

Role of Pakistan Reading Project (PRP) in Promoting Urdu Reading Skill at Primary Level in Azad Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract

This study was arranged to compare the performance of PRP schools and Non-PRP schools in promoting Urdu reading skills of the learners at the primary level in District Kotli AJ&K. The objectives of the study were to compare improvement in Urdu reading skills of the learners at primary level in PRP and non-PRP Schools and to compare gender wise, area wise improvement in Urdu reading skills of the learners at primary level in PRP and non-PRP schools. The population of the study consisted of all 410 PRP schools (256 male 154female) and 620 Non-PRP Schools (309 male &311 female) of Dist. Kotli in AJ&K. Four PRP schools and four non- PRP schools (2 boys &2 girls) were selected randomly. In this way, total eight (8) schools were selected and total students were 191. The self-made test was made as a research instrument for this study. Data collection was made through a personal visit. Data were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation and independent sample t-test. The performance of PRP Schools is above than average marks in all reading components while Non- PRP Schools is above than in three reading components (comprehension, vocabulary and print concept) and below average in three reading components. On the basis of analysis and findings conclusion were drawn the students studying in PRP Schools were better than the students studying in Non-PRP Schools with respect to Urdu reading skills in District Kotli AJ&K. Boys were better than girls in PRP & non-PRP Schools, urban was better than rural students in PRP Schools and rural were slightly better than urban in Non-PRP Schools in Urdu reading skills. The findings, analysis, and conclusions give some ideas in improving Urdu reading skills. Education department with the help and co-operation of Government should provide the opportunities for the teachers to gain training about modern techniques of PRP. The

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government should upgrade their teachers and Headteachers regarding coaching according to the modern era. Department of education should organize a proper ongoing training for their teachers and Headteachers. These Urdu reading components and techniques of PRP should be the part of the curriculum of AJK as well in Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

The language consists of signs and regulations of meaning that unite these symbols, which can be used to produce an immeasurable set of messages. Each country needs some identification tags. Language is the key to recognize any country. Pakistan is a federation of four provinces, each with its own regional language. Urdu is a national language that speaks and understands in all Pakistan as well as in A.J & K. The national language creates a feeling of unity and national cohesion. The people speak different languages in different provinces. However, the Urdu is used and understood in all the provinces of Pakistan and in A.J & K. Moreover to the science subjects, the normal teaching in the country is Urdu (Urdu Committee, 2013).

The Pakistan Reading Project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is applied by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and its partners (Creative International United World Learning and Rural Management Institute), a Five-Year Project for Regional and Regional Departments of Supportive Education (DOE) are spread throughout Pakistan to improve children's reading skills in the first and second grades. The project will achieve this through three distinct but interrelated components that work together to influence the quality of early education: a better classroom reading learning environment, improved policies, reading systems and community support for reading in Pakistan. The project designs to enhance the quality of education and reading an assessment by supporting in-service teacher education by providing an ongoing professional development model for in-service teachers and providing additional teaching materials, that suitable for primary school teachers. The project strategy includes support for the Pakistani government's work in each region and region, including AJK and GB. Achieve these goals. To ensure continued improvement in the quality of reading education in Pakistan, the project focuses on building the capacity of provincial and regional government stakeholders (Dawn, 2014).

According to ASER report, 2012 prepared by after the survey of 551 schools in an Azad Jammu and Kashmir 35% students of class 5 could not read the history of class 2 in Urdu, 52% of class3 students could not the sentence and almost 48% children of class 2 could not read Urdu. Pakistan Reading Project was launched in District Kotli in 2015 with rich reading material and modern teaching techniques and strategies. So the study was arranged to compare its effects on readers in improving reading skills in Urdu.

In the Kotli region, the PPR began the intervention in May 2015. In the framework of the PRP-Ministry of Education mutual consultation, 741 teachers (438 male & 303 female) were selected to enter 410 schools (256 male and 154 female) in the first and second degrees. According to the admission data of the EMIS 2014 report, the school Teachers were selected and tried to achieve the project goal through the PRP project, "Improving the learning environment of classroom reading" (Shahid, 2016-17).

