

**PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS ON ENGLISH READER AND
SUPPLEMENTARY READER NCERT TEXT-BOOKS PRESCRIBED
FOR IX AND X CLASSES**

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According to The Encyclopedia Americana (1976), a text book can be defined as under:

“In the strict sense of the term, a text book is a book that presents a body of knowledge in an organized and usually simplified manner for purposes of learning. The text book is frequently the most important teaching tool because it can determine not only what will be taught but also how it will be taught. Although television and other new media are reviling printed materials of communication, text books remain major resources in schools and colleges.”

Text book as a Tool of Instruction

In spite of the fact that the role of text book in school education is not well appreciated sometimes, it has continued to be an important tool of instruction in the hands of the students and teachers. In a developing country like ours, where the wide use of such instructional material as films, T.V., teaching machines, etc. cannot be thought of in the near future; text book would remain, perhaps, the only tool of instruction in majority of educational institutions for quite a long time to come. It is the most economic. It is used for reinforcement of previous learning and for advance learning and enrichment. Continuity with the text books of previous class is established and carried to the next class to make learning continual. It has been stated by well-known Education Commission (1964-66) as:

“The text book is an effective tool of learning and of diffusion of improved teaching methods. A good text book written by a qualified and competent specialist in the subject, and produced with due regard to quality of printing, illustrations and general get up, stimulates the pupils’ interest and helps the teacher considerably in his work. The provision of quality text books and other teaching material can thus be an effective program for raising standards. The need to emphasize it is all the greater because it requires only a relatively small investment of resources. Moreover, a quality book need not cost appreciably more than one that is indifferently produced”

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NEED FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEXT BOOKS

At present, we find a lot of deterioration in the standards of text books. Faulty and low standard text books are in the hands of our children. The quality of paper is bad, printing is unsatisfactory, material is unrelated and illustrations are poor with numerous printing mistakes. The well-known Education Commission (1964-66) recommended that the text books be nationalized. The commission stated that unfortunately, text book writing and production have not received the attention they deserve. In most school subjects, there is a proliferation of low quality, sub-standard and badly produced books, particularly in the regional languages. This has been due to a number of factors, among which mention may be made of

- the lack of interest shown by top ranking scholars so that the writing of text books has been generally done, in actual practice, by persons whose abilities are far from equal to the task;
- the malpractices in the selection and prescription of text books which defy control;
- the unscrupulous tactics adopted by several publishers;
- the lack of research in the preparation and production of text books; and
- the almost total disregard by private publishers (who are interested only in profits) of the need to bring out ancillary books, such as teachers' guides to accompany text books.

NEED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

It is a hard reality that the text books are the only material our school-going children are exposed to in the school. In other words, the text books are the only reading material for the students in the class room and out of the school life. Also, in a developing country, like India, most of the parents are unable to buy books other than the text books for their wards. So, the significance and importance of text books increases because they are like weapons at the disposal of the teachers for imparting education to the students.

Text books should never be produced and evaluated in a hurry. The process of preparing and publishing text books should be carefully planned, with due provision for try-out and for inviting experts', teachers', children's and parents' reactions and views in the light of which the text books can be revised. English text books have been undergoing changes ever since independence but the evaluation of English text books in our country and particularly in the State of Haryana got limited attention of the research workers. The present English text books

prescribed for classes IX and X in Haryana are newly prescribed text books by the Board of School Education, Haryana, Bhiwani. The evaluation of these books has not been done as yet. The investigator finds the 'Evaluation of English Text books' as a topic of his interest, enthusiasm and choice. Hence, the study.

Statement of the Problem

Obviously, therefore, keeping in view the above considerations, the problem in hand has been specifically enumerated as under:

“EVALUATION OF PRESCRIBED ENGLISH TEXT BOOKS FOR IX AND X
CLASSES IN HARYANA”

Operational Definitions of the Terms used

The terms which have been repeatedly used in this research work are defined or explained as under:

Text book

A text book is defined as a systematic organization and presentation of selected and summarized instructional material, based on the prescribed syllabus, keeping in view the goals of teaching a particular subject.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a process of determining the value of an attribute or a thing in relation to the pre-determined objectives. When applied to English text books, it means finding out the worthwhileness of text books as instructional tool in relation to the course of study and the objectives of the course.

Prescribed English Text Books

'Prescribed' means the English text books of IX and X classes laid down by the authority, i.e., the Board of School Education, Haryana, Bhiwani, which are:

1. English Reader for class X
2. Supplementary Reader for Class X
3. English Reader for Class IX
4. Supplementary Reader for Class IX.

Haryana

Haryana-the geographical unit or territory in the map of India – came into existence on First day of the month of November in the year 1966.

Objectives of the Study

The study has been planned, designed and conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. The first and foremost objective of the study is to analyse the strength and weaknesses of the English text books prescribed for classes IX and X in Haryana.
2. Secondly, to analyse the text books with a view to finding out how far they help in achieving the objectives of teaching English.
3. Thirdly, to analyse the English Readers and Supplementary Readers prescribed for classes IX and X in terms of the following evaluative criteria:

I. Academic Aspects:

- i) Planning of the books;
- ii) Selection of subject-matter;
- iii) Organization and Presentation of subject-matter;
- iv) Language;
- v) Illustrations;
- vi) Exercises; and
- vii) Suggested Readings.

II. Physical Aspects:

- i) Size of the books;
- ii) Type size;
- iii) Paper;
- iv) Printing;
- v) Cover paper;
- vi) Binding; and
- vii) Price.

