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THE STATE OF LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS: THE CASE OF BOTSWANA LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Children in most countries in Africa, as well as those in the Western world, begin their study of literature by learning and reading works by local authors because cultural identity is one of the critical ingredients for nation building and sovereignty. These countries have made their local literature part of their curriculum. Conversely, research has shown that in Botswana children begin to learn literature using works of foreign authors. As such, they do not read what scholars can refer to as the literature of “the here and now.” As a result, Botswana children grow up preferring to read foreign authors instead of local authors. Given the colonial history of Botswana and the false sense of superiority attached to everything foreign, it is imperative to expose children to literature beginning with works of local authors. This study, which was grounded in the theoretical framework of critical literacy, used content analysis and qualitative interview and monitoring of non-verbal gestures to review prescribed literature textbooks spanning a seven -year period (2010-2017) for Secondary School students. (Form 1-5). Findings from the study showed that teachers of literature in Botswana have a negative attitude towards works written by Botswana authors. The teachers cited the need to meet international standards as a justification for their preference for foreign authors whereas their body language showed a lack of self-confidence in the works of local authors. The results further demonstrated that the teaching of Botswana literature using works by local authors alongside works of foreign authors would facilitate strong literacy appreciation for children and boost cultural identity and integration. The researcher recommends that Botswana children be exposed to local and international works of literature as a way of building interest as well as developing an appreciation of literary art as a tool for human development. It is the position of the researcher that the onus is on curriculum designers and teachers of literature in Botswana to effect the needed change.

Keywords: Botswana, children, cultural identity, literature, local authors, youths.

The state of Literature for children and young adults: The case of Botswana Literature in English

The term 'literature,' which traditionally referred to fiction has expanded to include non-fiction, picture books, comics and graphic novels (Cart, 2008). However, for purposes of this study, it refers to reading materials often used in schools or for leisure reading. We used the term in a way that the adjective 'imaginative' should precede it.

However, defining 'children and young adult literature' is unexpectedly difficult or illusive. The problem of defining it emanates from the fact that "some books meant for adult literature are read by children and vice versa" (Ngugi, 2012). There are a variety of questions asked: Is it literature written for children? Literature written by children? Literature read by children? But one thing scholars agree upon is that Children's literature remains hard to define, poorly understood and frequently under estimated. Laura Laffrado (1995.....) defines children's literature widely, as "literature that does not exclude children, family literature, literature for a number of generations." Lesenik-Karin Obersterin as quoted by Ngugi (2012) defines children's literature as "a category of books, the existence of which absolutely depends on supposed relationships with a particular reading audience: children." It is defined by purpose. It can also be defined as simply as any literature that is enjoyed by children.

It has been established by this study that what is commonly known as children's literature or juvenile literature is a body or collection of written works accompanied by illustrations in order to entertain or instruct children. It comprises a range of works including fairy tales, picture books, lullabies, fables, folksongs and so on (Fadiman; 2015). According to Anon (2017) children's literature is comprised of "those books written and published for young people who are not yet interested in adult literature or who may not possess the reading skills or developmental understandings necessary for its perusal".

Undoubtedly, the parameters of children's and young adult literature are blurred. Who are children? This study adopts Chifton Fadiman's (2015) definition that children are "all potential or actual young literates...who can with joy read through a picture book or listen to a story read aloud, to the age of perhaps 14 or 15". Quite often the term "children" encompasses "young people".

Historical background

The general history of literature for some reason omits children's reading interests. Research has come to observe that this section of literature was considered inferior because it could not meet the set standards such as style, sensibility and vision, which disqualified it from the western artistic stature (Fadiman, 2015).

However, children's literature, though a category of the mainstream literature, offers its own unique history and characteristics. Firstly, it is independent to the extent that as much as it is supposed to meet many of the standards of adult literature, it has also developed its own aesthetic ways; for example, the use of pictures. Secondly, the nature of its audience distinguishes it from other literatures. The dramatic way it is read, sets it apart from adult reading. Thirdly, it offers a variety of genres and themes particular to itself. Lastly, it has the power to create its own institution, for example, publishing houses, libraries, writers, story tellers, book fairs, collections, exhibition and prizes. (Anon., 2017, <http://education.stateuniversity.com>)

Children's Literature in the Western world

Children's literature developed with time. In the western world, in the past centuries children were viewed in the light of social, economic and religious relationships to the clan, community or society (Fadiman: 2015). Throughout the Middle Ages and far into Renaissance, children's literature remained an unknown and unexplored literary region, the literature scarcely existed. The family, young and old had a homogenized existence (Fadiman: 2015).

