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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ATTITUDE OF SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS HOMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Homework is regarded as school work which is assigned by teachers to complete outside the school time to help them develop confidence and motivate them to study more. It encompasses a number of activities like a period of reading to be performed, writing to be completed, problems to be solved, a project to be prepared or other skills to be practiced. It increases the level of knowledge and improves the abilities and skills of the students. The present study was undertaken to study the attitude of school students towards homework and to find out if there is any gender difference in the attitude towards homework. The sample comprised of 80 school students between the age group of 14 –15 years (class-IX) drawn from the Jorhat district of Assam. The Attitude Scale towards Homework (ASTH) developed by Mishra (2006) was administered to collect the necessary information. It can be highlighted from the findings that majority of the respondents (67.5%) had neutral attitude towards homework, while 20 per cent of the respondents had favourable attitude and 12.5 per cent of the respondents had unfavourable attitude towards homework. It was also found that more number of girls (25%) had favourable attitudes towards homework than that of boys (18.75) and similarly more number of boys (31.25%) had unfavourable attitude towards homework than that of girls (12.5%).

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INTRODUCTION

Homework assignments play a very important role in education since they reinforce learning. It is the main intersection between home and school. Homework is defined as written/oral individual or group tasks assigned to students by the teacher to be done out of school time with the purpose of getting prepared for a new learning material or reinforcing, expanding, practicing or completing newly learned material (Cooper, 1989; Corno, 1996). According to Yucel (2004) homeworks are mental or physical tasks related to a particular topic or unit for students to cover. Assignments also promote students' self-discipline, independence and responsibility characteristics (McPherson, 2005). Hence, the aim of an assigning homework is to teach students to study independently, plan efficiently, get organized in group assignments and think individually (Sgouros and Martin, 2005). Research evidence shows that regardless of students' ability or prior coursework academic achievement is positively related to homework completion (Keith and Cool, 1992; Cooper et al., 1998).

Homework can improve students' study skills, improve their attitudes toward school, and demonstrate that learning can take place outside of formal schooling. However, excessive homework may impact negatively on student achievement and also reduce student access to leisure activities that can also teach important life skills (Homework Literature Review, 2014). The State of Queensland (2004) conducted a Homework Literature Review. They found that the impact of homework on students, their attitudes and their achievements were mixed, with both positive and negative effects. Students report positive attitudes to homework, and feel some homework is important in helping them do well at school.

The findings indicate that students, families and schools can benefit from a collaborative effort to improve the effectiveness of homework. A positive outcome for homework appears to be contingent on teacher preparation, the motivation of students and the parental support. Larson (2011) discovered that the mastery level of homework is positively influenced by student motivation and interest level, although motivation and interest level do not increase homework completion rates. Vavra et al. (2010) discovered that student journaling and self monitoring of homework had a positive impact on achievement. Carbone

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(2009) found that homework is seen as a valuable resource for teaching, allowing students to practice, and in doing so, learn the unit material. Every individual have different view about homework. Many people think that homework can improve the child academic progress while some other people think that it is just a burden and a wastage of time. Homework is important to reinforce what students have learned in class, prepare them for upcoming lessons, extend what they know by having them apply it to new situations, or to integrate their abilities by applying many different skills to a single task. When talking about homework, it seems that students have different attitudes towards homework concerning its worth and purpose. It is necessary to motivate the students to develop a favourable attitude towards homework. Some students find it interesting and important while others develop unfavourable attitude towards it. Hence, it is important to find out their attitude which will be of great help for teachers in handling homework issues easily.

### Objectives

- To study the attitude of students towards homework
- To compare the attitude of boys and girls towards homework

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Jorhat district of Assam. A total sample of 80 students (Class IX) were selected for the study. 'The Attitude Scale towards Home Work' developed by Mishra (2006) was used for collection of required data. The data was collected from the respondents by distributing the schedule to the students. The respondents were instructed by the researcher to read the statements carefully and decide how far they agree or disagree with a particular statement.

They were asked to give their responses in five alternatives: Strongly Agree, Agree, Indefinite, Disagree and Strongly Disagree, which were given along with each statement to know their opinion about homework. The scores obtained by each student were calculated based on positive and negative items. In positive items the scoring was given as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 for strongly agree, agree, indefinite, disagree and strongly disagree respectively whereas it was reverse in case of negative items i.e. score 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 were given for strongly agree, agree, indefinite, disagree and strongly disagree respectively Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of the score was calculated to find out the attitude level of students towards homework.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings (Table 1) revealed that majority of the respondents (67.5%) had neutral attitude towards homework, while 20 per cent of the respondents had favourable attitude and few of the respondents (12.5%) had unfavourable attitude towards homework. Though the number is less some of the students who had favourable attitudes towards homework could analyse the benefit of homework for academic progress. Majority of the students considered the homework as a compulsory work assigned by the teachers of different subjects. They neither view the homework as a process of complete learning nor ignore it. However, these students are

also motivated indirectly to develop positive attitude towards learning and gaining knowledge. This can be supported by the study conducted by Sharp *et al.* (2001) who had also found that students have positive attitudes to homework, and feel it is important in helping them to do well at school.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their attitude level**

Levels of attitude	Total Respondents N= 80			
	Mean	SD	Frequency	Percentage
Favourable			16	20
Neutral	123	7.98	54	67.5
Unfavourable			10	12.5

**Table 2. Attitudes of both the genders towards homework**

Respondents	Mean	SD	Favourable		Neutral		Unfavourable	
			F	P	F	P	F	P
Girls	125	6.24	12	25	30	62.5	6	12.5
Boys	120	9.18	6	18.75	16	50	10	31.25

F= Frequency, P= Percentage

The attitudes of both the genders towards homework are presented in Table II. It was found that majority of the female respondents (62.5%) had neutral attitude towards homework, whereas half of the male students (50%) had neutral attitude towards homework. Results also revealed that some of the female respondents (25%) had favourable attitude while only 18.75 per cent of male respondents had favourable attitude towards homework. Again few of the female respondents (12.5%) had unfavourable attitude towards homework while in case of male respondents it was found that 31.25 per cent had unfavourable attitude towards homework.

It is evident from the results that the preference of girls in doing homework is more than that of boys. The reason behind this may be that at this age (14- 15 years) the boys undergo many physiological and psychological changes which lead to daydreaming, frequent mood swing and restlessness. But the girls of the same age group experience the changes two years earlier i.e. between 11 to 13 years. Usually the girls in this age are composed, have more patience and perseverance, due to which they could see the homework activities more positively. This can be supported by the study conducted by Honigsfeld and Dunn (2003) who had also found that girls, in general, tend to have more positive attitudes toward homework than boys, showing more persistence in completing homework. Another study conducted by Sharp *et al.* (2001) had also found that girls are more willing to spend time on homework than boys.

### Summary and Conclusion

It can be concluded from the findings that majority of the respondents had neutral attitude towards homework. As for the genders, girls were found to have more favourable attitudes towards homework than their boy counterparts. Homework assignments should be assigned with a reasonable length and specific goal in order to keep students focused on their studies. It should be given to acquire knowledge by practising the skills necessary for learning that particular subject so that the entire work will not be a burden for the student.

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