



RESEARCH PAPER

Improving Urdu Hand Writing: An Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

In the present age, children find it very difficult to improve Urdu calligraphy, because they have no measure to improve calligraphy in Urdu alphabets by writing on the page or takhti (a wooden board). The purpose of the present study was to provide a measure to help students improve their calligraphy in Urdu alphabets. To achieve this target, an experimental research was conducted in a private school. Twenty two children were selected who could write Urdu alphabets a little bit. They were pre-tested. On the base of pre-test, they were divided in to two groups, experimental group and control group. The children of experimental group practiced of Urdu alphabets on four lines notebook with the help of teacher concerned, while the control group practiced of Urdu alphabets on one line note book with the help of the same teacher. After 45 days, the children were post-tested. Post-tests of the both groups were examined by the researchers and senior teachers. The result revealed that alphabets of the children who made practice of calligraphy in Urdu alphabets on four lines notebook were looking better and beautiful as compare to those children who made practice of calligraphy in Urdu alphabets on one line notebook.

Introduction

Calligraphy is an art of making beautiful handwriting (Webster New World College Dictionary, 1997). In the middle age; it was very popular among the Muslims artists. It was learned by the students in ancient universities of Muslims' regimes in the world. So, it is cultural heritage of the Muslims. The development of sophisticated calligraphy, as a form of an art is not unique to Islamic culture; the samples of Chinese and Japanese calligraphy and illuminated bibles from north-west Europe including the famous Book of Kells have been discovered. It is well renowned that the calligraphy is an Iranian art which existed before Islam. It started at least from the Achaemenid period and reached excellence in the Sassanian era. In

the Islamic era, some events occurred due to the possibility of more public education and calligraphy became more prosperous (Rasouli & Attaran, 2005).

After Islam, Iranian share is very high in promoting calligraphy. In the early seventh century, when the Mongols again invaded Iran, Kufic and sextuplet scripts (Sols, Naskh, Mohaqeq, Reyhan, Toqi and Reqa) were used there. Sextuplet scripts were selected from various scripts that had come into existence until then. In seventh century, special Iranian fonts developing movement began with the Arabic alphabet. Resultantly, sustained efforts of Iranian calligraphers led them to the creation of three scripts, Ta'liq, Naskh and Shekaste (broken) Nasta'liq. In the beginning of eighth century, Khaja Ali Tabrazy designed Nastaliq script from the combination of two scripts as Nasakh and Taliq in the city of Mavra-Ulnehre. In the late tenth century, observing the elegance of Nasta'liq, there appeared a need for a script with more writing speed. In the eleventh century until the late twelfth, broken Nasta'liq was generated and reached perfection. Nasta'liq is the last innovative script in the history of Iranian calligraphy (Mehmoodi, n.d).

In modern Iran, two scripts are more important than others; Naskh which is used to write Quran and other religious books and Nasta'liq which is used for other literary works, printed books and artistic tableaus for exhibitions. The current calligraphy instruction method was established by Emad Al-Molk Qazvini in late Qajar era through publishing 34 volumes of educational pamphlet (Rasouli & Attaran, 2005).

In Urdu language, two scripts are used, Naskh and Nastaliq. Naskh is old script and it is obsolete now. It is used to write Quranic verses only. Nastaliq is a modern script of Urdu language and used to write Urdu literature and official works. Normally, every language has unique writing rules, which are followed by experienced users and recognition engines. However, there are variations in writing style. Languages which are written from right to left e.g. Urdu, Arabic and Persian etc. are confusing and have a lot of variations due to fonts and writing style. If rules are not followed properly, the recognition engine is bound to fail (Hussain, Sajjad & Anwar, 2007).

Now -a- day, hand writing problem is increasing in Urdu scripts. Hand writing difficulty is a common in students' learning. The students who involve in hand writing difficulty are called lazy learners or lack of motivation (Khalid, Younus & Adnan, 2010; Berninger & International Dyslexia Association, 2008). Such students are reluctant in school competition of assignments. Thus, hand writing difficulty leads students to poor academic performance (Berninger & International Dyslexia Association, 2008; Palluel-Germain, Bara & Boisferon, 2007). Therefore, early identification of hand writing problem is necessary (Neo, su, Khalid & Yeon, 2012).

In the present age, due to learning many subjects at primary level, students are very poor in Urdu hand writing. They have no time to make calligraphy in Urdu alphabets. According to the senior teachers, the reason of poor hand writing is the use of pencil and paper and no use of takhti and qalum-dawat at primary level.

