



# **Lowering Reading Habits among Youth in the wake of towering Technology: Causes, Consequences, and Strategies for Improvement**

**Dr. Timsy Mehta**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Journalism & Mass Communication, University School for Graduate Studies, Chaudhary  
Devilal University, Sirsa, Haryana, India

**ABSTRACT:** Reading is a cornerstone of education and personal development. It enhances language proficiency, cognitive abilities, imagination, and academic achievement. However, recent decades have witnessed a momentous decline in reading habits among the youth worldwide. The towering impact of information technology and social media has transformed the mannerism of learning preferences. This research paper examines the phenomenon of declining reading patterns among the youth, identifies its causes, analyzes its academic and social consequences, and proposes strategies to foster an improved reading culture. Drawing upon extant literature and contemporary educational practices, the study lays out that integrated efforts by family, academic institutions, social institutions and government are a requisite to address this state of affairs. The paper concludes that promoting reading habits from an early age is an elementary step for developing informed, creative, and responsible citizens.

**KEYWORDS:** Reading habits, literacy, digital media, education, cognitive development

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Reading has been regarded as the most basic and cardinal activity that lies at the heart of socialisation. It promotes intellectual development, personal growth, social learning and overall capacity building. Since the outset of a well-fabricated society, reading has been regarded as an indispensable tool of learning. Book reading is not just an intellectual activity, but has been a hobby also that shifts mood patterns, introduces new behavioural norms, opens the gateways of learning from across the world and holds the potential of creating a better and upgraded version of the reader in light of the knowledge that a book contains.

Book reading is not just a ritual, but an important activity that asks for holding attention and imbibing cosmopolitan approach silently and effortlessly. A book guides like a veiled trainer where the reader observes the message and carries forward the notion. A book just not works on a person and his persona, but carries his legacy. Above and beyond, books communicate about the cultural heritage that bind the social elements together so as to build ethos and harmony.

The whole outcome of book reading is the silent transformation, where the reader finds himself evolved from within and without. It has also been observed that the reading habits developed in the elementary years of a child make him adept with communication skills, raise the bar of his creativity and help him be a more responsible citizen afterwards, along with making him capable of handling different situations more efficiently.

Despite the immense benefits of reading habits, the trends of contemporary world show a major decline in reading habits among youth. The books that once filled the shelves of the study rooms have been replaced with the online content that is easy to be gathered and available on a single click.

The fast-gathered knowledge is fast to diminish as well, so the graph of diminishing book-reading habits raises a concern for personal sanity as well as social well-being, which makes it critical to be studied upon hence ascertaining the causes and consequences behind the change.

## II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The magnanimous effect of New Media in our lives has marginalised books from our world without any extra effort. New Media being easily available, easily accessible and easily adaptable with one's needs, it has actually dwarfed every other activity and has held the broad canvas of our lives with its additive and addictive nature. This has induced concentration problems and lowered cognitive development among kids and youth. The problem addressed in this study is the decline in reading patterns and its impact on learning and personality development.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study endeavours to:

1. Examine the current trends in the reading habits of youth.
2. Identify factors contributing to declining reading patterns.
3. Analyse the effects of reduced reading on the youth's cognitive and personality development.
4. Explore the role of technology in shaping reading behaviour.
5. Suggest strategies to improve reading habits among the youth.

## IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What factors are responsible for declining reading habits among youth?
2. How does excessive digital media consumption affect reading behaviour?
3. What are the educational and psychological consequences of reduced reading?
4. What measures can be adopted to encourage reading among youth?

## V. LITERATURE REVIEW

The displacement from print based reading endeavour to high-velocity digital intake has radically altered how young people interact with text. The researchers have prominently worked upon the towering impact of Digital devices over lowering reading habits and have published their reports with blue-chip suggestions.

While exploring the rationale of reading motivation and engagement among students, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) find that motivation plays a critical role in developing reading habits. Students who perceive reading as an enjoyable and meaningful exercise are more likely to become lifelong readers. The study highlights the significance of creating supportive academic environments that promote reading engagement.

