**Decreasing literacy rate in Occupied Kashmir**

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Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is the only place in the world where 2.7 million hapless children do not have access to knowledge and information, while India is decreasing the literacy rate in the region by continuously targeting educational institutions, including schools.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirms that “education is a fundamental human right for everyone without any discrimination.” But it is quite unfortunate that the Indian government has been hampering the provision of access to education to Kashmiris.

The Indian government’s assault on Kashmiris’ education reached unlimited proportions on August 5, 2019, when the Indian extremist government revoked articles 35A and 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to the IIOJK. New Delhi split Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories—Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to be ruled by the federal government.

[Far-right leader Giorgia Meloni claims victory in Italy’s general elections](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Sep-2022/far-right-leader-giorgia-meloni-claims-victory-in-italy-s-general-elections)

And the radical Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the leader of the fanatic ruling party BJP, also imposed a strict lockdown in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) and deployed more than 900,000 troops there. The Indian military and paramilitary troopers have martyred tens of thousands of Kashmiris through ruthless tactics. Following the ideology of Hindutva (Hindu Nationalism), Indian rulers imposed various restrictions on the Kashmiris, which also targeted their educational institutions, including schools of IOK.

However, violence and civil strife have placed the region’s education sector on a backseat, while taking a heavy toll on the mental health of children. Indian occupation forces have turned IIOJK into the largest prison where even managing daily life routines are challenging.

Since the military and communication blockade, thousands of political leaders, journalists, teachers and students remain incarcerated in IIOJK under draconian laws and trumped-up charges.

[Pakistan’s floods boost calls for compensation to poor nations](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Sep-2022/pakistan-s-floods-boost-calls-for-compensation-to-poor-nations)

In this scenario, students have been suffering with no hope of a secure future in the IIOJK region. The clampdown on education has also disrupted the livelihood of around 65,000 teaching and non-teaching staff who are dependent on schools.

In this respect, writer Shehryar Ali already wrote on May 24, 2018: “In Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir…Conflict situations invariably take a toll on education through physical destruction/damage to education facilities; loss of teaching staff (e.g because they are victims of conflict, fear, breakdown of service delivery structures); physical and psychological trauma experienced by students; and the general challenges involved in trying to carry on a ‘normal’ life with the ever-present threat of violence. Denial of education opportunities often means denial of future for young people—thereby perpetuating the negative effects of conflict.”

Ali explained: “The closures and violence seen in schools have led to student uprisings and protests, as Kashmiri students see their education put at risk and being militarised…with military camps close to school buildings and campuses…lead to a negative psychological impact on children, which caused higher dropout rates…also puts girls in increased dangers, with the presence of army personnel meaning girls are more at risk of sexual violence, abuse and other forms of harassment. This leads to a further rise in the dropout rates in these schools for girls.”

[PTI protests against PM Shehbaz Sharif’s London visit](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Sep-2022/pti-protests-against-pm-shehbaz-sharif-s-london-visit)

According to the Anadolu Agency, a high school teacher Mohammad Altaf Baktoo told [on August 5, 2020]: “It has become really difficult to manage the education of our children since there been no school at all from the last 12 months…Last year, education suffered a major blow when regional administration closed educational institutions on August 4 in the run-up to a decision by the Indian government to strip limited autonomy of the region.”

Child psychologists opine that frequent disruptions in formal schooling, limited opportunities to socialise, and erratic schedules are leading to a rise in depression and behavioural issues among children. A New Delhi-based rights group pointed out: “Acute anxiety, panic attacks, suicidal tendencies and symptoms of post-traumatic stress are growing among children.”

Meanwhile, New Delhi is now actively depriving the youth of the occupied Jammu and Kashmir of seeking higher education opportunities abroad, especially in Pakistan. In this context, in a statement on May 12, this year, a senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Altaf Hussain Wani condemned the Indian authorities for imposing a ban on Kashmiri students to travel to Pakistan for pursuing higher education.

[Imran khan to spend a busy day in Lahore today](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Sep-2022/imran-khan-to-spend-a-busy-day-in-lahore-today)

Notably, the Indian government also ordered on June 14, 2022, a ban on all schools run by the Falahi Aam Trust (FAT), accusing that these schools were affiliated with the banned organisation Jamaat-e-Islami. As a result of the unjustified action, more than 10 thousand teachers become jobless in Kashmir.

Nonetheless, this serious situation deserves preventive action by the international community as well as the UN, EU and OIC. Kashmiri students already studying in different geographies, including Pakistan, are grievously affected by the Indian designs. Children are an asset to every country and community, and their education plays a key role in the development of a country. And from the Greek empire to the present era, various countries have made progress in every field due to research and education.

Hence, International Literacy Day is celebrated each year on September 8, which aims to highlight the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and societies. But it is a misfortune that the Indian fascist regime is endlessly denying the rights of education to Kashmiri students.