

Sierra Leone - National Population and Housing Census 1985

Central Statistics Office, University of Sierra Leone, National Population Secretariat, Representatives from various Ministries

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Identification

SURVEY ID NUMBER

SLE-SSL-NPHC-1985-v01

TITLE

National Population and Housing Census 1985

ABBREVIATION OR ACRONYM

NPHC

TRANSLATED TITLE

Titled in English and has not been translated into any language

COUNTRY

Name	Country code
Sierra Leone	SLE

STUDY TYPE

Population and Housing Census [hh/popcen]

SERIES INFORMATION

The 1985 Population Census was the third complete count of the Population to be carried out in Sierra Leone. The first was in 1963 and the second in 1974.

Prior to 1963 and 1974, however, a number of "Censuses" had been held in the country, employing various methods. The earliest of such "Censuses" is believed to have taken place in 1802 in what is now the Western Area. In 1901, the whole country was covered for the first time, although the methods in the provincial areas were different from what had become the standard practice in the Western Area. Similar "Censuses" followed in 1911, 1921, 1931 and in 1948, when the last of these "Censuses" was held.

The "Censuses" of 1901 to 1948 combined complete counts in the Western Area with sample estimates of the provincial population to obtain the population of the country. Because of the sampling and estimation procedures used, the estimates of the population of Sierra Leone obtained from these Censuses were as follows:-

1901 - 1,024,278

1911 - 1,400,149

1921 - 1,540,554

1931 - 1,768,480

1948 - 1,858,275

1963 - 2,180,355

1974 - 2,735,159

The 1985 Census reported the Population as 3,515,812 and adjusted upwards by 5% (for possible under enumeration) to 3,700,000.

Like the 1963 and 1974 Censuses, the 1985 Census was a de facto census based on a house-to-house canvass of the population. The adjusted enumeration return of 3,700,000 persons in the whole of Sierra Leone, implying an annual growth rate of 2.76% during the intercensal period 1974 to 1985.

ABSTRACT

The Republic of Sierra Leone is a small coastal West African country bordered by Guinea and Liberia. Sierra Leone has an area of 71,620 square kilometers (about 28,000 square miles). The country is divided into four major Administrative Areas namely, The Western Area, Northern Province, Southern Province and Eastern Province.

The Provinces are divided into twelve districts and the districts are divided into one hundred and forty nine chiefdoms. Western Area is divided into (Western Urban) Freetown and Western Rural Areas. Freetown is divided into wards.

There are five Physical Regions in Sierra Leone: (i) The Central Plains, (ii) The Northern Woodlands Savannah, (iii) The South Western Upland, (iv) The Western Coastal Swamps and (v) the Western Peninsula Upland Region.

The country is mountainous; about 50% of the terrain is covered by mountains including the Capital, Freetown. Agriculture is the main occupation for the people of Sierra Leone; especially rice farming in which about 60% of the people are engaged through the practice of shifting cultivation.

Sierra Leone has a tropical climate with two very different seasons - the Dry Season, traditionally from November to April and the Rainy Season from May to October with July and August being the wettest months of the year. In 2004, the census was taken in December.

This is the final report of the 1985 National Population and Housing Census. It is an analytical report and provides a detailed picture of the demographic, socio-economic and household-housing situation in the country. The entire exercise was carried out by local analysts. Finally whereas the total population counted was 3,515,812, some characteristics like education, economic activity, fertility etc. are tabulated and therefore analysed for a total population of 3,222,901.

A number of volumes have preceded this final report. These volumes have presented data on various aspects of the country's population and the general housing conditions. These include data on the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the population; the analysis of age and sex structure; fertility and mortality; migration and housing. Furthermore, detailed and small-area statistics will be available on request at the Central Statistics Office.

The ultimate objective of the census was to enhance national capacity in planning by providing estimates of total population and its growth rates, fertility, mortality, and other related socio-economic indicators. Data collection was completed within the first two weeks of December 1985 and the provisional results submitted and accepted by Government in January 1986. Thereafter, machine processing of the data was carried out until April 1990 when the final statistical tables were produced. The results were finally endorsed by the Government of Sierra Leone in May, 1992 and a National Seminar for dissemination of the results was held in that same month.

A national undertaking of this magnitude depends for its accomplishment on a great number of factors. Adequate financial resources, technical know-how, national and unflinching public co-operation are among the most important ingredients for success.

