

## AN ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S READING HABITS IN PUBLIC CENTRAL LIBRARY TIRUNELVELI

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### ABSTRACT

*Children read to satisfy the natural urge of curiosity and broaden their understanding of the world they live in. Reading satisfies additional needs of the child: Coping with challenges, a sense of security, gaining approval, a sense of belonging being loved, the quest for identity with historical figures characters. This paper is devoted to analyse children's reading Habits in public central Library at Tirunelveli. Four schools with homogenous characters have been selected for detailed study. A sample of 400 children at the rate of 100 per school, who are normally using central library are chosen as respondents of the study. Both primary and secondary information were collected, tabulated and analysed with reference to the different objectives framed for the study. As a result of the study, it is observed that variables like socio-economic level, gender, frequency of reading books, frequency of buying books, frequency of visiting book shops, having a subscription to children, magazine, having a library in class and at home create a significant difference on children's total attitude scores towards reading. It is believed that these findings are important in revealing the effect of activities carried out and the arrangements made for reading on children's attitudes towards reading. When these findings are considered, it becomes of utmost importance to raise families awareness on making their children gain the habit of reading and putting together libraries at school and at home that contain novels, story books and magazines to draw children's attention. The fact that girls have more positive attitudes towards reading books, studies can be carried out to inform the families and teachers about making boys gain the habit of reading starting from early childhood.*

**Keywords:** Socioeconomic, creativity, imagination, cultural, civilization, technology.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading which makes it possible for the individual to express himself better and more accurately by supporting his ability to speak enables the improvement of an individual's creativity, abilities, concrete thoughts, imagination and motor

(Duruarp etal:2013). The habit of reading is defined as practicing the act of reading throughout life, constantly and

This article "An Analysis of children's Reading Habit in public central

skills and supports his personal development. In addition, it has an important property of determining a society's place within civilization, its economic and cultural development, and the level of civilization

critically as a result of perceiving reading as a need and source of pleasure (Arican& yilmaz:2010)

Library" is carried out in the central public Library at Tirunelveli.

### 2. READING HABIT

Gaining the habit of reading is very important in increasing the habit of reading in a society, gaining the habit of reading from a very young age is stressed and the fact that reading habit should be supported starting from early childhood is emphasized. It is emphasized that with the development of technology in recent years

there has been a drop in children's habit of reading. Television, Cell Phone, Computer game, Videos and other technological innovations influence the rate of reading negatively. In addition, factors like lack of time, not having easy access to books which address children and teenagers interest, not having

appropriate conditions for reading at home,

not knowing the importance of reading.

### 3. CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

A Children's Library is a place where there are books, children and committed, enthusiastic staff to assist the children to develop their reading skills. Libraries depend on financial and staffing resources and come in a variety of styles. When adults come to library, they usually know how to read and they are seeking

Both Central and State Governments have made library mandatory in all educational set up, but primary and upper primary level government schools still have inadequate children's literature. Children in most villages and slum communities do not have access to libraries past studies have concluded that reading habit among children has been on the decline due to lack of proper encouragement and learning environment. Library system particularly children libraries in India has been a

information on a specific topic. Young children may not be able to read, so they need to be attracted to the library and assisted with their reading skills. Children need to feel comfortable in a library setting and should be gently encouraged to participate in the activities offered.

subject of neglect at both Central and State level. In India, library is not in the concurrent list of the constitution and hence, there is no hard core planning for setting up of children libraries. Many countries have constitutional provisions to establish national library for children and young adults. Russia, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Australia, USA, Canada and the European Countries have well established children libraries both at National and Local level.

### 4. PUBLIC LIBRARY AND CHILDREN LIBRARY

The public libraries in India particularly National and State Central libraries have introduced children sections dedicated to children's literature. The National Library, Kolkatta has a separate division for children with 28000 children books which are not lent out. The Delhi Public Library has a separate children section in all the service units including

mobile vans. Membership is open to children of the age group between 5-15 years. Children can borrow two books for 14 days. Even though, there are many public libraries which provide library service to children, the infrastructure and resources in district and rural public libraries are in extremely poor condition.

### 5. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The following are the major objectives of the study.

1. To understand the socio-economic level of the Children respondents and their reading habit.
2. To find out the Children's average scores of reading habit according to frequency of reading books.
3. To analyse and understand the children's habit in frequency of buying

- books.
4. To find out the habit of children's frequency of visiting book- stalls.
5. To analyse and understand the habit of children subscribing to children Magazine, having a class library and having a library at home.

## 6. SOURCE OF DATA

The required information are collected both from Primary and Secondary sources. The identified sample children respondents formed primary source. Library Professionals and

knowledgeable persons in the field of library and information sciences and children's education formed secondary sources of information.

