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Democracy and Illiteracy cannot Move Together

1) Introduction

Thesis Statement

2) Key Features of Democracy

3) How Democracy and Illiteracy cannot Move Together

- (i) Illiterate people do not know importance of their votes
- (ii) They Lack Political Consciousness regarding their rights and duties
- (iii) Popular accountability of political leadership hardly exists in such societies.
- (iv) Dynastic Politics can easily make inroads in such ambience
- (v) Populist leadership can easily manipulate the illiterate people
- (vi) Undemocratic forces face no resistance in such environment
- (vii) Transparency hardly exists in such societies
- (viii) Corruption becomes rampant in such atmosphere
- (ix) Individuals become stronger than Institutions in illiterate societies
- (x) Rule of law remains Oblivion → Might is Rights rules Large in such ambience
- (xi) Extremism and Intolerance pervades every corner of the society

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(xii) Hatred and Violence against minorities increase manifold in such societies.

(xiii) Poverty and economic inequality is more pronounced in such societies.

4) Way Forward

(i) Illiterate Masses should be educated

(ii) They should be made aware their rights and duties.

5) Conclusion

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Democracy is the only form of government where rulers come to power through the sanction of masses. As Abraham Lincoln saying goes: "Democracy is the government of the people by the people and for the people." Hence, in democracy, government derives power from the people. It requires masses to be more vigilant and conscious in electing their rulers. But in the illiterate society things are diametrically opposite. Democracy and illiteracy can not move together because ^{illite}_{rate} people do not know their rights and duties, and hence such societies fail to make their rulers accountable. In the illiterate societies democracy becomes the government of the elite, for the elite and by the elite. There are many factors which are responsible for the failure of democracy in the illiterate society. It happens because of the unawareness in the illiterate masses regarding the importance of voting; they are politically unconscious regarding their rights and duties; the illiterate societies do not make their rulers accountable; dynastic and populist forces can easily manoeuvre such people in their favour. Besides, undemocratic forces can undermine such an ambition quite easily; corruption becomes the order of the day here; personalities are prioritized over institutions; Transparency exists nowhere and

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rule of law remains oblivion in such environment. Unity and harmony finds no place, extremism and intolerance pervades everywhere; hatred and violence against minorities run riot in such an ambience. Likewise, poverty and inequality becomes more conspicuous in the illiterate society than anywhere else. Nevertheless, such a society can be transformed if measures are taken to educate the illiterate populace and make them politically conscious about their rights and duties.

Democracy is such form of government in which people elect their rulers on their choices. Moreover, people are the guardian of the democratic process and it could be said that the power eventually rests with people not rulers. Democracy ensures freedom of expression, liberty, freedom of religion and the supremacy of law. Both the rulers and the masses respect the rule of law; no one is above the law of the land. Similarly, whether be it a de facto or a de jure power, supremacy of law cannot be challenged. That is why in such societies peace and harmony hold high place. As power lies with people, people can make their rulers accountable for their actions. It is how democracy is the government of the people for the people and by the people.

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Illiterate masses do not know the importance of their votes. Being unaware about the worth of their votes they take wrong decisions while giving votes. They believe vote is just formality and hence do not bother thinking a bit before casting votes. Consequently, such people are elected to power who have authoritarian tendencies and want to centralize the power in their hands. For instance, coming in power of Modi in ~~2017~~ India who has dismantled the secular fabric of Indian democracy. Similarly, such type of rulers are elected in many democratic countries recently. Hence, it's how illiteracy leads to wrong decisions in casting votes. This shows that democracy and illiteracy cannot move together.

Additionally, the illiterate society is devoid of political consciousness. Such people do not know their rights and duties. They do not raise voice whenever ~~it~~ ^{their} rights are encroached by the government. In such ambience, the government can easily impinge on people's rights and silence them by force if they try to assert their legal right. However, the people ^{also} do not perform their duties honestly. When people do not know their rights and rights duties, the growth of society stunts in such environments. Thus, lack of political consciousness disrupts the smooth functioning of democracy.

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Furthermore, the illiterate masses do not bring their rulers to the justice. In such societies, rulers are considered powerful enough to sideline the law of land when it poses any threat to their arbitrary use of power. Actually, the rulers know that those who safeguard the law of land are unaware about their duty; hence, they feel no pressure in subverting the whole process. When rulers are allowed to run amok, things become abnormal in such societies. Hence, such countries become one man show. All in all, absence of public accountability in such society halts the democratic growth of such societies.

Moreover, dynastic politics can easily make inroads in such societies. People are less concerned about whether the parties are holding intra-party elections or party heads select their descendants to hold the key positions in their parties. Hence, the concept of leadership emerging from grass root levels just vanishes away. When there is no leader emerges from the grassroots who knows the real problems of the people, the country's problems incessantly grow with the passage of time. Dynastic political forces manipulate the people in such societies easily. Thus, dynastic forces' emergence roots out the democracy in true essence and substance.

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Alongside this, populism can easily manipulate the illiterate masses. Populist forces make promises of prosperity and fool people by making empty promises of restoring their past glory. For instance, Hitler and Mussolini in Germany and Italy did respectively. They made promises with their people to restore their past glory hence people supported them. And what happened, as a consequence, is history. In contemporary times, things are no different, especially in illiterate society, people appreciate and emulate populist leaders. Consequently, emergence of populist forces impede the democratic growth of any society.

