

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY–2015 CELEBRATED

**WITHOUT LITERACY EMPOWERMENT NOT POSSIBLE, SAYS PRESIDENT OF
INDIA SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE**

New Delhi, September 08th, 2015

Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President of India said that all leaders including Mahatma Gandhi have emphasised on literacy. Literacy was included even in Millennium Development Goals. He said this while speaking at the function held for celebrating International Literacy Day 2015 at New Delhi today. The function was organised by National Literacy Mission Authority, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The President further said that we have significantly raised our literacy rates from 18% in 1951 to 72.98% in 2011 but are yet to achieve 100% literacy. We must strive to achieve the goal of literacy laid down in XII Five Year Plan and gender gap in literacy should not remain more than 10 percentage points. Saakshar Bharat in combination with Swachh Bharat has the potential to transform India. Literacy gives empowerment and without it empowerment is not possible. Literacy has assumed greater significance in light of paradigm shift which has taken place in last one decade by giving rights to people backed by enactments in areas of employment, education and information etc. Therefore, we must consider empowerment and sustainability through literacy. President congratulated Minister of Human Resource Development for fixing target of 100% literacy under Saansad Aadarsh Gram Yojna. In his closing remarks, he said that we must make Bharat – Saakshar Bharat, Swachh Bharat – a Bharat of our dreams!

Smt. Smriti Irani, Union Minister of Human Resource Development, in her address, congratulated the literacy functionaries and volunteers and said that it is a matter of prestige that in the last 15 months a record number of 2.28 crore learners have been made literate. Scope of literacy has been expanded to include economic empowerment of beneficiaries and around one crore bank accounts have been opened under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna. Efforts of literacy functionaries deserve appreciation and require to be stated in figures and it

must be mentioned that very recently and in a short span of one month, they have mobilised and facilitated around 92.7 lakh beneficiaries to avail benefits of Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojna. She said national policy on education is being revised and for the revised policy, she requested one and all to suggest ways and means to achieve the goal of universal literacy. The Ministry has taken the pledge to achieve 100% literacy by March 2016, in adopted Saansad Aadarsh Grams located in 410 districts and made an appeal to state and district representatives to take similar kind of pledge for their respective operational areas. She made an appeal to literacy functionaries and officials to spread the message to honour women in family and only then one would be considered as literate and educated.

Shri Upendra Kushwaha, Minister of State for Human Resource Development (School Education & Literacy) in his welcome address said that illiteracy in India or elsewhere is a blot on the face of humanity. Illiteracy must be eradicated and it is the responsibility of educated ones to do it. It is unfortunate that one out of every five men and one third of women in India are still illiterate. Our country has progressed and we are moving towards the goal of literacy but much remains to be done. Therefore, whoever you are, wherever you are you must contribute towards efforts for eradication of illiteracy.

Shri Shigeru Aoyagi, Director, UNESCO, at New Delhi read out the message of Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General, UNESCO. Ms. Bokova said, UNESCO's message on this International Literacy Day is to allow women and men to participate fully in their societies, we need greater investments and more effective policies to embed action for literacy within wider development policies, supported by innovative mechanisms that generate positive synergies across all policy areas that are vital to build more just and cohesive societies. This is essential to all efforts to build a better future for all, on the basis of human rights and dignity.

A short film, titled, 'Saaksharta Se Samajik Suraksha Ki Ore', was screened during the function. It highlighted the efforts done under Saakshar Bharat programme to mobilise and facilitate the target groups to avail benefits of financial inclusion and social security schemes of Government of India especially Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojna.

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee also presented 11 Saakshar Bharat Awards - 2015 to States, Districts, Blocks, Gram Panchayats, State Resource Centre (SRC) and Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) for best performance in the field of adult education and skill development. Following are the list of awardees:

Category of Award	Winners
Best Performing State	Tamil Nadu
Best Performing District	1. Bastar, Chhattisgarh 2. Dharampuri, Tamil Nadu 3. Haveri, Karnataka
Best Performing Gram Panchayat	1. Palamalai, Salem District, Tamil Nadu 2. Giroud, Raipur District, Chhattisgarh 3. Poosarlapadu, Srikakulam District, Andhra Pradesh 4. Ankireddygudem, Nalgonda District, Telangana 5. Khanggabok Part - II, Mayai Leikai, Thoubal District, Manipur
Best Performing Resource Support Organisation	1. State Resource Centre (SRC), West Bengal 2. Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh

Shri S. C. Khuntia, Secretary (School Education & Literacy), Shri Y.S.K. Sheshu Kumar, Joint Secretary (Adult Education) & Director General, National Literacy Mission Authority and Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director, UNESCO, New Delhi Office & Representative to Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka were also present on the occasion. Vote of thanks was proposed by Sh. Y. S. K. Sheshu Kumar, JS (AE) and Director General, National Literacy Mission Authority.

The function was attended by dignitaries, guests and beneficiaries & functionaries of adult education programme.

GG/RT/DS/RK/ILD