

Research can help transform lives

Forgive me for throwing the word 'research' here because it certainly has different meanings to different people. I just want to raise questions: Have you ever sat in a workshop/conference where a participant, with the aim of thanking the organisers, refers to another institution? How about a guest on a radio/TV station missing out on the name of the station with which they are being hosted? Perhaps you have also observed in a job interview where the interviewee is not informed about the institution they applied to and bothered less to perform a simple background search.

Perhaps more exasperating is when a chief mourner while eulogising a deceased appear uninformed about the name, gender, and or age of the deceased. I often use the oxymoron 'hurry slowly' to appeal to people to proceed with caution, especially on some of the issues raised above. You can only imagine how irritating it is for a family of a month-old deceased baby for a chief mourner to say: "The deceased was my very good friend, a kind person and sacrificed the little he had for other people".

Rather dramatic and yet true, this is what some families have had to experience let alone the trauma of losing a loved one, and the challenges of managing mourners. For job interviews, certainly nothing can be done to



save such an interviewee even when they spent the entire week fasting, including days of overnight prayers. Let us not blame the apathy on basic inquisitiveness on the recently enacted provocative OTT tax, but rather on the general sense of inertia around the need to answer questions we may have. As a nation steering towards a middle-income economy, and with emphasis on embracing Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) in its development, it is high time we heightened our emphasis, practices, and advocacy on rigour and basic curiosity on issues of interest to us – the Internet and consultation with colleagues and friends, including access to written resources is a major entry point.

Perhaps most importantly, and as parents, guardians, and concerned citizens, it is necessary that we shift

gears on engaging younger generations' right from our homes through to national fora – of course cognisant of the fact that contemporary parents grapple with the dilemma of maintaining their jobs alongside providing 'enough' time to attend to families and friends. Anyhow, the little time we allocate to ourselves, families and the young ones should be productive and transformative and with sustained impact.

It does not harm to craft a cadre of generations that talks less, but asks more questions. Perhaps that way, we then nurture a new generation interested in answering their own questions through basic inquisitiveness and rigour, and above all, a well-informed population with keen interest in knowledge search, production and sharing. This in no way means that there is complete laxity, but rather a call to action to concerned citizens to craft, nurture, and support the need for documentation and knowledge sharing, among younger generations.

For those who can access newspapers, encouraging them to read even when they are for past days, is vital. We need to think through the need to generate simple home libraries from which we can use to reduce the hours spent watching televisions.

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