



## READING HABITS AND READING PREFERENCES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

**S. Nagaraja**, Librarian, Regional Institute of Education, NCERT, Manasagangotri, Mysore

**Dr. Jesudoss Manalan**, College Librarian (SG), Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirappalli

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**Abstract:** *Reading is a very important issue which is not only about enjoyment but a necessity and the basic tool of education. It is the very foundation on which the edifice of the child is to be built. In this study an attempt has been made to understand the reading habits, the reading preferences, attitude of students towards reading, motivational factors for reading, and the influence of family and friends on the reading habits of secondary school students. In this study survey of 80 secondary school students of ix and x standard students by using structured questionnaire to collect the necessary data for analysis. The findings of the study reveal that secondary school students read regularly books, newspapers and magazines. The preferred language for reading is English and they read on an average 1-2 hours every day. The most preferred type of book is fictions of adventures and horror in nature. The major motivating factors for reading are to get a good job and to become a public speaker. Study also reveals that mother play a major role in encouraging the students to read and the latest e-reading devices are not made much impact on the students.*

**Keywords:** *Reading, Reading habits, Reading preferences, Motivation for reading, Secondary schools students*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading plays a pivotal role in the life of a man and it is considered as an important tool for lifelong learning. Reading opens the doors of the treasures of knowledge. It provides experience through which the individual may expand his/her horizons of knowledge, identify, extend and intensify his/her interest and gain deeper understanding of himself/herself and other human beings of the world. According to William S. Gray "Reading influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as the attitudes, moral benefits, judgment and action of readers". It is widely acknowledged that the life-long habit of reading can best be inculcated and nurtured at an early age. Reading is a vital factor affecting intellectual and emotional growth. Sir Richard Steele has logically quoted, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to body".



It is, however, a general observation that there is an overemphasis on examination oriented subject related reading thus ignoring the general reading or recreational reading among school students. The reading habit of school students has long been a matter of much interest to educators, parents, teachers, librarians, publishers and other stakeholders. An understanding of the reading habits and preferences of children and other issues associated with it would help to take necessary measures for promoting reading habit among school students.

## **2. MEANING AND DEFINITIONS OF READING AND READING HABIT**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary the meaning of the word 'Read' is "to reproduce written or printed words mentally or vocally and is the ability to convert the same into intended words or meaning" and reading as a "way of interpreting something". The verb form 'reading' is mostly associated with books, magazines, instructions, directions, bill boards, etc.

Normally the word reading refers to the reading of books. Reading is an action of a person who reads. The Oxford English Dictionary defines reading as a "way of interpreting something". According to Cambridge English dictionary reading is the "skill or activity of getting information from books".

Smith and Robinson define reading as "an active attempt on the part of the reader to understand a writer's message". The dictionary meaning of the word habit is disposition or tendency to practice something regularly, constantly shown to act in a certain way, acquired by frequent repetition of act. The term reading habit refers to "the behaviour which expresses the likeness of reading of individual, types of reading and tastes of reading" (Sangkaeo, 1999). It is a pattern with which an individual organises his/ her reading.

## **3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

There are plenty of studies on the reading habits of different types of readers. Some of the recent studies on the reading habits among the Secondary School students are worth mentioning are given below.

Palani (2012) reported that the reading abilities widely vary among children, adults and people. Giving appropriate training at school level can easily develop reading abilities of the children and the language teacher plays a major role in developing these skills. Kumar, Ansari, and Shukla, (2010) in their study 'Reading habits of senior secondary students at



Allahabad city' found that the majority of the reading materials children get from their school library for study. It is further described that the senior secondary students need to improve their reading habits and for effective promotion of reading habits, skills and culture, reading must be made pleasurable and voluntary. Mondal (2008) investigated that the study that the reading habit of the students is not poor and the majority of pupils enjoy the pleasure of reading. The study also revealed that girls are engaged in reading more than the boys and boys spend more time than girls in reading other than textbooks. Senthil Kumar, Abigail and Swaroop Rani (2008) stated that the reading habit among the student community has shown a progressive improvement, which is for sure a positive sign for a developing nation like India. Majid and Tan (2007) reported that a majority of the students were motivated to read for academically-related reasons such as to improve the language skills and obtain better grades in examinations. Reading was the third most preferred leisure activity after hobbies and playing on computer or on Internet. Abeyrathna and Zainab (2004) reported that the reading is mainly confined to textbooks and mainly carried out for the purpose of acquiring knowledge or for study. It is also revealed that the library is used mainly to study or do home work rather than to borrow items to read at leisure.

