

Effectiveness Of An Integrated Library-Based Learning Intervention On Students' Reading Achievement, Motivation, And Engagement: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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Abstract

The development of a sustainable reading culture is an important challenge for elementary schools, particularly in geographically remote and resource-constrained regions where children's exposure to reading materials beyond prescribed textbooks remains limited. The present study examines an intervention aimed at transforming existing school libraries into active learning spaces for promoting reading culture and strengthening foundational literacy among children. The intervention was implemented across all 95 elementary schools covered under the initiative in Pauri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand, over three consecutive academic sessions from 2023–24 to 2025–26. The study adopted a descriptive and evaluative mixed-method research design with complete institutional coverage of all 95 participating schools. No sampling procedure was adopted. Data were collected through structured institutional responses, library records, implementation documentation, and written reflections from school heads and teachers. The intervention emphasized open book displays, classroom reading corners, dedicated library periods, student choice in book selection, home book circulation, age-appropriate categorization of books, and integration of reading with storytelling, role play, drawing, and other joyful learning activities. The study was guided by four hypotheses concerning the institutionalization of library practices, improvement in student access to reading materials, reading-related learning outcomes, and community participation. The findings revealed that 73.68% of schools developed written library plans, 88.42% incorporated dedicated weekly library periods, 53.68% implemented regular home book circulation, and 21.05% reported active participation of parents and School Management Committees. Schools further reported increased student interest in reading and improvements in reading fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, classroom participation, and language assessment outcomes, with most schools reporting an improvement of 10–20% or higher in language assessments. The study concludes that meaningful transformation of school libraries does not necessarily require substantial infrastructural investment. Rather, improving children's access to books, institutionalizing reading opportunities, integrating library activities with classroom pedagogy, and promoting learner autonomy can contribute to the development of a sustainable reading culture and improved literacy-related outcomes.

Keywords: Reading Culture, School Libraries, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, NIPUN Bharat, NEP 2020

1. Introduction

Reading is a fundamental component of children's educational development. It contributes not only to language acquisition but also to vocabulary development, comprehension, imagination, communication, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. The development of reading habits during the elementary years is particularly important because these years establish the foundation for subsequent academic learning. Research has emphasized the importance of libraries and supportive reading environments in developing sustained reading habits and promoting a culture of reading among children and students (Asif & Yang, 2021; Itsekor & Nwokeoma, 2017). Reading for pleasure is also associated with broader educational and developmental benefits, with libraries playing an important role in providing children with opportunities to engage with books beyond compulsory academic reading (Biswas, 2023; Cremin et al., 2023).

However, the presence of books in schools does not automatically ensure that children will develop a sustained interest in reading. The effectiveness of a school library depends not only on the availability of resources but also on their accessibility, utilization, and integration into the school's educational culture (Danladi & Yohanna, 2018; Kurttila-Matero, 2011). In many government schools, libraries exist and books are regularly purchased through institutional grants, yet their educational potential often remains underutilized. Books may be stored in locked cupboards, placed on inaccessible shelves, or maintained primarily as institutional records rather than being integrated into children's daily learning experiences. Consequently, reading often remains limited to prescribed textbooks, leaving children with few opportunities to explore storybooks, informational texts, or other forms of age-appropriate literature. The importance of functional library practices in developing children's reading culture has similarly been highlighted in earlier research (Elejene & Iheagwam, 2014; Tofi et al., 2022).

The issue has become increasingly significant in the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the NIPUN Bharat Mission, both of which emphasize the achievement of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN). Foundational learning requires children to develop reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, expression, and confidence. While classroom teaching plays a central role in achieving these outcomes, sustained exposure to diverse reading materials can provide an important complementary learning environment. Research on early reading development indicates that children's reading outcomes are influenced by multiple interacting environments, including the home and school literacy environments (Li et al., 2026). Similarly, research on reading culture emphasizes the role of libraries in creating environments that encourage regular reading and knowledge development (Asif & Yang, 2021; Tofi et al., 2022).

The present study emerged from an initiative undertaken in Pauri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand. The region is characterized by geographically dispersed rural settlements, mountainous terrain, limited transportation, and restricted access to supplementary educational resources. For many children, the

school represents the primary location where they can access age-appropriate books beyond prescribed textbooks. In such contexts, school libraries can function not merely as repositories of books but as important community and educational resources. Evidence from rural library contexts suggests that libraries can contribute to educational development and community participation when resources are made accessible and integrated into local needs (Dent et al., 2014). The broader role of libraries as public-facing educational and cultural institutions also underscores the importance of outreach and community-oriented programming (Ngulube, 2019).

The intervention was based on the recognition that the principal challenge was not necessarily the complete absence of books but their limited accessibility and pedagogical utilization. Therefore, instead of focusing on the construction of new library buildings or expensive infrastructure, the initiative attempted to transform existing spaces, resources, and institutional practices. Such an approach is consistent with the view that developing a culture of reading requires changes in school practices and the creation of environments in which reading becomes an accessible, meaningful, and pleasurable activity (Cremin et al., 2023; Radice, 2023). The intervention introduced several strategies, including open book displays, hanging libraries, classroom reading corners, dedicated library periods, student choice in book selection, home book circulation, age-appropriate categorization of books, community access, and the integration of reading with storytelling, role play, drawing, and other art-based activities. These practices reflect the broader principle that libraries can support reading not only through access to books but also through active engagement, literacy-oriented programming, and learner participation (Onwubiko, 2022; Radice, 2023).

The initiative was implemented over three consecutive academic sessions; 2023–24, 2024–25, and 2025–26; and covered all 95 elementary schools included in the intervention. The complete participation of all 95 schools provides the study with comprehensive institutional coverage. The present research examines the implementation and emerging outcomes of this initiative through four focused dimensions –

- Institutionalization of library practices
- Student access to reading materials
- Reading-related learning outcomes, and
- Community participation

These dimensions are consistent with the literature emphasizing the importance of institutional reading culture, accessibility of library resources, learner engagement, and the wider educational and community role of libraries (Danladi & Yohanna, 2018; Itsekor & Nwokeoma, 2017; Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2022).

Review Of Literature

Reading Culture and Educational Development

Reading culture refers to the development of regular, voluntary, and meaningful engagement with written materials. It goes beyond the functional requirement of reading prescribed textbooks and involves reading for pleasure, information, imagination, and personal development. Asif and Yang (2021) investigated the role of libraries in promoting reading culture and emphasized the importance of institutional environments that encourage regular interaction with reading materials. Their findings suggest that libraries can serve as important spaces for developing reading habits when they are accessible and actively integrated into learners' lives. Biswas (2023), in a review of literature on pleasure reading and libraries, highlighted the importance of reading for enjoyment and its relationship with the availability of supportive reading environments. Pleasure reading allows learners to engage voluntarily with texts and can contribute to sustained literacy development. These studies collectively suggest that reading habits cannot be developed merely through the availability of books. Children require opportunities, access, encouragement, autonomy, and supportive institutional environments.

School Libraries and Reading Culture

School libraries have traditionally been considered repositories of educational resources. However, contemporary perspectives increasingly emphasize their role as active learning environments. Danladi and Yohanna (2018) examined the role of school libraries in promoting reading culture and demonstrated that library resources can contribute significantly to students' reading habits when learners are encouraged to use them regularly. Similarly, Itsekor and Nwokeoma (2017) emphasized the importance of library utilization in developing a reading culture and improving knowledge acquisition. The authors argued that the existence of library resources alone is insufficient unless users actively engage with them. Elejene and Iheagwam (2014) also emphasized functional library education as an important mechanism for developing children's reading culture. Kurttila-Matero (2011) conceptualized the school library as a tool for developing the operating culture of schools. This perspective is particularly relevant to the present study because the intervention did not focus exclusively on library management but attempted to transform the broader institutional culture surrounding reading. Thus, the literature suggests that effective school libraries should be integrated into routine teaching-learning processes rather than functioning as separate or occasional institutional facilities.

Accessibility, Student Choice, and Reading Engagement

Physical access to books is an essential condition for developing reading habits. When books remain locked in cupboards or can only be accessed with teacher permission, opportunities for spontaneous reading are limited. Open book displays, reading corners, and classroom libraries can create informal opportunities for children to browse and select books. Student choice is particularly important because it provides learners with autonomy and ownership over their reading experiences. Cremin et al. (2023) emphasized reading for pleasure as an important framework for educational practice. A reading culture based entirely on prescribed materials and teacher direction may limit children's intrinsic motivation. Allowing learners to select materials according to their interests and reading levels can make reading a

more enjoyable and self-directed activity. The present intervention incorporated these principles by encouraging schools to make books visible, accessible, and available for independent selection.

Reading and Literacy Outcomes

Regular exposure to reading materials can contribute to multiple dimensions of literacy development. Repeated interaction with texts may support vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, comprehension, language expression, and confidence. The relationship between reading engagement and academic outcomes is particularly important at the foundational stage. Children who regularly interact with diverse reading materials are exposed to different vocabulary, sentence structures, narratives, and ideas. The present intervention integrated library activities with storytelling, role play, drawing, and classroom discussion. Such practices were intended to move reading beyond silent book consumption and connect it with communication, creativity, and experiential learning.

Home Literacy Environment and Community Participation

Literacy development does not occur exclusively within schools. The home environment and broader community can influence children's exposure to books and reading practices. Li et al. (2026) highlighted the importance of home literacy environments, school environments, and learning approaches in overcoming early reading challenges. The study emphasizes the interconnected nature of school and home in children's literacy development. In rural and resource-constrained communities, however, households may have limited access to age-appropriate books. Home book circulation can therefore serve as an important bridge between school libraries and home literacy environments. Dent, Goodman, and Kevane (2014) also emphasized the importance of libraries in rural communities and their potential contribution to educational development. However, community participation does not automatically emerge from school-based initiatives. Parents may face occupational constraints, lack awareness regarding the importance of reading beyond textbooks, or remain uncertain about their role in school library activities.

Research Gap

Existing literature establishes the importance of libraries in promoting reading culture. However, relatively limited documentation is available regarding interventions that transform existing library resources across a large network of rural government schools without substantial additional infrastructure. The present study addresses this gap by examining a three-year intervention implemented across all 95 schools covered under the initiative. The study focuses specifically on four interconnected dimensions:

1. Institutionalization of library practices.
2. Improvement in student access to reading opportunities.
3. Reading-related learning outcomes.
4. Community participation in sustaining reading culture.

Objectives Of The Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the extent to which library practices were institutionalized across the 95 participating schools.
2. To assess the improvement in students' access to books and opportunities for independent reading following the intervention.
3. To examine the reported influence of library-based reading practices on students' reading-related learning outcomes.
4. To assess the extent of parental and community participation in supporting and sustaining the reading culture initiative.

Hypotheses Of The Study

The following four null hypotheses were formulated:

H₀₁: There is no meaningful institutionalization of library practices among schools following the implementation of the reading culture initiative.

H₀₂: The intervention does not improve students' access to reading materials and opportunities for independent reading.

H₀₃: The integration of library-based reading practices does not contribute to improvement in students' reading-related learning outcomes.

H₀₄: The reading culture initiative does not generate meaningful parental and community participation in school library activities.

Research Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive and evaluative mixed-method research design to examine the implementation and outcomes of an initiative aimed at promoting reading culture through the transformation of existing school libraries into active learning spaces. The study was conducted in Pauri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand. The educational setting is characterized by rural and geographically dispersed schools located in mountainous terrain, where access to supplementary learning resources and age-appropriate reading materials outside school is limited. The intervention was implemented over three consecutive academic sessions, namely 2023–24, 2024–25, and 2025–26, enabling the participating institutions to move gradually from initial experimentation toward the integration of reading practices into routine school functioning.

The study covered 95 schools included during the intervention through systematic random sampling. The intervention was designed as a low-cost institutional transformation model. Rather than focusing on the development of new library infrastructure, schools were encouraged to improve the utilization of existing books and educational spaces. The major components included open book displays, hanging libraries, classroom reading corners, dedicated library periods, student choice in book selection, home book circulation, age-appropriate categorization of books, community access, and integration of books with storytelling, role play, drawing, and other experiential and art-based learning activities. School

heads were given flexibility to adapt these strategies according to their institutional and geographical contexts.

Data were collected from all 95 schools through structured institutional responses, implementation records, library documentation, and written reflections from school heads and teachers. Information was obtained regarding written library planning, scheduling of library periods, home book circulation, student access to reading materials, reading engagement, perceived improvements in literacy-related competencies, classroom participation, language assessment outcomes, and parental and community involvement. The quantitative component of the study was analyzed through frequencies and percentages. The number of schools adopting particular practices was calculated against the total number of participating schools ($N = 95$). Qualitative information obtained through school reflections and institutional feedback was analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns related to student engagement, reading behaviour, learning outcomes, implementation challenges, and community participation.

The study did not involve experimental manipulation, random assignment, or a separate control group. Therefore, the findings are interpreted as evidence of institutional change and reported educational outcomes rather than definitive experimental proof of causality. Furthermore, since standardized student-level pre-test and post-test scores were not available across all schools, advanced inferential statistical procedures could not be applied. The four hypotheses were therefore examined through systematic descriptive analysis of institutional implementation data and reported outcomes.

Data Analysis And Results

H₀₁: There is no meaningful institutionalization of library practices among schools following the implementation of the reading culture initiative.

Institutionalization refers to the extent to which library activities became integrated into regular school planning and routine educational processes. Two major indicators were used to examine this dimension: the development of written library plans and the inclusion of dedicated weekly library periods in school timetables.

Table 1: Institutionalization of Library Practices across Participating Schools

Institutional Indicator	Number of Schools	Percentage
Schools with written library plans	70	73.68
Schools without written library plans	25	26.32
Schools with dedicated weekly library periods	84	88.42
Schools without dedicated library periods	11	11.58
Total participating schools	95	100.00

The findings indicate a substantial level of institutionalization of library practices across the intervention schools. Out of 95 schools, 70 schools developed written library plans, representing 73.68% of the total institutional coverage. This indicates that nearly three-fourths of the schools formally incorporated library development into their institutional planning processes. The adoption of dedicated weekly

library periods was even higher. A total of 84 schools, representing 88.42%, included library periods in their regular timetables. This finding is particularly significant because the absence of protected reading time had been identified as one of the major barriers to effective library utilization before the intervention. The difference between the two indicators is 14.74 percentage points, indicating that some schools operationalized regular library activities even without preparing formal written plans. The average institutionalization score of 81.05% indicates a high degree of integration of library practices into routine school functioning.

Table 2: Composite Institutionalization Profile

Indicator	Percentage
Written library plans	73.68
Dedicated weekly library periods	88.42
Average institutionalization score	81.05

The descriptive evidence does not support H01. The findings demonstrate substantial institutionalization of library practices across the participating schools.

H₀₂: The intervention does not improve students' access to reading materials and opportunities for independent reading.

The second hypothesis examined whether the intervention increased opportunities for children to access and engage independently with reading materials. Prior to the intervention, books in many schools were largely stored in cupboards or on inaccessible shelves. The intervention attempted to address this issue by promoting open displays, classroom reading corners, dedicated library periods, student choice, and home book circulation.

