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Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency

EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET IN ZIMBABWE

Thematic Report Based on Quarterly Labour Force Survey

JULY 2026

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This thematic report was produced by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT)

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Foreword

Education and skills development remain central to Zimbabwe's aspirations for inclusive growth, decent work and structural transformation. Understanding how educational attainment translates into labour market outcomes is critical for evidence-based policy formulation, effective human capital investment and the achievement of national development priorities. Reliable labour market statistics provide the foundation for assessing whether the education system is equipping citizens with skills that align with evolving economic demands.

This report presents findings from the Second Quarter 2025 Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), focusing on the relationship between education and labour market outcomes. Drawing on nationally representative data for persons aged 16 years and above, the report analyses labour force participation, employment, unemployment, labour underutilisation, informality, occupational distribution and job quality across education levels. It provides a comprehensive assessment of how educational attainment shapes access to employment opportunities in both formal and informal sectors.

The analysis is aligned with international statistical standards, including the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) and the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), ensuring comparability and methodological robustness. By examining disaggregation by sex, age and place of residence, the report sheds light on structural gaps in the labour market.

The findings contribute directly to monitoring progress towards Zimbabwe's Vision 2030, the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Agenda 2063, particularly in advancing decent work, quality education, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth.

It is our expectation that this thematic report will serve as a valuable reference for policymakers, researchers, development partners and other stakeholders. ZIMSTAT remains committed to producing high-quality, timely and policy-relevant statistics to inform national development and welcomes continued collaboration in strengthening labour market evidence for decision-making.

Tafadzwa Bandama
DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Acknowledgement

We express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Zimbabwe, particularly the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, for its continued financial and policy support towards the production of high-quality labour market statistics. Their commitment to strengthening evidence-based planning remains instrumental in advancing national statistical development. We would like to acknowledge immense contribution by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for their technical support in producing this report.

We further acknowledge the leadership and guidance of ZIMSTAT Senior Management for providing strategic oversight and ensuring the effective mobilisation of technical and operational resources throughout the implementation of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey. Special recognition is extended to the staff of the Macroeconomics Division and all other ZIMSTAT divisions whose dedication in survey design, field coordination, data processing, analysis and report preparation ensured the integrity and credibility of the findings. We also commend the invaluable contributions of trainers, supervisors, team leaders, enumerators, data processors and technical reviewers whose professionalism and commitment were central to the successful completion of this exercise.

Above all, we extend our profound gratitude to the households and individuals who participated in the survey. Their cooperation and willingness to provide detailed and accurate information made this report possible and continue to strengthen the foundation for informed labour market policy and national development planning in Zimbabwe.

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Key Highlights

Secondary education remains the dominant attainment level in Zimbabwe, accounting for 65.0 percent of total employment and over 60 percent of the working-age population, while 9.5 percent of the working-age population attained higher education. Labour force participation increased with education, reaching 76.8 percent among persons with higher education and was about 1.6 times higher for males (59.2%) than females (36.9%). The employment-to-population ratio was highest among those with higher education (70%) and lowest among those who had never been to school (12%).

Formal sector absorption into employment rose sharply with education, peaking at 56.2 percent among persons with higher education compared to 1.9 percent among those with no schooling. Earnings also depicted a positive relation to the level of education with individuals with no formal schooling recording the lowest average earnings of USD 126.21, while those with primary education earned an average of USD 152.25.

Unemployment was highest among persons with secondary education (23.6%) and among youth aged 16–25 (39.7% for those with secondary education). Informality declined with higher education, while labour underutilisation (LU2) was highest among those with secondary education (30.3%) and lowest among those with higher education (11.9%), with females consistently more affected than males.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

Education plays a central role in shaping labour market outcomes by influencing individuals' employability, productivity and earnings potential. However, the relationship between education and employment is not always linear. Understanding how education translates into labour market outcomes is therefore critical for evidence-based planning.

Skills development remains a key component of National Development Strategy 2, aimed at promoting inclusive growth, decent work, and structural transformation. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) provides a robust and nationally representative source of data for analysing these dynamics. By capturing information on employment, unemployment, underemployment, labour force participation, earnings and demographic characteristics, the QLFS enables detailed assessment of how education levels are associated with labour market performance across different population groups. This thematic report draws on QLFS data to examine the nexus between education to labour market in a systematic and evidence-based manner.

1.2 Objectives of the Thematic Report

The main objective of this thematic report is to examine the relationship between educational attainment and labour market outcomes in Zimbabwe using data from the Q2 2025 Quarterly Labour Force Survey.

Specifically, the report aims to:

1. Examine labour market outcomes by level of education.
2. Assess labour underutilisation across education groups.
3. Analyse occupational and sectoral distribution by educational attainment.
4. Examine labour market exclusion, including NEET and discouraged workers.
5. Identify disparities by sex, age, and area.

1.3 Data Source and Methodology

This report is based on data from the 2025 Second Quarter Labour Force Survey (QLFS), which is a nationally representative household survey on labour market activity among the working-age population (16 years and above). The survey collects detailed information on employment status, hours worked, job search activities, industry and occupation and key demographic characteristics, including age, sex, and highest level of education attained.

Educational attainment was collected in accordance with International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 version. For analysis purposes, the standard categories were collapsed into 4 aggregated classes as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: ISCED Aggregated Classes

ISCED Category	Aggregated Class
No formal schooling	Never Been to School
ECE	Primary
Primary	
Vocational- National Foundation Certificate	Secondary or Equivalent
Lower Secondary	
Upper Secondary	
Vocational - Certificate	Higher Education (Post-Secondary or Tertiary)
Vocational - Apprenticeship / Teacher College	
Tertiary - Short Cycle	
Tertiary - Higher National Diploma / Bachelor / Bachelor Honours	
Tertiary - Master / Doctorate Medical Courses	
Doctorate	

1.4 Key Concepts

Youth are defined according to the statistical standard applied in the QLFS. While the African Union defines youth as persons aged 15–35 years, the United Nations defines youth as those aged 15–24 years. The report also uses internationally aligned labour market indicators, including unemployment, time-related underemployment (TRU), discouraged job seekers and broader measures of labour underutilisation. The concept of NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) is used to assess labour market exclusion among young people.

The analysis is primarily descriptive and cross-sectional, focusing on rates and distributions across education groups and selected demographic characteristics. While the QLFS provides rich labour market information, certain limitations should be noted. The report does not directly measure earnings or detailed skills competencies, limiting the ability to assess returns to education or precise skills mismatch. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow for tracking individual transitions over time. Nevertheless, the QLFS remains a comprehensive and reliable source for analysing the association between education and labour market outcomes at national level.

2. EDUCATION PROFILE OF THE LABOUR FORCE

2.1. Educational Attainment of the Working Age Population

The proportion of persons in the working age population (all persons 16 years and above) who had acquired higher education was 9.5 percent. Females who had acquired higher education were 9 percent of the total females in the working age while for males the proportion was 10.1 percent. The largest proportion in the working age population had attained secondary school as their highest level of education for both females and males at 60.5 and 66.3 percent respectively (Figure 1).

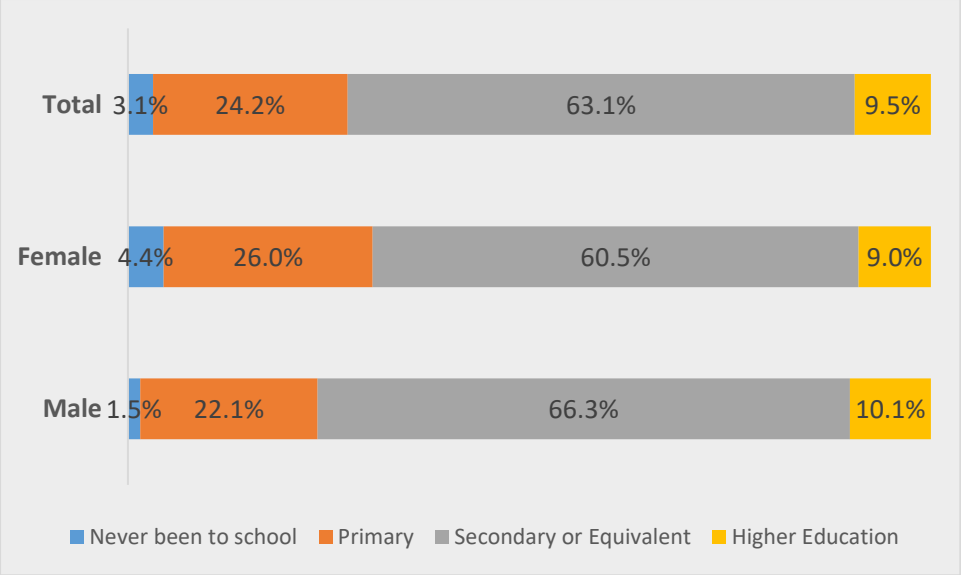

Figure 1: Working Age Population by Educational Attainment and Sex

In urban areas, the proportion of persons in the working age population who had attained higher education was almost 5 times that of those in rural areas (18.4% against 4% respectively). For both rural and urban areas, the largest proportion in the working age population had attained secondary schooling as highest level of education at 70.7 and 58.5 percent respectively. The proportion of persons who had attained primary education as their highest level of education in rural areas was about 3 times the proportion in urban areas (Figure 2).

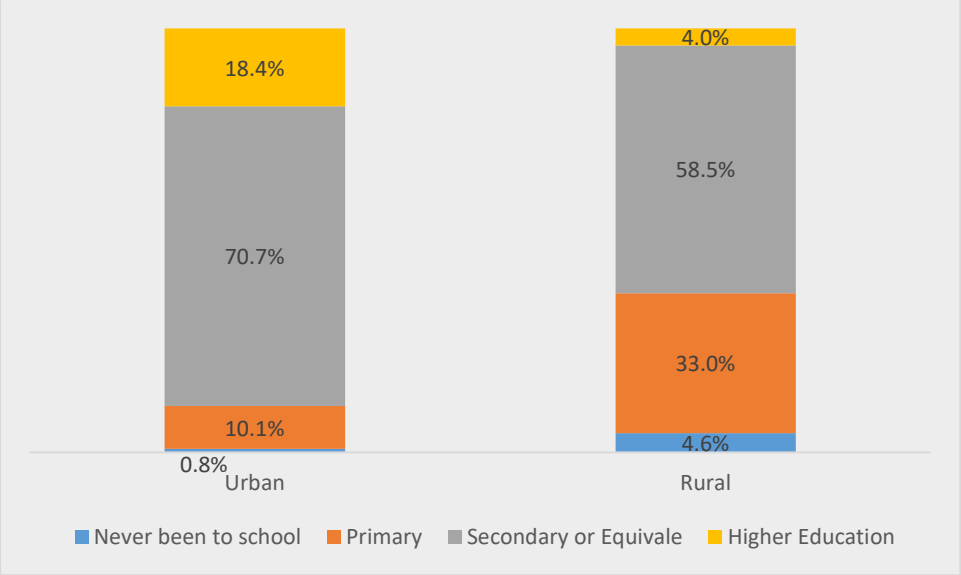

Figure 2: Working Age Population by Educational Attainment and Area

2.2. Labour Force Participation

The labour force comprises of all employed and unemployed persons within the working-age population. The labour force participation rate (LFPR) is calculated as the proportion of the working-age population that is in the labour force, expressed as a percentage.

