Reading Habits Among the Library Students of D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon: A Survey

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the reading habits of students at D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon, to understand their preferences, frequency of reading, and the role of the college library in promoting reading culture. In today's digital age, traditional reading habits are undergoing significant changes, especially among college students in semi-urban areas.

A survey-based quantitative research methodology was used, involving a structured questionnaire distributed among 150 students from Arts, Commerce, and Science streams. The study also includes interviews with library staff and faculty members to gain qualitative insights. Key findings suggest that while many students recognize the importance of reading, their actual reading time is limited due to digital distractions, academic pressure, and lack of motivation. Most students prefer reading for academic purposes, followed by leisure and exam preparation. The college library plays a supportive but underutilized role, and there is growing interest in digital reading platforms.

The study concludes that to foster better reading habits, active initiatives such as reading clubs, improved library facilities, and technology-integrated reading programs are essential. These findings offer useful insights for educators, librarians, and policymakers seeking to promote a stronger reading culture among students.

KEYWORDS: Reading habits, students, survey, libraries, information behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental activity that enhances learning, develops imagination and cultivates critical thinking. For college students, regular reading not only supports academic performance but also contributes to personal and intellectual growth. In an era dominated by digital media and rapid access to information, traditional reading habits are undergoing a transformation. Understanding how students read, what they read and why they read is important for educators, librarians and policymakers aiming to promote a healthy academic environment.

Reading Habits Among the Library Students of D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon: A Survey

This study investigates the reading habits of students at D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon. It seeks to identify patterns in their reading behaviour, explore their use of print and digital resources and evaluate the role of the college library in fostering a reading culture. The findings can help design more effective strategies to encourage regular and diverse reading among college students.

1.1 Background of the Study:

Reading is a foundational skill that plays a crucial role in the intellectual and emotional development of students. In today's digital age, where technology and entertainment options are rapidly evolving, traditional reading habits especially among college students are undergoing significant changes. While access to information has become easier, the discipline and depth of reading may be declining. This shift is particularly noticeable among youth in semi-urban and rural regions where academic pressures, limited library access, and the rise of smartphones often influence reading behaviour.

D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon, located in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, serves a diverse student population from both rural and semi-urban backgrounds. As the college emphasizes academic excellence and personality development, understanding the reading culture among its students becomes an important task. A survey on reading habits will help uncover patterns, preferences, and challenges faced by students in developing a consistent reading routine. This study will also explore how institutional resources like libraries, reading rooms, and digital facilities contribute to shaping these habits.

1.2 Importance of Reading in Student Life:

Reading enhances vocabulary, comprehension, analytical thinking, and creativity. For students, it is not only an academic requirement but also a gateway to self-development. Regular reading improves focus, memory, and communication skills—traits essential for success in both academic and professional life. Beyond textbooks, reading of newspapers, magazines, fiction, non-fiction, and digital content helps students stay informed and develop diverse perspectives.

Furthermore, reading nurtures empathy and emotional intelligence by allowing students to step into the experiences of others. In the current era, where screen time is often dominated by social media and entertainment, fostering a healthy reading habit is more important than ever. Therefore, investigating students' reading behaviour offers valuable insights into their learning habits, cognitive engagement, and overall educational development.

1.3 Objectives of the Study:

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To study the reading habits of students at D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon.
2. To identify the types of reading materials preferred by students (print vs. digital, academic vs. leisure).
3. To understand the frequency, purpose, and motivation behind students' reading.
4. To assess the role of the college library in promoting reading culture.
5. To explore the influence of digital technology on traditional reading habits.
6. To suggest measures for improving and sustaining reading habits among college students.

1.4 Scope and Limitations:

This study is confined to the undergraduate students of Arts, Commerce, and Science streams at D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon. The survey considers both male and female students from various socio-economic backgrounds. While the study tries to capture a wide spectrum of reading behaviours, it is limited to the students' self-reported responses through questionnaires. Factors such as reading comprehension, in-depth literary engagement, or language preferences are not extensively analysed. Also, since this is a single-institution study, the findings may not be universally applicable but will offer valuable insight into reading trends in a semi-urban college context.

1.5 Research Questions:

To guide the study, the following research questions are posed:

1. What are the current reading habits among the students of D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon?
2. What types of reading materials do students prefer and why?
3. How often do students visit and use the college library?
4. What are the major factors encouraging or hindering reading among students?
5. How is digital technology influencing students' reading behaviours?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies in the fields of education and library science have explored the reading habits of students across different educational levels. According to Patel and Jain (2016), students' reading habits are influenced by access to resources, parental background, and academic expectations.

