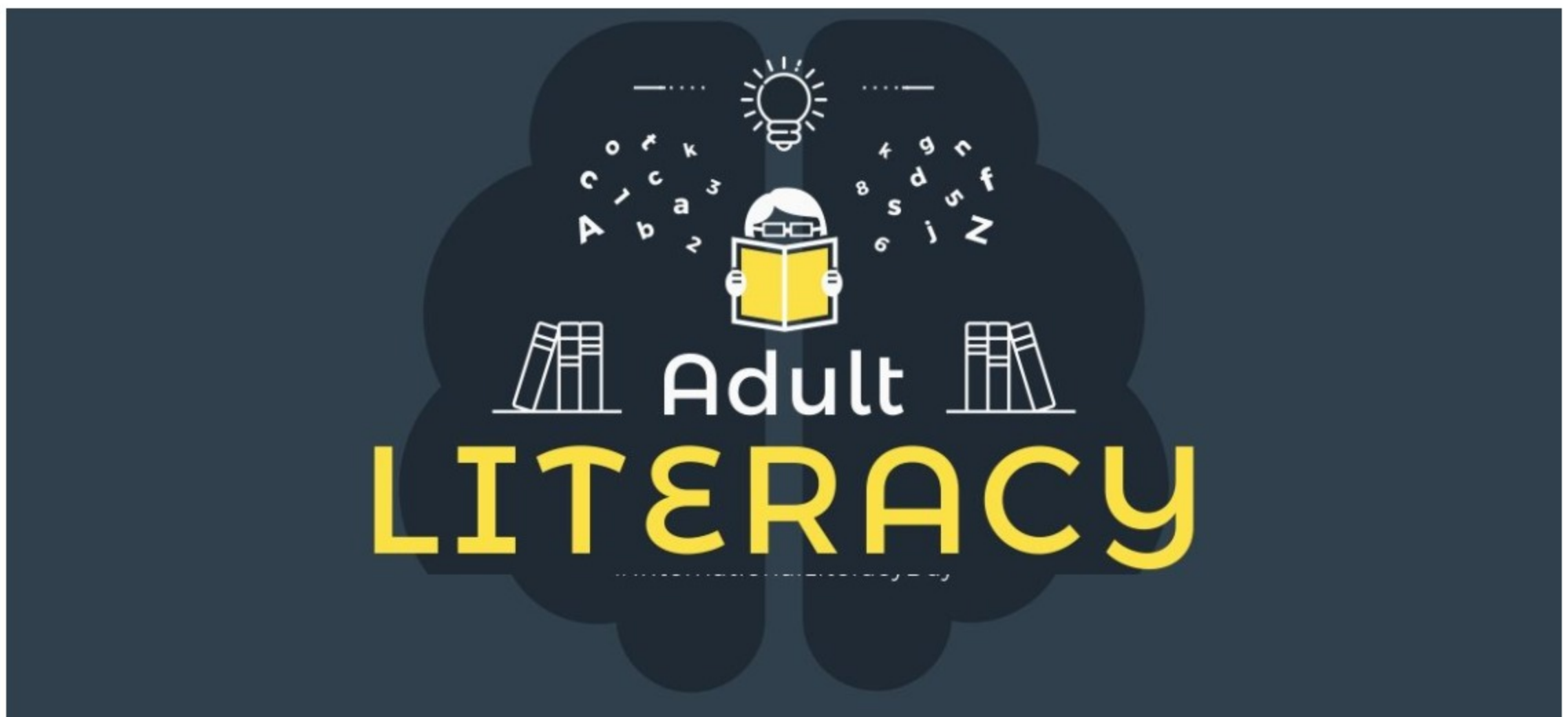
