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USING A LITERACY MODULE IN HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

A Guidebook

USING A LITERACY MODULE IN HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS: A GUIDEBOOK

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FOREWORD

Recent advances in social survey and educational assessment methods have provided economically advanced countries with new tools to meet their needs for literacy data and information. Several initiatives are being undertaken by UNESCO and partner agencies to meet the need for timely, reliable, comparable and sound literacy statistics at the national and international levels. One of these initiatives is the development of the Household Survey-based Literacy Module. The module consists of a set of questions that can be easily attached to existing household surveys, thus making it a cost-effective way to generate more reliable literacy statistics. Through the module's use, survey responses also provide more detailed information about characteristics and determinants that underlie differences in the acquisition and use of literacy skills.

The Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics (AIMS) Unit, in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Headquarters in Montreal, the UNESCO Bangkok Education sector, and Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT), has developed this guidebook in order to help social surveyors effectively use the module when they plan and conduct household surveys.

Instead of simply asking respondents if they are literate or not, the Household Survey-based Literacy Module presents a series of questions that examine literacy levels and gather information about the use of literacy skills in daily life. To do this, the module provides a set of questions to obtain information about a household's environment in relation to its members' level of literacy, use of literacy skills, stock of reading materials, and access to literacy-oriented facilities. In this way, the module provides better and more comprehensive information about reported literacy statistics, including socio-economic factors related to literacy. Furthermore, the module gathers literacy statistics in a cost-effective way. Countries can then use the statistics for policy formulation and to assess and monitor progress towards national and international literacy-related goals.

Using a Literacy Module in Household Surveys: A Guidebook is primarily meant for statistical and planning units dealing with literacy within education ministries and for statisticians in charge of household survey design within national statistical offices (NSOs) of developing countries. Government officials who are concerned with literacy and education, survey managers, programme officers of relevant international agencies, local and/or international experts in literacy and education and non-governmental organizations will also find this publication useful.

Sheldon Shaeffer
Director
UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

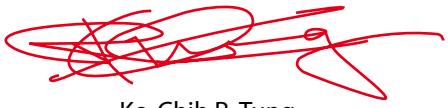
PREFACE

While analyzing available data on literacy and education some years ago, I was very frustrated, as many others may have experienced, with the measurement and analytical limitations of the usual set of items for measuring education and literacy that are contained within standard population censuses and household surveys. Having earlier designed and conducted household surveys for a national statistical office, I visualized how an interviewer could easily take an inventory of a household's literacy environment and its members' use of literacy and language skills in the home, school, and workplace. The use of literacy skills in other facilities, such as libraries, post offices, bookstores, and community learning centres – and the extent to which such places are accessible – could also be gauged during the survey process. I realized that inserting these items into a standard household survey could allow for cost-effective analyses of literacy-language behavior in relation to the many contextual items already contained within the survey. Furthermore, methodological studies on literacy that compare the standard "yes" or "no" response with the results of cognitive tests have shown that trichotomous response alternatives (such as "no, not at all"; "yes, with difficulty"; and "yes, fluently" or simply, "illiterate", "semi-literate" and "literate") in relation to literacy-related surveying would enhance more reliable estimations.

In preparation for the "EFA Mid-Decade Assessment in the Asia and Pacific Region," the usefulness, cost-effectiveness and necessity of such a module became ever more apparent. Thus, in response to a number of requests from ministries of education and national statistical offices which expressed interest in including such items in their countries' planned household surveys, UNESCO AIMS created its Household Survey-based Literacy Module. In 2007, the Census Department of Sri Lanka was the first agency to utilize the module for a Millennium Development Goals youth survey. The preliminary results of the pilot-testing in Sri Lanka gave us some valuable insights that, in turn, have proven useful in preparing this book.

In developing the Household Survey-based Literacy Module, AIMS undertook numerous consultations with UNESCO's Institute for Statistics and the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education. Input was also received during the Literacy Experts Meeting in September 2007. I would like to thank Japanese Funds-in-Trust for its financial contribution, which has made this project possible, and recognize AIMS staffers Nyi Nyi Thaung, who developed the module, and Subramaniyam Venkatraman, who organized the experts meeting and compiled the Guidebook.

Users' suggestions are welcome, and we hope to incorporate lessons gained from the Guidebook's use into future editions.



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Our thanks also goes to the Census Department of Sri Lanka for piloting the Household Survey-based Literacy Module in their Millenium Development Goals survey. The Department's valuable comments allowed UNESCO to make further improvements to the Household Survey-based Literacy Module's efficacy.

This project would not have materialized without the assistance of a number of individuals who have contributed valuable advice and comments, including: Kazi Saleh Ahmed, Lamphoune Luangxay, Sairi Hasbullah, Pervez Aslam Shami, A.M.U.K.Alahakoon, Priyadarshini De Silva, Shreeram Lamichhane, Pattama Amornsirisomboon, Suchin Petcharugsa, Tran Quoc Chan, Borhan Uddin, Dennis L. Malone, Shiu Kee Chu, Roshan Bajracharya, Abdul Hakeem, Darunee Riewpituk, and Kiichi Oyasu.

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ACRONYMS

ALL:	Adult Literacy and Life Skills
CDC:	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CWIQ:	Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire
DHS:	Demographic and Health Survey
EFA:	Education for All
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immune Virus/Acute Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
IALS:	International Adult Literacy Survey
ICTs:	Information and Communication Technologies
IPEC:	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
LAMP:	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme
LSMS:	Living Standards Measurement Study
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS:	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
OECD:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
REMUAO:	The Network of Migration and Urbanization Surveys in West Africa/*Le réseau d'enquêtes migration et urbanization en Afrique de l'Ouest*
SDA:	Social Dimensions of Adjustment
SIMPOC:	Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WFCL:	Worst Forms of Child Labour

BACKGROUND

Historically, literacy has always been a tool of human development. Learning and literacy have evolved over time in order to make survival of humankind easier and better. In the human context, such skills have been based on the thought process, slowly evolving into logical thinking, learning from experience, and converting logic and experience into skills for better survival. This learning could then be shared with others and passed on to successive generations. This process of 'passing on of skills' initially started off as an oral narrative and hearing tradition, which through the course of time included recording of relevant images in pictorial and symbolic forms on solid substances with crude tools. Later developments such as writing on palm leaves, calligraphy, and printing on paper, all became a part of human development history.

Definition of Literacy

Although literacy is generally considered simply to be the ability to read and write, there are numerous different understandings of literacy.[1] "Literacy refers to a context-bound continuum of reading, writing and numeracy skills, acquired and developed through the process of learning and application, in schools and in other settings appropriate to youth and adults" (UNESCO, 2005). No standard international definition captures all the facets of literacy, but this guidebook uses UNESCO's (1978) definition of 'functional literacy':

> A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective function of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development.

In many country censuses, respondents have been asked some variation(s) of the question "Can you read and write?" Similar questions are included in the individual interview section of the household survey directed at the respondent's estimation of his or her own literacy abilities. For the purpose of comparison with prior data sets, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) report (1989) has suggested that a respondent who says "yes" to the question "Can you read?" and also to the question "Can you write?" (or some variation used in previous censuses and/or household surveys) be classified as "literate"; all others are defined as "illiterate." The report goes on to state that it is important to bear in mind that this dichotomy represents the traditional basis for international comparability in self-assessment measures. Thus, the two basic definitions in self-assessment are:

Illiterate: A person is "illiterate" who says he/she cannot read and write (with understanding) a short simple statement on his/her everyday life in a language of his/her choice.

Literate: A person is "literate" who says he/she can both read and write (with understanding) a short simple statement on his/her everyday life in a language of his/her choice.

It is germane to the discussion here to cite further from the UNSD study (1989):

> How to determine whether the response includes the concept of "with understanding" restricted to "a short simple statement on his/her everyday life" is a different and complex matter. Frequently, it is simply assumed to be the case; occasionally, the question(s) specify an ambiguous context as in: "Can you read a simple message?" The basic definitions at I and II above are formulated with the intention of describing a "bare minimum." The key words "with understanding" are meant to eliminate any kind of merely mechanical ability with no practical meaning; "a short simple statement" to indicate a quite humble level of communication; and "on his/her everyday life" to signify that the message refers only to things that are very elementary and familiar to the person concerned.

1 See the Annex for a list of literacy definitions from select countries across the Asia-Pacific region.

The basic definitions need to be re-worded when the assessment is by direct measurement; thus:

A person is "illiterate" who cannot read and write (with understanding) a short simple statement on his/her everyday life, in a significant language of his/her choice (that is determined by the planning group), as determined by the direct assessment instrument(s).

and

A person is "literate" who can both read and write (with understanding) a short simple statement on his/her everyday life in a significant language of his/her choice (that is determined by the planning group), as determined by the direct assessment instrument(s).

Current Debates on Literacy Assessment

Even though several definitions of literacy have been given above, this subject is fraught with difficulties when it comes to actual measurement, which should also be made comparable. The main difficulty lies in the fact that there is still no consensus on the definition. Even though such differences relate mainly to direct measurements, they have their impact on self-assessments, as well. As for the latter, the problem is rooted in the question of what should be self-assessed.

It is appropriate to briefly look at some of these definitions here. Some specialists assert that literacy may be best understood in terms of its functional utility in a social context. They point out that UNESCO's definition of 'functional literacy' supports this approach. By way of illustration, they further note that being able to read a newspaper may justify the label of 'literate' in one context (even in the case of reading a newspaper, a person who may be literate in her/his mother tongue or regional language may not be literate in the national language, particularly in the case of bi-lingual or multi-lingual nations); but in another context, it may not be so. In the latter context, for example, literacy would be the skill to fill out a form to obtain a personal loan from a bank or the skill to read and understand a table or a chart.

There is another definition given by anthropologists (Schieffelin, B.B. & Gilmore, P., 1986) who describe actual literacy practices and say how they are more or less valued by different persons in a given society.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Literacy

In general parlance, ICTs refer to the Internet and wireless technologies, though in actuality they would also include telephony (both wired and wireless) and other audio and video technologies. We are already witness to a virtual information and knowledge explosion thanks to the speed at which information is gathered and transmitted.

ICT literacy, particularly skills that relate to using the Internet and other wireless technologies, has become as important to the modern and emerging Information Society as general literacy has been in the old world. The Information Society has been defined as "a society that makes extensive use of information networks and information technology, produces large quantities of information and communication goods and services, and has diversified content industry" (Jeskanen-Sundstom, 2001).

Despite the advances, ICTs have also ushered in a new human development problem: How do we cope with the information explosion? How do we ensure that all human beings are included in sharing the benefits of this boom; and none excluded? How do we empower all people (empowerment will be via accessing information/knowledge) and ensure that no one is left out in the process? These concerns are, indeed, the challenges of our times. The answer to these challenges lies in the literacy movement becoming dynamic enough to bring all people into the Information Society by developing the skills that will allow them to cope with (and use to their advantage) the availability of wide variety of of information.

What is important to note in this context is that acquiring knowledge and disseminating it is a fundamental necessity for human progress, and is an essential part of empowering the underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of society. The transmission of knowledge and information (which traditionally

would be passed on mainly through inter-personal contacts) has undergone a dramatic change with the advent of ICTs. Today, information is disseminated at a much faster rate than ever before. ICTs have made it possible for information and knowledge to permeate all layers of society. By harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies in all areas of human life, responses to vital and longstanding issues are possible. Thus, ICTs can be used to effect poverty reduction, create health and wealth that impacts whole societies, and support social justice and equity.

The notion of a Knowledge Society goes beyond that of the Information Society by ensuring that all persons, without distinction, are empowered to create, receive, share and utilize information and knowledge for their economic, social, cultural and political development. This definition emphasizes that ICTs should be regarded as tools to progress, and not as ends in themselves.

