

Topic: Democracy and illiteracy donot move together

Outline

1. Introduction

Thesis statement: Literacy is considered as a prerequisite for stronghold of democracy. Democracy and illiteracy donot move together on the same path as illiteracy hindrances adoption of democratic culture in every segment of society and also threatens democratic setup. However, for successful democratic culture, illiteracy must be diminished.

2. Illiteracy in the lense of democracy

3. Democracy and illiteracy donot move together

- a) Illiterate electorate elects undeserving candidates
- b) Illiteracy decreases voting turnout
- c) Illiterate politicians donot let democracy deliver
- d) Illiteracy discourages decentralization of powers ^{and} authority
- e) Illiteracy does not let accountability take place
- f) Illiteracy keeps women backwards and marginalized
- g) Illiteracy slowsdown the process of political evolution

4. Democracy and illiteracy move together on some track

- a) Illiterate masses get fundamental rights from ruling governments
- b) Illiterate masses participate democratic processes frequently
- c) Critics run hectic campaigns for empowering illiterate people
- d) Illiterate people acquire their rights with help of effective role of media

5. Hurdles in the way on which democracy and illiteracy move together

- a) Illiterate masses cannot acquire complete fundamental rights which is a setback for democracy
- b) Illiterate masses are forced to participate in electoral process on the behalf of their biradari
- c) Political victimization is used as tool against freedom of speech for illiterate masses
- d) Controlled media obstructs the progress of democracy and illiteracy to be on same page.

6. Conclusion

Milton Friedman has rightly said,

"A stable and democratic society is impossible without a minimum degree of literacy and knowledge on the part of most citizens." This clearly depicts that democracy and illiteracy do not move together. Literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, is essential to development and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship. On the other hand, illiteracy becomes a threat to democracy as all democratic values and norms are completely wiped out. Some manifestations of absence of democracy and illiteracy on the same path exist. Election of undeserving candidates by illiterate electorate is one of them. Similarly, illiteracy decreases voting turnout. Furthermore, illiterate politicians do not let democracy deliver and accountability take place. Moreover, illiteracy discourages devolution of powers and women empowerment. Illiteracy also retards political evolution. However, democracy and illiteracy move together in some circumstances. As illiterate masses get their fundamental rights from state. Illiterate people also participate in democratic process frequently. Moreover, critics struggle for empowering illiterate people. Similarly, media plays its active role socio-economic development of illiterate masses. However, there are some hurdles lie in the way of democracy and illiteracy to be on same path. The suppression of fundamental rights of illiterate people is one of them. Similarly, illiterate masses are forced to participate in electoral process on the aspirations of their tribal chief. Their freedom of speech is also suppressed. Moreover, control media obstructs the progress of democracy and illiteracy to be on the same page. In conclusion, literacy is considered as a prerequisite for stronghold of democracy. Democracy and illiteracy do not move together on the same path as illiteracy hinders adoption of democratic culture in every segment of society and also threatens democratic setup. However, for successful democratic culture, illiteracy must be diminished.

6. Conclusion

illiteracy affects democracy by causing a larger gap of non-participation in politics by the populace, which may lead to anarchy and derailment of a democratic government. Illiteracy is detrimental to democratic and economic growth apparently due to its potential of creating such an environment, which not only endangers the very existence of democratic system but also deprives electorates of all fruits promised by a democratic dispensation. Professor Dr. A H Hillali, former chairman of Political Science Department, University of Peshawar said,

"Democracy mainly suffers due to unawareness of electorates about the importance of politics, their role in a political government and making accountability of political parties through votes due to lack of education."

To begin with the manifestations that indicate democracy and illiteracy do not move together, elections of ~~undeserving~~ undeserving candidates by illiterate electorate is one of them. Illiterate masses cannot elect right person for right job. Illiterate electorate elects undeserving candidates that do not have only sufficient qualification but also lack vision. Thomas Jefferson said, "the cornerstone of democracy rests on the foundation of educated electorate." This clearly depicts whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government. However, unawareness leads to unwise and imprudent decisions at the time of elections. This results in political intolerance in the society. Assemblies did complete five years Constitutional term and huge financial resources were being wasted on holdings of re-elections in countries. Thus, illiterate electorate elects misfit candidates.

