



## **Inclusion: A Powerful Tool for Implementation of New India Literacy Programme (NILP)**

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### **Abstract**

Literacy is an imperative factor for countries for overall development and growth. Literacy is a powerful tool for any human being to achieve dignity and fundamental rights. It builds resilience and ensures quality in life as well as builds more powerful, equitable and inclusive sustainable society. In 1951 literacy rate of India is 18.3%. National Survey Report revealed that literacy rate in India in 2022 is 77.7%. India is continuously making changes in its education system to achieve 100% literacy rate by 2047. New India Literacy Programme (NILP) under NEP2020 is the latest scheme launched to cater the needs of various adult learners. Despite of various challenges and diverse learners, India is improving year by year. This paper focuses about the role of inclusion to boost literacy rate in India. It also discusses significance, relevance and importance of literacy, inclusive practices to increase literacy rates as well as challenges to face to meet the Goal of Universal Literacy by 2047.

**Key Words:** Literacy, Inclusion, NILP

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In an era driven by information and technology, the ability to read, write, and comprehend information holds immense value. Literacy goes beyond mere reading and writing; it empowers individuals with knowledge, enhances their quality of life, and paves the way for community development. Literacy is often associated with childhood education but its importance is beyond the age of learners. For Adult learners, literacy remains a powerful tool for personal development, empowerment, and active participation in modern society. In rural areas, where access to education and resources are limited, literacy holds immense importance. It empowers individuals with knowledge, enhances their quality of life, and paves the way for community development. Similarly for women, literacy is a tool for empowerment and advancement. Literate women become agents of change, not only transforming their own lives but also uplifting their communities through economic empowerment and community engagement. Illiteracy remains a significant impediment to the nation's progress, hindering social, economic, and human development. To combat this challenge, the government has launched "The New India Literacy Programme" (NLIP), a comprehensive program with the goal of achieving 100% literacy across



all age groups. It is a transformative initiative that seeks to address the longstanding issue of illiteracy in India.

### **Relevance and importance of Literacy for Learners over 15 years**

Literacy remains a critical skill for individuals aged 15 and above, offering numerous benefits far beyond the classroom. the multifaceted importance of literacy for adults is as follows:

- 1. Lifelong Literacy:** Literacy serves as a gateway to lifelong learning. Adults who possess literacy skills can access a wide range of resources, including books, online content, and academic courses. This continual learning contributes to personal growth, broadening perspectives, and staying intellectually engaged regardless of age.
- 2. Economic Empowerment:** In today's knowledge-based economy, literacy is closely linked to economic opportunities. Adults with strong literacy skills are better equipped to access job opportunities, understand employment contracts, and engage in entrepreneurial activities. Literacy enhances employability and opens doors to higher-paying jobs and career advancement.
- 3. Informed Decision Making:** Literacy empowers individuals to make informed decisions in various aspects of life, including healthcare, finance, and legal matters. Being able to read and comprehend information enables adults to understand prescriptions, financial documents, legal contracts, and other critical information that influences their well-being.
- 4. Civic Participation:** An educated and literate populace is essential for the functioning of a democratic society. Literate individuals can engage in informed civic participation, understanding policies, voting choices, and community issues. They are more likely to contribute to public discourse and advocate for positive societal changes.
- 5. Health Literacy:** Health literacy is crucial for maintaining personal well-being. Adults with strong literacy skills can understand healthcare information, follow medical instructions, and access accurate health resources. This contributes to better health outcomes and the ability to make informed choices about lifestyle, preventive measures, and medical treatments.
- 6. Digital Literacy:** In the digital age, literacy extends to digital skills. Adults over 15 who are literate in digital technologies can navigate the internet, use online communication tools, and access digital resources. Digital literacy is becoming increasingly important for accessing information, communicating, and participating in online platforms.
- 7. Social Inclusion:** Literate individuals are more likely to engage in social interactions, both online and offline. They can contribute to discussions, share ideas, and participate in cultural activities, which promotes social inclusion and reduces isolation.

