

A School Library, Moulding Young Minds and Providing Responsible Citizens to the Society: A Case Study

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Abstract

School Libraries are an inseparable part of school education. They play an important role in nation building. Studies regarding school libraries have revealed that reading habits of students have a huge impact on their mind. Reading books not only improves mental functioning but also affects their character in a very positive way. Students of an English medium missionary school having more than 3000 students in Kolkata city are interviewed. A semi structured questionnaire is provided to them for their response. Only matured students of class XI and XII are surveyed. The findings show there is a great demand for Adventure and Romantic stories. It has been found out that the students are influenced a lot by reading. It is concluded they should be motivated to read books in every possible way.

Keywords: Education system, School libraries, Types of students, Reading books, Biography, Adventure books, Mythology and Romantic stories. Character building.

1. Introduction

Society needs a lot. Education is the primary need of the society which will provide responsible citizens to the society. The economic well-being of the members is also very important. The inventions made by research scholars uplift the society in many ways. In addition to all these needs there are spiritual, ideological and cultural needs that nourish a society. There is also recreational need and appropriate recreational need can change the destructive and negative needs. In this scenario a library plays a vital role.

The children attend school at a very early age. They are just like molds of clay at that time. The proper books can influence them a lot at that time. They can realise the necessity of values by reading biographies of great leaders, the classics and fairy tales and other types of books will develop their imaginary skill, knowledge and vocabulary. Romantic fictions will help people to understand the importance of self-esteem and teach how to be in a relationship. The Mythological books will enrich their religious and historical needs and make them aware of the rich cultural origin of the country. They will learn how to use dictionaries and encyclopedias. In this way a school library can play a motivational and inspirational role in the life of the students.

The aim of school education is to give the students an idea about the society and surroundings in which they live, to infuse the necessity of values in their life, to drive them to be good citizens and to pinpoint the extracurricular excellence. A school library has a very significant role in this regard. (Mukherjee, 2010).



All countries have realised that the School Libraries are an inseparable part of school education. They play an important role in nation building. Studies regarding school libraries have revealed that reading habits of students have a huge impact on their mind. Reading books not only improves mental functioning but also affects their character in a very positive way.

The IFLA/ UNESCO School Library Manifesto came into being in 1999. Again by IFLA / UNESCO School Library Guidelines was published in 2002. The revision of the Manifesto took place in 2006. The importance and utility of school libraries has been highlighted in this document.

Few studies have shown that reading habits of students have a huge impact on their mind. Reading books not only improves mental functioning but also helps in character building. In this context, Kutay (2014) has explained that reading habit has a positive impact on cognitive ability and also improves vocabulary and other linguistic areas of an individual. Other researches have evidenced that a good reading habit has a great impact in developing the knowledge sphere of researchers, students and for other educational practitioners (Owusu- Acheaw & Larson). Besides the above-mentioned areas, psychologists have now focused on the significance of the reading habit in shaping student's personality traits. Due to the extreme exposure of the 'distorted social media influence', students or especially adolescence and youth have been deprived from 'true knowledge' about the society or the surroundings. As a consequence, the 'personality' of these young generations has been developed based on certain misguided concepts, which has a long-term effect in our society. Reading an authentic book not only increases patience among students, but also helps to shape personality in better ways, as books give us knowledge about our cultures, religion, art, and history and many more (Gundu, 2022). In this context, Agale (2020), has discussed that reading can help us to be open-minded from any kind of fallacies or biases and in-turn helps in holistic development of the young generation. Moreover, it helps to reform the thinking ability of a person and makes them more divergent in their life circumstances.

Students of an English medium missionary school having more than 3000 students in Kolkata city are interviewed. A semi structured questionnaire is provided to them for their response. Only matured students of class XI and XII are surveyed.

2. Literature Review

Pulimeno et al. (2020) presented a study to establish the importance of books, not only to modify the behavioural characteristics especially during the transitional period of children, but also it indicates that books can reduce the unhealthy practices along with the psychosomatic symptoms. The study was conducted on many published articles and books in order to find out the significance of the story-reading habit in the context of scholastics, imperative and other psychotherapeutic services.

Rana et.al. (2014) delineated that story has a great impact on a child's physical, social, psychological and even in spiritual development. In this qualitative paper, it has also been depicted that the inspirational stories help to nurture a child's cognitive functioning. Besides these, it has been mentioned that by reading or listening to stories children involve themselves in role-playing behaviour, which inspire them a lot and help them to shape their personality dimensions.

