



Lesotho Government



2023 GENDER REPORT

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In 2023, the Global Gender Gap report ranked Lesotho as 82 of the 156 countries and 16th in the Sub-Saharan African countries. The development and progress of a country requires formulation of policies and frameworks that identify the importance of gender equity. Gender equality is recognized as one of the key enablers for achieving sustainable development in national strategic plans. Production and dissemination of timely and reliable sex-disaggregated or gender relevant data is extremely essential to facilitate evidence-based policies and decision making that considers women and men in the entire nation. The progress relating to the status of women and men and their roles in social, economic, health, and political spheres, could not be assessed in achieving gender equality without gender statistics; or in prioritizing actions to address gender inequalities.

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), as adopted in 1995, gives very clear guidelines on and emphasizes the importance of the statistical measurement of gender related activities, as well as the need to build policies and strategies based on statistical evidence. Currently countries are signatories to important global development frameworks and are also guided by national legal and policy programmes. There are explicit gender targets under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework; Goal 5, “Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls” that unequivocally addresses this gender dimension. However, gender is a cross cutting phenomenon as a result, there are gender targets within all the SDGs that countries must address and report on the progress. The African societies are mostly patriarchal which often subscribes to subordination of women, resulting in gender inequalities.

The report is structured strategically to provide estimates of gender relevant indicators from the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, Global Minimum Set of Gender Indicators, gender indicators from the Africa Agenda 2063, the Africa Gender Scorecard and the Africa Gender and Development Index published by Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Africa Gender Index compiled by the Africa Development Bank (AfdB). The growing integration of gender in national planning and budgeting draws in part on strategies to institutionalize the processes and strengthen the abilities of women’s movements and to advocate for and be monitored.

1.1 Background

The government of Lesotho has implemented a platform of action by adopting a gender policy in 2003 and have the revised and updated the 2018 -2030 Gender Policy. The objective of the policy is to promote gender equality, enhance the enormous productive potential of women and demonstrate the commitment of Lesotho towards women empowerment and gender equality. This policy is guided by international conventions such as: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda 2063, Vision 2020, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR); the SADC declaration on gender and development (1997) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Of importance also are other national legal instruments such as Lesotho National Strategic Development Plan II 2019- 2023 which has been extended to 2027 (NSDP II), the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2023-2027 (NSDS II), the Lesotho Constitution, and the government principles on democracy and rule of law. The overall objective is to mainstream gender perspectives in all national and sub national policies, programmes, budgets, and work plans to achieve gender equality in the development process, (extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/gam170413.pdf).

Gender disaggregated data is essential at all levels of governance for implementation of projects and for monitoring and evaluation. However, in instances where there is lack of this data, sex disaggregated data is mainly used.

1.2 Major Data Sources

The data used in this report was sourced from population and housing census, household surveys as well as administrative reports. Data from census and surveys used for analysis in this report include the 2021 Lesotho Demographic Survey (LDS), 2016 Population and Housing Census (PHC) and 2019 Integrated Labour Force Survey (ILFS). The administrative data was sourced from different government ministries, departments and agencies records for different periods in time.

1.3 Method of Analysis

The statistical or sample design used the Sex variable to measure estimate precision to obtain representative estimates for women and men at the national and district level. The method of analysis that was employed includes frequency tables and cross tabulation for different variables to establish the relationship within and among sex disaggregated and related variables.

CHAPTER 2

Population Distribution and Decision Making

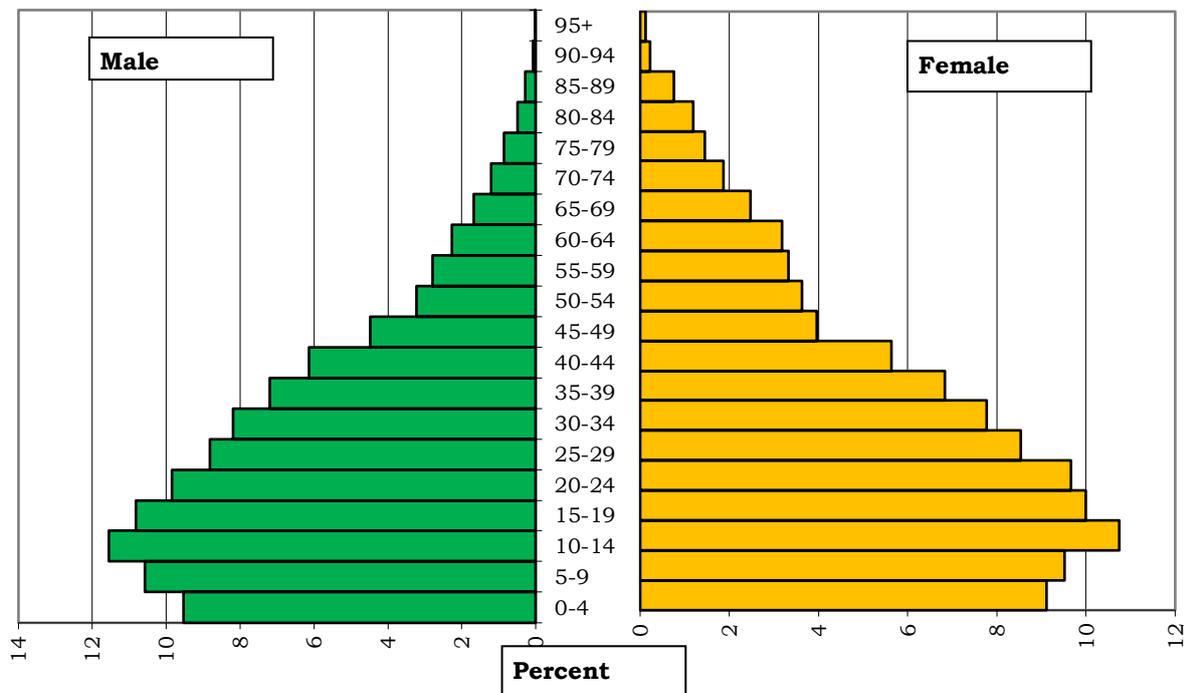
2.0 Population Structure

Population structure (also referred to as population composition) is the distribution of different social groups across a nation or area. It is how a population can be broken up or distributed. This includes among others gender, age, ethnicity, and density. It is important because it determines how an area will develop, relating to which businesses will succeed, how the population will change, and giving an idea as to the culture that the area will produce (StudySmarter).

Gender statistics are needed to measure and monitor the realities of the lives of women and men, and of girls and boys. A broad diversity of topics and issues is covered under the heading of gender statistics, reflecting the changing roles of women and men in society, in the economy and in families and households. Gender statistics assist policymakers to formulate and monitor policies and plans, monitor changes, and inform the public (UNECE.org).

