CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION
Various researchers have defined reading in different ways. This divergence in their views about the meaning of reading is the outcome of their own way of looking at it and their own theoretical orientations. Definitions of reading are divided into two major types: (1) those that equate reading with interpretation of experience generally; and (2) those that equate reading with interpretation of graphic symbols. The first is a broader category and encompasses the second; most reading definitions are related to one or both.

Reading as Interpretation of Experience

With the first type of reading definition, in which reading is equated with the interpretation of experience generally, we might speak of reading pictures, reading faces, or reading the weather. We read a squeaking door, a clap of thunder, a barking dog. The golfer reads the putting greens, the detective reads clues, the geologist reads rocks, the astronomer reads stars, the doctor reads the symptoms of illness, and the reading teacher reads the symptoms of reading disability.

Reading as interpretation of experience has implications for both the reading teacher and the pupil learning to read. One implication is that teachers of reading must become experts in reading children. The teacher of reading must understand children and must be able to identify the personal differences in children, which may lead to achievement differences between pupils.

A second implication is that the teacher needs to become expert in reading the symptoms of reading success and reading disability. One lesson
learned the hard way in combating major diseases is that many people die from treatable diseases because someone either ignored the symptoms or did not read them correctly. In a similar fashion, children may become reading disability cases because someone ignored or misread the symptoms of reading disability.

A third implication is that the teacher must develop expertness in reading the causes of reading disability. Smith and Carrigan (1959) note that clinicians are like a small group of bystanders standing next to a river full of drowning people who are being swept seaward. The clinicians can pull out a few, but the rest are lost. Few clinicians are willing to go upstream to find out how the people got into the river in the first place. Yet reading teachers clearly need to know how the disabled reader gets into the river of reading disability. To do this, they need to be able to read the causes of reading disability. It is not enough to know the symptoms; symptoms must be related to cause. Only in this way are prevention and remediation of reading disability possible.

Still another implication of reading as interpretation of experience is that pupils must be readers of experience before they can become readers of graphic symbols. The pupil cannot read symbols without having experience — without having those experiences that give the symbol meaning.

**Reading as Interpretation of Graphic Symbols**

Let us now turn to the second type of definition of reading, which equates reading with the interpretation of graphic symbols. Most definitions of reading given in professional textbooks are of this second type. DeBoer and Dallmann (1960) consider that reading "involves the comprehension and interpretation of
ideas symbolized by the written or printed page”. In a later book the authors (Dallmann, Rouch, Char, & DeBoer, 1978) note that their emphasis is on “reading as a process involving meaningful reaction to printed symbols”. Bond and Tinker (1967) point out that “reading involves the recognition of printed or written symbols which serve as stimuli for the recall of meanings built up through the readers past experience”. Harris and Sipay (1975) define reading as “the meaningful interpretation of written or printed verbal symbols”. Gibson (1966) says that reading “is receiving communication; it is making discriminative responses to graphic symbols; it is decoding graphic symbols to speech; and it is getting meaning from the printed pages”. Moreover, Dechant (1970) has defined reading as “the process of giving the significance intended by the writer to the graphic symbols by relating them to one’s own fund of experience”.

All these definitions of reading have certain elements in common; in particular, they all note that reading is an interpretation of graphic symbols. Reading is thus perceived as a twofold process: (1) identification of the symbols; and (2) association of appropriate meanings with them. Reading requires identification and comprehension.

Another important aspect of reading that is frequently emphasized in definitions of reading is that it is a language and communication process – the process of putting the reader in contact and communication with ideas. Reading always involves an interaction between the writer and reader. It is the culminating act of the communication process, initiated by the thoughts of the writer and expressed through the symbols on the page. Without a reader, communication via the printed page is impossible; writing has no purpose
without reader. Thus, a team of experts defined reading as an interaction by
which meaning encoded in visual stimuli by an author becomes meaning in the
mind of the reader.

Other descriptions of reading emphasize that reading requires higher-
order thinking. Reading requires the communication of a message or of
meanings and the apprehension of meanings; and meaning occurs on several
levels, from literal comprehension to interpretative reading, from concrete
interpretation to abstract interpretation, and from simple reaction to evaluation of
what has been decoded. Reading is so difficult to analyze because it involves
the most intricate workings of the human mind. It is a genuine cognitive process.
Reading is thinking through print.

