Chapter – I
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

The beginning of the twenty-first century is marked by the advent of spectacular changes, chief of which are the new information and communication technologies of internet and multimedia which have revolutionized every field of life mainly the field of education and research. Communication is basic to all human performance and in education and research; it is concerned about communication between teacher and student, between institution and government and between peers. In education, 87 percent of information enters our brain through eyes, 9 percent by ear and 4 percent via the other senses. So, visual aids gain much attention of students more than verbal teaching. Multimedia is one of such visual aids which helps the learners to improve their self-learning capacity also (Kaliammal and Thamaraisalvi 2005). As the future trends, internet and multimedia will influence and change the traditional methods of teaching and learning, and enlarge the sphere of dissemination of knowledge and information. Multimedia has become one of the often referred media in education, culture, and for the learning process. It has become one of the highly influential applications in every sector of personal, professional, and business environment. The technology has also influenced heavily on the general reading habit of the general masses. As a powerful tool for instruction, multimedia has significantly influenced the present process of teaching and learning. It incorporates many components which can be accessed simultaneously (Arora and Lekhi 2000). It
refers to the seamless integration of text, sound, still and full motion images and animation under computer control. It includes both linear and interactive presentations of information. A multimedia presentation is the seamless integration, through Information Technology (IT) of any or all of the different media. Compared to other forms of communication, such as broadcasting and publishing, multimedia invites participation by the receiver of the information typically by way of a graphical interface. The most important advance in multimedia stemming from Information Technology is the capability for dynamic, interactive presentation of information. Multimedia, as such, are the technologies that facilitate the integration of two or more types of media such as text, graphics, sound, voice, full motion video or animation into a computer based application. This technology has influenced the reading habit of the general masses to a great extent.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The present study has been taken up to know the influence given by multimedia technology on reading habit to the people of the state, Manipur. Nowadays, a new trend has been in place that the reading habit is decreasing day by day. It is true that if we go to the reading room of a library, we found most of the seats of the room vacant but in case of libraries having free internet facilities, maximum number of seats are occupied by the users and some of them are also waiting for their turn. Regarding reading habit, there is a sea change between the older generation and younger generation. But reading is very important for each and every person to cope with the fast changing environment. Keeping this in
view the study has been taken up to know the impact of multimedia technology and its influence on reading habit. Hence, the problem under study has been stated as ‘Influence of Multimedia Technology on Reading Habit in Manipur’, keeping in view to understand, how far the emerging technologies have influenced the general reading habit in the state.

1.2 Operational Definition of the Terms Used

The term ‘multimedia’ has been formed by the combination of two words ‘multi and media’. Multi refers to many, i.e. at least two. Media is an abbreviation for “Magnovax Electronic Data Image Apparatus”, meaning a unit system of information retrieval, printed and audio visual forms of communication and any necessary equipment required to render them usable” (Gupta 1998). Multimedia can be defined as the combination of different types of media in the communication of information between two users and their computers. The format, in which the information for communication exists, differs, but it usually includes voice communication and image processing (Birader and Kumbar 1998). As such the term multimedia used in the study encompasses all types of media and format concerning, text, sound/audio, visual effect, etc. Multimedia technology is a technology that attempts a harmonious real-time integration of different media like images, video, voice, text, graphics and other computer data for enhanced man-machine interaction encompassing the audio-visual senses. The impact of multimedia technology is felt in all aspects of life nowadays, education being one of them. It offers the potential to expand the
scope of teaching and learning overcoming of space as well as time. All sorts of multimedia technology available in the state of Manipur are taken into consideration in the present work. Multimedia technology has a great influence on the reading habit of the people. In ‘reading habit’ we get two words ‘reading’ and ‘habit’. Reading is an action of a person who reads and habit is a product of this action or learning (Mondal 2008). Smith and Robinson (1980) have defined reading as “an active attempt on the part of the reader to understand a writer’s message”. But with the advancement of information and communication technologies, reading a book, or searching information from a source sitting in a place becomes old idea or concept. The same condition is also happening among the people of the state. Maximum number of people of the state possesses skills of ICT and handling of computer. Maximum number of people read newspaper than other type of reading materials. They give more importance to accessing internet and using multimedia technologies than other technologies. Most of the people of the state are utilizing their leisure time on activities like watching T.V., playing computer games, talking on the phone, sending SMS, etc. rather than reading. So, reading habit of the people of the state is decreasing day by day. The influence of the emerging technologies particularly the multimedia technology, as such, is found to be prevalent in the context of Manipur too.