The 2021 Lesotho Demographic Survey (LDS) revealed that the total De Jure population was estimated to be 2,076,669 with female population constituting 51.3 percent and the 10 to 14 years' age bracket having the highest proportion. These shows that there are more females in terms of numbers but the women's participation in decision-making in different sectors of the economy must be observed if it follows the similar pattern.

Figure 2.1: Population Pyramid of Lesotho in 2021



Sex distribution of population by district is shown in Table 2.1. According to the table, the female population outnumbered males in almost all the districts except in Mokhotlong with 50.9 percent (51,839) of the population being males.

Table 2.1: De Jure Population by District and Sex, 2021 LDS

District	Male	Female	Total
Botha-Bothe	59,990	62,510	122,500
Leribe	174,412	187,183	361,595
Berea	131,709	137,581	269,290
Maseru	269,512	296,865	566,377
Mafeteng	83,536	86,525	170,061
Mohale's Hoek	78,675	80,462	159,137
Quthing	54,714	55,932	110,645
Qacha's Nek	37,251	39,901	77,152
Mokhotlong	51,839	50,006	101,845
Thaba-Tseka	68,759	69,308	138,066
Total	1,010,397	1,066,272	2,076,669

2.2 Decision Making

Decision-making can be regarded as a problem-solving activity yielding a solution deemed to be optimal, or at least satisfactory. It is therefore a process which can be more or less rational or irrational and can be based on explicit or tacit knowledge and beliefs. In every social setting, the status of individuals is mostly determined by these attributes and social norms within societies. As a result, gender relations may be defined as the ways in which a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities, and the identities of men and women in relation to one another (Bravo-Baumann, 2000). These relations are observable within the family as well as in many other places in the community (political arena, community life, etc.).

Participation of women in decision-making and governance focuses on the central level of government. Women's participation at decision making level is still low while males have globally dominated important decision-making processes and the female's low patronage in these processes is also observed to be a global phenomenon, although this is gradually changing. Many studies in this area focus on male dominance over female and there is need for females to increasingly be involved in social and public life.

2.2.1 Decision Making in Households

The investigation of households according to the sex of the household head is motivated by three common assumptions arising from the understanding of the role of household heads and from relevant research on gender differences in access to resources. The first two assumptions are that the household head is mainly responsible for the economic well-being of the household, and that women relative to men are disadvantaged in accessing society's economic resources and opportunities. Together these two assumptions imply that, although the household head must ensure the economic sustainability of the household irrespective of his or

her sex, the means available to do so are however not gender neutral. The third assumption arises from research which suggests that, the gender of household head affects both the way household resources are utilized and disbursed within the household, and the way households are networked for exchange of resources with other households (Lloyd and Gage-Brandon, 1993; Haddad, 1990; Bruce, 1989 in <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/CS21/03Chapter03.pdf>).

On average, more men were head of households than women with 62.5 percent as reflected in Table 5.1. Most men in age group 18 to 19 years through 60 to 64 years were heads of households while women were outstanding from age group 65 to 69 through 85+ years.

Table 2.2: Percentage Distribution of Household Heads by Age and Sex

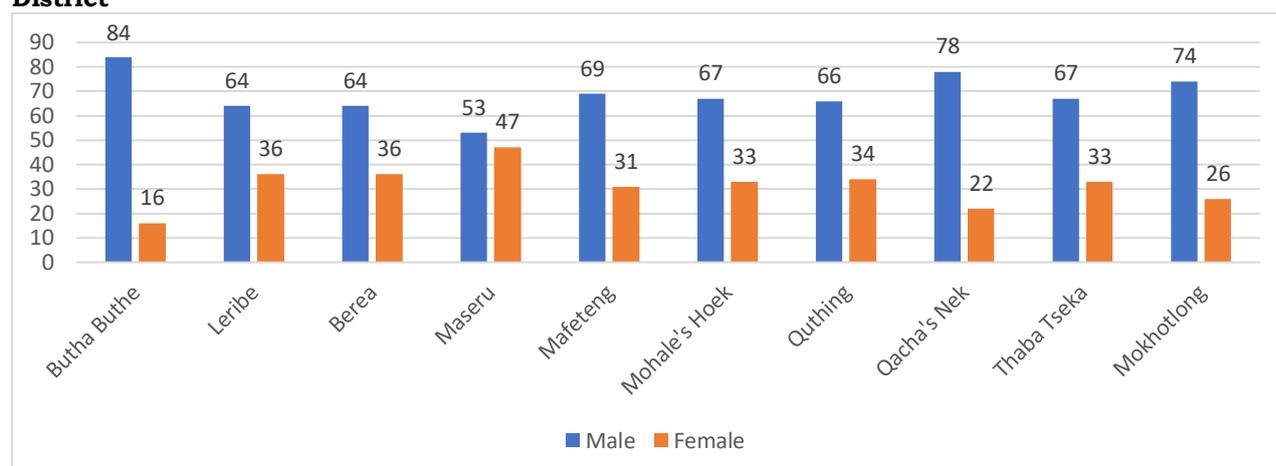
Age Group	Male	Female	Both Sexes
10 - 14	42.8	57.2	0.2
15 - 19	50.8	49.2	1.5
20 - 24	56.1	43.9	5.3
25 - 29	72.9	27.1	8.0
30 - 34	77.1	22.9	10.4
35 - 39	73.8	26.2	11.9
40 - 44	72.8	27.2	11.5
45 - 49	71.0	29.0	9.4
50 - 54	62.3	37.7	8.2
55 - 59	57.4	42.6	7.9
60 - 64	50.6	49.4	7.3
65 - 69	47.6	52.4	6.0
70 - 74	43.3	56.7	4.6
75 - 79	40.6	59.4	3.5
80 - 84	31.7	68.3	2.5
85+	29.2	70.8	1.9
Total	62.4	37.6	569,631

Source: 2021 LDS

2.2.2 Agricultural Household Heads

Agriculture is one of the contributing aspects to countries economy, the study was done to establish the relationship between gender and agricultural household heads. Figure 2.2 below shows the percentage distribution of men and women who are agricultural household heads by districts, likewise men dominate in all districts. The district of Botha -Bothe has the highest proportion of men as agricultural household heads with a percentage of 84 followed by Qacha's Nek. Maseru district is leading with 47 percent for women who are agricultural household heads and also displays the least percent for men who are agricultural household heads with 53 percent. Botha-Bothe also had the least proportion of women who are agricultural household head represented by 16 percent.

