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Attitude and Practices towards Marginalia: An exploratory study

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Introduction

Reading is a process in which person see a series of symbols and words and induce a meaning from them. The words and symbols seen from the eye and then the brain convert them into a meaning which communicates something. Through reading people receive information therefore it's a receptive skill.

A person read to satisfy self by satisfying the driving needs inside him whether the inquiry, the pleasure, the compulsion or the habit. Earlier, people started reading practice by reading and re-reading their religious writings. There was a general trend of reading out loudly. Reading silently was a transformation in a reading practice which took place in 10th century where a person learned to establish a relationship with the book and its words. Farge (2016) further elaborates Mangel's statement that Silent reading makes a mind free to reflect, to remember, to question and to compare and this process ends up writing annotations on a book.

Since the latter decades of eighteenth century the practice of *reader with the pen in hand* evolved.(Ferrari, 2008) This became the basis of *marginalia* where the readers while reading a book making ownership indicators, summaries, inscriptions(Jackson, 2011), underlining words, highlighting passages, folding of a page, making marks or adding references in the text. Even practicing of making stars, circles, checks, brackets, parentheses, boxes, dots and lines (straight, curved and jagged) and noting intra- and extra-textual references(Anderson, 2011) all appear to be practices of marginalia. Though the marginalia is as old as the printed book itself or even more as the traces have been found even on the scrolls (Drogin, 1983) but it was termed later by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Since the reading is done for two reasons; for information and for pleasure (Grellet, 2010), marginalia helps readers in satisfying those reasons by serving as an aid

to memory, a form of communication, a means of reflection and for a glimpse into the past (Bold, 2017).

Technological advancement of the modern world changed the face of reading by introducing digital or electronic reading. Back in 1971 when Michael S. Hart launched first e-book and started project Gutenberg and later in 1988 launched the first e-book reader. The launch of Amazon's Kindle e-book reader in US 2007 was a high achievement for the purpose of promoting e-readers while 2010 marked the history by releasing Apple's iBooks and iBookstore. Google on the other hand also launched and reports by Amazon highlighted that the e-bookstore and e-book sales outnumbered their hardcover book.

This technological advancement provided multiple mediums for readers to follow their reading practices and habits, despite all it also identified visible changes in the attitudes of readers for the printed and digital text. Readers, who used to practice marginalia in printed reading which shows a bonding of them with their readings by expressing their thoughts, became a matter of concern. Where marginalia is considered an important aspect of printed readings through reflecting the thoughts and understanding of the reader, the electronic reading is unable to satisfy those features.

E-books are reinventing the way books are read and annotated. E-readers allow users to select text, highlight them and save them for later. Electronic bookmarks are not like folding a page in a printed book but they are searchable, index able and shareable. Also it allows users to highlight text from which the most highlighted ones become "popular highlights". Bookmarking is also a facilitating element provided to readers. But the way printed book provide the ability for the readers to marginalize a book, not all e-readers do. Readers miss those features in e-readers which printed reading provide them. It is assumed that the feeling a person carries with a pen in

his hand while reading a printed book supports the interactive nature for marginalia then facing a screen providing as multiple options so as to ease a reader but can be a distracting element of e-readers. The no boundary of reading with battery time, mechanical and connectivity issues and sight deficiencies, marginalia practice on printed readings is free from all these charges.

From reading the printed texts to the reading on an electronic version, marginalia attitude of readers seems declining. To inquire these behavioral differences of readers towards practicing marginalia over printed or electronic format this study is conducted. It will highlight the difficulties they may face by the difference of medium for marginalia and will also help in revealing the potential requirements of readers for their marginalia practices on electronic text. It will be useful for the digital reading devices and software developers to better satisfy the requirements of today's e-readers.

Problem Statement

The printed books from centuries have been a basic medium of reading. People use to write annotations and marginalia over them attaining a sense of pleasure, satisfaction and contentment. Though modern technologies have covered almost all areas of human needs, e-readers with advanced features are introduced are getting replacement of printed books. These e-readers attempt to facilitate readers by satisfying their marginalia needs, which may vary from developed societies to developing societies. For this purpose, it is important here to identify the marginalia needs of readers living in developing state so as to incorporate the all the requirements of e-readers that users demand. There have been many systematic assessments of the reader's need over their preference of reading material but none over the importance, practices and need of required features for marginalia among them. Lots of individual's articles and views from the

west, have identified the necessity of bringing more relevant features of marginalia in modern e-readers. While no such argument of study have been conducted in a developing state like Karachi- Pakistan over such area of knowledge. This study has focused on identifying the value of marginalia in this society, what differences readers face when they need to follow their marginalia practices in e-reading and their responses towards e-readers. This area of knowledge is found necessary to explore for highlighting the reader's need regarding marginalia practice. It will provide awareness to the developers as well so as to develop and incorporate required features in e-readers.