#### **4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The specific objectives of this study are:

- a) to understand the reading habits of secondary school students in terms of reading interest, reading preferences, type of publications and frequency of reading;
- b) to find out the language preference for reading;
- c) to know the average time spent on reading, the convenient time and place for reading;
- d) to find out the motivational factors for reading books and other reading materials;
- e) to identify the reading preferences of fictions and non-fictions;
- f) to know who encourage students and give suggestion for reading;
- g) to find out the most-liked news items from newspaper and the type of magazines preferred by the students for reading;
- h) to know the favourite reading format and reading devices preferred for reading electronic format.



## 5. METHODOLOGY

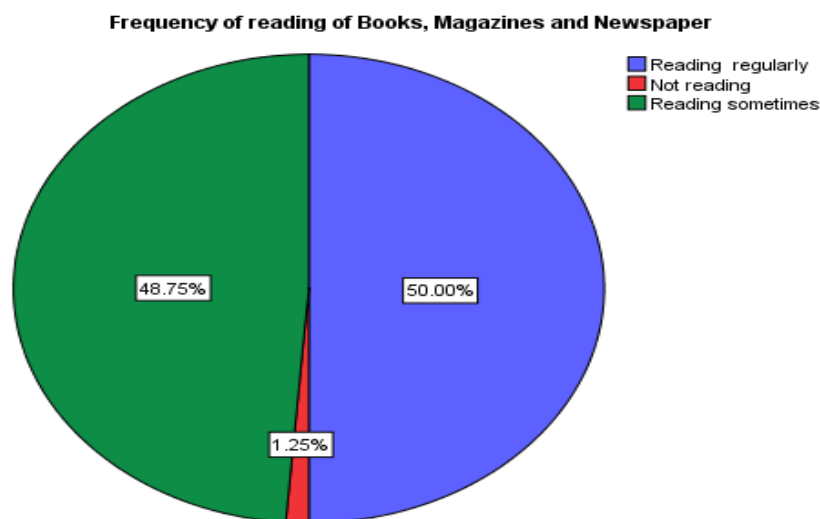
In order to understand the reading habits, reading preferences and other relevant issues of reading habits among the secondary school students a questionnaire was designed keeping in view the objectives of the study for the collection of required data for analysis. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher to eighty five IX and X standard students of the Demonstration Multipurpose School, Regional Institute of Education, Mysore. Out of this, eighty completely filled-in questionnaires were received from the students for analysis.

## 6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 80 Secondary School students participated in the survey, 32 (40%) are from IX standard and 48 are from X standard. Among the total sample 41 (51.25%) of them are female and 39 (48.75%) are male students.

**Table -1. Frequency of reading of Books, Magazines and Newspaper**

S. No.	Frequency of Reading	Number	Percentage
01	Reading regularly	40	50%
02	Not reading	1	1.25%
03	Reading sometimes	39	48.75%
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>



**Figure-1**

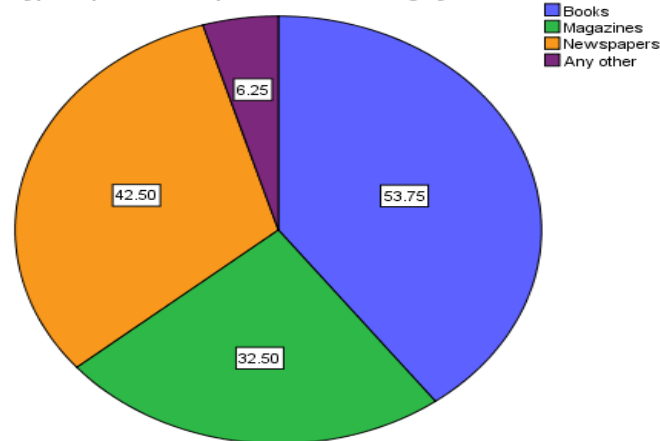
It is found from the above table and figure, that 50% of the students read regularly and the remaining (48.75%) students read sometimes and only one student responded that not reading anything.