At national level, LFPR for males (59.2%) was about 1.6 times that of females (36.9 %). Persons who had never been to school had the lowest LFPR among both females and males at 11.5 and 20.1 percent respectively. Conversely, persons who had attained Higher education as their highest level of education had the highest labour force participation rate at 76.8 percent. The LFPR trend consistently increased with higher educational attainment for both males and females (Figure 3).

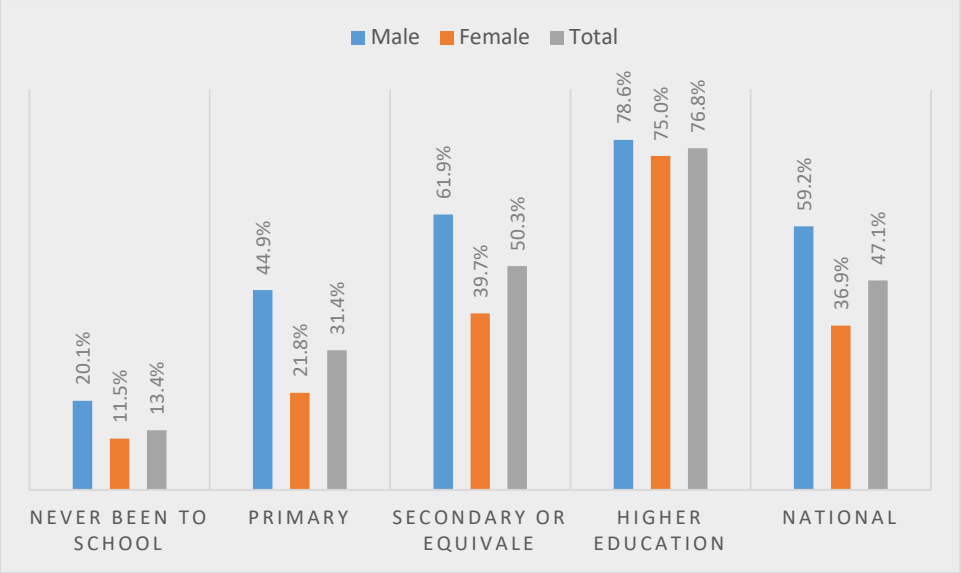

Figure 3: Labour Force Participation Rate by Educational Level and Sex

In both rural and urban areas, LFPR was highest among those who had attained higher education (post-secondary and tertiary). LFPR in rural areas was lower than urban areas across all categories of educational attainment except for those who had attained higher education (Figure 4).

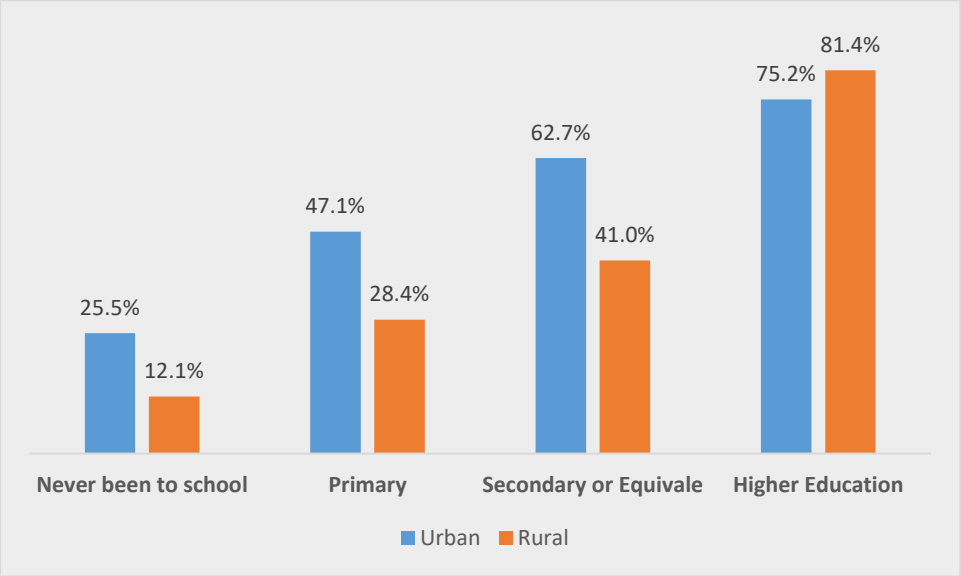

Figure 4: Labour Force Participation Rate by Educational Level and Area

3. EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

3.1. Employment by Level of Education

Among the employed persons, 17.8 percent had attained higher education (post-secondary or tertiary), whilst 1 percent had never been to school. The proportion of females who had completed secondary school as highest level of education was 61.5 percent whilst that of males was 67.5 percent (Figure 5).

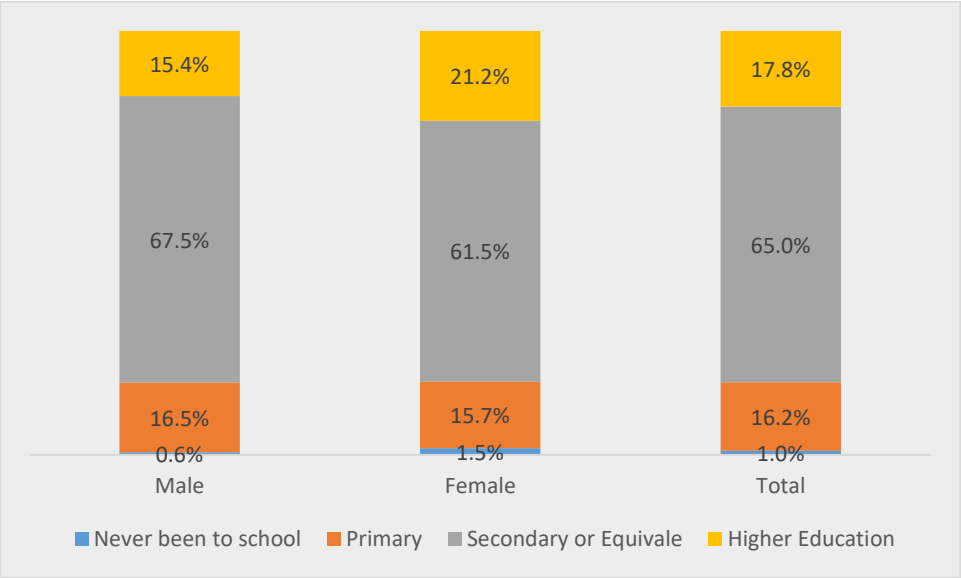

Figure 5: Employment by Level of Education and Sex

3.1.1 Employment by ISCED Level of Education

In Q2 2025, employment was mainly concentrated among persons with lower secondary education as highest qualification, accounting for 60.7 percent of total employment. Females were relatively more represented than males among those with Tertiary HND/Bachelor qualifications (11.1 percent compared to 8.1 percent). Males had a higher share among those with upper secondary schooling as highest educational level compared to females at 5.0 and 2.9 percent respectively. Employment among persons with vocational and postgraduate qualifications, as well as those who had never attended school, was below 2 percent (Figure 6).

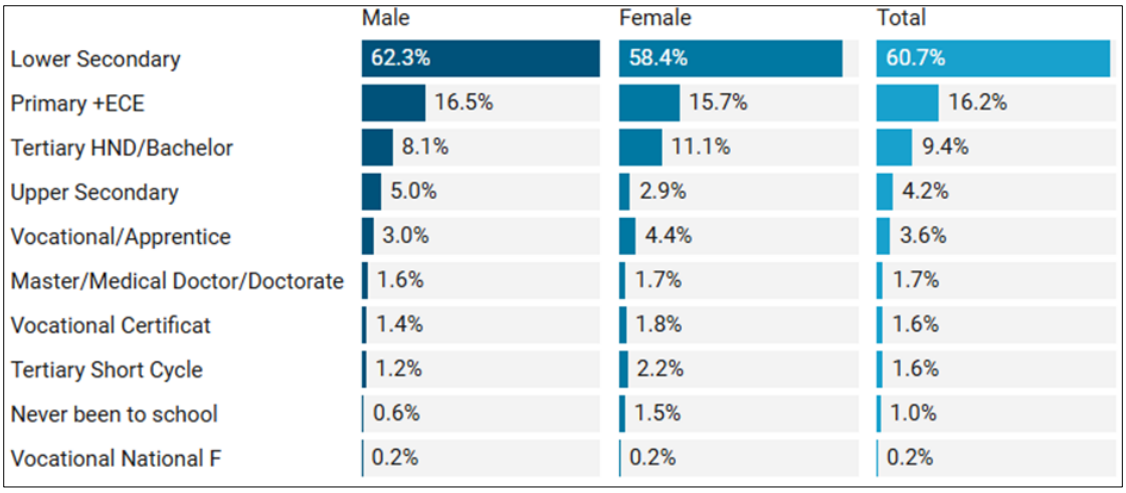

Figure 6: Employment by ISCED Level of Education and Sex

In urban areas, the proportion of employed persons who had attained higher education was about 2.5 times those in rural areas at 25.2 and 10.2 percent respectively. In rural areas, employed persons who had primary education as their highest level of education were 25.1 percent whilst in urban areas the proportion was 7.4 percent. The lowest proportions of employed persons for both rural and urban areas had never been to school at 1.7 and 0.3 percent (Figure 7a).

