CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

A survey of related literature is an essential aspect of a research project. It enables a researcher to acquire up-to-date information about what has already been investigated in the particular area from which he intends to take up a problem for research.

According to Aggarwal:
"The review of related literature is locating, reading and evaluating reports of research as well as reports of casual observation and opinion that are related to individual's planned research project" (Aggarwal 1966 p. 87)

Further, a review of related studies helps to demonstrate the relationship between completed research and the topics under investigation. It establishes the originality of the research undertaken and establishes its need and significance. The review also "promotes a greater understanding of the problem and its crucial aspects and ensures the avoidance of unnecessary duplication." (Mouly, 1963. p. 112)

It also helps the researcher to have a clear concept of the problem, to formulate the methodology to be followed, and the hypotheses of the study. Hence, a thorough survey of the studies related to the area of reading ability of students in English was done and relevant ones were picked up and classified under the following appropriate headings.
2.1 Reading Ability

The ability to read is generally regarded as the basis of education. Reading is a complex activity which involves the comprehension and interpretation of ideas presented by written or printed symbols. Making out the meaning of written language is the very essence of the reading process. The success of a student in the school is largely dependent on the extent to which his reading skills have been developed.

Ever since 1917, beginning with Thorndike, numerous studies have been conducted in foreign countries and in our country on the various aspects of reading such as reading habits, reading readiness, reading speed, comprehension and word knowledge, reading interests, methods of teaching reading and so on. Here, follow a few of them.

Thorndike (1917) hypothesized that for adequate comprehension of the reading material, the reader must constantly evaluate the relative importance of words, phrases and sentences and must make use of all his reasoning facilities and skills in problem solving.

Gray (1925) provided four conclusions on reading comprehension viz. (1) the ability to interpret single passage accurately increases rapidly in the lower grades and may reach a very high level by the end of grade three; (2) the speed with which the reader can interpret simple passages improves rapidly and somewhat steadily through the
grades; (3) the depth of interpretation increases steadily throughout the elementary and high school grades; (4) the ability to pronounce words usually exceeds ability to interpret meanings by the time pupils reach the third grade.

During nineteen thirties and forties several research workers concentrated on identifying the various subskills of reading ability. A few conducted factor analysis studies on reading ability in an attempt to identify various facets of reading ability. The investigator decided to record these studies elsewhere in this chapter where they suited.

Krantz (1957) found that total study skills, reading comprehension and reading vocabulary were the most persistent predictors of success in both the ninth and eleventh grades. Because certain other skills were also important, he recommended in addition, emphasis on reading skills specific to the content areas.

Scarborough et al. (1957) summarise the results of an experiment including three eight grade sections to determine the value of making reading assignments on the basis of levels of reading ability.

Lee (1957) presents an analysis of errors made by more than 200 children in England and Ireland in reading words in context and in isolation and compares the number of errors made on the more regularly and less regularly spelled words in the tests.

Cook (1957) studied the effect on comprehension among slow and rapid readers of rate scores obtained before and
after a time announcement. He found that a time announcement used to obtain rate score resulted in lowered comprehension scores after as compared with before the announcement in the case of slow readers but not for fast readers.

In a publication for UNESCO Olson (1957) presented data concerning the general development of good and poor readers and reiterated his basic contention that progress in reading parallels growth in organismic age.

Fridian and Rosanna (1958) present evidence from 18 students to support the view that speed and to some extent comprehension can be improved in a relatively short time through the use of appropriate methods in a history course.

Goins (1958) carried on an extensive study to determine the level of competence in visual perception of first grade pupils, the correlation of such competence with their achievement in reading and the effect of training in visual perception on subsequent progress in learning to read.

Reeves (1958) reported excellent progress in reading in a junior High School through ability grouping introducing the units through the use of materials in readers and audio visual aids and provides library reading adopted to the reading abilities of respective pupils.

Aaron (1960) conducted a comparative study of 175 fourth grade and 153 eighth grade pupils of white schools in Georgia School district with respect to difficulties among good and poor readers in spelling, phonetic syllables and syllabication. Good readers achieved higher mean scores
on all measures but numerous individual differences in performance were found in both good and poor readers.

At the college level, Spache et al (1960) using covariance analysis secured no significant differences, in reading achievement among students in six weeks remedial programmes in which the focus was upon individualized study, audio-visual presentation and work books respectively. Differences in attitudes towards reading tended to favour the individualized instruction group.