Figure 2.2: Percentage Distribution of Men and Women Agricultural Household Heads by District



Source: Agricultural Production Survey 2021/2022

2.2.3 Decision Making in Politics and Administration

The introduction stated that more than half of Lesotho's population which is 51.3 percent consist of females, however, their representation in the government and decision-making positions where major decisions that affect their lives are made is considerably lower than that of men. Table 2.3 presents the distribution of men and women occupying the decision-making positions, which is the proportion in managerial positions and the number of seats held by women at national parliament and local government. Regarding members of parliament in 2022, there were more men than women with 74.2 percent and 25.8 percent respectively. However, there is an observed increase as compared to the previous years, which reflects an improvement regarding SDG indicator 5.5.1. In general, very few women were represented in the decision-making positions throughout all the terms.

Table 2.3: Representation of Men and Women at the Decision-Making Positions

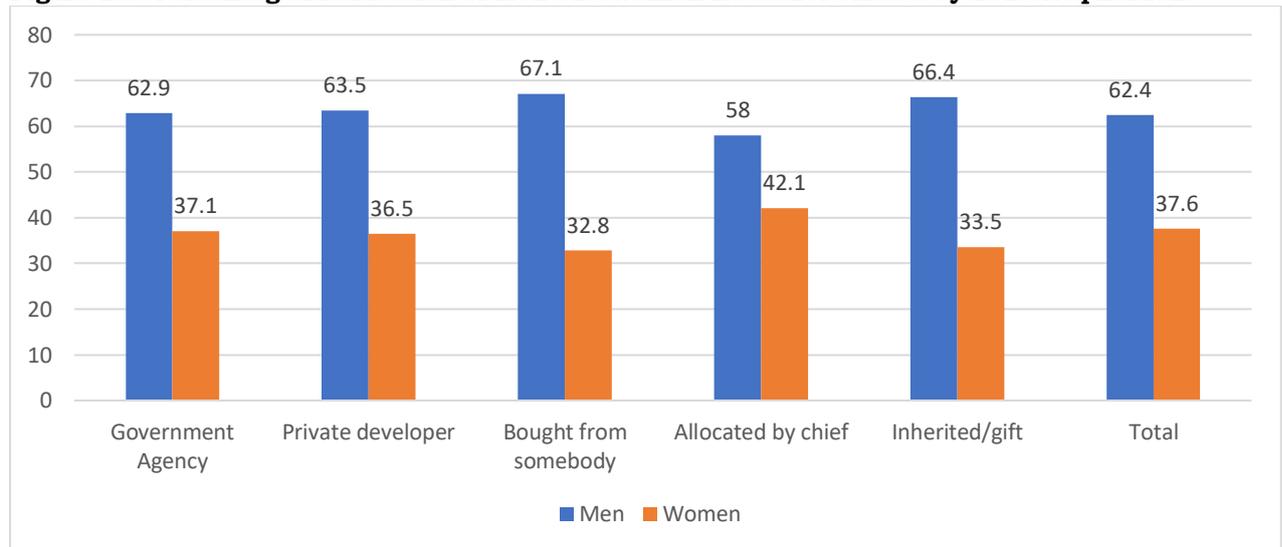
Positions	2012		2015		2017		2022	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Members of Parliament	87	33	95	25	95	25	89	31
Members Local Councillors	-	-	-	-	779	548	773	496
Members of Senate	24	9	26	7	25	8	25	8
Ministers	18	5	23	5	27	8	17	3
Deputy Ministers	4	3	4	3	7	1	0	0
Government Secretary	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
Principal Secretary	19	8	19	8	17	7	7	11
Public Service Commissioners	4	1	4	1	4	1	3	2
Judges	7	5	7	4	8	4	9	7
Senior Magistrate	0	2	0	2	0	2	1	1

Source: Parliament of Lesotho, High Court, Public Service and Independent Electoral Commission.

2.2.4 Land Acquisition

Land acquisition refers to activity that require obtaining land, building or other assets from displaced person for purpose of the sub-project against provision of compensation and assistance. Figure 2.3 shows the percentage distribution of men and women household heads by land acquisition. The graph depicts that, men constitute a large percentage of 62.4 as compared to 37.6 percent for women. The highest percentage of men which is 67.1 bought land from somebody while most women represented by 42.1 percent were allocated land by chief.

Figure 2.3: Percentage Distribution of Men and Women Household Heads by Land Acquisition



Source: 2021 LDS

CHAPTER 3

Main Economic Activities

In 2022 the United Nations reported that, divided gender roles among women and men have historically been reflected in duties and responsibilities within the family. Although with exceptions, men have traditionally worked outside of the home and have provided the financial means while women meanwhile have overseen taking care of the family and doing housework. Women’s work, although demanding, difficult, and time-consuming, has thus always been unpaid (UN, 2022).

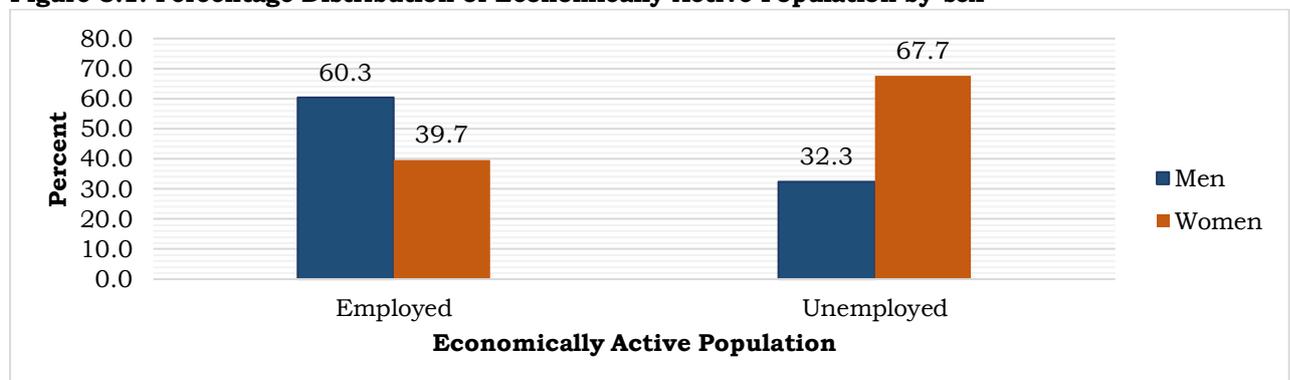
The current global labour force participation rate for women is just under 47 percent while for men, it’s 72 percent. That’s a difference of 25 percentage points, with some regions facing a gap of more than 50 percentage points (ILO,2022). It has been observed that, women who desire to work have a harder time finding a job than men. This problem is particularly marked in the Northern Africa and Arab States, where unemployment rates for women exceed 20 percent. While vulnerable employment is widespread for both women and men, women tend to be overrepresented in certain types of vulnerable jobs. Contrarily, men are more likely to be working in own account employment while women are more likely to be helping in their households or in their relative’s businesses (ibid). Thus, they rarely rise to positions of power in the labour market. Hence, the SDG goal 5 aims at empowering women and girls to receive due recognition for their unpaid work. Therefore, this chapter aims at identifying some of the considerable inequalities in the labour market between men and women in Lesotho.

