

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMY

1.1.1 Geography

The Solomon Islands consist of nearly 1,000 islands that together, make up a land area of approximately 30,400 square kilometres within a sea area of roughly 1.5 million square kilometres. The country's six major islands are Choiseul, New Georgia, Isabel, Guadalcanal, Malaita and Makira. The largest island is Guadalcanal, which is 5,336 square kilometres. Most of the landmass consists of hills and rugged mountain ranges with tropical rainforests, while the remainder consists of coastal plains and low-lying atolls. The Solomon Islands have a tropical climate with little temperature change over the year. Rainfall, however, is concentrated between November and April.

Solomon Islands became an independent country in 1978. The country's form of government is a constitutional monarchy within the Commonwealth, in which the British monarch is represented by the Governor General. Executive power is in the hands of the national Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister. The Parliament consists of 50 members, each of whom is elected from a constituency. The second administrative level is formed by the nine provinces and the Honiara town council. The provinces and Honiara are further subdivided into wards, of which there are 183 in total.

Solomon Islands is part of the Melanesian cultural area, with close ties to Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. However, there are also influences from people of Micronesia (mainly Kiribati) and Polynesia, and small European and Chinese populations. Land ownership and land use are largely organised along tribal lines, and people maintain strong attachment with their islands of origin. Christianity has a large influence on Solomon Islands society and is represented by a large variety of denominations. The country is also characterised by a rich linguistic diversity: the 1999 census distinguished 91 different vernacular languages. English is the official language of the country, but Pidgin is widely used as the *lingua franca*. The majority of people live along the coast, but there are substantial population pockets in inland areas of Guadalcanal and Malaita.

The recent ethnic conflict has had far-reaching consequences for Solomon Islands' economy and society. Major companies in the country were closed down, and a large number of people were displaced, leading to a significantly different population distribution within the country. Primary social services were reduced and several major aid donors cut back their support in the wake of the policy pursued by the Solomon Islands government. At the time of writing this report, the country is still struggling to regain its former stability.

1.1.2 History

It is thought that people have lived in the Solomon Islands since at least 2000 BC. The islands were explored in 1568 by Alvaro de Mendana of Spain, but were not visited again for about 200 years. In 1886, Great Britain and Germany divided the islands between them, but later Britain was given control of the entire territory. The Japanese invaded the islands in the 1940s, and the islands were the scene of some of the bloodiest battles in the Pacific Islands region, the most famous being the battle of Guadalcanal. The British gained control of the island again in 1945. In 1976 the islands became self-governing and gained independence in 1978.

Since early 1999, the Isatabu Freedom Movement, a militia group made up of indigenous Isatabus from Guadalcanal, have expelled more than 20,000 Malaitans from the island. The Malaitans then migrated to Guadalcanal from nearby Malaita, and many had secured jobs in the capital, Honiara, stirring resentment among Isatabus that has grown steadily since independence. In response to the ethnic violence and expulsions, a rival Malaitan militia group was founded, the Malaita Eagle Force. In June 2000, the Malaita Eagle Force stole police weapons, forced the country's prime minister at the time to resign, and seized control of the capital. The rival groups agreed to a cease-fire in June 2000, barely averting a civil war. Although a peace agreement was signed and

elections took place, the country continued to suffer from lawlessness. In July 2003, at the request of the prime minister, a 2,250-strong international peacekeeping force led by Australia arrived on the island to restore order. Australia's intervention was highly successful, and two years after troops had arrived, the country remained relatively stable.

1.1.3 Economy

The bulk of the population depends on agriculture, fishing, and forestry for at least part of their livelihood. Most manufactured goods and petroleum products must be imported. The islands are rich in undeveloped mineral resources such as lead, zinc, nickel and gold. However, severe ethnic violence, the closing of key business enterprises, and an almost empty government treasury have led to serious economic disarray, indeed near collapse. Tanker deliveries of crucial fuel supplies (including those for electrical generation) have become sporadic due to the government's inability to pay and due to attacks against ships. Telecommunications are threatened by the non-payment of bills and by the lack of technical and maintenance staff many of whom have left the country.

A per capita GDP of US\$340 ranks Solomon Islands as a lesser developed nation. Over 75% of the country's labour force is engaged in subsistence farming and fishing. Until 1998, when world prices for tropical timber fell steeply, timber was Solomon Islands' main export product and, in recent years, Solomon Islands' forests were dangerously overexploited. Other important cash crops and exports include copra and palm oil. In 1998 Ross Mining of Australia began producing gold at Gold Ridge on Guadalcanal. Mineral exploration in other areas continued. However, in the wake of the ethnic violence in June 2000, exports of palm oil and gold ceased while timber exports fell.

Exploitation of Solomon Islands' rich fisheries offers the best prospect for further export and domestic economic expansion. However, a Japanese joint venture, Solomon Taiyo Ltd., which operated the only fish cannery in the country, closed in mid-2000 as a result of ethnic disturbances. The plant has reopened under local management.

Tourism, particularly diving, is an important service industry for Solomon Islands. Growth in that industry is hampered, however, by a lack of infrastructure, transportation limitations and security concerns. Solomon Islands' economy was particularly hard hit by the Asian financial crisis that occurred before the ethnic violence of June 2000. The Asian Development Bank estimated that the crash of the tropical timber market reduced Solomon Islands' GDP by between 15% and 25%. About one-half of all jobs in the timber industry were lost. The government has said that it will reform timber harvesting policies with the aim of resuming logging on a more sustainable basis.

The arrival of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and the re-engagement of other donors provided Solomon Islands with an opportunity to rebuild and expand the struggling economy. The Solomon Islands Government was seen as the driving force of any fundamental reforms for long-term change. Clearing away the bureaucracy and inefficiencies of the past, and providing a stable environment for private business, were viewed at the time as fundamental to these reforms. Previous government domination of the small economy, both through state businesses and regulation, had hindered the development of a robust private sector.

With stability returning, the government can begin to tackle a range of medium-term problems that do not require increased expenditure, such as the removal of inefficient and costly regulations and licensing regimes. This should include regulations that discourage foreign investment. Efficient infrastructure and utilities are vital for economic and social welfare and, over the medium term, need to be improved. Greater government revenues and more targeted expenditure will enable the government to provide better services.

The key longer-term challenge will be that of land tenure. For Solomon Islands to prosper, the government must address this divisive and delicate issue. The size of Solomon Islands' market and the inherent difficulties and costs due to geography and relative isolation do not mean that Solomon Islands cannot be prosperous. Facilitating an open and flexible business-friendly economy will help Solomon Islands' economy grow and its businesses to compete in international markets.

1.2 POPULATION GROWTH

Population censuses have been carried out in the Solomon Islands since 1931 at various intervals, changing to decennial intervals. Table 1.1 provides a summary of the basic demographic indicators available for Solomon Islands from the census data for 1931–1999. Solomon Islands' population has increased four times since 1931, from around 94,066 in 1931 to over 409,042 in 1999. The population grew at a rapid rate between 1931 and 1986 from 1.0% to 3.4%, but the population growth rate has slowed since 1986 to 2.8% (Solomon Islands Government 1999). A recent projection (2008) estimated Solomon Islands' population to be over 521,100.¹

Table 1.1: Basic demographic indicators, selected indicators, Solomon Islands 1931–1999

	1931	1959	1970	1976	1986	1999
Total population	94,066	124,076	160,998	196,823	285,176	409,042
Intercensal growth rate (percent)	-	1.0	2.5	3.3	3.4	2.8
Density (population/kilometre ²)	3	4	6	7	10	14
Percent urban	-	-	-	9	13	16
Life expectancy						
Male	-	-	-	-	54.3	60.6
Female	-	-	-	-	55.0	61.6
Total	-	-	-	-	54.7	61.1

- equals unknown (not available)

Source: Solomon Islands Government National Statistics Office

The population density has greatly increased over the same period from three people per square kilometer in 1931 to 14 people per square kilometer in 1999. Solomon Islands is predominantly rural with the proportion of the urban population estimated at only 16% in 1999. Life expectancy for Solomon Islands women in 1999 was slightly higher than male life expectancy (61.6 years versus 60.6 years).

1.3 POPULATION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

1.3.1 Evolution of population policy

In 1998, the Solomon Islands Government endorsed the country's National Population Policy (NPP). This policy provided the framework for all population and development activities, including externally funded projects in the country. It discussed the main policy issues, the population policy framework, and the overall goals of the government in the broad area of integrated population and development planning. It also provided specific objectives in some key areas such as responsible decision-making regarding family size and raising children, basic service provision, sustainable resource use, and employment in rural areas.

Implementing the NPP began in 1999 and has since gained momentum. The ethnic tension caused serious delays but most activities have already restarted. In order to implement the NPP, it was felt that a comprehensive NPP Implementation Plan should be developed. Work on a Plan of Action began in February 2000. The Technical Advisory Committee of the National Population Council reviewed the first drafts of the plan during its meetings in 2000. After all amendments were made, the final draft was endorsed during a meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee in February 2001.

That Implementation Plan contained a comprehensive set of sectoral objectives and strategies in all relevant areas of integrated population and development planning. Like the 1998 NPP, it cannot be expected that all strategies included in that plan could be implemented overnight.

¹ SPC Population Projections 2008.

However, that plan was considered as a statement of intent as well as a framework within which all population and development related activities in the country were to be planned and executed.

In that Implementation Plan, extensive use was made of existing sectoral policies and acts such as the Women's Policy, the draft Youth Policy, and the Forest Act. Furthermore, relevant objectives and strategies of the Plans of Action of some international conferences, especially the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 were also included.

This current policy document outlines the perspectives, policies, and strategies on population issues and problems adopted by the Solomon Islands Government to guide the country over the next 10 years. It incorporates most of the objectives and strategies under the 1998/2000 NPP Plan of Action. The purpose of the National Population Policy 2008–2017 is to:

- assist the donor community and other development partners to identify programmes that they may wish to support, either financially or by means of technical assistance;
- make clear to the public as a whole what the population situation in the country presently is, what the future is likely to be like, and how the problems the future is likely to bring will be managed or alleviated by the government;
- assist national departments to understand fully the functions that they are currently performing or expected to perform in implementing government policy on population issues;
- assist provincial administrations to prepare projects, plans and programmes to address their particular population circumstances and conditions;
- provide NGOs with a framework for identifying the specific roles that they can play — in partnership with the government — to implement the proposed policies and strategies; and
- provide the government, through the Department of Development Planning, a tool for coordinating, monitoring and evaluating all population and development efforts aimed at improving the quality of life of the population, and thereby progressing achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other development goals.

The National Population Policy 2008–2017 represents a revision of Solomon Islands' last population policy (1998 National Population Policy for the period 2000–2004), which was based on outdated information from the 1986 population and housing census. It was recommended that the 1998 policy be revised as soon as the 1999 census results were available. Preparing the 2008–2017 policy began in July 2006 with stakeholder consultation meetings, followed by a workshop to discuss key population and development issues in Solomon Islands noted during the consultations. A number of international policy frameworks pertaining to population and related development issues continue to be promoted in the region, resulting in the adoption to incorporate them into national policy frameworks. Prominent among these are the MDGs. This also necessitated revision of the existing Solomon Islands population policy.

The 1998 population policy was prepared without the benefit of up-to-date statistics on population patterns and trends. Completing the 1999 census and the 2006 Household Income and Expenditures Survey facilitated the reformulation of policy approaches in the light of new evidence on population trends.

1.3.2 Rationale and role of the population policy

The rationale for an official government population policy rests on several grounds. First, the population of Solomon Islands, as with most developing countries, will continue to grow for several decades to come. An increasing population will in turn increase the demand for government services such as schools and health care. A population policy creates awareness of the probable future demand for government services, and this awareness makes it more likely that governments and other agencies will undertake advance planning to ensure that these demands will be met in the most cost-effective manner possible. Second, a population policy helps to identify population patterns and trends that threaten to undermine the pace or nature of socio-economic development. If current population trends are unacceptable from the perspective of

public welfare, government intervention to influence them is justified. A population policy identifies important population trends and issues and makes it transparent why government intervention is justified. A population policy can be justified if there is reason to believe that the desired welfare outcomes will not occur unless some government action takes place. The third basis for an official policy is that programmes and plans intended to influence population trends are more likely to be consistent and coherent if formulated within a unified framework and placed together in the same document.

Government intervention does not imply that the government or the state is attempting to take direct control of the private behaviour of individuals or families. 'Intervention' includes actions such as providing information and education, improving the quality and quantity of education or health services, or encouraging the involvement of the private sector or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The National Population Policy should not be confused with a 'population control' policy. While Solomon Islands has population problems, these are not so serious as to justify the use of population control measures or restrict social rights and freedoms. The National Population Policy 2008–2017, like its 1998 predecessor, is firmly rooted in a human rights perspective that draws upon the Solomon Islands Constitution as well as international declarations.

The principal role of an official population policy, therefore, is to provide a coherent and transparent picture of the significance of population issues in the overall development process, and the measures that government proposes to address them. A population policy is not an end in itself but a means to other ends. A population policy is future oriented: it is based upon a perception of what the future would be like if nothing was done to make it otherwise and expresses a preferred future for the country.

The Solomon Islands Government prefers a future where:

- Population growth does not constrain sustainable economic growth and development;
- Women have a higher social status than they do today, and participate in economy and society;
- Births are spaced to enhance the health of both mothers and children;
- Violence against women is eliminated;
- Universal basic education is achieved before the end of the next decade;
- Adult illiteracy, especially among women, will be substantially reduced;
- Laws on marriage and family are in harmony with emerging social values;
- All new entrants into the labour force are able to find productive work and contribute to the economy;
- The environment is protected from degradation;
- Fewer infants and children die before they have had a chance to experience life;
- Fewer mothers die in childbirth from preventable causes;
- Women and men live longer and healthier lives;
- Migration, urbanisation, and population distribution patterns contribute to rather than detract from development

These changes cannot be expected to occur automatically or at the desired speed. Government intervention is an important catalyst for change, and government policies can make a difference. But government alone cannot bring about change. A population policy is a call for individual, community and government collaboration in a voluntary and public effort to bring about population outcomes that enhance the quality of life and level of living for all citizens of Solomon Islands.

1.3.3 The review and policy formulation process

The process of reviewing and revising the 1998 revised NPP was recommended to begin as soon as the policy was approved. However, this review did not take place mainly because of the ethnic unrest after the 1998 policy was drafted. The Solomon Islands Government only requested for the

review in 2006 under the auspices of a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/ Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) project on integrating gender and population issues into policy and development planning.

Detailed consultations with government departments were conducted in July 2006 to ensure that the policy approaches adopted were consistent with the current strategies being applied by national departments and sectoral agencies. The review process occurred from 17–28 July 2006 and consisted of two weeks of consultations with stakeholders at all levels of Solomon Islands society: government administrations, including line ministries such as planning, health, labour, education, home affairs and finance; as well as the National Statistics Office and provincial administrations. A meeting of all provincial representatives was organised and these representatives participated in the National Workshop on the National Population Policy with other stakeholders, held in Honiara on 27 July. Development partner institutions visited are the World Health Organization, the German Foundation for International Development and Oxfam among others. A meeting with donor agencies (e.g. the Australian Agency for International Development, New Zealand Agency for International Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency, European Union, and Taiwan/ROC) was organised on 28 July, as well as consultations with key NGOs and civil society organisations (e.g. Save the Children, National Council of Women, Kastom Garden, Solomon Islands Christian Association, and Christian Care Centre [Anglican Church]). A meeting with Honiara youth was also organised and some of these youth participated in the National Workshop on the National Population Policy.

The review results are incorporated into the population policy formulation process, into their respective topics or sectors. All stakeholders, including the Solomon Islands Christian Association, recognised that the current population growth and related structure was not sustainable, given the potential impact on the delivery of services, including rural-urban migration and urbanisation.

Key recommendations from the National Workshop on the National Population Policy included the following:

- Ensure that the links between goals, objectives, strategies and targets are clear by using a policy matrix framework;
- Include consideration of environment, employment and urbanisation;
- Ensure that demographic targets are realistic within the time frame specified;
- Incorporate the recommendations of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo 1994), the Port Vila Declaration on Population (1993) and other relevant international meetings;
- Strengthen the focus on reproductive rights and the empowerment of women;
- Place family planning in the context of reproductive health;
- Pay greater attention to the demographic and social variations between provinces and regions.

Revising the National Population Policy was the responsibility of the Department of National Planning. The membership of the Population Policy Review Team was made up of representatives of the National Planning and Health departments, together with the UNFPA and SPC.

It is acknowledged that greater consultation with the provinces would have been valuable given the importance of their role in implementing government programmes. While most of the provinces were able to provide input into the policy details during the National Workshop, others were left out until the final review. Nevertheless, the National Population Policy 2008–2017 explicitly acknowledges the substantial variations in conditions between provinces, and this is reflected in a number of policy goals and strategies.

1.3.4 The policy time frame

The National Population Policy 2008–2017 covers a 10-year period. The year 2017 has been selected as the terminal year because all MDG-related strategies and programmes in Solomon Islands are targeted towards 2015, and a review after that would provide the opportunity to assess the impact of various interventions.

1.3.5 Health policy

One of the major issues in a country consisting of several large, scarcely populated and remote islands is the delivery of health services, difficulty and cost of transport in regard to increasing demand, and stable or declining supply. Poverty and gender issues are also considered to be important factors affecting access to health services; while the increasing vulnerability to infectious diseases, notably sexually transmitted infections (STIs, including HIV and AIDS), and lifestyle diseases may place increased pressure on the health budget of households and governments beyond sustainability.

The way health services are operated and provided, linked to qualification and commitment of staff, is also an issue affecting rural populations in the use health services as opposed to the use of traditional healers whose services are considered to be of poor quality but less expensive in terms of medication and transport. A change in the health seeking behaviour of Solomon Islanders is necessary to reduce morbidity and mortality and increase life expectancy. While more people are seeking better treatment, population growth and access to most areas are the main reasons for the difficulty in coping with demand and supply. Slow fertility decline (hopefully the 2006/2007 DHS and the next 2009 census results will confirm this statement) associated with increasing cohorts of childbearing aged women results in larger birth cohorts, continuing population growth, and increased pressure on health services in both rural and urban areas, where positive net rural-urban migration adds to natural population growth.

The government health department has in its current development plan, strategies to increase access by all women in both rural and urban areas to reproductive health and rights by 2015, following the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) 1994 goal that was reiterated at the Beijing conference in 1995 and the ICPD +5.

The draft National Health Strategy (NHS) will be integrated into the framework of the Population and Development Policy. Sectors included in the NHS address child as well as maternal health, two sectors that are related to the MDGs. In particular, they include immunisation, reduction of child mortality, safe motherhood and family planning, including adolescent sexual and reproductive health. The NHS would address the main issue of population growth through access to extended health services, expanding services to provinces and upgrading staff qualification, developing information on rights and choices, to conform to youth as well as married couples' expectations to be able to choose contraception methods according to their needs. Both single youth and married couples have unmet contraceptive needs that result in teenage pregnancies and unwanted pregnancies. Information and behaviour change are important for increasing the use of services, and for involving men in family planning, and empowering women in decision-making about family life, including sexual behaviour.

