

GLOBAL TOOLKITS FOR FLN ASSESSMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) proficiency is vital for students to remain in school, improve higher-order skills, secure a decent livelihood, and improving their social and health outcomes. In this ecosystem, assessments play a pivotal role in measuring and enhancing these FLN outcomes over time. In our previously published product, [Assessments in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy](#), we explored the role of assessments and the status of existing tools in India by bringing out the challenges in this ecosystem. This primer dives deeper into the existing assessment toolkits available globally for multiple stakeholders.

An analysis of the existing toolkits indicates that these fall under one of the following categories: (i) Early Years Assessments (0-6 years); (ii) Formal Schooling Years Assessments (7-14 years); (iii) Assessments for Physically Challenged and (iv) Assessments for Adolescents and Adults (14 - 80 years). **This primer describes 15 significant toolkits under these groups.**

The **Early Years Assessments toolkits** focus on assessing the different domains of development such as physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and language development in children. These include the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA), Early Grades Reading Assessment (EGRA), Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), and many more such toolkits. **Formal Schooling Years toolkits** focus on measuring the learning outcomes of diverse age groups, but are organised to capture the needs of various grades. These can be broadly divided into primary and secondary grades, and are critical to help make academic course corrections. The Early Grades Mathematics Assessments (EGMA), and ASER Beyond Basics are examples of this category. The third category of **assessments for the physically challenged**, also caters to learners across age groups, such as the Assessments for All (AFA) Toolkit. However, their focus is to gauge the special needs of people with disabilities so that learning processes can be made more inclusive and equitable. The final category of **adult and adolescent assessments**, such as the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Test goes beyond the fundamental measure of FLN to evaluate the practical application of these skills in real-world scenarios. These tools help anchor adult literacy programmes which can enable adults to acquire functional skills to navigate life transactions.

There is room for improvement in the design and administration of these tools. The current assessment landscape falls short of:

1. **Simplicity and standardisation** for nationwide formative and summative assessments
2. **Inclusivity** in existing assessments for testing differently abled children
3. **Capacity building** of assessors/teachers for establishing a strong assessment-to-action connection

Efforts in these areas would not only help achieve foundational learning outcomes but also help do it equitably and effectively.



