

Role of Literacy in People's Lives and its Importance

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Abstract: Literacy is a fundamental human right and it is the basis for any individual's ability. It is essential for social and human development and provides skills and empowers us to transform our lives, it improves standard of health and ability to earn a higher income. People who struggling with literacy are more likely to be poor, lack of education is not allowing them to avail an opportunity to participate fully in society's activities. Literacy is so fundamental; it is the essential foundation of education. Literacy is the first step towards freedom, towards liberation from social and economic constraints. It is the prerequisite for development, both individual and society. Literacy helps to spread awareness among the people of their rights. People with good literacy skills enjoy a higher standard of living, have better opportunities of finding jobs, and are able to continue to learn new skills that will help them in the workplace to get promotions. The higher literacy rate gives the higher socio-economic and human development of a nation. Hence, literacy not only empowers individuals, families and communities, but it also reduces poverty and unemployment, it improves quality of life, helps to attain gender equality and ensures peace, democracy and sustainable development. Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts, Literacy allows us to make sense of written, visual and spoken texts including books, newspapers, magazines, timetables, television and radio programs, Literacy is very important for economic development because; literacy develops human resources which are very necessary for the economic development.

Keywords: Literacy, Socio-Economic condition, Human Resource, democracy, Foundation of education, skills and development etc

1. Introduction

Literacy is most commonly defined as the ability to read and write. But it's not as simple as it sounds. Reading and writing abilities vary across different cultures and contexts, and these too are constantly shifting. Nowadays, 'reading' encompasses complex visual and digital media as well as printed material. (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996; Mortenson, 1998) An elderly person who can read the newspaper might struggle to get information from Google. Similarly, different cultures will have different perceptions of literacy. Results of Neuman & Celano's (2001) The writing traditions of the English language make reading comprehension an essential part of literacy, but this might not be as important in cultures or groups that rarely read printed material.

Add to this the many people who move between cultures and languages and you have a world where 'literacy' is almost entirely relative. Berger, Paxson, & Waldfogel (2005). These complex factors make it difficult to create a stable definition of literacy. In a civilized country, every citizen should learn how to read and write. If not, he is called an illiterate person. An illiterate person has to face many practical difficulties in life.

The Importance of Literacy in Economic Development

Our economy can enhance if learners have higher literacy levels. Effective literacy skills open the doors to more educational and employment opportunities so that people are able to pull themselves out of poverty. Aughinbaugh & Gittleman 2003; Baum 2003 In our increasingly complex and rapidly changing technological world, it is essential that individuals continuously expand their knowledge and learn new skills in order to keep up with the pace of change.

The Importance of Literacy in community well-being

From an individual perspective, one needs adequate literacy skills to participate and function happily within – and contribute to – one's communities. Persons with adequate literacy skills maintain better health through their ability to understand and interpret health information. They are better able to communicate clearly with their medical caregivers, learn and adopt preventive health practices. They are also better able to communicate with their children's teachers and to help their children with school work. From a collective perspective, a literate community is a dynamic community; a community that exchanges ideas, engages in dialogue is more innovative and productive. The sharing of ideas, perspectives and concerns also leads to greater levels of mutual understanding and caring, and ultimately strong community spirit. Literacy improves the future of everyone in society. Literacy is critical to economic development as well as individual and community well-being, without education there is no imagination of development in society, for community well-being it is important to have literacy in the community.

An illiterate man is generally exploited by the clever men in the society. They take full advantage of his ignorance of the language or wisdom. The illiterate men become like dancing dolls at the hands of the clever persons. They suffer in many ways in life.

Now-a-days, the Indian governments have taken a literacy drive all over the country. They are sending teachers into the remote corners of the villages of India in order to educate the people, irrespective of their age or profession. The programme of education has taken a bold step, and the results are encouraging. The students and the educated youth should come forward to join the literacy movement since launched by the government of India.

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The percentage of literate persons in India has considerably increased in comparison with the figures of the earlier years. It is found that in the villages, the young and the old men and women assemble and sit together to take lessons from the teachers who have been specially trained and appointed for the purpose of teaching the illiterate mass.

2. Benefits of Literacy

Improved literacy can contribute to economic growth; reduce poverty; reduce crime; promote democracy; increase civic engagement; prevent HIV/AIDS and other diseases through information provision; enhance cultural diversity through literacy programmes in minority languages; lead to lower birth rates as a result of increased education; and confer personal benefits such as increased self-esteem, confidence and empowerment. However, the benefits of literacy ensure only when broader rights and development frameworks are in place and operating effectively.

The empowering potential of literacy can translate into increased political participation and contribute to the quality of public policies and democracy.

3. Conclusion

Literacy is the state of being literate and it's defined by a combination of basic skills (not just one skill) that everyone needs in order to function in society to grow in their life. If you are from another country and want to be comfortable in your new place and want to take advantage of all the opportunities and make it your perfect home, then you will be required to become literate. If you live in this country and feel that you have been deprived educationally, then you have to brush up on your literacy skills.

Literacy skills will allow us to express our thoughts, to solve problems, to process new information, and to understand the world around us much better. Literacy also will make it easy for other people to understand us well. Literacy gives us knowledge and the ability to share and express this knowledge with different people. Literacy also gives us the ability to receive knowledge being brought to you by other people. In these ways, literacy gives freedom, freedom for you to go where you want to go in the world, and to seek opportunities in order to take your next steps in your life. Literacy also allows opportunities to find you! Literacy is liberating because it opens the door to our future. If we do not have the basic literacy skills then we may never experience the quality of life that we seek or deserve.

Literacy means the ability to write and to express our thoughts in an organized way. The written word is a fundamental and powerful form of communication; we want our written words to be instantly understood by another person, by our family, by our friends, by our neighbor, by our utility company, by our bank. Literacy also means expressing our self through spoken words (verbally) when in conversation with another person. Verbal expression is very important. We may need to communicate this way in a public situation or in a social setting (at a restaurant) or in the workplace (when applying for a job or talking to your boss or co-workers).

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