St. Vincent and the Grenadines Population and Housing Census Report 2023

They Counting You, They Counting Me.
The Information will Benefit the Whole Country

STATISTICAL OFFICE
ECONOMIC PLANNING DIVISION
MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING
KINGSTOWN, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

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Introduction

Background

Population and Housing Censuses remain the most comprehensive statistical exercises conducted by a country. They provide detailed information on the size, structure, and distribution of the population, as well as on households and dwellings. These data are essential for guiding national planning, designing policies, monitoring social and economic progress, and ensuring equitable allocation of resources.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, censuses have been conducted periodically since the late nineteenth century, creating a valuable statistical record of demographic and housing change. Each census has built upon the last, documenting long-term shifts such as fertility decline, outward migration, ageing of the population, improvements in education and housing, and changes in labour force participation. The 2012 Census, for example, provided baseline information on migration trends, gender disparities in the labour force, and the expansion of housing infrastructure.

The 2023 Population and Housing Census, the sixteenth national census, is the most recent exercise and updates information last collected in 2012. It comes at a critical juncture as the country addresses the challenges of climate change, outward migration, recovery from global economic shocks, and the ongoing need for resilient and inclusive development. Unlike earlier rounds, the 2023 Census employed digital data collection technologies, significantly improving efficiency, timeliness, and accuracy.

To build public awareness and encourage participation, the exercise was conducted under the slogan: "Census 2023. They counting you, they counting me. The information will benefit the whole country." This message underscored the national importance of the census and its role in producing data that serves everyone.

At the international and regional levels, the census forms part of the United Nations 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and is guided by the CARICOM Regional Census Strategy, ensuring comparability with other countries in the Caribbean and beyond.[1] At the national level, it provides essential benchmarks for the National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) 2013-2025, monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and strengthening statistical infrastructure for evidence-based decision-making.

Legal Framework

The census was conducted under the authority of the Census and Statistics Act, No. 24 of 1983, which establishes the mandate of the Statistical Office within the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology.

The Act authorizes the Statistician to direct and oversee census operations, appoint field staff, and ensure confidentiality of all information collected. The law stipulates that individual information provided

[1] *United Nations: Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Revision 4*

during the census must not be disclosed or used for non-statistical purposes, and it prescribes penalties for breaches of secrecy or failure to participate. These legal safeguards ensure the credibility of the census and public trust in the process.

Objectives

The main objective of the 2023 Population and Housing Census was to generate benchmark statistical data to support development planning, policymaking, and service delivery at national and community levels. The specific objectives were to:

1. Ascertain the size, structure, and spatial distribution of the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
2. Collect information on housing conditions, amenities, and access to basic services.
3. Monitor changes in key demographic, social, and economic indicators since the 2012 Census.
4. Update census maps and enumeration area lists to support census operations and future sample surveys.
5. Strengthen the statistical infrastructure to support policymaking and administration at national and local government levels.
6. Enhance the technical capacity of the Statistical Office to implement large-scale household surveys and censuses.
7. Provide data to inform policies and programmes that aim to improve the quality of life and sustainable development in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Phases of the Census

The 2023 Census was implemented in three main phases:

1. **Pre-enumeration Phase:** This phase involved updating the geographic frame and delineating enumeration districts, designing and pre-testing questionnaires, and recruiting and training field staff. A major innovation was the adoption of the World Bank's Survey Solutions CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) platform for questionnaire design, testing, and deployment, which significantly modernized the census process. Publicity and awareness campaigns were also undertaken to prepare and engage the population.
2. **Enumeration Phase:** This was the core data collection stage. Enumerators, equipped with tablets running the Survey Solutions CAPI platform, visited every household and dwelling across the country. Data were captured electronically in real time, reducing errors and improving the speed of processing. Information was collected on all persons present on census night as well as usual residents.
3. **Post-enumeration Phase:** After enumeration, a Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) was conducted to assess the completeness and quality of the data. This phase also included data processing, validation, and analysis. Preliminary results were disseminated shortly after enumeration, followed by comprehensive final results and thematic reports.

Technical Note to Data Users

During census enumeration, interviewers rely on a designated household respondent to supply information for all members of the household. In many cases, responses are provided on behalf of individuals who were unavailable or difficult to contact during the data collection period. While every effort is made to secure direct information for all persons, this is not always feasible due to temporary absence, non-contact, or refusal to participate. In such cases, proxy responses from relatives or neighbors are sought to minimize under coverage and ensure that all individuals are represented in the census.

Despite these measures, some degree of non-response is unavoidable. To safeguard data quality, the Statistical Office implements a series of rigorous procedures, including consistency checks, editing, imputation, and validation, at the collection, processing, and analysis stages. These measures are designed to reduce errors, adjust for missing or inconsistent information, and ensure that the final census outputs are as accurate, reliable, and comparable as possible.

Main Concepts and Definitions

Some basic definitions and terminologies used in the census are presented below:

Population

The term, as used in most of the tables in this report, refers to the household or non-institutional population, residing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This includes persons who were temporarily overseas on June 15, 2023, for business, vacation, educational, medical or other purposes. However, this excludes persons who were in prisons, hospitals (extended stay), home for the aged, etc.

Institutional Population

This comprises persons who are non-members of dwellings such as correctional and penal facilities, hospices, hospitals, youth detention centres, children's homes and senior citizens' homes.

Household Population

This includes usual residents in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, residents temporarily abroad for study or other reasons, non-Vincentian workers and other civilian residents.

Usual Resident

This is a person who has lived continuously for most of the last 12 months (that is, for at least six months and one day), not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least twelve months within the dwelling unit where she/he is found

Resident Population

This includes the non-institutional population. Visitors to St. Vincent and the Grenadines are excluded.

Population

This refers to the country's de jure and de facto population; that is, the total number of usual residents in the country (de jure population), as well as all persons present in the country (de facto population), during the enumeration period. The total population in this report refers to the de jure population, which includes: Persons living in private dwellings (households), Persons living in non-private dwellings, group dwellings and institutions, Persons with no fixed abode (e.g. homeless), Persons at work (e.g. Vincentian workers on cruise ships), on vacation, at school, Persons seeking medical treatment outside of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for most of the last 12 months prior to Census enumeration.

Homeless Population

The homeless population consists of those who have no fixed abode. While these persons were counted on census night, they are excluded from the analysis.

Household

A household consists of one or more persons living together (i.e. sleeping most nights of a week 4 out of 7) and making common provision for food and other essentials for living. It is important to note that a member of a household need not be a relative of the main family. For example, a boarder or a domestic servant who sleeps most nights of the week is a member of the household. It is possible for a household to consist of just one person, or of more than one family, as long as they share living arrangements. A group of unrelated persons living together can also comprise a household.

One-person household

A person who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living without combining with any other person to form a multi person household.

A multi-person household
A group of two or more persons living together who make common provision for food and other essentials for living. The persons in the group may pool their resources and may have a common budget; and they may be related or unrelated persons, or constitute a combination of persons both related and unrelated persons.

Household Head

The household head is a man or woman, who is acknowledged as such by the other members. In the case of a group of unrelated persons sharing a dwelling on an equal basis, the person whom the others acknowledge as the head is accepted as such.

Dwelling Unit

A dwelling is defined as a set of living quarters. It must have direct access from the street or common landing, staircase, vestibule, hall, lobby, passage or gallery where occupants can enter or leave without passing through anybody else's living quarters. A dwelling unit is one in which a household can reside. This may be a single house, flat, apartment, out room, part of a commercial building or a boarding house catering for less than six persons.

Census Night

This refers to June 15, 2023. This being the day on which the survey to determine the physical population, of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, was carried out.

Economically Active Population[2]

This term refers to the body of persons, ages of 15 and over, who furnish the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services. The term labour force is used interchangeably with economically active population; however, labour force refers only to persons, aged 15 years and older, who were either employed or seeking work during the week preceding Census Night, June 7 – 14, 2023. Hence, the labour force, is a combination of two groups: those who were employed (the working population), and those who were seeking work (the unemployed population). Note: tending a household garden, caring for children and elders, and volunteer work *are not considered examples of economic activity. These persons are therefore classified as economically inactive.*

Employment

Persons were labelled as Employed if they stated that they mostly worked during the short reference period. The question used to determine if a person should have been counted as employed was: '*Did you/N work for a minimum of ONE HOUR during the past week?*'. Persons who were temporarily absent from their job, with a formal attachment were also included amongst the employed. The following categories are included in relation to employment: Persons doing unpaid work in family firm or business, Persons who are employed for payment in case or in kind, but temporarily absent from work, Persons who are seasonal or occasional workers with formal attachment to their jobs, Persons who are apprentices and trainees.

Unemployment

Persons were labelled as Unemployed, if during the reference week, they were without work, wanted to work and were available for work, but failed to secure a job. This includes those who actively looked for work, as well as those who did nothing about finding a job, because they knew none were available or were otherwise discouraged.

Disability[3]

The questions cover six functional domains: seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care, and communication. Each question has four response categories: (1) No, no difficulty, (2) Yes, some difficulty, (3) Yes, a lot of difficulty, and (4) Cannot do it at all. Persons in St Vincent and the Grenadines classified as having a disability must be five years of age or older and be either unable to perform or have a lot of difficulty performing at least one of the six functional areas to be classified as having a disability. Scaled responses begin to describe the continuum of functioning from mild to severe.

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[2] International Labour Organization. (2023a). ILOSTAT: *Concepts and definitions – Labour force statistics*.

[3] Washington Group on Disability Statistics. (n.d.). *Definition of disability*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/about/definition-of-disability/

Methodology

For the purpose of the 2023 census, the country was divided into 13 geographic units, called Census Divisions (CD). There were 11 CDs on the mainland and 2 in the Grenadines. The CDs were further sub-divided into 412 smaller groupings called Enumeration Districts (ED). The size of each ED was designed to ensure manageable and equitable distribution of the workload to the enumerators and supervisors. In general, the aim was to limit the size of each ED to 150 households, with allowances for some variation due to the varying sizes of the different CDs.

Questionnaire Design and Data Collection Approach

The census questionnaire was developed for a Survey Solutions Andriod Tablet through consultations with stakeholders in the public and private sectors, as well as Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). It was designed in accordance with the United Nations' guidelines for the conduct of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses. The questionnaire contained 6 Sections, 29 Sub-sections, 278 Questions.

Coverage of the Census

St. Vincent and the Grenadines' 2023 Population and Housing Census counted both the country's de jure and de facto population. This means that the census sought to determine the total number and characteristics of all persons who were usual residents in the country during the enumeration period (de jure population); as well as count all persons who were present in the country on census night (de facto population).

Reference Periods

The 2023 Population and Housing Census used three specific reference periods. These were the one hour a week, month and year preceding the June 15, 2023, census night.

Main Topics Covered in the Questionnaire

The technical considerations, including the choice of topics were guided by the United Nations' guidelines for the conduct of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses. The main topics addressed on the census questionnaire were as follows: Total population, by sex and age. Economically active population by:

1. Sex and age group
2. Industry
3. Occupation
4. Status in employment
5. Highest educational level
6. Hours of work
7. Other characteristics. The age is defined in terms of age at last birthday. Total number of months worked (by employed persons) during the reference year; and, number of hours worked during the reference week. Income and means of transport used to travel to work.

Classifications Used

Employed persons and unemployed persons previously employed are classified by industry, occupation, and status in employment.

Industry

Based on the question '*Describe the MAIN business activities carried out at the company/establishment for which you work, i.e, type of goods and/or services produced', for the* coding industry, 21 groups of the national classification were used. Links to the ISIC-rev. 4 have been established to the tabulation category (2-digit) level.

Occupation

Based on the question, for the coding of occupation, 10 groups of the national classification were used. Links to the ISCO-08 have been established at the major group (1-digit) level.

Status in Employment

Based on the question 'Did you carry on your own business, work for a wage or salary or as an unpaid worker in a family business?' for coding status in employment, the following groups were used:

1. Paid employee, Government (Local and Central Gov't)
2. Paid employee, State Owned Company/Statutory Board
3. Paid employee, Private Business
4. Paid employee, Private Home
5. Own business with paid employees
6. Own business without paid employees (self-employed)
7. Apprentice/Learners
8. Unpaid family/worker/employee
9. Volunteer worker

Level of Education

Based on the question 'What is the highest formal level of education that you have attained?' for coding education level, the following groups from ISCED 2011 were used:

1. Daycare/Nursery
2. Pre-school
3. Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary
4. Lower / Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3) / Senior Primary
5. Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5)
6. Post Secondary, non-tertiary (diploma or associate degree)
7. Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree
8. Tertiary level - Master's Degree
9. Doctorate level programmes
10. None/Not Stated

Main Differences Compared with the Previous Census

A few differences exist between previous censuses and the 2023 Census. In the 2023 Census the following were included: A module on crime was included; A module on health was included; Additional questions on the disability module; Additional questions on the training module.

Executive Summary

Total Population and Geographic Population Distribution

Between 2012 and 2023, Table A shows, the total population declined marginally, from 109,991 to 109,296 persons, representing a decrease of approximately 0.6%. The vast majority of the population—over 99%—continued to reside in private households, confirming the dominance of family-based living arrangements. In 2023, the household population was 108,764, nearly identical to the 109,188 recorded in 2012, indicating demographic stability despite a minimal overall contraction. The institutional and homeless populations remained very small, together representing less than 1% of the total residents. This pattern suggests limited expansion in institutional living, such as prisons, nursing homes, or special care facilities. It reflects the continued preference and availability of private household living across the population.

Gender distribution within institutions highlights a consistent imbalance, with males far more represented than females, particularly in prisons and homeless shelters. In 2023, institutionalized males totaled 444 compared to 89 females, similar to the 2012 ratio, where males also dominated institutional populations. Women, however, are more represented in nursing homes and special care settings, consistent with longer life expectancy and higher elderly care needs. Overall, while population totals have changed little, the data point to ongoing gendered differences in institutional residency and a steady household-based social structure, with institutional populations remaining marginal in national demographic terms

Table 0-1 Total Population Distribution by Households and Institutions 2012 & 2023

2023						
		Institutional Population				
Sex	**Household Population**	**Homeless Population**	**Prisons**	**Nursing Homes**	**Mental Homes, Hospital, Other Institutions, or Special Living Arrangements**	**Total**
Male	54,757	53	273	15	102	55,200
Female	54,007	2	9	38	40	54,096
Total	**108,764**	**55**	**282**	**53**	**142**	**109,296**

2012						
		Institutional Population				
Sex	**Household Population**	**Homeless Population**	**Prisons**	**Hospitals, Mental Homes & Nursing Homes**	**Other Institutions or Special Living Arrangements**	**Total**
Male	55,835	84	371	101	282	55,200
Female	53353	1	12	186	20	54,096
Total	**109,188**	**55**	**383**	**287**	**48**	**109,991**

Table B reveals notable regional shifts despite stable national totals, with the overall household population increasing slightly from 107,835 in 2001 to 108,764 in 2023. The capital, Kingstown, experienced a sharp population decline of −6.0% between 2001 and 2012 and a further −15.9% between 2012 and 2023, indicating sustained urban out-migration. At the same time, the Suburbs of Kingstown and Calliaqua experienced strong growth across both periods, reflecting suburban expansion and relocation to less congested residential zones. This redistribution of population from the urban core to surrounding communities reflects a broader trend toward suburbanization, likely driven by housing availability and improved transport connectivity.

Table 0-2 Total Household Population Distribution by Census Division, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	2001		2012		2023		Percentage Change	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	2001–2012	2012–2023
Kingstown	13,526	12.5	12,712	11.6	10,690	9.8	-6.0	-15.9
Suburbs of Kingstown	13,027	12.1	13,782	12.6	15,705	14.4	5.8	14.0
Calliaqua	22,345	20.7	23,908	21.9	26,560	24.4	7.0	11.1
Marriaqua	8,254	7.7	7,798	7.1	7,360	6.8	-5.5	-5.6
Bridgetown	6,779	6.3	6,564	6.0	6,424	5.9	-3.2	-2.1
Colonarie	7,490	6.9	6,849	6.3	6,742	6.2	-8.6	-1.6
Georgetown	6,964	6.5	7,049	6.5	7,139	6.6	1.2	1.3
Sandy Bay	2,805	2.6	2,576	2.4	2,554	2.3	-8.2	-0.9
Layou	6,338	5.9	6,335	5.8	6,344	5.8	0.0	0.1
Barrouallie	5,459	5.1	5,625	5.2	5,624	5.2	3.0	0.0
Chateaubelair	6,081	5.6	5,756	5.3	4,900	4.5	-5.3	-14.9
Total Mainland	**99,068**	**91.9**	**98,954**	**90.6**	**100,042**	**92.0**	**-0.1**	**1.1**
Northern Grenadines	5,413	5.0	6,184	5.7	5,107	4.7	14.2	-17.4
Southern Grenadines	3,354	3.1	4,050	3.7	3,615	3.3	20.8	-10.7
Total Grenadines	**8,767**	**8.1**	**10,234**	**9.4**	**8,722**	**8.0**	**16.7**	**-14.8**
Total	**107,835**	**100.0**	**109,188**	**100.0**	**108,764**	**100.0**	**1.3**	**-0.4**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Rural and outer island areas displayed mixed results. Traditional agricultural regions such as Marriaqua, Bridgetown, and Colonarie recorded population declines, while Georgetown, Layou, and Barrouallie remained relatively stable. The Grenadines exhibited volatility—showing growth from 2001 to 2012 but sharp declines thereafter—likely linked to fluctuations in tourism and migration. Overall, the data illustrate a slow but clear demographic transition marked by population concentration in peri-urban zones, depopulation of rural and remote communities, and stabilization of total national numbers. These trends underscore the importance of regional planning to support balanced development and mitigate the effects of uneven population change.

Internal Migration

Internal migration intensified over the intercensal period, with birthplace retention falling from 72.0% in 2012 to 58.1% in 2023. Urban centers such as Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its suburbs absorbed 60% of all internal migrants, while rural districts like Georgetown, Chateaubelair, and Marriaqua retained stronger birthplace populations. Women emerged as more mobile than men, with sex ratios among internal migrants showing clear female predominance (77 males per 100 females). Population density remained relatively stable nationally at 724 persons per square mile, but spatial disparities intensified between densely populated urban zones and declining rural areas.

International Migration

International migration continues to shape demographic outcomes. The foreign-born population declined from 4,898 persons (4.5%) in 2012 to 4,440 (4.1%) in 2023, concentrated predominantly in Calliaqua (38%) and Kingstown (18.2%). The foreign-born population aged considerably, with those 65+ rising from 8.3% to 15.3%, and became increasingly feminized, with women outnumbering men (sex ratio of 89 males per 100 females in 2023).

Emigration patterns shifted notably. While Canada and the USA historically dominated as destinations, by 2023 the Caribbean Countries as a group (30.6%) emerged as the leading destination, followed by the United Kingdom (24.6%), USA (21.5%), and Canada (17.3%). Employment remained the primary driver of emigration (63.8%), and the educational profile of emigrants showed gradual upskilling, with college-educated and university-qualified individuals comprising growing shares. Return migration also increased, with nearly half of returnees originating from the Caribbean, reflecting strengthened regional mobility.

Education and Human Capital

Educational participation and attainment showed steady improvement despite demographic contraction. School attendance rates increased across all age groups, rising to 95.4% among children aged 3-14 years in 2023, compared to 91.7% in 2012. Early childhood education (3-4 years) expanded notably, with attendance rising from 74.3% to 86.9%. Gender parity remained stable at primary and secondary levels, though women continued to outpace men in post-secondary and tertiary participation.

Educational attainment improved markedly. The share of the population with no certification fell from 74.1% in 2001 to just 22.7% in 2023. CXC/CSEC passes became the most common qualification (18.2%), while associate and bachelor's degree holders more than doubled over the intercensal period. By 2023, associate degrees accounted for 6.1% and bachelor's degrees 4.4% of certifications, underscoring an expanding skills base. Women dominated higher education outcomes, holding larger shares of associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and postgraduate qualifications compared to men.

Labour Market and Economic Activity

Labour force participation improved modestly from 63.2% in 2012 to 65.5% in 2023, but persistent disparities remained. Male participation stood at 70.9% compared to 60.1% for females, maintaining an 11-percentage-point gender gap. Employment grew from 40,821 to 46,480 persons, while unemployment declined from 21.5% to 17.9%. However, youth unemployment remained critically high at 51.1% for 15-19 year olds and 28.3% for 20-24 year olds.

Employment remained concentrated in services and sales (25.0%), followed by elementary occupations (14.6%) and craft trades (12.4%). Agriculture's share declined from 11.8% to 9.1%, though it remained significant in absolute terms. The private sector accounted for 41% of jobs, while the public sector (government and state-owned enterprises combined) comprised 27.9%. Gender segmentation persisted, with women concentrated in education, health, and clerical roles, while men dominated agriculture, construction, and technical trades.

Among the unemployed, reliance on household and kinship networks remained dominant. In 2023, 22.3% of unemployed persons depended on parental support, 15.2% on local relatives, and 14.7% on spouses or partners. Overseas remittances declined to 6.5%, reflecting weakened transnational safety nets.

Housing and Living Conditions

The number of households expanded to 38,969 in 2023 while average household size declined to 2.8 persons, reflecting smaller family units and delayed household formation. Detached houses remained dominant (77.5%), though attached dwellings, apartments, and duplexes grew in urban centers. Concrete and block construction exceeded 85% of dwellings, underscoring investment in resilience, though nearly half of homes were built before 1999, pointing to an aging stock.

Service access improved significantly. Public-grid electricity reached 93% of households, piped water into dwellings rose from 71% to 80%, and LPG use remained near-universal at 96%. Sanitation showed the largest gains, with septic systems serving 86% of households and pit latrine use nearly halving since 2012. Geographic disparities persisted, however, particularly in the Grenadines, where reliance on private catchments and traditional facilities remained higher than on the mainland.

Health and Chronic Disease

Chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) became increasingly dominant. Hypertension rose from 7.1% in 2001 to 11.3% in 2023, while diabetes climbed from 3.4% to 6.5%. Women reported higher prevalence across most conditions, including hypertension (12.9% vs. 9.6% for men) and diabetes (7.8% vs. 5.1%). Arthritis and asthma remained significant, though both showed slight declines since 2012. Age remained the strongest predictor of chronic illness, with nearly half of hypertension and diabetes cases occurring among persons 65+.

Medical facility use declined sharply from 24,443 persons in 2012 to 13,607 in 2023, despite rising disease prevalence. District health centers and private doctors' offices remained the backbone of service delivery, but reduced patronage highlighted potential barriers to access, including affordability and service availability. Among those with chronic illnesses, kidney disease (57.6%), lupus (51.6%), and cancer (50.9%) recorded the highest facility utilization rates.

Gender, Youth, and Vulnerable Populations

Gender disparities remained evident across multiple domains. Women dominated higher education, accounting for larger shares of associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and postgraduate qualifications. However, they faced higher unemployment (19.8% vs. 16.3% for men) and earned less than men in most occupational categories, despite holding more advanced credentials. Women also reported higher prevalence of chronic illnesses but exhibited greater health-seeking behavior and longer life expectancy.

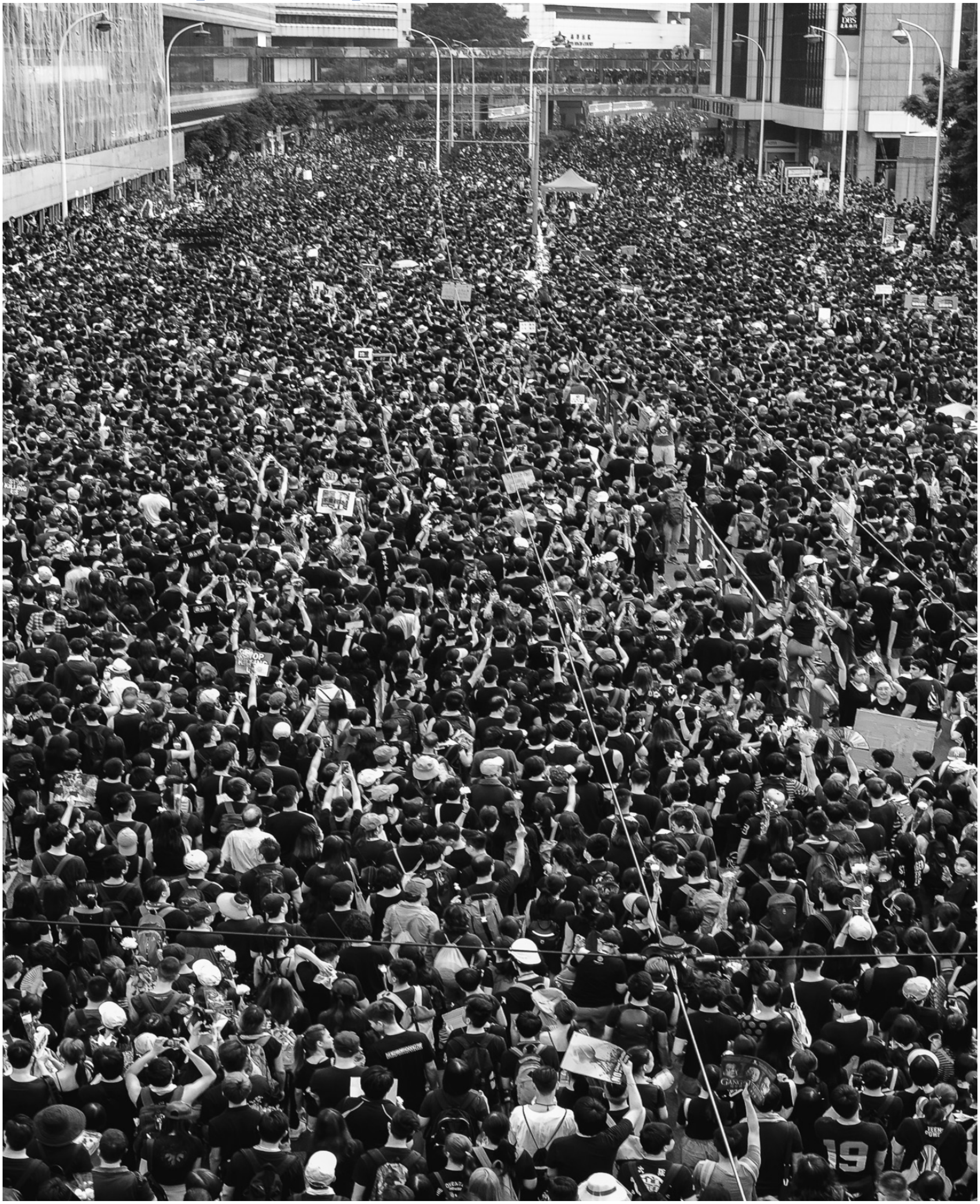
The youth population (15-24 years) declined from 18,519 in 2012 to 15,266 in 2023, representing 14.0% of the total population. School attendance remained high among 15-19 year olds (65.5%), though labour market outcomes were weak, with unemployment exceeding 28% among 20-24 year olds. Marriage and union formation declined sharply, with nearly 79% of youths reporting no spouse or partner in 2023.

Disability affected 4,437 persons (4.3% of those aged 5+), with prevalence rising steeply with age. Vision, mobility, and cognitive difficulties were most common, though the majority of cases were classified as mild to moderate. Women reported higher rates of mild and moderate disabilities, while men were slightly more represented in severe cases.

Conclusion

The 2023 Population and Housing Census confirms that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has entered a new demographic phase characterized by population decline, advanced ageing, and spatial redistribution. Gains in education, housing quality, and service access demonstrate progress toward sustainable development goals, yet persistent challenges remain, including high youth unemployment, gender wage gaps, chronic disease burdens, and rural depopulation. Policy interventions must balance support for an ageing population with investments in youth development, gender equity, and balanced regional growth to ensure long-term demographic resilience and inclusive development.RetryClaude can make mistakes. Please double-check responses.

Chapter 1. Population Size, Growth and Distribution



1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the size, growth, and distribution of the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, drawing primarily on data from the 2023 Population and Housing Census and comparing them with the 2012 Census results. The census remains the most comprehensive source of demographic data, and examining results across time provides insight into how the population has changed over the past decade.

The comparative analysis between 2012 and 2023 reveals not only whether the national population has expanded, contracted, or stabilized, but also where these shifts have occurred and which segments of the population have been most affected. Such insights are vital for policy formulation, as they underpin decisions related to labour markets, education and health services, housing needs, and infrastructure development.

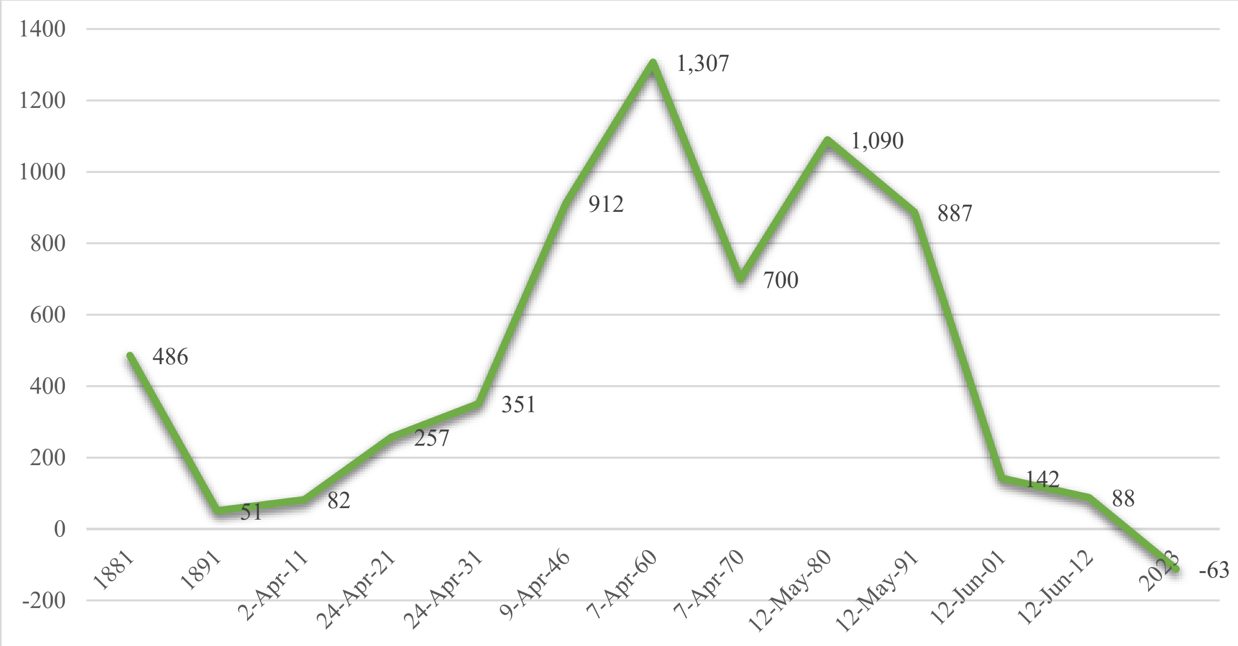
Understanding demographic change is also central to sustainable development planning. Population size and distribution influence pressures on natural resources, the resilience of communities, and the ability of the economy to generate opportunities. By situating the 2023 results against the 2012 benchmark, this chapter provides a clear picture of demographic continuity and change, offering evidence to guide future policy and national development strategies. The next section examines population size and growth in detail, setting the foundation for further analysis.

1.2 Population Size and Growth

The historical trajectory regarding population change in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reveals distinct phases of demographic expansion and contraction. The mid-20th century represented the country's most dynamic growth period, particularly between 1946 and 1960, when the population expanded at an average annual rate of 1,307 persons. This rapid increase reflected relatively high fertility rates in the post-war years, combined with moderate levels of outward migration. The 1970s also registered substantial growth, with an average annual increase of 1,090 persons, marking the last decade of sustained population expansion.

From the 1980s onwards, however, the momentum of growth began to taper. Between 1980 and 1991, the annual increase moderated to 887 persons, and this figure continued to decline in each subsequent intercensal period. From 2001 to 2012, average growth had slowed to just 88 persons per year, signaling the onset of demographic stagnation. This trend culminated in 2023, when for the first time in recorded census history, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines registered an absolute decline in its population. The total population decreased to 109,296 persons in 2023, down from 109,991 in 2012, resulting in a net loss of 695 persons, equivalent to an average annual decrease of approximately 65 persons. These shifts are clearly illustrated in Figure 1.1, which shows the peak levels of growth in the mid-20th century and the sharp contraction that followed, culminating in negative growth in 2023.

Figure 1.1 Average Annual Population Increase from 1971 to 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 1-1 Population Size and Growth, 1871 to 2012

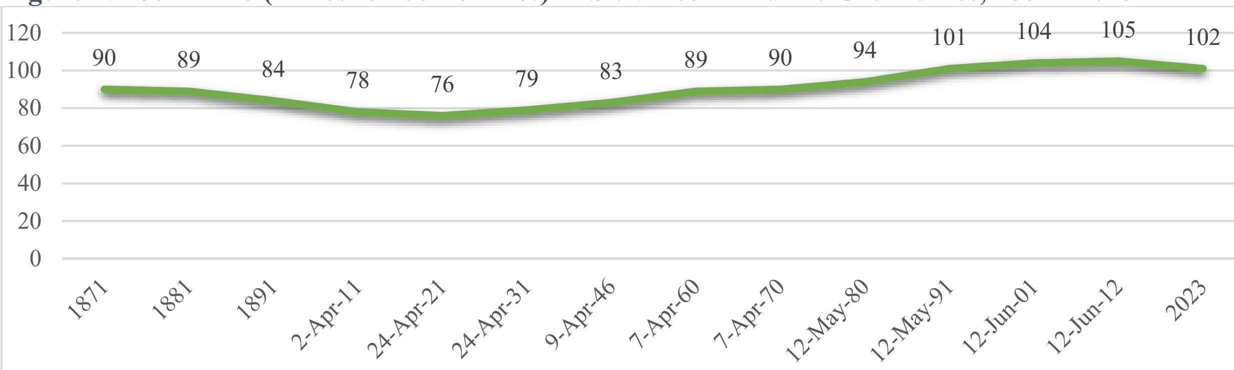
Date of Census	Male	Female	Population	Sex Ratio	Average Annual Increase
1871	16,865	18,823	35,688	090	-
1881	19,047	21,501	40,548	089	486
1891	18,780	22,274	41,054	084	51
02-Apr-1911	18,345	23,532	41,877	078	82
24-Apr-1921	19,155	25,292	44,447	076	257
24-Apr-1931	21,208	26,753	47,961	079	351
09-Apr-1946	27,901	33,746	61,647	083	912
07-Apr-1960	37,561	42,387	79,948	089	1,307
07-Apr-1970	41,150	45,794	86,944	090	700
12-May-1980	47,409	50,436	97,845	094	1,090
12-May-1991	53,977	53,621	107,598*	101	887
12-Jun-2001	55,456	53,566	109,022*	104	142
12-Jun-2012	56,419	53,572	109,991*	105	88
June 15, 2023	**55,200**	**54,096**	**109,296***	**102**	**-63 (decline)**

**Note: For 1991, 2001, 2012, and 2023, the total population figures are used.*

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The results from 2023, therefore, mark a critical demographic turning point. After more than a century of steady increases, the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has shifted from positive growth to outright decline. This reversal reflects the long-term weakening of natural increase and highlights the growing role of migration and aging in shaping population size. The evidence from Table 1.1 underscores that the country has entered a new demographic phase, one in which planning for a shrinking and potentially older population will become an essential consideration for future national development.

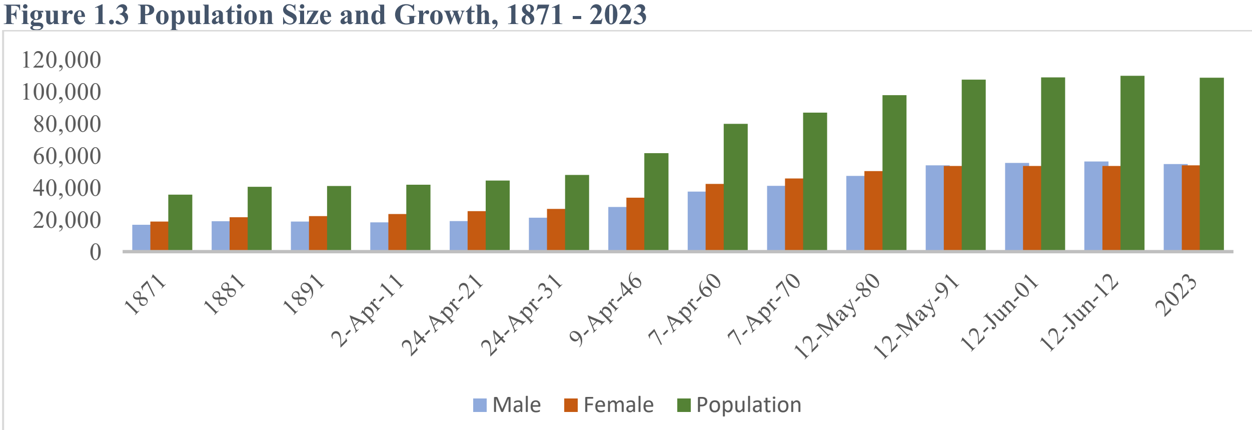
Figure 1.2 Sex Ratio (Males to 100 Females) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1871 - 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The sex composition of the population in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has undergone noticeable shifts over the past century. In 1921, the sex ratio reached its lowest point at 76 males per 100 females, reflecting a clear female majority. From that point onward, the ratio gradually increased, reaching parity in 1991 with 101 males per 100 females. The upward trend continued through the early 2000s, peaking at 105 in 2012, before moderating to 102 in 2023. These long-term fluctuations, as illustrated in Figure 1.2, indicate a transition from a persistent female dominance in the population structure to a more balanced distribution between the sexes in recent decades. While the drivers of these shifts may reflect a combination of demographic processes, including improvements in male survival rates, changing fertility levels, and evolving migration flows that increasingly involve both sexes. Nonetheless, monitoring future shifts in the sex ratio will be critical, as even small imbalances can have broader social and economic implications in a small population context.

Figure 1.3 Population Size and Growth, 1871 - 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

1.3 Population by Census Division

The distribution of the population across census divisions in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines highlights both continuity and change in settlement patterns over the last two decades. As shown in Table 1.2, the majority of the population remains concentrated on the mainland, which accounted for 92.0 percent of the total in 2023, compared with 90.6 percent in 2012. The Grenadines, by contrast, saw their share of the national population decline from 9.4 percent in 2012 to 8.0 percent in 2023, reversing the growth recorded in the previous intercensal period.

Within the mainland, the Suburbs of Kingstown and Calliaqua continue to expand their demographic importance. Together, they accounted for 38.8 percent of the total population in 2023, up from 34.5 percent in 2012. Between 2012 and 2023, the Suburbs of Kingstown grew by 14.0 percent while Calliaqua increased by 11.1 percent, confirming the ongoing trend of peri-urban expansion and residential relocation from the urban core to surrounding districts. These shifts reflect the continued spread of population into areas outside the main capital where housing and services are more accessible.

Table 1-2 Total Household Population Distribution by Census Division, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	2001		2012		2023		Percentage Change	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	2001–2012	2012–2023
Kingstown	13,526	12.5	12,712	11.6	10,690	9.8	-6.0	-15.9
Suburbs of Kingstown	13,027	12.1	13,782	12.6	15,705	14.4	5.8	14.0
Calliaqua	22,345	20.7	23,908	21.9	26,560	24.4	7.0	11.1
Marriaqua	8,254	7.7	7,798	7.1	7,360	6.8	-5.5	-5.6
Bridgetown	6,779	6.3	6,564	6.0	6,424	5.9	-3.2	-2.1
Colonarie	7,490	6.9	6,849	6.3	6,742	6.2	-8.6	-1.6
Georgetown	6,964	6.5	7,049	6.5	7,139	6.6	1.2	1.3
Sandy Bay	2,805	2.6	2,576	2.4	2,554	2.3	-8.2	-0.9
Layou	6,338	5.9	6,335	5.8	6,344	5.8	0.0	0.1
Barrouallie	5,459	5.1	5,625	5.2	5,624	5.2	3.0	0.0
Chateaubelair	6,081	5.6	5,756	5.3	4,900	4.5	-5.3	-14.9
Total Mainland	**99,068**	**91.9**	**98,954**	**90.6**	**100,042**	**92.0**	**-0.1**	**1.1**
Northern Grenadines	5,413	5.0	6,184	5.7	5,107	4.7	14.2	-17.4
Southern Grenadines	3,354	3.1	4,050	3.7	3,615	3.3	20.8	-10.7
Total Grenadines	**8,767**	**8.1**	**10,234**	**9.4**	**8,722**	**8.0**	**16.7**	**-14.8**
Total	**107,835**	**100.0**	**109,188**	**100.0**	**108,764**	**100.0**	**1.3**	**-0.4**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By contrast, the census division of Kingstown experienced a marked decline, with its population falling from 12,712 in 2012 to 10,690 in 2023, a contraction of 15.9 percent over the period. Marriaqua also registered a decrease of 5.6 percent, continuing its downward trend from the previous intercensal period. Other rural divisions such as Colonarie, Chateaubelair, and Sandy Bay also recorded losses, though at more moderate levels, reflecting persistent depopulation in some agricultural and remote areas. In contrast, divisions such as Georgetown, Layou, and Barrouallie remained largely unchanged, showing stability in their population size across the intercensal period.

The Grenadines, which had previously recorded robust growth between 2001 and 2012, experienced substantial contractions in the most recent intercensal period. The Northern Grenadines population declined by 17.4 percent and the Southern Grenadines by 10.7 percent, together reducing the overall Grenadines share of the national population to 8.0 percent in 2023. While small in absolute terms, these declines are significant when compared to the earlier decades signaling shifting dynamics in migration, tourism, and residential settlement patterns in the island divisions.

Overall, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is experiencing a shift in population away from traditional urban and rural centers toward peri-urban areas. These changes have important implications for planning, infrastructure and service delivery. The growing concentration of people in a few rapidly expanding divisions highlights the need for policies that address uneven growth, manage rural decline, and respond to population loss in the Grenadines. These emerging patterns of redistribution are further reflected in population density and settlement trends, which are examined in the following section.

1.4 Population Density and Settlement

Population density patterns in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have remained broadly stable over the last two decades. The 2023 Census reveals subtle shifts in line with overall demographic change. At the national level, density stood at 724 persons per square mile in 2023, slightly below the 732 recorded in 2012 and almost identical to the 725 observed in 2001. The mainland continues to account for the bulk of the population, with a density of 748 persons per square mile in 2023, while the Grenadines declined to 529 persons per square mile, reversing previous growth.

As shown in Table 1.3, densities differ sharply across census divisions. Kingstown, among the most densely populated census divisions, fell further to 5,626 persons per square mile in 2023, reflecting its continued population decline from 2001. In contrast, the Suburbs of Kingstown (2,454) and Calliaqua (2,251) recorded notable increases, consolidating their role as the fastest-growing peri-urban settlements. Bridgetown (892) and Marriaqua (783) also remained above the national average, though both showed modest decreases compared to 2012.

Rural and less accessible divisions continue to exhibit lower densities. Colonarie (503), Sandy Bay (482), Barrouallie (396), and particularly Chateaubelair (159) reflect persistent depopulation linked to migration and limited economic activity. Georgetown (322) and Layou (572) remained relatively unchanged, showing stability across the intercensal period. In the Grenadines, both the Northern (567) and Southern (482) divisions experienced significant declines in density, consistent with the overall population losses recorded there.

Table 1-3 Population Density by Census Division, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	Area (Sq. Miles)	2001 Population	2012 Population	2023 Population	2001 Density	2012 Density	2023 Density
Kingstown	1.9	13,857	12,909	10,690	7,293	6,794	5,626
Suburbs of Kingstown	6.4	13,782	13,812	15,705	2,154	2,158	2,454
Calliaqua	11.8	22,706	24,205	26,560	1,924	2,051	2,251
Marriaqua	9.4	8,254	7,798	7,360	878	830	783
Bridgetown	7.2	6,779	6,568	6,424	942	912	892
Colonarie	13.4	7,491	6,849	6,742	559	511	503
Georgetown	22.2	6,985	7,061	7,139	315	318	322
Sandy Bay	5.3	2,805	2,576	2,554	529	486	482
Layou	11.1	6,338	6,339	6,344	571	571	572
Barrouallie	14.2	5,463	5,884	5,624	385	414	396
Chateaubelair	30.9	6,081	5,756	4,900	197	186	159
Total Mainland	**133.8**	**99,786**	**99,757**	**100,042**	**746**	**746**	**748**
Northern Grenadines	9.0	5,647	6,184	5,107	627	687	567
Southern Grenadines	7.5	3,589	4,050	3,615	479	540	482
Total Grenadines	**16.5**	**9,236**	**10,234**	**8,722**	**560**	**620**	**529**
Total	**150.3**	**109,022**	**109,991**	**108,764**	**725**	**732**	**724**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, national population density has remained stable, but settlements are becoming increasingly uneven. Growth is concentrated in peri-urban areas, while Kingstown, rural districts, and the Grenadines face ongoing decline. These imbalances reemphasize the need to plan for public service delivery and infrastructure in expanding areas, while addressing depopulation and underuse of resources elsewhere.

1.5 Population by Age Group and Sex

The age and sex structure of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has undergone marked transformations over the past three censuses, driven by declining fertility, rising life expectancy, and the progressive aging of the population. In 2001, the population pyramid displayed a broad base, with children under 15 years accounting for 30.7 percent of the total population (Table 1.5, Figure 1.6). By 2012, this share had declined to 24.6 percent, and by 2023 it fell further to 20.7 percent, underscoring a sustained reduction in fertility. The steepest contraction occurred in the youngest cohort (0–4 years), which represented 9.4 percent of the population in 2001, fell to 7.9 percent in 2012, and dropped again to 5.2 percent in 2023 (Table 1.5 and Figures 1.6 to 1.8). These changes are clearly reflected in the narrowing base of the successive pyramids, signaling sustained fertility decline.

Table 1-4 Household Population by Age Group and Sex, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	2012				2023			
	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio
0–4	4,314	4,331	8,645	100	2807	2802	5609	100
5–9	4,308	4,212	8,520	102	4179	4037	8216	104
10–14	5,042	4,718	9,760	107	4350	4207	8557	103
15–19	5,053	4,859	9,912	104	4121	3928	8049	105
20–24	4,354	4,253	8,607	102	3731	3486	7217	107
25–29	4,228	4,089	8,317	103	3577	3837	7414	93
30–34	3,887	3,976	7,863	098	3608	3806	7414	95
35–39	3,839	3,714	7,553	103	3567	3784	7351	94
40–44	3,772	3,383	7,155	111	3736	3942	7678	95
45–49	3,861	3,605	7,466	107	3638	3491	7129	104
50–54	3,436	3,112	6,548	110	3801	3485	7286	109
55–59	2,642	2,389	5,031	111	3498	3136	6634	112
60–64	1,970	1,851	3,821	106	3465	3083	6548	112
65–69	1,457	1,384	2,841	105	2706	2483	5189	109
70–74	1,282	1,254	2,536	102	1705	1713	3418	100
75–79	964	1,014	1,978	095	1154	1191	2345	97
80+	1,142	1,493	2,635	076	1114	1596	2710	70
Total	**55,551**	**53,637**	**109,188**	**104**	**54,757**	**54,007**	**108,764**	**101**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Sex ratios highlight further nuances in demographic change. In 2001, the overall sex ratio was 98 males per 100 females, rising to 104 in 2012, before moderating to 101 in 2023 (Table 1.4). Among children (0–14 years), the ratio has consistently remained near parity, with a slight male advantage. However, in the prime working ages (25-44 years), male deficits appear, with sex ratios dropping below 100 in several cohorts, reflecting male out-migration and higher male mortality. By contrast, in the 55-64 cohorts, sex ratios rise above 110, before dropping steeply among the oldest-old. In the 80+ cohort, the sex ratio fell from 76 in 2001 to 83 in 2012 and to 70 in 2023, highlighting the clear female survival advantage at older ages.

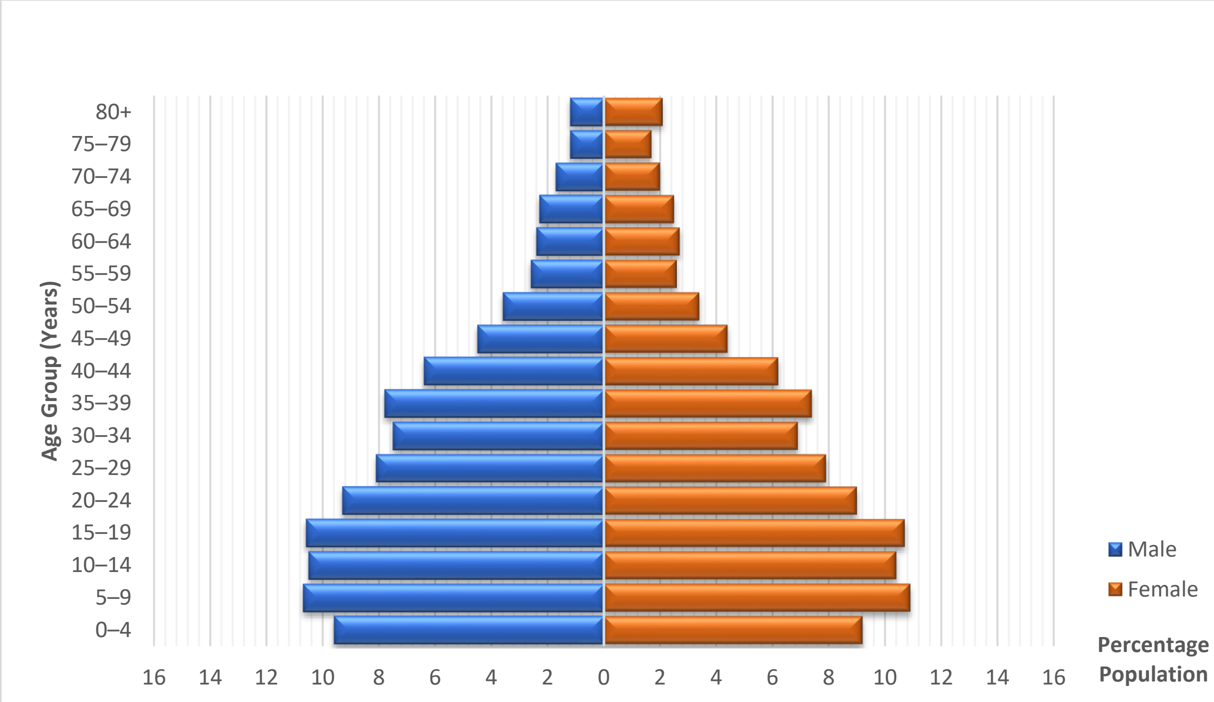
The youth population aged 15-24 years followed a similar trajectory. In 2001, this age group made up 20.6 percent of the population, declining to 17.1 percent in 2012 and further to 14.1 percent in 2023 (Table 1.5, Figures 1.6-1.8). Over the same period, the working-age population (15-64 years) expanded proportionally, rising from 63 percent in 2001 to 66.3 percent in 2012, and stabilizing at 67 percent in 2023. Within this broad category, the composition has shifted upward: younger working cohorts (25-44 years) dominated in 2001 and 2012, but older cohorts (45-64 years) expanded most rapidly by 2023. For instance, the 55-64 age group grew from 4.9 percent of the population in 2001 to 6.6 percent in 2012, and nearly doubled to 12.1 percent in 2023 (Table 1.5). These changes reflect both the maturation of earlier large birth cohorts and the ongoing ageing of the labour force.

Table 1-5 Percentage Distribution of Household Population by Age Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0–4	9.6	9.2	**9.4**	7.8	8.1	**7.9**	5.1	5.2	**5.2**
5–9	10.7	10.9	**10.8**	7.8	7.9	**7.8**	7.6	7.5	**7.6**
10–14	10.5	10.4	**10.5**	9.1	8.8	**8.9**	7.9	7.8	**7.9**
15–19	10.6	10.7	**10.6**	9.1	9.1	**9.1**	7.5	7.3	**7.4**
20–24	9.3	9.0	**9.1**	7.8	7.9	**7.9**	6.8	6.5	**6.6**
25–29	8.1	7.9	**8.0**	7.6	7.6	**7.6**	6.5	7.1	**6.8**
30–34	7.5	6.9	**7.2**	7.0	7.4	**7.2**	6.6	7.0	**6.8**
35–39	7.8	7.4	**7.6**	6.9	6.9	**6.9**	6.5	7.0	**6.8**
40–44	6.4	6.2	**6.3**	6.8	6.3	**6.6**	6.8	7.3	**7.1**
45–49	4.5	4.4	**4.5**	7.0	6.7	**6.8**	6.6	6.5	**6.6**
50–54	3.6	3.4	**3.5**	6.2	5.8	**6.0**	6.9	6.5	**6.7**
55–59	2.6	2.6	**2.6**	4.8	4.5	**4.6**	6.4	5.8	**6.1**
60–64	2.4	2.7	**2.6**	3.5	3.5	**3.5**	6.3	5.7	**6.0**
65–69	2.3	2.5	**2.4**	2.6	2.6	**2.6**	4.9	4.6	**4.8**
70–74	1.7	2.0	**1.8**	2.3	2.3	**2.3**	3.1	3.2	**3.1**
75–79	1.2	1.7	**1.4**	1.7	1.9	**1.8**	2.1	2.2	**2.2**
80+	1.2	2.1	**1.6**	2.1	2.8	**2.4**	2.0	3.0	**2.5**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

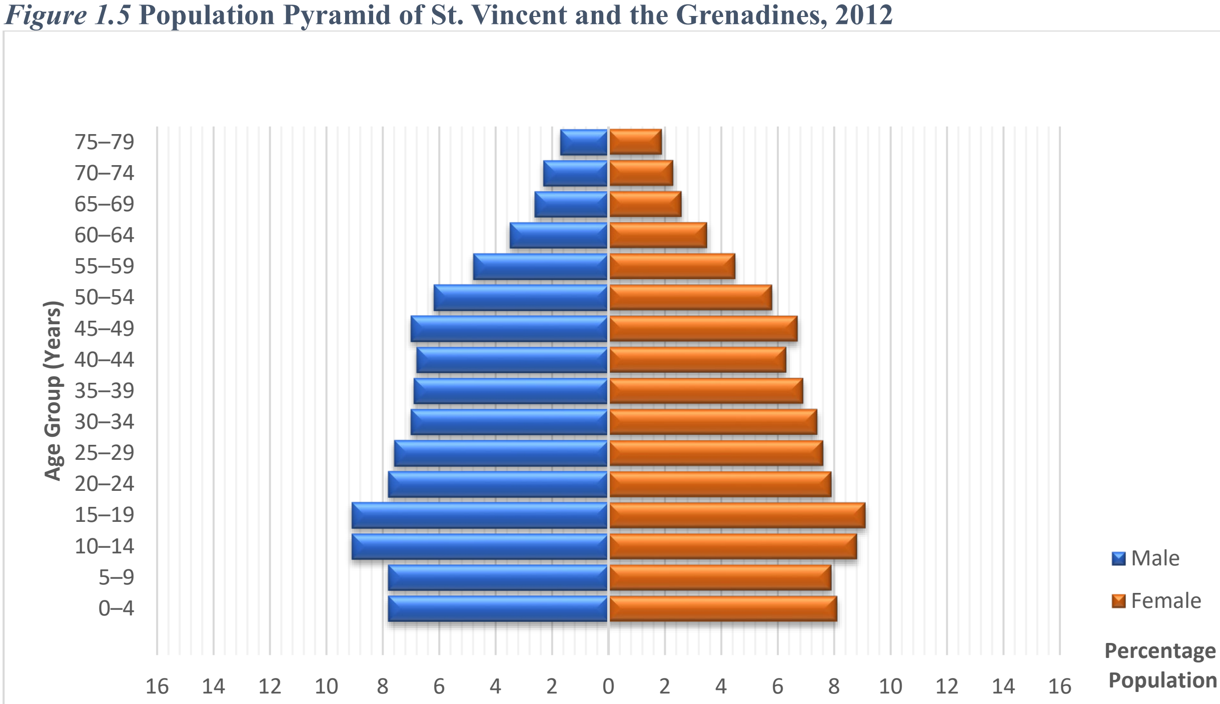
Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Figure 1.4 Population Pyramid of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2001



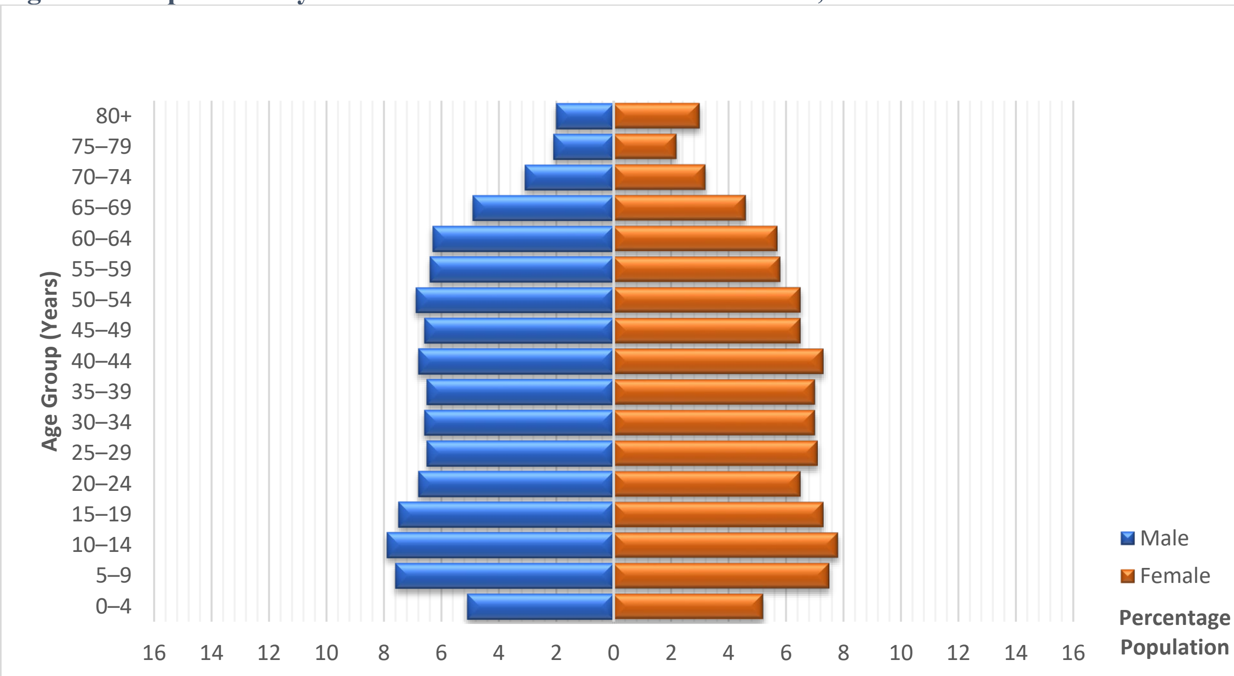
Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Figure 1.5 **Population Pyramid of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2012**



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Figure *1.6* Population Pyramid of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Moreover, the elderly population (65 years and over) has expanded steadily and now represents the most dynamic component of the age structure. In 2001, this group comprised 7.8 percent of the population, increasing to 10.5 percent in 2012 and rising sharply to 14.4 percent in 2023 (Tables 1.4 and 1.5). The 80+ population also grew, moving from 1.6 percent in 2001, to 2.4 percent in 2012, and 2.5 percent in 2023. The widening of the upper tiers of the pyramids illustrates this ageing process, contrasting the more youthful structure of 2001 with the increasingly top-heavy profile of 2023.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' demographic transition: from a youthful, broad-based structure in 2001, to a transitional form in 2012, and to an ageing population by 2023. The steady contraction of the child population, the plateauing of working ages, the sharp rise in the elderly, and the shifting sex ratios point to profound long-term implications for labour supply, healthcare systems, pensions, and social support.

1.6 Age Dependency Ratios

An important measure of population structure is the dependency ratio, which relates the size of the dependent population to the working-age population. Following Swanson and Siegel (2004), the dependency ratio is defined as the number of persons aged 0-14 years and 65 years and over divided by those aged 15-64 years, expressed per 100[4]. This measure can be further disaggregated into the youth age dependency ratio (YADR) and the old-age dependency ratio (OADR).

[4] Swanson, D. A., & Siegel, J. S. (2004). *The Methods and Materials of Demography* (2nd ed.). Elsevier Academic Press.

In 2001, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines had a YADR of 49 and an OADR of 12, giving a total age dependency ratio (TADR) of 61. The burden was overwhelmingly child-driven, consistent with a youthful population. By 2012, the YADR had fallen to 37, while the OADR rose modestly to 14, lowering the TADR to 51, the lowest across the three censuses. This represented a demographic window where the working-age population reached its largest share.

Further transformations occurred in 2023. The YADR dropped again to 31, but this was offset by a sharp rise in the OADR, which reached 21. Consequently, the TADR rose slightly to 52, but the composition of dependents had shifted dramatically: old-age dependency now accounted for nearly 40 percent of the total dependency burden, compared to just 20 percent in 2001. This underscores the accelerating process of population ageing and the gradual transition from child-driven to old-age-driven dependency.

Taken together, the trajectory of dependency ratios between 2001 and 2023 illustrates Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' demographic transition. The country has moved from a youthful structure, marked by heavy child dependency, to one in which the elderly exert increasing weight on the support burden. This shift carries significant implications for labour supply, pensions, healthcare, and long-term social protection policies.

1.7 Conclusion

The 2023 Census marks a significant demographic milestone for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, recording the first population decline in the country's history after more than a century of steady growth. This reversal reflects the combined effects of sustained fertility decline, continued out-migration, and population ageing. While peri-urban areas such as the Suburbs of Kingstown and Calliaqua have grown, rural divisions and the Grenadines have contracted, signaling a redistribution of population away from traditional centers toward expanding suburban zones.

The age structure has also undergone marked transformation, with children comprising a smaller share of the population, the working-age population stabilizing, and older cohorts expanding rapidly. The elderly population now accounts for a growing share of the total, shifting the dependency burden from child-driven to old-age driven. These changes underscore the demographic transition toward an ageing society and highlight the urgent need for policies that address labour force sustainability, social protection, and the balanced provision of services across both expanding and declining areas.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS – CHAPTER 1
POPULATION GROWTH , SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION

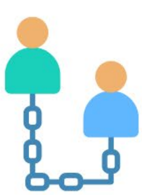
Population Decline:
Population decreased from 109,991 in 2012 to 108,764 in 2023

National density:
724 persons per sq. mile (2023)

Ageing Population:
Children under 15 dropped to 20.7%; elderly (65+) increased to 14.4%.

Youth & Labour Force:
Youth (15–24) share fell to 14.1%; working-age (15–64) stable at 67% but ageing.

Ageing Population:
Children under 15 dropped to 20.7%; elderly (65+) increased to 14.4%.



Dependency Burden :
52 dependents per 100 workers

Chapter 2. Social and Demographic Characteristics

2.1 Introduction

The social and demographic characteristics of a population provide essential context for understanding its cultural identity, social organization, and patterns of change. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, features such as place of birth, sex composition, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and marital or union status reflect the diversity of the population and its evolving social fabric.

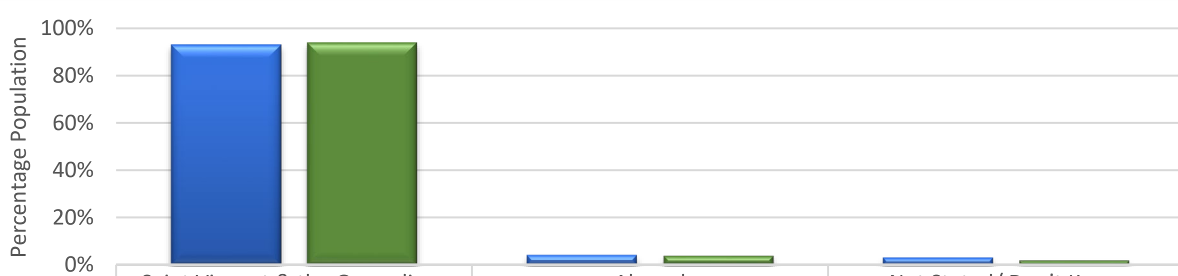
This chapter examines these characteristics using data from the 2001, 2012 and 2023 Population and Housing Censuses, highlighting shifts that occurred during the intercensal period. Section 2.2 explores patterns of place of birth, offering insights into nativity, migration, and their implications for population structure. Section 2.3 reviews the sex ratio, tracing changes in the balance between males and females and linking these trends to broader demographic processes. Section 2.4 focuses on ethnicity, documenting the persistence and transformation of cultural identities. Section 2.5 addresses religion and denomination, capturing the role of faith communities in shaping Vincentian society. Finally, Section 2.6 considers marital and union status, providing evidence on family formation, stability, and changing partnership arrangements.

Taken together, these dimensions show how social and demographic attributes intersect with broader forces such as fertility decline, ageing, and migration. They highlight the ways in which identity, culture, and family life are being reshaped in response to these demographic shifts. Understanding these patterns is critical, as they carry important implications for social cohesion, policy planning, and the long-term development trajectory of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

2.2 Place of Birth

The 2023 Census shows that the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continue to be predominantly native-born, although modest changes highlight the influence of migration on the country's demographic profile.

Figure 2.1: Total Household Population by Place of Birth and Sex, 2012 & 2023



	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	Abroad	Not Stated/ Don't Know
2012	93%	4%	3%
2023	94%	4%	2%

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Of the 108,764 persons enumerated in 2023, 102,546 or 94.3% reported being born in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. This marks an increase from 93.0% in 2012, though slightly below the 95.7% recorded in 2001 (Table 2.1 to 2.2 and Figure 2.1). The results point to the persistence of a strong native-born majority, while also reflecting the long-term demographic effects of international mobility.

The foreign-born population accounted for a total of 4,440 persons (4.1%) in 2023, down from 4,898 (4.5%) in 2012 and slightly below the 4,665 (4.3%) recorded in 2001. In absolute terms, the foreign-born declined by 458 persons between 2012 and 2023, representing a 9.4% reduction. This contraction suggests fewer immigration inflows during the period, possibly influenced by regional labour market conditions, out-migration of foreign residents, or broader socio-economic challenges. Despite the decline, the foreign-born population continues to contribute to the cultural and demographic diversity of the country.

Table 2-1: Total Population by Place of Birth and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Place of Birth	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	52,145	51,016	103,161	51,545	49,970	101,515	51,753	50,793	102,546
Abroad	2,272	2,393	4,665	2,474	2,424	4,898	2,085	2,355	4,440
Don't Know/Not Stated	8	1	9	1,532	1,243	2,775	919	859	1,778
Total	**54,425**	**53,410**	**107,835**	**55,551**	**53,637**	**109,188**	**54,757**	**54,007**	**108,764**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-2 Percentage Population by Place of Birth and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Place of Birth	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	95.8	95.5	95.7	92.8	93.2	93	94.5	94.0	94.3
Abroad	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	3.8	4.4	4.1
Don't Know/Not Stated	0	0	0	2.7	2.3	2.5	1.7	1.6	1.6
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, these findings reaffirm that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remain largely a native-born society. However, international migration and improved reporting practices have introduced subtle changes in population composition. The decline in foreign-born residents since 2012 highlights the limited role of immigration in counterbalancing broader demographic challenges, such as low natural increase, declining fertility, and population ageing.

2.2.1 Sex Ratio

The sex ratio by place of birth highlights differences between the native and foreign-born populations. Among the local-born, there were 102 males per 100 females in 2023 (i.e. 51,753 males and 50,793 females). This ratio has remained stable across the last three censuses, with 103 in 2012 and 102 in 2001, confirming the persistence of a slight male predominance in the native-born population.

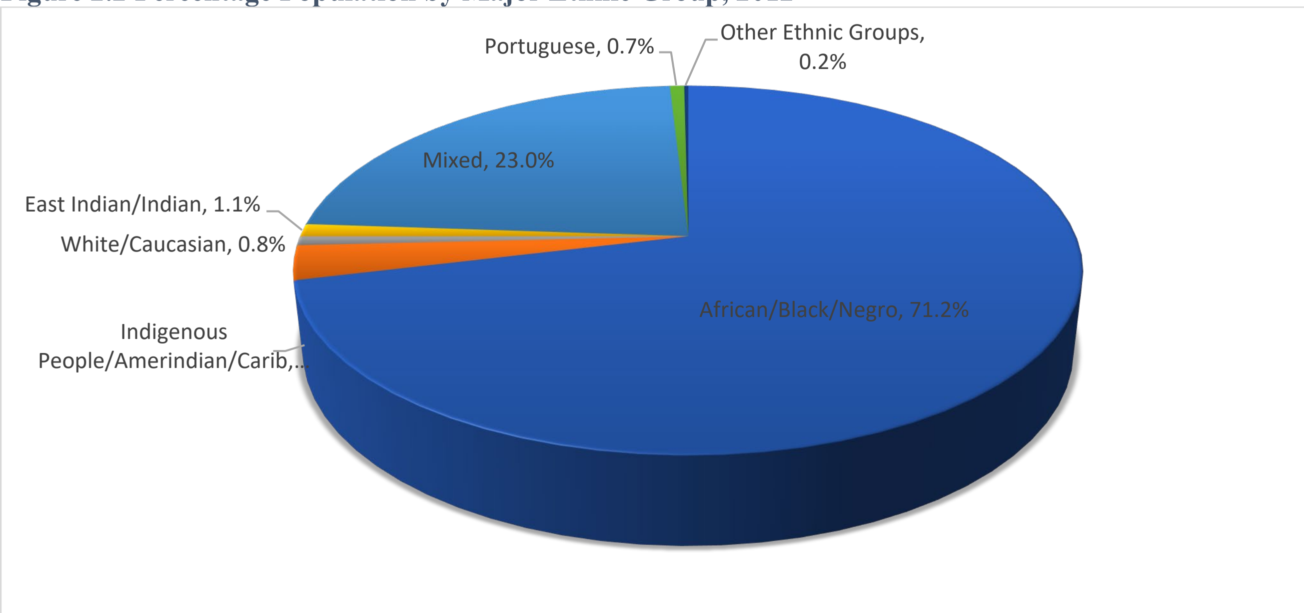
The foreign-born population shows a distinct contrast. In 2023, the sex ratio stood at 89 males per 100 females (i.e. 2,085 males and 2,355 females), down sharply from 102 in 2012 and lower than the 95 recorded in 2001. This shift reflects a clear tendency toward female-dominated migration during the last intercensal period, consistent with patterns of migration linked to family reunification, caregiving roles, and employment in services.

These findings show that the native-born population has maintained a stable balance between men and women, while the foreign-born population has become increasingly female-dominated. This pattern reflects the gendered nature of migration to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and suggests implications for household formation, the labour force participation, and gender roles.

2.3 Ethnicity

The population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continue to be dominated by persons of African descent, but the census data reveal important shifts in ethnic composition of the population between 2001, 2012, and 2023.

