

Reading Habits among College Students: A Case Study of the Chirang District

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Abstract

Reading opens the way to knowledge. The problem that students have with low performance in any examination is due to their reading habits. For a good performance in any examination, the students should have good reading habits. At present, due to the impact of the social media, students do not show much attentiveness in reading books, magazines, journals, and so on. Nowadays, many students prefer to watch movies and other shows on the television, listen to music, and so on. This research examines the reading habits among college students, specifically among the library users in the Chirang district, Assam, India.

Keywords: Reading Habit, College Students, Usage Study, Users Survey

Introduction

Reading is the action of a person who reads and habit is a product of this action or learning. A habit of reading not only describes the habit of reading magazines and textbooks, but also the habit of reading newspapers, journals, novels, poetries, magazines, and other reading materials. A common worry that is raised is the dwindling reading habits. Reading helps to gain experiences, so that a person may gain deeper knowledge of the world. The reading habit is a life-long process of learning new ideas. A majority of the students prefer to read English materials at the university level.

Reading is an action and is a starting tool of academic users. Reading is a key in education, and is vital for the conceptual growth of a person. The reading habit is necessary for an individual's development and plays a very

important role in allowing a person to achieve conceptual knowledge. The reading habit can be an assurance in the journey of self-improvement. However, this research will try to approach the reading habits among the college students in the Chirang district.

Literature Review

Kumar et al. (2010) conducted a study on 'Reading habits of senior secondary students at Allahabad city, U.P., India'. The opinion is that reading is usually a private act, a personal and individual relationship with a book. A well-structured questionnaire was designed and used for collecting data. The results of their study revealed that a majority of the students and their reading motives included getting the information, and improving their general knowledge.

Loan (2012) conducted a study on 'Reading habits of rural and urban college students in the 21st century'. He says that reading has been the passion of the greatest personalities of all times. Humans have been reading for ages, and thus, words of knowledge have been passed on through generations. It adds new sight to eyes and new wisdom to mind. "A dumb person becomes a communicator and a lame climbs mountains of knowledge through reading", is an old saying.

Somireddy (2013) conducted a study on 'Newspaper reading habits among P.G students: A study'. Man's desire to communicate with his fellow men led to the development of language. This very desire led to the development of modern newspapers. There was always news, but the etymology of the word is not exactly known. Newspapers contain information about what is happening

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in one's country and other nations of the world. They tell the reader what is happening in their city, district, state, and the world.

Baladhandayutham and Suji (2014) conducted a study on 'Reading habits among the students of engineering colleges in Madurai District, Tamilnadu, India: A study'. Reading is mainly an intellectual activity and the reading habit is a sort of attribute of human organisms. Like other habits, the habit of reading on an individual develops during the course of time. Psychologically, habit is a product of learning; however, reading is an art of interpreting the printed tools and written words. It is important for the professional staff of a library to know about the reading habits and information needs of the clientele being served. Their paper discusses about the reading habits among the students of engineering colleges in the Madurai district, Tamilnadu, India.

Vellaichamy and Jeyshankar (2014) conducted a study on the 'Reading habits of central library users: A case study of Alagappa University, Tamilnadu'. They found that book reading is an essential habit. People should be satisfied to read as part of their daily life. An academic institution library inspires a love for reading and promotes the reading culture among the users. They notice that reading is an art of interpreting the printed and written words and it is a basic instrument of education. Reading is particularly important in education, as well as for the unhindered intellectual growth of a person. After analysing all the collected data, they found that users are reading in preferable places, such as home (36.67%), followed by the library (24.67%), and the classroom (21.01%). A majority of the users prefer to read in the morning (29.33%), compared to late night (24.67%) and evening (24.01%). Their gender analysis shows that 32.50% of women prefer reading during late-night than men (15.71%). This study shows clearly that users develop the reading habit through self-efforts and interest (39.01%), followed by instruction of parents (20.33%).

