

## Role of Public Libraries in Promoting Reading Habits

Basawaraj Malipatil

---

### Author's Affiliation:

Librarian, Dr Ambedkar First Grade College Rangampet, Tq-Shorapur, Dist-Yadagir, Karnataka State 585220, India.

**Corresponding Author: Basawaraj Malipatil**, Librarian, Dr Ambedkar First Grade College Rangampet, Tq-Shorapur, Dist-Yadagir, Karnataka State 585220, India.

E-mail: [malipatilibrarian@gmail.com](mailto:malipatilibrarian@gmail.com)

Received on 24.02.2021, Accepted on 27.05.2021

---

### ABSTRACT

*Reading is a basic life skill needed by an individual throughout one's life. Recognizing the importance of reading and the decline in reading culture this study aims to find out the reading habits among the students newly admitted at SP College Shorapur Yadagir Karnataka. The study shows that students spend more time on social networking sites rather than reading. The research focuses on how the public libraries of Karnataka can aid in inculcating the reading habits among children at the school level and how technology can be incorporated to make reading more pleasurable.*

**KEYWORDS:** Reading habits, public libraries, social networking sites, Youths, Children's, Public

### INTRODUCTION

The famous quote Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body describes the importance of reading in our lives. Reading a book gives the reader a wonderful insight into the author's mind and the world created by the author. Books are said to be the faithful friends of the reader. They speak to the readers and keep them engrossed in it so much that the readers even forget their present environments around them and enter into the virtual world brought in by the books. Those who have developed the habit of reading find their comfort with books especially during loneliness. A learning process is formed as a result of continuous reading. Reading helps to develop the creativity within and also stimulates the thinking process of the reader. It is rightly said that good reading habit can feed the creative mind. There exists a universe

of knowledge which can be entered through the door of reading.

Issa (2012) in his study agrees that there is no doubt that through reading an individual is able to build or fix things enjoy stories discover what others believe and develop one's own ideas. In this information age, the reading provides a person all forms of information necessary for our daily survival and growth. Reading habits can contribute to the growth development and progress of individuals who consider reading as an inseparable part of an intellectual life.

### PUBLIC LIBRARY

A public library is a social institution, which is open for all people of the society without any discrimination and is meant for free dispersion of information. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan defines public library as a public institution or

establishment charged with the care of collection of books and the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them.

IFLA/UNESCO (Gill, 1) defines public library as an organisation established supported and funded by the community either through local regional or national government and which provides access to knowledge and information through various resources and services to all the members of the community regardless of race nationality age gender religion language disability economic and employment status and educational attainment.

#### **Functions of public library:**

Functions of public library are:

1. Collection and preservation of knowledge
2. Useful in basic education
3. Assistance in research work
4. Helpful in self study
5. Helps in perfect personality development
6. Use of leisure period of time

#### **Role of the public library in promoting reading habits**

The main aim of promoting a reading habit in the society is to make reading as a part of our daily lives and to establish reading as a habit in our lives that would be desired and enjoyed by all throughout our lives. The crucial role played by the public library in fostering reading habits among the children is highlighted in UNESCO's public library manifesto 1994 UNESCO has issued the following missions of a public library: creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age.

1. Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels.
2. Providing opportunities for personal creative development and stimulating the imagination and creativity of children.
3. Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study is conducted to identify the reading habits of the students and the role played by the schools in creating and further developing the reading habits. The study also aims to find out the type of reading material preferred by the students and suggestions on

how the public library can play an important role in developing the reading habits among the students in a community. Following are the objectives of the study.

1. To study the reading habits of the students.
2. To study the type of reading material preferred
3. To assess the role played by college and how the public library can nurture the reading habits among its students.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Reading is important in education as well as in day-to-day life for intellectual growth of a person. The subject of reading has received much attention from different quarters in recent times. The reasons of the decline in the reading habits of the public especially students are being widely studied and discussed by academicians intellectuals researchers librarians and the like.