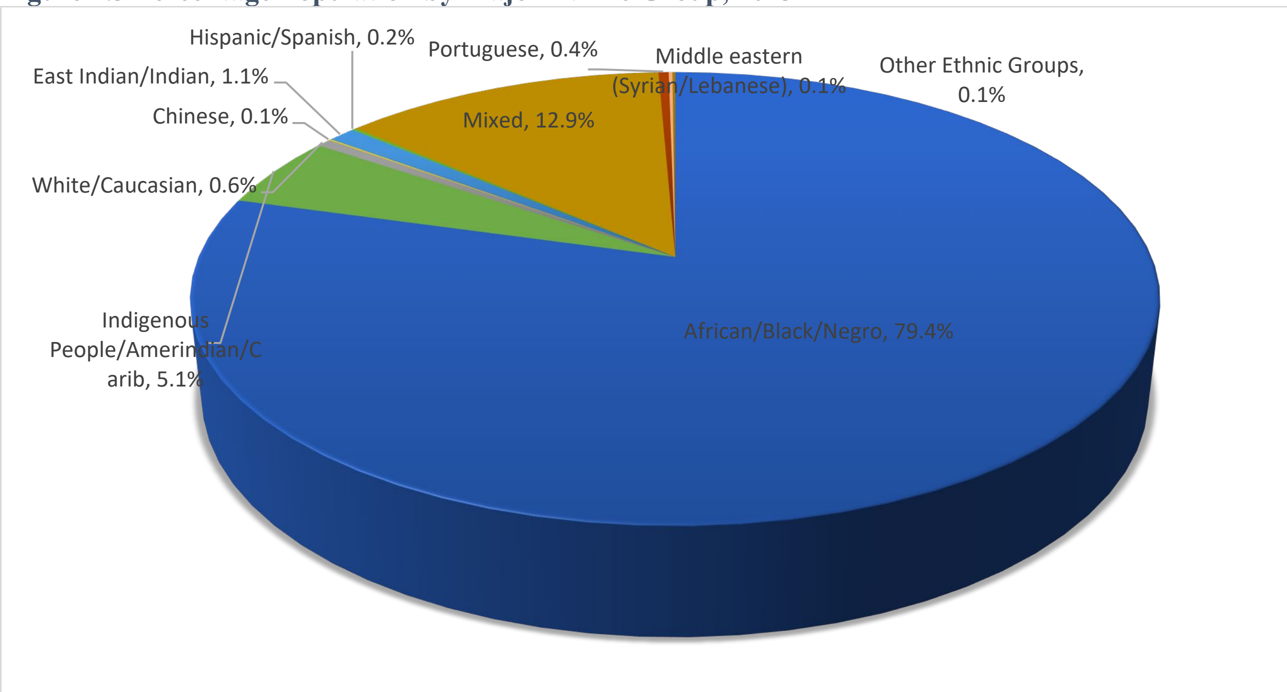
Figure 2.2 Percentage Population by Major Ethnic Group, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

In 2023, 71.2% (86,222 persons) identified as African/Black/Negro, down from 79.4% in 2012 and 72.8% in 2001 (Table 2.3 and Figure 2.3). While still the overwhelming majority, this decline of 8.2 percentage points since 2012 indicates a diversification of the population's ethnic profile. The reduction was accompanied by notable growth in other categories, particularly the "Mixed" group.

Figure 2.3 Percentage Population by Major Ethnic Group, 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-3 Household Population by Major Ethnic Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Major Ethnic Group	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
African Descent/Black/Negro	40,423	38,116	**78,539**	40,255	37,509	**77,764**	43,990	42,232	**86,222**
Indigenous People	1,945	1,953	**3,898**	1,591	1,689	**3,280**	2,653	2,934	**5,587**
White/Caucasian	438	445	**883**	453	436	**889**	338	295	**633**
East Indian/Indian	717	736	**1,453**	595	604	**1,199**	616	586	**1,202**
Mixed	10,226	11,379	**21,605**	12,133	12,978	**25,111**	6,594	7,413	**14,007**
Portuguese	300	316	**616**	406	347	**753**	233	209	**442**
Other Ethnic Group	108	98	**206**	118	74	**192**	262	275	**537**
Not Stated	270	365	**635**	0	0	**0**	71	63	**134**
All Groups	**54,427**	**53,408**	**107,835**	**55,551**	**53,637**	**109,188**	**54,757**	**54,007**	**108,764**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-4 Household Population Change by Major Ethnic Group and Sex, 2001-2012 & 2012-2023

Major Ethnic Group	Percentage Change 2001 to 2012			Percentage Change 2012 to 2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
African Descent/Black/Negro	-0.4	-1.6	**-1**	9.3	12.6	**10.9**
Indigenous People	-18.2	-13.5	**-15.9**	66.8	73.7	**70.3**
White/Caucasian	3.4	-2	**0.7**	-25.4	-32.3	**-28.8**
East Indian/Indian	-17	-17.9	**-17.5**	3.5	-3	**0.3**
Mixed	18.6	14.1	**16.2**	-45.7	-42.9	**-44.2**
Portuguese	35.3	9.8	**22.2**	-42.6	-39.8	**-41.3**
Other Ethnic Group	9.3	-24.5	**-6.8**	122	271.6	**179.7**
Not Stated	-100	-100	**-100**	0	0	**0**
All Groups	**2.1**	**0.4**	**1.3**	**-1.4**	**0.7**	**-0.4**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The Mixed population rose from 12.9% in 2012 to 23.0% in 2023 (Table 2.5), representing a near doubling in share. In absolute terms, this group grew to 14,007 persons, though this was below the 21,605 recorded in 2001. The intercensal fluctuations suggest both shifts in ethnic self-identification and broader patterns of inter-ethnic unions and identity formation over time.

Table 2-5 Percentage Distribution of Population by Major Ethnic Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Major Ethnic Group	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
African Descent/Black/Negro	74.3	71.4	**72.8**	72.5	69.9	**71.2**	80.3	78.2	**79.3**
Indigenous People	3.6	3.7	**3.6**	2.9	3.1	**3**	4.8	5.4	**5.1**
White/Caucasian	0.8	0.8	**0.8**	0.8	0.8	**0.8**	0.6	0.5	**0.6**
East Indian/Indian	1.3	1.4	**1.3**	1.1	1.1	**1.1**	1.1	1.1	**1.1**
Mixed	18.8	21.3	**20**	21.8	24.2	**23**	12	13.7	**12.9**
Portuguese	0.6	0.6	**0.6**	0.7	0.6	**0.7**	0.4	0.4	**0.4**
Other Ethnic Group	0.2	0.2	**0.2**	0.2	0.1	**0.2**	0.5	0.5	**0.5**
Not Stated	0.5	0.7	**0.6**	0	0	**0**	0.1	0.1	**0.1**
All Groups	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The Indigenous population (Carib/Amerindian) increased significantly in both absolute and relative terms, reaching 5,587 persons or 3.0% of the population in 2023, up from 3,280 (1.6%) in 2012. This represents a 70% increase over the last intercensal period, suggesting a revival of Indigenous identity and recognition, possibly reinforced by cultural revitalization movements and improved enumeration.

Smaller ethnic groups have recorded varied patterns. The White/Caucasian population declined from 889 persons (0.6%) in 2012 to 633 (0.8%) in 2023, a 28.8% decrease. Similarly, the Portuguese group fell from 753 persons in 2012 to 442 in 2023, a 41.3% decline. By contrast, the category of "Other ethnic groups" including Middle Eastern (Syrian/Lebanese), Hispanic/Spanish, and Chinese, expanded from 192 in 2012 to 537 in 2023, a 179.7% increase, despite representing a very small share of the total.

In summary, the ethnic composition of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remain dominated by its African heritage, however the most recent intercensal period has been marked by a steady movement towards greater diversity. The increase in the Mixed and Indigenous categories, and decline in some traditional minorities, reflects the interplay between population processes, culture and identity, as well as social development. These shifts highlight the evolving nature of Vincentian identity and underscore the importance of recognizing and accommodating ethnic diversity within national development planning and cultural policy.

2.3.1 Population Distribution by Census Divisions and Major Ethnic Groups

The distribution of ethnic groups across census divisions highlights both historical settlement trends and current demographic shifts. Persons of African descent remain numerically dominant in every division, but their relative concentration varies geographically.

Table 2-6 Total Household Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2012

Census Division	Major Ethnic Grouping							
	African Descent	Indigenous People	White/ Caucasian	East Indian /Indian	Mixed	Portuguese	Other	Total
Kingstown	8,276	191	114	129	3,708	163	131	**12,712**
Suburbs of Kingstown	10,480	285	57	49	2,853	56	2	**13,782**
Calliaqua	16,920	348	324	438	5,522	323	33	**23,908**
Marriaqua	6,010	54	38	294	1,375	19	8	**7,798**
Bridgetown	5,287	206	4	40	998	28	1	**6,564**
Colonarie	5,320	45	3	63	1,369	49	0	**6,849**
Georgetown	4,239	866	9	73	1,803	53	6	**7,049**
Sandy Bay	472	988	3	8	1,101	4	0	**2,576**
Layou	5,576	31	49	48	598	32	1	**6,335**
Barrouallie	5,001	53	10	10	539	12	0	**5,625**
Chateaubelair	4,199	35	3	17	1,502	0	0	**5,756**
Northern Grenadines	2,778	104	218	16	3,047	12	9	**6,184**
Southern Grenadines	3,206	74	57	14	696	2	1	**4,050**
Total	**77,764**	**3,280**	**889**	**1199**	**25,111**	**753**	**192**	**109,188**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

In 2023, their share exceeded 80% in divisions such as Layou, Bridgetown, and Barrouallie, reflecting long-standing settlement patterns in the central and rural mainland. Conversely, lower proportions were observed in the Grenadines and Calliaqua, where population diversity is greatest (Table 2.6 to 2.8). This indicates a spatial gradient of ethnic homogeneity, with rural areas more uniform and urban and coastal divisions more heterogeneous.

The Mixed population, which has expanded substantially at the national level, exhibits pronounced spatial clustering. In 2023, Calliaqua accounted for the highest concentration at 25.1%, followed by Kingstown (18.0%) and the Northern Grenadines (28.8%) (Table 2.4d). These divisions have historically recorded higher levels of inter-ethnic unions and mobility, as shown in 2001 and 2012 (Tables 2.5 and 2.4b). The persistence of these patterns suggests that urbanization, occupational diversity, and social integration play an important role in shaping ethnic identities.

Table 2-7 Percentage Household Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2012

Census Division	Major Ethnic Grouping							
	African Descent	Indigenous People	White/ Caucasian	East Indian /Indian	Mixed	Portuguese	Other	Total
Kingstown	10.6	5.8	12.8	10.8	14.8	21.6	68.2	**11.6**
Suburbs of Kingstown	13.5	8.7	6.4	4.1	11.4	7.4	1	**12.6**
Calliaqua	21.8	10.6	36.4	36.5	22	43	17.2	**21.9**
Marriaqua	7.7	1.6	4.3	24.5	5.5	2.5	4.2	**7.1**
Bridgetown	6.8	6.3	0.4	3.3	4	3.7	0.5	**6**
Colonarie	6.8	1.4	0.3	5.3	5.5	6.5	0	**6.3**
Georgetown	5.5	26.4	1	6.1	7.2	7	3.1	**6.5**
Sandy Bay	0.6	30.1	0.3	0.7	4.4	0.5	0	**2.4**
Layou	7.2	0.9	5.5	4	2.4	4.2	0.5	**5.8**
Barrouallie	6.4	1.6	1.1	0.8	2.1	1.6	0	**5.2**
Chateaubelair	5.4	1.1	0.3	1.4	6	0	0	**5.3**
Northern Grenadines	3.6	3.2	24.5	1.3	12.1	1.6	4.7	**5.7**
Southern Grenadines	4.1	2.3	6.4	1.2	2.8	0.3	0.5	**3.7**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

The Indigenous population continues to demonstrate strong territorial concentration. In 2023, Indigenous persons comprised 27.5% of Sandy Bay and 19.0% of Georgetown (Table 2.9). These figures represent growth from 2012 (30.1% in Sandy Bay and 26.4% in Georgetown; Table 2.7) and a marked increase compared with 2001. Such high proportions in north-eastern Saint Vincent affirm the continuity of Carib and Garifuna heritage and reflect both cultural revival movements and improved ethnic self-identification.

Table 2-8 Total Household Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2023

Census Division	Major Ethnic Grouping								
	African Descent	Indigenous People	White/ Caucasian	East Indian /Indian	Mixed	Portuguese	Other	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	6,918	668	50	146	2,518	75	305	10	**10,690**
Suburbs of Kingstown	14,057	229	15	18	1,283	44	26	33	**15,705**
Calliaqua	20,999	877	319	514	3,515	152	136	48	**26,560**
Marriaqua	5,807	162	13	298	1,050	23	2	5	**7,360**
Bridgetown	5,818	71	7	37	458	22	5	6	**6,424**
Colonarie	5,498	225	6	50	877	78	2	6	**6,742**
Georgetown	5,151	1,062	6	42	845	19	10	4	**7,139**
Sandy Bay	630	1,536	3	7	372	2	2	2	**2,554**
Layou	5,553	56	12	60	625	14	22	2	**6,344**
Barrouallie	5,407	111	5	7	67	10	10	7	**5,624**
Chateaubelair	3,883	261	4	10	732	1	3	6	**4,900**
Northern Grenadines	3,408	60	154	5	1,470	2	8	0	**5,107**
Southern Grenadines	3,093	269	39	8	195	0	6	5	**3,615**
Total	**86,222**	**5,587**	**633**	**1,202**	**14,007**	**442**	**537**	**134**	**108,764**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-9 Percentage Household Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2023

Census Division	Major Ethnic Grouping								
	African Descent	Indigenous People	White/ Caucasian	East Indian /Indian	Mixed	Portuguese	Other	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	8.0	12.0	7.9	12.1	18.0	17.0	56.8	7.5	**9.8**
Suburbs of Kingstown	16.3	4.1	2.4	1.5	9.2	10.0	4.8	24.6	**14.4**
Calliaqua	24.4	15.7	50.4	42.8	25.1	34.4	25.3	35.8	**24.4**
Marriaqua	6.7	2.9	2.1	24.8	7.5	5.2	0.4	3.7	**6.8**
Bridgetown	6.7	1.3	1.1	3.1	3.3	5.0	0.9	4.5	**5.9**
Colonarie	6.4	4.0	0.9	4.2	6.3	17.6	0.4	4.5	**6.2**
Georgetown	6.0	19.0	0.9	3.5	6.0	4.3	1.9	3.0	**6.6**
Sandy Bay	0.7	27.5	0.5	0.6	2.7	0.5	0.4	1.5	**2.3**
Layou	6.4	1.0	1.9	5.0	4.5	3.2	4.1	1.5	**5.8**
Barrouallie	6.3	2.0	0.8	0.6	0.5	2.3	1.9	5.2	**5.2**
Chateaubelair	4.5	4.7	0.6	0.8	5.2	0.2	0.6	4.5	**4.5**
Northern Grenadines	4.0	1.1	24.3	0.4	10.5	0.5	1.5	0.0	**4.7**
Southern Grenadines	3.6	4.8	6.2	0.7	1.4	0.0	1.1	3.7	**3.3**
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

The White/Caucasian population, though numerically small, reveals a distinctive spatial pattern. In 2023, 24.3% of residents in the Northern Grenadines identified as White (Table 2.9), compared with 19.7% in 2001 (Table 2.10). This concentration illustrates the enduring appeal of the Grenadines for expatriates, linked to tourism, second-home ownership, and international mobility. The Portuguese community, while declining overall, remains visible in Kingstown and Calliaqua, reflecting their historical urban settlement and assimilation trends.

Table 2-10 Percentage Distribution of Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2001

Census Division	Major Ethnic Grouping								
	African Descent	Indigenous People	White/ Caucasian	East Indian /Indian	Mixed	Portuguese	Other	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	11.8	4.7	16.3	8.4	16.1	20	42.2	24.7	**12.5**
Suburbs of Kingstown	13.6	6.6	5	2.2	9	4.7	1.9	9.4	**12.1**
Calliaqua	19.6	8	42.2	32.2	24.8	30.5	18.4	33.4	**20.7**
Marriaqua	8.4	1.8	1.4	31	5	5.8	0.5	4.1	**7.7**
Bridgetown	7.6	1.8	0.6	4.1	2.8	5.4	1.5	2.8	**6.3**
Colonarie	7.2	0.8	0.5	5.5	7.4	13	0	4.4	**6.9**
Georgetown	5.6	20.7	0.5	5.4	7.6	7.5	4.4	1.3	**6.5**
Sandy Bay	0.5	42.1	0	0.4	3.6	1.6	0.5	1.4	**2.6**
Layou	6.9	0.9	4.4	2.8	3.5	3.2	1.9	1.7	**5.9**
Barrouallie	6.1	1.6	0.3	0.6	2.7	3.2	0	1.6	**5.1**
Chateaubelair	5.4	6.6	1.1	4	6	0.8	0.5	2.4	**5.6**
Northern Grenadines	3.8	3.3	19.7	3	9	2.4	24.3	10.2	**5**
Southern Grenadines	3.6	1.2	8	0.4	1.7	1.8	3.9	2.5	**3.1**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Generally, the urban divisions (notably Kingstown, the Suburbs of Kingstown, and Calliaqua) continue to exhibit the greatest ethnic heterogeneity, accounting for a disproportionate share of Mixed, White, Portuguese, and Other ethnic groups. By contrast, rural divisions such as Layou, Bridgetown, and Chateaubelair retain an ethnically homogeneous profile, with persons of African descent comprising more than four-fifths of their populations.

2.3.2 Population Distribution by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group

The distribution of ethnic groups across broad age cohorts reveals important differences in population structure, intercensal change, and identity dynamics.

Table 2-11 Total Household Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2012

Major Ethnic Group	Broad Age Group					
	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Total
African Descent	18,400	19,225	16,485	16,577	7,077	**77,764**
Indigenous People	676	707	781	749	367	**3,280**
White/Caucasian	86	110	151	311	231	**889**
East Indian/Indian	111	175	246	449	218	**1,199**
Mixed	7,564	6,461	4,705	4,470	1,911	**25,111**
Portuguese	67	107	144	257	178	**753**
Other Ethnic Group	21	51	59	53	8	**192**
Total	**26,925**	**26,836**	**22,571**	**22,866**	**9,990**	**109,188**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-12 Total Household Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2023

Major Ethnic Group	Broad Age Group					
	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Total
African Descent	17,447	18,196	17,869	22,173	10,537	**86,222**
Indigenous People	1,162	1,145	1,166	1,482	632	**5,587**
White/Caucasian	45	45	91	216	236	**633**
East Indian/Indian	101	136	226	411	328	**1,202**
Mixed	3,439	3,065	2,778	3,005	1,720	**14,007**
Portuguese	46	29	75	136	156	**442**
Other Ethnic Group	117	47	206	139	28	**537**
Not Stated	25	17	32	35	25	**134**
Total	**57,541**	**56,812**	**50,540**	**55,992**	**26,120**	**247,005**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-13 Percentage Distribution of Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2001

Major Ethnic Group	Broad Age Group					
	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Total
African Descent	23.7	24.7	21.2	21.3	9.1	**100**
Indigenous People	20.6	21.6	23.8	22.8	11.2	**100**
White/Caucasian	9.7	12.4	17	35	26	**100**
East Indian/Indian	9.3	14.6	20.5	37.4	18.2	**100**
Mixed	30.1	25.7	18.7	17.8	7.6	**100**
Portuguese	8.9	14.2	19.1	34.1	23.6	**100**
Other Ethnic Group	10.9	26.6	30.7	27.6	4.2	**100**
Total	**24.7**	**24.6**	**20.7**	**20.9**	**9.1**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Persons of African descent remain the dominant group in all age cohorts, but their share is highest among adults aged 30-64. In 2023, they comprised 20.7% of the 30-44 age group and 25.7% of the 45-64 group, compared with 21.6% and 12.9% respectively in 2012 (Table 2.11- 2.15). The relatively higher proportions among working-age adults reflect the continuing numerical weight of African-descended Vincentians, while the lower share among children (20.2% of those aged 0-14) points to a gradual diversification of the younger cohorts. This suggests that ethnic diversification is likely to intensify in future generations.

The Indigenous population shows a younger age profile, with 20.8% of children (0-14 years) identifying as Indigenous in 2023, compared with 26.4% in 2012 and 20.6% in 2001 (Tables 2.13-2.15). Significant representation is also observed among working-age adults (20.9% in ages 30-44 and 26.5% in ages 45-64). This distribution indicates both cultural persistence and revitalization, especially as Indigenous self-identification has strengthened across successive cohorts since 2001.

The Mixed population continues to be most strongly represented among younger cohorts. In 2023, they comprised 24.6% of children aged 0-14 and 21.9% of youth aged 15-29, compared with 11.5% and 16.0% respectively in 2012 (Table 2.14-2.15). This doubling of proportions underscores the growing prevalence of inter-ethnic unions and multi-ethnic identification, particularly among younger generations. The age profile of this group suggests that the Mixed category will expand further in future intercensal periods, reshaping the ethnic composition of the society.

Table 2-14 Percentage Distribution of Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2012

Major Ethnic Group	Broad Age Group					
	0-14	**15-29**	**30-44**	**45-64**	**65+**	**Total**
African Descent	30.2	28.2	21.6	12.9	7.1	**100**
Indigenous People	26.4	27.4	21.8	15.7	8.6	**100**
White/Caucasian	16.8	19.5	23.8	25	14.9	**100**
East Indian/Indian	11.5	16.6	21.9	25.6	24.4	**100**
Mixed	11.5	16	24.3	32.8	15.4	**100**
Portuguese	35.7	27.8	18.6	11.7	6.2	**100**
Other Ethnic Group	14.6	18.9	38.8	17.5	10.2	**100**
Not Stated	20.9	29.6	27.1	14.6	7.7	**100**
Total	**30.6**	**27.8**	**21.1**	**13.2**	**7.3**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-15 Percentage Distribution of Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2023

Major Ethnic Group	Broad Age Group					
	0-14	**15-29**	**30-44**	**45-64**	**65+**	**Total**
African Descent	20.2	21.1	20.7	25.7	12.2	**100**
Indigenous People	20.8	20.5	20.9	26.5	11.3	**100**
White/Caucasian	7.1	7.1	14.4	34.1	37.3	**100**
East Indian/Indian	8.4	11.3	18.8	34.2	27.3	**100**
Mixed	24.6	21.9	19.8	21.5	12.3	**100**
Portuguese	10.4	6.6	17.0	30.8	35.3	**100**
Other Ethnic Group	21.8	8.8	38.4	25.9	5.2	**100**
Not Stated	18.7	12.7	23.9	26.1	18.7	**100**
Total	**20.6**	**20.9**	**20.6**	**25.4**	**12.6**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Smaller groups display contrasting age structures. The White/Caucasian population is disproportionately concentrated in older cohorts, with 37.3% aged 65 years and over in 2023 (Table 2.15). This ageing profile reflects both a declining base of younger persons and the historical settlement of expatriates, many of whom remain concentrated in the Grenadines. Similarly, the Portuguese population is older on average, with 35.3% aged 65+ in 2023, compared with just 10.4% in the 0-14 group. These distributions point to the gradual attrition of smaller minority groups through ageing and limited replenishment from new inflows.

By contrast, the East Indian/Indian population maintains a relatively balanced age distribution, with 18.8% in the 30-44 group, 34.2% in the 45-64 group, and 27.3% in the 65+ category in 2023 (Table 2.15). This profile reflects both historical settlement patterns and the persistence of Indian identity across adult generations.

The Other ethnic group category, which expanded sharply between 2012 and 2023, is well represented across all age groups but particularly in younger cohorts (21.8% in the 0-14 group and 25.9% in the 45-64 group). This category includes newer immigrant populations such as Hispanics, Middle Eastern, and Chinese, and its relatively youthful profile suggests potential demographic and cultural impact in the medium term.

Ethnic composition in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains majority African, however younger age groups tend to be mixed, Indigenous, and diverse. Smaller groups such as White and Portuguese are ageing, while growth among Mixed and Indigenous populations suggests that the future generations will be shaped by generational change and evolving identity.

2.4 Religion and Denomination

Religion is more than a set of beliefs; it is, as Émile Durkheim (1954) observed, *"an eminently collective thing"* that binds individuals into a moral community through shared practices and beliefs. He defined religion as *"a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things beliefs and practices which unite in one single community called a Church all those who adhere to them" (p. 47)*[5]. In this sense, religion operates as a source of moral guidance, collective identity, and social cohesion, while also offering individuals strength and meaning in navigating life's challenges.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, religion has historically played a central role in shaping cultural and national identity. However, the Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines[6] does not prescribe a state religion; instead, Section 9 affirms every person's freedom of conscience, including the right to hold, change, and manifest religious beliefs, individually or collectively, in both public and private life. This constitutional protection ensures that all religious groups (from established Christian denominations to smaller faith communities such as Hindus, Muslims, and Rastafarians) coexist on equal legal footing, alongside individuals who profess no religion.

The 2023 Population and Housing Census captured these dynamics through Question **A6: "What is your religious affiliation/denomination?"**. The responses to this question provided a demographic

[5] Elwell, Frank W., 2003, "Emile Durkheim on Religion," Retrieved September 12, 2025, https://faculty.rsu.edu/users/f/felwell/www/Theorists/Essays/Durkheim2.htm

[6] OAS. Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 1979 STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS 1979 No. 916. Retrieved September 12, 2025, https://www.oas.org/juridico/PDFs/mesicic4_svg_const.pdf

portrait of both continuity and change in religious life, highlighting the persistence of Christianity as well as the expansion of minority faiths and secular identities[7].

2.4.1 Religion

Religion in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continues to play a central role in shaping cultural identity and community life, although patterns of affiliation have shifted over time. Census data from 2001, 2012, and 2023 (Table 2.16) show that Christianity has consistently been the dominant religion, but with a gradual decline in its overall share of the population. In 2001, Christians represented 81.5% of the population; this proportion increased slightly to 82.3% in 2012 but fell to 78.1% in 2023. The decline reflects both secularization and the rise of alternative belief systems.

Table 2-16 Percentage Distribution of Population by Religion, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Religion/Religious Denomination	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Christian	77.3	85.8	**81.5**	78	86.8	**82.3**	72.2	84.2	**78.1**
Hindu	0.1	0.1	**0.1**	0.1	0.1	**0.1**	0.1	0.1	**0.1**
Muslim/Islam	0.1	0.1	**0.1**	0.1	0.1	**0.1**	0.3	0.1	**0.2**
Rastafarian	2.5	0.4	**1.5**	1.8	0.3	**1.1**	1.4	0.3	**0.8**
Other Religion/Religious Denomination	5.8	7.2	**6.5**	4	4.6	**4.3**	2.8	3.6	**3.2**
None/No Religion	12.4	5.1	**8.8**	10.7	4.1	**7.5**	19.0	8.8	**14.0**
Not Stated	1.7	1.3	**1.5**	5.3	4.0	**4.7**	4.3	3.0	**3.6**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The category “None/No Religion” has expanded significantly, growing from 8.8% in 2001 to 14.0% in 2023. This increase, especially marked among men (rising from 12.4% in 2001 to 19.0% in 2023), indicates a demographic trend toward secular identification, consistent with global shifts in religious affiliation.

[7] Secular identity denotes a personal identity that exists independently of religious beliefs or affiliations, emphasizing individual meaning and understanding outside of religious frameworks, as highlighted by regional sources. Source: https://www.wisdomlib.org/concept/secular-identity

Table 2-17 Total Household Population and Percentage Change by Religion, 2001 & 2012

Religion/Religious Denomination	2001			2012			Percentage Change (2001/2012)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Christian	42,086	45,821	**87,907**	43,327	46,564	**89,891**	-31.6	1.6	**2.3**
Hindu	48	36	**84**	47	42	**89**	-2.1	16.7	**6.0**
Muslim/Islam	51	28	**79**	77	34	**111**	51.0	21.4	**40.5**
Rastafarian	1,366	228	**1,594**	1,025	156	**1,181**	-25.0	-31.6	**-25.9**
Other Religion/ Religious Denomination	3,173	3,834	**7,007**	2,200	2,473	**4,673**	-30.7	-35.5	**-33.3**
None/No Religion	6,758	2,746	**9,504**	5,925	2,222	**8,147**	-12.3	-19.1	**-14.3**
Not Stated	942	718	**1,660**	2,950	2,146	**5,096**	213.2	198.9	**207.0**
Total	**54,424**	**53,411**	**107,835**	**55,551**	**53,637**	**109,188**	**2.1**	**0.4**	**1.3**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Minority religions remain small but have shown important internal dynamics. The Muslim population doubled between 2012 and 2023, from 111 to 222 persons (Table 2.18), accounted for 0.2% of the population in 2023, with slightly more men (0.3%) than women (0.1%). Similarly, Hinduism maintained a stable presence of about 0.1% of the population across all three census years. Rastafarianism, by contrast, declined both in absolute and relative terms, from 1.5% in 2001 to 0.8% in 2023.

Table 2-18 Total Household Population and Percentage Change by Religion, 2012 & 2023

Religion/Religious Denomination	2012			2023			Percentage Change (2012/2023)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Christian	43,327	46,564	**89,891**	39,525	45,453	**84,978**	-8.8	-2.4	**-5.5**
Hindu	47	42	**89**	45	46	**91**	-4.3	9.5	**2.2**
Muslim/Islam	77	34	**111**	152	70	**222**	97.4	105.9	**100.0**
Rastafarian	1,025	156	**1,181**	756	144	**900**	-26.2	-7.7	**-23.8**
Other Religion/Religious Denomination	2,200	2,473	**4,673**	1,534	1,931	**3,465**	-30.3	-21.9	**-25.9**
None/No Religion	5,925	2,222	**8,147**	10,411	4,763	**15,174**	75.7	114.4	**86.3**
Not Stated	2,950	2,146	**5,096**	2,334	1,600	**3,934**	-20.9	-25.4	**-22.8**
Total	**55,551**	**53,637**	**109,188**	**54,757**	**54,007**	**108,764**	**-1.4**	**0.7**	**-0.4**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Additionally, respondents identified with "other" belief systems outside the major religious traditions, declined sharply, from 6.5% in 2001 to 3.2% in 2023. Meanwhile, the share of respondents who did not state their religion rose from 1.5% in 2001 to 3.6% in 2023.These responses may reflect either a preference for privacy, religious pluralism beyond standard categories, or ambivalence toward institutional religion. Collectively, these figures illustrate that while Christianity remains dominant, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is experiencing religious diversification and a significant rise in secular identification, reshaping the cultural landscape of the nation (Table 2.8).

Concurrently, these patterns suggest that while Christianity continues to anchor the religious landscape of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, there is a gradual diversification of belief systems and a steady rise in secular and non-religious identities. The data underline the importance of religion as both a persistent cultural force and an evolving dimension of identity in Vincentian society (Tables 2.7–2.9).

2.4.2 Christian Denominations

Christianity has long been the dominant religion in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, but denominational affiliation has undergone marked change between 2001 and 2023. The data reveal both continuity in certain long-standing churches and significant shifts toward evangelical and Pentecostal traditions (Tables 2.19-2.21).

Anglican, once the principal denomination, has steadily declined. In 2001, Anglicans accounted for 17.8% of the population, but by 2023 their share had fallen to 10.5% (Table 2.11). This trend reflects broader secularization pressures and reduced denominational loyalty, particularly among younger cohorts.

Table 2-19 Total Household Population by Christian Denomination, 2001 & 2012

Religion/Religious Denomination	2001			2012			Percentage Change (2001/2012)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Anglican	10,090	9,066	**19,156**	8,130	7,045	**15,175**	-19.4	-22.3	**-20.8**
Evangelical	1,369	1,670	**3,039**	1,855	2,263	**4,118**	35.5	35.5	**35.5**
Methodist	5,943	5,774	**11,717**	4,984	4,474	**9,458**	-16.1	-22.5	**-19.3**
Pentecostal	8,539	10,484	**19,023**	13,733	16,375	**30,108**	60.8	56.2	**58.3**
Presbyterian/ Congregational	64	61	**125**	141	153	**294**	120.3	150.8	**135.2**
Roman Catholic	4,061	4,012	**8,073**	3,515	3,362	**6,877**	-13.4	-16.2	**-14.8**
Salvation Army	126	164	**290**	142	144	**286**	12.7	-12.2	**-1.4**
Seventh Day Adventist	5,169	5,830	**10,999**	6,170	6,540	**12,710**	19.4	12.2	**15.6**
Jehovah's Witness	286	388	**674**	370	539	**909**	29.4	38.9	**34.9**
Baptist (Spiritual)	4,617	6,111	**10,728**	4,150	5,525	**9,675**	-10.1	-9.6	**-9.8**
Rastafarian	1,366	228	**1,594**	1,025	156	**1,181**	-25	-31.6	**-25.9**
Other Religion/Religious Denominations	5,094	6,159	**11,253**	2,461	2,693	**5,154**	-51.7	-56.3	**-54.2**
None/No Religion	6,758	2,746	**9,504**	5,925	2,222	**8,147**	-12.3	-19.1	**-14.3**
Not Stated	942	718	**1,660**	2,950	2,146	**5,096**	213.2	198.9	**207**
Total	**54,424**	**53,411**	**107,835**	**55,551**	**53,637**	**109,188**	**2.1**	**0.4**	**1.3**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By contrast, the Pentecostal denomination has grown, increasing from 17.6% in 2001 to 26.4% in 2023, making it the single largest Christian denomination (Table 2.21). The rapid growth of Pentecostal churches is consistent with research that links their success to the dynamics of urbanization, social mobility, and youth identity formation. Pentecostalism's flexibility, charismatic worship, and ability to adapt to the needs of urban and transitional communities make it especially appealing in societies experiencing demographic change. Pentecostalism thrives in such contexts because it offers both spiritual empowerment and practical support through strong community networks, social outreach, and effective use of mass media to engage members (Ukah, 2020)[8]. These features explain why Pentecostalism has overtaken older denominations and continues to attract large numbers of persons in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Table 2-20 Total Household Population by Christian Denomination, 2012 & 2023

Religion/Religious Denomination	2012			2023			Percentage Change (2012/2023)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Anglican	8,130	7,045	15,175	5,853	5,535	11,388	-28.0	-21.4	-25.0
Evangelical	1,855	2,263	4,118	2,066	2,559	4,625	11.4	13.1	12.3
Methodist	4,984	4,474	9,458	3,318	3,580	6,898	-33.4	-20.0	-27.1
Pentecostal	13,733	16,375	30,108	12,756	15,969	28,725	-7.1	-2.5	-4.6
Presbyterian/ Congregational	141	153	294	88	74	162	-37.6	-51.6	-44.9
Roman Catholic	3,515	3,362	6,877	2,266	2,530	4,796	-35.5	-24.7	-30.3
Salvation Army	142	144	286	96	125	221	-32.4	-13.2	-22.7
Seventh Day Adventist	6,170	6,540	12,710	7,785	8,293	16,078	26.2	26.8	26.5
Jehovah's Witness	370	539	909	259	377	636	-30.0	-30.1	-30.0
Baptist (Spiritual)	4,150	5,525	9,675	4,740	6,042	10,782	14.2	9.4	11.4
Rastafarian	1,025	156	1,181	756	144	900	-26.2	-7.7	-23.8
Other Religion/Religious Denominations	2,461	2,693	5,154	2,029	2,416	4,445	-17.6	-10.3	-13.8
None/No Religion	5,925	2,222	8,147	10,411	4,763	15,174	75.7	114.4	86.3
Not Stated	2,950	2,146	5,096	2,334	1,600	3,934	-20.9	-25.4	-22.8
Total	**55,551**	**53,637**	**109,188**	**54,757**	**54,007**	**108,764**	**-1.4**	**0.7**	**-0.4**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Other denominations show mixed trends. Seventh-Day Adventists remain resilient, accounting for 11.6% of the population in 2023, maintaining the share achieved in 2012. Evangelicals nearly doubled their numbers, growing from 2.8% in 2001 to 4.3% in 2023 (Table 2.11), reflecting the wider appeal of revivalist movements. Smaller groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Salvation Army, and Presbyterians have remained below 1%, maintaining a modest but persistent presence.

[8] Ukah, A. F. K. (2020). Pentecostalism and the reshaping of the urban religious landscape. In *Pentecostalism and urbanization* (pp. 17–36). Brill.

Table 2-21 Percentage Distribution of Population by Christian Denomination, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Religion/Religious Denomination	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Anglican	18.5	17.0	**17.8**	14.6	13.1	**13.9**	10.7	10.2	**10.5**
Evangelical	2.5	3.1	**2.8**	3.3	4.2	**3.8**	3.8	4.7	**4.3**
Methodist	10.9	10.8	**10.9**	9.0	8.3	**8.7**	6.1	6.6	**6.3**
Pentecostal	15.7	19.6	**17.6**	24.7	30.5	**27.6**	23.3	29.6	**26.4**
Presbyterian/ Congregational	0.1	0.1	**0.1**	0.3	0.3	**0.3**	0.2	0.1	**0.1**
Roman Catholic	7.4	7.5	**7.5**	6.3	6.3	**6.3**	4.1	4.7	**4.4**
Salvation Army	0.2	0.3	**0.3**	0.3	0.3	**0.3**	0.2	0.2	**0.2**
Seventh Day Adventist	9.5	10.9	**10.2**	11.1	12.2	**11.6**	11.0	12.1	**11.6**
Jehovah's Witness	0.5	0.7	**0.6**	0.7	1.0	**0.8**	0.5	0.7	**0.6**
Baptist (Spiritual)	8.5	11.5	**9.9**	7.5	10.3	**8.9**	8.7	11.2	**9.9**
Rastafarian	2.5	0.4	**1.5**	1.8	0.3	**1.1**	1.4	0.3	**0.8**
Other Religious Denominations	9.4	11.5	**10.5**	4.4	5.0	**4.7**	6.9	7.7	**7.3**
None/No Religion	12.5	5.2	**8.8**	10.7	4.1	**7.5**	19.0	8.8	**14.0**
Not Stated	1.7	1.3	**1.5**	5.3	4.0	**4.7**	4.3	3.0	**3.6**
Total	100	100	**100**	100	100	**100**	100.0	100.0	**100.0**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The denominational profile of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has shifted markedly over the past two decades. Traditional mainline churches such as Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic have declined, while Pentecostalism and Evangelical movements have grown rapidly, now representing the largest share of Christians. This transformation reflects the adaptability and urban appeal of Pentecostalism, alongside broader processes of secularization and diversification. The evidence may suggest that Christian identity in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is becoming more dynamic and responsive to social change.

2.4.3 Population Distribution by Christian Denomination and Census Division

The distribution of Christian denominations across census divisions reflects both historical settlement patterns and more recent shifts in religious affiliation. While Christianity remains the dominant religion nationwide, the denominational mix varies considerably across geographic areas (Tables 2.22 – 2.24).

Anglicans, has been historically associated with colonial settlement and missionary activity, continue to be concentrated in the Grenadines and Sandy Bay. In the Northern Grenadines, nearly 29% of the population reported Anglican affiliation in 2023, compared with the national average of 10.5% (Table 2.22- 2.24).

Pentecostals dominate many mainland divisions, particularly in Calliaqua and the Kingstown suburbs, where they accounted for over 35% of the population. Their strong presence in these urban and peri-urban centers reflects the movement’s appeal to younger, mobile populations and its resonance with urban lifestyles. Pentecostal congregations have also expanded in rural divisions such as Marriaqua, illustrating their wide reach across settlement types.

Seventh-Day Adventists display notable regional concentrations. In Marriaqua and Layou, they account for more than 20% of the population, significantly above the national average of 11.6%. Moreover, Methodists and Roman Catholics, by contrast, have weakened across most divisions but retain visible pockets of adherence. Methodists are slightly stronger in Georgetown, while Roman Catholics show a modest concentration in Calliaqua and parts of Kingstown.

Smaller denominations, including Evangelicals, Baptists (Spiritual), and Jehovah's Witnesses, are dispersed more evenly across the country, rarely exceeding 5% in any given division. Their presence reflects a broader mix of religions beyond the traditional mainstream churches.

Christian denominations vary across the country, with Anglicans strongest in the Grenadines, Pentecostals and Evangelicals leading in urban centers, and Adventists concentrated in Marriaqua and Layou. These patterns show how tradition and new movements shape religious life in both rural and urban areas.

Table 2-22 Percentage Distribution of Population by Census Division and Christian Denominations, 2001

Census Division	Christian Denomination										
	Anglican	Baptist	Evangelical	Jehovah Witnesses	Methodist	Pentecostal	Presbyterian	Roman Catholic	Salvation Army	Seventh Day Adventist	Other Christian Denominations
Kingstown	19.7	7.2	2.3	0.9	18.3	20.2	0.1	11.6	0.4	3.8	3.1
Suburbs of Kingstown	14.5	8.9	3.8	0.5	11.0	25.6	0.1	5.0	0.2	7.7	2.1
Calliaqua	18.9	8.6	1.8	1.0	14.5	18.4	0.1	8.2	0.5	9.4	4.4
Marriaqua	8.7	11.4	0.9	0.5	12.5	16.2	0.1	9.8	0.9	24.1	4.8
Bridgetown	11.8	17.7	1.9	0.6	5.1	10.2	0.0	3.3	0.1	20.6	7.4
Colonarie	11.1	11.0	2.0	0.2	7.1	23.5	0.6	6.9	0.0	8.5	3.9
Georgetown	20.9	16.2	2.4	0.5	4.5	4.9	0.0	7.5	0.0	5.3	4.1
Sandy Bay	32.8	17.8	0.9	0.0	0.0	13.4	0.0	6.7	0.0	4.8	2.3
Layou	11.7	5.9	2.1	0.2	11.5	19.7	0.0	4.5	0.0	15.3	4.4
Barrouallie	21.7	7.6	6.9	0.2	7.6	20.7	0.0	1.2	0.0	10.4	2.8
Chateaubelair	18.4	12.2	4.6	0.6	17.6	15.5	0.1	4.5	0.0	2.5	2.8
Northern Grenadines	30.2	6.9	8.4	1.1	1.4	11.4	0.1	7.8	0.0	13.6	2.6
Southern Grenadines	28.9	5.7	1.1	0.4	2.0	11.8	0.1	21.4	0.1	12.8	3.7
Total	**17.8**	**9.9**	**2.8**	**0.6**	**10.9**	**17.6**	**0.1**	**7.5**	**0.3**	**10.2**	**3.8**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-23 Percentage Distribution of Population by Census Division and Christian Denominations, 2012

Census Division	Christian Denomination										
	Anglican	Baptist	Evangelical	Jehovah Witnesses	Methodist	Pentecostal	Presbyterian	Roman Catholic	Salvation Army	Seventh Day Adventist	Other Christian Denominations
Kingstown	15.4	5.5	3.4	0.9	14.7	29.8	0.1	9.2	0.3	4.5	0.7
Suburbs of Kingstown	10.2	6.3	4.3	0.7	8.3	35.9	0.4	4.3	0.2	8.3	0.5
Calliaqua	15.7	6.7	3.0	1.3	11.4	27.0	0.2	7.2	0.4	11.2	0.3
Marriaqua	7.0	9.1	0.6	0.5	11.1	22.3	0.1	7.2	1.2	28.9	0.0
Bridgetown	8.4	11.6	2.5	0.7	4.6	22.6	0.5	2.0	0.1	22.7	0.1
Colonarie	8.3	13.1	3.9	0.9	4.6	35.3	0.1	5.9	0.0	10.4	0.3
Georgetown	16.3	13.0	4.9	0.9	3.5	30.3	0.4	6.8	0.1	6.2	0.3
Sandy Bay	23.4	10.0	0.5	0.3	0.3	33.7	0.2	5.3	0.2	5.7	0.0
Layou	11.0	6.7	2.8	0.7	10.2	27.0	0.3	3.6	0.1	16.7	0.0
Barrouallie	16.3	8.0	7.7	0.1	5.3	25.0	0.7	1.4	0.1	11.0	0.1
Chateaubelair	13.7	23.6	5.6	0.7	15.5	23.0	0.2	3.8	0.0	2.2	0.0
Northern Grenadines	22.6	6.7	9.0	1.5	0.8	17.5	0.1	7.0	0.0	15.4	0.3
Southern Grenadines	21.0	7.4	1.0	0.5	2.4	18.2	0.1	18.4	0.1	12.8	0.0
Total	**13.9**	**8.9**	**3.8**	**0.8**	**8.7**	**27.6**	**0.3**	**6.3**	**0.3**	**11.6**	**0.3**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-24 Percentage Distribution of Population by Census Division and Christian Denominations, 2023

Census Division	Christian Denomination										
	Anglican	Baptist	Evangelical	Jehovah Witnesses	Methodist	Pentecostal	Presbyterian	Roman Catholic	Salvation Army	Seventh Day Adventist	Other Christian Denominations
Kingstown	15.7	8.4	6.1	1.2	13.2	36.3	0.2	9.8	0.4	7.6	1.1
Suburbs of Kingstown	9.7	10.6	5.9	0.7	6.8	51.0	0.5	3.9	0.1	10.1	0.8
Calliaqua	14.9	8.9	3.1	0.7	11.9	35.5	0.2	6.9	0.4	16.5	1.0
Marriaqua	5.8	10.5	1.3	0.4	8.6	31.6	0.0	5.3	1.1	34.2	1.1
Bridgetown	6.5	18.8	3.6	1.0	4.9	22.9	0.1	2.2	0.1	39.4	0.5
Colonarie	7.6	17.1	7.0	0.2	4.0	38.0	0.2	4.0	0.0	21.6	0.2
Georgetown	17.9	24.4	6.2	0.8	3.5	20.4	0.1	6.1	0.0	19.6	0.9
Sandy Bay	21.5	36.5	1.1	0.2	0.5	24.1	0.0	4.1	0.1	11.9	0.0
Layou	10.4	9.1	3.6	0.4	10.4	38.3	0.3	3.1	0.0	23.7	0.8
Barrouallie	17.5	11.5	13.7	0.3	5.0	32.7	0.1	0.6	0.1	18.1	0.4
Chateaubelair	12.1	23.4	10.5	0.9	11.8	15.4	0.1	2.6	0.0	23.0	0.2
Northern Grenadines	28.6	7.6	11.7	3.0	0.2	20.7	0.0	6.5	0.0	21.6	0.0
Southern Grenadines	21.7	8.9	7.5	0.1	3.3	22.0	0.0	14.8	0.0	20.0	1.6
Total	**13.4**	**12.7**	**5.4**	**0.7**	**8.1**	**33.8**	**0.2**	**5.6**	**0.3**	**18.9**	**0.8**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

2.4.4 Population Distribution by Christian Denomination and Sex

The distribution of Christian denominations by sex shows that both men and women are most strongly affiliated with Pentecostal, Anglican, and Seventh-Day Adventist churches (Table 2.20-2.21). Pentecostalism has become the leading denomination for both sexes, growing from 17.6 percent in 2001 to 26.4 percent in 2023. However, women make up a larger share of Pentecostal membership than men, highlighting their central role in the denomination's expansion. Seventh-Day Adventists also gained followers over the period, with women again more strongly represented, while Anglican affiliation declined for both sexes.

Smaller gender differences are seen elsewhere. Men are slightly more represented in Rastafarian congregations, while women continue to outnumber men in most of the other denominations, including Evangelical, Roman Catholic, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

In summary, the denominational profile indicates that while the major Christian groups attract both sexes, women play a particularly strong role in the growth of many of these denominations specifically, Pentecostal and Adventist churches. This reinforces broader patterns of higher female participation in religious life.

2.4.5 Population Distribution by Christian Denominations and Broad Age Group

Assessing the age structure of Christian denominations provides insight into how each group is sustained across generations (Tables 2.28-2.29). The data reveal that while some denominations are growing through younger cohorts, others are increasingly concentrated among older populations, reflecting some aspect of growth and renewal within the religious landscape.

Table 2-25 Percentage Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age group, 2001

Religious Denomination	0–14	15–29	30–44	45–64	65+	Total
Anglican	12.7	17.8	19.5	22.3	25.2	**17.8**
Baptist (Spiritual)	11.0	7.7	8.0	11.9	16.2	**9.9**
Evangelical	3.4	2.9	2.4	2.6	1.9	**2.8**
Jehovah Witness	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	**0.6**
Methodist	9.1	10.0	10.6	13.3	17.9	**10.9**
Pentecostal	22.9	18.7	15.3	12.2	8.3	**17.6**
Presbyterian	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	**0.1**
Roman Catholic	6.0	7.3	9.2	8.9	6.9	**7.5**
Salvation Army	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	**0.3**
Seventh Day Adventist	11.7	10.6	9.7	8.1	7.3	**10.2**
Other Christian Denomination	4.5	3.7	3.2	3.3	3.4	**3.8**
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

In 2001, Pentecostal and Anglican were the largest denominations. Pentecostals stood out for their youthful base, with almost one in four children (22.9 percent) identifying as Pentecostal. Anglican affiliation, however, was concentrated in older groups, particularly those aged 65 years and over (25.2 percent). Methodists, Baptists, and Seventh-Day Adventists were more evenly distributed, though Adventists displayed a fairly stronger presence among younger cohorts.

Table 2-26 Total Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age Group, 2012

Christian Denomination	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Total
Anglican	2,443	3,012	3,353	4,176	2,191	**15,175**
Baptist (Spiritual)	2,557	2,218	1,686	2,001	1,213	**9,675**
Evangelical	1,229	1,114	733	729	314	**4,118**
Jehovah's Witness	227	218	184	187	93	**909**
Methodist	1,715	2,210	1,843	2,336	1,355	**9,458**
Pentecostal	9,528	8,192	5,773	5,004	1,610	**30,108**
Presbyterian/Congregational	84	80	43	60	26	**294**
Roman Catholic	1,329	1,468	1,635	1,672	773	**6,877**
Salvation Army	71	91	60	46	19	**287**
Seventh Day Adventist	3,613	3,289	2,629	2,269	909	**12,710**
Other Christian Denomination	82	68	62	48	21	**281**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-27 Percentage Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age group, 2012

Religious Denomination	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Total
Anglican	9.1	11.2	14.9	18.3	21.9	**13.9**
Baptist (Spiritual)	9.5	8.3	7.5	8.8	12.1	**8.9**
Evangelical	4.6	4.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	**3.8**
Jehovah's Witness	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	**0.8**
Methodist	6.4	8.2	8.2	10.2	13.6	**8.7**
Pentecostal	35.4	30.5	25.6	21.9	16.1	**27.6**
Presbyterian/Congregational	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	**0.3**
Roman Catholic	4.9	5.5	7.2	7.3	7.7	**6.3**
Salvation Army	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	**0.3**
Seventh Day Adventist	13.4	12.3	11.7	9.9	9.1	**11.6**
Other Christian Denomination	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	**0.3**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2012, Pentecostalism had grown to 27.6 percent of the population, with particularly high representation among children (35.4 percent) and young adults (30.5 percent). This underscored its role as the fastest-growing denomination which tends to attract younger generations. Seventh-Day Adventists also strengthened their profile, with 13.4 percent of children ages 0-14 reporting Adventist affiliation (Table 2.26-2.27). In contrast, Anglicans, Methodists, and Roman Catholics showed declining proportions among younger people, with their membership increasingly concentrated among the middle-aged and elderly, suggesting aging congregations.

Table 2-28 Total Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age Group, 2023

Christian Denomination	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Total
Anglican	1,598	2,029	2,103	3,350	2,308	**11,388**
Baptist (Spiritual)	2,560	2,152	2,021	2,504	1,545	**10,782**
Evangelical	1,174	984	918	979	570	**4,625**
Jehovah's Witness	124	76	158	167	111	**636**
Methodist	1,019	1,218	1,337	1,900	1,424	**6,898**
Pentecostal	7,245	6,653	5,962	6,514	2,351	**28,725**
Presbyterian/Congregational	42	36	19	43	22	**162**
Roman Catholic	870	873	895	1,323	835	**4,796**
Salvation Army	39	33	51	56	42	**221**
Seventh Day Adventist	3,834	3,419	3,068	3,936	1,821	**16,078**
Other Christian Denomination	139	131	123	151	123	**667**
Total	**18,644**	**17,604**	**16,655**	**20,923**	**11,152**	**84,978**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-29 Percentage Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age Group, 2023

Christian Denomination	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-64	65+	Total
Anglican	8.6	11.5	12.6	16.0	20.7	**13.4**
Baptist (Spiritual)	13.7	12.2	12.1	12.0	13.9	**12.7**
Evangelical	6.3	5.6	5.5	4.7	5.1	**5.4**
Jehovah's Witness	0.7	0.4	0.9	0.8	1.0	**0.7**
Methodist	5.5	6.9	8.0	9.1	12.8	**8.1**
Pentecostal	38.9	37.8	35.8	31.1	21.1	**33.8**
Presbyterian/Congregational	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	**0.2**
Roman Catholic	4.7	5.0	5.4	6.3	7.5	**5.6**
Salvation Army	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	**0.3**
Seventh Day Adventist	20.6	19.4	18.4	18.8	16.3	**18.9**
Other Christian Denomination	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.1	**0.8**
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Likewise, the 2023 Census confirmed these trends. Pentecostalism became the largest denomination across all age groups, reaching 33.8 percent of the population. Its membership was strongest among children (38.9 percent) and young adults (37.8 percent), confirming its youthful appeal. Seventh-Day Adventists followed at 18.9 percent, also showing high concentrations among younger age groups (ages 0-14 and 15-29). By comparison, Anglican (13.4 percent), Methodist (8.1 percent), and Roman Catholic (5.6 percent) affiliations were highest among older adults, pointing to aging congregations and weaker recruitment of youth. Smaller denominations, such as Evangelical, Baptist (Spiritual), and Jehovah's Witnesses, maintained modest but steady proportions across age groups.

Overall, the age structure of denominations reveals a clear generational shift in the religious landscape. Pentecostal and Adventist churches are expanding through strong youth participation, while Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic churches are increasingly characterized by older memberships. This indicates that the future of religious life in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will likely be shaped by the continued growth of the more youthful denominations.

2.5 Marital and Union Status

Marital and union status is a core demographic characteristic that shapes household composition, fertility, and the overall social fabric of a population. The United Nations defines marital status as an individual's legal or customary position in relation to marriage laws or traditions, typically classified as single (never married), married, widowed, divorced, or separated (United Nations, 2013)[9]. Union status extends beyond these categories to include consensual partnerships, whether formalized through registration or existing informally, reflecting evolving social practices.

In the 2023 Population and Housing Census, two questions addressed these areas: **G1: What is your marital status? and G2: What is your present union status?** These questions capture both the legal dimension of marriage and the practical reality of unions, including informal partnerships.

From a demographic perspective, analyzing marital and union status by sex allows for the identification of gender-specific differences in marriage, singlehood, widowhood, divorce, and consensual unions. Comparing results from the 2012 and 2023 Censuses highlights patterns of continuity in traditional marital arrangements alongside shifts in the prevalence of non-marital and consensual unions.

2.5.1 Marital Status

The marital structure of the population reveals important changes between 2012 and 2023. In 2012, over half of the adult population (54.3%) was single and never married (Table 2.30). By 2023, this proportion increased sharply to 65.6%, making singleness the most common marital status among both sexes (Table 2.31). This rise in never-married individuals signals that more Vincentians are postponing or forgoing marriage altogether.

At the same time, the proportion of the married population declined significantly, from 38.7% in 2012 to 26.0% in 2023. Both sexes experienced declines, though the reduction was slightly steeper among women (from 37.2% to 25.2%) than men (from 40.3% to 27.1%). These changes point to a shift away from formal marriage as the dominant form of union, consistent with broader Caribbean patterns. St. Bernard (2003) notes that educational attainment, female economic participation, and shifting gender norms have contributed to a delay in marriage across the region, with common-law and visiting unions increasingly replacing early formal marriage as preferred arrangements[10].

Other marital categories, though smaller, reveal important gendered dynamics. Widowhood was higher among women (6.6%) than men (2.5%) in 2023, reflecting longer female life expectancy and earlier male mortality. Divorce also showed a higher share among women (2.9%) compared to men (2.3%),

[9] United Nations. (n.d.), *Metadata: Definitions and Methods of Computations – Marital Status of Men and Women.* Retrieved https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/dataset/marriage/wmd2012/Metadata/ Marriage_Metadata.pdf

[10] St. Bernard, G. (2003). *Major trends affecting families in Central America and the Caribbean*. United Nations. Retrieved https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/mtstbernard.pdf

suggesting women are usually more exposed to marital termination. Legal separation remained negligible, under 1 percent for both sexes across the two censuses.

Table 2-30 Population 15 Years and Older by Marital Status and Sex, 2012

Union Status	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Single Never Married	23,854	56.9	20,812	51.6	**44,666**	**54.3**
Married	15,907	37.9	15,956	39.5	**31,863**	**38.7**
Divorced	813	1.9	890	2.2	**1,703**	**2.1**
Widowed	752	1.8	2,213	5.5	**2,965**	**3.6**
Legally Separated	307	0.7	342	0.9	**649**	**0.8**
Not Stated	233	0.6	144	0.4	**377**	**0.5**
Don't Know	21	0.1	19	0.1	**40**	**0.1**
Total	**41,887**	**100**	**40,376**	**100**	**82,263**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-31 Population 15 Years and Older by Marital Status and Sex, 2023

Union Status	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Single Never Married	20,228	67.1	23,269	64.4	**43,497**	**65.6**
Married	8,157	27.1	9,103	25.2	**17,260**	**26.0**
Divorced	694	2.3	1,035	2.9	**1,729**	**2.6**
Widowed	750	2.5	2,373	6.6	**3,123**	**4.7**
Legally Separated	229	0.8	269	0.7	**498**	**0.8**
Not Stated	68	0.2	90	0.2	**158**	**0.2**
Total	**30,126**	**100**	**36,139**	**100**	**66,265**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, the data reflect a demographic shift toward lower marriage prevalence and delayed entry into formal unions. While marriage continues to structure family life, its universality has weakened as larger proportions remain never married. The higher incidence of widowhood and divorce among women further illustrates how mortality differentials and marital dissolution contribute to gendered differences in marital status.

2.5.2 Union Status

Union status offers additional insight into partnership patterns by capturing both legal marriages and informal arrangements. It provides insights into family formation, household composition, and the evolving dynamics of intimate relationships. In 2012, about 22.4% of persons aged 15 years and older were married and living with a spouse, 14.1% in common-law unions, and 11.5% in visiting partnerships. Meanwhile, 19.9% reported not being in a union, and nearly one-third (29.9%) stated that they had never had a spouse or partner (Table 2.32).

Table 2-32 Population 15 Years and Older by Current Union Status and Sex, 2012

Union Status	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Never had a Spouse/Partner	13,660	32.6	10,958	27.1	**24,618**	**29.9**
Married and Living with Spouse	9,190	21.9	9,242	22.9	**18,432**	**22.4**
Common Law Union	5,752	13.7	5,872	14.6	**11,624**	**14.1**
Visiting Partner	4,811	11.5	4,666	11.6	**9,477**	**11.5**
Not in a Union	7,411	17.7	8,965	22.2	**16,376**	**19.9**
Not Stated	1,063	2.5	673	1.7	**1,736**	**2.1**
Total	**41,887**	**100**	**40,376**	**100**	**82,263**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-33 Population 15 Years and Older by Current Union Status and Sex, 2023

Union Status	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Never had a spouse or common-law partner	5,466	18.1	5,162	14.3	**10,628**	**16.0**
Married and living with spouse	7,091	23.5	7,718	21.4	**14,809**	**22.3**
Married and not living with spouse	949	3.2	1,242	3.4	**2,191**	**3.3**
Common-law	3,274	10.9	4,190	11.6	**7,464**	**11.3**
Visiting partner	2,921	9.7	3,326	9.2	**6,247**	**9.4**
Not in a union	8,364	27.8	12,058	33.4	**20,422**	**30.8**
Not Stated	2,061	6.8	2,443	6.8	**4,504**	**6.8**
Total	**30,126**	**100**	**36,139**	**100**	**66,265**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, these patterns had shifted. The share of adults married and living with a spouse remained relatively stable at 22.3%, while common-law unions accounted for 11.3%, and visiting partnerships declined slightly to 9.4%. The most striking change was in the proportion of those not in a union, which increased to 30.8%, compared with 19.9% in 2012. Similarly, those who reported never having had a spouse or partner declined to 16.0%, suggesting that while fewer individuals are formally entering unions, more individuals are identifying as not being in any current union (Table 2.33).

These results indicate a trend toward delayed or foregone unions, aligning with broader Caribbean patterns where economic pressures, migration, and changing cultural norms shape partnership choices. St. Bernard (2003) notes that younger adults increasingly postpone marriage or opt for informal unions, reflecting wider social and economic shifts across the region[11].

2.6 Conclusion

Overall, the analysis of ethnicity, religion, and marital and union status points to both continuity and gradual transformation in the Vincentian population. The population remained predominantly of African descent, yet diversity increased as persons of Mixed heritage expanded their share, consolidating their

[11] St. Bernard, G. (2003). *Major trends affecting families in Central America and the Caribbean*. United Nations. Retrieved https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/mtstbernard.pdf

position as the second largest ethnic category. Smaller groups, including Indigenous peoples and East Indians, also maintained a visible presence, underscoring the country's multi-ethnic character.

Furthermore, Christianity continued as the dominant religion; however, denominational change was evident. Pentecostalism surpassed Anglicanism to become the largest Christian denomination, reflecting a wider regional trend toward revivalist movements that attract younger age groups. At the same time, the growing share of persons reporting "None/No religion" points to a subtle but steady secularization process, particularly among younger generations, underscoring changes in spiritual identity and practice.

Marital and union patterns further highlight the evolving social landscape. A marked rise in the proportion of adults outside formal unions, alongside the persistence of common-law and visiting relationships, indicates changing pathways in family formation. These shifts reflect delayed marriage, economic constraints, and changing cultural preferences, aligning with wider Caribbean demographic trends. Taken together, these patterns illustrate how continuity in tradition coexists with transformation, producing a society that is both rooted in its heritage and adapting to the demands of modern life.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 2
SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Nativity & Migration :
94.3% are native-born (102,546); foreign-born are 4.1% (4,440)

Ethnic Composition:
African descent remains the majority at ~79.3% (86,222)

Religion Overall:
Christian affiliation: 78.1% and None/No religion rose to 14.0%

Christian Denominations:
Pentecostal is largest at 26.4%; Seventh-day Adventist 11.6%; Anglican 10.5% (declining)

Marital Status (15+):
Never married 65.6%; Married 26.0%; Widowed 4.7% and Divorced 2.6%.

Union Status (15+):
Not in a union 30.8%; Married & living with spouse 22.3%; Common-law 11.3%

Chapter 3. Migration Patterns and Distribution

3.1 Introduction

Migration is one of the most influential demographic processes shaping Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It affects the size, structure, and distribution of the population while carrying broader social and economic implications. Both internal movements within the country and international flows (whether through emigration, immigration, or return migration) have played a critical role in transforming households, labor markets, and communities.

The Caribbean remains one of the most migration-intensive regions in the world, with high emigrant populations. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is no exception, as a reasonable share of its citizens reside abroad, contributing to remittance inflows, skills circulation, and cultural linkages (Jaupart, 2023)[12]. At the same time, immigration and return migration, though smaller in scale, add to the country's demographic diversity and economic resilience (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2023a)[13]. Internal migration within Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also redistributes people between rural and urban areas, influencing housing demand, service provision, and labor availability.

This chapter explores the dynamics of migration in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, drawing on the 2023 Population and Housing Census to highlight both continuity and change since the 2001 and 2012 Population and Housing Census 2012. Attention is given to movements within the country, the presence and role of the foreign-born population, the experiences of emigrants, and the reintegration of returnees. Collaboratively, these dimensions underscore how migration (whether internal, outward, or return) continues to shape the demographic composition, household structures, and the wider development trajectory of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

3.2 Local-born Population Internal Migration

The concept of the local-born population refers to persons born in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines who were residents in the country on Census Night. Internal migration, in this context, captures those who live at an address or in a census division different from their place of birth.

The local-born population continues to dominate the demographic structure of the country. In 2012, this group was estimated at 101,515 persons, representing 93.0% of the total population (Table 3.1). By 2023, the number declined to 84,978 persons, or 89.8% of the population, reflecting demographic change and the impact of emigration over the intercensal period (Table 3.2).

A key feature of local-born migration is the distinction between those who remain in their census division of birth and those who relocate elsewhere within the country. In 2012, 72.0% of local-born persons lived in their census division of birth, comprising 37,807 males and 35,319 females. The sex ratio of 107 males

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[12] Jaupart, P. (2023). *International migration in the Caribbean: Background paper for the World Development Report 2023: Migrants, refugees, and societies.* Washington, DC: World Bank. Retrieved from https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/3 c5cf49b10dd0607472f4a2fb8a063ce-0050062023/original/WDR2023-Caribbean-Background-Paper-FORMATTED.pdf

[13] International Organization for Migration. (2023a). Fundamentals of migration. Retrieved from https://www.iom.int/fundamentals-migration

per 100 females indicated that men were slightly more likely to remain in their birthplace. By 2023, however, the proportion of persons residing in their birthplace fell sharply to 58.1% (49,370 persons), while those reporting residence in another census division increased to 37.0% (31,450 persons). This shift represents a notable rise in internal migration over the intercensal period, with birthplace retention declining by almost 14 percentage points between 2012 and 2023.

Patterns of movement show a strong urban pull. In absolute terms, the largest numbers of in-migrants were recorded in Calliaqua (9,714 persons), the Suburbs of Kingstown (5,604), and Kingstown (3,584) (Table 3.1). Together, these three centers absorbed 60.1% of all internal migrants in 2023. Their proportions of internal migrants relative to their local-born totals were also among the highest: 47.5% in Calliaqua, 44.0% in the Suburbs of Kingstown, and 41.5% in Kingstown. These figures highlight the appeal of urban and peri-urban areas for employment, education, and services.

By contrast, rural and northern districts showed stronger birthplace retention. In 2023, 72.8% of Georgetown's population (3,825 of 5,255) were locally born, along with 70.2% in Chateaubelair (2,636 of 3,755), 65.7% in Marriaqua (4,358 of 6,630), and 66.8% in Layou (2,988 of 4,470) (Table 3.1; Table 3.3). These patterns indicate lower in-migration flows and a stronger attachment to place, consistent with the persistence of agriculture and fishing as anchors of rural economies.

The sex distribution of internal migration reveals distinct gender dynamics. Among those who remained in their division of birth, the sex ratio was 96 males per 100 females (24,118 males versus 25,252 females), indicating slightly higher female retention. In contrast, among those who had migrated to another census division, the sex ratio fell to 77 males per 100 females (13,630 males versus 17,820 females). This points to women being more likely than men to engage in internal migration, suggesting greater female mobility within the national settlement system.

In summary, internal migration in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reflects a clear urban–rural divide. Urban centres such as Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its suburbs function as major magnets for internal migrants, while rural districts like Georgetown, Chateaubelair, and Marriaqua display strong local retention. These movements mirror long-standing rural-to-urban dynamics driven by access to jobs, services, and opportunities, and underscore the continuing demographic weight of urban areas in shaping the country's internal migration profile.