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Statement of the Problem

The national language of Pakistan and Kashmir is Urdu. It is used in offices, courts, literature, and education. The aim of Pakistan Reading Project (PRP), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is to promote Urdu reading skills in Azad Jammu and Kashmir at Elementary Schools level. It helps the education industry and provides students with modern materials for their learning facilities. The aim of this study was to evaluate the performance of the learners of Pakistan Reading Project schools and compare the performance of the learners with Non-PRP schools.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follow;

1. To evaluate improvement in Urdu reading skills of the learners at the primary level in PRP and Non-PRP Schools.
2. To compare gender-wise improvement in Urdu reading skills of the learners at primary level in PRP Schools and Non-PRP Schools.
3. To compare area wise improvement in Urdu reading skills of the learners at the primary level in PRP Schools and Non-PRP Schools.

Research Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learners studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Print Concept.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learners studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Awareness of Phonemic.

H₀3: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learners studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Phonics.

H₀4: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learners studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Comprehension.

H₀5: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learners studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Fluency.

H₀6: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learners studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Vocabulary.

H₀7: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of learners studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Urdu Reading Skills.

Significance of Study

This study might be fruitful for the elementary learners. They may learn Urdu through modern materials and new techniques of PRP. It might be beneficial for teachers and parents. Teachers can use its modern material in teaching to make the lesson more effective. It might be proved good for head teachers. They can make implement of this program in their schools to improve the classroom learning environment for reading through improved reading techniques. It would provide guidance for curriculum development bureau to make a change in curriculum. This study may find out the contribution of Pakistan Reading Project for improving Urdu reading skills for early grade learners.

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Importance of Urdu

Language plays an important role in learning, helps to communicate and understand a topic. In fact, the national identity of the nation lies in its national language, while the national language clearly indicates the national identity of the nation. 1973 the Pakistani constitution proclaims that Urdu as the national language of Pakistan and has provided the necessary provisions for the use of Urdu for official and other purposes within 15 years of its establishment (GOP, 1973).

The national language is a clear indicator of the country's national identity. The Pakistani Constitution of 1973 promulgated Urdu as the national language of Pakistan. According to the provisions of the Constitution article 145 Azad Jammu and Kashmir (1974), the official language of AJ and K is Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, and can be spoken and understood throughout the country, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Article 145, 1974). On September 8, 2015, on Tuesday, the Supreme Court of Pakistan had issued an order to the federal and provincial governments to use Urdu as the official language of the country. The judges distributed orders to the federal and provincial governments, strictly complying with the court's note for the implementation of Urdu as the official language of the country (Dawn September 8, 2015).

Introduction of Pakistan Reading Project (PRP)

USAID-funded Pakistan reading project in Pakistan. CRS project in Pakistan to activate and improve the effectiveness of corporate and philanthropic social responsibility, and should identify best practices and social responsibility models for companies, private sector organizations of partners and strong and implement reliable links between government, philanthropists and civil society. In order to improve corporate social responsibility for inclusive growth in Pakistan, it is necessary to generate related knowledge, generate synergies and build an enabling environment for the three sectors of society working together in partnership.

Project in AJ&K

The annual report on the state of education (ASER) -2012 prepared after the survey of 551 AJK schools revealed that 35% of children in class 5 cannot read the history of class 2 in Urdu. The reading shows that 52% of class 3 students could not read the sentence and almost 48% did not. According to the report, in 40% of the public schools surveyed, class 2 students sat with other classes. Although the global literacy rate of Kotli is 73%, which is satisfactory, in light of the previous evaluation, the situation is very bad from the point of view of reading. Poor infrastructure, lack of basic classroom facilities, stagnant adoption of innovative and effective teaching methods and little attention to pre-school education have led to still weak learning. For many years in Kotli, the teacher did not have the opportunity to receive on-the-job training or professional development. To remedy this situation, the Kotli District was selected for this intervention as part of the reading project in Pakistan (Annual Report of PRP, 2016).

PRP Launched in District Kotli

In the Kotli Reading District Project in Pakistan, interventions began in May 2015. 741

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teachers (438 male, 303 female) were selected from the first and second grades of 410 schools (256 male, 154 female) through of mutual consultations between the Rural Education Department and the District's Department of Education (256male,154female) for this intervention. Based on data from the 2010 EMIS Report, schools and teachers were selected; an attempt was made through the PRP project to achieve the project's goal of improving the classroom learning environment for reading.

The core objective of componen is to improve classroom learning environment for reading by providing skills to teachers through high-quality education, training and continuous professional development, supporting improvements to in-service education, provide a model for teacher professional development for in-service teachers and introducing new instructional methods, materials, and resources to support improved reading outcomes for children in primary grades (Shahid, 2016-17).