In presenting this final report, the Central Statistics Office would again like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable contributions made to the success of the project by various national and international organizations, government agencies and institutions and the general public. Financial assistance, material and human resources for the census project were provided by the Sierra Leone Government, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Federal Republic of Germany and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

Special mention must be made of the authors who worked on areas of speciality and who inspite of all the odds continued to support every stage of the census up to its final conclusion. The final editing of this report was jointly concluded by the Census Analyst, Professor H.B.S. Kande and UNFPA/Country Support Team (CST) Regional Adviser Dr. K. V. Ramachandran of the Economic Commission for Africa, whose dedication is greatly appreciated.

Finally, the resourcefulness and dedication demonstrated by Dr. Peter L. Tucker, Census Commissioner, staff of the National Population Secretariat and the Central Statistics Office have been acknowledged by all.

This publication marks the successful conclusion of the 1985 census and I now look forward to your continued support as the Government prepares for the 1996 National Population and Housing Census.

KIND OF DATA

Census/enumeration data [cen]

UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Household and individuals

Version

VERSION DESCRIPTION

v0.1: This is the first version that has ever been documented

VERSION DATE

1992-05-22

VERSION NOTES

This is the first version. No other version has been documented

Scope

NOTES

- Population: Household listing and characteristics, education, economic activities, fertility and mortality
- Housing: Types, source of water, supply of fuel, materials of construction, acquisitions of housing unit

TOPICS

Topic	Vocabulary	URI
fertility [14.2]	CESSDA	Link
migration [14.3]	CESSDA	Link
morbidity and mortality [14.4]	CESSDA	Link
unemployment [3.5]	CESSDA	Link
employment [3.1]	CESSDA	Link
Occupation	CESSDA	Link
Industry	CESSDA	Link
Marital Status	CESSDA	Link
School Attendance	CESSDA	Link
High Class Passed	CESSDA	Link
Types of Economic Activity	CESSDA	Link
housing	CESSDA	Link
Toilet facilities	CESSDA	Link
Source of Water Supply	CESSDA	Link
Principal Supply of Fuel	CESSDA	Link
Materials of Construction of Dwelling Units	CESSDA	Link
Dwelling Acquired	CESSDA	Link
Population	CESSDA	Link

KEYWORDS

Keyword
Population
Migration
Occupation
morbidity and mortality
unemployment
employment
Marital Status
Industry
School Attendance
High School Passed
Types of Economic Activity

Toilet facilities
Source of Water Supply
housing
Materials of Construction of Dwelling Units
Dwelling Acquired
Fertility
Principal Supply of Fuel

Coverage

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

Country-Wide

GEOGRAPHIC UNIT

Chiefdom level

UNIVERSE

Everybody that slept within the boundaries of Sierra Leone on Census Night (2nd - 3rd December 1985)

Producers and sponsors

PRIMARY INVESTIGATORS

Name	Affiliation
Central Statistics Office	Government of Sierra Leone
University of Sierra Leone	Government of Sierra Leone
National Population Secretariat	Government of Sierra Leone
Representatives from various Ministries	Government of Sierra Leone

PRODUCERS

Name	Abbreviation	Affiliation	Role
Ministry of Labour	MoL	Government of Sierra Leone	Technical assistance in questionnaire design, Occupation and Industry
Ministry of Education	MoE	Government of Sierra Leone	Technical assistance in questionnaire design, Education
National Population Secretariat	NPS	Government of Sierra Leone	Technical assistance in questionnaire design, Population Module

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR

Name	Abbreviation	Role
Government of Sierra Leone	GoSL	Financial assistance, material and human resources
United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA	Financial assistance, material and human resources
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP	Financial assistance, material and human resources
The Federal Republic of Germany	FRG	Financial assistance, material and human resources
The Economic Commission for Africa	ECA	Financial assistance, material and human resources

