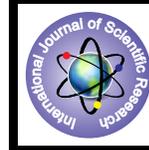


Reading Culture Among Youths as A Strategy for National Development



Law

KEYWORDS : Reading, culture, Development, National Development.

ABALAKA, BESSY F

LAW FACULTY, KOGI STATE UNIVERSITY ANYIGBA

ABSTRACT

National Development has been a major goal of all countries. Various agencies such as public and private, including individuals contribute towards national development. The part played by the library is outlined and discussed in relation to provision of adequate relevant information resources and provision of an enabling environment for reading. Problems confronting reading culture such as lack of published books, Funds, absence of conducive reading environment, obsolete information resources of foreign background, playing of catoon games on television and laize-a-faire attitudes of parents towards the reading culture of their children among others. The paper conclude that the library being the major player of the reading culture should be properly funded and be well stocked with relevant information sources, constraint of electricity should be addressed as it is vital to the attainment of national development.

Introduction

Reading has been described as an act of practice of reading. Nothing is important towards achieving academic excellence than being a good reader. Reading is crucial to learning and it is envisaged that if people learn to read, they will read to learn. Education is all about the development of the Whole man" ie Morally, Physically, socially and Mentally, Therefore, it is important that people need education, and this can only be achieved through reading as it brings about educational excellence. Sinsulu (2004), opined that reading is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning. Reading in all its variety is crucial to being better informed. Reading makes man to be constructive commentator to a democratic and cohesive society. Developed nations of the world all pride themselves on their promotion of reading. There is no doubt that the level of development in a country is proportional to the literacy level. It can be summed up that no nation can develop without its people developing the right reading culture.

National development is used to refer to constructive process of engaging citizens in building Cohesion, economic prosperity and political stability in a nation. Therefore the involvement of Youth in national development is a must. Youths play the most crucial role in nation building.

Youths cannot be said to be only leaders of tomorrow but partners today. Youths are social actors of change and progress, they are crucial segment of a nations development, their contribution cannot be overemphasized. Youths have been the key drivers of every activities in the world, be it war. Politics. Construction works, because of their agility which make all the difference in either destroying or building a nation.

Literature Review

When the people of a nation are learned, they can explore avenues for developing themselves and their societies. This sums up why the United Bank for Africa launched the 2012 edition of its annual co-operate social responsibility initiative tagged "Read Africa" in Lagos. This is because it believes the reading culture has to be strengthened if Africa's economic empowerment is to be achieved, thus the economic, social and political policies or strategies of a nation should be the eventual progress of the nation.

Ijeoma Aso (2012), opined that through reading, people discover vital ideas that can boast their Life, improve significantly on their business and impact their world. She further stated clearly that the bank has in mind to develop the continent capacity building as that's the only way it can compete with other countries of the world. It can therefore, be summed up that for our youths to be well cultured in reading, libraries

must be established and well equipped in every community to acquire information that will keep people aware of what is happening in other part of the world as well as adopting changes that can improve its production output positively and make products envy of other nation which cannot be ignored.

Holt (1999), avers that it is not only because reading adds quality to human existence, it also emancipates man and society. Creates the atmosphere that makes human freedom inevitable. Tony Marinho (2012), in his write-up on provision of more non-text book, stressed that if text Book of all knowledge are provided for youths, it will make them interested enough to enjoy Study , thereby getting better grades. They will also be knowledgeable enough to become self employed from wide entrepreneurial education. On this background, its obvious that reading culture when properly cultivated through the right channel/agency as the library can bring about Successful national development.

In an attempt to make the child cultivate reading habit, and to read wide, the Federal Government of Nigeria has distributed varieties of text books and library resources to primary and secondary schools, which was aimed at exposing the beneficiaries to a high standard of learning.

President Jonathan (2012), in "Bring back the book" avers that it is meant to advance the process of development in the country. He further stated that with better reading culture. Nigeria will be better equipped to aid development and called for collective igniting of the flame of reading in our communities so that we can forge a greater and more developed nationhood together. Indeed there can be no genuine national development without a proper developed reading culture. Based on this, if we encourage our youths, it is envisaged that they will in no doubt be readers and be productive all through their lives, therefore, with provision of books in our libraries, there will be flowering of talents and creative expression which can inspire young ones to aspire .An effort to reverse the poor reading culture among students in the country was renewed recently through the donation, by a public spirited company, of ultramodern libraries to two public schools in Lagos. The initiators of the project said the donation was part of the Read- to succeed project, designed to rekindle the flames of reading among students. Agbo (2015), avers that reading skills are essential to succeed in society. He argued that those who are good readers tend to exhibit progressive social skills and that a person who is widely read is able to mix with others and a better conversationist than those who do not read. He can stand on his ground. Reading broadens the vision.

