CHAPTER IV
PLANNING OF A TEST

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Planning is very important and essential step of a test construction process. Good Test does not happen easily. It is not the result of few moments or few minutes. It requires patience on the part of the researcher. It is a time consuming process, because it has to go through varied operations for the production of the test. The planning of a test involves the preparation of outlines of specifications of the mental ability to be measured, the content through which the ability could be measured, types of questions to be used, arrangement of the sub-tests length of the test and so forth. Therefore the first task before researcher is to specify the term 'reading comprehension'.

In order to be very specific, the components of reading comprehension so far described in books and revealed by reviewing some tests are given below:

i. Ability to note the significant details of what is read.

ii. Ability to give the sequence of events or ideas.

iii. Ability to give the meaning of words, phrases etc.
iv. Ability to give the meaning of the word in context.

v. Ability to draw generalization or to give the caption of the paragraph.

vi. Ability to find out relationship between ideas.

Over and above these, the knowledge of word meaning is an essential factor in reading comprehension and is measured directly or indirectly in any test. Again there was a question of deciding the priority of components or weightage to be given to the above mentioned components.

4.1 Determination of Weightage

The appropriate weightage to each of the components mentioned above was decided by asking twenty five experienced teachers of Hindi, method masters and experts in the field of Hindi language and literature. They were given a sheet containing the above components. A parenthesis was provided in front of each skill, to write the estimated weightage. They were also told their estimated weightage for each component when added up, should be 100. The approximate average for each of the component was then computed and is given in table 4.1.
Table 4.1
WEIGHTAGE GIVEN TO THE DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF READING COMPREHENSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Weightage in percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Ability to note the significant details of what is read.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Ability to give the meaning of words, phrases etc.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>Ability to give the sequence of events or ideas.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>Ability to draw generalization and to give the caption to the paragraph</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>Ability to find out relationship between ideas</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This helped the researcher in deciding emphasis to be given to each component and number of test items to be prepared for the test.

4.2 Selection of Grade

It is stated in the introduction part of the thesis that the main objective of teaching Hindi is to enable the pupils to understand simple spoken and written Hindi. This puts emphasis on comprehension aspect of teaching Hindi. This objective could not be achieved immediately, it is long
ranged objective and could be expected to have achieved after successfully completing the prescribed course of Hindi.

In Gujarat State pupils learn Hindi from classes V, VI and VII. In these three years they undergo varied experiences and secure reading comprehension. To know the reading comprehension of these pupils, it is worthwhile to select standard VIII.

There are a few achievement tests for class VIII constructed for Delhi and Vidarbha State but not for Gujarat State. Again they are the achievement test and includes items on grammar. While in reading comprehension test no place is given to items to test grammar. Therefore, the field is vast and new in scope for research in the field of reading comprehension.

Looking to these circumstances, the researcher decided to construct and standardize the present test for pupils of Class VIII.

4.3 **Selection of Reading Material**

In constructing and standardizing the reading comprehension test it was obvious that the researcher had to select reading material through which the skills mentioned
earlier could be measured to its entire coverage. The selection of reading material in Hindi needs care and caution because the success of reading process more or less depends upon it. Therefore, the researcher first studied the language material from the text books prescribed by Gujarat State and books of different writers of Hindi for Class VIII before the nationalization of books. Keeping in mind the language material, the researcher selected about twelve passages. The language material used in the passage and stories was not within the reach of pupils, therefore three passages were dropped out and only nine passages were selected. These nine passages were screened by the experts in the field of Hindi language and literature. The passages were also screened by the method masters and experienced teachers of Hindi. Thus the final touch was given to nine passages.

After finalising the reading material, it was found out that if all the nine passages would be used in the test, the test would be long and much of the time would be taken away in reading. Hence there is a need of selection of reading material. The selection of reading material was done with the help of a few experienced teachers of Hindi. While selecting the reading material; they were told to keep in mind the following criteria:
i. Language material be within the reach of the pupils that is the difficulty level of the material.

ii. Content varieties in passages be there to maintain reading interest of pupils.

iii. Reasonable length.

