CHAPTER IV

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS SCALE

This chapter deals with the details of preparation of learned helplessness scale. Every available test or every test prepared off-hand cannot be a fit tool for testing. It is only a scientifically prepared test for which can ensure a scientific testing. A good test is a prerequisite of research involving testing. One dependent variable in this study was learned helplessness. To the researcher’s knowledge, no standardized test was available (test publishing houses in India were also tapped for this purpose) to measure learned helplessness among learning disabled children. Many tests are available on self-esteem, achievement motivation which are overlapping concepts. Therefore, the researcher planned to construct learned helplessness scale.

4.1 Planning of the Test

Various definitions of learned helplessness were studied and four attributes were arrived at. Those are:

- Attribution of success to external factors.
- Belief that failure is result of lack of ability.
- Success / Failure due to factors beyond control.
- An attitude of ‘giving up’ e.g. I can’t do it or something close to it.

It was decided to give equal weightage for each of the attributes. It was also decided to use multiple choice type of items in the test.

The segment of population for which the test is to be made, was defined. Then, the purpose of the test was stated. The length of the test was decided because the cost depends on it, in terms of time and money, of giving and scoring the test and interpreting the results.
4.2 Selection of the Items

4.2.1 Raw Test

The next step in the construction of test is the preparation of items of the test. An item is generally defined as a single question or task that is not often broken down into any smaller units. Once the types of items had been fixed, the research worker had to compile a reasonably large number of items of suitable difficulty. These were 60 in number. Children’s school situations were observed for two days to know the kind of activities that happen in schools to enable the researcher to write items.

4.2.2 Try Out

This try out helped in refining items and preparation of instructions. A rough idea as to suitability of options was obtained by trying a few items on a small group of examinees from the population. After the rough draft of the learned helplessness scale was prepared, the scale was put to test.

This try out helped in refining items and preparation of instructions. The first draft of the test was then submitted to supervisors for critical evaluation. To ensure that the items reflected the learned helplessness among the students and that the language of items was appropriate, items were reviewed by a few experts belonging to different fields related to psychology and education. Ten experts were consulted and their suggestions were sought on the test. The items were modified in the light of suggestions and criticism given by the experts. After that, 54 items were retained. Thus, keeping the opinion of the experts in mind, the test was used in three schools of Ferozepur city. Many false assumptions, slips and oversights were underscored in this process. After the items have been written, reviewed and carefully edited, they were subjected to a procedure called item refinement. Item refinement is a technique through which those items which were valid and suited to the purpose were selected or modified to suit the purpose (Singh, 2002). The importance of refining of items in the development of psychological tests has been stressed by many workers, namely Gulliksen (1950), Davis (1951), Gay (1992) and Best and Kahn (1993). The preliminary draft was administered to a small group of 45 examinees to verify the suitability of items. A few
further modifications were suggested by this procedure. After these were incorporated, the preliminary draft was ready for the press or photocopying.

4.3 Final Draft

This preliminary draft was administered to a sample of the population for which test was made. Learned helplessness scale and achievement motivation scale were administered on 45 children of 3rd, 4th and 5th classes from three schools of Ferozepur city. 15 children were taken from each class randomly.

4.3.1 Standardization of the Test

Standardization of the test implies that the test has been administered and scored under standard and uniform testing conditions so that the results obtained from different samples may be compared legitimately. A standardized test is designed for general use (Best and Kahan, 1995). The items and the total scores have been carefully analyzed and validity and reliability have been established by careful statistical controls. Not only the content of the test, but the administration and scoring have also been standardized or set in one pattern so that those subsequently taking the tests will take them under similar conditions. As far as possible, the interpretation has also been standardized. In this test, barring norms all other conditions have been satisfied.

4.3.1.1 Validity

The most simplistic description of validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure and for whom it is appropriate. It is concerned with the extent to which test scores permit inferences to variables as postulated in definition of characteristics being measured.

Content Validity

Content validity refers to the degree to which the test actually measures or is specifically related to the traits for which it was deigned. The criterion of content validity is often assessed by a panel of experts in the field who judge its adequacy, but there is no numerical way to express it. This validity comprises of item validity and sampling
validity. Former deals with whether each item measures what the test is supposed to & latter with distribution of items w.r.t. each area of concept. For the present study, experts in the field of education and psychology were contacted at two levels — one at the preliminary stage of the test and also for the scoring of four attributes. These experts carefully examined all the items on two levels and made their judgement concerning how well they represent the intended content area.

**Concurrent Validity**

Concurrent validity is the degree to which the scores on a test are related to the scores on another, already established, test administered at the same time, or to some other valid criterion available at the same time (Gay, 1992). In the present study, a relationship was determined by administering achievement motivation scale (Deo Mohan, 1985) with learned helplessness scale. The purpose of applying these two scales was to check the concurrent validity of learned helplessness scale.

The value of coefficient of correlation was determined between two scales by product moment correlation(r). It was .94 (n=45, p<.01) which is highly significant. This speaks for the validity of the scale, the validity being of the concurrent nature. There is highly significant positive correlation between learned helplessness and achievement motivation.

**4.3.1.2 Reliability**

Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever attribute it measures. Reliable tests are stable in whatever they measure and yield comparable scores upon repeated administration. Anastasi and Urbine (2005) think reliability is the consistency of scores obtained by the same persons when they are re-examined with the same test on different occasions or with different sets of equivalent items or under other variable examining conditions.

For the present study, split-half reliability and test-retest coefficients were computed.
Split-half Reliability

Split-half reliability is a type of reliability based on the internal consistency of the test. The scores of first two sections of learned helplessness scale were correlated with other two sections. The correlation coefficient was calculated by using the product-moment method of correlation. The reliability coefficient of learned helplessness scale was .414 which is significant \( n = 45, \ p < .05 \). Learned helplessness scale was used on 45 children other than learning disabled children.

Test-retest Reliability

Test-retest reliability, also referred to as the coefficient of stability, is the degree to which scores are consistent over time. It indicates score variation that occurs from one session to another as a result of errors of measurement. After repetition of the test with a gap of 25 days, on the same group, a correlation was computed.

The value of coefficient of correlation for the learned helplessness scale came to be .91 \( n=45, \ p< .01 \) which is highly significant and indicates towards the reliability of the test.

4.3.2 Testing Conditions

To make the testing conditions as uniform as possible, the investigator administered the test personally in all the schools. For learned helplessness scale, the students were seated comfortably and were given the test copies. The following instructions were given to them:

“This is a test to know more about your personality. You are being presented with some situations. Assume that you have gone through these situations. Read the options carefully & tick mark (✓) according to your choice in each item. You could have more than one choice in each of them, There are no correct or incorrect options, Your responses will not be shown to anybody, Do not skip any item as far as possible.”
4.4 **Objectivity**

Objectivity implies, a test must be free from the subjective element so that there is complete inter personal agreement among experts regarding the meaning of the items and the scoring of the tests (Singh, 2002). In the present test, items have uniformity in the order of presentation as well as have a standard scoring procedure. Thus, the test can be regarded as objective.

4.5 **Practicability**

A test must be practicable from the point of view of time taken in completion, length, scoring, etc. (Singh, 2002). Ease of administration, scoring and interpretation is an important element of any test. The present test takes around 30-35 minutes and can be administered in small groups. The scoring method is also easy and can be done by those who may not be expert, in the area concerned.