SIERRA LEONE 2015 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

THEMATIC REPORT ON

EDUCATION AND LITERACY

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BY
TIMOTHY WASSWA KABUGO
IBRAHIM G. KARGBO
BAKIATU BANGURA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Sierra Leone, the official primary school entrance age is 6 years. The education system is structured so that the primary cycle lasts six years, lower secondary is three years, upper secondary runs over three years and there are four years of tertiary education. The 2015 Census findings indicated that 3.2 million people, comprising 45.8 per cent of the total population of the country, were aged 6–24 years. The school attendance status for persons aged 6 years and above revealed that 37.8 per cent of that population attended school in 2015, 20.3 per cent had left school prior to the 2015 Census, and about 42 per cent had never been to school. Nearly half of the population 15 years and above had never been to school. Wider sex variations in favour of males were observed among persons 15 years and above, who had never attended school.Regional distributions revealed that the proportion of persons who had never been to school was significantly higher in the Northern Region, followed by Eastern, Southern and Western regions. The Western Region recorded the highest proportion of the population that left school.

OVER 2.4 MILLION PERSONS 3 YEARS AND OLDER WERE ENROLLED IN SCHOOL IN 2015.

45.8% of total population were aged 6-24

50% of the population 15 years and above had never been to school

The census results indicate that for persons who were 15 years and above, more than 70 per cent were employed, 20 per cent were not in the labour force and only 5 per cent were unemployed. Additionally, the data also show that 80.5 per cent of persons that had never been to school and aged 18 years and above were employed, while 1.8 per cent were unemployed and 17.6 per cent were not economically active.

Over 2.4 million persons 3 years and older were enrolled in school in 2015. Half of these were enrolled in primary school, and about 33 per cent were attending secondary school. There were minimal sex and residential differentials among children enrolled in school. The distribution of pupils enrolled by class shows that the highest percentage of primary school enrolment was for children in Primary Three. The proportion of children by class declines thereafter and this could be due to higher dropout rates as children progress to higher classes. Similarly, the percentages and number of persons aged 12 years and above who were attending secondary school were higher in the lower forms than in upper forms. Such results depict higher dropout and repetition rates especially after Senior Secondary One (SSI).

The results reveal that pre-primary Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) was only 33.9. Place of residence differentials in GER reveal a 25.6 GER for rural pupils compared to 51.4 in urban centres. The national pre-primary Gender Parity Index (GPI) was 1.04 which indicates that relatively more girls were enrolled at the primary school level. At the regional level, the Western Region had the highest pre-primary GER (56.5), followed by Eastern Region at 37.5, Southern Region (30.8) and Northern region with the lowest at 24.7.

The national pre-primary Net Enrolment Rate (NER) was 20.8. The Northern Region had the lowest NER of 15.3, while the Western Region had the highest rate (32.6). At the national level, the NER for girls was almost the same as that for boys. The difference between the GER (34) and the NER (20) shows the level of primary school participation of the pupils outside the official pre-primary school-going age. This, therefore, means that about 14 per cent of the pupils in pre-primary were either below 3 years or above 5 years in 2015.

Overall, a total of 1.2 million persons aged 6 years and above were enrolled in primary school at the time of the 2015 Census. The data show that the GER at the primary level was 105.5. This means that some pupils repeated their grades or joined primary school at ages younger or older than the official primary school-going age.

Place of residence variations revealed that 96 per cent of rural pupils were enrolled compared with 122.6 per cent of primary school-going age children in urban centres, again plausibly due to either earlier or later entry of some of them into primary schools. At the regional level, the Western Region had the highest primary GER (121.1), followed by the Eastern Region at 109.1, Southern Region (105.1) and Northern Region, with the lowest GER of 96.1.

The 2015 Census results show that the primary school NER was 65.4. This implies that close to 35 per cent of the primary school age population was not enrolled in school at the official age. The Northern Region had the lowest NER of 60, while the Western Region recorded the highest rate of 75.9. At the national level, the NER for girls was slightly higher than that for boys. Overall, the difference between the GER of 105.5 and the NER of 65.4 shows that the participation of some pupils in primary schooling is outside the official primary school age.

The national junior secondary school (JSS) GER was 96.9, with the male GER being higher (100.6) than the female rate (93.1). This signifies a lower participation in secondary school education compared with primary schooling for both males and females. It also shows a higher participation rate for males than females at the secondary school level. The regional comparison also indicates the Eastern Region as having the highest JSS GER (112.3) while the Northern Region recorded the lowest (85.1) at the secondary school level. Wider variations were also observed in JSS enrolment by place of residence and sex. The JSS GER was higher in urban areas (115.2) than in rural areas (82.7).

The 2015 Census results further show that the JSS NER was 21. The low NER at this level implies that there was low participation at the official school age for junior secondary levels across the country. Regionally, the Western Region had the highest NER of 29.3 while the Southern Region reported the lowest NER of 17. It was also observed that there were more boys than girls attending JSS with a GPI of 0.98.

The national GER for Senior Secondary School (SSS) was 68.3, with the male GER being higher (78.0) than the female rate (58.3). The Western Region had the highest GER (120) while the lowest GER was recorded in the Southern Region (50.8). Significant variations were also observed in SSS enrolment by place of residence with the urban at 108.9 and the rural at 37.6.

The SSS NER was 10.9. The low NERs show the low enrolled rates at the right official school age for secondary levels in Sierra Leone. Wider variations were observed by type of place of residence, with a higher NER recorded in urban areas (18.5) compared to rural areas (5.1).

The census results also reveal that the Western Region had the highest NER of 21.8 while the Southern and Northern regions reported the lowest NER of 7.5 and 7.8 respectively. The data further show that there were more boys than girls attending secondary school with a GPI of 0.96.

The 2015 Census reported 48,357 students enrolled in vocational, technical and nursing institutions. This is made up of 55.9 per cent males and 44.1 per cent females. The regional composition indicated that Western Region had the highest proportion (39 per cent) with the Southern Region recording lowest at 14 per cent. The data showed that almost across all regions, the males had higher enrolment rates than females at post-secondary school level. At the national level, males accounted for 55.9 per cent of the number of persons enrolled at post-secondary school level as opposed to 44.1 per cent for females.

The post-secondary school GER was quite low (12), and significant variations by sex and place of residence were also observed at this level. The Western Region had the highest GER at 25.6 per cent, followed a distant second by the Southern Region at 8.2 per cent, while the Eastern and Northern regions reported about 7 per cent each.

The post-secondary school NER was 1.5. The NER was higher in urban areas (20.3) than in rural areas (4.3). At the regional level, the Western Region had the highest NER of 3.5, compared with the Northern Region that recorded the lowest NER of 0.8. It was also observed that there were more males than females attending secondary school with a GPI of 0.87.

Findings from the census reveal that 51.3 per cent of the population that was 10 years and older was literate. Gender differentials further indicated that 59.1 per cent of males were literate as opposed to 43.8 per cent of females. The 2015 Census results further indicated that 48.4 per cent of the Sierra Leoneans were illiterate. The percentage of illiterate persons was higher in females (56.1 per cent) as opposed to males (40.5 per cent).

The results showed that half of the population above 6 years had attained pre-primary level training. Over 22 per cent had attained JSS level, close to one in five had attained Senior Secondary School (SSS) and some 6 per cent had received post-secondary school education. Gender disparities were observed across post-secondary levels as males had a slightly higher proportion completing this level of education than females.

Furthermore, the 2015 Census results show that Sierra Leone had low school enrolment rates and high dropout rates. Some of the reasons for children not being in school included living arrangements, in terms of the presence or absence of parents, location, disability status and gender.

It will, therefore, be necessary for the Government of Sierra Leone to make a strong commitment to improving the education sector. It is recommended that the Government should explore ways to support the poorest families to be able to take care of schooling costs for their children. The Government should also enhance and enforce child labour and protection laws, and build schools in rural areas to increase accessibility. The authorities should also improve access to schools through infrastructure development, teacher training, motivation and supplies. Additionally, the Government of Sierra Leone should step up other modes of skill and knowledge development and improvement programmes amongst persons who have never attended formal school and for the population that prematurely drops out of school.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General information about Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is divided into four administrative regions, which are subdivided into 14 districts, 19 local councils and 149 chiefdoms. The country was devastated by an 11-year civil war, which ended in 2002. Despite the steady improvement in the quality of life in the last few years, nearly 5.6 million inhabitants, representing over 70 per cent of the country's population, live in poverty. Additionally, many children are working instead of attending school, and schools need to be refurbished and provided with essential supplies.

Recognizing that education is one of the most transformative of social services, the Government of Sierra Leone has made great strides in ensuring increased access to education in the country. Specifically, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) has sustained efforts to provide quality education to all children of primary school age as well as design and deliver adult education programmes. Plans are underway to ensure that those completing primary education progress to the next level, and at least complete Junior Secondary School (JSS), proceed to college or enrol in a vocational training institution.

The authorities developed the Sierra Leone Education Strategic Plan (2007–2015) as a key instrument to guide the creation of opportunities for children and adults to acquire knowledge and skills, nurture attitudes and values, and make tangible improvements in the nation's education sector to achieve national socio-economic transformation and prosperity. The full implementation of this roadmap requires the Government to meet the anticipated increase in demand for physical infrastructure, teachers and textbooks. In addition, support for technology is needed to enhance teaching and strengthen the means of education delivery in the country.

1.2 Overview of the education sector in Sierra Leone

1.2.1 Structure of the education system

Today, Sierra Leone's education system is based on a 6-3-3-4 structure [1]: six (6) years of primary education (classes 1–6), three (3) years of JSS (classes 7–9), three (3) years of Senior Secondary School (SSS, classes 10–12), and four (4) years of tertiary education, according to the Government of Sierra Leone in 2004. Both government and non-governmental institutions are responsible for providing education in the country.

The education sector is under the control of the MEST, and to an extent the Ministry of Local Government. Progression from primary level onwards is subject to passing each end-of-cycle examination. The different levels of the country's education cycle, including early childhood education are the following:

01 **Pre-primary education**, covering early childhood education, has a theoretical entrance age of three years and a duration of three years. The objective of this programme is to contribute to children's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and to prepare them for primary school.

02 **Primary education** generally starts at age 6 and lasts for six years. At the end of the last grade, all pupils are required to pass the National Primary School Examination designed by the West African Examinations Council to proceed to secondary education.