These are necessary items for calligraphy at primary level. However some teachers urge that the children spend a lot of time in writing takhti. They have to clean it with water and dry it in the sunshine. They spoil their clothes and bag with ink. The children have no time to clean and dry takhti and make lines on it for writing. They have to learn five or six subjects in five or four hours. They are only six to ten years old. How they can meet this situation. Everything is possible if students and teachers want to do it.

Instructions for making Calligraphy

Figures 1,2,3,4 (ahead) have been selected from the books of calligraphy. Alphabets in these images have been written with complete instructions. A teacher can write alphabets beautiful after doing necessary exercise and can make practice from students.

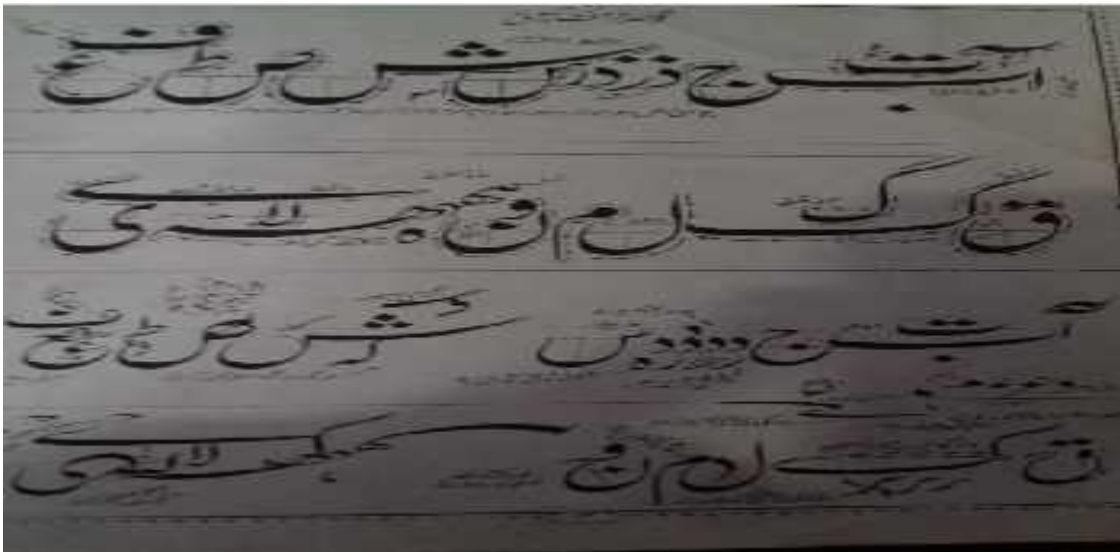


Figure1. Rules of writing Nastaliq scripts, Source: (Zahid, 2006,p.10)



Figure2. Sample of Nastaliq scripts, Source: (Mehmoon, n.d., 13)

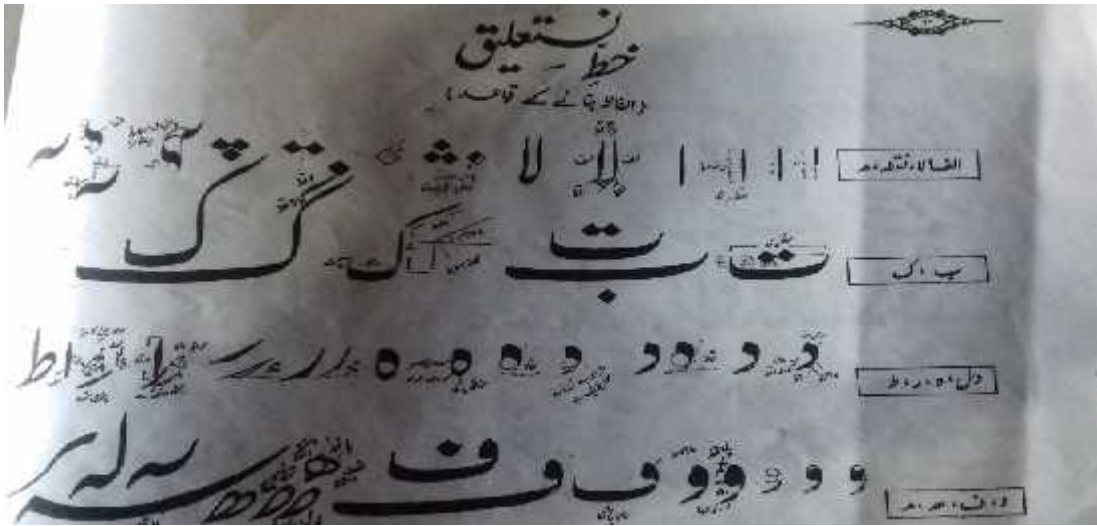


Figure3. Rules of writing Nastaliq scripts Source: (Mehmoonni n.d., p.10)