**Table-2. Type of publications preferred for reading by the students**

S. No.	Types of Publications	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Books	43	53.75%
02	Magazines	26	32.50%
03	Newspapers	34	42.50%
04	Any other	5	6.25%

**Type of publications preferred for reading by the students**



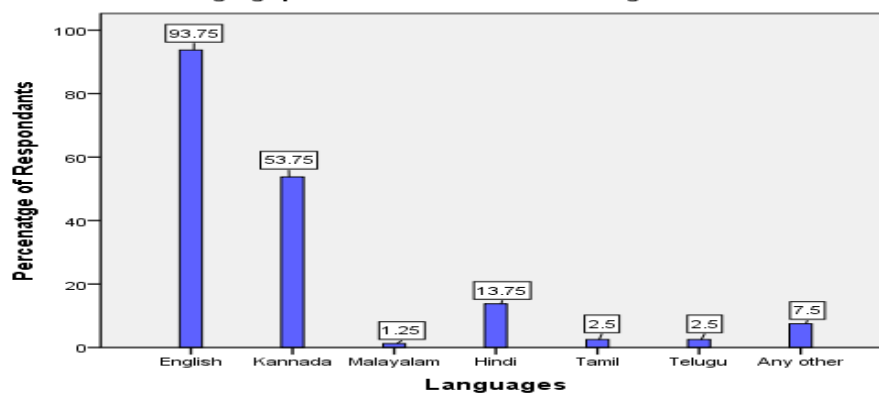
**Figure-2**

The above table and figure describes the type of publications preferred for reading by the students. Majority of the students 53.75% prefer to read books, 42.50% read Newspaper and 32.50 % students prefer to read magazines.

**Table-3. Language preference of students for reading books**

S. No.	Language preference for reading	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	English	75	93.75
02	Kannada	43	53.75
03	Malayalam	1	1.25
04	Hindi	11	13.75
05	Tamil	2	2.50
06	Telugu	3	2.50
07	Any other	6	7.50

**Language preference of students for reading books**



**Figure-3**



The most preferred language for reading books by the secondary school students as shown above is English (93.75%), followed by Kannada (53.75%) and Hindi (13.75%).

**Table-4. Average time spent per day for reading by the students**

S. No.	Average time spent per day	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	More than 3 hours	13	16.25
02	2 - 3 hours	16	20.00
03	1-2 hours	35	43.75
04	Less than one hour	16	20.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows that 43.75% of students read for 1 to 2 hours per day, 20% students 2-3 hours, 16.25% of students for more than 3 hours and 20% of students less than an hour per day.

**Table-5. The most convenient and preferred time for reading**

S. No.	Time	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Early Morning	45	56.25
02	During breakfast	7	8.75
03	While travelling to School	6	7.50
04	Evening	24	30.00
05	During free hours in school	20	25.00
06	Before going to bed	37	46.25

Table -5 clearly shows that early morning (56.25%) is the most preferred and convenient time for reading, which is followed by 'before going to bed' (46.25%) and 'evening time' (30%).

