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## MEASURING THE ABSOLUTE LITERACY: TO CONTEXTUALIZE WITH OFFICIAL CLAIMS OF LITERACY RATE IN DISTRICT BAHAWALPUR

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### **Muhammad Tahir Nadeem**

Assistant Professor

Department of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur,  
Punjab, Pakistan

E-mail: [tahir.nadeem@iub.edu.pk](mailto:tahir.nadeem@iub.edu.pk)

### **Irshad Hussain**

Professor

Department of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur,  
Punjab, Pakistan,

E-mail: [irshad.hussain@iub.edu.pk](mailto:irshad.hussain@iub.edu.pk)

### **Nosheen Malik**

Assistant Professor

Department of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur,  
Punjab, Pakistan

E-mail: [nosheen.malik@iub.edu.pk](mailto:nosheen.malik@iub.edu.pk)

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The goal of the study was to provide documented evidence of the absolute tested literacy and to detect the gap, if any, between tested and reported literacy rates in Bahawalpur District. Two types of research instruments were used to collect the data. One of the tools was a survey sheet to obtain demographic and other details of the respondents. The second tool was a test to measure the literacy rate. All the age groups between 10-50 years were the population of the study. A total number of 194 persons joined the test willingly, out of 589 people who reported as literate population. After the application of the test, the obtained data was inserted into two separate sheets with code numbers. The coded data analyzed and average and percentages were ascertained. It was concluded that a gap is visible in the two data sets; reported literacy and assessed literacy.*

### **KEYWORDS**

*Assessed Literacy, Literacy, Reported Literacy, Functional Literacy, Absolute literacy*

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**INTRODUCTION**

Education and literacy empower human beings and assist them in their capacity building to enhance their efficiency and productivity. As such, the dream of sustainable socio-economic development could not be realized without significant improvement in education.

Education and literacy are significant for human development and capacity building. The Sustainable development of any country is significantly related to human resource management. The more a country focuses on education the more it gets improvement in production and productivity (Siddiqui, & Taqar 2018). At early level, it facilitates learning and acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and beliefs. At later stage, education provides the fullest possible development of each individual for living as an active and thriving member of society. Literacy acquisition brings expressive changes in a person that helps in the growth in the cognitive function and adjustment in the society (Dehaene, Pegado, Braga, Ventura, Filho, Jobert, & Cohen, 2010). Also, it increases human productivity skills and the growth in economy of a country. The Economy of a country relates to a literate community in many ways. The countries that are well established in the world, behind them the reason is the higher literacy rate and skilled manpower (Memon, 2007).

Education and literacy empower human beings and assist them in their capacity building to enhance their efficiency and productivity. As such, the dream of sustainable socio-economic development cannot be realized without significant improvement in the literacy and education.

Educated people are on the basic component of the monetary advancement of the nation. Literacy gives chances of better living in the public. McGarry (1991b) expressed that literacy is the capacity to utilize language in its composed structure; a proficient individual can peruse, compose, and comprehend their local language. All the more officially, literacy is traditionally perceived as 'the capacity to utilize realistic images to speak to communicated in language' however as of late ignorance is an essential explanation of emergency like wellbeing, financial, innovation, psychological warfare and so forth on the planet (Memon, 2007).

Improving literacy is an incredible step towards the development of any country. It is one of the essential areas of schooling all over the world. It is accepted that a country with a high literacy rate is more developed while a country with a lower literacy rate is less developed because it considers development as the main task in the social and financial affairs of the nation. It provides a solid foundation for a high literacy

structure. Besides, it changes society. A nation that is unable to develop and use the knowledge and abilities of individuals in the most ideal way (Hashmi, 2007).

It is not empowering school access conditions in Pakistan. The low enrollment rate at the required level, the wide discrepancy between the area and the sexual orientation, the absence of trained teachers, the absence of training equipment, and the low actual structure of the schools show the helpless introduction of the area (Memon, 2007).

Literacy and Mass Literacy Commission was the first time set up in 1981 as a significant public literacy organization in Pakistan. Meaning of educated people likewise stayed changed and information speaking to literacy rate in an exceptional period additionally is set up under the proficient individual definition in that extraordinary time. Here literacy rate and the meaning of educated individuals are being introduced to help the task (UNESCO, 2006).

