

# Reading Habits of Students and their Academic Performance: A Survey of Government College of Education, Malerkotla (Punjab)

Naurin Ashraf

Librarian

Punjab Urdu Academy, Malerkotla

(An Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Higher Education Punjab (India))

**Abstract :** The study delineates the effects of reading on the academic performance of students of Government College of Education, Malerkotla, where reading is crucial for students, being a training centre for prospective educators. The study examines the effects of reading habits among students on their academic performance. The assertion, at a glance, portrays that students who spend more time in reading are good in studies rather than the students who do not spend much time for the same. Government College of Education, Malerkotla (Punjab) was selected to conduct a survey on the reading habits of students to test this assertion. Of the 100 students presented in the college, 95 were interviewed. Studies already done on the reading habits of students studying in various institutions were also taken into account in the literature review. Data has been presented in the form of tables and figures. It is believed that since the college of education produces school teachers of the future or the future nation builders; and poor quality nation builders are a liability on the nation. As the study is limited to a small sample size of students of just the Government College of Education, Malerkotla, the result of the same cannot be generalized across various sections of the society.

**IndexTerms - Academic Performance, College Students, Reading, Reading Culture, Reading Habits, Reading Interests, Reading Problems, Students.**

## I. Introduction

There was a time when reading was a favourite pastime of royal dignitaries and well-to-do sections of the society. Spending time for reading in the libraries was considered a status symbol. Being traditional, these libraries were not equipped with the latest technology as they do today. Yet, there prevailed a reading culture in society. Reading books was the primary way of getting excellence in academics as well as in other spheres of knowledge. We are living in an age of Information Technology (IT), where libraries are equipped with the latest technology. IT has brought about a revolution and sought to replace, and to some extent has replaced, printed documents in their digital counterparts. However, much of the available reading material in most Indian libraries is in print form. In a country like India, where bullock carts and cars run on the same road, there exist, at the same time, state-of-the-art, technologically advanced digital libraries as well as outdated or neglected traditional ones. While technology has accelerated the pace of knowledge acquisition, it has also brought certain adverse effects on the reading habits of the present generation.

Reading plays an important role in the academic performance of any student. It can be considered the base of acquiring knowledge from printed and electronic form of literature. It is true to some extent, that reading alone is not necessary for acquiring knowledge in every aspect of life. An illiterate person can also be knowledgeable. However, what we are talking about here is the academic performance of students on which reading has a great bearing. The effective use of language, fruitful learning and efficient study skills can be obtained through reading. The students are expected to read books in order to master their skills for acquiring knowledge, getting good marks in the examination and for the development of their personality. The assertion states that a student is required to read books for the betterment of his/her academic performance. Based on this idea, Government College of Education, Malerkotla was selected to conduct a survey on the reading habits of students and their academic performance.

## II. Profile of Government College of Education, Malerkotla

Government College of Education, Malerkotla is situated within the premises of Government Degree College, Malerkotla, District Sangrur, (Punjab). It is affiliated to Punjabi University, Patiala. It was established in 2006 by the Government of Punjab (India). The B.Ed. course has been taught since the establishment of the college, which was earlier a 1-year professional course. However, the duration of the course has been changed to 2 years, spanning over four semesters. During each session, the total sanctioned strength of students is 100, i.e., 50 each for first and second year. The annual budget of the college varies with every year according to the actual expenditure incurred by the college. Budget allotted by the State Government of Punjab during the financial year 2018-19 was Rs. 21 lakh. A large chunk of the budget goes towards payment of salaries of the staff. Notably, there is no staff engaged on a regular basis—the entire crew is either on a contract basis, guest faculty or hired on daily wages. There are five assistant professors in the college working as guest faculty and drawing a basic salary of only Rs. 21,600 per month with 5% increment per annum. Not to mention, however, that they all are fully eligible and qualified for being engaged as regular staff. Thus, the employment situation appears to be grim in terms of sanctioned strength of regular staff and the wages paid.

