



---

## MASS LITERACY CAMPAIGN DURING THE PRE AND POST-INDEPENDENT ERA WITH REFERENCE TO ELIMINATION OF POVERTY AND ENHANCEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

<sup>1</sup>Arup Kumar Ghosh

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar of Education, Department. Education, CMJ University, Jorabat, Meghalaya

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Nikhil Kumar Datta (Professor)

<sup>2</sup>Research Supervisor of Education, Department. Education, CMJ University, Jorabat, Meghalaya

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Kartik Maiti (Assistant Professor)

<sup>3</sup>Co-Supervisor of Education, Department. Education, CMJ University, Jorabat, Meghalaya

### ABSTRACT

*Literacy is not a static body of knowledge, but rather a developing ability to use language and literacy in all aspects of life. Literacy is critical to the acquisition of essential life skills that enable people to address the challenges they face in life, according to national evidence. These life skills include analytical skills, social and personal skills, negotiation skills, and livelihood skills, all of which are required for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century. The Main Aim Of This Paper Is To Discuss The Mass Literacy Campaign During The Pre And Post-Independent Era With Reference To Elimination Of Poverty And Enhancement Of Employment. The researcher in this researcher paper concentrated on adult literacy rates before and after India's independence. The concept of 'mass literacy' is central to the concept of 'education for all.' It has been demonstrated all over the world that massive changes in social order can be facilitated by mass literacy efforts. By empowering the process of rapid change, mass literacy inevitably takes on the challenge of people's political, social, and economic marginalization.*

**Keywords** - Mass Literacy Campaign, Pre and Post-Independent Era, Poverty, Employment etc

### 1. INTRODUCTION

India is the world's second most populous country and democracy is meaningless without literacy. There is a formal education system, which includes nursery, kindergarten, primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. Literate society refers to all types of learning that occur, whether formal or non-formal (and this includes informal learning as well), non-formal stream which includes adult education/literacy as well. The type and form of education imparted to the younger generation determines the future of any society. Education is essential for human development and growth; Aside from being an important tool for a



---

country's social and economic development. The quality of a country's educational system determines its potential to grow and develop.

'Education for all' is defined by the term 'mass literacy.' A mass literacy strategy aims to make all adult men and women in a country literate within a set period of time. Literacy is considered as a means to a variety of goals, including economic, social-structural, and political goals. Literacy is defined as "a skill of reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as the ability to apply them in one's daily life." It implies not only the ability to read and write but also something more; that is, the concept of literacy extends beyond simply being able to read and always intended the ability to read with meaning and understanding.

The type and form of education imparted to the younger generation determines the future of any society. Education is essential for human development and growth; Aside from being an important tool for a country's social and economic development. The quality of a country's educational system determines its potential to grow and develop. Without making education an ally, no country can flourish. These viewpoints imply that education provides prospects for a country's long-term growth. A man's purpose is to work for personal perfection, as well as the perfection of the state, because a perfect man cannot exist without a well-ordered and perfect state. Education makes man perfect, and the best state is one whose leaders are the most qualified in terms of capacity and education. The term "education" refers to any effort, influence, protection, or aid given to students in order to help them mature. Education is a process in which adults exert influence over, protect, and help students. The provision of high-quality education is a vital tool for producing social and economic development opportunities and benefits.

## 2. LITERACY IN WEST BENGAL

Literacy and education are widely regarded as the most important factors in a country's progress. Literacy, according to the Indian Census definition, is defined as "a person who can read and write a short message in any language with understanding." The focus is on the state of West Bengal and its districts in order to better comprehend the state's literacy situation. According to the 2011 Census, 74.04 percent of people in the country are literate, with 77.08 percent in West Bengal. Since a long time, West Bengal's literacy rate and growth have been quite close to the national average. However, the literacy rate in West Bengal varies greatly amongst districts. The literacy rate is higher in the southern districts surrounding Metropolitan Kolkata, whereas it is lower in the districts of North Bengal and the Western Plateau region. The actual spatial pattern of general literacy, as well as Scheduled Caste and Tribe literacy, is investigated in this research. Literacy development (change) varied from district to district from 2001 to 2011. The study aims to determine the cause and pattern of these discrepancies. West Bengal is believed to have a worsening picture of female literacy. It is currently 70.54 percent. The literacy gap between men and women is large, at 11.15 (2011 Census).



---

The S.C. and S.T. populations have a greater male-female disparity. Sex Differences in Literacy among General, S.C., and S.T. in Rural and Urban Frames were investigated in this work. Literacy rates and patterns clearly differ between rural and urban Bengal.

