

Newspaper Reading Habits Among Postgraduate Students of Periyar University, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Reading is a way to improve knowledge of one's own experiences and it may be an exciting journey to discovery. Reading transfers experiences to the individual in order that the reader might expand one's horizons, recognize, enlarge, and exaggerate his or her interest and gain deeper understanding of the globe. Newspaper is also an important source of information for all and brings news of daily happenings of the world. In this study, an attempt has been made to study the newspaper reading habits among postgraduate students of Periyar University, Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Information seeking, newspaper reading habits, newspapers, news seeking

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INTRODUCTION

When we consider newspapers, we expect of them as carrying us news, when we think about news, we predict of what's happening presently around us. This can be a very inadequate description of news as well as newspapers [1, 2]. A newspaper is not only solely provides a source of information but also it is a storehouse of information.

Reading newspaper daily is one among the simplest ways in which to stay up-to-date with the ever technology world. All the necessary news and events of the world are delivered to our threshold by the newspapers. Newspapers bring us a selection of the news from around the world [3, 4].

There is news from the parliament which provides information with regard to decisions affecting the country. News from the world comes through reporters for local newspapers stations abroad or through news agencies in different countries. Newspapers can also act as a forum for the readers and writers to express their ideas and views on various aspects [5–7].

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The study explores the newspaper reading habits among postgraduate (PG) students of Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu.

Which covers students from social science, science, humanities, and arts streams for the academic year 2017 to 2018. Furthermore, the study focuses on leading dailies such as Dhinanthi, Dinamalar, Dinakaran, The Hindu (Tamil), Dinamani, Malaimalar, Malaimurasu, and some of the English dailies which includes The Hindu, Deccan Chronicle, Business Line, Times of India, and Indian Express, which are being subscribed in central library of Periyar University, Salem [8–10].

Some of the objectives of this study are to:

- Find out the purpose of reading newspapers by PG students
- Know the time being devoted by PG students for reading newspapers
- Know the different areas of interests of PG students in newspapers
- Assess the extent of PG students depending on print newspapers other than Internet, radio, television, and other mass media for news
- Find out the opinions of students towards reading newspapers
- Suggestions to promote newspapers reading habits among PG students

METHODOLOGY

The work employs systematic, objective, and quantitative research techniques using a well-structured questionnaire. This is a survey in

which the sample was selected by means of random sampling to collect the data. Total 200 questionnaires were distributed among the PG students of all the disciplines of the university, out of which, 179 were returned with a response rate of 89.5% [11].

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The information given by the PG students is analyzed and presented.

Languages Known by Students

Students were asked about the languages they know. It is observed that Tamil being regional language dominates with 170 (94.97%) students. Indeed, 150 (83.79%) students know English language being medium of instruction and 42 (23.46%) students know other languages.

Newspaper Reading Place

The students read newspapers in different places. Majority of the students, that is, 117 (65.36%) read newspapers at library and 62 (34.63%) of the students read newspapers at home/hostel.

Preference of Language for Reading Newspapers

Indeed, 103 (57.54%) students read Tamil newspapers, while 63 (30.16%) read English newspapers and 13 (7.26%) students read Hindi newspapers.

Time Spent for Reading Newspaper

Study was done to know how much time students spend for reading newspapers every day. 74 (41.34%) students read newspapers for less than an hour, while 90 (50.27%) respondents spend 1½ hour. Followed by around 16 (8.93%) devote 2 hours and only very few around 9 (5.02%) spend more than 2 hours per day.

Source of Newspaper

Majority of the students, that is, 83 (46.36%) depend on self subscription, Followed by 96 (53.63%) students rely on libraries to read newspapers.

Format/Version of Newspapers Reading

Table 1 reveals that the format/version of the newspaper preferred by the students. Most of the students, that is, 161 (89.94%) prefer to read print version of newspapers and only 18 (10.05%) prefer to read on Internet.

