

Socioeconomic challenges depriving children of their right to education

Education costs money, but then so does ignorance.

Greetings, today I'll be presenting my English Language and Literature Individual Oral in the line of inquiry, Education and the global issue I'll be talking about is, Socioeconomic challenges depriving children of their right to education.

Every child deserves the right to education as it is crucial for his/her intellectual and personal growth. Apart from enhancing knowledge, education also builds confidence and allows children to chase their dreams and ambitions. Despite of the constant efforts by governments around the world, socioeconomic challenges like poverty, social status and geography hinder the availability and accessibility of education. These challenges often force children to engage in child labour to financially support their families which is physically and mentally hazardous for them. This issue has been prevalent for a long time and is still a serious and insidious problem which is evident through the two texts that I have chosen for this oral.

The literary text is an extract from *The Guide* by the Indian author RK Narayan, published in 1958 and the non-literary text is a blog by UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) titled "More support needed for refugee education in Iran" summarising the words of spokesperson Babar Baloch at the Geneva press briefing on 06 December 2019. These texts will help us apprehend why children are deprived of a basic human right.

Firstly, I'll be analysing my literary text, the extract taken from the Guide.

The extract depicts a conversation between Raju and the villagers of the village Mangal. As the text unfolds, we discover that the children of the village do not have access to formal education as they help their parents by engaging in labor activities to sustain the household.

Throughout the extract, The author establishes the socio-economic status of the villagers in several ways. The use of juxtaposition in lines 10 and 11 and then again in lines 15 to 17 to contrast cities and towns from villages, shows that the geography greatly affects availability of education for the children.

Connotation is used in the word “ Big-men” in line 10 as the author does not mean the men are literally big in size, instead it has an implied meaning that compared to villagers. city men are wealthier and belong to a higher social class. It is due to these differences that the children in cities have the access to education while it is “stupid” to even talk about education with children from the village.

In line 15, the declarative sentence “We cannot send our boys to the school as you do in towns; they have to take the cattle out for grazing” uses auxiliary verbs like cannot and have to, to show compulsion. The author tries to convey that the villagers are forced to deprive children of their education as they must work to sustain the household.

In lines 20 and 21, Raju says “Boys must read, first. They must, of course, help their parents, but they must also find the time to study.” Through these lines the author is trying to directly speak to the readers and uses Mesodiplosis by repeating the word “must” to emphasise the significance of education while also reminding them how children in villages have no other option but to indulge in child labour as their financial conditions force them to.

Several interrogative sentences and open questions are used in the extract as Raju asks “What are you studying”, “What do you do all day”, “Why should they not gather in the evenings and learn”. One would assume that Raju is genuinely interested in solving the issue of access to education, however through phrases like “ without any real interest in their problems”, the readers get to know that Raju is only showing concern for the children to maintain his image and he doesn't in fact care for their education. Raju is a part of the problem as his intentions are misguided. Furthermore, throughout the extract Raju repeatedly mentions and addresses “boys” but never once addresses the girls of the village. It can be inferred that women and girls had such low status in society that they weren't even a part of the conversation and even Raju who claims to be an advocate for the right to

education, fails to recognise that this right should belong to all children, despite their social status.

RK Narayan uses imagery throughout the novel to create a visual image for the readers. Through auditory imagery in the phrase “boys giggled”, the reader can almost hear the laughter of the children which tells the reader that it is laughable to think of educating village children.

In the extract the author uses linear narration in the third person perspective which allows him to write from a broader perspective and provide commentary on the scene to effectively bring out the issue of education. However he also includes direct dialogues from the characters like “no school for us” to provide realism to the narrative, so that the readers are constantly engaged as they get first-hand information on the issue.

Informal diction is used in the extract as the language used is simple, unpretentious and natural, which is a hallmark of Narayan’s writings. The casual vernacular represents how people talk in real life, so it makes the characters relatable for the readers, and the challenges of the children in the village are understood better.

By appropriate language, stylistic devices and diction, RK Narayan effectively highlights the issue of socio-economic challenges depriving the children of their right to education.

Now I’ll be moving on to my non-literary body of work, I.e. blogs by UNHCR, that spread awareness about the challenges faced the refugee communities across the world. One of the common outcome of these challenges presented in the blogs is the impact on children’s education. specific focus on one titled “More support needed for refugee education in Iran”.

This specific blog focuses on the Afghan refugees in Iran and how their socio-economic challenges stop their children from attending school.

The first thing that the reader notices is the title of the blog which is written in bold and a bigger font is used than the rest of the blog. This is a declarative title which provides an insight into the entire blog and summarises it in a few words. These words show the urgency

of the situation in Iran and the reader immediately understands that refugees are facing challenges that are hindering education.

The second thing is the image. Instead of showing children suffering, the author decides to show children who are availing education and are contended with it. The two girls are centered in the frame and the background is blurred. and the expression on their faces evokes pathos as the reader realises several children are not privileged enough to access this education. Brightness of the image with the use of pink colours in the scarf and a light background depicts positivity, growth and a bright future for these children. Showing us that lack of education can only result in darkness.

Formal diction is used in this blog and in all other blogs by unhcr which is evident through the sophisticated language and compound sentences like “A worrying number of refugee and undocumented families have told UNHCR that, due to increased daily costs, they may have to take their children out of school and send them out to work to so they can contribute to the family income.” Through such sentences, the author is able to be informative and convincing. This allows the reader to gain awareness on the issue of education being faced by the refugees.

The text starts with an optimistic tone by listing the achievements of Iranian government in the support of refugee education but it transforms to a more serious tone as the author tells us about the challenges faced by the refugees that are impacting the education. This tone makes the reader concerned for the people facing these challenges and help them realise the significance of the issue.

The author uses logos in phrases like “increase in the cost of school supplies” “threefold increase in the price of petrol” , “cost of living in Iran has skyrocketed” to provide statistics and logical reasoning behind the deprivation of education. These are the socio-economic challenges that are being faced by the refugees in Iran which lead to children being forced to work to earn a living instead of going to school.

- The blog is published on the internet and the menu bar has several options like the donate button and get involved button that tell the reader that UNHCR needs financial support to fund the governments around the world in order to overcome the economic challenges and solve issues like inaccessibility to education.

- The blog is available in several languages other than English like Spanish French and arabic. This allows readers across the world to read the blog and gain awareness about the

issues in Iran. This shows the universality of this issue as the author believes that the readers around the world would be able to relate to the challenges faced by the refugees as such challenges are affecting the education of children around the world.

The blogs by UNHCR are informative and factual pieces of literature that provide insight into the issue of socioeconomic challenges depriving the children of their right to education through the tone, style of writing, and the pictures used in the blogs.

In conclusion, both the literary and non-literary text effectively highlight the global issue of socio economic challenges depriving children of their right to education in different ways. While the guide follows a fictional narrative set in 1950s, giving us an account of this issue as it was prevalent in Indian history, the blogs by UNHCR, specifically the one we focussed on today, gives data on how the global issue is still prevalent in the 21st century in countries like Iran. Another major difference between the two texts is the fact that the extract from the guide refuses to mention girls and their right to education with focus being on boys, the UNHCR blog includes a picture showing just girls attending school which shows how the social status of women has changed in the society over the years.

According to a 2017 study by UNESCO, over 264 million children worldwide are denied access to education. This alarming issue can only be curbed by bringing social equality and enforcing free and compulsory education for the children so that every child can dream of a bright future.

Africa, Arab states, Asia, European countries like Bulgaria, Germany EUROPE AND
CENTRAL ASIA

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Languages:

Ethos: