CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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India is a vast country with a very large population of varied cultures, tradition and languages. The lack of means of communication, the advent of Aryans, the intermingling of the Aryans with Dravidians developed a diversified culture, diversified language groups and cohesion of religious groups. In those days Sanskrit was the basis of culture, religion and communication. Sanskrit being a language with set pattern of grammar remained a language of the learned only. This resulted in the evolving of different regional languages like Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi, Bengali etc.

1.1 Position of Hindi in Pre-Independence Era

The place of Hindi in Indian Secondary Education ever since its introduction has remained controversial and more especially in the post freedom era. Unfortunately the problem of Hindi is always clouded with political issues. It is the feeling of all that Hindi for a long time to come should be continued as the link language.

Hindi though happened to be the daughter of Sanskrit, it has varied local forms like Bhojpuri, Avadhi
etc. It is worthy to note that a large portion of people happened to be users of these branches of Hindi. In the middle ages the conquest of Islam over India led to the establishment of Muslim rule in the most of the part of Northern India. Muslim gave rise to spoken language named Urdu which was having a vocabulary full of Persian and Hindi words. This language became a means of communication. Due to Persian and Arabic words and the Persian script it was not successful in all parts of India.

The Hindu saints like Tulasidas, Kabir, Surdas endeavoured to regenerate and revitalise the Hindu culture. They therefore made use of the Hindi language as a means of communication of culture, and hence sanskritised Hindi became popular not only among the masses of Northern India but among the non-Hindi parts of non-south regions of India like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bengal, Orissa, etc. Thus Hindi became a link language. Slowly and slowly Hindi began to have the same status which was occupied by Sanskrit. During the middle ages amongst the Rajput Kingdom also Hindi was the means of communication, though it had the tints of local dialects. Thus amongst the daughters of Sanskrit, Hindi with its dialects became the language used by a large majority of people barring the most Southern areas of India.
During the reign of the British, the Persianised Hindi of Muslim rulers was replaced by English as the language of Administration. But the Britishers were an alien people and English language, because of its foreign root became the language of understanding not even 2% of the people of India.

1.2 The Case of Hindi after 1947

In the beginning of the 20th century freedom struggles gave rise to the spirit of patriotism and as a result of it, national leaders began to think of language common to most of the people of India. It is because of this that Gandhiji came forth with 14 points construction programme in which propagation of Hindi had a place. Even prior to Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad of Baroda also visualized the importance of Hindi as a link language of the people.

After independence the constituent assembly gave Hindi an honourable place as prime national language. With the increase of means of communication like the railways, roadways etc. There arose greater opportunities for people to come together. This also enhanced the propagation of Hindi. The Radio, the television, newspapers and religious discourses and the movies have the
dominant role in the spread of Hindi. Thus it is acclaimed that Hindi has a rightful people to be accepted as national language which can link various section of people.

The Government of Bombay appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of Shri D.V. Potdar. The committee recommended that:

"The aim of teaching Hindi as explained elsewhere should be steadily kept in view so that the student after passing standard XI, should be able to discharge his responsibilities as a future citizen of Indian union in a satisfactory manner. He should have acquired the ability and facility to express himself both in speech and writing on all questions of public interest as would come up, for instance in the legislatures of the country both central and state. He should be able to follow the programmes relayed by All India Radio in common Hindi. All official orders and proclamations, notifications etc., issued in common Hindi should be able to follow intelligently. Thus the whole aim of learning and teaching Hindi as a common language will be rather practical utilization than mere literary. He should not be able to find any difficulty in doing his job in a fairly satisfactory manner. He will easily feel the role of the common citizen of the Indian Union".

With a view to removing this inequality, the Central Advisory Board of Education divised the three language formula in 1956. It recommended that three languages should be taught in Hindi as well as Non-Hindi areas at middle and high school stage. The three language formula was simplified and approved by Chief Minister's Conference held in 1961. The conference recommended that the following languages should be taught at the middle and high school level.

(a) The regional language or the mother tongue when the latter is different from the regional language.

(b) Hindi or any other Indian language in Hindi speaking area.

(c) English or any other modern European language.

Kothari Commission of 1966 has also recommended a modified three language formula. The recommendation and re-recommendations of different committees and commissions show that there is a shift in emphasis of teaching Hindi in India.

1.3 The Policy of Hindi Teaching in Gujarat

The policy of teaching Hindi has undergone many changes. Hindi is taught as compulsory subject upto Stds.
VIII and IX. But before 1982 it was taught as a compulsory subject up to Std. X i.e. (New S.S.C.). Before the implementation of the new pattern 10 + 2 + 3; Hindi was taught as a compulsory subject up to Std. XI.

It is quite clear that more emphasis is put on the comprehension side of teaching Hindi. The Gujarat State Secondary School Certificate Examination Board also put emphasis on comprehension. This fact is supported by examining the distribution of marks in the question paper of Hindi. Out of 100 marks, about 60 marks are provided for testing comprehension of the test together with a passage for comprehension. Looking to all these conditions, the investigator thought that there is a need of a good, valid tool for measuring comprehension of pupils.

In non-Hindi speaking area, objectives of teaching Hindi are as follows:

1. To enable the pupils to express their thoughts in simple and correct Hindi.
2. To enable the pupils to write simple and correct Hindi.
3. To enable the pupils to comprehend spoken Hindi.
4. To enable the pupils to enjoy the music, rhythm and poetic thoughts.
To enable the pupils to comprehend written Hindi;

To enable the pupils to enrich their vocabulary.