Choice of News in the Newspapers

Table 2 shows that the students choice of news for their reading in the newspapers. The highest number 136(75.97%) of students

Table 1: Format/Version of Newspaper Reading.

Sl. No.	Format/version	Number of respondents (%)
1	Internet version	18(10.05)
2	Print version	161 (89.95)
Total		179 (100)

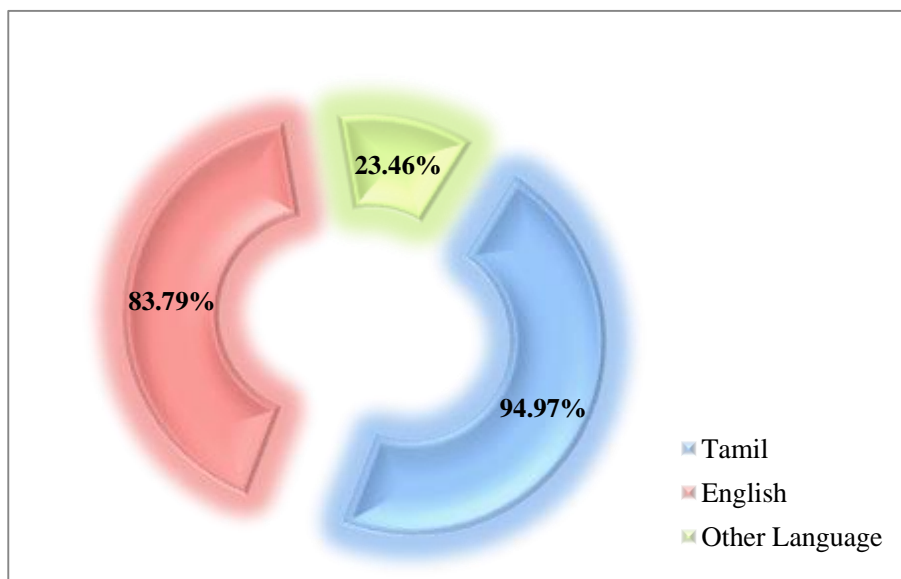


Table 2: Choice of News in the Newspapers

Sl. No.	Choice of news	Number of respondents with (%)
1	Sensational News	32(17.87)
2	Advertisement/business	111 (62.01)
3	Editorial page	26 (14.52)
4	International	98 (54.74)
5	Politics	104 (58.10)
6	Sports	96 (53.63)
7	Entertainment	140 (78.21)
9	Education	136 (75.97)
10	Agriculture	29 (16.20)
11	Health	76 (42.45)
12	Letters	16 (8.93)

prefer educational news, followed by 96 (53.63%) of the students prefer sports news, political news 104 (58.10%), international news 98 (54.74%), health-related news 76 (42.45%), sensational news 32 (17.87%), editorial 26 (14.52%), entertainment 140 (78.21%), advertisement and business purpose 111 (62.01%). Moreover, agriculture-related news is preferred by only 29 (16.20%) of respondents, respectively. The least preferred part of news is letters by the readers' portion, that is, 16 (8.93%).

Purpose of Reading Newspaper

Newspapers are a significant source of knowledge in enlightened societies, providing most up-to-date information to users. Newspapers serve up numerous functions for various purposes for different categories of users. Students were asked regarding the various purposes of reading newspapers and that they have given totally different reasons for reading newspapers.

Table 3 expresses that majority of the respondents, that is, 134 (74.86%) read newspaper to obtain information, while 92 (51.39%) of the respondents read newspaper for general knowledge and 85 (47.48%) of the respondents read for educational purpose. The least number of respondents, that is, 31 (17.31%) read newspaper as it is their as usual task of the day, as a leisure activity and also for getting various scholarship information, respectively.

Preferred Time for Reading Newspapers

Most of the respondents, that is, 128 (82.12%) read newspapers in the morning, while 34 (18.99%) of respondents read during any time of the day, 4 (4.08%) of the students read in the evening, and only 17 (9.49%) read in the afternoon.

