

Chapter 5. Literacy and Education

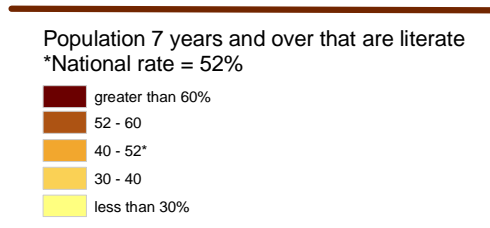
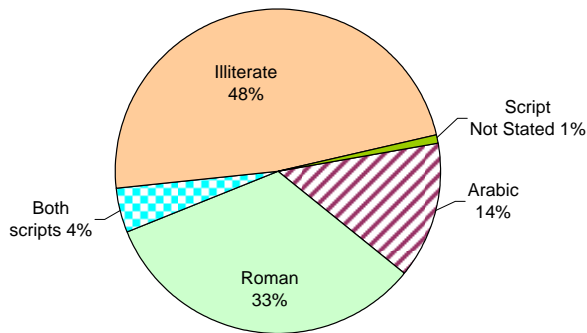
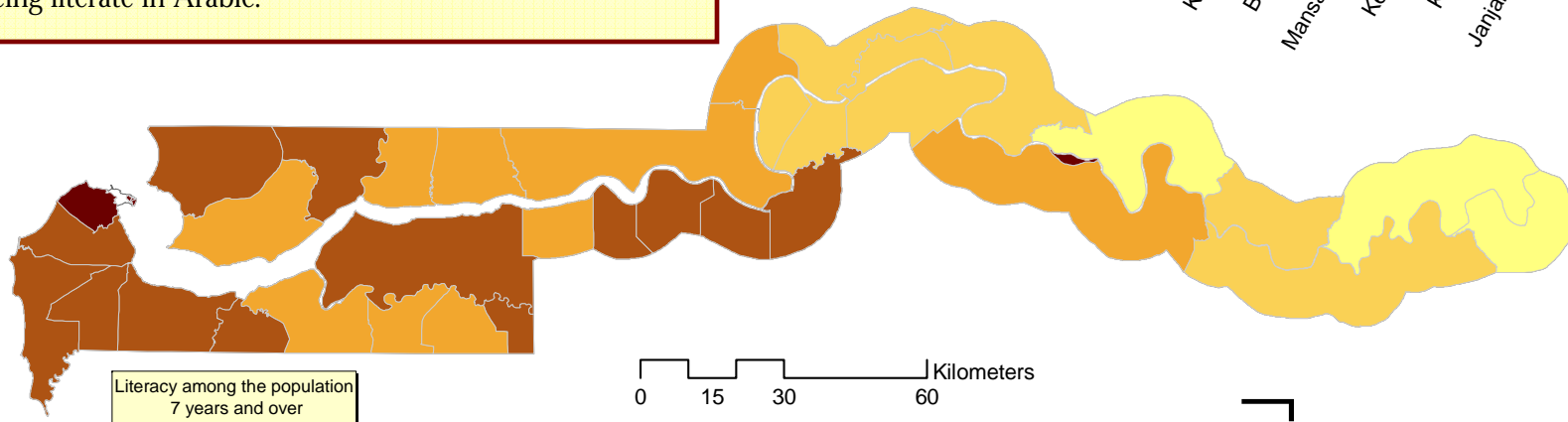
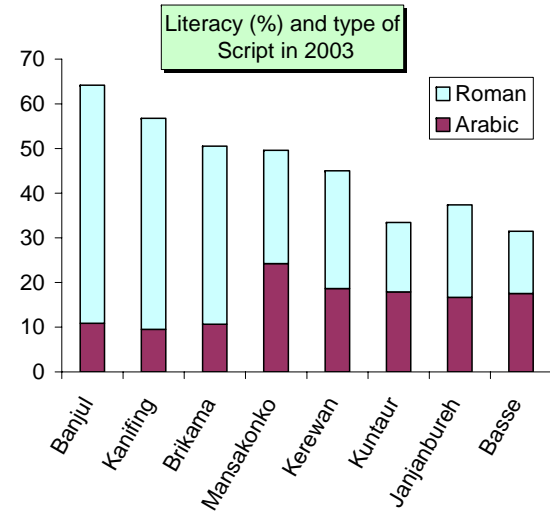


This chapter presents information on the spatial distribution of literacy and education among the various demographic groups. During the census, all persons aged 7 years and over were asked about their ability to read and write Arabic, Roman letters or both. Individuals are determined literate if they are able to read and or write either or both scripts. Also individuals three years and over were asked about their education and if they are currently attending, pre-school, lower basic/primary, upper basic and senior secondary school, vocational and other tertiary schools. The data suggests a considerable regional and demographic variation in both literacy and educational attainment. Overall, literacy rates are highest among urban dwellers than rural dwellers. In all regions, literacy is higher among males than females. Additionally, more males than females are enrolled in secondary schools and post-secondary schools.