The college has a library within its premises which was also established in 2006. Almost 12 years have passed since its establishment, during which time, the library has seen little to no growth in terms of space and books acquisition. At the time of establishment, around 2000 titles were acquired; while the total number of titles available now is mealy 2600. Of which, 2390 are textbooks. The librarian has also been working on a contract basis since the time of establishment of the library. Mr Sukhwant Singh is the librarian presently. The library provides only circulation service to the users. Students are allowed to borrow two books at one time for 14 days. The library subscribes to five newspapers and four magazines. The students can read newspapers in the library during college time. The reference section does not contain any material other than a few dictionaries.

### III. Statement of the Problem

The problem is with regard to the declining reading habits among students, more so, particularly, among the students of a small town like Malerkotla. The main reason behind this might be the lack of awareness among students and poor quality of teaching system. Most of them do not read for recreation and as a hobby or for getting knowledge and information, but for passing examinations only. There may be many reasons behind this problem. The major reason behind decreasing interest of students in reading books is the poor quality and outdated teaching style of schools and colleges of Indian society. Most of the teachers emphasise on completion of curricula. They never encourage and recommend students to read books beyond their syllabi in order to expand their knowledge. As a result, students limit themselves to their curriculum only. In many cases, teachers provide readymade study notes to students and block their natural research ability and reasoning by binding them to a limited focus, that is, getting good marks in exams. Another reason behind the problem or poor condition of libraries especially in Malerkotla is the lack of trained staff in the libraries because of the pathetic employment condition prevailing in the state of Punjab state as well as the indifference of school/college management towards the library. There is no regular staff selection in most government colleges in Punjab. Last but not the least, the television, internet and smartphones have also played a role to adversely affect reading habits of students. The reason behind dwindling reading habits among students is not that they are unable to read, but that other devices of consumption appear to be more engaging and interesting to them than books are.

These issues inspired the investigator to conduct a survey to examine the reading habits of students, especially, students of the college of education because they are the teachers of futures and thus future nation-builders.

### IV. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the reading habits of students and their academic performance. Other important objectives include:

- i. investigating reading habits among students;
- ii. ascertaining factors affecting reading habits of students;
- iii. determining correlation between reading habits and academic performance;
- iv. probing ways to improve reading habits among students;
- v. identifying the type of literature, whether in print or otherwise, read most by the students;
- vi. identifying the purpose the students read for;
- vii. ascertaining the role of parents, teachers and library in boosting the reading habits of students.

### V. Literature Review

Shafi (2010) investigated in his study on "*Reading habits among college students of Kashmir across gender*" that gender plays an important role in determining reading habits of students. He employed a survey method with a questionnaire for the collection of data. After conducting the survey, he found a positive attitude of college students towards reading. However, female students were found to be more dominant in reading than male students. Most male students read books related to religion, politics and literature, while most female students preferred to read books related to religion, science and technology and literature. The study concludes that gender is the main factor affecting the reading habits of students.

Kumar and Ansari (2010) examined the reading habits of Senior Secondary School- 11th and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. They applied case study method while using a well-structured questionnaire for data collection from five senior secondary schools/colleges at Allahabad. They found that the mother tongue of most of the students was Hindi and majority of them used to read books in Hindi and English language. Most students borrowed books from their school libraries and most of them study around 3 to 4 hours daily. Students also read newspapers and magazines published in English as well as in Hindi. They also used to consult reference books in libraries. The study recommended that a library period should be included in the school timetable. There should be a book club in each school to inculcate reading habits among students. The study concluded that students needed to improve their reading habits because they did not spend as much time in reading as was required.

Lone (2012), on the other hand, revealed through his study on academic college students of Kashmir Valley that reading habits among urban area students were more developed than rural area students in the 21st century. The study found that there was a need to fill the gap between regions for the development of reading habits among students. The study recommends that education and information for all should be the major points of concern.

