

## Illiteracy: A Bane

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After six decades of independence we are still too far away from the universal literacy. What is the reason? Why have we come to such a sorry state? Reason can be well enumerated; improper planning, poor implementation of policies, lack of infrastructure and lack of political will are the main causes responsible for such state of affairs.

If seen statistically, literacy in India has made remarkable strides since Independence. The literacy rate has increased from 18.33% in 1951 to 74.04% in 2011. This is despite the fact that during the major part of the last five decades there has been exponential growth of the population nearly 2% per annum.

A number of significant programmes have been taken up since Independence to eradicate illiteracy among adults like Social Education, Gram Shiksha Muhim and National Adult Education Programme. Yet, the problem lies in their proper implementation. Lack of motivation among school teachers, poor infrastructure facilities and corruption are the basic reasons why the result could not come as desired. There is little healthy contact between the teacher and the taught, parents are unwilling to send their daughters to school. The dropout rate still remains high. The infrastructure provided in the schools is not adequate. Many schools are being run in open or in buildings without roof or plaster.

It is absolutely necessary that the problem of illiteracy is to be tackled on war level by making awareness to the general masses about the importance of being literate. A powerful mass movement involving the Central and State Governments, Municipalities, Panchayats, NGOs, media and every other supportive institution is required to be launched.

Education is the most significant instruments of the national development. Literacy is the base of a Nation's overall progress and development. We must remember that ignorance leads to greater expectation and lack of empowerment leads to perpetrator of poverty and hunger. India is known for best skilled man power in the world, and also for largest number of illiterates in the world. The bane of illiteracy is to be root out at the earliest at all levels with all out positive efforts with strong political determination and will. Eradication of illiteracy should be given priority as delay can be disastrous.