An assessment of readiness among children attending anganwadi centres in Kathua District (J&K)

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted with the aim to assess the school readiness of eighty pre-school children (3-6 years) both boys and girls attending Anganwadi Centres. The objectives were to study the school readiness on the areas such as basic information and vocabulary, number concept and ordination, concept of time, object, class and social function, visual motor performance following the instruction and independence and self-care and to compare the male and female children of Anganwadi Centres. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The data were collected by using School Readiness Assessment Inventory and observation. The results revealed that majority of the children (male and female) had scored range from 25-45 to 45-65 in all the age groups. Not a single child had below 25 score. Mean scores on various areas of school readiness assessment inventory revealed higher scores on basic information and vocabulary among all age groups. Mean scores increased with age. t-scores of boys and girls on all areas of School Readiness Assessment Inventory were found to be insignificant. Therefore, no gender differences were found in children attending Anganwadi Centres of Kathua District.

School readiness, in the broadest sense involves children, families, early environment, school and communities. School readiness assessment is a hot topic these days, in large part because of increased accountability pressures in both the public school and early care and education setting. School readiness is more than about children.

Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR, 2008) defines readiness as a state of early development that enables an individual child to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences. As a result of family nurturing and interactions with others, a young child in this stage, has reached certain level of social and emotional development, cognition and general knowledge, language development, physical well being and motor development. School readiness acknowledges individual approach towards learning as well as unique experiences and background of each child.

Schools are also an important piece of the readiness puzzle because different school has different expectation about readiness. The same child, with the same strength and needs, can be considered ready in one school and not ready in another school. It is the school's responsibility to educate all children who are old enough to legally attend school, regarding of their skills.

The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP, 1997) identifies five domains of children's development and learning that are important to school success: physical well being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches towards learning, language development, cognition and general knowledge .The NEGP work on school readiness has been important in broadening people's understanding of readiness beyond the ABCs and 123s and highlight the inter connection among the five domains .The NEGP report principles and recommendation for early childhood assessment (Shepared *et al.*, 1998) identifies and describes major purposes for assessing young children: Improve learning, identify children with special needs, monitor trends over time, uses of high stakes accountability and evaluate programme.

The present research focuses on children attending Anganwadi centers of Integrated Child Development Services. The services provided in the centers include supplementary nutrition, immunization, health checkup, referral services, nutrition and health education, non-formal pre-school education and supply of IFA. As non-formal pre-school education is one of the important services

provided in these centres, it was felt that the school readiness of children attending those centres be assessed and necessary information related to this be given to the Anganwadi worker so as to improve children's learning in the areas they are lacking. This will also help in preparing children for school and provide a feedback to help administration in improving the programme. School readiness assessment is an important area of study because of increased accountability pressure in both public schools and early care and education settings. Assessing the readiness of entering pre- school children to succeed in school has become an increasing concern for policy makers, pre-school programme, programme staff, parent elementary staff and administrators and many others.

Objectives:

– To assess the school readiness of children (3-6 years) attending the Anganwadi centres in Kathua District in the areas; Basic information and vocabulary; number concept and ordination; concept of size, shape colour; concept of time object, class and social function; visual motor performance following instructions and independence and self-help.

– To compare the school readiness of male and female children attending Anganwadi centres in Kathua District.

RESEARCH METHODS

The sample for the study comprised of 80 children (40 feamle and 40 male) attending Anganwadi Centres of 4 Blocks of Kathua District *viz.,* Kathua, Barnoti, Hiranagar and Ghagwal. Two Anganwadi centres were selected from each Block and 20 children including each 10 male and female from each block were selected. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample. School Readiness Assessment Inventory was administered to assess the readiness in children attending Anganwadi Centres. Inventory was administered individually on children for getting detailed information regarding the school readiness. Both, qualitative and

quantitative analyses were done.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The scores of school readiness assessment inventory were classified into 3 categories for the purpose of present research.

Table 1 reveals that majority of respondents (64%) were observed in the age group of 3 years 1 month-3years, 11 months in the range of 25-45 scores on the school readiness inventory. On the other hand, 63 per cent, 71 per cent and 100 per cent in the age group of 4 yrs 1month-4yrs 11 months; 5yrs 1month-5yrs 11months and 6 yrs, 1month-6yrs 11 months fell in the range of 45-65 on the said inventory. Not a single child fell below 25 category. All the scores on inventory showed that the scores were increasing with increase in age. The scores of children except children in 6 yrs 1month-6yrs 11months age group depict that not a single child scored low but scored average to high. All the children in the age group of 6 yrs 1 month-6 yrs 11 months scored high. This indicates that with the increase in age, many concepts like time, class, social functions ordination, size, shape, colour and number were clear.

Table 2 presents the mean scores on various areas of 'School Readiness Assessment Inventory' and reveals higher mean scores on basic information and vocabulary among children 3 years 1 month – 3 years, 11 months to 6 years 1 month – 6 years 11 months of age. The mean scores of number concept and ordination was higher in 6 years 1 month – 6 years 11 months followed by the children of other age groups. The table also reveals that the mean scores was higher in 6 years 1month -6 years 11 months and 5 years 1 month – 5 years 11 months age group of children. The same mean score was found in visual motor performance, following instruction and self-help. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the mean score of the age group 6 years 1 month – 6 years, 11 months was higher than other age groups.

