

EVALUATION OF HINDI PRIMERS AND SUGGESTION OF ONE USING HTML

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in
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by

Prachi Chaturvedi



Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad, India

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**Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies
School of Humanities
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad -500046 (A.P.) INDIA**

CERTIFICATE

Dated:

This is to certify that I, Prachi Chaturvedi, have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis entitled, '*Evaluation of Hindi Primers and Suggestion of one using HTML*', for the full period prescribed under the Ph.D ordinances of the University.

I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for the award of any degree, to any other institution or university.

(Signature of Supervisor)

B. R. Bapuji

(Signature of the Student)

Prachi Chaturvedi

Enrollment No:99HAPH02

(Head of the Department)

Prof. Panchanan Mohanty

(Members of Doctoral Committee)

1.Prof. J. Prabhakara Rao

(Dean School of Humanities)

Prof. Sudhakar Marathe

2. Dr. Shivaram Paddikal

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A Note on the Revised form of the Thesis

One of the (two) external examiners of this thesis pointed out “several errors that need to be rectified before the thesis can be recommended for the degree.”

While encouraging the thesis as “a constructive and useful attempt” and considering the “subject matter and the scope of the thesis are good”, the examiner made couple of observations on the ‘content and the organization’ of the thesis and listed a dozen queries to be addressed in the revised form of the thesis.

The following two observations have been emphasized:

1. “The (first) chapter needs drastic reduction in length and the incorporation of Indian experience in literary programs in those states of which the primers are under investigation.”
2. “The Candidate needs to redo all the tables in the thesis”.

In accordance with the above suggestions of the examiner, we have attempted at a drastic reduction in length as far as possible and incorporated Indian experience in literacy programs in those states of which the primers are under investigation.

We have also redone all the tables rectifying the short comings pointed out. As the examiner has rightly observed, the tables were not adequately numbered and the variables not clearly specified. This has been rectified in the revised form.

The following queries (which the examiner listed in the report) have been addressed in the revised form of the thesis.

(1) As per the suggestion of the examiner, a brief section on the nature of Devanagari has been included and this forms a part of chapter two.

(2) On page 76 (in the earlier copy of the dissertation) point 1 was missing which was a mistake while formatting the text on the computer and has been rectified.

(3 & 4) The examiner observes that an analogy of Hindi and English should be avoided as Hindi alphabet is a combination of vowels and consonants unlike English alphabets. Therefore the similarities cited on pages 79 and 80 have been deleted.

(5) The traditional method of teaching Devanagari and the importance of Barakhadi has been discussed as asked by the examiner

(6) As per the suggestion of the examiner, the methodology and the test conducted during the pilot study (mentioned on page 94) have been described.

(7) The examiner notes that words like 'tṛ' should be avoided. We had included this word which is not familiar to the child as the child had already learnt the letters and the vowel markers. Therefore we wanted to test whether the child could attempt to write this unfamiliar word. The word 'aam' is included in the words without 'matras' as in this context the letter A is used as an individual sound and not as a marker with some consonant.

(8) The letters 'k' 'c' 't' 'p' are not pronounced from the same location in the oral cavity but the manner of articulation of these letters is similar as they are all voiced. The mistake as pointed out by the examiner has been verified.

(9) The concept in teaching Hindi alphabet is to teach the vowel markers in the end and not vowels. Some texts, for instance, the Hindi primers followed by the CBSE board and the MP Board teach the vowel markers along with the consonants. This should be avoided.

(10) The examiner notes that the need of HTML has not been specified but we would like to request the examiner to go through the relevant section once again since we have specified the need of HTML. The fact that the soft copy can be made as well as used easily by the use of HTML has been reiterated in the section on the development of primer using HTML.

(11) The examiner found that “the thesis does not accompany the suggested soft copy of the HTML primer”. This was the mistake committed by the examination branch of the university where we were told (subsequent to the report of this examiner) that the exam branch usually does not send ‘CDs’ unless the external examiners specifically ask for it and in many cases the external examiners did not prefer to receive one. As the exam branch personnel were unaware that the CD is relevant to the present thesis, they did not send it to the external examiner. Now we have specifically brought to the notice of the exam branch that the CD is a must and the thesis can not be evaluated in totality unless the relevant CD is supplied to the external examiner.

(12) As per the suggestion of the examiner, we have corrected the typos as well as mistakes in English as far as possible.

PREFACE

The goal of this dissertation is to *evaluate the existing Hindi primers* and to *suggest a new one using HTML*. It is an attempt to find the merits and demerits of the primers used by various Boards and to develop a new one which not only avoids these shortcomings but also tries to incorporate the many suggestions of the teachers involved in teaching Hindi. To achieve this goal our dissertation is divided into four chapters.

The chapterization is as follows:

1. Concepts of Literacy: An Overview

Before embarking upon an entourage of literacy, it is well worth to look upon the various happenings in this field through the ages. In the first section of this chapter we take a brief view of the history of education in India. Education refers to the process of imparting or acquiring knowledge and of developing the capacity of reasoning. Literacy, according to us, is the fundamental means through which education is acquired or imparted. The dichotomy, which we are lead to believe, exists between education and literacy is false as education includes explicitly or implicitly literacy. They are concepts so closely intertwined that it is sometimes impossible to separate one concept and talk about another.

Society and literacy are interlinked and are two interdependent variables. The state of education through the various ages and societies in India are discussed under the following heads:

1. Ancient period
2. Medieval period
3. Modern period
4. After Independence

There has also been a shift in the way literacy is viewed and defined. Today literacy means more than the ability to 'read and write'. Of course the ability to read and write is retained but today literacy has taken on new dimensions and is being defined in the light of its sociological and political implications. The second section of this chapter glances at the various concepts of literacy.

Further in the third and final section of this chapter there is an attempt towards reconceptualizing literacy and offering a working definition; a definition which is not just limited to the process of reading writing and doing arithmetic but is a contribution to the liberation of man to his full development.

2. Methodology

This chapter deals with two major topics. First we glance at the various methods of teaching alphabet. These methods are used for

teaching different languages and each method is tailored to suit a particular language. The second part of this chapter examines the methodology used by different schools and educational boards in teaching Hindi alphabet to children. It is essentially an enquiry towards selecting the most suitable technique in teaching Hindi.

To achieve this a questionnaire is designed and administered to a group of students belonging to the various schools following the CBSE Board, ICSE Board, UP Board and MP Board. The MP Board follows the Word based method, the UP board Phonetic method, CBSE follows the frequency method and ICSE resorts to various private publications which follow the phonetic method.

3. Evaluation of Class One Primers

This chapter evaluates the primers prescribed by the CBSE, UP, MP, and the primers followed by the ICSE Board. There is a two level critical analysis to be done – at the linguistic level and the non-linguistic level. The evaluation is by taking feedback from teachers teaching the concerned classes at different schools. This chapter looks into the presentation, language selection, gradation of lessons, manner of presenting letters, exercises and drills apart from the cover page, font and print of each primer in consideration.

4. Towards a New Hindi Primer

The mere idea of suggesting a new Hindi primer does not relegate the already existing primers. The suggested primer on the other hand, tries to overcome the shortcomings of the existing primers and pick up and incorporate the positive aspects.

A primer is suggested using the concept of HTML and is meant for those schools which impart computer aided instructions. Further, this will come in handy for the Hindi Diaspora who is interested to learn Hindi.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTS OF LITERACY: AN OVERVIEW

Education refers to the process of imparting or acquiring knowledge and of developing the capacity of reasoning. Literacy, according to us is the fundamental means through which education is acquired or imparted. The dichotomy, which we are led to believe, exists between education and literacy is false for theoretically it is impossible to maintain a distinction between literacy in a meaningful sense and education (Mukherjee 2003: 6). Education carried with itself, implicitly or explicitly, the notion of literacy. They are concepts so closely intertwined that it is sometimes impossible to separate one and talk about the other.

1.1. History of education in India

From the simple beginning of poetic flights of the Vedic age to the brains behind the buzz word Microsoft today, there has been an uninterrupted succession of teachers and scholars in India. Since the Vedic ages literacy has been present in the country in some form or the other. There were preliterate societies in Sumer, Egypt and India; education in India was present even in the basic and formative period of Indian cultural history. A study of Vedas and Brahmanas as well as the Upanishads reveals the contribution of Indian mind in various fields – Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine, Philosophy and Religion - which even today draws the attention of intellectuals of the East and West.

The history of India may be divided into the following sections or periods (Srivastava 1993:28):

I. Ancient Period (1200 B.C –5 AD)

Up to about 1000 B.C. when most of the Vedic literature was composed, every person male or female was required to undergo the discipline of 'Brahmacharya', where one was initiated into the sacred literature. Learning in ancient India was imparted by the teacher to the pupils who gathered around him and came to live in his house as members of the family. The family functioned as a domestic school, an Ashram, or a hermitage where the mental faculties of the pupils were developed (India 2000: 38). Great stress was laid on the individual's capacity to memorize, recite, and explain the religious hymns; developing creative intellect, debating powers and developing a spirit of enquiry. It was the father who used to educate the children. The education system produced youth grounded in religious literature, and related intellect and efficient in the family profession.

i) Vedic age (1200 B.C. – 200 B.C.)

From 1200 to 200 B.C., with the extensiveness of Vedic literature, complexity of rituals and the growth of new branches of learning, the professional teacher became a special feature. The *brahamcharis* had to leave his home and go to live with his new 'father', the *guru*. What existed then was the *gurukul* system which had the following features:

- a. Residential
- b. Free and frank discussions between the teachers and the intending pupil to assess merits and demerits of the *brahamcharis*.
- c. The pupils were taught dignity of labour
- d. The main method of teaching was learning the entire literature by heart, followed by discussion.
- e. There were also women scholars like *Gargi* and *Maitri* in this period.

Professional education on a hereditary basis was carried on. This was a creative epoch characterized by the development of metaphysics, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, metallurgy and of philosophic and political thought.

ii) Dharmashstra period (200 BC – 500 AD):

From 200 B.C. to A.D. 500, a systematic discussion of the aims and methods of education was available. The age was of critical reflection and rational outlook. Specialization in different branches had started and values of new discoveries were realized.

iii) Buddhist education (556-480 AD):

Buddhist *Samgha* as organized by Buddha developed into centres of learning. It did not impart only Buddhist studies but also Vedic and Brahmanical for comparison sake at least. There were two ordinations for entering the order:

- a. *Prabbajja*, the preparatory ordination at the age of 8.

- b. *Upasampada*, the final ordination at the age of 20.

Medical education was compulsory and begging for alms, devotion to teacher and personal services by the student to the teacher were recommended. Buddhist monasteries developed into corporate educational institutions, and some like *Nalanda*, *Valabhi* and *Vikramshila* became 'international' centres of learning.

iv) The Mauryan Period (272 BC – 232 AD):

This period reached its acme under the reign of Ashoka from 272 B.C. to 232 A.D. He was devoted to the practice of *Dharma* and its propagation amongst his people. His instructions on morality and everyday mundane business engraved on innumerable stone pillars, rocks, cave walls were written in Sanskrit. These were intended to be read and understood by the general public and their existence presupposes a widely diffused knowledge of writing and a high percentage of literacy.

Under the Mauryan kings, schools and higher educational institutions were maintained by State and public charities.

During the Mauryan period, there developed universities or great seats of learning among which *Takshashila (Taxila)* was the most famous. The subjects taught at *Takshashila* were literature, grammar, metrics, poetics, logic and philosophy, and also scientific subjects, such as, medicine, military science, astronomy, astrology, mathematics, politics, economics and mechanical arts of various descriptions (Srivastava 1993: 287). The country placed before itself a threefold educational object (Srivastava 1993: 288). They are:

- i. The acquisition of knowledge.
- ii. The training in the discharge of social and religious duties.
- iii. The formation of character.

Education was imparted not only by books and lectures, but by the percept and example by the gurus in the ashrams and in the university. (Srivastava 1993: 288)

v) The reign of Kanishka: (120 A.D – 143 A.D.)

During his reign from 120 A.D. to 143 A.D. a big Buddhist council was convened in Kashmir, which was attended by more than 500 Buddhist scholars. A thorough examination of theological literature from the remote antiquity was made and an encyclopedia of Buddhist philosophy, *Mahavibhsha*, was prepared.

vi) The Golden Period (3rd to 5th C):

The Guptas who ruled during the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries were of literary taste and patronized scholars. Great scholars like *Kalidasa*, *Dandin* and *Kumar Bhatt* flourished during this period. The *Dharma Shastras*, *Manava Dharma Shashtra* belong to this period. Medical sciences received a lot of patronage and in the field of literature there were new developments like the court Epic, drama, lyric, poetry and fables. The kings supported the teachers by granting villages. Fourteen subjects comprised the syllabus, which included the four *Vedas*, six *Vedangas*, the *Puranas*, *Mimangsaa*, *Nyaya* (Justice) and *dharma* (roughly translated as Duty).

During the ancient period the enthusiasm of the ruler played a major role in the development of education. For a time the indigenous system of education was deprived of royal support and patronage which was now directed to the promotion of new Islamic learning.

II. Medieval period (India under Mughals: 9th AD to 1765)

India under the Mughals could show nothing approaching the system of primary and secondary education, which is encouraged and directed by some modern democratic governments; but neither could England nor any other western countries in the time of the Tudors claim to have progressed very far in this direction. The Mughal government did not consider it to be its duty to educate the people. It had no department of education and did not allocate a portion of the public revenue for the spread of literacy. In all Muslim countries education was not controlled by the state and 'any person who was qualified and felt the urge could set himself up as a teacher' (Edwardees and Garrett 1979: 215). It was rather a matter of private individuals who set up educational institutions out of their own initiative and interest for the spread of education in a limited section of society, and no government, either Hindu or Muslim, considered it to be its duty to promote public education, as do the modern governments (Chitnis 1979:118). Nevertheless, the Muslim government established some schools for the Muslims, subsidized some others of the same community and controlled and guided practically all the Muslim educational institutions. The education was under the chief *sadr*, whose duty was to ensure

for a state a regular supply of learned Muslim divines, such as, *qazis*, *muftis*, *mir adls*, *muhatasibs* and other administrators (Srivastava 1993: 289).

The Indian universities, which had provided the best education known to the ancient world, fell a prey to the onslaught of Islam. *Takshashila*, *Nalanda*, *Vikramshila* and other universities disappeared one by one in the 11th century, the end of the 12th and the beginning of 13th century (Srivastava 1993:288). Under the Sultans, the Muslim system of education, which already existed outside India, was brought to the country. The system consisted of three types of institutions: -

- i. *Maktabas* (ii) *Khanqabs* or schools attached to the mosques (iii) *madrasas*

The first two types were elementary institutions, which taught reading and writing of Arabic and Persian. The pupils were required to memorize the *Quran*. The *khanqas* imparted instructions in mystic philosophy and the Sufi way of life. The curriculum followed in the *madrasas* of the *Sulatanate* period was borrowed from the Islamic countries outside India. Great stress was laid on theology and the main subjects taught were: *Tafsir* (exegesis), *Hadis* (traditions), and *Fiqh* (jurisprudence). The non-theological subjects taught were grammar, literature, logic and Muslim scholasticism (*Kalam*). The *Sirat-I-Firuz Shahi* gives the following list of 14 subjects, which were taught in the *madrasas* established by *Firuz Shah Tuglaq*:

1. *Fiqh* (jurisdiction)
2. *Qir'at* (Method of recitation, punctuation and vocalization of the text of *Quran*)
3. *Usul-I-kalam* (Principles of scholastic theology)
4. *Usul-I-Fiqh* (Principles of Jurisprudence)
5. *Tafsir* (Exegesis)
6. *Ahadith* (Traditions of the Prophet)
7. *Ma'ani-wa-Bayan* (Rhetorics)
8. *Nahw-wa-Sarf* (Syntax)
9. *'Ilm-I-nazar* (Science of observation)
10. *'Ilm-I-Riyadi* (Mathematics)
11. *'Ilm-I-Tab'i* (Natural Science)
12. *'Ilm-I-Ilahi* (Metaphysics)
13. *'Ilm-I-Tibb* (Medicine)
14. *Tahir-wa-khat* (Calligraphy)

From the time of *Illutmish* to the days of *Sikander Lodi* traditional subjects occupied a more important place than the rationalistic subjects. A change however took place when *Shaikh Abdullah* and his brother *Shaikh Azizullah* of *Multan* came to Delhi at the invitation of *Sikander Lodi* (**India 2000:121**). They introduced the study of philosophy and logic in the curriculum of the day, and thus reduced the religious bias of the existing system. For the first time during the

rule of *Sikander Lodi* (1489-1517), Hindus were permitted to join *maktabas* (Srivastava 1993:290). The Hindus now took to learning the Persian language, and a Hindu scholar, *brahamana* by name, instructed Muslims (India 2000:122). Significant though these steps were they did not bring about any fundamental change in the content of the Muslim education in India.

During the reign of *Babar* and *Humayun* little change was made in the educational system except that both were great scholars and lovers of literature and art. In fact all the Mughal rulers were scholars and lovers of literature and arts (Khurana 1993: 269). *Babur* and *Humayun* were lovers of education. *Babur* established a *madarsa* in Delhi in which besides theology, mathematics, geography and astrology were taught. *Babur* himself was a man of high literary tastes and 'was endowed with a fastidious critical perception and was an accomplished Persian poet and in his native *Turki* was a master of pure and unaffected style, alike in prose and poetry (Edwardees and Garret 1979: 225). He is famous for his memoirs and is called the prince of diarists; through his works he stands revealed as a man of deep culture and artistic tastes (Quershi 1979: 63). He even initiated a kind of handwriting called the *Babari* hand and indicted a copy of the *Quran* in that script and sent it to Mecca. *Humayun* also founded *madarsas* in Agra and Delhi and he used to establish contact with learned men on Thursdays and Saturdays.

Before the rule of *Akbar*, his predecessor built a few *madrasas*, but it was only during his reign that education received a great impetus. *Akbar* himself was

uneducated but he took keen interest in the progress of education and established various *maktabs* and *madarasis*. During his time a lot of schools, primary and secondary were opened. He reformed the curriculum and included certain important subjects such as science of morals, social behaviour, arithmetic, agriculture, menstruation, geometry, astronomy, physiognomy, foretelling, household economy, public administration, medicine, logic history etc. the medium of instruction was Persian. In teaching the language the teacher had to concentrate on five things:

- a. Knowledge of letters
- b. Meaning of words
- c. Hemistich
- d. The verse
- e. Repetition

The mogul rulers after *Akbar* did not take the same degree of interest in the state schools established by him, though some of these schools were subsidized by the state and allowed to function. These schools however were not meant for the education of public nor were any aid provided to the schools established by a private agency. Education during the period was a private affair. *Jahangir* took a keen interest in the development of education and he ordered that if a man died without successor all his property should be utilized for the development of schools and colleges (Khurana 1993: 270). He also got repaired

all those schools which were not being used for educational purposes and thus contributed to its expansion.

Private schools existed in almost every village and a school was invariably attached to every temple or mosque. The Hindus introduced their children to regular education at the age of five and the Muslims usually performed the *maktab* ceremony of their children at the age of four years, four months and four days.

Barring the poor people engaged in agriculture or menial service all Hindu children were sent to school to learn reading writing and arithmetic. Unlike the Hindus, the Muslims in general did not display the same enthusiasm for the education of their children. *Maktab*s were primary schools meant for the beginners and maintained by *maulvis*. There were no printed primers and the children were made to write letters of the alphabet and figures on the wooden boards. In Muslim schools the *Quran* was invariably taught to every child who had to learn it by heart where as in the Hindu schools lessons from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* were compulsory. Here too the child was expected to memorize the lines from the scriptures. Much attention was paid to elementary arithmetic and there was in vogue an interesting way of committing to memory the multiples of numerals called *paharas* (the present day multiplication tables).

Good handwriting was emphasized upon and calligraphy was practiced. In the primary and secondary schools it was not necessary to study for a fixed

number of years. The teacher was the sole judge to test the efficiency of a student in a particular subject. There was no examination system at that time. *Yusuf Hussain*, a historian writes, "Students were promoted from a lower to higher class according to the opinion of the teacher concerned who took into account the total academic career of the students whom they knew very intimately." (as cited in Khurana 1993: 270).

The basic feature of Muslim educational system was that it was traditional in spirit and theological in content. The curriculum was broadly divided into two categories: (India 2000: 120): -

- a. *Manqulat* or traditional sciences which included subjects like exegesis (*Tafsir*), traditions (*Mantiq*), Law (*Fiqh*), History and Literature,
- b. *Ma'qulat* or rational Sciences under which were included subjects like logic (*Mantiq*), philosophy (*Hikmat*), medicine (*Tibb*), Mathematics (*Riyadi*) and Astronomy (*Hai'at*).

Badaoni, in his book *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, which included biographies of eminent persons, differentiates the sciences, which require the exercise of reasoning faculty (such as philosophy, astronomy, incantations and mechanics) from the rest of the subjects which depend upon memory (Chopra 2000: 144).

Female education during the Mogul period was confined to the royal family and the upper class women. Girls did not attend schools; instead tutors were employed. They were taught literature, elementary arithmetic and religious

scriptures.

III. Modern period (India under British: 1765 - 1947)

With the advent of the British rule, primary education in India underwent a change. During the early years of the 19th century, the government of the East India Company followed a policy of indifference in the matter of education, which was not regarded as a part of the responsibility of a commercial company. The traditional educational system of *pathshalas* and *madarsas* suffered a decline. The forces, which compelled the Britishers into a position of passivity towards education, were: -

i. India, which at that time comprised of many states and princely kingdoms had come under the suzerainty of East India Company not by conquest but by subsidiary system. The Company was to protect each of its feudatories against external invasions and internal rebellion; and they in turn were to be free to exercise to the full internal sovereignty and civic administration. Political peace secured by the dominance of the British and the alliance of the princes did not always guarantee civic and internal peace. Therefore the first decade of the East India Company was spent in maintaining political order and trying to strengthen their power in the India.

ii. Education and the study of letters with the Hindus and Mohammedans were associated with their respective religions. A new system of education would

certainly undermine their traditional religion and both the communities would not have liked outsiders to interfere with their religion.

iii. There was a strong belief amongst the Britishers that India had fallen into their hands basically because of the ignorance of the people and that to educate them was to pave their own expulsion from the country.

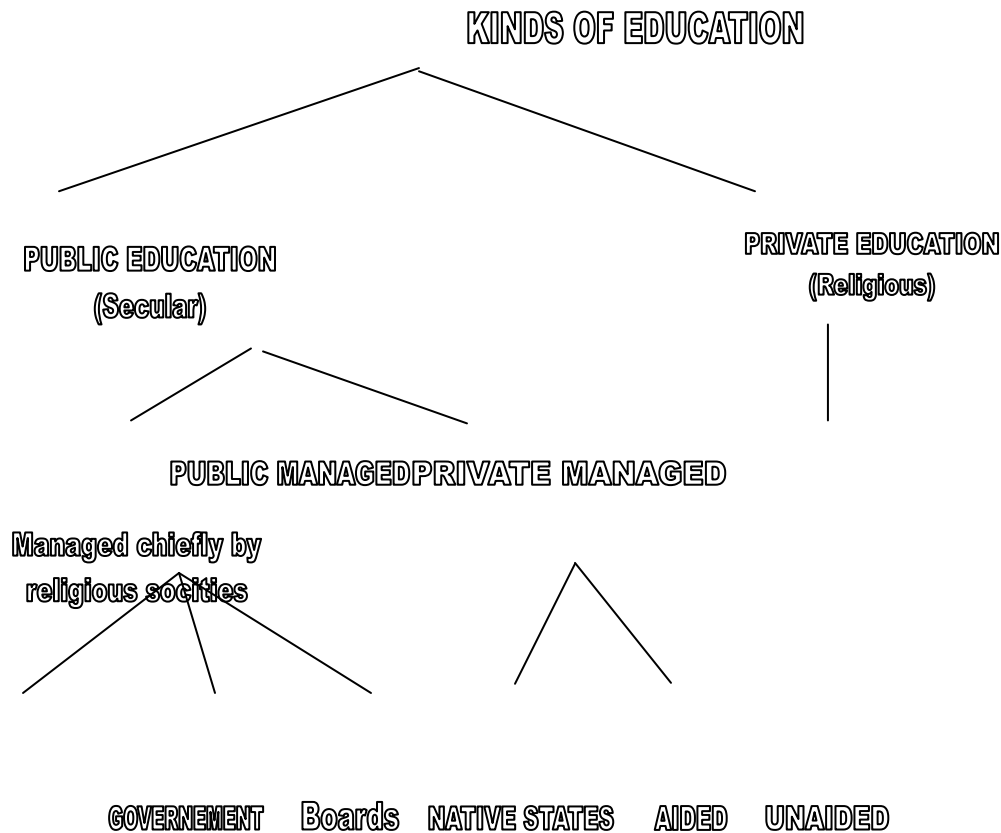
On the other hand there were forces, which led the Britishers to adopt some educational responsibility. Firstly, there was a school of political philosophers who held the opinion that among all sources of difficulty in British administration and of possible danger to the stability to their government the ignorance of the people was a serious one. Secondly, there were repeated appeals from the Christian missionaries on behalf of western education for the natives. The missionary advocated universal learning of the western language and literature so that everybody might have the right of reading “God’s” word. Further, there was a desire shown by the ‘intellectual’ and ‘aristocratic’ classes among the natives for western education – the language of their conquerors, which gave them a peculiar social prestige. A few schools and colleges were already springing up owned by private natives, missionaries and individual Britishers. Finally, there was the need by the British government for native administrative assistants, educated in English to help carry on the work of British government.

It was only in 1882 that the Education Commission showed that the promises of the Despatch of 1854, that the primary education was responsibility of the government, had not been realized. The Commission urged the government to devote their attention and revenue increasingly to the promotion of primary education. The Education department of the government of India was created in 1910. At the time it started, this department was confined not only to control of education but also included sanitation, local self-government, ecclesiastical nature, archeology and museums.



Education was classified under two broad heads – Public and Private. ‘Public’ education was given in ‘public schools’, which were defined as institutions giving *secular* education, and such institutions must conform to the standard of efficiency prescribed by the government and follow the approved course of instructions (Chinappa 1988:106). The significance of the term ‘public’ lies in the fact that the instructions given in these institutions were general and the institution was open to anybody regardless of caste, colour or creed and that they were supported wholly or partly by the fund raised among the people at large. ‘Private’ education was given in ‘private’ institutions many of which were intended to impart religious instructions of different kinds and orient learning, and they give so little secular teaching that the State cannot take account of them.

The kind of education given and the different managing bodies are shown in this diagram (Chinappa 1988: 107).



The Indian Education Commission of 1882 defined primary education as the instruction of the masses through the vernacular in such subjects, as will best fit them for their position in life (Chinappa 1988: 116). The primary curriculum comprised of vernacular reading, writing, arithmetic and a certain amount of mental calculation. Physical exercises were also compulsory except in Burma. Lessons on nature study (centered around the field, the crops and the cattle), the study of village map, the records of the village accountant, simple mensuration and the method of keeping and checking household or shop accounts were generally included in the curriculum, partly as an intellectual training and partly with a vocational object (Chinappa 1988: 128). Second languages were prescribed only in Madras, Punjab and Burma. In Madras schools, English which

was very largely used in that presidency was taught; in Punjab Persian was occasionally included in the course for rural schools and monastic schools in Burma taught *Pali*.

Chinappa (1988) sketches the general curriculum followed by the British government in India for primary schools at different stages.

Lower primary Stage

Reading: Department readers, Grammar, Recitation of poetry.

Writing: dictation and spelling.

Arithmetic: simple arithmetic- European and Native, Compound rules, easy mental arithmetic.

Geography: of the village and the district, study of map, plan of the school, houses etc.

Object lessons: on objects treated in the reading book with simple drawing, familiar animals, vegetables, minerals, and their products.

Upper Primary Stage

Reading: As above but more advanced.

Writing: As above but more advanced.

Arithmetic: English tables of weight, measures, etc., vulgar fractions, rule of three and compound proportion, mental arithmetic involving the use of native tables.

History: history of the province, general knowledge of India upto 1858.

Geography: Of the province and of India. Map of India.

Object lessons: plants, animals and natural phenomena with simple drawing.

Middle Primary Stage

Reading: departmental readers, grammar and etymology, manuscript reading, repetition of poetry, prosody.

Writing: essay or report writing in current hand with attention to handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

Mathematics: Arithmetic and native accounts, Euclid. Book I

History: history of India; some instructions in the system of Indian government.

Geography: geography of the world, elementary geography.

The first efforts at imparting modern education were made by Christian missionaries and individual officers of the company. The missionaries opened

schools, started printing presses and printed many books. The system as it evolved between 1765 and 1947 can be divided into five phases.

i. 1765-1854:

A few new types of schools giving instruction in English language and other branches of western learning started functioning. The first step towards the educational development of India was taken after the Charter Act of 1813. English was made the medium of instruction in the few schools and colleges that were opened by the government. The resources allocated to education were extremely meager.

In 1835, Thomas Macaulay set the tone for what educated Indians were going to learn about themselves, their civilization, and their view of Britain and the world around them.

Thus was born the famous-or infamous- Macaulayite education system of India. As its founder saw it, serving the people was not a priority; its primary goal was to create an educated elite that would serve the interests of the British rulers. The tragedy is that this system was not only retained after independence, but was given the pride of place to such an extent that it now dominates almost all-national life. The government services, the educational establishment, the industry, the arts and the media--all are now in the hands of a small elite that is the product of such an educational system (Muktadhara 2001: www.members.tripod.org).

ii. **1854 –1902:**

The progress in primary education was very slow during this period.

Usually three causes are identified:

- a. Non-introduction of compulsory primary education
- b. Transfer of primary education to the control of local bodies
- c. Neglect of the indigenous schools

However this period was marked by qualitative changes in certain aspects of primary education which were:

- a. Construction of school buildings.
- b. Admission of girls and 'untouchable' castes.
- c. Use of printed books.
- d. Improved curriculum.
- e. Adoption of new methods of teaching.
- f. Improvement in the training and qualifications of teachers.

iii. **1902-1921:**

The policy of larger grants to primary education initiated by lord Curzon brought about a considerable expansion of primary education in this period. *Gaekwar*, the ruler of the State of Baroda introduced compulsory education throughout his state in 1906. This led to the Indian nationalist opinion to press the

British government for the introduction of compulsory education. Though the bill put forward for compulsory education was rejected, there was a spur of activities by the government in this regard. The government resolution on educational policy in 1913 stated that the local governments should extend the application of the principle of free elementary education amongst the poorer and more backward sections of the society.

1921-1937:

The expansion of primary education was very rapid in the years 1922-27. The number of primary schools and students increased considerably. From 1927-37, there was comparatively little progress due to the financial stringing caused by the World Depression. The period witnessed neither an appreciable improvement in quality nor expansion in the field of primary education.

iv. 1937-1947:

During this period compulsory primary education received more attention as the Congress ministers assumed offices. An epoch making event of the period was the scheme of basic education formulated by *M.K. Gandhi* which was adopted in 1944. The core of Gandhi's proposal was the introduction of productive handicrafts in the school curriculum. The idea was not simply to introduce handicrafts as a compulsory school subject, but to make the learning of a craft the centerpiece of the entire teaching programme. It implied a radical restructuring of the sociology of school knowledge in India, where productive handicrafts had been associated with the lower groups in the hierarchy of the

caste system. Knowledge of the production processes involved in crafts, such as spinning, weaving, leather-work, pottery, metal-work, basket-making and bookbinding had been the monopoly of specific caste groups in the lowest stratum of the traditional social hierarchy. Many of them belonged to the category of 'untouchables'. India's own tradition of education as well as the colonial education system had emphasized skills such as literacy and acquisition of knowledge of which the upper castes had a monopoly.