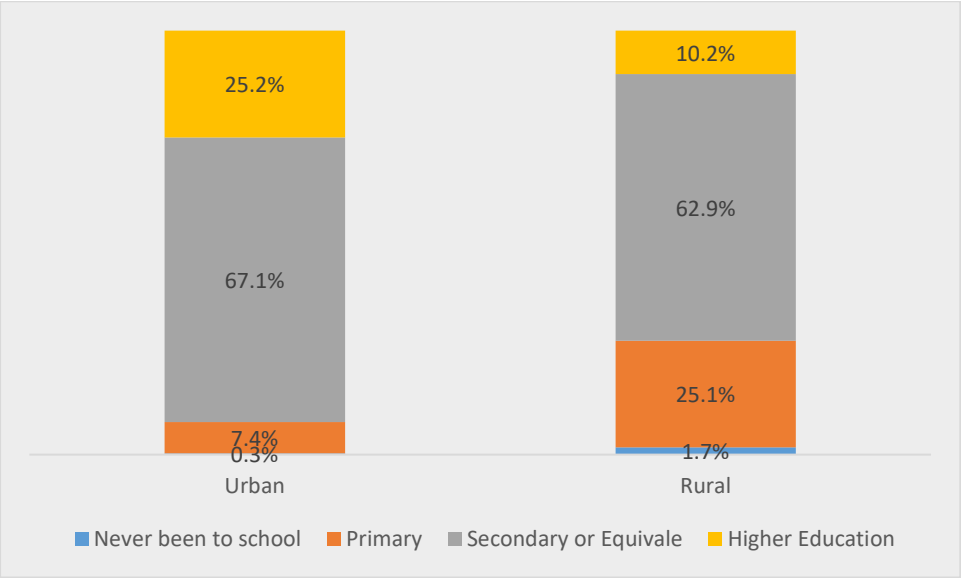

Figure 7a: Employment by ISCED Level of Education and Area

The distribution of educational attainment varied across provinces, although secondary education constituted the largest qualification category in most provinces. Harare recorded the highest proportion of persons with secondary education at 73.6 percent, followed by Mashonaland East (69.0 percent), Mashonaland West (68.6 percent) and Midlands (65.4 percent). The highest proportion of persons with higher education qualifications was observed in Matabeleland North at 36.9 percent, followed by Bulawayo (31.6 percent), Masvingo (23.9 percent) and Harare (20.0 percent).

Mashonaland Central recorded the highest proportion of persons whose highest level of education was primary education at 33.8 percent, while Harare had the lowest proportion at 6.0 percent. The proportion of persons who had never attended school remained relatively low across all provinces, ranging from 0.0 percent in Matabeleland North to 3.1 percent in Mashonaland Central. Overall, the results indicate that the majority of the labour force possessed at least secondary education, with notable provincial differences in the attainment of higher education qualifications (Figure 7b).

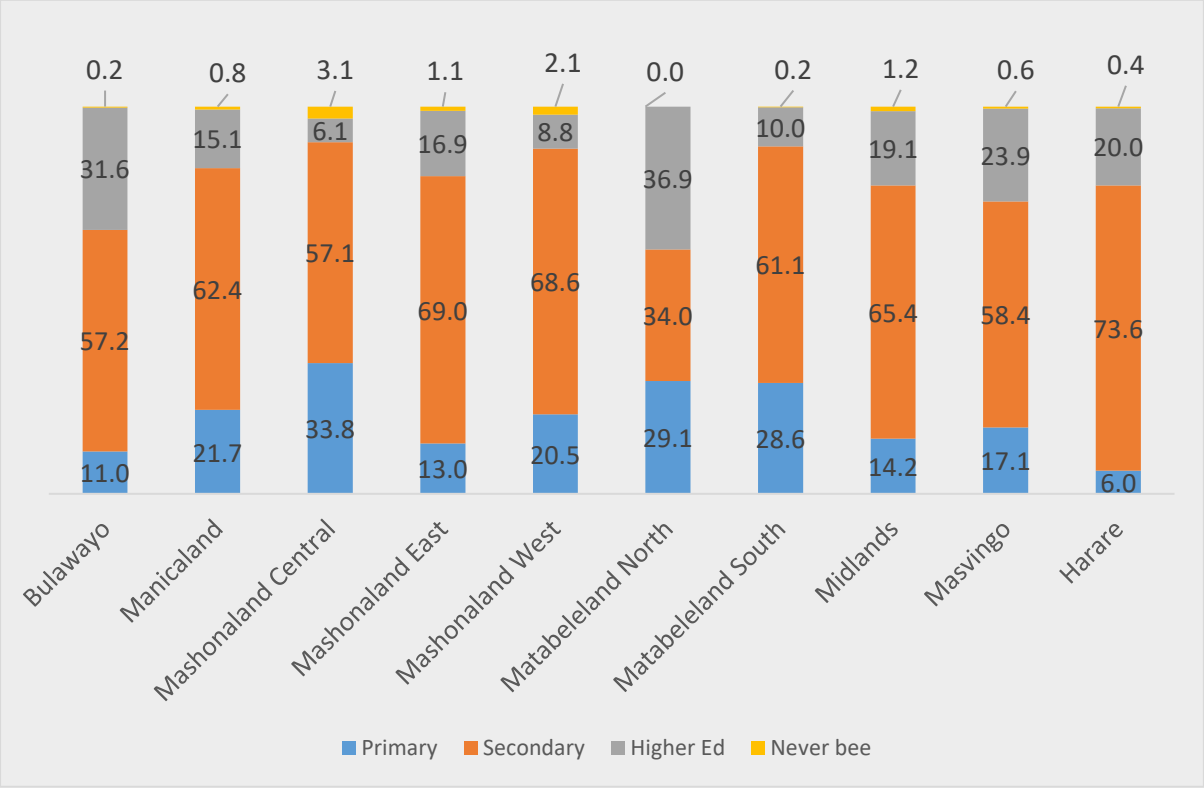

Figure 8b: Employment by ISCED Level of Education and Province

3.1.2 Employment and Field of Study

Employment by field of study among those with higher education shows notable differences between males and females. Overall, the largest proportion of employed persons specialised in Social Sciences, Business and Law, accounting for 36.2 percent of total employment. This field was particularly dominant among females, where it accounted for 40.2 percent compared to 32.9 percent among males.

The second largest field of specialisation was Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction, representing 20.7 percent of total employment. However, this field was heavily male-dominated, with 33.1 percent of employed males compared to only 5.7 percent of females.

In contrast, females were more concentrated in Health and Welfare as well as Education, accounting for 21.4 percent and 14.3 percent respectively, compared to 6.0 percent and 6.8 percent among males. Fields such as Science, Humanities, and Services recorded relatively smaller shares of employment across both sexes, while Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery had the lowest proportion overall at 0.7 percent (Figure 8).

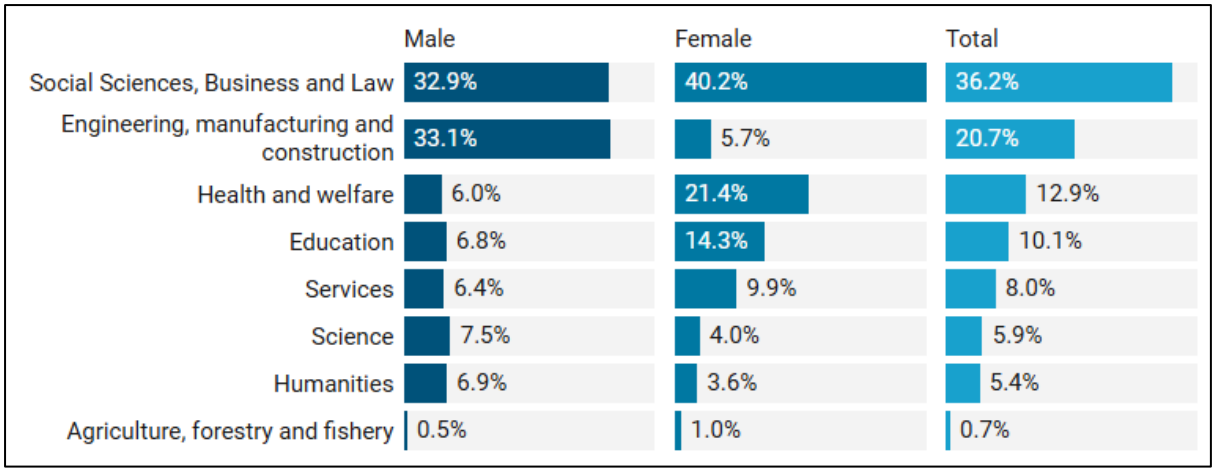

Figure 9: Employment for Persons with Higher Education by Field of Study and Sex

3.1.3 Formal Sector Employment

The formal sector consists of producers of goods or services that have a recognized legal and institutional status. This includes entities that are owned or controlled by the government, registered with the registrar of companies or legally recognized as separate from their owners. Such entities maintain a complete set of accounts for tax and regulatory purposes. In addition,

formal sector producers primarily operate for the market, aiming to generate income or profit, although some may function as non-profit or non-market producers supplying goods or services for use by other economic units.

Among persons employed in the formal sector, 40 percent had higher education while 51.4 percent had secondary education. For males, the highest proportion employed in the formal sector had completed secondary education as highest qualification at 59.9 percent while for females the highest proportion had attained higher education. Among both females and males, the lowest proportion in the formal sector had not attained any level of formal schooling (Figure 9).

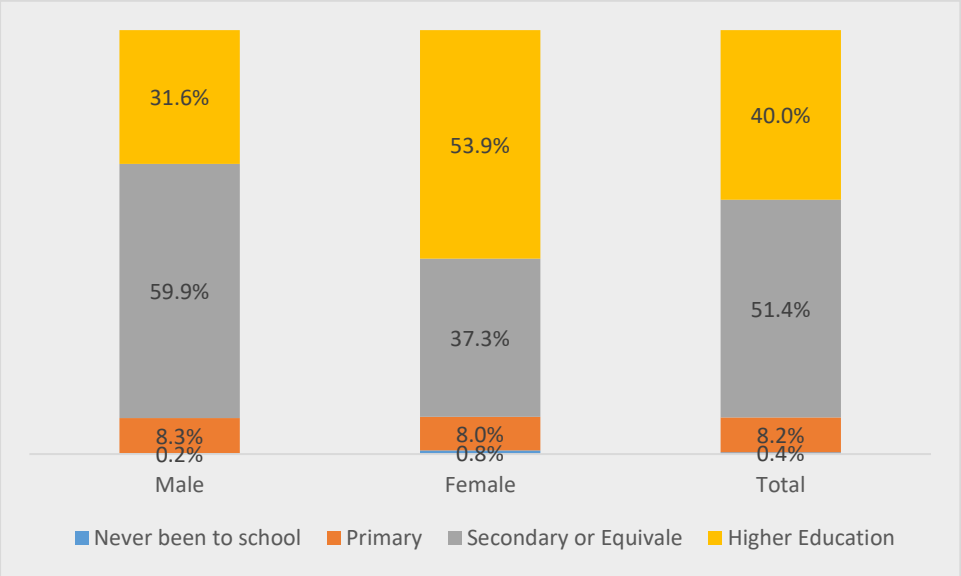

Figure 10: Proportion of Formal Sector Employment by Educational Level and Sex

3.1.4 Level of Education and Earnings

Average earnings generally increased with higher levels of educational attainment. Individuals with no formal schooling recorded the lowest average earnings of USD 126.21, while those with primary education earned an average of USD 152.25. Average earnings increased further to USD 232.83 among individuals with secondary education. The highest average earnings were observed among individuals with higher education qualifications, who earned an average of USD 634.40. These results indicate a positive relationship between educational attainment and earnings, with individuals possessing higher levels of education earning substantially more than those with lower levels of educational attainment (Figure 10).

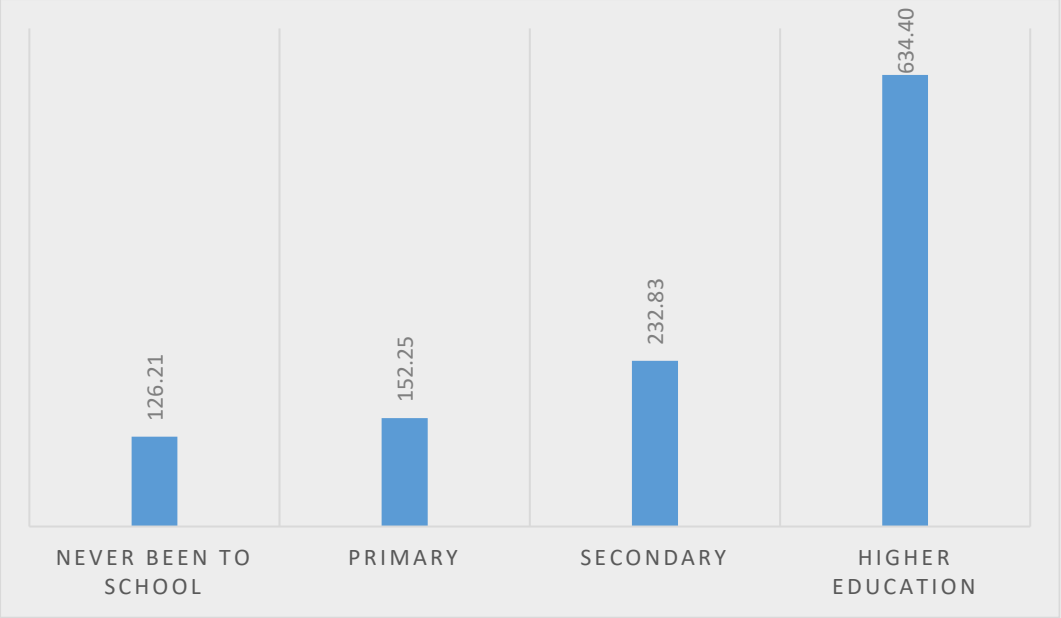

Figure 10: Average Earnings (USD) by Level of Education

3.2. Employment Absorption Rate

The Employment Absorption rate also known as Employment-to-Population Ratio (EPR) measures the proportion of the working-age population that is employed. The employment absorption rate was highest among those who had attained higher education at 70 percent. This means that the probability of being employed after attaining higher education (post-secondary or tertiary) was at 70%. On the other hand, the employment absorption rate was lowest among those who had never been to school at 12 percent. For both males and females, the odds of being employed increased with higher educational attainment (Figure 11).

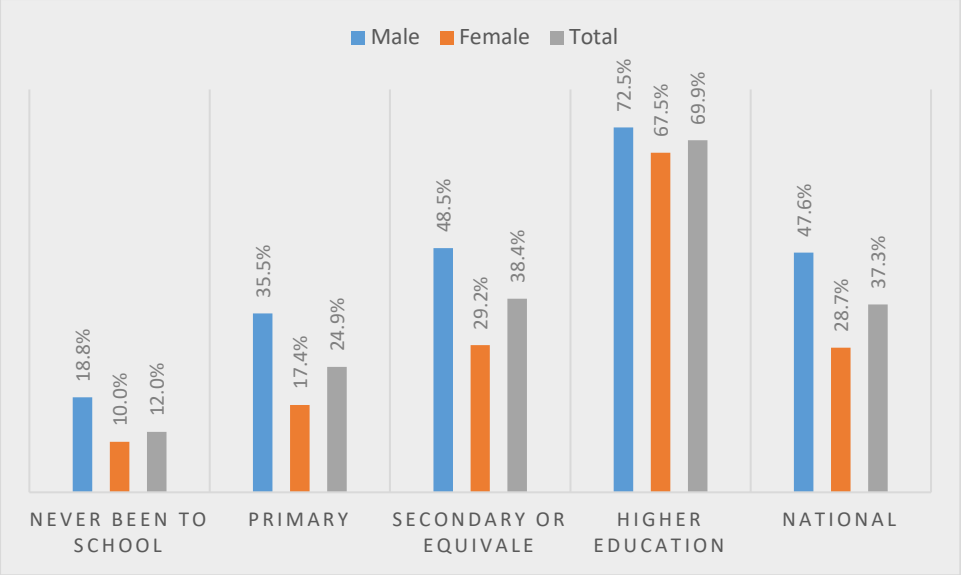

Figure 11: Employment to Population Ratio by Level of Education and Sex

Employment to population ratio for urban population was consistently higher than that of the rural population in all educational categories except for those who had attained higher education (post-secondary or tertiary) as shown in Figure 12.

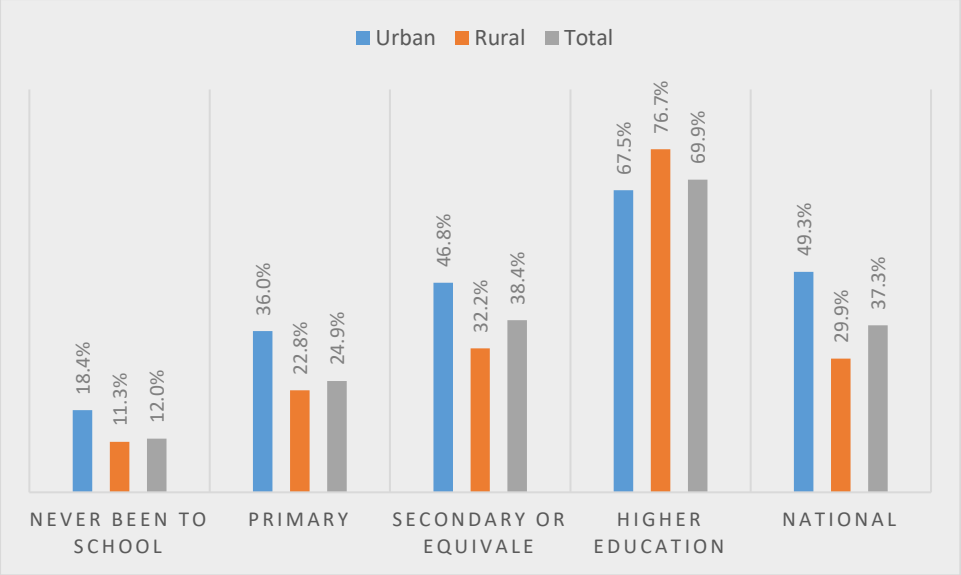

Figure 12: Employment to Population Ratio by Level of Education and Area

3.2.1 Absorption Rate in the Formal Sector

At national level, the employment absorption rate in the formal sector was 18.3 percent for males and 9.3 percent for females. The highest absorption rate in formal sector was among

those who had higher education at 56.2 percent while the lowest was among those who had never been to school at 1.9 percent. For both males and females, the absorption rate for the formal sector increased with increase in educational attainment. Males' absorption rate in the formal sector was consistently higher than that of females (Figure 13).

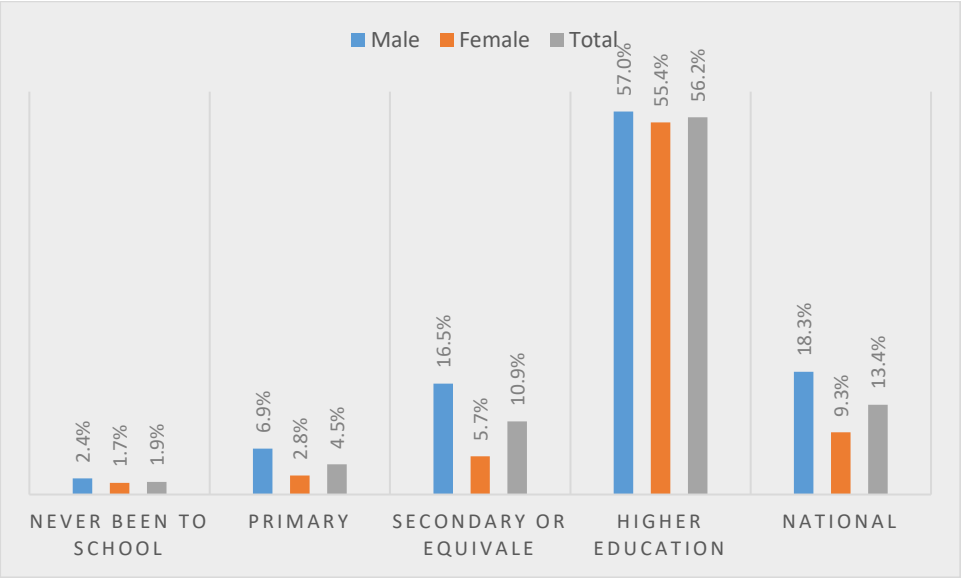

Figure 13: Formal Employment to Population Ratio by Level of Education and Sex

3.3 Unemployment

For one to be classified as unemployed, a person must meet three conditions. First, they must not be engaged in any form of employment, whether for pay or profit. Second, they must be actively seeking work, demonstrating concrete efforts to find a job. Third, they must be available to start work within a two-week period. Only individuals who satisfy all three criteria are considered unemployed.