A study by Khan and Ahmad (2018) observed that while students understand the importance of reading, many lack the motivation or time to read beyond their academic syllabus. Other research has emphasized the shift in reading patterns due to the advent of digital media. Studies such as those by Mishra (2020) found that mobile phones and social media have significantly reduced the attention span and reading frequency among youth. However, digital content, if well curated, can also be a medium to encourage reading.

These studies show a broad interest in understanding how students engage with reading material, the types of content they prefer (books, newspapers, e-books, etc.), and the challenges they face in maintaining regular reading habits.

2.2 Role of Libraries in Promoting Reading:

Libraries play a crucial role in shaping the reading culture of students. A well-equipped and accessible library can serve as a catalyst for developing reading habits. According to Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science, libraries are living institutions that grow with their readers. Studies like those conducted by Dhanavandan and Tamizhchelvan (2012) highlighted how active library services such as reading clubs, book exhibitions, and reader advisory programs positively impact students' inclination toward reading.

In rural and semi-urban colleges, libraries often become the only organized access point for books and reference materials. The presence of a reader-friendly environment, availability of both print and digital resources, and the involvement of library staff in promoting reading campaigns significantly boost student engagement. Nonetheless,

the potential of libraries remains underutilized in many institutions due to budget constraints, limited staff, or outdated collections.

2.3 Reading Behaviour in Rural/Semi-Urban Contexts:

Research specific to rural and semi-urban contexts indicates that students from these backgrounds often face challenges such as lack of reading material at home, absence of reading culture in families, and limited digital access. However, students in such settings also demonstrate a strong desire for learning and upward mobility, making institutional support more impactful.

A study by Pawar (2019) conducted in rural Maharashtra noted that students were more inclined to read newspapers and exam guides due to their direct utility in competitive exams and academic performance. While interest in literature, fiction, and biographies exists, access is often a barrier. Initiatives like mobile libraries and community reading programs have shown success in boosting reading engagement in these regions.

At the same time, the spread of smartphones and the internet is altering reading patterns, with students turning to online articles, YouTube summaries, and e-books. This dual environment limited traditional access but rising digital exposure makes rural reading behaviour a unique area for research.

2.4 Gaps in Existing Literature:

Although many studies address reading habits in urban and university-level contexts, there is limited research focusing specifically on the reading behaviour of students in rural and semi-urban degree colleges like D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya. Furthermore, the literature often overlooks students' emotional and motivational aspects of reading, and focuses more on quantitative factors like frequency and duration.

There is also a lack of localized studies that consider regional language preferences, cultural reading material, and the role of college libraries in vernacular settings. This study aims to fill these gaps by providing a focused examination of reading habits among students in a semi-urban institution and assessing the real-life challenges and opportunities they experience.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology section provides a systematic outline of the approach adopted to conduct the study. It includes the type of research, data collection techniques, sampling method, and the tools and techniques used to analyse the collected data.

3.1 Type of Research:

This study adopts a survey-based quantitative research approach. The goal is to gather measurable and statistically analysable data regarding the reading habits of students. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect information from students across various academic streams to identify patterns and preferences in reading behaviour. Quantitative research is suitable for this study as it enables the researcher to summarize large volumes of data and generalize findings across the student population of the college.

In addition, some qualitative observations have been included where relevant, such as brief feedback or comments from students and librarians to provide depth to certain responses.

3.2 Sampling Method:

The study uses the stratified random sampling method. The entire student population of the college was divided into three main strata based on their academic stream—Arts, Commerce, and Science. From each stratum, a random selection of students was made to ensure representation from all disciplines. This method helps in capturing stream-wise variations in reading habits and ensures balanced data collection across the college.

Stratified sampling was chosen to reflect the diversity of academic programs and to provide comparative insights between streams.

3.3 Sample Size and Demographic Details:

The sample consisted of 120 students from D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon. The demographic distribution was as follows:

- Stream-wise Distribution:
    - Arts: 40 students
    - Commerce: 40 students
    - Science: 40 students
- Gender-wise Distribution:
    - Male: 65 students
    - Female: 55 students
- Age Group:
    - Majority of the students were in the age group of 17 to 22 years, which represents the typical undergraduate population.