Olanrawaju (2008), opined that most of the problem we have in this country are traceable to the high rate/level

of illiteracy .He stated the issue of vandalization and further avers that lack of one who is knowledgeable enough to know that when he cuts an electricity wire also suffers for the consequences of lack of electricity will think twice. The same also applies to violence such as the present Boko Haram insurgency facing the nation. Majority of the youths involved in Boko Haram(education is sin) are not literate and so goes into unwanted destruction of life and Property.

Osundare (2009), emphatically asserts that a country’s level of development is a function of its level of mental and cultural evolution as well as the states of its educational advancement, which is embedded on building of literacy in all facets of the population. Nssien (2008), posit that poor reading skills has been identified as the problem of Nigerian Students as a result of the following: slow comprehension rate, slow reading rate, difficulty In distinguishing main ideas from relevant details, inadequate vocabulary or word power , Inadequate reading interests and habit, distraction from television and film viewing and Lack of interest and relevant reading materials.

Alison Oguru (2012), noted that improving the reading culture of Nigerians will empower them to contribute developmental programmes. This in no wise is true as when an individual is well read, he tends to translate what he/she has read into meaningful ways that can improve the development of his/her community and the nation at large , and become immensely self- reliant. Imbibing the culture of reading helps to dose- off youth restiveness as they will be pre-occupied with vital issues of creating and producing for national development.

Methodology

The survey methods was used for this study . The population of the study is the total number of Youths in Kogi State which is 988425, but for purpose of clarity, the population was restricted to Youths from three (3) Local Government selected from the three Senatorial zones in Kogi State. The three Local governments are;

Adavi Local Government,

Dekina Local Government and

Kabba /Bunu Local Government.

384 youths is the sample size adopted for this study using Robert and Dample educational and Psychological measurement as formular , therefore,384 questionnaires were distributed giving Adavi 130, Dekina 140 and Kabba/ Bunu 110. Based on this, 380 questionnaires were returned and analysed.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The discussion that followed in this section is concerned with the presentation of analysis and The interpretation of data collected from the study. The data analysed were presented in tabular Format using percentages.

Table I Response rate distribution by Local government

S/N	Local Govt	Responses Rate	Percentages %
1.	Adavi	120	34.2
22	Dekina	150	36.8
3.	Kabba/ Bunu	110	28.9
	Total	380	100%

Source: researcher survey 2015

From the data presented above, it is obvious that 380 copies of the questionnaire were Duly returned and used for the study. Dekina local Government has the highest rate of Response with 150(36.8): Adavi local Government 120(34.2), while the least local Government Kabba/Bunu had 110(25.9)

Table 2:Distribution of what motivates youths to read

Items	No. of Respondence	Percentages %
Entertainment	95	25%
Examination	170	44.7%
Interest	45	11.8%
Boredom	70	18.4%
Total	380	100%

The table above shows that examination is what really motivates youths to read With 170(44.7%), entertainment 95(25%), boredom 70(18.4%), while the least of what motivates them is interest with 45(11.8). The above table implies that youths are only motivated to read when they write examinations.

Table 3: Distribution of how frequently youths read

Items	No of Respondent	Percentage %
Everyday	50	13.1%
Once a week	100	26.3%
Forth nightly	155	40.7%
Occasionally	75	19.7%
Total	380	100%

Field survey 2015

Table three above reveals how frequently youths read .155(40.7 forthnightly, 100(26.3%) read once a week, 75(19.7%) read occasionally, while 50(13.1%) read daily. This indicates that imbibing of reading culture is yet to be appreciated.

Table 4: Distribution by how youths contribute to national development

Items	No of Respondent	Percentage %
Youths Empowerment	90	24
Attitudinal change	96	25.2
Reduction of Youth Restiveness	70	18.4
Increase in Literacy	100	26.3
Participation in leadership role	20	6
Total	380	100%

field survey 2015

Table 4 above reveals how reading contributes to national development.

A large number of respondents indicated that reading brings about literacy increase 100(26.3%), 96(25.2%) indicated attitudinal change, 90(24.3%) also indicated youth Empowerment while 70(19%) indicates reduction of youth restiveness and Participation of youth in leadership role came least 20(6%).

