CHAPTER-I
THE TOPIC AND ITS RELEVANCE
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1.1 Introduction:

Reading is the Process of using our EYES and our MIND to understand the LITERAL as well as the HIDDEN meanings of what the WRITER was attempting to convey.

In general, reading is the process of coming in contact with the minds of millions of wise men and women – dead or alive – who have recorded their experiences for the reader’s benefit. In other words Reading is an important facet of communication and an essential aid to personal welfare and social progress. Reading is considered primarily a process of securing and reading the ideas recorded in written or printed words.

Reading and understanding is a relationship between the conscious and the sub-conscious, like mother and the child. “Reading without reflecting” said Edmund Burke “is like eating without digesting”!

“A good book is a life blood of a master spirit treasured for life beyond life” said Milton...Great writers through their books leave foot prints in the sands of time for us to follow. Hence reading is a very important form of communication and interaction with great minds – debating and discussing with them while getting enlightened and getting our mental horizons broadened. Reading is defined as not only the ability to read but also ability to create reading. It is a complex mental task with varying degrees of concentration and intensity depending upon the material one is reading.
There are many objectives for reading like comprehension, acquiring knowledge thereby acquiring power, personal pleasure – entertainment, having aesthetic and emotional fulfillment etc.

Reading confers many advantages like personal development and development of abilities to fulfill one’s ambitions and aspirations and acquiring skills.

Before printing press was invented there were bards singing stories, myths and legends in the west. We had Harikathas and other types of oral-communication tradition and later readings and explanation of Puranas at public foras. Still later as literacy grew, people started developing reading habits for enjoyment and benefit and acquisition of knowledge there by enriching one’s life. It became a source of information and ideas, it is because books became enormously important for the development of man, society, culture and civilization. They became repositories of wisdom and knowledge of the great minds.

Libraries have to play a greater role in promoting reading habits. They should be centers of information dissemination and beacon lights that guide people out of darkness into light as the prayer of Upanishads runs “Lead me from mortality to immortality from darkness into light.” You cannot imagine a world without books “Without books god is silent, justice dormant, natural science static, philosophy lame, letters dumb and the entire universal in darkness.” Wrote Thomas Bertolin a Danish Librarian.

In this age of technology and information it is all the more important that the reading habits are promoted by all available means otherwise we may have literate ignoramuses.
1.2 Information Technology:

Information Technology is application of tools and methods that support through which or by means of which information is transferred, recorded, edited, stored, manipulated and disseminated. According to the Advisory Council, for applied Research and Development of the Cabinet Office (Sept. 1980) of U.K. there are three key components of the new technology; i.e., new ways to store information compactly and cheaply; new mechanisms to manipulate, scan and search, such stores records; and new facilities for cheap and rapid transmission of information over long distances.

1.3 Properties of Information Technology:

There three unique properties, they are:-

1) The growth of information (and technology) is irreversible. It is possible for us to forget something and ignore others. But once something becomes known, it is almost impossible to make it unknown. Similarly once something has been invented one can’t uninvent it.

2) The growth of information and technology is exponential; the more is known and the more has been invented, the easier it is to know still more, and invent still more.

3) There is no forceable upper limit to the growth of knowledge or inventions.

1.4 Document and Information Production:

The introduction of new technologies is causing rapid changes in printing industry. The factors which are having a dominant impact are
computers, microprocessors, desktop publishing, lasers, digitization of information and screen based technology including television and telecommunications. The significant changes within the next decade will have their origin in one or more of these areas. Data capture in machine readable form is becoming easier with the advent of word processors and direct entry photo setters. Increasing digitization of data and automation of equipment will make printing a more ‘systems’ oriented process.4

1.5 Products of Electronic Publishing:

The main products of electronic publishing are electronic books, electronic journals, electronic databases and electronic articles or working papers.


Electronic Databases: - They are of two types: off-line systems and online systems. In off-line systems, the information is stored in mainly CD-ROMs whereas in on-line systems the information is stored in the main frame to be distributed and made available at the local computers through networks like the Internet.5

The Multimedia information Sources are available in the following formats

CD-ROMs
Video Disks (VD)
Laser Disks (LD)
Audio and Video Cassettes
Web
1.6 Impact of Electronic Publishing on Libraries:

The era of electronic publishing has brought a change in the nature and type of library services. Publishing through the network, especially Internet, has made the libraries more responsible towards their users. The impact of electronic publishing on libraries can be as follows:

1. Increased access to online catalogues and databases has changed the nature of library services to users.

2. Internet links provide remote users with significantly increased access to library systems.

3. The user/academic community greatly benefited due to the proactive, positive response by librarians to networked/electronic environment.