**Table-6. The convenient places for reading for the students**

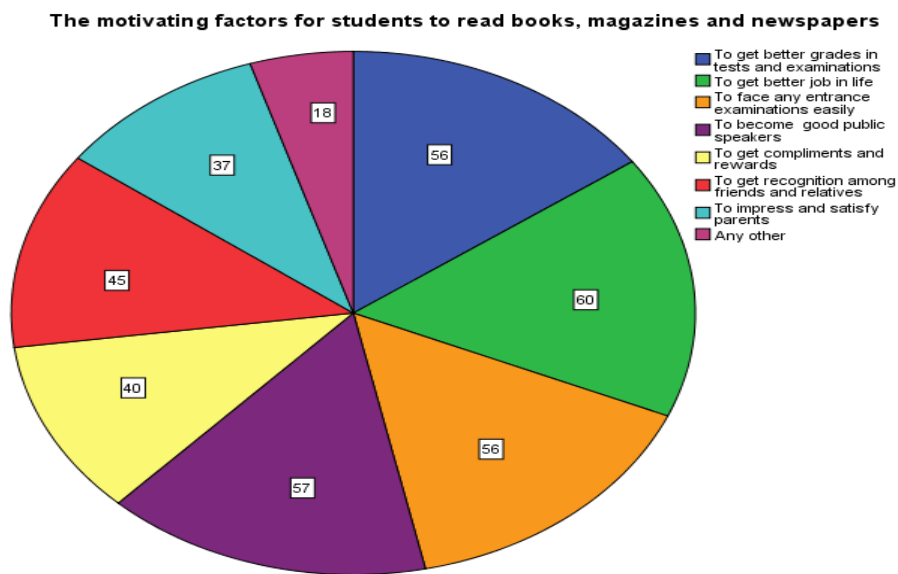
S. No.	Places	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Home	63	78.75
02	School	16	20.00
03	School Library	31	38.75
04	Public Library	6	07.50
05	While Travel	13	16.25
06	Any other	13	16.25

The above table indicates that for majority (78.75%) of students home is the most convenient place for reading. For 38.75% school library is the convenient place for reading and for 20 % school is the convenient place for reading.



**Table-7. The motivating factors for students to read books, magazines and newspapers**

S. No.	Motivating factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	To get better grades in tests and examinations	56	70
02	To get better job in life	60	75
03	To face any entrance examinations easily	56	70
04	To become good public speakers	57	71.25
05	To get compliments and rewards	40	50
06	To get recognition among friends and relatives	45	56.25
07	To impress and satisfy parents	37	46.25
08	Any other	18	22.50



**Figure-4**

The motivating factors for reading books, magazine and newspaper by the Secondary School students are shown in the table-7 and figure 4. Most of the students (75%) responded that they read to get better job in life, followed by 71.25% to become good public speakers, 70% to get better grades in tests and examinations and 70% to face any entrance examination easily.

**Table-8. The type of books preferred for reading by the students**

S. No.	Type of books preferred for reading	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Fiction (Stories – imaginary)	35	43.75
02	Non Fiction (Reality)	22	27.50
03	Both	23	28.75
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>



Type of books preferred for reading by the students

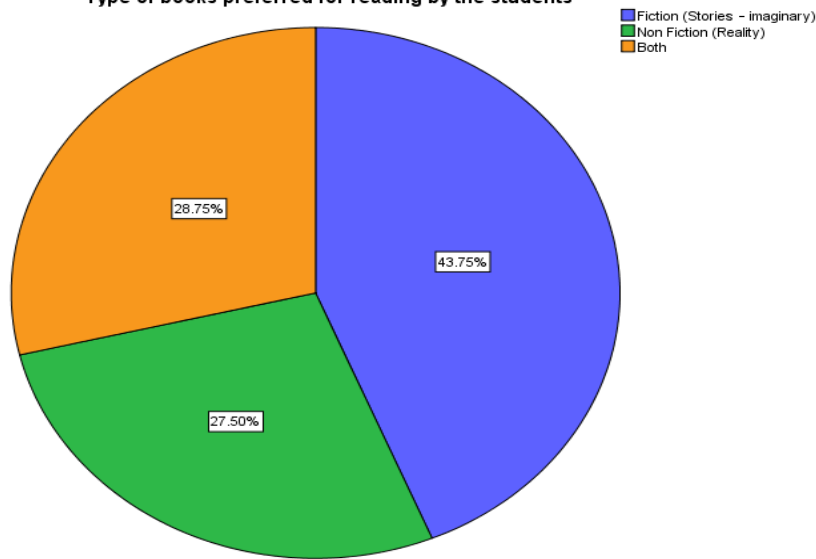


Figure -5

The above table and figure shows that 43.75% of students prefer to read fictions, 27.50% non-fiction and 28.75% of students read both types of books.