The ability to read promotes lifelong learning. According to Busayo (2011) a reading habit is a pattern with which an individual organizes his/her reading. The habit of reading provides experience through which the individual may expand his horizons of knowledge intensifies his interest and gains deeper understanding of either himself or of others (Chettri and Rout, 2013).

Issa et. al. (2012) states that if one has the practice of reading regularly without even thinking about it conclusion can be drawn that good reading habits have been formed. A habit forms when an individual does something repeatedly without being conscious about it. He further states that academic performance of the students has been at stake due to the lack of good reading.

Ogbodo (2010) identifies three types of reading habits viz hobbial recreational and concentration. In hobbial one derives joy and satisfaction in doing it. Hobbial reading helps the person to satisfy his interests and aspirations. Recreational reading or reading for recreation or relaxation is common among the employed. This reading relaxes the brain and avoids mental fatigue. Concentration reading is result oriented which is done to obtain a specific achievement.

Akanda Hoq and Hasan (2013) in their paper have analysed the reading activities of the students of Rajshahi university Bangladesh and how the reading are affected by various other elements. They have put forward recommendations to improve the reading habits of young students.

In order to assess the reading culture of children in the academic community Akindele (2012) has studies the perception of parents on the practice of early childhood reading. Her study reveals that learning activities provided by nursery school are not sufficient for children's development without parental involvement.

College library has been appraised by intellectuals and is considered to be an inevitable segment of the education system. A library and a college are inseparable and one will cease to function satisfactorily without the existence of the other.

Busayo (2011) states that the college education the student with the help of teachers whereas the library functions silently by offering teaching material to aid classroom teaching. A college library complements the college in moulding the traits of cultured individual into a creative informed knowledgeable and literate citizen.

## METHODOLOGY

Survey method was used to conduct the study. The present study was conducted on a sample of 401 students studying in first year Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of commerce streams at SP College Shorapur, Yadagir Karnataka. A

total of 401 student admitted in the First year Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of commerce Departments. The main aim in selecting these groups of respondents is that the students are new to the institute and are not well acquainted with the college library.

The reading habits developed within them if any would be as a result of their reading culture inculcated within them by college and their parents. A total of 401 questionnaires were distributed to the students during the first week of the academic year of which 375 students responded to the questions. Thus the response rate is 93.5%. The data collected is analysed using SPSS software. The data is clearly shown in the form of graphs and tables and test like chi-square is applied for hypothesis testing.

## ANALYSIS

In all 401 questionnaires were distributed among the students of which 375 students responded which became the sample for analysis. The following analysis is based on the responses provided by these students.

### Using social networking sites

A huge mass of today's generation especially student are hooked onto various social networking sites like Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram etc. For most of the time. It seems that such sites have created a huge impact on the lives of many and as such most of the people use these sites to kill time. Therefore the students were asked how many times a day do they log into their social networking accounts. The responses given are as below:

**Table 1: Using social networking sites**

No. Of logins on social networking sites per day	No. Of respondents	Percentage
Once a week	30	8%
Only once a day	25	6.67%
2-3 times a day	98	26.13%
Whenever I am free (several times a day )	222	59.2%
Total	375	100%
Chi-square of Asymp. sig	269.405 <sup>a</sup> 3 000	

The above table 1 clearly shows that only 30 (8%) students log into their social networking sites only once a week 25 (6.67%) students log in once a day 98 (26.13%) log into their social

networking accounts at least 2-3 times a day whereas majority of 222 (59.2%) students use the social networking sites whenever they are free i.e. several times a day. It can therefore be

concluded that majority of the students spend their free time on these sites instead of using their time in reading or studying. The chi-square test proves that more students use the social networking suits per day. The chi-square asymptotic significant value is 000 which is below 0.05. Through the chi-square test it is evident that the number of students using the social networking site is high. Therefore the hypothesis students spend more time on social networking sites is proved based on this test. The students were asked about the number of books they read during the last three months. This question attempts

to find out if the students have inclination towards reading inspite of the impact of internet in their lives Following are the responses given by the students.