4. As computer network interconnections and capabilities have increased, the concept of "global village" has become a much more immediate day-to-day reality in libraries.

5. The users can employ Internet to search remote on-line catalogues as easily as they can search their local catalogues.

6. It is possible for the end-users to place their own interlibrary loan requests electronically at libraries world-wide, indifferent to the source of the needed item.

7. The notion of 'Virtual libraries' where users transparently access needed information regardless of location, depend on no-cost, unrestricted access to electronic information becomes possible.
1.7 Electronic Publishing and Change of Reading Habits:

Accessibility: To access electronic publications the users should possess the necessary skill of handling the machines for searching and retrieving information. Without proper computer on telecommunication facilities, it becomes difficult to access e-publications even if they are available.

Electronic documents can be accessed by two ways:

1) By local database (e.g. Elsevier CAPCAS). The database can be on a local server or CD-ROM disks. Generally it forms a part of the library collections. The database has to be purchased from a publisher. It becomes expensive for rarely used materials.

2) By remote database with network access (e.g. Academic Press IDEAL). The database provides up-to-date information but has the problem of bandwidth, especially when archiving network publications (at least the volumes the library has subscribed). The system allows payment per transaction. It is cheaper for rarely used materials.

Readability: Conventional publications facilitate continuous, uninterrupted reading whereas electronic publications are to be read only through computer screens which create several difficulties while reading the documents.

Retrieval Software: Most of the electronic publications are produced with their own retrieval software, which becomes difficult for the users to be aware of this software to access them. The user has to get familiarized with several retrieval software associated with different electronic databases, if he/she wants to access them. Common standardized retrieval software which
could be sued in different situations could have solved the problem of the users to a great extent.\textsuperscript{8}

The Information Technology is showing its impact on production, storage and distribution of information. The user is in need of information instead of document. Reader is insisted for access to electronic information instead of reading a printed document. The total concept of reading is changed in present digital environment. Thus Information Technology influences the reading habits of users with its new Technologies.

Information Technology facilities the library and information centers in providing the Literature Search Service by searching various information sources in print or non-print form within the library, outside the library or at national or international level, in a short time with accuracy.

Thus, in the changing environment, the influence of new information technologies in libraries has proved the concept of ‘Library-in-a-desk’ a reality. This revolutionary concept which envisages, paper less information system has brought in drastic changes in library services. The old manually operated, lethargic library services are diminishing day-by-day, giving rise to modern and dynamic library services as libraries without walls providing access to ‘world information’, and to the most up-to-date and comprehensive information resources.

In the changing information environment in which, there will be widespread access to a greater variety of information, any concept of the library which begins with books on shelves is sure to encounter trouble. Instead, it should be viewed as dynamic service agency – a repository based on a combination of computer storage, micro reduction, and a remote transmission and acquisition of information, from a suitable interactive search process and the ability to process and package information tailored
according to the information needs and “information seeking behaviour” of the users. In each case, a variety of linguistic, processing and display tools would be sued to establish appropriate connections between the customers and the corresponding relevant information item.9

In the light of the above present study namely “The influence of Information Technology on the reading habits of the students in Degree College Libraries.” Is more appropriate and useful from the context of user’s studies in library and Information Science.

1.8 Role of College Libraries in Electronic Era:

The library occupies a place of central importance in a college; it touches the academic work of students and staff at every point. Libraries are regarded as means of universal and perpetual self education by an individual. Keeping this in view reading habit has to be developed and encouraged among the people in their early life. It should commence with the school library, be continued by the college and university libraries and sustained by the public libraries.

A college is an institution of higher learning. The education imparted in colleges forms part of higher learning and therefore, all the ideals of higher education, e.g. humanism, tolerance, reason, adventure of ideas, truth, etc. apply to collegiate education also. Higher learning/ education broadly have to attend the following functions:

1) Seeking and cultivating new knowledge;
2) Inculcation of leadership qualities and development of mental powers;
3) Training in all useful faculties and profession;
4) Promotion of equality and social justice;
5) Fostering a sense of nationalism and internationalism;
6) Greater socialization and participation;
7) Develop the capacity of individual for interpretation, critical evaluation.

A proactive and fully integrated system of college library services should form the core of the education process. The college library as the resource center or the tool for learning has to support the following educational objectives:

1) To participate in instruct planning;
2) To regularly acquire, manage and develop library collections;
3) To attempt proper interpretation of knowledge, human needs and values, etc;
4) To provide bibliographic and information services and also bibliographic instruction;
5) To collaborate with the faculty in developing suitable teaching techniques and application of education technology by preparing necessary kits and packages;
6) To help students supplement and complement their class room learning through guidance.

