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9-2019

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Azad, Shaveta, "Reading Habits And Preferences Of Female Collegiate Students From Jalandhar Region: A Survey" (2019). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 3558.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/3558>

# **READING HABITS AND PREFERENCES OF FEMALE COLLEGIATE STUDENTS FROM JALANDHAR REGION: A SURVEY**

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*Abstract –Read in order to know won't be wrong if we talk about the importance of reading in a student's life during his/her academic career and later. Reading makes one capable of being a lifelong learner through updating and expanding one's existing knowledge. Unfortunately, Indian Education System do not comprise of special types of Reading programs for students to nurture the habits of reading since their very early age , like other developed countries. The present study aims to find out the reading habits of college going female students studying in different streams such as Humanities, Non-Med, Pure Sciences, Commerce, IT etc..To reach any conclusion a sample of 60 female students pursuing different streams of studies were asked to fill up a well planned questionnaire. The findings of this study comprise the student's frequency of reading, preferences, language they like to read in, types of sources they like to read, selection criteria and lastly the factors affecting their reading habits.*

**Key words- Reading, habits, preferences**

**Introduction and literature review:**

Reading is a process by which we understand what is written through a language. Through reading one can decode the symbols of language and get the idea hidden behind. Reading makes the cultures grow. As more we read the more we become aware of others perspectives. Reading helps us to gain knowledge about ideas and thoughts throughout the generations. People since long are recording their experiences in written form. And reading makes us capable of knowing what others know. Reading makes us capable enough to consent or reject other's ideas by using our critical thinking skills. It empowers us to protect or protest against the pre recorded knowledge.

Singh (2011) examined academic achievement and study habits of higher secondary students. The study was conducted on hundred (100) higher secondary

students randomly from two higher secondary schools. The result indicates that girls and boys differ significantly in their study habits and academic achievement.

Clark and Foster (2005) reveal that girls enjoy reading greater than boys and boys, most times have a negative attitude towards reading. Hassell & Rodge (2007) report females reading for pleasure to male counterparts. Studies also indicate that students hardly read more than 2 hours in a day (Blackwood, 1991).

Bhan and Gupta (2010) on the other hand examined study habits and academic achievement among the students belonging to scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste group. The results revealed that sex has no significant impact on the study habits and academic achievement of students.

Reading is an interactive process between the reader and the writer. Brunan W.K (1989) defines “reading as a two way interaction in which information is exchanged between the reader and the author”. Smith (1973) also shares the same attitude. This is proved by his line:

“Reading is an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver”

An action becomes a habit when we repeatedly do something and gradually develops it as an important part of our routine. Same goes with the reading habit. It grows with the course of time. But people in Punjab region are not aware of its importance due to different reasons. Hardly any proper actions are taken to encourage reading habits among children.

The success of a student’s academic life is greatly depending upon his/her reading habits. Reading habits help you to become a lifelong learner by keeping yourself updated with the current happenings. The one who only reads textbooks may score well but his knowledge cannot be the best. It very much depends upon what else did he/she read other than textbooks .Reading improves student’s writing skills. Good reading habits helps a person grow intellectually which helps the overall growth of society. There is a great need today to get rid from illness of negativity and suspecting one’s own beliefs. Many of our social issues can be expounded if reading habits of our youth improve.

Each user’s choice and preference is related to what one chooses between different present alternatives. Reading preferences show the reading attitude of a reader

means what she would like to read when offered. It may be among fiction and nonfiction, different genres and other reading material available.

**Statement of the problem:** In this fast age of information technology, it has become very important for us to stay updated. The study never ends with the completion of an academic course or a degree but one has to inculcate the habit of being a lifelong learner for survival. Reading is a source of continued education in order to achieve new skills, to gain new information and knowledge, through different sources of information such as books, periodicals, newspapers, internet etc... Now days the collegiate female students are found with the lack of healthy reading habits. Their focus has become limited till reading course related material only.

