CHAPTER I

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1. Introduction

Reading habit is a subject which is always discussed by the philosophers, writers, teachers, parents and students. After S.S.C. and H.S.C. results, the interviews of the meritorious students are always published. They focus on the importance of reading habit, study habit, study time, reading skills, place and planning.

The researcher is an experienced teacher. He is aware of the importance of quality in education in this competitive world. Today everyone around us is found to be conscious of quality education. Parents seek admission of their wards in the schools having good results and stimulating environment. Schools with poor results are generally neglected by all parents. It is difficult to describe all the factors that affect the results. It is immaterial what the teachers teach, but what students understand and learn how to read is an important issue. This reason motivated and inspired the researcher to think over it.

Various scholars have pointed out the importance of reading. Bal Gangadhr Tilak said, “If you read you will be survived”, Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar pointed out, “Unless you read, you can’t survive. Reading is my breath.” According to G.G Agarkar, the great thinker, “Reading of books is the greatest means in any achievement”. Richard Steel, the famous essayist, quoted “Reading is to mind what exercise is to the body”.

Above statements show the importance of reading. Through reading one can get countless benefits. As much as 80% of knowledge of the world is hidden in the books. To acquire this knowledge one has to read. Reading improves thinking power, behaviour, language and personality. One who reads more possesses more. For proper development of personality, effective communication and clarification of doubts, reading is necessary.
Renowned authors, great saints, well-known thinkers all over the world expressed their views in books. By reading these views the future generation is motivated to learn the effective ways of living. Reading takes place as soon as a student goes to school. Only at this stage students develop reading habits. But even today, in many schools, students are unable to read properly. If such is the state of text books reading, how can we expect extra reading from them?

Nowadays, students are getting away from reading habit. Lack of reading limits one’s life and personality. Children are unable to face the day-to-day problems. They lack scientific and general knowledge which is more useful in their daily lives. General knowledge is a must for entering into various careers. Reading is a base of study. Also, it is a base of life. Nowadays, the habit of reading is becoming lesser and lesser. It is not a good sign.

For survival in this speedy, competitive, informative and technological age, reading is a must. But it is observed that students are rapidly getting away from reading. They are exposed to various entertainment programmes on T.V. as well as multimedia channels and they are not guided properly as regards to how to read, what to read, why to read and how much to read. They are not motivated by their parents, teachers as well as by their peer groups to read properly. These are some of the hypothetical reasons which have been studied by many researchers.

Various factors are responsible for good habit of reading. Many demographical conditions such as age group, gender, needs, cultural heritage, availability of time and reading material etc affect the reading habit. If all the above demographical conditions are favourable to the children, will they read effectively? The researcher is mainly concerned with
this issue. Considering the value and importance of reading, the researcher wants to study this problem with psychological angle.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

“A study of reading habits, reading skills and their relationship with certain demographical and psychological variables”.

1.2 Definitions of the terms used in this study

i) Reading

The dictionary meanings of reading are

i) “To apprehend the meaning of something printed or written”.

ii) “To interpret something read in a specified manner”.

iii) “To apprehend the meaning of (book writing) by perceiving the form and relation of the printed or written character.”

Reading is also defined as a process of recognizing and understanding the meaning of written (including printed) symbols. In a broad sense this process is adopted in musical notes, scientific formulas and equations, shorthand, and brail symbols for the blinds. It deals mainly with reading of material, written alphabets. Reading is one of the language arts and is closely related to speaking, listening, and writing. Reading is a way of using a language. But language users not only read, they also speak, listen and write. All these ways of using language are related to sentence pattern. Reading enables a learner to read silently unfamiliar authentic texts at reasonable speed with adequate comprehension.
Reading as a complex behaviour

It is not surprising that reading deficiencies are common, because reading is complex art, and these complexities create many opportunities for error to occur.

Reading is a mental process of securing and reacting to an author’s message represented by written or printed symbols. To read one must recognize words, know the meaning of the words, understand the ideas expressed by the authors, sense the mood and tone of selection, evaluate the accuracy of the ideas and learnt use or apply them.

Children in the primary grades usually learn to read simple material. These abilities are expanded and refined in the middle and upper grade. Many high schools in the United States began to teach reading between 1930 and 1950 while a number of colleges initiated courses to improve reading. It is recognised that one learns to read, than reads to learn and that the growth of these two abilities continues from childhood to adulthood.