Mahesh and Chinnasamy (2015) conducted their study on 'Reading habits of e-journals among engineering students in Erode district'. Their study attempts to find out the familiarity, preference, and utility of e-journals by the students of engineering colleges. Analysis and interpretation are mainly from the information collected through the questionnaire method. In their survey, they

found that (a) 35.19% of the respondents read e-journals once a week; (b) 62.37% of the users spent more than one hour on the use of e-journals; (c) 71.43% of the respondents use the e-journals related to their courses; and (d) the overall satisfaction of reading e-journals (49.83%) is excellent. Few respondents feel no opinion of impression. They notice that reading not only gives people new ideas, information, and insights, it also helps them to become more complete in every aspect. Therefore, reading is crucial for every human being because it benefits people in different ways.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the reading habits and attitudes towards reading among college students in the Chirang district.
- To find how much time students spend on reading.
- To find out what initiatives can be taken by the colleges in the Chirang district, and also by the students themselves, to improve their reading habit.

Scope and Methodology

Reading is the best road to develop knowledge, and if we want to succeed in life, we will need to learn new ideas, things, and so on. By improving our reading habits one can learn the best ways to expand and gain knowledge. There are six colleges in the Chirang district, which have been taken into consideration for the study.

- Bengtol College
- Bengtol Junior College
- UN Brahma College
- Bijni College
- Basugaon College
- Sova Ram Borgoyari College

In this research, the researcher had used the Survey Method and the data collected was both qualitative and quantitative. The data collection tool was the questionnaire. The researcher has taken 15% of the respondents, out of 5,756 students from all the six colleges in the Chirang district. The researcher has reached every selected college in the Chirang district, and taken 15% of the students from every college by the stratified random

sampling technique, where the entire population was initially divided into different colleges, and then the final respondents was randomly collected from the selected college.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

The collected data is organised and tabulated using statistical methods. Data analysis and interpretation of the

data collected through a questionnaire is carried out. A total of 320 questionnaires were distributed among the six colleges in the Chirang district. However, only 173 questionnaires were returned. There were 3,756 students in the six colleges in the Chirang district, and 8.51% of the total population, i.e., 320 questionnaires, were distributed. Out of this, only 173 questionnaires were returned, which constitutes 57.06% of the total population. The researcher has selected the entire received questionnaires for analysis of data.

Table 1: College-Wise Response Rates of Students

College	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned	Percentage (%)
Bengtol College	50	27	54.00%
Bengtol Junior College	50	16	32.00%
UN Brahma College	70	69	98.57%
Bijni College	50	27	54.00%
Basugaon College	50	19	38.00%
Sova Ram Borgoyari College	50	15	30.00%
Total	320	173	54.06%

The data shows that 320 questionnaires were distributed to the six colleges in the Chirang district. Out of the 320 questionnaires distributed, 173 questionnaires were returned, which constitutes 54.06% of the total distributed questionnaires. The researcher has selected all 173 questionnaires for analysis. From Table 1 we can see that

the response rate is just above the middle. This shows that students take an interest in such activities.

The 6 colleges in the Chirang district where the questionnaires were distributed is shown with the help of a pie chart (Fig. 1). The names of the colleges have been indicated.

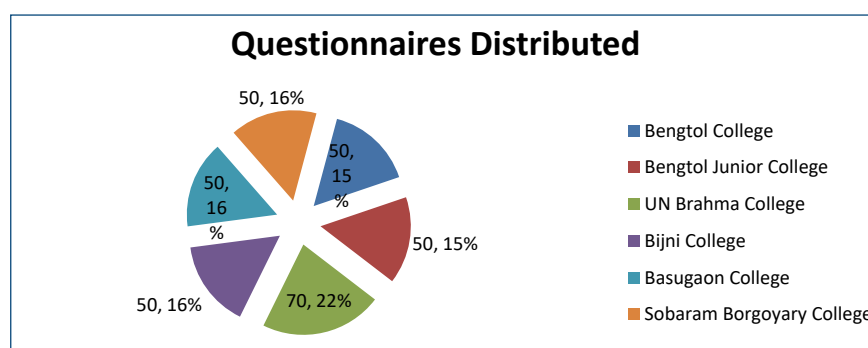


Fig. 1: Questionnaires Distributed

Table 2: Gender-Wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender-Wise Distribution of Respondents		
Gender	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Male	66	38.15%
Female	107	61.84%
Total	173	100%

The number of female students from the six colleges in the Chirang district is 107, representing 61.84%, and the number of male students is 66, representing 38.15%. This means that the number of females who were randomly selected from the total population was slightly more than the males. It should be noted that the main purpose of this research will not be on gender difference or bias,

though there is a slight difference in the gender-wise distribution.