In a comparison of low language achievers in five Grade X Canadian schools, Larson, Black and Brown (1960) found no significant difference between four homogeneous experimental groups and five heterogeneous control groups in reading achievement. A specially designed curriculum was used in the experimental group and both groups made significant progress on reading and language tests selected from the Iowa Tests of Education Development.

Comparison of usefulness of a vocabulary scale based upon a random sampling of the dictionary versus an age scale in showing vocabulary progress in 216 students aged 6-15 years in English schools was conducted by Williams (1961).

Reid and Schoer (1966) conducted a study on reading achievement of 87 fourth grade males. The WISC subtest patterns of the 87 pupils were analysed to determine the relationship between the patterns and reading achievement and social class. All social class effects and interactions involving social class were non significant scores on three verbal scale subtests and one performance scale subtest were found to be significantly related to
reading achievement.

Roelise (1969) found that three dimensions of vocabulary were significantly related to comprehension. They are Extensiveness (number of words for which a child can select a synonym), Intensiveness (number of meanings known for words) and flexibility (selection of the particular meaning which fits a particular context).

Hafner and Weaver (1970) have shown in their study that word knowledge is the most important factor in reading comprehension in the elementary and secondary school years respectively.

Karlin (1971) stated that the ability to comprehend is enhanced when the reader sees the relationships among the ideas in a passage and recognizes the structure that ties the sentences together.

Oaken, Wiener and Cromer (1971) studied the effect of the ability to organize passage information on the ability to comprehend a passage. They found that even when readers could decode words readily they had difficulty in comprehending a passage if they did not organize the ideas presented in a meaningful way.

Tulman (1974) comparing students answering questions with and without reading the passage found that between 57 and 75 percent of the correct responses might be attributed to prior knowledge.

Reporting an association between a recent increase in difficulty in primary texts and rising reading scores Chall (1979) points out that adopting more difficult texts in
primary schools has led to an increase in reading scores.

Norton (1980) found that subjects of 6th and 8th grades comprehended idiom passages better than vocabulary passages. She concluded that context facilitated the selection of definitions for idioms and multiple meaning words found in narrative passages and also that idioms were more easily understood than were high level meaning for vocabulary words. Her next conclusion was that reading achievement level influenced the facility with which context was used by readers across grade and language groups.

Shefdbines's (1983) study examined how sixth grade students learn word meaning from the context of passages taken from a sixth grade basal reading text book. The study revealed: (1) students learned word meanings from context; (2) high verbal students learned relatively more even though they had less room for improvement and (3) words representing familiar concepts were more likely to be learned than those representing unfamiliar concepts.

A paper presented by Kyongho and Nation (1989) describes how a particular way of selecting stories reduces the vocabulary load and increases the repetitions of new vocabulary for the learners with a limited vocabulary knowledge when they read newspaper articles. It looks at two ways of selecting running stories and selecting unrelated stories, and the effect that they have on the repetitions of words outside the 2000 most frequent words which is assumed to be the vocabulary of EFL high school graduates entering universities. They found that running stories provide more repetitions of low frequency words, and therefore reduce the vocabulary load and provide
better conditions for the acquisition of words outside the 2000 most frequent words.

The limited vocabulary of EFL high school graduates is a major source of difficulty in reading. Laufer (1987) has shown that in order to achieve successful comprehension learners need 95 percent lexical coverage of a text. Recent studies suggest that the number of words necessary to cover 95 percent of an unsimplified text is about 5000. According to Deville et. al. (1985), Ostyn and Godin (1985) and Hindmarsh (1980) a lexicon of 5000 words would give a coverage of 90-95 percent of the lexis in authentic texts.

Most high school graduates in EFL countries have a far smaller vocabulary than this. Laufer (1986:6) provides findings from several studies. Indonesian graduates are reported to have a passive vocabulary of 900 to 1000 words. (Quinn 1970), Chinese 1200 words (Shui-Chun 1982); Malaysian - 1000 words (Crippper 1981) Nepalese - 500 to 700 words (Davies et al. 1984) and Tanzanian - 1700 words (Crippper and Dodd 1984).

Narayanaswamy (1972) reports that his vocabulary test showed that learners in India at a pre university school class who had been taught English for a period of six to seven years and had been through Indian language medium schools knew less than 1000 words of a general list.