Table 3: Major Indicators of Student Access to Reading Opportunities

Access Indicator	Number of Schools	Percentage
Dedicated weekly library period	84	88.42
Regular home book circulation	51	53.68
No regular home book circulation	44	46.32
Total participating schools	95	100.00

In addition to these measurable indicators, schools reported the establishment of open reading corners, hanging libraries, open book displays, and opportunities for independent book selection. The implementation of dedicated library periods in 88.42% of schools created structured opportunities for students to interact regularly with reading materials. This represents an important institutional shift from occasional or teacher-dependent library use toward scheduled access. Home book circulation was implemented by 51 schools, representing 53.68% of all participating institutions. This enabled more than half of the intervention schools to extend reading opportunities beyond the school environment. However, home circulation was more difficult to implement than scheduled library periods. The difference between the adoption rates was:

$$88.42\% - 53.68\% = 34.74\%$$

This difference reflects the additional challenges associated with allowing books to move beyond the direct control of schools, including concerns regarding book loss, damage, record maintenance, and accountability.

Table 4: Student Access Implementation Gradient

Type of Access	Intervention Mechanism	Implementation Status
Structured institutional access	Weekly library periods	88.42% schools
Extended school-home access	Home book circulation	53.68% schools
Informal classroom access	Reading corners/open displays	Widely implemented
Learner-controlled access	Independent book selection	Reported as part of intervention

The findings indicate that access mechanisms directly controlled by schools achieved higher institutional adoption than those requiring engagement beyond the school. The findings do not support H02. The intervention substantially increased opportunities for students to access reading materials through structured, informal, and home-based mechanisms.

H₀₃: The integration of library-based reading practices does not contribute to improvement in students' reading-related learning outcomes.

The third hypothesis examined school-level evidence regarding changes in students' reading behaviour, literacy competencies, classroom participation, and language assessment outcomes.

Table 5: Reported Reading-Related Learning Outcomes

Learning Dimension	Reported Outcome
Interest in reading	Strong increase
Independent reading	Increased engagement
Word recognition	Improvement reported
Reading fluency	Improvement reported
Vocabulary	Improvement reported
Reading comprehension	Improvement reported
Classroom participation	Noticeable improvement
Confidence in expression	Improvement reported
Storytelling participation	Increased
Language assessment outcomes	10–20% or higher improvement in most schools

The findings reveal changes across three interconnected dimensions.

- The first dimension relates to student behaviour and engagement. Schools reported a noticeable increase in children's interest in reading. Greater access to storybooks and the opportunity to select books independently appeared to make reading more enjoyable and self-directed.
- The second dimension relates to literacy competencies. Teachers reported improvements in word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These improvements were attributed to repeated exposure to reading materials and the integration of reading activities into regular pedagogy.
- The third dimension relates to academic outcomes. Most schools reported an improvement ranging from 10% to 20% or higher in language assessment outcomes.

Table 6: Multi-Dimensional Framework of Reported Learning Outcomes

Outcome Level	Major Indicators
Behavioural outcomes	Reading interest, curiosity, independent reading
Literacy outcomes	Word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension
Participation outcomes	Discussion, storytelling, classroom expression
Academic outcomes	Improvement in language assessments

The progression suggests a possible pathway in which increased access encourages engagement, engagement promotes regular reading practice, and sustained practice contributes to literacy development.

Table 7: Intervention–Outcome Relationship

Intervention Strategy	Immediate Change	Reported Educational Outcome
Open book displays	Increased visibility	Greater reading interest
Reading corners	Easy accessibility	Frequent engagement with books
Library periods	Protected reading time	Regular reading practice
Student choice	Learner autonomy	Increased motivation
Home circulation	Reading beyond school	Extended exposure to texts
Storytelling	Active engagement	Language expression
Role play	Interpretation of texts	Classroom confidence
Art-based activities	Creative engagement	Participation and expression

The descriptive evidence does not support H03. Participating schools consistently reported positive changes in reading engagement, literacy-related competencies, classroom participation, and language assessment outcomes. However, since standardized student-level baseline and endline data were not available for statistical comparison, the findings should be interpreted as strong descriptive and institutional evidence rather than definitive causal proof.

H₀₄: The reading culture initiative does not generate meaningful parental and community participation in school library activities.

The fourth hypothesis examined whether the intervention extended beyond the institutional environment and generated participation from parents and School Management Committees.