Thorndike (1917) maintained years ago that the reading of a paragraph
involves the same sort of organization and analysis as does thinking. It includes
learning, reflection, judgment, analysis, synthesis, problem-solving behaviour,
selection, organization, comparison of data, determination of relationships, and
critical evaluation of what is being read. Hildreth (1958) has pointed out that
reading requires inference, weighing the relative importance of ideas and
meanings, and seeing the relationships among them.

Examine now more closely two important aspects of the reading process:
(1) the language or sign system of reading which the reader must identify and
recognize and in which the messages are formulated and encoded; and (2) the
decoding or comprehension process in which the reader must engage.
The Sign System

The purpose of all communication is the sharing of meanings; the purpose of all reading is comprehension of meanings. But it is the sign system, the symbols or words that must carry the burden of meaning between the communicators or between the writer and the reader. The symbol is the writer's or speaker's tool for awakening meaning in the reader or listener. James (1890) noted that language is, "a system of signs, different from the things signified, but able to suggest them".

The focus for many years in the teaching of reading has been on the development of quick and easy recognition of the sign system – the alphabetic writing or the graphic language system. The teacher was interested in helping the beginning reader to perceive the significant contrastive features of the letters in words and to identify letters and words with facility and accuracy. Research focused on feature analysis (analysis of the written symbols) or on the analysis of surface structure of the language. Reading teachers spent most of their time and energy on the perceptual aspects of letter and word identification and on methods of word identification.

Bloomfield (1942) differentiated between the act of reading (recognition of letter-sound or grapheme-phoneme correspondences) and the goal of reading (comprehension). The central thesis of the Bloomfield method is that there is an inseparable relationship between the words as printed and the sounds for which the letters are conventional signs, and that converting letters to meaning requires from the beginning a concentration upon letter and sound to bring about as
rapidly as possible an automatic association between them. Bloomfield's system is a linguistic system of teaching reading, which separates the problem of the study of word form from the study of word meaning. Bloomfield felt that initial teaching of reading for meaning is incorrect, and that meaning will come quite naturally as the alphabetic code or principle is discovered. Reading is thus, basically described by Fries (1963) and Bloomfield (1942) as recoding printed symbols into sound and then extracting meaning from sound.

In Bloomfield's approach to reading, readers who have not previously dealt with the words must make two adjustments: (1) they must visually identify the symbols (which makes reading a sensory process, requiring proper use of the eyes and to some extent proper eye movements; and a word-identification process, requiring the discrimination of one visual stimulus from another and the application of the appropriate method of word identification); and (2) they must associate sound with the symbols (which makes reading a recoding process). Reading thus involves visual identification of the symbol and pronunciation of the symbol. The reader must identify the symbols, but must also be able to translate them into sounds.

Unfortunately, excessive concern with the sign system or the identification of letters and words may actually handicap the pupil. Poor readers have to focus most of their processing capacity on the visual aspects. Also, beginning readers often become so engrossed with the mechanical aspects of reading, with word identification and pronunciation that they fail to understand the need for comprehension. Nevertheless, pupils must learn to identify letters and words,
they must become familiar with the letter sequences, and they must acquire a sight vocabulary.

Decoding or Comprehension

If reading were simply a word-identification or word-naming process, children would be good readers when they could name the printed symbols. However, reading is much more than simple recognition of the graphic symbols. Reading is more than the mere ability to pronounce the words on the printed page, the match the written word with the spoken code, to go from the graphic code to the spoken code. It is more than a matching of phoneme and grapheme: this is recoding, but it is not decoding. Decoding occurs only when meaning is associated with the written symbol and only when the meaning that the writer wanted to share with the reader has been received by the reader. Decoding is effected through the use of semantic and syntactic cues.

Semantic Cues

The reading of graphic symbols consists of two processes: the visual process involved in bringing the stimuli to the brain, and the mental processes involved in interpreting the graphic symbols after they get to the brain. When the light rays from the printed page strike the retinal cells of the eyes, signals are sent along the optic nerve to the visual centers of the brain. This is not yet reading. The signals must be interpreted; the reader must give significance to the graphic symbols by bringing meaning to them. The critical element in reading often is not what is on the page, but rather what the graphic symbols signify to the reader. Thus, Dechant (1970) defined reading as "the process of giving the
significance intended by the writer to the graphic symbols by relating them to one’s own fund of experiences”.

Reading is a perceptual process, an interpretative process, a conceptual and thinking process. Conceptual thought is required to react with meaning. Readers interpret what they read, associate it with their past experience, and project beyond it in terms of ideas, relations, and categorizations. Reading can be viewed as a process of forming tentative judgments and interpretations, and of verifying correcting, and confirming guesses. To comprehend a passage, reader must be in a continuously alert, anticipatory frame of mind, suspending judgment and correcting or confirming guesses as they go along.