Stages in reading -

Studies show that pupil’s attainment in reading at various grade levels differ widely.
1) The first stage is called “reading readiness” or perception for learning to read. Interest in books and in printed words is usually exhibited during this stage.
2) The second stage is that of “learning to read”. During this stage, children’s interest in reading increases. They become thoughtful about what is read.
3) During the third stage there is considerable progress in learning. At this stage pupils begin to use reading as a tool in other school subjects to satisfy their curiosity.

4) The fourth stage is characterized by the acquisition of more mature reading interest. During this stage all of the previously learned abilities are refined and enhanced, word recognition is gradually increased, knowledge of meanings is extended and precision of meaning is acquired. Understanding or ability to interpret grows as the reader secures a better background against what he reads. He is able to apply new knowledge acquired from his reading to assist him in adjusting his attitude and behaviour. His reading interest becomes broader in various areas.

**Phases of reading**

Reading is complex act. It involves following inter locking phases :-

1) **Word Perception**

   It means recognizing words and their meaning together. Reader can identify and pronounce words which he understands.

2) **Comprehension** –

   Comprehension is more than understanding words, sentences and paragraphs. It is seeing relationship of word in groups of sentences, in paragraphs.

3) **Reaction**

   Reaction is a fact of the reading acts. It includes two types of responses -
a) Intellectual: The reader judges whether the statements are having accurate reasoning sound.

b) Emotional: the reader is moved by the style of writing.

4) Assimilation

Assimilation is another aspect of reading. The reader gets ideas from what he reads and he combines them with his own.

5) Rate / Speed of reading -

Speed is considered as one of the phases of the reading. There are different speeds used by reader. They vary with reasons for readings and also with the difficulty of materials. This function is highly subjective. It means that one should not read social studies and text books in the same manner. Each type of literature needs to be read differently.

Types of reading:

Following are some of the types of reading.

• Intensive reading
• Extensive reading
• Skimming and scanning

Intensive reading - When we read with interest and our understanding is nearly complete, this type of reading is called intensive reading. We may need to read the material more than once for this purpose.

Extensive reading – We skip certain words or lines and paragraphs without suffering any loss in comprehension. This type of reading is purely for
pleasure Global comprehension is what is demanded. Very often we read for pleasure and do not read more than once.

**Skimming and scanning:**

These are complementary processes of reading. We are able to achieve global comprehension by skimming. Individuals, while skimming, look at a passage / material as quickly as possible and grasp the main theme.

**Scanning** is a process by which we can locate specific information in a passage or reading material, which we have already read. We go through the passage quickly. We make a note of it or mark the relevant portion with pencil for further or future reference. This process is called scanning.

**i) Reading Habits**

Every person in this world has some habits. His behaviour, actions, ideas etc. assume the form of habit. According to James, “Habit is a tendency of an organism to behave in the same way as it has behaved before”. Further he states, “Man is a bundle of habits. Habits have also become a part of the mental world. These habits inspire and encourage our behaviour.”

Thus “A habit is an automatic learned behaviour pattern that enables an individual to handle specific type of environmental situations easily.” A student who acquires good study habits may develop a behaviour pattern, which enables him/her to work on his/her assignments with a maximum concentration. A student who has good study habits, becomes efficient and effective in writing and reading. Good and effective study / reading habits are essential for personality development as well as for our day to day performance.
ii) Reading skills

Reading skill is defined as “an ability or proficiency in execution performance”. Reading is a receptive skill. While reading, we try to understand what we read. Reading, apart from listening is an important way of getting exposed to one’s language and getting knowledge. If one wants to improve one’s language one should read. If one wants to get confidence in communication, one should read. Usually an effective communicator is a good reader and good listener. However, one can not become good reader over-night. It requires constant practice. It is important for students to be able to read well and quickly. Even in audio-video age, reading remains to be an essential skill.

Every student must be able to master without delay the content of the text – books or other material. A good student is an efficient reader. He reads rapidly with good comprehension. He is able to read critically and he retains what he has read.

Reading skill consists of previewing, rate or speed of reading and skimming.

**Previewing** - A good way for a reader to approach a new text is to devote a few minutes for previewing the material. This is a useful reading technique by which the reader familiarizes himself with the general context of the text before he begins the actual reading.