However, the genre came into existence in the latter part of the (18th and has now grown to the state where it is regarded with respect as a recognised branch of literature. "Both as a person of special regard and as an idea worthy of serious contemplation, the child began to come into his own in the second half of the eighteenth century. According to Fadiman (2015) the emergence of the child and the literature that reflected their needs is a result of various historical focus. Despite the forces working for the child, their recognition somewhat delayed until the emergence of writers such as William Blake, Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, Mark Twain and so. Only then was a child viewed as an independent being hence the development of children's literature.

Even after the recognition of the child, literature persisted on seeing children as diminutive adults. Literature was viewed as a partial reflection of children. As such, it didn't portray children as whole as it

would in attempting to present the whole adult. Instead it presented children as types, that is, with emphasis on characterisation. (Fadiman: 2015).

Both in the Western world and Africa, research has shown that children's literature appeared late than that of adults. It also grows more slowly (Fadiman, 2015). Only after new techniques had been employed did it flourish. However, the rate of development varies from country to country, hence this paper.

Children's literature is still struggling with the force of either becoming didactic or imaginative. Initially it stressed more on morality or good manners and adjustment to prevailing social code. It emphasised nationalist or patriotic motives (Fadiman, 2015). However, it evolved into a literature designed for entertainment, aiming at emotional expansion rather than acculturation, which usually develops later.

Development of Children's and Young Adult Literature in Africa

In Africa, literature for children and young adults is relatively new in that it only emerged in the 1960s (Britannica, 2017). In 1962 a children's series; The African Readers Library began to be published. This led to a few titles to be published in Nigeria. This was followed by African stories from Kenya in 1966 (Britannica, 2017). The development of this literature is classified into three categories; pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial.

Pre-colonial literature

The pre-colonial children's and young adult literature is what is commonly referred to as oral literature. It was common in almost all African states (Ngugi, 2012). Long before the publication of novels, poems, short stories and plays, orature had revealed the creative mind of an African writer (Ngugi, 2012; pg.62). Through orature, children acquired "social virtues of patience, honesty, obedience, hard work and generosity, among others. They also learnt about such vices as greed, disobedience and lies, and their consequences" (Ngugi, 2012; pg.63).

The historical, cultural, socio-economic issues of society were passed from generation to generation through orature. Society's life outlook as well as how it relates with its neighbours was covered in the literature.

Colonial literature

It was during the colonial period that written material in many countries came into the picture. It was introduced by Christian missionaries. Books used in European schools were imported to African schools without any modification (Ngugi, 2012; Pg.63). As such the African children in government and mission schools were introduced to literature that was foreign to their experience. This literature had "subjects and images which convey no meaning and no feeling to the average...African child in his natural environment" (Ngugi, 2012; Pg.63-4). The literature was based on foreign cultures hence it was difficult for most students to appreciate the reading material since it was detached from their cultural background.

Consequently, colonial literature had negative effects on the minds of African children. It ignored the experience of the African child and the environment he/she is being raised. It was this period that also suppressed the African oral literature (Ngugi, 2012; pg.65).

Post-colonial literature

This stage signifies the decolonisation of African literature. As such literature produced was aimed towards the formation of an African image. It started with the need to decolonise the literature syllabus. In Kenya there was a strong call for a cultural bias in the children's and young adult literature. The objective was to make the study of literature more Afrocentric than Eurocentric. As a result, a number of writers produced many works of literature for children and young adults in English (Ngugi, 2012; pg.68)

The value of Literature of children and young Adults

Access to all varieties of literature by children and young adults is important for their success. (Crippen, 2012). Therefore, curriculum designers, teachers, parents and members of the community must assist students to develop a love for reading. Exposure literature has countless benefits to children and young adults.

Firstly, this type of literature accords children and young adults the opportunity to respond to literary issues and develop their own opinions about the subject at hand (Crippen, 2012; Cart, 2008). Exposure strengthens the cognitive development of a child as it encourages deeper thinking about literature. It also accommodates difference in opinion, therefore, based on various view points, students can learn to evaluate and analyse a text. Literature of children and young adults can foster social development by encouraging students to accept other people and their differences.