Table-9. Type of fiction preferred for reading by the students

S. No.	Type of Fiction	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Science fiction	41	51.25
02	Crime-detective stories	47	58.75
03	Adventure stories	55	68.75
04	Humour/Comedy	49	61.25
05	Fantasy	33	41.25
06	Horror stories	55	68.75
07	Animal Stories	29	36.25
08	Any other	7	8.75

Type of fiction preferred for reading by the students

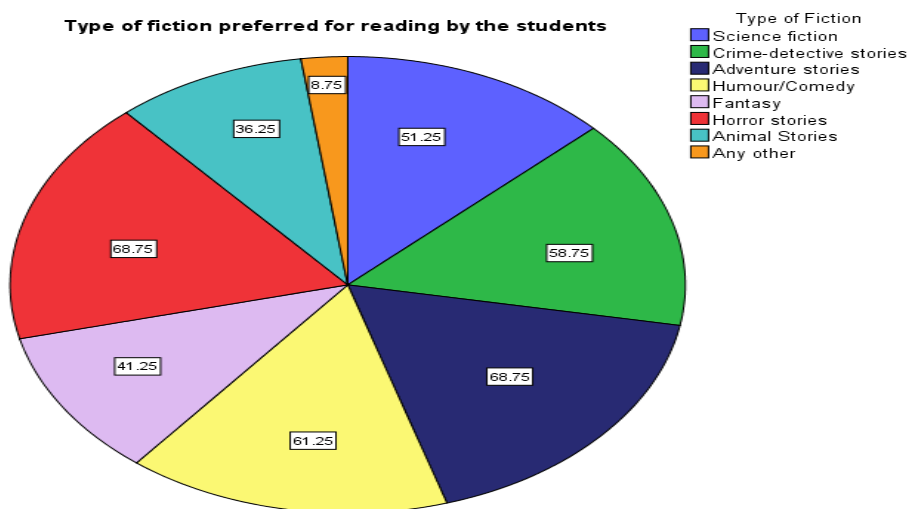


Figure -6

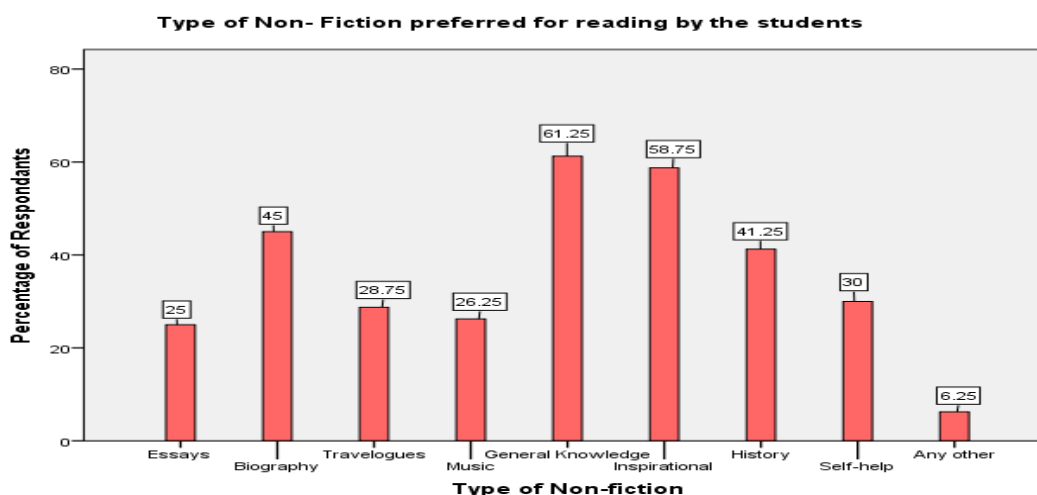




The above table and figure describes that among the types of fictions students prefer to read, adventure stories and horror stories are by 68.75% followed by humour/comedy by 61.25% and crime-detective stories by 58.75%.

