

READING HABITS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The library is one of the information centres where an individual can obtain information. It is also a place where a person can go and read or study with his materials. Libraries are places where the habit of reading books can be acquired. Libraries increase student success at colleges and they help them to acquire the learning knowledge necessary for adapting to changing and developing circumstances. The library, irrespective of its form, status, typology or classification has thoughtful potency in bringing cultural, political and socio-economic empowerment to the culture. The reading habit gives a opportunity to determine the relationship between their reading attitudes and how the surroundings might affect them especially in colleges, Universities and other academic institutions. In order to find out the students' reading habits, it is essential to understand their attitudes towards reading, the environment and the reading materials that they prefer.

INTRODUCTION

The services of the library should aspire at creating reading habits among learning students. Students could be motivated to read more and more books by giving rewards to those who visit the library and make best use of the library and information services. The success of any college library depends on the willingness and competency of the librarian and his endurance to help the students in providing the required information in the form of books, journals or any other information resources of their interest. He should be aware of the significance and philosophy explained in five laws of Library Science by Dr.S.R.Ranganathan and should give his best efforts to implement the same in the library.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading habit is an indispensable and significant aspect for creating the information literate society in this human race. It shapes the individuality of an individual and it helps them to develop the proper thinking methods and help in creating new ideas. At present, due to the influence of the communication media, people could not show much interest in reading the books, magazines and journals etc. Therefore, there is a need to develop the reading habit among the students in the academic society.

If computers have replaced the traditional literacy world, it is noteworthy that educators, publishers, writers, and software engineers might cooperate with each other to create more interesting and economic online materials for students based on the knowledge of students reading habits and reading behaviors. Hagood (2003) emphasized, because new media and online literacy are part and parcel of our day-to-day lives, researchers and educators need to begin to view them as a central aspect of information literacy research.

Library is seen as an integral part of any academic institution as it contains information hub in the form of books and journals, which cultivate a deep inbuilt desire in students to do extra reading and research on the topics discussed in the class.

Parvathamma and Reddy (2009) have noted that public libraries have improved literacy through various information and educational services that they render over time. They are also well known to

stimulate imaginative thoughts and expand personal horizons while making the empowerment of citizen, and provision of access to a common cultural heritage a reality. This study investigated reading habits of users as determinants of the utilisation of library information resources of two public libraries.

Reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in schools and colleges, but once formed it can last one's life time (Green, 2001). Reading and academic achievement are vital for research workers and educationists to know that every reader whether he or she is gifted, average, normal or backward etc, should be educated in his or her own way but if he or she possesses good study habits, he or she can perform well in academics and in every challenging situation. It is the reading habits which help the learner in obtaining meaningful and desirable knowledge. Good reading habits act as a strong weapon for the students to excel in life (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012).

Palani (2012) also opines that, effectual reading is Imperative avenue of valuable learning and reading is interrelated with the total outcome of the instructive process and hence, educational success requires successful reading habit. He believes reading is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them.

A lot of researchers like Ogbodo (2002), Bhan & Gupta (2010), and Singh (2011) have done work on reading associated with reading habits, especially how it affects the academic presentation of an individual or students. However, most of these works pertain to the international community. Some other intellectuals namely Ward, (1997), Agbezree, (2001) conducted in Ghana were limited to primary and secondary levels of education. It is against this backdrop that it has become necessary to conduct similar study in Ghana to examine the effect of reading habits on the academic performance of students in the tertiary level of education in Ghana with particular reference to Koforidua Polytechnic.

Passive Readers

Now a day's there is overall fall in the standard of education and it is the imitative of modernity. Our academic circle is under the process of change where 'conventional values' are being replaced by 'Greed of Money'. Apart from private sector especially in government and co-operative sectors quality is at stake in terms of partiality and favoritism. Consequently, it is very unfortunate that students spool under aggravation and become passive at studies. Looking upon such cases, in general, average students begin to lose interest of reading & writing. He avoids and may not come to library. It is our moral responsibility to attract and make these passive readers to come to library and make best use of the library.