### 6.1 SAMPLING DESIGN

A sample of 400 children, in the age group of 14 to 18 studying 8<sup>th</sup> standard to 12<sup>th</sup> standard from four schools at the rate of 100 each as respondents. All the four schools are located in Tirunelveli

City, Palayamkottai and Tirunelveli Town. Children who used to visit Public and Central Library are chosen as respondents.

### 6.2 METHOD OF RESEARCH

In this study a descriptive survey method is used. A general information form was developed together information about the children and their families and

“Attitude inventory on Reading Habit” was followed. A questionnaire was distributed among the sample of 400 students from four schools.

### 6.3 TOOLS USED FOR COLLECTION OF DATA

For the collection of primary data a structured, close-ended questionnaire-schedule was used. The questions were asked to the respondents and the answers were ticked by the enumerators. In

addition informal talk with knowledgeable persons and interview techniques were also made for the collection of primary data. The records of the Central library served as secondary data.

### 6.4 TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

For analysis and interpretation of the data collected, simple statistical tools

such as averages, percentages, tables, and diagrams are used.

## 7. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES.

The review of literature is an essential of any research investigation which gives necessary input to frame the research study on any chosen topic. It enables the researcher to define the limits of his field and to delimit and define the problem. The knowledge of related

literature, brings the researcher up-to-date on the work which others have done and thus to state the objectives clearly and concisely. A few of the past studies with reference to the present problems are explained below.

Fractor et al(1993) indicate a number of necessary features for classroom libraries, attractive and highly visible area, separated from the rest of the class room; special seating arrangement, in an area that can accommodate at least five to six pupils at a time. A variety of reading levels, with at least five to six books per student and literature-oriented displays.

One of the weaknesses of the class library is the shortage of resources, which detracts from the goal for which such libraries are established. Many libraries contain very few books, some of which were acquired as gifts from Children's homes and are therefore, inappropriate for encouragement of reading.

Mary Francis (1989) points out the related disadvantages that these small amounts of books may include familiar

Morrow(1987) describes a project that was implemented in four recreational day care centres in New York, combining library corners with a recreational reading

Morrow and Weinstein(1982) conducted observation in 13 Kindergarten class rooms of literature use by the children in their free time. In some of the Kindergartens a classroom reading program was implemented in others the

Gover(1963) conducted a study among sixth grade students of six schools, two of the schools had central collections administered by one of teachers, two

volumes that children have seen over and over again.

programs. As a result of the project, the children's attitudes towards books improved and increase use of books was reported in all four centres.

library corners were redesigned, in still others both the program and the design were implemented and there was also a control group. Data were collected before and then a week after the introduction of the changes which took two weeks period. contained classroom collections, and the other two had a central school library, administered by librarians and serving both the students and the teachers.

**8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Since the study centres round only one public library situated in Tirunelveli and the respondents are limited only to

four schools, the outcomes of the study are applicable to the selected schools only. It cannot be generalised.

**9. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Public libraries are helping to close the "book gap" by providing children of all backgrounds access to high-quality reading materials and rich language experience.

The data collected has been analysed with reference to the major objectives of the study

**TABLE 1**

**Socio-economic levels of Respondents**

Socio-economic level	No.of Respondents	Average to Total %	Percentage to Total %
L- Low	135	33.75	33.75
M-Middle	145	36.25	36.25
H-High	120	30.00	30.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows that above one third of the total children's socio-economic level creates a significant difference on children's attitudes towards reading habit. The socio-economic level of 33.75% children is low, 36.25% children are in middle socio-economic status and only

30% of the children are in the high socio-economic level. In various studies it was found that children in middle economic, socioeconomic level have higher attitudes towards reading and have higher reading habits.

TABLE 2

## Attitude score for reading Habits-Gender Wise

Sr.No.	Gender	No. of Children	Percentage %
1	Female	210	52.50
2	Male	190	47.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : Calculated from Primary data

Table 2 shows that gender creates a statistically significant difference on children's attitude scores on reading habit. This finding reveals that gender is effective on children's attitude on reading habit. When average scores are analysed, it is observed that girls average attitude scores(52.50%) on reading habit is higher than boys average scores (47.50%). This

might be a result of girls being encouraged to read more. Other research results also reveal that girls have a higher rate of reading books compared to boys. Girls are found to be more interested in reading and are more successful in reading comprehension skills and have more positive attitude towards reading.

TABLE 3

## Reading Habit according to frequency

Sr.No.	Frequency of Reading	No .of Children	Percentage %
1	Everyday	210	52.50
2	Once a week	125	31.25
3	Once a month	40	10.00
4	A few times a year	15	03.75
5	Once a year	10	02.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : Calculated from primary data

Table 3 reveals that the frequency of reading creates a significant difference in attitude scores on reading habit. About 53% of the children stated that they read

daily,31.25% stated that they read once a week and 10% stated that they read once a month. Only a meagre 3% percentage of student stated that they read once in a year.