The Functional Nature of Literacy

Literacy is functional, while education is conceptual. Literacy is a skill that helps an individual to function better in the context of coping with her/his day-to-day life. Education refers to the process of knowing, of understanding the logic of a phenomenon, of analyzing its causes and effects in more of a conceptual form. It may or may not be utilized in coping with one's day-to-day life. For example, ability to read a street name is functional; while ability to understand the Law of Gravitation is conceptual.

Literacy is now widely interpreted to mean a continuum of skills with a focus on reading and writing with understanding. Education is perceived as a human right and a public good. Literacy and education form the basic cornerstone around which human development is built.

Literacy has to be viewed in terms of any language. Though it usually starts with the mother tongue, it can also include other languages. In fact, this is the case in many bi-lingual and multi-lingual countries. People may be motivated to learn another dominant language, an official or national language, or an international language in view of their perceived advantages of communication in matters relating to administration, trade, commerce and international dealings. Thus, such people become literate in several languages.

The world has shrunk in terms of communication, and we are witness to the emergence of a global village. The future trend is to universalize primary education and literacy such that no human being is left out in the march towards a Knowledge Society. The targets set under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations specifically support the achievement of Education for All (EFA) through universalization of primary education for all girls and boys the world over by 2015. The programme supports non-formal and distance learning for this purpose, as well.

However, according to UNESCO's *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007*, more than 100 million children today are out of school and more than 800 million adults are illiterate (UNESCO, 2006). Of particular concern is the fact that a majority of these children and adults happen to be females. About 85 percent of the illiterate population is concentrated in 33 countries of the world. In order to fully achieve the objectives of the EFA movement, education policies need to incorporate a very clear literacy perspective and targets. Information on what needs to be done in order to achieve this should be made available to the policy planners. The data need to capture aspects such as current literacy status by different languages and the extent to which skills are continuously acquired, updated and put to use by people in the context of coping with their day-to-day life situations. Informed policy research and planning need to be supported by well-informed and well-planned intervention programmes, and sufficient and sustainable resources made available to carry out such programmes.

Disaggregated Information on Literacy

Detailed and disaggregated information about the actual ground realities related to literacy are generally found to be lacking, particularly in developing countries. Censuses and other general household surveys normally miss such details. The details of functional literacy variance in the contexts of multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural or multi-economic-quintile populations are hard to come by in such surveys. In the absence of such disaggregated data, particularly in the context of developing countries, it is hard to provide education policy planners with a very clear literacy perspective and targets – that is, specific information on what needs to be done.

For this reason, information needs to be gathered on aspects such as current literacy status by different languages and the extent to which skills are continuously acquired, updated and put to use by people in the context of coping with their day-to-day life situations.

Since launching separate surveys for this purpose might prove to be very expensive for many countries, a short module that could piggy-back on some regular household survey is proposed through the Household Survey-based Literacy Module. The utility of this module lies in its ability to measure current literacy skill use without employing elaborate testing procedures for such an assessment. The module generates useful information about households by addressing the literacy environment, personal reading and writing behavior during daily life, and educational background. The incorporation of such questions into the standard household survey offers an important advantage, as countries can gain detailed information about literacy and literate environments that can then be used for policy-making and literacy programme planning.

INTRODUCTION

Our understanding of literacy has deepened greatly in the last few decades. Literacy is a complex measure. It is complex because its definition can vary according to different contexts of use. The contexts can again be of geography, culture, society, economy, time period and polity. Indeed, literacy is no longer seen as mere individual transformation, but as one that is dependent on the context and societal. Furthermore, the importance of literate environments are being increasingly discussed whether the access to reading materials or electronic communications at household, community, school or workplaces, the availability of such environments is considered to affect how literacy skills are practised and understood. Because of such complexity, measurement of literacy is fraught with difficulties.

Data on literacy status have long been collected as part of household and other surveys. conducted by governments and various development agencies nationally, regionally and internationally. These include censuses, special household surveys and special assessment studies. Such data feed into policy planning, programme development and implementation of specific and need-based interventions in order to achieve a given set of goals within a given period of time. Thus, an important role of such data inputs would be their ability to provide a body of evidence based on which informed decisions could be taken. It must be noted, however, that such a body of evidence is acceptable only if it is robust, relevant, comparable and interpretable.

These data are important not only for planning the achievement of targets set nationally, but also for planning the ones set internationally under the MDGs. In order to be robust and reliable, the data need to capture the local contexts that may act as barriers to development. Such barriers and their determinants need to be captured by providing for disaggregation of details at the local levels. For doing this effectively, literacy indicators need to be correlated with basic characteristics of the population surveyed. Such basic characteristics could be obtained from the main household survey chosen for inserting the module. Information from secondary sources could also help the process.

Why Insert a Module?[2]

While several special assessment studies on literacy have been and are being carried out by a number of agencies, questions may arise about the need for a literacy module and the reasons for its insertion into household surveys? Several such special assessment studies have, indeed, been carried out by several agencies: the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) of the World Bank, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)[3], the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP[4]) of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), and the ALL[5] (Adult Literacy and Life Skills) study.

Advantages of the Literacy Module

The module contains a set of questions to collect information about the literate environment, access to facilities, stock of reading materials, and use of literacy skills by household members. It was developed to respond to countries' needs for literacy statistics, which they would use for policy formulation and to assess and monitor their progress towards national and international literacy-related goals.

Rather than just asking respondents if they are literate or not, the literacy module asks a series of questions that examine literacy levels and gather information about the literacy environment and

2 Refer to Annex 1.

3 IALS was a seven country survey that was first conducted in 1994. Since then, two rounds of IALS data collection were conducted to cover an additional 16 countries in 1996 and 1998. Several thematic reports and international comparative reports have been published by OECD and Statistics Canada. See Statistics Canada (2006).

4 LAMP is a cross-national and comparable direct literacy assessment programme, mainly for developing countries, being designed by UIS. See UIS (2007).

5 ALL is an international comparative study about the skills of adult populations. It measures adults' problem solving skills and gathers information on their familiarity with ICTs. Six countries participated from Europe and North America in ALL. See NCES (2006).

use of literacy skills in a respondent's daily life. Module results ultimately provide a better sense of a country's literacy levels, and do so in a cost-effective way. The important point to note in this context is the fact that the module does not use any cognitive testing for assessing an individual's literacy skill level. Instead, it captures details about the literacy environment and individual's behavior in accessing and using available resources in daily life.

It, thus, provides better and more comprehensive information about reported literacy statistics than would be gathered through a general household survey. Such information includes socio-economic factors related to literacy such as educational attainment, literacy environment, access to literacy materials, etc. For this reason, results of the Household Survey-based Literacy Module would be particularly useful in a country's policy formulation.

Many of the developing countries may not be able to afford full-scale assessment studies that can often incur huge costs. Furthermore, even if they were able to afford it, they would likely not be able to conduct necessary follow-up surveys within short intervals due to the high costs involved. A module like this inserted into an existing household survey could act as an interim, but effective, measure to provide reliable data between two such large-scale assessment surveys. By piggy-backing this module onto an on-going household survey, many of the human resource requirements necessary for data collection could be easily, met and the activity done at a minimum and affordable cost.

Such an approach, it is believed, would be welcomed by most developing countries. Of concern, however, would be the identification of a suitable household survey on which to piggy-back the module, as well as the assurance of cooperation among stakeholders involved in the surveys.

Many of the household studies (such as the DHS, MICS, MDG survey or the national censuses) may or may not contain the type of information that is needed to inform literacy policy planning. They may contain some information on reading, writing and even numeracy ability. In fact, some censuses have categorized any person who can simply sign their names in any language as literate! Such types of information about literacy status makes little sense for purposes of policy planning and for developing suitable programme interventions to effectively deal with the huge illiteracy numbers. In fact, it would be germane to our discussion of this subject to recall that Lerner and Lasswell (1951) stated that the appropriate role for policy research was not to define policy; it was rather to establish a body of evidence from which informed judgements could be made. So, the survey-based literacy module would effectively lead to the establishment of such a body of evidence for making informed judgements.

A person might have learned to read and write during childhood, but might have forgotten such a skill. Traditionally gathered data may not contain current literacy levels, and day-to-day practice levels in the context of use with understanding, which is very important for measurement purposes. Therefore, unless a respondent's current status is also measured, it would be difficult to generate relevant data for policy planning purposes.

The best way out of such problems is to develop a simple literacy module that has a few questions, but which is focused on measuring the degree of skills currently known and practised with understanding. This instant household survey-based module does exactly that.

The module is composed of more comprehensive questions than most literacy measures that rely on a single question, such as "Are you literate?" Of course, such a question is highly subjective because it depends on a respondent's understanding of literacy. There is likely to be considerable transmission loss of the definition and connotation meant by the interviewer when such a question is asked of the respondent. The respondent will perceive it from her/his own background, understanding and interpretation of the question. Therefore, the question asked and the response given in such cases are likely to be at great variance.

The methodology used in the Household Survey-based Literacy Module is more focused on the current functional aspects of literacy skills. Thus, the questions asked address current specific uses of simple reading and writing skills that are relevant to certain important day-to-day activities.

The best part of the methodology used in this module is its simplicity. It does not involve any special effort from the respondent to actually read, write or calculate. It just achieves the literacy assessment objectives by carefully breaking down questions on current use of literacy skills.

Objectives and Target Users of the Literacy Module

It may be noted that the objective of the Household Survey-based Literacy Module is much more modest than those of other full-scale literacy assessments; however, this module's over-riding objective is to provide reliable estimates of current literacy skills in terms of an individual's use of languages within her/his literate environment.

It may well be stated that the module compromises on the aspects of depth (i.e, not a full scale assessment) in favour of ease of implementation and affordability. On the other hand, it addresses an additional objective, namely, of accounting for literacy in local languages.

A REVIEW OF EXISTING HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

As already mentioned in the Introduction, conducting exclusive literacy assessment surveys in order to measure the current literacy status of respondents could prove to be very expensive and unaffordable. Under such circumstances, a cost-effective alternative would be to insert a short literacy module into an already-existing household survey. In this way, most of the base costs necessary for launching a survey of literacy would have already been provided for under the larger survey. The cost of introducing a short literacy module may then be quite affordable. This chapter, therefore, reviews some of the more prominent household surveys that may lend themselves to such insertion.

Household surveys collect data on a wide range of development indicators that provide information on aspects such as population, health, education, employment, household income and expenditure, migration and other areas of public policy interest. Some of the usual characteristics of such surveys are that they are carried out by independent external (external to the government departments that may be implementing the concerned sector programmes) agencies; use rigorous sampling and data collection methodologies; usually repeat the surveys over fixed time intervals; and disseminate the data quickly and widely. Therefore, their acceptability levels are also high.

The following is a quick review of some of the leading household surveys, with a view to helping countries identify the one that would be most suitable for their individual needs.

Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)[6]

Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) is an international household survey programme designed to provide current and reliable information on a given population's demographic and health status. It includes key indicators such as fertility levels and trends, morbidity and mortality levels, maternal and child health, reproductive health and knowledge and use of contraception. Since 1984, DHS has conducted over 140 surveys in 70 countries[7], with many countries having conducted multiple surveys at five-year intervals. Sample size varies across surveys, but the general tendency is to go in for larger samples over time in order to provide for more sub-national (and lower) levels of representation, as well as to provide for disaggregation of data to capture as many local-specific variables as possible.

DHS includes a household questionnaire, which collects data on household and individual members' characteristics and a questionnaire meant for women in the reproductive age group – usually 15 to 49 years.[8] Sometimes a questionnaire meant for men in the 15-59 year age group is also added.

