

# Effect of Saakshar Bharat Mission in Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh

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**Abstract** This paper examines the effect of the Saakshar Bharat Mission-2012 in the district Chamba of Himachal Pradesh. Saakshar Bharat Mission was launched on the International Literacy Day, 8th September, 2009. The rationale behind the programme is to create a literate society through a variety of teaching learning programme for non-literate and neo-literate adults in the age group of 15 years and above with the prime focus on women. The programme is mainly focused on women as the magnitude of illiteracy among women is very high. Only 54.16% of women are literate as per 2001 census. The programme included 365 districts. These are those districts in which the female literacy rate is found to be less than 50% according to 2001 census. In Himachal Pradesh, Chamba district has been selected for the same as the female literacy rate according to 2001 census was 48.8%. Saakshar Bharat Mission has left positive effect on the literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh. The literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh indicates an increase of 7.30% in 2011 census. The male (5.48%) and female (9.18%) literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh also increased. The district Chamba of Himachal Pradesh indicates an increase in literacy rate by 10.28% from 2001 to 2011. The male and female literacy rate in Chamba district is increased by 7.78% to 13.29% from 2001 to 2011. As far as gender gap in district Chamba is concerned it is decreased by 5.51%.

**Keywords:** Saakshar Bharat Mission, adult education, female literacy rate

## INTRODUCTION

Despite unprecedented decadal increase in literacy, the persistence of illiteracy continues to be a serious national concern. No wonder till date India has the largest population of non-literate and semi-literate in the world. According to 2001 census, there were 304 million non-literate in the country out of which 260 million were women (National Literacy Mission, 2009). As per 2011 census, 74.0% of population of India is literate comprising 65.5% of females and 82.1% males. The incremental increase over census 2001 is 11.8% for females (Govt. of India, 2012 - Men and Women in India 14<sup>th</sup> Issue). Women in India constitute 50% of the country's human resource and

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their contributions are vital for the nation's progress. But the literacy among women is very low. Only 54.16% of women are literate as per 2001 census (Statistics on Women, 2010). The gender gap in literacy which was 18.30% in 1951 increased to 25.05% in 1961 and 26.62% in 1981 (Rani, 2010). After that there was a slow decrease in the gap as the literacy rate among women started gradually increasing after 1991 (32.17% in 1991) to 54.16% in 2001 (Censuses of India, 2001) and 65.46% in 2011. But still 34.54% of women are illiterate in India (Censuses of India, 2011).

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India has the highest number of illiterate in the world. 2001 census revealed that there were still 259.52 million illiterate adults (in the age group of 15+) in the country (Census of India, 2001). But with the world's largest illiterate population, India has been making progress. In 1985-1994 just about half of the adults in the country were literate, now the number has gone up to two-thirds (UNESCO, 2010 - The Education For All-Global Monitoring Report). Gender disparities remain deeply engrained, with 28 nations across the developing world having nine or fewer girls in school for every ten boys. Two-thirds of the total illiterate people are women.

### **WORLD ILLITERACY RATES**

The United Nations, which defines illiteracy as the inability to read and write a simple message in any language, has conducted a number of surveys on world illiteracy. In the first survey (1950) at least 44% of the world's population were found to be illiterate. A 1978 study showed the rate to have dropped to 32.5% by 1990 illiteracy worldwide had dropped to about 27%, and by 1998 to 16% (Illiteracy, 2012). However, a study by the United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) published in 1998 predicted that the world illiteracy rate would increase in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because only a quarter of the world's children were in school by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were 775 million adults who could not read and write in 2010. Globally adult literacy has increased over the past two decades from 76% in 1985-1994 to 84% in 2005-2010 (UNESCO, 2012 - The Education For All-Global Monitoring Report).

The highest illiteracy rates were found in the less developed nations of Africa, Asia, and South America; the lowest in Australia, Japan, North Korea, and the more technologically advanced nations of Europe and North America. Over two-thirds of the world's 775 million illiterate adults are found in only nine countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Pakistan); of all the illiterate adults in the world, two-thirds are women; extremely low literacy rates are concentrated in three regions, the South and West Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, where around one-third of the men and half of all women are illiterate (2010 est.), (World Demographics Profile, 2013).

