

## **ILLITERACY - A CHALLENGE IN INDIA**

*Author: Abhay Kumar, III year of B.A.,LL.B. from Lloyd Law College, Greater Noida*

### **ABSTRACT**

Illiteracy has been the main problem of India for the last nearly two hundred years. A large percentage of India's population still cannot eat enough food. As much as economic growth is increasing in India, poverty is also increasing. Poverty and illiteracy are dependent on each other. The success of the country's democracy depends in large measure on whether the people of the country are educated or not. It plays a very important role and makes people able to choose the right representative, evaluate its functions, evaluate the government's work, etc. One reason for illiteracy is the backwardness of women in Indian society. Due to illiteracy Crime increases in society and the peace of the country begins to break and anarchy spreads in the country. In the areas where there is more poverty and illiteracy, there is more crime in those areas. This paper talks about illiteracy - a challenge to the goal of the right to vote and the introduction of illiteracy which includes the meaning of Democracy. This paper starts with the introduction and further Scope and Dimensions of illiteracy. Now, this paper will discuss the scope and Dimension of Literacy and constitutional provisions related to some law and fundamental rights of the person which is given under the constitution of India. Historical background and review of achievements are mentioned. Issues, challenges and solutions regarding literacy are also mentioned in this chapter. This chapter has some discussion on the case which is related to illiteracy. This paper also analyzes the Emerging trends that are discussed in the future of illiteracy and literacy. At last, this paper has some suggestions and conclusions at the end.

Keyword- Literacy, Illiteracy, Fundamental Rights, Human Development, Democracy, Vote, Sovereign

### **INTRODUCTION**

Democracy means rule by the will or power of the people. It has a form of government in which people are governed by their chosen representatives. The true meaning of the word is to define political views that favour a government Chosen by people, made up of people, and works for People. In this system of government, it is the people Our supreme and sovereign. They control the government. They are free to choose the government of their choice.

Freedom of Election is the core of democracy. India is a true democracy because citizens are responsible to elect their representatives in power. Democracy had already existed in ancient Greek and Roman republics but with little success. This had a little scope in ancient India. Entered democracy the golden stage in the twentieth century. Many countries in the world Follow the democratic form of government today. The democracy Following conditions, the coexistence of ideas and Parties, right to free discussion, universal adult suffrage, and periodic elections. India is known as the largest democracy in the world. The Indian Constitution was enacted on 26 January 1950<sup>1</sup>. India became a democratic republic full of justice, freedom, equality, and fraternity. The preamble, the basic principle of state policy, and fundamental rights reflect Indian ideology, as well as race, creed, religion, property, or gender, their right to vote. Democracy is working in our country, its condition is not better than other countries' condition. We are facing so many challenges to democracy like poverty, population growth Regional disparities, regionalism, communalism, violence, Linguistic problems, and illiteracy. One of the major social problems of India's problems is illiteracy. Every issue that our society has to face is like a chain link. Each digit is connected to the other, directly or indirectly. Series of issues in this society we are uneducated in the strongest episode of that series. Illiteracy is the mother of all issues because it gives birth to many people. We enjoy every right in principle, but not in practice. Real Democracy<sup>2</sup> will be formed only when there is a public Woke up and participated in the economic and political life Country. Illiteracy is the main reason for inequality. For democracy to be fully successful, voters must be literate and politically aware. They should be fully aware of their rights and privileges. The illiterate people of India should be educated so that they can vote wisely for the right leaders. America, Britain, Germany, and Japan are successful democratic countries and have made progress in every field because the public is literate.

