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Press Release

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Government needs to do more for people living with disabilities

The Government needs to do more to meet its obligation under the United Nations Convention to uphold the rights of people living with disabilities.

This was part of the recommendations in the 2019 Census report.

Solomon Islands is a signatory to a United Nations convention to uphold the rights of people with disabilities; and is therefore obliged to: “Promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.”

The 2019 Census found there were higher prevalence of disability for females especially those residing in rural area and elderly population.

Those having difficulty in seeing represented 10.6% of the population, followed by difficulty in remembering (8.4%), Walking (7.8%), Hearing (5.6%), Self-care (4.7%) and communicating (3.7%).

Table 10.2.1: Percentage distribution of the population aged 5 years and older with disabilities by functional domain and degree of difficulty, Solomon Islands: 2019

Functional Domain	Sex			Residence			Age Group			
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	5-17	18-59	60+
Seeing										
Total	10.6	10.1	11.1	10.6	7.2	11.9	10.6	0.8	11.2	56.9
Some Difficulty	9.6	9.2	9.9	9.6	6.7	10.7	9.6	0.7	10.7	47.2
A lot of difficulty	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.4	1.1	0.9	0.1	0.5	8.9
Cannot do at all	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.8
Hearing										
Total	5.6	5.2	5.9	5.6	3.2	6.5	5.6	1.6	4.6	34.9
Some Difficulty	4.8	4.5	5.1	4.8	2.9	5.5	4.8	1.5	4.2	27.5
A lot of difficulty	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.1	0.3	6.7
Cannot do at all	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.7
Walking										
Total	7.8	6.9	8.8	7.8	4.3	9.2	7.8	1.0	7.0	50.2
Some Difficulty	6.5	5.8	7.4	6.5	3.7	7.6	6.5	0.9	6.4	37.9
A lot of difficulty	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.1	0.5	1.3	1.1	0.1	0.5	10.6
Cannot do at all	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.8
Remembering										
Total	8.4	7.7	9.2	8.4	4.0	10.2	8.4	3.5	7.8	40.1
Some Difficulty	7.5	6.9	8.2	7.5	3.6	9.1	7.5	3.3	7.3	32.4
A lot of difficulty	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.3	1.0	0.8	0.2	0.4	6.8
Cannot do at all	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.9
Self-care										
Total	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.7	2.3	5.7	4.7	5.0	2.4	23.3
Some Difficulty	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.9	1.9	4.7	3.9	4.4	2.1	17.5
A lot of difficulty	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.2	4.5
Cannot do at all	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	1.4
Communicating										
Total	3.7	3.5	3.9	3.7	1.8	4.5	3.7	2.8	2.3	20.2
Some Difficulty	3.1	2.9	3.3	3.1	1.5	3.7	3.1	2.4	2.0	15.7
A lot of difficulty	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.2	3.7
Cannot do at all	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.8

About 11% of the population 5 years and over reported at least a functional form of disability.

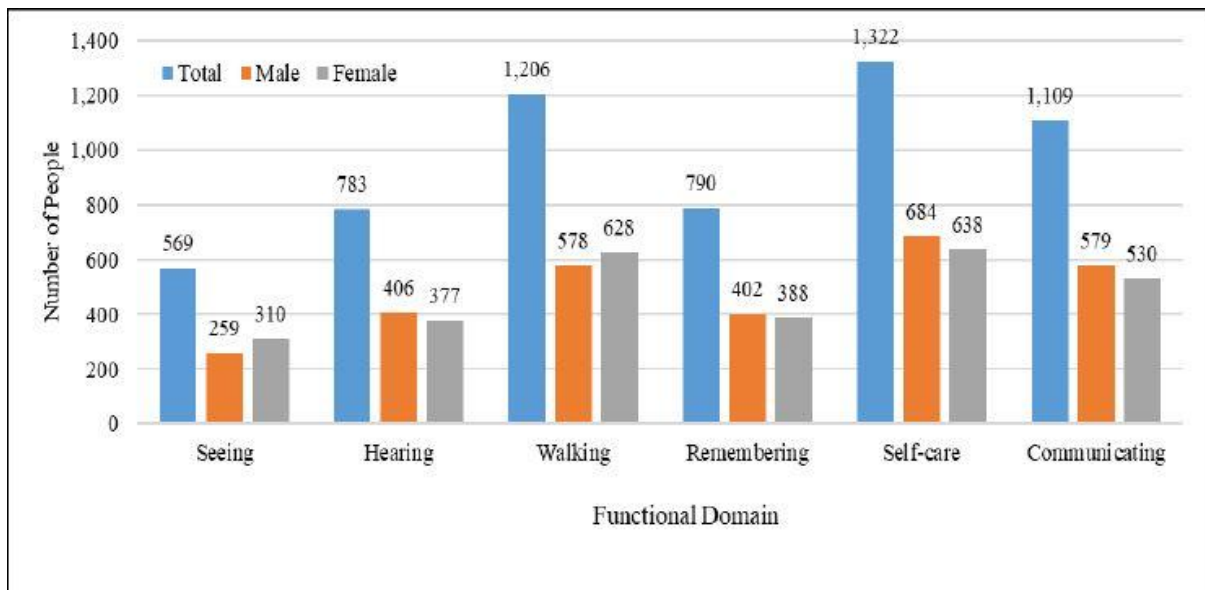
This was especially prevalent amongst people with some difficulties in Seeing (10.6%), comprising of more females (51%) than males (49%).

