

# INFLUENCE OF STORYTELLING PROGRAM ON THE PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN: A STUDY IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF CHENNAI REGION

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## ABSTRACT

*This study analyses the influence of storytelling program on the personality development of children in the public libraries of Chennai region, Tamil Nadu. One hundred and Twenty-five children in the age group of 4-14 years from the four major public libraries in Chennai were selected as respondents. Twenty storytelling programs were conducted on various themes. Questionnaire, interview and observation methods were employed. Children liked to listen stories in English and Tamil language. Lion's share of the children preferred moral stories and among them 'The Lion and the Mouse'. The nature and type of stories preferred by them were identified. The personal traits imbibed by them were identified as well as the knowledge/skills. The impact of the storytelling on the children also studied. This study is beneficial to librarians, parents and teachers in selecting the nature and type of stories to children.*

**Keywords:** *Storytelling, Storytelling Program, Story Reading, Story Books, Reading Culture, Personality Development, Children, School Children, Childrens Literature, Library Extension, Mental development, Personality traits, Public Library, Moral Stories, Comic Stories, Fairy Tales, Folk Tales, Fables, Detective Stories, Religious Stories, Horror Stories, Digital Oriental Stories, Motivation, Positive Thinking, Reading Literacy, Tamil Nadu, India.*

## 1. Introduction

Storytelling is the art of telling stories to the people and it conveys message as well as knowledge. It plays an important role in shaping the personality of children because, it teaches them many things about the World as well as life. Storytelling has several benefits to children. They are i) helps to boost their imagination ii) improves their listening and thinking skills iii) helps sharpen memory iv) lower stress in children v) instill values and virtues in children vi) boosts confidence in communication vii) sharpens memory and concentration. Thus, it shapes the overall development and personality of the child.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century public libraries in USA began implementing storytelling programs and is seen as a rewarding way to connect children to literature and libraries. Later it spread to other countries including India. Librarians play an important role in conducting storytelling programs. There are several studies which shows that regular participation of storytelling program has an impact on children's development. So far, no studies of this type has been conducted in the public libraries in the Chennai region, thus the need for this study.

## 2. Review of Literature

Following are reviews of few of the prominent documents related to the storytelling program.

The research article by Zort et al. (2023) sheds light to indicate the importance of storytelling approach for sharing cultural values and heritage. The study by Bagheryan et al. (2022) found that empathy among children increased due to storytelling. A case study of storytelling -art-science- club in Jakarta, Indonesia has been described by Raheim (2021). How storytelling acts as a catalyst for learning? This aspect was studied by Matei and Hunter (2021). Effect of public library storytelling on children's reading literacy development was studied by Chung and Sung (2020).

An ethnographic observational study of storytelling for children in Swedish public libraries has been explored by Hedemark (2020).

Bernard (2018) discusses more about digital story telling. Digital storytelling has an impact in the improvement of language skills according to Nassim (2018). The influence of storytelling method on the language development of children has been studied by Widiyaningrum (2018). Noviningrum (2017) submitted a thesis on the topic "effect of storytelling chain on students' speaking ability.

Campana et al. (2016) discusses the measures of effectiveness of storytelling

in early literacy. Librarian's perceptions of storytelling in libraries have been studied jointly by Sturm and Nelson (2016). Literary benefits of storytelling have been described by Acosto (2016). Student perceptions of digital storytelling as a learning tool is described by LaFrance and Blizzard (2013). Mokhtar et al. (2011) revealed a study which identified the effects of storytelling on students Language and communication skills. The emotional impact of frightening stories on children have been studied by Orbach et al. (1993).

## 3. Objectives of the Study

- i) To find out the nature and type of stories liked by children in selected public libraries in Chennai.
- ii) To identify the title of the stories in each group and to assess the satisfaction level of the various type of stories.
- iii) To analyze the influence of story telling on the personal characteristics of children
- iv) To elicit opinion about knowledge/ skills acquired through storytelling program
- v) To find out the satisfaction level of children on the impact of storytelling program

## 4. Methodology

One hundred and twenty-five children from the four major public

libraries in Chennai region were selected for the study. Name of the libraries and responses are given in table 1. Children of the age group of 4 and 14 years were interviewed. Around twenty storytelling programs were conducted in the selected four libraries various themes and topics. Analysis of the storytelling programs illustrated a

correlation between various outputs. Questions were asked to the children who participated and the results were carefully recorded. SPSS was used to analyze the data on the story time observations and children’s behavioral patterns at group level. Final result of the study provided very valuable insights on their skills acquired.