Table 3-1 Local-born Population by Place of Birth, Place of Residence and Gender, 2012

Place of Residence	Gender	Place of Birth														
		Kingstown	Suburbs of Kingstown	Calliaqua	Marriaqua	Bridgetown	Colonarie	Georgetown	Sandy Bay	Layou	Barrouallie	Chateaubelair	Northern Grenadines	Southern Grenadines	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	Male	3,880	239	288	99	60	73	69	61	72	78	138	45	54	506	**5,662**
	Female	3,578	283	345	144	82	118	85	69	115	94	177	89	62	496	**5,737**
	Total	7,458	522	633	243	142	191	154	130	187	172	315	134	116	1,002	**11,399**
Suburbs of Kingstown	Male	765	3,912	223	98	63	80	50	65	139	83	218	48	32	581	**6,357**
	Female	807	3,741	253	132	73	93	49	75	194	90	245	66	51	639	**6,508**
	Total	1,572	7,653	476	230	136	173	99	140	333	173	463	114	83	1,220	**12,865**
Calliaqua	Male	943	248	7,261	507	294	292	197	141	133	109	176	103	83	346	**10,833**
	Female	984	262	6,881	619	335	325	253	214	134	106	187	149	75	404	**10,928**
	Total	1,927	510	14,142	1,126	629	617	450	355	267	215	363	252	158	750	**21,761**
Marriaqua	Male	49	23	138	3,054	86	38	11	16	29	13	16	8	6	231	**3,718**
	Female	46	38	164	2,979	87	35	20	28	27	16	22	11	10	210	**3,693**
	Total	95	61	302	6,033	173	73	31	44	56	29	38	19	16	441	**7,411**
Bridgetown	Male	22	15	75	98	2,629	96	32	14	16	15	11	5	5	163	**3,196**
	Female	37	13	75	93	2,437	123	34	23	20	10	10	6	6	161	**3,048**
	Total	59	28	150	191	5,066	219	66	37	36	25	21	11	11	324	**6,244**
Colonarie	Male	25	9	36	24	97	2,962	72	15	15	5	12	7	7	69	**3,355**
	Female	28	23	38	26	110	2,753	103	26	11	7	11	3	8	62	**3,209**
	Total	53	32	74	50	207	5,715	175	41	26	12	23	10	15	131	**6,564**
Georgetown	Male	17	16	37	25	25	103	2,241	258	9	2	15	4	6	697	**3,455**
	Female	12	13	28	22	34	73	2,131	305	9	9	10	3	2	669	**3,320**
	Total	29	29	65	47	59	176	4,372	563	18	11	25	7	8	1,366	**6,775**
Sandy Bay	Male	10	18	18	5	7	9	12	1,125	3	8	8	3	2	65	**1,290**
	Female	6	8	6	3	6	7	9	1,065	8	5	3	11	6	69	**1,215**
	Total	16	26	24	8	13	16	21	2,190	11	13	11	14	8	134	**2,505**
Layou	Male	96	100	39	29	24	21	9	11	2,329	59	103	14	7	182	**3,023**
	Female	107	100	36	65	17	23	18	23	2,047	51	112	16	12	179	**2,806**
	Total	203	200	75	94	41	44	27	34	4,376	110	215	30	19	361	**5,829**
Barrouallie	Male	32	39	23	12	12	14	17	13	46	2,199	104	8	6	221	**2,746**
	Female	41	25	26	11	13	11	13	14	66	1,962	93	6	12	257	**2,550**
	Total	73	64	49	23	25	25	30	27	112	4,161	197	14	18	478	**5,296**
Chateaubelair	Male	29	22	20	7	7	16	9	23	21	43	2,636	8	11	71	**2,923**
	Female	25	24	15	10	12	6	8	18	23	36	2,368	8	7	58	**2,618**
	Total	54	46	35	17	19	22	17	41	44	79	5,004	16	18	129	**5,541**
Northern Grenadines	Male	25	13	48	19	23	24	13	60	6	11	17	2,504	15	304	**3,082**
	Female	25	6	13	5	11	11	6	31	4	9	22	2,339	13	200	**2,695**
	Total	50	19	61	24	34	35	19	91	10	20	39	4,843	28	504	**5,777**
Southern Grenadines	Male	77	45	71	62	52	53	64	60	30	46	104	31	1,075	132	**1,902**
	Female	39	53	31	45	27	36	23	48	23	33	95	23	1,038	132	**1,646**
	Total	116	98	102	107	79	89	87	108	53	79	199	54	2,113	264	**3,548**
Total		**11,705**	**9,288**	**16,188**	**8,193**	**6,623**	**7,395**	**5,548**	**3,801**	**5,529**	**5,099**	**6,913**	**5,518**	**2,611**	**7,104**	**101,515**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 3-2 Local-born Population by Place of Birth, Place of Residence and Gender, 2023

Place of Residence	Gender	Country or Geographic Division of Birth					
		At this address	Elsewhere in the country	Abroad	Not Stated	Don't Know	Total
Kingstown	**Male**	2,253	1,439	210	39	10	**3,951**
	Female	2,184	2,145	298	50	18	**4,695**
	Total	4,437	3,584	508	89	28	**8,646**
Suburbs of Kingstown	**Male**	3,104	2,514	188	72	64	**5,942**
	Female	3,288	3,090	232	102	70	**6,782**
	Total	6,392	5,604	420	174	134	**12,724**
Calliaqua	**Male**	4,391	4,191	507	102	29	**9,220**
	Female	4,843	5,523	692	150	36	**11,244**
	Total	9,234	9,714	1,199	252	65	**20,464**
Marriaqua	**Male**	2,192	887	55	19	5	**3,158**
	Female	2,166	1,165	89	18	34	**3,472**
	Total	4,358	2,052	144	37	39	**6,630**
Bridgetown	**Male**	1,905	619	56	3	5	**2,588**
	Female	1,875	794	41	2	2	**2,714**
	Total	3,780	1,413	97	5	7	**5,302**
Colonarie	**Male**	1,734	661	49	5	4	**2,453**
	Female	1,864	921	69	5	4	**2,863**
	Total	3,598	1,582	118	10	8	**5,316**
Georgetown	**Male**	1,888	567	31	14	10	**2,510**
	Female	1,937	752	36	14	6	**2,745**
	Total	3,825	1,319	67	28	16	**5,255**
Sandy Bay	**Male**	823	162	6	5	2	**998**
	Female	800	153	6	7	4	**970**
	Total	1,623	315	12	12	6	**1,968**
Layou	**Male**	1,448	543	65	9	7	**2,072**
	Female	1,540	745	91	9	13	**2,398**
	Total	2,988	1,288	156	18	20	**4,470**
Barrouallie	**Male**	1,295	445	26	8	1	**1,775**
	Female	1,495	550	42	6	5	**2,098**
	Total	2,790	995	68	14	6	**3,873**
Chateaubelair	**Male**	1,221	460	23	4	7	**1,715**
	Female	1,415	575	35	12	3	**2,040**
	Total	2,636	1,035	58	16	10	**3,755**
Northern Grenadines	**Male**	899	552	71	0	0	**1,522**
	Female	972	767	89	4	0	**1,832**
	Total	1,871	1,319	160	4	0	**3,354**
Southern Grenadines	**Male**	965	590	58	5	3	**1,621**
	Female	873	640	72	8	7	**1,600**
	Total	1,838	1,230	130	13	10	**3,221**
Total		**49,370**	**31,450**	**3,137**	**672**	**349**	**84,978**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-3 Population Born Elsewhere in this Country by Place of Birth and Place of Residence and Gender, Place of Residence and Gender, 2023

Place of Residence	Gender	Place of Birth														
		Kingstown	Suburbs of Kingstown	Calliaqua	Marriaqua	Bridgetown	Colonarie	Georgetown	Sandy Bay	Layou	Barrouallie	Chateaubelair	Northern Grenadines	Southern Grenadines	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	Male	678	156	110	99	18	26	42	70	27	36	99	32	46	0	**1,439**
	Female	876	182	190	168	57	73	87	76	80	49	177	62	66	2	**2,145**
	Total	1,554	338	300	267	75	99	129	146	107	85	276	94	112	2	**3,584**
Suburbs of Kingstown	Male	725	834	185	90	46	56	55	44	124	80	214	24	33	4	**2,514**
	Female	756	963	235	139	61	93	77	81	185	99	288	61	47	5	**3,090**
	Total	1,481	1,797	420	229	107	149	132	125	309	179	502	85	80	9	**5,604**
Calliaqua	Male	849	235	1,455	467	195	211	149	131	105	74	170	68	81	1	**4,191**
	Female	949	353	1,842	623	312	251	280	235	129	90	206	153	100	0	**5,523**
	Total	1,798	588	3,297	1,090	507	462	429	366	234	164	376	221	181	1	**9,714**
Marriaqua	Male	78	20	114	456	60	45	15	23	19	15	15	8	16	3	**887**
	Female	96	60	187	566	90	33	19	17	23	19	24	19	8	4	**1,165**
	Total	174	80	301	1,022	150	78	34	40	42	34	39	27	24	7	**2,052**
Bridgetown	Male	22	19	39	49	244	105	36	18	26	8	34	11	8	0	**619**
	Female	46	24	39	72	337	128	59	17	16	14	24	11	7	0	**794**
	Total	68	43	78	121	581	233	95	35	42	22	58	22	15	0	**1,413**
Colonarie	Male	25	19	28	19	74	404	47	12	9	14	2	3	4	1	**661**
	Female	25	7	40	40	97	513	97	36	30	10	15	5	4	2	**921**
	Total	50	26	68	59	171	917	144	48	39	24	17	8	8	3	**1,582**
Georgetown	Male	40	4	13	19	11	71	270	111	4	2	11	5	3	3	**567**
	Female	64	6	10	26	8	80	364	158	7	4	17	5	1	2	**752**
	Total	104	10	23	45	19	151	634	269	11	6	28	10	4	5	**1,319**
Sandy Bay	Male	11	8	13	10	9	5	26	63	3	3	3	0	8	0	**162**
	Female	9	7	2	11	3	5	25	74	2	2	6	5	2	0	**153**
	Total	20	15	15	21	12	10	51	137	5	5	9	5	10	0	**315**
Layou	Male	79	34	26	50	11	6	14	9	186	35	72	8	13	0	**543**
	Female	117	48	29	62	13	21	12	6	247	67	100	9	13	1	**745**
	Total	196	82	55	112	24	27	26	15	433	102	172	17	26	1	**1,288**
Barrouallie	Male	65	20	10	5	3	4	12	6	24	221	64	6	5	0	**445**
	Female	91	19	6	7	4	8	8	9	42	244	103	5	4	0	**550**
	Total	156	39	16	12	7	12	20	15	66	465	167	11	9	0	**995**
Chateaubelair	Male	52	17	5	8	3	2	6	10	10	29	317	0	1	0	**460**
	Female	93	8	6	4	3	5	10	13	18	20	383	5	7	0	**575**
	Total	145	25	11	12	6	7	16	23	28	49	700	5	8	0	**1,035**
Northern Grenadines	Male	17	9	20	12	7	12	19	26	4	5	21	398	2	0	**552**
	Female	30	18	21	8	4	9	18	31	4	12	10	587	15	0	**767**
	Total	47	27	41	20	11	21	37	57	8	17	31	985	17	0	**1,319**
Southern Grenadines	Male	96	33	34	28	17	35	37	42	23	32	66	14	133	0	**590**
	Female	129	36	36	46	26	26	20	37	39	14	62	8	161	0	**640**
	Total	225	69	70	74	43	61	57	79	62	46	128	22	294	0	**1,230**
Total		**6,018**	**3,139**	**4,695**	**3,084**	**1,713**	**2,227**	**1,804**	**1,355**	**1,386**	**1,198**	**2,503**	**1,512**	**788**	**28**	**31,450**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

3.3 Foreign-born Population

The foreign-born population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines consist of persons born outside of the country but who were resident on Census Night. This group includes:

a) persons born abroad with Vincentian parentage;
b) persons born abroad who later acquired Vincentian citizenship through other channels; and
c) residents who are not Vincentian citizens, regardless of their legal status in the State.

In 2012, the foreign-born population was estimated at 4,898 persons, representing 4.5% of the total population. By 2023, the number declined to 4,440 persons but accounted for a slightly higher share, 4.7% of the population. This reflects two processes: overall population decline due to emigration and natural demographic change, and the continued though limited presence of migrants. While small in scale, the foreign-born group plays an important role in shaping the demographic and socio-economic landscape of the country.

3.3.1 Age Group and Sex of Foreign-born Population

The age composition of the foreign-born population underscores an important demographic transition.

In 2012, the age profile was relatively young, with higher proportions recorded among children and young adults. For example, 8.8% of foreign-born persons were 0-4 years, 9.6% were aged 5-9 years, while 9.3% were aged 25-29 years. At the opposite end, 8.3% were aged 65 years and over. The overall sex ratio was 102 males per 100 females, indicating near gender balance (Table 3.4).

Table 3-4 Foreign-born Population by Age Group, Sex and Sex Ratio, 2012

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Male %	Female %	Total %	Sex Ratio
0 – 4	239	194	433	9.7	8.0	8.8	123
5 – 9	257	215	472	10.4	8.9	9.6	120
10 – 14	189	181	370	7.6	7.5	7.6	104
15 – 19	134	129	263	5.4	5.3	5.4	104
20 – 24	161	144	305	6.5	5.9	6.2	112
25 – 29	239	214	453	9.7	8.8	9.3	112
30 – 34	158	175	333	6.4	7.2	6.8	90
35 – 39	151	163	314	6.1	6.7	6.4	93
40 – 44	163	158	321	6.6	6.6	6.5	103
45 – 49	168	180	348	6.8	7.4	7.1	93
50 – 54	158	171	329	6.4	7.1	6.7	92
55 – 59	148	139	287	5.6	6.2	5.9	93
60 – 64	132	131	263	5.3	5.4	5.4	101
65+	187	220	407	7.6	9.1	8.3	85
Total	**2,484**	**2,414**	**4,898**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**102**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, however, the profile had shifted toward older age groups. Only 2.7% of foreign-born residents were aged 0-4 years, compared with 15.3% who were 65 years and older, a near doubling of the elderly share. Middle-age groups such as 35-39 (9.2%) and 40-44 (8.9%) also became more prominent (Table 3.5). These changes are indicative of a decreased inflow of young migrant families as well as the aging of earlier migrant cohorts.

Table 3-5 Foreign-born Population by Age Group, Sex and Sex Ratio, 2023

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Male %	Female %	Total %	Sex Ratio
0 – 4	70	51	121	3.4	2.2	2.7	137
5 – 9	133	152	285	6.4	6.5	6.4	88
10 – 14	192	201	393	9.2	8.5	8.9	96
15 – 19	156	183	339	7.5	7.8	7.6	85
20 – 24	92	100	192	4.4	4.2	4.3	92
25 – 29	83	121	204	4	5.1	4.6	69
30 – 34	123	123	246	5.9	5.2	5.5	100
35 – 39	187	221	408	9	9.4	9.2	85
40 – 44	195	198	393	9.4	8.4	8.9	98
45 – 49	144	172	316	6.9	7.3	7.1	84
50 – 54	150	130	280	7.2	5.5	6.3	115
55 – 59	131	154	285	6.3	6.5	6.4	85
60 – 64	133	165	298	6.4	7	6.7	81
65+	296	384	680	14.2	16.3	15.3	77
Total	**2,085**	**2,355**	**4,440**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**89**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Gender composition also shifted over the intercensal period. In 2012, males slightly outnumbered females, but by 2023, females represented a majority: 2,355 females versus 2,085 males, yielding a sex ratio of 89 males per 100 females as opposed to 102 males per 100 females in 2012 (Table 3.4 – 3.5). This feminization is most evident in older age groups, suggesting that female migrants either remained in the country at higher rates or experienced greater longevity compared with their male counterparts.

3.3.2 Place of Residence of Foreign-born Population

The spatial distribution of the foreign-born population reveals notable concentrations in urban and semi-urban centres, with Calliaqua and Kingstown emerging as the primary destinations across both census periods. In 2012, Calliaqua accounted for nearly one-third (32.4%) of all foreign-born residents, followed by Kingstown with 16.5% and the Suburbs of Kingstown with 9.2% (Table 3.6). Collectively, these three divisions attracted 58.1% of the foreign-born population, underscoring the importance of urban areas as centers of settlement, employment, and social integration.

Table 3-6 Foreign-born Population by Census Division and Sex, 2012

Census Division	2012 Frequency			2012 Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Kingstown	418	390	**808**	16.9	16.1	**16.5**
Suburbs of Kingstown	225	227	**452**	9.1	9.4	**9.2**
Calliaqua	749	838	**1,587**	30.3	34.6	**32.4**
Marriaqua	150	109	**259**	6.1	4.5	**5.3**
Bridgetown	98	105	**203**	4	4.3	**4.1**
Colonarie	90	82	**172**	3.6	3.4	**3.5**
Georgetown	91	72	**163**	3.7	3	**3.3**
Sandy Bay	21	11	**32**	0.8	0.5	**0.7**
Layou	156	156	**312**	6.3	6.4	**6.4**
Barrouallie	73	70	**143**	3	2.9	**2.9**
Chateaubelair	79	63	**142**	3.2	2.6	**2.9**
Northern Grenadines	166	171	**337**	6.7	7.1	**6.9**
Southern Grenadines	158	130	**288**	6.4	5.4	**5.9**
Total	**2,474**	**2,424**	**4,898**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, this trend became even more pronounced. Calliaqua alone absorbed 38.0% of the foreign-born population, while Kingstown and its Suburbs accounted for 18.2% and 11.6%, respectively (Table 3.7). Combined, these three divisions represented 67.8% of all foreign-born residents, a significant increase over 2012. This shift highlights the continuing urban pull of the southern corridor, where opportunities in commerce, services, and access to infrastructure are greatest.

Table 3-7 Foreign-born Population by Census Division and Sex, 2023

Census Division	2012 Frequency			2012 Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Kingstown	371	436	**807**	17.8	18.5	**18.2**
Suburbs of Kingstown	244	273	**517**	11.7	11.6	**11.6**
Calliaqua	780	907	**1,687**	37.4	38.5	**38.0**
Marriaqua	63	97	**160**	3.0	4.1	**3.6**
Bridgetown	83	61	**144**	4.0	2.6	**3.2**
Colonarie	68	79	**147**	3.3	3.4	**3.3**
Georgetown	54	45	**99**	2.6	1.9	**2.2**
Sandy Bay	9	7	**16**	0.4	0.3	**0.4**
Layou	106	118	**224**	5.1	5.0	**5.0**
Barrouallie	40	48	**88**	1.9	2.0	**2.0**
Chateaubelair	47	37	**84**	2.3	1.6	**1.9**
Northern Grenadines	130	154	**284**	6.2	6.5	**6.4**
Southern Grenadines	90	93	**183**	4.3	3.9	**4.1**
Total	**2,085**	**2,355**	**4,440**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

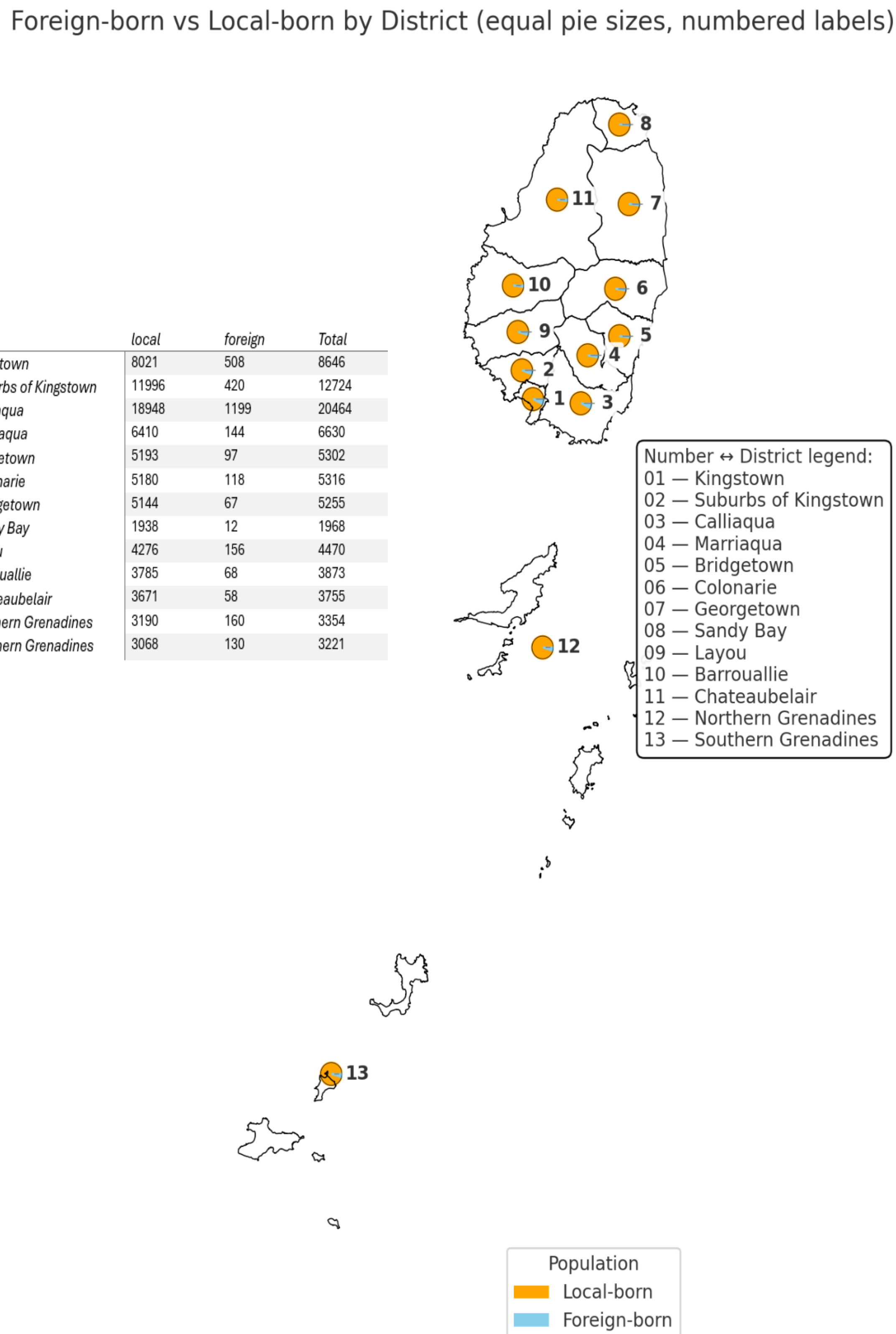
In contrast, rural and northern districts maintained relatively small shares of the foreign-born population. In 2023, Georgetown (2.2%), Sandy Bay (0.4%), and Barrouallie (2.0%) registered minimal foreign-born populations. While retention in these areas remains limited, it suggests that such regions are less attractive for settlement by foreign-born persons, likely due to fewer employment opportunities and weaker service networks. Still, modest concentrations exist in semi-rural divisions such as Marriaqua (3.6%), Layou (5.0%), and Chateaubelair (1.9%), reflecting some level of localized integration.

Regarding the Grenadines in 2012, the Northern and Southern Grenadines together accounted for 12.8% of the foreign-born population, while in 2023 their combined share declined slightly to 10.5%. This suggests that although the Grenadines remain destinations for some foreign-born residents, possibly linked to tourism-related activities, their relative importance has diminished compared to the mainland urban centers.

Map 3.1 illustrates that the foreign-born population is concentrated mainly within the three urban census divisions and the Grenadine Islands. On the mainland, their presence diminishes progressively with distance from the urban centers, as non-urban census divisions further inland recorded smaller shares of foreign-born residents. Outside of the urban and Grenadines areas, the distribution of the foreign-born population varied in direct relation to the degree of rurality of each census division.

Overall, the place of residence of the foreign-born population underscores the critical role of urbanization in shaping settlement choices. The dominance of Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its Suburbs points to a concentration of foreign-born persons in areas of higher economic activity, while rural districts remain relatively marginal in attracting this group.

Map 1 Foreign-born, Local-born and Total Population by Census Division, 2023



	local	*foreign*	*Total*
Kingstown	8021	508	8646
Suburbs of Kingstown	11996	420	12724
Calliaqua	18948	1199	20464
Marriaqua	6410	144	6630
Bridgetown	5193	97	5302
Colonarie	5180	118	5316
Georgetown	5144	67	5255
Sandy Bay	1938	12	1968
Layou	4276	156	4470
Barrouallie	3785	68	3873
Chateaubelair	3671	58	3755
Northern Grenadines	3190	160	3354
Southern Grenadines	3068	130	3221

Source: 2023 Population and Housing Census

3.3.3 Labour Force Participation of Foreign-born Population

The economic participation of foreign-born residents reveals both continuity and change over time. In 2012, 65.4% of foreign-born persons aged 15 years and over were economically active, while 34.6% were outside the labour force (Table 3.8). Among participants, the unemployment rate stood at 12.5%, significantly below the national average of 21.5%, suggesting strong integration into the labour market (Table 3.9).

Table 3-8 Labour Force Participation Rate of Foreign-born Population 15 Years and Over, 2012

Population 15+ (Foreign-born)	2012		2023	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Not in Labour Force	1,255	34.6	1,524	41.9
In Labour Force	2,369	65.4	2,117	58.1
Total	**3,624**	**100**	**3,641**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-9 Unemployment Rate of Foreign-born Population 15 Years and Over, 2012

Population 15+ (Foreign-born)	2012		2023	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	2,073	87.5	1,839	86.9
Unemployed	296	12.5	278	13.1
Total	**2,369**	**100**	**2,117**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, labour force participation had fallen to 58.1%, with 41.9% of foreign-born adults outside the workforce (Table 3.8). Among those active, 86.9% were employed and 13.1% unemployed, reflecting a modest increase in unemployment compared with 2012 (Table 3.9). This decline in participation aligns with the aging profile of the foreign-born, as older residents are more likely to be retired or otherwise economically inactive.

Overall, while foreign-born residents remain an important part of the labour force, their demographic profile increasingly reflects long-term settlement and aging rather than recent inflows of working-age migrants. The concentration of foreign-born residents in cities shows that their livelihoods are closely linked to the urban economic activity.

3.4 Former Residents

The destinations of Vincentian emigrants reflect both long-standing historical migration routes and evolving regional opportunities. In 2012, the majority of emigrants resided in Canada (37.7%), followed by the United States (25.2%), and the Caribbean (21.0%). The United Kingdom accounted for 13.3%, while only small proportions were recorded under “Other” destinations (1.7%) and “Not Stated” (1.5%).

These figures highlighted the enduring pull of North America, with Canada and the USA together attracting nearly two-thirds (62.9%) of emigrants (Table 3.10).

Table 3-10 Total Residents Emigrating by Country of Destination and Sex, 2012

Country of Destination	2012 Frequency				2012 Percentage			
	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total
Caribbean	485	499	39	**1,023**	22.3	19.9	22.7	**21.0**
Canada	768	979	63	**1,810**	35.5	39.0	36.6	**37.7**
United Kingdom	378	244	23	**645**	17.5	9.7	13.4	**13.3**
USA	470	708	41	**1,219**	21.7	28.2	23.8	**25.2**
Other	37	43	3	**83**	1.5	1.7	1.7	**1.7**
Not Stated	32	36	3	**71**	1.5	1.4	1.7	**1.5**
Total	**2,170**	**2,509**	**172**	**4,851**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, the distribution of emigrants shifted in notable ways. The Caribbean (30.6%) emerged as the leading destination, surpassing Canada and the USA, and reflecting the strengthening of intra-regional migration, possibly linked to CARICOM mobility frameworks, educational opportunities, and closer labour market integration. The United Kingdom also gained prominence, increasing to 24.6% of emigrants compared to 13.3% in 2012, signaling renewed migration to Europe, likely supported by family networks and historical ties. The United States (21.5%) remained a key destination but declined relative to its earlier share, while Canada (17.3%) experienced the sharpest drop from 37.7% in 2012 (Table 3.11).

Table 3-11 Total Residents Emigrating by Country of Destination and Sex, 2023

Country of Destination	2023 Frequency			2023 Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Other	102	105	**207**	4.9	5.3	**5.1**
Caribbean	648	603	**1251**	30.9	30.3	**30.6**
Canada	379	327	**706**	18.1	16.5	**17.3**
USA	402	477	**879**	19.2	24.0	**21.5**
United Kingdom	547	459	**1006**	26.1	23.1	**24.6**
Not Stated	18	16	**34**	0.9	0.8	**0.8**
Total	**2096**	**1987**	**4083**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, these shifts reflect a diversification of migration flows. North America remains important, but intra-regional movement within the Caribbean has grown, and the United Kingdom has re-emerged as a major destination. The rising share of "Other" destinations (1.7% in 2012 to 5.1% in 2023) also points to expanding settlement beyond traditional destinations. Together, these trends highlight both the adaptability of Vincentian migrants and the continued role of social, historical, and economic ties in shaping migration choices.

3.4.1 Age Group when Emigrated

The age distribution of emigrants reflects the stages of the life cycle most associated with international movement. In 2012, the majority of emigrants fell within the 15–24 age group (36.6%), followed by those aged 25–44 (24.7%) (Table 3.12). Together, these two groups accounted for more than three-fifths (61.3%) of all emigrants, underscoring that migration was largely concentrated among young adults seeking education, training, or early career opportunities abroad. Children under 15 years accounted for 5.0%, while older adults (45 years and over) represented only 5.1%, indicating that emigration in later life was relatively uncommon.

Table 3-12 Residents by Sex and Age Group Post-emigration, 2012

Age Group	2012 Frequency				2012 Percentage			
	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total
0 – 14	122	111	8	**241**	5.6	4.4	4.7	**5.0**
15 – 24	829	938	10	**1,777**	38.2	37.4	5.9	**36.6**
25 – 44	544	650	3	**1,197**	25.1	25.9	0.6	**24.7**
45 – 59	64	114	2	**179**	2.9	4.5	0.6	**3.7**
60+	21	47	0	**68**	1.0	1.9	0	**1.4**
Not Stated	590	649	150	**1,389**	27.2	25.9	88.2	**28.6**
Total	**2,170**	**2,509**	**172**	**4,851**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, these patterns persisted but showed notable shifts. The 25–44 age group (32.5%) overtook the 15–24 cohort (32.1%) as the dominant emigrant category (Table 3.13). This change highlights the increasing importance of prime working-age adults in migration flows, possibly linked to employment-driven movement. Children under 15 years rose slightly to 5.8%, while persons aged 45–59 increased to 6.3%, suggesting a broader age distribution of emigrants compared to 2012. Overall, the age profile of emigrants in 2023 reflects both continuity in youth-driven migration and an emerging role of mid-life movement tied to labour demand and family reunification abroad.

Table 3-13 Residents by Sex and Age Group Post-emigration, 2023

Age Group	2023 Frequency			2023 Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0 – 14	131	105	**236**	6.3	5.3	**5.8**
15 – 24	682	630	**1,312**	32.5	31.7	**32.1**
25 – 44	713	616	**1,329**	34.0	31	**32.5**
45 – 59	124	133	**257**	5.9	6.7	**6.3**
60+	17	53	**70**	0.8	2.7	**1.7**
Not Stated	429	450	**879**	20.5	22.6	**21.5**
Total	**2,096**	**1,987**	**4,083**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

3.4.2 Reason for Emigrating

The motivations for emigration also shifted significantly between the 2012 and 2023 intercensal periods. In 2012, employment was the leading driver, accounting for 45.0% of all emigrants, followed by family reunification (28.5%) and study opportunities (12.6%) (Table 3.14). Medical reasons and other causes each contributed less than 4%, while crime and insecurity played a negligible role (0.2%). These findings highlight the dual pull of economic opportunity and family networks as the primary forces shaping Vincentian emigration during that period.

Table 3-14 Residents by Sex and Reason for Emigrating, 2012

Reason for Migration	Frequency				Percentage			
	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total
Family Reunification	588	780	12	**1,380**	27.1	31.1	7	**28.5**
Employment	1,149	1,020	13	**2,182**	52.9	40.6	7.6	**45.0**
Study	240	369	4	**613**	11.1	14.7	2.3	**12.6**
Crime Rate	2	11	0	**13**	0.1	0.4	0.0	**0.2**
Medical	20	52	0	**72**	0.9	2.1	0.0	**1.5**
Other (specify)	58	117	3	**178**	2.7	4.7	1.7	**3.7**
Not Stated	113	160	140	**413**	5.2	6.4	81.4	**8.5**
Total	**2,170**	**2,509**	**172**	**4,851**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

In 2023, however, the structure of emigration drivers became more concentrated. Employment accounted for nearly two-thirds (63.8%) of all emigrants, reinforcing its dominance as the primary factor (Table 3.15). Family reunification and study, once major drivers, were not separately captured in the 2023 census categories but were likely absorbed under “Other reasons,” which accounted for 34.3%. Medical reasons remained marginal at 1.5%, while natural disasters accounted for a very small proportion (0.1%).

Table 3-15 Residents by Sex and Reason for Emigrating, 2023

Reason for Migration	Frequency			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Employment	1,420	1,183	**2,603**	67.7	59.5	**63.8**
Medical	22	41	**63**	1.0	2.1	**1.5**
Natural Disaster	3	2	**5**	0.1	0.1	**0.1**
Other (specify)	647	754	**1,401**	30.9	37.9	**34.3**
Not Stated	4	7	**11**	0.2	0.4	**0.3**
Total	**2,096**	**1,987**	**4,083**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

The comparison reveals a clear intensification of labour-driven emigration between 2012 and 2023. While family and education once played a significant role, their relative decline suggests that economic imperatives have become the overwhelming driver of outward migration. This trend is consistent with regional migration patterns, where labour demand in North America and Europe continues to attract Vincentians in their most economically active years.

3.4.3 Highest Education Attained

Educational attainment of emigrants provides useful insights into the type of human capital being lost through migration. In 2012, the majority of migrants had attained secondary education (44.7%), followed by primary education (23.8%) and pre-university qualifications (12.4%). Only a small proportion held university/tertiary education (8.1%), while negligible shares reported no schooling, pre-primary education, or “other” qualifications (Table 3.16).

Table 3-16 Total Migrating Residents by Sex and Highest Education Attained, 2012

Highest Education Attained	Frequency				Percentage			
	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total
None/No Schooling	11	15	0	**26**	0.5	0.6	0.0	**0.5**
Pre-Primary Education	27	25	3	**55**	1.2	1.0	1.7	**1.2**
Primary	606	538	8	**1,152**	27.9	21.5	4.7	**23.8**
Secondary	988	1,163	16	**2,167**	45.5	46.3	9.3	**44.7**
Pre-University	241	360	2	**603**	11.1	14.3	1.2	**12.4**
University/Tertiary	156	234	2	**392**	7.2	9.3	1.2	**8.1**
Other	13	34	1	**48**	0.6	1.3	0.6	**1.0**
Not Stated	128	140	140	**408**	5.9	5.6	81.4	**8.4**
Total	**2,170**	**2,509**	**172**	**4,851**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, the overall pattern remained weighted toward secondary-educated emigrants, who accounted for 37.4% (1,529 persons) of the total. However, notable shifts were evident. The share of emigrants with college education rose to 26.2% (1,070 persons), up from 12.4% in 2012 (pre-university). Similarly, the proportion with university/tertiary education stood at 7.7%, remaining close to the 2012 level. Primary-educated emigrants declined to 14%, suggesting improvements in educational attainment among more recent emigrants (Table 3.17).

Table 3-17 Total Migrating Residents by Sex and Highest Education Attained, 2023

Highest Education Attained	Frequency			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Nursery/Kindergarten	12	17	**29**	0.6	0.9	**0.7**
Primary	316	257	**573**	15.1	12.9	**14.0**
Secondary	854	675	**1,529**	40.7	34.0	**37.4**
Technical/Vocational	139	90	**229**	6.6	4.5	**5.6**
College	489	581	**1,070**	23.3	29.2	**26.2**
University/Tertiary	123	193	**316**	5.9	9.7	**7.7**
None	155	162	**317**	7.4	8.2	**7.8**
Not Stated	8	12	**20**	0.4	0.6	**0.5**
Total	**2,096**	**1,987**	**4,083**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

These results indicate a gradual change in the composition of emigrant skills. While secondary-level emigrants still dominate, the 2023 data show an increasing share of those with higher education, especially college-level qualifications. This shift reflects both expanding educational opportunities within Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the tendency for better-educated individuals to seek opportunities abroad.

In summary, migration continues to involve large numbers of individuals at the secondary level, but the rise in college and tertiary-level emigrants' points toward a "brain drain" risk, with more highly skilled Vincentians contributing to the country's outflows.

3.4.4 Broad Occupational Group of Emigrants

The occupational profile of emigrants provides insight into the types of skills and labour resources that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines lost through outward migration. In 2012, a total of 4,851 emigrants were recorded by broad occupational group. The largest share i.e. 39.2% (1,899 persons) were students, indicating that education-related migration was the dominant factor. Beyond this, significant proportions were employed in services and sales (10.2%), craft and related trades (7.0%), and professionals (7.2%), suggesting that both skilled and semi-skilled groups were represented among those leaving the country (Table 3.18).

Table 3-18 Total Emigrating Residents by Sex and Broad Occupational Group when Moved, 2012

Broad Occupational Group	Frequency				Percentage			
	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total
Armed forces occupations	5	0	0	**5**	0.2	0.0	0.0	**0.1**
Managers	24	20	0	**44**	1.1	0.8	0.0	**0.9**
Professionals	103	239	9	**351**	4.8	9.5	5.3	**7.2**
Technicians and Associate Professionals	68	62	7	**137**	3.1	2.5	4.1	**2.8**
Clerical Support Workers	83	199	5	**287**	3.8	7.9	2.9	**5.9**
Services and Sales Workers	206	268	21	**495**	9.5	10.7	12.4	**10.2**
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries	67	33	0	**100**	3.1	1.3	0.0	**2.1**
Craft and Related Trades Workers	293	33	13	**339**	13.5	1.3	7.1	**7.0**
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	108	9	3	**120**	5.0	0.4	1.8	**2.5**
Elementary Occupations	141	119	16	**276**	6.5	4.7	8.8	**5.7**
Students	747	1,090	62	**1,899**	34.4	43.5	36.5	**39.2**
Not Stated	325	443	30	**798**	15.0	17.7	17.7	**16.5**
Total	**2,170**	**2,509**	**172**	**4,851**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 3-19 Total Emigrating Residents by Sex and Broad Occupational Group when Moved, 2023

Broad Occupational Group	Frequency			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Managers	16	23	**39**	1.6	2.7	**2.1**
Professionals	105	205	**310**	10.4	24.4	**16.7**
Technicians and Associate Professionals	69	51	**120**	6.8	6.1	**6.5**
Clerical Support Workers	46	121	**167**	4.5	14.4	**9.0**
Service and Sales Workers	194	156	**350**	19.2	18.6	**18.9**
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries Workers	42	14	**56**	4.2	1.7	**3.0**
Craft and Related Trades Workers	182	10	**192**	18.0	1.2	**10.4**
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	77	4	**81**	7.6	0.5	**4.4**
Elementary Occupations	110	52	**162**	10.9	6.2	**8.7**
Not Stated	171	204	**375**	16.9	24.3	**20.2**
Total	**1,012**	**840**	**1,852**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, however, the occupational structure of emigrants had shifted significantly. Students were no longer a major reported category, reflecting changes in classification and reporting. Instead, emigrants were more concentrated in services and sales (18.9%), professionals (16.7%), clerical support (9.0%), and elementary occupations (8.7%). This indicates that outward migration increasingly involves persons already participating in the labour force, rather than those leaving primarily for education. The data also highlighted a strong representation in craft and related trades (10.4%) and plant and machine operators (4.4%), underscoring the continued movement of semi-skilled workers (Table 3.19).

Gender differences were evident but not absolute. Men were strongly represented in craft and related trades (18.0%), service and sales (19.2%), elementary occupations (10.9%) and professionals (10.4%). These categories highlight men's active role in both skilled manual work and knowledge-based sectors. At the same time, women were more concentrated in professional (24.4%) and clerical support roles (14.4%), but were also significantly involved in service and sales (18.6%). These patterns show that while certain occupational divisions persist, both men and women are migrating from overlapping areas of the economy, particularly services and professional employment.

The 2023 emigration data reflect a movement away from student-dominated migration to the movement of active workers across services, professional, and craft occupations. Both men and women are represented in these sectors, pointing to a direct loss of skilled labour and service workers from the national workforce.

3.5 Returning Residents

Returning residents are Vincentians who once lived abroad and subsequently returned to reside in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2012, they accounted for 11.6% of the total population, representing an important component of the country's demographic dynamics (Table 3.20). According to the 2012 Population and Housing Census only 22.9% of returning residents identified their country of origin, with the majority originating from the Caribbean (10.5%), followed by Canada (4.4%), the USA (4.0%), and the UK (3.5%). A smaller proportion (0.5%) returned from other destinations. Notably, more males than females were reported among returnees, pointing to a slight gender imbalance in the composition of return migration during that period.

Table 3-20 Returning (Local-born) Residents, by Country of Origins and Sex, 2012

Country of Origin	Frequency			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Caribbean	703	621	**1,324**	10.7	10.2	**10.5**
UK	221	215	**436**	3.4	3.5	**3.5**
USA	273	234	**507**	4.2	3.9	**4.0**
Other	23	37	**60**	0.4	0.6	**0.5**
Canada	282	275	**557**	4.3	4.5	**4.4**
Not Stated	5,061	4,677	**9,738**	77.1	77.2	**77.2**
Total	**6,563**	**6,059**	**12,622**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, the profile of returning residents had shifted significantly (Table 3.21). Nearly half (44.6%) originated from the Caribbean, reflecting the importance of regional mobility. Extra-regional flows also featured strongly, with Canada (22.0%), the USA (19.3%), and the UK (11.9%) together accounting for over half of all returnees. The proportion from "Other" destinations rose to 2.1%, indicating increasing diversification of return flows. Unlike 2012, the sex balance in 2023 was more even, with males (52.1%) only slightly outnumbering females (47.9%).

Table 3-21 Returning (Local-born) Residents, by Country of Origins and Sex, 2023

Country of Origin	Frequency			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Other	99	63	**162**	2.5	1.7	**2.1**
Caribbean	1,821	1,551	**3,372**	46.2	42.9	**44.6**
Canada	753	907	**1,660**	19.1	25.1	**22.0**
USA	815	643	**1,458**	20.7	17.8	**19.3**
United Kingdom	447	450	**897**	11.4	12.4	**11.9**
Not Stated	3	1	**4**	0.1	0	**0.1**
Total	**3,938**	**3,615**	**7,553**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Return migration to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reflects both regional and extra-regional linkages. While the Caribbean has emerged as the leading source of returnees in 2023, flows from Canada, the USA, and the UK remain substantial. This pattern underscores the continuing importance of diaspora ties and highlights the dual role of regional proximity and overseas connections in shaping the dynamics of return migration.

3.6 Conclusion

Migration remains a predominant force in shaping the demographic and socio-economic landscape of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Internal migration intensified over the intercensal period, with birthplace retention falling from 72.0% in 2012 to 58.1% in 2023. This shift underscores the strong pull of urban and peri-urban centers such as Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its suburbs, which together absorbed over 60% of internal movers. By contrast, rural districts like Georgetown, Chateaubelair, and Marriaqua retained large shares of their local-born populations, reflecting lower in-migration and the persistence of agriculture and fishing livelihoods. Women emerged as more mobile than men, highlighting gendered dynamics in internal population redistribution.

The foreign-born population, though relatively small at 4.7% of the total, has undergone marked demographic shifts. Its age structure now reflects a mature, settled community: in 2023, 15.3% were aged 65 years and over, nearly double the share recorded in 2012. At the same time, the population has become more feminized, with women now outnumbering men, especially at older ages. Labour force participation declined to 58.1%, a direct outcome of this aging profile, although those engaged in the workforce maintain relatively high employment rates. Spatially, foreign-born residents remain heavily concentrated in the southern urban corridor (particularly Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its suburbs) where access to jobs, services, and infrastructure is greatest.

International migration remains a cornerstone of Vincentian demographic change, but patterns have diversified. While Canada and the USA once dominated, their shares declined as the Caribbean (30.6%) and the United Kingdom (24.6%) gained importance. The bulk of emigrants remain in the 15-44 age range, but there has been a rise in college-educated migrants, signaling risks of brain drain. Occupationally, outward flows have shifted from being student-dominated to active workers across professional, services, and craft categories, pointing to more direct losses of labour resources from the domestic workforce.

Return migration further illustrates the cyclical nature of population mobility. By 2023, nearly half of returnees originated from the Caribbean, while significant flows came from Canada, the USA, and the UK, underscoring both regional and extra-regional linkages. Together, these findings show that migration continues to reshape the country's size, structure, and settlement system.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS – CHAPTER 3
MIGRATION PATTERNS & DISTRIBUTION

Peri-Urban Pull:
Calliaqua (31%) and Suburbs of Kingstown (18%) together absorbed nearly half of all movers

Urban Core Loss:
Kingstown attracted only 11%, reflecting population shift away from the capital

High Mobility:
About 31,450 persons (29%) lived outside their birth division.

Female Majority:
Women formed 57% of internal migrants, suggesting strong female-led mobility.

Age-Linked Migration Pressures :
Children and youth made up over 20% of the foreign-born and internal migrant streams

Labour Force Dimension:
Among foreign-born residents aged 15+, 58% were in the labour force, with nearly 87% employed

Chapter 4. Education and Training

4.1 Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a cornerstone of human development, enabling individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies that enhance personal well-being and contribute to national growth. Education plays a dual role as it reflects the characteristics of the current population and shapes future economic and social trajectories through its influence on fertility, employment, and productivity. The Population and Housing Censuses of 2001, 2012, and 2023 provide a valuable opportunity to examine trends in access to and outcomes of education across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

At the global level, education has been prioritized under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015)[14]. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, education policy has been shaped by frameworks such as the Education Sector Development Plan (2014-2019), which sought to strengthen universal access at the primary and secondary levels, expand post-secondary opportunities, and reduce inequities across gender, geography, and socio-economic status. These initiatives provide an important context for interpreting the census findings.

Despite progress, notable challenges remain. The 2017 UNICEF Situation Analysis highlighted gaps in early childhood education, rural–urban disparities, and gendered outcomes, with girls continuing to outperform boys at the secondary and tertiary levels (UNICEF, 2017)[15]. The census results confirm both advances, such as the expansion of secondary and tertiary attainment, and persistent areas of concern, especially at the pre-primary level and among disadvantaged populations. This chapter therefore examines education within a demographic framework, focusing on school attendance, institutional participation, and highest level of attainment, while assessing progress toward SDG 4 and identifying areas where continued investment is required.

4.2 Education and Demography

Education and demography are closely intertwined, as demographic shifts directly affect the size and composition of the school-age population and, in turn, demand for educational services. Census results from 2001, 2012, and 2023 reveal that the overall number of school-aged children has declined, reflecting fertility reductions and smaller cohort sizes. This demographic contraction has significant implications for school enrollment levels, as well as for planning teacher deployment, infrastructure needs, and the delivery of equitable educational opportunities (UNICEF, 2017). The census data therefore provide a critical lens through which to track not only access to education but also the broader demographic transition underway in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

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[14] United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations. Retrieved from: https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda

[15] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2017). *Situation analysis of children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*. UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/reports/situation-analysis-children-saint-vincent-and-grenadines

School attendance by age (Tables 4.1 and 4.2) reveals long-term declines in the number of children enrolled across most age groups. Between 2001 and 2012, steep contractions were observed particularly among children aged 6 to 9 years, where attendance fell by more than one-quarter, reflecting smaller cohort sizes linked to fertility decline. The 2012 to 2023 period shows a continuation of this trend, with further reductions in the lower age groups, particularly among those aged 3 to 5 years, where attendance dropped by 14 to 26 percent. However, modest increases are evident among older adolescents (15-17 years), suggesting extended participation in education, which is consistent with global efforts to expand secondary and post-secondary access. This indicates that while the school-age population is shrinking, the demand for higher-level education opportunities is becoming more prominent.

School attendance among young children aged 3-4 years is especially significant for early childhood development and later educational outcomes. Data from Tables 4.2a through 4.3b show marked declines in both absolute numbers and proportions attending school. In 2001, 2,836 children in this age group were attending school; by 2012 this fell to 2,714, and by 2023 attendance dropped further to 2,115. Proportionally, attendance rates among children 3-4 years decreased across nearly all census divisions, with particularly sharp contractions in areas such as Kingstown, Marriaqua, and the Grenadines. These patterns highlight uneven access to early childhood education, a concern given the importance of pre-primary participation for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4. Strengthening early childhood access therefore remains a critical priority for sustaining educational progress across the life course.

Table 4-1 School Attendance by Age, 2001 & 2012

Age Group	2001			2012			2001-2012 Change %		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
3	588	603	**1,191**	601	610	**1,211**	2.2	1.2	**1.7**
4	837	808	**1,645**	732	771	**1,503**	-12.5	-4.6	**-8.6**
5	1,047	1,042	**2,089**	812	834	**1,646**	-22.4	-20.0	**-21.2**
6	1,255	1,183	**2,438**	805	753	**1,558**	-35.9	-36.3	**-36.1**
7	1,105	1,105	**2,210**	887	813	**1,700**	-19.7	-26.4	**-23.1**
8	1,081	1,140	**2,221**	810	815	**1,625**	-25.1	-28.5	**-26.8**
9	1,110	1,124	**2,234**	790	826	**1,616**	-28.8	-26.5	**-27.7**
10	1,129	1,040	**2,169**	948	929	**1,877**	-16.0	-10.7	**-13.5**
11	1,180	1,140	**2,320**	1,072	968	**2,040**	-9.2	-15.1	**-12.1**
12	1,037	978	**2,015**	906	870	**1,776**	-12.6	-11.0	**-11.9**
13	1,023	1,098	**2,121**	883	847	**1,730**	-13.7	-22.9	**-18.4**
14	971	1,017	**1,988**	954	873	**1,827**	-1.8	-14.2	**-8.1**
15	760	927	**1,687**	838	854	**1,692**	10.3	-7.9	**0.3**
16	661	767	**1,428**	747	755	**1,502**	13.0	-1.6	**5.2**
17	510	673	**1,183**	721	665	**1,386**	41.4	-1.2	**17.2**
18	323	496	**819**	443	402	**845**	37.2	-19.0	**3.2**
19	169	242	**411**	207	236	**443**	22.5	-2.5	**7.8**
20+	448	828	**1,276**	817	1,632	**2,449**	82.4	97.1	**91.9**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 4-2 School Attendance by Age, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	2012			2023			2012-2023 Change %		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
3	601	610	**1,211**	499	498	**997**	-17.0	-18.4	**-17.7**
4	732	771	**1,503**	538	580	**1,118**	-26.5	-24.8	**-25.6**
5	812	834	**1,646**	746	664	**1,410**	-8.1	-20.4	**-14.3**
6	805	753	**1,558**	759	656	**1,415**	-5.7	-12.9	**-9.2**
7	887	813	**1,700**	866	878	**1,744**	-2.4	8.0	**2.6**
8	810	815	**1,625**	802	887	**1,689**	-1.0	8.8	**3.9**
9	790	826	**1,616**	831	839	**1,670**	5.2	1.6	**3.3**
10	948	929	**1,877**	891	758	**1,649**	-6.0	-18.4	**-12.1**
11	1,072	968	**2,040**	860	839	**1,699**	-19.8	-13.3	**-16.7**
12	906	870	**1,776**	786	821	**1,607**	-13.2	-5.6	**-9.5**
13	883	847	**1,730**	829	806	**1,635**	-6.1	-4.8	**-5.5**
14	954	873	**1,827**	835	862	**1,697**	-12.5	-1.3	**-7.1**
15	838	854	**1,692**	796	823	**1,619**	-5.0	-3.6	**-4.3**
16	747	755	**1,502**	689	672	**1,361**	-7.8	-11.0	**-9.4**
17	721	665	**1,386**	598	645	**1,243**	-17.1	-3.0	**-10.3**
18	443	402	**845**	368	328	**696**	-16.9	-18.4	**-17.6**
19	207	236	**443**	167	184	**351**	-19.3	-22.0	**-20.8**
20+	817	1,632	**2,449**	1,082	2,246	**3,328**	32.4	37.6	**35.9**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-3 Population 3 to 4 Years by Census Division and School Attendance, 2001 & 2012

Census Division	2001				2012			
	Attending	Not Attending	Not Stated	Total	Attending	Not Attending	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	346	128	1	**475**	297	60	20	**377**
Kingstown Suburbs	341	180	1	**522**	362	89	38	**489**
Calliaqua	556	255	-	**811**	566	137	57	**760**
Marriaqua	284	93	-	**377**	197	24	25	**246**
Bridgetown	181	99	-	**280**	145	56	17	**218**
Colonarie	194	67	1	**262**	167	53	8	**228**
Georgetown	192	71	-	**263**	215	61	4	**280**
Sandy Bay	86	39	1	**126**	62	31	9	**102**
Layou	143	98	-	**241**	149	22	30	**201**
Barrouallie	134	85	-	**219**	138	53	10	**201**
Chateaubelair	183	86	-	**269**	171	46	2	**219**
North Grenadines	105	49	-	**154**	150	40	8	**198**
South Grenadines	91	46	1	**138**	95	15	17	**127**
Total	**2,836**	**1,296**	**5**	**4,137**	**2,714**	**687**	**245**	**3,646**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 4-4 Proportion of Population 3 to 4 Years by Census Division and School Attendance, 2001 & 2012

Census Division	2001				2012			
	Attending	Not Attending	Not Stated	Total	Attending	Not Attending	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	12.2	9.9	20.0	**11.5**	10.9	8.7	8.2	**10.3**
Kingstown Suburbs	12.0	13.9	20.0	**12.6**	13.3	13.0	15.5	**13.4**
Calliaqua	19.6	19.7	0.0	**19.6**	20.9	19.9	23.3	**20.8**
Marriaqua	10.0	7.2	0.0	**9.1**	7.3	3.5	10.2	**6.7**
Bridgetown	6.4	7.6	0.0	**6.8**	5.3	8.2	6.9	**6.0**
Colonarie	6.8	5.2	20.0	**6.3**	6.2	7.7	3.3	**6.3**
Georgetown	6.8	5.5	0.0	**6.4**	7.9	8.9	1.6	**7.7**
Sandy Bay	3.0	3.0	20.0	**3.0**	2.3	4.5	3.7	**2.8**
Layou	5.0	7.6	0.0	**5.8**	5.5	3.2	12.2	**5.5**
Barrouallie	4.7	6.6	0.0	**5.3**	5.1	7.7	4.1	**5.5**
Chateaubelair	6.5	6.6	0.0	**6.5**	6.3	6.7	0.8	**6.0**
North Grenadines	3.7	3.8	0.0	**3.7**	5.5	5.8	3.3	**5.4**
South Grenadines	3.2	3.5	20.0	**3.3**	3.5	2.2	6.9	**3.5**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 4-5 Population 3 to 4 Years by Census Division and School Attendance, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	2012				2023		
	Attending	Not Attending	Not Stated	Total	Attending	Not Attending	Total
Kingstown	297	60	20	**377**	205	10	**215**
Suburbs of Kingstown	362	89	38	**489**	303	49	**352**
Calliaqua	566	137	57	**760**	431	100	**531**
Marriaqua	197	24	25	**246**	140	27	**167**
Bridgetown	145	56	17	**218**	123	19	**142**
Colonarie	167	53	8	**228**	157	11	**168**
Georgetown	215	61	4	**280**	182	25	**207**
Sandy Bay	62	31	9	**102**	47	11	**58**
Layou	149	22	30	**201**	129	24	**153**
Barrouallie	138	53	10	**201**	110	15	**125**
Chateaubelair	171	46	2	**219**	115	10	**125**
Northern Grenadines	150	40	8	**198**	103	3	**106**
Southern Grenadines	95	15	17	**127**	70	8	**78**
Total	**2,714**	**687**	**245**	**3,646**	**2,115**	**312**	**2,427**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-6 Proportion of Population 3 to 4 Years by Census Division and School Attendance, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	2012				2023		
	Attending	Not Attending	Not Stated	Total	Attending	Not Attending	Total
Kingstown	10.9	8.7	8.2	**10.3**	9.7	3.2	**8.9**
Suburbs of Kingstown	13.3	13.0	15.5	**13.4**	14.3	15.7	**14.5**
Calliaqua	20.9	19.9	23.3	**20.8**	20.4	32.1	**21.9**
Marriaqua	7.3	3.5	10.2	**6.7**	6.6	8.7	**6.9**
Bridgetown	5.3	8.2	6.9	**6.0**	5.8	6.1	**5.9**
Colonarie	6.2	7.7	3.3	**6.3**	7.4	3.5	**6.9**
Georgetown	7.9	8.9	1.6	**7.7**	8.6	8.0	**8.5**
Sandy Bay	2.3	4.5	3.7	**2.8**	2.2	3.5	**2.4**
Layou	5.5	3.2	12.2	**5.5**	6.1	7.7	**6.3**
Barrouallie	5.1	7.7	4.1	**5.5**	5.2	4.8	**5.2**
Chateaubelair	6.3	6.7	0.8	**6.0**	5.4	3.2	**5.2**
Northern Grenadines	5.5	5.8	3.3	**5.4**	4.9	1.0	**4.4**
Southern Grenadines	3.5	2.2	6.9	**3.5**	3.3	2.6	**3.2**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

The distribution of students across census divisions also points to geographic disparities in education. For example, in 2012 Calliaqua recorded the highest number of children aged 3-4 years in school (566), while in 2023 it remained the largest contributor (431), though still showing a decline of 24 percent. Smaller divisions such as Sandy Bay and the Southern Grenadines consistently registered the lowest numbers, underscoring challenges in rural and remote areas where educational infrastructure and access may be limited.

Gender parity has been maintained across all census periods. In 2023, boys accounted for 51.3 percent of primary students (5,462 out of 10,652), while girls represented 48.7 percent (5,190 out of 10,652). At the secondary level, boys made up 50.1 percent (4,321) and girls 49.9 percent (4,302), reflecting near parity. This indicates that gender is not a major barrier to participation, though women continue to outperform men in post-secondary and tertiary education.

Tables 4.4 and 4.5 provide detailed insight into education outcomes, showing clear shifts in both the highest level of education attained and the highest certificates earned between 2012 and 2023. In 2012, the majority of the population reported secondary school as their terminal level, with relatively small proportions moving beyond. By 2023, however, there was measurable expansion into post-secondary and tertiary education. For example, the number of persons reporting associate degrees increased to 5,551 persons (6.1%), while bachelor’s degrees rose to 4,005 persons (4.4%), nearly doubling since 2012. Although still representing a minority, these gains reflect increasing access to higher learning opportunities, both locally through regional institutions and abroad. They also reflect an expanding base of human capital that can contribute to national development objectives.

Furthermore, certification data confirm this upward trend. By 2023, more individuals reported holding CXC/CSEC passes, associate degrees, and professional certificates than in 2012, underscoring improvements in both academic and vocational qualifications. Bachelor's degree holders expanded their share, while postgraduate qualifications, though still small, showed growth compared to the 2012 baseline. Gender differences are also notable as women were more likely than men to hold these higher-level qualifications, continuing a regional pattern of female outperformance at the tertiary level. These improvements represent progress toward creating a more skilled and adaptable workforce capable of meeting the demands of a modernizing economy.

Overall, the census data demonstrate both progress and persistent challenges in the educational landscape. While participation rates remain high and attainment levels are gradually rising, demographic contraction has reduced the overall number of students, and geographic disparities continue to affect rural and remote communities. Continued investment in higher and lifelong education will be necessary to sustain these gains and ensure alignment with the goals of SDG 4.

Table 4-7 Total Population Attending School by Census Division and Type of Institution, 2012

Census Division	Pre-Primary	Special Education	Primary School	Secondary	Technical/ Vocational	Professional	Community College	University	Adult Education	Other	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	233	13	1,161	822	46	21	139	174	24	57	518	**3,208**
Suburbs of Kingstown	268	10	1,456	1,068	66	18	146	147	28	31	550	**3,788**
Calliaqua	513	20	2,317	1,818	105	48	267	402	51	128	611	**6,280**
Marriaqua	161	11	858	704	43	12	79	86	14	12	92	**2,072**
Bridgetown	117	7	656	545	14	2	77	57	14	21	203	**1,713**
Colonarie	164	5	773	593	28	8	58	31	9	6	122	**1,797**
Georgetown	186	12	749	578	13	1	67	53	12	5	147	**1,823**
Sandy Bay	59	2	331	205	9	-	6	7	20	9	31	**679**
Layou	133	8	680	474	38	11	60	57	5	19	155	**1,640**
Barrouallie	126	1	687	486	29	7	34	39	7	5	173	**1,594**
Chateaubelair	148	1	661	550	18	6	45	24	5	4	128	**1,590**
Northern Grenadines	147	21	549	405	20	4	28	24	5	13	151	**1,367**
Southern Grenadines	80	2	365	233	14	1	14	13	2	12	139	**875**
Total	**2,335**	**113**	**11,243**	**8,481**	**443**	**139**	**1,020**	**1,114**	**196**	**322**	**3,020**	**28,426**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 4-8 Percentage Population Attending School by Census Division and Type of Institution, 2023

Census Division	Pre-Primary	Special Education	Primary School	Secondary	Technical/ Vocational	Professional	Community College	University	Adult Education	Other	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	10.0	11.5	10.3	9.7	10.4	15.1	13.6	15.6	12.2	17.7	17.2	**11.3**
Suburbs of Kingstown	11.5	8.8	13.0	12.6	14.9	12.9	14.3	13.2	14.3	9.6	18.2	**13.3**
Calliaqua	22.0	17.7	20.6	21.4	23.7	34.5	26.2	36.1	26.0	39.8	20.2	**22.1**
Marriaqua	6.9	9.7	7.6	8.3	9.7	8.6	7.7	7.7	7.1	3.7	3.0	**7.3**
Bridgetown	5.0	6.2	5.8	6.4	3.2	1.4	7.5	5.1	7.1	6.5	6.7	**6.0**
Colonarie	7.0	4.4	6.9	7.0	6.3	5.8	5.7	2.8	4.6	1.9	4.0	**6.3**
Georgetown	8.0	10.6	6.7	6.8	2.9	0.7	6.6	4.8	6.1	1.6	4.9	**6.4**
Sandy Bay	2.5	1.8	2.9	2.4	2.0	0.0	0.6	0.6	10.2	2.8	1.0	**2.4**
Layou	5.7	7.1	6.0	5.6	8.6	7.9	5.9	5.1	2.6	5.9	5.1	**5.8**
Barrouallie	5.4	0.9	6.1	5.7	6.5	5.0	3.3	3.5	3.6	1.6	5.7	**5.6**
Chateaubelair	6.3	0.9	5.9	6.5	4.1	4.3	4.4	2.2	2.6	1.2	4.2	**5.6**
Northern Grenadines	6.3	18.6	4.9	4.8	4.5	2.9	2.7	2.2	2.6	4.0	5.0	**4.8**
Southern Grenadines	3.4	1.8	3.2	2.7	3.2	0.7	1.4	1.2	1.0	3.7	4.6	**3.1**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 4-9 Total Population Attending School by Census Division and Type of Institution, 2023

Census Division	Daycare/ Nursery	Preschool	Infant/ Kindergarten	Primary	Special Education	Post Primary (Non-Secondary Tech/Voc)	Secondary (General)	Home Schooling (Primary)	Home Schooling (Secondary)	Post Secondary - A Level	Post Secondary - Professional Tech/Voc	Post Secondary-UWI/other	Adult Education	Online/ Distance learning	Other (specify)	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	67	220	51	982	5	10	776	-	1	110	54	94	11	81	16	3	**2,481**
Suburbs of Kingstown	115	310	100	1,704	25	34	1,365	-	-	170	114	152	42	146	45	4	**4,326**
Calliaqua	217	461	141	2,210	27	52	1,944	3	5	316	155	367	32	258	57	22	**6,267**
Marriaqua	35	117	40	778	5	9	605	-	-	81	48	59	10	60	16	2	**1,865**
Bridgetown	52	102	13	656	8	14	514	-	1	44	42	44	10	36	9	1	**1,546**
Colonarie	57	139	39	685	9	14	558	-	2	60	48	29	6	42	13	-	**1,701**
Georgetown	57	182	25	794	10	10	583	-	-	54	27	33	7	12	23	3	**1,820**
Sandy Bay	3	46	21	266	1	3	210	-	-	24	6	6	6	9	4	-	**605**
Layou	62	119	38	603	2	9	480	-	2	58	31	72	5	34	29	2	**1,546**
Barrouallie	36	129	34	618	2	12	500	-	-	68	36	20	6	17	25	-	**1,503**
Chateaubelair	27	108	32	555	5	16	440	1	1	59	24	27	5	21	4	1	**1,326**
Northern Grenadines	34	126	13	430	30	13	376	-	-	43	33	24	-	10	-	-	**1,132**
Southern Grenadines	46	83	9	371	1	-	272	-	1	7	1	2	3	11	2	1	**810**
Total	**808**	**2,142**	**556**	**10,652**	**130**	**196**	**8,623**	**4**	**13**	**1,094**	**619**	**929**	**143**	**737**	**243**	**39**	**26,928**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-10 Percentage Population Attending School by Census Division and Type of Institution, 2023

Census Division	Daycare/ Nursery	Preschool	Infant/ Kindergarten	Primary	Special Education	Post Primary (Non-Secondary Tech/Voc)	Secondary (General)	Home Schooling (Primary)	Home Schooling (Secondary)	Post Secondary - A Level	Post Secondary - Professional Tech/Voc	Post Secondary-UWI/other	Adult Education	Online/ Distance learning	Other (specify)	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	8.3	10.3	9.2	9.2	3.8	5.1	9.0	0.0	7.7	10.1	8.7	10.1	7.7	11.0	6.6	7.7	**9.2**
Suburbs of Kingstown	14.2	14.5	18.0	16.0	19.2	17.3	15.8	0.0	0.0	15.5	18.4	16.4	29.4	19.8	18.5	10.3	**16.1**
Calliaqua	26.9	21.5	25.4	20.7	20.8	26.5	22.5	75.0	38.5	28.9	25.0	39.5	22.4	35.0	23.5	56.4	**23.3**
Marriaqua	4.3	5.5	7.2	7.3	3.8	4.6	7.0	0.0	0.0	7.4	7.8	6.4	7.0	8.1	6.6	5.1	**6.9**
Bridgetown	6.4	4.8	2.3	6.2	6.2	7.1	6.0	0.0	7.7	4.0	6.8	4.7	7.0	4.9	3.7	2.6	**5.7**
Colonarie	7.1	6.5	7.0	6.4	6.9	7.1	6.5	0.0	15.4	5.5	7.8	3.1	4.2	5.7	5.3	0.0	**6.3**
Georgetown	7.1	8.5	4.5	7.5	7.7	5.1	6.8	0.0	0.0	4.9	4.4	3.6	4.9	1.6	9.5	7.7	**6.8**
Sandy Bay	0.4	2.1	3.8	2.5	0.8	1.5	2.4	0.0	0.0	2.2	1.0	0.6	4.2	1.2	1.6	0.0	**2.2**
Layou	7.7	5.6	6.8	5.7	1.5	4.6	5.6	0.0	15.4	5.3	5.0	7.8	3.5	4.6	11.9	5.1	**5.7**
Barrouallie	4.5	6.0	6.1	5.8	1.5	6.1	5.8	0.0	0.0	6.2	5.8	2.2	4.2	2.3	10.3	0.0	**5.6**
Chateaubelair	3.3	5.0	5.8	5.2	3.8	8.2	5.1	25.0	7.7	5.4	3.9	2.9	3.5	2.8	1.6	2.6	**4.9**
Northern Grenadines	4.2	5.9	2.3	4.0	23.1	6.6	4.4	0.0	0.0	3.9	5.3	2.6	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	**4.2**
Southern Grenadines	5.7	3.9	1.6	0.8	0.8	0.0	3.2	0.0	7.7	0.6	0.2	0.2	2.1	1.5	0.8	2.6	**3.0**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

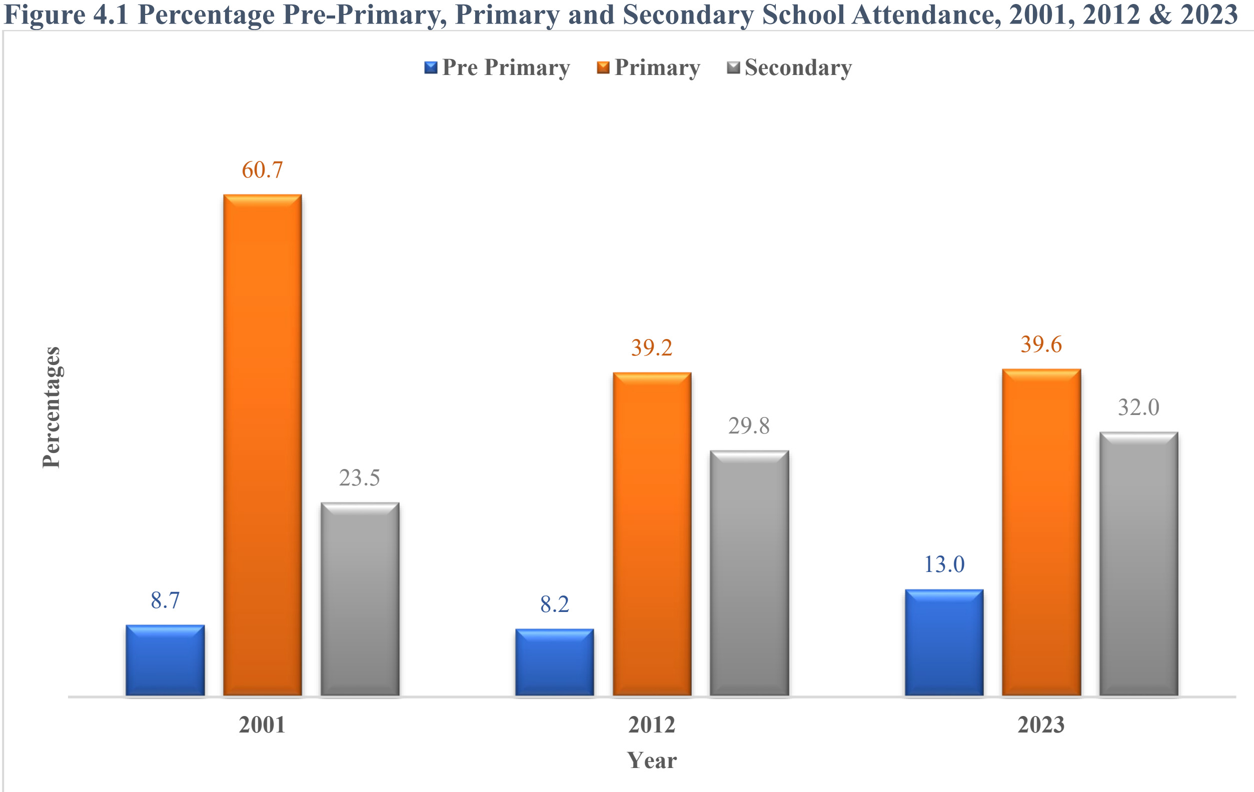
4.3 School Attending Population by Type of Educational Institution

4.3.1 Pre-Primary Education

Pre-primary education provides the foundation for early cognitive, social, and emotional development, ensuring children are better prepared for entry into primary school. Census results show that participation at this level, while modest compared to higher levels, remains significant for educational progression. In 2012, 2,335 children aged 3–5 years were enrolled in pre-primary institutions, representing 8.2 percent of the population aged three years and older (Table 4.11). By 2023, this number fell slightly to 2,142 children, or 8.0 percent of the corresponding population (Table 4.12). The contraction reflects smaller cohort sizes due to fertility decline and highlights persistent disparities in access across communities.

The 2023 data provide further detail by distinguishing between daycare/nursery, preschools, and infant/kindergarten programs. Of the 3,506 children enrolled, preschools absorbed the largest share with 2,142 children, while daycare/nursery accounted for 808 and infant/kindergarten for 556. This distribution underscores the dominant role of preschools in early childhood learning, but also reflects household choices and structural constraints such as affordability and the uneven availability of facilities.

Figure 4.1 Percentage Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary School Attendance, 2001, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Gender parity in pre-primary participation has remained consistent. In both 2012 and 2023, boys and girls enrolled in nearly equal numbers, showing no significant gender-based disparities in access. This suggests that the challenge lies less in gender equity and more in ensuring adequate coverage and participation rates, particularly for children from smaller census divisions and rural communities where access to early childhood institutions is often limited.

Table 4-11 Population 3 Years or Older by Type of Educational Institution and Sex, 2012

Educational Institution	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Pre-Primary	1,150	8.2	1,185	8.2	**2,335**	**8.2**
Special Education	80	0.6	33	0.2	**113**	**0.4**
Primary School	5,776	41.3	5,467	37.8	**11,243**	**39.6**
Secondary	4,315	30.9	4,166	28.8	**8,481**	**29.8**
Technical/Vocational	219	1.6	224	1.5	**443**	**1.6**
Professional	29	0.2	110	0.8	**139**	**0.5**
Community College	362	2.6	658	4.6	**1,020**	**3.6**
University	368	2.6	746	5.2	**1,114**	**3.9**
Adult Education	43	0.3	153	1.1	**196**	**0.7**
Other	111	0.8	211	1.5	**322**	**1.1**
Not Stated	1,520	10.9	1,500	10.4	**3,020**	**10.6**
Total	**13,973**	**100**	**14,452**	**100**	**28,425**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 4-12 Population 3 Years or Older by Type of Educational Institution and Sex, 2023

Educational Institution	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Daycare/Nursery	412	3.2	396	2.8	**808**	**3.0**
Preschool	1,067	8.2	1,075	7.7	**2,142**	**8.0**
Infant/Kindergarten	269	2.1	287	2.1	**556**	**2.1**
Primary	5,462	42.2	5,190	37.1	**10,652**	**39.6**
Special Education	93	0.7	37	0.3	**130**	**0.5**
Post Primary (Non-Secondary Tech/Voc)	100	0.8	96	0.7	**196**	**0.7**
Secondary (General)	4,321	33.4	4,302	30.8	**8,623**	**32.0**
Home Schooling (Primary)	1	0.0	3	0.0	**4**	**0.0**
Home Schooling (Secondary)	6	0.0	7	0.1	**13**	**0.0**
Post Secondary - A Level	444	3.4	650	4.6	**1,094**	**4.1**
Post Secondary - Professional Tech/Voc	247	1.9	372	2.7	**619**	**2.3**
Post Secondary - UWI/other	258	2.0	671	4.8	**929**	**3.4**
Adult Education	35	0.3	108	0.8	**143**	**0.5**
Online/Distance learning	152	1.2	585	4.2	**737**	**2.7**
Other (specify)	56	0.4	187	1.3	**243**	**0.9**
Not Stated	19	0.1	20	0.1	**39**	**0.1**
Total	**12,942**	**100**	**13,986**	**100**	**26,928**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Geographic differences, however, remain more pronounced. Larger divisions such as Kingstown and Calliaqua reported the highest numbers of children in pre-primary education, while smaller or more remote divisions like Sandy Bay and the Grenadines recorded consistently lower figures. These disparities highlight the structural inequalities in access to early learning opportunities, a concern given the emphasis placed on early childhood education under Sustainable Development Goal 4.

4.3.2 Primary Education

Primary education remains the largest segment of the education system in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, reflecting its role as the foundational stage of compulsory schooling. In 2012, a total of 11,243 children were enrolled at this level, representing 39.6 percent of the population aged three years and older (Table 4.11). By 2023, the absolute number fell to 10,652, maintaining an identical share of 39.6 percent (Table 4.12). This consistency in proportional terms, despite a decline of nearly 600 pupils, mirrors the broader demographic contraction in the child population, particularly among younger age cohorts. The figures suggest that while fertility decline has reduced the number of children entering primary school, participation rates remain stable and nearly universal.

School attendance at the primary level has remained fairly balanced by sex across census years. In 2012, 5,776 males (51.4 percent) and 5,467 females (48.6 percent) were enrolled in primary school, while in 2023 the figures stood at 5,462 males (51.3 percent) and 5,190 females (48.7 percent), as shown in Tables 4.6a and 4.6b. This consistency highlights a sustained gender parity in access to primary education, suggesting that both boys and girls are equally benefiting from opportunities at this level.

Although the share of primary school enrollment remained stable, the declining absolute numbers point to structural challenges. Fewer students mean reduced demand in some divisions, which can affect the viability of smaller schools, particularly in rural areas such as Sandy Bay, Chateaubelair, and the Grenadines. Conversely, larger urban and peri-urban divisions like Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown continue to absorb the highest numbers of primary students, maintaining pressure on facilities in those areas.

