

Role of Literacy & Non-Formal Education in Building a Sustainable and Peaceful Society in Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract



Literacy plays a vital role in the transition of the world as well as in building a sustainable and peaceful society. Promoting literacy leads to enhanced skills, knowledge, and upgraded mindsets which encourage individuals to build a sustainable future and assist them to make effective and informed decisions. The major objectives of the study were: 1) to explore the role of the literacy department in transition for promoting a sustainable peaceful society and 2) to identify the barriers to implementation of promoting literacy and a sustainable peaceful society. In the current research study, the qualitative research design was used. The population of the study was selected through purposive sampling technique all the stakeholders who could play a role in promoting literacy in the Punjab. The sample of the study was selected through a purposive sampling technique and it consisted of 15 stakeholders of the district Chiniot. The self-developed interview guide was used for data collection. However, the data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings of the study reflected that the literacy department has a significant role in promoting literacy for world transition and developing a sustainable peaceful society. It was recommended that the literacy initiatives should be expanded and should also be strengthened in all the areas of Punjab.

Keywords: Sustainable Peace, Poverty, Gender Disparity, Quality Education

Introduction

The UNCECO is the slogan of the year 2023 through Literacy & Non-Formal Education in Building a Sustainable and Peaceful Society in the World. Therefore, literacy serves a fundamental role in developing peaceful societies and it also facilitates in smooth transition (See & Gorard, 2014). The transition could be of any form such as social, political, educational, economic, technological, etc. During the transition phase, the promotion of literacy skills becomes more important. Likewise, literacy equips individuals with critical skills both for professional and personal development. The literate people are capable of accessing information, analyzing it critically, and then making wise decisions. Consequently, they feel empowered and are actively involved in peaceful outcomes and the transition process. They also understand the changes that are happening in their surroundings and hence reduce their feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. Likewise, literacy also positively influences economic growth which is essential for societal transitions. Literacy also provides abundant employment opportunities which leads to economic stability in society (Yeoh & Chu, 2012). The variety of opportunities availed by individuals makes them financially strong and stable.

Similarly, literacy is also fundamental for understanding and accepting the changes existing among individuals and also promotes inclusive dialogue. During the transition phase, conflicts and differences might also arise due to different backgrounds, values, and beliefs which could be dealt with through literacy. Individuals develop the abilities of tolerance, empathy, flexibility, and open-mindedness through literacy skills. It leads to the development of a peaceful society and encourages individuals to engage in constructive exchanges which are essential for bridging the gaps and bringing harmony (Begum, 2020; Wilson, 2016). In this regard, the role of educational systems becomes more instrumental. It is the responsibility of the educational sector to promote literacy, and also modify the educational policies for literacy development during the transitional phase. They should ensure that all the marginalized and disadvantaged groups of the society have equal access to education. Likewise, to

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cater to the varied needs of the individuals, contextually relevant and culturally sensitive approaches should be used. Hence the literacy rates could be improved through the provision of quality education, and it would help develop peaceful societies during the transitional phase (Gul et al., 2020; Adunyarittigun, 2017).

Literature Review

Within literacy, it is also crucial to address gender disparity as well, as it leads to substantial implications for economic, political, and social development. Gender disparity is operationalized as the unequal opportunities, outcomes, and access among females and males, particularly regarding education. This issue exists in many societies at the global level, and it impedes the overall advancement toward equality and peace. Hence it needs to be tackled efficiently and effectively. Further, gender disparity is among the major focus of sustainable development goals, and it could be eradicated by promoting literacy through an equitable and inclusive educational environment (Oghenekohwo & Frank-Oputu, 2017). Moreover, it empowers individuals predominantly girls and women through the provision of required skills and knowledge and enables them to actively contribute to society. Literate girls and women have enriched decision-making skills and also have access to more opportunities leading to improved economic status. It not only challenges the stereotypes and the traditional gender roles; endorses equality within the society, but is also helpful for breaking the cycle of discrimination and poverty (Alam, 2011). However, through the provision of quality education to all, non-formal education schools can effectively address these disparities. It would provide a more level playing field and would lead to improved livelihoods, financial independence, and better employment prospects regardless of gender.