1.4 DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEY

This report presents the findings of the 2006/2007 Solomon Islands Demographic and Health Survey (SIDHS), which was carried out by the Solomon Islands Statistics Office from 9 October 2006 to 15 April 2007, using a nationally representative sample of over 4,000 households. All women aged 15–49 in these households were eligible to be individually interviewed, while men aged 15 and over in one-half of the households were eligible to be interviewed.

1.4.1 Survey objectives

The principal objective of the SIDHS was to provide current and reliable data on fertility and family planning behaviour, child mortality, adult and maternal mortality, children's nutritional status, the use of maternal and child health services, and knowledge of HIV and AIDS. Specific survey objectives were to:

- collect data at the national level, which will allow the calculation of key demographic rates;
- analyse the direct and indirect factors that determine the level and trends of fertility;
- measure the level of contraceptive knowledge and practice among women and men by method, urban-rural residence and region;
- collect high-quality data on family health, including immunisation coverage among children, prevalence and treatment of diarrhoea and other diseases among children under 5 years, and maternity care indicators, including antenatal visits, assistance at delivery, and postnatal care;
- collect data on infant and child mortality;
- obtain data on child feeding practices, including breastfeeding, and collect 'observation' information to use in assessing the nutritional status of women and children;
- collect data on knowledge and attitudes of women and men about sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS, and evaluate patterns of recent behaviour regarding condom use; and
- collect data on support to mentally ill people as well as information on the incidence of suicides.

This information is essential for informed policy decisions, planning, monitoring, and evaluating programmes on health in general, and reproductive health in particular, at both the national level as well as in urban and rural areas. A long-term objective of the survey is to strengthen the technical capacity of government organisations to plan, conduct, process, and analyse data from complex national population and health surveys. Moreover, the 2006/2007 SIDHS provides national, rural and urban estimates on population and health that are comparable with data collected in similar surveys in other Pacific DHS pilot countries and other developing countries.

1.4.2 Survey organisation

The 2006/2007 SIDHS was carried out under the ADB/SPC Pacific Regional Pilot DHS Project, which was executed by the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office (SINSO) in collaboration with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Health (MOH). Macro International Inc provided technical assistance through its MEASURE DHS project. The survey was funded by ADB.

A steering committee was formed to be responsible for coordination, oversight, advice, and decision-making on all major aspects of the survey. The steering committee comprised representatives from various ministries, including MOH, and SINSO. A technical advisory committee and technical subcommittee were also formed.

1.5 SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION

1.5.1 Sample design

The sample SIDHS was designed to provide reliable estimates of total fertility and infant mortality rates at the national level, with urban and rural breakdown and relatively stable estimates for selected provinces. Although the design considered an urban-rural split, this was not carried out during the sample selection of the enumeration area (EA). The sample was not spread out geographically in proportion to the population; as a result, the SIDHS sample is not self-weighting at the national level and sample weighting factors have been applied to survey records in order to bring them into proportion.

The sample for the survey is a three-stage stratified, nationally representative sample of households. The sampling frame consisted of the estimated number of households in each EA by

province and was prepared by SPC from the 1999 population census data and estimated urban and rural population growth rates. Honiara, which is urban in its entirety and selected enumeration areas of Guadalcanal and other provinces, comprise the country's urban areas. The rest of Guadalcanal and all other provinces are rural. Five domains were identified: Honiara, remaining Guadalcanal, Western, Malaita, and the combined group of smaller provinces (Choiseul, Isabel, Central, Makira/Ullawa, Rennell/Bellona and Temuto). The primary sampling units, comprising 215 EAs, were selected in each province using systematic random sampling with probability proportional to the estimated number of households in the EA. It was not possible to cover several of the selected sample EAs: 5 EAs were damaged or destroyed during the tsunami of 1 April 2007; 5 EAs were refused permission to survey by village elders or the community; and 23 EAs (11 in Honiara, 7 in Western, 4 in Malaita and 1 in Guadalcanal) were not covered due to poor team leadership or poor field monitoring. In Western Province, 7 EAs were not covered due to internal migration of residents after the tsunami. Thus, the survey covered 182 EAs — 60 urban and 122 rural.

Mapping and listing households in each sample EA were undertaken by the interviewers. In each sample point, 20 households were selected by the team supervisor using systematic random sampling. The sample was designed to cover a target sample of 4,300 households with an expected household response rate of 95%. All women aged 15–49 who slept in the sample household on the night prior to the interview date were eligible to be interviewed for the Women's Questionnaire, and for the anthropometric (height and weight), blood pressure and haemoglobin measurements. Every second household was sub-selected for the male survey. All men aged 15 or over in the sub-selected households were eligible to be interviewed for the Men's Questionnaire, and for anthropometric and blood pressure measurements. All children aged 0–5 years were eligible for anthropometric measurement, and those aged 6 months to 5 years, for anaemia testing.

1.5.2 Questionnaires

Three questionnaires — a household questionnaire, a women's questionnaire and a men's questionnaire — were used in the SIDHS. The contents of these questionnaires were based on model questionnaires developed by the MEASURE DHS program at Macro International.

In consultation with MOH, SINSO and Macro, staff modified the DHS model questionnaires to reflect relevant issues in population, family planning, HIV and AIDS, and other health issues in the Solomon Islands. The questionnaires were translated into Pidgin and back-translated in order to check accuracy.

The household questionnaire was used to list all the usual members and visitors in the selected households. Some basic information was collected on the characteristics of each person listed, including age, sex, education, and relationship to the head of the household. The main purpose of the household questionnaire was to identify women and men who were eligible for the individual interview. The household questionnaire also collected information on characteristics of the household's dwelling unit, such as source of water, type of toilet facilities, materials used for the floor and roof of the house, ownership of various durable goods, and ownership and use of mosquito nets. In addition, this questionnaire was also used to record height and weight measurements of women aged 15–49, men aged 15 and above, and children under the age of 5 years, as well as consent from women, and children's parent or guardian to give blood samples for anaemia and blood pressure testing among women and men.

The women's questionnaire was used to collect information from all women aged 15–49 on:

- Background characteristics (education, residential history, media exposure, etc.)
- Reproductive history and child mortality
- Knowledge and use of family planning methods
- Fertility preferences
- Antenatal and delivery care
- Breastfeeding and infant feeding practices
- Vaccinations and childhood illnesses

- Marriage and sexual activity
- Woman's work and husband's background characteristics
- Infant and child feeding practices
- Awareness and behaviour about AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

The men's questionnaire collected similar information contained in the women's questionnaire, but was shorter because it did not contain questions on reproductive history, contraceptive calendar, and maternal and child health and nutrition.

Both informal and formal pre-tests of the questionnaires were undertaken. In July 2006, an informal pre-test was done through self-administration of the individual women's and men's questionnaires, respectively, by six female and four male SINSO staff members.

A more formal three-week pre-test was undertaken for the interviewers from 21 August to 2 September 2006, inclusive of Saturdays. The pre-test training for the nurses/health technicians started a few days later, and went from 25 August to 2 September. Twelve pre-test interviewers (seven males and five females) were expected to become team supervisors and field editors during the main enumeration. Four nurses/health technicians were trained for accuracy and reliability of the various measurements. Most pre-test interviewers had experience as interviewers in the 2006 Household Income and Expenditures Survey. Recruitment was done through radio advertisement and recommendation of SINSO staff.

Pre-test training for the interviewers consisted of classroom lectures, demonstration interviews, front-of-class interviews, mock interviews, quizzes and tests, and three days of field practice. Instructional materials included the household questionnaire, the women's questionnaire, the men's questionnaire, four field control forms, and various PowerPoint presentations. A whiteboard, an electronic projector and a laptop computer were also used during the pre-test training. The pre-test resulted in revising the translation of some questions and skip instructions.

1.5.3 Anaemia and blood pressure testing

All eligible women aged 15–49 who were interviewed were asked to voluntarily provide some drops of blood for anaemia testing, and the parents or guardians of children aged 6–59 months were asked for consent to test the child for anaemia. In addition, women aged 15–49 and men aged 15 and above who were interviewed were asked if they wanted to have their blood pressure taken as part of the survey.

The protocol for the anaemia and blood pressure testing was based on protocols developed by the DHS programme, and approved of by Macro International's Institutional Review Board. Each data collection team included one nurse/nurse aide/health technician who was responsible for taking the anthropometric (height and weight), blood pressure, and haemoglobin (anaemia) measurements.

For the blood pressure and anaemia testing, the team health technician described the procedure to eligible respondents in order to obtain informed consent. For the blood pressure measurement, respondents who agreed to the test were measured using the mercury-type sphygmomanometer.

Anaemia levels were determined by measuring the level of haemoglobin in the blood, a decreased concentration of which characterises anaemia. For haemoglobin measurement, capillary blood was taken from the finger (or heel of infants aged 6–11 months) using HemoCue safety lancets (i.e. sterile, single-use, spring-loaded instruments that allow a relatively painless skin puncture). Haemoglobin was measured in the blood using the HemoCue system.

1.5.4 Training

Interviewer training for the main enumeration was undertaken from 11–30 September, 2006. In total, 74 candidates (who comprised 12 teams plus 2 reserve interviewers) were trained. Each team consisted of three female interviewers, one male interviewer, one field editor and one team

supervisor and a nurse/health technician. Training was mostly done by Macro Inc's long-term consultant to the project.

A separate training for the 12 nurses/health technicians was conducted. However, due to the delayed delivery of the blood pressure measuring equipment and the weighing scales, training in how to use this equipment was delayed until the equipment was received in the first week of October.

A few days after the main training, a condensed training for five SINSO staff who would act as field supervisors or office editors/coders was carried out for 2.5 days. However, there was no actual practice on editing/coding due to time constraints.

Another condensed training for reserve interviewers was undertaken immediately after the training for field supervisors/office editors. This was a special training for eight (6 females and 2 males) newly recruited reserve interviewers to replace those not performing well in the field. All the questionnaires, forms and instructions were discussed thoroughly in five days as in the main training, with only one day of mock interviewing but no demonstration interviews.

For these trainings, the same techniques, materials, and equipment were used as in the pre-test training. In addition, a sound system was provided due to the large number of participants.

1.5.5 Fieldwork

As mentioned above, each of the 12 data collection teams comprised one supervisor, one field editor, three female interviewers, one male interviewer, and one nurse/health technician. Five senior staff from SINSO were designated as field coordinators. Data collection started on 9 October 2006. The field enumeration for Honiara and Guadalcanal were first, but without the measurement component of the survey. The teams had to make call backs for the measurements after the health technicians' training on the use of the weighing scale and sphygmomanometer. Data collection continued until April 2007.

The field teams faced several challenges:

1. A considerable number of households and individual respondents refused to be interviewed. The field editors and team supervisors had to make last attempt call-backs to interview problem households and respondents.
2. In Western Province, local health officials campaigned to residents not to cooperate because they were not informed about the survey. A SINSO senior staff visited the province to resolve the issue.
3. Tribal leaders of five EAs did not allow the interviewing team to conduct the survey, resulting in EA non-response.
4. Twelve EAs in Western Province were affected by the tsunami, resulting in missing questionnaires for the entire EA and non-coverage due to exodus of residents.

1.5.6 Data processing

The computer processing of SIDHS data began a few weeks after the fieldwork began. The Macro Inc data processing consultant held a training from 30 October 30 to 10 November 2006. A data processing specialist from SPC, the data processing head from SINSO, and two data processing staff from the Republic of the Marshall Islands attended. The training included how to set up the data entry system, data entry, and how to run the field check tables to monitor data quality and teams' and interviewers' performance.

Completed questionnaires were returned periodically from the field to the SINSO office in Honiara. Data processing began in the first week of November 2006 and was completed in the last week of June 2007. The data processing staff consisted of 2 supervisors from SINSO, 4 questionnaire administrators/coding clerks, and 14 data entry operators. Data were entered using the CSPro computer package. All data were entered twice (100% verification). The concurrent data processing was a distinct advantage for data quality, since SIDHS staff were able to advise

field teams of errors detected during data entry. Upon completion of data entry, final editing and preliminary tabulation were undertaken in the last week of June 2007. However, 33 of the 215 clusters were missing — either not enumerated, completed but destroyed by the tsunami, or refused by tribal leaders. Adjustment for non-response was done for the missing clusters. Sampling weights were then calculated and incorporated into the household and individual records.

1.6 RESULTS OF SURVEY INTERVIEWS

1.6.1 Response rates

Table 1 shows response rates for the 2006/2007 SIDHS. In total, 3,632 households were selected in the sample, of which 3,475 were found occupied at the time of the fieldwork. The shortfall is largely due to households that were away for an extended period of time. Of the existing households, 3,259 were successfully interviewed, yielding a household response rate of 94%.

Among the households interviewed in the survey, 4,409 eligible women were identified, of whom 3,823 were successfully interviewed yielding a response rate of 87%. With regard to male survey results, 2,598 eligible men were identified, of whom 2,056 were successfully interviewed, yielding a response rate of 79%. Response rates are lower in the urban sample than in the rural sample, especially for women. Response rates were lowest in Honiara and highest in Malaita.

The principal reason for non-response among eligible women and men was a failure to find individuals at home despite repeated visits to the household, followed by refusal to be interviewed. The substantially lower response rate for men reflects the more frequent and longer absence of men from the households.

Table 1.2: Results of the household and individual interviews

Number of households, number of interviews, and response rates, according to residence and region, Solomon Islands 2006/2007

Result	Residence		Region					Total
	Urban	Rural	Honiara	Guadal-canal	Malaita	Western	Other provinces	
Household interviews								
Households selected	1,177	2,455	1,077	755	580	460	760	3,632
Households occupied	1,105	2,370	1,008	716	568	444	739	3,475
Households interviewed	1,008	2,251	917	666	555	412	709	3,259
Household response rate	91.2	95.0	91.0	93.0	97.7	92.8	95.9	93.8
Women's interviews								
Number of eligible women	1,844	2,565	1,715	752	644	467	831	4,409
Number of eligible women interviewed	1,463	2,360	1,363	673	610	400	777	3,823
Eligible women response rate	79.3	92.0	79.5	89.5	94.7	85.7	93.5	86.7
Men's interviews								
Number of eligible men	1,143	1,455	1,071	411	367	266	483	2,598
Number of eligible men interviewed	841	1,215	796	334	316	206	404	2,056
Eligible men response rate	73.6	83.5	74.3	81.3	86.1	77.4	83.6	79.1

CHAPTER 2 HOUSEHOLD POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

In the following chapters of this report, a number of demographic and health-related topics (e.g. respondent characteristics, fertility, contraceptive behaviour, infant and child mortality) are viewed across different sub-groups of the population. One focus of this chapter is to describe the environment in which survey respondents live. This description shows general characteristics of the population such as age-sex structure, literacy and education, household arrangements (e.g. headship, size) and housing facilities (sources of water, sanitation facilities, dwelling characteristics and household possessions). A distinction is made between urban and rural settings where many of these indicators usually differ.

Besides providing the background for better understanding of many social and demographic phenomena discussed in the following chapters, this general description is useful for assessing the level of economic and social development of the population.

2.1 HOUSEHOLD POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

The 2006/2007 SIDHS included a household questionnaire that was used to elicit information on the socioeconomic characteristics of usual residents and visitors who had spent the previous night in the selected households. Table 2.1 shows the reported distributions of the household population in five-year age groups, by sex and urban-rural residence. Data show that there are just slightly more men (8,500) than women (8,365), with men constituting 50.4% of the population and women constituting 49.6%. The sex composition of the population does not show significant variation by urban-rural residence, in fact the proportions were same at 50.4% for men and 49.6% for women.

Table 2.1: Household population by age, sex, and residence

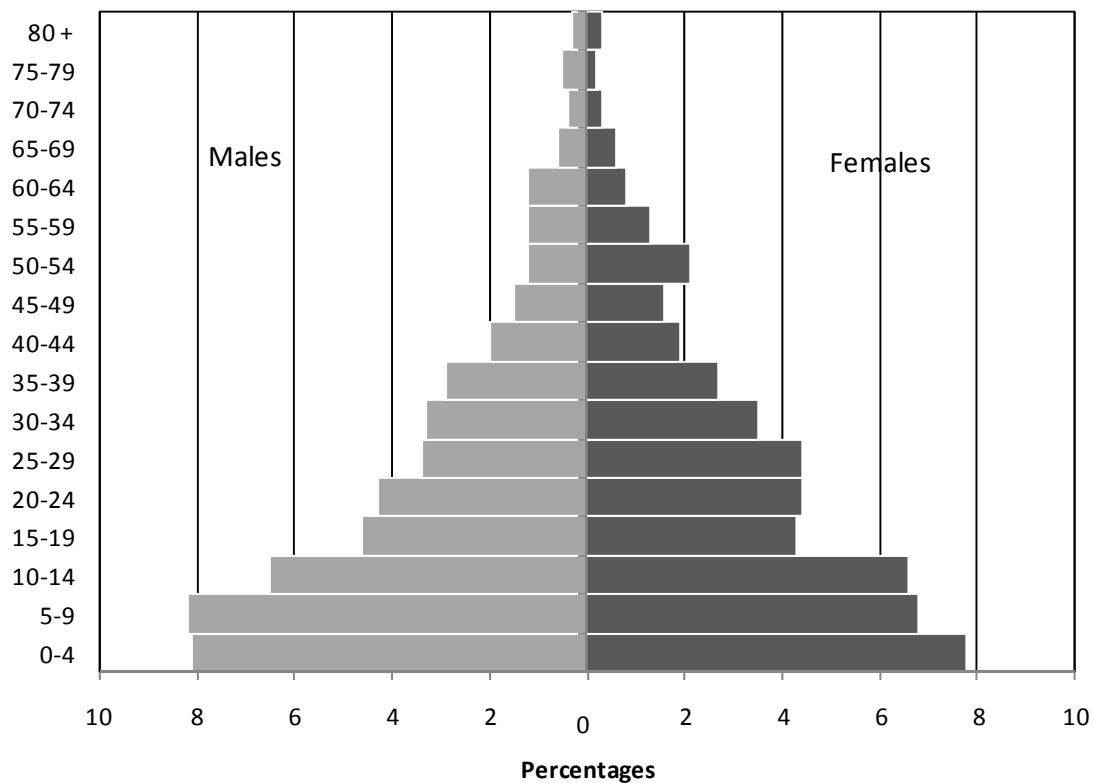
Percent distribution of the de facto household population by five-year age groups, according to sex and residence, Solomon Islands 2007

Age	Urban			Rural			Male	Female	Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			
<5	12.3	13.8	13.0	16.7	16.0	16.4	16.1	15.7	15.9
5-9	13.8	12.0	13.0	16.6	13.9	15.3	16.2	13.7	14.9
10-14	9.8	11.2	10.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.0	13.2	13.1
15-19	10.4	11.2	10.8	8.9	8.3	8.6	9.1	8.7	8.9
20-24	12.8	13.0	12.9	7.7	8.2	8.0	8.4	8.9	8.7
25-29	9.6	9.8	9.7	6.3	8.6	7.5	6.8	8.8	7.8
30-34	8.8	8.7	8.8	6.1	6.8	6.5	6.5	7.1	6.8
35-39	7.1	6.2	6.7	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.7	5.5	5.6
40-44	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.0
45-49	3.2	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.1
50-54	2.9	3.7	3.3	2.3	4.3	3.3	2.4	4.2	3.3
55-59	1.7	1.6	1.6	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.5
60-64	1.5	0.9	1.2	2.6	1.7	2.2	2.4	1.6	2.0
65-69	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.2
70-74	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.8
75-79	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.9	0.4	0.7
80+	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6
Don't know/missing	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	1,278	1,190	2,467	7,222	7,176	14,400	8,500	8,365	16,867

The table further depicts Solomon Islands as having a young population, with a large proportion of the population being in the younger age groups. The population under age 20 constitutes 53% of

the total population. The older age groups are very small in comparison, as can be seen in the population pyramid in Figure 2.1. In general, the population pyramid reflects a broad base pattern, characteristic of Solomon Islands and over half of its population being young. This type of age structure has a built-in momentum for the growth of the country's population. When the young population eventually reaches reproductive age, the result will be a high population growth rate for some years to come.

