SCHOOL TEACHERS READING HABITS FOR LIFE-LONG LEARNING: A STUDY

H. Rajendra Babu
Department of Studies and Research
in Library and Information Science
Tumkur University, B.H Road - 572103,
Tumakuru, Karnataka, India.
hrajendra.babu@gmail.com

Abstract

The present study aimed to examine how the teachers inculcate the reading habits in doing their job in an effective manner. The article describeresults of 150 questionnaire obtained by the school teachers in Tumakuru. 92% of the teachers spend 30 minutes to 2 hours per week in the library for reading. 47.3% of the respondents feel that authors and 35% feel Subject is the main influence for them to read a book. Further, 32% read to prepare class work, 22.7% read for personality development, 20.7% read for pleasure or entertainment and 11.3% respondents only read books to gain knowledge. The teachers when read an interesting / stimulating book, 38% discuss it with their friends or colleagues, 26% share the joy of reading with their respective families and 24% would discusses it in the class. We feel this aspect is much useful to the students. The article also discuss on the ways to improve the reading habit among the teachers. The article also discusses Aliteracy and Peter Effect.

Keywords: Reading Habit, School Teacher, Reading, Lifelong Learning

Introduction

The nature of education is dynamic since the inception of mankind. It has gone under many changes as the change in needs, aspirations and conditions of the mankind time-to-time. It is said that Education and learning is a life-long process (Iqbal, 2009). It is the education which goes from womb to tomb, which evidently revealsits dynamic nature (March, Hooper, Baum, 1977). Aristotle (384BC-322BC) said, *"The difference between the literate and the illiterate person is the same, as we find between the living and non-living beings"* (Aristotle Quotes, 2019). Reading is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them (Palani, 2012). The reading habit is irreplaceable

weapon for everyone in order to mentally grow and fulfil their potential. Reading is the foundation upon which other academic skills are built. Reading habit becomes an inbuilt tutor that everyone caries everywhere throughout their lives (Hassen, 2016).

Teacher is the preserver of the culture, knowledge and the transmitter of culture and knowledge to the younger generation (Philip, 2007). A good teacher guides the students with the ideas and ideals. The students blindly follow the words of a teacher. Therefore, the role of teacher in the society is very significant in building their values, viewpoints and philosophy of life (Su, 1997). Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) said, *"A lamp cannot enlighten another lamp unless, it continues its own flame burning" (*Tagore, ND). In order to become a good teacher, a teacher has to become student. Therefore, he has to study the latest books related to his subject to keep his knowledge fresh and up-to-date (Beijaard, Verloop, &Vermunt, 2000), (Scardamalia, &Bereiter, 1999).

Review of Literature

There are twenty-five million illiterate people in the USAwho cannot read newspapers,warning signs, directions, orlabels on prescription drugs. There areanother thirty-five million marginal illiterateswho read haltingly and laboriouslywhen they are required to fill outforms or read street signs discussed in the study by Kozol,1985. There are other group of people who are able to read and choose not to, are termed as Aliteracy. Many changes in the present modern society havecontributed to the phenomenon of aliteracy.In just few decades, it has moved from an industrial society to aninformation society (Naisbitt, 1982) to the present knowledge society.There are 200 to 300 newmagazines startspublishing and over 6000 to 7000 scientific articles are being published on a daily basis.However, the proportion of students in the USA who have become avid readers has been diminishing as stated by Guthrie Etal, 1996. Further research has suggested that a large number of students are literate.

Some reading experts like Guthrie and Anderson 1999 done a study and identified a type of ideal readers and called them as engaged readers for those who read regularly with enthusiastic readers for a variety of their own purposes. The motivations they derive among the engaged readers have been assessed by Metsala and McCann, 1997. One such aspect which differentiates between the normal reader and the motivated readers is the intrinsic motivation which make the readers engage more in

reading for the sake of enjoyment and thus satisfaction. This leads to the higher amount of time spent for reading (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997). However, Schiefele (1991) found that university students feel that topic of a text as intrinsically motivatingand interesting for an assessment of comprehension.

