

## LITERACY IN INDIA: GOVERNANCE

**NEWS:** Top 10 Indian states/UTs with highest and lowest literacy rates: Mizoram becomes 1st 'fully literate' state

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Mizoram has become India's first fully literate state with a 98.2% literacy rate, surpassing the 95% benchmark set by the Ministry of Education. This milestone aligns with NEP 2020 and SDG goals, supported by initiatives like the ULLAS adult literacy program.

### Mizoram Becomes India's First Fully Literate State

- Mizoram has officially been declared India's first fully literate state.
- This recognition marks a historic educational milestone for the state and sets a benchmark for others to follow.

### Definition of Literacy in India

- As per the *Office of the Registrar General of India*, a literate person is someone aged 7 or above who can read and write with understanding in any language.
- The *Department of School Education and Literacy* has now introduced an expanded definition in line with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** and **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.6**.
- Under the revised definition, literacy includes:
  - Ability to read and write with understanding.
  - Basic computing and numerical skills.
  - Critical life skills such as **digital literacy** and **financial literacy**.
- A State/UT is considered fully literate when it reaches a 95% literacy rate.

### Current National Literacy Status (2023–24)

- India's overall literacy rate (age 7+) is **80.9%**, combining both rural and urban populations.
- Literacy rate has shown significant improvement:
  - From **14% at the time of independence** to **80.9% in 2023–24**.

### Mizoram's Achievement

- Mizoram has recorded a **98.2% literacy rate**, according to the **2023–24 Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** by MoSPI.
- This surpasses the 95% threshold required for "fully literate" status as per the **Ministry of Education**.
- This makes Mizoram the **first Indian state** to achieve this distinction.

## Comparison with Other States and UTs

- *Ladakh* was the first administrative unit to achieve **full functional literacy** under the ULLAS scheme.
- States with the lowest literacy rates:
  - **Andhra Pradesh** – 72.6%
  - **Bihar** – 74.3%
  - These figures are also from the **2023–24 PLFS survey**.

## About ULLAS – Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram (New India Literacy Programme)

- **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** implemented from **2022 to 2027**.
- Aligned with **NEP 2020** and **SDG targets**, focusing on adult education (15+ years) who missed formal schooling.
- Five key components:
  - *Foundational Literacy and Numeracy*
  - *Critical Life Skills* (digital, financial, legal literacy, etc.)
  - *Basic Education* (up to class 8 level)
  - *Vocational Skills*
  - *Continuing Education* (libraries, book clubs, etc.)
- It works on the spirit of **volunteerism and Kartavya Bodh (sense of duty)**.
- Motto: *Jan Jan Saakshar* – making every citizen literate.

## Conclusion

- Mizoram's achievement reflects the potential impact of targeted education policies.
- The ULLAS program and other NEP-aligned initiatives are vital for bridging regional literacy gaps and empowering India's population through lifelong learning.

**Source:** <https://indianexpress.com/article/trending/top-10-listing/top-10-indian-states-highest-lowest-literacy-mizoram-full-literate-2025-10018981/>