

**INCULCATING READING HABITS IN CHANGING WORLD TO CURB LOSS OF VALUE
SYSTEM: A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

BY

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**BEING A PAPER PRESENTED AT 2022 READERSHIP PROMOTION CAMPAIGN (RPC)
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Abstract:

Reading is the bases of various information with immeasurable benefits, immediate and later. Relying on secondary sources, the paper enjoins all concerned to rise to the challenge, ensuring reading is greatly promoted. It highlighted the needs and the importance of reading for a healthy intellectual and plays a greater role in enabling a person to attain a practical efficiency. It also discussed the need to inculcate reading habits to people's growth and economic sustainable development. It highlighted some challenges of reading culture to include change of Value System which is attributed to materialism, godfatherism, illiteracy and poor funding of educational systems as well as lack of suitable and relevant information resources in the libraries for effective service delivery. The paper concluded that Inculcating Reading Habits is a concern to all the stakeholders, (policy makers), librarians, parents, teachers and the general public). All hands must be on deck in ensuring that reading culture is given a serious attention it deserves and relevant information resources are provided and available and accessible to people for effective service delivery. Unless this is done, otherwise, Nigeria will remain underdeveloped.

Key words; Inculcating, reading habits, changing world, curb, various system in Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Nothing is more important towards achieving academic excellence than being a good reader. Also it is said that readers are leaders, hence the need to acquire reading skills at a very early stage. Reading is basic to learning and it's hoped that if a person learns to read, he/she will read to learn (Gotau, 2015)

Libraries are charged with the responsibilities of collecting information materials print, non-print, audio-visuals, organizing the materials and disseminating information and providing services on the materials for users. Libraries are also established to serve all and sundry in the community irrespective of their age, sex, occupation, or educational attainment.

Education is the preparation of man for life. Therefore, it is necessary that a child needs education which can only be achieved through reading, because reading is a programme that enhances educational excellence. Reading generally extends one's capacity in language. By reading, one can add the efforts of other writers thereby perhaps gaining greater powers of expressions. It is viewed that a student furthers education after secondary school education depends to a large extent on the quality and quantity of reading.

READING

Reading according to Dadzie (2008) is defined as the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development. Invariably, this means the ability of individual to make meaning out of what he/she had read from books or other forms of recorded information.

Reading can also be defined as the process of looking at a series of writing symbols and getting meaning from them. Reading is a receptive skill, through it, we receive information (Abdulrazaq, 2019).

Reading is a building block of learning while reading culture is the philosophy of developing a progressive reading attitude. Reading makes a person to think logically and dispassionately. It prepares an individual for distinction in life.

Reading is not just for the purpose of education in academic institution, it is an essential habits which ensures greatness in a man's life. Reading provides tools for transmitting ideas to succeeding generation as well as the opportunity of partaking of the wisdom of the past generation. Therefore, children need to be proficient in reading for them to prosper in their academic work and carry out their duties as citizens of a governing society (Aina, 2019)

Gotau (2015) opined that reading is identified as the single most determinant of the students' success in education and in our modern complex society. Reading culture is defined as the process of building positive reading attitude among children and students over a period of time. When an individual habitually and regularly reads books, newspapers and other information carriers that are not necessarily required of him to advance in his carrier one is said to possess a good reading culture.

READING HABITS

A good reading habits connotes the characteristics observed in students as they find their ways around libraries, interacting with books and non-book resources alike. Individual develops and expresses reading habits through cognitive and effective domains from early childhood and formative years (that is, when they are in nursery, primary and secondary schools). The formal learning environment called the school libraries provide the students with the necessary resources and facilities to cater for and promote good reading habits (Gotau, 2015). Therefore, it is pertinent to inculcate good reading habits in students and sound and qualitative education remains Nigerian surest and quickest route to all development and industrialization.

