



MoE Defines Literacy under NILP

For Prelims: New India Literacy Programme (NILP), [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#), [Sustainable Development Goal](#), [PARAKH](#), [NIPUN](#), Saakshar Bharat Programme, [Census 2011](#), Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT).

For Mains: Definition of Literacy and Full Literacy under NILP, Challenges Related to Literacy in India, Significance of Government Policies & Interventions in Education

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Education (MoE)** has defined 'literacy,' and what it means to achieve 'full literacy,' as part of its renewed focus on adult literacy under the **New India Literacy Programme (NILP)**.

What is the New India Literacy Programme (NILP)?

- **About:**
 - **New India Literacy Programme (NILP)** is a **centrally sponsored initiative** that aligns with the [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#).
 - It is also known as [ULLAS \(Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society\) Nav Bharat Saksharta Karyakram](#) (erstwhile known as **Adult Education**).
- **Vision:**
 - The vision of this scheme is to make India '**Jan Jan Saakshar**' and is based on the spirit of '**Kartavya Bodh**' (Duty) and is being implemented through volunteerism.
- **Objective:**
 - It aims to educate 1 crore non-literate per year aged 15 years and above through Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS).
 - OTLAS is a **computer application** embedded in the Web Portal/Mobile App under **ULLAS** developed by the [National Informatics Centre \(NIC\)](#).
 - **It was launched for implementation during 5 years from FYs 2022-23 to 2026-27 with a financial outlay of Rs.1037.90 crore.**
 - It aims to achieve [UN Sustainable Development \(UNSDG\) Goal 4.6](#) (ensuring all youth and adults achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030)
- **Key Components of the Scheme:**
 - [Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test \(FLNAT\)](#)
 - Critical Life Skills

- Vocational Skills Development
- Basic Education
- Continuing Education
- **Beneficiary Identification:**
 - Beneficiaries are identified through door-to-door surveys via a mobile app, and non-literates can also self-register through the app.
- **Other Key Aspects:**
 - The scheme heavily relies on **volunteerism for teaching and learning**, and volunteers can sign up via the mobile app.
 - The NILP is primarily implemented through **online platforms and leverages** technology.
 - Educational materials and resources are made available on the [DIKSHA platform](#) of NCERT, accessible through mobile apps.
 - Various modes, including **TV, Radio, and Samajik Chetna Kendra**, are utilised to disseminate foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

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ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

DESPITE SLOW PROGRESS,

THE WORLD IS FALLING FAR BEHIND IN ACHIEVING QUALITY EDUCATION

WITHOUT ADDITIONAL MEASURES, BY 2030:



THE PANDEMIC

CAUSED
LEARNING
LOSSES
IN **4 IN 5** OF
104 COUNTRIES
STUDIED



PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES ARE **RIISING**, BUT THE PACE IS SLOW AND UNEVEN



LOW- AND LOWER-
MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES
FACE A NEARLY

\$100 BILLION
ANNUAL
FINANCING GAP
TO REACH THEIR
EDUCATION TARGETS

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT 2023: SPECIAL EDITION- [UNSTATS.UN.ORG/SDGS/REPORT/2023/](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/)

What is the Definition of Literacy under NILP?

- **Definition of Literacy:** According to the MoE, literacy encompasses the **ability to read, write, and perform arithmetic** with comprehension.
 - It also includes **identifying, understanding, interpreting, and creating content**, along with acquiring **critical life skills like digital and financial literacy**.
- **Full Literacy:** A State or Union Territory (UT) is considered fully literate when it achieves a **95% literacy rate**.
- **Criteria for Literacy Certification:** Under NILP, a non-literate person is considered literate if they pass the **FLNAT**.

- **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT):**
 - This test evaluates **reading, writing, and numeracy skills** to assess foundational literacy.
 - It is conducted in all districts of participating States/UTs at District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) and government/aided schools.
 - It aims to **certify non-literate learners** and **promote multilingualism** by offering the test in regional languages, in line with the **NEP 2020**.
 - An individual is declared literate after successfully completing the **FLNAT**.
 - **In 2023, out of 39,94,563 adult learners who took the FLNAT, 36,17,303 were certified as literate. However, in 2024, only 85.27% were certified as literate in FLNAT.**

What are the Challenges Related to Literacy in India?