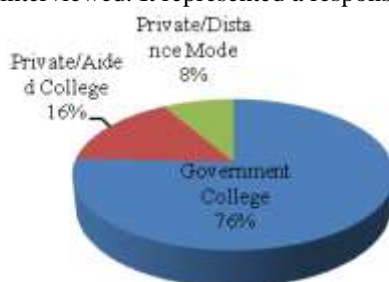
Ajayi, Shorunke and Aboyade (2014), targeted the population of students of Adele University, Ede to assess reading interests there. The investigators collected data through survey method using a questionnaire. The study concluded that reading interest among students was declining day in and day out that leads to poor quality graduates. The students rarely read for pleasure but mostly for passing examinations only. The investigators concluded with recommendations that there must be awareness for using databases and resources; studies should be carried out to improve the reading interest of users; awareness among students should be brought in not to do a reading for passing examination only, but for gaining knowledge also. The investigators stated that the government should take appropriate initiatives to start some awareness programs towards this end.

The study conducted by Khan (2016) presented another but an unavoidable aspect of Indian society, that is, disparate parenting practice by the parents that tend to be prejudicial with regard to a girl and a boy child. She confirmed that the socio-economic status and discrimination based on sex has cast its effects on the study habits of students of Government College of Amroha District. She revealed that boys had more chances of exposure than that of girls. Generally, the girls have to help in household chores and taking care of siblings, boys got more encouragement and opportunity as compared to girls. Thus, the study concludes that gender bias affects study habits significantly.

Florence, et al. (2017) conducted a survey on reading habits among College of Education students of Oyo town in Nigeria. The sample of 200 College of Education students was collected from colleges of Oyo town. The investigators examined the reading habits of respondents through the questionnaire method. The study delineated that most of the respondents understand that reading played an important role in improving their academic performance. 65.5% of students like to read various fields of specialization daily, while 25% love to read weekly. The study concludes that good reading enhances academic performance. Some recommendations were also made at the end, while the responsibility of reinforcing reading habits among students was put on the shoulders of parents, teachers, librarian as also the government.

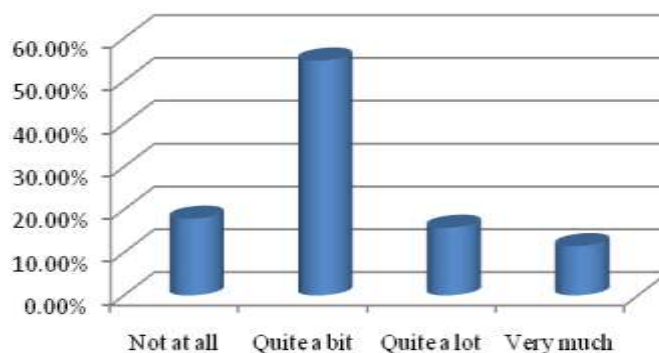
## VI. Research Methodology

Survey method, while using questionnaire and structured interview schedule, was applied as instruments of research to examine reading habits among students of the College of Education, Malerkotla. There were a total of 100 students in all in the college, of which 95 present students were interviewed. It represented a response rate of 95.0% of the total population.



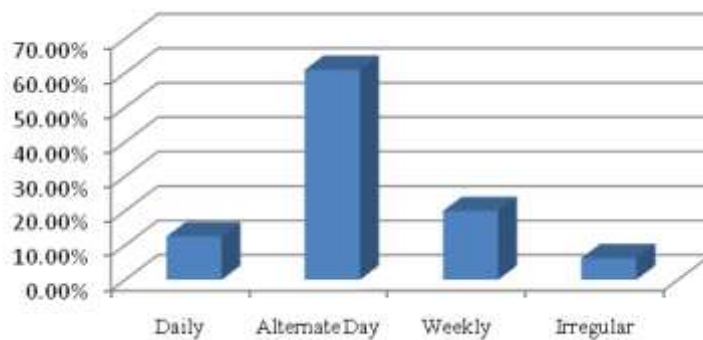
**Fig.1 Educational background of students**

Figure 1 describes 76% of students graduated from government colleges as regular students, 6% belonged to private/aided colleges and 8% were those who did their graduation privately or through distance mode.



