

Essay:

How Can Pakistan Overcome the Burgeoning Crisis of Illiteracy?

Outline:

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Understanding Illiteracy
- 1.2. Illiteracy is a threat to democracy, social cohesion and integrity.
- 1.3. Thesis Statement:

Illiteracy in Pakistan is not just an educational failure but a multifaceted crisis that arises out of poverty and socio-political factors. It often leads to social disparity, instability and stagnant society. The menace of illiteracy can be effectively overcome by adopting cogent measures including effective economic and political policies, modern reforms and curriculum development.

2. Main Body

2.1. Causes of Illiteracy

2.1. Crisis of Illiteracy in Pakistan

- i)- Current situation
- ii)- Widening disparity in gender
- iii)- Out of school children and inefficient system.

2.2. Causes of Illiteracy in Pakistan.

- i)- Socio-political causes
- ii)- Economic constraints of state and people.
- iii)- Out-dated curriculum and ghost schools.

2.3. Effects of Illiteracy

- i)- Socio-economic disparity in society
- ii)- Poverty and employment
- iii)- Political instability and stagnation of society.

2.4. Measures to Overcome the Crisis of Illiteracy

A- Budgetary Allocation to Improve Infrastructure

- i)- Increase of Budget in accordance with International standard (4% of GDP)
- ii)- Provision of Modern Laboratories and Research Facilities.
- iii)- Providing clean and healthy campuses.

B. Inclusive Education

- i)- Art. 25-A of Constitution
- ii)- Special focus on educating women, transgender and persons with disabilities.
- iii)- Educating Out-of-School Children.
- iv)- Affordable education.

C- Modern Curriculum.

- i)- Use of Technology
- ii)- Focusing on Learning skills.
- iii)- Industry-academia link.

D- Improving Socio-Political Environment.

- i)- Tackling Law and Order situation.
- ii)- Awareness programs
- iii)- Addressing ^{social} stigma regarding women's education

E- Efficient Human Resource

- i)- Trainings and workshops of faculty members.
- ii)- Accountability of Teachers to Tackle the concept of Ghost schools.
- iii)- Promotions and competitive salaries to teachers.

F- Public-Private Partnership

- i)- Increased quality due to competition.
- ii)- Sign of Relief for treasury.
- iii)- It needs strict check and balance.

3. Conclusion

- i)- Thesis Reinstated
- ii)- Concluding Thoughts.

"The Essay"

"Education is the movement from darkness to light." - (Allan Bloom). Education is the key to success and prosperity. An uneducated person is regarded as illiterate person. Illiteracy poses a significant threat to the well-being of a society. A person, who is unable to read and understand a simple text in any language or write a simple letter and perform a basic mathematical calculation, is considered as an illiterate person. Illiteracy hampers social cohesion and brings about disparity among the classes. Currently, 39.35% of population in Pakistan is illiterate. Illiteracy in Pakistan is not just an educational failure but a multifaceted crisis that arises out of poverty and socio-political factors. It often leads to social disparity, instability and stagnation of society. The menace of illiteracy can be effectively curtailed by adopting cogent measures such as effective economic and political policies, inclusive education, modern curriculum and efficient human resources. Nations cannot excel unless the crisis of illiteracy is overcome.

First of all, the situation of illiteracy in Pakistan should be understood. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2024-25, the literacy rate is 60.65%. It means that out of ^{every} 100 persons, around 39 persons are illiterate in Pakistan. The current situation is quite worrying. There is a significant gap between literacy rate of regions and genders. Men's illiteracy is 32% while women's illiteracy rate is around 47.2%. Moreover, the Pakistan Education Statistics, released by Ministry of Education in April 2025, indicate that 35% of children are out-of-school. The current education's expenditure by federal government is around 0.8% of GDP ^{in the} Budget 2025-26. In rural areas, the condition is further threatening. Most of the children leave schools to work in farms to help their families. Pakistan is 168/193 in HDI ranking.

Now, the causes of illiteracy in Pakistan shall be discussed. There are multi-dimensional causes ranging from socio-political factors to governmental policies. Poverty is ^{one of} the important factor that lead to illiteracy. Due to economic constraints, parents are unable to send their children to schools. Instead of education, they work to earn some money to meet the basic necessities of life. Moreover, law and

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order situation also hampers educational progress. For instance, many schools in rural and remote areas of ex-FATA regions got closed due to war on terror. Political instability, corruption and economic crises in country add fuel to the fire. Due to circular debts and fiscal deficit, government is unable to spend money on education. Poor quality of education and lack of assets and infrastructure also deepens the menace of illiteracy. Out-dated curriculum, weak governmental policies, less number of qualified teachers and improper awareness create more ghost schools.