Among the unemployed, the largest proportion (76.7%) had attained secondary school education as highest level of qualification. Both males and females followed a similar trend with the lowest proportions recorded being those who had never been to school as shown in Figure 14.

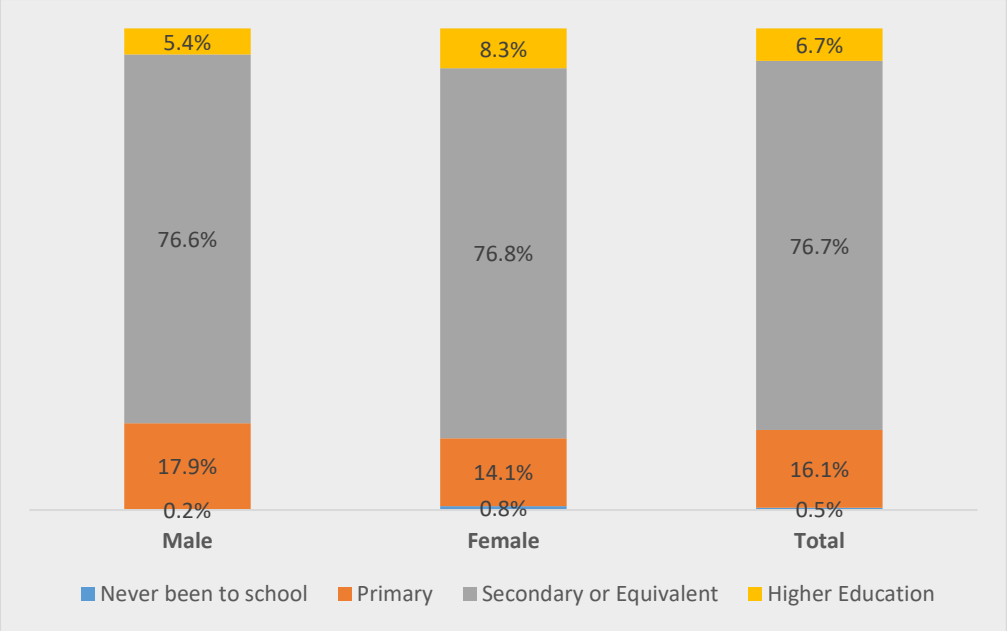

Figure 14: Unemployment by Level of Education and Sex

3.3.1 Unemployed by Area

Unemployed persons were highest among those who had attained secondary school as highest level of education. The proportion of unemployed persons who had attained higher education was lower in rural areas than in urban areas (2.6% against 10.2%) as shown in Figure 15.

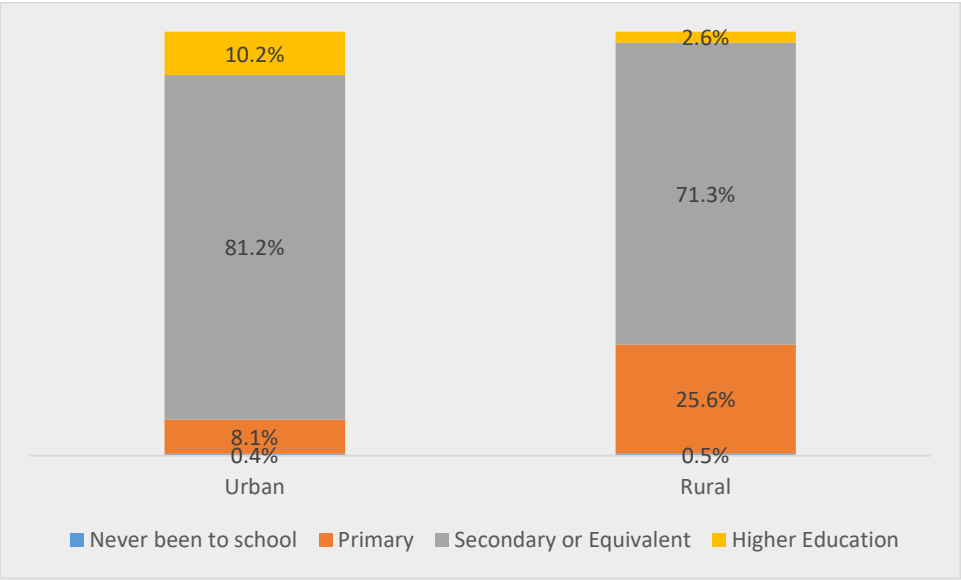

Figure 15: Unemployment by Level of Education and Area

3.3.2 Unemployment Rate by Level of Education

Unemployment rate is defined as the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force. At national level, the unemployment rate was 20.7 percent. Unemployment rate was highest among those with secondary education at 23.6 percent. For males with primary education as highest educational level, the unemployment rate was 20.9 percent while for females in the same category it was 20.4 percent (Figure 16).

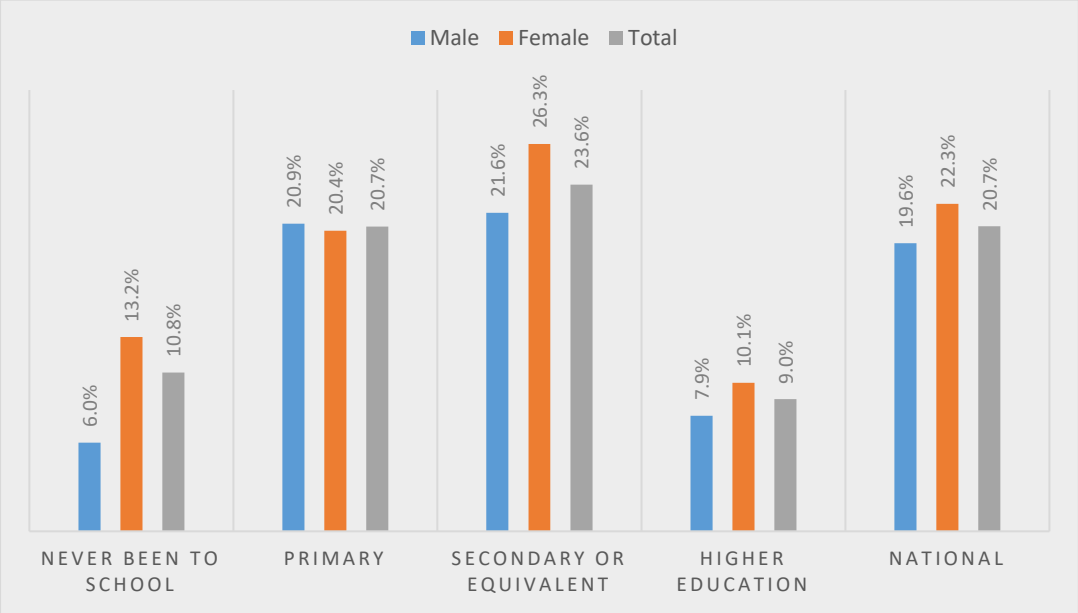

Figure 16: Unemployment Rate by Level of Education and Sex

For males, the in urban areas, the highest unemployment rate was among those who had never been to school at 28.1 percent followed by those with secondary education at 25.4 percent. Conversely, the highest female unemployment rate was recorded among those who had secondary education at 21.5 percent followed by those with primary schooling (20.7) (Figure 17).

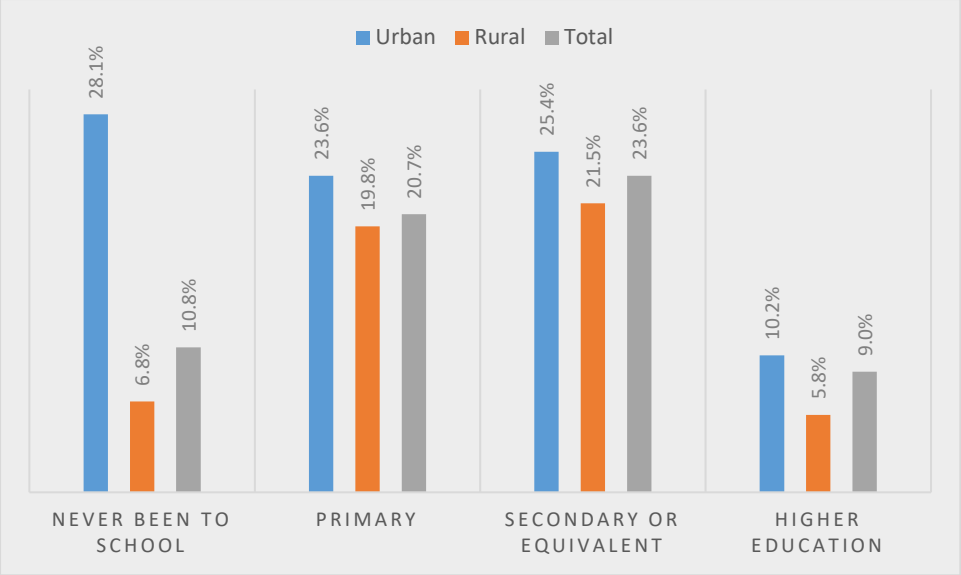

Figure 17: Unemployment Rate by Level of Education and Sex

Across all age groups, unemployment rate was highest in the age group 16-25 years for persons with secondary schooling as highest level of education at 39.7 percent. Persons in the age group 26 – 35 recorded highest unemployment rate in the category of persons who had never been to school (Figure 18).