The future of India's largest democracy will be largely determined by its citizens' educational advancement. "Literacy skills are vital to informed decision-making, personal empowerment, active and passive engagement in the local and global social community," according to the statement. "Literacy is a human right, a tool for personal empowerment and a means for social and human development"; according to UNESCO data. Literacy is required for educational opportunities. It's at the heart of universal basic education, and it's crucial for eradicating poverty, lowering child mortality, slowing population growth, attaining gender equality, and ensuring long-term development, peace, and democracy" (UNESCO 2010). Literacy, according to the Indian Census definition, is defined as "a person who can read and write a short message in any language with understanding." (Indian Census, 2011) The post-liberalization period in India (after 1991) is undeniably significant because the Indian economy, society, and way of life have all altered dramatically. India is currently a developing nation in terms of consumer, business, and global politics. Liberalization policy has a significant impact on the field of education. The magnitude of the influence, whether good or negative, is a point of contention. According to the 2011 Census, 74.04 percent of people in the country are literate, with 77.08 percent in West Bengal. Since a long time, West Bengal's literacy rate and growth have been quite close to the national average. The picture of literacy and education after 68 years of independence is not any worse, but the rate of development is not adequate. The most important problem with literacy is disguised in its raw statistics, which includes literacy disparities between castes, religions, population groups, and male-female disparities, among other things.

West Bengal shares a border with Bangladesh on the eastern part of the country. The state's latitudinal and longitudinal extents are 2138N to 2710N and 5850 to 8950E, respectively. According to the 2011 census, West Bengal has a total population of 21463270 people, making it the seventh most populous state in India, with a population density of 1029 people per square kilometre, making it the country's second most densely inhabited state. The state's Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.492 (2008).

### **3. ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR LITERACY IN INDIA**

Throughout the history of adult education, the notion of adult education has evolved and altered under numerous names. Up until 1947, the fundamental notion was 'basic education,' which was based on a traditional method and concentrated on a night school curriculum.

The idea of 'civic literacy,' which was based on a life-oriented approach and centred on social education, was employed between 1949 and 1966. Between 1967 and 1977, the notion of 'functional literacy,' based on a work-oriented approach, was promoted in adult education, with a focus on functional literacy, farmer's education, and ShramikVidyapiths. Since 1978, the 'developmental



---

literacy' concept, which is based on a social change strategy and focuses on whole literacy initiatives, has been more popular.

With the expansion of night schools, which received grants-in-aid beginning in 1929, the basic literacy notion evolved. This scheme's course was carried out over two years and contained modest lessons in the three R's, historical stories, and basic health, cleanliness, and first-aid lessons. The training took place in the evening for about 2-3 hours. Various provincial governments initiated a series of Provincial Mass Literacy Campaigns in 1938-39. Between 1938 and 1942, an estimated 1.38 crore people became literate.

Civic literacy was first proposed in 1949 and revised in 1952 when it was incorporated into the Community Development Program. During the first two Five-Year Plans, it was implemented throughout India. During the First Five Year Plan, it was estimated that roughly 35 lakh illiterates became literate, and over 40 lakh during the Second Plan.

The term "functional literacy" was coined in the 1960s. Functional literacy, defined as "literacy integrated with the learner's occupation and directly related to growth," was put into practise in 1968. It was first implemented in three districts, but over the next ten years, it grew to reach 144 of the 397 districts by 1977. Nearly 30 lakh farmers enrolled in functional literacy sessions during the Fourth Plan.

The concept of development literacy had formed by the early 1970s. Literacy was defined as a contribution to man's liberation and full development, not only the act of gaining the abilities of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The National Adult Education Program was established by the government in 1978 (NAEP). In India, the University Money Commission (UGC) awarded grants to 93 institutions in the 1980s, resulting in the expansion of university adult education (Shah, Indian Adult Education: A Historical Perspective, Directorate of Adult Education, New Delhi, 1993).

### **1. NAEP (National Adult Education Program):**

On October 2, 1978, the NAE programme was inaugurated with the goal of providing education and improving literacy to all illiterate people, particularly those aged 15 to 35. The central government, state governments, union territory administrations, non-profit organisations, universities, colleges, and youth centres are all working together on the programme.

The NAE program's education is a package that includes:

- imparting literacy skills to the target illiterate population,
- their functional development, and



- 
- creating awareness among them about government laws and policies in order to effectively implement the redistributive justice strategy

Women, Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and other vulnerable elements of society are being given special attention, as they make up the majority of India's illiterate population.

## **2. RFLP (Rural Functional Literacy Program):**

The RFL programme is a sub-program of the Adult Education Program, which is funded entirely by the federal government and administered by the states and union territories.