Reading as decoding or as an interpretative process focuses on the semantic information or cues. Semantic cues are meaning-bearing cues based on experience; they are bundles of experience, which have been given vocabulary tags by an author (Hoskisson & Krohm, 1974). When the reader associates meaning with a symbol, a meaning acquired through experience, the reader is utilizing a semantic cue and is making use of the semantic context.

The fact is that readers cannot be proficient readers of graphic symbols without previously having been proficient readers of experience. Reading always involves a reading of past experience. Meaning is supplied by the readers as they process the symbols by relating them to experience. The word boat may have no meaning for a pupil who has never experienced, handled, seen, or sailed a boat. In reading, an adequate response demands much more than mere identification and recognition of the configuration. There simply is not a one-to-
one correspondence between the stimulus (the graphic input) and the response (what the reader must add is the sum total of the retained and organized effects of past experience). According to Hurvich and Jameson (1974), the individual perceives his world in terms of "what he is" as much as "what it is". Thus, "reading typically is the bringing of meaning to rather than the gaining of meaning from the printed page" (Smith & Dechant, 1961). The reader is stimulated by the writer's words, but in turn invests those words with his or her own meaning. Meaning is thus output (what the reader brings by way of past experience to the printed page) as well as input (the new meanings that the reader gets from the printed page). Comprehension occurs only when the reader's reconstruction agrees with the writer's intended message.

**Syntactic Cues**

Decoding is also effected through syntax or the syntactic content. Recent discussions of the nature of the reading process have thus broadened the description of reading by focusing on language structures. Lefevre (1964), a linguist, started the emphasis on language structures. He stressed syntactical cues, both intraword (such as inflections) and interword (such as sentence structure), and maintained that the "grasp of meaning is integrally linked to grasp of structure". Only by reading structures can full meaning be attained. Lefevre thus adapted linguistic ideas to meaningful reading. He suggested an analytical method of teaching reading, emphasizing language patterns. He emphasized in particular that meaning comes only through the grasping of the language structure exemplified in a sentence.
Lefevre's ideas were more clearly outlined by psycholinguist such as Chomsky (1970), Goodman (1970), and Ruddell (1974). All these authors reject the notion that reading is simply sequential word recognition. Reading is not the adding up, as it were, of the meanings of individual words; it is not simply a sequential perception and identification of letters and words. These theorists emphasize that all languages, and hence all sentences, have a surface structure and a deep structure. Sounds or written words are the surface representation of a message; meaning, both syntactic and semantic interpretation, is the deep level. The deep structure gives the meaning of the sentence; it is the sentence structure, the way the words are used in the sentence that at least partially determines the meaning of the individual words.

The transformational – generative grammar model, advocated by Chomsky, suggests that grammar or the rules of syntax are a set of rules by which sense is made out of language. Grammar is the link between sound or graphic symbols, and meaning. Syntax mediates between the visual surface structure and the deep structure or meaning. Syntax permits the grouping or ordering of words to suggest specific nuances of meaning.

Goodman (1967) notes that reading is a selective process, involving partial use of available minimal language cues (graphic, semantic, and syntactic). Readers, as they process this partial information, confirm, reject, or refine their tentative decisions in the course of reading. Goodman notes that readers utilize all three kinds of information (graphic, semantic, and syntactic) simultaneously. Certainly, without the graphic input there would be no reading, but the reader uses syntactic and semantic information as well.
Smith (1971) points out that fluent readers maximize the use of cues contained in the semantic and syntactic language and minimize their dependence on feature analysis or surface structure. They operate at a deep structure level and predict as they read, sampling the surface structure as they test out their predictions. When the predictions are not confirmed, they then engage in more visual analysis. Wardhaugh (1969) suggests that semantic and syntactic processing are necessary in addition to the processing of the visual signals.

The import of all this is that readers will do a better job of decoding if they understand language structures or the patterned regularities among the elements of a sentence. The rules of syntax determine how the particular visual-semantic association should be interpreted. Poor readers, in contrast to good readers, maximize the graphic input and minimize the semantic and syntactic input. The good readers, on the other hand, utilize three kinds of information simultaneously: the graphic input, the semantic input, and the syntactic input.