GLOSSARY

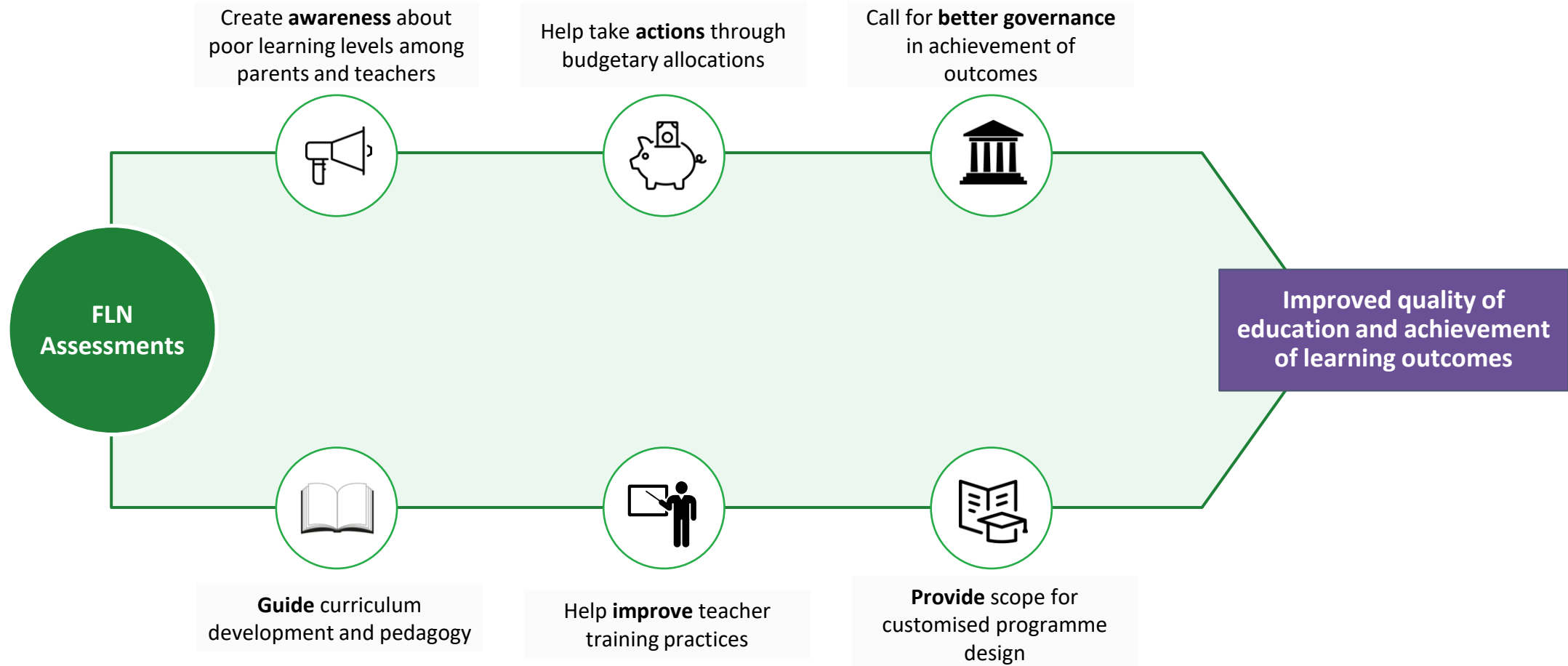


- AFA - Assessments for All
 - ANA - Annual National Assessments
 - ASER - Annual Status of Education Report
 - ASQ - Ages and Stages Questionnaire
 - DIYA - Do It Yourself ASER
 - ECD Communities - Early Childhood Development Communities
 - ECE Centre - Early Childhood Education Centre
 - EGMA - Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
 - EGRA - Early Grade Reading Assessment
 - ELGs - Early Learning Goals
- EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
 - FLN - Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
 - FLNT - Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Test
 - GLD - Good Level of Development
 - IDELA - International Development and Early Learning Assessment
 - ICAN - International Common Assessment of Numeracy
 - NAS - National Achievement Survey
 - NCERT - National Council of Educational Research and Training
 - SRI - School Readiness Instrument

IMPORTANCE OF FLN ASSESSMENTS ACROSS THE GLOBE



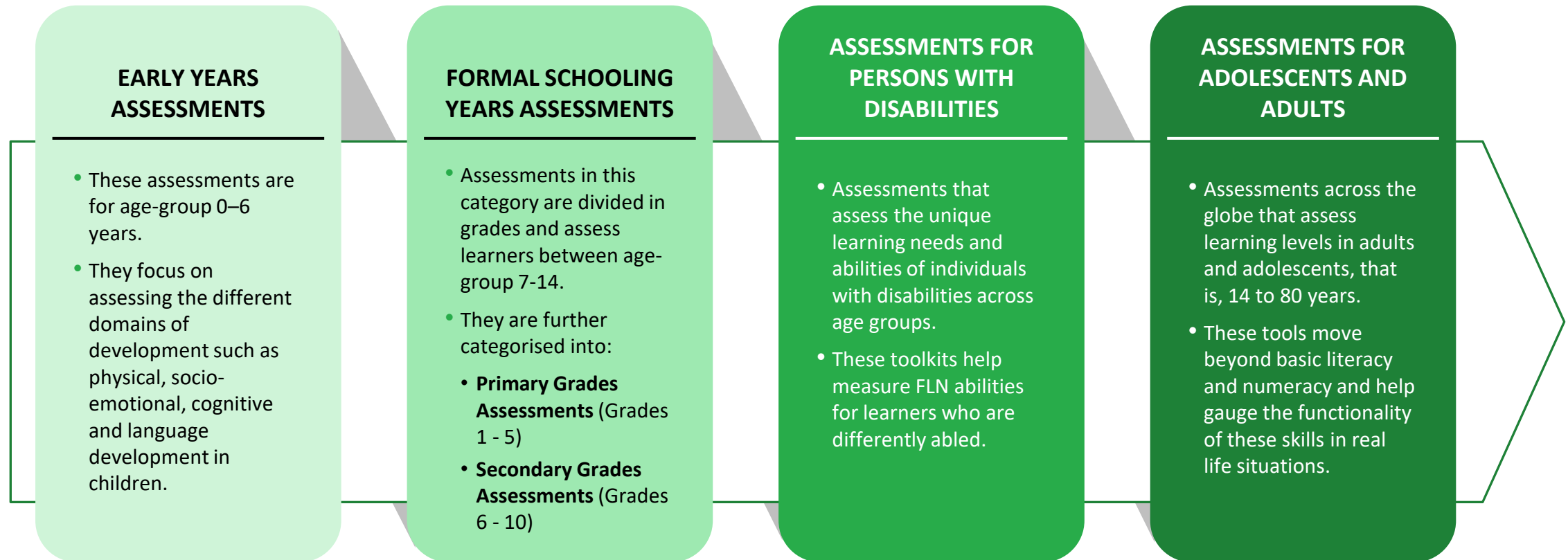
Foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) assessments shed light on key learning issues, provide evidence to set learning outcomes and track progress on the same.