The Definition of literacy in 1951 was an individual who can read in language and the literacy rate was 16.5 percent. In the year 1961 definition of literacy was individuals who can read and understand a paragraph in any language and the literacy rate was 16.4 percent. However, the definition of literacy in 1972 was the individual who has an understanding of what he is writing or reading is a literate one and the percentage of literacy was 21.8%. In 1981 literacy was defined as the person who can read the newspaper in the local language is literate person and the percentage of literacy was 26.3 percent. In literacy was defined as 1998 the person read write and understand comprehensively is a literate person.

HR and their capacity can be implicit in numerous ways like to give the capacity to feeble and denied individuals, offer motivators to a working-class resident, and educated ignorant individuals. Today in this new time of literacy, training is assuming and a significant part of the development and improvement of the general public in each part of life, and mindfulness among the general public has to assume a significant job. Along these lines, it is accepted that the equilibrium development of the country centers on the socio-financial aspects and social - social improvement of the country. The socio-financial aspects and social - social improvement of the country would stay immature and disabled until the working class individuals stay ignorant of any country and stay feeble to produce pay (UNESCO, 2009). Mohanty (2007) appears to concur that being educated is one of the significant pointers of a human turn of events and urgent to each part of the social and financial turn of events.

The unified country and other global and public organizations are attempting to

increase the expectation of individuals through the arrangement of essential human needs. The essential and the need zone of these offices are instruction and literacy. Public activity plan on training for every one of 2001-2015 gives a total role to a few activities of grown-up literacy in the nation.

Pakistan stands at almost top on the list of those with a high population growth rate. The population of the age of over 10 is expected to increase from 100 million to 147 million at the end of the year 2016. This increase eventually will demand more resources for the education of upcoming social demand (Service of Literacy, Pakistan, 2007). The government of Pakistan is consuming a ton of assets for the improvement of literacy. As of late, the public commission for human improvement has again receptive with the goal that it can work appropriately on grown-up literacy (grown-up focus) and universalization of essential instruction. Non-conventional fundamental training schools have been set up to give free and mandatory instruction to kids. In Pakistan, the survey does not provide complete information regarding literacy. For example, long stretches of study, beginning young, literacy and obtaining abilities, guidelines of tutoring, and specialized aptitudes. Because of the bother of achieved school years, one can neither process the conceivable training nor find the impact of an additional time of tutoring on singular benefit. Consequently, the open composed material in Pakistan is absent to estimate the profits to training by misuse of the scarce resources. Pakistan has started the overview, Pakistan Household review to discover the unbalance in literacy rate (Nasir, & Nazli, 2000).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Universally literacy definition is restricted uniquely to the specific circumstance. Areas of literacy may vary starting with one territory then onto the next and starting with one age then onto the next. Whatever the areas might be nevertheless one thing is certain that literacy is a basic as showing essential letter sets, or works one's name and clarifying away or a way to someone. The acquisition of literacy depends upon the meaningful engagements in the school. Currently, Pakistan is lacking in the net enrollment and participation rate of the primary age group (World Bank, 2003). Pakistan stands at the lower rank in South Asia, with an adult literacy rate of 44%, as compared to 90% of Sri Lanka, 835 for India, and 70 percent for Nepal (World Bank, 2005). This low participation is linked with the gender disparity, distance from institution, poverty, and low literacy rate in parents (Mete & Sather, 2005, Holmes, 2003). In National census of Pakistan (1998) a literate person was defined as "one who can read newspaper and write a simple letter in any language".

Literacy has much significance and numerous implications can be deduced from it.

According to the General Census of Pakistan (1998) definition of a literate person was ‘a person who can read a newspaper and write in simple language’. According to UNESCO (2004) literacy enables an individual in reading, accepting, learning, communicating, and interpreting the various types of inscribed and printed material. Today, numeracy is believed to be the functional part of literacy that is assumed as the outcome of reading, writing, and mathematics (Kaye, 2014).

It relies on the reach and on several thoughts that give the total significance of it. A few meanings of literacy “*center on readiness and unraveling*”. Sapche, (1964) portrayed literacy as an arrangement of word discernments for example perusing as it were. Kaestle (1985) described literacy as the potential to use language at the basic level of oral talks and express the view in written manners.

