
UNIT 18 METHODOLOGIES OF NEED ASSESSMENT

Methodologies of Need
Assessment

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18.1 INTRODUCTION

Need assessments are critical not only to developing relevant and effective education and training programmes, but also in preparing policy documents relating to developmental issues. Need assessment is also supportive to assess and to incorporate gender concerns in all programmes and policies. The findings from these assessments can be used by government/development organizations as well as researchers, activists and policy-makers for conducting programmes and formulating policies to ensure gender equality and gender justice.

18.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- define need assessment;
- describe the methodology used to conduct need assessment;
- analyze tools of need assessment; and
- distinguish gender concerns in need assessment.

18.3 DEFINITION OF NEED ASSESSMENT

Need assessment is a process for determining and addressing needs or “gaps” between current conditions and desired conditions, often used for improvement in individuals, education/training, organizations or communities. The need can be a desire to improve current performance or to rectify existing deficiency. The idea of a need assessment, as part of the planning process, has been used to frame objectives and action-oriented gender-aware assessment tools with the following core principles:

Equity in Approach and Service Provision to: (a) increase equality between women and men and boys and girls; (b) broaden opportunities for women and girls within the larger society; and (c) improve opportunities for men and boys from marginalized communities.

Participatory in Approach to: (a) engage in substantive consultations with women and men, government mechanisms and NGOs working on women's, gender and youth issues during the assessment process; and (b) involve women and men in the Assessment Team.

Relevancy of Service Provision to: (a) design projects that are informed by the articulated needs, priorities and interests of women, men, boys and girls from the targeted area; and (b) deploy and use appropriate resources to address the specific and differential needs of females and males.

Adequacy of Service Provision to: (a) provide resources in amounts that will enable women and men to improve their well-being; (b) discourage dependency; and (c) facilitate a smooth transition from survival to development.

Efficiency of Service Provision through the: (a) use of context-specific delivery mechanisms; (b) involvement of INGOs and local NGOs with demonstrated experience working with and for, women and girls and men and boys from marginalized communities; and (c) use of goods and services that are easily obtainable.

18.4 CONDUCTING A NEED ASSESSMENT

Conducting a need assessment is often a long and carefully worked out process. It is important that a need assessment should not be an “empty” exercise, but should be geared towards getting information that is both essential and adequate to bring about the necessary change.

Let us now go through some tips towards conducting a successful need assessment.

This is a twelve-step process encompassing planning, data gathering and analysis.

Step 1 Confirming the Issues and Audience

In this step the purpose of the need assessment would be established, determining if it is a legal requirement, a requirement that is a felt necessity or simply desired for general knowledge. Need assessment should always address the goals and objectives in synthesis. An executive summary is often helpful for carrying out the exercise. Is this a new issue or something that is already known to be a concern? Is there widespread agreement up the organizational chain or among the policy makers that this issue needs to be addressed?

Step 2 Establishing the Planning Team

In this step, the planning team would be established while also determining the resources available for conducting the need assessment. This includes:

- Time;

- Money;
- Number of individuals required for the need assessment;
- Research or prior studies available on the issue; and
- Expertise of researchers.

It is important that all components of the need assessment should be conducted as part of a group effort and in the form of a planning team. The planning team ideally should consist of members from different stakeholder groups, as well as individuals with expertise in the area of research being conducted. Effective communication between members of the planning team is essential. The team must establish protocols and specific roles right at the beginning to be able to get maximum data through the needs assessment.

Step 3 Establishing the Goals and Objectives

In this step, based on the available resources confirmed in step two, the planning team will establish goals and objectives. This step has three phases:

- Identifying the optimum (desired) and actual levels of knowledge or skill;
- Identifying the cause(s) for the lack of knowledge or skill; and
- Devising a solution or series of solutions.

Ensuring goals and objectives will drive the outputs (statistical analysis and reporting). This will prioritize the rest of the steps and determine the amount of effort to be spent on the need assessment.

Step 4 Characterizing the Participants

The most important people in the need assessment are the people who participate in this exercise. In this step person carrying out need assessment will determine the following characteristics of the population among whom the need assessment is being done:

- Number of individuals present (i.e. sample size);
- Skill and knowledge level of the participants;
- Educational level of the participants;
- Organizational niche ;
- Cultural characteristics and possible biases towards the subject;
- Attitudes and biases among the population;
- Ability to access or attend training programmes or any other programme to bring about a change in the existing situation; and
- Ability to use or access services.