FRAMEWORK FOR CATEGORISING FLN ASSESSMENTS



The following framework categorises **FLN assessments by age group and needs of various populations**. They help indicate various skill sets required in the students' learning journey.



The examples of tools and toolkits mentioned in the subsequent slides are as per these categories.



CATEGORY 1: EARLY YEARS ASSESSMENTS



Toolkit 1: International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA)

Developed by **Save the Children** in collaboration with education experts and researchers, IDELA was **created in 2011**, drawing on the evidence from early childhood development research across the globe. The tool is particularly useful in low and middle-income countries where access to quality early childhood education may be limited.



PURPOSE	IDELA is an assessment tool designed to evaluate the early learning and development of young children between the ages of 3 and 6 years. Its primary purpose is to provide a comprehensive and holistic assessment of children's skills and competencies.
CHARACTERISTICS	IDELA also aims to identify children who may be at risk of falling behind in their early development and to inform targeted interventions that can support their learning and growth.
STAKEHOLDERS	Provides data to governments, donors, programmes, communities, consultants, and academics.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The tool captures four domains – motor development, emergent literacy, emergent maths and socio-emotional development. It also measures inhibitory control, memory and learning approaches.
LANGUAGES	The toolkit is available in the English language.



Toolkit 2: Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)

EGRA is a widely used assessment tool specifically developed and validated between 2006 and 2014 by **RTI International**. It is used to identify students who are struggling with reading, and to diagnose specific areas of difficulty.



PURPOSE	EGRA gauges early literacy skills through a 15-minute individual oral assessment.
CHARACTERISTICS	Being an early years assessment toolkit, it measures the reading ability of children between 3-6 years.
STAKEHOLDERS	International donors, policymakers and practitioners are major consumers of the data gathered through EGRA so that relevant intervention investments are made.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The toolkit assesses five essential components of reading: listening comprehension, letter identification, non-word reading, oral reading fluency with comprehension, and sound identification.
LANGUAGES	EGRA is adopted in 120+ languages and used across 70+ countries.



Toolkit 3: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile

First published in 2007 by the **Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)**, United Kingdom, EYFS Profile is a statutory **assessment of children's development at the end of the early years foundation stage**. It is intended to provide a reliable, valid, and accurate assessment of whether children have achieved the required milestone or not.



PURPOSE	The EYFS is a summative assessment where children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved the expected level for the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in mathematics and literacy.
CHARACTERISTICS	It is a mandatory assessment, administered and completed by the teachers when the child turns five years old, towards the end of the year.
STAKEHOLDERS	Each child's records are combined at local authority and national levels to produce a National Statistics publication and make relevant changes to the early years programmes.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	There are 17 different development goals on which children are assessed.
LANGUAGES	This assessment is available in English.



Toolkit 4: School Readiness Instrument (SRI) Tool

Designed by the **World Bank**, the instrument in draft form was administered on 426 children in three regions in India viz. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Madhya Pradesh (MP) in **2007**.



