CHAPTER – 4

ASSESSMENT OF READING SKILLS

1. Methodology for assessing reading skills

Reading passages based on the ten steps for improving reading discussed in Chapter III were chosen to assess the reading skills of Karunya students. Regular tests were conducted and the reading skills of students were assessed carefully by the researcher.

1.1. Sample for the study

- A total number of around 253 students from II B. Tech (EEE), II B. Tech (CSE), I B. Tech (Section I, comprising all branches), I B. Tech (Section R, comprising all branches) were chosen for the study.
- Out of these students, the mother tongue of 82 students is Malayalam. Tamil students are 102 in number; the others are: North Indian students 34, Kannada students 28 and Telugu students 22.
- II B. Tech students are 131 in number and the rest 122 students are in I B. Tech.
- Number of girl students is 132 and boy students are 121.

1.2. Variables taken for the study

The study was conducted to find out the strength and weaknesses of the students in their levels of reading. They were also assessed according to their vernacular languages, age groups, subject groups and gender.
1.3. **Using Vocabulary in Context**

Four reading practices were given to students, each concentrating on the four types of context clues. Multiple choice questions followed.

**1.3.1. Results of the Test**

Out of the 131 students who took up the tests, 29 students scored full marks (10/10), 16 students scored 9/10 marks, the majority (30 students) scored 8/10, 14 students got 7/10, 9 students scored 6/10, 10 students scored 5/10, 3 students scored 4/10, 3 students got 3/10, 1 student got 1 mark and 3 students scored zero. (Chart 11)

![Chart 11 – Vocabulary test marks](chart11.png)

The average score for this test for identifying and improving the students’ skill in vocabulary is 6.8
1.3.2. **Language wise Analysis of Vocabulary skill**

Out of 131 students chosen for this study, the mother tongue of 41 students is Malayalam. Tamil students are 60 in number; the others are: Bhojpuri 1, Hindi students 12, 1 Anglo – Indian student, Kannada 3, Telugu 19 and 1 Nepali student. (Chart 12)

![Chart 12 – Language groups](image)

The average mark of Tamil students is 8, Nepali is 8, Hindi is 8.6, Telugu is 7.9, Malayalam is 7.2, Anglo Indian is 10, Bhojpuri is 9 and Kannada is 7.5. (Chart 13)

![Chart 13 - Vocabulary skill variation in linguistically varied students](image)
So, comparatively, Hindi students are better in understanding vocabulary from the given context when compared to Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada students.

Girls fared better in this test and so did the II B. Tech students (Chart 14 & 15).

Chart 14 – Vocabulary skill (boys versus girls)

Girls fared better in this test and so did the II B. Tech students (Chart 14 & 15).

Chart 15 – Vocabulary skill (II years versus I years)
1.4. Recognizing Main Ideas

Three reading tasks were given to students to recognize the main ideas. The results of the test are provided below:

![Chart 16 – Finding main idea (boys versus girls)](image)

In the test given to the students to identify the main idea, girls fared better, and so did the II B. Tech students (Chart 16 & 17). Kannada students were good in grasping the main idea, followed by North Indian and Malayalam students. Tamil students were found to be weak in this area (Chart 18).

![Chart 17 – Finding main idea (I years versus II years)](image)
1.5. Identifying Supporting Details

The results of the tests show that girls were able to identify better the supporting ideas than boys (Chart 19)
Malayalam students performed well in these tests, whereas Tamil and Kannada students showed difficulties with identifying the supporting details (Chart 20).

![Chart 20 – Identifying supporting details (different language groups)](image)

The results of the II B. Tech students showed that with better exposure to language studies, with more guidance and with more maturity, better results can be achieved (Chart 21).

![Chart 21 – Identifying supporting details (II years versus I years)](image)
1.6. Recognizing Implied Main Ideas and the Central Point

Three tasks were given to students to trace the implied main ideas in these passages and recognize the central point. The results of the tests indicated the better performance by girls (Chart 22).

Chart 22 – Identifying implied idea (boys versus girls)

Once again, Malayalam students were very sharp in recognizing the implied main ideas and the central points. Kannada students faced difficulty in this area of reading (Chart 23). And II B. Tech students, as usual scored the highest (Chart 24).