Titus's (1989) study on sixth and eighth grade students revealed that the gifted group performed significantly higher on knowing two meanings and knowing at least one meaning of the 45 item multiple meaning words. No significant difference was found between the above average and average groups.
Asbill (1991) in his study examined the syntactic analysis skills in listening and reading in relation to reading comprehension ability as measured on a standardised paragraph reading test. Ability to use syntactic analysis in listening was found to be positively correlated with the ability to use syntactic analysis in reading, reflecting the underlying assumption that listening and reading require the same language comprehension process.

Several studies on the various aspects of reading comprehension have been conducted in India also. Narayanaswamy (1969) investigated into reading comprehension at college level. It was found possible to improve reading efficiency of school leavers through reading alone irrespective of proficiency in other language skills. He also found the average reading speed in English at college level to be 150 words per minute for a slow reader, 250 words for a fair reader and 350 words for a good reader with about 70 percent comprehension.

Ansuya (1970) attempted to establish criteria for the improvement of reading efficiency of the pre university students.

Koppar (1970) tried to investigate the factors affecting reading comprehension in English of class XII students of Gujarati medium schools. His findings revealed that reading comprehension in English was related positively to reading attitude. Anxiety, was related negatively to reading comprehension. Some other factors related to reading comprehension were reading readiness, academic motivation, attitude towards the study of English, the quality of classroom teaching etc.
Badami and Badami (1970) studied reading interests of college students through a questionnaire.

Shastri (1972) found that the performance of the students on the vocabulary test had a significant correlation with their performance in the S.S.C. examination.

Deshpande (1973) attempted improvement of teaching reading to beginners through improvement in the preparation of reading material and through evaluation of reading programmes.

Ahuja and Ahuja (1974) assessed speed and comprehension in silent and oral reading of children of standard VII.

Parikh (1976) inquired into the factors affecting reading speed and comprehension and found that reading speed was influenced positively by the print and the size of letters.

Pal (1977) identified verbal intelligence and language proficiency as the important variables in reading comprehension. She has also suggested that both the perceptual and conceptual skills are vital in reading comprehension. She has further affirmed that an instructional strategy aimed at improving the overall proficiency can significantly improve reading comprehension.

Rajagopalan (1981) studied the relationships of selected variables to reading comprehension in English and found that pupils experienced greater difficulty in
recognizing the meaning of words than in dealing with sentence forms and continuous pieces of writing.

Aggarwal (1981) examined the role of some of the personal cognitive and non-cognitive factors in reading ability. The sample for the study consisted of 200 boys and 200 girls of the ninth standard. He found that males and females differed significantly in reading ability study habits and academic achievements.

Shah (1981) conducted a study to find out the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension. He found that vocabulary (word meaning) has a positive bearing on reading comprehension. The correlation between vocabulary and reading comprehension was found to be .65 which indicated that vocabulary to some extent accounts for comprehension.

Bir Singh (1981) suggested that the use of word recognition technique, improving vocabulary, use of thinking skills, favourable attitude towards reading and towards the teacher are the measures to be taken to improve and develop reading skills of pupils.

Dass (1984) developed a reading ability test to measure the reading comprehension of pupils of standard X and attempted to establish some norms for reading comprehension for students of English medium schools of Central Gujarat. He found: (1) the mean score of girls was higher than that of boys. There were sex differences with regard to reading comprehension in English. (2) the mean difference of reading comprehension scores was in favour of students with high SES and high leadership traits. (3) Emotional stability was not found to influence
reading comprehension (4) Students having high degree of radicalism were found superior in reading comprehension to those with low degree of radicalism.

Srivastava (1983) studied correlations between various measures of reading comprehension and various measures of school achievement and found them to be positive and significant. The highest correlations were found between comprehension (reading for main idea and details) and different measures of school achievement.

2.2 Reading Ability - Unitary or composite : Some factor Analytic Studies

Research has attempted to discover whether reading is composed of different subskills that might relate to one another within a taxonomy or hierarchy of skills. Over the years, many different taxonomies or lists have been drawn up.

The early research workers who probed into the complexity of Reading Ability were Thorndike (1917), Richards (1929), Touton and Berry (1931) and Traxler (1941). Most of their studies established the existence of a number of subskills, which quite probably led to some of the confusion in terminology which still exists. As yet, research workers have not come to a definite conclusion as to whether reading ability is a unitary trait or it is a composite of various subskills.

A series of factor analysis studies of reading comprehension were undertaken in the late thirties and early forties to find out the various facets of reading ability. Feder (1938) obtained data showing that reading
for information and reading for inference were relatively independent skills.

