

Illiteracy a Social Issue: And it's Remedial Measures

Ms. Jyoti Devi*

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology

Abstract – Illiteracy is one of the major problems that are faced by the every corner of the world. Many developing countries like India are adversely affected by the basic social problems – poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. These problems are the greatest challenges in the path of the development. As the problem of illiteracy in India is concerned, it is an established fact that India is one of the least literate countries of the world. There are a number of individuals, communities and social groups who are not able to acquire minimum standard level of education. The major effect of illiteracy in India is poverty. Poverty is a problem for both the developing and the developed countries. It can be understood from three perceptions these are basic needs, income and capability. An individual is avowed to be under poverty when his income is below a certain point. When an individual is not able to meet these requirements such as adequate nutrition, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education, and then he is stated to be residing within the conditions of poverty. In this paper researcher highlight the firm relationship between illiteracy and poverty and also discuss about the measures in the problem of illiteracy.

Keywords – Poverty, Illiteracy, Problems, Measures.

-----X-----

INTRODUCTION

India is a country of diverse culture, race, religion and communities. It is the 7th largest country by area and 2nd largest by population in the world. Indian subcontinent is a unique of its nature because every region has its own custom, tradition, religion, caste, race and political democracy .Despite of that India has possesses unity in all the regions. One of the major problems that are our India is faced the problem of the illiteracy and poverty. Although eradicating poverty, hunger and education for all are two critical components in both the international and national development agenda and in the government initiatives. These are the two major concerns in developing countries. In Indian context, major portion of the population are living in poverty and majority of them are deprived from the basic and primary education. There is no doubt from last two decades; India has shown improvement both in reducing poverty and increasing literacy rate. Poverty has been lessening by 45.3% in 1993-94 to 21.9% in 2011-12 while literacy rate increased from 52.2% in 1991 to 73% in 2011 (census). In spite of that the improvement in poverty and literacy but still most of the people are die due to hunger and more than one-fourth of the total population are not able to read and write.

Illiteracy is a state when the individuals do not possess the abilities of read, write or solve numerical problems. Due to illiteracy, they develop unawareness regarding important areas; they are not able to

develop their skills and abilities, effective communication and encounter barriers within the course of having an efficient and a productive living. Therefore, it is vital to solve the problem of illiteracy and every individual should realize the importance of education, irrespective of his background and status. Jobs and employment opportunities are considered vital for every individual. Everyone wants to obtain employment for the source of income and to sustain their living conditions, to learn, achieve, develop their skills and abilities and become more creative and resourceful. More and more employment opportunities should be generated for the individuals to enable them to become achievement oriented. The importance of literacy was first observed at the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) General conference in 1966 and the first International Literacy Day was celebrated on 8th September 1967. This tradition of celebrations of ILD have taken place annually around the world to remind the public of the significance of literacy as a subject of dignity and human rights, and to advance the literacy agenda towards a more literate and sustainable society

As per UNESCO, 773 million adults and young people around the world still lack basic literacy skills. National Statistical Office (NSO) released the data for 2017-18 on state-wise literacy rate in the country for aged 7 or above. As per this report, India's average literacy rate is 77.7%. Whereas the

literacy rate of Andhra Pradesh is 66.4% the worst among all states in India and considerably lower than Bihar 70.9%. Kerala is ranked highest in the list with 96.2% and Delhi stood second with 88.7% of literacy rate. Other remarkably aspect, the gap between male and female literacy rate is the smallest in Kerala at just 2.2 %. And the gap at all-India level is 14.4 % with male literacy is 84.7% and female literacy is 70.3%.

The essential requirement for any nation is to achieve universal basic education and high literacy rate is at par on an international platform with other countries. No nation has a capability to develop as a stable economic growth rate unless improve their poor literacy rate. After all Education is a fundamental right which is guaranteed to the every citizens. The community of worldwide is **focusing on 2030** with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has intended to “ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning” within its goals of **SDG 4**. As per the UNESCO report, India will achieve the universal literacy by 2060.