Surveys conducted during Phase I (up to 1989) of the programme included a few questions on education. Subsequent phases, however, have included more questions on the educational attainment of household members, literacy status of adult members, and school participation among the youth. In the latest phase of DHS, MEASURE DHS+ (1997-2002)[9], women and men were asked to demonstrate their literacy by reading a sentence that was provided to them. This approach is certainly an improvement on the earlier self-reported literacy measurement that was used. The latest DHS also includes a question on the adults' exposure to literacy-fostering programmes. The limitation here, however, is that not all the adults in the household may be covered by this approach because only those identified as eligible for answering the women's and men's questionnaire may respond to this question. The household questionnaire has also been revised to include questions on school participation among youth over a two-year period in order to calculate the repetition and drop-out ratios (in addition to school attendance ratios).

6 See Macro International Inc. (2007)

7 In South and South East Asia so far 10 countries have participated. They are Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam

8 Some surveys target all women in this age group; some only currently married women; and yet others ever-married women.

9 See Macro International Inc. (2007).

Two other data collection activities that are related to DHS deserve special mention in this context. They are the Service Provision Assessment (SPA) and the DHS EdData Survey. The SPA is conducted by some countries either in conjunction with DHS or separately in order to collect data from health providers and communities on the characteristics of health services and family planning services that are provided by them, as well as information on the nearby schools. The DHS EdData is a new USAID-funded activity. It conducts education surveys that are statistically linked to the DHS. They seek to provide data on factors that determine a household's demand for schooling. The objective here is to gather and provide information on what factors determine household decisions about how much to invest in education.[10]

Living Standards Measurement Studies (LSMS)[11]

The Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) was initiated in 1980 by the World Bank in response to a perceived need for policy-relevant data that would allow policy makers to move beyond simply measuring rates of unemployment, poverty, and health care use to understand the determinants of these observed social sector outcomes. The LSMS was designed to build the capacity of national statistical institutes/offices in developing countries so that they could collect good and reliable data and use such data for policy-making. The study has gone through four phases. From 1985 to about 1991, it concentrated mainly on the implementation of surveys. Since about 1991, there has been increasing emphasis on building analytic capacity, as well as data collection capacity, in partner countries.

As the LSMS collects data that could help assess household welfare, it also helps to understand household behaviour and to evaluate the impact of various government policies and programmes on the living conditions of a population. The data collection includes: consumption patterns, income, savings, employment, health, education, fertility, nutrition, anthropometrics, housing and migration.[12]

Two characteristics distinguish LSMS surveys: (i) multi-topic questionnaires designed to study multiple aspects of household welfare and behaviour, and (ii) extensive quality control features.

A typical LSMS survey uses three kinds of questionnaires: a household questionnaire, which collects detailed information about the household members; a community questionnaire, in which key community leaders and groups are asked about community infrastructure; and a price questionnaire, in which market vendors are asked about prices. In addition to these three, a fourth questionnaire is sometimes used in order to gather detailed information about existing school or health facilities. The usual sample size is in the range of 2,000 to 5,000 households. The survey is often administered over the course of an entire year to be able to adjust for seasonal variations.

Under the standard education module of LSMS, data is collected from all household members who are of primary school age or older. Information is also canvassed on pre-school age children regarding their participation in various special governmental programmes such as early childhood education or school feeding. This module includes questions on: self-reported literacy and numeracy; past/present school attendance; completion of school; current enrollment; current grade/level; repetition; highest degree/diploma received; attendance at private/public/religious school; distance to school; and transportation used to commute to school. In respect to those who have attended school in the previous 12 months, information is also gathered on household expenditure for schooling and receipt of scholarships. In a few countries, children have also been given brief literacy and numeracy tests. LSMS is considered to be one of the household surveys that provide a very comprehensive set of information on education, but only basic questions on literacy.[13] For example, in the Nepal study, the following set of questions related to literacy was asked:

10 The topics under this survey include: reasons for school-age children never having attended school; or having dropped out of school; reasons for over-age first-time school enrollment; household expenditures on schooling and other contributions to schooling; parents'/guardians' perceptions of the benefits of schooling and of school quality; distances and travel times to schools; age of children's first school attendance and drop-out; and the frequency of and reasons for student absenteeism.

11 See World Bank (2006b)

12 Also see *Grosh, M. & Glewwe, P. (1996)*

13 For a sample questionnaire of LSMSS please see World Bank (2006c)

1.Can (name) read a letter?, 2. Can (name) write a letter?, 3. Where did (name) learn to read and write? 4. Educational background (skip question to other parts depending on the education level), 5. Why didn't (name) ever attend school?

(*To see the questions in proper table format, please visit the link given in footnote 13 below.*)

In 1987, the World Bank implemented another programme in sub-Saharan Africa known as the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA). Different types of surveys were developed under this programme: the Integrated Survey (which is identical to the LSMS); the Priority Survey (a relatively simple household survey aimed at identifying policy target groups), which provides a mechanism to produce key socio-economic indicators on a regular basis in order to describe and monitor the well-being of different groups of households; and finally, the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ), which uses simple indicators to identify the actual beneficiaries of social sector programmes. Regarding issues related to education, the CWIQ indicators are usually limited to measurement of distance to the nearest school; number of children enrolled in school by age and sex; and household perception of quality of schooling.

Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS)[14]

This is a UNICEF-sponsored survey that seeks to measure the progress of women and children towards set goals. Two rounds of this survey have been conducted; the first one in 1995-96 (MICS) in more than 60 countries, and the second one in 1999-2000 (MICS 2) in more than 65 countries. The current third round of MICS 3 is being carried out in many countries. The data also serve as a baseline to create benchmarks for monitoring progress over different time periods.

Besides education and literacy, the MICS also provide data on other indices of UNICEF relevance such as Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses (IMNCI), malaria and HIV/AIDS. So far, about 130 surveys have been conducted. The sample sizes vary from about 2,000 to about 20,000 respondents.

The MICS 2 includes a household questionnaire, a questionnaire for women 15-49 years of age, and a questionnaire for children under the age of 5 years. It also has questions on literacy and early childhood education. The questions on education include self-reported literacy and educational attainment for household members aged 5 years and above, and information on school attendance for children who are 5-17 years old.

Statistical Information on Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC-ILO)[15]

This programme is located in the International Labour Organization's Bureau of Statistics. It was started in 1998 as the statistical branch of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). Its mandate is to create a statistical knowledge base on child labour. The programme has been expanding over time, and has so far conducted about 150 surveys in about 50 countries. Household surveys have constituted its main plank of data-gathering in support of the universal adoption of Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL), which took place in 1999. However, the programme has also been undertaking surveys of limited scope and coverage, but with greater focus on WFCL.

The sample sizes of these surveys are in the range of about 10,000 to about 120,000 households. Their design permits disaggregation of key indicators down to the district level in order to facilitate the development of suitable local specific policies and programmes to eliminate child labour.

A typical questionnaire under this survey usually has three parts. The first part is on household characteristics, the second one is on parents and the third is on children. The focus is on girls and boys in the age group of 5 to 17 years. The objective of this survey is to capture quantitative data pertaining to economic and non-economic activities (such as household chores) of children; demographic details;

14 See UNICEF (2006)

15 See ILO (2006)

social and economic details of other household members; working hours and conditions of work; health and safety issues including injuries and other hazards at work; and perceptions of parents about children's work. As for education, in addition to school participation of children, the survey also captures information on literacy and school attendance of children. It also looks in to aspects such as the effect of children's work on their schooling and the relationship between parents' socio-economic background and child labour.

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Surveys[16]

The CDC Surveys are known as Reproductive Health Surveys that gather information from females and males of reproductive age group. Since 1990, about 20 such surveys have been conducted in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Sample sizes vary from about 6,000 to about 20,000 households. The questionnaire is varied according to the needs of each country.

The household questionnaire does not include any questions on education status. However, such data are collected in respect to individual women and men of reproductive age group and/or youth (15 to 24 years), depending upon the design of the particular survey. As a result, information on children's school attendance is generally missing in these surveys, although some recent surveys have included questions regarding the school attendance of children 5-14 years of age.

The Network of Migration and Urbanization Surveys in West Africa/Le réseau d'enquêtes migration et urbanization en Afrique de l'Ouest (REMUAO)[17]

These are migration surveys. These surveys were carried out in 1993 in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. They were designed to measure the flows, characteristics, attitudes and aspirations of migrants; the determinants and consequences of migration; and the degree of societal integration. In the Burkina Faso survey, a module on reproductive behaviour was included. Similarly, modules on agricultural operations and utilization of revenues were added in the Ivory Coast survey. All surveys addressed issues of migration within and across countries. The range of the sample size was from about 7,000 to 13,000 households. The age range of migrants covered varied across countries from about 6 years + to about 15 years +.

As for education data, the surveys collected information on aspects such as the level of education attained, literacy, and current schooling status. Information was also sought on the extent to which education acted as a determinant of migration. The data are representative nationally and are again disaggregatable by urban-rural residence.

Identifying a Suitable Household Survey

In order to identify a suitable household survey18 for the Household Survey-based Literacy Module, planners should address a number of considerations. This could include: the size of the sample, its representativeness for disaggregation at district and lower levels, willingness and cooperation of the

16 See CDC (2007).

17 See Richard E. Bilsborrow (1998).

18 Other Household Surveys: The list above is not exhaustive; but only indicates some of the major surveys. There are many others – Africa Household Survey Databank (see World Bank, 2006a), Regional Program for Improving Household Surveys and Measurement of Living Conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (ISLC/MECOVI), Poverty Monitoring Database, Luxembourg Income Study/Luxembourg Employment Study (see LIS, 2000), HEIDE database, RAND Family Life Surveys (FLS) (includes Bangladesh, Indonesia and Malaysia) see (RAND, 2006), National Censuses, The Williamson Davidson Institute (with links to education data sources, see WDI, 2007), The Development Gateway (with links to education data sources) and the University of California site.

agency that is in charge of conducting the household survey, willingness of the education department that may most likely liaise with the statistics department or other agency concerned with carrying out this exercise, and cooperation in integrating and internalizing the needed technical inputs in terms of training and data analysis.

Selection Criteria

The need for insertion of a literacy module into the selected household survey should be explained to the stakeholders concerned in terms of the following criteria:

- It would supplement the general information on education and literacy already contained in the survey.
- It would focus on relevant information and more information on the subject of literate environment and individual's access, including provision for disaggregation of variables at the lower levels of data collection over and above some simple questions already contained in the household survey, such as one's ability to read and write.
- Such disaggregated information would be immensely useful to policy makers.
- Such information would be qualitatively superior because efforts would be taken to assess respondents' abilities in the crucial areas of day-to-day interaction, where literacy would determine understanding and thinking for action rather than simply rely upon self-reporting by the respondents to general types of questions.
- It should be a regular survey, i.e. held at regular intervals from regular government funding.
- The household survey should target all household members, or should at least cover the 15 years of age + population.

Each member country may have to undertake this exercise and identify a suitable household survey for launching the literacy module by organizing a workshop or similar exercise for the purpose.

Rolling Sample

As far as possible, the periodicity of the chosen household survey and the literacy module will be coincidental. However, if the chosen household survey happens to be of a longer periodicity - such as most census surveys, which are decennial - then there might be a need for a rolling sample in order to review progress in the short run.

THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY-BASED LITERACY MODULE

The importance of the Household Survey-based Literacy Module lies in its simplicity, relevance, comparability, interpretability and affordability.

It is a simple tool for collecting basic literacy data in a harmonized way and with regularity, since most household surveys into which such a module would be inserted are conducted on a regular basis. Household surveys are usually conducted about every five years, which provides the systemic advantage of generating an element of anticipation in the respondent groups. Usually, the field workers are already identified and are trained professionals. Therefore, re-training and fieldwork become relatively simpler tasks. For instance, in most censuses, teachers from schools are trained and deployed for data collection work. Since they already have experience in household data collection, it would be comparatively a simpler task to train them on a module that would be inserted into the regular household survey.