Furthermore, the initiatives implemented by the Literacy Department of Punjab in promoting literacy and peace in society are commendable. By establishing literacy centers, offering adult literacy programs, addressing gender disparities, fostering community engagement, and integrating technology, the department is making significant contributions to building a literate and peaceful society. The Punjab government has handed over NCHD and BEC nonformal education schools to the literacy department in 2022. Now all non-formal schools operating by the literacy department in Punjab. These efforts are not only enhancing educational opportunities but also creating a foundation for a harmonious and prosperous future for the people of Punjab. Moreover, Dr. Khurram Shahzad, the Director General Literacy & NFBE Department Punjab described the current status and working of literacy departments all over Pakistan on 8th September 2023 in his article in Dawn newspaper;

“Currently, there are 40,696 non-formal schools in the country with 1,615,176 enrollments. However, these existing numbers of non-formal schools are nowhere near to achieving the dream of 100 percent literacy in Pakistan, especially in fulfilling the commitment to SDG 4, including the SDG target 4.6 on youth and adult literacy and numeracy. We need to build a very robust and all-inclusive literacy and non-formal education sector policy framework. This policy framework needs to be built upon six building blocks of the literacy and non-formal education sector. These six building blocks are literacy governance, literacy financing, literacy workforce, literacy information systems, literacy mobilization, and literacy curriculum and research” (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1774600/non-formal-education-sector-in-pakistan-and-the-way-forward>).

The literacy department initiatives of NFBES, Feeder schools, ALC, and skill-based education centers are also playing significant roles in building a sustainable and peaceful society all over Punjab. These initiatives are also helpful in eradicating gender disparity, poverty, and illiteracy in society. However, poverty is a complex issue that exists in many parts of the world including Pakistan. Various interlinked reasons exist behind poverty in Pakistan, and it could be addressed through a multi-faceted approach. The low literacy rates and lack of access to quality education have a strong influence on the social and economic development of the country. It disseminates limited opportunities for economic independence, employment, and advancement. As far as formal education is concerned, educational institutions such as universities, colleges, and schools are delivering knowledge and helping individuals to prepare for future careers. They follow structured curriculum guidelines and exploit certain instructional strategies, resources, and assessments to expedite the learning process. Conversely, all the individuals are not streamlined into these educational institutions.

Education goes beyond the traditional classroom setting. Informal education provides learning experiences that occur outside the formal institutions. It is the learning that we gain from our peers,

community, social media, and family. Informal education is also important for improving the knowledge, character, and skills of individuals as it provides practical learning opportunities. In the current times, there is an emphasis on the implementation of holistic education which nurtures the social, emotional, physical, creative, and intellectual development of individuals. It not only stresses the incorporation of various disciplines but also promotes collaboration, problem-solving, lifelong learning, and critical thinking. Besides, due to technological advancements, the educational sector is persistently evolving. Modern education is characterized by online platforms and digital tools that provide opportunities for personalized instruction, access to rich educational resources, and remote learning (Santos & Serpa, 2020). It results in more diverse learning which occurs beyond the physical classroom boundaries and provides a platform for cultural exchange and global collaboration. Similarly, education is a continuous process that is not restricted to a certain stage or age. Certainly, the concept of lifelong learning motivates individuals to keep on adapting to new challenges, upgrading personal development, and gaining skills and knowledge. Technology particularly the internet has become a substantial element of our lives (Nasreen & Mirza, 2023). It could be effectively used to achieve certain benefits. Hence through lifelong learning and the integration of technology, the changing needs of society could be encountered.

