Motivating Class VIII Students to Read Books

Singye[1*]

[1]*Chali Lower Secondary School, Mongar, Bhutan.*

Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Short Research Article

ABSTRACT

This research shows how to encourage students to inculcate reading habits beyond the classroom through various interventions like Reading Aloud, maintaining a reading portfolio, and Book Talk. Reading makes men perfect in speaking and writing. It is very important to motivate our students constantly and reinforce them. Reading is not only meant for students but everyone because it helps to improve language both in speaking and writing. This research was conducted to examine how to encourage students to be active readers in the classroom as well as anywhere they required. Students were given various platforms to practice their reading inside the classroom and maintaining records of their readings too. My research was carried out with class VIII students of Chali Lower Secondary School. Data was mainly gathered through mixed methods, that is qualitative and quantitative questionnaires. Students were observed during the usual class hour. The observations were made by recording their reading using criteria. They were observed without informing to get authentic observable responses. In the end, the result was known, why the students usually neglect reading. It helped to understand why students lack reading and what are strategies teachers need to apply to overcome these challenges?

Corresponding author: Email: singyedendup@gmail.com;

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a vital factor for the growth of a society. Moreover, it is the core factor that would lead Bhutan to its attainment of Gross National Happiness. Wherein, the government of Bhutan is emphasizing on educating all children of universal age. The educationist and teachers bring in different strategies to improve the standard of the children as they are the future leaders of the country. Reading strategy is one of many to improve the standard of Education [1,2].

Students in Bhutan are generally not taking serious in reading and this has been concern for teachers and some educated parents. As a teacher this concern gave rise to a question in my mind, how can I motivate reading habits of my students. I wanted to know what the factors that avoids students to read books. I have chosen to do this study with class VIII students OF Chali Lower Secondary School [3-5]. Reading books help young people to develop their language skills and improve standard. Through reading they will acquire vast knowledge and information.

Action research is an approach to professional development to improve and update knowledge and information. It helps learners reflect on their work and make changes in their practice [6,4]. It is sometimes difficult to convince teachers that change is necessary or practicable when those promoting changes are outside the teacher's own classroom. This research work is basically an attempt to study the reading habits of students in English and to find out some strategies to contribute reading habits. I have studied the class VIII students [7,8]. I did my action research by survey questionnaire to collect the data and analyze the data at the end.

Reading also helps students learn to listen, speak and communicate in effective manner. We want to be best speaker and gain listeners attention while we give speech. But we lack to achieve it because we do less reading. Thus we are unable to perform as we wish to do. Due to this weakness we create lots of issues and have misunderstanding with friends, elders, family and in society as a whole [9,10,11].

Therefore, reading includes listening, speaking and communicating with proper grammatical structures and help students to develop good communication skills both in verbal and written language. Thus, I felt it is important responsibilities for teachers to have concern and bring the solution to cultivate habits of reading so I did this action research.

1.1 Situational Analysis

Our country Bhutan is a landlocked country, situated in the eastern Himalaya between two Asian countries, China in the north and India in the south. Bhutan is a small country with 38,394 sq.km of area with around 7,28,394 population possessing unique belief, culture and traditions. Around 72 percent of the total area is covered with forest rich in flora and fauna and is ranked as one of the ten hot-sports recorded in red list of the world. It is a developing country with the help of the foreign aids governed by the guiding developmental philosophy of Gross National happiness. Our form of Government is Constitutional Democratic Monarchy, establish in the year 2008, 18th July, where people have the rights to participate in decision making and formulating the laws of the country but we have king over all.72% of the area is covered by forest with rich flora and fauna.

Socio-economic background of the country is that the literacy rate is 63%, poverty rate is 23% and unemployment rate 2.1%

1.2 Education Background

Actual modern education was begun in 1914 when Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was asked by Royal Government of Gongsa Ugyen Wangchuck to establish a school in Haa. Then in 1960s, modern education was established with the first Five Year Plan across the country.

Chali Lower Secondary was established in 1995 under Chaling Gewog. It is the Goevrnment school. In the past years, it was only up to primary standard. Later it was upgraded to Lower Secondary School. It is reconstructed school with up grading classes and infrastructures. It is located at the centre of the community and near to Gewog office. The school is still under the process of developing. The place is moderate in summer and cold in winter. Thus school has serve with great benefits for these students. Currently there are 19 teaching staffs and 241students.

1.3 Competence

I graduated from Paro College of Education in the year 1999. The initial placement was in

Tsamang Primary School. In 2006 I was transferred to Daksa Primary School as offtg.Headmaster back then. In 2007, I was promoted to full-fledged Principal. I joined Chali Lower Secondary School in 2010 and serving at Principal till date.

We felt it is vital for every educator in the fields of teaching and learning to acquire fact knowledge and information. As we all are aware that knowledge and information will change with the change of time. Thus, with that theoretical knowledge I took this action research on the topic "How can we motivate our students to read books?"

- **Participants**

My participants were class VIII students of Chali Lower Secondary in Mongar.

- **Critical friends**

My critical friend was Mrs. Sarita Rai. While carrying out this action research she was there to help me. She graduated from Samtse College of Education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

"Reading and writing are joyful and successful in human life. Through reading and writing, we can achieve our goals and have satisfaction in life. The habits of reading, writing, spelling and written expression as a separate subject are so deeply entrenched that they continue to be taught in title relationship to each other or oral language" [12] To improve the quality of English

speaking and writing, teacher or parents has to provide opportunities for independent reading by the individual or very small groups. To develop the habits of reading, we have to build reading habits before age five and admit to the school. So the students will have a strong foundation and cultivate habits of reading. Thus, it is compulsory for students in schools that reading as a major activity in English subject to be focused. Reading will help to improve language, vocabulary, and even communication skills, which is the most important aspect in achieving goals in one's life. "If you going to use the language experience approach in your classroom, you would set up a highly individualized reading program" [13].