Significance of Reading Habit

The habits of 'Reading' and 'Listening' function as stimuli in formal education system that generate personal responses in the mind of a student. 'Stimulus & Response Theory' occupies a place of importance in pedagogy. A good listener can become a good speaker and a good reader can become a good student. This habit keeps one updated with regard to the knowledge of world happenings in general and subject knowledge in particular. it is a trite saying that knowledge is power and it imparts a prestigious position to student.

Efforts That a Librarian Can Do to Keep the Spirit of Libraries Alive

It is absurdity that today youths are educated but they miserably lack in basic knowledge of the subjects. Only certificates of qualification cannot guarantee employment in private sector which is, today, ever expanding and generating potentials of employment. Mahatma Jyotirao Fule had attached great significance to education saying that lack of education robs one of every opportunity of progress.

Today our youths are educated, but there is a wide gap between the standards of their certificates and oral personality. Following measures could be of greater significance in bringing our disenchanted students out of the miserable & gloomy situations.

To encourage the reading of books, colleges can consider starting a Reading Club, where the members are divided into groups. Here, each group can be responsible for reading one particular classic book. Each group will focus on one book every month, with each club member handling one specific aspect or component of the book. For example, one person can be in charge of the storyline, another can be in charge of the main characters etc. The club members can meet once a week, and at the end of the month, there can be an event to showcase what each group has done for the benefit of other groups.

Reading & Writing Competitions

Competitions can be arranged among the students, the feeling of togetherness and sense of alertness. Such competitions would bring competitive spirit among these students and they would work hard for appreciation and rewards. They must be given sufficient time for preparation and the previous winners must figure in the talk of the college.

College Brand Ambassador for Reading and Writing is appointed

Local models carry superior appeal to the students; therefore those who have excelled in the previous competitions must be declared brand ambassadors. The qualities in their skills of reading and writing must be highlighted and these qualities must be impressed upon the minds of the rest of the students.

Use of Audio-Visual Aids

Formal programs must be organized in which 'Video Clips', 'Audio Records of Good Reading', 'Guest Lectures for guidance', 'Model Demonstrations of Good Reading & Writing' must be formally presented before students. Students are imitative and definitely they would imbibe the style and practice with it.

Bio-Pic, Auto-Biographies & Biographies Must Be Stacked In Libraries

Bio-Pic, Auto-Biographies & Biographies must be available in abundance in the college libraries. Every student has certain role-model, and he is interested in knowing more & more about him. Inculcating in students the habit of reading biographies may prove to be an effective breakthrough in the present scenario of students' lack of response to reading.

Impact of Motivational Speeches

There are many professionally trained motivators available in our surrounding area, their lectures may be organized in the college. The impact of such speeches is excellent. If such lectures are arranged in the college library, soon after the lecture motivated students would crowd at the library counters. Others would also feel like borrowing books.

Display of Books under Boards

This is the age of marketing where sale is increased by the way of advertisement. Art of advertising and channels using sign boards such as 'Must Read', 'New Arrivals', 'Best Selling Books', 'Prize Winning Books', generates in onlookers the need to buy the commodity being advertised. This practice will definitely develop in students the attitude favorable for reading & writing.

CONCLUSION

Physical books in a college library should be arranged and sorted out in an attractive and aesthetic and in a accessible way. The books borrowed most often (in both fiction and non-fiction categories) can be

singled out and their front and back covers can be photocopied and put up on the library's notice board along with a well-written summary. Information can be given about the author, publisher along with reviews of the book. Students are like hungry birds, the more they eat the more they feel like hungry. The duty of librarian is to channelize their energy for the activities of reading and writing. The carrying out of the above discussed remedies in academic institutions would definitely change the attitude of the students in cultivating the reading habit among them.

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