**Table 1**  
**Percentage of Children Selected from Various Public Libraries in Chennai**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Name of the Library</b>	<b>No. of Children</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Anna Centenary Library, Kotturpuram	40	32.0
2	Branch Library, Annanagar	30	24.0
3	Connemara Library, Egmore	30	24.0
4	District Central Library, Chennai-2	35	28.0
	Total	125	<b>100.00</b>

## 5. Analysis of Data

### 5.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics

Among the 125 samples taken, male children are more (71.2%), those

at the age range of 6-10 years (35.2%) and urban residents are half of the sample (50.4%).

**Table 2**

**Socio- demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

	<b>Particulars</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	89	71.2
	Female	36	28.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Age Range	Below 5 Yeats	09	7.2
	6-10 Years	44	35.2
	11-15 Years	40	32
	Above 15 years	32	25.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Nativity	Rural	45	36
	Urban	63	50.4
	Semi-urban	17	13.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**5.2. Medium of Instruction Preferred**

The medium of instruction preferred by children in the storytelling shows that 52% of them preferred English language

and the rest 48% have likeness towards Tamil language, the state language of Tamil Nadu.

**Table 3**

**Medium of Instruction Preferred by the Respondents**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	English	65	52
2	Tamil	60	48
	Total	125	100

### 5.3.Type of Stories Preferred by Children

Storytelling in public libraries is essential in encouraging creativity, effective learning and boosting mental health of children. These stories help in handing down values from generation to generation. These programs are very valuable and experience gaining which helps children to emerge and grow with competency skills. The analysis given in table 4, shows a full view of the different types of stories preferred by children in

the storytelling session held in public libraries of Chennai.

It is seen from the analysis that lion's share of children preferred moral stories (80%). Next in order is fairy tales (62.4%) and comic stories (60%). The other type of stories they liked are biographies of great personalities (59.2%), social awareness stories (53.6%), horror stories (45.6%), detective stories (44%), digital oriented stories (37.6%) and religious stories (38.4%).

**Table 4**  
**Type of Stories Preferred by Children**

Sl. No	Themes		Preferred	Not preferred	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
1	Moral Stories	N	101	24	125	1.19	0.395	1
		%	80.8	19.2	100			
2	Fairy Tales	N	78	47	125	1.38	0.486	2
		%	62.4	37.6	100			
3	Comic stories	N	75	50	125	1.4	0.492	3
		%	60	40	100			
4	Biographies of Great Personalities	N	74	51	125	1.41	0.493	4
		%	59.2	40.8	100			
5	Creating Social awareness stories	N	67	58	125	1.46	0.501	5
		%	53.6	46.4	100			
6	Horror stories	N	57	68	125	1.54	0.5	6
		%	45.6	54.4	100			
7	Detective Stories	N	55	70	125	1.56	0.498	7
		%	44	56	100			
8	Interest in Digital oriental stories	N	47	78	125	1.62	0.486	8
		%	37.6	62.4	100			
9	Religious Stories	N	48	77	125	1.62	0.488	9
		%	38.4	61.6	100			

#### 5.4. Level of Satisfaction of Various Types of Stories

Among the moral stories, the children are highly satisfied with the following stories in order of preference. They are i) The Lion and the Mouse, ii) The Wolf and the Crane, iii) Cinderella, iv) The Boy who cried Wolf, and v) the Fox and the

Stork. Among the fairy tales, they liked 'The Blue Mountains'. Other fairy tales are given in table 5. Similarly the titles of the various types of stories and their titles are given in the table. Identification of the story titles revealed by these children are very much useful for the librarians in other public libraries in their acquisition process.

**Table 5**  
**Identifying the Stories Preferred by Children and Satisfaction Level**

Name of the Stories	Title of stories	Highly satisfied	satis-fied	Less satis-fied	Very less satisfied	Dis satisfied	SD	CV
Moral Stories	The Lion and the Mouse	34.5	21.2	14.6	13.7	18.2	4.2929	0.1996
	The Wolf and the Crane	28.7	24.2	18.6	17.8	11.7	8.1947	0.3861
	Cinderella	31.4	29.2	21.4	18.7	5.6	7.1964	0.3686
	The Boy Who Cried Wolf	24.7	23.2	24.5	19.6	8.0	9.4648	0.4871
	The Fox and the Stork	31.3	24.8	19.6	21.6	2.7	10.9165	0.5716
Fairy Tales	The Blue Mountains	29.3	21.2	23.6	19.8	6.1	12.3683	0.6561
	Chicken Little	30.7	26.5	21.6	12.2	9.0	13.82	0.7406
	The Dog in the Sea	31.8	25.4	21.2	12.1	9.5	15.2718	0.8251
	Fortunatus and His Purse	27.4	21.6	19.6	18.4	13.0	16.7235	0.9096
	Jean de l'Ours	33.1	21.6	17.6	20.8	6.9	18.1753	0.9941
	The Grateful Dead	27.9	23.2	21.5	17.6	9.8	19.6270	1.0786