Figure 2.1: Population pyramid, Solomon Islands 2007



2.2 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Table 2.2 presents the headship and composition of households in Solomon Islands. Only one in ten households is headed by women while eight in ten households are headed by men. The proportion of female-headed households is the same in both urban and rural areas (i.e. 13%).

Close to 2 in every 10 households have one to two members. One- to two-member households are more likely to be found in rural areas (15.9% percent) than in urban areas (8.1%). Excluding household sizes of seven to nine (or more) members, rural areas have consistently higher percentages of households that contain between one to six members than urban areas. In urban areas, 20% of households have nine or more members, compared with about 9% in rural areas, indicating the need for housing in urban areas. Table 2.2 also shows that the mean household size is 5.3 people, which is slightly lower than the figure of 6.3 people obtained from the 1999 population and housing census (SINSO 1999). The mean household size is larger in urban areas (6.3 people) than in rural areas (5.2 people).

2.3 FOSTERHOOD AND ORPHANHOOD

In Solomon Islands, a person younger than age 18 years is defined as a child. Information on fosterhood and orphanhood of children is presented in Table 2.2. Nearly three in ten Solomon Islands households included one or more children who stayed with neither their natural father nor

their natural mother. A slightly higher percentage of households in urban areas (30%) have foster children than in rural areas (27%). Nearly one in ten (6.4%) Solomon Islands households have orphans. There are more households with single orphans (5%) than with double orphans (1%), and there are no major variations between rural and urban areas regarding households with orphans.

Table 2.2: Household composition

Percent distribution of households by sex of head of household and by household size; mean size of household, and percentage of households with orphans and foster children under age 18, according to residence, Solomon Islands 2007

Characteristic	Residence		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Household headship			
Male	86.7	87.4	87.3
Female	13.3	12.6	12.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of usual members			
1	4.8	6.7	6.5
2	3.3	9.2	8.5
3	9.5	11.4	11.2
4	11.7	13.7	13.5
5	13.3	15.5	15.3
6	14.7	14.9	14.9
7	12.6	11.4	11.6
8	10.0	8.3	8.5
9+	20.1	8.8	10.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean size of households	6.3	5.2	5.3
Percentage of households with orphans and foster children under age 18			
Foster children ¹	29.8	26.7	27.1
Double orphans	0.9	1.0	1.0
Single orphans	4.4	5.5	5.4
Foster and/or orphan children	32.2	29.6	29.9
Number of households	387	2,872	3,259

Note: Table is based on *de jure* household members (i.e. usual residents).

¹ Foster children are those under age 18 living in households with neither their mother nor their father present.

The distribution of *de jure* children under age 18 by living arrangements and survival status of parents and related information are presented in Table 2.3. About seven out of ten (69.5%) Solomon Islands children younger than age 18 years live with both parents, 10.0% live with their mother but not with father even though the father is alive somewhere. Both male and female children aged 0–9 years living in either rural or urban areas are more likely to be found living with their mothers. Moreover, children living with their mothers are almost equally distributed in all wealth quintiles from lowest to highest. In contrast, those children younger than age 18 years living with their fathers is only 1%, and these are likely to be in the age range of 10–14 years living in urban areas and from second and the highest household wealth quintiles. There is very little difference in the number of boys and girls in this living arrangement.

Table 2.3: Children's living arrangements and orphanhood

Percent distribution of *de jure* children under age 18 years by living arrangements and survival status of parents, the percentage of children not living with a biological parent, and the percentage of children with one or both parents dead, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Living with mother but not with father			Living with father but not with mother		Not living with either parent					Total	Percentage not living with a biological parent	Percentage with one or both parents dead	Number of children	
	Living with both parents	Father alive	Father dead	Mother alive	Mother dead	Both alive	Only father alive	Only mother alive	Both dead	Missing information on father/ mother					
Age															
0–4	72.3	15.5	1.0	0.5	0.5	8.3	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.6	100.0	8.5	1.8	2,677	
<2	72.9	18.1	1.5	0.2	0.1	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	100.0	5.2	1.6	1,085	
2–4	71.9	13.8	0.7	0.7	0.9	10.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	1.3	100.0	10.8	1.9	1,592	
5–9	71.1	9.1	1.4	1.2	0.3	14.0	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.5	100.0	15.4	3.1	2,547	
10–14	69.1	6.9	2.0	1.9	0.4	15.5	0.4	1.3	0.9	1.5	100.0	18.2	5.1	2,255	
15–17	58.4	3.8	3.9	1.2	0.6	25.1	0.4	1.8	0.6	4.1	100.0	28.0	7.3	961	
Sex															
Male	69.1	10.3	1.4	1.3	0.5	14.0	0.4	0.8	0.5	1.8	100.0	15.6	3.6	4,361	
Female	69.9	9.6	2.1	1.1	0.3	13.8	0.2	0.7	0.5	1.8	100.0	15.1	3.8	4,078	
Residence															
Urban	69.8	7.8	1.5	2.5	0.4	13.5	0.2	0.5	0.6	3.3	100.0	14.7	3.2	1,042	
Rural	69.4	10.2	1.7	1.0	0.4	13.9	0.3	0.8	0.5	1.6	100.0	15.5	3.8	7,398	
Region															
Honiara	72.0	7.5	1.1	2.3	0.6	11.5	0.3	0.6	0.4	3.7	100.0	12.8	3.1	732	
Guadalcanal	77.1	7.1	2.5	1.4	0.3	9.0	0.5	0.5	0.2	1.5	100.0	10.1	3.9	1,504	
Malaita	78.8	7.1	2.0	1.5	0.2	7.7	0.3	0.7	0.5	1.2	100.0	9.2	3.7	2,045	
Western	58.5	15.1	1.1	1.1	0.8	19.1	0.0	0.2	0.8	3.2	100.0	20.1	3.1	999	
Other provinces	62.7	12.1	1.4	0.7	0.5	19.1	0.4	1.1	0.5	1.5	100.0	21.1	3.9	3,160	
Wealth quintile															
Lowest	73.0	10.8	1.4	0.9	0.2	10.6	0.4	0.9	0.5	1.3	100.0	12.3	3.3	1,837	
Second	71.9	8.4	1.9	1.4	1.0	11.8	0.5	1.1	0.5	1.5	100.0	13.9	5.2	1,741	
Middle	66.7	10.7	2.0	0.8	0.3	16.7	0.1	0.1	0.6	2.0	100.0	17.5	3.1	1,696	
Fourth	66.0	10.5	1.7	0.9	0.3	16.5	0.2	0.9	0.6	2.4	100.0	18.2	3.6	1,601	
Highest	69.3	9.2	1.5	2.0	0.3	14.2	0.4	0.7	0.3	2.1	100.0	15.6	3.2	1,565	
Total <15	70.9	10.7	1.4	1.2	0.4	12.4	0.3	0.6	0.5	1.5	100.0	13.8	3.2	7,478	
Total <18	69.5	9.9	1.7	1.2	0.4	13.9	0.3	0.7	0.5	1.8	100.0	15.4	3.7	8,440	

Note: Table is based on *de jure* members (i.e. usual residents).

The 2006/2007 SIDHS results from Table 2.3 also shows that Solomon Islands children younger than age 18 years and not living with either parent constitute about one in seven (13.9%) of children. These are likely to be in the 2–17 years age range living in both rural and urban areas, and in the middle to highest wealth quintile households. There is very little variation by sex.

Overall, roughly one-sixth (15%) of children do not live with their biological parents. This figure is likely to increase as the age of the child increases and is equally likely to be the case in both rural and urban areas. The variation by region ranges from 9–21%. Meanwhile, about 4% of these children have either one or both parents' dead.

2.4 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Increased access to safe drinking water results in improved health outcomes in the form of reduced cases of water-borne diseases such as dysentery and cholera. Information was collected in the 2006/2007 SIDHS about certain characteristics of household drinking water, including source of drinking water, time taken to collect water, household members who usually collect the water, water treatment prior to drinking, and type of sanitation facility.

Table 2.4 shows that 83% of households use improved water sources.² In urban areas, 9 in every 10 households have access to an improved water source while 8 in every 10 households have access to an improved water source in rural areas. Piped water into a dwelling/yard/plot (28%) and public tap/standpipe (28%) are the two major sources of drinking water (a combined total of 56%), while rainwater (18%) and non-improved water source (16%) are the next two important sources (with a combined total of 34%). These four sources combined are used by about 90% of households. Other water sources such as tube well or borehole, protected dug well and protected spring, unprotected dug well, unprotected spring and surface water accounts for only 25%. The percentage of households with access to piped water into a dwelling/yard/plot is much higher in urban areas (60%) than in rural areas (24%). However, public tap/standpipe water source is more popular in rural areas (30%) than in urban areas (11%). These results complement the findings of the 1999 Population and Housing Census.

Regarding the amount of time taken to draw water, findings show major urban-rural differences. In rural areas, 26% of households take less than 30 minutes to obtain drinking water, compared with only 8.1% of urban households. Similarly, most rural households (5.1%) still take 30 minutes or longer to make a round trip to and from a drinking water source compared with only 3.2% in urban areas. The above differences may have been determined by the result that 88% of households in urban areas have water on the premises compared with only 67% of households in rural areas.

The 2006/2007 SIDHS findings also show that most of the burden of fetching drinking water rests on women aged 15 and over. Solomon Islands children (girls and boys under age 15) are less likely to fetch water (only about 2.9% of households). It should be noted that households could report more than one person who usually collects water. In rural areas, women collect water in a higher percentage of households than other family members under age 15 (23%) compared with only 6.5% for urban women where most households have water on the premises.

Water from an improved source can be contaminated at collection, during transportation, and during storage. Information was collected on whether or not water was treated prior to drinking. The majority of households (84%) do not use any appropriate treatment method on their drinking water while only about 13% of households do use an appropriate treatment method. The most commonly reported treatment method is boiling. Only one in every ten households boiled water prior to drinking. This method is practiced more by urban households (29%) than by rural households (9%).

² Improved water sources include piped water, public tap, tube well or borehole, protected dug well, or spring and rainwater. It should be noted that the definition of improved water sources used in Solomon Islands differs from the international definition used here in that it excludes rainwater.

Table 2.4: Household drinking water

Percent distribution of households and de jure population by source, time to collect, and person who usually collects drinking water; and percentage of households and de jure population by treatment of drinking water, according to residence, Solomon Islands 2007

Characteristic	Households			Population		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Source of drinking water						
Improved source	93.7	81.7	83.1	93.7	82.6	84.1
Piped water into dwelling/yard/plot	60.3	23.8	28.2	61.0	24.4	29.6
Public tap/standpipe	11.1	30.2	27.9	10.6	30.9	28.0
Tube well or borehole	0.2	0.9	0.8	0.3	0.8	0.8
Protected dug well	0.2	4.2	3.8	0.3	4.4	3.8
Protected spring	2.2	5.1	4.7	2.0	4.7	4.3
Rainwater	19.7	17.5	17.7	19.5	17.4	17.7
Non-improved source	5.7	17.8	16.4	5.9	17.0	15.4
Unprotected dug well	0.1	1.2	1.1	0.1	1.3	1.2
Unprotected spring	3.0	7.7	7.1	3.3	7.5	6.9
Tanker truck/cart with small tank	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Surface water	1.9	8.4	7.6	1.9	7.7	6.9
Bottled water, improved source for cooking/washing ¹	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0
Other	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Missing	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage using any improved source of drinking water						
	94.1	81.7	83.2	94.0	82.6	84.2
Time to obtain drinking water (round trip)						
Water on premises	87.9	66.8	69.3	88.2	67.7	70.6
Less than 30 minutes	8.1	26.2	24.1	7.8	24.9	22.5
30 minutes or longer	3.2	5.1	4.9	3.5	5.8	5.5
Don't know/missing	0.8	1.8	1.7	0.5	1.6	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Person who usually collects drinking water						
Adult female 15+	6.5	23.0	21.0	6.3	23.5	21.1
Adult male 15+	1.6	5.5	5.0	1.4	3.2	2.9
Female child under age 15	0.6	2.1	1.9	0.6	2.6	2.3
Male child under age 15	0.1	0.8	0.8	0.1	1.2	1.0
Other	3.2	1.2	1.5	3.4	1.4	1.7
Water on premises	87.9	66.8	69.3	88.2	67.7	70.6
Missing	0.1	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Water treatment prior to drinking²						
Boiled	29.1	8.9	11.3	29.8	8.3	11.3
Bleach/chlorine	0.9	0.0	0.1	1.1	0.0	0.2
Strained through cloth	2.1	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.6
Ceramic, sand or other filter	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1
Solar disinfection	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1
Other	4.5	1.7	2.1	4.8	1.7	2.1
No treatment	64.8	86.8	84.2	64.1	87.4	84.1
Percentage using an appropriate treatment method³						
	31.2	10.3	12.8	31.8	9.7	12.8
Number	387	2,872	3,259	2,450	14,854	17,303

¹ Because the quality of bottled water is unknown, households using bottled water for drinking are classified as using an improved or non-improved source according to their water source for cooking and washing.

² Respondents may report multiple treatment methods so the sum of treatment may exceed 100%.

³ Appropriate water treatment methods include boiling, bleaching, straining, filtering, and solar disinfecting.

Poor sanitation coupled with unsafe water sources increases the risk of water-borne diseases and illnesses due to poor hygiene. This has contributed immensely to the disease burden in Solomon Islands. Households without proper toilet facilities are more exposed to the risk of diseases such as dysentery, diarrhoea, and typhoid fever than those with improved sanitation facilities. Table 2.5 shows that approximately two in ten households use improved toilet/latrine facilities compared with about eight in ten households that use non-improved toilet/latrine facilities. Households with improved toilet facilities of flush/pour flush to septic tank system account for only about 8% and mostly in urban areas (52%) while those with pit latrine with slab account for a little over 4% and are again more likely to be in the urban areas (13%). Overall, 66% of households in Solomon Islands have no toilet facilities of any kind. This problem is more common in rural areas, where a staggering 74% of households have no toilet facilities, compared with urban areas where only 5% of households have no facilities. The 2006/2007 SIDHS findings support what was found in the 1999 Population and Housing Census.

Table 2.5: Household sanitation facilities

Percent distribution of households and de jure population by type of toilet/latrine facilities, according to residence, Solomon Islands 2007

Type of toilet/latrine facility	Households			Population		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Improved, not shared facility						
Flush/pour flush to septic tank	51.7	1.9	7.8	56.1	1.7	9.4
Flush/pour flush to pit latrine	5.8	1.2	1.7	5.5	1.4	2.0
Ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrine	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.5
Pit latrine with slab	12.6	3.1	4.3	13.5	3.2	4.7
Non-improved facility						
Any facility shared with other households	16.8	6.0	7.3	12.7	6.2	7.1
Flush/pour flush not to sewer/septic tank/pit latrine	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Pit latrine without slab/open pit	1.9	6.1	5.6	1.5	5.9	5.2
Bucket	3.4	0.9	1.2	3.3	0.7	1.1
Hanging toilet/hanging latrine	0.0	1.5	1.3	0.0	1.7	1.4
No facility/bush/field/beach	4.8	73.8	65.6	4.1	73.3	63.5
Other	0.1	3.4	3.0	0.1	3.8	3.3
Missing	1.2	0.4	0.5	1.2	0.4	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	387	2,872	3,259	2,450	14,854	17,303

Table 2.6 provides information that relates to other characteristics of dwellings, such as whether or not the household has electricity, the main construction materials used for the floor, the number of rooms used for sleeping, and information on type of power/fuel used for cooking and location of cooking.

Only 13% of households in Solomon Islands have access to electricity. The result is similar but just slightly lower than that of the 1999 Population and Housing Census (16%). As expected, access to electricity is much higher in urban areas (69%) than in rural areas (a mere 5%). Indeed, findings show that 9 in 10 rural households do not have access to electricity.

The type of material used for the floor may be viewed as an indicator of the quality of housing (a wealth dimension) as well as an indicator of health risk. Some floor materials such as earth and sand pose a health problem because they can act as breeding grounds for pests and may be a source of dust. They are also more difficult to keep clean.

Overall, over 5 out of every 10 households (55%) have floors made of wood/planks. Wood/planks are almost equally used by urban (54%) and rural (55%) households. Palm/bamboo is the next most commonly used flooring type, of which 2 in 10 households have floors made of this material and that this flooring type is more popular in the rural households (23%) than urban households (0.3%). On the other hand, only about 7% of households have earth or sand floors, with rural

households accounting for the majority of households (8%), compared with only 0.6% of the urban households.

The number of rooms used for sleeping gives an indication of the extent of crowding in households. Crowding in one sleeping room increases the risks of infection by diseases. In Solomon Islands, a room that sleeps more than two people is considered to be overcrowded. Overall, about one-fifth of all households (19.4%) use only one room for sleeping. A higher percentage of household members in rural areas (21%) sleep in one room than in urban areas (11%). Households in urban areas are more likely to use two or more rooms for sleeping than households in rural areas.

Smoke from solid fuels for cooking (e.g. charcoal, wood, and other biomass fuels) is a major cause of respiratory infections. The type of fuel used for cooking, the location where food is cooked, and the type of stove used are all related to indoor air quality and the degree to which household members are exposed to the risk of respiratory infections and other diseases. A little over 1 in 10 (13%) Solomon Islands households cook in the same house, about eight in ten (82%) use a separate building, while only 4% cook outdoors. Rural households are more likely (86%) than urban households (56%) to cook in a separate building, although cooking in a separate building is also still common in urban households (as was revealed by the DHS).

Cooking fuel affects air quality for household members. Clean fuel is not affordable in most cases and most households resort to using solid fuels that emit a lot of smoke. As a result, household members are likely to be exposed to air pollution. Reducing the proportion of the population relying on solid fuels is a Millennium Development Goal. In Solomon Islands, this proportion is 92%.