This sample size was considered sufficient to draw meaningful conclusions while being practical within the time and resource constraints of the study.

3.4 Tools Used for Data Collection:

The primary tool used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, which included both close-ended and a few open-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into the following sections:

1. Personal and academic information (age, gender, stream, year of study)
2. Reading frequency and preferences (daily/weekly reading habits, preferred formats such as print or digital)
3. Purpose of reading (academic, leisure, exam preparation, etc.)
4. Use of library resources (library visits, borrowing habits, opinion about library services)
5. Challenges faced in reading (time constraints, distractions, lack of interest, etc.)

    The questionnaire was distributed in both physical form (print) and digital format (Google Form) to maximize participation.

In a few cases, informal interviews with selected students and faculty members were conducted to gather supplementary qualitative input

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

After collecting the responses, the data was compiled and analysed using descriptive statistical methods. The tools and techniques used include:

• Percentage and frequency analysis to understand the distribution of responses.

• Graphical representation such as bar charts and pie charts to visually interpret the data.

• Cross-tabulation to compare responses between different groups (e.g., stream-wise or gender-wise comparisons).

The analysis focused on identifying key trends in reading habits, popular types of reading material, and the effectiveness of the library in encouraging reading. Qualitative comments, where available, were categorized thematically to support quantitative findings.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents and interprets the data collected through the questionnaire distributed among students of D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon. The data is analysed to understand students' reading behaviour, preferences, and the role of the college library and digital resources in supporting their reading habits.

Quantitative data has been presented using tables, pie charts, and bar graphs, followed by interpretation and comparative analysis wherever applicable.

4.1 Frequency of Reading

Frequency of Reading	No. of Students	Percentage
Daily	36	30%
3-4 times a week	42	35%
Weekly	26	22%
Rarely	16	13%

Frequency of Reading Among Students
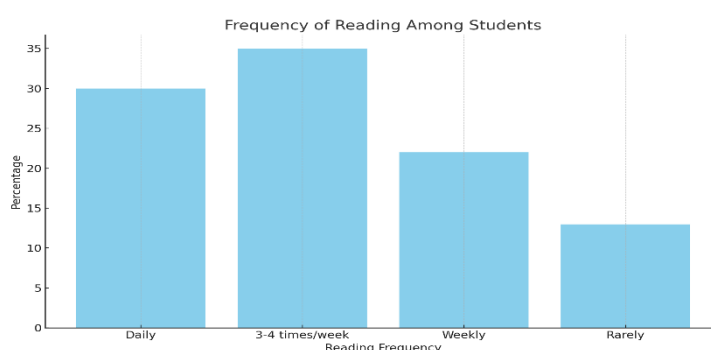
A majority of students (65%) reported reading on a regular basis (daily or 3–4 times a week), showing a positive trend in reading habits. However, a small percentage (13%) rarely engage in reading beyond academic requirements.

4.2 Type of Reading Materials Preferred

| Type of Material	No. of Students	Percentage
Textbooks	90	75%
Novels/Storybooks	45	38%
Newspapers	40	33%
Magazines	20	17%
E-resources (PDFs, blogs, websites)	65	54%

Types of Reading Materials Preferred
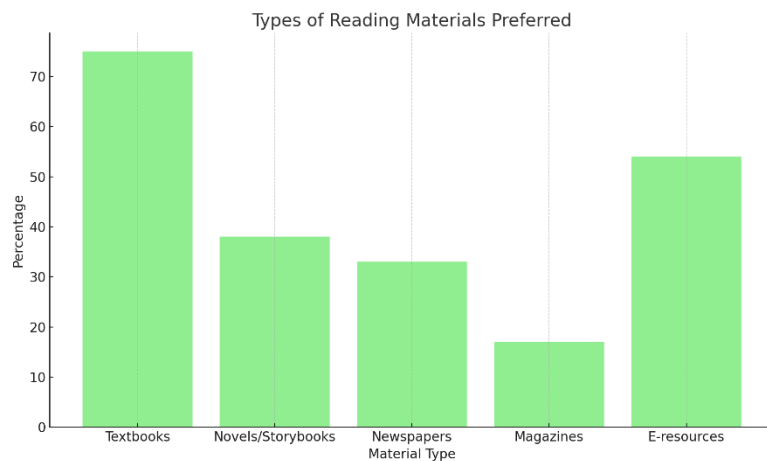
Textbooks are the most commonly read material, as expected in an academic context. However, a significant number of students also engage with novels and e-resources, showing a blend of traditional and digital reading patterns. Magazines seem to be the least preferred among the sample.

