

A Sociological Study on Illiteracy as a Challenge to Democracy

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Abstract

Every issue that our society faces is like a link of a chain. Each issue is connected to another, either directly or indirectly. The chain of issues in this society that we live in, the strongest link of that chain is illiteracy. Illiteracy is the mother of all problems, and it is also challenge to democracy. We can see the many challenges to democracy like poverty, population growth, regional disparities, regionalism, communalism, violence, linguistic problem and illiteracy. In this background our study focused on the basis of selected 25 agriculturalist and 25 labourers in Hassan taluk of Hassan district of Karnataka state through simple random sampling method and conducted direct interview with on interview schedule. Data was collected and classified and then it is analyzed in this present study. The present study aims to find out the illiteracy as a challenge to democracy. The study results show that people are not aware of democratic principles and values due to reason of illiteracy.

Keywords: Sociological Study, Illiteracy, Democracy

1. Introduction

Democracy means rule by the will of the people. It is a form of government in which people are governed by their own elected representatives. In the true sense of the term is defined as the political view point of these who favor a government that is elected by the people, is made up of the people and works for the people. In this system of government, it is the people who are supreme and sovereign. They control the government. They are free to elect a government of their own choice. Freedom of choice is the core of democracy.

India is a true democracy because the citizens are responsible for electing their representatives to power. Democracy existed in ancient Greek and roman republics but with little success. It had very little scope in ancient India. Democracy entered its golden stage in twentieth century. Many countries in the world today follow the democratic form of government. Democracy depends on the following conditions, co-existence of ideas and of parties, the right to free discussion, universal adult suffrage and periodic elections.

India is the largest democracy in the world. The constitution of Indian was enforced on 26 January, 1950. India became a democratic republic infused with the spirit of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. The preamble, the directive principle of state policy and the fundamental rights reflect the Indian ideology as well as the caste, creed, religion, property, or sex have the right to their vote.

Democracy is working in our country its condition is no better than condition of other countries. We can see the so many challenges to democracy like poverty, population growth, regional disparities, regionalism, communalism, violence, linguistic problem and illiteracy. One of the major social problems of India is illiteracy. Every issue that our society faces is like a link of a chain. Each issue is connected to another, either directly or indirectly. The chain of issues in this society that we live in the strongest link of that chain is illiteracy. Illiteracy is the mother of all issues as it gives birth to many

other issues like poverty, population growth, linguistic problem and many more.

We enjoy every right in theory, but not in practice. Real democracy will come in to being only when the masses are awakened and take part in the economic and political life of the country. Illiteracy is the main cause of inequality. For a democracy to be fully successful, the electorate should be literate and politically conscious. They should be fully aware of their rights and privileges. The illiterate masses of India should be given education so that they can sensibly vote for the right leaders. The U.S.A, Britain, Germany and Japan are successful democratic countries and gave progressed in every sphere because the masses are literate.

Table 1: Literacy rate in India from (1951-2011)

Census Year	Male	Female	Total
1951	27.16	8.86	18.33
1961	40.40	15.35	28.30
1971	45.96	21.97	34.45
1981	56.38	29.76	43.57
1991	64.13	39.29	52.21
2001	75.26	53.67	64.84
2011	80.9	64.6	73.0

India is developing but at a very slow rate, this is not the fault of a government, it is due to this problem of illiteracy only. Literacy enables a person to think rationally, to be understanding, to be more responsible and to make his/her own decisions. A literate person is aware of all his fundamental rights and duties. Literacy is the ultimate solution to fight problems like communalism, poverty, population growth and under development.

Illiteracy can bring down even the most powerful nations down, so if we are to become a developed nation, the government should first remove the problem of illiteracy by introducing effective programs with proper implementation and budget. It

is ironical that even today, our leaders and people's representatives give literacy a very low priority, pitting poverty alleviation, food, clothing, shelter, work, health etc. above it they fail to perceive literacy as part of the development process, as an Endeavour to improve the quality of life, as the process of building awareness among the weaker sections, as part of democratization of political power. Neglecting the issue of illiteracy can hurt the development of India very badly. This study is about illiteracy as a challenge to democracy. For these we are trying to find the solutions through the sociological study.

Objective of the study

1. To know about demographic profile of the respondents.
2. To study about the illiteracy as a challenge to democracy.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on the primary data which is collected from 25 agriculturalist and 25 labourers in Hassan taluk of Hassan district of Karnataka state. Through the simple random sampling methods 25 agriculturalist and 25 labourers were selected to generate primary data. Detailed information of the attitudes and opinions of the respondents were collected through pre-tested structured interview schedule which is comprised of pre-coded and open-ended questions regarding objectives of the study. The primary data was collected employing interview schedule directly from the respondents and the secondary data were collected from books, journals and website related to democracy and illiteracy. The data collections are processed in a systematic way. The data are edited for checking their completeness and accuracy. The data is tabulated and processed in the table by using computer.

Limitation of the study

The present study had some limitations. The respondents were not fully aware about the research being conducted on them which resulted are fewer co-operations by them. Moreover observations of this study were based on the research field study on only 25 agriculturalists and 25 labourers of Hassan taluk which is a small part of Karnataka.