IMPORTANCE OF READING

The importance of reading cannot be overemphasized considering its indispensability in life of any growing nation. With reading, a reader is given a glimpse of the whole world without moving an inch from his/her place (Krashen, 2004). The following few importance of reading are stressed as:

-Acquisition of knowledge: Reading enables an individual to acquire knowledge about things he/she has not come across.

-Learning new words: The more one reads, the more words one comes across and they make way into individual's daily life. One feels satisfied and happy by making use of new words. One feels confident by speaking well with good vocabulary.

-Krashen (2004) posits that reading is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning. Becoming a skilled, vast and adaptable reader enhances the chances of success in schools and beyond life.

-Reading in all its varieties is so vital to being better informed and having a better understanding of everything. It makes an individual to be thoughtful and constructive and then contribute significantly to the society.

- Reading increases level of patience. The level of patience of an individual increases when reading, particularly, when the book is an interesting one. One will feel the need to complete it with patience to know the in-depth of each line and the word in it.

Reading brings tranquility. No matter what types of the book one reads, it relaxes one's mind and bring a change in one's attitude with the subject of the reading. It assists in knowing various solutions to inevitable problems in life.

- Reading develops mind. It makes one to eat right and live healthy.

- Reading broadens your imagination and enhances creativity.

- Reading reduces stresses and helps you sleep better.

-Reading is a great source of motivation, don't give up, amongst others.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Development refers to improving people's lifestyle through improved qualitative and functional education, incomes, skills and fulfilled employment (Igwe, 2011). He further stated that development involves people who can read and write. Similarly, Onome (2010) opined that one of the criteria for categorizing a country as a developed is the extent to which it develops its information systems at various level to achieve socioeconomic growth.

On the other hand, economic development simply means development of a greater quality of life for human and well-structured human capital development is an asset for global development (Denver, 2018).

Sustainable economic development is simply an approach to economic planning that attempts to foster economic growth while preserving the quality of the environment for future generation. Sustainable development therefore, is a process of development that accommodates the needs of current and future generation.

Wikipedia defines economic development as a process in which a nation improves in the economic and social well-being of its people. I.e. putting the region on the path of higher growth by improving the productivity in ways that leads to better incomes and living standard for all. Consequently, all these take place as a result of reading. Leading Nations pry themselves merely on their promotion of reading. They see high level of literacy as a major sources of their development and socioeconomic and political maturity.

CAUSES AND PROBLEMS OF POOR READING CULTURE

There is a general apartheid towards reading in Nigeria as a whole. This apathy to reading is not only common with the youth alone, however, even with the adults who are

to show the directions to the younger generation are not reading, this has been a greater concern to Nigerians about the dwindling reading culture.

Ayansina (2011) opines that low intellectual capacity, unsuitable curriculum, illiteracy, poverty, inadequate funding, and misappropriation/ mismanagement of funds meant for education amongst others are the major impediments responsible for poor patronages of the books and the slow development of reading culture. The declining interest in reading among youth today is a cause for alarm and a challenge to all.

Cultivating reading habits is important to both individual and to the nation's development. Therefore, it has become imperative to sustain reading culture or else, literacy will revert to illiteracy. Consequently, Igwe (2011) and Gotau (2015) posit that the absence of widespread culture of reading in Nigeria serves as an effective barrier to our development and competitiveness to attaining global educational standard. Furthermore, most of the problems we are experiencing today in Nigeria are traceable to high rate of illiteracy. They highlighted some of the problems bedeviling the country to include kidnapping, raping, armed robbery, terrorism, cultism, vandalism, corruption, drugs abuse, amongst others had cut across Nigeria. There is therefore need to make the present generation to be more aware and conscious of the importance of reading, ensuring that they should have the literacy skills required in the modern society so as to key into the contemporary development.

If a person can read and write, he/she can avoid some of the things that can harm him/her, he/she can get information from different sources on what to do to be healthy. The Nation benefits from this because, it's only those who are healthy that can contribute significantly to the development of this Country. The facts remain that, unless a solution is found to this dwindling reading habits in Nigeria, otherwise, the country will continue to battle with underdevelopment.

