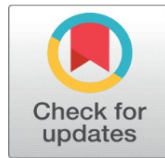


LIBRARIES IN PROMOTING READING HABITS IN THE INTERNET ERA

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ABSTRACT

Many activities of academic life require the ability to read and write. Reading helps to develop the mind and personality of a person; it also enriches ones' intellectual abilities. Libraries play a leading role in the promotion of reading habits. Therefore, libraries should be well equipped with print resources as well as electronic resources to develop the reading culture among masses. In this internet era, information technology brought a drastic change in reading habits of users. The information technology influenced students' learning in classroom as well as their reading behaviour. The challenges for students today is to acquire skills such as how to learn, how to make critical judgments, and how to communicate intelligently, to be flexible, adaptable and tolerant to other creeds and cultures and to make contributions to the society and to the well-beings of others.

Keywords: Reading Habits, Internet, Libraries

1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries play a leading role in the promotion of reading habits. Today the role of libraries and librarians is changing worldwide as libraries are using technology to improve the management of scholarly information and to provide speedy access to it. Habit of reading is of utmost importance in overall development. It is important to know the trend of reading in the internet era as well as to know the role of teachers, parents and Library personnel in developing their reading habit.

Human evolution is the lengthy process of change which evolved over a million of years. Language played very important role in human lives through which they communicated their thoughts and experiences to each other. The invention of writing systems at least five-thousand years ago allowed mankind to preserve the language on material. Man has always been thirsty for knowledge since the inception of world and always wants to require new knowledge which may be acquired only after having read some books. Book plays very important role in our

lives. Books answer our questions, solve problems, inspire for a better life and give us comfort and strength.

2. IMPORTANCE OF READING

Individual's personality is shaped by reading and it also helps them to develop proper thinking and creating new ideas. Reading is a key which helps to unlock the knowledge from books and the habit of reading keeps and makes this knowledge up to date. Reading is done for various reasons and purposes by people, some of which include for pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information and so on.

Value of reading can be foretold from an unlettered person who cannot read newspaper or a story book and remains always enthusiastic to know the news and listen to stories. According to [Palini \(2012\)](#), Reading habit is an essential and important adjunct for creating a literate society in this world. Today the capability of reading is highly valued and very crucial for advancement of a person and a society. In today's world with abundance of learning material, urge to know, there is a need for conscious effort to conquer divisive forces for providing all the best facilities to inculcate reading. It can be said that reading is a fundamental activity to acquire information. Some of the benefits of reading are:

- Reading fosters a quest of knowledge.
- Reading is a good play.
- Reading aids to develop good nation by directing people on right paths.
- Reading helps us to be creative.
- Reading makes adventure out of boredom.

3. READING HABITS

Reading is an intricate "cognitive process" of understanding symbols in order to devise meaning. It is difficult to have exact definition of the term 'Reading' as in science. It has such a wide scope that every person shall hold different opinions about it. Some state an intellectual delight, but some hold an opinion that it is a chore to pass examination and to carry off the time. To quote Francis Bacon (1561- 1626), "Reading serves for delight, for ornament, for ability; the crafty condemns it, the simple admires it, and the wise uses it". Endless opportunities are provided by reading, an ever open door to ever greater mental growth. The wisdom of the world can be found in books. It is only by reading that we get to know the ideas and thoughts of great thinkers and teachers of the past and present that are transmitted to the present generation when they read books penned by them. It is the easiest mode of communication and it helps to excel in everyone's streams.

Knowledge is power and should form reading habit to keep one's knowledge up to date. Right from the ancient time, reading has played a vital role in the progress and development of human beings. The purpose of reading is not limited to the educational sphere today, but it also enriches knowledge, taste, standard of living as well as personality of the person. "Reading involves the recognition of the important elements of meaning and thoroughness in comprehension [Gray \(1978\)](#)," Reading is an important way to sail through the ocean of wisdom and knowledge. The process of reading often develops in a habit. New standard [Encyclopedia \(1981\)](#) defined, "Habit is a learned action or other form of behavior that is repeated often enough for it to become largely automatic response to a particular stimulus or situation. Habits can be acquired by conscious repetition and desire to achieve proficiency in an activity." It is rightly said reading habits formed through the repetition of reading

activity which satisfies motivating condition. Reading is a primary avenue to all knowledge. It offers access to the information, ideas, ideals, aspirations and happenings of both the past and present. Through reading one extends his environment from home to community and community to world. Reading habit is very important for individuals as well as for the progress of a country. It is a taste for reading, be acquired at an early age, the child may find a lifelong companionship with books. It not only adds to knowledge and information but also inculcates his habit of independent, original or creative thinking. The habit of reading if taken at early years of life can be a passion of life that guarantees a blissful and soulful person.

