

**ROLE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN PROMOTING READING CULTURE: CASE  
STUDY OF SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH COLLEGIATE PUBLIC SCHOOL,  
CHANDIGARH**

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**Abstract**

Learning is a lifelong process and reading is the first step towards learning. But developing the habit of reading is not that easy. There is dire need to inculcate reading habits and promote reading culture at an early stage i.e., childhood. Here, libraries have a vital role. To achieve this, school libraries are the best starting points. An attempt is made in this study to examine the role of a school library in promoting reading culture among students. This study is based on primary data collected from 137 students of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Collegiate Public School, Chandigarh. The results of the study revealed that the library is offering adequate collection and users are satisfied with the assistance offered by the library staff, but the reading culture is still lacking. Use of smart phones and the Internet is a significant reason for decline in reading culture. The study concludes with suggestions to inculcate reading habits and cultivate reading culture among students.

**Keywords: Reading Habits, Reading Culture, School Libraries, Chandigarh**

**Introduction**

Learning is a lifelong process which never ends and reading is the first step towards learning. The famous quote 'reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body' very well describes the significance of reading in one's life. Books are the best friend anyone could ever have and the habit of reading gives comfort especially when one feels lonely. When we enjoy reading, books start speaking to us. These take us into a different world, the world created by the author. According to Ailakhu and Unegbu (2017), reading embraces the thinking process. It encourages the creativity and thinking process of the reader. There is abundance of literature available both in printed and digital format and one can enter the universe of knowledge through the door of reading.

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Reading is not confined only to students or scholars rather whosoever is interested can pick a book and start reading. But developing the habit of reading is not that easy. There is dire need to inculcate reading habits and promote reading culture at an early stage i.e. childhood, for which strategies need to be developed. Here, libraries have a vital role to play. All the libraries may it be a school, college or public library, play a significant role in inculcating the reading habits and developing the reading culture by offering unique user-friendly reading environment along with various types of reading material as per their user requirements.

### **Reading Culture and School Libraries**

Reading culture is having the habit of reading in everyday life beyond the school education (Ailakhu and Unegbu, 2017). Libraries induce reading culture by acquiring and providing access to wide variety of resources like books, magazines, newspapers, audio-visual materials, etc. The aim of reading culture is to publicize reading among members of the society and make it a lifelong habit. The fundamental target of developing and advancing a reading culture is to make reading a habit that is valued and cherished by people. Therefore, it is significant to create awareness about the importance of reading for leisure and not just for passing exams in one's life. Several researches highlight that those who read just for passing exams lapse into illiteracy in the end. The habit of reading enhances the quality of life and is essential for participating in the modern world. Books are the key to enter the real and fantasy world. Thus, it is very essential to promote reading culture amongst members of the society and school libraries are the best place to start infusing the same.

According to IFLA Guidelines for School Libraries (2015), the school libraries work with a goal to develop information literate students and make them responsible citizens of the society. It works as a media centre to ensure the equitable access to its resources to all the members of the school community. The information literate students are self-directed learners. They are well aware of their information needs and actively engage themselves in the world of ideas. So, the school library not only provide information resources and study materials to support teaching and learning environment in school, but also work towards cultivating reading habits among students. Now-a-days, the main focus of education is on developing learning/ literacy/acquisition skills instead of teaching alone. To achieve this, school libraries are the starting points. To inculcate reading habits among students, libraries organize various programs like storytelling, story hours, reading circles, debates, interactive talks, authors visit

to the libraries, etc. and thus create an environment for learning new skills. These types of programs promote love for books, reading and libraries in students.

### **Review of Literature**

Sethy(2018) analyzed the role of libraries in promoting reading habits in society. The study defined the concept of reading culture and also examined the cause behind poor reading. The article also assessed the efforts that are being undertaken to enhance reading and explained the need to develop reading habits in society. The author observed that poverty, commercialization of education, lack of government policies, poor attitude of administration towards libraries were some of the major factors responsible for poor reading culture. Libraries can play vital role in promoting reading habits by offering access to right information and services, platforms to access resources as per their users' requirements, a pleasant and silent environment for reading and also provision for awarding best readers which may encourage readers to explore more, and read widely and deeply. The study suggested that the libraries should organize campaigns, workshops, virtual author visits, introduce mobile libraries and reconstruct their services to invite users to their libraries.