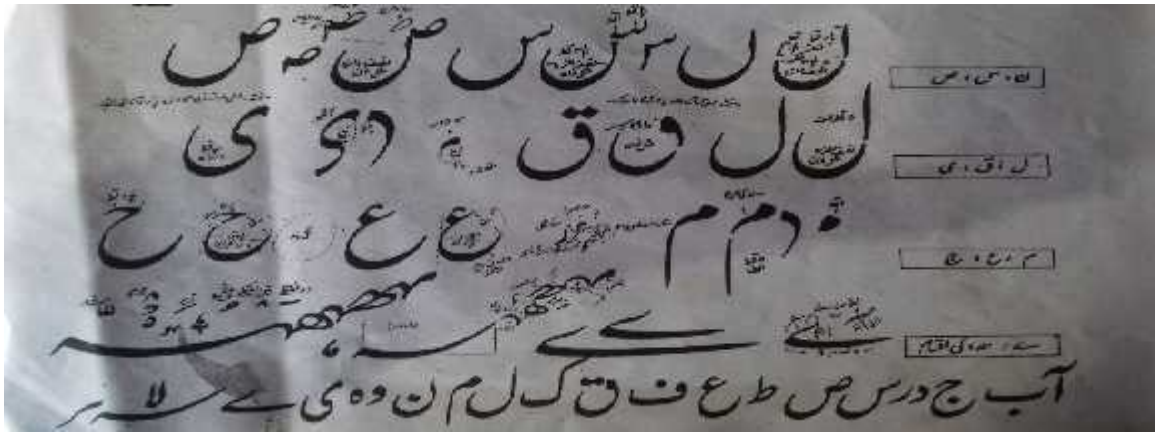


Figure4. Rules of writing Nastaliq scripts, Source: Mehmoonni (n.d., p.11)

In Urdu language, we have no measure to make calligraphy in Urdu alphabets. In English language, four lines notebook is used for making calligraphy in English alphabets. Similarly, four lines notebook can be used for making calligraphy in Urdu alphabets, but a few alphabets require six lines notebook, but it cannot be recommended because more than four lines note book creates confusion for the students. Those Urdu alphabets such as : Lam, Meem, Kaf and Gaf can be written lying up (some part of alphabet) from four lines (as can be seen in figure 5 and 6).



