



SIERRA LEONE 2015 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS THEMATIC REPORT ON

GENDER




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**SIERRA LEONE 2015
POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS**

**THEMATIC REPORT ON
GENDER**

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ABBREVIATIONS

AfP	Agenda for Prosperity
CBR	Crude Birth Rate
CDR	Crude Death Rate
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CMR	Child Mortality Rate
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
CWR	Child-Woman Ratio
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GFR	General Fertility Rate
ICT	Information, Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
PHC	Population and Housing Census
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SSL	Statistics Sierra Leone
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
U5MR	Under-five Mortality Rate
UN	United Nations



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Gender Thematic Report on the 2015 Population and Housing Census of Sierra Leone represents a new facet to the analysis of previous census reports. The aim is to address issues affecting women and girls during the census, but most importantly, to give some visibility and voice to the specific needs of women and girls, in comparison with males.

Indicators and data that are not sex-disaggregated often mask disparities of various forms. The recognition that these disparities exist is essential and a step towards adopting human rights-based programming and considerations, thereby making the final output gender-inclusive and relevant for development planning purposes.

This first gender thematic report, is designed to be user-friendly and accessible to all persons, especially women, in a language that is gender-sensitive. Having a gender report is a necessary pre-requisite for the systematic analysis of gender issues and the subsequent promotion of gender-equitable development processes. It is a first step in creating a more efficient, effective and sustainable planning framework for development.

55.7% of females are in the ages 15-64 years.

29.8% of male heads of household are in polygamous marriages



28% female-headed households

44% of female are literate

More than 20 years since the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Sierra Leone is now signed up to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), guiding the global fight against poverty through to the year 2030. There is a realization that women's advancement, equality and empowerment are key and central to progress on these SDGs, as they were in the Millennium Development Goals which preceded them.

This report confirms that the lives of women have improved in many areas over the last two decades, especially since the last census exercise of 2004 - but that the pace has been slow and uneven across and within regions. Its findings will guide the government, policy makers, researchers, scholars, non-governmental organizations and Sierra Leonean citizens, within and around the world, to improve the lives of every Sierra Leonean woman so that she can enjoy her human rights and an equal chance and platform to achieve her full development potential.

The need for improvement in the development and living conditions of Sierra Leoneans is urgent, especially from a gender perspective. The development efforts required for empowering men, women and children to meet their immediate and basic social welfare needs have been made even more complex by the consequences of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). Resources have been depleted, destroyed and stretched so that poverty, suffering and loss have become extensive and pervasive at all levels nationwide, particularly for women and children.

For the attainment of rights and opportunities, it is a pre-requisite for efforts to be person-centred, so that the implementation of ratified international protocols and instruments are recognized as empowerment tools, whether enacted into law or not. Over the years, Sierra Leone has become a signatory to a good number of these, from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to the Maputo Protocol, which led to the enactment of the Gender Laws in Sierra Leone.

But there is a dire need for proper implementation and for the highly illiterate populace to fully understand what falls within their rights and that of others. For sustainable development to be effective in Sierra Leone, women must be integrated into the process at all levels and given equal access to opportunities and resources to ensure that the current and future development of children is secure from ignorance, poverty and diseases.

This Gender Report, based on the 2015 Census, presents an analysis and assessment of the situation of women and their access to existing social, economic, political, and cultural structures that determine their civic, welfare and legal status and the conditions that influence their preservation, protection, development and survival.

Accessibility to key social welfare and quality of life indicators in areas including health, reproductive health, and education are examined in relation to women's current socio-economic status and role in society, and their access to decision making - both within their households and in the public arena. The assessment determines the underlying

factors that inhibit women's full participation in nation-building and their accessibility to and availability of fundamental rights on equal terms with men.

This will inform government, law and policy makers on areas requiring actions to be taken, and help them put Sierra Leone on the road to achieving better, faster and more sustainable development for women in particular, and the country in general. This should also be guided by the recommendations made by the women of Sierra Leone to the Constitutional Review Committee, which when accepted, will lay the ground for many gender-sensitive laws to be operational to achieve gender parity regarding access to facilities and services.

Women accounted for 50.8 per cent of the entire population in the 2015 Census, with an overall sex ratio of 96.8 males for every 100 females. Females out-numbered their male counterparts at both the regional and urban-rural levels.

There was a relatively higher proportion of female (3.6%) than male (3.4%) population in the ages of 65 years and above and a higher male dependence within the ages of 0-14 compared to their female counterparts.

Marital status was classified into several categories including never married, engaged, married monogamous and married polygamous. More than 39 per cent of women were married and 30.3 per cent were married to a man who is married to one or more additional women. More than half of males were never married (were 53.1 per cent) and 29.8 per cent were in a polygamous marriage. There were more widowed household heads (7.6 per cent) than widowers (0.8 per cent).

There were considerably less female-headed households (28 per cent) than male-headed households (72 per cent). Household heads were mostly between the ages of 25-49 years. Male heads of household with some form of basic education represented about 26 per cent compared to 24 per cent of female heads of households but there are more female household heads educated at postgraduate level compared to males.



Female heads of household were mostly engaged in household work (11.1 per cent) whilst 6.6 percent were not working or looking for work, compared to 1.2 per cent of male household heads engaged in household work and 3.1 per cent not working or not looking for work. The households using government-supplied electricity (NPA/BKPS) was slightly lower for households headed by women (17.6 per cent) than for men (17.9 per cent). Households headed by men who got their supply of drinking water from a public tap was 28.9 per cent compared to that of women, 29.4 per cent.

The census found that 51 per cent of the population were literate but there was a higher proportion of literate men (59 per cent) than women (44 per cent). There were more females enrolled at the primary school level but there was a fall in the numbers of both boys and girls moving from primary school level to junior secondary school which became even more distinct from junior secondary to senior secondary level.

There were 52,450 persons with disabilities employed in Sierra Leone and of this number more were male (28,015) than female (24,435). The crude death rate nationally was 14.7 per 1,000 (15.4 per 1,000 for males and 14.0 per 1,000 among females). Deaths were higher for males than their female counterparts in all the regions and at the national level. Under-five mortality at the national level was 184 per 1,000 live births: 191 for the rural and 183 for the urban areas.

The total population 10 years and above with access to the Internet was 13.0 per cent. Again, more men had access than women (16 per cent to 10 per cent). Tobacco and alcohol use were both higher amongst men than women.

This summary of the census data shows there are gender disparities in almost every area of Sierra Leoneans' lives. It is, therefore, recommended for the Government of Sierra Leone, to formulate policies that are gender-sensitive to address the clear needs of women and girls. The enforcement of these policies would be key to improving the lives of not just women and girls, but also men and boys, and lead to a sustainable development of the country.



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Overview of Male-Female Dichotomy

Gender is referred to as the social attributes and opportunities associated with being female or male, as well as the relationships between these socially constructed identities (UN 2015). Because these categories are context-specific, time-specific and changeable, gender is an important criterion for socio-cultural analysis.

The lack of sex-disaggregated data and statistics that make gender inequalities visible, especially around issues pertinent to inclusive and sustainable development, has resulted in an incomplete picture of women's economic, political and social situation in Sierra Leone relative to men.

At a time when many countries are making extra efforts to transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), that were expected to be achieved by 2015, and move on towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the importance of gender statistics and data needs to be re-emphasized as a tool by which this acceleration can be achieved.

Certainly, disadvantages that women and girls face in various social, political and economic contexts are a major source of inequality and are correlated with unequal human development. Sex disaggregation of data to inform the preparation of a gender report is thus required for accurate monitoring of progress so far made in the implementation of the SDGs, as well as in addressing persisting and new gender inequalities (The World's Women 2015).

Therefore, a gender report based on the 2015 Population and Housing Census (PHC) serves as a prelude for determining the immediate and underlying factors that have facilitated or restricted the availability and accessibility of services and resources required for women in Sierra Leone to achieve their basic needs and rights.

The terms 'sex' and 'gender' have been used interchangeably historically, but in modern

society the two have different meanings. Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences. On the other hand, gender can be defined as the differentiation of roles between males and females in society often referred to as gender roles, or an individual's concept of themselves, known as gender identity.

1.2 The Sierra Leonean Context

Sierra Leone has conducted five censuses since independence, 56 years ago. However, this is the first time that a gender analysis report has been produced on census data. Sierra Leone, like many other countries around the world, has a patriarchal culture. The general populace is only just awakening to the view and consideration of a gender perspective in all that is done, especially when relating to policies and legislations.

Socio-cultural perspectives have primarily been about men and their opinions, plans and viewpoints. From a gender perspective, qualitative methodology in research normally gives a voice to the silent and unheard, who are normally presented as just numbers, figures or samples in quantitative research.