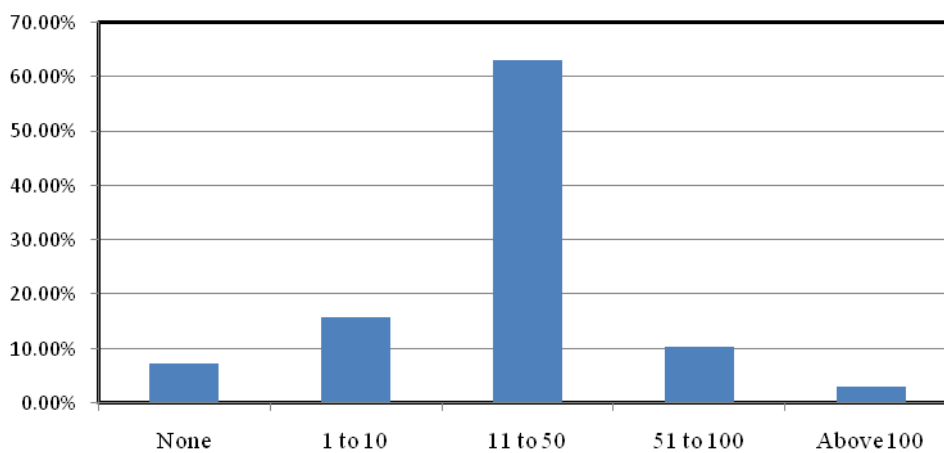
**Fig.2 Reading enjoyment of students**

Figure 2 reveals that 17.9% of students did not enjoy reading, 52% liked to enjoy reading a bit, 15.8% liked to enjoy reading a lot and 11.5% liked to enjoy reading very much.



**Fig.3 Frequency of visiting the library**

Figure 3 explains the frequency of visits of students to the library. It shows that 12.6% of students visited the library daily, 61.0% on an alternate day, 20.0% weekly and 6.3% visited the library irregularly.



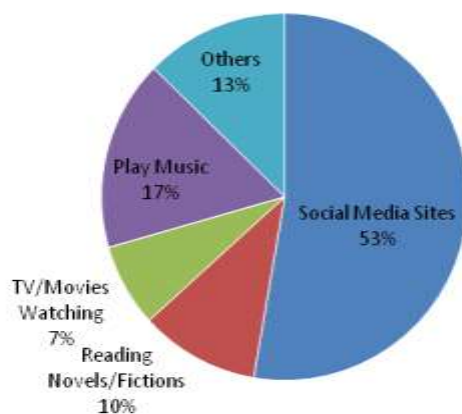
**Fig. 4 Number of personal books that students have at their homes**

Figure 4 describes that majority of students had 11 to 50 extra books except for textbooks at their homes as their personal books. Data shows that 7.3% of students had not even a single extra book at their homes besides textbooks, 15.8% students had 1 to 10 books, 63.1% students had 11 to 50 books at their home, 10.5% of students had 51 to 100 books and 3.1% students had more than 100 books at their home as their personal property. This data shows the lack of interest of students towards books.

Table 1 Sources of Reading

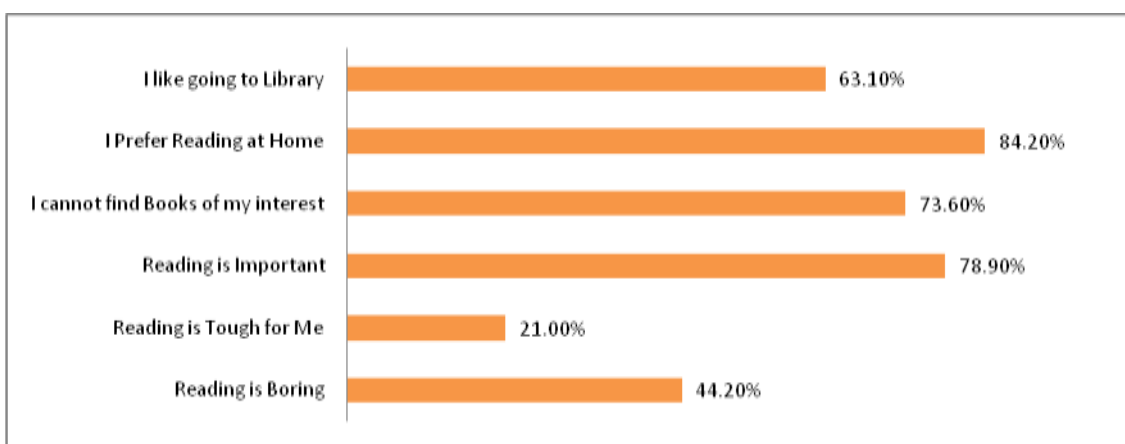
Source of reading	Students
Digital/Electronic form	65.2%
Printed/Paper form	34.7%