Notes: Care must be taken in interpreting the data as regional and gender disparity in both literacy and education may be skewed by the high rate of migration among people with education in search of job in urban areas. Since more males than females stay longer at school and are more likely to migrate to the urban centers, the regional and gender difference are even more apparent.

Literacy among the population 7 years and over in 2003

In 2003, 52 percent of the population 7 years and over are literate in Arabic or Roman letters or both. Overall, western Gambia with its proximity to Banjul and Kanifing has the highest literacy rates than Upper River and Central River Divisions. With the exception of rural districts like Upper Saloum, Nianija and Kiang East, literacy in Roman letters is two times higher than in Arabic letters. Figures on literacy in Arabic letters may have been over reported as many people confuse ability to read Koranic text with being literate in Arabic.

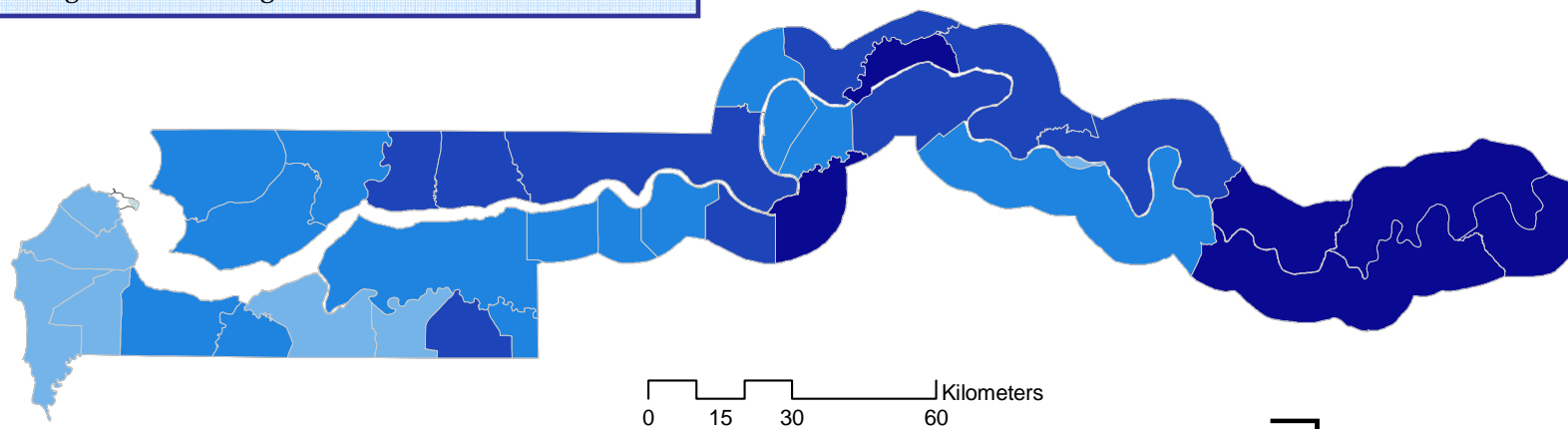


Population data: The Gambia Population and Housing Census 2003
District boundary data: The Gambia 50000 dataset. Department of State for Local Government and Lands, 2001.

Gender difference in literacy in 2003

Male literacy divided by female literacy among the population 7 years and over

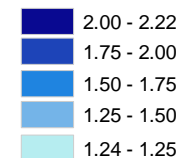
The proportion of male literacy to that of female literacy equals one where male literacy is equal to female literacy. Throughout the Gambia, literacy is higher among males than females. This is more so in eastern Gambia where male literacy is more than twice that of female literacy. Even in Banjul where the gap between male and female literacy is small, literacy among males is 20% higher than among females.



