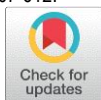# A Comparative study of reading skills among elementary school children at Tirupati

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Abstract: *The aim of the study was to compare the reading skills among urban and rural elementary school children. The study to compare the reading skills between rural and urban elementary school children and to determine the association between reading skills of urban and rural elementary school children with the demographic variables. A descriptive design was adopted. Fifty urban and fifty rural elementary school children were selected by using cluster random sampling technique in Tirupati, to assess the reading skills by using the structured questionnaire.*

I.INTRODUCTION

The children of today are the future of tomorrow; this powerful statement assumes special significance of children (0-14 years) comprise one third of the total population in the country. Education is a powerful tool which prepares the children to become wise leaders. It makes them open to new ideas and become lifetime learners2. The importance of education in India is indeed rising with passing time. Though India has always been a great source of learning for many years, it still needs to improve not just on the quality of education but also on the number of people being educated. The 2011 census, however, indicated a 2001–2011 decadal literacy growth of 9.2%, which is the slower than the growth seen during the previous decade.[3]

There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India: effective literacy rates (age 7 and above) in 2011 were 82.14% for men and 65.46% for women4. Out of every 100 children, 19 continue to be out of school. Of every 100 children who enroll, 70 drop out by the time they reach the secondary level. Of every 100 children who drop out of school, 66 are girls.[8] Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand text, and it is an important for elementary students.13.

II.MATERAIL AND METHODS

Research design: Comparative study. One group of urban elementary school children and one group of rural elementary children was adopted for this study.

Setting:The study was conducted in elementary schools Tirupati, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh, South India.Total number of 4th class students -100 students

Population: Boys and girls were studying 4th standard in Elementary schools, Tirupati.

Sample size: 5o urban elementary school children and 50 rural elementary school children were selected.

Sampling Technique: Cluster random sampling technique each school was considered as a cluster and children were selected by simple random sampling technique.

Criteria for sample selection
Inclusion criteria:
- Who can speak, read and write Telugu
- Age group of 9-10 years

Exclusion criteria:
- Children more than 10 years
- Children less than 9 years
- Children who don't know to read and write Telugu
- Children who is having deaf, dumb and blindness

Instrument

The study was carried out by using a structured interview schedule.

Score interpretation:

The scores are interpreted in the following manner.
- < 50% below average
- 50-70% average
- 75% above average

Data Collection Procedure:

Permission was obtained from M.E.O of Tirupati and head ministers of Elementary schools, Tirupati.

On the first day, the investigator was introduced to the group of 100 urban elementary school children from 4th standard, assigned for the study. Fifty children were selected on simple random sampling technique. They were divided into 10 groups. The next day demographic data was collected from all fifty children by interview method and from 01-04-2013 to 11-04-2013.The investigator was introduced to the group of 100 rural elementary school children from 4th standard, assigned for the study. Fifty children were selected on simple random sampling technique. They were divided into 10 groups. The next day demographic data was collected from all fifty children by interview method and from 12-04-2013 to 24-04-2013.For each student 45 minutes was allotted for collection of data. The children were cooperative and attentive. The schedule which was adopted for the data collection procedure is as follows.

Data Analysis:

After giving a score for each individual child, results were tabulated. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis of the reading assessment tool between urban and rural schools. Descriptive statistics such as percentage was calculated for demographic data. Percentage mean and standard deviation were used. Inferential statistics of chi-square test was used for analyzing the association between demographic characteristics of urban and rural school children with that of the tool scores. Paired't' test was used for analyzing the difference between the urban and rural schools.

III.RESULT

The data collected from 4th standard elementary school children regarding the reading skills were tabulated, analyzed and presented in the tables and were interpreted. The data obtained was classified in to 4 sections.