Objectives

The study has focused on the marginalia practiced by the readers in a developing state, for this;

1. The first objective of the study is to identify the preferred medium of reading.
2. To explore the relation of readers with marginalia in current scenario.
3. To identify the contemporary issues faced by the reader while practicing marginalia in e-readers.
4. To find out the reasons behind if there is reserve attitude towards practicing marginalia.

Literature Review

Scholars have contributed a lot to the term Marginalia in past few years, though the practices have been performed way before. From the time literature is produced, the practices of marginalia are on its way where great amount of literature has been contributed from the west. Scholars from developing countries have shown their major focus towards reading habits and the

medium of reading such as printed or electronic, preferred by the readers. Gribben, 1978; Jackson, 2010 and Ryback, 2008 are the scholars contributed to the term in the form of books and papers. Their work highlighted the practices of marginalia done by famous ancient individuals of their time and are considered highly impactful for the readers today. From many years writing and reading marginalia is a fascinating part of printed books which with the invention of e-books seems to get lessened. In this regard scholars (e.g. Slights, 2001; Sherman, 2008) have highlighted the importance of marginalia and showed their concerns over decreasing rate of its practices due to many factors among which attitude of librarians were also mentioned.

Reading behaviors

Byars (2015) studied the readers of a state university of California, U.S., whether they prefer printed or electronic book while reading for pleasure and education. Multiple factors were discussed such as cost, profitability, durability, reading conditions and lifetime which drives readers to make these choices. It was identified that majority of students preferred printed books over e-books for general reading purposes ignoring the cost factor and these students were loyal to their desired material. Some students preferred e-book for which cost was a main factor.

Vandenhoeck (2013) analyzed that education have been impacted with the advent of technology as the reading has been grown towards screen reading and its more common in university students. But the spread of screen reading presented the students with different challenges and opportunities. This study was conducted to examine the preference of university students of an Ireland state university and their use of annotation and interaction with the text. The finding reveals that students prefer printed reading and they perform different annotation techniques while printed reading and they lack knowledge to how to perform these techniques in digital

reading. Students usually underline and highlight the text when reading in a printed format while reading digitally they use a separate paper to record and note. Students choose printed material for annotating while study because they do not know how to use digital readers to annotate their text.

Reading behaviors of readers were found different in developing states than developed states. These studies aim to identify the effect of this transformation from printed material to e-books on reading habits; is also a subject worthy of deeper analysis. The contribution in literature by West, 2014; Salleh & Alwi ,2014; Dilshad, Adnan and Akram's,2013 represents the high habit of reading is among female readers than male readers and the medium chosen for reading is electronic. The female lecturers use to study majorly on e-books as well as the female students, who read to satisfy their educational needs also choose e-books for reading. The reason was found for using e-resources were; mobility, saving physical space, convenience, saving time and money and ease-of-use. The other category of readers which were mostly house wives, children and old citizens were found more enthusiastic for mobile reading than male readers and they are confident over their mobile reading habit and use to tell and persuade other people to use mobile for reading purposes. They prefer mobile reading as it is convenient and affordable.

Research Questions:

Focusing on the problem statement that is defining the reasons for the selection of this topic and the Objectives of this study that are highlighting those areas that needed to explore and assessed, the following research questions are meant to determine the value of marginalia carried by the readers today and to highlight this area of knowledge so as to achieve a desired features required

in e-readers that may remove all the supposed barriers in practicing marginalia in e-readers as well. The research questions are;

Q1. What is the importance of marginalia practices for the readers?

Q2. What difference of attitude they carry for practicing marginalia in printed and e-books?

Q3. How well the readers are aware and satisfied with marginalia features in e-readers?