By listening and reading stories about great personalities, the child is involved in role-taking behavior where he/she puts him/herself into another person's (role-model) position and imagines how that person thinks, feels and behaves. Stories are also used for therapeutic purposes for all age groups. Widely accepted projective tests, like Children's Apperception Test, Thematic Apperception Test, analyse an individual's personality through stories. Wu et. al., (2016) conducted a grounded theory study in order to enlist the important effects of reading mystery books and its influence on the readers' mind. Total 21 in-depth interviews were conducted on the individuals who prefer to read mystery books. Some interesting facts have been found from this study. The result categorised seven types of satisfaction from reading mystery stories. Readers reported having a sense of establishment by solving the unrevealed truth, finding out the hidden facts which indeed incorporates the sense of fulfilment of exploring a certain relevant information. This has also been mentioned that the mystery books help the reader to understand which story character, emotionality can be expressed and so on.

One of the three chapters of the thesis, Nagy (2020) has mentioned the impact of romantic fictions on an individual's executive functioning. In this proposition, the main focus has been drawn on the effect of reading books or fiction on brain activities. Besides these it has also been mentioned that not only romantic stories but reading habits has also been considered as an important one to increase the Neuropsychological abilities in some cases.

Leilani (2016) has mentioned a few important effects of fairy tales on a child's mind. First of all, it depicted that in some cases, therapists prefer these fictional stories in order to deal with childhood anxiety. Secondly, it has been mentioned that fairy tales help the children to have an effective adjustment for eating disordered patients. Moreover, these books help to improve the quality of psychological well-being as well, that may influence the future endeavour of the individuals.

3. Objective

Following objectives were formulated for the present study.

1. To assess how a school library is influencing the character development of the students.
2. To delineate the authorities of the educational institutions regarding the different categories of books and their effectiveness, so that the school libraries can be remodelled accordingly.
3. To examine the Role of School Libraries in Academic Achievement.
4. To analyse how access to diverse reading materials influences students' academic performance.

4. Methodology

Students of an English medium missionary school having more than 3000 students in Kolkata city are interviewed. A semi structured questionnaire is provided to them for their response. Only matured students of class XI and XII are surveyed. Total 44 students who have reading habits are approached for the study.

Almost 30% of the total users have participated in this survey. Besides that, only four kinds of books are selected due to limited scope and time. The data thus obtained are organized and presented in a tabular form. Inferences are drawn based on these four types of books.

5. Different kinds of Books covered

The study has been conducted based on four categories of books. Biographical books are selected as it plays a major role in character building, Adventure or Detective books and Romantic books are taken for their popularity, Mythology is selected as recently it is noted that the students are getting interested to read these books as popular authors are presenting these stories in different ways.

5.1 Biography Books

Recently in almost all curriculum, educationists have implemented 'Biography books' in the curriculum of young children. Since several years it has been understood that reading biographical books help in developing the sense of morality among the young generations. In this context, psychologists have explained that the youth or young generations are much influenced by reading these categories of books and they are much inclined to model their behaviour as a form of hero-worship (Simpson, 1933). Focusing on these characteristics, Sister M. Godfrey (77: 323) stated that students in the period of adolescence are much attracted to the quality of these significant characters by reading their biographical books, as this is the high time to develop their emotional pattern. Moreover, Simpson (1933) experimented that biographical books have successfully developed sympathy, encouragement, responsibilities, enthusiasm, inspirations, will power and so on. Shyangtan (2019) reviewed 'The Dalai Lama' and stated that reading biographical books help to alter the sense of personal self and self-identity. In this study, students' perspective has been assessed as a measure of understanding that reading a biography may influence an individual's personality characteristics.

5.2 Detective/Adventure

The detective fictions like 'Murder on the Orient Express' or 'Sherlock Holmes' or even 'The De Vinci Code', adventure books like 'Gulliver's Travels' have influenced pupils a lot. In one of the interesting articles by John Le Carre, it has been depicted that we all live in a life full of secrecy and surprises. And it has always been a usual practice of the human being to uncover these puzzles of life. This is the most important reason for preferring detective books or novels or series, especially for young adults. Understanding or trying to reach those uncovered areas have driven a person to put more stress on the 'rationality'. In this way, reading detective novels or books have helped the pupils to indulge themselves in critical analysis processes or rational thinking.

5.3 Romantic Fictions

Many psychologists have referred that during adolescence, the interaction with the opposite gender increases. At the same time, adolescents start developing some fictional, ideal characters about their partners. Many researches have been conducted to find the reason, as why these youth are fonder of these romantic novels. One of the most interesting studies, has shown that especially the girls who prefer to read romantic

novels, want the ‘glimpse of romance’, which is missing in their daily life (Mwangi, 1992). Reading romantic novels could actually meet their imagination with their desire (Mwangi, 1992). Most importantly at this time, by their surroundings, they started developing ‘the ideal form of relationship’. Reading this category books actually help them to have a flavour of being in a ‘romantic, yet not perfect relationship’.