Table 3 reveals the mean scores of girls in the age group 3 years 1 month - 5 years 11 months was higher than boys on basic information and vocabulary. The t-

Table 1: Scores of children on school readiness assessment inventory									
		Age group of children							
		3yrs,1mnth-3yrs,11mnths		4yrs,1mnth-4yrs,11mnths		5yrs,1mnth-5yrs,11mnths		6yrs,1mnth-6yrs,11mnths	
Sr. No.	Scores	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Below 25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	25-45	14	64	10	37	6	29	-	-
3.	45-65	08	36	17	63	15	71	10	100
Total		22	100	27	100	21	100	10	100

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation of children (3 years, 1 month-6 years, 11 months) on various areas of school readiness assessment inventory

Areas	Age 3 years 1 month- 3years 11 months Mean ± S.D	Age4 years- 1 month – 4 years 11months Mean ± S.D	Age 5 years 1 month – 5 years 11 months Mean ± S.D	Age 6 years 1 month-6 years 11 months Mean ± S.D
1. Basic information and vocabulary	14.8 ± 2.48	15.29 ± 2.19	15.4 ± 2.2	20 ± 1
2. Number concept and ordination	6.13 ± 2.22	6.7 ± 2.29	7.57 ± 1.29	9.5 ± 0.5
3. Concept of size, shapes, motion and color	5.9 ± 1.74	6.6 ± 2.84	7.38 ± 1.06	8.9 ± 1.57
4. Concept of time, object, class and social function	6.22 ± 1.44	6.6 ± 1.3	6.95 ± 1.23	9.4 ± 0.8
5. Visual motion performance following instruction and dependence self-help	10 ± -	10 ± -	10 ± -	10 ± -

Table 3: t-scores of boys and girls on basic information and vocabulary

	Boys Mean ± S.D	Girls Mean ± S.D	t- test
Age 3 years,1month - 3 years ,11 months	14.18 ±2.6	14.18± 2.32	-
Age 4 years, 1 month - 4 years, 11 months	13.7 ±1.9	14.5 ±2.3	0.462**
Age 5 years, 1 month - 5 years, 11 months	12.9 ± 2.5	16.8 ± 1.7	4.29**
Age 6 years, 1 month - 6 years, 11 months	16.4± 0.6	15.6± 1.2	1.29**

** indicates significance of value at P= 0.05

Table 4: t-scores of boys and girls on number concept and ordination

	Boys Mean ±S.D	Girls Mean ±S.D	t-test
Age 3 years 1month - 3 years 11 months	6.36± 2.61	3.90 ±1.74	1.11*
Age 4 years 1 month - 4 years 11 months	7.84± 1.38	5.14 ±2.8	1.40*
Age 5 years 1 month - 5 years 11 months	6.8 ±1.4	8.4 ±1.06	1.66*
Age 6 years 1 month - 6 years 11 months	9.6 ±0.5	9.4± 0.5	1.26*

*indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Table 5: t-scores of boys and girls on concept of size, shape, motion and colour

	Boys Mean ±S.D	Girls Mean ± S.D	t-test
Age 3 years 1month - 3 years 11 months	5.8 ±2.25	6.09 ±1.00	0.49*
Age 4 years 1 month - 4 years 11 months	8.30 ±2.04	5.07 ±3.31	0.039*
Age 5 years 1 month - 5 years 11 months	6.90 ± 1.03	7.9 ±1.07	0.21
Age 6 years 1 month - 6 years 11 months	10.2 ±1.85	9.6 ±1.23	0.096

*indicate significance of value at P=0.05

scores of boys and girls in all age groups were insignificant at 0.05 levels.

Table 4 reveals that the mean scores of the girls in age group 5 years 1month-5 years 11months was higher than boys on number concept and ordination. Mean scores of boys was higher than girls in other age groups of boys and girls on number concept and ordination is insignificant at 0.05 levels.

Table 5 reveals the mean scores in age group 4 years 1 month-4 years 11 months in boys and 6 years 1 month – 6 years 11 months was higher than girls on concept of size, shape, motion and colour where as mean scores of girls was higher in other age groups. The t-scores are insignificant at 0.05 level.

Table 6 reveals that the mean scores of boys in age group 4 years 1 month-4 years 11 months and 6 years, 1month-6 years 11 months was higher than girls on concept of time, objects, class and social function. The t-scores was insignificant between boys and girls at 0.05 level.

Table 7 reveals that the mean scores of boys and girls are equal on visual motor performance following the instruction and independence and self-help.

It was found that school readiness increases with age and no gender differences were found. After analyzing the mean scores of children on School Readiness Inventory, it is indicated that Anganwadi centres focus more on basic information and vocabulary,

Table 6: t-scores of boys and girls on concept of time, object, class and social function

	Boys Mean ± S.D	Girls Mean ± S.D	t-test
Age 3 years 1month - 3 years 11 months	6.18± 1.58	6.27 ± 1.28	0.01**
Age 4 years 1 month - 4 years 11 months	7.46 ±1.24	6.35 ±1.60	0.10**
Age 5 years 1 month - 5 years 11 months	6.54 ±1.73	7.4 ±1.36	0.08**
Age 6 years 1 month - 6 years 11 months	9.6± 0.82	9.2± 0.77	0.24**

** indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Table 7: t-scores of boys and girls on visual motor performance following instruction and independence and self- help

	Boys Mean ± S.D	Girls Mean ± S.D	t-test
Age 3 years 1month - 3 years 11 months	10 (-)	10 (-)	-
Age 4 years 1 month - 4 years 11 months	10 (-)	10 (-)	-
Age 5 years 1 month - 5 years 11 months	10 (-)	10 (-)	-
Age 6 years 1 month - 6 years 11 months	10 (-)	10 (-)	-

Insignificant at 0.05 level

visual motor performance following instruction and independence and self-help. Anganwadi workers and parents need to improve on the areas of number concept and ordination, concept of time, object, class and social function, concept of size, shape, motion and colour of children in the age group of 3 years 1 month to 5 years 11 months. Various previous studies highlighted the relationship between parental involvement, teacher strategies and school readiness (Pelletier,2002; Mendoza, 2004; Thomas, 2008 and Psicologia, 2009).

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