

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STATE

Assam is a north-eastern state of India, known for its rich cultural heritage, lush tea gardens, extensive river systems, and diverse ethnic communities.

Geography:

Gateway to the north-eastern region of India, Assam is bordered by Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, and West Bengal, along with international borders with Bangladesh and Bhutan. Most of the plains of the state is situated in the Brahmaputra Valley, through which the Brahmaputra River, one of the major rivers of India, flows, creating fertile plains suitable for agriculture. Southern extension of the state lies in the Barak Valley, through which the Barak River passes through. The state also features hilly regions to the north and south, with rich biodiversity that includes wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, such as Kaziranga National Park, famous for the one-horned rhinoceros.

Culture and Demographics:

Assam has a multicultural society with several ethnic groups. People of Assam are collectively known as Assamese, a social admixture of different tribes like Bodos, Mishings, Tiwas, Karbis, Dimasas, Kacharis, Rabhas and various other tribal and non-tribal communities. Assamese is the *lingua franca* of the state and different dialects of Assamese and tribal languages are used to communicate internally by the groups. Assam is known for its vibrant festivals such as Bihu, Baikhu, Baisagu etc. which celebrate the cropping seasons.

Economy:

The economy of Assam is primarily agriculture-based, with tea being a major crop. Other economic activities include oil and natural gas production, silk production (notably *Muga* and *Eri* silk), and weaving. The Brahmaputra River supports fishing and inland water transport, while tourism plays an essential role due to the state's natural beauty and wildlife.

Total Population:

As per Census 2011, total population Assam is **3,12,05,576** (Male= **1,59,39,443** and Female= **1,52,66,133**).

Literacy rate:

As per the Census of India 2011, the literacy rate of **Assam** was **72.19%** (Male literacy at 77.85% and Female literacy at 66.27%). According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025, the literacy rate of Assam has increased to **88.1%** for persons aged 7 years and above.

The progress is reflected in the successive Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Reports shown below:

PLFS Report	Literacy Rate of Assam	Literacy Rate of India
	(%)	(%)
PLFS 2021-22	87.90	79.7
PLFS 2022-23	77.50	80.3
PLFS 2023-24	87.00	80.9
PLFS 2025	88.10	81.1

DEFINITION OF LITERACY IN INDIA

In a progressive step to advance the nation's literacy goals, the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India has communicated a refined and comprehensive description of literacy tailored to the Indian context. This initiative aligns with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and aims to expedite the attainment of full literacy across all States/UTs under the **ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram**. This also supports the SDG 4.6 which is about ensuring that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030.

In light of this, the Department has recognized the necessity of establishing a clear and inclusive definition of literacy that extends beyond basic reading and writing skills. Literacy will now be defined as, **“the ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, i.e., to identify, understand, interpret and create, along with critical life skills such as digital literacy, financial literacy, etc.”** This approach ensures that individuals are equipped to fully engage in and contribute to society.

(Source: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=2049494®=3&lang=2>)

ULLAS – About the Scheme:

ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) is a literacy and education initiative, also known as Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram (New India Literacy Programme- NILP) of Ministry of Education, Government of India. Its vision is to make Bharat “*Jan Jan Saakshar*” (Every Citizen Literate) by promoting volunteer-driven education and lifelong learning opportunities for persons aged 15 years and above. The programme is rooted in the spirit of Kartavya Bodh (sense of duty) and aims to bridge literacy gaps while fostering practical critical life skills.

A Centrally Sponsored Scheme “New India Literacy Programme (NILP)” was approved by the Government of India for Financial Years 2022-27 with the vision “Education for all”. In Assam, the scheme **commenced from the year 2023** and has since been implemented across all 34 (thirty-four) administrative districts of the State.

Along with the recommendations of NEP-2020 on Adult Education, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.6 of the United Nations mandates that “By 2030 ensure that all youth and adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy”. It is therefore imperative that the country should eliminate illiteracy and achieve 100% literacy by 2030.

The major targets under SDG 4 are as follows:

- 4.1 Complete free primary and secondary education for all
- 4.2 Access to early childhood education and care.
- 4.3 Affordable and quality technical, vocational, tertiary, and university.
- 4.4 Skills for employment and entrepreneurship.
- 4.5 Eliminate gender disparities and ensure equal access.
- 4.6 Ensure all youth and most adults have numeracy and literacy.
- 4.7 Knowledge and skills for sustainable development.