The broad aims of this programme are to:

- improve learners' reading and writing abilities, and
- raise learners' understanding of their rights and responsibilities, as well as the benefits they can derive from the government's many socioeconomic development initiatives

On the idea of "Each One Teach One," the RFLP was founded in May 1986 by enlisting the NSS and other student volunteers in colleges and universities. Starting with a modest 2 lakh volunteers, it grew to 4.50 lakh volunteers in 1990, covering over 4.20 lakh students. The programme has been created with the learners' requirements and languages in mind. The government has chosen 40 districts to increase adult education quality. Only after an evaluation of the impact will the initiative be scaled up in order to promote literacy in the shortest period possible.

## **3. National Literacy Mission (NLM):**

The government formulated a comprehensive programme and established the National Literacy Mission (NLM) to achieve literacy goals by implementing Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) across the country in a phased manner, in accordance with the directives of the National Policy on Education and the implementation strategies envisaged in the Programme of Action. The NLM was established in May 1988 with the purpose of providing 'functional literacy' to 80 million illiterate people between the ages of 15 and 35 by 1995.

As a result, the Mission set a goal of obtaining 80% literacy in 1995, compared to 36% in 1981. The NLM wanted to include youth and volunteer organisations in the programme. In 1990, 513 projects in various states and union territories were in operation. Similarly, there are 500 volunteer organisations operating in the field right now.

## **4. Assessment of Measures Taken:**

The government's attempts to eradicate illiteracy in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s failed, likely because



---

the nation was obsessed with issues such as food, jobs, and self-reliance at the time. Aside from that, the number of illiterates in the country grew steadily from 29.4 crore in 1951 to 32.5 crore in 1961, 37.6 crore in 1971, 42.4 crore in 1981, and 48.1 crore in 1991, owing to population growth.

In the last two decades, the literacy initiative has not yielded much. According to official estimates, the literacy campaign in the country has so far literated 2.20 crore individuals. And it took the country 50 years to reach these historic figures. A total of Rs. 2,483.07 crore was spent on adult education, with another Rs. 9,201 crore spent on elementary education.

The goal of the adult education programme was to persuade illiterates to voluntarily learn to read and write. The Functional Literacy Program was designed to reduce infant mortality, dropout rates, improve health, improve environmental conditions, raise awareness of rights, assist neo-literates in acquiring skills to improve their economic standing, motivate them to adopt small family norms, and improve women's status. Have we, however, been able to make any impact on the situation? Why isn't India's adult literacy initiative gaining traction?

The most common critique is that the adult education movement lacks grassroots backing. The planning is more at the state level, and there is still no such thing as a specific action plan for each district, village, and area, with weak areas and difficult problems meticulously recognised and addressed, and resources securely assured.

Much attention has been spent on pedagogy, and local and regional invocations have been effectively suppressed, as has freedom of choice (Tarlok Singh, March, 1991). Rather than welcoming all available options, such as the so-called 'centre' approach, 'each one teach one' or 'each one teach many,' the concerned central agency places increasing barriers in the way of voluntary and local agencies bringing learners together in 'centres' and imparting both literacy and other skills as well as socially useful knowledge.

Thus, five flaws in the NAE program's failure may be identified: a lack of community involvement, a lack of political and administrative support, learners' irregular motivation, low training quality, and the absence of a post-literacy programme. Our country lacks a well-thought-out plan of action that will bring together the federal government, state governments, municipal governments, non-profit organisations, and productive workers in a cumulative, all-encompassing national effort.

As if the previous failures weren't enough, the Ramamurti Committee also turned back the clock. "In the case of adults, inability to read and write has not necessarily meant lack of education," the Committee wrote in its Perspective Paper on Education, which was released in September 1990. The goal isn't to romanticise illiteracy, but rather to emphasise the importance of rethinking adult education programmes in a meaningful way.



However, the Committee offered no concrete plan of action in its entire report, "Towards an Enlightened and Human Society," which was submitted in December 1990. It simply suggested that, following the Eighth Five Year Plan, an independent research group analyse the current programme and offer appropriate solutions for reducing adult illiteracy as quickly as feasible.

"The review may also look into the many alternative models and study their applicability with respect to distinct socio-cultural and political contexts in various parts of India," the Committee added. The study's minimal goal should be to determine on an objective basis which approaches do not provide outcomes, so that those models are not encouraged." Isn't it clear that the Ramamurti Committee's findings makes one feel completely betrayed?

The Ramamurti Committee's report went on to say that adult education programmes could only be successful if all of the other fundamental demands were met at the same time. Health, nutrition, housing, and employment were identified as these needs. Instead of launching literacy programmes, the report seems to emphasise that illiterate individuals be made aware of their basic requirements.

