CHAPTER VI
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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Reading plays an important role in human life. It is the chief means of acquiring knowledge. Printing material which is to be read, provides the most illuminating and varied records of human experience hidden in the past history and culture of mankind. It can be studied and verified again and again at the reader's convenience. A person who cannot read thus may be considered to an extent partially blind in this environment (Subramanyam, 1984).

Reading also plays an important role in school education. It has been demonstrated by researchers (e.g. Hughes, 1975) that the success of any student in any school subject depends largely on the development of his/her reading skills. Unfortunately a good number of students in primary schools of our country are found to be poor readers. Recent survey reports reveal that in India students are rather too backward in reading skills as compared to their counterparts living in developed countries (Thorndike, 1963). Perhaps because of this fact, in India, there appears a relatively greater amount of backwardness amongst Indian people as compared to Western countries. Furthermore, there is a greater amount of wastage and stagnation in education at all levels. Thus the immediate concern of Indian educators and researchers in the field of education appears to be one of identifying the factors which contribute to reading achievement of school children so as to remove the
backwardness in reading as well as to suggest remedial measures for the improvement of Reading Ability in them.

As is well known, primary school level is a crucial stage in education and it is the right age to develop any skill in students by providing a conducive atmosphere and proper guidance and instituting the required remedial programmes. Hence even in the development of Reading Ability or acquiring proficiency in Reading Ability, the training for the same should start at the primary school level. This is possible only when the factors which constitute Reading Ability are identified.

Thus the present study is an attempt in this direction in that it has as its major aim investigating the various factors which constitute the Reading Ability. It also attempted to ascertain the effect of Reading Ability training on the academic performance of students, i.e. whether the improvement in Reading Ability leads to improvement in academic performance.

To be more specific, the present study set out with the main objectives of (1) ascertaining the correlates of Reading Ability, (2) ascertaining the relationship between Reading Ability and academic performance, (3) ascertaining whether Reading Ability differs in terms of different types of school, (4) ascertaining the relationship between Reading Ability and personality traits, personal attributes and home background of students, (5) ascertaining whether improvement in Reading Ability will lead to improvement in the academic performance of students.
The study was conducted in two phases. In phase I, an intercorrelational matrix was worked out and a 4 x 2 factorial design was used, whereas in phase II of the study, an ex-post facto research design was used and the data was treated with trend analysis.

For Phase I of the study, the sample consisted of 360 students, drawn from class II, III and IV respectively studying in 4 different types of school viz., Public school, Missionary school, Navayug school, and Central school. For Phase II, 45 students of class III studying in Navayug school were taken with 15 students each (7 with good Reading Ability and 8 with poor Reading Ability) for Experimental group, Control group I and Control group II, respectively.

Tools used in the Phase I and II of the study include the following:

1. Reading Ability test (Devised by the researcher for the purpose)
2. Intelligence test (by A.N. Misra, 1971)
3. Phonic ability test (by J.M. Hughes, 1975)
4. Personal attributes instrument (Devised by the researcher for the purpose)
5. Home background Instrument ( -do- )
6. Personality traits Instrument ( -do- )

The statistical method used were inter correlation matrix, step-wise regression analysis, t-test and trend analysis.

The results obtained were as follows -
1. Reading Ability was constituted of a number of factors such as personality traits, intelligence, phonic ability, reading habits of students, reading interest of students, health of students, availability of reading material, parents' education, parents' occupation and reading habit of parents.

2. Reading Ability was positively and significantly correlated with academic performance.

3. Reading Ability was a function of types of school; specifically, Missionary school students had the highest Reading Ability score, followed by students of Public school, Navayug school and Central school in that order.

4. Reading Ability varied in terms of differential personality traits (i.e. diligence at work, honesty, neatness, etc) amongst students.

5. Reading Ability of students differed in terms of their personal attributes, such as intelligence, reading habit of students, reading interest of students, health of students etc.

6. Reading Ability was positively and significantly correlated with home background; such as, availability of reading materials at home, parents' education, parents occupation, parents encouragement towards reading etc.

7. Reading Ability did not differ as a function of sex factor, except in the case of Class II, Missionary school students wherein girls had significantly higher Reading Ability scores than boys.
8. Improvement in Reading Ability led to better academic performance amongst students.

The above results were found to support the findings of some of the researches which have focussed on one or two of ten factors obtained as correlates of Reading Ability in this study. The present study differs from the other studies in the sense that it has considered all the relevant factors of Reading Ability rather than one or two factors, and arrived at the correlates demonstrating that Reading Ability is not a separate entity but is composed of ten factors in all. Except two, the remaining eight factors were improved upon in students through a Reading Ability training, to find out if improvement in Reading Ability will lead to improvement in academic performance of students. Results showed that improvement in Reading Ability contributed to improvement in the academic performance of students.