Gandhi's proposal intended to stand the education system on its head. The social philosophy and the curriculum of what he called 'basic education' thus favoured the child belonging to the lowest stratum of society in such a way that it implied a programme of social transformation. It sought to alter the symbolic meaning of 'education' and to change the established structure of opportunities for education. (Bruke 2000: www.infed.org). Why Gandhi proposed the introduction of productive handicrafts into the school system was that he really wanted schools to be self-supporting, as far as possible. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, a poor society such as India simply could not afford to provide education for all children unless the schools could generate resources from within. Secondly, the more financially independent the schools were, the more politically independent they could be. What Gandhi wanted to avoid was dependence on the state which he felt would mean interference from the centre. Above all else, Gandhi valued self-sufficiency and autonomy. These were vital for his vision of an independent India made up of autonomous village communities to survive. It was the combination of *swaraj* and *swadeshi* related to the

education system. A state system of education within an independent India would have been a complete contradiction as far as Gandhi was concerned.

He was also of the opinion that manual work should not be seen as something inferior to mental work. He felt that the work of the craftsman or labourer should be the ideal model for the 'good life'. Schools which were based around productive work where that work was for the benefit of all, were therefore, carrying out education of the whole person - mind, body and spirit (Richards 2001: www.vedamsbooks.com).

The right to autonomy that Gandhi's educational plan assigns to the teacher in the context of the school's daily curriculum is consistent with the libertarian principles that he shared with Tolstoy (Bruke 2000: www.infed.org). Gandhi wanted to free the Indian teacher from interference from outside, particularly government or state bureaucracy. Under colonial rule, the teacher had a prescribed job to do that was based on what the authorities wanted the children to learn. Textbooks were mandatory so that Gandhi found that 'the living word of the teacher has very little value'. A teacher who teaches from textbooks does not impart originality to his pupils'. Gandhi's plan, on the other hand, implied the end of the teacher's subservience to the prescribed textbook and the curriculum. It presented a concept of learning that simply could not be fully implemented with the help of textbooks. Of equal, if not more importance, was the freedom it gave the teacher in matters of curriculum. It denied the state the power to decide what teachers taught and what they did in the classroom. It gave

autonomy to the teacher but it was, above all, a libertarian approach to schooling that transferred power from the state to the village (Bruke 2000: www.infed.org).

Gandhi's basic education was, therefore, an embodiment of his perception of an ideal society consisting of small, self-reliant communities with his ideal citizen being an industrious, self-respecting and generous individual living in a small cooperative community.

IV After Independence

After Independence in 1947, the government of free India set before itself two goals in the field of primary education. They are:-

- i. Introduction of free and compulsory universal education for all children up to 14 years.
- ii. The conversion of all primary schools to one basic pattern.

A National Institute of Basic Education was established in 1956 and its goal was to promote within a period of 10 years free and compulsory education for children. While increase in school enrolment has been substantial, the achievements have been offset by population growth and drop-out rate in schools. The state governments allow free education at primary level. But, not all Indians get the opportunity to go to school. Schools are funded from different sources like government, local bodies and private funds. The smaller the funds the less the students receive. School institutions range from schools without any

building to schools with all the hi-tech facilities and even sites on the internet (Aharon Daniel 2001: www.adaniel.tripod.com)

Enrolment of children is easy but it is their retention in the elementary education system till they complete class VII that creates difficulty. It must be conceded that great expansion has taken place as a consequence of the efforts made to extend the outreach of elementary education to all. Alternative strategies like open schooling, non-formal education, alternative education and others have been attempted. One concern that has emerged over the years is — what are our children learning in schools in the first five or eight years? Those putting their children in high-fee charging air-conditioned schools may just not be aware of such a concern. More than 50 per cent of children drop out before completing eight years in school. Needless to say, most of these children are from the weaker sections of the society, from rural areas and urban slums. This was the group that deserved special attention not only at the policy and planning stage but also at the implementation level. (Rajput 2003: www.hinduonnet.com)

According to the National Policy on Education (1968) a system of 12 years of school education, popularly known as 10 + 2 system has been adopted. The ten year school is conceived in these segments:

Primary – Class I to V.

Middle – Class VI to VIII.

Secondary – Class IX and X.

As the main strategy for covering out of school children, both non-starters and drop-outs a change in the outlook has been adopted: according to which a non-formal part-time education is being developed in a large way as an alternative to formal schooling. Further, it is being suggested that the states introduce the 'non detention' policy so that every child shall complete one class in each year. There can be periodic assessment and continual education.

Eradication of illiteracy has been one of the major concerns of the Government of India since independence. During the first Five-Year Plan, the program of Social Education, inclusive of literacy, was introduced as part of the Community Development Program (1952). Model community centers, rural libraries, youth clubs, mahila mandals and folk schools were encouraged. The Government of India established a Council for Rural Higher Education for building graduate-level manpower through the scheme of Rural Institutes. A Standing Committee of the CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education) on Social Education was constituted in 1956. A National Fundamental Education Center was started to provide high-level training facilities and undertake research studies relating to adult education. (Balsubhramanium 2000: www.col.org)

In spite of these initiatives, the program of adult literacy did not make much headway. The Community Development Program got weakened and was soon abandoned. It was assumed that adult literacy would automatically become universal as soon as the universal and compulsory elementary education became a reality. The literacy rate in India, therefore, increased only from 16.67

per cent in 1951 to 24.02 percent in 1961. But the Kothari Commission (1964-66) picked up the threads again and emphasized the importance of spreading literacy as fast as possible. It suggested the following measures:

- a. Expansion of universal schooling of five-year duration for the age group 6 – 11,
- b. Provision of part-time education for those children of age group 11 - 14 who had either missed schooling or had dropped out of school prematurely,
- c. Provision of part-time general and vocational education to the younger adults of age group 15 – 30,
- d. Use of mass media as a powerful tool of environment building for literacy,
- e. Setting up of libraries,
- f. Setting up follow-up programs,
- g. Ensuring active role of universities and voluntary organization at the State and district levels.

The Education Commission had observed, "if literacy is to be worthwhile, it must be functional". The launching of the inter- ministerial project of Farmers' Training and Functional Literacy in 1967-68 aimed at popularization of high yielding varieties of seeds through adult education, was a step in this direction.

The program covered 144 districts where nearly 8640 classes were organized for about 2.6 lakh farmer-adults by 1977-78. But in this program, the clientele remained selective and several largely illiterate groups viz. artisans, landless labor, SCs, STs, and women got neglected.

Adult education and literacy programmes were transformed under the auspices of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) into a mass campaign leading towards a people's movement for total literacy and a new awakening for education. The Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) provided a new sense of urgency and seriousness to adult education. The first breakthrough came in Kottayam city in Kerala, followed by Ernakulam district where a literacy campaign was initiated in 1989 and completed within a year.

The success of the campaign mode in the Ernakulam district of Kerala laid the foundation for the campaign approach. While developing a national strategy for the country, the National Literacy Mission was fully aware of the need for diversity of approaches, given the inter-regional variations in the country. It was also aware that in many parts, participation of women and disadvantaged sections would require an intensive environment building process. In this context, efforts of NLM represent a major initiative for bringing together civil society to actively participate in a people's movement for achieving literacy within a stipulated time frame. For the first time, an area-specific time bound campaign approach had been implemented and the community had become responsible for

running its own development program and consequently determining its future (Balasubramaniam 2000: www.col.org).

Recognizing the fragile nature of literacy levels achieved in a campaign mode and the need to create a learning society, the NLM provides for a Post Literacy phase where the gains of literacy are consolidated and an effort is made to link learning skills with life skills. Similarly, in order to sustain the learning process in the community, NLM supports the establishment of Continuing Education Centres that provide a package of life-linked services for neo-literates.

In the present day a lot of research and attention is given to the preparation of teaching material. At the primary level all the four skills of a language – understanding, speaking, reading and writing are sought to be developed. Despite nearly five decades of development planning in independent India, the country is still one of the nine giants in the world where there is a heavy concentration of illiteracy, and a higher incidence of poverty. From about 16% at the time of independence in 1947, the literacy rate has certainly jumped to an impressive 65.38% in 2001. But the other side of the coin is that vast sections of India's adult population are still illiterate (Balasubramaniam 2003: www.col.org).

Even after more than half a century after independence, there exist marked disparities between groups within the regions of India, which make some sections of the population highly vulnerable. In addition to the rural urban divide, the caste, class and gender disparities in health, education, poverty, access to facilities, knowledge, wealth persists, leading to a situation in which people in the

same country live in entirely different worlds in terms of health, education and other development indicators.

Poverty relates not only to economic deprivation but also to social and human development, and India's performance in literacy, education, the role and status of women, and health care has not been notable. Regional differentials of mortality are marked, with socially advanced states such as Kerala experiencing mortality levels several fold lower than those of socially backward states (Drèze and Murthi 1999: kings.cam.ac.uk). Four large populous states of North and Central India (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) lag substantially behind the rest of the country, not only in primary education, but also in fertility reduction, the status of women and improvements in health (Balsubramanium 2003: www.col.org).

Every ten years the literate population of India goes up by about 10%. During its independence, there were only 12% literate Indians, according to the 1991 census there are 52% literate Indians, meaning that over half a billion people are literate. Education is monitored in India by state governments and this finds its expression in different figures for different states. Kerala in south India, with a population of 30 million, has the highest literacy rate in India of about 90%. Rajasthan in north India, with a population of 45 million, has the lowest literacy rate of about 40%.

Literacy rate among the urban population is higher than among the villagers. It is also higher among the men than among the women. In some states

the gap between literate men and literate women is very salient. For example, in Rajasthan and Bihar, the gap is about 30%, while in Kerala and Mizoram it is about 7%. Literacy rate among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is lower than in the general population. Among the Scheduled Tribes it is the lowest because many tribes still prefer to stay away from the mainstream population. But since independence the literacy rate among the women and the lower castes has grown up at a much higher rate than among the general population.

1.2. Definitions of literacy

Any attempts to define literacy must begin with this remarkable fact: that the practice of definition itself arises out of and is entirely dependent upon the existence of a written language. Neither the possibility of fixed and stable meaning of words, nor indeed the conception of 'word' itself can gain a foothold in the world of orality. Literacy individuates words from the continuous flow of speech, detaching what is said from the speaker and circumstance, and preserves a fixed linguistic meaning, which can be transferred over time and space.

Literacy is not a stagnant concept, nor does it carry an absolute definition. Today, this inherent characteristic is taken to an extreme as discrete disciplines built around media literacy, visual literacy, computer literacy, cultural literacy, information literacy, economic literacy, emancipatory literacy, and beyond. One is left asking, is anything not a literacy, and has this liberal appropriation of the term

rendered what was once largely reserved for reading and writing devoid of any real meaning.

While a cursory reflection might encourage us to seek refuge within a traditional definition (reading and writing), this would be to overlook a critical insight. In fact, while perhaps not readily apparent, the recent proliferation of definitions is indicative of literacy's intimate relationship with technology as each responds to the other in an organic dance over time. Leu (2001) expresses their interconnectedness when he states:

“Historically, the nature of literacy has always changed through different historical and cultural contexts as the technologies of information and communication have changed and as individuals have seen new possibilities within these technologies for literate acts. Thus, in a broad, historical sense, literacy has always been deictic, its meaning dependent upon the technologies and envisionments within many historical, religious, political, and cultural contexts.” (Lievrouw and Lynch 2001: is.gseis.uda.edu)

It is a well-established fact that no society can build its morrow on a generation that is ignorant nor can it thrive on the ignorance of a certain section of its people. Literacy and society are two interdependent variables. All societies, all nations realize the importance of literacy and have come to terms with the need to take education as a social imperative and an economic prerogative. Accepting that literacy is intricately linked to society, one notices that the broad

range of definitions provided by various academicians, organizations and literacy researchers, are particular to society and time.

Literacy is not necessarily beneficial in and of itself; many oral cultures function quite well with no writing system. For instance in the U.S., some Native American cultures prefer that their languages not be written. The Cherokee do not believe that all their people should be able to read and write. The Amish do not believe there is a need for education beyond the 8th grade. On the other hand, in many parts of the world, literacy is seen as essential for improving one's social and economic situation. In the United States, literacy is viewed as an economic necessity: It "plays a major academic and social role in the formal school systems of North America. Thus, learning to read and write is perceived to be a major task for the student and a notable feature of acculturation into mainstream culture" (Roberts 1994: www.ncela.gwu.edu). Seen in this political light, the consequences of literacy instruction become clearer. As the disfranchised acquire literacy tools, they become more able to express their needs and claim their rights.

Traditionally, literacy was construed as the technical skill of transforming speech in its written form and had been defined as the ability to write whatever one can say, and to read with understanding anything one would have understood had it been spoken. Within the general population the prevailing concept of literacy is 'the ability to read, write and do math'. Definitions of literacy

found in the various dictionaries, like the Oxford dictionary, Merrian Webster Collegiate dictionary and the Collins dictionary, are more or less the same that literacy is the state of being literate and 'literate' according to the same source is the 'ability to read and write'.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 defines literacy as "an individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual and in society." This is a broader view of literacy than just an individual's ability to read, the more traditional concept of literacy. As information and technology have increasingly shaped our society, the skills we need to function successfully have gone beyond reading, and literacy has come to include the skills listed in the current definition (National Institute for Literacy, America: www.novel.nifl.gov).

Paradoxically, although a fundamental capacity of literacy is to render verbal analysis increasingly precise it has been observed that vagueness characterizes almost all attempts to explicate the meaning of literacy. Definitions have ranged from the 17th century Swedish definition of literacy as the ability to sign ones name and to read aloud from familiar texts, often wholly or partially memorized to the definition in contemporary school contexts as the ability to produce extended description and argumentation in writing; and to decode and make complex inferences about unfamiliar texts whose interpretation may require extensive background knowledge. (Mishra 2000: 56)

Attempts to articulate a conception of 'functional' literacy which, might be more inclusive, practical and more relevant to the demands of everyday life have foundered on the vagueness of the idea of 'function'. The UN (1948) describes literacy as the ability to read and write a simple message in any language. UNESCO (1951) defined literacy in similar terms stating that a person who is literate can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life. However, literacy is a multifarious concept, which cannot be captured by these simple definitions.

In a very general sense this basic connotation of reading and writing remains, but in the contemporary context the additional connotations of the term derive from the changing demands made on literacy both in the industrialized and the developing world. In the industrialized countries more and more literate individuals are finding their literacy insufficient for the demands made on it both in the place of work and in civic life. Literacy derives its added connotation in the context of widespread literacy, which continues to deprive a large number of people of the advantages that accrue through formal education.

Dubin and Kuhlman (1992) state that the field of literacy has been marked by significant new direction in literacy research brought about by questions which seeks to discover how literacy functions in families, in communities and in workplaces. What does it mean to be literate as a member of a particular culture? What are the patterns of literacy use within fields of work, within professions,

within age groups? In defining literacy as a mere ability to read and write is highly disastrous (Valenzuela 2002: www.unm.edu).

John Wilson (1986) argues that people often speak of literacy as if it were a 'skill' like being able to ride a bicycle or swim. Computers can, in some sense, be programmed to read and write, but how thin this sense is – how much is missing from what we hope human beings do in their reading and writing- is clear enough. He further elaborates this point by saying that the human beings, unlike machines, do not form strokes and letters or enunciate the syllables represented by 'the cat sat on the mat'. Human beings express their thoughts and feelings in writing and understand those of others in reading. To quote Wilson again "Literacy so far from being a single skill or even a set of skills, is inextricably bound up with understanding, with choices of words, with grasp of syntax, grammar and diction and what is all often omitted – with a certain attitude towards the whole business. (Suzanne, Allan and Kieran 1986: 120)

According to the *Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (NIFL)* "literacy not only involves competency in reading and writing, but goes beyond this to include the critical and effective use of these in people's lives and the use of language (oral and written) for all purposes". This definition involves critical thinking about what one reads as well as expanding the term to encompass oral forms of literacy. With the increasing demands of information and technology in shaping our society the definition of literacy takes on a more contextualized perspective. According to the national institute of literacy (USA)

literacy is “an individual’s ability to read, write; speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual and in society. (NIFL: www.novel.nifl.gov)

This is a broader view of literacy than just an individual’s ability to read, the more traditional concept of literacy. As information and technology have increasingly shaped our society, the skills we need to function successfully have gone beyond reading and literacy has come to include the skill listed in the current definition. Of note, is the emphasis on English. The stress on English may be relevant to some countries but we cannot give a general definition of a literate as a person who can speak English.

Freire's book with Macedo (1987) calls for a view of literacy as cultural politics. That is, literacy training should not only provide reading, writing, and numeracy, but it should be considered “...a set of practices that functions to either empower or disempower people.” Literacy (for Freire and Macedo) is analyzed according to whether it serves to reproduce existing social formations or serves as a set of cultural practices that promote democratic and emancipatory change.” (Freire and Macedo, 1987:viii.) Literacy as cultural politics is also related in Freire's work to emancipatory theory and critical theory of society. Hence, emancipatory literacy “becomes a vehicle by which the oppressed are equipped with the necessary tools to reappropriate their history, culture, and language practices” (Freire and Macedo: 159).

He not only taught the peasants to read, he taught them to understand the reasons for their oppressed condition. The sounds, letters, and words from the world of his adult learners were integrated and codified. Ideas, words, and feelings joined together to generate a powerful literacy that was based on the learners' lived experiences. The Brazilian peasants learned to read the words rapidly because they had already read the world, and their world was the foundation for reading the words. Traditionally, literacy has been the process of reading only the word. Emancipatory literacy is reading the world. Freire was not jailed and exiled because he taught peasants to "read the word," but because he taught the subordinate class to critically read the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Freire taught the peasants to use their knowledge and their literacy to examine and reexamine the surrounding power structures of the dominant society.

Freire taught that no education is politically neutral. Traditionally, teachers have assumed that they don't have to bother with politics and that their only concern is with teaching. It is pretty naive, and maybe even elitist, to think that teaching and learning could possibly take place in a vacuum. Every time a curriculum is chosen, a political decision is being made. Behind the apparently simple question what should be taught, and what shouldn't be there are great social, cultural, and political implications. (Joan Wink 2003 www.joanwink.com)

Schools are social; they are filled with real people who live in real communities and have real concerns. People with multiple perspectives send their kids to schools. Teaching and learning are a part of real life, and real life

includes politics and people. Schools do not exist on some elevated pure plain of pedagogy away from the political perspectives of people. If two friends sit down for a social visit, politics is a part of it. Paulo Freire recognized this before many others in education. If educators state that they are neutral, then they are on the side of the dominant culture.

It is necessary to clarify what teaching is and what learning is. Teaching is the form or the act of knowing, which the professor or educator exercises; it takes as its witness the student. This act of knowing is given to the student as a testimony, so that the student will not merely act as a learner. In other words, teaching is the form that the teacher or educator possesses to bear witness to the student on what knowing is, so that the student will also know instead of simply learn. For that reason, the process of learning implies the learning of the object that ought to be learned. This preoccupation has nothing to do exclusively with the teaching of literacy skills. This preoccupation establishes the act of teaching and the act of learning as fundamental moments in the general process of knowledge, a process of which the educator on the one hand and the learner on the other are a part. And this process implies a subjective stance. It is impossible that a person, not being the subject of his own curiosity, can truly grasp the object of his knowledge.

Hiebert (1991) takes an explicitly constructive perspective to the definition of literacy: "the new perspective on literacy does not consist of old ideas in a new name, but rather it represents a profound shift from a text driven view of literacy

as active transformation of texts.”(Valenzuela 2002: www.unm.edu). In the old view meaning was presumed to reside primarily within the text, whereas according to the new view meaning is created with the interaction between the reader and the text. Langer (1991) takes this notion a step forward contrasting literacy as the act of reading and writing and literacy as the way of thinking (Valenzuela 2002: www.unm.edu).

A glance at the literature about literacy produced by linguists, literacy specialists, and social historians reveals three emerging directions in literacy research:

- Literacy as a verbal skill involving the ability to control the visual medium of language.
- Literacy as a call for the participation of the socially deprived illiterate masses in the heritage of written culture.
- Literacy as an enabling factor, which creates conditions conducive to linguistic innovation and imaginary creativity. (Srivatsava 1993: 46-47)

Viewed from the point of linguistic resources, literacy may be regarded as an extension of the functional potential of language with regard to the visual mode of transmission involving writing and reading skills. The study of literacy is broad and has focused on different aspects. Individual aspects of literacy have been investigated from psychological and educational perspectives. The main concern of this group is the cognitive effects of literacy on individuals. Social aspects of literacy have been studied by sociologists and social anthropologists.

This group has been concerned with how literacy affects society or how societies use literacy in certain contexts. Research on linguistics aspects of literacy concerns the relationships between spoken and written language, and more recently the properties of writing systems.

Each argument in these areas mainly reflects either of two particular perspectives – evolutionist view or the contextualist view. The evolutionists see the individuals and societies following a course of linear progression. The contextualists see each culture and society varying and literacy practices situated in contexts differing across cultures.

The general argument of the evolutionists is: Culture develops from simple to complex, society evolves from primitive to civilized, and humans progress from illiterate to literate.

The contextualist view, which emerged in the 1980s, and 90s appeared from the areas of psychology, history, social anthropology, linguistics and sociolinguistics. According to his approach literacy is seen as social practices embedded in the contexts where the speakers of the language live and make use of literacy for their purposes and where the use of literacy is somehow regulated by the social relationships of people. The concern of this group is more on how people use literacy than on how literacy affects people. According to Heath (1992) the meanings of literacy in certain societies vary depending upon how the society or the group of people see or view literacy (Tauchi 2000:

www.ntu.edu.au). The definition of literacy, then, can differ from one community to another, from one period of time to another and from one literacy program to another.

Street (1993) distinguishes these two streams of study, naming the first 'autonomous model' and the second the 'ideological model'. In the autonomous model literacy is seen independent of social context, and its consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic characteristic. Advocates of the autonomous model of literacy assume a single direction in which literacy development can be traced and associate it with 'progress', civilization, individual liberty and social mobility. According to the autonomous model literacy has inherent qualities in itself which brings about a change in the society, making one literate individual as modern, cosmopolitan and innovative. Literacy, then, represents a way of perpetuating the notion of a great divide between 'modern' and 'traditional' societies.

Many researchers were dissatisfied with autonomous model of literacy, as it failed to provide a more theoretically sound and ethnographic understanding of the actual significance of literacy practices in people's lives. They view literacy as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures and society. They look into the role of literacy practices in reproducing or challenging structures of power and domination. Street uses the term 'ideological' to describe this approach. According to him all approaches to literacy in practice will involve a bias, will be

loaded with some ideology. Literacy is not a 'neutral technology' as prescribed in the reductionist 'autonomous' model as can be seen by various instances through ethnographies of literacy.

For instance, Lewis (2000) in writing about the meanings and uses of literacy in Somalia rejects the idea of 'great divide' between literacy and orality intrinsic to the autonomous model of literacy. He further demonstrates the role of mixed literate in local politics and in the assertion of their identity. Similarly, Rockhill's account of the politics of literacy reveals the struggles for power and position by women among the Hispanics in Los Angeles (www.edst.educ.ubc.ca). Similarly in the recent past a group of women from the Dubagunta village in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh started a mass movement against liquor forcing the government to put against the sale of liquor. However keeping in mind the falling revenue of the state the ban was lifted and the lesson, which had instigated the movement, was subsequently scraped off the books. Looking at these instances one is not only promptly ready to believe that literacy is ideologically manipulated but also that literacy is power. According to Rockhill literacy has been on symbolic and ideological dimensions and goes far beyond being able to read and write. The power of literacy is framed primarily in terms of economic development, equality of opportunity and the possibility of liberty and democracy. The ideology in the ideological model refers to 'the site of tension between authority and the power on the one hand and resistance and creativity on the other'. Street holds that there is a tension between social groups one of, which has the authority and power over the other, and one of, which is resistant

to the other. Literacy and language, along with various cultural practices play a role in mediating this tension.

Definitions of literacy employed in literacy programs have been changing reflecting the change in the stream of literacy studies. In the periods between the 1960s and 1980s **UNESCO's** definition of literacy expanded from the narrowest sense, skill of reading and writing, to one including economic and social function. The perception of literacy by various organizations has also changed – they have come to see literacy in bigger and wider contexts. Some see literacy as an integral part of development and others see it as a tool of total human growth that enables individuals and groups to 'read the world' around them and transform it.

According to the **National Literacy Mission**, India (1988), merely signing one's name does not make a person literate. They have precisely defined what comprises as literacy for them. The reading, writing and numeracy skills expected from the learner are as follows:

1) Reading:

- Reading aloud, with normal accent a simple passage on a topic of interest to the learners, at a speed of 30 words per minute.
- Reading silently small paragraphs in simple language at a speed of 35 words per minute.
- Reading with understanding road signs, posters, simple instructions and newspapers for neo literates etc.

- Ability to follow simple written messages relating to ones working and living environment.

2) Writing:

- Copying with understanding, at a speed of 7 words per minute.
- Taking dictation at a speed of 5 words per minute.
- Writing with proper spacing and alignment.
- Writing independently short letters and applications of most use to the learners

3) Numeracy:

- To read and write numerals from 1 to 100.
- Doing simple calculations without fractions, involving addition, subtraction up to 3 digits and multiplication and division by 2 digits.
- Working knowledge of metric units of weights measures currency, distance, area and units of time.
- Broad idea of proportion and interest (without involving fractions) and their use in working and living.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 says:

“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical education and professional education shall be made generally available.

A quantitative definition of literacy which is used by various governmental organizations and literacy programmes is proposed. According to this, a person is considered to be literate when s/he can read at a certain grade level (e.g. 6th grade). This grade level literacy can theoretically be measured by standardized tests. A limitation of this definition is that it does not account for a person's ability to function in different and social and human contexts.

In opposition to this some researchers came up with the qualitative definitions of literacy. They mentioned two types of literacy:

Functional literacy: - According to this definition, a person is considered literate when s/he has the ability to function within a predetermined context. This context is not selected by the learner, instead, socioeconomic, race, gender, or other factors may dictate the context of instruction. Sharon in the paper 'Defining Literacy' says that the term 'functional literacy was first used by the US Army during World War II to indicate the capability to understand written instructions necessary for conducting basic military functions and tasks a fifth grade reading level' (Castell, Duke and Egan: 1986: 148). Functional literacy today is the ability to accomplish reading and written tasks required for functioning at a minimal level in society. The context may have been determined - that learners need to complete specific tasks, write resumes, fill out applications, or operate a certain piece of equipment. In the US this would include reading road signs, reading food labels, taking a driver's license exam, filling out job instructions,

and reading instructions on the job. The problem with this definition is that it transforms the learner into an object.

Liberatory or Humanistic literacy: - Building on the work of Paulo Freire, this definition names a person as literate when s/he has become politicized. A politicized person is able to manipulate language (speaking, reading, writing etc) so as to comprehend his/her own self-identity in the context in which s/he functions. The literate person does not learn to function in a predetermined context, but rather how to use language to function in different contexts. The learner, together with the educator, decides the context of literate functioning or at least has valued input regarding what is taught and what is learnt. This approach allows a learner to determine what they feel a comfortable level of literacy is and whether they have achieved it or not.

It seems that in the past 10-20 years, the understanding of literacy has simultaneously been changed, broadened, narrowed, manipulated, co-opted, politicized, liberated, confined, clarified, and muddled. Its also clear that a single definition of literacy does not always work, therefore giving rise to expansive words like "literacies" or clarifying adjectives such as "functional," "workplace" or "critical." How do these definitions of literacy affect learners especially women and our work as literacy advocates or teachers or researchers? (Mevmiller 2000: www.eduation.gsu.edu).

To emancipate illiterate girls and women, literacy has to go well beyond reading and writing skills and incorporate emancipatory content and process.

Literacy per se does not foster the development of critical thinking and limits the scope of experience and opportunities that awaits them. Literacy materials for girls and women should (Gloria 2002: www.accu.or.jp):

- Reflect the many different life experiences of women and girls.
- Show girls and women's strengths, sense of dignity, and values
- Show them in a variety of jobs and roles including those that may seem surprising or different for them
- Support their desire to learn and to educate themselves according to their own hopes and dreams
- Recognize that there are many levels of oppression for girls and women and that society often treats them differently because of such things as race, class, religion, education and sexual orientation
- Recognize that they share common experiences and present a positive image of girls and women
- Be easy to read with words, layout, print, illustrations, format and binding that make them as easy as possible for all girls and women to use
- Be written mostly by women
- Keep in mind that girls and women with limited reading skills have the following characteristics:
 - They are busy with household chores.
 - They are socially and economically disadvantaged.
 - They have experienced failures in school during childhood or do not have confidence that they can learn well.

- They have strong feeling of inferiority and shame about being illiterate.
- They will only read what they think is useful or entertaining for them.
- They have their own ideas about things. They like to be treated as adults and as equals. They dislike being tested.
- They like the feeling of achievement.
- They learn best if they can participate in the learning activities.

A literacy campaign which aims to involve the women has to keep the factors mentioned above in mind. Contents of the literacy materials for girls and women should be related to their everyday life, interest and problem. In some way, these can help solve their immediate problems and raise relevant questions about their own conditions and status in society. If contents of literacy materials are familiar to the girls and women, they would be able to relate what they read to their life, be stimulated to act, discuss and share opinions among themselves. For instance, the Female Functional Literacy (FFL) project which is continuing in provinces of Philippines The utilization of area-based, community, and culture-specific literacy materials is an innovative feature of FFL (Gloria 2002: www.or.jp). Their contents address community needs identified through a thorough situational analysis. The identified needs revolve around health, nutrition, food production and related development concerns. These contents are translated into specific doable messages and are linked with literacy and

numeracy skills. The basic literacy skills are expected to enhance learner's ability to take action on health and nutrition and other messages essential to survival, protection, and development.

A unique feature of FFL as mentioned by Sarrienter Gloria is their curriculum. Literacy materials they use are collaborated from various agencies working for the needs of these people. The content is validated by specialists in those fields. The FFL model to literacy materials development demonstrates that it is possible to take people with no previous training in materials development and have them turn out good materials. Each province that has been participating in the FFL project developed its own primer and facilitator's guide to ensure that the materials are truly need-based and resource-based. This is in recognition also of the essential meaning of literacy as a social process - that "the process of becoming literate is experienced by individuals in their own local and personal terms within the special context of their social reality and the practice of literacy."

Wanting to promote literacy of girls and women is a complicated yet rewarding task. One needs to have a clear understanding and appreciation of the tremendous load of responsibilities girls and women carry with them from childhood. One also needs to put their double responsibility in their social, cultural, and political realities. The strength and limitations of their limited reading

skills need to be addressed also in terms of text presentation and layout design. The most important aspect, which is a sine-qua-non of developing materials for girls and women with limited reading skills, is commitment to their empowerment and status in society. How to combine these elements in a balanced manner remains a challenge that must be met to bring about meaningful changes in the life of illiterate girls and women.

