CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this age of knowledge explosion, reading, as a means of communication continues to enjoy the significance and respect it had from times immemorial. It takes its place as a way of receiving ideas, along with listening to people directly, listening to the radio, watching the television and other mass media. Despite the phenomenal growth of technology and electronic media of communication, the place occupied by books and other printed material in the advancement of knowledge and facilitation of communication is unique.

The ability to read is not only the basis of education but also an essential prerequisite of a civilized society. Education is the right of all in a democratic society. And for each person in order to be educated, there is an irreducible minimum of information and understanding which must be acquired and this minimum is constantly increasing. The quantity of reading materials in the form of newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and books has increased to staggering heights. This trend reveals the fact that the growing popularity of media communications like TV and cinema has not diminished the innate urge of the young and old to go in for more and more reading materials.

Of all the valuable skills the average person learns in his life time, the ability to read is the most universal and useful. Haffner has enlisted the following unique values and uses of reading. They are:
1. Reading material is readily accessible.
2. Reader can react as an individual.
3. Reading allows time for reflection and memories can be renewed.
4. One can select segments of materials one wants and can readily skim a wide range of material.
5. Information can be easily rechecked and resources can be compared readily.
6. Reading provides excellent contexts for concept development and vocabulary study.

(Haffner 1967)

According to Strang:

"Reading Proficiency is the royal road to knowledge; it is essential to success in all academic subjects. In modern life learning depends largely upon one's ability to interpret the printed page accurately and fully."

(Strang 1972, P.67)

Francis Bacon, the great English essayist wrote:

"Reading maketh a full man." Reading contributes in the development of personality and helps in the enrichment of life. Reading enables man to realize his role in society and his duties and responsibilities as a citizen. Reading widens man's outlook on life and liberates him from petty concerns of dogmas and prejudices. It banishes ignorance and superstition.

Mechanisation in all spheres of life has led to increased amount of leisure time. Reading is the best type of leisure time activity for many people. Strang is of the
view that *recreational* reading affords more than entertainment. He has stated:

"The reader has time to reflect on the ideas he meets and give play to the imagination. Reading provides experience through which the individual may expand his horizons, identify, extend and expand his interests and gain deeper understanding of himself, of other human beings and of the world."

(Strang, 1967 p. 68)

In the modern world, reading has social significance. The democracy of any country can survive only if the people of this country achieve a certain general level of reading competence. Russell (1949) has rightly stated: "A good general level of reading ability is essential to the working of democracy. With all its cumbersome machinery of government, democracy is still the rule of the people and citizenry are fit to rule only if through reading, they can appreciate and understand some of the important problems facing their community or country and make thoughtful decisions about them."

Illiteracy is the root cause of many evils in the society. Perhaps it is because of this realisation that eradication of illiteracy, has been given top priority in the developmental projects in all developing countries. As Jennings has stated:

"If democratic living is valuable to us as individuals and the members of groups, then we have to make certain that every generation will grow beyond our grasp and understanding. Techniques are not enough and the expression of scientific knowledge is never sufficient. We need to be able to read widely and wisely in the library of
'all our yesterdays' to keep the record of our achievement straight. We need to be able to read accurately the words and features, the hopes and plans of ourselves and our fellowmen."

(Jennings, 1965, p. 191)

Only those who can read and write can play an active role in nation-building. Books are the treasure houses of all knowledge and the rich experience and valuable visions of great men. The welfare-nation visualised by great philosophers becomes a reality when the nation becomes a reading nation, when ignorance and superstitions vanish, enlightenment and prosperity prevail.

For international understanding and brotherhood also, effective reading is essential. Reading helps us to understand and appreciate the common achievements and goals of whole human family and the unique contribution of every nation. According to Strang: "A just and lasting peace depends upon the universal communication of a new concept of greatness - greatness through competition and power. Through reading, it is possible to build sound values and to arrive at means and methods for creative living in this machine age." (Strang, 1961, p. 21)

Reading fulfils man's emotional and spiritual needs too. Tension-torn minds get cooled down in the company of books. Great statesmen and leaders were also avid readers. Many seek solace in reading to get a solution to their personal problems. Reading according to Stauffer "is a man's bulwark against loneliness, his window on life, his unending delight. It brings yesterday and tomorrow into now." (Stauffer, 1969 p. 15)
To sum up, for personal development and progress there is no easy alternative other than reading. It is, therefore, imperative for educational institutions to give adequate importance to reading. Reading is a tool, the mastery of which is essential to the learning of nearly every other school subject. Continued guidance is, therefore, essential for the development of the reading skills in the primary and upper grades and even in high school and college.