A good teacher with reading habit identifies andcreates interest inreading among the student community (O'Flahavanetal., 1992). Inherent motivationto read develops deep roots in classic motivation theory,specifically known as theexpectancy-value theory (Eccles, 1983). A good reader makes a good and influential teacher. An Influential teacher engagesstudents in the thoughtfulexploration of text.

Need for the study

Education plays a key role in the development of any nation. Learning has been considered the core of education. The core of the present day education system is teaching and learning pedagogy. It becomes important that how a teacher inculcates reading habit togain knowledge so as to teach effectively. It is also important for the teachers to read before making their teaching interesting and effective for the students.Aliteracy, a term describing people whocan read but choose not to, is a growingproblem in any society (Decker, 1986). Hence, it is felt to carry-out the present study to assess the reading habits among the school teachers in the direction of Aliteracy.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To determine how often school teachers read.
2. To examine the teachers' purpose of reading.
3. To find the type of materials teachers read.
4. To identify the benefit of reading among the teachers.

Scope and Methodology

The institutions covered for the study are the schools and teachers situated in thegeography of Tumakuru district of Karnataka state, India. The name of the privately run schools are MaruthiVidya Kendra, Sarvodaya School, Chaithanya Techno School and Podar International School only.

The present study has been conducted by using a structured questionnaire. The investigator has distributed 200 questionnaires to the school teachers. The questionnaire has been divided into two parts to

collect the demographic and reading habits related information through, open ended and closed ended questions. Finally 150 duly filled questionnaires were obtained which forms 75% of the response rate. The data gathered was subjected to the analysis using SPSS and tables were generated for easy interpretation. For all referencing purposes Zotero has been used and APA 6.0 style guide versions are used.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

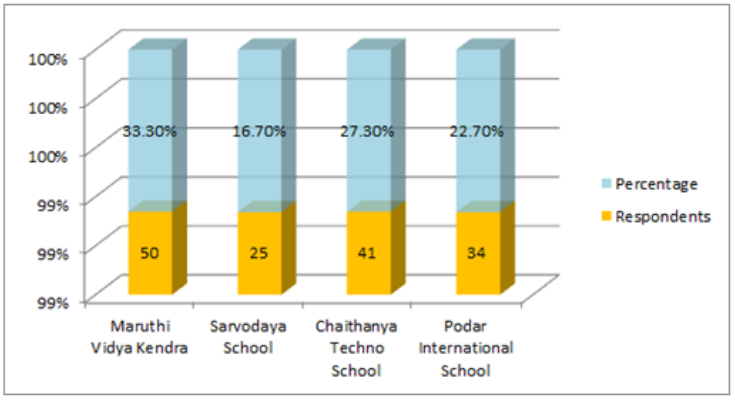


Figure-1: School details

Note: Numbers in the parentheses to be read as percentage.

Data from the above figure indicates the name of the school and the response rate with percentage. MaruthiVidya Kendra's response rate is high with 33.3% and Sarvodaya School recorded a lowest response rate with 16.7%. However, in general the Sarvodaya School has more number of teachers in comparison to the overall number of teachers from other schools.

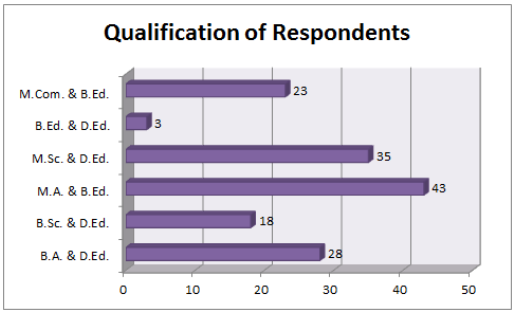


Figure-2: Qualification of Respondents

The qualification of the teachers has been shown above and all the responding teachers teach primary to high school students. A maximum number of 28.7% teachers are post graduates with arts background with B.Ed. degrees. 23.3% responding teachers are from postgraduate science background with B.Ed. degree. 15.3% responding teachers are from postgraduate commerce background with B.Ed. degree. Overall there is a good mix of disciplines with B.Ed. and D.Ed. additional teaching eligibility degrees.