India is developing but at a very slow rate, this is not a mistake. According to one government, this is only due to the problem of illiteracy. Literacy is a way for the person to think rationally, understand, be more responsible, and make one's own decisions. A literate person must be aware of all his fundamental rights and duties and also know their rights in

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<sup>1</sup> Explained Desk, *explained: Why January 26 is celebrated as Republic Day*, Indianexpress 25 set. 2020 (09: 12 am)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/why-january-26-is-celebrated-as-republic-day-6230037/>

<sup>2</sup> Michael Merrill, *Real Democracy*, Smlr.Rutgers.Edu 25 set. 2020 (02: 22pm)

<https://smlr.rutgers.edu/learn/blog/real-democracy>

society. Literacy is a weapon to the ultimate solution to fight the problems under communalism, poverty, population growth, and development. Illiteracy can slow down the country's growth rate even the most powerful nations, so if we are to become a developed nation, the government must first overcome the problem of illiteracy by introducing effective programs with proper implementation and budgeting. The irony is that even today, our leaders and public representatives give very low priority to literacy, eradicate poverty, food, clothing, shelter, work, health, etc., because they make literacy a part of the process of development. Fail to perceive, as an adventure. To improve the quality of life, as a process of building awareness among the weaker sections as part of the democratization of political power. Ignoring the issue of illiteracy can hurt India's development very badly. This study is about illiteracy which is a challenge for democracy. For these, we are trying to find solutions through sociological study.

### **Impact of the study**

When people are properly invested in, social development happens. Low or minimum-wage workers are discriminated against in a developed society. There is no discrimination based on race or gender, and everyone feels protected and makes a healthy organizational culture.

### **Methodology**

The thesis is focused on secondary data and is based on a review of prior research and reports on similar topics.

### **Scope**

The study's focus is limited to illiteracy in India.

### **The aim of this paper is to**

1. Gain a better understanding of illiteracy in India.
2. To obtain a better understanding of the situations of illiteracy in different aspect in India.
3. To investigate the impact of such illiteracy all over India.

## Literacy: Its Scope and Dimensions<sup>3</sup>

### 1. Definition of Literacy

Literacy, as defined in census works, is the ability to read and write with comprehension in any language. A person who can only read but cannot write is not classified as literate. Any formal education or minimum educational standard is not required to be considered literate. By adopting these definitions, the level of literacy Male literacy in the country was 39.45 percent, and female literacy was 18.69 percent. According to the latest census estimates (2001), the figure of India has risen to 65.38%, three-quarters of our menfolk (75.85%) are literate, while more than half (54.16%) of our women are also literate. As discussed later in this paper, it should not be considered such an accomplishment, even though we do not fulfil the constitutional directives we have set for ourselves.

### 2. Literacy and Human Rights

Literacy is part of human rights<sup>4</sup>. Now, most of the countries of the world have also accepted their obligation to provide at least primary education to their citizens. Declaration of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

*“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and Professional education shall be generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all based on merit”*

This Right is also repeated in the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child which seeks to ensure *the “Right to free and compulsory education at least in the elementary stages and education to promote general culture, abilities, judgment and sense of responsibility to become a useful member of society and opportunity to recreation, and play to attain the same purpose as of education”*.

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<sup>3</sup> S.B. Kucer, *Dimensions of literacy: A conceptual base for teaching reading and writing in school settings*, Researchgate 25 set. 2020 (010: 42pm)  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286193123\\_Dimensions\\_of\\_literacy\\_A\\_conceptual\\_base\\_for\\_teaching\\_reading\\_and\\_writing\\_in\\_school\\_settings](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286193123_Dimensions_of_literacy_A_conceptual_base_for_teaching_reading_and_writing_in_school_settings)

<sup>4</sup> LITERACY AS A HUMAN RIGHT, Read.Org.Za 26 set. 2020 (010: 12 am)  
<http://www.read.org.za/useful-info/literacy-as-a-human-right/>

### 3. Literacy and Human Development<sup>5</sup>

The ability to invest in human capital is now recognized. Economists have long believed that the main component of a country's productive wealth is physical property ("produced wealth"). By improving people's ability to gain and use information, education deepens their understanding of themselves and the world, enriches their minds by broadening their experiences, and as consumers, producers and citizens improve the choices they make. Education strengthens their ability to fulfil their ability to raise their family and their productivity and to achieve higher living standards. By improving people's confidence in literacy to participate in the vote and their ability to create and innovate, it multiplies their opportunities for personal and social achievement. Japan's rapid industrialization following the Meiji Restoration was characterized by its aggressive accumulation of technical skills, which in turn was based on an already high level of literacy and a strong commitment to education, particularly the training of engineers.