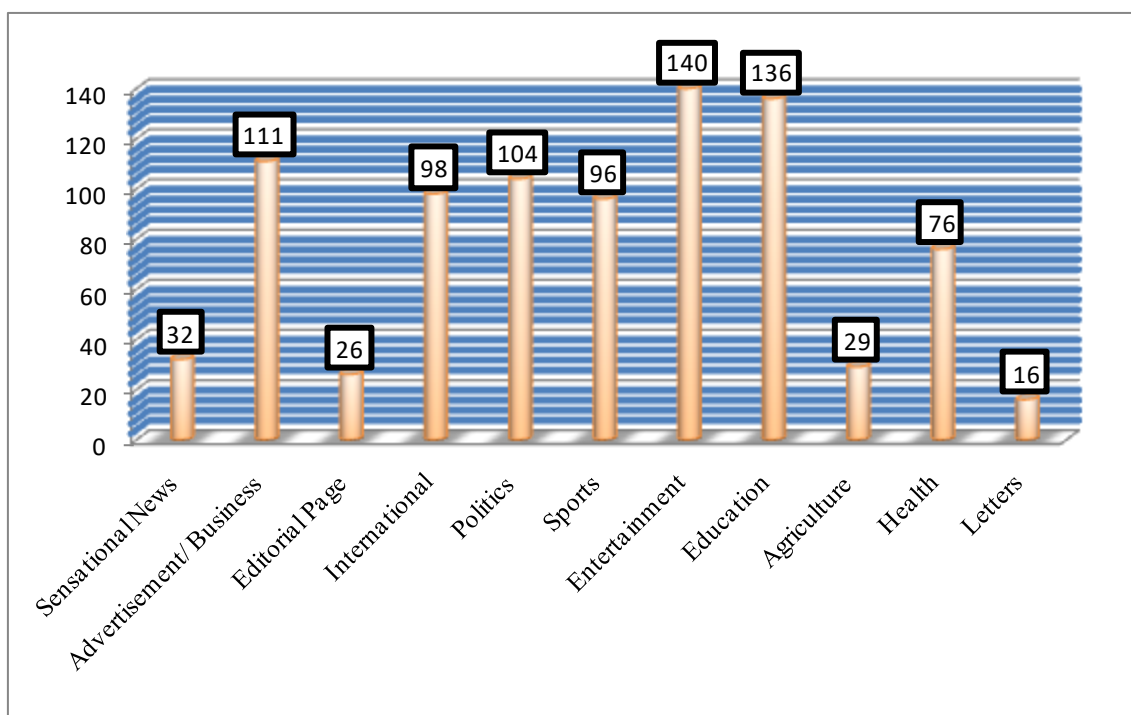


Fig. 1: Choice of News in the Newspapers.