4.3 Purpose of Reading

Purpose	No. of Students	Percentage
Academic study	95	79%
Competitive exams	36	30%
Leisure/Entertainment	40	33%
General knowledge	50	42%

Purpose of Reading
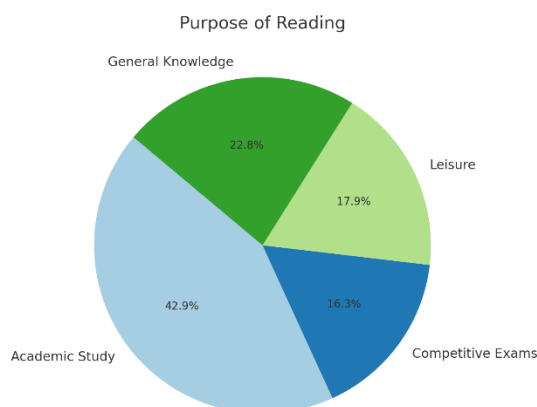
Most students read for academic purposes, but a fair number of them also read for general knowledge and entertainment, which is encouraging for overall personality development. Only a small number read specifically for competitive exams, possibly due to their current year of study.

4.4 Use of College Library

Frequency of Library Use	No. of Students	Percentage
Regularly (weekly)	35	29%
Occasionally	50	42%
Rarely	25	21%
Never	10	8%
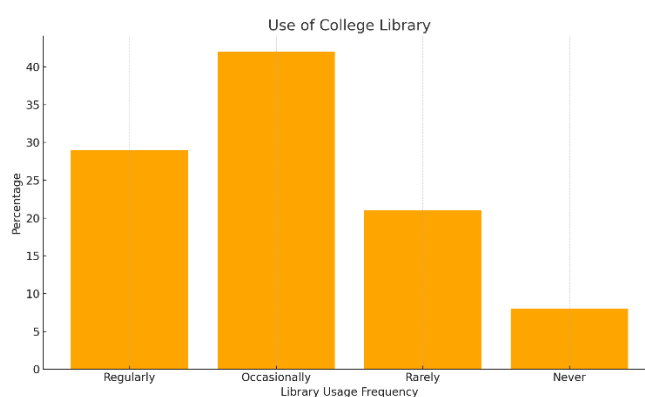
While 29% of students regularly use the library, a large portion uses it occasionally, indicating that awareness or motivation to use library services may need improvement. Some students (8%) never use the library, which is an area of concern.

4.5 Use of Digital Resources

| Usage Level	No. of Students	Percentage
Regular users	48	40%
Sometimes	45	38%
Rarely	20	17%
Never	7	5%

Use of Digital Resources
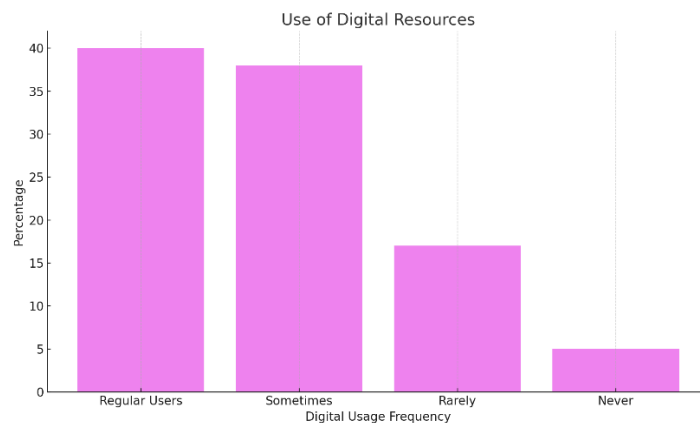
40% of the students are regular users of digital resources such as e-books, online journals, YouTube educational content, etc. This shows a growing trend of digital literacy and preference among students. However, a portion of students still lack regular access or awareness.