Moreover, the advancement of literacy could also increase awareness regarding gender-related issues such as harmful traditional practices, violence against women, and discrimination. Literacy education could also integrate gender-sensitive content which challenges the existing social customs, and develop positive attitudes regarding gender equality. In fact, through critical thinking and raising awareness, societal norms could be transformed which would result in an inclusive and peaceful society. To remove the illiteracy, it is vital to provide education to the marginalized communities on a priority basis. It could be done by focusing and investing in non-formal education programs and schools that particularly target underprivileged individuals including women, and address their distinctive needs. Moreover, the scholarships, mentorship programs, and other support networks could further play a role in improving the literacy rate and increasing female participation in literacy education. We can also empower women through addressing the gender disparities and can challenge harmful gender norms by emphasizing equal access and inclusiveness which results in an equitable and peaceful future for all.

Several commendable initiatives have been taken by the Literacy Department of Punjab for promoting peace and literacy (Khan et al., 2023). Education is a significant factor in bringing development and peace; the department has initiated various innovative programs and implemented certain interventions for tackling the challenges existing in the region regarding literacy. Among the initiatives taken by the Literacy Department, one is the development of literacy centers in marginalized and remote areas of Punjab (Jumani et al., 2011). Such centers are playing an admirable role in promoting literacy and providing quality education to underprivileged individuals. It is successfully contributing to increasing the literacy rate. In addition to this, the Literacy Department has also introduced certain adult literacy programs for the individuals who missed out the formal education. Through these programs, the adults are enabled to gain basic numeracy and literacy skills which empower them to participate actively in community matters and build a peaceful society. Moreover, vocational training offers practical skills to the individuals which provides them with employability and enhances socioeconomic stability.

In the perspective of making education accessible to all, the Literacy Department has also employed certain initiatives to tackle gender disparity (Abdullah et al., 2022). It is particularly focusing on improving the women's literacy rate as women's education plays a vital role in developing an egalitarian and peaceful society. Educated women feel more empowered and contribute towards the social and economic development of society (Hasan & Mirza, 2021). Additionally, collaborations with the stakeholders, civil society organizations, and local communities are the major approach of the department for promoting peace and literacy. The department ensures that through the involvement of all these actors, the initiatives should be aligned with the particular necessities of the communities. Moreover, the workshops, awareness campaigns, and community engagement activities are organized to encourage active participation and to develop a sense of ownership in educational happenings. The Literacy Department of Punjab is also focusing on the integration of technology in enhancing literacy skills. Hence the Literacy Department has established computer labs in community centers and schools for the implementation of digital literacy programs to equip individuals with

essential digital skills. This digital literacy not only prepares individuals for the modern world but also connects them to the global community for developing a peaceful society.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study portrays the holistic view of the research. The theoretical framework of this study was based on social capital theory. The social capital theory was based on the social relationship and resources that lead to the socio-economic development of the society and also played a vital role in the development of human capital. Stable families provide better education and health facilities to their children and make them peaceful and useful citizens of society. Literacy initiatives played an essential role in the well-being of people, and in building a sustainable peaceful society.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. To explore the role of the literacy department in transition for promoting a sustainable peaceful society
2. To identify the barriers to the implementation of promoting literacy and a sustainable peaceful society

Research Questions

The current research study focused on the following research questions.

1. What is the role of the literacy department in transition for promoting a sustainable peaceful society?
2. Which barriers create hindrances in the implementation of promoting literacy and a sustainable peaceful society?

Significance of the Study

The study may be beneficial for the literacy department to exploit technology to promote literacy in society. It would also be valuable for curriculum developers to incorporate necessary changes in the curriculum to sensitize students about the importance of peace. It would also be advantageous for all the stakeholders to collaborate to promote a peaceful society as well as literacy.

Delimitation of the Study

Due to financial and time constraints, the current study was delimited to only district Chiniot.

Research Methodology

The qualitative research design was used in this study. The population of the study consisted of all the stakeholders who play a significant role in promoting literacy in the Punjab. The sample of the study was selected through a purposive sampling technique and it was comprised of 15 stakeholders of the district Chiniot. The current research study was delimited to only one district i.e. Chiniot. The interviews were conducted by taking earlier consent and appointment from the concerned respondents. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis.

