

How Books Maketh a Man

¹Prof. G.Anburaj, ²Prof. W. Christopher Rajasekaran, ³Ms. Ruchika Mahajan,
⁴Ms. Hyma Francis
^{1,2}(English,SSL VIT University, India,)
³(12BMD0050,SBST-VIT University, India)
⁴(13BBA0049-VITBS), VIT University, India)

Abstract: *The journal has brought in the various stages reading creates in an individual's life and how it advances to impact an entire society at a later stage. Reading influences everyone beyond age limits and serves as an everlasting way to learning. Children start learning to read by reciting nursery rhymes and repeating alphabets. This then progresses at different pace depending on individual capabilities and opportunities to learn. Reading books has a great influence on ones fluency and hence voracious readers tend to catch up the language faster. Reading results in acquiring knowledge and this knowledge does not remain within oneself, instead, is passed on to inspire and enlighten many people in diverse fields, who can bring in drastic changes to our country's functioning. Books at one point of time paved way for many to vent their feeling especially during the wars when they found it difficult to survive the pain and agony inflicted. Such books are important records of great revolutions and indicate how our culture has taken shape.*

Key Words: *colloquial language, clichés, apathy, derogatorily,*

I. Progression of Learning How to Read

People learn to read in different ways. Some have their parents or other family members teach them, some start at school and, yet others learn by teaching themselves. However, in all these cases, the progression remains more or less the same.

Learning to read begins when children listen to people reading. Many parents read bed-time stories while showing the children the text. This helps them to comprehend and form the understanding of the words and letters. The next step in learning to read is the study of the alphabet along with the related sounds which help learn how to hear and therefore use these sounds as syllables and words. Nursery rhymes that attaches alphabets to things which the child uses everyday is the most common way, among the many, to learning alphabets. As education continues, vocabulary increases as well.

Children then learn to attach alphabets and identify the sounds they make. Like 'ch', 'sh', 'ed', 'tr' etc. They also learn how to put syllables together. They learn that 'fa' and 'ther' together makes father and 'pen' and 'cil' makes 'pencil'. The faster a child learns how to put together syllables, the more fluent they become in reading. It is at this point that children also learn to comprehend what they are reading and imagine situations they read out loud. Repetitive reading helps this process while improving fluency.

As fluency increases, the speed at which one reads also increases. However, this does not mean that every fluent reader reads at the same pace. A person who makes a habit of reading is more likely to read faster than someone who picks up a book once in a while.

As the child grows, the text they read becomes more complex. This facilitates critical thinking and identification of common phrases, the common colloquial language used, etc. This slowly shifts from the child learning to read to reading to learn.

II. Gradual Progression of Reading

For a voracious reader, their parents would be first to teach them how to read. They would be about three and would have been starting school soon. In preparation, they learn the alphabet and a few other simple words. They also learn to spell their names and the names of their family members, their home address, the name of their school and their teacher. At school, this education would continue. They'd learn how to read and write the words they use on a daily basis. They'd also learn new words and how to implement them in their speech. Perhaps it is easier for me than most, as English could also be the language they spoke at home.

This writer's love for reading was unknowingly instilled into her by her mother. Not a voracious reader herself, she one day brought home *The Chalet School* and *Jo* by Elinor M Brent-Dyer, given to her by a colleague who had a daughter the same age as me. Thus began a lifelong love of books. At the age of ten, she was reading books by Enid Blyton and Louisa May Alcott. At thirteen, she read *Oliver Twist*, her first foray into

the world of Dickens. However, she finds that she understand some of his works better as an adult, than she did as a teenager.

However, not everyone was at the same level. Some were ahead and some were behind. The progress made in the comprehension of the written words had various degrees of success. On first entering school, there were friends who couldn't speak the English language. They learnt by ear; by listening to the teachers and students speak. Similarly, there were also student who were ahead and could do more advanced work. As they grew, skill in the language would increase, and itself translate into a love for reading.

Of course, not everyone would have the same interests. Some would prefer novels and prose. Other would find that poetry could better speak to their emotions. Then there would be those that wouldn't like to read at all, unless it meant opening a book for the upcoming exam. It was observed that this did have an impact on the level at which we read and wrote. The children, who read more, were more adept at vocalizing their thoughts, had a better comprehension of the material and even penned their thoughts on paper better. Each child is different and each runs at his own pace. Our interests tend to guide us.

III. Impact of Books on an Individual

"Books are a man's best friend", "Pen is mightier than a sword", are some of the age-old sayings and might sound like clichés, but are actually true.