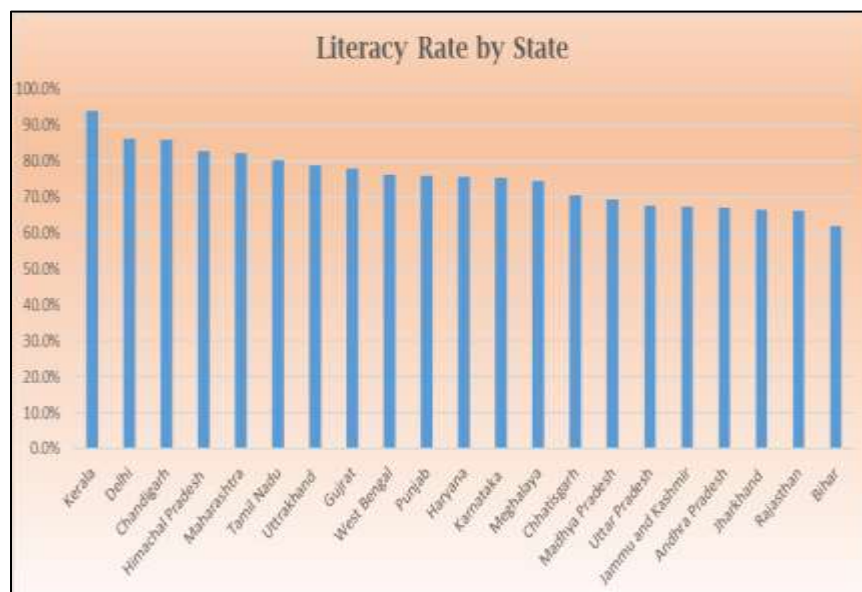
It is clear from above discussion that literacy is a cornerstone of personal and societal development. In a rapidly changing world, being literate equips adults with the tools they need to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to their communities and the broader global context.

**II. CAUSES OF ILLITERACY IN INDIA**

- Large Population
- Lack of family support.
- Lack of supporting environment and challenges due to adverse situations
- Lack of resources
- Poor financial status
- Difficulty in understanding academic subjects due to lack of interest, poor classroom instructions, old and boring methods, untrained teachers etc.
- Discrimination against girls and deprived people
- Unemployment
- Brain drain
- Corruption

**III. LITERACY RATES IN INDIA**

As per the latest UNESCO report about 771 million adults worldwide lacked basic literacy skills today most of whom are women. According to the report published by national survey of India the literacy rate of India is in 2022 is 77.7%. The literacy rate in 2011 was 73%. In 1951 literacy rate of India was 18.3 percent only .Up to 2018 India’s male literacy rate stood at 82.4females literacy rate is 65.8%, so both male and female population have shown study rise in literacy rates. India has covered a huge gap with a network of traditional and online schools. India’s literacy rate state wise has increased considerably. And the weightage of the female literate population as well as marginalized and deprived population has also improved substantially.





Source: <https://www.insightsonindia.com/indian-geography-2/indian-economic-and-human-geography/population-and-growth-trends-density-sex-ratio-literacy-tribes-and-racial-groups>

### **The New India Literacy Programme (NLIP)**

The National Literacy Mission launched in 1988, now known as the Saakshar Bharat Programme (SBP), run by the National Literacy Mission Authority, has made creditable contribution towards increasing the percentage of literacy in Indian Subcontinent. The average literacy rate at the time of independence has grown from a pitifully small 18.33 percent in 1951 to 74.04 percent as per the 2011 Census. Despite this, India still remains the country with the largest number of illiterates, approximately 287 million as per the Census 2011. Government has taken various initiatives, "New India Literacy Programme" (NLIP), is the most recent one.

