

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

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Abstract

No education seems to be worth the name which has not made children at home in the world of books and so related them, mind to mind, with thinkers who have dealt with knowledge. The text book is one of the important aids in the teaching-learning process and has occupied a pivotal role in educating the children. The process of education in most of the schools in India and even in abroad can be summed up in one phrase: 'As the text book, so the teaching and learning.' The International Encyclopedia of Education (1985) points out the importance of text books in the following words:

“The books are the most important resources which teachers and schools have, as they do their work of educating. Indeed, it may be, that the core work of all schooling consists in developing the skills and attitudes associated with the mastery of the ideas and information carried by books without regard to their ‘ultimate’ quality and social significance.”

Describing the importance of text books, Mukerji (1976) says that the text books may be looked upon as the symbol of national culture. Text books are not national symbols in the same sense as Ashoka Chakra, but they are perhaps more revealing of national ideas, ideals and values than the figures on our coins and flags. Unesco (1949) describes the importance of text books as:

“The best planned programs carried out by the most able teachers cannot achieve maximum effectiveness unless implemented by first-class text books....”

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To Patel (1970), a text book may be treated as ‘the teacher in print, nevertheless, it can by no means replace the teacher. Rather, it is to be used to aid and supplement his work. Good (1945) is of the view that a text book is ‘any manual of instruction, a book dealing with a definite subject of study, systematically arranged, intended for use at a specified level of instruction, and used as a principal source of study material for a given course’. Mishra (1970) points out:

“Among various instructional aids such as text books, supplementary books, reference books, maps, charts, film-strips, films, etc., the text book is presumably the most important because it is used in formal as well as informal situations of instruction and also in situations of self-study. This is the cheapest of all the aids enumerated above and this is the only aid available to a large majority of the pupils and also the teachers.”

Singh (1975) writes the importance of text books as under:

“A text book combines in itself a successful teacher, an unimpeachable scholar of the subject, an open-minded method master, a watchful curriculum worker and above all, a disarming and effective communicator in print. The last accomplishment envisaged a sound written expression together with some understanding of graphics and production processes. Since all these faculties are not easy to find in any one person, it is considered proper to get the text book prepared by a panel.”

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), Pattabhram (1973), Ponshe (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 Parents

The investigator was interested in getting the opinions of parents of the children of the two classes IX as well as X, who are educated and help their wards in studies or coach them daily or occasionally as per usual practice in the present set up. It was difficult to get adequate number of such parents particularly from rural area, therefore, it was found advisable to have parents from combined urban and rural areas. In the present study, as many as ten parents of this category who help their wards at home, were identified from each district. It was further assured that their wards belong to IX as well as X classes and their ratio was 50:50. Obviously, therefore, the total number of parents involved in the study has then $16 \times 10 = 160$. It was satisfying again to learn that all the parents gave free and frank opinions regarding both the text marks i.e., English Reader and Supplementary Reader meant for IX and X classes.

Tools employed

For getting the opinions of parents who coach their wards regarding English text books, two questionnaires for parents were evolved, one concerning English Readers and another Supplementary Readers. Each questionnaire consisted of the following two points:

- i) Academic Aspects
- ii) Physical Aspects

Questions pertaining to the academic and physical aspects were of Yes: No type. The respondents were asked to put 'Yes' if their response was positive and in case their answer was negative, they have to say 'No'. At the end of the questionnaire, 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

The study, in hand, has revealed that the academic aspects of the text books viz. the planning, subject-matter, language, etc. are neither relevant nor according to the mental level of the students. It is, therefore, concluded as under:-

- Some of the lessons, specifically, 'Tom Sawyer', 'A Mad Tea Party' and 'Packing for a Holiday' from English Reader meant for class IX are without any theme or do not help in clarifying the theme, if any. It is just like groping in the dark.
- The absence of poems in Supplementary Readers for classes IX as well as X have not been relished, while a few poems given in English Readers do not present rhythmic appeal and hence fail to develop the most essential emotional and aesthetic sense.
- The illustrations which normally help in understanding the theme of the lessons, are conspicuous by their absence in the books meant for X class.
- The exercises are also not according to the examination pattern of the Haryana Board since the system expects essay type as well as objective type questions.
- It is good that the books for further study have been suggested after each lesson but it has been inferred that these suggested books are neither available in the school libraries nor from the market.
- The language used in the books should be simple which may be easily understandable even by the children coming from rural areas.
- The new contents of these books should contain sufficient number of poems preferably written by Indian authors which should present an emotional and aesthetic appeal.
- The exercise which are given at the end of each lesson should be as per requirement of the examinations and be made more comprehensive to have a test of the grammar as well as language.
- The list of books for Suggested Reading for each lesson should be given only if the same can be available in the market. In this connection, it is strongly recommended that national and state agencies like NCERT, SCERTs and State Boards of School Education

should produce such material for students as well as teachers and make them readily available in the market.

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