Besides, undemocratic elements can easily takeover political system and establish government in illiterate societies. People do not know the importance of power that democracy devolves to them; hence it is easier for undemocratic elements to get legitimacy in the illiterate societies. There are many instances of subversion of democratic process by undemocratic elements: military rule. Pakistan has experienced 33 years of direct military rule. This substantiates the above point that in the illiterate society undemocratic forces can easily get legitimacy and recognition than in literate. This eventually derail the democratic

process

Similarly, corruption becomes rampant in such society. As discussed in the above paragraphs that such societies lack political accountability, it is far more easier in such societies to elude or circumvent the law. Hence, corruption becomes unaccountable in such societies. It has been noticed that corruption is more in the illiterate and poor societies. In developing countries masses take no account of rulers' misuse of their money and hence corruption rules large in such societies. Thus, corruption stagnates socioeconomic growth of masses and democracy loses its essence in such societies because democracy is all about benefitting masses.

Apart from this, in such societies personalities are preferred to institutions. Institutions hold no importance in the eyes of people because they have created inflated images of their leaders in their minds who sit above the institutions. This mainly results into people's distrust in public institutions. But when personalities are held above than institutions, ^{then} the whole system is manipulated and undermined by these personalities to suit their interests. This, furthers the democratic degradation of society of the illiterate

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Furthermore, such societies are completely deprived of any shred of transparency. In illiterate society where rulers know that no one can make them accountable until and unless people are with them.

Hence, in case they are brought to justice, the whole nation rally in their support. Thus transparency exists nowhere in such societies. From top to bottom and bottom to top the whole system is hijacked by few people.

Their whims and notions are all that matter. On the other hand, transparency is prerequisite for sound and healthy growth of democracy. Thus, lack of transparency contributes to the dormancy of ^{democratic} growth in such ambience.

Likewise, rule of rule of law seems oblivion in such an environment. These societies are ruled through might is right phenomenon. As discussed above that in such environments, there is no accountability of the powerful and similarly no transparency in the system. Consequently, rule of law does not exist in such conditions.

Because the powerful people are above the law and hence law is either for the poor or it is weaponized against suppressing the dissent in society. And rule of law is precondition for the healthy growth of democratic process. This is why democracy in illiterate society fails to take root because rule of law is missing in such societies.

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Unfortunately such societies are breeding ground for extremism and intolerance. People being deprived of basic necessities become intolerant of what is happening with them. Moreover, extremism is phenomenally high in the illiterate societies. People do not like people who belong to other communities and sects than their own. Moreover, such societies also become xenophobic. This eventually leads to disharmony and disunity in the society. This can result into chaos and disorder in the society. This shows that for proper democratic growth society should be harmonious and united. But in illiterate societies extremism and intolerance pervades every aspect of the societies.

Moreover, it has been noticed that in the illiterate society people hate minorities. They do not respect ~~for~~ other's faith. Hence, marginalization and persecution of minorities are more vehement in the illiterate societies. There are many such instances where minorities are suffering at the hand of majorities. For example, in Myanmar Rohingya muslims and in Rwanda war between Tutsis and other faction and so on. Thus it shows that in illiterate societies there is no respect for minorities. But in democracy social fabric is sustained through love and harmony between

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people. Thus, it clarifies that more violent tendencies of the illiterate towards minorities brings democracy in state in such societies.

Alongside all these factors, anything that is more obvious and conspicuous in such societies is poverty and economic inequality. The illiterate masses do not know their rights and obligations, and they consider fate responsible for poverty. They do not take stock of how they are being exploited by their rulers for their petty interests. Hence, in such societies people hardly meet their ends. But whatever be the circumstances they never question their rulers. This eventually shows up in high malnutrition rates and various other diseases in such societies. For example, Pakistani and Indian societies where people are bereft of basic necessities but they cast vote everytime for the same rulers. It is all because politician manipulate people to believe that it is all because of fate. Hence in such a society which even do not know that it is being exploited by politicians, democracy hardly succeeds in reaping the fruits of success.

In the above paragraphs, the essay discussed how democracy and illiteracy cannot

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move together. In the following paragraphs it will discuss how to improve this situation.

To begin with, for the healthy functioning of democracy it is pertinent that illiterate masses should be educated. Pakistan's literacy rate stands at 62.8 percent. Hence 40 percent of its population is illiterate. Similarly, in the South Asian region except Sri Lanka, other countries are not doing well on education indices. Thus, efforts should be given at reducing the illiteracy rates so that people become aware of their responsibilities to the state and states' responsibilities to them. Governments should put emphasis on educating their illiterate masses. Because literate people are the guardrail of democracy. Hence, democracy can only function well when the society is literate enough to know its importance.

Furthermore, when people become literate they would also turn towards family planning. Because, it is quite difficult for any state to cater to the needs of increasing population. Hence, population control has become the need of the hour for policy makers. But forcefully it cannot be imposed upon people that they are allowed

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~~Illiterate masses do not know the impor~~
for giving birth to certain fixed number of children. Because, in that case people will consider this move unislamic and resist against it. However, population budge can be controlled if illiterate people are educated. Education provides awareness to the masses, and hence they become more conscious about every problem of their own and nation as a whole. Hence, for the proper functioning of democracy it is necessary that government meet the requirements of its citizens. And that is only possible by controlling population one way or the other.

Conclusively, it is not possible for democracy and illiteracy to move together, because the source from which democracy drives power is people and when people do not know their rights and duties, they cannot ensure flourishing of democracy in their country. It is because in illiterate society people do not know worth of their votes; they are politically unconscious about their rights and duties; they do not make their rulers accountable for their misdeeds; they are easily manipulated by dynastic politicians and moved by populists; undemocratic forces face no resistance from them to overthrow any publically mandated government; and such societies prefer personalities to

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institutions. Furthermore, illiterate societies fail to ensure supremacy of law and transparency remains pipe dream in such societies. Social fabric in such societies is poisoned with extremism and hatred against minorities and whoever that does not fit in their fold and questions their approach to life. However, illiterate masses can be improved if they are educated enough to reap the dividends of democracy. At the end of ^{the} day education and democracy can only move together.