CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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Due to advancement in science and technology, knowledge has not only expanded, but also exploded. Horizons of knowledge have been extending the boundaries with one after another explosion in the form of numerous experiments. Communication with various countries of the world and planets of the universe has become a very common phenomenon in these days. In such an age of communication, acquisition of knowledge has become an important facet for shaping a human life.

In schools through Geography we study the various modes and activities of the human kind, and also the human life in its true colour and form. Through History, we try to understand and evaluate the past. Through Mathematics, we measure and develop intellectual capacities, and through Science, we endeavour to unfold many secrets of nature. Thus, through various subjects we acquire knowledge and perhaps the best and the most efficient instrument to acquire knowledge is READING. By striving and struggling through ages to find out sources of knowledge, no substitute of READING has been found.

Therefore, it has become utmost necessary in the present times that every student becomes an efficient reader.
In the years to come a poor reader will be almost equivalent to a physically handicapped individual. Because the most effective avenue of knowledge i.e. READING, will be closed for him, which may lead him to be still further loser in social adjustment. It has now been established that common factor working as the chief dynamic and governing force in persons who live intellectual life, who enjoy good social and academic status, who assert leadership, who show insight foresight, farsight and entrepreneurship has been comprehensive READING of the concerned field. In these circumstances, a student can not afford to be a poor reader. Hence the strategy to prevent a student from being a poor reader seems to be inevitable.

The most important and decisive factor in reading performance is READING READINESS. The more a student is ready to read, the better reader will he become. If one wants to trace the foot prints of poor reading, one will have to start at the infancy level.

A child does not learn to walk as soon as he takes birth. He learns to walk only after his legs and waist grow strong enough to hold him steady. However, anxious the parents may be, they should not make haste in making the child learn walk as soon as possible, because this unwelcome and untimely haste may lead the child to frequent falls that may
result in permanent physical deformity. So the most appropriate way is to wait for the right time, i.e. when the child is physically ready in terms of capacity. In the same way a child can read only after he has attained a certain level of mental capacity. Parents or teachers who are ignorant of this fact, many times overburden their children with irresponsible fancies of teaching reading at quite an unripe time.

Educationists who have devoted precious years of their lives to the scientific study of child life are of the opinion that children show great irresistible tendency for certain type of work at certain times, which are called sensitive periods. Due to this characteristic tendency, only from the age of 8 months till two to two and a half years, a child without any help of a teacher, learns the language that is being spoken around him, just by observing and listening to the people who speak it, whatever that may be, whereas, we find it difficult to learn a non-native language at an old age. A child speaks words like 'Baa' (mother), 'Bhoo' (water), in the beginning in Gujarati language and gradually goes on to speak words like 'Dada' (grand-father), 'Tata' (bread), 'Mama' (maternal uncle), 'Mummy' (mother), 'Pappa' (father) - the words made of combinations of same letters or sounds which are repeated. Thus, the raw material for reading is seen in the form of child's speech and language patterns.
To learn to speak while doing monkeylike acts, to learn to hold a book, to perform mock-reading, - all these actions are ingredients for further reading, and the vaster and stronger these ingredients are, the vaster and stronger the reading readiness of a child will be.

The way in which parents converse in the home, affects the child's way of speaking and the child's language as well. Thus, the child develops his language according to his home environment. A home throbbing with encouragement, warmth and culture has been proved to have high correlation with the child's reading readiness and reading progress. But such a warm home environment is not in the fate of many children - and they prove to be poor readers. Whatever such children read is in the form of pronouncing or speaking individual letters of the alphabets recognised or perceived from words, and so, not being able to understand and comprehend whatever he may be reading. Thus, whatever is read, is not comprehended and reading without comprehension is useless. It is beyond doubt that READING is very important for studying any subject and also for acquiring knowledge. It has been proved through many studies that the children who have developed READING abilities, secure amazing academic achievements in their studies. So the need of the age is that the children who have not developed reading ability should be provided with READING READINESS PROGRAMME to help them read.
to learn, instead of discarding them away just by labelling them as 'dullards'.

1.1 Need and Importance

There are some children in the pre-primary schools who dislike reading, have never found pleasure in it, do not recognize its importance and hence are not motivated to improve. They need opportunities which demonstrate to themselves that reading can be both enjoyable and useful.