Figure5

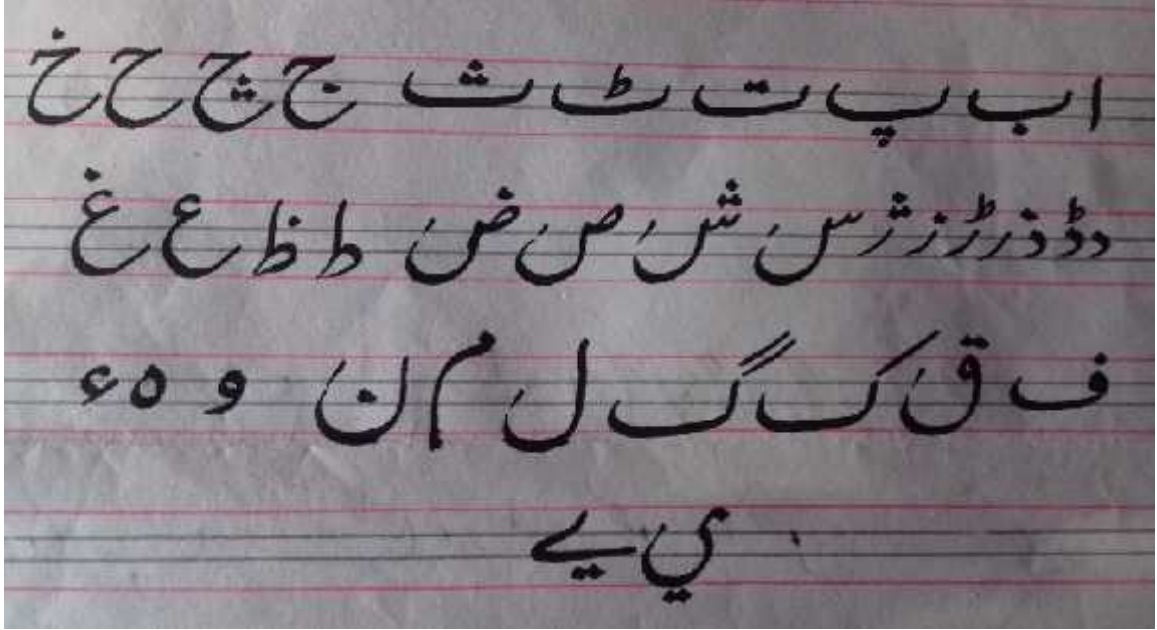


Figure6. Calligraphy has been made in Urdu alphabets on four lines

Components of Calligraphy

There are four components of making calligraphy/khushkhati such as: qalum (pen), dawlat(ink), takhti (paper) and exercise (Mehmoodi,n.d.).

Material and Methods

For making calligraphy in Urdu alphabets on four lines, an experimental research was conducted in a private school. Twenty two (22) children were selected from nursery class who could write Urdu alphabets. The children were pre tested (as can be seen in figure 7).

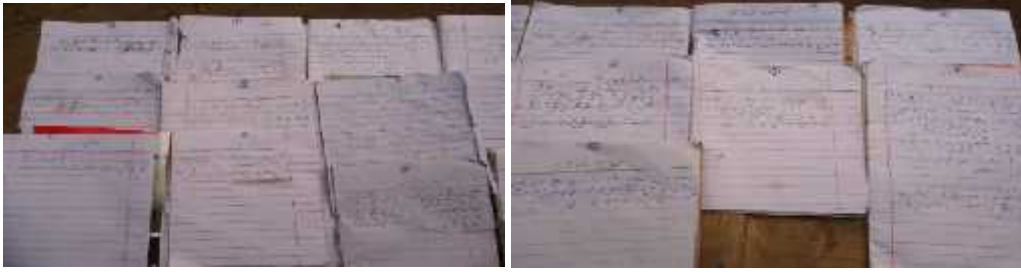


Figure7. Per-test

On the base of pre-test, the children were divided in to two groups, experimental group and control group. The groups were designed by purpose sampling. Odd numbers were given to the experimental group and even numbers were allotted to the control group. The children of experimental group made practice of Urdu alphabets on four lines note book with the help of teacher concerned and control group made practice of Urdu alphabets on one line note book with the help of same teacher. After 45 days, both the groups were post-tested (as can be seen in figure8 and 9).



Figure8. Post-test of experimental group

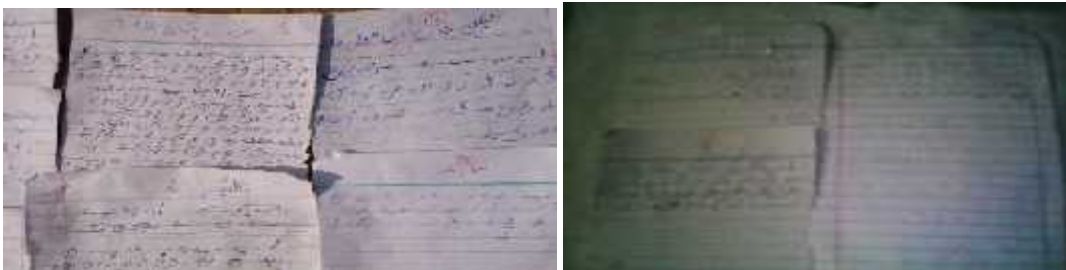


Figure9. Post-test of control group

Post-test was analyzed by the researchers and senior teachers. Post-tests of both the groups were compared at the spot. Post-test also was compared with pre-test. Alphabets of the experimental group were looking better and beautiful as compare to alphabets of the control group.

Results and Discussion

Comparison of images of control group as well as experimental group has been done. You can assess yourself the scripts of Urdu alphabets of control group as well as experimental group after making practice for 45 days.

Comparison with in control group

Now we present a comparison of the scripts of Urdu alphabets of pretest and post test of control group students. Alushbah is a female student. You can evaluate the alphabets scripts of her in pretest and post test. There is no significant difference between pretest and posttest of her alphabets scripts after 45 days' practice as shown in figure 10 and 11.