1.1 Definitions of Reading

Reading has been defined by different writers in different ways. It was defined as the process of recognizing printed or written symbols, involving such aspects as recognizing the words that make up a passage, rate at which words and phrases are recognized and rhythmical progress of perceptions along the lines.

The meaningful response is the very heart of the reading process. Reading may be defined as the act of responding to printed symbols, especially for the beginner. From this basic level of recognition, the reasoning part of reading is gradually reached when the beginner starts responding to these symbols intellectually and emotionally. As the reader matures in age and experience, he learns to adapt his method of reading in accordance with his purpose for reading and achieves skills on the reasoning aspect of reading. This is the view of Harrison when he says: "Reading is a process of recognizing symbols which serve as stimuli to the recalling and constructing of meaning". (Harrison, 1939)
It is a fact that reading without comprehension is meaningless and if the symbols do not convey any message. But there are people like Reed who hold the view that reading "involves merely the decoding of graphic symbols, for, when the symbols are decoded, reading stops and thinking begins to occur." (Reed, 1970 p. 30)

According to Goodman and Niles, "Reading is a complex process by which a reader constructs to some degree a message encoded by a writer in graphic language." (Goodman and Niles, 1970 p. 5). Here, the emphasis is placed more on identification of symbols than on getting the meaning.

On the other hand, reading according to Artley is, "Plucking out all subtle threads of meaning from sentences, paragraphs and pages and weaving them into your personality" (Artley, 1948, pp 11). To Burton (1950 pp. 3-15) word-calling without understanding is not reading. At times one word would carry several meanings and selecting one specific meaning suitable to the context requires knowledge of word meaning.

To some others reading is an active process for ascertaining the experiences encoded in language and in turn encoded in print. Thus, according to Tinker:

"Reading involves the reconstruction of printed or written symbols which serve as stimuli for the recall of meanings built up through past experience and the reconstruction of new meanings through manipulation of concepts already possessed by the reader."

(Tinker, 1952 p.11)
Literature is accessible to the reader only if he can understand the words on the printed page. Words are the tools for thinking and they open up the gateway to knowledge. According to Dechant "Reading is a means of learning. Without the ability to comprehend meaning, written or printed passages escape understanding." (Dechant 1969)

It is thus obvious that reading is not merely recognizing the graphic symbol. While reading a person reconstructs the facts that lie behind the symbols. He tries to decode the author's message. To understand the idea the author tries to convey, the reader has to think of what he reads. Thus the processes of reading and thinking are interrelated. DeChant says, "the good reader thinks with the writer. And, because his experiences are different from those of the writer, he frequently thinks beyond or differently from the writer..... even good readers obtain different understandings from the same reading experience."

Constructing meaning is a vital prerequisite of all reading. But reading is also a form of thinking, problem solving or reasoning which involves analysing and discriminating, judging, evaluating and synthesising. Any definition of reading process must therefore include interpretation and evaluation of meaning as well as construction of meaning.

1.2 Types of Reading

There are many varieties of reading like oral and silent; informational and recreational; observational and
assimilative; reflective and creative. Yoakim (1955) has classified reading according to form, purpose and the psychological processes involved.

1.2.1 Forms of Reading – Oral and Silent

In form, reading occurs both as oral and silent. Both oral and silent reading involve vocabulary, comprehension, speed and accuracy. While loud reading may be done to communicate with others or to convince and influence others, silent reading is done to learn things or to recreate oneself.

Arora (1989) is of the view that initial training in oral reading is an essential step to silent reading. Oral reading helps children to pronounce the words correctly.

In oral reading speed is limited by pronunciation; in silent reading it is limited by the ability to grasp meaning. Oral reading demands skill in voice-pitch, tempo and gesture and in sensing the mood and feeling intended by the author.