4.6 Comparison Between Genders

Aspect	Male (%)	Female (%)
Daily reading	28%	32%
Use of library (regular)	24%	35%
Use of digital resources	44%	36%
Reading for leisure	30%	36%

Comparison of Reading Habits by Gender
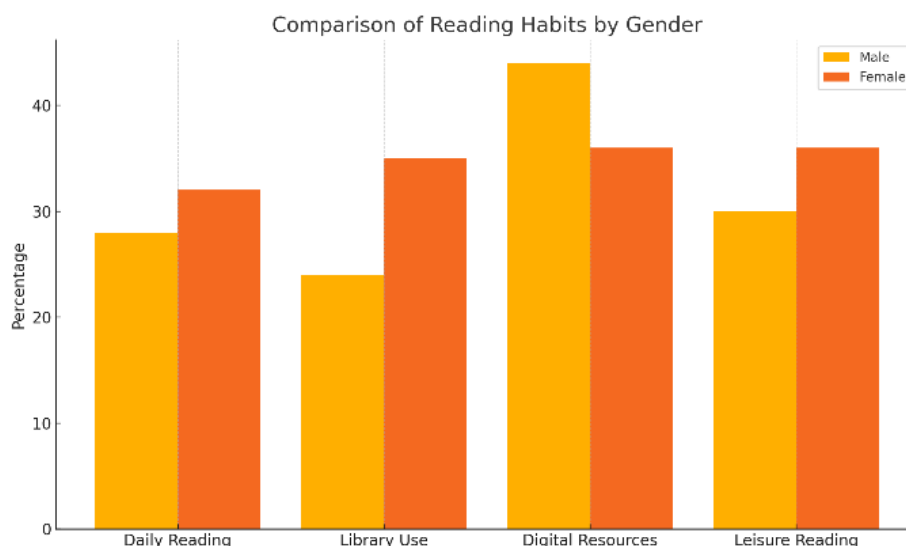
Female students tend to use the library more regularly and read slightly more for leisure. Male students are more inclined towards digital resources. These highlights differing reading behaviours that could inform tailored library services or reading programs.

4.7 Comparison Between Streams

Stream	Library Use (%)	Digital Resources (%)	Reading for Leisure (%)
Arts	38%	34%	41%
Commerce	28%	48%	29%
Science	22%	53%	30%

Comparison by Stream
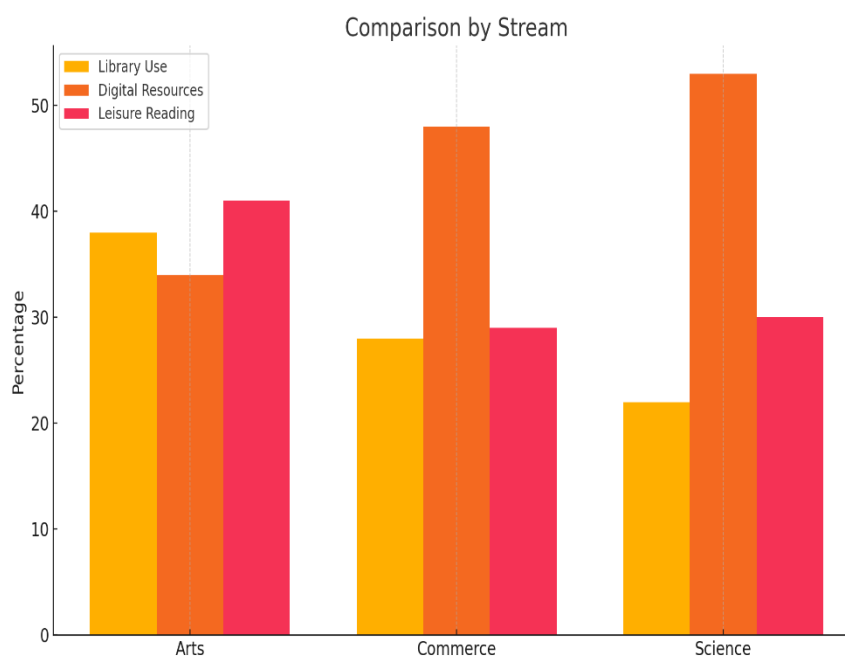
Arts students use the library more, while Science and Commerce students depend more on digital resources. Leisure reading is relatively higher in Arts students. These trends may be shaped by curricular demands and access to resources.

5. FINDINGS

This section presents the key findings drawn from the survey conducted among students of D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon. The data was collected from a representative sample covering all three major academic streams Arts, Commerce, and Science and analysed based on gender, reading frequency, preferences, and library/digital usage patterns.

