



CURRENT CHALLENGES AND PROMOTION OF READING HABITS OF ADULT NEO-LITERATES IN TRIBAL AREAS

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Abstract

This study analyzes the current challenges in the tribal areas for implementing different interventions for tribal neo-literates on reading habits by govt. and different organizations. In the same time this study focuses on different ongoing challenges for promotion and proper implementation of these programmes in these areas. According to the thrust of the study three objectives were framed along with same number of research questions also many secondary sources are examined to provide justification of this topic. The main finding of the study like: The-investigator has identified some of the factors which may affect reading comprehension. They are - (i) reading attitude (ii) pupils academic motivation (iii) test-anxiety (iv) socio-economic status (v) dependency/independency. Also it was found that Lack of reading readiness, Lack of academic motivation are responsible factor and current challenges within the tribal new-literates for reading. This study strongly suggests that adult learners can benefit from extensive and pleasure reading and that a well equipped library, easy access to books, and encouragement and time to read are all key factors in the development of reading habits.*

Key Words: current challenges, promotion, reading habits, neo-literate and tribal etc



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Introduction

Reading occupies a pivotal role in the life of a man. Reading opens the doors of the treasures of knowledge. It is an important means of introducing the child to the world that surrounds him. It is the very foundation on which the edifice of the child is to be built. Reading is one of the most important components of our language and it is an essential tool for lifelong learning for all learners in general tribal learner in particular. In order to face the 21st century, education has to prepare these learners to adapt to social and technological changes that are taking place at an unprecedented rate. Education under these circumstances depends largely on language competency of the tribal Neo-literates. In this context, reading especially is a resource for continued education for the tribal's, for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, for gaining information through media, especially newspapers, books, radio, television, and the computers.

The activity of reading is regarded as a habit when it is repeatedly carried out. In measurable terms reading habits is often considered in terms of the amount of materials being read, the frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on reading (Wagner, 2002), and this habit can be cultivated (Wijesuriya, 1995). Reading, which is a long-term habit starting with the very early ages, is the prominent gateway to the knowledge room. It can be assumed as a practice that assists individuals to gain creativeness and develops their critical thinking capacities. In this sense, reading habit is an important tool for the development of personalities and mental capacities of individuals in particular reference to the tribal neo-literates those are deprived of their education for many reason. In addition to personal and mental developments, reading is an access to social, economic and civic life (Clark and Rudman, 1957). Moreover, all reading patterns in terms of emotional response enhance emotional satisfaction of individuals in the tribal youth.

Importance of Reading Habits

Reading is one of the 3 R's with which a child starts his education and it is more useful for tribal neo-literates because of their low reading habits. In fact the success and failure of tribal neo-literate academic life depends to a large extent upon of their reading ability. Reading may be regarded as a basic skill to be acquired by every learner and hence every effort should be directed towards its development in children from early life. Studies have shown that schools and teachers do not have as big an influence on children as parents & friends do. The people that children spend the most time with are the ones who govern their thoughts and directions in life. To be around people who propagate learning and reading is always a good thing for a child. There are many benefits to picking up such reading habits, especially when

it comes to matters that pertain to the child's mental growth. Without a reading habit, a child can grow up with some difficulties, especially if in a line of work that requires reading at any level. Reyhene (1998) observed that when children read for pleasure, they involuntarily and unconsciously improve their language skills. Bignold (2003) indicated that the habit of reading improved children's reading skills. Hence, the issue of reading whether it is for learning or leisure is important since it helps broaden young people's experiences and knowledge (Green, 2002).

A good reading habit is necessary for a healthy intellectual growth and plays a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency. Furthermore, an individual's interests are determined to a considerable extent by the amount he will read and the intensity with which he will pursue his reading activity. By reading books, one gets confirmation or rejection of one's own ideas, which makes one think more critically about right and wrong in the society. Reading provides people with a sense of values, which enable them gradually to develop the greatest of all virtues, that is the ability to understand rather than condemn. Books can also be very comforting, especially at times when one doubts one's self and one's beliefs. Pleasure reading furthers the development of reading as life-long habit which strengthens both language skills and fluency noted that children improve their reading skill when they read for pleasure.