1.3. REDEFINING LITERACY

Before embarking on redefining literacy one major point has to be driven home. Literacy is in no way an antonym of illiteracy as many campaigns might lead us to believe. There is a well-circulated notion that says that illiterates have to be taught to learn... as if illiteracy were a kind of plague, which has to be eradicated.

Before the 60s, it was claimed that life prior to becoming literate was devoid of culture. According to this conception, the illiterate individual was thought of as being excluded from the social structure and literacy as the strategy designed to rescue and integrate him into society. Research findings during eighties and nineties, however (Fingeret, 1984; Gowen, 1994; Kalman, 1999), reveal that illiterate individuals and poorly educated adults do not have a diminished self image (www.unesco.org). Public stereotypes of illiterate individuals portraying them as dependent, incompetent, incapable, weak and failure – prone, come up against the fact that adult illiterates” have had reading

and writing experiences, and have a concept of its use, and functionality (Kalman, 1999 :www.unesco.cl).

Currently, qualitative research on the subject has provided ample evidence that indicates that there are few people in the world who have not had any contact whatsoever with reading and writing. The notion that literacy programmes are intended for individuals who are total ignoramuses who cannot write or do not know the uses of writing, does not reflect today's social reality (Street, 1993). UNESCO's World Conference at Persepolis (1975), marks a turning point for adult education, to the extent that the concept of what constitutes an illiterate gradually begins to change. No longer would they be considered empty vessels demanded to be filled, but persons endowed with reasoning abilities, profound labour experiences, and a strong sense of individual and collective responsibility (Kalman, 1989). Research studies (Scribner and Cole, 1983) have corroborated, that adult illiterates are persons worthy of respect, individual, intelligent and capable of engaging in abstract thinking. A literacy programme is far better off if it assumes that the knowledge is there: that educators accept that they are working with competent adults who operate in complex social settings and require a wide range of intellectual and social skills. Despite this modern view, in the modern society illiterates are discriminated upon, not only because they lack the ability to write, but also, as the result of the prejudices with which society has branded those who can not read or write.

Once we have decided upon, what illiteracy is the next step is to define literacy, which is a multifarious concept. The census figures of literacy rates and education growth in India show a remarkable progress. The literacy level of India at the time of independence was only 29.45 per cent, with male literacy at 39.45 per cent and female literacy at 18.69 per cent. The total population at this time was 360 million]. The latest Census estimates (2001) the All-India figure as 65.38 per cent; male literacy stands at 75.85 %; and female literacy at 54.16 %. One could on a superficial glance at applaud the flattering figures shown by the census. But how was a literate defined. According to the Indian government the term literacy means the ability to read and write with understanding in any language. A person who can merely read but cannot write is not classified as literate (www.humanrightsinitiative.org). Such statistics then is not really trustworthy for it leaves out the different natures of literacy. If the percentage of literate women has increased from 18.69% to 54.16%, does it mean that the number of women who are conscious of their rights, who can raise their voices against violence at work and domestic sphere has increased? Literacy is not just a process of learning skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and his full development.

Over the past two decades, theoretical approaches to literacy have argued that literacy practices cannot be understood as a set of neutral technical skills, but must be seen as embedded within particular social, economic, political and ideological contexts (Heath 1983; Street 1984, 1993). Furthermore, according to these authors, understandings of literacy as a neutral and inherently empowering

skill, or the *autonomous* model of literacy (Street 1984), fail to recognise the ways in which western assumptions about what literacy “is” and “is for” are imposed on local populations--to the detriment of literacy projects around the world. Despite the strength of the argument, this *ideological* model of literacy (ibid.) has not trickled down to most educational efforts on the ground. In general, such projects continue to view literacy as an unquestionable marker of cognitive, social and economic development. Literacy programs are often implemented without a clear understanding of what communities want, need and expect from literacy skills, and also what literacy skills they already have. Street (2001) suggests that this lack of explicit attention to theory ...has led to so many failures in development literacy programmes; behind the naturalisation of teaching and learning have lurked ideological pressures and political dogmas, often colonial but also urban/rural, or based on local ethnic conflicts and hierarchies. (Street 2001: 10)

Alternatively literacy is defined as a tool to gain ‘empowerment’ and to become ‘liberated’. Literacy does not empower people. After literacy campaign ‘concludes’ its ‘work’ there are very few signs of having changed peoples lives. It seems that many of the past claims about the benefits of literacy are bogus. Literacy in itself probably does not empower and does not bring benefits in respect of health, productivity or population growth. However, this is not to say that literacy can never bring huge benefits. A campaign’s approach should involve two parallel and interweaving processes: a literacy process and an

empowering process. The literacy gives people practical skills which will help in the empowerment process (e.g. as they assume positions of responsibility in community organizations) and the empowerment process in turn creates uses for literacy in people's everyday lives. This mutual consolidation and reinforcement is the essence of why it makes sense to fuse the two processes. Literacy programmes, then, can be very empowering if the literacy process is interwoven with other processes through a well-structured participatory methodology.

Literacy programmes in the past (especially since Freire) have tried to fuse the two processes and some have succeeded, with remarkable results. However, most have failed because they have fallen into believing that either literacy in itself is sufficient (so they have ignored other processes and focused on the product) or they have assumed that empowerment in itself is enough (but have in practice tried to "*indoctrinate*" people into new ideologies) (www.dfid.gov.uk).

The list on literacy terms comprises UNESCO's definition: "A literate is a person who, with understanding, can both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life." The backgrounder to the invitation for this forum mentions that this popular view of literacy is insufficient in the context of the different ethnic and linguistic cultures of Asia. This argument has to be taken still further and the ideas of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's should be put to use. For him and many others who have embraced his work, literacy is a part of the process by which illiterate people become aware of their personal situation-

and learn to do something about improving it. This definition is worth being adhered to.

The logical question that arises then is what is meant by the word empowerment. What does one as a feminist (which by the way means that a feminist strives for equal opportunities for men and women) understand by an empowered man or woman? Is it someone who can read and maybe write a simple statement on her everyday life, value free, or empowerment a process? A process of becoming aware of a situation in which you find yourself and want to come to grips with. To get to know the forces of patriarchy that makes you somebody that you are not? The obvious choice seems to be to choose the process approach for empowerment.

Empowerment, as a process, links up with Paulo Freire's definition of literacy. Literacy feeds into empowerment but is not conditional. The most important part of the process is that one gets a grip on life. Decisions can be made and adhered to by the person. One learns to do something about their own situation. One realizes that there are possibilities of change and that you recognize the forces that prevent change or gendered development.

As far as literacy is concerned, women are particularly underprivileged. During the course of this Second Asia Regional Literacy Forum, New Delhi, gender aggregated data show the discrepancy of literacy percentages between men and women, between boys and girls (www.literacyonline.com). Linking it with empowerment clearly girls are not considered equal to boys and do not get

the same education. The reasons for this situation are complex- physical, economical, political, historical and socio cultural. These six dimensions of empowerment are interrelated. All these do not all carry equal weight. The socio-cultural context is all pervasive, all permeating and decisive. With some examples one can see that the socio cultural context slows down the process of literacy by keeping women disempowered.

Physical empowerment is being master of your own body. It should in principle be your own decision whether to have a child, to practice family planning or to have an abortion. In this region, however, sex is often not discussed between partners or the willingness or the physical ability of the woman to bear another child not questioned. Refusal to be intimate when you expect the man to have visited someone else before he comes to you is culturally almost impossible. Women often cannot demand sterilization or anti conception pills without the husband (and family) doubting the fidelity of the women. A Bombay based research proved that 99% of abortions took place of female fetuses and had nothing to do with the physical condition of the pregnant woman. Often women do not know how their womb functions. They suffer from Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDS) without realization that this is not a normal healthy condition. Organizations can produce all the pamphlets in the world to explain the causes and consequences of being HIV positive but if one is unable to say NO when it matters, the booklet is 'barren.'

The same argument can explain the minimal participation of women in politics. Socio-cultural impediments make a reservation policy necessary otherwise women do not get a say in local politics or do not get a ticket from a political party. A recent UNICEF sponsored research indicated that violence against women in local governing bodies is increasing. Women approve documents by affixing their new learned signature or by inking their thumb and impress documents they do not understand. They are not empowered enough to say: "I need training" or "explain it to me for I do not understand."

A woman usually sits at the back of the meeting and does not dare speak in front of men because it is socially not accepted. Women do not want a grand scale irrigation project that alienates their labour and takes them far from home and children. Women are unable to participate in the direction of development, disempowered to decide what is good and healthy for them and the family.

Literacy, the ability to read a document or a letter, the ability to write, to consciously sign for agreement connects with the ability to voice demands, to speak out in front of men, to effect balanced development for both men and women. For men it is essential to let women speak and to listen to women's needs for they may be different then theirs. Changing the status of women depends on changing the attitude of men, particularly in their role as fathers and husbands and in their relationships with women as equal partners. UNESCO would like to be an intermediary to provide a different concept of masculinity. It seeks to develop and disseminate curriculum resources and textbooks depicting

non-violent and non-aggressive behaviour and provide training for boys, girls and educators in emotional expressions and inter-group communication. UNESCO looks forward to promote change in the representation of men in mass media to counter any impact of violent images of masculinity of movies and television. This was decided in an expert group meeting in Oslo in September 1997 as part of UNESCO's Culture of Peace programme (www.literacyonline.org).

Riet Turksmathe, a gender expert in UNESCO reveals the importance of addressing the sociocultural context of literacy and empowerment by giving the instance of a program called Education for Women's Empowerment (Mahila Samakhya). A program carried over from India by colleagues to Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda and possibly Pakistan and Palestine. It is a programme stimulating the empowerment of women so as to take control of their own lives. With this aim, the project provides the crucial conceptual and practical link between empowerment and education. The premise is that empowerment is essential for women to be active participants in the educational process. Mahila Samakhya was born from the need to translate the vision of the National Educational Policy, which states that education can be used as an agent of change. Operationalising this commitment, literacy is perceived as one component of an overall strategy of empowerment. The project attempts to create a demand for literacy (Department of Education, GOI, Education for All, the Indian Scene, subtitled Widening Horizons p.35-38). However the pace at which this is accomplished is determined by the women themselves (www.literacyonline.org).

One of the most interesting aspects of the project is the articulation of 10 nonnegotiable principles. To mention a few: women have to consolidate their independent time and therefore the pace of the program cannot be hurried. You cannot take short cuts. Project functionaries are facilitators and do not act on any one's directive. In this way activists within government service or from outside can be appointed as coordinators. These women are used to work with women groups on an equal basis. Education should be understood as a process, which enables women to question, conceptualize and seek answers. They act and reflect on their actions and raise new questions, exactly as Paulo Freire defined literacy: "illiterate people becoming aware of their situation and learn to do something about it." In Mahila Samakhya there is an acceptance that as an environment of learning is created, what women decide to learn first, may not be reading or writing. Women's priorities for learning must be respected.

The result of this project is that a change in gender relations is taking place. Women have proved to be effective in local political bodies and have sent their daughters to school. Families are embracing smaller family norms, women work and decide how to spend the money, and they want their husbands to stop drinking and object to household violence. For themselves they want to learn to read and write when they are not too tired in the night. They want to understand their situation and bring change in their status in society. If it is in that order: once a process of empowerment is set in motion, literacy in its broadest definition will follow.

Illiterate women remain the poorest of the poor even when they play an essential role in their economical development of their families and the communities. These women are the least paid and most exploited (Alshi 2001: www.literacyonline.com). However a question worth posing is whether an educated woman really becomes 'liberated' is a question worth posing. Islam K.M.Bahrul , in his paper **Development Challenges for 21st Century Indian Society: Issues in Women Literacy & Women Rights Education in Assam** presented at the Second Asia Regional Literacy Forum-Innovation and Professionalization in Adult Literacy, New Delhi 1998 gives data he collected to find how conscious a woman is about her rights. A few pertinent questions were asked to a sample consisting of 200 women belonging to various groups like Educated, Illiterate, Employed, Urban, Rural etc. (as cited by Bahrul www.literacyonline.com)

The collected data made clear that there exists an urgent need of increasing the awareness level of the Indian women about their legal, constitutional & marital rights. We can see that as much as 45% of the educated women are not aware of their rights and 94% of the illiterate women have no idea about women rights. A corroborative response is also seen when only a small percentage of women has indicated to go for legal/judicial redressal against any infringement of such rights. At the same time it is also well founded that most of these women (77%) are aware that they do not know enough about their rights.

Yet another aspect of literacy is that the speakers of the language, those who use literacy are the ones who define it. In many arguments it sounds as if the speakers or the ones receiving literacy are passive recipients of beneficial skills, which are introduced by someone from outside. It may be true that a particular form of literacy has been introduced in that way to a society which does not 'read or write' before. But when we discuss literacy practices in different cultures, it is more important to know how people in each culture view literacy and modify it for their own purpose.

1.4. Literacy Scenario In India¹

The Census 2001 provisional reports indicate that India has made significant progress in the field of literacy during the decade since the previous census in 1991. The literacy rate in 2001 has been recorded at 65.38% as against 52.21% in 1991. (www.nlm.nic.in: 2002) The Census 2001 provisional figures also indicate that the efforts of the nation during the past decade to remove the scourge of illiteracy have not gone in vain. The eradication of illiteracy from a vast country like India beset by several social and economic hurdles is not an easy task. Realising this the National Literacy Mission was set up on 5th May, 1988 to impart a new sense of urgency and seriousness to adult education. After the success of the areas specific, time bound, voluntary based campaign approach first in Kottayam city and then in Ernakulum district in Kerala in 1990, the National

We have added this section now, since the external examiner has suggested to incorporate Indian experience in literacy programmes in those states of which the primers are under discussion.

Literacy Mission had accepted the literacy campaigns as the dominant strategy for eradication of illiteracy.

Of all the spheres of Indian society where there is an enormous gap between the stated goals and actual achievements, literacy stands out as one of the most depressing, probably next only to unemployment and poverty. In 1991 (the year of latest census), only half the population in India is literate; and going by the present trend, the total literacy in India is approximately half a century away. Besides such low level and slow progress, the literacy scenario in India is also characterised by wide inequities among different sections of the population. Another important weakness of the literacy scenario is that, the widespread illiteracy is found not only among the aged, but also among younger boys and girls because of low enrolment and high dropout rates (www.literacyonline.org). Finally, one should also note that literacy is defined very liberally in the population census. According to Amartya Sen if we try to measure literacy in terms of years of schooling, the average is merely 2.4 years in India for persons aged 25 and above (Dreze and Sen, 1995). The current literacy status in India as well as its rate of progress since the fifties would clearly indicate that the issue has generally been neglected here.

Among its south-Asian neighbours, although the literacy rate in India is better than in Nepal (27 percent). Pakistan (36 percent) and Bangladesh (37 percent), it is much worse than in Sri Lanka (89 percent). Compared to east and south-east Asian countries, the situation is again much worse in India, not only with respect

to their current literacy rates, but even with respect to the past literacy rates of those countries when they were at a comparable state of economic development. The neglect of literacy as an essential component of development is also indicated by the inadequate allocation of resources for this sector (Shaibal Gupta and Ashwani Sharma as cited in www.literacyonline.org) Although educational expenditure as a proportion of gross national product has increased from a little over 1 percent in early fifties to around 3 percent in early nineties, this is much below the target of 6 percent, recommended in 1966 by the Education Commission (GOI, 1966). Indeed, even this target of 6 percent is much lower than the international average for the developing countries which stood at around 15 percent during the eighties (Basu, 1995).

The National Literacy Mission was revitalised with the approval of the Union Government on 30th September, 1999. The Mission's goal is to attain total literacy i.e. a sustainable threshold literacy rate of 75% by 2007. The Mission seeks to achieve this by imparting functional literacy to non-literates in the 15-35 age-group. To tackle the problem of residual illiteracy, now it has been decided to adopt an integrated approach to Total literacy campaigns and Post literacy programme. This means the basic literacy campaigns and post literacy programmes will be implemented under one literacy project called '*Literacy Campaigns and Operation Restoration*' to achieve continuity, efficiency and convergence and to minimise unnecessary time lag between the two. Post literacy Campaigns are treated only as a preparatory phase for launching Continuing Education with the ultimate aim of creating a learning society

(www.education.nic.in). The scheme of *Jan Shikshan Sansthan* or Institute of People's Education, previously known as the Scheme of *Shramik Vidyapeeth* was initially evolved as a non-formal continuing education programme to respond to the educational and vocational training needs of adults and young people living in urban and industrial areas and for persons who had migrated from rural to urban settings. Now the Institutes' activities have been enlarged and infrastructure strengthened to enable them to function as district level repositories of vocational and technical skills in both urban and rural areas. At present there are 122 *Jan Shikshan Sansthans* in India. (www.pd.cpim.org)

Ever since its inception the National Literacy Mission has taken measures to strengthen its partnership with NGOs and to evolve both institutional and informal mechanisms to give voluntary organisations active promotional role in the literacy movement. Now under the scheme of support to NGOs they are encouraged and provided with financial assistance to run post literacy and continuing education programmes in well defined areas.

1.4.1 Current Literacy State in Madhya Pradesh

The state literacy presently is 64.11 %, which is close to the national literacy rate 65.35 %. A summary of the literacy profile of the state of Madhya Pradesh (MP) is given in the table below.

	Literacy Rate (1991)	Literacy Rate (2001)	Decadal growth in Literacy Rate (1991 to 2001)
Male	58.54	76.8	18.26
Female	29.35	50.28	20.93
Total	44.67	64.11	19.44

Literacy Profile of Madhya Pradesh

Source: Census 1991 and 2001

In its effort to provide education the state government runs 51164 primary schools, 13369 middle schools, 1600 high schools and 1782 higher secondary schools. Over all 75 per cent of school education in MP is provided by the state, though as one moves upwards in the educational hierarchy the commitment of the state becomes progressively reduced.

In its schools government employs 3,35,342 regular teachers, of whom about half are at the primary level. The state, therefore, has at its command a huge array of almost 70000 schools and about 3.35 lakh teachers. This is the largest single set of government servants in the state. The figures provide a very rosy picture but the reality is rather conflicting. The general complaint is that the state schools do not function well, the teachers do not attend to their duties diligently and many village schools are without teachers because they do not like to serve in rural areas. In other words, the huge educational infrastructure at school level available to the state is deemed to be either non functional or extremely inefficient in functioning.

Therefore, in order to ensure rapid literacy the state government launched two more schemes. The first relates to appointment of *Shikshakarmis* or literacy workers on fixed pay, who are supposed to supplement the teaching staff. At present there are 46294 Shikshakarmis in the rural areas and 5147 in the urban areas, making a total of 51441 Shikshakarmis. The Shikshakarmis represent 15.33 per cent of the strength of the regular teachers. There are also 24093 ad-hoc teachers, servicing 23790 education guarantee scheme schools.

The adult literacy program is handled by the "*Padhna-Badhna*" (meaning: [Study-Progress](#)) scheme, which has its own 'gurujis' (teachers). This radically revamped strategy for literacy was launched in Madhya Pradesh at the initiative of the former Chief Minister, Digvijay Singh. Under this, non-literate people (in the age group 15-50 years) came together in groups of twenty to thirty as Padhna Badhna Samitis. They engaged local educated persons to be their teacher (Guruji). The state government's role was restricted to training the teachers and the evaluation of learners. After the evaluation, based on the number of learners made literate an honorarium or "gurudakshina" was paid to the teachers individually by the learner for which funds were made available by the government.

Under this strategy, the non-literate people came together as the Padhna Badhna Samitis. About two lakh Padhna-Badhna Samitis are active in rural and urban areas of the state. Many teachers, grassroots functionaries,

pensioners and educated youth in villages have responded to this scheme and have become gurus of Padhna-Badhna Samitis.

Training and teaching-learning material to the teacher is provided by the nearest 'Jan Shiksha Kendra' (mass education centre). After the completion of the three primers stipulated by the National Literacy Mission, another primer on rights is dealt with. This primer enables the learners to know their rights and to get acquainted with various legal provisions in respect of forest, land and gender issues. The fourth primer also provides information on development schemes and formation and functioning of self-help groups.

This model involves the Panchayats adequately unlike the Total Literacy Campaign which was conceived before Panchayat Raj was established in the state. The previous scheme was also seen to be more expensive with three sequential phases of Literacy, Post-Literacy and Continuing Education. While the Literacy phase was expected to impart basic literacy, the Post-Literacy phase was expected to promote livelihood skills and Continuing Education phase was to sustain literacy through libraries etc. Under the new strategy, collective action based on existing social bonds becomes the starting point and gets reinforced as people undergo learning. By integrating the scheme with the Jan Shiksha Kendras of the school education stream, sustained academic support for continuing the education is also taken care of. Apart from this it was seen that after the initial

enthusiasm energies waned in the absence of incentives. (www.mp.nic.in)

The Padma Badhna Scheme aims to meet people's demand for literacy. But do people in fact demand literacy the way they would demand a road, a hospital or even a primary school for their children? Or do the Government, Civil Society organizations, NGOs and Panchayati Raj Institutions need to take on the role of catalysts and stimulate such a demand? However it is still too early to say whether adult literacy would seldom be the felt need of the people in the same way as food, clothing and shelter.

One aspect of education, which seems to be totally neglected in this state is skill development. It had been suggested that the teaching of professional courses at school level should be vastly expanded so that the largest possible number of students could develop skills which would allow them to enter a widely expanded labor market. Very little seems to have been done in this behalf. According to a statement made in 2002 by **MN Buch** Chairman National Center for Human Settlements & Environment, Bhopal, the bureaucracy is strongly opposed to the very idea of skill development and has steadfastly blocked every attempt at expansion of vocational education, despite the fact that the Chief Minister does have a positive attitude towards professionalism and vocationalisation of education (www.boloji.com).

In 1994, The Government of Madhya Pradesh converted selected programmes into Rajiv Gandhi Missions and among them, one of the most important has been the Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission for basic education. The Shiksha Mission in 1997 introduced an Education Guarantee Scheme to universalise primary education in the quickest possible time through partnership with local communities (www.mp.nic.in). Madhya Pradesh was able to reach a primary schooling facility to every habitation by 1998 through the Education Guarantee Scheme. The goal set for the Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission was to universalize primary education by 1998 and accelerate the movement towards total literacy in the state. The Mission was able to achieve both these goals on schedule. It universalized access to primary schooling in the state by August 1998. The first goal of universalizing primary education was implemented by pioneering an Education Guarantee Scheme and adding over 31,000 new primary schools. Every village has now a school in Madhya Pradesh, in fact every habitation in a tribal area where there are 25 children of school-going age. Any community with 25 learners in a tribal area and 40 learners in a non-tribal area who do not have a school within one kilometer of the habitation has the right to demand a school, which the state guarantees to provide within 90 days thereby creating a rights-based framework for primary education for the first time. The state government later expanded the mandate of the Shiksha Mission to universalize access to Elementary Education — to provide a Middle School facility within every 3 kilometers.

The Mission is set to achieve this goal also by June 2003.

[www.educationforallinindia.com , www.ssa.nic.in]

In the area of adult literacy, the Mission succeeded in pushing the literacy rate of the state by an unprecedented 20% catching up with the national average and shedding the obnoxious *Bimaru* (sick) tag in this area. Female literacy jumped over 21%, in fact more than the cumulative rise in the three decades from sixties to nineties and winning for the state, the country's Decadal Achievement Award in Female Literacy. In spite of the increase registered in comparative terms, female literacy continues as the major challenge in this sector. In terms of replication of the models worked through by these Missions, variants of the Education Guarantee Scheme piloted by the state went on to Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa and in 2001 was adopted by the Government of India as a national scheme. (www.accu.or.jp)

The State has started programmes that are being implemented for Universalisation of Elementary Education and equity. These programmes are as follows:

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).
- National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL).
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyala Yojna (KGBV).

However, observers note that while these reforms have increased physical access to schools, quality-wise this new system does not deviate much from the old system and is characterized by the same set of practices that account for malfunctioning of the public educational system (Leclercq, 2002 as cited in econpapers.repec.org).

Moreover, these educational reforms, focusing on 'alternative schools' create a second track school system which can lead to increased enrolment in the short run; in the long run, they contribute to further social differentiation and social inequality (Dreze and Sen, 2002).

Moreover, the quality of 'literate' of the school system is very low. The actual quantity of schooling that children experience and the quality of teaching they receive are extremely insufficient to any mastery of basic literacy and numeracy skills. This seems to be true of both the educationally more advanced states as well as the educationally backward states. Leclercq (2002) in his study of two districts of Madhya Pradesh found that in most schools he visited, few children could read their basic texts fluently. The emphasis was on rote learning and there was little attempt in teaching activities to impart understanding or comprehension of the text.

1.4.2. Current Literacy State in Uttar Pradesh

A review of educational development in the state of Uttar Pradesh reveals that the goal of universalizing elementary education in a resource-poor state seems to be elusive in the near future. Neither the financing pattern of education per se nor elementary education in particular is conducive to achieving the target of universal elementary education. The magnitude of out – of - school children (leaving or dropped-out children) vis-à-vis the resources allocated toward elementary education provides a gloomy picture in the state. Financing the additional resources required to universalize elementary education in the state would require significant reallocations in overall expenditure with federal assistance, since the fiscal situation in Uttar Pradesh is highly imbalanced. The state and central government should bear the entire responsibility of funding and ensure the twin principles of equity and efficiency in the public education system in the state. This requires an indomitable political commitment in terms of reorientation of spending priorities and improving the efficiency of resource use in the state. This study reaffirms that the goal of universal elementary education could become a reality only if there is a joint commitment between the federal and state polities. The 2001 census shows the following literacy rate in this state (www.nlm.nic.in):

State/UT	Total	Male	Female
Uttar Pradesh	57.36	70.23	42.98

(figures shown in percentage)

In some villages, the building is used by the teachers for residential purposes. Elsewhere, the school premises are used as a store (Sarwana in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh), police camp (Baruhi, Bhojpur, Bihar), to dry cowdung cakes

(Mujahidpur, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh), as a cattle shed (Belri Salehpur, Hardwar, Uttar Pradesh) and a public latrine (Vangaon, Saharsa, Bihar) (www.flonet.com).

These are extreme cases but even the "typical" school boasts little more than two classrooms, a leaking roof, a couple of blackboards and a table and chair for the headmaster. The probe survey found 82 per cent of the schools needed repair. Two-thirds had leaking roofs, making it difficult to hold classes during the rains. (India Today Oct 13 1997 as cited in www.ashanet.org). The problems of education system is challenging. Due to public apathy the schools are in disarray, privately run school are functional, but beyond the reach of ordinary people. The State government has taken programmes to make the population totally literate. There are special programmes like World Bank aided DPEP (District Primary Education Programme). Steps are being taken with the help of NGOs and other organizations to raise popular participation (www.upgov.nic.in).

Prior to 1972, the primary and upper primary education in Uttar Pradesh were run, maintained and controlled by District Boards and Town Areas committees, municipalities including corporations etc. constituted under various acts related to management of local bodies i.e.

U.P. Kshettra Samitis and Zila Parishad Adhiniyam, 1961.

U.P. Municipalities Act, 1916.

U.P. Nagar Mahapalika Adhiniyam, 1959.

Considering urgent need to improve literacy in the state, it was felt that education needed planned interventions from the state Government. In this background, the Government of Uttar Pradesh passed The Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Act, 1972 (U.P. Act No. 34 of 1972) (www.upefa.com).

The main objective of this act is to organise, co-ordinate and control imparting of basic education in schools other than high schools or intermediate colleges. By this Act, an Autonomous Body named "Uttar Pradesh Board of Basic Education" was constituted under chairmanship of the Director, Basic Education. All schools which were managed and controlled by local bodies have since then been transferred to the Board. The Board of Basic Education controls the transfer and posting of basic school teachers, determines school timings and gives recognition to private schools imparting basic education in the state.

Uttar Pradesh Board of Basic Education Act 1972 has been amended in year 2000, incorporating principle of devolution of powers to the village community and management of education has been decentralised for empowering grassroots participatory agencies. Other acts relating to basic education were also amended and most crucial one has been in United Provinces Panchayati Raj Act. 1947 where in there is a committee for each village or group of villages called Gram Shiksha Samiti whose constitution is as follows :

- Gram Pradhan - Chairman

- 3 Guardians (one woman) of students of Basic schools - Members
- Head Master of Basic School or senior most head master - member secretary (if these are more than one schools).

Gram Shiksha Samiti would establish, control and plan basic schools in its panchayat areas. It would prepare plans for development and improvement of the schools. Major functions also include giving advice regarding building and other improvement plans to Zila Panchayat. The Parishad shall act as an autonomous and independent body for implementation of the Uttar Pradesh Education For All Project (Hereinafter referred to as "the Project") as outlined in the Project Document published by the Government of Uttar Pradesh and its revised version that may be prepared on the basis of review from time to time. The activities of the Parishad will be concentrated in selected districts, but may extend to the whole State of U.P. in respect of selected and sponsored projects. The Parishad has been established to function as a societal mission for bringing about a fundamental change in the basic education system, and through it in the overall socio-cultural situation. The following specific objects of the Project would be pursued by the Parishad :

Keeping the motive of strengthening basic education, a World Bank assisted project called Basic Education Project had been undertaken initially since 1993, for expansion of quality basic education in the state. For smooth running of this project, a society "Uttar Pradesh Sabhee Ke Liye Shiksha Pariyojana Parishad

(U.P. Education for all Project Board) has been established on 17 May, 1993 under Societies Registration Act of 1860. Its objects are :-

1. Universalisation of Primary Education, viewed as a composite programme of (i) access to primary education for all children up to 14 years of age; (ii) universal participation till they complete the primary stage through formal or non-formal education programmes; and (iii) universal achievement at least of the minimum levels of learning.
2. Provision of continuing education and skill development programmes for youth.
3. Making suggestions for greater gender equality in education and female empowerment.
4. Making necessary intervention to provide equal educational opportunity to children belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the poorest sections of society.
5. Laying special emphasis on all educational activities on culture and communication; science and environment and inculcation of a sense of social justice (www.worldbank.org).

DPEP began towards end of 1994 as a modest effort for providing financial and technical assistance to selected states in the country towards achieving the objectives of universal primary education. The DPEP started in 42 districts spread over seven states. It now covers 271 districts spread over eighteen states and is perhaps the largest ever programme of primary education development in the

world. It has been initiated in the state of Uttar Pradesh, as DPEP-II in year 1997 (1997-2003) in 22 districts. The programme is being implemented by U.P. Education for all Project Board (www.education.nic.in). Specifically, DPEP aims to develop and implement in the project districts, a replicable, sustainable and cost-effective programme in order to (www.upefa.com) :

- Reduce differences in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5%.
- Reduce overall primary dropout rate for all student to less than 10%.
- Raise average achievement level by at least 25% over measured baseline assessment level and ensure achievement of basic literacy and numeracy competencies and a minimum of 40% achievement level in other competencies by all primary school children.
- Provide according to norms, access for all children to primary education (classes I-V) through primary schooling wherever possible or its equivalent non-formal education.
- Strengthen the capacity of national, state and district level institutions and organisations for planning, management and evaluation of primary education.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.0. Introduction:

'It is as easy as learning ABC'.... At the outset this dictum sounds plausible and reasonable but ask the kindergarten school teachers and students what a Herculean task this is. The first year when a child is introduced to the alphabet of its language, it is its first tryst with reading and writing. Till this stage the child at the pre nursery level is taught rhymes, numbers and the whole string of alphabets but the whole learning process is restricted to memorizing and depending totally on rote memory.