Alex-Nmecha and Horsfall (2019) conducted a study to address the concept of reading culture, its benefits and the role libraries play in promoting the same in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The paper emphasized that libraries have important role to play in endorsing the reading culture. Some of the roles include promoting literacy, offering vast resources of knowledge, encouraging students to participate in library week, etc. The study concluded that people read not just for education but for some other reasons too i.e. for self-improvement, relaxation and pleasure. The study recommended that one should read a book daily and share a story with others at least for 10 minutes. For promoting reading culture, libraries should develop library collection, organize readership campaigns, reading clubs and activities like world book day.

Adejimoh et al. (2021) surveyed Benue State's school libraries to assess the role of these libraries in promoting reading culture amongst secondary school students. The findings of the study showed that most of the students visit the library once a week and spend less than an hour on reading. Students read for fun and for personal intellectual development. Further, students preferred newspapers, magazines, poetry and comics. However, the opening hours of the libraries are not convenient as per the students' response and there is no library period.

The study concluded with suggestions like students should be encouraged to visit library daily and spend more time there, administration should upgrade the library with more relevant textbooks and school library activities should be integrated in school curriculum for promoting reading culture.

Review of above studies reveal that school libraries have a significant role in promoting reading among students, these libraries need to determine the needs of students and accordingly take initiative to induce reading culture at early age. An attempt is made in this study to examine the role of library of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Collegiate Public School, Chandigarh in promoting reading culture among students.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To study the status and nature of collection of library under study.
- To determine the frequency of library visit, purpose of reading and time spent by students on reading.
- To examine the preferences of students with regard to reading material.
- To know how well integrated are school library activities into the school curriculum.
- To determine the factors hindering reading among students.
- To suggest ways to cultivate reading culture among students.

### **Research Methodology**

The current study has been conducted on the library of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Collegiate Public School, Chandigarh. So, it is a case study and is descriptive in nature. The study was conducted with the help of survey method. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, primary data was collected from students through structured questionnaire. In all 150 questionnaires were administered amongst the users of the library out of which 137 were received back and analyzed in this study.

### **Sri Guru Gobind Singh Collegiate Public School, Chandigarh and its Library**

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Collegiate Public School (SGGSCPS), Chandigarh endeavors to motivate, support and inspire personal, spiritual, emotional and educational growth in a safe and secure environment. It was established in 1991 under the aegis of Sikh Educational Society (SES). SGGSCPS is a co-educational institute and is affiliated with CBSE. Here, the

students are encouraged to understand their potential and improve their life skills to better handle the real time challenges. The school has not just focused on education but also on other attributes as well like personality, aptitude and confidence through various motivational and learning activities to empower the students with a sense of self-esteem. To support education, the school has world class infrastructure, attractive and properly ventilated classrooms, well stocked library, laboratories, sports facilities, clubs, etc.

The library is an integral part of the school and facilitates the teaching and learning process of the school. The library is managed by a librarian and a restorer. It is organized in various sections like Children Section, Senior Section and Reference Section. The library is stocked with more than 6000 books, 16 magazines and 8 newspapers to support academic curriculum and to offer equal and easy access to each student. It has rich collection of quality fiction, non-fiction, biographies of eminent personalities, and other light reading materials in digital and print format to promote reading among the youngsters.

Library remains open from 8:30am to 2:30 pm. There is a provision of library period for 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> standard students. Library offers facilities like reading room with capacity of 60 students, computers for faculty and students to access the Internet, kindle device to promote e-reading, etc. The library also has its web blog at [librarysggscps26.blogspot.com](http://librarysggscps26.blogspot.com) to offer access to e-resources like e-books, e-magazines, e-lectures, syllabus, question papers, etc.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

The following analysis is based on the responses received from 137 users of SGGSCPS library:

**Table 1: Users' Opinion Regarding Library Collection**

Items	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Opportunity to borrow books and other reading materials from the library	128	9	93.43	6.57
Existing library collection is adequate	87	50	63.50	36.50

Table 1 indicates that majority of the users (93.43%) felt that they have the opportunity to borrow books and other reading materials from the library.

