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Devendra Kumar

Chaudhary Charan Singh University, dkdeobhu@gmail.com

M. M.A. Ansari

Jamia Millia Islamia University, mmansari29@gmail.com

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Kumar, Devendra and Ansari, M. M.A., "Reading Habits of Senior Secondary Students at Allahabad City, U.P., India" (2010). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 486.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/486>

Library Philosophy and Practice 2010

ISSN 1522-0222

Reading Habits of Senior Secondary Students at Allahabad City, U.P., India

Devendra Kumar

Library Professional & Faculty
Department of Library & Information Science
Chaudhary Charan Singh University
Meerut, U. P. (India)

Dr. M. M. A. Ansari

Sr. Assistant Librarian & Course Co-ordinator
Dr. Zakir Husain Library, Jamia Milia Islamia
New Delhi (India)

Sanjay Kumar Shukla

Librarian
Sambhu Nath Institute of Engineering and Technology
Allahabad, U.P., India

Introduction

The school library is the central focus in the teaching and learning process. The emphasis these days is very much on learning and developing information acquisition skills, instead of teaching. Rather than wait to be taught to master facts, students now need to be taught information acquisition skills and how to learn. The role of the teacher-librarian, therefore, includes encouraging students to cultivate both individual and collective habits of reading more especially when reading is not part of our background at home.

One of the major goals of the school library is to inspire a love for reading - to promote a reading culture among its users. This implies the need to create the awareness of written letters, the need to read not only textbooks but also to engage in creative, leisurely, and pleasurable reading (Segum 1995). The library can do this by:

- Making available a collection of books, magazines and audio-visual materials.
- Providing a conducive environment for:
 - Reading,
 - Writing,
 - Story telling,
 - Research; and even
 - Debate and drama.
- Providing library and study skills on how to find books and maximize their

utility;

- Providing tips on reading skills through interactive talks, video tapes and films; and
- Promoting a variety of activities that could enhance love of reading and libraries.

Reading is usually a private act, a personal and individual relationship with a book; but then, it is the environment as long as it is favourable, which according to Gault (1982: p 16) encourage the setting up of this relationship. The school library must in this case serve as the needed environment. And this it should do, by integrating itself completely into the educational system to achieve the overall objectives of the school. And what, better ways are there to do this than to stimulate the intellectual growth of the child through the provision of appropriate instructional materials for teachers and reading materials for students. It should go further by not only transforming itself into a research centre of some sort where students are taught how to sift data through independent reading, but also by providing a workshop setting for supervised studies of individuals and groups.

Previous Studies

This paper presents a selective review of studies conducted in India and abroad, including Anderson (2007), Shahriza (2007), Train (2007), Boström & Lassen (2006), Corradini (2006), Dent (2006), Celep & Cetin (2005), Brier & Lebbin (2004), but this type of research is unusual, since it studies the reading habit of the senior secondary students. Schools curriculum incorporates an expressive and exploratory from interactive education system, so that they develop an inquisitive mind and discover the power of self-determination and discipline to grow up into successful professionals and good human beings.

Limitation of the Study

The present study is limited to the senior secondary students belonging to five senior secondary schools i.e. Kendriya Vidyalaya New Cantt, Maharishi Patanjali Vidya Mandir, *Mary Lucas School*, St. Joseph's College, St. Mary's Convent Inter College of Allahabad City, U.P. (India).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study is to find out the mother tongue, motives of study, reading materials borrowed from library, time spent for the serious reading, use reference materials, languages of newspaper that read daily, sections of newspapers read, place of reading, and to develop some suggestions for solution of the problem. This study will help to establish whether senior secondary schools are on par with their peer in other countries in the acquisition of intellectual skills.

Methodology

The study uses the case study method. A well structured questionnaire was designed and used for collecting data. The sample for the study was selected purposefully from those noticed in the school library more frequently. 400 questionnaires were distributed to the senior secondary students i.e. class XII & XI. 75 returned from Kendriya Vidyalaya New Cantt, 72 returned from Maharishi Patanjali Vidya Mandir, 70 returned from *Mary Lucas School*, 70 returned from St. Joseph's College, and 70 questionnaires returned from St. Mary's Convent Inter College. Therefore, a total of 357 questionnaires were returned and used for this study. The results of the findings were presented in

tables using percentage.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Size of the Sample

School	Class XIIth	Class XIth	Total
	DQ (RQ)	DQ & RQ	
Kendriya Vidyalaya. New Cantt, Allahabad	35(30)	45(45)	75
Maharishi Patanjali Vidya Mandir	35(35)	45(37)	72
Mary Lucas School	35(32)	45(38)	70
St. Joseph's College	35(29)	45(41)	70
St. Mary's Convent Inter College	35(27)	45(43)	70
Total	175 (153)	225(204)	357

(Figure in brackets received questionnaires).

