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IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS BETWEEN REPORTED AND TESTED LITERACY RATES IN SELECTED AREAS OF DISTRICT FAISALABAD, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to identify gaps between reported literacy and tested literacy rate in selected areas of district Faisalabad, Pakistan. To achieve the broader aim of the study, three objectives were formulated: a). to get a reliable estimate of literacy rate through household survey among the population of selected rural and urban areas of district Faisalabad; b). to test literacy skills of the population aged 10-59 and estimate literacy levels achieved by the selected population; and c). to identify gaps between reported literacy rate and the tested literacy rate. Sampling and data collection in the study were done in two phases. In the first phase, 256 houses were selected for household survey through cluster sampling (64 houses from each of four tehsils of the district; 32 houses from rural and 32 from urban areas). A survey questionnaire was designed to get information about literacy rate of the selected population. In the second phase, a literacy test was developed to test reading, writing, numeracy and visual skills of the selected participants. The literacy test was administered on 126 participants of 10-59 years age group. On the basis of test scores, the participants were categorized into three levels of literacy: basic level, middle level and functional level. The study identified overall 9.75% gap between reported and tested literacy rates. The gap between reported literacy rate and functional level of literacy was 29.75%. A number of other facts have surfaced through the study. It was concluded that the current literacy claim of the government of Pakistan seems overestimated in many respects and it does not appear reflect the actual literacy rate.

Keywords*:* Adult literacy, Reported Literacy Rate, Tested Literacy rate, Literacy Skills, Levels of Literacy, Gaps between Reported and Tested Literacy Rate.

INTRODUCTION

Variations are seen in reported literacy rate of Pakistan in different official and non-official documents. For instance, Economic Survey of Pakistan 2008-09 (Government of Pakistan, 2009) reported 55% literacy rate for Pakistan with 59% male and 52% female literacy rate. It claimed 61% literacy rate for the province of Punjab with 62% male and 59% female literacy rate. UNESCO (2004a) provided 59.52% estimated literacy rate of Pakistan for the year 2008. For the province of Punjab it reported 63.60% literacy rate which included 74.14% male and 54.14% female literacy rate. Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey 2008-09 (Government of Pakistan, 2010) claimed 59% literacy rate for the country with 71% male and 46% female literacy rate. Such variations in reported literacy rates pose questions about the actual literacy rate in the country. In addition to variations regarding reported literacy rate, questions are also raised about the quality of literates in Pakistan. A number of studies have been conducted to assess learning achievements of primary level students in different subjects (AEPM, 1999; Bureau of Curriculum Development and Extension Services NWFP, 2000; UNESCO, 2002; Saeed et al., 2005; NEAS, 2006; Das, Pandey and Zajonc, 2006). The findings of these studies indicated that majority of students obtained less scores than the minimum criteria. A few studies were conducted to investigate the retention level of literacy skills among neo-literates after a gap of 3 months, 6 months and 9 months (Adeeb, 2005; 2006) and after 3 years (Niwaz, et al., 2010). The studies reported that retention level of literacy skills among neo-literates was 36.54%, 37.46% and 37.46% respectively at the above mentioned three periods (Adeeb, 2005; 2006) and a huge relapse into illiteracy was reported after the period of three years. None of the participants achieved the advanced level of literacy and majority of them were placed below the basic level of literacy (Niwaz, et al., 2010). Although some of these studies have sought to find out the gaps in learning achievements of primary level students and neo-literates, no study has addressed to find out the gaps between reported literacy rate and the tested literacy rate. The present

study aimed to report literacy rate of the selected population on the basis of a household survey and then test the literacy skills of literate people aged 10-59 years. The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To get a reliable estimate of literacy rate through household survey among the population of selected rural and urban areas of district Faisalabad, Pakistan.
2. To test literacy skills of the population aged 10-59 and estimate literacy levels achieved by the literate population.
3. To identify gaps between reported literacy rate and the tested literacy rate.