It can be found from Table 1 that a majority of students (65.2%) prefer reading in their mobile phones/PCs/laptops at their homes and 34.7% of students find required information from books. The reason may be the lack of library collection and other library services.



**Fig.5 Leisure time spent by students**

Figure 5 explains that how students spend their leisure time. The data shows that 53% students spent their leisure time on the internet and social media sites; 10% in reading novels/fiction; 7% in watching movies/TV; 17% in playing music and 13% students spent their leisure time in other activities.



**Fig.6 Perception of students about reading**

Figure 6 describes the data related to the perception of students about reading. It shows most students acknowledged that reading is very important. 44.2% of students confirmed that reading was boring for them; while 21.0% considered it hard for them. 78.9% of students acknowledged reading very important and 73.6% of students complained that they could not find the books of their interest in the library. 84.2% of students read outside the library or at their homes while 63.1% of students like to read in the library.

**Table 2 Purpose of Reading**

Purpose of reading	Students
It helps in getting good marks in exams	73.6%
It provides information in different fields of life	8.4%
It is a fun	3.1%
It helps in finding needed information	12.6%
For recreation	3.1%
Preparation for competition	2.1%

When the purpose of reading was discussed, it came to light that majority of students read for getting good marks in exams, very few students read to get information in diverse walks of life, for fun and to learn what they wanted or needed to know. (see Table 2)

Table 3 Type of Reading Material Borrowed by Students from Library

Reading Material	Students	Reading Material	Students
Text Books	89.4%	Poetry	6.3%
General Books	52.6%	Fiction/Story books	21.0%
Reference Books	18.9%	Novels	12.6%
Newspapers	71.5%	Play/Dramas	10.5%
Magazines	15.7%		

Table 3 describes the types of materials borrowed by students from the library. Data shows that a majority of students (89.4%) borrowed textbooks from the library and 71.5% of students used the library for reading newspapers. The main reason behind the lesser rate of reading of students for extra reading material was the unavailability of sufficient stock of general and other books in the library.

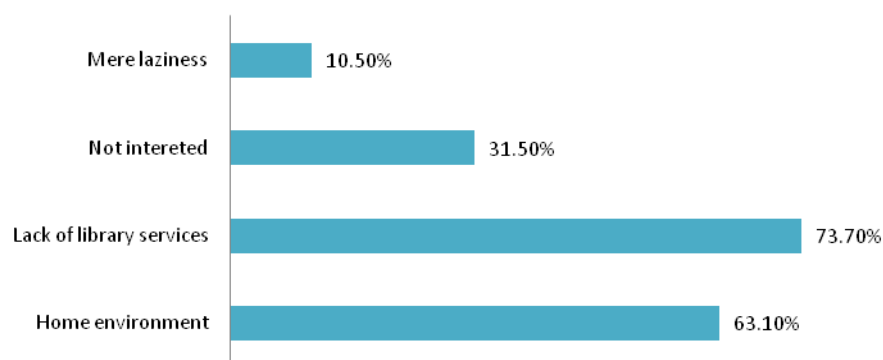


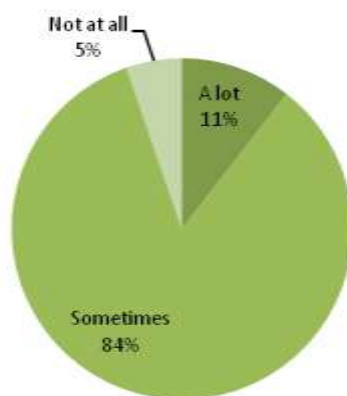
Fig.7 Hindrances to reading habits of students

Data from Figure 7 outlines the hindrances to reading. Home environment of 63.1% was found not suitable for inculcating reading habits among them. The second main hindrance was the lack of library services which influenced 73.7% students. 31.5% of students were not interested in reading and 10.5% students avoided reading owing to mere laziness.