Step 5 Conducting Information and Literature Search

In this step, information and literature regarding the issue would be reviewed by looking at studies based on development plans, public records, strategic plans, reports and articles on the subject. Surveys are often used to clarify or answer questions that have surfaced through reviewing existing reports and data.

Step 6 Selecting Data Collection Methods

Deciding how to collect data from choices ranging from personal interviews to written tests is significant in this step. This is a very important decision as it not

only will affect much of the time and resources of a particular project, but will also affect the kind of data that the team has to collect during the need assessment.

Step 7 Determining Sampling Scheme

Sample size should exceed the projected number or stated requirement. The biggest threat to a survey is that the results are inaccurate because the sample size was not representative enough. Also respondents should be chosen from a variety of groups of people. This will get you information that is more accurate and more in tune with the existing situation.

Step 8 Designing and Piloting the Collection Instrument

Before commissioning the final need assessment survey, conducting a pilot survey will be helpful in identifying the gaps and can incorporate more questions wherever needed. Sometimes one can remove irrelevant questions. Piloting the questionnaire is essential. It is futile to go into the field with a questionnaire that the respondents are not interested in answering either because they do not understand it or because they find it irrelevant to the issue at hand. Also, one has to assure the respondents that confidentiality will be maintained through out the project and anonymity would be ensured. This is necessary to get more accurate answers through the needs assessment.

Step 9 Gathering and Recording Data

It is very essential to record all the data that is collected during the need assessment. One may have to go back to the data again and again during the course of the project.

Step 10 Analyzing Data

All data that has been collected during the need assessment has to be analyzed systematically. This is essential to devise future programmes to address the existing gaps. Where logistics permit, it is important to have a data analyst who is different from a data gatherer. It is vital how non-responses to individual questions are dealt with during the analysis.

Step 11 Managing Data

This step involves determining how data will be organized and archived.

The significance of this step is often not recognized until it is too late. It is also important that the data is preserved right to the end of the project in order to measure the visible changes that have occurred due to the project. It is also important at this stage to determine who owns the data once it is collected.

Step 12 Synthesizing Data and Creating Reports

To begin with, one has to determine whom the final report is intended for, what hope the final report will give and the expectations from the findings of the need assessment. We have to always address the goals and objectives in the data report. The data report must include problems or errors with the design and the implementation of the survey. An executive summary is often helpful.

18.5 TOOLS OF NEED ASSESSMENT

The key to any successful needs assessment project is the gathering of complete and accurate data and information regarding the target audience. There are **seven** basic need assessment methods that can be used to gather data and information. Each has its own set of benefits and limitations. Depending on time and other logistic issues one may not be able to utilize what might be the first choice of

method. Often one will need to use more than one method to obtain the information needed. The following are the tools of need assessment:

1) **Observation**

Observation means method of data collection based on watching a process or skill and systematically recording the events.

2) **Interviews**

Interviews mean one or more series of active interchanges between two or more people. They can be conducted either face-to-face or via technology.

3) **Focus Groups**

A focus group is an interactive exchange between an interviewer/facilitator and a group of people. Typically the discussion is guided by the facilitator according to a pre-planned set of questions.

4) **Oral Surveys**

Oral surveys are an interview where closed questions are used in order to elicit “yes” or “no” answers to a set of pre-selected questions.

5) **Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are a survey instrument through which individuals respond to printed questions.

6) **Existing Data**

Observations of existing data mean looking at information already gathered by the organization or sourced from elsewhere. By existing data, we are referring to existing information in the form of reports, work samples, historical data, planning and budget reports, organizational structure charts, evaluations, career development reports that can be reviewed and analyzed.

7) **Tests**

A test means simply an exam that assesses knowledge or skill level. Testing the knowledge and/or skill levels of the target audience will give a good idea of the knowledge gaps that exist.

18.5.1 Factors Influencing Need Assessment

There are several factors that need to be taken into consideration while planning the need assessment.

- *Audience Characterization*

Characterizing the audience means figuring out the essential traits, abilities and knowledge of the audience. Conducting a target audience assessment will help you decide the mode and tools to be used during the need assessment. The information in this discussion on audience characterization details the types of questions and information one may ask in characterizing the audience.