Quantitative methodologies are commonly used in Sierra Leone and do not usually bear much reference to the how and why of aspects of the data collected. Therefore, women generally do not have a fair participation in quantitative research, because of their limited or lack of education and comprehension of the issues involved.

This report is based on the 2015 Census and provides the latest statistics and analysis on the status of women and men at the regional, district and chiefdom levels. It also reviews the progress towards gender equality over the last eleven years.

The chapters of the report cover several broad policy areas identified in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the framework that set the international agenda for improving the status of women.

These areas include population and families; health; education; work; power and decision-making; violence against women; environment; economic status and poverty.

In each area, a life-cycle approach is used to reveal the experiences of women and men during different periods of life; from childhood and the formative years, through the working and reproductive stage, to old age.

The statistics and analysis presented are based on a comprehensive and careful assessment of a large set of available data and consider new and emerging methodological developments in gender statistics.

The report reveals that the lives of women have improved in some respects relative to men. For instance, the gender gap in education has narrowed, particularly at the primary school level, as a factor of the 'free basic education' strategy, and an increased number of women in tertiary and vocational education.

In other areas, however, progress has stagnated. Today, half the world's women join the labour force compared to three quarters of men, a situation not unlike that of eleven years ago.

Women are far from having an equal voice as men in public and private spheres and, unacceptably, in every region of the country, women are still subjected to various forms of discrimination and violence. Sierra Leonean women also face new challenges, including those related to changes in living arrangements. As a result, women today are more likely to be living alone and in poverty than men of the same age.

This report will deepen the understanding of policy makers on the status of women and men in Sierra Leone and consider the strides made for the advancement of women's empowerment. It will also serve as a model for national and international stakeholders in identifying and addressing data gaps on gender issues.

However, much work remains to fill the gaps in coverage of key topics to improve the timeliness and comparability of data over time and across regions and districts nationwide, and to

strengthen national capacity in the production and use of gender statistics.

Future efforts at development must enable all citizens to be free from ignorance, ill-health, unfavourable housing and living conditions and early death, for the attainment of full rights and opportunities, and enhancing visibility of the issues. The international instruments and conventions signed and ratified by Sierra Leone, like the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW (1979) and the Maputo Protocol (2014) have entrenched prerequisites for rights and opportunities.

The Sierra Leone 2015 Census reported a total population of 7,092,113, including total household population of 7,076,119 and institutional population of 15,994. The rural areas recorded 59.0 per cent of the total population as opposed to 41.0 per cent for the urban areas. The current population of the country, which suggests a gradual increase since 1963, has, together with other factors, influenced the development of the country.

These include the eleven-year civil war which ended in 2002 and the Ebola Virus Disease. All these have gender perspectives that need to be understood if the country is to achieve sustainable development.

The population is young with 40.9 per cent aged under 15 years. This is obviously the result of high fertility, relative to declining mortality. The population 65 years and older represents just 3.5 per cent of the total country's population while the working population (15-64 years) is 55.6 per cent.

1.3 Objectives

The aim of this report is to use sex-disaggregated data from the 2015 Census and other relevant recently-conducted research studies to assess and review the situation of women and men in key areas such as health, education, employment, household arrangements and other social characteristics in present-day Sierra Leone. The specific objectives of the study are:

- 01** Assess the current demographic, economic and social situation using key statistical indicators derived from the 2015 Census;
- 02** Review the trends or major changes which have occurred over the past few decades using data from other modern censuses and surveys;
- 03** Analyse the process of transition from traditional to modern society and how this transition has positively or negatively affected the male-female relationship;
- 04** Review some of the major policies, gender equality programmes and legislative initiatives which are being pursued in all areas to promote equality and equity;
- 05** Make recommendations for further action in the light of the key findings from this study.

1.4 Sources of Data

The primary source of data for this study is the 2015 Population and Housing Census. However, data from other recently-undertaken censuses have also been used where necessary or available.

1.5 Methodology

Various methods are used in presenting information in this report. Percentages/proportions and rates computed from the actual population figures are used to show the existence (or non-existence) of disparities in selected

socio-demographic and economic spheres, and to highlight gender issues of concern. In some areas, population figures and proportions are used to further compute ratios or gaps that help to identify disparities and possible areas of gender inequality in relation to a given thematic area. For some of the indicators, the rates/ratios are obtained directly from the already compiled thematic reports.

1.6 Definitions of Concepts and Indicators

Gender is a social construct that refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women within a given society or location. Gender roles and responsibilities are, therefore, defined, modified and influenced by prevailing social variables such as culture, economic status, age, religion and political milieu.

Gender analysis is the process of collecting and analysing data that are disaggregated by sex to explore differences between men and women. The utilization of findings from such analyses will enable policy makers and programme implementers to identify and meet the needs of both women and men effectively and appropriately. The knowledge from gender analysis can identify gaps in existing policies and programmes, and inform where interventions could take place at national and subnational levels to address any inequalities.

Gender equality means that males and females enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections (UNICEF, 2011). The definition implies a status where men and women are exposed to equal conditions to realize their human rights as well as contribute to and benefit from social, economic, cultural and political development (UNESCO, 2003). Moreover, a society characterized by equality between adult men and women presents children with a model for a future with mutually-respectful relationships (UNICEF, 2011).

Gender equity is related to measurable outcomes. When men and women enjoy equal rights, opportunities and entitlements (gender equality), it leads to outcomes that are fair and just (Derbyshire, 2002). Gender equity in any society is generally indicative of wider social equality in that society.

Gender mainstreaming is the approach/strategy of taking into consideration the needs, concerns and experiences of both men and women in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. By analysing census data and compiling an analytical report on the gender dimensions of a country's population (alongside other reports), it is possible to highlight differences (or similarities) between women and men in relation to gender issues and inequalities that are likely to affect development, and which may, therefore, require policy and programme interventions at national or subnational levels.

Gender issues can be identified through the interpretation and analysis of census data. There are similarities and differences in gender issues from one country to another, since gender roles and responsibilities are influenced by social, cultural, economic and political factors. What is considered a gender issue in one context may not be recognized as such in another context. Gender issues are important because principles of equality and human rights are expected to apply to all people universally, as evidenced by the existence of equality goals and targets agreed upon globally in many of the international declarations.

The indicators include the following:

- a) The basic characteristics of the population and housing census at the smallest geographical unit.
- b) National development programmes in areas including improving literacy, health status, labour force participation and housing conditions.
- c) A set of indicators was determined for monitoring and implementing specific projects in Sierra Leone (for example, millennium development indicators, sustainable development indicators, indicators on women status).

These indicators were further explored to provide deeper insights that may inform policy decision by government and other stakeholders.



CHAPTER 2: POPULATION SIZE, COMPOSITION AND AGE-SEX STRUCTURE

2.1 Population distribution

This section will briefly examine Sierra Leone's population based on the 2015 Census. The socio-demographic characteristics of a population are expressed statistically using variables such as population size, age, sex, educational level, income level, marital status, occupation and religion. The analysis of the demographic characteristics from the gender point of view will empower government and other organizations to learn more about Sierra Leone's population structure as well as the characteristics and its distribution across regions and districts for many purposes, including policy formulation and development.

Figure 2.1 shows that the sex ratio at the national level is estimated at 96.8 males per 100 females compared to 94.7 in 2004.

Figure 2.1: Sex ratio by region, district and chiefdom



Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 2.1 shows that the population of Sierra Leone is 7,092,113 of which 3,490,978 are males and 3,601,135 are females.



Table 2.1: Population distribution by region and type of place of residence

Region/place of residence	Both Sexes	Per cent	Male	Per cent	Female	Per cent
Sierra Leone	7,092,113	100.0	3,490,978	49.2	3,601,135	50.8
Region						
Eastern	1,642,370	23.2	814,441	49.6	827,929	50.4
Northern	2,508,201	35.4	1,224,828	48.8	1,283,373	51.2
Southern	1,441,308	20.3	702,151	48.7	739,157	51.3
Western	1,500,234	21.2	749,558	50.0	750,676	50.0
Type of place of residence						
Urban	4,187,016	59.0	2,052,342	49.0	2,134,674	51.0
Rural	2,905,097	41.0	1,438,636	49.5	1,466,461	50.5

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Females represent 50.8 per cent of the total population nationally and at the regional and urban-rural levels. This was also the case in the 2004 Census. This could be due to the eleven-year civil war where more young men than women were either killed or migrated to resettle outside Sierra Leone. It could also be due to differences in life expectancy at birth, which is higher among females than males. There are variations in sex ratio at the regional levels: the Eastern Region has a sex ratio of 98.3 compared to 95.3, 94.9 and 99.3 respectively in the Northern, Southern and Western regions.