Along with these this very much for the tribal neo-literates like the process of material production in their own language, to maintain a modern way of life, to avoid present complexity of structural and functional aspects of present societies and other changes etc. No doubt, the present generation is exposed to an ocean of books but the problem for the tribal neo-literates is in the selection of appropriate and suitable literature, which can help individuals and society at large. Unfortunately, the undesirable literature that is produced with all vested interested and a profit motive has become popular and has been diverting the minds of masses, particularly the youth in general tribal neo-literates in particular from their main concerns. Thus, there is an urgent need to arrest such material and make desirable reading material available to them. Hence, selection and reading of a book today is a challenging task for the tribal neo-literates to be approached scientifically.

Review of related literature

The literature in the field of Adult Education, most commonly under the notion of literacy practice (reading habits in our study), refers to people's reading activities as a twofold distinction of both types of material they read and/or write and how frequently they engage in reading them (i.e., frequency of engagement). **Smith, in a seminal 1996** study, described the

literacy practices of 24,842 adults, 19 years old and older, in the US by relating reading practices and literacy proficiency. The participants were classified according to how frequently they read newspapers, magazines, books, and documents. The results showed that a majority of the subjects would engage in a variety of practices, and a majority of the participants read at least two print materials (newspapers, magazines, or books) regularly. The results also showed that the more proficient a subject, the more frequently he/she reads. **Pati, (1989)** conducted a study on analyzing of reading needs and interests of the adult neo-literates in the state of Orissa. The main objective of the study was to analyze the reading interest of the adult neo-literates and to classify the different categories of adult neo-literates. One of the main findings of the study was the reading preferences of the adult neo-literates were highly influenced by the local environment. **Nagappa, (1966)** conducted an exploration into the reading needs and interests of adult neo-literates. He concluded that the method of presentation of new ideas had a high appeal to the neo-literates. He further concluded that reading interests can be maintained by opening, community literacy centres in various parts and supplying necessary materials. **Scales and Rhee (2001)**, when comparing reading habits among white adult Americans and Asian Americans, found that education, gender, and race were significant predictors of how often and how well literate adults read, suggesting that adults read what relates to their lifestyle and culture. The studies above, therefore, indicate that, generally, multiple factors may play a crucial role on the creation of reading habits by adults. It should be noted that all of these studies are based on self-reported data. In an interesting descriptive and co relational study, **Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, and Soler (2002)** examined the change in out-of-school literacy practices by 159 adults attending 22 literacy programs in the US. By change in literary practices these researchers meant that their subjects adopted new reading habits and read more frequently. The participants had different levels of education, from preliterate to 11th grade or higher. English speakers of other languages were included in the study only if they did not have a high school diploma in their native tongue and if they were working on acquiring English language skills. The results indicated that the use of real-life activities and material in class, that is, authentic material, had a significant effect on the participants' literacy practices. The factors that most strongly related to change in literacy practices were literacy level and the amount of time spent in literacy classes. **R. Burman (1996)** has given the figures relating to tribal literacy and has revealed the then existing state of affairs in the field of education with regard to literacy. The author found out that inadequate use of tribal language always leads them to make a wrong

view about tribal education. Difficulty in the use of tribal languages will force the students to drop their course at every stage of their education.

Rationale of the study

Reading habit is an essential and important aspect for creating the literate society in this world. It shapes the personality of an individual and very much of essential for tribal due to their depravedness for accessing education and it helps them to develop the proper thinking methods and creating new ideas. At present, due to the influence of the Mass Media, people could not show much interest in reading the books, magazines and journals etc, Therefore, there is the urgent need to develop the reading habit among the individuals in the society in particular reference to the tribal neo-literates. In this paper, the author has discussed the various methods and benefits in improving the reading habits among tribal along with current challenges in the field. However, the mainstream Hindu population considers the general tribal population as primitive, technologically backward, and illiterate. Since the 16th century, the tribes have been perceived as sub-humans who live under primitive conditions. All the reasons are the root cause of the alienation of tribals in education and the Dropout. By giving more emphasis on other activities in the tribal hamlet, they are ignoring the value of education.

Reading habits by tribal neo-literate adults have been reviewed in the Adult Education field through descriptive and/or correlational studies of literacy practice as related to demographic variables such as age, gender, race, employment status, and literacy proficiency. The question of how extensive reading contributes to the development of reading habits among tribal neo-literate adults has not been tackled in the literature, in the same time it was found from literature current challenges and promotion are not given emphasis. So here researcher wanted to know the gaps and challenges in implementation level of adult education in particular reference to the development of reading habits of tribal neo-literates and current challenges through this study and also this is the main thrust of this topic.