- *Knowledge*

While testing knowledge, one may ask questions such as: What degree of knowledge does the target population have relating to the particular issue? Do they have an understanding of current events related to the issue? Are they familiar with any special terms or acronyms?

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- *Training*

What type of prior training or skills do the respondents have in relation to this issue?

- *Tools and Techniques*

What tools and techniques do the respondents currently use or have access to in relation to the subjects discussed during the need assessment?

- *Benefits*

What are the personal benefits to the respondents in learning about this issue or changing tools/techniques?

- *Attitudes and Biases*

What attitudes and biases do the respondents have towards the issue?

- *Ability to Attend or Access*

Are there any factors that will affect the ability to access, attend or utilize any training or programmes or services offered to the respondents after holding the need assessment?

- *Cultural Characteristics*

Are there any cultural issues? How do those cultural issues or practices affect the respondents' view of the existing situation and the possible solutions to existing problems?

The purpose of the need assessment as we have already seen is to get enough and accurate data on an issue. Therefore, it is essential to be able to hold successful interviews with the respondents to get the required data.

The key components of holding a successful interview are as follows:

- 1) Asking the Right Questions; and
- 2) Active Listening.

Let us discuss each of these in detail.

1) Asking the right questions

There are two ways of asking questions:

- **Face-to-face questions**

When one has been given the opportunity to ask questions in person, face to face, one has to make sure they are focus directly on issues or problems. Interviewing someone in person permits us to adjust wording, clarify meanings and ask additional questions to elicit more detail – things that are not possible using written instruments or web surveys.

- **Written Questions**

Written questions present unique challenges but at the same time can be advantageous. One can test multiple iterations of questions to ensure there is no bias and can elicit complete responses from the first time itself as well as improve the grammar and sentence structure as well.

2) **Active Listening**

Active listening means focusing both on the words being spoken and on the person herself/himself in order to better understand what she/he is saying. The interviewer should also communicate understanding and show non-judgmental acceptance of what is being stated. The following are some tips for active listening:

- Asking non-leading questions: “can you tell me more about that?”;
- Rephrasing what the speaker said in the researchers own words;
- Reflecting underlying feelings: “when that happens to me, I feel really bad”;
- Avoiding analyzing what was described;
- Using personal disclosure: “I’m not sure I fully understand what you are saying”;
- Avoiding using probing questions;
- Facing the speaker;
- Watching the speaker and listening; and
- Focusing on what the speaker is saying.

18.5.2 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of questionnaires, interviews, surveys, etc. one will distribute or conduct during the need assessment process. Having large enough samples to prevent one sample from skewing the results is important. But, the size of the sample is not nearly as important as the proper design of the survey instruments. However, if there is bias in the data, it is unlikely to go away as you collect more data.

It is more important to obtain a representative sample than a large sample. Identifying the groups that researchers need to study and putting more effort into getting a high response rate (e.g. by phoning or sending reminders) is crucial. Sending out huge numbers of questionnaires and letting a few undefined volunteers return them should be avoided.

18.5.3 Need Assessment Methods: Advantages and Disadvantages

Table 18.1 summarizes the key advantages and disadvantages of major methods of assessing training and performance needs. Using a blend of methods helps to give a balanced perspective and offset the disadvantages of some methods.

Table 18.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Need Assessment

| Methods of need assessment | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|--|
| Analyzing organizational documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relevant, quantifiable data ● Shorter period of time in obtaining results ● Inexpensive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build stakeholders involvement ● Not necessarily focused on human resource development so there is less |