2.2 Dependent and Working Population

Table 2.2 shows disaggregated population data by sex and broad age groups of the working and dependent population. The results show that the population within age 0-14 years was 41.2 per cent while the 15-64 years and 65 years and above respectively recorded 55.3 per cent and 3.5 per cent of the total population. The table further shows that 41.6 per cent of the males and 40.8 per cent of the females were in the age group 0-14 years compared to 55 per cent and 55.7 per cent within the ages 15-64 years of males and females, respectively. There is also an indication of a relatively higher proportion of the female population (3.5 per cent) than the males (3.4 per cent) in the elderly age group (65 years and above). Looking at the male and female divide, there is higher male dependence within the ages of 0-14 years.



Table 2.2 Dependent and working population

Broad Age Groups	Both Sexes	Per cent	Male	Per cent	Female	Per cent
0-14	2,941,542	41.2	1,451,709	41.6	1,489,833	40.8
15-64	3,951,124	55.3	1,918,170	55.0	2,032,954	55.7
65+	246,529	3.5	116,836	3.4	129,693	3.5
Total	7,139,195	100.0	3,486,715	100.0	3,652,480	100.0

The kind of population distribution presented in Table 2.2 suggests that more attention should be paid to young people in terms of their education and health. This calls for the building of more schools and health facilities, which means allocating a higher proportion of the country's resources to education and health.

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

2.3 Marriage

Marriage is a significant event in life leading to the creation of a new family nucleus, with the birth of children often following. The earlier people get married, the more likely they are to start childbearing at a young age, have a larger number of children and become exposed to the risk of maternal and child health challenges. Table 2.3 has information on the distribution of the population of Sierra Leone by marital status.



Table 2.3 Percentage of the population 10 years and above by marital status in Sierra Leone

Marital Status	Sex					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Never Married	1,304,687	53.1	1,005,761	39.1	2,310,448	45.9
Engaged	90,513	3.7	112,497	4.3	203,010	4.0
Married Monogamous	241,720	9.8	409,713	15.9	651,433	13.0
Married Polygamous	731,732	29.8	779,686	30.3	1,511,418	30.0
Co-habitation (<5 years)	8,735	0.4	11,806	0.5	20,541	0.4
Co-habitation (= <5 years)	3,542	0.1	5,197	0.2	8,739	0.2
Separated	29,058	1.2	38,874	1.5	67,932	1.4
Divorced	15,772	0.6	23,419	0.9	39,191	0.8
Widowed	20,973	0.9	180,011	7.0	200,984	4.0
Don't know	9,095	0.4	7,225	0.3	16,320	0.3
Total	2,455,827	100	2,574,189	100	5,030,016	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The population 10 years and above were asked if they had ever been married. Marital status was classified into never married, engaged, married monogamous, married polygamous, co-habitation, separated, divorced and widowed.

Within the male population, more than half (53.1 per cent) were never married and the highest proportion (29.8 per cent) of those married were in polygamous unions (with more than one wife). A similar pattern is seen among their female counterparts, where 39.1 per cent were never married, and 30.3 per cent were married to a man who is married to one or more additional women. In the Sierra Leonean population, polygamous marriages are usually practised amongst Muslims.

The legal age for marriage without consent from parents or guardians in Sierra Leone is 18 years for both males and females. Marriages before the age of 18 years are organized with parental consent but this is now discouraged to ensure girls can stay on at school and to minimise maternal and child mortality. It is usually expected that couples should start producing their children as soon as they are married causing health and social impacts on adolescents or girls who get married at very young ages.

2.4 Religious affiliation

Spirituality is an important part of life in Sierra Leone and 98.9 per cent of the population indicated that they are affiliated to one religion or another (Table 2.4). The main religions are Islam (77.0 per cent) and Christianity (21.9 per cent). There is no discernible difference between the sexes.



Table 2.4 Distribution of Sierra Leone's population by religious groups and sex

Religion	Sex					
	Both Sexes	Both Sexes	Male	Male (%)	Female	Female (%)
Catholic	498,191	7.0	246,864	7.1	251,327	7.0
Anglican	85,237	1.2	40,612	1.2	44,625	1.2
Methodist	213,083	3.0	103,807	3.0	109,276	3.0
SDA	48,559	0.7	23,862	0.7	24,697	0.7
Pentecostal	372,973	5.3	172,935	4.9	200,038	5.6
Other Christian	329,093	4.7	155,039	4.5	174,054	4.8
Islam	5,451,008	77.0	2,697,833	77.5	2,753,175	76.6
Bahai	2,680	0.0	1,327	0.0	1,353	0.0
Traditional	3,597	0.1	1,855	0.1	1,742	0.1
Other	51,854	0.7	25,250	0.7	26,604	0.7
No Religion	19,844	0.3	10,249	0.3	9,595	0.3
Total	7,076,119	100.0	3,479,633	100.0	3,596,486	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census



Table 2.5 Orphaned children 0 to 17 years by sex

Age	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
Total	1,349	54.6	1,123	45.4	504	57.9	366	42.1	375	52.7	336	47.3
<5	136	5.5	112	4.5	123	14.1	76	8.7	59	8.3	55	7.8
5 to 9	337	13.7	260	10.5	122	14.0	81	9.4	75	10.5	92	12.9
10 to 17	876	35.4	751	30.4	259	29.8	209	24.0	241	33.9	189	26.6

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

A total of 711 children reported to have lost both parents. These children might not reach their full potential in terms of cognitive development because of inter-related factors of poverty, inadequate care and poor health conditions.

CHAPTER 3: HOUSEHOLD HEADS

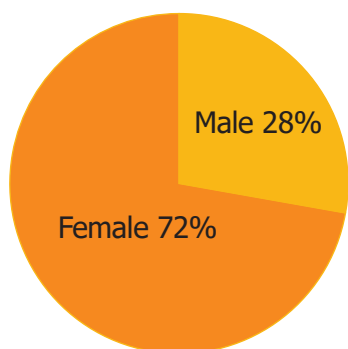
3.1 Household heads

According to the 2015 Census, a household is a dwelling unit where individuals share the same catering arrangement (i.e. eat from the same pot) . The head of that household for census purposes is a person who is recognised by the members as the head. Female control of household resources is often associated with consumption preferences which favour basic needs and child welfare.

The socio-demographic characteristics of male and female household heads examined here concern their ages, sex, educational levels, marital status and employment status. A study of these characteristics is important because they have an important bearing on the living conditions of household members, household size, child upbringing, the consumption of goods and services and the occurrence of demographic phenomena such as marriage, death and migration.

Gender is one of the key factors that determines access to the position of household leadership, especially in societies where men are overwhelmingly present in positions of leadership and decision making, culturally and otherwise. Men are often considered as household heads, irrespective of their ages or economic situation or ability to take decisions on behalf of all or some members of the household. Figure 3.1 depicts the sex distribution of household heads in Sierra Leone. It shows there are more male-headed households (72 per cent) than female-headed households (28 per cent) in Sierra Leone.

Figure 3.1: Sex distribution of Household Heads



Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 3.1 shows the representation of the household heads by sex and by age. A large percentage of household heads are between the ages of 25-49 years. The percentages of female household heads are higher between the ages of 30-49 and male household heads are higher between the ages 25-49 years.





Table 3.1: Household Heads by Age and Sex

Age group	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
15 – 19	15,291	1.2	8,999	1.0	6,292	1.8
20 – 24	62,681	5.0	41,969	4.6	20,712	5.8
25 – 29	138,726	11.0	104,003	11.4	34,723	9.8
30 – 34	148,416	11.7	112,133	12.3	36,283	10.2
35 – 39	191,384	15.1	144,053	15.8	47,331	13.3
40 – 44	156,927	12.4	116,739	12.8	40,188	11.3
45 – 49	146,621	11.6	110,259	12.1	36,362	10.2
50 – 54	115,692	9.1	81,709	9.0	33,983	9.5
55 – 59	72,545	5.7	50,534	5.6	22,011	6.2
60 – 64	69,521	5.5	44,620	5.0	24,901	7.0
65 – 69	47,699	3.8	30,870	3.4	16,829	4.7
70 – 74	39,269	3.1	24,628	2.7	14,641	4.1
75 – 79	24,679	2.0	16,485	1.8	8,194	2.3
80 – 84	17,015	1.3	10,139	1.1	6,876	2.0
85 – 89	9,064	0.7	5,765	0.6	3,299	0.9
90 – 94	4,995	0.4	3,231	0.4	1,764	0.5
95+	4,943	0.4	3,399	0.4	1,544	0.4
Total	1,265,468	100.0	909,535	100.0	355,933	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

Even though women make up 50.8 per cent of the population of Sierra Leone in the 2015 Census, they constitute only 28.1 per cent of the population of household heads. In Sierra Leonean society, men are more likely than women to be accorded the position of household heads at very early ages. Allowing a woman to become a household head, to live on their own at a very young age or to head their own household is often unacceptable in many of the country's customs. However, Table 3.1 shows an unexpected trend where the proportion of female heads of household at early ages (15-24 years) is slightly higher than that for males.