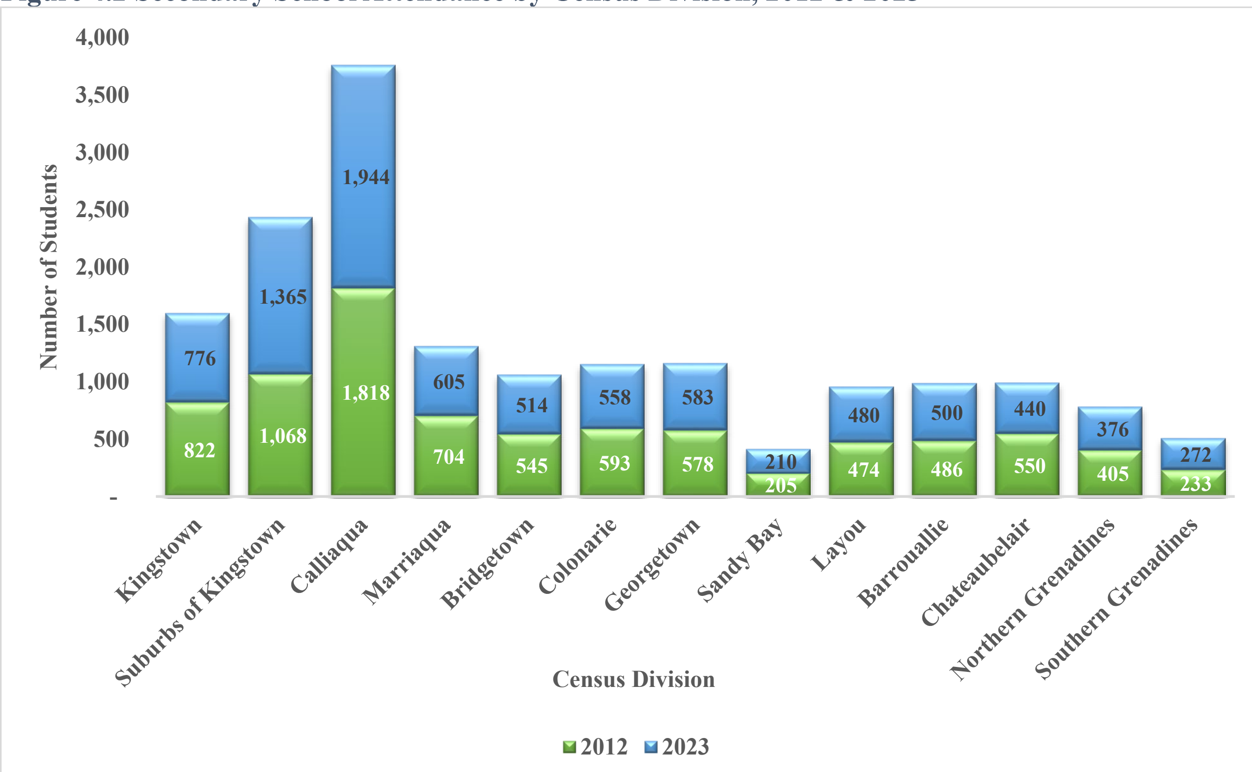
4.3.3 Secondary Education

Secondary education continues to play a central role in the educational profile of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, reflecting both the transition from compulsory primary schooling and the country’s ongoing investment in expanding access at this level. According to the 2012 Population and Housing Census Report, universal access to secondary education was achieved in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2005. Entry into secondary school follows the completion of the Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA), which replaced the Common Entrance Examination (CEE). At the end of this cycle, students sit the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination, which provides the foundation for transition into post-secondary or tertiary institutions.

Between 2012 and 2023, the number of persons enrolled in secondary schools increased slightly from 8,481 to 8,623, even as the overall school-aged population contracted. This modest growth suggests stronger retention and progression into secondary education, consistent with global trends toward near-universal lower secondary participation.

Sex differentials remain minimal, with males and females showing nearly identical attendance levels across both years. In 2012, 4,315 males and 4,166 females were enrolled (Table 4.11), while in 2023 enrollment reached 4,321 males and 4,302 females (Table 4.12). This balance points to sustained gender parity at the secondary level, reinforcing earlier patterns observed in primary schooling. Importantly, this parity contrasts with tertiary-level enrollment, where women tend to outnumber men, as discussed later in Section 4.4.

Figure 4.2 Secondary School Attendance by Census Division, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Geographic differences in secondary school attendance, however, are more pronounced. Figure 4.2 shows that in 2012, larger divisions such as Calliaqua, the Suburbs of Kingstown, and Georgetown accounted for the highest numbers of secondary students. By 2023, these areas continued to dominate enrollment but registered slight declines in absolute numbers, reflecting broader population contraction. Rural and remote divisions, particularly Sandy Bay, the Grenadines, and Chateaubelair, maintained lower attendance levels, highlighting persistent disparities in access to secondary education by location.

The census data confirm that secondary education remains a cornerstone of the national education system, with strong enrollment levels reflecting the policy of universal access. Continued attention to quality, equity, and progression into higher education will be essential to ensure that gains in access translate into improved outcomes for all students.

4.3.4 Post Secondary Education

Post-secondary education has expanded between 2012 and 2023, reflecting growing opportunities for advanced learning. In 2012, approximately 9.6 percent of persons aged 3 years and older were enrolled in post-secondary institutions, including community colleges (3.6%), universities (3.9%), technical/vocational programmes (1.6%), and professional courses (0.5%) (Table 4.11). By 2023, the categories became more diversified, with enrollment recorded in A-Levels (4.1%), professional technical/vocational programmes (2.3%), UWI/other universities (3.4%), and online/distance learning (2.7%) (Table 4.12). This expansion, particularly the emergence of distance learning, demonstrates how post-secondary education is adapting to changing demands and modalities of study.

Gender differences are notable across the post-secondary landscape. Females consistently outnumber males in higher education participation, particularly at university and professional levels. In 2023, for example, 671 females were enrolled in university-level programmes compared to only 258 males, and women were also more likely to be engaged in distance and continuing education. This gendered advantage mirrors regional and global patterns of female outperformance in post-secondary and tertiary education, with implications for women's growing role in the skilled labor force.

4.3.5 Special Education

Special education continues to serve a very small share of the population, though the numbers increased slightly over the intercensal period. In 2012, 113 persons (0.4%) reported enrollment in special education institutions (Table 4.11). By 2023, this number rose to 130 persons (0.5%), with males continuing to outnumber females (93 vs. 37) (Table 4.12). This male dominance is consistent with global evidence that boys are more frequently diagnosed with learning and developmental disabilities.

The persistence of low enrollment, however, points to broader structural challenges. Limited resources, social stigma, and inadequate institutional capacity may contribute to underrepresentation in special education programmes, especially among girls. This suggests that while policy efforts are slowly improving access, greater investment and gender-sensitive strategies are needed to ensure equitable educational opportunities for both boys and girls with disabilities across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

4.3.6 Adult and Continuing Education

Adult and continuing education remains a limited but evolving component of the education system. In 2012, only 196 persons (0.7%) reported participation in adult education programmes (Table 4.11). By 2023, this number declined to 143 persons (0.5%) (Table 4.12). However, the 2023 Census also introduced a new category for online/distance learning, with 737 persons (2.7%) reporting enrollment. This suggests a shift in how continuing education is being accessed, with digital platforms playing an increasingly important role in broadening opportunities for lifelong learning.

Gender patterns again show female dominance in participation. In 2023, 585 females were enrolled in online/distance education compared to 152 males, and women also outnumbered men in professional post-secondary programmes (372 as compared to 247). These results confirm that women are driving much of the expansion in adult and continuing education, positioning themselves to benefit more strongly from lifelong learning opportunities. This reflects both a demand for upskilling and a response to labor market conditions where women increasingly need formal qualifications to secure professional advancement.

4.4 Highest Level of Education and Highest Certificate Attained

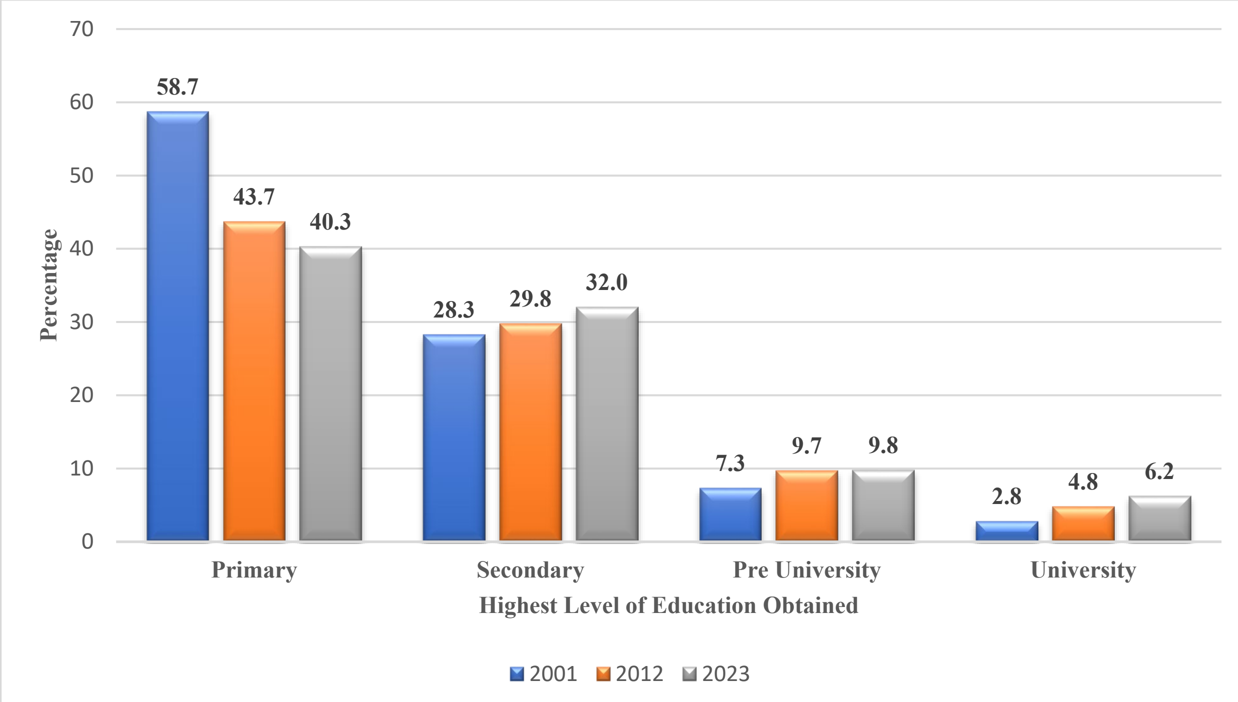
Educational attainment has shown notable shifts over the intercensal periods, reflecting improvements in access to schooling and opportunities for higher learning. In 2001, the majority of the population reported primary education as their highest level attained (58.7%). By 2012, this share declined to 43.7%, and further to 40.3% in 2023, suggesting that more Vincentians are advancing beyond the primary level. At the same time, the proportion attaining secondary education increased steadily, from 28.3% in 2001 to 32.0% in 2023, consolidating its role as the modal level of attainment. Smaller but important gains were also recorded at the pre-university and university levels, underscoring the gradual expansion of tertiary education in the country.

Tables 4.13 and 4.14 provide additional insight by detailing the highest certificates, diplomas, and degrees earned across the three census rounds. A key finding is the sharp reduction in the proportion of the population reporting "none," which fell from 74.1% in 2001 to 22.7% in 2023. This signals a substantial expansion in formal certification, with more persons leaving the education system equipped with recognized qualifications. In particular, CXC General and CSEC passes became the most commonly reported certification by 2023 (18.2%), while associate and bachelor's degrees also gained prominence.

The expansion of post-secondary and tertiary attainment is further highlighted by the doubling of bachelor's degree holders between 2012 and 2023 (from 2.5% to 4.4%). Associate degree attainment also increased significantly, from just 1.2% in 2012 to 6.1% in 2023. Though postgraduate qualifications remain relatively limited, the census shows incremental growth in both master's and doctoral degrees, suggesting a slowly diversifying and deepening skills base.

Gender patterns remain central to these developments. Women continue to outpace men in tertiary education, particularly in university and professional qualifications. In 2023, females accounted for a larger share of associate and bachelor's degree holders, as well as those completing postgraduate study. These outcomes mirror regional trends of female outperformance in educational attainment and carry important implications for labor force participation, earnings, and gender equity in the future.

Figure 4.3 Highest Level of Education Attained, 2001, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-13 Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree Earned, 2001 & 2012

Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree Earned	2001		2012	
	Count	%	Count	%
School Leaving Certificate	2,099	2.8	2,361	2.9
GCE or CXC O-Level Passes	8,531	11.4	12,397	15.1
GCE A-Levels/CAPE	1,072	1.4	2,361	2.9
Associate Degree	253	0.3	960	1.2
Bachelor's Degree	1,145	1.5	2,071	2.5
Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate	142	0.2	487	0.6
Higher Degree (Masters or PhD)	335	0.4	885	1.1
Other	4,197	5.6	8,242	10
None	55,473	74.1	48,092	58.5
Not Stated	1,581	2.1	4,405	5.4
Total	**74,828**	**100**	**82,263**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-14 Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree Earned, 2023

Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree Earned	Count	%
Common Entrance	10,111	11.1
CPEA	9,715	10.6
School Leaving (Standard Six or Seven)	10,113	11.1
Cambridge School Certificate	109	0.1
CXC Basic	3,582	3.9
CCSLC	196	0.2
GCE 'O' Levels, CXC General, CSEC	16,595	18.2
High School Certificate	652	0.7
GCE 'A' Levels, CAPE	2,850	3.1
Associate Degree	5,551	6.1
College Certificate	1,992	2.2
College Diploma	1,005	1.1
Professional Certificate (RSA, City & Guilds etc)	640	0.7
Bachelor's Degree	4,005	4.4
Post Graduate Certificate	145	0.2
Post Graduate Diploma	167	0.2
Higher Degree (Master's)	1,558	1.7
Higher Degree (Doctoral)	227	0.2
Other (Specify)	764	0.8
None	20,727	22.7
Not Stated	522	0.6
Total	**91,226**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

4.5 Conclusion

Census results from 2001, 2012, and 2023 show an education system adjusting to a smaller school-age population. Attendance has fallen most among children ages 3-5, while participation at older ages has held steady or risen slightly, pointing to better retention into secondary grades. Geographic gaps remain: larger divisions such as Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown enroll the most students, whereas smaller and remote divisions, including the Grenadines and Sandy Bay, continue to record lower participation, especially at pre-primary.

At primary and secondary levels, access remains broad and gender parity is stable. Primary enrolment held a constant share of total students (39.6%) despite fewer children overall, and secondary enrolment inched upward between 2012 and 2023, reflecting sustained progression. Beyond compulsory schooling, the profile of attainment continues to rise: the share with no certification has fallen sharply since 2001, while CXC/CSEC passes have become widespread and the numbers holding associate and bachelor's degrees have grown. Women are leading gains in post-secondary and continuing education, including university and online/distance learning.

The census findings show steady gains in educational attainment, with nearly universal participation at the primary and secondary levels and rising numbers completing post-secondary and tertiary studies. Women continue to outpace men in higher education, reflecting regional trends and strengthening the country's skills base. However, uneven early childhood access and geographic disparities highlight that progress, while significant, is not uniform across all groups.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 4
EDUCATION & TRAINING

High Enrolment:
23,787 children (ages 3–20) were in school, with near-universal attendance between ages 7–14.

Early Childhood Gaps :
Only 2,115 children aged 3–4 years attended school (87%), leaving 312 not enrolled.

Primary & Secondary Balance:
10,652 students (40%) were in primary and 8,623 (32%) in secondary,

Gender Parity:
Boys and girls were almost equally represented at both primary and secondary levels

Certification Growth :
74% of adults held a certificate or higher, including 5,551 and 4005 with associate and bachelor's degrees

No Formal Qualification:
Adult population (20,727 people) reported no formal certification

Chapter 5. Economic Activity

5.1 Introduction

The economic activity of a population is one of the most critical dimensions of demographic inquiry, as it reveals how human resources are mobilized to sustain livelihoods and drive national development. By examining who works, who seeks work, and who remains outside the labour force, we gain insight into both the capacity of the economy and the vulnerabilities of different population groups.

The 2023 Population and Housing Census captures these dynamics at a pivotal point in the country's development trajectory. Over the past decade, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has confronted demographic ageing, outward migration, and exposure to global economic shocks, all of which have shaped the structure of the labour force. These influences are manifested in shifts in labour force participation, the balance between formal and informal work, and the persistence of challenges such as gender inequality and youth unemployment.

This chapter explores the main features of economic activity in 2023, beginning with the size and composition of the working-age population, then examining labour force participation, employment by status, occupation and industry, unemployment, and those outside the labour force. Comparisons with the 2012 Census highlight both continuity and emerging changes, providing a long-term perspective on labour market developments. These results serve as an important benchmark for tracking progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 8, which emphasizes inclusive economic growth and decent work opportunities for all.

5.2 Methodological Issues

The 2023 Population and Housing Census maintained the international standard of defining the economically active population as persons 15 years and older. Consistent with the 2012 Population and Housing Census, two reference periods were used, specifically, the 12 months prior to enumeration and the week immediately preceding Census Night. While both periods provide valuable perspectives, the analysis presented in this chapter relies primarily on the shorter reference week, as it offers a more accurate and timely measure of current labour market status.

For each individual, the main activity was identified as the one in which they were most engaged, even if they participated in multiple forms of work or livelihood support. This allowed the classification of persons as employed, unemployed, or not in the labour force. Employed persons include those who worked for pay, profit, or family gain for at least one hour during the reference week, as well as those with a job but temporarily absent. Unemployed persons were identified as those without work, available for work, and expressing a desire for employment, including discouraged workers who did not actively search because they believed no jobs were available.

By retaining consistency with the 2012 methodology, the 2023 results are directly comparable across census rounds, ensuring continuity in measuring labour force trends. This methodological framework thus provides a robust basis for analyzing the structure and evolution of economic activity in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

5.3 Working Age Population

The working-age population is commonly defined as persons aged 15 years and older, but this varies from country to country (International Labour Organization [ILO], n.d.)[16]. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the 2023 Census recorded 86,382 persons in this group, compared with 82,263 in 2012 and 74,828 in 2001 (Tables 5.1 and 5.2). This reflects a 5% increase over the past decade and 16% growth over two decades, though the pace of expansion has slowed, consistent with the broader demographic transition of declining fertility and net out-migration.

Moreover, the composition of the working-age population reveals the advancing ageing process. The 25-44 year cohorts continue to make up the bulk of the population, underscoring the enduring importance of prime working years. However, the sharpest growth has occurred among older cohorts, particularly those aged 55 years and above. Between 2012 and 2023, the number of persons 65 years and over expanded by 37% (from 9,990 to 13,662). This trend is the result of declining mortality, improved life expectancy, and the maturing of larger birth cohorts from the 1960s and 1970s into older age groups. This reflects not only lower fertility over the past two decades but also the emigration of young people pursuing education and employment abroad.

Within this ageing working-age population, levels of economic activity show modest improvements. In 2023, 65.5% of persons aged 15 years and over were economically active (employed or unemployed), compared to 63.2% in 2012 (Table 5.3). This increase suggests a slight expansion of labour market engagement despite demographic and economic headwinds. The employed population grew by 5,659 persons over the decade, rising from 40,821 in 2012 to 46,480 in 2023, while the unemployed population fell from 11,193 to 10,124. Consequently, the unemployment rate dropped from 21.5% to 17.9% (Table 5.4). These shifts indicate some progress in absorbing the labour force into employment. Age-specific analysis reveals this imbalance starkly: youth (15-19 years) faced unemployment of 51.1% in 2023, while the rate among those aged 20-24 was 28.3%. Both figures far exceed the national average and may be indicative of the long and difficult school-to-work transition faced by young Vincentians. By contrast, adults aged 45-64 experienced unemployment below 15%, reflecting stronger and more secure integration into the labour market. Interestingly, among the 65+ population, a growing minority remained economically active, and while smaller in number, those seeking work faced unemployment rates similar to or slightly above national averages.

Gender patterns add further complexity to the observed trends in the labour force. Although both men and women benefited from declining unemployment since 2012, women continue to face higher barriers. Female unemployment stood at 19.8% in 2023, compared with 16.3% for men. Women's concentration in inactivity may be link to their caregiving and household responsibilities, despite a gradual increase in female labour market participation. These patterns highlight the ongoing gender gap which exist in accessing decent work, amid incremental gains achieved.

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[16] International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *Definitions and metadata*. WESO Data Finder. https://weso-data.ilo.org/definitions-and-metadata/

Table 5-1 Working Age Population by Economic Activity, Age Group and Sex, 2001

Age Group	Working Age Population	Economically Active (Labourforce)			Not in Labour Force
		Employed	Unemployed	Total	
Both Sexes					
15–19	11,454	1,907	2,020	3,927	7,527
20–24	9,859	4,827	2,230	7,057	2,802
25–29	8,644	5,103	1,397	6,500	2,144
30–34	7,802	4,910	1,055	5,965	1,837
35–39	8,199	5,425	915	6,340	1,859
40–44	6,803	4,524	687	5,211	1,592
45–49	4,802	3,169	415	3,584	1,218
50–54	3,794	2,332	298	2,630	1,164
55–59	2,830	1,363	198	1,561	1,269
60–64	2,784	935	110	1,045	1,739
65+	7,857	1,093	71	1,164	6,693
Total	**74,828**	**35,588**	**9,396**	**44,984**	**29,844**
Male					
15–19	5,760	1,332	1,340	2,672	3,088
20–24	5,051	2,933	1,408	4,341	710
25–29	4,420	3,043	909	3,952	468
30–34	4,080	3,006	693	3,699	381
35–39	4,259	3,239	634	3,873	386
40–44	3,502	2,693	482	3,175	327
45–49	2,454	1,869	307	2,176	278
50–54	1,967	1,448	239	1,687	280
55–59	1,421	897	160	1,057	364
60–64	1,332	628	94	722	610
65+	3,448	755	52	807	2,641
Total	**37,694**	**21,843**	**6,318**	**28,161**	**9,533**
Female					
15–19	5,694	575	680	1,255	4,439
20–24	4,808	1,894	822	2,716	2,092
25–29	4,224	2,060	488	2,548	1,676
30–34	3,722	1,904	362	2,266	1,456
35–39	3,940	2,186	281	2,467	1,473
40–44	3,301	1,831	205	2,036	1,265
45–49	2,348	1,300	108	1,408	940
50–54	1,827	884	59	943	884
55–59	1,409	466	38	504	905
60–64	1,452	307	16	323	1,129
65+	4,409	338	19	357	4,052
Total	**37,134**	**13,745**	**3,078**	**16,823**	**20,311**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 5-2 Working Age Population by Economic Activity, Age Group and Sex, 2012

Age Group	Working Age Population	Economically Active (Labourforce)			Not in Labour Force
		Employed	Unemployed	Total	
Both Sexes					
15–19	9,912	978	1,575	2,553	7,359
20–24	8,607	3,866	2,547	6,413	2,194
25–29	8,317	4,895	1,634	6,529	1,788
30–34	7,863	5,016	1,288	6,304	1,559
35–39	7,553	5,046	1,017	6,063	1,490
40–44	7,155	4,943	802	5,745	1,410
45–49	7,466	5,080	788	5,868	1,598
50–54	6,548	4,340	545	4,885	1,663
55–59	5,031	2,930	427	3,357	1,674
60–64	3,821	1,590	179	1,769	2,052
65+	9,990	2,137	391	2,528	7,462
Total	**82,263**	**40,821**	**11,193**	**52,014**	**30,249**
Male					
15–19	5,053	601	794	1,395	3,658
20–24	4,354	2,279	1,208	3,487	867
25–29	4,228	2,725	801	3,526	702
30–34	3,887	2,728	604	3,332	555
35–39	3,839	2,809	487	3,296	543
40–44	3,772	2,814	425	3,239	533
45–49	3,861	2,869	423	3,292	569
50–54	3,436	2,549	310	2,859	577
55–59	2,642	1,771	280	2,051	591
60–64	1,970	1,062	121	1,183	787
65+	4,845	1,483	240	1,723	3,122
Total	**41,887**	**23,690**	**5,693**	**29,383**	**12,504**
Female					
15–19	4,859	377	781	1,158	3,701
20–24	4,253	1,587	1,339	2,926	1,327
25–29	4,089	2,170	833	3,003	1,086
30–34	3,976	2,288	684	2,972	1,004
35–39	3,714	2,237	530	2,767	947
40–44	3,383	2,129	377	2,506	877
45–49	3,605	2,211	365	2,576	1,029
50–54	3,112	1,791	235	2,026	1,086
55–59	2,389	1,159	147	1,306	1,083
60–64	1,851	528	58	586	1,265
65+	5,145	654	151	805	4,340
Total	**40,376**	**17,131**	**5,500**	**22,631**	**17,745**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 5-3 Working Age Population by Economic Activity Status, Age Group and Sex, 2023

Age Group	Working Age Population	Unemployment Rate	Employment Rate	Economically Active (Labour force)			Not in Labour Force
				Employed	Unemployed	Total	
Both Sexes							
15–19	8,049	51.1	48.9	1,038	1,085	2,123	5,926
20–24	7,217	28.3	71.7	4,061	1,602	5,663	1,554
25–29	7,414	19.4	80.6	4,933	1,186	6,119	1,295
30–34	7,414	16.6	83.4	5,319	1,058	6,377	1,037
35–39	7,351	15.3	84.7	5,405	973	6,378	973
40–44	7,678	13.5	86.5	5,729	894	6,623	1,055
45–49	7,129	14.0	86.0	5,190	845	6,035	1,094
50–54	7,286	13.7	86.3	5,171	818	5,989	1,297
55–59	6,634	14.1	85.9	4,241	694	4,935	1,699
60–64	6,548	15.1	84.9	2,932	523	3,455	3,093
65+	13,662	15.3	84.7	2,461	446	2,907	10,755
Total	**86,382**	**17.9**	**82.1**	**46,480**	**10,124**	**56,604**	**29,778**
Male							
15–19	4,121	48.0	52.0	599	552	1,151	2,970
20–24	3,731	27.2	72.8	2,255	843	3,098	633
25–29	3,577	16.5	83.5	2,569	508	3,077	500
30–34	3,608	14.8	85.2	2,733	475	3,208	400
35–39	3,567	13.9	86.1	2,791	449	3,240	327
40–44	3,736	11.7	88.3	2,947	392	3,339	397
45–49	3,638	12.6	87.4	2,821	407	3,228	410
50–54	3,801	12.3	87.7	2,968	416	3,384	417
55–59	3,498	13.4	86.6	2,464	380	2,844	654
60–64	3,465	13.6	86.4	1,931	303	2,234	1,231
65+	6,679	14.5	85.5	1,703	289	1,992	4,687
Total	**43,421**	**16.3**	**83.7**	**25,781**	**5,014**	**30,795**	**12,626**
Female							
15–19	3,928	54.8	45.2	439	533	972	2,956
20–24	3,486	29.6	70.4	1,806	759	2,565	921
25–29	3,837	22.3	77.7	2,364	678	3,042	795
30–34	3,806	18.4	81.6	2,586	583	3,169	637
35–39	3,784	16.7	83.3	2,614	524	3,138	646
40–44	3,942	15.3	84.7	2,782	502	3,284	658
45–49	3,491	15.6	84.4	2,369	438	2,807	684
50–54	3,485	15.4	84.6	2,203	402	2,605	880
55–59	3,136	15.0	85.0	1,777	314	2,091	1,045
60–64	3,083	18.0	82.0	1,001	220	1,221	1,862
65+	6,983	17.2	82.8	758	157	915	6,068
Total	**42,961**	**19.8**	**80.2**	**20,699**	**5,110**	**25,809**	**17,152**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 5-4 Employment and Unemployment Rate by Census Division and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	2001		2012		2023	
	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Both						
Kingstown	82.3	17.7	82	18	86	14
Suburbs of Kingstown	77.2	22.8	75.6	24.5	87.2	12.8
Calliaqua	81.6	18.4	81.3	18.7	84.0	16
Marriaqua	83.1	16.9	80.1	19.9	86.5	13.5
Bridgetown	76.8	23.2	78.2	21.9	82.9	17.1
Colonarie	74.6	25.4	72.5	27.5	79.1	20.9
Georgetown	75.8	24.2	73.4	26.6	77.0	23
Sandy Bay	71.6	28.4	81.5	18.5	73.3	26.7
Layou	71.2	28.8	74.3	25.7	83.8	16.2
Barrouallie	76.2	23.8	74.5	25.5	81.1	18.9
Chateaubelair	73.7	26.2	73.6	26.4	74.1	25.9
Northern Grenadines	82.9	17.1	79.3	20.7	88.9	11.1
Southern Grenadines	86.9	13.1	87.3	12.8	92.0	8
Total	**79.1**	**20.9**	**78.5**	**21.5**	**83.7**	**16.3**
Male						
Kingstown	79.5	20.5	83.1	16.9	83	17
Suburbs of Kingstown	77.1	22.9	77.5	22.5	84.0	16
Calliaqua	78.9	21.1	82.0	18.0	83.4	16.6
Marriaqua	82.8	17.2	81.0	19.0	84.2	15.8
Bridgetown	75.8	24.2	82.1	17.9	76.1	23.9
Colonarie	74.2	25.8	74.9	25.1	69.9	30.1
Georgetown	73.2	26.8	77.6	22.4	65.1	34.9
Sandy Bay	68.1	32.0	87.4	12.6	60.7	39.3
Layou	72.9	27.1	78.7	21.3	82.4	17.6
Barrouallie	78.3	21.7	77.8	22.2	82.4	17.6
Chateaubelair	73.6	26.4	81.4	18.7	61.6	38.4
Northern Grenadines	80.4	19.6	89.3	10.7	85.2	14.8
Southern Grenadines	85.2	14.9	80.6	19.4	90.0	10
Total	**77.6**	**22.5**	**80.6**	**19.4**	**80.2**	**19.8**
Female						
Kingstown	85.8	14.2	80.7	19.3	84.6	15.4
Suburbs of Kingstown	77.5	22.5	73.4	26.6	85.7	14.3
Calliaqua	85.3	14.7	80.6	19.4	83.7	16.3
Marriaqua	83.7	16.4	79.0	21.0	85.5	14.5
Bridgetown	79.3	20.8	72.3	27.7	80.1	19.9
Colonarie	75.4	24.6	68.8	31.2	75.0	25
Georgetown	81.7	18.3	67.5	32.5	71.8	28.2
Sandy Bay	82.7	17.3	70.3	29.7	68.4	31.6
Layou	68.1	31.9	69.0	31.0	83.2	16.8
Barrouallie	72.0	28.1	68.4	31.6	81.6	18.4
Chateaubelair	74.1	25.9	66.2	33.8	68.7	31.3
Northern Grenadines	88.2	11.8	76.1	23.9	87.2	12.8
Southern Grenadines	89.9	10.1	89.3	16.1	91.2	8.8
Total	**81.7**	**18.3**	**75.7**	**24.3**	**82.1**	**17.9**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The working-age population has expanded and is ageing, with modest gains in participation and reduced unemployment since 2012. Yet, high joblessness among youth, persistent gender gaps, and divisional disparities reveal that access to employment remains uneven across groups and regions.

5.4 Labour Force

The labour force comprises all persons of working age (15 years and older) who are either employed or unemployed, and thus actively contributing to or seeking entry into the labour market (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2023a)[17]. This measure is central for understanding how human resources are mobilized and how demographic and socio-economic conditions shape patterns of participation. In the 2023 Census, the labour force totaled 56,604 persons, an increase from 52,014 in 2012 (Table 5.5), reflecting both population growth and modest improvements in economic activity.

Regional data reveal notable disparities. In 2023, Calliaqua reported the largest labour force (13,867 persons), followed by the Suburbs of Kingstown (8,366). By contrast, smaller divisions such as Chateaubelair (2,333) and Sandy Bay (1,282) had the lowest labour force counts (Table 5.5). Importantly, the Grenadines, despite being smaller in population size, maintained relatively strong participation levels compared to some rural mainland divisions. At the same time, many rural districts showed higher proportions of persons not in the labour force relative to their total working-age population.

Moreover, age- and sex-based participation patterns provide further insight into labour market dynamics. The labour force participation rate (LFPR), defined as the proportion of the working-age population that is economically active (ILO, 2023b), rose from 63.2% in 2012 to 65.5% in 2023 (Table 5.6). Participation peaks during the prime working ages (25-49), where more than 80 percent are engaged in the labour force, underscoring the centrality of this group to economic output and household livelihoods. In contrast, the 15-19 cohort recorded a participation rate of only 26.4 percent in 2023, consistent with higher school enrollment and delayed entry into the job market, while the 65 years and over population reported 21.3 percent, reflecting retirement and declining work capacity.

An examination of gender gaps remains another defining feature of the labour force. In 2023, the male LFPR was 70.9%, compared to 60.1% for females. Although female participation improved relative to 2012, the gap of nearly 11 percentage points underscores persistent structural barriers, including women’s disproportionate share of household and care responsibilities, occupational segregation into lower-paying sectors, and limited access to flexible or formal work arrangements. These constraints continue to limit women’s full participation in economic activity, even as they have achieved notable gains in educational attainment and increased representation in the expanding service sector.

[17] International Labour Organization. (2023a). ILOSTAT: *Concepts and definitions – Labour force statistics*. Retrieved https://ilostat.ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/description-labour-force-statistics/

Table 5-5 Working Age Population by Economic Activity and Census Division, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	Work Age Population	Employed	Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Persons Not in Labour Force
2012					
Kingstown	9,721	5,219	1,148	6,367	3,354
Suburbs of Kingstown	10,207	5,155	1,668	6,823	3,384
Calliaqua	18,407	9,762	2,241	12,003	6,404
Marriaqua	5,821	2,954	733	3,687	2,134
Bridgetown	4,935	2,307	645	2,952	1,983
Colonarie	5,124	2,146	813	2,959	2,165
Georgetown	5,172	2,291	830	3,121	2,051
Sandy Bay	1,874	861	196	1,057	817
Layou	4,791	2,172	751	2,923	1,868
Barrouallie	4,076	1,808	617	2,425	1,651
Chateaubelair	4,168	1,740	623	2,363	1,805
Northern Grenadines	4,851	2,470	645	3,115	1,736
Southern Grenadines	3,116	1,936	283	2,219	897
Total	**82,263**	**40,821**	**11,193**	**52,014**	**30,249**
2023					
Kingstown	8,757	4,855	883	5,738	3,019
Suburbs of Kingstown	12,244	7,168	1,198	8,366	3,878
Calliaqua	21,537	11,606	2,261	13,867	7,670
Marriaqua	5,814	3,301	562	3,863	1,951
Bridgetown	5,135	2,714	673	3,387	1,748
Colonarie	5,281	2,631	875	3,506	1,775
Georgetown	5,454	2,429	955	3,384	2,070
Sandy Bay	1,971	877	405	1,282	689
Layou	5,046	2,640	533	3,173	1,873
Barrouallie	4,357	2,193	493	2,686	1,671
Chateaubelair	3,761	1,603	730	2,333	1,428
Northern Grenadines	4,152	2,475	363	2,838	1,314
Southern Grenadines	2,873	1,988	193	2,181	692
Total	**86,382**	**46,480**	**10,124**	**56,604**	**29,778**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 5-6 Labour Force Participation Rate by Age Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15 – 19	46.4	22	**34.3**	27.6	23.8	**25.8**	27.9	24.7	**26.4**
20 – 24	85.9	56.4	**71.5**	80.1	68.8	**74.5**	83	73.6	**78.5**
25 – 29	89.4	60.3	**75.2**	83.4	73.4	**78.5**	86	79.3	**82.5**
30 – 34	90.7	60.8	**76.4**	85.7	74.8	**80.2**	88.9	83.3	**86**
35 – 39	91.0	62.5	**77.3**	85.9	74.5	**80.3**	90.8	82.9	**86.8**
40 – 44	90.7	61.6	**76.6**	85.9	74.1	**80.3**	89.4	83.3	**86.3**
45 – 49	88.7	59.9	**74.6**	85.2	71.5	**78.6**	88.7	80.4	**84.7**
50 – 54	85.8	51.6	**69.3**	83.2	65.1	**74.6**	89	74.7	**82.2**
55 – 59	74.4	35.7	**55.2**	77.6	54.7	**66.7**	81.3	66.7	**74.4**
60 – 64	54.3	22.3	**37.6**	60.1	31.7	**46.4**	64.5	39.6	**52.8**
65+	23.4	8.1	**14.8**	35.6	15.7	**25.3**	29.8	13.1	**21.3**
Total	**74.7**	**45.2**	**60.1**	**70.2**	**56.1**	**63.2**	**70.9**	**60.1**	**65.5**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The evidence shows that the labour force has expanded and participation has improved since 2012, but progress remains uneven. Young people still struggle to secure work, women continue to participate at lower levels than men, and rural divisions still lag behind districts with more diverse economic opportunities, particularly Kingstown and the Grenadines.

5.5 Employed Labour Force

The employed labour force represents all working-age persons who were engaged in paid work, self-employment, or other economic activities during the reference period (ILO, 2023a).[18] Employment patterns provide critical insight into how jobs are distributed by type, sector, and occupational category, reflecting both structural shifts in the economy and demographic patterns in participation.

5.5.1 Status in Employment

Between 2012 and 2023, the number of employed persons increased from 40,821 to 47,198, reflecting a 16 percent rise over the intercensal period. This expansion demonstrates the economy's capacity to generate jobs, but also reveals shifts in the composition of employment.

The private sector continues to dominate, accounting for 41.0% of employed persons in 2023, slightly lower than the 42.6% recorded in 2012. The public sector (government and state-owned enterprises

[18] International Labour Organization. (2023a). *ILOSTAT: Concepts and definitions – Employment statistics.* Retrieved https://ilostat.ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/

combined) grew from 25.5% to nearly 27.9%, underscoring its enduring importance as a stabilizing force in the labour market.

Self-employment without paid employees declined from 19.2% in 2012 to 17.9% in 2023, suggesting reduced reliance on micro and own-account activities. Employers with paid staff remained relatively small, contributing just over 3% of jobs. Domestic workers made up nearly 5% of total employment in 2023, with women strongly overrepresented in this category.

Gender disparities remain clear. Women's share of total employment increased modestly from 42% in 2012 to 44.4% in 2023, but their employment remains concentrated in government, state-owned enterprises, and private household work, while men are more dominant in self-employment, apprenticeships, and trade-based roles.

Table 5-7 Employed Population by Status in Employment and Sex, 2012 & 2023

Status in Employment	Male	%	Female	%	Both	%
2012						
Paid Employee, Government (Local and Central Government)	3,839	44.0	4,891	56.0	8,731	21.4
Paid Employee, State Owned Company/Statutory Board	1,069	63.6	612	36.4	1,681	4.1
Paid Employee, Private Business	10,684	61.4	6,712	38.6	17,396	42.6
Paid Employee, Private Home	736	37.3	1,238	62.7	1,973	4.8
Own Business with Paid Employees	873	69.1	390	30.9	1,263	3.1
Own Business without Paid Employees (Self-Employed)	5,327	67.9	2,523	32.1	7,850	19.2
Apprentice/Learners	45	70.3	19	29.7	64	0.2
Unpaid Family Worker/Employee	198	44.4	248	55.6	445	1.1
Volunteer Worker	64	57.1	48	42.9	112	0.3
Other	271	70.4	114	29.6	384	0.9
Don't Know	58	81.7	13	18.3	70	0.2
Not Stated	527	61.9	324	38.1	851	2.1
Total	**23,690**	**58**	**17,131**	**42**	**40,821**	**100**
2023						
Paid Employee, Government (Local and Central Government)	4,262	38.9	6,703	61.1	10,965	23.2
Paid Employee, State Owned Company/Statutory Board	1,265	57.2	948	42.8	2,213	4.7
Paid Employee, Private Business	11,259	58.2	8,101	41.8	19,360	41.0
Paid Employee, Private Home	1,132	48.5	1,200	51.5	2,332	4.9
Own Business with Paid Employees	1,083	71.1	441	28.9	1,524	3.2
Own Business without Paid Employees (Self-Employed)	5,691	67.2	2,772	32.8	8,463	17.9
Apprentice/Learners	78	70.9	32	29.1	110	0.2
Unpaid Family Worker/Employee	348	55.4	280	44.6	628	1.3
Volunteer Worker	49	60.5	32	39.5	81	0.2
Other (Specify)	714	70.6	298	29.4	1,012	2.1
Don't Know	261	65.4	138	34.6	399	0.8
Not Stated	77	69.4	34	30.6	111	0.2
Total	**26,219**	**55.6**	**20,979**	**44.4**	**47,198**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

5.5.2 Occupation

The occupational profile of employment also reflects important shifts over time. Service and sales workers remained the largest group in 2023, accounting for 25.0% of total employment, a near continuation of the 26.0% observed in 2012. Elementary occupations (14.6%) and craft and related trades workers (12.4%) followed, together accounting for more than a quarter of the workforce (Table 5.8).

Higher-skilled roles show modest but steady growth. The share of professionals increased from 11.1% in 2012 to 11.9% in 2023, while technicians and associate professionals rose from 7.1% to 8.8%, reflecting the gradual expansion of skilled employment linked to educational gains. Conversely, skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers declined sharply, from 12.5% in 2012 to 9.1% in 2023, underscoring the declining weight of agriculture in the labour market. Managerial positions, while relatively balanced by sex, remain small at 4.7% of jobs in 2023, highlighting limited upward mobility.

Table 5-8 Currently Employed Population by Occupational Group, 2012 & 2023

Occupational Group	Count			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2012						
Managers	968	661	**1,629**	4.1	3.9	**4.0**
Professionals	1,553	2,991	**4,544**	6.6	17.5	**11.1**
Technicians and associate professionals	1,436	1,470	**2,906**	6.1	8.6	**7.1**
Clerical support workers	606	1,905	**2,511**	2.6	11.1	**6.2**
Service and sales workers	4,442	6,188	**10,630**	18.8	36.1	**26.0**
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	4,230	880	**5,110**	17.9	5.1	**12.5**
Craft and related trades workers	4,995	472	**5,467**	21.1	2.8	**13.4**
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	1,928	110	**2,038**	8.1	0.6	**5.0**
Elementary occupations	3,246	2,220	**5,466**	13.7	13	**13.4**
Not Stated	286	234	**520**	1.2	1.4	**1.3**
Total	**23,690**	**17,131**	**40,821**	**100**	**100**	**100**
2023						
Armed Forces Occupations	8	1	**9**	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Managers	1,099	1,077	**2,176**	4.3	5.2	**4.7**
Professionals	1,719	3,797	**5,516**	6.7	18.3	**11.9**
Technicians and Associate Professionals	1,989	2,115	**4,104**	7.7	10.2	**8.8**
Clerical Support workers	903	2,434	**3,337**	3.5	11.8	**7.2**
Service and sales workers	4,640	6,991	**11,631**	18.0	33.8	**25.0**
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	3,481	758	**4,239**	13.5	3.7	**9.1**
Craft and related trades workers	5,113	642	**5,755**	19.8	3.1	**12.4**
Plant and Machine Operators and assemblers	2,033	114	**2,147**	7.9	0.6	**4.6**
Elementary Occupations	4,360	2,404	**6,764**	16.9	11.6	**14.6**
Not Stated	436	366	**802**	1.7	1.8	**1.7**
Total	**25,781**	**20,699**	**46,480**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Gender continues to shape occupational outcomes. Women are concentrated in clerical, service, and elementary work, while men dominate agriculture, craft, and technical trades. Although women's presence in professional and managerial roles has grown, men still retain a slight advantage in these higher-status occupations.

5.5.3 Industry

Employment by industry reflects both the productive structure of the economy and the opportunities available across sectors. In 2012, the leading industries were wholesale and retail trade (16.9%), construction (11.6%), and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (11.8%) (Table 5.9). By 2023, while trade (12.7%) and agriculture (14.4%) remained major employers, construction's share declined to 9.2%, signaling structural adjustments in the labour market (Table 5.10).

Table 5-9 Currently Employed Population by Industry, 2012

Industry	Count			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	3,903	905	**4,808**	16.5	5.3	**11.8**
Mining and quarrying	34	7	**41**	0.1	0.0	**0.1**
Manufacturing	1,446	615	**2,061**	6.1	3.6	**5.1**
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	276	60	**336**	1.2	0.4	**0.8**
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	270	54	**324**	1.1	0.3	**0.8**
Construction	4,433	317	**4,750**	18.7	1.9	**11.6**
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	3,370	3,512	**6,882**	14.2	20.5	**16.9**
Transportation and storage	2,571	525	**3,096**	10.9	3.1	**7.6**
Accommodation and food service activities	1,234	1,788	**3,022**	5.2	10.4	**7.4**
Information and communication	304	228	**532**	1.3	1.3	**1.3**
Financial and insurance activities	240	552	**792**	1.0	3.2	**1.9**
Real estate activities	29	19	**48**	0.1	0.1	**0.1**
Professional, scientific and technical activities	221	375	**596**	0.9	2.2	**1.5**
Administrative and support service activities	765	416	**1,181**	3.2	2.4	**2.9**
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	2,125	1,851	**3,976**	9.0	10.8	**9.7**
Education	840	2,328	**3,168**	3.6	13.6	**7.8**
Human health and social work activities	262	1,136	**1,398**	1.1	6.6	**3.4**
Arts, entertainment and recreation	150	208	**358**	0.6	1.2	**0.9**
Other service activities	433	449	**882**	1.8	2.6	**2.2**
Activities of households as employers	470	1,494	**1,964**	2.0	8.7	**4.8**
Activities of extraterritorial organizations & bodies	14	17	**31**	0.1	0.1	**0.1**
Not Stated	300	275	**575**	1.3	1.6	**1.4**
Total	**23,690**	**17,131**	**40,821**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Agriculture registered notable growth in absolute employment, rising from 4,808 persons in 2012 to 6,694 in 2023, although its relative share of total jobs fluctuated, highlighting the sector's continued but evolving role. Conversely, manufacturing experienced a small decline in share, falling from 5.1% to 4.3%, consistent with regional trends of limited industrial expansion.

Table 5-10 Currently Employed Population by Industry, 2023

Industry	Count			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5,263	1,431	**6,694**	20.4	6.9	**14.4**
Mining and quarrying	688	719	**1,407**	2.7	3.5	**3.0**
Manufacturing	1,401	619	**2,020**	5.4	3.0	**4.3**
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	232	38	**270**	0.9	0.2	**0.6**
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	267	73	**340**	1.0	0.4	**0.7**
Construction	4,045	230	**4,275**	15.7	1.1	**9.2**
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	2,841	3,045	**5,886**	11.0	14.7	**12.7**
Transportation and storage	2,224	574	**2,798**	8.6	2.8	**6.0**
Accommodation and food service activities	1,595	2,252	**3,847**	6.2	10.9	**8.3**
Information and communication	239	221	**460**	0.9	1.1	**1.0**
Financial and insurance activities	289	510	**799**	1.1	2.5	**1.7**
Real estate activities	69	36	**105**	0.3	0.2	**0.2**
Professional, scientific and technical activities	224	406	**630**	0.9	2.0	**1.4**
Administrative and support service activities	895	835	**1,730**	3.5	4.0	**3.7**
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	1,787	1,707	**3,494**	6.9	8.2	**7.5**
Education	716	2,731	**3,447**	2.8	13.2	**7.4**
Human health and social work activities	310	1,300	**1,610**	1.2	6.3	**3.5**
Arts, entertainment and recreation	212	218	**430**	0.8	1.1	**0.9**
Other service activities	367	455	**822**	1.4	1.2	**1.8**
Activities of households as employers; activities of households for own use	318	895	**1,213**	1.2	4.3	**2.6**
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	2	8	**10**	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Not Stated	1,797	2,396	**4,193**	7.0	11.6	**9.0**
Total	**25,781**	**20,699**	**46,480**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Expansions were noted in the service-based sectors, with accommodation and food services increasing from 7.4% in 2012 to 8.3% in 2023, reflecting the importance of tourism. Human health and social work activities also grew from 3.4% to 3.5%, tied to rising demand for health services. While public administration declined from 9.7% to 7.5%, a sign of slower government employment growth relative to other industries.

Gender differences also remain distinct. Women dominate education, health, and accommodation services, while men are concentrated in agriculture, construction, and transport. These patterns demonstrate both sectoral specialization and persistent gender segmentation of the labour market.

5.6 Unemployed Labour Force

Unemployment is one of the central measures of labour underutilization. According to ILO/ILOSTAT, the unemployment rate is defined as the share of persons in the labour force who are unemployed, that is, those of working age who are without work during the reference period, are currently available for work, and have actively sought employment (ILO, n.d.).[19]

In 2023, the unemployment rate declined to 17.9%, down from 21.5% in 2012, reflecting some improvement in labour absorption (Table 5.11). However, this decline conceals sharp disparities by age and gender. Among youth aged 15-19, unemployment remained extremely high at 51.1%, while for those aged 20-24 it stood at 28.3% in 2023, both well above the national average. These outcomes highlight persistent challenges faced by young labour force entrants.

Adults in the 30-49 age groups registered relatively lower unemployment rates (13 to 17%), reflecting stronger attachment to the labour market. Older workers aged 50-64 also displayed moderate unemployment (12 to 15%), while among the 65 years and over age group, unemployment stood at 15.3%, suggesting that older individuals still seeking work face barriers comparable to the national average.

Gender disparities in unemployment remain persistent. In 2023, women recorded an unemployment rate of 19.8%, compared to 16.3% for men. In 2012, the rates were 23.5% for women and 19.8% for men, showing that while unemployment declined for both sexes, the gap has endured. Women remain more concentrated in less secure and lower-paying forms of work, such as domestic and service-related jobs, and are more affected by caregiving responsibilities, which can limit access to stable employment.

[19] International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *Labour force statistics: Concepts and definitions.* ILOSTAT. Retrieved from https://ilostat.ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/description-labour-force-statistics/

Table 5-11 Employment and Unemployment Rates by Age Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	2001		2012		2023	
	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Both sexes						
15–19	48.5	51.5	38.3	61.7	48.9	51.1
20–24	68.4	31.7	60.3	39.7	71.7	28.3
25–29	78.5	21.5	75.0	25.0	80.6	19.4
30–34	82.3	17.7	79.6	20.4	83.4	16.6
35–39	85.6	14.4	83.2	16.8	84.7	15.3
40–44	86.8	13.2	86.0	14.0	86.5	13.5
45–49	88.4	11.6	86.6	13.4	86.0	14.0
50–54	88.7	11.3	88.8	11.2	86.3	13.7
55–59	87.3	12.7	87.3	12.7	85.9	14.1
60–64	89.4	10.6	89.9	10.1	84.9	15.1
65+	93.9	6.1	84.5	15.5	84.7	15.3
Total	**79.1**	**20.9**	**78.5**	**21.5**	**82.1**	**17.9**
Male						
15–19	49.8	50.2	43.1	56.9	52.0	48.0
20–24	67.5	32.5	65.4	34.6	72.8	27.2
25–29	77.0	23.0	77.3	22.7	83.5	16.5
30–34	81.3	18.8	81.9	18.1	85.2	14.8
35–39	83.6	16.4	85.2	14.8	86.1	13.9
40–44	84.8	15.2	86.9	13.1	88.3	11.7
45–49	85.9	14.1	87.2	12.9	87.4	12.6
50–54	85.9	14.2	89.2	10.8	87.7	12.3
55–59	84.8	15.2	86.4	13.7	86.6	13.4
60–64	87.0	13.0	89.8	10.2	86.4	13.6
65+	93.6	6.4	86.1	13.9	85.5	14.5
Total	**77.6**	**22.5**	**80.6**	**19.4**	**83.7**	**16.3**
Female						
15–19	45.8	54.2	32.6	67.4	45.2	54.8
20–24	69.7	30.3	54.2	45.8	70.4	29.6
25–29	80.8	19.2	72.3	27.7	77.7	22.3
30–34	84.0	16.0	77.0	23.0	81.6	18.4
35–39	88.6	11.4	80.9	19.2	83.3	16.7
40–44	89.9	10.1	85.0	15.0	84.7	15.3
45–49	92.4	7.7	85.8	14.2	84.4	15.6
50–54	93.8	6.3	88.4	11.6	84.6	15.4
55–59	92.5	7.5	88.7	11.3	85.0	15.0
60–64	95.0	5.0	90.1	9.9	82.0	18.0
65+	94.6	5.4	81.2	18.8	82.8	17.2
Total	**81.7**	**18.3**	**75.7**	**24.3**	**80.2**	**19.8**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Patterns of livelihood among the unemployed also shifted markedly (Table 5.12). In 2012, 70.2% relied on support from local friends or relatives, and 12.0% on overseas relatives. By 2023, these figures declined, giving way to more diversified support systems: 22.3% relied on parents, 15.2% on local relatives, and 14.7% on spouses or partners. Overseas remittances declined to 6.5%, while pensions, savings, and other forms of support grew in relative importance.

Table 5-12 Total Number of Persons Unemployed by Source of Livelihood, 2012 & 2023

Sources of Livelihood	Number	%
2012		
Disability Benefits	21	0.2
Employment	335	3.0
Investments	48	0.4
Public Assistance	118	1.1
Pension (Local)	108	1.0
Pension (Overseas)	37	0.3
Savings or Interest on Savings	751	6.7
Subsistence Farming	487	4.4
Support From Friends or Relatives (Local - Cash or Kind)	7,863	70.2
Support From Friends or Relatives (Overseas - Cash or Kind)	1,338	12.0
Other	1,273	11.4
2023		
Pension (Local)	145	1.4
Pension (Overseas)	26	0.3
Other (Unspecified)	62	0.6
Remittances (Overseas – Cash/Kind)	229	2.3
Savings/Interest on Savings	950	9.4
Employment	744	7.3
Disability Benefits	17	0.2
Unemployment Benefits	30	0.3
Social Security Benefits (NIS)	73	0.7
Other Public Assistance	162	1.6
Support from Friends/Relatives (Local - Cash/Kind)	1,538	15.2
Support from Friends/Relatives (Overseas - Cash/Kind)	662	6.5
Spouse/Partner Support (Cash/Kind)	1,485	14.7
Children Support (Cash/Kind)	315	3.1
Parent(s) Support (Cash/Kind)	2,260	22.3
Guardian(s) Support (Cash/Kind)	91	0.9
Farming (Backyard, Garden etc.)	350	3.5
Other (Specify)	263	2.6

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The evidence shows that while unemployment has fallen since 2012, challenges remain entrenched. Youth and women continue to face disproportionate risks of unemployment, while reliance on household and kinship networks remains the dominant safety net. These findings reinforce the need for targeted policies to create decent jobs for young people and to reduce gendered barriers to employment.

5.7 Population Not in the Labour Force

The population not in the labour force includes persons aged 15 years and older who were neither employed nor actively seeking work during the reference period, such as students, retirees, homemakers, and those unable to work due to illness or disability (ILO, 2023).

In 2023, 29,679 persons were outside the labour force, a slight decline from 30,249 in 2012 (Table 5.13). Retirement was the main reason for inactivity, increasing from 25.5% in 2012 to 36.0% in 2023, consistent with population ageing. School attendance remained high, though slightly lower at 21.1% in 2023 compared to 22.3% in 2012. Home duties also declined from 20.0% to 18.8%, while disability and illness fell from 8.3% to 7.2%. About 6.9% of the inactive population in 2023 reported looking for work or being available for work, showing some latent attachment to the labour market.

Table 5-13 Main Activity of the Economically Inactive Population, 2012 & 2023

Main Activity in the Past Month	Count	%
2012		
Own illness, disability, injury, pregnancy	2,510	8.3
Home duties, personal/family responsibilities	6,052	20.0
In school/training	6,732	22.3
Retirement/old age	7,698	25.5
Believe no work is available	575	1.9
Do not know how or where to seek work	311	1.0
Not yet started to seek work	672	2.2
Other	726	2.4
Not Stated	4,973	16.4
Total	**30,249**	**100**
2023		
Had a job and worked	1,474	5.0
Had a job but did not work	317	1.1
Looked for work	1,510	5.1
Wanted work and available	521	1.8
Did home duties	5,575	18.8
Attended school/student	6,251	21.1
Retired, did not work	10,688	36.0
Disabled, unable to work	2,148	7.2
Other (Specify)	877	3.0
Not Stated	318	1.1
Total	**29,679**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Furthermore, sources of livelihood show notable shifts (Table 5.14). In 2012, local family support (50.2%) and overseas remittances (10.9%) dominated. By 2023, these declined to 7.4% and 3.9%, respectively. Pensions became more important, with local pensions rising from 10.3% to 15.0%, while parental support grew sharply to 20.9%, the largest single source in 2023. Savings and interest also increased, from 2.9% in 2012 to 6.5% in 2023, while reliance on public assistance decreased from 7.2% to 5.4%.

Table 5-14 Economically Inactive population by Source of Livelihood, 2012 & 2023

Sources of Livelihood	Count	%
2012		
Disability Benefits	134	0.4
Employment	1,815	6.0
Investments	265	0.9
Public Assistance	2,173	7.2
Pension (Local)	3,104	10.3
Pension (Overseas)	1,496	4.9
Savings or Interest on Savings	877	2.9
Subsistence Farming	855	2.8
Support From Friends or Relatives (Local - Cash or Kind)	15,173	50.2
Support From Friends or Relatives (Overseas - Cash or Kind)	3,306	10.9
Other	3,059	10.1
2023		
Pension (local)	4,443	15.0
Pension (overseas)	1,418	4.8
Other (Unspecified)	313	1.1
Remittances (overseas – Cash/Kind)	415	1.4
Savings/interest on savings	1,942	6.5
Employment	1,074	3.6
Disability benefits	226	0.8
Unemployment benefits	103	0.3
Social security benefits (NIS)	1,084	3.7
Other public assistance	1,608	5.4
Support from friends/relatives (local – Cash/Kind)	2,193	7.4
Support from friends/relatives (Overseas – Cash/Kind)	1,157	3.9
Spouse/Partner Support (Cash/Kind)	2,448	8.2
Children Support (Cash/Kind)	2,157	7.3
Parent(s) Support (Cash/Kind)	6,194	20.9
Guardian(s) Support (Cash/Kind)	259	0.9
Farming (Backyard, garden etc.)	445	1.5
Other (specify)	338	1.1

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Generally, while the size of the inactive population remained relatively stable, its composition has shifted. Retirement and formal sources of support such as pensions and savings are becoming more prominent, while reliance on remittances and informal transfers has declined. These shifts reflect both demographic ageing and changing household support systems, with a gradual move toward more formal and structured means of support.

5.8 Conclusion

The 2023 Census highlights a labour market that is larger and more engaged than in 2012, yet still marked by deep structural challenges. The working-age population has grown and aged, with participation improving modestly and unemployment declining to 17.9%. However, youth continue to struggle with high levels of joblessness, women remain underrepresented and face higher unemployment, and several rural divisions lag behind more diversified areas such as Kingstown and the Grenadines.

Additionally, employment is concentrated in services, while professional and technical roles are slowly expanding and agriculture's relative importance is declining despite some growth in absolute jobs. Among those outside the labour force, retirement has become the leading reason for inactivity, and support systems have shifted toward pensions and savings, with declining reliance on remittances and informal transfers.

These dynamics show some progress in labour market absorption but also reveal ongoing challenges, including youth unemployment, persistent gender and regional gaps, and the probable growing demands on social support systems as the population ages.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS – CHAPTER 5
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Labour Force Participation:
Of the 86,382 working-age population, 56,604 (65.5%) were economically active

Labour Force Participation & Gender:
Men had a higher participation rate (70.9%) than women (60.1%)

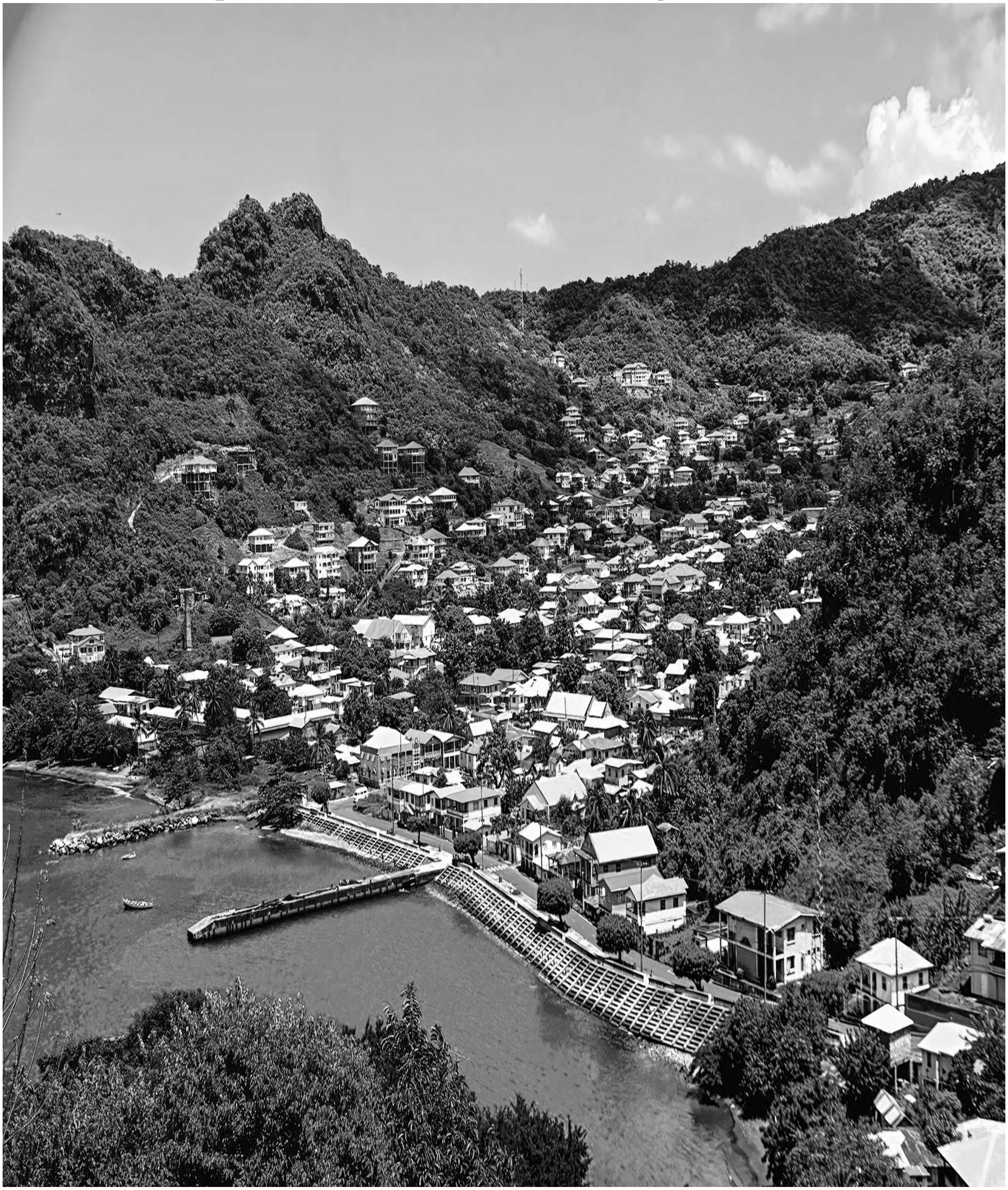
Overall Unemployment :
The unemployment rate stood at 17.9% nationally, with 16.3% among men and a higher 19.8% among women

Youth Unemployment :
Joblessness was most severe among the young: 51% for ages 15–19 and 28%

Employment Status:
Most employed persons were paid employees (69%), split between private business (41%) and government (23%)

Inactive Population:
Among the 29,679 inactive persons, most were retired (36%), students (21%) & engaged in home duties (19%)

Chapter 6. Household and Housing Characteristics



6.1 Introduction

Household and housing characteristics are key measures of living standards and social well-being. They reflect not only the physical condition of housing but also access to essential services such as water, lighting, sanitation, and energy. These indicators provide insight into inequalities across regions and population groups and are closely linked to health, economic security, and environmental resilience.

Globally, adequate housing is embedded in the framework of sustainable development. According to the Global Goals, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, one target is to ensure access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services by 2030 (Global Goals, n.d.)[20]. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, comparing data from the 2012 and 2023 censuses provides a forward-looking view of how housing quality and household conditions are evolving in response to demographic, social, and economic change.

This chapter examines multiple dimensions of household and housing conditions across census divisions and over time. It explores materials of construction, dwelling size in terms of rooms and bedrooms, and access to key services such as lighting, water supply, cooking fuel, and toilet facilities. Through comparative analysis, the chapter highlights both gains in housing adequacy and the persistent challenges that remain.

6.2 Households

Households provide a vital lens for understanding demographic change. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the number of households has grown steadily from 16,940 in 1970 to 38,969 in 2023 (Table 6.1). Over the same period, average household size fell from 5.1 in 1970 to 3.0 in 2012 and to 2.8 persons in 2023. This decline reflects key demographic shifts such as falling fertility, increased female labour force participation, and migration, alongside social preferences for smaller family units and independent living.

Table 6-1 Number of Households and Average Size (1970-2023)

Census Year	Household Population	Number of Households	Average Size
1970	86944	16940	5.1
1980	97845	20290	4.8
1991	106499	27002	3.9
2001	107835	30558	3.5
2012	109188	36829	3.0
2023	**108764**	**38969**	**2.8**

Source: 2001 Population and Housing Census Report; 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

[20] Global Goals. (n.d.). *Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities*. Retrieved from https://globalgoals.org/goals/11-sustainable-cities-and-communities/

Census division data show that by 2023, most areas recorded fewer than three persons per household (Table 6.2). Sandy Bay had the largest average at 3.5, while the Southern Grenadines had the smallest at 2.2. These differences point to contrasting demographic and social dynamics: rural and traditional communities often maintain larger households due to extended family living, while urban and island divisions are more likely to experience smaller households influenced by ageing populations, migration, and the rise of single-person or nuclear households.

Table 6-2 Average Household Size by Census Division, 2001, 2012 & 2023

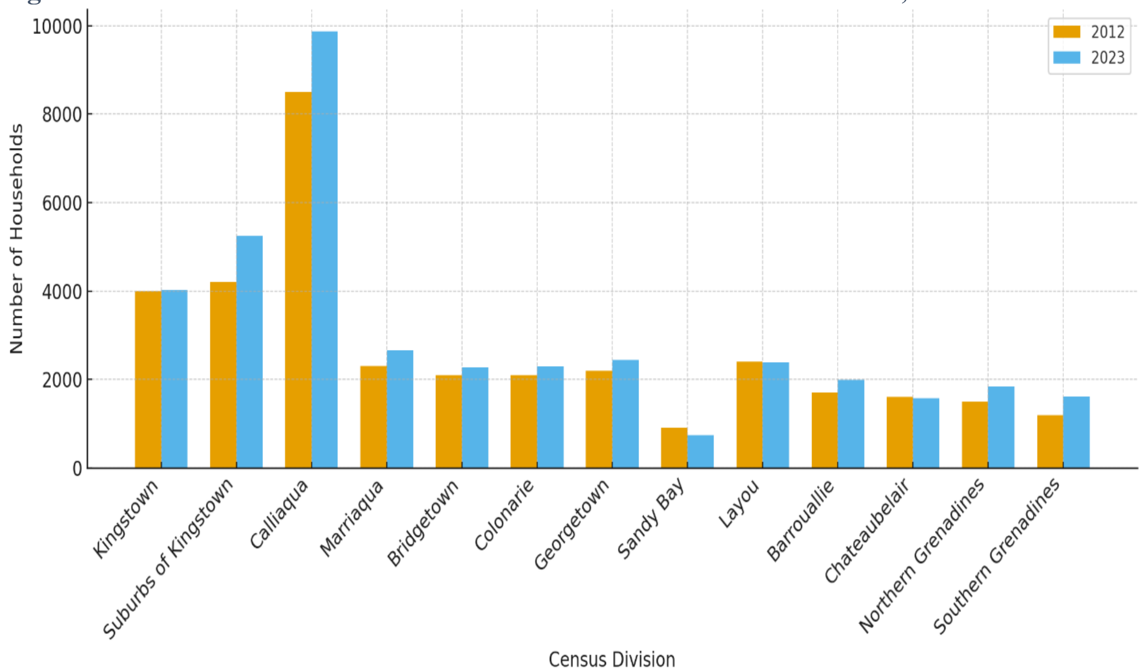
Census Division	Average Household Size		
	2001	2012	2023
Kingstown	3.4	3.0	2.7
Suburbs of Kingstown	3.9	3.1	3.0
Calliaqua	3.4	2.8	2.7
Marriaqua	3.7	3.2	2.8
Bridgetown	3.7	3.1	2.8
Colonarie	3.8	3.2	2.9
Georgetown	3.6	3.2	2.9
Sandy Bay	4.2	3.9	3.5
Layou	3.4	2.9	2.7
Barrouallie	3.5	3.1	2.8
Chateaubelair	3.8	3.4	3.1
Northern Grenadines	3.1	2.3	2.8
Southern Grenadines	2.7	2.5	2.2
Total	**3.5**	**3.0**	**2.8**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Also, household numbers have also expanded unevenly across divisions (Table 6.3). Calliaqua more than doubled from 3,710 households in 1980 to 9,877 in 2023, making it the largest division, followed by the Suburbs of Kingstown with 5,250. By contrast, smaller areas such as Sandy Bay and the Southern Grenadines reported 738 and 1,616 households, respectively. Such disparities illustrate the growing concentration of households in peri-urban and economically active regions.

Growth rates highlight strong geographic contrasts in household formation (Table 6.4). Earlier decades, particularly 1980-1991, saw rapid expansion in most divisions, but the pace slowed considerably by 2012-2023, when national household growth fell to single digits. Peri-urban areas such as Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown continued to expand, reflecting their role as growing residential hubs. In contrast, urban core areas such as Kingstown and Chateaubelair recorded declines, consistent with patterns of ageing, migration, and slower household formation. These divergent trends illustrate how demographic and social shifts are reshaping the distribution of households across the country.

Figure 6.1 Distribution of Households in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2012& 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-3 Total Households by Census Divisions (1980-2023)

Census Division	Total Number of Households				
	1980	1991	2001	2012	2023
Kingstown	3,761	4,175	3,983	4,278	4,021
Suburbs of Kingstown	1,711	2,551	3,378	4,385	5,250
Calliaqua	3,710	5,430	6,562	8,655	9,877
Marriaqua	1,633	2,167	2,206	2,436	2,669
Bridgetown	1,221	1,679	1,849	2,085	2,281
Colonarie	1,361	1,895	1,993	2,174	2,296
Georgetown	1,420	1,946	1,921	2,188	2,436
Sandy Bay	486	575	662	662	738
Layou	1,119	1,516	1,861	2,178	2,386
Barrouallie	1,021	1,393	1,577	1,806	1,986
Chateaubelair	1,232	1,449	1,603	1,669	1,580
Northern Grenadines	1,045	1,450	1,721	2,673	1,833
Southern Grenadines	570	776	1,242	1,640	1,616
Total	**20,290**	**27,002**	**30,558**	**36,829**	**38,969**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-4 Percentage Change of Households by Census Divisions

Census Division	Household Percentage Change			
	1980-1991	1991-2001	2001-2012	2012-2023
Kingstown	11.0	-4.6	7.4	-6.0
Suburbs of Kingstown	49.1	32.4	29.8	19.7
Calliaqua	46.4	20.8	31.9	14.1
Marriaqua	32.7	1.8	10.4	9.6
Bridgetown	37.5	10.1	12.8	9.4
Colonarie	39.2	5.2	9.1	5.6
Georgetown	37.0	-1.3	13.9	11.3
Sandy Bay	18.3	15.1	0.0	11.5
Layou	35.5	22.8	17.0	9.6
Barrouallie	36.4	13.2	14.5	10.0
Chateaubelair	17.6	10.6	4.1	-5.3
Northern Grenadines	38.8	18.7	55.3	-31.4
Southern Grenadines	36.1	60.1	32.0	-1.5
Total	**33.1**	**13.2**	**20.5**	**5.8**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The combined effect of shrinking household size and uneven growth patterns has important implications. Smaller households increase demand for housing units even when population growth slows, while regional disparities intensify pressure on fast-growing areas.

6.3 Type of Dwelling

The type of dwelling provides insight into both housing quality and spatial settlement patterns across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Detached or undivided private houses remain the dominant dwelling type, but data from 2012 and 2023 highlight a gradual diversification in the housing stock, especially in more urbanized census divisions.