5.4 Mythological Books

Recently, adolescents are putting much effort into the study of human culture, human existence and as a history of any culture. Many educational practitioners have emphasised that the mythological studies are not only important to understand the background of human life, but also it helps to reduce the life hazards. This is not only escalating the process of enculturation, but also its helpful in developing the sense of spirituality.

6. Findings

The findings of the conducted survey are presented in a tabular form along with a pie chart to show the influence of different domains of these four types of books on the characters of youth.

6.1. Findings Biography

Table 1 shows out of 44 students 13 or 30% have courage after reading biographies, 21 or 48% are inspired to achieve goal, 15 or 34% have idea about importance of struggle, 18 or 41% are inspired to keep patience to achieve goal, 11 or 25% can understand the psychological perspective about life, 14 or 32% can understand how a positive and negative side of a person can influence the society. The mean of response is 35%.

Table 1: Biography books affecting different domains of character of the students

TOTAL NO. OF PARTICIPANTS	BIOGRAPHICAL BOOKS HELP IN	SCORES OBTAINED	PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES
44	To have courage, after reading the life stories.	13	30%
	To be inspired to achieve a goal, even though I have too many hurdles in my life.	21	48%
	To have an idea about the importance of struggle in our life	15	34%
	To keep patience in order to achieve a goal	18	41%
	To understand the psychological perspective about life.	11	25%
	To explain how a positive and negative sides of someone’s personality may influence the societal scenario.	14	32%
	Others	1	02%
MEAN OF THE RESPONSES			35%

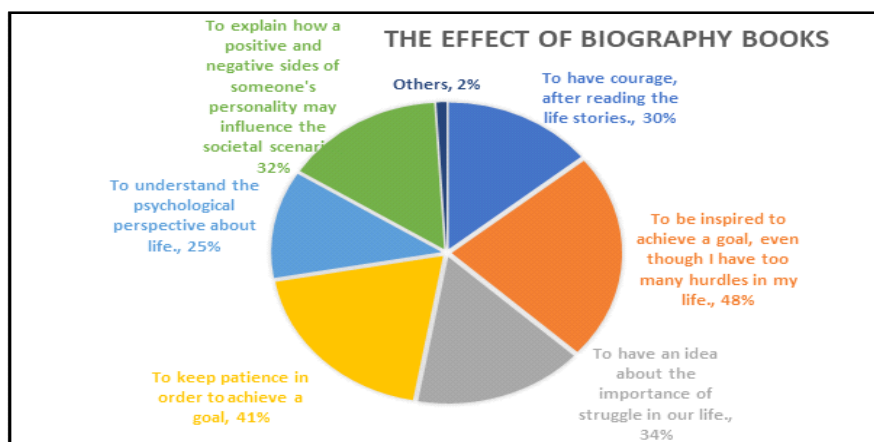


Figure 1 : Biography books affecting different domains of character of the students

6.1.1 Remarks

From the result table, it can be inferred that the students who read the biographical books get inspiration in their lives to achieve their goal. Moreover, in this study, some other students have added that biographical books are the types of books that have ‘tapestry of hues, both vibrant and dull colours. Students have admitted that these categories of books help them in vicarious learning, as in those stories the real-life situations have been depicted in different shades.

6.2 Detective and Adventure Books

Table 2 and Figure 2 show out of 44 students 25 or 57% gets inspiration to explore new things after reading adventure or detective stories, 31 or 70% says these books enhance observation power, 9 or 20% say they develop common sense, 26 or 59% say they enrich analytical power and 18 or 41% feel they enhance decision making. 2 or 5% says these books affect them in some other way. The mean of response is 49.4%.

Table 2: Adventure or detectives book affecting different domains of character of the students

TOTAL NO. OF PARTICIPANTS	ADVENTURE/DETECTIVE BOOKS HELP IN	SCORES	PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES
44	In exploring new things	25	57%
	To enhance observation power.	31	70%
	To develop common senses.	09	20%
	To enrich analytical power.	26	59%
	To enhance the decision-making ability.	18	41%
	Others	2	5%
MEAN OF THE RESPONSES			49.4%