OTHER IDENTIFICATIONS/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Name	Role
H.K. Max-MacCarthy	Chief Census Officer, General Supervision of the 1985 Census Survey
Prof. H.B.S. Kandeh	Editor, 1985 Census Analytical Report/Author, Mortality
Dr. K.V. Ramachandran	Editor, 1985 Census Analytical Report/Co-Author, Population Size, Growth, Age and Sex Structure
Dr. Peter L. Tucker	Technical Support
Dr. A.C. Thomas	Co-Author, Population Size, Growth, Age and Sex Structure, 1985 Census Report
Dr. G.T. Tengbeh	Author, The Land and the People, 1985 Census Report
F. Yumkella (Mrs)	Co-Author, Nuptiality and Fertility, 1985 Census Report
Mr. D.E. Kaindaneh	Co-Author, Nuptiality and Fertility, 1985 Census Report
Mr. I.M. Sesay	Author, Population Distribution, Urbanisation and Migration, 1985 Census Report
Mr. S.K. Kroma	Author, Education and Literacy, 1985 Census Report
Mr. O. Taylor	Author, Employment and Labour Force, 1985 Census Report
Mr. J.L.K. Muana	Co-Author, Household and Housing Characteristics, 1985 Census Report

Sampling

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

There was no sampling procedures as it was a national survey

Data collection

DATES OF DATA COLLECTION

Start	End
1985-12-02	1985-12-11

DATA COLLECTION MODE

Face-to-face [f2f]

SUPERVISION

The field organization and operations started immediately after the National Population Census Secretariat was established. The question of manpower for enumeration was the most important item on the agenda. It was recognized that the enumeration would make heavy demands on manpower and it was important to take steps early to ensure that an adequate number of the right type of people were available when needed.

Four main categories of Field Staff were required:-

1) District Census Officers; 2) Field Officers 3) Supervisors and 4) Enumerators

1.3.1.1. District census offices

Before the end of the second quarter of 1985, twelve District Census Officers, one representing each District, a Census Officer and an Assistant for the Western Area had been appointed. The District Census Officer will among other things:

- i be responsible under the guidance of the Census Office, for publicity in the district.
- ii carry out a preliminary recruitment feasibility exercise for Field Officers, Supervisors and Enumerators in the District as he goes about his census publicity duties.
- iii with the help and guidance of the Census Office, recommend for selection and training of Field Officers, Supervisors and Enumerators.
- iv with the help and guidance of the Census Office organize and conduct the Census Enumeration in the District.
- v be responsible for all census materials, documents and money entrusted to his care.

vi be responsible to the Census Secretariat through the Chief Census Officer for all matters connected with the Census. He was responsible for the efficient conduct of the enumeration within his district.

vii In addition to the above responsibilities he had particular responsibility for carrying out certain checks in the overall Census control. He was also required to submit reports on the enumeration when handing over Census Documents of his district. On completion of enumeration it was his responsibility to make sure that all Field Staff engaged for the census were duly paid, provided all census documents were handed over through their Supervisors to the Field Officers, and was empowered to delegate some of his responsibilities to the Field Officer serving under him.

Besides their academic, professional and administrative attainments, District Census Officers were recruited on the basis of their ability and competence to cope and execute their assignments and duties efficiently. By and large those recruited to fill these vacancies were those who also knew their areas and people very well. They were experienced and mature people with high sense of responsibility and accountability.

1.3.1.2. Field officers and supervisors

The Field Officers were :-

- i responsible to the District Census Officer for the efficient conduct of the enumeration within his area in the District.
- ii required to assist in the recommendation for recruitment of Supervisors and Enumerators and when requested in the training of those selected.
- iii responsible for all census materials, documents and money entrusted to his care.
- iv particularly responsible for carrying certain checks in the overall Census Control, and submit detailed written report on the enumeration when handing over census documents and materials to the District Census Officer.
- v to ensure complete decorum of the entire Field Staff in his Area; settle disputes and correct errors as and when reported.
- vi to check the Master List against the Enumeration Books and ensure that all questions are answered correctly and countersigned the sheet.
- vii to authorise payment of honorarium to Field Staff who have completed their work efficiently and submitted all that should be handed over after the Census exercise.

The Supervisors were:-

- i responsible to the Field Officer for the efficient conduct of the enumeration within his assigned Area in the District.
- ii to master the Questionnaire and the Enumerators Manual and know the locality and its people.
- iii to assist in the training of Enumerators.
- iv to check the contents of each satchel, ensure that all that would be required in the field are in the satchel.
- v to have close supervision of the Enumerators work and correct mistakes on the spot.
- vi to report to the Field Officer the progress of the census exercise in his Area.
- vii to settle promptly any difficulties, disputes or problems which may arise and report to the Field Officer.
- viii to ensure decorum of Enumerators in the field; make sure that each knows which Area he has to cover. Go over his map with him and make sure he understands what places he has to visit and how to get there.
- ix to make arrangement for meeting each in turn and as soon as after the start of the enumeration as possible.
- x to deal speedily with any queries they may have and if necessary refer to the Field Officer.
- xi to ensure that enumeration starts on time daily; witness one complete interview conducted by the Enumerator and satisfy himself that he is doing his work correctly.
- xii to ensure that all localities are being visited, including localities which may not be shown in the Enumeration Map.
- xiii to satisfy himself that any locality said to be deserted is in fact deserted.
- xv to satisfy himself that at the end of the enumeration every house has been visited, the inhabitants enumerated and that all bear the blue sticker.