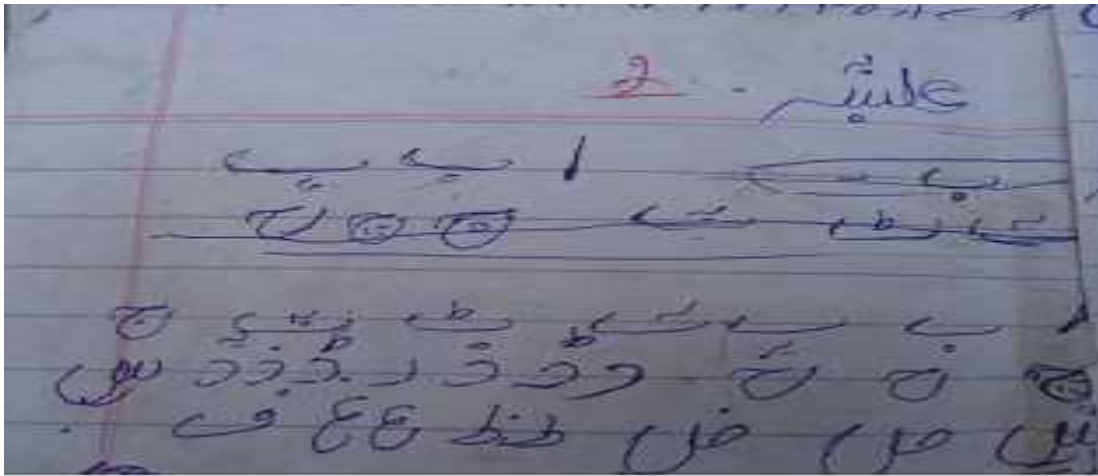


Figure10.Pretest image of alphabets script

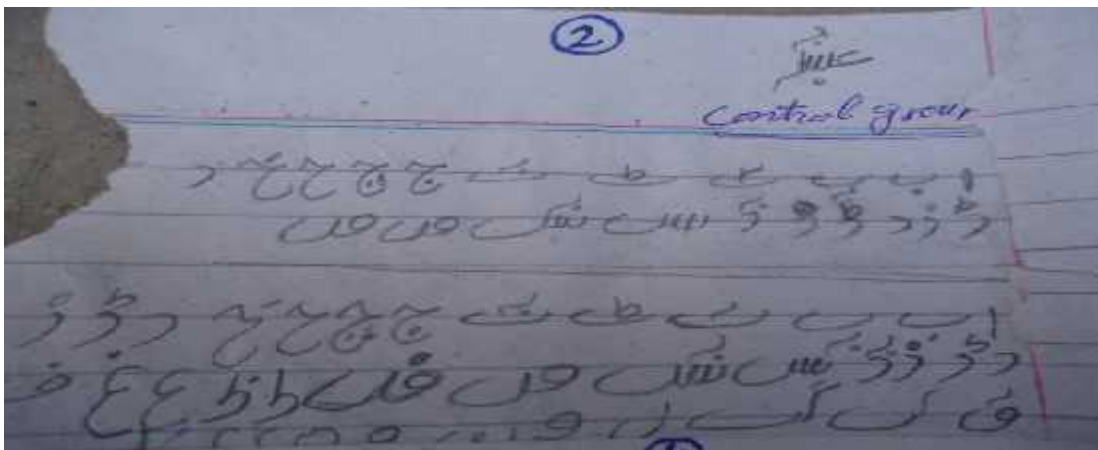


Figure11.Posttest image

Barkat is a male student. Comparison of his scripts of Urdu alphabets has been made. Images of both scripts indicate that there is no significant difference between alphabets scripts of pretest and posttest as shown in figure12 and13.

