

# Education for Adult

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## Abstract:

The concept was introduced in the year 1956 and many adults have benefitted from it. Adult education has opened new arenas for several adults. The concept was introduced in the year 1956 and many adults have benefitted from it. Adult education has opened new arenas for several adults. Measures such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act are wide-scale initiatives to ensure that the future generations of Indians will be given better access to education, and, therefore, not be as susceptible to illiteracy as their predecessors.

**Keywords:** Adult, Education, Government Organization, Promote

## 1.0 Introduction:

Illiteracy is the root cause of most of the problems not only in India but also in other developing nations. In order to overcome this problem, our country has not only made education a fundamental right of every child and come up with The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act but has also introduced the concept of adult education. Any adult who could not get formal education in his early life can enrol for adult education. An adult can seek both basic education and vocational training based on his requirement.

The concept was introduced in the year 1956 and many adults have benefitted from it. Adult education has opened new arenas for several adults. It enables them to earn their living by securing better paying and more respectable jobs. Education does not only make a person earn better but also makes him more aware about the things happening around him and empowers him to bring about change in the society.

A number of night schools have been set-up to provide education to adults who work during the day. This way they can seek education post their working hours. Besides, many NGOs and public sector enterprises also extend their support to this mission.

## 1.1 Adult Education

Adult education includes the entire body of educational processes, whatever the content, level or method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities, as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong

develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. The concept of 'adult education' has undergone changes through ages. The literary meaning of adult education implies educational facilities to the adults who could not undergo a regular course of formal education during their school

Adult Education aims at extending educational options to those adults, who have lost the opportunity and have crossed the age of formal education, but now feel a need for learning of any type, including literacy, basic education, skill development (Vocational Education) and equivalency. With the objective of promoting adult education, a series of programmes have been introduced since the First Five Year Plan, the most prominent being the National Literacy Mission (NLM), that was launched in 1988 to impart functional literacy to non-literates in the age group of 15-35 years in a time bound manner. By the end of the 10th Plan period, NLM had made 127.45 million persons literate, of which, 60% were females, 23% belonged to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 12% to Scheduled Tribes (STs). 597 districts were covered under Total Literacy Campaigns of which 502 reached Post Literacy stage and 328 reached Continuing Education stage.

The Government of India's Ministry of Human Resource Development defines Adult Education as that which "aims at extending educational options to those adults, who have lost the opportunity and have crossed the age of formal education, but now feel a need for learning of any type, including, basic education (literacy), skill development (vocational education) and equivalency."

Adult education is a key requirement in developing countries that still struggle with issues such as poverty, burgeoning populations and poor infrastructure. In India, while the Government has made considerable efforts in the area of adult education, including incorporating ambitious targets in the Five Year Plans, the quantum of actual progress falls significantly short of the level required to achieve a respectable national literacy rate, more so when it comes to literacy among Indian women. Sensing the need in this area, several NGOs and public-private partnerships have emerged to contribute to the cause of improving literacy rates. As a boon to the promotion of literacy among women in India, the Government in 2009 announced that literacy would be its key programme instrument for emancipation and empowerment of women, and this would be done through focussed efforts by the National Literacy Mission (NLM).

The NLM has now taken steps to strengthen its partnership with NGOs for furtherance of the cause of literacy and adult education.

## 1.2 Organizations working for Adult Education

### 1.2.1 Government Organization

- **The National Literacy Mission (NLM)**, launched in 1988, is the program undertaken by the Government for adult education. It has been the topic of discussion at various United Nations forums, and was awarded the UNESCO Noma Literacy Prize in 1999. By the end of the 10th Plan Period (2002-2007) the NLM had made 127.45 million persons literate, of which 60% were females. To further bolster 'Adult Education and Skill Development', the Government also introduced two new schemes, namely **Saakshar Bharat and Scheme for Support to Voluntary Agencies for Adult Education and Skill Development**, during the 11th Plan. Saakshar Bharat is the world's largest adult education programme, which envisages making 70 million adults literate by 2017.

### 1.2.2 NGOs and other initiatives

- **The Indian Adult Education Association**, probably the oldest organisation dedicated to the cause, was established in 1939. Dr. Zakir Hussain, former President of India, who served on the committee of the IAEA for 10 years as its Vice President, is quoted as saying, "The history of the IAEA is the history of adult education in India," from which it can be concluded that very little was done in this space prior to the IAEA's formation.  
IAEA organises conferences and training programmes for adult educators in the country, as well as functionaries in the Government, and enrolls high-profile Government officials, educators and social workers. The International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education (IIALE) was set up by the IAEA in 2002.
- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)**: A number of public sector enterprises have extended their support to the Saakshar Bharat Program. There are partnerships with the private sector as well, for example, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) which has supported the campaign for literacy with its Computer Based Functional Literacy Program that has now been accepted as part of the 12th 5-year plan of the Government of India. The PPP model is emerging as an important channel in development, especially through the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF).
- **Indian Literacy Project (ILP) and other organisations**: Formed in 1990 in the USA, ILP partners with local NGOs to "Play the role of a catalyst for literacy". ILP has supported nearly 100 projects since its inception, benefitting around 220,000 children, youth and adults. There are also NGOs working in this space, such as Tara Akshar, Nirantar and CORO for Literacy.