Table-3: Shows that out of 50 urban elementary school children, 58% (29) were 9years, 28% (14) were 10 years, and 14% (7) were 11years. Among them 56% (28) were boys, 44% (22) were girls. Regarding type of family 68% (34) were living in nuclear family, 32% (16) were living in joint family. Regarding the religion 72% (36) were Hindu, 6% (3) were Christian. With regard place of residence 100% (50) were living in Urban. In relation to number of children in family none of them have one child, 2 %(1) were have more than three children. Regarding the distance between home and school 38% (19) were have ½ Km, 10% (20) were have more than 1Km. In relation to the occupation of the father 42% (21) were Laborer, 30% (15) were Business. In relation to the occupation of mother 42% (21) were Home maker, 24% (12) were Business. Pertaining to education of father 24% (12) were illiterate, 30% (15) were collegiate, regard to education of mother 40% (20) were illiterate, 4 (2) were collegiate. In relation to the habit of reading 100% (50) were had reading habit. Pertaining to type of books 78% (39) were had habit of reading Text books, 22% (11) were had the habit of reading Story books. In relation to how many hours they spent for reading 7% (14) were ½ hour, 20% (10) more than 2hours.with regard to how many times you read to get comprehension 10% (5) were get comprehension by reading one time, 48% (24) were get comprehension by reading more than two times.

Out of 50 rural elementary school children, 42% (21) were 9years, 50% (25) were 10 years, and 8% (4) were 11years. Among them 60% (30) were boys, 40% (20) were girls. Regarding type of family 50% (25) were living in nuclear family, 32% (16) were living in joint family. Regarding the religion 56% (28) were Hindu, 8% (4) were Christian. With regard place of residence 100% (50) were living in Rural. In relation to number of children in family none of them having one child, 8% (4) were having more than three. Regarding the distance between home and school 8% (4) were have ½ Km, 24% (12) were have more than 1Km. In relation to the occupation of the father 42% (21) were Laborer, 5% (10) were Business. In relation to the occupation of mother 74% (37) were Home maker, none of were doing business. Pertaining to education of father 40% (20) were illiterate, 26% (13) were collegiate, regard to education of mother 38% (19) were illiterate, 16% (8) were collegiate. In relation to the habit of reading 100% (50) were had reading habit. Pertaining to type of books 52% (26) were had habit of reading Text books, 48% (24) were had the habit of reading Story books. In relation to how many hours they spent for reading 10% (5) were 1 hour, 36% (18) more than 2hours. Regarding how many times you read to get comprehension none of them get comprehension by reading one time 72% (36) were by reading more than two times.

Table-3: Distribution Of Demographic Variables Among Urban And Rural Elementary School Children

S.NO	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE		URBAN		RURAL	
			NO	%	NO	%
1.	Age	a) 9 years	29	58	21	42
		b)10 years	14	28	25	50
		c)11 years	7	14	4	8
2.	Gender	a)Boy	28	56	30	60
		b)Girl	22	44	20	40
3.	Type of family	a) Nuclear Family	34	68	25	50
		b) Joint family	16	32	16	32
		c) Single parent	-	-	-	-
		d) Extended family	-	-	9	18
4.	Religion	a) Hindu	36	72	28	56
		b)Muslim	11	22	18	36
		c)Christian	3	6	4	8
		d)Any other	-	-	-	-
5.	Place of residence	a)Urban	50	100	50	100
		b)Rural	-	-	-	-
		c)Semi urban	-	-	-	-
		d)Urban slums	-	-	-	-
6.	Number of children in the family	a)One	-	-	-	-
		b)Two	33	66	31	62
		c)Three	16	32	15	30
		d)More than three	1	2	4	8
7.	Distance between home and school	a)1/2 KM	19	38	4	8
		b)1KM	21	42	34	68
		c)More than one kilometer	10	20	12	24
8.	Occupation of father	a)Laborer	21	42	21	42
		b)Framer	6	12	16	32
		c)Employee	8	16	8	16
		d)Business	15	30	5	10
9.	Occupation of the mother	a)Home maker	21	42	37	74
		b)Laborer	13	26	13	26
		c)Employee	4	8	-	-
		d)business	12	24	-	-
10.	Educational status of father	a)Illiterate	12	24	20	40
		b)Primary education	18	36	17	34
		c)Secondary education	5	10	-	-
		d)collegiate	15	30	13	26
11.	Educational status of mother	a)Illiterate	20	40	19	38
		b)Primary education	18	36	18	36
		c)Secondary education	10	20	5	10
		d)collegiate	2	4	8	16
12.	Do you have the habit of reading	a)Yes	50	100	50	100
		b)No	-	-	-	-
13.	If yes which type of books you like to read	a)Text books	39	78	26	52
		b)Story books	11	22	24	48
		c)Magazines	-	-	-	-
		d)News paper	-	-	-	-
14.	How much time do you spent for reading	a)1/2 hour	7	14	5	10
		b)1 hour	22	44	12	24
		c)2 hours	11	22	15	30
		d)More than two hours	10	20	18	36
15.	How many times you read to get good comprehension	a)1 time	5	10	-	-
		b)2 times	3	6	-	-
		c)3 times	18	36	14	28
		d)More than three times	24	48	36	72