The above statement states that teachers must motivate students to read by providing books according to their choice and standard. Even teachers have to provide a complement to the students while reading in the class to encourage them. It is the responsibility of teachers to take care and practice possible activities like poem recitation, maintaining reading corners in the classroom, conducting reading weeks, and even the book review competition in school to motivate and make them read.

The relationship between reading and the other language arts has been documented in many research studies, and the success of a reading program often depends upon a concern for general language growth. "Success in reading furthermore should be defined by the ability to active participation in the reading process." [13].

Fig. 1. This is Chali Lower Secondary School, Mongar

In our perception, a favourable reading atmosphere in the school or classroom should be created, to motivate students to read books. And it is equally important to create an environment at home too so that it plays an equal role in the life of students to become a good readers and develop reading habit. So the students will be habituated to read books whenever and wherever they are.

2.1 Research Question

How can I motivate class VIII students of Chali Lower Secondary School to read books? This is the overall question of my Action Research.

The following are sub-questions to apply while I carried out my research.

- How can we motivate students to read books?
- What are the strategies that we need to identify in order to motivate students to read books?
- How can we demonstrate appropriate reading skills to encourage students in school?
- What are the reading activities that we need to practice in the school?
- How can we make my student a better reader?

2.2 Objectives of the Research

- To inculcate reading habits and make them aware of the importance of reading
- To improve English Language
- Read with correct pronunciation, fluency, audibility and intonation
c.

Baseline data analysis and Themes:

- Reading as a source of knowledge and information

3. METHODOLOGY

Mixed method: To carry out this action research mixed method that was Quantitative method and Qualitative method were used.

Quantitative method: In quantitative method there were five multiple questions with four options to select based on participants choice of reading. The multiple choice questions are attached in appendix.

Qualitative method: In Extended questions there are seven questions where participants have to write their opinions, suggestion and comments.
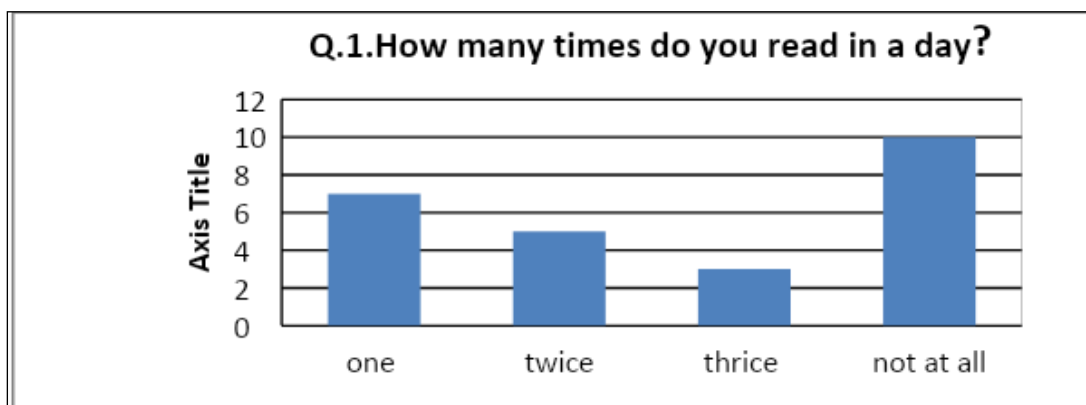
4. BASELINE DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

4.1 Baseline Data

The baseline data was collected mainly through observation, letting them to read in the class randomly without informing them.

a. Observation: In a class I observed few students how they read in the class when asked I ask them to read a paragraph or phrases.
b. Survey Questionnaire: In order to find out more on why the students are reading properly and what could be the measures to improve their reading in the class. (Refer Appendix 1).


*Note: Each graph is followed by explanation below it.*

- In this question out of twenty five students ten of them don't prefer to daily base and once or twice only. It showed that students were not aware of the importance of reading as well as they were not having reading habits.

Q.2.What kind of book do you read the most?
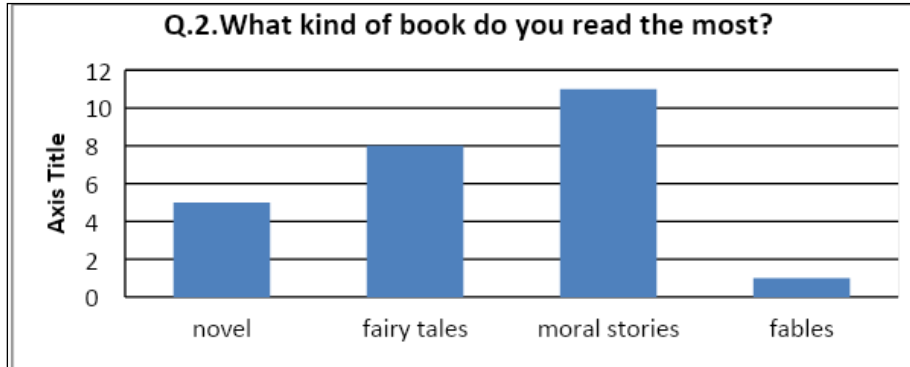
- In the above graph out of twenty five twelve students preferred moral stories books to read. In question two most of the students prefer to read books with moral stories.