At present, due to the influence of the mass media, people do not show much interest in reading books; magazines and journals, among others (Palani, 2012)

**Objectives of the study:** The study aims to reflect the reading habits of female collegiate students studying in different streams such as Humanities, Non- medical, Pure Sciences, Information Technology and Commerce from Jalandhar region. The findings from this study will provide an insight into reading habits and factors affecting among biologically same students.

**Methodology of the study-** This is empirical study and adapted survey method. Random sampling method was applied for data collection. Sixty college going female students from Jalandhar region were asked to fill the questionnaire. The study was limited to biologically similar students (female only).

**Points to Discover-**The reading habits and preferences of female collegiate students

The factors affecting their reading habits

**Table No.-1**

<b>Hours per week spent for reading</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
2 Hours	10	16.6
4 Hours	18	30
Less than 2 hours	2	3.3
More than 4 hours	12	20

No idea	18	30
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How many hours you spend for reading during a week?

Studies have shown that students enjoy leisure reading and are more successful academically when they make time for leisure reading. Reading frequency is an imperative aspect related to reading. When students read frequently, they expand their vocabulary and word knowledge while enhancing their reading skills and strategies simultaneously. On the other hand, if they do not practice their reading, then the ability of refining their skills and strategies is lost (Brown, 2008).

As per the Table no.1 shows only 30 percent of students spend 4 hours for reading per week, 20 percent more than 4 hours, 16.6 percent only 2 hours, 3 percent less than 2 hours and 30 percent do not have any idea about how much time they spend for reading.

**Table No.-2**

<b>Favourite language for reading</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hindi	14	23.33
Punjabi	6	10
English	40	66.66

Which is your favourite language for reading?

Language plays a very important role in reading as according to the studies students do have choice about language while they go for reading. It was amazing to discover that students living in Jalandhar have English as their first preference for reading, instead of their mother tongue. Punjabi is the regional language of Punjab but students showed least interest in Punjabi reading. 66 .6 percent of them wish to read in English, Hindi is our national language but only 23.33% prefer Hindi and 10 percent like Punjabi for reading.

**Table No.-3**

<b>Reasons for reading</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
For entertainment	5	8.33
For information	15	25
For knowledge	33	55
Love reading	7	11.66

What are the main reasons for reading?

Whatever we do, we do for a purpose. Why do they read? According to the table no. 4, 55 percent of students read to gain knowledge, 25 percent for information, 11.66 love to read and 8.33 read to entertain themselves. It is the duty of teachers and parents to inculcate the habits of reading in a child since from very early age. So that when a child grows physically, his/her habits also develop along with. But unfortunately, no such reading culture is provided to our children.

**Table No. - 4**

<b>Atmosphere of library</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	42	70
No	16	26.66
Not sure	2	3.33

Do you find the atmosphere of your college library comfortable enough to sit and read?

Comfort is a position where one may feel relax and at ease. The more relax you feel the more you enjoy reading. Table no. 4 shows that 70% of students find the atmosphere of their library cozy enough to sit and read, 26.66% say no and 3.33% are not sure about it.

**Table No.-5**

<b>Reading preference</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Magazines	15	25
Newspaper	9	15
Journal	1	1.66
Reference books	14	23.33
Text books	16	26.66
Fiction/nonfiction	5	8.33

What do you pick for reading while visiting the library?

Libraries are considered most important places for reading since inception and contain a variety of reading resources. Every college student visits the library during academic career. Variations have been found, in their choice of reading material when they visit the library. According to table no.4, 26.66% of students like to read textbooks or course related material, 25% like magazines, 23.33%

choose reference books, 15% newspapers, 8.33% fiction or nonfiction and only 1.66% pick journals for reading.

**Table No.-6**

<b>Selection of book</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Suggested by friends	3	5
Book reviews	21	35
bestsellers	8	13.33
Library displays/ library staff	15	25
Pick randomly	13	21.66

How do you select a book for reading?