Districts with greatest and smallest gender difference in literacy among population 7 years and over. Male literacy divided by female literacy

District	Population	Ratio- Male:female	District	Population	Ratio- Male:female
Kantora	30,006	2.24	Kombo South	61,615	1.42
Wuli	36,198	2.21	Kanifing	322,735	1.34
Fuladu East	98,078	2.15	Banjul North	8,453	1.25
Sandu	18,304	2.12	Banjul South	17,514	1.25
Jarra East	12,445	2.06	Banjul Central	9,094	1.24

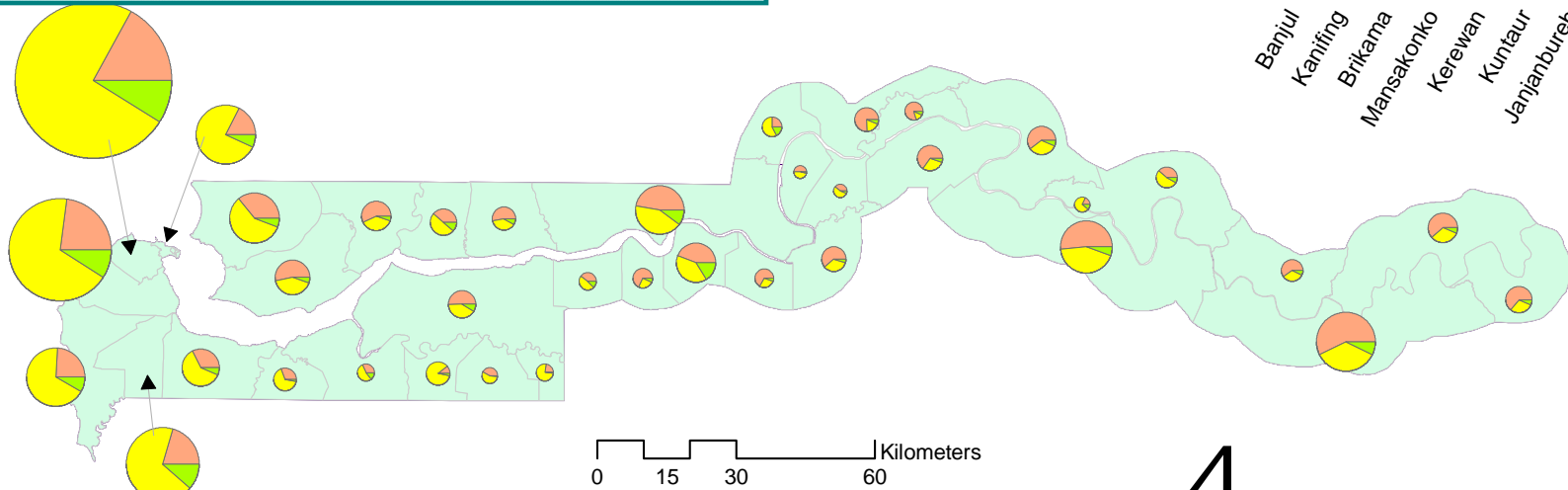
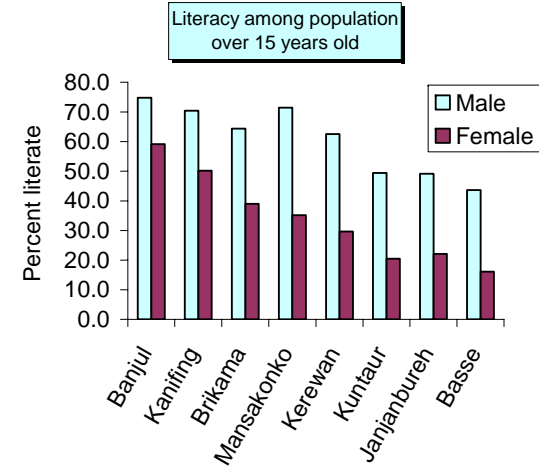
Gender difference in literacy among 7 years and over: Male literacy divide by female literacy
*National ratio = 1.5



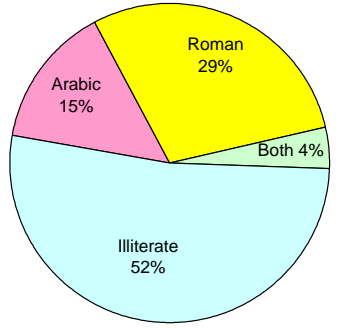
Population data: The Gambia Population and Housing Census 2003
District boundary data: The Gambia 50000 dataset. Department of State for Local Government and Lands, 2001.