Table:4 indicates that out of 50 urban elementary school children 14% (7) below average, 56% (28) had average, and 30% (15) above average reading skills. Out of 50 rural elementary school children 52% (26) below average, 32% (16) had average, and 16% (8) above average reading skills

Table: 4 Distributions Of Scores Of Reading Skills Among Urban Elementary School Children.

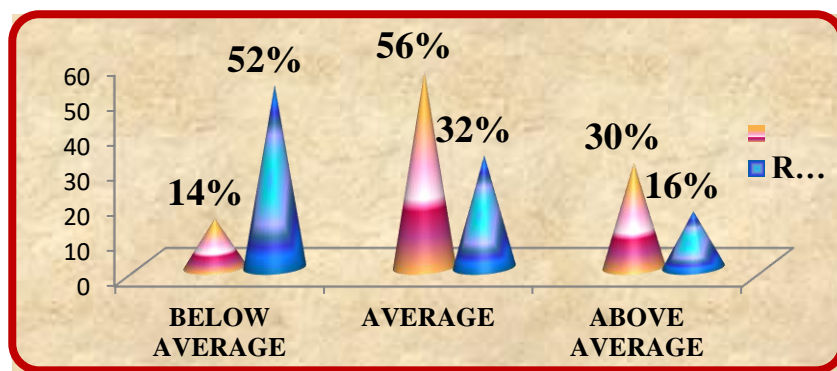| S.NO	VARIABLE	BELOW AVERAGE		AVERAGE		ABOVE AVERAGE	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
1.	Reading skills of urban elementary school children	7	14	28	56	15	30
2.	Reading skills of rural elementary school children	26	52	16	32	8	16

Table: 5 Comparison Of Reading Skills Between Urban And Rural Elementary School Children.

Mean and standard deviation of urban and rural elementary school children reading skills scores

SL.NO	VARIABLES	URBAN		RURAL		PAIRED 't' VALUE
		Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	
1.	Word attack skill	4.940	0.240	4.920	0.244	0.388
2.	Fluency	2.360	1.425	1.900	0.953	1.897
3.	Critical reading skill	4.460	1.249	3.720	1.400	2.789**
4.	Comprehension skill	1.660	0.848	1.380	0.753	1.746
5.	Reading with comprehension	4.440	0.760	3.600	0.070	6.458**
	TOTAL	17.920	3.116	15.500	3.005	3.953**
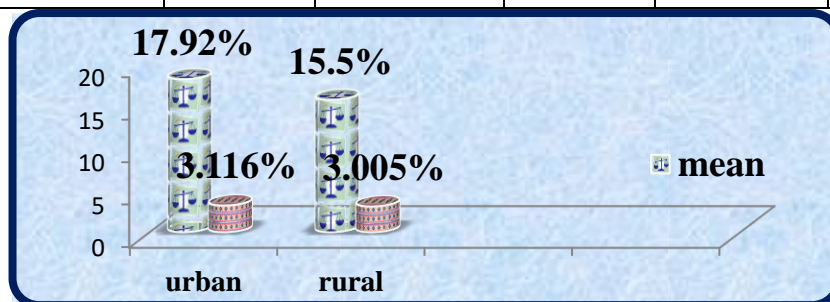
Significance:

** = Significant at 0.01 level

* = Significant at 0.05 level

IV. DISCUSSION

The present study mainly concentrates on reading skills among elementary school children. The problem statement of this study is **"comparative study of reading skills among elementary school children"**.