Table 8: Community Participation in Library Activities

Community Engagement Status	Number of Schools	Percentage
Active parent/SMC participation	20	21.05
Limited or no active participation	75	78.95
Total	95	100.00

Only 20 schools reported active participation of parents and School Management Committee members. This represents 21.05% of the total participating schools. The findings demonstrate that community engagement was considerably weaker than school-level institutionalization.

Table 9: Comparative Implementation Pattern

Dimension	Percentage of Schools
Dedicated library periods	88.42

Written library plans	73.68
Home book circulation	53.68
Active community participation	21.05

The data reveal a progressive decline in implementation as the intervention moved further beyond the direct institutional control of schools. The gap between dedicated library periods and active community participation is:

$$88.42\% - 21.05\% = 67.37\%$$

This substantial difference suggests that internal school reforms were easier to implement than broader social and community engagement. The limited community participation was associated with factors such as lack of awareness regarding the role of reading beyond textbooks, occupational constraints of parents, concerns regarding the safety of books, and uncertainty about the role of community members in library activities. The findings provide partial support for H04. While the initiative succeeded in generating meaningful community participation in 20 schools, active involvement remained limited across the majority of participating institutions. Thus, community participation should be considered an emerging area of development rather than a fully achieved outcome of the intervention.

Discussion

The findings of the study demonstrate that school libraries can become important spaces for educational transformation when their role changes from passive storage to active pedagogical engagement. The intervention addressed a fundamental problem observed in many resource-constrained schools: the existence of books without meaningful student access or systematic educational utilization. The findings related to the first hypothesis indicate substantial institutionalization. The incorporation of weekly library periods by 88.42% of schools suggests that the intervention successfully created protected time for reading within the formal school structure. Similarly, the development of written library plans by 73.68% of schools demonstrates an emerging commitment to systematic planning.

These findings support the argument that reading culture requires institutional legitimacy. When reading is included in the timetable, it becomes part of the recognized educational routine rather than an optional activity dependent entirely upon individual teacher interest. The second hypothesis focused on student access. The findings demonstrate that access can be improved without major infrastructure investment. Reading corners, open displays, hanging libraries, and home circulation represented practical adaptations of existing spaces and resources. The relatively lower adoption of home book circulation compared to library periods is also significant. It indicates that interventions involving home-school interaction require additional trust and administrative mechanisms. Concerns about book safety and teacher workload can influence implementation.

The findings related to learning outcomes provide encouraging evidence. Schools consistently reported increased student interest in reading, improved reading fluency, vocabulary development, better comprehension, and greater classroom participation. Most schools also reported improvements of 10–

20% or higher in language assessments. Community participation emerged as the weakest dimension of the intervention. Only 21.05% of schools reported active parental and SMC participation. This finding demonstrates that changing institutional practices within schools may be easier than transforming broader social attitudes and practices.

The findings suggest that implementation success tends to decline as interventions require greater involvement from stakeholders outside the immediate institutional structure. Another important aspect of the intervention was flexibility. Schools were encouraged to develop context-specific solutions rather than following a rigid standardized model. This flexibility likely contributed to ownership and adaptation in geographically diverse and resource-constrained settings.

Major Findings

The findings indicate that the intervention resulted in substantial progress in the institutionalization and utilization of school library resources. Written library plans were developed by 70 schools (73.68%), while 84 schools (88.42%) incorporated dedicated weekly library periods into their regular timetables. The resulting composite institutionalization score of 81.05% indicates a high level of integration of library practices within routine school functioning. The intervention also promoted more accessible reading environments through reading corners, open book displays, hanging libraries, age-appropriate categorization, and greater opportunities for students to select books according to their interests. However, regular home book circulation was reported by 51 schools (53.68%), indicating comparatively lower implementation of practices extending reading beyond the school environment. The findings further suggest positive changes in students' reading engagement and learning. Teachers reported increased student interest and motivation toward reading, along with perceived improvements in word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Students were also observed to demonstrate greater classroom participation and confidence in expressing their ideas. Most participating schools reported improvements of approximately 10%–20% or higher in language assessment outcomes, suggesting that improved access to and engagement with reading materials may have contributed to better language-learning performance. These findings are consistent with the broader literature emphasizing the role of accessible library resources, reading opportunities, and supportive literacy environments in strengthening reading culture and children's literacy development. Community participation emerged as the comparatively weakest dimension of the intervention. Active parental and community participation was reported by 20 schools (21.05%), indicating that practices controlled directly by schools were substantially easier to institutionalize than those requiring sustained engagement from families and the wider community. The three-year continuity of the intervention nevertheless appears to have supported the gradual embedding of reading practices within school routines and strengthened the culture of library use. Overall, the findings demonstrate that meaningful transformation of school libraries can be achieved primarily through better utilization, accessibility, and pedagogical integration of existing resources, rather than through substantial investment in new