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|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May build management involvement | <p>opportunity to improve human resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May not identify causes of the particular problems ● May not provide visibility |
| Questionnaires & Surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reach many people in shorter period ● Build involvement among beneficiaries as well as implementers ● Relatively inexpensive ● Yield relevant, quantifiable data that are easy to summarize ● Anonymity may encourage honesty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Require time and skill to develop ● Low response rates or inaccurate responses ● No opportunity to clarify ● May restrict freedom of response ● May lead to unrealistic expectations |
| Individual Interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build involvement and support ● Allow for clarification ● Provide relevant data ● Easier to conduct than group interviews ● May uncover information that would not be brought up in a group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moderately time-consuming (but less so than individual interviews) ● Moderately expensive ● Difficult to conduct ● May be difficult to analyze and quantify data |
| Advisory Committees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build management involvement and sponsorship ● Provide visibility ● Inexpensive synthesis of opinions of key stakeholders ● Allows decision-makers to participate ● Can help identify resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time-consuming and difficult to manage logistically ● Fails to build lower-level stakeholders involvement ● Poor source of quantifiable data ● May lead to “group think” or conflict over areas of control |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Observation of Work Situations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Builds stakeholder involvement ● Provides excellent information when coaching an individual ● Builds credibility ● Generates relevant, quantifiable data ● May provide excellent documentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Requires skilled observers ● Does not involve management ● Time-consuming ● May change performance or be perceived as spying ● May be logistically difficult |
| <p>Benchmarking and Independent Research</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn from in-the-field leaders and competitors ● Can build credibility ● Availability of free data on internet ● Avoid rediscovering what is known | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not build involvement ● May not be directly relevant ● Data from different organizations may be misleading ● Requires significant analysis |

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: a) Use this space given below to answer the question.
 b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the Unit.

1) Define need assessment.

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2) Explain any one of the tools used in need assessment.

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18.7 GENDER AND NEED ASSESSMENT IN SECTORAL AREAS

Effective need assessment is the first step towards finding solutions and formulating policies to change the existing gender discrimination. Gender issues can be classified broadly into the following sectoral areas:

- Food security;

- Health;
- Education;
- Economic – self-reliance/employment opportunities;
- Social justice – harassment, sexual abuse, rape etc.;
- Conflict – war;
- Poverty; and
- Violence.

18.7.1 Food Security

Most studies have shown that due to sequential eating deriving from male preference, adult women of the household eat less and last. One of the reasons why girls and women are undernourished is the deeply entrenched belief that men do more work and hence need more food. Even in situations where calorie output in daily activities is higher or when there is shortage of food for various reasons, both men and women believe that it is women who must do without. This disadvantage for women starts out from the moment she is born. The very birth of a girl child is seen as a calamity. This is reflected beginning with the feeding of the newborn. Besides breast milk, all other forms of nutrition are given grudgingly, whereas a male baby is received with joy and is fed to the best of his parent's abilities. This is continued into later childhood, adolescence and adulthood – all through the woman's life. Qualitatively and quantitatively, her nutritional requirements are subordinated to those of her brother/s', father's, husband's – and finally, her son's.

18.7.2 Health

Poor health status always had been one of the critical indicators of women's low status in Indian society. Until the 1990s, virtually every gender related health statistics for the country showed discrimination against women. Some examples include higher female infant mortality, high maternal mortality, higher general mortality and morbidity rates in most age groups and lower life expectancy at birth. This trend persists in the 2011 census data of Government of India also. With regard to sex ratio, according to 2011 census, it is 940 females per 1000 males. But in developing countries like Indonesia it is 988 females per 1000 males in 2011. In Bangladesh it was 978 per 1000 males in 2011. (Census of India, provisional population totals, office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner). Women's health is always a low priority, both in the family and in society. Parents hesitate to take their girl children to doctors – both for the fear of spending money, as well as ruining the chances of getting her married. Nobody wants an 'ill' daughter-in-law. In her marital home also she is expected to be a care giver and not a care-seeker. The needs of her family always come before her needs. This is specially so if she does not have an income of her own.

18.7.3 Education

Drop-out rates for girls are far higher than for boys. Girl children are expected to lend a helping hand at home and care for the siblings. Lack of schools in every village/town etc. also means that very often students have to travel to schools in other places. Post-puberty, the concern for the girls' safety is so high that parents are reluctant to risk potential sexual violence on the way to school and back. Hence education takes a back seat.

To begin with girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or to achieve good performance in education. Education helps men and women claim

their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for girls' development towards adult life. It should be an intrinsic part of any strategy to address gender-based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies. The following points will further explain the necessity of girls'/women's education:

- Education is a right;
- Cultural changes;
- Better health and awareness; and
- Poverty reduction.

Right to Education

Everybody has the right to education, which has been recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The right to free and compulsory primary education, without discrimination and of good quality, has been reaffirmed in all major international human rights conventions. Many of these same instruments encourage, but do not guarantee, post-primary education. These rights have been further elaborated to address issues like quality and equity, moving forward the issue of what the right to education means and exploring how it can be achieved. As a minimum level, states must ensure that basic education is available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable for all. (4A scheme) The right of girls to education is one of the most critical of all rights – because education plays an important role in enabling girls and women to secure other rights.