Before a child enters school, usually between the ages of 3 to 4 years, it is well familiar with the spoken world. By this age the child has a vocabulary of around 200 words and it uses them increasingly in coherent sentences and phrases to communicate thoughts and information (Bhatia 1997:196). At school he has to be introduced to the written world and in a way take its first step towards being a literate, literacy here being crudely read as the ability to 'read and write'.

In India the process of teaching 'reading and writing' still depends heavily on textbooks. Of course, the advent of modern devices like computers, televisions and radios are being utilized by some schools to make teaching and

learning more effective, but even these educational institutions rely on textbooks. It is a common established fact that education and imparting of literacy skills depend greatly, if not solely on textbooks. A lot of research is being done on education and from time to time new methods have been presented. There is a lot of research on curriculum design, child psychology, classroom teaching and various other issues, which deal with learning and teaching. . At the initial level the most important issue is that of teaching untrained learners the concept of numbers and alphabets. According to the teachers at various schools the school is the first tryst for the child to have a first hand experience with graphemic representation of words. Before this the entire written world is just a set of symbols for the child which according to him is a world for the 'grown ups'. Initially when a child comes to school it has the inherent interest to learn reading and writing. Therefore it is essential that the school and the books the child uses cater to further enhance its interest. The teacher who teaches a child its first interaction with the written world should be very cautious. The onus of this lies equally and justly with the bookmakers.

Textbooks should be prepared taking into account the level, mental age and other socio-economic factors besides the cultural background of the student for whom the book is being written. A textbook comprises of oral language, non-verbal language and graphic material as well as written material. Textbooks should introduce the child to rudiments of things and objects surrounding it. It

should be creative and hold the interest of the students and should be a pleasurable experience to the learner.

All factors lead us to attempt a primer for class I: the introductory language class. We want the child to love the experience of learning as well as learn in the easiest way possible. There are many ways a child can be taught the language. It forms a rather important question as to how we can teach a child the letters of the alphabet, which doesn't intimidate it. To furnish this need there have been various ways proposed to teach a child the letters of the alphabet. We shall discuss in the first section of this chapter the various ways of introducing letters of the alphabet. Each method is suitable for some or the other language. For instance, the alphabetic method is best suited for languages like English. Amongst the various methods, a few have been adapted for teaching Indian languages, which are basically syllabic in nature. The makers of the Hindi primers have attempted to use many of these methods but it hasn't been ascertained which method is the best one. The present study is essentially an enquiry towards selecting the most suitable technique to teach the Hindi alphabet.

In this chapter we deal with two major topics. First we glance at the various methods of teaching alphabets. These methods are used for teaching different languages and each method is tailored to suit a particular language. The second part of this chapter examines the methodology used by us in the

study. It gives the sample size, the nature of the questionnaire designed and the analysis of the data to arrive at conclusions.

2.1. Nature of Devanagari * ¹

Before discussing the methods employed to teach various languages a brief discussion on nature of Devanagari, the script used to write Hindi, is warranted.

The writing system used for Sanskrit is known as *Devanagari*. Indian languages are phonetic in nature and hence the letters represent unique sounds. In Sanskrit as well as in other Indian languages, proper pronunciation of the words is quite important. Hence it is necessary to learn the sounds associated with the letters of the language.

The word "alphabet" is not usually applied to Sanskrit or other Indian languages. There is a subtle difference between the notion of "alphabet" and the "*aksharas*" as the letters of Sanskrit are called. When we think of the word "alphabet" we normally think of the letters of the language and a name given to each letter to identify it. In most languages the letters of the alphabet have names, which may give a clue to the sound associated with the letter. In Sanskrit and other Indian languages, there is no specific name given to the letters. The sound the letter stands for is actually the name for the letter. For instance the sound **k** /k/ has the name /k/ unlike as in English where the sound **ga** /g/ is named as **jal** /gl/. In a phonetic language reading becomes easy since the reader will be reading out the letters by uttering the sound associated with the *akshara*.

Devanagari is interesting because it's a completely rationalized alphabet. The symbols are organized by phonetic type i.e. the manner of articulation and place of articulation, in the same way a modern linguist would lay them out, and they have been for thousands of years. The characteristic feature of *Devanagari* is that there is a concurrence between the sound and the letter – i.e. there is one to one relationship between the utterance and the written form. As a result what is spoken is written as it is (Mehta and Singh 2001: 18).

Devanagari is an alpha syllabic Alphabet. It has 33 consonants and 10 vowels, plus two special characters. The alphabet is ordered logically, beginning with vowels (short before long, monophthongs before diphthongs). Then come *anusvara* and *visarga*; the former nasalizes the preceding vowel, and the second aspirates a vowel (*ah*, for example, is pronounced somewhat like `aha'). Finally come the consonants, arranged into three groups: stops, classified into five groups arranged according to the place of articulation (velar, palatal, cerebral/retroflex, dental, and labio-dental), with each group containing five members (unvoiced, aspirated unvoiced, voiced, aspirated voiced, nasal); four semivowels (/ **ya**/ ya, /**r**/ ra, /**la**/ la, and /**va**/ va) and four aspirants: palatal s'a, cerebral s.a, dental sa, and guttural ha.

¹ This section is included in this revised version, following the suggestion of an external examiner that “A discussion on the nature of Devanagari is warranted.” The section also deals with the traditional teaching method using ‘barakhadi’ as stressed by the examiner.

The vowel symbols in the alphabet are used only for word-initial vowels. Elsewhere, they are represented by a system of combining marks, which follow, precede, or hang above or below the consonant in question. If a consonant has no vowel marked, -a is assumed; there is a mark known as *virama*, which indicates a word-final consonant.

The basic unit of the Devanagari language- in its written as well as oral form is the 'akshar'. The process of speaking and writing any Devanagari form is totally scientific.

The vowels or the 'svar' as they are called are the 'akshar' and it is only with the combination of a svar with a 'vyanjan' (consonant) that a vyanjan becomes a 'akshar' and can be pronounced. The traditional method of teaching the Hindi alphabets which is often referred to as 'akshar gyan' or knowledge of alphabet makes use of this basic fact. Often after all the vowels and consonants are taught and the vowel markers taught individually there is the 'barakhadi'. The 'barakhadi' teaches all the consonants in combination with all the ten vowels. This drives home the fact to the child that these letters can occur only in combination with the vowels and presents to the child in a simple form all the possible combinations possible. The visual as well as audio sense of the learner is utilized and there is equal stress on hearing, speaking and writing of the language.

Devanagari makes extensive use of ligatures. Whenever consonants occur without an intervening vowel, they are written with a ligature. Forms of ligature include: vertical (the first consonant appearing above the second), horizontal (with the main vertical stroke on all but the last consonant omitted), and special (where the combined form does not resemble the separate consonants; the two most common examples are *ks.a* and *jnya*,

(will include the Hindi symbol here) which are learned by children as separate letters). In addition, *r* is represented specially in combination with other consonants: *r* before a consonant cluster is indicated by a mark above the cluster (to the right of any vowel marker), while *r* after a cluster is indicated by a diagonal tick in the lower left.

1.2. METHODS OF TEACHING ALPHABET: AN EXAMINATION

The various teaching methods are discussed here. Some of these methods have been implemented and are being used.

2.2.1. Alphabetic Method:

Each written letter of the alphabet/grapheme has a corresponding sound/phoneme. Every spoken word in the language is made up of a string of different phonemes. The phonemes become the unit of speech, which can be pronounced separately then joined to make a word.

1. This method assumes that familiarity with form and names of letters will help children to recognize and pronounce words. The main emphasis is laid on the recognition of new words rather than meaning (Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo [ITEK]: www.itek.ac.ug).

A student is taught that every word is made up of separate sounds from the alphabet that is used when the word is spoken. When each of these sounds are correctly said and then joined together in the right order, the word is

correctly pronounced. The learner looks at the printed form (grapheme) and says the correct speech sound (phoneme) for it.

In trying to discover how children learn to read, it was found, in a research done in 1962 that children who were taught letter names experienced an initial handicap in identifying nonsense syllables because in trying to identify the printed symbol, the child had to pass through an intermediate step of saying the letter name before he arrived at the beginning of the word.

Porter and Copp (1967) made an attempt to teach school beginners letter names using various play games like lotto, spelling games and alphabet songs. Their efforts were largely unsuccessful. The researchers came to the conclusion that the popular alphabet song can lead to very serious confusions and that the alphabet sequence, particularly at the beginning of the alphabet generated auditory and visual discrimination difficulties.

Used by the Mysore State Adult Education Council for Kannada Language, this method has six letters having similar structures grouped on each page of the primer. The grouping has been done on the presumption that it will be easier for the student to learn to write the letters as a group. The drill of the letters is provided through unconnected words, phrases and sentences. There are a few pictures on each page to help recognize certain words (Chandrasekhar 2002: www.hinduonnet.com).

2.2.2. The Alphabetic- Picture-Association Method

This is commonly known as the 'Laubach' method named after its author, Dr. Frank C. Laubach. The basic theory behind this method is that the students are able to recall to memory the shape of a letter if it resembles the shape of an object, wherein, the name begins with the same letters. Whether this approach really helps the learner is a debatable point and there is considerable difference of opinion about this theory. One of the serious disadvantages of this method is that such natural resemblances of letters and objects cannot be found for all letters and so some artificial resemblances are worked out, and the students find it difficult to notice the association between the object and the letter, which it is supposed to represent.

2.2.3. The Ansari Method

This is a picture-word-association-method devised by Hayathullah Ansari. It is based on the maxim of leading the student from "Known to unknown". Through the help of a picture, the student learns a word. Most of the words are bi-syllabic. This method differs slightly from other simple picture-word method. The author has taken pains to see that whenever a new bi-syllabic word is introduced, one of the syllables is already known to the students. Thus, syllabus becomes the focal point and the students recognize the word as a whole. One innovation the author has made here is the use of flash-card to fix the syllable and the device of introducing a new word, where the students already know one syllable of the word.

2.2.4. The Awasthi Method

This method, devised by the late B. D. Awasthi of Lucknow, is based on the modern principles of educational psychology. The main principle kept in view is that the rate of learning is faster when the head and heart of an adult work together. This method has been widely used in the community development blocks in U.P. Writing of alphabets is first taught and then reading. The alphabets, their different strokes and the words and sentences made out of them are serially numbered and they are to be taught in the definite order designed for the purpose (Chandrasekhar 2002: www.hinduonnet.com).

2.2.5. The Chorus Key Word Method

This method formulated by Salig Ram Pathik, creates an 'atmosphere' in the class by the teacher giving an interesting talk and singing the chorus in the beginning. Most of the songs have a religious and cultural touch, which appeal to the village adults who come for literacy. The theory is that it becomes easier for the adults to remember the 'key words' because of the rhythm. These key words are analyzed into their component parts. The success of this method depends not only on a well-trained teacher but a teacher who has ready wit and humour, interesting experiences to narrate and an abundance of zeal and enthusiasm for literacy teaching.

2.2.6. The Frequency Method:

As the name suggests the frequency method teaches letters or words according to the frequency. If the basic unit is considered to be a letter or an

alphabet the letters which are most often used are taught first. It is in order of their frequent usage that the letters of the alphabet are taught. For instance the Central Board of Secondary Education uses this method to teach Hindi in which the letters /m/ and /k/ are taught right in the beginning. This is contrary to the usual practice where the vowels are taught first and then the consonants.

Some educators consider word as the basic unit of language. Therefore, words frequently used are first taught. This is used particularly in teaching adult learners. For instance the National Literacy Mission uses the frequency method for its adult education primers.

2.2.7. The Integrated Literacy Method

Another method that was recently developed by Helen Butt of Nilokeri is the integrated literacy method. This is primarily a synthetic method and the letter is the most significant unit. However, this method uses 'eclectic' approach. The salient features which differentiate this method from the traditional method are: Use of meaningful words right from the start; choice of a different sequence of letters and '*matras*' or vowel markers and the postponement of teaching of numbers and arithmetic, till the last five lessons. The integrated literacy method, therefore, goes into the minutest details regarding the sequence of teaching and the way of dealing with each item of instruction. The techniques used in this method follow from the significant characteristics of adults. This is a combination

method using activities and approaches selected from the different methods and theories.

It is assumed that adult learners have a higher level of understanding, richer experience and greater vocabulary when compared to children. These are to be used to the best advantage for building the skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, through initiative, self-education and independent learning by the adult learners with the help of the teacher. Rote learning which entails a heavy load on memory is reduced to the minimum by substituting mechanical repetition with an understanding of the principles underlying correct reading and writing which are to be explained to the adult learners by the teacher which, it is assumed, will facilitate the learning of correct reading and writing.

The eclectic method has these specific advantages.

1. It makes it possible for each child to learn to read using the method each finds easier and most suitable according to learning style.
2. The teacher can select activities from all the methods to meet the basic aim of developing independent readers. Independent readers must be able to;
 - a) Recognize on sight a large basic vocabulary, being able to pronounce the words and to know their meanings.
 - b) Use phonics and word-analysis skills to pronounce and recognize words they have not read before, but have used in their oral vocabulary.

2. From the beginning, reading makes sense to the child and is interesting throughout the process. (Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo: www.itek.ac.ug)

2.2.8. The Phonetic Method:

Educators consider the Phonetic method an apt one for alphabetic languages like English these days. For the Indian languages, which are basically syllabic, this method seems to be the ideal one.

In this method, the sounds of letters are substituted for the letter names. The advocates of this method hold that the ability to think about words as sequences of phonemes is essential to learning how to read an alphabetic language. Children should become aware of the building blocks of spoken language. Phonemic awareness, according to them is the foundation on which all other reading skills are built. (Hempenstall 2000: www.education.org)

Originally the sounds of individual letters were taught but since the last decade, linguists have pointed out that letter sounds are never produced singly but in the context of words and that, usually the positioning of the letter determines the sounds. Alternatively termed as the Synthetic or Explicit method the new synthetic phonic schemes usually recommend that phoneme/grapheme correspondence should be taught at the rate of about one a day.

Certain educationists have suggested that more suitable synthesis is achieved by beginning with a consonant vowel combination since consonants cannot be accurately sounded except with a vowel (Office of Educational research and Improvement, USA 1993: www.readyweb.crc.uinc.edu).

The phonetic approach introduces children to pictures (such as that of an apple, ostrich, umbrella etc.) so that the children are familiar with the short words through key pictures. This key carries a phonic clue which provides information about the beginning letters sounds and not its name. This is followed by more pictures to illustrate the more common consonants.

The Indian traditional way of teaching letters of the alphabet, which is still largely followed with minor variations, is the phonetic method. Interestingly, the letters of the alphabet in the alphabet chart are arranged in a phonetic semblance. The same method is used largely in the teaching of modern Indian languages even though some of the letters and sounds have now become redundant or obsolete.

In the 19th century, variations were made to the phonetic method of teaching and a new method called the intrinsic or Incidental Phonics was developed. This method of learning to read starts out with a basic sight vocabulary which the student must memorize by shape before (many of) the sounds (which the letters represent) are taught. After the sight vocabulary has

been firmly established through the use of clues (below), the sound values of the letters are learned by analyzing the words previously memorized (phonetic analysis). The list memorized by the child may vary from 50 to more than 100 words, most which do not follow the common phonetic principles of the language (Hempenstall 1998: www.rmit.edu).

The child first learns a small sight vocabulary of words, i.e. words recognized on sight, usually personally meaningful, and then begins to compare these words for similarities and thus to extract from the experience valid phonic generalizations. For instance, if the English child knows 'mother', 'must' and 'me' or 'baby', 'big' and 'baker' he is ready to make generalizations regarding the sound of the consonants /m/ and /b/ respectively.² As more words become familiar more generalizations can be made about the sounds associated with other letters. This particular way of progressing gives this phonetic approach the name of Inductive or Analytic approach --- as specific words are used to make a generalization regarding the sounds of letters and whole words are analyzed to identify and find recurring letters and their associated sounds.

The Sequence Followed: (Called "learning the word attack skills.")
(Charlton 1989: www.telusplanet.net)

1. Learning the shape of the word in the initial sight vocabulary.
2. Learning to use context as a clue to word recognition and meaning.

² Hindi examples removed as advised by the examiner as an analogy between Hindi and English not possible

3. Learning to use pictures as a clue to word recognition and meaning.

4. Learning to use structural analysis (breaking the words into units of meaning by removing prefixes and suffixes before they have learned the sounds of letters).

5. Learning to use phonetic analysis as a clue to word recognition. This is only done when other clues have been established and the sight vocabulary memorized.

6. Learning consonants:

- Learning the sounds of consonants through using known words in the sight vocabulary list.

- Consonant substitution : Borrowing a consonant from the beginning or the end of a known word, substituting it at the beginning (or end) of another known word and arriving at a new word; using clues (shape, context, pictures) to check the result. Example: If a child has memorized the words /run/ and /bat/ and the teacher wants to introduce the word /bun/, the child is told "It starts like bat, but it ends like run, so it must be bun!". This comprises most of the phonics taught in this method. Much of it is done with workbooks where the child merely fills in the missing letter. The work is mainly visual.

- Learning the vowel sounds which may begin at the end of the first grade. Most children learn to use visual clues to vowel sounds in the second grade.
- Developing or 'intuiting' generalizations. (This is the term for rules which may or may not ever actually be taught.)
- Reading story type materials which have the words repeated frequently to aid memorization.

The Students' "word attack" Skills or what the student is required to in this process is:

1. Note the shape of the word.
2. Use picture clues.
3. Use Context clues.
4. Use structural analysis.
5. Use Phonetic analysis.
6. Use various methods in combination.

Two new terms describing phonics procedures have been introduced in recent years. Explicit phonics (or the stating of the rules governing the sound/letter relationships) which would fall under real phonics, and implicit

phonics (or the intuitive act of discovery) which would fall under phony phonics (Charlton 1989: www.telusplanet.net).

The strategies which can be used to identify words which are remarkably similar to the "word attack" skills sequence are listed below with some comments beneath as their usefulness:

1. *Picture Clues*

Popular notion: Picture clues build meaning or semantic background and add to the reader's knowledge of what is being said.

What the research says: Pictures are irrelevant to the reading process and serve only to distract or cause the beginning reader to divert his attention from the text if the pictures are used to read words. Pictures make books attractive and interesting to the child but should not be used to teach words.

2. *Visual Configuration Clues*

Popular notion: Visual configuration clues are whole-word clues by which associations are made between the shape or visual features of the words or letters.

What the research says: English words do not have any shapes that convey meaning - they are built from sounds. ...The instruction should not, as it often does, mislead children into assuming that the printed word is an ideographic symbol, a notion that will have to be corrected later and, apparently with great difficulty. The child cannot be told to look at the picture saying, "see

it swims in water, it is a fish". Not all things which can swim in water are fishes. Therefore the child should not be initiated with visual clues which later it has to relearn. Procedures that initiate children into the mystique of reading by drawing their attention to the visual configuration ('remember this shape; it has a tail') and its associated meaning ('the one with the tail means monkey') without alerting them to the relevance of the sound structure of the word may lead them into blind alleys.

3. *Semantic Clues*

Popular notion: Semantic clues are context-based, whole word clues which demand the reader's knowledge of the world and vocabulary to help him/her make sense out of the text.

What the research says: The English language as well as Hindi and all other Indian languages are phonetic not semantic. No meaning can be derived from the intrinsic letter make-up of words. Unfamiliar words are first decoded using phonics then the meaning derived from context, not the other way round.

4. *Syntactic Clues*

Popular notion: Syntactic clues are context-based, whole word clues by which the reader uses his/her knowledge of the syntactic structure of the language to infer the identity of words on the basis of what sounds right in the sentence.

What the research says: From their knowledge of spoken English, children are aware of correct syntax. That you give me is an example of incorrect syntax that might be used conversationally by a very young child. Some reading ability is necessary before contextual or syntactic clues can be effectively used. Such clues cannot be used by themselves or as an initial strategy to teach beginning reading.

3. *Morphemic Clues*

Popular notion: Morphemic clues involve word parts, which the reader then synthesizes into whole words. They involve the recognition of meaning units within words, such as farm-er , or walk-ed.

What the research says: A string of sounds that convey meaning. Morphology is the study of the rules used to combine morphemes with each other. The rules are peculiar to the language being studied. All words consist of one or more morphemes but not all morphemes are words. Word endings such as -ing, -tion, -cious, and prefixes such as pre-, re-, con-, are morphemes in English and serve to regulate word sequences in the language. In Hindi suffixes such as -e, yAn, -A , -l etc and prefixes such as -a, -be, -ni can be taught as groups of sounds, each group conveying some particular meaning. They may be taught as letter groups in phonic programmes.

4. *Phonic Clues*

Popular notion: Phonic clues are word parts which the reader synthesizes into whole words. The source of information is the reader's knowledge of the phonological structure of the language....word attack is encouraged by the use of the cueing systems, [the first five strategies] and is verified or aided by phonic/structural information. Strategies for word attack should not be isolated or drilled in unrelated sentences or words.

What the research says: Empirical research proves phonics as the most effective and efficient means of instructing beginning readers. It does not serve as an aid to other methods, but is a stand alone method of teaching beginning reading. Good phonics strategies include teaching children the sounds of letters in isolation and in words (s/i/t), and how to blend the sounds together (s-s-i-it). Phonic rules provide a guide to the pronunciation of letter combinations that represent words; it is not necessary to provide infallible sound-to-letter relationships for the rules to work. For example: in the /ea/ vowel combination, the sound generally heard is the long /i/ sound (e says its name) as in ear. This same combination is also in heard but the sound is now the /er/ sound as in herd. While other phonic tactics can be applied to successfully derive the right sound, for the child to initially sound it as h-ear-d provides a close enough approximation, especially in context, for an immediate corrective follow-up with the accepted pronunciation.

By the end of grade one, or part way through grade two, sufficient knowledge of phonics should have been acquired by most children to allow

them to become independent readers - within the limit of their spoken vocabulary (which is quite extensive, variously estimated at between 10 and 20 thousand words). The key, now, for progress in reading is not to belabor the phonics rules (or redundant blending exercises) but to encourage the act of reading itself; the 'reading to learn' stage has arrived.

William Bennet, the U. S. Secretary of Education had this to say about the place of phonics in beginning reading: *"Research of the past two decades has confirmed what experience and common sense tells us: ...children learn to read more effectively when they first learn the relationship between letters and sounds. This is known as phonics."* (Charlton 1989: www.telusplanet.net).

In the booklet *Becoming a Nation of Readers: What Parents Can Do*, it is advised that, "Teachers should teach phonics and then let children practice using those skills in stories that contain the sounds being taught." It goes on to say: "The goal of phonics is not that children be able to state the 'rules' governing letter-sound relationships...[but] to get across the alphabetic principle, the principle that there are systematic relationships between letters and sounds."

The critics of this method say, a disadvantage of this form is that the heyday produces uninteresting reading material and usually the reading of interesting material is delayed until the pupils have achieved a high degree of mastery of the sounds and are competent at word building.

2.2.9. The Picture-Word-Card Method

In this method used by the Bombay City Social Education Committee of Marathi, there are 20 cards (Chandrasekhar 2002: www.hinduonline.com). On the left of the card there are four double colour pictures of the four objects, their names written below them. Up to lesson three, the names consist of bi-syllabic words only. On the right the words introduced on the left are printed at the top in red colour. This is followed by a list of words made by permutation and combination of the letters used in the words already introduced. At one end of the card there are two sentences made of the words just learnt. With the help of the pictures, the students are expected to recognize the words. As the words are bi-syllable, combined with the fact that the language is phonetic, it is presumed that the students will be able to analyze words themselves and be able to make new words using only those letters. This set of cards is in a way, a self-teaching device to overcome the difficulties of making the adult learn the basic skills in the classroom.

2.2.10. The Raisam Method

Venkat Rao Raisam has evolved a new method of teaching the three R's, which is known as the 'Raisam', in Himachal Pradesh and Delhi Territory (Chandrasekhar 2002: www.hinduonline.com). This method is actually a synthetic or what we called traditional method of introducing writing of alphabets first and then slowly proceeding to reading with synthetic methods of word-building and sentence construction. As an aid to teach, simple materials like pieces of ropes, seeds and pebbles are used for familiarizing adult learners with

the shape of letters and with movements of the hand necessary for drawing different strokes that go to make these letters.

2.2.11. The Rhythmic Method

Formulated by A. B.Mande, this method has different verses on every page, mostly from epics, which are very popular in rural areas. The language used may be described as the language of the people. The verses have a religious and cultural background and the recognition of letters is done through songs. This method tries to develop among the students, the habit of seeing the words and sentences as a whole and then begins to recognize letters gradually. This method is being tried in a project at Gorakhpur in U.P. This is an ideal method to be used over radio, because of the use of songs (www.hinduonline.com).

2.2.12. The Shape Similarity Method

This method is in vogue these days and is used for teaching many languages. This is a `synthetic' method and is the main method used in schools and adult literacy classes. Here they begin by selecting the most common letters — those which can be easily written or which can be grouped on the basis of similarity of their shapes. Then the adults are taught to make words through combining of the letters already learned, sometimes even making meaningless `words' by such combinations. Apart from this, they also use an improved traditional method. The picture of an object is shown to the students and they

are asked to pronounce the name of the object. Then their attention is drawn towards the sounds in the word they have pronounced and the letters representing those sounds are shown to them separately at first and then combined to make the word, which is printed below the picture of the object.

2.2.13. The Tomar Method

This is one of the 'analytic' methods and it starts with small sentences, which go to make up a short story. Beginning with a sentence, the method breaks into analysis of the key words of the story into 'sub-words' and finally the analysis of these 'sub-words' into alphabets. After the mastery of the alphabets, the adults use these alphabets in synthesizing new words, thus building up a new vocabulary (Chandrasekhar 2002: www.hinduonline.com).

2.2.14. Whole Word Approach

This approach also known as 'Look and Say' or Discovery or the Apprenticeship Approach, stresses the word and not the letter, name or sound, and has been used as a means of trying to make the reading process more meaningful to children.

The group of educators who emerged in the 1830's believed that words as wholes should be presented. They argued that children learned from whole to

part and began to experiment with the introduction of whole words with pictures and concrete experience (www.literacyonline.org).

Maurice Pope, a specialist in the history of writing, says that whole word methods stem from the 18th century German philosophy. 'Man sees the whole (say a flower or tree) before analyzing the parts (petal and stamen, branches and leaves) and children should be taught in the order prescribed by nature (Godsland 2003: www.aowm73.dsl.pipex.com). According to Rudolph Flesch the introduction of whole word reading schemes occurred during the 1920s in the USA. They soon crossed to Britain where they were at first used alongside traditional phonetic instruction. These methods have held center stage since that time with phonics relegated to the bottom rung of the reading methods below various forms of 'guessing' to be used only when everything else has failed (Morgan 2000: www.childliteracy.com).

According to the word method, the child's attention can be drawn to an element, which is already familiar to the child through its speech. Children see the difference between words on the basis of length and the shape of the configuration of words, and then can easily be able to recognize the word using some clues. The theory is that if a child has spoken or heard a word that exists in the language that word will be recognized in its written form as a whole word. It is assumed that the word will be read by the child when it is seen in print without any necessary analysis of the sounds that make up the word.

Steven Pinker, a leading cognitive scientist says, “In the dominant technology, called ‘whole language’, the insight that language is a naturally developing human instinct has been garbled into the evolutionary improbable claim that reading is a naturally developing human instinct, old fashioned practice at connecting letters to sounds is replaced by immersion in a text-rich social environment and the children don’t learn to read.” (Godsland 2003: www.aowm73.dsl.pipex.com). In other words, although speech and language are 'hard wired' into our brains, reading, which is a relatively recent cultural phenomenon, cannot possibly be fixed in this way.

A modification of the whole word approach is the Analytic or Implicit Phonics or Onset-Rime or the Analogies Approach. The Analytic Phonics Instruction is used alongside whole word reading schemes in some schools – this is called the ‘mixture of methods’ or a ‘balanced approach’ (Esvelt, Ash and Brandt 1997: www.premier.net). It involves looking at patterns in words and using context clues whilst reading the whole word. When the child comes across an unfamiliar word, they are trained to break the word into ‘onset’ and ‘rime’. First the onset (initial letter or consonant cluster) is sounded out and then the rhyming family that the rest of the word belongs to, such as the /ot/ family – p/ot/, d/ot/, c/ot/, h/ot/ and so on. When only the initial sounds represented by the alphabet letters are taught, it is called the OLOMOS (one-letter-only makes-one-sound)

2.2.15. The Zero Method

The Bengal Mass Education Society for teaching Bengali in Kolkata uses this method devised by *Vigyan Bhikshu* (Chandrasekhar 2002: www.hinduonline.com). This method is rather unique in the sense that it begins teaching, reading and writing from symbols used in arithmetic. According to this method, all the numerals emanate from 'O' (Zero) and the letters from 'O' or a numeral. This is a 'synthetic' method since the figures and the letters are built step by step and the students proceed from one lesson to another, along the path of least resistance. The drill for the recognition of letters is provided mostly through unconnected words and some sentences which are not related to each other.

2.3. METHODS FOLLOWED IN TEACHING HINDI

Hindi is a syllabic language where each grapheme conveys a particular sound. The main emphasis while teaching this language to native speakers as well as the second language learners of this language is to teach grapheme-sound correspondence. We have already seen the various methods adopted in teaching the letters of the alphabet, but, before arriving at a conclusion as to which is the most apt method for teaching Hindi. A brief glance at the already existing primers prescribed by various institutions is helpful. Most of the books follow the phonetic method with little or no variation. The books followed by the Indian Council of Secondary Examination (ICSE) Board, the Uttar Pradesh (UP) Board and the assortment of private publications teach the alphabet string in the

order they occur in the alphabet chart. Bal Bharati, the book prescribed by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Board employs the frequency-based approach. The Word based method is utilized by the Madhya Pradesh (MP) Board, which has formed its primer in a totally new pattern with the aid of not just the state board of education but also various Non Governmental Organizations involved in imparting literacy.

Thus three methods are followed in introducing Hindi and a thorough comparison between them was conducted to decide which would be more suitable for teaching children. Apart from the views propounded on each of these methods and their relative advantages and disadvantages, conclusions in this work have been arrived at after interviewing the teachers involved in teaching Hindi and a survey test conducted on young learners who are picking up Hindi literacy skills of reading and writing.

2.4 METHODOLOGY OF THE PRESENT STUDY

We knew what we wanted but the question was how to achieve the result. What would be the best and most economic way to discover which amongst the existing methods of teaching was most appropriate for teaching Hindi. One way, which first hit across to us was to take a few children who were of an age to enter school (approximately 3-4 yrs of age) and to teach each group the letters of the alphabet using different modes. As teaching the entire series of alphabets would have taken a lot of time we selected only the vowel

series and a few consonants. A pilot study was conducted with two children in each group and they were initiated into the realm of Hindi letters using different techniques. After a period of two weeks the children were tested. They were asked to recognize a few letters and also write a few letters.³ A simple test was administered. First a few of the vowel sounds they had learnt were written on the blackboard and they had to recognize it. Then a few of the letters they had learnt were uttered and they had to write it on the slates provided. Each correct entry was marked with a point and there was no score given for a wrong answer. The correct answer tally was recorded for each child.

