

# READING CULTURE – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

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**Introduction :** Having a reading culture has become imperative in the 21st century for everybody, particularly our kids, and the prospect of the nation. To involve ourselves effectively in our children is a task that we must take very honestly. This ought to be the vital goal of institutional leaders, educators, parents, and our commune at large. The waning interest in reading exhibited by our children today is a cause of alarm to all. Creating a reading culture is essential if we want our students to become encouraged and motivated readers. Therefore, it is high time that our mentors think in terms of teaching what is known as “life-long education”, or more aptly, “life-long self-education” which can only be nurtured and cultured through the habit of reading.

Reading is obviously one of the basic things a child begins to do in the early stages of formal education, within the school building. A few children also learn to read from the parents even before they start schooling. It is in the journey of reading that children expand their perception of life. It unbolts up entire new-fangled world from which to see themselves and others. Reading facilitates to bloom imagination and creativity in the child. It gives them the tool to discover their talent while learning about themselves and their societies.

Almost all our valuable life-enriching habits are given to us by our **Parents**. The people that are culturally closest to us and who are therefore most influential are our parents. Parents are their children's first teachers. It is through parents that children learn about their traditions, customs, certain principles, ethics, gain language acquisition and so forth. They take part in a very constructive role in their children's education: in and out of the classroom. Because of the reason, parents need to take on the challenge and provide their children the tools they will need in order to be successful and unbeaten in school and life. Edification does not only involve knowing the content areas in school. Education entail learning how to be a prolific member of society, it involves how to behave in social settings, it involves learning how to figure everyday problems, and so much more. By conversing with their children, parents can help them enhance their lexis, they help their children in their receptive and expressive language and they help their children feel empowered. Also, parents that talk with their children build lasting, positive and strong relationships. Parents have a great deal of responsibility. Parents must be willing to take on the challenge of exposing their children to things other than their local surroundings. School is never the only option for educating children. Because of this, parents necessitate to accept and embrace their roles as teachers and do the best they can with the resources they have. Ironically, they are not likely to lead people into libraries because they usually do not go there themselves. According to famous proverb,

*“If we want students to develop a devotion to reading, we need to show them evidence of our devotion to it.”*

## **Literature Review**

Various researches have been done just round the corner of home environments and there insight into the importance of children's reading habits. Reading habits need to be cultivated from an early age. Many researchers have also pointed out that children who do best in schools are those who come from homes where there are books, where their parents spend time reading to their children and where children see their parents and older siblings engaging in reading activities. Some of the studies pertaining to these aspects are:

**Hamilton-Ekeke, Joy-Telu; Ayebaemi Frank-Oputu (2013)** their research work entitled ‘Influence of Home on Study Habits of Secondary School Students Bayelsa State, Nigeria’, found that 134 (67%) of the respondents agreed that motivation from parents like help them to read at home. It was found from the study that children whose parents are degree holders study better at home than children whose parent's educational qualification is school certificate and first school leaving certificate. Students whose parents are well educated also enjoy extra attention than those whose parents are not, commonly educated parents guide their children on assignment given to them by their teachers and this cumulates their overall assessment.

**Akindede (2012)** in the study entitled ‘Reading Culture, Parental Involvement and Children’s Development in Formative Years: The Covenant University Experience’, found that the practice of early childhood reading among parents in Covenant University is high (95.2%) and the respondents have a good insight into the need and importance of early childhood reading. Most of the respondents (87.7%) replied that learning activities provided by nursery school and parental involvement is must. Parents spend at least one hour reading to their children, but mainly during the weekends. The availability of time is a major hindrance faced by parents in cultivating reading culture for their children in 83.4% of cases, 23.3% reported the lack of parental involvement and reading to children is a waste of time reported by 3.3% of the respondents.

**Wells (2007)** stated that infants have the ability to see and hear at birth. Infants see the world through these senses and transfer information from one sense to another. Learning by association is always there. If books are part of loving parent-child interactions from an early age, children will associate the company of books with positivity and love. This will lead to development in brain of the child.

**Gauthier, Smeeding and Furstenberg (2004)** are of the view that the parents are devoting less time to their children as compared to 30 or 40 years ago. Time use surveys collected between 1961 and 2000 indicated that today’s parents are spending substantially more time with their children. The increase in parental time has been especially strong for fathers as it represented only 36% of mother’s time in 1970’s. By the 1990’s it had increased to 53% (for all countries). The authors went on further to say that parents have been able to preserve the time they spend with their children by sacrificing other activities including sleep.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study aims to find:

- The type of reading material parents of secondary school students like to read.
- Attitude of parents of secondary school students towards reading.
- Favorite pastime activity of parents of secondary school students.
- Habit of reading books of secondary school students.
- Role of parents in reading culture among secondary school students.

### **Hypotheses:**

- Parents of secondary school students like to read books.
- Parents of secondary school students have a positive attitude towards reading.
- Reading books is the favorite pastime activity of parents of secondary school students.
- Secondary school students have a satisfactory habit of reading books.
- Parents play a positive role in developing reading culture among secondary school students.

### **Research Methodology**

Questionnaire method was used to collect data on reading culture of the selected group. Study on secondary school students of Ludhiana and Jalandhar districts was done. The study focused on reading for pleasure, done in leisure time and unrelated to work or study obligations. 160 questionnaires were distributed of which 10 were rejected invalid. So, total of 150 questionnaires were valid for study. Statistical tool of percentage is used for testing hypothesis. Majority that is above 50% is considered for acceptance and rejection of the hypothesis.