Table 2.6: Household characteristics

Percent distribution of households and de jure population by housing characteristics and percentage using solid fuel for cooking; and among those using solid fuels, percent distribution by type of fire/stove, according to residence, Solomon Islands 2007

Housing characteristic	Households			Population		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Electricity						
Yes	68.6	5.4	12.9	70.6	5.1	14.4
No	31.2	93.8	86.4	29.2	94.1	84.9
Missing	0.1	0.8	0.7	0.2	0.8	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Flooring material						
Earth, sand	0.6	7.6	6.8	0.4	7.0	6.0
Dung	0.0	3.0	2.6	0.0	2.6	2.3
Wood/planks	53.9	55.4	55.2	54.2	55.4	55.3
Palm/bamboo	0.3	22.9	20.2	0.4	22.9	19.7
Parquet or polished wood	15.9	4.8	6.2	15.4	5.3	6.8
Vinyl or asphalt strips	1.0	0.2	0.3	1.1	0.2	0.4
Ceramic tiles	1.0	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.2
Cement	20.9	3.4	5.5	21.1	3.4	5.9
Carpet	5.6	0.8	1.4	5.7	1.2	1.9
Other	0.7	1.4	1.3	0.9	1.4	1.3
Missing	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Rooms used for sleeping						
One	11.3	20.5	19.4	7.6	16.4	15.1
Two	43.6	38.8	39.4	41.6	38.3	38.8
Three or more	37.5	35.8	36.0	43.8	40.4	40.9
Missing	7.6	4.9	5.2	7.1	4.8	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2.6 (continued)

Housing characteristic	Households			Population		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Place for cooking						
In the house	34.2	10.1	12.9	34.0	9.3	12.8
In a separate building	55.5	85.5	82.0	55.0	87.9	83.2
Outdoors	9.4	3.1	3.9	10.1	1.8	2.9
Other	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
Missing	0.6	1.1	1.0	0.4	1.0	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Cooking fuel						
Electricity	1.3	0.2	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.3
LPG/natural gas/biogas	41.4	2.5	7.2	39.0	1.9	7.1
Coal/lignite	1.6	2.3	2.2	1.5	2.5	2.4
Charcoal	47.4	93.9	88.4	49.5	94.5	88.1
Straw/shrubs/grass	7.9	0.5	1.4	8.6	0.6	1.8
Agricultural crop	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0
No food cooked in household	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1
Other	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
Missing	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percentage using solid fuel for cooking ¹	57.0	96.8	92.1	59.8	97.7	92.3
Number of households/population	387	2,872	3,259	2,450	14,854	17,303
Type of fire/stove among households using solid fuel¹						
Closed stove with chimney	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Open fire/stove with chimney	1.9	2.7	2.7	2.0	2.8	2.7
Open fire/stove with hood	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.2	2.2	2.1
Open fire/stove without chimney or hood	93.4	93.6	93.6	93.0	93.5	93.4
Other	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Missing	2.7	1.5	1.6	3.7	1.5	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of households/population using solid fuel	221	2,780	3,000	1,465	14,510	15,975

LPG = liquid petroleum gas

¹ Includes coal/lignite, charcoal, wood/straw/shrubs/grass, agricultural crops, and animal dung [list categories included in the country questionnaire]

Findings in Table 2.6 also show that charcoal is the fuel used for cooking in 88% of all households, while LPG/natural gas/biogas is used in 7% of households. Electricity is used by only 0.4% of all households while coal/lignite is used in 2% of all households. Use of charcoal fuel in rural areas is almost universal with over 9 out of 10 households using it, while in urban areas nearly 5 out of 10 households (47%) use this type of fuel.

Chimneys help reduce the exposure of household members to cooking fire smoke. Results show that 94% of households use open fires/stoves without chimneys for cooking, which waste energy and expose household members to harmful smoke.

2.5 HOUSEHOLD ASSETS

The 2006/2007 SIDHS also collected information on household ownership of selected assets that are in themselves believed to have a strong association with poverty levels. Some of these can be used to measure household welfare when combined with other indicators to generate a wealth index. Information was collected on household ownership of a radio and television as a measure of access to mass media; telephone ownership (both mobile and non-mobile telephones) as an indicator of access to an efficient means of communication; refrigerator ownership as an indication of the capacity for hygienic storage of foods; and ownership of a means of transportation (bicycle, motorcycle, boat with or without a motor, or private car or truck) as a sign

of the household's level of access to public services and markets as well as exposure to developments in other areas. In addition, ownership of agricultural land shows a household's access to means of production. Ownership of farm animals such as local cattle, exotic/cross cattle, horses/donkeys/mules, goats, sheep, pigs, or chickens indicates the level of assets a household possesses that could be used to meet household demands.

Table 2.7 shows that 55% of households in Solomon Islands own a radio; urban households are more likely than rural households to own a radio (80% and 52%, respectively). Overall, 5% of all households own a television, and as expected, urban households are more likely than rural households to own a television set (38% and 0.9%, respectively). About 4% of households own a mobile telephone while 2% own a non-mobile telephone and almost all these telephones are likely to be owned by urban households. Regarding transport, about 9% of households own bicycles and these are more likely to be found in urban households (10%) than in rural households (8.5%). Meanwhile, 14% of urban households own a car or truck compared with less than 1% of rural households. In contrast, about 9% of rural households own a boat with a motor compared with 6% of urban households. Similarly, 7% of rural households own fishing gear compared with 3% of urban households.

Nearly 2 out of 10 households (18.4%) own agricultural land; 29% are owned by urban households while 17% are owned by rural households. A little over 4 out of 10 households (43%) own farm animals and, as expected, 48% of these households are in rural areas while 9% of households are in urban areas. Pigs, chickens and cattle were some of the most commonly owned types of livestock, each owned by 43% of all households.

Table 2.7: Household possessions

Percentage of households and de jure population possessing various household effects, means of transportation, agricultural land and livestock/farm animals by residence, Solomon Islands 2007

Possession	Households			Population		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Household effects						
Radio	79.9	51.7	55.1	81.4	54.7	58.5
Television	38.3	0.9	5.3	43.6	1.3	7.3
Mobile telephone	24.3	0.7	3.5	27.0	0.8	4.5
Non-mobile telephone	15.0	0.2	2.0	16.5	0.3	2.6
Refrigerator	35.9	0.6	4.8	38.0	0.5	5.8
Bed	70.8	45.1	48.2	71.8	45.9	49.6
Dining set	52.6	12.3	17.1	55.1	13.7	19.5
Dressing table	40.7	6.1	10.2	42.7	7.2	12.2
Lounge chair	41.9	6.7	10.9	46.2	7.2	12.7
Pressure lamp	20.7	19.6	19.7	22.7	19.7	20.1
Cooking gas	53.5	5.2	10.9	54.1	5.2	12.1
Microwave oven	8.2	0.3	1.2	9.2	0.2	1.5
Sewing machine	44.9	31.8	33.3	49.5	34.7	36.8
Freezer	23.1	0.2	3.0	23.5	0.2	3.5
Washing machine	5.1	0.5	1.0	5.0	0.6	1.2
Video set	46.8	3.0	8.2	51.4	3.4	10.2
Chainsaw	6.2	7.6	7.4	6.9	8.6	8.3
Carpet/floor rug	59.5	15.8	21.0	60.8	16.6	22.9
Fishing net	2.9	7.2	6.7	3.0	8.3	7.5
Means of transport						
Bicycle	10.0	8.5	8.7	11.1	9.4	9.6
Animal drawn cart	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.5
Motorcycle/scooter	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
Car/truck	14.1	0.7	2.3	16.7	0.8	3.1
Boat with a motor	6.2	8.6	8.4	7.0	9.1	8.8
Ownership of agricultural land	29.1	17.0	18.4	32.4	18.0	20.0
Ownership of farm animals¹	8.9	48.1	43.4	10.0	51.5	45.6
Number	387	2,872	3,259	2,450	14,854	17,303

¹ cattle, cows, bulls, horses, donkeys, goats, sheep or chickens

2.6 WEALTH QUINTILES

The 2006/2007 SIDHS did not collect information on household income or consumption. However, information on household assets is used to create an index representing the wealth of households interviewed. The wealth index is a proxy for long-term standard of living of the household. Household assets used to calculate the wealth index include consumer items such as a refrigerator, television and car; dwelling characteristics such as floor material; type of drinking water source; toilet facilities; and other characteristics that are related to wealth.

To construct the wealth index, each household asset for which information was collected is assigned a weight or factor score generated through principal components analysis. The resulting asset scores are standardised in relation to a standard normal distribution with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one.

Each household is assigned a standardised score for each asset, where the score differs depending on whether or not the household owned that asset (or, in the case of sleeping arrangements, the number of people per room). These scores are summed by household, and individuals are ranked according to the total score of the household in which they reside. The sample is then divided into population quintiles (i.e. five groups with the same number of individuals in each). The 20% of the population with the lowest total asset scores become the individuals in the lowest wealth quintile; the next 20% become the members of the second wealth quintile, and so forth. At the national level, approximately 20% of the household population is in each wealth quintile.

In other words, the wealth index measures the standard of living of a household relative to other households in Solomon Islands. The wealth quintile of a household does not indicate whether or not the household lives in poverty according to a Solomon Islands poverty definition (an experience of hardship). Rather, it indicates that an individual living in a household in the second wealth quintile has better socioeconomic status than someone in the lowest wealth quintile and worse socioeconomic status than someone in the middle wealth quintile.

In defining the wealth quintiles, a single asset index is developed on the basis of data from the entire country sample and used in all the tabulations presented. Separate asset indices are not prepared for rural and urban population groups on the basis of rural or urban data, respectively.

Wealth quintiles are expressed in terms of quintiles of individuals in the population, rather than quintiles of individuals at risk for any one health or population indicator. Thus, for example, the quintile rates for infant mortality refer to the infant mortality rates per 1,000 live births among all people in the population quintile concerned, as distinct from quintiles of live births or newly born infants, who constitute the only members of the population at risk of mortality during infancy.

The assets index has been found to be highly comparable to both poverty rates and gross domestic product per capita for India, and against expenditure data from household surveys in Nepal, Pakistan and Indonesia (Filmer and Pritchett 1998) and Guatemala (Rutstein 1999).

Table 2.8: Wealth quintiles

Percent distribution of the de jure population by wealth quintiles, and the Gini coefficient according to residence and region, Solomon Islands 2007

Residence/region	Wealth quintile					Total	Number of population
	Lowest	Second	Middle	Fourth	Highest		
Residence							
Urban	0.6	1.1	3.4	13.0	81.9	100.0	2,450
Rural	23.2	23.1	22.7	21.1	9.9	100.0	14,854
Region							
Honiara	0.2	1.5	2.3	10.8	85.2	100.0	1,784
Guadalcanal	26.1	16.5	19.2	20.9	17.2	100.0	2,934
Malaita	21.2	22.8	23.6	20.4	12.0	100.0	3,969
Western	9.0	12.7	20.1	27.8	30.4	100.0	2,045
Other provinces	25.4	27.1	22.9	19.3	5.3	100.0	6,572
Total	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.1	100.0	17,303

Table 2.8 shows the distribution of the de jure household population into five wealth levels (quintiles) based on the wealth index by residence. These distributions indicate the degree to which wealth is evenly (or unevenly) distributed by geographic areas. The findings indicate that wealth is concentrated in urban areas. Among the population in urban areas, 82% is in the highest wealth quintile, compared with 10% of the household population in rural areas. About 95% of the urban population is in the top two (fourth and highest) household wealth quintiles compared with nearly 5 in 10 rural people likely to be found in the last second and lowest household wealth quintiles. These results further confirm other findings that the distribution of wealth is uneven and that poverty is more concentrated in rural areas than in urban areas.

2.7 BIRTH REGISTRATION

It is a human right for a child to know who its parents are and to have a nationality through registration. The registration system in Solomon Islands needs to be formalised with the Ministry of Home Affairs. Currently, only birth registration is done by the Ministry of Health but requires considerable quality control checks to improve proper recording and maintenance. Coverage is good in some provinces while in others more efforts are needed to improve the capture of vital demographic processes. Birth registration is being undertaken in all provinces countrywide. Apart from being the first legal acknowledgment of a child's existence, birth registration is fundamental to the realisation of a number of rights and practical needs, including but not limited to access to health care and immunisation. Birth registration in a well established and functioning system ensures that the country has an up-to-date and reliable database for planning. This is as useful for national level planning as it is for local government bodies that are responsible for maintaining education, health, and other social services for the community.

Table 2.9 shows that about 80% of children are registered in Solomon Islands. There is, in fact, a slight difference in the proportion of children registered in urban areas (70%) than in rural areas (81%). However, there is not much variation in birth registration within household wealth quintiles, ranging from 80% in the lowest quintile to 78% in the highest quintile.

Table 2.9: Birth registration of children under age 5 years

Percentage of de jure children under age 5 years whose births are registered with civil authorities, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Percentage of children whose births are registered			Number of children
	Had a birth certificate	Did not have a birth certificate	Total registered	
Age				
<2	79.2	1.7	80.9	1,085
2-4	77.3	1.7	79.1	1,592
Sex				
Male	77.4	1.7	79.1	1,344
Female	78.8	1.7	80.4	1,333
Residence				
Urban	68.7	1.1	69.8	319
Rural	79.4	1.8	81.1	2,357
Region				
Honiara	61.9	0.6	62.5	232
Guadalcanal	75.9	2.4	78.3	475
Malaita	78.4	3.3	81.8	649
Western	66.4	2.5	68.9	304
Other provinces	86.1	0.4	86.5	1,016
Wealth quintile				
Lowest	79.5	0.3	79.8	645
Second	82.0	2.5	84.5	565
Middle	75.1	2.4	77.5	520
Fourth	76.6	1.7	78.3	502
Highest	76.3	1.9	78.1	445
Total	78.1	1.7	79.8	2,677

2.8 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF HOUSEHOLD POPULATION

Education affects many aspects of life, including individual demographic and health behaviour. Studies have shown that educational level is strongly associated with contraceptive use, fertility, and the general health status, morbidity, and mortality of children. In each household, for all members aged 6 years or older, data were collected on the highest level of education attended and the highest grade completed at that level. Table 2.10.1 shows the distribution of female household members and Table 2.10.2 shows the distribution for male household members aged 6 years and older by the highest level of education attained and the median number of years of education completed, according to background characteristics.

Table 2.10.1: Educational attainment of the female household population

Percent distribution of the de facto female household populations age 6 and over by highest level of schooling attended or completed and median grade completed, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	No education	Some primary	Completed primary ¹	Some secondary	Completed secondary ²	More than secondary	Don't know/missing	Total	Number	Median years completed
Age										
6–9	68.2	26.6	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	5.1	100.0	1,143	0.0
10–14	8.8	83.5	3.9	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.8	100.0	1,106	2.2
15–19	8.3	27.5	19.0	43.1	0.0	0.4	1.7	100.0	727	5.7
20–24	8.6	23.3	19.0	43.1	0.5	4.0	1.3	100.0	746	5.9
25–29	11.2	26.1	31.6	25.0	0.1	4.6	1.6	100.0	736	5.4
30–34	14.1	23.7	41.0	15.4	0.1	5.3	0.5	100.0	592	5.3
35–39	26.0	18.1	40.0	12.3	0.0	2.8	0.8	100.0	459	5.1
40–44	20.4	25.2	38.2	10.4	0.0	5.5	0.3	100.0	325	5.2
45–49	31.3	49.7	8.4	8.1	0.5	1.4	0.7	100.0	264	2.6
50–54	45.4	35.5	9.8	4.4	0.0	0.9	3.9	100.0	352	1.0
55–59	37.0	50.5	7.9	1.2	0.0	1.0	2.4	100.0	214	1.5
60–64	50.0	33.9	4.6	1.0	0.0	2.1	8.4	100.0	136	0.0
65+	62.2	30.1	3.2	0.4	0.0	0.6	3.4	100.0	243	0.0
Residence										
Urban	18.1	27.4	14.8	30.1	0.4	6.6	2.6	100.0	1,025	5.3
Rural	28.4	38.2	17.3	12.7	0.0	1.2	2.1	100.0	6,025	2.7
Region										
Honiara	17.9	26.9	14.8	30.6	0.5	6.5	2.8	100.0	745	5.4
Guadalcanal	30.8	37.8	13.2	14.1	0.0	0.7	3.2	100.0	1,210	2.5
Malaita	38.9	36.7	10.2	10.2	0.0	1.3	2.7	100.0	1,673	1.0
Western	10.2	35.1	29.4	20.5	0.1	2.1	2.6	100.0	844	5.2
Other provinces	25.3	39.3	19.6	12.9	0.1	1.8	1.1	100.0	2,578	3.2
Wealth quintile										
Lowest	38.1	39.9	13.1	7.9	0.0	0.0	1.1	100.0	1,331	1.3
Second	28.0	38.9	18.8	10.3	0.0	0.2	3.8	100.0	1,453	2.8
Middle	27.3	38.9	18.6	12.1	0.0	1.1	1.9	100.0	1,373	2.6
Fourth	25.8	35.6	19.0	15.8	0.0	1.6	2.1	100.0	1,394	3.3
Highest	16.4	30.5	15.1	29.0	0.4	6.7	1.9	100.0	1,499	5.2
Total	26.9	36.6	16.9	15.3	0.1	2.0	2.2	100.0	7,050	3.0

¹ Completed six grades at the primary level.

² Completed seven grades at the secondary level.

Note: Totals include nine women for whom age is missing.

As shown in Table 2.10.1 and Table 2.10.2, the majority of Solomon Islanders had attended school, although many did not complete primary school (about 30% for each sex). Among those who never attended school, slightly more females than males never attended; 26.9% of females aged 6 or older in Solomon Islands had never been to school, compared with 22.8% of males. According to these results, the gender gaps in educational attainment are obvious; favouring males more than females in all categories except for 'completed secondary' attainment level, where both are the same for each sex (0.1%). Females aged 20 and older are less likely to have no education and have attained some secondary education than males aged 20 and older. In contrast, the proportion of individuals aged 6–19 with no education is higher for males than for females.

Overall, levels of educational attainment in the primary level are higher in rural areas than in urban areas while in the secondary levels it is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. The median number of years of schooling is higher in urban areas (5 years) than in rural areas (3 years).

As a result of free education at the primary education level, there is little variation among the different levels of educational attainment in this category with the exception of secondary and

higher. The likelihood of completing secondary and 'more than secondary' level education increases as a household's wealth quintile increases. For example, among females, only 7.9% of those from the poorest households would have some secondary education while 29% of females from the wealthiest households would have some secondary schooling. Similar differences by wealth are also large among males; only 8% of males from the poorest households have 'some secondary' compared with 32% from the wealthiest households.