[1] Excluding pre-primary / Early Childhood Education: which starts at age 3 for three years

03 **Secondary education** is divided into (a) JSS, the final cycle of basic education, validated by the Basic Education Certificate Examination; and (b) SSS, validated by the West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination. Both exams are administered by the West African Examinations Council.

04 **Tertiary education** includes (a) university, leading to undergraduate (four years), and post-graduate degrees; (b) teacher training, leading to the Higher Teacher Certificate (three years); (c) polytechnics, leading to the Higher National Diploma (two years); and (d) other vocational courses.

05 **Non-formal education** includes all organized educational and training activities and processes outside the formal education system, that are designed to meet the learning needs of out-of-school children, the youth and adults. These include adult and continuing education, non-formal education for children, skills training and apprenticeships for youth, community education and adult literacy programmes.

1.2.2 Recent developments in the education sector

The Government of Sierra Leone has made progress in the education sector over the last 10 years. Several policies and pieces of related legislations have been enacted including the following:

The Child Rights Act (2007): This is a local version of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. The domestic act also states that every child must have access to health care and free basic education.

The Teaching Service Commission Act (2010): Passes much of the work of teacher management from the MEST to the Teaching Service Committee, which is an autonomous entity.

The Government White Paper on Education (2010): Based on a report from the Gbamanja Commission of Enquiry on high failure rates at the Basic Education Certificate Examination and West African Senior School Certificate Examination of 2008. The White Paper accepts the recommendation for an additional year of SSS and the phasing out of double-shift schooling and making pre-primary schooling compulsory.

The Sierra Leone National Food and Nutrition Policy (2012-2016): Focuses on food and nutrition needs of all sectors of the population to improve quality of life, but, more importantly, the document highlights the importance of education in reducing the incidence of malnutrition.

1.2.3 A status report on the education sector

In brief, the Sierra Leone Education Country Status Report 2013 observes that:

- Educational expenditures increased slightly between 2004 and 2011, reaching 3.5 per cent of GDP in 2011. Of recurrent public expenditures, 29 per cent is allocated for education, an indication of the government's prioritization of the sector.
- There has been an increase in enrolment across all grade levels from 2000 to 2010.
- Enrolment has increased in all education subsectors over the 2000–2010 period, particularly at the secondary level.
- Demand for JSS has grown due to higher primary school completion rates and the education system's favourable response through increasing capacity at this level.
- The net impact of education on human development is noteworthy. Many fertility, maternal and child health indicators change or improve with education; the average age at which a woman gives birth to her first child increases; and women give birth to fewer number of children. The likelihood of living in poverty and unemployment also drops considerably.

The Country Status Report also pointed out several challenges facing the education sector:

i. Increasing capacity: Demographic pressure on the education system is expected to increase in the future. Therefore, a 56 per cent in the system's capacity is required towards achieving universal primary school education by 2020.

ii. Ensuring children enter primary school at the right age: At least 24 per cent of children 6–11 years old were out of school in 2010. About 40 per cent of new Grade One pupils are 7 years old or older.

iii. Improving internal efficiency: Repetition is particularly high for primary school students at 16 per cent, well above the sub-Saharan African average of 12 per cent.

iv. Supporting pro-poor schooling: Across all age groups and grade levels, household wealth remains a major factor for disparities in children's enrolment, and the distribution is worsening.

v. Further supporting girls' schooling: Gender disparities in access to education are minimal, but tend to deepen gradually as children progress through their school careers. The systematic under-performance of girls in nearly all standard examinations is an issue of particular concern.

vi. Improving teacher management: The allocation of teachers to primary and secondary schools needs to be improved to ensure more consistent and equitable deployment. Providing untrained or unqualified teachers with the necessary training and skills and assessing the opportunity of formalizing the status of non-Personal Identification Number teachers would also contribute to improving the situation.

vii. Reducing disparities among regions, districts and schools that persist despite decentralization: Improving supervision and accountability mechanisms at the local level may be an effective intervention to ensure more efficient use of education inputs and resources at the school level.

1.3 Sources of data

The main data sources for establishing benchmarks for economic and social indicators for Sierra Leone are censuses and surveys. Information is also obtained from administrative records. With the support of UNFPA, Irish AID, UKAid and UNDP, 17 reports were commissioned by Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL) to enhance the utilization of the 2015 Census data, which include the Education and Literacy Thematic Report.

The primary objective of this report is to provide inputs into the policy-making process. This will ultimately improve the quality of life of Sierra Leoneans through evidence-based policy formulation, planning and monitoring of development goals and implementation of intervention programmes.

1.4 The 2015 Sierra Leone Population and Housing Census

The 2015 Population and Housing Census was the most comprehensive ever conducted in Sierra Leone. The census collected data on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population, household and housing conditions, agriculture, activities of micro-enterprises and small enterprises and community characteristics.

1.4.1 Census implementation

The 2015 Census was conducted on the night of 4 December 2015. The enumeration was done by trained enumerators who canvassed the entire country and administered the questionnaires to the household head, or in his/her absence any other knowledgeable household member. Special arrangements were made to enumerate institutional and homeless populations. The census administered a standard questionnaire to all persons countrywide. Table 1.1 shows the total population by age group, sex, region and district.

The findings indicate that the majority of the population were of school-going age, the bulk of this population being in the primary school-going age category. With over 2.5 million people, the Northern Region recorded the highest population, followed by Eastern, Western and Southern regions

Population composition

Total male
3,490,978

Total female
3,601,135

Table 1.1 Total population by age group, sex, region and district, 2015

Age	Male	Female	Total
0 – 4	469,092	469,361	938,453
5-9	555,292	553,423	1,108,715
10-14	431,588	415,704	847,292
15 – 19	430,792	442,828	873,620
20 – 24	308,135	354,684	662,819
25 – 29	277,618	330,365	607,983
30 – 34	199,964	234,239	434,203
35 – 39	201,459	219,713	421,172
40 – 44	154,121	145,094	299,215
45 – 49	133,783	108,405	242,188
50 – 54	99,050	87,743	186,793
55 – 59	59,261	51,188	110,449
60 – 64	53,987	58,695	112,682
65 – 69	36,414	37,308	73,722
70 – 74	30,606	34,962	65,568
75 – 79	20,044	19,684	39,728
80 – 84	13,177	18,182	31,359
85 – 89	7,258	8,630	15,888
90 – 94	4,430	5,554	9,984
95 – 99	2,662	2,889	5,551
100 – 104	1,253	1,477	2,730
105 – 109	441	337	778
110 – 114	242	306	548
115 – 119	64	74	138
120 +	245	290	535
Total	3,490,978	3,601,135	7,092,113

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	260,586	469,361	938,453
Kenema	301,104	553,423	1,108,715
Kono	252,751	415,704	847,292
Eastern	814,441	442,828	873,620
Bombali	296,683	354,684	662,819
Kambia	165,541	330,365	607,983
Koinadugu	204,498	234,239	434,203
Port Loko	294,954	219,713	421,172
Tonkolili	263,152	145,094	299,215
Northern	1,224,828	108,405	242,188
Bo	280,569	87,743	186,793
Bonthe district	99,014	51,188	110,449
Moyamba	153,699	58,695	112,682
Pujehun	168,869	37,308	73,722
Southern	702,151	34,962	65,568
Western area rural	221,351	19,684	39,728
Western area urban	528,207	18,182	31,359
Western	749,558	8,630	15,888

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

CHAPTER 2: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

2.1 Introduction

Education is a basic human right, vital to personal and societal development. All children deserve quality education founded on a rights-based approach and rooted in the concept of gender equality. A rights-based approach to education will address socio-economic inequalities in our societies that are deep-rooted and often gender-based. Such inequalities exclude many children, particularly girls, from school or condemn them to educational experiences of very poor quality.

Several socio-economic surveys in Sierra Leone have confirmed that education enhances lives. It ends generational cycles of poverty and disease and provides the means for sustainable development. Quality basic education better equips girls and boys with knowledge and skills needed to adopt healthy lifestyles. Cognizant of this, the Government of Sierra Leone allocates a sizeable share of its budget to the education sector to strengthen its human resource capital so that it can meaningfully contribute to the country's socio-economic transformation.

2.2 Size and composition of the school age population

The size and distribution of the school age population is useful for planners and other policy makers to adequately prepare the education system to address future challenges and achieve the medium- and long-term goals of a nation. This section focuses on official school-going ages at the various levels. The official school-going age bracket is 6-11 years for primary; 12-17 years for JSS and SSS; and 18-24 years for post-secondary school level.

Table 2.1 shows that 3.2 million people aged 6-24 years were of school-going age, and constitute 45.8 per cent of the total population. Those that fell in primary school age group comprised 17.5 per cent of the total population, while the secondary school age population and post-secondary age, accounted for 14.0 per cent and 14.4 per cent respectively of the total population of the country.

Table 2.1 Composition of school-going age population by sex and age, 2015

Age group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% of the total population
Primary school age (6-11 years)	624,409	17.9	613,155	17.0	1,237,564	17.5
Secondary school age (12-17 years)	499,614	14.4	490,611	13.6	990,225	14.0
Post-secondary school age (18-24 years)	474,046	13.6	541,396	15.1	1,015,442	14.4
Total school age (6-24 years)	1,598,069	45.9	1,645,162	45.7	3,243,231	45.8
Total household population	3,479,633		3,596,486		7,076,119	

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

At the regional level, the Eastern Region had the highest proportion of the school-going population (47.0 per cent), while the Western Region registered the lowest proportion (44.9 per cent) of the school-going population (Table 2.2). Variations by place of residence indicate that the proportion of primary school-going age persons in the rural areas was 19.0 per cent compared to 15.2 per cent in the urban setting. Analysis of school-going population by sex reveals that there were no significant sex differentials across the various age groups.

Table 2.2 Percentage of school-going population by selected characteristics, 2015

Characteristics	Primary school age (6-11 years)	Secondary school age (12-17 years)	Post-secondary school age (18-24 years)	Total school age (6-24 years
Sex				
Male	17.9	14.3	13.6	45.8
Female	17.0	13.6	15.0	45.7
Residence				
Urban	15.2	14.8	17.1	47.0
Rural	19.0	13.4	12.4	44.8
Region				
Eastern	18.3	14.6	14.1	47.0
Northern	18.8	13.9	13.0	45.6
Southern	18.0	13.7	13.5	45.2
Western	13.7	13.6	17.5	44.9

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

2.3 School attendance status

The 2015 Census categorized school attendance status into three groups: those who were 'attending school in 2015', 'left school' and 'never attended school'. This information was collected from all individuals aged 6 years and above. The 'attending school in 2015' category comprised of only those pupils who had attended school in the year 2015. 'Left school' represents those who had left school prior to the 2015 Census and 'never attended school' included all those persons who had never been to school. The results in Table 2.3 show the school attendance status for persons aged 6 years and above, and 15 years and above. Overall, 37.8 per cent of the population aged 6 years and above attended school in 2015, while 20.3 per cent had left school prior to the 2015 Census. Two in five (41.9 per cent) of the population had never been to school.