There are only 16 questions in the module. Two of them contain skip possibilities. They are simple and straightforward in nature. The choices provide for capturing enough detail and for capturing current status with regard to reading, writing, conversation and access to books and other reading materials. These responses could be analyzed with reference to certain respondent characteristics such as type of residence, gender, income level, age, etc. The latter set of characteristics may be driven largely by the type of household survey chosen which, in turn, would be based upon a country's own perceived information needs.

Thus, the information gathered through the Household Survey-based Literacy Module could help policy planners address country-specific problems related to illiteracy and school dropout. Similarly, based on information provided by this module, programme implementers (particularly in education, rural development and women and child development departments) could re-design their existing intervention programmes as well as design new intervention programmes to tackle back-logs and other emerging issues observed.

Given the module's adaptability, other entities could also benefit depending on the main subject of the chosen household survey on which it would "piggyback." For instance, if a country chooses to include the module in a DHS, then the responses could benefit the health department of the country, as well. The data would help quantify, for example, the association between functional literacy and certain chosen health behavior topics of the household study. Such information could be used for advocacy and more effective targeting of actions. In other words, this module inserted into a DHS type of household survey would bring out the correlation between literacy skills and health-seeking behaviour. Similarly, if this module were to be inserted into a nutrition survey, then it would help in identifying correlations between literacy skills and nutrition behaviour. Other types of correlations could emerge depending upon the nature of the household survey that may be chosen.

Hence, the Household Survey-based Literacy Module is relevant because it seeks to focus on the detailed type of information that would be useful to policy makers with reference to the actual field situation and assessment of current life skills. The use of standard and quantum indices within the module ensures comparability with other districts, countries and regions. Yet, the locally specific nature of the variables and the reporting of attained skill levels helps to make logical interpretations of data for effective policy formulation. Furthermore, since governments generally reserve funds for household surveys on a recurring basis, the additional cost required to insert the literacy module would be quite minimal and, therefore, more likely to be widely affordable.

In Sum

The advantages of inserting this module into a household survey include:

- It helps to measure functional literacy, reflecting the continuum concept.
- It provides data of acceptable quality that is easy to understand and use.
- It meets minimum analytical objectives, such as making national estimates of functional literacy for major groups of people.

- It is simple to work with in terms of preparation, administration (there are no cognitive testing to be administered), data collection, and handling of post-data collection operations. Data can be analyzed using common analysis tools that are familiar to most survey data analysts.
- It is affordable.
- It is comparable; its results are comparable across the full socio-economic range within countries and across languages and countries.

MODULE CONTENTS

The Household Survey-based Literacy Module has been developed as a simple tool that is easy to use in the field. Besides seven questions meant for establishing the identity of the respondent, the module contains sixteen questions divided into three blocks: Access to Reading Materials (head of household only), Language Background and Education Background (for individual household members of age 15 and above) and Use of Literacy Skills. Because the module is intended to be inserted into an existing household survey, it is advisable that the surveyor follows the sampling, response strategy and interviewing guidelines/trainings of the relevant main survey. Thus, authorities should consider these aspects before selecting the household survey.

One survey needs to be filled in for each eligible person. The module form is composed of the following sections:

Identification Particulars: These have been included to establish the identity of each respondent vis-à-vis the information contained in the main household survey.

Definition of Literacy: The term 'literacy' in the context of a knowledge society is undergoing continual change in its connotation. From its earlier and rudimentary meaning of ability to read and write in a particular language to an inclusion of 'numeracy,' the term has metamorphosed to include an implied ability to think over what one reads, understand meaning, and be able to take appropriate action in furtherance of whatever objective one is up to achieving in order to function. Thus, the questions asked have to be viewed in this context.

Head of Household – Access to Reading Materials: Availability and access to a literate environment (i.e., books, publications, and other reading materials) in a house or community creates the needed circumstances for maintaining or improving one's literacy skill. In order to assess such an ambience, three questions have been included in this block. These relate to ownership of such materials by the household and additional availability of such materials within the community.

Language Background: Literacy always refers to literacy in any language, which has a time dimension to it. If the respondent had studied in a particular language earlier which has been forgotten by the respondent due to lapse of time, then it makes sense to ask about such skills relating to currently known and practised language. The questions in this block address the issue of currency of language background. There are three questions in this block.

Education Background: This block seeks to assess the extent of formal and non-formal education received by the respondent. While basics of literacy can be obtained by formal or non-formal education, it is sustained by either continuing or non-formal education. This would help in the assessment of current literacy level of the respondent. There are four questions in this block.

Use of Literacy Skills: This block is more of a practice assessment area. It seeks to assess the extent to which respondents use their literacy skills in order to cope with day-to-day real life situations. Such skills relate to:

- reading and writing letters, e-mails, and other personal messages
- reading road signs, names of stores, posters, pamphlets, announcements, notice boards, etc.
- reading newspapers, magazines, books, manuals, tables, etc.
- filling-in forms
- reading/producing bills and invoices
- reading budget tables, charts, diagrams, maps, etc.
- reading and signing legal documents
- accessing public libraries, bookstores, newsstands, etc.

There are six questions in this block.

This chapter contains guidelines that are basically meant for survey managers and those involved in adapting or using the Household Survey-based Literacy Module, such as interviewers, field supervisors, and field data editors. The guidelines examine specific components of the module and offer approaches for context-specific adaptation. While some questions can be easily adapted by simply adding or deleting the anwer choices provided, other questions may contain specific words that could convey different meanings when translated into local languages. For this reason, care must be taken when undertaking any adaptation. Proper definitions should always be provided to those words that may have different connotations in the local country contexts.

Identification Section

L 1. Cluster Number: The concerned cluster number of the household survey identified should be filled in here.

L 2. Household Number: The concerned household number, which would normally be a unique number, should be filled in here.

L 3. Person's Name: The name of the respondent should be written here. As already mentioned, one form will be filled for each eligible respondent.

L 4. Person's Line Number: This would relate to the respondent's line number as already allotted in the list of members within the household survey. That number should be written here. It would facilitate proper identification of the respondent within the household.

L 5. Interviewer's Name and Number: The name of the interviewer who conducts the interview and her/his code number should be written here. This will facilitate easy identification of the interviewer.

L. 6. Day/Month/Year of Interview: The day and months should be indicated by two digits, while the year should be indicated using four digits.

L. 7: Result of the Interview: The result of the interview should be indicated here, using the digital codes for the purpose.

Questions for Head of Household Section

Access to Reading Materials

The questions in this block are to be asked of heads of households only.

LA 1. How many books does your family have at home?: It might be difficult for all respondents to remember the exact number of books in their home. At best, they might be able to estimate. The interviewer should help the respondent in making the estimate. A clear definition of a 'book' must be provided which could be based on the local socio-cultural context.

LA 2. How does your family obtain reading materials such as newspapers, magazines and books?: The respondents should be requested to specify the exact source in case of such an unlisted source from which books are accessed. Again, the country could adapt this question suitably, if need be, by adding further options to those already given.

LA 3. Are there the following facilities in your community?: This question is a good indicator to ascertain the kind of literate environment an individual has in the community she/he lives. More options could be included depending on the context of the survey and the local needs.

Questions for Individual Household Members (age 15 years and above) Section

Language Background

This block seeks to identify in which languages the respondent has current literacy skills.

LB 1. What is the language (name) learned to speak during childhood and still understands?: It has been stated in parenthesis that if the respondent no longer understands the first language learned, the second language learned should be indicated. Therefore, the importance here is to the language that is currently understood.

LB 2. In what language did (name) first learn to read and write?: Here also the ability to read currently is important.

LB 3. What is the language (name) can currently speak well enough to conduct a conversation?: This is a multiple choice question.

Education Background

This block has questions that seek to assess the formal or non-formal education level of the respondent.

LE 1. What is the highest level of formal schooling (name) has ever attended?: This question asks about attendance only. Therefore, even if respondent had not completed a particular level, still it should be marked if attended.

LE 2. What is the highest grade that (name) has completed in any formal schooling that she/he has ever attended?: This relates to status of completion of highest grade of schooling.

LE 3. Has (name) ever participated as a learner in a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read and write (excluding formal school)?: Care should be taken to see that formal schooling is not included here.

LE 4. Has (name) ever completed such a programme?: It may be noted that the emphasis here is on completion of the programme.

Use of Literacy Skills

This block seeks to assess the extent to which the respondent is able to put her/his literacy skill to day-to-day use. Obviously, such literacy skill would include ability to read, write, understand and act upon in the context of daily activities.

LS 1. Can (name) read personal letters (fluently, with some difficulty or not at all) in the following languages?: It may be explained here that 'personal letters' mean hand-written letters.

LS 2. Can (name) read newspapers (fluently, with some difficulty or not at all) in the following languages?: This may be taken to include magazines, pamphlets and other similar dissemination materials.

LS 3. Can (name) write a personal letter or short note such as a message for the family (fluently, with some difficulty or not at all) in the following languages?: As in the case of 'personal letters,' this may also be taken to include hand-written or computer-written notes.

LS 4. In the past 12 months, how often has (name) read the following items?: The items listed here are all items that normally one comes across in day-to-day dealings. It may, therefore, be useful to explain some of them if the respondent is unable to correctly understand them.

LS 5. In the past 12 months, how often has (name) done the following things?: This question tries to assess the extent to which literacy skills are actually used by the respondent in the context of day-to-day dealings and coping with life activities. This question is very relevant within the context of developing an Information Society.

LS 6. In the past 12 months, how often has (name) visited the following places?: This question is very relevant within the context of developing a Knowledge Society.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is of great importance to the entire process of conducting a household survey. It has a vital role to play in determining data quality. Good training of field investigators and strict supervision of field work will ensure that good quality data is collected.

The responses to the questions in the module should be linkable to responses in the main survey. Such a linkage would support data analysis work considerably in terms of establishing causal relationships, for example, between some general background characteristics of households such as socio-economic status and the literacy levels achieved by respondents. Similar correlations could also be established between literacy skills and other characteristics relating to the main topics of the household survey.

Inserting the Literacy Module

The usual way to insert a simple module like the Household Survey-based Literacy Module would be to insert it at the end of the main household questionnaire. The other alternative would be to insert it immediately after any question relating to literacy and education in the main survey. Such questions are built in as part of household identification particulars in some surveys like the DHS versions. If the second alternative is used, then care must be taken to ensure that there is no repetition of any question or sub-question.

Field Work and Field Editing of Data

Once the field investigators are well trained in the administration of the module, their field work should be qualitatively good. Nonetheless, their field work should be checked very closely in the initial phase of the survey. The field editors or supervisors could do this job. Initially, each and every schedule filled in needs to be scrutinized by the field editors. Errors and inconsistencies should be brought to the attention of the investigators concerned and corrected on the spot. In some cases, it may involve visiting the household again in order to correct the problems. The field editor should do this along with the investigator concerned.

A sample of such filled in questions could be re-checked by the supervisors. As the survey progresses and as the number of error messages starts decreasing, then it would be enough to do a check of a smaller sample. It must be remembered that once the field survey team leaves the area of work, it becomes very difficult for them to visit the same area again for purposes of checking, editing, and correcting the collected data.

Code Book

A code book needs to be prepared for each and every possible response under each and every question in the module. It should be ensured that the codes used are comparable across countries and across regions. The data entry operators should be trained adequately in how to use the code book for purposes of keying in survey responses. Coding of open-ended responses such as 'others specify' will have to be handled very carefully to ensure that all available and important disaggregations are fully captured in the process of keying in the data. Crucial details should not be missed out. This is very important.

Data Processing:

A suitable data entry programme needs to be developed. The mechanics of doing this will have to be discussed and finalized by the stakeholders concerned. The data entry operators would be well trained in using the programme. The programme would do well to provide for built-in filters and error messages.

Checks:

A number of in-house checks will also be carried out in order to ensure data quality and reliability. These would include checks such as ID checks, range checks, logic checks and outlier checks.