## **ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN INDIA**

Adult education in India is the process to provide education to the adult in the age group of 15 and above who somehow, had failed to receive the education during their childhood. The effort of providing adult education in India has been in existence for the past several years, as it is one of the most important things in building an educated nation. Unless the adult realizes the importance of education they would never understand the need to educate their progeny. Education is one of the major stepping stones for building a strong nation. Hence, adult education is promoted on a large scale in the Indian sub continent.

Adult education in India is mainly provided at night schools. These are situated in almost all the Indian cities and villages. The provision for imparting education has been made at night because most of the people are engaged during the day. Apart from the night schools, the government of India has also set up libraries for neo-literate to continue their education.

## **SAAKSHAR BHARAT MISSION**

Eradication of illiteracy is one of the major concerns of the government of India since independence. A number of programmes have been taken up in this direction in the post independence period. The first major attempt to eradicate illiteracy in a systematic and planned way in post-independence era was made in the year 1954 when social education became an integral part of the community development programme in India. At national level, National Fundamental Education Centre (NFEC) was established in 1956 under the Ministry of Education. This centre was subsequently converted into Directorate of Adult Education in the year 1971. One more national programme to eradicate illiteracy was implemented in the country in the year 1967-68. It was called Farmers Functional Literacy Programme (FFLP). It was initiated as part of the green revolution with the objective of making farmers functionally literate in high yielding cultivation areas. The first nationwide attempt to eradicate illiteracy was made through the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) launched on October 2, 1978. The programme aimed at educating 100 million non-literate adults in the age-group of 15-35 years within a time of five years. The objective of NAEP were not only to impart literacy, but also to provide social awareness and functionality. When the NAEP was launched, simultaneously another major centrally sponsored scheme was also started in 1978 especially for rural areas. It was called Rural Functional Literacy Project (RFLP). To impart functional literacy to non-literates in the age group of 15-35 years in a time bound manner, the National Literacy Mission (NLM)

was launched in 1988 and it continued through Ninth and Tenth Five Year Plans. By the end of the Tenth Five Year Plan (March 2007), National Literacy Mission had covered 597 districts under Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), 485 districts under Post Literacy Programme (PLP) and 328 districts under Continuing Education Programme (CEP). As a cumulative outcome of these efforts, 127.45 million persons became literate, of which 60% learners were females while 23% learners belonged to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 12% to Scheduled Tribes (STs), (Department of School Education and Literacy, 2012). At present Saakshar Bharat Mission, a centrally sponsored scheme has been launched on the International Literacy Day, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2009 but it came into implementation with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2009.

### 1. TARGET OF SAAKSHAR BHARAT MISSION

The government has set a National Goal of achieving by 2012, 80% literacy rate and reducing gender gap in literacy to 10%. In addition minimizing regional social and gender disparities with special focus on Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes, Minorities, disadvantaged groups, adolescents, low literacy states and tribal areas is the other national target. This target has to be achieved through formal schooling of 6-14 years old children and literacy programme of adults (UNESCO, 2012 - Action Plan India). In order to achieve 80% literacy, the principal target of the mission is to impart functional literacy to 70 million adults in the age group of 15 years and beyond, to reduce gender disparity. To reduce social disparities, within the overall target, 14 million will be scheduled castes (10 million women + 4 million men), 8 million scheduled tribes (6 million women + 2 million men), and 12 million minorities (10 million women + 2 million men) (Saakshar Bharat Mission, 2012).

**Table 1:** Category wise targets under literacy programme (millions).

Category	Male	Female	Total
SC	4	10	14
ST	2	6	8
Muslim	2	10	12
Others	2	34	36
Total	10	60	70

Source: Saakshar Bharat Mission-2012

The above table shows that the total population to be taken under Saakshar Bharat Mission is 70 million which includes 60 million female and 10 millions male belonging to SCs, STs, Muslim, and other category. This indicates that the prime focus of the mission is female literacy.

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## 1.1 Target Specific Approach

### i) Women/ SCs/STs/Minorities

Women are the prime focus and predominant beneficiaries. The districts under this programme have been selected on the basis of female literacy below 50% according to 2001 census.

The SCs (15%), STs (8%) and minorities (20%) together constitute more than 40% of India's population. In terms of illiterate population, SCs constitute 20.5% and STs 12%, minorities especially Muslim, constitute another large block of illiterate population.

