1.0.0.0. INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of science and technology, there is an explosion of knowledge. Reading is widely acknowledged and used as one of the information technological means to access this.

The individual in the modern world is likely to be handicapped, if he does not have competency and interest in reading. Through reading, the individual can realise profit from studying the store of knowledge in his field of work and interest.

It is well-known fact that, for all the standards and subjects from primary school to college, there is prescribed curriculum. The text-books are designed in accordance with the curriculum. The teachers are teaching in the classrooms as per the curriculum. The students are supposed to read the text-books and other reference books on the subjects to fathom the ocean of knowledge.

But it is common experience of all the persons concerned with teaching that the students are asking for notes, guides and short cut material, readily available. This clearly indicates that students do not understand the material they read from the text-books independently. In order to pass the examination, they cram the answers of likely questions without understanding the matter. This dependency is the result of poor reading ability. The poor reading ability is due to the improper and haphazard impractical methods of teaching of reading right from the Standard First to the college level. This feeling is supported by the findings of Thorndike. He carried out a survey of reading comprehension education in fifteen countries by taking a sample of two age groups i.e. 10 years and 16 years. The pupils of both the age groups of our country are found to be poorer in reading comprehension in comparison to other countries.

The figures showing the approximate percentage of enrolment at the different levels of schools of the total population of the

particular age group are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously one of the major reasons for the large incidence of drop-outs is the poor teaching of reading.

Besides this, it will be worthwhile to look into the importance of reading in day-to-day life and reading as a tool of learning.

1.1.0.0. IMPORTANCE OF READING

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four fundamental skills of communication. Out of these, listening and reading are receptive skills, while the remaining two are expressive skills. These skills are to be developed through the teaching of languages. It is through these skills that the learning of other subjects becomes possible. Hence much emphasis must be given to the acquisition and development of these skills.

It has more often been apprehended that new media will increasingly usurp the place of reading. We are benefitted by the mass media, but we also should be aware of the associated shortcomings and attending dangers. The public is bombarded with information through mass communication. This abundance of informational stimuli threatens to reduce the exercise of thought. However, it is not necessarily the quantity of information gathered that makes a vital difference but the quality of thoughtful reflection, which may ensue. Reading encourages reflection, which is essential for maintaining perspective, even more so during rapidly changing times. Reading for purposes beyond functional demands gives a person access to resources in print that can entertain or refresh the spirit.

Reading affects the entire personality. It may heighten his appreciation of the physical world around him and give him an
increased interest in aesthetic and spiritual values.

In the individual's role as a citizen of the world, beyond the confines of his own country, he is likely to be handicapped, if he does not have competency and interest in reading. In order for the citizen of today to participate intelligently in the society in which he lives - on the local, national and international scene, he must understand the great forces that in one or two generations have changed the face of the earth. Along with this, understanding must come to a keener realisation of the dangers of modern war made infinitely more destructive by the 'knowledge explosion' of the last few decades. One of the highest common goals to be sought by all people is learning peaceful means of sharing the earth's resources in order for life to survive on this planet. National solutions do not suffice to solve global problems such as those of food, depletion of energy supplies and environmental pollution.

As part of a solution to problems of survival, the attainment of world-wide literacy continues to be a challenge. Although the ability to read cannot be claimed as the only means to achieve world peace, reading can better equip an individual to cope with the enlarged realities which he confronts. With the ever increasing trend of knowledge, scope and challenge of reading ability development is also increasing by leaps and bounds.

1.2.0.0. READING AS A TOOL OF LEARNING

We can get knowledge by reading. Someone has rightly said, 'if knowledge is locked palace, reading is the key to open it'. In other words, it could be said that reading is the common denominator in learning all subjects. Thus, it has been considered to be an important tool of widening the horizon of knowledge and understanding.

Aukerman 2 has rightly said,

"Some educators, in fact, refer to reading as one of the 'tool' subject. There is a common notion that a child acquires this tool-reading in elementary

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school and from there onwards uses it in all areas of the curriculum."

Therefore, if a person is not able to read properly, he cannot comprehend what he has read. If there is no comprehension, there is no reading. Aukerman \(^3\) states,

"A text-book is the beginning and the end of learning so long as the school text-book is the prime medium of learning, attention must be paid to the fact that the learner's ability to read the text-book must be good".

Moreover, reading can also be considered as one of the major and important tool of communication, essential for the existence in the complex system of social arrangements. The importance of reading is expressed by John J.DeBoer \(^4\),

"If all the inventions of hundred years were destroyed and only books were left, man could still be man, in the sense intended by the idealists, the poets, the great creators."

From this discussion, it could be said that reading is the king pin in the learning process. Also it becomes clear that without proper reading ability, one cannot understand and gather subject knowledge.

1.3.0.0. PRESENT POSITION OF TEACHING READING IN INDIA

Our country is a democratic country. It has to play its role towards world peace. For this, our country needs critical and creative thinkers. It is reading in its real sense that can make man a critical and creative thinker.