Nearly half of the population (49.3 per cent) 15 years and above had never been to school, while 23 per cent were still in school and 28 per cent had left school. A higher proportion of females than males had never attended school among those 15 years and above. population had never been to school.

Table 2.3 Percentage distribution of school attendance status by age group and sex, 2015

School attendance status	Population					
	6 years and above			15 years and above		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Attending school	40.2	35.6	37.8	26.3	19.9	23.0
Left school	23.4	17.3	20.3	32.5	23.3	27.7
Never been to school	36.4	47.1	41.9	41.3	56.7	49.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

The distribution of population by school attendance status, age and region is shown in Table 2.4. Apart from the 13–18 year age group, the results reveal that the proportion of persons who attended school in 2015 declines with age. This may be due to higher primary completion rates which were likely translated into strong enrolment rates for junior and senior secondary levels in the country. In contrast, the proportion of the population that has never been to school increases with age; and the bulk of these were found in the 30–49 age group.

Regional variations in education from the census data indicate that the proportion of those who had never been to school was highest in the Northern Region (41.7 per cent), followed by Southern Region (37.5 per cent), Eastern Region (35.9 per cent) and the Western Region at 19.4 per cent. The Western Region recorded the highest proportion of those who left school (30.8 per cent), followed by 15.0 per cent in the Southern Region, 14.0 per cent in the Eastern Region and 11.5 per cent in the Northern Region.

Table 2.4 Percentage distribution of school attendance status by age-group and region, 2015

Characteristics	Attended school	Left school	Never been to school	Total
Age (years)				
6-9	10.3	0.2	4.2	14.7
10-12	7.5	0.2	1.9	9.7
13-18	11.8	1.6	3.7	17.1
19-24	5.4	3.9	4.2	13.6
25-29	1.6	3.8	4.8	10.3
30-49	0.9	8.0	14.6	23.6
50-59	0.1	1.5	3.4	5.0
60+	0.1	1.1	4.9	6.1
Total	37.8	20.3	41.9	100.0
Region				
Eastern	33.8	14.0	35.9	
Northern	28.2	11.5	41.7	
Southern	29.7	15.0	37.5	
Western	35.8	30.8	19.4	

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

2.4 Population that left school

Policy makers and researchers have had considerable interest in the returns to those who had some degree of education. The population that left school includes all those who attended up to a certain level of education without completing that level, and those who left school after attaining a certain level. Table 2.5 shows the distribution of persons aged six years and above who were out of school.

The data show that for all persons aged 15 years and above who have left school, 73.6 per cent were employed, 5.4 per cent were unemployed and 20.9 per cent were not in the labour force. The proportion of those in employment indicates that 78.5 per cent of the males were employed as opposed to 64.3 per cent of the females. At the time of the census, place of residence differentials revealed that 84.1 per cent of urban dwellers who had left school were employed, compared to only 49.4 per cent of rural dwellers.

Regionally, the Eastern Region had the highest proportion (77.1 per cent) of persons aged 15 years and above who were out of school and were employed. This was followed by Northern, Southern and Western regions. Notable sex differentials were observed for those not in the labour force: the proportion of females was almost twice as that for males.

Table 2.5 Economic activity status of population aged 15 years and above that had left school by sex, place/region of residence and age

Characteristics	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labour force	Not applicable	Total
Sex					
Male	78.5	6.3	14.3	0.8	100.0
Female	64.3	4.0	30.7	1.0	100.0
Residence					
Urban	84.1	1.8	12.9	1.2	100.0
Rural	49.4	7.2	24.3	0.5	100.0
Region					
Eastern	77.1	3.1	18.6	1.2	100.0
Northern	75.2	4.3	19.2	1.3	100.0
Southern	73.0	3.9	22.1	0.9	100.0
Western	67.8	7.7	23.9	0.5	100.0
Age					
15-30	66.3	6.4	27.3	0.0	100.0
31-59	83.8	4.7	11.5	0.0	100.0
60+	62.7	2.4	35.0	0.0	100.0
Total	73.6	5.4	20.9	0.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

2.5 Population that has never attended school

In view of the linkages between basic education and development, it is important to establish the status of employment for persons who have never attained any level of education. The population that has never attended school includes those who have never entered primary school.

Table 2.6 shows the status of persons aged 18 years and above that have never been to school, by economic activity. The results further reveal that the Northern Region had the highest percentage of persons engaged in non-economic activities that were aged 18 years and above and had never been in school. Again, differentials by sex reveal that the proportion of females of the same group not in the labour force was significantly higher than that for the males. The results indicate four out of five (80.5 per cent) persons that had never been to school and were 18 years and above were employed, while 1.8 per cent was unemployed and 17.6 per cent not in the labour force.

Table 2.6 Economic activity status of the population aged 18 years and above that has never been to school by age, sex and place/region of residence

Characteristics	Employed	Unemployed	Not in labour force	Total
Sex				
Male	87.7	2.6	9.7	100.0
Female	75.7	1.3	22.9	100.0
Residence				
Urban	68.3	4.2	27.5	100.0
Rural	85.3	1.0	13.8	100.0
Region				
Eastern	84.2	1.2	14.6	100.0
Northern	83.5	1.3	15.2	100.0
Southern	78.9	1.5	10.4	100.0
Western	35.5	5.4	8.8	100.0
Total	80.5	1.8	17.6	100.0
Age				
18-30	81.1	2.4	16.6	100.0
31-59	85.2	1.7	13.1	100.0
60+	64.4	1.1	34.5	100.0
Total				**100.0**

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

CHAPTER 3: SCHOOL ENROLMENT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter largely focuses on persons who, at the time of the census, were enrolled in school. The government and stakeholders are obliged to ensure the provision of quality education for Sierra Leone's children regardless of differences in sex, economic status, social or cultural origin. This is in line with Sierra Leone's Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper for 2013–2017 which recognizes that human resource development is the bedrock of poverty reduction and sustainable socio-economic development. It asserts that the overall objectives of the education sector are to provide quality basic education for all Sierra Leoneans and support manpower development for key sectors of the country's economy.

3.2 School enrolment in relation to age, sex, region and place of residence

Sierra Leone's school-going age at early childhood and primary levels are 3–5 years and 6–11 years respectively. Table 3.1 reveals that over 2.45 million persons aged 3 years and above were reported to be enrolled in school in 2015. Age differentials indicate that the age group 6–11 years had the highest proportion of persons who had enrolled.

Inequities, particularly those related to gender and place of residence are not substantial. Deliberate girl-child interventions have successfully impacted the enrolment of girls at all levels, and gender parity has been achieved, particularly at the primary and secondary school level. At the regional level, the Northern Region has the highest proportion of the population 3 years old and above enrolled in school, followed by the Eastern Region, Western Region and the Southern Region. The Western Region has the highest proportion of the population enrolled in schools in urban centres whilst the Northern Region accounts for 41.9 per cent of children enrolled in rural areas.

Education sector

Provide quality basic education for all sierra leoneans and provide manpower development for key sectors of the country's economy.

Table 3.1 Proportion of the population 3 years and older who are currently enrolled in school by age, place of residence and sex

	Sex				Place of residence					
Age group	Male		Female		Urban		Rural		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
3 – 5	109,896	8.7	116,527	9.8	133,326	10.7	93,097	7.7	226,423	9.2
6 – 11	442,521	34.9	451,397	38.0	513,656	41.1	380,262	31.5	893,918	36.4
12 – 14	184,711	14.6	188,085	15.9	187,023	15.0	185,773	15.4	372,796	15.2
15 – 18	246,839	19.4	231,824	19.5	229,824	18.4	248,839	20.6	478,663	19.5
19 – 22	147,678	11.6	116,853	9.8	104,329	8.3	160,202	13.3	264,531	10.8
23 – 29	94,481	7.4	59,207	5.0	54,207	4.3	99,481	8.2	153,688	6.3
30 – 34	17,916	1.4	9,519	0.8	11,064	0.9	16,371	1.4	27,435	1.1
35 – 39	9,574	0.8	5,311	0.4	5,993	0.5	8,892	0.7	14,885	0.6
40 – 44	5,159	0.4	2,736	0.2	3,147	0.3	4,748	0.4	7,895	0.3
45 – 49	3,745	0.3	1,658	0.1	2,305	0.2	3,098	0.3	5,403	0.2
50 – 54	2,383	0.2	1,187	0.1	1,485	0.1	2,085	0.2	3,570	0.1
55 – 59	1,335	0.1	548	0.0	801	0.1	1,082	0.1	1,883	0.1
60+	3,156	0.2	1,732	0.1	2,474	0.2	2,414	0.2	4,888	0.2
Total	1,269,394	100.0	1,186,584	100.0	1,249,634	100.0	1,206,344	100.0	2,455,978	100.0
Region										
Eastern	316,250	24.9	300,682	25.3	364,821	29.2	252,111	20.9	616,932	25.1
Northern	419,761	33.1	359,691	30.3	523,231	41.9	256,221	21.2	779,452	31.7
Southern	241,578	19.0	236,127	19.9	347,516	27.8	130,189	10.8	477,705	19.5
Western	291,805	23.0	290,084	24.4	14,066	1.1	567,823	47.1	581,889	23.7
Total	1,269,394	100.0	1,186,584	100.0	1,249,634	100.0	1,206,344	100.0	2,455,978	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

At the district level, the results from the census credit the Western Area Urban District, with over 17.1 per cent, as having the highest proportion of persons aged 3 years and above enrolled in school (Table 3.2). The figure for the Western Area Urban District is almost double the proportion in each of the districts that follow, including Kailahun, Kenema, Bombali and Bo.

