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Ten percent of the illiterate population concentrated in nine of the 261 districts

Ghana Statistical Service highlights geographic variations in illiteracy on International Literacy Day

Data from the 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) indicates that **only nine of the 261 districts account for more than a tenth (10.4%) of the 7.9 million illiterate persons 6 years and older. Four of the nine districts are in the Northern Region, two in the North East Region, and one each in the Savannah, Volta, and Upper East regions.** These districts are Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (123,455), Nanumba North Municipal (100,046), East Mamprusi Municipal (98,293), Sagnarigu Municipal (94,006), Gushegu Municipal (92,056), West Mamprusi Municipal (82,262), Central Gonja (81,261), Ketu South Municipal (76,082), and Bawku West (74,798). In all, these nine districts combined have 822,259 persons 6 years and older who are not literate i.e., cannot read and write with understanding in any language.

One in every five districts (53 out of the 261) had at least half of the population 6 years and older being illiterate. **The percent illiterate was highest in the Karaga district (81.0%)** followed by the Gushegu Municipal (80.7%), and North East Gonja (80.3%) districts. **Six districts had more than three-quarters of the population 6 years and older that was illiterate** – the aforementioned three districts and the Mion (77.7%), North Gonja (77.3%), and Mamprugu Moagduri (76.4%) districts.

Nine out of the 16 regions had at least one district that had more than half of its population 6 years and older that was illiterate: Northern (14), Upper West (10), Upper East (8), Savannah (6), North East (5), Bono East (4), Oti (4), Eastern (1), and Ashanti (1).

There were 15 districts with less than 10.0 percent of the population that was illiterate. All except one of these 15 districts were in the Greater Accra Region and Ashanti is the only region to have a district with an illiteracy rate of less than 10.0

percent (Kwadaso Municipal) and a district with an illiteracy rate greater than 50.0 percent (Sekyere Afram Plains). The district with the lowest illiteracy rate was Ayawaso West Municipal (5.9%), followed by La Dade-Kotopon Municipal (6.1%), and Tema West Municipal (6.2%).

International Literacy Day is commemorated annually on 8th September to raise awareness of the importance of literacy. The theme for the 2023 International Literacy Day is "Promoting literacy for a world in transition: Building the foundation for sustainable and peaceful societies."

Disaggregated statistics on literacy can be directly accessed from the GSS StatsBank. Further information on literacy is also available from the 2021 PHC General Report on Literacy and Education which presents statistics on literacy in English and local languages disaggregated by sex, region, and type of locality, and the Thematic Report Brief on Illiteracy in Ghana which presents statistics on the trends, patterns and correlates of illiteracy.

About the Ghana Statistical Service

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) provides comprehensive, reliable, quality, relevant, accurate and timely statistical information to guide national development as stipulated in Section 3 of the Statistical Service Act, 2019 (Act 1003). The organisation's vision is to be the trusted provider of official statistics for good governance and its mission being the efficient collection, production, management, and dissemination of quality official statistics based on international standards, using competent and motivated staff for evidence-based decision-making, in support of national development.

The Statistical Service produces monthly and quarterly data on important economic indicators such as Consumer Inflation, Producer Inflation and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GSS also regularly generates periodic population, housing, demographic and economic data at the locality, district, and national levels from routine surveys and censuses. The statistics generated by GSS are utilised by a wide cross-section of users including the public sector, businesses, academia, civil society organisations and development partners. For more information on the statistics generated by GSS visit www.statsghana.gov.gh.