Thus, reading habit is the habit which a student develops as the results of being repeatedly subjected to reading situations. It is a constructive habit that enhances our life, sharpens our mind and brain. To be physically fit, one must do physical exercise; similarly, one must read good books for healthy mind. According to Shorter [Oxford University Press. \(2007\)](#) 'Habit' is "A settled disposition or tendency to act in a certain way, especially one acquired by frequent repetition of the some act until it is almost involuntary; a customary practice or way of acting, the custom of being accustomed to something; familiarity."

Reading habit extensively stimulates one's thinking and gives it exactness and sharpness that is why, reading has been the passion of the greatest personalities of all times. Their mental horizons are widened with the result that they shed off narrow mindedness and this mental elevation is benefited to the individual and the community. Regular and systematic reading sharpens the intellect, refines the emotions, elevates tastes and provides perspectives for one's living and thereby prepares a person for an effective participation in social, religious, cultural and political life. Reasons for reading vary according to individual needs and factors such as age, cultural background, level of education, social status and religious as well as political values. In addition to self-motivation, motivation to reading is often provided by family members, teachers, librarians and society. According to [Palini \(2012\)](#) the following are some of the general techniques to develop the reading abilities:

- Parental guidance and encouragement.
- Motivation by teachers.
- Inculcation of desirable hobbies and interests.
- Constant use of dictionary.
- Daily newspaper reading.
- Book reading.
- Visiting libraries.
- Well-constructed reading material.
- Study improving vocabulary and language.

From reading, ideas are gained, personal ideas are stimulated. The task of making every young mind into enthusiastic readers is a difficult one and the guiding young minds towards reading are even more difficult. Learning is always brought by reading. Through reading we learn a lot, and we take the benefit of reading throughout our life. Education is a never-ending process and for that matter, reading has to be continued forever. Reading is very personal experience. It helps in increasing, updating, creating knowledge to live a meaningful life. Inculcating reading habits among students is really important because while developing this skill, they can become powerful and can play an important role in the society. Good

reading habits help students in acquiring power of imagination, expression and appreciation of literature. Though all the skills of gaining proficiency in a language is equally important, nevertheless, reading habits help tremendously in improving comprehension, accuracy, fluency and in increasing vocabulary. As fuel is necessary to drive an automobile and as water is essential to quench our thirst, similarly acquaintance with books and reading habits are important mediums for leading a significant and full life. Reading habits become the cause of eliminating boredom and nourishing mind. Reading habits aid us in being an intelligent person as they sharpen intellect, widen the mind, adorn experience, elevate morals, heighten emotions and above all, a person masters manners.

4. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND READING

Reading is a basic tool for living a good life because it provides not only the knowledge but also the reasoning, thinking and critical ability. In this internet era, information technology brought a drastic change in reading habits of users. The information technology influenced students' learning in classroom as well as their reading behaviour. The importance of reading habit cannot be over emphasized. Reading is meant for learning or acquiring knowledge. It is an essential tool for promoting reading culture among students. It is one of the most important activities of life through which we enter in the life and experiences of others and further extend our knowledge by sharing different perceptions of each other's. Advent of information technology and use of ICT in education made it necessary to teach the right techniques of reading while pupils are in schools and college.

One cannot deny that the electronic media has brought revolutionary changes in this world. The social, cultural and economic developments of the country depend on its info-rich people. Reading makes a person bold enough to unravel the problems in an efficient way. It can be said that the internet influences every aspect of a person's life from both the sides which are good or bad for the betterment. It has affected every domain of human life by handing an information-rich environment. There has been an argument that reading habits are vanished in this internet era. It is somewhat and somehow true, for pupils of this era completely dwell on internet; in order to excel in their studies.

