

Reading Habits of the Students of Assam: a case study of the degree students of general colleges of Cachar District

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Abstract: *Reading is a learning process. It enhances one's own knowledge. The aim of the study is to investigate the reading habits of the degree students of general colleges of Assam. The questionnaire method is applied for this study.*

Key Words: *Reading, Degree Students, Assam, Colleges, Cachar*

I. Introduction:

Learning means acquiring knowledge. It is a continuous process which one starts consciously or unconsciously right from the day of birth. More a person reads, more a person learns. Learning not only means acquiring knowledge but also understanding them. Reading is one of the most effective processes of 'conscious learning'. Reading helps to enhance one's own knowledge. Reading is one of the best ways to give a creative orientation to one's own mind. Humans have been reading since ages and thus words of knowledge have been passed on through generations. The reading habit influences in the promotion of one's personal development in particular and social progress in general. Devarajan (1989) defined 'reading as the art of interpreting printed and written words'. "Reading habit is the best formed at a young impressionable age in School, but once formed can last rest of one's life."

II. Cachar District at a glance:

Cachar District is located in the Southernmost part of Asom is one of the oldest districts of Asom. It lies between longitude 92^o-24' E and 93^o-15' E and latitude 24^o-22' N and 25-8' N and is bounded by Borail and Jayantia hill ranges on the north, by the state Mizoram on the south, by sister districts Hailakandi and Karimganj on the east. Cachar was created in 1830 after annexation of Kachari kingdom by British. Karimganj subdivision and Hailakandi subdivision were made separate districts in 1983 and 1980 respectively. There are two possibilities regarding the origin of the name. They are :

- (1) The Kacharis gave this name Cachar when they ruled this land.
- (2) The word Kachar in Sylhette (Bengali of Sylhet) means a stretch of land at the foot of a mountain. Hence the name Cachar might have been given by Bengalis of Sylhet as the land is surrounded by mountains

III. Objective of the study:

The main objective of the study is to understand the reading habits of the degree students of the general colleges of Cachar district. Aims of the study are:

- a) The quantum of time spent by the students in reading.
- b) Identifying the factors that prevent the students from reading.
- c) Ascertain the purposes of reading

IV. Sample characteristics:

The study population includes students studying in degree classes of 15 colleges of Cachar district. Questionnaire method was applied to collect data. 10 students from each college were selected randomly. 150 questionnaires were distributed out of which 90 questionnaires were received. The response rate is 60%.

V. Analysis and Interpretation

Data is being represented in the following tables:

5.1 Time spent in Reading

Table 1: Time spent by the users in reading

Time spent		
Up to 2 hours	44	48.88%
2-4 hours	40	44.44%
4-6 hours	16	17.77%
Above 6 hours	Nil	
Total	90	

The majority that is 48.88% of the students responded that they spend up to 2 hours on reading per day, 44.44% students spend 2-4 hours and 17.77% students spend 4-6 hours per day on reading.

5.2 Purpose of Reading:

Table 2: Different purposes of reading

Purposes		
a) Writing an assignment	7	7.77%
b) Updating knowledge	11	12.22%
c) Preparing for exam	42	46.66%
d) Preparing notes to supplement the class lecture	6	6.66%
e) Enhance self knowledge	8	8.88%
f) Reading for recreation	16	17.77%
Total	90	

Based upon the findings it seems that majority of the respondents i.e 46.66% of the students read for preparing for examination, 17.77% read for recreation, 12.22% read for updating their knowledge, 8.88% read for enhancing self knowledge, 7.77% read for writing assignment, 6.66% read for preparing notes to supplement the class lecture notes.

5.3 Satisfaction on the library services and resources:

Table 3: Satisfaction on the library services and resources

	Satisfied	Not satisfied
Satisfaction on the library services and resources	66 (73.33%)	24 (26.66%)

The data reveals that 66 students i.e.73.33% of the respondents are satisfied with the library services and resources and 24 i.e.26.66% are not satisfied they are to depend on other libraries.

5.4 Inculcating the Reading Habits:

Table 4: Inculcating Reading Habits

Sources		
a) Parents	10	11.11%
b) Teachers	39	43.33%
c) Brothers/sisters	20	22.22%
d) Friends	11	12.22%
e) Librarians	10	11.11%
	90	

Table 4 indicates that students develop reading habits mostly with the help of their teachers followed by brothers/sisters, friends, parents and librarians respectively.

5.5 Favourite place for Reading:

Table 5: Favourite places for reading

Places for reading		
a) Home	13	14.44%
b) Library	57	63.33%
c) Classroom	7	7.77%
d) Park	10	11.11%
e) Other Places	3	3.33%
	90	

The above table indicates that 63.33% mentioned library as their favourite place for reading, followed by 14.44% like to read at home, 11.11% at parks, 7.77% in the classroom and 3.33% like other places for reading like while traveling somewhere by bus etc.

5.6 Major factors that prevent them from reading:

Table 6: Major factors that prevent from reading

Factors that prevent from reading		
a) T.V.Programme	32	35.55%
b) Home works assigned by teachers	10	11.11%
c) Tuition	28	31.11%
d) Extra curricular activities	20	22.22%
	90	

32 i.e.35.55% respondents mentioned T.V programme as the main factor that prevent them from reading, followed by 28 i.e. 31.11% uttered private tuition as the main factor, 22.22% mentioned extra curricular activities, and 11.11% respondents feel Home work as the main factor respectively.

VI. Findings :

- 1) It is found that there are very less students (i.e.17.77%) who spend 4 to 6 hours per day in reading.
- 2) Findings show that 46.66% students read for preparing for their examinations. Very less students read for recreation and updating of knowledge. It is also found that in addition to the class lecture notes students rarely consult any book.
- 3) Regarding satisfaction on library resources and services it seems that majority students are satisfied with the library services and resources.
- 4) It is observed that less than majority of the students are being encouraged for reading by their teachers.
- 5) The data reveals that majority of the students (i.e.63.33%) like to read in the library itself.
- 6) 35.55% of the students responded that they like to spend time in watching Television instead of reading. Some students also mentioned private tuition and home work and extracurricular activities as the main factors which prevent them for reading.

VII. Conclusion:

Reading is a creative activity and is involved deeply with all phases of life but it seems that reading habit of the students has declined very much. Reading habit should be inculcated in the young minds in their home, in their schools. There should be reading atmosphere at home which will help a child to form reading habits. Parents should motivate their children by providing good books of their kid's interest. Reading is highly enjoyable, it helps to develop creativity and improve imagination.

Librarians and teachers should encourage the students to improve their talents by reading books, newspapers etc. Since the Libraries are the central focus of learning process so emphasis must be given to develop the libraries. The role of Librarians is to do everything possible to cultivate reading habit amongst the students through the use of various library resources.

References

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