Significant percentage of users (63.50%) felt that existing library collection is adequate. Only few users (36.50%) found the library materials to be inadequate. This implies that the status and collection of school library is good.

**Table 2: Frequency of Library Visit by Users**

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	26	19
Once a Week	37	27
Twice a Week	32	23.34
Occasionally	24	17.51
Never	18	13.13

Table 2 depicts how frequently users visit the school library. The study showed that 27 % users visit the library once a week followed by 23.34% who visit twice a week. It was discouraging to note that 13.13% students reported that they never visit the school library.

**Table 3: Time Spent on Reading in Library by Users**

Time Spent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	19	13.87
1-2 hours	63	46
2-3 hours	37	27
3-4 hours	11	8.03
4-5 hours	4	2.92
Above 5 hours	3	2.18

The results depicted in Table 3 indicates that 13.87% users spend less than 1 hour daily on reading while majority of the users (46%) read for 1-2 hours daily in library. The responses clearly showed that out of 137 students, only 2.92 % spend 4-5 hours and 2.18 % spend above 5 hours in library which is not satisfactory. The analysis indicated that library needs to work really hard to promote reading culture in school.

**Table 4: Purpose of Reading**

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
To pass examinations	69	50.36
For fun and entertainment	2	1.46
Preparing notes	33	24.88
General awareness	20	14.60
For personal development	12	8.76
To while away time	1	0.73

Table 4 clearly shows that most of the respondents (50.36%) read only to pass examinations followed by preparing notes (24.88%) and for general awareness (14.60%). Only 1.46% students read for fun and entertainment, and 0.73% read to while away time. This clearly justifies the results of table 3 i.e. reading culture is non-satisfactory and school library needs to take some initiatives to promote leisure reading among students.

**Table 5: Reading Material Preferred by Students**

<b>Reading Material</b>	<b>Most Preferred</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Moderately Preferred</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Less Preferred</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Lecture notes	71	51.82	44	32.12	22	16.06
Textbooks	88	64.23	32	23.37	17	12.40
Newspapers	37	27.01	38	27.74	62	45.25
Comics	16	11.68	39	28.47	82	59.85
Poetry	59	43.07	55	40.14	23	16.79
Novels	68	49.63	41	29.93	28	20.44

According to Table 5, textbooks are preferred by 64.23% of students for reading, which is followed by lecture notes (51.82%) and novels (49.63%). However, comics (59.85%) and newspapers (45.25%) are less preferred by the respondents for reading.

This result also reveals that students prefer curricular reading and are not much engaged in leisure reading.

**Table 6: Integration of School Library Activities in School Curriculum**

Items	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
The library is always closed	0	137	0	100
No library period	17	120	12.41	87.59
Opening hours of library not convenient	3	134	2.19	97.81
Library materials are outdated and have no relevance	9	128	6.57	93.43

It can be seen from the Table 6 that all the respondents (100%) agreed that the library remains open always and even 97.81% reported that the opening hours are convenient. Only few students (12.41%) stated that there is no library period.

Also, majority of respondents (93.43%) affirmed that the material in the library is up to date and relevant to their courses. All this implies that the library activities are integrated in school curriculum.

**Table 7: Factors Hindering Reading**

Hindrances	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Playing sport	23	16.79
Watching TV	39	28.47
Lack of interesting books	67	48.90
Non availability of books	41	29.93
Surfing the Internet	72	52.55
Chatting on social site (Whatsapp, Facebook, etc.)	88	64.23
Phone addiction	66	48.17

Table 7 indicates that the major factors that creates hindrances to reading among students includes chatting on social sites (64.23%) followed by surfing the Internet (52.55%). Lack of interesting books (48.90%) and phone addiction (48.17%) also hinder students from reading.



