

REPORT ON THE OBSERVANCE OF THE 60th INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY 2026

Theme: “Literacy for People, Planet and Prosperity”

8 September, 2026



Indian Adult Education Association
IAEA Head Office, 17-B, IP Estate, New Delhi

1. Introduction

The Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA), New Delhi, observed the **60th International Literacy Day** on **8 September 2026** at its Head Office. The programme was organised on the theme “**Literacy for People, Planet and Prosperity**”, highlighting the wider significance of literacy in promoting individual empowerment, social development, sustainable communities and economic prosperity.

The observance brought together IAEA officials, faculty members, researchers, students, interns, learners, representatives of partner institutions and members of the local community. The programme comprised a **Community Mobilisation and Literacy Awareness Rally**, an inaugural session, addresses by distinguished speakers, a panel discussion on *People, Planet and Prosperity*, and the commencement of a **Five-Day Research Methodology Course** in blended mode.

The programme emphasised that literacy should not be understood merely as the ability to read and write. Rather, it is a continuing and multidimensional process that contributes to awareness, informed decision-making, community participation, livelihood opportunities and meaningful engagement in social and economic life.

2. Objectives of the Programme

The International Literacy Day observance was organised with the following objectives:

- To create awareness about the importance of literacy and lifelong learning.
- To promote literacy and continuing education among members of the local community.
- To encourage community participation in educational and skill-development initiatives.
- To create awareness about digital literacy and vocational skills as important components of contemporary education.
- To examine the relationship between literacy, sustainable development and prosperity.
- To provide a platform for academic interaction on contemporary issues in adult and continuing education.
- To promote research capacity and methodological learning among scholars, educators and other participants associated with adult education.

3. Major Activities

Activity 1: Community Mobilisation and Literacy Awareness Rally

Theme: “Saksharata Se Viksit Bharat”

The International Literacy Day observance commenced with a **Community Mobilisation and Literacy Awareness Rally** organised under the theme “Saksharata Se Viksit Bharat.”

The rally commenced from **Atal Canteen, Anna Nagar**, and proceeded through the local lanes of Anna Nagar and the **Sanjay Amar Colony** area. The rally was led by **Prof. Rajesh, Director (I/c), IAEA**.



The activity witnessed active participation from IAEA staff members, scholars pursuing internships, learners associated with the IAEA Skill Centre and Computer Literacy Centre, and members of the local community. The participation of different groups reflected the collective nature of the literacy movement and the importance of involving educational institutions and communities in literacy promotion.



The rally focused on creating awareness regarding:

- Literacy and continuing education;
- Digital literacy;
- Skill development;
- Lifelong learning; and
- Educational opportunities available through IAEA initiatives.

During the mobilisation activity, participants interacted directly with members of the surrounding communities and sought to understand their educational needs, interests and aspirations. Community members expressed interest in literacy and skill-development classes offered through IAEA initiatives.

The rally therefore served not only as an awareness activity but also as an important **community outreach initiative**, strengthening the relationship between the IAEA and the communities in its surrounding areas.

The activity further reinforced the understanding that literacy should not remain confined to classrooms and formal institutions. Literacy initiatives need to reach communities directly and create accessible opportunities for individuals to continue learning and develop relevant skills.



Activity 2: Celebration of International Literacy Day and Panel Discussion

Theme: “Literacy for People, Planet and Prosperity”

Following the community mobilisation rally, the main programme was organised at the **K.C. Choudhury Memorial Hall**.

The inaugural programme consisted of the ceremonial proceedings, welcome remarks, presidential address, keynote address, addresses by distinguished participants, panel discussion, and vote of thanks.

3.2.1 Welcome and Ceremonial Proceedings

The programme commenced with a two-minute silence in memory of the deceased students of the University of Delhi.



This was followed by a warm welcome to the dignitaries and participants, followed by a soulful **prayer sung by Ms. Chanchal**, a student of the Skill Centre course run by IAEA. The prayer created a serene and positive ambience, setting a graceful tone for the proceedings.



This was followed by the **ceremonial lighting of the lamp**, symbolising the illumination of knowledge, learning and enlightenment. The lighting of the lamp symbolised the spread of knowledge and awareness, reflecting the central objectives of literacy and adult education. The opening proceedings also introduced the participants to the significance of International Literacy

Day and the broader theme of **People, Planet and Prosperity**.