The main purpose of silent reading is to increase the rate of reading and to assimilate the ideas expressed in reading. However, practice in oral reading contributes to fluency in silent reading. It familiarizes the reader with words and recurring phrases. Because of this fact, proper training in oral reading is essential at the initial stage. By the time the child enters class five or six he can be introduced to silent reading.
1.2.2 Reading purposes

The purpose of reading is a critical component of the reading process. Most ineffectual and superficial reading is due to lack of purpose in the mind of the reader. The reader's purpose for reading provides a basis against which he can judge the relevance of the material and as a guide to how to handle this material. If the reader has a specific purpose, his reading becomes goal directed and efficient to the extent that his skills allow him to concentrate only on what is relevant to his purpose.

There are many lists of different reading purposes. Perhaps Hathaway has the most elaborate list. She listed 1529 different reading purposes grouped into the following major headings.

1. To gain meanings.
2. To gain information
3. To guide activity.
4. For social motives (i.e. to influence or entertain others)
5. To find values.
6. To organize
7. To solve problems.
8. To remember.
9. To enjoy

(Hathaway, 1929)

1.2.3 Reading as a Psychological Process

Analysis of reading from the standpoint of the
intellectual processes involved may be of four types:

First is observational reading where the reader notes what the writer has to say but makes no determined efforts to analyse it or to remember the words or ideas. He merely wants to gain an overall impression of the passage to know what it is all about.

Second is assimilative reading. Here the reader reads to assimilate, to understand, and remember ideas. He wishes to follow the main line of argument, or to follow the story or to gain some familiarity with the general outline of a process which is described in the text. He also tries to memorize the details of each example that is cited or to note the exact sequence of events that are related.

The third type of reading is reflective reading where the reading is frequently interrupted by moments of reflexion. This type of reflective reading is otherwise termed as critical reading. Here, the reader wants to follow an argument which to him appears obscure in some part of the text or when he is sceptical about an argument.

The last type of reading is creative reading when the reader wishes to discover ideas which he can use in oral or written expression. Creative reading goes beyond interpretation. Here the reader evaluates, passes personal judgement on the quality, the value, the accuracy and truthfulness of what is read. Creative reading in its higher form starts with a question or an inquiry which arises in the mind of the reader, takes him to the levels beyond the direct implications gathered from the reading material and calls for creative thinking.
The different types of reading that are appropriate to different purposes also underline the best known prescription for effective reading to learn. This is the SQ 3R technique first propounded by Robinson (1946). The formula stands for Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Review. It is intended as a general scheme which can be applied to every text when reading is undertaken for the purpose of learning. The reader has to undertake a preliminary survey (i.e. Skim reading) to find out what all things he can expect in the text. In the course of his survey he should ask the questions which he has reason to believe may be answered in the text. Thus the initial S is followed by a Q phase and this in turn by the first R (Receptive or assimilative reading). Following on this reading, the student is required to recite, i.e., to go over the points he has established so as to make sure he has indeed learned from his reading. This is the second R. Finally, he should go over the main points again reviewing the material, paying particular attention to any points he has missed. This is the third R. Thus purposeful reading helps students in their learning. Hence it becomes imperative that reading should be given due importance in our school curriculum.

1.3 Reading in the School Curriculum

Reading is an important aspect of living in school and outside. It serves many different purposes and it calls for a wide variety of skills, attitudes and understanding. To teach the children to meet the varied reading demands of today's world is a crucial task for education. It calls for a high level of skill, insight and resourcefulness on the part of the teachers.
In this age of science and technology, the world is advancing rapidly and the frontiers of knowledge are expanding day by day. A quick grasp of the vast amount of reading materials covering all the modern developments is expected of students. Hence developing reading habits in children becomes very essential and teaching reading should be given due importance in school curriculum.

In the words of Thorndike:

"There would be little argument that reading has been and will be the central part of the school curriculum especially, the curriculum at the elementary grades. With the rapid increase of human knowledge and expanding curricula, books have become the nucleus of much of the activity conducted in schools and success in many academic subjects is dependent upon the pupil's reading ability. It not only contributes to general school success, but also plays an important role in the mental health of the child."