The children who were left entirely on their own, who were not helped to consider their purpose in reading a story, who received no special help in vocabulary, who had no chance to discuss or to take part in extra activities related to their reading - these children did not see reading as a means to enjoyment, discovery or personal development; to them it was mere routine.

Researches have clearly revealed the importance of the first 4 to 5 years of the child's life as the period of most rapid growth. It is also believed that the education of the child starts right from the period of its conception. Therefore, the pre-school age (3-6 years) is the most impressionable age in one's life. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation, was also quite aware of this.
He stated:

"We labour under a sort of superstition that the child has nothing to learn during the first years of its life. On the contrary the fact is that the child never learns in after life, What it does in its first five years. The education of the child begins with conception."¹

This statement gets a lot of support from Benjamin Bloom, who believes that an individual's achievement in life depends very largely on what he has been helped to learn before the age of four, for that is when human intelligence grows more rapidly and the roots of intellectual curiosity are laid. It is because of this that the programme for pre-primary education is receiving more and more attention day by day in this modern society.

The pre-primary education aims at the all round development of the child namely physical, social, emotional and intellectual. In order to achieve these objectives, attempts are being made to provide the enriched environment through the pre-primary school programmes.

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¹ Rajalakshmi Muralidharan (Ed.) 1969, Pre-School Education as an instrument of change in developing society. New Delhi, Indian Association for Pre-School Education, p. 140.
"Most of the activities of the kindergarten are provided for the purpose of induction and orientation of the child to the school."\(^2\)

Therefore the pre-primary education should not be considered as a luxury but a basic need to foster all round development of the child. Frost is justified when he writes -

"Pre-schools are nice for all children but they are essential for the disadvantaged."\(^3\)

This discussion leads to say that pre-primary education is effective in building the foundation of education or in motivating the child for effective study later on. It could be said that the aims and programmes of pre-primary school is to prepare the children for primary schools, that is to build foundation by way of developing reading readiness or motivating the child for effective study, so that the tasks of teaching reading and other subjects become easy in primary schools. This would indicate the need for developing a reading readiness programme. The readiness for pre-primary


education is that the foundation for all future learning is laid down during this period. Therefore, it is essential that this foundation be strong and well-rooted.

The developmental programme helps to build new interests.

"Reading opens doors, takes the reader into new places, brings him into contact with both real and imaginary characters whose interests and ideals he may or may not wish to adopt. Interests often lead to further reading."4

The aim of all developmental reading programmes is to produce effective readers - i.e. readers who like to read, who are not deterred by any reasonable difficulty, who are independent and analytical and who are interested in the possibility of a better life and a better world.

"The children come to the schools from different families with different socio-economic status, have different habits and varied experiences and tastes - no two children are alike, whereas with all these differences they are to start reading in one and the same manner. Therefore, they are to develop some similar skills and abilities required for beginning reading."5

5. Ibid., p. 167.
In order to read (the printed symbols) one requires to attain some skills and abilities as mechanism of reading. The process of attaining the necessary skills and abilities is termed as Reading Readiness or preparing the beginner ready to read. Hence a Reading Readiness Programme.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Development of reading readiness programme and to study its effect on reading readiness of the pupils of pre-primary schools.

1.3 Defining the Terms

It is necessary on the part of the investigator to explain certain important terms occurring in the statement of the problem.

They are:

(a) Development.
(b) Reading Readiness.
(c) Programme.
(d) Pre-primary School.

(a) Development

Development means a systematic and gradual unfolding of the unit or the topic at hand in the light of newer approaches in education and teaching which may fulfil the needs of
the changing society and help the child in his daily work. The child adjusts himself in the newer type of society.

(b) **Reading Readiness**

Reading readiness is relatively a new concept in education. Reading readiness is the teachable moment for reading. It is a stage of development when the child can learn easily and without emotional strain. When a child has developed certain mental characteristics to a point, he is able to learn to read without any tension.

(c) **Programme**

Reading readiness programme is the development of learning process and language development. It can be defined as sequential activities through which pupils are supposed to pass with the help of the teachers. The activities are phased in a proper manner so as to orient the pupils towards the readiness for reading.

