

## **The Benefits of Reading in Childhood: Case Studies of Ten Writers**

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This study focuses on the importance of library outreach programmes that connect schools and communities and make children have close contact with books and reading, by showing how much this connection has helped ten award winning Sinhala and English writers in Sri Lanka who have also proved to be fair and upright citizens of this country, leading successful lives at present. The objective of this study is to make adults realize how valuable it is to get children to read for fun when young. This is an interpretative study, using ethnographic methods to find the common denominator in all ten varied lives functioning as case studies. To find their sense of justice and fairness, a literature analysis of their work in the decade after the war between Tamil separatist militants and the Sri Lankan state ended in 2009 was conducted to identify their stance on the ethnic minorities of Sri Lanka. Findings showed that the influence common to all ten childhoods was that they all had connections to libraries and were avid readers, often encouraged by an adult around them. All of them also took a clear stand against racial discrimination and prejudice in their work. All of them were also leading economically stable lives, measured here by the successful careers they have. This concludes that having a childhood that prioritized reading may have helped all of the ten writers to become what they are at present. It is recommended to replicate such connections between reading, libraries and children wherever possible. Given that Sri Lanka has a strong library system, this would not call for extra resources; good qualified librarians and dynamic teachers and volunteers networking may be able to instill the habit of reading in children.

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