Reading

Reading is a skill that involves the ability to make sense of words and understand the meaning of those words. A learner can easily read the written words, sentences and context (Module, 2015)

Accuracy

Students can correctly pronounce every word in the story. They can do the decoding and blending easily and correctly (Paris, 2005).

Fluency

Fluency refers to student rates and comprehensive accuracy scores. The time spent by participants in each story is added to the accuracy for fluency. An early reader can read 52 to 60 words in a minute (Bashir & Hook, 2009).

Comprehension

Absorption is the relevance of the students' answers to the questions about each story. The learners can comprehend the text that was taught them and answer the questions about the (Nuttall, 1996).

Comprehension

Important things to understand the concept of words three types of education should pay attention to problems useful things to use and see in the words of students but both to express in more than one meaning word or language-difficult words. The teachers' conscious speech and interest in students create their words of growth, and their meaning and strength can be useful. There are many readers who know the words of the senses and learn very well. The word consciousness develops in many ways the Reader:

- Taking into account the Author's choice
- Play words (and examples of puns and speeches)
- Search for the source of the word
- Find examples that use words (Osborn, 2001).

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Fluency

Flow provides a bridge between word recognition and understanding. Teacher for students to read English language conversation and flow is the key ingredient for success as a whole in terms of students need to evaluate to determine (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Components of Pakistan Reading Project

The Reading Project in Pakistan contains seven legible components. These compositional skills are also important at all levels of education. Some of the first series are more important, and some are more important in the later series. The Reading Project in Pakistan contains seven legible components.

Print Concept

Before children start learning to read, they need to understand the concepts of written letters and words. When students understand the concept of printing, they can begin to develop their skills to read the other elements (Module 2014).

Phonemic Awareness

The student can recognize the sound of every symbol (letter) which he utters or his teacher. A word is an audio activity, which means that students understand and, recognize every letter in the word. It is about the letters sound. (Module1, 2014, p-126).

Phonics

Each character in the alphabet has a sound or sound. In languages such as English, some sounds can be represented by multiple characters in/k/audio. In addition, a character set can sometimes produce a sound, such as "CK" or "TH" in English. Phonics was a major subject in during many years of our past. The use of phonics independent was different from any other method. With the help of this method the student can easily sound out the long difficult word but unable to understand what was written. A learner of 2 class by using Jalongo method spelled words phonetically (Janlongo, 1998).

Fluency

Use meaningful phrases to read phrases correctly and quickly. As students begin to read, they use a part of the brain to keep their work memory alive. Working memory can hold only 7 items for a few seconds to pronounce the correct fluency of words and at least 52 words in a minute (www.Pk.readingproject).

Comprehension

The above components help people understand the written or spoken text. There are asked questions about the read contexts which are consisted of deep and superficial questions (Module3, 2015, P-59).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study design was comparative by nature. The test was taken to evaluate the performance of the PRP project. The results were compared with Non-PRP schools.

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Population of the study

The population of the study consisted of all 410 PRP schools (256 male 154female) and 626 Non-PRP Schools (314 male &312 female). The numbers of the students in PRP schools were (5147 male &4742 female) and Non-PRP Schools were (6180male &9330female). The detail of the population was explained in table 1.2 which is as follow;

Sample of the Study

Types of schools	Male	Female	Total
PRP Schools	2	2	4
Non PRP Schools	2	2	4
Total	4	4	8

In this way total eight (8) schools were to be selected and total students expected were 200 but only 191 students participated in the test.

Sample of the Study (Students)

Kinds of Students	Male	Female	Total
PRP Schools	51	48	99
Non PRP Schools	48	44	92
Total	99	92	191

In this way191 students were selected through universal sampling. 99 students (51male &48 female) were selected from PRP Schools and 92 students (48 male& 44 female) were selected from Non PRP Schools.

Reading Performance of PRP and Non-PRP Schools

Reading Performance of PRP Schools

Components	Total Marks	Average Marks	Means of Obtained Marks
1 Print concept	45	22.5	29.22
2 Phonemic Awareness	35	17.5	23.42
3 Phonics	10	5	6.94
4 Comprehension	20	10	11.48
5 Fluency	20	10	10.59
6 Vocabulary	20	10	14.57

Table shows total marks and average marks of grade II students in PRP schools. Table shows that obtained marks of students were 29.22 out of 45 in print concept. In components of awareness of phonics students got 23.42 marks out of 35. In phonic components, average marks of grade II students were 6.94 out of 10. Moreover, mean of obtained marks of students were 11.48, 10.59 and 14.57 out of 20 from each components. These obtained marks show that students got above average marks in all six reading components.