3.1 Economically Active Population

This section focuses on the members of the population in the labour force who were employed and unemployed during the 2021 LDS.

The percentage distribution of the economically active population aged 10 years and above as per 2021 LDS results is demonstrated in Figure 3.1. The figure reveals that there were more males employed constituting 60.3 percent as opposed to females recording 39.7 percent. It further reveals that most females were unemployed accounting for 67.7 percent.

Figure 3.1: Percentage Distribution of Economically Active Population by sex

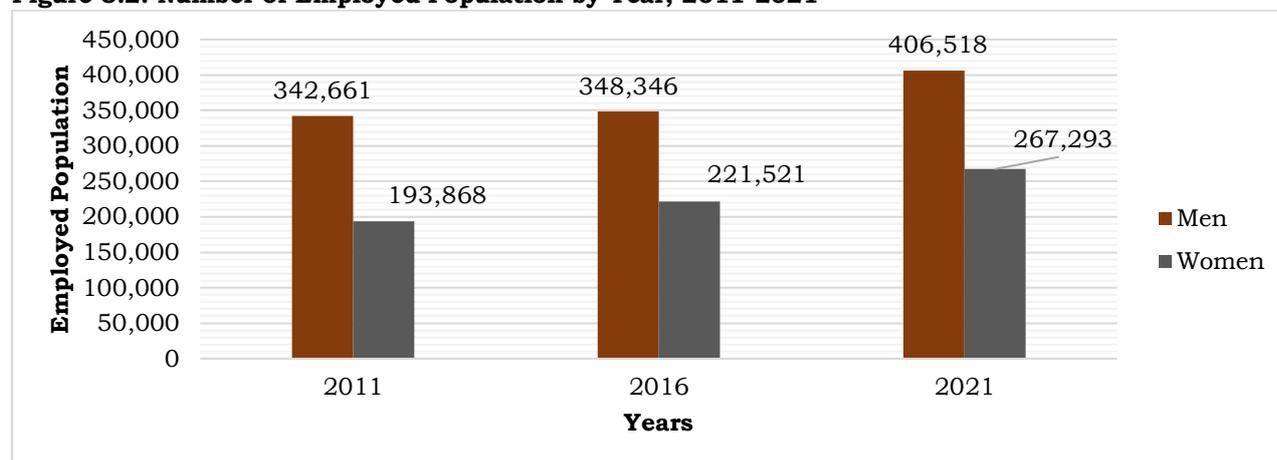


Source: 2021 LDS

3.2 Employed Population

The employed population refers to the total number of people of any age who are currently in work (defined as having worked at least one hour in the reference week). The employed population by sex from the year 2011 to 2021 is portrayed in Figure 2. The general observation from the graph is that the employed population for both men and women has been increasing from 342,661 for men and 193,868 for women in 2011 to 406,518 for men and 267,293 for women in 2021.

Figure 3.2: Number of Employed Population by Year, 2011-2021



Source: 2011 LDS, 2016 PHC and 2021 LDS

3.2.1 Employed Population and Main Activity

This variable was derived from a question in the intercensal survey that sought main activity of a person seven days prior to the survey. The pre-assigned response categories disaggregated by sex are presented in Table 3.1. Most men and women aged 10 years and above were regular wage or salary earners recording 52.9 percent. The second highest were own account workers or farmers accounting 27.4 percent. Men are more likely to be working in own account employment while women are more likely to be salary or wage earners.

Table 3.1: Percentage Distribution of Employed Population by Main Activity and Sex

Main Activity	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Employer	0.4	0.5	0.4
Own account worker/ farmer	30.2	23.2	27.4
Regular wage/ salary earner	46.5	62.7	52.9
Casual worker	13.0	8.4	11.2
Unpaid family worker	9.0	2.0	6.2
Homemaker	0.8	3.3	1.8
Total	406,518	267,293	673,811

Source: 2021 LDS

3.2.2 Age of Employed Population and Sex

The number of employed population by age and sex provides planners and policy makers with an indication of what groups of people participate in the labour force for any country. The percentage distribution of employed population aged 10 years and above by age and sex are presented in Table 3.2.

The age differentials indicate that in general, employed population increases with an increase in age from 0.7 percent for age group 10 to 14 years and reaches a peak of 15.1 percent at age group 30 to 34 years, and then declines to 14.5 percent at age group 35 to 39 years as indicated in Table 3.2. Furthermore, the results also reflect that, concentration of employed persons is mostly at ages 20 to 44 years for both sexes.

Table 3.2: Percentage Distribution of Employed Population Aged 10 Years and Above by Age and Sex

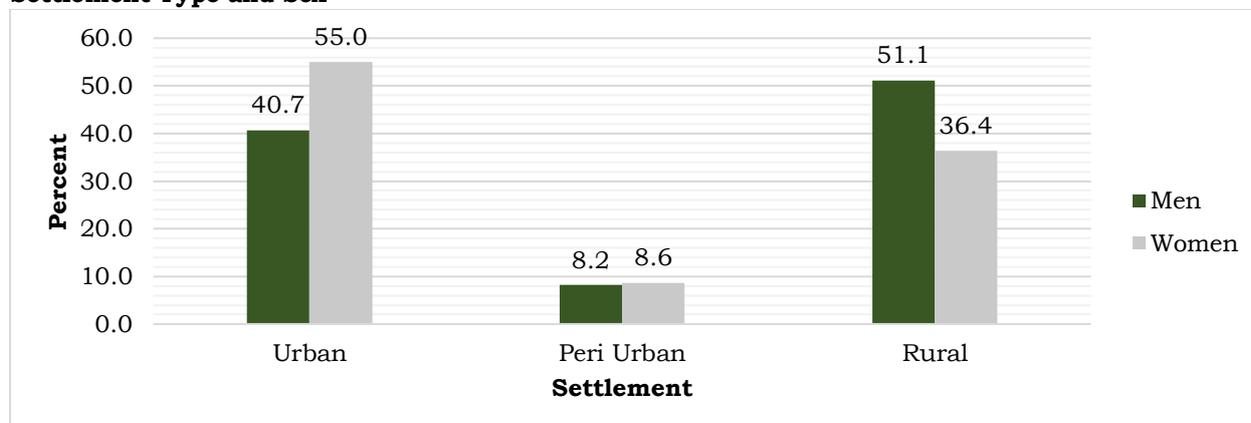
Age-Group	Male	Female	Total
10 - 14	1.2	0.1	0.7
15 - 19	6.9	2.0	4.9
20 - 24	11.3	8.0	10.0
25 - 29	13.8	13.8	13.8
30 - 34	14.6	15.8	15.1
35 - 39	13.4	16.2	14.5
40 - 44	11.7	13.4	12.4
45 - 49	8.6	8.9	8.7
50 - 54	6.0	7.3	6.5
55 - 59	4.6	6.0	5.2
60+	7.9	8.5	8.2
Total	406,518	267,293	673,811