Comic Stories	August Infinite	34.2	21.3	27.8	21.9	0.9	21.0788	1.1631
	Wakanda Forever	29.4	17.8	19.9	27.2	5.7	22.5305	1.2476
	American Dream	16.8	27.4	29.3	18.4	8.1	23.9823	1.3321
	Death to the Mutants	24.7	31.7	24.2	17.9	1.5	25.4340	1.4166
	Eve of Judgment	19.7	28.9	21.8	16.2	14.4	26.8858	1.5011
Biographies of Great Personalities	A Life of The Genius Ramanujan	31.5	29.4	18.7	13.2	07.2	10.3968	0.4649
	Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle With India	28.7	26.3	23.7	19.2	02.1	10.6080	0.4744
	Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan	21.9	32.7	18.7	21.4	05.3	9.8061	0.4385
Creating Social Awareness stories	Between the World and Me	27.9	24.2	18.7	27.4	1.8	28.3375	1.5856
	The Hate U Give	34.1	19.7	21.2	16.5	8.5	29.7893	1.6701
	The Fire Next Time	27.9	28.7	20.6	19.7	3.1	31.2410	1.7546
	Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents	31.6	24.5	19.7	16.9	3.1	32.6928	1.8391
	Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You	27.8	24.5	23.7	14.9	8.1	34.1445	1.9236

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Horror Stories	The Tower by Marghanita Laski	33.2	21.5	16.7	21.8	6.8	35.5963	2.0081
	In the Bag by Ramsey Campbell	34.5	31.2	21.3	24.8	2.5	37.0480	2.0926
	Survivor Type by Stephen King	28.5	24.7	26.4	21.4	3.0	38.4998	2.1771
	The Landlady by Roald Dahl	28.7	21.4	19.8	24.7	5.4	39.9515	2.2616
	The Forbidden by Clive Barker	31.5	24.7	20.1	19.7	4.0	41.4033	2.3461
Detective Stories	Murder Most Unladylike	26.8	27.5	21.7	14.9	9.1	7.909	0.3536
	The London Eye Mystery	23.5	29.7	28.4	26.4	4.7	10.6146	0.4064
	Emil and the Detectives	30.5	23.7	21.9	17.5	5.7	9.1949	0.4141
	The Mysterious Benedict	31.2	24.6	19.8	24.8	12.5	8.1929	0.4561
Interest in Digital Oriental Stories	The Magic Carpet Magazine	29.5	24.7	26.4	17.8	1.6	42.8550	2.4306
	College Humor	31.5	29.4	27.4	19.7	1.2	44.3068	2.5151
	The Man Who Limped	27.4	25.6	21.3	19.0	6.4	45.7585	2.5996
	Scented Gardens	30.4	21.5	26.4	12.8	8.9	47.2103	2.6841
	The Shadow of the Vulture	28.5	26.7	25.4	23.2	1.7	48.6620	2.7686
Religious Stories	The Blind Men and the Elephant	26.4	25.9	27.4	21.2	4.6	50.1138	2.8531
	The Monkey King and the mangoes	25.7	19.7	21.9	16.4	17.3	51.5655	2.9376
	David and Goliath	31.8	27.4	21.2	16.8	2.8	53.0173	3.0221
	Nachiketa and Yama	29.7	14.8	25.4	17.9	12.2	54.4690	3.1066
	Rama and Sita	27.4	21.3	16.8	16.5	18.0	52.2721	3.4587

• Numbers in the level of satisfaction columns denotes percentage



### 5.5. Opinion About Personal Characteristics

The personal traits found in them are according to priority are creativity, helpfulness, empathy, motivation, patience, positive thinking, punctuality, self-confidence and friendliness. These are valuable traits which help to emerge as a responsible citizen in the family as

well as to the society and the nation. By allowing children in hearing stories of various themes will help them to develop a mature mind and to achieve good co-ordination, organising skills, being responsible and develop team spirit. Thus, the librarians have a great responsibility in the development of the citizens of the country through the storytelling programs to children.