Factor analysis studies of reading comprehension of college students were conducted by Davis (1941), Langsman (1941) and Hall and Robinson (1945). Gans (1940) and Mazurkiewicz (1957) made factor analysis studies on intermediate students and Anderson (1949) on secondary level students.

One of the best-known of all the investigations of this type was that reported by Davis in 1941. Davis sought to identify some of the fundamental factors in reading comprehension and to provide a means of measuring them. A factor analysis study revealed the presence of nine factors of reading comprehension, six of them clearly significant. Davis repeated his factor analysis of reading comprehension in 1968 and 1971 and presented evidence that at senior high school level the following subskills are identifiable: recalling word meanings, drawing inferences about a word from context, getting the literal sense meaning of details and weaving together ideas in the context drawing inferences from the content and recognizing an author's purpose, attitude, tone, mood and technique.

A reanalysis of Davis's data by Thurstone (1946) employing a somewhat different factor analysis technique led him to conclude that a single factor was sufficient to account for the obtained correlation.

Davis (1946) reacting to Thurstone's reanalysis of his data continued to maintain that his first six factors, at least represented significant dimensions of reading comprehension, though admittedly several of them accounted
for very little variance in reading scores.

Langsman (1941) reported a factor analysis of results of six reading tests and one, intelligence test. She identified five factors - a verbal factor concerned with word meaning, a perceptual factor, a word factor denoting fluency in dealing with words, a seeing relationships factor concerned with logical organization and a numerical factor.

Conant (1942) developed tests designed to measure the following skills: (1) Reading to get the pattern of the author's thought including comprehension of the main points; comprehension of specific facts which support main points, Comprehension of cause and effect relations and comprehension of words in context (2) Ability to interpret and make critical evaluation of material read. She found that intercorrelations among all these measures except five were above .50 leading Conant to state that there was no evidence "that students in general employed relatively independent abilities in this study-type reading." She concluded that the results indicated the presence of a single factor which could be defined as general comprehension.

Hall and Robinson (1945) developed a test-battery that included twenty five measures. Factor analysis of the results of the administration of these tests to one hundred college students yielded six factors which Hall and Robinson defined as "attitude of comprehension accuracy"; "an inductive factor", "a verbal or word meaning factor; a "rate for unrelated facts" factor; a chart reading factor and a sixth undefined factor.
Harris (1948) identified seven skills in comprehension in various types of literature. After administering a battery of tests to two groups of adults and factor analysing the results, Harris concluded that: one and only one ability is common to the comprehension of the literary passages of different types and that one general factor is adequate to account for the intercorrelations of the seven variables.

Hunt (1952) sought to determine whether the six factors identified by Davis would reappear in an independent investigation or more generally, reading comprehension is made up of aspects sufficiently specific to be measurable as independent variables. Hunt developed tests to develop each of the six factors and administered them to 585 college students. Factor analysis of the scores led to the conclusion that except for the vocabulary test, "the other measures were measuring much the same function of reading comprehension". Comparing the factor structure revealed in his study with that reported by Davis, Hunt reported emergence of a first factor somewhat resembling Davis's reasoning factor; a second factor similar to Davis's word-knowledge factor, and a third factor like Davis's organizing ability factor. He also found three other factors, all probably not significant.

Mc Cullough (1957) found that pupils at all levels tested (first, second and fourth grades) "are able to think about story material in the four ways examined and that there is a substantial relationship among the scores suggesting the possibility of a common factor pervading all."
Thorndike (1973-74) reanalysed Davis's data and concluded that they showed the presence of a separate word knowledge factor but that none of the other skills was separately distinguishable and they could all be described as "reasoning in reading".

Another analysis of Davis's data using new factor analysis technique by Spearitt (1972) resulted in the conclusion that four skills were distinguishable and they were: recalling word meanings; drawing inference from the content; following the structure of a passage and recognizing the writer's purpose, attitude, tone and mood. Spearitt concluded, however, that aside from word knowledge, which accounted for most of the variance, other types of comprehension tests were so highly intercorrelated that they largely measured, "reasoning in reading."

Davis (1972) essentially agreed with Spearitt when he pointed out that "Word Knowledge" and "reasoning in reading" accounted for about 89 percent of variance leaving only 5 percent for other comprehension subskills. Davis also suggested that the following abilities might be highly important in determining comprehension: decoding skill, listening vocabulary, memory for ideas heard and ability to weave ideas together.