Prof. Rajesh, Director I/c, IAEA, and other staff members warmly welcomed all the dignitaries and guests to the programme. He expressed his sincere gratitude to the distinguished guests, speakers, faculty members, students and participants for their gracious presence and valuable support. As a gesture of welcome and in keeping with the theme “People, Planet and Prosperity,” the dignitaries were presented with saplings, symbolising growth, sustainability and the collective responsibility towards a greener and more prosperous future.



Ms. Neha Gupta, Librarian-cum-Documentation Officer welcomed **Dr. Neha Nainwal** on her appointment as **Associate Professor at Jamia Millia Islamia** and extended his sincere congratulations and best wishes to her for her new academic role.



3.2.2 Presidential Address

The presidential address was delivered by **Prof. L. Raja, President, IAEA**.



In his address, emphasis was placed on the continuing relevance of adult education and literacy in addressing changing social and developmental realities. The programme highlighted the need to view literacy from a broader developmental perspective.

Literacy contributes not only to individual learning but also to people's ability to understand their circumstances, access opportunities, make informed decisions and participate in processes affecting their lives.

The address also reinforced the importance of IAEA's continuing efforts in the areas of adult education, community participation, skill development and research.

3.2.3 Keynote Address – Shri A. R. Nanda, IAS (Retd.)

The keynote address was delivered by **Shri A. R. Nanda, IAS (Retd.)**, former Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The address began with an introduction to his distinguished career and committed public service, presented by Mr. Vivek Kumar Chahar.

Shri A. R. Nanda, a 1965-batch IAS officer of the Odisha cadre, served the nation with distinction for nearly four decades. During his career, he held several important positions, including the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, the Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, Ministries of Finance, Mines and Power. He has held senior assignments in the Government of Odisha, including the Chief Minister's Office, Executive Director, Population Foundation of



India, Member, Advisory Group on Community Action under the National Rural Health Mission. A significant aspect of his address concerned the importance of perspective in understanding literacy, development and community work. He emphasised that the experiences of people themselves can provide important insights into understanding and addressing social situations.

He also highlighted the relationship between **human resources and natural resources**, drawing attention to the fact that development depends upon the effective and responsible use of both. Human beings should not be viewed merely as beneficiaries of development programmes but also as important resources capable of contributing to social change.

Another important point was the need to work **with communities by understanding them**. Community-based interventions are more meaningful when they take into account the experiences, needs and circumstances of the people concerned. Understanding existing community structures is therefore an important aspect of designing relevant educational and developmental interventions.

The address also touched upon the importance of **tradition and tribal culture**. Local traditions and cultural practices form an important part of people's lived experiences and need to be understood in the context of social development. Educational and developmental initiatives can become more relevant and participatory when they recognise and appropriately engage with existing cultural practices. The address consequently presented literacy and development as processes that require an understanding of people, their experiences, their environment and their cultural context.

3.2.4 Address by Prof. S. M. Patnaik

Prof. S. M. Patnaik, Director, Centre for Tribal Studies, University of Delhi - Distinguished Guest, also shared his perspectives during the programme.

His discussion drew attention to changing demographic and social realities. Among the observations discussed was the decline in the child population and its implications for educational planning and the future demographic structure of society.

The discussion also emphasised the importance of ensuring that available resources and funds reach the people and children who require support. Financial resources allocated for educational and developmental purposes need to reach the intended beneficiaries so that they can contribute meaningfully to their well-being and development.



Regular attention to resource provision was highlighted as an important aspect of ensuring that educational and welfare initiatives produce meaningful benefits for communities.

These observations were particularly relevant to adult education because literacy and education are closely connected with the broader social and economic circumstances in which individuals and families live.

3.2.5 Address by Dr. T. N. Giri

Dr. T. N. Giri, Director (Vocational), National Institute of Open Schooling - Guest of Honor, was also among the distinguished participants.



His presence added an important **vocational and skill-development perspective** to the discussions on literacy. The programme highlighted that contemporary literacy needs to extend beyond basic reading and writing and should also equip individuals with knowledge and skills that enable them to participate more effectively in education, employment and community life.

The relationship between literacy, continuing education and vocational development was particularly relevant to the broader objective of creating opportunities for individuals to enhance their capabilities and economic participation.