According to Department of School Education & Literacy "A new centrally sponsored scheme on Education for All (erstwhile known as Adult Education), "New India Literacy Programme (NILP)", has been approved by the Government of India with a financial outlay of Rs.1037.90 crore for implementation during FYs 2022-23 to 2026-27, in alignment with the recommendations of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The scheme is targeted at all non-literates of age 15 years and above. The scheme has five components, namely;

- Foundational Literacy and Numeracy,
- Critical Life Skills (which include, financial literacy, digital literacy, legal literacy, healthcare and awareness, childcare and education, family welfare, etc.),
- Basic Education (includes preparatory (classes 3 - 5), middle (classes 6- 8), and secondary stage (classes 9-12) equivalency),
- Vocational Skills (Skill development will be a part of the continuous learning process for neo-literates to obtain local employment),



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- Continuing Education (This includes engaging holistic adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, recreation, as well as other topics of interest or use to local learners).
- Formation and involvement of SHGs, Voluntary & User Groups and other community based organizations may be encouraged.

The scheme is to be implemented through volunteerism. The learners will be encouraged to access the content in local languages in online mode through DIKSHA platform in NCERT. Government/Aided schools registered under UDISE are the units of implementation of the scheme which are run by the State/UT Governments.” To meet the goal of universal literacy by 2047. India has to achieve SDG4 -"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". So inclusion is the only solution for achieving the desired goal.

## **Inclusion: Solution for resolving literacy issues and boosting literacy**

Inclusion has been a driving force in education, advocating for equal opportunities, access, and participation for learners of all ages. While it is commonly associated with the schooling of children, the principles of inclusion are equally applicable to adult education. The field of adult education encompasses a diverse group of learners, including those returning to formal education, seeking skill development, or pursuing lifelong learning. This paper explores the imperative of inclusion in adult education and highlights its significance in promoting accessible, equitable, and effective learning environments for all adults.

Inclusion is a strategic necessity for the successful implementation of the New India Literacy Programme. By embracing social, economic, and cultural dimensions of inclusion, the program can effectively address barriers, promote equity, and uplift marginalized communities. Through equitable access, engagement, community participation, skill development, and a reduction in disparities, an inclusive approach can make the literacy program a catalyst for holistic societal transformation. In embracing inclusion, India can pave the way for a brighter future where every citizen has the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the nation’s progress.

## **Role of Inclusion in Increasing Literacy Rates in Learners**

Inclusion, the principle of embracing diversity and providing equal opportunities for all, plays a crucial role in increasing literacy rates among learners over the age of 15. Inclusion, as applied to adult learners, involves removing barriers and creating an environment that addresses the unique challenges faced by this demographic. The specific roles that inclusion plays in promoting literacy among learners are as follows:

- 1. Tailored Learning Approaches:** Inclusive literacy programs recognize the diversity in learners' backgrounds, interests, and learning styles. By offering a range of instructional methods such as digital resources, interactive workshops, and peer learning groups – learners can choose the approach that suits them best. This personalization enhances engagement and reduces the risk of disengagement often seen in traditional, one-size-fits-all approaches.