- **Night Schools:** There are around 200 independently functioning night schools in Maharashtra (150 of which are in Mumbai). The advantage of night schools is that they provide an opportunity for youth and adults who have to work during the day, to still pursue their education post work hours. Though the concept of night schools is unique to only a few states (mainly Maharashtra), it would be beneficial to replicate the night school model across the country. Masoom is an NGO that works with night schools in Mumbai, and has developed a model for improvement of the night school education system.

### 1.2.3 Others :

Gas Authority India Limited (GAIL), Hindustan Petrol Corporation Limited (HPCL), Power Finance Corporation, Container Corporation of India Limited and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, etc.

## 1.3 Ways to Support Adult Education

While the current figures for illiteracy are still daunting, it is heartening to know that the Government through its Literacy Mission, as well as citizens through various forums and organisations, is now systematically approaching the issue and bringing down the adverse rates steadily. Measures such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act are wide-scale initiatives to ensure that the future generations of Indians will be given better access to education, and, therefore, not be as susceptible to illiteracy as their predecessors.

It is important to mobilize support for the promotion of literacy and adult education, especially in the following ways:

1. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Other organisations in the private sector can take the example of TCS and use their resources to develop valuable aids to assist the Government in imparting education to adults across the country. Technology-based solutions, especially mobile phone-based ones, are most likely to successfully reach out to a large portion of the population at a much lower cost.
2. **Awareness & Fundraising:** Partnering with NGOs to create awareness for the cause - for example the "Back-a-thon" (backwards walk) organised by the NGO Make a Difference (MAD) in 20 cities across the country to raise public awareness on illiteracy. Fundraising initiatives would also go a long way in providing NGOs with financial resources to implement their programs, as well as draw attention and support to their work. Companies can also consider options like "payroll giving" and regular NGO visits for their employees.
3. **Volunteering:** Assisting NGOs by enrolling as volunteers to teach the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Professionals from all walks of life can also volunteer their services to help build the capacity of the NGOs in areas such as strategy, financial management, human resource management, etc. Strengthening

the NGO as an organisation would help set a strong foundation and enable higher productivity and success of the program.

4. **Advocacy:** Outreach and impact can be significantly expanded when NGOs partner with the Government and avail the benefits of the various schemes and budgets that can be utilised for program implementation. For this, strategic advocacy efforts are required on the part of NGOs in this space.
5. **Collaboration of NGOs:** NGOs that are involved in similar causes would stand to benefit by collaborating their efforts and building on each other's learning and proven successes in the field. Endeavours must be made to identify such NGOs and find a way to synergize their programs for perhaps a more efficient and wider outreach.

Adult education programs ought to be treated slightly differently given the special needs of their beneficiaries. They should have more of a vocational training focus to them, to enable these adults to start making a living from their education as soon as possible. This will not only retain their interest in the program, but will also serve as examples to other non-literates in the community.

While NGOs may work towards these goals, programs in adult education can only be truly successful with support from the Government and from other members in the community. Going by the progress made by the National Literacy Mission and the growing support from the private sector, we can perhaps optimistically look forward to a literate India in the fairly near future.

#### **1.4 Importance of adult education:**

The literacy ratio of any country is extremely important. A country with educated adult population is bound to achieve social, economic, technological and moral progress. The importance of adult education is highlighted below in points.

1. Education enables a person to earn his living. An educated person is able to overcome his individual poverty. An educated individuals is capable of looking after himself and his family.
2. Education leads to an increase in the overall standard of living. They follow good hygiene habits as well.
3. Educated people are capable of bringing mass changes in the society. They fight against evil social practices such as dowry, early marriages, caste system, etc.
4. They contribute towards the overall progress of the nation. A country achieves great success where a large number of adults consists of educated people such as doctors, lawyers, chartered accountants, engineers, etc.
5. Educated parents are able to guide their children in their studies.

6. Educated adults can adopt teaching as their profession. In this way, they can further contribute towards building an educated nation.
7. Educated people are capable of reading and writing. They will never sign any document without fully understanding the meaning of its content. In this way, their rights are secured.

### 1.5 How to Promote Adult Education?

Adult Education can be promoted in several ways. Every literate person should spare some time to educate illiterate people as a service to humanity. There should be mass campaigns to promote adult education. The importance of literacy can be shown in Televisions, radios and other media of instruction. The Government should also encourage adults to participate in Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes.

Efforts should be made for the establishment of modern libraries in Villages. Village library should have collection of educational and informative books. There should be latest journals and leaflets to promote their awareness and understanding.

Full literacy of the masses is a great task. We must work hard to achieve it.

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