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Ladakh's Journey to 97% Literacy: A Success Story of the ULLAS Programme

Ladakh has recently achieved a significant milestone by reaching a 97% literacy rate, marking it as a fully "functionally literate" union territory. This accomplishment is largely attributed to the successful implementation of the ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram scheme. A celebratory event held at Sindhu Sanskritik Kendra (SSK) in Leh highlighted this achievement, with Lieutenant Governor BD Mishra and other dignitaries discussing the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) and the impact of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.



[Source: DD News]

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The Road to Literacy in Ladakh

1. Historical Context

Ladakh, a union territory located in the northern part of India, has faced numerous challenges in achieving high literacy rates due to its remote location, harsh climate, and sparse population. Historically, education in Ladakh was limited, with few schools and a lack of infrastructure. However, the administration's commitment to improving education has led to significant progress over the years.

2. Implementation of ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram

The ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram, also known as the New India Literacy Programme (NILP), is a centrally sponsored initiative running from 2022 to 2027. The program aligns with NEP 2020 and aims to empower adults aged 15 and above who missed out on formal schooling. The scheme encompasses five key components: foundational literacy and numeracy, critical life skills, basic education, vocational skills, and continuing education.

3. Achieving 97% Literacy

Ladakh's achievement of a 97% literacy rate is a testament to the effectiveness of the ULLAS programme and the dedication of the local administration. The programme's success is further underscored by the enrolment of 1.29 crore learners and 35 lakh volunteer teachers through the ULLAS Mobile App, which facilitates online learning and teaching.

Celebratory Event at Sindhu Sanskritik Kendra (SSK), Leh

1. Highlights of the Event

The celebratory event at Sindhu Sanskritik Kendra (SSK) in Leh was a momentous occasion attended by various dignitaries, including Lieutenant Governor BD Mishra and Sanjay Kumar, Secretary of the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education. The event highlighted the administration's commitment to foundational literacy and numeracy and the broader goals of the NEP 2020.

2. Speeches and Acknowledgments

Lieutenant Governor BD Mishra emphasized the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy, which includes essential skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. He encouraged students to not only seek jobs but also to create them, crediting Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Sanjay Kumar applauded Ladakh for its significant accomplishment and assured continued support from the Ministry of Education to enhance the region's education system.

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Understanding the ULLAS Programme



[Source: The Statesmen]

1. Overview of ULLAS

The ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society) - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram is designed to cover all aspects of adult education, aligning with the recommendations of NEP 2020. The scheme is implemented from 2022-23 to 2026-27 and aims to foster national development by integrating adults who missed out on formal schooling into the education system.

2. Financial Outlay and Targets

The total outlay for the ULLAS scheme is Rs. 1037.90 crore, with the Government of India's share being Rs. 700 crore and the states' share being Rs. 337.90 crore. The scheme targets non-literates aged 15 years and above in all States and Union Territories, aiming to reach five crore learners, or one crore learners per year.

3. Key Components of ULLAS

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- a. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:** Focuses on basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- b. Critical Life Skills:** Includes digital literacy, legal literacy, financial literacy, healthcare awareness, childcare and education, family welfare, etc.
- c. Basic Education:** Provides foundational education up to the secondary stage (classes 9-12) for those without formal schooling.
- d. Vocational Skills:** Offers training in various trades to enhance employability.
- e. Continuing Education:** Ensures ongoing education to keep skills and knowledge current.

4. Nationwide Impact

Nationally, the ULLAS programme has benefited over 77 lakh individuals, with the ULLAS Mobile App playing a crucial role in facilitating online learning and teaching. The scheme's success in Ladakh sets a precedent for other regions to follow, demonstrating the potential for significant improvements in literacy rates through targeted educational initiatives.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

1. Vision and Objectives

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to transform the Indian education system by making it more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, aligned with the needs of the 21st century, and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student. The policy emphasizes foundational literacy and numeracy, early childhood care and education, and the integration of vocational education into the mainstream education system.

2. Relevance to Ladakh's Achievement

The NEP 2020 played a pivotal role in Ladakh's achievement of a 97% literacy rate. The policy's focus on foundational literacy and numeracy, as well as its emphasis on lifelong learning, aligns perfectly with the goals of the ULLAS programme. By providing a comprehensive framework for educational reform, the NEP 2020 has laid the groundwork for significant improvements in literacy and education across India.

Challenges and Future Prospects

1. Overcoming Geographical and Logistical Challenges

Despite the remarkable progress, Ladakh still faces numerous challenges in maintaining and further improving its literacy rate. The region's remote location, difficult terrain, and harsh climate pose significant logistical challenges for the delivery of education. However, the success of the ULLAS programme demonstrates that these challenges can be overcome with targeted interventions and the use of technology.



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2. Sustaining Literacy Rates

Sustaining high literacy rates will require ongoing efforts to improve the quality of education, provide continuous training for teachers, and ensure that educational infrastructure is maintained and expanded. The administration's commitment to foundational literacy and numeracy, as well as the continued support from the Ministry of Education, will be crucial in this regard.

3. Expanding Vocational and Continuing Education

To ensure that the benefits of increased literacy translate into improved economic opportunities, there is a need to expand vocational and continuing education programmes. These initiatives will help individuals acquire the skills necessary for employment and entrepreneurship, thereby contributing to the overall development of the region.

Ladakh's achievement of a 97% literacy rate is a significant milestone that highlights the effectiveness of the ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram and the region's dedication to education. This success is a testament to the power of targeted educational interventions and the importance of a supportive policy framework. As Ladakh continues to build on this achievement, it sets a powerful example for other regions in India and around the world, demonstrating that with commitment and innovation, remarkable progress in literacy and education is possible.