Chapter - V

READING HABITS

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

“Science is perhaps too much with us in this technology oriented century of curs It has invaded all our activities including reading today” (Naik M.K, 1975-76, p117).

There was a time in India when a person could acquire knowledge without formal reading. There were Harikathas, narration of purity and recitations of poetry either in temples or in public places where people used to gather. So a child or an adult has been the most important method of gathering information and getting enlightenment. It is always a means to an end and not an end itself. Effective reading stems from the desire to learn through reading. It is motivated by the readers’ goal and purpose. It is stimulated by interesting and challenging reading material. It contributes to the solution of every day problems to the enhancement of personality and to the enrichment of life. Reading is not a single complex of mental operations, but rather a series of complex activities. Among these complex activities listed are;

1. Reaching to what is read
2. Furnishing the ideas with previous experience
3. Judging relevance, accuracy, importance of the author’s statements and other activities

First step in reading is to recognize the importance of attitude towards the printed page. This mental stance taken towards a page is going to determine what the reader acquires from that page

“Reading is the primary avenue to all knowledge. It offers access to the information ‘ideas’ deals, aspirations and happenings of both the past and the present. Through reading one extends one environment from home and
community to the world as a whole. Every one, in the civilized areas of the world, child, adolescent and adult, has a personal need for being an effective reader. Effective reacting is the result of the acquisition of a set skills and habits.

5.1.1 Habit

Effective reading is the result of acquisition of set of skills and habit. According to the Oxford English Dictionary “Reading” means “the action of pursuing written or printed matter (OED, 2003, p.1201).

Meaning of the “Habit” is given by the same dictionary as “a selected deposition or tendency to act in a certain way, especially one acquired by frequent repetition of the same act unit became almost or quite involuntary” (OED, 2003, p.631).

Habit is the enormous fly-wheel of society. It is the most precious conservation agent. It alone keeps us all within the bounds of ordinance and saves the children from the envious uprising of the poor. It alone prevents the hardest and most repulsive walks of life from being deserted by those brought up to the trend there in.”(James, 1950)

Habits are automatic routines of behavior that are repeated regularly, without thinking (Butler and Hope, 1995) They are learned, not instinctive, human behaviors that occur automatically, without the explicit contemporaneous intention of the person. The person may not be paying attention to or be conscious or aware of the behavior. When the behavior is brought to the person's attention, they may be able to control it

Among many good habits, reading is one which enriches the personality of a person in the society. Reading habit is a required and fixed action of pursuing written or printed mater and which involves certain conditions to continue the process.
Reading cultivation begins in childhood and is connected with education and upbringing. Reading aids character formation, widens horizons and is morally and aesthetically improving. Schools and libraries nourish the reading habit but more can be achieved, if families cooperate, e.g., by reading aloud or arranging evenings devoted to reading followed by discussion.

Books have played a vital role in the cultural and scientific development of man in the past and present, and the process still continues. Reading is an endless opportunity, an ever open door to ever greater mental growth. Practically, all Wisdom of the world is to be found in books. Book is more powerful than the most powerful forces of the world, since it can bring a silent revolution.

Books are to the library what cells are to the body. It is mostly through libraries that books are brought into the hands of the readers. The library is a living force for popular education and it acts as a stimulus to intellectual activity. In the library one attains self development in an atmospheres of freedom. The library is an educational force of national importance, because it brings into contact the entire social, political and intellectual life in a community.

5.2 READING HABITS IN INDIA

The National Readership Studies Council (NRSC) released the findings of National Readership Study 2006 (NRS 2006), to an audience comprising the who's who of the media, advertising and marketing fraternity.

- The reach of the press medium (dailies and magazines combined) has increased from 216 million to 222 million over the last one year.
- As a proportion, however, press reach has stabilized in urban India – at 45%. Press reach in rural India has also stayed the same at 19% --
needless to say, on a much larger population base. The number of readers in rural India (110 million) is now roughly equal to that in urban India (112 million).

- The Internet as a medium seems to have paused on its growth trajectory. From 7.2 million users who logged in every week last year, the number has grown, though only to 9.4 million. As proportions, these represent 0.9% and 1.2% of India’s 12 years plus population. However, urban India has shown faster growth in internet reach – from 4.3% to 3.4%.

Thus the frequencies are terribly low in India as compared to the developed countries of the west. In India particularly, reading is of utmost necessity in view of the fact that India is a democratic country. Democracy pre-supposes well informed citizenship.

5.2.1 PROMOTION OF READING HABIT

Reading has become one of the most important factors of success in many fields today. The development of a habit of Reading for all normal children may well be one of the most important objectives of the school. Our educational goal is to make children read. The intellectual development can be possible only through the cultivation of regular reading habit.

New India wants her citizens and particularly her technical men grow mentally in a luxuriant way while they are still students and deep growing all through life after graduation. One of the essential sides to such a mental growth is wide reading and love of books. The habit of reading and love of books is best formed during childhood and adolescence and seldom later. There are various ways in which this habit can be fostered in students.
5.2.1.1 TEACHING TECHNIQUE

An essential means of cultivating reading habit in students goes with the teaching technique. The advent of alive and growing library in the educational institutions should influence the teaching technique, even as the advent of the first baby affects everything in a family.

The true aim of education and the true purpose of teaching technique should be to equip the student to meet the new situation bound to arise from time to time in his later life. For this, he should be trained even while still in college to help himself in finding out by himself information or knowledge needed to satisfy his curiosity and to serve his interests. In this method of teaching, reading habit will grow in a natural way. It must arouse curiosity in students to turn them on to the library to find satisfaction to their curiosity. In this method of teaching the members of the library staff and those of the teaching staff should work in close co-operation.