3.2 Educational Levels of Male and Female Household Heads

The educational level of the household head is one of the factors that determine their access to gainful employment and affects the wellbeing of the household. It is also strongly linked with demographic events such as mortality, migration and fertility within the household. Unfortunately, female household heads, like women in general, are behind men in terms of educational attainment.

Table 3.2 shows that most households in Sierra Leone are headed by persons who have no education (51.6 per cent males and 69.8 per cent females), particularly in the rural areas. There are slightly more (four per cent) male-headed households with basic education. There are more male educated household heads (1.2 per cent) at post-graduate level than female (0.5 per cent).



Table 3.2: Male and Female Household Heads by Levels of Education

Educational Attainment	All Residence		Rural		Urban	
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
No Education	51.6	69.8	67.8	85.5	31.3	51.3
Basic School	20.6	16.6	18.1	11.2	23.6	23.0
SSS	15.4	7.8	7.2	2.0	25.7	14.6
Voc/Technical/Nursing/Teacher	5.0	3.5	2.5	0.8	8.2	6.7
Higher (First Degree)	3.2	1.3	0.6	0.1	6.4	2.7
Tertiary (Postgraduate) & PHD	1.2	0.5	0.3	0.1	2.4	1.0
Other	3.0	0.5	3.5	0.3	2.4	0.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (Number)	909,535	355,933	504,818	192,916	404,717	163,017

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

3.3 Marital Status of Male and Female Household Heads

A woman's marital status often determines whether she becomes a household head or not. A single woman living alone might lose the position of being household head if she marries. On the other hand, a wife who loses her husband to death, divorce or separation, may take over his position as household head. Men, however, do not usually lose their status as household head when their marital status changes.

Table 3.3 shows that nearly three-quarters (74.8 per cent) of male heads of household are in polygamous marriages as opposed to less than one-fifth (18.0 per cent) of female heads of household. Polygamous marriage is higher in the rural areas (84.7 per cent and 22.2 per cent for male and female heads of household respectively).



Table 3.3: Male and Female Household Heads by Marital Status

Sex of Household Head / Place of Residence	Never Married	Engaged	Married Monogamous	Married Polygamous	Co-habitation (< 5 years)	Co-habitation (= >5 years)	Separated	Divorced	Widowed	Don't know	%	Total
Male Household Heads	8.8	6.0	6.6	74.8	0.2	0.1	1.4	0.9	1.1	0.1	100	909,535
Rural	3.4	3.3	5.5	84.7	0.1	0.0	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.0	100	504,818
Urban	15.5	9.5	8.0	62.5	0.2	0.1	1.9	1.1	1.1	0.1	100	404,717
Female Household Heads	9.0	4.5	32.0	18.0	0.5	0.4	5.0	3.3	27.2	0.1	100	355,933
Rural	3.2	3.0	34.5	22.2	0.4	0.3	4.2	2.6	29.5	0.1	100	192,916
Urban	16.0	6.3	29.1	13.1	0.7	0.5	5.9	3.9	24.4	0.1	100	163,017

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

There are more widows (27.2 per cent) than widowers (1.1 per cent) as household heads. This is likely to be influenced by societal norms, which encourage a man to remarry but make it difficult for widows to find a new husband. Being widowed is additionally challenging for women when they become single parents and have to care for children with little or no resources.



3.4 Employment Status of Male and Female Household Heads

When household heads are employed, this enables them to earn an income that can be used for the upkeep of the household. It is therefore expected that most poor households will have unemployed household heads. The main employment status of household heads is presented by sex in Table 3.4.



Table 3.4: Household Heads by Sex and Employment Status, 10 years and above

Main Employment Status	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Paid employee	160,522	12.7	138,226	15.2	22,296	6.3
Self-employed without employees	794,793	62.8	576,046	63.3	218,747	61.5
Self-employed with employees (employer)	50,468	4.0	40,135	4.4	10,333	2.9
Unpaid family worker	31,683	2.5	22,009	2.4	9,674	2.7
Paid apprentice	5,837	0.5	5,192	0.6	645	0.2
Unpaid apprentice	8,012	0.6	6,436	0.7	1,576	0.4
Worked before but currently looking for work	11,660	0.9	10,111	1.1	1,549	0.4
Looking for work for the first time	27,106	2.1	21,497	2.4	5,609	1.6
Household work	49,917	3.9	10,572	1.2	39,345	11.0
Not working & not looking for work	51,514	4.1	27,939	3.1	23,575	6.6
Full time student	38,112	3.0	27,443	3.0	10,669	3.0
Retired/pensioner	15,899	1.3	11,373	1.3	4,526	1.3
Other (specify)	16,230	1.3	10,456	1.1	5,774	1.6
Don't know	3,715	0.3	2,100	0.2	1,615	0.5
Total	1,265,468	100.0	909,535	100.0	355,933	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Female-headed households are more exposed to poverty than those headed by their male counterparts. There are less female heads of households in paid employment or self-employed, than male heads of households, giving their households less income security. The census shows that of the male household head population of 909,535, 63.3 per cent are self-employed without employees and 15.2 per cent are paid employees. In contrast, 61.5 per cent of the female household heads population of 355,933 are self-employed without employees and 6.3 per cent are paid employees.

It is usually the case that a household head working in the formal sector enjoys social security benefits and is assured of a means of subsistence, even when he or she retires. On the other hand, self-employment in the informal sector is usually characterized by low or near absence of social security and no guarantee of income at old age.

The data show that female heads are mostly engaged as self-employed without employees (61.5 %), followed by household work (11.0%) and not working or looking for work (6.6 per cent). The male household heads on the other hand, are mostly engaged as self-employed without employees (62.8%), followed by paid employees (12.7%) and not working or looking for work (4.1%).

3.5 Housing Conditions of Households Headed by Males and Females

Shelter is a fundamental human right and a sufficiently large and comfortable dwelling unit is necessary for every household. A comfortable dwelling unit promotes the physical and mental health of household members and supports their social development, irrespective of the sex or other socio-economic characteristics of the head of household.

The analysis of the structure and composition of households focuses on the age-sex structure of the households, their status and the patterns of relationship within them. During the 2015 Census, questions were also asked on the source of lighting of households (see Table 3.5).



Table: 3.5: Households by Sex of Head and Source of Lighting

Source of lighting	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
NPA/BKPS	225,551	17.8	162,856	18.0	62,695	17.6
Gas	2,814	0.2	2,030	0.2	784	0.2
Kerosene	15,121	1.2	10,405	1.1	4,716	1.3
Generator	11,413	1.0	8,955	1.0	2,458	0.7
Battery /Rechargeable Light	967,298	76.4	694,228	76.3	273,070	76.7
Candle	2,466	0.2	1,863	0.2	603	0.2
Wood	20,096	1.6	14,174	1.6	5,922	1.7
Solar	10,090	0.8	7,445	0.8	2,645	0.7
Other	10,619	0.8	7,579	0.8	3,040	0.9
Total	1,265,468	100.0	909,535	100.0	355,933	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The source of lighting is an indicator of the quality of life for members of the household. The ideal source of household lighting is electricity which is not universally available in Sierra Leone. Not all households have functional electricity installations in their dwellings or an electricity generator in their area.

The analysis reveals there is little difference between male and female-headed households and their source of lighting. More than three-quarters of all households use battery or rechargeable lights, with just 0.4 per cent more female-headed households using this source than male-headed households. The proportion of households headed by women that use the government-supplied electricity (NPA/BKPS) is slightly lower than that for male-headed households (again by 0.4 per cent). The proportion of female households that use kerosene is slightly higher than their male counterparts (by 0.2 per cent).

3.6 Ownership Status of Dwelling Unit

The ownership status of a dwelling unit of a household is an indication of the degree of its housing security. When the household head owns a dwelling unit, its housing situation is more secure than that of households that rent.

However, in the case of Sierra Leone, the dwelling unit can be owned by any member of the household.