Scope and Limitations of the study

This study is to examine the marginalia practices done by today's readers and the differences faced by them while reading on different formats of book i.e. printed and electronic. For this, the study has emphasis that the respondent must be a reader ranging from age of 18-40 years so as possibly to be a reader of both formats. This study has not focused on the reading habits of the readers while the questions carries relevance to the reading habits of readers are entirely made to identify their marginalia practice over that particular type of reading material for e.g. If a reader is asked for the purpose of reading, this question is meant to identify the marginalia practice over that particular type of book. This study also put its emphasis and limits their respondents to the progressive achievements.

Research Methodology:

The study aims to explore the readers of today through their marginalia practices. For this purpose the targeted audience was the readers of this society who have access and use both printed and electronic mediums for reading so that the difference of practicing marginalia can be

identified. To achieve the required output survey method was approached as a tool to gather data from the respondents, residents of the city Karachi, Pakistan to inquire their attitude and practices related to marginalia on printed and e-books. The questionnaire was designed so as to carry both open and close ended questions. For this nature of study the respondents were self-selected (to ensure all respondents are readers) between the ages ranging from 18- 40 years, representing an active reader population of the society. The sample is not a representative of whole population (which is 1.62 million estimated in 2016 by World population Review) but the active readers of this society. To analyze the data statistical methods were used in a quantitative study.

Analysis of the Respondents

The study was conducted through a survey questionnaire to identify their marginalia practices and attitudes on both electronic and printed material. The questionnaires were distributed to 325 readers while 300 readers responded among which females contributed highly to this study. The readers were divided into 4 categories as Students, Professionals (those who are working professionally and are not student anymore), researchers/teachers and house wives so as to examine their habits and practices with respect to their profession.

Table 1

	RESPONDENTS		MEDIUM OF READING		
	N=300		Printed	Electronic	Both
GENDER	N	%	%	%	%
Male	83	27.6	30.12	4.81	65.06
Female	217	72.33	30.41	7.37	62.21
DESIGNATION					
Student	244	81.3	30.73	5.32	63.93
Professionals	34	11.3	35.29	8.8	55.8
Researchers	17	5.6	0	0	100
House wives	5	1.6	80	0	20
AGE					
18-20	150	50	24.6	8	67.33
21-25	102	34	41.17	1.96	56.86
26-30	26	8.6	19.2	3.8	76.9
31-35	9	3	33.3	0	66.6
35-40	13	4.3	30.7	7.6	61.5

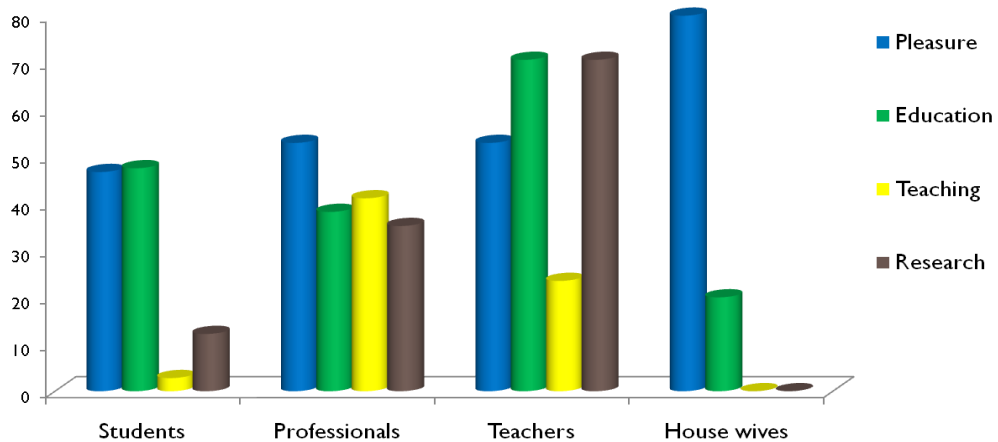
Most of the respondents despite their gender, designation and age choose both printed and electronic format to read except the housewives as most (80%) of them choose printed format to read.

Readers were inquired about their preferences for reading on any specific medium and the reasons identified for opting printed materials was its easy availability and due to having eyesight issues readers go for the print versions while there were multiple reasons for reading on e-resources that were; easy and remote access over such material, also because of the time and cost saving attribute of e-resources which confirms the studies of West (2014); Salleh & Alwi (2014); Dilshad, Adnan and Akram's (2013) as discussed above.

Purpose of reading:

Respondents were inquired for their purpose of reading to find out the attitude towards marginalia when reading for different purposes. With respect to their designation, students (52%) mostly read for pleasure and education purposes while Professionals use to spend more time on pleasure (58%) then for teaching, education and research. Researchers follow their reading practice highly for research (70%) and education purposes (70%) whereas housewives mostly read for pleasure (79%).

