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# Democracy and Illiteracy do not Move Together

## Outlines

### I. Introduction

Tesis statement.

No one can disagree to this fact that democracy and illiteracy do not move together. Illiteracy has multiple effects on democracy. It does not let democracy to develop.

Many factors are responsible behind the illiteracy. However, these factors can be removed by taking some steps.

### II. An overview of human political evolution

### III. Factors that prove democracy and illiteracy do not move together.

(a) Political unawareness

(b) Low voter turnout

(c) Lack of political leadership

(d) Downturn economic conditions

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- (e) Undemocratic norms
- (f) Lack of planning and policy making
- (g) Class disparity
- (h) Lack of accountability
- (i) Patriarchal society

iv. Factors leading to illiteracy and impediments

- (a) Low education budget
- (b) Absence of suitable policies
- (c) Poor infrastructure
- (d) Poverty
- (e) Feudalism

v. Recommendations for the problems

- (a) Enhance education budget
- (b) Effective policies
- (c) Infrastructure development
- (d) Address poverty issues
- (e) Remove feudal system

vi. Conclusion

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Democracy, owing to its benefits and dividend, wields distinguished among various forms of government. Many gurus and thinkers in the field of political, despite having many difference over their concept and beliefs, are unanimous in their support for democracy, declaring it only form of government capable of representing people's wishes and safeguarding their wellbeing. Where so many other factors jeopardizing the existence, growth and performance of democracy illiteracy can be rated as the biggest enemy because of its potential of creating such environment that not only endangers the very existence of democracy but also deprives it of all fruits that are promised by a democratic dispensation. Democracy and illiteracy

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certainly and irrefutably, can never move together.

Since the beginning of life on the Earth, human needs have undergone many changes. Initially, only, clothes and shelter were the basic necessities of life because these were the only things human needed for survival. Gradually these requirements transformed into owing to increase in population and well-organized, collective governance system became the topmost priority of every society and civilization. Political journey of mankind saw different stations of experience and various junctures of observation. After experiencing monarchy, theocracy, autocracy, and dictatorship and many more political models; human world is now fully convinced that democracy and

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only democracy is the system that can best serve human desire of inclusive progress, prosperity and growth.

Democracy has been and can be defined in a number of ways. Meriam Dictionary defines democracy as, "a government in which supreme power is vested in the public and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections." As per Cambridge Dictionary, democracy is belief in freedom and equality between people or a system of government based on this belief in which power is held by elected representatives or directly by the people themselves. In simple words, democracy can be defined as a political system in which collective affairs are run through

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peoples chosen representatives. Provision of fundamental rights, equality before law, participatory governance, accountability and transparency and decentralization of power and authority are some basic principles of democracy.

Democracy, owing to its multitude benefits, is certainly the best form of government. Like every system, however, democracy too has vulnerabilities and limitations as far as its sustenance, growth and performance are ~~per~~ are concerned.

Illiteracy is one of the very same factors the presence of which is highly detrimental to the very existence of democracy. Illiteracy just like powerful witch, clips the wings of the dove of democracy. Till the time it dies its natural death many ground realities provide substantial evidence to the very same

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fact that democracy and illiteracy can never move together. A detailed analysis of these realities can be extremely informative and eye opening.

The fact that can be presented as the very first evidence to prove democracy's incompatibility with illiteracy is electoral political unawareness that is caused by lack of education. This unawareness leads to unwise and imprudent decision at the time of elections and resultantly the state, despite having a democratic form of government, remains deprived of the most suitable persons to run its affairs. Similarly, being unaware of their rights these electors remain incapable of exerting pressure on those elected by them that is necessary to keep them on the right track.

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and hence, democracy yields not fruitful results.

Likewise, low voter turnout is another issue that is peculiar to the states having poor literacy rate, it also has detrimental impacts on democracy. According to report released by the Pew Research Center, the highest turnout rates among OECD nations in this decade were in Belgium 87.2 percent, Sweden 85.6 percent and Denmark 80.3 percent and these are the countries having literacy rate 99 percent. Conversely Pakistan recently touched 62 percent literacy. The recent election 2014 turnout was only 47.90 percent overall. The province wise turnout rate was in Punjab 51 percent, KP 44 percent, Sindh 43 percent and Balochistan lowest 41 percent. The literacy rate also low in Balochistan. The directly



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proposition between literacy rate and voter turnout renders it impossible for democracy to move hand in hand without with illiteracy.

Similarly, literacy rate has a direct connection with the quality leadership in a country. A country cannot produce quality leadership that run the affairs of state. An uneducated person cannot understand the system of state even cannot read and write the contents of agendas. Lack of quality leadership leads to the country to challenges and issues. The developed countries have an educated leadership that can play role their to transform the country. An educated leadership can bring peace, prosperity and development in the country. However, illiteracy leads the country

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to lack of equality leadership. Plato also says that state should be ruled by intellectual persons. So, illiteracy provide lack of equality leadership. In Pakistan prior to the imposition of conditions that declared graduation as the minimum requirement for being a part of legislature, many such used to get repeatedly elected who were unable to write even their name. So, what equality contribution should be expected of these individuals who were dependent on others in reading the agenda of the legislation. Even today most of the members of provincial assemblies and national parliament in Pakistan are unable to comprehend the ~~wrong~~ wording of the simple draft bills; leave aside contributing to their improvement.