The pilot study showed that the phonetic method provided the best results. However, these results could not be considered conclusive due to the small size of the sample. We decided to conduct a similar test at a larger scale. As teaching a large group of children per se research purposes was practically impossible due to time restraint. Therefore we decided to conduct this test on children who have already been taught the letters of the alphabet using these various techniques by trained and experienced teachers.

2.4.1 SELECTION OF SAMPLE:

For this the students of various schools following various methods of teaching the Hindi alphabet were tested and evaluated. Based on their performance and the response and comments of the teachers from various schools the most apt method was established. To conduct this study a test was

³ The following para has been added in answer to the query raised by the external examiner on the test and the methodology of evaluation

designed which would test the learners efficiency in reading and writing Hindi at a basic level. The test aimed at eliciting responses from the child and statistically calculates its proficiency in the basic language skills after an exposure of one year to the teaching of Hindi.

The test was conducted in the cities of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh and Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Various school teachers were approached for their views and comments on the existing primers and the ways they adopted to teach. Their views and practices were highly enlightening and handy. Apart from this a few parents were asked their experiences with regard to the process of teaching, learning and writing.

It would not suffice if children from one school were selected and asked to attempt the designed test. A result is conclusive only if the sample being tested has several varieties. Therefore, the students selected had to vary in gender and socioeconomic background to form a better sample. The best way to test was to check the efficiency of children belonging to various 'groups'. We came up with four groups depending upon the method employed in teaching the alphabet series.

The various groups categorized are shown below:

Educationa l board —> Type of school	CBSE	ICSE	UP	M P
I st group	20	20	20	20
II nd group	20	20	20	20
III rd group	20	20	20	20

Figures denote the number of students

Table I⁴

As the table depicts the 1st group consists of students from the CBSE stream. These students have been taught Hindi letters using the frequency method. The second group comprises of students who belonged to schools following the ICSE Board. The ICSE Board does not prescribe any fixed books for the lower grades and therefore different schools use any one of the books they feel is befitting. While most ICSE schools followed books by private publishers some of them in UP followed the book prescribed by the UP government. In our study of ICSE schools we have not considered the schools which follow the primer prescribed by the UP Board. The private publishers invariably follow the phonetic method. Students from the schools following the UP Board constituted the third group. These children were also taught the alphabetic string using the phonetic method. The difference between this book and the ones used by the schools following the ICSE Board is that the UP Board primer also stresses on maths, reasoning and science in the language primer.

The MP Board breaks away from these methods and in collaboration with many NGOs has come up with a book, which adopts the word based method and the students from the schools following the MP Board syllabus constituted the fourth group.

There is an attempt to encompass students from different 'types' of schools. In our study we categorized the schools into three types based upon factors such as the infrastructure of the school, the existing fee structure, the training and educational background of the teachers and the economic background of the students. As we are well aware there are different types of schools in India – while there are some which have the best facilities right up to air conditioned classes there are some schools which don't even have a proper classroom. In this work we shall refer to these different types of schools as different 'categories'. Three categories of schools were considered – the first category comprised of schools which were considered to be the best in town and had adopted modern techniques to impart education, the second category schools were those which were considered good but were not at par with the schools in the first category in terms of infrastructure provided and the third category schools were usually the government schools which neither had a name nor in some cases a building to call a school. Children belonging to different economic status attended these three different categories of schools. Students from these three categories of schools were taken into consideration.

⁴ the previous manuscript lacked table numbers and have been inserted after the recommendation by the examiner

In the first category schools the fee ranged from approximately 2,000 to 3,000 rupees per month. The teachers at the kindergarten level were all essentially Montessori trained. Schools from the second category charged approximately Rs. 1,000 to 1,500 per month and most of the teachers were trained. However there were some untrained teachers in some of the schools falling into the second category. The third group of schools basically and only comprised of students from the lower economic strata. Most of these schools were government schools, which provided free education. While it was essential for these schools to employ trained teachers there were many schools that had teachers who were just plain graduates. 20 children have been selected from each of these categories.

The sample for this study consists of 240 subjects studying in various schools following the syllabus prescribed by either CBSE, ICSE, UP or MP Board. Of the three educational boards mentioned here the UP and the ICSE board followed the phonetic method. The UP government's primary education cell prescribes its own book while the primary classes of ICSE Board follow books offered by private publishers. The CBSE Board, which follows books prescribed by National Center for Education Research and Technology (NCERT), adopts the less frequently used frequency method to teach Hindi.

In selecting the sample, 20 respondents were chosen from each category, comprising of equal number of male and female subjects. The objective of selecting a sample was to have subjects of both genders, matching in their intellectual quotient and age and of varying income status.

2.4.2. QUESTIONNAIRE:

A questionnaire was designed to obtain the personal background data and the subjects' mastery over the four language skills. In the personal data sub-section the child was asked its name, age, gender and their parental occupational background

The next section tested the children's proficiency in Hindi. The first part tested them on their ability to identify the letters and words shown to them. These were shown to the children using flash cards – single letters and two and three lettered words with or without *matras* or vowel markers. In all, the children had to identify 25 words in this section.

The list of words the children had to recognize is as follows:

Single letter:- **ba K h qa Aao**

Two lettered without matras:-

A) **saba**

B) **cala**

C) **pr**

D) **tT**

E) **Aama**

Two lettered with matras:-

a) **dala**

b) **jalt**

c) **Guana**

d) **kaOna**

e) **hvaa**

Three lettered without matras:-

a) **magar**

b) **plaT**

c) **saD,k**

d) **lahr**

e) **nakla**

Three lettered with matras:-

a) **baairYa**

b) **Sarlr**

c) **gamalaa**

d) **iknaara**

e) **dlvaar**

In the second part the children were dictated 25 words ranging from single letters to three letters with or without matras. There are five words in each category. The list of words is stated below.

Single letters: **ma ja r la T**

Double lettered words without matras:

a) **mat**

b) **Gar**

c) **hla**

d) **caK**

e) **vana**

Double lettered words with matras:

a) **pOr**

b) **ihla**

c) **kUd**

d) **nadl**

e) **sUaK**

Three lettered words without matras:

a) **Kbar**

b) **mahla**

c) **Sapqa**

d) **phna**

e) **Apna**

Three lettered words with matras:

- a) **iktaba**
- b) **Baraosaa**
- c) **lakD,l**
- d) **jahaja**
- e) **maukuT**

The entire test was conducted in two to three sittings so that the child would not be overstrained and become inattentive. A mark was awarded for each correct response. A child could thus attain the maximum score of 125 and the maximum average score achieved could be 5.

2.4.3. INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES:

The stimuli or organic conditions manipulated by an experimenter are referred to as independent variables. An independent variable is so called because it is a variable manipulated by the experimenter in accordance with the nature of the question, which his experiment is to answer. It is independent of what the subject does. The label given to the variable that the experimenter expects to influence the other is called the independent variable.

In this study the method of teaching letters is the primary explanatory independent variable. This is operationalized by examining the proficiency of the children according to responses given by them. We have mentioned earlier that three methods are being taken into consideration in this study – the frequency method, word based method and the phonetic method.

A second dependent variable is the gender of the student. In the Indian context, education for girls is not given much importance. In India, which is estimated to have some 432 million illiterate people, 64 percent of Indian men are literate, but fewer than two out of five women can read and write. Here the term illiterate refers to people who according to the definition followed by the Indian government cannot read, write and do arithmetic. About 41 percent of Indian girls under the age of 14 do not attend school, said the UNICEF report of 2000. In this study we have tried to examine whether gender difference play any role in acquiring literacy skills.

The type of school is yet another factor whose effect on language proficiency is studied here. There is an endeavour to find out whether the children fare better if they study in classy or high class schools as compared to the children studying with just a classroom and one black board

In addition to varying certain stimuli to organic condition (while holding other stimuli and organic conditions constant) the researcher observes and measures his subjects' responses. The variables affected by the changes in the

independent variables during the experiment are called dependent variables. These are called dependent variables because they depend upon the factor whose isolated influence is under investigation. For instance, if a subject is presented with a list of pleasant and unpleasant words, his retention scores will depend on the nature of the words. He might remember the pleasant words more than the unpleasant ones. Here the retention score is a dependent variable.

In this study, the test scores of the children is the dependent variable. How the child performs, and how many correct responses he gives depends upon the method in which he has been taught the language.

2.5. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

As stated earlier our aim is to investigate which method of teaching Hindi letter string is the most effective. There is an attempt to study if gender and the type of school influence the acquisition of literacy skills. By calculating the average number of correct responses given by each category of students we can statistically deduce which method is the most effective. Of course, the input by the teachers cannot be belittled or ignored as their experiences go a long way to ascertain which method of teaching alphabets is the best one.

The score of each student was tabulated and the average number of correct scores by students in each category was calculated.

2.5.1. Method of teaching letters of alphabet:

The study reveals that amongst the three methods used in teaching the Hindi alphabet the phonetic method seems to be the most effective. The children from the UP Board, which follows the phonetic method, fared better than the students from other boards. Following the scores of the schools following UP Board is the percentage score of the students from CBSE Board, which follows the frequency method. Their score is higher than the ICSE score because the ICSE Board does not have a prescribed textbook but the schools following the ICSE Board use private publications. An evaluation of these private publications shows that most of them are not properly planned. Though most of them have a very attractive cover, the books are not methodical. There are books for instance, the *Swar Sarita*, 2002 publication that has spelling mistakes. In some books the alphabet chart is given but the remaining pages have exercises. The book depends solely upon the teacher's initiative. The performance of the students of MP Board, which follows the word-based method, was the lowest. It was noticed that the children who were taught reading and writing using whole words took a longer time to recognize a letter by sight but first resort to guessing. If it is an unfamiliar word they take longer to read it, in fact whenever a word was shown to them they read the first letter and guessed a word, which would be familiar to them and of the same length as the word shown to them.

The following graph depicts the performance of the children from the various boards. The figures depict the average number of correct responses by the children of the various boards under consideration. The average score of all

students irrespective of gender was calculated from all the samples in each board.⁵

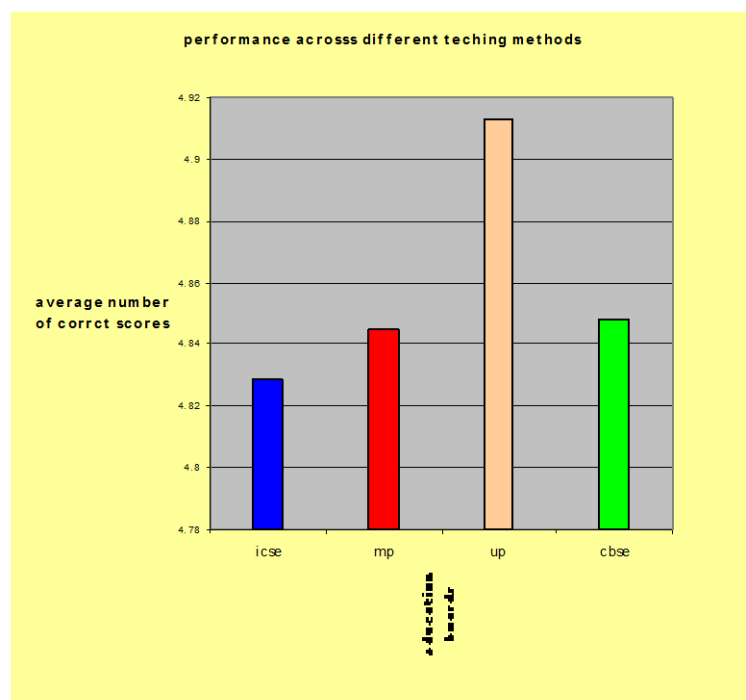


Table II

Based on the above results the suggested primer thus proposes to follow the phonetic method. This method makes the problem of word recognition less arbitrary by giving the child a lawful code with which to reconstruct currently meaningless but potentially meaningful written words into their already meaningful spoken equivalents. Word recognition thus becomes a matter of

⁵ This para added for clarity to the graph and the graph numbered and properly marked as asked by the examiner

rational problem solving than of random guessing. It becomes a process of lawfully decoding the unknown written word by applying existing knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences with the aid of additional cues such as context and illustrations.

The 'look and say' method, would render Hindi, based on regular learnable correspondences between graphemes and phonemes into a pictorial non alphabetic, non phonemic written language like Chinese. In short, the 'look and say' method corresponds most closely to the rote end of our learning continuum whereas the use of graphemes and phonemes employs representational meaningful learning.

It is true, that children who learn to read by the 'whole word method' tend to spontaneously develop some impressions about grapheme-phoneme correspondence. They also gather how to use these impressions in deciphering familiar words. But this haphazard, incidental and unguided discovery learning of grapheme-phoneme correspondences can hardly be considered defensible instructional procedure when such knowledge can be transmitted much more efficiently on a systematic, suitably programmed and guided reception basis.

Learning to read by the recognition of word and sentence shapes alone would limit progress because each complete word would have to be learned as one whole. The sub-division of words into their phonetic structures enables a transfer from one word to another thus allowing the synthesis of new words (Haslam 1971:106). As children become proficient in the combination of letters

and double letter sounds they are able to use this ability as a tool for expressing themselves.

The learning of grapheme-phoneme correspondence does not imply that pupils must learn a set of formal rules. This would hardly be practicable at the age of initial reading instruction. Rather, it means providing guided practice in responding phonically to the more frequently encountered letter combinations in words so that the child acquires the intuitive grasp of grapheme-phonemic correspondence. The child eventually becomes capable of responding automatically with the correct phonetic equivalents of the different graphemes and graphemic combinations.

Another reason that the traditional phonetic method is effective is because the alphabet chart is scientific. *Ranganayakamma* (1991) gives us reasons how alphabetic chart traditionally followed is scientific and this method better than the others for teaching the letters, for example of Telugu. The five reasons she states are as follows:

- i) Letters involves sounds and sounds have features of length and aspiration. An alphabetic chart must show this division and the traditional chart depicts this.

- ii) There is a logical order in the appearance of consonants /k/, /c/, /t/ /p/ since each part is pronounced from the same location in the oral cavity.

iii) Vowels consist of single sound and others are consonants. These two should be placed separately and the traditional chart shows them differently.

iv) The frequency of occurrence of consonants in the speech of children varies: the consonants in the first series in the chart are used more frequently than the consonants in the later series.

v) The traditional chart gives letters in a logical order: as logical as the number series.

2.5.2. TYPE OF SCHOOL

During the course of this study the effect of the type of school on the performance of the children was also studied. Results achieved regarding consequence of this variable on the test scores are not conclusive as this was not the main variable to be considered and was not thoroughly studied. However, the conclusion can prove to be an asset for further study of the effect of this variable on language performance by children from various categories of schools and can provide scope for further research.

Of the three different categories of schools taken into consideration it was found that the students from middle category school performed far better than their counterparts from other categories of schools. The following graph shows the results clearly.

According to the teachers of the schools in the first category children from the initial stages had a very reluctant and laid back attitude towards languages

and language learning. The fault according to the teachers of these institutions lies not with the school but with the attitude of the parents and society towards Hindi. A few parents accepted that they paid more stress to the learning of English alphabets and numerals by their wards. It is very debatable whether the difference in the test scores of these children is due to the type of school it is or whether it is the attitude of the parents and society and therefore an attitude unconsciously adopted by the child.

The average scores for all students in the sample irrespective of gender and the board they study in is tabulated. The graph depicting the value for the 1st type of school comprises the correct responses of girls and boys belonging to the 1st type of school from the UP, MP, CBSE, and ICSE Board. Similarly the IInd and IIIrd category values in the graph refer to the average correct number of responses from girls and boys belonging to the IInd and IIIrd category schools respectively irrespective of the Board.

As depicted in the graph the children studying in the second category schools fared better than the students of other categories. Teachers teaching here declared that they had to resort to different techniques of teaching the Hindi letters and thus make it interesting for the child. Further, they believe that other institutions give more importance to other subjects and want their students to excel in English, Mathematics and Science.

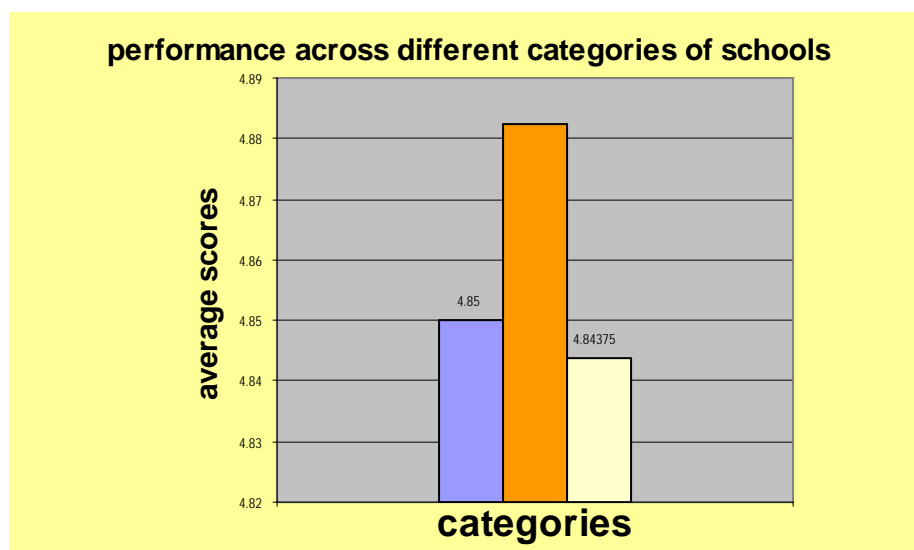


Table III

bar 1 denotes the avg score by samples of the first category of schools

bar 2 denotes the average score by samples of second category schools

bar 3 denotes the average score by samples of third category schools⁶

The third category institutions achieved better results than the schools in the first category. However it was noticed that boys performed better in this category, unlike the other categories of schools.

The results collected here are in themselves not conclusive and definite as we in our research were stressing on modes of teaching letters rather than effects of type of school. However these results leave an open ground for further research and give rise to a volley of questions which can be answered decisively if further studied.

2.5.3. Gender

In all these we also found that the girls demonstrated higher verbal abilities in comparison to boys. It was seen that while the girls concentrated more in class, boys at the initial schooling years were less attentive. Most of these girls, however, come from families that have had a long history of formal education. It was noticed that in the schools, which belong to the third category, the boys outperformed the girls in their scores. This probably is because those girls coming from the lower socio-economic strata continue to suffer from the disadvantage of not receiving a sound education and having to cope up with household chores even at a very young age. Further, girls education can be encouraged by having girls' schools and women teachers which, are vital for

encouraging parents, especially in rural areas to send girls to school.

(Karlekar, 2000: 86)

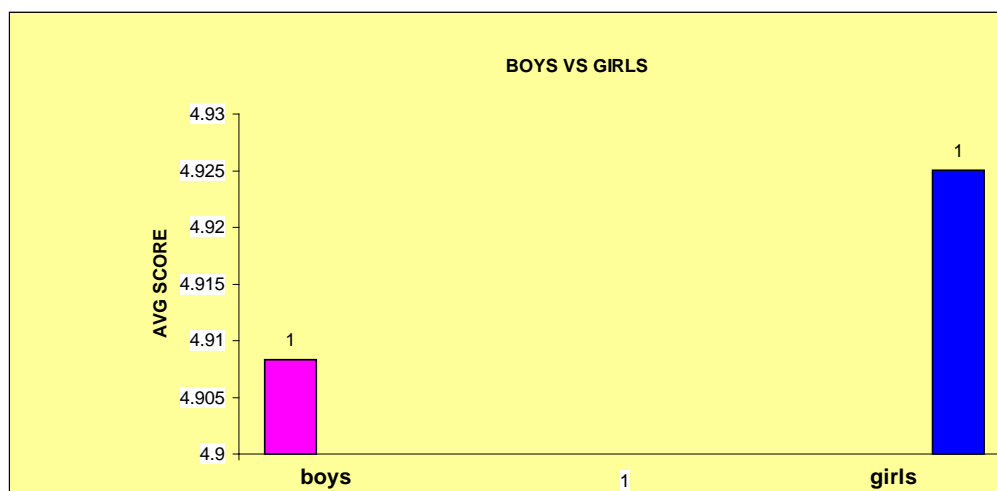


Table IV

⁶ The graph numbered and properly marked as asked by the examiner

The graph depicts the average number of correct responses by all the girls and the boys in the samples from all type of schools under consideration from all the boards which are in the study⁷

One of the heaviest yet undecided questions is whether the sexes differ in their linguistic competence. Educators commonly believe that girls develop verbal skills more rapidly than boys, with the latter catching up early or completely some time in adolescence. Girls fare better in language courses and logic as compared to boys (Pierie 2003: www.adamsmith.org). Girls perform better than boys in tests of verbal ability; in school they learn to read earlier, and there are a fewer girls than boys in remedial reading. Interpreting such findings is not without problems. While there are general patterns, there are also differences between tests. Tests measure a variety of aspects of language: it is by no means clear that these can be bundled together into a single coherent category of 'verbal ability'. However it is clear that girls do well in language-related subjects in school. For instance, in India girls from the CBSE or ICSE or any State board achieve better pass rates than boys at the +2 level in English, Hindi and other languages (The Tribune 2000: www.tribuneindia.com).

Some explanations of differences between girls' and boys' performance on tests of verbal ability have been based on biological factors. For instance, it has been suggested that there are maturational differences between girls and boys; girls have an early verbal advantage, but boys eventually catch up. Added

⁷ This para added to add clarity to the graph and the graph numbered and properly marked as asked by the examiner

to this are the transcriptions of infant's spontaneous vocalizations, which reveal consistent sex differences in language acquisition. It is observed that girls are ahead of boys in acquiring phonemes. Other explanations have placed more emphasis on social factors. The differences in the interaction of the adults with the girls and boys right from their infancy encourage girls' early verbal proficiency. Mothers seem to vocalize to their daughters in a more distinctive or attention seeking manner than they do to their infant sons.

CHAPTER THREE

EVALUATION OF CLASS ONE PRIMERS

3.0. INTRODUCTION

To attain any objective mere sustained labour is not sufficient, but an assessment is essential at every stage. This assessment or evaluation is always responsible for a healthy beginning. The textbook evaluation not only assesses the suitability and relevance of the textbook but also invariably suggests steps to improve and modify the existing textbook to make it more relevant and up to date. The evaluation of textbook involves judgement about its effectiveness as a tool of learning. It is an essential tool for identifying the pros and cons in the learning activity; it not only locates the weaker aspects but also suggests methods for further improvement.

Realizing the importance of textbooks, regular assessment and gradation of books is required. Periodical assessment of textbooks helps to identify loopholes but also in improving the existing texts by appraising the suitability of the text and suggesting steps to improve them so as to make them more relevant to the current times.

The evaluation of the primers in consideration was done by the feedback given by the teachers teaching the concerned classes. They were asked about their views of the book they used and the problems faced in using that book.

Various shortcomings, virtues and suggestions were offered by the teachers, concerning different aspects. A few of the aspects discussed by the teachers are:

- a) The order of the lessons
- b) The order of introducing alphabet
- c) The size of letters
- d) The colours used in the book
- e) The type and number of words used in each lesson
- f) The exercises and sentences given for practice.

3.1. TWO LEVEL EVALUATION

On the basis of the feedback a few guidelines are formed to evaluate the primers. There is a two level analysis conducted. At the first level the linguistic factors are considered. Apart from linguistic factors, non-linguistic factors too play an important role in making a textbook. These are also evaluated at the next level.

3.1.1. Linguistic factors:

The foremost factor in judging a book is its content and its manner of presentation. In this study the following linguistic elements are considered:

1) Language Selection

- Whether the language used in the book is of a standard and accepted variety
- Is there a gradual shift from the spoken style to the written code

2) Presentation

- The method of introducing alphabets
- The words given in each lesson
- Whether all the language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading

and writing receive adequate coverage

- Whether the lessons are arranged in a graded manner
- Whether the difficult and new words are explained
- Whether it contains a detailed preface

3) Exercises

- Whether each lesson is followed by proper and adequate exercises
- Are the topics embedded in the culture of the student
- Does the book encourage practical observation
- Are the exercises and tasks practical and interesting
- Do the drills test the understanding of the pupil; do they restrict to

the reading skill of the student

- Are the exercises interesting enough to motivate the student to go

further on his own accord

3.1.2. NON-LINGUISTIC FACTORS

Apart from the content of the book, the text structure, the illustrations and the other non-linguistic elements play a vital role in the teaching of a language to the children. The various non linguistic factors are:

- The title of the book
- The cover of the book
- The gradation of the chapters
- Whether the book contains a preface
- The font type and size used in the book
- The illustrations given in the book
- The choice of colours

3.2. EVALUATION OF CBSE BOARD PRIMER

(Appendix 2A: Title Page of CBSE Primer and 2B: Publication Details)

Bal Bharati I is a result of the social and psychological research put in by educational cell of the National Council of Education and Research Training (NCERT). The Director of NCERT, Ashok Kumar Sharma, writes in the preface that this book primarily aims to train the children's reading skill in as little time as possible. The technique followed in this book is to teach children how to read is so effective, that according to the book makers, the children would be able to read more reading material apart from their text on their own by the end of the course. The makers of the book have attempted to make this book simple to use not only for pupils but also for the teachers. There is a detailed note for the teachers in the beginning of the book instructing them how to use the book. There are footnotes on each page giving guidelines to the teacher how they can make the lesson more interesting and the learning more effective by mentioning various

exercises and practice drills. The book in the present form was published in 1997 and has been compiled by the efforts of senior teachers of various schools.

A. Linguistic Aspect

At the very beginning of the book there is a detailed note to the teachers explaining that the aim of the primer is to teach children primarily to read and develop their other language skills. There are footnotes for the teachers instructing them to ask the child various questions related to the text. The teacher should write the letter to be taught on the board and ask the student to identify it.

Keeping in mind that the book is meant for fresh learners/children for whom reading is totally a new activity, the makers of this book have not introduced the alphabet of Hindi from the beginning. The first few chapters are devoted to introducing pictures of common animals, birds, means of transport, fruit and vegetables. The child is asked to identify these by looking at the pictures, as it is familiar to these. The teacher is asked to question about the colour of the objects. They should be told to make paper boats in the lesson of means of transport, apart from being introduced to the practical drills. Such exercises help the child in overcoming its initial apprehension towards this new activity of learning and reading.

Following these pictures are five stories in illustrations. Each story is represented in four pictures from left to right and top to bottom. This is the usual

way to write Hindi. This exercise is meant to develop the learning and speaking skills of the child as well as to accustom the child to move his eyes from left to right and top to bottom while reading. Such exercises develop the imagination and the creativity of the child as he is asked to narrate the story given in the pictures. It also develops their speaking and narration. Moreover, when they narrate the story in front of the entire class they lose their initial shyness and can speak boldly in front of others.

The next step before introducing the child to the world of alphabet, is to teach the young learner a control over its pencil. Therefore the next two lessons on page 12 and 13 are devoted to teach child how to write. There are a few simple designs, which the child has to trace. These designs form parts of various *Devanagari* letters. These designs start from simple to complex and the child has to copy them in its slate or notebook. It would have been better if some spaces were given in the book itself for the child to practice. The writers of the book suggest that these exercises be followed for the first few weeks. The figures could be first given in the dotted lines for the child to just trace over and then it could be asked to draw them on its own. A few designs like that of spectacles and a duck are quite unnecessary at this stage.

The letters of the Hindi alphabet are introduced from lesson1 on page 14. The book breaks away from the traditional way of using phonetic similarity to introduce letters or the often used shape similarity method. Here, they are presented to the child in order of their frequency of occurrence. In the frequency

based method, letters which occur more frequently are first introduced to the child. In Hindi consonants like **k** /k/, **la** /L/, **ba** /b/ and **sa** /s/ etc occurs more in comparison to consonants like **Sa** /S/, **T** /T/ or **Na** /N/. Therefore first few chapters introduce these commonly occurring consonants. Similarly the vowel markers or *matras* (I for **Aa**) are used much more frequently than the vowels themselves. This concept of introducing letters according to their frequency of occurrence is followed consistently throughout this book. The entire alphabet is introduced in 26 lessons.

In this book initially words without vowel markers are given and as the lessons progress words with vowel markers are introduced. Consonant clusters or ‘*Sayunkthakshars*’ like **xa** /ks/, **~** /tra/ and **&** /gya/ are also taught at appropriate places. By the 29th lesson all the letters of the alphabet series have been taught. In each lesson three to four letters have been introduced. The ideal situation would have been if each lesson dealt only with one letter.

Familiar words are introduced with each letter. Borrowed and nativized words to which the child is exposed have also been used freely. For instance words like ‘bus’ and ‘car’. Abstract words like **kba** /kab/, **mana** /man/ and **rxaa** /rakshA/ have also been given, Such abstract concepts are alien to the

child and very difficult to explain. Only concrete words, which have a physical structure, like **Gar** /ghar/ and **gaaya** /gAy) should be taught.

After every four to five lessons, reading material using simple sentences and usually a very rhythmic form are given. These sentences use only the letters already taught. It would be better if all the letters taught were revised after every couple of lessons. This revision would be of immense help to the child, as he would get more practice for the material already taught. In Chapter 6, the full stop or '*purnviram*' is used for the first time. All the stories apart from providing reading practice teach esteemed and accepted social values like the love between siblings, of being good to all etc.

By chapter 19, all the vowel markers have been taught and the child is asked to recognize the various consonants with their vowel markers. Initially the children are not told that **I** is the vowel marker for **Aa** A or **l** is the marker for **[-** /I/.

The various types of exercises given after the lessons are:

- Recognizing the letter
- Reading the words formed with the letters taught
- Looking at the picture and searching for the word in the list of words

given

- Writing the letters taught in their notebooks – this exercise is introduced from lesson two. Each letter is first taught in parts. For instance, to teach **ba** /b/ there are four steps followed teaching the child entire letter bit by bit.

On teaching entire alphabet series, lesson 27 gives the alphabet chart according to the phonetic similarity and the students are asked to memorize it. This chart could have been given in the beginning itself as it has more impact.

Lesson 28 introduces a few consonants without the any vowel marker (not even the default vowel **A** /a/) like **@** and **c** which are used in words like **@yaa** /kyA/ and **gucCa** /gucchA/ etc. These words are taught and used in stories to follow. The two penultimate lessons are stories, which the child can read. These stories are however too long for the child of the first grade. A story should be of maximum two pages where half a page each should carry an illustration related to the story. The picture should be colourful and appropriate. The teacher can ask who, when and why questions to test the understanding of the child.

In the end, five poems are given which are based on topics which would interest the students of that age. The children have to memorize the poems.

B. Non Linguistic Aspect:

The cover of the book is quite colourful and depicts a picture of two happy children. However it would have been more effective if the children on the cover were showed to be reading or going to school with a satchel. Such a picture would convey to the new readers that studying is not a burden but an activity to be enjoyed. By keeping in mind that this book is to be used by children handling books for the first time, the cover should have been made considerably thicker.

