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The present period is known as the age of communication; the language symbols have now become the means of bringing human beings together. Thus, the comprehension of written symbols is the most important device for the existence of mankind. Although, the technology has spread over the world, it cannot replaced by reading. Thus reading has been the major instrument of mass communication.

In this connection, however, it is sad to note that, today in an exploding world population and the return of oral-aural communication through electronics, there is a decline in the activity of reading. At present reading is the chief means of transmitting the cultural heritage, in keeping pace with its rival media. But if this decline should occur in future, the loss will be great.

As per John J. DeBoer: "Reading involves skill, it involves thinking but considered in its broader sense it affects the entire personality." ¹

The lack of reading comprehension is untolerable.

Investigations have revealed that the reading skill is not innate but it can be acquired. Moreover findings revealed

that many problems of students in school, whether academic or psychological, can be ascribed to their disability to read.

The solution of reading disability lies in the conclusion of investigations that, reading could be acquired, and in turn inspires a number of researches on reading improvement and on testing of reading in foreign countries. A very few researches have been done in this area in India. Some of which are cited in the present report.

In this connection, however, it is sad to note that there is not even a single research done like the present one in Gujarat. The review of the work done in this area also revealed that there is no mention of a single research carried out on preparation and implementation of Reading Improvement Programme in Gujarati. Of course sporadic attempts have been made to prepare the courses for the improvement of English reading comprehension.

Durrett notes: "The challenge facing teachers today is the improvement of classroom practice in the light of present knowledge. This is particularly true in reading. Therefore, the greatest needs are for the production of new instructional material." 2

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Norman Lewis says: "The most effective method for mastering any skill is the continuous practice under appropriate instruction. The royal road to better and faster reading is simply—reading, more reading and still more reading under the expert—guidance." 3

Taking such thoughts as the guide line the present investigator took up this research. It was thought worthwhile to go for the unexplored field of reading and to make available a standardized test of reading comprehension in Gujarati for the pupils of Class VI and also a Reading Improvement Programme, to study its impact on reading comprehension of the students.

This multi dimensional research has been included with a photo—finish detail in this report. The task was felt greater than what it was anticipated while deciding the problem.

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Smt. M.H. Shelat