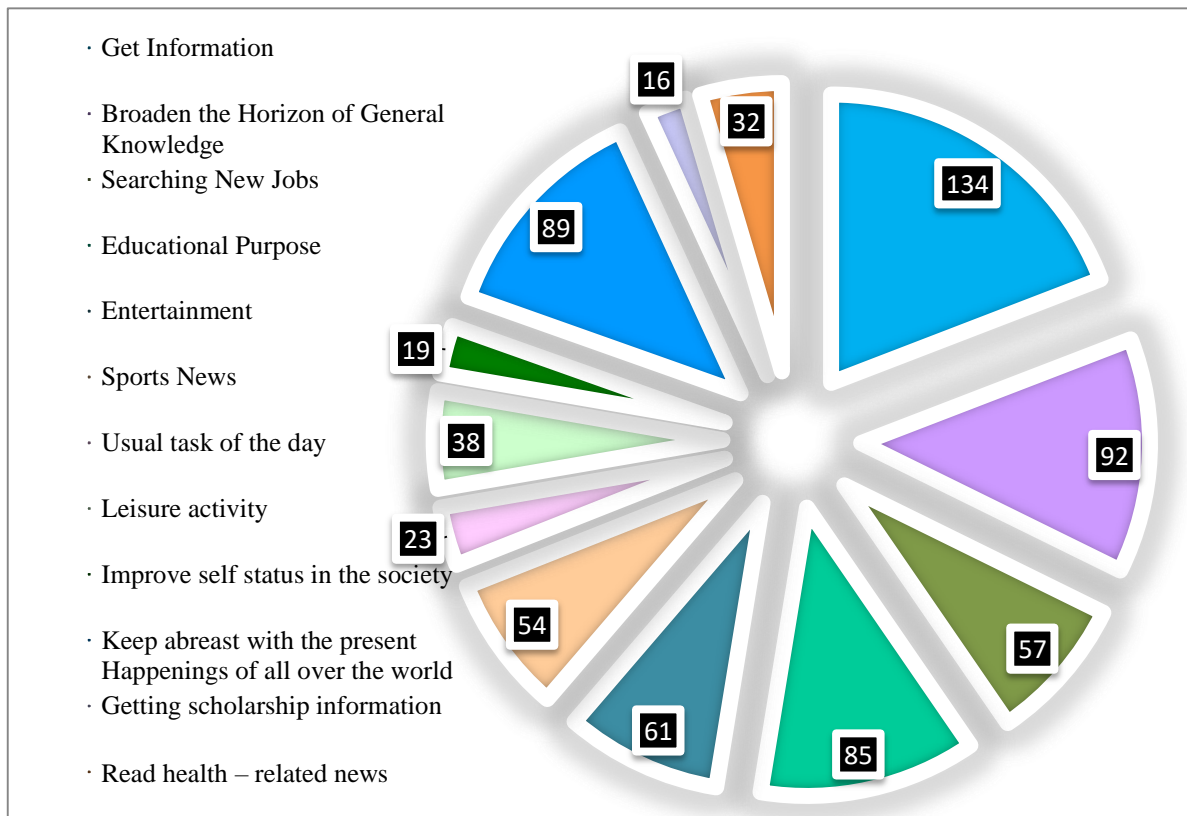


Fig. 2: Purpose of Reading Newspapers.

Table 3: Purpose of Reading Newspapers.

Sl. No.	Purpose	Number of respondents with (%)
1	Get information	134 (74.86)
2	Broaden the horizon of general knowledge	92(51.39)
3	Searching new jobs	57 (31.84)
4	Educational purpose	85 (47.48)
5	Entertainment	61 (34.07)
6	Sports news	54 (30.16)
7	Usual task of the day	23 (12.84)
8	Leisure activity	38 (21.22)
9	Improve self status in the society	19 (10.61)
10	Keep abreast with the present happenings of all over the world	89 (49.72)
11	Getting scholarship information	16 (8.93)
12	Read health-related news	32 (17.87)

Constraints in Reading Newspapers

Majority of the respondents, that is, 147 (77.55%) feel that time is a major constraint as they do not get time to read the newspapers, while 32 (17.87%) feel non-availability of newspapers at the right time and place.

Use of Internet for Reading Online Newspaper

The rapid growth of information and communication technology has led to the wide spread use of Internet in almost all the daily affairs of human life. Using Internet people can access to the newspapers everywhere. In the study, it was noticed that 42 (23.46%) students access Internet for reading online newspapers, while 137 (76.53%) respondents donot read newspapers online.

Newspapers Role in Improving the Language and Communication Skills

The role of newspapers in improving the language and communication skills was analyzed. 157 (87.70%) are of the opinion that they agree newspaper reading plays an important role in improving their language and communication skills, while 36 (20.11%) of the students do not agree with it.

Effective Sources of News

With the advantage of information and communication technology, there are varieties of source of news. Here an attempt has been made to know which source of news students

feel more effective. Table 4 reveals that majority of the students, that is, 156 (87.15%) believe television is effective source of news, 102 (56.98%) of the respondents believe newspaper, 87 (48.60%) believe online news, and 23 (12.84%) with the opinion that radio is the effective source of news.

