



RESEARCH ARTICLE

READING HABITS OF CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS IN THE DIOCESE OF MYSORE

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ABSTRACT

Reading is to the mind, what exercise is to the body. Reading occupies a key role in the life of a person. It opens the doors of treasures of knowledge. The present study, aims to assess the reading habits of the inhabitants of religious houses and their spiritual growth. The study was conducted in the Mysore Diocese. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The present study is based on some observations on the religious houses in the Mysore Diocese. Inhabitants have focused only on religious collection and reading. Libraries should be utilized to have access to information. It is necessary that religious libraries keep themselves abreast with modern development technologies and lack digital information such as websites, mobile apps, YouTube channels, live broadcasts etc.

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INTRODUCTION

According to King's English, Addone (2006), books are our greatest companions. Our friends may sometimes refuse to help us. Sometimes they may not be in a position to help us either because of illness or because of inconvenience. However books are always readily available to help us gain knowledge. Reading is no doubt a stupendous habit. It can make a stagnant, barren mind rich and cultivatable. Books are good source of dissemination of useful ideas. They are effective tools to popularize the fruits of our research in various fields of knowledge, religion and spirituality. They help in the spread of our progressive views. Books give us an insight to the world where ever possibly you are physically or mentally. According to A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (2013), "For me personally, books have always been close companions. I discovered some when I was very young, and have never forgotten them. They are like friends who have led me by the hand and guided me through life. Their words breathe meaning into many situations, for I use them to understand the world around me". Reading provides experience through which the individual may expand his horizons of knowledge, identify, extend and intensify his interest and gains deeper understanding of himself, of other human beings and of the world. Reading has come to hold the most significant place in education as a means of communication in a highly erudite society.

In spite of the invention of the latest audio-visual materials, the book in its ordinary conservative form is, still the most important means of communication ever invented. Thus the achievement of quality basic education calls for the development of good reading habits of both the young and adult learners. Reading is a key to a wealth of experience that links people in a way, far beyond distance or time.

Christianity an Overview

The problem of origin is always difficult for a historian. There are two reasons for it. 1) In order to confirm events with scientific accuracy he requires official documents and archaeological remains. Now these things will exist only when a movement has emerged into public life. 2) Moreover pioneers are more concerned with making history than with writing history. These two things are true of Christianity as of every other historical subject. This is the main difficulty to trace the origin of Christianity.

Therefore, we have to base our research on some available resources. The Acts of the Apostles, the 'epistles' of Paul, references Latin historians and the documents collected by Eusebius of Caesarea, provide with a number of statements about the origin of Christianity. But they give a picture of early Christian centuries that is false because it is extremely one sided.

The Acts and epistles are interested only in the work of Paul. The Latin historians mention Christians only in connection with the Empire. Eusebius uses documents concerned almost exclusively with Asia, Syria and Egypt. But in the last 50 years, the complex Jewish background to early Christianity has been discovered and this combined with a better understanding of the Greek and Roman world into which Christianity later emerged, makes it possible to give a more or less accurate origin of Christianity.

- The Dead Sea scrolls' reveal in greater detail a part of the Jewish frame work into which Christianity arose.
- The discoveries of Nag Hammadi particularly that of the 'Gospel of Thomas' gives us an Aramaean tradition of Jesus.
- The Judeo Christian writing 'the Didache'. 'Assension of Isaiah' etc help us to rediscover the background of Christianity prior to and contemporary with the writings of New Testament.

To trace the origin of Christianity we have to go back to Jesus himself. Christianity is the religion founded upon the life and teaching of Jesus who was born in 4th BC. He began his career in Palestine, instructing and preaching to the people about the Kingdom of God. Jesus shared an ordinary family life in a rural setting fully emerged with traditional type of Jewish society. He travelled around the country with a group of followers called disciples. He chose twelve disciples called 'apostles' to preach His doctrines. It is this intimate group of Jesus that formed the nucleus of later Christianity. The death of Jesus was a great blow to the Jesus' group and they scattered. However they soon reassembled on after another beginning on the first Easter morning, reported that they had met Jesus alive. This rising from death is called 'Resurrection' and forms one of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith without resurrection Jesus movement would have completely disappeared.

Pentecost

Jesus movement received a new incentive at Pentecost, 50 days after Easter. On that day the disciples reported a strange and powerful inspiration. They said the Holy Spirit had entered into them. They were invested by the spirit with an authority and power which made them preachers and propagators of faith in Christ. After Pentecost they spoke of unusual deeds, such as speaking in many languages (Glassolia). This event was in the year 30 AD at Jerusalem. It is impossible therefore to write the history of Christianity without sharing from the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Christianity in Mysore

Christianity was introduced in Mysore by the Dominicans around 1325. The Dominicans were followed by the Franciscans by 1587. In the 17th century the Jesuits came to the kingdom of Mysore and established the Jesuit mission. The Jesuit fathers seem to have followed the Cauvery upstream to Srirangapatna which was the capital of the Kingdom of Mysore from 1610 to 1799. From the capital they spread the teachings of Christ to the north and west of the Kingdom. The mission stations of the period were Palhally, Dornahally, Gadanahally and Sathihally. As there was suppression of Jesuits in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV they could not continue the missionary work.

At the suggestion of the Secretary of the Propaganda fide Msgr. Borgia. Pope Luis VI gave the new responsibility of Mysore to the Paris society of Foreign Missions (MEP) in the 1776. The first superior of this mission was Brigot, The Ex-jesuits amalgamated themselves with MEP. 1792 Abbe Dubos, one of the most illustrious priests of the Paris society Foreign Missions came to Srirangapatna. Dubois realized that in order to have access to the people it was necessary to live according to their customs. He traveled throughout the kingdom as a brave missionary and took tremendous care for the upliftment of the people especially with health care. He got the support of Colonel Wellesley, the Governor of the town, whose protection was essential for the success of his missionary work. At Ganjam a church was constructed in the year 1800. He also built churches in Mysore, Coimbatore and Dharmapuri. The book titled as 'Hindu manners, customs and ceremonies' written by Abbe Dubois are one of the famous book on the subject.

After Abbe Dubois Bishop Charbonneau came to Srirangapatna in 1837. He took care of the Christian Communities of Srirangapatna, Mysore, Kollegal, Hunsur, Sathihalli Shimoga, Tirthahally and Harihar. He administered the Christian community with faith, care, discipline, great zeal and love. In 1840 he added an aside to church of Sattihalli. He built a chapel at Fraserpet and the following year a church at Shimoga. In spite of his illness he was anxious to finish the church in the town of Mysore. Krishnaraja Wodeyar was the then Rajah of Mysore. Rajah of Mysore was a very close friend of Bishop Charbonneau Rajah of Mysore came forward to support the construction of the church with financial gifts. The church was ready for blessings in 1843. The next foreign missionary who landed in the soil of Mysore was Chevalier. He came to Mysore mission in the first part of the 19th century. In 1845 Mysore became a separate mission centre and so he opened a seminary in Bangalore to recruit local vocations. In 1859 he started the Institute of the Brothers of St. Joseph to disseminate education to the young. In 1873 he was appointed as Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of Mysore. He chose Fr. Coadou as his pro-vicar.

In the year 1877 a terrible famine broke out all over South India. This famine brought a lot of orphaned children to the mission. The government officials co-operated with missionaries to bring relief to the population. In 1878 an orphanage was built in Mysore, called 'Famine boys orphanage.' In 1880 he died and was buried in the sanctuary of the Cathedral at the foot of St. Patricks at Bangalore. In 1886 the vicariate of Mysore was elevated to the diocese and its Vicar Apostolic Coadou became the 1st Bishop of Mysore. St. Joseph's College in Bangalore was started during this period. In 1884 Coadou decided to also start the hospital at St. Martha's in Bangalore. Bishop Coadou was succeeded by the second Bishop Kleiner in 1890. He was a famous architect and built beautiful churches.

The third bishop of the Diocese of Mysore was Bishop Basle 1910-1915. He constructed a number of convents and churches in Bangalore. The fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Mysore was Bishop Teissier, he was appointed as Bishop in 1916. The last bishop of the French Foreign Missionary was Bishop Despatures (1922-1942). Krishnaraja Wodeyar III became the friend of the fourth Bishop, on several occasions the king presented gifts to the diocese, the king also permitted the bishop to construct new churches, schools, convents.

A news Bulletin called Doota of the sacred heart of Jesus was published in the year 1924. St. Peter's pontifical seminary was opened in 1936. St. Philomena's shrine at Mysore was solemnly blessed. Today St. Philomena's Cathedral is known as St. Joseph's cathedral. The foundation stone was laid on 28th October 1933 by Krishnaraja Wodeyar. Mysore Mission was split into two dioceses – Mysore and Bangalore in the year 1942. Since 1845 Bangalore had been the headquarters of the mission. The Bishops house and Cathedral was in Bangalore. Bishop Thomas Pothacamury was appointed as the Bishop of Bangalore and Bishop Feuga as Bishop of Mysore.

