

Notification No.: 568/2024

Date of Award: 02-09-2024

Name of scholar: Devika Sharma

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Azra Razzack

Name of Centre: Dr. K.R. Narayanan Centre for Dalit and Minorities Studies

Topic of Research: Reading in the Intersections of Gender and Caste: Ethnography of a Community Library

Findings

1. The several aspects of the field site, Community Library Organisation, such as the spatial design, arrangement of books and displays, activities and programmes; and community walks to highlighted what Ambedkar called the ethics of *maitri* practiced in the library.
2. The gendered notions of library and reading impact boys and girls in different ways. On the one hand, library and reading is perceived by parents, friends and neighbours as 'loitering' when girls are in question, whereas for the young boys it is seen as '*time phodna*', a waste of time.
3. Most of the participants revealed that their early reading and writing experience was not pleasant, rather it was meaningless and did not encourage them to becoming readers. Participants learnt to associate print with school. They learnt to be a student, getting hardly any chance to acquire reader identity. Major hurdle was the textbook culture. It got manifested in children's time which is structured around *school ka kaam* (school related work) that is homework, project work, tuition classes, work for home from tuition classes, and preparation for tests.
4. The adolescent readers who lived in smaller dwelling units, and shared the room with more than two persons and belonged to lowered caste find it difficult to navigate constraints of space and time, impacting the '*laya*' (rhythm) of reading. It influenced some to the extent that the apparent choice of home as the reading space became unavailable, which in turn affected their reading choices in terms of genres and lengths of texts.
5. Mostly, lowered caste male readers living in overcrowded room were less likely to read at home. On the other hand, those who belonged to upper caste and lived in bigger dwelling units happened to read at home, more books, and longer texts.
6. The study also revealed that short stories and life narratives among young women were popular formats and genres respectively. Young men preferred science-related non-fiction. None of the young women in the sample borrowed any book on this subject.

1. Summary of abstract (only 2 pages)

2. Soft copy in PDF format with hard copy