In the field of development economics, literacy holds an important place to measure development. It has been assumed that the "Human Development Index" (HDI) developed by the United Nations is a measure of the overall development of the country. "Literacy" is one of the three components used in calculating HDI. It is a cumulative measure of many factors that contribute to human development. According to the United Nations Development Report, 2000, India's ranking in HDI is 128, with the education index registering .55 due to a low adult literacy rate of 55.7 and a combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrollment of 54. In their book, "Development Reconsidered<sup>6</sup>", Owens and Shaw state: *"It is self-evident that literacy is a fundamental element of a nationwide knowledge system. The most important element of a literacy program is not only the program but also the ability to become and sustain literacy."* Is encouragement. "When people can believe that they can improve their lives through themselves *"the effort when they discover that some newly created opportunities are depriving them of illiteracy, they will learn how to read, write, and count."*

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<sup>5</sup> John E. S. Lawrence, *Literacy and Human Resources Development: An Integrated Approach*, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Vol. 520, World Literacy in the Year 2000 (Mar. 1992), pp. 42-53 (12 pages)

<sup>6</sup> Gündüz Atalık, *Regional Development Reconsidered*, ISBN: 3-540-43610-3  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269397467\\_Regional\\_Development\\_Reconsidered](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269397467_Regional_Development_Reconsidered)

Thus, education is seen as an integral part of national development. Development is not merely 'economic development'; Rather, it provided opportunities for a better life for all people with 'better growth and means'. Education and development are connected in various ways. First, education, as stated earlier, is a human right, the practice of which is necessary for personal development and fulfilment. An individual's ability to contribute to social development becomes possible and his or her development as an individual is enhanced. Thus, education is the means by which skills and productive capacity are developed and endowed. Problems of illiteracy will not solve themselves in the flow of time. Without organized literacy action, illiteracy would continue indefinitely, along with the associated diseases of poverty and underdevelopment. Experience has shown that scheduled literacy action is the exception and more often, literacy campaigns are 'on and off' in line with short-term policy changes. Therefore, a constitutional guarantee is required. In light of earlier discussions, literacy and education have both overlapped projections as engines of socio-economic progress, as well as for personal development. There is no attempt to seriously discriminate here in the discussions.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS**

The Constitution of India has recognized the importance of education for social change<sup>7</sup>. The preamble affirms the determination to secure the equality of thought, expression, belief, belief, and worship and status and opportunity and to promote the spirit of the fraternity of the people, ensuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. The preamble specified in the preamble includes the basic structure of The Constitution, which cannot be amended, and the preamble can be applied to determine the scope of the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy. Judicial interpretation has brought alive many articles of the constitution, which if truly read, can be a colourless article. The relevance of literacy, for example, is a broader interpretation of the term 'personal freedom'.

In *Francis Coralie Mullin v. Administrator, Union Territory of Delhi (1981)*, Justice Bhagwati observed: *“The fundamental right to life which is the most precious human right and which forms the arc of all other rights must therefore be interpreted in a broad and expansive spirit to invest it with significance and vitality which may endure for years to come*

<sup>7</sup> Fundamental Rights, Mhrd 26 set. 2020 (05: 22pm)  
<https://www.mhrd.gov.in/constitutional-provision>

*and enhance the dignity of the individual and the worth of the human person. We think that the right to life includes the right to live, with human dignity and all that goes along with it, namely, the bare necessities of life such as adequate nutrition, clothing and shelter and facilities for reading, writing and expressing oneself in diverse forms, freely moving about, mixing and co-mingling with fellow human beings.”*

Again, the Supreme Court in its judgment in the case of *Bandhua Mukti Morcha, etc. vs. Union of India*<sup>8</sup> specifically referred to the earlier judgments made in this connection as under:

*“In Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Education v. K.S. Gandhi JT 1991 (2) SC 296, right to education at the secondary stage was held to be a fundamental right. In J.P. Unnikrishnan V. State of Andhra Pradesh JT 1993 (1) SC 474, a Constitution Bench had held education up to the age of 14 years to be a fundamental right.... It would be therefore incumbent upon the State to provide facilities and opportunity as enjoined under Article 39 (e) and (f) of the Constitution and to prevent exploitation of their childhood due to indigence and vagary.”*

### **Equality of educational opportunity**

Since 'equality of opportunity'<sup>9</sup> is a fundamental feature of the Constitution, judicial interpretation has been sought on various aspects of this principle of equality of educational opportunity, being a part of the preamble. For many, egalitarianism in education is seen as a powerful force for the achievement of the just, more equitable and Breaking any connection between society, distribution of education, and distribution of personal income through its contribution to greater social mobility (Blog). Nevertheless, the "equality of education" concept can be given a variety of interpretations, each leading to different policy outcomes. In particular, "equality of education" may concern equality of access to education, equality of educational treatment, or ultimate educational equality. Our Courts have wrestled with the problem of what is known as 'affirmative discrimination' in favour of affirmative action or disadvantaged classes, while at the same time preserving the quality of education and the needs for fair play. The rationale in this regard is on some of the following lines: "The lofty goal of imparting education according to the capacity or ability of each person (rather than

<sup>8</sup> *Bandhua Mukti Morcha, etc. vs. Union of India* (J.T. 1997 (5) SC 285)

<sup>9</sup> Rupert Maclean, *Equality of Opportunity in Education*, International Handbook of Educational Research in the Asia-Pacific Region pp 143-154

his socio-economic background) is ineffective because those used to identify merit, or 'intelligence' Norms are themselves correlated with social background. Therefore, society must adopt special methods to compensate for the shortcomings of the environment in which children grow and which largely account for their unequal educational performance; This would take the form of a national policy of 'ruminant positive discrimination' in favour of the underprivileged. Constitutional provisions are very useful for determining what are essentially political and ideological objectives and whether the policy conflicts of parents' free-choice versus educational equality are related to the ability to pay education or to learn- Should be available as per father's wish? To avoid bringing a significant decline in educational standard.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND EVOLUTION**

In this chapter, a general review of the progress in universalization of literacy, including its socio-political and economic dimensions, is given<sup>10</sup>. There is a need for compulsory elementary education and free education at that stage and immediate education to emphasize not to bear the burden in the 21st century. Although sufficient Progress has been achieved in the field of literacy, the basic constitutional provision of universalization of primary education, which has been achieved till 1960, is still affecting us; Even by 2000, it is targeted to achieve only 90%. In this chapter, a general review of the progress in universalization of literacy, including its socio-political and economic dimensions, is given. There is a need for compulsory elementary education and free education at that stage and immediate education to emphasize not to bear the burden in the 21st century. Although sufficient progress has been achieved in the field of literacy, the basic constitutional provision of universalization of primary education, which has been achieved till 1960, is still affecting us; Even by 2000, it is targeted to achieve only 90%.

For this consultation paper, this review will be limited to two specific aspects.

(1) *Literacy*, as it is directly related to the concept of welfare state inherent in our state.

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<sup>10</sup> Marshall Maposa, *Conceptualising historical literacy - a review of the literature*, Scielo 26 set. 2020 (11: 32pm)  
[http://www.scielo.org/za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S2223-03862009000100006](http://www.scielo.org/za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2223-03862009000100006)



(2) The universalization of primary education which has been done as a specific directive principle of state policy, and the provision which has been interpreted as the nature of a fundamental right, and subsequently included.

Other statistics about declines in population growth are also important and relevant to our objective because it would mean less provision in the planned budget for new enrolment, less in terms of incremental growth required for school teachers, etc. While quantitative expansion may still be necessary for specific areas, at least in the initial section, its rate will now be lower with control of population growth and more planning funds may now return to other areas of need within the primary education budget.

### **INTO THE FUTURE**

Emerging trends are discussed in this chapter. The need to go into a learning mode has been indicated, along with the conditions for building capacities in the education system to meet the needs of knowledge enhancement, communication expansion, reinforcement of cultural roots. The changing needs of educational technology and the penetration of computers and the integration of information and communication technology demand new structures, which the system needs to be able to assimilate. Renewal of education also calls for provision for regular review, which also changes scenarios and developments in emerging technologies.