Krashen (2004) lays out that self-imposed reading significantly improves vocabulary acquisition, language proficiency, writing skills, and academic performance. Children who read on a regular basis tend to develop stronger literacy skills compared to the ones relying solely on classroom instruction. He furthers that reading for pleasure is one of the most impelling means of rising literacy among young learners.

Clark and Rumbold (2006) emphasize that reading for pleasure is strongly associated with educational attainment. The authors conclude that fostering a positive attitude toward reading is essential for long-term academic outcomes.

Research on Digital Media Consumption suggests that excessive screen time may negatively affect attention spans and limit opportunities for contemplation. Carr (2010) argues that frequent exposure to fragmented online information can weaken sustained concentration and critical thinking skills. While examining the impact of Digital Devices on human cognition and reading behaviour, he argues that constant consumption of Digital Media promotes fragmented attention and superficial information processing. Digital technologies may cut down individuals' ability to take in deep reading, reflection, and sustained concentration.

Investigating the effects of Digital technology on reading habits, Wolf (2018) highlights that the increasing disposition for screen-based reading may alter neural pathways associated with deep reading. Her research shares concerns regarding diminution of attention spans and reduced critical thinking among young readers in online environments.

Rideout and Robb (2021) analyse the media consumption patterns among adolescents and reveal that young people spend a substantial portion of their daily lives interacting with digital devices. Their study suggests that increased media consumption often trims down the time accessible for recreational reading, thereby contributing to declining reading impulse.

The psychological motivations driving social media usage actively pull young people away from independent reading. Mehta (2022) examines this impulsive behaviour through the concept of "fake facets," illustrating how platforms serve as spaces for hyper-curated, glamorous self-presentation. This continuous pursuit of virtual validation creates a psychological dependency loop, where users feel compelled to constantly update, monitor, and adjust their digital personas to alleviate underlying social anxieties or capture immediate peer reinforcement.

This constant need for digital feedback directly drives the displacement effect, where the time required to maintain online identities actively replaces leisure reading hours.

The extant literature study collates that deteriorating reading habits are influenced by a nexus of technological, social, academic and cultural factors. Most studies coincide on the notion that encouraging reading habits for pleasure, strengthening literacy programs, and inducing parental involvement are essential strategies for addressing the decline in reading habits among young people

## **VI. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study adopts a descriptive research design based on secondary data collected from books, journal articles, academic reports and literacy studies.

## **VII. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR DECLINING READING PATTERNS**

### **7.1 Digital Devices Usage**

Every single person carries his own digital devices today which have an internet connectivity. The top factor underneath the decline of reading habits is the increasing use of digital devices. Digital devices may provide an easy and instantaneous access to information through internet exploration but the joy of reading is a big miss through this medium. Other than that, the ability to retain the message is much less compared to the traditional form of reading in a tangible format.

### **7.2 Social Media Influence**

Social media platforms support quick intake of information through reels, images and photographs along with short text messages and chats. Voice chats and video chats have become another normal way of communication across distances. This environment gets addictive while furthering instant gratification and tends to lower the interest of youth in dedicated reading. The youth often spend several hours on a daily basis watching reels, playing games, or browsing social media content feed. These activities are fed on the time otherwise available for dedicated reading thereby reducing the time meant for books. Laptops, Personal Computers, Smartphones and tablets offer entertainment in a chained manner, where one after the other the content keeps flowing and the users keep consuming it without setting or observing the boundaries of time.

The impulse of scrolling through unique and never ending content can have a deteriorating effect on concentration and patience sought for reading books.

### **7.3 Lack of Reading Culture at Home**

The ethos and culture of the family plays a major role in moulding the reading habits. Reading lover parents tend to create a reading environment for their kids at homes. Ironically, most of the living rooms prefer TV Screens or digital devices in the contemporary set up, where the family members do not even communicate with each other. Their total exercise of togetherness lies in living under a single roof while not sharing feelings or ideas primarily or on daily basis. In such conditions, the youth do not find any spark in working on themselves and building a constructive personality while reading books.

#### 7.4 Fast paced life

In an attempt to create a life for themselves, the youth keep chasing targets without realising the need of physical well-being and mental sanity. They work relentlessly day and night with screens in the front of their faces and literally no scope of books arises in such settings.