PURPOSE	The School Readiness Instrument measures cognitive and language development in 5-6 year olds. In addition to the tool, the observation schedule at the Anganwadi/ECE centre complements information about personal and social development.
CHARACTERISTICS	The toolkit is administered by researchers or teachers on a one-to-one basis.
STAKEHOLDERS	School Readiness Instrument (SRI) is meant more for research and data collection purposes. It is used by stakeholders to study systemic changes and impact of specific programmes on children.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The instrument consists of ten discrete tasks that tap key fundamental skills related to number, space, shape, quantity, sequencing and pattern; ability to follow instructions, vocabulary and sentence meaning, phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge.
LANGUAGES	SRI is exclusively available for use in India, and is designed in English.



Toolkit 5: Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

Originally developed by University of Oregon and a few experts from the early childhood education space in 1997, the toolkit has three versions and is extensively used in the USA.



PURPOSE	ASQ is a developmental screening tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month and 5 ½ years.
CHARACTERISTICS	The tool consists of 21 questionnaires filled by parents at different points of their children's growth, that is, Month 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 42, 48, 54 and 60. Additionally, an ASQ calculator helps determine whether or not developmental milestones have been achieved.
STAKEHOLDERS	This tool is widely used by ECE programme developers, educators, paediatricians, nurses, occupational therapists, parents and other caregivers.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The toolkit measures components such as communication skills, gross and fine motor skills, problem-solving and social skills. It is also compatible for children with autism.
LANGUAGES	The toolkit is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Vietnamese.



Toolkit 6: ASER Early Years Toolkit

ASER Early Years Toolkit was developed by **ASER Centre** to measure five domains of development among children in the Early Years.



PURPOSE	The toolkit assesses children in the age-group of 4-8 years on various domains of development in early years
CHARACTERISTICS	ASER volunteers conduct a rapid assessment of children, who are usually local residents.
STAKEHOLDERS	Can be used by all the stakeholders; volunteers, parents, communities, researchers, educationalists and policymakers.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The toolkit measures various components like cognitive development, early language, early numeracy and socio-emotional development in children.
LANGUAGES	The toolkit is available in Hindi and English in India.



CATEGORY 2: FORMAL SCHOOLING YEARS ASSESSMENTS



Toolkit 7 : National Achievement Survey (NAS)

The National Achievement Survey (NAS) is a representative large-scale survey of students' learning, undertaken by the **Ministry of Education, Government of India**. Developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the first nationwide survey was conducted in **2001**.

PURPOSE	NAS is a competency-based assessment that monitors learning levels among schoolchildren from Grade 3 to Grade 10 (age group ranging from 9 to 18 years) studying in state government schools, government-aided schools, private unaided and central government schools.
CHARACTERISTICS	The survey is conducted through a sample-based approach, where a representative sample of students from various states and union territories is selected. This helps in drawing conclusions about the overall learning outcomes in different regions of the country.
STAKEHOLDERS	NAS can be used by educational planners and policymakers, including researchers, in understanding the interdependence of assessment, pedagogical process and learning outcomes.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The survey assesses levels of learners across various subjects, depending on the grade the student is in. For example, NAS 2021 conducted Language, Maths and Environmental Studies assessments for Grades 3 and 5; Language, Math, Science and Social Science for Grade 8 and Modern Indian Language, Math, Science, Social Science and English for Grade 10.
LANGUAGES	The languages in which the National Achievement Survey (NAS) is administered can vary depending on the linguistic needs of the region or state where the survey is conducted.



Toolkit 8: Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)

An annual survey on the status of learning is conducted in India by **ASER Centre** of the **Pratham Education Foundation**, and is conducted in rural India. ASER is being conducted since **2005**, making it one of the most long-standing and influential educational assessments in India.

PURPOSE	ASER is conducted with the primary goal of assessing the basic reading and arithmetic abilities of children aged 3-16 years in rural India.
CHARACTERISTICS	ASER is a very simple tool which uses a sample-based methodology to collect data. Volunteers, often local residents, visit households and schools in rural areas to assess children's literacy and numeracy skills.
STAKEHOLDERS	Catering to a wide range of population, the tool can be used by teachers, parents, communities, government bodies, international organisations, policymakers.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The toolkit goes beyond just measuring foundational literacy and numeracy, providing information about enrolments, infrastructure, teacher presence, access to learning material and basic demographics.
LANGUAGES	The toolkit is available in 19 Indian languages.



