## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

The advent of 20th century brought in number of changes in the systems of Government and the ways of living all over the world because of the scientific and technological advancement. As a result of this advancement there has been an explosion of knowledge. Transmission of the present knowledge through education to the coming generation is the prime responsibility of the present society. The school curriculum becomes outmoded and even the things (new things) of each subject has made the reading materials very heavy. On the other hand our constitution provides compulsory and free education for children in the age group of 6 - 14 years. As a result of this and the craze for English medium education brought in students to English medium class rooms with different capacities. It is believed that new and heavy but essential content of the text books and composition of class-room with students of different capacities coupled with quality of poor reading materials and teaching, made the standard of education go down tremendously. Not only this but the amount of stagnation and wastage at the primary and secondary stages also increased manifold. This worried the inhabitants of the world of education, educationists, administrators and policy makers.
It is reported in Kothari Commission that the wastage is higher in the lower classes. The second thing that is quite clear is, the wastage is on the increase with the time. The wastage is more than sixty per cent at higher primary level. It can be assumed that wastage must be less at the secondary level but it cannot be less than 40%. The reasons of this huge wastage can be many. Here are some of the reasons given by the Kothari Commission:

(i) Over crowded classes
(ii) Poor teaching of reading in the beginning
(iii) Inadequately prepared teachers
(iv) A wrong system of reading.

Out of these reasons (ii) Poor teaching of reading is certainly a cause of great importance. This gives rise to disability of reading. This disability in reading is never removed in the secondary stage because there is no systematic attempt at teaching of reading.

Again, if at all any teaching of reading is done, it is done in periods of languages concerned only. The curriculum of the school includes science, Social Sciences and many other subjects. Each subject needs the teaching of reading to comprehend its content. Unfortunately this has escaped the notice of

educationists that each specific area of curriculum needs specific skills to comprehend its content.

1.1 **READING - ITS MEANING**:

Reading has been misconceived by many people. There are some who think that reading is synonymous with word calling. This means - if you can pronounce the words correctly, you are reading even when you have no idea what the author has said. But in-fact it involves two parallel processes physical and mental. The physical process consists of looking at the printed matter, recognizing its impression to the brain and reproducing it either silently or loudly. The mental process refers to the functions of the 'mind, interpreting the graphic symbols with a view to giving meaning to them. The end product of these processes is comprehension. Hence it is right to say that where there is no comprehension, there is no reading.

Therefore, reading involves a reader in reacting and acting. When a man reads a particular passage, his feelings get stimulated, mildly or intensely. He agrees or disagrees with, gets disturbed or feels reassured. Therefore, feelings are interwoven with reading. Unfortunately, reading of this kind is not an easy achievement. It involves many kinds of components. John J. De Boer has enlisted them in his book "The Teaching of Reading"

1. ability to find main idea,
2. ability to select significant details,
iii. ability to answer questions,
iv. ability to summarize and organize ideas,
v. ability to arrive at generalization,
vi. ability to predict the outcomes or draw inferences,
vii. ability to find out sequence of events.
viii. ability to critically reacting to what is read,
ix. ability to follow directions,
x. ability to read tables, graphs, charts and maps.

A reader cannot acquire a complete comprehension at all at once. It is a gradual process. It needs a lot of time and a persistent effort on the part of the reader. He needs to acquire the above mentioned components. The comprehension is achieved by levels.

1.2 DIFFERENT LEVELS OF COMPREHENSION:

i. It is a level of identification. Here the reader is mainly concerned with recognizing the word accurately. For example, on reading the sentence, "As you sow so shall you reap" the reader first employs many techniques (using structural or phonetic analysis and others) to get the words accurate. If he wants to figure out the word 'reap' he may recall, heap, cheap and make out reap.

ii. At this stage the reader gets almost a rough idea or a sort of casual impression about the material
read. Usually this happens while skimming through the material to find as to what happened to the hero or how a particular hero came into trouble. It is not necessary that the information is always correct.

iii. It is a stage of "literal" comprehension. Here the reader is able to get the main idea of the paragraph or the story. There is a conscious effort on the part of the reader to get the main idea or the details.

iv. The last comes the interpretative level. Here the reader goes beyond the facts and gives his own interpretation in the light of his own experience. The interpretative reading is of two kinds - critical and creative:

(a) It is the creative reading when the reader recognizes the implied meaning, enjoys and appreciates the beauty or the humour.