Similarly, illiteracy decreases voter turnout. Illiterate people do not properly know about their rights and power of their votes. They think that elections of their representatives is a formality of electoral process and they have to elect their representatives on the aspirations of their chief of clan or moholla. This type of understanding hinders them to participate in the electoral process. Thus, voter turnout decreases. Education influences voter turnout across the world. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report of "Effects of Education on Voting behaviour," unveiled on August 2019, "educated citizens are more likely to vote in democratic system across the world." Therefore, it can be concluded that illiteracy decreases voting turnout.

Moreover, illiterate politicians do not let democracy deliver. Politicians that lack proper education and training do not have political will that helps to sustain democracy. They suppress people's democratic rights and prefer to their interests to fulfill. From a policy formulation to implementation, they influence broadly. In his recent published book "Governing the Ungovernable," Dr. Ishrat Hussain describes, "our politicians who do not have vision, are reluctant to the devolution of powers after the eighteenth amendment of the constitution as their authority will reduce." This clearly depicts that these politicians obstruct to the transfer of powers to the grassroot level so that service delivery can be improved. In this way, illiterate politicians do not let democracy deliver in letter and spirit.

Furthermore, illiteracy discourages the decentralization of power and authority. Devolution of the powers do not only enhance service delivery but also resolves fundamental problems of the community. Visionary leadership always support decentralization of powers as it let democracy to deliver. In many parts of the world, where literacy ratio is high, decentralization of powers successfully persists. ~~For~~ On the contrary of this, the countries having low literacy ratio, devolution of powers is missing in their democracies in letter and spirit. For instance, according to the CIA World Factbook, Burkina Faso has thirty eight ~~ty~~ percent literacy ^{rate} ~~word~~ in the world where practice of the decentralization of powers is missing clearly in the country. In this way, illiteracy discourages decentralization of powers in some democracies in the world.

Apart from this, illiteracy does not let accountability take place across the board. Illiterate masses cannot hold their representatives accountable for wrongdoings. Illiterate people cannot use democratic forums for accountability of their leaders as they are unaware of their rights and are also living in fear. Even they cannot appear in front of media to raise their voice against their representatives as their representatives do not fulfill demands of people of their constituency. Lessons are to be learned from history. During the Dark Ages of Europe, the Church purposely kept the people uneducated so as to continue its influence without facing any accountability. One ~~kind of~~ ^{dreads that} pattern in many democracies across the world is similar.

Additionally, illiteracy keeps women (the half population) backwards and marginalized. Both illiterate people and politicians are against women empowerment. They do not let women participate in electoral process. They only keep women backwards and marginalized. Women empowerment is the soul of democracy and they are against it. Backwardness of women itself is a black spot for nations. Such nations with more number of illiterate, economically deprived, sexually harassed, ^{and} physically tortured. As per a report of (UNESCO), Women's Education and Women's political participation, "a ten percentage increase in women's literacy is associated with increase in female candidacy of twenty percentage, of the chances that a woman is in the top two vote winners of thirteen percentage and in female turnout of close to six percentage." Therefore, illiteracy keeps women backwards and marginalized.

Furthermore, illiteracy slows down the process of political evolution. High literacy rate exacerbates growth of democracy in the form of political evolution. Illiterate rulers deteriorate to ^{the} growth of democratic evolution in many illicit ways. They enforce political instability, polarized politics, absence of rule of law rigging in elections, and political engineering. In his recently published book, "Pakistan: Beyond the Crisis state," Maleeha Lodhi describes, stagnant literacy rate of Pakistan has deeply deteriorated growth of democracy as rate of political participation cannot achieve trajectory that can promote democracy effectively." Similarly, many African countries including Namibia, Ghana, and Liberia, illiteracy decays democratic growth. Therefore, illiteracy retards progress of democracy in the world.

However, democracy and illiteracy move together as they ensure socioeconomic development, political instability and political participation. Getting some basic facilities of life and human rights from ruling governments by illiterate peoples is one of the manifestations that show democracy and illiteracy move together. Public representatives work for progress and prosperity of people of their constituencies. They bring development projects, ensure rule of law, and stress on education in order to fulfill basic facilities of life and human rights of their people. For example, in some regions of India where literacy rate is below fifty percent, people are getting their fundamental rights and other basic facilities of life effectively from rulers. Hence, it makes illiteracy and democracy move together.