Abbreviations: DQ = Distributed Questionnaires; RQ = Received Questionnaires

Table 2: Mother Tongue

S.N.	Mother Tongue	No. of students	%
1.	Hindi	333	93.28
2	English	24	9.72
Total		357	100

The Table-2 shows that the 93.28% students mother tongue were as Hindi, whereas 9.72% as mother tongue English.

Table 3: Motives of Reading

S.N.	Access the Information	No. of students	%
1	To get information	167	46.78
2	To derive pleasure	28	7.84
3	To improve my general knowledge	136	38.09
4	It is my hobby	26	7.28
Total		357	100

The above Table-3 depicts that 46.78% students were read the books, newspapers & magazines for getting the information, 38.09% students to improve the general knowledge, 7.84% to derive pleasure, and 12% says its hobby.

Table 4: Time Spent for Daily Reading

S.N.	Time spent for reading	No. of students	%
1.	1 to 2 hours	33	9.24
2	2 - 3 hours	73	20.45
3.	3 - 4 hours	187	52.38
4.	5 hours and above	64	17.93
Total		357	100

Table-4 reveals that most students study between 3 to 4 hours daily.

Table 5: Are you Borrow Reading Materials from Library?

S.N.	Books borrow from library	No. of students	%
1.	Yes	327	91.59
2.	No	30	8.41
Total		357	100

The above Table-5 shows that 91.59% of students borrowed reading materials from library.

Table 6: Kinds of Reading Materials Borrow from Library

S.N.	Kinds Books borrow from library	No. of students	%
1.	By subject	285	78.83
2	Recreational (i.e. fiction, poetry, etc.)	72	20.17
Total		357	100

Table-6 depicts that 78.83% of the students were borrowed reading materials from library related to their subjects, whereas 20.17% students were borrowed reading materials from library like recreational materials.

Table 7: Languages of Reading Materials Do You Read

S.N.	Languages	No. of students	%
1.	English	230	64.42
2.	Hindi	246	68.90
3.	Others	19	5.32

(Multiple answers allowed)

The above Table-7 shows that 64.42% of students were used as English languages for study, whereas 68.90% as Hindi, followed by 5.32% students were used other languages.

Table 8: Uses of Reference Materials

S.N.	Reference books	No. of students	%
1.	Encyclopedias	183	51.26
2.	Dictionaries	228	63.86
3.	Maps, globes	61	17.09
4.	Year Books	173	48.46

(Multiple answers allowed)

Table-8 depicts that 63.86% of students were used reference materials like dictionaries, 51.26% encyclopedias. 48.46% year books, whereas 17.09% used maps, globes.

Table 9: Read Newspaper Daily

S.N.	Reference books	No. of students	%
1	English newspapers	317	88.79
2	Hindi newspapers	192	68.90

(Multiple answers allowed)

The above Table-9 shows that 88.79% of students were read English newspaper daily, while 68.79% read Hindi newspapers.

Table 10: Which Sections of Newspaper like Most?

S.N.	Newspaper Section	No. of students	%
1.	Advertisement	34	9.52
2.	Editorial	24	6.72
3.	Cinema News	47	13.16
4.	Letter to editors	9	2.52
5.	Politics	64	17.92
6.	Sensational news	63	17.65
7.	Sport	116	32.49
Total		357	100

Table-10 shows that 32.49% of students were like most sections of newspaper i.e. sport news, 17.92% political news, 17.65% sensational news, 13.16% cinema news, 9.52% advertisement, and 6.72% read editorial. The least number of users i.e. 2.52% like letters to the editors.

Table 11: Read Magazines

S.N.	Magazines	No. of students	%
1	Reader digest	230	64.42
2	Film magazine	71	19.89
3	India Today	111	31.09
4	Outlook	87	24.37
5	Mathematics Today	95	26.61
6	Competition Success Review	218	61.06
7	Blitz	118	33.05
8	Science Today	89	24.92
9	Science Reporter	98	27.45
10	Chemistry Today	90	25.21
11	Physics Today	110	30.81
12	Biology Today	103	28.85
13	Cricket Today	97	27.17
14	Sports Today	59	16.52
15	PC Quest	51	14.28

(Multiple answers allowed)

The Table-11 shows that 64.42% students were read magazine like reader digest, 61.06% competition success review, 33.05% blitz, 31.09% India today, 30.81% physics today, 28.85% biology today, 27.45% science reporter, 27.17% cricket today, 26.61% mathematics today, 25.21% chemistry today, 24.92% science today, 24.37% outlook, 19.89% film magazines, and 16.52% sports today. The least number of students were read magazine like pc quest i.e.14.28%.

