KNBS
KENYA NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS
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KENYA VISION 2030

PRELIMINARY REPORT

GENDER STATISTICS AND INDICATORS: ANALYSIS OF MOBILE PHONE OWNERSHIP IN KENYA FOR SDG 5.B.1



INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) prioritized gender issues by integrating a set of gender indicators to address the agenda 2030 through the aspiration 'leaving no one behind'. This commitment and principal demand that countries and regions identify their most vulnerable and marginalized populations and understand how they fare on key markers of well-being, particularly in comparison to other groups in society.

SDG Goal 5 on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women in the public and private spheres and to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources and access to ownership of property.

At the global level, there are 54 gender-related SDG indicators to track the progress of gender equality. Target 5.b of SDG 5 focuses on enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular, information and communications technology (ICT), to promote the empowerment of women. This can be measured by evaluating the proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone by sex as articulated in Indicator 5.b.1[1].

While mobile phone networks have spread rapidly over

1 The indicator is defined as: Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex'; (region 'urban and rural', age group, educational level and location).

UN WOMEN | WOMEN COUNT

the last decade and the number of mobile-cellular subscriptions is quasi equal to the number of the people living on earth, not every person uses or owns a mobile-cellular telephone. A number of studies have highlighted the link between mobile phone ownership and empowerment, and productivity growth. Indeed, the mobile phone is a personal device that, if owned and not just shared, provides women with a degree of independence and autonomy for personal, professional, and economic empowerment. Mobile phone ownership is thus an important indicator for tracking gender equality[2].

It is in view of this that the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) in collaboration with UN Women through the Women Count Kenya reviewed and reprocessed data from official statistical publications and databases[3] to generate information on the 'proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone' by sex, region (geographic and/or urban/rural), age group, level of education, and occupation with a view to identify gaps and as a critical step towards addressing them. This issue brief provides insights from the data review and reprocessing with a view to supporting reporting and decision-making on SDG goal 5.b.1.

The findings of this UN Women-KNBS study are thus aimed at helping to fill gender data gaps and/or generate statistics and indicators with further disaggregation towards Kenya's reporting on SDG 5.b.1.

Mobile phone ownership - definitions and as an indicator of empowerment

A mobile (cellular) telephone is a portable telephone subscribing to a public mobile telephone service using cellular technology, which provides access to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN)[4]. This includes analogue and digital cellular systems and technologies and users of both post-paid subscriptions and prepaid accounts.

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The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) defines SDG Indicator 5.b.1 as the "proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex'[5]; (region 'urban and rural', age group, educational level, and location). An individual can be said to own a mobile cellular phone if she/he has a mobile cellular phone device with at least one active SIM card for personal use or has a mobile cellular phone supplied by an employer that one can use for personal communication including calls and access to the internet. An individual who has a mobile phone for personal use that is not registered under her/his name is also included as a mobile phone owner. However, individuals who have only active SIM card(s) and do not have a mobile phone device are excluded from mobile phone ownership, as are those whose SIM cards are inactive[6].

While data on the proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone currently only exists for very few countries, ITU encourages all countries to collect data on this indicator through national household surveys; the indicator is expected to be added to the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development's Core List of Indicators. The number of countries with official data for this indicator is thus expected to increase in the near future[7].

The Kenya Integrated Budget and Household Survey (KIHBS 2015/2016) was the only source of data that provided detailed sex disaggregated information on mobile phone ownership used for analysis of SDG indicator 5.b.1. On the contrary, the 2014 KHDS collected information on mobile phone ownership at the household level, hence, failed to satisfy the requirements for analyzing the indicator 5.b.1 requirement for data on individuals.

DATA SOURCE

The Kenya Integrated Budget and Household Survey (KIHBS 2015/2016) was the only source of provided a comprehensive dataset with detailed sex disaggregated information on mobile phone ownership used for analysis of SDG indicator 5.b.1.