(Thorndike, 1973)

In the opinion of Gray and Rogers, reading competence is a four dimensional process involving word perception, comprehension of meaning, reaction to the ideas expressed and application of these ideas to behaviour. It is in these four areas that direction and training must be given if reading is to be more than a passive process of assimilation. (Gray and Rogers, 1956 p. 17)

Accordingly, reading has been paid much attention to in the school curriculum in Western countries. Numerous research studies have been done on various aspects of reading and consequently modifications in school curriculum for effective teaching of reading have also been brought about.
The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement decided to launch an international study of reading comprehension as a part of its six subject survey in 1966. In its report it has been mentioned that the most dramatic finding of the survey was the very large difference in reading level between the developed and developing countries. Thorndike, the director of the project says: "The differences are so large that by the standard of developed countries, 14 year olds in the developing countries seem almost illiterate". (Thorndike, 1973). Hence improving the reading standards of children in the developing countries is a matter of concern for everyone working in the field of education.

But reading is a very neglected area both from the viewpoint of research and subsequent application of the results in education. At the primary school level children are taught to read. At the high school and college level very little is done to teach reading or to introduce some remedial reading programmes.

The report of the Education Commission submitted to the Government of India, Ministry of Education explains the position of teaching reading in the primary schools. The following lines from the report clearly state the strong feelings of the members of the commission in regard to the improvement of reading standards at the primary stage.

"We would like to emphasize one important aspect of education at this stage, viz., reading with understanding. If proper foundations for this are not laid at this level, the entire future education of the child will receive an irreparable set-back. Adequate attention has not
been paid so far to research in beginning reading, to the evolution of proper scripts which the Indian languages have, to the preparation of graded vocabularies, to the designing of primers and readers for class I and to the evolution of tests of reading readiness and competence. It has not been yet possible to organize the proper training of teacher-educators at the primary level in these matters, and the average primary teacher generally tries to teach reading in a rule of thumb manner. It is the neglect of this crucial area that is responsible for a good deal of stagnation at the lower primary stage. We recommend that a study of these problems should be taken up in earnest and that vigorous programme of improving reading instruction at the lower primary stage should be developed in all parts of the country."


A rather unscientific approach to the teaching of reading followed in many of our schools, instead of benefitting children is causing much damage to them. This is especially true when children are taught to read English. They are not taught correct pronunciation of words, proper intonation and accent and meaningful grouping of words while reading. This ultimately affect their comprehension also and students pass their successive standards with poor scholastic records at their credit.

This pitiable condition of teaching reading in Indian schools has been criticised by foreign researchers also. According to Marbel:

"Language programmes in Indian schools currently stress oral reading which is mainly restricted to reading of textbooks."
To be good readers children must practise reading. 'Sustained silent reading' should be encouraged. Indian children do very little independent reading at home. Their reading choices can be widened by constant exposure to a variety of materials."

(Marbel, 1984)

In the modern school much more reading is required than in the past. The pupil must be a skillful reader to succeed in the subject matter field also, be it social Studies, General Science or Mathematics. Teaching reading which was considered the duty of the language teacher, has now become the duty of the subject teachers as well. They have to give students instructions in those reading skills which are specifically pertinent to diverse content and graphic materials basic to social studies, sciences and mathematics. Therefore, teaching of reading is an integral part of the school curriculum.

As far as languages are concerned reading plays a key role among the four language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading and writing are the formal skills taught at school and both are well related. One who is a good reader naturally can express his ideas in good writing also. Therefore, continuous development of reading competence can result in better oral and written expression.

In mother tongue this type of training in reading is practically easier than that in any foreign language like English. In Indian conditions, the important role English has to play is well acknowledged. Besides being the lingua franca English is our library language. It is the medium
of instruction in some types of schools and most of the higher education institutions. Therefore, developing reading skills in English is of utmost importance. A reading oriented English syllabus is very much required in our system of education.

1.4 Teaching of Reading English in India

In a multi-lingual country like India, the place of English is very high. English is taught in our schools and colleges not as a mere foreign language. It has attained the position of a second language. When English is taught solely as a school subject for the purpose of giving the student a foreign language competence so as to enable him to read literature, to read technical works, to listen to the radio etc. it is taught as a foreign language. When it is used as a language of instruction in the schools, it is treated as a second language.

The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) also recommends the use of English as a second language as it has more implications than it being taught as a foreign language.

In teaching English as a second language, the primary goal of instruction is the achievement of a fair degree of communicative competence in English. English is the language educated Indians can use anywhere in India as a medium for communication. Thus English language promotes our national integration.