In 2012, 85 percent of households resided in detached or undivided private houses (Table 6.5). By 2023, this share fell to 77.5 percent, even though the absolute number remained high at just over 30,000 units. This decline was offset by increases in attached dwellings, apartments, and duplexes. The proportion of households in part of a private house grew from 6.4 percent in 2012 to 9.2 percent in 2023, while flats or apartments increased from 5.3 percent to 6.2 percent. Duplex housing experienced the sharpest rise, tripling from 494 households in 2012 to 1,542 in 2023 (4 percent of all dwellings).

Census division data (Tables 6.5 and 6.6) reveal where these shifts are most pronounced. Calliaqua recorded 517 apartments in 2012, rising to 847 in 2023, accounting for more than one-third of the national total in both years. Similarly, attached dwellings in Calliaqua grew from 597 in 2012 to 832 in 2023. The Suburbs of Kingstown also saw marked increases, with attached dwellings rising from 256 to 725 and duplexes from 41 to 61 over the same period. By contrast, rural divisions such as Marriaqua, Layou, and Barrouallie remain heavily dominated by detached houses, which made up over 80 percent of households in 2023. Still, modest shifts are visible, including the growth of duplexes in Layou (from 35 in 2012 to 70 in 2023) and the appearance of improvised housing in Marriaqua (rising from 1 in 2012 to 4 in 2023).

At the same time, the number of improvised structures (though a very small share overall) grew from just 9 in 2012 to 153 in 2023. Many of these were concentrated in the Grenadines and selected rural areas, pointing to ongoing housing vulnerability despite improvements elsewhere. The persistence of combined business-and-dwelling units, which rose slightly from 493 in 2012 to 577 in 2023, may highlight the continued integration of livelihood and residence, particularly in smaller towns and trading centers.

Table 6-5 Number of Households by Type of Dwelling, 2012

Census Division	Undivided Private House	Part of a Private House	Flat/ Apartment	Townhouse	Double House/Duplex	Combined Business & Dwelling	Barrack	Group Dwelling	Improvised Housing Unit	Other	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	3,209	468	442	4	69	66	-	4	-	7	9	**4,278**
Suburbs of Kingstown	3,756	256	258	2	41	44	-	9	-	11	8	**4,385**
Calliaqua	7,252	597	517	113	74	83	4	5	-	6	4	**8,655**
Marriaqua	2,200	164	33	-	8	21	3	4	1	1	1	**2,436**
Bridgetown	1,818	53	91	-	72	45	-	-	1	2	3	**2,085**
Colonarie	2,014	107	10	-	11	28	-	-	1	3	-	**2,174**
Georgetown	2,039	99	3	-	3	26	-	3	1	14	-	**2,188**
Sandy Bay	543	18	62	14	4	18	-	1	-	2	-	**662**
Layou	1,873	140	96	-	35	31	-	2	-	1	-	**2,178**
Barrouallie	1,701	87	1	-	2	13	-	-	-	2	-	**1,806**
Chateaubelair	1,425	63	94	-	68	16	-	2	1	-	-	**1,669**
Northern Grenadines	2,386	116	31	2	72	54	-	-	4	5	3	**2,673**
Southern Grenadines	1,070	171	300	1	35	48	3	1	-	6	5	**1,640**
Total	**31,286**	**2,339**	**1,938**	**136**	**494**	**493**	**10**	**31**	**9**	**60**	**33**	**36,829**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 6-6 Number of Households by Type of Dwelling, 2023

Census Division	Separate house/ Detached / Undivided private house	Part of a private house/ Attached	Flat, Apartment/ Condominium	Townhouse	Double house/ Duplex	Combined business and dwelling	Barracks	Out-room	Yacht	Group dwelling	Improvised Housing Unit (Earth/ Leaves/ Branches etc)	Other (specify)	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	2,473	557	508	1	336	78	-	-	-	6	10	49	3	**4,021**
Suburbs of Kingstown	3,830	725	430	1	61	91	3	-	-	-	25	52	32	**5,250**
Calliaqua	7,308	832	847	13	648	128	1	2	3	3	46	19	27	**9,877**
Marriaqua	2,290	196	89	2	29	37	1	-	-	1	4	11	9	**2,669**
Bridgetown	2,063	41	74	6	21	31	-	-	-	2	10	27	6	**2,281**
Colonarie	2,043	107	18	3	63	35	-	-	-	2	8	12	5	**2,296**
Georgetown	2,206	73	85	-	15	13	-	2	-	-	11	17	14	**2,436**
Sandy Bay	681	26	1	-	15	5	-	-	-	-	3	1	6	**738**
Layou	1,819	330	55	1	70	38	1	-	-	2	6	49	15	**2,386**
Barrouallie	1,554	127	163	2	71	33	-	-	-	-	15	7	14	**1,986**
Chateaubelair	1,334	134	20	-	40	25	-	-	-	-	8	15	4	**1,580**
Northern Grenadines	1,397	319	32	10	35	29	-	-	-	-	5	6	-	**1,833**
Southern Grenadines	1,198	128	94	3	138	34	1	-	-	-	2	10	8	**1,616**
Total	**30,196**	**3,595**	**2,416**	**42**	**1,542**	**577**	**7**	**4**	**3**	**16**	**153**	**275**	**143**	**38,969**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-7 Total and Percentage Household by Type of Dwelling, 2012 & 2023

Type of Dwelling Unit	2012		2023	
	Count	%	Count	%
Separate house/Detached/Undivided private house	31,286	85	30,196	77.5
Part of a private house/Attached	2,339	6.4	3,595	9.2
Flat, Apartment/Condominium	1,938	5.3	2,416	6.2
Townhouse	136	0.4	42	0.1
Double house/Duplex	494	1.3	1,542	4
Combined business and dwelling	493	1.3	577	1.5
Barracks	10	0	7	0
Out-room	-	-	4	0
Yacht	-	-	3	0
Group dwelling	31	0.1	16	0
Improvised Housing Unit (Earth/Leaves/Branches etc)	9	0	153	0.4
Other (specify)	60	0.2	275	0.7
Not Stated	33	0.1	143	0.4
Total	**36,829**	**100**	**38,969**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

6.4 Type of Tenure

Patterns of household tenure in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reveal both continuity and gradual transformation in housing arrangements. Ownership remains the dominant form of tenure, but the data show shifts in the balance between ownership, renting, and alternative arrangements over the past two decades.

Table 6-8 Total and Percentage Households by Type of Tenure, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Type of Tenure of Dwelling Unit	2001		2012		2023	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Owned Fully or with Mortgage	23,130	75.7	28,987	78.7	28,572	73.3
Rented Private (paying)	3,903	12.8	4,181	11.4	5,073	13
Rented Govt. (paying)	37	0.1	63	0.2	83	0.2
Rent free	2,756	9.0	3,083	8.4	3,510	9.0
Leased	27	0.1	40	0.1	52	0.1
Squatted	133	0.4	203	0.5	307	0.8
Other	487	1.6	187	0.5	445	1.1
Not Stated	-	-	-	-	582	1.5
Don't Know	85	0.3	85	0.2	345	0.9
Total	**30,558**	**100**	**36,829**	**100**	**38,969**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

In 2001, owner-occupied dwellings (fully owned or mortgaged) represented 23,130 households (75.7%), rising to 28,987 (78.7%) in 2012. By 2023, ownership grew only slightly to 28,572 households, but its share dropped to 73.3%, as other forms of tenure expanded more quickly (Table 6.8). This shift indicates that while ownership remains the preferred arrangement, alternative housing options are becoming increasingly significant.

Private rental housing shows the clearest growth. The number of households renting privately increased from 3,903 (12.8%) in 2001 to 4,181 (11.4%) in 2012, and further to 5,073 (13.0%) in 2023. These steady gains suggest a stronger role for the rental market, particularly in urban and peri-urban centres where housing demand outpaces the supply of owner-occupied homes. By contrast, government rental has remained negligible, with fewer than 100 households across all three census years.

Rent-free living also remains an important feature of the tenure landscape. In 2001, 2,756 households (9.0%) lived rent-free, increasing to 3,083 (8.4%) in 2012 and 3,510 (9.0%) in 2023. This stability highlights the continued role of family and informal support networks in meeting housing needs. Smaller categories such as leased dwellings and squatting also showed modest growth, with squatting rising from 133 (0.4%) in 2001 to 307 (0.8%) in 2023, possibly reflecting persistent challenges in affordability and access to secure housing.

Taken together, the data show that while ownership still dominates, the growing share of renting, squatting, and uncertain tenure points to diversifying housing arrangements and emerging pressures on land and housing security.

6.5 Year Dwelling was Built

The age profile of the housing stock in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines shows that a large share of households continues to occupy older dwellings. In 2012, 22.8 percent of households, or 8,384 units, reported living in homes built before 1980. By 2023, the data show that nearly half of all households (47.9 percent, or 18,676 units) were residing in dwellings constructed before 1999 (Table 6.9). This expansion highlights that much of the housing stock is aging, with limited recent construction to offset the reliance on older homes. The findings underscore the growing importance of maintenance and rehabilitation to ensure housing safety and resilience.

The distribution across construction periods further illustrates the slowdown in housing development over time. In 2012, relatively active building phases were recorded between 1990 and 1999, accounting for 16.7 percent (6,147 units), and between 2000 and 2005, at 11.6 percent (4,270 units). By 2023, the most significant additions since 1999 were from 1999-2004, contributing 13.3 percent (5,169 units), and 2005-2010, at 8.5 percent (3,313 units). More recent periods have been less productive: 2011-2016 added only 6.2 percent (2,425 units), while each year from 2017 to 2024 contributed less than 2 percent of the stock. These figures confirm that housing growth has slowed sharply over the past decade.

Moreover, uncertainty in reporting remains, with 15.0 percent of households in 2023 and 23.6 percent in 2012 not specifying the year their dwelling was built. Even with these gaps, the data clearly show that the housing stock is becoming increasingly weighted toward older construction.

Table 6-9 Number of Households by Year Dwelling was Built 2012 & 2023

Year Dwelling Built	Count	%
2012		
Before 1980	8,384	22.8
1980 – 1989	4,773	13.0
1990 – 1999	6,147	16.7
2000 – 2005	4,270	11.6
2006	590	1.6
2007	591	1.6
2008	551	1.5
2009	656	1.8
2010	665	1.8
2011	593	1.6
2012	252	0.7
Don't Know	8,705	23.6
Not Stated	653	1.8
Total	**36,829**	**100**
2023		
Before 1999	18,676	47.9
1999-2004	5,169	13.3
2005-2010	3,313	8.5
2011-2016	2,425	6.2
2017	527	1.4
2018	417	1.1
2019	434	1.1
2020	451	1.2
2021	409	1.0
2022	360	0.9
2023	210	0.5
2024	8	0.0
Not Stated	740	1.9
Don't Know	5,830	15.0
Total	**38,969**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

6.6 Material of Outer Walls

The composition of outer wall materials highlights both resilience and disparity in housing construction across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2012, concrete and blocks overwhelmingly dominated, accounting for 25,723 dwellings or 69.9 percent of the housing stock (Table 6.10). By 2023, reporting distinctions separated “concrete” (18,121 dwellings, 46.5 percent) from “concrete and blocks” (15,038 dwellings, 38.6 percent) (Table 6.11). When combined, these materials continue to represent over 85 percent of all dwellings, underscoring the nation’s strong reliance on durable, hurricane- and climate-resilient construction. This dominance reflects broader shifts in building standards, urban expansion, and household investment in permanence.

At the same time, the use of traditional construction materials have fallen. Wooden dwellings declined from 3,619 units (9.8 percent) in 2012 to 2,093 units (5.4 percent) in 2023, marking a nearly 42 percent drop in absolute numbers. This reduction is especially pronounced in urban and peri-urban divisions where housing policies and market demand favour concrete structures. However, hybrid materials such as wood and concrete edged upward slightly, from 2,473 dwellings (6.7 percent) in 2012 to 2,676 (6.9 percent) in 2023. These incremental or mixed-material houses often represent transitional housing strategies, balancing cost constraints with aspirations for durability.

Spatial patterns reveal important contrasts. Calliaqua remains the largest contributor, recording 4,380 concrete units and 4,194 concrete and block dwellings in 2023, together representing nearly a quarter of the national total. The Suburbs of Kingstown also saw significant concentrations, with 2,766 concrete units and 1,812 concrete and blocks. By comparison, rural divisions such as Sandy Bay (536 concrete and block units) and the Southern Grenadines (377 concrete and block units) still report higher shares of wood and mixed-material dwellings in 2023, reflecting both economic constraints and exposure to housing vulnerability.

Minor categories such as stone, brick, and wattle/adobe have largely disappeared, with fewer than 200 dwellings combined in 2023. While their presence is marginal, they highlight residual reliance on outdated or improvised structures in some communities. Notably, the persistence of 153 improvised units in 2023 (Table 6.7) indicates that a small segment of the population remains in fragile housing, raising concerns about vulnerability to natural hazards and the adequacy of shelter in these areas.

Table 6-10 Number of Households by Type of Construction Material and Census Division, 2012

Census Division	Stone	Brick	Concrete	Concrete and Blocks	Wood and Brick	Wood and Concrete	Wood and Galvanize	Wood	Wattle Adobe	Other	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	45	56	586	2,666	55	331	44	470	-	18	7	**4,278**
Suburbs of Kingstown	38	52	428	3,044	41	261	91	423	-	7	-	**4,385**
Calliaqua	115	180	819	6,167	81	413	102	726	2	43	5	**8,655**
Marriaqua	14	29	140	1,738	27	188	27	267	-	1	3	**2,436**
Bridgetown	24	36	340	1,336	14	119	39	166	-	8	3	**2,085**
Colonarie	14	44	117	1,609	24	88	47	216	1	14	1	**2,174**
Georgetown	4	25	55	1,620	12	124	47	294	4	4	-	**2,188**
Sandy Bay	10	16	224	333	9	25	9	35	-	-	-	**662**
Layou	22	23	100	1,508	27	182	28	286	2	-	1	**2,178**
Barrouallie	11	4	23	1,480	15	106	17	144	-	2	1	**1,806**
Chateaubelair	15	17	3	1,406	11	87	33	75	21	1	-	**1,669**
Northern Grenadines	9	21	135	1,740	55	371	28	293	2	16	3	**2,673**
Southern Grenadines	18	31	80	1,078	11	178	12	222	2	4	5	**1,640**
Total	**337**	**533**	**3,049**	**25,723**	**384**	**2,473**	**523**	**3,619**	**36**	**119**	**31**	**36,829**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 6-11 Number of Households by Type of Construction Material and Census Division, 2023

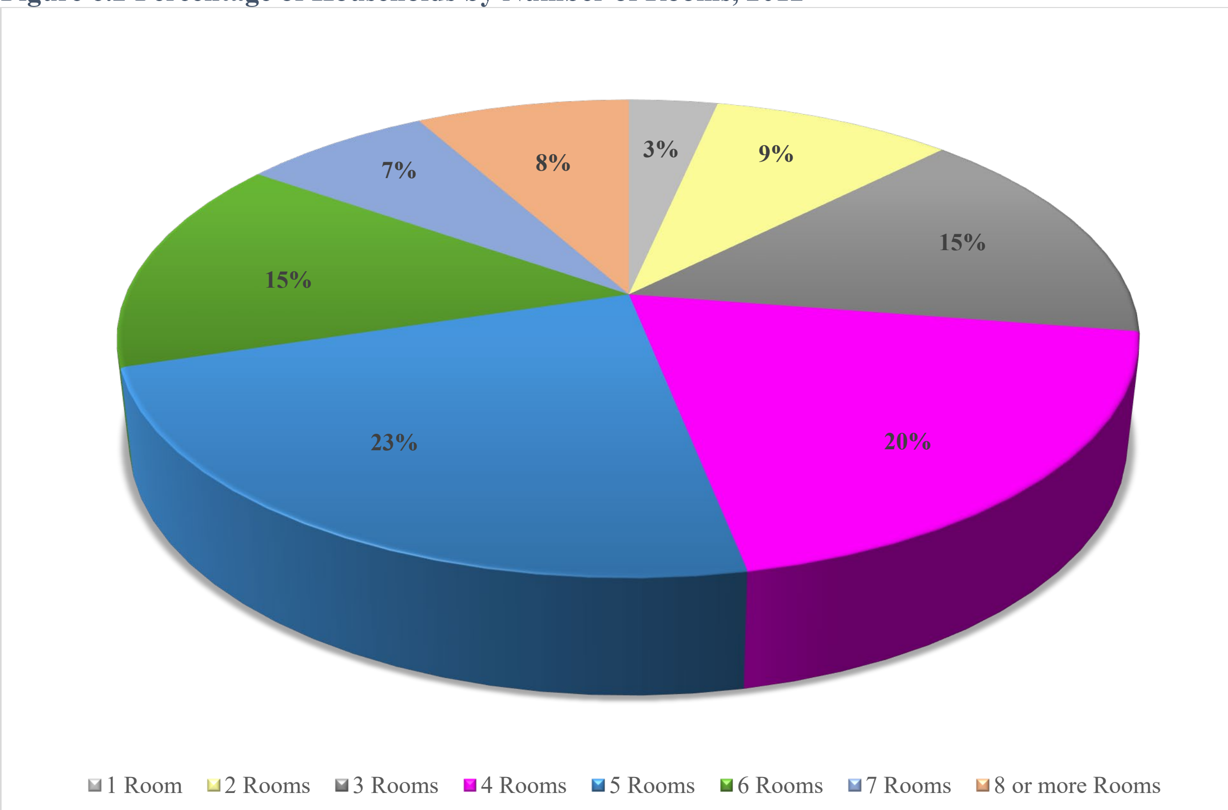
Census Division	Wood	Wood and brick	Wood and concrete	Wood and galvanize	Concrete	Concrete and blocks	Stone	Stone and brick	Wattle/ Adobe/Tapia	Other (specify)	Total
Kingstown	172	25	392	21	2,499	880	13	13	-	6	**4,021**
Suburbs of Kingstown	268	51	262	56	2,766	1,812	1	15	2	17	**5,250**
Calliaqua	440	76	593	141	4,380	4,194	5	25	4	19	**9,877**
Marriaqua	131	13	199	24	1,618	661	14	4	-	5	**2,669**
Bridgetown	95	10	115	25	1,071	939	-	1	-	25	**2,281**
Colonarie	107	23	168	34	924	1,021	1	3	1	14	**2,296**
Georgetown	181	28	144	59	1,151	830	-	9	1	33	**2,436**
Sandy Bay	19	3	21	9	145	536	-	3	1	1	**738**
Layou	179	37	150	33	632	1,347	-	5	-	3	**2,386**
Barrouallie	103	10	161	25	582	1,105	-	-	-	-	**1,986**
Chateaubelair	55	8	80	13	366	1,054	-	1	2	1	**1,580**
Northern Grenadines	189	6	232	15	1,096	282	2	2	2	7	**1,833**
Southern Grenadines	154	21	159	7	891	377	2	1	-	4	**1,616**
Total	**2,093**	**311**	**2,676**	**462**	**18,121**	**15,038**	**38**	**82**	**13**	**135**	**38,969**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

6.7 Number of Rooms

The number of rooms in a household is a key measure of housing adequacy and crowding. In 2012, the distribution was concentrated in smaller to mid-sized dwellings, as shown in both Table 6.12 and Figure 6.2. Households with three rooms accounted for 34.2 percent, followed by two-room households at 28.1 percent and four-room households at 22.3 percent. Collectively, these categories made up over 80 percent of all homes. Only 4.5 percent of households had six rooms or more, confirming that larger, more spacious housing was relatively uncommon.

Figure 6.2 Percentage of Households by Number of Rooms, 2012

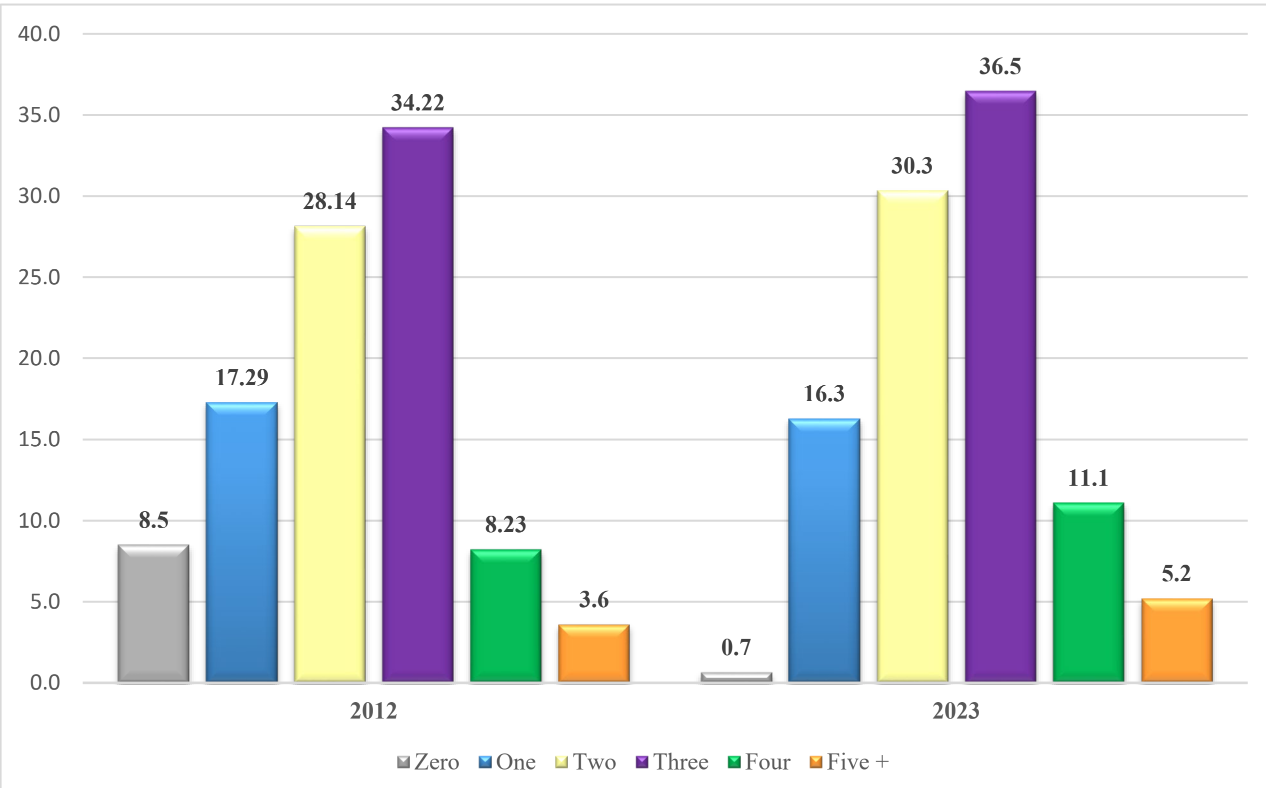


Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, the pattern shifted modestly toward slightly larger dwellings (Table 6.13, Figure 6.3). Three-bedroom households remained the most common, rising to 36.5 percent of the total, while two-bedroom households accounted for 30.3 percent. In contrast, four-bedroom households declined significantly to 11.1 percent, suggesting a reduction in this category. At the upper end, households with five or more rooms increased from 918 in 2012 to 1,390 in 2023, with six-room dwellings alone doubling from 246 to 459. This upward shift in larger homes, though modest, reflects gradual improvements in living space and housing adequacy.

The census division data reveal where these differences are most pronounced. Calliaqua stood out in both 2012 and 2023, reporting 2,242 two-bedroom and 3,203 three-bedroom households in 2012, growing to 2,802 and 3,655, respectively, in 2023. Similarly, the Suburbs of Kingstown maintained a concentration of mid-sized dwellings, with three-bedroom houses rose from 1,365 to 1,968. By contrast, rural areas such as Marriaqua and Layou remained anchored in smaller homes, with fewer households transitioning into larger categories. The Grenadines also showed relatively small numbers overall, reflecting their lower household base.

Figure 6.3 Percentage of Households by Number of Bed Rooms, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Together, the tables and figures point to a housing landscape still dominated by smaller units, but with gradual improvements at the upper end, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas.

Table 6-12 Number of Households by Number of Bedrooms and Census Division, 2012

Census Division	Zero	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine+	Total
Kingstown	345	711	1,176	1,415	427	147	41	10	5	2	**4,278**
Suburbs of Kingstown	398	747	1,365	1,337	354	121	37	11	13	1	**4,385**
Calliaqua	745	1,248	2,242	3,203	814	275	74	33	15	5	**8,655**
Marriaqua	225	406	720	794	196	64	18	4	8	-	**2,436**
Bridgetown	149	343	637	753	136	47	15	1	4	-	**2,085**
Colonarie	165	433	655	677	185	35	12	3	9	-	**2,174**
Georgetown	161	495	595	745	146	29	10	3	4	-	**2,188**
Sandy Bay	52	99	209	226	59	15	2	-	-	-	**662**
Layou	242	386	554	763	160	52	10	5	3	3	**2,178**
Barrouallie	194	357	488	572	135	42	11	3	3	-	**1,806**
Chateaubelair	128	297	487	577	144	25	6	1	3	-	**1,669**
Northern Grenadines	171	400	728	1,116	197	51	7	2	2	-	**2,673**
Southern Grenadines	158	447	509	424	78	14	3	4	2	-	**1,640**
Total	**3,134**	**6,368**	**10,364**	**12,603**	**3,032**	**918**	**246**	**79**	**72**	**11**	**36,829**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 6-13 Number of Households by Number of Bedrooms and Census Division, 2023

Census Division	Zero	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight +	Total
Kingstown	39	632	1,175	1,383	517	208	43	13	11	**4,021**
Suburbs of Kingstown	66	778	1,707	1,968	514	152	57	5	3	**5,250**
Calliaqua	89	1,434	2,802	3,655	1,183	446	197	54	17	**9,877**
Marriaqua	2	417	773	983	356	97	30	6	5	**2,669**
Bridgetown	7	404	704	836	225	83	13	6	3	**2,281**
Colonarie	16	363	722	870	249	57	14	4	1	**2,296**
Georgetown	11	458	790	921	197	50	8	1	-	**2,436**
Sandy Bay	4	137	201	251	111	25	5	3	1	**738**
Layou	7	426	695	849	302	83	15	6	3	**2,386**
Barrouallie	3	337	583	741	232	59	30	1	-	**1,986**
Chateaubelair	5	224	493	588	185	57	27	-	1	**1,580**
Northern Grenadines	1	272	610	733	155	48	11	2	1	**1,833**
Southern Grenadines	9	464	569	431	98	25	9	6	5	**1,616**
Total	**259**	**6,346**	**11,824**	**14,209**	**4,324**	**1,390**	**459**	**107**	**51**	**38,969**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

6.8 Main Source of Lighting

Access to reliable lighting is a critical aspect of housing quality and modern living standards, reflecting both infrastructural reach and household affordability. The 2012 Census revealed that the overwhelming majority of households in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 32,721 or 88.9 percent, relied on electricity supplied publicly through the national grid. Small numbers also reported electricity from private generators (103 households, or 0.3 percent) and gas-powered lighting (241 households, or 0.7 percent). Traditional sources such as kerosene lamps remained in limited use (939 households, or 2.6 percent), while solar was almost negligible at just 33 households (Table 6.14). Notably, 373 households reported having no lighting, underscoring persistent energy poverty, particularly in rural or remote areas.

By 2023, access to electricity through the public grid had expanded significantly, reaching 36,238 households or 93 percent of all households, reflecting continued improvements in national electrification. Dependence on private generators declined slightly to 90 households, while gas lighting dropped to only 32 households. Kerosene lighting also fell sharply to 341 households, representing less than 1 percent, signaling a clear retreat from traditional, less efficient sources. Solar energy, though still relatively small, grew more than fivefold to 167 households, pointing to the gradual adoption of renewable energy solutions. Despite this progress, 1,092 households (2.8 percent) still reported no lighting, a higher figure than in 2012, suggesting affordability and access challenges for specific groups.

Census division data highlight the spatial distribution of lighting sources. In 2012, Calliaqua recorded the largest share of households using public electricity (7,948), followed by Kingstown (3,942). By 2023, Calliaqua's reliance had expanded to 9,311 households, maintaining its dominance, while the Suburbs of Kingstown increased to 4,883 from 3,910 in 2012. In contrast, the Grenadines reported relatively smaller totals, with the Northern Grenadines falling from 2,444 public electricity users in 2012 to 1,737 in 2023, indicating the possibility of challenges in energy coverage. Moreover, the persistence of kerosene, none, and "other" sources was also more pronounced in these outer islands.

The shift away from kerosene and gas toward electricity and, to a smaller extent, solar reflects broader development progress. The data suggests not only improvements in electrical infrastructure but also an evolving energy landscape where renewable options are beginning to gain traction. However, the overall increase in households without lighting between 2012 and 2023 raises concerns about affordability gaps or disconnection issues, which may disproportionately affect vulnerable groups.

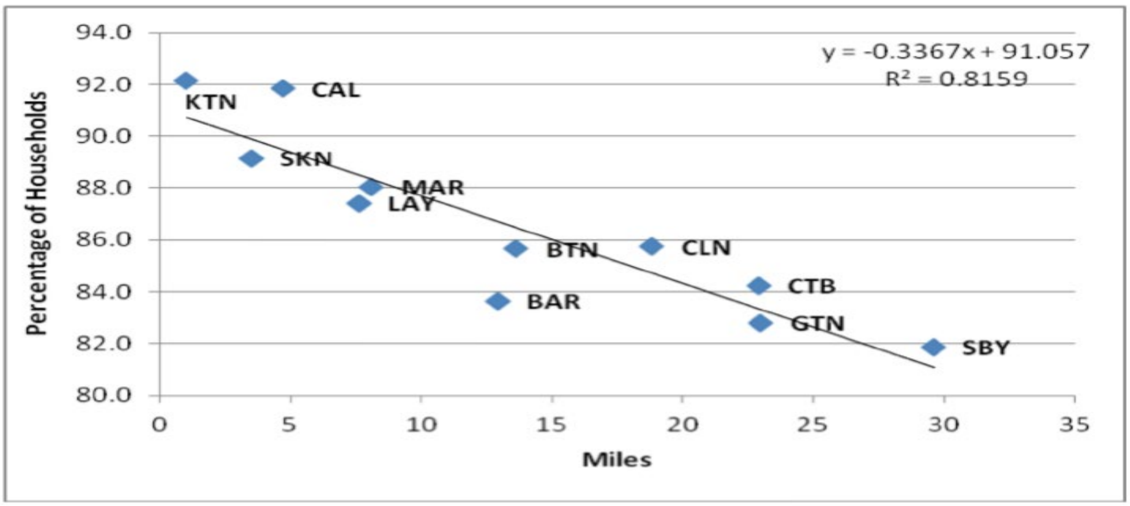
Table 6-14 Number of Households by Type of Lighting Used, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	Main Source of Lighting								
	Electricity - Public	Electricity - Private Generator	Gas	Kerosene	Solar	None	Other	Not Stated	Total
2012									
Kingstown	3,942	8	6	87	-	39	133	63	**4,278**
Suburbs of Kingstown	3,910	8	32	126	5	24	197	84	**4,385**
Calliaqua	7,948	30	39	189	6	68	315	60	**8,655**
Marriaqua	2,144	5	11	71	1	25	167	11	**2,436**
Bridgetown	1,786	-	8	49	2	21	193	26	**2,085**
Colonarie	1,864	4	8	68	-	40	170	20	**2,174**
Georgetown	1,811	10	10	88	2	32	228	6	**2,188**
Sandy Bay	542	4	9	42	-	17	42	6	**662**
Layou	1,903	3	30	51	5	22	134	29	**2,178**
Barrouallie	1,510	9	17	69	1	27	119	53	**1,806**
Chateaubelair	1,406	3	20	38	2	14	158	28	**1,669**
Northern Grenadines	2,444	10	30	40	7	26	108	9	**2,673**
Southern Grenadines	1,511	8	21	22	3	18	38	20	**1,640**
Total	**32,721**	**103**	**241**	**939**	**33**	**373**	**2,003**	**416**	**36,829**
2023									
Kingstown	3,856	7	1	2	16	57	81	1	**4,021**
Suburbs of Kingstown	4,883	9	9	29	28	81	188	23	**5,250**
Calliaqua	9,311	26	4	78	27	217	201	13	**9,877**
Marriaqua	2,502	1	-	10	10	64	78	4	**2,669**
Bridgetown	2,057	3	-	40	7	101	72	1	**2,281**
Colonarie	2,094	-	-	4	1	118	76	3	**2,296**
Georgetown	2,196	26	8	24	7	118	56	1	**2,436**
Sandy Bay	634	-	-	17	4	54	27	2	**738**
Layou	2,173	4	2	65	25	72	43	2	**2,386**
Barrouallie	1,804	5	7	24	6	84	51	5	**1,986**
Chateaubelair	1,455	1	1	14	9	62	36	2	**1,580**
Northern Grenadines	1,737	6	-	27	13	40	10	-	**1,833**
Southern Grenadines	1,536	2	-	7	14	24	26	7	**1,616**
Total	**36,238**	**90**	**32**	**341**	**167**	**1,092**	**945**	**64**	**38,969**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

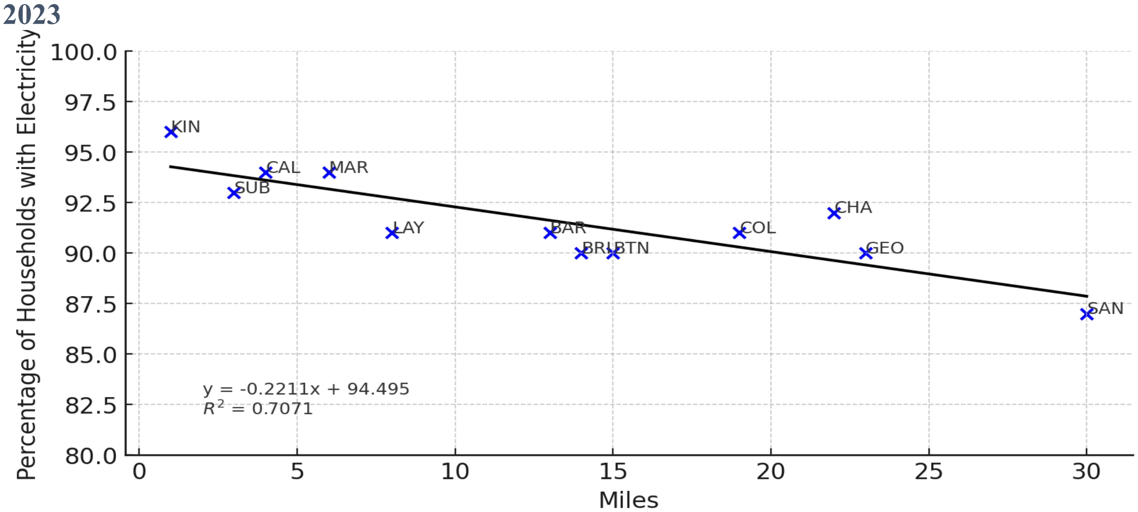
On mainland St. Vincent, there is a consistent inverse relationship between proximity to the main urban centre and the rate of public electricity penetration. In 2012, the proportion of households without electricity increased by an average of 0.3 percent for every additional mile from Kingstown, with distance explaining 81.6 percent of the variation in public electricity penetration (Figure 6.4). By 2023, the pattern persisted, though with a weaker strength of association. On average, households without electricity increased by about 0.2 percent per mile, and distance accounted for 70.7 percent of the variation in electricity penetration across census divisions (Figure 6.5). These findings suggest that while distance from Kingstown continues to influence access to electricity, the strength of this relationship has declined over time. Table 6.15 on the following page provides the reference data underpinning these calculations.

Figure 6.4 Relationship between Distance from Main Urban Centre and Public Electricity Penetration, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Figure 6.5 Relationship between Distance from Main Urban Centre and Public Electricity Penetration, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

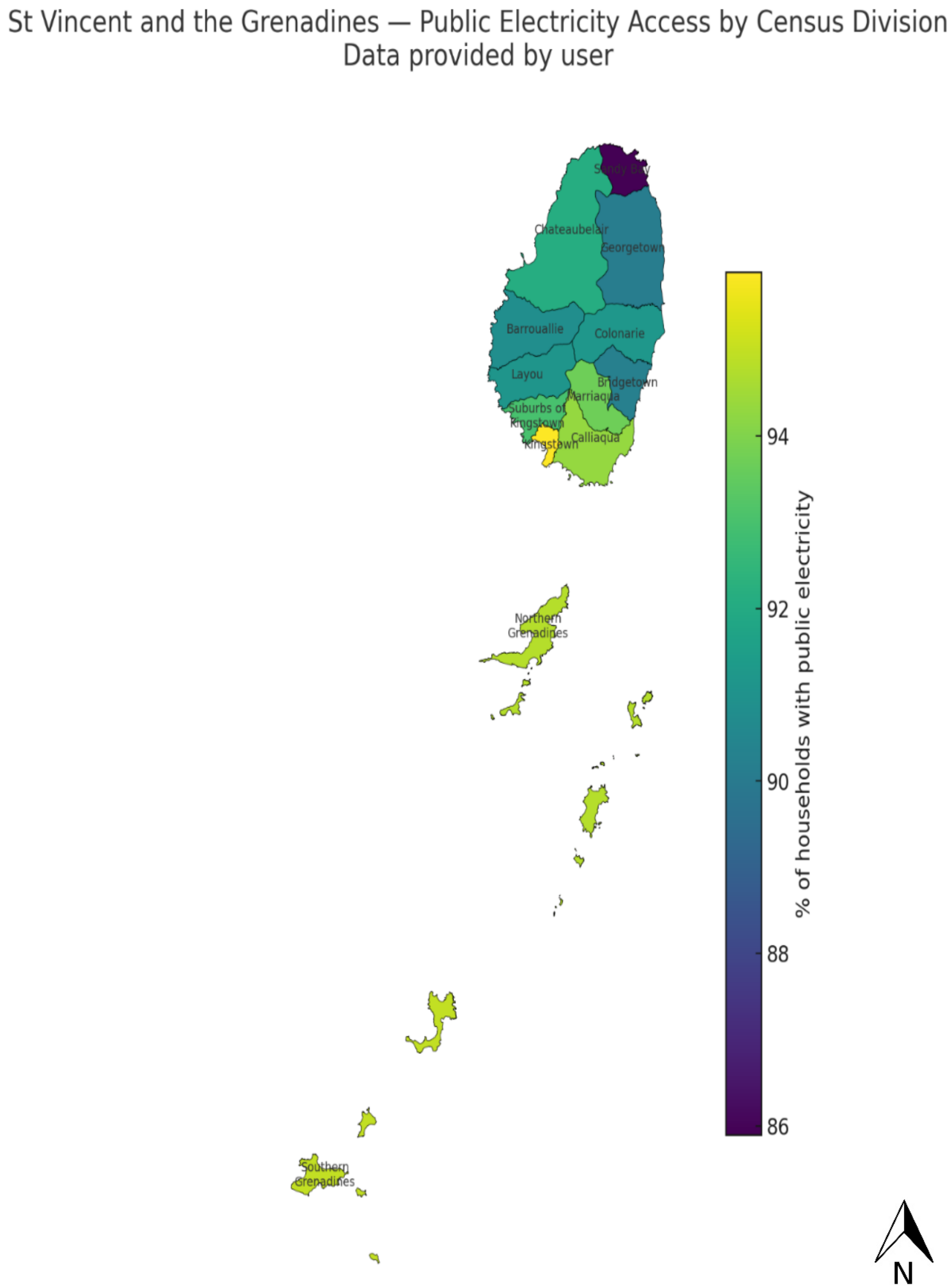
Table 6-15 Distance from Urban Centre

Census Division	Abbreviation	Reference Point	Distance (Miles)
Kingstown	**KTN**	Radius from Court House	**1.0**
Suburbs of Kingstown	**SKN**	Questelles Police Station	**3.5**
Calliaqua	**CAL**	Calliaqua Police Station	**4.7**
Marriaqua	**MAR**	Mesopotamia Primary School	**8.1**
Bridgetown	**BTN**	Biabou Police Station	**13.6**
Colonaire	**CLN**	Colonaire Police Station	**18.8**
Georgetown	**GTN**	Caratal Bridge	**23.0**
Sandy Bay	**SBY**	Sandy Bay Police Station	**29.6**
Layou	**LAY**	Velox Corner	**7.6**
Barrouallie	**BAR**	Kearton's Playing Field	**12.9**
Chateaubelair	**CTB**	Chateaubelair Police Station	**22.9**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Moreover, Map 2, which shows the penetration of public electricity, as a main source of lighting, by census divisions. Map 6.1 illustrates that the census divisions of Kingstown (96%) and Calliaqua (94%) had the highest concentration of public electricity as a main source of lighting. Both fell within the range of 94% - 96%. The census division of Sandy Bay, at 86%, had the least concentration of public electricity as a source of lighting. In addition, the number of households using Private generators and Kerosene as a main source of lighting declined by 87.2% and 76.0%, respectively. By 2023, the use of gas lanterns had become negligible, following earlier increases noted in 2001-2012.

Map 2 Penetration of Public Electricity as a Main Source of Lighting by Census Divisions, 2023

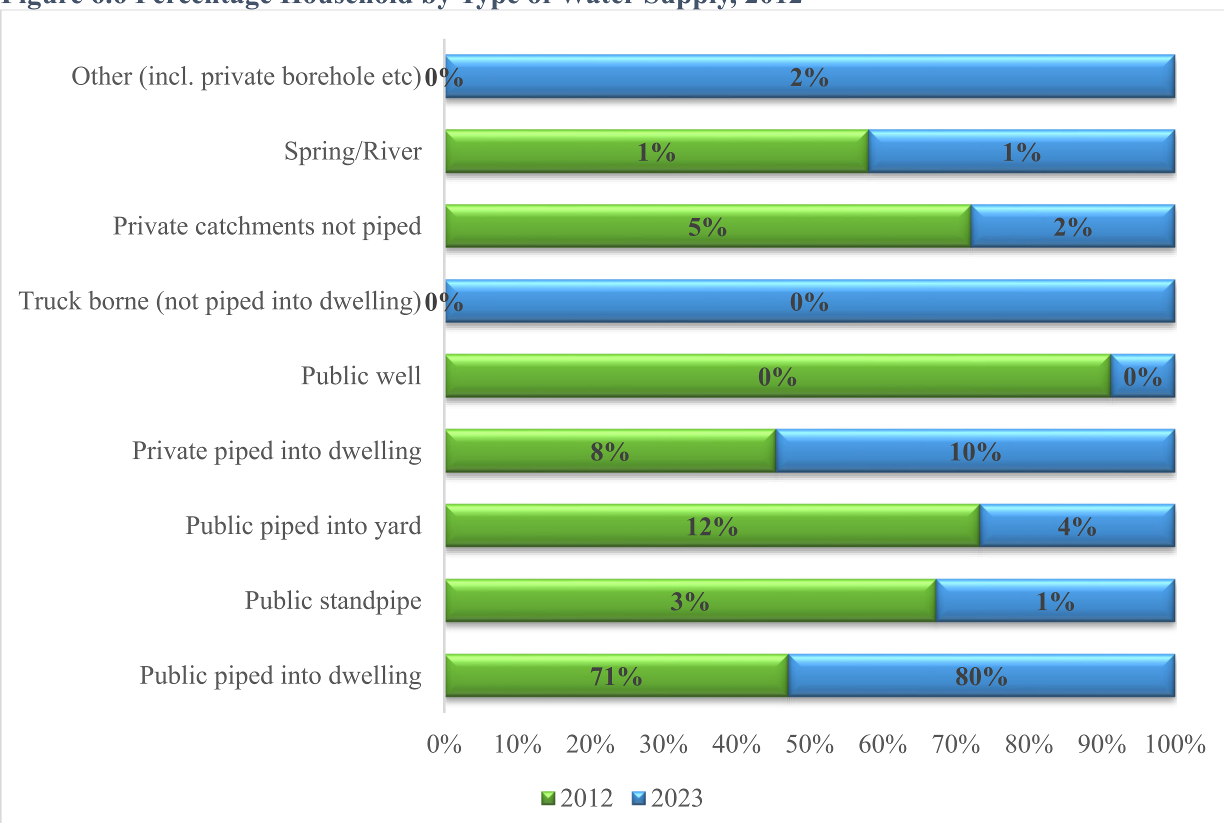


Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

6.9 Main Source of Water

Access to reliable water supply is a key dimension of housing quality and public health. Between 2012 and 2023, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines registered notable progress in expanding household connections to improved water sources. The census data reveal that piped water into dwellings has become the dominant supply type nationwide, reducing reliance on public standpipes, private catchments, and other less secure sources. These improvements underscore investments in infrastructure, particularly in urban and peri-urban divisions, while also pointing to persistent disparities in the Grenadines.

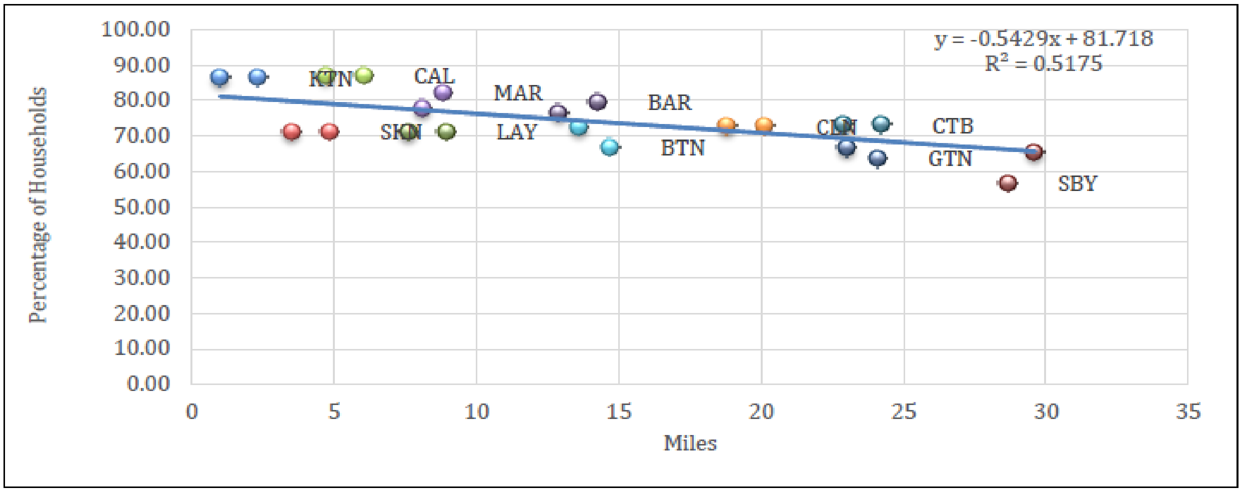
Figure 6.6 Percentage Household by Type of Water Supply, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

In 2012, about 71 percent of households (25,365) reported having water piped directly into their dwellings (Table 6.16). By 2023, this proportion increased to 80 percent (31,005 households) (Table 6.17), representing growth of more than 5,600 households. Over the same period, the share of households with water piped into their yard declined from 12 percent (4,270 households) to just 4 percent (1,692 households), reflecting the transition toward full in-home access. Reliance on public standpipes also decreased, falling from 944 households (3 percent) in 2012 to 499 (1 percent) in 2023, as shown in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.7 Relationship between Distance and the Penetration of Public Piped Water into Dwelling, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

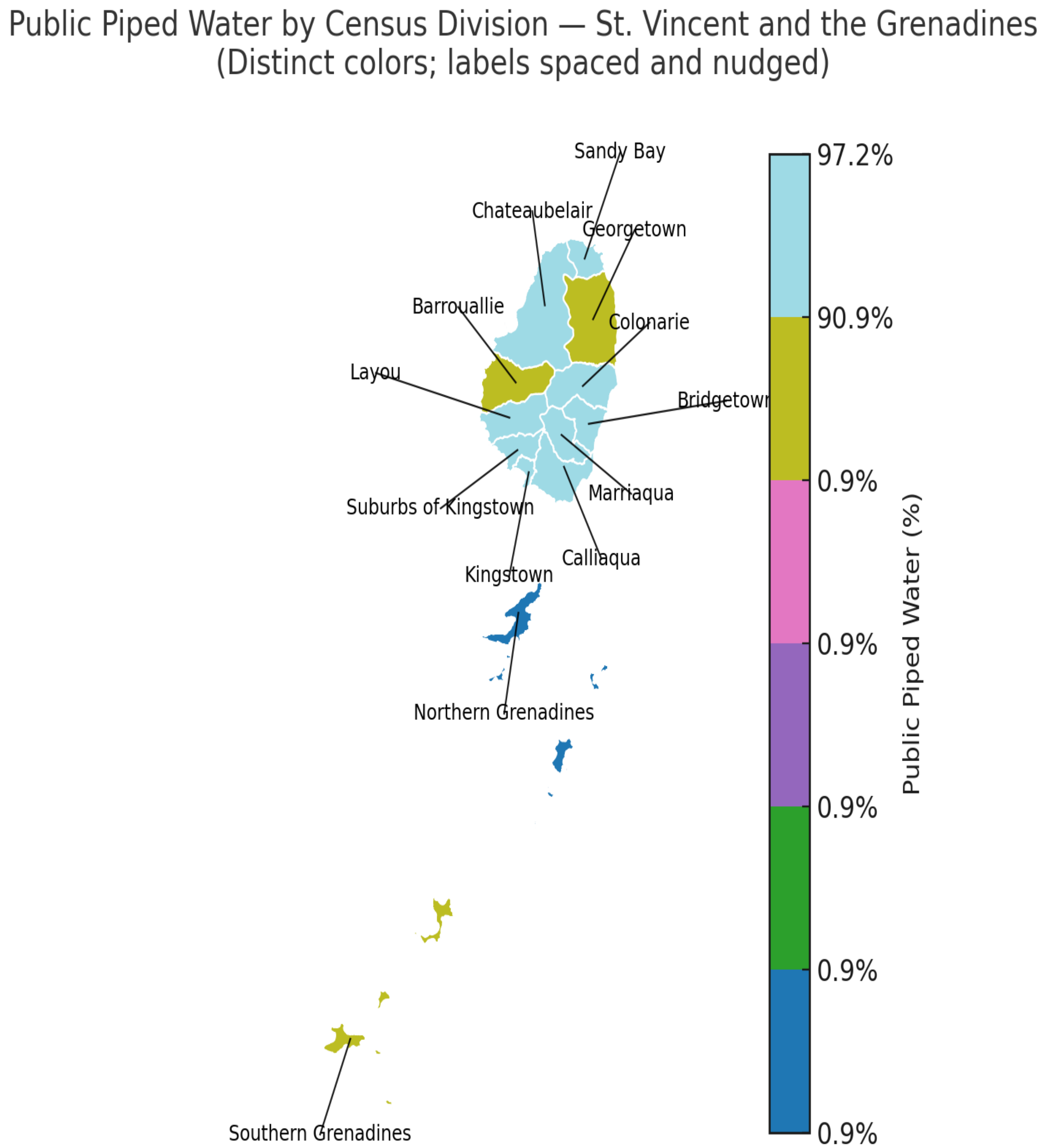
On mainland St. Vincent, the penetration of public piped water into dwellings in 2012 ranged from 65.1 percent of households in Sandy Bay to 87.1 percent in Calliaqua. Distance from the main urban centre accounted for 51.8 percent of the variation in piped water penetration across census divisions, underscoring the moderate influence of geography on access to this service (Figure 6.7).

By 2023, the distribution of piped water connections continued to reflect the advantages of urban and peri-urban areas. At the census division level, Calliaqua recorded the largest number of in-dwelling piped connections, increasing from 7,537 households in 2012 to 9,108 in 2023 (Table 6.17). The Suburbs of Kingstown also registered substantial growth, with 4,720 households in 2023 compared to 3,117 in 2012. Together with Kingstown, these areas demonstrate how infrastructure investments remain concentrated in urban and peri-urban zones.

In contrast, the Grenadine islands continue to lag significantly behind. In 2023, only 16 households in the Northern Grenadines and 28 households in the Southern Grenadines reported piped water into their dwelling, compared with just 3 and 0 respectively in 2012. *(See Map 2 i.e. next page, which illustrates the penetration of Public Piped Water into Dwellings as a main source of drinking water by census divisions)*. Instead, reliance on localized sources dominates: 1,501 and 1,178 households in the Northern and Southern Grenadines, respectively, depended on private catchments piped into their dwelling, while 312 and 271 households relied on private catchments not piped into the dwelling. This highlights the persistent disparities between mainland divisions and the Grenadines, where centralized systems remain limited and localized water collection continues to be the primary means of access.

Other sources of water remain but are experiencing an overall decline. In 2012, 1,932 households (5 percent) relied on private catchments not piped, but by 2023 this number fell to 813 households (2 percent). The use of springs and rivers remained marginal at about 1 percent in both census years, while truck-borne supplies, which were not reported in 2012, were used by 17 households in 2023 (Table 6.17). These shifts indicate that while most households now benefit from piped connections within their homes, rural and island communities still face significant challenges in achieving equal access to reliable water supply.

Map 3 Penetration of Public Piped Water into Dwellings by Census Division, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-16 Number of Households by Main Source of Water and Census Divisions, 2012

Census Division	Water Supply Source									
	Public piped into dwelling	Public standpipe	Public piped into yard	Private piped into dwelling	Public well/tank	Private catchments not piped	Spring/River	Other	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	3,691	119	292	15	2	18	2	83	56	**4,278**
Suburbs of Kingstown	3,117	43	629	326	4	46	29	133	57	**4,385**
Calliaqua	7,537	140	668	48	5	52	33	138	33	**8,655**
Marriaqua	1,894	16	347	11	2	43	43	73	7	**2,436**
Bridgetown	1,509	116	370	20	-	14	16	35	4	**2,085**
Colonarie	1,579	141	360	6	-	16	20	42	10	**2,174**
Georgetown	1,457	110	528	2	4	5	23	54	4	**2,188**
Sandy Bay	431	30	156	12	-	1	15	49	24	**662**
Layou	1,547	70	417	1	1	13	55	49	24	**2,178**
Barrouallie	1,380	48	241	6	11	21	18	37	43	**1,806**
Chateaubelair	1,220	110	254	3	2	3	31	19	27	**1,669**
Northern Grenadines	3	-	2	1,655	5	890	-	112	5	**2,673**
Southern Grenadines	-	-	7	776	11	808	1	22	13	**1,640**
Total	**25,365**	**944**	**4,270**	**2,881**	**48**	**1,932**	**289**	**815**	**286**	**36,829**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 6-17 Number of Households by Main Source of Water and Census Divisions, 2023

Census Division	Water Supply Source										
	Public piped into dwelling	Public standpipe	Public piped into yard	Private piped into dwelling	Public well	Truck borne (not piped into dwelling)	Private catchments not piped	Spring/River	Other (incl. private borehole etc)	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	3,731	34	143	22	-	-	15	7	67	2	**4,021**
Suburbs of Kingstown	4,720	20	240	15	-	-	44	11	175	25	**5,250**
Calliaqua	9,108	69	263	207	-	5	42	12	157	14	**9,877**
Marriaqua	2,304	9	207	37	-	-	26	23	59	4	**2,669**
Bridgetown	1,920	88	160	9	-	-	19	37	47	1	**2,281**
Colonarie	1,909	36	176	43	1	3	27	26	71	4	**2,296**
Georgetown	1,909	72	172	217	-	1	10	18	36	1	**2,436**
Sandy Bay	629	7	36	8	-	-	9	26	21	2	**738**
Layou	2,023	84	91	89	-	-	9	36	53	1	**2,386**
Barrouallie	1,418	35	97	350	-	2	24	16	38	6	**1,986**
Chateaubelair	1,290	43	104	97	-	-	5	15	24	2	**1,580**
Northern Grenadines	16	-	1	1,501	-	-	312	-	3	-	**1,833**
Southern Grenadines	28	2	2	1,178	4	6	271	-	119	6	**1,616**
Total	**31,005**	**499**	**1,692**	**3,773**	**5**	**17**	**813**	**227**	**870**	**68**	**38,969**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

6.10 Main Source of Fuel for Cooking

The type of fuel households use for cooking is a key indicator of living standards, energy access, and environmental impact. Cooking fuel use in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is overwhelmingly dominated by Gas/LPG, as shown in Table 6.18. In 2012, 34,531 households, or 94 percent of all households, relied on Gas/LPG as their primary source of fuel. By 2023, this number rose to 37,527 households, representing 96 percent. This stability underscores the long-standing reliance on LPG as the preferred and most accessible energy source for cooking across the country.

At the same time, there has been a clear decline in the use of traditional fuels. Wood use dropped from 742 households in 2012 to 388 in 2023, while charcoal use fell from 593 to 333 households over the same period. This represents a decline of nearly half in both categories, suggesting a gradual shift away from biomass fuels. The use of electricity and solar energy for cooking remains minimal, though in 2023, 17 households reported adopting solar for the first time, signaling early diversification of cooking energy sources.

Urban and peri-urban divisions account for most of the LPG use, with Calliaqua (9,569 households) and the Suburbs of Kingstown (5,034 households) standing out in 2023. In contrast, smaller divisions such as Sandy Bay and the Southern Grenadines continue to record higher proportional reliance on wood, charcoal, and other alternatives, reflecting disparities in access. Overall, the data point to stability in the dominance of LPG, reductions in traditional fuel use, and the very early emergence of renewable alternatives such as solar.

Table 6-18 Number of Households by Type of Fuel most Used for Cooking and Census Division, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	Fuel Used for Cooking										
	Wood	Charcoal	Kerosene	Electricity	Gas/LPG	Solar Energy	Biogas	None	Other	Not Stated	Total
2012											
Kingstown	45	51	12	73	3,996	-	-	52	8	41	**4,278**
Suburbs of Kingstown	56	77	9	39	4,124	-	-	33	3	42	**4,385**
Calliaqua	132	105	10	68	8,244	-	-	55	12	30	**8,655**
Marriaqua	51	48	1	7	2,292	-	-	30	1	6	**2,436**
Bridgetown	66	23	-	2	1,962	-	-	21	3	8	**2,085**
Colonarie	90	19	2	8	2,021	-	-	28	1	5	**2,174**
Georgetown	105	34	-	8	2,007	-	-	32	-	2	**2,188**
Sandy Bay	32	32	-	2	584	-	-	11	-	1	**662**
Layou	39	45	1	19	2,025	-	-	21	8	21	**2,178**
Barrouallie	32	46	-	7	1,642	-	-	27	-	52	**1,806**
Chateaubelair	43	38	2	7	1,533	-	-	19	1	25	**1,669**
Northern Grenadines	33	59	2	13	2,548	-	-	12	3	3	**2,673**
Southern Grenadines	21	14	3	7	1,554	-	-	21	-	19	**1,640**
Total	**742**	**593**	**42**	**261**	**34,531**	**-**	**-**	**364**	**40**	**256**	**36,829**
2023											
Kingstown	5	17	21	37	3,906	-	-	33	1	1	**4,021**
Suburbs of Kingstown	49	51	12	26	5,034	2	1	47	5	23	**5,250**
Calliaqua	80	64	22	88	9,569	6	1	27	5	15	**9,877**
Marriaqua	21	21	6	3	2,571	-	-	43	-	4	**2,669**
Bridgetown	42	23	3	9	2,194	-	-	8	1	1	**2,281**
Colonarie	34	27	12	6	2,186	2	-	23	1	5	**2,296**
Georgetown	35	18	6	20	2,330	5	-	20	1	1	**2,436**
Sandy Bay	15	18	8	1	681	-	1	12	-	2	**738**
Layou	33	32	4	29	2,277	-	-	8	2	1	**2,386**
Barrouallie	21	32	4	7	1,898	2	-	17	-	5	**1,986**
Chateaubelair	28	16	4	4	1,521	-	-	4	1	2	**1,580**
Northern Grenadines	9	10	1	24	1,785	-	-	4	-	-	**1,833**
Southern Grenadines	16	4	5	3	1,575	-	-	7	-	6	**1,616**
Total	**388**	**333**	**108**	**257**	**37,527**	17	**3**	**253**	**17**	**66**	**38,969**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

6.11 Main Source of Toilet Facilities

Access to adequate toilet facilities is a critical indicator of housing quality, sanitation, and public health. The census data for 2012 and 2023 reveal significant progress in access to modern sanitation, though disparities persist across regions.

In 2012, the majority of households (65.7 percent or 24,208) relied on flush toilets linked to septic tanks, while just 2.7 percent (1,006 households) used flush toilets connected to a sewer system (Table 6.19). Pit latrines, however, remained widespread, with 9,529 households (25.9 percent) reporting use across three categories: ventilated and elevated (4.9 percent), ventilated and not elevated (6.7 percent), and non-ventilated (14.3 percent). This reliance on basic facilities highlighted gaps in sanitation infrastructure, particularly in rural divisions.

By 2023, sanitation patterns had shifted significantly. Flush toilets linked to septic tanks expanded to 33,544 households (86.0 percent), underscoring their dominance as the main type of facility (Table 6.20). Flush toilets connected to sewer systems also grew to 458 households, a modest but notable increase. Pit latrine use, meanwhile, fell sharply to 4,354 households (11.2 percent), nearly halving the 2012 figure. Within this category, ventilated and elevated/VIP facilities accounted for 2.0 percent, ventilated and not elevated for 3.5 percent, and non-ventilated for 5.6 percent of households. This decline was driven primarily by reductions in non-ventilated latrines, which dropped from 5,249 households in 2012 to 2,194 in 2023.

Regional differences remain striking. In Kingstown, more than 93 percent of households now use flush toilet facilities connected to either sewer or septic systems, compared to 81 percent in 2012. Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown also recorded strong improvements, both surpassing 85 percent coverage with modern toilet systems. By contrast, rural divisions such as Barrouallie and Chateaubelair, and the Grenadine islands, continue to depend on pit latrines at relatively higher rates. Even so, these areas recorded reductions in the number of households without facilities, pointing to gradual but uneven progress.

These shifts point to steady improvements in sanitation, with fewer households depending on basic pit latrines and more adopting flush toilets, particularly septic tank systems. Most households still rely on decentralized systems such as septic tanks, where waste is managed on-site rather than through a central sewer network. While this reflects limited sewer infrastructure, the overall trend indicates progress toward safer and more hygienic living conditions.

Table 6-19 Number of Households by Type of Toilet Facilities and Census Division, 2012

Census Division	Type of Toilet Facility								
	Flush toilet linked to sewer	Flush toilet linked to septic tank	Pit latrine ventilated and elevated	Pit latrine ventilated and not elevated	Pit latrine not ventilated	Other	None	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	131	3,317	85	99	413	23	146	63	**4,278**
Suburbs of Kingstown	135	3,013	198	255	591	24	125	44	**4,385**
Calliaqua	325	6,704	417	365	630	22	164	27	**8,655**
Marriaqua	7	1,553	171	189	433	1	75	7	**2,436**
Bridgetown	66	1,205	71	207	476	5	51	3	**2,085**
Colonarie	20	1,250	127	94	559	3	112	9	**2,174**
Georgetown	27	1,257	55	215	556	3	71	4	**2,188**
Sandy Bay	49	338	7	36	203	2	26	1	**662**
Layou	78	1,364	248	264	88	5	105	25	**2,178**
Barrouallie	8	1,095	175	224	180	10	67	45	**1,806**
Chateaubelair	23	912	42	61	539	3	62	26	**1,669**
Northern Grenadines	136	1,456	186	290	218	-	381	7	**2,673**
Southern Grenadines	1	742	35	162	362	-	321	16	**1,640**
Total	**1,006**	**24,208**	**1,817**	**2,463**	**5,249**	**102**	**1,707**	**277**	**36,829**

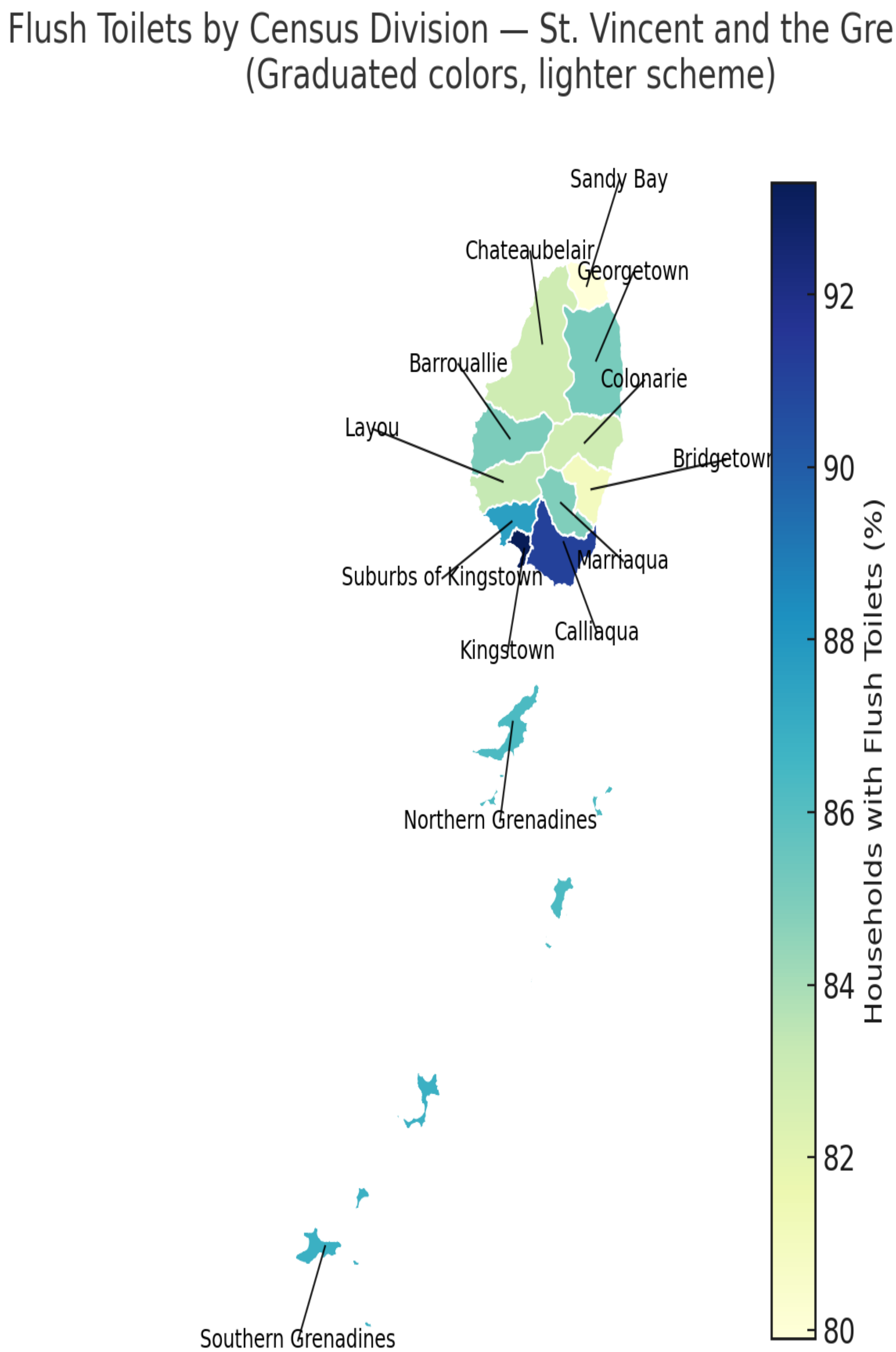
Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 6-20 Number of Households by Type of Toilet Facilities and Census Division, 2023

Census Division	Type of Toilet Facility									
	Water Closet (WC) (flush toilet) Linked to sewer (Uptown, downtown, Kingstown)	Water Closet (WC) (flush toilet) Linked to septic tank/Soak-away	Pit latrine ventilated and elevated/Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP)	Pit latrine ventilated and not elevated	Pit latrine not ventilated	Other specify	None	Don't know	Not Stated	Total
Kingstown	179	3,574	14	33	151	31	33	5	1	**4,021**
Suburbs of Kingstown	45	4,555	58	253	221	42	53	-	23	**5,250**
Calliaqua	42	8,955	182	191	394	15	83	1	14	**9,877**
Marriaqua	16	2,251	42	83	243	3	26	1	4	**2,669**
Bridgetown	3	1,844	65	168	167	8	22	3	1	**2,281**
Colonarie	10	1,894	137	75	128	7	39	1	5	**2,296**
Georgetown	36	2,036	71	81	187	5	19	-	1	**2,436**
Sandy Bay	1	589	24	73	31	1	10	7	2	**738**
Layou	13	1,974	75	147	138	5	32	-	2	**2,386**
Barrouallie	101	1,588	39	73	118	6	54	2	5	**1,986**
Chateaubelair	5	1,305	29	54	158	6	21	-	2	**1,580**
Northern Grenadines	1	1,580	17	72	160	2	1	-	-	**1,833**
Southern Grenadines	6	1,399	35	69	98	-	4	-	5	**1,616**
Total	**458**	**33,544**	**788**	**1,372**	**2,194**	**131**	**397**	**20**	**65**	**38,969**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Map 4 Penetration of Flush Toilets by Census Division, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

6.12 Conclusion

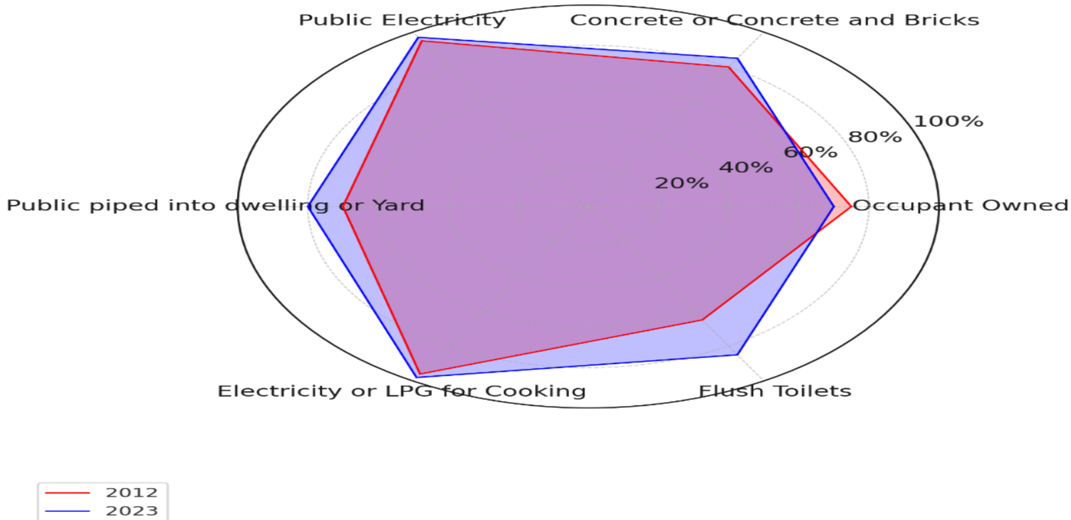
The analysis of household and housing characteristics highlights steady progress in living conditions in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, though with uneven outcomes across divisions. Household numbers rose to 38,969 in 2023 while average size declined to 2.8 persons, reflecting broader demographic shifts toward smaller, more independent living arrangements (Tables 6.1 to 6.4). Peri-urban areas such as Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown absorbed most of this growth, while older centers like Kingstown and Chateaubelair recorded stagnation or decline.

Housing stock remains dominated by detached dwellings, but the decade saw notable increases in attached units, apartments, and duplexes. Concrete and block construction, now exceeding 85 percent of dwellings, underscores investment in permanence and resilience, while wooden houses continue to decline (Tables 6.5 to 6.11). At the same time, nearly half of households occupy homes built before 1999, pointing to an aging stock with growing maintenance needs (Table 6.9).

Likewise, service access improved across the board. Public-grid electricity reached 93 percent of households in 2023, piped water into dwellings rose from 71 to 80 percent, and LPG strengthened its dominance as the main cooking fuel at 96 percent. Sanitation saw the largest gains, with septic systems serving 86 percent of households and pit latrine use nearly halving since 2012 (Tables 6.14, 6.16 to 6.20). Yet regional gaps persist, particularly in the Grenadines, where reliance on private catchments and traditional facilities remains higher.