### **Purpose of reading**

Reading not only relaxes the mind but also develops the thinking ability of the human mind and keeps a person informed about the current affairs. One should therefore develop the habit of reading in order to be information literate. The students were asked about their purpose of reading, and the responses given by them are tabulated in the following table 2:

**Table 2: Purpose of reading**

<b>Purpose of Reading</b>	<b>No. Of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
To pass exams	61	16.27%
I love to read it is of the my hobby	89	23.73%
To keep up with current affairs	119	31.73%
For self motivation	106	28.27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table 2 reveals the values of the purpose of reading. It is seen that 61 (16.27%) students read only to pass their exams. This category of students read books only related to their studies and as such one can say that once their examinations come to an end they don't feel the need to read books. Only 89 (23.73%) students love to read and consider that reading is one of their hobby. These students can be considered as habitual readers who have developed the habit of reading. 119

(31.73%) students read newspapers and magazines to keep up with the current affairs and 106 (28.27%) students read books for self motivation/development.

### **Reasons for preferring e-book**

The students were further asked why they preferred to read e-books as compared to the print format and the responses gives are as follows:

**Table 3: Reasons for preferring e-book**

<b>Reasons for preferring e-book</b>	<b>No. Of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mobility	90	65.22%
Speed of purchase	6	4.35%
Flexibility in reading	20	14.5%
e-books are cheaper as compared to print books	3	2.17%
Free e-books can be downloaded	10	7.25%
Can carry multiple titles on a single e-reader	2	2.89%
Consist of multimedia sounds	2	1.45%
Need not visit a library	3	2.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100%</b>

Of the 138 students who stated that they preferred e-books over the print format it can be seen that 90 (65.22%) students prefer e-books due to their mobile nature. 6 (4.35%) said that they preferred e-books because e-books can be purchased faster. According to

20(14.5%) students there is flexibility in reading e-books i.e. the font light can be adjusted while reading which is absent in print format. 3 students feel that e-books are cheaper as compared to print books and therefore, they prefer e-books. 10 (7.25%)

students stated that they prefer e-nooks as free books can be downloaded and read. 2 students (2.89%) prefer e-books since multiple titles can be downloaded and saved on a single reader that can be read as and when required. Only 2 (1.45%) students are fascinated by the multimedia sounds provided by certain e-books and 3 (2.17%) students stated that reading e-books will not require them to visit a library.

### **Library period**

A college apart from teaching also needs to inculcate the habit of reading among its students. This is extremely important because if the student fails to adopt the habit of reading it can create an impact on their educational life. The students were asked whether they had a library period in their college and the responses given are of follows:

According to the above figure no.3 it is seen that 259 (69.07%) students stated that had a library period in college 101 (26.93%) students stated that there was no library period in the college was a library period in their college. It can be concluded that from the total of 375 respondents. 116 (30.93%) students did not have a library period in their college. The students were further asked if they were given books to read during the library period and all the 259 students responded positively that books were provided to read during that period.

## **FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Social networking sites have created a huge impact on the lives of many individuals mostly the students. The culture of reading is decreasing among the students as students use the Internet to retrieve any information require by them. The study has revealed that majority of the students spend their time on social networking sites whenever they have free time. Gok's Study (2016) has also revealed similar results wherein students prefer to follow social networking sites instead of reading book newspaper etc. Reading keeps a person informed in today's fast moving world. One can say that a person who does not have the habit of reading lags behind, however the present study shows that majority of 281 (74.93%) students did not read any book during the past three months which shows

their poor reading habits. Only 89 (23.73%) students consider reading as their hobby and can be considered to possess reading habits. Taking note of the students spending time on social networking sites there is an ardent need to divert the students attention from social networking sites to reading. This can be done by the government authorities by imposing the rule stated in the Goa public library Act 1993 which states that: compulsory requirement to produce enrolment/membership certificate of the public libraries by the unemployed youth during the registration in the Employment Exchange for those jobs where literacy is required Merely having a membership at a public library is not sufficient this rule may be amended further in a way that the candidate need to produce a certificate attested by the librarian stating that the individual is an active member of the library.