Research instrument

The tool used in the current research was an interview guide. The tool was developed personally by the researcher through an extensive literature review and expert views. The interview guide consisted of 12 twelve open-ended questions. Moreover, the open discussion session on the interview guide was also arranged in which all the respondents took part actively. The face and content validity of the tool was ensured through a panel of research experts.

Thematic Analysis

For an in-depth understanding of the role of the literacy department in transition for promoting a sustainable peaceful society, the data was collected through an open-ended interview guide. The researcher tape-recorded each session of the interview, and then it was transcribed carefully. After the transcription process of the collected data, the themes and labels were assigned to each response. The detail of the interview questions as well as the responses and the subsequent emerging themes is given as follows.

- 1) Can you provide a brief overview of your experience and expertise in the field of literacy development?

Respondent (R) 1 stated that *"being an educationist, it is my passion to promote literacy and to make modifications in behaviors of students. I have a meaningful contribution to the promotion of literacy over the last ten years"*. Likewise, respondent R12 had similar views as R1. While the R9 opined that *"the importance of education particularly women's education cannot be neglected at all"*.

In my opinion, multiple activities included in literacy enhance its effectiveness. I emphasize particularly on literacy skills and preparing children for a peaceful society". Respondents # 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 & 11 agreed with his statement regarding the promotion of literacy. Therefore, it was concluded that all the respondents supported the literacy activities in their jurisdiction areas. They also acknowledged that literacy activities played a vital role in the well-off and peaceful society development. They also appreciated the already initiated activities by the literacy department in Chiniot.

2) How would you define 'literacy' in the context of building sustainable and peaceful societies?

In response to this question, respondent 3 stated "*In my opinion, literacy cannot be confined to figures and numbers. It's about giving training of long life learning*". While respondent 4 described that "*literacy and peaceful society were integrated and part and parcel for development of any society*". On the other hand, respondent 7 additionally stated that "*education and effective bringing up of their children was very important to make them a useful citizen of society*". The remaining respondents 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 & 12 supported the above-mentioned statements and added that a sustainable peaceful society could be established through literacy and through sensitizing their children regarding the importance of peace. While respondent 11 stated that "*literacy is a complete lifelong living procedure, we can differentiate literate to illiterate individuals through literacy initiatives*". Hence it was also concluded that a sustainable peaceful society can be established through literacy and education. An effective curriculum can play a significant role in the development of sustainable peaceful society in all over the world.

3) Why promoting literacy is essential for creating sustainable and peaceful societies in a world undergoing significant changes?

While answering this question, respondent 1 stated that "*as every individual has to play his unique role to combat with challenges of upcoming life, hence all individuals should be equipped with literacy*". Respondents 6, 7, 9 & 11 agreed with his statement. However, respondent 3 additionally said, "*For promoting sustainable peaceful society, literacy is much essential tool to educate the people and providing awareness regarding peaceful society all over the world. Also, literacy creates awareness among the individuals*". Likewise, the respondents 2, 5, 10 & 12 favored the above-mentioned statement. Therefore, it was concluded that literacy is a significant tool to promote education and sustainable peace in society. The major reason behind it is that it creates awareness among individuals, and it is also helpful to eradicate poverty and ignorance in society and lead towards prosperity.

4) In your opinion, what are the key challenges and barriers in promoting literacy in today's rapidly changing world?

In response to this question, respondent 1 described that "*the world is changing rapidly, so in the prevailing situation, the challenges are coming on the surface like socio-economic crisis, unemployment. I think the major challenges in promoting literacy are flaws in policy structure, lack of effective monitoring, and lack of implementation of educational programs*" " Respondent R3 additionally stated that "*poverty is a big challenge in developing countries like Pakistan. Moreover, the male behaviors regarding female education are a big hurdle, and the lack of resources is the major barrier in promoting literacy*". The respondents no 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 supported the above-mentioned statements. Hence it was concluded that the key challenges in promoting a peaceful society in Pakistan are the lack of interest from the government in this regard, ineffective policies, lack of resources, etc. Pakistan being a developing country needs to do a lot in this regard for promoting literacy. However, these hurdles can be minimized through effective policies and the collective approach of the people of the community. The rapidly changing world can be made peaceful through literacy and education.