infrastructure. The intervention therefore provides evidence for a relatively low-cost, school-centered approach to strengthening reading culture and supporting foundational literacy in resource-constrained rural school settings.

Conclusion

The present study examined an intervention designed to transform existing school libraries into active learning spaces across all 95 schools covered under the initiative in Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand. Implemented over three consecutive academic sessions, the intervention demonstrates that the development of reading culture can be promoted through strategic institutional and pedagogical changes without requiring major infrastructural expansion.

The findings demonstrate substantial institutionalization of library practices. A large majority of schools introduced dedicated library periods, while nearly three-fourths developed written library plans. The intervention also improved opportunities for children to access books through reading corners, open displays, independent book selection, and home book circulation. The reported improvement in reading interest, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, classroom participation, and language assessment outcomes suggests that regular access to reading materials and their integration into pedagogy can contribute positively to foundational learning. However, the findings also reveal that community participation remains a major challenge. While some schools successfully involved parents and School Management Committees, the majority had not yet achieved sustained community engagement. This indicates the need for targeted strategies to extend reading culture beyond school boundaries. The study therefore proposes that a sustainable reading culture requires the interaction of four major dimensions:

- **Institutionalization:** Regular planning and protected reading time.
- **Accessibility:** Visible and child-friendly access to books.
- **Pedagogical Integration:** Connecting reading with classroom learning and joyful activities.
- **Community Engagement:** Extending reading practices into homes and communities.

The experience demonstrates that a functional school library is not defined primarily by a separate building or expensive infrastructure. Its effectiveness depends upon whether books are accessible, whether children are encouraged to choose and read them, and whether reading becomes part of the everyday culture of the school. Ultimately, the study reinforces the principle that transforming a school library is fundamentally a process of transforming educational culture.

Educational Implications

- **Implications for School Leaders:** School leaders should recognize libraries as integral components of academic improvement and foundational literacy. Dedicated library periods should be incorporated into school timetables, and reading plans should form part of institutional planning.
- **Implications for Teachers:** Teachers should integrate books and reading activities with storytelling, role play, drawing, discussion, and other experiential learning approaches. Reading

should not be treated as an isolated activity but as an integral part of language and classroom pedagogy.

- **Implications for Educational Administrators:** Monitoring systems should focus on meaningful student engagement and educational outcomes rather than merely examining book stocks, registers, or physical infrastructure.
- **Implications for Policy:** Policies relating to school libraries should focus not only on procurement and infrastructure but also on accessibility, teacher orientation, pedagogical integration, and regular student use.
- **Implications for Community Engagement:** Schools need systematic strategies to involve parents and communities. Parent orientation, community reading events, home reading campaigns, and book-sharing initiatives can help extend the reading culture beyond institutional boundaries.

Limitations Of The Study

The study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. The intervention was conducted within a single district in a specific rural and geographical context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. The study did not include a separate control group, and experimental manipulation was not undertaken. Student-level standardized pre-test and post-test data were not available across all schools. Consequently, advanced inferential statistical tests could not be applied. Several learning outcomes were based on institutional feedback, teacher observations, and school-level reports. Therefore, the findings establish descriptive evidence of positive institutional and educational change rather than definitive causal relationships.

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