Adult literacy models that failed to have the desired impact after five years, according to the second option, should be abandoned. Could it be argued that, given the significance of job and nutrition, the adult literacy programme should be postponed until we reach our employment and nutrition goals...?

After that, a new dispute erupted. Professor Yashpal, the ex-Chairman of the University Grants Commission, proposed that institutions and colleges be closed for a year in order to engage teachers and students in a literacy drive. This concept was considered by vice-chancellors of various institutions at a meeting arranged by the Association of Indian Universities in collaboration with the Planning Commission on March 8, 1991 in Delhi. They recommended that literacy be included in college and university curricula, and that students participate in literacy programmes over the summer vacation.

##### **5. The expert group recommendation**

- A strong political commitment to the entire effort,
- Integration of literacy campaigns with non-formal education programmes,
- Conducting a door-to-door survey of illiteracy in the country,
- Concentration on the Hindi belt, and
- Emphasis on the voluntary nature of the programme.

Aside from the above critical assessment of literacy programmes, we can also identify the following roadblocks to the adult education program's successful implementation.

- A. Though the literacy programme was designed to include three dimensions: literacy, awareness, and functionality, in fact, the programme has tended to focus on literacy because most adult



education centres lack the resources to address the other two core components of AEP. Adults have no interest in visiting these centres because they do not believe the programmes are relevant to their environmental requirements.

- B. Time constraints, economic pressures, a fatalistic attitude fostered by centuries of enslavement and exploitation, a lack of leisure, family resistance, geographical distance, a lack of material incentives, a negative attitude toward women's literacy, and lack of awareness of the programme are all important factors that prevent adult illiterates from attending centres.
- C. A fundamental impediment to the successful implementation of AEP is a lack of commitment, interest, and missionary fervour among key officials tasked with its implementation.
- D. The threat posed by vested interests has also had a negative impact on the programme, as it threatens to deprive them of cheap labour and prospective vote banks. As a result, hidden opposition and implicit disapproval of the programme from a significant portion of the community are stumbling barriers to its widespread adoption.
- E. The program's effectiveness is also hampered by a number of practical issues, including an overemphasis on rules, voluntary agencies that do not receive state government support, a lack of coordination among various agencies, a lack of effective media support, poor quality of functionary training, a lack of proper evaluation, and a lack of sustained support from panchayati raj institutions (PRIs).

Aside from the aforementioned reasons, there are four other reasons for the failure: One, the six-month fixed term stated in the NLM system is excessively long because many students drop out in the midst of the programme, and underpaid instructors are unable to maintain interest.

As a result, setting a period of merely two months would be more reasonable. Two, the established literacy standards are excessively high. Reading and writing should be separated from arithmetic. It is not intended to imply that mastering math is not an important part of adult education. The recommendation is that math be separated from basic literacy and that its instruction be deferred to the post-literacy period.

#### 4. MASS LITERACY

"A mass literacy strategy aims to literate all adult men and women in a country within a specific time frame." Literacy is viewed as a means to a variety of ends, including economic, social-structural, and political goals." This required massive resource mobilization and commitment, which would have been impossible to achieve under other circumstances. Because of the campaign's mass nature, a large portion of the population was able to participate as learners, instructors, or in one of the many other



roles in the literacy classes. Thus, creating a literate environment in society is critical for ensuring universalization of elementary and adult education and achieving generic quality, ensuring sustainable development, and addressing other social and moral issues, such as child mortality, through a campaign. The term campaign refers to a set of operations that are organized and indented to achieve a specific goal, series, or area involving a specific type. The concept of 'mass literacy' is central to the concept of 'education for all.' It has been demonstrated all over the world that massive changes in social order can be facilitated by mass literacy efforts.



**Figure 1: Mass Literacy**

## **5. MASS EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA**

The 1950s and 1960s were a time of unwavering belief in the efficiency of education in encouraging development among

emerging countries around the world. The 1964-66 Indian Education Commission Report's opening phrase, "The fate of India is now being moulded in her classrooms," encapsulated this notion. Such optimism is no longer justifiable as evidence of what formal education does and who it benefits grows.

Despite the fact that this naive faith in education's contribution to the nation and the people as a whole has been shattered, few would argue that education has not aided growth. Though some may agree with Ivan Illich's criticism that formal education has failed to foster "real" growth and is, in fact, responsible for many of today's issues, few would find the solution in his prescription that governments around the world abolish schooling and spin educational webs. The fact that no country has yet embarked on such a drastic programme reflects, in part, the notion that formal education has a



---

role in growth. A viewpoint like these cuts beyond national and ideological barriers. China, for example, has taken specific efforts to revitalise its formal educational system as part of its wider modernisation goal, following a period of relative neglect.

