

THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS IN PROMOTING READING CULTURE AMONG STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the best exercises for our mind. It is like meditation that enriches it with fruitful ideas, knowledge and skills. It helps tremendously in nourishing moral and societal values. It ends our idleness and provides certain ways to get success in our life. But this legacy of past is the edge of extinction. It is becoming quite unpopular especially among students. The significant downfall of reading culture is getting more and more certain in our society. This downfall is for the human being. The brains are becoming the store house of information and devoid of true knowledge, the knowledge that is the key of better future. Students are being marginalized in grasping information, authentic or non-authentic. In the present scenario, it is the sheer responsibility of the libraries and librarians to handover the key of knowledge to learners in an organized manner. The role of library would have been greater if not for the challenges such as lack of proper utilisation of funds, growing ignorance of reading culture in elementary schools, Digitalization, ICT challenges among others. However this proper recommend solution such as planned utilization of library funds, Role of librarians and parents, introduction of more and more community and public libraries in towns and Panchayats among others.

Keywords: Reading Culture, Extinction, Digitalisation, Libraries and Librarians

Introduction

Reading is the basic requirement of our life like food and water. Its place in society cannot be underrated. Reading is an art of being able to understand, comprehend, make sense and utterly interrupt written symbols and letters (Victoria and Nawanne, 2017). According to Tarigan, Reading is a process carried out and used by a reader to acquire message which is conveyed by a writer through words could be seen and known by reader. In short reading is an activity to get meaning from printing words and symbols and how this ability is used to recognize, understand and interpret in words. Reading is very crucial and indispensable. It opens doors of the world of possibilities. It helps us to think and build ideas for inner as well as outer development. It is well said, "An empty mind is the home of devil." Reading engages one's mind with positive thoughts, which is important for both academic and intellectual excellence. Looking back, the process of declining reading culture has taken place gradually. It has its roots in the foundational stage of education. Our non-focused approach towards reading in class room has led to the degeneration of reading culture among students. The ignorance of class room reading led to the inability to learn and read sometimes called 'word blindness'. It is the main skill to reach a successful study. More reading means more knowledge. It makes the people capable to participate actively in the continuity of learning. This continuity cannot be possible without the help of Libraries and Librarians. This is because Library provides the unhindered access to information needed for the academics, economics and social advancement of

any nation(Raphael, 2016) There are a common sayings Books are our best friends” they never lie. They contain the information that his its roots in authenticity. But in spite of this, students are not interested in visiting libraries or reading when required. There is no doubt that the reading culture is declining day by day. It is dying. The students find it boring. This belief lead to their poor academics as well as personality development. According to Rosenberg (2000) children with poor reading habits have higher chances of anti- social behavior. Delinquency, school violence, bullying and examination malpractices all appear to have correlation with poor reading skills. However if not anti-social, they develop as introvert personalities. Reading has been as an activity to pass an examination. Very few people and students read for leisure. They prefer surfing an internet than reading inn library. This paper stands to suggest solutions to rectify this problem.

Background

Reading is the legacy of our past. Through the ages, our country is known to the world for its rich literature. The libraries of Nalanda and Taxila were visited by the scholars of different countries. The intellect of the students was assured through Shastratha that demanded the thorough study of Vedas, Upanishads etc. The way of gaining knowledge enhances many qualities that a student needs i.e. patience, calmness and concentration. This legacy remain continue through several ages. Though at that time the resources were limited as comparison of today but were authentic. People visited Public libraries to have access to books. Reading books was a household activity. Parents read story books to their kids during bed time which automatically push them to the world of books. History is the witness of the fact that intellectuals always found an esteemed position in the society. Almost all the weather, religious, academics or general books. But the modern world has been characterized by the decline of reading culture. According to a survey, 80% of teenagers don't read books. The invention of internet and the growing trend of digitalization of reading material led to that decline of reading culture. The availability of books, journals, magazines just on one click of smart phones and computers cause serious problems of mental and physical deformities

Literature Review

Olu Oyewole (2017) in his study investigated the effects and remedies of poor reading culture among secondary school students in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State. The population of the study was one hundred and twenty while the sample of of twenty five students was randomly selected from the students and twenty teachers were also selected. It has been found from the study that students from educated read fluently than the students from uneducated homes. It has been further found that the reading habit has influence on academic performance and there is a relationship between reading culture and academic performance. Idachaba Joy Asibi et al (2021) investigated the decline in reading culture in some selected university libraries South East Nigeria. The population of the study consists of Professional Librarians & Para-professionals. The study revealed that the benefits of inhibiting reading culture in some selected university libraries includes academic performance, Educational Performance, educational advancement, equipping citizenry with knowledge, skills, attitude required for economic self-sufficiency and poverty reduction and sustainable development. Kayuni, H.K (2017) in his study examined the effects of poor reading culture on distance students at Kwame Nkrumah university in Zambia. The study has assessed the claim that there has been deterioration in the

reading habits among students of the current generation which has impacted negatively on their academic performance. The study reveals that there is indecently behavior and use of corruption has decreased the reading culture. It has been suggested that fair consideration be given to the effects of poor reading culture whenever addressing. The common challenge of the students involving themselves in Indecent and corrupt ways of obtaining academic favour from teachers.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of huge investment in the field of Education like library grants and book banks, reading culture is declining at a very fast rate. In this digital world, our present generation is learning towards short cut method of obtaining knowledge. They prefer reading material on internet instead of reading books and analyze the materials themselves. They are becoming habitual of spoon feeding. The patience level for using libraries materials and reading books, journals and magazines is getting low day by day. Along with digitization, several factors like socio-economic background, the educational background of the students, availability of public libraries, and motivation from teachers and parents are responsible for poor reading culture among students. Reading book is becoming the thing of past. Even kids are comfortable with tabs and smart phones.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is

- To find out the causes responsible for the decline of reading culture among students which is affecting their mental and intellectual development?
- To find out how libraries and librarian can promote reading culture.
- To investigate the challenges faced by the libraries and librarians in the promotion of reading culture.