Religious Vocation

The Religious Vocation links the Religious with all Christians. The religious call is the special grace Religious receive to embrace Christian vocation with full understanding of the total consecration it implies to their lives to God and his kingdom to continue Jesus' mission on earth. Religious have accepted Jesus' invitation, "If you want to be my disciple, renounce yourself, take up your daily cross, and follow me." (Lk 9:23) By this self-gift they bind themselves to transform their lives according to the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, obedience, renouncing marriage, property and career. Through such bond they totally dedicate themselves to God by an act of supreme love. They do so in the firm hope that God Jesus Christ, their only support in this world will be also their eternal reward. Religious vocation does not separate the religious from other people, but rather unites them in a distinctive manner with all people through Jesus Christ. As Jesus demonstrated his solidarity with our race through his union with the Father and through his obedience to him up to death (cf. Mk.10:45) so will religious prove their devotedness to their religious consecration. Indeed, the evangelical counsels unite, in a special way, those who embrace them, to the mystery of the Church. Thus their spiritual life is devoted to the superior life of the whole Church (L.G. 44)

Scope of the study

The scope of this study is as broad as possible in the field of Reading habits of religious congregation. This study seeks to create a space for the representation of any and all perspectives in the role of reading religion and spirituality in present society. This also welcomes a wide variety of disciplinary practices with the new trends. The perspectives captured in these spaces range from committed within-religion views, to comparative or pan-religious views, to religious empirical or theoretical readings of the role of religion and spirituality in society. Above all, it provides spaces and insights for open dialogue on the sources of foundational or essential meaning of the scope of research which is limited to all Religious houses in Mysore Diocese. The present existing Diocese of Mysore comprises of four civil districts of Mysore, Kodagu, Mandya and Chamarajanagar. In Mysore Diocese the religious Institutions are headed by different Religious priests, brothers and sisters. There are 19 religious priest orders, 4 religious brothers orders and 48 religious sisters orders consecrated to serve Jesus Christ through various ministries.

The study and information collected is from the following libraries

Religious Priests

- Carmelites (First Order), Order of Discalced Carmelites – OCD

- Congregations of Missions – CM
- Holy Spirit Fathers – ALCP-OSS
- Missionaries of Compassion – MoC
- Missionaries of Francis de Sales (Fransalians) – MSFS
- Missionaries of Our Lady of LA Salette – MS
- Missionaries of the Sacred Heart – MSC
- Norbertine Fathers – O. Praem.
- Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin – OFM Cap
- Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) – OFM
- Pallottines Society of the Catholic Apostolate – SAC
- Precious Blood Missionaries – CPPS
- Servants of Charity (Guanellians) – SDC
- Society of Jesus – SJ
- Society of Montfort Missionaries – SMM
- Society of St. Francis de Sales (Salesians of Don Bosco) - SDB
- Society of the Divine Word – SVD
- The Indian Mission Society – IMS
- Third Order Regular of St. Francis – TOR

Religious Brothers

- Congregation of the Missionary Brothers of St. Francis of Assisi – C.M.S.F.
- Disciples of the Divine Saviour (DDS)
- Missionaries of Charity Brothers – MC
- Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel – SG

Religious Sisters

- Adorers of the Blood of Christ – ASC
- Apostolic Carmel – AC
- Assisi Sisters of Mary Immaculate – ASMI
- Benedictine Sisters of Camaldoli - OSB
- Carmelite Sisters of St. Teresa – CSST
- Carmelite Teresian Sisters – CTS
- Catechist Sisters of Mary Immaculate – CMMI
- Congregation of the Carmelite Religious – CCR
- Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul – DC
- Daughters of Presentation of Mary in the Temple - DPM
- Daughters of the Church – DC /EF
- Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy – FDM
- Dinasevanasabha (Servants of the Poor) - DSS
- Franciscan Missionaries of Mary – FMM
- Franciscan Sisters of THE Immaculate Heart of Mary – FIH
- Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Hearts – FSSC
- Institute of the Foreign Missions Sisters in India - ME
- Little Sisters of the Poor – LSP
- Manava Jeevodaya - MJ
- Missionaries of Charity – MC
- Missionaries of Mary Mediatrix (MMM)
- Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians – MSMHC
- Missionary Sisters, Servants of Holy Spirit - SSPS
- Order of Discalced Carmelite – OCD
- Order of the Most Holy Saviour - OSSS
- Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd - RGS
- Religious of Mary Immaculate Claretian Missionary Sisters – RMI
- Saccidananda Ashram
- Salesian Missionaries of Mary Immaculate - SMMI