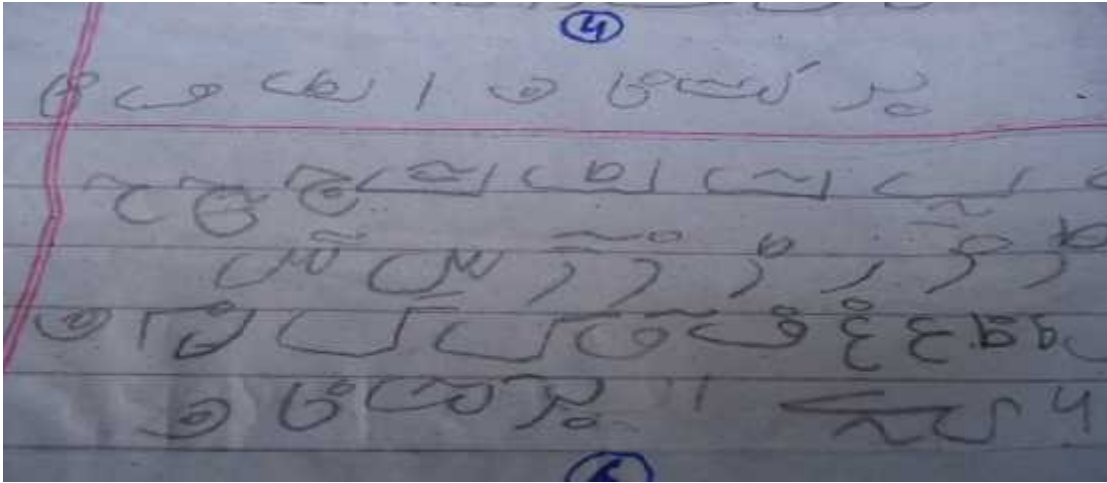


Figure12.Pretest image

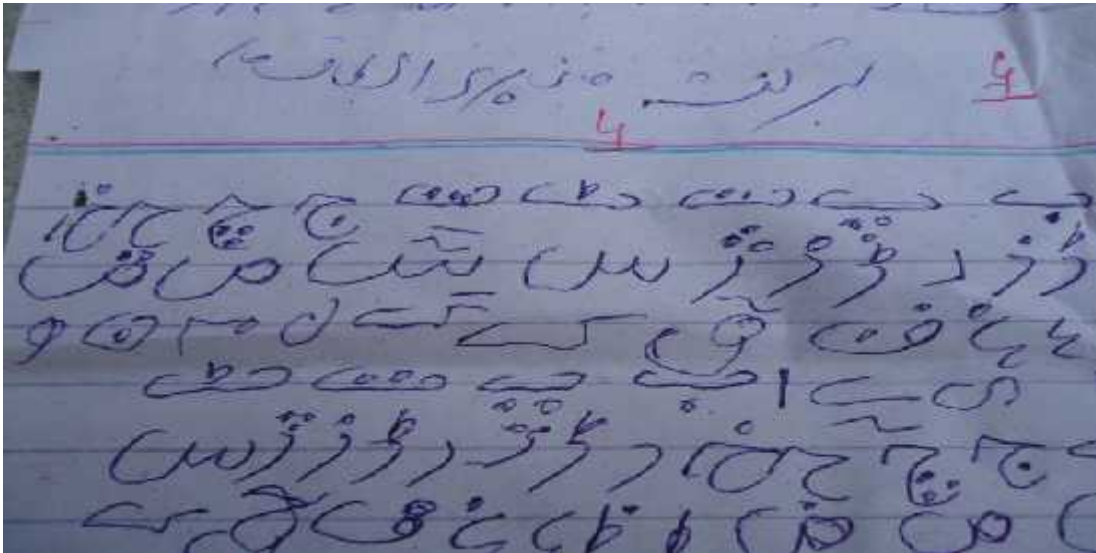


Figure13.Posttest image

Comparison with in Experimental Group

Now we present the scripts of Urdu alphabets of experimental group for comparison. Shabanah is a female student of experimental group. You can judge her scripts of alphabets of pretest and post test. There is significant difference between her alphabets scripts of pretest and posttest after doing exercise of 45 days as shown in figure 14 and 15.