CHANGE OF VALUE SYSTEM:

Another reason for decline reading culture in Nigeria today is change of Value system. Anunobi (2022) has attributed the poor reading culture in Nigeria today as a quest for materialism. She further pointed out that people have shifted their emphasis from reading and acquisition of knowledge to materialism, a development that is dangerous for the growth and development of Nigeria. She noticed that poor funding of National Library of Nigeria- the custodian of knowledge sources and cultural heritage, had greatly affected its service delivery to the nation

Another factor is lack of respect for the learned in the society. The quest for materialism in the society has made people to underrate the learned because they donot have money and cannot be called the "shot" (Anunobi, 2022). To this end, she buttressed her points that regrettably, Nigerian Laquettes were being recognized outside the shore of the country, rather than within, a development that had contributed to the poor development of reading culture due to change in value. The youths, children and adults are no longer interested in knowledge rather, people are interested in materialism.

People want to get rich quick and rather, they have no respect for the scholars and the learned. The Laquettes like Chinue Achebe and Woke Soyinka etc are being recognized beyond the shore of the Country.

Another factor is the Parents. Parents have not helped in the matter. They do not encourage their children to read at home s. Some parents do everything possible to ensure that their children get the best certificate without values or solid background or without the knowledge. However, they support examination malpractices and JAMBs malpractices by bribing the teachers and JAMBs Officers. They call it "MiracleCentres" in ensuring that their children get the best grades and results, a development that makes Nigeria underdeveloped.

Parents do not have time and attention to what their children are reading or the knowledge they will get.

Another factor to decline in reading culture is Godfatherism. Godfatherism has contributed immensely in the sense that students with Godfatherism believe that even if they do not get good certificates, they must surely get the best employment or job. Everything is there for them even the unborn children of the Godfatherism keep job for their children, a development that have increased corruption and impoverished Nigerians. Patients die in the hands of such doctors in hospitals. Money is lost in the hands of such bank managers in the banks, buildings collapse in the hands of such engineers. Justice is perverted in the hands of judges and lawyers in the courts, etc (Gotau, 2015).

Another factor is neo-literacy. What this means, is that people do not understand the importance of reading. Meanwhile, they themselves have the background of reading. Their parents brought them up in reading. Anunobi (2022) posits that if you want to hide something from a Nigerian, put it in the pages of the books or newspapers, they will never see it. That shows that people are not reading. The way out is to change the mindset of our people.

Economic hardship. Some parents could not afford the money to buy the recommended textbooks for their wards, they can only pay the school fees and forget about the working materials in the school. Some parents find it difficult to even feed the children with good food due to level of poverty and children are pruned to sickness (malnutrition).

Cost of production of books: Publishers find it difficult to publish due to increase of the cost of materials as a result of non-incentive from the government. Authors are no longer writing indigenous books, thereby indigenous knowledge is declining. This is because authors are no longer motivated and encouraged to do so.

The advent of ICT: The objective of the ICT is to increase knowledge and research work. However, students and parents no longer read hard copies/ print copies. Rather, they indulge on internets, film houses and electronic gadgets, video games, handset etc, they are addicted to the tech savvy things, rather than reading. Young people are more tethered to the computer, phone screens and they hardly know the joy of reading. They prefer to watch videos, negative videos, movies and chart aimlessly on the internet, watching Europeans football matches and turn to pornographic sites on the computer-internet i.e. (social media- Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApps, Youtube, etc.) at the detriment of reading for increase knowledge, a development that exposes them to crimes and other social vices.

Another problem is low patronage to use of libraries. Young people (pupils and students) hardly visit libraries to read. They only do that during examinations. Loss of interest in reading is mostly reflected in people's attitude to libraries. The libraries are almost non-existent in some primary and secondary schools.