Teaching of reading English also should be given due importance. Teachers should chalk out programmes to
inculcate interest in students to read books for recreation and information. Curriculum makers should arrange school-wide planning to make provision for the inclusion of specific reading skills in the curriculum, for the preparation of appropriate reading material for the continuous evaluation of the programme and for the training of teachers.

It is frequently the case that the ability to read English is often assessed through a test of reading comprehension. Very frequently, students reading in a foreign language seem to read with less comprehension than when they read in their mother tongue. Very often teachers also fail to realize that children's reading ability in English is impaired by vocabulary problems.

Effective instruction in vocabulary building contributes to the pupil's understanding of what is read. This enables him to express ideas both in oral and written forms. The emphasis on vocabulary building should be on meaning. New words can be taught with respect to the contexts. Practice in using a dictionary would also help in vocabulary building. The infinite wealth of allusions, figurative language, idioms and metaphors must be opened to the pupils.

Again, the teacher should create interest in students in reading some of the basic literature. A child's reading taste can be gradually improved so that from basic light literature, he can go to classics. The class room or school library should be ready to provide appropriate books for the pupils whose curiosity is thus aroused. The teacher should help students in selecting the books to read and encourage them to compare the reading matter.
In searching for ways and means for improving reading comprehension, a prime consideration should be the involvement of pupils in their reading. Pupils should be encouraged to reflect upon the ideas and information they get from books.

Teaching reading in English can be improved by preparing texts that capture the imagination of pupils and help in developing their vocabulary and knowledge of grammatical constructions and usages. In short, a broad framework for evolving a policy for promoting effective reading across curriculum especially that of English, should include a structure of instruction, guidance and reading practice and a perusal of methods and materials aimed at creating the optimum opportunity for pupils to use reading purposefully.

1.5 Reading Skills

In lower grades, the main objective of teaching reading is developing reading skills, while developing reading ability is the objective of higher classes. But these two reading skill and reading ability cannot be considered as separate entities; both are interrelated. One who has achieved proficiency in the mechanical aspects of reading like oral and silent reading, correct pronunciation and intonation and adequate speed in reading will have better reading ability based on language, ideas, organization style and so on.

Over the years, several research workers have attempted to discover whether reading is composed of different subskills that might relate to one another within a taxonomy or hierarchy of skills. Several researchers
put forth different taxonomies or lists of reading skills. Davis presented evidence that at senior high school level the following subskills of reading ability are identifiable. They are:

1. Knowledge of word meaning.
2. Ability to select the appropriate meaning for a word or a phrase in the light of its contextual clues.
3. Ability to follow the organization of a passage and to identify incidents and references in it.
4. Ability to select the main thought in the passage.
5. Ability to answer questions that are answered in the passages but not in words in which the question is asked.
6. Ability to answer questions on points that are specifically mentioned in the passage.
7. Ability to draw inferences from the passage contents.
8. Ability to recognize the literary devices in a passage and to determine its tone and mood.
9. Ability to determine the writer's purpose and point of view and to draw inferences about the writer.

(Davis, 1964)

Lennon on the other hand emphasises four basic skills:

1. The ability to know words and their meaning.
2. Ability to comprehend the literal meaning.
3. Ability to comprehend the implied meaning.
4. Ability to detect the author's mood and purpose and the tone of the passage.

(Lennon, 1962 p. 214)
But whatever be the number and classifications of the comprehension abilities, one thing is worth noticing. i.e., all these abilities grow out of the purpose for which one reads. At certain times the reader reads to locate or retain factual information; at other times he reads to sense the relationships among the facts presented in order to organize them to suit the purposes. He may also read to evaluate the information given or to interpret the ideas or to appreciate the content.

Thus it is clear that reading is a complex ability consisting of various facets or components. Now the question arises as to what could be the relationship of these components with each other, whether they are statistically dependent (interrelated) or independent skills.

Intensive research work has been going on for the past seventy or eighty years to unravel the mysteries of this endlessly fascinating topic. A large number of objective standardised tests of a wide variety of reading skills and abilities have been constructed and administered on students of various age and grade levels to identify the various facets of reading ability.