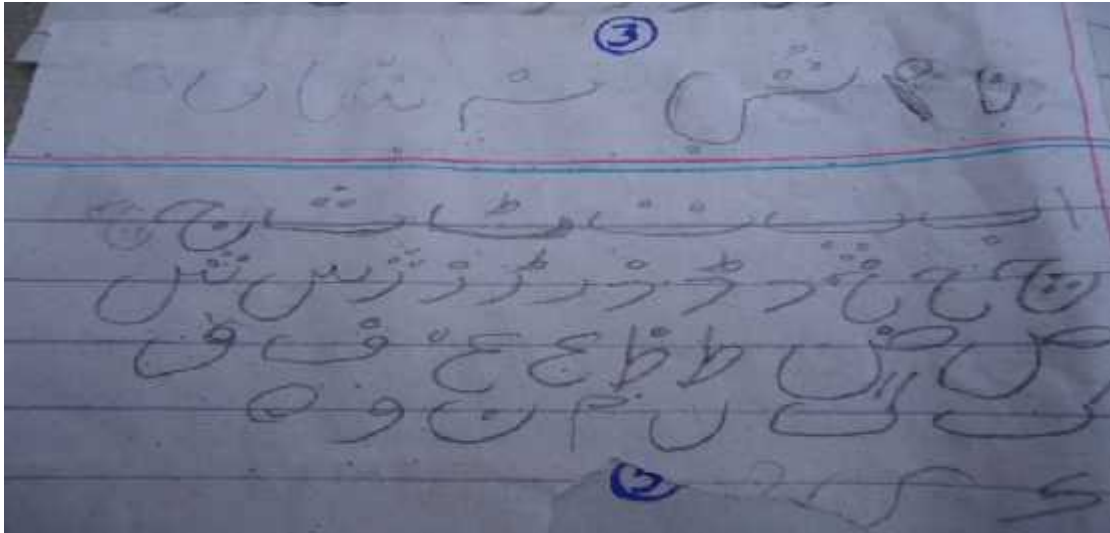


Figure14. Pretest image

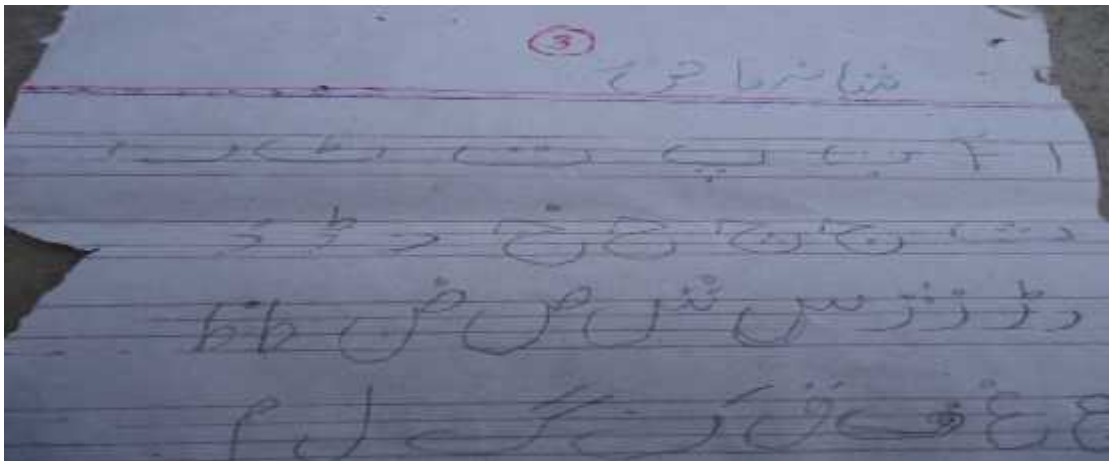


Figure15. Posttest image

Hasnain is another male student of experimental group. You can decide either his script of pretest is better or script of posttest is better. Alphabets script of posttest is looking better (as can be seen in figure 16 and 17).