Literacy among the population over 15 years old in 2003

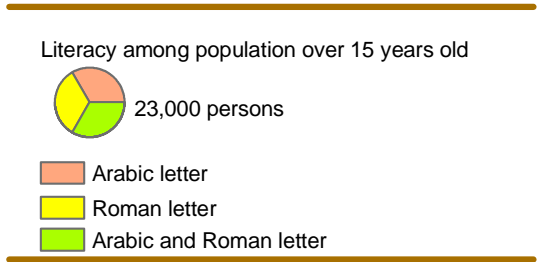
Forty-eight percent of the population, 15 years and over are literate in Roman script, Arabic script or both. Literacy among this group is highest in Banjul (66%) and lowest in Basse (28%). Generally, literacy is higher among males (62%) than among females (34%). This gender gap widens with distance from Banjul, away from urban centers.



Literacy among population 15 years and over



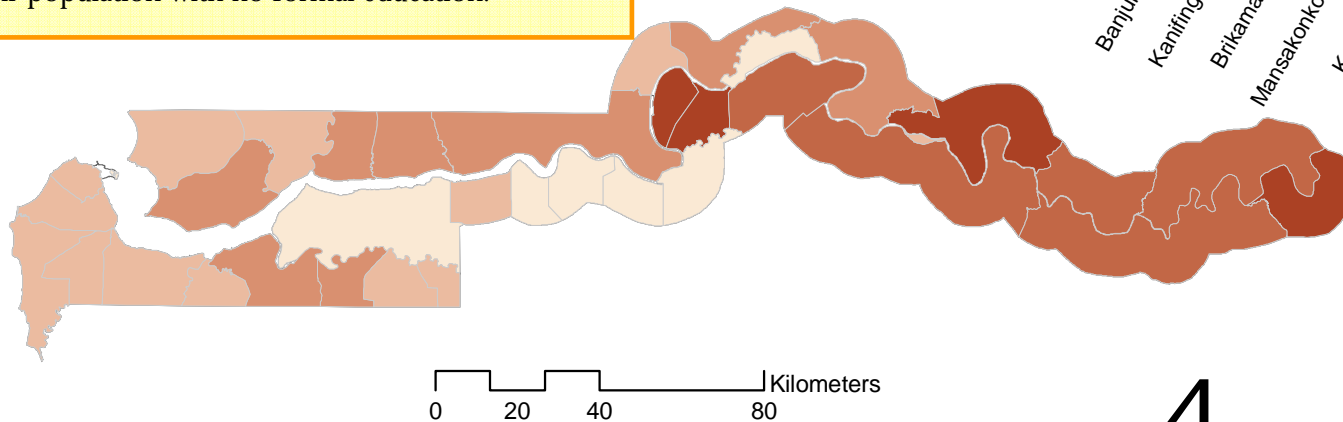
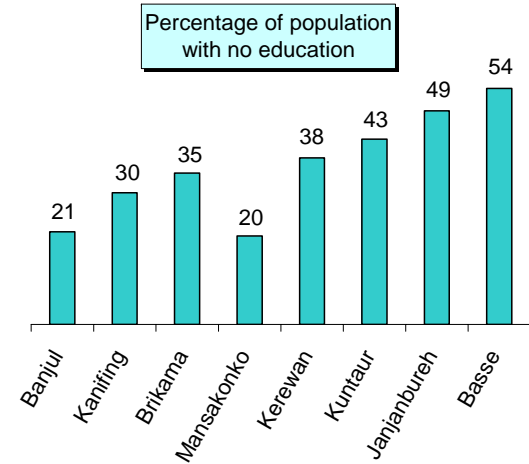
4



Population data: The Gambia Population and Housing Census 2003
 District boundary data: The Gambia 50000 dataset. Department of State for Local Government and Lands, 2001.

Population with no education in 2003

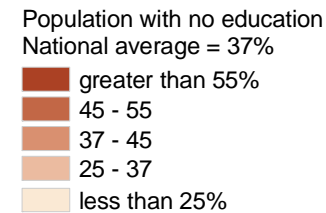
Nationally, 37 percent of the population aged 3 years and over have no formal education. The proportion of the population with no education varies from 20% in Mansakonko to 54% in Basse LGA. Districts with lowest proportion of their population with no formal education include Jarra Central (16%), Kiang East (18%) and Banjul (18%). Areas of high incidence of no education are Niamina and Sami with over two-thirds of their population with no formal education.