1.3 Multimedia

Multimedia means different things to different people. There are two schools of thought about the multimedia. Some people say multimedia is nothing
but a hot air. Others say no one should be without multimedia. Quite literally, it refers to anything that uses more than one media to present information. Unimedia e.g. musical recording uses only one media i.e. sound, whereas a television is a type of multimedia because it communicates using both sound and video. Multimedia at the beginning was found to be somewhat confusing and inadequately defined – meaning different things to different people. In the present technological context it is a single product enabling computational facility integrating or combining sound, animation, graphics, text and displaying them all at once. It is a seamless integration of data, text, images, and sound within a single digital information environment, i.e., a collection of technologies. A simple definition of multimedia is that it is a generic term for ‘multimedia computing’ or ‘interactive multimedia’: the use of a wide variety of media within a computer interface or hypermedia programme. Also, it was used to describe art works that combined several different media. A New British Magazine namely ‘Multimedia Computing with Sound and Motion’ published in 1990, in its first editorial, suggested, multimedia as “all things to all people”. The name can convey a highly specific meaning or less than nothing depending on the group of audience. In fact, multimedia is a singular mix of disparate technologies with overlapping applications in pursuit of a market and an identity.

1.4 Historical Development of Multimedia

Origin of multimedia is frequently connected with the emergence of the term hypertext (HT). The hypertext concept can be traced back to Second World
It was Vannever Bush in 1945 who visioned the multiple access to a system and designed a system called “Memex”- a device to store all his records. After fifteen years, Doug Englebert implemented and designed a system called NLS which had interactive multi person editing and branching of different files and texts having searching facility. Ted Nelson understood the concept of Bush and designed a system called hypertext in 1965. Ted Nelson and Andrews Van Dam at Brown University collaborated to develop a hypertext ceiling system on an IBM 360 in the late 1960. A fourth generation system developed at Brown, and late Inter-media continued this research to include animation and video tools. In 1967, Nicholas Negroponte formed the Architecture Machine Group in the Architecture Department of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). It was when the MIT media laboratory established to develop Multimedia system. Multimedia is thus an extension of hypertext/hypermedia.

Important milestones in multimedia, hypermedia and hypertext can be enumerated as below:

1945:  Hypertext concept first coined by Dr. Vannevar Bush in his famous article “As we may think” published in Atlantic Monthly. In his article he introduced a machine for browsing and making notes in an extensive online text and graphic system called “memex”.

1960:  Implemented by Doug Englebert in order to provide a set of tools for extending the human intellect.

1965:  Next milestone took place by Theodor H Nelson’s Vision about global hypertext library.

1967:  The hypertext editing system at Fress Brown University, Andy Van Dam, et al.
1978: Aspen movie map, first hypermedia videodisk.
1980: Multimedia entered in the real world.
1984: Television from Telos Limited hypermedia database widely available for the Macintosh.
1985: Rapid growth of MM/HM/HT.
1985: Intermedia Brown University, Norman Heyrowitz.
1986: OWL introduces guide, first widely available hypertext.
1990: MM/HM/GT are fully established. Now several sophisticated systems are available, that anybody can buy and use in their local computers for different purposes.
1992: Multimedia Computer and Communication (INFOCOM'92, Bombay, India), (Kawatra 2000).

**Current trends:** Emergence of knowledge Society, ICT- as driving force, becoming an environment of multimedia, new sophisticated gadgets have been developed.

1.5 Elements of Multimedia

Multimedia is a convergence of several information forms. Such as text, still images, audio sequences, motion video sequences and animation sequences. The following figure 1:1 shows the five major elements that constitute multimedia (Murthy 2001).
1.6 Characteristics of Multimedia Technology

The basic characteristics of multimedia are:

- The system must be computer controlled,
- They are integrated,
- The information they handle must be represented digitally,
- The interface to the final presentation of media is usually interactive etc.

Besides these, multimedia technology also possesses with the following distinctive features:

- Combined media – Multimedia incorporates many media components which can be accessed simultaneously.
- Interactivity – Multimedia technology allows the learner to participate and the technology respond to the learner’s choice in an interactive way.
- **Self-paced learning** – Multimedia programme contain detailed instruction for self learning.

- **Ease of use** – Multimedia packages are generally easy to use as they are designed and developed even for learners with little or no prior knowledge of the packages (Kawatra 2000).

### 1.7 Significance of Multimedia Technology

Multimedia permits an extraordinary flexibility in conveying concepts through words, pictures and sound, as something that can build and play as well as read and watch. New genres, such as simulation games, are emerging that challenges the user or player to build some complex creation – a city, species, business or world- out of some given set of resource, or that put the person into a simulated environment or through a scenario to meet a challenge, or learn a skill. With multimedia the computer draws on more of the senses, and more dimensions of intelligence, enlarging the opportunity to learn for those who have been less able to learn from conventional teaching materials. Some uses of new media are genuinely inspired, provocative, and engaging, and these examples suggest that we have opened an important new chapter in the history of the imagination- and of education, business, entertainment, marketing, etc.

Multimedia technology is largely being used for general and specific information like, tourist, museum, hospital information, advertising, entertainment, etc and it also helps specifically in training, education, creative arts, etc. It has immense potentialities in professional education (Biradar and Kumbar 1998).
Multimedia technology aims at satisfying the demand for “better access to and presentation of information”. It has provided better access to and for the presentation of information in almost virtual form. The uniqueness of multimedia technology may be stated as its ability to present rapidly a variety and quality of information to meet the varied needs of different people. The application of multimedia technology can solve the problem of presenting quickly and effectively the right kind of information to a variety of users as per their needs which is very complex.

In education and training, it provides a new dynamic environment for instructors, students and others. Using multimedia for teaching is more effective than using a single medium. It always helps the learners to develop a new skill that printed medium alone cannot produce. Student-teacher interaction is actually paramount in traditional teaching whereas the interactive multimedia programmes overcome this problem by providing more system interaction. In libraries and information centres, users satisfaction and effective communication of information is primary and multimedia certainly fulfils this need effectively. Multimedia has certainly solved many problems of presenting quickly and effectively a variety of information in different forms. Multimedia technology combined with telecommunication technology has led the generation of innumerable multimedia applications. It can significantly play a vital role in broad areas like, education, recreation, research, communication, business, etc.
1.8  **General Multimedia Application**

Multimedia has become one of the highly influential applications in every sector of personal, professional and business environment. The general multimedia applications, include:

- Presentation of products and services,
- Information retrieval systems,
- Education including instructional and courseware materials,
- Management including staff training and development,
- Technical documentation including manuals, specifications,
- Product information guides (e.g. catalogues),
- Reference sources (e.g. encyclopaedias, travel guides etc.),
- Multimedia electronic mail messages (e.g. email),
- Video teleconferencing/video telephony,
- Expert system and
- Information kiosks (Venkataraman and Rao 1998)

1.9  **General Impact and Influence of Multimedia Technology**

Multimedia is used in various spheres of human activity such as education, training, research, publishing, advertising, games, home, shopping, audio and video production, information storage and retrieval, etc. It gives maximum freedom to the people and enhances sharing and networking.
The use of multimedia is potentially beneficial to development as it encourages the sharing of information and the effective involvement by social groups at various levels, offering in particular the possibility of networking individuals and system. The participatory aspect of community life is thus strengthened, as are relation with authorities at all levels. Multimedia holds the potential to foster hitherto unknown type of action, engagement, contacts and interaction among individuals, people, communities, nations, culture and civilizations. Multimedia offers the potential to expand the scope of teaching and learning, breaking through the traditional constraints of space and time as well as boundaries of current educational systems. Information and Communication Technology, Multimedia Technology, Computers, Satellite T.V. Channels, Mobile Cellular, Iridium Technology is what the world is breathing today. With all the technological advancement that are being made in this area to ease human life one should not overlook the serious consequences which will cost in terms of human values.

In this age of technologies surfing the net, playing with the funky handset and passing non-stop SMS, watching television, playing computer games, listening music seem to be the order of the day, reading a book sitting in a peaceful corner of a library or home become an archaic idea for most people. While technology is slowly taking a steady control on individuals lives, the reading habit is fast vanishing into thin air. The city libraries and information centres are mute witness to this. They present a gloomy picture of the gradual depletion of voracious readers who use to flock the libraries and information
centres every evening. Apart from a few elderly people and a handful of students, the libraries and information centres wear a deserted look most of the time.

A decade ago if someone said that he or she had not read a book written by famous writer like Tagore or Shakespeare, that person was looked down by others. At that time, there was a strong sense of accountability and responsibility among the people. They were much more conscious and well read because at that time simple living and high thinking were dictum. But with the gradual advent of globalization life has become mechanical and material-oriented. People are constantly being whipped for performance and the concept of intrinsic value addition is now a long lost idea.

Sadly, the reading habit is on the decline among the children as well. It is the parents who are responsible for this, says an English professor, parents blame it on the mounting pressure of the children in schools and tuition classes. Children hardly get time to read story book. In the little time they gets after finishing the home work, all they want to do is watch the cartoon channel or play video games.

The situation is no better among the college and university students. Library for them becomes popular only during the final examinations. It is then that the students, in a panic state, just browse through their course related books. There are also regular visitors to the libraries among them, though they constitute a small community who frequently borrow book. But more often than not, students visit the libraries for their research work rather than reading a book for
their own pleasure. Much after the Internet boom, reading has almost wiped across the life of people lives as an interactive medium of image which is so engrossing.

1.10 Reading Habit

Like other habits, the habits of reading in an individual develop during the course of time. Psychologically, habit is a product of learning, however reading is an art of interpreting the printed tools and written words. Reading habit means the behaviour which expresses the likeness of reading of individual, which occurs regularly of leisure reading approach, type of reading use of library service viewing on what they have read, fixing on objectives of reading and so on (Mahapatra 2010).

According to the Report of the Commission on Reading (Anderson et al 1985), reading is considered as a cornerstone for success, not just in schools, but also throughout the adult life of an individual. Reading is regarded as a process, a mode of thinking, a kind of real experience and involves many complex skills: the ability to perceive printed words, to skim for information and then perhaps read intensively. Kirsch and Guthrie (1984) in their research with adult readers found reading contributing significantly to job success, career development, and ability to respond the change. Smith and Robinson (1980) defined reading as “an active attempt on the part of reader to understand a writer message”. Devarajan (1979) defines reading as an art of interpreting printed and written words. Gray (1984) indicates that reading influences the extent and accuracy of information as
well as attitude, moral, belief, judgement and action of the reader. Reading helps in the resolution of personal need and in the attainment of mental maturity and independence of thoughts. It is a basic tool of education and one of the most important skills in everyday life. Education loses its purpose and value if reading is not one of the daily routines of an individual. Rahman (1959) in his report on “Reading for pleasure” has mentioned that lack of appreciation and understanding of good books and the failure to derive pleasure from a habit of reading underlines the problems of educational growth. Reading practice is influenced by many factors like home environment, subject background, age, status and changing technologies. Bryan (1939) relates the reading habits in relation to the library and mentions that the librarians` task is to find the right books for the right reader at the right time. A librarian must know his books, he must know his readers and he must know what effect will be produced by bringing the two together.

The factors affecting the reading habits are: Nature of readers, needs of reader, nature of information required, educational qualifications of a reader, cost of reading material, availability of reading material and way of interaction of users and information. Observation has its limitations. So, in order to cope with the new knowledge in the changing world of technological age, reading is important for everybody. The importance and necessity of reading will hopefully continue to increase in the years to come. However, the number of those who know how to read but do not read enough is also increasing. There are still some people, young and old, who cannot get access to reading activities and reading
programmes at all and some people who are able to read do not get access to such activities and programmes, but in a dissatisfactory degree of relationship. They neither have much initial interest nor lasting interest in books and reading. The reading habit has to be built up and promoted from the early age. It is the most natural habit to inculcate.

The influence of multimedia technologies on the general reading habit has become a global scenario today. As many studies undertaken in different parts of the world show the traditional reading habit, regular visit to library systems, even dependence on documentary terms of resources, etc are found to be near missing. Such studies to assess the situation in this north eastern part of India, has, however, hardly been carried out. Manipur, though a tiny border state of the country, the winds of multimedia technologies have already arrived and effected in many spheres of individuals in different contexts. A new tendency is also found to be developed among the young generations including school, colleges, even university students and academies on the use of the technologies in place of the documentary resources. General reading habit, so, has been decreasing and decreasing. Keeping this in view the present study has assessed how far the general reading habit has been influenced by the new technologies.

