

A STUDY ON THE AWARENESS OF READING HABITS IN BOOK FESTIVAL AT TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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The study investigates the reading habit among the public in a book festival at Tirunelveli District. The study is conducted on a sample of 200 respondents who came for the book festival held in Tirunelveli. The purpose of this study is to know about the different aspects of reading habits of people through a book fair and their opinions about the book fair at Tirunelveli. The results of the study include: 34% respondents came to know about the book fair through newspapers only, majority of the respondents (74%) felt the accessibility of the book fair venue as convenient, 44% stated that the collection of books in the book fair was very good. Majority of the respondents chose to read subject books.

Keywords: Reading Habits, Book Fair, User Study, Book Festival

INTRODUCTION

Book festival plays a vital role in promoting reading habits among the people. It is very essential in creating a better society. It improves the behavior of a person and helps them to develop an ideal way of thought. Reading was a vital practice of the greatest personalities of all times. Humans have been gaining knowledge and wisdom through reading. The reading habit helps in the encouragement of one's personal maturity in particular and social progress in general.

Reading kindles the imagination of a person. It also increases the wisdom of the mind. It can keep a person busy when he has nothing else to do. A valuable book is always better than depending on electronic devices. The knowledge or wisdom imbibed through reading is an imperishable property that one can have. It is indeed a pleasant and profitable pastime that one should acquire. In fact, the habit of reading should be acquired very early in our lives, right from our childhood. The best way is to read with a passion. As Viscount Grey (1919) rightly says, "Books are the greatest and the most satisfactory of recreations. Without books, without having acquired the power of reading for pleasure, none of us can be independent". The most important step is to choose a good book. A good book is not just a collection of pages containing printed content. You have to choose a book whose author has put his heart and soul in his writings. The author's aim is to lift us out of our earthly life and carry us to

a life of spiritual enlightenment. Read a book that really interests you, Francis Bacon says, some books are to be tasted others to be swallowed, and some others to be chewed and digested. But this kind of choice making doesn't come all at once. The wisest thing is to start with a book one likes as Nicolson says, Read only what you honestly enjoy.

BOOK FESTIVAL AT TIRUNELVELI

To fulfill the needs and desires of the people in Tirunelveli and to improve the reading habits among the student community, the National Trust of India, the Tirunelveli District Administration and the Tamil Growth and Development Center together had organized a book festival named "Nellai Book Festival" on 03.02.2018 at VOC Ground, Palayamkottai. The festival was held for 9 days. After noticing a decline in the reading habits among the people, this festival has been organized to help them enter into the reading world by installing 110 book stalls for the visitors. In addition to that, many art and cultural programs like debates, dramas, dancing and singing events etc., were conducted as a part of the book festival. More than that, several exhibitions and seminars were also conducted. The price of the books started from Rs. 10 and various discount coupons have been given to those who purchased books for more than Rs.300, in order to encourage visitors and students to increase their reading habit.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Senthilkumar et al. (2008) have studied about the Reading Habits among the School Children in the Northern Districts of Tamil Nadu, India. The authors pointed out that almost more than half of the students from each school present books to their friends on special occasions to promote reading habits. Shabani, Naderikharaji and Reza (2011) conducted a survey on Reading behavior in digital environments among higher education students in Iran. The authors examined the readers' mentality in computerized reading condition based on statistic factors including staff, education and gender orientation with advanced teaching undergraduates of Isfahan University.

Owusu-Acheaw, Micheal (2014) conducted a study

on analyzing the reading habits among the students and their effects on their academic performance. The study was conducted in Koforidua Polytechnic college situated in the Eastern Region of Ghana. A questionnaire was used for the data collection. The study confirmed that reading habit has had a huge influence on academic performance. The reading creates an easy way to score in academics. The author recommended that lecturers should be advised to stop providing handouts to the students but rather encourage them to use the library for research. The current system of assessing students should be given a second thought with respect to the formulae of assessment.

Sivakumar and Tamilselvan (2015) explored the use of newspapers among the students at Kalaignar Karunanidhi Institute of Technology Library, Coimbatore. It is found from the study that majority of the respondents read newspapers every day. Favorite newspapers among the students are English and Tamil language. Findings also showed that the students spent one or two hours every day in reading newspapers. Davidovitch et al. (2016) found that it is not the medium of education that affects learning but rather the efficient management of the learning. The authors found through survey that there is an improvement in the reading skills as a result of academic studies.