Limitations

While the objectives set up for this study have been realised, there have been certain limitations which need to be taken cognizance of. It is well known that however much one may attempt a perfect research design, certain limitations are unavoidable, particularly in the field of education, wherein one deals with human subjects and that too with young students. Despite this basic limitation an attempt has been made to ensure as adequate a research design as possible by controlling as many extraneous variances as possible by either building them into the research design or by taking matched subjects and randomizing wherever possible.
In addition to the above, certain important limitations have entered into the study which are being presented below.

Firstly, the limitation in regard to the tools of the study need to be taken up. As mentioned elsewhere, an attempt has been made to use only those tools for data collection which have been standardized on Indian Population. Thus except Hughe's (1975) instrument of phonic ability, the other tools were standardized on Indian population. The instruments devised by the researcher, though were first subjected to a pilot study to ascertain their worthiness and relevance before taking up for the final study, are not standardized tests. For instance, the personality traits instrument, which includes a large number of factors, is not a standardized test. The factors considered under personality traits, are taken by the schools (study sample) particularly in the primary sections as indicative of personality traits. To this extent, the scores obtained on personality test instrument may not be representative of the particular child's personality trait, though it gives the teacher's perception of the child's personality.

The second limitation refers to the representativeness of the sample. Only one school under each type of school have been taken for this study. Since there are many schools under each 'type' (of school), as classified by the Delhi Administration to make the sample representative, it would have been ideal to take random sample of students from each school, but this was beyond feasibility of the researcher, because many schools refused to give permission to collect data as they had very tight curriculum schedule.
The third limitation is in regard to Phase II of the study. Here, the training programme on Reading Ability was given to students of only one type of school. If the same training had been given to students of all the 4 types of school, one could have obtained a far more authentic conclusion about the effect of Reading Ability training on academic performance. The time factor and the availability of school, limited this phase to one school.

The fourth limitation refers to the very small size of the sample of students given the Reading Ability training. Only 15 students could be taken in each group, which is rather too small to render the results valid and generalizable. A larger sample and that too from different types of school should have been subjected to Reading Ability training to make any valid generalization.

The next limitation is that the second phase was conducted only in English medium school, using the phonic ability test by Hughes, which was in English. It is important to develop a phonic ability test in vernacular language so as to use which have vernacular language as the medium of instruction.

Another limitation has been that, in the Reading Ability training it would have been ideal to use an audio-visual equipment to read the phonic words, pronounce the words etc. This would have given a greater degree of uniformity and standard in teaching of reading programme to students, so that the possibility of fatigue effect, boredom effect and other similar human error effect entering into the experimental situation could have been avoided. This could not be done so because
of financial restraints. However, it may be stressed that the researcher on her part took considerable precaution to keep the experimental situation as well controlled and uniform as possible.

The seventh limitation refers to the problems encountered in a field study. The Phase II of this research is basically a field study and not a laboratory type experiment. Therefore, it was not possible to shut out the various distracting sounds and sights coming from other classes which might have affected student's attention and concentration. Since this type of auditory and visual distraction were the same for all the schools of the three groups, one could expect that the confounding effect of these distractions would be uniform for all the subjects in the study. Thus the chance errors could possibly have been neutralised.

The eighth limitation refers to the socio-economic status of the students in the Phase II of the research. Herein, one may argue that the differences in the socio-economic status amongst students might have confounded the research situation and thus the obtained results may not be valid. In this context, it is to be noted that in Navayug school all the students came from almost similar socio-economic background and thus this factor has been to an extent controlled, though one might have taken subjects matched for socio-economic status.

Suggestions for further Research

Arising from the limitations mentioned above, one may put forward the following suggestions for future research in this field.
1. This study both phase I and phase II, has to be replicated so as to ascertain if the findings in this study are obtained by other researchers in different schools in different States of India.

2. Children with lower or average IQs should also be taken up and subjected to the phase II of this study, so as to see if their academic performance also improves.

3. Children, especially with scholastic backwardness should be particularly subjected to the RA Training so as to see if their academic backwardness could be removed.

4. The phonic test should be made in Hindi to test its applicability with Hindi Medium school children. If found workable, similar phonic tests could be devised for other vernacular medium schools.

5. For the Reading Ability test and the Training programme as a whole, future researches may make use of audio visual equipment (T.V., Cassette player) so that there is uniformity in the administration of the training programme. This would also help in standardizing this programme and pass the same on to various schools.

6. The future research in the field may take up more schools under each type and make an attempt to see if Reading Ability is constituted of any other factors also, such as the organisational climate in school, the extra and cocurricular activities, the curriculum and syllabi followed etc. These are some of the factors which this study had not considered.
7. Sex differences in vocabulary, speech, language etc. have been brought out clearly by many earlier researchers. In Reading Ability too, one may explore this aspect in more detail, as in this study variations in terms of sex factor have not been dealt with adequately.

While all the above limitations have been listed out and suggestions for overcoming the limitations as well as direction for future researches have been presented, it is important to reiterate that despite the above limitations, the findings of this study has been able to throw light on a very difficult and somewhat loosely explored area in the field of education, namely, Reading Ability. Towards this end, one may consider this study as having made a significant and unique contribution to the field of educational psychology.