Q.3.Who help you to read most of the time?
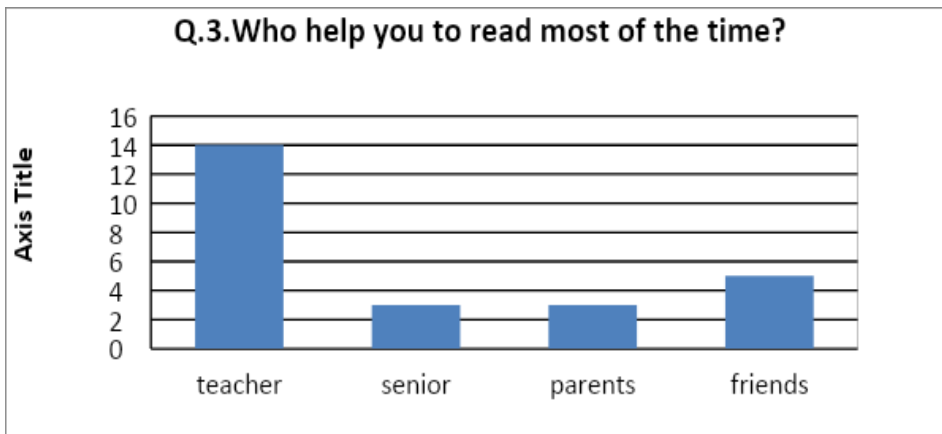
- In the graph fourteen students were influenced by the teacher out of twenty five students and rest five were by friends, three were by senior and three by parents. It indicates that teacher should be to show the role model to influence the students towards reading world with applying various interventions.

Q.4.Where do you prefere to read the most?
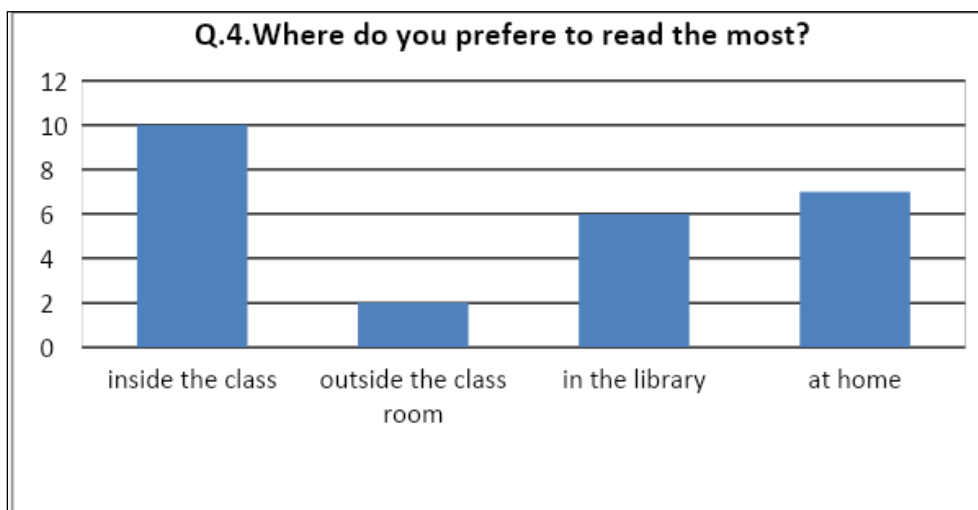
- In question four it shows ten students prefer to read inside the class out of twenty, seven preferred to read at home, six at library and two of them preferred to read outside the classroom. So it indicates students were reading only in the class when teacher asked to read.
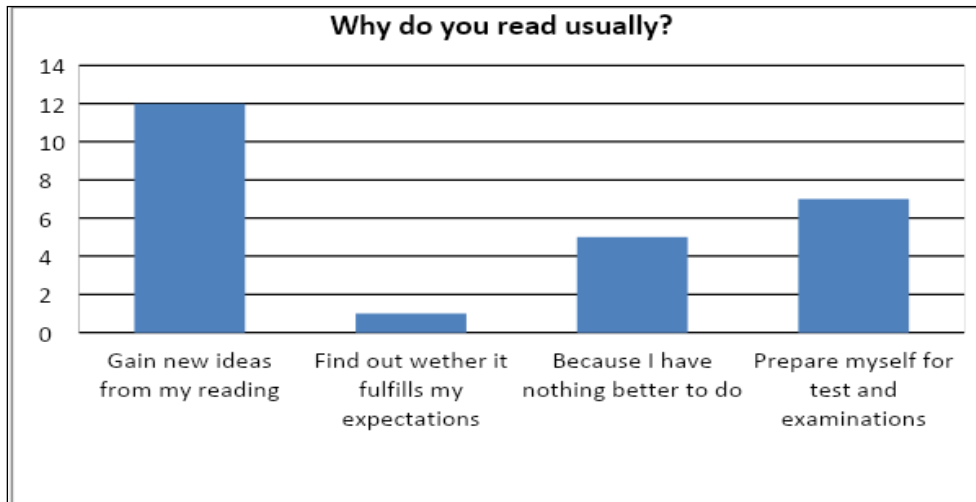
- In question five twelve students preferred reading to gain new knowledge out of twenty five. Where seven of them were for academic performance and rest of them were reading for different purposes. As out of twenty five twelve of them select for gaining new knowledge.
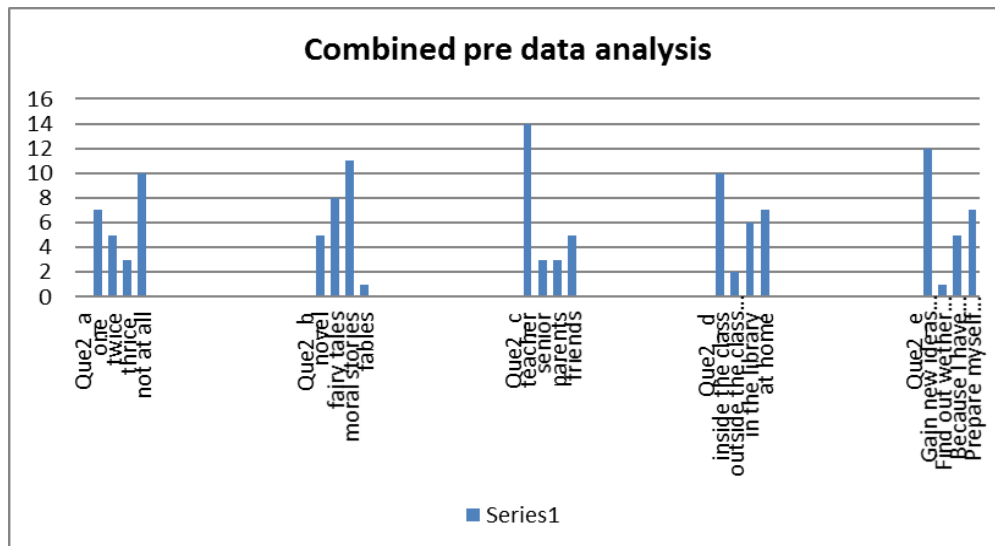
By looking this over all graphs, it shows that students mostly read to gain knowledge and for academic performance. Moreover, teachers have influence them to read and make the habit of reading. This graph also shows that before I intervene most of the students were not interested in reading and they were not aware of reading.

