



The Causes and Effects of Illiteracy

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When you think of global issues, illiteracy usually does not come to one's mind. Although it seems like reading is second nature and is something everyone should know, there are millions in the world that do not know how to read due to gender inequality, poverty, and learning disabilities. If these issues continue to exist, then illiteracy will continue to grow worldwide.

Illiteracy is caused by gender inequality, as gender inequality is one of the biggest obstacles to those who want to learn how to read. Although there has been a lot of success in gender equality, this value is still an issue in many countries like India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Sudan. Every year, approximately 12 million young girls are forced into marriage, causing most of those girls to miss their education. This societal value has caused many adult women to be illiterate, as 66% of the world's illiterate adults are female, and 60% of the world's illiterate youth are girls. (UNESCO, 2014) In brief, gender inequality is a huge obstacle to millions of illiterate people and will continue to cause illiteracy if it is not solved.

Poverty is another major cause and factor in global illiteracy. In 107 countries, approximately 1.3 billion people live in poverty, almost half of which are children. Money is needed to build schools and to create education for children and adults, and education is needed to prevent illiteracy. Even if there is education available, what if the education cannot be paid for? There are a whole range of problems in this field, and their effects are devastating. According to the UN (United Nations), 1 in 4 youth in poor countries are unable to read as a result of the poor quality or lack of education. Thus, poverty is a prevalent world problem that is also causing illiteracy.

Learning disabilities are also a substantial cause and factor in illiteracy, affecting millions worldwide. About 3% of the world's population have a learning disability (LDAO, 2009). There are many resources and lots of support for people with learning disabilities, however there are a lot of people that do not have the proper treatment for their disabilities and are undiagnosed. At least 60% of adults in the US struggle with reading or are illiterate have an undiagnosed and untreated learning disability. It is extremely difficult to learn how to read with a barrier as major as a learning disability, so unless those with them are treated, it is impossible to expect them to be literate. On the whole, learning disabilities, especially those that are untreated, are huge barriers for those who want to become literate.

In the final analysis, illiteracy is a significant problem, with about 775 million people worldwide that are illiterate (The Globe and Mail, 2012). The causes for this problem are as substantial as illiteracy itself, with certain societal values, poverty, and poorly treated learning disabilities. Although this problem cannot be solved quickly, humankind as a collective can slowly fix it over time by protesting for gender equality, donating money to the poor and creating support resources for those with learning disabilities. This will result in saving hundreds of million of future humans from illiteracy and ending illiteracy as a global issue.