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Similarly, illiteracy does not let democracy to grow. Undemocratic norms arrest the growth of the democracy. Democratic norms do not develop within the mainstream political parties, leading to ~~the~~ one man's or one family's hold over the party - a situation that is closer to monarchy than to the actual spirit of democracy. Political landscapes of Pakistan, Bangladesh and India reflect very same realities where leadership of political parties gets transferred from generation to the next purely on inheritance basis. Members and followers of these political parties, owing to their illiteracy and unawareness, have developed a mindset of blindly following their leaders without bothering to consider whether they actually hold credentials necessary to

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to run the affairs of the party or for that matter the state. Such sort of democracy, which is far away from democratic values, leads to an environment that impedes the provision of even fundamental rights.

Another factor that proves illiteracy and democracy cannot move together is fragile economy of the country. Illiteracy leads to social degradation.

Poverty unemployment and corruption are common in illiterate society.

They lead to further social evils in the society like increase in crime and terrorism and extremism. The nexus between

illiteracy and social evils is too close. This would not be wrong

to say that illiteracy is the mother of social evils which degrade the democratic society. So, illiteracy breeds social evils

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that halt the development of the democracy.

Likewise, quality of planning and policy making cannot be possible without quality education. Those countries having low literacy rate face policy crisis.

They depend upon other countries in policy making and decision making in the best interest of the country. Developed countries having higher literacy rate, they are able to make policies in the vested interest of the

population. While developing countries' politicians and policy makers make policy in best interest of the political parties and their agendas. For example, Pakistan has been undergone

many policy changes like Ayub Khan's promoting of royal families and Bhutto's nationalization of industries in 1970s. Lets on

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privatization of policies in 1990s.  
This shows all the mainstream  
political parties made policies  
in their own interest rather  
than in interest of the country.

So, illiteracy cannot let the  
political leader to make policies  
in the best interest of the country.

This underscores illiteracy and  
democracy do not move together.

Further, illiteracy creates  
classes in the society which might  
lead to national disintegration.

Illiteracy promote centralized  
control of power and authority.

~~Confine~~ Illiteracy creates and  
supports class disparities by  
keeping the power and authority  
confined to a few hands only

and this thing kills the spirit  
of the democracy. It can be

observed that feudal systems  
and class disparity prevail in  
societies where illiteracy is high

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not been eradicated so far, and people feel protected while living in tribal or a feudal environment. The feudal mind set is prevalent in Pakistan, in Balochistan, Sindh and South Punjab. These areas having low literacy rate and lack of awareness about education. Democratically elected rulers in these societies try to keep most of the financial and administrative powers under their thumb, and the general public too accepts it without any sort of resentment or resistance. When one looks at the political history of Pakistan, where feudal mind set prevails owing to illiteracy, it dawns on one that none of the democratically elected government showed interest in devolution of power through effective local government system. Centralized authority caused

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illiteracy detrimentally affects the performance of democratically elected government and jeopardize the existence of democracy in the long run.

Another factor that makes democracy not adjustable with illiteracy is lack of accountability that is an indirect outcome of lack of education and awareness. In an illiterate society accountability never exists as a general norm and resultanty all the sectors lack sound and fool proof accountability mechanism. In the absence of accountability democracy never delivers the way it should.

Similarly, illiteracy is one of the biggest impediments to women empowerment, an imperative for the sustenance, growth and effective performance of democracy. An illiterate society promote patriarchal culture and resist every move of women empowerment.



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There are multiple reasons behind illiteracy in a country. These reasons do not let the people to get education. Illiteracy is a global phenomenon but developing countries have been facing high illiteracy. The reasons behind the low literacy are that <sup>poor</sup> economic conditions of the country, low education budget, poor policies and short term policies, poverty, over population and social and cultural barriers in the way of education.

To begin with, first and foremost ~~of~~ reasons of high illiteracy is <sup>poor</sup> economic conditions of the country.

This phenomenon is in developing and third world countries.

Economically poor countries cannot improve their education due to financial instability.

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Developed countries <sup>invest</sup> in education sector and having high literacy rate. Poor countries spend on education sector in return the results ~~is~~, according to their investment. Countries, like Finland, Sweden, Denmark having 100 percent literacy rate because they invest 6 to 7 percent of the GDP in education. According to study of organization of Economic Cooperation development USA invest 16868 dollars per child per year and having literacy rate 99 percent. While Pakistan, with poor economic conditions, spends on education less than two percent of the GDP. According to Economic Survey report FY2023 the country allocated for education only 1.7 percent of the GDP. This shows the how poor economic condition of the country.

Similarly, lack of progress

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approach in education leads to the high illiteracy rate. Many economic policies have been made since the inception of the country. Due to lack of vision all the policies have gone failed. The main reason of the failure of the education policies is lack of vision. Feudal system is not in the favour of promoting education. The second reason of the failed education policies is that lack of implementation in true letter and spirit. A single national curriculum policy devised in 2018 but it has faced many challenges because education is a provincial subject made in the 18th amendment. So, absence of suitable policies result in high illiteracy.