**Table 6**  
**Opinion About Personal Characteristics of Children**

Sl. No	Factors		Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Total	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	Creativity	N	31	37	25	15	17	125	2.6	1.344	1
		%	24.8	29.6	20	12	13.6	100			
2	Helpful	N	36	26	25	25	13	125	.62	1.36	2
		%	28.8	20.8	20	20	10.4	100			
3	Empathetic (ability to understand and share the feelings of one another)	N	20	31	40	26	125	100	3.17	1.424	3
		%	16	24.8	6.4	32	20.8				
4	Motivation	N	22	21	16	32	34	125	3.28	1.468	4
		%	17.6	16.8	12.8	26	27.2	100			
5	Patience	N	9	24	22	47	23	125	3.41	1.199	5
		%	7.2	19.2	17.6	38	18.4	100			
6	Positive thinking	N	18	11	19	45	32	125	3.5	1.348	6
		%	14.4	8.8	15.2	36	25.6	100			
7	Punctuality	N	4	18	30	55	18	125	3.52	1.013	7
		%	3.2	14.4	24	44	14.4	100			
8	Self confidence	N	19	10	14	48	34	125	3.54	1.371	8
		%	15.2	8	11.2	38	27.2	100			
9	Friendliness	N	4	17	15	66	23	125	3.7	1.026	9
		%	3.2	13.6	12	53	18.4	100			

## 5.6. Opinion About Knowledge/Skills

Most of the children opined that they have improved their reading habits through the storytelling program. The attitude of the children in this aspect is explained below:

1. Improved reading habit: Reading aloud a story increased young children's reading interest. They will automatically listen to stories without compulsion and take part in creative activities by getting inspiration from the stories they read/listen. It helps in analyzing pictures and titles in text, building vocabulary and enhancing their vocabulary and spelling.
2. Showing ability to build up story by themselves: Stories teach abstract concepts. It makes the children more active. Thus, they like to hear the same story again and again. Continuous hearing of the stories develops the personality traits such as self-confidence, expressing their own ideas and later on building up stories from their own imagination.
3. Helping in presenting the story without stage fear: Story telling encapsulates serious and wise speeches from a wide variety of characters. In children's play/stories there is continuity in narrative themes with jokes and playing tricks. Stories enable children to emerge as a better speaker to throw their views/thoughts among a public crowd without feeling any stage fear, one of the traits of good personality.
4. Interest to participate in storytelling program: Children are keener to hear different narrative stories.

Their curiosity of knowing various facts told by the expert story teller or resource person makes them to drag the children in participating further story sessions.

5. Improved class room performance (Listening/Answering Questions): Children hearing a broad range of stories can interpret (when reading) and to construct (when writing) and thus, develop good reading and writing skills. Children's knowledge of stories enhances their understanding of the world. Through sharing knowledge, they develop the ability of asking questions among discussion groups and gaining right answer. Thus expressive skills and listening ability improve. Therefore, through their presence of mind in the class, academic merit level will also increase.
6. Overcome Language Barrier: Stories are motivator for language learning. During storytelling program automatically children will concentrate and their brains will get alert to make attention of unfamiliar languages. Stories help in learning their native mother tongue. They are also invaluable to children in learning a second language.
7. Overcome Learning Difficulties: By developing reading skills, students expand the vocabulary. Difficulties in learning are a) Struggling to understand unfamiliar terms: Unfamiliar terms can be overcome with phonic instructions and reading out loud, b) Poor comprehension: Usually children skip ahead the text,

if they do not know the meaning of the word, c) Speed: How the speed of reading can be increased? Through

story reading sessions, reading speed increases so also newspaper reading.

**Table 7**  
**Opinion about Knowledge/Skills Acquired through Storytelling Program**

Sl. No	Attitude		Highly Avgee	Avgee	Disavgee	Very Disagree	No Comment	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank.
1	Improved Reading Habit	N	31	33	15	36	10	125	2.69	1.335	1
		%	24.8	26.4	12	29	8	100			
2	Showing ability to build up story by themselves	N	41	13	17	36	18	125	2.82	1.505	2
		%	32.8	10.4	13.6	29	14.4	100			
3	Helped and motivated in presenting of the story without stage fear	N	23	27	16	31	28	125	3.11	1.449	3
		%	18.4	21.6	12.8	25	22.4	100			
4	Developed Interest to participate in the Story telling program	N	22	17	21	41	24	125	3.22	1.379	4
		%	17.6	13.6	16.8	33	19.2	100			
5	Improved my classroom performance (Listening / Answering/ Asking Questions)	N	18	16	22	55	14	125	3.25	1.242	5
		%	14.4	12.8	17.6	44	11.2	100			
6	Overcome Language Barrier	N	20	25	11	33	36	125	3.32	1.473	6
		%	16	20	8.8	26	28.8	100			
7	Overcome Learning Difficulties	N	18	16	20	33	38	125	3.46	1.411	7
		%	14.4	12.8	16	26	30.4	100			