The radar chart (Figure 6.8) visually reinforces these trends, showing broad improvements between 2012 and 2023 across key housing indicators such as durability of materials, access to public utilities, sanitation, and fuel use. The most substantial gains were observed in flush toilet access and piped water into dwellings, while electricity and LPG use reached near-universal levels. These patterns illustrate how infrastructure investments and shifts in household practices have translated into tangible quality-of-life improvements.

Figure 6.8 Housing Progress between 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, the census points to clear gains in housing adequacy, durability, and access to services, aligning with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities. Still, the persistence of aging housing, regional disparities, and small shares of vulnerable households highlight areas where progress remains incomplete.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 6
HOUSEHOLD AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing Patterns:
Most Households (77.5% or 30,196) live in separate detached houses, while apartments/condominiums account for just 6.2%

Home Ownership:
About 64.6% (25,193 households) own their homes outright, with another 8.7% (3,379) paying a mortgage

Age of Housing Stock:
Nearly 48% of dwellings were built before 1999, and just 11% since 2017, pointing to an ageing housing stock

Energy Use:
Cooking is almost entirely gas-based (37,527 or 96%), with 93% (36,238) grid electricity but minimal solar uptake (<1%)

Water and Sanitation Access:
80% of households (31,005) have piped water inside their dwelling

Room Size Distribution:
Around 43% of households have 5+ rooms, while only 3% live in single-room units

Chapter 7. Household Heads

7.1 Introduction

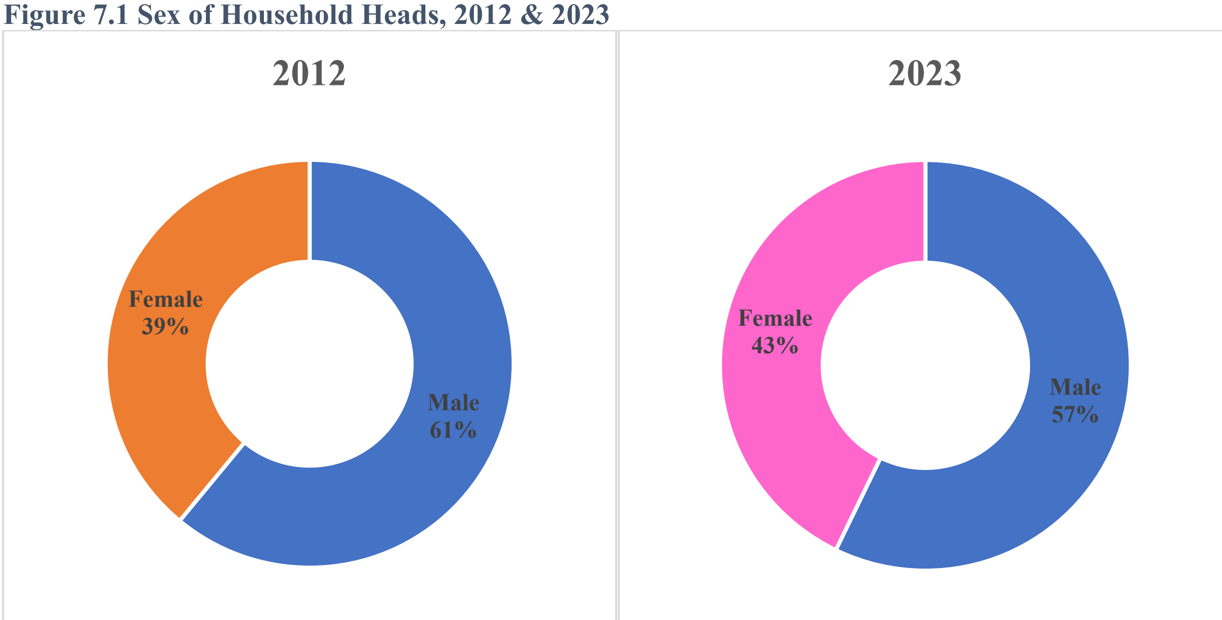
The household head plays a central role in determining the welfare, stability, and socio-economic trajectory of the family unit. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1997) the head of household is the person in the household acknowledged as head by the other household members. The head has primary authority and responsibility for household affairs (FAO, 1997)[21]. As the primary decision-maker, the head of household influences the allocation of resources, access to services, and the ability to respond to social and economic change. Understanding the characteristics of household heads therefore provides an important lens for examining household well-being and broader development dynamics.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, examining the profile of household heads across the 2012 and 2023 censuses sheds light on shifting gender dynamics, social structures, and economic pressures. These changes reflect broader demographic transitions while also highlighting evolving roles of men and women in household leadership and their implications for national development.

7.2 Sex of Household Heads

The sex of household heads is a key demographic indicator that reflects gender roles, household organization, and socio-economic conditions. It provides insight into the balance of male and female leadership within households and highlights broader patterns of social and economic change.

Figure 7.1 Sex of Household Heads, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

[21] Food and Agriculture Organization. (1997). *Women, agriculture and rural development: A synthesis report of the Near East Region.* FAO. Retrieved from https://www.fao.org/4/w0022e/w0022e02.htm#P143_13377

Census data for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines show a gradual shift between 2012 and 2023. In 2012, male household heads accounted for 60.7 percent of all households, compared to 39.3 percent female (Table 7.1; Figure 7.1). By 2023, the proportion of female-headed households had risen to 42.8 percent, while male-headed households declined to 57.2 percent. The overall sex ratio of household heads fell from 1.5 in 2012 to 1.3 in 2023, indicating a narrowing of the gender gap in household leadership.

Table 7-1 Percentage Distribution of Household Heads by Sex and Census division, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Sex Ratio	Male	Female	Sex Ratio
Kingstown	58.5	41.5	1.4	55.0	45.0	1.2
Suburbs of Kingstown	60.3	39.7	1.5	55.5	44.5	1.2
Calliaqua	60.9	39.1	1.6	56.0	44.0	1.3
Marriaqua	59.5	40.6	1.5	56.9	43.1	1.3
Bridgetown	60.1	39.9	1.5	58.1	41.9	1.4
Colonarie	58.2	41.8	1.4	56.3	43.7	1.3
Georgetown	57.1	42.9	1.3	52.4	47.6	1.1
Sandy Bay	61.0	39.0	1.6	61.1	38.9	1.6
Layou	63.3	36.7	1.7	61.4	38.6	1.6
Barrouallie	60.2	39.8	1.5	59.2	40.8	1.5
Chateaubelair	64.7	35.3	1.8	59.6	40.4	1.5
Northern Grenadines	63.9	36.1	1.8	64.8	35.2	1.8
Southern Grenadines	67.6	32.4	2.1	61.8	38.2	1.6
Total	**60.7**	**39.3**	**1.5**	**57.2**	**42.8**	**1.3**

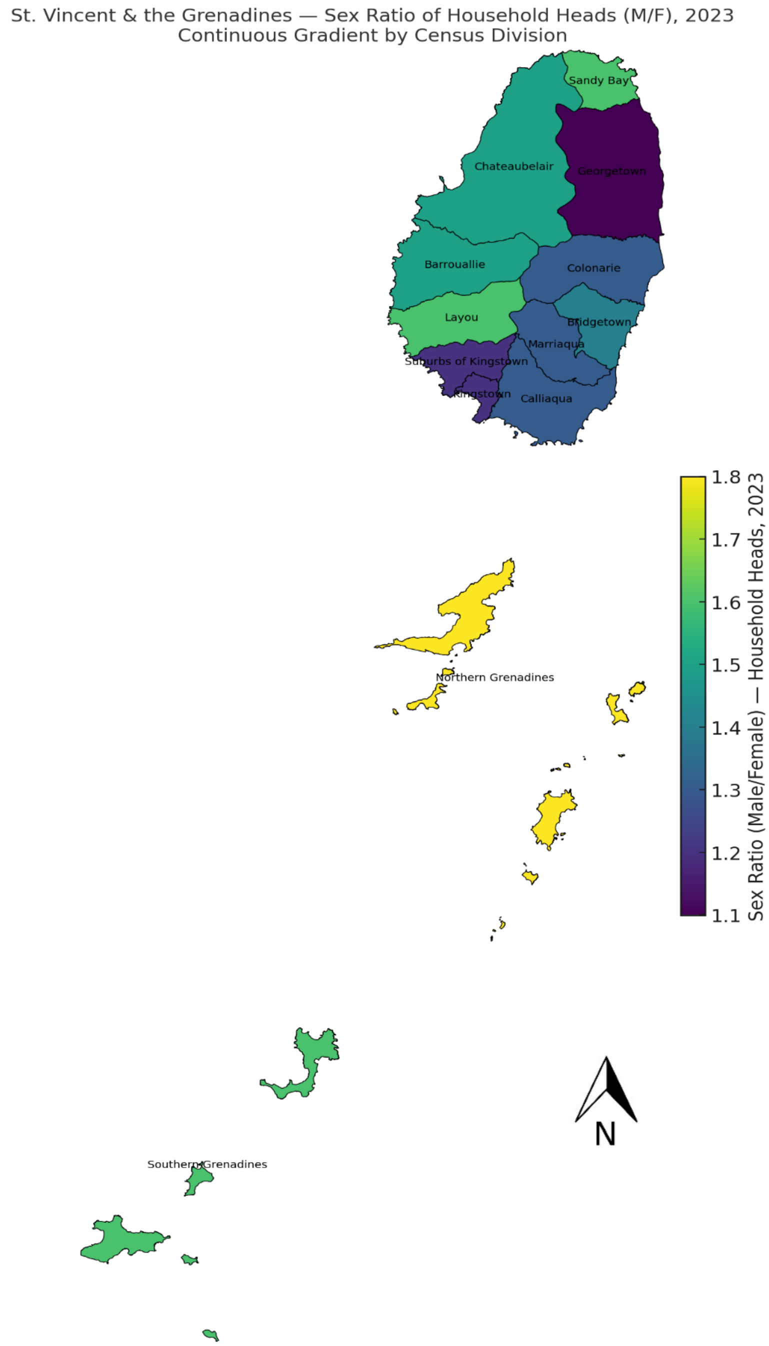
Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Census divisional data reveal that female-headed households are more common in urban and peri-urban areas. In 2023, Kingstown and the Suburbs of Kingstown reported 45.0 percent and 44.5 percent female heads, respectively. In contrast, rural areas such as Sandy Bay and Layou remained more heavily male-dominated, each with sex ratios of 1.6. The Grenadines present a mixed pattern where the Southern Grenadines reported 38.2 percent female heads, while the Northern Grenadines recorded 35.2 percent.

Map 5 portrays a geospatial distribution of the male-to-female ratio of household heads by census division. The Northern Grenadines had the highest male-to-female ratio of household heads. For every 1.0 female-headed household there were 1.8 male-headed households. Similarly, the census divisions of Sandy Bay, Layou, and the Southern Grenadines all recorded relatively high ratios of 1.6. On the other hand, the Georgetown census division had the smallest ratio. For every one female-headed household in that division, there were 1.1 male-headed households. Nationally, the overall ratio stood at 1.3, meaning that for every one female-headed household, there were about 1.3 male-headed households.

These results suggest that while male household heads continue to predominate across all divisions, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of female-headed households. This may reflect factors such as male out-migration, changing household structures, and rising economic independence among women.

Map 5 Male to Female Ratio of Household heads, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

7.3 Union Status of Household Heads

Union status among household heads is an important indicator of household composition and family structure. It reflects not only personal and cultural choices but also broader demographic and social changes that shape how households are organized. An examination of the 2012 and 2023 census data reveals notable shifts in marital and partnership patterns across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In 2012, nearly one-third (28.9 percent) of household heads reported being not in a union, while 25.6 percent were married and living with a spouse. Common-law unions accounted for 14.9 percent, and 17.9 percent indicated they had never had a spouse or common-law partner. Smaller proportions included visiting partner relationships (11.2 percent) and a limited share of responses not stated (1.4 percent).

Table 7-2 Percent Distribution of Household Heads by Union Status, 2012 & 2013

Union Status of Household Heads	Percent (%) Distribution
2012	
Never had a Spouse or Common law partner	17.9
Married and Living with Spouse	25.6
Common law Union	14.9
Visiting partner	11.2
Not in union	28.9
Not Stated	1.4
2023	
Never had a spouse or common-law partner	8.4
Married and living with spouse	21.9
Married and not living with spouse	5.1
Common-law	11.9
Visiting partner	9.0
Not in a union	35.5
Not Stated	8.2

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, the distribution had shifted notably. The share of household heads not in a union rose to 35.5 percent, making it the single largest category. Meanwhile, the proportion married and living with a spouse declined to 21.9 percent, reflecting a move away from traditional marital arrangements. The share in common-law unions also fell slightly to 11.9 percent, while those in visiting partner arrangements decreased to 9.0 percent. A significant decline is also observed in the group who reported never having a spouse or partner, which dropped from 17.9 percent in 2012 to 8.4 percent in 2023 (Table 7.2).

These results indicate a growing prevalence of single or non-union household heads, alongside a modest decline in both married and informal partnerships. These shifts suggest changing social norms and increasing diversity in household arrangement.

7.4 Age of Household Heads

The distribution of household heads by age group underscores both demographic transitions and changing patterns of household leadership. In 2001, younger age groups such as 25-34 years accounted for a significant share of household heads, with males strongly dominant (for example, 64.6 percent of male heads in the 30-34 age group compared to 35.4 percent female). By 2012, these middle-aged cohorts (35-54 years) continued to represent the bulk of household heads, while the overall gender gap narrowed slightly, reflecting modest increases in female headship across most age groups (Table 7.3).

Table 7-3 Percentage Distribution of Household Heads by Age Group and Sex, 2001 & 2012

Age Group	2001		2012		2023	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15-19	59.4	40.6	57.1	42.9	65.3	34.7
20-24	58.1	41.9	61.0	39.0	52.4	47.6
25-29	60.4	39.6	57.4	42.6	50.1	49.9
30-34	64.6	35.4	60.1	39.9	54.3	45.7
35-39	64.0	36.0	61.7	38.3	55.7	44.3
40-44	64.0	36.0	63.2	36.8	55.8	44.2
45-49	62.8	37.2	63.6	36.4	58.0	42.0
50-54	62.9	37.1	63.1	36.9	59.5	40.5
55-59	60.6	39.4	62.7	37.3	60.8	39.2
60-64	56.3	43.7	62.1	37.9	61.1	38.9
65-69	56.9	43.1	62.5	37.6	59.8	40.2
70-74	52.7	47.3	58.7	41.4	57.2	42.8
75-79	46.6	53.4	53.1	46.9	56.1	43.9
80+	42.8	57.2	46.8	53.3	44.0	56.0
Total	**60.1**	**39.9**	**60.7**	**39.3**	**57.2**	**42.8**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, the age profile of household heads shifted further upward, with a greater concentration in older cohorts. Notably, 55.8 percent of household heads aged 35-39 were male and 44.3 percent female, while among those aged 60-64, the distribution stood at 61.1 percent male and 38.9 percent female (Table 7.3). This demonstrates that older age groups now account for a more significant share of headship compared to earlier periods. At the same time, younger cohorts, particularly those under 30, have become less prominent, with just 0.3 percent of total household heads aged 15-19 in 2023 (Table 7.4).

Table 7-4 Percentage Distribution of Household Heads by Sex and Age Group, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15-19	0.5	0.5	**0.5**	0.3	0.2	**0.3**
20-24	2.2	2.2	**2.2**	1.3	1.6	**1.4**
25-29	4.8	5.5	**5.1**	3.3	4.4	**3.8**
30-34	8.0	8.2	**8.0**	5.2	5.9	**5.5**
35-39	10.1	9.7	**10.0**	7.5	8.0	**7.7**
40-44	11.8	10.6	**11.3**	9.6	10.2	**9.8**
45-49	13.3	11.8	**12.7**	10.6	10.2	**10.4**
50-54	12.4	11.2	**12.0**	12.5	11.3	**12.0**
55-59	10.2	9.4	**9.8**	12.2	10.5	**11.5**
60-64	7.6	7.2	**7.4**	12.4	10.5	**11.6**
65-69	5.9	5.5	**5.7**	10.2	9.1	**9.7**
70-74	5.1	5.6	**5.3**	6.5	6.4	**6.5**
75-79	3.9	5.3	**4.4**	4.4	4.6	**4.5**
80+	**4.3**	**7.6**	**5.6**	**4.0**	**6.9**	**5.4**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The overall shift in the age profile of the household heads reflects both population aging and a trend toward older individuals retaining headship roles for longer periods. In 2012, the highest shares of household heads were concentrated in the 40-54 age groups, with each contributing around 12 percent of the total. By 2023, these age groups still remained central but slightly declined, while headship shares rose among the 55-64 and 65-74 cohorts, which together accounted for over 21 percent of all household heads. This highlights a gradual aging of household leadership, consistent with broader demographic changes such as increased life expectancy and delayed transitions of household responsibility to younger generations.

7.5 Household Heads by Highest Certificate or Degree Earned

Educational attainment among household heads has shifted notably over the last two decades, reflecting both expanded access to formal education and changing qualifications within the labour market. In 2001, more than three-quarters of household heads (77.6 percent) reported having no formal certification, with just 6.4 percent holding GCE/CXC O' Levels and 2.0 percent possessing a bachelor's degree. By 2012, the share of household heads without certification had fallen to 66.9 percent, while O' Level attainment rose to 9.2 percent, and those with a bachelor's degree increased modestly to 2.7 percent (Table 7.5). This shift suggests gradual but steady improvement in access to secondary and tertiary education during the first decade of the 21st century.

Table 7-5 Proportion of Household Heads by Highest Certification Earned and Sex, 2001 & 2012

Level of Education	2001			2012		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
School Leaving Certificate	3.0	3.3	3.1	3.2	4.0	3.5
Cambridge School Certificate	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
GCE or CXC O'Levels (Gen. proficiency)	6.1	6.9	6.4	8.5	10.3	9.2
High School Certificate (HSC)	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.1	1.0	1.0
GCE A'Levels/CAPE	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.4	1.2
College Certificate/Diploma	1.9	1.1	1.6	4.4	4.4	4.4
Associate Degree	0.5	0.3	0.4	1.0	1.1	1.0
Bachelor's Degree	2.3	1.5	2.0	2.7	2.5	2.7
Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.8
Professional Certificate	4.0	4.3	4.1	2.5	2.3	2.4
Higher Degree (Masters)	1.0	0.4	0.7	1.5	0.9	1.2
Higher Degree (Doctoral)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.2
Other	0.6	0.4	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.1
None	76.9	78.5	77.6	67.2	66.3	66.9
Not Stated	2.5	2.2	2.4	4.5	3.7	4.2

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 7-6 Proportion of Household Heads by Highest Certification Earned and Sex, 2023

Level of Education	Male	Female	Total
Common Entrance	12.6	11.9	**12.3**
CPEA	0.7	0.9	**0.8**
School Leaving (e.g. Standard Six or Seven School Leaving exam)	17.3	18.7	**17.9**
Cambridge School Certificate	0.1	0.2	**0.2**
CXC Basic	2.9	3.9	**3.3**
CCSLC	0.1	0.1	**0.1**
GCE 'O' Levels, CXC General, CSEC	13.9	15.8	**14.7**
High School Certificate	0.8	0.9	**0.8**
GCE 'A' Levels, CAPE	1.4	1.5	**1.5**
Associate Degree	3.1	4.7	**3.8**
College Certificate	2.0	2.1	**2.1**
College Diploma	1.4	1.2	**1.3**
Professional Certificate e.g. RSA, City and Guilds etc	1.0	0.8	**0.9**
Bachelor's Degree	4.5	6.0	**5.2**
Post Graduate Certificate	0.2	0.2	**0.2**
Post Graduate Diploma	0.3	0.4	**0.3**
Higher Degree (Master's)	2.2	1.9	**2.1**
Higher Degree (Doctoral)	0.4	0.2	**0.3**
Other (Specify)	0.9	0.9	**0.9**
None	33.3	26.9	**30.5**
Not Stated	0.7	0.8	**0.8**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

The 2023 Census presented a more diversified picture of educational outcomes. Household heads with no certification declined further to 30.5 percent, representing less than half the proportion recorded in 2012. The most common qualification in 2023 was the School Leaving Certificate, reported by 17.9 percent of heads, followed closely by O' Levels/CSEC at 14.7 percent and Common Entrance Pass at 12.3 percent (Table 7.6). Notably, new qualification categories such as CPEA (0.8 percent) and CCSLC (0.1 percent) emerged, reflecting curriculum reforms within the Caribbean Examination Council system. At the tertiary level, 5.2 percent of household heads reported holding a bachelor's degree, double the proportion recorded in 2012. Those with postgraduate training also increased slightly, with 2.1 percent reporting a master's degree and 0.3 percent a doctoral degree.

Gender differences in educational attainment are also evident. In 2023, women were more likely than men to have obtained higher academic qualifications such as bachelor's degrees (6.0 percent versus 4.5 percent) and associate degrees (4.7 percent versus 3.1 percent). Conversely, men were slightly more likely to report no formal certification (33.3 percent compared with 26.9 percent). This pattern suggests that while men continue to dominate numerically as household heads, female heads are more likely to have pursued and completed tertiary-level qualifications.

7.6 Households Heads by Main Economic Activity and Source of Livelihood

The economic activity of household heads highlights both participation in the labor force and the reliance on alternative income sources. In 2012, 59.6 percent of household heads had a job and worked, compared with 56.3 percent in 2023 (Table 7.7). This slight decline points to changes in labor market absorption and demographic pressures. Unemployment dynamics shifted as well, the share of those actively seeking work fell from 5.6 percent in 2012 to 3.4 percent in 2023, but those wanting work but not actively searching rose from 1.5 percent to 2.2 percent. Household heads engaged primarily in home duties also decreased, from 10.9 percent in 2012 to 9.0 percent in 2023. At the same time, retirees grew from 16.0 percent to 21.0 percent, reflecting population aging and the transition of more household heads into non-active economic roles.

Table 7-7 Percentage Distribution of Household Heads by Usual Economic Activity, 2012

Usual Activity Over Past 12 Months	2012	2023
	Percent (%)	
Had a Job and Worked	59.6	56.3
Had a Job, but did not Work	0.5	1.0
Looked for Work	5.6	3.4
Wanted Work and Available	1.5	2.2
Did Home Duties	10.9	9.0
Attended School/Student	0.4	0.5
Retired, did not Work	16.0	21.0
Disabled, Unable to Work	2.6	2.8
Other	1.5	3.3
Not Stated	1.5	0.4
Total	**100**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

In terms of livelihood sources, employment remained the mainstay in 2012, accounting for 55.8 percent of household heads (Table 7.8). However, many households supplemented or replaced earnings with other income streams. Subsistence farming supported 7.1 percent of household heads, while pensions (7.7 percent local, 3.3 percent overseas) also featured prominently. Public assistance and remittances provided important safety nets, with 4.5 percent and 7.7 percent of household heads, respectively, depending on these transfers. Notably, in 2012 female household heads were more likely than males to report reliance on public assistance and remittances, underscoring gendered vulnerabilities.

Table 7-8 Source of Livelihoods of Household Heads, 2012

Source of Livelihood	Male	Female	Total
Disability	0.3	0.3	0.3
Employment	62.8	44.9	55.8
Investment	1.7	1.0	1.5
Public Assistance	2.9	6.9	4.5
Pension (Local)	7.2	8.6	7.7
Pension (Overseas)	3.8	2.6	3.3
Savings/Interest on savings	3.9	2.1	3.2
Subsistence Farming	9.3	3.7	7.1
Support From Friends/ Relatives (Local-Cash/Kind)	11.7	28.4	18.3
Support From Friends/ Relatives (Overseas-Cash/Kind)	4.4	12.8	7.7
Other	2.5	4.3	3.2

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 7-9 Source of Livelihoods of Household Heads, 2023

Source of Income	Count
Pension (local)	3,611
Pension (overseas)	1,106
Investment	605
Remittances (overseas - Cash/Kind)	428
Savings/interest on savings	2,798
Disability benefits	111
Unemployment benefits	96
Social security benefits (NIS)	971
Other public assistance	1,156
Support from friends/relatives (local - Cash/Kind)	1,519
Support from friends/relatives (Overseas - Cash/Kind)	927
Spouse/Partner Support (Cash/Kind)	1,015
Children Support (Cash/Kind)	1,777
Parent(s) Support (Cash/Kind)	272
Guardian(s) Support (Cash/Kind)	24
Farming (Backyard, garden etc.)	1,325

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, a more diversified picture of livelihood sources emerged (Table 7.9). Local pensions supported 3,611 household heads, while overseas pensions accounted for another 1,106. Savings and interest on savings (2,798) and farming activities, such as backyard or garden production (1,325), became notable sources of sustenance. Remittances continued to play an important role, with 428 household heads citing overseas cash or in-kind transfers, complemented by another 927 reporting regular support from overseas friends and relatives. Social security and other public assistance also supported over 2,000 household heads combined, while smaller but significant numbers depended on support from spouses (1,015), children (1,777), or parents (272).

Together, these findings indicate that while employment and pensions form the backbone of household livelihoods. Evidently a wide range of secondary supports including remittances, family transfers, farming, and savings remain vital.

7.7 Conclusion

The 2012 and 2023 census findings highlight important demographic and socio-economic shifts in the profile of household heads in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Although men remain the majority, the growing presence of female heads, particularly in urban centers, signals gradual change in traditional leadership patterns within households.

Union status results point to declining prevalence of marriage and common-law arrangements, alongside a rise in household heads who report being outside of unions altogether. This trend reflects broader social transformations, including changing partnership norms and greater independence in household formation. At the same time, the age distribution shows that older cohorts are increasingly retaining headship roles, underscoring the influence of population aging and delayed generational turnover.

Rising levels of educational attainment, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels, illustrate expanding access to formal learning opportunities and a narrowing of gender gaps in higher education. Meanwhile, livelihood data reveal continued reliance on a mix of employment, pensions, remittances, savings, farming, and transfers from relatives, pointing to a diversified yet vulnerable household economy. Together, these findings underscore the intersection of gender, aging, education, and economic pressures in shaping the evolving character of household leadership.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS – CHAPTER 7
HOUSEHOLD HEADS

Male-Dominated Household Heads:
Men account for 57% of household heads, highest in Northern Grenadines (65%), lowest in Georgetown (52%)

Union Status Divide:
Over a third (35.5%) of household heads are not in a union, while 22% are married and living with a spouse

Age Profile of Heads:
Household leadership peaks between ages 45–64 (about one-third of all heads), while youth (under 30) represent only 6%

Educational Attainment Gaps:
Nearly 31% of household heads have no formal certification. Only 5% hold a bachelor's degree or higher

Economic Engagement:
About 56% of household heads were employed in the past year, while 21% were retired, indicating an aging headship base.

Income Reliance:
Household heads depend heavily on pensions (local 3,611; overseas 1,106) and savings (2,798) as primary income sources

Chapter 8. Agriculture and Food Security

8.1 Introduction

Agriculture has long been a cornerstone of livelihoods and food security in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, contributing both to household sustenance and to the broader national economy. Beyond its economic value, agriculture underpins rural employment, cultural identity, and resilience in the face of external shocks. According to the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture St. Vincent and the Grenadines' (SVG) agriculture sector is largely based on subsistence farming, concentrated on the mainland with some activity on the larger Grenadine Island. The sector combines crop production, livestock rearing, and fisheries. The 2023 Population and Housing Census provides important insights into household participation in agriculture, landholding structures, vulnerability to natural hazards, and livestock ownership, offering a demographic perspective on this critical sector.

At the global level, agriculture is recognized as central to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, SDG 2 seeks to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture, underscoring the sector's pivotal role in human well-being and national development. This positions agriculture not only as a source of economic activity but also as a foundation for sustainable development and resilience.

Within Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, agricultural systems continue to face structural challenges including limited land availability, vulnerability to natural hazards, and declining labor force participation. Nonetheless, the sector remains integral to household survival strategies, as many families supplement incomes with small-scale crop or livestock production. By linking census findings with these broader considerations, this chapter seeks to highlight both the demographic importance of agriculture and its evolving role in shaping food security, livelihoods, and development outcomes.

8.2 Household Participation and Agricultural Vulnerability

Agriculture continues to play an important role in the livelihood structure of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, though its scale and nature vary across households. In 2023, a total of 9,440 households were engaged in agricultural activity, representing just under one quarter of all households. Of these, male-headed households dominated, accounting for 66.7 percent (6,295 households), while female-headed households contributed 33.3 percent (3,145 households) (Table 8.1). This male dominance underscores the persistence of gendered divisions in agricultural labour and decision-making, although women continue to play important roles in crop and small-scale livestock production.

Table 8-1 Households engaged in agriculture, by Sex of Head of Household

Engagement in Agricultural Activity	Sex					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	6295	66.7	3145	33.3	9440	100

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

When agricultural activity is disaggregated by type, crop production emerges as the most common, involving 8,147 households (Table 8.2). Animal production is also significant, with 2,622 households participating, followed by fisheries (414 households) and agro-processing (260 households). More specialized activities such as forestry (121 households), aquaculture (14 households), and apiculture (42 households) remain relatively marginal. These figures highlight a predominance of traditional farming practices, particularly crop and livestock production, while more modern or specialized subsectors remain underdeveloped. The fact that 29,441 households reported no engagement in agriculture underscores both the structural shift of the economy away from smallholder farming and the growing urban orientation of the population.

Table 8-2 Households engaged in agriculture, by activity type

Type of Agricultural Activity	Count
Crop production	8,147
Animal production	2,622
Fisheries activity	414
Aquaculture activity	14
Forestry activity	121
Agro-processing	260
Apiculture Beekeeping	42
Others	126
None	29,441

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 8-3 Households engaged in agriculture, by Census Division

Census Division	Count	%
Kingstown	349	3.7
Suburbs of Kingstown	1,046	11.1
Calliaqua	1,887	20.0
Marriaqua	1,066	11.3
Bridgetown	943	10.0
Colonarie	890	9.4
Georgetown	582	6.2
Sandy Bay	385	4.1
Layou	515	5.5
Barrouallie	621	6.6
Chateaubelair	749	7.9
Northern Grenadines	276	2.9
Southern Grenadines	131	1.4
Total	9,440	100

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Geographic differences are evident in the distribution of agricultural households across census divisions. The largest shares were recorded in Calliaqua (20.0 percent), Marriaqua (11.3 percent), and the Suburbs of Kingstown (11.1 percent) (Table 8.3). Smaller rural areas such as Sandy Bay (4.1 percent) and the

Southern Grenadines (1.4 percent) registered relatively low proportions, reflecting differences in arable land availability, settlement patterns, and access to markets. These disparities suggest that while agriculture retains strongholds in key valleys and peri-urban zones, its importance is uneven across the national territory.

Table 8-4 Number and Percentage of Agricultural households affected by natural hazards

Households Affected by Natural hazards	Count	%
Yes	3,504	37.1
No	5,931	62.8
Not Stated	5	0.1
Total	**9,440**	**100**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Agricultural households remain highly vulnerable to natural hazards. In 2023, 37.1 percent (3,504 households) reported being affected by at least one hazard, while 62.8 percent reported no such impact (Table 8.4). The single most significant event reported was volcanic eruption, with 2,989 households citing impacts, reflecting the lasting effects of the 2021 La Soufrière eruption (Table 8.5). Other major hazards included hurricanes and tropical storms (851 households) and floods (153 households). Although smaller in absolute terms, drought (78 households), landslides (99 households), and storm surge (43 households) represent critical threats to livelihoods in specific ecological niches. These findings confirm that vulnerability is not only widespread but also hazard-specific, with volcanic and climatic shocks shaping the resilience of rural households.

Table 8-5 Number of Agricultural households affected by natural hazards by Type

Type of Natural Disaster	Count
Hurricane / Tropical Storms	851
Bush fires	8
Storm surge / High seas / swells	43
Severe Storms	81
Extreme temperatures	121
Volcanic Eruption	2,989
Tsunami	-
Floods	153
Drought	78
Earthquake	29
Landslides	99
Other Specify	30

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Household participation in agriculture remains significant but uneven, with crop and livestock production dominating while other subsectors remain small. Exposure to hazards such as volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, and floods underscores the vulnerability of rural livelihoods, highlighting the need for greater resilience and diversification.

8.3 Farm Structure and Livestock Ownership

Farm structure in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is characterized by small-scale and fragmented holdings, which continue to shape agricultural productivity and household livelihoods. Table 8.6 shows that the majority of farming households (62.0%, or 5,859 out of 9,440) operated a single parcel of land in 2023, while only 1,281 households (13.6%) managed two parcels. Very few households cultivated more than five parcels, highlighting the limited scale of farming operations. Additionally, 866 households reported no parcels, suggesting engagement in non-land-based agricultural activities such as livestock, fisheries, or agro-processing. This structure underscores the prevalence of subsistence and semi-commercial farming, with only a small fraction of farmers operating on larger, more consolidated holdings.

Table 8-6 Distribution of farm households by number of parcels farmed

Number of Parcels	Count
0	866
1	5,859
2	1,281
3	421
4	176
5	93
6	38
7	24
8	5
9	4
Not Stated	673
Total	**9,440**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Livestock ownership provides further insight into farm household composition and diversification strategies. Table 8.7 indicates that poultry dominates with an average of 102 birds per household, followed by rabbits (11), pigs (30), and small ruminants such as goats and sheep (5 each). However, median and modal values reveal that most households keep relatively small herds, reinforcing the subsistence nature of animal rearing. Cattle, though less common, remain important, with an average of 4 per household, while donkeys and horses are marginal.

The distribution of livestock-owning households by species (Table 8.8) confirms the prominence of small ruminants and pigs. Goats (1,733 households) and sheep (1,267 households) are the most widespread, followed by pigs (872) and cattle (755). Poultry is also significant, with 316 households reporting ownership, although concentrated in fewer but larger flocks. The presence of rabbits (204 households), beehives (10 households), and other species indicates a degree of diversification, though on a relatively small scale. These patterns highlight the dual role of livestock as both a source of food security and supplementary income.

Table 8-7 Average number of livestock owned per household

Type of Livestock	Mean	Median	Mode
Cattle	4	3	2
Pigs	30	4	1
Goats	5	4	3
Sheep	5	4	2
Horses	3	4	1*
Donkeys	1	1	1
Rabbits	11	6	6
Poultry	102	24	12

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 8-8 Farm Households owning livestock, by species

Type of Livestock	Count
Cattle	755
Pigs	872
Goats	1,733
Sheep	1,267
Horses	5
Donkeys	15
Rabbits	204
Poultry	316
Beehives bee families	10
Other species	60

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Farm structure and livestock ownership in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remain dominated by small-scale operations, with most households managing a single parcel of land and maintaining modest herds. These patterns emphasize the subsistence orientation of agriculture, while also highlighting the role of diversification in supporting food security and income stability.

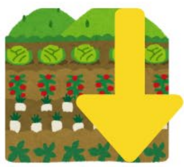
8.4 Conclusion

The 2023 Population and Housing Census highlights that agriculture in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continues to be a vital source of livelihoods, though it is characterized by small-scale farming, fragmented landholdings, and uneven participation across regions. With 9,440 households engaged in agriculture, crop production (8,147 households) and animal rearing (2,622 households) dominate, while activities such as aquaculture, apiculture, and agro-processing remain marginal. Geographic disparities are evident, with areas such as Calliaqua and Marriaqua recording higher levels of participation compared to divisions like the Southern Grenadines. These patterns reveal both the enduring importance of agriculture and the challenges of scale and accessibility that shape its contribution to rural economies.

Livestock ownership further illustrates the adaptive strategies of households, with goats (1,733 households), sheep (1,267 households), and poultry (316 households) playing an important role in supplementing food and income. Yet vulnerability to natural hazards remains a defining feature of the sector, as shown by the 37.1 percent of agricultural households affected in 2023, particularly from the 2021 volcanic eruption (2,989 households impacted) and tropical storms (851 households). These realities underscore the fragility of agricultural systems but also their necessity in sustaining food security. In this regard, the census findings reaffirm the centrality of agriculture to achieving SDG 2, ending hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture, while emphasizing the need for policies that enhance resilience, productivity, and equitable access across communities.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS – CHAPTER 8
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY

Overall engagement low:
Only 24.2% (9,440 households) reported agricultural activity

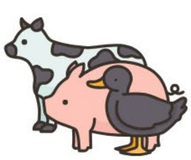


Urban disengagement:
Agriculture is least common in Kingstown (8.7%) and Southern Grenadines (8.1%)

Agricultural strongholds:
Highest activity is in Sandy Bay (52.2%), Chateaubelair (47.4%), and Bridgetown (41.3%)

Hazard exposure:
37.1% of agricultural households (3,504) reported being affected by natural hazards

Small parcel farming:
Farming is mostly small-scale: 62% of farm households cultivate only 1 parcel, while just 3% farm 5 or more parcels



Livestock ownership limited:
Fewer than 30% of households own common livestock like pigs (27%), goats (54%), or poultry (10%)

Chapter 9. Health

9.1 Introduction

Health is one of the most critical dimensions of human development, shaping both individual well-being and national progress. The World Health Organization (WHO) Constitution defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1948)[22]. This definition emphasizes that health extends beyond the treatment of illness to encompass the overall capacity of people to live fulfilling and productive lives. The Constitution of the World Health Organization further affirms that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right of every person and that governments carry the responsibility to ensure access to health and social measures that secure this right.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, health is not only a personal concern but also a matter of collective importance, influencing productivity, educational outcomes, and overall social stability. The prevalence of illness and access to healthcare directly affect the capacity of households to thrive and shape the resources governments must allocate to meet population needs. Examining health conditions, the prevalence of chronic diseases, and patterns in the use of medical facilities provides valuable insight into both the challenges faced by the population and the effectiveness of health systems in responding to these needs.

The census data for 2001, 2012, and 2023 offer a unique opportunity to trace health outcomes over time, revealing how demographic shifts, lifestyle changes, and improvements in healthcare access have influenced the burden of illness. Chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs), in particular, have become increasingly prominent, raising concerns about long-term health risks and the sustainability of healthcare systems. At the same time, patterns of medical facility usage shed light on accessibility, affordability, and preferences in healthcare seeking behavior across different communities.

This chapter therefore explores the health profile of the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with a focus on chronic illnesses and the use of medical facilities. By analyzing changes over the three census periods, it highlights progress made, persistent inequalities, and areas requiring policy attention in order to improve population health and strengthen resilience.

9.2 Chronic Illnesses

Chronic illnesses remain one of the leading health concerns in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, shaping both the quality of life of individuals and the demands placed on the healthcare system. Census data from 2001, 2012, and 2023 reveal that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have steadily increased in prevalence, reflecting the combined effects of population aging, changing dietary habits, reduced physical activity, and other lifestyle factors. Hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and arthritis continue to dominate the health profile, while conditions such as glaucoma, kidney disease, and cancer, though less

[22] World Health Organization. (1948). *Constitution of the World Health Organization*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution

common, have become increasingly visible in recent years. These patterns mirror broader regional and global shifts in health, where NCDs now account for the largest share of disease burden.

Over time, the prevalence of the most common conditions has shown a clear upward trend. Hypertension remains the most widespread chronic illness, rising from 7.1 percent of the population in 2001 to 10.0 percent in 2012 and further to 11.3 percent in 2023 (Table 9.1). Diabetes followed a similar trajectory, increasing from 3.4 percent in 2001 to 5.6 percent in 2012 and 6.5 percent in 2023. By contrast, both asthma and arthritis showed slight declines between 2012 and 2023, suggesting some improvement in prevention or management. Although less prevalent, conditions such as glaucoma, which affected 0.6 percent of the population in 2023, and kidney disease, at 0.5 percent, underscore the growing importance of early detection and long-term care.

Table 9-1 Cases of Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Chronic Illness	2001		2012		2023	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Hypertension/High Blood Pressure	7668	7.1	10935	10	12239	11.3
Arthritis	5469	5.1	5226	4.8	3891	3.6
Asthma	4702	4.4	6094	5.6	4683	4.3
Diabetes	3715	3.4	6308	5.8	7039	6.5
Heart Disease	964	0.9	958	0.9	955	0.9
Sickle Cell Anemia	865	0.8	1008	0.9	733	0.7
Kidney Disease	451	0.4	317	0.3	420	0.4
Stroke	360	0.3	419	0.4	-	-
Cancer	167	0.2	274	0.3	399	0.4
Lupus	19	0	27	0	62	0.1
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	50	0.1	45	0	-	-
Glaucoma	-	-	581	0.5	654	0.6

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Note A total of 26,504 and 34,700 persons reported at least one chronic illness in 2012 and 2023 respectively

Table 9-2 Number of Persons Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness and Sex, 2012 & 2023

Illness	2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Sickle Cell Anemia	318	690	1,008	254	479	733
Arthritis/Rheumatism	1,814	3,412	5,226	1,250	2,641	3,891
Asthma	2,754	3,340	6,094	1,898	2,785	4,683
Diabetes	2,233	4,075	6,308	2,601	4,438	7,039
Hypertension	3,817	7,118	10,935	4,307	7,932	12,239
Heart Disease	379	579	958	428	527	955
Stroke	194	225	419	-	-	-
Kidney Disease	138	179	317	199	221	420
Cancer	158	116	274	196	203	399
Lupus	8	19	27	10	52	62
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	13	32	45	-	-	-
Glaucoma	291	290	581	325	329	654

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Gender differences in chronic illness prevalence add another dimension to the picture. Women were more likely than men to report hypertension, diabetes, and arthritis across all census years, consistent with both biological risks and longer life expectancy. Men, however, recorded slightly higher rates of kidney disease and cancer, pointing to different vulnerabilities in male and female health outcomes (Table 9.2). These patterns highlight the importance of understanding NCDs not only as medical conditions but also as outcomes shaped by gendered health behaviors and access to care.

Furthermore, the age distribution provides further evidence of the shifting burden of disease. As expected, chronic illnesses were most concentrated among older adults, with nearly half of all hypertension and diabetes cases in 2023 occurring among persons aged 65 years and over (Tables 9.3 and 9.4). Arthritis displayed a similar pattern, reinforcing its association with aging. In contrast, asthma remained the condition most common among children and younger adults, with close to one-third of cases reported among those under 15 years. This dual pattern underscores the complexity of the chronic disease burden. So, while NCDs are heavily linked to aging, certain conditions like asthma persistently affect the young, creating overlapping health challenges for different age groups.

Simply put, chronic illnesses have become a defining feature of the health profile in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The steady rise in NCDs, coupled with clear gender and age disparities, highlights the need for ongoing monitoring and effective management to reduce their impact on population well-being.

9.2.1 Hypertension/High Blood Pressure

Hypertension remains the leading chronic illness in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and has shown steady growth over the past two decades. Census results indicate that prevalence increased from 7.1 percent in 2001 to 10.0 percent in 2012, and further to 11.3 percent in 2023 (Table 9.1). This rise reflects a combination of demographic change, particularly an aging population, and lifestyle-related risk factors such as diet and reduced physical activity. The trend underscores the mounting role of non-communicable diseases in shaping the health profile of the nation.

Differences by sex and age are consistent and notable. In 2023, 12.9 percent of women reported hypertension compared with 9.6 percent of men (Table 9.2), continuing a long-standing pattern observed in earlier censuses. Age distribution shows that the condition is rare among younger people, with fewer than 2 percent of cases under 35 years, but rises sharply in older cohorts. More than one-quarter of cases occur among persons 65 years and older (Table 9.4), confirming a strong association with aging. These results highlight both the scale of the condition and its concentration among older adults and women.

9.2.2 Diabetes

Diabetes has become an increasingly significant chronic illness in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, showing steady growth across census years. In 2001, 3.4 percent of the population reported the condition, rising to 5.6 percent in 2012 and 6.5 percent in 2023 (Table 9.1). This upward trend reflects broader global and regional patterns where diabetes prevalence is climbing due to aging populations, lifestyle changes, and diet-related risk factors. Although not as widespread as hypertension, the continued increase signals its growing contribution to the national burden of non-communicable diseases.

The condition is more prevalent among women than men. In 2023, 7.8 percent of females reported diabetes compared with 5.1 percent of males (Table 9.2). Age also plays a central role: while cases are minimal under 35 years, prevalence rises sharply in middle age and peaks in older cohorts. Data from Table 9.4 show that nearly half of all cases occur among persons aged 65 years and older, reflecting the link between diabetes, aging, and long-term health vulnerabilities. These findings confirm diabetes as a steadily rising concern, disproportionately affecting women and older adults.

9.2.3 Asthma

Asthma remains one of the more common chronic conditions in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, though its prevalence has shown a slight decline over time. In 2001, 4.4 percent of the population reported asthma, compared with 3.8 percent in 2012 and 3.4 percent in 2023 (Table 9.1). While these figures suggest some reduction in overall prevalence, asthma continues to represent a substantial health challenge, particularly because of its early onset and impact on children and young adults.

Age distribution highlights asthma's distinct profile compared to other chronic illnesses. Unlike hypertension and diabetes, asthma is concentrated in younger age groups, with close to one-third of cases in 2023 occurring among persons under 15 years (Table 9.4). Gender differences are relatively modest, though women reported a slightly higher prevalence (3.7 percent) compared to men (3.2 percent) in 2023 (Table 9.2). These patterns confirm asthma as a condition that disproportionately affects younger populations, distinguishing it from the age-related rise observed in most other chronic diseases.

9.2.4 Arthritis

Arthritis has emerged as a steadily growing health concern in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Census data show that 2.2 percent of the population reported arthritis in 2001, increasing to 3.4 percent in 2012, and rising further to 5.3 percent in 2023 (Table 9.1). This consistent upward trend signals the rising burden of degenerative and inflammatory joint conditions, particularly as the population ages. Unlike asthma, which is concentrated in younger groups, arthritis is strongly associated with older cohorts, making it a significant contributor to disability and reduced mobility among the elderly.

The 2023 Census data confirm that arthritis is most prevalent among persons 65 years and older, where it accounted for more than one in five cases (Table 9.4). Women remain disproportionately affected, with 6.6 percent reporting arthritis compared to 4.0 percent of men (Table 9.2). This gendered pattern reflects both biological susceptibility and the cumulative effects of life-course roles, including occupational and caregiving demands.

9.2.5 Other Illnesses

Beyond the major non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, diabetes, and arthritis, the Census also captured a category of other illnesses, which reflects a wide range of chronic and acute health conditions not separately identified. In 2001, only 1.3 percent of the population reported being affected by "other illnesses." This share rose to 3.4 percent in 2012, before declining slightly to 2.6 percent in 2023 (Table 9.1). The trend suggests improvements in the diagnosis and classification of specific conditions, leading to a shift away from generalized reporting into more defined categories such as diabetes or arthritis.

Disaggregated data reveal important patterns. Women consistently reported higher rates than men, with 3.2 percent of females compared to 2.0 percent of males in 2023 (Table 9.2). Age also plays a clear role: while prevalence remains low in younger cohorts, rates increase steadily with age, reaching over 4 percent among persons aged 65 years and older (Table 9.3b). These findings suggest that other illnesses, though less prominent than the major NCDs, remain a significant health burden, particularly for older women. This underscores the need for continued health monitoring, better disease classification, and targeted support for individuals with conditions that fall outside the main chronic categories.

Table 9-3 Total & Percentage of Persons Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness and Age Group, 2012

Age Group	Hypertension	Diabetes	Asthma	Arthritis	Heart Disease	Stroke	Kidney Disease	Cancer	Sickle Cell Anemia	Lupus	Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	Glaucoma
	Count											
Under 15	23	32	2,678	41	81	5	25	1	280	2	2	18
15-29	249	132	1,805	146	84	6	60	12	343	3	13	23
30-44	1,515	750	853	533	100	34	66	33	227	10	16	48
45-64	4,999	2,855	536	2,006	298	148	96	87	119	8	10	164
65+	4,149	2,539	223	2,500	395	226	70	141	39	4	4	328
Total	**10,935**	**6,308**	**6,094**	**5,226**	**958**	**419**	**317**	**274**	**1,008**	**27**	**45**	**581**
	Percentage											
Under 15	0.2	0.5	43.9	0.8	8.5	1.2	7.9	0.4	27.8	7.4	4.4	3.1
15-29	2.3	2.1	29.6	2.8	8.8	1.4	18.9	4.4	34.0	11.1	28.9	4.0
30-44	13.9	11.9	14.0	10.2	10.4	8.1	20.8	12.0	25.5	37.0	35.6	8.3
45-64	45.7	45.3	8.8	38.4	31.1	35.3	30.3	31.8	11.8	29.6	22.2	28.2
65+	37.9	40.3	3.7	47.8	41.2	53.9	22.1	51.5	3.9	14.8	8.9	56.5
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 9-4 Total & Percentage of Persons Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness and Age Group, 2023

Age Group	Arthritis/ Rheumatism	Kidney Disease (Renal)	Asthma	Diabetes	Hypertension/ High Blood Pressure	Sickle Cell Anemia	Glaucoma	Cancer	Heart Disease	Lupus
	Count									
0-14	11	11	1,438	11	5	143	3	5	43	-
15-29	47	20	1,388	81	187	206	15	4	69	10
30-44	169	40	989	451	1,113	191	26	29	73	19
45-64	1,345	141	626	2,882	5,184	145	130	149	272	27
65 +	2,319	208	242	3,614	5,750	48	480	212	498	6
Total	**3,891**	**420**	**4,683**	**7,039**	**12,239**	**733**	**654**	**399**	**955**	**62**
	Percentage									
0-14	0.3	2.6	30.7	0.2	0.0	19.5	0.5	1.3	4.5	0.0
15-29	1.2	4.8	29.6	1.2	1.5	28.1	2.3	1.0	7.2	16.1
30-44	4.3	9.5	21.1	6.4	9.1	26.1	4.0	7.3	7.6	30.6
45-64	34.6	33.6	13.4	40.9	42.4	19.8	19.9	37.3	28.5	43.5
65 +	59.6	49.5	5.2	51.3	47.0	6.5	73.4	53.1	52.1	9.7
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

9.3 Use of Medical Facilities

The use of medical facilities declined markedly between 2012 and 2023, falling from 24,443 to 13,607 persons who reported seeking care within the past month (Table 9.5). This contraction is striking given that the prevalence of chronic illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes increased over the same period (see Tables 9.1-9.3). The mismatch suggests that the reduction in reported utilization does not reflect healthier populations but rather potential barriers to access, particularly affordability and service availability. Rising out-of-pocket costs, under-resourced public facilities, and geographic disparities in health infrastructure may all contribute to this decline.

Despite the overall reduction, district health centers/clinics and private doctors' offices remained the backbone of health service delivery. In 2012, these facilities together accounted for 77 percent of visits, and in 2023, they still represented nearly three-quarters of all reported use, although with lower absolute numbers. District health centers fell from 11,815 to 6,350 visits, while private doctors' offices declined from 7,051 to 4,024. Public hospital usage also dropped sharply, from 4,205 to 2,706. In contrast, reliance on private clinics and hospitals grew slightly, from 271 persons in 2012 to 371 in 2023. This shift hints at a possible stratification of care, where households that are able to afford continue to access private services, while others reduce or delay care altogether.

Table 9-5 Main Medical Facility Utilized in the Past Month by Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Main Facility	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Public Hospital	1,706	2,314	4,020	1,781	2,424	4,205	1,134	1,572	2,706
District Health Centre/ Health Clinic	3,061	5,250	8,311	4,585	7,230	11,815	2,378	3,972	6,350
Private Doctor's Office	2,762	4,190	6,952	2,888	4,163	7,051	1,600	2,424	4,024
Pharmacy	409	598	1,007	224	294	518	31	64	95
Family Planning Clinic	29	140	169	2	40	42	-	2	2
Private Clinic/Hospital	125	135	260	111	160	271	144	227	371
Not Stated	-	-	-	265	270	535	24	15	39
Other	83	113	196	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't Know	-	-	-	3	3	6	8	12	20
Total	**8,175**	**12,740**	**20,915**	**9,859**	**14,584**	**24,443**	**5,319**	**8,288**	**13,607**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

9.3.1 Use of Medical Facilities by Census Division

Census divisional data highlight the uneven distribution of medical facility use across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Table 9.6). In 2012, the largest concentrations of visits were in Calliaqua (5,485), the Suburbs of Kingstown (2,653), and Kingstown itself (2,611). By 2023, however, these figures declined sharply, with Calliaqua falling to 2,979 (a 45.7 percent decrease), Kingstown to 1,405 (a 46.2 percent decline), and the Suburbs of Kingstown to 1,529 (a 42.4 percent decline). Smaller divisions such as Marriaqua and Barrouallie also reported reductions, with Marriaqua dropping from 1,456 in 2012 to 997 in 2023 and Barrouallie from 1,445 to 1,059. In Bridgetown, visits dropped by 34.5 percent, while Layou recorded a smaller reduction of 12.9 percent, falling from 653 in 2012 to 569 in 2023. In the Grenadines, the Northern Grenadines saw visits decrease from 562 to 374 (33.5 percent), while the Southern Grenadines fell from 350 to 239 (31.7 percent). These patterns suggest that while declines are widespread, they are more evident in more remote divisions where health service accessibility is already limited.

Moreover, the data demonstrate that while declines were universal, the steepest drops occurred in the larger and historically more active divisions such as Calliaqua, Kingstown, and the Suburbs of Kingstown. Smaller but steady decreases in rural divisions and the Grenadines confirm that the reduction in medical facility use is not isolated to urban centers but is a national trend, reflecting widespread shifts in health service utilization patterns over the intercensal period.

Table 9-6 Number of Persons Utilizing Medical Facilities within Previous Month by Census Division, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	Public Hospital	District Health Centres/ Clinic	Private Doctor's Office	Pharmacy	Family Planning Clinic	Private Clinic/ Hospital	Not Stated	Don't Know	Total
2012									
Kingstown	779	662	930	120	10	25	85	-	**2,611**
Suburbs of Kingstown	675	848	842	176	7	32	73	-	**2,653**
Calliaqua	801	2,201	2,179	83	6	56	159	-	**5,485**
Marriaqua	206	1,107	514	44	-	16	22	-	**1,909**
Bridgetown	133	977	345	2	-	25	36	-	**1,518**
Colonarie	126	1,081	381	12	3	21	25	-	**1,649**
Georgetown	280	916	377	12	1	7	25	-	**1,618**
Sandy Bay	47	632	136	2	1	3	8	-	**829**
Layou	214	528	398	15	1	16	34	-	**1,206**
Barrouallie	146	676	365	8	1	17	13	-	**1,226**
Chateaubelair	258	995	210	2	4	8	17	-	**1,494**
Northern Grenadines	440	492	262	43	4	27	20	-	**1,288**
Southern Grenadines	100	699	113	-	3	19	23	-	**957**
Total	**4,205**	**11,814**	**7,052**	**519**	**41**	**272**	**540**	**-**	**24,443**
2023									
Kingstown	383	275	673	7	0	63	4	0	**1,405**
Suburbs of Kingstown	389	774	493	0	0	60	5	5	**1,726**
Calliaqua	439	1,140	1,245	26	0	114	11	4	**2,979**
Marriaqua	129	730	335	1	0	22	3	3	**1,223**
Bridgetown	194	491	291	0	0	14	4	1	**995**
Colonarie	200	565	218	27	0	17	1	1	**1,029**
Georgetown	313	226	83	5	0	9	1	0	**637**
Sandy Bay	46	283	85	1	0	16	2	0	**433**
Layou	153	495	161	4	0	15	0	3	**831**
Barrouallie	108	503	135	1	1	8	2	3	**761**
Chateaubelair	200	293	98	14	0	13	2	0	**620**
Northern Grenadines	103	318	145	9	1	10	2	0	**588**
Southern Grenadines	49	257	62	0	0	10	2	0	**380**
Total	**2,706**	**6,350**	**4,024**	**95**	**2**	**371**	**39**	**20**	**13,607**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

9.3.2 Use of Medical Facilities by Chronic Illness

Patterns of medical facility utilization by chronic illness reveal significant changes between 2012 and 2023 (Table 9.7). In 2012, nearly half of persons with hypertension (49.3 percent) and close to 54 percent of those with diabetes reported using medical facilities. Arthritis and asthma patients also showed relatively high levels of service utilization at 45.3 percent and 33.8 percent, respectively. Heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease patients were among the most frequent users, with over 50 percent of individuals in each category accessing facilities.

Table 9-7 Number of Persons Utilizing Medical Facilities by Chronic Illness, 2012 & 2023

Chronic Illness	2012		2023	
	Count	Percent (%)	Count	Percent (%)
Sickle Cell Anemia	374	37.1	198	27.0
Arthritis/Rheumatism	2,367	45.3	1,352	34.7
Asthma	2,058	33.8	1,086	23.2
Diabetes	3,388	53.7	2,722	38.7
Hypertension/High Blood Pressure	5,392	49.3	4,067	33.2
Heart Disease	524	52.7	443	46.4
Stroke	229	54.7	-	-
Kidney Disease	167	51.1	242	57.6
Cancer	151	55.1	203	50.9
Lupus	7	25.9	32	51.6
Carpal tunnel Syndrome	17	37.8	-	-
Glaucoma	264	45.4	294	45.0

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Note: It is important to note that stroke and carpal tunnel syndrome were not listed as categories in the 2023 census questionnaire. These cases may have been captured under "Other (specify)," but the absence of explicit categories makes direct comparison unreliable.

By 2023, patterns of use shifted notably. Kidney disease recorded the highest proportion of persons accessing medical facilities at 57.6 percent, followed by lupus (51.6 percent), cancer (50.9 percent), and heart disease (46.4 percent). Glaucoma patients also reported strong engagement at 45.0 percent. Among the most common conditions, hypertension and diabetes recorded lower facility use than in 2012, at 33.2 percent and 38.7 percent respectively. Asthma (23.2 percent), arthritis/rheumatism (34.7 percent), and sickle cell anemia (27.0 percent) showed more moderate utilization levels.

The data suggest a transition from high levels of facility use among the most prevalent conditions in 2012 (such as hypertension and diabetes) toward relatively greater reliance on services among patients with less common but often more severe conditions like kidney disease, cancer, and lupus in 2023. This points to possible changes in disease management strategies and care-seeking behavior across the population.

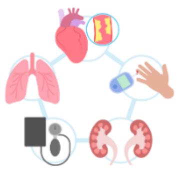
9.4 Conclusion

The health profile of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has been increasingly shaped by the rising burden of chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Census data from 2001, 2012, and 2023 show persistent growth in conditions such as hypertension, which rose from 7.1 percent to 11.3 percent, and diabetes, which climbed from 3.4 percent to 6.5 percent. While asthma and arthritis showed modest declines since 2012, they remain significant contributors to the national disease burden. Gender and age continue to play a defining role. Women and older adults remain disproportionately affected, particularly in relation to hypertension, diabetes, and arthritis, underscoring how gender and aging are central to the chronic disease burden.

At the same time, the use of medical facilities declined sharply, dropping from 24,443 persons in 2012 to 13,607 in 2023, despite the rising prevalence of illness. The decline was widespread across divisions, with some of the steepest reductions occurring in major centers such as Calliaqua, Kingstown, and the Suburbs of Kingstown. This points to possible systemic barriers to healthcare access, including affordability, service availability, and uneven geographic distribution of health infrastructure. District health centers and private doctors' offices remain the main points of care, but their reduced patronage highlights potential gaps in meeting population needs.

Finally, analysis by type of illness shows that while common conditions such as hypertension and diabetes accounted for the largest numbers of cases, their facility utilization rates fell in 2023 compared to 2012. In contrast, less prevalent but more severe illnesses (such as kidney disease, cancer, lupus, and heart disease), showed the highest rates of medical facility use, with over half of affected individuals seeking care. This divergence indicates a shift in care-seeking behavior, where facility use is increasingly concentrated among those with the most acute health needs. Together, these findings highlight both the growing burden of NCDs and the need to strengthen health systems to ensure timely and equitable access to care across the population.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 9
HEALTH



Chronic Illness Burden:
Hypertension (12,239 cases) and diabetes (7,039) are the leading chronic conditions, followed by asthma and arthritis

Gendered Health Divide:
Women report higher rates of hypertension (65% of cases) and diabetes (63%), while asthma is more evenly split.

Age-Linked Risk:
Over 50% of persons aged 65+ reported living with chronic illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, or arthritis

Medical Facility Dependence:
District health centers are the most utilized (6,350 users), outpacing private doctors (4,024) and public hospitals (2,706)

Severe Conditions Drive Care Seeking:
Over 50% of cancer (50.9%) and lupus (51.6%) patients used a facility in the past month

Chronic Illness and Care Needs :
Facility use is highest among persons with diabetes (38.7%), hypertension (33.2%), and arthritis (34.7%)

Chapter 10. Children

10.1 Introduction

Children, defined as persons from birth to 14 years of age, represent a vital sub-population in demographic analysis. They embody a dependent group within households and communities, as they are largely unable to contribute economically and therefore rely on family members, institutions, and the state for care and support (Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 2012). Beyond their demographic weight, children hold a central place in national development policy because of their rights to education, healthcare, protection, and nurturing.

International census standards emphasize the importance of treating children as a distinct population group. According to the United Nations (2008)[23], statistics on children should focus not only on their age and sex distribution but also on key aspects of well-being, including school attendance, relationship to household head, and health status. Particular attention is often directed to subgroups such as children under five, who are at risk of under-enumeration, and the girl child, whose outcomes in education, early marriage, and health remain priority areas in global monitoring.

This chapter, therefore, examines the demographic profile of children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, drawing on data from the 2012 and 2023 Population and Housing Censuses. It analyzes their size, age structure, and sex distribution, as well as key indicators such as school attendance, household relationships, and dependency status. In doing so, the chapter provides critical insights into the well-being of children and highlights progress and challenges in meeting national development goals and international commitments.

10.2 Sub-population of Children

Children aged 0-14 years accounted for 22,382 persons in 2023, representing a decline of 17 percent compared to 2012, when 26,926 children were enumerated. This contraction reflects broader demographic changes, including falling fertility and declining cohort sizes at younger ages. Despite the decline, the distribution by sex has remained stable over time, with boys consistently accounting for just over half of all children (50.6 percent in 2023, compared to 50.8 percent in 2012). Girls made up 49.4 percent of the child population in 2023.

The age distribution of children further underscores the impact of demographic transition. The youngest cohort (ages 0-4) experienced the sharpest decline, falling from 8,645 in 2012 to 5,609 in 2023, representing a reduction of 35.1 percent. By contrast, the 10-14 age group fell only modestly, from 9,760 to 8,557 (a 12.3 percent decline), while the 5-9 age group dropped from 8,521 to 8,216 (3.6 percent) (Table 10.1 and Map 6 illustrate the distribution of children across census divisions). These patterns suggest that fertility decline in recent years has already reduced the number of births, while older child cohorts remain relatively larger, reflecting higher birth rates in earlier years.

[23] United Nations. (2008). *Principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses: Revision 2*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesm/seriesm_67rev2e.pdf

Table 10-1 Number of Children by Five-year Age Ranges and Sex, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
2012						
0–4	4,314	49.9	4,331	50.1	**8,645**	**100**
5–9	4,308	50.6	4,212	49.4	**8,521**	**100**
10–14	5,043	51.7	4,717	48.3	**9,760**	**100**
Total	**13,665**	**50.8**	**13,260**	**49.3**	**26,926**	**100**
2023						
0–4	2,807	50	2,802	50	**5,609**	**100**
5–9	4,179	50.9	4,037	49.1	**8,216**	**100**
10–14	4,350	50.8	4,207	49.2	**8,557**	**100**
Total	**11,336**	**50.6**	**11,046**	**49.4**	**22,382**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 10-2 Number of Children by Five-year Age Range and Census Divisions, 2012 & 2023

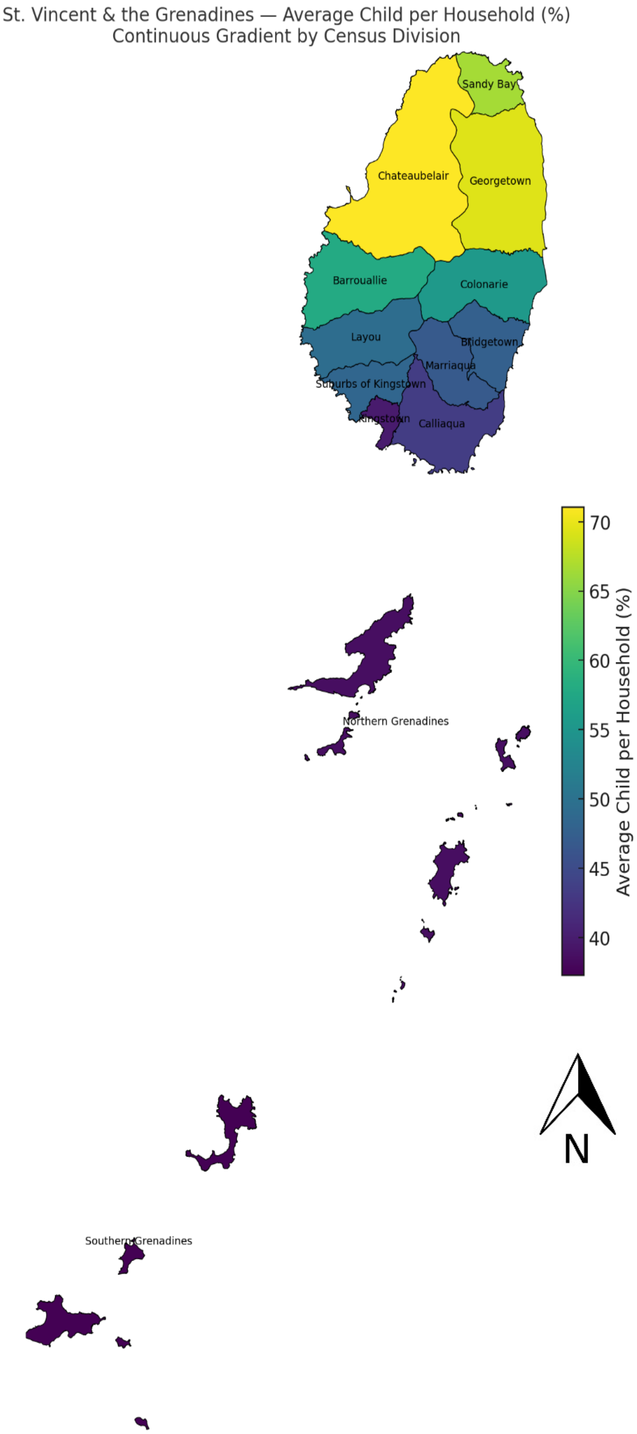
Census Division	2012				2023			
	Five Year Age Group							
	0-4	5-9	10-14	Total	0-4	5-9	10-14	Total
Kingstown	917	989	1,084	**2,990**	468	760	705	**1,933**
Suburbs of Kingstown	1,100	1,159	1,316	**3,575**	819	1,278	1,364	**3,461**
Calliaqua	1,766	1,696	2,039	**5,501**	1,233	1,819	1,971	**5,023**
Marriaqua	667	580	729	**1,976**	335	601	610	**1,546**
Bridgetown	502	506	621	**1,629**	333	483	473	**1,289**
Colonarie	552	581	592	**1,725**	388	520	553	**1,461**
Georgetown	652	560	665	**1,877**	469	628	588	**1,685**
Sandy Bay	223	213	266	**702**	153	184	246	**583**
Layou	471	492	581	**1,544**	356	455	487	**1,298**
Barrouallie	486	527	536	**1,549**	309	457	501	**1,267**
Chateaubelair	547	484	557	**1,588**	301	426	412	**1,139**
Northern Grenadines	450	430	455	**1,335**	252	339	364	**955**
Southern Grenadines	312	303	319	**934**	193	266	283	**742**
Total	**8,645**	**8,520**	**9,760**	**26,925**	**5,609**	**8,216**	**8,557**	**22,382**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Between 2012 and 2023, the number of children declined across every census division, underscoring a nationwide demographic shift. Calliaqua continued to record the largest child population in 2023 (5,023), followed by the Suburbs of Kingstown (3,461) and Kingstown proper (1,933), yet each of these areas experienced notable reductions from 2012 levels. The declines were particularly steep in smaller divisions such as Marriaqua, which fell by 21.7 percent, Sandy Bay by 16.9 percent, and the Southern Grenadines by 20.6 percent. Even in the larger divisions where child numbers remained relatively high, contractions of between 3 and 9 percent were recorded, confirming that population decline among children is not confined to rural or remote areas but reflects a national trend.

The consistent decline in the child population across all divisions signals important demographic changes that will have long-term implications for education, labor force renewal, and social development.

Map 6 Average Child per Household by Census Division, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

10.3 School Attendance

School attendance among children aged 3 to 14 years in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines showed notable shifts between 2012 and 2023. In 2012, 20,109 children were reported as attending school, accounting for 91.7 percent of this age group, while 4.7 percent were not attending and 3.6 percent had their attendance status not stated. By 2023, the number of children attending school declined to 18,330, or 95.4 percent of this age group, even though the total child population had also contracted (Table 10.3). This indicates that while the absolute number of children in school fell, the proportion attending school actually increased, suggesting stronger compliance with school enrollment despite demographic decline.

Across age groups, attendance patterns showed some variation. Among children within the 3-4 year age group, attendance rose from 74.3 percent in 2012 to 86.9 percent in 2023, reflecting improvements in early childhood education access and participation. For primary school-aged children (5-9 years), attendance was consistently high at over 92 percent in both census years, but the actual number of children fell from 8,522 in 2012 to 8,216 in 2023. Among older children (10-14 years), attendance remained the highest at over 96 percent in both census years, though numbers dropped from 9,760 in 2012 to 8,557 in 2023, mirroring broader population declines.

Table 10-3 Number of Children, Age 3 – 14 Attending School by Sex and Age Range, 2012 & 2023

Age Group & Sex	School Attendance Status							
	2012				2023			
	Yes Attending	Not Attending	Not Stated	Total	Yes Attending	Not Attending	Not Stated	Total
Male								
3 – 4	1,333	358	131	**1,822**	1,037	173	3	**1,213**
5 – 9	4,104	74	131	**4,309**	4,004	166	9	**4,179**
10 – 14	4,763	127	152	**5,042**	4,201	140	9	**4,350**
Total	**10,200**	**559**	**414**	**11,173**	**9,242**	**479**	**21**	**9,742**
Female								
3 – 4	1,381	328	114	**1,823**	1,078	139	3	**1,220**
5 – 9	4,041	59	113	**4,213**	3,924	108	5	**4,037**
10 – 14	4,487	78	153	**4,718**	4,086	109	12	**4,207**
Total	**9,909**	**465**	**380**	**10,754**	**9,088**	**356**	**20**	**9,464**
Both Sexes								
3 – 4	2,714	689	246	**3,649**	2,115	312	6	**2,433**
5 – 9	8,145	133	244	**8,522**	7,928	274	14	**8,216**
10 – 14	9,250	205	305	**9,760**	8,287	249	21	**8,557**
Total	**20,109**	**1,024**	**794**	**21,927**	**18,330**	**835****	**41****	**19,206**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023
*** See Footnote[24]*

[24] NA – Not applicable – Data not collected in 2012; A total of 835 children were not attending school, while 41 did not state their status, making 876 children not enrolled or undisclosed

Gender differences were minimal, with both boys and girls showing very similar attendance rates across all age groups. In 2023, for example, 95.1 percent of boys and 96 percent of girls aged 3-14 were attending school. This parity indicates that gender-related barriers to schooling are not a significant concern at the primary and lower secondary levels. However, the modest number of children not attending school in 2023 (835, or 4.3 percent) remains an issue, particularly in the 3-4 age group, where one in eight children was not enrolled.

The aforementioned highlights that while demographic decline has reduced the overall number of children in school, school attendance rates have improved.

10.4 Child Dependency Ratio

The child dependency ratio measures the number of children aged 0-14 relative to the working-age population (15-64 years). It represents the proportion of dependents supported by those in their prime working years, reflecting the economic pressures placed on households and the wider society. According to the United Nations, this ratio provides an important demographic indicator of the balance between those who are economically dependent and those available to support them (United Nations, n.d.)[25].