DATA ANALYSIS: TABULATION PLAN

This chapter discusses the proposed data analysis in terms of tabulation planning. Attention to this process is important in order to provide the end users with a set of findings that can be used for effective policy planning and programme implementation.

Data analysts should therefore not only consider the information gathered on literacy status, but also other socio-economic data gathered under the household survey. In this way, the analyst should seek to identify causal relationships between some of the broader household variables such as income, education and literacy levels. Similarly, if the household survey contains community-level information such as availability of schools, non-formal education centres, public and private libraries, news stands, internet facilities, etc., the information should also be correlated with education and literacy levels estimated from the module to see if such correlations are significant.

The following tabulation plan is indicated as a model. The plan and the tables follow the order in which the questions have been arranged in the Household Survey-based Literacy Module.

Introduction to the Tabulation Plan

A little introductory note is warranted before going through the tablulation plan indicated below.

There are two main aspects involved in data processing. They are: data preparation and data analysis. These should be properly designed at the beginning of survey preparations. Tabulating and analyzing survey data constitute an arduous and desultory process that warrant the deployment of considerable human and material (computer) resources. Therefore, they should be planned very carefully. It would be helpful for survey purposes if the people involved in the data analysis were also directly involved in the preparation of the survey instruments.

The design of a tabulation plan should be largely driven by the purpose and the nature of the household survey chosen, as well as by the specific place and role of the literacy module partnered with the survey. It would also be driven by other allied factors such as the literacy skills included, the degree of detail provided, the need for and feasibility of cross-classifications in different respects and sampling considerations. Equally important would be the considerations relating to anticipated use of the tables for analysis, research and drawing conclusions for policy planning and programme implementation. Finally, all these would subserve the specific national circumstances with regard to educational structures and socio-economic conditions.

The following sample module tables should therefore be viewed in this context. Though the literacy skills that would be captured in the module form the basis for cross-tabulations, it is assumed that the general characteristics for such cross-tabulations were identified through the "parent" demographic household survey, which is purely illustrative here. In actual country situations, the chosen household survey and its general characteristics might be different from what is indicated here. This is an important point to keep in mind.

However, the utility of these model tables lies in their use as a starting point for further adaptation to specific conditions and needs of each participating country.

It may be worthwhile to recall at this stage what a 1989 UNSD report has to say regarding such tabulation plan models: "It is emphasized that a properly designed tabulation programme constitutes in itself a basic instrument for interpretation and analysis of the data. Appropriate breakdowns and cross-classifications in these tables are essential for studying relationships between educational characteristics and certain demographic and socio-economic factors, such as age, sex, occupation and income" (p. 124).

Since no direct measurement of literacy skills is proposed under the Household Survey-based Literacy Module, it may be a simple case of categorization by self-assessment, in which case, the basic tabulation would start with a simple calculation of the numbers of individuals coming under such categories.

Broadly, such a classification procedure would allow for the computation of different statistical measures such as percentages, rates, ratios, etc.

For example, the most quantitative direct survey would seek to measure literacy and/or illiteracy rates in the population surveyed. The Household Survey-based Literacy Module, however, allows for an assessment of current literacy skills and their use than a mere literacy rate in the conventional sense. It is this dynamic aspect of literacy that makes this model module a more meaningful one for policy planners.

The rates so computed could then be used for a variety of analytical purposes, both at a particular point of time and over a period of time. When the survey is repeated at regular intervals over a period of time, then it is possible to generate a time series, which would be very helpful for planning educational reforms and for organizing massive literacy campaigns in the countries concerned.

In a typical situation, much of the early analysis would be in the form of cross-tabulations such as for region, residence (urban/rural), age and/or sex by literacy skill category. At this early stage, it is helpful to do cross-tabulations of literacy skill categories for each of the main comparison variables in the study and to check if there are any unexpected patterns in the data collected. This process also provides another opportunity to check possible errors either in data collection or in data entry processes.

In this context, the UN document entitled "Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses" (1980) deserves mention. This resource emphasizes the following factors as determinants of literacy:

- age
- sex
- rural/urban residence
- ethnicity
- religion
- first language and orthography/alphabet
- education level (educational attainment)
- employment/occupation
- fertility/mortality and health status
- other relevant socio-demographic factors

It is useful for the survey team of each participating country to make early decisions regarding how it proposes to compare and contrast various sub-groups within the overall sample and how it proposes to relate the variables to one another. For example, a participating country might like to compare literacy skill levels across its main language/literacy groups to consider sex differences and to determine the relationship between formal schooling and literacy achievement. In such a case, that country would need to select the corresponding variables for inclusion in its tabulation plan. This is only an example. There could be several other situations possible.

The usual practice is for the tables to structure the different levels of literacy attainment in columns and the other variables (such as sex, age and region) in rows.

Cross-classifications would be useful between literacy skills and certain demographic and socio-economic aspects of particular interest such as fertility, mortality, employment, economic activity, income and so on.

The initial set of tables envisioned by the survey team may undergo changes as the study tools get adjusted (after pre-testing, for example) and still further adjusted at the time of analyzing the early set of tabulations. This is no cause for concern, since it is a natural outcome of the survey analysis process.

It is necessary to re-emphasize at this point the fact that the *tabulation plan suggested here is meant to serve as an illustrative example*. The actual set of tables that a given country uses would very much depend upon the needs, potentialities and constraints of that particular survey plus those of the "parent" household survey chosen. It must be stressed at this point that the degree of disaggregation in any tabulation plan and its cross-classifications should ideally be confined to reasonable limits in order to minimize the chances of possible sampling errors.

Similarly, a tabulation plan may have many possibilities. However, only a few illustrations have been given here*, more as a guideline than as an actual tabulation plan*. It would be advisable, for instance, to take the survey goals, the feedback from the planning group, and the inputs from the interactions

with the data itself into consideration while finalizing the tabulation plan, as they form a set of locally relevant guidelines in this regard.

In sum, the above discussion sets the stage for a proper appreciation of the role and the context of the tabulation plan suggested below. The main points that should be kept in mind while going through the different tables have been summarized below for a ready recapitulation:

- The first point is that these are **only sample tables** that are **meant to be adapted based on a country's specific needs.**
- The second point is that for each and **every question in the module, a table has been suggested as a sample.** While the variables on the module question are reflected within the column headers from left to right, the characteristics of the household survey with which correlations are sought are listed in the first column.
- The third point is that the **characteristics shown here are only illustrative**, as they are based on a sample demographic survey. The actual characteristics will vary according to the household survey chosen by each partner country.
- The fourth point is that the **choice of such characteristics should be left to what each member country thinks appropriate** in their circumstances and as per their felt data needs.
- The fifth point is that **one could introduce any change either to the columns or to the rows according to one's felt data needs** and the felt need for clarity of expression in a given interview situation.

The model tables which follow will be helpful to partner countries in developing their own individual tabulation plans.

Table LA 1-LA 3 collect information about a respondent's access to reading materials, looking at availability within the household and in the larger community.

Table LL 1-LL 3 provide details regarding the respondent's language comprehension abilities.

Table LE 1-LE 4 gather information about a respondent's educational background in formal schooling.

Tables LC 1-LC 6 are directed at those individuals who have neither had any schooling nor participated in any literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write. These tables are important in order to assess the extent of literacy acquisition which is driven by the need to cope with the demands of daily life.

Table LA 1: Ownership of Reading Materials - Books

Percent distribution of heads of households by ownership of books at home according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Owns no books	Owns between 1 and 10	Owns between 11 and 100	Owns more than 100	Total	
					n	%
Number						
Respondent's education						
No schooling						
Attended pre-primary						
Completed pre-primary						
Attended primary						
Completed primary						
Attended lower secondary						
Completed lower secondary						
Attended upper secondary						
Completed upper secondary						
Attended post secondary, non-tertiary						
Completed post secondary, non-tertiary						
Attended tertiary						
Completed tertiary						
Type of residence*						
Urban						
Rural						
Tribal						
Gender*						
Female						
Male						
Income Level*						
Category 1– from……to……..						
Category 2 – from……to……						
Category 3 – from……to…….						
Category 4 – from……to……..						
Category 5 – from……to……..						
Age*						
15 – 29 years						
30 – 39 years						
40 - 49 years						
50 – 59 years						
60 years and above						
Total percent						

** Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LA 2: Access to Reading Materials – Newspapers, Magazines and Books

Percent distribution of heads of households by access to reading materials such as newspapers, magazines and books according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Never obtaining any	Buying them	Borrowing fom a library, school or community centre	Borrowing from friends or relatives	Others	Total	
						n	%
Number							
Respondent's education							
No schooling							
Attended pre-primary							
Completed pre-primary							
Attended primary							
Completed primary							
Attended lower secondary							
Completed lower secondary							
Attended upper secondary							
Completed upper secondary							
Attended post secondary, non-tertiary							
Completed post secondary, non-tertiary							
Attended tertiary							
Completed tertiary							
Type of residence*							
Urban							
Rural							
Tribal							
Gender*							
Female							
Male							
Income level*							
Category 1– from……to……..							
Category 2 – from……to……							
Category 3 – from……to…….							
Category 4 – from……to……..							
Category 5 – from……to……..							
Age*							
15 – 29 years							
30 – 39 years							
40 - 49 years							
50 – 59 years							
60 years and above							
Total percent							

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LA 3: Community Facilities for Accessing Books and Other Reading Materials

Percent distribution of the availability of books and other reading materials at the community level by characteristics such as size and type of community surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Public library	Private/ circulating library	Bookstores	News stands	Community centres	Total	
						n	%
Number							
Size of the community*							
Less than 1,000							
1,000 – 5,000							
5001 – 10,000							
More than 10,000 but less than 100,000							
More than 100,000							
Type of community*							
Urban							
Rural							
Tribal							
Total percent							

** Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LL 1: Language Background of Respondents – Language First Learned in Childhood and Still Understood

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above by language first learned in childhood and still understood according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Language 1 ……	Language 2 ……	Language 3 ……	Other (Specify) ……	Total	
					n	%
Number						
Type of residence*						
Urban						
Rural						
Tribal						
Gender*						
Female						
Male						
Income level*						
Category 1 – from……to……..						
Category 2 – from……to……						
Category 3 – from……to…….						
Category 4 – from……to……..						
Category 5 – from……to……..						
Age*						
15 – 19 years						
20 – 29 years						
30 – 39 years						
40 - 49 years						
50 – 59 years						
60 years and above						
Total percent						

** Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LL 2: Language Background of Respondents – Language in Which Respondent First Learned to Read

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above by language in which respondent first learned to read according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Never learned to read	Language 1 ……	Language 2 ……	Language 3 ……	Other (specify) ……..	Total	
						n	%
Number							
Type of residence*							
Urban							
Rural							
Tribal							
Gender*							
Female							
Male							
Income level*							
Category 1 – from……to……..							
Category 2 – from……to……							
Category 3 – from……to…….							
Category 4 – from……to……..							
Category 5 – from……to……..							
Age*							
15 – 19 years							
20 – 29 years							
30 – 39 years							
40 - 49 years							
50 – 59 years							
60 years and above							
Total percent							

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LL 3: Language Background of Respondents – Language in Which Respondent Can Speak Well Enough to Conduct a Conversation

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above by language in which respondent can speak well enough to conduct a conversation according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Never learned to read	Language 1 ……	Language 2 ……	Language 3 ……	Other (specify) ……..	Total	
						n	%
Number							
Type of residence*							
Urban							
Rural							
Tribal							
Gender*							
Female							
Male							
Income level*							
Category 1– from……to……..							
Category 2 – from……to……							
Category 3 – from……to…….							
Category 4 – from……to……..							
Category 5 – from……to……..							
Age*							
15 – 19 years							
20 – 29 years							
30 – 39 years							
40 - 49 years							
50 – 59 years							
60 years and above							
Total percent							

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LE 1: Education Background of Respondents – Highest Level of Formal Schooling Ever Attended