**Table 8: Level of Satisfaction with the Assistance Provided by Library Staff**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Satisfied	103	75.18
Not Satisfied	34	24.82

Table 8 clearly shows that majority of students (75.18%) are mostly satisfied with the assistance provided by library staff in using the library resources and services, only 24.82% are not satisfied.

### **Findings of the Study**

The findings of the study are based on the responses received from the respondents. The results revealed that students have the opportunity to borrow books from library and the collection is also adequate, even then only few students visit library daily. Also, on an average, students spend only 1-2 hours daily on reading. Hence, library staff needs to take initiative to create interest in reading amongst students as students do not find any pleasure or enjoyment in reading. They read only to pass examinations, that is why they just preferred textbooks and lecture notes. The analysis also depicted that the school library activities are well integrated into the school curriculum and the school library has relevant educational material and opening hours are convenient. But the factors like chatting on social site and surfing the Internet hinders students from reading. Students are satisfied with the assistance offered by library staff in accessing and using library resources and services.

### **Suggestions**

If one wants to learn something, reading is the first step. The foundation of elementary education constitutes the students ability of reading, writing and arithmetic. One of the main goals of school library is the overall development of a student and to make them responsible citizens. The habit of reading enhances the concentration and focus. It encourages the creative thinking skills and also helpful in relieving stress. Hence, the school library should inculcate reading habits amidst students. When students start enjoying reading, learning becomes relevant and this will expand their reading ability and self-confidence. Based on the findings of the study, following are some suggestions for promoting reading culture:

- As reading is equally important for both students and parents, libraries can initiate reading clubs for both. Through these clubs libraries can organize activities.

These activities give a chance to both students and parents to discuss what they read with each other which will in return increase their interest in reading

- Authors create a different magical world through their writings. Students love to interact with authors to explore how they create this magical world. Libraries can organize such interactions by arranging authors' visits to libraries may be physical or virtual. This may trigger their curiosity in reading.
- To enhance the reading habits amongst students, cooperation and coordination between teachers and librarians is very important. Both should encourage students to read widely and deeply beyond their textbooks and lecture notes or sometimes beyond their favourite authors. Teachers and librarians should encourage leisure reading along with curricular reading.
- As the results of this study revealed, students spend most of their time on surfing Internet and social sites, they should be encouraged to get maximum out of social media. They can develop their reading and writing capabilities with the help of social media by joining various literary groups. Various sites are offering free quality e-books and other reading materials online. Libraries can offer access to these sites via school websites or library blogs.
- Reading environment and healthy interaction with users is also important. Today the concept of Human library is prevailing. Librarians can develop human library by sharing their personal experiences and providing a platform to students where they can express their views and ideas which can boost their interest for reading and spending more time in libraries.
- Best reader award will also inspire the students to develop love for reading.
- Organizing workshops, debates, storytelling sessions or creating reading groups are some of the effective ways to promote reading culture amongst students.
- Financial, infrastructural and motivational support from administration and authorities is required to create and promote reading culture not only in schools but in every institute.

## **Conclusion**

Reading is an art and this art could be very fascinating experience for children if they are guided properly. According to Oji and Habibu (2011), in school the success of students largely depends on their ability to read and understand, which further depends on the support

they receive from us in promoting reading habits. To comprehend the role of school libraries in promoting reading habits, the current study was undertaken. The results of the study revealed that libraries are offering adequate collection and users are satisfied with the assistance offered by the library staff, but the reading culture is still lacking. Use of smart phones is one of the significant reasons for daily decline in reading culture. Everyone, especially the younger generations have easy access to variety of social networking sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. through the Internet. Even, children and adults love to spend time with friends, or watching television as a way of enjoying their leisure time instead of reading. The poor reading culture is slowly eating deep into the fabric of nation. So, it has become necessary for school libraries to come forward, make efforts to inculcate reading habits and promoted reading culture amongst students at their early age. The process of reading may be tedious and gradual, but it is endless and valuable.

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