Source: 2021 LDS

3.2.3 Employed Population and Settlement Type

The place where an individual stays and where he or she is employed plays an important role in as far as employment is concerned, hence, Figure 3.3 presents the percentage distribution of employed population aged 10 years and above by settlement and sex for 2021. As portrayed in the figure, the highest proportion of employed men constituting 51 percent) were from the rural areas while for the majority for women were from urban areas represented by 55 percent .

Figure 3.3: Percentage Distribution of Employed Population Aged 10 Years and Above by Settlement Type and Sex

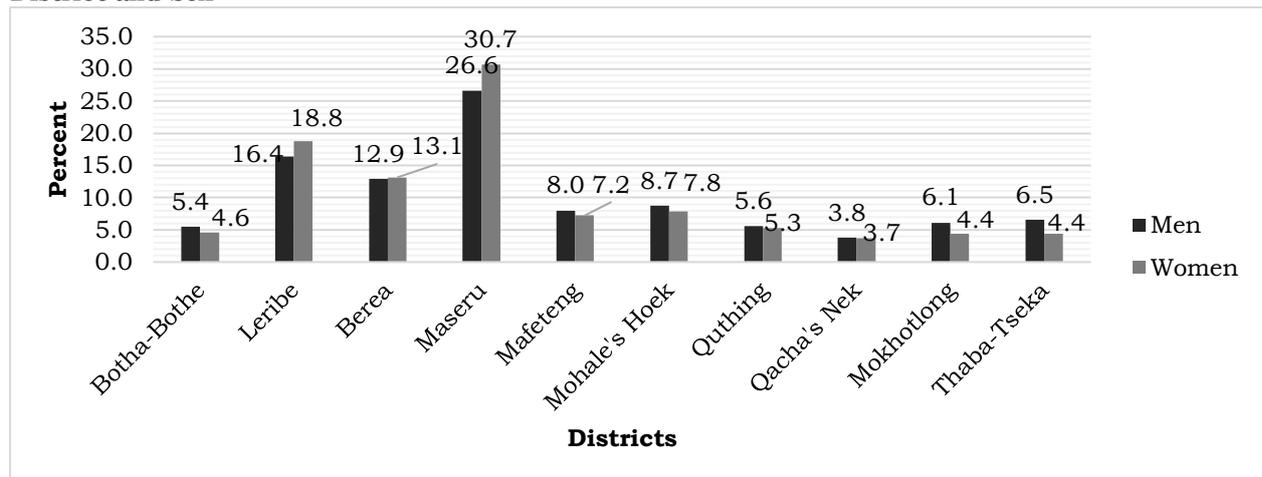


Source: 2021 LDS

3.2.4 Employed Population in Districts

The results regarding the distribution of employed population aged 10 years and above by districts and sex for 2021 are presented in Figure 3.4. According to the figure, the majority of employed men and women reside in Maseru constituting 30.7 percent for women and 26.6 percent for men. The second district with most employed population was Leribe with 18.8 percent of women and 16.4 percent of men. The least proportions of employed men and women were residing in Qacha's Nek both estimated at 3.7 percent.

Figure 3.4: Percentage Distribution of Employed Population Aged 10 Years and Above by District and Sex



Source: 2021 LDS

3.2.5 Occupation of Employed Population

Data on occupation provides the insight on economic characteristics relating to the type of work done during the defined period. The Percentage distribution of employed population aged 10 years and above by type of occupation and sex for 2021 is displayed in Table 3.3.

Data suggests that the majority representing 52.0 percent of the working population are absorbed in the Elementary occupations. The picture is the same for both males and females. The second most popular type of occupation for men was Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery type of occupation with 18.5 percent while women were mostly found in Service and sales work with 14.5 percent representation.

Table 3.3: Percentage Distribution of Employed Population 10 Years and above by Occupations and Sex.

Occupation	Sex		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Armed forces occupations	2.7	0.8	2.0
Managers	1.9	1.6	1.8
Professionals	5.2	11.8	7.8
Technicians and associate professionals	2.3	1.5	2.0
Clerical support workers	1.2	3.2	2.0
Service and sales workers	8.7	14.5	11.0
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	18.5	7.7	14.2
Craft and related trades workers	4.7	5.5	5.0
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	3.0	1.1	2.3
Elementary occupations	51.8	52.3	52.0
Total	406,518	267,293	673,811

Source: 2021 LDS

CHAPTER 4

Education

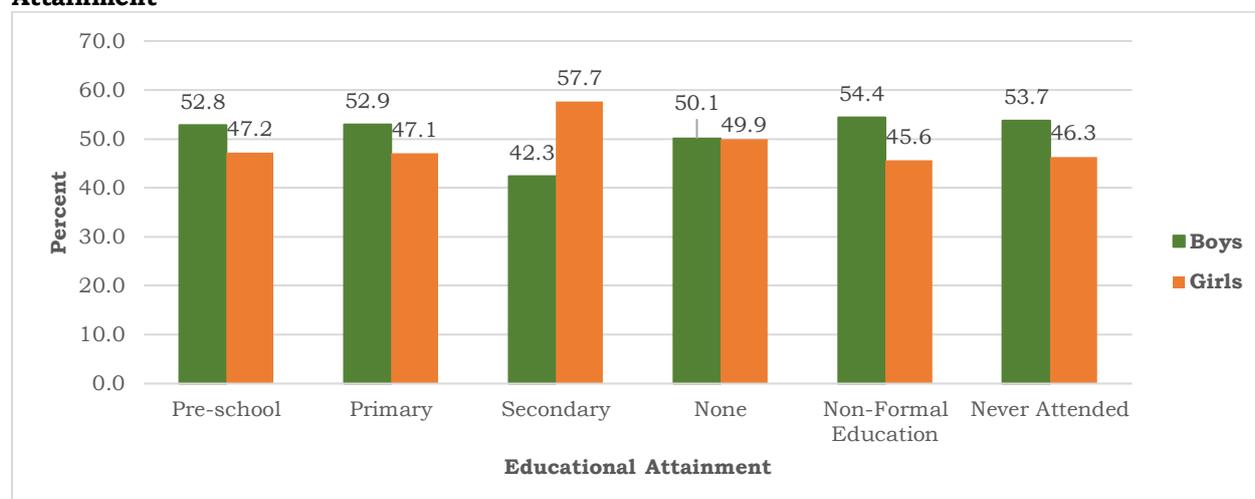
Education is the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life, (www.dictionary.com, 2018). It is central to gender equality and improves access to labour market specifically higher skilled and more remunerative occupations. In addition, education is a precondition to development and hence plays a key role in the determination of the gender status. Formal education in Lesotho covers four levels including early childhood development (ECCD); primary school cycle which runs for seven years; secondary school cycle covering five years and tertiary education covering one to five years depending on the nature of the course.

