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**A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
SUPPLEMENTARY READERS IN THE
ENHANCEMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION
OF MIDDLE GRADES STUDENTS
UNDER
PUNJAB MIDDLE SCHOOLING PROJECT**

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Executive Summary

This study has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of supplementary readers in enhancing the general reading comprehension of grade VI to VIII students of government middle schools in Punjab. The study will be completed in four phases. The first two phases, i.e., development of the Reading Comprehension Test and documentation of baseline reading comprehension scores has been completed.

During the first phase two parallel forms of reading comprehension were developed adopting standard test development procedure. During the second phase one of the forms, Form A, was administered as pre-test to 8447 students from the 99 sampled middle schools of eight divisions of the Punjab. The reading comprehension scores are documented for the total sample, by grades, by location and by administrative divisions.

In order to assess the impact of SR's in the enhancement of reading comprehension the pre-test/baseline scores will be compared with the post-test and post-post test scores. Statements of relevant hypotheses and needed analysis will be a part of the final report. Some of the important findings of the first two phases are summarized as under:

1. The test can be claimed as a highly reliable test of Urdu reading comprehension for grades 6-8.
2. Students of all grades have demonstrated better understanding of the fiction material as compared to the non-fiction material. However, there is more heterogeneity in the scores on the former type as compared with the later type of material.
3. Students generally scored higher on items measuring understanding of facts as compared with those measuring ability to infer and synthesize.
4. Genderwise comparisons of scores projected girls as better readers than boys at all grades in rural as well as urban area schools. The findings are in harmony with the cross-cultural data on language acquisition scores of boys and girls during the pre-adolescence period.
5. Reading comprehension scores of the students of urban area schools were higher than their counterparts in rural area schools. This difference might be attributed to more opportunities for urban area students to have access to additional reading materials as compared with rural areas where such opportunities are extremely limited.
6. There is a highly significant correlation between the additional reading, measured through reading attitude scale, and the reading comprehension.

The nature and scope of the second phase of the study was limited to the documentation of baseline scores which do not provide grounds for direct inference about the effectiveness of SR's. However, two findings of the study relating to the higher reading comprehension scores of urban area students as compared with their rural counterparts (5) and highly significant correlation between additional readings and reading comprehension (6) strongly support the rationale of the introduction of SR's for the enhancement of reading comprehension, one of the foundation skills for further study and successful adult life.