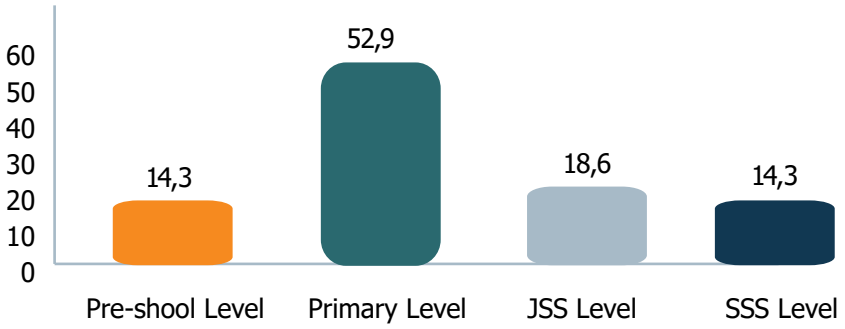
Table 3.2: Proportion of the population 3 years and older who are currently enrolled in school, by district, sex and place of residence

Districts	Sex		Place of residence		Total
	Male	Female	Rural	Urban	Total
Kailahun	9.0	8.8	11.7	6.0	8.9
Kenema	8.6	9.1	7.3	10.4	8.8
Kono	7.4	7.4	10.2	4.5	7.4
Bombali	8.9	8.4	10.8	6.4	8.6
Kambia	4.4	3.7	5.0	3.1	4.1
Koinadugu	4.8	4.4	6.5	2.6	4.6
Port Loko	7.8	7.2	9.7	5.2	7.5
Tonkolili	7.2	6.6	9.8	3.9	6.9
Bo	8.2	8.6	9.3	7.5	8.4
Bonthe	2.3	2.4	3.2	1.5	2.4
Moyamba	3.7	3.6	6.4	0.8	3.6
Pujehun	4.9	5.2	8.9	1.0	5.1
Western area rural	6.4	6.7	1.1	12.2	6.6
Western area urban	16.5	17.8	0.0	34.9	17.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The combined enrolment for all school levels of education was 2.4 million and the distribution across school levels shows marked inequalities in terms of total numbers enrolled at each school level and by sex. The primary school level accounts for more than half (52.9 per cent) of all pupils enrolled at the four school levels. This is followed by the JSS level, accounting for almost one fifth (18.6 per cent). Figure 3.1 presents the distribution of enrolled pupils at all four levels of education with pre-school and SSS levels accounting for the least (14.3 per cent each).

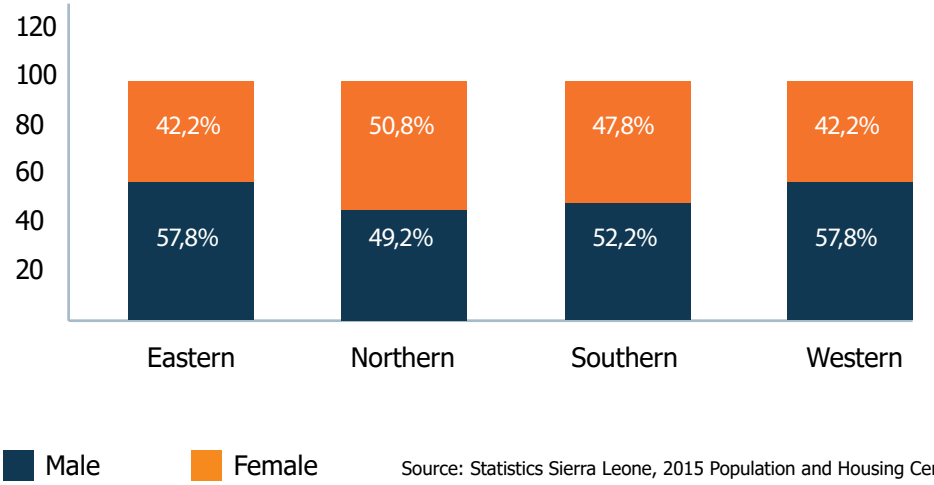
Figure 3.1 Percentage distribution of enrolment by school level



Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Enrolment differences, in terms of sex, at each school level show a unique pattern for the primary school level as the only level with female dominance (50.8 per cent females and 49.2 per cent males) while male dominance is observed in all the other three levels of education. Figure 3.2 clearly shows the prevailing disparities in terms of sex in each of the four levels of education.

Figure 3.2: Percentage school enrolment by sex and school level



Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

School-level enrolment disparities have engendered disparities in GERs and NERs. From Table 3.3, the highest GER (105) was recorded at the primary school level, followed by JSS (97), SSS (48) and pre-primary school (34). Similarly, NER was highest at the primary school level while pre-primary and JSS were at 21 each, and SSS had the lowest NER of 14.

Table 3.3 Differences in GER and NER by school level

Level	GER	NER
Pre-primary school	33.9	20.8
Primary school	105.5	65.4
Junior secondary school	96.9	21.0
Senior secondary shool	68.3	10.9
Post-secondary school	11.6	1.5

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.3 Pre-primary school enrolment

Amongst the 235,774 enrolled in pre-school during the 2015/16 academic year are many over-aged pupils, implying that not all parents enrol their children at the right official school age. The pre-primary GER refers to the number of pupils enrolled at the pre-primary level, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official pre-primary school age (3–5 years) population. The GPI is the ratio of the GER for girls to boys. It is commonly used to assess gender differences in primary school enrolment.

3.3.1 Pre-primary Gross Enrolment Rate

Table 3.4 shows that pre-primary GER was only 33.9. At the national level, female pupils (34.5) have slightly higher GER compared to males (33.3), and the national pre-primary GPI was 1.04, which further illustrates that more girls are enrolled at the primary school level relative to boys. The place of residence GER differentials also indicate that 25.6 per cent of rural pupils were enrolled compared with 51.4 per cent of pre-primary school-going age children in urban centres. At the regional level, the Western Region had the highest GER (56.5), followed by Eastern Region at 37.5, Southern Region at 30.8 and Northern Region, with the lowest GER at 24.7 (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Pre-primary school GER and GPI by age, sex and place/region of residence

Pre-primary level	
Sex	
Male	33.3
Female	34.5
GPI	1.04
Place of residence	
Rural	25.6
Urban	51.4

Pre-primary level	
Region	
Eastern	37.5
Northern	24.7
Southern	30.8
Western	56.5
Total	33.9

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 3.5 shows the pre-school GER for both sexes across various districts. The top five districts with the highest pre-school GER were the Western Area Urban (60.8), Western Area Rural (48.0), Kono (42.2), Kailahun (41.4) and Pejuhun (36.1). The district with the lowest pre-school GER was Kambia (19.9).

Table 3.5 Pre-school GER by SEX and district of residence

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	40.5	42.2	41.4
Kenema	29.4	31.1	30.2
Kono	41.2	43.1	42.2
Bombali	27.8	28.1	28.0
Kambia	20.5	19.4	19.9
Koinadugu	21.7	21.2	21.4
Port Loko	23.0	22.4	22.7
Tonkolili	29.4	28.3	28.8
Bo	31.6	34.5	33.1
Bonthe	22.7	25.4	24.1
Moyamba	24.6	26.4	25.5
Pujehun	35.0	37.1	36.1
Western area rural	46.8	49.1	48.0
Western area urban	59.8	61.8	60.8

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.3.2 Pre-primary Net Enrolment Rate

The NER is the percentage of children enrolled in pre-primary, primary or secondary school who belong to the age group that officially corresponds to pre-primary primary, or secondary schooling, divided by the total population of the same age group. A high level of NER shows a higher level of participation of the pupils within that age group. It is a better measure of school participation than the GER.

Table 3.6 shows that the national pre-primary NER was 20.8, with females having a relatively higher rate (21.6) than males (20 per cent). This shows that close to 80 per cent of the pre-primary school age population were not enrolled in school at the appropriate or official age. The Northern Region had the lowest NER of 15.3, while the Western Region had the highest rate (32.6). At the national level, there is no significant difference between the NER for girls (20) and that for boys (21.6). The difference between the GER of 34 per cent and the NER of 20 per cent shows the level of primary school participation of the pupils outside the official pre-primary level. This, therefore, means that about 14 per cent of the pupils in pre-primary were either below 3 years or above 5 years in 2015.

Table 3.6 Pre-school NER and GPI by sex and place/region of residence

Pre-primary school (3–5 years)	
Sex	
Male	20.0
Female	21.6
GPI	1.08
Place of residence	
Rural	16.2
Urban	30.3
Region	
Eastern	22.9
Northern	15.3
Southern	20.1
Western	32.6
Total	20.8

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

As shown in Table 3.7, the data further reveal that the highest pre-school NER was 34.8 in the Western Urban District, followed by Western Area Rural (28.3), Kailahun (27.4), and Pujehun (24.9) in the top five spots. The five districts with the lowest pre-school NER were Koinadugu (12.9), Kambia (13.1), Port Loko (14), Bombali (16.8) and Moyamba (16.8).

Table 3.7 Pre-school NER by district

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	26.1	28.6	27.4
Kenema	18.3	20.3	19.3
Kono	21.4	23.4	22.4
Bombali	16.3	17.3	16.8
Kambia	13.1	13.0	13.1

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Koinadugu	12.7	13.1	12.9
Port Loko	13.7	14.3	14.0
Tonkolili	18.1	18.4	18.2
Bo	18.9	21.3	20.1
Bonthe	15.7	18.3	17.0
Moyamba	15.6	17.9	16.8
Pujehun	23.7	26.1	24.9
Western area rural	27.2	29.4	28.3
Western area urban	34.1	35.4	34.8

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.4 Primary school enrolment

The distribution of pupils by primary school enrolment and class for persons aged 6 years and above is shown in Table 3.8. Overall, a total of 1.2 million persons aged 6 years and above were enrolled in primary school at the time of the 2015 Census. The number of female primary pupils exceeded that for males by 19,409 (3.2 per cent).

The proportion of distribution of pupils enrolled by class shows that the highest percentage of primary school enrolment was for children who were in Primary Three (P3) at the time of the census. The proportion of children by class declines thereafter. This could be due to higher dropout rates as children progress to higher classes. The results further show that there are minimal gender differentials in terms of the distribution of children by class for each sex.

Table 3.8 Primary school enrolment for persons aged 6 years and above by class and sex

Class	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
P1	80,922	13.4	81,784	13.2	162,706	13.3
P2	111,057	18.4	115,130	18.5	226,187	18.5
P3	124,865	20.7	131,504	21.2	256,369	21.0
P4	108,642	18.0	112,961	18.2	221,603	18.1
P5	92,890	15.4	94,846	15.3	187,736	15.3
P6	83,573	13.9	85,133	13.7	168,706	13.8
Total	601,949	100.0	621,358	100.0	1,223,307	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Regional distribution of persons who attended primary school at the time of the census in 2015 shows a similar pattern to that recorded at the national level. Pupils attending P3 had the highest proportion across all four regions, and the percentages decline steadily at higher grades. The percentage of pupils who were in P6 is on average 12.9 per cent except for the Western Region which had 16 per cent enrolled in P6. The lower percentages for P6 are an indication of higher dropout rates especially in the preceding classes.

