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Abstract

Social literacy practices for adult learners are essential for reducing educational disparities and encouraging socio-economic progress in Pakistan. The current state of adult education is examined in this analysis, with a focus on literacy programs, community involvement, and government initiatives. Regardless of endeavors to further develop proficiency rates, critical difficulties continue, including lacking financing, socio-social hindrances, and restricted admittance to assets. The analysis highlights successful case studies that show how community-driven initiatives have helped adult learners, highlighting the significance of approaches that are culturally and context-specific. Enhancing government and non-governmental organization collaboration, investing more in adult education, and incorporating technology to expand reach and effectiveness are some of the recommendations. This extensive comprehension of social proficiency rehearses expects to illuminate policymakers and teachers to all the more likely help grown-up students in Pakistan, eventually adding to a more educated and enabled society.

Key Words: Adult Literacy, Social Literacy, Socio-Economic Development, Literacy Rate

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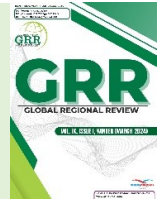
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Cite Us



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Abstract

Social literacy practices for adult learners are essential for reducing educational disparities and encouraging socio-economic progress in Pakistan. The current state of adult education is examined in this analysis, with a focus on literacy programs, community involvement, and government initiatives. Regardless of endeavors to further develop proficiency rates, critical difficulties continue, including lacking financing, socio-social hindrances, and restricted admittance to assets. The analysis highlights successful case studies that show how community-driven initiatives have helped adult learners, highlighting the significance of approaches that are culturally and context-specific. Enhancing government and non-governmental organization collaboration, investing more in adult education, and incorporating technology to expand reach and effectiveness are some of the recommendations. This extensive comprehension of social proficiency rehearses expects to illuminate policymakers and teachers to all the more likely help grown-up students in Pakistan, eventually adding to a more educated and enabled society.

Keywords: [Adult Literacy](#), [Social Literacy](#), [Socio-Economic Development](#), and [Literacy Rate](#)

Introduction

The growing recognition of the concept of 'social literacy' has posed questions on the criteria for reporting literacy rates and the pedagogical implications of teaching literacy particularly in the contexts where skill-based approaches to teaching and assessing literacy are largely practiced (Street, 1984; Barton & Hamilton, 1998). A number of skill-

based studies pointed out significant gaps in the reported literacy rate and the tested literacy rate in developing contexts (UNESCO, 2004a; Shakir, 2009; Asif, 2013). The researchers in these studies developed and administered literacy and numeracy tests, calculated the test scores to report the tested literacy rate, and concluded that the literacy rate reported by the governments (by counting the



number of persons who could read and write) does not present the actual literacy rate. These studies included only the literate persons as the participants while excluding the illiterate population, which, according to Street (1984) and other researchers in the New Literacy Studies (Baynham & Prinsloo, 2009) is also involved in literacy activities to a great deal in everyday life. It has been observed in everyday social and economic affairs that the 'illiterate' population (the term used in governments' literacy censuses) also involves in and practices a number of literacy and numeracy activities as required by the context. This phenomenon has led literacy researchers and literacy teachers to rethink the criteria for reporting and assessing literacy. Further, the skill-based approaches have also contributed to the design and development of large-scale literacy enhancement programs that focus on an individual's reading, writing, and numeracy skills and ignore, to a great extent, how literacy is used in societies (Daswani, 2001). Following the perspectives of 'social literacy' and multimodality, the present study aims to examine the literacy practices of the selected rural people in Pakistan and how these practices are shaped by socioeconomic, religious, and political factors. Based on the analysis of literacy practices, the study also aims to develop a model curriculum for literacy enhancement programs in that particular context. I will briefly overview my context in the following section.

Pakistan is a developing country in South Asia with a population of approximately 180 million. Since its establishment Pakistan has spent a low share of its GDP on education, for instance, 2.10% in 2008-09 and 2.05% in 2009-10 (Government of Pakistan, 2010). A low literacy rate is one of the biggest challenges for the government. Gender disparity in male and female literacy rates is high. Overall, 42% of the population of the country has never attended a school. Further, approximately 70% population lives in rural areas and is provided with limited opportunities for formal education. The rural population makes its livelihood through agriculture, cash crops, and cattle breeding and parents want their children to lend them a hand in earning money rather than attend schools. The gap between urban and rural literacy rates is wide (more than 20%). Poverty is another issue in the country. The World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2009) have indicated that the poverty rate in Pakistan ranges between 25.7 % and

28.3 %. About 60.3 % of Pakistan's population lives on under \$2 a day and some 22.6 % live under \$1 a day (UNDP, 2009). Under the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA), the government of Pakistan pledged to achieve EFA goals by the year 2015. However, due to a lack of sustained efforts on the part of the government and NGOs, Pakistan could achieve only a 1% average annual increase in literacy rate from 2001-2010 (48% literacy rate in 2001 and 58% in 2010). It still needs to show a sound commitment to achieving EFA goals by the year 2015 (UNESCO, 2004b; Saleem, 2008; Bukhsh and Asif, 2009). Along with NGOs, the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD <http://www.nchd.org.pk>) is a government organization responsible for administering adult literacy enhancement programs throughout the country. The skill-based notion of literacy is dominant in all literacy enhancement programs.

The site of the present study will be villages of southern Punjab in the province of Punjab, Pakistan. It is situated in the center of Pakistan. The majority of the population in the villages are farmers with a few government servants (in the professions of teaching and other services) and local businessmen (shopkeepers, cloth merchants). The land is fertile and farmers grow and sell vegetables (pumpkins, okra, turnip, brinjal, green coriander, carrots, etc.) in a nearby market. It has the facilities of landline telephones, mobile phone networks, FM radio channels, a state television channel (PTV), and cable TV channels. A limited number of people also have computers and internet connections at home. The district has a population of 35 million, the majority of which live in rural areas. Some pictures of village life in Pakistan particularly in southern Punjab are given in Appendix A.

Current Study

The current study aims to examine the analysis of social literacy practices of the selected people in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. Adult learners in Pakistan face significant challenges such as inadequate funding, socio-cultural barriers, limited access to resources, and insufficient government support, hindering the effectiveness of social literacy practices.

Objectives of the study

To achieve the broader aims, the following objectives of the study were to (a) examine the

literacy practices of the rural and urban people in their everyday lives; (b) analyze current social literacy practices for adult learners in Pakistan, and recommend certain measures how to improve adult literacy program inculcating social literacy.

Literature Review

Literacy is not only a skill but actions and values rooted in social and cultural contexts (LoBianco and Freebody, 2001; Castleton, 2001; Barton and Hamilton, 1998). Street (1984) argues that literacy should not be conceptualized as an individual's ability to understand a language rather it should be understood as the social uses of a language. Further, it is essentially a social activity and is located in interaction between the individual and the text and among people (Barton and Hamilton, 1998). Individual literacy is a restricted definition of literacy and it does not lead to social development which is the desired aim of societies (Elwert, 2001; Doronila, 2001). In my context where illiteracy is considered one of the major reasons for poverty, it is important to understand the social and functional nature of literacy and include these components in the literacy development programs (Daswani, 2001).

I use the term 'literacy practices' as social interactions that are influenced by literacy texts and practices. Further, these are located in particular events and particular social, cultural, and political contexts (Barton and Hamilton (1998). I am aware of the criticism raised on the narrow, contextual, and local use of literacy practices which ignores trans-contextual and trans-local elements (Baynam & Prinsloo, 2009). For a broader understanding of the whole picture of literacy in use, I will include multimodality which, in addition to the text, also includes visual, aural, and other modalities that influence and shape literacy practices (Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Street, 1984). One of the issues with literacy research is how to make it useful for literacy education programs so that it might be used in teaching functional literacy to adults (Street, 1984). To respond to this issue and for the purpose of linking research findings with the theory and practice of literacy teaching, I also plan to develop a model curriculum on the basis of the analysis of literacy practices of the selected participants in my study.

Social Literacy is a student's successful

performance and understanding of social skills, organizational skills, and communication skills. It is the student's ability to connect effectively with those around them. Social literacy spans across interacting with peers, family, coworkers, teachers, and even people we may not have met face to face. Social literacy is so crucial to a person's success. The ability to communicate and voice opinions and thoughts, as well as listen to the opinions and thoughts of others, is essential in learning. Firmly grasping social cues and norms is extremely beneficial. In literally every single setting of our lives: school, home, work, clubs, and activities, interacting with people (whether face to face or behind the technology), we use our social literacy. We play so many roles every day and we socially need to understand how to play those roles appropriately. For example: I would speak differently with my friends than I would my mother, or I would chat on Facebook differently than I would while emailing a professor. Without an understanding of this communication, one cannot function with success in society. Below are some examples of social literacy in a classroom. As you look at these images, think about how many social interactions are occurring and what students are learning about from being exposed to these social situations.

Social awareness therefore refers to the knowledge required for one to be able to exist and live among other people and even being in a position to be able to make a particular right decision that will benefit the society. Civic competence which in recent years has been the subject of a rather active discussion is a set of skills and knowledge that allows the subject to exist effectively in society. This can be defined as the capacity to appreciate the social environment and society in general, be able to deliver your messages and get the right messages from other people, make the right decisions, and take part in social responsibilities. This study tried to discuss the various aspects of social literacy and the role of social literacy in advancing an individual and society.

