



PADHNA LIKHNA ABHIYAN

INTRODUCED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

With a view to ensure complete eradication of illiteracy in India, the Government of India has recently launched a scheme for adult education in India - *Padhna Likhna Abhiyan*.

The scheme initiated by the Department of School Education & Literacy under the Ministry of Human Resource Development now Ministry of Education, Government of India, focuses on providing basic literacy in its initial stage.

Over the period of time, the focus of the programme shall also be on the basic literacy component, i.e. vocational education (skill development), equivalency, physical and emotional development, practical arts, applied science, or recreation.

This programme will assertively give an opportunity to those who have either lost the opportunity, or transcended the age of formal education, and now feel a need for learning.

The principal target of the *Abhiyan* is to impart functional literacy to 55 lakh adult illiterates in the age group of 15 years and above under basic literacy programme in a period of one year, i.e. Financial year 2020-21. Within these targets, the *Abhiyan* will focus on women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) Minorities, and other disadvantaged groups. The State/UT will distribute the allotted target to districts selected by them.

The scheme shall have a flexible approach and innovative methodologies such as involving school and college students & other volunteers of such Schemes as National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), for imparting basic literacy.

In a blog post in *Indian Express*, the Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal has also requested the retired government teachers and other employees, homemakers and volunteers to actively participate in building a literate India. He assured that the material for learning and teaching will be made available free of cost in the public domain. The guidelines and instructions will also be provided to the teachers.

ILLITERACY RATE OF INDIA

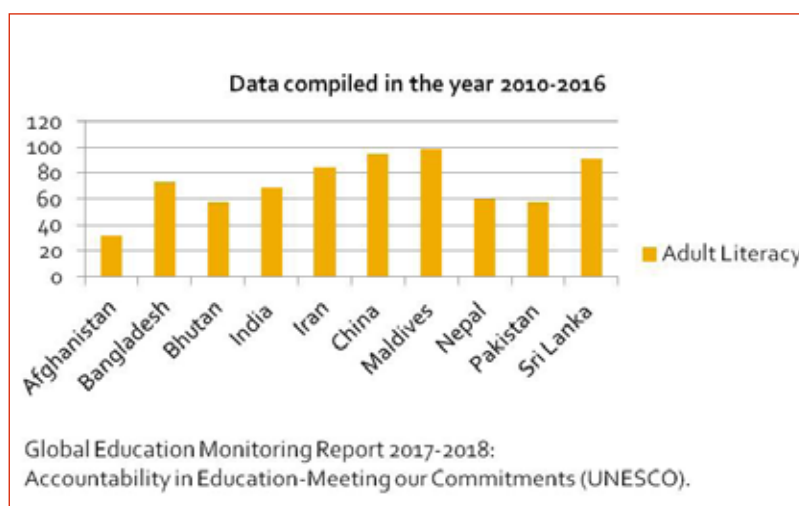
The main focus of Adult Education in India has always been on its very bottom tier, which is, "basic literacy". Reason being that at the time of Independence in 1947, 86% of India's population was illiterate.

As per Census 2011, the absolute number of illiterates of the country in 15+ age group is 25.76 crore (Male 9.08 crore, Female 16.68 crore), whereas Census 2001 had reported 25.95 crore (Male 9.13 crore, Female 16.82 crore) illiterates.