Table 3.6: Ownership Status of Dwelling Unit by Sex of Household Head

Tenure Status	Male Headed Households	% Male Headed Households	Female Headed Households	% Female Headed Households	Total number of Households	% Number of Households
Owner-Purchased	19,486	2.1	7,139	2.0	26,625	2.1
Owner-Constructed	450,352	49.5	166,145	46.7	616,497	48.7
Owner-Inherited	173,539	19.1	83,367	23.4	256,906	20.3
Employer-Government	10,040	1.2	3,670	1.0	13,710	1.1
Employer-Private	6,585	0.7	1,954	0.5	8,539	0.6
Employer-Para-statal/Quasi-Government	834	0.1	287	0.1	1,121	0.1
Renting Government	6,458	0.7	2,511	0.7	8,969	0.7
Renting Housing Corporation	19,683	2.2	7,528	2.1	27,211	2.2
Renting Private	192,232	21.1	72,140	20.3	264,372	20.9
Renting-Parastatal/Quasi-Government	881	0.1	247	0.1	1,128	0.1
Squatter	6,455	0.7	2,170	0.6	8,625	0.7
Other	22,990	2.5	8,775	2.5	31,765	2.5
Total	909,535	100.0	355,933	100.0	1,265,468	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Female-headed households are more likely to be owners of their dwelling than male-headed households. The proportion of female-headed households (23.4 per cent) that inherited their dwelling units is higher than that of their male counterparts (19.1 per cent). The proportion of female-headed households who privately rent their dwelling units (20.3 per cent) is slightly lower than that of male-headed households (21.1 per cent).

3.7 Access to Source of Drinking Water

Access to sources of clean drinking water is essential for life. Government policy and the SDGs feature the provision of safe drinking water. Unfortunately, not all households in the country have access to safe drinking water. Table 3.7 shows the distribution of households by sources of drinking water by sex of household head.



Table 3.7: Main Source of Drinking Water by Sex of Household Head

Principal source of drinking water	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Indoor Pipe	11,827	0.9	8,377	0.9	3,450	1.0
Compound Pipe	54,535	4.3	38,635	4.2	15,900	4.5
Public Tap	366,305	28.9	261,660	28.8	104,645	29.4
Protected Ordinary Well	267,875	21.2	188,996	20.8	78,879	22.2
Protected Spring	45,761	3.6	33,782	3.7	11,979	3.4
Unprotected Ordinary Well	64,439	5.1	46,670	5.1	17,769	5.0
Unprotected Spring	44,904	3.5	33,112	3.6	11,792	3.3
Mechanical Well	99,101	7.8	69,284	7.6	29,817	8.4
River/Riverbed/Stream	242,948	19.2	178,685	19.7	64,263	18.0
Neighbour's Tap	26,456	2.1	19,008	2.1	7,448	2.1
Sachet/Bottled Water	33,655	2.7	25,577	2.8	8,078	2.2
Water Vendor/Bowser	5,674	0.5	4,226	0.5	1,448	0.4
Other	1,988	0.2	1,523	0.2	465	0.1
Total	1,265,468	100	909,535	100	355,933	100

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The table shows that the sex of the household head seems to have no influence on the source of supply of drinking water.

CHAPTER 4: EDUCATION AND LITERACY

4.1 Literacy

The Government of Sierra Leone considers the issue of narrowing the gender gap as a key priority in its development programming activities. Several legislations and intervention programmes focusing on women's empowerment have already been enacted. The 2004 Education Act provided for nine years of free basic education whilst the 2007 Child Rights Act emphasises the rights of every child to an education.

The Government also initiated a five-year poverty reduction road map, the Agenda for Prosperity (AfP). This, among other issues, emphasized the issues of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Government introduced free education for girls in public primary schools to achieve gender parity at the primary level of education. Its vision is that 'by 2035', 90 per cent of Sierra Leoneans should be able to read and write.

The country's educational system is made up of pre-school education, lasting for three years; primary education lasting six years; junior secondary education of three years; four years of either senior secondary education or technical vocational education; two to three years of tertiary, nursing or teacher training education; and four years of university studies.

Table 4.1 shows the gender disparity of male and female enrolment from primary to senior secondary levels of education. At the primary level, more females are enrolled, but there is a change as they move from the primary level to the junior secondary and senior secondary levels of education. The table shows that at the entry point (primary), more females are enrolled than their male counterparts. There is a drop for both sexes from primary level to junior secondary school. The drop is even sharper when pupils move from junior secondary to senior secondary.

In terms of gender, the massive enrolment of girls in primary school that outweighed boys, starts to reverse as they progress to junior secondary. These findings highlight the challenges young girls in Sierra Leone face in their education. Young girls' education is shrouded in challenges related to early marriage, teenage pregnancy and parents not ready to support girls in their educational pursuits.



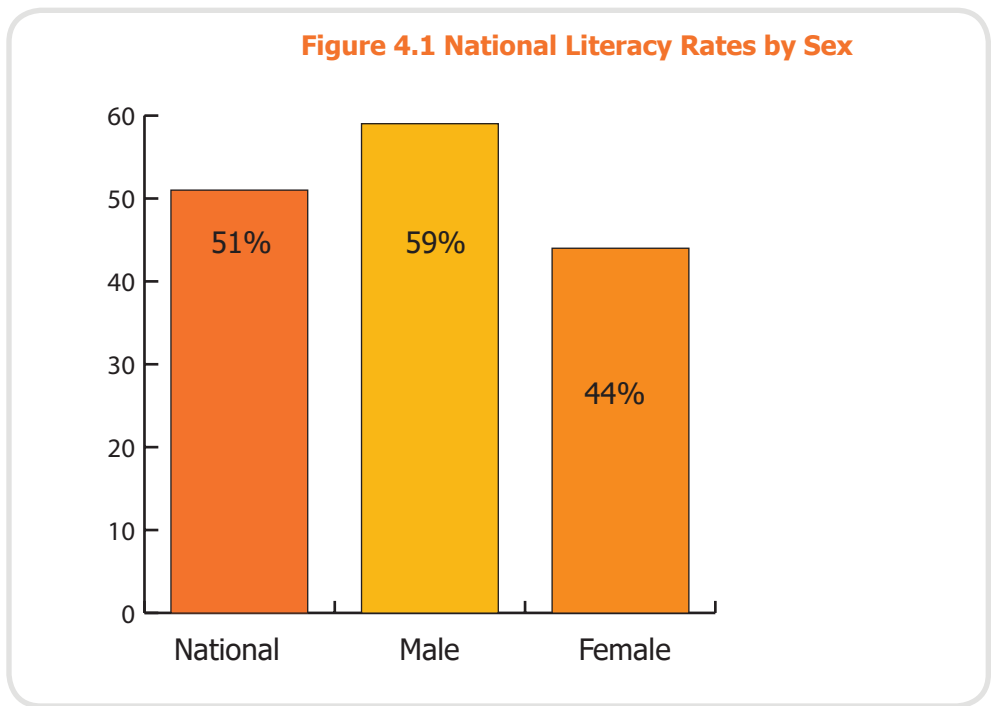
Table 4.1: Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) by Educational Level and by Sex

SIERRA LEONE	Total	Male	Female
Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) for Primary	105.4	102.8	108.1
Net Enrolment Rates (NER) for Primary Level	65.3	63.5	67.1
Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) for Junior Secondary School Level by sex	96.7	100.4	93.0
Net Enrolment Rates (NER) for Junior Secondary School Level by Sex	20.9	21.2	20.7
Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) for Senior Secondary School Level by Sex	48.1	55.8	40.4
Net Enrolment Rates (NER) for Senior Secondary School Level by Sex	14.3	14.9	13.6

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The 2015 Census defined literacy as “the ability to read and write in any language”. Questions about literacy were asked to persons 10 years and above. Findings from studies have shown that literacy has so many benefits for individuals, families, communities and nations. It is fundamental for informed decision-making, personal empowerment, active and passive participation in local and global social community (Stormiest, 2005, p. 12).

Figure 4.1 shows the national literacy rates by sex. The results show that just over half of all people in Sierra Leone are literate but that men make up a much higher proportion of that number (59 per cent) than women (44 per cent).



CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

5.1 Labour Force

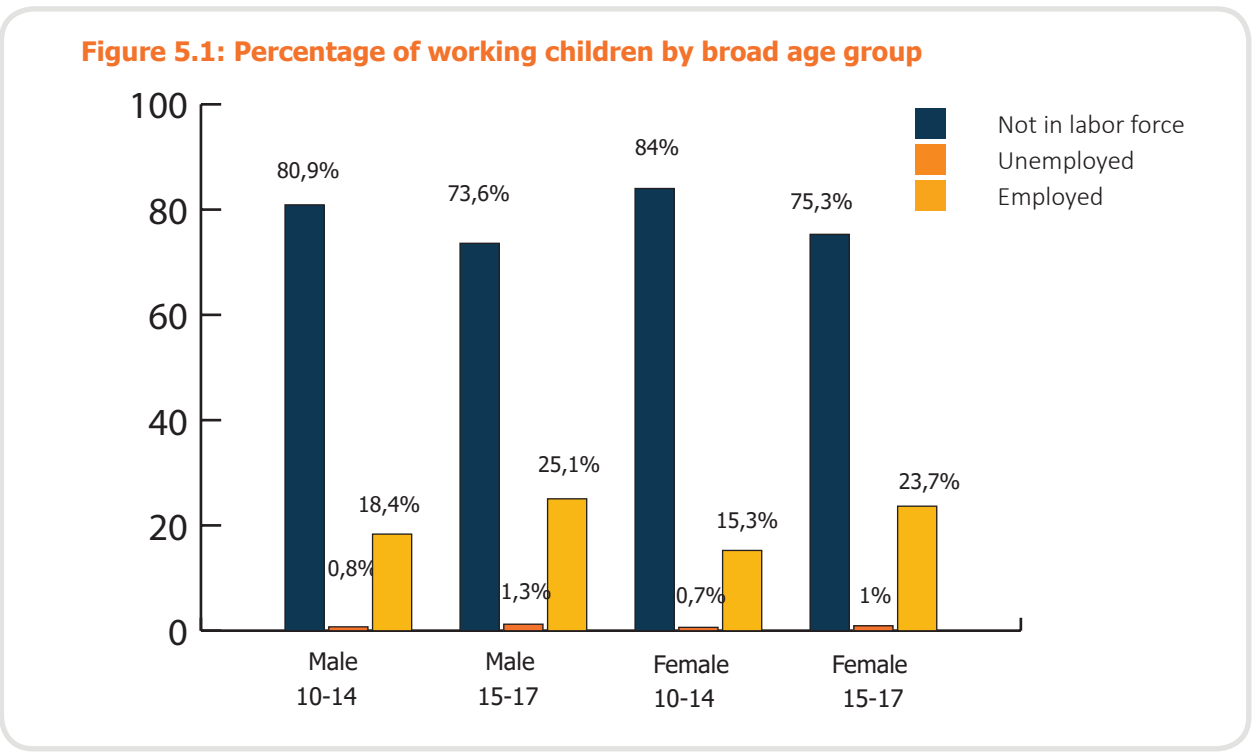
The 2015 Census captured economic activities for all persons 10 years and above. Economic activity by its definition, relative to the census, describes any activity for which the respondent received some pay or remuneration, profit or which generated family gains at any time during the last 12 months prior to the census.

The information on labour force presented here provides the status of persons by industry, employment, self-employment, unemployment, working children, and economically inactive population by age, sex, district and region. They cover a wide range of topics useful for understanding the participation of women and men in the labour force.

The key international laws dealing with child labour include the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Labour Organization's (ILO) conventions on the 1973 Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (ILO Convention 138) and on the 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO Convention 182).

Children are often employed because they are cheap labour and are usually unaware of their rights. The risks that these children face can have an irreversible physical, psychological and moral impact on their development, health and wellbeing. Child labour takes many forms depending upon the type of work, the age and sex of the child and whether they work independently or with families. Due to its complex nature, there is no one strategy that can be used to eliminate child labour.

Figure 5.1 depicts the percentage distribution of children by broad age groups and employment status at the time the 2015 Census was conducted. It shows that there is a higher proportion of boys engaged in child labour than girls. About 25 per cent of male children within the ages of 15-17 were employed, and 18.4 per cent of 10-14 year olds.



In contrast, there were 23.7 per cent of girls aged 15-17 years working and 15.3 per cent of 10-14 year olds.

Figure 5.2 shows the percentage distribution of the age dependent and working population by sex. There is a slightly higher proportion of women in the working population of Sierra Leone (ages 15-64 years) with 56.4 per cent female compared to 54.8 per cent male. However there is a slightly higher proportion of males in the under 14 years age dependent population but slightly more women in the 65 years plus age dependent population.

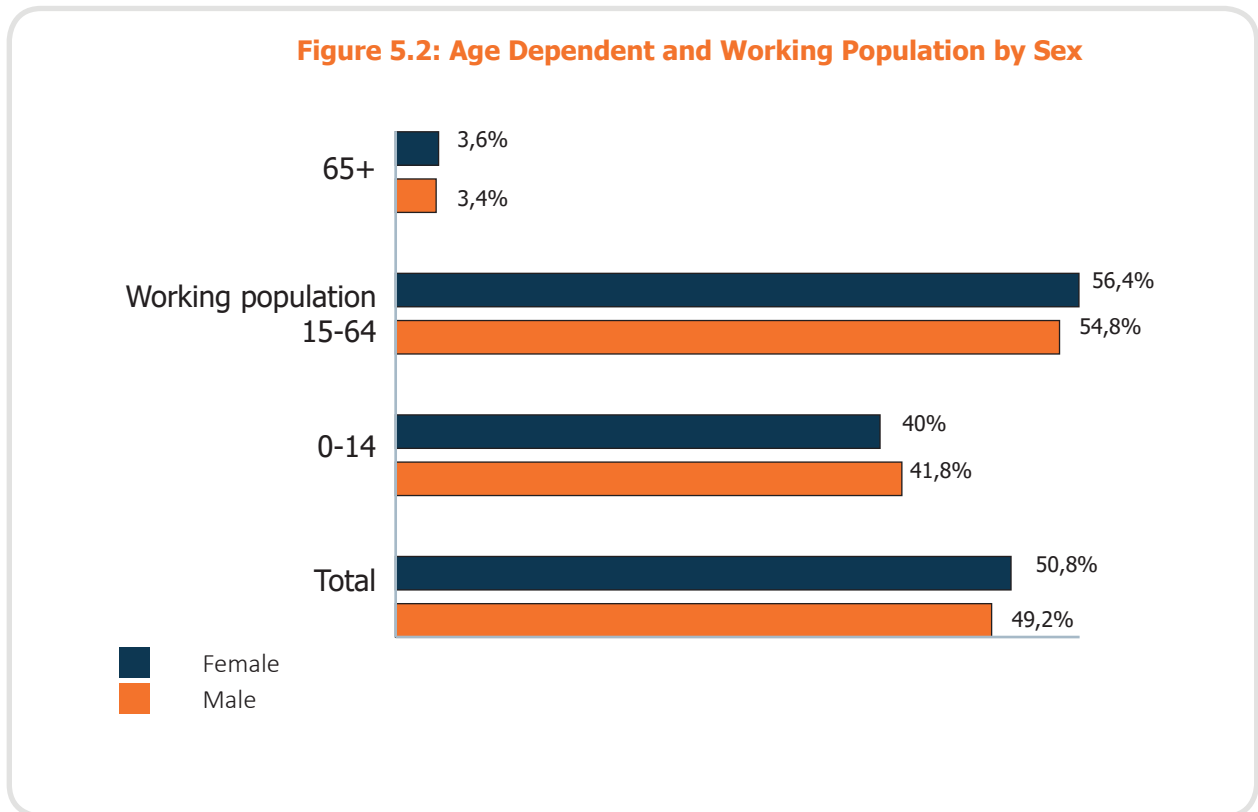




Table 5.1 Percent of population with disability that are employed by region and sex

Region	Total		Male		Female	
	Number	Percent(%)	Number	Percent(%)	Number	Percent(%)
Total	45,927	100.0	26,906	100.0	19,021	100.0
Eastern	13,940	30.4	8,333	31.0	5,607	29.5
Northern	15,853	34.5	8,949	33.3	6,904	36.3
Southern	11,661	25.4	6,919	25.7	4,742	24.9
Western	4,473	9.7	2,705	10.1	1,768	9.3

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Table 5.1 shows the proportion of all persons 10 years and older with disability and economic status. There are 45,927 persons with disability that are employed in Sierra Leone with the highest percentage (34.5%) of the employed living in the Northern Region. This pattern is the same when the disaggregation of the persons with disability who are employed is presented by sex. The proportion of the females with disability is 36.3 percent and that of the males is 33.3 percent in the Northern Region. Persons with disability who are employed are of the least percent in the Western Area Rural. Overall, there are more males (26,906) than females (19,021) with disability who are employed in Sierra Leone.



Table 5.2: Economic Status of Persons with Disability 10 years and older

Economic activity status	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Employed	45,927	55.1	26,906	60.1	19,021	49.4
Unemployed	1,483	1.8	999	2.2	484	1.3
Not in labour force	35,882	43.1	16,854	37.7	19,028	49.3
Total	83,292	100.0	44,759	100.0	38,533	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Within the sexes, males with a disability who are employed are about 60.1 per cent and females account for 49.4 per cent. The unemployed percentages of males are slightly higher (2.2 per cent) than their counterpart females with 1.3 per cent. Persons with disability 10 years and older who are not in the labour force nationally, represent 43.1 per cent; males accounting for 37.7 per cent and 49.4 per cent for females.

CHAPTER 6: FERTILITY AND MORTALITY

6.1 Fertility

Fertility is the natural capability to produce an offspring. As a measure, fertility rate is the number of children born to a woman in a population. Fertility depends on a number of factors such as nutrition, sexual behaviour, timing and way of life.

Population growth creates a range of social, economic, and environmental challenges and makes it more difficult to raise living standards. The rapidly growing population in Africa has therefore made demographic trends a key issue for the continent's policy makers.