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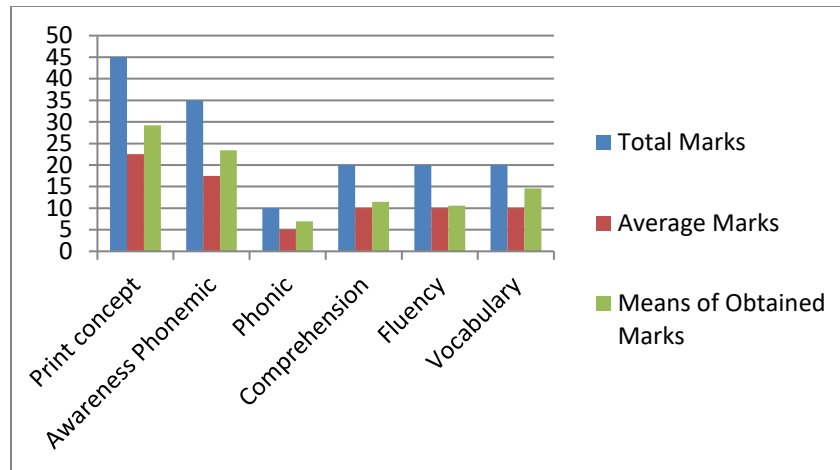
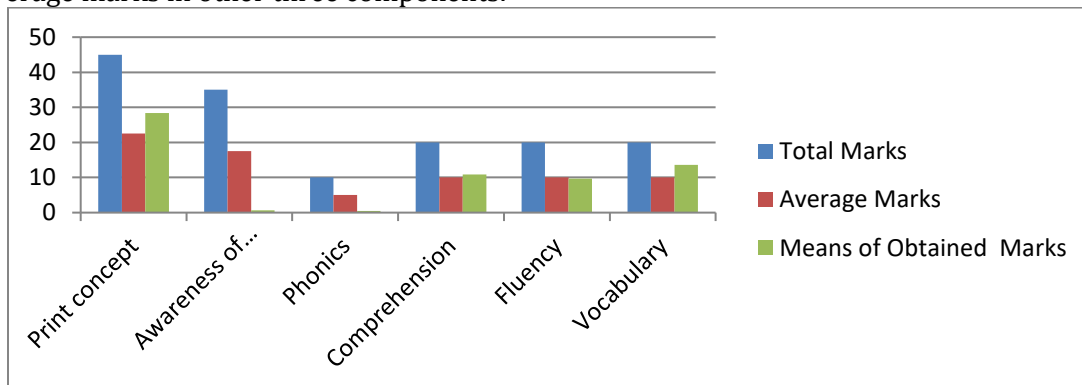


Figure Performance of PRP Schools in Urdu Reading Components

Reading Performance of Non PRP Schools

Sr. No.	Components	Total Marks	Average Marks	Means of Obtained Marks
1	Print concept	45	22.5	28.40
2	Awareness of Phonemic	35	17.5	.68
3	Phonics	10	5	.51
4	Comprehension	20	10	10.91
5	Fluency	20	10	9.71
6	Vocabulary	20	10	13.6

Table shows total marks and average marks of grade II students in Non- PRP schools. Table shows that obtained marks of students were 28.4 out of 45 in print concepts. In components of awareness of phonics students got .68 marks out of 35. In phonic components, average marks of grade II students were .51 out of 10. Moreover, mean of obtained marks of students were 10.91, 9.71 and 13.6 out of 20 from each components. These obtained marks show that students got above average marks in all three reading components while they got below average marks in other three components.



Performance of Non- PRP Schools in Urdu Reading Components

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Data analysis comparing PRP and Non-PRP Schools

H₀1: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP Schools and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Print Concept.

Statistical Test: Independent Sample t-test

Group Wise Comparison of Print Concepts

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
PRP	99	29.22	14.518	.463	0.644
Non PRP	92	28.40	9.600		

df= 171.119

Table reveals results of independent sample t-test. It made clear that there was no statistical difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP schools (N=99, Mean=29.22 and SD=14.518) and Non-PRP schools (N=92, Mean=28.40 and SD=9.600), $t(171.119) = 0.463$, $p=0.644 > 0.05$. Although Table 4.3 also indicated that students studying in PRP schools (N=99, Mean=29.22 and SD=14.518) were slightly better than the students studying in Non-PRP schools (N=92, Mean=28.40 and SD=9.600).