Swaminathan and Raja (2017) discussed the various methods and benefits in improving the reading habits through book fair. Majority of the students visited the book fair. The authors found that subject books and competitive exam books are highly purchased by the visitors, convenience of book fair venue is comfortable and food court and beverages stall facilities is good and satisfied. Transport facilities to the book fair venue were also good. Arali and Krishnamurthy (2018) conducted a study on Review of Literature on Reading Habits and use of Public Library Resources by Urban Women. It is found from the study that public libraries have to re-conceptualize their functions as an answer to the strategies of urban rejuvenation. The authors also recommend that public libraries should facilitate women reading clubs and community services. Kumara and Sampath Kumar (2019) carried out a study on the Impact of Reading Habits on the Academic

Achievements. The study found that the reading habit has made an impact on the academic achievements of the respondents. Further, it is found that reading habit has been acting as a channel for gaining real world knowledge. It also improved mental capacity and enhanced the reading skills in everyday life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the demographic profile of the readers in Tirunelveli district
2. To analyze the time spent for reading a book based on their profession
3. To find out the preference of the readers with regard to books
4. To know the opinion about the collection of books in the book festival
5. To motivate the public to make use of book fairs and festivals

METHODOLOGY

The present study is conducted on a sample of 200 respondents who came for the book festival that was held in Tirunelveli. Since population was unknown, Non Probability Sampling Technique was adopted and then Convenience Sampling Technique was employed to pick the samples. The authors visited the book festival and distributed the questionnaires among the visitors of the festival. The filled in questionnaires were collected back for data analysis. The data collected in the questionnaires were organized and tabulated. The data shown clearly through tables and percentages and a relation was found out by applying the standard deviation and correlation. The collected data were also analysed using percentage analysis. Statistical methods like Frequency distribution, weighted average method and ranking method have also been applied.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The present research study is limited to the respondents who came over to the book festival held in Tirunelveli. The Scope of this study does not encompass how they are reading and what method they have been using for reading.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Gender Wise Classification of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Male	122	61
2	Female	75	37
3	Transgender	3	02
Total		200	100

The table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by their gender. It is inferred from the study that majority (61%) of the respondents were male, 37 percent of the respondents were female and remaining 2 percent of the respondents were transgender

Table 2: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Below 10 th	41	21
2	Undergraduate	58	29
3	Post Graduation	63	31
4	Pursuing M.Phil & Ph.D	35	17
5	None	3	2
Total		200	100

The table shows that the majority (31%) of the respondents were post-graduates, 29 percent of the respondents were under-graduates, 21 percentage of the respondents were SSLC students, 17 percent of the respondents were doing research studies i.e. M.Phil. and

Ph.D. and remaining 2 percent of the respondents were not having any qualifications.

Table 3: Age wise distribution of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Below 20	21	11
2	21 - 30	46	23
3	31 - 40	61	30
4	41 - 50	20	10
5	More than 50	52	26
Total		200	100

The table 3 provides the age wise distribution of the respondents. It is inferred from the table that majority (30%) of the respondents belonged to 31 - 40 years of old. Around 26 percent of the respondents were 50 years old, 23 percent of the respondents were having an age between 21 to 30 years, 11 percent of the respondents were below 20 years and remaining 10 percent of the respondents were having more than 50 years of age.

Table 4: Mode of Awareness about Book Fair

Sl. No.	Media Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Radio/FM	22	11
2	Newspaper	68	34
3	Notice	14	7
4	Television	36	18
5	Friends Circle	18	9
7	Social Networks	42	21
Total		200	100

The table 4 reveals the media through which

awareness for the book festival has been created. Majority of 34% respondents came to know about the book fair through newspapers, followed by 21% respondents through Social Networks, 18% respondents through television, 11% respondents were aware of the book fair by Radio / FM, 9% respondents got through the friends circle and remaining 7% respondents came through notice boards in the institutions.

Table 5: Convenience of Book Fair Venue

Sl. No.	Convenience of Book Fair Venue	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	148	74
2	No	24	12
3	May be	28	14
Total		200	100

If the book fair venue is comfortable and easily reachable it will attract more number of visitors. 74% felt the accessibility of the book fair venue was convenient and 14% of respondents felt the accessibility of the book fair venue convenience might still be better and remaining 12% respondents felt that the venue was non-convenient.

