

No literate adult among 26 percent rural families

At least 26 percent of rural families in India and eight percent of urban families have no literate member over the age of 15, says a National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) report.

The report - the third of a seven-part series based on employment-unemployment data of the NSS' 61st round - says that in almost 50 percent of rural families there is still no literate woman above the age of 15. This figure is naturally smaller in urban families, says the survey, placing female illiteracy above the age of 15 at 20 percent.

Of the people surveyed, 73 percent belonged to rural India, accounting for 75 percent of the total population covered by the organisation. The literacy rate was 64 percent during 2004-05, the report says, adding that it was 55 percent in rural areas and 75 percent in urban.

Sixty-four percent of rural males and 45 percent of rural females were literate. The literacy rates among their urban counterparts were much higher at 81 percent and 69 percent, respectively, said the report.

The highest incidence of illiteracy among those above the age of 15 is rural Bihar with records showing 38 percent and the lowest is Kerala, recording only three percent.

In urban areas, too, Kerala leads in literacy, with only one percent of the state's population above the age of 15 turning out to be illiterate. Literacy is marginally higher among urban Biharis than urban Rajasthanis, with 16 percent illiteracy in Rajasthan cities as against 15 percent in Bihar towns. West Bengal stands marginally better at 14 percent.

The proportion of non-literates was highest in the bottom monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) class and it decreased gradually as the MPCE increased; this proportion was largely similar in rural and urban areas.

The literacy report, which provides statistics on literacy, attainment of general and technical education, current attendance in educational institutions, covers all of India except parts of Jammu and Kashmir, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands that remained inaccessible through the year.

The level of literacy in Jammu and Kashmir is adequately high and the situation in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is also better than most other states, said government sources.

(© IANS / India eNews)