

Problems of illiteracy and it effects

Literature



There is the general belief that education is an instrument for social, economic and political development. Evidence in support of this assertion can be found in the relationship between the level of educational development and the high standard of living in developed nations such as the United States of America, Britain, Canada, and Japan. Malcolm X dropped out of middle school in 1940. In 1946, he was arrested for burglary and he was sent to prison. Later on in prison he met a guy called John Elton Benbuy who inspired Malcolm to get educated by reading in prison. Therefore, Malcolm read to solve his illiteracy problem.

An illiterate is a person who is not able to read, write, and speak and listen. In simple language illiteracy means “ lacking culture especially in language and literature. ” According to Ronald Nash, there are three types of illiteracy, Functional illiteracy, cultural illiteracy and moral illiteracy (2). So illiteracy has broad meaning according to its type. Despite the fact that there is high educational development in the United States of America, Illiteracy is still a problem in the United States of America and what are some of the programs being set up to combat the problem of illiteracy?

An estimate of thirty million Americans over 16 years old cannot perform simple and everyday literacy activities such as reading road signs, reading a book, writing down the shopping list, painting and drawing. This shows that illiteracy is still a problem in the United States of America since part of the population cannot perform these simple routine tasks. They can't read and understand basic stuff. For instance, an illiterate visits the hospital and sees a sign that reads do not enter but will enter the room since he/she doesn't understand what is written there.

Sixty percent (60%) of America's prison inmates are functionally illiterate and eighty five percent (85%) of all juvenile offenders have reading problems. Functional illiterate means inability to read and write. So majority of the people in prison are unable to read and write and this is a problem of illiteracy. It can be deduced from the above statistics that many people in prison are illiterate and this poses a problem of illiteracy because they are not educated and they are not willing to learn. In 2009, the United States of America was more literate than Italy, China and Greece (according to a report done by the United Nations Development Program), but was trumped by Georgia, Ukraine, Latvia, Barbados, Poland, Hungary and Turkmenistan. United States was able to overcome only these three countries. What about the other countries that overcame the United States? This therefore suggests that the United States still has some issues to deal with illiteracy. More mechanisms have to be put in-place in order to curb this problem. Another problem of illiteracy also exists in many of our schools in the United States of America.

It is estimated that more than two billion dollars is spent each year on students who repeat a grade because they have reading problems. Illiteracy does not only exist outside the schools but in the schools also and this has become a problem because students don't read a lot. This has resulted in bad grades. Education is one of the major solutions to illiteracy. I think that if people are educated in America it will reduce the rate of illiteracy in the country. More emphasis should be put on the benefits of education so that the people of America will know the importance of being educated. This will motivate more people to read.

Policy analyst Jeanne Allan suggests that “ public education must be improved through strategy rather than additional funding and education should be less focused on vocational education and more directed at reading through techniques such as phonic instructions. ” Workshops can also be organized for the adults who are illiterate. In my community for instance, workshops are organized for the adults. Basically, they attend the workshop every month. And they are trained on several things like reading and writing, and how to use a computer. This strategy really helped them to improve upon their reading skills.