Regarding Qualitative baseline data analysis and result: Here I have derived only three major themes which also cover other sub- themes**.**

i. Reading is time consuming: Most of the students responded that reading take lots of time and reading is for time pass.
Eg. Respondent 2: "Time consuming because I have lots of homework to do and I have to study".

ii. Lack of understanding: Students were not much interested towards reading because they lack understanding the meaning of new words and pronunciation of new words while reading.

Eg: Respondent 1: "Sometimes it is hard for me to understand the meaning of certain words and I have to refer dictionary"

iii. Feels burden to read books: While reading they face problem like pronunciation and words meaning. Thus they felt burden while reading. They were losing interest in reading.

iv. Not interested in reading: Most of the students were not interested in reading because they are reluctant and not having keen interest.

Eg: Respondent 7: "When I read I feel sleepy and reading is my sleeping tablet".

4.2 Intervention

Reading Aloud: While teaching in the class teacher used to asked student randomly and read a paragraph. There we observe the student's reading and corrected their mistakes. Reinforcement and complements were given immediately to provide them with good comments to motivate them and corrected their mistake in positive manner.

This strategy is used in normal class by asking them to read a paragraph or a phrase. So that to know the ability of their reading by observing through while they read. This intervention also helped to identify students who were very weak in reading and correct their pronunciation and intonation while they read.

Maintaining reading portfolio: After few weeks of teaching students were provided with instruction and sample of portfolio on how to maintain portfolio? They were told to reflect all the criteria given in the sample. Thus participants were well informed before they start their job.

This strategy was effective because it was compulsory for individual to do and show at the end of the term. They have read under compulsion and this drag them to read anyhow. It is because they were assessed with the Continuous Assessment Mark for the term.

Book Talk: After collecting base line data, participants were informed that they have to do book talk. And they will be assessed for class room participation mark.

So this made students to read one particular book thoroughly. So that they are able to say what the book is about and who was the author of book that they have selected. In this way they are under compulsion to read.

Choral Reading: While teaching in normal classes sometimes participants were let to read together a paragraph or paragraphs. Thinking that all will get opportunities to read at a time and enjoy it.

This strategy was basically used for weak readers thinking that those weak readers can also learn to read along with better readers. Weak readers get the opportunities to read equally; learn to pronounce the words and phrases along with others. So, that they have built confidence within themselves. The other motive was reading was fun because choral reading means reading together at same pace.

Develop friendly environment among the teachers and students in school: From the beginning itself students were told to ask problem while they read, problem like pronunciation and words meaning. Sometimes share readings happened to build approachable bridging with them.

## 4.3 Post – Data Analysis and Result Discussion
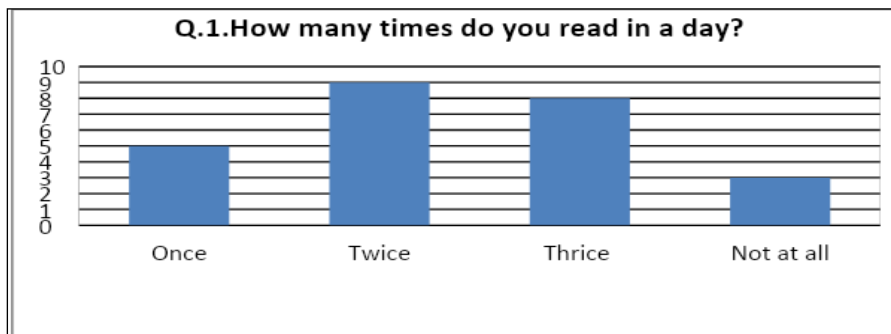
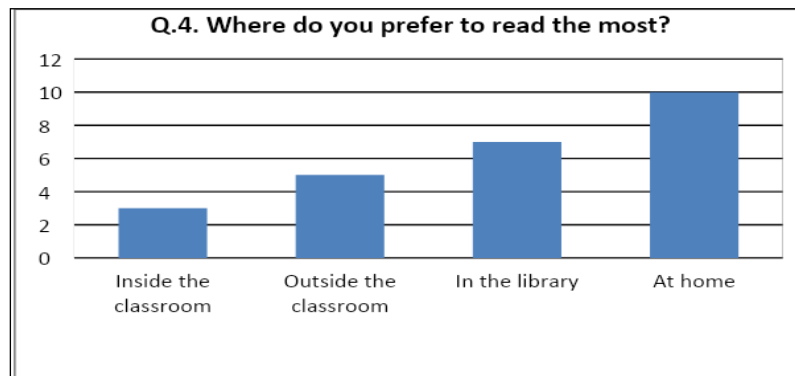*Note: Each graph is followed by explanation below it.*

- In this post graph shows maximum students have adopted reading habits because the graph shows more than ten students were in 'reading twice' per day. It is because the graph shows less number of students in 'not at all' option. Maximum students were reading twice than followed by thrice and at least once in a day. Thus this graph clearly shows increase number of readers comparing with the pre- data.

Q.2. What kind of book do you read the most?

novel	fairy tales	moral stories	fables
10	7	8	
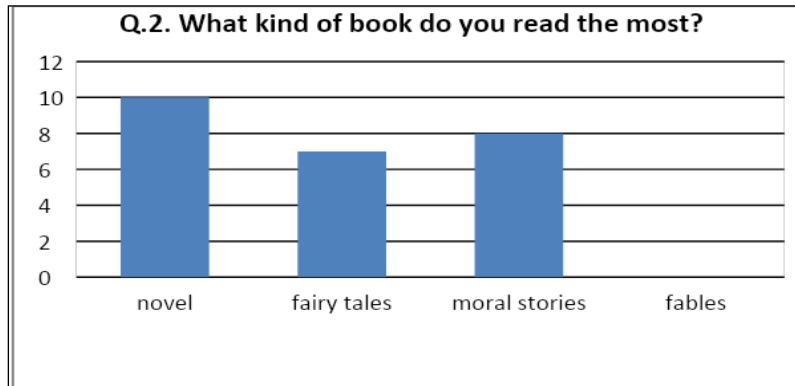
- In this post graph shows ten students prefer to read novel comparing with pre - data. In pre-data graphs it showed most students preferred to read moral stories which mean they were not aware of other kinds of books. After applying different intervention they were explored with the variety of books. Though it was not drastic improvement or changes but at least there was improvement.

Q.3.Who help you to read most of the time?

Teacher	seniors	Parents	Friends
13	2	6	4
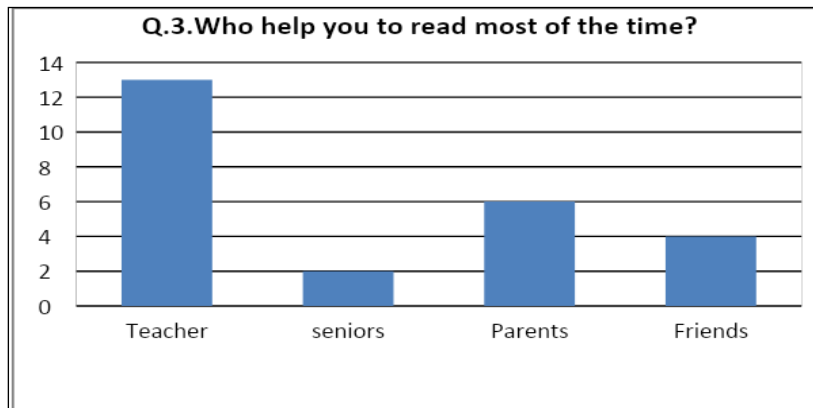
- This post graphs also shows that teacher was the main person to motivate them to read as more then twelve students were reflected in teacher inspiration. They also got inspired from parents and friends.

Q.4. Where do you prefer to read the most?

Inside the classroom	Outside the classroom	In the library	At home
3	5	7	10

- This post graphs shows ten students were preferred to read at home now. Here most of the students were habituated with reading at home. It clearly indicates that students have inculcated reading habits. In the per-data, students were only reading in class room but now at home also.
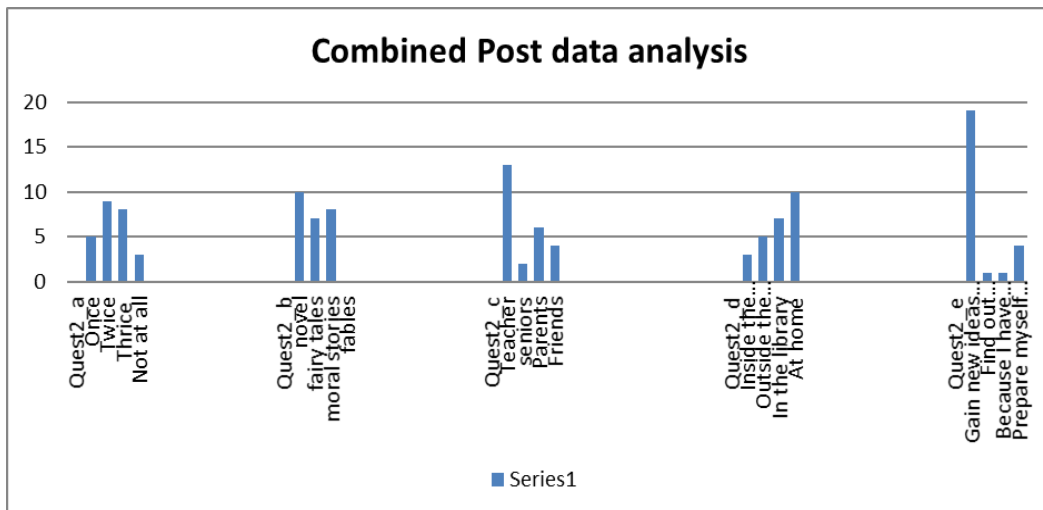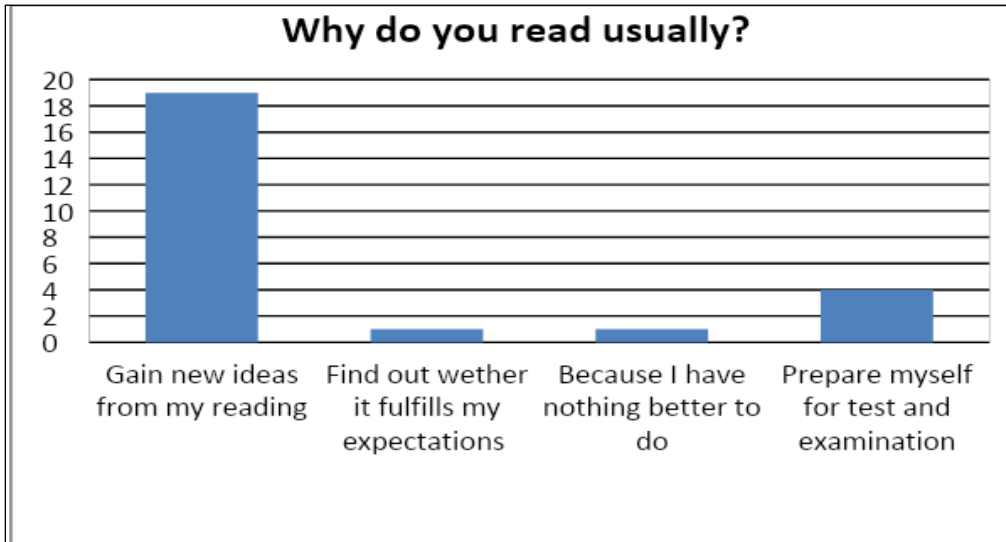
- This graph shows nineteen students were basically reading to gain new knowledge and four of them were for academic performance. It indicates that now students were aware of reading after interventions.

