

Unesco: Bangladesh literacy rate reaches all-time high of 72.76% in 2016

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Over 90% of men and women in Bangladesh aged from 15 to 24 years are now considered literate

The literacy rate in Bangladesh has risen remarkably over the past decade to an all-time high of 72.76% in 2016, according to data from the Unesco Institute for Statistics (UIS).

The figure marks an increase of 26.1 percentage points from 2007, when the literacy rate was a mere 46.66%.

Over the same period, the literacy rate for females has risen from 43.74% to 69.90%, and for males from 49.83% to 75.62%.

The literacy rate for men and women aged between 15 to 24 years increased to 92.24% in 2016, up from 61.87% in 2007.

The data also revealed that the number of educated young males and females rose dramatically over the past 10 years.

This phenomenal rise in literacy rate is one of the major factors that the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) of the United Nations considered when declaring Bangladesh's eligibility for graduating from Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

The UIS data said Bangladesh is now ahead of India (69.30%), Nepal (59.63%), Bhutan (57.03%) and Pakistan (56.98%) in the global literacy rate index.

Unesco attributed the success to the Bangladesh government's policies and fiscal support for the education sector.

According to UIS, the government doubled expenditure in the education sector to over \$4.3 billion in 2016 from just under \$2 billion in 2008. The fiscal allocation for the education sector in the budget for the 2017-18 financial year was over \$7.8 billion (Tk65,444 crore).

According to the Education Ministry, the government has been implementing numerous projects since 2009, with the aim of building up skilled and competent human resources. The projects mainly revolve around creating opportunities for enrolment at all levels of education.

The government has also prepared the National Education Policy 2010 to ensure the right to education for all.

In addition, policy has emphasized on ensuring basic resources for education, digitisation of classrooms and textbooks, curriculum reforms, introduction of creative question papers,

infrastructure development, and the modernization of madrasa education.

As part of this development, the “Sheikh Russel Digital Lab and Multimedia Classroom” has already been established at over 37,000 educational institutions across Bangladesh.

Furthermore, more than 26,000 primary schools have so far been nationalized, in a bid to set up a public primary school in every village of the country.

At the secondary level, Upazila ICT Training and Resource Centres have been established and 295 non-government schools have been transformed into model schools in 315 upazilas.

Construction of new buildings for 5,500 non-government educational institutions, including schools and colleges, is also ongoing.

On average, the government distributes 354.6 million textbooks to students in Bangladesh every year. About 3.8 million students from the 6th grade to undergraduate level are provided with stipends and other forms of assistance at a cost of Tk675 crore.

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