statistically analyzed by using different techniques. Results indicated no significant difference in the self-concept of hearing impaired and crippled female students [12].

Shan and Schrawat (2003) assessed the self-concept and level of aspiration among urban and rural physically challenged 9^{th} and 10^{th} class hearing impaired, visually impaired and crippled high school students selected from 20 districts of Haryana. The sample included 211 boys and 258 girls selected from urban areas and 288 boys and 243 girls selected from rural areas of Haryana. Children's Self-Concept Scale (CSCS) by Ahluwalia and Level of Aspiration Test developed by Patel were the tools employed for the investigation. Findings indicated that physically challenged urban school children had better self-concept as compared to their rural counterparts [13].

B. International Research

Narimani & Mousazadeh (2010) compared the self-esteem and self-concept of 1720 visually impaired and sighted (10-20 year) old students studying in 86 schools of Ardabil province. Cooper Smith's Self Esteem Inventory and Beak and Stiller's Self-Concept Scale was used to collect the data. Analysis was done with the help of MNOVA. Findings indicated better self- esteem in individuals with normal vision and high scores of self-concept in students with visual impairment [14].

Soulis & Christodoulous (2010) observed the self-esteem of (8-12 year) old children with and without visual impairment and found that visually impaired children attained a low score in self-esteem as compared to their typical participants [15].

Heine & Slone (2008) investigated the impact of mild central auditory processing disorder on school performance during adolescence. Results revealed a deficient performance in academics in children with mild hearing loss [16].

Miyahara & Piek (2006) attempted to ascertain the impact of minor and major physical disabilities on self-esteem of children and adolescents. The work was based on the blend of the previous investigations to understand the relationship between physical disabilities and self-esteem. Meta-analysis of 13 investigations was done which included 1984 subjects. The findings discovered a mild effect on self-esteem because of major disabilities in comparison to the minor disabilities [17].

Jambor & Elliot (2005) studied the self-esteem and coping strategies among deaf students of California State University, Northridge. Self-esteem factors related to deafness viz., means of communication at home, severity of hearing loss with hearing aid and the coping strategies were assessed. Hierarchical regression modeling was employed to treat the data statistically. Results discovered that identification and interaction with deaf community significantly worked to develop positive self-esteem in them [18].

A study by Ntzamilis (2004) was undertaken to assess academic potential in mathematics among 50 visually and 50 hearing impaired students randomly selected from 42 elementary schools in Athenes. After analyzing the data statistically results revealed no significant difference between visually impaired and hearing impaired students on academic performance in mathematics [19].

Fok & Fung (2004) assessed the self-esteem and self-concept of 115(52 blind and 63 sighted) adolescents studying in the university of Hong Kong. The results revealed that visually impaired and sighted adolescents possessed a similar level of self-esteem and self-concept [20].

Stuart (2004) investigated the self-concept, level of aspiration, mental health and academic achievement of 250 handicapped and 250 normal teenagers in New Jersey U.S.A. Various statistical techniques were employed to the data collected and it was found that the handicapped teenagers differ significantly from the normal teenagers on self-concept, level of aspiration, mental health and academic achievement [21].

Ross & Broh (2000) in their study entitled: the role of self-esteem and the sense of personal control in the academic achievement process maintained that the sense of personal control affects subsequent academic achievement, but that self-esteem does not. Earlier academic achievement and parental support increased self-esteem and the sense of personal control. Although the authors expected that achievement would have a larger effect on personal control and that parental support would have a larger effect on self-esteem, they found evidence for the former but not for the latter. Another fact which was established is that while self-efficacy and self- esteem are often found to be related, increasing evidence revealing the positive effect from student self-efficacy for academic success does not demonstrate a direct positive influence from self-esteem on school achievement [22].

Cooper Smith (1969) in their study concluded that children with high self-esteem feel the confidence, talent, creativity and self-expression. They are not easily influenced by environmental factors. He found that no significant difference between the self-esteem of girls and boys [1].

III. OBJECTIVE

To determine the levels of self- esteem and ascertain its influence on academic achievement of special children in rural Kashmir.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Study was conducted on visually impaired, hearing impaired and orthopedically crippled school children selected from various private and government schools of rural areas in Kashmir. The given category of disability was selected so that the sample could be easily collected from the normal schools. Total sample size included 90 children with disabilities.

Tool. Self-esteem of the sample was assessed by using Cooper Smith's Self-esteem inventory (1967) [1]. It consists of 25 statements which measures evaluative attitudes of the respondents towards self in various domains. Academic achievement comprised the aggregate marks obtained by the subjects in their previous examination.