Secondly, literature of children and young adults provide an opportunity for students to learn about their cultural heritage as well as the cultures of other people (Crippen, 2012). This helps children and young adults develop positive attitudes towards their own culture and the culture of others. Such social and personal development is necessary. (Norton, 2010; Crippen, 2012)

Thirdly, literature for children and young adults helps students to develop emotional intelligence as stories possess the power to promote emotional and moral development (Crippen, 2012). It has the capacity to foster understanding empathy and compassion by offering clearly realised portraits of characters' lives. In this sense the literature invites its leadership to embrace humanity it shares, who might forever remain strangers (Cart, 2008). In essence this literature encourages students to think deeper about their own feelings (Crippen; 2012)

Next, literature for children and young adults also encourages creativity. It nurtures and expands the imagination (Norton, 2010; Crippen, 2012).

Furthermore, literature of children and young adults foster personality and social development (Crippen; 2012). During the formative stage, children are impressionable. As such this literature can assist them to develop into caring, intelligent and friendly people. As a literature of relevance that meets developmental needs of youth such as literacy skills, literature for children and young adults becomes a development assist in promoting positive teenage development (Cart; 2008)

As children go through developmental stages, they move from self-centredness to accommodating other people's feelings and viewpoints. Being able to understand other people viewpoints and being selfless are critical skills that adults must nurture in children through exposure to literature. Since acceptable relationships require an understanding of other people's feelings and viewpoints Botswana can even curb the radical nature of student at tertiary institutions by exposing them to literature at a tender age.

Moreover, literature encourages students to be considerate and compassionate. These traits may be consistent with developing children and young adults into quality citizens. As such, countries that take their children and young adults seriously develop their literature. The literature is made valuable not only by its artistry but also by its relevance to the lives of readers (Cart; 2008). The literature becomes a strong motivator for them to read, especially at a time when adolescent literacy has become an important issue.

In addition the literature of children and young adults has the capacity to offer reader an opportunity to see themselves reflected in its pages (Cart; 2008). Since young adulthood is a period of emotional turmoil and self-discovery, exposure to their cultural identity and heritage is necessary lest they begin to associate themselves with foreign cultural identities.

Young adults have a strong desire to belong, yet they also regard themselves as unique. As such, in the absence of a cultural identity, they experience cultural degeneration, which leads to despair.

In other words, literature of children and young adults has the capacity to tell its readers the truth. It does so by equipping reads with the knowledge to deal with their realities of impending adulthood as well as for assuming the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. As a country Botswana does not have this kind of literature.

Finally, literature of children and young adults of great value in that it is a timeless tradition. Books are a vehicle through which there is transfer of a nation's literacy heritage from one generation to another. (Norton, 2010; Crippen, 2012). Therefore, the development of quality literature for children and young adults has a great potential to captivate audiences for many generations. This literature is invaluable in both the school and home environment (Crippen, 2012).

In conclusion, the exposure of children and young adults to quality literature, both local and international, can contribute to the development of responsible, successful and caring individual. Therefore, this study underscores the values of literature of children and young adults. We believe it is an indispensable part of a national literature and regard it as important to a healthy youth and community development.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Critical Literacy as its theoretical framework. Critical literacy emanates from ideology. Ideology has a bearing on how people think, act and form the perception of who they are as a person, a family, as a community and as a society (King, 2010). The premise of Critical Literacy is on the link between literacy and power. (Fajardo, 2015). According to Anderson and Irvine (1993) as quoted by Fajardo (2015; pg2), proponents of this theoretical framework view literacy as "the process of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations."

Educational experiences make it possible for learners to take control of their own lives (Singer & Pezone, online). According to Singer and Pezone, "for Freire education is a process of continuous group discussion

(dialogue) that enables people to acquire collective knowledge they can use to change society." The dialogue that arouses learners' consciousness can best be brought about by literature. For Freire, dialogue is an important part of Critical Literacy. It is an act of creation; a conquest of the world for the liberation of humankind (de Souza, 2007). Freire's work has contributed to "engaging participants in the emotive and societal processes of 'reading the world'" (de Souza, 2007; pg. 23). We also believe that literature engages children and young adults in the process of reading the world around them.

Consequently, ignoring local literature for children and young adults in preference for a foreign one is muffling the most powerful voice a young reader has to make sense of this environment. Scholars have emphasised the importance of using a more familiar literary content as a springboard for nurturing children, so that an emotional connection to the social issues can be established before engaging them in foreign works (Ukwuoma, 2015). Literature aids young readers to engage in problem posing (asking questions that help them identify problems facing their community), presentations (discovering ideas or creating symbols) that explain their life's experiences (codification) and encouraging analysis of prior experiences as the basis for new understanding and social action (conscientization).