In this combined data nineteen students were aware of the importance of reading followed by thirteen students, who got inspired reading by teacher. Out of twenty five students nine students started to read thrice in a day and eight students twice in a day. Rest of them read at least once a day. It clearly shows that students have inculcated reading habits.

The above graph also shows that ten students cultivated reading habits at home also. In the baseline data there were only few students who read at home which means drastic improvement in reading after intervention. Moreover, students were familiar with different kinds of books like novels and stories and ten students preferred to read novels, eight students preferred to read story books with themes. It indicates students were exposed to reading.

4.4 Results and Discussion

Overall summary of both pre and post Data
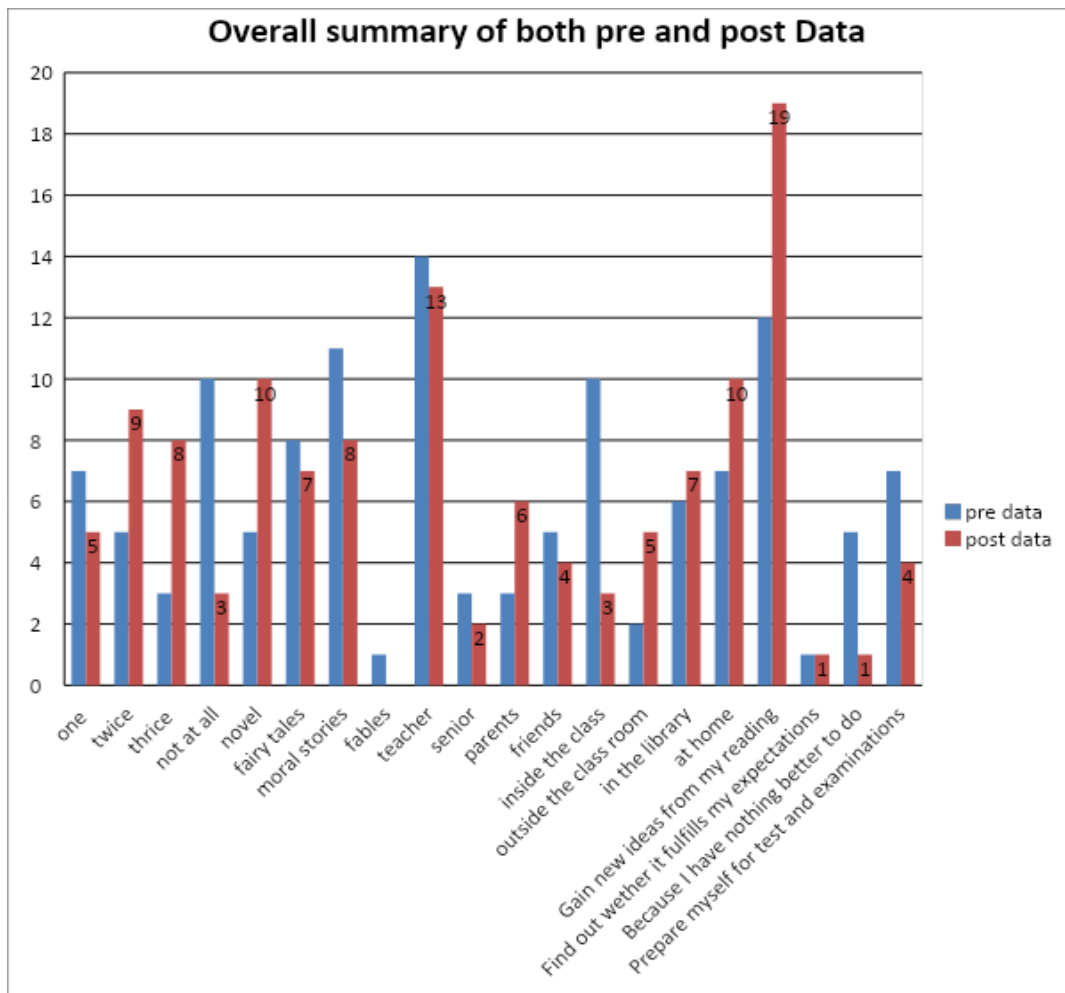
Note: In this graph blue graph indicate pre-data analysis and red indicate post-data analysis.
Following are the three major themes derived from the combined data analysis

Increase reading in a day: The combined graph shows only three students who do not read at which mean out of twenty five only three students were not ready.