TABLE 1: TRENDS IN LITERACY RATES AFTER INDEPENDENCE

YEAR	RURAL			URBAN			COMBINED		
	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
1951	4.87	19.02	12.1	22.33	45.6	34.59	8.86	27.15	18.32
1961	10.1	34.3	22.5	40.5	66	54.4	15.35	40.4	28.31
1971	15.5	48.6	27.9	48.8	69.8	60.2	21.97	45.96	34.45
1981	21.7	49.6	36	56.3	76.7	67.2	29.76	56.38	43.57
1991	30.17	56.96	36	64.05	81.09	67.2	39.29	64.13	52.21
2001	46.7	71.4	59.4	73.2	86.7	80.3	53.67	75.26	64.83
2011	57.93	77.15	66.77	79.11	88.76	84.11	64.63	80.88	72.98
% increase in 2011 over 2001	24%	8%	12%	8%	2%	5%	20%	7%	13%

RELATIONSHIP OF POVERTY WITH ILLITERACY

There is a general agreement that improvement in educational status reduces the level of poverty. In addition to poverty has becomes the obstacle to access basic education by everyone. The poor people are often not able to access their basic needs, education and rights. It is evidenced that the poor people tend to have lower level of education. Education usually considered as an important tool for social, economic and cultural development and it also leads to remove the ignorance of illiteracy. The awareness leads to access the needs and rights. Thus education is measured as most important weapon for the development of the individual as well as the society globally. Although the literacy rates has great importance in the development for any society, more than one-fourth of the Indian's can't even read and write. Access to higher education in India is even very low only 6-7 percent of the Indian youth in the age group 17-23 has access to higher education.

COMPLICATION FACED BY COMMON PEOPLE

In ancient times, education has been run for the purpose of retaining power by the ruling elites. Unfortunately the hierarchical social order, caste-based society, inequality of rights has made and is still making it difficult for every Indian society to make utilize the benefit of education. Nowadays, the economic development is preserver target of women and Dalits peoples and they treating literacy as a means of communication of ruling elites with the society are favourable to the spreading of education. The higher castes have a monopoly in most of the social spheres of society and it leads to deny the access higher positions to the lower castes in the social and professional structure. In comparison to the lower castes Dalits have considerably worse opportunities to use education and achieve educational success. It is revealed from the inaccessibility of certain educational forms for the poorest social strata, uneven distribution of social institutions and underdeveloped educational and technical field.

The main reasons behind illiteracy in rural India in some families' children are considered as useful for the family (planting, agriculture, harvesting, household work etc.). Children's were not goes to school to read their mother tongue, and their interest in education is suppressed by their parents who think education has little and no relevance to home earnings.

RE-BUILD THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Kerala is the state with the highest literacy rate in the country. If the young population or adults of India is remained illiterates then the goal of the sustainable development would not be achieve. Educators and trainers must transform their methods of teachings, textbook, curriculum, and language of instruction in the primary training institutions.

The Twelfth Five Year Plan by the Government of India (2012-17) clearly links the quality of education to the availability of physical infrastructure, textual materials, classroom processes, and academic support to the teachers, assessment procedures, and community participation. This plan also focus on providing the sufficient inputs and infrastructure for the proper functioning of primary education and takes school as an inputs for just starting point in the improvement of education. In 1993 supreme court of India, declared that every children had a fundamental right to free and compulsory education .Moreover by the 86th constitutional amendment act 2002 “Right to Education “was incorporated in the Constitution. Some other schemes had been initiated to make sure the right to education in the country, The National Policy of Education in the

year 1986 declared that the whole nation must execute itself to drive away from the menaces of illiteracy especially the young population.

India has successfully broken out of the “low literacy trap” in which the illiteracy of parents leads to poor literacy outcomes for the successive generation. The improvement in the literacy rate for both males and females confirm about the continual efforts have bear fruitful over the years. Some of the important initiatives by the government is the Mid-Day-Meal Scheme (1995) , Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001) and enactment of RTE (Right to Education Act, 2009), have contributed notably improvement in literacy. If the India is able to maintain this drive, then the country might be able to achieve universal literacy by 2030.