In a UNESCO publication, "Education in Asia and the Pacific"<sup>11</sup>, Raja Roy Singh has rightly written:

*"The dynamics of education and its role in each society in development and transformation make it essential that education continually renews itself to prepare for a future rather than for obsolescence. This renewal process derives from a variety of sources which include: the growth of human knowledge, which is the basic component of education; the heritage of collective experience and values which education transmits to the new generations; the means and methods of communication by which knowledge and values are transmitted and the new values and aspirations which the human spirit adds to the collective experience and wisdom of the past or by which the heritage of the past is reinterpreted and reassessed."*

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<sup>11</sup> Singh, Raja Roy, *Educational planning in Asia*, ISBN: 92-803-1134-4, 92-803-2134-x (fre) Page 37- 114 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000087067>

Three distinct global developments that may affect the future of education are:

### **1. Knowledge Growth**

The range and sweep of the speed with which knowledge is now developing are important in the expansion of knowledge in science and technology. It is estimated that in the period 600 BCE to 1700, the body of scientific knowledge doubled every 1000 years; From the beginning of industrialization until the beginning of the twentieth century, the period of doubling increased to about 200 years; And now in many scientific fields, knowledge is doubling every 15 years. Also, the interval between a discovery in fundamental science and its technical application is significantly reduced. This huge increase in the amount and application of knowledge on every aspect of modern life. Parallel to the rapid development of knowledge is the increasing velocity with which knowledge is being transmitted. New configurations in the field of knowledge are emerging and at least somewhat eroding, old established demarcation lines between natural sciences and social and anthropology. Cross-over points are emerging between major areas of human activity. Another direction of advance is the aggregation of various components of traditional disciplines into newly integrated areas. The most practical conclusion we make about the education plan is that the choices for learners about areas of study should not be closed too soon.

### **2. Education and Communication**

Perhaps no other field has had such a deep revolution in communication and information science. Communication technologies have become many times more powerful. Development in computer technology will soon affect every person. The amount of information already readily available in telecommunications and data processing as well as its reach has increased dramatically. The integration of information and communication technologies is a new challenge facing educational administrators.

### **3. Education and Culture**

Another source of educational renewal is the cultural heritage reflected in the full range of expression, which imparts meaning and value to society. Today the need for re-affirmation of cultural identity is more due to the inclination towards uniformity and homogeneity generated by economic and physical forces and mass media. Only next to the family, the school is the most important institution for transmitting cultural values. The role of education, an unavoidable role, is a medium in which various new influences are assimilated into the

cultural stream. Education has an important role in promoting the processes by which scientific and technical knowledge is imbibed in the fabric of national life without any restriction on the values of the people. Every subject taught in schools has a 'cultural' dimension. It should be brought into the way of education.

### **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

In this chapter, some issues arising from the foregoing discussions, which should find a way into our educational structures as constitutional or legal provisions, are discussed. Need for application of sunset laws to avoid obsolescence, special consideration, and structures due to unanimous nature, etc. are indicated in some directions

#### **1. Universalization of Education: Need for Consensus**

Fortunately for us, there is a consensus about the universalization of elementary education as our evidence. This issue should go beyond politics, the entire basis of access to educational opportunities at all levels should be a non-party matter and discussion of its aspects should go beyond party politics. All major political parties have placed it high on their agenda. It is also a positive factor that successive governments have expressed their preference for education. It has now been made an important component of the National Human Development Initiative (NHDI) and the Prime Minister's Special Action Plan. In a situation when the need for strong political commitment is being felt, these announced intentions of the government are certainly welcome and help keep the momentum alive<sup>12</sup>.