Purpose of Using Internet on Mobile

The study found that majority of the students, that is, 123 (68.71%) are accessing Internet to read newspapers on their mobile, while very few number of students, that is, 56(31.28%) do not read newspapers on their mobile. Table 5 shows that the different purposes of using Internet on their mobile. The majority of respondents using Internet for the purpose of general information, that is, 78 (43.57%), while 53 (29.60%) of the respondents use Internet for the purpose of social networks, 30 (16.75%) of the respondents use Internet for entertainment, followed by 18 (10.05%) of the respondents use for news channels.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

It is found that majority of the students, that is, 94.97% read Tamil newspapers and most of them (65.36%) read newspapers at library. However, 50.27% students spend 1½ an hour a day for reading newspaper. Indeed, 46.36% of students are self subscribers of the newspapers and the number of students who access to the newspapers in library is marginal, that is, 18.37%. In this digital environment, almost all the students seem to be tech savvy, but 89.94% of the students prefer print newspapers and only 10.05% of them read newspaper on Internet.

Table 4: Effective Sources of News.

Sl. No.	Sources	Number of respondents with (%)
1	Newspapers	102 (56.98)
2	Television	156 (87.15)
3	Online news	87 (22.90)
4	Radio	27 (15.08)

Table 5: Purpose of Using Internet on Mobile.

Sl. No.	Purpose of using Internet on mobile	Number of respondents with (%)
1	Entertainment	30(16.75)
2	Social networks	53 (29.60)
3	General information	78(43.57)
4	News channels	18 (10.05)

The study shows that 78.21% of students prefer entertainment news followed by education-related news. Majority of the respondents, that is, 134 (74.86%) read newspaper to obtain information, while 92(51.39%) of the respondents read newspaper for general knowledge and 85 (47.48%) of the respondents read for educational purpose.

A total of 87.15% of the respondents believe television are effective source of news. However, 77.55% feel that time is a major constraint as they do not get time to read the newspapers, and 76.53% of respondents do not read newspapers online.

On data analysis and opinion given by the respondents, some important suggestions have been made, which will help in promoting the newspaper reading habits among PG students of Periyar University, Salem.

1. University library should increase subscription of the newspapers and inspire the students to make use of newspapers in the library through user education programs.
2. The awareness about the importance of newspaper reading and about sections of newspapers must be created among PG students which will help them keep update with current happenings around the world.
3. Awareness has to be created on the use of online newspapers, which may, ultimately, help for the cause of environmental protection.
4. With so many news portals available online, students must be encouraged to prefer news portals for getting instant news of their interest.
5. Majority of the students are not aware of news portals. Therefore, libraries should promote the use of different news portals among library users by creating awareness through orientation programs.

CONCLUSIONS

As it is well known that, reading is an important activity in the process of learning, which can shape good personality, ideas, right thinking, and brings change in attitude of individuals. Newspapers, particularly, are the prime conveyors of current information to the people. In spite of the availability of several other sources of news like books, magazines

(print media), radio, television channels, telephone, electronic media, and so forth. Yet newspapers continued to dominate as the main channel of current information. Newspapers not only offer current news but they also conjointly contain challenging, thought-provoking and informative articles, features, editorial and subeditorials, analysis, and observations. In today's extremely competitive world, newspapers will equip students with necessary information, knowledge, and insights which is able to provide them the abundant needed required edge for being eminent not just for competitive examinations or job interviews, however, conjointly in their skilled and social life. Therefore, newspapers are necessary for university students.

This study reveals that most of the PG students are in the habit of reading newspapers but still they are not aware of the advantage of online newspapers and news portals which can spontaneously update their knowledge by providing latest and nascent information. Therefore, the library professionals must create more awareness of such news sources and libraries must ensure that the students have access to wide variety of newspapers, so as to enable the students to read their preferred newspapers and enhance their knowledge base which can help them be more productive in their academics and lead a responsible life in the society.

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