Toolkit 9: Early Grades Mathematics Assessments (EGMA)

EGMA is specifically designed to measure early-grade mathematics skills by **RTI International**, supported by **USAID** between **2008 and 2011**.

PURPOSE	A mathematical assessment toolkit for the early grades of primary schooling with learners between ages 6-11.
CHARACTERISTICS	It is an oral assessment, individually administered to students by trained assessors.
STAKEHOLDERS	The results of the tool are useful for teachers, school officials, assessors, and community members.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The tool has six tasks - number identification, reasoning about magnitude (number discrimination), recognition of number patterns (missing number), addition and subtraction (levels 1 and 2), and word problems.
LANGUAGES	The tool is contextualised and is used across the Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Zambia.



Toolkit 10: Do it Yourself ASER (DIYA)

The toolkit was an initiative of the **Pratham Education Foundation and ASER Centre** to make assessments accessible to more people in remote areas in 2018.

PURPOSE	The toolkit can be used to test the basic learning levels for literacy and numeracy of children aged 5-16 easily through test formats that can be self-administered and recorded.
CHARACTERISTICS	The toolkit allows communities and individuals to assess their literacy and numeracy skills at home.
STAKEHOLDERS	The tool can be used by educationists, teachers, scholars, and any citizen to measure the basic reading and arithmetic ability of children.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	For literacy, the toolkit assesses letter recognition, word recognition, paragraph (Grade 1-level text), and story (Grade 2-level text) reading and comprehension. The arithmetic segment tests learners across four tasks: identifying single-digit numbers, double-digit numbers, subtraction with borrowing, and division.
LANGUAGES	The DIYA toolkit is available in Hindi and English with detailed instructions on how to use the testing tools.



Toolkit 11: Annual National Assessments (ANA)

The Annual National Assessments was developed by the Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa to assess foundational literacy and numeracy skills in primary and secondary school students.

PURPOSE	The toolkit is designed to test students' abilities in language and mathematics in formal years of schooling from Grade 1 to Grade 9.
CHARACTERISTICS	It is diagnostic in nature and conducted in school by the faculty members. Question papers and marking memoranda are supplied by the national Department of Basic Education, while schools conduct the tests and manage the moderation and paper checking.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	ANA is designed to provide information on students' abilities in language and mathematics, allowing education authorities to monitor learning outcomes and identify areas for improvement in the education system.
LANGUAGES	The toolkit is available in English.



Toolkit 12: International Common Assessment of Numeracy (ICAN)

ICAN is an open-source, robust and easy-to-use assessment tool developed through a collaborative effort among **PAL Network member organisations and ASER Centre**, which is widely used in Eastern, Southern and Western Africa, USA and South Asia.

PURPOSE	The assessment focuses on FLN skills, which is adapted from the ASER tool for household assessments and is implemented orally one-on-one.
CHARACTERISTICS	The toolkit is designed to cater to children in their formal schooling years from Grade 1 onwards, and is usually conducted in Grades 2 and 3.
STAKEHOLDERS	The tool can be used by educationists, teachers, scholars, and any citizen to measure the basic arithmetic ability of children.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	50% tasks on ICAN are based on number knowledge (topics such as counting, comparing number of objects, number recognition, operations - with and without carryovers, borrow and remainder) and other 50% are based on geometry (topics like position and direction, shapes and figures), measurement (length and capacity, time and calendar) and data display (retrieving simple information).
LANGUAGES	The toolkit is available in multiple languages including English, to cater to the needs of the diverse population.



CATEGORY 3: ASSESSMENTS FOR DIFFERENTLY-ABLED INDIVIDUALS



Toolkit 13: Assessment for All (AFA)

Pratham, in partnership with CBM was working on ensuring the right to education for learners with disabilities. Thus, an inclusive assessment tool - AFA - was developed in collaboration with Pratham's ASER Centre.