Education plays an important role across all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), driving progress towards sustainable development. Goal 4 is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunity for all potential”. School attendance is defined as attendance at any regular accredited educational institution or programme, public or private for organised learning at any level of education, (United Nations, 2015). According to Lesotho censuses and surveys, school attendance is categorized into three groups; the never attended, still attending and those that left school. This chapter portrays an overview of gender and education levels of girls and boys aged 3 to 17 years, women and men aged 18 years and above.

4.1 Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education an individual has successfully completed. Figure 4.1 shows percentage distribution of boys and girls by educational attainment. In most levels of education attained, boys assume leading proportions than their female counterparts except for those that attained secondary level where girls lead at 57.7 percent.

Figure 4.1: Percentage Distribution of Boys and Girls Aged 3 - 17 Years by Educational Attainment

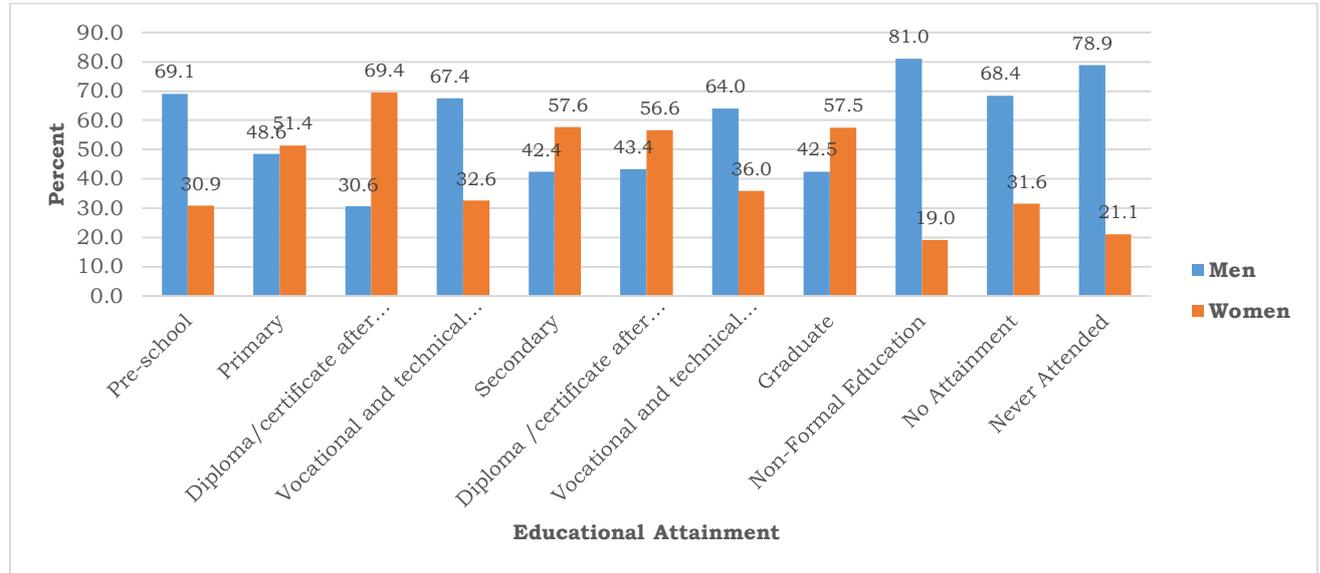


Source: 2021 LDS

Figure 4.2 presents percentage distribution of men and women by educational

attainment and sex. According to this figure, the general observation is that more women than men attained primary, secondary, diploma or certificate after primary, diploma or certificate after secondary and graduate levels with over 50.0 percent. Most men had either received a non-formal education, pre-school, or had never attended school.

Figure 4.2: Percentage Distribution of Men and Women Aged 18 Years and above by Educational Attainment



Source: 2021 LDS

4.2 Literacy

Literacy is defined as the ability to write a meaningful sentence and read with understanding in either Sesotho or English. Literacy is divided into three groups namely Literacy 1, Literacy 2 and Illiteracy. Literacy 1 signifies population that can read and write English or Sesotho or both with ease. Literacy 2 represents population that is either able to read and write English or Sesotho or both with some difficulty, while Illiteracy means population that cannot read and/or write at all.

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of boys and girls by age, literacy rate and sex. It shows that 52.3 percent were girls (dominating) who could read and/write either Sesotho or English with ease. The converse was observed for Literacy 2 and Illiteracy where boys have higher proportions than girls.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Boys and Girls Aged 3-17 by Age, Literacy Rate

Age	Literacy 1			Literacy 2			Illiteracy		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
3	62.4	38.0	221	59.6	40.4	267	50.9	49.1	11,814
4	34.5	65.5	171	43.2	56.8	484	46.9	53.1	17,758
5	44.6	55.4	368	51.7	48.2	2,080	50.5	49.5	24,095
6	61.6	38.3	658	45.0	55.0	8,816	54.2	45.8	27,300
7	39.9	60.0	1,486	48.3	51.7	17,781	52.5	47.5	22,408
8	40.1	59.9	3,773	50.1	49.9	22,236	54.7	45.3	15,076
9	39.9	60.1	8,177	50.8	49.2	25,753	60.3	39.7	9,569
10	40.4	59.6	16,162	53.4	46.6	24,017	66.1	33.9	6,164
11	43.7	56.3	21,560	52.7	47.3	19,482	70.6	29.4	3,278
12	44.7	55.3	29,371	57.6	42.4	15,343	79.4	20.6	1,921
13	46.7	53.3	29,026	68.0	32.0	10,610	83.5	16.5	1,465
14	50.5	49.5	19,244	70.9	29.1	6,729	88.7	11.2	1,097
15	57.7	42.3	12,026	74.6	25.4	4,967	90.3	9.8	1,133
16	59.0	41.0	9,433	76.5	23.5	3,919	96.6	3.5	913
17	64.8	35.2	7,942	72.4	27.6	4,008	91.8	8.4	861
Total	47.7	52.3	159,618	57.5	46.8	166,492	50.0	40.7	144,852

Source: 2021 LDS

According to Table 4.2, most women were able to read and write English or Sesotho with ease than men by 14.0 percentage points. Women who had literacy 2 were less than their male counterparts by 15.0 percentage points. It is evident from this table that there are far more men who are illiterate than females in the country.

