

Literacy Rate in India

Mains: GS I - Social Empowerment | GSIII - Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it.

Why in news?

Recently, Tripura attained the “full literacy” tag, citing data from Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society (ULLAS) - Nav Bharat Saksharta Karyakram.

What is known as literacy?

- **Literacy** - It was defined as “the ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, i.e., to identify, understand, interpret and create, along with critical life skills such as digital literacy, financial literacy, etc.”
- **Literate** - According to the Office of the Registrar General of India, a person **aged 7 years and above** who can read and write with understanding in any language is considered literate.

Status of Literacy Rate in India

- **Total literacy rate** - It accounts for 80.9% in the period 2023-24.
- **Top states**
 - Goa-99.72%, Mizoram -98.2%, Kerala - 96.2, Tripura - 95.6%.
- **Lowest states**
 - Andhra Pradesh- 72.6% and Bihar -74.3%.

What are the measures taken in India?

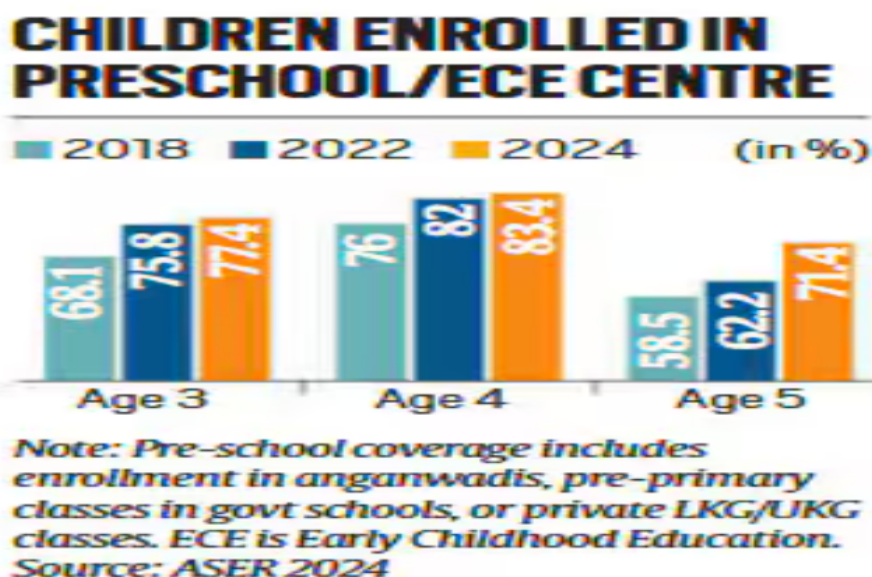
- **Right to Education (RTE) Act** - It was enacted in 2009, to mandate free and compulsory education, to establish minimum standards for schools, and to prohibits practices like discrimination and corporal punishment.
- **National Education Policy 2020** - It emphasizes foundational literacy and numeracy, promotes multilingualism, integrates vocational education, and fosters technology-enabled learning.
- It focuses on holistic development and equips students with 21st-century skills.
- **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan** - It is a comprehensive school education program which combines three Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS)
 - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
 - Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)
 - Teacher Education (TE)
- **PM SHRI (PM Schools for Rising India)** - It intends to improve 14,500 schools to “showcase” the NEP, 2020, and be “exemplars” for other schools in their region.
- It is for existing elementary, secondary, and senior secondary schools run by the

central government and state and local governments around the country.

- **DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing)** - It aims provide *digital content and resources* to teachers and students.
- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** - It aims to promote the education of the girl child and *address gender disparities in education*.
- **PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme** - It is a Central Sector scheme to provide financial support to students so that financial constraints do not prevent anyone from pursuing higher studies.
- It *provides collateral free loans* to students who are admitted in to quality higher education institutions (QHEIs).

How effective are educational programs in India?

- **Increased literacy rate** - India's literacy rate was only 14% at the time of independence, which has increased over the years as more people have received better education.
- **Increased reading level** - The number of Class 3 children who can read a Class 2 textbook in government schools stands at 23.4%, up from 16.3% in 2022 and 20.9% in 2018.
- **Improved arithmetic ability** - The arithmetic level improved across both government and private schools.
- **Rise in enrolments** - The % of children aged between 3 and 5 who enrolled in some form of pre-school rose in 2024 over 2018 and 2022.
- This is in line with the NEP's focus on providing early childhood care and education to all children before Class 1.



What are the key challenges in attaining high literacy?

- **Inclusion issues**- Disparities persist based on socio-economic status, gender, and caste.
- Various marginalized communities often have limited access to quality education.
- **Disparities in quality** - Disparities exist between urban and rural areas, private and public schools, and among states.

- **High dropout rates** -Despite efforts, dropout rates at various educational levels remain high due to factors like poverty, child labour and lack of infrastructure.
- **Quality issues** - Teacher shortages, uneven qualifications, and inadequate training hampers the full potential of the educational landscape of India.
- **Administrative Challenges** - Bureaucratic red tape slows down policy implementation, hindering the effectiveness of educational programs.

What lies ahead?

- India should focus on restructuring the curriculum and pedagogy to bring innovative elements in the educational ecosystem.
- The education should be made more accessible, interactive, and tailored to the needs of diverse learners.

Quick facts

ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society)

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented from 2022-2027.
- It is also known as Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram or New India Literacy Programme (NILP)
- **Objective** - It aims to *equip 5 crores 'non-literate individuals'* over the age of 15 across the country with foundational literacy and numeracy skills.
- The teaching material is also meant *to impart 'critical life skills'* like financial and digital literacy
- **Five components**
 - Foundational Literacy and Numeracy,
 - Critical Life Skills,
 - Basic Education,
 - Vocational Skills, and
 - Continuing Education.
- **Significance** - It aligns with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Annual Status of Education Report (Rural)

- **Released by** - NGO Pratham
- **Survey** - It is a nationwide rural household survey
- **Objective** - To measure basic reading and arithmetic levels among school children, attendance in school, and other indicators.
- **Categories** - The survey considered children in three age categories
 - Pre-primary (ages 3 to 5)
 - Elementary (6 to 14)
 - Older children (15 to 16)

Reference

[The Indian Express| Literacy Rate in India](#)



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