Chart 23 – Identifying implied idea by different language groups
1.7. Understanding Relationships that involve addition, time, examples, comparison or contrast, and cause and effect

The results of the tests showed girls to be better performers in understanding relationships that involve addition, time, examples, comparison or contrast, and cause and effect (Chart 25).
North Indian students were very promising in this area, followed by Kannada students. In fact all the students were good in tracing the relationships of words and ideas in the given reading passages (Chart 26). But definitely there was deviation with respect to the II B. Tech students who scored higher than the I B. Tech students (Chart 27).

Chart 26 – Understanding relationships of words (different language groups)

Chart 27 – Understanding relationships of words (II years versus I years)
1.8. Distinguishing between facts and opinions

Two tasks were given to students. The two tasks were great challenges to the boys. Girls fared better in it (Chart 28). It was surprising that Kannada students were good at distinguishing facts from opinions (Chart 29), and as usual II B. Tech students did the tasks easily and more correctly (Chart 30).

Chart 28 – Ability to distinguish fact and opinion (Boys versus girls)

![Chart 28](image)

Chart 29 – Ability to distinguish fact and opinion (different language groups)

![Chart 29](image)
1.9. Making inferences

Four tasks were given. II B. Tech students fared better than the I B. Tech students (Chart 33). In these tasks boys proved themselves to be better than girls (Chart 31). And Tamil students marveled in these tasks (Chart 32).
1.10. Understanding Purpose

Girls fared far better than boys in this test (Chart 34). North Indians excelled in it, followed by Telugu and Malayalam students. Tamil students were also good in identifying the purpose of the author. But Kannada students showed some struggle (Chart 35).
II B. Tech students excelled in these tasks and I B. Tech students also fared fairly well (Chart 36).
1.11. **Understanding Tone**

Boys could identify the tone of the author better than girls, though both showed struggle (Chart 37). But Telugu students were sharper in these tasks, followed by Malayalam students. North Indian and Kannada students were average in their
performance. Tamil students were the weakest (Chart 38). II B. Tech students were ahead of the I B. Tech students in their scores (Chart 39).

Chart 38 – Understanding the tone of the author by different language groups

Chart 39 – Understanding the tone of the author (II B. Tech versus I B. Tech)

1.12. Evaluating Argument

Both boys and girls were weak in these tasks (Chart 40).
Though Telugu and Kannada students fared better than the others and Malayalam
students and Tamil students were average in their performance, all the students need
training in these tasks. North Indian students need more attention than others (Chart 41).
But, compared to the I B. Tech students, II B. Tech students have done pretty well (Chart
42).

Chart 40 – Evaluating arguments (boys versus girls)

Chart 41 – Evaluating arguments by different language groups
1.13. **Summary of the Findings**

- The average test mark of all the students in all the 10 tests is 6.8 out of 10. The average mark of each test is shown in Chart 43.
• The average of girl students is 6.8. The average mark of girl students in each test is shown in Chart 44.

Chart 44 - Average marks of girls

• The average of boy students is 6.7. The average mark of boy students in each test is shown in Chart 45.

Chart 45 – Average marks of boys
- Girl students show slightly better performance than boy students. The average marks of girls and boys are shown in Chart 46.

![Chart 46 - Girls versus boys (average marks)](chart46.png)

- Girl students perhaps are much more serious in taking up tests and assignments when compared to the boys (Chart 46).

- Tamil students need more reading practices to improve. The average marks of students language vise are shown in Chart 47.

![Chart 47 – Average marks of different language groups](chart47.png)
- II B. Tech students who have taken up reading practices in their first year have fared far better than the I B. Tech students. This clearly indicates that training in reading helps improve a lot. (Charts 48 & 49)

Chart 48 – Average marks of II B. Tech students

Chart 49 – Average marks of I B. Tech students
- Malayalam students have scored the highest on the whole. (Chart 50)
- Students have performed their best in the eighth test, i.e, in finding the purpose of the author in any piece of writing as shown in Chart 51.

![Chart 50 – Average of all the groups](chart50)

- But when it comes to argument they find it difficult to see through the point.
  Hence students need more practice in analytical skill (Chart 51)

![Chart 51 – Least score in finding the argument](chart51)
• Girl students perform well both in finding the purpose of the author and in tracing the implied main idea and the central point. (Chart 52)

![Chart 52 – Girls strong in two skills](image1)

• Girl students scored the least in finding the tone of the author. (Chart 53)

![Chart 53 – Girls weak in identifying tone](image2)
• Girls are not able to assess the tone of the author well when compared to the boys. (Chart 54)

![Chart 54 – Girls better than boys in identifying tone of the author](chart54)

• Like the girls, the best performances of the boys were in finding the purpose of the author and in tracing the implied main idea and the central point. (Chart 55)

![Chart – 55 – Best performances of boys](chart55)
• However, even in these two tests they were not able to rise up to the girls’ level.  

