

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/>