According to conventional demographic theory, high fertility in the early stages of demographic transition is the consequence of parents wanting large families. Couples may want many children to assist with family enterprises such as farming, or for economic security in old age. In addition, high child mortality leads parents to have additional children to protect against loss or to replace losses. Fertility decline will not occur until rising levels of urbanization and education, changes in the economy and declining mortality lead parents to desire a smaller number of births.

The Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey of 2013 showed that a woman of reproductive age (15-49 years) gives birth to an average of 4.9 children in her life time.

The conventional view on how to reduce fertility preferences is to invest in social and economic development. There is no doubt that such investments would have a fertility-reducing effect, but this process is likely to take many decades, during which rapid population growth would continue. Fortunately, family planning programmes can also bring about changes in preferences through educational campaigns that present evidence on the health and socio-economic benefits of contraception and smaller families. Such messages are particularly effective when they have the support of political leaders.

6.2 Child mortality

Goal 3 of the SDGs states that to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all (at all ages), there should be targets to end preventable deaths of newborns and children under five years of age; reduce neonatal mortality to no more than 12 per 1,000 live births; and reduce under-five mortality by 25 per 1,000 live births. These targets are in line with Sierra Leone's development priorities as defined in Pillar 3 of the AfP.

In the 2015 Census, questions relating to the birth of any child (fertility), and the death of any child, were asked of all females aged 10 years and above. The questions were designed in such a way as to capture the sex of the children born. The sex was needed so indicators relating to child mortality could be calculated for both male and female children separately.

The leading causes of death amongst children younger than five years include pneumonia, pre-term birth, diarrhoea, malaria and malnutrition. Pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria together are the cause of three out of every 10 child deaths before the age of five years. Nearly half of under-five deaths globally are attributable to under-nutrition. The same causes and preventative measures that apply to infant mortality (children younger than one year) also apply to understanding child mortality.

Child mortality was calculated using indirect estimates and the results are presented in the Table 6.2 for infant mortality rate, child mortality rate and finally for under-five mortality rate.

6.3 Results of indirect estimates of childhood mortality, Sierra Leone 2015

The crude death rate (CDR) is the number of deaths occurring among the population of a given geographical area during a given year, per 1,000 mid-year total population of the given geographical area during the same year.

Table 6.1 shows the different mortality rates of Sierra Leone’s population at national level and live expectancy at birth by sex. In Sierra Leone, the crude death rate of both sexes nationally is 14.7 per 1,000



Table 6.1 Results of indirect estimates of childhood mortality, Sierra Leone 2015

Indicator	Analytical Report
Crude Death rate per 1,000	14.7
Infant mortality rate per 1,000	96
Child mortality rate per 1,000	67
Under 5 mortality rate per 1,000	157
Life expectancy at birth (males)	47.6
Life expectancy at birth (females)	51.3
Maternal mortality rate per 100,000	1.8
Total Fertility rate	5.6

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

CHAPTER 7: MEN AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITY

7.1 Gender Perspective of Disability

According to the United Nations, persons with disability include people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. In this condition, a person is unable to use his/her body to the normal natural expectation.

Persons with disability may be disadvantaged in several ways: socially, economically and educationally. The condition may be physiological, psychological, sexual, psychiatric and/or medical. Persons with disability often find themselves partially or totally dependent on others. Examples are persons with visual/sight impairment, hearing impairment, speech impairment, physical disability, intellectual disability, and emotional or behavioural disorders. Disability thus may have different consequences on males and females.

In 2011, Sierra Leone enacted a Disability Act. This Act established the National Commission for Persons with Disability. The Commission is charged with the responsibility of fighting all forms of discrimination against persons with disability and ensuring the enhancement of equal opportunities for persons with disability among other matters.

This chapter focuses on the gender perspectives of disability using the 2015 Census data. Analysis is presented on disability prevalence by type of disability and sex, education and economic status as well as by age, sex, district and region of residence.

Disability issues are critical to ensure 'no one is left behind' - as documented in the SDGs. The 2015 Census collected information on the main and second type of disability for all persons in households across the country.

The results from the analysis indicate that there are 93,129 persons with disability in Sierra Leone of which 54 per cent are male and 46 per cent female. The Northern Region has a higher proportion of persons with disability (35.3 per cent) whilst the Western Region has the least (12.8 per cent). This pattern remains the same when disaggregated by sex.



Table 7.1: Percentage Distribution of Persons with Disability by Region and Sex

Region	Total		Male		Female	
	Number	Percent(%)	Number	Percent(%)	Number	Percent(%)
Sierra Leone	93,129	100.0	50,319	100.0	42,810	100.0
Eastern	25,577	27.5	14,150	28.1	11,427	26.7
Northern	32,849	35.3	17,337	34.4	15,512	36.2
Southern	22,770	24.4	12,207	24.3	10,563	24.7
Western	11,933	12.8	6,625	13.2	5,308	12.4

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015
Population and Housing Census

Table 7.2 shows the school attendance for persons with disability three years and older. It shows that significantly less girls with disabilities attend school than males with disabilities.



Table 7.2: School Attendance for Persons with Disability 3 years and older

School attendance	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Ever attended	34,282	37.2	22,164	44.6	12,118	28.6
Never attended	57,538	62.5	27,416	55.1	30,122	71.1
Don't Know	256	0.3	133	0.3	123	0.3
Total	92,076	100	49,713	100	42,363	100

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

Girls with disabilities experience greater exclusion and injustices because of both their disability and gender. They are less likely to go to school and are often considered a burden on the family because they are considered as non-productive members of the society.



Table 7.3: Educational Level Attained among Persons with Disability 3 years and older

Level attained	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Kindergarten	2,011	5.9	1,161	5.2	850	7.0
Primary	14,684	42.8	8,446	38.1	6,238	51.5
JSS	7,342	21.4	4,698	21.2	2,644	21.8
SSS	5,855	17.1	4,296	19.4	1,559	12.9
Vocational/Technical/ Nursing/Teacher	1,739	5.1	1,272	5.7	467	3.9
Higher (First Degree)	694	2.0	560	2.5	134	1.1
Tertiary (Post-graduate) & PHD	292	0.8	232	1.1	60	0.5
Koranic	1,455	4.2	1,360	6.2	95	0.7
Other	155	0.5	107	0.5	48	0.4
Don't Know	55	0.2	32	0.1	23	0.2
Total	34,282	100	22,164	100	12,118	100

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The proportion of girls with disability who achieve a primary level of education is higher than for boys with a disability. However, 5.7 per cent of males who have disabilities have attained vocational, technical, nursing or teacher’s level of education compared to 3.9 per cent of their female counterparts.

Table 7.4 shows that a total number of 4,053 orphans below 18 years of age in Sierra Leone have disabilities. Most of these orphans are adolescent children who are of ages 10-17 years. There are more male orphans (55%) compared to their female counterparts (45%). These children will need special care and provision of basic needs for their up-keep if they are to have any meaningful development in society.



Table 7.4: Orphaned children 0 - 17 years with disability

Age	Total count	Male		Female	
	Both Sexes	Count	Percent(%)	Count	Percent(%)
Total	4,053	2,228	55.0	1,825	45.0
<5	561	318	7.8	243	6.0
5-9	967	534	13.2	433	10.7
Adolescent (10-17)	2,525	1,376	34.0	1,149	28.3

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census



CHAPTER 8: INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

8.1 Access to and use of ICT

The Millennium Development Declaration adopted by the UN in 2000 underscored the urgency of ensuring that the benefits of new technologies, especially Information and Communication Technologies [ICTs], are made available to all. One resource that liberates people from poverty and empowers them is knowledge. It is also now well understood that any attempt to improve the quality of life of people in developing countries would be incomplete without empowering women.

Access to ICTs is crucial if they are to be a means for women's economic empowerment. There is a need to work towards universal access. It is important not only to establish physical facilities, such as communication networks or computers, but to ensure that users can utilize these facilities to the greatest possible extent. Women's access to and use of ICT is constrained not only by technological infrastructure, but also by socially constructed gender roles and relations.

In the 2015 Census, questions were asked on access to Internet facility and, specifically, the use of the Internet in the past week.. These questions were asked to persons 10 years and above and the findings are shown in Tables 8.1 and 8.2.



Table 8.1: Percentage Internet Access by Sex among Persons 10 years and older

Internet access	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Yes	651,826	13.0	393,763	16.0	258,063	10.0
No	4,359,515	86.6	2,052,037	83.6	2,307,478	89.6
Don't Know	18,675	0.4	10,027	0.4	8,648	0.4
Total	5,030,016	100.0	2,455,827	100.0	2,574,189	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

In Sierra Leone, only 13.0 per cent of persons 10 years and older have access to the Internet. The proportion of males with access is higher than for females. The results clearly show the vast majority of women and men have no access to the Internet.