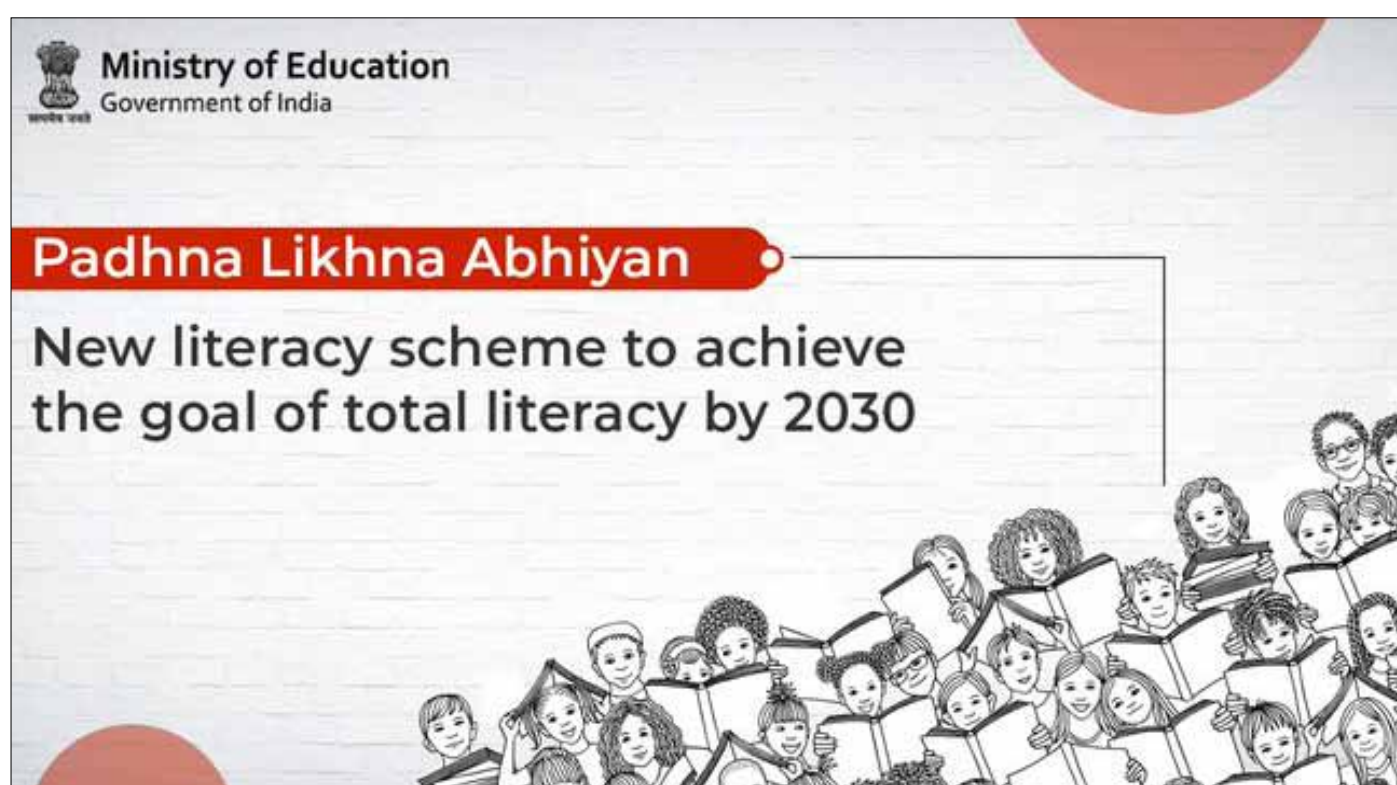
The percentage of adult illiterates in India is around 35% of the world's total adult illiterates. "Global Education Monitoring Report 2017-18: Accountability in Education: Meeting our Commitments" published by UNESCO has provided adult literacy details of different countries compiled during 2010-2016. As per the report, the adult literacy rate (15 & above age group) in South Asian and neighbouring countries is Afghanistan 32%, Bangladesh 73%, Bhutan 57%, India 69%, Iran 85%, China 95%, Maldives 99%, Nepal 60%, Pakistan 57% and Sri Lanka 91%.

From time-to-time, a series of programmes for promotion of adult literacy has been initiated by Government of India since 1951.



PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

According to the guidelines presented by the Ministry of Education, this programme entails identification of non-literates through a survey, area wise mapping of their learning needs and imparting them instructor based teaching of about 120 hours, spread over four months or beyond, depending on motivation of the learner and local conditions. Successful completion of the 120 hours of instructional learning would enable the learner to read and comprehend unknown text (newspaper headings, road signs, etc); apply skills of writing in day-to-day activities like writing applications and letters and filling up of application forms, etc., and compute





ABOUT PADHNA LIKHNA ABHIYAN

The primary objective of Padhna Likhna Abhiyan is to impart functional literacy to 57 lakh adult illiterates aged 15 and above under a Basic Literacy Programme for a period of one year - 2020 to 2021.

Adult Education in the Indian context, extends educational option to those adults, who have lost the opportunity of getting an education and transcended the age for formal education, and now feel a need for pursuing basic education, vocational education (skill development), equivalency, physical and emotional development, practical arts, applied science, or recreation. Currently, the percentage of adult illiterates in India is around 35% of the world's total adult illiterates.

In order to ensure complete focus on eradication of illiteracy, the scheme of Adult Education (Padhna Likhna Abhiyan) will be focused on the Basic Literacy component. The Abhiyan will focus on women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Minorities, other disadvantaged groups and aspirational districts.

simple problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. A certificate will be issued to every successful learner based on a Basic Literacy Assessment Test against learning Outcomes. This will open up opportunities for further education through Open Learning Systems. Classes will be convened at such time and venue as would be suitable to the learners. State Literacy Mission Authorities (SLMAs) will be under obligation to arrange for the use of school buildings, Panchayat Building, Community Hall etc., during out of school hours and holidays, to be used for conducting literacy classes and related activities. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has developed Primer for adult learners containing lessons on literacy and numeracy.

VOLUNTARY TEACHING

A volunteer acts as a mobiliser, trainer and a teacher and will be responsible for imparting literacy, on an average, to 8-10 learners. The implementing agency at the operational level with the help of local bodies (Gram Panchayat/Municipality) will be responsible for identification of potential learners as well as volunteers, their batching and matching, making arrangements for their training, distribution of literacy kits to learners and volunteers, keeping track of the progress made by each learner-volunteer group, and at the same time making sure that the momentum of learning is not lost, while simultaneously ensuring that learning takes place at the pace suitable to the learner. Voluntary Literacy Educators will not be paid any remuneration. Since high motivational level of Voluntary Literacy Educators is critical, the government plans to motivate them through different means, including public recognition, at different levels, of their contribution besides other incentives and rewards.

Padhna Likhna Abhiyan will focus on the Basic Literacy component in four months cycle amongst the adults of the nation. For this purpose, the government think tank, NITI Aayog, has underlined 112 Aspirational Districts.

While the scheme will focus on achieving 100% or Total Literacy by 2030, it is believed that the scheme will be merged with the historic New Education Policy 2020 which was recently launched by the Government. ■

—Meghna Chukkath