**Rate / Speed of reading** - Most readers can improve their rate of reading without losing the essential ability to comprehend, let your rate be determined by the purpose for which you read and difficulty level of material.
**Skimming** - Skimming and reading are not the one and the same thing. Skimming is the skill in reading process. In skimming one leaves out whole sentences, paragraphs, even whole pages when he glances at the head lines and subhead lines In skimming one’s eyes move rapidly and efficiently over the text. The reader will not be moving his/her eyes from left to right and line to line. By skimming he gets general idea of the content.

**Reading skills for good readers**
First of all one has to a find some time for reading every day. For increasing one’s reading stamina, one should keep reading every day. One should read more and more and collect new words, read news papers, magazines, novels etc.

Following are some of the skills for good readers.
1) Use the title – Does the title give meaning to you?
2) Survey – Survey the passage in the usual way i.e. by reading the fireline of each paragraph.
3) Anticipation – You should be able to ask yourself some anticipatory questions.
4) Read – Read passage quickly. Don’t forget reading speed against the time.
5) Organization – Draw a diagram to represent organization of the passage.
6) Summary – Use the diagram to write brief summary of the main points of the passage.
iii) Psychological variables

a) Self – concept

Self concept is a picture or image an individual has of himself. It includes the perception an individual has of his physical appearance and of the tangible properties of himself as a person, his worth, his right to have his own feelings and thoughts and to make his own choices.

- The term self concept is an abbreviated way of saying “Attitudes towards and conception about one’s self”

According to Mead George (1934) “the self is a product of our symbolic interactions with others and that we can perceive ourselves only as a reflection in the eyes of another”. Cooley, C.H. (1902) described our tendency to use others as a kind of looking glass in which we can view our selves in imagination. Further he wrote, “we perceive in others mind some thought of our appearance, manner, aim, deeds, characters friends, and so on and are variably affected by it”. W. Combs and Donald Saygg (1959) conceived of the self concept as the centre of a system of percept that they called the phenomenal environment. The environment as it is perceived by the individuals is shown in the following figure.

![Diagram of self concept and phenomenal environment]

The portion of the phenomenal environment that is perceived as being related or some how involved with the self they termed, the phenomenal self
within this era are to be found objects and events that the individuals see as some how important to him. The use of the modifier may be considered as an indicator of what is included in the phenomena self.

Self concept has been broadly defined as “person’s perception of himself or /her-self.” These perceptions are formed through interactions with and interpretation of one’s environment. They are influenced especially by evaluation by significant others, reinforcement and attribution for one’s own behavior.

Various schools in psychology have explained the concept of self in different ways. According to James (1890) – pioneer of functionalism, “Self is the core of personality which provides it a unity”. Another pioneer of functionalism, Cattel (1956), pointed out “The self alone exists as totality and constantly emerging. It can be understood only as a unique personal opinion of experience and the self is undifferentiated in time and space”.

The Gestalits emphasized the predominance of the perception of whole over parts, viewed self as a unitary integration, developing its potentialities by simulating the environment. According to Koffka (1935), “the core of the ego is the self, which represents and acts corresponding to genuine needs and their influence on behaviour”.

According to Allport (1961), “the self is something of which we are immediately aware. It is a warm central private region of our life. As such it plays a crucial role in our consciousness”, “Self is some kind of core in our being”. Self is composed of such elements as the perception of one’s characteristics and abilities, the percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environment, the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experience, objects and goals ideals
According to Rogers (1951) “Self concept or self structure may be thought of as an organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissible to awareness”.

**Dimensions of Self**

There are three dimension of self i.e. perceived self, social self, and ideal self.

a) **Perceived Self** : Perceived self is the way one perceives and described one self or what one may think about one self..

b) **Social Self** : Social self is our awareness of the way other thinks of us and perceive us to be.

c) **Ideal Self** : Ideal self is the image a persons of the kind of person he would like to be.

**b) Anxiety**

The present era is an age of anxiety. In everyday life an individual experiences so many tensions. People behave under tension. They fear about their lives because their lives are not secure. Due to this, in modern era, each of us feels insecured and anxious about our lives. Generally, anxiety emerges in this situation. Anxiety is an uncomfortable feeling. A person has a sense of fearfulness but can't identify the cause of his fear. One may have experienced anxiety at the beginning of a new course or job.

It is apparent from a number of studies that very high level of anxiety is crippling and interfere with wide variety of tasks, particularly the more complex one's. High level of anxiety also tends to interfere with new learning and with performance on tasks such as creative writing and learning.
Fear and anxiety:

These two emotions are not synonymous. Fear generally has a specific source, i.e., child fears fast car in the street. Anxiety has a more vague or generalised source. The anxious child experiences an ever feeling of apprehension, but does not know its precise origin.