4

Districts with highest and lowest percentage of their population with no education

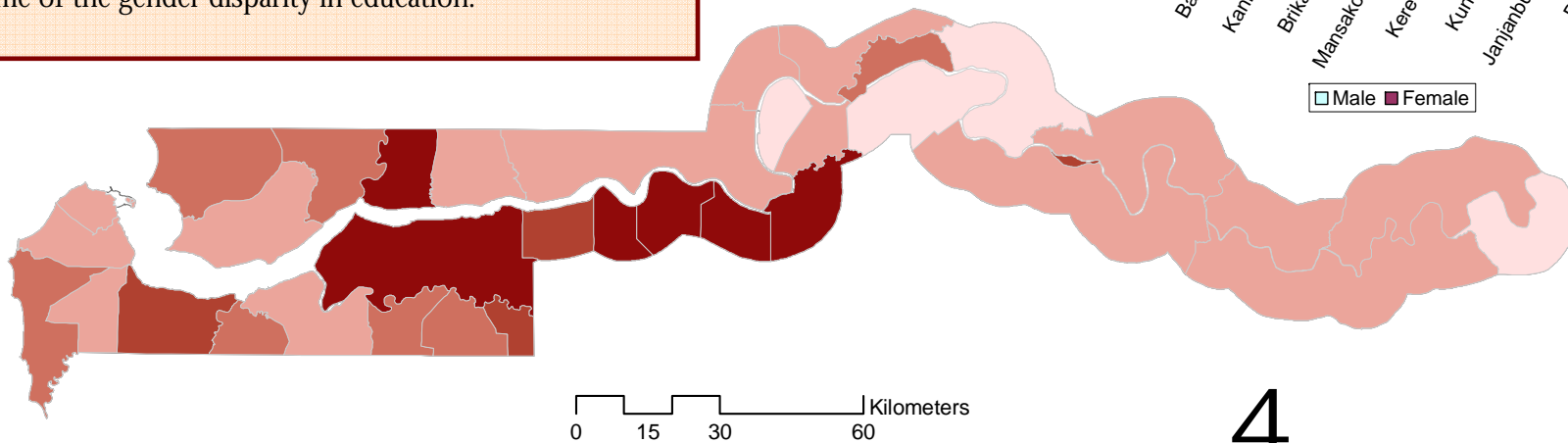
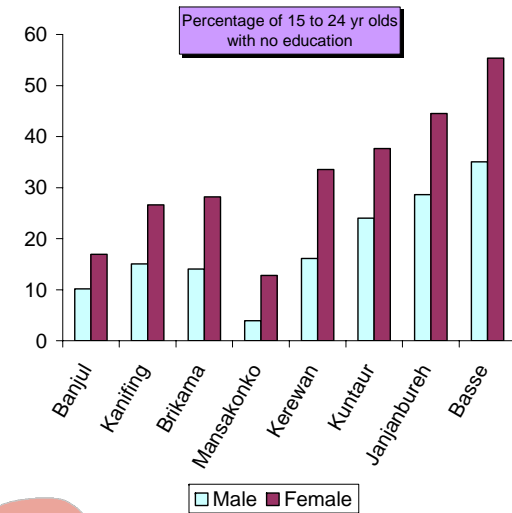
District	Population	% with no Education	District	Population	% with no Education
Jarra Central	5,654	16	Sandu	16,357	55
Kiang East	5,570	18	Kantora	26,894	62
Banjul South	5,729	18	Niamina West	5,847	62
Jarra West	20,048	18	Sami	16,547	66
Kiang West	12,850	19	N. Dankunku	5,276	67



Population data: The Gambia Population and Housing Census 2003
 District boundary data: The Gambia 50000 dataset. Department of State for Local Government and Lands, 2001.

**Gender difference in education in 2003:
15 to 24 year olds with no education**

About 1 in four 15 to 24 year olds is without education, with significant differences between male and females and between urban and rural areas. Nationally, there are about 2 times more females than males in this age group with no education. Until the introduction of free-education policy for girls, enrollment and retention rates among girls was very low. This, combined with early marriage help explain some of the gender disparity in education.



4

Gender difference in education among 15 to 24 year olds: percentage of females with no education divided by percentage of males with no educational

- greater than 3.0
- 2.5 - 3.0
- 2.0 - 2.5
- 1.5 - 2.0
- less than 1.5

Population data: The Gambia Population and Housing Census 2003
District boundary data: The Gambia 50000 dataset. Department of State for Local Government and Lands, 2001.