Issues in Hand

The study focussed upon following research questions

1. What are the promotional techniques for developing reading habits among adult tribal neo-literates?
2. What are the problems/challenges in tribal areas for proper development of reading habits among tribal neo-literate?
3. What can be the fruitful steps to develop reading habits among tribal neo-literates?

Objectives of the study

Keeping in mind the above research questions, the study addressed the following objectives

1. To highlight different promotional strategies for developing reading habits among adult tribal neo-literates in our country
2. To highlight different challenges in tribal areas for proper development of reading habits among tribal neo-literate
3. To suggest some practical steps to develop reading habits among tribal neo-literates

Methodology of the study

Methodology

Descriptive survey method used in the study as the investigators tried to get information about more than one variable also with better understanding of perceptions of stakeholders (Hittleman and Simon, 1997). Through this method information about conditions, situations and events that occur in the present can be obtained (UNESCO, 2005). Therefore, in the present study the investigator used this method to explore all possibilities to measure the challenges and promotional strategies in reading habits with regarding to the tribal neo-literates and adult education, Also the problems and its eradication from the root.

Secondary data collection

The sources of secondary data are the published and unpublished reports. Data from secondary sources were gathered from books, articles, journals, published reports, and Government documents. Also we have tried to explore different quantitative information with regard to current issues and challenges on reading habits, along with different promotional techniques on development of reading habits of tribal neo-literates.

Discussion

Promotional strategies for developing reading habits among adult tribal neo-literates

Developing reading interest

Reading abilities widely vary among children, adults and in special reference to tribal people. Giving appropriate training at school level/adult education centre can easily develop reading abilities. Language teacher/trainer plays a major role in developing these skills. Teachers of other subjects can create interest and motivate students to learn and they can also inculcate attitudes and aspirations that shape the tribal neo-literates into serious readers. Then there is a possibility that neo-literates would continue reading for the rest of their life, with confidence. The following are some of the general techniques to develop the reading abilities:

- Parental guidance and encouragement.

- Motivation by teachers.
- Inculcation of desirable hobbies and interests.
- Constant use of dictionary.
- Daily newspaper reading.
- Book reading.
- Visiting Libraries.
- Well constructed reading material.
- Study improving vocabulary and language.

Use of ICT in Promoting Reading Habits

For several years, it has been anticipated that electronic books will gain wide spread use as an educational tool, but this has not yet actually come to fruition in special reference to the tribal student context. But in reality if we go depth it seems that, for the first time, all of the necessary elements are in place: inexpensive but highly functional portable reading devices, an increasing number of available book titles, and a technologically literate student population hungry for new media, so here we should made attempt to literate thribal neo-literate. The classroom/tribal adult education centre is an obvious target for e-book implementation because students typically embrace new technologies to purchase a high volume of expensive, cumbersome and rapidly discarded books. Few studies have yet been conducted to find the effects replacing standard textbooks with e-books would have on students'' reading habits, but still it will be serve tribal as one of the viable media for reading habit development. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) offer the readers different opportunities compared to their predecessors. ICTs have enabled libraries to transform themselves into digital libraries. Digital library is simply a collection of information stored in electronic format. Electronic resources open up the possibility of searching multiple resources at a time - a feat accomplished more easily for neo-literates than when using the printed equivalents. Electronic resources are updated more often than printed tools. One main advantage - especially for distance tribal learners or those with limited time to access the library - is the access available to them from outside the library by means of dial-up facilities.

Approach to reading instruction

There are a variety of approaches to reading instruction. A specific approach has to be adopted depending on a particular situation and the nature of children. There are many researchers in the country and outside have described common six modern approaches. They

are: (1) teaching word recognition (2) oral instruction (3) silent reading (4) instruction based on reading experience charts (5) to make reading a thought-getting process, centred around purposeful activities (6) reading instruction based on a well-organised coordination of all the methods. One becomes a good reader when he achieves a satisfactory degree of maturity in the development of his reading abilities, skills, interests and tastes. These are also needful the children like tribal and in the situation like tribal remote areas.

Motivation of Reading habits: - Tribal's need for English is great, they face problems in learning than their non-tribal counterparts. For tribal's their typical use of regional languages interferes with English. For them English are 5th or 6th languages. In this juncture motivation to words any language for reading is quite necessary for the neo-literates, so the trainer should ensure that he is providing proper motivation, feedback and reinforcement to continue reading habits in case of tribal neo-literate.