Even though characterizing literacy is intricate, yet it is critical to ponder upon it. A few specialists have underlined the psychological cycle in depicting literacy, some for the most part and others all the more particularly. As indicated by Goodman (1976) that “*perusing is a psycholinguistics speculating game*”. Venezky (1991) states that literacy as, “*intellectual ability*”. Calfee and Nelson-Barber (1991) depict it as “the ability to utilize language as an apparatus for oral correspondence”. Even though literacy may not be an extraordinary panacea that prompts satisfaction and abundance, it could prompt a change in the manner in which force is disseminated in the public eye (UNESCO, 1991). As defined by Gray, (1956) “An individual is practically proficient when he has gained the information and abilities in perusing and composing when empower him to connect successfully in every one of those exercises in which literacy is typically expected in his way of life or gathering”.

Endurance concerning political establishments is by and by relying upon literacy. In numerous nations, the option to cast a ballot is denied to the uneducated. Dependable democracy isn't simple without literacy. Literacy makes the majority rules system conceivable and authentic reactions to the ancestral drum more uncertain (Bhola, 1990).

Literacy rate of males in Pakistan is 61.3% and the female is extremely low 36.8% more than the populace of 5-9 age bunch is more than 20 million and 11 million (57%) are out of school which is disturbing circumstance is the training area. The explanation is that 42% of family units' populace is unskilled and helpless heads. 21% of heads are educated which are contrasted and unskilled. The net enrollment ratio in the areas with high socio-economic is 59% and 37% in low areas and even more low and specifically low in women (SPDC, 2002).

As Memon (2007) has stated, Pakistan lags behind other countries in the region in many significant respects. The role of literacy and numeracy skills is vibrant in individual gains in society. Education plays an important role in the development of every aspect of human life. This leads to a steady increase in people's profits and positive feedback, resulting in a talented and competitively trained generation that is well-suited to propel the country's economy on a possible financial turnaround. Like other agricultural countries, the situation in the field of education in Pakistan is not improving. Low enrollment than the prescribed enrollment rate in institutions, wide discrepancies between different areas and gender relations, unavailability of qualified teachers, unavailability of training equipment in labs, and the basic foundations of schools are proof of the terrible performance of this area. The total literacy rate in the country for 1997-98 was 40%, with 51% males and 28% females. It was estimated to be 60% in metropolitan zones and 30% in provincial areas. According to the statistics described in Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2007-8 the current status of literacy is progressing with a truncated pace as shown in the table below (MICS, 2009).

#### Survey Results of Literacy and Participation Rate in District Bahawalpur

\*Results given in %

S. No	Indicator	Punjab MICS 2007-8	Global MICS 2007-8	Bahawalpur MICS 2007-8		Bahawalpur MICS 2003-4	
				District	Punjab	District	Punjab
1.	Literacy rate 10+ Year	44	-	45	59	37	54
2.	Adult Literacy rate 15+ Year	45	-	42	56	34	52
3.	Adult Literacy rate 25+ Year	46	60	58	73	49	68
4.	Preschool Attendance	36	50	10	14	-	-
5.	Net Intake rate in Primary	39	54	17	19	-	-
6.	Net Attendance rate Primary (5-9)	37	53	43	53	32	51

These rates are still among the lowest in Punjab and in the country. Institutional participation rates have risen significantly recently; still there is a need to do a lot in various government policies and local administration strategies. The dropout rate at high levels has not yet been brought under control. Also, the low utilization of the current education system can be seen through the low trainee foundation ratio,

(approximately 18 students per class in each establishment), the low teacher organization ratio (2 teachers for each organization), and Higher Learning Teacher Ratio (46 teachers per student) (Bureau of Statistics 2009).

Every year the government claims that the literacy rate in Pakistan has been improved, reported through UNESCO, UNDP, USAID and other organizations. But the basic question remains the same if the claim of these organizations is true and facts based then why the actual literacy rate computed is not matched with the reported literacy rate. To cope with this type of countless queries, the following study was designed. The main objective of the present study is to find the difference between reported literacy and tested literacy in selected areas of Bahawalpur.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To measure the literacy with reliable sources through a household survey.
2. To examine the skills of selected individuals and estimate functional literacy.
3. To identify the breaches between tested and reported Literacy.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive research design was used to conduct research. The survey was conducted to identify the gap between literacy reported by different sources and actual literacy estimated in all the areas including urban and rural of District Bahawalpur.