In the present study, the concept 'reported literacy' refers to the literacy rate reported on the basis of a household survey in the selected areas of district Faisalabad, Pakistan. The literacy rate was reported by counting the number and percentage of the people who had completed primary level of education (grade 5 or above). For reported literacy rate, literacy skills of the people were not tested. The concept 'tested literacy' refers to measuring the literacy skills of the literate people and then reporting the literacy rate on the basis of test results. The purpose of 'tested literacy' rate was to find out the levels of literacy skills in the literate population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of literacy is difficult to define and there is a lot of debate on the meaning of literacy in the academic, political and economic worlds (Street, 1994; Castleton, 2001). This debate is due to multimodality of literacy and multiple dimensions of the meaning of literacy (UNESCO, 2005; Cope and Kalantzis, 2006; Street, 2009). Earlier definitions of literacy were based on reading and writing skills and focussed on individual's competency in these skills (UNESCO, 2004a). Later, numeracy skill or arithmetic was also included along with reading and writing. In addition, literacy has been defined differently in different countries. For instance, in Bangladesh, it is defined as the ability to read and write in any language whereas in Canada a 9th grade pass is considered a literate. In Pakistan, a literate person is one who can read a newspaper and write a simple letter in any language (UNESCO, 2004a; Chaudhry, 2006). In Indian context, a literate person is that who can read with a speed of 40 words per minute and write at a speed of 10 words per minute (UNESCO, 2004a). All these definitions tend to emphasize individual's competency in literacy skills particularly reading and writing. Modern day literacy writers have criticized the individual and skill based notions of literacy. They have argued for social aspect of literacy. For them, literacy is not only a skill but actions and values rooted in social and cultural contexts (LoBianco and Freebody, 1997; Barton and Hamilton, 2000; Castleton, 2001). Street (2009) argues that literacy should not be conceptualized as an individual's ability to understand a language rather it should be understood as the social uses of a language. Barton and Hamilton (2000) also support the view that literacy is essentially a social activity and is located in interaction among people.

In view of the debate on individual-social meanings of literacy, UNESCO (2005) has attempted to propose a definition of literacy which includes all the aspects discussed above. It defines literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential, and participate fully in community and wider society (UNESCO, 2005: 21)This definition seems to expand the concept of literacy by using the words 'knowledge' and 'potential' instead of skills. These are the emerging views about literacy. However, in the context of Pakistan where literacy rate is low, a lot of importance is still given on the development of literacy skills in individuals so that they might be able to solve their daily problems and contribute towards social development. Further, in Pakistan, literacy is defined as a skill and an ability to read and write. Considering our context, it seems important to present an overview of literacy skills.

Reading, writing and numeracy have been recognized as operationally definable core skills of literacy (OECD, 2003; Wagner, 2005; UNESCO, 2005; OECD, 2006) and in view of its significance in

individual and social life, visual skill has also been added as a literacy skill (UNESCO, 2004b; Schaffner, 2005). All literacy definitions, traditional or modern, consider reading and writing skills as core components of literacy. Reading skill comprises of a set of abilities to name letters, to understand the relationship between text and images, to recognize common words printed in the context of the individual, to decode written words, to understand simple phrases and sentences and the ability to find out, understand and use information from text or documents. Writing skill comprises of individual's abilities to form letters, to be aware of print conventions, to copy written text, to write a text from dictation and to compose a message, or to fill out a form (OECD, 2003; Wagner, 2005; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2009). Numeracy skill includes abilities to count, sort, and perform simple comparisons of quantities, to decode the meaning of numerals, to be aware of small and large numbers, to carry out the four arithmetical computations, to be aware of measurement systems and procedures and to understand percentage, averages, graphs, and other ways to summarize and display data (OECD, 2003; UNESCO, 2004; Wagner, 2005; UNESCO, 2009). Visual skills are related to understanding and interpretation of visual signs and images. Schaffner (2005) enlists the following abilities which constitute visual skill: the abilities to locate own province or district on a map, to understand and interpret diagrams, to draw arrows and show logical sequence between pictures, to number pictures in the logical order and to write a short story based on a picture/pictures.

Academic and research literature indicates different levels of literacy, for instance, local literacy (Barton and Hamilton, 2000) and transnational literacy (Warriner, 2009) which goes beyond local and contextual boundaries. In the present study, however, the researchers used the word 'levels' to indicate levels within 'literacy skills'. Levels refer to the degree of individual's competency in four literacy skills mentioned above. Identification and determination of literacy levels can help us to understand the competency of individuals in literacy skills. At the skills level, Thomas (2001) and Barton (2007) mention two levels of literacy: basic and functional levels. For Pakistani context, UNESCO (2004a; 2004b) classified literacy in three levels: basic level, middle level and functional level. Basic level is used for people with poor competency in literacy skills, middle level for persons who possess minimum level of literacy to perform societal demands whereas functional level refers to the higher level of literacy