Hobbies	Respondents	%
Reading	74	49.3%
Music	28	18.7%
Watching T V	6	4.0 %
Playing	17	11.3%
Writing, drawing and Painting	15	10.0%
Others	10	6.7%
Total	**150**	**100.0%**

Table 1: Hobbies of Respondents

Teachers are the most creative thinkers developed by continuous reading for their teaching and learning, they are also habituated to some hobbies (Henriksen, & Mishra, 2013) when asked about their hobbies 49.3% responded that reading is their best hobby, followed by 18.7% listen to music, 11.3% and 10% respondents said playing and creative arts such as writing, drawing and painting respectively

Library visit	Responses	%
From school days	43	28.70%
From college days	97	64.60%
After joined as a teacher	10	6.70%
Total	**150**	**100.00%**

Table-2: Teachers Visiting the Library

Data in the above table shows that a majority of 64.60% respondents visited the library during their college days, 28.7% of the respondents visit the library from school days, rest of 6.70% of the teachers made their visit to the library only after joining as a teacher. It is suggested on part of the school, college and teachers that the is a dire need to inculcate the habit of visiting the library by allocating one or two hours in a week as a library visit

hour to the school children accompanied by the respective teacher (Sridhar, 1989).

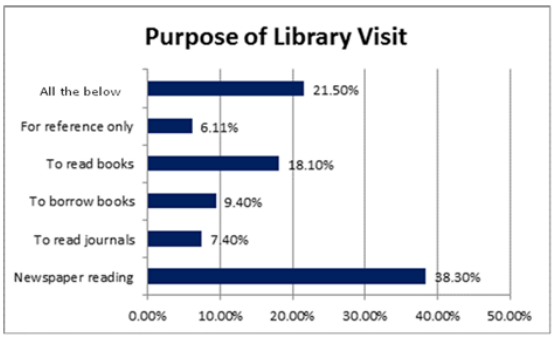


Figure 3: Purpose of library visit

The chart indicates the responses on the purpose of visit to the library by the teachers. Teachers need to know current affairs in the form of news, hence 38.30% visit the library to read the newspaper to discuss and create awareness on the matters of interest to the student community, 21.5% opined that they visit the library for all the mentioned purposes (Newspaper reading, to read journals, to borrow books, to read books and for reference only). 18.1% visit the library for reading books. It is strange to note that a mere 6.11% teachers visit the library for the purpose of reference only, as the teachers would be highly depending on the reference sources for their teaching but the response is discouraging.

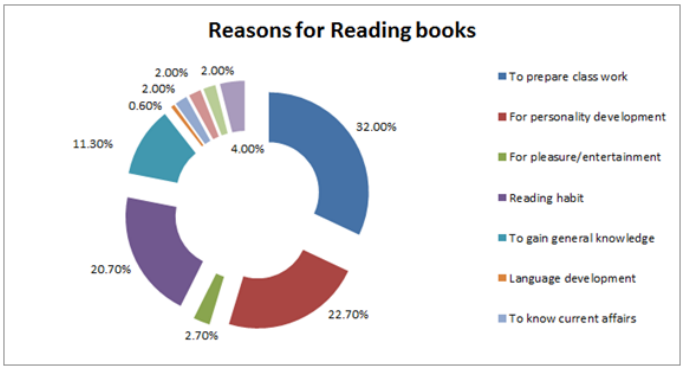


Figure 4: Reasons for Reading books

When the respondents are posed with the question on the reasons to read 'Books', a maximum of 32% responded with the answer for preparing class

work, 22.7% read books for personality development and 20.7% read books for the pleasure/ entertainment and 11.3% read books for gaining general knowledge. Lowest of 0.7% respondents read books for Language development(Hall, 2005). Overall, reading is the main aspect for a teacher, hence, reading makes an important part of teaching.

Response	Responses	%
Discuss it with friends or colleagues	57	38.0%
Share the enjoyment with family	39	26.0%
Discuss it in class	36	24.0%
Belongs to a book club, so share there	5	3.3%
Recommend books to other people	13	8.7%
Total	**150**	**100.0%**

Table-3: What does a teacher do, after reading an interesting or stimulating book?