Table 3.9 Percentage distribution of primary school enrolment by region and class

Class	Eastern		Northern		Southern		Western		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
P1	61,903	18.7	93,913	20.7	59,812	21.9	29,120	11.7	244,748	18.7
P2	56,301	17.0	80,752	17.8	47,584	17.5	41,550	16.7	226,187	17.3
P3	65,134	19.7	90,360	20.0	51,446	18.9	49,429	19.9	256,369	19.6
P4	55,922	16.9	73,260	16.2	43,113	15.8	49,308	19.8	221,603	17.0
P5	47,950	14.5	60,990	13.5	38,431	14.1	40,365	16.2	187,736	14.4
P6	44,255	13.4	53,477	11.8	32,189	11.8	38,785	15.6	168,706	12.9
Total	331,465	100.0	452,752	100.0	272,575	100.0	248,557	100.0	1,305,349	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

3.4.1 Primary school Gross Enrolment Rate and Gender Parity Index

The census data shows that the primary level GER was 105.5, an indication that some pupils repeated their grades or joined primary school at ages younger or older than the official primary school-going age (Table 3.10). Rural-urban variations reveal that 96 per cent of the rural pupils were enrolled compared to 122.6 per cent of the primary school-going age children in urban centres. At the regional level, the Western Region had the highest GER (121.1), followed by Eastern Region at 109.8, Southern Region (105.1) and Northern Region with the lowest at 96.1. The national primary school GPI was 1.05 which indicates that more girls than boys were enrolled at the primary school level.

Table 3.10 Primary school GER and GPI by sex and place/region of residence

Primary level	
Sex	
Male	102.9
Female	108.2
GPI	1.05
Place of residence	
Rural	96.0
Urban	122.6
Region	
Eastern	109.8
Northern	96.1
Southern	105.1
Western	121.1
Total	105.5

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The 2015 Census results show that the top three districts with the highest primary school GER were Western Area Rural with 121.9, followed by Western Area Rural (118.8), and Bo (114.9). As shown in Table 3.11, the lowest primary school GER was observed in Koinadugu (71.3), Bonthe (84.5), Kambia (96.1) and Tonkolili (96.1).

Table 3.11 Primary school GER by district

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	110.0	116.4	113.2
Kenema	101.4	114.6	108.0
Kono	107.7	108.3	108.0
Bombali	106.5	108.8	107.6
Kambia	97.5	94.5	96.1

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Koinadugu	70.7	71.9	71.3
Port Loko	104.8	104.0	104.4
Tonkolili	95.5	96.8	96.1
Bo	110.6	119.2	114.9
Bonthe	74.1	95.5	84.5
Moyamba	99.2	111.9	105.2
Pujehun	93.5	110.2	101.7
Western area rural	118.7	118.8	118.8
Western area urban	121.4	122.4	121.9

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.4.2 Primary school Net Enrolment Rate and Gender Parity Index

The 2015 Census results show that the primary school NER was 65.4 (Table 3.12). This implies that close to 35 per cent of the primary school age population was not enrolled in school at the official age. The Northern Region had the lowest NER of 60, while the Western Region had the highest percentage (75.9). At the national level, the NER for girls was slightly higher than that for boys. The difference between the GER of 105.5 and the NER of 65.4 shows the participation of the pupils outside the official primary school age. This, therefore, means that about two in five of the pupils in primary schools were either below 6 years or above 11 years in 2015.

Table 3.12 Primary school NER and GPI by sex and place/region of residence

Primary school (6-11 years)	
Sex	
Male	63.6
Female	67.2
GPI	1.06
Place of residence	
Rural	59.0
Urban	76.7
Region	
Eastern	67.7
Northern	60.0
Southern	64.0
Western	75.9
Total	65.4

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The top three districts with the highest primary NER in Sierra Leone were Western Area Urban which was 77.1, Western Area Rural (73.0) and Kailahun (71.2). As shown in Table 3.13, Koinadugu with 45.5 had the lowest NER, followed by Bonthe at 52.1 and Kambia at 59.3.

Table 3.13 Primary NER by district

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	68.8	73.7	71.2
Kenema	62.5	70.6	66.6
Kono	64.4	65.4	64.9
Bombali	65.9	67.7	66.8
Kambia	60.0	58.6	59.3
Koinadugu	44.6	46.4	45.5
Port Loko	64.2	64.3	64.2
Tonkolili	60.5	61.7	61.1
Bo	66.4	72.0	69.2
Bonthe	45.5	59.2	52.1
Moyamba	59.2	66.9	62.9
Pujehun	58.8	68.8	63.7
Western area rural	73.0	73.1	73.0
Western area urban	77.0	77.1	77.1

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.5 Distance to the nearest primary school

The 2015 Census collected information on distance from the household to the nearest primary school, as perceived by the respondent, irrespective of whether the children in the household were going to the same school. Table 3.14 shows that about 92 per cent of the urban households were within a kilometre distance from the nearest primary school compared to 75 per cent in the rural areas.

Overall, more than 80 per cent of the households were within a kilometre radius to the nearest primary school. At the regional level, the Western Region had the highest percentage (90 per cent) of households within less than a kilometre to the nearest primary school, followed by Eastern Region (81 per cent). The Southern Region had the lowest percentage of households within a radius of less than a kilometre to the nearest primary school.

Table 3.14 Percentage distribution of households by distance to the nearest primary school and place/region of residence

Characte-ristics	Within compound	Less than 1 Km			More than 1 km			Don't know
		< ½ mile	½ mile - < 1 mile	Total	1-5 km	>5km	Total	
Residence								
Urban	4.4	73.1	14.5	92	4.1	0.9	5.0	3.0
Rural	4.9	56.7	13.6	75.2	14.5	8.6	23.1	1.7
Region								
Eastern	4.4	63.5	13.6	81.5	11.1	5.9	17.1	1.5
Northern	5.5	59.7	14.9	80.1	11.3	6.5	17.8	2.1
Southern	4.1	62.3	12.5	78.9	13.1	6.7	19.8	1.3
Western	4.3	71.6	14.3	90.2	4.5	1.4	5.8	3.9
Total	4.7	64.1	14.0	82.8	9.9	5.1	15.0	2.3

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.6 Secondary school enrolment

The number of pupils completing primary education and demanding secondary education has increased over the years. There is need to intensify support for post-primary education to increase access at that level. According to the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2004–2014), The Government is committed to developing facilities for secondary education as one of the strategies to cope with rapidly increasing numbers of the primary school graduates. Table 3.15 shows the number and proportion of persons aged 12 years and above who were attending secondary school at the time of the census. About 800,000 persons aged 12 years and above were attending secondary school, made up of over 440,000 males and 370,000 females.

The results further show that the proportion decreases in the higher classes. Generally, the percentage and number of persons aged 12 years and above who were attending secondary school were higher in the lower classes, and gradually declines in the upper classes. Such results depict higher dropout and repetition rates especially after Senior Secondary One. The results show minimal variations among female students compared with their male counterparts for junior and secondary school classes while the male percentages are slightly higher than females attending SSS classes.

Table 3.15 Percentage distribution of persons attending secondary school by sex and class

Class	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
JS1	74,803	16.9	70,253	19.1	145,056	17.9
JS2	86,243	19.4	79,025	21.5	165,268	20.4
JS3	78,565	17.7	70,150	19.1	148,715	18.3
SS1	44,637	10.1	36,818	10.0	81,455	10.0
SS2	56,635	12.8	43,491	11.8	100,126	12.3
SS3	54,041	12.2	38,622	10.5	92,663	11.4
SS4	48,497	10.9	29,717	8.1	78,214	9.6
Total	443,421	100.0	368,076	100.0	811,497	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

Differentials by region show a similar pattern at the overall secondary school level (Table 3.16). The Western Region had the highest percentage of students in all the SSS classes compared to the other regions. On the contrary, the Western Region had a lower proportion of students in JSS classes. Individually, the proportion of students in Senior Secondary Four in Eastern, Northern and Southern regions was much lower compared to that in the Western Region.

Table 3.16 Percentage distribution of population aged 12 years and above by class and region

Class	Eastern		Northern		Southern		Western		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
JS1	35,457	17.9	38,720	17.1	24,965	18.8	29,758	13.3	128,900	16.5
JS2	42,723	21.6	48,767	21.5	29,610	22.3	33,633	15.1	154,733	19.8
JS3	39,316	19.9	44,576	19.7	25,419	19.2	34,569	15.5	143,880	18.4
SS1	19,271	9.7	22,103	9.8	12,770	9.6	27,311	12.2	81,455	10.4
SS2	21,521	10.9	26,162	11.5	14,862	11.2	37,581	16.8	100,126	12.8
SS3	22,106	11.2	26,237	11.6	13,613	10.3	30,707	13.8	92,663	11.9
SS4	17,399	8.8	20,017	8.8	11,290	8.5	29,508	13.2	78,214	10.0
Total 12+	197,793	100.0	226,582	100.0	132,529	100.0	223,067	100.0	779,971	100.0

3.6.1 Junior secondary school Gross Enrolment Rate and Gender Parity Index

The GER at the JSS level is shown in Table 3.17. The national GER for secondary school was 96.9, with the male GER being higher (100.6 per cent) than that for females (93.1). This signifies a lower participation of girls in secondary education compared to the primary level for both males and females. The Eastern Region had the highest JSS GER (112.3) while the Northern Region had the lowest (85.1).

Wider variations were observed in JSS enrolment by place of residence and sex. The junior secondary level GER was higher in urban areas (115.2) than in rural areas (82.7) with GER in favour of male students. At the JSS level, the GER of males was higher than that of females (100.6 versus 93.1) leading to a GPI of 0.93.

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 3.17 JSS GER and GPI by sex and place/region of residence

Junior secondary school	
Sex	
Male	100.6
Female	93.1
GPI	0.93
Place of residence	
Rural	82.7
Urban	115.2
Region	
Eastern	112.3
Northern	85.1
Southern	90.3
Western	105.3
Total	96.9

The official age for enrolment into JSS in Sierra Leone is inclusively 12 to 14 years. Regardless of age, total enrolment at the JSS level shows 459,039 pupils, of which 52.2 per cent were males and 47.8 per cent females. As shown in Table 3.18, the 2015 Census results reveal that Kailahun (137.2), Western Area Urban (109.0), Kenema (107.2) and Pujehu (103.3) had the highest GER across the country. Moyamba, with a GER of 69.5, recorded the lowest figure.