The discussion on reading thus far has in a general way identified three basic systems operating in reading that can cue meaning: the sign system or the graphic cues, the semantic cues, and the syntax or the syntactic cues. These translate themselves generally into two phases: identification of the symbols, and association of meaning with the symbols. Reading is clearly a synthesis of recognizing and comprehending, in which the absence of either makes true reading impossible (Harris & Sipay, 1975).

Figure 1 illustrates the graphic, semantic, and syntactic relationships.
Figure 1. Schematic representation of the graphic, semantic, and syntactic relationships
Reading

WORD IDENTIFICATION

- Visual identification of the symbol
- Association of sound with the symbol (Recoding)

COMPREHENSION (Association of Meanings with the symbols)

- SEMANTIC CUE SYSTEM (cues from experience)
- SYNTACTIC CUE SYSTEM (Cues in the flow of the language)

GRAPHIC CUE SYSTEM (Cues within words)

Surface Structure

Deep structure
Reading as a sensory process focuses on the graphic input or information, on the letters used in printing and on their sequencing in words; reading as a perceptual process focuses on the semantic information or cues; reading as a language process is concerned with the syntactic information, or structure, as provided, for example, by word order, inflectional endings, and intonation patterns. Reading is message reconstruction, and for the most part comprehension of meaning depends on using all the information or cues available. The description of reading that has been developed to this point is twofold: (1) Reading is a complex language system, and (2) it is a complex cognitive skill aimed at obtaining information. The reader is constantly processing information.

Danks and Fears (1979) take a different view about reading. They point out that reading aloud, or oral reading may or may not involve comprehension. Experience shows that there are some children who can read aloud texts, but do not understand what they read. They have the ability to give a phonetic conversion of the graphemic print, but they are unable to gain access into semantics. Such children are called as word callers (Smith, Goodman, & Meredith, 1976). Danks and Fears (1979) propose two hypotheses about oral reading performance. Figure 2 represents the Schematic version of these two hypotheses. It is proposed that with the visual input from print the symbols are decoded into a phonological base. This leads to oral production (point A in Figure 2). At this point there might be no comprehension of the text at all, or oral production and comprehension might progress in parallel; or comprehension might occur much later than the oral production, perhaps as the reader hears
himself or herself talk. However, text comprehension would depend upon three main factors, i.e., reader's level of reading, text difficulty level, and the purpose of reading. Readers' reading skill level sets the upper limit that reader can accomplish in comprehension while reading a text orally. Besides, so far as text difficulty is concerned it can vary at several levels such as syntactic, structural, vocabulary, ideas, and concepts. When a text is syntactically ambiguous, or contains infrequently used words, or the ideas presented in the text are abstract or obscure, comprehension is retarded. Moreover, the purpose of reading also determines comprehension such as: if the reader's oral errors are being assessed, or if he is going to be tested on the text he has covered. Thus, Danks and Fears view that reading may remain confined to decoding the print into the sound base, or it may carry comprehension of the text along with oral decoding depending upon the reader's level of reading skill, purpose of reading, and text difficulty level.

Figure 2 illustrates the schematic version of two hypotheses about Oral reading performance.

Goodman (1969, 1980), and Smith (1978,1982) propose a completely different view of reading. It is basically viewed as an information-processing task; but the way it is achieved is explained in a completely different way. The process of reading starts with the visual stimulus-input from a set of printed matter. This input may be highly selective in the sense that the reader, instead of going through every bit of visual input, selectively chooses a few out of an entire array of it. In addition to the selectivity of input, reading involves association of ideas and manipulation of concepts at the ideational level, and relating the
Figure 2. Schematic version of two hypotheses about Oral Reading Performance
PRINT INPUT → DECODING → COMPREHENSION

(A) Verbal Code

SPEECH ARTICULATION

SPHCE

(B) Semantic Representation

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

SPEECH ARTICULATION

SPHCE
concurrently present visual input to them. This act is presumably dependent upon the reader's level of linguistic development and proficiency.

Goodman (1980) while describing reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" points out that the reader simultaneously processes three different kinds of information-grapho-phonic, syntactic, and semantic-which are contained in the text. Reading is based on an efficient and continuous process of anticipating what is not seen, and this anticipation is made on the basis of minimal selected cues from the preceding text. Thus, he asserts that reading is an active and selective process, far from being a series of word perception. And, the more skilled and fluent the reader is, the finer and more efficient is his selectivity and the lesser he depends upon graphic input.