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above by the highest level of formal schooling that the respondent has ever attended according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	No schooling	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Post-secondary, non-tertiary	Tertiary	Total	
								n	%
Number									
Type of residence*									
Urban									
Rural									
Tribal									
Gender*									
Female									
Male									
Income level*									
Category 1– from……to……..									
Category 2 – from……to……									
Category 3 – from……to…….									
Category 4 – from……to……..									
Category 5 – from……to……..									
Age*									
15 – 19 years									
20 – 29 years									
30 – 39 years									
40 - 49 years									
50 – 59 years									
60 years and above									
Total Percent									

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LE 2: Education Background of Respondents – Highest Level of Formal Schooling Completed

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above by the highest level of formal schooling that the respondent has completed according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Post secondary, non-tertiary	Tertiary	Total	
							n	%
Number								
Type of residence*								
Urban								
Rural								
Tribal								
Gender*								
Female								
Male								
Income level*								
Category 1– from……to……..								
Category 2 – from……to……								
Category 3 – from……to…….								
Category 4 – from……to……..								
Category 5 – from……to……..								
Age*								
15 – 19 years								
20 – 29 years								
30 – 39 years								
40 - 49 years								
50 – 59 years								
60 years and above								
Total percent								

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LE 3: Education Background of Respondents without Formal Schooling – Participation in a Literacy Programme or Any Programme That Involves Learning to Read or Write

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above who have had no schooling by participation or otherwise in a literacy programme that involves learning to read or write according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Yes, participated in a literacy programme that involves learning to read or write (excluding formal school)	No, did not participate in such a programme	Total	
			n	%
Number				
Type of residence*				
Urban				
Rural				
Tribal				
Gender*				
Female				
Male				
Income level*				
Category 1 – from……to……..				
Category 2 – from……to……				
Category 3 – from……to…….				
Category 4 – from……to……..				
Category 5 – from……to……..				
Age*				
15 – 19 years				
20 – 29 years				
30 – 39 years				
40 - 49 years				
50 – 59 years				
60 years and above				
Total percent				

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LE 4: Education Background of Respondents without Formal Schooling – In Case of Participation in a Literacy Programme or Any Programme That Involves Learning to Read or Write – Whether Respondent Completed Such a Programme or Not

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above who have had no formal schooling, but who have participated in a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write whether having completed such a programme or not according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Yes, respondent completed such a literacy programme	No, respondent has NOT completed such a literacy programme	Total	
			n	%
Number				
Type of residence*				
Urban				
Rural				
Tribal				
Gender*				
Female				
Male				
Income level*				
Category 1 – from……to……..				
Category 2 – from……to……				
Category 3 – from……to…….				
Category 4 – from……to……..				
Category 5 – from……to……..				
Age*				
15 – 19 years				
20 – 29 years				
30 – 39 years				
40 - 49 years				
50 – 59 years				
60 years and above				
Total percent				

** Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

Table LC 1: Use of Literacy Skills – Ability to Read Personal Letters (with reference to languages identified in LL series questions)

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above (who have had no schooling and who have not participated in nor completed a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write) in terms of the respondent's ability to read a personal letter according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Can respondent read personal letter in the following languages?												Total	
	Language 1 ……...			Language 2 …….			Language 3 ……			Others (specify) …….			n	%
	F	WD	NA	F	WD	NA	F	WD	NA	F	WD	NA		
Number														
Type of residence*														
Urban														
Rural														
Tribal														
Gender*														
Female														
Male														
Income level*														
Category 1 – from……to……..														
Category 2 – from……to……														
Category 3 – from……to…….														
Category 4 – from……to……..														
Category 5 – from……to……..														
Age*														
15 – 19 years														
20 – 29 years														
30 – 39 years														
40 - 49 years														
50 – 59 years														
60 years and above														
Total percent														

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

F – Fluently
WD – With Difficulty
NA – Not at All

Table LC 2: Use of Literacy Skills – Ability to Read Newspapers (with reference to languages identified in LL series questions)

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above (who have had no schooling and who have not participated in nor completed a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write) in terms of the respondent's ability to read newspapers according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Can respondent read newspapers in the following languages?												Total	
	Language 1			Language 2			Language 3			Others (Specify)			n	%
	F	WD	NA	F	WD	NA	F	WD	NA	F	WD	NA		
Number														
Type of residence*														
Urban														
Rural														
Gender*														
Female														
Male														
Income level*														
Category 1 – from……to……..														
Category 2 – from……to……														
Category 3 – from……to…….														
Category 4 – from……to……..														
Category 5 – from……to……..														
Age*														
15 – 19 years														
20 – 29 years														
30 – 39 years														
40 - 49 years														
50 – 59 years														
60 years and above														
Total percent														

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

F – Fluently
WD – With Difficulty
NA – Not at All

Table LC 3: Use of Literacy Skills – Ability to Write a Personal Letter or Short Note Such as a Message for the Family (with reference to languages identified in LL series questions)

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above (who have had no schooling and who have not participated in nor completed a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write) in terms of the respondent's ability to write a personal letter or short note such as a message for the family according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	Can respondent write a personal letter or short note in the following languages?												Total	
	Language 1			Language 2			Language 3			Others (Specify)			n	%
	F	WD	NA	F	WD	NA	F	WD	NA	F	WD	NA		
Number														
Type of residence*														
Urban														
Rural														
Gender*														
Female														
Male														
Income level*														
Category 1 – from……to……..														
Category 2 – from……to……														
Category 3 – from……to…….														
Category 4 – from……to……..														
Category 5 – from……to……..														
Age*														
15 – 19 years														
20 – 29 years														
30 – 39 years														
40 - 49 years														
50 – 59 years														
60 years and above														
Total percent														

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

F – Fluently
WD – With Difficulty
NA – Not at All

The next three tables deal with the respondent's practice of literacy skills.

Table LC 4: Use of Literacy Skills – Practice Related to Reading

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above (who have had no schooling and who have not participated in nor completed a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write) in terms of their frequency of reading something in the past 12 months according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	In the past 12 months. how often has respondent read the following items?																												Total	
	Road signs or names of stores				Posters, pamphlets, announcements, or notice boards				Personal messages, letters or e-mails				Newspapers or magazines				Fiction or non-fiction books				Manuals or reference books				Bills, invoices or budget tables				Charts, diagrams or maps				n	%
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
Number																																		
Type of residence*																																		
Urban																																		
Rural																																		
Gender*																																		
Female																																		
Male																																		
Income level*																																		
Category – from…… to……..																																		
Category 2 – from…… to……																																		
Category 3 – from…… to…….																																		
Category 4 – from…… to……..																																		
Category 5 – from…… to……..																																		
Age*																																		
15 – 19 years																																		
20 – 29 years																																		
30 – 39 years																																		
40 - 49 years																																		
50 – 59 years																																		
60 years and above																																		
Total percent																																		

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

1 – Never
2 – Rarely
3 – Once or Twice a Month
4 – Once or More per Week

Table LC 5: Use of Literacy Skills – Practice Related to Writing

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above (who have had no schooling and who have not participated in nor completed a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write) in terms of their frequency of writing something in the past 12 months according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	In the past 12 months, how often has respondent done some writing?																								Total	
	Written personal letters or messages (e-mails)				Written official letter to an authority or organization				Filled in forms herself/himself				Written reports or articles				Produced bills, invoices, or budget tables				Produced charts, diagrams, or maps				n	%
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
Number																										
Type of residence*																										
Urban																										
Rural																										
Gender*																										
Female																										
Male																										
Income level*																										
Category 1 – from……to……..																										
Category 2 – from……to……																										
Category 3 – from……to…….																										
Category 4 – from……to……..																										
Category 5 – from……to……..																										
Age*																										
15 – 19 years																										
20 – 29 years																										
30 – 39 years																										
40 - 49 years																										
50 – 59 years																										
60 years and above																										
Total percent																										

***** *Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

1 – Never
2 – Rarely
3 – Once or Twice a Month
4 – Once or More Per Week

Table LC 6: Use of Literacy Skills – Practice Related to Accessing Books and Other Reading Materials

Percent distribution of individual household members aged 15 years and above (who have had no schooling and who have not participated in nor completed a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write) in terms of their frequency of visiting places in the past 12 months for accessing books or other reading materials according to selected characteristics surveyed under the literacy module in [country] in [year].

Characteristics	In the past 12 months, how often has respondent visited the following places?																Total	
	A public library				Book stores				News stands				Community centres				n	%
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
Number																		
Type of residence*																		
Urban																		
Rural																		
Gender*																		
Female																		
Male																		
Income level*																		
Category 1 – from……to……..																		
Category 2 – from……to……																		
Category 3 – from……to…….																		
Category 4 – from……to……..																		
Category 5 – from……to……..																		
Age*																		
15 – 19 years																		
20 – 29 years																		
30 – 39 years																		
40 - 49 years																		
50 – 59 years																		
60 years and above																		
Total percent																		

** Information to be taken from the main household survey.*

1 – Never
2 – Rarely
3 – Once or Twice a Month
4 – Once or More Per Week

Other Correlations

Other such dummy tables could be prepared based upon other possible correlations depending upon the chosen survey's main subject of study. For example, if it is a demography/health survey, then such tables could include correlations between variables on literacy skills and practise of preventive health care actions. As noted earlier, these types of tables will depend upon the main subject of the chosen household survey and the perceived data needs of each country.

Some possible examples are:

- education levels/literacy skills and availing ante-natal check-up facilities
- education levels/literacy skills and institutional delivery
- education levels /literacy skills and exclusive breastfeeding practice
- education levels/literacy skills and immunization of children
- education levels/literacy skills and growth monitoring of children
- education levels/literacy skills use of contraception
- education levels/literacy skills and awareness on HIV/AIDS
- education levels/literacy skills and awareness on tuberculosis and its treatment
- education levels/literacy skills and awareness on malaria and its treatment
- education levels/literacy skills and the extent of migration
- education levels/literacy skills and the extent of child labour

The above correlations could also be examined against certain chosen general characteristics of the population, such as type of residence, gender, income levels, age groups, ethnicity, etc.

Once the tables are tested for significant correlations between the different chosen variables, end users of the results will be able to draw logical conclusions upon which they can then streamline or revamp their literacy education policies and programmes.

INTEGRATING THE MODULE INTO HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

The tabulation plan suggested in the previous chapter is based on certain characteristics of the sample population that have been assumed for purposes of developing these tables. It must be remembered that these characteristics are not exhaustive, nor have they been chosen purposively. Rather, they may vary according to which household survey is chosen by a particular country. They may also vary depending upon the priorities of the country undertaking the survey. A country will undoubtedly choose to select a particular household survey which it sees as best suited for the information it intends to collect. As a result, the variables contained within the tabulation plan which relate to characteristics of the population may change. Such characteristics and variables are selected and used mainly for establishing meaningful and significant causal relationships to a given population's literacy skills.

Similarly, the terms used in the Household Survey-based Literacy Module may have to be changed according to local variations. For instance, the model module includes the term 'public library.' In a particular partner country, they may also like to include 'private or circulating libraries.' Similarly, the module uses the International School Classification System (ISCED) format to record education levels. These may be identified differently in different countries. However, what is important is that definitions are indicated by standard codes irrespective of the actual terminology used in the questionnaires. Such standardization ensures comparability of the data across countries, regions and sub-regions.

Proper Linkages to Main Household Survey

Use of unique code numbers for households both in the literacy module and in the main household survey is important to ensure proper linkage of the module with the main survey. This will make it easy to identify the needed socio-economic and demographic characteristics from the main survey for use in the tabulation plan for the module. If this is not properly done, it may result in data inconsistency problems.

As already discussed elsewhere in this report, the selected household survey may also contain information about a respondent's formal education. In such a case, it should be ensured that the same concept and wording are used in both the main survey and the module as far as possible. Information pertaining to type of residence, gender, age and income level have to be obtained from the main survey. To enable this process, it has been suggested above that a system of unique numbers should be used.

