



Beacon in the Darkness

Overview

Pakistan Bible Society (PBS) established this literacy program in 2014 and have been providing Bible-based literacy classes for non-literate Pakistani women since then. Bible Society believes that if a woman is taught to read and write, she becomes a 'beacon of light' to her community, with the word of God.



The Need

The current literacy rate for women in Pakistan is one of the lowest in the world, largely due to the social structure that suppresses women's rights. Without the basic skill of reading and writing, social and economic opportunities are limited for women.

Women's literacy rates vary throughout the country — from over 60 per cent in the capital city of Islamabad, to less than 20 per cent in some rural areas. Overall, millions are lacking this life skill. Christian women, who mostly live in these rural areas and slums, most likely lack basic literacy skills.

Being a non-literate typically leads to further marginalisation in households, workplaces, and communities. Non-literate women in Pakistan are often restricted to inferior positions at work and an inferior social standing.

58.8m

non-literate adults in Pakistan

52%

of the population are women

64%

of women in Pakistan are literate

34%

of Pakistani Christian women are literate

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 1:7, NIV

Goals

This project aims to empower women by providing literacy skills, fostering personal development, and influencing their families and communities positively. Women will also gain spiritual growth through a deeper understanding of the Bible.

Throughout 2024, the goal is to reach 3,500 women across 350 literacy groups. PBS staff will assess illiteracy rates from January to March, determining class numbers and conducting teacher training and baseline assessments. Materials will be distributed. Classes will run from April to June, with PBS staff visits and eyesight checks, with glasses provided if needed. July to September will focus on writing, mathematics, and health lessons from a medical guide in the syllabus on how to stay healthy and active. The guide also provides information for pregnant women on safe delivery of healthy babies. October to December will see progression towards tests, graduation, and Bible presentations for each graduating student.

Impact

In 2022, 5,655 students graduated and were impacted by this project. In 2023, a further 2,800 students maintained their studies. In 2024, this project aims to impact 3,500 women. Since the average family consists of 5 people, the project will indirectly impact 17,500 people.

This project primarily impacts Christian Pakistani women whose Christian faith are not always welcomed. Equipping this target group will strengthen Christian families and will empower women to develop spiritually and take on the mandate to reach others, beginning with their families.

The Pakistani Church is very active in this project. Fellowship among churches and as well as the capacity of women are developing through this project.

Testimonies

"One day, our pastor announced that literacy classes for women are starting in the Church compound. My daughters and I joined the classes and now we are able to read the Bible," says Razia, a 65-year-old mother of 8 children from Peshawar. Since Raiza and her daughters' literacy journey, they have been reading the Bible at home and have even taken the opportunity to read the Bible in their church pulpit.

Prayer Needs

- Pray that program participants will quickly embrace the new teaching available to them and be impacted by God's word.
- Please pray that partner churches will continue to respond positively to the program and have an impact in their community.
- Pray for wisdom and for the safety of Bible Society staff working on this project.