1.11 Objectives of the Study

Keeping all the aspects as discussed, in view, the present study has been carried out with the following objectives:

- To understand the reading habit among the people of Manipur,
• To ascertain their preference of materials for reading,

• To study the information seeking behaviour of the reader,

• To assess how far their reading habit has been influenced by the multimedia technologies,

• To know their level of preference on multimedia technologies over other materials,

• To take up necessary measures for the overall improvements of reading habit.

1.12 Need for the Study

It is said that we are now living in the “Knowledge Age” which is largely characterised by the developments that had taken place in technology and, in particular. The convergence of telecommunications, broadcasting and computers has had a significant influence on society, comparable with previous major societal change such as industrial revolution or the advent of printing press (Eyre 2003). At the same time in today’s world of information explosion and culture of “quick fixes”, people seem to be moving away from reading. In today’s contemporary world, the major competition to book and reading comes from computers, television and other multimedia system (Malaviya 2006). Research about reading has been approached from various possible angles and from a variety of disciplinary background including literature, social science, library and information science, information system and more recently ICT. Studies on reading habit have gained much attention in recent days due to the impact of digital media made available through internet.
For the all round development of an individual, reading is very essential. But with the gradual advent of ICT including multimedia technologies life has become more mechanical. Most of the people are getting lost their interest from reading. Truly speaking, reading habit among the people is in a declining mood. There are many reasons for the same among the people. The major reasons may be – (1) They don’t get their information needs; (2) the information seeking behaviour; and (3) the information access pattern of the people is not matched with the resources available with existing information centres. To become an informative society it is very much required that all the individuals must be well informed. To achieve this, reading is very much required. So, in order to create interest on reading and to face the problems encountered in seeking information among the people, the study on the general reading habit of the people is very much needed. In this backdrop, an attempt has been made in the present study to know how far the fast emerging multimedia technologies have influenced the reading habit of the people of the state. Hence the need for the study arises.

1.13 Hypotheses

The present work has formulated the following hypotheses to test their validity and reliability:

- There is a general tendency among the people of Manipur to adapt multimedia and its based products and services over other printed materials.
- The habit of going library by the common people has also been decreased.
- There is a need to improve upon the reading habit of the people of the state in many aspects.

- Existing Library and Information centres need to rejuvenate their role and responsibility to inculcate the reading habit of the individual in the ICT era.

1.14 Scope of the Study

The scope of the work has been limited to the following aspects:

- The geographical area of the study has been confined to the state of Manipur.

- All the individuals of Manipur have been taken into account as population of the study.

- A sample size of 3000 individuals covering persons from all walks of life has been considered for the study.

- Data from the selected sample size has been collected during June 2010 to August 2012.

- Different types of libraries, educational institutions, Information agencies, Cyber Cafe, Common Service Centres, NGOs, Local Clubs, Panchayat Ghars, etc. have also been visited to collect information.

1.15 Chapterisation

The present work has been organised into the following six chapters:

Chapter – I: Introduction

Background – Statement of the problem – Operational definitions of the terms used – Multimedia – Significance of Multimedia technology – General Impact and Influence of multimedia technology – Reading Habit – Objectives of the Study – Need for the study – Hypotheses – Scope of the study – Chapterisation – Conclusion.
Chapter – II: Literature Review


Chapter – III: Research Methodology


Chapter – IV: Reading Habit and Multimedia Infrastructure in Manipur


Chapter – V: Influence of Multimedia Technology on Reading Habit – An Analysis


Chapter – VI: Conclusion

1.16 Conclusion

Multimedia technology is having a deep impact on the lives of growing number of people around the world. It is offering the possibility of significant positive social and personal growth but only to those who use it reasonably and effectively in their normal life, for the individual, or collaborative and cooperative communities of learners for the global society. Multimedia has its influence on the reading habit of individuals too. But reading is essential for the all round development of a person and a good society. Reading helps the individual to understand society and his role as a citizen, worker, an individual within the own personal problem. It is essential for further personal development and enrichment of life. But, with the advent of globalization life has become more mechanical and reading habit among the people has also declined to some extent. To overcome the declination of reading habit and to give measures for the overall improvement on the reading habit in the present ICT driven knowledge society, measures need to be taken up, keeping in view what the readership community of our society is expected. The present study is an attempt towards this end.

References