5.2.1.2 OPEN ACCESS

The second well-tried means to promote reading habit is for the library to adopt the open access system. Walking amidst books, browsing under guidance and handling books freely from the essence of open access certainly develops better reading habits. A well guided stack room with books arranged and displayed in a minutely classified way is a perennial exhibition. It is known that the introduction of open access has led to the shoot up of use ten-fold in many libraries.

5.2.1.3 TOPICAL COLLECTION

Another method of purposefully harnessing the curiosity roused at a tutorial meeting or in a lecture is to the library to assemble together the
important books bearing on the topic of the tutorial discussion or the lecture. These should be displayed prominently, inviting bay guides and shelf guides.

5.2.1.4 READING CIRCLE

Another useful method for promoting the habits of purposive reading is to promote the formation of reading circles. These may be formed among students with a teacher as their leader. The library should acquire books needed for the reading circles.

5.2.1.5 DOCUMENTATION SERVICE

Bringing students to the library is not sufficient. Something more is necessary to make the student to come to the library on his own accord. Till an appreciation of the value of books blooms in him, transforms him into a willing beneficiary of the library, makes him come back to the library, quite often he must be attended by a library host.

Each library should provide an adequate number of information officers to function as library hosts and human converters. Documentation service is the essential human process of establishing contact between the right reader and the right book by personal service. Its character varies with every reader and book context. Documentation service is vital in the promotion of the reading habits in students.

5.3 READING HABIT AND LIBRARY

"Without Books, God is silent, justice dormant, natural science at stand still, philosophy lame, letters dumb and all things involved in Cimmerian Darkness", so wrote Thomas Bartholin a Danish Librarian in 1672. (U.G.C., 1956) But books themselves fail to serve any purpose unless they are put to effective use. Herein, therefore, arose the need for providing a channel through which such accumulated wealth of knowledge as is contained in
books may be disseminated. And it is library which can provide such a channel. It also fosters idealism and strengthens the struggling aspirations of human spirit. The place it provides for reading, the material and the equipment to handle and make them accessible and the trained personnel to manage the tool operation in library bring about the awakening of thought. Nevertheless such activities and their effectiveness succeed or fail according to the personality of the librarian, that, is according to his leadership and his readiness for undertaking such a programme.

The Progress of our country depends largely upon the education of its citizens. The education can be of two types formal and informal. The formal type of education is strictly restricted to textbooks. But now the concept of educational sphere has demanded a network of libraries. Libraries play a vital role in the development of education and with the dawn of freedom of our country, national government has become library conscious. Libraries, which are primarily educational institutions for intellectual advancement, have a vital part to play by disseminating facts and ideas in the community. Libraries are regarded as means of universal and perpetual self education by an individual. Keeping this view in mind, reading habit has to be developed and encouraged among the people in their early life. It should commence with the school library; it should be continued by college and university libraries and sustained by the public libraries. The reading habit must be part and parcel of the nature of an individual.

5.3.1 LIBRARY SERVICE FOR YOUNG ADULTS:

Young adults compose roughly 1/5th of the total population, but for many libraries they form a majority as the users. It is of course in the role of student that most young people use libraries. The young adult, whose
experience with libraries has been positive, will become the citizen most likely to continue to use and support libraries. A commitment to good service for youth, therefore, becomes an investment in the community’s and library’s future. In this context, the goal of library services for young adults is to aid the individual in achieving a successful transition from childhood to adulthood by providing the resources and the environments that will foster intellectual, emotional and social development. To reach this goal, it is essential that the library recognizes that the needs of young adults are different in kind and intensity from those of other library users.

It is true that young people wish to be treated with the same respect and regard as adults. In effect, however, the same treatment as that given to adults will not always suffice. Because they are so often on the defensive awkward, young adults require sensitive handling. Library staff must learn to interpret each request and to take it seriously, to create a sense of ease and to preserve confidence. Moreover, policies must not arbitrarily restrict young adults’ access to materials or services on the basis of age. Young adults should facilitate communication with this group and solicit their participation in policy making.

The group of young adults, is new to the world of books and ideas. It has particular need of understanding. The enthusiasm of an alert librarian can help interests carry over into a life-time use of library materials; disinterested librarian can turn the group immediately away from libraries. If reading and the use of the library are to become life-long voluntary habits, they must offer pleasure to the individuals.

Stimulating and delighting young readers with the discovery of good books; motivating them to extend their knowledge and broaden their horizons,
developing their ability to seek the information, required for intelligent decision making, must be the purpose of Library Reading promotion programme.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The intellectual development can be possible only through the cultivation of regular reading habit. That means the reading habit is the outcome of education, because without education there is no reading. The development of reading habits depends upon various factors in education system.

The influence of the family on children's reading has been much studied long back. The emotional attitudes of the older members of the family towards books and reading have a real impact on young children. The greatest drawback to parents' effort is their lack of knowledge of children's literature and reading needs. Parents are often at variance with what the school is teaching and therefore, confusing. They expect too much and lose patience quickly and sometimes they scold the children. This can only be remedied by further parent education by schools, social organization and private study.

A teacher has been assigned a distinct and delicate role by society. He is mainly responsible for the building up of nation and human welfare. There should be cordial relationship between student and teacher. Then only the aim of education will be fruitful. Some times, the place or institute where the students is studying is also important. Hence, for the present study the profile of different university libraries are studied in the next chapter.
REFERENCES


