CHAPTER XIII

EFFECTS OF READING

1. Introduction
2. Summary of the types of effects
3. Responses of students
4. Incidental Findings
5. Review of the Chapter
Sir, My wife was about to divorce me until she read your touching article about the evils of a broken home. Now she says she is going to stick to me through thick and thin. Please cancel my subscription.

A letter to the Editor of McCall's.

A book should help us either to enjoy life or endure it.

Samuel Johnson.
1. **Introduction**:

1.1 The data on 'effect of reading' were collected by (i) asking a specific question in the interview; (ii) including a question in the diary form distributed to students (Appendix VI). Following table shows the number of students who volunteered answers to the question concerning effects of reading.

**Table 12.1 - Formation of N for the question on 'Effects of reading'.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Interview Source</th>
<th>Diary Source</th>
<th>Total Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>57.79</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42.20</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>99.99</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 **Limitations**: Question regarding effects of reading was a free response question of an exploratory nature. It was not included in the main questionnaire for making the questionnaire compact. So data were collected from a limited number of students.

As the data were collected from a limited number of students and not from all the sample used for the main ob-
jectives of the study analysis is presented only on one level i.e., level of all the students and not on the three levels namely faculty B.A., B.Sc., B.Com; Sex – Men and Women students; and Setting – Urban and Rural Students.

1.3 Responses were analysed in order to find out various categories or types of effects and frequency of mention of each of the type envisaged. It should be made clear that the system of categories envisaged here is subjective and arbitrary. In order to make clear for what each category stands for representative verbatim responses are produced in 3.

2. Summary of the types of effects:

2.1 Table 12.2 shows the types of effects of reading and frequency of each type in descending order of percentage.

Table 12.2 - Types of effects of reading on students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Effects on</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Desire - Inspiration</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Opinions - outlook</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Effects on No.</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Overt behaviour</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Conversation - speech</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Relief - respite</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Regular studies</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Ideals</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Understanding human nature</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Philosophy of Life</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Comments:

(i) The common notion that the youth read only to kill time is dispelled by the findings of this study. Only 7.30% students read for respite or relief. Corollary to this finding is that reading of 'drug' literature that is reading of detective novels, erotic stories, etc. is not as widespread
as it is supposed to be.

(2) The greatest number of reported efforts are on emotions. This is natural as the population under study consists of students of adolescent age group.

(3) Literature can have effect on different aspects of human behaviour (Table 12.2). This inherent power of literature should be fully exploited for shaping the youth properly in all aspects.

(4) It should be noted with satisfaction that at least 8 students have remarked that they found reading useful for their regular studies. This is a welcome thing. In fact the classification of reading as reading prescribed for studies and for leisure time depends on the outlook of the reader. Reading prescribed for the course can be enjoyed by the student as leisure time reading and at the same time he could find latest information regarding the subjects prescribed for studies in leisure time reading. If this outlook is inculcated during school and college days then there will be no need for the movement for 'continuous education' for at least the 'formally educated', as they would continue their education on their own, using print (and other mass media).

3. **Responses of students:**
3.1 It would not be out of place here to quote the actual remarks of the students regarding effects of reading. Responses have been reproduced in order to avoid repetition.

3.2 Effects on Emotion

- Reading made me sensitive and enriched my mind.

- Reading of 'Karmayan' and 'Radhey' created in me sympathy for Karna.

- When I read about the love between brother and sister I became sensitive and some-times weep as I am the only child of my parents.

- Reading helped me acquire poise, mental peace, and satisfaction.

- Reading infuriated me about the social injustice meted out to Harijans.

- 'Shakuntal' (a novel) by Prof. B.S. Phadke enhanced my love of our country.

- Reading changed my fickleness of mind into firmness.

- I feel disgusted when I read about corruption, high prices of commodities and other aspects of our social life.

- Reading gives me great joy.

- Reading of a story created in me sympathy for the poor and down-trodden.

- Poems of Balkavi give me immense pleasure.
- Reading created in me hatred for a character in the story who killed his brother for money.
- Reading made me courageous.
- Reading of novels made me sympathetic towards the sorrows of others.
- Reading about spiritual matters, religious literature and literature about culture made me grave by nature.
- Reading of the poem 'Sagare Pran Talamala' turned my patriotic feeling more intense.
- Reading made me humble.
- Reading generates enthusiasm in me.
- Reading created in me self-confidence.
- My mental life was properly shaped because of reading.
- Reading created in me love for humanity.
- Reading created in me sympathy for the character depicted.
- I feel elated and get satisfaction from reading.
- I can keep control over my mind because of reading.
- Reading made me pious.
- Reading increased my love for the mother.
- Religious reading affected in me respect, love, and sympathy for others.
Negative effects:
- Reading of love stories made me uneasy.
- Reading of 'Kamasutra' by Vatsayyan created great confusion in my mind.
- Because of reading of detective novels I am scared when I am alone.
- Reading of Ache-Adhure made me disturbed because of the weak willed hero of the play, whose character generated in me a doubt about the stability of our family.
- Reading made me pessimistic. I began to think that in real world there was no real beauty or love. The actual world was full of deceit.
- Identifying myself with the character and daydreaming his experience makes me gloomy afterwards.
- Reading of erotic literature made me uneasy for a while.
- When I read something which is contrary to my convictions I become perplexed and I lose confidence in myself.