5) What is the role of social, economic, and cultural factors in promoting peace and literacy in society?

In response to this question, respondent R5 reflected that "*In this commercial era, the social, economic and cultural factors affected the quality education and literacy rate in the society. All of these factors play a significant role in promoting literacy. Positive changes in cultural and social norms can lead to a peaceful society*". Respondents no 1, 2, 3 & 9 supported this statement. While respondent R7 stated that "*the financial status of people plays a significant role in their children's education and promoting literacy*". The respondent R4 added that "*yes the financial, social, and*

cultural factors are playing important role in developing a peaceful society". The remaining respondents no 6, 8, 10, 11 & 12 agreed with this statement. Therefore it was concluded that the parents' financial, social, and cultural positions play a key role in the education and development of their children. Similarly, these factors are also significant in the development of a peaceful society.

6) How can technology and digital tools be used to support literacy development and overcome constraints for a peaceful society?

The respondent R1 stated that *"the different tools of technological apps can be used to tackle the issues regarding literacy. As it is an era of technology, we can use it for creating awareness in society regarding the importance of peaceful society and literacy"*. Additionally R2 described that *"social media is a big power in today's world; therefore we can get help from Social Media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter (x), Tiktok, etc. regarding spreading literacy in the society and attaining peaceful society"*. Moreover, the respondent R7 opined that *"the technology can be very helpful for teaching and learning in this digital world. Awareness campaigns through social media could be run to sensitize people about peace"*. The respondents no 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 strongly agreed with above the mentioned statements. Hence it was concluded that technology and different social media apps can help spread literacy activities and awareness in this rapidly changing world. Now the model of traditional teaching and learning has flipped into technology-based education in this digital era.

7) Are there any innovative practices or initiatives you have come across that have successfully fostered literacy in changing societies?

In response to this question, respondent R11 stated *"In my opinion, activity-based learning and the other modern pedagogical strategies can be adapted to promote literacy and to bring a change in the society"*. On the other hand, respondent R6 described that *"if the motivation level of the personnel involved in literacy activities is enhanced through reward and praise, and proper acknowledgment is given to their work, it could be an effective strategy for promoting literacy"*. While the respondent R4 added that *"the research and innovation are the enhanced output of work, and also the community can be involved for taking innovative initiatives and promoting literacy"*. The remaining respondents such as no 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 12 supported the above-mentioned statements regarding innovative strategies and approaches for promoting literacy. It was concluded in the light of all responses that the literacy department is playing a vital role in enhancing innovative practices and approaches that help promote literacy for a sustainable peaceful society.

8) How can partnerships between governments, non-profit organizations, and communities contribute to promoting literacy for sustainable and peaceful societies?

In response to this question, respondent R1 stated that *"the many non-profit organizations and communities are contributing well to promote sustainable and peaceful societies. In this regard, both national and international organizations are actively working"*. Respondent R3 opined that *"the government institutions, NGOs, and the community can play an important role in promoting literacy and peace in society. Their collaboration could lead to better outcomes"*. The respondents no 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 strongly supported these statements regarding the partnership of government and non-government institutions for promoting literacy and peace in society. Therefore, it was concluded that government institutions and NGOs are playing a significant collaborative role in enhancing and improving literacy and sustainable peaceful societies.

9) What role can literacy schools play in fostering a culture of lifelong learning and promoting sustainable peace in society?