Table 6: Assessment about the Collection of Books

SL. No.	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Very Good	88	44
2	Good	60	30
3	Neutral	34	17
4	Bad	18	9
Total		200	100

The table 6 which shows the opinions about the

collection of books in the book fair. Majority of the respondents, i.e 44% stated that the book collections were very good, 30% of respondents rated it as good, and 17% of respondents' opinions were neutral and the remaining 9% respondents' opinions about the collection of books were bad.

Table 7: Time Spent for Reading Books

Sl. No.	Reading Time	Students	Employees	Job Seekers	Retired Persons	Business	House wives
1	Below 2 hours	42 (44%)	58 (63%)	5 (64%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
2	2-4 Hours	28 (29%)	24 (26%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
3	4-6 hours	17 (18%)	7 (8%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4	More than 6 Hours	8 (9%)	3 (3%)	1 (12%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total		95	92	8	3	1	1

It is understood from the table 7, on time spent in reading books. Among the Students, majority (44%) of them spent less than 2 hours for reading, 29 % of the students spent 2-4 hours , 18% of the respondents spent 4-6 hours and remaining 9 % of the respondents spent more than 6 hours for reading books. Among the employees 63% of the respondents spent less than 2 hours for reading, around 26% spent 2-4 hours, 8% of the respondents spent 4-6 hours and remaining 3% of

the respondents spent more than 6 hours for reading books. Among the Job seekers 64% of the respondents spent less than 2 hours for reading, a round 12% spent 2-4 hours, 12 % of the respondents spent 4-6 hours and remaining 1 % of the respondents spent more than 6 hours for reading books. All the retired persons spent more than 6 hours for reading; Business people spent 2-4 hours for reading and housewives spent only 2 hours for reading.

Table 8: Types of the books preferred by the respondents

Sl. No.	Types of Books		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total	WAM	Rank
1	General Books	N	89	47	31	4	29	200	3.68	8
		%	44.5	23.5	15.5	2	14.5	100		

2	Subject Books	N	95	15	40	5	45	200	4.55	1
		%	47.5	7.5	20	2.5	22.5	100		
3	Story Books	N	112	56	9	10	13	200	3.70	4
		%	56	28	4.5	5	6.5	100		
4	Competitive exam books	N	111	75	5	5	4	200	4.07	3
		%	55.5	37.5	2.5	2.5	2	100		
5	Religious Books	N	79	65	45	5	6	200	4.22	2
		%	39.5	32.5	22.5	2.5	3	100		
6	Other Books	N	25	45	55	40	35	200	3.57	6
		%	12.5	22.5	27.5	20	17.5	100		

The table 8 shows the types of books preferred to be read by the respondents. It is noticed that most of the respondents chosen to read subject books (WAM-4.55), Religious books (WAM-4.22) and Competitive exam books (WAM-4.07). More number of respondents preferred to read story books (WAM-3.70), General Books (WAM-3.68) and other books (WAM-3.57).

Table 9: Opinion about the Transport facility in the book fair

Sl. No.	Opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Very Good	138	69
2	Good	34	17
3	Neutral	10	5
4	Bad	12	6
5	Very Bad	6	3
Total		200	100

The table 9 shows the respondents' opinion about the transport facility. 69% respondents felt that the transport facility was very good, 17% respondents' opinion were good, followed by 5% respondents felt neutral and 6% respondents' opinion about the transport facility in the book fair was bad and remaining 3% respondents felt very bad about the transport facilities.

CONCLUSION

Reading is a good habit which not only helps the people in making good use of their spare times but also enlightens the busy times with stable ideas. Reading changes the lifestyle where the machines and technologies are controlling the human mind. Reading is a peaceful and healthy pastime that one can acquire. There is no such thing as good books and bad books; it is in the taste of our reading. When our taste is wise, then we read the wise books and so our life will also become wise. We can safely say that reading is an anti virus application to protect our lives from harmful viral thinking. The study reveals that in order to improve the reading habits among the people, it is necessary to organise more book fairs and festivals. One of the major findings of the present study is that except the students and regular employees, the others like retired persons, house wise, don't spend much time on reading. Therefore it is necessary to create awareness among the others too in order to create a reading public. The authors conclude that reading habits shall be improved by conducting awareness programme not only in educational institutions but in public places where people gather together.

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