Role of Library and Librarian in promoting reading culture

Knowledge is the key of getting success. Libraries and Librarians hold the key that unlock the door of endless possibilities and opportunities. Libraries have been playing a significant role in promoting the reading culture in India. Ogayi and Chinna (2012) see the library as an organized collection of books and other information materials for studying, teaching, research and recreation. The library is a place designed to freely support the attainment of knowledge in the best possible manner. They are precious for storing information and knowledge in print as well as not print format. Library Promotes Literacy. Library is the dwelling place of ideas and excellence. People from all walks of life use it for the fulfillment of their own requirements Students use it for improving their knowledge and academic performance by writing something different authors' writing. The non academicians visit libraries for pleasure and their hobby. Thus libraries are vital in every society. The role of librarians is very much important in promoting reading culture. It has been analyzed that most of the students feel reading books boring because they feel to get it in organized manner and according to their interest. Now here is the responsibility of the librarian to provide reading material to the readers in and organized manner. The introduction of ICT in libraries can provide assistance to the students to have an unhindered access to reading materials.

In other words, library and Librarian are greatly responsible to save the dying reading culture among students.

Reading is an endless process. It is the most efficient way of acquiring knowledge and for achieving sound development of our minds. Library is like a heart of any educational institution from where knowledge flows like blood to all other domains. Libraries are the storehouse where knowledge is acquired, preserved and disseminated in print and non print formats. Libraries have been used by different people of different age groups for their own purpose. Some visit to get academic knowledge, some for pleasure. Thus there is a need to have libraries at all levels like primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions. Libraries play a crucial role in developing the right reading culture and in the development of nation. No nation can develop without brain storming minds. The roles of Librarians are as:

Organization and Interpretation of information:

Librarians are professionals who deal with all types of print and non- print information. They are experts at finding and organizing information and at interpreting information needs. Librarians provide a reading environment where one can meditate books in silence. They provide facilities to the readers in grasping the required knowledge in may possible ways. Library automation an up to date method to help librarians to automate the typical procedures of libraries such as cataloguing and circulation it help in extending services beyond the physical walls of a building, by providing materials accessible by electronic means.

Library provide quite place for reading:

Libraries are the best place where one can nourish his/ her thoughts in beat possible way. They are the silent zone. One can read, write think without any disturbance. Librarians are the solely responsible for the maintenance of discipline in libraries like sitting arrangement, light, cleanliness and of course silence. Librarian can provide a proper reading zone in an organized manner to inculcate interest in reading.

Public Sensitization by the librarians:

Library period must find a place in school curriculum. In the present scenario, it has been observed that no library periods are included in school time table. Public sensitization by the librarians on library establishment in school, library usage packages and accessibility should be carried out as it will further strengthen people’s desire and interest for reading.

Introduction of ICT in libraries:

Librarians can provide latest and relevant information to the reader by introducing ICT(Information and Communication Technology). It provides global information access beyond the physical walls of a building by providing materials accessible by electronic means and by providing the assistance of Librarians in navigating and analyzing very large amount of information with the variety of digital tools. Thus the librarian provides quick and unhindered access to information/ gathering, information processing, information storing and date presentation through the application of ICT.

Findings

Socio-Economic background of the reader: Reading is most likely to start from a very young age. Families play a very important part in inculcating the habit of reading. Some families fail to develop this trait due to lack of resources because of poverty and some families because of abundance of resources. The children from humble background find it very hard to use library in their spare time. In poor families 'Reading cannot be their problem. Empty stomach comprehend nothing'. On the other hand children from sound socio-economic background can afford electronic gadgets where information i.e. available on their fingertips. Then who cares for book reading that demand patience and time.

Injudicious use of library funds: it is unfortunate that most of the funds allocated to libraries are not used properly. A huge amount of money has been spent on purchasing books that are already collecting dust on the shelves. Moreover, very few efforts have been made to correct traditional library setup in to modern one. This is the worst problem. Lack of library staff in the schools and colleges further led to the disinterest in reading. The students, right from the foundational stage must given access to story books, picture books, information CDs and DVDs. But no such initiative has been taken especially in government sector institution.

Digitalization and Social Media: Social media and the digital world have also been taken children away from reading culture. Social media engages them in the virtual world where one can spent his entire day without blink of eye. Viewers find it interesting and time saving. They enjoyed getting information from social media whether authentic or non authentic, no matter. Further, the use of digital technology has minimized the use of library by the students. There is no doubt that the digitalization has revolutionized all the sector of the society. But the advent of internet has led to the development of various application for games and chatting which has continue to take students time living reading books as old fashioned.

Conclusion:

Thus library and librarian play a crucial role in promoting reading culture among students. Reading is as important as food and water. It is indispensable. More reading means more knowledge. It makes the people capable to participate actively in the continuity of learning. This continuity cannot be possible without the help of library and librarian. This article deals with the causes of degenerating reading culture among the students ,role of librarians and the challenges faced by them. It is acknowledged that a strong reading culture can revolutionized the society. This article highlights the age old reading culture of India, the role of several factors especially digitalization.

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