In most developing countries, literacy rate is reported by conducting population census or household surveys. Information about literacy is elicited by asking the questions like: Can you read and write or do you know how to read and write? If a person answers 'yes' to these questions, he/she is considered literate (Schaffner, 2005; UNESCO, 2009). In Pakistan literacy rate is reported by asking the person whether he/she has passed 5th grade examination (any person who passes primary level of education is considered literate). Information gathered through such sources overestimates literacy rate. Some respondents may consider them fully literate when actually they were not and some may be reluctant to admit that they are illiterate (Terryn, 2004). Research studies support the view that there may be discrepancies between reported literacy and the actual literacy rate (Greaney, Khandker, and Alam, 1998; UNESCO, 2004b). It may happen when the head of the family reports illiterate members of the family as literate. Due to limitations of survey method of reporting literacy rate, some alternative or complimentary methods are suggested by literacy research organizations and researchers to enhance reliability of literacy data. The alternative methods may include direct form of literacy assessment through literacy tests or observations of literacy in use. Literacy tests are designed to assess individual's competencies in reading, writing, numeracy and visual skills (Greaney, Khandker, and Alam, 1998; OECD, 2003; Singleton and Vincent, 2004; Terryn, 2004; UNESCO, 2004b; Schaffner, 2005; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2009). The present study attempts to validate the data (literacy rate) obtained through literacy survey by administering a literacy test to measure the competency of the participants in four literacy skills.

METHODOLOGY

The study was quantitative in nature. Survey method was used to collect information on the number of literate people in the selected areas included in the study. After identification of literacy rate, a literacy test was administered on the literate people to find out their actual literacy level. The

population of the study consisted of the people living in rural and urban areas of district Faisalabad. Males and females of 10-59 age groups who had completed primary education but not completed elementary or secondary education were considered the population for administering literacy test. Four villages and four towns from each tehsil of district Faisalabad were selected through cluster sampling. Eight houses from each village/town were randomly selected for household survey to get estimate of literates. Hence, total 16 villages and 16 towns were selected from the district and 8 houses were selected from each village/town Total houses included in the sample were 256 (8×32).

Data were collected in two phases. During the first phase, a questionnaire about literacy information was used to identify the literate people from the selected sample. During the second phase a literacy test developed by Lao National Literacy Survey 2001 (UNESCO, 2004b) was used after some modifications. The test was administered on the selected sample to test literacy skills. The test aimed to measure reading, writing, numeracy and visual skills among the selected participants. The test contained the following items:

Background Information

Background information of respondents consisted of reading practice and literacy information.

Reading skill
To measure the reading skill, the test consisted of five different questions like matching columns, description of time, information about letter address and schedule of trains.

Writing Skill
Five questions were included to measure writing skill. The questions comprised of writing counting, writing names of days, writing fruits name, writing of address and letter writing.

Numeracy Skill
To measure numeracy skill, five questions were included in the teat which consisted of simple calculation, subtraction, multiplication and division etc.

Visual Skill
Five questions about visual skill consisted of map reading, arranging the images with sequence and understanding sketches and writing a short story on seeing a sketch/picture.

Data collected from household survey was analyzed by simple percentage. Data collected from literacy test was marked and scores were awarded to each participant for each literacy skill. The test contained four skills a) reading, b) writing, c) numeracy, and d) visual skill. Each skill contained five questions and consisted of 25 marks. The following criteria were used to analyze scores in each literacy skill.

a. Obtaining 6-11 scores out of 25 or minimum 24.0 percent score was considered at " Basic Literacy Level" or "Level I",
b. Obtaining 12-17 scores out of 25 or achieved minimum 48.0 percent scores was considered at "Middle Literacy Level" or "Level II",
c. Obtaining 18-25 scores out of 25 or minimum72.0 percent was considered at " Functional Level' or "Level III".

