

From Shelves to Souls: Reviving Reading Culture Through Creative School Library Programs

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Abstract: *School libraries play a critical role in nurturing reading habits, information literacy, and lifelong learning among students. This paper examines how innovative school library programs can strengthen reading culture through structured and engaging interventions. It presents practical initiatives implemented within a school setting, including book clubs, reading challenges, author interactions, peer recommendation systems, digital library platforms, library orientation activities, and technology-enabled reading support. The paper also highlights inclusive resource curation, scheduled library periods, recognition programs, and experiential learning visits as mechanisms for increasing student engagement with reading. These initiatives collectively demonstrate how school libraries can evolve from traditional resource centres into dynamic learning environments that foster curiosity, collaboration, critical thinking, and sustained reading motivation. This paper aims to describe and evaluate innovative school library practices implemented to strengthen reading culture among school students.*

Keywords: School libraries; Reading culture; Literacy promotion; Student engagement; Information literacy; Library innovation; Digital learning resources; Lifelong learning

About the School Library

A school library is more than just a collection of books- it is the heart of a school's intellectual and cultural life. It is a dedicated space where students and teachers can access information, explore new ideas, and develop a lifelong love for reading. Current trends in school libraries include digital integration, Use of e-books, audiobooks, and online databases alongside traditional books. Maker spaces and creative corners include include areas for coding, crafts, robotics, and design thinking activities. Open educational resources and online platforms such as like NDLI, e-Pathshala, and Swayam are being integrated. As well as using AI Tools & Reading Apps, such as Reading Coach, which helps track progress. School libraries play a pivotal role in Student development as they foster critical thinking and information literacy to evaluate reliable sources. Post-Pandemic Shifts result in Libraries as collaborative spaces, not just silent zones- a greater emphasis on digital citizenship and safe online research. School libraries face challenges keeping resources updated in a rapidly changing information world. Balancing screen time with print reading and Training teachers and students in effective digital resource use is part of library functioning for optimum use. The following initiatives were implemented in the school library to revive the reading culture.

Creating a Reader-Friendly Environment

A reader-friendly school library fosters curiosity, comfort, and a love of books is said to be reader-friendly. It starts with a cosy, inviting area where pupils can roam about. A wide collection that represents a range of cultures, interests, and reading levels, age-appropriate displays, and well-organized shelves serves a diverse student body. While engaging events like book talks, reading challenges, and "Reader of the Month" awards encourage students to read more, the library is welcoming with cosy seating, well-lit areas, and interactive

reading nooks. Whether they are reluctant readers or aspiring book lovers, all types of readers will find a space with digital tools, audiobooks, and quiet areas. The school library transforms into a caring environment for lifelong readers by fusing accessibility, inclusion, and innovation.

Integrating Library Periods into the Timetable

Reading and information literacy shift from a pastime to an essential education component when library hours are integrated into the school calendar. Students have regular, unbroken time to peruse literature, carry out research, and hone their independent learning abilities during a designated library period. It enables the librarian to introduce digital and print resources that complement the curriculum, teach information-seeking techniques, and assist students in choosing appropriate reading materials. Consistent scheduling stimulates participation in library-based events and contributes to developing a reading routine, both support the establishment of a school culture that views the library as a crucial part of education. When schools formally devote library time, they express that reading, study, and independent research are just as important as academic topics.

Curating Inclusive and Diverse Reading Materials

Every student may recognize themselves in the tales they read and learn about other viewpoints, cultures, and experiences when inclusive and varied reading resources are curated in school libraries. All children can feel acknowledged and included in the school library if items have been appropriately selected to accommodate a range of reading levels, languages, and interests. Books that reflect various cultures, languages, and perspectives. Graphic novels, audiobooks, magazines, newspapers, and OERs (Open Educational Resources) support open access to quality content.

Innovative Library Programs and Activities

To create vibrant, interesting locations beyond regular book lending, libraries must implement creative programs and activities. Access and interaction are further enhanced by incorporating technology through e-readers, online reading platforms, and virtual book chats. Libraries can stimulate curiosity, promote teamwork, and turn reading into an engaging, interactive experience that promotes academic development and a lifetime love of books by creating programs that accommodate a range of interests, age groups, and learning styles.