Table 2.10.2: Educational attainment of the male household population

Percent distribution of the de facto male household populations age 6 and over by highest level of schooling attended or completed and median grade completed, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	No education	Some primary	Completed primary ¹	Some secondary	Completed secondary ²	More than secondary	Don't know/missing	Total	Number	Median years completed
Age										
6-9	74.8	21.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	100.0	1,375	0.0
10-14	10.6	81.5	4.6	1.7	0.0	0.0	1.5	100.0	1,104	2.0
15-19	5.5	33.9	19.9	39.3	0.1	0.7	0.5	100.0	776	5.5
20-24	6.1	16.8	18.7	53.1	0.8	3.5	1.0	100.0	718	7.3
25-29	6.7	13.6	29.3	37.4	0.4	9.8	2.8	100.0	579	6.0
30-34	3.4	19.4	39.2	23.7	0.2	11.8	2.3	100.0	554	5.7
35-39	9.4	15.7	35.0	26.6	0.2	12.2	0.9	100.0	486	5.7
40-44	8.6	20.3	31.0	28.4	0.1	8.9	2.7	100.0	341	5.9
45-49	10.6	41.1	19.7	20.8	0.1	5.5	2.2	100.0	258	5.7
50-54	12.0	57.4	11.8	7.6	0.0	8.7	2.5	100.0	202	5.5
55-59	16.3	49.2	12.1	12.9	0.0	6.7	2.8	100.0	200	5.1
60-64	19.7	49.5	20.4	5.7	0.0	3.9	0.7	100.0	207	4.0
65+	43.9	47.1	2.2	0.8	0.0	3.7	2.3	100.0	309	0.7
Residence										
Urban	14.9	23.8	14.2	33.6	0.8	9.5	3.2	100.0	1,120	5.8
Rural	24.3	36.9	16.5	16.9	0.0	3.4	1.9	100.0	6,013	3.6
Region										
Honiara	13.8	22.6	13.4	36.2	1.1	9.8	3.0	100.0	819	6.2
Guadalcanal	24.0	36.7	14.3	20.0	0.0	1.6	3.4	100.0	1,159	3.5
Malaita	28.8	39.0	12.3	15.3	0.0	2.9	1.7	100.0	1,605	2.4
Western	13.7	36.6	23.9	18.2	0.1	4.5	3.1	100.0	872	5.1
Other provinces	24.5	34.8	17.6	17.2	0.0	4.7	1.2	100.0	2,678	3.8
Wealth quintile										
Lowest	32.3	40.5	15.9	7.8	0.0	2.0	1.6	100.0	1,345	2.2
Second	26.4	37.0	17.3	15.4	0.0	2.3	1.5	100.0	1,352	3.2
Middle	22.9	37.8	15.1	19.2	0.1	3.4	1.4	100.0	1,439	3.6
Fourth	20.7	32.8	18.7	21.2	0.0	4.4	2.3	100.0	1,459	4.9
Highest	13.4	27.2	14.1	32.2	0.6	9.1	3.5	100.0	1,537	5.8
Total	22.8	34.9	16.2	19.5	0.1	4.3	2.1	100.0	7,133	4.0

¹ Completed six grades at the primary level.

² Completed seven grades at the secondary level.

Note: Total includes 23 men for whom age is missing.

The likelihood of reaching ‘more than secondary level of education’ is much greater among the wealthiest Solomon Islanders than those from poorer households. Nine percent of males from the wealthiest households have ‘more than secondary level of education’ compared with 2–4% of males from the remaining wealth quintiles. A similar pattern is observed for women, with 7% of females from the wealthiest households and just 0–2% of those from less wealthy households having attained ‘more than secondary level of education’.

2.8.1 Primary school attendance ratios

Solomon Islands uses a 6-6-4 formal education system, which means six years of primary school, a maximum of six years of secondary school, and four years of post secondary/university/tertiary. The official age ranges for these levels are 6–13 years, 14–17 years, and 18–21 years, respectively.

The net attendance ratio (NAR) for the primary level is the percentage of primary school-age population (aged 6–13) that is attending primary school. Overall, the primary school NAR is only 65.4% in Solomon Islands (see Table 2.11). In urban areas, 72% of children aged 6-13 attend primary school compared with 65% in rural areas. Interestingly, there is a slight difference in the primary NAR by sex, which is 69% for females and 63% for males.

Table 2.11: School attendance ratios

Net attendance ratio (NAR) and gross attendance ratio (GAR) for the de facto household population by sex and level of schooling; and the gender parity index (GPI), according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Net attendance ratio ¹				Gross attendance ratio ²			
	Male	Female	Total	Gender Parity Index ³	Male	Female	Total	Gender Parity Index ³
PRIMARY SCHOOL								
Residence								
Urban	69.1	76.0	72.1	1.10	91.9	113.4	101.2	1.23
Rural	61.5	67.8	64.5	1.10	101.6	103.1	102.3	1.02
Region								
Honiara	72.3	71.9	72.1	0.99	96.4	105.2	100.4	1.09
Guadalcanal	66.7	66.1	66.4	0.99	95.5	103.3	99.3	1.08
Malaita	56.0	59.5	57.8	1.06	96.0	88.9	92.5	0.93
Western	68.3	75.8	71.6	1.11	117.8	124.5	120.8	1.06
Other provinces	60.7	74.4	67.0	1.23	100.8	110.4	105.2	1.10
Wealth quintile								
Lowest	55.5	61.3	58.1	1.10	94.2	87.0	91.1	0.92
Second	61.0	66.5	63.9	1.09	99.4	111.3	105.6	1.12
Middle	61.7	61.0	61.4	0.99	106.2	97.6	102.3	0.92
Fourth	58.5	75.9	66.7	1.30	96.4	106.2	101.0	1.10
Highest	76.4	79.9	78.0	1.05	105.6	118.8	111.8	1.12
Total	62.5	68.7	65.4	1.10	100.4	104.3	102.2	1.04
SECONDARY SCHOOL								
Residence								
Urban	47.9	45.2	46.5	0.94	67.7	52.7	59.9	0.78
Rural	25.0	26.4	25.7	1.05	31.9	30.8	31.5	0.96
Region								
Honiara	47.0	47.1	47.1	1.00	68.0	55.7	61.6	0.82
Guadalcanal	34.3	30.1	32.3	0.88	48.6	37.2	42.7	0.77
Malaita	20.5	20.0	20.3	0.98	28.6	22.9	25.8	0.80
Western	23.3	34.5	28.8	1.48	27.5	38.6	32.9	1.40
Other provinces	27.5	27.5	27.5	1.00	32.9	31.7	32.4	0.96

Table 2.11 (continued)

Background characteristic	Net attendance ratio ¹				Gross attendance ratio ²			
	Male	Female	Total	Gender Parity Index ³	Male	Female	Total	Gender Parity Index ³
Wealth quintile								
Lowest	11.8	10.3	11.1	0.88	20.8	11.4	16.3	0.55
Second	25.2	26.6	26.0	1.06	29.0	28.9	28.9	0.99
Middle	25.2	24.0	24.6	0.95	32.5	30.3	31.5	0.93
Fourth	30.8	34.6	32.8	1.13	36.4	42.5	39.4	1.17
Highest	44.8	45.8	45.3	1.02	62.4	52.8	57.5	0.85
Total	28.5	29.6	29.1	1.04	37.4	34.6	36.0	0.92

Note: Attendance ratios are calculated using children's ages at the beginning of the school year to avoid underestimating rates of school participation by including children below the target age for each level.

¹ The NAR for primary school is the percentage of primary-school age (aged 6–11) population attending primary school. The NAR for secondary school is the percentage of the secondary-school age (aged 12–18) population attending secondary school. By definition, the NAR cannot exceed 100%.

² The GAR for primary school is the total number of primary school students, expressed as a percentage of the official primary school-age population. The GAR for secondary school is the total number of secondary school students, expressed as a percentage of the official secondary-school-age population. If there are significant numbers of overage and underage students at a given level of schooling, the GAR can exceed 100%.

³ The GPI for primary school is the ratio of the primary school NAR (GAR) for females to the NAR (GAR) for males. The GPI for secondary school is the ratio of the secondary school NAR(GAR) for females to the NAR(GAR) for males.

There is little variation in the NAR by wealth quintiles. The NAR is lowest among school-age children in the lowest wealth quintile households (58%) and the highest NAR is observed for children in the highest wealth quintile (78%). The NAR for children for all other wealth quintiles falls between 61% and 67%. Given that primary education is supposed to be free (although not compulsory), it is not surprising that the NAR does not increase with increasing wealth quintiles — from the poorest to the middle wealthiest households. However, some schools still charge some fees and that may have caused the trend in the fourth and highest wealth quintiles.

The gross attendance ratio (GAR) measures attendance irrespective of the official age at each level. The GAR for primary school is the total number of primary school students (aged 5–24), expressed as a percentage of the official primary-school-age population (aged 6–12). A major contributing factor to high GAR is children starting primary school later than the recommended age of 6 years. Overall, the primary school GAR is 102, with the highest GAR in the Western Province (121%) followed by 105% in the second wealth quintile. There are no notable differences by sex.

The gender parity index (GPI) is a measure of the ratio of females to males attending school, regardless of age. For primary school, the GPI is 1.04, indicating that the number of female and male students is almost the same, with females slightly outnumbering males. There is not much variation in the GPI for the primary school GAR by background characteristics; however, the ratios are below the national average for rural areas and for lowest and middle wealth quintiles.

2.8.2 Secondary school attendance ratios

The concept of the NAR at the secondary level is similar to that of the primary level, being the percentage of the secondary school-age population (aged 12–18) attending secondary school. Overall, only 29 out of 100 children of secondary school age in Solomon Islands attend secondary school. The secondary NAR for males is 29% and the NAR for females is 30%.

The secondary school NAR is better in urban areas than in rural areas (47% versus 26%). This pattern is the same for boys and girls in urban areas. As regards wealth quintile, ignoring the second wealth quintile (26%), the secondary school NAR rises with wealth from about 11% in the lowest wealth quintile to 45% in the wealthiest quintile. This finding suggests that poverty and factors related to poverty play an important role in whether children are sent to secondary school.

The secondary GAR is 36% for the nation as a whole and is higher in urban (60%) than in rural parts of the country (32%). This same pattern is observed for males and females. Similar to the

NAR, the secondary GAR increases as wealth increases: the GAR is 58% among youth in the wealthiest households and only 16% among youth in the poorest households.

The GPI for the secondary school GAR is 0.92, indicating that, the ratio of females to males attending schools is not quite the same, with males slightly outnumbering females. This ratio is lower than the GPI for the primary school GAR, and varies little by background characteristics. Male students are outnumbered by female students only in the fourth wealth quintiles while males outnumbered females in all background characteristics. The GPI for the secondary school is especially low in the lowest wealth quintile households (0.55) and to certain extent in urban areas (0.78), indicating a gender gap in favour of males. There was no perfect gender balance in the secondary school GAR observed for any of the background characteristics, however, we are close to achieving that in certain characteristics.

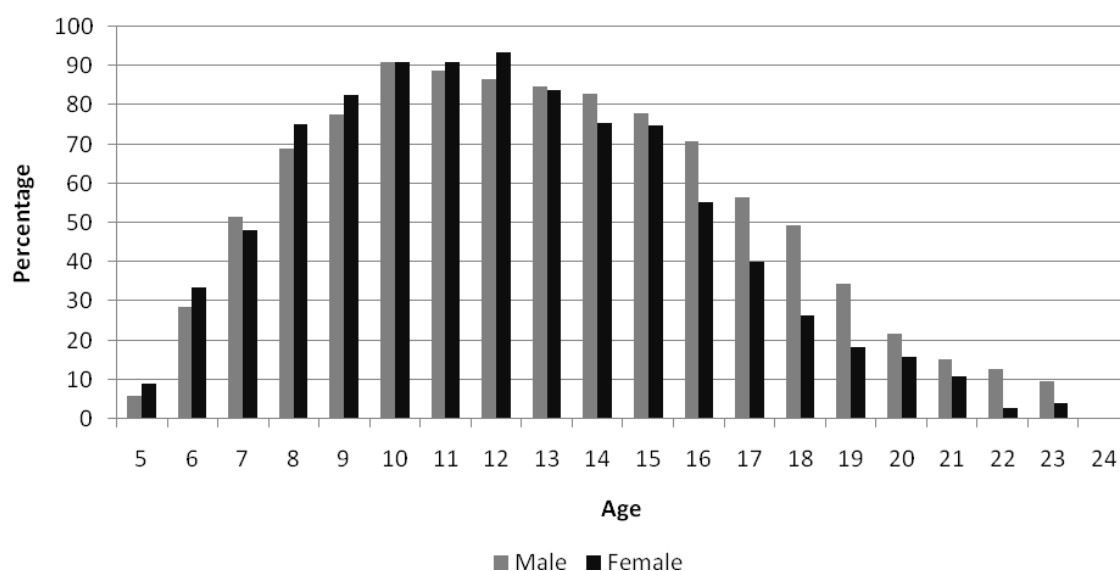
2.8.3 Age-specific attendance rates

Figure 2.2 presents information on school attendance among youth aged 5–24, by age. The figure includes students who attended primary school, secondary school, or higher education during the 2006 school year.

As Figure 2.2 shows, by ages 8 and 9 the vast majority of children in Solomon Islands attend school (approaching 80% and over). Rates of attendance range from 50–93% among males and females aged 7–12. Starting at age 13, attendance rates decline noticeably for all children. For instance, the attendance rate is 50% among males aged 18, and just 27% among females the same age. By age 21, only 15% of males attend school, compared with only 11% of females.

Figure 2.2 also shows that half (50%) of children aged 7 attend school, and attendance rates among children aged 8 and 9 are around 70% percent and 83%, respectively. These statistics show that most children in Solomon Islands enter into primary schools later than age 6. The age-specific attendance rate for Solomon Islands peaked between 10 and 12. For about 50% of children aged 7 and about 28% of the children aged 8, this was not the case; that is, they were not attending primary school (this is particularly important as education is free although not compulsory in Solomon Islands).

Figure 2.2: Age-specific attendance rates of the *de facto* population aged 5–24



2.9 KEY RESULTS

This section highlights the main findings related to general characteristics of the Solomon population, population structure, literacy and education, household arrangements, household composition, household facilities, sanitation facilities, dwelling characteristics and household possession. These findings are useful for policy decision-making in assessing the level of economic and social development of the population and to be able to make sound policy decisions to improve the current status of the economic and social development in the country. These findings are listed below.

1. Solomon Islands has a young population structure. The findings show that about half of the population is below the age of 20, an indication of rapid population growth and large population composition are in the dependent age groups. In contrast, a very small proportion of women and men are in the older age groups, indicating early death in the country.
2. The average household size in Solomon Islands is five, with urban households having more members than rural households, which indicates the need in urban areas for more housing.
3. Not all households (83%) use improved water sources and the majority of households (84%) do not apply any treatment to their drinking water, which is an implication of higher exposure of household members to water-borne diseases such as dysentery and cholera.
4. The results show that 6 out of 10 households have no toilet facilities and this is more common in the rural areas. Poor sanitation coupled with unsafe water sources increases the risk of water-borne diseases.
5. According to the wealth index, the distribution of wealth is uneven across all household in Solomon Islands: poverty is more concentrated in rural areas than in the urban area.
6. Even though education is provided free in Solomon Islands up to primary level, the results show that primary education does not reach the entire primary school-age population. The declining trend of females and males attaining secondary and higher education is associated with the cost of education at these levels.
7. The results also show that most children in Solomon Islands enter into primary school later than age 6 — the official primary age of primary education.

CHAPTER 3 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

This chapter describes the situation of men and women of reproductive age in Solomon Islands, which is useful for understanding the context of reproductive and health of men and women. The following variables are discussed: age at the time of the survey, marital status, residence, education, literacy, and media access. In addition, this chapter explores factors that enhance women's empowerment, including employment, occupation, earnings, and continuity of employment. An analysis of these variables provides the socioeconomic context in which demographic and reproductive health issues are examined in subsequent chapters.

3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Table 3.1 presents background characteristics of the 3,823 women aged 15–49 and 2,056 men aged 15–54 who were interviewed in the 2006/2007 SIDHS, and show their distribution by background characteristics. The proportion of women and men decline with increasing age, reflecting the young population of Solomon Islands: 37% for both women and men in the 15–24 age group, 35% of women and 33% of men are aged 25–34, and the remaining respondents are women aged 35–49 and men aged 35–54.

About 62% of women are formally married compared with less than one-half (46%) of men. Men are much more likely than women to have never married (41% for men, 29% for women). Less than 20% of women and men (5% percent women, 12% men) declare themselves to be living together. Women are more likely in the divorced/separated and widowed status than men do (3.6% and 0.9%).

The distribution of men and women by residence is biased towards rural because a large proportion of Solomon Islands' population resides in rural areas: about 83% of women live in rural area while 17% of women are found in urban areas. These figures are similar for men where 81% reside in rural areas while only 19% live in urban areas.

Data in Table 3.1 show that there is some variation in educational attainment of women and men, where 14% of women and 6% of men have no formal education. Moreover, 45% of men have a secondary or higher education compared with only 31% of women.

Wealth quintiles for both women and men were evenly distributed across the quintiles.

In terms of religion, 76% of Solomon Islanders are Anglican, followed by 41% who are South Seas evangelical, 32% who are Roman Catholic, 20% who belong to the United Church, 17% who are Seventh-Day Adventists, and 13% who are in the 'other' category.

The majority of the population is Melanesian, followed by Polynesian and Micronesian.

Table 3.1: Background characteristics of respondents*Percent distribution of women and men aged 15–49 by selected background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007*

Background characteristic	Women			Men		
	Weighted percent	Weighted	Unweighted	Weighted percent	Weighted	Unweighted
Age						
15–19	18.0	687	736	18.1	292	283
20–24	18.7	716	744	18.8	304	327
25–29	19.1	729	698	16.5	266	267
30–34	15.7	600	620	16.5	266	286
35–39	12.6	482	472	14.8	239	232
40–44	8.8	336	321	8.3	134	151
45–49	7.1	273	232	7.0	113	128
Marital status						
Never married	29.4	1,125	1,213	40.9	660	668
Married	62.0	2,368	2,294	46.1	744	785
Living together	5.0	191	188	12.1	195	200
Divorced/separated	2.5	95	81	0.6	9	13
Widowed	1.1	43	47	0.3	5	8
Residence						
Urban	16.6	636	1,463	18.6	301	731
Rural	83.4	3,187	2,360	81.4	1,313	943
Region						
Honiara	12.6	481	1,363	14.9	240	692
Guadalcanal	16.7	637	673	15.4	249	269
Malaïta	22.0	840	610	21.4	345	245
Western	12.0	458	400	11.2	181	159
Other provinces	36.8	1,407	777	37.1	599	309
Education						
No education	13.6	520	481	5.5	88	80
Primary	55.3	2,114	1,908	49.2	794	719
Secondary	27.9	1,067	1,244	36.8	593	708
More than secondary	3.2	122	190	8.6	138	167
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	18.2	696	576	17.4	281	212
Second	19.8	755	526	18.0	291	223
Middle	19.3	738	551	20.0	323	229
Fourth	20.1	769	664	21.9	353	298
Highest	22.6	864	1,506	22.7	366	712
Religion						
Anglican	36.0	1,376	1,057	40.3	650	516
Roman Catholic	15.5	593	730	16.3	264	318
United Church	10.1	384	515	9.5	154	210
South Seas Evangelical	20.9	798	786	21.2	343	336
Seventh-Day Adventist	9.8	376	458	7.3	118	168
Other	7.7	296	277	5.2	84	123
Ethnicity						
Melanesian	96.7	3,698	3,659	97.0	1,566	1,595
Polynesian	2.1	81	108	1.6	26	50
Micronesian	1.1	42	48	1.0	17	22
European	0.0	0	1	0.0	0	0
Chinese	0.0	0	1	0.0	0	0
Other	0.0	1	4	0.2	3	4
Total 15–49	100.0	3,823	3,823	100.0	1,614	1,674
50+	na	na	na	na	442	382
Total men 15+	na	na	na	na	2,056	2,056

Note: Educational categories refer to the highest level of education attended, whether or not that level was completed.
na = not applicable

3.2 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Tables 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 show the distribution of respondents according to the highest level of schooling attended. Most respondents had some secondary education: 28% of women compared with 36% of men. Table 3.2.1 shows that the percentage of women with some primary education (27%) is slightly higher than that for men (21%). An equal proportion (28%) of both women and men completed primary education. More men (9%) than women (3%) have more than a secondary education.