Table 10-4 Child Dependency by Census Divisions, 2012

Census Division	2012			2023		
	0-14	15-64	Child Dependency Ratio	0-14	15-64	Child Dependency Ratio
Kingstown	2,990	8,486	35.2	1,933	7,091	27.3
Suburbs of Kingstown	3,575	9,305	38.4	3,461	10,704	32.3
Calliaqua	5,501	16,007	34.4	5,023	17,996	27.9
Marriaqua	1,976	5,156	38.3	1,546	4,905	31.5
Bridgetown	1,629	4,298	37.9	1,289	4,315	29.9
Colonarie	1,725	4,498	38.4	1,461	4,458	32.8
Georgetown	1,877	4,552	41.2	1,685	4,719	35.7
Sandy Bay	702	1,619	43.4	583	1,706	34.2
Layou	1,544	4,088	37.8	1,298	4,144	31.3
Barrouallie	1,549	3,669	42.2	1,267	3,696	34.3
Chateaubelair	1,588	3,659	43.4	1,139	3,178	35.8
Northern Grenadines	1,335	4,160	32.1	955	3,326	28.7
Southern Grenadines	934	2,775	33.7	742	2,482	29.9
Total	**26,925**	**72,272**	**37.3**	**22,382**	**72,720**	**30.8**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

At the national level, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recorded a decline in the child dependency ratio from 37.3 percent in 2012 to 30.8 percent in 2023 (Table 10.4). This indicates that for every 100 persons

[25] United Nations. (n.d.). Dependency ratio: Methodology sheet. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/methodology_sheets/demographics/dependency_ratio.pdf

of working age, there were about 37 children in 2012 compared to only 31 in 2023. The reduction is consistent across almost all census divisions, with the sharpest decreases observed in Kingstown (35.2 to 27.3 percent) and the Suburbs of Kingstown (38.4 to 32.3 percent). These trends align with the overall decline in the child population, as reflected in earlier sections, and suggest declining fertility levels combined with the demographic transition toward an aging population.

Regional differences remain important to note. In 2023, the highest child dependency ratios were recorded in Georgetown (35.7 percent) and Chateaubelair (35.8 percent), while the lowest were observed in the Northern Grenadines (28.7 percent) and Kingstown (27.3 percent) (See Map 8). This implies that rural and more remote communities continue to face relatively higher dependency burdens, while urban areas are experiencing more pronounced fertility declines and population aging.

Closely related to this indicator, the ratio of children to every 100 employed persons also fell sharply, from 66.0 children in 2012 to 48.2 in 2023 (Table 10.5). This suggests that although the number of employed persons increased from 40,821 in 2012 to 46,480 in 2023, the pool of children under 15 declined significantly, reducing the economic dependency burden per employed person. The steepest declines were observed in urban divisions such as Kingstown (57.3 to 39.8) and Calliaqua (56.4 to 43.3).

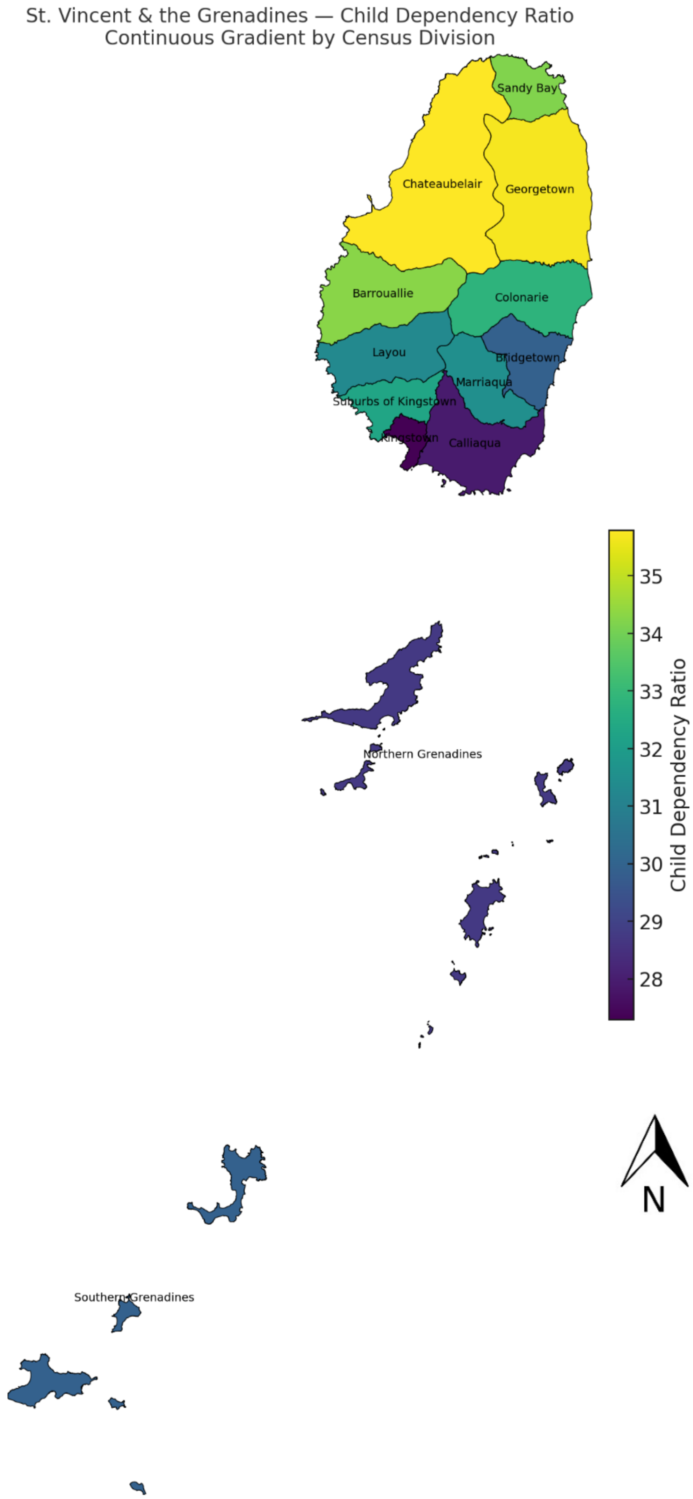
Table 10-5 Ratio of Children to Every 100 Persons Employed, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	2012			2023		
	0 - 14 years	Employed Persons	Children to 100 Persons Employed	0 - 14 years	Employed Persons	Children to 100 Persons Employed
Kingstown	2,990	5,219	57.3	1,933	4,855	39.8
Suburbs of Kingstown	3,575	5,155	69.4	3,461	7,168	48.3
Calliaqua	5,501	9,762	56.4	5,023	11,606	43.3
Marriaqua	1,976	2,954	66.9	1,546	3,301	46.8
Bridgetown	1,629	2,307	70.6	1,289	2,714	47.5
Colonarie	1,725	2,146	80.4	1,461	2,631	55.5
Georgetown	1,877	2,291	81.9	1,685	2,429	69.4
Sandy Bay	702	861	81.5	583	877	66.5
Layou	1,544	2,172	71.1	1,298	2,640	49.2
Barrouallie	1,549	1,808	85.7	1,267	2,193	57.8
Chateaubelair	1,588	1,740	91.3	1,139	1,603	71.1
Northern Grenadines	1,335	2,470	54.1	955	2,475	38.6
Southern Grenadines	934	1,936	48.2	742	1,988	37.3
Total	**26,925**	**40,821**	**66.0**	**22,382**	**46,480**	**48.2**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

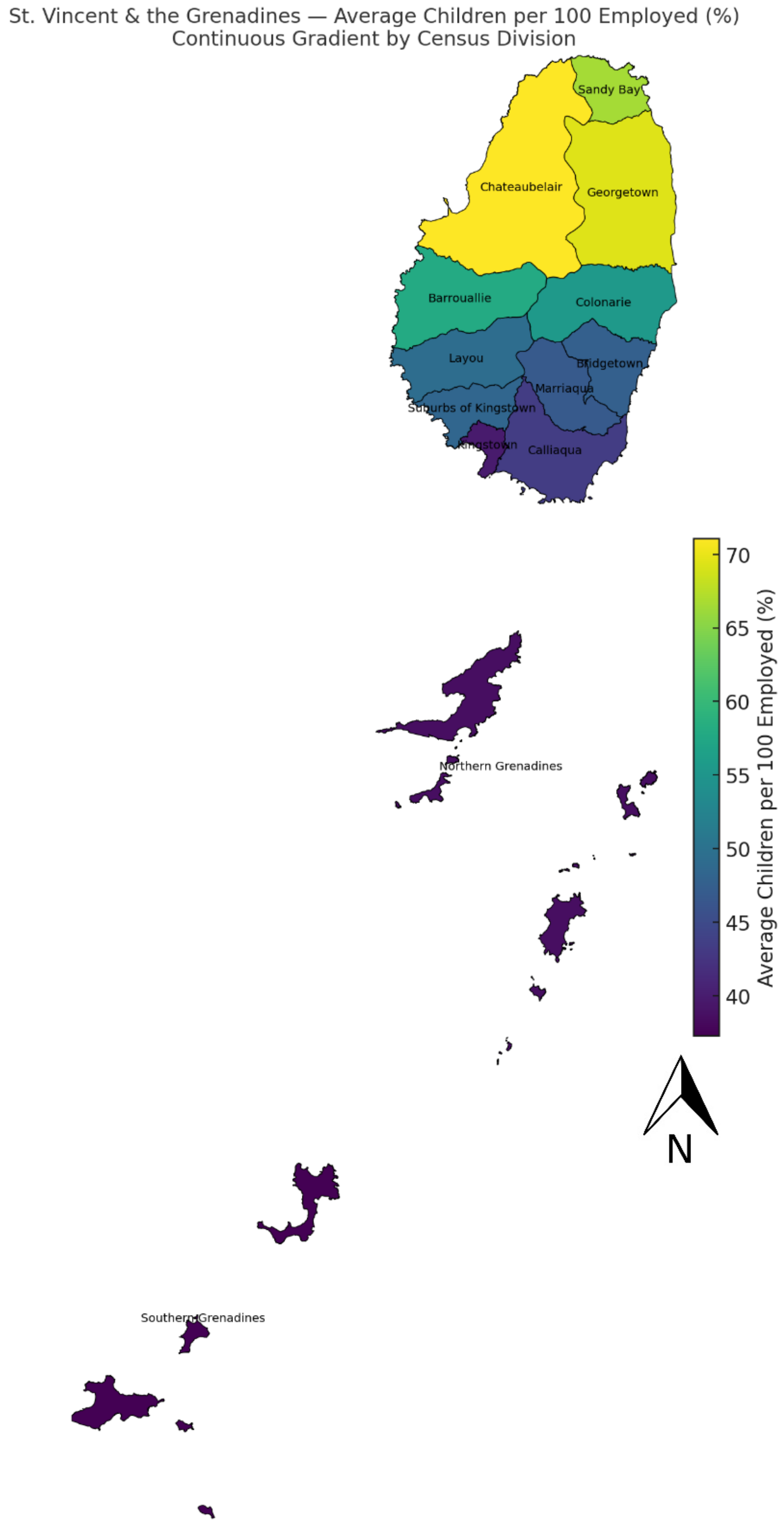
The decline in the child dependency ratio signals reduced pressure on the working-age population, offering short-term economic benefits. However, it also points to an aging population ahead, requiring policies that balance current gains with future support needs. In this regard, sustained investment in education, health, and youth development will be critical to ensure long-term demographic resilience.

Map 7 Child Dependency Ratio by Census Division, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Map 8 Average Children per 100 Employed by Census Divisions, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

10.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the child population in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines between 2012 and 2023 reveals a clear demographic transition, marked by declining numbers of children across all census divisions. The sharpest reductions were observed among the youngest cohorts (ages 0-4), reflecting sustained fertility decline. While boys continued to represent a slightly higher share of the child population, the sex distribution has remained relatively balanced over time. These shifts highlight both the demographic weight of past fertility trends and the emerging reality of smaller child cohorts entering the population structure.

Despite the contraction in child numbers, indicators of well-being such as school attendance improved during the intercensal period. The proportion of children enrolled in school rose, particularly at the early childhood level, underscoring advances in access and participation. However, the modest proportion of children not attending school, particularly among those aged 3-4, signals areas where further policy focus is required.

The steady decline in the child dependency ratio and the ratio of children to employed persons suggests reduced economic pressure on working-age populations in the short term. Yet, this trend also foreshadows an aging society that will require careful planning to sustain economic growth, social protection, and intergenerational support. This chapter therefore underscores the importance of continued investment in children’s health, education, and development, even as their numbers decline, to secure both present and future demographic resilience.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS – CHAPTER 10
CHILDREN

Balanced Gender Distribution:
Children 0–14 years totaled 22,382, split almost equally between males (50.6%) and females (49.4%)

Age Structure:
The largest group is 10–14 years (8,557), followed by 5–9 years (8,216) and 0–4 years (5,609)

Geographic Concentration:
Calliaqua (5,023) and Suburbs of Kingstown (3,461) have the highest child population i.e. over 38% of children

High School Attendance:
Among ages 3–14, about 19,343 children (87%) attend school, while 2,990 (13%) did not

Child Dependency:
National child dependency ratio stands at 31 children per 100 working-age adults

Employment-Based Ratio:
There are 48 children for every 100 employed persons nationally, peaking in Sandy Bay (66) and Chateaubelair (71)

Chapter 11. Youth

11.1 Introduction

Youth is widely recognized as a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, marked by significant physical, psychological, social, and economic changes. The United Nations defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years, acknowledging, however, that the term "youth" may vary depending on national contexts (United Nations, n.d.)[26]. This life stage is often characterized by the pursuit of education, entry into the labour force, and the beginning of family formation, all of which influence broader patterns of national development.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the 2023 Population and Housing Census identified 15,266 persons within this cohort, equal to 14.0 percent of the total population, continuing the decline observed since 2001 and 2012. This downward trend reflects sustained fertility reduction and the gradual ageing of the population. Although smaller in absolute numbers, the youth population remains central to national development. With a near-balanced sex composition (51.4 percent male and 48.6 percent female) this group represents the future labour force and a key driver of social and economic transformation. The following sections examine their demographic profile, educational participation, marital and union status, and economic activity to provide insights into both opportunities and emerging challenges.

11.2 Sub-Population of Youth

The youth population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has contracted significantly across the last two decades, reflecting a combination of demographic transition, fertility decline, and structural ageing. In 2001, there were 21,313 youths aged 15-24 years, accounting for 19.7 percent of the total population. By 2012, this number fell to 18,519 (17.0 percent), and by 2023 further to 15,266 (14.0 percent) (Table 11.1; Figure 11.1). Overall, this represents a decline of 6,047 youths, or 28.4 percent, since 2001. The sharp reduction demonstrates the cumulative effect of falling birth cohorts in the past two decades, suggesting that the country is moving into a more advanced stage of demographic transition, with implications for labor supply and population ageing.

The sex distribution of the youth population has remained remarkably stable over time. In 2001, the share was almost evenly split at 50.7 percent male and 49.3 percent female. A similar pattern was observed in 2012 (50.8 percent male, 49.2 percent female) and in 2023 (51.4 percent male, 48.6 percent female) (Table 11.1). This stable distribution indicates that shifts in fertility, mortality, and migration have had minimal impact on the relative proportions of young males and females.

[26] United Nations. (n.d.). *Youth*. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth

Table 11-1 Number of Youths by Age Group and Sex, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	Sex					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
2012						
15-19	5,053	51.0	4,859	49.0	**9,912**	**100**
20-24	4,354	50.6	4,253	49.4	**8,607**	**100**
Total	**9,407**	**50.8**	**9,112**	**49.2**	**18,519**	**100**
2023						
15-19	4,121	51.2	3,928	48.8	**8,049**	**100**
20-24	3,731	51.7	3,486	48.3	**7,217**	**100**
Total	**7,852**	**51.4**	**7,414**	**48.6**	**15,266**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Figure 11.1 Number of Youths by Age Group and Sex 2001 and 2012

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Age breakdowns within the youth population show modest but notable changes. In 2012, the younger subgroup (15-19 years) comprised 53.5 percent of all youths compared with 46.5 percent for the 20-24 category. By 2023, the share of person 15-19-years declined slightly to 52.7 percent, while the 20-24 group increased to 47.3 percent. This pattern indicates that the youth cohort is gradually shifting toward older ages, as smaller birth cohorts replace larger ones at the younger end of the spectrum. If low fertility continues, future censuses may record more 20-24 year olds than 15-19 year olds, signaling a narrowing youth base.

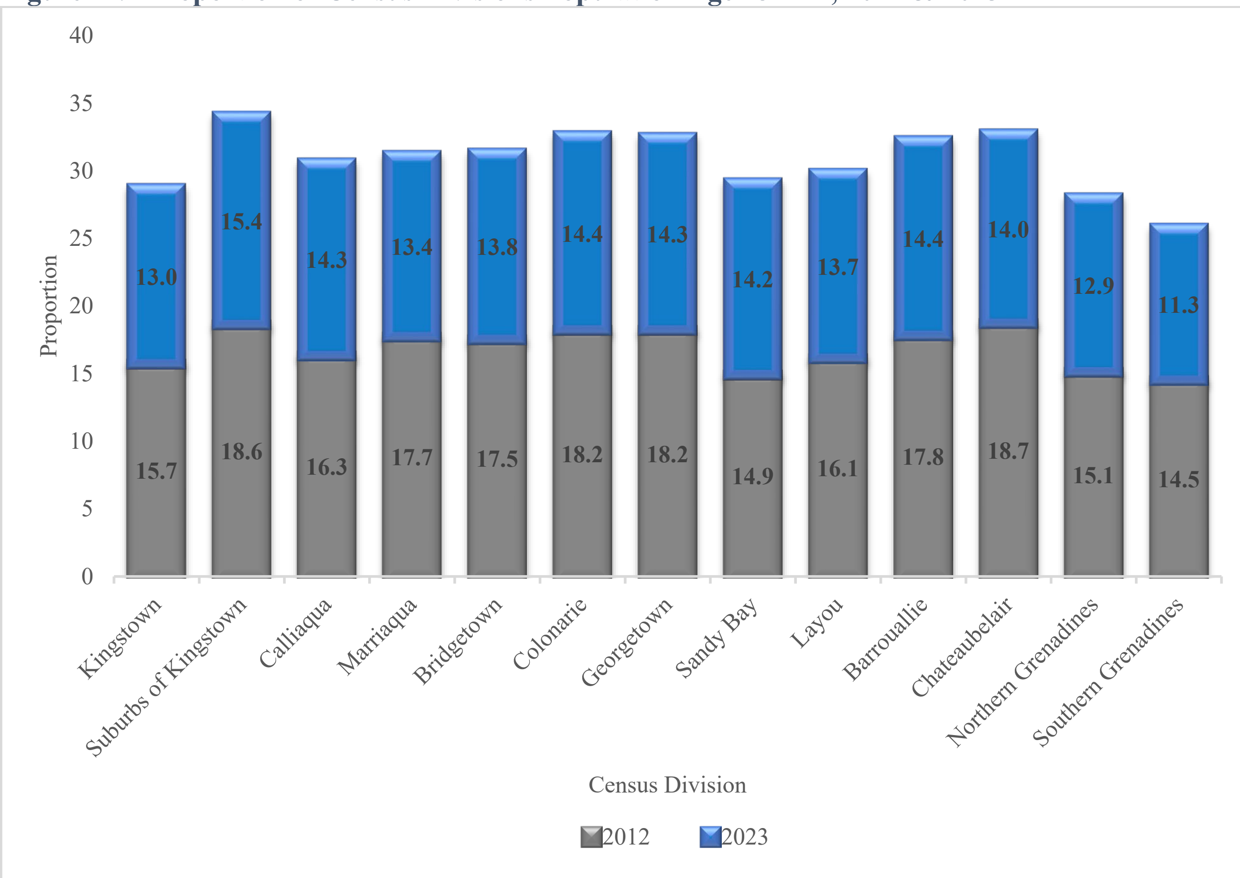
Table 11-2 Number of Youths by Age Groups and Census Divisions, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	Age Group					
	15-19	%	20-24	%	Total	%
2012						
Kingstown	1,060	53.1	936	46.9	**1,996**	**100**
Suburbs of Kingstown	1,358	53.1	1,201	46.9	**2,559**	**100**
Calliaqua	2,077	53.2	1,826	46.8	**3,903**	**100**
Marriaqua	738	53.6	639	46.4	**1,377**	**100**
Bridgetown	664	57.8	485	42.2	**1,149**	**100**
Colonarie	657	52.7	590	47.3	**1,247**	**100**
Georgetown	690	54.0	593	46.0	**1,283**	**100**
Sandy Bay	223	58.1	161	41.9	**384**	**100**
Layou	553	54.2	467	45.8	**1,020**	**100**
Barrouallie	558	55.7	443	44.3	**1,001**	**100**
Chateaubelair	584	54.1	495	45.9	**1,079**	**100**
Northern Grenadines	490	52.6	442	47.4	**932**	**100**
Southern Grenadines	260	44.1	329	55.9	**589**	**100**
Total	**9,912**	**53.5**	**8,607**	**46.5**	**18,519**	**100**
2023						
Kingstown	744	53.6	644	46.4	**1,388**	**100**
Suburbs of Kingstown	1,297	53.5	1,126	46.5	**2,423**	**100**
Calliaqua	1,951	51.4	1,843	48.6	**3,794**	**100**
Marriaqua	530	53.6	459	46.4	**989**	**100**
Bridgetown	470	53.0	417	47.0	**887**	**100**
Colonarie	507	52.3	463	47.7	**970**	**100**
Georgetown	524	51.5	494	48.5	**1,018**	**100**
Sandy Bay	182	50.1	181	49.9	**363**	**100**
Layou	445	51.1	425	48.9	**870**	**100**
Barrouallie	467	57.6	344	42.4	**811**	**100**
Chateaubelair	367	53.4	320	46.6	**687**	**100**
Northern Grenadines	365	55.4	294	44.6	**659**	**100**
Southern Grenadines	200	49.1	207	50.9	**407**	**100**
Total	**8,049**	**52.7**	**7,217**	**47.3**	**15,266**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Spatial distribution reveals striking contrasts across census divisions. In both 2012 and 2023, the largest concentrations of youths were in urban and peri-urban centers. In 2012, Calliaqua (3,903 youths), Suburbs of Kingstown (2,559), and Kingstown (1,996) together accounted for 45.7% of the youth population. By 2023, although absolute numbers declined, these areas remained dominant, with Calliaqua (3,794), Suburbs of Kingstown (2,423), and Kingstown (1,388) collaboratively accounting for 49.8% (Table 11.2). Conversely, rural divisions such as Sandy Bay (384 youths in 2012, 363 in 2023), Chateaubelair (1,079 to 687), and the Southern Grenadines (589 to 407) consistently recorded the smallest counts. Figure 11.2 highlights these disparities, showing declines across all divisions, with the sharpest reductions in Kingstown (30.5 percent) and the Southern Grenadines (30.9 percent) between 2012 and 2023. These patterns reflect both declining fertility and migration dynamics, as youth gravitate toward larger urban and suburban centers, while smaller or more remote communities experience demographic weakening.

Figure 11.2 Proportion of Census Divisions Population Age 15 – 24, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

At the household level, youth density has also fallen. In 2001, there were on average 0.7 youths per household, meaning roughly three households for every two youths. This ratio declined to 0.5 in 2012 and further to 0.4 in 2023 (Table 11.3). The reduction reflects both the contraction of the youth population and an increase in the number of households. Rural divisions such as Chateaubelair and Georgetown typically reported higher youth-to-household ratios, reflecting larger household sizes and a possible stronger reliance on extended family structures. Urban areas, by contrast, such as Kingstown and the Suburbs of Kingstown, showed lower ratios consistent with smaller household sizes, delayed family formation, and higher levels of out-migration.

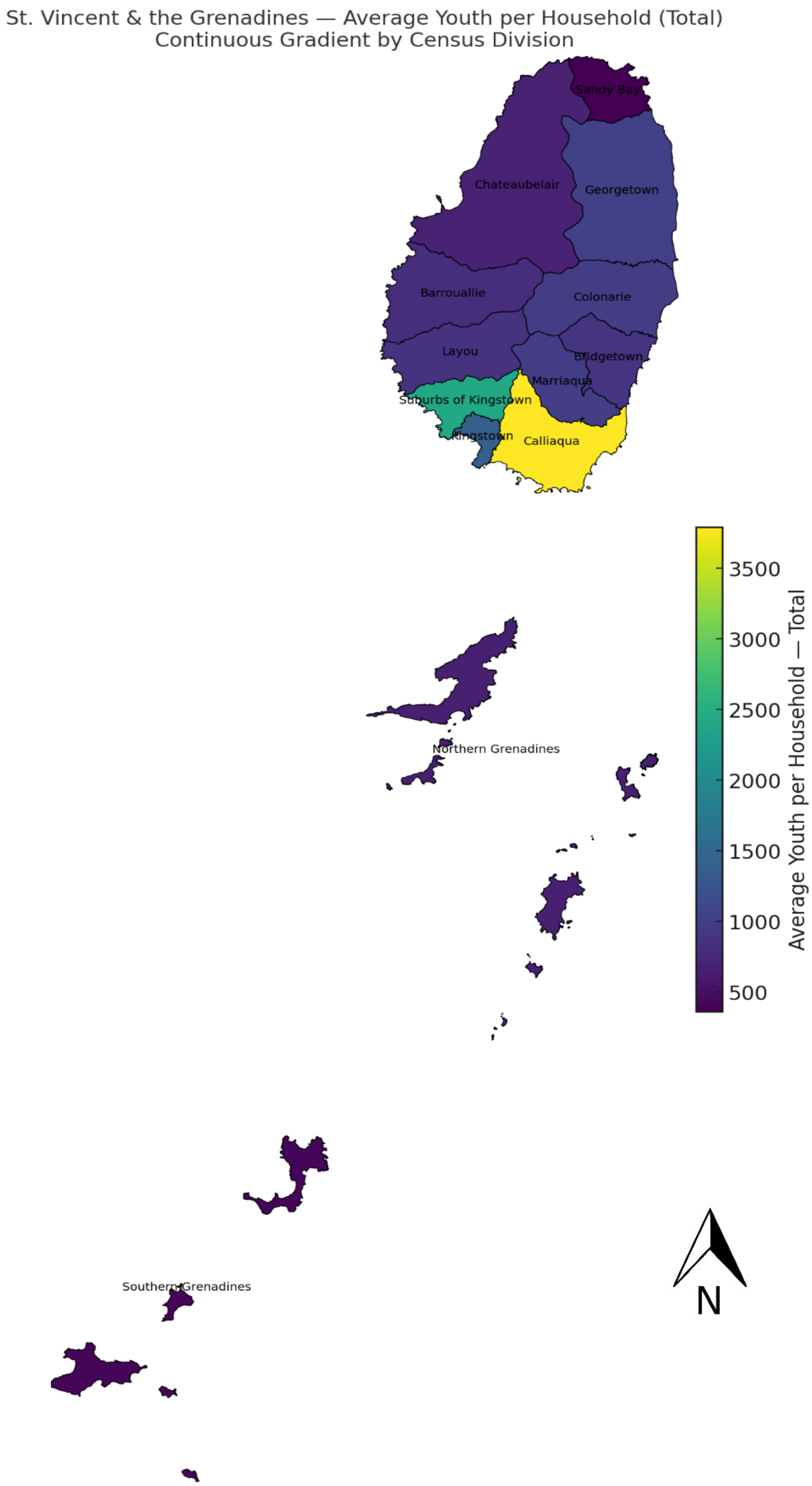
Table 11-3 Ratio of Youths and Households by Census Divisions, 2012 & 2023

Census Division	Number of Youths	Number of Households	Average Youth Per Household	Average Household Per Youth
2012				
Kingstown	1,996	4,278	0.47	2.14
Suburbs of Kingstown	2,559	4,385	0.58	1.71
Calliaqua	3,903	8,655	0.45	2.22
Marriaqua	1,377	2,436	0.57	1.77
Bridgetown	1,149	2,085	0.55	1.81
Colonarie	1,247	2,174	0.57	1.74
Georgetown	1,283	2,188	0.59	1.71
Sandy Bay	384	662	0.58	1.72
Layou	1,020	2,178	0.47	2.14
Barrouallie	1,001	1,806	0.55	1.8
Chateaubelair	1,079	1,669	0.65	1.55
Northern Grenadines	932	2,673	0.35	2.87
Southern Grenadines	589	1,640	0.36	2.78
Total	**18,519**	**36,829**	**0.5**	**1.99**
2023				
Kingstown	1,388	4,021	0.35	2.90
Suburbs of Kingstown	2,423	5,250	0.46	2.17
Calliaqua	3,794	9,877	0.38	2.60
Marriaqua	989	2,669	0.37	2.70
Bridgetown	887	2,281	0.39	2.57
Colonarie	970	2,296	0.42	2.37
Georgetown	1,018	2,436	0.42	2.39
Sandy Bay	363	738	0.49	2.03
Layou	870	2,386	0.36	2.74
Barrouallie	811	1,986	0.41	2.45
Chateaubelair	687	1,580	0.43	2.30
Northern Grenadines	659	1,833	0.36	2.78
Southern Grenadines	407	1,616	0.25	3.97
Total	**15,266**	**38,969**	**0.4**	**2.55**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The contraction of the youth population carries important demographic consequences. Since 2001, the loss of more than 6,000 youths has reduced the flow of new entrants into the labour force, narrowing the country’s demographic base. While smaller cohorts may temporarily ease household dependency, they also place greater pressure on a shrinking working-age population to support a growing elderly segment. The concentration of youth in urban centers and steady declines in rural areas further highlight spatial imbalances that contribute to the weakening of smaller communities and the reshaping of the national demographic structure.

Map 9 Average Youth Per Household by Census Division, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

11.3 School Attendance and Educational Attainment

School attendance and completion are central to youth development, strongly associated with health, psychosocial well-being, and long-term life outcomes (Kearney, Childs, & Burke, 2022)[27]. Education is also recognized globally as a cornerstone of sustainable development and poverty reduction, with international frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals and the World Programme of Action for Youth identifying it as a critical driver of equity and opportunity (UNDESA/UNESCO, 2013)[28]. Against this backdrop, census data provide an important measure of how effectively youth are engaging in education and transitioning across levels of attainment.

Table 11-4 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Groups and School Attendance, 2012 & 2023

Sex & Age Group	Yes (Full & Part Time)	No	Don't Know / Not Stated	Total
2012				
Male 15-19	2,956	1,942	155	**5,053**
Male 20-24	317	3,906	131	**4,354**
Male Total	3,273	5,848	286	**9,407**
Female 15-19	2,913	1,818	128	**4,859**
Female 20-24	563	3,582	108	**4,253**
Female Total	3,476	5,400	236	**9,112**
Both 15-19	5,869	3,760	283	**9,912**
Both 20-24	880	7,488	239	**8,607**
Both Total	**6,749**	**11,248**	**522**	**18,519**
2023				
Male 15-19	2,618	1,497	6	**4,121**
Male 20-24	214	3,509	8	**3,731**
Male Total	2,832	5,006	14	**7,852**
Female 15-19	2,652	1,270	6	**3,928**
Female 20-24	517	2,960	9	**3,486**
Female Total	3,169	4,230	15	**7,414**
Both 15-19	5,270	2,767	12	**8,049**
Both 20-24	731	6,469	17	**7,217**
Both Total	**6,001**	**9,236**	**29**	**15,266**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

[27] Kearney, C. A., Childs, J., & Burke, S. (2022). Social forces, social justice, and school attendance problems in youth. *Contemporary School Psychology,* 27(1), 136–151

[28] UNDESA/UNESCO. (2013). *Youth and education*. United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-education.pdf

As shown in Table 11.4, 6,749 youths were enrolled in school in 2012 compared with 6,001 in 2023. While this represents a decline of nearly 750 students, the contraction reflects the shrinking youth population rather than falling participation. In proportional terms, enrolment remained broadly stable at around four in ten youths, suggesting that school participation has been sustained despite demographic decline.

Age remains the primary determinant of school attendance. In 2012, 59.2% of youths aged 15-19 were enrolled in school, compared with 10.2% among those aged 20-24 (Table 11.4 & Figure 11.4). By 2023, the pattern persisted: 65.5% of 15-19 year olds were enrolled (5,270 of 8,049), while 10.1% of 20-24 year olds were enrolled (731 of 7,217) (Tables 11.4 and Figure 11.4). These figures confirm that schooling is concentrated in late adolescence, with a sharp drop-off as youths enter early adulthood.

Table 11-5 Youth Population Attending School by Sex, Age Group and Type of Institution, 2012 & 2023

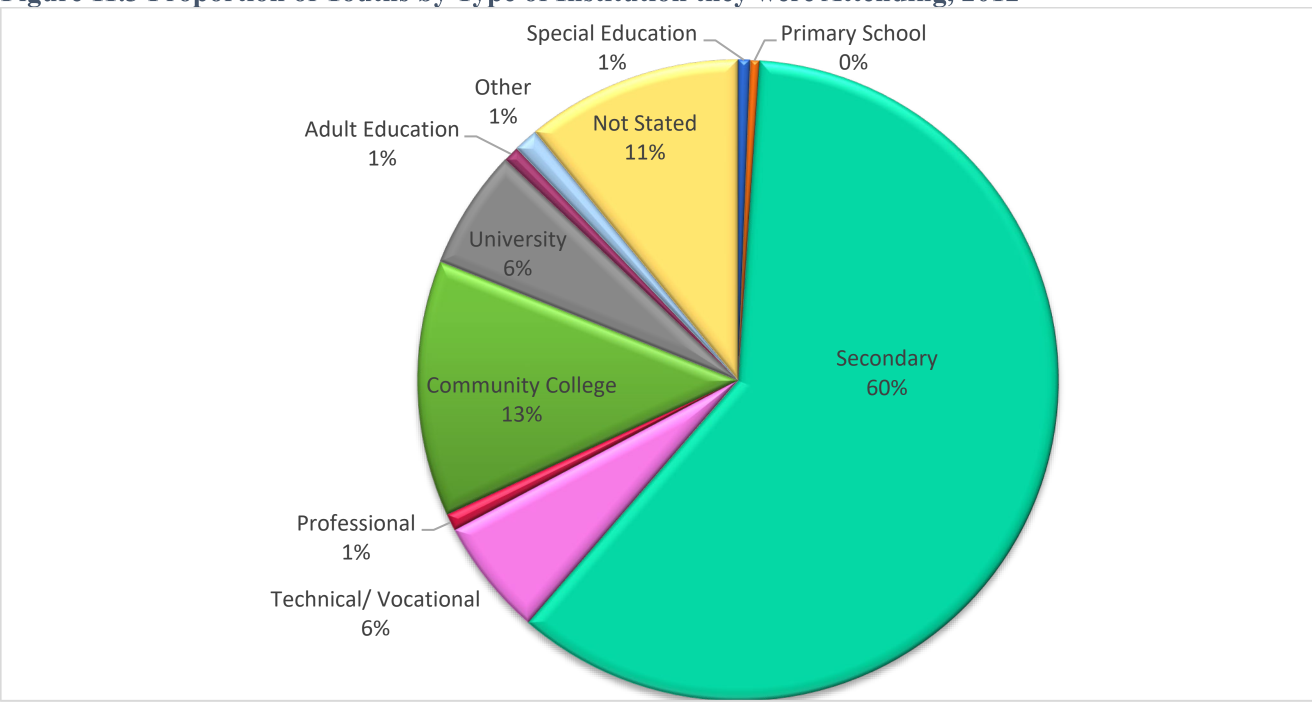
Type of Educational Institution Attending	Age Group & Sex								
	Male			Female			Both		
	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total
	2012								
Special Education	21	6	**27**	9	4	**13**	30	10	**40**
Primary School	17	0	**17**	14	0	**14**	31	0	**31**
Secondary	2,133	0	**2,133**	1,938	0	**1,938**	4,071	0	**4,071**
Technical/ Vocational	163	37	**200**	157	41	**198**	320	78	**398**
Professional	0	12	**12**	13	33	**46**	13	45	**58**
Community College	268	55	**323**	454	95	**549**	722	150	**872**
University	14	113	**127**	26	254	**280**	40	367	**407**
Adult Education	5	8	**13**	11	30	**41**	16	38	**54**
Other	13	19	**32**	15	36	**51**	28	55	**83**
Not Stated	321	68	**389**	277	69	**346**	598	137	**735**
Total	**2,955**	**3,273**	**6,228**	**2,914**	**562**	**3,476**	**5,869**	**880**	**6,749**
	2023								
Primary School	11	1	**12**	14	4	**18**	25	5	**30**
Special Education	18	3	**21**	6	1	**7**	24	4	**28**
Post Primary (Non-Secondary Tech/Voc)	86	6	**92**	63	5	**68**	149	11	**160**
Secondary (General)	1,847	7	**1,854**	1,679	4	**1,683**	3,526	11	**3,537**
Home Schooling (Secondary)	5	0	**5**	2	0	**2**	7	0	**7**
Post Secondary (A Level)	390	39	**429**	564	57	**621**	954	96	**1,050**
Post Secondary (Professional Tech/Voc)	194	26	**220**	200	63	**263**	394	89	**483**
Post Secondary (UWI/Other)	35	88	**123**	56	259	**315**	91	347	**438**
Adult Education	15	1	**16**	21	14	**35**	36	15	**51**
Online/ Distance Learning	4	26	**30**	13	76	**89**	17	102	**119**
Other (Specify)	12	12	**24**	31	34	**65**	43	46	**89**
Not Stated	1	5	**6**	3	0	**3**	4	5	**9**
Total	**2,618**	**214**	**2,832**	**2,652**	**517**	**3,169**	**5,270**	**731**	**6,001**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Furthermore, sex differentials are relatively small in adolescence but become more pronounced in early adulthood. In 2023, 63.5 percent of males aged 15-19 (i.e. 2,618 of 4,121) were enrolled compared with

67.5 percent of females (i.e. 2,652 of 3,928). Among those aged 20-24, however, the difference was striking 5.7 percent of males (i.e. 214 of 3,731) remained in school, versus 14.8 percent of females (i.e. 517 of 3,486). This pattern underscores a persistent trend where women extend their participation into post-secondary and tertiary education while men exit education earlier. Globally, many young women continue to face barriers to higher education due to affordability, infrastructure, and gender norms (UNDESA/UNESCO, 2013), making the persistence of Vincentian women in post-secondary schooling an important divergence from broader patterns.

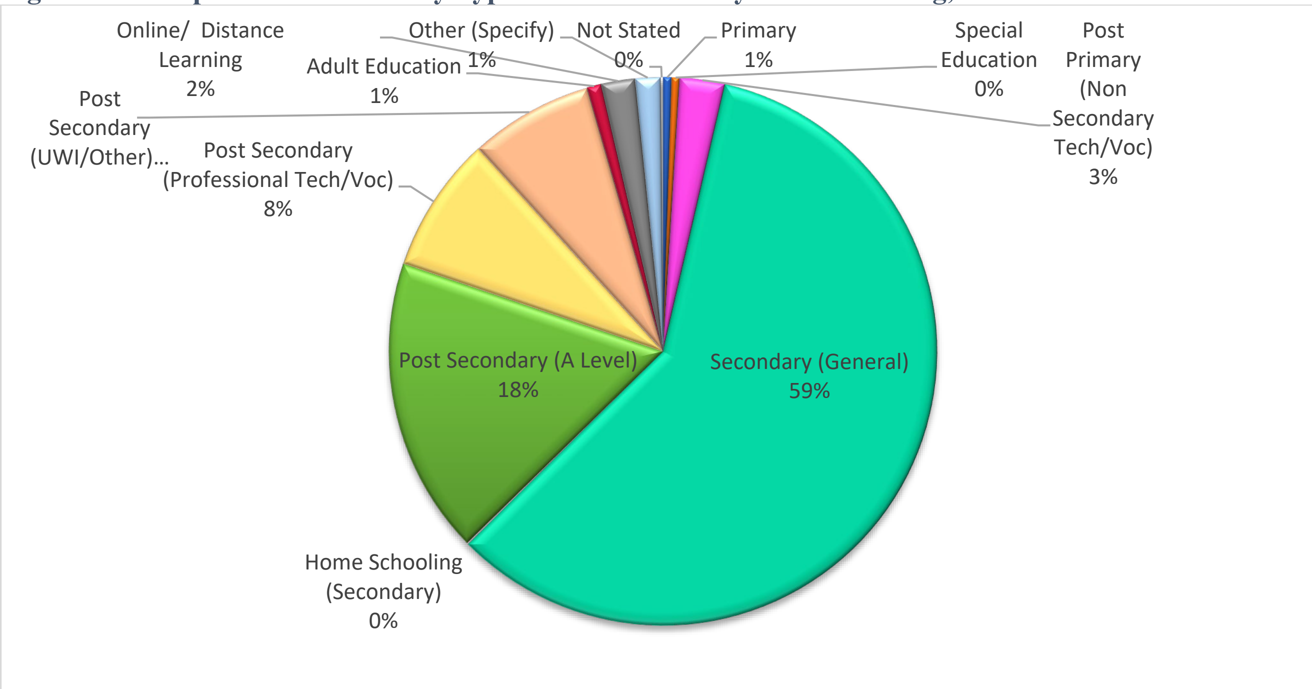
Figure 11.3 Proportion of Youths by Type of Institution they were Attending, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

The distribution of enrolment across institutions highlights both continuity and diversification. In 2012, secondary schools accounted for 60 percent of enrolment, followed by community colleges (13%) and universities (6%) (Table 11.5, Figure 11.3a). By 2023, secondary schools remained dominant (59%), but participation in post-secondary programmes expanded: enrolment in A' Levels grew from 872 to 1,050, and professional/technical programmes rose from 398 to 483. University enrolment also increased modestly (407 to 438), while online and distance learning emerged as a new feature, with 110 youths in 2023 (Figure 11.3b). These shifts indicate both institutional diversification and new modalities of access.

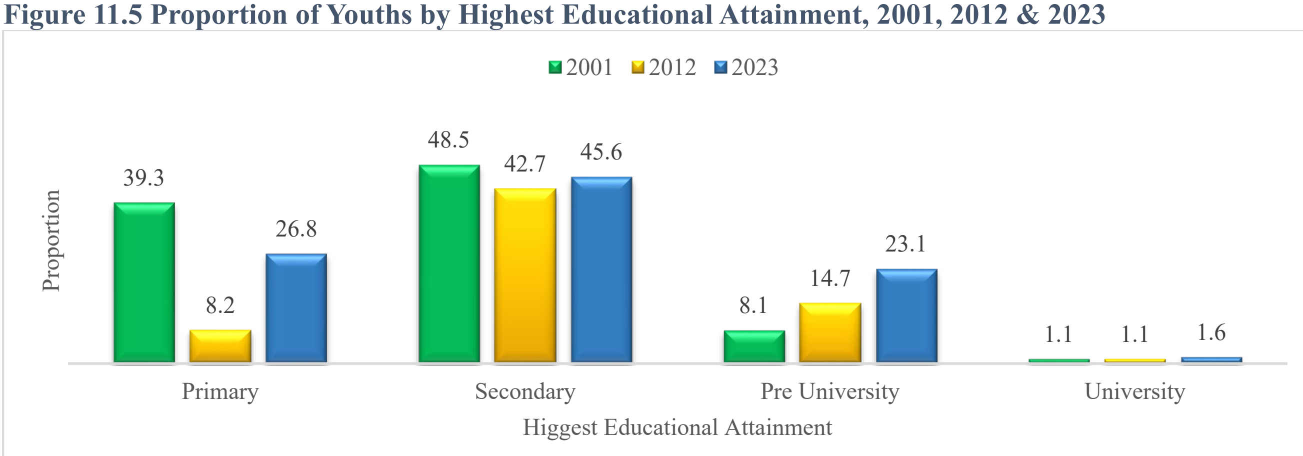
Figure 11.4 Proportion of Youths by Type of Institution they were Attending, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Attainment outcomes reflect a generational transformation. As shown in Figure 11.4, the share of youths whose highest education was primary fell sharply, from 39.3 percent in 2001, to 26.8 percent in 2012, and just 8.2 percent in 2023. Secondary attainment remained the modal outcome, accounting for 45.6 percent of youths in 2023, while pre-university qualifications rose from 14.7 percent in 2012 to 23.1 percent in 2023.

Figure 11.5 Proportion of Youths by Highest Educational Attainment, 2001, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 11-6 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Highest Educational Level Attained, 2012 & 2023

Highest Educational Level Attained	Age Group & Sex								
	Male			Female			Both		
	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total
	2012								
Primary	212	876	**1,088**	96	334	**430**	308	1,210	**1,518**
Secondary	1,885	2,280	**4,165**	1,603	2,140	**3,743**	3,488	4,420	**7,908**
Pre-University	290	732	**1,022**	528	1,170	**1,698**	818	1,902	**2,720**
University	0	66	**66**	1	132	**133**	1	198	**199**
Other	20	62	**82**	7	32	**39**	27	94	**121**
Not Stated	2,644	336	**2,980**	2,621	444	**3,065**	5,265	780	**6,045**
None	3	1	**4**	2	2	**4**	5	3	**8**
Total	**5,054**	**4,353**	**9,407**	**4,858**	**4,254**	**9,112**	**9,912**	**8,607**	**18,519**
	2023								
Daycare/Nursery	0	1	**1**	0	0	**0**	0	1	**1**
Pre-school	24	9	**33**	8	3	**11**	32	12	**44**
Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary	1,790	569	**2,359**	1,461	271	**1,732**	3,251	840	**4,091**
Lower / Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3) / Senior Primary	382	327	**709**	224	117	**341**	606	444	**1,050**
Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5)	1,458	1,590	**3,048**	1,568	1,292	**2,860**	3,026	2,882	**5,908**
Post Secondary, non-tertiary (diploma or associate degree)	357	1,040	**1,397**	571	1,561	**2,132**	928	2,601	**3,529**
Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree	11	57	**68**	19	137	**146**	20	194	**214**
Tertiary level - Master's Degree	-	7	**7**	-	17	**17**	-	24	**24**
Doctorate level programmes	2	1	**3**	-	3	**3**	2	4	**6**
None	57	35	**92**	57	16	**73**	114	51	**165**
Other (specify)	22	50	**72**	23	43	**66**	45	93	**138**
Not Stated	18	45	**63**	26	29	**55**	44	37	**96**
Total	**4,121**	**3,731**	**7,852**	**3,928**	**3,486**	**7,414**	**8,049**	**7,217**	**15,266**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 11-7 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Highest Certificate Attained, 2012 & 2023

Highest Examination Passed	Age Group & Sex								
	Male			Female			Total		
	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total
	2012								
School Leaving Certificate	72	66	**138**	53	31	**84**	125	97	**222**
Cambridge School Certificate	11	4	**15**	13	24	**37**	24	28	**52**
GCE O'Levels or CXC Gen	855	1,228	**2,083**	1,280	1,459	**2,739**	2,135	2,687	**4,822**
High School Certificate	92	100	**192**	110	110	**220**	202	210	**412**
GCE A'Levels / CAPE	108	334	**442**	212	584	**796**	320	918	**1,238**
College Certificate/Diploma	89	341	**430**	151	538	**694**	245	879	**1,124**
Associate Degree	26	37	**63**	51	89	**140**	77	126	**203**
Bachelor's Degree	0	52	**52**	2	97	**99**	2	149	**151**
Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate	0	4	**4**	2	8	**10**	2	12	**14**
Professional Certificate	12	32	**44**	8	30	**38**	20	62	**82**
Higher Degree (Masters)	0	1	**1**	0	6	**6**	0	7	**7**
Other (Specify)	97	35	**132**	98	31	**129**	195	66	**261**
None	3	1	**4**	2	2	**4**	5	3	**8**
Not Stated	3,176	1,925	**5,101**	2,411	1,119	**3,530**	5,587	3,044	**8,631**
Total	**5,054**	**4,353**	**9,407**	**4,858**	**4,254**	**9,112**	**9,912**	**8,607**	**18,519**
	2023								
Common Entrance	239	434	**673**	205	216	**421**	444	650	**1,094**
CPEA	2,052	423	**2,475**	1,677	200	**1,877**	3,729	623	**4,352**
School Leaving Certificate	14	22	**36**	9	3	**12**	23	25	**48**
Cambridge School Certificate	0	0	**0**	2	3	**5**	2	3	**5**
CXC Basic	189	237	**426**	214	203	**417**	403	440	**843**
CCSLC	19	21	**40**	15	16	**31**	34	37	**71**
GCE 'O' Levels, CXC General, CSEC	1,037	1,200	**2,237**	1,153	1,007	**2,160**	2,190	2,207	**4,397**
High School Certificate	29	16	**45**	16	23	**39**	45	39	**84**
GCE 'A' Levels, CAPE	130	309	**439**	143	480	**623**	273	789	**1,062**
Associate Degree	130	508	**638**	259	843	**1,102**	389	1,351	**1,740**
College Certificate	39	131	**170**	68	173	**241**	107	304	**411**
College Diploma	9	53	**62**	16	59	**75**	25	112	**137**
Professional Certificate e.g. RSA, City and Guilds	1	22	**23**	1	21	**22**	2	43	**45**
Bachelor's Degree	8	46	**54**	1	105	**106**	9	151	**160**
Post Graduate Certificate	0	4	**4**	2	5	**7**	2	9	**11**
Post Graduate Diploma	0	0	**0**	0	4	**4**	0	4	**4**
Higher Degree (Master's)	0	5	**5**	0	11	**11**	0	16	**16**
Higher Degree (Doctoral)	1	1	**2**	0	3	**3**	0	4	**5**
Other (Specify)	20	19	**39**	8	9	**17**	28	28	**56**
None	116	222	**338**	68	66	**134**	184	288	**472**
Not Stated	88	58	**146**	71	36	**107**	159	94	**253**
Total	**4,121**	**3,731**	**7,852**	**3,928**	**3,486**	**7,414**	**8,049**	**7,217**	**15,266**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

At higher levels, growth is visible but modest. In 2023, 214 youths held bachelor's degrees, 24 held master's degrees, and 6 reported doctoral qualifications (Table 11.6). More significant is the increase in post-secondary diplomas (3,529) and associate degrees (1,740), suggesting that more young people are pursuing intermediate and tertiary-level qualifications aligned with technical and professional training.

Certification trends support these findings. In 2012, most youths reported CXC/GCE O' Levels (4,822) or CAPE/A' Levels (1,238) as their highest certificates (Table 11.7). By 2023, O' Levels/CSEC remained dominant (4,397), but there was sharp growth in associate degrees (from 203 to 1,740) and steady gains in bachelor's degrees (151 to 160). The Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA), introduced to replace the Common Entrance exam, was also widely reported in 2023, with 4,352 youths certified. These changes highlight both policy reforms and structural diversification of the education system.

Overall, the data demonstrates steady improvement in the education profile of youths in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. While the absolute number of students declined with demographic contraction, fewer now leave school with only primary education, and more are advancing into pre-university, post-secondary, and tertiary level education. Female youth consistently show higher persistence than males, particularly beyond compulsory schooling. From a demographic perspective, these trends mark a qualitative improvement in human capital, though they exist alongside global challenges of disengagement and exclusion, which affect more than 225 million youths worldwide (UNDESA/UNESCO, 2013).

11.4 Marital Status

Marriage among youths in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains rare, reflecting the extended transition to adulthood typical of the Caribbean and many other regions. As shown in Table 11.8, the overwhelming majority of youths were single or never married in both census years 92.1 percent in 2012 (17,063 persons) and a nearly identical 98.8 percent in 2023 (15,082 persons). This consistency highlights a strong preference for delaying formal marriage during adolescence and early adulthood.

The number of married youths declined substantially, from 1,435 in 2012 to only 90 in 2023, with proportions falling from 7.7 percent to less than 1 percent of the youth population. This sharp contraction suggests that formal marriage has become even less common among young Vincentians, aligning with broader Caribbean trends of postponed or foregone marriage. Divorce, while uncommon, rose from 6 cases in 2012 to 41 in 2023. Small numbers of widowed and legally separated youths were also recorded in both years.

The decline in marriage among youths reflects both cultural and structural dynamics greater prioritization of education, economic constraints, and the growing preference for less formal arrangements such as cohabitation or visiting partnerships, discussed further in the following section.

Table 11-8 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Marital Status, 2012 & 2023

Marital Status	Age Group and Sex								
	Male			Female			Both		
	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total
	2012								
Single / Never Married	5,017	3,996	**9,013**	4,625	3,425	**8,050**	9,642	7,421	**17,063**
Married	34	351	**385**	230	820	**1,050**	264	1,171	**1,435**
Divorced	0	3	**3**	2	1	**3**	2	4	**6**
Widowed	1	1	**2**	1	1	**2**	2	2	**4**
Legally Separated	0	0	**0**	0	5	**5**	0	5	**5**
Not Stated	1	3	**4**	1	1	**2**	2	4	**6**
Total	**5,053**	**4,354**	**9,407**	**4,859**	**4,253**	**9,112**	**9,912**	**8,607**	**18,519**
	2023								
Single / Never Married	4,096	3,669	**7,765**	3,909	3,408	**7,317**	8,005	7,077	**15,082**
Married	2	33	**35**	5	50	**55**	7	83	**90**
Divorced	10	13	**23**	7	11	**18**	17	24	**41**
Widowed	1	0	**1**	1	0	**1**	2	0	**2**
Legally Separated	0	2	**2**	2	2	**4**	2	4	**6**
Not Stated	12	14	**26**	4	15	**19**	16	29	**45**
Total	4,121	3,731	**7,852**	3,928	3,486	**7,414**	8,049	7,217	**15,266**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

11.5 Union Status

Union status data provide a broader view of relationship patterns beyond legal marriage. In 2012, about 11,682 youths (63.1%) reported never having a spouse or common-law partner, while another 2,505 (13.5%) were not in a union at the time of the census (Table 11.9). Together, these categories accounted for 14,187 youths, or 76.6 percent of the youth population.

By 2023, the absolute number of youths in these categories declined to 12,043, reflecting the contraction of the overall youth population. However, in proportional terms, this group expanded to 78.9 percent of all youths (6,668 who had never had a partner and 5,375 who were not in a union). This increase indicates that a larger share of young Vincentians are delaying or avoiding union formation, even as the total number of youths shrinks.

At the same time, participation in unions declined across categories. Visiting partnerships dropped from 2,396 youths (12.9%) in 2012 to 1,350 (8.8%) in 2023, while common-law unions decreased from 1,209 (6.5%) to 657 (4.3%). Formal marriage remained rare, with only 65 youths living with a spouse in 2023, down from 194 in 2012.

Sex and age differences were also evident. In 2012, females aged 20-24 were more likely than males to be in unions, but by 2023 both sexes saw declines, with women still entering unions earlier but at lower rates than before. These shifts suggest that singlehood is not only more common but also more prolonged, as young people extend schooling and postpone household formation.

Table 11-9 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Union Status, 2012 & 2023

Union Status	Age Group and Sex								
	Male			Female			Both		
	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total
	2012								
Never had a Spouse or Common-Law Partner	3,871	2,522	**6,393**	3,412	1,877	**5,289**	7,283	4,399	**11,682**
Married and Living with Spouse	5	54	**59**	8	127	**135**	13	181	**194**
Common-Law Union	26	286	**312**	222	675	**897**	248	961	**1,209**
Visiting Partner	258	778	**1,036**	410	950	**1,360**	668	1,728	**2,396**
Not in a Union	692	602	**1,294**	663	548	**1,211**	1,355	1,150	**2,505**
Not Stated	201	112	**313**	144	76	**220**	345	188	**533**
Total	**5,053**	**4,354**	**9,407**	**4,859**	**4,253**	**9,112**	**9,912**	**8,607**	**18,519**
	2023								
Never had a Spouse or Common-Law Partner	2,261	1,327	**3,588**	1,987	1,093	**3,080**	4,248	2,420	**6,668**
Married and Living with Spouse	1	24	**25**	1	39	**40**	2	63	**65**
Married and not Living with Spouse	0	0	**0**	0	6	**6**	0	6	**6**
Common-Law Union	32	165	**197**	94	366	**460**	126	531	**657**
Visiting Partner	110	526	**636**	166	548	**714**	276	1,074	**1,350**
Not in a Union	1,442	1,355	**2,797**	1,444	1,134	**2,578**	2,886	2,489	**5,375**
Not Stated	275	334	**609**	236	300	**536**	511	634	**1,145**
Total	**4,121**	**3,731**	**7,852**	**3,928**	**3,486**	**7,414**	**8,049**	**7,217**	**15,266**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

11.6 Economic Activity and the Youth

Youth economic activity reflects the transition from school to work and from dependence to economic self-reliance. Data from Tables 11.10 and 11.11 show that between 2012 and 2023, youths in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines experienced modest gains in employment, persistent unemployment, and shifting roles between schooling and domestic responsibilities.

Employment rose slightly, particularly among young adults. For males aged 20-24, the share employed increased from 55.3 percent in 2012 to 60.8 percent in 2023, while for females it rose from 40.0 percent to 52.0 percent. Among 15-19 year olds, employment remained limited but still increased from 9.6 percent to 12.7 percent. These patterns highlight the gradual incorporation of youths into the labour force, with the bulk of participation occurring after age 20.

Unemployment, however, remained a significant concern. In 2012, 14.4 percent of youths were either looking for work or available but not employed; by 2023 this proportion had risen to 17.0 percent. Among 20-24 year olds, 17.9 percent of males and 15.1 percent of females were actively seeking work in 2023, suggesting continued barriers to securing stable employment despite improvements in education.

School attendance continued to dominate adolescence but declined sharply in early adulthood. In 2012, 66.4 percent of 15-19 year olds were enrolled in school, compared with 69.2 percent in 2023. By contrast, only 8.9 percent of 20-24 year olds were in school in 2023, down slightly from 10.0 percent in 2012, consistent with limited progression into tertiary education.

Gender patterns remain distinct, particularly with respect to domestic roles. In 2012, 15.2 percent of young women reported home duties as their main activity, but this share dropped to 7.1 percent in 2023, reflecting declining emphasis on traditional domestic responsibilities and greater female engagement in education and work. Male reporting of home duties remained minimal in both years, at around 5 percent in 2012 and 3 percent in 2023.

Overall, the findings point to a slower but more complex transition from school to work. While employment opportunities expanded modestly, unemployment remains high, and many youths struggle to convert educational attainment into secure labour market participation. At the same time, schooling dominates adolescence, while gendered expectations around home duties are receding, particularly for young women. These trends underscore both progress and persistent vulnerabilities in the economic lives of Vincentian youths.

Table 11-10 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Main Economic Activity, 2012

Age Group and Sex	Main Activity in Last 12 Months										
	Had a job and worked	Had a job but did not work	Looked for work	Wanted work and available	Did Home Duties	Attended School/ Student	Retired, did not work	Disabled, unable to work	Other (Specify)	Not stated	Total
						2012					
Male											
15-19	595	1	536	132	270	3,266	8	39	56	150	**5,053**
20-24	2,406	25	924	211	239	332	3	50	56	108	**4,354**
Total	**3,001**	**26**	**1,460**	**343**	**509**	**3,598**	**11**	**89**	**112**	**258**	**9,407**
Female											
15-19	358	6	409	98	482	3,315	8	22	28	133	**4,859**
20-24	1,701	16	799	167	898	526	4	34	36	72	**4,253**
Total	**2,059**	**22**	**1,208**	**265**	**1,380**	**3,841**	**12**	**56**	**64**	**205**	**9,112**
Both											
15-19	953	7	945	230	752	6,581	16	61	84	283	**9,912**
20-24	4,107	41	1,723	378	1,137	858	7	84	92	180	**8,607**
Total	**5,060**	**48**	**2,668**	**608**	**1,889**	**7,439**	**23**	**145**	**176**	**463**	**18,519**
						2023					
Male											
15-19	574	12	351	142	112	2,788	10	27	93	12	**4,121**
20-24	2,267	32	666	273	120	222	-	57	86	8	**3,731**
Total	**2,841**	**44**	**1,017**	**415**	**232**	**3,010**	**10**	**84**	**179**	**20**	**7,852**
Female											
15-19	451	6	277	131	190	2,783	2	13	65	10	**3,928**
20-24	1,814	38	526	232	336	417	5	31	68	19	**3,486**
Total	**2,265**	**44**	**803**	**363**	**526**	**3,200**	**7**	**44**	**133**	**29**	**7,414**
Both											
15-19	1,025	18	628	273	302	5,571	12	40	158	22	**8,049**
20-24	4,081	70	1,192	505	456	639	5	88	154	27	**7,217**
Total	**5,106**	**88**	**1,820**	**778**	**758**	**6,210**	**17**	**128**	**312**	**49**	**15,266**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 11-11 Percentage Distribution of Youths by Sex, Age and Economic Activity, 2012 & 2023

Age Group and Sex	Main Activity in Last 12 Months										
	Had a job and worked	Had a job but did not work	Looked for work	Wanted work and available	Did Home Duties	Attended School/ Student	Retired, did not work	Disabled, unable to work	Other (Specify)	Not stated	Total
						2012					
Male											
15-19	11.8	0.0	10.6	2.6	5.4	64.7	0.2	0.8	1.1	3.0	**100**
20-24	55.3	0.6	21.2	4.9	5.5	7.6	0.1	1.1	1.3	2.5	**100**
Total	**31.9**	**0.3**	**15.5**	**3.7**	**5.4**	**38.3**	**0.1**	**0.9**	**1.2**	**2.8**	**100**
Female											
15-19	7.4	0.1	8.4	2.0	9.9	68.2	0.2	0.5	0.6	2.7	**100**
20-24	40.0	0.4	18.8	3.9	21.1	12.4	0.1	0.8	0.9	1.7	**100**
Total	**22.6**	**0.2**	**13.3**	**2.9**	**15.2**	**42.2**	**0.1**	**0.6**	**0.7**	**2.3**	**100**
Both											
15-19	9.6	0.1	9.5	2.3	7.6	66.4	0.2	0.6	0.9	2.9	**100**
20-24	47.7	0.5	20.0	4.4	13.2	10.0	0.1	1.0	1.1	2.1	**100**
Total	**27.3**	**0.3**	**14.4**	**3.3**	**10.2**	**40.2**	**0.1**	**0.8**	**1.0**	**2.5**	**100**
						2023					
Male											
15-19	13.9	0.3	8.5	3.4	2.7	67.7	0.2	0.7	2.3	0.3	**100**
20-24	60.8	0.9	17.9	7.3	3.2	6.0	0.0	1.5	2.3	0.2	**100**
Total	**36.2**	**0.6**	**13.0**	**5.3**	**3.0**	**38.3**	**0.1**	**1.1**	**2.3**	**0.3**	**100**
Female											
15-19	11.5	0.2	7.1	3.3	4.8	70.9	0.1	0.3	1.7	0.3	**100**
20-24	52.0	1.1	15.1	6.7	9.6	12.0	0.1	0.9	2.0	0.5	**100**
Total	**30.6**	**0.6**	**10.8**	**4.9**	**7.1**	**43.2**	**0.1**	**0.6**	**1.8**	**0.4**	**100**
Both											
15-19	12.7	0.2	7.8	3.4	3.8	69.2	0.1	0.5	2.0	0.3	**100**
20-24	56.5	1.0	16.5	7.0	6.3	8.9	0.1	1.2	2.1	0.4	**100**
Total	**33.4**	**0.6**	**11.9**	**5.1**	**5.0**	**40.7**	**0.1**	**0.8**	**2.0**	**0.3**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

11.7 Conclusion

The proportion of the population aged 15-24 years continued its decline across the intercensal period, falling from 19.7 percent in 2001 to 14.0 percent in 2023, consistent with sustained fertility reduction and demographic ageing. As a result, the average number of youths per household also decreased, reflecting both smaller birth cohorts and household expansion.

School participation remained concentrated among adolescents, with roughly two-thirds of those aged 15-19 enrolled in 2023. Compared with earlier periods, a larger share of youths advanced to higher levels of education, particularly post-secondary and tertiary studies. Female youths demonstrated greater persistence beyond compulsory schooling, underscoring widening gender differences in educational attainment.

At the same time, the transition to adult roles has slowed. Marriage and union formation declined sharply, with nearly four in five youths reporting no spouse or partner in 2023. Labour force participation improved modestly, especially among persons 20-24 years, though unemployment persisted at elevated levels. Overall, youth in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are fewer in number but increasingly characterized by prolonged schooling, delayed family formation, and later entry into stable employment.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS – CHAPTER 11
YOUTH

Size & sex:
Youths total 15,266; males 51.4%, females 48.6%. The 15–19 cohort is slightly larger (8,049; 53%) than 20–24 (7,217; 47%)

Divisional Concentration:
Largest concentrations are Calliaqua (3,794; 25%); smallest are Sandy Bay (363) and Southern Grenadines (407)

School participation:
65.5% of 15–19 are in school (5,270 out of 8,049). By 20–24, only 10.1% remain in school (731 out of 7,217)

Education attained:
Completed Upper Secondary: 5,908 youths; Post-secondary non-tertiary: 3,529; Primary or lower: 4,091

Qualifications:
Holders of CSEC/GCE O-Level: 4,397; CAPE: 1,062; Associate degree: 1,740; Bachelor's: 160

Work status:
Overall, 33.4% had a job (5,106), 11.9% looked for work and 5.1% wanted work (not working)

Chapter 12. The Elderly

12.1 Introduction

Population ageing has become one of the most significant demographic changes of the 21st century, with implications for labour markets, health care, social protection, and intergenerational support. The Caribbean, including Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, is experiencing this transformation more rapidly than in previous decades, owing to sustained declines in fertility, longer survival, and the contraction of younger cohorts. According to regional estimates, the proportion of persons aged 60 years and over in Latin America and the Caribbean has more than doubled since 1950 and is projected to reach nearly one-quarter of the total population by 2050 (ECLAC, 2024)[29]. These shifts mirror a global trend in which older adults are becoming a growing segment of national populations, reshaping family and community structures.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, this trend is clearly visible. While the youth population has contracted since 2001, the elderly population has expanded steadily, accounting for a larger share of the total population with each successive census. This reflects the advanced stage of demographic transition in the country, where declining fertility has reduced the inflow of younger cohorts while mortality decline and improved life expectancy have extended survival into advanced ages. The result is a population that is gradually ageing, with a rising proportion of older persons who increasingly shape the country's demographic and socio-economic profile.

12.2 The Elderly Population

The elderly population (aged 60 years and over) in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has grown steadily over the past two decades, reflecting sustained fertility decline and improvements in life expectancy. In 2001, there were 10,499 elderly persons, representing 12.9 percent of the total population. By 2012, this figure had increased to 13,811 persons (16.0 percent), and by 2023 it had risen sharply to 20,210 persons (18.5 percent) (Tables 12.1 & 12.2). This progression highlights the acceleration of population ageing, with the elderly population expanding by 31.5 percent between 2001 and 2012, and by a further 46.3 percent between 2012 and 2023.

Growth has been particularly striking in the younger elderly cohorts (60-69 years), who benefited most directly from past gains in survival. Between 2012 and 2023, the 60-64 age group expanded from 3,821 to 6,548 persons, a 71.4 percent increase, while the 65-69 group rose from 2,841 to 5,189 persons (82.6 percent increase) (Table 12.2). These dramatic gains indicate that successive birth cohorts are now entering older ages in larger numbers, consistent with the demographic transition. By contrast, the 80 years and over group showed only modest growth (2.8 percent), suggesting higher mortality at advanced ages still limits the expansion of this subgroup.

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[29] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2024). *Demographic Observatory: Population prospects and rapid demographic changes in the first quarter of the twenty-first century in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/PUB.2024/22-P).* United Nations.

Table 12-1 Elderly Population (Age 60+) by Age Group and Sex, 2001 & 2012

Age Group	2001			2012			Percentage Change (2001-2012)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
60-64	1,313	1,433	**2,746**	1,970	1,851	**3,821**	50.0	29.2	**39.1**
65-69	1,222	1,333	**2,555**	1,457	1,384	**2,841**	19.2	3.8	**11.2**
70-74	892	1,062	**1,954**	1,282	1,254	**2,536**	43.7	18.1	**29.8**
75-79	639	878	**1,517**	964	1,014	**1,978**	50.9	15.5	**30.4**
80+	649	1,078	**1,727**	1,142	1,493	**2,635**	76.00	38.5	**52.6**
Total	**4,715**	**5,784**	**10,499**	**6,815**	**6,996**	**13,811**	**44.5**	**21.0**	**31.5**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 12-2 Elderly Population (Age 60+) by Age Group and Sex, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	2012			2023			Percentage Change (2012-2023)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
60-64	1,970	1,851	**3,821**	3,465	3,083	**6,548**	75.9	66.6	**71.4**
65-69	1,457	1,384	**2,841**	2,706	2,483	**5,189**	85.7	79.4	**82.6**
70-74	1,282	1,254	**2,536**	1,705	1,713	**3,418**	33.0	36.6	**34.8**
75-79	964	1,014	**1,978**	1,154	1,191	**2,345**	19.7	17.5	**18.6**
80+	1,142	1,493	**2,635**	1,114	1,596	**2,710**	-2.5	6.9	**2.8**
Total	**6,815**	**6,996**	**13,811**	**10,144**	**10,066**	**20,210**	**48.8**	**43.9**	**46.3**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Sex differentials remain a defining feature of the elderly population. Women consistently outnumber men in all elderly age groups, reflecting their survival advantage. In 2023, females accounted for 10,066 elderly persons compared with 10,144 males, narrowing the historical female predominance. This near parity reflects more rapid increases in male longevity over the last decade. Still, among the 80+ age group, women remain the dominant, numbering 1,596 compared with 1,114 men; this may be due to higher male mortality at older ages (Table 12.1b).

12.3 Union Status of the Elderly

Patterns of union status among the elderly population reflect both long-term marital trajectories and the dynamics of ageing. In 2012, the largest shares of elderly persons were either married and living with a spouse (37.6%) or not in a union (37.3%), together accounting for nearly three-quarters of all elderly individuals (Table 12.3). A smaller proportion (12.4%) reported never having had a spouse or common-law partner, while 7.2% were in common-law unions and 3.4% in visiting partnerships. These figures suggest that while formal marriage remained the dominant arrangement, a significant share of the elderly population was living outside unions by this period. By 2023, these trends shifted markedly, with the proportion of the elderly not in a union rising to 41.4 percent (8,373 persons), surpassing those married and living with a spouse (33.2%, or 6,709 persons). At the same time, the share of those who never had a spouse or partner declined to just 5.8 percent (Table 12.3).

Table 12-3 Total and Percentage Elderly Population by Union Status and Sex, 2012 & 2023

Union Status	Sex					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
2012						
Never had a Spouse or Common-Law Partner	700	10.3	1,015	14.5	**1,715**	**12.4**
Married and Living with Spouse	3,068	45	2,119	30.3	**5,187**	**37.6**
Common-law Union	652	9.6	337	4.8	**989**	**7.2**
Visiting Partner	300	4.4	164	2.3	**464**	**3.4**
Not in a Union	1,908	28	3,237	46.3	**5,145**	**37.3**
Not Stated	187	2.7	124	1.8	**311**	**2.3**
Total	**6,815**	**100**	**6,996**	**100**	**13,811**	**100**
2023						
Never had a spouse or common-law partner	624	6.2	540	5.4	**1,164**	**5.8**
Married and living with spouse	3,871	38.2	2,838	28.2	**6,709**	**33.2**
Married and not living with spouse	562	5.5	421	4.2	**983**	**4.9**
Common-law	831	8.2	453	4.5	**1,284**	**6.4**
Visiting partner	358	3.5	146	1.5	**504**	**2.5**
Not in a union	3,237	31.9	5,136	51	**8,373**	**41.4**
Not Stated	661	6.5	532	5.3	**1,193**	**5.9**
Total	**10,144**	**100**	**10,066**	**100**	**20,210**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 12-4 Total Elderly Population by Age Group and Union Status, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	Never had a spouse or common-law partner	Married and living with spouse	Married and not living with spouse	Common-law	Visiting partner	Not in a union	Not Stated	Total
2012								
60–64	458	1,668	-	383	167	1,074	71	**3,821**
65–69	325	1,267	-	209	100	888	52	**2,841**
70–74	313	1,021	-	161	63	906	72	**2,536**
75–79	263	649	-	114	58	855	39	**1,978**
80+	356	582	-	122	76	1,422	77	**2,635**
Total	**1,715**	**5,187**	**-**	**989**	**464**	**5,145**	**311**	**13,811**
2023								
60–64	409	2,248	333	606	287	2,210	455	**6,548**
65–69	343	1,859	288	350	135	1,930	284	**5,189**
70–74	172	1,226	171	188	56	1,424	181	**3,418**
75–79	117	854	94	71	20	1,080	109	**2,345**
80+	123	522	97	69	6	1,729	164	**2,710**
Total	**1,164**	**6,709**	**983**	**1,284**	**504**	**8,373**	**1,193**	**20,210**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The growth in singlehood is especially visible across older cohorts: among those aged 80+, nearly two-thirds (63.8%) reported not being in a union in 2023 compared with 54.0 percent in 2012 (Table 12.5). These shifts highlight the combined effects of widowhood, separation, and changing partnership norms, with advancing age strongly associated with non-union living.