Cultural Changes

Cultural and traditional values stand between girls and their prospects for education. The achievement of girls' right to education can address some of societies' deeply rooted inequalities, which condemn millions of girls to a life without quality education – and, therefore, also all too often to a life of missed opportunities. Improving educational opportunities for girls and women helps them to develop skills that allow them to make decisions and influence community change in key areas. One reason for denying girls and women their right to an education is rarely articulated by those in charge: that is their fear of the power that girls will have through education. There is still some resistance to the idea that girls and women can be trusted with education. Education is also seen in some societies as a fear of change and now with globalization, the fear becomes even greater – fear to lose cultural identity, fear of moving towards the unknown or the unwanted, fear of dissolving in many others.

Better Health

Basic education provides girls and women with an understanding of basic health, nutrition and family planning and giving them choices and power to decide about their own lives and bodies. Women's education leads directly to better reproductive health, improved family health, economic growth for the family and for society, as well as lower rates of child mortality and malnutrition. It is also a key in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Poverty Reduction

Educating girls and women is an important step in overcoming poverty. Inequality and poverty are not inevitable. "The focus on poverty reduction enables the right to education to be a powerful tool in making a change in the lives of girls and women. Poverty has been universally affirmed as a key obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights and it has a visible gender profile. The main reason for this is the

fact that poverty results from violations of human rights, including the right to education, which disproportionately affect girls and women. Various grounds of discrimination combine trapping girls in a vicious downward circle of denied rights. Denial of the right to education leads to exclusion from the labour market and marginalization into the informal sector or unpaid work. This perpetuates and increases women's poverty".

18.7.4 Economic Participation

Women's autonomy cannot be addressed without addressing their economic status. Patriarchal ideology not only is creating intra-household divisions of labour, but increasing the burden of household responsibilities falling on women. Most of the time women find it difficult to take up outside jobs. But when the financial situation of households deteriorates, responsibilities will fall on women. We have learnt about the triple burden of women in the previous courses. In this context we can recognize that most of the women have very little choice about their work. They are forced to undertake work outside the households. In order to bring changes, self-reliance/employment opportunities are also an option. The need for a woman to have some source of earning – to take care of herself and her children – cannot be overstated. That is the key to her empowerment in her adult life and for the next generation of girls who will go on to grow up into womanhood.

18.7.5 Social Justice

Abuse of women is seen as a weapon in society. The abuse can take the form of mental or physical harassment. The harassment again may be classified as purely physical assault or an assault of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment might manifest itself in the form of molestation on the lower end of the scale, to rape at the other end. The extreme manifestation of sexual violence takes the form of organized trafficking of women for monetary gain or sexual slavery.

18.7.6 Conflict

Although entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex. In all situations of social unrest and disruption of everyday law and order, it is the women and by extension, the girls who have to bear the worst consequences. From the point of being physically weaker to resist assault and battery, to being the target of rape, gang-rape and mass-rape etc. women are the most vulnerable in all situations of conflict. It is estimated that close to 90 per cent of current war casualties are civilians, the majority of whom are women and children, compared to a century ago when 90 per cent of those who lost their lives were military personnel. Parties in conflict situations often rape women, sometimes using systematic rape as a tactic of war. Other forms of violence against women committed in armed conflict include murder, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization.

18.7.7 Poverty

Women bear a disproportionate burden of the world's poverty. Statistics indicate that women are more likely than men to be poor and at risk of hunger because of the systematic discrimination they face in education, health care, employment and control of assets. Poverty implications are widespread for women, leaving many without even basic rights such as access to clean drinking water, sanitation, medical care and decent employment. Being poor can also mean they have little protection from violence and have no role in decision making. According to some estimates, women represent 70 per cent of the world's poor. They are often paid less than men for their work, with the average wage gap in 2008 being 17 per cent. Women face persistent discrimination when they apply for credit for business or self-

employment and are often concentrated in insecure, unsafe and low-wage work. Eight out of ten women workers are considered to be in vulnerable employment in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with global economic changes taking a huge toll on their livelihoods.