The debate is no longer about whether or not education promotes progress. That's right. The discussion has switched to the linked questions of what development means and who is being helped to develop. Education can help people develop, but it depends on how development is understood, as John Simmons points out. If economic growth is viewed solely in terms of benefiting upper-income individuals, schooling has aided this by broadening the talents and increasing the productivity of future workers. If progress is defined as primarily raising the standard of life of the poorest 40% of the population, the majority of whom are illiterates or primary school dropouts, formal education is unlikely to have aided them significantly. Indeed, research reveals that in most nations, investing in education worsens the gap between affluent and poor.

### 5.1 Developmental Adult Education

Adult education in India nowadays focuses on literacy, usefulness, and social awareness, but these aren't ends in and of themselves. They are tools that enable a person to perform in his or her social context. It is expected that a person uses reading skills and functional and social awareness knowledge in his or her daily life to lead a better human life. Adult education is thus more than just the transmission of information; it is also the ability to act — to read, write, and count when the situation calls for it, to be more productive and raise one's economic status, to reject evil and wrongdoing, and to accept desired ideals.

Adult education's success is thus judged not just in terms of the amount of knowledge taught, but also in terms of the type of life that the learners have been equipped to live. Illiterate adults, it is considered, would not be able to live a truly human life without acquiring these adult education elements. Adult education is therefore seen as a basic service for illiterates and is included in the Minimum Needs Program.

Adult education is regarded an important developmental initiative in India due to the fact that the large majority of the Indian population is illiterate. Frequently, economic and political programmes fail to reach their goals. The disadvantage of being illiterate and uneducated is one of the reasons why prospective beneficiaries do not benefit from developmental programmes. What good will economic programmes do if the impoverished don't know how to use them? Many developmental programmes in India fail to reach the poorest and weakest elements of society, owing to a lack of education among these groups. Developmental organisations have realised that a basic degree of education for the masses is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for their socioeconomic development. How can a man grow unless he is made aware of his social condition and convinced that he must improve himself? The first step is to recognise oneself. When a guy believes he needs to develop, he needs the



---

resources to do so, which are developmental programmes. At this point, it's vital that he understands how the developmental programmes can help him. To put it another way, a person in need of development must be convinced of it and understand what resources are available to help him achieve his goal, as well as how to apply them. This is the driving force for adult education's emphasis on practicality and social awareness.

## 5.2 Mass Education for the People

We are republishing here some of Comrade A.K.Gopalan's remarks on our country's education system and the SFI's resolution on education. Student Struggle was fortunate enough to recover these notes, which Com. AKG had put down sometime in late 1974. For the first time, Student Struggle published this article, which was written down a decade later.

There isn't much to say about Com. A. K. Gopalan. He was a leading figure in the people's struggle against all types of exploitation, actively participating in the national movement, and is regarded as one of the country's founders of the Communist movement. From 1952 until his death in 1977, he was elected to the Lok Sabha without interruption. He was the head of the opposition in Parliament and the voice of the working class, especially during the Emergency's early days. This piece, which was written over five decades ago, is still relevant today.

- Today's Situation
- A massive issue
- Fight Imperialism
- Socialism as a Source of Inspiration
- Our Country's Priorities
  
- An Instrument of Struggle: Education

## 6. INDIA'S PRE-INDEPENDENCE ERA MASS LITERACY CAMPAIGN

The successful functioning of the MLC for adults from 1938 to 1947 has made the masses, their organizations, and leaders both inside and outside the government aware of the importance of adult education in development and the necessity to strengthen the programme. Several provincial-level efforts for Basic Literacy Programs (BLPs) were undertaken out in 1938-39 (Bengal, United Provinces, Bombay, Madras, Punjab and Assam). The beginning of literacy campaigns across India, as well as the active participation of prominent Indians such as Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Jawaharlal Nehru, established a conducive environment for the development of India's mass literacy movement and the founding of professional societies.

Furthermore, some mass educators felt the need to establish a control organisation. The Indian



Education Society (IES) was established in Delhi in 1937, and the first All India Adult Education Conference (AIAEC) was held in March 1938 to investigate the feasibility of establishing a central body that would provide results by December 1939. The findings of the Central Advisory Board of Education's (CABE) second, third, fourth, and fifth conferences emphasised the importance of adult literacy, the necessity for literacy teacher training, adult motivation, the use of audio-visual technologies in education, and measures to prevent illiteracy relapse. By the 1940s, mass education had become an official programme. In 1901, there were 238.4 million people; by 1911, there were 252.09 million people, 251.32 million in 1921, 272.98 million in 1931, and 318.66 million in 1941. Though, for the censuses 1901 to 1941, the literacy rate increased dramatically from 5.2 percent to 16.1 percent for the whole population, 9.8 percent to 24.9 percent for males, and 0.6 percent to 7.3 percent for females.

