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Towards Viksit Bharat 2047: India's poverty as a Hindrance to Literacy

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Abstract

Second only to education, literacy has a significant impact on socioeconomic development. Illiteracy is a constant problem in India, especially among its most illiterate citizens. The achievement of universal literacy is still a major obstacle. The relationship between poverty and literacy in India, as well as how earning capacity impedes educational gains, are extensively covered in the paper. The research addresses poverty as a structural barrier to higher literacy rates and possible solutions, such as government and other organization community assistance campaigns intended to lessen poverty's hold on literacy, by reviewing the body of existing literature, government reports, and statistics.

Key words: *India, poverty, literacy, education, and socioeconomic development.*

1. Overview

Everyone has the right to education, which is a prominent step to fundamental literacy. It is both a right and the most important foundation for both individual and national development. Numerous government and non-governmental initiatives have been attempted, but without success, to improve literacy in India. According to the 2022 National Statistical Office (NSO) report, India's literacy rate is roughly 77.7%, with rural and economically disadvantaged areas falling even further behind. And once more, one of the main causes of illiteracy in India is poverty. A sizable section of the Indian populace is living below the poverty line

while trying to meet their basic needs, which include food, shelter, and medical care.

Education comes second, even though this fundamental need is valued. Lack of money to cover parental expenses like textbooks, uniforms, and school fees, Textbooks, uniforms, and even transportation deter kids from attending school. Additionally, children from economically disadvantaged families are often compelled to work at low-paying jobs to help support their families, which severely limit their access to formal education.

2. India's Poverty as a Barrier to Literacy.

There are several interconnected ways that poverty impacts literacy, including:

2.1 Financial Limitations

Dropout rates are high, particularly in rural areas, because many families cannot afford the costs of education. In particular, because families value boys' education more than girls', girls suffer disproportionately.

2.2 Child Labour

Children in impoverished households must work due to the difficult economic circumstances they face, which prevents them from attending school. Over 10 million school-age children in the nation are engaged in child labor, according to UNICEF, which severely lowers the country's literacy rates.

2.3 Inadequate Facilities for Education

Most of the components of primary and secondary education, such as adequate libraries, trained teachers, and even basic supplies like computers, are absent from schools and other educational facilities in underprivileged areas. Students are deterred from attending class and the quality of education is lowered by the absence of this infrastructure.

2.4 Inadequate Nutrition and Health

Malnourished children may confront cognitive and attention impairments, which impairs their capacity to learn. The rate of school absences and dropouts is also impacted by deteriorating health conditions.

2.5 Issues with Socio culture

In some regions of the world where chronic poverty is common, education is still optional and not a top priority. School dropout is caused by cultural practices that the children, especially girls, are exposed to, like early marriage.

3. Government and Non-Governmental Organization Intervention

3.1 Government Initiatives

The Indian government has developed and put into action a number of initiatives to address the need for education brought on by poverty, including:

- The Government of India's flagship initiative, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), guarantees universal access to elementary education.
- The Mid-Day Meal Program feeds students while they are in class in an effort to guarantee attendance.
- The 2009 Right to Education (RTE) Act: This law provides free and mandatory education.

3.2 Contribution of NGOs and Private Sector

Numerous NGOs and private organizations have helped to achieve these milestones through offering scholarships, building rural schools, and offering digital access to learning. Organizations such as Pratham, Teach for India and Akshaya Patra have

greatly played a role in helping support less privileged children in their education.

4. Steps to Take in Overcoming the Barriers to Literacy Induced by Poverty:

While working towards and enhancing literacy irrespective of the economic scenario, the following should be undertaken:

- **Increased Government Funding:** Increasing budgetary allocation is suggested for enhancing educational physical infrastructure, providing more trained teachers, and enhancing student support.
- **Vocational Training Programs:** These programs have been established with the aim to equip young individuals with skills and knowledge that would enable them to secure employment.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Mobilizing CSR funds for educational activities in economically backward areas.
- **Community Awareness Programs:** Involving parents in education programs on literacy as well as encouraging active involvement of the community in education.

Conclusion:

Without a doubt, one of the main obstacles to improving literacy rates in a country like India is poverty. The majority of economically disadvantaged families today

lack the funds to meet their basic needs, which forces their children to work from a young age. Unfortunately, this leads to cycles of illiteracy rather than promoting education. Through government policies and non-governmental organization activities, the country's literacy rate is steadily being raised and improved, with positive results. However, there are a lot of socio-cultural, financial, infrastructure, and deeply ingrained traditions that need to be addressed. More work is required. India may attain universal literacy and established sustainable development goals with consistent and targeted development.

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