

Illiteracy: The Silent Enemy

of Democracy

Outline:

1) Introduction

Illiteracy hinders democratic values. Such as participation, accountability, equality and justice because democracy demands an informed, active and participatory citizenry which is not possible in an illiterate society. Thus, illiteracy and democracy are fundamentally incompatible.

2) Illiteracy is the silent killer of democracy:

2.1) Illiterate citizens are often discouraged from voting due to procedural challenges and lack of awareness.

(Case Study: Voice and Equality by Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995))

2.2) Illiterate citizens cannot read manifestos, understand ballot papers or evaluate policy options.

(Case Study: Political man by Seymour Martin Lipset (1960))

2.3) In many societies, female illiteracy is higher, leading to gendered political exclusion.

Case Study: Half the Sky by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (2009)

2.4) Illiterate individuals often remain unaware of their fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech, the right to vote, and access to legal protection.

Case Study: Development as Freedom by Amartya Sen (1999)

politicians exploit illiterates

2.5) Illiterate masses can be easily exploited by politicians using emotional slogans, religious sentiments, or bribes.

Case Study: Democracy and the Market by Adam Przeworski (1991)

Conclusion