The gap between reported literacy and tested literacy was calculated by finding out the difference between reported literacy rate and the tested literacy rate at all three levels of literacy: basic level, middle level and functional level.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented in the following tables:

Table 1. Tehsil Wise and Overall Reported Literacy Rate of Age Group 10 Years and Above (Total Number of People: 1341)

Area/ Subgroup	Number of People	Overall Literacy Rate	Number of Male Literates	Male %	Number of Female Literates	Female %
Tehsil Faisalabad	359 (Male:190 Female: 169)	59.00 %	127	66.84 %	87	51.16 %
Tehsil Jaranwala	345 (Male:184 Female: 161)	57.10 %	121	65.76 %	78	48.44 %
Tehsil Samundri	335 (Male:175 Female: 160)	53.67 %	108	61.71 %	73	46.62 %
Tehsil Tandianwala	302 (Male:161 Female: 141)	50.35 %	98	60.88 %	56	42.18 %
District (Overall)	**1341 (Male:710 Female: 631)**	**56 %**	**454**	**63 %**	**294**	**49 %**

The above table provides a picture of tehsil and gender wise literacy rate of district Faisalabad according to the researcher's survey in the selected population. Overall literacy rate in the district was 56% with male literacy rate 63% and female literacy rate 49%. Literacy rate in tehsil Faisalabad was 59 % with 66.84 % males and 51.16 % females. Literacy rate in Jaranwala was 57.10 % with 65.76 % males and 48.44 % females. In tehsil Samundri literacy rate was 53.67 % with 61.71 % males and 46.62 % females. Literacy rate in tehsil Tandianwala was 50.35 % with male literacy rate of 60.88 % and female literacy rate of 42.18 %.

Table 2. Comparison of Researchers' Reported Literacy Rate of the District with Other Sources

Source of Information	Overall Literacy Rate	Male	Female
Annual Status of Education Report Faisalabad (2008)	51.9%	----	----
City District Government Faisalabad, Strategic Policy Unit (2008)	60%	68%	52%
Economic Survey of Pakistan (2008-09) Overall Pakistan Literacy Rate	55%	59%	52%

Economic Survey of Pakistan (2008-09) Overall Punjab Province Literacy Rate	61%	62%	59%
Economic Survey of Pakistan (2009-10) Overall Pakistan Literacy Rate	57%	61%	54%
Economic Survey of Pakistan (2009-10) Overall Punjab Province Literacy Rate	62%	6 %	60%
UNESCO (2004a) (Estimated Literacy Rate for Faisalabad in 2008	69.37%	76.10%	64.10%
Researcher's Survey in Selected areas of District Faisalabad (2009)	**56% Urban: 65% Rural: 47%**	**63%**	**49%**

Table 2 shows information about literacy rate of district Faisalabad, Province of Punjab, overall literacy rate of Pakistan and literacy rate of selected areas of Faisalabad from the data collected by the researchers. Annual Status of Education Report (ASEP, 2008) reported 51.9% literacy rate of district Faisalabad. It did not mention gender wise literacy rate. Strategic Policy Unit (2008) conducted its own survey in selected areas of district Faisalabad and claimed 60% Literacy rate of the district with a gender gap of 16 % (Male literacy rate: 68% and female literacy rate: 52%). Economic Survey of Pakistan (2008-09) reported 55% literacy rate of Pakistan in the year 2008-09 with 59% male and 52% female literacy rate. For the province of Punjab, it claimed 61% overall literacy rate with 62% male and 59% female literacy rate. Economic survey of Pakistan (2009-10) reported 59% literacy rate of Pakistan with 61% male and 54% female literacy rate. For the province of Punjab, it reported 62% literacy rate with 64% for males and 60% form females. UNESCO (2004a) estimated 69.37% literacy rate for district Faisalabad with 76.10% male and 64.10% female literacy rate. The researchers' survey conducted in the selected areas of district Faisalabad reported 56% literacy rate with 63% male and 49% female literacy rate.

Table 3: Eligible Population and the Number of Participants who appeared in the Literacy

Area	Number of Male Participants Selected for Test	Number of Female Participants Selected for Test	Total	Number of Participants who Appeared in the Literacy Test
Tehsil Faisalabad	30	21	51	36
Tehsil Jaranwala	31	19	50	35
Tehsil Samundri	27	13	40	26
Tehsil Tandianwala	22	17	39	29

Total (District Faisalabad)	**110**	**70**	**180**	**126**

The above table shows the eligible and actual number of participants who appeared in the test. There were some disable persons included in the eligible population. They were not included in the sample. Although the number of selected participants for administering the test was 180, a lot of them, however, were not available at homes in spite of fixing an appointment and others refused to take test in the last minute particularly female participants. In view of all these difficulties, total number of participants who appeared in the test was 126.