All the pictures in this book are colourful, but many of them are not in their natural colours. For instance, on page 5, the tomatoes, carrot and some other vegetables are shown in the same shade of red. Similarly on page 7 the lion is brown and not its usual yellow. There are other instances as on page 59, the leaves are shown in green but also in orange which is not a very common sight in the country. A few of the figures are so confusing that the child can't identify them properly. For instance on page 22 for teaching the word /net/ a man is shown with a net and on page 51 to introduce the word for plant a plant in an earthen pot is shown. Such complex figures confuse the child.

Throughout the book the type size is big and bold making it easier and more attractive for the children to read. The book cost is reasonable and free of any printing errors.

At the end of each lesson there is a note for the teachers, which is very helpful. It gives the teachers instructions as to how to teach the letters and various other questions they can ask the students apart from the exercises given at the end of each chapter. It would have been better if these instructions were given in a manual instead of being given as footnotes. The footnotes at the end of each page confuse the child because it doesn't understand.

Summary

The entire evaluation of the class I primer can be summarized with regards to its linguistic and non linguistic factors.

Linguistic factors:

Positive Aspect:

- The letters of the alphabet are not taught right from the beginning of the book.
- In the beginning to introduce the child to a familiar world there are pictures of familiar objects given for the child to identify.
- There are stories given in pictures, which not only develop the understanding and speaking skills of the child but also his imagination and creativity.
- Writing practice on simple designs is given before the child is taught the writing of letters.

- The reading material given after every few lessons apart from providing reading practice also teaches the children morally and socially accepted values and behaviour.

Negative Aspect:

- The designs given for writing practice are very complex towards the end and are unnecessary.

- The frequency method is used which is not very effective to teach the letters taught to child.

- Abstract words like **saMtaoYa** /santos/ 'peace' (page 64) and **mana** /man/ wish (on page 17) are also introduced with the letters. These abstract words are alien to the child.

- The stories given are very long for the child

Non Linguistic Factors

Positive Aspect

- The cover of the is colourful and attractive
- The type size throughout the book is bold ad big.
- There is a detailed preface given for the teachers at the beginning of the book

- There are guidelines for the teachers for the teaching of each alphabet

Negative Aspect

- The picture on the cover is not very appropriate, as it does not show children reading or going to school but playing
- The pictures given throughout the book are colourful but natural colours have not been used.
- The cover should have been thicker and the binding stronger
- The footnotes at the end of each page are helpful but confuse the child. They can be given separately as teacher's manual.

3.3. EVALUATION OF MP BOARD PRIMER

(Appendix 3A: Title Page of MP Board Primer. Appendix 3B: Publications Details)

The Hindi primer prescribed by the M.P. State government educational board has been prepared jointly with the Rajiv Gandhi Educational Board, Bhopal. In the acknowledgements the Secretary of the primary education, MP informs that the book has taken its shape by collecting ideas and methods followed by various governmental and non-governmental organizations, so that there is a similar book followed throughout the state.

This primer differs in its structure and methodology from the various other existing primers. At the very outset, there are detailed instructions for the teachers. In the preface for the teachers the primer gives them cues on how to make the learning process more interesting. They are asked to divide the whole class into small groups of five to six students and make them do the exercises

given in the book. The children should be encouraged to ask questions and to learn things on their own and from their friends.

Model question papers are given and the book is prepared keeping the duration of the course in mind. This book has been prescribed for the entire state after continuous assessment of it by using it in 15 districts of MP. Assessment of the book has been done by Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Results of these assessments and that of the fieldwork done have given rise to this book in its present structure.

A. Linguistic Aspect

The book , as mentioned earlier is different in structure from the other available primers. It is divided into three portions. According to the makers of this primer, if the study programme runs, according to its schedule from June to March, the first portion of the book will be over by September end, the second part by December end and the final part by the end of the academic year in March.

At the beginning of each new lesson , the gist of what has to be taught in that lesson is given. The book claims to have given, and rightly so, enough practice to the child of the items learnt. At the end of each of the three parts of the book a test paper is given. The preface expects the teachers to prepare similar kinds of papers to test the child.

There are 34 lessons in total. The division of the lessons into sections is as follows:

Section I – Lesson 1 to 12

Section II – Lesson 13 to 23

Section III – Lesson 24 to 34

Section I

Lesson 1, on page 1, starts with the traditional practice of giving a poem, which the child has to learn. The note for the teacher instructs them to ask all the children recite some prayer when they arrive. Apart from teaching the poem, the children can also learn to stand in a line and be disciplined.

The second lesson on page 2 presents some pictures and the child is required to recognize them. These pictures are commonplace objects, animals and birds. The teacher is supposed to explain to the child the features and uses of these objects. The teacher can also ask the children where they find these objects. As all these objects are familiar to the child, it feels comfortable and the exercises/activities give it confidence to speak without hesitation and also to observe more keenly the things carried around it.

On page 3, a picture showing a village scene is given. All the children in the class can be divided into small groups and made to talk about what is being

depicted in the scene. The objects in this picture are the same ones the child has recognized separately on page 2.

Before lesson 4, in which the introduction of the letters of the alphabet will begin is a detailed note on pages 4 and 5. It tells us the method in which these letters will be taught. It deviates from the traditional method of teaching letters using phonetic similarity and instead uses the word method. According to the note provided, the children can be taught to perceive, pronounce, read and write different sounds by various activities such as songs, poems, stories, games, concrete objects and cards. This method is more interesting.

The procedure of teaching alphabets through word-based method, as specified in the book , is as follows:

- The child can easily recognize the picture of a **maTka** (pot) easily as he is familiar with that object.
- The picture of the pot is just a representation of the real object pot.
- Looking at the picture the child predicts what the object is like.
- The child also understands that the word maTka is a symbolic representation of the object pot. Thus it forms a relation between the object and the word.
- The whole word has to be initially recognized as one unit. Later the word can be broken into its component parts.

This method alternatively known as the 'Whole Word Method or 'Look and Say' method of teaching reading stresses on the word as a unit and not the letter name or sound, and has been used as means of trying to make reading process more meaningful to children. According to this method, the child's attention can be drawn to an element, which is already familiar through the child's speech. The underlying principle of the word based method is that children will see the difference between words on the basis of length and the shape of configuration of the words, and then easily be able to recognize the word using some clues like pictures.

According to the adherents of this method an advantage of this method is that one uses the words familiar to the child. Instructions and lessons in the child's own oral vocabulary makes it possible to get away from the difficult- to – transfer learning situation of phonic word building and blending and the spelling units of the alphabetic method. The children are highly motivated and not bored. However this method comes with its own disadvantages. It provided little technique for deciphering unfamiliar words. Secondly, one would have supposed that not being confined by the restrictions of using only regularly phonic words would lead to the production of more interesting reading material firmly based on children's interests. However, if letter clues are underplayed it does become difficult for a child to recognize the few 100 words required to tell an interesting story.

At the beginning the teacher is advised to work on the first set of four words. The child is shown the four cards and asked to name them one by one. After some time, the child recognizes the words through the pictures. To test whether the child has learnt to recognize the words, the book suggests that the teacher show the children the cards, the word facing them and ask them to recognize.

After this detailed note, lesson 3 on page 6, teaches the four alphabets **T** /T/ **ma** /m/ **p** /p/ **la** /l/ ; through the words **TmaaTr** /TamATar/, **maTka** /maTakA/, **p<aa** /pattA/ and **lakDI** /lakaDI/ respectively. As mentioned earlier in the note, the teacher is asked to teach these words using the flash cards. However the book could have been made more self- sufficient if the picture given was not a complex one but the related picture to be given adjacent to the word. It is important here as the picture is the sole clue of the word to the child.

Lesson 4, in a similar fashion, teaches the letters **ba** /b/, **na** /n/, **ga** /g/ and **ca** /c/. Apart from the four words introducing these letters, the words learnt in the last lesson are also revised. Lesson 5, on page 16, is a small onomatopoeic poem, **baadla garjao** (bādal garje). The children have to learn and sing the poem and recognize the similar sounds. For example,

Qama and **Cma**. The children can be encouraged to make similar words, even though the words formed are meaningless. Following this lesson is an activity for the children, in which they are required to make models and toys from mud or clay.

In the next two lessons, eight more letters of the alphabet are taught using the same method of flash cards. After each lesson from 3 to 7, except for the poem there are 6 exercises. They are as follows:

- (i) To match the words with the pictures / illustrations given.
- (ii) To match the letter at the centre of the circle with the ones of the same shape given at the circumference of the circle.
- (iii) To encircle the first letter of the word and match it with a same one from the list given below it.
- (iv) To trace over the dotted lines of the words given. While doing this the child should be instructed about the movements of the pencil from left to right and from top to bottom. Exceptions such as la where the l starts from the right to left should be stressed upon.
- (v) To recognize the objects given which start from the same letter as those taught in the lesson.

Lesson 8, on page 28, is the last lesson in this section. Here a story is depicted by two illustrations. The child has to imagine and think on its own and

narrate the story. This develops their capacity to think creatively. Some children might be shy to speak publicly and can be encouraged by asking small direct questions.

B. Section II

A detailed note for the teachers on pages 29 and 30 starts the second section of the book. The lessons in this section vary from the ones in the previous part. In this, the child has to now recognize the letters and then make a word.

For instance, the child is familiar with the word **p%ta** (leaf) and the first symbol p and its corresponding sound. The teacher has to now teach the child the letter p. using the guidelines in the note, lesson 9 on page 31 and 32 attempts to teach the child to recognize letters already taught in section I. The child is encouraged to make words of his own with these letters. This exercise forms an important part in the word- based method, where the child is asked to recognize the letters by looking at its graphemic representation.

On page 33, is an exercise where drawings are given in dotted lines and the child has to trace over it. This exercise is included to teach the child control on his hand and pencil. This exercise seems to be a bit too late as the previous section already expects the child to write the letters tracing over dotted lines. The teacher is advised to give the child more of such exercises. In the next exercise,

the child has to write letters, which they already learnt. Here also the child has to trace over the dotted lines.

Following this is a poem on page 35. The child has to learn the poem and sing it in tune with actions. It's a short 8 lines poem and simple. As the teacher reads the poem, the children have to follow in their books and recognize the letters. This doesn't seem to be a very fruitful exercise as the children have till now learnt only eight letters, of which only 4 are there in the poem. Further, the word **PyarI** (pyArI) carries the sound /p/ which the child recognizes but the corresponding representation of that sound here is not **p** which the child has already learnt but **P**. This would surely confuse the fresh learner.

Lesson 11, on page 36, teaches 4 more letters. The same method as followed in the first section is employed to teach the letters. Words starting with the letters already learnt are also given which gives a kind of revision of the material. With each new letter one word is introduced many times so that the child can register the similarity in the structure of the word.

Likewise four more letters **I** /i/, **C** /ch/, **Ga** /gh/ and **Qa** /dh/ are introduced in lesson 12 on page 40. The exercises following these two chapters are in the same vein as in the first section where the child has to match the word

to the pictures given, to match the same letter as in the circle, to match the first letter of the word with the same letter from the ones given in the list and finally to recognize the illustrations which begin with the letters taught. The only addition of exercises in lesson 12 is:

- i) Writing practice of letters taught – which is now not restricted to tracing over dotted lines.
- ii) To combine two letters and read them as whole words.

Lesson 13, on page 51, is a story in pictures. The teacher can divide children into groups and they can discuss the story. This enhances the creativity of the child and the teacher can expect to get different versions of the story from the groups. On the next page there is again a picture of some animals and the child has to identify whether it's a land based animal or water based animal.

The next lesson on pages 53 and 54 teaches the two vowels **A** /a/ and **Aa** /A/ and also the /A/ marker **I** (for the vowel **Aa**) used after consonants. In the flash cards used the teacher can write the vowel marker with a different colour. The children can be made to read it and also write it. Once the child has learnt the concept of vowel and vowel marker the chapter proceeds to give short sentences of two to three words. Here the book seems to have picked up a lot of pace. Introducing the letter **Aa** /A/ and the vowel marker for it **I** together will merely confuse a child. The sentences are simple and made up entirely of letters

already familiar to the child. Following this are two exercises where the child has to write the sentences given and to fill in the blanks with the words provided.

The vowel marker **।** (for the vowel **I**) is taught in lesson 15 on page 57 and the vowel marker **o** (for the vowel **E**) is covered in lesson 16 on page 60. In both the lessons there are a few words given with the vowel markers used. Following are few simple sentences. The letter which does not occur in the word initial position and is not a native sound in Hindi is also taught in lesson 16. The exercises after this lesson test the child on the three vowel markers learnt – the children have to form words using these three vowel markers and fill in the blanks.

Ironically, the letter **[-** /l/ is taught in the next lesson after the child has been taught the vowel marker **।** for the /I/ sound. Apart from the vowel the sounds **Z** /D/, **sa** /s/ and **t** /t/ are also taught in this lesson. The words introduced with these letters employ the vowel markers learnt. Following on the next page are a few sentences which form a story. The sentences are short but a few letters are used which are not taught as yet. For instance the graphemic representation of k is **k** which includes the vowel marker. However the word used in the lesson is **@** where the /k/ is without any vowel. Similarly the vowel

marker **i** is taught and used but so also the short vowel /i/ is used. The exercise gives a series of pictures and the child has to write its name. Here some words require letters not taught to the children as yet.

For instance, **iKD,kl** (window) – **i** the vowel marker for /i/ is not taught

maaOjao (Socks) - **ao** is not taught.

On page 66, lesson18, is an eight-lined poem and the next two pages have a few riddles. This helps the child to think on its own and talk. Here the children are encouraged to ask each other riddles, even using their dialects. However it is doubtful whether this exercise is appropriate for a four to five year old.

Lesson 19, teaches the alphabet **Aao** and the corresponding vowel marker **ao** which is used with consonants. The pattern of first giving words and then sentences is followed. There are two exercises following this lesson:

- i) A list of letters is given and the child has to use the **a o ao** marker with them.
- ii) The child has to make words using these four matras.

Four new alphabets are presented in lesson 24, on page 71. Following it is a one-page story. Like the many words introduced, this story is totally embedded in the village environment of fields and farming. Following the story is a crossword, where a list of words is given and the child has to fill it in the puzzle, where the starting or the final letter is provided. This might prove a daunting task for a child of 4 years. On page 74, lesson 2 is yet another poem. The note asks the teacher to let the child find the words similar in sound. E.g. **lauTi** /luTi/ and **jauTi** /jutl/. Such an exercise helps the child differentiate between sounds even though the words sound similar.

] (u) and its marker **U** is taught in lesson 22, on page 77. There is a small story which the child has to read on its own. Only letters already taught are used in the story. The exercise is as in the previous lesson where the child has to put various vowel markers in the consonants given. In the next exercise there are a few sentences which the child has to fill. These sentences have a unity of theme and the child has to write three sentences on its own following the same theme. This exercise tests the child's level of comprehension, reading and writing apart from giving a free rein to its creativity.

The last line in this section teaches four more letters, followed by a story. In this story the sentences are longer than in the previous ones. Apart from statements, interrogative sentences are also used here. The four letters taught in this lesson

are used frequently in this story. The exercises following the lesson are also different.

- (i) A list of words is given and the child has to read them and write them on its own.
- (ii) To write the names of the objects given in pictures.

Following this section is a model question paper. The first part is oral with questions of 25 marks and so is the second part which requires written answers. The question paper given pattern of questioning is as follows:

A. ORAL

The first section consists of questions which are objective and have short answers. In this section the child is asked questions based on:

- a) its knowledge
- b) its understanding
- c) its proficiency

The second section has longer answers and the questions are based on the child's knowledge and proficiency in the language.

B. Written

This section for 25 marks is divided into two parts. The first part has objective questions like fill in the blanks, match the following etc. The second part has objective questions where the child has to write one sentence answers. These are also based on the child's general knowledge and his efficiency in the language.

C. Section III

A 12-line poem forms the 24th lesson. The teacher is instructed to teach the initial six lines first thoroughly, asking the children to recite them and make them learn thoroughly. After that the last six lines can be taught in a similar way. This poem makes the child aware of what the animals in their surrounding environment survive on. From a linguistic point of view, there are various letters used and vowel markers used which are unfamiliar to the child. On the next page, number 87, are pictures of some animals. The child has to respond by saying what these animals eat and how they speak.

Lesson 25, on pages 88 and 89, is solely devoted to the teaching of the short vowel marker for /i/ and the difference between [] and [-] (/I/ and /i/). The short /i/ marker, **i** is different from the other vowel markers as it is placed before the consonant instead of after the consonant. This is done by showing the letter without any marker in contrast with the vowel marker **I** for /I/. For example, **k** /k/ and **ik** /ki/ are given alongside. The difference between short /i/ and long /I/ is also emphasized by using words in sentences where the difference in the meaning of words is only due to the length of the vowel.

e.g

]sao panal iplaa. /use pānī pilā/ Give him/her water.

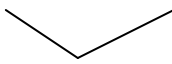
yah irbana pllaa hO. /yah riban pīlā hai/ This ribbon is

yellow.

Following this chapter are six exercises:

- i) The child has to practice the **l** /i/ and **ll** /l/ matras it has learnt in that lesson.
- ii) A list of letters of the alphabet is given and the child has to apply the 6 vowel markers he has already learnt.
- iii) The child has to make words on its own with the vowel markers learnt.
- iv) A pair of words is given in each unit. The child has to extract one letter from each word to form a third word.

e.g. **baala** **baajar**



baajaa

Apart from this, other words are also possible and the child should be encouraged to make as many words as possible.

- v) to join the letters given with **l** /i/ and form words.
- vi) To join the letter **na** /n/ with the letters given.

vii) To join the letter **ca** /c/ with all the letters given.

Following this on page 93, lesson 26 teaches the letters **Xa,, ?, va, Ja, Aao** and **Aao**. The words introduced with these letters are very uncommon.

For instance, **AaoTa** /oTA/

Xakllaa /SakllA/

Sabaanaa /SabAnA/

vak /vak/

The words introduced with **Sa** /S/ is **Salajama** whereas the word in the standard variety of Hindi is **Salagama** /Salagam/ . The **Ya** /š/ and **Sa** /S/ sounds are actually borrowed sounds from Sanskrit. A story using the letters taught is given. There is only one exercise in this lesson where the child has to write the words given neatly.

Lesson 27 teaches the short vowel **]** /u/ and the difference in sound between the short vowel /u/ and the long **}** /U/ is emphasized. The guidelines of this lesson are similar to the other lessons where the vowel markers are taught.

In this lesson there is a one page story. The sentences in this lesson are longer. There are 3 exercises after this lesson.

i) to test whether the child has understood the difference between short vowel **ɪ** and long vowel **ī**.

ii) to put all the vowel markers from **Aa** /A/ to **Aao** /au/ in the list of letters given. Interestingly, **eo** and **eOo** are not taught to the child as yet but he is expected to use it.

iii) the exercises are related to the content of the short, testing whether the child has understood the story or not.

The vowel marker for **Aao** /O/ is taught in the next lesson on page 29.

Abstract words like **gaaOrva** /gOrav/ (pride) and **maaOt** /mOt/ (death) are used. A few sentences are given to emphasize the difference between o and au. There are no exercises in this lesson. On similar lines is the next lesson on page 101, which introduces the letter. Here too a story is given and there are exercises testing the comprehension, with short questions and fill in the blanks related to the lesson. In addition there are two exercises on the vowel markers learnt. This is the first time the child is expected to give answers in complete sentences.

In the next lesson, lesson 30 on page 105 a poem related to colours is given. Here the child has to read the poem, read it aloud. The teacher can initiate a discussion about the colours of the various objects, animals and vegetables. This lesson can be made more interesting by asking the children to bring leaves, flowers and objects of various colours.

Clusters like ~ **xa &** are taught in lesson 31 on page 106. Most of the words in the lesson are difficult as many of them are borrowed from Sanskrit and not used in spoken Hindi. One of the reasons for this might be that these clusters are not native Hindi sounds.

These are highly literary words.

Examples:

marNa dxa naxa~ &anavatI xait

Throughout this book, proper names have been given to introduce a letter. In this lesson, for instance **ravaNa** /rAvaN/ and **gyaancand** /gyAncand/ are used. In the previous chapter **yaSaaooda** was taught while teaching y. Proper names and abstract words like death, knowledge should be avoided. The child doesn't understand the abstract concepts at this age. Proper names are not only those objects which the child can see physically should be taught. The

exercise following this expects the child to write a list of words given, which include the letters taught in the lesson.

Lesson 32, page 109, strives to mark the difference between **D** /d/ and **D**, /d,/, and also between **Z** /dh/ and **Z**, /d,h/. This is done through a few words given in contrast and then through a story. The aim of the two exercises is also the same – in one the child has to write the words given and in the second frame words with dh and dh. This exercise serves a good purpose because teachers find it a common problem amongst fresh learners – the distinction between these letters must be emphasized.

Holi on page 111 forms lesson 33. Now that the child has learnt all the letters of the alphabet and the vowel markers it should be able to read the lesson without any difficulty. The five exercises after the poem are as follows:

- i) Question related to the content of the lesson – this not only tests the understanding of the child but also its ability to read and write.
- ii) The child is asked to draw in a space provided – what the child has to draw is not specified and why this is included here is unimaginable.
- iii) Fill in the blanks with the words given – this ensures that the child has understood the meanings and usage of the word.
- iv) To complete the poem.

v) To make rhyming words – this shows that the child can differentiate between words.

The last lesson, on page 114, gives the alphabet chart and all the 34 consonants with all the vowel markers attached to it. This fortifies the child's grasp on the sound of the consonants when a vowel is added to it. Additionally, the teacher can ask them to make word with all the consonants in all the forms and to pronounce it properly.

B. Non – linguistic Aspects

Just as the book is different in structure and in its approach linguistically, even in the non-linguistic aspect it has unique features. One notices that the entire book is in black and white. Colours are not used for the letter introduced or for the illustrations. In fact, the sentence in one of the lessons on page 89 says **yah irbana pllāa hO** (this ribbon is yellow). The illustration however shows a black and white figure. Interestingly there is a lesson on the colours (lesson 30) but there too no colours are used.

However, a lot of linguistic research has been done in the preparation of this book. As said in the preface this book is a combined effort of the State Education department as well as various NGO's like the Eklavya, UNICEF and the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Mission and many more. The preface of the book is

thorough and instructions to the teachers given in detail. In each lesson there is a footnote for the teacher apart from the detailed one before each of the three sections of the book. These instructions though useful could have been given in a separate teacher's manual. The cover of the book is colourful. The type is bold clear and sans errors. The price is reasonable.

Summary

Linguistic Factor

Positive Aspects

- Many words have been introduced in each lesson
- There is an attempt to make the book very interesting for the child by giving interesting stories

Negative Aspects

- The letters are introduced using the word based method which, is not appropriate for teaching Hindi.
- Similarly, in the MP Board prescribed book Bharati page 61 which teaches the child the letter and the vowel marker has the following sentences:

yah jaoba hO. bakrl jayaa kl hO. PaoDa malza hO. Pao= hra hO.

(which is translated as : This is a pocket. The goat is jaya's. The peda (a sweet) is sweet. The plant is green)

Non Linguistic Factor

Positive Aspect

- A lot of planning and research has gone into the making of the book
- The preface and the notes for the teachers are very detailed and explanatory

Negative Aspect

- The instructions for the teachers on how to use the book is given in between the lessons itself. It can be included in a separate booklet

3.4. EVALUATION OF ICSE BOARD PRIMERS

The ICSE Board does not prescribe any primer for its schools. Therefore different schools in different parts of the country follow any of the private publications they consider apt. However all the books followed by the ICSE schools follow the same pattern of teaching letters through the phonetic method. A few of these books are assessed here.

3.4.1. Evaluation of Rashtra Bharati – Part I

(Appendix 4A: Title page of Rashtra Bhrati. Appendix 4B: Publication Details)

The publishers, Arc Board publications of the Rashtriya Bharati Series entered into the publication of Hindi textbooks in 1995. The present primer, Rashtriya Bharati – Part I is authored by Prof. Indu Vashishta. According to the

publishers, the aim of this book is to teach Hindi, to the children of the southern states in India, in as little time as possible. While the book has been compiled keeping in mind the capacity and language skills of the learners at that age there is also an attempt to keep it interesting.

A. Linguistic Aspect

Before the lessons, page 1 –6 have a note for the publishers, the national anthem and an oath. The preface has no instructions for the teachers but merely mentions the purpose of the book.

The first lesson, on page 7, is the alphabetical chart comprising the vowels, consonants and the clusters. Chapter 2 has letters that the child has to recognize. The letters are not introduced separately and there are no words given in the beginning with the different letters. All the letters are introduced only with the chart in the first page. The different letters are not dealt with separately.

For the child, the concept of reading and writing is a new activity. Therefore the teaching and learning process should be made interesting. The child shouldn't be suddenly thrown into the unknown realm of letters and alphabets. Ideally a page each should have been devoted for the introduction of each letter.

Lesson 3, on page 9 introduces some 2 lettered words. All the words are without *matras*. The child is supposed to read the words and then write them.

With no prior exposure to writing and using of pencil, the task of writing words is highly unadvisable, if not ridiculous. Following this, lessons 4, 5 and 6 have simple sentences most of them comprising of two words. On each page five to six sentences are given – the length of sentences increases by one word on each page.

Three lettered words are introduced in lesson 7, on page 13. Again as for the two lettered words the child is supposed to read and write the words. The next three chapters are devoted to introduction of sentences in an increasing order of gradation of words.

Lesson 11 presents words comprising of four letters followed by sentences in the next three lessons. The next four lessons from lesson 15 on page 21 to lesson 19 on page 23 have simple sentences. Most of the sentences range from two words to four words in length.

All the words introduced are simple without vowel markers. However without many abstract words are introduced which would be very difficult for the child to understand.

e.g. **Baya**

hya

BaD,k

sabala

words from Sanskrit origin, which are restricted to literary Hindi – in poems and other genres are also given.

e.g. **Aja** ‘snake’ (page 9)

maga ‘road’ (page 10)

pga ‘foot’ (page 11)

pvana ‘wind’ (page 14)

Instead of such words, ones used in conversational usage should have been introduced. Any language should be taught in its standard form. However some words are given which are colloquial.

e.g.

garba instead of **gava**

laCmana instead of **laxamaNa**

The sentences given are short but some of them do not follow proper Hindi grammar.

naqa phna bahna Aa[- /nath pahan bahan AI/ [Wrong]

naqa phna kr bahna Aa[- /nath pahan kar bahan AI/

[Correct]

There are words used in some of these sentences which are tatsam and not used in conversational language which have been used here even though simpler words are possible.

But some sentences do not follow the

E.g. **Anaya mat kr** (page 34)

naBa pr Gana Bar Aaeo (page 36)

3.4.2. Evaluation of *Akshar Manjari*

(Appendix 5: Title Page of *Akshar Manjari*)

A product of Pearl (India) Publications house, *Akshar Manjari* seems to be just yet another book with not much insight into the various developments going on in the field of language teaching. It gives all the letters of the alphabets from page 2 to page 30. there is no pattern followed as to how many letters are introduced in one page. It is at random. Sometimes there is one letter on one page while there are instances of three letters being taught together on one page. A word is given with each letter with a picture accompanying it. Not much attention has been paid to the selection of words. Though most of the words are simple it seems that the selection hasn't been made following any rules and principles. Sometimes words are introduced with a letter where the letter being

introduced itself carries a vowel marker. For example, the word }^T (camel) is introduced with the letter } and **BaalaUu** (bear) is introduced with **Ba** /bh/.

There are words which are introduced which have no vowel markers and are easy to read but are not used commonly **vak** (heron) introduced with **va**. the alphabet chart is given right at the end where as it could have been rightfully included in the beginning itself. Non linguistically also not much attention has been paid. The cover pages (front cover and back cover) show pictures being used in the book. This has no meaning for a cover. Instead children studying and enjoying the activity could have been shown. The book is priced at 19 rupees which is not worth it. However, this book is used by many schools in Bihar and Jharkand.

2.4.3. Evaluation of *Bolo K Kh G*

(Appendix 6: Title Page of Bolo K Kh G)

A publication of Holy Faith International Publications this book is the first in the series of With A Smile books. This book too teaches all the alphabets in 21 pages. Two letters are taught on each page. For sounds which are not used in Hindi (**A: Ha Na** etc) three letters are taught in a page. The words selected in a few cases carry a vowel marker with the letter being introduced (e.g. }^T /UnT/ (camel) :pg 3 and **BaalaU** /bhAIU/ (bear) :pg 16). Pages 22 – 24 teach

the numbers in Hindi from 1 to 10. No practice at all is given for reading and writing of letters.

3.4.3 EVALUATION OF *HINDI SAGAR*

(Appendix 7A: Title Page of Hindi Sagar. Appendix 7B: Publication Details)

According to the publishers of this book, this primer, the first in the series of Hindi Sagar intends to teach the children the letters, vowel markers and then progressing to teach them words, poems and stories.

LINGUISTIC ASPECT

All the letters of the alphabet are taught or introduced in merely seven pages from page 5 to page 11. The number of letters taught on each page is arbitrary.

Page 5 – **A Aa [[-] } ?**

Page 6 - **eo eO Aao AaO AM A:**

Page 7 - **k K ga Ga = ca C ja Ja Ha**

Page 8 – **T z D Z Na**

Page 9 - **t qa d Qa na p f ba Ba ma**

Page 10 – **ya r la va Sa Ya sa h X**

Page 11 - **xa ~ &**

Pages 5 and 6 deal with vowels; one word with a picture is given along with each vowel except with **A:** . Beneath the vowels on page 6 all the vowels are given together for the child to recognize and read. There are two major flaws in introducing the alphabets in this manner.

1. At least one page should be devoted to each vowel as this is the first time the child is learning alphabets.
2. There should be 5-6 words with each letter, a few with pictures and a few without.

On page 7, the velar series comprising of the letters **k** /k/ **K** /kh/ **ga** /g/ **Ga** /gh/ and the nasal velar are introduced. On the same page the palatal series of **ca** /c/ **C** /ch/ **ja** /j/ **Ja** /jh/ and the palatal nasal is also taught. The pattern of teaching one word with each letter is followed. There is no reading practice of these letters after they are taught and there are no exercises. Only the alveolar series of **T z D Z** and the nasal alveolar are dealt with in the next page with the same pattern. Beneath these letters on the same page is the entire three series of consonants already taught.

On page 9 and 10 all the other consonants are taught and page 11 has the three clusters **xa** /Ks/ **~** /Tra/ **&** /gya/. On page 11 itself the entire

alphabet chart is given for the first time. Most of the books give the alphabet chart on one whole page; the views about the position of the chart in the books differ. Here just half a page is devoted to the chart.

Pages 12 and 13 have a number of pictures. Beneath each picture three letters are given and the child has to choose the right one. For instance the picture of a lotus (**kamala** /kamaɫ/ 'lotus') is given and the letters **k** /k/, **K** /kh/ and **ga** /g/ are shown. The correct response is **k** /k/ as /kamaɫ/ starts with a /k/. however the instructions in the book are not very clear.

Two lettered words without vowel markers are introduced on page 14 and a series of words are given on page 15. Two or three word sentences comprising of two lettered words are given. The following page has an exercise where a picture is given and a blank is left in the word, which the child has to fill. The same pattern is followed for 2 and 4 lettered words till page 22.