Traxler (1941) addressing a conference on problems in measurement of reading remarked that "what is apparently needed is a mathematical solution of the difficulty by means of a thorough-going factor-analysis of the abilities which enter into silent reading." Ever since then a series of factor analysis studies have been conducted in this area of reading ability, its pioneers being Davis (1941), Langsman (1941), Hall and Robinson (1945),
Anderson (1949), Thorndike (1973), Spearitt (1972) and so on. All these studies have established the fact that reading is essentially a complex ability, though they differed as to what facets it consists of. Factor analysis studies have revealed various factors of reading comprehension but most of them have indicated the presence of such factors as word knowledge, factual comprehension, reasoning in reading and, inferential reading. Investigations have also indicated the difference between literal and critical reading - all leading to the final confirmation that reading comprehension is undoubtedly made up of several component skills.

Thus, it goes without saying that reading ability consists of many dimensions and aspects. It is on the basis of these dimensions that the reading ability of children is to be developed. Therefore, it is the duty of the teacher to devise appropriate methods to teach reading to the students. Conscious and constant efforts must be taken by the teacher to develop reading skills amongst children.

1.6 Need for the Present Study

It is undisputed that English occupies a place of prestige in the educational and official structure of India. The prestige that English enjoys in our country is attributed to various reasons. Learning another language especially English, is a significant enterprise directed towards ensuring a more intensive experience and view of the world.

"English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world and we will act unwisely if we allow
ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance" (Radha Krishnan Commission 1948-49).

Various education commissions appointed by the government to study various aspect of educational reconstruction in India have recognized the crucial role that English plays in the development of this country. The Education Commission of 1949 has observed:

"Our students who are undergoing training at schools which will admit them either to a university or to a vocation must acquire sufficient mastery of English to give them access to the treasurers of knowledge, and in the universities no student should be allowed to take a degree, who does not acquire the ability to read with facility and understanding works of English authors."

(Education Commission 1949 p. 325)

Therefore, a developing nation like ours cannot afford to neglect the teaching of English Language in an effective manner. Kothari Commission (1964-66) devised a Three language formula which made English compulsory in the lower secondary stage. Accordingly English is taught in classes VII to IX in all schools in the country. English is adopted as the medium of instruction in some schools also. This has resulted in its acquisition in varying degrees in different schools. There are various other factors also which have affected the learning of English as a second language and its constituent skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These factors may be learner or teacher-oriented as well as instructional or environmental. Along with the cognitive aspect - the inherent capacity of the individual to learn a language, there is the affective aspect involving motivation and attitude that plays an important role. The socio-cultural
background of the learner, of which his family, peer group, school and college and others around him in the society are important components, also is related with the second language proficiency.

In India, schools are mainly of three categories - government, central and public schools. Most of the public schools are English medium schools and most of the government schools are giving instructions only through the medium of mother tongue. But, recently on public demands English medium sections have also been started in government schools. Central schools too are bilingual schools.

In comparison public school students are expected to have better standard in English since all the subjects are taught to them in English from the primary level onwards. Moreover, the students are trained up on conversing in English in and outside the class room. The socio-economic status of parents, the school atmosphere and discipline and the importance given to extra curricular activities all will directly or indirectly influence the academic achievement and also the standard in English of the students in the Public schools.

However, it has been noticed that in its eagerness to master scientific and technological subjects, the student community as a whole, irrespective of the school systems, pays little attention to reading and developing reading skills. Owing to the absence of a skills-oriented English language reading curriculum, the teachers also are at a loss to inculcate the reading skills among the students. The investigator, being an English teacher herself, was
aware of the present state of teaching reading English and also the difference in the standards of reading ability of students of different schools for many explicit and implicit reasons. But taking all the three categories of schools and comparing the reading performance of their students was beyond the resources of the investigator. Moreover, the reading ability of the ninth standard students of Central Schools and Government schools had already been tested by Grover (1990). Therefore, the investigator decided to choose the ninth and eleventh grade girl students of the Public schools of Delhi for her present study.

Grover (1990) could identify two factors of reading ability, viz., a word knowledge factor and a comprehension factor, in the case of the central school students and Government school girl students of the ninth standard. By taking up the ninth standard Public school children of Delhi for the present study, a picture of the structure of reading ability of Indian students in English was expected to emerge. Moreover, the investigator proposed to study the hypothesis that differentiation of abilities takes place as children grow older. For this purpose, she decided to administer the same testing material to both the ninth and eleventh classes of the Public schools and study the outcome.