Figure 1



Marginalia practices followed for different purpose of reading:

Marginalia is a habit that is practiced by majority of the readers. In order to identify which medium they prefer for practicing marginalia, the readers were asked over it and analyzed that 85% of the readers use to practice their marginalia skills over printed resources and 30% of the users practices on both mediums while 15% of readers are still not aware of any such features of e-readers confirming the study of Vandenhoeck (2013) that readers lack the awareness of e-readers marginalia facilities.

Marginalia Practices	Pleasure(%)	Education (%)	Teaching(%)	Research(%)	SUM
Note a comment	23.60	35.30	8.30	10.60	77.80
Underline a text	14	55.30	11	13.60	93.90
Highlight a passage	17.30	48	13	14.60	92.90
Fold a page	27	32.30	9	10	78.30
Write your name	30.60	19.30	6	6.30	62.20
Write an annotation	12.30	30	8.30	7	57.60
Make different marks like(circle, tick, cross, star etc)for different purposes.	24.30	43.60		15	82.90
Put reference to other pages	3.60	28.60	9.60	11	52.80

Table 2

Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100% as respondents (300) were allowed to select more than one option.

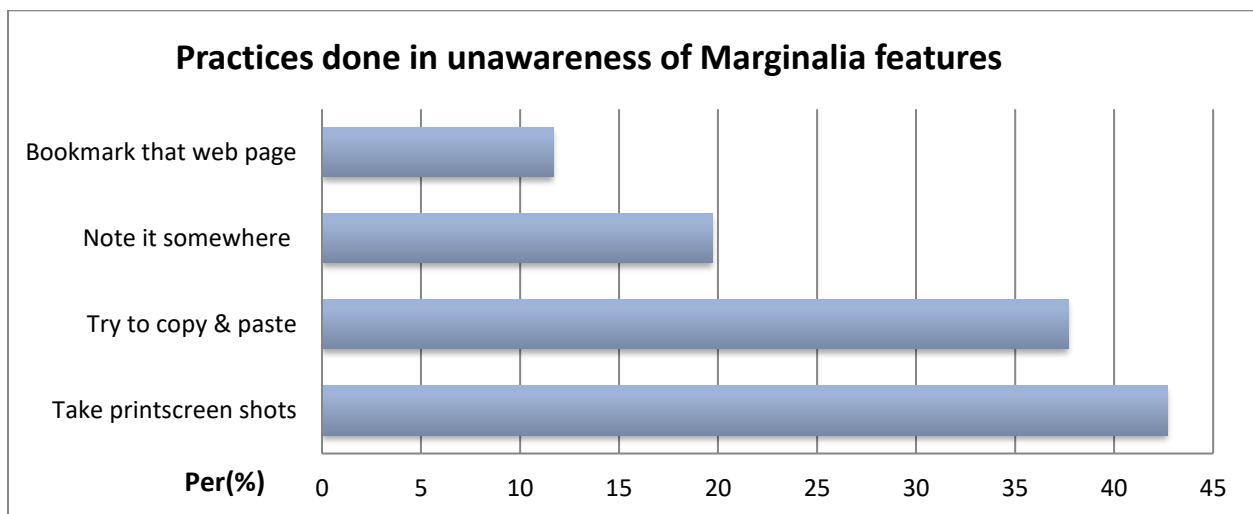
Table 2 summarizes the marginalia practices done by the readers when reading printed resources and the results noted highlights that the highly used marginalia practice is underlining a text and highlighting a passage on the printed resources while these features are also available in some e-readers, the trend of writing and highlighting on printed is mostly followed. Also making different types of marks is also a practice done by readers in printed text. This feature is not accommodated in any of e-reader yet and is among the most popular marginalia activity found in readers. From the data it was observed that readers (72%) used to put a tick mark when they have completely read or memorize the text or agree with certain statement, respondents (50%) also

shared that they circle the text for making it visible for future readings. A cross sign(X) is also used by the readers(70%) when they note something unimportant while the symbol star is used by readers(58%) for marking the particular text very important. Readers (75%) use the symbol of question mark for unclear statements and when any question arose in their mind on that text. Readers (78%) do have a habit of folding pages when reading printed books and are unable to avail such facility in e-books while noting on books is a feature practiced by readers (77.80%) can also be availed at e-reader like Acrobat.