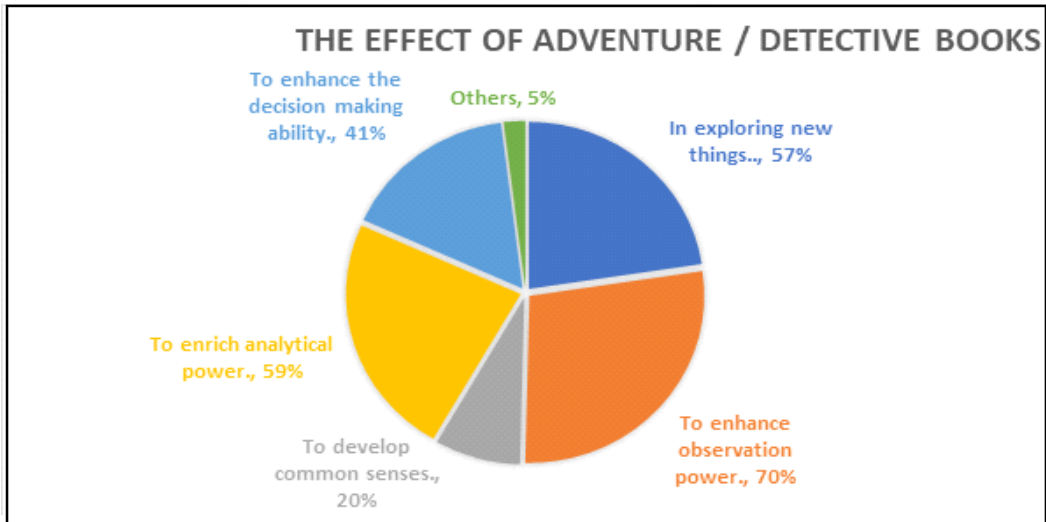


Figure 2: Adventure or detectives book affecting different domains of character of the students

6.2.1 Remarks

From Table 2 and Figure 2 it can also be inferred that a fair percentage of students have reported that these books help to increase the observation power. Above all, a certain percentage of students have responded that these books are helpful to develop the common senses which we barely recognise, but are always an important cue to understand the surrounding. Some other responses have elucidated that adventure books have inspired them to be more active to their surroundings. Few other students, in this study, have reported that these books are not 'just thrilling' to them, but they are 'mind blogging' too. It helps them to think something out of the box and also helps to adapt or adjust with their environment.

6.3 Romantic Fictions

Table 3 Figure 3 show out of 44 students 11 or 25 % say that the Romantic Fictions help them to understand importance of them as a separate entity, 24 or 55% say that it helps to understand self-esteem, 14 or 32% finds them helpful to resolve interpersonal relationship, 18 or 41% can understand the patterns of emotion in the context of individual differences, 30 or 68% get help to understand interpersonal relationship. The Mean of response is 44.2%.

Table 3: Romantic fictions affecting different domains of character of the students

TOTAL NO. OF PARTICIPANTS	ROMANTIC FICTIONS	SCORES	PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES
44	To understand the importance of 'Me', as a separate entity.	11	25%
	To understand the importance of self-worth/ self-esteem.	24	55%
	To resolve interpersonal relationship conflict.	14	32%
	To understand patterns of emotion in the context of individual differences.	18	41%
	To understand the different types and nature of interpersonal relationships. It also helps to understand that the pattern of a relationship isn't the same in every case or for every individual.	30	68%
	Others	3	6.81%
MEAN OF THE RESPONSES			44.2%

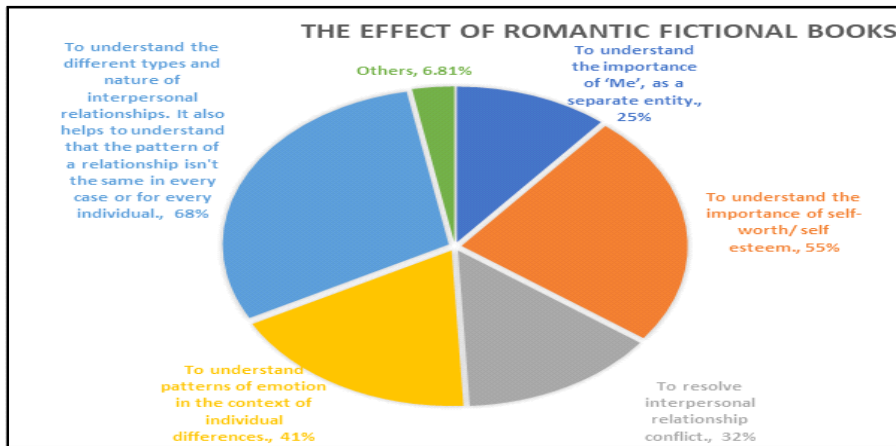


Figure 3: Romantic Fictions affecting different domains of character of the students

6.3.1 Remarks

From this study it can be said that the students who prefer reading romantic fictions are readily able to understand that all the relationships have different patterns, and dealing with them are also quite not similar with each other. These categories of books help them to understand the importance of self-worth and self-esteem, especially in the case of dyad group relations. Reports have shown that the students do believe that reading romantic fictions help them to understand their partner's psychological pattern, which is really helpful to be adjustable in situations. Moreover, the students included in the others category have reported

that students are understanding the importance of having romantic relationships by not nurturing grudges but also to forgive others can help them to be a well-adjusted person.