Today college libraries must provide facilities for accessing information available on public data networks. Accessing World Wide Web information through Internet. All college libraries must be brought into the network programme of INFLIBNET. Finally library automation and networking is the need of the hour for each and every college library for modernizing the library services in electronic era.
2. Objectives of the Study:
The present study has been taken up with the following objectives:

1. To identify the facilities available, library collection and services provided by the degree college libraries, under study.
2. To understand the status of automation, availability of necessary infrastructure for computerization in degree college libraries, under study.
3. To elicit opinion of the Librarians regarding the need for computerization and observations about problems in automation of the degree college libraries.
4. To study the use of different information sources and reading habits of degree students, and
5. To obtain views of the student users regarding the environment in their college libraries and their views on the impact of library automation.

3 Hypotheses of the Study:
1. Physical facilities as well as the library collection are not satisfactory in un-aided college libraries when compared to Government and Aided College Libraries.
2. All these degree college libraries are mainly providing the lending (home lending) service and textbook of collection service to some extent. But for these two, these libraries provide traditional services, no other modern services.
3. A majority of the college libraries have not yet initiated automation and need to gather the needed infrastructure for computerization networking of their libraries using the resources available to them.
4. The college librarians, in general, are in favour of library automation and networking through computerization.

5. Majority of the librarians feel that computerization and networking will definitely influence the reading habits of the users.

6. Almost all the librarians express financial reasons as the cause for the delay or problem in library automation.

7. The reading habits of the student users in these degree college libraries are not encouraging and most of the student users are not satisfied with the existing library environment in their colleges.

8. All the student users feel the need for library automation, which provides them access to a variety of information sources while saving time.

9. Internet facility is reported to be essential for improving their student's knowledge as well as for their studies and career development.

4. **STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:**

   Acharya Nagarjuna University caters to the higher education needs of the people from three districts viz., Guntur, Krishna and Prakasam in the State of Andhra Pradesh. There were colleges under different management systems affiliated to this University and the colleges were offering graduate and postgraduate level courses within their scope and limitations. The Government besides those established by private agencies mainly establishes these colleges. The government aids some of the private management colleges. Hence, there are altogether three types of colleges as represented below:
Obviously, the scope for development and further improvement differs among the three types of colleges, because of the regulations that govern the management as well as the financial resources varies among the three types of colleges. Besides, these colleges were set-up at different periods of time and show differential development. Most of the degree colleges affiliated to the Acharya Nagarjuna University was established after the 1970s. Prior to that some Government and Aided Colleges were there but the majority of the un-aided colleges came into existence during 1991-2000.

The differences in the year of establishment and type of management will also effect the development of libraries in these types of colleges. Because of this the facilities available in the library, services provided by the library and also the environment for future developments like automation and networking also show a lot of variation among the three types of colleges. In turn, these factors will have their bearing on the students – who are the users of the library services.

Needless to say, the advancements in the field of Information Technology have brought in tremendous changes in the functioning of library system. Information location and access for retrieval from far off
locations have become very simple and very less time consuming. Automation of academic libraries has been progressing in our state but not at a desired pace. As the machines are going to play a significant role in the years to come, it is necessary to study the existing situation in the libraries and also what type of influence it has on the service providers as well as users.

In this background, the present study is taken up to study the opinion of the librarians regarding the existing situation in their libraries as well as what influence the Information Technology has on the reading habits of the students in degree college libraries affiliated to Acharya Nagarjuna University in Andhra Pradesh.

4.1 Study Design:

In view of the objectives set for the study, the present study has been designed to be a descriptive/narrative study suitable for presenting the existing status in the study libraries.

The study is proposed to be carried out at two different stages:

a). Survey of the college libraries.

b). Survey of the Users of the college libraries (Degree students)

a) Survey on the College Libraries:

This part of the study is proposed to get the needed background information along with the views of the librarians regarding the facilities, services, status of automation, need for computerization and problems if any in computerizing the libraries of the Degree Colleges.

b) Survey on Users of the College Libraries (Degree Students):

As the main aim of the study is to see the influence of Information Technology on the reading habits of the students in Degree Colleges, only
the Degree level students who are using the library services have been proposed to be covered to the study.

