

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON THE READING CULTURE AMONG THE YOUTH

In today's world, technology has taken over almost everything, especially with one of its most recent inventions; Artificial Intelligence (AI). One of the most used technological inventions is social media. Social media can be used to outsource almost anything in today's world.

In 2018, a study by Hopelab and Well Being Trust showed that 93% of youth aged 14 to 22 use social media, mostly daily. Research by Monia Anderson shows that 95% of youths have access to smartphones and 45% say they are online “almost constantly”. This data proves that teenagers and youth especially are the highest users of social media. Young people are very curious by nature, they always like to try new things and always like things to be made easy for them. This is why it would be instinctive for a young person to try and outsource, for example, their schoolwork to social AI apps.

According to the Pew Research Center, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among teens and youth. While it is true that social media helps in making work easier and faster, it is also very important to imbibe paramount values and principles into the youth in their formative years. Solid foundations and principles, like an excellent reading culture, are slowly disappearing in our society and being replaced by social media. Who would want to go through the hassle of sitting down for hours to gain knowledge through books when they could easily search for summaries online?

Importance of a Good Reading Culture

According to IGI Global, a reading culture is “a learned practice of seeking knowledge, information or entertainment through written words”. When cultivating a reading habit, it will inculcate some principles into one like patience, wisdom, and can also broaden one's perspective on a whole lot of things. For example, when acquiring information or knowledge through social media there wouldn't be any need to put your imaginative power to work because the social media platforms are tailored to make information easy to understand. But when it comes to reading books, one will have to put their imaginative power to work, and this process of imagining can provoke thoughts and birth new perspectives.

Here are some ways social media can affect the youth:

1. Poor focus: The focus required to gain knowledge through reading books and the focus required to gain knowledge through social media can never be the same. If the youth spend the bulk of their time on social media, it would affect their ability to focus on real life tasks because their social media addiction would always demand that they indulge social media from time to time.

2. Laziness: Most youth would always rather find creative ways to escape putting in the hard work that is required to excel at their work, and sadly, social media enables them to do so.

3. Dullness: This one is very tricky because it's not necessarily all-around dullness. One might be dull academically but can be tech-savvy as a result of social media. Most youth, especially students, can utilize social media for all their school work and eventually not gain the knowledge that was intended for them if they did the work by themselves.