H₀4: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Comprehension.

Statistical Test: Independent Sample t-test

Group-wise comparison of Comprehension

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
PRP	99	11.49	7.626		
Non-PRP	92	10.91	6.848	0.556	0.579

df= 188.785

Table discloses results of independent sample t-test. It elucidated that there was no statistical difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP schools (N=99, Mean=11.49, and SD=7.626) and Non-PRP schools (N=92, Mean=10.91 and SD=6.848), $t(188.785) = 0.556$, $p=0.579 > 0.05$. Although Table 4.6 also indicated that students studying in PRP schools (N=99, Mean=11.49, and SD=7.626) were slightly better than the students studying in Non-PRP schools (N=92, Mean=10.91, and SD=6.848).

H₀5: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Fluency.

Statistical Test: Independent Sample t-test

Group-wise Comparison of Fluency

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
PRP	99	10.59	8.379		
Non-PRP	92	9.71	8.234	0.731	0.466

df= 188.404

Table indicates results of independent sample t-test. It elucidated that there was no statistical difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP schools (N=99, Mean=10.59, and SD=8.379) and Non-PRP schools (N=92, Mean=9.71 and SD=8.234), $t(188.404) = 0.731$, $p=0.466 > 0.05$. Although Table 4.7 also indicated that students studying in PRP schools (N=99, Mean=10.59, and SD=8.379) were slightly better than the students studying in Non-

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PRP schools (N=92, Mean=9.71, and SD=8.234).

H₀₆: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Vocabulary.

Statistical Test: Independent Sample t-test

Table Group-wise comparison of Vocabulary

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
PRP	99	14.57	4.741	1.420	0.157
Non-PRP	92	13.60	4.669		

df= 188.353

Table point out results of independent sample t-test. It elucidated that there was no statistical difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP schools (N=99, Mean=14.57, and SD=4.741) and Non-PRP schools (N=92, Mean=13.60 and SD=4.669), $t(188.353) = 1.420$, $p = 0.157 > 0.05$. Although Table 4.8 also indicated that students studying in PRP schools (N=99, Mean=14.57, and SD=4.741) were slightly better than the students studying in Non-PRP schools (N=92, Mean=13.60 and SD=4.669).

H₀₇: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP and Non-PRP Schools with respect to Urdu Reading Skills.

Statistical Test: Independent Sample t-test

Table Group-wise comparison of Urdu Reading Skills

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
PRP	99	96.23	46.883	5.744	0.000
Non-PRP	92	63.82	29.802		

df= 167.622

Table indicates results of independent sample t-test. It elucidated that there was a statistical difference in the mean scores of students studying in PRP schools (N=99, Mean=96.23, and SD=46.883) and Non-PRP schools (N=92, Mean=63.82 and SD=29.802), $t(167.622) = 5.744$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. Table 4.9 also indicated that students studying in PRP schools ((N=99, Mean=96.23 and SD=46.883) were significantly better than the students studying in Non-PRP schools (N=92, Mean=63.82 and SD=29.802).

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of findings and analysis following conclusions were drawn;

1. Students of PRP schools fall in category of above average in all six reading components in PRP Schools. The students reading in Non-PRP Schools obtained above average marks in three reading components (print concept, vocabulary and comprehension) and got below average marks in three reading components (awareness of phonemic, phonics and fluency).
2. Student studying in PRP Schools were better than students studying in Non-PRP Schools in all six components of Urdu Reading skills (i Print Concept, ii Awareness of Phonemic, iii Phonics, iv Vocabulary, v Fluency and, vi Comprehension).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study is able to make recommendations on the basis of findings and conclusions, and to

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further study the components of the Pakistan reading project to facilitate reading in Urdu in AJ& K.

The results of the study indicated that performance of boys is better than performance of girls in reading abilities of Urdu in both PRP and Non-PRP schools.

1. It is suggested to head teachers and principals that they may implement PRP reading components in their schools. They may provide opportunities, teaching material and managerial help to teachers. They may facilitate teachers and students both and provide funds if it is needed (for buying charts, cards, pictures and other helpful material in reading).

Suggestion for Further Study

Topics for further study are as under;

1. The present study was an evaluation of Reading Components of PRP in promoting Urdu reading skills for grade 2 of District Kotli of AJ&K. Research can be conducted in other Districts of AJ&K.
2. Research/Study may be done on increased alphabetical letters.
3. The experimental study can be conducted on PRP Reading Components.
4. This study may be conducted of other grades learners also.

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