From page 23 to 46, all the 13 vowel markers are taught. Two pages are devoted for each vowel. Six words comprising of each vowel marker is given. On one page is a list of words and a few sentences comprising of the vowel markers are given on the next page. There are no exercises to follow. Once all the vowels are taught there are words given on pages 47 –49. a few words with pictures are given where a vowel marker is left missing and the child has to fill it. This is the

first time the child is asked to write and that too the vowel markers. There was absolutely no writing practice given for the writing of vowels and consonants.

The combination of each consonant with all the vowels is given in a chart on pages 50 and 51, which the child has to read and learn, by heart. Pages 53 and 54 have a story. There are 7 to 8 words sentences which are very long for a child. The story uses punctuation marks like comma, inverted commas and exclamation marks with which the child is not all familiar. Simple short sentences should be used.

Not much thought has been given to the selection of words. There are many words which the child cannot understand as they are either highly literate words borrowed from Sanskrit and not in conversational usage or they are abstract words or proper names like names of cities, states and people etc. A few examples are given below:

a) Words of Sanskrit/Non native origin:

Examples:

Word used	meaning	page number	commonly used word
-----------	---------	-------------	--------------------

Kga	bird	15	icai=yaa
nama	pray	15	pUjaa
vatna	country	18	doSa

camana	garden	18	baglcaa
baaga			
]pvana	garden	21	baglcaa
baaga			
ivahar	roam	26	
GaUmanaa			
Saltla	cool	28	znDa
kuiuTyaa	hut	30	
Jaaop=I			

b) Abstract words

examples

word used	meaning	page number
zga	cheat	15
Aba	now	15
jaba	when	15
gama	sorrow	15

sarla	easy	18
sanama	beloved	18
Acaanak	suddenly	24
icata	pyre	26
naklal	fake	28

The sentences given after each list of words are short but not simple. There are a lot of difficult words used and sometimes there is no coherence between sentences given. For instance these are the following sentences given together on page 15:

saca kh. 'speak the truth'

fla caK. 'taste the fruit.

Qana Gar pr rK. 'don't keep valuables at home

zga mat. don't cheat

gama mat kr. 'don't sorrow'

Content:

The content of the book is sometimes very misleading. For instance there are a number of sentences which show that money is very important and earning a lot is a positive thing. There are sentences which convey the meaning that one should earn a lot of money and show kindness towards the poor. Such sentences bring in the rich/poor divide amongst the young minds who form their views of the world through what they read.

Examples:

rama Qanavaana bana . (page 21)

‘ram (you) become rich’

pOsaa kmaa kr laa . (page 36)

‘earn money and come’

garlobaaOM pr kpa kr . (page 46)

show kindness to poor

Views about the handling of money are also aired through sentences like

Examples:

Qana Gar pr rK . (page 21)

keep the money/valuables at house

ma^hgaa kp=a mat phna . (page 44)

don’t wear expensive clothes.

A book should avoid ‘preaching’ or ‘teaching any kind of ideology.’

Similarly there is reference to caste and the position of the people in society according to their labour.

Example: **majadUr rajapUt qaa .** (page 32)

(The) labourer was a Rajput

Further some of the words taught adhere to a particular religion and are not a common word for the children coming from various backgrounds. E.g.

pvana hvana kr .

naTvar hvana kr

jaap kr

havan and jAp are not common to all religions but are primarily related to one religion. Moreover a book has no right to promote any particular ideology – be it belief in god or no belief in god. To avoid this names of political leaders should be avoided. For instance the name of *Jawahar* is used on page 24. Why should a book use names of political leaders from a particular party? The authors of the book have no right to allow their political views to affect a child even involuntarily.

Non Linguistic Aspect:

The cover of the book is colourful but the picture is not appropriate. It shows a child going with a bag from home. It would be better to show the child reaching school with the bag.

3.5. EVALUATION OF UP BOARD PRIMER

(Appendix 8A: Title Page of UP Board Primer. Appendix 8B: Publication Details)

Bhasha Kiran – Bhaag I is the book prescribed by the Uttar Pradesh education cell for class I students. The Education Director for the basic Education cell of U.P., Mahesh Chandra pant suggests that the aim of this book is five – fold:

- i) The teaching material apart from being in accordance with the capacity and interest of the students should also widen their mental and deepen their interest.
- ii) There should be flexibility in the teaching schedules such that the children develop the ability to read, understand and learn on their own.
- iii) The children's efficiency in language as well as mathematics and science should reach the requisite level.
- iv) Children should through this book develop a positive and healthy attitude towards life.
- v) They should learn to value the rich cultural heritage of the country.

Introduction of language through teaching of positive values and respect for country is an effort worth appreciating. Teaching of mathematics and science in a language book is not a good idea because the child is new to all the three subjects. In a language book the primary focus should be on introducing the language learning elements.

A. Linguistic Aspect:

On page 5, the first chapter of the book is a small patriotic poem of 10 lines. The children are presumably (as there are no instructions) supposed to memorize this poem. Giving poems in the beginning is a good practice as it captures the interest of the child. The rhymes and singing attract the child's attention and go a big way in making the child feel that studies are not a burden. However, instead of an abstract notion like patriotism a theme that is familiar to the child about his daily activities or the surrounding around him would have been a more suitable.

The second and third chapters are in pictures. In the second chapter – **'baaga'** (the garden)- there is a picture on two pages and the child has to identify various objects. However the picture instead of depicting a garden shows a village scene. Even the instructions given as footnote for the teachers ask the students more questions relating to familiar objects in the village. Most of the objects are unfamiliar to children from urban background. Objects from both the worlds – urban and rural- should have been given in equal proportion in the illustration. However giving pictures familiar to the child and asking him to identify them is a good idea, as it doesn't throw the child suddenly into an unfamiliar realm of words and letters. It takes him gradually from a familiar world to an unfamiliar one.

The third lesson **‘tbalaa gaiNat’** (Pond-Maths) is aimed towards increasing the mathematical skills of the children. As the preface claims, this book is meant to develop not only the language skills of the children but also their knowledge of science and arithmetic. The picture depicts a pond with various animals and birds where the child is supposed to compare them in terms of number. There are four exercises following the lesson:

- (i) Comparing and finding out which objects within the ones shown are more, less or equal in number.
- (ii) Finding out what is big and what is small in size.
- (iii) From the assorted illustrations given marking the vegetables by a triangle (▲), fruits by a square■ and encircling the flowers.
- (iv) Teaching numbers from one to five.

The contents of this lesson and the exercises do not serve any purpose in a language book. Instead of teaching alphabets, numbers have been first introduced in a language book constructed for teaching Hindi.

The fourth lesson on page 13 is a poem of 8 lines (**‘huAa savaora’**-morning). It deals with the daily routine of a child and encompasses all the activities a child indulges in right from waking up early in the morning to getting ready and going to school. In the footnote the teacher is instructed to ask the students about their daily routine and teach them to recite

the poem with actions. Such an interactive exercise helps in judging the child's understanding skills and in developing its speaking skills.

In total there are five poems in this book:

1. **'Baart Pyaara'** – lesson 1
2. **huAa savaora'** – lesson 4
3. **ptMga** – lesson 7
4. **pPpU jal ko rsagaullao** – lesson 21
5. **jyaada garmal AaOr barsaat** – lesson16

Lesson 5 on page 14 is devoted to preparing the child to write. Various shapes, which make up the letters of the Hindi alphabet are given. First these shapes are given in dots and the child has to trace over it. Initial practice can be done on the slates and when the young learner is perfect he can draw these in the spaces provided in the book. Such an exercise helps the child to have control over his pencil to write/draw shapes.

In chapter 6, from page 15 to 25 all the 52 letters of the Hindi alphabet are introduced. With each letter one word is introduced and shown in the picture. The phonetic similarity is followed in introducing the alphabets. All the letters are presented in a **vaNamaalaa galt** or Alphabet Rhyme. With each letter

one word is given and an illustration is also shown. In each line the first word begins with the letter introduced. The last word of each line of the two alphabets introduced successively rhymes. For instance, the letters 'a' and 'A' are introduced one after the other and the rhyming lines given are introduced one after the other and the rhyming lines given are:

Anaar ko danao laala laala /anAr ke dAne lAl lAl/

Aama Kato imaTzU laala /Am khAte miTThU lAl/

Similarly for 'g' and 'gh' introduced together the two lines are;

Gamalao maoM hOM saundr fUla /gamle man hEn

sundar phOl/

Ga=l baaolal calaao skUla /ghaDI boll calo skOl/

Introducing letters through a song seems to be an interesting and unique method. The child might perhaps learn the rhyme and enjoy it. However it would be better if more attention were paid on new letters introduced. With each new letter being taught, more words beginning with that letter of the alphabet should be given. This would make the child more familiar with the new material taught by giving him more reading practice.

Only these 10 pages of the total 88 pages in the book are dedicated to the teaching of the alphabets. According to the instructions given as footnote, the

teacher is supposed to make the child practice the sounds of the various letters. The teacher should also instruct the students on what the various objects are.

Not much attention has been paid to the type of words introduced. For instance, non-native words, borrowed from Sanskrit used only for literary purposes have been used.

Examples:

vana va\xa

For some letters onomatopoeic words have been introduced. For instance,

qap qap A: A:

Abstract words like **hvaa** ‘wind’ and **&anal** ‘intellectual’ have also been used. Such words are difficult for the child to understand and fathom. Concrete nouns, which can be clearly depicted in the illustration, should have been introduced throughout the book.

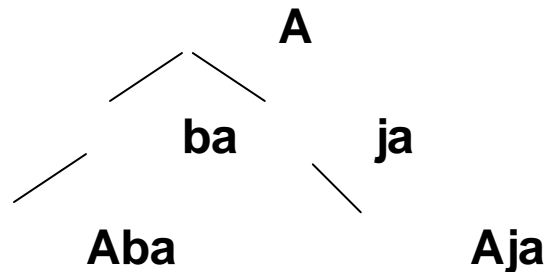
At the end of each page there is writing practice for the child for each letter. There are three columns for each letter. In one the letter is shown in bold. In the second box it is given in dotted lines and the child can trace over it. In the third column the child is supposed to write the letter on his own. The practice of teaching the writing of a letter after a child learns to identify it is a good practice.

In fact, the book could have given more writing practice by either giving more space in the book itself or by supplementing it with a workbook.

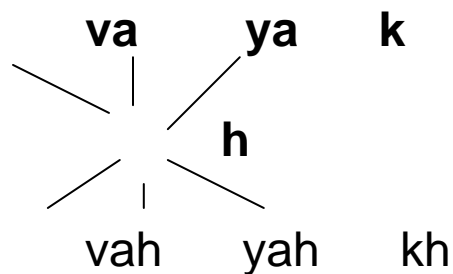
Following the introduction of all these alphabets are five exercises:

1. The first one asks the child to read the two letters given and then a word comprising of the two letters is given. for instance: The picture of a jug is given and the letters **ja** j and **ga** g given indifferent boxes. These are then combined in one box to form **jaga** .

2. The second one is in the form of a pyramid. The child recognizes one letter, beneath which are two letters. Two words are formed comprising the topmost letter and one of each letter on the second level. Example:

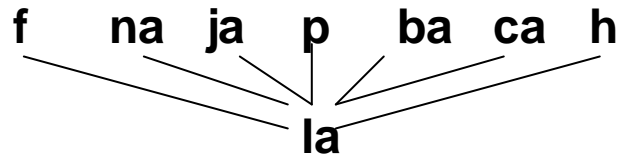


3. this is also similar to the second exercise except that the pyramid is inverted. Example



4. the fourth exercise requires to match one letter to the various letters given and form words.

Example:



5. in the fifth exercise the child has to read the words comprising of a few alphabets and then write those words. Here the teacher is instructed to give enough writing practice to the child.

Lesson 7 on page 30 is the poem 'patang' – an eight-lined short rhythmic poem about kites. There is a picture given alongside with a lot of kites and the teacher is instructed to make the child familiar with the different colours. The various exercises, which follow, ask the child to do the following:

- i) Search for various words in the poem.
- ii) To find out at least 10 words in the poem which have the letter 'r' in it.
- iii) Questions related to the text, which test the understanding of the child.
- iv) To combine the letters given to form meaningful words
- v) To solve a puzzle given which is not related to the text or for that matter to the learning of language too.

- vi) To identify the pictures given and categorize them.
- vii) To draw some simple designs.

The last three exercises seem to be given not for any linguistic purpose but for the entertainment of the child.

On the next page, there are three exercises – in the first exercise pictures are given and the child has to use his perception of above-under, light-heavy and inside-outside. In the second exercise he is supposed to match the similar objects. Finally the third exercise wants the child to write all the alphabets and to recite them. The book's major drawback is that it does not concentrate much, or almost negligibly to the language part. Instead the focus is on science and as we shall see later on arithmetic.

The next lesson on two pages, page number 32 and 33, is a picture depicting a kitchen. Here no instructions are given but presumably the child has to recognize the various things shown. The existence of such a lesson in a language book once the alphabets have been taught is totally unwarrantable. Following this lesson are five exercises. The first one asks the child to identify the items shown, which belong to the kitchen and count the number. This exercise and the next are devoted to teaching the digits from one to five. The third introduces all the vowel markers and a word with each. The only introduction of vowel markers is done in this exercise. Further, there is no practice or elaborate presentation. The difference between the *anuswar* (◌ं) and the *chandrabindu* (◌ँ) is

also shown and the teacher is asked to give practice to the child with all the vowel markers. The main disadvantage of this book is that it relies heavily on the teacher and makes no effort of its own to give adequate language exercise to the child.

The fifth exercise reinforces the difference between the short and long vowel markers [] and [-]. The next exercise is to make the child familiar with the two sides – left and right.

On page 37 is a short story of one page. All the vowel markers have been used in the writing of the story. The sentences are short of an average length of 3 to 4 words. The words used are also simple. Following the story are six exercises:-

- i) To find words with the vowel marker for [] /u/ and [} /U/ and to write them.
- ii) To count the objects given and write the number.
- iii) To write down the sources of water.
- iv) To write a sentence
- v) To join letters and form words.
- vi) To read the words given and write them down.

All the exercises, except the second one are relevant here. They give the child not only writing practice but also help it recognize the various letters and vowel markers.

Lesson 10, on page 40 and 41 is again a story. Here many complex words are given which the child hasn't been taught as yet. e.g. **iDbbao Clloa ibandl**. The concept of consonants occurring without any vowel marker hasn't been taught as yet. Following the story are two exercises on linguistics and two on arithmetic. The first exercise is related to the lesson and the second asks the child to search for the letters **Z**, /d,h/ and **D**, /d,/ in the story. The numerical exercises teach the child letters from 6 to 9. A footnote instructs the teacher to give the child more practice in the numerals.

The next lesson on page 43 is a lesson on addition. In fact, the book now concentrates only on arithmetic. One wonders why a book on language has to devote 50 odd pages to maths. From page 43 to 47 both addition and subtraction are taught.

A picture of a usual railway platform is shown on page 48 and 49. Following this are again 4 exercises related to the picture. The next lesson focuses on the concept of zero – adding or subtracting zero to a number and the two exercises also deal with this.

A story of two pages is given on page 53 and 54. Here the sentences are longer than in the previous stories. However many onomatopoeic words have been used like **KTr pTr Zp Zp** etc.

Following are six exercises:

- a) To match the similar objects given.
- b) To imitate the sounds of the animals given in pictures.
- c) To tell the source of light.
- d) To search in the story for word from a list of words given.
- e) To read the words and write them.
- f) To understand the change in verbs because of gender.

The last exercise doesn't seem in accordance with the level of the child's knowledge. Such concepts can be introduced at a higher level.

Lesson 15, on page 56 is again on arithmetic. On page 59, the alphabet chart is presented. The teacher is instructed to use flash cards or pocket boards to help children learn the letters in that order. It would have been better if the chart was given right at the beginning instead of the end of the book.

There is a two page story on page 60 and 61. Though the words are simple, there are some letters used which have not been orthographically taught

to the children. For instance in the word **TokTr** the symbol has not been introduced to the children earlier. Following the story are three exercises:

- i) There are 13 means of transport given in pictures and the child has to arrange them in ascending order according to their speed.
- ii) Pictures of animals are given and the child has to identify which are the animals whose milk we drink.
- iii) The final exercise – and the only one which has any linguistic element – gives a list of words from the text and the child has to find these words in the story.

The last five lessons are dedicated solely to mathematics, teaching the children the concepts of units and tens, addition, subtraction and the special case of zero. The exercises also deal with these topics. The exercises capture the interest of the child but would find a better place in an arithmetic book instead of a book to teach language.

Non-Linguistic Aspects:

The cover of the book is colourful depicting a few children with books and pencils studying. The image of children studying attracts the young readers who on seeing the cover page feel that studying is not such a burden.

The type is bold. The letters introduced are in a different colour but of the same size as the other letters there in the word. There are no printing errors and the price is reasonable.

The pictures are colourful and in most places natural colours have been used. There are instructions for the teacher at the end of each page which are very helpful for the teacher but confuses the child as it has no relevance to it.

C. Summary:

I. Positive Aspects:

a) Linguistic Aspect:-

- *The child is first introduced to familiar objects.*
- *The alphabets are introduced in a rhyming song, which enraptures the child's attention and makes the learning more interesting.*
- *At the end of each page writing practice given for children for the new letters taught.*
- *Words used are simple.*
- *The stories are short and interesting.*

b) Non-linguistic Aspect

- *There are guidelines for the teacher.*
- *The illustrations are colourful.*
- *The cover page is attractive.*

II. Negative Aspect:

a) Linguistic Aspect

- *Not enough attention on introducing the alphabets which should have been the major portion of the book.*

- *Lot of emphasis on mathematics and other general concepts.*
- *The vowel markers taught as a part of exercise after a lesson.*
- *Very few exercises dealing with the linguistic part.*

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS A NEW 'HINDI PRIMER'

4.0. INTRODUCTION

Inability to write correct sentences in one's own mother tongue in many of the adults, young children and the not so young children made me sit up and ask – where are things going wrong. As a teacher I noticed children studying Hindi for more than a year struggling with their final year question papers – their failure to read the words written there on the question sheet in a clear big font baffled me. Here were children supposed to write five lines on a cow but the child wasn't even able to read the word **gaaya** meaning cow.

A critical analysis of the existing primers resulted in the realization that this situation could be remedied if a proper primer could be fashioned. This does not relegate the existing books. In fact, the suggestion offered here picks up the positive aspects of the existing books and tries to overcome the shortcomings. Needless to say, one may accuse that this might be just yet another primer like the ones flooding the market these days. However, this is not old wine in a new bottle as the adage goes. The attempt here is to overcome the various limitations of existing primers and to propose a new one which might serve the purpose of a handy and useful school primer for children learning Hindi.

For the preschool children this is a very special time and a very crucial stage of life as this is the first time they gain independence and self-control, and learn to take initiative and assert themselves in socially acceptable ways. At this juncture a child undergoes visible language, social/emotional physical and cognitive development. The child's entry behaviour at school judged by all the relevant factors stated influences its performance at school. Therefore it is necessary that a brief look is given here to these relevant factors. A book specially being prepared for the children who have just entered school has to consider these factors seriously.

Language development includes understanding and communicating through words, spoken and written. Children are born with the capacity to communicate with others-verbally and non-verbally. By the time they reach preschool, their ability to communicate thoughts and feelings through spoken language takes on new importance. Language becomes the principal tool for establishing and maintaining relationships with adults and other children.

Because words represent objects and ideas, language development is closely related to cognitive development. With frequent language experiences between the ages of 3 and 5, children's vocabulary can grow dramatically. The richer a child's vocabulary, the more likely that the child will become a good reader. Language and literacy skills go hand in hand. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing develop interdependently in children.

Apart from language development there is a social/emotional development during the preschool years. Social development is about socialization-the process by which children learn the values and behaviors accepted by society. It is also about becoming a competent and confident person.

There are three goals for social/emotional development.

- Achieving a sense of self: knowing oneself and relating to other people-both children and adults.
- Taking responsibility for self and others: following rules and routines, respecting others, and taking initiative.
- Behaving in a pro-social way: showing empathy and getting along in the world, for example, by sharing and taking turns.

Social and emotional competence is essential to children's well-being and success, in school and in life. With the current focus on readiness, accountability, and high standards, there is always a danger that programs will focus only on academic content and ignore aspects of development that are equally important for achieving long lasting and positive results.

The Child Mental Health Foundations and Agencies Network, 2000 provides evidence that social/emotional readiness is critical to a successful kindergarten transition, early school success, and even later accomplishments in

the workplace. The report describes a child who is socially and emotionally ready for school. This child is

- confident, friendly, able to develop good relationships with peers
- able to concentrate on and persist at challenging tasks
- able to communicate frustrations, anger, and joy effectively
- able to listen to instructions and be attentive

Social and emotional readiness can be taught and nurtured most effectively when children are young. Because preschool is a prime setting for gaining social and emotional competence, social/emotional development is an important focus for teachers.

Physical development includes children's gross (large muscle) and fine (small muscle) motor skills. Physical development is sometimes taken for granted in the early childhood classroom because it is often assumed that it happens automatically. Not only is this assumption untrue, but teachers need to remember that physical development is just as important to learning as every other area of development.

With more advanced physical development, children master increasingly sophisticated tasks and gain personal responsibility for their own physical needs, such as dressing themselves. In addition, physical development, in many ways, promotes social/emotional development. As children learn what their bodies can

do, they gain self-confidence. In turn, the more they can do, the more willing they are to try new and challenging tasks. Thus, a positive cycle, which effects learning overall, is established.

The benefits of promoting physical development are well documented. *The Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health* (1996) states that physical activity contributes significantly to personal health and well-being. Physical education in the early grades supports children's academic achievement, general health, self-esteem, stress management, and social development. And we know from brain research that moving the body literally wakes up the brain.

There are two goals for physical development.

Achieving gross motor control: moving the large muscles in the body, especially the arms and legs, consciously and deliberately. Gross motor control includes balance and stability; movements such as running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping; and physical manipulations such as throwing, kicking, and catching.

Achieving fine motor control: using and coordinating the small muscles in the hands and wrists with dexterity. As these fine muscles develop, children are able to perform self-help skills and manipulate small objects such as scissors and writing tools. The achievement of fine motor skills generally lags behind gross motor development.

Cognitive development refers to the mind and how it works. It involves how children think, how they see their world, and how they use what they learn.

There are three goals for cognitive development.

Learning and problem solving: being purposeful about acquiring and using information, resources, and materials. As children observe events around them, ask questions, make predictions, and test possible solutions, learning reaches beyond just acquiring facts. Persistence and knowing how to apply knowledge expands their learning even further.

Thinking logically: gathering and making sense of the information by comparing, contrasting, sorting, classifying, counting, measuring, and recognizing patterns. As children use logical thinking, they organize their world conceptually and gain a better understanding of how it works.

Representing and thinking symbolically: using objects in a unique way, for instance, a cup to represent a telephone, or a broom to represent a horse; pretending, for instance, to be mommy or a firefighter; portraying the world through charts or pictures, for instance, making a graph to show changes in the weather over time or a drawing to show what happened to a character in a story. Representations and symbols free children from the world of literal meanings and allow them to use materials and their imagination to explore abstract ideas.
(Teaching Strategies Inc. 2002: www.teachingstrategies.com)

Textbooks play an important role in furthering children's development of communication and literacy skills. Also, listening to stories enables children to learn new words, extend their experiences, and become familiar with the patterns, rhythms, and structures of language. Children who are familiar with sound-letter patterns should be encouraged in their attempts at independent writing and reading. The teacher should be aware of the stages in the development of oral language and of reading and writing skills, and should provide appropriate materials and guided activities to ensure progress and growth for each child.

Children grasp ideas more easily and effectively, while maintaining their interest in school when they have an educational program that is integrated – one that enables them to connect their learning to their own lives and the world around them, and that helps them to see how knowledge and skills in one area are relevant for other areas. Kindergarten programs should emphasize the interconnected learning that occurs. In each child, the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and creative dimensions are interrelated. In order to address all dimensions of the child, the kindergarten program should also include opportunities for learning and appreciating the rich tradition of the country.

4.1. SUGGESTED PRIMER

Cover Page:

The cover page goes a long way in forming an impact on the student. An attractive cover with an appropriate picture acts as a positive factor for the

children who are to start studying and they form a mental picture that the activity of reading will not be a burden but a pleasure. A few young children going to school with books and bags can be shown. A school can be shown in the background and a few children playing here and there. It should be a picture that the child can relate to and find alluring.

Page 1:

There should be an alphabet chart at the very beginning of the book. The letters should be big in size. There is no need to give a title to the lesson like **vaNa-maalaa** /varNamAlA/ or **vaNa-galt** /varNagIt/. A chart is essential in the beginning because the first page just as the cover page has the maximum impact on the child or any other reader. Moreover, the alphabet chart in the first page is helpful for the child who can refer to any time it wants easily. The added advantage of having a chart in the first page itself is the fact that when a child opens the book to any page it cast a cursory glance at the alphabets numerous times.

Page 2:

Two small rhymes of around 5 lines each may be given here. The child can be made to recite these poems. The poems should be related to the child's immediate surroundings. It can be about his daily activities or about the environment he sees around himself. Nursery rhymes can help learn reading

comprehension and phonetic awareness. It is a known fact that children remember better if they sing or chant and this can be accomplished by using nursery rhymes in school. Children love nursery rhymes and because they are short and simple quickly memorize them and continue singing them constantly. This is a great start to building vocabulary.

However, nursery rhymes play a greater role than just entertaining. Rhyming activities develop two of the most critical concepts – Reading Comprehension and Phonemic Awareness – which are the two basic building blocks. McLean and Bryant (1987) of the National Research Council for preventing reading difficulties in young children stated, “Early knowledge of nursery rhymes was specifically related to development of more abstract phonological skills and of emergent reading abilities.” Nursery rhymes are a vital part of children developing emerging (early) literacy skills (Brockman 2002: t3.preservice.org).

Another reason Nursery rhymes are useful in reading comprehension is the fact that each language has its own rhymes and metre. The natural rhythm of Nursery rhymes lends themselves to being read out loud. By learning of words and sounds through rhyming children remember and retain more of what they learn.

Pictures of few common objects with which the child is familiar can be shown. The child should be asked to recognize these pictures. This exercise undoubtedly does nothing to improve the language skills of the child but it makes the journey to the world of letters less intimidating for the child. The child is taken from the familiar world he knows to the unfamiliar world of letters and words. This makes him more comfortable and at home in the new task of learning.

Page 4:

At the initial stages the child uses drawing to represent writing. At this preliterate stage when the child doesn't know the concept of spellings it feels that drawings is a communication of a purposeful message and they even read their drawing as if there were a writing on them (Sowam School 2003: www.sowamsschool.org). Therefore it is a good idea to let the child do some drawing and colouring.

Page 5:

The next page can carry a story in pictures. There can be 4 pictures depicting the story. The story should proceed from the left top picture to the picture at right top and then the bottom left picture to bottom right. It is a common knowledge that stories hold a fascination for a child. This exercise not only creates the interest in the child to read further but also trains its eye movements from left to right and top to bottom. This is useful because the *Devanagari* script follows the same left to right pattern.

Page 6:

This page can give a few simple figures, which the child can first trace over and then draw on its own. These figures can be part of the symbols by which sounds are denoted. For instance the child can be asked to trace and draw shapes like l – c etc. at the age of 4-5 years the child can scribble and can manage to make a crude circle or square (ceinfo.udh.edu).

Pages 7-16:

On these pages the vowels can be taught. There is no need to number the lessons. The letter to be taught must be written in the centre of the page with a bold font. Two to three words can be taught which begin with this letter and can be illustrated. Here the letter to be taught can be given in a different colour. This inherently draws the attention of the child towards it. Apart from the few words in illustrations there can be list of other words, which carry the sound of the letter being taught.

The words taught should essentially begin with the letter being taught. This is necessary because more stress is given to the first letter while speaking a word in Hindi. Though consonants are spoken in combination with a vowel, without the aid of some vowel, a consonant just cannot be pronounced, it is difficult for the child to understand this concept and feel the presence of a particular vowel in a consonant. As the lessons proceed to different vowels the

child can then be introduced with words, which consists of consonants with the vowel markers of the vowels already taught. For instance after the lesson on **Aa** /A/ , when any other vowel is being taught the vowel marker I for A can be used. E.g. while teaching the letter **Am** the word **AMDa** /anDA/ 'egg' can be taught. However a vowel marker should not be used in any of the words being taught until and unless it has already been taught.

The vowels **? ?R** which find a place in the old alphabetic chart after **}** are often taught to the children. However these are non-native sound to Hindi and cannot be pronounced easily by the children. These should not be taught to the children initially but can be taught later when the students are conversant with all the letters of the alphabet. Only the following vowels need be taught in the beginning:

A Aa [[-] } eo eO Aao AaO AM

A suggestion of words with each of the vowels is given below. There are a few limitations in the suggestions given here. Not many simple words which begin with the letters like U I E could be found.

Examples of words with each vowel are listed below.

A AAdrK Acakna Anaar Acaar Ama\$d

AKraoT Anaanaasa

Aa Aama AaTa AalaU Aa[-naa Aga Aa[saklma

**[[malal [martl [laayacal [naara [@ka [-
[-K**

]]llaU } }na

}dibalaava

eo eoD,l

eO eOnak

Pages 17-18:

On this page exercises are given dealing with all the vowels taught. These exercises give practice to the child in recognizing the letters and writing them.

- i. Recognizing and Reading exercises: First all the letters can be given in an order as they appear in the chart with the exception of the alphabets not taught. The child is expected to recognize the letters. The second exercise can give all the letters in a jumbled form for the child to recognize. This tests whether the child really has learnt the letter or just

remembers it one after the other. It can then be asked to rewrite the jumbled up letters in an order.

- ii. Writing exercises: all the vowels can be given and the child asked to write the letters five times.

Pages 19-50:

The consonants can be taught from this page onwards. The four velar consonants **k K ga** and **Ga** can be taught. The nasal velar **=** shouldn't be taught now as the child is not familiar with this sound at all as it is a non native sound in Hindi. One consonant should be given in each page. As with the vowels there can be a few words with pictures and a few without pictures too. The words introduced should be familiar to the child. A few words are suggested which can be used to introduce the letters from /k/ to /gh/.

k kmala klama kThla kmalja kbaUtr kTaorl

K KTmala KiTyaa KjaUr KrbaUja KrgaaoSa

ga gamalaa gaQaa gada galaa

Ga Gar GaD,l GaD,a GaiD,yaala

The exercises can be similar to the ones given after the lessons on vowels. The child can be asked to recognize the vowels given. It can then be asked to write the vowels.

The next five pages will be devoted to teaching the palatal series of letters **-ca C ja** and **Ja**. The last letter in the series the nasal palatal can be ignored initially because it is a sound, which is not used in Hindi but still retains its position in the alphabet chart as it was a part of the Sanskrit alphabet. Words to introduce these letters are also suggested here. There are very few words which have J at the word initial position and no vowel markers.

ca caka caTa[- cammaca caPpla

C Ctrl CD,I Clanal C%ta

ja jahaja jalaobal

Ja JaNDa

T z D Z - the alveolar consonants can be dealt with in the next four pages. Here too the nasal sound **Na** should be left as it is a Sanskrit sound found in tatsama words. It can be taught to the child after it learns all the consonants.