Definitions of Anxiety:-

Anxiety is often referred to as psychic pain and is actually unpleasant. It operates as a powerful driving force towards maintenance of a psychological level.

Anxiety can be defined as a persistent, distressing psychological state arising from an inner fear. It is a complex of many conditions as distinguished from passing experience of anger, fear, grief, uneasiness, inability, depression or vaguely defined feelings which the individual cannot account for. Anxiety is a response to hidden and subjective danger.

Anxiety is an unpleasant emotional state that physiologically resembles fear but is produced internally rather than by objective external sources. Anxiety is a major factor in virtually every form of personality break downs and is a significant component of the normal personality as well.

Generally psychologists assume that anxiety is determined by learning. The research evidence suggests that the relationship is more complex depending on the level of anxiety, the difficulty of the material and the ability of the students. Generally speaking anxious students do less well under high levels of stress but what is stressful may differ for different students. The anxious person should work more effectively in a highly structured situation. Anxiety is both a concept and a personality trait. It is a
pervasive and significant motivational dimension in personality and has been found to be a factor of considerable importance in influencing and directing human behaviour and performance.

Anxiety is unique among personality variables in its constructive and destructive potential. Without it, the organism can not survive. You can perpetuate the most primitive and bizarre behaviour. On the opposite side anxiety raises an individual’s level of motivation and enables him to make maximum use of his resources.

The concept of anxiety has played a key role in human behaviour and adjustment. It has been found to be an important independent variable in explaining many features of human behavior influencing social interactions.

**Horney Karen** (1937) made basic anxiety central to her theory. She believed that this anxiety arises from social influences in the development of man rather than from the conflict between biological motives and the ego Basic anxiety is first aroused in the person by any social situation or conflict between close one, by criticism, coldness and indifferences etc..

**Cumming (1944)** found that anxiety tends to increase with age and sex. Girls, on the whole, tend to experience greater anxiety than boys. Anxiety has been described as a painful uneasiness of the mind concerning independing on anticipated ill it represents a danger or threat - within the individual rather than an external danger. In anxiety the disturbing stimulus does not physically accompany the emotional state but it is anticipated or expected to occur in the future. Anxiety is accompanied by a sense of helplessness. Anxiety is more often stimulated by qualities within the person who is unaware of the conditions within himself which make him uneasy.
c) Locus of control

The concept of locus of control was first introduced by Julian Rotter (1966). He discovered that locus of control is an important aspect of personality. Several psychologists think that people differ in their feelings of control. The internal holds themselves responsible for what happen to them and their world. While the external believe in fate, unpredictable control or controls of other powerful people. The effect of reinforcement following some behaviour depends upon whether the person perceives the locus of control in side himself or some where out-side.

Meaning of Internal and external L.O.C.

- Having control upon one's fate or fortune i.e. having full faith upon one's potentiality is called internal locus of control.
- As opposed to these, beliefs, external factors, fate, fortune, opportunities etc., are responsible for things happening in one’s life is called external locus of control.

Many a time we come across such statements,

"I tried a lot, but I couldn't win because luck was not in my favour" or

“What I have achieved to-day is through hard work and constant efforts." Reactions of these types indicate the locus of control.

Locus of control is the sensation of whether success or failure of a person is dictated by him self / her self or by external factors.

We might suppose that Persons holding strong internalized expectancies would be more efficient at cognitive activity and information processing than would externalizers.
Internals stated more reasons for their decision than externals and also gave more reason based on the previously learned information.

Subject who held generalized beliefs in internal locus of control had longer decision time than those who believed in external control only when the task requires skill. Internal reacts more approximately to other people than are externals.

Internals and externals becomes anxious and inattentive when they find themselves in situations having locus of control probabilities that differ from their generalized expectancies. Externals become anxious when they are allowed complete control over punishment contingencies where as internals become anxious when such control is denied to them. In both cases anxiety arises from a discrepancy between generalized expectancies and objective reality and have adverse consequence for learning. Persons with internal control expectancies tend to be more cognitively active than those with external control expectancies

iv) Demographical Variable

In the present study in demographical variables are as under.

1) Family structure –

Family structure is categorised as – i) Nuclear family and joint family.