## 7. INDIA'S MASS LITERACY CAMPAIGN DURING THE POST-INDEPENDENT ERA

Former Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru created the mixed economy approach. In accordance with his goal, he aggressively used literacy to bring about social transformation. The challenges of illiteracy in India were addressed in the post-independence era up until the 10th Five Year Plan, when the NLM, 1988, included and implemented many masses education programmes. The many literacy centres, libraries, community centres, volunteer organisations, social education institutes, and rural development and employment centres were all founded as a result of the joint efforts of these Five-Year Plans. It was also a time of deliberate industrial expansion and social education. Planners of the 1960s and 1970s recognised literacy as a critical component of national development, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization advocated the concept of functional literacy at the time (UNESCO).

In the 1960s and 1970s, programmes such as the Farmers' Functional Literacy Program (FFLP) and the ShramikVidyapeethProgramme (SVP)/ Workers' Education Programme (WEP) were created to aid in the process of modernization by acquiring the skills needed to increase productivity as well as transmitting and promoting newly articulated national ideals of hard work, scientific temperament, rationality, and a sense of identification with the composite culture. The debate on literacy shifted dramatically in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The Indian constitution's basic principles of state policy stated that "the state shall provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen," with the goal of achieving this goal by 1961, or within ten years of the constitution's inception in 1951. However, when it came to adult literacy and education, there was no precise or definitive date. On October 2, 1978, an overview of the National Adult Education Program (NAEP) was established after considerable consultation and a policy declaration on adult education. It was established for the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1978-83) with the goal of organising adult education with literacy as a key component for at least 100 million



illiterates (mainly in the age group of 15-35 years). By the end of 1983, NAEP had completed the following activities in order to provide students with the literacy skills needed for self-directed learning, allowing them to become self-sufficient, take an active role in their own development, and promote social awareness:

- Selecting a significant number of literate and skilled individuals.
- Involving people in various developmental programmes that will allow them to reach their full potential while reducing waste.
- Raising public understanding of government laws, regulations, and programmes, as well as better health and nutrition.

This, in turn, would aid in the implementation of the redistributive justice strategy. The NAEP was created as a nationwide initiative to fight the two major challenges that Indian society faces, namely poverty and illiteracy, by:

- The 3Rs are used to teach adults between the ages of 15 and 35 (reading, writing and arithmetic).
- Educating adults in order to develop functional skills and obtain a job.
- Educating students on India's history, culture, and developmental programmes for social consciousness.

However, NAEP's performance in terms of improving literacy status could not keep up with the country's massive population expansion, causing the country to fall farther behind in its efforts to achieve universal literacy. In 1951, the population expanded from 361.09 million to 439.23 million in 1961, 548.16 million in 1971, and 683.33 million in 1981. Though, from 1951 to 1981, the literacy rate increased dramatically, rising from 16.45 percent to 35.35 percent for the whole population, 25 percent to 45.9 percent for males, and 7.9 percent to 24.8 percent for females. The results obtained during implementation, while limited in scope, were satisfactory enough to inspire confidence in the enormous adult education program's future.

However, it had several severe flaws, and it posed a threat to achieve its goals unless certain dramatic modifications were implemented. The task of establishing widespread adult education programmes was thought to be extraordinarily difficult.

As a result, the emphasis on basic essential education for all residents was re-emphasized in the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85). The Post Literacy Program (PLP) and the Continuing Education Program (CEP) were adopted as essential components of Adult Education Programs (AEPs)/ Adult Literacy Programs (ALPs) with the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986, which stated, "The entire nation must pledge itself to the eradication of illiteracy". In continuation with the preceding programme, the Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90) was launched. Adult education received special

attention from the NPE in 1986 under the task group Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) because of its critical link to national development. Adult education was envisioned by the NPE as a tool of decreasing economic, social, and gender inequities. The NAEP's key features were:

- Creating an environment conducive to the abolition of illiteracy.
- A reorganisation of the current programme.
- A programme for adult education and growth.
- A large-scale functional literacy initiative.
- A programme of on-going education.
- System of technical resources.
- Illiteracy-eradication technology.