DATA COLLECTION NOTES

The Census Enumeration duly commenced on the morning of Monday, 2nd December, 1985. In most areas throughout the country, counting started at dawn, while in a few others it started between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning. Persons in hospitals, hotels, prisons, lock-ups, secret societies and other institutions were enumerated by enumerators or supervisors by kind permission of the respective authorities concerned.

The Census Secretariat was inundated by several calls late on the first day of enumeration by people very eager to be enumerated. They were given full assurance that during the course of the week, the enumerators would call on them. In the rural areas, some Chiefs did not allow their subjects to go out until they had them enumerated - especially in the mining areas.

The 'Floating population' that is people who have no fixed abode but find shelter wherever they could for the night, were also enumerated in special operation mounted at mid-night, of December 2nd and 3rd, 1985, throughout the country. This

was carried out with the assistance of police personnel and some stalwarts from the 'Invisible community'. In the Western Area, particularly in Freetown where a large number of this category of people are, as compared with other areas in the country, the usual haunts were identified and listed and strategy worked out well. The enumerators, both male and female, were all personnel of the Central Statistics Office. On the whole, the response from these people was very good and the leaders in each of the hide-outs visited were most co-operative.

Throughout the enumeration exercise, the Census Secretariat in Freetown was in constant touch with the field through the field officers and census personnel. The general public manifested interest which no doubt was indicative of the excellent publicity embarked on and the wide coverage the enumeration continued to receive through the mass media, throughout the enumeration period. However, although there were no major or insurmountable problems, there were a few instances of local difficulties, which were amicably resolved.

There was abundant evidence of a nation-wide awareness of the census exercise and so it was whole-heartedly accepted by patriotic citizens who were prepared to "stand up and be counted", in order to reap the full benefits derivable from a census. Since the census was scheduled for 2nd to 11th December, some two to three days to the scheduled date, a few concerned citizens who had not been enumerated became worried and a volley of reports was received at the secretariat either by telephone or personal calls. All complainants received full assurance that they would be enumerated. In order to allay fears, there was a radio announcement that all those who had not been enumerated would be enumerated before the close of the enumeration exercise.

The enumeration, as already mentioned was scheduled for ten days and in most areas this deadline was attained quite easily while in a few others, mostly urban areas due to some unforeseen circumstances enumeration was not completed until the 18th of December 1985.

For identification purposes, enumerators were provided with blue and yellow stickers. The blue stickers were affixed to mark buildings which had been visited and whose occupants had all been enumerated while the yellow stickers were used to mark any building which had either not been enumerated or enumeration of all the house-holds in the dwelling had not been completed. The use of these stickers helped to check on coverage. During the campaign and through the mass media, the populace was made aware of the implications of the blue and yellow stickers that were affixed to their buildings by enumerators. They were told that the stickers should not be removed by them for any cause whatever and each enumerator before leaving a dwelling would remind the occupants not to remove the stickers. The enumerators were warned not to fix a blue sticker to any dwelling unless all its occupants had been enumerated. This was strictly adhered to by enumerators. The first checking of enumeration was done by the Supervisors and then the field officers who did some checking on random sample basis. This was closely followed by the independent observers who were deployed to observe the process of enumeration, the demeanour of Enumeration Personnel, the reactions of respondents and to check on the correct use of the stickers and census materials. The Independent Observers were required and submitted reports on the Census enumeration.

Thus from the judgement of the National Population Census Secretariat and the reports of the Independent Observers deployed throughout the country, it is estimated that total enumeration covered was more than ninety-five percent achieved.

DATA COLLECTORS

Name	Abbreviation	Affiliation
Central Statistics Office	CSO	Government of Sierra Leone

Questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRES

The scope of a census as finally determined is reflected in the questionnaire which contains the topics to be investigated in the census. The selection of topics for the 1985 census was based on a balanced consideration of all the major factors involved, such as the requests for data submitted by the various Government Ministries; Local and International Organizations; the ability of the Enumerators to ask questions correctly and the respondents to furnish reasonably accurate answers; the need to keep the questionnaire of reasonable length and so on.