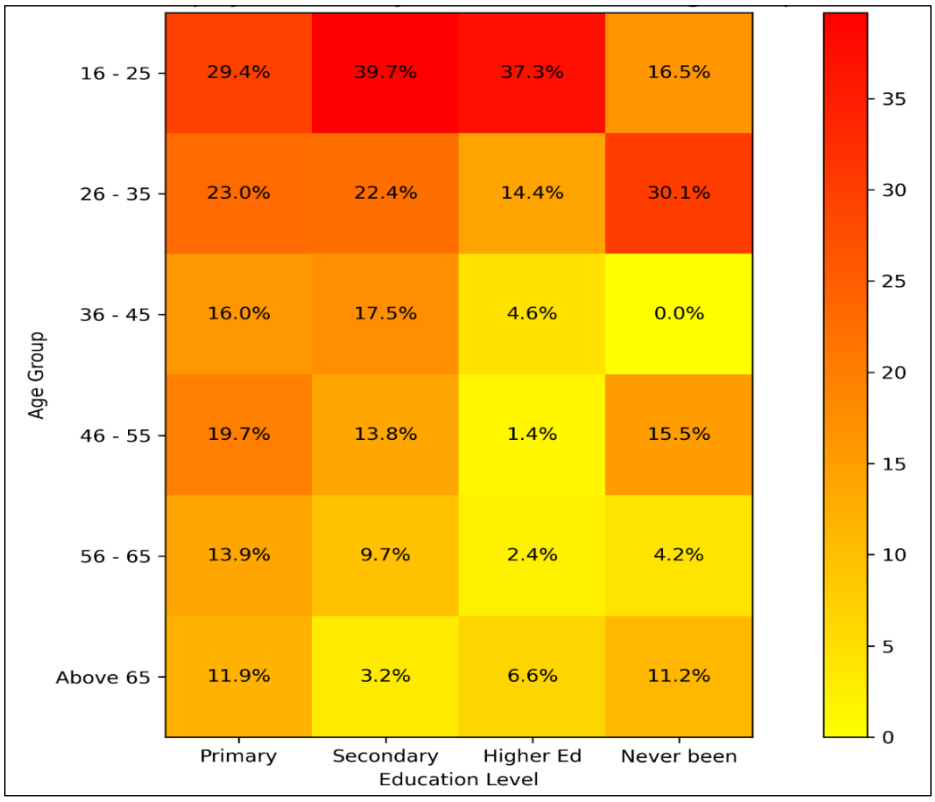

Figure 18: Unemployment Rate by Education Level and Age Group

4. SECTORAL AND OCCUPATIONAL OUTCOMES

4.1 Employment by Industrial Sector (ISIC) and Education

Employment by industry classifies employed persons into sections of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Revision 4 and expresses each sector as a percentage of total employment.

Education industry had the highest proportion of persons with higher education (post-secondary or tertiary) at 80 percent. Financial and Insurance Activities as well as Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities industries recorded 63.9 and 63.5 percent respectively of employed persons with higher education. Apart from the Education industry, the highest proportion of employed females with higher education was in the Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply industry at 82.9 percent. The least proportion of persons with higher education was found in the Activities of Households as Employers of Domestic Workers at 2 percent (Figure 19).

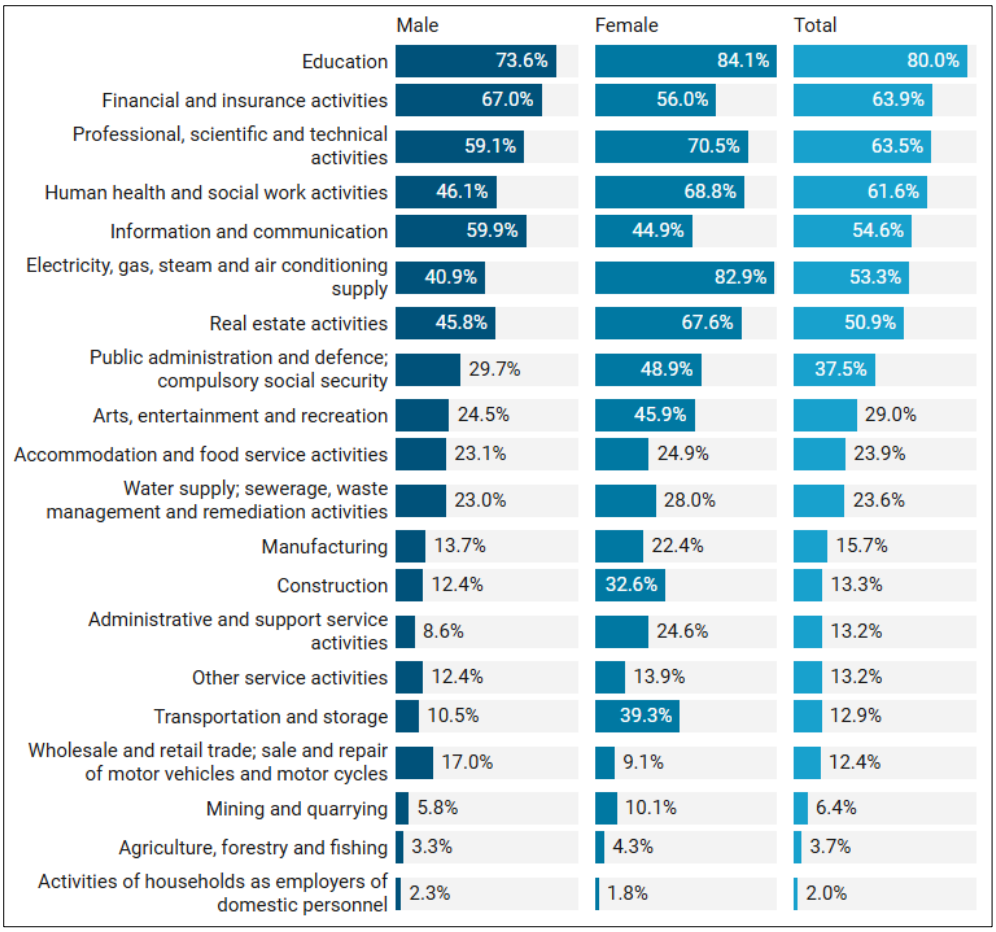

Figure 19: Proportion of employed persons with Higher Education by Industry and Sex

4.2 Employment by Occupation

Employment by occupation classifies employed persons into the 10 major groups of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) and presents each group as a percentage of total employment.

Majority of Managers and Professionals had attained higher education at 53.2 and 85.5 percent respectively. For service and sales workers, 80.4 percent had attained secondary school as highest level of education. About 7.6 percent of all Managers had primary school as highest level of qualification (Table 2).

Table 2: Employment by Occupation and Level of Education

Occupation	Never been to School	Primary	Secondary	Higher Education	Total %	Total Number
Managers	0.0	7.6	39.1	53.2	100	97,564
Professionals	0.3	1.0	13.3	85.5	100	315,860
Technicians and associate professionals	0.0	1.2	50.7	48.1	100	110,793
Clerical support workers	0.0	0.9	49.2	49.9	100	55,301
Service and sales workers	0.8	10.8	80.4	8.0	100	805,033
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	2.0	27.1	66.3	4.6	100	378,954
Craft and related trades workers	1.0	15.9	71.7	11.5	100	401,074
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	0.5	15.8	76.4	7.3	100	190,719
Elementary occupations	1.5	26.6	69.3	2.6	100	825,166
Other	0.0	0.0	81.4	18.6	100	6,133
National	**1.0**	**16.2**	**65.0**	**17.8**	**100**	**3,186,598**

4.3 Occupation by ISCO-08 Skill Level

In accordance with the International Standard Classification of Occupation, the ISCO-08 skill levels are aligned with ISCED-97 education groups to reflect the relationship between occupation skill requirements and educational attainment as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: ISCO-08 Skill Level and ISCED-97 categories

ISCO-08 skill level	ISCED-97 groups
4	6 Second stage of tertiary education (leading to an advanced research qualification)
	5a First stage of tertiary education, 1st degree (medium duration)
3	5b First stage of tertiary education (short or medium duration)
2	4 Post-secondary, non-tertiary education
	3 Upper secondary level of education
	2 Lower secondary level of education
1	1 Primary level of education or never been to school

About 7.6 percent of persons employed as managers were classified at ISCO-08 skill level 1, while 41.3 percent were at skill level 2. A further 4.3 percent and 46.8 percent of managers were at skill levels 3 and 4, respectively, indicating that nearly half of all managers possessed the highest skill classification. In contrast, among persons employed in elementary occupations, 28.2 percent were at ISCO-08 skill level 1, whereas 1.2 percent were classified at skill level 4 (Table 4).

Table 4: Occupation by ISCO-08 Skill Level

Occupation	ISCO Skill Level				Total
	1	2	3	4	%
Managers	7.6	41.3	4.3	46.8	100
Professionals	1.2	14.1	27.5	57.1	100
Technicians and associate professionals	1.2	52.8	17.1	28.8	100
Clerical support workers	0.9	56.5	7.2	35.3	100
Service and sales workers	11.7	81.7	1.8	4.7	100
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	29.1	67.6	1.2	2	100
Craft and related trades workers	16.9	74.6	5.5	3	100
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	16.5	78.1	2.7	2.8	100
Elementary occupations	28.2	70	0.6	1.2	100

Underqualified
Matched
Overqualified

4.4 Qualifications Mismatch

The largest proportion of under qualified persons were found in the Technicians and associate professionals at 54 percent. Conversely, the largest proportion of overqualified persons was found in Elementary occupations at 71.8 percent. Service and Sales Workers were the most matched occupation at 81.7 percent (Figure 20).

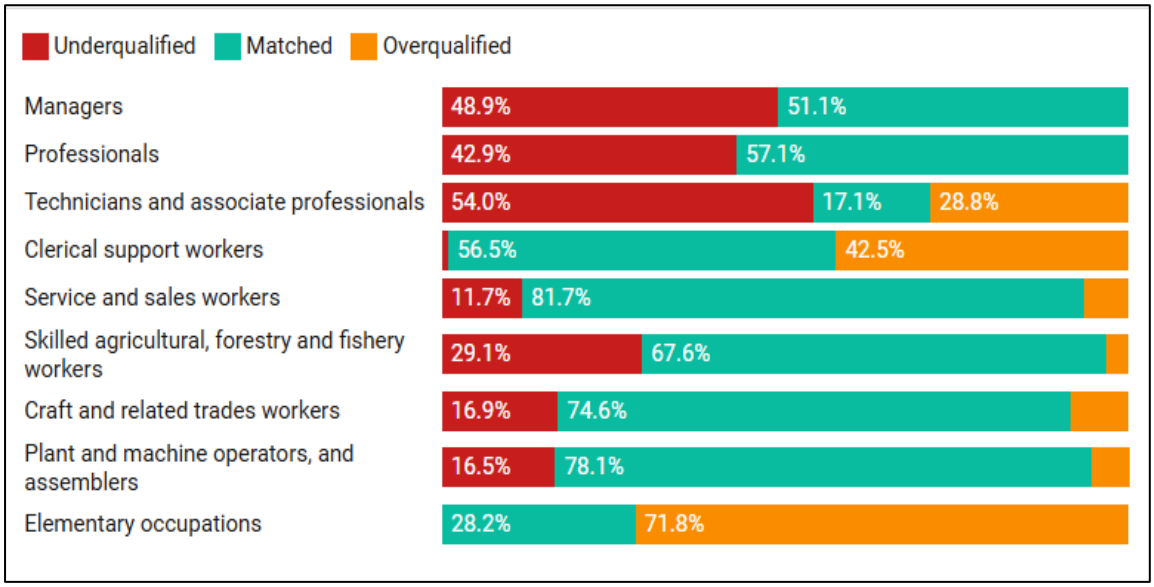

Figure 11: Qualifications Mismatch by Occupation

5. QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS UTILISATION

5.1 Status in Employment by Level of Education

About 56 percent of all permanent employees had secondary school as highest level of education. For employers in corporations, 73.8 percent had attained higher education. The largest proportion of dependent contractors (68.2%) had completed secondary school as highest qualification level (Table 5).