Table 4 Language Preference of Students for Reading

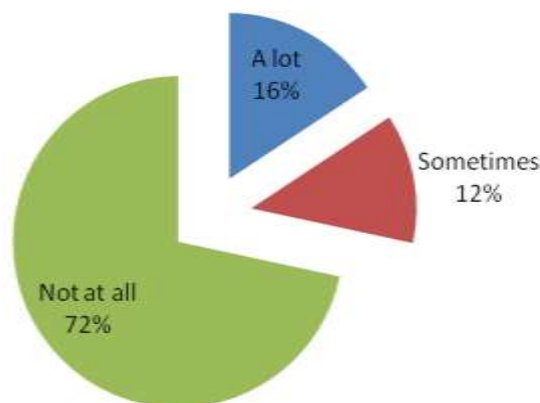
Language	Students
English	21.0%
Hindi	10.5%
Punjabi	63.1%
Any Other	5.3%

Table 4 shows the language preference of students for reading. Most students (63.1%) prefer reading in Punjabi; second preference was given to English (21.0%); third for Hindi (10.5%) and 5.3% students liked reading Urdu books.



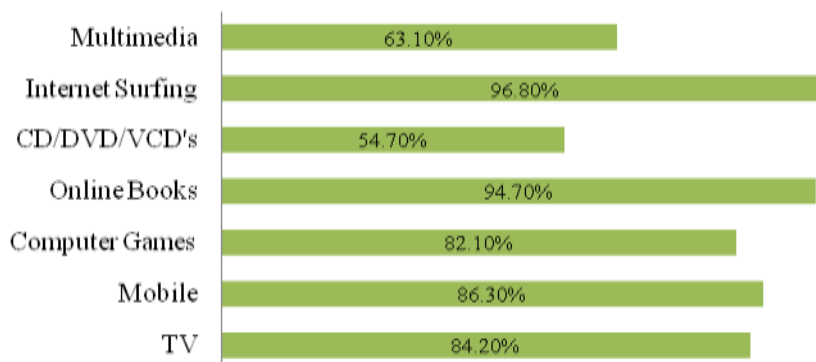
**Fig. 8 Encouragement from parents for reading**

Figure 8 shows that most parents encourage for reading sometimes, not a lot.



**Fig.9 Time spend by parents with students in reading**

It is clear from Figure 9 that most parents did not spend time with their wards and this factor influenced the reading habits of students a lot.



**Fig.10 Factors affecting reading habits of students**

Figure 10 shows the major factors affecting the reading habits of students. Most students thought that internet surfing and online books were the main factors that affected their reading habits. Besides, TV, mobile phone, online games and other electronic gadgets were also pointed out as factors affecting the reading habits of students.

**VII. Findings**

The present study leads us to conclude that most students acknowledge that reading is very important especially for the improvement of their academic performance. Yet, a large chunk of them is used to read books just for passing the examinations. The overall findings of the survey present that reading habits of students of Government College of Education, Malerkotla is not

very sophisticated. Several factors may be responsible for this problem. The main factors include: lack of encouragement from teachers as well as parents, the home environment of students, lack of library services because of insufficient budget from the government as well as negligence of the higher authorities, educational background of students and lack of relevant reading material in the library. Students prefer reading in the Punjabi language. Most students like to read at their homes because of the lack of the required infrastructure for reading in the library. Most students find relevant information from the internet owing to the insufficient reading materials available in the college library.