1) **Library as a Skill Hub** – Today's library serves as a dynamic skill center where students may obtain practical library management experience in addition to being a location to read and check out books. They learn the fundamentals of library maintenance through supervised activities, such as classifying resources, fixing damaged items to increase their usefulness, and methodically arranging and storing books using the Dewey Decimal classification scheme. Additionally, students are exposed to using contemporary library administration software, which helps them comprehend the procedures involved in digital cataloging and circulation. In addition to teaching students accountability and organizational skills, these hands-on experiences expose them to library science as a potential career path, emphasizing its application in academic, public, and digital settings. The library is a true center for knowledge and skill development because it serves as a learning laboratory that fosters critical abilities like cooperation, problem-solving, and attention to detail.

2) **Book clubs** (e.g., Book Lovers' Club) - Schools offer a lively forum for students to discuss literature, explore a variety of genres, and share their reading experiences through book clubs like the Book Lovers' Club. Members can suggest books, discuss topics, and share viewpoints in these clubs, which promotes group learning and improves understanding and critical thinking. School book clubs assist in developing a deeper appreciation for literature while boosting self-esteem, communication skills, and a lifetime love of reading by creating a sense of community among readers. Weekly classes are held with the students to have interactive discussions, story time, and enjoyable weekly activities to make their reading worthwhile. Some of the best activities posted on the School's Facebook page, the report of the same is mentioned below:

- **Bookworm Club conducted** various activities, such as Sort Fiction V/s Non-Fiction. Students understood the concept of fiction and non-fiction categories of books in the library and how they are classified under different headings on the shelves. Random Writing - Students were given 40 minutes to read a book, and after reading, they had to pen down the summary of the story they read in the stipulated time. Know about Library Technical Section - Students learn how a book is processed in the library before it is included in the stack of books in the bookshelves. Shopping for Words from the Newspaper - Students collect difficult words from the newspaper and write the same word on a small piece of paper along with the meaning of that word on the backside. All the collected

words are kept in a paper envelope/bag, and then students purchase/sell their kitty of words with their mates. Tower of Book Challenge - Students prepare a tower of book titles and their authors of all the books they have read. They then present the same in the form of a vertical paper tower.

- **Library orientation game** – When primary school students graduate to the middle wing in grade 6, the library period for the first time can be nerve-racking and overwhelming. So many tall cupboards and shelves lined up one after the other. This is because they have graduated from the cosiness and familiarity of the Reading Room in the primary wing to the senior school library, which has thousands of books. Students become comfortable in navigating the library, its racks, its shelves and cupboards, and once they understand how the books in the library are organized, locating relevant material becomes a joyful adventure.



- **Book scoop** – Book Scoops are graphic organisers that help students to analyse the story by identifying the characters, setting, problem, events and resolutions. Book Scoops help students develop their comprehension, memory, and communication abilities because they involve summarising and recounting a story or a text in their own words. The SCOOP acronym is a great guide to make this process easier to remember....SCOOP stands for - Setting, Characters, Order of Events, Oh no! The Problem, Problem Solved.



- **Call no. Sorting** – An Engaging Activity by the Book Lover Clubbers. As the new session commenced, the Work Ex. Clubbers of the School began their yearlong clubbing activities with enthusiasm and gusto. Very often, it is seen that library users do not place the books in their rightful places on the library shelves. Books are either not kept in the proper places or kept on the tables. This is inconvenient to the users who come later to the library because they cannot find the book of their choice in its proper place on the library shelves. So, in the very first session, these clubbers learnt how to stack books back on their shelves by their CALL NUMBER following the DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM.



- **Making connections using reading strategies** – Making connections using Reading Strategies.... allows young readers to monitor their thinking and make connections between the texts and their own experiences in life. By making these connections by reading, they can understand the text and draw on their prior knowledge and experience to connect



with it. They start questioning themselves: What does the story remind them of? How can they relate to the characters in the story? Does any incident in the story correlate to their incident in life?