In the baseline data there were only few students who read in a day but in post data there increased maximum students reading books every day.

Increased reading at home: In the baseline data most of the students read only in the class but in post data ten students started reading at home also. It clearly shows after intervention students were habituated with reading.

Eg. Respondent 9: 'I read my favourite books or stories and share with my parents'.

Importance of reading: By looking at post data students were fully aware of the importance of reading. It is because nineteen students were reading for gaining new knowledge and information. It means they are now aware of the importance of reading and they also reflected the importance of reading.

Eg. Respondent 8: 'I read books to learn new knowledge and explore the world around.

Through reading: These combined graphs represent the changes of respondents comparing with pre and post data analysis. Through this combined graph we can clearly understand that students reading habit has been improved towards the end after various intervention. The graph also shows increased daily readers and more number of readers at home.

Moreover, these graph shows 99% of the students knew the importance of reading and mostly reading habits has to be enhance by the teacher himself or herself. So that students will get motivated towards reading. The post data analysis shows that friends and parents also be their role model. The above also shows that students preferred reading novels and books with themes or morals.

To show the evidences that student's really got influence towards reading; the observation was done before and after the intervention. Set criteria were used to evaluate the students both in pre and post observation using same format.

The observation format that was used to assess students were attached in the class (appendix 2)

4.5 Based on these Criteria the Participants Were Evaluated

Attached both pre and post observation records of the class (*appendix 3*)

We basically focused on pronunciation, fluency, intonation and audibility while they read. These components were important to take care while we read or speak. As it play the vital role to convince other. The reader should be good enough in pronunciation and intonation. It is because if we mispronounce then audience will have entirely different meaning. So it is important for the readers to be conscious with pronunciation and intonation while reading.

Moreover, reader should be loud enough when they read. Then only audience will enjoy your reading and get your messages. Moreover, to become a good reader or speaker one should have fluency. In nutshell, reading can provide complete package of practice if one wanted to be good reader or speaker. Thus, the criterion was applied to evaluate participants both in baseline data collection and post data collection.

And it is observed that there is improvement comparing with baseline data and post data. Though there was not huge difference but still we can see the graph below showing the changes. The red pink line shows baseline data observation and light green line shows the post data observation.
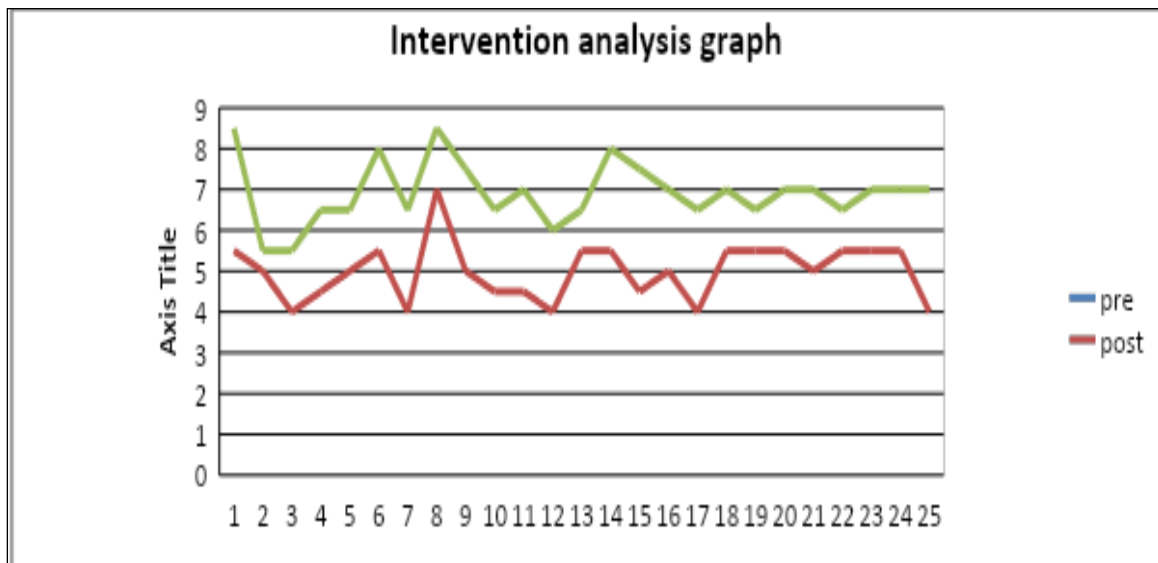
By looking the above graphs both baseline data observation and post data observation, it has clearly shown that intervention has worked because post data observation graph was above the baseline data observation. Moreover, students were improved in pronunciation, fluency, intonation and audibility indeed. The record of both baseline data observation and post data observation were attached (*appendix 3 & 4*)

5. CONCLUSION

Through research we understood the issues in depth and we came up with the solutions of the problems or issues that we come across in our daily life. Action research is an approach to professional development to improve and update knowledge and information and to find the solution to the problems though it takes months. Though the time was limited to change someone's reading habits, it helped us to instil the habits of reading and it will be continuous process. It helps learners or students to reflect on their work and make changes in their practice. It is vital for every educator and learners to make oneself aware of this Action Research in order to promote learning process

By doing this action research, we gain lots of new ideas and knowledge as it was not aware of it before. This Action Research gave us comprehensive teaching and learning opportunities in the lives of each individual. Personally felt due to time constraint the research could have been better, though very difficult to change someone's behaviours in a short time, but it was confirmed that one can always encourage and intervene to make the habits for someone. This Action Research was indeed an eye opening and very helpful to prepare ourselves to be the competent and confident educator in this 21st century.