CAUSES OF ILLITERACY

- Problem of Illiteracy in parents: Many parents who are illiterates do not put much stress on the importance of education. Some of them born to parents who cannot able to read or write and end up their life being illiterate. This is especially true in rural areas where many individuals in the older generation have not gone through formal education.
- Inexpensive educational facilities: In remote areas most of the people have few or no education facilities may remain illiterate. The nearby school may be found several miles away from their homeland. Instead of going to the tedious route of walking long distances on a routine basis for just to go school many of them choose to stay at home. Duo to the lack of access of educational facilities in these areas has results the higher number of illiterate people in rural and remote area.
- Problem of unemployment: Some people think that motive behind to attain educations is that he or she assured to get job and make a good quality life. But without the promise of employment, education is not a obligation to the people. If the number of educated persons are unemployed in any country, then there will not be adequate motivation for the illiterate to go school and gets education.
- Lack of awareness: In some remote areas there are several people who do not understand why it is important for them to go to school, the level of illiteracy may be high. In comparison to the rural areas, urban areas have less number of illiterate people. People who are lived in cities are more aware of the need to eliminate the problem of illiteracy and the challenges that arise from the lack of education. It also adds up social benefits of being literate compared to those who lived in remote areas.

- Poverty: Families with low incomes who finds difficult to pay the school fee and they are forced to choose between providing basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing and taking their children to school. In those countries where basic education is not freely available, the number of children who do not go to school tends to be higher compared to places where basic education is free and compulsory.

CONSEQUENCES OF ILLITERACY

- Personal disorganization because of inaccessibility to knowledge sources; frustration and quarrel inside homes because of not fulfilling educational demands of children.
- Social disorganization on account of lack of ignorance and increasing belief in superstition and fear because of lack of awareness. Education removes ignorance and increases cooperation and mutual understanding in society. But, on account of lack of education in a community they can be easily prepared on communal and religious lines.
- Family disorganization because of quarrels and misguidance
- Increase in poverty and educational unemployment
- Increase in all anti-social activities ranging from theft, robbery to abduction and rape.
- It also creates chances for social and economic exclusion in society.

MEASURES TO THE PROBLEM OF ILLITERACY

Individuals have realized the significance of education and development of literacy skills to a major extent. Within the course of acquisition of education and development of literacy skills, there occur certain barriers which need to get eliminated. The measures that are required to get implemented to prevent the problem of illiteracy have been stated as follows:

- Provide free education: The provision of free education in schools, colleges, and universities by the government can play the main role in reducing the level of illiteracy. Since some people fail to attend school or basic education due to the lack of money to pay for the fees, and in such cases offering free education can increase the number of people attending school and subsequently

reduce illiteracy levels within society and country.

- Knowledge: To create the awareness about the importance of education can motivate people to send their ward to school. Various non-governmental organizations, government agencies, and other concerned institutions should put their deliberate efforts to create awareness in the society and play the important role to reduce the problem of illiteracy.
- Provision of Grants and financial sources: Well reputed educational institutions, colleges and training centres are located in urban areas, due to this migration of many rural people from rural areas to urban areas for admitting in higher education institutions. Many families, social groups and communities are not able to bear the burden of fees of their children's and other related expenditure. In those cases offering grants, subsidies, and scholarships can reduce the financial burden of the parents. It would be helpful for those students to learn without interrupting their education due to the lack of school fees.
- Digitalization: Nowadays we live in the age of information and communication technology. Having digital platforms for reading and learning can help reduce illiteracy in society. It can also take care of the challenge in the scarcity of educational facilities. With the help of Digital libraries a good platform available for those who live far away from urban centres to develop their knowledge.
- Development of Curriculum and Instructional Methods –To promote the literacy, it is essential to arrange the curriculum and teachings methods in a systematic and logical manner. In various educational institutions and training centres when the curriculum and teachings methods are formulated in an appropriate manner then it should rouse interest among the students towards learning.
- Experience and Attitude of the Teachers –To develop education and literacy skills amongst the individuals, it is essential that the teachers and educators should possess the updated knowledge and skills. The right knowledge and skills would effectively contribute in enhancing knowledge and skills amongst the learners. To prevent illiteracy, teachers have a vital role to play they motivated the students towards learning and those who possess learning disabilities and problems should be helped and encouraged by the teachers so that they are able to perform well in education. Effective communication and friendly nature, politeness, courtesy and kindness are the

necessary behavioural traits on the part of the teachers, if they are to efficiently contribute in the prevention of illiteracy.

- Development of Extra-Curricular Activities – Learning only academic subjects and concepts may make learning boring. If students go to school and they only get engaged into reading and writing then they may not feel motivated towards learning. To stimulate the individuals towards learning, it is vital to formulate measures to make learning interesting for them. The development of creative and extra-curricular activities is considered essential to arouse keenness and curiosity amongst the learners. The range of extra-curricular activities include yoga, meditation, sports, taekwondo, physical activities, artworks, handicrafts, playing of musical instruments, singing, dancing and so forth. These activities encourage the individuals to become dedicated towards their learning, hence resulting in enhancement of the literacy skills.
- Development of Infrastructure and Other Facilities – There have been a number of cases mainly in rural areas that who belong to deprived and marginalized sections of the society they do not develop much interest in education because of the inadequate infrastructural facilities. Schools are placed at a distance and roads are in deprived conditions and some other individuals have transportation problems. To prevent the problem of illiteracy, it is very important that transportation, roads, equipment, telecommunications, water supplies, power supplies, public services, communications should be adequately developed.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

For Education and Literacy:

- National Education Policy, 2015: It aims at making “India a universal knowledge superpower” by introducing the numerous changes in the school level to college level.
- Samagra Shiksha: It is an integrated scheme for school education extending from pre-school to class XII to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education.
- Mid-Day Meal Scheme: With this scheme that every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to

VIII who enrolls and attends the school shall be provided hot cooked nutritional meals, free of cost every day except on school holidays.

- Eklavya Model School and Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme (RGNF): This scheme aims to encourage the students belonging to Scheduled Tribes (ST) community to pursue higher education.

For Digital Literacy:

- Digital India Programme: It pulls together many existing schemes by restructuring and re-focusing them and then implementing them in a synchronized manner.
- Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan: It is one of the largest initiatives of the country with the target of making citizens digitally literate.
- National Digital Literacy Mission: It aims to empower at least one person per household with crucial digital literacy skills.
- Bharat Net Programme: It aims to have an optical fibre network in all Gram panchayats.

CONCLUSION:

The significance of education cannot be underrated. As many people think it merely as a process to gain the skills and knowledge necessary for the employment. Even though education provides help to individual in the job market, which is not all that it does. Education plays the major role in the mental as well as social development of a person. The lessons learned and the skills that a person acquires through in school days prepare him or her for life in society. One can be trained in problem-solving skills and build up the social intelligence indispensable to overcome the everyday life challenges. Illiteracy therefore, has no room in modern society. There is no doubt government has launched the number of programmes for the better education and awareness programs but until the individuals, groups and communities participated well in these processes the aim to achieve the universal literacy is not possible. So there is a duty and obligation of every citizen to make aware about the importance of education and get full benefits from the government plan. More the number of people who have educated, the community and society will be better. Everyone should desire to be educated and gain knowledge because of the blessings of being literate.

“Padega India, Badega India”

REFERENCES

1. Ahmad Z, Batul T (2013). Relationship among Poverty, Education, Expenditure, and

Education Status: Empirical Evidence from Pakistan

2. Bhatia, Sugan (2013). Literacy and Adult Education in Independent India, New Delhi India, Sonali Publications.
3. Chaurasia, Pawan et. al. (2016). Illiteracy a social issue- A brief study in the Indian population, International journal of Engineering and technical Research. Vol. 9, Issue
4. Das, S (2007). The Higher Education in India and the Challenge of Globalization
5. Dehury, Bidyadhar (2017). Interlinkages of Literacy and Household poverty in India: Inter-District and demographic disparities, journal of Scientific & Technical Research. ISSN 2574-1241
6. Shafiqullah, S (2011). “Regional Analysis of Urban-rural Differentials in Literacy in Uttar Pradesh, India”, Journal of Geography and regional planning
7. Sivakumar, Vijay M (2012). “Regional Disparities in Poverty and Education in India”

Web References:

1. http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt5_eng.pdf
2. http://study.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/Ch11_Global%20Illiteracy.pdf
3. http://www.childrenincrisis.org/sites/default/files/uploads/press/The_Economic_&_Social_Cost_of_Illiteracy.pdf

Corresponding Author

Ms. Jyoti Devi*

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology

jyotimohan62@gmail.com