Students choose books for reading through different ways. According to table no. 5, 35% of them select their readings on the basis of book reviews, 25% through books displayed in library or recommended by library staff, 21.66% have no particular criteria for book selection. They just choose it randomly. 13.33% like to read bestsellers, 5% follow their friend's advice while selecting a book.

**Table No.-7**

<b>Literature Preference</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Fiction	22	36.66
Nonfiction	3	5
both	35	58.33

Which literature do you prefer the most to read?

Fiction and non-fiction both type of literature are important for reading. Where fiction takes you to the unknown world and give wings to imagination and compels you to think beyond, there nonfiction shows you the grounds of realities by setting live examples of others lives. According to table No. 6, 58.33% of students like to read both fiction as well as nonfiction, 36.66% like to read only fiction and rest 5% read only nonfiction.

**Table No.-8**

<b>Use of mobile phone</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
For surfing internet	24	40
For social media	8	13.33
For reading online books	20	33.33

For making calls	8	13.33
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What do you use mobile phone for?

Internet is common to access nowadays and so are the smart phones. 40% of students use their mobile phones for surfing internet, 33.33% for reading books online, 13.33 for social media and in the same ratio 13.33% use only to make phone calls.

**Table No-9**

<b>Reading habits are affected</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Better now	40	66.66
Are same	12	20
Getting worse	8	13.33

Have your reading habits changed after getting into college?

One can start reading at any stage of life. The student, who starts reading in later years, also may tend into avid readers. It is well said that it's never too late.

As per table no. 9, 66.66% of students admitted that their reading habits have improved as they got into college, 20% said there is no change and 13.33% said that there is deterioration found in their reading habits.

**Table No.-10**

<b>Factors affecting your reading habits</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Social media	18	30
Busy schedule at college	33	55
Want to spend time with friends	9	15

Choose the reasons which negatively affect your reading habits?

This seems probably the most important question of survey. By answering this question, the students themselves have depicted the major hindrances in their way of reading. 55 percent of students have admitted that their busy schedule is affecting their reading habits, 30 percent says social media is the cause and 15 percent says they prefer to spend time with friends more than reading.



**Findings and Suggestions-** To promote the reading habits of female students is the need of hour to make them lifelong learners. They should not limit their knowledge by reading only text book type material. There are so many other reading sources available, which students should go through during their academic career. After carrying out this research, it has been found that:

The female collegiate students have shown least interest towards reading journals. They have shown more interest towards reading text books, magazines and reference books. Study finds that they are losing their love to read in their mother tongue rather their preferred language for reading is English. It is always good to learn other languages but not at the stake of your mother tongue. The studies have shown that reading in mother tongue always enhances one's critical skills.

A good number (70%) of students admitted that college library offer them comfortable environment for reading while 26.66% admitted that they do not. Authorities should try the best to update the libraries. Our libraries need to provide cozy environment and perfect seating arrangements for students to attract them more towards reading. The libraries should be fully automated, air conditioned and offer open access to make our students at most ease while reading. Moreover we should have qualified Teacher librarians to encourage reading culture through different type of literary activities such as book clubs, author visits, book exhibitions, book talks and providing reading awards to the avid readers etc.

There are many reasons today, affecting the reading habits of students like social media with the ease of access to smart phones, the phase of their age in which they find the company of their friends most important. But the most prominent reason affecting their reading habits is the lack of time due to their busy timetables and schedules of studies. We need to encourage such a culture in our institutions where they should be aware of that reading is no less important than any other aspect of their academic career and it will go with them for lifetime even after completing the formal studies. Frequency of reading hours per week is also found poor in this study. The female collegiate students of Jalandhar need to learn time management and authorities to provide little flexibility in their time tables so that they may be able to visit the library more frequently and spend quality time in reading. The Education policy makers, curriculum developers, teachers, mentors and librarians should focus on developing lifelong readership qualities into them by organizing

maximum number of workshops and by providing Reading Excellence Scholarship schemes to them. All these steps can hopefully bring a positive change in the current scenario.

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