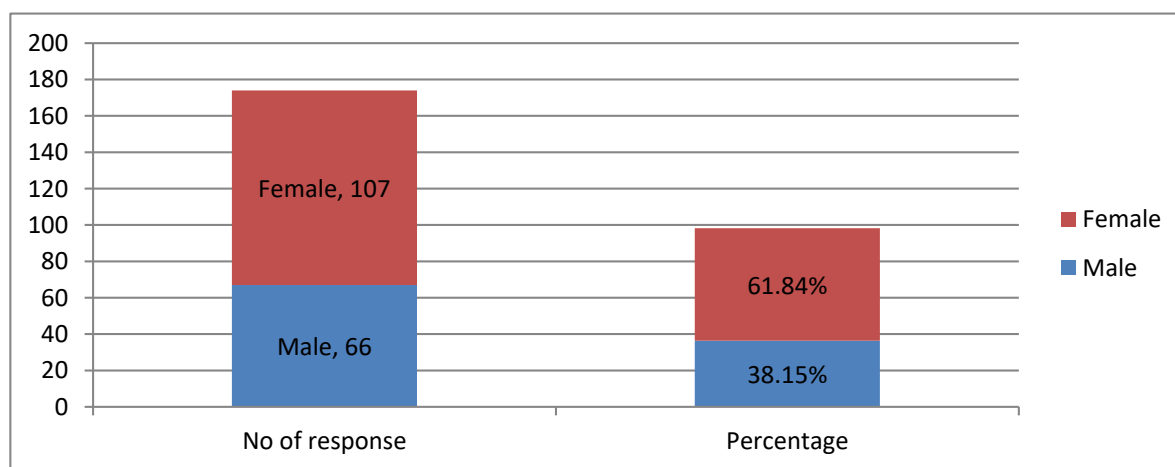


Fig. 2: Gender-Wise Distribution of Respondents

Table 3: Habit of Reading Newspapers and Books

Habit of Reading Newspapers and Books			
A. Yes	Percentage (%)	B. No	Percentage (%)
146	84.39%	27	15.60%
Hours	No. of Responses	Percentage	
1 hour	104	60.11%	
2-3 hours	45	26.01%	
4-5 hours	19	10.98%	
6-7 hours	5	2.89%	
Total	173	100%	

From the data shown in Table 3, it is clear that 84.39% of the total respondents read every day, whereas 15.60% do not read. Around 60.11% read for one hour every day, 26.01% read for 2-3 hours, 10.98% read for 4-5 hours, and 2.89% read for 6-7 hours every day. It is clear from the table that a maximum number of respondents read every day to keep themselves up-to-date.

