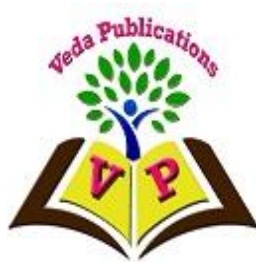


DEVELOPING READING SKILLS-NEED OF THE HOURD.Gangaiah¹ and Dr.N.Bujji Babu²¹(Lecturer in Economics, VSR & NVR College, Tenali.)²(Lecturer in Chemistry, VSR & NVR College, Tenali.)doi: <https://doi.org/10.33329/IJREP.2019.44>**Abstract**

Reading is cardinal to 21 st century students whose mission and goal are to excel in their academic pursuit and future endeavours. When a strong foundation is laid both in the school and at home by parents, the nation will surely be transformed into a reading society. The habit of reading can only be cultivated through regular and keen reading of various reading materials such as books, magazines, novels and newspapers by students in order to acquire knowledge which will be applied for development. Students who are avid readers would not be bereft of ideas to have breakthroughs in any life endeavour. Reading is an essential skill that is crucial for all-round development of students at all levels of education in the world of today. This paper focuses on the importance of the Reading Skill.

Keywords: *Reading Skill, Knowledge, Students.*

1. Introduction

A good reading habit is a vital skill that students should possess. Students should strive to imbibe good reading habits that would enable them function well in all spheres of life. Reading is the ability to induce meaning from written or print words. Therefore, reading is cardinal to 21st century students whose mission and goal are to excel in their academic pursuit and future endeavours. When a strong foundation is laid both in the school and at home by parents, the nation will surely be transformed into a reading society [1].

The habit of reading can only be cultivated through regular and keen reading of various reading materials such as books, magazines, novels and newspapers by students in order to acquire knowledge which will be applied for development. Students who are avid readers would not be bereft of ideas to have breakthroughs in any life endeavour. Reading is an essential skill that is crucial for all-round development of students at all levels of education in the world of today.[2]

2. Importance of Reading Habits

Reading habits enhance individual self-confidence, moral and intellectual development. Reading provides experience through which the individual may expand horizons of knowledge, identify, extend and intensify interest and gain deeper understanding of him-self, other human beings and the world [3] It is imperative for all stakeholders to promote the reading habits of students. There are diverse ways of promoting reading habits among students which include programmes such as reading clubs, mobile reading tents, book talk, and story hours.

3. Developing Good Reading Habits

Developing a good reading habit is highly essential to students because it will enable reading with ease, and provide opportunity to have great accomplishments in any task. There is a general saying that 'readers are leaders: when a student is an avid reader, such would have an edge over his colleagues, who are casual readers, the reason being that he would acquire inspiration, information and have an insight into the rich knowledge of the world around him through reading. Acquisition of reading habits is a gradual process of letters, words, sentences, paragraphs and complete texts. 8 It is evident that the development of good reading habit is not sudden but stepwise. Promoting reading for pleasure is fundamental to empowerment of students to become lifelong readers and to have successful career

There is an urgent need to develop reading habits among individuals in the society, most especially students of high schools. There have been several interventions over the years to promote reading among young people. For instance, the Reading Associations, Book Development Council and Library Association have been in the forefront of the struggle for the development of good reading habits of students. To this end, the National Library of has been sponsoring the readership promotion campaign in the country. One of the aims of the initiative is to revitalise reading habits of young people. Bring Back the Book is a right

initiative for reviving the poor reading habits. However, as good as the initiative is, there is a fundamental problem with the implementation of the initiative [12], affirmed that the initiative was not properly implemented and some essential factors were found missing; hence, this affected the execution and the success of the initiative. Government should not hesitate to establish adequate public libraries in all local government areas and school libraries in all secondary schools in the nation. These libraries must be funded appropriately to achieve the missions and the goals of the libraries.

Moreover, Readership Campaign is a vision of the National Library to promote, stimulate and inspire the inculcation of reading habits among students. Specifically, the objectives of the readership campaign are to: encourage more reading, promote the increase in production of reading materials, both in quality and variety, and identify the major inhibitors of reading in the country and find ways of eliminating them. Readership promotion campaign should be embraced by all stakeholders to create awareness and emphasise the importance of good reading habits among students. Funding has been a major setback to readership campaign across the nation. Consequently, the effect of the programme has not cut across the whole federation due to lack of print and electronic media that could go round which could enhance the achievement of the set objectives. Good reading habits could serve as a panacea to socio-economic and political problems.