Financial crisis is likely to affect women particularly severely. In many developing countries where women work in export-led factories or in countries where migrant women workers are the backbone of service industries, women's jobs have taken the greatest hit. The International Labour Organization estimated that the economic downturn could lead to 22 million more unemployed women in 2009, jeopardizing the gains made in the last few decades in women's empowerment.

In many countries, however, the impact goes far beyond the loss of formal jobs, as the majority of women tend to work in the informal sector (for example as domestic workers in cities) and do not show up in official unemployment numbers. Economic policies and institutions still mostly fail to take gender disparities into account, from tax and budget systems to trade regimes. And with too few seats at the tables where economic decisions are made, women themselves have limited opportunity to influence policy.

18.7.8 Violence

Violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide, in all socio-economic and educational classes. It cuts across cultural and religious barriers, impeding the right of women to participate fully in society. Violence against women takes a dismaying variety of forms, from domestic abuse and rape to child marriages and female circumcision. All are violations of the most fundamental human rights. In a statement to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995, the then United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said that violence against women is a universal problem that must be universally condemned. But he said that the problem continues to grow. The Secretary-General noted that domestic violence alone is on the increase. Studies in 10 countries, he said, have found that between 17 per cent and 38 per cent of women have suffered physical assaults by a partner. In the Platform for Action, the core document of the Beijing Conference, Governments declared that "violence against women constitutes a violation of basic human rights and is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace".

18.7.9 Fighting Hunger

Women have a crucial role to play in the fight against hunger. As mothers, farmers, teachers and entrepreneurs, they hold the key to building a future free of malnutrition. Here are ten reasons why empowering women is the key to development.

- 1) Women make up a little over half of the world's population but in many parts of the world, especially in Asia and South America, they are more likely to go hungry than men.
- 2) Following natural disasters, women and girls suffer more from shortages of food.
- 3) A large body of research confirms that putting more income in the hands of women yields beneficial results for health, education and child nutrition.
- 4) Closing the gender gap in agriculture by giving women farmers more resources could bring the number of hungry people in the world down by 100-150 million people.
- 5) Surveys in a wide range of countries have show that women provide 85-90 per cent of the time spent on household food preparation.

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- 6) Women in Africa work an average of 50 per cent longer each day than men.
- 7) Worldwide, for every 100 boys out of school there are 122 girls. But in some countries the gender gap is much wider. For every 100 boys out of school in Yemen there are 270 girls, in Iraq 316 girls and in India 426 girls.
- 8) Educated mothers have healthier families. Their children are better nourished, are less likely to die in infancy and more likely to attend school.
- 9) Around half of all pregnant women in developing countries are anaemic. Iron deficiency causes around 110,000 deaths during child birth each year.
- 10) Malnourished mothers often give birth to underweight babies who are 20 percent more likely to die before the age of five. Up to 17 million children are born underweight every year.

Table 18.2 will give us an idea of the gender disaggregated indicators and data which should be collected for the need assessment.

| Table 18.2: Proforma for collecting of gender-sensitive baseline demographic data¹ | |
|--|--|
| Name of village, town, district, city, sub-region, etc. | |
| Type of local government organization | |
| | |
| Total area | |
| Area of Land | |
| Area of Water | |
| | |
| Population density | |
| # of inhabitants | |
| # of HH | |
| Average # of individuals in HH | |
| | |
| # of Females (18-60 yrs) | |
| # of Males (18-60 yrs) | |
| # of Females (5-17 yrs) | |
| # of Males (5-17 yrs) | |
| # of Females (under 5 yrs) | |
| # of Males (under 5 yrs) | |
| # of Elderly (over 60 yrs) | |
| ¹ Sources of baseline demographic data include, the national census, UNDP's national human development reports, and the World Bank. | |

| | |
|---|--|
| | |
| Median income of HH | |
| Median income for female-headed HH | |
| Median income for male-headed HH | |
| | |
| # of HH living below the poverty line | |
| # of female-headed HH living below the poverty line | |

of male-headed HH living below the poverty line

Note: HH stands for household

| | |
|---|--|
| Gender sensitive baseline livelihoods (agricultural and non-agricultural) data² | |
| Cost of food-basket | |
| % of HH w/FT secure agricultural employment | |
| Monthly average income | |
| % of females w/FT secure agricultural employment | |
| Monthly average income | |
| % of males w/FT secure agricultural employment | |
| | |
| % of HH w/FT secure non-agricultural employment | |
| Monthly average income | |
| % of females w/FT secure non-agricultural employment | |
| Monthly average income | |
| % of males w/FT secure non-agricultural employment | |
| | |
| % of HH w/PT secure agricultural employment | |
| Monthly average income | |
| % of females w/PT secure agricultural employment | |
| Monthly average income | |
| % of males w/PT secure agricultural employment | |
| | |
| % of HH w/PT secure nonagricultural employment | |