Reading has always benefitted each and every person in some way or the other. It doesn't matter what the topic is, each time you read some piece of work, no matter who the writer is, you're bound to learn one new word or the other. Its benefit has been seen in many national and international exams also.

Reading is a key to learning and its benefits are not bound to age. Be it a 70 year old or a teenager, everyone learns by reading. Books make a human being a complete being. Knowledge on every subject regardless of the field is gatherable. The impact is a awesome (may say 'far reaching' or 'has a ripple effect') cycle. A book impacts one person which goes on to impact the family, which further makes its mark in the society. Books and articles have the power of making huge impacts on the discoveries and even the governmental policies in the past. The best example is Jules Verne where his imaginative power led to the invention of the first flying glider by the Wright brothers.

Great books have been known to bring out revolutions. They've helped people in the worst of the scenarios. During the years of World Wars, it was a way of venting out the frustration and people learnt from these books about the apathy and the torture (inflicted on man) . Apart from creating a fantasy world for some people, it has led to great thinking and learning abilities.

Recent books like the one by Aravind Adiga, which went to win him the Man Booker Award, show the real pain and struggle that the masses in our country suffer from. Books help a person to realize, imagine, contemplate, learn and get influenced. These are some of the very important steps to bring changes. And just like little drops make an entire ocean, few individuals can bring out changes and revolutionize a nation altogether.

Books can influence a person's thinking and outlook drastically. Hence, the habit of reading should be inculcated at a very young age and this will eventually help to develop a nation.

IV. Impact of Books on Society

Technological development has helped social media to play an important role in the society. It has helped people spread their thoughts and opinions and keeps them updated on all that has happened around the world. However, books still have a significant impact on society as compared to the Television.

The written word itself was the first to benefit from the spread of printed works. Due to distance, common people were far from knowing a standard language of their land. The printing of books and letters in high number standardized the languages and make them an effective tool of communication by setting certain meanings of words, phrases, symbols and signs. It was due to print impression that some of the sign got international recognition.

From a historical perspective, books help preserve our culture. Through works such as Hugo's *Les Miserables*, we came to know of a very personal view of the French Revolution and Alcott's *Little Women* gives us a glimpse into the life of a family during the American Civil War. These books have given historians more information on the evolution of our history. They help people connect with their ancestors and give them a greater appreciation of the circumstances of their present and the possibilities of their future.

Newspapers and manuals proved a great success in highlighting the work of scientists and to bring in new ideas in technology Reading the print media worked as a catalyst to spearhead the industrialization towering over Europe, which was based on the new technologies invented during the 18th centuries. It helped people to understand the impact of science and how the support of it could change their futures drastically. But perhaps one of the greatest impact of reading, is on the freedom of opinion. Today, with what people read, they

are given a multitude of ideas and equip them to making informed decisions on their lives, on their futures and on matters that make a difference to the world

Books do in fact make an impression on the thought process of the society; on the way people see things- Why else would some of the dictators and governments try and ban them? The cultural revolution in China during Chairman Mao's time is the best example to this.!

V. Difference between a Reader and a Non-Reader

Perhaps the biggest difference between a reader and a non-reader, is the skills that are acquired. Non-readers generally struggle with comprehension and vocabulary. Readers are generally more active and are able to articulate their thoughts better, both aloud and on paper. They are able to grasp concepts and ideas quicker and display more effective argumentative skills due to their enhanced knowledge of certain subjects and due to mastery over vocabulary

Recent research findings suggest that there are significant difference in functioning of brain of readers and non-readers. Studies conducted on listening, reading and problem solving skills testify that brain is significantly sharper among readers. These people were also found to be more successful in all subject areas such as maths, science and history.

There are many reasons why people don't read. They could find it a chore and therefore boring. They may not find reading as easy as other, and to avoid feeling bad about themselves, they avoid reading all together. Reading is generally thought of as an intelligent and highbrow activity; as inherently superior to watching TV or seeing a movie; as better than listening to music, playing a videogame, and so on. These opinions are valid. We also have as different life circumstances that dictate our priorities and not everyone has to place reading on that list.

VI. Conclusion

Written media and the press has been a powerful means of spreading information and awareness about the world around us, and a channel to express and broadcast one's opinion to the masses. Newspapers and books sparked revolutions several centuries ago. The power of writing played an important role in the Indian struggle for independence, with mere words giving rise to strong feelings of patriotism in the hearts of Indians, uniting them as one nation.