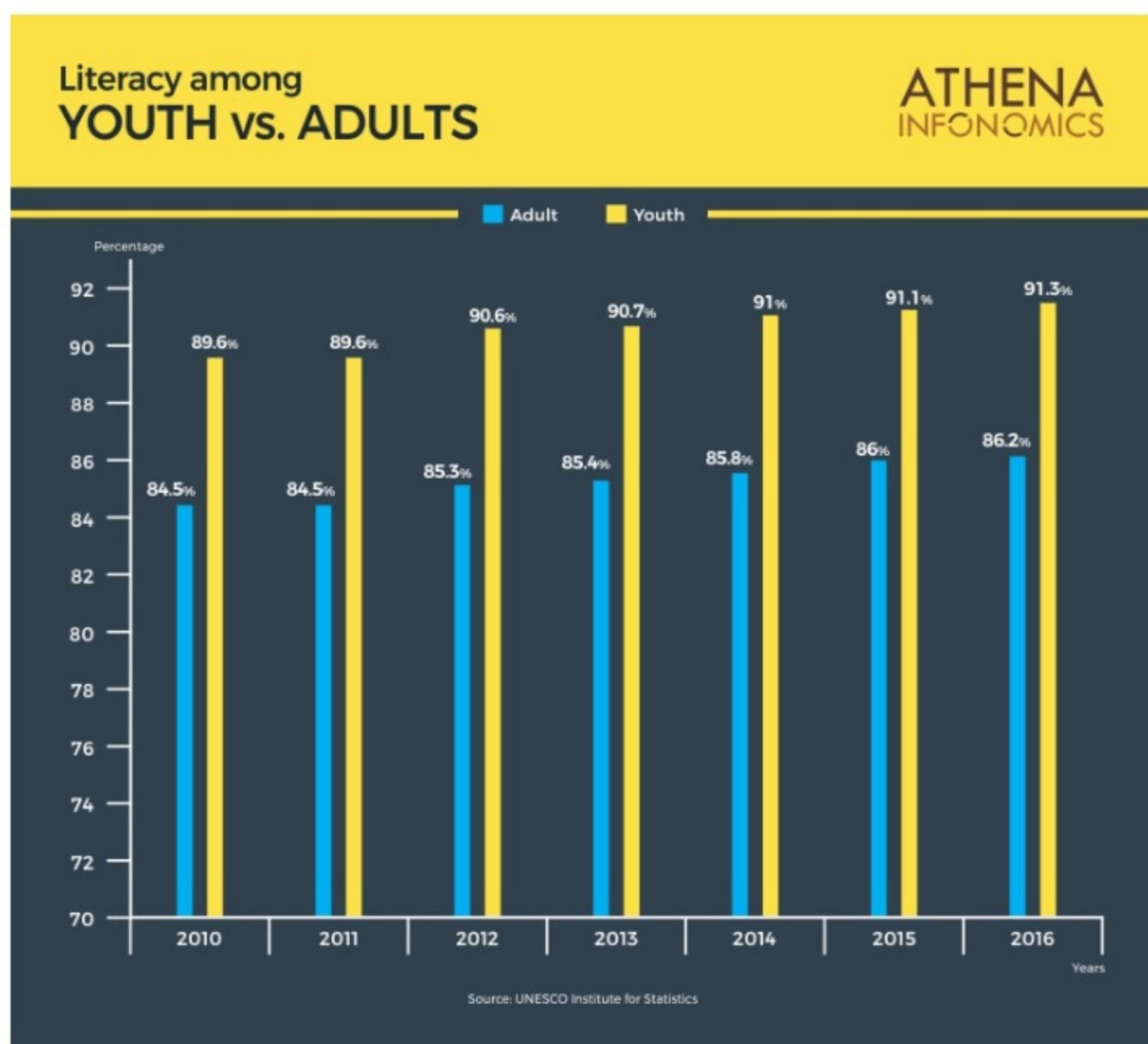