CONSENT

As per international standard, parental written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Cox C. Teaching Language Arts. (A. Joseph, Ed.) United States, United State of America; 2008.
2. Samtse College of Education. Introduction to Academic Skills ACS 103: Samtse, Bhutan; 2009.
3. Chittenden E, Salingar T, Bussis A. Inquiry into meaning: An investigation of learning to read. New York: Teachers College Press; 2001.
4. Akerson V. Teaching Science when your principal says: Teach Language arts. Science and children. 2001;38(7):42-47.
5. Johnson N, Giorgis C. Children's books: Interacting with the curriculum. The Reading Teacher. 2001;55(2):204-213.
6. Rose K. Teaching Language Arts to Children. New York, United State of America: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; 1982.
7. Samson G. The language instinct Debate. (G. Samson, Ed.) New York, New York, The Tower Building: Chennai Micro Print (p) Ltd; 2007.
8. Samson G. The language instinct Debate; 2007.
9. Kirby JR. Enhanching the quality of Learning. (J. R. Kirby, Ed.) New York: Cambridge University Press; 2012.
10. Lhamo. Helping Childrent to become Readers. Paro; 2003.
11. Deshpande KS. Development and Sustenance of Reading Habit. India; 2011.
12. Don H. The Foundation of literacy. (D. Holidaway, Ed.) U.S.A: Aston Scholastic P.O.Box579,Gosford, N.S.W; 1979.
13. Rose K. Learning Language Arts to Children. New York, United State of America: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; 1982.

APPENDICES / APPENDIXES

Survey Questionnaire (Appendix 1)

Dear students
I am undertaking a research on "How can teacher motivate class VIII students to read books?" Your views and information being shared are to be kept confidential. I would be grateful if you could kindly fill up the questionnaires with honesty. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Q. 1.Demographic Information (Tick the most appropriate in the given space)

Class……….. …………. section………..
a. Gender: male………. ….. Female……………
b. Age: 12 – 14 years……… 14 and above…………….

Q.2. Tick the correct response provided in the brackets.

a). How many times do you read in a day?
1. (Once) 3. (Thrice)
2. (Twice) 4. (Not at all)

b. what kind of book do you read the most?
1. (Novel) 3. (Moral stories)
2. (Fairy tales) 4. (Fables)

c. Who helps you to read most of the time?
1. (Teacher) 3. (Parents)
2. (Seniors) 4. (Friends)

d).Where do you prefer to read the most?
1. (Inside the classroom) 3. (Outside the classroom)
2. (In the library) 4. (At home)

e). Why do you read usually?
1. Gains new ideas from my reading.
2. Find out the whether it fulfills my expectations.
3. Because I have nothing better to do.
4. Prepare myself for tests and examinations.

Write your views in the space provided below

Q.1. Do you like reading? Why?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Q.2.Who inspired you to read? How?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Q.3. How can you become a good reader?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Q.4.What is your opinion about reading?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Q.5.If someone ask about reading, what do you say?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Q.6.When you read, do you refer to read different books by same author or different books by different authors? Why?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Q. 7. What are difficulties do you face while reading? Why?

Assessment Format for both Baseline data observation and Post data Observation (Appendix 2) Format

Criteria Respondent	Pronunciation (3)	Fluency (3)	Intonation (2)	Audibility (2)	Total (10)
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

This data were collected before interventions were implemented.

Baseline Data Observation Record (Appendix 3)

Criteria Respondent	Pronunciation (3)	Fluency (3)	Intonation (2)	Audibility (2)	Total (10)
1	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	5.5
2	1	1	1	1.5	5
3	1	1	1	1	4
4	1.5	1	1	1	4.5
5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	5
6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	5.5
7	1	1	1	1	4
8	2	2	1.5	1.5	7
9	1	1	1.5	1.5	5
10	1	1	1	1.5	4.5
11	1	1	1	1.5	4.5
12	1	1	1	1	4
13	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	5.5
14	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	5.5
15	1	1	1	1.5	4.5
16	1	1.5	1	1.5	5
17	1	1	1	1	4
18	1.5	1	1.5	1.5	5.5
19	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	5.5
20	1.5	1	1.5	1.5	5.5
21	1	1.5	1	1.5	5
22	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	5.5
23	1.5	1	1.5	1.5	5.5
24	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	5.5
25	1	1	1	1	4

Post Data Observation Record (Appendix 4)

Criteria	Pronunciation (3)	Fluency (3)	Intonation (2)	Audibility (2)	Total (10)
Respondent					
1	2.5	2	2	2	8.5
2	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	5.5
3	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	5.5
4	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	6.5
5	2	1.5	1	2	6.5
6	2	2	2	2	8
7	1.5	2	1.5	1.5	6.5
8	2.5	2	2	2	8.5
9	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	7.5
10	1.5	2	1.5	1.5	6.5
11	2	2	1.5	1.5	7
12	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	6
13	2	2	1.5	2	6.5
14	2	2.5	1.5	2	8
15	2	2	2	1.5	7.5
16	2	2	1.5	1.5	7
17	1.5	1.5	1.5	2	6.5
18	2	1.5	1.5	2	7
19	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	6.5
20	2	1.5	1.5	2	7
21	2	1.5	1.5	2	7
22	2	1.5	1.5	2	6.5
23	2	2	1.5	1.5	7
24	2	2	1.5	1.5	7
25	2	1.5	1.5	2	7