Following that, NLM was established to combat illiteracy, and it was founded on a thorough examination of the NAEP's limited successes and limitations for the following reasons:

- The learning environment was discovered to be lacking in essential learning amenities.
- Employees, especially instructors, were not properly trained.
- Learner motivation and attendance were low, with a high drop-out rate.
- People's social awareness and learning of the 3R's functionality were not adequately covered.
- There was no efficient post-literacy mechanism in place to keep what had been started going.
- Administrative procedures were tough for administrative support, especially for volunteer agencies, and there was a lot of misinformation regarding centres and how they worked.

Thus, the past trends in literacy rates before and after independence show that prior to the 1991 census, the Indian literacy census excluded children aged 0-4 years from the literate population count. On the eve of the 1991 census, it was decided that all children aged 0-6 would be considered illiterate, and literacy rates would be calculated for the population aged 7 years and older. Table 1.1 shows the growth in literacy rates by gender and population (in millions) in India from 1901 to 2011.

**Table 1: Literacy Rates by Sex with Population Growth in India for the Census Years from 1901-2011**

Census Year	Literacy Rates in Percentage (Approximately)			Population Growth (In Million)
	Persons	Males	Females	
1901	5.20	9.80	0.60	238.4

1911	5.80	10.60	1.00	252.09
1921	7.00	12.20	1.80	251.32
1931	9.25	15.60	2.90	272.98
1941	16.10	24.90	7.30	318.66
1951	16.45	25.00	7.90	361.09
1961	23.7	34.40	13.00	439.23
1971	29.05	39.40	18.70	548.16
1981	35.35	45.90	24.80	683.33
1991	52.45	62.70	42.20	846.42
2001	66.14	69.40	62.88	1028.74
2011	74.90	82.34	67.46	1210.19

**Source:** Figures for literacy rates for the census years from 1901 to 2001 are retrieved from <http://www.educationforallindia.com/page172>

Figures for 1981 exclude Assam, and figures for 1991 exclude Jammu and Kashmir, indicating that no census was conducted in Assam in 1981, or in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991.

Figures for 2001 exclude the entire Kachchh district, Morvi, Maliya-Miyana, and Wankanertalukas of Rajkot district, Jodiyataluka of Gujarat state's Jamnagar district, and the entire Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh, where the 2001 census was not held due to natural calamities.

Literacy rates in 1951, 1961, and 1971 were based on the population aged five and up. Literacy rates from 1981 to 2011 were based on the population aged seven and up.

Literacy rates in various censuses from 1901 to the present show an upward trend in both males and females. Rates were very low until 1931, but there was a sharp increase in 1941 from 9.25 percent to 16.1 percent, which remained nearly stationary at 16.45 percent in 1951. This could be because earlier figures were for undivided India, and secondly, after the country was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947, nearly eight million people came to the Indian Union from newly created Pakistan, while six to seven million Muslims left India. As a result, assigning reasons for the observed figures is nearly impossible. After 1951, literacy rates increased steadily by 5 to 8 percent, reaching 13.69 percent in the 1991-2001 decade and 7.76 percent in the 2001-2011 decade. The literacy rate has increased more than threefold over the last half-century, and there has been population growth per census from 1901 to 2011.

Poverty and illiteracy are the two most pressing issues confronting Indian society. As a result, we are still unable to compete with developed countries in the twenty-first century. To make everyone functionally literate and close the gender literacy gap in India, it is still necessary to (i) select a



significant portion of the literate and better skilled population. (ii) Involving people in various development programmes that would allow them to maximize their potential and minimize waste; and (iii) Raising awareness among them about government laws, policies, and schemes, as well as better health and nutrition. This, in turn, would aid in the implementation of the redistributive justice strategy. (iv) Teach adults between the ages of 15 and 35 years old the 3R's (reading, writing, and arithmetic), (v) Teach adults functional competences and how to get a job, and (vi) Make them aware of India's history, culture, and developmental schemes for social awareness. However, the performance of various literacy campaigns in terms of improving literacy status could not keep up with the tremendous growth in population, causing the country to fall further behind in its efforts to achieve universal literacy.

## **8. MASS LITERACY – ELIMINATION OF POVERTY AND EMPLOYMENT WILL INCREASE**

Prof Olasupo Jegede, a former Dean of the University Of Lagos Faculty Of Education, has encouraged the Federal Government to be more proactive in its literacy programme in order to alleviate poverty and boost employment, among other things.

According to him, the campaign will target the approximately 10 million youngsters who are out of school. In October 2019, the Federal Ministry of Education said that it had performed a National Personnel Audit of both public and private schools in Nigeria, which revealed that the country's out-of-school children totalled 10,193,918.

According to Jegede, who cited the National Bureau of Statistics, overall literacy in English is 57.9%, whereas literacy in other languages is 71.6. At a seminar organised by the Rotary Club Onigbongbo in Lagos State, he claimed this while presenting a presentation titled, Values and methods of the adult literacy campaign.