Similarly, illiterate masses participate frequently in democratic processes. In several parts of the world, voting turnout is increasing slowly and gradually. ^{The} interest of illiterate people for the participation in democratic process has increased. Participation of illiterate masses in democratic processes, including general elections, referendum, local bodies elections etc. has witnessed rise. Media and civil society have empowered illiterate masses to participate frequently in democratic processes by providing them awareness and the sense of responsibility. United Nation Development

Program says, "public participation in democracies that have low literacy rate is increasing slowly and gradually in this decade." Hence, participation of illiterate electorate is increasing in democratic process.

Moreover, hectic campaigns by the opinion makers in the favor of illiterate people helps illiteracy and democracy move together. Democracy offers criticism, hence, many critics of governments raise their voice in favor of illiterate and marginalized citizens on various forums. They launch hectic campaigns for socioeconomic development of ~~these~~ ^{this} suffering and illiterate population. Many opinion makers and popular journalists and scholars are educating citizens to gain information and communication if there are major violations of human rights, democratic oppression and misconduct and law enforcement. In this age of digitalization, social media forums are utilized for the cause. In this way, illiteracy and democracy is facilitated to move together.

Furthermore, illiterate masses are benefited from effective role of media amid democratic political setup. Illiterate masses are getting multiple benefits, including awareness of accountability of public servants, importance of the participation in political processes etc. The emergence of social media in the 21st century has empowered them in social, political, and economic spheres of life. Social media, print media, and electronic media helps to disseminate education for citizens to educate them on various issues including national matters, legislative, constitutional rights, political rights, economic issues, cultural and policy issues. In this way, illiterate masses are getting benefits from the emergence of media across the world.

However, there are some hurdles in the way on which democracy and illiteracy move together and they retard their progress on macro level. Illiterate masses cannot get their desired fundamental rights which is setback for democracy. Illiterate politicians cannot fulfill required desired fundamental rights of illiterate people. Illiterate people ~~hard~~ try to fulfill hardly some demand. In a result, illiteracy will increase more and will create hurdles for democracy to advance. Ban Ki-moon, the eighteenth secretary general of the United Nations said, "the exercise of the fundamental rights in the society by illiterate rulers can be achieved properly." This indicates that, illiterate masses cannot get their desired fundamental rights when they are ruled by illiterate politicians.

Similarly, biradavi based voting influences negatively to the growth of democracy. Tribal chiefs and community heads and landlords make illiterate people bound for vote according to their aspirations. These people participate in voting during elections on the demand of their chiefs and masters. In this way, people cannot elect deserving candidates for their representation which makes democracy difficult to ~~support~~ sustain. According to the National Institute of Statistics of Tunisia, "sixty five percent of Tunisian women living in the rural areas drop out of school at an early age, contributing to an illiteracy rate over thirty percent within this population, has hardly twenty percent participation in elections by female and forty percent by male due to restrictions of their tribal chiefs." In this way, tribal chiefs create hurdles for political participation.

Moreover, controlled media and political victimization used as a tool against freedom of speech. Illiterate politicians try to control media as it enlightens public about their rights and the performance of their electables. Similarly, illiterate politicians make strict physical, moral and economic punishments of their strong bitter critics. In this way, freedom of speech is attempted to eliminate from the democracy. This results a situation in which democracy and illiteracy cannot move together on the same path. Amnesty International says in its latest report of 2021, Role of media in deepening democracy, "Many African countries have been taking the media as enemies including arresting and imprisoning journalists and other keeping in custody forever." Therefore, media that empowers illiterate confront cruel policies.

In conclusion, democracy cannot be sustained in any part of the world until and unless it has literate population. Literacy is considered as a pre-requisite for strengthening democracy. Democracy and illiteracy cannot move on same path as illiteracy obstructs democratic growth. As illiterate electorate elects undeserving candidates, reluctant to participate in elections, unaware of accountability of rulers, and slows down democratic evolution. However, in some situations democracy and illiteracy move together. Illiterate people are acquiring their fundamental rights, Media and civil society strictly want their empowerment. But, there are some hurdles lie in the cooperation. Bivadi based voting, controlled media, and suspension of freedom of speech are included in that which difficult survival of democracy with illiteracy. As Nelson Mandela has rightly said, "literacy is the fertilizer needed for development and democracy to take root and grow."