T Tba TmaaTr

z zzora

D Dma\$ Dilayaa DbalaraoTI Dbbaa DsTr

Z, Z@kna Zflal

In the dental consonantal series - **t qa d Qa na** – the nasal /n/ is an indigenous sound of Hindi and has to be taught with the other letters of the series.

t tvaa tbalaa tlavaar trbaUja tikyaa

qa qana qarmasa

d drl drvaajaa dvaa[- dvaat dhl djal-

Qa QanauYa

na nala namak nadl

Similarly the entire series of labial consonants **p f ba Ba ma** can be taught together. However in the next series of consonants sounds like **ya Sa** and **Ya** can be relegated to the end. The native sounds of **r la va sa h** can be dealt with first as the child would be familiar with all these sounds. One notices that a young child in fact finds no difference in sound when it hears the **Sa** and **Ya** sounds.

**p prvala pTa pTaka ptlaUna pda- phaD, p%ta
p%qar**

f fla fnda

ba batK bartna basa barfl bargad bakrl baksa

Ba BagaaOnaa

ma maTr maClal magar macCr mahla

r rqa rbaD, rsagaullaa rssal

la laD,kl laD,ka lakD,l laT\TU

sa salavaar saD,k saraOta sabjal saporā

h hla hqaaOD,a hlavaa[- hldl hD\DI

Pages 51 –59

Once all the letters are introduced the vowel markers can be taught. The basic reason why vowel markers are taught right at the end is that the child by then becomes conversant or familiar with all the letters. In the beginning the child will find it difficult to understand the concept of a consonant occurring bound with a vowel. The /a/ ending consonants have the vowel sound with the consonant symbol without any additional obvious marker. Consonants with the invisible but very much sounding a are the most natural sounds and the first sounds that the child utters. Therefore the consonants are first taught with the schwa ending sound. Later as the child is able to recognize and read the letters and there is a growing familiarity with different sounds, as the lessons proceed the other vowel markers can be taught.

a baala caadr talaa naak kana kar Gaasa

haqa

i iktaba ittlaḡ igalahrl

I calnal divaar calla klla

Uu gaulaaba kurta ku%ta

U jaUta fUla

o saoba maoja rola kolaa

O pOr baOla qaOlal

ao maaor baaotla gaaoBal

aO kaOAa maaOjaa laaOkI

M (for AM) baMdr pMK [-MMMT kMGaa

Pages 60-62:

These exercises can test the child not only on the vowel markers taught in the last few pages but also the combination of all these vowel markers with various consonants.

Pages 63-68

The remaining consonants = **Ha Na ya va Sa Ya** and the three clusters **xa ~** and **&** can be taught in these 6 pages.

ya ya yan~

Sa Salagama Sahnaa[- Sarbat Sarlfa

Ya YaTkaoNa

Pages 69-70

On the last two pages of the book a short story of about 10 lines can be given. On the top of both the pages there should be an illustration and the story should be beneath the two pictures starting from the left page and then ending on the right page story. The story should be entertaining and should have simple sentences that the child will be able to read on its own.

4.2. TEACHER'S MANUAL

Page 1 of the primer:

The teacher should ensure that there is an alphabet chart always hanging on the walls the classroom. Though there are alphabet charts available in plenty

in the markets, the teacher should make certain that the letters are bold and clear in the chart. It might be advisable to make one's own chart and then round off the letters, which exist in the alphabet string but are not used in modern Hindi usage. She can tell the children the relevance of all the alphabets telling them that these are the building blocks to reading and writing their language.

Page 2:

While teaching the nursery rhymes the teacher can make the children recite the poems with actions. In fact apart from the few nursery rhymes given, the teacher can actually teach the children nursery rhymes in between the lessons.

Page 3:

The children can be asked to form stories or relate experiences based on the object they identify. This not only polishes their verbal skills and trains their thoughts, it gives all the children to relate to the lessons being taught and makes it more of a personal experience for each one of them.

Page 4:

The story in pictures can be first told to the child by the teacher making sure that each child is following the association between the picture and the narrative. This guided experience trains the child's to move from left to right and also spurs its already existing creative abilities.

Page 5:

Apart from the space given in the book to draw and trace the simple figures the child can be made to draw these figures in his slate and gain perfect control over the movements of his pencil. It has to be ensured that the child is merely not scribbling but is able to draw the figures as shown to it.

Teaching the letters:

A lot of effort is needed to teach this completely new thing to the child. while teaching any letter the teacher should write the letter being taught on the blackboard. She should point out that letter in the alphabet chart hanging in the class, to the children. The children can be asked to recognize that letter in the alphabet chart given in the first page of the book. She should write all the words being taught in that lesson on the board.

Once the child has learnt to recognize a particular letter it can be asked to practice writing that letter. The teacher can call them to write the letters on the board. This way she not only tests the child but also is saved of the drudgery of correcting lots of notebooks.

Vowel markers: it is practically impossible to give the combinations of all vowel markers with all the consonants in book. Therefore the teacher can make a chart of the combinations in the order the consonants have been taught and place it on the wall. Apart from that she can make the child practice the various

combinations or 'barahkadi' as it is popularly called. This exercise has to be done both verbally and in writing.

There are a few letters in the Hindi alphabet series, especially the aspirated letters which though occur frequently in the Hindi language do not give ready simple and easy words without vowel markers. In such cases the words included in the primers are sometimes difficult for the child to understand and the teacher should try her best to explain the words to the children and maybe encourage them to think of words which begin with that letter in their own dialects.

SELECTION OF WORDS AND SENTENCES

The word selection has to be based on two factors:

- a. Frequency of use or Familiarity

Frequency or familiarity was the key word while selecting words

- b. Source

The selection of words depending on source was also in a hierarchy. The following chart shows the kinds of sources possible.

Source

- A. Native

- i) Sanskrit

- a) Tatsam
- b) Tatbhav
- ii) Non Sanskrit
- a) Indigenous
- b) Hindi

B. Non-native

- i) English
- ii) Non English

The hierarchy broadly followed can be shown as here:

1. Tatbhava and Indigenous
2. Hindi and Non native
3. Tatsama

In choosing this also the concept of familiarity should be kept in mind.

During the semantic selection of words concrete words have to be given as far as possible. Concrete words dealing with basic vocabulary items such as body parts, household objects and flora and fauna should be introduced. Where these are not possible abstract words simple for the child to understand have to be given. The words taught should always be in the singular form. The words should be simple two to three lettered. As the lessons proceed, four lettered words with which the child is familiar may be given. Once the vowel markers have been taught only then should words using them should be taught. It is not

practically possible to find words without any other vowel marker except the natural **A** /a/ therefore sometimes it becomes essential to teach the other kinds of words. For instance, a word like **gaQaa** /gadhA/ (donkey) can be taught with **ga** g/. that is because the letter being introduced is **ga** g/ and the stress has to be on that letter. Therefore the letters following that can have vowel markers.

Sentences can be taught once the lessons on consonants are over and the child has learnt the vowel markers. The child by then is well equipped to read three lettered to four lettered words. Short sentences consisting of two to three words can be given. These should be small and simple. Even though simplicity should be maintained the sentences should not be disoriented. They should follow a particular theme. In many cases the sentences are connected to each other.

Primer using Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML)

The primer is presented in another version as a soft copy. This soft copy has been prepared using the HTML editor Front Page. To use this software one doesn't need to have knowledge of computers. In fact if one has a computer and internet explorer, which need not necessarily be connected to the internet, one can make use of this HTML version. There is a common notion that one needs to be connected to the internet or the world wide web to write and view HTML documents. But the fact is that the documents may be

composed, viewed and stored on a hard drive or floppy attached to a computer. One can even navigate among local documents with HTML's hyper linking capabilities without ever being connected to the Internet, or any other network for that matter.

The soft copy of the primer is targeted basically for the Hindi Diaspora. However, schools in India which make use of computers can also utilize this. The primary benefit of using HTML is that it allows forward and backward movement from one page to another just as a book would. Further it has its own advantages - One doesn't always have to scroll through all the pages to reach a particular page but can jump directly to any page required.

HTML – hyper text markup language – the name reveals the dynamic nature of the text. It is not a static text but hypertext for one can go directly from one page to another. All of us are familiar with hypertexts though not with the language itself. When we log onto the internet to check mails or use the search engines – anywhere when we click and a new page opens hypertext is being used. To use these pages one doesn't have to know the intricacies of the programming language. Therefore, the primer can be used by the kids as well as adult learners who want to learn Hindi and have access to computers.

What is HTML?

The World Wide Web is common today and most of us have logged onto the internet. All the web pages, have been created using HTML. What we see is the user interface of the page but in the open window if we go to the *View* option we can see the source code behind it if we choose the *Source* option. The HTML code 'looks' frighteningly difficult but it is relatively easier than other programming languages and one doesn't have to be a hard core programmer to write a HTML text.

The most frequent term one comes across while talking about HTML are 'tags'. Tags are nothing but coded commands which 'tag' pieces of text and tell the web browser what kind of text it is (Oliver 1998:24). Any HTML text has four obligatory tags: All the HTML tag have two parts: an opening tag, to indicate where a piece of text begins and a closing tag to show where the piece of text ends. The closing tag has a slash before the tag name.

i) <HTML>

This tag simply indicates that the page is a web page and the </HTML> which is the closing tag indicates that the Web page is over.

ii) The Head tag

Between the opening and closing of Head tags one can put in the document header, and other elements which can provide information to users and search engines.

iii) The Title

The text typed between the title tag is shown by the browser (for instance Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer) at the very top of the Netscape window.

iv) The Body

All that is put in between the `<BODY>` and `</BODY>` tag appears in the main display area of the Web browser's window.

The general format of a HTML text is like this;

```
<HTML>
<HEAD> <TITLE>           </TITLE> </HEAD>
<BODY>
</BODY>
</HTML>
```

Usually a web page appears same with all browsers but if the settings of the browsers are chosen differently (for instance the display options, size of window) then the page appears differently.

Apart from the obligatory tags mentioned, HTML uses a variety of other tags to display the web pages in different fonts, colours and patterns.

Instructions to follow to use the enclosed primer

- To read the pages of the primer enclosed one needs to have Internet Explorer installed into their system.
- One needs to have a Hindi font to read the pages properly. If the Hindi font is not installed what will appear on screen will be pure gibberish. A Hindi font, *Shusha*, is enclosed and can be installed in less than a minute by just copying it into the Fonts folder in the system being used,
- Once this is done we are ready to view the primer.
- To begin with one has to open the Internet Explorer window and choose the **Open** tab in the **File** option.
- The first page to be opened is named 'alpha'.
- 'alpha' contains the alphabet chart and there is an option to go to any lesson one wants to read from this page itself.
- Each page has the option of either going to the next letter to be learnt or to go back to the first page which is the alphabet chart.

From any page in the primer one has the liberty to directly go back to the alphabet chart. The letter being taught is given in a different colour from the rest of the word so that there is more impact and it attracts the attention of the learner.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

We would like to summarize the work and the results of this dissertation for ready inspection.

The aim of the dissertation was to evaluate the Hindi primers used by the various Boards of Education, such as the CBSE, ICSE, UP and MP Board and to suggest a new primer, which would overcome the shortcomings of the existing primers. In suggesting the primer we concentrated on nature of presentation of letters of alphabet, the selection of words and sentences and the general layout of the book. Further, as a part of this study the primer was presented in a computer friendly and user-friendly format using the concepts of HTML. The soft copy can be used by schools, which use computers either wholly or as an aid to impart instructions, and by the Hindi Diaspora.

The study was divided into two parts: Evaluation and Suggestion.

First we had evaluate the existing primers used by the Boards mentioned above. The evaluation was based on the feedback given by teachers using the above mentioned books. The teachers were asked their views regarding the primer they followed and problems faced in following it. The questions asked to them could be answered in the yes/no format and also gave them the scope of giving their views regarding the various shortcomings, virtues and offer suggestions concerning different aspects. A few of the aspects discussed were:

- The order of the lessons

- The order of introducing alphabet
- The size of letters
- The colours used in the book
- The type and number of words used in each lesson
- The exercises and sentences given for practice.
- The method of introducing alphabets
- The words given in each lesson
- Whether all the language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing receive adequate coverage
- Whether the lessons are arranged in a graded manner

On the basis of the feedback the primers were evaluated and the positive and negative aspects in the linguistic as well as nonlinguistic factors have been summarized after the detailed evaluation of each primer.

The critical comments of the teachers were very helpful in suggesting the primer. The major hurdle was to test which method amongst the various being used was the best for teaching Hindi alphabet. Currently, the methods employed by various Boards are:

CBSE Board

Frequency Method

ICSE and UP
Board

Phonetic Similarity method

MP Board

Word Based Method

To select the most appropriate method a test was administered to 240 children. There were 60 children from each of the Boards mentioned earlier. All the children had completed an years learning the alphabet (through different methods depending upon the schools in which they studied). The test was conducted in schools following UP Board, MP Board, the ICSE or the CBSE Board. To make the results more conclusive we selected our subjects keeping in mind factors like gender and socio economic background of the children. To achieve this the number of girls and boys selected in the sample from each kind of school was kept equal. Apart from that the test sought to encompass different kinds of schools. Here by kind of school we meant the distinction between schools in terms of their infrastructure, fee system, training and experience of teachers and the economic background of the students who attend these schools.

The test or questionnaire sought to test the child on its literacy skills (Questionnaire enclosed as Appendix).

The conclusive findings and observations in this study are presented here chapter wise:

Chapter One:

The first section of the chapter which gives us an overview of education down the ages of history reaffirms a few facts which educationists and literacy workers have been debating on since a long time. We find that literacy and the right to education was always in the hands of the person or organization at the top of the power structure. In the Ancient period it was confined to Brahmins;

during the Mughal rule attention to education, if any was given was confined to Mohammedan madarsas and during the British rule education was first denied to natives but later on was given not because the East India Company saw it as their duty but because they needed natives who could do their work. Today, after years of independence we are well aware how political parties change the syllabus to suit their needs and purpose. One such instance is the often talked about history syllabus prescribed by the NCER. Here we do not go into an argument about the views we hold but give this example to show how the.

The nature of education was always functional. In the Vedic and the Mughal Ages it was based on religion and it was only in the modern era, during the British rule that literacy took on a new hue. People started learning English to get government jobs and to be in the good books of the British, and education could be separated from religion, partly if not wholly.

What we notice is changing forms of literacy and the various definitions have been discussed in the second section of this chapter. Literacy has been reconceptualized in the final section and there has been an attempt to offer a definition which does not restrict itself to just learning how 'read and write'. Literacy should be a part of the process by which illiterate people become aware of their personal situation and learn to do something about improving it. Literacy skills which are supposed to empower people can really be made a reality if a literacy gives people practical skills which will lead to empowerment and the empowerment process in turn should in turn create uses for people in their daily lives.

Chapter Two:

In this chapter the various methods used to teach alphabet in various languages are discussed and goes on to test which method is most suitable for teaching Hindi. This is achieved by using the results obtained by administering the questionnaire on the subjects. The following observations and results were obtained.

- The traditional or the phonetic method is most apt for teaching Hindi letters
- Children studying in the Second category schools perform better than children studying in the first category schools
- Girls perform better in learning language than their male counterparts
- In the third category schools boys do better in language than the girls

Chapter Three

The primers of the Boards mentioned above were analyzed. The following general observations were made.

- Most of the private publications, which are used by the ICSE Board are not properly planned

Chapter Four

The new primer offers the following suggestions :

- the alphabet chart should be given at the beginning of the primer
- Phonetic similarity method be followed to teach letters

- One entire page should be devoted to each letter.
- The letters which are not used in Hindi but are retained in the

alphabet chart like **A: ? Ha Ya Sa =** etc can be taught after the alphabet series.

- While introducing a letter the words being taught should begin with that letter itself and the initial letter should not have a vowel marker.

The following points have to be kept in mind while selecting the words to be taught:

- In selecting words, the main stress should be on familiarity of the word. If familiar words with the letter being introduced are unavailable then other words can be included.

- The aim should be to introduce letters through words which have no vowel markers except of course for the basic a sounds.

e.g. while teaching the letter **k** /k/ words like **kmala** /kamal/ which have no vowel marker should be taught

- If such words are not available then words which have vowel markers after the initial letter can be taught.

e.g. to teach the vowel **[i]** the word **[malal]** /iml/ can be used.

A soft copy of the primer is also presented using HTML. It is easy to use and the learner doesn't need to have any special knowledge of computers in using this. The learner is not required to know the HTML code but just needs to

have access to computers. the primer opens at a page which shows all the alphabet chart and from there is a link to each alphabet. A letter each is dealt with on each page and the learner can either go to the next letter or come back to the alphabet chart from any page. The letter taught is always given in a different colour from the rest of the text. This primer would make learning more interesting for the children.

It is hoped that the findings in this study will be helpful in designing teaching materials for the kindergarten children. The primer suggested seeks to overcome the shortcomings of the existing primers and has been made with the help of the inputs given by teachers and parents.

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APPENDIX 1

PART A

Name:

Class:

Age:

Occupation of Father:

Occupation of Mother:

PART B

RECOGNIZING

Single letter:- **ba K h qa Aao**

Two lettered without matras:- **saba cala pr Tt Aama**

Two lettered with matras:- **dala jalt Guana kaOna hvaa**

Three lettered without matras:- **magar plat saD,k lahr
nakla**

Three lettered with matras:- **baairYa Sarlr gamalaa
iknaara dlvaar**

DICTATION

Single letters: **ma ja r la T**

Double lettered words without matras: **mat Gar hla caK
vana**

Double lettered words with matras **pOr ihla kUd nadi sUaK**

Three lettered words without matras: **Kbar mahla Sapqa
phna Apna**

Three lettered words with matras: **iktaba Baraosaa lakD,I**
jahaja maukuT

बाल भारती

भाग 1



APPENDIX 2-B

प्रथम संस्करण

अप्रैल 1997 बैसाख 1919

तीसरा पुनर्मुद्रण

नवंबर 1999 कार्तिक 1921

PD 285T GR

(V A C-70 S)

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सर्वाधिकार सुरक्षित

- ☐ प्रकाशक की पूर्ण अनुमति के बिना इस प्रकाशन के किसी भाग को छापना तथा इलेक्ट्रॉनिकी, मशीनी, फोटोप्रतिलिपि, रिकॉर्डिंग अथवा किसी अन्य विधि से पुनः प्रयोग पद्धति द्वारा उसका संग्रहण अथवा प्रसारण वर्जित है।
- ☐ इस पुस्तक की किसी इस शर्त के साथ की गई है कि प्रकाशक की पूर्ण अनुमति के बिना यह पुस्तक अपने मूल आवरण अथवा जिल्द के अलावा किसी अन्य प्रकार से व्यापार द्वारा उधारी पर, पुनर्विक्रय, या किराए पर न दी जाएगी, न बेची जाएगी।
- ☐ इस प्रकाशन का सही मूल्य इस पृष्ठ पर मुद्रित है। रबड़ की मुहर अथवा चिपकाई गई पट्टी (रिटकर) या किसी अन्य विधि द्वारा अंकित कोई भी संशोधित मूल्य गलत है तथा मान्य नहीं होगा।

एन.सी.ई.आर.टी. के प्रकाशन प्रभाग के कार्यालय

एन.सी.ई.आर.टी. कैम्पस	108, 100 फीट रोड, होस्टेकरे	नवजीवन ट्रस्ट भवन	सी.डब्ल्यू.सी. कैम्पस
श्री अरविंद मार्ग	हेली एक्सटेंशन, बनाशंकरी III इस्टेज	डाकघर नवजीवन	32, बी.टी. रोड, साखचर
नई दिल्ली 110016	बैंगलूर 560085	अहमदाबाद 380014	24 परगना 743179

रु. 25.00

प्रकाशन प्रभाग में सचिव, राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद, श्री अरविंद मार्ग, नई दिल्ली 110 016 द्वारा प्रकाशित गोवर्धन पब्लिशर्स प्रा. लि. गुलाब हाउस, मायापुरी नई दिल्ली 110 064 द्वारा मुद्रित।

भारती

पहली पुस्तक



मध्यप्रदेश पाठ्यपुस्तक निगम

प्रकाशन वर्ष 2001

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	डी.डी. कुलश्रेष्ठ	सूरज नागर
	इंदुबाला पाटनी	डी.पी. खरे (टीकमगढ़)
	आर.सी. भार्गव (भोपाल)	आर.पी. शुक्ला (पन्ना)
	सुरेश तिवारी (बस्तर)	रामलाल सिंह परिहार (नागौद)
	अरुण नामदेव (नागौद)	एस.एस. त्रिपाठी (रायपुर)
	महेश पामल (भोपाल)	

चित्रांकन : मुख पृष्ठ - पुरुषोत्तम पांचाल

अन्य चित्र : अरविन्द भटनागर, पुरुषोत्तम पांचाल, प्रवीण नगरकर, राकेश सोनी

आकल्पन : मीडिया ग्राफिक्स, भोपाल

आभार : परिषद् नीचे लिखे उन सभी व्यक्तियों एवं संस्थाओं की आभारी है जिन्होंने इस पुस्तक के निर्माण में अपना अमूल्य योगदान दिया है- पाठ्य पुस्तक स्थायी समिति की अकादमिक उप-समिति के सदस्य जिनके सुझावों को पाठ्य पुस्तक में सम्मिलित किया गया है। दिगंतर, शिक्षा एवं खेलकूद समिति जयपुर, जिनके अकादमिक सहयोग से वैकल्पिक शाला की पुस्तकें विकसित की गई थीं और जो इन पुस्तकों का आधार बनी हैं। गैर सरकारी संस्थाएँ - एकलव्य, भोपाल एवं श्रम निकेतन, शहडोल, जिनकी कुछ रचनाओं एवं अकादमिक सुझावों को पुस्तक में सम्मिलित किया गया है। अंततः प्राथमिक शिक्षा से जुड़े वे सभी शिक्षक एवं शिक्षाविद् जिन्होंने समय-समय पर पुस्तकों को बेहतर बनाने के लिए अपने अमूल्य सुझाव दिए हैं।

आर्कबर्ड

राष्ट्र-भारती

भाग-1





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द्वारा सुरक्षित हैं ।

प्रथम संस्करण 1995

पुनर्मुद्रण - 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999

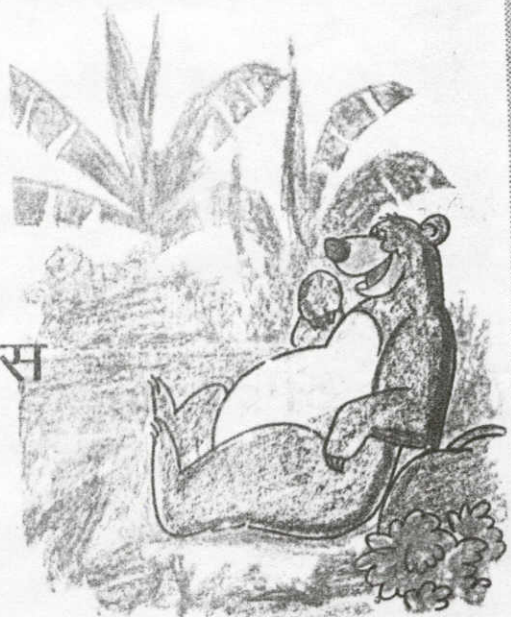
2000, 2001

प्रकाशक

आर्कबर्ड पब्लिकेशन्स

रोजरी कान्वेंट लेन, गणफंड्री,
हैदराबाद - 500 001.
फोन : 3211030, 6503861

PRINTED AT
GOLDEN PRESS PVT. LTD.



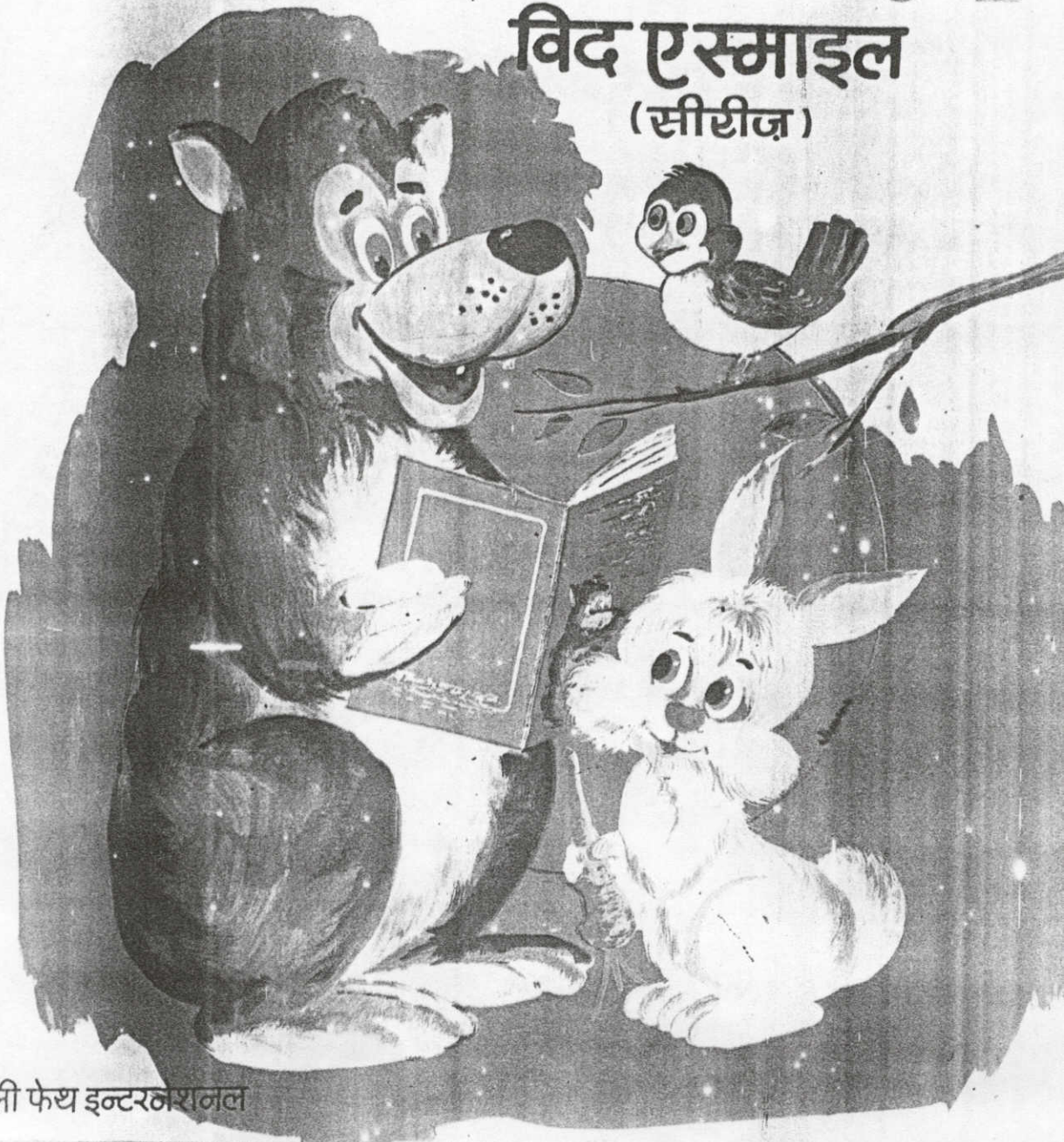
अक्षर मंजरी



म बी डी ग्रुप प्रस्तुति

बोलो क ख गा

विद एस्माइल
(सीरीज़)



हिन्दी सागर प्रवेशिका



APPENDIX 7B

प्रकाशक

आर्कबर्ड पब्लिकेशन्स

5-9-802, रोजरी कॉन्वेंट लेन

गनफाउण्ड्री, हैदराबाद-500001

फोन : 3211030, 6503861

नॉर्थ इण्डिया ज़ोनल ऑफिस

आर्कबर्ड पब्लिकेशन्स

सी-1485, इन्दिरानगर

लखनऊ (उ.प्र.)

आर्कबर्ड पब्लिकेशन्स, 2002

सर्वाधिकार सुरक्षित

प्रथम संस्करण 2002

Printed at : Card Box Company, Offset Printers, Hyd-1, Ph : 3201718



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माया किरण

9



संयोजन	: शिक्षा परियोजना परिषद् तथा राज्य शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्, उ०प्र०
संपादन	: नवीन चन्द्र कबड़वाल, सर्वेन्द्र विक्रम, सुरेश कुमार सोनी, सुदर्शन यादव, अवनीश यादव, सम्पत सिंह, दुर्गा प्रसाद शुक्ल, राज सिंह, मुकेश भार्गव, वीरेन्द्र दुबे, मदन पाण्डेय, जयप्रकाश ओझा, सुरेन्द्र प्रसाद सिंह
परामर्श लेखन	: श्रीमती कल्पना अवस्थी, सुबीर शुक्ला, योगेन्द्र नाथ योगी : अवनीश यादव, राज सिंह, मुकेश भार्गव, सुदर्शन यादव, मदन पाण्डेय, वीरेन्द्र दुबे, सुरेन्द्र प्रसाद सिंह, जयप्रकाश ओझा, शोभा तिवारी, रेनु श्रीवास्तव, निधि श्रीवास्तव, अनीता त्यागी, दिनेश चन्द्र जोशी
चित्रांकन	: दुर्गा दत्त पाण्डेय
कम्प्यूटर कम्पोजिंग	: मनोज कुमार गोयल, दीपक कुमार, केशव शर्मा ले-आउट : लोकेश गुप्ता, कपिल रौतेला (अनुग्राफिक्स, लखनऊ)
आभार	: यहाँ संकलित सामग्री कई स्रोतों से ली गयी है। हम उन सभी के प्रति तथा विशेष रूप से महाराष्ट्र राज्य पाठ्य-पुस्तक उत्पादन एवं पाठ्यक्रम शोध ब्यूरो, पूना, रुचिपूर्ण शिक्षा परियोजना उ०प्र० तथा ब्राक परियोजना बांग्लादेश के भी आभारी हैं।

उत्पादन	
पाठ्य-पुस्तक विभाग	
शिक्षा निदेशालय, बेसिक, लखनऊ (उत्तर प्रदेश)	
राज नियुक्त प्रकाशक	: होलीफेथ इन्टरनेशनल प्रा० लिमिटेड, ई-1820, राजाजीपुरम, लखनऊ (उ०प्र०)
मुद्रक	: होलीफेथ इन्टरनेशनल प्रा० लिमिटेड, बी-9-10, साइट-IV, इंडस्ट्रियल एरिया, साहिबाबाद (उ०प्र०)
शिक्षा सत्र	: 2000 - 2001 हेतु
मुद्रित प्रतियों की संख्या	: 2 लाख
प्रिन्ट साइज	: 15.9 × 22.1 सेमी., ट्रिम साइज 18.4 × 24.1 सेमी., प्रयुक्त कागज का आकार 50.8 × 76.2 सेमी., भार 60 ग्राम प्रति वर्ग सेमी., प्रकार क्रीम बोव ह्वाइट पेपर आई० एस० आई० नं० 1848 - 1991 थर्ड रिवीजन ऐज एमेन्डमेन्ट अप-टू-डेट वाटर मार्क (S) अंकित है।