4. Factors Inhibiting the Reading Habits of Students

The factors include: lack of functional school libraries in secondary schools, large percentage of obsolete information materials among the library stock, lack of professional librarians, lack of inviting and conducive environment for reading, lack of adequate funds from government to procure information materials that will cover both intensive and extensive reading, non-existence of public libraries, high poverty rate, illiteracy among others highlighted inhibiting factors: the family background of students where few homes are conducive to reading owing to noise and lack of reading materials; the lack of functional libraries in most of the schools surveyed and a similar lack of trained librarians or teacher librarians; the failure to provide library periods in schools; language teachers and shortage of equipment and resources for teaching reading skills; and a heavy reliance on school texts. Taking cognisance of all the aforementioned inhibiting factors, all educational stakeholders should be involved in developing and sustaining the reading habits of students.

5. Reading Habits of Students

Book exhibition; book talk: story-talk hour; creative activities or creative writing; book clubs; drama and mobile reading tents help develop reading habits.. Therefore, in developing the reading habits of students, there are major stakeholders in the society that should be actively involved, such as parents, teachers, school librarians, school counsellors and the students themselves.

Children should be introduced to reading very early in life . In this regard, mothers should introduce reading habits to their children at pre- school age. Parents have a crucial role

to play in the development of reading habits of students. Parents should read to their children, procure picture books and attractive reading materials for their children. Illiteracy and ignorance are presupposed to be the major factors hindering developing good reading habits of students. Illiterate parents may find it difficult to assist and motivate their children to become passionate about reading and this could compound the problem of poor reading habits. As the general saying goes, those readers beget readers, if parents are voracious readers, their children would also become ardent readers. Thus, it is imperative for all parents to play their role in giving their children a solid foundation of reading right from pre-school age.

Teachers also have to play a fundamental role in helping students to develop and maintain a positive reading habit. Teachers' role in developing reading habits of students cannot be overlooked simply because they are the second role model for the students. Schools should organise reading competitions with attractive rewards for successful competitors, and relevant media houses should feature such programmes. Teachers should therefore endeavour to teach students how to read and develop them to be ardent readers. It is only those teachers who possess good reading habits that could endeavour to impart these skills to their students.

There should be continuous training and retraining for both primary school and secondary school teachers on the need to develop reading habits. School teachers should advocate for the integration of reading into the school curriculum to resuscitate the dying reading habits of students. In addition, school teachers should encourage students to use the library by giving assignments that will compel students to use the library such as reading novels presentation of book reviews. Developing the reading habit of students should not be left to language teachers alone. All subject teachers should harness their efforts together to accomplish in the students irrespective of their discipline or area of specialisation to inculcate a love for reading. Teachers must also engage in recreational reading, in order to increase their horizon and sharpen their intellect.

School librarians should collaborate with school teachers in taking students out on excursions to libraries and book exhibitions in various school libraries to stimulate students to imbibe good reading habits. Besides school librarians must ensure that the school libraries are in good condition and are stocked with adequate and age appropriate reading materials which are relevant to a culture. School librarians ought to be accessible to students, that is, they must be friendly, approachable, not gloomy and hostile to students. School librarians should advocate for library period in the school time table in order to fast track the development of good reading habits of students. In addition, school librarians must be good public relation officers (PRO),

There is urgent need to re-design the school curriculum at secondary school level to emphasise the acquisition of reading skills, train and re-train teachers and adequately fund the school system for the sustainability of educational standards in .

All efforts should be harnessed in order to remove distractions that are capable of subjugating their reading time to watching television, using social media sites such as: Facebook, WhatsApp, and twitter among others. Students should be engaged in intensive and extensive reading that would illuminate their minds, sharpen their intellect and guarantee their educational success and all round development [23], affirmed that students do not like to read despite the fact that it is fundamental to their intellectual development. Hence, if every other stakeholder puts in their best and students still fail to do their part, low reading habits will remain the norm [10], asserted that to inculcate reading habit, students must develop the habit of reading on a daily basis. In essence, students' efforts cannot be underplayed in developing their reading habits.

6. Conclusion

Reading habits of students has been a concern to all and sundry, because reading is the pillar of around educational development. Reading habits enhance individual self-confidence, moral and intellectual development. Reading habits are the essential skills that all students must possess in order to excel in their academic pursuit. Literature revealed that the reading habits of students are declining. Consequently, all stakeholders: parents, school teachers, school librarians/ school media specialists, Government and school counsellors, should pay rapt attention to the development of good reading habits of students.

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