The house-listing particulars (including mapping) of the main household survey may be shared with those conducting the literacy module survey (in case they are carried out by separate teams) such that the identification of the selected households is made simple and fast.

It is important to note that all questions in the Household Survey-based Literacy Moldule are directed at the selected respondents and proxy responses are not allowed.

Self-Declaration

The Household Survey-based Literacy Module uses self-declaration to assess a respondent's use of literacy skills. This approach is considered imperfect and cannot replace direct assessment since it is subject to bias. Again, such bias may vary according to people's characteristics, as well as to skill levels. Still, it may be able to help in providing a baseline that could be adjusted through a model that estimates the mean score or the proportion of people above a given level.

Another useful way of looking at this issue is that self-declaration provides information about the respondents' own perception of their literacy skills and their current use.

The Problem of Over-Estimation

The model module has taken care to ensure that the problem of over-estimation on the part of the respondent is considerably reduced. For example, specific questions have been framed to provide for a

certain degree of ability: a respondent's ability to read a personal letter or newspaper may be identified as fluent, with some difficulty or not at all. A more general question that asks whether the respondent can read and write would most probably elicit an affirmative response. Therefore, the questions in the module provide an important degree of specificity that provides a more accurate means of measuring functional literacy.

Functionality

The framing of the questions also reflect the functionality aspect of literacy skills. It may be noted that three response categories are used in order to distinguish those who really struggle to read or write from those who feel more comfortable doing so. This is in line with the concept that literacy is a continuum.

Use of Skills

As already mentioned elsewhere in this report, questions about use of literacy skills need not be asked of those who report that they are unable to read.

There are, indeed, very few household surveys that contain questions about reading habits and other use of literacy skills. For this reason, a literacy module that can be partnered with these surveys is both practical and complementary.

Cost Constraint

As mentioned earlier, cost hurdles associated with large surveys are effectively overcome by the "piggy-back" application of the literacy module onto a chosen on-going household survey. This is a welcome savings for most countries. The only issue countries must take into careful consideration is which larger household survey would best be served (and serve) the literacy module. All involved stakeholders would certainly need to be in agreement in order to support the collaboration required for the chosen survey's implementation and analysis.

DATA INTERPRETATION AND REPORT PLAN

Data interpretation will be based upon the final tabulation plan that is decided upon by each country. The conclusions will similarly be based upon the significance of correlations between observed variables set against the background of their socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural contexts.

Data interpretation has to be based upon statistical significance, but also upon an appreciation of the technical background of the subject matter in a specific country context – in this case, literacy in the country context. Particularly in the context of literacy, it must be borne in mind that culture plays a significant role as a determinant of behaviour, in addition to other determinants like income and social status. One common example of this is girls' education, which suffers from a number of taboos in many developing countries. Quite apart from the phenomenon of inter-generational gender gaps observed in the matter of providing nutrition, health care and education to female children, many cultures consider it a taboo to send girls to school after they attain puberty. If the school happens to be located at some distance from the village concerned, then such a taboo works very strongly against girls' education. Given a steady decrease in the age at which female children attain puberty, girls face an increasing risk of not even completing primary education. Any disaggregation of data will, therefore, need to capture such details so that they are not missed in data analysis and interpretation.

Data coding and data keying in are equally important in order to capture these fine points. Of particular importance in this context is the 'other, specify' part of the literacy module. These are usually left open-ended in the questionnaire. It is up to the investigators to properly record the response without diluting its significance in any way. What usually happens is that if a particular response sounds unfamiliar to the investigator, the latter may usually try to classify it into an already-familiar category. Such a step will defeat the very purpose of the literacy module. For this reason, the training programme for investigators will have to specially focus on motivating them to capture the real variables as narrated by the respondents. Later the coding assistants should assign special codes for such responses, no matter the number of special codes required. Technical help in training and supervision from literacy experts with a cultural study background is an advantage in ensuring this.

The following format is suggested as a plan for writing the report, with a listing of possible content items.

- Table of Contents
- List of Tables, Figures and Diagrams
- Acronyms
- Preface
- Executive Summary

1: Background:

A historical, social, political and economic account of the partner country – to be backed by suitable data with their sources – a comparison of its geography, demography, social development, economic indicators, literacy and education, and other human development indicators with those of the neighbouring countries or countries of the region and with countries of the developing world where appropriate – the context of the emerging Literacy and Knowledge Society and the importance of literacy to acquire knowledge needed to survive in the modern world – the Global Village – the importance of ICTs to enhance one's ability to access information and acquire knowledge – importance of literacy in its broadest sense of ability to read and write with understanding.

2: Introduction:

Definition of literacy in the country context – the need to measure it as an indicator of human development – its importance in measuring the progress made by the country in the context of international goals such as MDGs and EFA – a review of data already being collected on literacy under various on-going surveys and by the department concerned, their utility and drawbacks – the need for the Household Survey-based Literacy Module – its simplicity and adaptability (focus on the subject matter, focus on measurement of current use of functional literacy, focus on capturing local-specific variables as against the overall and generic ones) - its ability to get inserted into the chosen household survey – therefore, its cost-effectiveness – the suitability of the household survey chosen for this purpose – how it meets

the perceived data needs of the partner country - the willingness and cooperation of the stakeholders – methodology of data collection – training – field work – duration – response rate - data processing and analysis.

3: An Analysis of Household Characteristics:

This chapter will rely on the data collected under the main household survey – the analysis will depend upon the characteristics surveyed – for example, it may analyse characteristics such as: respondents' type of residence; gender; income level; and age group – comparisons may be made with overall country population in respect of the above characteristics – information from other surveys and census may be used for such comparisons – tables, figures and diagrams may be used suitably to illustrate the findings.

4: Access to Reading Materials:

The interpretation in this chapter of the results of the literacy module should be based upon an assessment of the literacy environment - the premise that such an environment is fundamental to developing and sustaining adult literacy - access to reading materials may be used as a proxy indicator to literacy and education status of the members of the respondent households – the availability and the numbers of books at household level – what characteristics of households appear to determine such availability – is there a correlation between higher income, higher education levels and availability of larger number of books at households? – what are the other ways by which the members of the households obtain reading materials such as newspapers, magazines and books? – special care must be taken to analyse the details of 'others (specify)' item under question number LA 2[19]– a discussion on the availability of facilities such as a public library, private library, book stores, news stands and community centres, needs to be included in this chapter – apart from the information obtained under the literacy module, the analysis would also collate information gathered from other sources such as village profile or community profile collected as part of the main household survey or as part of this module – possible correlations between availability of such facilities and the literacy levels observed in the communities surveyed.

Tables already generated may be used appropriately to illustrate the points in this chapter; other suitable diagrams may be developed and included to illustrate the discussions.

5. Language Background:

The analysis in this chapter may start with a description of how literacy is normally conceived in relation to a particular language – a person literate in one language may not be so in another language – literacy may also be in more than one language – it may be explained as to how formal education in the partner country is organized – if the country is bilingual or multi-lingual, then literacy may also start with the mother tongue and may later shift to another dominant, official, national language or international language such as English or French – people could be literate in different languages to different degrees – then there should be a discussion of which language the country is choosing in order to measure literacy skills? – is it in terms of mother tongue? – or a dominant language? – or, any language? – it may be worth mentioning here that technically literacy could be in any language – this approach will be in accordance with UNESCO's approach to mother tongue and multi-lingual education and to cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2003).

The Household Survey-based Literacy Module provides for three language choices with an additional provision of a fourth choice: 'other (specify)' – the information on 'other (specify)' should be carefully captured, coded and interpreted – the other related issue is that literacy is also about inclusion and empowerment – this means that in a country with more than one language in use, literacy skills in an official language may be helpful for communication with a wider group of people including people in government – similarly, literacy skills in a dominant language may be helpful in communication with the concerned groups of people in areas like for instance trade and commerce – literacy in an international language may be helpful in communicating with a global audience as, for instance, in international trade or in outsourcing business – the analysis may measure how many people have literacy skills in any language and how many have such skills in more than one language – the skills relating to language first learned in childhood and still remembered, the language first learned to read and the language in which respondent can speak well enough to conduct a conversation may be measured with reference to the basic characteristics of household members taken from the household survey.

19 see Annex 1

Tables and figures may be used in support of the analyses in this chapter.

6: Education Background:

This chapter tries to assess the general educational background of the respondents. Some household surveys may contain a similar line in the general household particulars at the beginning of the questionnaire, e.g., most DHS surveys and censuses may contain such a list with basic information on educational background. In such cases, the areas of redundancy may be eliminated while analyzing the data for this chapter.

The first question collects information on whether a respondent has had any schooling at all, and if so, the level of attendance – pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, post-secondary but non-tertiary and tertiary – the need to use the country-specific terms for such classification has already been discussed elsewhere in this report – again, such education levels should be examined in the light of basic characteristics of the respondents – correlations if any between such observed phenomena need to be discussed – since this question talks about 'ever attended' status, it relates largely to enrollment – it would be useful to compare this rate with the enrollment rates arrived at by other surveys and departmental figures - Question LE 2 deals with completion – here again, similar correlations as above with basic characteristics of respondents is recommended.

Where respondents have indicated 'no schooling' to question LE 1, they skip to the question number LE 3, which deals with non-formal literacy/education programme – this question measures the number who ever participated in a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write (excluding formal school) and the analysis here may be in terms of such measurement vis-à-vis the basic characteristics of the respondents – if the response is positive, then the next question, LE 4, attempts to measure how many have ever completed such a programme? – here again, the analysis of numbers will be with reference to basic characteristics already identified for such comparisons – positive correlations will be highlighted here as well. – here again, comparisons may be worthwhile attempting with similar assessments made by other surveys and/or with departmental figures of attendance rates and completion rates in such programmes.

In this chapter, again, tables and other suitable illustrations may be used in support of the discussions made and conclusions drawn.

7: Use of Literacy Skills:

This chapter seeks to measure the current status of literacy skills of the respondents. In this context, literacy is perceived as a continuum of skills. It goes along the UNESCO definition as already indicated elsewhere in this document, where a person is considered to be functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective function of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development. The underlying concept is that of literacy as the ability to read and write with understanding for use in everyday life. This is in contrast with the literacy skills imparted in formal schooling. Here literacy is perceived as an essential tool to cope with day-to-day life situations and challenges. This perspective needs to be kept in view while analyzing the findings of this chapter.

Depending upon the subjects studied under the main survey, the information on literacy skills may also be used for recommending advocacy and targeting. For example if the main survey deals with health or nutrition, the information gathered under the main survey will inform correlations between the use of literacy skills and accessing information relating to health practices or nutrition practices.

Questions on use of literacy skills would be asked of those who have answered 'no' to question number LE 3, that is, 'has (*name*) ever participated in a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write (excluding formal school)?'. The questions would not be asked of those who have reported that they could not read at all.

The first three questions LS 1, LS 2, and LS 3 relate to languages identified in questions under LB category – LS 1 tries to assess the respondent's ability to read personal letters – the analysis should measure the degree of such ability in terms of fluency, reading with some difficulty and total inability to do so – again such measurements could be vis-à-vis the basic characteristics of the respondents taken from the main household survey – LS 2 seeks to measure similar ability levels in respect of reading newspapers – LS 3 seeks to analyse such ability to write a personal letter or short note such as a message for the family –

this section should analyse current abilities of respondents in reading and writing skills with reference to the languages learned.

The tables already generated may be used in evidence of the discussions in this section – additional figures and diagrams may be pressed in to service for better illustration of the points made.

Now follows an analysis of the actual practice of literacy skills by the respondents in the past 12 months period before the survey. This updates the continuum of literacy skills of the respondents for the readers. Therefore, this section is very important for policy planning purposes.