OBJECTIVES OF NILP:

- Foundational Literacy and Numeracy,
- Critical Life Skills,

- Basic Education (Equivalency),
- Vocational Skills Development, and
- Continuing Education which are necessary for a citizen of the 21st century.

ULLAS – Strategy for implementation:

1. Implementation through volunteers:

The scheme has been envisaged to be implemented through volunteers. Volunteers will include school students of Class-V and above, Pre-service students in TEIs (Teacher Education Institutes for M.Ed./B.Ed./D.El.Ed./B.T.C./J.B.T. etc. courses) under NCTE, Community members including from that of HEIs, volunteers from NYKS, NSS, NCC, etc, volunteers from CSOs, community, housewives, Anganwadi workers, teachers, PRIs, and other institutions.

2. Conduct of Survey of Non-literates and VTs:

Surveyors will be identified/deputed by the districts in the States/UTs at the school level for the identification of non-literates and Volunteer Teachers (VTs).

3. Identification of non-literates (learners) and volunteers.

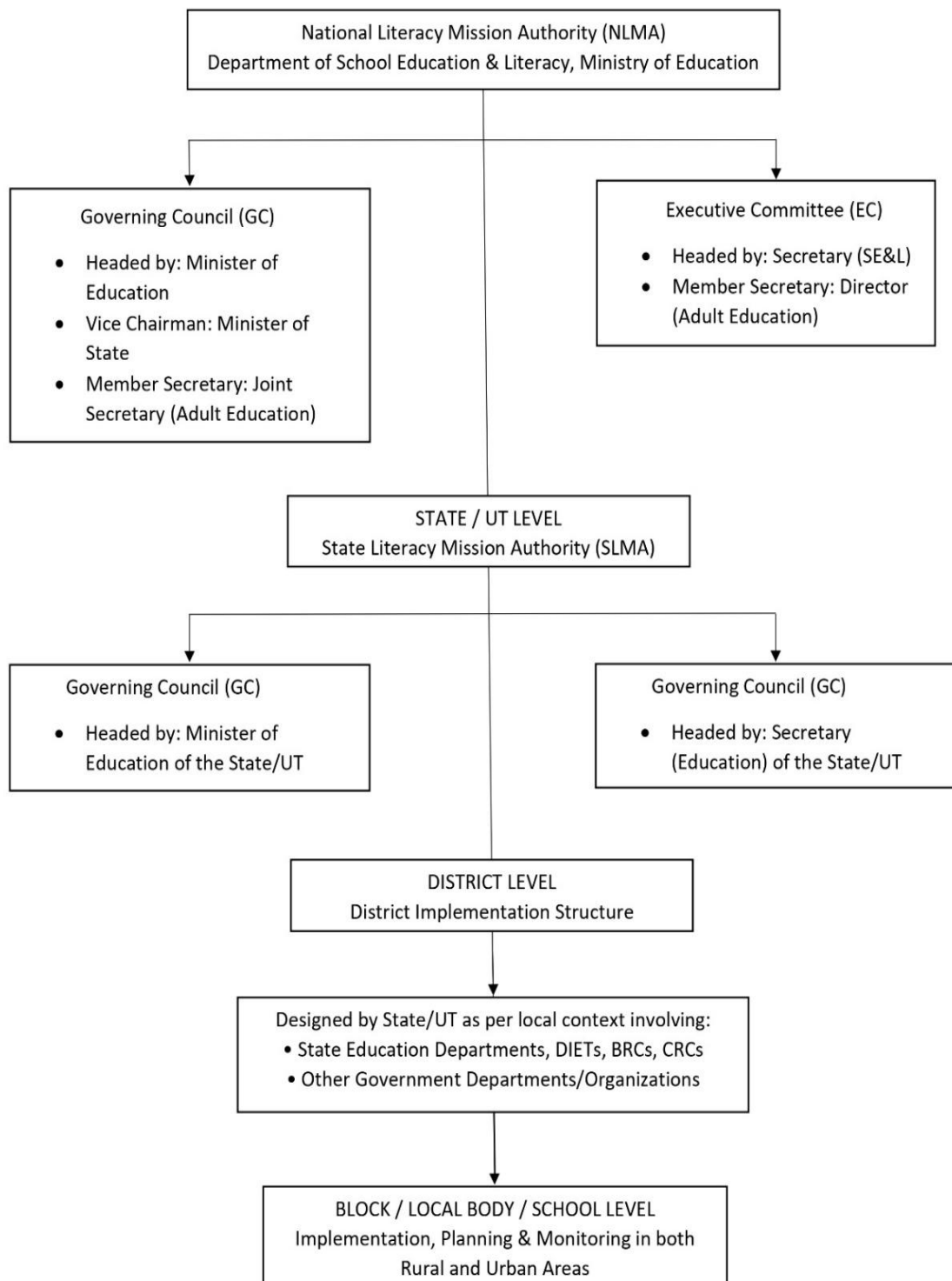
4. After identification, the **Tagging/Matching/Batching process will be undertaken, where the surveyors will suitably tag, match, and batch the Volunteer Teachers (VTs) with the identified non-literates.**