**Table-10. Type of Non- Fiction preferred for reading by the students**

S. No.	Type of Non-fiction	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Essays	20	25.00
02	Biography	36	45.00
03	Travelogues	23	28.75
04	Music	21	26.25
05	General Knowledge	49	61.25
06	Inspirational	47	58.75
07	History	33	41.25
08	Self-help	24	30.00
09	Any other	5	6.25

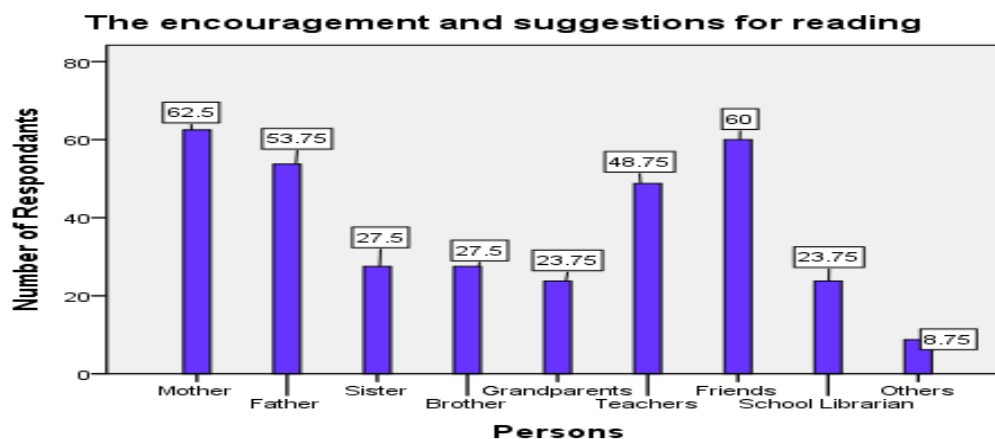


**Figure -8**

The above table and figure shows that among non-fiction 61.25% of the secondary school students prefer to read general knowledge, followed by 58.75% inspiration writings and 45% Biography.

**Table-11. The encouragement and suggestions for reading**

S. No.	Persons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Mother	50	62.50
02	Father	43	53.75
03	Sister	22	27.50
04	Brother	22	27.50
05	Grandparents	19	23.75
06	Teachers	39	48.75
07	Friends	48	60.00
08	School Librarian	19	23.75
09	Others	7	8.75



**Figure-9**

The analysis of data in the above table and figure clearly shows that majority of the students get encouragement and suggestions for reading from their mothers (62.50%) followed by friends (60%), father (53.75%) and teachers (48.75%).

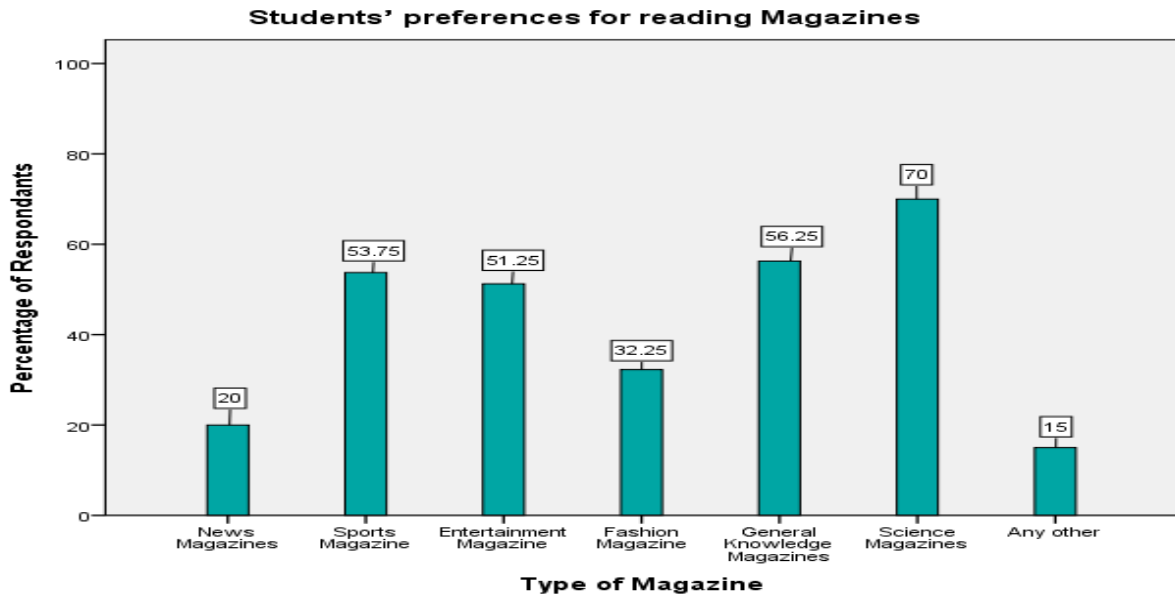
**Table-12. News items from the newspapers preferred for reading by the students**