#### **Population**

The population of this research was considered all the areas including urban and rural of District Bahawalpur. Which was included five tehsils. Persons whose age was between ten years to fifty-nine age group and completed their education up to grade four but they were unable to complete their education up to elementary school level were the population of the study.

#### **Sampling**

A simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Four households from rural and four from urban areas of five tehsils of District Bahawalpur namely Bahawalpur City, Bahawalpur Sadar, Ahmedpur, Yezman, Khairpur Tamewali, and Hasilpur were selected. The total sample was three hundred and twenty households were the total selected sample of the study.

#### **Instrument Development**

Two research tools were used to gather the required information from households. The first tool was the modified form of "Lao National Literacy survey 2010". This

instrument was used to obtain basic information on literacy from households. The second instrument was a questionnaire based on reading, writing, numeracy, and visual skills.

### Data Collection

Data were collected by survey method. The researchers personally visited the households and gather the required information. At the first stage, time was fixed with the research participants. In the second stage, the researchers ask the respondents to fill the first research tool and identify the targeted population. In the third stage, the researchers measured the basic literacy skills of research participants.

### Data Analysis

The gathered information was organized and screened. Descriptive statistics were used to compute the desired outcomes.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: *Level of Literacy of overall respondents and tested respondents***

Literacy level	Eligible respondents			Tested respondents		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Primary Section with the lowest and highest level	380	93	287	126	34	92
	64.25%			64.90%		
Elementary section	211	43	168	68	13	55
	35.75%			35.05%		
Total (Literate with at most incomplete lower elementary	588	108	480	194	56	138
	100%	19.49%	81.51%	100%	29.25%	71.45%

**Table1 reveals** the level of literacy eligible respondents and tested respondents, According to the above table 588 respondents were eligible for literacy tests. Among these 588 respondents, 64.25% lies under the lower and upper primary level and 35.75 percent of respondent's lies under the lower elementary level. 126 respondents were selected for the next process of data collection which was a test to measure the basic literacy skills. Among these 126 respondents, ninety-two were male and thirty-four respondents were female. From the lower Elementary level, a total of 168 participants were selected for the test; and among them 138 were male and fifty-six were female.



**Table: 2 Tested Literacy of all subgroups**

Regions	Basic level	Middle level	Self-Learning level
5 Tehsils(10-59)	39.08%	25.6%	10.7%
BWP	47.8%	32.7%	18.5%
Yazman	35.7%	21.3%	8.2%
Ahmedpur East	40.8%	31.4%	9.8%
Khairpur Tamewali	31.6%	19.8%	4.6%
Hasilpur	39.5%	22.8%	12.5%

Table: 2 reveals the results of the test conducted to measure reading, writing, tested, and numeracy skills under the age group 10-59. A total of 194 respondents participated in the test among them only 38.9 percent of respondents attained basic skills, 25.6 percent middle level, and 10.7 percent were at self-learning level. In tehsil Bahawalpur, 47.8 percent of respondents lie under the basic skills, 32.7 percent under the middle level, and 18.5 percent under the self-learning level. In tehsil Yazman, 35.7 percent of respondents lie under the basic skills, 21.3 percent under the middle level, and 8.2 percent under the self-learning level. In tehsil Ahmadpur east 40.8 percent of respondents lie under the basic skills, 31.4 percent under the middle level, and 9.8 percent under the self-learning level. In tehsil Khairpur Tamewali 31.6 percent of respondents lie under the basic skills, 19.8 percent under the middle level, and 4.6 percent under the self-learning level. In tehsil Hasilpur 39.5 percent of respondents lie under the basic skills, 22.8 percent under the middle level, and 12.5 percent under the self-learning level.

### Comparison of the gap between reported and Tested Literacy

**Table 3: Reported and Tested literacy rate (10-59)**

Tested Levels of Literacy rate	Male	Female	Total	Gender Disparity
basic level (10-59)	46.80%	31.50%	39.09%	15.15%
basic level (10-59)	30.90%	20.50%	25.80%	10.60%
basic level (10-59)	13.80%	7.90%	10.80%	5.90%
Reported Literacy rate (10-59)	51.70%	39.06%	45.40%	12.78%

Table-3 describes the literacy of Bahawalpur district. It makes a clear distinction between the literacy test rate and the stated literacy rate based on the results of measurements of basic literacy level, intermediate level, and self-learning level of literacy in which the literacy rate is. According to the above table, the estimated

literacy rate in the Bahawalpur district is very high. According to the literacy rate and the literacy rate is 6.3% and the gender gap at all levels of literacy is important.