Table 3.2.1: Educational attainment — Women

Percent distribution of women aged 15–49 by highest level of schooling attended or completed, and median grade completed, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Highest level of schooling						Total	Median years completed	Number of women
	No education	Some primary	Completed primary ¹	Some secondary	Completed secondary ²	More than secondary			
Age									
15–24	7.4	24.9	18.1	46.9	0.3	2.4	100.0	6.0	1,404
15–19	7.9	27.3	17.1	47.3	0.0	0.5	100.0	5.9	687
20–24	6.9	22.6	19.2	46.5	0.7	4.2	100.0	6.3	716
25–29	10.3	28.8	31.3	25.3	0.0	4.3	100.0	5.3	729
30–34	14.0	24.4	40.2	15.7	0.1	5.5	100.0	5.3	600
35–39	23.3	20.7	41.0	12.8	0.0	2.2	100.0	5.1	482
40–44	19.7	24.4	40.9	12.5	0.0	2.5	100.0	5.2	336
45–49	29.1	54.0	7.2	7.7	0.3	1.7	100.0	2.8	273
Residence									
Urban	7.8	18.2	18.9	45.2	0.8	9.2	100.0	7.2	636
Rural	14.8	28.9	30.1	24.3	0.1	2.0	100.0	5.3	3,187
Region									
Honiara	8.4	18.4	19.4	44.5	0.9	8.4	100.0	7.0	481
Guadalcanal	15.7	34.7	23.2	25.1	0.0	1.3	100.0	5.0	637
Malaita	31.0	29.3	17.7	19.6	0.0	2.5	100.0	3.8	840
Western	0.8	11.3	46.8	37.6	0.2	3.4	100.0	5.9	458
Other provinces	8.3	30.4	33.7	24.9	0.1	2.6	100.0	5.4	1,407
Wealth quintile									
Lowest	21.3	38.0	24.3	16.2	0.0	0.1	100.0	4.1	696
Second	13.2	32.5	32.8	20.4	0.0	1.2	100.0	5.2	755
Middle	17.4	25.9	32.9	22.3	0.0	1.5	100.0	5.2	738
Fourth	11.8	24.8	32.4	28.7	0.0	2.2	100.0	5.5	769
Highest	6.1	16.6	19.6	47.3	0.8	9.8	100.0	7.7	864
Total	13.6	27.1	28.2	27.7	0.2	3.2	100.0	5.4	3,823

¹ Completed six grades at the primary level.

² Completed seven grades at the secondary level.

There is no significant difference in the median years of education completed by both women and men (5% women, 6% men). As expected, people in rural areas are less educated than those in urban areas.

Table 3.2.2: Educational attainment — Men

Percent distribution of men aged 15–49 by highest level of schooling attended or completed, and median grade completed, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Highest level of schooling						Total	Median years completed	Number of men
	No education	Some primary	Completed primary ¹	Some secondary	Completed secondary ²	More than secondary			
Age									
15–24	4.9	21.6	18.9	50.4	1.0	3.2	100.0	6.5	596
15–19	3.3	25.8	20.6	48.6	0.2	1.4	100.0	6.0	292
20–24	6.5	17.5	17.2	52.1	1.8	4.9	100.0	7.4	304
25–29	4.8	20.0	24.6	37.4	0.4	12.8	100.0	6.4	266
30–34	2.3	21.0	41.7	19.8	0.1	15.1	100.0	5.6	266
35–39	6.6	13.5	36.4	31.9	0.1	11.4	100.0	5.8	239
40–44	9.0	14.7	38.7	28.4	0.0	9.1	100.0	5.8	134
45–49	10.8	41.4	26.7	16.7	0.0	4.5	100.0	5.7	113
Residence									
Urban	2.5	11.7	17.9	52.2	2.2	13.5	100.0	8.5	301
Rural	6.2	22.9	30.7	32.7	0.1	7.4	100.0	5.7	1,313
Region									
Honiara	2.8	10.6	15.7	55.4	2.7	12.7	100.0	8.7	240
Guadalcanal	4.6	27.0	30.4	35.5	0.0	2.6	100.0	5.7	249
Malaïta	16.9	24.9	21.8	30.2	0.0	6.2	100.0	5.5	345
Western	1.8	12.6	43.1	33.4	0.8	8.3	100.0	5.9	181
Other provinces	1.4	22.6	31.9	33.3	0.0	10.8	100.0	5.9	599
Wealth quintile									
Lowest	11.4	33.6	32.4	18.9	0.0	3.7	100.0	5.3	281
Second	2.7	23.5	33.1	34.6	0.0	6.0	100.0	5.8	291
Middle	10.7	22.0	26.6	31.9	0.5	8.3	100.0	5.7	323
Fourth	2.7	19.8	31.0	37.3	0.0	9.2	100.0	5.9	353
Highest	1.1	8.8	20.5	54.0	1.7	13.9	100.0	8.5	366
Total 15–49	5.5	20.8	28.4	36.3	0.5	8.6	100.0	5.9	1,614
50+	28.3	54.0	7.7	6.1	0.0	3.9	100.0	3.3	442
Total men 15+	10.4	28.0	23.9	29.8	0.4	7.6	100.0	5.7	2,056

¹ Completed six grades at the primary level.

² Completed seven grades at the secondary level.

3.3 LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT

The literacy level determines the individual's ability to read all, part or none of a sentence in the language that he/she is able to read. Questions assessing literacy were asked of each respondent who had not attended any school and who were attending primary school only. An additional approach in gaining more information on respondents' level of literacy is by getting respondents to read out loud a simple sentence. In the 2006/2007 SIDHS, the same method was applied to all respondents who had not attended school and had attended primary level only. The interviewer asked respondents to read out loud a simple sentence written on a card in Solomon Islands Pidgin. The interviewer then recorded whether the respondent could read all of the sentence, only parts of it, or could not read any of the sentence.

3.3.1 Literacy achievement: women and men

Data in Tables 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 show that 21% of women aged 15–49 and 11% of men aged 15–49 cannot read at all. As expected, the literacy level is often higher in urban areas than rural areas, for both men and women. For example, the percentage of literate men in urban areas is 95% compared with 87% for men in rural areas. The figures for women show a similar trend, where 86% of women in urban areas are literate compared with 77% of women in rural areas.

Table 3.3.1: Literacy — Women*Percent distribution of women aged 15–49 by level of schooling attended and level of literacy, and percentage literate, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007*

Background characteristic	Secondary school or higher	No schooling or primary school					Blind/visually impaired	Missing	Total	Percentage literate ¹	Number
		Can read a whole sentence	Can read part of a sentence	Cannot read at all	No card with required language						
Age											
15–19	47.7	25.5	11.8	13.0	0.3	0.0	1.8	100.0	85.0	687	
20–24	51.4	20.2	13.2	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	100.0	84.8	716	
25–29	29.6	27.4	22.9	20.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	79.9	729	
30–34	21.3	36.2	25.1	17.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	82.6	600	
35–39	15.0	35.6	19.2	29.4	0.4	0.0	0.4	100.0	69.8	482	
40–44	15.0	34.0	23.6	27.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	72.6	336	
45–49	9.7	24.4	19.9	45.6	0.1	0.1	0.2	100.0	54.1	273	
Residence											
Urban	55.1	19.0	12.1	13.4	0.1	0.0	0.2	100.0	86.2	636	
Rural	26.3	30.4	20.2	22.6	0.1	0.0	0.5	100.0	76.9	3,187	
Region											
Honiara	53.8	17.5	13.5	14.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	100.0	84.8	481	
Guadalcanal	26.4	30.8	17.6	24.9	0.1	0.0	0.2	100.0	74.8	637	
Malaita	22.1	18.8	24.2	33.8	0.3	0.0	0.7	100.0	65.2	840	
Western	41.1	36.1	20.0	2.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	97.2	458	
Other provinces	27.6	34.5	17.6	19.8	0.0	0.0	0.5	100.0	79.6	1,407	
Wealth quintile											
Lowest	16.3	27.5	26.6	29.4	0.1	0.0	0.1	100.0	70.4	696	
Second	21.5	33.6	20.3	24.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	100.0	75.5	755	
Middle	23.8	31.7	18.0	24.9	0.0	0.0	1.6	100.0	73.5	738	
Fourth	30.9	30.3	20.0	18.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	100.0	81.3	769	
Highest	57.8	20.4	10.9	10.6	0.2	0.0	0.2	100.0	89.0	864	
Total	31.1	28.5	18.8	21.0	0.1	0.0	0.4	100.0	78.4	3,823	

¹ Refers to women who attended secondary school or higher and women who could read a whole sentence or part of a sentence.

Table 3.3.2: Literacy — Men*Percent distribution of men aged 15–49 by level of schooling attended and level of literacy, and percentage literate, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007*

Background characteristic	Secondary school or higher	No schooling or primary school					Blind/visually impaired	Missing	Total	Percentage literate ¹	Number
		Can read a whole sentence	Can read part of a sentence	Cannot read at all	No card with required language						
Age											
15–19	50.3	20.4	17.1	12.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	87.8	292	
20–24	58.8	15.7	10.7	14.6	0.0	0.0	0.2	100.0	85.2	304	
25–29	50.6	25.9	10.4	12.6	0.3	0.0	0.1	100.0	86.9	266	
30–34	35.0	47.7	10.2	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.7	100.0	92.9	266	
35–39	43.5	33.7	13.0	8.2	0.3	0.0	1.3	100.0	90.2	239	
40–44	37.5	39.2	11.7	9.4	0.0	0.0	2.2	100.0	88.4	134	
45–49	21.2	54.4	11.4	11.7	0.0	0.0	1.2	100.0	87.1	113	
Residence											
Urban	67.9	19.4	7.7	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.3	100.0	95.0	301	
Rural	40.2	33.5	13.2	12.3	0.1	0.0	0.7	100.0	86.9	1,313	
Region											
Honiara	70.9	17.6	7.2	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	100.0	95.6	240	
Guadalcanal	38.0	28.6	21.2	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	100.0	87.8	249	
Malaita	36.4	25.9	14.9	22.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	100.0	77.3	345	
Western	42.5	32.4	16.6	5.5	0.9	0.0	2.2	100.0	91.4	181	
Other provinces	44.1	39.4	7.6	8.4	0.0	0.0	0.5	100.0	91.2	599	
Wealth quintile											
Lowest	22.5	41.1	15.2	21.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	100.0	78.8	281	
Second	40.6	33.6	13.7	10.4	0.3	0.0	1.4	100.0	87.9	291	
Middle	40.7	28.9	14.2	15.8	0.0	0.0	0.5	100.0	83.7	323	
Fourth	46.5	34.3	12.0	6.8	0.2	0.0	0.2	100.0	92.8	353	
Highest	69.6	19.2	7.2	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.8	100.0	96.0	366	
Total 15–49	45.3	30.8	12.2	10.9	0.1	0.0	0.6	100.0	88.4	1,614	
50+	10.0	42.7	18.5	27.3	0.2	1.3	0.0	100.0	71.2	442	
Total men 15+	37.7	33.4	13.6	14.4	0.1	0.3	0.5	100.0	84.7	2,056	

¹ Refers to men who attended secondary school or higher and men who could read a whole sentence or part of a sentence.

3.4 ACCESS TO MASS MEDIA

Information access is essential to increasing people's knowledge and awareness of what is taking place around them, which may eventually affect their perceptions and behaviour about an issue. In the survey, exposure to media was assessed by asking how often a respondent reads a newspaper, watches television, or listens to a radio.

Most of the population is exposed to some form of media. In general, men are more likely than women to have access to mass media (this is true for all types of media). Tables 3.4.1 and 3.4.2 show the variation in media exposure by background characteristics of respondents. The results for both women and men indicate that more men in the 20–24 age group are exposed to any form of media at least once a week than other men and women in other age groups. Urban women and men are more likely to have access to mass media than rural residents. For example, 68% of men in urban areas read a newspaper at least once a week compared with 26% of rural men. In terms of television, 58% of urban men watch television once a week compared with 2% of rural men. For those listening to radio, 85% of urban men listen to radio at least once a week compared with 67% of rural men. Findings further show a gap in media access for all three media at least once a week, biased towards urban men 43% (compared with 2% for rural men). The proportion of the population that has access to all three media types (i.e. radio, newspaper and television) at least once a week is generally lower for women (4.4%) than men (9%). About 49% of women and 28% of men have no exposure to any media.

Data further reveal that exposure to media is positively associated with educational attainment. For example, 19% of women with more than a secondary level education are exposed to at least one form of media each week, compared with only 2% of women with no primary education or only a primary education. A similar pattern exists for men, where 16% of men with more than a secondary level education are exposed to at least one form of media each week compared with 4% of men with no primary education or only a primary education.

Data also show that media exposure is limited among Solomon Islands women and men in the lower household wealth quintiles. For instance, 1% of women from the poorest homes are exposed to at least one form of media each week, compared with 15% of women from the richest homes. This pattern is similar for men.

Table 3.4.1: Exposure to mass media — Women

Percentage of women aged 15–49 who are exposed to specific media on a weekly basis, by background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Reads a newspaper at least once a week	Watches television at least once a week	Listens to the radio at least once a week	All three media at least once a week	No media at least once a week	Number
Age						
15–19	24.6	11.8	45.8	5.2	45.7	687
20–24	24.7	11.3	48.8	6.3	45.7	716
25–29	18.1	9.5	49.5	4.5	45.5	729
30–34	14.6	9.2	40.0	3.9	54.7	600
35–39	14.6	8.3	44.7	3.3	50.9	482
40–44	17.4	8.2	38.2	2.9	55.8	336
45–49	9.7	3.9	40.9	1.3	53.8	273
Residence						
Urban	42.0	40.9	63.9	20.5	22.3	636
Rural	14.2	3.3	41.2	1.1	54.6	3,187
Region						
Honiara	42.2	49.9	61.5	24.7	21.9	481
Guadalcanal	28.0	11.0	64.1	5.5	31.8	637
Malaïta	7.1	0.7	39.2	0.0	59.1	840
Western	24.1	2.8	40.0	1.8	52.8	458
Other provinces	12.1	2.6	35.8	0.3	59.3	1,407
Education						
No education	0.8	3.3	29.9	0.2	69.0	520
Primary	12.7	6.6	42.4	2.0	52.6	2,114
Secondary	36.0	16.5	54.6	9.4	35.9	1,067
More than secondary	52.9	26.1	70.3	19.5	21.9	122
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	8.1	2.2	24.5	0.7	73.5	696
Second	10.8	3.0	35.8	0.9	59.4	755
Middle	14.8	2.4	43.0	1.5	53.0	738
Fourth	19.2	4.5	54.1	1.5	41.0	769
Highest	37.7	31.7	63.2	15.3	24.8	864
Total	18.8	9.5	45.0	4.4	49.2	3,823

Table 3.4.2: Exposure to mass media — Men

Percentage of men aged 15–49 who are exposed to specific media on a weekly basis, by background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Reads a newspaper at least once a week	Watches television at least once a week	Listens to the radio at least once a week	All three media at least once a week	No media at least once a week	Number
Age						
15–19	39.4	13.8	65.2	8.3	29.0	292
20–24	32.9	15.2	74.9	12.5	21.0	304
25–29	36.8	12.6	77.4	9.2	16.7	266
30–34	32.0	10.6	68.9	8.2	27.5	266
35–39	29.8	9.1	71.6	6.9	22.4	239
40–44	36.9	12.4	70.9	9.1	25.6	134
45–49	23.6	11.8	59.2	9.9	38.1	113
Residence						
Urban	68.0	58.3	85.2	42.9	5.5	301
Rural	25.9	1.9	67.3	1.5	29.0	1,313
Region						
Honiara	68.4	65.8	83.6	49.0	6.2	240
Guadalcanal	36.9	10.3	72.4	8.1	22.5	249
Malaita	21.0	0.9	74.0	0.3	21.6	345
Western	32.0	2.9	55.8	1.3	37.2	181
Other provinces	26.6	1.4	67.3	1.2	30.8	599
Education						
No education	0.7	2.9	46.8	0.5	52.8	88
Primary	19.9	5.8	62.4	3.5	33.7	794
Secondary	53.8	21.1	83.5	16.5	11.0	593
More than secondary	48.5	19.0	78.2	16.2	12.8	138
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	12.8	1.0	51.7	0.4	45.0	281
Second	25.0	0.5	68.1	0.3	29.4	291
Middle	29.4	1.0	73.4	0.8	23.5	323
Fourth	29.8	4.4	73.6	3.2	22.8	353
Highest	64.7	48.5	82.0	36.2	7.9	366
Total 15–49	33.8	12.4	70.7	Total 9.2	24.6	1,614
50+	24.0	5.5	56.1	4.6	39.9	442
Men 15+	31.7	10.9	67.5	8.2	27.9	2,056

3.5 EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Like education, employment can be a source of empowerment for women, especially when leading them into a decision-making position and control of income. The measurement of women's empowerment is one of the more difficult tasks to undertake and is most often under-reported, especially women's work that deals with family or the home, which is almost always referred to as informal work or home duties.

To ensure complete coverage of women's empowerment, the 2006/2007 SIDHS provided questions about women's employment status in both the informal and formal sectors. All employed women are classified as those currently working for the last 7 days and the last 12 months prior to the survey. Some additional questions were also included to ask about any kind of payment respondents received in return for the service they provided.

Tables 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 show that 36% of women and 71% of men are classified as currently employed. The proportion currently employed increases with age and the number of living children among women. Data for men show a similar variation in employment status by age and number of children. Women who were classified as divorced/separated/widowed or who were married are the most likely to be employed (about 37% for both categories). Never-married women and men are the least likely to be employed (35% women, 57% men). Almost 81% of married men are currently employed.

There is little variation in the current employment level for women in rural areas (37%) and urban areas (35%), although there is some variation in employment level between men in rural areas (74%) and men in urban areas (57%).

Clearly, current employment levels for both women and men are positively associated with educational attainment.

Table 3.5.1: Employment status — Women

Percent distribution of women aged 15–49 by employment status, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Employed in the 12 months preceding the survey		Not employed in the 12 months preceding the survey	Missing/ don't know	Total	Number of women
	Currently employed ¹	Not currently employed				
Age						
15–19	29.7	2.7	67.3	0.3	100.0	687
20–24	33.8	4.4	61.7	0.1	100.0	716
25–29	34.0	4.6	61.3	0.2	100.0	729
30–34	41.8	5.3	52.4	0.5	100.0	600
35–39	41.2	4.3	54.4	0.0	100.0	482
40–44	47.2	4.2	48.6	0.0	100.0	336
45–49	32.2	11.2	56.7	0.0	100.0	273
Marital status						
Never married	34.6	4.1	61.0	0.3	100.0	1,125
Married or living together	37.1	5.0	57.8	0.2	100.0	2,560
Divorced/separated/widowed	36.9	5.1	58.0	0.0	100.0	138
Number of living children						
0	33.9	4.3	61.5	0.3	100.0	1,213
1–2	34.2	4.4	61.3	0.1	100.0	954
3–4	39.7	4.3	55.8	0.2	100.0	885
5+	39.0	6.3	54.6	0.2	100.0	772
Residence						
Urban	34.6	2.9	62.1	0.3	100.0	636
Rural	36.7	5.1	58.1	0.2	100.0	3,187
Region						
Honiara	29.7	3.3	66.6	0.4	100.0	481
Guadalcanal	35.1	5.2	59.1	0.6	100.0	637
Malaita	29.0	3.1	67.9	0.0	100.0	840
Western	51.4	2.8	45.4	0.4	100.0	458
Other provinces	38.7	6.6	54.7	0.0	100.0	1,407
Education						
No education	23.1	4.7	72.2	0.0	100.0	520
Primary	34.6	5.1	60.1	0.2	100.0	2,114
Secondary	42.4	4.1	53.2	0.3	100.0	1,067
More than secondary	70.0	4.0	26.0	0.0	100.0	122
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	37.1	8.0	54.8	0.0	100.0	696
Second	37.9	6.0	55.9	0.2	100.0	755
Middle	27.3	4.9	67.7	0.1	100.0	738
Fourth	35.7	1.8	62.2	0.4	100.0	769
Highest	42.7	3.5	53.6	0.2	100.0	864
Total	36.3	4.7	58.7	0.2	100.0	3,823

¹ 'Currently employed' is defined as having done work in the past seven days, and includes people who did not work in the past seven days but who were regularly employed and were absent from work for leave, illness, vacation, or any other such reason.