5. State Centre for Literacy (SCL) established in State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) would provide learning material, like Primers, guidebook, question papers, Teaching learning materials both in online and offline mode.

6. Assessment and certification of learners:

- State/ UTs would be responsible for conducting the assessment tests, **twice in a year**, at Government/ aided schools, community halls, or any other suitable places near the schools.
- The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) would jointly issue certificate to successful learners.

Implementing Agencies of *ULLAS*:



IMPLEMENTATION IN ASSAM:

In Assam, the scheme is being implemented at the State level by the **State Literacy Mission Authority (SLMA)** under the Directorate of Non-Formal and Adult Education (DNF&AE), Assam. At the district level, the scheme is implemented through the respective **District Literacy Mission Authorities (DLMA)** across the districts of Assam.

For the academics related to the primers and guidebooks, the **State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)**, functioning as the State Centre for Literacy (SCL), receives the learning materials from the Centre and translates them into four languages. The materials are also suitably modified to reflect the culture and context of Assam.

The focus areas include:

Foundational Literacy & Numeracy: Teaching basic reading, writing, and arithmetic to non-literate youth and adults.

Critical Life Skills: Awareness on health, hygiene, financial literacy, digital skills, and environmental responsibility.

Volunteerism: Mobilising students, teachers, retired professionals, and community members as ULLAS *Mitras* (volunteer teachers).

Localized Content: Using Assamese and other regional languages to make learning culturally relevant and accessible.

Performances by districts in Assam:

➤ **Learners identification:**

As of 13th May 2026, 2 (two) districts viz. Hailakandi and Charaideo have achieved **100% identification**. Another 2 (two) districts Golaghat and Lakhimpur have achieved more than **80% identification**.

➤ **VT Identification:**

As of 13th May 2026, only 1 (One) district, Hailakandi has achieved more than **80% VT identification**. Other districts are at various stages of progress.

As per the guidelines issued by the Government of India, the ideal ratio of learners to Volunteer Teachers (VTs) is 1:10.

Special Features in Assam:

- Community Learning Centres in rural, tea garden areas and Char areas to reach marginalized groups.
- Awareness Campaigns through local events like street plays, bicycle rallies, tree plantation activities, community meetings and cultural programmes like folk song on ULLAS, short movie and radio broadcasts to encourage participation and mass mobilization.

ACHIEVEMENT:

- So far, 5 (five) Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Tests (FLNATs) under ULLAS have conducted in Assam. Cumulatively, more than 11 lakhs learners have successfully passed in all these FLNATs.
- ULLAS in Assam is helping reduce adult illiteracy, empowering women and marginalized communities, and creating a culture of lifelong learning. By blending traditional teaching with modern tools, it is making education more inclusive and sustainable.
- One of the best practices of Assam was conducting FLNAT in the **jails of Morigaon and Barpeta** districts. Literate prisoners were engaged as volunteer teachers to educate the non-literate prisoners/ UTPs.

CONCLUSION:

- ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for all in Society) or NILP is a holistic scheme that aims 100% literacy in India by 2030 with the motto “***Education for All***”.
- Assam is performing considerably well in educating the non-literates of the age group 15+ years. It is expected that the state would soon be declared ‘***fully literate***’ state.
- With the painstaking efforts of the SLMA, Assam, thousands of non-literate people of the state are now freed from the evil bondages of illiteracy.