4. Panel Discussion: “People, Planet and Prosperity”

A panel discussion was organised on the theme **“People, Planet and Prosperity.”**

The session was chaired by **Prof. Ajay Kumar, Professor, Group of Adult Education, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University**. The discussion examined literacy

and education within the broader framework of human development, environmental sustainability and social prosperity.

A key theme emerging from the discussion was that **people's experiences constitute valuable sources of knowledge.**

Communities possess their own understanding of their environment, traditions, resources and challenges. Educational and developmental interventions therefore need to engage with this existing knowledge rather than considering communities merely as recipients of externally designed solutions.



The relationship between **human resources and natural resources** was also discussed in relation to the theme. Human development is closely connected with responsible interaction with the natural environment. Literacy can contribute to greater awareness of available resources and support cultural practices, including those associated with tribal communities, which form important elements of community life and need to be appropriately recognised in educational and developmental initiatives to inform decisions regarding their use.

The panel also recognised the importance of **community participation**. Effective work with communities requires an understanding of their social and cultural backgrounds. Local traditions and cultural practices, including those associated with tribal communities, form important elements of community life and need to be appropriately recognised in educational and developmental initiatives.

Overall, the panel discussion reinforced the interconnectedness of **people, environmental sustainability and prosperity** and highlighted the role of literacy and education in supporting these dimensions.

Prof. Nasra Shabnam, Head, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, participated as the principal panellist and shared her insights on the role of adult and continuing education in empowering individuals and communities. Her intervention highlighted the importance of lifelong learning, social inclusion, community participation and education for sustainable development. She emphasised



the significance of creating learning opportunities that enable individuals and communities to respond effectively to social, environmental and economic challenges.



The discussion also featured brief interventions from **Prof. Uma Choudhary, Professor, Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences, University of Delhi, and Dr. Jai Pratap Singh, Assistant Professor, Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi.** Their interventions enriched the discussion by bringing additional academic perspectives to the relationship between literacy, education, environmental sustainability, social responsibility and prosperity.

The panel discussion encouraged a multidimensional understanding of literacy as an essential foundation for people-centred development, environmental sustainability and equitable prosperity. It provided an opportunity to examine how adult education could strengthen awareness, agency and participation among citizens and support communities in responding to emerging challenges.

The discussion also underscored the need for educational approaches that connected individual empowerment with collective well-being and sustainable development. Overall, the deliberations reinforced the continuing relevance of adult education in fostering a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable society.



As part of the environmental awareness initiative, the dignitaries also **planted trees**, emphasising the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable development alongside literacy and education.



5. Participation

The programme received active participation from students of:

- IP College for Women;
- Bhaskaracharya College;
- Kamla Nehru College;

- Shaheed Bhagat Singh College;
- Shyam Lal College;
- Miranda House; and

Students enrolled in skill-based courses, representatives of MoU partner institutions, IAEA staff members, interns, learners and community members also participated.



More than 110 participants attended the celebration and panel discussion. The participation of students, educators, community members and representatives of partner institutions reflected a collective interest in literacy, lifelong learning, skill development and community education.



6. Vote of Thanks

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by **Ms. Neha Gupta, Librarian-cum-Documentation Officer, IAEA.**

She expressed gratitude to the distinguished speakers, guests, panellists, participating institutions, students, staff members, interns and all others who contributed to the successful organisation of the International Literacy Day programme. Reflecting on the theme, “Literacy for People, Planet and Prosperity”, she remarked that literacy was not simply about reading and writing but also about empowering people, building sustainable communities and creating a prosperous future. She highlighted the broader significance of literacy in enabling individuals to participate meaningfully in society, make informed decisions and contribute towards sustainable development. She concluded by thanking everyone whose support and participation contributed to the successful organisation of the International Literacy Day programme.



The IAEA also expressed its sincere gratitude to **Shri Suresh Khandelwal, General Secretary, IAEA**, for his continued guidance, support and contribution towards the activities of the Association. Although he could not be present at the programme, his encouragement and support were duly acknowledged and appreciated.

7. Programme Facilitation and Coordination

The programme was effectively facilitated and meticulously coordinated by **Shri Vivek Kumar Chahar, Copy Editor, IJAE**, and **Ms. Lovely, Intern, Zakir Hussain College.**



They played an important role in ensuring the smooth, systematic and well-coordinated conduct of the entire programme. From welcoming the dignitaries, speakers and participants to introducing the various segments of the event, they managed the proceedings with confidence and professionalism.