Table 4. Tested Literacy Rate of Reading Skill

Areas	Basic Level	Middle Level	Functional Level	Total
Tehsil Faisalabad	18%	22%	13%	53%
Tehsil Jaranwala	21%	18%	12%	51%
Tehsil Samundri	23%	19%	9%	51%
Tehsil Tandianwala	22%	17%	6%	45%
Total (District Faisalabad)	**21%**	**19%**	**10%**	**50%**

Table 4 shows tested literacy rate of participants in writing skill test. Overall 50% of participants achieved the minimum criteria to be called literates. Majority of the participants (21%) were only able to attain the basic level of literacy whereas 19% got middle level and only 10% were able to achieve the functional level of literacy.

Table 5. Tested Literacy Rate of Writing Skill

Areas	Basic Level	Middle Level	Functional Level	Total
Tehsil Faisalabad	16%	12%	19%	47%
Tehsil Jaranwala	18%	11%	14%	43%
Tehsil Samundri	22%	17%	6%	45%
Tehsil Tandianwala	24%	16%	9%	49%
Total (District)	**20%**	**14%**	**12%**	**46%**

Table 5 indicates tested literacy rate in writing skill. Overall 46% participants were considered to be literate in this skill. 20% participants achieved basic skill, 14% of them attained middle level and12% were able to get functional level.

Table 6. Tested Literacy Rate of Numeracy Skill

Areas	Basic Level	Middle Level	Functional Level	Total
Tehsil Faisalabad	21%	20%	15%	56%
Tehsil Jaranwala	23%	16%	12%	51%
Tehsil Samundri	19%	13%	20%	52%
Tehsil Tandianwala	17%	23%	17%	57%
Total (District)	**20%**	**18%**	**16%**	**54%**

It is evident from the above table that overall 54% participants were considered to be literate in numeracy skill. 20% participants achieved basic skill, 18% of them got middle level and16% were able to get functional level. Only 34% respondents achieved middle and functional levels of literacy.

Table 7. Tested Literacy Rate of Visual Skill

Areas	Basic Level	Middle Level	Functional Level	Total
Tehsil Faisalabad	18%	22%	13%	53%
Tehsil Jaranwala	21	18%	12%	51%
Tehsil Samundri	23%	19%	9%	51%
Tehsil Tandianwala	22%	17%	6%	45%
Total (District Faisalabad)	**19%**	**9%**	**7%**	**35%**

Table 7 shows the tested literacy rate of participants in visual skill test. Overall 35% of participants attained the minimum criteria to be called literates in visual skill. Majority of the participants (19%) were only able to achieve the basic level literacy whereas 9% got middle level and only 7% were able to achieve the functional level of literacy.

Table 8. Tested Literacy Rate in all Four Skills

Literacy Skill	Basic Level	Middle Level	Functional Level	Total
Reading	21%	19%	10%	50%
Writing	20%	14%	12%	46%
Numeracy	20%	18%	16%	54%
Visual Skill	19%	9%	7%	35%
Overall Literacy Rate	**20%**	**15%**	**11.25%**	**46.25%**

Table 8 presents the percentage of respondents in all four literacy skills. Overall tested literacy rate was 46.25%. The number of participants who attained basic level of literacy on average in all four skills was 20%. Middle level of literacy was achieved by 15% participants and only 11.25 could achieve functional level of literacy.

Table 9. Gender Wise and Urban-Rural Comparison of Tested Literacy Rate in all Four Skills

Literacy Skill	Male %	Female%	Urban%	Rural%	Total
Reading	51%	49%	58%	42%	50%
Writing	44%	48%	51%	41%	46%
Numeracy	60%	48%	56%	52%	54%
Visual Skill	43%	27%	29%	41%	35%
Overall Literacy Rate	**49.50%**	**43%**	**48.5%**	**44%**	**46.25%**

The above table shows gender and area wise comparison of overall literacy rate in all four skills. Fifty one percent males and 49% females were found to be literate in reading skill. In writing skill, 44% males and 48% females, in numeracy skill 60% males and 48% females, whereas in visual skill 43% males and 27% females were tested to be literate. The data also revealed that 58% participants from urban areas and 42% from rural areas were tested to be literate in reading skill. In writing skill 51% from urban areas and 41% from rural areas, in numeracy skill 56% from urban areas and 52% from rural areas, and in visual skill 29% from urban areas and 41% participants from rural areas were considered literate. Overall 49.50% male and 43% female participants included in the sample were found out literate. From urban areas 48.5% participants and from rural areas 44% participants were considered to be literate.