## Adult Literacy: The Neglected Aspect of Literacy



Posted by Aditi Gupta in [Public Policy Advisory](#)

Literacy has been recognized as a right by UNESCO and several other international conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Several advancements have been made in achieving literacy goals, with world youth literacy rate improving from 86% in 1999 to more than 91% by 2016. Traditionally, literacy has been defined as the ability to read and write, although with these advancements, there have been discussions about potential additions including various aspects like, finance, technology and health literacy. However, several challenges are yet to be resolved, like wide disparity in literacy among advantaged and disadvantaged groups, especially in developing and under developed countries. One such aspect, which has not been addressed adequately until recently, even by developed countries, is adult literacy.

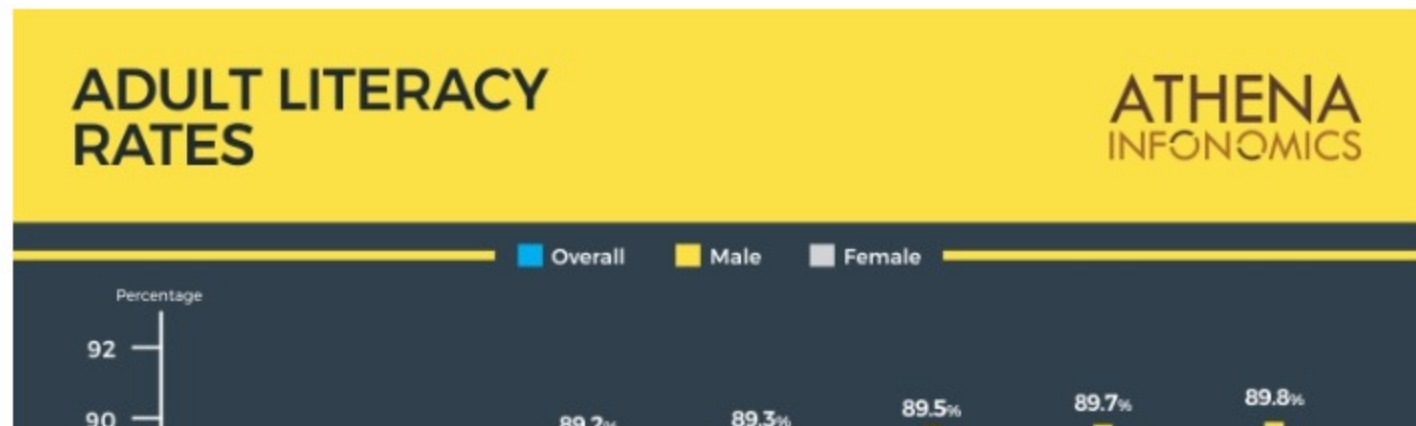


It has been widely contended that the benefits of adult literacy range from individual benefits to much larger collective benefits for society. Literacy among adults has a more immediate impact on political participation, reproductive behavior, gender equality, etc. An improvement in adult literacy, even feeds in to improving child and youth literacy, as literate adults are more concerned about their children's education. Although, to what extent these benefits are reaped depends on the way adult literacy programs are designed, if they are conducive and take place in a supportive environment.

Due to increased emphasis of organizations like UNESCO on adult learning, governments around the world have started providing or provisioning for adult literacy programs. However, there is a lack of standardization of aims, content, intensity and duration of these programs, which makes them difficult to be evaluated. Also, participation levels in these programs is a cause for concern. According to the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education II (GRALE II), 2012, among 29 low and middle-income countries, over the period of 2004-2011, only about 6% of adults aged 15-49 had participated in a literacy program. In all countries except Ethiopia, Honduras, Nepal and Senegal, the participation rates were below 15%.

There are concerns about equity in access to such programs, based on income levels and gender. Among the 29 low and middle-income countries, 6.7% of men had attended a literacy program, while the rate for women was 5.7%. Similarly, among rich and poor, 5.4% poor had attended a literacy program as compared to 7.1% of the rich. GRALE III, 2015, reported the changes in participation rates since 2009, according to that report, there are no major differences between income groups in terms of changes in reported participation rates. This means that disparities continue to exist in participation rates among rich and poor.

Overall, across all the participating countries, 58% reported higher female participation in literacy programs. There is a need for more emphasis on female participation in such programs since there is wide disparity between adult female and male literacy rates.