#### **2. Educational Opportunity as a Fundamental Right**

Education is a value in itself and is the foundation on which any limitation of equality of opportunity can be built. It opens the way for progress and literacy is a yardstick of human development. It is easy to plan for sound economic development and a stable political system in an educated society. Therefore, there is every reason to include the right to education as a fundamental right<sup>13</sup>. The learning process is not only complex but also demanding. Aldous Huxley wrote<sup>14</sup>,

<sup>12</sup> [https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/102629/9/09\\_chapter%201.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/102629/9/09_chapter%201.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Sanjay Sindhu, *Fundamental Right to Education in India: An Overview*, G.J.I.S.S., Vol.3(5):92-95(September-October, 2014) ISSN: 2319-8834

<https://www.longdom.org/articles/fundamental-right-to-education-in-india-an-overview.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Modern Humanities Research Association, *Aldous Huxley and D. H. Lawrence: An Attempt at Intellectual Sympathy*, The Modern Language Review Vol. 69, No. 3 (Jul. 1974), pp. 501-522 (22 pages)

*“There is no substitute for correct knowledge, and in the process of acquiring that knowledge, there is no substitute for concentration and prolonged practice. Except for the unusually gifted, learning must ever be hard work. Unfortunately, many professional educationists seem to think that children should never be required to work hard. Whenever educational methods are based on this assumption, children will not acquire much knowledge; and if the methods are followed for a generation or two, the society, which tolerates them, will find itself in full decline. We are human because, at a very early stage in the history of our species, our ancestors discovered a way of preserving and disseminating the results of experience”.*

Cicero told the unvarnished truth in saying that *“those who do not know what has gone before them must, forever, remain children”* There is no denying the fact that our development history has to be properly projected in many areas. But this should not remove the requirements of the discipline involved in the learning process.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

For democracy to be fully successful, there must be voters literate and politically aware. They should know everything, their rights and privileges<sup>15</sup>.

The following are the methods of education.

1. There is a need to teach democratic principles.
2. Fundamental Rights are required to teach.
3. Fundamental duties are required to be taught.
4. Need to be given against communalise education.
5. Need to be given against the caste system education.
6. Poverty needs to be given against education, these all apply through mass media, school syllabus, Literacy moments, etc.
7. With the extensive changes taking place in the world of knowledge and communication, it may be worthwhile to include a new right as a right to knowledge. The practical implication

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<sup>15</sup> Kavya CN & Pavan Kumar HM, *A Sociological Study on Illiteracy as a Challenge to Democracy*, International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development Online ISSN: 2349-4182 Print ISSN: 2349-5979, Volume 2; Issue 12; December 2015; Page No. 502-504  
www.allsubjectjournal.com

of this would be to make state libraries or information centres accessible to all, and all those who would be fountains of knowledge themselves would be put into the will.

8. The preamble can be extended to secure itself for a learning society so that the fruit of knowledge reaches everyone without fear, favour, or discrimination.

### **CONCLUSION**

However, the roots of what is wrong with our democracy appear as a negative attitude towards citizens, who are elected by good citizens to vote for bad officials who do not vote. Very often elections are reduced to a setback, with the highest bidder emerging victorious, without merit, merit, or interest. Many efforts have been made by the government to tackle illiteracy. But this is not only the reaction of the government, but it is also the reaction of the writers. Every literate citizen should contribute to fighting the demon of illiteracy. Our motto should be "Each one teaches", if we want to become a developed nation then the democratic system will succeed.

Indian democracy is facing many unexpected challenges in today's time. Worlds like poverty, population growth, regional inequality, regionalism, communalism, violence, linguistic problems, and illiteracy are also major challenges for democracy. It was observed that 100% of the respondents felt that illiteracy is a big challenge for democracy like other reasons. Nowadays voter's illiteracy is the reason for the pleasant overall power of politicians and officials. It shows their dominance over the people, it is also a challenge to democracy. 92% of the respondents felt that the illiteracy of voters is the reason for the pleasant overall power of politicians and officials. 8% of the respondents felt that illiteracy is not the only reason for the problem. People do not understand the democratic system and democratic principles due to illiteracy and all that, so people show unrestrained in politics. 92% of the respondents felt that illiteracy is due to people showing unrestrained politics. 8% of the respondents felt that illiteracy is not just a reason to show off to people in politics, but also some other reasons.