Research Method

The present study was descriptive in nature and a survey was conducted to analyze the current literacy situation in Pakistan. Data was collected from the

community including literate and illiterate people and attempted to understand how they use literacy skills rather than on acquisition/learning or assessment of literacy skills. The researcher observed and analyzed the participants in their natural cultural and social settings and was a part of them to understand them closely. The researcher would study all the participants individually on multiple sites. A sample of 315 was selected from both rural and urban areas of southern Punjab by using a convenience sampling technique. The researcher visited the sampled area by herself and collected the relevant information from the respondents.

Tool Development

A questionnaire was developed to analyze the literacy situation of both literate and illiterate people. Twenty statements were developed based

on the current literacy situation and social literacy aspects. The researcher initiated a questionnaire to get the background socio-economic and literacy information about the participants to use this information to select participants for the main part of the study. I have already developed and used such a questionnaire and if the participant felt any difficulty in reading the statement, the researcher herself elaborated and helped the participant according to the situation. On the base of the collected data, the researcher developed a data-sheet in Excel and entered the data to draw the results.

Results and Data Analysis

The entered data was analyzed using frequency and percentage of the data. The following results were drawn after careful analysis of the data.

Table 1

Literacy Practices

Sr. No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1	I can read and understand simple texts in my native language.	4.8%	3.2%	9.5%	38.1%
2	I can write simple sentences in my native language.	3.8%	5.7%	11.1%	36.5%
3	I use reading and writing skills in my daily life.	3.2%	4.8%	7.9%	41.3%
4	I often read newspapers or magazines.	6.3%	9.5%	15.9%	38.1%
5	I regularly read religious texts.	3.2%	4.8%	6.3%	34.9%
6	I enjoy reading books for pleasure.	4.8%	6.3%	9.5%	34.9%
7	I write letters or emails to communicate with others.	3.8%	5.7%	9.5%	41.3%
8	I use social media to communicate with friends and family.	2.5%	3.8%	7.9%	38.1%
9	I can fill out forms and applications without help.	3.2%	4.8%	9.5%	41.3%
10	I can read and understand instructions on medication labels.	3.8%	5.7%	9.5%	34.9%

The percentage of respondents who expressed varying degrees of agreement with ten statements regarding their reading and writing skills in their native language is shown in Table 1 of a survey on literacy practices. The majority of respondents (38.1%) were in agreement with the statement, "I can read and understand simple texts in my native

language," while a smaller number of respondents disagreed (3.2%) or were neutral (9.5%). Additionally, 36.5% of respondents concurred that they could compose basic sentences, with 5.7% differing and 11.1% leftover impartial. 41.3 percent of respondents agreed that they use their reading and writing skills on a daily basis, while 4.8%

disagreed or were neutral. 38.1% said they read newspapers or magazines, 15.9% said they were neutral, and 9.5% said they didn't. A high percentage of people who regularly read religious texts agreed, at 34.9%, with only 4.8% disagreeing and 6.3% neutral. In a similar vein, 34.9 percent of respondents stated that they enjoy reading books for leisure purposes, while 6.3% of respondents disagreed or remained neutral. 41.3 percent of respondents agreed that they communicate by writing letters or emails, while 38.1 percent agreed that they communicate by using social media, with lower disagreement rates of 5.7% and 3.8%, respectively. 41.3 percent of respondents agreed

that they could fill out forms and applications without assistance, and 34.9 percent agreed that they could read and comprehend medication labels, with smaller disagreement rates of 4.8% and 5.7%, respectively, regarding practical applications of literacy. Generally speaking, the review shows that a critical piece of respondents feel positive about their essential proficiency abilities, utilizing them routinely in day-to-day existence and for correspondence. However, there are also significant proportions of respondents who are neutral or disagree, highlighting potential areas for literacy support.

Table 2

Social Literacy Themes

Sr. No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1	I am aware of my rights and responsibilities as a citizen.	4.8%	6.3%	11.1%	36.5%
2	I understand the importance of voting in elections.	3.8%	4.8%	9.5%	36.5%
3	I can identify and solve problems in my community.	5.7%	7.0%	11.1%	34.9%
4	I participate in community meetings and discussions.	7.9%	9.5%	15.9%	36.5%
5	I understand the importance of health and hygiene.	3.2%	3.8%	7.9%	38.1%
6	I can access and understand health information.	3.8%	4.8%	9.5%	34.9%
7	I am aware of gender equality issues.	3.2%	4.8%	11.1%	38.1%
8	I understand the importance of financial literacy.	3.2%	(3.8%	11.1%	39.7%
9	I can manage my personal finances effectively.	4.8%	6.3%	11.1%	34.9%
10	I am aware of environmental conservation practices.	3.8%	4.8%	12.7%	34.9%

The percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed, disagreed, were neutral, or agreed with each of the ten statements is shown in Table 2, which provides an overview of survey responses regarding various aspects of social literacy. 36.5% of respondents agreed with the statement, "I am aware of my rights and responsibilities as a citizen," while 6.3% disagreed or remained neutral (11.1%). Similarly, 36.5 percent of respondents agreed that voting is important, while 4.8 percent disagreed and 9.5% were neutral. Concerning their ability to

identify and solve problems in their community, 34.9% of respondents agreed, 7.0% disagreed, and 11.1% were neutral. 36.5 percent of respondents agreed to participate in community gatherings and discussions, with 9.5% disagreeing and 15% remaining neutral. Well-being and cleanliness mindfulness was high, with 38.1% settling on its significance and just 3.8% clashing. 34.9% of respondents agreed that it was important to understand health information, with 4.8% disagreeing and 9.5% remaining neutral. 38.1%

agreed that gender equality issues were important, while 4.8% disagreed or were neutral (11.1%). 39.7% of respondents agreed that financial literacy was important, while only 3.8% disagreed. However, only 34.9% of respondents agreed with effective personal finance management, with 6.3% disagreeing and 11.1% neutral. Last but not least, environmental conservation awareness received 34.9% of the vote, with 4.8% opposed and 12.7% neutral. Generally speaking, the review recommends major areas of strength for and comprehension of social education topics among respondents, especially in regions like citizenship, casting a ballot, well-being, orientation fairness, and monetary proficiency. In any case, there are prominent regions where greater commitment and training may be required, particularly in local area support and individual accounting of the board.

Discussion

The study reactions framed in the table give a smart outline of the respondents' mindfulness and comprehension of different parts of social education. A remarkable 36.5 percent of respondents agreed that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, while only 6.3% disapproved and 11.1 percent remained neutral. This suggests that the participants generally have a high level of civic awareness. Another 36.5% strongly agree that understanding the significance of voting in elections is important, indicating that respondents are aware of the significance of their participation in democratic processes. The picture of community involvement is slightly more mixed. While 34.9% agreed that they could identify and solve problems in the community, a larger percentage of 7.0% disapproved and 11.1% were neutral. Despite 36.5 percent agreement, participation in community meetings and discussions had a higher disagreement rate of 9.5% and neutrality of 15.9%. These figures feature a likely region for development in cultivating dynamic local area commitment. Awareness of health and hygiene is another strong point, with 38.1 percent of respondents agreeing with its significance and only 3.8 percent disagreeing. Similar high levels of agreement (34.9 percent) for comprehending health information indicate health literacy. Orientation balance issues are likewise major areas of strength for Saw, with 38.1% understanding, building up the respondents' acknowledgment of its

significance in friendly proficiency. The majority of respondents agreed that financial literacy is highly valued, with only 3.8% disagreeing. However, the agreement rate for effective personal finance management drops to 34.9%, with 6.3% disagreeing and 11.1% neutral, indicating that practical financial skills can be improved. Environmental conservation awareness had a rate of 34.9% agreement, but there was also a 4.8% disagreement and a slightly higher neutrality (12.7%), indicating that although there is some awareness, it may not be as strong as in other areas. Citizenship, voting, health, gender equality, and financial literacy are among the most well-understood and well-known social literacy topics, according to the survey. However, gaps in areas like community participation and managing personal finances indicate that more education and engagement might be beneficial. This examination highlights the significance of designated mediations to upgrade social education extensively across all subjects.

Conclusion

There is a solid foundation in both literacy practices and social literacy themes among the 315 respondents from Southern Punjab. The majority of respondents are aware of their civic responsibilities and social issues and possess the literacy skills necessary for daily life. Literacy practices are incorporated into everyday activities, as evidenced by the data's high levels of reading, writing, and social media use. Social literacy topics like health and hygiene, financial literacy, and environmental preservation are also well understood and understood. Literacy programs in Pakistan appear to be making significant progress, according to these findings. However, there is still room for improvement in areas like problem-solving and community participation. Upgrading these perspectives can prompt a more connected and informed populace, adding to a generally friendly turn of events and prosperity.

Recommendations

It is essential to integrate community-based learning initiatives, make use of local languages, and use culturally relevant content to improve social literacy among Pakistani adult learners. Accessibility issues can be addressed by setting up adult education

centers with mobile learning units and flexible schedules. The necessary resources and expertise can be obtained through partnerships with non-governmental organizations, government agencies, and businesses. Preparing neighborhood instructors and using advanced apparatuses can additionally

uphold students. Literacy programs will have a long-term impact on individual and community development if they place an emphasis on practical skills like health education, financial literacy, and civic engagement.

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