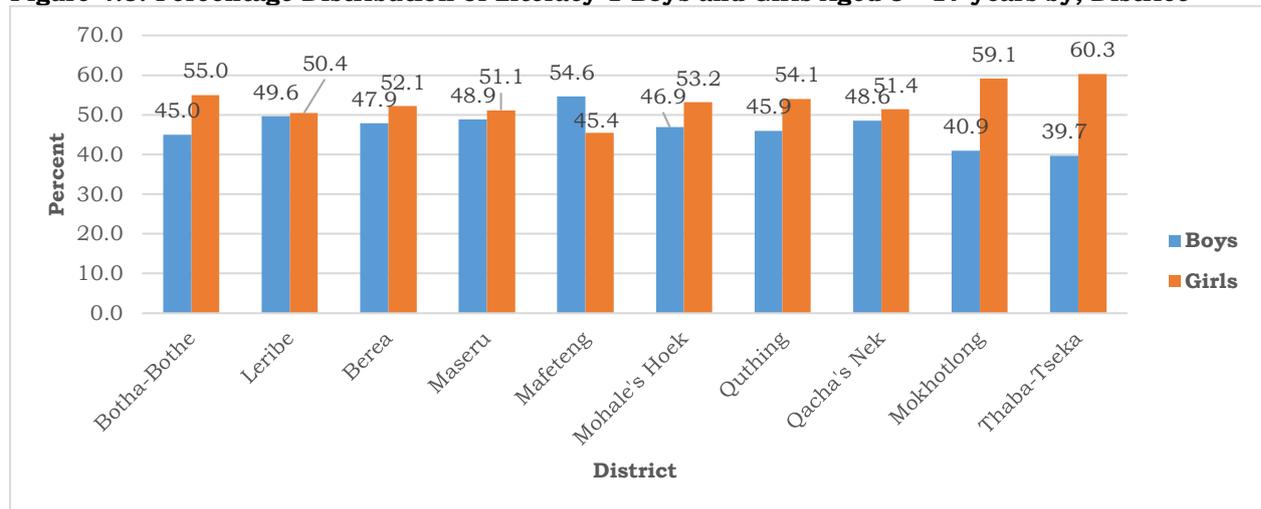
Table 4.2: Percentage Distribution of Men and Women Aged 18 years and above by Age, Literacy Rate

Age Group	Literacy 1			Literacy 2			Illiteracy		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
18-19	58.8	41.2	13,359	81.2	18.8	5,671	82.7	17.3	1,748
20-24	60.2	39.8	34,122	76.2	23.8	16,152	89.9	10.1	4,664
25-29	54.0	46.0	33,371	73.4	26.6	15,636	86.7	13.3	4,046
30-34	47.7	52.3	38,658	67.8	32.2	16,692	87.3	12.7	4,550
35-39	46.6	53.4	40,367	62.9	37.1	17,444	81.5	18.5	3,612
40-44	43.5	56.5	35,816	63.3	36.7	14,464	76.4	23.6	3,864
45-49	46.1	53.9	27,167	62.1	37.9	10,584	76.7	23.3	3,172
50-54	39.5	60.5	23,427	57.7	42.3	8,232	75.0	25.0	2,220
55-59	34.3	65.7	22,285	47.1	52.9	9,128	77.7	22.3	2,507
60-64	31.1	68.9	22,842	40.2	59.8	9,596	63.1	36.9	2,158
65+	24.3	75.7	56,130	28.4	71.6	28,404	38.5	61.5	8,536
Total	43.0	57.0	347,544	57.5	42.5	152,003	72.3	27.7	41,077

Source: 2021 LDS

Figure 4.3 shows the percentage distribution of boys and girls by literacy rate, district and sex. The general observation is that most districts, girls had higher literacy 1 rate of over 50.0 percent as opposed to their counterparts except for Mafeteng where more boys could read and/or write with ease at 54.6 percent. A wide gap is observed in Thaba-Tseka and in Mokhotlong districts where the margin is higher between boys and girls who can read and/or write with ease.

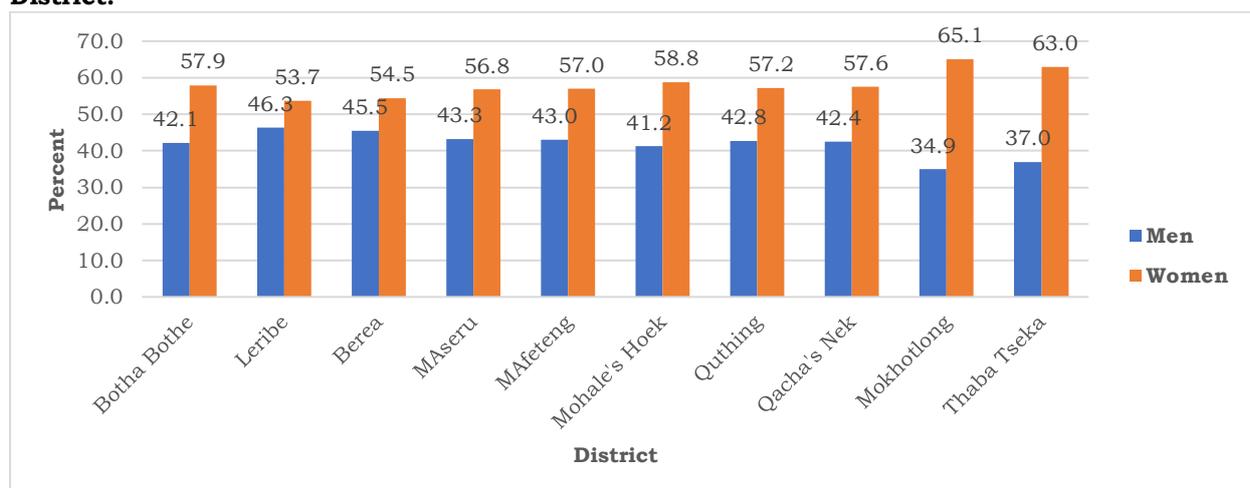
Figure 4.3: Percentage Distribution of Literacy 1 Boys and Girls Aged 3 - 17 years by, District



Source: 2021 LDS

According to Figure 4.4, it was observed that women could read and write with ease in all districts ranging over 50.0 percent compared to men with proportions below 50.0. A clear distinction is observed in the mountain districts where (like in the younger ages) the margin is bigger between men and women with Literacy 1 than in the lower lying districts. The proportion of Literacy 1 for men was recorded at 34.9 percent in Mokhotlong while the least percentage of women was estimated at 53.7 percent in Leribe.