- **Low Literacy Level:** According to the [2011 Census](#), there were **25.76 crore non-literate** individuals in India aged 15 and above (9.08 crore males and 16.68 crore females).
 - Despite the progress made through the **Saakshar Bharat Programme (2009-10 to 2017-18)**, which certified 7.64 crore people as literate, an estimated **18.12 crore adults remain non-literate** in the country, highlighting the need for the NILP.
- **Lower Budget Allocation:** **The budget allocation for the New India Literacy Programme (NILP) was reduced from Rs 157 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 100 crore in the revised budget estimate, indicating financial constraints.**
- **Gender Disparity:** There is a substantial gender gap in literacy rates, with women often having less access to education. Traditional gender roles, cultural norms, and economic factors contribute to this disparity. In many areas, girls are expected to prioritise household chores over education, leading to lower enrollment and higher dropout rates among female students.
 - This gender gap **hampers the overall development and empowerment** of women in society.
- **Quality of Education:** **The quality of education in many Indian schools, especially in rural areas, is often poor. Inadequate teacher training, outdated curricula, and a lack of teaching materials contribute to low learning outcomes. Even students who complete primary and secondary education often lack basic literacy and numeracy skills, highlighting the gap between access to education and actual learning.**
- **High Dropout Rates:** India faces a high dropout rate, particularly in rural areas and among economically disadvantaged groups. Economic pressures force many children to leave school early to contribute to the family income.
 - This is **especially prevalent among girls**, who may also drop out due to early marriage, domestic responsibilities, or concerns about safety and accessibility of schools.
- **Economic Constraints:** Poverty is a major barrier to literacy in India. Many families cannot afford to send their children to school, leading them to prioritise work over education. Even when children are enrolled in school, the costs of uniforms, books, and transportation can be prohibitive.
 - Economic constraints also affect the quality of education, as **underfunded schools struggle to provide adequate resources and support to students.**

What are the Government Initiatives Related to Educational Reforms?

- [National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning](#)
- [Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan](#)
- [RAGYATA \(Plan- Review- Arrange- Guide- Yak \(talk\)- Assign- Track- Appreciate\)](#)
- [Mid Day Meal Scheme](#)
- [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao](#)
- [PM SHRI Schools](#)

Way Forward

- **Community-Centric Partnerships:** Collaborate with local communities, [NGOs](#), and [Self-Help](#)

Groups (SHGs) to effectively identify and engage marginalised populations.

- **Flexible Learning Models:** Implement **diverse learning formats**, such as evening classes, weekend workshops, and online courses, to accommodate varying schedules and preferences, thereby **expanding accessibility**.
- **Leveraging Technology:** Integrate **digital literacy training** into the curriculum, utilise **adaptive learning platforms** for personalised instruction, and develop **mobile learning** applications to enhance reach and effectiveness.
- **Incentivisation and Peer Tutoring:** Promote **peer-to-peer learning** to boost engagement and provide support, while offering incentives like **skill certificates** and **vocational training opportunities** to motivate learners.
- **Integrating Life Skills Training:** Embed **financial literacy, health and wellness education,** and vocational training into the curriculum to equip learners with essential life skills for better employability and decision-making.
- **Strengthening Partnerships:** Establish **strong collaborations between government agencies, private sector organisations,** and **international** entities to leverage resources, share expertise, and implement best practices.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement a **robust monitoring and evaluation framework,** focusing on regular assessment and data-driven decision-making, to ensure **continuous improvement in program effectiveness**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. What are the issues with the school education system in India? How can the current system in India address these challenges and ensure inclusive quality education?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following provisions of the Constitution does India have a bearing on Education? (2012)

1. Directive Principles of State Policy
2. Rural and Urban Local Bodies
3. Fifth Schedule
4. Sixth Schedule
5. Seventh Schedule

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3, 4 and 5 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans- (d)

Mains

Q. How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate on your answer. (2020)

Q. Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail. (2021)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/moe-defines-literacy-under-nilp>