It is in this context that the present problem has been undertaken for the purpose of research.

1.4 The Problem

The problem is "Construction and standardization of Reading Achievement Test in Hindi for pupils of Class VIII of Secondary Schools of Gujarat State". It is very essential on the part of the investigator to make precise connotation and meaning of the terms involved in the statement of the problem. They are:

- Construction
- Standardization
- Reading Achievement
- Pupils of Std. VIII

1.4.1 Construction

It happens in the field of mental measurement to adopt some foreign test rather than to construct a new test. This is particularly true with regard to intelligence tests and inventories. Here the term construction means to construct the test items after selecting the
reading material for measuring comprehension. All the items which are to be subjected to the process of standardization must be constructed. This naturally leads one to think that items must undergo the process of pilot administration and item analysis. A constructed test is always ready without undergoing any change in its form and content.

1.4.2 Standardization

This is a statistical term and it is a complete process of administration of the test and thereafter establishing the norms, its reliability and validity.

1.4.3 Reading Achievement

In a reading act, the far important aspects are reading speed and reading comprehension. It is found that the reading speed varies due to readability of the material, purpose of the reader, interest, attitude, linguistic experiences and familiarity with the theme of the material. It is an established fact that there is a positive relationship between reading speed and comprehension. There are various views about the speed of reading and comprehension. Some are of the views that for good comprehension the speed of reading be lowered
down. Faster reading does not guarantee good comprehension. Therefore, it is seriously viewed that no one should read faster at the cost of comprehension since reading is a purposeful activity and when purpose is lost, the activity has no significance. Consequently every one should try to read with a reasonable speed and comprehension. Hence the speed of reading and comprehension should be taken into consideration while judging the reading skill. This suggests that in judging the readers' ability score on reading speed and score of comprehension must be taken into consideration. The product of the two would be a proper solution for judging the reader's ability. The person who is good at comprehension and also a fast reader would always be higher in reading achievement. The person who is a slow reader and poor in comprehension would always score less in reading achievement. The rest of the combination may vary in degrees of the two components. Thus, in order to have better idea about the reader's achievement with regard to reading separate score of rate of reading and reading comprehension be taken into consideration. In this connection, Burl J. Brim has given the following formula.2

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In Gujarat the new pattern of education is implemented. It is known as 10+2+3 pattern. Again classes from I to VII are grouped under primary education. The classes from VIII to X are grouped under the heading of secondary education and classes XI and XII are grouped under higher secondary. Therefore, class VIII is the beginning year of secondary education.

They are the pupils who are in Std. VIII as regular students and learning Hindi as one of the subjects.

1.5 The Scope and Objectives of the Present Test

In India, although attempts have been made to develop some psychological tests and achievement test in certain school subjects, due attention has not so far been given to the development of tests in the field of reading, except a few persons who have attempted to construct tests in this field on a small scale. Therefore there is a vast scope for the present test in the field of Reading in Gujarat.
Reading ability tests are of immense importance to teachers. They help teachers to know their pupils' reading comprehension. The test would also tell them about the level of the pupils or of the class in relation to the norms of a large number that took the test while it is standardized. The test would also be useful to classify pupils on the basis of scores as excellent, good, average and poor at reading comprehension. Therefore, keeping in view of the scope, the investigator laid down the following chief objectives.

1.6 Objectives

1. To establish norms of reading achievement in Hindi for pupils of Class VIII.

2. To study whether there are any sex differences with regard to reading achievement in Hindi.

3. To study reading achievement of pupils coming from different areas that is rural and urban.

4. To provide schools with a valid tool of measuring reading achievement, in Hindi of pupils studying in Std. VIII.

The field of application of the test is quite wide. Much depends upon the users of the test, hence it will be futile to describe the use of the test here.
1.7 Plan and Procedure of the Present Work

Mostly, the procedures of constructing different tests in the field of mental measurement more or less resemble with each other. The test generally had items based upon investigator's definition or concept of the ability or abilities to be measured. Therefore, one must be very clear about the definition of the ability to be measured before constructing the test. In order to be clear about the definition or concept of the mental ability, the investigator has to study the past work done in the field of reading, in which he is proposing to construct the test. The same procedure is followed in the present investigation.

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

In third chapter, attempt has been made to review the past work done in the field of reading achievement. At the same time, some well known tests were studied with a view to deciding the components of reading comprehension.
The meaning of reading comprehension and reading achievement derived through theoretical discussion and review of some tests led the investigator to the planning of the test; selection of proper reading material through which achievement can be measured. All these have been described in the fourth chapter.

The fifth chapter is devoted to experimental try-out of the test. Methods of selecting and discarding the test items are discussed and applied in order to reach goal of preparing the final form of the test.

The final form of the test was subjected to the process of standardization. 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. This is a sixth chapter of thesis and it also includes the fixation of norms and their discussion.

The seventh chapter deals with the methods of establishing the reliability of the test. 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 eighth deals with the concepts of validity of the test and is full of statistical calculations such as correlations and factor analysis. The methods that have been adopted for studying the validity of the test show agreement in proving the test, as valid tool.

The last chapter deals with the summary and observations made during the work under process. The uses of the test are also mentioned with the suggestion for further investigation into the field of reading.

Thus, the body of the thesis includes the full detail and discussion of all the necessary steps taken to construct and standardize a good, reliable and valid tool for measuring reading achievement in Hindi.