(d) **Pre-primary School**

The unit of the school which enrolls three year olds on a regular basis for two years prior to entrance to first grade is designated as a pre-primary school.

The pre-primary year is a transition year between home and school and stresses the importance of readiness activities
1.4 Objectives of the Study

The chief objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To develop Reading Readiness Programme for pre-primary pupils.

2. To provide pre-primary schools with an effective and reliable Reading Readiness Programme for developing Reading Readiness.

3. To study the effect of this Reading Readiness Programme upon the Reading Readiness of pre-primary pupils.

4. To study the significance of difference in the effect of Reading Readiness Programme upon the Reading Readiness of pupils of experimental group and pupils of control group.

5. To study the significance of difference in the effect of Reading Readiness Programme upon the Reading Readiness of urban pupils and rural pupils.

6. To study the significance of sex difference in the effect of Reading Readiness Programme upon the Reading Readiness of these pupils.

7. To study the significance of difference in the effect of Reading Readiness Programme upon the Reading Readiness of pupils of highly educated parents and pupils of lowly educated parents.
8. To study the significance of difference in the effect of Reading Readiness Programme upon the Reading Readiness of pupils of high income parents and pupils of low income parents.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

The present study has certain limitations as under:

1. The study is limited to pre-primary schools of Kheda district only.
2. It is limited to the Gujarati speaking children only.
3. The children with poor vision and hearing are not included in the sample.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The ability to read with fluency and to comprehend it is a fundamental skill for the citizens of our society. This ability to read has been considered to be the basis of education. Hundreds and thousands of pupils learn to read in our schools every year. We have to think of the number of pupils who fail to acquire this skill and their low level of skill achieved in the field.

Inefficient reading ability springs from inefficient Reading Readiness of the child. Unless Reading Readiness of the children is catered to at the pre-primary level, reading
ability cannot be acquired and strengthened in a way the society demands literacy skill. That is why Reading Readiness Programme must form a basic necessity through which every child of the nation should pass.

Tools to know the Reading Readiness of pre-primary pupils have been developed, but very little has been done in the area of development of Reading Readiness Programme for these pupils, as such, there is no Reading Readiness Programme developed in this part of the country for the pupils studying in pre-primary schools which may prepare students for reading.

In most of the institutions the existing system of teaching reading is unscientific and inadequate. It has become difficult for the teachers to know the exact position of pupils with regard to their Reading Readiness. It has been still more difficult for the teachers to develop reading in those pupils who lack it, because of the absence of Reading Readiness Programme.

This state of affairs prompted the present investigator to undertake this work with the hope that it would help the younger generation and their teachers to have a definite knowledge as to where they stand in Reading Readiness. This knowledge is also supposed to contribute much to one's future adjustment to learning the subject. Thus there is a vast
The Scheme of Chapterization

The first chapter is devoted to the need and importance of the problem. Besides the presentation of the problem, definitions of terms and objectives of the study have also been described.

The second chapter deals with the concept of reading readiness and its programme development. Definitions and meaning explained by the various reading experts are discussed in details. The components of Reading Readiness and the process of attaining the necessary skills and abilities for Reading Readiness are also discussed in brief.

The third chapter reviews the past work done in the field of Reading Readiness. The theory and concepts of Reading Readiness, various Reading Readiness Tests and pre-reading programmes have been studied. It gives an idea about the preparation of items and process of administration of Reading Readiness Programme.

In the fourth chapter the description on planning and preparation of the Reading Readiness Test and planning and preparation of the Reading Readiness Programme have been discussed in details.
The fifth chapter explains the experimental design and final administration of Reading Readiness Programme. The formulation of hypotheses, sample, formation of equivalent groups, steps of the design, administration of pre-test, treatment and post-test .... all these have been described at length.

Chapter six deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data. The analysis of the data were carried out keeping in view the objectives.

The last chapter presents the observations made while the present work was in the process and the conclusions drawn on the bases of the data analysed. It also includes value and utility of the programme. Also suggestions have been given for further research.

The body of the report contains a number of tables and graphs wherever necessary. A list of exhaustive bibliography is given at the end of the report. Besides this, appendices consisting of pilot form of reading readiness programme, final form of reading readiness programme, pilot form of reading readiness test and final form of reading readiness test are also attached at the end.