Table 10. Identification of Gaps between Reported Literacy and Tested Literacy Rate

Literacy Rate	Total	Male	Female	Gender Disparity
Researchers' Reported Literacy Rate (Based on household survey)	56 %	63 %	49 %	14%
Tested Literacy Rate	46.25%	49.50%	43%	6.5%
Gap in Reported and Tested Literacy Rate	**9.75%**	**13.50%**	**6%**	**7.50%**

The above table shows the gaps between literacy rate reported by the researchers through initial survey and the literacy rate tested by the researchers after administration of the literacy test. The reported literacy rate was 56% and the tested literacy rate was 46.25%. Hence the gap between reported and tested literacy rate was 9.75%. Gap was also found in male and female literacy rate. Reported literacy rate for males was 63% whereas tested literacy rate for males was 49.50%, hence, 13.50% gap was reported. Reported literacy rate for females was 49% and tested literacy rate was 43%. A gap of 6% was found in reported and tested literacy rate for females. Gender gap is also

evident in the reported and the tested literacy rates. In reported literacy rate gender gap was 14% whereas in tested literacy rate it was 6.5%.

Table 11. Identification of Gaps between Reported Literacy Rate and Tested Literacy Rate in Urban and Rural Areas

Area	**Overall District**	**Urban Literacy Rate**	**Rural Literacy rate**	**Disparity in Urban and Rural Literacy**
Reported Literacy Rate in Survey	56 %	65 %	47 %	22%
Tested Literacy Rate	46.25%	48.50%	44%	6.5%
Gaps in Reported and Tested Literacy Rate	**9.75%**	**16.50%**	**3%**	

Table 11 presents area wise gaps between reported and tested literacy rates. In urban areas reported literacy rate was 65% whereas tested literacy rate was 48.50%. It shows a gap of 16.50%. Interestingly, the gap is less in rural areas. In rural areas reported literacy rate was 47% whereas tested literacy rate was 44%. It shows 3% gap between reported and tested literacy rate. In reported literacy rate the disparity between urban and rural areas was 22% whereas it was 6.5% in the tested literacy rate.

Table 12. Identification of Gaps between Reported Literacy and Tested Literacy Rate in Middle and Functional Levels of Literacy

Literacy Rate	**Total**
Researchers' Reported Literacy Rate	56 %
Cumulative Tested Literacy Rate in Middle Level and Functional Level of Literacy	26.25%
Gap in Reported and Tested Literacy Rate in Middle and Functional Levels of Literacy	**29.75%**

The above table shows tested literacy rate in two levels of literacy; middle level and functional level. Basic level literacy rate has been excluded in this table. The data shows a gap of 29.75% in reported literacy and tested literacy in middle and functional levels of literacy.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and the data analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Male population in the selected areas tends to be more in number than female population and majority of population lives in rural areas.
2. There seem to be no valid and reliable criteria to report literacy rate. That is why variations can be seen in different literacy surveys.

3. There was a significant gap between reported literacy rate and the tested literacy rate. Interestingly, the gap was wider in male literacy rate as compared to female literacy rate. It is also important to mention that the gap was wider in urban areas as compared to rural areas.
4. Higher numbers of participants were literate in reading, writing and numeracy skills as compared to visual skills.
5. Majority of the participants attained basic level of literacy. The functional level of literacy of those who attained middle level was significantly less than those who attained the basic level.
6. Gender disparity in reported literacy rate was higher than that in the tested literacy rate.
7. If functional level of literacy be considered criteria for reporting literacy rate the gap was significantly higher. Under these criteria, only 26% participants were reported to be literate and 30% gap was observed in reported and tested literacy rate.
8. Tested literacy rate in the selected areas seemed to be lower than the literacy rate reported in various literacy surveys.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings mentioned above, the following appropriate measures are recommended.

1. There is a need to develop some reliable criteria to report literacy rate in the country. The criteria for reporting literacy rate by just counting the number of people who claim to be able to read or write or who have completed primary education need rethinking. A standardized literacy test can be developed and administered on primary level graduates to identify the class equal to literacy in Pakistan.
2. There should be more emphasis on functional literacy rather than focus on basic literacy.
3. It is advisable to conduct similar surveys in other parts of the country to validate the findings so that reliable criteria of reporting literacy rate can be developed.
4. Qualitative studies can be conducted on how people use literacy skills in their daily lives. Illiterate people can also be studied to see the extent to which they use literacy skills in solving their daily problems.
5. A systematic cluster approach may be evolved to increase literacy and measuring literacy in the country.

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