### **Findings and Discussion**

**Hypothesis 1.** Parents of secondary school students like to read books.

Table No. 1. The type of reading material parents of secondary school students like to read.

Type of reading material	No. of Parents	Percentage
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Newspapers	65	43.33
Magazines	25	16.66
Books	52	34.68
Online Resources	8	5.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table no. 1 shows that 65 parents out of 150 like to read newspapers, followed by 52 parents who say that they like to read books. 25 say they read magazines and 8 like to read online material. So maximum parents that is 43.33% like to read newspapers and least that is 5.33% like to read the online material.

Hence, the hypothesis is *rejected* as not many parents like to read books and only 34.68% of the population read books.

**Hypothesis 2** Parents of secondary school students have a positive attitude towards reading

Table No. 2 Attitude of parents of secondary school students towards reading

Responses	No. of parents	Percentage
Yes	115	76.66%
No	35	23.34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table no. 2. Shows that 115 parents like reading books and 35 out of 150 parents don't like to read books. Hence, maximum parents have the positive attitude towards reading. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is *accepted*.

**Hypothesis 3** Reading books is the favorite pastime activity of parents of secondary school students

Table No. 3. Favorite pastime activity of parents of secondary school students.

Reasons	No. of parents	% of parents
Watching T.V.	30	20%
Reading books/ newspaper	84	56%
Chatting/gossiping	12	8%
Exercising/ walking	12	8%
<b>Sleeping</b>	12	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

Table no.3 shows that 30 parents like to watch t.v. in their freetime, 84 like reading books or newspapers, 12 parents like to chat, exercise and sleep (each category).

Maximum parents like to read books and the hypothesis is *accepted* that reading books is the favourite pastime activity of the parents.

**Hypothesis 4.** Secondary school students have a satisfactory habit of reading books.

Table No. 4. Level of reading books of secondary school students

Responses	No. of parents	Percentage
Yes	98	65.34%
No	52	34.66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table no.4 shows that 65.34% of parents revealed that their children have a satisfactory level of reading according to their age as compared to 34.66% who don't have the satisfactory level of reading. Hence, hypothesis 4 is *accepted* that secondary school students read satisfactorily.

**Hypothesis 5.** Parents play a positive role in developing reading culture among secondary school students.

**Table No5 (i)** Discuss books at home

Responses	No. of Parents	Percentage
Yes	100	66.67%
No	50	33.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table no 5 (i)** shows that out of 150, 66.67% parents generally discuss the books at home and 33.33% responded negatively. So, maximum parents discuss about the books at home with their children.

**Table No 5 (ii)** Books gifted to children

Responses	No. of Parents	Percentage
Yes	96	64%
No	54	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table no 5 (ii)** shows that 64% parents gifted books to their children on various occasions and 36% have never gifted books to their children on any occasion.

**Table no 5 (iii)** Awareness about the role of reading in developing lifelong learning habits

Responses	No. of Parents	Percentage
Yes	103	68.67%
No	47	31.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table no 5 (iii)** shows that 103 parents are aware about the fact that reading helps in developing lifelong learning habits and 47 parents are not aware of this importance. So, maximum parents 68.67% are aware and know the importance that reading develops lifelong learning habit.

**Table no 5 (iv)** Awareness about any bookshop in nearby area

Responses	No. of Parents	Percentage
Yes	134	89.34%
No	16	10.66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table no 5 (iv)** shows that 134 parents know few bookshops in the nearby area and 16 parents don't know about any bookshop in nearby area. So, maximum parent that is 89.34% know about bookshops in their respective areas.

So, table no. 5 (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) shows that maximum students discuss about the books at home, maximum parents gifted books to their children on various occasions, maximum are aware about the fact that reading helps in developing lifelong learning habits among their children and many parents are aware about few bookshops in their nearby areas. Thus, parents play a positive role in developing reading culture among their children. Hence the hypothesis 5 is *accepted*.

### **Conclusions**

The study reveals that although parent's favourite reading material is not books and they like to read newspapers. They are well aware about the role of reading in developing lifelong learning habits. Their children have a satisfactory level of reading and are aware about few bookshops in their areas. They have positive attitude towards reading and their favourite pastime activity is reading. At many a times they have gifted books to their children. Overall they play a positive role in developing reading culture among their children. From the results of this study, it can then be concluded that the home has a vital role to play in student study habit that will help to revive the falling standard of secondary school education. Parents should know that family is the first unit of a child's socialization unit, this means, there are duties to be perform for the children. Despite the nature of the family background, the family should never neglect its basic responsibilities towards the children.

### **Suggestions**

The environmental factors shape students' reading habits and the home is a base, a foundation where the rudiments and love for reading is to be laid. When children read bedtime stories, they would be able to develop a love for reading by linking the fantasies of the stories read to them to the fact that they can access more of such treasures from books. They would be motivated to try their hands at reading so that they can satisfy their imaginations about characters, places and fairies. In addition, there should be a provision of books with parents being models i.e. parents who read all the time. These would look after children's appetite for reading and enable them to satisfy their curiosity, develop their imagination and expand their horizons. The following recommendations are proposed as a means of encouraging students to develop reading habits:

- Parents should themselves cultivate the habit of reading so as to be models for children to emulate.
- Parents should enable their children by reading to them bedtime stories, other stories and providing books, magazines, home libraries, etc.
- Parents and teachers should ensure students read books other than their schools texts.
- Government should join hands with parents, schools, associations to establish Reading Rooms, Reading Clubs and Reading Centres. They should build and stock functional libraries in schools, organize competitions and look into ways of bringing down prices of books to make them affordable for all.

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