Challenges in tribal areas for proper development of reading habits among tribal neo-literate

Constrains in reading

The present study has found out that, rural tribal people are too busy with their professions (agriculture and daily labour). Long time working, multiple responsibilities and other domestic and family problems have become impediments for them to find time for reading. In spite of their busy schedule and tight time-table many have been showing some interest to read at least very short materials like advertisements, pamphlets, newspaper headlines and small bulletins rather than reading books, magazines and journals. Even at the university level, students and teachers are inclined towards secondary sources rather than original classics. Reading of original classics and first hand sources had become a thing of the past because; there is no proper encouragement at school, adult education centre or university level. Owing to the present competitive examination system at all levels, students are showing more interest in preparing for objective type examinations that are deteriorating their attitudes and reactive abilities, this is also same in case of tribal neo-literate.

With regard to higher order reading activities, general fears have created a climate of gloom, with the perception that

- Adolescent learners (tribal neo-literates) do not read for recreation;
- Most adolescent's tribal learners do not regard reading as necessary for their intellectual development or later success in the world;

- Adult education centre teachers do not serve as models of reading and do very little to encourage extensive recreational reading;
- Children from affluent homes(from the tribal domicile) read more voraciously than children from less privileged backgrounds;
- Adolescent tribal neo-literates learners abhor the texts prescribed at centres
- Access to the Internet and computer-based activities has not within the areas
- Adolescents' neo-literates read far more enthusiastically when they were at adult education centres, but lack of proper motivators of extensive reading (first parents and family, then centres) neglected their duty in this regard,

Some practical steps to develop reading habits among tribal neo-literates

What teachers can do to promote readership: Number Percentage

- Find more relevant, interesting books to read with classes
- Emphasize the importance of books for intellectual stimulation and future professional advancement
- Induce school libraries to provide more relevant, interesting books
- Suggest suitable books to learners, give personal recommendations of books he or she enjoyed, or serve as a model of reading for pleasure
- Read with learners in class; read aloud and share reading experiences
- Nothing can be done to promote readership; readers are born, not made
- Reward learners with extra marks for books read; having feedback of books read by instituting book reports
- Do not "analyse the book to death" in classroom discussions but more often read books for the sake of pleasure only
- Make books more interesting by role play, games and dramatic enactments

Findings of the study

The main finding of the study like: The-investigator has identified some of the factors which may affect reading comprehension. They are - (i) reading attitude (ii) pupils academic motivation (iii) test-anxiety (iv) socio-economic status (v) dependency/independency.

However other factors affecting reading comprehension on the basis of case-studies are as follows:

- Lack of reading readiness
- Lack of academic motivation
- General indifference to the study of English language

- Poor teaching
- Lack of proper direction
- Low educational status of parents
- Social and economical compulsions..

Some suggestions apart from steps in Objective three

Along with above practical steps (provided in objective three) following are also some practical suggestions which we all researcher, administrator, curriculum constructor, material developer should be taken in to consideration when doing work for them the suggestions like;

- Tribal friendly reading methods, strategies, tools and skills in reading comprehension in English should be developed keeping in view the Indian tribal neo-literates.
- In the same time tribal neo-literates should be encouraged to consult dictionaries, acquire accurate vocabulary, develop ability to find specific answers to questions, develop ability to understand sequence of events and to grasp the organisation of the' paragraph.
- The objectives and the right goals of reading comprehension for the adult education in English or in their own tribal languages in the Indian context should be clearly defined in order to evolve a sound reading programme at all levels.
- There should be concerted efforts to include reading comprehension as a part of school and, adult education programmes curriculum. Short-term teacher training programmes for teachers engaged in tribal areas for neo-literates with special reference to teaching reading comprehension in English should be developed.
- Reading comprehension should form a compulsory period in tribal adult education programme or training right from the primary grass-root stage.
- Problems in reading comprehension in English should be studied and identified and if necessary, legislation to provide special education to neo-literate adult with reading problems should 'be made.
- Reading therapy for groups of tribal neo-literates according to their peer group in the same place should be opened with a view to helping children to overcome their disabilities in reading comprehension in English.
- There should be regular reading comprehension competitions in the centre and similarly inter-centre competitions should be periodically organised to motivate tribal neo-literate for reading.

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