Punjab is largely a humid and warm region in India, where air conditioners are a must during hot and humid weather. However, unlike University libraries and private college libraries, there are no air-conditioning facilities available in most of the government college libraries. This also has its bearing on users' showing up in libraries. Another factor that also poses a hindrance to developing reading habits is simply the laziness of students. It is observed that 78% of students use internet for reading. Thus, the internet and online books are also the main factors that directly affect the reading habits of students.

### VIII. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the survey some recommendations may be given as follows:

- Libraries should organise such programmes that encourage students for reading.
- Teachers should motivate and encourage students to read more books.
- Parents should cultivate a reading culture at home too.
- It is the responsibility of various library associations to chalk out such programmes which may boost reading interest among young generation by making them aware of the seriousness of the fact.
- The government should also make efforts in this regard, for if our education system is strong our nation will, in turn, prosper and grow. The government should provide appropriate funds to the public libraries as well as academic libraries so that their conditions improve.
- The scarcity of skilled and professional staff in public and government academic libraries is a tremendous problem in Punjab state. The recruitment of staff is carried out on either temporary or contractual basis or on daily wages, and they are paid paltry salaries in the State. It has been more than 15 years since Punjab government has done some regular recruitment of assistant professors and college librarians under the higher education department. It shows the sheer apathy and indifference on the part of the government in the administration of the education system in the State.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Adekanmbi, Arinola Rebecca and Boadi, Benzie Y. (2008). Problem of developing library collection: A study of colleges of education libraries in Botswana. *Information Development*, 24 (4), 275-288.
- [2] Ajayi, Stephen Adekunle; Shorunke, Oludare A. and Aboyade, Modupe A. Mrs. (2014). The influence of electronic resources use on students' reading culture in Nigerian Universities: A case study of Adeleke University Ede, Osun state. *Library Philosophy and practice (e-journal)*, 1182. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommonsuni.edu/libphilprac/1182>
- [3] Awolola, J.O. (1998). College of education libraries in Kwararata (Nigeria): A comparative study. *Library herald*, 36 (3), 152-158.
- [4] Bashir, I. and Mattoo, N.H. (2012). A study of study habits and academic performance among adolescents (14-19) years. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, 1 (5), 1-8.
- [5] Bhan, K.S. and Gupta, R. (2010). Study habits and academic achievement among the students belonging to SC Groups. *Journal of Applied Research in Education*, 15 (1), 1-9.
- [6] Chattopadhyay, T. & Ghatak, N.C. (2008). An analytical study of dental college libraries in Kolkata in the age of information technology. *SRELS Journal of Information Management*, 45 (1), 45-53.
- [7] Fakirappa, D.G. & Babu, K.S. (2017). A survey of dental college libraries in Bangalore district with special reference to user satisfaction. *International Journal of Library and Information Studies*, 7 (2), 157-163.
- [8] Florence, Fatiloro Oluwayemisi et al (2017). A survey on the reading habits among college of education students in the information age. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8 (8), 106-110.
- [9] Isangedighi, A.J. (1997). A comparison of study habits among the under achieving, achieving and over achieving junior secondary students. *West African Journal of Educational Research*, 1, 114-119.
- [10] Khan, Zebun Nisa (2016). Factors effecting on study habits. *World Journal of Educational Research*, 3 (1), 145-149.
- [11] Kumar, Devendra and Ansari, M.M.A. (2010). Reading habits of senior secondary students at Allahabad city, U.P., India. *Library Philosophy and practice (e-journal)*. 486. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommonsuni.edu/libphilprac/486>
- [12] Lone, Fayaz Ahmad (2012). Reading habits of rural and urban college students in the 21st century. *Library Philosophy and practice (e-journal)*, 709. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommonsuni.edu/libphilprac/709>
- [13] Shafi, S.M.; Lone, Fayaz Ahmad (2010). Reading habits among college students of Kashmir Across Genders. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236531479>
- [14] Selvaraja, A. Jayakumara & Chandra, G.K. (2014). User satisfaction towards resources and services of A. J. Institute of dental science library, Mangalore: A case study. *E-Library Science Research Journal*, 2 (11), 1-5