Monthly average income

² Sources of baseline employment and livelihoods data include the census, FAO statistics, ILO reports, economic ministries, and the World Bank.

Note: w/FT stands for working full-time; w/PT stands for working part-time.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: a) Use this space given below to answer the question.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Why should we conduct need assessment for policy making in the area of health?

.....
.....
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.....

18.8 SUMMING UP

This Unit dealt with defining need assessment and different approaches in need assessment. It also discussed different methodologies to conduct need assessment. Not only methodologies, tools of conducting need assessment were also described. Lastly, it explained the importance of bringing gender concerns in the need assessment process and the areas of concern for conducting need assessment to formulate gender-sensitive policies.

Need assessment is a process for determining and addressing needs or 'gaps' between current conditions and desired conditions, often used for improvement in individuals, education/training, organizations or communities. Conducting information and literature search; selecting data collection methods; determining sampling scheme; designing and piloting collection instrument; gathering and recording data; analyzing data; managing data; synthesizing data and creating reports.

Some of the tools used for need assessment include observation; interviews; focus group discussion; oral surveys; questionnaires; existing data and tests.

Factors influencing need assessment include audience characterization; knowledge; training; tools and techniques; benefits; attitudes and biases; ability to attend or access; and cultural characteristics.

Gender and need assessment in sectoral areas such as food security; health; education; economic self-reliance/employment opportunities; social justice; conflict; poverty; violence; fighting hunger. Table 18.2 summarized the gender disaggregated indicators and data which should be collected for need assessment.

18.9 GLOSSARY

Gender-aware needs : Gender-aware needs are those that are specific to female or male members of the population and partially result from women's and men's positions in the family and larger society.

Gender-aware assessment : A process within which the specific needs of women and girls and men and boys are identified and analyzed.

Gender-aware priorities : Gender-aware priorities are those that reflect the main concerns of either women or men and are

information

informed by their roles in the household and public spheres (commonly referred to as gender roles).

Gender-aware qualitative : Gender-aware qualitative information reveals data on the quality of the daily realities of women, men, boys and girls, as well as the quality of their participation in different sectors.

Sex-disaggregated data : Statistical information that differentiates between females and males.

18.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Need assessment is a process for determining and addressing needs or “gaps” between current conditions and desired conditions, often used for improvement in individuals, education/training, organizations or communities. The need can be a desire to improve current performance or to rectify existing deficiency.
- 2) Observation – Observation is a method of data collection based on watching a process or skill and systematically recording the events.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Poor health status always had been one of the critical indicators of women’s low status in Indian society. Until the 1990s, virtually every gender-based health statistic for the country showed discrimination against women. For example, higher female infant mortality, high maternal mortality, higher general mortality and morbidity rates in most age groups and lower life expectancy at birth. This trend persists in 2011 census data of Government of India also. With regard to sex ratio, according to 2011 census, it is 940 females per 1000 males. But in developing countries like Indonesia it was 988 females per 1000 males in 2011. In Bangladesh it was 978 per 1000 males in 2011. (Census of India, provisional population totals, office of the Registrar General and census commissioner). Women’s health is always a low priority, both in the family and in society. Parents hesitate to take their girl children to doctors – both for the fear of spending money, as well as ruining the chances of getting them married. Nobody wants an ‘ill’ daughter-in-law. In her marital home also she is expected to be a care giver and not a care-seeker. The needs of her family always come before her needs. This is specially so if she does not have an income of her own.

18.11 REFERENCES

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18.12 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

- 1) How can we conduct need assessment? Explain with suitable examples.
- 2) What are the advantages and disadvantages in carrying out need assessment?
- 3) Analyze the significance of need assessment in formulating gender-sensitive policies. Explain with a few selected indicators.