SUMMARY FINDINGS - 2015/16

Following the above definitions and parameters, the data review and reprocessing exercise found that 18,544,529 (44.4%) of Kenya's population[8] own mobile phones. Of these, 9,179,775 (49.5%) are women and 9,365,225 (50.5%) are men.

By Sex Disaggregation

The sex disaggregation of the population owning a mobile phone revealed that, 49.5 per cent were women, while 50.5 per cent were men.

2 https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/ accessed on 25th June 2021.
3 These comprised the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014 KHDS), ICT Survey (2016) and Kenya Integrated Budget and Household Survey (KIHBS) to generate indicator 5.b.1: the proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex.
4 International Telecommunication Union (ITU) definition
5 https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/ accessed on 25th June 2021.
6 An active SIM card is one that has been used in the last three months.
7 https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/ accessed on 25th June 2021.
8 The total national population aged 3yrs and above is estimated at 41.8 million people (based on xxx population data sourced from xxx)

By Percentage Distribution

Consequently, a further analysis to Identify the extent of the inequalities amongst women and men shows that out of the total female population, the proportion of those who owned a mobile phone was 43.2% compared to their male counterparts at 45.5%, respectively.

By region

While the overall rate of mobile phone ownership dips in rural areas (36% compared to 59% in urban areas), the balance in ownership between women and men flips albeit with a small percentage difference; women comprise 50.2% of people in rural areas who own mobile phones while men comprise 49.8% of rural residents who own a mobile phone. The converse is true in urban areas. Here, the difference in the proportion of the population which owns a mobile phone is slightly more pronounced than the national average in favor of men with women accounting for 48.7% of those who own mobile phones in urban areas.

By age group

When analyzed by age group, girls form a larger proportion of the population aged 5-9 years who own a mobile phone (approximately 57% compared to about 44% of boys). However, in the age 10-14 years, proportion of the girls who own a mobile phone was 49%. This difference increases further in the 15–19-year age group in which girls form slightly more than 43% of mobile phone owners while boys form approximately 57% of mobile phone owners. Other age groups with a significant difference in the proportion of mobile phone owners who are women and men are the 45-49-year group (women 50%, men 53%), and 60-64 years (women 48% and men 53%). The largest discrepancy in mobile phone ownership between the sexes by age group is observed in the age 70 and above population in which women comprise 46% of mobile phone owners, while men comprise 54% of mobile phone owners.

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The proportion of people who own mobile phones peaks between the ages of 25 years and 54 years (more than 80% of this age bracket owns a mobile phone), with the highest proportion of the population owning a mobile phone between the ages of 35-39 (85%), which is the prime working population. Mobile phone ownership starts to decline from the age of 40 years with only 45% of the population aged 70 years and above owning a mobile phone.

By education

The study found that the proportion of the population that owns a mobile phone rises with an increase in the level of education. Aside from children in pre-primary, the lowest proportion (27%) of women and men who owned mobile phones was observed among those who had no education, while the highest was observed among those with college (97%), university undergraduate (99%) and university postgraduate (approximately 100%).