Davis and Widdowson (1974) came up with a list of types of reading comprehension question relevant to the testing of reading ability: direct reference question, inference, supposition and evaluation questions. A longer list of feasible levels of questions is exemplified by Smith (1981) using the Bloomian taxonomy.
However Lunzer and Gardner (1979) attempted to identify a hierarchy of skills by designing questions on passages aimed at different levels of meaning. But they failed to prove that different questions called upon different subskills and stated, therefore, that reading comprehension cannot be described simply in terms of a set of hierarchically ordered skills.

A recent study of Belille (1990) attempted to answer the following question: "Do specific skills for reading subject matter materials exist? If specific skills do exist, to what extent do they account for differences in reading comprehension?" Do different subject matter texts require differing sets of skills? The primary purpose of the study was to explore the nature of general versus specific reading skill and to identify factors which might comprise reading comprehension. After administering Nelson-Denny Reading test and specially constructed tests in Social and Natural Sciences to 94 grade 13 students, Belille came to the following conclusions: (1) Comprehension of narrative texts is not different from comprehension of texts in Social Studies and Natural Sciences (2) Reading Comprehension consists of no more than two factors a) Vocabulary, b) "Relationship among words in sentences". (3) While question formats can be differentiated from one another, they do not differentiate among kinds of texts.

Another study in India was conducted by Grover (1990). Factor analysis was done on the data secured from administering a battery of six reading Ability Tests to five homogeneous groups of ninth standard students of Delhi. She found that two factors - a Word Knowledge or Vocabulary Factor and a Verbal Comprehension Factor -
emerged in the case of Group I and V, i.e., Central School Boys and Government School Girls, respectively. However, with Groups II, III and IV, i.e. Central School Girls, Government School Boys and two Government School Girls respectively, reading ability emerged as a single unitary trait.

The studies reviewed here have established the fact that reading is essentially a complex ability. Several factor analysis studies have revealed various factors of reading ability which have been identified as Word Knowledge, Comprehension, reasoning in reading, inferential reading and so on. On the other hand some researchers have not been able to identify various factors of reading ability and, therefore, they have concluded that reading ability is a unitary trait. A few research workers have tried to unravel the hierarchical theory of reading skills. On the other hand a few researchers have attempted to establish that the numerous reading skills to which separate names or titles have been attached are in fact so closely related to one another that they must be considered as identical.

2.3 Reading and Differentiation of Abilities

A closely related problem is that of differentiation of abilities with increase in age and experience. It is a fact that at lower grade levels reading ability is much less organized than at the high school or college and adult levels. In the beginning stages of reading emphasis is on the perceptual and mechanical aspects of reading than on central thought process. Since the requisite perceptual skills are being acquired at varying rates by children, there may exist among them more differential degrees of
proficiency in various components of reading ability.

Some significant investigations were undertaken to identify differences in patterns of reading and reading achievement on the basis of individual differences in mental ability. The relationship between reading achievement and mental ability has continuously intrigued researchers from the beginning of this century. Reading proficiency and general mental ability appeared to have so much in common that researchers have guessed a fair degree of relationship between the two.

The age level and grade level studies on the relationship of mental ability or intelligence with reading have tended to show that significant relationship exists between the two. As the students advance in age, there is more likelihood of their reading ability getting differentiated into different factors. The following are the results of investigations carried out upon subjects differing in age.

Thorndike (1926) in a study of mental organisation among school children and college students discovered a decrease in intercorrelation within a test battery as we go from children to adults. He found the correlation of vocabulary and arithmetic for 126 fifth grade children was .52 while the correlation between vocabulary and arithmetic for 100 college students was .23.

Durrel (1933) on the basis of a study conducted with a sample of around 1000 children advocated that intelligence tests were basically reading tests. Perhaps he was one of the pioneers to identify that normal or even bright children are classified as dull with the help of group intelligence test, may be, because they are poor readers.
In the work of Bryan (1934) and Anastasi (1932) a decrease in intercorrelation within a test battery between children and adults is seen. By administering certain memory tests using pictures, objects, forms, colours and blocks to 100 four year old boys, Bryan found that these memory tests were as closely related to vocabulary as they were to each other thereby indicating that there is a considerable degree of homogeneity in the abilities utilized by these young children in dealing with symbols. In contrast, Anastasi's study of memory with adult subjects reports the correlation of verbal factor with memory to be .085 and of the number factor with memory .00.

In 1935 Garret, Bryan and Perl administered ten tests to measure memory, verbal ability and numerical ability to three groups of public school boys and girls at three age levels. They found the intercorrelations among the tests of memory, verbal ability and numerical ability decreased with age from 9 to 12 and from 12 to 15.