PURPOSE	The toolkit is designed to understand the learning levels for children with disabilities. The tool comprises language and maths instruments that include a variety of tasks to assess learners on their foundational skills of literacy and numeracy.
CHARACTERISTICS	It assesses foundational skills of learners in the age group of 6 to 14 years.
STAKEHOLDERS	It can be used by policymakers, educationalists, civil society groups, teachers, parents and others.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The toolkit comprises eight tasks in the language section, thirteen tasks in the numeracy section, four tasks on practical math, one task on writing and one task on visuo-spatial recognition.
LANGUAGES	The toolkit is available in Hindi and Marathi languages along with its instructional manual and data recording sheet, assessment aids and adaptative guidelines.



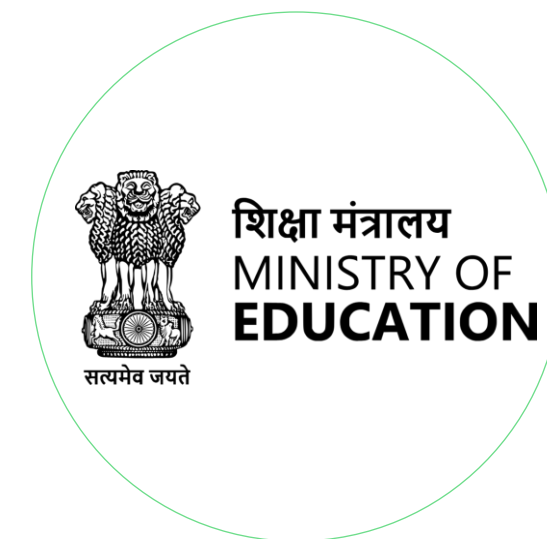
CATEGORY 4: ASSESSMENTS FOR ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS



Toolkit 14: Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Test (FLNT)

The (FLNAT) under **Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram (New India Literacy Programme)** was held in **March 2023** in India across **10 States and UTs** in the country to assess the basic reading, writing and numeracy skills of the neo-literates.

PURPOSE	The assessment measures literacy and numeracy skills of children and adults, hence is compatible with diverse range of age group of 15 to 80+ years.
CHARACTERISTICS	The first Foundational Literacy and Numeracy test was conducted in the year 2023 by the Ministry of Education. It was administered to 22.70 lakh participants.
STAKEHOLDERS	The assessment is administered by the youth and students of colleges, who are involved as volunteer teachers to organise teaching learning activities.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	The assessment has five components that are aligned with the Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram, namely - (i) Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, (ii) Critical Life Skills, (iii) Basic Education, (iv) Vocational Skills, (v) Continuing Education.
LANGUAGES	The tool is administered in English and other regional languages for assessing FLN skills.



Toolkit 15: ASER Beyond Basics

ASER Beyond basics is an assessment tool developed by the **ASER Centre of the Pratham Education Foundation** which was conducted in the year **2017**.

PURPOSE	ASER Beyond Basics is one of the first nationwide measures of status of learning and aspirations for the age group 14 to 18 years.
CHARACTERISTICS	Through household-based assessments, the tool tries to understand the learning gap in children and assess if they have acquired the skills and abilities they will need to lead productive lives as adults.
STAKEHOLDERS	The tool can be used by teachers, parents and communities, policymakers and practitioners to study where learning deficits among the youth lie.
COMPONENTS CAPTURED	ASER Beyond Basics attempts to capture responses related to four components namely, activity (what they are involved in), ability (what they can do), awareness (what they know) and aspirations.
LANGUAGES	The toolkit is available for use in Hindi and English.



WAY FORWARD



While the 15 tools mentioned in the primer are enabling the assessment ecosystem, further investments are needed so that the **existing challenges in the employment of these tools** can be addressed



1

STANDARDISED NATION-WIDE ASSESSMENTS

While significant efforts have been made to create assessments measuring various aspects of foundational literacy and numeracy, **lack of standardised assessments and Indian norms comes in the way of administration of tools at scale.**



2

INCLUSIVITY IN ASSESSMENTS

The early years landscape has the maximum number of assessments to measure FLN outcomes in children. However, the **inclusivity of these tools is limited** to a certain section of children and young adults. Investing in assessments that are **compatible with differently abled people is a necessary step to ensure inclusion.**



3

TEACHER TRAININGS

Investing in capacity building of the assessors plays a crucial role in validating the findings of the assessment. The teachers in charge of administering assessments require proper training where the needs and aims of administering these toolkits are known to them.



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