Table 12: Place of Reading

S.N.	Reading	No. of students	%
1	Home	174	48.74

2	School Library	135	37.81
3	The Public/Local Library	48	13.44
Total		100	100

The above Table-12 shows that 48.74% students were read at home, 37.81% in school library, whereas 13.44% students were read at public/local library.

Table 13: Sources of Getting Reading Materials

S.N.	Sources of getting books	No. of students	%
1	School Library	214	59.94
2	Friends	48	37.81
3	Home	68	19.05
4	Public/local Library	27	13.44
Total		357	100

The above Table-13 revealed that 59.94% of students their source of getting books were the school library, 37.81% from friends, 19.05% home, and 13.44% public library. Thus, the majority of the respondents sources of getting information about books from school library.

Table 14: Sources of Getting Newspapers/Magazines

S.N.	Sources	No. of students	%
1	Individual Subscription	198	55.46
2	Friends	24	6.72
3	School Library	135	37.81
4	Public/Local Library	23	6.44
Total		357	100

The above Table-14 shows that for 55.46% student's sources of getting the newspaper and magazines were the individual subscription, 37.81% school library, 6.72% friends, and 6.44% getting from public/local library.

Findings of the Study

- The result of the present study revealed that a majority of the student's mother tongue is Hindi.
- The result of the present study revealed that a majority of the students their reading motives is getting the information, and to improve the general knowledge.
- The result of the present study revealed that a large majority of the students study between 3 to 4 hours daily.
- The result of the present study revealed that most of the students borrow reading materials from their school library.
- The result of the present study revealed that a large majority of the students reading materials related to their subjects.
- The result of the present study revealed that most of the students proffered reading materials in Hindi and English languages.
- The present study most of the students used reference materials like dictionary as well as encyclopaedia.
- The result of the present study revealed that a majority of the students reading newspapers daily published in English as well as Hindi.
- The present study revealed that most of the students like sports sections of the newspapers daily.

A large number of students are reading magazines like reader digest, and competition success review.

- The result of the present study revealed that a majority of the students reading place are their home, and school library.
- The result of the present study revealed that most of the students getting reading materials from their school library.
- The result of the present study revealed that a majority of students getting newspapers, and magazines by individual subscription.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The above findings of this study lead us to conclude that senior secondary students need to improve their reading habits. It will be beneficial to have a record of their reading habits in order to make predictions about their academic success in the study. For effective promotion of reading habits, skills and culture, reading must be made pleasurable and voluntary. All shades of opinion must be catered for be well considered. It is such a demonstration of democratic sensitivity that can turn even a reluctant reader to a lover of books. In library there should be adequate reading area and related facilities to accelerate reading habits. There are still barriers to creating a reading environment that will inculcate good reading habits in senior secondary school students. The library is still the best place for quiet study. A serious senior secondary student should give priority to studying in the library. Library periods should be included in the time table to improve the reading habits among students. Book-discussion-clubs may be encouraged in each school. if a group of students reads books and meets weekly to discuss the books they have read, they may find a new sort of fellowship and they will able to speak intelligently not only about books, but also about all problems. So book club in each school may be encouraged by the authorities in order to cultivate healthy reading habits among students. The production of reading materials with Indian background for cultural reading should be encouraged so as to enable students to know the greatness of our rich culture and civilization. The findings of this survey lead us to conclude that senior secondary students need to improve their reading habits. It will be beneficial to have a record of their reading habits in order to make predictions about their academic success in the academic programme. Both librarians and other course lecturers concur that generally their expectations of their students' reading ability, have not been met. It would be helpful to librarians to have a heightened awareness of the reading difficulties faced by our students. One of the steps taken to minimise reading problems would be to incorporate study skills components within the courses or to make reading lists (in particular literature texts) more manageable. This activity can assist in the promotion of autonomous learning and make students more independent and resourceful. We hope senior secondary students will continue to read after secondary exam passed when the pressure to read is absent thereby helping to foster a reading culture in our society.

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