Human being is a social animal and communication being the basic nature of human beings (Hall, & Piazza, 2008). Basing this, there was a question posed on 'What the teachers do, when they have read an interesting or stimulating book' (Morrison, Jacobs,&Swinyard, 1999), 38% would go and discuss it with their friends/ colleagues, 26% and 24% share the enjoyment with their respective families and discuss it in the class respectively. 8.7% Recommend books to other people and 3.3% are the member of a book club, so they would share there. The aspect of teachers discussing what they have read with their class is really interesting and would take the students understanding on the subject to a long way (Hall, & Piazza, 2008) and (BurgessEtal, 2011).

Response	Respondents	%
Yes	115	76.66%
No	35	20.14%
Total	**150**	**100.0%**

Table-4: Decline in reading habit among Teachers

It is a general notion among the people and a cause of concern among the teachers and librarians that the present generation is not inclined to reading especially books. However, there is anevident decline of reading habits among the teachersdue to lack of enthusiasm (Applegate and Applegate, 2004) termed as “Peter Effect”. In this direction the investigation has posed a questionas the teachers are the ones who read most.

A majority of 76.66% respondents agreed that there is a decline in reading

habits among the teachers It is the teachers who needs to read the most to get themselves updated to guide the students, but the results in the study shows that lack of reading habits among teachers is an alarming aspect to be considered by the teachers, authorities and libraries to make sure that the teachers to inculcate better reading habits to build the same among young minds (Palani, 2012).

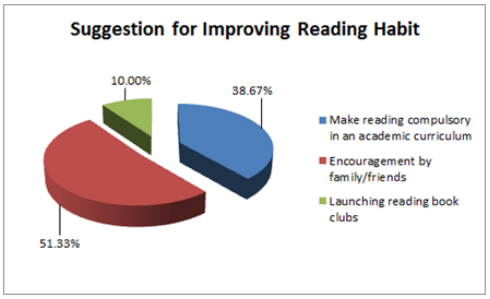


Figure-5: Suggestion for improving reading habit among Teachers

It is found from the table-3 that, there is a decline in the reading habits, the investigation has asked to suggest the ways and means to improve the reading habits among the teachers, 51.33% suggested that 'Encouragement by family/friends' is the most important one followed by 38.67% suggesting to 'Make reading compulsory in an academic curriculum'(Sangkaeo, 1999).

Discussion and Suggestions

Any education institutionmustprovide basic facilities such as playing ground, library and so on. It is alarming to observe that 24.67% respondents say their school doesn't have a library. School library is the place where the children can gain by reading and use it in their studies and life. Hence, it is suggested that the school authorities must look into providing a start a state-of-the-art library.

When a teacher reads an interesting book, 38% discuss it with their friends or colleagues, 26% and 24% share the enjoyment with their respective families and discuss it in the class respectively. The aspect of teachers discussing what they have read with their class is really interesting and would take the students understanding on the subject to the higher level.

It is a cause of concern that the present generation is not inclined to reading habits due to the lack of enthusiasm also termed as “Peter Effect”. The majority 76.66% of teachers agreed that there is a decline in reading habits among them. It is the teacher who needs to read the most to get updated. It is an alarming aspect to be considered by the teachers, authorities and libraries to make sure that the present generation inculcates better reading habits.

The other suggestions are, the present study did not address the reading habits of young and experienced teachers. The other aspect that didn't get the focus is that to what extent, does the workplace and the culture of the school and the curriculum support teachers' reading habits.

Conclusion

Education is very essential for the human beings;it is the basis for reading. Learning at any age, by anyone is a continuous process. Once a person ceases to learn, he ceases to exist. Hence, Aristotle said, *"The difference between the literate and the illiterate person is the same, as we find between the living and non-living beings"* (Aristotle Quotes, 2019) Teachers and Libraries play a very important role in promoting reading habits among the younger generation. It is the responsibility on part of the teacher with support from the library to inculcate a reading habit among the young ones to foster the life-long learning. Thefindings suggest that teachers who impart education need to do more to inculcate personal reading by incorporating strategies to promote reading habits among the students Increased accountability factor, reduced 'Peter Effect' (Applegate & Applegate, 2004), may be the solutions for the problem as the future generations are at stake… however, it alarming to note the increasing aliteracy levels among the literates….

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