Illiteracy is one of the leading factors that cause disturbance in society. It creates socio-economic disparities in the society which is a threat to national cohesion and integration. Illiterate people fall prey to the negative prog. propagandas very easily. Illiterate people may become a tool of destabilizing a state. It results in unemployment and poverty, which leads to crime in society. Rule of law and democracy is also threatened by the crisis of illiteracy. People are unable to know their rights and duties. Moreover, there is very little innovation in society. Nation becomes stagnant and devoid of tolerance and social ethics. There is

maladministration and bad governance. If the grave nature of illiteracy is not tackled, then it may lead to the death of a nation.

Considering the causes and consequences of illiteracy, there are certain measures that can overcome the menace of illiteracy. First of all, economic factor of illiteracy has to be tackled. It can be done by increasing budgetary allocation. According to the Budget for the FY 2024-25, 0.8% of the GDP was spent on education. On the other hand, international standard for education spendings is at least 4% of GDP. This shows the ineffective and worse condition of our economy. This budget should be spent on improving infrastructure including classes, chairs, whiteboards and modern laboratories to welcome more students. Modern research facilities shall be provided to enable the students to compete on international level. Sanitation should be improved to provide clean and healthy campuses to the students. It will foster mental and physical capabilities of the students.

Secondly, steps should be taken to make education accessible to everyone. It has been enshrined by the Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, that state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years. It means that education of everyone is the duty of state. There should be inclusive and affordable education. People leave schools due to economic constraints. Government should provide free education, so that even poor people can attain education. This step has been already taken but college and university education should also be made affordable for impoverished strata of society. Special attention should be given to educating women, transgenders and people with disabilities. About 60% of transgender and 47% of women are illiterate. Steps should be taken make them useful part of only society. Currently, a school dedicated for transgenders was established in Lahore. Government should also focus on bringing the 35% of ^{out-of-school} children back to schools.

Thirdly, government need to improve and revise the current curriculum. Technology can be used in classes to make learning more accessible and feasible. The current educational system is based on cramming. It

is devoid of skills. Students get degree but unable to secure jobs due to lack of skills. This condition further discourage the common people to leave studies and do some work to earn livelihood. Policy has to be made to inculcate skills-based learning. Modern curriculum should include those subjects which have high demand and value in market. Link between industry and academia ought to be established to nurture the abilities of students. This will encourage more students to attain education and learn skills. Economic conditions of nation can be effectively tackled by adopting the above approach in academics.

Fourthly, the crisis of illiteracy can be countered effectively by ~~improy~~ improving the socio-political environment. It is a known fact that political instability and worse security conditions hamper educational growth. For instance, schools and madrasa were being attacked by the terrorists to discourage the public from attaining education. Poor law and order situation badly affected the education of women. Moreover, women education also got hampered due to social stigmatization and

strict norms especially in rural areas of Pakistan. Lack of facilities in rural areas for women need to be addressed to make them efficient part of national progress. Similarly, there should be awareness programs and campaigns run by the government and NGOs to create awareness among people regarding importance of education. People can be encouraged to attain knowledge by coming to schools through by adopting strict security measures, community engagement, women-friendly institutes and consistent policies.

Fifthly, the menace of illiteracy in Pakistan can be curbed by having efficient human resource. Government should arrange workshops and trainings to enhance the abilities of the faculty members. Teachers should go through specialized programs to meet the modern standards of education. Teaching is not just a profession, but a responsibility to nourish the future generation. There are thousands of ghost schools that are attended neither by the students nor by the teachers. This dilemma can be countered by introducing bio-metric system for attendance to improve accountability. The system bio-metric attendance of teachers

has been effectively working in some parts of Pakistan in government schools for the past few years. There should be effective process of promotions and competitive salaries to teachers to encourage them. Best teachers should be hired by government schools. This approach will encourage teachers and school administration toward maximum participation.

Lastly, the emerging concept of public-private partnerships ~~can~~ can effectively save the drowning economy and education of Pakistan. As, there are many responsibilities on a modern government, so the administration of educational institutes becomes a bit difficult for a government. There are many complexities and formalities in government. Due to the intricacies and economic burden, government schools fail to produce the desired results. That is why, ^{these} government educational institutes, which are difficult to run by government, can be run through public-private partnership model. In this concept, the government leases out a school to the private experienced agency, who remodels the institutes, by providing all the facilities. In recent times, several institutions have been given to private firms under this... concept... But this... concept, needs

a strong system of checks and balances. A strong regulatory body is required to keep an eye on these institutes. This topic has become the talk of the town in recent times due to privatization of schools and colleges in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that illiteracy in Pakistan is an educational failure as well as a result of socio-political and economic constraints. It poses a significant danger to national progress, cohesion and sovereignty. It may also lead to social disparity and stagnation of nation devoid of ethics. The crisis of illiteracy can be overcome by increasing budgetary allocation, improving infrastructure and policies, making education accessible, revising curriculum, using technology, tackling law and order situation, running awareness campaigns, hiring experts, training teachers and partnering with private firms. The steps should be taken to improve the educational status of our children and provide a better place of living to future generations. Everyone should strive to seek education and knowledge. It is an obligation upon every Muslim men and women to seek knowledge. The Holy Prophet (SAW) also emphasized the importance of education by saying, "Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave."

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