#### 7.5 No Subscription Charges

While book reading asks for purchasing or borrowing books from somewhere, Internet offers going through any information without any extra charges. This may be a big factor while making a reading decision as not everyone would love to make an extra expenditure on books in a materialistic world of today.

#### 7.6 Storage and Maintenance

The books kept for reading are a forever possession, and need to be taken care of like any other household object. They even need a dedicated corner at home for storage. No books means no extra effort in maintenance linked with them. A new-aged person may even skip to own books for the above said reason.

### VIII. AFTERMATH OF DIMINISHING READING HABITS

#### 8.1 Impact on Vocabulary

Book reading spreads out the orbit of rich and varied vocabulary, sentence construction, and speaking skills. The ability to infer consequences while reading between the lines can also be developed on the go while reading books. Reduced reading exercise can slow down the communication proficiency.

Those who read less may have a hard time while writing or having a verbal communication.

#### 8.2 Academic Consequences

Reading skills often open the corridors of learning from all sides of the world. An avid reader acquires cosmopolitan approach while reading the diverse content through the books. Low reading habits often tend to show up as trouble in apprehending textbooks and developing cognitive skills.

#### 8.3 Ablated Rational and Logical Thinking Skills

Books boost the analytical mannerism of thinking, thereby encouraging users to decipher meanings, and appraise the situations. A diminution in reading habits can slow down the development of the higher-order thinking capabilities.

#### 8.4 Lowered Creative Quotient

Unlike visual media, books require readers to imagine characters, settings, and events. Reduced reading may curtail creative quotient and ingenuity.

#### 8.5 Reduced Concentration

Those accustomed to obtaining information instantaneously through online sources may find it hard to focus on detailed topics. This may lead to concentration issues while going through serious matters of academic or social nature.

#### 8.6 Hindered Emotional Quotient and Empathy

The platform of books offer the youth a roadmap to get oriented with the varied perspectives of life. Reduced exposure to the recorded matter on paper cuts the chance of youth for developing emotional quotient and empathise with their social counterparts.

#### 8.7 Cultural Estrangement

The youth bonded with books often get bonded with their culture and heritage. Books open the galleria of cultural assortment and cross-cultural communication. Missed book-reading exercises happen to be a chance missed for cultural alignment.

**IX. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PLAN OF ACTIONS FOR BOOSTING READING HABITS****9.1 Family Engagement**

A reading atmosphere may be developed in the families where reading becomes a daily ritual. Screen time may be cut off. Book contents may be reviewed and discussed upon instead in the family time.

**9.2 Academic Institution Based Interventions**

Educational institutions may work upon fostering book-reading habits by planning to enrich libraries, encourage book-reading clubs, organise creative reading, reviewing and storytelling activities and literary events timely.

**9.3 Community Engagement**

Parallel to academic institutions, social institutions may also give a thought to building and enriching public libraries. Book-reading clubs may also be formed for discussing and reviewing the contents of books

**9.4 Government Interventions**

Government may devise strategies to enhance reading activities among the commoners so as to create a holistic difference in the reading profile of the society. For the same, infrastructure for public libraries may be raised. Book-reading activities may be arranged from time to time, covering all age-groups of the society.

**X. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

The findings hint that diminishing reading habits among the youth shoot out of a nexus of technological, academic and social constituents. The fundamental joy of book reading compromised at the cost of incessant internet usage has barred the learning graph and attention span to a sizeable level.

The research findings suggests that book reading was not just meant for academic learning or as a hobby, but that it has affected the overall cognitive behaviour which tends to alter understanding, response and reaction of an individual at every level of personal, intellectual, behavioural and social growth.

The patterns of lifestyle change have shown a massive shift on account of the technological ontogeny that the world has witnessed in the past two decades. The thus changed lifestyle has induced digital reading and learning to a great extent which may not be reversed totally in light of the newest innovations in the technological field, but a considerable amount of shift is sought as the need of the hour. Traditional reading practices need to be encouraged in family and social environments so that the academic engagement and learning experience could be bettered.

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