- *Complete a double-entry journal* – Students read a particular book and jot down the lines from the book about which they need to interact. This activity increases critical thinking skills, creates a meaningful construction, and better explains what they read. With this strategy, the Book Lovers' of Classes 6 & 7 in their Work Ex. weekly activity periods recorded their responses as they read their favourite books. A pre-defined format of a double-entry journal was given to them. The layout of the format was divided into two columns. In Column 1, students reflected the text written in the book or its summary along with the page number. In Column 2, they jotted down their comments or wrote questions they would like to ask the author or the characters. Some avid readers also tried connecting the book's incidents to their lives. It was indeed an excellent way of engaging with books.



- *Whose line is it anyway?* They were required to jot down on chits, which were kept in a tray, famous lines from different books. Each student randomly selected a line, and if they thought that was the best punch line of the book, they pasted the line in their notebooks and wrote the book title and author name to which the line belonged. An element of gamification was added to this energizing activity. If they couldn't recognize the line to which the book belonged, they were asked to leave the chit back in the tray for others to try to guess. The activity's objective was to enhance attention, listening skills and quick responses, and inject a sense of humour and lightness.



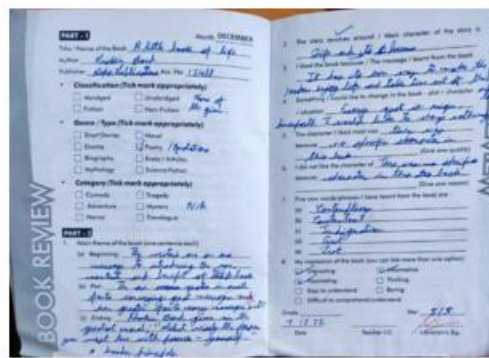
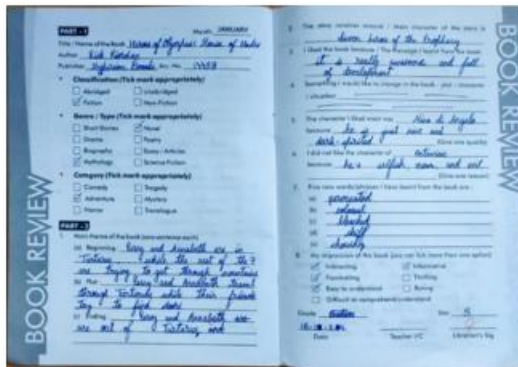
- *Extreme Makeover of a character* – Students updated a character from a book and invented a new life based on their observations from the story. Character learning and analysis through makeovers helps enhance comprehension and critical thinking skills because they explore the character traits in depth. Students learnt to define traits explicitly and identify behaviours aligned with those traits.



- 3) **Reader of the Month** - The school library's "Reader of the Month" program is an incentive program created to

honour and commend students for their regular reading routines, love of books, and involvement in library events. A student is chosen each month based on the quantity and diversity of books read, the calibre of book reviews, and participation in literary conversations. The selected reader receives recognition and often obtains a certificate or a little gift as a token of admiration during school assemblies or library exhibits.

- 4) **Reading Challenges** - These tasks can be completed alone or in groups, and they can be structured according to themes, genres, or time constraints (e.g., "Explore 5 Different Genres" or "Read 20 Books in 3 Months"). Students monitor their progress through digital platforms, review submissions, or read logs. Public recognition, diplomas, or badges identify milestones. Reading challenges motivate students to venture beyond their comfort zones, extend their literary horizons, and make reading a happy and fulfilling aspect of school life by fostering a sense of fulfilment, achievements, and friendly competition.
- 5) **Scavenger hunts**- Students can explore the library's resources and hone their research and information-finding abilities by participating in engaging, entertaining scavenger hunts in the school library. In these exercises, students are given task lists, riddles, or hints that help them find particular books, authors, genres, or library sections.
- 6) **Book fairs** - Book fairs are educational and cultural gatherings. Book fairs at schools are powerful instruments for encouraging literacy, stimulating curiosity, and creating a culture of reading. Because of the engaging platform they provide to introduce them to a variety of books, from timeless classics to the newest releases, children can explore stories, topics, and locations they may not have before encountered.
- 7) **Author visits** - Students have a rare opportunity to interact directly with the authors of the books they read and love through author visits in the school library. These events allow authors to share their writing journeys, methods, and inspirations while offering valuable insights into literature and narrative. Students can participate in writing workshops and interactive Q&A sessions and get inspired to discover their creative abilities.
- 8) **Peer-to-peer book recommendations** and review boards - Peer-to-peer book recommendations and review boards in the school library create an interactive platform where students can share their reading experiences and suggest books to their classmates. By giving students a voice in shaping reading trends within the School, review boards promote collaborative learning, boost engagement with library resources, and nurture a culture where reading is personal and socially shared.
- 9) **A library diary** with a specified review format printed in it is given to each student so that they can write a review every month.