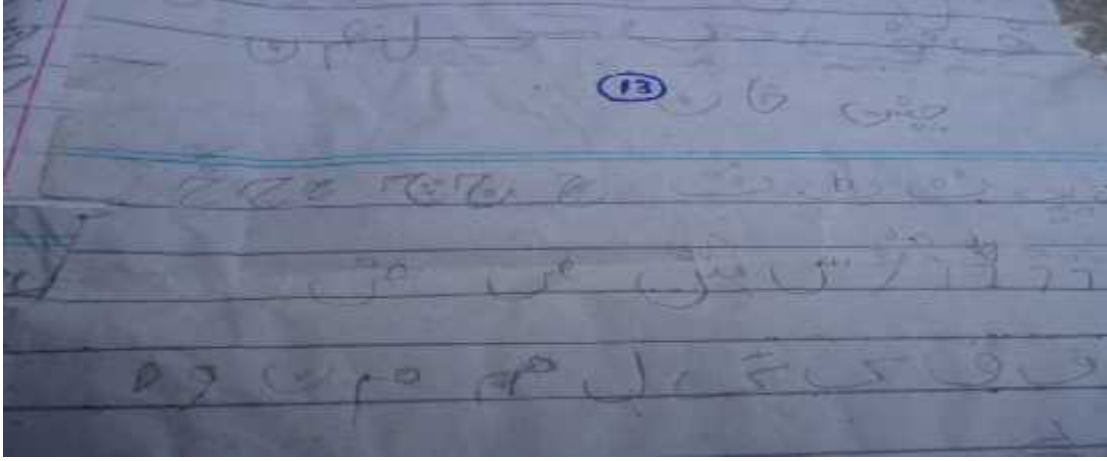


Figure16.Pretest image

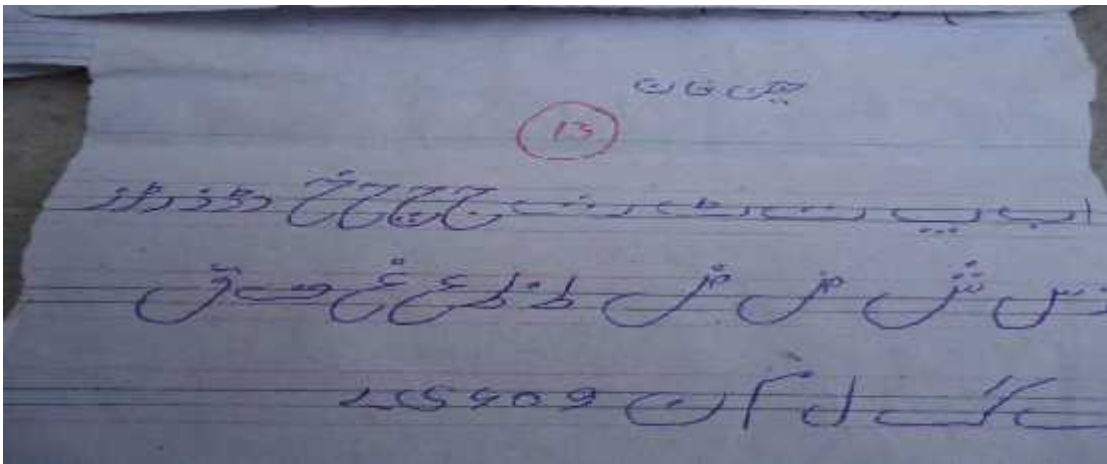


Figure17. Posttest image

Discussion

The present study was conducted in the school of rural area. There was lack of teaching facilities. Moreover, it was January a cold and rainy season. The children could not come to school daily. In spite of this entire situation, there was a significant difference between the calligraphy/khushkhati in Urdu alphabets of the experimental group and control group. Now -a- day, hand writing problem is increasing. Hand writing difficulty is a serious problem in students' achievement. The students who involve in hand writing difficulty are called lazy learners or lack of motivation (Khalid, Younus & Adnan, 2010; Berninger & International Dyslexia Association, 2008). Such students are reluctant in school competition of assignments. Thus, hand writing difficulty leads students to poor academic performance (Berninger & International Dyslexia Association, 2008; Palluel-Germain, Bara & Boisferon, 2007). Therefore, early identification of hand writing problem is necessary (Neo, su, Khalid & Yeon, 2012).

In the present age, due to learning many subjects at primary level, children are very poor in Urdu hand writing. They have no time to make calligraphy in Urdu alphabets. According to the senior teachers, the reason of poor hand writing is the use of pencil and paper and no use of takhti and qalum-dawat at primary level. These are necessary items for calligraphy at primary level (Mehmoodi, n.d.). The study suggests that students should make practice of writing Urdu alphabets on four lines with qalum-dawat on Takhti or with holder on page.

Conclusion

Conclusion of the research study was that alphabets of the children who made practice of calligraphy/khushkhati in Urdu alphabets on four lines notebook were looking better and beautiful as compare to those children who made practice of calligraphy in Urdu alphabets on one line notebook. The children can learn and make calligraphy in Urdu alphabets on four lines notebook soon and easily. Practice of writing of Urdu alphabets on four lines will help the children to improve their handwriting in future.

Recommendations

1. Children should use four lines notebook for writing Urdu alphabets.
2. School administration should get readymade board of Urdu alphabets written along with four lines (as can be seen in figure18).



Figure18.Urdu alphabets board

3. Teachers should use board of Urdu alphabets as a visual-aid to make practice of Urdu alphabets from the children.
4. Teachers should use/consult calligraphy books and instruct the students at primary level.
5. Calligraphy/ khushkhati should be the part of training of the teacher of primary and elementary level.

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