Table 3.18 JSS GER by district of residence

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	139.8	134.4	137.2
Kenema	108.0	106.4	107.2
Kono	98.1	89.4	93.8

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Bombali	98.6	88.4	93.7
Kambia	89.8	71.2	81.0
Koinadugu	76.0	71.5	73.9
Port Loko	84.6	72.4	78.7
Tonkolili	100.1	88.4	94.6
Bo	98.7	91.7	95.2
Bonthe	78.7	86.5	82.5
Moyamba	71.1	67.7	69.5
Pujehun	98.9	108.0	103.3
Western area rural	103.0	89.4	95.9
Western area urban	116.3	102.9	109.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.6.2 Junior secondary school NER

Table 3.19 shows that the JSS NER in the country was 21. The low NER implies that there was low participation at the official school age for junior secondary levels across the country. The NER for JSS students residing in urban areas was almost twice as high as that for students living in rural areas. At the regional level, the Western Region had the highest NER of 29.3 while the Southern Region had the lowest NER of 17 per cent.

Thus, about 83 per cent of the JSS-age population in the Southern Region was not enrolled at the official age in the JSS level in Sierra Leone. It was also observed that there were more boys than girls attending JSS with a GPI of 0.98.

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 3.19 JSS NER and GPI by sex and place/region of residence

Junior secondary school (12-14 years)	
Sex	
Male	21.2
Female	20.8
GPI	0.98
Place of residence	
Rural	15.2
Urban	28.4
Region	
Eastern	22.0
Northern	17.5
Southern	17.0
Western	29.3
Total	21.0

The 2015 Census showed that persons of age 12–14 years old enrolled in school at the JSS level was 99,406 (Table 3.20). The highest JSS NER was 31.5 per cent in Western Area Urban, followed by Western Rural Area (24.3), Kailahun (24.2) and Kenema (22.8). The lowest JSS NER was 12.4 and it was recorded in Moyamba District.

Table 3.20 JSS NER by district

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	25.3	23.1	24.2
Kenema	23.0	22.5	22.8
Kono	19.0	18.6	18.8
Bombali	20.0	19.0	19.5
Kambia	15.5	12.4	14.0
Koinadugu	16.3	16.0	16.2
Port Loko	17.1	15.7	16.4
Tonkolili	20.9	18.5	19.7
Bo	18.8	18.3	18.5
Bonthe	15.2	16.7	15.9
Moyamba	12.5	12.3	12.4
Pujehun	18.2	19.6	18.9
Western area rural	25.1	23.6	24.3
Western area urban	31.6	31.3	31.5

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.6.3 Senior secondary school GER and GPI

The national GER for SSS was 68.3, with the male GER being higher (78.0) than the female rate (58.3). The Western Region had the highest GER (120) while the lowest rate of 50.8 was recorded in the Southern Region. Significant variations were observed in SSS enrolment by place of residence. Significant variations were also observed in SSS enrolment between the urban (108.9) and rural (37.6) areas, an indication that accessibility of students in rural areas to secondary schools is quite low. At the secondary school level, the GER of males was higher than that of females, translating to a GPI of 0.75.

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 3.21 SSS GER and GPI by sex and place/region of residence

	Senior secondary school
Sex	
Male	78.0
Female	58.3
GPI	0.75
Place of residence	
Rural	37.6
Urban	108.9
Region	
Eastern	62.8
Northern	52.2
Southern	50.8
Western	120.0
Total	68.3

Analysis of data from the 2015 Census revealed that the highest SSS GER were in Western Area Urban (92.2), followed a distant second by Western Area Rural (66.0). The lowest SSS GER was in Moyamba (24), Pejehum (27) and Koinadugu (29.7), all of which were below 30 per cent. This means that more than 70 per cent of the students from these districts did not enroll at the required official school level.

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 3.22 Senior secondary GER by district

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	50.6	33.5	42.3
Kenema	57.3	41.1	49.1
Kono	45.7	32.0	38.8
Bombali	60.3	41.3	50.9
Kambia	43.8	20.4	31.9
Koinadugu	33.3	25.7	29.7
Port Loko	43.5	26.7	34.9

Districts	Male	Female	Total
Tonkolili	41.7	26.2	34.2
Bo	55.6	39.9	47.6
Bonthe	38.1	28.5	33.3
Moyamba	29.2	18.8	24.0
Pujehun	30.4	23.5	27.0
Western area rural	77.3	55.4	66.0
Western area urban	103.7	81.8	92.2

3.6.4 Senior Secondary School Net Enrolment Rate

The SSS NER was 10.9 (Table 3.21). The low NER shows the low enrolment rates at the right official school age for secondary school levels in Sierra Leone. Wider variations were observed between rural and urban areas, with higher NER recorded in urban areas (18.5) compared to rural areas (5.1).

The census results also indicate that the Western Region had the highest NER of 21.8 while the Southern and Northern had the lowest NER of 7.5 and 7.8 respectively. Thus, over 90 per cent of the SSS-age population in the Southern and Northern regions was not enrolled at the official school age. The data further show that there were more boys than girls attending secondary school with a GPI of 0.96.

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 3.23 SSS NER and GPI by sex and place/region of residence

Senior secondary school (15 - 17 years)	
Sex	
Male	11.1
Female	10.6
GPI	0.96
Place of residence	
Rural	5.1
Urban	18.5
Region	
Eastern	9.1
Northern	7.8
Southern	7.5
Western	21.8
Total	10.9

Table 3.24 SSS NER by district

Table 3.24 shows that the Western Area Urban District recorded the highest SSS NER (29.5). In contrast, Moyamba District had the lowest SSS NER (6.7), followed by Pujehun (7.7), Kambia (8.4), Koinadugu (8.6) and Tonkolili (9.4).

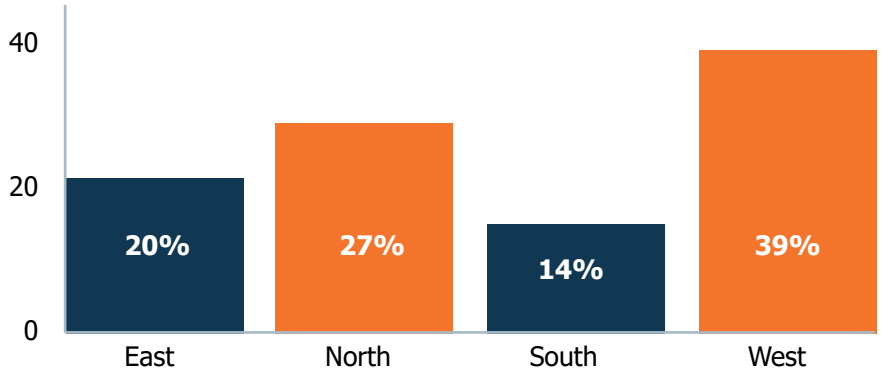
Districts	Male	Female	Total
Kailahun	12.2	9.2	10.7
Kenema	15.5	13.5	14.5
Kono	11.9	11.0	11.4
Bombali	15.9	13.0	14.4
Kambia	10.4	6.6	8.4
Koinadugu	9.0	8.1	8.6
Port Loko	11.9	8.9	10.4
Tonkolili	10.8	8.0	9.4
Bo	14.3	13.3	13.8
Bonthe	10.4	8.6	9.5
Moyamba	7.1	6.2	6.7
Pujehun	8.4	7.0	7.7
Western area rural	22.3	20.6	21.4
Western area urban	29.0	29.9	29.5

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.7 Post-secondary enrolment

The 2015 Census data shows that 48,357 students (55.9 per cent males and 44.1 per cent females) were enrolled in vocational, technical and nursing training institutions. Figure 3.3 presents the regional distribution with the Western Region recording the highest (39 per cent) and the Southern Region with the lowest at 14 per cent.

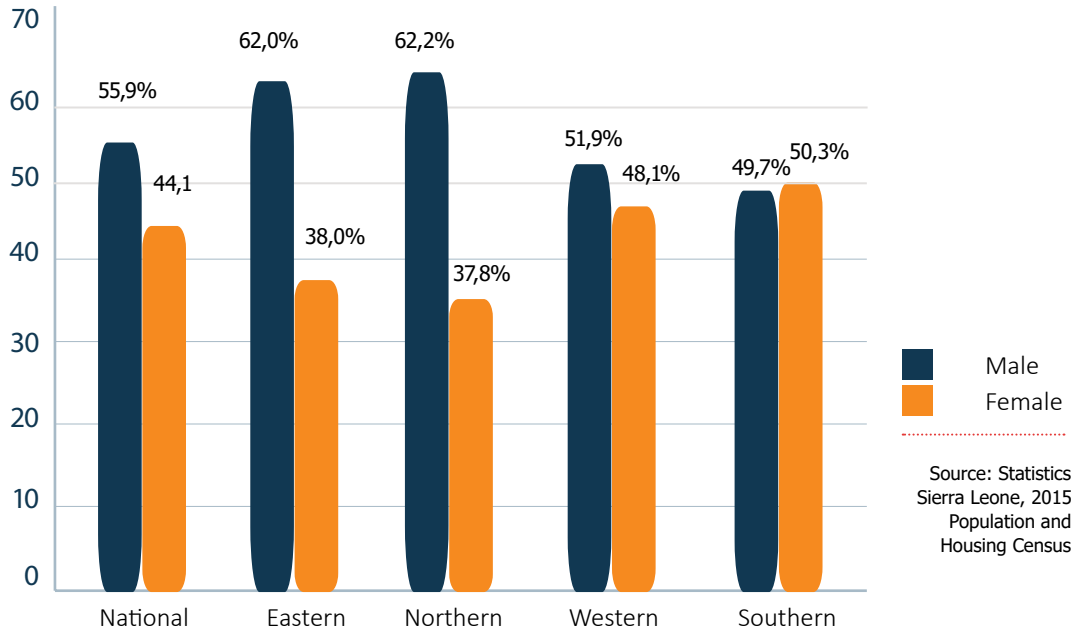
Figure 3.3 Regional enrolment in vocational / technical / nursing institutions



Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The data further showed that almost across all regions, the males had higher enrolment rates than females at the post-secondary level. At the country level, the males accounted for 55.9 per cent of persons enrolled at post-secondary level while 44.1 per cent were females. As shown in Figure 3.4, Eastern and Northern regions recorded significant gender disparities in favour of males.