10) **Library Blog** is an extended learning platform provided to students with the following main features.

- Recommend Book purchase using link or QR Code
- Check the new arrivals using a social networking site, i.e goodreads.com
- Check forthcoming
- Upload activities via PADLET
- Display of Reader of the Month via Google Slides
- Ask your Librarian
- Link to access blog <https://aisv6library.blogspot.com/>

11) **Readersville**, an annual library event, is organized during National Library Week, 14-20 November, where a series of activities are performed, and each student is gifted a book.

12) **AmiLolib** - An open Volunteer exchange of books by students is set up in the library.

13) **Vocal for Local: Educational trips** - As part of enriching experiential learning, students were taken on an educational visit to a library of national importance including Parliament Library, Sahitya Akademi Library, IGNCALibrary. Students were introduced to the library’s history, objectives, and unique collections, including rare manuscripts, reference materials, and digital resources. They also observed the functioning of different sections such as cataloging, digital archiving, and reader services, gaining insights into the systematic organization and management of such a prestigious institution. Interactions with library professionals helped students understand the scope of library science as a career and the importance of modern technologies in information management.

14) **Monthly library activities** are organized to make library periods more worthwhile and fruitful for students. Some of the activities, along with their reports, are posted on the school page:

- World Poetry Day – March 21st is when the globe unites to commemorate World Poetry Day, a day devoted to celebrating one of humanity's deepest forms of linguistic and cultural expression. The year 2025 is unique because the theme for the year isPoetry as a Bridge for Peace and Inclusion. There is no denying the fact that poetry connects people around the world, fostering mutual



understanding and respect by amplifying diverse voices. Thus, poetry catalyzes creative cultural exchange and social unity. The day was founded in 1999 by UNESCO to celebrate the unique ability of poetry to capture the innovative spirit of the human mind. On this day, students of the School engaged their creative spirits in 2 linguistic activities - Limerick Creations & Acrostic Poems. They were introduced to limericks' playful and rhythmic forms, and their humorous and imaginative verses were penned while understanding the cadences of rhyme, rhythm, and syllable patterns. The creators of Acrostic poetry composed poems on titles of library books, which helped organize their thoughts and express emotions on paper while promoting critical thinking as they searched for words that aligned with their theme.

- **Comic strip on short story** (Students create a comic strip of a Max 15 grid) –Students of Class 5 created comic strips and presented them in their library period. It helps students improve their writing skills. Comic panels' visual nature and limited space help students share their opinions and information more effectively and concisely.



- **Dictionary Look Up** - With the internet and Google as a powerful information medium, the Importance of the Dictionary is dwindling among school children. It is a book, no doubt, on every shelf and in every school bag in different sizes and proportions, but rarely opened. Students were given some words and guided to find the definition of those words with the help of some 'guide words'. They learnt to navigate through the pages of the dictionary. While finding the particular word, they developed prediction skills when they came across the new vocabulary and knew the Importance of the guide words in search of a specific word.



- **National Poetry Month** –Amity Vasundhara Sector-6 also took this marvellous opportunity to celebrate the expressiveness, delight, and pure charm of poetry that helps us to appreciate the world around us. The following activities were conducted to enable students in the library to regale themselves with the world of poems and poets: recitation, writing poetic



summaries, and writing poems with required punctuation.