(b) The reading is critical when the reader is judging, setting a standard of norms or checking the sense of values and so on. The reader is free to accept or reject the relevance of the material.

Hence a book or a passage can be read and understood with varying degrees of understanding. There may be a student
who reads it without any sort of understanding and there may be another who reads it with full understanding. The amount of comprehension depends on the reader's purpose. But there are other important factors that have an equal bearing on the comprehension of a passage. The physical condition of the reader, his interest in the material and the linguistic difficulty of the material.

The classroom teachers try to create a helpful atmosphere and conditions for the benefit of the reader. They use different types of aids to achieve this objective. The textbook being a central instrument in the educational process today, need to be discussed in detail here.

1.3. THE TEXT-BOOK, ITS PLACE IN THE EDUCATION OF A CHILD:

India's policy of free and compulsory education has brought-in the classrooms all types of children - children who are the wards of multimillionaires, middle class parents, factory workers and labourers. Their access to the educational equipment varies from home to home. As a result of this, there are many who can hardly afford to purchase even a note-book. It has also brought-in teachers who could be termed as mobile universities. But it has also given a place to many such teachers whose capacities are far from being satisfactory and yet have to groom a child into a responsible citizen.
Hence in the schools when such teachers and students assemble to act their roles in the grooming process - (teaching-learning process) major part of their activity is subject centred, and these subjects in turn are taught through a text-book because it is the cheapest and easily available instrument in the hands of the students. Therefore, the text-book assumes a greater importance. If this is the only tool in the hands of the teachers and the taught, it is the paramount duty of the society to place a well-written text-book in the hands of the students. It is through the well-written text-books that the teacher will be able to produce expected behavioural changes in the student to make him useful to himself and to the rest of the society. Mr. Saik Mowla says:

"The text-book is a guide for the teachers, a memory aid for the pupil, a permanent record or measure of what has been learnt, a generalization or canalization, a means of extending linguistics experience of the pupil and finally an exercise ground for reading. The text-book is also a patent factor in acclimatizing the student to the printed matter for the rest of his life."

Thus looking to the teaching-learning activity in the class-rooms. It becomes quite clear that attempts are being

made through the text-book to create learning situations which could help to achieve the desired objectives. Learning aside the class-room activity, the learning activity at home also takes place with its help since the majority of our students do not afford any other educational material. The student revises for renewing his content knowledge or refers to the glossary or does his home work with the help of the text-book only. Hence the text-book surpasses the merits of any other variable for the advancement of learning process in the system of formal education. It looks appropriate to note what an expert of great importance like Robinson Helen thinks about the test-book:

Text-books are preferable to general books because they provide for systematic instruction, have controlled vocabularies, are graded in difficulty, develop skills that enable the child to interpret words and to read for many purposes and are suited to a child's general development level.³

Unfortunately, the last merit of text-books mentioned by Robinson, Helen M. is normally not found in our text-books. Many a times, the content of the text-book is presented in such a language that it goes beyond the reach of the pupils. In

fact the language of presentation of the content in text-books should be in accordance with the general and linguistic development of the pupil. Thonis Eleanor Wall throwing light on this point says:

Simple ideas may seem to be difficult if presented in complex ideas may be simplified and made easier by the use of simple language. The matter of simplicity or complexity must be related to the language skills and experience of the reader.  

Because of the fact that our pupils in the classes come from different strata of society having different levels of experiences, one text-book for all of them may not be suitable to them. It is, therefore, relevant to examine how our text-books were produced before the nationalization and after it.

1.4 TEXT-BOOK PRODUCTION BEFORE NATIONALIZATION:

Nationalization of text-book industry was done in 1967-68 in the state of Gujarat. Prior to that, the text-book production was entirely managed by private publishers. They used to invite some authors to form a panel to write a text-book for a particular standard. The syllabus was prescribed

by the State Department of Education. The panel of authors generally consisted of a Professor, a Principal of a School or even a school teacher. The formation of the panel of authors, assigning them the work, collecting the manuscripts, getting them approved and publishing them, all these activities were solely conducted by the private publisher. The publisher used to submit the manuscript to the Department of Education for approving and prescribing it as text-book. The panel of experts in the subjects was appointed by the State Department of Education to examine them from the view point of language, content coverage of the syllabus and illustrations. The Department of Education after the recommendation of the experts committee would prescribe it as text-book. There were more than one book in each subject. Hence there was a scope of choice for the head-master to choose a text-book for his school. But this freedom of choice gave rise to malpractices. The merit of the text-book hardly prevailed upon the choice. It was, in most of the cases, the personal influence of the publisher that mattered. Hence the Kothari Commission in 1966 observed with great pain:

