

Baseer Khan

Essay

Test - 5

35-37

Essay:

The Decline of Reading Habits
Among Youth: Causes and Solutions

Outline:

I. Introductory Remarks: The irony of enhanced access to information but the decline of reading habits among youth. ?

II. Thesis Statement:

Indeed, the decline of reading habits among youth can be attributed to rising digital distractions, weak reading culture in families, and the downfall of print media and literary spaces; however, reading habits among young people can be revived by undertaking media and government-led campaigns, creating strong reading culture at homes, revitalizing print culture and literary spaces, and leveraging technology to enhance accessibility to resources.

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III. The immense significance of reading for individual and societal development

IV. The multiple factors responsible for the decline of reading habits among youth:

A. Digital distractions keeping youth away from the pleasure of reading

i) Pew Research Center study: 95% teenagers (with access) use YouTube and nearly 60% use TikTok daily

B. Weak reading culture in families

i) Pakistan's National Education Assessment System report: 60% of students have never seen a book at home other than textbooks

C. Passive and exam-oriented education systems

i) Paulo Freire's 'Banking Concept of Education'

D. Youth culture shifting toward entertainment and social validation

i) Reading seen as 'uncool' in peer groups

E. Economic constraints and limited access to books

i) Pakistan Library Association report: only one functional library per 500,000 people

F. Decline of print media and literary spaces

V. The strategies needed to revive reading habits among youth:

A. Modernizing the education system and nurturing a love for reading

i) 'Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) sessions in Finnish Schools

B. Creating a strong reading culture at homes

C. Media and government-led campaigns

i) The UAE's 'Reading Nation' campaign distributing 5 million books to children worldwide

D. Reviving print culture and literary spaces

i) Public reading cafes

E. Leveraging technology to enhance accessibility to reading resources

i) Apps. like Kindle and Google Books

F. Establishing and maintaining community libraries

VI. Concluding Remarks

In any human civilization, books have been the threads that have stitched intellectual progress, social development, and technological advancement. Reading has been a key force in nurturing revolutions, producing intellectual thinkers, and fostering societal development. However, the modern age faces a shocking irony. While the emergence of digital technology has made reading resources and information more readily accessible than ever, the habit of reading among youth is seen to be on an increasingly downward trajectory. Immersed in the habit of persistent scrolling on social media applications and a culture of entertainment, young people today find ^{the} habit of reading boring. There are multiple factors responsible for the decline of reading habit among youth such as the fall in print culture and literary spaces, passive and exam-oriented education systems, weak reading culture at homes, and economic constraints. However, with a

multifaceted approach, the habit of reading can be re-cultivated by reviving print culture, fostering a culture of reading at homes, and initiating government-led campaigns. Indeed, the decline of reading habits among youth can be attributed to rising digital distractions, weak reading culture in families, and fall of print media and literary spaces; however, reading habits among young people can be revived by undertaking media and government-led campaigns, creating strong reading culture at homes, revitalizing print culture and literary spaces, and leveraging technology to enhance books' accessibility.

Reading is an activity that is indispensable to individual and societal development. Reading fosters critical thinking and cognitive abilities of individuals. Reading broadens one's perspectives and creates acceptance for multiple viewpoints. Besides, reading leads to well-informed citizens with

a strong civic sense. Reading enhances democratic values in society and produces a civilized populace. Not only that, reading also catalyzes literary and technological advancement in a society. Hence, reading plays pivotal role in both individual growth and societal development.

There are multiple factors bringing about the decline in reading habits among youth. To begin with, digital distractions have been a prominent cause. The emergence of social media applications such as TikTok, Youtube, Facebook etc. has significantly influenced reading habits among youth. Habitually occupied in doom scrolling, ^{young} people today have little time for reading and are the least fascinated by book reading. According to a study by 'Pew Research Center', 95% teenagers use Youtube and nearly 60% use TikTok daily. This implies that social media applications have replaced books, eroding

the habit of reading among youth.

Moreover, the decline of reading habits among youth is also owing to the downfall of reading culture in families. Activities such as storytelling, reading circles, and magazine culture have nearly ceased to exist. Since parents themselves are increasingly immersed in touch screens, children are unsurprisingly least attracted to book reading. Fewer homes have established bookshelves, particularly in the developing countries. For instance, Pakistan's National Education Assessment System reports that more than sixty per cent of students have never seen a book at home other than textbooks. Hence, reading habits among youth have declined because of the weak reading culture at homes.