Table 3.5.2: Employment status — Men

Percent distribution of men aged 15–49 by employment status, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

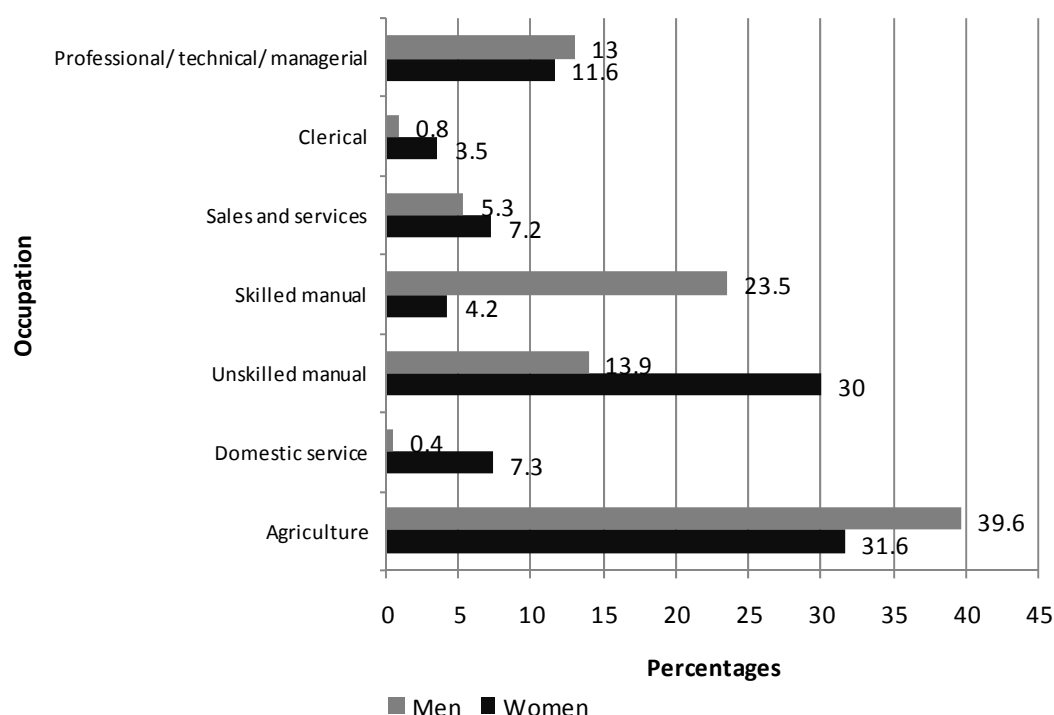
Background characteristic	Employed in the 12 months preceding the survey		Not employed in the 12 months preceding the survey	Missing/ don't know	Total	Number of men
	Currently employed ¹	Not currently employed				
Age						
15–19	42.0	12.3	45.6	0.0	100.0	292
20–24	64.2	3.3	32.4	0.0	100.0	304
25–29	73.8	8.2	18.0	0.0	100.0	266
30–34	88.6	2.7	8.7	0.0	100.0	266
35–39	79.4	8.7	11.9	0.0	100.0	239
40–44	87.2	3.4	9.4	0.0	100.0	134
45–49	78.7	6.9	14.1	0.3	100.0	113
Marital status						
Never married	56.6	7.3	36.0	0.1	100.0	660
Married or living together	80.9	6.2	12.9	0.0	100.0	939
Divorced/separated/widowed	83.3	9.5	7.2	0.0	100.0	14
Number of living children						
0	59.8	7.3	32.9	0.0	100.0	754
1–2	76.6	7.2	16.2	0.0	100.0	322
3–4	85.0	5.0	10.0	0.0	100.0	298
5+	81.3	6.3	12.4	0.0	100.0	240
Residence						
Urban	57.4	3.8	38.8	0.0	100.0	301
Rural	74.1	7.4	18.5	0.0	100.0	1,313
Region						
Honiara	54.8	2.2	43.1	0.0	100.0	240
Guadalcanal	76.8	13.5	9.5	0.1	100.0	249
Malaita	50.4	3.9	45.7	0.0	100.0	345
Western	80.1	4.1	15.8	0.0	100.0	181
Other provinces	84.2	8.1	7.8	0.0	100.0	599
Education						
No education	39.1	5.2	55.6	0.0	100.0	88
Primary	76.3	6.8	16.8	0.0	100.0	794
Secondary	66.3	8.0	25.8	0.0	100.0	593
More than secondary	80.8	1.5	17.7	0.0	100.0	138
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	74.0	7.4	18.6	0.1	100.0	281
Second	79.0	6.2	14.8	0.0	100.0	291
Middle	63.8	11.4	24.9	0.0	100.0	323
Fourth	74.1	4.7	21.2	0.0	100.0	353
Highest	65.6	4.4	30.0	0.0	100.0	366
Total 15–49	71.0	6.7	22.3	0.0	100.0	1,614
50+	68.6	3.6	27.8	0.0	100.0	442
Total men 15+	70.5	6.0	23.5	0.0	100.0	2,056

¹ Currently employed¹ is defined as having done work in the past seven days, and includes people who did not work in the past seven days but who were regularly employed and were absent from work for leave, illness, vacation, or any other such reason.

3.6 OCCUPATION

Respondents who were currently employed were asked to state their occupation. The results are presented in Figure 3.6.1, Tables 3.6.1 and 3.6.2. For women who are currently employed, 32% are engaged in ‘agriculture’ and 30% are engaged in ‘unskilled manual’. About 12% are involved in professional, technical and managerial related occupations, while only 7% are engaged in both sales/services and domestic services. A similar situation was observed in men, where 40% are engaged in agriculture, 24% are involved in skilled manual, 13% are engaged in professional, and 14% in unskilled manual. This confirms that a large percentage of both men and women are engaged in agriculture.

Figure 3.6.1: Occupation by sex



Most women and men who are engaged in *non*-agricultural activities work in unskilled manual labour or sales and services, skilled manual labour or clerical-related occupations. Professional, technical, and managerial occupations, which require more skill and have higher income-earning potential, are occupied by 12% of women and 13% of men

Table 3.6.1 shows the distribution of women employed in the 12 months preceding the survey by type of occupation and according to background characteristics. Most women are engaged in agriculture (32%) and unskilled manual (30%). Obviously, women are more likely to work in professional/technical/managerial and skilled manual occupations unless they are urban residents, have more than a secondary level education or are from the richest homes.

Women in the 30–34 age group, those who are divorced/separated/widowed, who live in urban areas, have no education, and are in the fourth wealthiest households are more likely to be in skilled manual occupations. Women holding professional/technical and managerial occupations, those in the 20–29 age group, and those who are never-married, typically live in urban areas, have higher qualifications and are in the highest wealth households.

Table 3.6.1: Occupation — Women*Percent distribution of women aged 15–49 employed in the 12 months preceding the survey by occupation, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007*

Background characteristic	Professional/ technical/ managerial	Clerical	Sales and services	Skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Domestic service	Agriculture	Missing	Total	Number of women
Age										
15–19	1.7	0.6	5.4	2.1	41.9	7.8	26.0	14.5	100.0	222
20–24	17.5	3.9	6.8	3.6	28.4	12.5	22.3	5.0	100.0	274
25–29	16.9	5.4	7.2	3.3	29.9	4.7	30.4	2.3	100.0	281
30–34	10.6	5.3	8.7	6.5	29.5	7.7	27.9	3.8	100.0	283
35–39	9.2	4.4	11.7	4.1	22.2	2.2	44.3	1.9	100.0	220
40–44	13.3	1.0	5.6	4.6	30.7	2.6	40.5	1.8	100.0	172
45–49	8.6	1.3	1.2	5.3	26.2	15.8	39.4	2.3	100.0	118
Marital status										
Never married	15.5	2.9	5.2	2.3	31.1	12.8	20.6	9.5	100.0	436
Married or living together	9.9	3.8	8.1	4.7	29.6	4.9	36.4	2.7	100.0	1,077
Divorced/separated/widowed	14.4	2.3	4.3	9.4	29.5	10.3	25.3	4.5	100.0	58
Number of living children										
0	16.0	3.9	4.9	2.6	32.4	10.5	20.8	9.1	100.0	463
1–2	11.4	5.1	9.2	3.2	26.4	6.5	34.5	3.7	100.0	369
3–4	12.0	3.9	5.4	6.3	27.3	5.1	36.7	3.4	100.0	389
5+	5.6	0.8	10.0	5.0	33.6	6.4	37.3	1.2	100.0	349
Residence										
Urban	21.7	20.6	11.9	5.2	9.8	22.3	3.2	5.2	100.0	239
Rural	9.8	0.4	6.3	4.0	33.6	4.6	36.7	4.5	100.0	1,331
Region										
Honiara	22.1	17.7	12.3	5.1	8.5	25.3	3.1	6.0	100.0	159
Guadalcanal	6.1	1.8	3.6	4.2	23.1	6.2	47.4	7.6	100.0	257
Malaita	18.7	5.0	3.2	5.9	35.4	4.3	16.3	11.1	100.0	269
Western	12.3	2.4	12.6	6.6	8.6	4.8	50.8	2.0	100.0	248
Other provinces	7.9	0.4	6.9	2.3	44.2	5.5	31.4	1.4	100.0	637
Education										
No education	0.4	0.0	5.1	6.1	39.3	6.6	41.6	0.8	100.0	145
Primary	2.3	0.6	7.8	4.1	31.5	9.2	40.4	4.1	100.0	839
Secondary	22.0	6.6	7.8	4.2	27.7	5.5	18.9	7.2	100.0	496
More than secondary	59.3	19.1	0.5	1.6	14.1	0.6	3.7	1.1	100.0	90

Table 3.6.1 (continued)

Background characteristic	Professional/ technical/ managerial	Clerical	Sales and services	Skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Domestic service	Agriculture	Missing	Total	Number of women
Wealth quintile										
Lowest	0.6	0.0	4.5	1.5	41.6	5.4	44.7	1.7	100.0	315
Second	3.8	0.0	4.8	2.5	50.3	7.7	27.6	3.2	100.0	332
Middle	17.2	0.9	8.4	3.3	18.0	2.7	43.4	6.1	100.0	237
Fourth	14.0	0.9	8.4	9.0	20.7	7.1	31.6	8.4	100.0	288
Highest	21.7	12.6	9.6	4.7	17.8	11.3	17.7	4.6	100.0	399
Total	11.6	3.5	7.2	4.2	30.0	7.3	31.6	4.6	100.0	1,570

Likewise, Solomon Islands men with skilled manual jobs are more likely to be in the 20–24 age group, tend to be single men, reside in urban areas and live in the wealthiest households. Professional jobs are occupied more by men in the 35–39 age group, are married or living with a partner, live in urban areas, have a higher educational level, and live in wealthier households.

Table 3.6.2: Occupation — Men

Percent distribution of men aged 15–49 employed in the 12 months preceding the survey by occupation, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Professional/ technical/ managerial	Clerical	Sales and services	Skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Domestic service	Agriculture	Missing	Total	Number of men
Age										
15–19	2.6	0.2	0.0	10.6	16.7	0.5	57.8	11.7	100.0	159
20–24	6.5	1.0	4.5	36.8	6.1	0.9	41.9	2.3	100.0	205
25–29	16.6	0.2	6.4	25.7	13.3	0.1	35.2	2.5	100.0	218
30–34	13.0	1.2	5.7	26.4	19.1	0.3	30.6	3.7	100.0	243
35–39	21.9	1.4	7.0	22.1	13.6	0.0	33.0	1.0	100.0	210
40–44	18.9	0.4	6.4	17.0	12.3	0.1	42.3	2.6	100.0	121
45–49	8.5	1.2	6.7	15.4	16.4	0.7	49.0	2.0	100.0	97
Marital status										
Never married	7.5	0.4	2.9	25.7	11.9	0.2	44.7	6.8	100.0	422
Married or living together	15.6	1.0	6.5	22.3	15.0	0.4	37.1	2.0	100.0	818
Divorced/separated/widowed	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	100.0	13
Number of living children										
0	11.1	0.6	3.5	23.2	14.1	0.4	41.5	5.6	100.0	506
1–2	14.4	0.6	7.4	29.7	11.1	0.3	33.4	3.1	100.0	269
3–4	19.6	1.3	4.5	21.1	10.2	0.3	41.3	1.8	100.0	268
5+	7.2	1.3	7.9	19.2	21.5	0.3	41.1	1.4	100.0	210
Residence										
Urban	22.9	5.7	23.6	33.7	1.1	1.2	7.9	3.9	100.0	184
Rural	11.2	0.0	2.1	21.7	16.1	0.2	45.1	3.5	100.0	1,069
Region										
Honiara	22.5	7.2	27.1	34.8	0.5	1.1	3.3	3.6	100.0	137
Guadalcanal	7.2	0.0	6.7	20.0	4.8	0.3	60.6	0.3	100.0	225
Malaita	21.8	0.0	4.0	23.7	10.4	0.0	33.2	6.8	100.0	187
Western	11.9	0.5	3.8	24.8	1.9	1.4	48.8	6.9	100.0	152
Other provinces	10.3	0.0	0.1	21.6	25.3	0.0	39.8	2.9	100.0	552

Table 3.6.2 (continued)

Background characteristic	Professional/ technical/ managerial	Clerical	Sales and services	Skilled manual	Unskilled manual	Domestic service	Agriculture	Missing	Total	Number of men
Education										
No education	(0.0)	(0.0)	(3.7)	(29.7)	(9.2)	(0.0)	(53.9)	(3.5)	100.0	39
Primary	3.6	0.0	3.3	24.8	15.9	0.4	48.6	3.4	100.0	660
Secondary	20.4	1.3	9.4	21.7	9.6	0.4	33.5	3.6	100.0	441
More than secondary	43.0	3.9	1.1	20.5	20.5	0.0	6.6	4.5	100.0	113
Wealth quintile										
Lowest	1.4	0.0	0.8	18.7	20.7	0.3	56.0	2.1	100.0	229
Second	8.4	0.0	1.1	19.7	28.2	0.0	39.9	2.8	100.0	248
Middle	12.1	0.1	1.3	25.2	12.8	0.3	46.2	2.0	100.0	242
Fourth	15.4	0.0	4.8	22.6	6.3	0.5	45.5	5.0	100.0	278
Highest	25.9	4.0	17.7	30.8	3.1	0.6	12.3	5.6	100.0	256
Total 15–49	13.0	0.8	5.3	23.5	13.9	0.4	39.6	3.6	100.0	1,253
50+	15.0	1.3	4.1	7.8	11.7	1.9	56.9	1.3	100.0	319
Total men 15+	13.4	0.9	5.0	20.3	13.4	0.7	43.2	3.1	100.0	1,573

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

3.7 EARNINGS, TYPE OF EMPLOYER, AND CONTINUITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Table 3.7 shows the distribution of women by their employment status. The data indicate that 44% of employed women receive payment in cash only, 6.7% are paid both in cash and in kind, 1.2% receive only payment in kind, while 47% receive no payment for their work.

The data on type of employer indicate that 76% of women are employed by family member, 21% are self-employed, and 3% are employed by a non-family member.

Table 3.7 also presents the distribution of women by the continuity of their employment. About four in every ten women work all year, 39% work seasonal and 19% work occasionally.

Table 3.7: Type of employment: Women

Percent distribution of women aged 15–49 employed in the 12 months preceding the survey by type of earnings, type of employer, and continuity of employment, according to type of employment (agricultural or non-agricultural), Solomon Islands 2007

Employment characteristic	Agricultural work	Non-agricultural work	Missing	Total
Type of earnings				
Cash only	13.9	44.1	36.9	34.2
Cash and in kind	9.6	6.7	3.3	7.5
In-kind only	1.8	1.2	0.4	1.4
Not paid	74.7	47.4	57.5	56.5
Missing	0.0	0.5	1.9	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Type of employer				
Employed by family member	75.6	53.8	39.1	60.0
Employed by non-family member	3.2	25.5	22.9	18.3
Self-employed	20.9	20.0	36.2	21.0
Missing	0.3	0.6	1.9	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Continuity of employment				
All year	40.3	58.7	82	53.9
Seasonal	39.1	27.3	9.9	30.2
Occasional	19.4	13.5	6.2	15.0
Missing	1.2	0.5	1.9	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of women	497	1,001	73	1,570

Note: Total includes women with missing information on type of employment who are not shown separately.

3.8 HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE: WOMEN

The 2006/2007 SIDHS asked respondents if they were covered by specific types of insurance schemes. These insurance schemes were categorised as: 1) government-run schemes such as the Social Security Scheme, 2) employer-based schemes, 3) mutual health organisation/community-based insurances, 4) privately purchased commercial insurances, and 5) other insurance arrangements. The distribution of respondents aged 15–49 by types of insurance coverage according to the respondent's background characteristics are presented in Table 3.8.1 for women and Table 3.8.2 for men.

These tables show the percentage of women and men covered by a health scheme or health insurance, by type of health insurance coverage. Overall, 99% of both women and men are not covered by any government and/or private insurance schemes. This means that less than one in ten respondents is covered by any insurance scheme in Solomon Islands. For example, social security covers slightly the same low proportion of women and men (0% women, 0.2% men). Obviously, there is an equal proportion of women and men (1%) who are covered by other employer-based insurance. Mutual health organization, community-based insurance, and privately purchased commercial insurance covers 0.1% respectively for both women and men. Other insurance covers 0.1% for women and 0.2% for men.

The overall trend shows that insurance coverage for both women and men in Solomon Islands is low, indicating that insurance is too expensive to afford.

A small proportion of both women and men aged 25 and over, living in urban areas and in the Western Province and have a higher education level, are more likely to be covered by other employer-based insurance.