Smith (1978, 1982) points out that reading is not a visual activity, though it starts with visual information input. He describes reading as a trade off between visual and non-visual information available to the reader. Visual information refers to the information input from print, which is fed to the brain through the eyes. Non-visual information refers to the reader's knowledge of language, his knowledge on the subject matter that he is reading, his knowledge of how to read a text, etc.

The reader while reading a text makes predictions about what is coming next and this is dependent upon his command over non-visual information available to him. The extent to which his reading will make use of visual and non-visual information depends on how risk he is willing to undertake while making
predictions in reading. Smith (1982) also assumes that too high level of dependence on visual information retards comprehension of the text.

Hence both Goodman and Smith hold the view that reading is necessarily a cognitive act, an act of decoding meaning from the printed text. These two authors emphasize upon the projections and predictions the reader makes while reading a text. However, relatively less emphasis is laid upon visual information input in reading than it is upon non-visual information.

From all the definitions of reading discussed above, it is clear that reading is perceived as a twofold process: (1) identification of symbols, and (2) association of appropriate meanings with them. The former makes up the first stage while the latter makes up the second stage of reading. The second stage of reading is clearly dependent on the first stage. Both facets taken together make reading complete and meaningful.

Another important concept involved in the present study is the social disadvantage (SDA). Social disadvantage is a complex of adverse environmental circumstances, which bear directly upon the development of adequate intellectual and social functioning (Miller, 1968). The impetus for work on socially disadvantaged has come from the research on early experience and sensory deprivation in comparative psychology. Following the work of Hebb (1949) on animals, which were raised in restricted environment and were found to have retarded sensory and perceptual development, the psychologists have maintained that poor verbal and intellectual environment lead to cultural and social disadvantage.
The disadvantaged children also refer to the largely unspecified complex of environmental factors associated with poverty that prevents an organism from achieving its optimum development. Those children are disadvantaged who: (i) suffer from a continuous inadequacy of materials, educational and social provisions; (ii) are subjected to detrimental environmental stresses which interfere with the growth and development of their body intellect or personality, and thus, able to achieve the inherent potential; and (iii) are deprived of basic biological, psychological, and socio-educational needs of life (Rath, Dash, & Dash, 1979). A number of investigators have taken up the task of describing in details, the life circumstances of the disadvantaged. The terms such as “deprived” (Clarke & Clarke, 1953), “psychologically deprived” (Kirk, 1958), “culturally deprived” (Riessman, 1962), “socially disadvantaged” (Havighurst, 1964), and “disadvantaged” (Uzgiris, 1968) are all used in current literature to identify the group whose children in the main stream are marked by three general characteristics during their school career: (i) progressive decline in intellectual functioning, (ii) accumulative academic achievement deficit, and (iii) premature school termination or higher dropout rate. All these seem to be the effects of a deprived socio-cultural environment.

As it has been stated by DeCecco (1968) that a disadvantaged child is one who is reared in a pre-school environment, which fails to develop the entering behaviour necessary for beginning his formal education in public school. During pre-school years the social environment for the disadvantaged child lacks adequate qualitative stimulation, which is essential for normal growth and functioning of his cognitive abilities. Moreover, if such a child has come from a
similar adverse home environment, his cognitive growth has already been depressed before he comes to the school.

In short, the socially disadvantaged children are those who have come from lower caste, lower class, slum or depressed neighbourhoods, minority, ethnic, linguistic, or tribal backgrounds.

In Indian context, the term "disadvantaged" initially referred to the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), the urban slum, and the Economically Backward Class (EBC) groups and subgroups, covering a large segment of the rural population. With the development in the assessment of specific, molecular, micro-level, categorization of children into groups or subgroups did not seem acceptable. Moreover, an universal definition can not be used on specific group/subgroup comparisons. Therefore, disadvantaged need to be considered in the individual context, as an universal phenomenon. So, a disadvantaged child may be defined as one whose basic bio-physio-psychological and social-affective-personal needs have not been met or inadequately met, whose rights have been denied, who suffers from a continuing under stimulation or prolonged deprivation, whose environment has failed to provide appropriate social support and cognitive stimulations at the critical stages in life for optimal growth and development, and who is subject to neglect, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, and/or developmentally detrimental stressful experiences of any kind. These life situations do not allow the disadvantaged child's innate potentialities to grow and develop fully and harmoniously. And as a consequence, the disadvantaged child, thus fails to attain optimal growth and development in physical, mental, and spiritual domains and/or educational,
vocational, and social spheres, preventing him/her from achieving the limits of his/her inherent potentials. The disadvantaged children's eco-cultural environments have deprived them materially, their families have failed to provide effective upbringing for their optimal development, and their social support networks are weak or non-existent. As a result, their internal psychological conditions, and competencies have remained relatively under-developed, inadequate or weak; ultimately leading to failure, frustration, anxiety, depression, and unproductive copying efforts (Dash & Hariharan, 1988; Dash, 1989).