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### ii) Geographical Area Coverage

Another goal of the mission is to minimize inter and intra disparities. Inter-state disparities range between 33% and 88%. Intra-state disparities are equally stunning. To minimize regional disparities, the programme, in its first phase, that is during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan period will remain confined to districts with female literacy rate of 50% or less as per 2001 census. Nearly 18 crore non-literate adults live in these districts. According to 2001 census, 84% of India's non-literates live in rural India. An all out effort may be made to saturate rural areas first before expanding to non-rural areas. In these areas, the focus will be on women and adolescents belonging to SCs, STs, minorities, and other disadvantaged group.

Tables 2 and 3 show the national status of implementation of centrally sponsored scheme of Saakshar Bharat Mission. It also shows the number of learners identified, enrolled, certified, trained volunteer teachers (VT), house hold survey conducted, number of lok shiksha samiti at zilla, block and gram panchayat level etc.

Table 2 indicates that total number of learner identified were 384 lakhs, enrolled 92.22 lakhs, 7.57 lakhs volunteer teachers were trained and 89,324 adult education centre (AEC) were set up and 34,37,372 learners were certified till March, 2011. Table 3 shows that at present 4, 96, 48,308 record of house hold survey are there. Total illiterate persons are 1,76,71,264. Number of volunteer teachers are 4, 98,282 and prerak are 73,660. General body of lok shiksha samiti is 3,451, at block level it is 41,553 and at gram panchayat level it is 5, 79,579.

## 2. Saakshar Bharat Mission in Himachal Pradesh

Saakshar Bharat Mission-2012 started in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh in the month of August 2010 (State Resource Centre, 2011). Himachal Pradesh is among the leading states in the country in terms of literacy with 83.78%

**Table 2:** National status of centrally sponsored scheme of Saakshar Bharat Mission

S. No.		
1	Learners identified (Compiled data)	384 lakhs
2	Enrollment	97.22 lakhs
3	VTs trained	7.57 lakh
4	Literacy classes	8.67 lakh
5	AECs set up	89,324
6	Assessed till August, 2011	97,55,230
7	Certified till March, 2011	34,37,372
8	Anticipated number of certified literate adults by March, 2012	160 lakhs

Source: Govt. of India, 2012 - Conference of State Education Secretaries: Adult Education

**Table 3:** National status - Saakshar Bharat Mission.

S.No	Uploading survey of data	No. of Records
1	House Hold	4,96,48,308
2	Illiterate (TIP)	1,76,71,264
3	Volunteer Teachers	4,98,282
4	Prerak	73,660
5	Gen Council (SLMA)	334
6	Exec Committee (SLMA)	179
7	Exec Committee (ZP Lok Shiksha Samiti)	2,001
8	Gen Body (ZP Lok Shiksha Samiti)	3,451
9	BP Lok Shiksha Samiti	41,553
10	GP Lok Shiksha Samiti	5,79,579

Source: Govt. of India, 2012 - Conference of State Education Secretaries: Adult Education

literacy rate (male 90.83% and female 76.60%) as per 2011 census (Govt. of Himachal Pradesh, 2010-11) and therefore, all the districts except Chamba have a higher literacy percentage. Talking of female literacy, the gender gap has come down by 3.7% in 2011 as compared to 2001 for the state (Census of Himachal Pradesh, 2011) as a whole and now stand at 14.23% which is better than the all India figure of 16.68%. The gender gap of Chamba district was adverse which was 27.56% in 2001 and 22.05% in 2011. According to 2001 census, Chamba

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district had the lowest female literacy rate in Himachal Pradesh i.e. 48.8%. The gain in female literacy rate in 2001-2011 periods has been highest in Chamba district which is 13.29%. (Census of Himachal Pradesh, 2011).

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### **2.1. Facts About District Chamba of Himachal Pradesh**

Many mobile literacy centres have been launched in Chamba district under the centrally sponsored Saakshar Bharat Mission-2012. Nomad gujjar families are being imparted free education and made fully literate by organising classes in these mobile literacy centres for them. Besides this, the literacy classes are being held in 54 madarsas in the district (Prashar, 2012 - Saakshar Bharat Yatra Flagged Off).