The respondent R4 stated that *"the literacy schools are the main source of changes, and the transition into the knowledgeable peaceful society. 'To enter to learn and serve' is the mission of literacy schools"*. While respondent R6 opined that *"the literacy schools are the key factors in promoting literacy rate in far-flung areas of the country. The literacy department is providing low cost but quality education to the underprivileged children"* "Respondents no 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 11 supported this statement. However, respondent R9 added that *"the literacy department is assisting the education department regarding providing quality education in rural areas and less developed areas"*. The respondents no 3, 8, 10 & 12 also gave similar statements. Hence it was concluded in the light of all responses that the literacy department is playing a significant role in increasing literacy rate through providing education in remote areas and marginalized individuals. The different literacy

department initiatives have had a prominent impact in increasing prosperity, awareness, and peaceful societies.

10) Have you examined any collaborations or initiatives of the literacy department that have successfully promoted literacy and generated positive social impacts?

In response to this question, respondent R1 described that "*I serve the society by promoting literacy and education through my school. I also help the poor people by offering free education to them*". While respondent R4 opined that "*the mindset of students, community, and parents gradually changed by the literacy department through literacy schools. The literacy initiatives such as NFBE, Feeder schools, and ALCs schools have a significant impact on improving literacy rate and bringing peace in societies*". The remaining respondents such as no 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 also supported this statement. Therefore, it was concluded that all the respondents agreed and acknowledged the efforts and initiatives that have been taken by the literacy department regarding improving the literacy rate and developing peaceful societies. The literacy department is bringing a change at the root level.

11) Do you have any recommendations for assessing the long-term effects of literacy promotion on a sustainable and peaceful society?

In response to this question, respondent R2 reflected that "*education is the only key to change the society. A sustainable peaceful society can be developed through literacy initiatives. And the different literacy initiatives are having an important impact on society transitions. The children getting an education from the literacy schools are transforming into peaceful and educated individuals*" "Respondents no 1, 5, 11 & 12 strongly supported this statement. While respondent R3 additionally stated that "*the third party evaluation for measuring large scale impact of literacy initiatives for improving literacy rate and peace would be effective in this regard*". However, respondent R6 opined that "*the literacy department also has good monitoring mechanisms for smooth functioning of schools like real-time monitoring app and monitor for cross monitoring as well. These monitoring techniques are very effective for sorting the weaknesses and keeping a check on literacy schools*". The respondents no 4, 7, 8, 9 & 10 supported this statement. Hence it was concluded based on the responses that the role and importance of the Literacy Department Punjab is increasing day by day regarding promoting literacy rate and developing sustainable peaceful societies.

Discussion

The major findings of the study revealed that promoting literacy is undeniably essential for cultivating a sustainable and peaceful society, especially in the context of global transitions. It was found that the Literacy department is playing an effective role in promoting literacy. These results are consistent with the findings of the other research conducted by Abdullah et al. (2022) in which it was found that the Literacy Department of Punjab is also serving tremendously in district Rajanpur by providing education to underserved communities and hence promoting literacy. Literacy empowers individuals to actively participate in societal and democratic processes. When people possess strong reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, they can meaningfully engage in decision-making processes, advocate for their rights, and hold governments accountable. In turn, this active citizenship fosters a sense of ownership over sustainable development initiatives and promotes social cohesion, thus contributing to a more peaceful society. Moreover, literacy equips individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in sustainable practices. A literate society is more likely to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors, such as eradication of illiteracy in society, reduction of poverty, best usages for available resources, and responsible consumption. The understanding the impact of their actions on the environment, individuals can make informed choices that contribute to the overall sustainability of their peaceful communities.

It was also found that the different initiatives are taken by the Literacy department such as NFBE, Feeder schools for outreach formal schools children, and ALCs for adult education. These institutions are playing a vital role in the development of sustainable societies and also improving the literacy rate of Punjab as well as Pakistan. Another research conducted by Hiq et al. (2021) revealed similar results and found that the Literacy Department of Punjab is contributing a lot towards developing a sustainable peaceful society and focusing on adult education which are important ends of sustainable development goals. In this dynamic era, maintaining peace is a major concern that is necessary for the progress of any country. Likewise, educating adults through non-formal education centers enhances their literacy skills which could be beneficial for improving their social and economic status.