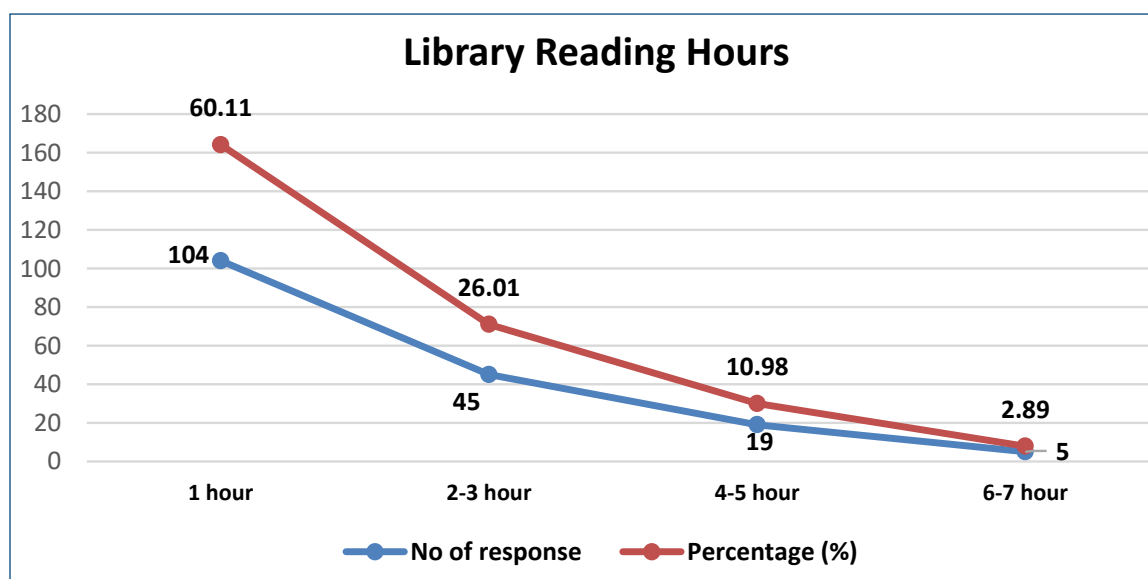
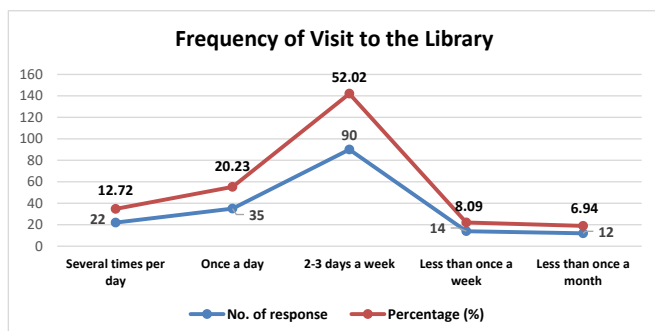


Fig. 3: Habit of Reading Newspapers and Books

Table 4: Frequency of Visit to the Library

<i>Frequency of Visit to the Library</i>		
<i>Frequency</i>	<i>No. of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Several times per day	22	12.71%
Once a day	35	20.23%
2-3 days a week	90	52.02%
Less than once a week	14	8.09%
Less than once a month	12	6.93%
Total	173	100%

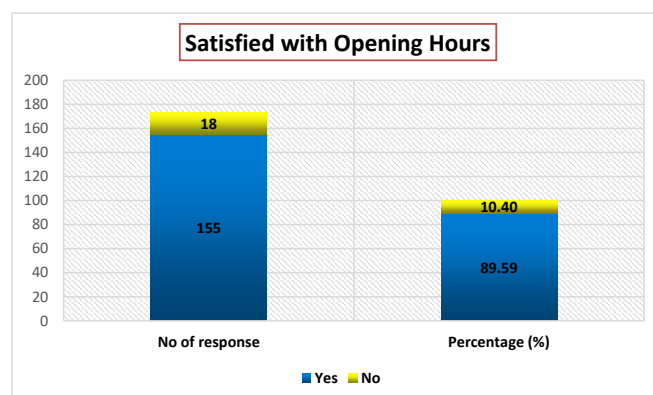
From Table 4, it can be interpreted that 12.71% of the total respondents visit the library several times a day, 20.23% visit once a day, 52.02% visit 2-3 days a week, 8.09% visit less than once a week, and 6.93 % visit the library less than once a month. So, it is seen from Table 4 that a majority of the respondents visit the library 2-3 days a week.

**Fig. 4: Frequency of Visit to the Library****Table 5: User Opinion about Opening Hours of Library**

<i>Opening Hours of Library</i>		
<i>Satisfied with Opening Hours</i>	<i>No. of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Yes	155	89.59%
No	18	10.40%
Total	173	100%

The data shows that the total respondents of the population is 98.84%. The number of respondents satisfied with the opening hours of the library is 89.59%, whereas 10.40% are not satisfied with the opening hours of the college libraries. In short, the response rate shows that satisfied users visit the library regularly whenever they are free and only a few users who are not regular are not satisfied with

the opening hours of the library because of some personal problems.

