

The Problem of Illiteracy in Egypt⁽¹⁾

A. Increase in number of illiterates:

In spite of the decrease in the number of illiterates from 70.3% in 1960 to 65.3% in 1966, the absolute number of illiterates has increased from 12.7 million to 13.8 million during the same period. The increase is due to the high rate of population growth.

B. **Professional illiteracy**, i.e. lack of professional training, is more widely spread than "alphabetical illiteracy". The number of professional illiterates reached 94% of the total number of those 15 years old and over in 1976.

C. **Percentage of children not in school:** 40% in 1960; about 30% in 1976.

In 1976, less than 1% of the total number of illiterates completed studies in the illiteracy elimination classes.

D. **Inability of the educational system to handle the illiteracy problem.** Causes:

1. Environmental cultural retardation: deficiency of the educational stimulus in the child's environment.

2. Incorrect order of educational priorities:
a. Absence of clear educational goals at the primary level.

b. Theoretical approach to education unattractive to students.

c. Costly process with little income.

3. Imbalance of the income distribution structure:

a. Inability of poor families to afford the expenses necessary for education.

b. Poor health conditions retard mental development.

c. Poor quality of teaching.

E. **Treatment of the Problem:**

1. Eliminating poverty and creating a favorable home atmosphere.

2. Improving methods used for eliminating illiteracy.

3. Creating educational policies which are in harmony with economic, social, political, educational, cultural, and organizational policies.

(1) Outline of an article by Khaled Abdallah Louffi, **Population Studies**, no. 62, July/September 1982, pp. 79-82.