Table 5: Status in Employment by Level of Education

Status	Never been to School (%)	Primary (%)	Secondary (%)	Higher Education (%)	Total %	Total Number
Employers in corporations	0.0	0.0	26.2	73.8	100	15,905
Employers in household market enterprises	2.7	13.1	64.8	19.4	100	127,895
Owner-operators of corporations without employees	0.0	13.6	41.7	44.8	100	10,876
Own account workers in household market enterprises without employees	0.9	17.5	75.2	6.4	100	1,168,033
Permanent employees	0.8	14.3	56.3	28.6	100	1,380,248
Fixed term employees	1.4	12.3	61.6	24.8	100	129,788
Short term and causal employees	3.3	18.1	71.4	7.2	100	39,992
Apprentices, trainees and interns	0.0	0.0	43.3	56.7	100	7,769
Contributing family workers	0.7	17.3	77.3	4.7	100	43,913
Dependent contractors	1.5	24.7	68.2	5.6	100	262,179
National	**1.0**	**16.2**	**65.0**	**17.8**	**100**	**3,186,598**

5.2 Hours Worked per Week by Level of Education

The distribution of hours worked indicates that the largest number of employed persons across all education levels worked between 40 and 49 hours per week. This pattern was consistent among those with primary, secondary and higher education. The second largest group comprised those working fewer than 20 hours per week.

Among persons with secondary education, who constituted the largest share of total employment (2,071,974), most worked 40–49 hours (642,093), followed by 50–59 hours (248,499) and 60–69 hours (227,249). A similar distribution was observed among those with primary and higher education. Notably, among females with no schooling, the majority were

concentrated in the 30–39 hour band, reflecting relatively shorter working hours compared to other education categories (Tables 6).

Table 6: Hours Worked by Level of Education

Hours Worked by All Employed Persons by Level of Education

Hours bands	Primary	Secondary	Higher Education	Never been to school	Total
Below 20	71,004	243,474	112,149	6,780	433,406
20 - 29	47,766	144,987	29,460	2,365	224,579
30 - 39	65,800	210,251	41,835	7,104	324,990
40 - 49	145,681	642,093	287,604	8,668	1,084,045
50 - 59	58,623	248,499	41,765	3,376	352,263
60 - 69	37,233	227,249	22,044	978	287,504
70 - 79	56,256	197,669	17,719	700	272,344
Above 79	32,648	157,754	15,107	1,958	207,467
Total	**515,011**	**2,071,974**	**567,683**	**31,929**	**3,186,598**

Hours Worked by Employed Males by Level of Education

Age Bands	Primary	Secondary	Higher Education	Never been to school	Total
Below 20	27,890	99,258	37,996	2,364	167,507
20 - 29	21,522	73,751	15,167	1,087	111,526
30 - 39	34,872	111,474	19,563	977	166,886
40 - 49	92,745	427,354	151,055	3,491	674,645
50 - 59	37,325	164,453	24,656	1,520	227,953
60 - 69	26,519	147,836	13,202	512	188,069
70 - 79	37,736	126,227	11,635	0	175,598
Above 79	26,132	99,274	11,620	1,289	138,316
Total	**304,741**	**1,249,627**	**284,893**	**11,239**	**1,850,500**

Hours Worked by Employed Females by Level of Education

bands	Primary	Secondary	Higher Education	Never been to school	Total
Below 20	43,114	144,216	74,153	4,416	265,899
20 - 29	26,244	71,236	14,293	1,279	113,053
30 - 39	30,929	98,776	22,272	6,127	158,104
40 - 49	52,936	214,739	136,549	5,177	409,400
50 - 59	21,298	84,046	17,110	1,856	124,310
60 - 69	10,714	79,413	8,841	467	99,435
70 - 79	18,519	71,442	6,084	700	96,746
Above 79	6,516	58,480	3,487	669	69,151
Total	**210,270**	**822,348**	**282,790**	**20,691**	**1,336,098**

5.3 Time-Related Underemployment (TRU) by Education

Time-related underemployment (TRU) refers to persons in employment who worked less than 40 hours per week in all jobs combined, who wanted to work additional hours, and who were available to do so if given the opportunity.

Time related underemployment was highly pronounced among females with secondary schooling as highest educational level at 11.5 percent. Employed persons with higher educational qualification had the lowest TRU rate for both females and males at 3.5 and 2.9 percent respectively. For all educational categories, TRU rate was consistently higher for females than for males except those who had never been to school (Figure 21)

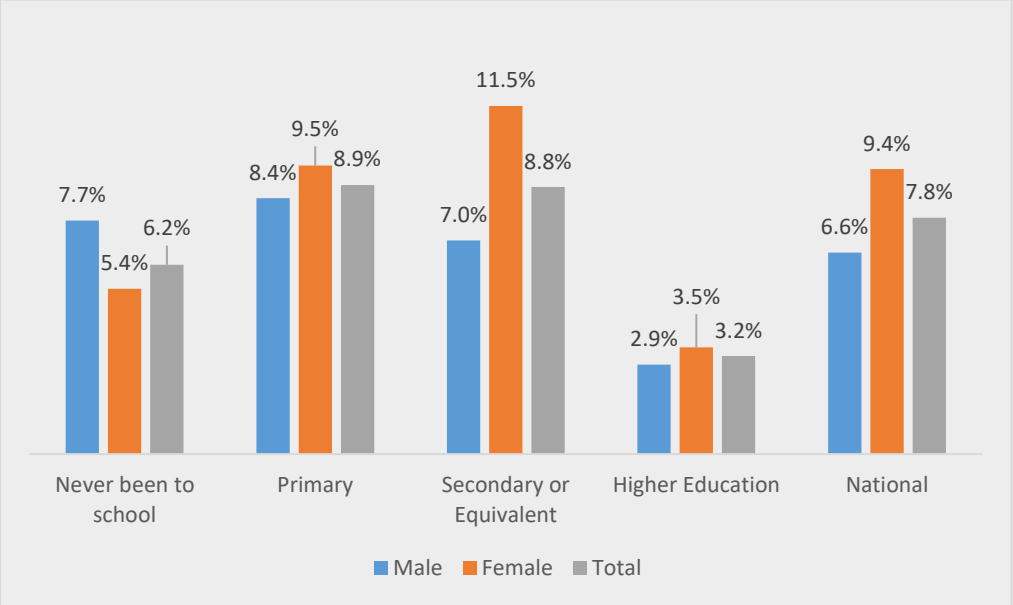

Figure 12: Time Related Underemployment by Educational Level and Sex

5.4 Informality and Job Security by Education

Employment in the informal economy encompasses two related concepts: employment in the informal sector and informal employment. Employment in the informal sector is determined by the characteristics of the enterprise in which a person is employed; an economic unit is considered informal if it is not registered with the Registrar of Companies or does not keep books of accounts for tax purposes.

Informal employment, on the other hand, is defined by the characteristics of the job held. It includes own-account workers and employers operating in their own informal sector

enterprises, unpaid contributing family workers regardless of the sector of the enterprise, and paid employees who are not entitled to at least one of the following: employer contributions to a pension fund, paid annual leave, paid sick leave or a written contract with the employer.

5.4.1 Informal Employment

The highest proportion of persons who were informally employed was among those who had never been to school at 84.5 percent. As educational attainment increased, the proportion of informally employed persons decreased (Figure 22).

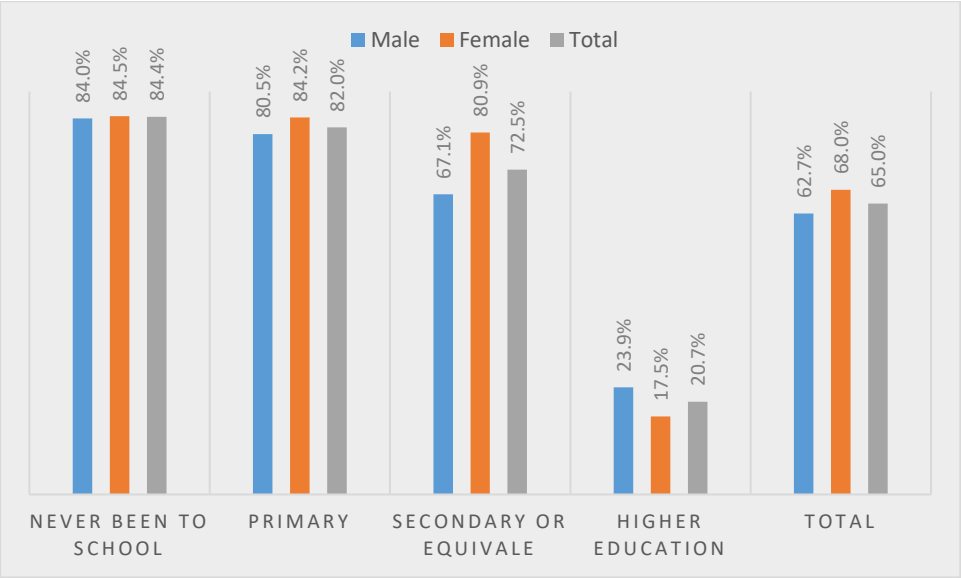

Figure 132: Proportion of Informally Employed Persons by Level of Education and Sex

5.4.2 Sector of Employment

Among persons with primary education (515,011), the majority were employed in the informal sector (73.3%), while 18.1 percent were in the formal sector and 8.6 percent in the household sector. A similar pattern was observed among those with secondary education (2,071,974), where 65.3 percent were informally employed, 28.3 percent were in formal employment and 6.4 percent were in the household sector.

In contrast, employment among persons with higher education (567,683) was predominantly formal, accounting for 80.4 percent, while 19.0 percent were in informal employment and 0.6 percent in the household sector. For persons who had never been to school (31,929), employment was mainly informal (80.4%), with 15.8 percent in the formal sector and 3.9

percent in the household sector. Overall, 58.5 percent of total employment was informal, compared to 35.8 percent formal and 5.7 percent household employment (Table 7).