- Satyaseva Catechist Sisters of the Families – SCS
- Sisters of Charity of Saints Bartholomea Capitanio and Vincenza Gerosa - SCCG
- Sisters of Notre Dame – SND
- Sisters of Sacred Science – SSS
- Sisters of St. Anne of Bangalore – SAB
- Sisters of St. Anne of Madras – SSA
- Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo – SCB
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy - SJA
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny – SJC
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes - SJT
- Sisters of the Cross of Cahvanod – SCC
- Sisters of the Holy Cross - HC
- Society of Jesus, Mary Joseph – JMJ
- Society of the Helpers of Mary - SHM
- Society of the St. Anne (Madras) - SSA
- The Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany - BS
- Ursuline Franciscan Sisters – UFS
- Ursuline Sisters of Somasca (USS)
- Visitation of Holy Mary – VHM

Table1. Age Group Wise Distribution

S/N	Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Under 20 years	31	16.00
2	21 to 30 years	54	27.00
3	31 to 40 years	36	18.00
4	41 to 50 years	33	16.00
5	Above 50 years	46	23.00
	Total	200	100.00

The above Table1 shows the age group of the respondents. Books are used by various people for various purposes. The religious too use library for reading and reflecting. A majority of 27 % for respondents belong to the age group of 21 to 30 years which stated that it is the middle aged religious who uses more of books for spiritual growth followed by the age group belonged to above 50 years.

Table 2. Visit to the Library

S/N	Visit	Response	Percentage (%)
1	Daily	69	34.05
2	Twice a week	30	15.00
3	Once a week	35	17.05
4	Once a fortnight	18	9.00
5	As and when required	48	24.00
	Total	200	100.00

The religious community was given the details of the libraries which they could visit, and to note down the frequency of their visits to the libraries, as shown in Table 2. The inhabitants were inconsistent to visiting the library and most of them visited as and when required to read religious books.

Table 3 – Use of Time

S/N	Time	Response	Percentage (%)
1	Half an hour	102	51.00
2	One hour	68	34.00
3	Two hours	16	8.00
4	Three hours	6	3.00
5	More than three hours	8	4.00
	Total	200	100.00

Mere visits to the library by the respondents, in the sense of reading religious books or for sheer curiosity, were not really

effective. Hence the community was told to note the time they spent in the library when they visited to read religious books it was observed that very few inhabitants spent more than 3 hours. The results are in Table 3.

Table 4. Maintaining the Accession Register

	Accession Register	Response	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	172	86.00
2	No	28	14.00
	Total	200	100.00

It was found that approximately 86 % of the respondents of religious communities maintained accession register, and 28 % did not. This met with a fairly good response as many accessed the religious books, as shown in Table 4.

Table 5 .Collection of Books

	Collection	Response	Percentage (%)
1	Good	142	71.00
2	Average	53	26.05
3	Poor	5	2.05
	Total	200	100.00

The respondents were then told to turn their attention to the various facets of Christianity books available. About 71 % readily turned to the religious purposes exclusively, but 5 % of the readers did not collect the religious books which may have been available and also proves disinterest for such books as shown in Table 5.

Table 6 – Use of Digital Media

	Digital Media	Response	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	131	65.05
2	No	69	34.05
	Total	200	100.00

The respondents were asked after a sui Table interval as to whether they had experienced any spiritual growth because of the use of digital media, and a huge percentage of 65%, cutting across age lines, reported a very positive spiritual growth. Of course, the growth was in various directions due to the multiplicity of the media employed, but there was augmentation nevertheless, as shown by Table 6.

Table 7. Level of Satisfaction

S/N	Satisfactory	Response	Percentage (%)
1	Highly Satisfied	15	7.05
2	Satisfied	159	79.05
3	Neutral	21	10.05
4	Dissatisfied	04	02.00
5	Highly dissatisfied	01	00.05
	Total	200	100.00

The respondents were asked regarding the overall level of satisfaction they obtained in the enhancement of the goal of becoming a more devout Christian with growth in spirituality. The response was in the shape of a Bell curve, with the high satisfaction group to the highly dissatisfied group, but the group which was satisfied with their growth was the maximum at 79.05 %. This is reflected in Table7.

Conclusion

To conclude we have the aspects of diverse outputs from the reading habits and 'growth in spirituality', and asked what the main questions are in the philosophy of reading and religion, and which of them most interest and satisfy the readers. This should have helped you get a sense of the place of definitions in the reading habits, and helped you to distinguish questions that are genuinely to understand from questions that are the present perspectives of the reading inhabitants. We have done some work on the important exercise of thinking about how these tables can be made for views we ourselves accept and how far they apply reading to give satisfaction to religion and growth of spirituality. This gives a through view of readers enhancing the growth of spirituality with satisfactory levels of indulgence in reading.

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