TABLE 4

## Frequency of Buying Books

Sr.No.	Frequency of Buying books	No.of children	Percentate %
1	Once a week	95	23.75
2	Once a month	225	56.25
3	A few times a year	48	12.00
4	Once a year	15	03.75
5	Never	17	04.25
<b>Total</b>		<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : Computed from primary data

It is also revealed by the table 4 that frequency of buying books creates a significant difference in attitude scores on reading habit. The frequency of buying books reflexes the attitude of the children's

habit towards reading About 225 children stated that they buy books once in a month. Another 95 (23.75%) children stated that they buy books (magazines) once in a week.

TABLE 5

## Frequency of visiting book-stalls

Sr.No.	Frequency of going to book shops (stalls)	No. of children	Percentage %
1	Once a week	84	21.00
2	Once a month	190	47.50
3	Once in a few months	86	21.50
4	Once in six months	18	04.50
5	Once a year	22	05.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : Primary data

Table 5 shows that the frequency of visiting book shops, has a positive effect on children's attitude towards books. Children's frequently visiting book stalls may contribute to their examining the

books and having the opportunity to read books and the knowledge about the availability of books on certain area of discipline.

TABLE 6

## Subscribing to children magazine having a class library having a library at home

Sr.No.	Habit	Yes	%	No	%	Total
1	Subscribing to children's magazine	178	44.50	222	55.50	400
2	Having a class library	120	30.00	280	70.00	400
3	Having a library at home	290	72.50	110	27.50	400
<b>Total/Percentage of total</b>		<b>588</b>	<b>49.00</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>51.00</b>	<b>1200</b>

Source : Calculated from primary data

Table 6 shows that 178(44.50%) children are subscribing to children magazine such as "TELL ME WHY" and the others 222(55.50) are not subscribing to children's magazines with regard to class library, 120(30%) Children stated that they have a class library and the

It is observed that children who have a subscription to at least one magazine, who have a library in class and who have a library at home have more positive attitudes towards reading. The study carried out emphasize that there is usually a library in class. But the number of books in the library are inadequate and as the grade level increased, the school and class library's rate of meeting the need

balance of 280(70%). Children stated that they do not have class library. with regard to home library, 290 (72.5%) accepted that they have small home library and about 110(27.50%) do not have any library at their homes.

decreases. Study revealed, in general, that subscribing to certain magazine depend upon the socio-economic level and the parents educational standard of the children. Having a library at home also depended on the educational economic , social back ground of the family members. Having a library in the class rooms depends upon the type of school the children are studying.

## 10. FINDINGS

The following are the major findings of the study.

- 1) It is observed that variables like socioeconomic level, gender, frequency of reading books,

frequency of buying books, frequency of visiting book Shops, having a subscription to children

magazine, having a library in class rooms and at home create a significant difference on children's total attitude scores towards reading.

- 2) The study reveals that 33.75% of the children's socioeconomic level is low, 36.25% of the children's socioeconomic level is "Middle" and 30% children's Socio economic level is high. Hence, it is concluded that the socioeconomic Level of about 70% is low.
- 3) The finding reveals that gender is effective on children's attitude on reading Habits. When the average scores are analysed, it is observed that girls average attitude scores on reading habit is higher (52.50%) than boys average scores (47.50%).

## 11. SUGGESTIONS

- 1) To meet the challenges experienced in the children's library, a research Consortium is to be established, comprising of competent persons such as Architect, interaction designer, engineer and computer scientist combined with a set of industrial partners having various interests:
  - a) a cabin maker, a web bureau
  - b) a company developing databases and architectural office.
- 2) To facilitate quality and diversity of input from the library domain,

- 4) The study revealed that frequency of reading creates a significant difference in attitude scores on reading habit. About 5.3% of the children read daily.
- 5) The frequency of buying books creates a significant difference in attitude scores on reading habit. About 225(56.25%) children buy books once in a month which reflexes their attitude scores on reading habit.
- 6) Children's frequency of visiting book stalls may contribute to their examining the books and having the opportunity to read books and get the knowledge about the availability of new books and their titles.

representatives from different children's libraries are to be included as part of the project.

- 3) The Children should be able to engage several senses and even the whole body when experiencing and dealing with information.
- 4) Noisy activities are to be accepted on equal basis with more silent ones such
- 5) as reading.
- 6) Should work positively with the fact that children see IT services as being a
- 7) Natural and attractive part of learning environment.

## 12. CONCLUSION

It is believed that these findings are important in revealing the effect of activities carried out and the arrangements made for reading on children's attitudes towards reading. When these findings are considered, it becomes of utmost importance to raise families awareness on

making their children gain the habit of reading and putting together libraries at school and at home that contain books to draw children's attention. In addition, when the fact that girls have more positive attitudes towards reading books, studies can be carried out to inform the families

and teachers about making boys gain the habit of reading starting from early

It is also believed that increasing the function of libraries and increasing the number of book stalls that have corners for

childhood. The habit of reading may also be promoted through media.

children to read books may contribute to children's developing a positive attitude towards reading habit.

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