5.1 Summarized Results from Data

- **Reading Frequency:**
- Only 30% of students reported reading daily, while 35% read 3–4 times a week.
- A noticeable portion (22%) read only once a week, and 13% read rarely, indicating a scope for improvement in regular reading habits.
- **Type of Reading Materials Preferred:**
- Textbooks were the most preferred reading material (75%), showing a strong academic focus.
- E-resources (54%) and novels/storybooks (38%) were also popular, while newspapers (33%) and magazines (17%) had lower readership.
- **Purpose of Reading:**
- Academic study was the leading motive (79%), followed by general knowledge (42%) and leisure (33%).
- Only 30% mentioned reading for competitive exams, indicating that exam-focused reading is less dominant.
- **Use of College Library:**
- Only 29% of students used the library regularly, while 42% visited it occasionally.
- 21% rarely used it, and 8% never used it, suggesting underutilization of this resource.
- **Use of Digital Resources:**
- 40% were regular users, and 38% used them occasionally, indicating growing digital engagement.
- However, 17% rarely used digital materials and 5% never did, possibly due to lack of access or awareness.

5.2 Patterns and Trends Observed

- Daily reading is more prevalent among female students (32%) compared to males (28%).
- Female students also used the library more frequently than male students, reflecting a slightly higher engagement with academic resources.
- Digital resource usage was higher among science students, indicating tech-savviness and course-related necessity.
- Arts students showed a higher preference for leisure reading (41%), compared to other streams.
- The Commerce stream students exhibited moderate use of both library and digital tools, suggesting a balanced approach.

5.3 Key Observations About Reading Habits

- The dominant purpose of reading remains academic, with little emphasis on recreational or curiosity-driven reading.

- A significant portion of students depend on digital resources, showing a transition from traditional to tech-based learning.

- Despite having access to a library, its underutilization highlights a need for awareness programs and improvements in library infrastructure.

- Reading as a habit needs cultivation, especially among students who read infrequently or only for academic compulsion.

- There is scope for introducing reading clubs, digital awareness workshops, and curated reading lists to promote more diversified and consistent reading habits.

6. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussions, this section offers practical suggestions aimed at improving the reading culture among students of D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya. These recommendations can be implemented through collaborative efforts between the college administration, faculty, librarians, and even parents.

6.1   Practical Steps to Improve Reading Habits

1. Integrate Reading into Curriculum: Encourage teachers to include supplementary reading materials beyond textbooks. Assignments involving book reviews or critical reflections can foster independent reading.

2. Promote Daily Reading Time: Allocate a specific time during the week (e.g., "Silent Reading Hour") for all students to engage in reading non-syllabus books.

3. Motivate with Incentives: Recognize and reward regular readers through certificates, awards, or public appreciation. Positive reinforcement helps in forming habits.

4. Awareness Campaigns: Organize talks, posters, or orientation sessions on the importance of reading for academic and personal growth.

5. Create Peer Reading Groups: Encourage students to form small reading groups where they can share and discuss what they've read. This builds a social culture around books.

6.2 Enhancing Library Services and Resources

1. Expand Library Collections: Add more variety to the library, including novels, biographies, self-help books, exam preparation guides, magazines, and current affairs materials.

2. Digital Library Access: Subscribe to e-journals, online books, and databases. Provide students access through college Wi-Fi or library terminals.

3. Library Orientation Programs: Conduct sessions to teach students how to use the library catalogue, search tools, and digital resources effectively.

4. User-Friendly Environment: Make the library space more inviting with comfortable seating, quiet zones, and displays of new or popular books.

5. Regular Feedback Mechanism: Gather suggestions from students on what books or services they need, and improve accordingly.

6.3 Organizing Reading Clubs, Book Talks, or Competitions

1. Reading Club Formation: Establish a student-led reading club where members meet weekly or biweekly to discuss selected books or authors.

2. Book Talk Events: Invite local authors, alumni, or passionate readers to conduct book talks or storytelling sessions to inspire students.

3. Competitions: Organize reading-based competitions like:

    • Book Review Contests

    • Quiz Competitions on famous books/authors

    • Reading Challenges (e.g., "Read 5 Books in a Semester")

4. Thematic Reading Weeks: Celebrate events like "Reading Week," "Library Day," or "Marathi Bhasha Gaurav Din" with curated reading activities.

6.4 Use of Technology to Encourage Reading

1. Mobile Reading Apps: Encourage the use of apps like Google Books, Kindle, Juggernaut, or Marathi-specific apps like BookGanga and GranthDoot.

2. QR Codes in Library: Place QR codes on library walls or bulletin boards linking to free e-books, articles, or book trailers.