Awareness of Marginalia features in E-readers

Besides practicing marginalia on printed resources, usage of marginalia features in e-readers were inquired from the readers and more than half of the readers (55%) have no awareness that even e-readers provide any of marginalizing features. Readers who are unaware of any such feature use other tactics when reading e-resources and want to memorize or highlight it among which taking print screen and screen shots was on a high usage as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2



Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100% as respondents (300) were allowed to select more than one option

On the contrary, the readers (45%), who are aware of the marginalia features of e-readers uses more than one e-reader. These readers were categorized according to their age (Table 3) and it is visible from the results that reading device patterns changes with respect to the age of readers. Mobile is the most usable and popular e-reading device especially for the readers age ranging from 18-25, that are possibly the students in a society, were most likely to read on mobiles. Even readers ranging from 26-40 also represented their interest in reading through mobile largely than other devices. Age ranging from 18-25 also showed their interest towards I pad as reading device and little readers have pointed towards the use of Kindle and E-readers for PC. Since the target readers are still wants to see more features in e-readers. The e-reader developers in order to employ the target readers for multiple e-reading devices must focus on the needs and requirements of such age group and incorporate in new developments to enhance the maximum use of e-readers.

Table 3

Age Range	Mobile	Kindle	Ipad	E-reader for PC
18-20	31.3	2.7	4.3	3.3
21-25	20.7	2.7	4	3.7
26-30	4.7	0.7	1.7	1.3
31-35	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3
35-40	1	0	0.3	0.7
SUM	58.4	6.4	10.6	9.3

Note: Percentages may sum to more than 100% as respondents (300) were allowed to select more than one option.

Desired Marginalia Features

This study focuses on the marginalia attitude and practices of readers in printed material and e-readers where it is found that readers today are willing to read and do read on both mediums (Table 1) but many of the readers are not well aware of the features that e-readers provide and to satisfy their such needs readers use to perform other functions in unawareness of marginalia

features (Figure 2). Also the potential readers of e-readers desire to have more features in e-readers for making e-reading comfortable. There are various e-readers available for PC at e.g. *opensourceshakespeare.org*, *webmarginalia.net*, *mbeckler.org* and many more for the facilitation of readers but these e-readers are unable to provide all marginalia features to the readers. Also Kindle, Sony's touch screen and Nook provides features like note taking and highlighting on the screen, readers desired for the following features in e-readers.

Table 4

DESIRED FEATURES	n = 146	STUDENT	PROFESSIONAL	RESEARCHERS	HOUSEWIVES
Bookmarking feature	84.9	43.8	17.6	52.9	6
Text search	78.76	37.7	35.2	52.9	20
Highlighting	80.1	40.1	35.2	23	40
Typing a comment	51.3	21.7	23.5	64	40
Making circle, tick, cross, star, etc	73.2	34.4	41	47	0
Making link to the other pages	35.6	15.5	26	29.4	0
Adding references	41.7	20	17	29.4	0
Writing your name on the material	28.08	11.4	11	29.4	60
Providing space for reviewing	39.7	15.9	29	35.3	40
Providing sense of privacy	28.7	14.3	17	0	20

N = Percentages % may rise than 100 as respondents were allowed to select more than 1 option

