***Illiteracy in Pakistan***

Complete illiteracy means a person cannot read or write at all. Of equal relevance is the concept of functional illiteracy, which means an individual may have basic reading, writing and numerical skills but cannot apply them to accomplish tasks that are necessary to make informed choices and participate fully in everyday life. This might include simple tasks like reading, writing and even at times speaking in a language properly.

**Definition of Illiteracy**

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) defines Illiteracy as:

“Measured by assessing reading, writing and mathematical skills in the various domains of social life which influence individual identity and insertion into society. From this perspective, literacy involves not only reading and writing but also the acquisition of the skills necessary for effective and productive performance within society”

**Illiteracy in Pakistan:**

Pakistan stands on 180th position regarding literacy rate in the world.

**According to 2102 Census of UNESCO:**

According to latest report of UN education department UNESCO, the illiteracy percentage was 79 percent in Pakistan in 2012 and the number of Pakistan was 180 in the list of 221 in big or small countries in the world. (Current literacy rate of Pakistan is 58%)

The illiteracy percentage was 72 percent in the youth age 15 to 24 years, 57 percent in the aged 25 to 44 youths, 46 percentage in 45 to 54 years and 38 percent in the people aged 55 to 64 years in the year 2012, it said.

Pakistan remained below in the illiteracy from China, Iran, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Burma, while it remained above from Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

According to the report 3 million 75 lakh students were going to school and colleges in the year 2012 out of them 2.6 million were Primary level students, 2.9 million students of high school education and 1.5 million students were of colleges and universities.

According to the report only 3 percent students reaches to colleges and above level out of them 1 percent passed graduation.

On the other hand the 75 percent boys and girls left school before reaching 10th class while 81 percent students of 3 classes could not read English words.

The report added that 72 and 78 percent students aged from three to five years do not go to schools in Sindh and Balochistan respectively.

During survey, the students of sixth and fifth class were asked to read an essay , but 94 percent and 68 percent students could not read the essay.

Islam religion makes obligatory to all men and women to acquire education. But here fifty one lakh children are deprived of their basic education.

The literacy rate ranges from 96% in Islamabad to 28% in the Kohlu District.[5] Between 2000 and 2004, Pakistanis in the age group 55–64 had a literacy rate of almost 38%, those ages 45–54 had a literacy rate of nearly 46%, those 25–34 had a literacy rate of 57%, and those ages 15–24 had a literacy rate of 72%.[6] Literacy rates vary regionally, particularly by sex. In tribal areas female literacy is 9.5%.[7] Moreover, English is fast spreading in Pakistan, with 18 million Pakistanis[8] (11% of the population)[8] having a command over the English language, which makes it the third largest English-speaking nation in the world and the second largest in Asia.[8] On top of that, Pakistan produces about 445,000 university graduates and 10,000 computer science graduates per year.[9] Despite these statistics, Pakistan still has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world[10] and the second largest out of school population (5.1 million children) after Nigeria.[11]

**The Scenario of Illiteracy in Pakistan:**

The picture of illiteracy in Pakistan is grim. Although successive governments have announced various programs to promote literacy, especially among women, but they have been unable to translate their words into actions because of various political, social and cultural obstacles. Access to basic education is the right of every individual. Education is the most important instrument in enhancing human capabilities, and in achieving the desired objectives of economic development. Education enables individuals to make informed choices, broaden their horizons and opportunities and to have a voice in public decision-making. It is one of the most important factors that act as a counterweight to social and economic mobility imposed by cultural and historical biases. Education is a vehicle of nation building through which a nation’s shared interpretation of history and cultural values are reproduced across generations. At the country level, education means strong economic growth due to productive and skilled labor force. At the individual level, education is strongly correlated to higher returns in earning and a more informed and aware existence. The emerging global scenario offers immense opportunities and challenges, and only those nations can benefit from it, which have acquired the required knowledge base and skills.

There are 163,000 primary schools in Pakistan, of which merely 40,000 cater to girls. According to UNICEF, 17.6 per cent of Pakistani children are working and supporting their families.

**Causes of Illiteracy with Regards to Pakistan:**

1) Half-hearted planning and management of literacy and continuing education.

2) Limited budget.

3) Lack of reliable statistics and research researchers.

4) Weak community participation.

5) Lack of multimedia material.

6) Lack of special skilled textbook writers.

7) Poor follow up of programs.

8) In-service teachers do not take such work seriously.

9) Dependence on foreign aid.

10) Dropout rate is high.

11) Over-crowded classrooms.

12) Panacea of private sector.

13) Outdated curriculum.

14) Problems of higher education; brain drain etc.

15) Corruption.

16) Rote learning.

17) Unfair examinations.

18) Lack of adequate facilities such as clean water, electricity etc. in the rural schools.

**Effects of Illiteracy:**

1) Over-population.

2) Low-GDP and per capita income.

3) Increase unskilled labour.

4) Infant mortality and maternal mortality.

5) Political instability.

6) Poor use of natural resources.

7) Heavy international debts.

8) Child labour.

9) Poor international image.

10) Low per acre agriculture yield.

11) Halting industrial growth and less trade activities.