Because of the wide variety of data sought, the possibility of collecting some of the data by means of sampling methods was considered. The idea was, however, abandoned, because it was feared that this might introduce too many complications into the processing and yield results of doubtful quality. It was decided that the entire population was to be treated uniformly during the enumeration.

The proposed questionnaire for the census was fully tested in the Pilot Census and the results provided the basis for the

preparation of the final questionnaire (Appendix 1.1).

The questions on relationship within household, sex, age, nationality and place of birth are standard questions in African Censuses. In view of the great need for information on fertility and mortality, questions on children born and survival of parents were also included; data from which would yield reasonable estimates of these parameters by the use of special well-known techniques, since information on fertility and mortality had been collected in the 1974 Census. The inclusion of questions on housing represented a significant improvement over the 1963 and 1974 censuses. Questions on level of education and school attendance asked in 1963 and 1974 were repeated. No question was included on literacy, as experience had shown that this topic usually poses problems under enumeration conditions as there are other ways of obtaining reasonable estimates of literacy level.

Questions on the economic characteristics of the population are also regarded as basic in any census, although these topics are amongst the most difficult to investigate properly in African censuses. Much consideration was therefore given to the economic questions which were included in the questionnaire. There was a great demand for data on employment status and on the distribution of the working population by occupation and industry.

In the interest of ease of handling and economy, it was decided after the Pilot Census experience that the questionnaires should be bound up into pads of 50 questionnaires each consisting of 10 lines. Since the vast majority of household comprised less than 10 persons, the arrangement was very convenient as it allowed all the particulars for a household to be accommodated on one page in the majority of cases. This made for easier cross-checking of answering to questions pertaining to the members of the same household and promoted more accurate reporting.

Data Processing

DATA EDITING

Data editing took place at a number of stages through the processing, including:

- Office editing and coding
- Secondary editing

Detailed documentation of the editing of data can be found in the "Census Coding Schedule" document provided as an external resource

METHODOLOGY NOTES

The start of the post enumeration is adjudged to be the commencement of data processing. The provisional figures were accepted in January 1986 but data processing was delayed due to a number of administrative reasons - Vacation leave taken by a number of the very few key personnel, delay in writing up of coding manuals and recruitment of coders. The training of coders eventually started sometime in early April 1986 and coding began in May 1986.

Data recording took a much longer time to get under way. The reasons were as follows:-

- i Considerable delay in identifying a suitable and willing candidate and in the recruitment of a UN Data Processing Adviser.
- ii Loss of important staff of the Data Processing Division through resignations.
- iii Delay in the installation of the Wang Workstations due to difficulties with the National Power Authorities.
- iv Prolonged and frequent electricity power cuts.
- v Problems with malfunctioning and missing parts and budgetary difficulties in installing a new electricity power generator plant.
- vi Frequent breakdowns of the Wang computer system resulting in long periods of non-activity in the areas of data entry and processing.

Data Appraisal

ESTIMATES OF SAMPLING ERROR

Not Applicable. Entire population was covered country-wide

DATA APPRAISAL

A Post-Enumeration survey was conducted to assess the reliability of data or any observations regarding data quality.

Access policy

CONTACTS

Name	Affiliation	Email	URL
Information Dissemination Unit Data Processing Division	Statistics Sierra Leone	statistics@statistics.sl OR info@statistics.sl	www.statistics.sl

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CITATION REQUIREMENTS

"Statistics Sierra Leone, National Population and Housing Census 1985 (NPHC 1985), Version 0.1 of the public use dataset (December 2011), provided by the Statistics Sierra Leone National Data Archive. www.statistics.sl"

ACCESS AUTHORITY

Name	Affiliation	Email	URL
Statistics Sierra Leone	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	statistics@statistics.sl OR info@statistics.sl	www.statistics.sl

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Metadata production

DDI DOCUMENT ID

DDI-SLE-SSL-NPHC-1985-v01

PRODUCERS

Name	Abbreviation	Affiliation	Role
Statistics Sierra Leone	SSL	Government of Sierra Leone	Documentation of Study

DATE OF METADATA PRODUCTION

2011-12-13

DDI DOCUMENT VERSION

Version 1.1 (December 2011)

Data Dictionary

Data file	Cases	Variables
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