Results and Discussion

This study result shows that 20% of respondents are belongs to the age group of 21 to 30. 38% of respondents are belongs to the age group of 31 to 40. 22% of the respondents are belongs to the age of 41 to 50. 20% of respondents are belongs to the age group which is of above 51 years. The data depict that 60% of respondents are male and 40% of respondents are female. The study observed that Majority of the respondents (80%) are belongs to Hindu religion. 16% of respondents are belongs to Muslim and remaining 4% of respondents are belongs to Christian. It is observed that 30% of respondents are belongs to Vokkaliga. 14% are Lingaitha, 20% of respondents are SC, 8% of respondents are ST, 28% of respondents are belongs to other caste. The data revealed that 50% of respondents are Agriculturalist and other 50% of respondents are Saw mill labourers. The study observed that 10% of respondents monthly income is 01-1000. 40% of respondents income is 1001-2000. 30% of respondents income is 2001-3000 and remaining 20% of respondents income is 3001-4000.

Findings of the Study

The study deals with the opinion of respondents about illiteracy as a challenge to democracy. In our country every people should

necessity to understand the democratic system. If they do not understand this system then democratic system will never succeed. In that 100% of our respondents felt that there is a necessity of understanding democratic system. In India every people has voting rights. Vote is the main foundation of democracy. In that our 80% of respondents are involving in election process as a voter. 20% of respondents are not involving in every election process as a voter.

Every country has their own election process. This is a part of democratic system. Any good citizens can participate in election as a candidate. The data revealed that only 4% of respondents are participate in local level election as a candidate. 96% of respondents felt that they are not participating in election as a candidate due to reason of their illiteracy. Democratic system of every country has its own principles, values, norms, ideologies. It is observed that 10% of respondents are known about democratic principles and values. 90% of respondents are not aware of democratic principles and values due to reason of illiteracy. In Indian democratic system we have fundamental rights and duties. People should aware of these things. It is observed that only 6% of respondents felt that they are aware of fundamental rights and duties. But majorities (94%) of respondents are not aware of fundamental rights and duties because of illiteracy. The study revealed that 100% of respondents felt that they are not working in any parties as a leader due to reason of illiteracy and some other reasons.

Democracy is working in our country, its condition is no better than condition of other countries. It was observed that 90% of respondents felt that democratic system is failure in India because of so many impediments. 10% of respondents felt that democratic system is not fully failure in India. Illiteracy is the main cause to inequality. For a democracy to be fully successful, the electorate should literate and politically conscious. 100% of respondents felt that literacy is necessity to democratic succeed. Now a day our Indian democratic system is facing so many impediments and it's also effect to democratic succeed. 96% of respondents felt that illiteracy is impediment to democracy. 4% of respondents felt that illiteracy is not only the impediment to democracy. Our India facing terrorism problem against democracy due to the reason of illiteracy 84% of respondents felt that illiteracy is reason for terrorism against democracy. 16% of respondents felt that illiteracy is not only the reason for terrorism against democracy, because majority of literates also involved in terrorism against democracy.

Indian democracy faces many unforeseen challenge in today's world, like poverty, population growth, regional disparities, regionalism, communalism, violence, linguistic problem and illiteracy is also major challenge to democracy. It was observed that 100% of respondents felt that like other reasons illiteracy is also major challenge to democracy. India is the largest democracy in the world. Now a day voter's illiteracy is reason for politicians and official's enjoyable whole power. It shows their dominion on the people, it is also challenge to democracy. 92% of respondents felt that voter's illiteracy is reason for politicians and official's enjoyable whole power. 8% of respondents felt that illiteracy is not only for the reason for this problem. Due to reason of illiteracy people can't understand the democratic system and democratic principle and all that, so people by showing uninterested in politics. 92% of respondents felt that illiteracy is reason for people by showing uninterested in politics. 8% of respondents felt that illiteracy is not only the reason for people by showing uninterested in politics, but also some other reasons are there.

Illiteracy can bring down even the most powerful nations down. Illiteracy is reason for decreasing democratic values and principles due to bad conditions of elections. It was observed 94% of respondents felt that illiteracy is reason for decreasing democratic values due to bad conditions of elections. 6% of respondents felt that illiteracy is not only the reason for decreasing democratic values. Due to reason of illiteracy people can't understand value of vote. So it is the main reason for getting fewer votes. Majority 98% of respondents felt that illiteracy is reason for getting fewer votes. 2% of respondents felt that illiteracy is not only the reason for getting fewer votes, but other major reasons also are there. For a democracy to be fully successful people should be fully aware of fundamental rights and duties of democracy. The study revealed that 100% of respondents felt that there is a necessity for understanding rights and duties of democracy.

Suggestions

For a democracy to be fully successful, the electorate should be literate and politically conscious. They should be fully aware of their rights and privileges. They should be need of democratic education there are following way.

- There is a need of giving democratic principle education.
- There is a need of giving fundamental rights education.
- There is a need of giving fundamental duties education.
- There is a need of giving against the communalism education.
- There is a need of giving against the caste system education.
- There is a need of giving against the poverty education.

These are all implement through mass media, school syllabus, literacy moments, etc.

Conclusion

The root of all that is wrong with our democracy, however, appears to be the negative approach of citizens towards voting bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote. Very often elections are reduced to a sham wherein the highest bidder emerges victorious, sans merit, competency or interest. Several efforts have been made on part of the government to deal with illiteracy. But it is not only the response of government it is also responses of literates. Every literate citizen should contribute in battling with the demon of illiteracy. Our motto should be "each one teaches one", if we are to become a developed nation then democratic system will succeed.

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