4. Lastly, to suggest guidelines for the improvement of the text books.

Related Studies

The position in regard to research in improving the quality of text books in India before independence was not very much satisfactory since no significant work had been attempted in this area. With the dawn of independence, the Ministry of Education and numerous other agencies came into the field and conducted some relevant studies. The National Council of Educational Research and Training, popularly known as professional arm of Ministry of Education, Government of India, took the responsibility of producing model text books for the states to follow. Obviously, feeling the necessity, they made deliberate efforts for the scientific evaluation of their own made text books in different subjects. A known academician Dr. Buch (1987) reported that the Department of Text Books, NCERT (1970-72)

conducted studies and developed the basic principles and procedures in the preparation and evaluation of text books separately in different subjects including English. Kher (1972), Lalithamma (1981), Pattabhiram (1973), Ponkshe (1972) and Walvalkar (1971) carried out the evaluation of school text books, while Dharamadhikari (1973) attempted to evaluate teacher's handbooks for work experience. Rastogi and others (1975) developed principles for the preparation of text-books of mother tongue and made a comparative study of certain language text-books.

Sample of Students

An important purpose of the present study is to elicit the responses of the students who have been studying English text books viz., English Reader and Supplementary Reader in IX and X classes. The student population was suitably represented by collecting 80 students of IX and X classes from each of the 16 districts. Obviously, therefore, as many as 1280 students from all the 16 districts comprise the sample in this respect. Half of this number was picked up from urban schools and the remaining half from the schools situated in rural areas. Again, the choice was made in such a way that the ratio between boys and girls students in urban and rural setting was 50:50. Again, the investigator kept in view, for the purpose of giving adequate representation to IX as well as X class students, the boys and girls were 50% from class IX and the remaining 50% from class X. The investigator was particular to divide the sample equally for its different variables to extract responses from students regarding both the prescribed English text books viz., English Reader and Supplementary Reader.

Questionnaire for the Students

Keeping in view the maturity level of the students, two questionnaires were designed for them, one concerning English Reader and another for Supplementary Reader. Each questionnaire consisted of the following three aspects:

- (i) Academic Aspects
- (ii) Physical Aspects
- (iii) Overall Evaluation

Questions pertaining to the academic and physical aspects were of Yes: No type. The respondents were asked to give a tick mark in the box provided with 'Yes' if their answer was positive and in case their answer was negative, they were asked to tick mark in the box provided with 'No'. They were also requested to give suggestions to improve different aspects of the books. At the end, personal data was asked.

Scoring

Scoring was done by taking down the responses from the questionnaires in terms of tallies. In this way, all the answer sheets were dealt with and necessary tallies were marked and counted, and the scores in each column were taken to be final scores. For every item, the sum total of the frequencies was checked off and on and found to be correct.

Statistical Techniques used

The data obtained from the questionnaires was analysed by making use of percentages. In addition, chi-square (Probability of equal distribution) test of significance was also applied to each item of the questionnaire in order to compare the experimentally-obtained results with those to be expected theoretically with reference to the hypotheses.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

English Reader for class X:

1. Majority of the students like the most the first lesson of the book, i.e., 'Footprints without Feet' written by H.G. Wells.
2. Majority of the students find seventh lesson 'A Basketful of Sea-Trout' (a play) written by Neil Grant as most difficult.
3. Regarding outstanding features of the book, students point out that the book is interesting and the style of presentation of subject-matter is clear and simple. They feel that the language of the book is free from mistakes and the exercises are adequate.
4. Regarding major weaknesses of the book, it is remarked that the language of the book is difficult, the cover page is unattractive and the paper used is not of good quality.
5. Students suggest that the language should be made easy, cover page of the book should be made attractive and the paper should be thick and strong.

Supplementary Reader for class X:

1. Majority of the students like the most the first lesson of the book i.e., 'Blackwood House' written by G.C. Thornley.
2. Majority students find last lesson 'Malachi's Cove' written by Anthony Trollope as most difficult.
3. Regarding outstanding features of the book, students point out that the lessons are interesting and the book helps in the learning of English language. They also feel that subject-matter is simple, exercises are adequate, titles are meaningful and the book is free from printing mistakes.

4. Regarding major weaknesses of the book, it is remarked that it is not related to the life and environment of the students, the exercises are difficult, the language is tough and the illustrations are not provided in the book.
5. Students suggest that the content matter of the book should be related to their life and environment, the language and the exercises should be made easy, attractive and useful questions should be provided and some lessons related to Indian scenes should be included in the book.

English Reader for class IX:

1. Most of the students like the most the lesson 'Tom Sawyer' which is the first lesson of the book written by Mark Twain.
2. Almost all the students find eighth lesson, i.e., 'Plants Also Breathe and Feel' as most difficult.
3. Regarding outstanding features of the book, students point out that the lessons are interesting and the book helps in the learning of English language. They also feel that the subject-matter is clear, illustrations are adequate, accurate, and attractive and the book is free from printing mistakes.
4. Regarding major weaknesses of the book, it is felt that the subject-matter, contained in the book, is not related to the life and environment of the students.
5. It is suggested that some lessons which can provide latest knowledge, should be included in the book.

Supplementary Reader for class IX:

1. Almost all the students like the most the first lesson of the book i.e., 'The Qazi's Judgement'.
2. Majority students find 'At The Church Door' written by Guy de Maupassant as most difficult.
3. Regarding outstanding features of the book, students point out that the book helps to promote national integrity and in the learning of English language. They opine that the illustrations contained in the book are adequate, attractive and accurate.
4. Regarding major weaknesses of the book, it is felt that the subject-matter contained in the book is not related to the life and environment of the students.
5. Students suggest that the writing from Indian authors should be included in the book. They also point out that some lessons related to Haryana should be included in the book.

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