- *Book Tasting* - A Book Tasting is a high-impact, fun activity designed to introduce students to various types of books. They are invited to choose books they want to read instead of being assigned a particular book. It gave them a 'taste' or exposure to books they may not have selected for themselves in the library periods. The purpose is to encourage, excite and motivate them to be active readers. Students were asked to choose a title from the library, read 4-5 pages of the same book, browse the book for a first impression, read the inside flaps and then complete the activity in the Book Pasting Card (Note Catcher) provided to them. The card included inputs like - the name of the book, was the cover interesting, what were some of the challenging words, who would they recommend this book to, would they like to check this book out, and after reading the initial 4-5 pages, what was their opinion about it.



- *Boggle Writing* - Students created as many words as possible using 10 random letters in the boxes. Then, they use as many words as possible to write an original story. Many had realistic and humorous flavours to their stories. Boggle writing is an excellent platform for creative writing, enhancing vocabulary and literacy skills. It is an extension of their linguistic abilities.



- *Create Wall Hangings* on: Library rules or Importance of reading – Library lovers of Classes V to VIII prepared meaningful and colourful wall hangings for their library in April. Library Rules, Importance of Reading, Choice of Books, etc., were all themes that were creatively put up as Library Wall Hanging Decor. Such activities beautify the space and contribute to this vital room's overall ambience and experience.



- *TWEET TWEET* about a story–The avid readers used this new-age messaging technique by embracing the magic of tweeting from an essential event in the story they had just read. They created short information using hashtags to share their opinion about an event in their reading storybook. By building story-based experiences, they made their narratives.



- 15) **The OPAC** facility allows students to search the library collection from their convenient location. Reserve a book online and recommend a book for library purchase via OPAC.

Leveraging Technology

Students' access to resources is improved, their reading experiences are enhanced, and their digital literacy is developed when school libraries use technology. Physical

barriers are no longer an obstacle thanks to digital libraries, e-readers, and platforms like StoryWeaver and NDLI, which offer a vast selection of books and educational resources that are always available. Reading Coach and other AI-powered tools provide kids with individualized reading practice to advance at their own speed. Online catalogues and library blogs can be participatory venues for sharing student reviews, showcasing new arrivals, and informing the school community about library events. Integrating these technological tools makes the school library a modern, dynamic space supporting traditional and digital learning.

Another platform is Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya, a groundbreaking digital library initiative in India. This website, by the Ministry of Education, is a free and digital initiative to build a culture of reading. It aims to instil a lifelong love of reading among children by offering over 1,000 non-academic books published in more than 22 languages (including English) by reputed publishers.

A training session was conducted with students and teachers on using Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya, and students were taken on a journey through Chandrayaan's developmental stages. Informational posters were shared with students to help them access the books related to the Chandrayaan journey and STEM to explore the universe and different scientists and astronomers.

Recognizing and Celebrating Reading Achievements

When students' efforts in reading are acknowledged, it not only boosts their confidence but also motivates them to continue exploring books and expanding their knowledge. Such recognition transforms reading from a solitary academic task into a rewarding and enjoyable pursuit. By celebrating milestones, schools send a clear message that reading is a valued and celebrated part of the learning journey. This appreciation drives students to establish and attain new reading goals and establishes a culture of reading pleasure where individuals feel appreciated for their literary endeavours. Public displays of student booklists, reading logs, or reviews help to further exhibit their accomplishments in engaging other students and cultivating a culture that values and promotes reading.

Results in Fostering a Habit of Lifelong Learning

Introducing students to various reading materials, including current events, fiction, non-fiction, and resources tailored to a particular subject. Schools can assist students in gaining the ability to investigate, inquire about, and comprehend the world independently. A solid basis for self-directed learning is created by supporting regular reading habits, fostering thoughtful conversations, and incorporating reading into daily activities. In addition to promoting academic progress, this consistent reading habit gives people the attitude and flexibility they need to keep learning, developing, and thriving throughout their lives.

School libraries have the potential to become transformative learning spaces that extend far beyond traditional book lending. Through structured reading programs, inclusive collections, digital integration, student participation, and recognition-based initiatives, libraries can significantly strengthen reading culture and support lifelong learning

habits. The practices presented in this manuscript demonstrate practical strategies that schools may adapt according to institutional context and resource availability. Future work should systematically evaluate the measurable impact of such interventions on reading engagement, literacy development, and student learning outcomes.

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Note: Scanning the QR code will take you to the activity, posted on the social networking site.