Research Design and Instruments

The study used a qualitative approach in that it adopted a series of data collection methods; content analysis and qualitative interview as well as monitoring of non-verbal gestures to review prescribed literature textbooks spanning a seven -year period (2010-2017) for Secondary School students. (Form 1-5). A survey of books that children and young adults read was conducted through a researcher-developed mixed questionnaire entitled "What books children read in Botswana's schools." The questionnaire comprised both close and open ended questions. To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire for the purpose for which it was designed, it was piloted on 20 subjects out of the intended population. However, these did not make a part of the sample. The intention was to determine its suitability in terms of comprehension and time needed to complete it. Furthermore, in-depth face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with the Curriculum Development & Evaluation Department personnel as well as Heads of Departments in schools. Interviews allow for the exploration of individual experiences and perceptions in great detail.

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised four (4) primary schools - two (2) in Gaborone and two (2) in Palapye; four junior secondary schools – two (2) in Gaborone and two (2) in Palapye; and three (3) senior secondary schools – two (2) in Gaborone and one (1) in Palapye. The study focused on (i) pupils from standard 4 to 7; junior secondary school pupils from form one to form 3; senior secondary school students from form 4 to 5. The total number of schools was eleven (11), six (6) from Gaborone and five (5) from Palapye.

Twenty (20) participants were randomly selected from each primary school. Five (5) participants were further drawn randomly from each of the classes. The total number of primary school pupils that participated in the study was eighty (80). Their age range was between ten (10) and thirteen (13).

From junior secondary schools, fifteen participants were randomly selected from each school; five (5) from each of the three classes, form 1-3. A total number of sixty (60) pupils was selected. From senior secondary schools, twenty (20) participants were randomly drawn; five (5) from each of the two forms- 4 and 5 from each senior school in Gaborone, making a total of twenty (20); ten (10) participants were randomly drawn from one senior school in Palapye. The total number of senior secondary school students that participated in the study was thirty (30). Their age range was between seventeen (17) and nineteen (19).

Interviews were conducted firstly with Senior Teachers/ Heads of Departments or House from each of the eleven (11) schools sampled. Thereafter, the Principal Education Officer, Curriculum was interviewed. The overall population sample of this study was hundred and seventy (170).

Lastly, a survey of prescribed books and what types of reading materials existed in the school and national libraries was conducted.

Discussion of Findings

The research questions that this study attempts to answer are, “What do Botswana children and young adults read?”, “what is the state of Botswana children and young adult literature in English?”

The results show that only 58% of children and young adults read. The results further indicate that the section of the population that indicate that they read, do so for purposes of examinations. However only a

few indicated that they read for personal development, leisure or to be knowledgeable. There is a clear picture of lack of a reading culture among young people in the country. The poor culture of reading portrayed here maybe a result of lack of appropriate reading books. This is supported by Arua & Arua, (2011; pg. 589) when they state that, “the enabling environment for the development of a reading culture does not exist, as books are scarce and unaffordable or unsuitable for the diverse groups that need them; and government hardly ensures that reading materials are available.”

Textbooks appear to be the most significant reading material especially at primary, and junior secondary school level. Teachers have reported either lack of books that may be read for pleasure or content that is foreign to students as a hindrance to reading. Students confirmed teachers' claims by stating that reading materials available comprised textbooks. The responses confirmed the opinion of some researchers (e.g Tella & Akande, 2007; Arua & Lederer, 2003) who observed that most African children and young adults still have a poor reading culture. This may be partly due to the fact that children's and young adult literature in Africa is still undeveloped.

It's noteworthy to indicate that if the state of reading of children and young adults in Botswana remains static, the country is going to have a generation of uninformed leaders. This is because literature helps readers to develop emotional intelligence. It also nurtures the growth and development of children's personality and social skills (Crippen, 2012). From the reviewed literature, literature for children and young adults has demonstrated that the power of stories shape young people. African children and Botswana's in particular, grew up and continue to do so without access to books that represent their own stories and realities. This study appreciates that it is a great thing for young people to be exposed to other cultures and be inspired by such. However, it is detrimental to a child if foreign literature becomes the only window into the world. We believe that as children and young adults read about characters that depict their way of life and family backgrounds, this gives them a reason to be proud of their cultural background.