The centrally sponsored scheme of Saakshar Bharat Mission-2012 launched in Chamba district has revealed that 5,570 government employees working in different departments in the district are still illiterate. These illiterate employees are serving in various government departments at the lower level such as peons, beldars, part-timers, mid-day meal workers etc. Official sources of the mission revealed that the Public Works Department had the highest number of illiterate employees (2,777), Irrigation and Public Health Department had 299 such employees and the Forest Department had 73 illiterate employees. Amazingly, the Education Department in Chamba district had 583 illiterate employees and the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board had 60 staff members in this category (Prashar, 2012 - 5,570 govt. employee illiterate in Chamba district).

There were a total of 80,000 illiterate persons in the district who would be taught by 8,000 volunteer teachers. 283 Lok Shiksha Kendras had also been set up in 283 panchayats of the district. Saakshar Bharat Mission clubs were also being formed in government colleges, senior secondary and high schools of the district. As many as 1,35,824 illiterates had been identified through a household survey conducted in the district. Out of them, 34,980 were attending literacy classes in the 7,126 literacy centres running in the district and 8,000 literacy centres had already been set up under the control of 283 Lok Shiksha Kendras in the district (Prashar, 2012 - 5,570 govt. employee illiterate in Chamba district).

### **2.2 Present Status of Saakshar Bharat Mission in Himachal Pradesh**

In Himachal Pradesh the Chamba district is the one which is covered under this mission. The Saakshar Bharat Mission scheme is started since September, 2009 but in Chamba district it was started from August 2010. After conducting survey it was found that 1, 35,824 persons are illiterate. The 2011 census shows that total literacy rate of Chamba district has increased by 11.10% (Govt. of Himachal Pradesh, 2011-12).



The present status of Saakshar Bharat Mission in Himachal Pradesh is as under:

- (a) One eligible district sanctioned in 2010-11.
- (b) All major preparatory activities completed.
- (c) 1,35,824 learners identified.
- (d) 3,772 learners certified till March, 2011.
- (e) 6,837 reported to have appeared in the August, 2011 assessment .
- (f) 50,000 learners targeted to be made literate during the project period.
- (g) All Resource Persons trained. 50,000 primers distributed.
- (h) 8,000 literacy classes started, 30,981 learners enrolled.
- (i) Rs. 129 lakh spent against total release of Rs. 195 lakh.

(Source: Govt. of India, 2012. Conference of State Education Secretaries: Adult Education)

**i) Overview-Literacy Rate (%)**

Table 4 indicates the literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh and Chamba district.

**Table 4:** Literacy Rate of Himachal Pradesh and District Chamba.

	Himachal Pradesh			Chamba		
	2001	2011	% Increased/ Decreased	2001	2011	% Increased/ Decreased
All Person	76.48	83.78	7.30	62.91	73.19	10.28
Male	85.35	90.83	5.48	76.41	84.19	7.78
Female	67.42	76.60	9.18	48.85	62.14	13.29
Gender Gap	17.93	14.23	-3.70	27.56	22.05	-5.51

Source: Census of Himachal Pradesh, 2011

There is an increase in the literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh and Chamba district from 2001 to 2011. The literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh was 77.13% in 2001 and 83.78% in 2011. So there is an increase of 7.30% in literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh from 2001 to 2011. The gender gap of Himachal Pradesh has decreased by 3.71% which was 17.94% in 2001 and 14.23% in 2011. The Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh shows an increase in literacy rate of 10.28% from 2001 to 2011. The literacy rate of Chamba district was 62.91% in 2001 and 73.19% in 2011. The gender gap in Chamba district has also reduced by 5.51%. As far as female literacy rate in Chamba district is concerned there is an increase of 13.29%.



## ii) Progress of Teaching Learning in District Chamba of Himachal Pradesh

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The progress of teaching learning under basic literacy programme of Saakshar Bharat Mission in district Chamba of Himachal Pradesh is displayed in table 5.