3. Digital Reading Lists: Share recommended reading lists via WhatsApp groups or college portals, categorized by stream, interest, or purpose (e.g., career, fiction, motivation).

4. Social Media Engagement: Use Instagram or Facebook pages of the college to post book recommendations, student reviews, or library updates.

5. E-Book Lending System: Implement a simple digital lending system so that students can borrow e-books via email or pen drives.

To build a vibrant reading culture in a rural or semi-urban college setting like D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, it is crucial to blend traditional methods with modern technology. Encouraging reading must go beyond the classroom and become a collective mission supported by all stakeholders. These suggestions, if implemented gradually and consistently, can lead to a significant improvement in the reading habits and overall academic engagement of students.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to examine the reading habits of students at D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon, across different streams such as Arts, Commerce, and Science. The study explored various aspects including frequency of reading, type of materials preferred, purpose behind reading, and the usage of library and digital resources. A survey-based methodology was employed using a structured questionnaire, and responses were analysed to understand patterns and trends.

The research also considered the role of libraries, the influence of technology, and students' personal motivations. It sought to understand how reading habits are shaped in a semi-urban, rural-influenced academic setting and what factors contribute to or hinder the growth of reading culture among youth.

Major Takeaways

- A majority of students read primarily for academic purposes such as exams and assignments.

- Reading for leisure or personal interest is significantly lower, especially among students in the Science and Commerce streams.

- The use of digital resources like e-books and online articles is growing, particularly among male students and those in higher academic years.

- The college library remains an underutilized resource, indicating the need for better awareness and engagement strategies.

- A notable number of students rely on mobile phones and social media, which in many cases distract from rather than support reading habits.

- Initiatives like reading clubs, competitions, and integration of technology can play a key role in reviving reading interest among students.

Limitations of the Study

- The study was limited to a single college, which may not represent the broader scenario across different regions or institutions.

- The data collection was based on self-reported responses, which may involve biases or inaccuracies.

- Time and resource constraints limited the sample size, preventing a deeper comparative analysis across multiple academic years or between urban and rural students.

- The qualitative aspects of reading motivations and emotional engagement with reading were not extensively explored due to the survey's structured format.

Scope for Future Research

- A comparative study involving multiple colleges from urban and rural areas could offer a broader understanding of regional differences in reading habits.

- Future research can delve into qualitative aspects such as student interviews or focus group discussions to gain deeper insights into motivations and barriers.

- A longitudinal study may help track the development of reading habits over the course of a student's academic journey.

- Research can also focus on evaluating the impact of specific interventions like digital library training, reading challenges, or teacher-driven reading programs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

(For Students of D. G. Tatkare Mahavidyalaya, Mangaon)

General Information:

1. Name (Optional): _____

2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

3. Age: _____

4. Stream: ☐ Arts ☐ Commerce ☐ Science

5. Year: ☐ First ☐ Second ☐ Third

Reading Habits:

6.   How often do you read (other than textbooks)?

☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Occasionally ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

7.   What type of reading material do you prefer? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Novels ☐ Newspapers ☐ Magazines ☐ E-books ☐ Academic books ☐ Comics ☐ Others: _____

8.   What is your main purpose of reading?

☐ Academic ☐ Exam preparation ☐ Hobby ☐ General knowledge ☐ Stress relief

9.   How much time do you spend reading in a day?

☐ Less than 15 mins ☐ 15–30 mins ☐ 30 mins–1 hour ☐ More than 1 hour

10.   From where do you usually get reading materials?

☐ College Library ☐ Bookshops ☐ Internet ☐ Friends/Relatives ☐ Others: _____

11.   Do you visit the college library regularly?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

12.   How would you rate the resources available in the college library?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor

13.   Do you use digital platforms for reading (e-books, PDFs, online articles)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

14.   What distracts you most from reading?

☐ Mobile/Internet ☐ social media ☐ Lack of Time ☐ Lack of Interest ☐ Others: _____

15.   Would you be interested in joining a reading club/book discussion group?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

(For Librarian/Faculty Members)

1.   What is your opinion about students' reading habits in this college?

2.   What types of reading materials are most in demand among students?

3.   How frequently do students visit the library?

4.   Do you think the library has enough resources (books, journals, digital access) to encourage reading?

5.   What initiatives has the college taken to promote reading habits?

6.   Are there any challenges you face while engaging students in library activities?

7.   How do you think technology has impacted student reading habits?

What suggestions do you have to improve reading culture among students?

_____