Table 7: Employment by Sector and Educational Level

Educational Level	Household	Formal	Informal	Total%	Total Number
Never been to school	3.9%	15.8%	80.4%	100.0%	31,929
Primary	8.6%	18.1%	73.3%	100.0%	515,011
Secondary or Equivalent	6.4%	28.3%	65.3%	100.0%	2,071,974
Higher Education	0.6%	80.4%	19.0%	100.0%	567,683
National	**5.7%**	**35.8%**	**58.5%**	**100.0%**	**3,186,598**

6. LABOUR MARKET EXCLUSION AND UNDERUTILISATION

6.1 Discouraged Job Seekers by Level of Education and Sex

The largest proportion of discouraged job seekers among both males and females had attained secondary education as their highest qualification, accounting for 69.1 percent and 72.4 percent respectively. Discouraged male job seekers with higher education represented 2.8 percent of all employed males, while the corresponding proportion for females was higher at 4.1 percent. In contrast, the smallest share of discouraged job seekers was recorded among persons who had never been to school (Figure 23).

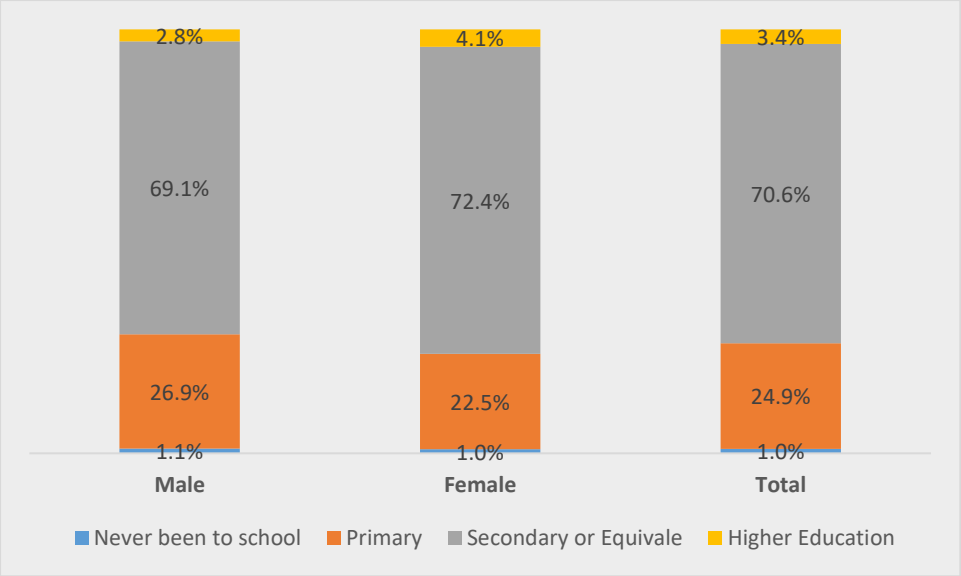

Figure 143: Discouraged Job Seekers by Educational Level and Sex

6.2 Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)

Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) refers to the proportion of young people who are neither employed nor engaged in education or training, calculated as a percentage of the total youth population.

The highest proportion of youth aged 15 – 24 years who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) for both females and males was recorded among those who had never been to school at 82.3 and 72.8 percent respectively. The NEET rate consistently declined as level of education increased. A similar trend was also realised among the 15 – 35 age group (Figures 24a and b).

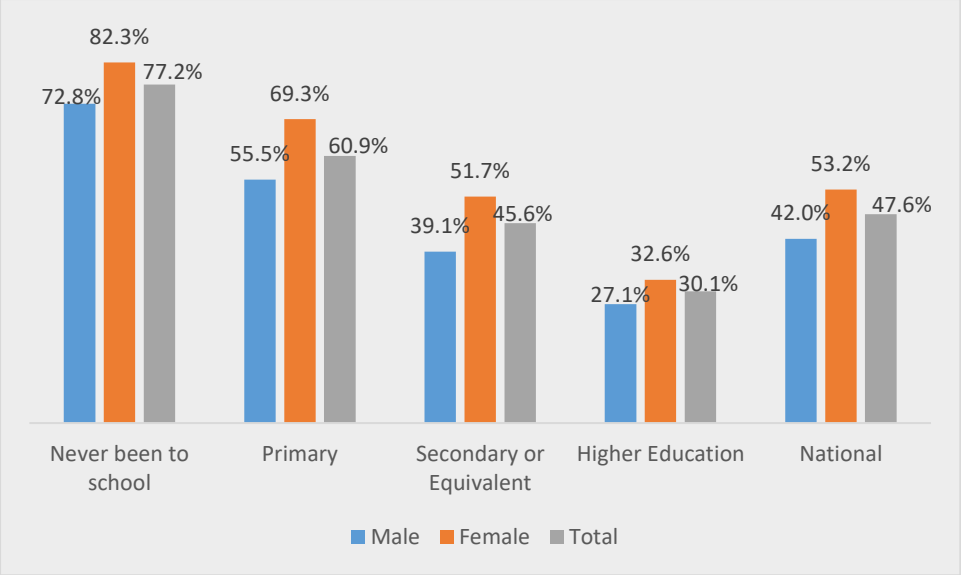

Figure 24a: Youth (15-24) Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)

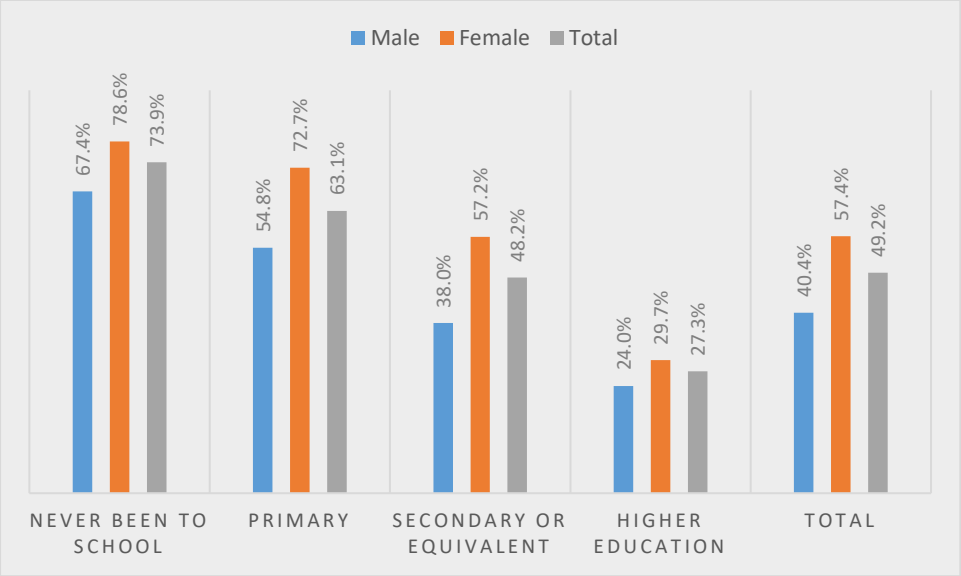

Figure 24b: NEET rate by education and sex (15 – 35 years)

6.3 Composite Labour Underutilisation by Education

The LU2 rate, which combines unemployment and time-related underemployment, stood at 26.9 percent**,** indicating that over one-quarter of the labour force is either without employment work or were working fewer hours than desired. Underutilisation is higher among females (29.6%) than males (24.9%) and this gender gap is observed across all education levels. LU2 is lowest among individuals with higher education (11.9%)**.**

In contrast, the highest rate is recorded among those with secondary education (30.3%), followed by primary education (27.7%). Individuals who have never attended school recorded a comparatively lower rate (16.4%). The largest gender disparity appears at the secondary level, where female underutilisation exceeds that of males. Overall, LU2 varies by education level, peaking at secondary education and declining among those with higher education (Figure 25).

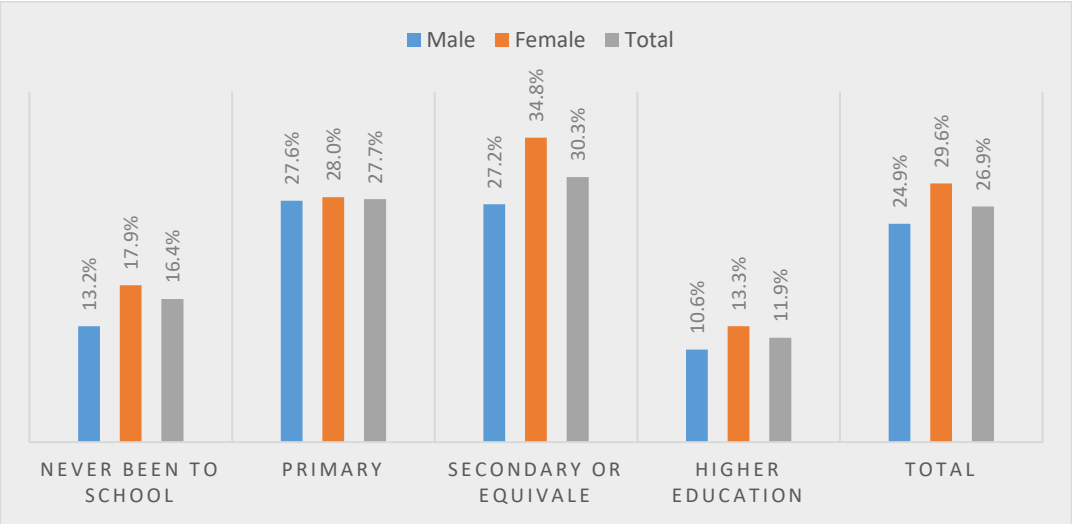

Figure 25: Combined Rate of Time-Related Underemployment and Unemployment

7. CONCLUSION

The findings of this thematic report reaffirm the strong link between educational attainment and labour market outcomes in Zimbabwe. Higher levels of education are consistently associated with increased labour force participation, higher employment-to-population ratios and greater access to formal sector employment. Conversely, lower levels of education are closely linked to informality, unemployment and labour underutilisation, highlighting persistent structural challenges within the labour market.

While education improves employment prospects overall, the report also reveals important disparities. Unemployment remains elevated among youth, particularly those with secondary education, suggesting potential skills mismatches and limited absorption capacity within the economy. Gender gaps persist across most indicators, with females experiencing lower participation rates and higher levels of labour underutilisation.