3.3 Knowledge-comprehension:
- Reading increased my power of comprehension.
- Reading increased my general knowledge.
- Reading keeps me abreast of all the current events.
- Novels broaden my span of knowledge.
- I know about many things without moving outside.
- Reading gave me information regarding many things.
- Reading made me compare what was expressed in writing with the actual life.
- I acquired knowledge about this world through reading novels.
- Reading gave me knowledge about style of living and proper way of conversation.
- Reading increased my knowledge about the national scene and political upheavals.
- I can now understand talk of high level between two persons, because of reading.
- I realized the meaning of life through reading.
- Reading increased my knowledge about many things.
- Reading implanted in my mind patterns of civilized behaviour.
- Reading deepened my knowledge.
- Reading increased my knowledge of politics.
- Reading helped me to evaluate the present happenings.
- Reading removed my doubts about many political and social problems.
- Reading keeps me in contact with the various happenings in the world.

3.4 Desire - Inspiration:
- Reading created in me a desire for doing some constructive work.
- Reading generated in me a desire to learn.
- Reading of thought provoking articles created in me a desire for setting my behaviour on the pattern expressed in such articles.
- Reading inspired me to write something.
- Reading of plays created in me a desire for acting and I fulfilled it.
- I read a story by Smt. Kamala Phadke entitled 'Phulpakhara' in which life of an innocent small girl was depicted. She was deceived by elderly persons. After reading the story I felt that this world must be changed.
- When I read stories of great persons I also feel doing something like them.
- Reading created in me a desire to further my education.
- Reading inspired me to write short stories and up to now I have written 25 to 30 unpublished short stories.
- Reading created in me a burning desire to do some-
thing for the progress of my country.

- After reading articles published in 'Sanmati', 'Jainbodhak' and daily 'Sakal' I felt like doing some social work.

- Reading inspired me to write something on the pattern of what I usually read.

- Reading inspired me to follow proper path in life.

- Reading of biographies has set before me ideals and I feel like imitating them.

- Reading inspired me to write a play, a short story, and a poem.

- After reading newspapers I also feel like plunging myself into the current of social events.

- Reading created in me a desire for social work.

- When I read autobiography of late P.K. Atre, I felt becoming like him - a teacher, playwright, poet, author, critic, orator, author of humorous literature.

- Reading of character sketches and autobiographies created in me a desire to acquire the strong traits of the persons and stick to my goals.

- Reading travelogues by P.L. Deshpande, Arwind Gokhale, Prabhaskar Tamhane, Jadugar Raghuvar, created in me a desire to travel abroad.
- Reading of social stories created in me a desire to help poor and downtrodden people.
- After reading love stories I started earnestly to be in love with somebody.
- Newspaper reading created in me a desire for doing something for the society.
- Reading of literature by late F. A. Atre inspired me to write something like F. A. Atre.
- I found certain similarities between the life of a hero depicted in a novel by Prof. M. S. Phadke and that of mine. After reading the novel I felt that I would be able to do something in my life as the hero did in the novel.
- Reading created in me a desire for more reading.
- Novels by Prof. M. S. Phadke created in me a desire to do something worthwhile in my life.
- Reading of religious matter created in me a desire to behave accordingly.
- After reading 'Radhey' I felt that I should also keep mental balance and not to lose temper according to Karna.
- Reading of biography of Shastriji created in me a desire to emulate his virtues, to be an orator like him and to serve my nation.
- Reading created in me a desire for doing something for the society.
- Reading created in me a desire for adventure.
- Reading inspired me to write independently.
- When I read news about famine and corruption in our society I feel that the government should be changed and our society should be founded on the principles propounded by Karl Marx.

3.5 Opinions and Outlook:
- Reading of autobiography of late P.K. Atre changed my opinion about Pune.
- Reading confirmed my view of the ideology of the Congress Party.
- Reading of short stories changed my outlook on life. I now feel that life is full of heavenly happiness.
- Novels of late V.S. Khandekar taught me how to look at the beauty of nature.
- Reading changed my opinion about United States of America. I now know the bad side of the States also.
- Reading confirmed some of the opinions I already have.
- Reading broadened my outlook.
- I had no good opinion about Karna. After reading a
book on Karna by Shivaji Sawant my opinion regarding Karna changed.