Such is the power of writing, for words are much more than random combinations of alphabets-they are a means of conveying powerful opinions. However, considering the fact that different people think differently, it is extremely unlikely that every person's reaction to an opinionated work of literature would be the same. One person's opinion on a topic or a contemporary issue may vary drastically from another's. And more often than not, it is impossible to reach a consensus as to whether or not a book and the belief it stands for is right or wrong.

For example, if one were to write a novel on World War II, condemning Adolf Hitler for the mass destruction that he was responsible for; while most people would agree with the opinion on Nazism and Hitler presented in the book, there would still be a set of people giving him credit for being a great leader and a fighter till the very end.

Another example for the same would be Salman Rushdie's controversial novel, 'Satanic Verses'. While orthodox Muslims alleged that the book contained paragraphs and verses that were derogatory to Islam and the principles it stands for, few others treated it as yet another work of art and accused critics of blowing the issue out of proportion. However the facts are extremely clear-there was utter chaos after the release of the controversial book, with Muslims holding Rushdie responsible for the deaths of several orthodox followers of Islam, who could not bear the thought of their religion and its tenets being described derogatorily, while the author claimed that his work was only a means by which was exercising his right to the freedom of press.

Varied opinions, in a way are extremely essential, for it ensures that both sides of an argument are paid equal amount of attention to, without an aspect being blatantly ignored for the lack of supporters who feel for it and are willing to speak up for it. If handled the right way, one's feelings for or against an opinion presented in a novel, and the way he or she voices it, may lead to change-the right kind of change - for the greater good of society at large. In short, as the old adage goes, "reading maketh a man", reading makes a person think independently, makes his own opinion on issues of social relevance and therefore, can influence his society and the world at large. Book is man's best friend.

Acknowledgement

I have taken efforts in this research paper. However, it would not have been possible without the kind support and help of many individuals. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of them. My thanks and appreciations also go to my colleagues in developing and concluding this precise research and students who have willingly helped me out with their abilities. The take this opportunity which I had with my learners in our

VIT University was a great chance for learning and professional development. Therefore, I consider myself as a privileged individual as I was provided with an opportunity to be a part of it this study. I am also grateful for having a chance to meet so many wonderful students and faculty members who led me throughout this research paper in order to shape the core idea. Bearing in mind the previous, I am using this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude and special thanks to Prof. W. Christopher Rajasekaran, (Assistant Professor) one of the co-authors of this study who in spite of being extraordinarily busy with his work, took time out to hear, share and keep me on the correct path and allowing me to carry out my ideas neither changing nor deviating from it.

It is my radiant sentiment to place on record my best regards, deepest sense of gratitude to Ms. Hyma Francis, (13BBA0049), who is one of the co-authors, for her careful and tireless proof reading, alignments, valuable suggestions and clear insights regarding the key factors of this paper which were extremely valuable for my study both theoretically and practically. This paper is one of the evidences of her interest over English language learning and manipulating.

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my co-authors Ms Ruchika Mahajan, (12BMD0050), for her contribution on the introduction of main ideas, conclusion and minute details in order to focus the core objectives of this research paper is really undeniable. She is the one who gave me the golden opportunity to explore this core perspective and I came to know about so many new things, I am really thankful to her. Finally I dedicate my priceless thanks and regards to our division chairs, dean, administration and management teams of VIT University, without their support and encouragement, this research wouldn't have been carried out successfully.

Reference

- [1]. Todd Parr, Reading Makes You Feel Good, printice hall press; Apr 1, 2009
- [2]. Richard J. Davidson, Sharon Begley, The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How Its Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel, and Live--and How You Can Change Them, Town send press; March 1, 2012
- [3]. John Langan, Ten Steps to Advancing College Reading Skills: Reading Level: 9, Townsend Press; January 4, 2010
- [4]. Amy Buswell, Bruce Lansky, Stephen Carpenter Giggle, Poetry Reading Lessons: A Successful Reading-Fluency Program Parents and Teachers Can Use to Dramatically Improve Reading Skills and Scores, Kindle Edition; June 10, 2014
- [5]. Sara Gruver, Reading Skills Mini-Lesson, Prentice Hall Press; November 2, 2004
- [6]. John Langan, Ten Steps to Improving College Reading Skills, 5th Edition, Townsend Press, January 2, 2008
- [7]. Peter Kump, Breakthrough Rapid Reading, Prentice Hall Press; November 1, 1998
- [8]. Deanne Spears, Developing Critical Reading Skills, McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages; May 18, 2012
- [9]. John Langan, Ten Steps to Building College Reading Skills, Townsend Press; January 1, 2011