Garret (1946) states "Abstract or symbol intelligence changes in its organization as age increases from a fairly unified and general ability to a loosely organised group of abilities or factors." But he does not consider only maturation to contribute to this differentiation but also increasing experience and diverging interests.

Cooper (1955) gave tests based on materials from various subject fields and correlated the results to test the assumption that "reading ability becomes differentiated into specific abilities requiring different skills". Correlations showed high interrelationship among the factors studied which led to the conclusion that reading ability
appears to be an expression of students' total intellectual and language development".

Tillson (1958) made an attempt to study the reading maturity level of 32 superior readers at Purdue University through the application of the scale of Maturity in Reading.

Flavell and Steadman (1961) investigated the ability of children in grades 2 to 19 to rank order word pairs according to eleven categories of "logic - grammatical" relationship. Illustrative categories used were synonyms (Fast-swift) co-ordinate (dog, cat) contrasts (good-bad) and whole-parts (tree-limb). In the task of choosing which of the two pairs were most closely related in meaning "group agreement in rank ordering of word pairs in terms of semantic similarity showed a more or less regular increase with age". While young children did not show a definite similarity of meaning hierarchy, somewhere between Grade III and V an adult pattern began to emerge.

Anderson's two studies (1960 and 1961) deal with the relationship of age with reading ability. Anderson made a correlation study of relationship among scores on the co-operative Reading Test and the Cattell 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire for 290 male and 125 female entering students at the University of Western Australia. He found a significant increase with age in vocabulary development, but a decrease with age in reading speed and comprehension among 278 adults aged 18-62.

De Chant and Smith (1977) suggested that mental age is a basic determinant of reading success when children have reached the stage at which they "read to learn" than it is
when they are "learning to read".

Rabuya's study (1980) was intended to establish the performance of Zairean Sixth and twelfth graders on reading measures. It was found that an increase in vocabulary and reading comprehension subskills existed between sixth and twelfth graders when comparing the entire sample together. But when a selected group of the top seven per cent of sixth graders was compared with the twelfth graders, there was no remarkable variation in their reading achievement.

Many of the Indian research workers also have confirmed this differentiation hypothesis.

Mukherjee (1962) factor analysed a series of correlation tables obtained during the standardisation of DAT (form A) and confirmed the hypothesis that with increasing age and experience there is gradual differentiation of abilities.

Rao (1962) by plotting test profiles of 50 cases in the Differential Aptitude Testing Project also reported similar results.

Bala (1977) reported that greater differentiation of mental abilities is possible with increasing age and educational experience after performing a factor analysis of reasoning ability in three age groups - 13, 14 and 15 years.

Tewari (1985), Tyagi (1987) and Garg (1989) also have conducted factorial studies and supported the hypothesis of differentiation of mental abilities with increasing age.
Though reading as a mental ability has not been empirically proved, it has emerged as a composite of some specific skills at a relatively higher stage as shown in the studies of Davis (1941), Langsman (1941) Hall and Robinson (1945), Anderson (1949) Gans (1940) and Mazurkiewicz (1957) who conducted factor analysis studies of reading comprehension with secondary intermediate and college students.

It is an accepted fact that reading comprehension is an ongoing process from the time a child begins reading. At the lower level comprehension means that the reader gets satisfied with the matter he reads as it makes some sense for him. For this, he must know the meaning of words he reads and must see that the words hold together grammatically and conceptually. At a higher level, a reader wants to learn by reading. For this, he wants to penetrate beyond the verbal forms of the text to the underlying idea by comparing the new idea with what he already knows; by getting at the meaning of metaphors, idioms and proverbs and the like; by making inferences and generalisations and so on. Whether in this process a person's reading ability gets scattered into various subskills or, his comprehension gets differentiated into various factors still remains an enigma. Research in this field so far, has remained inconclusive as the results of the numerous investigations mentioned before reveal.

While some of the studies reviewed above have pointed out that reading ability is a unitary trait, some others have endorsed the view that reading ability has several facets. So also, many research studies have tried to establish that reading ability is essentially a mental ability and differentiation of abilities takes place with
increase in age and educational experience. The investigator could not come across any study on the problem whether the reading ability in English is a unitary trait or not and whether differentiation of abilities takes place as children grow older with regard to the 9th and 11th grade Public School students. Hence the investigator decided to take up this present topic for further investigation.