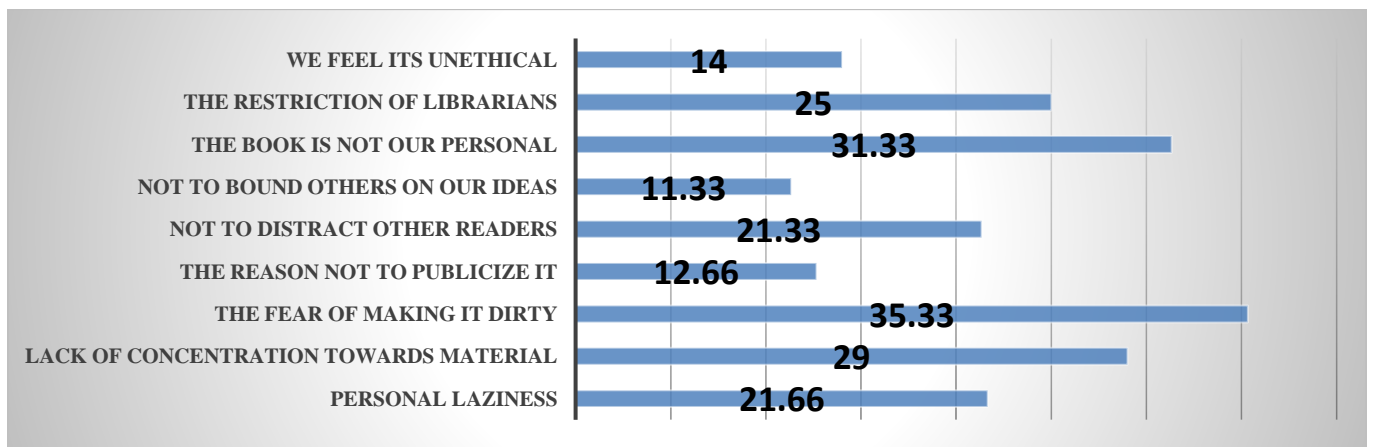
The most desirable feature in e-reader was found to be bookmarking (84.9%) by the researchers, students as well as other professionals. Also text searching feature (78.67%) and Highlighting (80.1%) was highly desired by the respondents. Respondents also showed their interest in features like making circle, tick, cross and star (73.2%) which they practice for different memorizing purposes (Table 2). Among all features, house wives seem to be highly desirable for showing ownership by writing their name on the book.

Attitude towards Marginalia Practices

From the findings of Table 2 it was analyzed that readers tends to marginalize more when reading for educational purposes than other reading. When inquired about the reasons for not marginalizing any material the readers show their immense responses mentioned in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Reasons behind not Marginalizing



N = % may rise than 100 as respondents were allowed to select more than 1 option.

It was analyzed than by Figure 3 that besides unawareness of e-reader’s features there are many other emotional reasons and attitudes that keep a reader away from practicing marginalia and thus minimizing the potential skills one can achieve by practicing it. As show in Figure 3, many respondents (35.33%) have a fear of making a book dirty reflects their early life lessons of not making a book dirty given by either parents or teachers has now disappointedly effected their ability of mind free thinking. As discussed above the Mangel’s statement “Silent reading makes a mind free to reflect, to remember, to question and to compare and this process ends up writing annotations on a book” (Farge 2016). Also respondents (31.33%) have mentioned the reason that

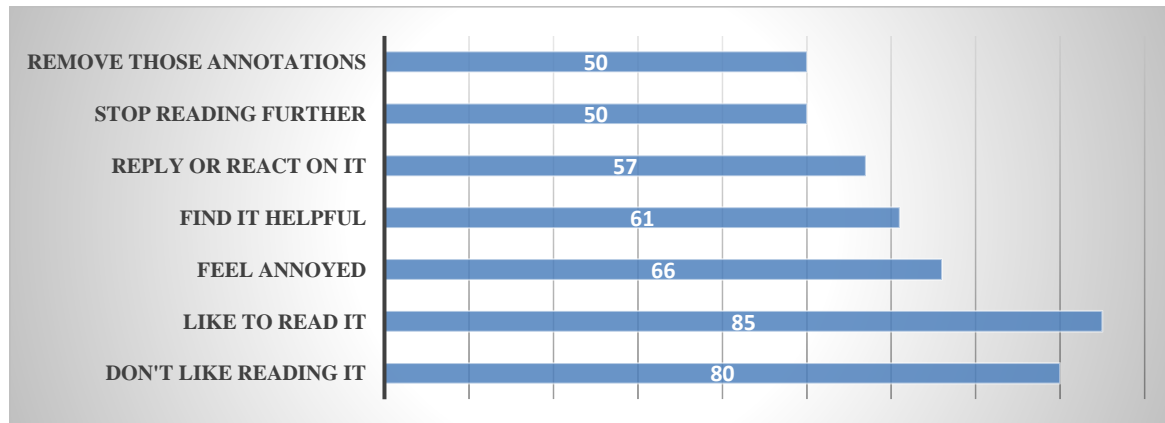
the book is not their personal which sounds ethical being a mature reader. The respondents (29%) also pointed out that their lack of concentration towards particular reading material makes it difficult to marginalize it. Few respondents (25%) also mentions the restriction of librarians not to marginalize a book which seems as ethical as the book is not their personal.