This section also has three questions, LS 4, LS 5 and LS 6. The first question tries to measure the frequency of use of reading skills by the respondents in the past 12 months in the context of day-to-day life situations – the analysis here should be in terms of frequency of reading the following displays and materials: road signs or names of stores; posters, pamphlets, announcements, or notice boards; personal messages, letters or emails; newspapers or magazines; fiction or non-fiction books; manuals or reference books; bills, invoices or budget tables; and charts, diagrams or maps – the use of these eight variables should be measured in terms the frequency of their use, that is, whether they were used never; or rarely; or once or twice a month; or once or more per week – in doing this, again, the correlations with basic characteristics of the respondents as obtained from the main household survey may be used.

Question LS 5 tries to measure how often the respondents have written something in the past 12 moths prior to the survey. The analysis here should be in terms of the frequency of use of writing skills in day-to-day life situations. The analysis should be in terms of the respondents having written the following things in the past 12 months: personal letters or messages (emails); an official letter to an authority or an organization; filled in forms herself/himself; reports or articles; produced bills, invoices or budget tables; produced charts, diagrams or maps – in doing these analyses, again, the correlations with basic characteristics of the respondents as obtained from the main household survey may be used.

The last question of this section, that is, LS 6 attempts to measure practice of a literacy skill in order to access information/knowledge from resources available within the community. The resources listed are: a public library; a private library/circulating library; book stores; news stands; and community centres. The analysis here should be in terms of the frequency of visits by the respondents to such facilities in the past 12 months prior to the survey – the measurement should again be in terms of frequency of such visits, that is, in terms of whether the respondent has visited such facilities never; rarely, once or twice in a month; or once or more per week – here again, correlations with basic characteristics of the respondents as obtained from the main household survey and the impact of availability of such services in the community on the use of literacy skills may be analysed – information on such facilities available in the community if already gathered under the main household survey may also be used for comparison with the responses observed under this section – similarly, information on such facilities available in the communities concerned gathered from any other secondary source may also be used for comparison – such analyses will make the discussions richer and more useful.

In this case also, as in the others, the tables already generated may be used in support of the discussions – additional figures and diagrams may also be used in order to illustrate the points analysed better.

8: Other Correlations:

Other correlation tables between variables pertaining to the main subject of the survey and literacy skills may be discussed as per perceived data needs of the participating country – such as in health, nutrition, migration or child labour - the tables that may be additionally generated in this regard may be used here along with suitable diagrams.

9: Conclusions and Recommendations:

This chapter will summarise the findings of the survey in terms of certain specific conclusions and will make certain specific recommendations based on them for consideration by policy planners and programme implementers of the partner country. Care should be taken to see that the recommendations are need-based, practical and implementable from the point of view of the government of the country concerned. They should also be affordable and sustainable.

- Annexes
  - References
  - The Module
  - Literacy Data from Other Surveys

DISSEMINATION

Dissemination of the data and survey findings to all stakeholders – policy planners, programme implementers, scholars, researchers, the public and other interested groups – is a crucial aspect of the survey process. Effective and timely dissemination helps all stakeholders to make good use of the data and take informed decisions. Thus, the dissemination process needs to be planned properly and carried out systematically.

The main target users of the findings will be the education and literacy policy planners and programme implementers of the partner country. This group may include the education department, the planning department or planning commission, national council of educational research and training, department of non-formal education, department of rural development, department of information, department of public libraries, local library authorities and the department of women and child development. Other target users may include universities, research institutions, NGOs, the media, scholars, researchers and the public at large. A third set of target users may be international agencies and donors working in the field of education and literacy.

Different materials may need to be produced in order to disseminate the information to the different target groups. These may include items such as reports (hard copies and digital versions), write-ups, PowerPoint presentations, articles for newspapers and journals, articles for websites, brief information pamphlets, etc.

The following table indicates which materials would be ideal for use depending on the intended target group.

Sl. No.	Target audience	Media materials that may be useful	Format of dissemination that may be suitable
1.	Policy Planners, Programme Implementers: Education Department, Planning Department/Planning Commission, National Council of Educational Research and Training, Department of Non-Formal Education, Department of Rural Development, Department of Information, Department of Public Libraries, Local Library Authorities, and the Department of Women and Child Development	Hard copies of the Report Digital Versions of the Report PowerPoint Presentation	Circulation Circulation through the Internet Organization of Workshops
2.	Universities, research institutions, the media (print and broadcast), scholars, researchers and the public at large.	hard copies of the report digital versions PowerPoint Presentation Information Pamphlets Articles for Publication Interviews and Discussions for the Broadcast Format	Circulation Circulation through the Internet Workshops Wide Distribution Newspapers/Journals Radio/TV vii. Use of web/electronic formats will be encouraged, wherever possible - publishing data file will be encouraged.
3.	International agencies, donor agencies, etc, working in the field of education and literacy.	hard copies of the report digital versions PowerPoint Presentation	Circulation Circulation through the Internet Workshops

The above plan is only illustrative. Depending upon locally perceived needs, each country may vary the plan according to such requirements.

ANNEX

Annex 1: Household Survey-Based Literacy Module

Household Survey-Based Literacy Module

(**Identification Section**: Please note this section may not be required if this module is inserted as part of an existing household survey where such information has already been collected.)

Identification section	
Fill in one form for each eligible person. Fill in the cluster and household number, and the name and line number of the person in the space below. Fill in your name, number and the date.	
L1. Cluster number:	L2. Household number: .....
L3. Person's name:	L4. Person's line number:.....
L5.Interviewer name and number:.....	L6. Day/month/year of interview: ..... ./ ..... ./ .....
L7. Result of interview	Not at home.....1 Refused.....2 Partly completed.....3 Incapacitated.....4 Other (*specify*).....5

Repeat greeting if not already read to this person:

"We are from (country-specific affiliation). We are working on a project concerned with family health and education. I would like to talk to you about this. The interview will take about (number) minutes. All the information we obtain will remain strictly confidential and your answers will never be identified. Also, you are not obliged to answer any question if you choose not to, and you may stop the interview at any time. May I start now?"

Household Questions (by head of household only)

Access to Reading Materials (LA)				
LA 1. How many books are available in your household?	None .....1 Between 1 - 10 .....2 Between 11- 20.....3 Between 20-50.....4 Between 50 - 100.....5 More than 100.....6			
LA 2. How does your family obtain reading materials such as newspapers, magazines and books?	Never obtain any.....1 Buying them .....2 Borrowing from a library, school or community centre.....3 Gift.....4 Borrowing from friends or relatives.....5 Distributed by GOVT/NGO.....6 Others (please specify).....7			
LA 3. Are following facilities available in your community?		Don't Know	Yes	No
	Public library	1	2	3
	Bookstores	1	2	3
	Newsstands	1	2	3
	Community centres	1	2	3
	Internet/cybercafe	1	2	3

Questions for Individual Household Members (ge 15 and above)

Language Background (LB)	
LB 1. What are the languages (*name*) learned to speak during childhood (0-5 years) and still can understand? (Interviewer: if the respondent no longer understands the first language learned, indicate the second language learned)	Language 1.....1 Language 2.....2 Language 3.....3 Other (specify).....4
LB 2. In what language did (*name*) first learn to read and write?	Never learn to read.....1 Language 1.....2 Language 2.....3 Language 3.....4 Other (specify).....5
LB 3. What is the language (*name*) can currently speak well enough to conduct a conversation? (Please tick all that apply)	Never learn to read.....1 Language 1.....2 Language 2.....3 Language 3.....4 Other (specify).....5

Education Background (LE)	
LE 1. What is the highest level of formal schooling (*name*) has ever attended?	No Schooling.....1 ↘ If no schooling, go to LE 3 Pre-primary.....2 Primary.....3 Lower secondary.....4 Upper secondary.....5 Post secondary, non-tertiary.....6 Tertiary.....7
LE 2. What is the highest grade (*name*) completed in formal schooling she/he has ever attended?	
LE 3. Has (*name*) ever participated as a learner in a literacy programme or any programme that involves learning to read or write (excluding formal school)?	Yes.....1 No.....2 ↘ Go to LS1
LE 4. *If Yes*: Has (*name*) ever completed such a programme?	Yes.....1 No.....2

Use of Literacy Skills (LS)					
LS 1. Can (*name*) read personal letters, (fluently, with some difficulty or not at all) in the following languages? (Interviewer should refer to the languages identified under questions in section LB)			Fluently	With some difficulty	Not at all
	Language 1	-	1	2	3
	Language 2	-	1	2	3
	Language 3	-	1	2	3
	Others (specify)	-	1	2	3
LS 2. Can (*name*) read newspapers (fluently, with some difficulty or not at all) in the following languages? (Interviewer should refer to the languages identified under questions in section LB)			Fluently	With some difficulty	Not at all
	Language 1	-	1	2	3
	Language 2	-	1	2	3
	Language 3	-	1	2	3
	Others (specify)	-	1	2	3

LS 3. Can (*name*) write a personal letter or short note such as a message for the family (fluently, with some difficulty or not at all) in the following languages? (Interviewer should refer to the languages identified under questions in section LB)		Fluently	With some difficulty	Not at all
	Language 1 -	1	2	3
	Language 2 -	1	2	3
	Language 3 -	1	2	3
	Others (specify) -	1	2	3

LS 4. In the past 12 months, how often has (*name*) read the following items?		Not available	Cannot	Never	A few times in a year	A few times in a month	A few times in a week	Daily
	Road signs or names of store	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Posters, pamphlets, announcements, notice boards, telegram	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Personal messages, letters or e-mails	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Newspapers or magazines	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Fiction or non-fiction books	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Manuals or reference books	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Bills, invoices, budget tables	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Charts, diagrams, or maps	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

LS 5. In the past 12 months, how often has (*name*) done the following things?		Not available	Cannot	Never	A few times in a year	A few times in a month	A few times in a week	Daily
	Written personal letter or messages (e-mails)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Written an official letter to an authority or an organization	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Filled in forms him/herself	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Written reports or articles	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Produced bills, invoices budget tables	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Produced charts, diagrams, or maps	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

LS 6. In the past 12 months, how often has (*name*) visited the following places?		Not available	Cannot	Never	A few times in a year	A few times in a month	A few times in a week	Daily
	Public library	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Bookstore	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Newsstand	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Community centre	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Internet/telecentre/cyber café	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Annex 2: References

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Annex 3: Literacy Definitions from Asia-Pacific Countries (UNESCO, 2005)

China

In urban areas, literate refers to a person who knows a minimum of 2,000 characters. In rural areas, literate refers to a person who knows a minimum of 1,500 characters.

Source: Population census (2000)

India

A person aged 7 and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language.

Source: Population census (2001)

Islamic Republic of Iran

Literate is an individual who can read and write a simple sentence in Farsi or any other language.

Source: Government household survey (2002)

Papua New Guinea

Those who have the ability to read and write a language with understanding.

Source: Population census (2000)

Myanmar

Literacy is defined as the ability to read easily or with difficulty a letter or a newspaper.

Source: MICS (2000)

Pakistan

Definition: Persons 10 years and older who can read and write in any language with understanding is called literate.

Source: Labour force survey (2004)

Sri Lanka

The census schedule provided for recording the ability to speak, read and write Sinhalese, Tamil and English. A person was regarded as able to read and write a language only if he could both read with understanding and write a short letter or paragraph in that language. A person who is able to read and write at least one language was regarded as literate.

Source: Population census (2001)

Thailand

Literate persons are defined as persons aged 5 and over who are able to read and write simple statements with understanding in any language. If a person can read but cannot write, then he/she is classified as illiterate.

Source: Population census (2000)

Tonga

For a person to be considered as literate in a language, that person must be able to read and write in that language.

Source: Population census (1996)

Viet Nam:

A person who knows how to read and write with understanding simple sentences in his/her national or ethnic language or foreign language.

Source: Population census (1999)

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