Poverty is another big cause of high illiteracy rate

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in the country. Due to lack of education, lack of awareness and poverty people do not send their children to school.

They prefer to send their children at work. They do not having meal for three times so they prefer their children to send at work place. According to World Bank report 40 percent of the population in Pakistan lives below the ~~poor~~ poverty line and 24 percent living in extreme poverty. 7 lakh more people might slip in poverty. So, poverty is a big obstacle in the way of literacy rate in a country.

Similarly, social and cultural problems are responsible for the high illiteracy in a country. Pakistan has been facing the same problem. As some far right movement do not

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~~girls~~ let girls to receive education. Because they perceive that girls education is against the provision of Islam. This is misunderstanding with the teachings of Islam.

This perception is very high in Balochistan and KP where girls schools are targeted and destroyed the buildings.

A number of attacks were made in the past. The stark example of this the attack on Malala Yousaf Zai. So, the social, cultural and religious barriers involved in the high illiteracy rate.

Our population is another big hurdle in the way of education. Our population creates problems for the administration to manage the huge population with shortage of resources. Our population arrests the development of the education sector. Currently,

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the country is the fifth most populated country in the world. 40 percent of its population is illiterate and 40 percent living below the poverty line. 6 to 7 percent of the youth is unemployed. These factors contribute in low literacy rate.

Poor infrastructure of the school is another big cause of low literacy rate. Lack of internet facility also involved in low literacy rate in any country. In Balochistan 15 percent of the schools access to electricity. 38 percent of schools having no internet access. 39 percent of schools having no toilets and boundary walls. Most of the buildings of schools are in dilapidated condition. Shortage of staff is another big cause of low literacy rate.

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To achieve the literacy rate is difficult task but by no means impossible. Multiple efforts help improve the literacy rate. To achieve the goal at literacy rate the government must take some steps.

These include increase education budget, implementation of policies in true letter and spirit, improve economic condition, reduce poverty, planning to control population and infrastructure development.

To begin with, to achieve literacy goal, the country ~~must~~ must increase its education budget. Lack of education is one of the most important reason behind the low literacy rate in any country. Poor economic condition does not the country to allocate high education budget. First, the developing countries should

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improve their economic condition. Developed countries allocate budget for education 6 to 7 percent of the GDP like Finland, Sweden and Norway. Pakistan allocates budget for education less than two percent of education which is far below the target set by the United Nations 4 percent to the GDP.

Similarly, another reason behind the low literacy rate is lack of implementation of policies in true letter and spirit. Feudalism is a big hurdle in the way of implementation of education policies. Another reason for the failure of the policies of education is lack of cohesion between center and province. 18th amendment, a big barrier in the way of uniform education. ~~Remove~~ To remove these hurdles pragmatic approach is needed. To improve the literacy



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rate and the stakeholders should be on the same page. So, the Centre and provinces and education authority should take collective measures to literacy goals.

Likewise, poverty has a big role in high illiteracy in the country. Poor people do not send their children to school. They prefer to send their children at work to meet need of the family. The authority should create an environment suitable for literacy. Good economic condition might help to address the poverty issue from the country. To improve economic condition the best option is to attract the foreign foreign direct investment. It will help improve economic condition and reduce the poverty.

In addition to, Another

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big reason behind the high illiteracy in the country is over population of the country.

The country is fifth populous country of the world. According

to ~~UNDP~~ UNDP 64 percent of

the population below the age of

30. Overpopulation create big hurdles

in the way of achieving goal

of education. So, thoughtful approach

is need to make family planning.

There is need to spread awareness

among the rural areas. The people

should use contraceptive methods. There

is a dire need of family planning.

Last but not least, infrastructure

development is another

step that can help in achieving

the literacy rate. Poor infrastructure

is a big obstacle in the way

of achieving goal of education.

Literacy rate, most of the schools

deprived at basic facilities

like buildings, water cable, etc.

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drinking water and toilet and boundary walls. The bleak picture of the education is in Balochistan where 15% of schools have access to electricity, 38% of schools in overall the country lack access to internet. Further, shortage of staff is another big problem to the education sector. In addition to, lack of cohesion between center and provinces is another big barrier in achieving high literacy rate.

In conclusion, democracy and illiteracy can by no means move together. Illiteracy creates hard hurdles for the sustenance, development and performance in the democracy. It cannot let the democracy to grow. It deprives the democracy of its basic principles. It leads the democracy to natural death. People cannot enjoy fundamental rights due to high

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illiteracy. Many factors involved behind the high illiteracy in a country. These include low education, poor infrastructure, poverty, absence of suitable policies, overpopulation and feudalism and lack of implementation of policies in true letter and spirit. However, nothing in the world that cannot be achieved. Everything can be difficult but by no means impossible. Hurdles in the way of democracy can be removed by the taking steps. The most common hurdle is illiteracy. The illiteracy can be addressed by taking some measures improve economic conditions, increase education budget, reduction in poverty, control overpopulation. Further, remove social and cultural hurdles in the way of literacy to achieve.