

Literacy today is not the ability to read and write. It is the ability to function in a digital economy.

Globally, literacy standards have improved but for Pakistan, the challenge is twofold.

For one, 40% of its people remain illiterate, with women lagging far behind men. The second one is digital gap in a country, where cellphones are common but internet access is weak in rural areas, and digital skills far less.

These issues were highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Smart classrooms were introduced but the teachers lack the skills to operate those classes. Bridging the gaps required investment in schools, for teachers, affordable broadband & gender parity. Therefore, if achieved, the return would be large: a digital literate population could lift productivity, and strengthen democratic population.