Numerous studies in India have established the adverse influence of social disadvantage on cognitive development of children (Mohanty, 1998; Mohanty & Dash, 1997; Mohanty & Mishra, 1991; 1994; Mohanty & Rout, 1992; Mohanty & Sharma, 1995; Sahu, 1985; 2000; Singh, 1982; Sinha, 1982). Several researchers have documented the negative correlation between social disadvantage and academic achievement (Bhatia, 1982; Jayaswal, Singh, & Hassan, 1982; Mohanty & Barik, 1997; Rath, Dash, & Dash, 1979). Moreover, in India maximum socio-culturally disadvantaged children stagnate and drop-out at primary school level due to the lack of educational stimulation at home and maladjustment at school, thus, their cognitive growth is seriously impaired. The percentage of unemployment and under employment is, therefore, more in case of these socially disadvantaged children (Rath & Dash, 1975).

In India, majority of rural children, most of the lower caste and urban slum children, and all the tribal children are disadvantaged. In our culture, caste may be more significant variable than socio-economic status (SES). So caste belongingness may be more important factor affecting cognitive development of
children compared to SES. Because of the prevalence of the complicated caste system in India, it seems justified to assume that a poor Harijan child and a poor Brahmin child will have different degree of social disadvantage.

Miller (1968) has identified four major classes of variables where culturally disadvantaged children show deficits in performance as compared to the advantaged group. These variables are: (a) cognitive variables, (b) motivational variables, (c) personal style variables, and (d) physical variables.

The cognitive variables refer to the individual's skills necessary to function at a level of abstraction. They include perceptual, conceptual, and linguistic abilities. Disadvantaged children seem to lack adequate perceptual constancy, and cognitive competence. Most studies have emphasized the negative effects of social disadvantage on cognitive competence of children (Whiteman & Deutsch, 1968; Jensen & Fredericksen, 1973; Firkowska-Mankiewiez & Czarkowski, 1981; Hunt, 1985; Millard & Katherine, 1968). The scholastic achievement of socially disadvantaged children also hampered (Basvana & Rani, 1984; Chalip & Stigler, 1986). Moreover, in India, the higher percentage of mentally retarded come from low SES group (Kuppuswamy, 1962).

The motivational variables refer to those learned attitudes which maintain task orientation of the individual and retain the task relevant involvement necessary for achievement (Miller, 1968). The disadvantaged children have very low motivation, which stands on their way for further progress. They do not think education to be important because they do not expect to rise too far in the occupational world. Strauss (1962) has characterized that members from high
social class do evidence of a high degree of motivation, which accounts partly for their success in the educational and occupational world. Rath, Dash, and Dash (1979) have reported that the educational and vocational aspirations of the low caste children and their parents are much below than that of the high caste children and their parents.

The personal style variables refer to the personal ways in which individuals process new information and approach behaviours they take in problem solving situations (Rath et al., 1979). These variables include individual’s self-concept, impulsivity, reflectivity present-future orientation, success-failure orientation, sense of control over environment, time orientation, etc. Disadvantaged children manifest significantly lower self esteem than most of the advantaged children, and their feelings of inadequacy lead to school failure. The disadvantaged children have vague and not definite notion about the future, and are more present-oriented. Due to cultural segregation and social isolation, the socially disadvantaged groups are proved to project worse personality observations compared to advantaged groups.

With regard to the physical conditions, it was reported that due to substandard nutrition and lack of adequate medical care, the incidence of chronic health problem is almost four times as great among disadvantaged families than advantaged families.

Last two decades saw an upsurge of interest in the research in the field of reading. This was the inevitable outcome of the observation that about 10 to 15 percent of student population in primary schools show reading problems.
Elimination or amelioration of reading problem in children necessarily presupposes a knowledge of causative factors. So far as the causes of reading failure is concerned a number of factors have been offered to account for it. The important ones of them include: lack of cerebral asymmetry, developmental lag, minimal brain damage, intellectual development, phonological processing, linguistic deficiency, memory failure, social disadvantage, etc.

In the following section an attempt is made to review the findings of related studies reporting the effects of the above causal factors on the reading abilities of children.