"Unfortunately the text-book writing and production have not received the attention they deserve. In most school subjects, there is a proliferation of low quality, sub-standard and badly produced books, particularly in regional languages. This may be due to number of factors among which mention may be made of:
- The lack of interest shown by top ranking scholars so that the writing of text books has been generally done by persons whose abilities are far from equal to task.

- the malpractice in selection and prescription of text-books which defy control.

- the unscrupulous tactics adopted by several publishers.

- the lack of research in the preparation and production of text-books and

- almost total disregard by the private publishers of the need to bring out ancillary books: such as teacher's guides to accompany text-books.\(^5\)

The Commission has brought out very vividly a number of unscrupulous ways adopted by the text-book industry before its nationalization. This was done with a motive of earning heap of profits out of it. The result was that we could not give a standard text-book in the hands of students whom we want to defend our borders and push forward this nation, to lead the rest of the nations and whose most of the formative activity depends on this text-book.

1.5 NATIONALIZATION OF TEXT-BOOKS:

The evils enlisted by the Commission were so great that no progressive government could remain unmoved. Therefore, the attention of the State Government was drawn to them and it was recommended that, in order to eliminate them, the State Government should take over the production of text-books. Though many of the evils have been eradicated by taking over the production of text-books by the states, the general feeling is that the standard of text-books has not much improved. Kothari Commission therefore, observes:

"There have been some definite gains from this policy. Private profiteering has disappeared and prices have been kept low. The malpractices and intrigues which used to be so common a feature of what used to be so common a feature of what used to be called the 'Text-book racket' have also disappeared. The quality of books has improved in several instances, although the general level of the text-books still remains poor and their standard does not often come upto what some of the well established and efficient publishers are doing."

6. Ibid., p. 229.
This would become clear by examining the present procedure adopted by the text-book Board of Gujarat State.

The text-book Board selects some writers in the subject and invites manuscripts from them on the basis of prescribed syllabus. It sometimes appoints a committee of text-book writers to prepare manuscript. The manuscripts thus prepared are printed and prescribed as text-book. In other case, there is no committee appointed for the preparation of manuscripts and the manuscripts are simply invited from the authors by way of advertisement. A Committee of Experts is appointed to scrutinize them. This Committee edits them and edited form is printed as text-book. Therefore, it is clear that manuscripts for text-books are prepared by more than one writer as it used to be prior to the nationalization. As a result of this, the language and the style of writing differ from chapter to chapter.

Moreover the text-book Board prepares only one text-book in each subject. Hence there is no scope for selection. It is, perhaps, in that context that the Kothari Commission recommended the preparation of three or four text-books for one standard. It observed that:

No useful purpose is served by having only one text-book in a subject for a given class, this is almost, invariably
The position under the existing programmes of nationalization. It should be an important objective of policy to have at least three or four books in each subject for each class and leave it open to the teachers to choose the book best suited to the school.\textsuperscript{7}

Then the Commission recommends the preparation of three or four books for each standard, it involves the consideration of the following basic facts:

i. the schools are suited in different localities having different linguistic and socio-economic background of the students.

ii. The students differ in reading ability, I.Q. and age even within the class.

At present there is only one text-book in each subject for each standard throughout the state. Therefore, it is necessary to know whether it suits to all pupils according to their reading abilities.

The students and teachers who taught social-studies in ninth standard when asked to give their impressions about the social-studies text-books they simply shrank their noses indicating their disfavour. Some of the students were vocal

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 229.
enough to say that it was difficult for them to understand a good many chapters in the text-book. It is also the feeling of the majority of teachers that the text-book in social-studies is difficult. Therefore, it is in this context that the investigator has taken up this problem.

1.6 THE PROBLEM:

"AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECT OF LOW READABILITY MATERIAL AND PRESCRIBED MATERIALS PROVIDED TO THE STUDENTS OF STD. IX IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS OF GUJARAT STATE."