This study further revealed that participants generally agreed that there is a lack of local books for children and young adults. All the four primary schools did not have adequate books to be accessed by pupils. They further indicated that their libraries were scarcely stocked. Teachers, especially primary school teachers, stressed that prescribed texts are so shallow that they resort to using extracts from non-prescribed books of their choice. We are tempted to believe that for the reading habit of children and young adults to improve, a relevant local literature for this very section of the society must be developed. This literature may create interest in reading.

Research has also shown that in Botswana's schools, children begin to learn literature using works of foreign authors. As such, they do not read what scholars can refer to as the literature of "the here and now." As a result, Botswana children grow up preferring to read foreign authors instead of local authors. Botswana children and young adults have now resorted to speaking and writing colloquial English they pick from foreign books or even TV programmes. We believe that Botswana children and young adults deserve to see themselves and culture reflected in the books they read. The government, publishing industry, associations, and writers can come together and work towards building a successful industry, to tap on this unexplored book market. This growing generation needs stories that portray their own lives and aspirations. Otherwise, with the current situation in Botswana, children and young adults grow feeding on the cultures presented in the foreign books they read. However, as they consume this culture, they unconsciously get de-socialised and hence devalue their own.

Krashen (1996) states that the availability of books signifies access and time for reading. But the question this study poses is, "Are the books read by children and young adults in Botswana's schools relevant to their needs? Do they mean anything to an average Botswana child?" This study has discovered that at primary and junior secondary school, the results reveal that teachers are the sources of reading materials. Since pupils depend on them for their reading they tend to be biased towards the foreign literature that they studied when they were students. Can young people develop reading habits through only reading textbooks and foreign literature? This question is directed to all educational stakeholders in the country.

The findings of this study further reveal that lack of a relevant literature for children and young adults in addition to the inadequate book availability prevalent in schools, hinder the growth of their love for literature and reading for leisure. This is further supported by Tella & Akande (2007). This study underscores the value of education and encourages parents to use it to nurture their children. Therefore, factors that prove to be a hindrance to the desirable growth of their children must be addressed. Such obstacles may be raising children based on the moral values of western culture. We must realize that if we allow the current situation to prevail, we are raising a generation that is likely to suffer cultural alienation. Literature, particularly local literature is an ideal way to teach children about their histories, culture and people. We must realize that unless we decolonize the literature curriculum, the current situation may remain and Botswana, like other African countries will be disadvantaged.

The Botswana children and young adults' book market is riddled with a variety of problems among which are; low population, high printing costs, lack of children's literature writers. Books are still considered a

luxury for most average Batswana families who have a limited access to books. They also don't associate reading with pleasure but educational advancement. In the bookstores we witnessed an increase in imported books. Worse still, today's youth have lost the power of imagination because of their dependence on technology. Despite all these, Batswana must try to retain the centrality of imaginative story-telling that is prevalent in their culture.

Findings from the study showed that teachers of literature in Botswana have a negative attitude towards works written by Botswana authors. The teachers cited the need to meet international standards as a justification for their preference for foreign authors whereas their body language showed a lack of self-confidence in the works of local authors. The results further demonstrated that the teaching of Botswana literature using works by local authors alongside works of foreign authors would facilitate strong literacy appreciation for children and boost cultural identity and integration. The curriculum officer and teachers who were interviewed revealed that Literature has been underrated as a valuable subject in Botswana primary schools. What is of paramount importance, according to teachers, is that, it is a good command of the language and skills that facilitate success in the exams. They further suggested that government must regulate the publishing industry by reducing tax for publishers, especially local ones, so as to publish literature for children and young adults. They believe that if children's literature books are produced in large quantities, children would have ample choice, hence cultivate a culture of reading.

It must be highlighted that most publishers in this country are trade publishers, mainly multi-national publishers who may not necessarily have the interest of developing the local literature. Botswana's trade publishers rely on the educational market for their prescribed lists. However, since their publications are syllabus driven, their prescribed books fall short of the needs of children and young adults. However, we share Pamela Ngugi's sentiments that, "...Our pupils need to be taught all genres of literature including poetry, adventure stories, short stories, riddles, jokes, proverbs and songs and other relevant materials that focus on emerging issues in the society such as children's right, child abuse, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS" (2012; pg. 69-70).