It is in this connection, we have to see the position of teaching of reading in our education system.

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\(^3\) Ibid, p.2

1.3.1.0. Reading and the Curriculum

In our schools, reading has been given hardly any place in the curriculum. State syllabi make a mention of reading as an activity but no systematic system ensues. It may not be necessary to include reading as a special subject in the school curriculum, if it finds a place in the language programme of the school. Whether reading is viewed as a separate subject or as one of the parts of a unified language programme, it is necessary to give it an appropriate place in the school curriculum. Educational administrators and curriculum framers must realise its importance and usefulness.

1.3.2.0. Teacher Training

At the same time, giving reading a place in the school curriculum alone will not raise the reading standards of our children. We need trained teachers, who can teach reading systematically. Teachers should know the full meaning of reading; they should be acquainted with the various factors involved in reading and the techniques for developing reading skills; they should have a knowledge of the methods of teaching reading and of evaluating the performance of children in reading; they should possess knowledge about diagnosing and remedying the reading difficulties of pupils, and last but least, they should know how to develop the reading tastes and interests of children. For all this, we must turn to the teacher training institutions in the country. Unless reading is given place in the curriculum of the training colleges, the dearth of good teachers of reading cannot be met.

1.3.3.0. Developing Educational Literature

When we consider a teacher training programme or the development of in-service education, we face the problem of building up suitable literature both at school and in the training institutions on different aspects of reading. In the U.S.A. and the U.K., much of work has been done in this field and further more work is in progress. The problems of Indian languages are different. We have to prepare literature for Hindi and other regional languages as per our requirements.
1.3.4.0. Preparation of Reading Material

Children read through the medium of books or some other printed matter. Are the materials that our children use, suited to their mental level, interest and taste? Is there enough material for our children to read? If we stop for a while and think about these problems, we would find that a lot more is yet to be done to publish suitable books for our children, which can really help to develop their reading ability.

1.3.5.0. Methods of Teaching

For years now, we have been teaching reading to our children but are not certain of the methods of teaching reading. Children encounter different types of difficulties in reading. Some have trouble with visual discrimination, some show deficiency in their vocabulary, some cannot comprehend the matter read by them, some cannot evaluate and appreciate the matter read by them; some are slow readers and so on. What methods should be used for developing vocabulary and comprehension? What techniques should be used to increase the rate of reading of slow readers? In what way can we make our children creative readers? All these are problems of teaching reading in our country.

1.3.6.0. The Need for Research

No educational programme can stand on a hypothetical pivot. For the introduction of any programme in the country, it is always essential to conduct some research and base the programme on empirical evidence of the results obtained. Some persons have attempted to make preliminary investigations in some of the aspects of reading but the results of these investigations may not be conclusive.

For conducting a research and for evaluating the progress of children in any branch of knowledge, we need some tools to measure. A researcher or a teacher of reading very frequently requires different kinds of tests in reading, like silent reading tests, oral reading tests, diagnostic tests, reading readiness tests, survey tests, etc.
A study of references in this context revealed that there is hardly one known reading comprehension test of Standard IX in Gujarati and that too very old. Moreover, the Government is planning to consider Standard IX as the first stage of secondary education, which shall give prime importance to Standard IX for basic studies. These facts prompted the researcher to consider Standard IX level and frame a reading comprehension test based on more modern and precise pattern of test to provide a standard tool for the measurement of reading comprehension.

1.4.0.0. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"A study of reading comprehension in Gujarati of students of Standard IX of Ahmedabad city in the context of some psycho-socio correlates."

1.5.0.0. DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is quite essential to define certain keywords used in the wording of the problem because in education and psychology, the same word can be defined in different ways. It is with this objective in view that the following words have been defined.

1. Study
2. Reading Comprehension
3. Psycho-socio Correlates

1.5.1.0. Study

The word study has different meanings. They are as follows:

According to Dictionary of Education 5, study means,

1. Application of mind to a problem or subject and
2. An investigation of a particular subject.

According to the American Everyday Dictionary 6, it means

1. Application of mind to the acquisition of knowledge
2. Deep thought
3. To examine or investigate carefully.

5 Good, 1945, p.302
6 Stein, 1953, p.467
According to Comprehensive Desk Dictionary, it means something deserving, attentive, considerative.

According to Webster New Illustrated Dictionary, it means,
1. To evaluate closely and
2. To scrutinise or earnestly contemplate.

1.5.2.0. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension has been defined by different authors in different ways. Edward L. Fry has defined reading comprehension as follows:

"Reduced to its simplest elements, it might be said that comprehension is a part of the communication process of getting the thoughts that were in the author's mind into the reader's mind."

It means understanding of words in the context, understanding of significant details and grasping of concepts that are given in the reading material. The comprehension could be measured by assigning scores for the performance of the students reading comprehension text.