- The novel 'Onkar' changed my opinion regarding Anandibai.

- Reading helped me to change my opinions regarding political policy.

- Narayan Dharap's novel 'Krishna' changed my attitude towards life of a woman and I realised the necessity of freedom for woman.

- Reading helped me to acquire a broad view of life.

- Reading developed my outlook on life.

- Reading helped me understand that everything in a foreign land by itself was not good.

- Reading changed my opinion about Hitler and Bajirao II.

- I was doubtful about the existence of God. But reading of the Bible convinced me that there is God and He runs the universe.

- Reading about Jayprakash Narayan's struggle in the state of Bihar changed my opinion about him. Previously to that I thought that he was unnecessarily considering himself as a great person.

- Reading of newspapers created in me reverence for
Yeshwantrao Chavan.

- Reading changed my political thinking.
- Reading made me receptive to new thoughts.
- Reading made me a theist.
- Previously I used to believe in wonders but reading of a story about a girl changed my belief.
- After reading love stories I decided not to be in love with anybody.

3.6 Thinking:

- Reading increased my power of thinking.
- Reading made me to think over the political and social problems, convinced me that we must strive to bring in political equality.
- Lofty thoughts in the novels of late V.S. Khandekar influenced my thinking.
- Reading deepened my thinking.
- Reading creates sound basis of thinking and so unwelcome thoughts have no influence on my mind.
- Reading created in me confusion regarding contrasting points expressed by the same author.
- Reading in general and reading of historical novels in particular enriched my thinking.
- Reading of novels makes me think about the reasons
of downfall of a hero in the novel and how to avoid the downfall in personal life.

- Reading helped me in formulating my political opinions.
- Reading makes me think about life and my country from various aspects.
- Reading helped me to acquire habits of deep thinking. It also developed a critical attitude towards life.
- Reading helped me form a habit of weighing incidents and thoughts in a balanced manner.
- Reading made me think about the matter I read.
- Reading made me think deeply even if a matter was trivial.
- Reading inculcated in me a habit of critical thinking.
- I started thinking about the mistakes committed by the party in power and how it should behave.
- Reading helped me in acquiring critical attitude towards social problem.
- Reading sharpened my thinking.
- Because of reading I started thinking independently.
- Reading improved my thinking.

3.7 Awareness:
Reading made me aware of...

- social problems
- poverty in our country
- backwardness of our society
- social and political scene in our country.
- shortcomings in my behaviour
- social conditions
- political differences
- dangers in our social life
- duties as a citizen
- social injustice

Love stories sometimes awakened my passion about the feeling of love.

Reading made me aware of our secondary position in sports.

Reading made me aware of the behaviour of political leaders, ways of earning money and corruption.

Reading of Shresht Yogi a novel by Ranjeet Desai made me aware of the greatness of Shivaji.

Reading of newspapers made me aware of the political scene in our country.

Reading of novel 'Swayamsevak' by Nath Madhav made me realise that one could strive for making social change by
working alone. It is possible to work alone even without thinking about success or failure.

- Reading of newspapers made me realize that education was worthless. It was not useful for gaining employment.

- Reading made me aware that there were many deceitful persons in the society. I learnt from reading how to save myself from such persons.

3.8 Interest:
- Reading led me towards more reading.
- Reading created in me interest for sports.
- Reading made my life interesting.
- I read three novels on Karna namely 'Mrvtyunjay' 'Karmayan' and Madhey' a year ago. They immensely influenced me. 'Mrvtyunjay' created in me great interest in Gayatri Mantra. I endeavoured to understand its meaning.
- Reading created in me a dislike for motion pictures and dressing up.
- Reading created in me a liking for 'Science'.
- Reading created in me an interest in going to plays and understand them in a better way.
- Reading created in me an interest in discussion and chit-chatting.
Reading created in me liking for knowledge.
Reading attracted me towards revolutionary ideas.
Reading created in me a love for knowledge.

Negative:
Reading created in me an aversion to politics.

8.9 Overt behaviour:
Reading made me practical.
Reading of social novels taught me how to behave in society. I learnt from it what makes a person unpopular in company.
Reading influenced my style of living.
I did not know how to behave in the world, nor did I know good manners but reading improved my behaviour.
Reading guided me in behaving properly in this world.
Reading helped me in social adjustments. Even if a friend is wrong I now adjust with him.
Reading made me firm and taught me to work hard without spending energy in fruitless talking.
Reading showed me proper style of living. Reading helps me in removing my shortcomings.
Reading showed me the proper ways of behaving with others.
- Reading helped me to rethink about my philosophy of life and thus change the behaviour accordingly.
- Reading helped me in facing unforeseen circumstances.
- I learnt how to behave in this world through reading.
- Because of reading I started taking part in Social work.
- Reading helped me cultivate acquire some good manners.
- Reading of articles published in 'Sakal' taught me how to behave in home.
- I tried to behave according to characters in the historical novels by H.N. Apte, and writings of Baba Amate, but I found it very difficult to do so. Practical difficulties come in the way. Now I think that one should change oneself according to the changing circumstances.