Attitude towards a Pre-Marginalized Book

Respondents also shows their different reactions over pre-marginalized books (Figure 4) makes the study more interesting that how readers react when reading any material that is already annotated by another reader. It was also analyzed that those readers that do not write on books are more likely to read other's annotations than those readers who use to write annotations.

Respondents also show their different views over privacy of annotations. 203 respondents (67.66%) think that marginalia is a private and personal element and they do not like to share it with others neither would be willingly publicizing their annotations with others. Other 97 respondents (32.33%) have a different view and thinks that annotations are not private at all as they are the thoughts of one influenced by other's writings, hence sharing annotations is a valuable activity. Through their different views over annotations, majority of the respondents viewed the e-book marginalia as more positive and secure so as cannot be read by others easily, despite printed books marginalia which was viewed as comparatively negative as no privacy can be maintained on it.

Figure 4



N = % may rise than 100 as respondents were allowed to select more than 1 option.

Respondents also showed their attitude towards other's annotations as shown in Figure 4 where 85% of the respondents love to read what others have written. On the contrary 80% of the respondents agree that they don't like reading that. Also few readers (66%) get annoyed by those annotations of others while 61% find them helpful in their further readings. Some respondents mention that they even react to other's annotations or use to remove them or stop reading the book further.

Discussion

Marginalia is a practice done by several readers consciously or unconsciously. This practice portrays the thoughts and opinions of people over the particular text they are reading. It is a fact that readers are highly switched towards reading on e-resources but the printed books has never given up its importance in contemporary period. The marginalia practice seems never ending though medium of reading have changed, readers demand those memorizing features in e-readers that they use to practice over books.

It is observed that underlining, highlighting and putting different signs are the highly used practice of the readers over the printed material. As majority of the readers read on both mediums; electronic and printed, it is analyzed that 55% of the respondents are unaware of the e-readers and its features.

Respondents are more towards reading on Mobile phones than others e-readers so as to avail those features that are already provided by the e-readers. Despite in awareness of e-reader's features, they use to perform other actions in like copy-paste or print screen for memorizing and noting purposes.

The study also highlighted the features desired by the respondents uses e-readers for reading electronic information resources; arranged accordingly as per demanded.

- Bookmarking
- Text search
- Highlighting
- Making different signs for different purpose

Respondents also have reasons for not marginalizing any material; some with emotional and some with ethical reasons for placing any annotations or marks over the material. These respondents are separated into two groups as per their views over annotations are personal or non-personal elements where majority goes with the point that annotations are personal on nature and hence supported e-annotations for it. But mention their great interest towards reading the annotations of others.

This study has provided the attitude of readers of this society towards marginalia which is significant in identifying the areas need to be developed in upcoming generations for enhancing their reading habits and mind free writings.

Conclusion

To inquire the connections of people with the text and literary world; marginalia seems a great way for it. It is an inescapable function for an immense reader, who is not only a prime factor for a society but for the whole world. In order to promote and built such readers and scholars, it is important to analyze the existing strengths and weaknesses of a society so as to remove them all the way through.

This study is an attempt to put forward the practices and attitudes followed by the ultimate reader society to analyze and draw conclusions for the betterment of our literary world. Through this study, it is evolved that there is a downward trend seen for the marginalia practices especially in writing annotations among the readers. The major reason identified was; **the book might get dirty**. It is felt necessary to inform the people of our society that how important marginalia practices are for a growing intellectual society. As these marginalia practices are referred as an intellectuality of a man and not only encourages but also reveals and reflects the free mind thoughts of a society, where *growing minds grow new and diverse ideas* that brings revolutionary changes in a society. It is important to highlight that the habits of mind free writings must not be discouraged at any stage of life so that they may prevail lifelong and contribute to a growing healthy society.

The marginalia features that are already available in e-readers are desired by the respondents shows the lack of awareness in the public regarding HOW TO USE E-READERS. For this

purpose it is suggested that in the era where e-resources are highly used, the experts must bring in awareness those important e-reader feature that are available such as text searching, highlighting and commenting through text.

Also, the ratio of desired features in e-readers portrays the increasing use of e-resources by the readers today where researchers highly require the commenting feature while professionals show their need towards making tick, cross, circles and star. The student desired for bookmarking feature while house wives need the feature of personalizing the book by writing their names. It is suggested to the e-reader developers to bring the required features in e-readers and also make public aware from them.

E-book reading can never be like reading a book in our hand and folding the page from the top corner of it, but e-readers can be improved so as to better satisfy the growing needs of their users.

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