Fifty urban and fifty rural children of 4th standard were selected by cluster random sampling technique. A structured tool was used to assess the level of reading skills elementary school children.

The first objective of the study was to assess the reading skills among urban and rural elementary school children.

Table: 3 revealed that out of 50 urban elementary school children 14% (7) below average, 56% (28) had average, and 30% (15) above average reading skills. Out of 50 rural elementary school children 52% (26) below average, 32% (16) had average, and 16% (8) above average reading skills.

The present study was supported by a study conducted in the year 2012 conducted a study on Developmental relations between reading fluency and reading comprehension. A longitudinal study conducted from Grade 1 to Grade 2. From a developmental framework, relations among list reading fluency, oral and silent reading fluency, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension might be expected to change as children's reading skills develop. They examined developmental relations among these constructs in a latent-variable longitudinal study of first and second graders. Results showed that list reading fluency was uniquely related to reading comprehension in Grade 1, but not in Grade 2, after accounting for text reading fluency (oral or silent) and listening comprehension. In contrast, text reading fluency was uniquely related to reading comprehension in Grade 2, but not in Grade 1, after accounting for list reading fluency and listening comprehension. When oral reading fluency and silent reading fluency were compared, oral reading

fluency was uniquely related to reading comprehension after accounting for silent reading fluency in Grade 1, whereas silent reading fluency was uniquely related to reading comprehension after accounting for oral reading fluency in Grade 2. [25]

The second objective of the study was to compare the reading skills between rural and urban elementary school children.

Table: 4 show that there is a significant deference in the levels of reading skills between urban and rural elementary school children at P<0.01

The present study was supported by a study conducted in a year 2009 relationship between reading/writing skills and cognitive abilities among Japanese primary-school children: normal readers versus poor readers (dyslexics).Four hundred and ninety-five Japanese primary-school children aged from 8 (Grade-2) to 12 (Grade-6) were tested for their abilities to read/write in Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji, for their size of vocabulary and for other cognitive abilities including arithmetic, visuo-spatial and phonological processing. Percentages of the children whose reading/writing scores fell below the −1.5SD cut-off differ according to the scripts—Hiragana: 0.2% for reading and 1.6% for writing, Katakana: 1.4% and 3.8%, and Kanji: 6.9% and 6%, respectively. Further, for the normal children, the older the age, the better they performed on cognitive tasks, while the reading/writing disability (RWD) group (below −1.5SD) showed a weaker relationship between the age and the performance level. It was also revealed that for the normal children, the "vocabulary size" was the most potent predictor variable in accounting for Kanji word reading performance for all grades except Grade-6, for whom nonword reading/repetition were also significant predictor variables. In contrast, for Kanji word writing, generally other writing related variables were better predictor variables. The RWD group however showed different patterns of results. Thus the data from the normal and RWD children in the current cohort were discussed in terms of the current theories of reading, and developmental dyslexia. [32]

To determine the association between reading skills of urban and rural elementary school children with the demographic variables.

Table : 5 shows that there was a statistically significant association exists between the levels of reading skills among urban elementary school children with their age, number of children in their family and education of father at P<0.05 level and education of mother, time spent for reading and frequency of reading to get comprehension at P<0.01 level.

Table: 6 revealed that there was a statistically significant association exists between the levels of reading skills among urban elementary school children with their age, gender, type of family, number of children in their family occupation of father, educational status of father and mother, type books like to read and time spent for reading at P<0.01 level and religion and distance between home and school at P<0.05 level.

The present study was supported by a study conducted in the year 2001 on factors influencing reading literacy at the primary school level. The objective of this study is to find out the reasons behind the low level of reading literacy among primary school students. The data from IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2001 are analyzed. And the main conclusions are drawn that the socioeconomic situation of the family has a great impact on students reading literacy as well as parents' education and reading aloud to a child at the preschool age. Students high achieving in reading literacy usually like reading for their own enjoyment and come from families where parents spend a lot of time on reading. [21]

V.CONCLUSION

The study was to assessed the level of reading skills among urban and rural elementary school children, at Tirupati.

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