Table 5: Distribution by how Youths are encouraged to read

Items	No of Respondent	Percentage %
Reading competition	98	25.7

Establishment of libraries in Communities	150	39.4
Provision of adequate textbooks	90	23.6
Parents teaching their wards how to read at home	42	11
Total	380	100%

Field survey 2015

Table 5 above reveals the frequency of how youths can be encouraged to read. A large number of respondents indicated that establishment of libraries in communities will encourage youths to read. 150(39.4%), 98(25.7%) reading competition, 90(23.6%) provision of adequate text Books, while parents teaching their wards to read at home came least 42(11%). This result shows that establishment of libraries in communities play vital role in encouraging reading culture in youths.

Table 6: Distribution of challenges faced among youths

Items	No of Respondent	Percentage %
Absence of Libraries in Communities	101	26.5
Inadequate information resources in Libraries	190	50
most parents are not literate	89	21
Total	380	100%

Field survey 2015

Table 6 above shows that absence of libraries in communities is 26.5%, inadequate information resources in libraries 50%, and most parents are not literate is 21%. These are the challenges affecting youths reading culture.

Table 7: Distribution on strategies adopted to enhance reading

Items	No of Respondent	Percentage %
Establishment and Equipping of Libraries in communities/schools	150	28.9
Provision of relevant information resources in libraries	90	23.6
Parents teaching their wards how to read	80	21
Radio/T.V houses	60	18
Total	380	100%

Table 7 : The result of the data analysed in table 7 above, indicates Strategies adopted to enhance reading culture. 150(28.9%) indicates est-establishment of libraries in communities,90(23.6) agreed with provision of relevant information resources, 80(21%). Parents teaching their wards how to read at home, while 60(18%) use radio and television homes. The result above implies that all of the above are pre-requisites for enhancing reading culture.

Conclusion

Arising from the findings of this study, as analysed above, it can be concluded that reading culture of our youths both at home and at school is poor. This is due to the fact that the importance of reading and accessing the library services are limited in their educational development. Our youths lack the knowledge of exploring the resources and services of the school library and sometimes no relevant books of interest to them.

Forming reading habit is a sine qua non to educational development of individuals. Librarians can create a good environment for reading public. It is a great social service of utmost need for every community or school to have a well stocked school/public library with relevant information resources. If there are fewer books, then there will be a decline in library service, and that means less crave and desire to read. The question now is do we have enough libraries to cater for the needs of our youths? The answer to this is obviously No. It is pertinent to note that without a populace that is both literate and able to access information, development effort cannot be sustained because target groups will lack needed tools for change. Furthermore, reading is a necessary skills for even farmers as they need farming techniques to have access to information concerning agricultural products and market their product effectively. Informed society is necessary precursor for effective national development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are some of the ways through which Reading culture among youths can aid national development. Attention should be given to establishing libraries in all communities/schools to Enable our youths access information relevant to their needs so as to contribute Immensely to national development. The library should be made conducive for reading and manned by professional librarians who can effectively and efficiently organize library information resources in both the school/public libraries within communities. The provision of adequate information resources in all subject of human endeavour should be made available as it helps in sharpening their IQ (intelligent quotient) on what to do in life. Time should be created by the professional librarian manning the school/public libraries to instruct and orientate users on the importance of library as it relates to their academics,business,and occupation Parents should be seriously involved in developing the reading culture of their ward and make them proactive in national development to empower them economically. Government should provide adequate funds for libraries to acquire information Resources that will make our youths self-reliant, creative and be able to make balanced judgment. Children should be guided not be involved in playing too much T.V games.

References.

1. Agbo, A. (2015) , Why reading matters.The Nation,tuesday August 20, 2015 Pg. 30
2. Alison O. (2012), Newspaper commentary on how reading can help development The Nation July 2012,p7
3. Angelina,C.U. and Adaora,J. U. (2009), Reading habits of students in three Private secondary schools in Owerri. Nigerbiblios vol. 20 No.1&2 Jan-December. P65.
4. Anita G. (2012), Why parents should be involved in their childrens education: Daily Trust, July 27 2013 p.47
5. Kantumoya (2002), Public Libraries and community information services in Africa; African Journal of library Archives and information science. 2(1)pp 33-38.
6. Makemzi, M. (2004); reading out to less advantaged: Reading tents in Kenya. World Library and information congress 70th IFLA General Conference and Council 22nd –27th august, Buenos Aires, Argentina pp.1-10.
7. Marinho, T (2012); Comentarty on more textbooks. The Nation July 25th, 2012. P21
8. Nyesom, W. (2002), On how reading can help developments; The Nation July 13th,2012 p 7.
9. Oduaza, P. (2012), UBA Launches 2012 "Read Africa" Daily Trust July 24th 2012 p.21
10. Van,R. R. (2001), Who is afraid of these declining Adult Issues; Book and Reader Development; Library Association Records, 103(3), p. 168-169. <http://www/lahg.org/uk/directory/record/article5html>