(Chart 56)

![Chart 56 – Girls ahead of boys](chart)

• Boy students found it difficult to track the argument that an author makes. (Chart 57)

![Chart 57 – Boys weak in tracing the argument](chart)
• Tamil students are much more analytical than the other students. They were able to tap the inferences in a passage well. (Chart 58)

• Tamil students are weak in tracing argument. (Chart 58)

Chart 58 – Tamil students weak in tracing argument

• North Indian students are strong in their vocabulary. (Chart 59)

• But they are weak in tracing arguments. (Chart 59)

Chart 59 – Strong and weak skills of North Indian students
• Telugu students are good in finding the purpose of the author (Chart 60)

• However they are weak in tracing arguments. (Chart 60)

Chart 60 – Strong and weak skills of Telugu students

• Malayalam students were able to find the implied main ideas and the central points much more easily than any other language students. (Chart 61)

• Their weak area, again, is tracing arguments (Chart 61)

Chart – 61 – Strong and weak skills of Malayalam students
- Kannada students’ forte was in finding the relationships of words in sentences and passages. (Chart 62)
- Their weak area again is arguments. (Chart 62)

![Chart 62 – Strong and weak areas of Kannada students]

1.14. **Areas that need training**

The results of the study show that more attention, help and practice must be given to students to improve them in those areas in which they have scored less in the given reading tests. So tests will have to be rearranged in the following order: Tracing argument, finding the tone of the author, recognizing facts and opinion, recognizing supporting details, understanding vocabulary, finding the main ideas, understanding inferences, finding the implied main idea and the central point, understanding relationships of words and ideas and finding the purpose of the author. (Chart 63)
Areas of reading that need help in the case of girls is in the following order: Tone, Argument, Facts and opinion, Main idea, Supporting details and Inference, Relationships, Vocabulary, Implied main idea and Purpose. (Chart 64)
Areas of reading that need help in the case of boys is in the following order: Argument, Tone and Facts and opinion, Main idea, Supporting details and Vocabulary, Inference, Relationships, Implied main idea and Purpose. (Chart – 65)

Chart 65 – Training plan for boys

- Tamil students must be trained in the following order:
  Argument, Tone, Supporting Details, Facts & Opinion, Main Idea, Relationship, Implied Main Idea, Purpose, Vocabulary and Inference (Chart 66).

Chart 66 – Training plan for Tamil students
- North Indian students must be trained in the following order:
  
  Argument, Tone, Facts & Opinion, Supporting Details, Main Idea, Implied Main Idea, Inference, Relationship, Vocabulary and Purpose (Chart 67).

![Chart 67 – Training plan for North Indian students](image)

- Telugu students must be trained in the following order:
  
  Argument, Facts & Opinion, Tone, Supporting Details, Main Idea, Inference, Vocabulary, Implied Main Idea, Relationship and Purpose (Chart 68).

![Chart 68 – Training plan for Telugu students](image)
• Malayalam students must be trained in the following order:
  Argument, Facts & Opinion, Tone, Supporting Details, Inference, Main Idea, Relationship, Purpose, Vocabulary and Implied Main Idea (Chart 69).

Chart 69 – Training plan for Malayalam students

• Kannada students must be trained in the following order:
  Argument, Tone, Supporting Details, Implied Main Idea, Purpose, Inference, Vocabulary, Facts & Opinion, Main Idea and Relationship (Chart 70).

Chart 70 – Training plan for Kannada students
• II B. Tech students must be trained in the following order:
  
  Argument, Tone, Supporting Details, Facts & Opinion, Relationship, Main Idea, 
  Implied Main Idea, Inference, Vocabulary and Purpose (Chart 71).

Chart 71 – Training plan for II B. Tech students

• I B. Tech students must be trained in the following order:
  
  Argument, Tone, Facts & Opinion, Supporting Details, Inference, Main Idea, 
  Vocabulary, Implied Main Idea, Relationship and Purpose (Chart 72).

Chart 72 – Training plan for I B. Tech students