Table 8.2: Percentage Internet Use in the Past One Week before the 2015 Census by Sex and Place of Use

Place of Internet Use	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Home	475,428	72.9	288,295	73.2	187,133	72.5
Office	37,623	5.8	25,047	6.4	12,576	4.9
Internet Café	17,935	2.8	11,365	2.9	6,570	2.6
Yes other	37,918	5.8	22,832	5.8	15,086	5.8
No	82,922	12.7	46,224	11.7	36,698	14.2
Total	651,826	100.0	393,763	100.0	258,063	100.0

Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The use of the Internet was further disaggregated by sex and by various categories of place of use such as home, office, internet café and other places. The results show that in Sierra Leone, 72.9 per cent of persons 10 years and above who have access to the Internet make use of the services at home. Just under three per cent of them access Internet services at Internet cafés. A similar pattern was observed for both sexes. A relatively higher proportion of males than females had made use of the Internet at home, at the office and in an Internet café in the past week before the census.

CHAPTER 9: ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO USE

9.1 Uses of Alcohol and Tobacco

Alcohol and tobacco use is usually frowned upon in Sierra Leone, but they are still used by both men and women. Women are particularly not well regarded when they use tobacco and drink alcohol. Table 10.1 shows the percentage of persons 10 years and above by sex and tobacco and alcohol intake.

The differences in drinking behaviours are evident throughout adolescence and into adulthood (e.g., Dermody et al., 2014; Drabble et al., 2005; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2008; Marshal et al., 2012; Wilsnack et al., 2008; Ziyadeh et al., 2007) and so identifying the factors that may help to explain these differences appears important.



Table 9.1: Percentage Tobacco and Alcohol Intake by Sex among Persons 10 years and older

Tobacco and Alcohol usage	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Tobacco only	456,815	9.1	311,982	12.7	144,833	5.6
Alcohol only	174,414	3.5	106,670	4.3	67,744	2.6
Both Tobacco and Alcohol	131,171	2.6	109,759	4.5	21,412	0.8
None	4,195,022	83.4	1,891,256	77.0	2,303,766	89.5
Don't Know	72,594	1.4	36,160	1.5	36,434	1.4
Total	5,030,016	100	2,455,827	100	2,574,189	100

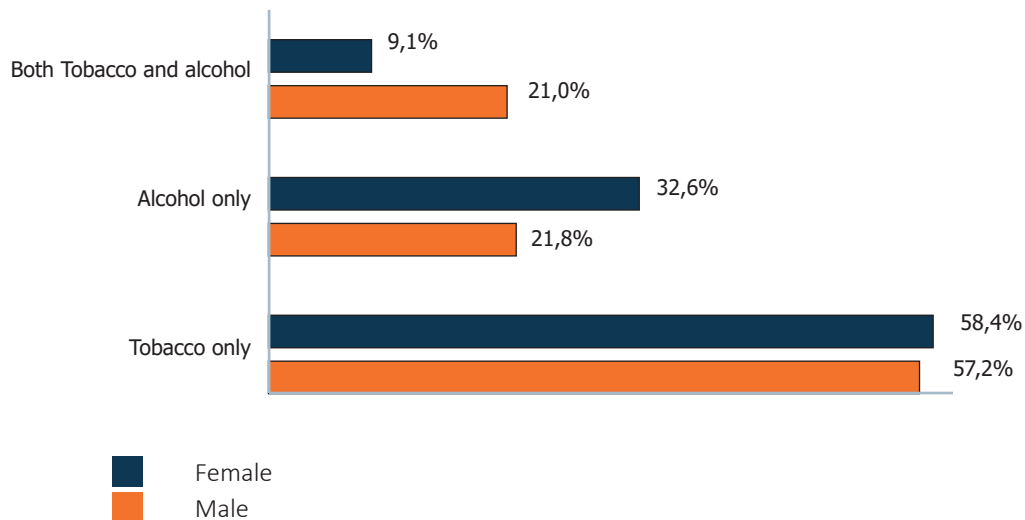
Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census

The results indicate that men are almost twice as likely to take tobacco than women. Alcohol intake is also correspondingly higher amongst men (4.3 per cent) than women (2.6 per cent). The results further indicate that the use of both tobacco and alcohol is even more pronounced among men and than women.

The 2015 Census did not ask further questions on the reasons for tobacco or alcohol use. However, there is need for sensitization and advocacy on the adverse effects of tobacco and alcohol use, which should target men who are the biggest users of both substances.

The Figure 9.1 presents information on the tobacco and alcohol in-take among persons 15-35 years of age by sex.

Figure 9.1: Percentage tobacco and alcohol intake among persons 15-35 years by sex



Males within the ages of 15-35 years who take tobacco only are 57.2 per cent which is slightly less than females of the same age group with 58.4 per cent. 32.5 per cent of the females compared to 21.8 per cent of their male counterparts were drinkers of alcohol only. It is somehow surprising that females who either take tobacco or drink alcohol only are higher in proportion than the males within the same ages. The reverse of this pattern is seen only for persons who take both tobacco and alcohol where the proportion is by far higher among males (21.0 %) than the females (9.1%).



CHAPTER 10: GENDER; THE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

10.1 Legal & Policy Framework

Because of the patriarchal mind-set, gender mainstreaming and gender considerations are conspicuously absent in decision-making arenas and especially within the structures of policy makers. The establishment of the Institute for Gender Research and Documentation at Fourah Bay College, the University of Sierra Leone, is making slow, continuous headway in making gender mainstreamed across the university and in various institutions.

Strong advocacy from women's organizations such as the 50/50 Group and the Women's Forum, have led to the Three Gender Laws, the 2007 Domestic Violence Act and Sexual Offences Act, the Registration of Customary Marriage/Divorce Act and the Devolution of Estates Act, to be passed. However, there has not been a drive to implement these laws nationwide and they have been largely ineffective.

10.2 International treaties

International policies and treaties have all been instruments for equality, non-discrimination and the protection of women. The Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Maputo Protocol and the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women are all developed to fully integrate women in the development process. They aim to empower women, enhance their capabilities as agents of economic, social and political development, and ensure the full development of human resources for national development. They are also used to achieve national awareness and respect for women's rights as citizens and as agents and beneficiaries of development and to ensure that all forms of discrimination against women and abuse of women are eliminated.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

11.1 Conclusion

The findings from the 2015 Census reported a total population of 7,092,113, with more women (50.8 per cent) than men (49.2 per cent). The sex ratio at the national level is 96.8 males per 100 females. There are more males that are dependent within the ages of 0-14 than females and slightly more females than males within the ages of 15-64 of the working population.

More than three-quarters of the population practise Islam as a religion and this is reflected in the polygamous nature of many men's marriages.

There are about 430 orphans nationwide of which 52.7 per cent are males and 47.3 per cent are females.

Although more than half the population are female, they constitute only about 28.1 per cent of the population of household heads. The proportion of female household heads at ages 15-24 years is slightly higher than that for males within the same age group. Most households are headed by persons who have no education and there are also slightly more male household heads with basic education than for females, although there are more female household heads at post-secondary level compared to their male counterparts.

More than half of male heads (53.8 per cent) of household are in polygamous marriages compared to 5.1 per cent of female heads of household. There are more widows (7.6 per cent) than widowers (0.8 per cent) as household heads in the country.

More female heads of household are engaged in household work (11.1 per cent) or not working or looking for work (6.6 per cent) compared to males with 1.2 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively. The proportions of males who are self-employed (63.3 per cent) is slightly higher than for females (61.5 per cent).

The supply of electricity to households is one of the Government's priority areas in the country's National Development Plan (A4P) but still there is low supply of electricity to households. The proportion of households headed by females with access to electricity from the Government-supplied source (NPA/BKPS) is 17.6 per cent, which is slightly lower than that for the males (17.9 per cent).

There is a clear divide between men and women in educational attainment from basic to tertiary education level. This disparity will result in a slower rate of growth of national income and significantly constrain efforts to achieve rapid economic development; eradicate poverty; improve health and mortality rates; and to improve the living standards of all the population.

11.2 Recommendations

At the end of the analysis, the following recommendations are proposed:

The Government needs to continue and improve efforts to close the gender gap in education. The legal age for marriage (18 years) must be enforced at all levels. If girls marry at an early age, they start producing children right away, compromising their health, their children's health and their social and economic development.

The Government must strengthen the implementation of a safety net to provide much needed services for the elderly population, widowers and widows, orphans and people with disability. This could be achieved through the establishment of health insurance services for the elderly, residential homes and social security, especially for employees.

There is need for the Government to act on and formulate policies that help orphans, especially those that are faced with challenges related to inadequate care and poor health conditions.

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