This was followed by persons with some difficulty in other functional domains such as: Remembering (8.4%), Walking (7.8%), Hearing (5.6%), Self-care (4.7%) and Communicating (3.7%).

The prevalence of these forms of disability were higher amongst the rural population than in urban areas.

About 1% of the population 5 years and over reported a 'severe' form of disability ("Cannot do at all"). This comprised of 1,322 persons with severe difficulties in self-care - the most prevalent. This was followed by 1,206 persons who were suffering from lameness (walking) and 1,109 person who had sever difficulties in communicating. The others included 783 persons who were deaf and 569 persons with blindness.

(Figure 10.2.1) 120



Comparison by gender showed that severe disability was higher among females in Seeing (310) and Walking (628) while the males dominated in Hearing (406), Remembering (402) Self-care (684) and Communicating (579) (Figure 10.2.1).

Results of having disabilities by province as presented in Table 10.2.2 reported the domain of Seeing with the highest prevalence of disabilities for Western (12.6), Central (11.4), Rennell-Bellona (10.4), Guadalcanal (9.8), Malaita (10.5), Temotu (15.4) and Honiara (6.8).

Health problems related to remembering were higher in Choiseul (13.9), Isabel (15.9) and Makira (14.0).

Table 10.2.2: Percentage of persons having disabilities by functional domain and province, Solomon Islands: 2019

Province	Percentage of population aged 5 years and older with Difficulty in:					
	Seeing	Hearing	Walking	Remembering	Self-care	Communicating
Total	10.6	5.6	7.8	8.4	4.7	3.7
Male	10.1	5.2	6.9	7.7	4.6	3.5
Female	11.1	5.9	8.8	9.2	4.8	3.9
Choiseul	12.2	6.3	7.2	13.9	7.3	7.6
Male	11.3	5.5	5.9	12.7	7.0	7.2
Female	13.2	7.2	8.5	15.2	7.5	7.9
Western	12.6	6.5	8.5	10.8	4.9	4.0
Male	11.9	6.2	7.1	10.1	4.8	3.9
Female	13.3	7.0	10.0	11.6	5.0	4.1
Isabel	15.1	7.3	10.4	15.9	6.7	7.2
Male	14.6	7.0	8.9	14.7	6.8	6.5
Female	15.6	7.7	12.0	17.2	6.5	7.9
Central	11.4	6.2	9.2	8.8	4.4	3.2
Male	11.1	5.8	7.9	7.6	3.9	2.6
Female	11.8	6.5	10.6	10.0	5.0	3.8
Rennell- Bellona	10.4	5.5	8.5	6.0	8.8	5.3
Male	8.7	5.1	7.1	5.9	8.5	5.3
Female	12.5	6.0	10.1	6.0	9.2	5.3
Guadalcanal	9.8	5.3	7.8	7.9	4.6	3.1
Male	9.4	5.0	7.1	7.3	4.7	2.9
Female	10.1	5.5	8.5	8.6	4.5	3.3
Malaita	10.5	5.9	8.1	7.3	5.0	3.9
Male	9.9	5.4	7.1	6.5	4.7	3.7
Female	11.2	6.4	9.0	8.0	5.2	4.2
Makira-Ulawa	13.1	7.0	11.0	14.0	6.9	4.8
Male	12.8	6.4	9.9	12.9	7.0	4.6
Female	13.4	7.7	12.2	15.2	6.9	5.0
Temotu	15.4	7.8	13.4	11.0	7.0	5.4
Male	14.2	7.2	11.1	9.3	6.5	4.6
Female	16.6	8.4	15.6	12.5	7.5	6.2
Honiara	6.8	3.1	4.0	3.4	2.0	1.6
Male	6.6	3.0	3.7	3.1	2.0	1.6
Female	6.9	3.2	4.3	3.8	2.0	1.6

These population groups constitute a vulnerable and disadvantaged group, and they are a target group in need of specialized medical assistance.

Although it is commendable that the government supports an inclusive education policy, which also includes specialized schools for disabled pupils, the government needs to do more.

Further special facilities and resources in schools and work places are required to cater for the special needs of people with disabilities, and specialized education facilities are needed in the different provinces

- **SINSO Press**