S. No.	News Items	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Local News	35	43.75
02	National News	49	61.25
03	International News	47	58.75
04	Political News	28	35.00
05	Educational News	55	68.75
06	Cartoons and comic	60	75.00
07	Puzzles and crossword	49	61.25
08	Entertainment and Cinema	51	63.75
09	Sports News	59	73.75

The above table describes that the most interesting news items for the students from the newspaper are cartoon and comics (75%), followed by sports news (73.75%), educational news items (68.75%), Entertainment and Cinema (63.75%) and puzzles and crosswords (61.25%).

**Table-13. Students' preferences for reading Magazines**

S. No.	Type of Magazine	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	News Magazines	16	20.00
02	Sports Magazine	43	53.75
03	Entertainment Magazine	41	51.25
04	Fashion Magazine	26	32.25
05	General Knowledge Magazines	45	56.25
06	Science Magazines	56	70.00
07	Any other	12	15.00



**Figure-10**

It is found from the above table and figure that 70% of the secondary school students prefer to read science magazines followed by 56.25% general knowledge magazines and 53.75% sports magazine.

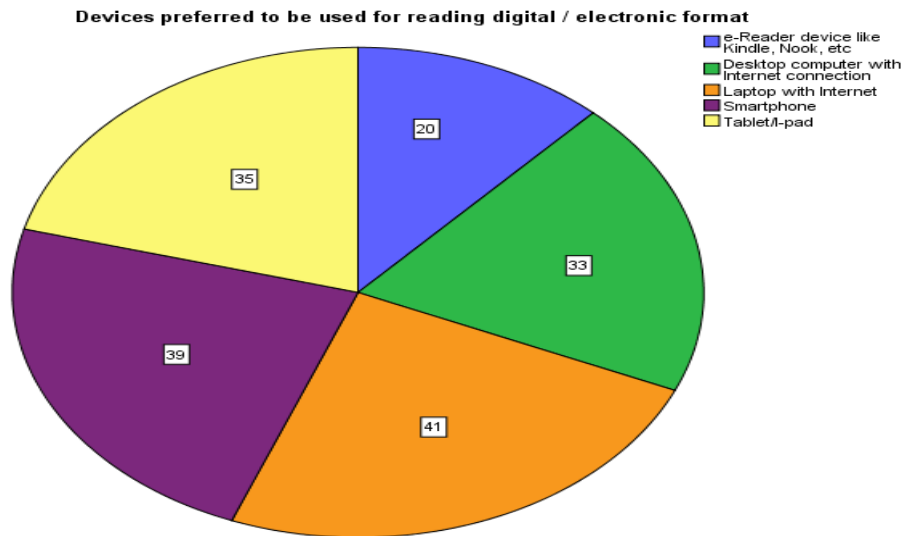
**Table-14. Secondary School students' favourite reading format**

S. No.	Favourite reading format	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Traditional Print format	15	18.75
02	Digital format	22	27.50
03	Both	43	53.75
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows that the 53.75% of students preferred to read both print and digital format, followed by digital format by 27.50% and print format only by 18.75%. This shows that the students start reading in digital format along with traditional print format.