## DISCUSSION

This discussion is expected to clarify the branch of knowledge and provide an opportunity to further illustrate the identifiable evidence of the gap between ideally reported literacy and tested literacy and the family unit review. A literacy dependency gauge can be obtained. Everyone in the family unit was asked if they could write and compose a short story with an understanding of day-to-day life. The literacy rate in Pakistan has been adjusted by the administration according to the number and level of people completing compulsory school education. During this research, some caution was observed for the following reasons. During the study, the reviewer could not go to each house and collect data, however, he sat in a prominent place and collected data from individual pairs of all the families in the city. Instead, they would sit in schools and collect data from students about their family units that were not solid. Besides, it was also noted during the review that the examiner usually expects the condition of the family without any solid evidence.

Most reviewers did not pay attention to this training. Due to these variables, the literacy rate in Pakistan was not solid and the literacy rate is misrepresented. The idea of experimental literacy has been identified as a way to evaluate the profiteering individual's literacy practices against the rules. For this reason, the literacy test was designed to look at all aspects of literacy, which should be in a skilled person. The reason for checking the level of literacy is whether the only skilled people and work are literate or not. For this reason, it was decided not to include people who had not completed their primary education. Because they are considered educated and mature who were long-term aggregates and have passed four or five classes. Despite the preliminary examination was not selected. As indicated by these choices, the post-adult measures were qualified and tested.

This investigation inspected a few factors that show an essentialness hole between the revealed literacy and tried literacy rate. In the light of discoveries of the investigation, it shows most of the reacts have not met the models of the essential degree of literacy anyway their presentation in perusing and numeracy is superior to composing ability. Likewise, it is reasoned that the lion's share of members has not met the fundamental degree of composing abilities and has the most minimal score in letter composing. In the light of discoveries of the examination, it is presumed that the lion's share of the members of lower rudimentary has accomplished the greatest degree of literacy. It is closed from the discoveries that Bahawalpur has a significant level of self-learning

level or continued useful level. Toward the end, it is presumed that a critical hole is articulated among revealed and tried utilitarian or center literacy rate in Bahawalpur.

The study reported a significant gap between reported literacy and measured literacy in district Bahawalpur as there appeared a notable difference between the tested literacy rate and reported literacy rate. Respondents' skills were better in numeracy and reading as compared to other literacy skills. Most of the respondents lie under the lowest level of writing in the letter.

The study affirmed that most respondents did not meet the basic level of literacy as most of the respondents of grade-four qualification wishfully met the basic skills of literacy. Therefore, respondents needed five years' education to acquire basic literacy skills. However, the respondents with lower elementary education demonstrated maximum literacy level. As a whole, the high-level literacy skills and self-learning appeared among the respondents from tehsils Bahawalpur.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that in the upcoming census in Pakistan, the census form should carry two-three written lines. When the census workers contact citizens for recording census data, they should check the reported literacy level of the citizens by making them read the written lines provided in the census form and the results should be recorded on the form and get signed by the citizen giving data. Moreover, measures for quality control should be taken at various stages of the census during the submission of the reporting phase. And maps should be provided to each enumerator. A wide variety of surveys should be conducted in the country to measure the literacy capacity of the literate. Its mass, large-scale literacy campaign should be taught reading, data writing skills, and writing skills methods which should be more important.

In line with the findings of this research, it is suggested that the basic literacy curriculum be modified for the betterment of our future generations. However, the government should also take over the work of the National Commission for Human Development and ensure the acquisition of UPE from this body, thus stopping the flow of new literacy. Also, the sex goals of the Dakar agenda need to be reaffirmed. And adult writing skills can be enhanced by "wooden slate". Besides, NGOs should provide reliable data to the Ministry of Literacy.

According to the results of this research, it is suggested that a broad-based meeting be held in the community to raise awareness among those who are illiterate.

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