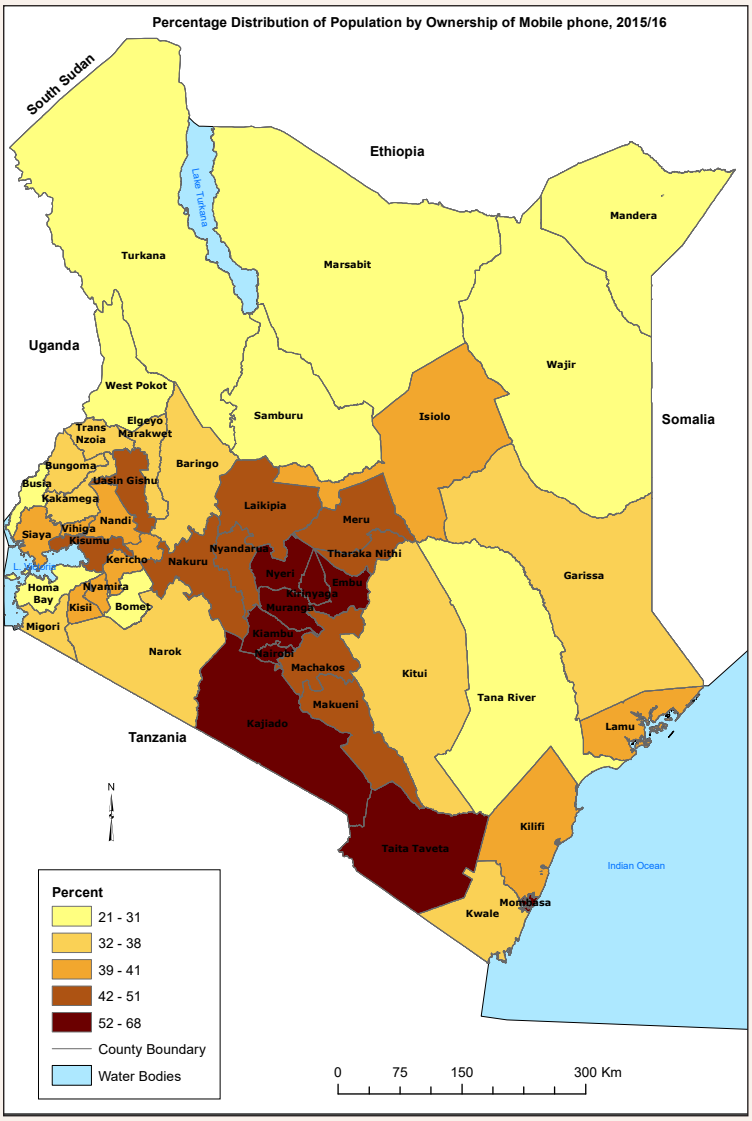
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The only exception was among secondary school graduates of whom only 74% owned a mobile phone compared to those with post-primary and vocational training, of whom 84% owned mobile phones. 54% of those with madrassa education own mobile phones. When disaggregated by both education level and sex, significant discrepancies were observed. For instance, women only comprised 34% of the university postgraduate population that owns a mobile phone compared to their male counterparts, 66% of whom own mobile phones. Conversely, girls/women comprised 64% of mobile phone owners with pre-primary education in stark contrast with boys/men who comprised 36% of mobile phone owners with the same level of education. Girls/women with a primary school education also formed the bulk of mobile phone owners in this group (51% compared with 49% of boys/men with the same level of education).

By county

Unsurprisingly, a higher proportion of residents in urban areas including Nairobi (68%) the capital and the coastal city of Mombasa (65%) show the highest mobile ownership rates compared to Turkana (21%), West Pokot (23%) and Samburu (24%) in the north and north-east, which registered the lowest proportions of mobile phone ownership among populations here. The proportion of women mobile phone owners in these three counties is notably lower than the proportion of men mobile phone owners.

Women make up only 43% of mobile phone owners in Turkana compared to 57% of men here, while women comprise only 38% of mobile phone owners in West Pokot compared to 62% of men here. The proportions are significantly more evenly split in the capital city; women make up 49% of mobile phone owners in Nairobi compared with men here (51%) while women comprise 46% of mobile phone owners in Mombasa compared with 54% of men in this city.



CONCLUSIONS

While this study is a commendable first step in compiling and analyzing disaggregated mobile phone ownership data in Kenya, further analysis of the data and observation not captured in this exercise is required for further policy documentation. Some examples of these investigations for policy documentation include what information do the 3–5-year-old children who own mobile phones access and how detrimental is the above in the society?

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the data gaps, there is a need to implement the following reccomendations:

a) Integration of gender related data gaps in future censuses and surveys;

b) Addressing issues that contribute to gender related data gaps such as capacity, technology, budgets etc;

c) Promoting cooperation and collaboration in addressing gender data gaps at both national and international arena; and

d) Promoting access to and use of gender related data.

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