6.4 Mythological Books

Table 4, Figure 4 shows, out of 44 students 16 or 36% say mythological books develop spirituality, 22 or 50% find it helpful to know about our culture, 24 or 55% find it helpful to understand the historical background of the cultures or origin of human development, 16 or 36% can understand the struggle in mythological character and 16 or 36% find them helpful to understand importance of eternal peace in the world of materialism. The mean of responses is 42.5%.

Table 4: Mythological books affecting different domains of character of the students

TOTAL NO. OF PARTICIPANTS	MYTHOLOGICAL BOOKS	SCORES	PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES
44	In developing the sense of spirituality.	16	36%
	It helps to know more about our culture.	22	50%
	It helps to understand the historical background of the cultures or origin of human development, which connects and synchronizes with our past and present endeavors.	24	55%
	To understand the importance of the struggle of the mythological characters. Along with that it helps to understand how their life struggle helped them to find wisdom.	16	36%
	To understand the importance of eternal peace in the world of materialism.	16	36%
MEAN OF THE RESPONSES			42.6%

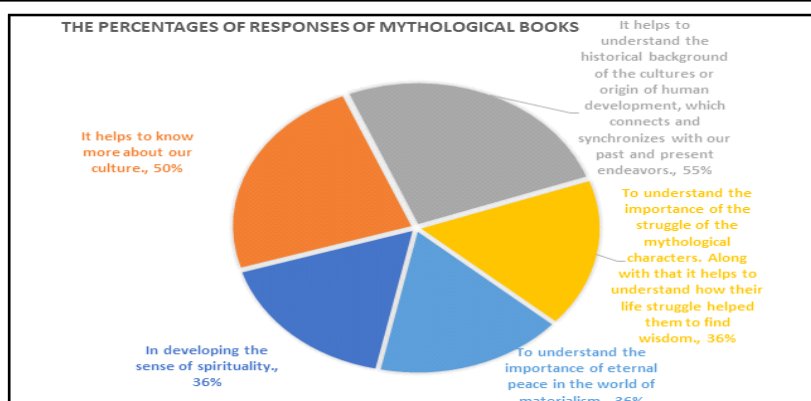


Figure 4: Mythological books affecting different domains of character of the students

6.4.1 Remarks

The response percentages have shown that the mythological characters have influenced the student's mind in diverse ways. It has helped them to understand that they don't always understand in easier life circumstances, how to overcome challenges, how to accept the reality and look forward with the positive manifestation.

6.5 Mean of different types of books:

Mean of different types of books are calculated to find out the popularity of different types of books.

6.5.1 Finding Mean

Table 5 shows the Mean of Biographical Books is 35%, Adventure or detective books 49.4, Romantic fictions 44.2 and Mythological books 42.6.

Table 5: Mean Percentages of the Responses of Four Types of Books:

TYPES OF BOOKS	MEAN PERCENTAGES OF THE RESPONSES
Biographical books	35%
Adventure/ detective books	49.4%
Romantic fictions	44.2%
Mythological books	42.6%

6.5.2 Remarks

This table has depicted the mean percentages of the responses of the participants in these four types of books. From the above table, it can be inferred that the students are able to relate much with the adventure or detective books as this category has received maximum responses in all the domains. Therefore, it can be interpreted that students are able to relate much with these types of books. Next comes the Romantic books. Unfortunately, biography is least preferred hence steps must be taken to motivate the young generations to read biographies.

7. Conclusion

It has been observed that all these four kinds of books are affecting different domains of characters of adolescents. Serious measures should be taken to develop reading habits of the clientele of the school libraries. Dramas written by eminent writers may be staged during the cultural programmes of the school. This usually attracts the students to that book and to that author. Directing the students to write book reviews and reading out the best one also helps. The clientele who has taken the maximum number of books from a section may be given a prize at the end of the year. Online mode may also be taken to popularise the books. Book reviews by students who love to read books may be posted on online platforms, covers of New

Books, clippings of videos of films made on classics and other types of books and innovative ways may be taken to popularise reading.

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