In order to make the research more exact and reliable it is essential on the part of the investigator to define certain important terms used in the wording of the problem.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

(a) Effect: "Used technically by Thorndike to designate the law of learning, which was usually been called the law of selection."\(^8\)

Readability: Readability of a word which conveys the difficulty level of a chapter in terms of comprehension. It covers various aspects of written materials which collectively determine the reading difficulty of a printed page. More about this is discussed in the next chapter but in short the chapters of social-studies text-book of ninth class which are more difficult to read and comprehend are named as chapters having "high readability" and those which are easy to read and comprehend are named as chapters having "low readability".

Prescribed Material: It is that material which has been prescribed by the State Department of Education, Gujarat State, in the form of a text-book in social-studies of Std. IX in English medium schools.

1.8 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

Various studies in Reading have shown the utility of reading in teaching. The effectiveness of reading in terms of pupils achievement and its efficiency in terms of time taken to learn a particular topic has been proved better by studies in India as well as abroad.

The present study deals with the relationship between readability and prescribed materials. The investigator has used the experimental method for the study so as to focus its implications in the field of education.
1.9 LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

(a) The term "readability" is used in a restricted sense. It does not include the count of ideational content. It includes the counts of various components which collectively determine the reading-difficulty. Consideration to the following factors has been given in the present study:

(i) Average sentence length in terms of number of words.

(ii) Long words are those words which consist of four and more letters.

(iii) Words impeding learning are called impedilexae. They may be technical or non-technical or conceptual words. They can be consisted of any number of letters.

(b) The Aukerman's formula has been used for measuring readability in the present study.

(c) The impedilexae have not been taken from a standard list of impedilexae. In fact there is no ready-made list of impedilexae in English language for social-studies in the Indian context. Hence it is determined on the basis of a definite criteria fixed for the study.
(d) The readability indices of all the chapters of the text-book are found-out. The most difficult three chapters, out of the whole lot are selected. They are re-written to a lower level of readability.

(e) For the purpose of measuring the reading comprehension in social-studies, comprehension test is prepared on the basis of the content of three most difficult chapters under study.

(f) The present experiment is confined to the secondary schools within Kaira, Bharuch, Surat and Valsad districts only.

(g) The study is confined to the text-book in social-studies of Class IX, written in English.

(h) The study is confined to the students of standard IX in the academic year 1988-89.

1.10 **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

(i) to prepare a list of impedilexae out of all, twenty-nine chapters of social-studies text-book prescribed for class nine by the Department of Education, Gujarat State.

(ii) to determine the readability index of each chapter.

(iii) to find out the chapters having high readability.
(iv) to prepare a tool for measuring comprehension in social-studies for three chapters under study.

(v) to re-write the chapters under study having high readability to a lower level of readability.

(vi) to study the effect of the materials on the comprehension of pupils falling in upper and lower group of distribution of scores on reading ability test in English.

(vii) to study the effect of the materials on the comprehension of pupils falling in upper and lower groups of distribution of scores of I.Q. Test.

(viii) to advance some suggestions to the text-book writers.

1.11 THE SCHEME OF CHAPTERIZATION:

The first chapter deals with the importance of the problem, the need and importance of a good text-book, and an explanation of the terms used in the title of the problem.

The second chapter encompasses a discussion of the theoretical aspects of readability, wherein different definitions of readability are thoroughly examined.

The third chapter is devoted to review the past studies on readability which help the investigator in understanding the present problem.
The fourth chapter deals with the planning and procedure of the investigation, determining of impedilexae, construction of reading comprehension test in social-studies, the method of determining the readability indices and re-writing of the three most difficult chapters to a lower level of readability.

The fifth chapter deals with the experimental design, the treatment given to the experimental groups and the administration of different tests.

The sixth chapter deals with description of the procedure adopted for analyzing the data in accordance with the hypotheses formulated in the initial stage of the study.

The seventh chapter deals with observations, made during the investigation, the conclusions, some important suggestions to the text-book writers and a list of well-thought of problems on which research can be carried out in future.

CONCLUSION:

The present chapter has discussed the significance of readability and prescribed materials in the present context. It also discussed the important terms, topics comprised in the title of the problem. The objectives and limitations of the study are presented to make the following treatment of the study to be viewed in a proper perspective.