- Nuclear family is that family where not more three siblings with their parents stay in a house.
- Joint family – In joint family grand parents stay with in the family. It is extended family where all brothers including unmarried brothers and sisters stay together.
2) Socio – Economics status of the family – Taking in to account the
income and occupation of the subjects, socio-economic status of the
family is categorised into three sub groups :
i) Low - In this group family members are labourers and their income is
less than 5000 Rs. per month.
ii) Middle – Total income of such family members is in between
Rs. 5000 to 15000 per month and one or more members of the family
are educated
iii) High – Total income of such family members is more than Rs. 15000
per month and all members of the family are educated and employed.
3) Area of residence – This variable is categorized as Urban and Rural area
selected from Ahmednagar districts.
4) Sex / Gender – This variables is categorized as male and female.

1.3 Significance of the study

Rapid development is taking place in various fields i.e. information
and technology, computer, agriculture, engineering, bio-technology etc. To
adjust with this new situation and gain knowledge of these new fields for
one's own development, one should develop good reading habits and reading
skills.

It is observed that younger children don't have much information
about the above fields. They are lacking in general knowledge, new
discoveries and existing knowledge. Nations with a high illiteracy rate are
handicapped economically and politically. The same thing is applicable to
the individuals who can't read well enough..

Low quality of education affects development of the country. When
any country is liberalizing and entering the global market, we need to
increase quality in education. It is the nature of the market economy that only those who efficiently maintain high productivity and quality will survive. Without high quality, survival is difficult for any educational institution or individuals. To achieve high quality in education the focus should be on reading habits and reading skills. The most important problem before higher education today is to improve quality of education.

Due to poor reading habits the citizens as well as society are facing very severe problems regarding unemployment, corruption, superstitions, hygiene and terrorism. To overcome these problems, one should develop reading habits. Communication plays a vital role in modern era. Reading, learning and expressing is a chain or process of communication. Reading can be called as first step in acquiring knowledge, information, techniques and new thoughts.

Generally it is observed that a sizable number of youths irrespective of gender differences, standard of living, geographical limitations, lack in reading as such they are reluctant to read.

Main purpose for conducting this study is to convert these negative conditions in to favorable, positive and hopeful situations such as

1. Developing positive attitude towards reading habits.
2. Creating environment to develop the skill of reading.
3. Reducing the impact of television, multimedia channels, audio-video channels which do limit the thinking capacity of students
4. Establishing self confidence among urban and rural students.
5. Generating the importance of print media as a permanent source of knowledge.
6. Removing social evils like superstitious, illiteracy false beliefs, unemployment and corruption.
7. Stressing the value of reading for the purpose of psychological community development.

8. Strengthening the mind through the enjoyment of reading and minimizing the stresses, tensions and mental burden.

9. Coping up with the personality changes and also with global economic and rapid changes.

Formal educational system along with its social aspiration is careless for developing such skills that have prime importance in personality development, community development and social upliftment.

Conclusions of this research will make aware the psychologists to find out a major reasons of social disorder. If a focus on this lacuna can be given through this research, it will add something really important to the field of psychology. Researches, psychologists, educationalists and social analogists may achieve a considerable view to add their analytical and interpretative impressions.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are as under:

1. To study the reading habits and reading skills of the students and their relationship with certain demographical variables such as nature of the families, socio-economic status of the families, area of residence, and gender of the respondents.

2. To study reading habits and reading skills of students in relation to certain psychological variables such as self concept, Anxiety and LOC..

3. To find out sex differences in psychological variables i.e. self concept, Anxiety and LOC.
4. To study the differences in the personality variables based on high scores and low scores on the reading habits and reading skills.

1.5 Hypotheses

1. Subjects coming form urban area have significantly superior reading habit and reading skills than those who come from rural area.
2. Significantly superior reading habit and reading skills are observed among the females than males.
3. The subjects with advantaged background develop significantly better reading habits and reading skills than the subjects with disadvantaged background.
4. Subjects coming from nuclear families have significantly superior reading habits and reading skills than those who come from joint families.
5. Subjects coming from middle class families have significantly better reading habits and reading skills than those who come from higher and lower class families.
6. Subjects having better reading habits and reading skills are more internally controlled (LOC) than the subjects who have poor reading habits and reading skills.
7. Significantly high anxiety tend to be observed among the subjects who have poor reading habits and reading skills than those with superior reading habits and reading skills.
8. Significantly better self concept tend to be observed among the subjects having superior reading habits and reading skills than the subjects who have poor reading habits and reading skills.
9. Educational level of the subjects would affect their reading habits and reading skills.