

Table 1c – Special Topic Volume 1

Table 1c assesses age heaping using the Whipple's Index by sex and urban/rural residence for each census 1985 - 2003.

Description of variables:

The Whipple's Index, or the Index of Concentration, is based on population statistics by single years of age as presented in table 1a. The interpretation of this index is relatively free from consideration of factors not connected with the accuracy of age reporting.

The Whipple's Index "is obtained by summing the age returns between 23 and 62 years inclusive and finding what percentage is borne by the sum of the returns of years ending with 5 and 0 to one-fifth of the total sum."¹ An index value of 100 represents no concentration at all and a maximum value of 500 occurs if no returns were recorded with any digits other than the two mentioned. Index values below 100 indicate the opposite phenomenon.

In previous editions of the *Demographic Yearbook*², the index has been presented grouped in the following categories:

		<i>Value of Whipple's Index</i>
I.	Highly accurate data	Less than 105
II.	Fairly accurate data	105 – 109.9
III.	Approximate data	110 – 124.9
IV.	Rough data	125 – 174.9
V.	Very rough data	175 and more

The index is applicable to all age distributions for which single years are given at least to the age of 62, with the following exceptions: (1) where the data presented are the result of graduation, no irregularity is scored by Whipple's Index, even though the graduated data may still be affected by inaccuracies of a different type; (2) where statistics on age have been derived by reference to the year of birth, and tendencies to round off the birth year would result in an excessive number of ages ending in odd numbers, the frequency of age reporting with terminal digits 5 and 0 is not an adequate measure of their accuracy.

Using the statistics presented in table 1a the index is computed for all the single-year age distributions from censuses held between 1985 and 2003, with the exception of those excluded on the criteria set forth above. The ratings are presented for both sexes combined as well as males and females by urban/rural residence.

Although Whipple's Index measures only the effects of preferences for ages ending in 5 and 0, it can be assumed that such digit preference is usually connected with other sources of inaccuracy in age statements and the index can be accepted as a fair measure of the general reliability of the age distribution.³

Coverage and earlier data:

Whipple's Index is shown for 145 countries or areas. Data are presented by urban/rural residence for 92 countries or areas.

Whipple's index has not been previously published as part of the *Demographic Yearbook System*.

¹ J. T. Marten, *Census of India, 1921, vol.1, part 1 (Calcutta, 1924)*, pp. 126-127.

² *Demographic Yearbook 1973, 25th Issue, Special Topic Population Census Statistics III* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.74.XIII.1)

³ United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.80.XIII.1, pp. 13-14.