He stated that while previous administrations had paid attention to literacy, there was still work to be done. "The overall literacy rate in English is 57.9%, whereas the rate in other languages is 71.6. Aside from that, 10.2 million children in Nigeria are out of school. Lack of dedication, inadequate preparation, corruption, and the square peg in a round hole are among issues that plague mass literacy programmes in Nigeria.

"Literacy can help to alleviate poverty, increase employment, promote gender equality, improve family health, protect the environment, and promote democratic participation, among other things." It also aids memory, facilitates documentation, supports verification, stimulates thinking, aids creation, aids in the transmission of ideas, values, aids communication at a distance, eradicates ignorance, and provides privacy/confidentiality," he added.





---

According to Jegede, a successful literacy programme necessitates political will on the part of the government.

"The presence of political will is the first step toward a successful literacy programme. The leaders or organisers must be dedicated to the people's actual emancipation. For example, if the major goal of literacy is to empower people to gain greater freedom to make choices, a better grasp of real life, boost human dignity, and access to various sources of knowledge, then we need more than rhetoric from our leaders to achieve success," Jegede remarked. Mr James Ajayi, President of the Rotary Club of Onigbongbo, said the club lays a strong focus on education, and that the seminar was part of the club's Literacy Week.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Literacy is defined as the ability to recognize, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute meaning from and through a variety of socially contextual symbols. A literate person can derive and convey meaning, as well as use knowledge, to achieve a desired goal that requires the use of language skills, whether spoken or written. Literacy is an increasing ability to use language and literacy in all aspects of life, rather than a single piece of knowledge. In a word, it is a dynamic, evolving idea that represents the constant changes in our society, the quality of being literate, the ability to read and write logically and critically, and the ability to think critically. Literacy, as a whole, is the power to develop human capacities, foster a healthy environment, serve as a learning tool, and inspire a desire to study more. Literacy is critical to the acquisition of fundamental life skills that enable people to face the obstacles they experience in life, according to national evidence. Mass literacy has an essential role in improving the quality of life of a nation, state, district, and community as a whole, as well as at the individual, group, and communal levels. The focus of this study article was on adult literacy rates before and after India became independent. The study article concludes that literacy rates have been rising in both males and females in numerous censuses since 1901. The rates were quite low until 1931, when they suddenly increased from 9.25 percent to 16.1 percent in 1941, but then remained nearly constant at 16.45 percent in 1951.

## REFERENCES

- [1].Tertiary Education Commission. (2008). Literacy, language and numeracy Raising the literacy, language and numeracy skills of the workforce, AkuTuapapa (Annual Action Plan 2008-2009). Retrieved from <http://www.tec.govt.nz/...../ LiteracyLanguage-and-Numeracy-action-plan-200.....on> dated 16-04-2009.
- [2].Population Growth, Sex Ratio and Literacy Rate. (2011, April-June). Census 2011 results: Population growth, sex ratio and literacy rate (Vol. 8, No.1) Mumbai: IIPS Mumbai, ENVIS Center. Retrieved from [http:// www. iipsenvi. nic.in/ Newsletters/ vol8no1/ Report\\_1.htm](http:// www. iipsenvi. nic.in/ Newsletters/ vol8no1/ Report_1.htm) on dated 12-03-2012.



- 
- [3].Mahendra, K. P. (2002, October). Growth in literacy: India's literacy panorama. Paper presented at the National Seminar on progress of literacy in India: What the census 2001 prevails, NIEPA, New Delhi. Abstract retrieved from <http://www.educationforall.inindia.com/page172.htm> on dated 31/01/2012.
- [4].Helen Adebola "Standard in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education: Capacity Building and Sustainable Development" August 2007
- [5].Helen Adebola "The Public Policy Challenges of Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in the Global Age"August 2008 Perspectives on Globalization, Development and Public Policy (pp.1046-1054)
- [6].John McLeish "Evangelism and Mass Literacy in England" Evangelical Religion and Popular Education Edition1st Edition Pages 32 2006
- [7].M.P. Parameswaran "Experience of mass literacy campaigns in India: 1988-1996"January 2005
- [8].OpeyemiOlaseni, Francis O. OLANIYI "Mass Literacy As A Means Of Information Dissemination For Political Campaign In Nigeria" 2021
- [9].Vasudevaraob.S "Evaluation of Total Literacy Campaign in Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh"October 2006
- [10]. Viswanadha Gupta Puvvada "Training of Functionaries in Saakshar Bharat Programme: An Analysis" April 2012