3.10 Language:
- Reading enriched my vocabulary and refined my sentence patterns.
- Reading influenced my language.
- Reading helped me in my writing critical articles.
- Reading helped me in improving my spelling.
- Reading helped me in my essay-writing.
- Good sentences that I come across in reading help me in writing essays.
- Reading of 'Mrutyunjay' helped me in refining my language.
- Reading of Hindi novels enriched my Hindi language.
- Reading improved my language and style of writing.
- My language was not standard one and it was without any figures of speech. But reading improved my language.
- Reading of novels by V.S. Khandekar improved my language.
- Reading helped me to express myself effectively in written form.

3.11 Conversation - Speech:
- Because of reading of Khandekar's personal essays I can now convince others of my point of view.
- Because of reading I can now take part in conversation effectively.
- Reading taught me how to converse effectively with others. It also helped me to convince others regarding some point.
- I can now take part in the discussion about political, social, historical, or spiritual matters. On some subjects I can speak authoritatively.
- Reading helped me to speak on any subject confidently among my friends.
- Because of reading, I can now discuss any subject.
- Reading helped me in discussion with others and thus gain confidence.
- I used to take part in debates, but I was never successful. After I started reading, this situation changed.
- Reading removed my weaknesses in discussion.
- Reading helped me express myself effectively orally.
- Reading improved my speech.

3.12 Relief and Respite:
- Detective novels absorb me so much that I forget all other things.
- Reading of poetry gives me respite, makes me happy and generates enthusiasm in me.
- Reading lessens tensions on my mind.
- Due to mental satisfaction gained through reading, I feel fresh for doing other activities.
- Reading takes me to other lands of imagination.
- Reading gives me peace of mind and I can enjoy sound sleep because of mental peace.
- Reading gives me peace of mind.
- Reading makes me forget all my anxieties, sorrows,
and worries.

- Reading soothes my mind.
- Reading gives my mind respite.

3.13 Regular studies:
- Reading helped me in my regular studies.
- Reading helped me indirectly in my examinations.
- Reading helped me in cultivating habits of sitting at a place for 3/4 hours and this habit helped me in my regular studies.
- Reading helped me in acquiring habit of regular studies.
- Reading improved my regular studies.

Negative:
- I am so much interested in reading that it is now adversely affecting my regular studies.
- Reading interfered with my regular studies.

3.14 Ideal:
- I get a message from reading good novels.
- I got the message of doing hard work from reading.
- 'Karmayan' taught me, 'One can achieve anything if one has a great will power'.
- Reading of literature by late S.V. Savarkar kept before me an ideal of patriotism.
In reading I found answer to the question regarding the role of women.

Reading provided me with ideals for emulation.

3.15 **Understanding Human Nature**:

- I can now understand varied facets of my friend because of the reading of character sketches by P.L. Beshpande.

- I feel that it is very difficult to understand oneself fully. But some times I come across a character which is similar to me and I begin to understand myself.

- Before reading I was a self-centred person. I did not like to mix with others but reading changed me and I began to feel that this universe was my home.

- I understand human nature because of reading a novel entitled 'Yatra'. I learned that there were some persons who though wicked by nature appeared outwardly docile.

3.16 **Experience**:

- I got varied experiences through reading.

3.17 **Miscellaneous**:

**Negative**:

- Reading interfered with my household work.

3.18 **Philosophy of Life**:

- Reading helped me in my search to know the proper path of life and proper way for day to day living. Reading
helped me in formulating a philosophy of life.

3.19 **Memory:**
- Reading increased my power of memory.

4.1 **Incidental finding:**

It would be interesting to see whether reading has positive or negative results on the reader. From this point of view effects can be classified in two categories namely positive and negative effects. It should be borne in mind that positive or negativeness of effect depends on the reader. Table 12.3 shows the number of positive and negative effects from the point of view of the students.

Table 12.3 - Positive and Negative results of reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Type of Effect</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>95.30</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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</table>

**Conclusion:** Positive results outnumber negative results.

4.2 **Comments:**

Leisure time reading is not harmful in case of majority of the students. On the contrary in majority of the cases it gives positive results.
5. **Review of the Chapter**:

(1) The data on 'effect of reading' were collected by
(i) asking a specific question in the interview, (ii) including a question in the diary form distributed to students.(1)

The data collected were of exploratory nature. (1)

(2) After analysing free responses it is found that reading has influenced the following aspects of behaviour:

(3) It is incidentally found that reading has more positive than negative results on the population studied. (4).