**Table 5: Progress of teaching learning under basic literacy programme of Saakshar Bharat Mission**

Achievement during 2011-2012									
Social/age categories	Current Enrollment			Completed basic literacy primer			Completed bridge primer (if applicable)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>i) Total number of learners</b>									
a) at adult education centre(AEC)	4599	1143	3456	4599	1143	3456	Teaching work is going on		
b) literacy learning centre (LLC)	42898	12483	30415	42898	12483	30415	Teaching work is going on		
C)Total (a+b)	47497	13626	33871	47497	13626	33871			
<b>ii) Caste/regional wise breakup of learners</b>									
a)Scheduled Castes	11553	3175	8378	11553	3175	8378	Teaching work is going on		
b)Scheduled Tribes	18273	5710	12563	18273	5710	12563			
c)Minorities	2746	927	1819	2746	927	1819			
d) Others	14925	3814	11111	14925	3814	11111			
<b>iii) Age wise breakup of learners</b>									
a) age group 15-19	1794	577	1217	1794	577	1217	Teaching work is going on		
b) age group 20-24	4810	1252	3558	4810	1252	3558			
c)age group 25-34	10258	2623	7635	10258	2623	7635			
d)35years and above	30635	9174	21461	30635	9174	21461			

Source: Directorate of Education: Himachal Pradesh

Above table indicates that the current enrollment of the learners and the learners who have completed basic literacy primer at Adult Education Centre (AEC) is 4,599 and at Literacy Learning Centre (LLC) are 42,898 with the total of 47,497. The table further indicates that the current enrollment of scheduled

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castes (SCs), scheduled tribes (STs), minorities and others are 11,553, 18,273, 2,746, and 14,925 respectively and the same number of all these categories have completed the basic literacy primer. The learners enrolled within the age group 15-19 years are 1,794, 20-24 years are 4,810, 25-34 are 10,258, and above 35 years are 30,635.

### iii) Physical Progress of District Chamba –Himachal Pradesh

Table 6 shows the physical progress of district Chamba of Himachal Pradesh which is cumulative up to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2012.

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**Table 6:** Physical progress of district Chamba of Himachal Pradesh

Activity	Target	Achievement
Survey(No. of Gram Panchayats)	283	283
Identification of learners	Total illiterate population	1,35,824
Setting up of Adult Education Centres(AEC) (No. of AECs Old+New)	283	283
Engagement of Preraks	566	566
No. of VTs Trained	5,408	7,148
Enrollment of learners in Adult Literacy Classes	50,000	47,497
Teaching Learning Material printing of primers	50,000	50,000
Teaching Learning Material distribution	50,000	50,000
Learners Assessed (VT assisted)	50,000	35,741
Learner Assessed (Self taught) and VT	NIL	12,221
Total learner certified	50,000	10,789

Source: Directorate of Education: Himachal Pradesh

In district Chamba of Himachal Pradesh 283 gram panchayats have been selected under Saakshar Bharat Mission. The total number of illiterate population was 1, 35,824. 283 adult education centres have been set up, 566 preraks engaged and 5,408 volunteer teachers (VTs) have been trained. The total number of learners enrolled in adult literacy classes were 47,497 as against the target of 50,000. The total number of learners assessed and certified is 35,741 and 10,789 respectively, as against the target of 50,000.

The literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh shows an increase from 2001 (77.13%) to 2011 (83.78%). The female literacy rate indicates an increase of 9.18% in Himachal Pradesh while in Chamba district the increase is 13.29%. The total illiterate population in district Chamba was found 1,35,824 and till March, 2012 only 10,789 learners were certified as against the target of 50,000.

## CONCLUSION

In India many programmes have been launched to make adult people literate. Every programme had its importance whether they had been successful or not, they left an impact which cannot be underestimated. People who are not able to approach the previous literacy campaigns with one or the other reason, Saakshar Bharat Mission-2012 brings a new opportunity to them. Saakshar Bharat Mission has left positive effect on the literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh. The literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh indicates an increase of 7.30% in 2011 census. The male and female literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh also increased by 5.48% and 9.18% respectively. The district Chamba of Himachal Pradesh indicates an increase in literacy rate by 10.28% from 2001 to 2011. The male and female literacy rate has increased by 7.78% and 13.29% respectively. As far as gender gap in district Chamba is concerned it has decreased by 5.51%. Saakshar Bharat Mission will definitely help in the eradication of illiteracy in India.

Govt. of India has been making strenuous efforts to make adult population literate in far flung and backward areas of the country by launching various programmes. Therefore literate population of these areas should take moral responsibility to encourage illiterate population of respective areas to join such programmes and get benefitted from these programmes which shall be useful for them in their day to day life.

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