Figure 3.4 Regional enrolment in post-secondary level by sex and region of residence



Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.7.1 Post-secondary school Gross Enrolment Rate and Gender Parity Index

The post-secondary GER is very low at 12 per cent, and significantly varied by sex and place of residence. The Western Region had the highest GER at 25.6 per cent, followed a distant second by the Southern Region at 8.2 per cent. The Eastern and Northern regions each recorded slightly over 7 per cent GER.

Table 3.25 Post-secondary school GER and GPI by sex and place/region of residence

Post-secondary level	
Sex	
Male	14.9
Female	8.8
GPI	0.59

Place of residence	
Rural	4.3
Urban	20.6
Region	
Eastern	7.5
Northern	7.4
Southern	8.2
Western	25.6
Total	11.6

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

3.7.2 Post-secondary school Net Enrolment Rate

The post-secondary school NER was 1.5. The very low NER indicates low participation of students at the required official age in post-secondary school education across the country. The NERs are, however, relatively higher in urban areas than in rural areas. At the regional level, the Western Region recorded the highest NER of 3.5 and the Northern Region the lowest NER of 0.8. It was also observed that there were more males than females attending post-secondary school with a GPI of 0.87.

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 3.26 Post-secondary school NER and GPI

Post-secondary school (18-21 years)	
Sex	
Male	1.6
Female	1.4
GPI	0.87
Place of residence	
Rural	0.6
Urban	2.7
Region	
Eastern	1.1
Northern	0.8
Southern	1.1
Western	3.5
Total	1.5

CHAPTER 4: LITERACY

4.1 Introduction

Literacy is not only essential to the modern workforce, but also to safe and healthy lives in a modernizing society. Sierra Leone, like any other developing country, needs citizens who can actively participate in the democratic process, as well as families that can care for the health and welfare needs of their members and the socio-economic development of their communities. Literacy is not only concerned with reading and writing, but also personal dignity, the right to participate, the empowerment of the marginalized and excluded, and the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways and settings, and making informed choices.

Studies in Sierra Leone have shown that the regions with low levels of literacy also have high poverty rates. The multidimensionality of poverty implies that the illiterate population gets isolated from information and communication, becomes hard to reach, and thus marginalized in the modernization process. In policy terms, literacy is a key learning tool for knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required for human beings to develop their capacities and to participate fully in development. This chapter presents the background characteristics of the literate population, literacy levels and differentials of the population aged 10 years and above.

4.2 Government policy on literacy

Literacy education in Sierra Leone is mainly managed by the MEST, and to an extent the Ministry of Local Government. In addition to the government, there are many other agencies providing adult literacy in Sierra Leone, including international or foreign NGOs and individual initiatives.

4.3 Literacy and development

Many policy analysts consider literacy rates a crucial measure of human capital development. This claim is made to the effect that literate people can be trained less expensively than the illiterate. Literate people also generally have a higher socio-economic status and enjoy better health and employment prospects.

4.3.1 Size and sex composition

Table 4.1 shows the size and sex composition of the literate population. The 2015 Census reveals that 51.3 per cent of the population 10 years and above was literate. The sex distribution shows that the proportion of literate males is relatively higher than females across age groups. Specifically, gender differentials further indicate that 59.1 per cent of the males are literate as opposed to 43.8 per cent of the females.

Literacy

Literacy is not only concerned with reading and writing, but also personal dignity, the right to participate, the empowerment of the marginalized and excluded, and the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways and settings, and making informed choices.

Table 4.1 Percentage of the population that is literate by sex and age group

Age group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10-14	269,490	62.4	264,334	63.6	533,824	63.0
15 - 19	311,746	72.4	301,051	68.0	612,797	70.1
20 - 24	222,053	72.1	199,380	56.2	421,433	63.6
25 - 29	178,009	64.1	127,605	38.6	305,614	50.3
30 - 34	106,937	53.5	66,201	28.3	173,138	39.9
35 - 39	97,400	48.3	56,209	25.6	153,609	36.5
40 - 44	72,955	47.3	34,825	24.0	107,780	36.0
45 - 49	62,974	47.1	25,701	23.7	88,675	36.6
50 - 54	45,474	45.9	19,151	21.8	64,625	34.6
55 - 59	28,376	47.9	10,904	21.3	39,280	35.6
60 - 64	22,096	40.9	8,720	14.9	30,816	27.3
65 - 69	15,284	42.0	5,331	14.3	20,615	28.0
70 - 74	10,366	33.9	3,747	10.7	14,113	21.5
75 - 79	6,799	33.9	2,189	11.1	8,988	22.6
80+	7,906	26.6	3,463	9.2	11,369	16.8
Total	1,457,865	59.1	1,128,811	43.8	2,586,676	51.3

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

4.3.2 Place of residence

The distribution of literate population by place of residence in Table 4.2 shows that the urban centres have a higher (69.7 per cent) proportion of literate persons compared to 37.3 per cent residing in rural areas. Sex differentials indicate that the proportion of females that were literate in rural areas was lower (29.6 per cent) than that among the males (45.6 per cent). Among the regions, the Western Region recorded the highest proportion (74.5 per cent) of literate persons, followed by the Eastern, Southern and Northern regions. Variations by sex also reveal that the Northern Region had the lowest proportion of females that were literate relative to the males.

Table 4.2 Percentage of the population that is literate by sex, place of residence and region

Place of residence/ region	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Place of residence						
Rural	626,014	45.6	435,469	29.6	1,061,483	37.3
Urban	831,851	76.7	693,342	62.9	1,525,193	69.7
Region						
Eastern	316,097	54.6	238,038	40.4	554,135	47.5
Northern	419,510	51.2	302,367	34.0	721,877	42.2
Southern	257,336	53.4	195,898	37.6	453,234	45.2
Western	464,922	80.7	392,508	68.3	857,430	74.5
Total	1,457,865	59.4	1,128,811	43.9	2,586,676	51.4

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

4.3.3 Literacy and language proficiency

Literacy is also understood as the ability to read, write, do arithmetic and use a language. The findings of the 2015 Census show that the highest proportion (44.2 per cent) of the population that was 10 years and above were literate in only English (Table 4.3). This was followed in a distant second by those who were literate in Arabic only, accounting for 2.7 per cent of the total population. It is also worth noting that those who were proficient only in a local language represented 2.6 per cent of the total population 10 years and above. Close to half of the population (48.1 per cent) was illiterate. Place of residence variations were also reported among the population that was illiterate. The percentage of illiterate persons is higher in rural areas (62.2 per cent) than in urban areas (29.8 per cent).

Table 4.3 Percentage of the population 10 years and older by sex, place of residence and language of literacy

	Local language only	English only	Local language and english only	French only	English and french only	Arabic only	English and arabic only	Other languages	Not literate	Don't know	Total
Both sexes											
Rural	2.5	30.3	0.6	0.2	0.2	3.2	0.1	0.3	62.2	0.5	100.0
Urban	2.8	62.4	1.3	0.5	0.1	2.0	0.2	0.4	29.8	0.4	100.0
Total	2.6	44.2	0.9	0.3	0.1	2.7	0.1	0.3	48.1	0.4	100.0
Male											
Rural	2.4	35.8	0.7	0.2	0.2	5.9	0.1	0.3	53.9	0.4	100.0
Urban	2.6	68.0	1.5	0.6	0.1	3.1	0.3	0.5	22.9	0.4	100.0
Total	2.5	50.0	1.0	0.4	0.1	4.6	0.2	0.4	40.2	0.4	100.0
Female											
Rural	2.6	25.2	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.8	0.0	0.2	69.9	0.5	100.0
Urban	3.0	56.9	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.4	36.7	0.4	100.0
Total	2.8	38.8	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.8	0.1	0.3	55.7	0.5	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

4.4 Illiterate population

According to the 2004 Population and Housing Census (Republic of Sierra Leone, 2006), the national literacy rate improved from 13 per cent in 1985 to 39 per cent in 2004. Despite this progress, many policy makers have been concerned about the illiterate population in the country. Illiteracy is defined as the inability to read and write a simple sentence in any language.

4.4.1 Size and sex distribution

The 2015 Census results indicate that 48.4 per cent of Sierra Leoneans are illiterate. The percentage of illiterate persons is higher among females (56.1 per cent) as opposed to males (40.5 per cent). It is worth noting that more than five out of 10 people aged 30 years and above are illiterate.

Table 4.4 Percentage of the population that is illiterate by sex and age group

Age group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10-14	161,393	37.4	150,920	36.3	312,313	36.9
15 - 19	117,438	27.3	141,113	31.9	258,551	29.6
20 - 24	84,266	27.3	154,739	43.6	239,005	36.1
25 - 29	97,861	35.3	202,146	61.2	300,007	49.3
30 - 34	91,743	45.9	167,492	71.5	259,235	59.7
35 - 39	102,867	51.1	163,009	74.2	265,876	63.1
40 - 44	80,239	52.1	109,978	75.8	190,217	63.6
45 - 49	70,183	52.5	82,504	76.1	152,687	63.0
50 - 54	53,193	53.7	68,467	78.0	121,660	65.1
55 - 59	30,720	51.8	40,200	78.5	70,920	64.2
60 - 64	31,744	58.8	49,926	85.1	81,670	72.5
65 - 69	21,061	57.8	31,941	85.6	53,002	71.9
70 - 74	20,190	66.0	31,192	89.2	51,382	78.4
75 - 79	13,213	65.9	17,490	88.9	30,703	77.3
80+	21,851	73.4	27,247	72.2	39,529	58.6
Total	997,962	40.5	1,445,378	56.1	2,443,340	48.4

4.4.2 Place of residence

Variations by place of residence show that the percentage of illiterate persons was significantly higher at 62.2 per cent in rural areas compared with 29.8 per cent in urban centres. At the regional level, the Northern Region had the highest proportion of illiterate population, while the Western Region had the lowest. The sex distribution shows that the percentage of illiterate females exceeds that of males across the four regions.