Poor budgetary allocation to educational sector. Education is not a priority to the present government of the day and the successive past governments, considering the statistics of budgetary allocations to educational sector. Poor funding had effected all sectors of the education from inadequate relevant library resources in our institutions of learning. Under- staffing, inadequate library resources etc. Some schools do not even have librarians and qualified teachers.

Lack of training and retraining of the existing teachers and librarians among others.

INCULCATING READING CULTURE

Inculcating good reading habits in pupils and student and sound and qualitative education remains Nigerian surest and quickest route to all round development and industrialization.

The readership promotion campaigns organized by National library of Nigerian annually, is a good development and is timely in knowledge increase and National development. It is a collective efforts with other stake holders, policy makers in order to proffer solutions that would alleviate the poor reading culture in Nigeria. However, the poor reading culture is a social phenomenon that cuts across all the social strata of the Nigerian society (Aina, 2019). Therefore, it shall not be left in the hands of few individuals to fix it. However, it needs a holistic approach.

The school library has a role to play in improving the reading habits of the students which will enable them to be grounded on a solid educational base, characterized by self-confident, self-reliance, creativity and balanced judgment. Libraries are component of education which exist in order to provide varied information needs of their clientele. It is the responsibility of the librarians to ensure that suitable and relevance books are carefully selected and made available in the library to meet the need of the inhabitants of the communities. The collection should be relevance, adequate and up-to date. They should include classroom textbooks. There should be good relaxation, the materials like

periodicals (newspapers, journals) and audio-visuals like television sets. All these provide a variety of relaxation and various forms of education of students.

Parents are the role models and mentors to their children. Children learn by imitations and demonstrations. Therefore, parents should read aloud to their children and touching the objects for them to see as well as touching the words they are pronouncing for them to do the same. By doing so, the children will develop interest in learning. They should buy books and other reading materials that can stimulate and arouse interest for their children, as gifts during birthday, Christmas, Salah and other celebrations. Parents should ensure that the information materials given to them are relevance that can transform and shape their minds and characters.

Evil-doers: People should not celebrate criminals and stop calling them as their role models or mentors. Offenders of all kinds should be punished and disgraced publicly to serve as deterrent to those who intend to perpetrate such evils. If you call a criminal your mentor, you will one day end up in prison custody.

Change of value system: We should change our mind set towards quick rich or wealth accumulations and develops interest on reading information resources that can change our mindset and believe that a knowledgeable society is a leading society. Parents should monitor what their children read and pay full attention to them and ensures that the children ^{are} doing the right thing at the right time.

The use of information and communication technology should be encouraged. However, parents should ensure that their children are using them for increase in knowledge, for researches and assignments and not the other way round.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are made here towards attaining/ improving reading culture in Nigeria.

Adequate funding:

Giving education prior attention in national and human capital development. Improving reading culture in Nigeria has to begin with adequate funding of the educational sector. The 26% of the Nation's Budget as recommended by UNESCO (2006) as minimum percentage for education should be given to education authority and the fund should be properly managed by the Authority concerned (Gotau, 2015).

The greatest resources for development are human resources. Hence, no nation shall develop without human resources and a tool for such development is education, hence, the need to develop the staff through training, workshops, seminars, conferences capacity builds amongst others.

Establishment of National Library Commission for Libraries: This commission when established shall certainly enhance the growth, development and coordination of services of various zonal and regional branches of the national library of Nigeria in the 36 state of the Federation. Similarly, all the 36 States of the Federation should have public libraries in each of the 774 Local Governments and such libraries should have librarians in charge also management staff.

All primary schools and secondary schools should establish libraries and such libraries should be handled by teachers' librarians to ensure speedy service delivery.

Information literacy education should be part of the curricular of Secondary and Tertiary Institutions. It should be independent and taught as other subjects are taught in the Schools/Institutions. Library ~~time~~ table should be created in the school time table as well.

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