**Table-15. Devices preferred to be used for reading digital / electronic format**

S. No.	Devices preferred	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	e-Reader device like Kindle, Nook, etc	20	25.00
02	Desktop computer with Internet connection	33	41.25
03	Laptop with Internet	41	51.25
04	Smartphone	39	48.75
05	Tablet/I-pad	35	43.75



**Figure-11**

The most preferred device to read digital/electronic format is laptop with internet connection by 51.25 %, followed by Smartphone by 48.75%, Tablet/i phone by 43.75% and desktop with internet connection by 41.25%. This clearly indicates that the latest e-reading devices like Kindle, Nook, etc are not very much popular among the students.

## **7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The careful analysis and interpretation of the data collected for the study lead us to some important findings. They are:

1. Majority of the secondary school students read regularly 40(50%) and remaining 39 (48.75%) students read sometime and only one student d not read does not read anything.
2. Secondary school students prefer to read books (53.75%), followed by Newspaper (42.50%) and magazines (32.50 %).
3. The most preferred language for reading books and other reading materials is English (93.75%), followed by Kannada (53.75%) and Hindi (13.75%).
4. The average time spent by the students for reading is 1 to 2 hours (43.75%) , 2-3 hours (20%), more than 3 hours (16.25%) and remaining students (20%) less than an hour per day.
5. The convenient and preferred time for reading is 'early morning' (56.25%) followed by 'before going to bed' (46.25%) and 'evening time' (30%).



6. The most convenient and preferred places for reading by the students are home (78.75%), followed by the school library (38.75%) and school (20 %).
7. The motivating factors for reading books, magazine and newspaper by the secondary school students are 'to get better job in life' (75%), followed by 'to become good public speaker' (71.25%), 'to get better grades in tests and examinations' (70%)
8. The most preferred type of books for reading is fiction (43.75%) followed by non-fiction (27.50%) and both types (28.75%).
9. Among the types of fictions students prefer to read the adventure stories and horror stories (68.75%) followed by humour/comedy (61.25%) and crime-detective stories (58.75%).
10. Among the non-fiction secondary school students prefer to read general knowledge (61.25%) followed by inspiration writings (58.75%) and Biography (45%).
11. Majority of the students get encouragement and suggestions for reading from their mothers (62.50%) followed by friends (60%), father (53.75%) and teachers (48.75%).
12. The most interesting items for students reading the newspapers are cartoon and comics (75%) followed by sports news (73.75%) and educational news items (68.75%).
13. Students preferred to read Science magazines (70%) followed by general knowledge magazines (56.25%) and sports magazine (53.75%).
14. Students prefer to read both print and digital format (53.75%), followed by digital format (27.50%) and only print format (18.75%) and this indicates that the students start reading in digital format along with the traditional print format.
15. The students' choice for reading electronic format is Laptop with internet connection (51.25 %) followed by Smartphone (48.75%), Tablet/I-phone (43.75%) and desktop with internet connection (41.25%). This clearly indicates that the latest e-reading devices like Kindle, Nook, etc. are not very popular among the students.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

The reading habit is an important tool for lifelong learning and this learning leads to the overall development of the individual. The reading habit needs to be inculcated in the very beginning of students' life as it helps them to become more fulfilled and complete in all the aspects of life. The study reveals that the students read books, magazines and newspaper



regularly to improve knowledge, to acquire language skills and as a recreation activity. Parents and friends play a major role in the promotion of reading habit among the students. The major motivation factors for reading by the students are to get better job in life, to become good public speaker and also perform and score well in the tests and examinations. The students prefer to read fiction/storey books of adventures type and among the non-fictions they prefer to read the general knowledge books, inspirational writings and the biographies.

It summarised that the secondary school students read books, magazines and newspaper regularly and it is the responsibility of the parents, teachers, school librarians and administrators to create suitable atmosphere and provide all possible infrastructure and encouragement to inculcate, promote and enhance reading habit among the secondary school students.

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