

Habit Of Reading And Its Importance Among Children

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habit of reading can result in an all-round development of children. digital books in all local languages on a common platform can do wonders.

why is habit of reading important for children

Even after holding a master's degree in Physics; C.V. Raman had to join the Finance Department in Calcutta initially due to lack of apt opportunities during those times. However, his love for Science and Physics did not fade away.

It is said that once while returning from work in the evening, he spotted the signboard of 'Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science' (IACS). As soon as he saw it, he jumped out of the moving tram that he was sitting in.

What happened next made him a legend for which he is known to all of us today. But more on his story a little later.

Before that, sharing a bit about my growing-up years

My story-world was amazing due to **Bengali writers like Sukumar Ray** during my childhood. He was the first writer of India to use illustrations along with his compositions. Oh! It used to be magical, long before the world of Harry Potters came along. Undeniable, it did inculcate the habit of reading in me.

Some of his stories have taught me the value of small things, people, place and anger-management.

It is astonishing how Sukumar Ray could see the world from a child's point of view and almost created virtual wonderlands for the little ones!

And because of that early introduction to Bengali literature which my mother made, while growing up and even today, I have continued to read and be inspired by books not just in English but in Bengali too. I am soaking in the best of both the worlds.

Bit from others' experiences

I was talking to my colleague in office and he shared that while his mother loved reading Premchand, he has hardly read any stories in Hindi. Growing up, his parents and then his school only exposed him to reading in English. And now, even though he wants to, he finds Hindi books rather boring to read. Therefore, he couldn't really foster the habit of reading within himself.

This made me wonder how many of us are lucky enough to experience reading in our home-languages.

The ever-inspiring Steve Jobs!

Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple one day walked into the cafeteria for his lunch. This was the time

when he was ousted from Apple and he had started building Next Computers. Two of his engineers were eating bagels. Steve entered the cafeteria, started making his bagel, when he suddenly turned towards the two engineers and asked them, “Who is the most powerful person in the world?”.

One of the engineers who had spent a lot of time in South Africa, said, “Steve, I think the most powerful person is Nelson Mandela”. Steve was not impressed. In his usual style, he shot back, “No, that’s incorrect. The most powerful man in the world is the storyteller. This is because stories can influence, stories can inspire, stories can bring a change in the world. Disney owns the business of storytelling and I am fed up with this. I want to own it”.

Everyone knows that Steve Jobs then went on to commence Pixar Animations, which released Toy Story. It became so popular that Pixar was eventually bought by Disney and Steve actually owned the storytelling business. This part of the story however is not important.

What is important is what Steve says about the stories. THEY CAN INFLUENCE, INSPIRE AND CHANGE THE WORLD. They can shape young minds, they can expose them to the world they have not seen, to the experiments they can’t conduct, to places they can’t go.

In the present times

Our Hon’ Prime Minister during one of his speeches had talked about “Book pyaao” like a bank of books. Like how every village in the country needs to have enough books which can inspire students to read.

But how are we going to turn his vision into a reality?

How do we make so much material reach the students in rural villages and government schools in our country? Especially the material in local languages.

We constantly nag that kids of this generation are not rooted to their local languages nor do they have any interest in reading books in their mother tongue. And a big reason for this is because they do not have access. Our ecosystem has not been able to ignite the interest of students to proactively pick up books and start reading them.

Setting up physical libraries is tough. It is expensive, time consuming, difficult to manage and very difficult to update. There will always be limitations to how many books a physical library can have.

Did you know?

The ‘Akshara Library’ in the deep forests of Kerala is a true example of love for reading. A school teacher and a tea stall owner started this and now it is a massive source of learning for the tribal children there. With the deepest of respects for this model, we have to accept that it is extremely difficult to scale this.

But what if, all of these writings can be brought down to a single platform and everyone is able to access them whenever they feel like.

Digital Book Library on a Mobile App

With the reach of mobile and internet, it gives us an amazing opportunity to create a channel for distributing books to all students and that too in their local languages.

Over the years, we at iDream Education have made a lot of efforts in this regard. Today across all our

solutions and very notably on the iDream Learning App, we have a dedicated section called "Digital Book Library" .

Inside of which you will find stories, poems, picture books, inspirational biographies, books on arts, literature and so much more.

Also read: learning in mother tongue

The best part is that all these books are being available to students in both English and their local languages. We already have books in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Oriya on our platform and we are consciously working to enrich this section.

Some screenshots of the feature on the app:

digital books

categories of digital books

A few days back, below reviews were posted by users on the Google play listing of the app:

- *"Good app..... Full free access..... interesting books and biographies.." ~ Vinisha*
- *"In fact there are motivational biographies of legends and books to read and a cute animated learning video of the chapter" ~ Sunita*

And we couldn't be happier!

We strongly believe that to inculcate in our children the habit of reading, it is important that books should be easily accessible to every student far and near. And rapid penetration of Smartphones and the internet in our country is making this possible.

How can habit of reading create an edge in children

Exposure: Habit of reading can keep introducing a child to innumerable bunch of books. Books can open up the world of possibilities. Sitting at my home, I can know about ancient civilizations, countries that exist beyond the oceans, cultures which one might never get to experience. Not only this but also incorporating new facts and new ideas in their minds one can groom up into an ideal conversationalist. This makes a person confident enough to present himself to the outer world and be at par.

Moreover, knowledge can make one wiser, can give them skills to grow, can inspire them to work harder and pursue their dreams.

Kindles imagination: Imagination is something that children should never be deprived of. It is the only way by which a child can develop his brain, explore his creative and innovative side. Books can actually activate imagination in a very effective way and eventually make a child see the unseen and discover that is yet to be discovered.

Psychological aspects: Books can keep minds engaged, help think better, and enable a person to stay calm and positive. Reading can improve memory, expand vocabulary and stimulate the brain in all good ways. While we are engaged with a book, our minds also get involved. As a result, we stay away from other worries and stress.

Brings in discipline: When one cultivates the habit of reading, he sub-consciously makes it a point

to complete reading a book within a stipulated period of time. He becomes time-bound, punctual and automatically brings in self-control, regulations and dimension to his life.

Improves Language Skills: Learning your mother tongue well can create a strong base for learning other languages too. However, reading books of different genres and languages can infuse this efficiently. Children are already blessed with quick grasping skills. Hence, if a child starts reading books from a very young age, he automatically develops open doors towards early language learning.

That's the impact books can have.

Let's make this world a better place with Stories

If you know of anyone who would like to list their books on our platform or if you know of other similar initiatives, please do let us know in the comments sections below.

Coming back to C.V. Raman's story....

Before you sign off, if you are wondering what C V Raman did, here's what happened, when he jumped from the tram.

He abruptly rushed into the premises of IACS. There was obviously an awkward situation initially! But then, he was welcomed by Amritlal Sircar whose father had actually founded the institute to promote Indian Science. Their meeting went well and C.V. Raman joined the institute. He was so devoted that he worked in the lab after his office hours. Soon, he started producing high quality scientific papers attracting several experts' attention.

Eventually, the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University offered Raman the Taraknath Palit Chair of Physics at the University. Quitting the Finance job, he delightfully accepted this offer and could finally pursue what he always wanted to!

Takeaway

The story of C.V. Raman that we began this article with is an example of utter dedication for what you love and want to achieve. Such stories can serve as a massive source of inspiration and positively build the habit of reading among children. Hence, making these available to them on easy-to-access platforms and in their own languages should continue to be the primary focus.

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