In spite of spending maximum time on electronic formats it is found that 237 (63.2%) students still prefer to read using the print format. Only 138 (36.8%) prefer e-books mostly due to the mobile nature of the e-books. E-books can be read from anywhere and one need not visit a library to borrow a book for reading. Even though an e-book offers various features the students fail to read them. Since the students possess a fascination towards reading electronic information, public libraries need to update their collection and add e-books to the present print collection. The users may be given access to the virtual collection through individual logins either free of cost or at a nominal price. The public libraries in Karnataka are funded by the Government and providing such a facility to the reader should not be cumbersome. The public libraries can also equipped with kindles e-tablets and other devices used for reading e-resources. The uses today are not aware of such technological evolutions in the libraries and therefore the young tech-savvy readers need to be made literate about electronic reading wherein the users can read information from anywhere without personally visiting a library. Technology can therefore be used to pull the students into the practice of reading.

A College encompasses many factors that affect learning; one of them being a school library period incorporated into the syllabus.



The study revealed that not all schools have a library period. It is found that 116 (30.93%) students did not get the opportunity for library reading. A library is considered to be a heart of an institution and if a school imparts education without a well-established library, then the child misses the opportunity of getting in touch with the books and finds it difficult to form reading habits at later stage. The main reason for schools not to have a school could be lack of infrastructure books and trained staff. Here the role of public library comes into play. One of the objectives of a public library is to provide extension services and convert non-reader into a reader. The state of Karnataka has a well-established public library system with 175 Taluka libraries Thirty One (31) District library and more than 875 village libraries. So also conducting a story-talk hour wherein the student is allowed to narrate the story to other is another way of establishing contact between a book and the readers. More staff possessing the skills to interact with the children needs to be employed in the public libraries to carry out such activities.

## CONCLUSION

A reading society is considered to be a literate society. Reading culture should therefore be inculcated among the citizens especially the children. It is seen and researches and various studies have proved that today's generation is constantly on the social networking sites and the reading culture has greatly decreased among the youth. There is an urgent need to switch the student's attention to reading and this can be done with the help of public libraries by extending their services beyond the walls of the libraries and reaching out to the general public and transforming them to become serious readers.

## REFERENCES

1. Akanda A.K.M. eamin Ali. Hoq, Kazi mostak Gausul and Hasan Nazmul (2013). Reading habit of students in social sciences and arts: A case study of Rajshahi University Chinese librarianship: an international electronic Journal 35. Accessed June 9 2017 <http://www.iclc.us/cliej/c135AHH.pdf>
2. Akindele Nadia (2012) Reading culture Parental Involvement and children's Development in Formative years: the covenant university experience library philosophy and practice (e-journal) 805 accessed June 8 2017.<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/805>
3. Busayo Isaac Oluwadare (2011) . The school library as a foundational step to Chidrens Effective reading Habits library philosophy and practice (e-journal) 665 accessed June 8 2017 <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/665>
4. Chettri Kushmeeta and Rout S.K. (2013). Humanities and social science. 14: 13-17 accessed June 8, 2017 [www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhas/papers/voll4-issue6/C01461317.pdf?id=6916](http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhas/papers/voll4-issue6/C01461317.pdf?id=6916)
5. Gok T (2016). The Effects of social Networking sites on students studying and Habits. International Journal of Research in Education and science. 2: 85-93
6. IFLA (2004) "IFLA/UNESCO public library Manifesto 1994" accessed June 28 2017 <https://archive.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng.htm>
7. Issa abdulwahab Olanreqaju Aliyu Mulikat Bola Akangbe Rachel Bisilola and Adedeji Adegboyega feancis (2012). Reading Interests and Habits of the Feseral Polytechnic OFFA, students International Journal of Learning & Development 2: 470-486.
8. Ogbodo rosemary Ochanya (2010). Effective study Habits in Educational sector counselling Implications Edo Journal of Counselling 3: 229-239.

**How to cite this article:** Malipatil B. (2021). Role of Public Libraries in Promoting Reading Habits. *Library Progress (International)*, 41(1), 138-143.