Besides, reading culture among youth is also on decline on account of the passive and exam-oriented education.

system. Educational systems prefer rote memorization over exploration. Paulo Freire's 'Banking Concept of Education' aptly explains the educational systems today wherein the teachers serve as depositors of knowledge and the students as passive recipients. Hence, the educational systems fail to cultivate a love for reading among the students. Thus, the existing passive educational systems also contribute to the decline of reading habits among youth.

Added to that, the youth culture is increasingly shifting toward entertainment and social validation. Entertainment provided by the social media platforms appears more appealing to teenagers than reading books which requires patience and attentions. Many teenagers seek social validation from their peers where reading books is perceived as outdated and 'uncool'. Hence, reading habits among youth are declining because of the shift in

youth culture toward entertainment and social validation.

Furthermore, economic constraints and limited access to reading resources ^{have} further distanced the youth from reading habits.

Reading resources have become expensive with the rise in ~~in~~ inflation and a large of people do not have access to libraries, particularly in the developing world. According to a report by 'Pakistan Library Association', there is only one functional library per 500,000 people in the country. Hence, the economic constraints and limited access to reading resources further explain the decline of reading habits among youth.

Last but not ~~the~~ least, the decline of print media and literary spaces is another driving force in the diminishing interest of reading among youth. Printed newspapers, magazines, and books are gradually disappearing and are being replaced by

digital sources available online.

Even though online sources are easily accessible, they fail to deliver the traditional taste of print media. Besides, literary spaces such as book clubs, literary festivals, and reading communities are increasingly on decline. Hence, the fall of print media and the disappearance of literary spaces is another cause of the declining reading habits among youth.

Is all lost? Can reading habits among youth be revived again? Indeed, a multifaceted approach can ensure the revival of reading culture among the teenagers. One of the ways in which reading culture among youth can be revived is by modernizing the education system in a way that nurtures the love for reading. Instead of concentrating on examination systems, the educational systems should focus on polishing the critical thinking of the students by making reading activities mandatory in the academic

process. Educational systems globally can imitate the 'Drop Everything And Read (DEAR)' sessions practiced in Finnish schools. This can inculcate the love for reading among youth and help revive reading culture.

Added to that, it is also imperative to establish a strong reading culture at homes. Parents can play a critical role in this regard by setting family reading hours and establishing mini libraries at homes. This can help make reading a part of the daily routine of the youth. Gifting books instead of electronic gadgets can be a move in the right direction. Hence, creating a strong reading culture at homes can significantly help revive the reading habits among youth.

Moreover, the media and government-led campaigns can be equally crucial in the revival of reading culture. Country-wide campaigns can

be run to make people aware of the benefits attached to reading culture. For instance, the UAE's 'Reading Nation' campaign distributed around five million books to children worldwide. Such campaigns can be replicated by other countries as well. Hence, government-led campaigns can be of immense significance in reviving reading culture.

Furthermore, there is an urgent need to revive print culture and literary spaces. Subsidies should be granted to publishers in order to reduce the purchasing price of books and journals. Newspapers in hard forms should be encouraged by the governments. Public reading cafes and community book stalls should be established to revitalize reading culture in the communities. Hence, reviving print media is a step in the right direction.

Not only that, technology

can be leveraged to make reading resources widely and easily accessible. Online book stores can be linked with student portals ~~to~~ where they can borrow books online for reading. Kindle and Google books can ~~to~~ help increase accessibility of books. Hence, ^{the} integration of technology with reading can significantly facilitate the revival of reading habits among youth.

Last but not the least, establishing and maintaining community libraries can play a vital role in the revival of reading habits among youth.

There is a significant shortage of public libraries, particularly, in the developing countries. There is an urgent need to establish fully equipped libraries that contain books from all genres ranging from History to Fiction and modern sciences. These libraries need to be maintained and updated with fresh literature. Hence, the need to establish

Libraries for reviving reading habits among youth can never be underestimated.

In short, reading has played an instrumental role in the development of every civilization. However, the modern age faces a huge dilemma. While access to reading resources has become easier than ever, yet the youth seems to be drifting away from reading habits. The multiple factors responsible for the decline of reading habits among youth include the passive and rote learning-based ~~exam~~ education systems, disappearance of reading culture in families, and the decline of print media and literary spaces. Besides, the increasing digital distractions and economic constraints further explain the decline of reading habits among teenagers. However, reading habits among youth can be revived by establishing community based libraries, ~~re~~ fostering print culture, and encouraging reading culture in families. Leveraging technology to enhance accessibility and government-led campaigns to raise awareness

can further facilitate the revival of reading habits among youth.

The urgency to make a collective effort for the revival of reading habits can not be neglected if the youth is to be protected from the loss of treasures hidden in reading.