The results of the study also reflected that the major hurdles in promoting literacy and providing quality education included flaws in policy structure, lack of effective monitoring and implementation of educational programs, poverty, male-dominant society, and lack of resources. On the contrary, some other barriers were mentioned in a research study conducted by Zahid et al. (2023). The findings of this study revealed that the major barriers to quality education are limited cooperation of the community, no stipend for learners, lack of provision of non-formal elementary education, only 8000/- honorarium of non-formal school teachers, less number and overburdened field staff, a single teacher for each school and home-based non-formal schools. By prioritizing literacy initiatives and developing comprehensive educational policies, we can create a society in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive, contribute to sustainable development, and actively work towards a more peaceful world.

Conclusion

In the light of results of the study, it was concluded that promoting literacy is essential for fostering a world that transitions towards a sustainable and peaceful society. The role of the literacy department in transition for promoting a sustainable peaceful society is significant and increasing day by day. The literacy department has a valuable impact on fostering literacy education; individuals are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to take part in the economic, social, and political life of their communities. It was also mentioned that literacy plays a crucial role in creating sustainable societies by empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their environment, resources, and consumption patterns. When people are literate, they can understand the interconnectedness of human actions and their impact on the planet. They can actively participate in sustainable practices such as recycling, conserving energy, and advocating for environment-friendly policies.

It was also concluded that the significant barriers to the implementation of promoting literacy and a sustainable peaceful society are poverty, lack of resources, cultural barriers, female education, and male dominance in our society. Literacy is a catalyst for social and economic development. It provides individuals with the necessary tools to access employment opportunities, engage in entrepreneurship, and improve their living conditions. Functionally literate societies are more likely to thrive economically and have higher levels of social cohesion, as individuals can contribute meaningfully to their communities and also minimize hurdles in gender disparity and female education in society. Furthermore, the Literacy department also plays a crucial role in promoting peace and social harmony. When individuals are literate, they have a better understanding of diverse perspectives, leading to greater tolerance and empathy. They can critically analyze information, challenge prejudice and discrimination, and actively participate in democratic processes. It was also concluded that the literacy department is playing a substantial role in increasing literacy rates by providing education in remote areas and marginalized individuals. The different literacy department initiatives have had a prominent impact in increasing prosperity, awareness, and peaceful societies.

Recommendations for future research

In light of results regarding the promotion of literacy for a world transitioning towards a sustainable and peaceful society, it is crucial to implement comprehensive strategies that address various aspects of education. It is recommended that the early childhood education programs should be emphasized which focus on literacy development. In this regard, certain initiatives could be taken such as preschools, early literacy support programs, and daycare centers which provide a strong foundation for future learning. It is also recommended that a holistic approach to literacy should be adopted that goes beyond the basic writing and reading skills. It is also recommended that problem-solving abilities, creativity, and critical thinking should be encouraged among individuals to develop a peaceful society. Further, it is recommended that such programs should be offered that reinforce digital literacy, information literacy, and media literacy which are beneficial for tackling the complexities of the modern world. It is also recommended that the liaison between NGOs and government institutions should be increased to enhance literacy rates, attain sustainable development, and build a peaceful society. It is also recommended that schools or learning centers should be established in underserved areas to increase educational opportunities for marginalized communities. The education should be provided to all community members without gender disparity. It is also recommended that different literacy initiatives should be started such as time flexibility, skill-based literacy programs, and specific curriculum according to the needs of learners and to meet the current era requirements in Punjab. Moreover, it was also recommended to foster global awareness and

emphasize reading materials that promote understanding, peace-building, and sustainable development. It is also recommended that the students should be enabled to explore global issues and encourage them to become active global citizens. By implementing these recommendations, we can empower individuals with the necessary literacy skills to contribute to a sustainable, peaceful world and create a society that values lifelong learning.

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