### 5.7. Impact of Storytelling Program on Children

The satisfaction level revealed by the children on the impact of storytelling program are given in Table 8. They are briefed below:

1. Updated changes in my Personality: Attending storytelling programs conducted in the library has made changes in my personality and improved planning skills, organizational skills, evaluation skills, communication skills and comparison skills. Further listening skills improved and led to children's comprehension and vocabulary increase.
2. Improved children's extracurricular activities: Learning difficulties were rectified through the program. Further attention skills improved and helped in focusing the mind.
3. Motivated to learn good things in life: Through hearing various types of stories, children Listened to different characters and thus came to know the culture and character of other people. Thus, they developed good habits and became aware about bad things.
4. Changes in Children's Life Style: Through storytelling program, children develop public speaking ability. They can become a good public speaker and can emerge as a good leader in future.
5. Cultivate Reading habit: By attending storytelling program, children develop reading habit. when they come to library for the program, they consult their favorite books in the library and thus improves their reading habit.
6. Helps to have awareness about Environment and Society: By attending storytelling program in libraries, the children will gain awareness about the environment and what is happening around.

**Table 8**

**Impact of Storytelling Programs on Children and Satisfaction Level**

Sl. No	Impact		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Total	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	
1	Updated changes in my personality	N	41	1317	36	18	125	100	2.82	1.505	1	
		%	32.8	10.4	13.6	29	14.4					
2	Improved my extracurricular activities	N	24	19	33	32	17	125	100	2.99	1.317	2
		%	19.2	15.2	26.4	26	13.6					
3	Motivated to learn new things and useful in developing vocabulary	N	21	20	36	34	14	125	3	1.251	3	
		%	16.8	16	28.8	27	11.2	100				

4	Changed in my life style only because of attending library programs	N	16	15	17	58	19	125	3.39	1.25	4
		%	12.8	12	13.6	46	15.2	100			
5	Created the Habit of Reading in the Library	N	20	10	16	50	29	125	3.46	1.359	5
		%	16	8	12.8	40	23.2	100			
6	Attending Programs help to know about new things related to Environment and Social awareness	N	11	16	27	47	24	125	3.46	1.195	6
		%	8.8	12.8	21.6	38	19.2	100			

## 6. Major Findings of the Study

- i) More than half of the children prefer English language stories and almost half of them prefer Tamil language.
- ii) Lion's share (80%) of the children like moral stories than any other type and the next in order is fairy tales.
- iii) The title of the stories preferred by the children are identified in this study, and is beneficial to the librarians in public libraries, children's libraries, school libraries and parents.
- iv) Among the type of moral stories, the children are highly satisfied with the story 'Lion and Mouse'.
- v) The various personal traits acquired by the children are elicited from them. The most important personal trait they acquired is 'creativity'.
- vi) Knowledge/skills acquired by them were identified and listed. Among them, they found that they developed 'improved reading habit; through storytelling.
- vii) The impact of storytelling program on children were identified and the

major impact they felt is that they 'updated changes in their personality'.

## 7. Conclusion

The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto defines public library as a democratic institution for education, culture and information. The manifesto also stresses to keep close contact with children (UNESCO, 1972). Thus, the public libraries have special responsibility to offer effective services to children. Among the various type of programs conducting for children, Storytelling has prime importance now. Storytelling has a great role to play in the personality of the children. It enables to use language without hesitation, helps to build up vocabulary, learn new things, cognitive development etc. It will broaden the horizon of knowledge so that children can live a meaningful life in future. It is better to participate children in the stories while narrating it, rather than merely listening to it.

This study identified the various types of stories liked by children including the story title. It also identified the personal

qualities imbibed by them; the knowledge skills acquired as well as its impact on them. The results of this study help librarians, parents as well as teachers to choose the most engaging stories to increase the personality of the children, in turn to good citizens of India. Such studies should be conducted in other public libraries in other regions too.

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