The habit of reading is not just a pastime. The main purpose of reading is to acquire knowledge and understand the content of the books and take advantage from them. In the present day living with proliferation of media technology, how is time for reading to be found? It is uncommon to see people carrying books to read as, "The internet becomes an important part of college student's lives, not only for their studies and daily routines, but as a tool forgetting to know other people and the rest of the world [Chou & Hsiao \(2006\)](#)". Information technology has changed the world into a global village. Students are no exception to it. They also prefer electronic media as e-books, online journals etc. The rapid advancement of science in 20th and 21st centuries led to technological developments. Technological advancement led to the information age in which people are more interconnected with each other through the internet. Millions of people at a single click can access any information instantly. Over the last several years, libraries are going over with major changes. The main electronic sources a library might use are those provided by the internet and World Wide Web, databases, digitized resources such as reference work, journal subscriptions or electronic copies of documents and electronic books, etc.

5. LIBRARY IN PROMOTION OF READING HABITS

Libraries always assist their readers as these are stored with all the documents of need and concern. Libraries provide such an environment that every person is permitted to handle and turn the pages as and how he wants to. The main goal of libraries is to foster a search for knowledge and if it materialized well, a person can gain a good amount of knowledge. Libraries are made to fulfill the needs of readers who come there to get their problems unraveled. Libraries play a significant role to bridge the information gap by handing free access to information and communication technologies, notably the internet. According to (UNESCO: Basic) quoted in [Krolak \(2005\)](#), “the goal of education for all also involves the development of literate societies in the developing world and cannot be attained solely by providing quality learning materials to schools. If people are to stay literate, they “MUST” have “ACCESS” to a variety of written documents and continue the habit of reading in their adult lives”. In line with this, libraries are a vital tool to provide access to information sources and ensure that users are in frequent contact with them.

Over the last several years, a significant transformation has been noticed in policies and practices of libraries. Print medium is increasingly giving way to the electronic form of materials. In India, libraries are going through their transition phase of Print libraries to Polymedia libraries, they are no longer passive keepers and preservers of books rather they have evolved to become facilitators of information. Many types of library material such as journals, books, newspapers, photographs etc. are now in born digital form. Librarians are logical contributors to development, who can help the users in making use of e-resources. They can organize e- learning programmes to help the users to learn the use of technology anywhere and anytime. Librarians are now working in e-environment who can help the users to acquire information on the internet. The librarians should help users in developing a positive and pleasant attitude towards reading. The optimistic attitude of a reader should be cultivated first before someone is able to form involuntarily the habits of reading and the fondness for books. In terms of promoting reading habits in libraries the following suggestions can be chased:

Library hour should be mandatory in all the educational Institutions. Libraries should have a good collection of books. Besides, informed librarians who can guide users in choosing books and help them to discover their tastes in reading that will make the needed difference.

- The users should be provided regular orientation and training for making the effective use of library resources in beginning of their course.
- Reading and writing competition must be organized regularly to enhance the reading habits of the students.
- Competitions regarding General Knowledge should be arranged so that users find interests in reading other books, newspapers, magazines, etc.
- Readers' survey should be conducted quite often to improve the library service as well as to know their taste and interests in literature.
- Organizing exhibition in the libraries is another way to promote reading habit. The main aim of exhibition is to present collection to readers on selected theme. By organizing such events, users will get encourage to borrow books for home.

- School libraries, college libraries and public libraries should organize various seminars, workshops and conference to sell the noble idea of good reading culture to students.
- According to the need of users, collection of both printed and e-resources should be managed.

6. CONCLUSION

Book reading is an art which provides pleasure. Books are friends and companion forever. Good reading habits are the source of knowledge and learning. A person read for his own pleasure or for a necessity. This is an essential way to improve ourselves besides getting well equipped. As per the former President of India Kalam (1998), "India as a developing country has all the characteristics of being a part of knowledge society, India will be super power by 2020". Reading habit among students is no doubt a challenge, but to make reading effective, they should learn how to use various techniques, make connection to texts, visualize and answer to questions. For inculcating reading habit, appropriate and proper reading material is must during the formative years of a child. A study was conducted by The Reading Agency in the United Kingdom, found that "reading for pleasure increases empathy, enriches social relationships, reduces symptoms of depression and instills an overall sense of wellbeing". It shows how general reading is important nowadays for everyone in this world. Public and school libraries have an important responsibility in this regard. Therefore, these libraries should be well equipped with print resources as well as electronic resources to develop the reading culture among masses.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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