4.2 Methodology:

Keeping in mind the objectives and design of the study, it is clear that the Degree College Librarians and student users are to be covered from the Colleges affiliated to Acharya Nagarjuna University. Available information shows that there is 223 degree colleges affiliate to the Acharya Nagarjuna University as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Colleges</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aided Colleges</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-aided Colleges</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>223</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of the smaller number of colleges under Government and Aided Categories, it is proposed to make a complete coverage of the libraries. In the third category i.e. the un-aided category – there were 148 colleges and it is difficult to make a complete coverage. Moreover, these colleges are mostly of recent origin. Hence, it is decided to cover as many libraries as possible, if not complete coverage ensuring a minimum of 75% of these libraries which comes to 111 libraries. The 148 un – aided colleges
were listed from oldest to latest considering the year of establishment and covered beginning with the oldest.

Regarding the coverage of student users, it is decided to interview 2 percent the students who are members of the degree college libraries, covered in the present study. Prior permission is obtained from the authorities for interviewing the students and these interviews were done on selective basis so as to cover the 2 percent sample from each of the college library. These interviews were conducted for a period of 1-4 days in a library depending on the sample to be covered.

4.3 Actual Coverage:

Details of actual coverage of respondents – libraries as well as student users are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DETAILS OF COVERAGE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed to cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A) Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aided Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-Aided Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Student Users:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aided Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-aided Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, 14 out of the 18 Government College Libraries, 45 out of the 57 Aided Colleges and 100 out of the proposed 111 Un-aided Colleges could
be covered. The total coverage thus coming to nearly 86 percent and it is surmised that any observations made from these data will have logical justification. The 27 Colleges that could not be covered is mainly due to non-response because of several reasons like refusal, on-availability of the respondents, presentation of partial information etc.

In the 159 colleges covered, the strength of the degree students is 86,766 of which 2 percent are covered, which comes to 1735. As mentioned earlier, this Sample of student users is taken as 2 percent of the degree student strength from each of the 159 colleges covered for the present study. Thus the student user sample coverage is 100 percent of the proposed sample.

4.4 Research Tools:

The most popular tool of canvassing an interview schedule is employed for eliciting the needed information. Two different interview schedules were designed keeping in mind the objectives of the study (i) interview schedule for Librarians, and (ii) interview schedule for degree student users.

Both the schedules were pre-tested and necessary modifications were incorporated before finalizing the schedules. The finalized interview schedules were used for data collection at a later stage.

4.5 Analysis of Data:

As mentioned earlier, the study is designed to be a descriptive/narrative one and this does not necessitate any advanced statistical treatment.

The data were analyzed accordingly and presented in simple comparable Format with percentages. In view of the expected differences,
the data were presented with a comparison between the three types of colleges i.e. Government, Aided and Un-aided.

The chi-square test has been applied wherever necessary.

The data were analyzed with the help of a Personal Computer using the Software Package- SPSS Version 12.0.

5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. The study is exclusively meant for and relates to the degree students using college Libraries in A.N.U. area...

2. The study relates and pertains to the students who have the same background academic philosophy and needs and the college Libraries having the similar types of facilities offered to the students. This study is further limited to the colleges affiliated to A.N.U.

3. The study and its findings carry equal importance in regard to the reading habits of degree college students and can be relevant to all the degree colleges in the country.

6. PLAN OF THE STUDY:

This Ph.D. thesis is divided into five chapters as noted below.

Chapter 1: This chapter describes the concept, definition of reading habit and discusses the impact of Information Technology on reading habits it presents the objectives and Hypotheses of the study. It also provides study design and Methodology it highlights plan of the study.

Chapter 2: This chapter highlights the concept of reading habits in traditional educational system. It discusses the influence of Information Technology on reading habits. It describes the concept of reading from the
view of print media and electronic media. It also describes the information seeking behavior and the models of information seeking behavior. Further it describes the influence of I.T. on information generation and dissemination through new technologies.

Chapter 3: This chapter studies the growth and development of college Libraries in India. It presents in brief the reports of various Committees and Commissions set up by the Government on college Libraries from time to time. It describes the objectives, functions and responsibilities of college Libraries. It discus the importance of Library automation and net working in college libraries.

Chapter 4: This chapter is divided into three sections: Section- A presents a brief account of A.N.U. and its affiliated colleges. Section- B presents the analysis of the data collected through questionnaire-I collected from college Librarians. Section- C presents data analysis of the questionnaire-II collected from the students (user of the college library)

Chapter 5: This chapter discusses the findings drawn from the analysis of the questionnaires I and II. It offers suitable and relevant suggestions for implementation in college Library. Finally it offers further course of research in the area of the study.

Annexures

| Annexure 1 | Bibliography. |
| Annexure 2 | Questionnaire – I. |
| Annexure 3 | Questionnaire –II. |
| Annexure 4 | List of colleges under study. |
7. References: