

Lost in the Text: What Shapes How Undergraduates Read Today

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Abstract

Reading plays a pivotal in gearing up of the success of academy or other skills. Developing the right reading strategy for reading takes crucial function in enhancement of both academic as well as non-academic. Instituting right strategy in reading has greater effect in instilling good reading habit among the students or readers.

Reading strategy is a key element in evolving reading skills, yet most teachers disregard incorporate in their teaching, resulting poor performance by learners in their reading skills. Researchers have concluded that students will endure struggling throughout their academic and adult life if they don't possess a foundation of reading strategies.

Therefore, it felt important for teachers or educators to deliver right strategy through designing effective reading strategies and implementing in their teaching for inculcation of powerful weapon in learners' lives. The study investigated reading habits and the factors affecting reading habits of students. The study engaged mixed approaches; comparative study on the survey work, quantitative and qualitative approach. Data was collected using survey and questionnaires. Total of 10 students from Secondary school and 5 UG students have taken part in this questionnaire session. Total of 15 questionnaires were mailed and awesomely all the questionnaires were duly filled and submitted. This study was conducted to study students' weakness in reading, their reading habits and certain factors that affect reading habits of students.

Keywords: Bhutan, Bhutanese, Reading strategies, Factors, Connections, Habit

Introduction

Reading is a foundation to build up other skills in foreign language learning. Many researchers have highlighted the importance of teaching reading strategies in students to uplift their skill in comprehension. English today has become one of the most important mediums of communication in life, be it spoken or written. Student's lack of reading habit has subsequent effect on their academic performance which is evident through their past test result in English subjects. According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, "Reading is a basic life skill. It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfilment and job success inevitably will be lost (1985)."

Many researchers have pointed out that person who are vigorously involved in reading are conscious of the methods they use in understanding what they read. In this regard, teachers can support to improve student understanding through use of correct approaches. Using of correct approaches create unique curiosity in the learners' mind and it is crucial for teacher to grasp such enthusiastic from learners to eradicate the reading problem. Block & Israel, 2005, Predicting, making connections, visualizing,

inferring, questioning, and summarizing are tactics shown to progress reading skill. It is important for teacher to teach reading skills with name of approaches. “It is important to teach the strategies by naming the strategy and how it should be used, modelling through the think-aloud process, group practice, partner practice, and independent use of the strategy,” (Duke & Pearson, 2005).

There could be factors affecting students’ reading habits, which will ultimately have impact on their performance. Reading is a driving force for the growth of all other skills in English as it provides wholesome development in the minds of students and the readers. It is a key to unlock and discover the hidden treasures of the world and overpower minds with knowledge. To grow the seed of reading, grooming and nurturing with right strategies is crucial. If teachers unsucccess in grooming and nurturing part will let in failure. Reading is a lifelong skill, need to instill and groom with right strategies.

Statement of the problem

English today has become one of the most important media of communication in life, be it spoken or written. Teaching and learning in schools, colleges or institutions is faced with boundless hitches on the part of the learners learning due to lack in reading habit accompanied with other anomalies. Student’s lack of reading habit has subsequent effect on their academic performance which is evident through their past test result in English subjects. For a glorifying performance, cultivating effective reading and studying habits is crucial. Problem does not lie along to reading habit but there is other obstacle that hinders the growth of motivational reading habit.

This study presents on reading habit of 15 students in Bhutan, types of reading materials they read and some of the factors affecting their reading be it in school or during weekend. Mostly this study will highlight on factors that affect the growth of reading habit of the Bhutanese students specially in Bhutan.

Objectives of the study

The focus objective of this research is to examination the reading habits of students and to assess the factors affecting the reading habits.

The plain objectives of this research work are:

1. To find out reading habits of students in Bhutan
2. To perceive the reading material students read in reading
3. To evaluate the factors affecting the reading habit of students

Research Question

To address this aim, the following research questions were raised

1. What are the reading habits among Bhutanese students?
2. What kind of materials do they read?
3. How much time do students spend on reading?
4. What are the factors affecting students reading habits?

Review of literature

There have been several contributions in the attempt to define reading. Many people have often, taken too simple the term —reading. Akabuike, Ifeoma Grace &Asika, Ikechukwu Emmanuel (2012). Guthrie, Benneth &McGough, (2007) cited in Owusu-Acheaw, Micheal (2014) believes that “reading” is the act of getting meaning from printed or written words, which is the basis for learning and one of the most

important skills in everyday life. In the views of Okwilagwe (1998) cited in Akabuike, Ifeoma Grace & Asika, Ikechukwu Emmanuel (2012) it should be more of reasoning, involving the meaningful interpretation of words, phrases and sentences, requiring all types of thinking such as critical, analytical, creative, imaginative, evaluative, judgmental and problem-solving. According to Toit (2001) cited in Lone, Fayaz Ahmad (2011) "Reading is as a process of thinking, recalling and relating concepts under the functioning of written words."

However, the definition of reading, the purpose and intention of reading is to make one's future better. As quoted, 'Today a reader, tomorrow a leader'. Once a student develops a reading habit, they develop a love for reading, which would help them develop mentally and physically. (Green, 2001) cited in Owusu-Acheaw, Micheal (2014) is of view that "Reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last one's life time. Similarly, Okoro (2004) cited in A. Adetunji emphasized the importance of introducing children to reading very early in life even before the child steps into school so that children can see reading as a means of enjoyment, self-development, love of literature and learning.

Reading is an important gateway that exposes readers to world and helps them develop overall skills needed in life. Reading is fun and once a habit is developed it can be source for one's entertainment. (Holden, 2004) as cited in Clark, C. & Rumbold, K. (2006) states that reading is an important gateway to personal development, and to social, economic and civic life. Reading makes one productive citizen. As noted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2003), cited in Clark, C. & Rumbold, K. (2006) "people cannot be active or informed citizens unless they can read. Reading is a prerequisite for almost all cultural and social activities". According to Tracy (2008), as cited by Aina, A. J.; Ogungbeni, J. I.; Adigun, J. A.; and Ogundipe, T. C. (2011) reading is the only form of entertainment that is also an essential life skill.

Once a student develops a reading habit, the habit encourages learning to occur outside classroom, as a hobby, not as a mandatory school activity. In the words of Philip (2009), "reading habit tends to be associated with course work and examinations, rarely with pleasure". Yet it is a known fact that whatever the discipline, students (children and adolescents) cannot fulfil their potential if they do not read widely. A. Adetunji (2007) remarked that extensive reading has found to be the most effective way of developing reading skill among youth in the sense that each reader will have a choice of what to read and they have more scope following their own interest; this will definitely reduce the teacher control and encourages learning outcome to occur outside the class.

Many researchers have discussed various factors that affect student's reading habit. According to Sanacore, J., (1990) cited by A. Adetunji emphasized that the reader interest and behavior is determined by a number of factors such as social values of their society, school, family and environment, each factor has its own function and promotes the development of readers personalities.

Research methods

Reading, a cultivational land for the growth of other skills and core supporter for the development of the most fundamental skill for academic learning and success. Block & Israel, 2005, United States scholar stated that, the ability to read proficiently is significantly related to how much a person can achieve in his or her personal and professional life.

To study on reading habit and factors affecting the reading habit of Bhutanese students, the study was conducted. The study was carried out using mixed-method approach through survey questionnaires and

comparative study methods. A total of 15 students includes 10 higher Secondary and 5 undergraduate students.

A pre-set structured questionnaire was mailed among the participants for data collection. From the total of 15 copies of questionnaire mailed, all copies were duly filled and returned, representing a response rate of 100%. Appropriate literature was reviewed in addition to the survey questionnaire for qualitative data.

Participants

Table shows the total number of students who participated in the study and demographic statistics of the participants. Total of 7 males have taken part in the survey making frequency percent of 46.67% and 8 female making 53.33% of the responded to the survey questionnaires. The table shows the demographic statics of responded for this study.

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	7	46.67%
Female	8	53.33%
Total	15	100%

Data collection

Collection of data for this study were done through a survey questionnaire and it consisted of 17 items catering to two types: Reading Habit and factor affecting reading, be it academic or non-academic. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section one required the respondents to write their gender and educational level while section two enquire about their reading habit, materials they read and factors affecting their reading habit through make choice from multiple responses.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the whole analysis of the data gathered through a survey questionnaire and the participants interpretation on 'reading habits, types of materials they read and factors affecting their reading habit. The analysis on the data collection were presented in the form of simple bar graph and table.

Figure 1.1: Students Reading Habit

From the figure 1.1 below clearly shows and indicates that out of 15 students, 100% students prefer to read. 33.33% of the students read always where 0% who doesn't like to read at all and 6.67% of students read only when it is their choice. 20% of students read most of time, and 40 % students read sometimes. From the above finding, conclusion can be drawn that, at least everyone tries to read.

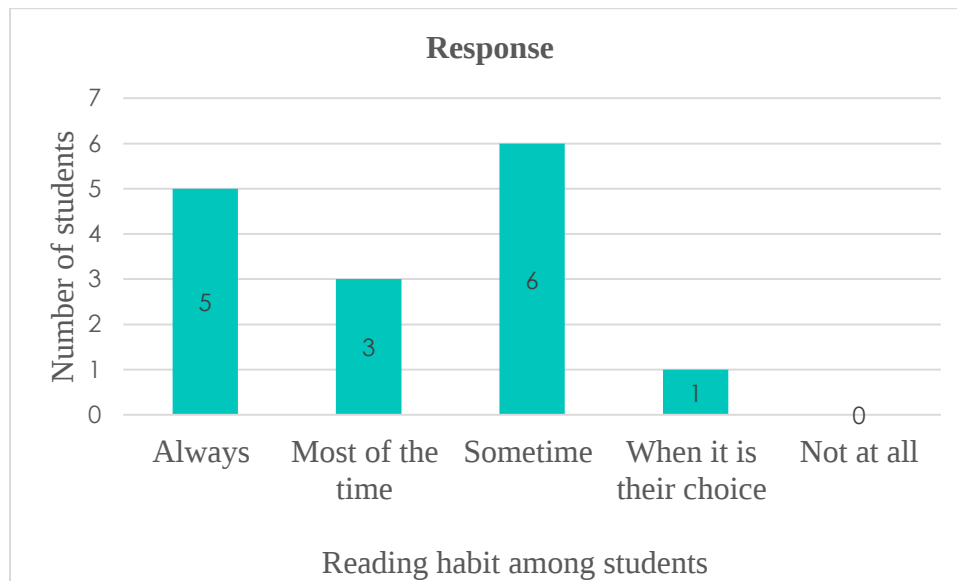


Figure: 1.1

Figure 1.2: Frequency of Reading

The figure 1.2, showcases the frequency of reading done by 15 students in two different environments (In school and during weekend). In school out of 15 respondents, 6.67% of students show that, they do not read at all at school hours but can see 100% reading during the weekend. During school hours 46.67% of students read for 30 – 50 minutes, followed by 26.67% of 50 – 60 minutes, and 13.33% for an hour and 2 hours respectively. The green bar shows the reading frequency of students during weekend. In this regard, the graph shows maximum students involve in reading. The maximum hour of reading constitutes at 26.67% respectively for an hour and 2 hours reading, followed by 33.33% of students reading for 50 – 60 minutes and 13.33% of students show, they spent 30 – 50 minutes on reading during weekend. From the figure, it shows most of students prefer to read during weekend than in the school. By looking into the total average of students who read during school hours and weekend, respectively it comes to 88.82% and 96.8%.

The figure shows that students read a greater number of hours during weekend. Respondents stated that they get lesser amount of time to read (during interval, lunch break and during free periods). However, they said that at-least they get 30-60 minutes of free time to read.

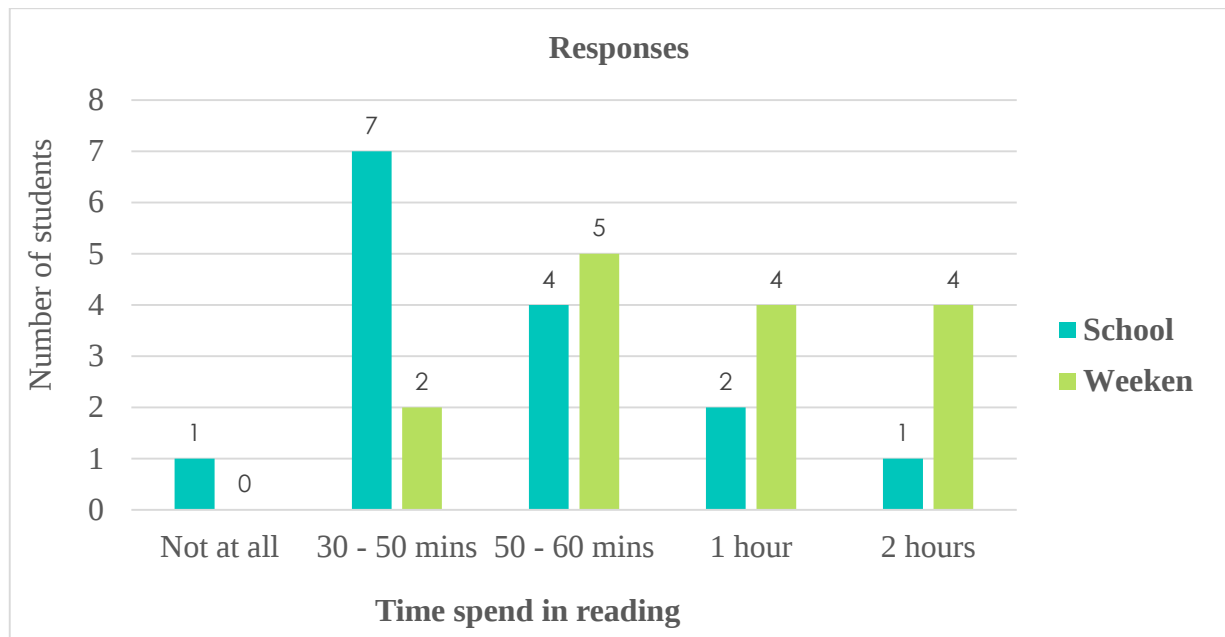


Figure: 1.2

Figure 1.3: Reading Materials

Figure 1.3 tell us about the types of reading materials students usually read during school hours and weekends. In the graph, we can see that out of 15 respondents, 13.33% reads magazines, 33.33% reads newspapers, 66.67% reads website, 66.67% reads novel, 53.33% reads short story, 40% reads essay and 6.67% reads nothing from the given choices but read other reading materials. This figure shows the reading habits and the materials that the students prefer to read during school hours and for weekends. This figure shows that total of 93.3% of students read, though their preference of reading material is different.

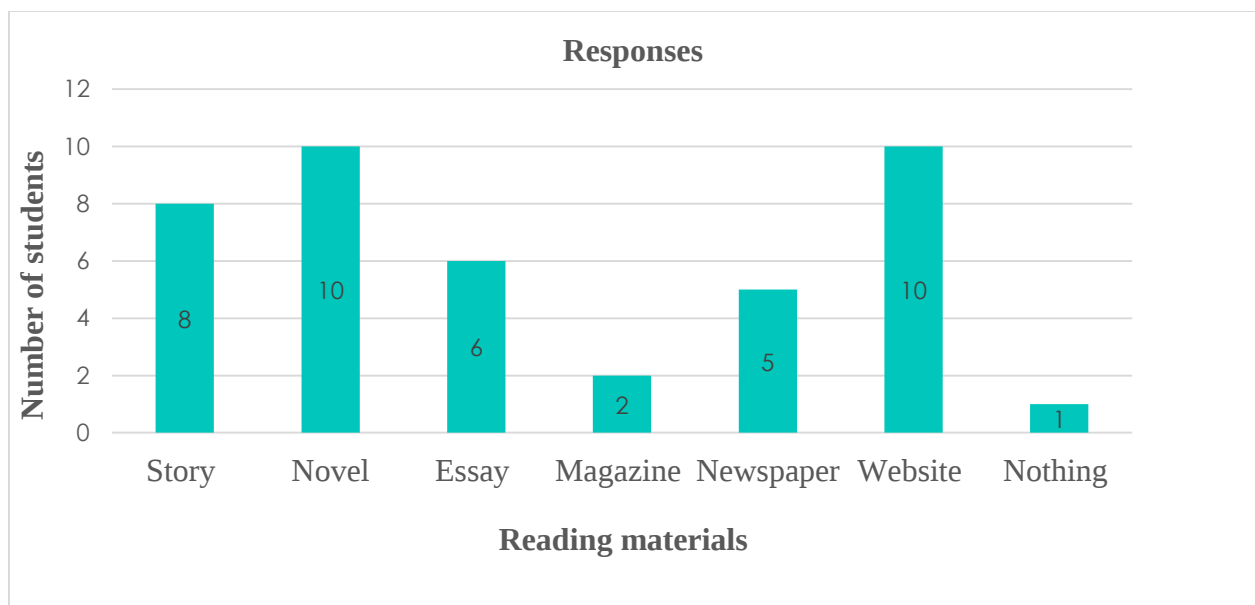


Figure 1.3

Figure 1.4: Motivation to read

From figure 1.4, we can draw a conclusion on motivations for reading of 15 students. There, out of 15 respondents, 6.67 % of students are motivated to read for the completion of the school assignments, similarly 26.67% of students read on friend's recommendation followed by 40% of students read for the

need of improvement. 6.67% of students out of 15 are motivated as it provides them with enjoyment and last 20% students are motivated to read as it gives them peace of mind or relaxation. From the findings, the assumption can be made as most students read for their improvement and the least reading is done for completion of school assignment and for stemming recreation or enjoyment.

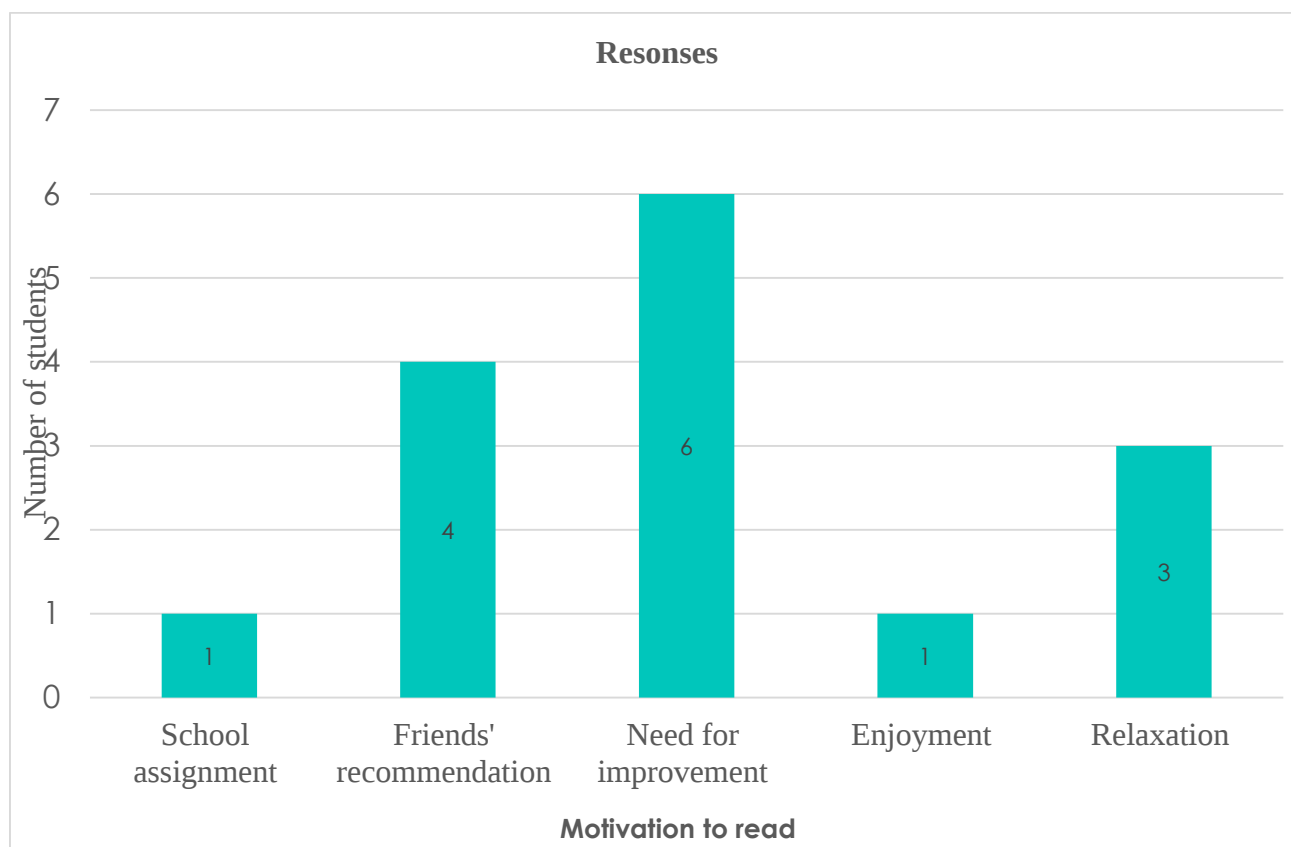


Figure 1.3

Factors affecting Reading Habit

From the above shown graphs on reading habit, materials students read and number of hours spend on reading could clearly mirrored the enthusiasm of students on reading. Graphs provide clear idea on possession of great zeal in students about reading. Though, students have keenness on reading yet there are certain factors that affects students reading habit. From the 15 questionnaires that were mailed to them, they have filled and returned, clearly echoed the presence of other hindrances which hamper their reading habit. From the many, most of the factors involve around the home, school and time constraint as the foremost factors that anguish their reading habit.

The information given below inform on some of the common factors distressing their reading habit.

Factors affecting reading habit at home

All the participants in this study are day scholar staying with their families and relatives. Most of the students are reading paramour but given hindrances obstruct their reading.

Table 1: showed the factors affecting their reading at home. From the data 20% of the students reading habit were affected from house chores, 40% of them could not get time to read as they have many homework to be completed during weekend. Large family members and noises at home and lack of interest

represent 6.67% as factors hampering their reading followed by 26.67% stating as lack of inspiration from parents due to illiterate and not knowing the importance of reading hinders their reading habit.

These hurdles are main demotivating factors that disconnect the students from reading at home or during weekend.

Factors	Frequency	percentage
a. House chores	3	20%
b. Many homework to be completed during weekend	6	40%
c. Large family members and noises at home	1	6.67%
d. Lack of interest	1	6.67%
e. Lack inspiration from parents due to illiterate and not knowing the importance of reading.	4	26.67%

Table: 1

Factors affecting at school

Table 2: showed the reading habits affected at School. From the table 13% of the student respond saying reading materials in library are old and not interesting. 20% of the respondents have chosen on inadequate library periods and short duration of the borrowed book, cannot complete on time as hinderance. 6.67% of them said that they can't read because of disturbance in library and lack personal interest while 26.67% claimed that they need to complete activity and class work during interval and lunchbreak, making difficult to adjust time on reading and 13% said that though they love reading and do reading mostly but they lack comprehension skill (not understand what they are reading) that oil up in hamper reading habit. These are dominating factors, that disinterest the readers or students at school.

Table 2: Factors affecting reading habit at School

Factors	Frequency	percentage
a. Reading materials in library are old and not interesting,	2	13%
b. Inadequate library periods and short duration of the borrowed book, cannot complete on time.	3	20%
c. Can't read because of disturbance in library.	1	6.67%
d. Lack personal interest	1	6.67%
e. Less recess time	2	13%
f. Need to complete activity and class work during Interval and lunchbreak.	4	26.67%
g. Lack comprehension skill (not understand what they are reading).	2	13%

Table: 1

Limitations

Every successful story has its own loophole and it is true for this study too. The model size of the study, which comprises of only 15 students, cannot be comprehensive and practical for universal. Since, individuals have different perceptions, the finding based on the opinions are likely to vary. A sample size of 15 students' responses will not showcase the overall findings of other students in the country and this

number is not adequate to give 100% true result. The findings rely upon the integrity of respondents in giving true and fair opinion and level of knowledge a respondent have in the subject under study.

Conclusion

The study participants were Secondary and under graduate students of Bhutan. From a total of 15 participants have done all the survey questionnaires and from their comebacks, it is clear that students do have reading habit and read variety of genres during weekdays and weekends.

Based on the findings of students' responses and making analysis on their responses the following conclusions are drawn:

- Students have a habit of reading books and related materials but some of them lack comprehension skill making reading disinterest.
- Students could not emphasis more on reading during school hours as they are loaded with many activities and task to complete withing given time. This was very clear from finding that the reading hour was very less during school hours.
- Inadequate library periods, not having sufficient of books types, and short duration of the borrowed book affect their reading enthusiasm as before completing their reading, they have to return back.
- Students have to assist their parents and sibling by doing house chores and they have to complete lots of homework ones they reach home. Another factor that affects their reading at home is they lack inspiration from parents due to illiterate and not knowing the importance of reading.

Though there are lots of obstacles hampering the reading be it in school or home, yet students have great zeal in reading and is a good indication that, they have strong sense toward reading. The only thing that needs for enhancement of their reading are to provide moral support, reading materials and environment, and reading time which are inseparable factors for the growth of reading habit and to reap the prosperous fruit of successful readers among the readers.

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