The anchors effectively coordinated the transitions between the different sessions, including the inaugural proceedings, addresses by the dignitaries, the panel discussion, interventions and the concluding Vote of Thanks. They ensured that the speakers were introduced appropriately and that the programme proceeded according to the planned sequence and time schedule. Their clear communication and attentive coordination helped maintain continuity and avoided interruptions during the proceedings.

Their confident, engaging and courteous presentation created a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the participants. They also maintained active engagement with the audience throughout the programme, providing appropriate announcements and connecting the different components of the event. Their ability to coordinate with the organising team, speakers and participants contributed to the orderly execution of the programme.



Overall, the effective anchoring and coordination by Shri Vivek Kumar Chahar and Ms. Lovely added to the professional presentation of the event and contributed significantly to its successful and seamless conduct.

The programme concluded with the National Anthem.

8. Activity 3: Five-Day Research Methodology Course Day 1

As part of the International Literacy Day celebrations, IAEA commenced a **Five-Day Research Methodology Course** aimed at strengthening research capabilities among scholars, educators and other participants associated with adult education and allied fields.



The first day's session was conducted by **Prof. (Dr.) N. K. Chadha**, described during the programme as a prominent Indian psychologist and an expert in quantitative research methodology and statistics.

The session provided participants with insights into:

- Research methodology;
- Quantitative research approaches;
- Statistical techniques; and
- Their application in academic and social research.

The commencement of the course added an academic and research-orientated dimension to the International Literacy Day observance and complemented the broader objectives of promoting knowledge, learning and capacity building.

9. Key Learning from the Programme

The International Literacy Day programme generated several important observations concerning the broader meaning and role of literacy and adult education.

9.1 Literacy as a Multidimensional Process

Literacy extends beyond the acquisition of reading and writing skills. It is connected with awareness, participation, informed decision-making, livelihood opportunities and social empowerment.

9.2 Importance of Understanding Communities

Effective community development requires an understanding of people, their experiences and their circumstances before educational or developmental interventions are designed. Local knowledge can provide valuable insights for addressing community issues.

9.3 Human and Natural Resources

The programme highlighted the relationship between human resources and natural resources. Sustainable development requires responsible interaction between human needs and the natural environment.

9.4 Culture and Tradition

Educational and community-development programmes need to recognise local cultural contexts. Understanding traditions and the cultural practices of different communities, including tribal communities, can contribute to more relevant and participatory interventions.

9.5 Access to Educational Resources

The discussions emphasised the importance of ensuring that educational and financial resources reach their intended beneficiaries, particularly children and communities requiring greater support.

9.6 Literacy, Skills and Livelihoods

The programme highlighted the growing relationship between literacy, continuing education, digital literacy, vocational skills and opportunities for participation in economic and social life.

9.7 Research and Capacity Building

The commencement of the Research Methodology Course demonstrated the importance of strengthening research capabilities in adult and continuing education and promoting evidence-based approaches to educational and community-development initiatives.

10. Conclusion

The **60th International Literacy Day 2026** observance organised by the **Indian Adult Education Association, New Delhi**, provided a meaningful platform for reflecting on the changing dimensions of literacy and adult education under the theme **“Literacy for People, Planet and Prosperity.”**

The Community Mobilisation and Literacy Awareness Rally demonstrated the importance of taking literacy awareness directly to communities and engaging local residents in educational initiatives. The main programme and expert addresses provided broader perspectives on literacy, community development, human resources, natural resources, culture, vocational education and social development.

The panel discussion further highlighted the interconnected relationship between **people, the environment and prosperity**, while emphasising the importance of community participation and local knowledge. The commencement of the Five-Day Research Methodology Course added an important academic and capacity-building component to the observance.

Overall, the programme reinforced the understanding that literacy is not an isolated educational objective but a **continuous process of learning and empowerment**. It can contribute to

individual development, strengthen communities, support informed participation, promote skill development and encourage responsible engagement with social and natural resources.

The observance therefore served as both an awareness initiative and a platform for academic dialogue, community engagement and capacity building, reflecting IAEA's continuing commitment to the advancement of **adult education, literacy, lifelong learning and community development**.