Age and sex differentials further illustrate these dynamics. In 2012, elderly men were more likely to be married and living with a spouse (45.0%) than women (30.3%), while women were more often outside unions (46.3% compared with 28.0% for men). This pattern persisted in 2023, with 38.2 percent of men still married compared with 28.2 percent of women, but over half of elderly women (51.0%) reported not being in a union, compared with 31.9 percent of men (Table 12.3). These disparities reflect the demographic realities of female longevity and male mortality, which contribute to higher rates of widowhood and singlehood among older women.

Table 12-5 Percentage Elderly by Age Group and Union Status, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	Never had a spouse or common-law partner	Married and living with spouse	Married and not living with spouse	Common-law	Visiting partner	Not in a union	Not Stated	Total
				2012				
60–64	12.0	43.7	-	10.0	4.4	28.1	1.9	**100**
65–69	11.4	44.6	-	7.4	3.5	31.3	1.8	**100**
70–74	12.3	40.3	-	6.3	2.5	35.7	2.8	**100**
75–79	13.3	32.8	-	5.8	2.9	43.2	2.0	**100**
80+	13.5	22.1	-	4.6	2.9	54.0	2.9	**100**
Total	**12.4**	**37.6**	**-**	**7.2**	**3.4**	**37.3**	**2.3**	**100**
				2023				
60–64	6.2	34.3	5.1	9.3	4.4	33.8	6.9	**100**
65–69	6.6	35.8	5.6	6.7	2.6	37.2	5.5	**100**
70–74	5.0	35.9	5.0	5.5	1.6	41.7	5.3	**100**
75–79	5.0	36.4	4.0	3.0	0.9	46.1	4.6	**100**
80+	4.5	19.3	3.6	2.5	0.2	63.8	6.1	**100**
Total	**5.8**	**33.2**	**4.9**	**6.4**	**2.5**	**41.4**	**5.9**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, the data underscore a clear ageing trend in union status: while marriage remains an important part of life course trajectories, its prevalence diminishes with age, particularly among women

12.4 Marital Status of the Elderly Population

Patterns of marital status among the elderly population (aged 60 and over) in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reveal significant shifts between 2012 and 2023. As shown in Table 12.6, marriage remained the most common status, but its prevalence declined sharply from 48.7 percent in 2012 to 38.5 percent in 2023. At the same time, the share of elderly who were single or never married rose markedly, increasing from 27.8 percent to 40.0 percent. This reversal suggests changing social trajectories, where fewer individuals enter or remain in formal unions into later life, consistent with broader demographic transitions in family formation and stability.

Widowhood continues to be an important feature of ageing, reflecting the demographic reality of higher female longevity. In 2012, 16.9 % of elderly were widowed, rising in absolute numbers to 3,108 persons by 2023, though the overall proportion declined slightly to 15.4 % (Table 12.6). Women continue to dominate this category, in 2023, nearly 22.3% of elderly females were widowed compared with just 8.5% of males, underscoring the persistent gender gap in survivorship. Divorce and legal separation remain relatively minor statuses but have shown small increases; divorced elderly grew from 4.3% to 4.4%, while those legally separated represented just above 1% in both censuses.

Table 12-6 Total and Percentage Elderly Population by Marital Status and Sex, 2012 & 2023

Marital Status	Sex					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
2012						
Single/Never Married	1,627	23.9	2,211	31.6	**3,838**	**27.8**
Married	4,069	59.7	2,660	38	**6,729**	**48.7**
Divorced	334	4.9	256	3.7	**590**	**4.3**
Widowed	603	8.9	1,727	24.7	**2,330**	**16.9**
Legally Separated	109	1.6	86	1.2	**195**	**1.4**
Not Stated	64	0.9	49	0.7	**113**	**0.8**
Don't Know	9	0.13	7	0.1	**16**	**0.1**
Total	**6,815**	**100**	**6,996**	**100**	**13,811**	**100**
2023						
Single /Never Married	4,185	41.3	3,895	38.7	**8,080**	**40.0**
Married	4,472	44.1	3,314	32.9	**7,786**	**38.5**
Divorced	442	4.4	451	4.5	**893**	**4.4**
Widowed	860	8.5	2,248	22.3	**3,108**	**15.4**
Legally Separated	133	1.3	89	0.9	**222**	**1.1**
Not Stated	52	0.5	69	0.7	**121**	**0.6**
Total	**10,144**	**100**	**10,066**	**100**	**20,210**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Age-specific patterns further clarified these dynamics. As seen in Table 12.8, the prevalence of marriage declines steeply with advancing age, falling from 41.9 percent among those aged 65-69 to just 23.3 percent among those 80 years and older in 2023. By contrast, widowhood rises sharply with age, affecting 39.4 percent of the 80+ cohort, compared with only 6.2 percent of those aged 60-64. The proportion single or never married also shows an upward trend, particularly among the younger elderly: nearly 48.1 percent of those aged 60-64 was single/never married in 2023, double the level observed in 2012 (27.8 percent). This shift highlights the growing demographic weight of individuals ageing without a marital partner.

Table 12-7 Total Elderly Population by Age Group and Marital Status, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	Single/ Never Married	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Legally Separated	Not Stated	Don't Know	Total
2012								
60–64	1,063	2,203	186	264	75	28	2	3,820
65–69	717	1,587	146	327	46	15	3	2,840
70–74	678	1,288	110	404	28	25	3	2,537
75–79	550	855	80	452	19	18	4	1,978
80+	830	796	68	883	27	27	4	2,636
Total	**3,838**	**6,729**	**590**	**2,330**	**195**	**113**	**16**	**13,811**
2023								
60–64	3,150	2,603	257	409	80	49	-	**6,548**
65–69	2,141	2,174	259	520	78	17	-	**5,189**
70–74	1,198	1,421	185	562	32	20	-	**3,418**
75–79	711	956	101	550	19	8	-	**2,345**
80+	880	632	91	1,067	13	27	-	**2,710**
Total	**8,080**	**7,786**	**893**	**3,108**	**222**	**121**	**-**	**20,210**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 12-8 Percentage Elderly by Age Group and Marital Status, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	Single/ Never Married	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Legally Separated	Not Stated	Total
2012							
60–64	27.8	57.7	4.8	6.9	2.0	0.7	**100**
65–69	25.3	55.9	5.1	11.5	1.6	0.5	**100**
70–74	26.8	50.8	4.3	15.9	1.1	1.0	**100**
75–79	27.9	43.2	4.0	22.9	1.0	0.9	**100**
80+	31.5	30.2	2.6	33.5	1.0	1.0	**100**
Total	**27.8**	**48.7**	**4.3**	**16.9**	**1.4**	**0.8**	**100**
2023							
60–64	48.1	39.8	3.9	6.2	1.2	0.7	**100**
65–69	41.3	41.9	5.0	10.0	1.5	0.3	**100**
70–74	35.0	41.6	5.4	16.4	0.9	0.6	**100**
75–79	30.3	40.8	4.3	23.5	0.8	0.3	**100**
80+	32.5	23.3	3.4	39.4	0.5	1.0	**100**
Total	**40.0**	**38.5**	**4.4**	**15.4**	**1.1**	**0.6**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Together, these findings suggest that the marital profile of the elderly population is being reshaped by longer life expectancy, shifts in union formation, and evolving social norms. Declines in marriage and increases in singlehood among the elderly reflect both delayed or foregone unions earlier in life and the cumulative effects of demographic ageing. At the same time, widowhood remains a central marker of later life, particularly for women, reinforcing the gendered dimension of ageing and family support systems in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

12.5 Economic Activity and Source of Livelihood

The sources of livelihood for the elderly population reveal both continuity and transformation over the intercensal period. In 2012, employment accounted for nearly one-quarter (23.4%) of elderly support, highlighting the persistence of older persons in the labor force even after reaching retirement age (Table 12.9). Local pensions (20.9%) and overseas pensions (10.3%) provided a foundation of formal support, while remittances from relatives abroad (11.3%) and assistance from local family and friends (24.8%) underscore the reliance on informal and transnational networks. Public assistance (12.3%) further points to the role of the state as a safety net for the most vulnerable (Table 12.9).

Table 12-9 Source of Livelihood of Elderly Population Age 60 and Over, 2012

Source of Livelihood	Count	Percent (%)
Disability Benefits	47	0.3
Employment	3,230	23.4
Investments	247	1.8
Public Assistance	1,696	12.3
Pension (Local)	2,891	20.9
Pension (Overseas)	1,429	10.3
Savings or Interest on Savings	460	3.3
Subsistence Farming	865	6.3
Support From Friends or Relatives (Local - Cash or Kind)	3,419	24.8
Support From Friends or Relatives (Overseas - Cash or Kind)	1,562	11.3
Other	613	4.4

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, the distribution of livelihood sources had shifted considerably, as shown in Table 12.10. Pensions (local and overseas combined) became the dominant source of support, with over 5,900 beneficiaries, reflecting both the expansion of pension coverage and the growing reliance of the elderly on formal retirement schemes. Employment remained significant, with 4,006 elderly persons still engaged in the labor market, highlighting delayed retirement or continued economic necessity. Support from children (1,883 persons), remittances, and social security benefits (1,192 persons) show that family and institutional transfers remain vital pillars of elderly well-being. The growth in absolute numbers across nearly all categories reflects both population ageing and the diversification of support systems. Importantly, while formal pensions and employment have expanded, the continued significance of intergenerational and overseas transfers illustrates the persistence of family-based and transnational safety nets in Vincentian society.

Table 12-10 Source of Livelihood of Elderly Population Age 60 and Over, 2023

Source of Livelihood	Count
Pension (Local)	4544
Pension (Overseas)	1415
Investment	343
Remittances (Overseas – Cash/Kind)	282
Savings/Interest on Savings	1376
Employment	4006
Disability Benefits	92
Unemployment Benefits	89
Social Security Benefits (NIS)	1192
Other Public Assistance	1307
Support from Friends/Relatives (Local - Cash/Kind)	877
Support from Friends/Relatives (Overseas - Cash/Kind)	590
Spouse/Partner Support (Cash/Kind)	655
Children Support (Cash/Kind)	1883
Parent(s) Support (Cash/Kind)	24
Guardian(s) Support (Cash/Kind)	14
Farming (Backyard, Garden etc.)	685
Other (Specify)	192
Not Stated	526

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

12.6 Chronic Illness

The incidence of chronic illness among the elderly reflects the demographic and epidemiological transition associated with ageing populations. In 2012, hypertension (5,396 cases) and diabetes (3,328 cases) were the dominant conditions, together accounting for the majority of chronic morbidity (Table 12.11). By 2023, these conditions had risen sharply to 7,512 and 4,698, respectively, representing an intensification of non-communicable disease (NCD) prevalence. Arthritis remained widespread but declined slightly from 3,083 to 2,861, while heart disease increased modestly from 488 to 599. These patterns suggest a dual burden: early-onset conditions such as diabetes and hypertension peaking in the younger elderly, and degenerative conditions such as arthritis persisting into advanced ages.

Additional conditions documented in 2023 further highlight the complexity of elderly morbidity (Table 12.12). Glaucoma (532 cases) and cancer (263 cases) were significant contributors to health burdens, while kidney disease (258) and asthma (384) added to the growing profile of NCDs. Although smaller in magnitude, illnesses such as sickle cell anemia (68) and lupus (13) underscore the diversity of chronic conditions within the elderly population. Importantly, just over 40% (8,866 persons) reported no chronic illness, but this share declines steeply with advancing age, illustrating the cumulative toll of ageing on health.

Table 12-11 Elderly Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness and Age Group, 2012 & 2023

Age Group	Type of Chronic Illness							
	Diabetes	%	Hypertension	%	Arthritis	%	Heart Disease	%
2012								
60–64	789	23.7	1,246	23.1	582	18.9	93	19.1
65–69	718	21.6	1,126	20.9	602	19.5	98	20.1
70–74	670	20.1	1,059	19.6	590	19.1	81	16.6
75–79	514	15.4	912	16.9	557	18.1	93	19.1
80+	637	19.1	1,053	19.5	752	24.4	123	25.2
Total	**3,328**	**100**	**5,396**	**100**	**3,083**	**100**	**488**	**100**
2023								
60–64	1,084	23.1	1,762	23.5	542	18.9	101	16.9
65–69	1,170	24.9	1,819	24.2	646	22.6	136	22.7
70–74	856	18.2	1,436	19.1	510	17.8	123	20.5
75–79	709	15.1	1,083	14.4	467	16.3	104	17.4
80+	879	18.7	1,412	18.8	696	24.4	135	22.5
Total	**4,698**	**100**	**7,512**	**100**	**2,861**	**100**	**599**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 12-12 Elderly Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Other Types of Illness and Age Group, 2023

Age Group	Other Types of Chronic Illness							
	Kidney Disease	Asthma	Sickle Cell Anemia	Glaucoma	Cancer	Lupus	Other	None
60-64	50	142	20	52	51	7	268	3,672
65-69	66	108	23	100	70	4	249	2,421
70-74	49	49	13	129	50	0	201	1,342
75-79	47	21	4	90	42	2	195	727
80-84	29	34	6	64	27	0	102	345
85-89	12	20	0	60	13	0	64	222
90 and over	5	10	2	37	10	0	35	137
Total	**258**	**384**	**68**	**532**	**263**	**13**	**1,114**	**8,866**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

The combined evidence underscores that population ageing in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is increasingly accompanied by heightened exposure to chronic illness. The prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, and glaucoma illustrates the demographic shift toward an older population living longer but with greater morbidity.

12.7 Conclusion

The elderly population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has grown rapidly over the past two decades, rising from 12.9% of the total population in 2001 to 18.5% in 2023. This expansion is driven largely by fertility decline and increased survival, with the most significant growth occurring among the younger elderly cohorts (60-69 years). While women continue to outnumber men at the oldest ages due to their survival advantage, the gender gap has narrowed over time as male longevity has improved.

Union and marital patterns highlight the evolving social dynamics of ageing. The share of elderly persons outside unions has increased, particularly among women, while the proportion married has declined. Widowhood remains a defining characteristic of later life, yet the rise in single and never-married elderly suggests broader life course changes where individuals are ageing with fewer long-term partnerships. These patterns point to shifting family structures and underscore the importance of intergenerational and community support networks.

Economic and health dimensions further shape the ageing experience. Local and overseas pensions, alongside employment, remain the primary sources of livelihood, complemented by family transfers and remittances. At the same time, the elderly face a growing burden of chronic illness, particularly hypertension, diabetes, glaucoma, and cancer, though a notable share still report no chronic conditions at younger elderly ages. Together, these trends signal both the progress of demographic transition and the need for stronger health care systems, social protection, and eldercare services to ensure that longevity is accompanied by well-being and security in later life.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 12
THE ELDERLY

Size & structure:
Elderly total 20,210 (male 10,144, female 10,066). The largest band is 60–64 (6,548; 32%); ages 80+ number 2,710 (13%)

Longevity tilt:
Women outnumber men from 70+ onward

Union status overall :
Not in a union is the largest category (8,373; 41%), followed by married & living with spouse (6,709; 33%)

Advanced age vulnerability:
Among the 85+ elderly, more than 40 –51% are widowed and over 64% are not in a union, highlighting social isolation

Leading reported chronic conditions:
Hypertension (7,512) and diabetes (4,698) dominate, followed by arthritis, heart disease, glaucoma and cancer

Top livelihood sources (most important):
Local pension (4,544) and employment (4,006) lead, followed by children's support (1,883) and savings/interest (1,376)

Chapter 13. Disability

13.1 Introduction

Disability is increasingly recognized as a critical dimension of demographic analysis, reflecting both health outcomes and the extent to which societies are inclusive in providing equal opportunities for all individuals. According to the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, disability is understood as difficulties in basic functional domains such as seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care, and communication, which may limit participation in social and economic life (Washington Group on Disability Statistics, n.d.)[30]. This conceptual framework emphasizes that disability is not only a medical condition but also an interaction between functional difficulties and the environment.

The 2023 Population and Housing Census of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines adopted this approach to measure disability among persons aged five years and older. The census data provide insights into both the prevalence and severity of disability, as well as the types of functional difficulties most commonly reported. By disaggregating these results by sex and age, the data highlight the demographic and social patterns underlying disability in the population.

Understanding disability prevalence and characteristics is central to national development planning, particularly as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines seeks to advance commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 10, which focuses on reducing inequalities, explicitly calls for the empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The census results, therefore, not only quantify disability but also provide evidence for shaping policies and programs aimed at ensuring equal access to education, health, employment, and community participation for all citizens.

13.2 Disability Prevalence by Age and Sex

The 2023 Population and Housing Census recorded 4,437 persons aged five years and older living with a disability in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, representing approximately 4.3 percent of the population in this age group. The data reveal distinct patterns by both age and sex.

As shown in Table 13.1, males accounted for 2,112 persons with disabilities, while females made up a slightly higher 2,325. This near balance underscores that disability affects both sexes in similar proportions, although the slightly higher female prevalence aligns with global trends where women often experience greater longevity and thus higher exposure to age-related disabilities.

Age-specific prevalence shows a strong correlation between advancing age and increased disability. Among children aged 0-14 years, only 247 cases were recorded, equivalent to 1.5 percent of this age group. Prevalence begins to rise in early adulthood, with 376 cases among persons 15-29 years and 511 cases in the 30-44 age group. The incidence climbs more steeply in mid-life, with 1,231 cases among persons aged 45-64 years, and reaches its highest level among those 65 years and older, where 2,072 persons were reported with a disability.

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[30] Washington Group on Disability Statistics. (n.d.). *Definition of disability*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/about/definition-of-disability/

Table 13-1 Persons Five Years of Age and Over with or Without Disabilities by Age Group and Sex

Broad Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	Without Disability	With Disability	Without Disability	With Disability	Without Disability	With Disability
0-14	8,390	139	8,136	108	16,526	247
15-29	11,220	209	11,084	167	22,304	376
30-44	10,660	251	11,272	260	21,932	511
45-64	13,814	588	12,552	643	26,366	1,231
65 and over	5,754	925	5,836	1,147	11,590	2,072
Total	**49,838**	**2,112**	**48,880**	**2,325**	**98,718**	**4,437**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

This progression indicates that disability is relatively rare in childhood but becomes increasingly common in later life, reflecting both biological aging and cumulative exposure to health risks.

13.3 Types and Severity of Disability

The 2023 Census reveals that most persons over age five do not report any form of disability, with 87,235 individuals (84.6 percent) stating no difficulty (Table 13.2). However, 11,505 persons (11.2 percent) reported mild difficulties, followed by 2,740 (2.7 percent) with moderate difficulties, and 862 (0.8 percent) with severe difficulties. Women are more likely than men to report mild and moderate disabilities, accounting for 59.4 percent of all mild cases and 54.0 percent of moderate cases. In contrast, men account for just over half (51.9 percent) of severe disabilities, suggesting subtle gender differences in the reporting and experience of disability severity.

Table 13-2 Persons Five Years of Age and Over by Degree of Disability and Sex

Degree of Disability	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
None	45,181	51.8	42,054	48.2	87,235	100.0
Mild	4,671	40.6	6,834	59.4	11,505	100.0
Moderate	1,260	46.0	1,480	54.0	2,740	100.0
Severe	447	51.9	415	48.1	862	100.0
Not Stated	391	48.1	422	51.9	813	100.0
Total	**51,950**	**50.4**	**51,205**	**49.6**	**103,155**	**100.0**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Moreover, an examination of the specific types of disability (Table 13.3), that is, difficulties related to seeing, hearing, and walking dominate the overall profile. Difficulty seeing is the most prevalent, affecting 7,757 individuals with some difficulty and 906 reporting lots of difficulty, while 222 persons reported being unable to see at all. Difficulty walking is also common, with 5,105 persons reporting some difficulty, 1,676 with lots of difficulty, and 427 unable to walk at all. Hearing difficulties affect

1,829 with some difficulty and 248 with lots of difficulty, while 76 persons reported total inability to hear. Other forms of disability such as remembering or concentrating (3,295 with some difficulty), self-care (1,389 with some difficulty), and communication (1,414 with some difficulty) are less widespread but remain significant for daily functioning.

Table 13-3 Persons Five Years and Over by Type of Disability, Degree of Disability and Sex

Type and Degree of Disability	Male	Female	Total
Difficulty Seeing: No - No difficulty	48,161	45,288	**93,449**
Difficulty Seeing: Yes - some difficulty	2,864	4,893	**7,757**
Difficulty Seeing: Yes - lots of difficulty	399	507	**906**
Difficulty Seeing: Cannot see at all	129	93	**222**
Difficulty Hearing: No - No difficulty	50,483	49,694	**100,177**
Difficulty Hearing: Yes - some difficulty	894	935	**1,829**
Difficulty Hearing: Yes - lots of difficulty	131	117	**248**
Difficulty Hearing: Cannot hear at all	43	33	**76**
Difficulty Walking: No - No difficulty	48,767	46,354	**95,121**
Difficulty Walking: Yes - some difficulty	1,868	3,237	**5,105**
Difficulty Walking: Yes - lots of difficulty	709	967	**1,676**
Difficulty Walking: Cannot walk at all	208	219	**427**
Difficulty remembering or concentrating: No - No difficulty	49,748	48,626	**98,374**
Difficulty remembering or concentrating: Yes - some difficulty	1,473	1,822	**3,295**
Difficulty remembering or concentrating: Yes - lots of difficulty	281	283	**564**
Difficulty remembering or concentrating: Cannot remember at all	44	45	**89**
Difficulty with Self Care: No - No difficulty	50,535	49,645	**100,180**
Difficulty with Self Care: Yes - some difficulty	655	734	**1,389**
Difficulty with Self Care: Yes - lots of difficulty	210	226	**436**
Difficulty with Self Care: Cannot care at all	151	173	**324**
Difficulty Communicating or speaking: No - No difficulty	50,453	49,911	**100,364**
Difficulty Communicating or speaking: Yes - some difficulty	789	625	**1,414**
Difficulty Communicating or speaking: Yes - lots of difficulty	242	175	**417**
Difficulty Communicating or speaking: Cannot speak at all	67	66	**133**

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Together, these patterns highlight the diverse nature of disability in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, spanning sensory, physical, cognitive, and communication challenges. While mild and moderate difficulties are more common, the presence of severe and profound cases underscores the need for inclusive health, education, and social support systems that can address the varying levels of functional limitation within the population.

13.4 Conclusion

The 2023 Population and Housing Census highlights that disability, while affecting a relatively small proportion of the population, is unevenly distributed across age, sex, and type of difficulty. Prevalence increases sharply with age, particularly among those 65 years and older, where functional limitations such as difficulty seeing, walking, and remembering are most common. Women are more likely than men to report mild and moderate disabilities, while men are slightly more represented in severe cases. These findings align with global patterns of aging populations and gendered health outcomes.

The data also reveal that the most common forms of disability relate to vision, mobility, and cognition, with communication and self-care difficulties being less frequent but still significant for affected households. Importantly, the majority of cases are classified as mild to moderate, suggesting opportunities for timely intervention through accessible health care, rehabilitation services, and inclusive education and employment policies. The presence of more severe disabilities, though less common, underscores the need for comprehensive support systems to ensure full participation and well-being.

Overall, the census findings emphasize that disability is both a social and demographic issue, shaping household dynamics, access to services, and economic participation. Addressing these challenges is critical to advancing Sustainable Development Goal 10. Essentially, by integrating disability data into policy and planning, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines can work toward a more inclusive society that recognizes and supports the needs of all its citizens especially persons with disabilities.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 13
DISABILITY

Overall prevalence:
About 4,437 persons (4.3%) over age five reported a disability, with slightly more females (2,325) than males (2,112)

Age & Disability:
Disability rises sharply with age: only 1.5% of children 0–14 have a disability, compared to 15% of those 65+ (2,072 cases)

Degree of disability:
While 85% (87,235 persons) reported no difficulty, about 11% had mild difficulty, 2.7% moderate, and 0.8% severe

Vision impairments:
Difficulty seeing is the most common type: 7,757 reported some difficulty; 906 lots of difficulty & 222 cannot see at all

Mobility challenges:
Difficulty Walking is the second most common disability: 5,105 persons reported with some difficulty & 1,676 lots of difficulty

Cognitive and concentration issues:
Reported by 3,295 persons with some difficulty and 564 with lots of difficulty, accounting for about 3.8% of cases

Chapter 14. Gender and Development Issues

14.1 Introduction

Gender and development issues remain a central priority in the national development framework of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The Government, through the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs and Persons with Disabilities, has emphasized that equal access to social, cultural, spiritual, educational, economic, and political opportunities is essential for fostering inclusive growth. The Gender Affairs Division plays a pivotal role in advancing this mandate, guided by its mission to ensure equality of opportunity, its vision of a fully integrated approach to gender equity and mainstreaming, and its goal of embedding a gender perspective into all aspects of national development[31].

Over the years, this commitment has translated into targeted initiatives aimed at eliminating gender-based disparities and promoting empowerment across all spheres of life. Such efforts align with global and regional frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize gender equality as both a fundamental right and a requirement for sustainable progress.

This chapter presents an overview of gender and development issues as revealed in the 2023 Population and Housing Census. It highlights disparities and progress in union status, health outcomes, educational attainment, and labour force participation. The analysis underscores the extent to which gender dynamics continue to shape demographic and socio-economic patterns in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and points to areas where policy interventions remain critical for achieving equity and empowerment.

14.2 Demographic, Health and Gender Issues

Union status patterns among household heads in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reflect clear gender differences. As shown in Table 14.1, men were far more likely than women to be married and living with a spouse. In 2012, nearly 87 % of household heads in this group were men, compared with only 13% women. By 2023, men continued to dominate this category (84.1%), though the share of female household heads increased slightly to 15.9%.

Conversely, women were consistently overrepresented among household heads not in a union. In 2012, 58.6 percent of household heads outside of unions were women, compared with 41.4 percent men. By 2023, women still dominated this category, accounting for 58.0 percent. This imbalance points to the gendered realities of separation, divorce, and widowhood, with women more frequently assuming household headship in the absence of a marital or common-law partner.

[31] Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. (n.d.). *Gender Affairs.* In Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Gender Affairs and Persons with Disabilities. Retrieved September 20, 2025, from https://mobilization.gov.vc/mobilization/index.php /gender-affairs

Table 14-1 Union Status of Households Heads by Sex, 2012 & 2023

Union Status	Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total
2012			
Never had a Spouse or Common Law Partner	53.1	46.9	**100**
Married and Living with Spouse	86.9	13.1	**100**
Common Law Union	67.9	32.1	**100**
Visiting Partner	53.4	46.6	**100**
Not in Union	41.4	58.6	**100**
Not Stated	59.1	40.9	**100**
Total	**60.7**	**39.3**	**100**
2023			
Never had a spouse or common-law partner	56.3	43.7	**100**
Married and living with spouse	84.1	15.9	**100**
Married and not living with spouse	51.3	48.7	**100**
Common-law	63.8	36.2	**100**
Visiting partner	52.9	47.1	**100**
Not in a union	42	58	**100**
Not Stated	50.8	49.2	**100**
Total	**57.2**	**42.8**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Other union types also reveal gendered patterns. According to Table 14.1, men were more likely to head households in common-law unions (63.8 percent) and visiting partnerships (52.9 percent) in 2023, while women were less represented in these arrangements. These patterns suggest that union status, household structure, and gender roles remain deeply intertwined, with men continuing to dominate headship in formal and semi-formal unions, while women more often lead households in contexts of non-union living.

14.3 Health and Gender Issues

Patterns of chronic illness in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines demonstrate clear gender differences, with females reporting higher levels of morbidity than males. The 2023 census shows that hypertension was the most widespread condition, affecting 12,239 persons, of whom nearly two-thirds were women. Diabetes followed, with 7,039 reported cases, again concentrated among females. Asthma (4,683 cases) and arthritis (3,891 cases) also revealed a similar trend, while heart disease (955 cases) affected more women than men. These data underscore the disproportionate burden of chronic illnesses among females (Table 9.2 in Chapter 9: Health).

Despite this higher prevalence of illness, females continue to experience greater longevity than males, a paradox that has persisted across census cycles. While biological and social factors may contribute, a key explanation lies in health-seeking behaviour, as women are generally more proactive in accessing health care facilities and monitoring their health status compared to men.

The persistence of higher female morbidity may also reflect differences in reporting practices. Men are often less likely to disclose or recognize health problems, often due to limited health knowledge or reluctance to disclose conditions that may affect their employment. Women, in contrast, are more open to seeking medical attention and reporting health concerns. This behaviour contributes to earlier detection and management of chronic conditions, but also results in higher recorded morbidity. Notably, certain illnesses such as lupus remain overwhelmingly female-dominated, whereas kidney disease, cancer, and glaucoma showed smaller gender gaps.

14.4 Education and Gender Issues

Educational attainment in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continues to show marked gender differences, particularly at the upper levels of the education system. While males remain more visible at the lower stages of schooling, females have consistently advanced into higher levels, with stronger representation in secondary, tertiary, and adult education programmes.

Table 14-2 Highest Education Attained by Population 15 Years and Over by Sex, 2012 & 2023

Highest Education Attained	Sex					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
2012						
Pre Primary	7	0.0	13	0.0	**20**	**0.0**
Primary (1-7 Years)	20,066	47.9	15,881	39.3	**35,947**	**43.7**
Secondary	11,740	28.0	12,772	31.6	**24,512**	**29.8**
Pre-University/Post-Secondary/ College	3,344	8.0	4,651	11.5	**7,995**	**9.7**
University	1,678	4.0	2,252	5.6	**3,930**	**4.8**
Other	316	0.8	216	0.5	**532**	**0.6**
Don't Know or Not Stated	4,734	11.3	4,593	11.4	**9,327**	**11.3**
Total	**41,885**	**100**	**40,378**	**100**	**82,263**	**100**
2023						
Daycare/Nursery	8	0.0	1	0.0	**9**	**0.0**
Pre-school	188	0.4	145	0.3	**333**	**0.4**
Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary	14,305	33.6	10,392	24.7	**24,697**	**29.2**
Lower/Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3)/ Senior Primary	7,064	16.6	6,112	14.5	**13,176**	**15.6**
Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5)	10,899	25.6	12,000	28.5	**22,899**	**27.0**
Post Secondary, non-tertiary (Diploma/Associate Degree)	4,921	11.6	7,399	17.6	**12,320**	**14.6**
Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree	1,496	3.5	2,666	6.3	**4,162**	**4.9**
Tertiary level - Master's Degree	645	1.5	995	2.4	**1,640**	**1.9**
Doctorate level programmes	124	0.3	121	0.3	**245**	**0.3**
None	1,420	3.3	1,011	2.4	**2,431**	**2.9**
Other (specify)	412	1.0	439	1.0	**851**	**1.0**
Not Stated	1,085	2.5	817	1.9	**1,902**	**2.2**
Total	**42,567**	**100**	**42,098**	**100**	**84,665**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 14.2 illustrates this trend, showing that women outpace men in post-secondary and tertiary enrolment, reflecting not only a narrowing but, in some areas, a reversal of traditional gender gaps in education.

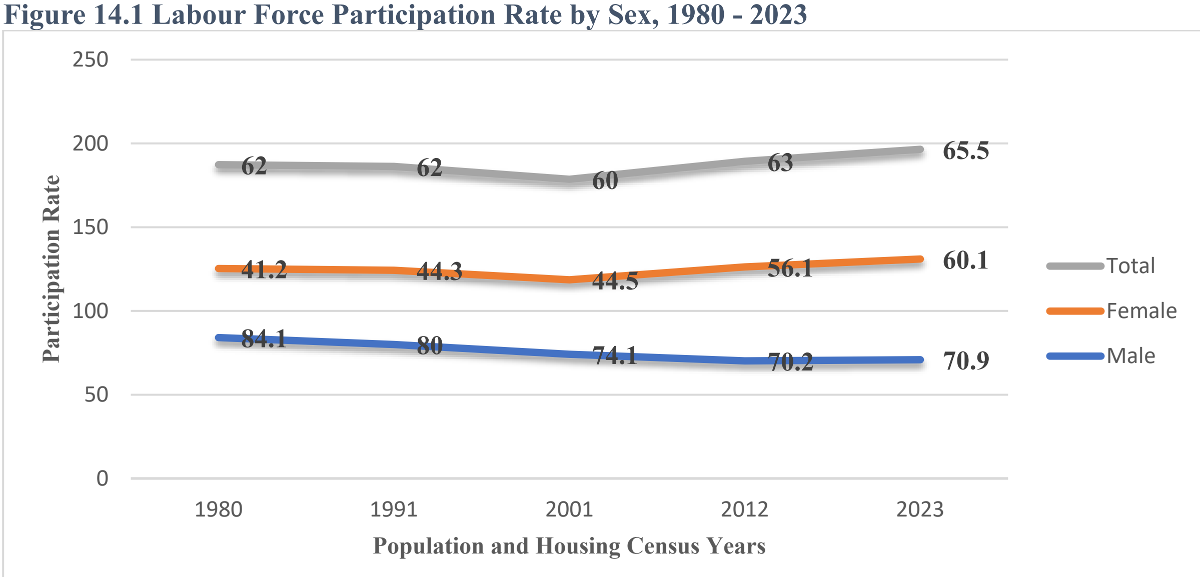
Despite women forming a smaller share of the overall adult population, they are more likely than men to pursue and complete higher education. The data confirm that females are increasingly concentrated in institutions such as community colleges, universities, and professional training centers. This progression has also translated into a larger proportion of women earning advanced qualifications, including bachelor's and master's degrees. Such trends point to a steady feminization of higher education, which carries long-term implications for gender roles in the labour market and household decision-making.

Simultaneously, the limited progression of males beyond the lower levels of schooling raises concerns about their long-term outcomes. While females have increasingly capitalized on opportunities in post-secondary and tertiary education, men remain disproportionately concentrated at primary and lower secondary levels. This imbalance risks reinforcing future disparities in employment prospects and socio-economic mobility. As such ensuring greater male engagement in higher education is therefore critical to achieving balanced gender and development outcomes in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

14.5 Labour Force Participation and Gender Issues

Labour force participation in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reflects persistent gender disparities, though shifts over the past four decades highlight gradual change. Figure 13.1 illustrates the evolution of participation rates between 1980 and 2023.

Figure 14.1 Labour Force Participation Rate by Sex, 1980 - 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

While overall participation increased from 62.0% in 1980 to 65.5% in 2023, the gap between males and females has persisted, though it has narrowed. Male participation declined from 84.1% in 1980 to 70.9%

in 2023, while female participation rose significantly from 41.2% to 60.1% over the same period. This suggests that women are increasingly integrated into the labour market, reflecting broader social and economic changes, including improved access to education and shifting gender norms. However, men's declining participation may indicate challenges related to underemployment, disengagement, or migration, which warrant further policy consideration.

Table 14.3 highlights shift in both employment and unemployment rates across census years. Specifically, unemployment has trended downward, from 23.5 in 1980 to 17.8% in 2023. Gender disparities remain evident, as females consistently report higher unemployment rates (19.7% in 2023) compared to males (16.2%). Employment rates mirror these differences, with men (83.8%) still more likely to be employed than women (80.3%). These patterns underline persistent gender inequalities in accessing stable employment opportunities, even as female participation has grown.

Table 14-3 Employment Status by Sex, 1980 - 2023

Year	Unemployment Rate			Employment Rate		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1980	23.0	24.5	**23.5**	77.0	75.5	**76.5**
1991	18.4	22.1	**19.8**	81.6	77.9	**80.2**
2001	22.5	18.3	**20.9**	77.6	81.7	**79.1**
2012	19.4	24.3	**21.5**	80.6	75.7	**78.5**
2023	16.2	19.7	**17.8**	83.8	80.3	**82.2**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 14-4 Employment Status by Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

Status in Employment	2001		2012		2023	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Paid employee, Government	50.8	49.2	44	56	38.9	61.1
Paid employee, Statutory	70.3	29.7	63.6	36.4	57.2	42.8
Paid employee, Private Business	62.2	37.8	61.4	38.6	58.2	41.8
Paid employee, Private Home	-	-	-	-	48.5	51.5
Self-Employed with paid employees	75.3	24.7	69.1	30.9	71.1	28.9
Self-Employed without employees	66.8	33.2	67.9	32.1	67.2	32.8
Apprentice	78.1	21.9	70.3	29.7	70.9	29.1
Unpaid Family Worker	54.6	45.4	44.4	55.6	55.4	44.6
Volunteer worker	-	-	-	-	60.5	39.5
Other (Specify)	-	-	-	-	70.6	29.4
Don't know	-	-	-	-	65.4	34.6
Not Stated	-	-	-	-	69.4	30.6

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Note: The additional categories appearing in 2023 (e.g., Paid employee, Private Home; Volunteer worker; Other; Don't know; Not stated) reflect refinements to the census questionnaire and coding of labour-force responses. These were introduced to capture forms of employment or reporting that were either negligible, less visible, or not separately classified in earlier censuses (2001, 2012).

Moreover, employment patterns by sex and sector, presented in Table 14.4, reveal further distinctions. By 2023, women dominated public sector government jobs (61.1% of females versus 38.9% of males) and were equally strong in paid private home employment. Men, by contrast, were more likely to be self-employed with employees (71.1% male versus 28.9% female) or apprentices (70.9% male versus 29.1% female). These occupational divisions suggest enduring gender segmentation, with women concentrated in public and service-oriented employment while men remain more engaged in entrepreneurial and technical roles.

Table 14-5 Employed Population by Major Occupation Group, 2001, 2012 & 2023

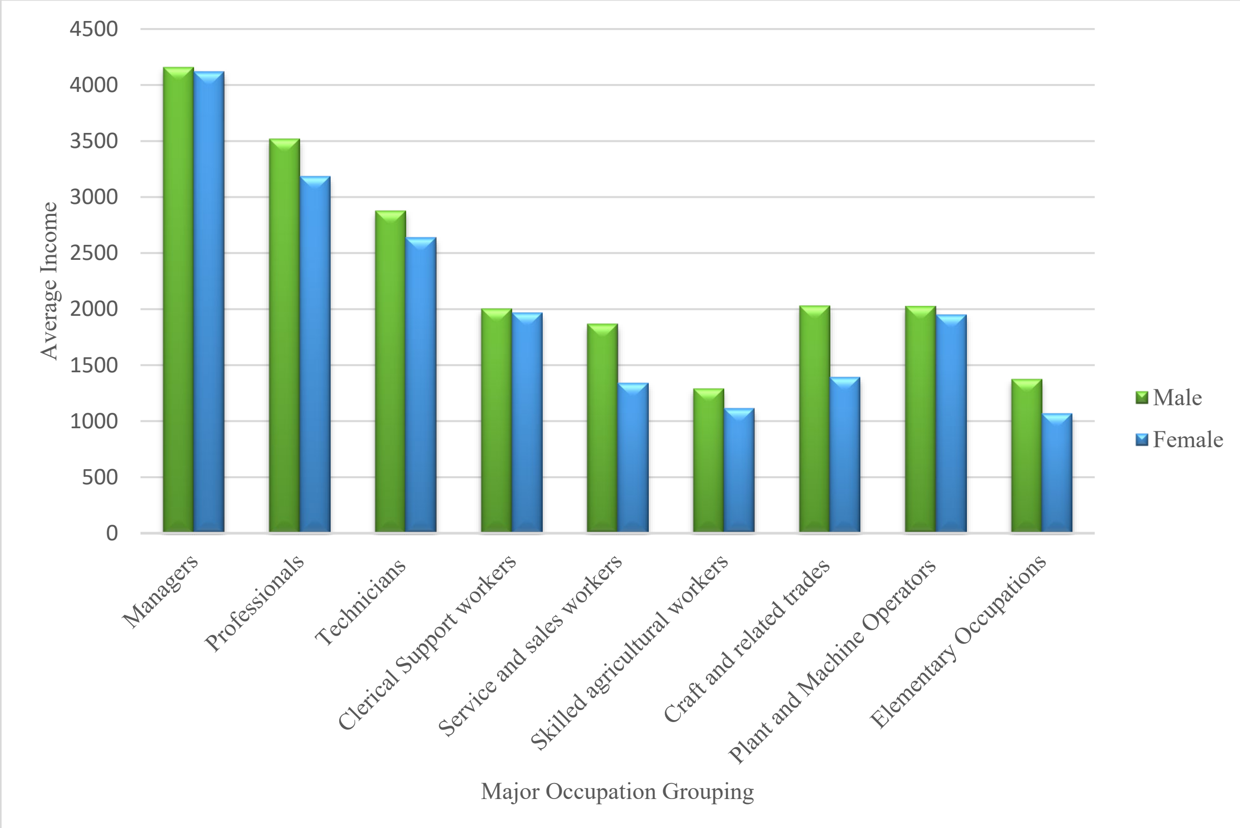
Major Occupation Groups	2001			2012			2023		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Armed Forces Occupations	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1	9
Managers	1,104	1,076	2,180	968	661	1,629	1,099	1,077	2,176
Professionals	1,611	1,920	3,531	1,553	2,991	4,544	1,718	3,797	5,515
Technicians and associate professionals	896	866	1,761	1,436	1,470	2,906	1,989	2,115	4,104
Clerical support workers	726	2,594	3,320	606	1,905	2,511	903	2,434	3,337
Service and sales workers	2,621	2,581	5,202	4,442	6,188	10,630	4,639	6,989	11,628
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	3,315	674	3,989	4,230	880	5,110	3,480	758	4,238
Craft and related trades workers	4,390	446	4,836	4,995	472	5,467	5,111	642	5,753
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	2,280	182	2,462	1,928	110	2,038	2,033	114	2,147
Elementary occupations	4,232	3,061	7,293	2,346	2,220	5,466	4,360	2,403	6,763
Not Stated	668	345	1,013	286	234	520	435	365	800
Total	**21,843**	**13,745**	**35,587**	**23,690**	**17,131**	**40,821**	**25,775**	**20,695**	**46,470**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 14.5, which disaggregates employment by occupation group, reinforces the aforementioned division. In 2023, women dominated professional and clerical occupations, accounting for nearly three-quarters of professionals (3,797 out of 5,515) and clerical support workers (2,434 out of 3,337). Conversely, men remained dominant in agriculture, craft, and trades, with 3,480 males in skilled agricultural work compared with only 758 females, and 5,111 males in craft and trade occupations versus 642 females. These disparities highlight how occupational choices and opportunities remain strongly gendered, influenced by both educational attainment as well as cultural expectations.

Earnings data, presented in Figure 14.2, further reveal gendered inequalities in the labour market. While men and women share similar earnings at the managerial level, wage gaps widen in most other categories. Male professionals earned on average more than females, and the difference is even more pronounced among service, agricultural, and elementary workers, i.e. occupations where women's wages tend to lag significantly behind men's. The persistence of these wage gaps despite female advancement in education suggests that structural barriers, occupational segregation, and undervaluation of female-dominated jobs continue to shape gender wage inequality.

Figure 14.2 Average Monthly Wage of Employed Population by Sex, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Educational attainment provides critical insight into these labour market dynamics. Table 14.6 highlight clear shifts between 2012 and 2023 in the educational profile of the employed population, with marked gender differences. In 2012, employment was heavily concentrated at the primary (43.1%) and secondary (32.9%) levels, where men dominated, holding over half of all jobs at the primary level (50.6% male vs. 32.8% female). Women, by contrast, were more visible at the higher tiers, representing 10.1% of employed persons with university level qualifications, compared to 5.5% of men. By 2023, the structure of employment had shifted upward: the share of employed with only primary education fell to 24.7%, while upper secondary rose to 29.0% and post-secondary non-tertiary to 17.9%. The gender gap widened at these higher stages. Women made up 23.4% of employed with associate degrees compared to 13.5% of men, and nearly two-thirds of employed bachelor's graduates (9.6% female vs. 4.3% male). This transition points to a feminization of the employed population at advanced education levels, while men remain concentrated in lower tiers, particularly primary and junior secondary.

Table 14-6 Employed Population by Highest Education Attained, 2012 & 2023

Highest Level of Education Attained	Sex					
	Male	%	Female	%	Both	%
2012						
Pre Primary	3	0.0	3	0.0	6	0.0
Primary (1 – 7 Years)	11,987	50.6	5,625	32.8	17,612	43.1
Secondary	7,239	30.6	6,202	36.2	13,441	32.9
Pre-University/Post-Secondary/College	2,333	9.8	2,897	16.9	5,230	12.8
University	1,303	5.5	1,729	10.1	3,032	7.4
Other	160	0.7	63	0.4	223	0.5
Don't Know or Not Stated	665	2.8	612	3.6	1,277	3.1
Total	**23,690**	**100**	**17,131**	**100**	**40,821**	**100**
2023						
Daycare/Nursery	2	0.0	-	0.0	2	0.0
Pre-school	80	0.3	45	0.2	125	0.3
Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary	7,970	30.9	3,488	16.9	11,458	24.7
Lower / Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3) / Senior Primary	4,214	16.3	2,357	11.4	6,571	14.1
Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5)	7,039	27.3	6,434	31.1	13,473	29.0
Post Secondary, non-tertiary (diploma or associate degree)	3,480	13.5	4,840	23.4	8,320	17.9
Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree	1,108	4.3	1,996	9.6	3,104	6.7
Tertiary level - Master's Degree	425	1.6	766	3.7	1,191	2.6
Doctorate level programmes	89	0.3	83	0.4	172	0.4
None	706	2.7	272	1.3	978	2.1
Other (specify)	198	0.8	213	1.0	411	0.9
Not Stated	464	1.8	201	1.0	665	1.4
Total	**25,775**	**100**	**20,695**	**100**	**46,470**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

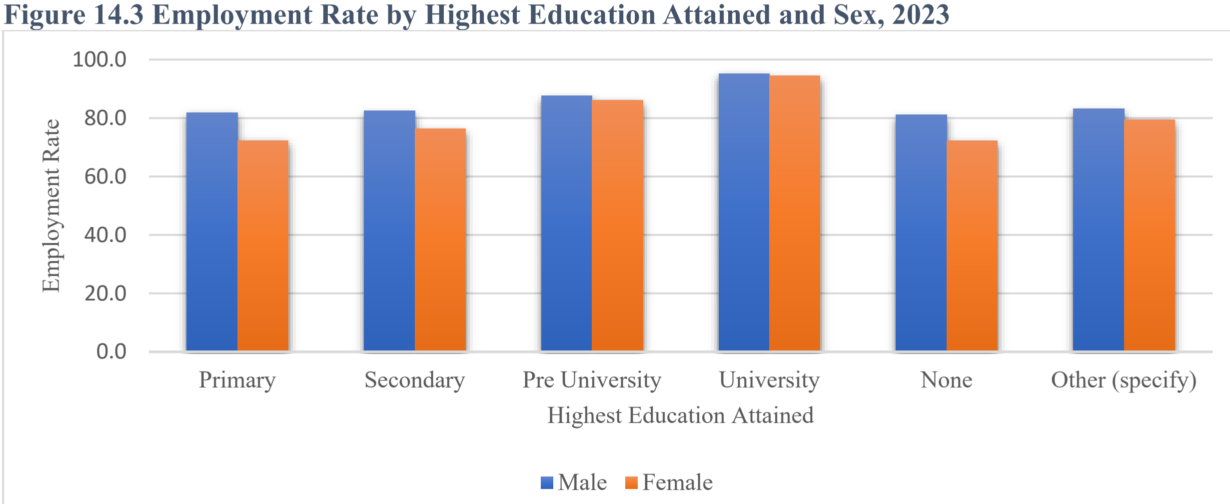
The unemployed population reveals a contrasting dynamic. In 2012, unemployment was concentrated among those with secondary education (43.9%) and primary education (40.2%), with men slightly more represented at primary (48.3%) and women at secondary (48.3%). By 2023, the share of unemployed with primary education declined sharply to 30.5%, while upper secondary rose to 32.7%. The gender differences observed in 2023 are striking as women made up a disproportionate share of the unemployed at higher education levels, specifically post-secondary non-tertiary (15.2% vs. 9.9% for men) and bachelor's degrees (2.5% female vs. 0.9% male). Alternatively, men continued to dominate the unemployed at the primary and junior secondary levels, where limited schooling restricts labour market entry. This indicates that while women are attaining higher levels of education, they may face greater barriers to translating these qualifications into employment while men's vulnerability stems more from low educational achievement.

Table 14-7 Unemployed Population by Highest Level of Education Attained, 2012 & 2023

Highest Level of Education Attained	Sex					
	Male	%	Female	%	Both	%
2012						
Pre Primary	-	0.0	2	0.0	2	0.0
Primary (1 – 7 Years)	2,747	48.3	1,756	31.9	4,503	40.2
Secondary	2,258	39.7	2,658	48.3	4,916	43.9
Pre-University/Post-Secondary/College	399	7.0	752	13.7	1,151	10.3
University	68	1.2	102	1.9	170	1.5
Other	37	0.6	33	0.6	70	0.6
Don't Know or Not Stated	184	3.2	197	3.6	381	3.4
Total	**5,693**	**100**	**5,500**	**100**	**11,193**	**100**
2023						
Daycare/Nursery	1	0.0	-	0.0	1	0.0
Pre-school	17	0.3	13	0.3	30	0.3
Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary	1,756	35.2	1,322	26.0	3,078	30.5
Lower / Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3) / Senior Primary	885	17.7	802	15.8	1,687	16.7
Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5)	1,503	30.1	1,796	35.3	3,299	32.7
Post Secondary, non-tertiary (diploma or associate degree)	492	9.9	776	15.2	1,268	12.6
Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree	43	0.9	125	2.5	168	1.7
Tertiary level - Master's Degree	25	0.5	39	0.8	64	0.6
Doctorate level programmes	5	0.1	5	0.1	10	0.1
None	165	3.3	105	2.1	270	2.7
Other (specify)	39	0.8	55	1.1	94	0.9
Not Stated	59	1.2	54	1.1	113	1.1
Total	**4,990**	**100**	**5,092**	**100**	**10,082**	**100**

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Figure 14.3 Employment Rate by Highest Education Attained and Sex, 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The Vincentian labour market shows a dual dynamic: women have advanced in education and professional roles but still face higher unemployment and wage gaps, while men remain concentrated in agriculture and trades yet are increasingly limited by lower education and declining labour participation. These contrasting paths present a critical challenge for achieving both equity and productivity.

14.6 Conclusion

The analysis of gender and development issues in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines highlights both areas of progress and persistent disparities. Over the past decade, women have advanced significantly in education, health-seeking behaviour, and participation in formal employment. They are now more visible in higher levels of education, government employment, and professional occupations, reflecting a gradual shift away from traditional gender roles. At the same time, women remain disproportionately represented among those outside of unions and continue to bear a heavier burden of chronic illness, underscoring the dual nature of empowerment and vulnerability in their demographic profile.

Men, on the other hand, continue to dominate agricultural, craft, and trade-related employment but face increasing challenges linked to educational underachievement and declining labour force participation. Their stronger presence in lower levels of schooling and concentration in manual and self-employment sectors contrast sharply with women's rising share of post-secondary and tertiary qualifications. This divergence not only widens gender gaps in employment outcomes but also signals the risk of long-term imbalances in human capital development.

Taken together, these contrasting trajectories highlight a dual challenge: sustaining women's progress toward equity and empowerment while also addressing the vulnerabilities of men in education and employment. Closing these gaps will be vital for ensuring balanced gender and development outcomes in the years ahead.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 14
GENDER & DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Union Status:
Men head most married-with-spouse households (84%), while women lead most non-union households (58%)

Health disparities:
Women bear a heavier burden of chronic illness, accounting for 65% of hypertension and 63% of diabetes cases

Education gap reversal:
Women surpassed men in higher education, making up 62% of employed with bachelor's degrees & 66% with masters degree

Labour force participation:
Female participation rose to 60.1%, narrowing the gap with men (70.9%) but not closing it

Unemployment inequality:
Women face higher unemployment (19.7%) than men (16.2%), showing barriers in turning educational gains into jobs.

Sectoral employment differences:
Women are more concentrated in services, sales, and clerical jobs, while men dominate agriculture & craft

Appendix 1: Description of Major Census Division

For census purposes, Saint Vincent is divided into 11 divisions and the Grenadines into 2 divisions. The descriptions of these divisions were extracted from the 2012 Population and Housing Census (PHC).

Census Division	Description
Division1 **Kingstown**	This division comprises all lands, parcels, and buildings within the following boundary: beginning at the point where the Sion Hill/Arnos Vale Crown Lands boundary meets the sea, proceeding along this boundary to the Windward Highway; then running northerly along the Windward Highway to a point on Ronald Llewellyn's boundary; from there, in a straight line to the junction at the Hunte/David Seales boundary with the Dorsetshire Hill road. The boundary continues along the Dorsetshire Hill road to its meeting point with the Leonard Phillips/Thomas Mascoll boundary, then extends in a straight line to Gibson Corner. From Gibson Corner, it follows the Leeward Highway northward to its intersection with the St. George/St. Andrew Parish boundary, and finally runs along this parish boundary to the sea.
Division 2 **Suburbs of Kingstown**	This division comprises the area outside the Town Boundary beginning at Cooper's Ridge, north of Clare Valley, continuing to "Plantation," and then following Rilland Gutter, which crosses the Leeward Highway at the deep bend culvert just below the Rilland Hill Standpipe, up to its head and onward to Agout Ridge. From there, the boundary runs along the spur to Mt. St. Andrew, then continues along Fenton Ridge, Green Hill, and Orange Grove to the point where Dorsetshire Hill meets the Leonard Phillips/Thomas Mascoll boundary at Millar's Gate. It then follows the Town Boundary to the sea at Ross Castle and runs along the coastline back to the starting point.
Division 3 **Calliaqua**	This division starts at Mt. St. Andrew; the boundary extends northward along the Main Ridge and continues over Ponsonby Ridge to the "Kennedy Trail." It follows this trail past Eyry Ridge to its junction with the Vigie Highway, then proceeds along the Vigie Highway to the road leading to Akers. From there, it runs along this road to Crick's Corner, then follows the deep gully (Cologne) between Calder and Akers to the Argyle Dam. The boundary continues along the gully north of New (Rescue) Village to the deep bend and culvert on the Windward Highway near the ninth mile pillar (Breadfruit Gutter), and descends through this gutter to the sea.
Division 4 **Marriaqua**	This division comprises the entire natural basin from Ponsonby Ridge, continuing along the Main Ridge to Grand Bonhome, then to Petit

	Bonhome and onward along the ridge to Maroon Hill. From there, the boundary follows the ridge forming the northern limits of Hopewell, Sayers, and Argyle Estates, extending to the Escape R.C. Church and then to the sea.
Division 5 **Bridgetown**	This division begins at Petit Bonhome, the boundary runs along a spur to the head of the Julie Gutter, follows the Julie Gutter to its junction with the Union River, and continues along the Union River to the sea.
Division 6 **Colonarie**	This division starts at Grand Bonhome, the boundary follows the Main Ridge to Hill 3404, then extends along the eastern spur and the northern boundary of Mt. William Estate to Byrea Ridge on the Windward Highway. From there, it follows the stream down to the sea.
Division 7 **Georgetown**	The boundary runs along the Morne Garu Range to the point nearest the head of the Karo River, then follows the course of the Karo River to the sea.
Division 8 **Sandy Bay**	This divison is located along the Main Ridge through Hills 3421, 3150, 2405, 1474 and 185 of the 1889 Admiralty Chart to the Rocky Promontory opposite Booby Rock.
Division 9 **Layou**	This division begins at Bambaroo Point, the boundary runs along the ridge north of Ruthland Vale Estate, continues through Happy Hill to the Main Ridge, and then follows the Main Ridge southward to Mt. St. Andrew.
Division 10 **Barrouallie**	The boundary follows the northern boundary of Cumberland Estate, then continues along the spur north of Spring Village to Mount 3404, and from there runs south along the Morne Garu Range.
Division 11 **Chateaubelair**	This division comprises the remaining north-western portion of the island, extending to the rocky promontory opposite Booby Rock.
Division 12 **Northern Grenadines**	This division comprises of Bequia, Battawia, Balliceaux, Mustique, Petit Mustique and Savan - that chain of island extending from Bequia to Savan Rock.
Division 13 **Southern Grenadines**	This division comprises of Canouan, Mayreau, Union Island and Petit Canouan to Petit St. Vincent.

Appendix 2: Concepts and Definitions

Visitation Record

A log of the Enumeration Summary, which includes information about each building, dwelling unit and household visited in a specific enumeration district.

Total Population

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2012 Population and Housing Census counted the country's de jure and de facto population. This means that the census counted the total number of persons who were usual residents in the country during the enumeration period (de jure population), as well as all persons who were present in the country on census night (de facto population). In this preliminary report, the total population refers to the de jure population, which includes:

a) Persons living in private dwellings (households),
b) Persons living in non-private dwellings, group dwellings, and institutions,
c) Persons with no fixed place of abode (e.g., Homeless),
d) Persons at work (e.g., Vincentian workers on cruise ships), on vacation, at school, or seeking medical treatment outside of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for less than six (6) months.

Household/Non-Institutional Population

The household population includes all persons who reside in private dwellings in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It is important to note that a member of the household is not necessarily a relative of the main family. A boarder or a domestic employee, for example, who sleeps most nights (4 nights or more) per week and shares at least one of the daily meals at the house where they work, is also included as a member of that household. The concept of the household and family is not the same. It is possible to encounter more than one family constituting a single household once they live together for most nights of the week and share at least one meal.

Census Division (CD)

The largest geographic areas into which St. Vincent and the Grenadines is divided for the purpose of the census administration.

Enumeration District (ED)

This is the smallest geographical area into which each Census Division is subdivided to facilitate data collection. Each area should be just large enough for one (1) Enumerator to canvas within a reasonable time.

Household

One or more persons living together (i.e., sleeping most nights of a week; 4 to 7 days) and sharing at least one daily meal. Members of a household do not have to be related.

Institution

Living quarters in which the occupants live collectively for disciplinary, health, educational, religious, or other purposes. The institutional population comprises persons who are not members of households. These include those in university dorms, religious institutions, prisons, and so forth.

Head of Household

A "marker" for a household, its type, and structure. It is usually defined as the principal wage earner or provider for a multi-person household or, alternatively, as the person in whose name the housing unit is rented or owned. Persons living alone are also designated as heads of households. In principle, the number of households is equal to the number of household heads

Sex Ratio

This is the ratio of males to females within the population.

Age Dependency Ratio

A ratio in which the numerator represents the total number of people not of working age (too young or too old to work and therefore "dependent" on those who do), and the denominator represents the population of working age; often multiplied by 100, which yields the number of dependents per 100 persons of working age.

Dependency Ratio

The ratio of the number of persons in a given "dependent" age group of interest to the number in a different age group considered to contain those persons providing support to those dependent (e.g., the number of persons less than 15 years of age divided by the number aged 15 to 64).

Appendix 3: Population and Housing Census Questionnaire

The questionnaire for the 2023 Population and Housing Census can be accessed via the following link: https://designer.mysurvey.solutions/q/details/693274ac-157a-47c3-b4d0-b42b21b07902

Generated by edwinstcather, Sep 04, 2025 16:57
Questionnaire owned by edwinstcather, Mar 31, 2025 09:29
Last modified by edwinstcather, Apr 01, 2025 13:35

Shared with:
bretneyanthony (never edited)
rdegazon (never edited)

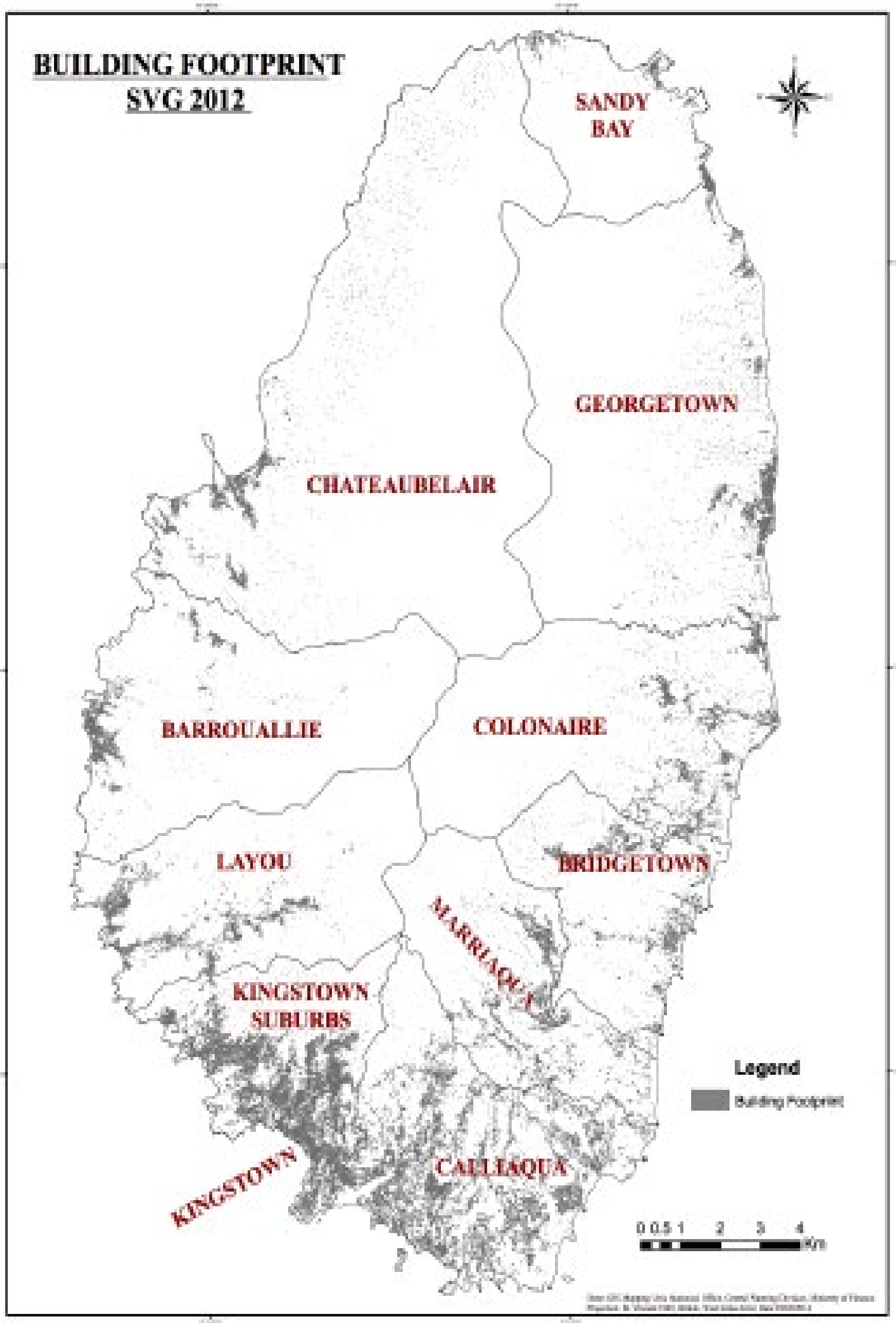
Sections: 6, Sub-sections: 29,
Questions: 278.
Questions with enabling conditions: 154
Questions with validation conditions:28
Rosters: 5
Variables: 0

Survey Solutions

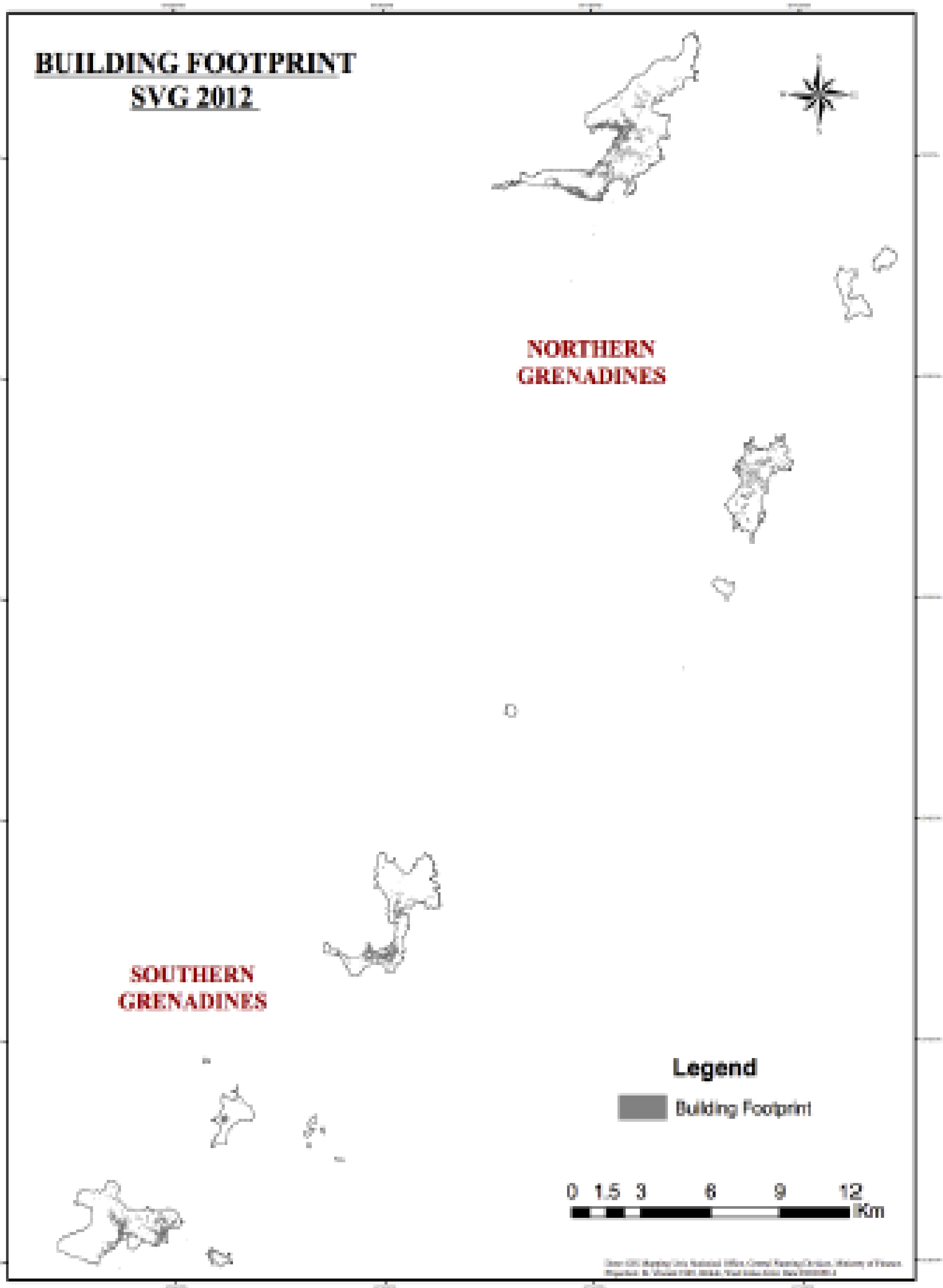
SVG PHC 2023_Final

Appendix 4: Maps

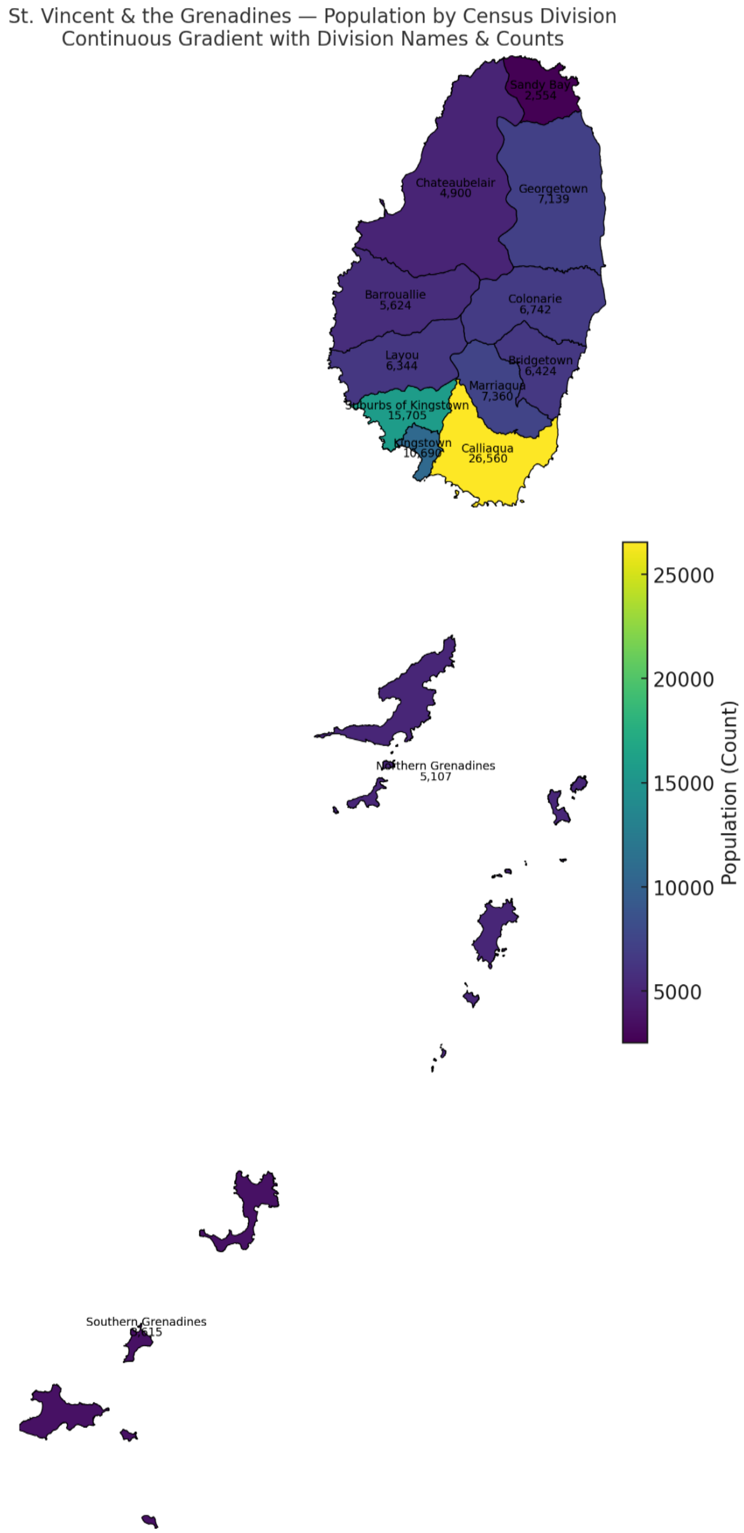
Map 10 Building Footprint SVG 2012



Map 11 Building Footprint SVG - Grenadines 2012



Map 12 SVG Population by Census Division



Map 13 SVG Population Density by Census Division