1.5.3.0. Psycho-socio Correlates

An individual's learning to think, feel and behave in an adult way is the function of socialisation. Age, sex, area and other physical make-up and basic mental potentialities have an immense impact on it. This ultimately results into a set of reaction-habits which is known as a 'Personality Trait'. Hence the researcher viewed that these psycho-socio-economic variables may have some effect on reading comprehension. Some human behaviours have been classified and have been named by exponents of different schools of psychology. There are still many to be classified and named. The researcher accepted the trait theory of personality and chose carefully a few apparently related traits with the reading comprehension.

7 Barnhet, 1958, p.766
8 Terl, 1962, p.313
The researcher also viewed that some social and psychological factors also play a part in shaping reading comprehension ability of a person. Hence she thought it proper to view reading comprehension in the context of some personality trait and social factors like, socio-economic status, sex, etc.

1.6.0.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

i) To construct a reliable and valid tool for measuring reading comprehension in Gujarati for pupils of Standard IX.

ii) To establish norms for reading comprehension test in Gujarati for pupils of Standard IX.

iii) To study sex differences with regard to reading comprehension.

iv) To study whether there are any mean differences in reading comprehension among pupils coming from different socio-economic status.

v) To study the effect of personality trait, happy go lucky vs. seriousness, on reading comprehension.

vi) To study the effect of personality trait, self-sufficiency vs. dependency, on reading comprehension.

vii) To study the effect of personality trait, dominance vs. submissiveness, on reading comprehension.

viii) To study the effect of personality trait, leadership and reading comprehension.

ix) To study the effect of personality trait, introversion vs. extroversion, on reading comprehension.

x) To study the effect of personality trait emotional stability on reading comprehension.

xi) To study the effect of personality trait, honesty vs. dishonesty, on reading comprehension.
1.7.0.0. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has certain limitations, which are stated below:

1) The study is carried out on only students of Standard IX.
2) The study is limited to the students studying in Gujarati medium schools.
3) The study is based on the students living within jurisdiction of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.
4) The whole investigation is based only on one dependent variable, viz. reading comprehension and nine other independent variables viz., S.E.S., sex, happy go lucky vs. seriousness, self-sufficiency vs. dependency, dominance vs. submissiveness, leadership, introversion vs. extroversion, emotional stability and honesty vs. dishonesty.
5) The scores obtained on the standard tools for independent variables, were used only forming two criterian groups viz. high and low groups.

The field of application of the test is quite wide. Much depends upon the user of the test, hence it will be futile to describe the use of the test.

1.8.0.0. THE SCHEME OF CHAPTERISATION

A brief description of the Chapters to follow is given here.

Chapter II - Conceptual Framework

In this Chapter, an attempt has been made to define the nature of reading process. Some definitions of reading and reading comprehension are described and discussed with a view to formulating the definition of reading and reading comprehension.

Chapter III - Review of Past Studies

It gives a short review of the past studies. The Chapter presents a few studies on reading comprehension. It contains mainly
significant contributions made by chief investigators in the field of reading comprehension at different centres.

Chapter IV - Planning of the Present Study

The meaning of reading process and reading comprehension derived through theoretical discussion and review of some tests led the investigator to the planning of the test. It includes the selection of proper reading material, construction of items, determination of test length and preparation of pilot form of the test. All these have been described in this Chapter.

Chapter V - Tryout and Pilot Administration

This Chapter describes the pre-tryout, tryout, item analysis, selection of items and final form of the test.

Chapter VI - Final Run of the Test and Establishment of Norms

The final form of the test was subjected to the process of standardisation. All the physical aspects of the final testing, such as arrangement of test items, sub-tests, the answer sheet, scoring key, sample, etc. are described in this Chapter. The discussion about fixing the norms is also included in this Chapter.

Chapter VII - Reliability

In this Chapter, the methods of establishing the reliability are discussed. The reliability of the present test has been computed by applying several methods. They all show agreement with each other and prove that the present tool is reliable.

Chapter VIII - Validity

The concept of validity is discussed in this Chapter. The validity of present test has been computed by statistical calculations. The computed validity proves the test as a valid tool.

Chapter IX - Studies related to Reading Comprehension

The second phase of the project has been described here. The study of different correlates of reading comprehension is discussed in this Chapter. It also discusses how independent
variables' clusters were formed to study the main as well as interaction effects of the independent variables on reading comprehension. The factorial design of $2 \times 2 \times 2$ was used for all the studies.

Chapter X - Observations, Conclusions and Suggestions

This Chapter describes the resume of the earlier Chapters. It also includes the researcher's observations and experiences in carrying out the work. The conclusions drawn are reported. Finally, suggestions for further studies in this field are also mentioned.

Thus this thesis contains the detailed description of all the essential steps taken to standardise the test of reading comprehension of the students of Standard IX alongwith the study of some effective correlates on reading comprehension. It also contains tables, bibliography and appendices.