The passages were then circulated to 10 experienced teachers with a request to assign them the difficulty value as easy, average and difficult. The separate sheet for this was given which indicated the passage or story number. Against each number three columns were given for putting a tick mark in the appropriate column after reading the material. The responses were analysed and out of nine passages, six passages and story were selected. Out of six passages and story one was easy, second third were average in difficulty and the rest were difficult from the viewpoint of reading comprehension.

4.4 Preparation of Test Items

In planning a test, decision must be made regarding the types of items to be included in the test. Among the various forms of objective test the more widely used form of objective item is the 'multiple choice'. This form is encouraged because they can be scored either by hand scoring
technique or machine scoring. The scoring also becomes rapid and objective. Therefore, the researcher decided to use the multiple choice form of the objective question, except in the case of testing the ability to follow the sequence of events. The researcher himself constructed the items using the content of reading material of each passage. The number of items prepared were more than the required number. The items prepared by researcher were screened and discussed with the guide and other experts and method masters in Hindi. In the light of the suggestions made by the guide and other experts, certain items were redrafted. Certain items were modified and reworded. Certain items were discussed from the view point of the wording of the stem and distractors. All these items were discussed and revised. In all, 159 items were included in the first draft of the test.

4.5 **Determining Test Length**

The number of items to be included in the final form of the test is generally determined by the purpose of the test and important decisions to be taken about the individual. For this, the test must be reliable and hence must contain more items. The construction of the present test was undertaken with a view to providing schools with valid and reliable tool for measuring reading comprehension. It was decided that length of the test should be sufficient so that
it could be administered to a class within a usual length of two class periods. This was also fixed by keeping in view the element of fatigue, to be avoided during the taking of the test. This practical situation had to be paid due attention otherwise the test would remain unused. Therefore, the number of items constructed for tryout was considerably larger than the number needed in final form.

4.6 Arrangement of Test Items and Sub-tests

After the items had been constructed, the problem remained of selecting the items from amongst those that survived after the review process and then try out those which were to constitute the test, and of arranging the selected items into order of each sub-test. While compiling the test items the following points were borne in mind.

1. Overlapping of items be avoided.
2. Selected items be arranged in order of estimated difficulty level.
3. One type of items be grouped together.

In every sub-test the multiple-choice type of items were put together and they were arranged according to the content of the passage and estimated difficulty level. The items testing the pupils in the ability to follow sequence of
events were kept at the end of the sub-test because they differ in type and nature. Besides this they needed different instructions to be given to solve them. This is how the items were arranged in each sub-test.

The sub-tests of paragraph reading comprehension were arranged according to the difficulty of the reading material and they were grouped together. Similarly the sub-tests of vocabulary, idioms etc., were put at the end of the test as was found in almost all reading tests.

4.7 Description of Sub-tests

The description of each sub-test is given with a view to giving very general idea of reading material.

Test 1

It is a passage describing an incident of Lincon's life. It is composed of 285 words. This incident provides test situations for measuring skill of comprehension.

Test 2

It is a passage describing the love of mother towards the child and a description of a riot. It is composed of 350 words. It also provides enough situations for constructing test-items.
Test 3

It is a passage describing the rules of hygiene and art of life. It teaches us how to live a long life and how to live happily. It is composed of 195 words. Though it is short, it provides enough situations to coin test items.

Test 4

This is a story about a poor boy. In this story there are preachings of Swami Vivekanand. It is composed of 345 words. There are also events in the story which provide good testing situation for different components of reading comprehension.

Test 5

It is a story of an idle boy. It describes the nature of a hard working further. It expresses the love of a mother towards a son. It is composed of 315 words. It provides the sufficient number of situations to coin test items.

Test 6

It is a story of Mogul King who is honest and hardworking. The passage is composed of 375 words. It provides good testing situation for different components of reading comprehension.
Test 7

It is a test of idioms. There are twenty nine idioms. Each word is used in sentence and four different meanings of the underlined words are given.

Test 8

This is a vocabulary test. There are 30 words in all. These words were collected by carefully scrutinizing the vocabulary of pupils.

Test 9

This is a vocabulary test. There are 15 words in all. Looking to the description of the sub-tests, it leads us to conclude that the variety and newness in reading material and content had been paid due attention. The students will like the test and the test-administrator will not have any difficulty.