Statistical Techniques Used. SPSS (version 16) was used to analyze the data statistically. Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and T-test for significance of difference between means was employed.

Research Design. The study was descriptive in nature.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To establish the significance in mean self-esteem and academic achievement scores of children with disabilities, t-test was computed. Details have been presented in Tables given below:

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of the two groups on Self-Esteem (N=60each).

Groups	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of Significance
VI	9.48	1.08	4.44	Significant at 0.01 level
HI	10.30	0.92		

VI= Visually Impaired
HI= Hearing Impaired

The means, standard deviations and t-value comparison of visually impaired and hearing impaired school children with N=60 in each case on self-esteem is shown in Table 1. The results revealed a significant difference in the two groups i.e., visually impaired and hearing impaired school going children on self-esteem. More specifically the findings indicated that the visually impaired school going children attained a low score on the self-esteem inventory which shows that they were shy, sensitive, easily bothered, dependent and felt less liked and appreciated by parents and peers.

Table 2: Means and standard deviations of the two groups on Self-Esteem (N=60 each).

Groups	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of Significance
VI	9.48	1.08	5.38	Significant at 0.01 level
OC	8.55	0.79		

VI=Visually inpaired
OC=Orthopedically Crippled

The means, standard deviations and t-value comparison of visually impaired and orthopedically crippled school children with N=60 in each case on self-esteem is indicated in Table 2. The results revealed a significant difference in the two groups with visually impaired school going children scoring better than their orthopedically crippled peers. More specifically the results revealed that the orthopedically crippled school going children in comparison to the visually impaired children were shy, sensitive, easily bothered, had too many parental expectations and felt discouraged at home and school. Whereas the visually impaired school going children were confident, easy going, least bothered and friendly with their parents. However, the scores attained by the two groups were considerably low on self-esteem. Lakshimi & Anuradha (2014) found a significant difference in self-esteem of crippled and visually impaired subjects.

Table 3 represents the means, standard deviations and t-value comparison of hearing impaired and orthopedically crippled school going children with N=60 in each case on self-esteem and indicated a significant difference in the two groups with orthopedically crippled school going children scoring less than the hearing impaired children on self-esteem inventory.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of the two groups on Self-Esteem (N=60each).

Groups	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of Significance
HI	10.30	0.92	11.13	Significant at 0.01 level
OC	8.55	0.79		

HI=Hearing Impaired
OC=Orthopedically Crippled

More specifically the results conveyed that the orthopedically crippled subjects in comparison to the hearing impaired school going children were shy, sensitive, easily bothered and felt discouraged and upset. Whereas, the hearing impaired children were less shy, less sensitive and less upset. Singh and Verma (2004) found no significant difference between the two groups on self-esteem.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations of the two groups on Academic Achievement (N=60each).

Groups	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of Significance
VI	43.75	10.48	0.80	Not Significant
HI	41.97	13.94		

VI=Visually Impaired
HI= Hearing impaired

Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations and t-value comparison of visually impaired and hearing impaired school children on academic achievement. The results indicated no significant difference in the two groups on academic achievement. More specifically the results revealed that the academic achievement of visually impaired and hearing impaired school going children was more or less the same. A study by Ntzamilis (2004) also revealed no significant difference between visually impaired and hearing impaired students on academic performance.

Table 5: Means and standard deviations of the two groups on Academic Achievement (N=60each).

Groups	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of Significance
VI	43.74	10.48	0.43	Not Significant
OC	42.90	10.70		

VI=Visually Impaired
OC= Orthopedically Crippled

Table 5 reveals the means, standard deviations and t-value comparison of visually impaired and orthopedically crippled school going children on academic achievement. The results indicated no significant difference in the two groups on academic achievement. The findings are in line with the findings of a study by Chandra and Koul (2006).

Table 6: Means and standard deviations of the two groups on Academic Achievement (N=60each).

Groups	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of Significance
H I	41.93	13.94	0.42	Not Significant
OC	42.92	10.70		

HI=Hearing Impaired
OC=orthopedically crippled

The above table shows the means, standard deviations and t-value comparison of hearing impaired and orthopedically crippled school children on academic achievement. No significant difference was found between the two groups on academic achievement. Pandit *et al*, (2011) assessed the academic achievement of visually impaired, hearing impaired and orthopedically crippled children and found no significant difference between the groups.

VI. CONCLUSION

Enhancing self-esteem does not mean working on good academic achievement also. Self-esteem is not a trait dependent on the factors we don't have control. Undeniably we can work towards the development of positive self esteem in special children by meticulously observing their nature and modifying the environment to enable them to meet their requirements.

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