**Fig. 5: Opening Hours of Library**

Findings

The following are some of the major findings of the study:

- The findings reveal that a majority of respondents, i.e., 146 (84.39%), read books for the purpose of gaining knowledge.
- The study reveals that a maximum number of respondents, i.e., 74 (42.77%), borrow materials weekly for reading purposes, because of their busy class schedules.
- The study finds that a majority of respondents, i.e., 90 (52.02%), visit the library 2-3 days a week.
- The study finds that a majority of respondents, i.e., 66 (38.15%), use a computer/mobile phone to access library and information services.
- The present study reveals that a majority of respondents, i.e., 71 (41.04%), have not used the computer.
- The study finds that most of the respondents, i.e., 124 (71.67%), have experience in using a library effectively.
- The study reveals that a maximum number of respondents, i.e., 138 (79.76%), attend lectures on how to use a library effectively.
- The present study reveals that a majority of respondents, i.e., 155 (89.59%), are satisfied with the opening hours of the library.
- The study finds that a maximum number of respondents, i.e., 60 (34.68%), find the library collection

only adequate, due to the unavailability of relevant materials.

- The study finds that a majority of respondents, i.e., 132 (76.30%), are satisfied with the loan period of books.
- The study also finds that a maximum number of respondents, i.e., 133 (76.87%), are not satisfied with the number of books issued to them.
- The result shows that most of the respondents, i.e., 109 (63.00%), cannot access online search facilities in their library due to some technical problems.
- The study finds that a majority of respondents, i.e., 77 (44.50%), find that their librarian and staff are sometimes helpful in finding answers to their queries.
- The study reveals that a maximum number of respondents, i.e., 80 (46.24%), know about a new publication acquired by the library, as it is displayed in the library stack.
- The result shows that most of the respondents, i.e., 114 (65.89%), feel that the library should provide training programmes to users so that they can access the library services effectively.
- The study finds that a maximum number of respondents, i.e., 117 (67.63%), used the library collection up to 75%, in general.
- The study finds that a majority of respondents, i.e., 108 (62.42%), request/recommend the library to acquire publication catering to their specific interests.
- The study depicts that a maximum number of respondents, i.e., 66 (38.15%), are not satisfied with the response to their requests to acquire materials matching their specific interests.
- The study reveals that a maximum number of respondents, i.e., 74 (60.11%), want to see an improvement in the magazines/newspapers.

Suggestions

The following are some of the suggestions obtained from the study:

- The six colleges in the Chirang district must make an endeavour to improve their collection.

- They should automate their libraries, to provide better service to their users.
- The staff of the library should be given proper training, particularly in IT, so that they can understand the needs of the users, such as e-resources, digital library, and so on.
- It is also suggested that the hours of the library should be increased, as many hostlers prefer to visit the library at night.
- The staff strength should be increased to provide better services.

Suggestions from the Respondents

- Updated newspapers, daily events, and so on; they may be regional, state, national, or international.
- Reading the newspaper every day is a good habit.
- Newspapers should reorganise their functioning, and journalists must cover both rural and urban areas.
- Books are a source of new knowledge, so we have to read them daily.
- Books and newspapers are the best forms of communication, which provides us with job- and weather-related information.
- E-papers and e-books are the most vital parts of our daily life, from which we can easily retrieve information whenever needed.
- In the present generation, everybody has a mobile phone with Internet facility, which is used for accessing e-books, and which is more preferable than printed books.
- Newspapers should work to include more world news, and people need to support this.
- They give instructions and suggestions about health and balanced diets.
- Nowadays e-papers are available on the Internet, which we can access anytime, anywhere, whenever we want. So e-media is preferable to paper media.
- The library plays a very important role in our day-to-day life.
- The newspaper is a road that enables us to be informed of job opportunities.

- Newspapers and journals enable students to update their knowledge; therefore, it is important to read the newspapers and journals.
- Yes, I have improved my language by reading the newspapers and books in the library.

Conclusion

Information is essential to create and to enlarge a reading community. Reading is an art of action. Reading not only shows the way, but also develops the concepts and sharpens students' intellect. The findings of this study suggest that most of the respondents read books for the purpose of gaining knowledge and they enjoy reading. However, it was found that some media, such as mobile phones, laptops, gossiping, and televisions, seem to waste the time of students of six colleges in the Chirang district (Bengtoll College, Basugaon College, Bijni College, Bengtoll Junior College, Sova Ram Borgoyari College, and UN Brahma College). It is, therefore, recommended that there should be some check on the use of these resources so that valuable time is not wasted. Instead, students may devote more time to reading, to enhance their knowledge base, which is necessary in this age of competition.

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