- 2. Addressing Individual Needs:** Adult learners may have diverse needs, Inclusive literacy programs assess these needs and provide support, such as language classes, remedial education, or adaptive learning tools and targeted assistance.
- 3. Empowering Learner Agency:** Adults often have commitments such as work and family responsibilities. Inclusive programs offer flexible schedules, enabling learners to balance their existing commitments while pursuing literacy education. This empowerment fosters a sense of ownership and motivation, contributing to higher retention rates.
- 4. Overcoming Stigma and Shame:** For learners above 15 who are illiterate, there can be a sense of shame or stigma associated with admitting their lack of basic skills. Inclusive environments are designed to be non-judgmental and supportive, fostering a safe space where learners can share their challenges and work towards improvement without fear of ridicule.
- 5. Engaging Relevant Content:** Inclusion in literacy programs involves developing content that resonates with adult learners' experiences and aspirations. Utilizing real-life examples, case studies, and practical applications of literacy skills makes the learning process more relatable and meaningful.
- 6. Fostering Peer Learning Communities:** Inclusion encourages the formation of peer learning communities where learners can collaborate, share experiences, and support each other's progress.
- 7. Addressing Barriers:** Inclusive literacy programs offer outreach programs, online resources, and community-based learning centers, barriers are reduced, making education more accessible.
- 8. Recognizing and Valuing Prior Knowledge:** Adult learners bring a wealth of life experiences and knowledge to the educational setting. Inclusion acknowledges and values this prior knowledge, incorporating it into the learning process. This recognition boosts learners' confidence and creates a positive learning environment.
- 9. Lifelong Learning Perspective:** By promoting the idea that it is never too late to learn, inclusive programs encourage continuous skill development beyond basic literacy. By recognizing and harnessing the potential of adult learners, societies can benefit from a more educated, skilled, and engaged population that contributes positively to economic, social, and cultural development.

#### **Inclusive Practices for Promoting Literacy in Non-School-Going Populations:**

Promoting literacy among non-school-going populations is a vital endeavor to enhance overall education levels, empower individuals, and uplift communities. Here are some effective ways to spread literacy among non-school-going people:

1. Community Learning Centers
2. Mobile Libraries
3. Local Language Materials



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4. Peer Learning Groups
5. Literacy Through Technology
6. Storytelling and Folklore
7. Practical Application
8. Tailored Curricula
9. Family-Based Approach
10. Involvement of Local Leaders
11. Incentives and Recognition
12. Intergenerational Learning
13. Literacy Campaigns.
14. Partnerships and Collaborations
15. Flexibility and Patience
16. Literacy in Daily Activities
17. Health Literacy Workshops
18. Mentorship Programs
19. Learning Circles
20. Cultural Events and Celebrations
21. Community-Based Literacy Festivals
22. Drama and Theater
23. Empowerment Through Writing
24. Encourage Family Literacy Nights
25. Public Awareness Campaigns.
26. Skill Development Workshops
27. Business Training Programs
28. Learning Through Art
29. Establish Reading Clubs.
30. Continuous Support and Follow-up
31. Community Contests and Challenges
32. Celebrate Literacy Milestones
33. Use Technology Wisely
34. Promote Parent-Child Reading
35. Adapt Strategies to Local Contexts

By combining a variety of these strategies, literacy initiatives can reach and impact non-school-going populations in diverse and meaningful ways, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and empowerment.



### **Challenges to Foster Inclusion**

**Lack of Infrastructure:** Many marginalized areas lack proper educational infrastructure. By integrating mobile learning platforms and community centers, the program can overcome this challenge and deliver learning materials effectively.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** Cultural inclusion requires careful consideration of diverse norms and practices. Collaborating with local communities and involving cultural experts can ensure the creation of content that is both culturally sensitive and educationally effective.

**Digital Divide:** Economic disparities often translate into a digital divide. To mitigate this, the program can provide subsidized access to technology, offer offline learning materials, and conduct technology literacy workshops.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The New India Literacy Programme (NILP) holds the promise of transforming the nation by eradicating illiteracy and promoting education for all. To ensure its success, it is imperative that inclusion becomes a central tenet of the program. By actively engaging marginalized communities, addressing economic disparities, and creating inclusive learning environments, the program can reach its goals more effectively. Moreover, the benefits of inclusion extend beyond literacy, promoting social cohesion, empowerment, and a more informed and enlightened society. While there are challenges to overcome, such as infrastructure limitations and the need for capacity building, these can be addressed through strategic planning, community engagement, and advocacy efforts. With inclusion, the New India Literacy Programme has the potential to be a powerful catalyst for positive change, leading to a more literate and inclusive India. The way is long and difficult but joint efforts of all the stake holders will take India to meet the desired goal of 100% literacy.

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