Table 3.8.1: Health insurance coverage — Women*Percentage of women aged 15–49 with specific types of health insurance coverage, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007*

Background characteristic	Social security	Other employer-based insurance	Mutual health organisation/ community-based insurance	Privately purchased commercial insurance	Other	None	Number
Age							
15–19	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	99.9	687
20–24	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.2	98.8	716
25–29	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.1	99.1	729
30–34	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.1	0.0	98.3	600
35–39	0.1	1.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	98.3	482
40–44	0.0	1.0	0.2	0.0	0.4	98.3	336
45–49	0.0	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.0	99.0	273
Residence							
Urban	0.1	2.7	0.2	0.3	0.4	96.3	636
Rural	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	99.4	3,187
Region							
Honiara	0.1	2.8	0.1	0.4	0.2	96.4	481
Guadalcanal	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	99.6	637
Malaita	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	840
Western	0.0	3.4	0.3	0.0	0.3	96.0	458
Other provinces	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	99.7	1,407
Education							
No education	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	99.3	520
Primary	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	99.4	2,114
Secondary	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	98.4	1,067
More than secondary	0.3	5.3	0.0	2.1	0.8	91.6	122
Wealth quintile							
Lowest	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	99.7	696
Second	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	755
Middle	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	99.4	738
Fourth	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	99.6	769
Highest	0.0	2.9	0.1	0.4	0.4	96.1	864
Total	0.0	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.1	98.9	3,823

Table 3.8.2: Health insurance coverage — Men*Percentage of men aged 15–49 with specific types of health insurance coverage, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007*

Background characteristic	Social security	Other employer-based insurance	Mutual health organisation/ community-based insurance	Privately purchased commercial insurance	Other	None	Number
Age							
15–19	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	292
20–24	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.1	99.4	304
25–29	0.0	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	99.3	266
30–34	0.7	1.1	0.3	0.0	1.2	96.8	266
35–39	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	98.6	239
40–44	0.3	1.9	0.4	0.0	0.6	97.5	134
45–49	1.5	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	98.0	113
Residence							
Urban	0.0	1.9	0.4	0.1	1.4	96.4	301
Rural	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	99.2	1,313
Region							
Honiara	0.0	2.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	97.4	240
Guadalcanal	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	98.2	249
Malaita	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	99.4	345
Western	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.9	96.9	181
Other provinces	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	99.5	599
Education							
No education	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	88
Primary	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.2	99.3	794
Secondary	0.0	1.6	0.1	0.2	0.0	98.3	593
More than secondary	1.6	0.5	0.5	0.0	1.8	95.8	138
Wealth quintile							
Lowest	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	99.6	281
Second	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	99.8	291
Middle	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	323
Fourth	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	99.0	353
Highest	0.6	2.3	0.3	0.3	1.1	95.6	366
Total 15–49	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	98.7	1,614
50+	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.2	99.2	442
Total men 15+	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.2	98.8	2,056

3.9 KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE TOWARD TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis (TB) is a major killer of women, men and children in most developing countries. Knowledge about TB is critical to understanding how people deal with the disease. The 2006/2007 SIDHS asked questions about knowledge and attitude toward TB. Tables 3.9.1 and 3.9.2 show several indicators relating to respondents' knowledge and attitude concerning TB, including the percentages who have heard of TB, who know that TB is spread through the air by coughing, who believe that TB can be cured, and who would want to keep it a secret that a family member has TB.

Table 3.9.1: Knowledge and attitude concerning tuberculosis — Women

Percentage of women aged 15–49 who have heard of tuberculosis (TB), and among women who have heard of TB, the percentage who know that TB is spread through the air by coughing, the percentage who believe that TB can be cured, and the percentage who would want to keep secret that a family member has TB, by background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Among all women		Among women who have heard of TB:			
	Percentage who have heard of TB	Number	Percentage who report that TB is spread through the air by coughing	Percentage who believe that TB can be cured	Percentage who would want a family member's TB kept secret	Number
Age						
15–19	91.2	687	77.6	81.7	19.1	627
20–24	95.2	716	81.9	85.5	17.1	682
25–29	93.3	729	83.5	87.0	19.8	680
30–34	94.7	600	79.9	87.0	14.5	568
35–39	95.0	482	85.4	85.1	19.6	458
40–44	93.9	336	82.7	90.4	12.6	315
45–49	96.6	273	80.1	81.2	16.8	264
Residence						
Urban	97.3	636	91.1	88.6	15.0	619
Rural	93.3	3,187	79.5	84.8	18.0	2,975
Region						
Honiara	96.9	481	89.3	90.1	14.8	466
Guadalcanal	93.8	637	89.4	80.2	13.7	597
Malaita	93.1	840	75.7	86.4	13.5	782
Western	96.5	458	96.4	87.9	18.6	442
Other provinces	92.8	1,407	73.6	84.8	22.1	1,306
Education						
No education	87.0	520	76.6	80.6	15.8	453
Primary	93.9	2,114	78.0	84.4	17.4	1,984
Secondary	97.0	1,067	89.4	88.4	18.1	1,035
More than secondary	100.0	122	89.4	94.6	18.8	122
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	91.0	696	74.4	79.8	16.3	634
Second	92.2	755	73.3	84.5	22.6	697
Middle	93.8	738	82.9	85.6	19.6	692
Fourth	95.6	769	84.5	86.9	14.5	735
Highest	96.7	864	90.0	89.0	14.9	836
Total	94.0	3,823	81.5	85.4	17.5	3,594

Knowledge of TB by both women and men is almost universal (94% and 98%, respectively). Slightly more Solomon Islands men (86%) than women (82%) reported that TB is spread through the air by coughing. About nine in ten Solomon Islands women and men believe that TB can be cured. This figure generally increases with age and educational attainment. More women in urban areas believe that TB can be cured than women in rural areas.

Table 3.9.2: Knowledge and attitude concerning tuberculosis — Men

Percentage of men aged 15–49 who have heard of tuberculosis (TB), and among men who have heard of TB, the percentage who know that TB is spread through the air by coughing, the percentage who believe that TB can be cured, and the percentage who would want to keep secret that a family member has TB, by background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Among all men		Among men who have heard of TB			
	Percentage who have heard of TB	Number	Percentage who believe that TB is spread through the air by coughing	Percentage who believe that TB can be cured	Percentage who would want a family member's TB kept secret	Number
Age						
15–19	93.7	292	80.2	94.5	27.1	273
20–24	99.3	304	87.3	93.2	16.7	302
25–29	97.2	266	85.9	90.2	14.8	258
30–34	98.0	266	87.3	94.5	22.5	261
35–39	99.5	239	88.5	96.8	30.7	237
40–44	95.8	134	87.9	93.8	17.4	128
45–49	99.4	113	87.6	98.6	19.6	112
Residence						
Urban	99.3	301	86.2	93.2	6.6	299
Rural	97.1	1,313	86.1	94.3	25.1	1,274
Region						
Honiara	99.1	240	89.1	91.8	5.8	238
Guadalcanal	98.4	249	94.8	98.8	16.8	245
Malaita	97.6	345	73.9	95.4	2.9	337
Western	99.6	181	86.3	94.9	13.7	180
Other provinces	95.7	599	88.2	92.1	43.5	573
Education						
No education	91.8	88	70.8	94.6	3.1	81
Primary	96.8	794	84.4	91.8	27.0	768
Secondary	98.8	593	88.7	96.7	16.8	587
More than secondary	99.2	138	93.4	96.0	22.0	137
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	98.5	281	83.3	98.4	26.4	277
Second	98.1	291	87.0	93.4	38.7	286
Middle	96.1	323	84.5	95.6	17.6	310
Fourth	95.8	353	88.5	92.6	21.0	338
Highest	99.0	366	86.6	91.5	8.2	362
Total 15–49	97.5	1,614	86.1	94.1	21.5	1,573
50+	97.1	442	83.0	93.4	22.6	429
Total men 15+	97.4	2,056	85.4	94.0	21.8	2,002

A small difference is observed for rural and urban women in terms of those who would want it kept secret that a family member had TB: 18% for rural women, 15% for urban women. In contrast, the proportion of men expressing a desire to keep it secret about a family member with TB was higher among rural men (25%) than urban men (7%).

3.10 TOBACCO USE

Tobacco is responsible for many deaths around the world including Solomon Islands.

The 2006/2007 SIDHS asked women and men aged 15–49 about whether they smoked cigarettes, a pipe or other tobacco products. Respondents were also asked how many cigarettes they smoked in the preceding 24 hours.

Tables 3.10.1 and 3.10.2 show the number of women and men aged 15–49 who smoked cigarettes, pipe or other tobacco products (including the number of cigarettes smoked) in the preceding 24 hours before the DHS survey.

A large proportion of women aged 15–49 (80%) do not use tobacco as compared with 42% of men. More men (45%) than women (14%) smoke cigarettes. Slightly more women in urban areas (20%) than in rural areas (13%) smoke cigarettes. The same pattern is observed for men, where 53% of men in urban areas smoke cigarettes compared with 43% of men in rural areas.

Some significant difference can be observed for women and men who use other tobacco. About 53% of men smoke other tobacco compared with only 9.2% of women.

The results also indicate that about 10% of pregnant women and those women who breastfeed smoke both cigarettes and other tobacco.

Table 3.10.1: Tobacco use — Women

Percentage of women aged 15–49 who smoke cigarettes or a pipe or use other tobacco products, and the percent distribution of cigarette smokers by number of cigarettes smoked in the preceding 24 hours, according to background characteristics and maternity status, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Tobacco type			Does not use tobacco	Number of women	Number of cigarettes in last 24 hours					Total	Number of cigarette smokers
	Cigarettes	Pipe	Other tobacco			0	1–2	3–5	6–9	10+		
Age												
15–19	13.9	0.5	7.2	83.2	687	3.1	62.8	22.2	3.7	8.2	100.0	96
20–24	17.3	0.6	7.6	78.6	716	6.8	53.5	19.6	9.7	10.4	100.0	124
25–29	13.1	1.7	8.4	80.7	729	12.3	35.1	37.3	1.5	13.7	100.0	96
30–34	12.3	3.4	10.2	79.9	600	15.0	38.6	29.4	4.3	12.6	100.0	74
35–39	13.6	5.8	11.8	76.1	482	9.1	63.7	16.9	7.3	3.0	100.0	66
40–44	10.0	6.7	11.9	79.6	336	(8.7)	(48.1)	(32.2)	(3.1)	(7.9)	100.0	34
45–49	14.0	6.7	11.4	74.4	273	(31.0)	(9.7)	(38.2)	(3.2)	(18.0)	100.0	38
Residence												
Urban	19.7	0.0	7.1	78.8	636	4.1	32.0	28.9	13.6	21.3	100.0	125
Rural	12.6	3.4	9.7	79.7	3,187	12.4	52.3	25.7	2.5	7.0	100.0	401
Region												
Honiara	20.3	0.1	7.2	78.2	481	5.2	32.5	27.6	13.3	21.4	100.0	98
Guadalcanal	12.1	8.4	8.1	79.0	637	18.7	34.6	24.7	9.3	12.7	100.0	77
Malaita	10.6	1.4	6.9	85.5	840	3.8	45.3	41.6	6.8	2.5	100.0	89
Western	8.4	0.6	4.2	87.2	458	(9.1)	(43.0)	(25.8)	(2.7)	(19.5)	100.0	39
Other provinces	15.9	3.0	13.5	74.1	1,407	12.8	60.1	20.7	0.0	6.4	100.0	224
Education												
No education	12.8	6.7	11.2	76.4	520	9.8	36.6	48.1	1.0	4.5	100.0	67
Primary	12.5	3.3	9.7	80.3	2,114	14.9	50.6	23.0	4.0	7.4	100.0	265
Secondary	16.5	0.5	7.5	80.0	1,067	4.4	47.4	23.6	8.2	16.4	100.0	176
More than secondary	15.4	0.0	9.0	74.0	122	(6.1)	(43.8)	(24.8)	(7.8)	(17.5)	100.0	19
Maternity status												
Pregnant	9.5	4.4	10.2	81.7	228	*	*	*	*	*	100.0	22
Breastfeeding (not pregnant)	10.4	4.1	8.5	82.5	990	5.9	45.5	31.4	4.1	13.2	100.0	103
Neither	15.4	2.3	9.5	78.2	2,605	10.8	48.2	26.1	5.3	9.6	100.0	401
Wealth quintile												
Lowest	12.5	7.2	12.0	75.6	696	9.6	65.6	20.3	2.5	2.0	100.0	87
Second	10.6	4.7	8.1	79.1	755	(7.2)	(57.2)	(26.8)	(1.8)	(7.1)	100.0	80
Middle	14.9	2.9	11.1	79.7	738	18.5	44.2	28.2	5.1	4.1	100.0	110
Fourth	15.1	0.4	11.9	80.0	769	11.9	46.7	28.6	2.9	9.9	100.0	116
Highest	15.5	0.0	4.1	82.5	864	5.0	33.3	27.1	11.0	23.5	100.0	133
Total	13.8	2.9	9.2	79.5	3,823	10.4	47.5	26.5	5.2	10.4	100.0	526

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25–49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

Tables 3.10.1 and 3.10.2 further show that a significant proportion of both women and men smoked several cigarettes in the 24 hours preceding the survey. For example, 48% of women reported that they smoke 1–2 cigarettes compared with 19% of men. In contrast, about 37% of men reported that they smoked 3–5 cigarettes in the preceding 24 hours compared with 27% of women. Tobacco use — in this case, cigarette smoking — for both women and men has a strong link with age and educational background. For example, cigarette smoking is more prevalent among women in the 20–24 age group (17.3%), while cigarette smoking among men is more prevalent in the 20–29 age group. This is further supported by educational attainment, where tobacco use among women increases with educational attainment, while the opposite is true for

men, where tobacco use decreases with educational attainment. In general, men use some form of tobacco more often than women.

Table 3.10.2: Tobacco use — Men

Percentage of men aged 15–49 who smoke cigarettes or a pipe or use other tobacco products, and the percent distribution of cigarette smokers by number of cigarettes smoked in the preceding 24 hours, according to background characteristics, Solomon Islands 2007

Background characteristic	Uses tobacco					Number of cigarettes in last 24 hours							Number of cigarette smokers
	Cigarettes	Pipe	Other tobacco	Does not use tobacco	Number of men	0	1–2	3–5	6–9	10+	Don't know/missing	Total	
Age													
15–19	34.7	0.3	32.5	59.8	292	2.4	43.9	37.7	3.7	11.9	0.3	100.0	101
20–24	52.5	0.8	55.7	36.5	304	2.2	15.4	33.0	7.7	40.8	0.9	100.0	160
25–29	58.1	0.8	64.3	29.7	266	3.9	14.9	38.2	14.3	28.2	0.5	100.0	155
30–34	49.5	2.0	64.3	33.6	266	6.6	18.2	35.8	7.5	31.0	0.9	100.0	132
35–39	38.0	1.2	50.7	45.0	239	6.2	15.4	43.7	7.1	26.5	1.2	100.0	91
40–44	31.8	2.0	49.0	47.5	134	12.1	13.7	28.2	4.1	41.9	0.0	100.0	43
45–49	37.2	3.3	55.5	40.2	113	18.0	7.9	36.6	11.7	23.7	2.2	100.0	42
Residence													
Urban	52.5	0.1	38.4	46.1	301	0.0	12.7	33.1	18.7	34.7	0.9	100.0	158
Rural	43.0	1.5	56.4	40.5	1,313	6.9	21.1	37.5	5.6	28.1	0.8	100.0	565
Region													
Honiara	52.0	0.1	38.1	46.2	240	0.0	11.7	30.8	19.3	37.1	1.1	100.0	125
Guadalcanal	42.8	7.7	51.6	42.4	249	12.2	17.6	39.5	13.6	14.0	3.1	100.0	107
Malaita	48.6	0.1	54.7	44.0	345	0.0	18.5	32.0	9.4	39.6	0.5	100.0	168
Western	47.9	0.0	54.1	38.2	181	29.9	18.0	29.1	5.3	17.6	0.0	100.0	87
Other provinces	39.6	0.0	58.3	38.9	599	0.0	24.9	44.2	0.9	29.8	0.1	100.0	237
Education													
No education	53.6	3.4	78.5	19.8	88	(4.7)	(11.0)	(32.4)	(3.2)	(48.7)	(0.0)	100.0	47
Primary	43.6	1.6	56.4	39.5	794	7.0	17.6	39.3	7.7	28.0	0.4	100.0	347
Secondary	47.4	0.7	49.2	43.1	593	4.4	23.6	33.8	9.8	26.9	1.4	100.0	281
More than secondary	34.6	0.0	33.7	60.4	138	0.0	13.5	36.8	10.9	37.8	0.9	100.0	48
Wealth quintile													
Lowest	41.8	2.8	60.0	39.3	281	4.8	21.4	38.7	6.2	27.7	1.2	100.0	117
Second	49.2	1.5	60.6	34.3	291	6.2	26.6	41.0	5.5	20.0	0.8	100.0	143
Middle	35.8	1.4	44.6	50.9	323	6.1	21.3	28.5	8.1	35.3	0.8	100.0	115
Fourth	49.1	0.5	62.7	34.1	353	7.2	16.4	43.8	6.3	25.8	0.5	100.0	173
Highest	47.4	0.3	39.8	47.9	366	2.9	13.2	29.5	14.9	38.6	0.8	100.0	173
Total 15–49	44.8	1.2	53.0	41.5	1,614	5.4	19.3	36.5	8.5	29.6	0.8	100.0	723
50+	29.0	4.0	43.0	50.2	442	8.5	27.9	31.1	6.9	23.3	2.3	100.0	128
Total men 15+	41.4	1.8	50.9	43.4	2,056	5.9	20.5	35.7	8.2	28.6	1.0	100.0	851

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases.

3.11 KEY RESULTS

This chapter describes the situation of men and women of reproductive age in the Solomon Islands in terms of their age at the time of the survey, marital status, residence, education, literacy and health. Understanding the context of the reproductive health and overall health status of women and men is critical to understanding issues related to women's and men's health that are discussed in other chapters of this report. Such information also provides a solid foundation for planning and development. This section summarises the main findings in this chapter.

1. The population of women and men of reproductive age in Solomon Islands is concentrated in the 15–29 age group. About 50% of both women and men are in the 15–29 age group. Of these, around 30% are in the 30–39 age group, and less than 20% are in the 40–49 age group. The proportion of both women and men decline with increasing age, reflecting the young population and early death in Solomon Islands.
2. Women are more likely to be married than men, an indication that women are losing out on opportunities such as education and better jobs. A higher proportion of married women means that more women are exposed to getting pregnant and, thus, positively contributing to the increasing fertility level.
3. The distribution of women and men is more concentrated in rural areas because the majority of Solomon Islands' population reside in rural areas. The population residing in rural areas are less likely to have access to economic and social services.
4. More women in the reproductive age categories have no education compared with men. These uneducated women are more likely to be found in rural areas and in the lowest wealth quintile. More men are literate than women.
5. About 50% of women are not exposed to any media compared with 25% of men who are exposed. Most of these women reside in rural areas and have either no primary education or only a primary level education. Women who are less exposed to information and knowledge are less likely to change their perceptions and behaviour.
6. Far fewer women than men are currently employed (36% compared with 71%). Education is very much associated with employment because most employed women and men are those with higher educational levels.
7. Employed women in Solomon Islands are more engaged in occupations such as agriculture and unskilled manual, whereas men are more engaged in agriculture and skilled manual work. Slightly the same small proportion of employed women and men are in professional/technical and managerial occupations.
8. About one in every two employed women aged 15–49 receive payment in cash from non-agricultural work, 75% are not paid for doing agricultural work.