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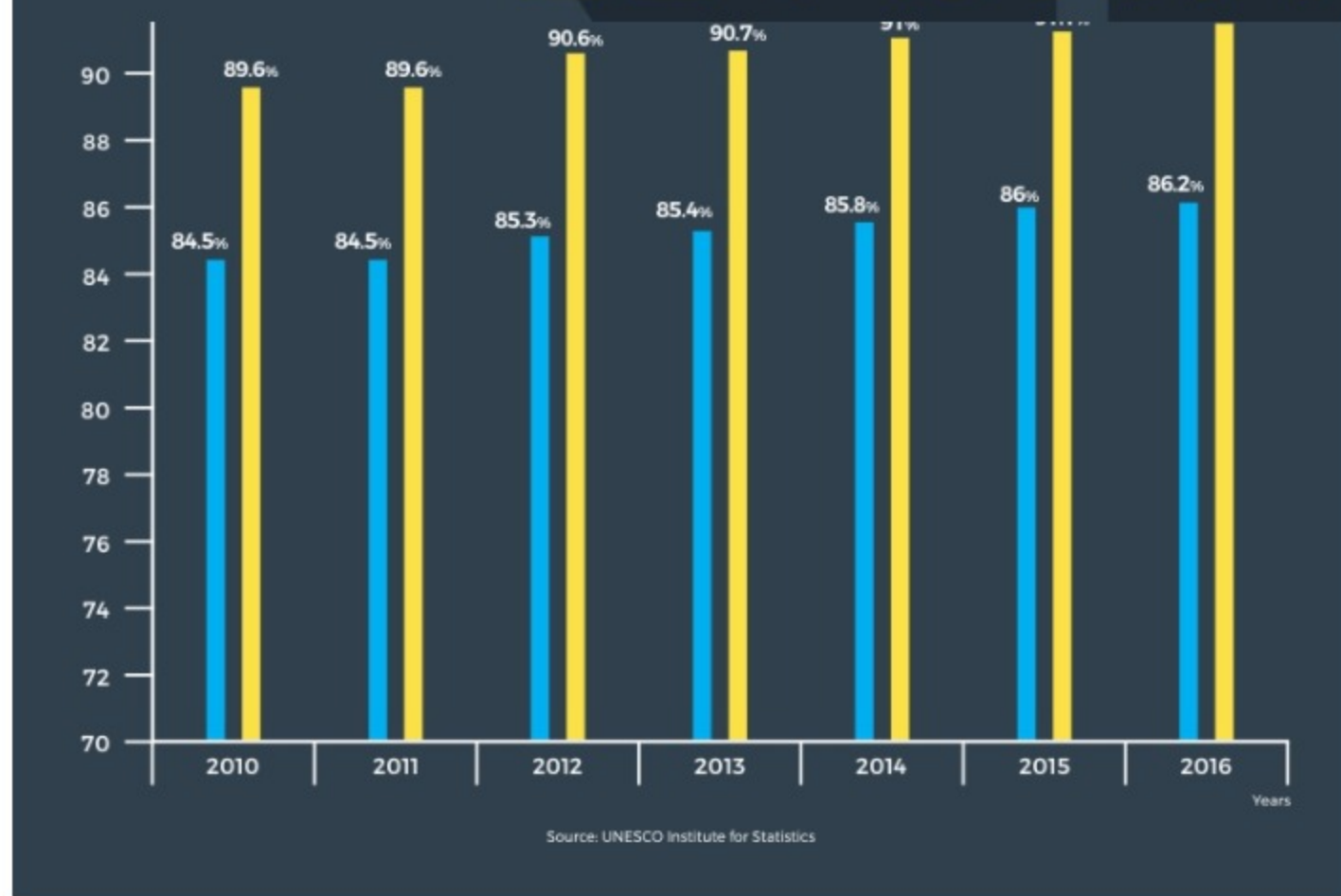
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INDICATORS	COUNTRIES	DATA 2011-2015
Female under-five mortality rate & ratio of female to male under-five mortality	193	100%
Female children under 5 whose births have been registered with a civil authority, & female to male ratio	59	73%
% of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 18 (child marriage)	131	63%
Ready to Measure indicators identified in other sources		
% of girls/young women aged 3-5 years above official age for last grade of each level of education	7	100%
For Women	Low Cost Private Education in Lucknow	The Cyclical Connection with Unpaid Labor
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