Implications for the development of a children's literature

Despite the heavy investment on education by the Botswana government, the achievement of quality basic education may be enhanced through a conscious development of a literature of children and young adults. This is because "literature takes students out of their lives and lets them experience things that are new

and challenging, and encourages them to imagine possibilities and to think about ways the world could be different” (Drucker, 2012).

With the support of educational stakeholders, the development of literature of children and young adults is not difficult to accomplish. A few locally produced children’s books that begin to appear on the market is a step in the right direction to achieving quality education.

Conclusion

This study has focused on pertinent issues relating to the development and promotion of literature for children and young adults in Botswana. Children in most countries in Africa as well as those in the Western world begin their study of literature by learning and reading works by local authors because cultural identity is one of the critical ingredients for nation building and sovereignty. These countries have made their local literature part of their educational curriculum.

However with all concerted efforts of nurturing the future leaders and sound citizens of this country, the development of a children’s literature is achievable. This may take some time and the process may be laborious, but certain deliberate steps need to be taken. As Botswana chant their national anthem, they should pause and ponder over its meaning. It can be a reminder of their need to develop and promote the local literature as part of their cultural heritage that the coming generations shall be proud of. That is the spirit of patriotism.

Recommendations

The study has the following recommendations:

Firstly, parents who encourage their children to read display a noble gesture, for their educational endeavours. Exposure of children and young adults to reading cultivates the love and appreciation of literature. However, it is imperative that children access quality and relevant reading material. Both local and foreign. Through literature of children and young adults, educational and health strategies aimed at improved communication, information and knowledge transfer between parents and the youth may be achieved.

Secondly we encourage the reading of local story books. Publishers must explore literature of children and young adults as a new option of investment. Literature is a vehicle through which a society may pass its norms and values to its younger generation. As such literature of children and young adults may be useful in shaping their character.

Youth and children are a mirror of society, in that the nation sees its achievements, and its potential for the future in its children. Children and youth, these constitute an irreplaceable resource and heritage. It is a challenge to the nation to make sure that youth and children are properly guided and moulded in Botswana's own culture, this is important for preserving the nation's identity and pride. (National Policy on culture; 2001, p24)

Thirdly, schools must create a learning environment by establishing a mini-reading corner with reading materials relevant to children and young adults. During Prize Giving ceremonies, schools must offer local story books as prizes or gifts to the excelling children. The idea is to cultivate the love for the local literature.

Next, what should precede the exposure of children and young adults to their own cultural heritage and the cultures of other nations, is a careful selection of books to recommend to young readers. Many books are available that reflect culture as one of the important pieces comprising a balanced society that have to be treasured. However Botswana seems to be lagging behind in this aspect. However, teachers are better placed to know the types of books children and young adults enjoy reading. As such they must recommend local texts. They should try as much as possible to order locally produced texts in order to promote local literature. They must inform parents and curriculum designers on the importance of access to local literary books.

Moreover, teachers need to appreciate the importance of literature. This would accord them the opportunity to encourage their learners to read widely. This study calls for well-rounded reading teachers who can support their students in all circumstances. What is noteworthy in Critical Literacy is the role of the facilitator (teacher) in supporting participants (students) in the process of uncovering and analyzing their environment as well as identifying the key challenges facing it.

Furthermore, the media should assist in promoting locally produced books. They must have a "Writers Corner", a programme where interesting local books are read on air.

Lastly, if indeed children and young adults are a reflection of the Botswana society, the government and private sector must make a deliberate effort to develop a relevant literature of this section of the population.

Research has shown that the development of culturally based strategies aimed at curbing ignorance/illiteracy among children and young adults regarding contemporary social problems such as sexuality, domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape that Botswana National Youth Policy advocates is critical. As such, the government needs to play a major role in ensuring that Botswana has quality literature for children and young adults. Some of the roles government can play are:

- a) To be proactive if Botswana has to have a significant corpus of literature for children and young adults. The quality of books produced locally as well as that of those which reach schools should be monitored.
- b) To provide adequate funding for classroom and school libraries to be furnished with appropriate reading materials.
- c) To ensure that Botswana literature plays a significant role in the whole basic education curriculum. Government must ensure that local content outweighs foreign content in the curriculum. That way, we move away from Eurocentric curriculum to a more Afrocentric one.
- d) Government to introduce a Literature Bureau or Council. This is a forum where the Department of Curriculum and Evaluation, Associations such as Writers Association of Botswana (WABO) and Readers Association of Botswana (RABO) would work collaboratively with government and private sector to commission writers to produce Botswana Literature for children and young adults.

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