Table 4.5 Percentage of the population that is illiterate (aged 10 years and above) by sex, place of residence and region

Place of residence/ region	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Place of residence						
Rural	739,643	53.9	1,028,674	69.9	1,768,317	62.2
Urban	247,976	22.9	404,607	36.7	652,583	29.8

Place of residence/ region	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Region						
Eastern	260,252	32.0	347,844	59.1	608,096	52.1
Northern	395,827	32.3	583,157	65.5	978,984	57.3
Southern	222,791	31.7	322,772	62.0	545,563	54.5
Western	108,749	14.5	179,508	31.2	288,257	25.0
Total	987,619	40.2	1,433,281	55.7	2,420,900	48.1

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

CHAPTER 5: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

5.1 Introduction

Educational attainment among household members is an indicator of the population's exposure to formal education. It is an indication of the quality of a country's human resource base. This chapter presents indicators on educational attainment based on the 2015 Census. This information is of particular interest to the education sector since inequities in school attainment patterns among school age children by religion, sex and place of residence needs to be addressed in line with the Sustainable Development Goal of leaving no one behind. It will also help prioritize investments in the educational sector to ensure that the most disadvantaged receive more attention.

5.2 Educational attainment and class or grade

Table 5.1 indicates that almost half (49 per cent) of the total population who were 6 years and older had attained basic education (pre-primary and primary level). About 23 per cent were attending JSS, close to 20 per cent had attained SSS and some 6 per cent had attained post-secondary school education. Gender disparities were observed especially at the SSS and post-secondary level with a relatively higher proportion of males completing this level of education compared to the females. We also note that 2.5 million persons who were 6 years and above had no education, and they represented 72 per cent of the total population 6 years and above in the country, broken down into 57.4 per cent females and 42.6 per cent males.

Table 5.1 Percentage of persons aged 6 years and above by educational attainment

Age group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Pre-primary	74,751	4.1	69,489	4.4	144,240	4.2
Primary	745,851	40.6	790,829	49.7	1,536,680	44.8
JSS	405,894	22.1	379,177	23.8	785,071	22.9
SSS	408,056	22.2	257,327	16.2	665,383	19.4
Voc/technical/ nursing/ teacher	80,691	4.4	55,088	3.5	135,779	4.0
Higher (First degree)	52,691	2.9	23,582	1.5	76,273	2.2
Tertiary (Post-graduate) & PHD	15,886	0.9	6,329	0.4	22,215	0.6
Koranic	45,537	2.5	5,962	0.4	51,499	1.5
Other	4,187	0.2	2,664	0.2	6,851	0.2
Don't know	1,480	0.1	979	0.1	2,459	0.1
Total	1,835,024	100.0	1,591,426	100.0	3,426,450	100.0
No education	1,052,486	42.6	1,416,388	57.4	2,468,874	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 5.2 shows the population 6 years and above with their corresponding levels of education attained by district. The results indicate that Koinadugu District had the highest proportion (62.6 per cent) of population 6 years and above that had no education. Other districts with more than half of its population 6 years and above with no education were Kambia (53.4 per cent), Bonthe (52.7 per cent), Tonkolili (51.7 per cent) and Moyamba (51.4 per cent). The districts with lower percentages of persons with no education also include Western Area Urban (19.8 per cent), Western Area Rural (29.2 per cent) and Bo (39.0 per cent). Notably, Western Area Urban is by far the district with the highest proportion of persons that had attained secondary and post-secondary education in comparison with the other districts.

Table 5.2 Percentage of the population 6 years and older by highest educational level attained and district

	Kailahun	Kenema	Kono	Bombali	Kambia	Koinadugu	Port Loko	Tonkolili
No education	40.6	43.0	45.3	45.2	53.4	62.6	47.9	51.7
Kindergarten	2.4	2.3	3.2	2.3	1.4	1.5	1.8	2.4
Primary	29.6	25.8	27.8	26.8	26.0	19.2	27.3	25.1
JSS	15.8	13.7	13.0	12.2	10.3	8.5	11.6	11.5
SSS	8.6	10.3	8.6	9.8	6.3	5.8	8.0	6.7
Voc/technical/nursing/ teacher	1.5	2.5	1.2	2.2	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.3
Higher (First degree)	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3
Tertiary (Post-graduate) & PHD	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Koranic	0.8	1.3	0.4	0.3	1.1	1.2	0.7	0.7
Other	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Don't Know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

	Bo	Bonthe	Moyamba	Pujehun	Western area rural	Western area urban	Total
No education	39.0	52.7	51.4	47.4	29.2	19.8	41.9
Kindergarten	2.5	1.3	1.8	2.2	3.2	3.4	2.4
Primary	28.7	22.6	27.4	26.8	26.8	24.0	26.1
JSS	13.4	10.5	10.8	12.5	17.0	17.1	13.3
SSS	11.1	7.7	5.8	6.5	17.0	24.0	11.3
Voc/technical/nursing/ teacher	2.5	2.0	1.3	1.2	3.1	5.0	2.3
Higher (First degree)	1.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	2.1	4.6	1.3
Tertiary (Post-graduate) & PHD	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.7	1.3	0.4
Koranic	0.8	2.6	1.0	2.7	0.5	0.4	0.9
Other	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1
Don't Know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

5.3 Educational attainment and occupation

The analysis of educational attainment and occupation is based on the knowledge and skills education equips people with. Table 5.3 shows the distribution of persons aged 15 years and above by the highest educational level attained and the main occupation engaged in. The results include persons who declared that they had engaged in an economic activity at the time of the census. The results show that 67 per cent of the people were self-employed without employees, irrespective of the highest level attained. Among persons who had never been to school; however, 74 per cent reported to be self-employed without employees.

The results further reveal that the percentage of paid employees increases from 25 per cent among persons with secondary education to 61 per cent for persons with post-secondary education. The results, therefore, indicate a strong linkage between education and type of occupation engaged in.

Table 5.3 Percentage of persons aged 15 years and above by highest grade completed in education and main occupation

	Highest educational level							
	No education	Basic school (Primary & JSS)	SSS	Voc/technical/ nursing/teacher	Higher (First degree)	Tertiary (Post-graduate) & PHD	Other	Total
Paid employee	2.2	8.2	24.7	61.0	66.8	68.7	8.5	8.6
Self-employed without employees	73.9	64.1	48.6	20.3	15.0	16.2	73.3	66.8
Self-employed with employees (employer)	3.7	3.9	4.2	3.5	4.1	5.2	4.1	3.8
Unpaid family worker	5.3	4.4	1.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	4.9	4.6
Paid apprentice	0.4	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Unpaid apprentice	1.0	1.8	1.2	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.9	1.2
Worked before but currently looking for work	0.3	0.9	1.9	2.3	2.3	2.0	0.8	0.7
Looking for work for the first time	1.8	3.8	8.0	7.4	8.1	4.2	1.5	3.0
Householdwork	11.4	12.0	8.5	3.3	2.1	2.3	5.4	10.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

5.4 Educational attendance and attainment for orphans and persons with disabilities

An orphan is anyone aged less than 18 years who has lost one or both parents. The national policy on orphans and vulnerable children lists orphans among the vulnerable groups in the country. Table 5.4 shows the educational attainment of orphans and non-orphans in the country in 2015.

The results show that 27 per cent of orphans had never been to school compared to 23 per cent of non-orphans. Generally, orphans had slightly lower educational attainment levels than non-orphans in 2015. The results further show that there were minimal gender differentials in school attainment among orphans and non-orphans at the various grades and levels.

Table 5.4 Educational attainment for orphans and non-orphans aged 6–17 years by sex and grade

	Orphans			Non-orphans		
School attendance/ Level/Grade	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Never attended school	27.3	26.3	26.8	24.0	24.0	22.9
Kindergarten	3.5	3.6	3.5	4.4	4.4	4.4
Grade 0	4.2	4.4	4.3	7.0	7.0	7.1
Grade 1	7.0	7.5	7.2	10.2	10.2	10.5
Grade 2	9.2	9.7	9.4	11.4	11.4	11.9
Grade 3	9.1	9.5	9.3	9.9	9.9	10.2
Grade 4	8.3	8.9	8.6	8.4	8.4	8.6
Grade 5	7.9	8.4	8.2	7.4	7.4	7.6
Grade 6	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
JSS	18.0	17.5	17.7	13.4	13.4	13.4
SSS	4.0	3.6	3.8	2.7	2.7	2.6
Post-secondary education	1.2	0.2	0.7	1.1	1.1	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 5.5 Percentage of persons 6 years and above by sex, educational attainment and disability status

	Persons with disability			Persons without disability		
School attendance/ Level/Grade	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Never attended school	56.4	71.6	63.5	36.8	46.9	42.0
Kindergarten	1.9	1.5	1.7	2.6	2.3	2.5
Grade 0	1.9	1.7	1.8	3.2	3.2	3.2
Grade 1	2.4	2.1	2.3	4.4	4.4	4.4
Grade 2	3.1	2.8	3.0	5.2	5.4	5.3
Grade 3	2.9	2.3	2.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
Grade 4	2.8	2.4	2.6	4.1	4.1	4.1

	Persons with disability			Persons without disability		
School attendance/ Level/Grade	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Grade 5	3.2	2.7	3.0	4.2	4.1	4.1
Grade 6	1.6	1.0	1.3	0.9	0.8	0.8
Basic education	19.8	16.5	18.3	29.2	28.9	19.8
JSS	10.1	6.5	8.4	14.4	12.7	13.5
SSS	9.3	3.8	6.7	14.5	8.6	11.5
Post-secondary school	4.5	1.6	3.1	5.3	2.9	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

CHAPTER 6: POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, there are several laws and policies adopted by the Government of Sierra Leone to help improve educational outcomes in the country. However, many of these are not being implemented or enforced. Similarly, the Government's efforts to increase access to basic education are inadequate, thereby creating other problems which are detrimental to the education system. The authorities will need to tackle these barriers to access to education from the root of the problem rather than the surface. To do so, the Government of Sierra Leone will need to continue to collaborate with its development partners to supplement ongoing efforts to increase accessibility and quality of education.

The 2015 Census results have shown that Sierra Leone has low enrolment rates and high drop-out rates, especially among females at higher levels. Some of the reasons for children not being in school include residential living arrangements, location, disability and gender. To address some of these challenges, the Government of Sierra Leone should reinforce or introduce relevant policies, strategies and interventions; such as provision of infrastructure, supplies and quality teachers to enhance teaching and learning; enforce free compulsory education for all and introduce school feeding and other social protection measures for the poor and marginalized groups, including those with disability and teenage girls to ensure greater education accessibility in the country.

Other interventions may include the introduction of a system of apprenticeship and vocational training among school dropouts and non-formal and functional education among adults. All the above call for more commitment in the allocation of resources to the educational sector to achieve greater productivity and social well-being for the population.

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