Figure 4.4: Percentage Distribution of Literacy 1 Men and Women Aged 18 Years and above by District.



Source: 2021 LDS

4.3 Field of Specialisation

The field of specialisation refers to a course of study or major at an academic institution. In the case of an educator, academic specialisation pertains to the

subject they specialize in teaching. SDG indicator 4.3.1 is focused on the participation rate in both formal and non-formal education and training. Table 4.3 shows that, more males specialize in business and administration professionals followed by engineering professionals with percentages of 22.8 and 21.6 respectively. A different scenario is observed in the case of females, whereby more females specialize in teaching professionals followed by business and administration professionals with 33.4 and 29.8 percent.

Table 4.3: Number and Percentage Distribution of Field of Specialisation by Sex

Field of Specialisation	Sex			
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Physical and earth science professionals	1749	3.2	1358	1.8
Life science professionals	2665	4.9	3475	4.6
Engineering professionals	11807	21.6	1691	2.2
Architects, planners, surveyors, and designers	4968	9.1	2365	3.1
Health professionals	2467	4.5	6911	9.2
Teaching professionals	9868	18.0	25109	33.4
Business and administration professionals	12492	22.8	22388	29.8
Information and communications technology professionals	3939	7.2	3711	4.9
Legal professionals	1176	2.1	954	1.3
Librarians, archivists, and curators	409	0.7	587	0.8
Social and religious professionals	2548	4.7	6079	8.1
Other Specify	220	0.4	54	0.1
Unknown	390	0.7	523	0.7
Total	54698	100.0	75203	100.0

Source: 2021 LDS

CHAPTER 5

Reproductive Health Issues

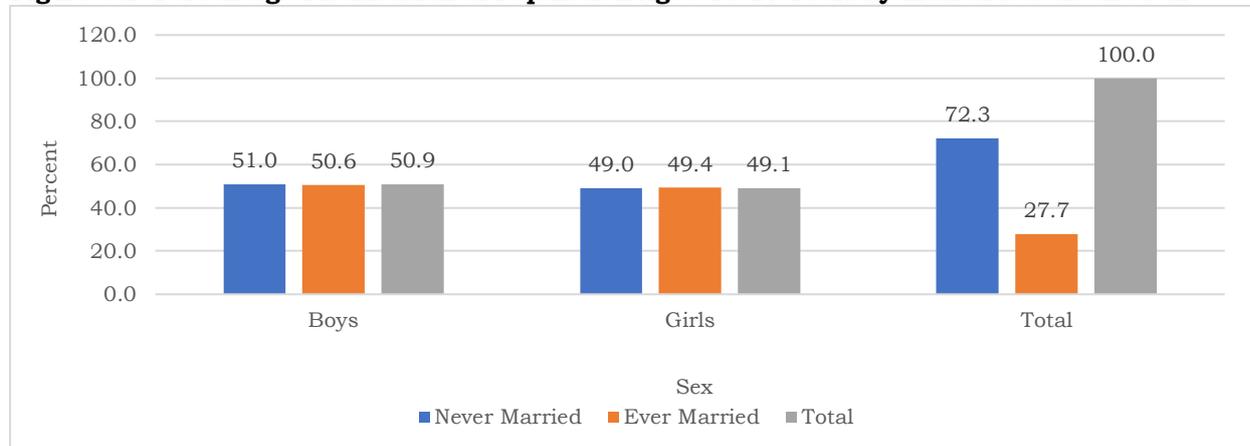
The concept of reproductive health is one which has been developing for some time. It was originally understood as referring to those services which were provided for family planning; however, this definition has been transformed several times. It has moved from the biological to consider the affective, the cultural, and the implications of population growth for sustainable development. The present, amplified concept positions reproductive health as an essential part of human development. It is based on human rights and responsibilities, both individual and societal. It encompasses the principles of equity, respect for self-determination, and consideration of human beings as embodying bio-psychosocial integrity, and it incorporates a gender perspective (Iris Paho, 1998).

5.1 Marriage

Gender roles and expectations play a significant role in couple interaction, family decision-making, and perspectives on marital satisfaction. Gender roles are typically determined by society (Williams and McBain 2006 in National Healthy Marriage Resource Centre, 2017).

Boys and girls estimated at 50.9 and 49.4 percent respectively were never married as displayed by Figure 5.1. On average, 72.3 percent of boys and girls were never married while 27.7 percent were ever married.

Figure 5.1: Percentage Distribution of Population Aged 10-17 Years by Marital Status and Sex



Source: 2021 LDS

Table 5.1 demonstrates marital status and sex of population aged 18 years and above. The table shows that the respective 56.3 and 43.7 percent of men and women were never married. Moreover, across marital status categories, most men and women were monogamously married with 48.7 percent while the least represented category was divorced 1.2 percent.

Table 5.1: Percentage Distribution of Population Aged 18 Years and above by Marital Status and Sex

Marital Status	Men	Women	Total
Never married	56.3	43.7	31.1
Monogamously married	50.1	49.9	48.7
Polygamously married	51.9	48.1	1.3
Living together	51.2	48.8	0.5
Separated	43.1	56.9	5.0
Divorced	32.7	67.3	1.2
Widowed	17.0	83.0	12.2
Total	47.4	52.6	100.0

Source: 2021 LDS

5.1.1 Trend in Marital Status and Singulate Mean Age at Marriage

The singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) is the average length of single life expressed in years among those who marry before age 50 years. It is a synthetic indicator calculated from marital status categories of men and women aged 15 to 54 years at the census or survey date (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2013).

Table 5.2 presents trend in marital status of persons aged 15 years and above by sex. The figure reveals that in 2001 Lesotho Demographic Survey (LDS) most males were never and currently married compared to their female counterparts with 44.7 and 48.4 percent respectively. On the contrary, in LDS 2021 more females were widowed and divorced than males with 17.6 and 6.4 percent correspondingly.

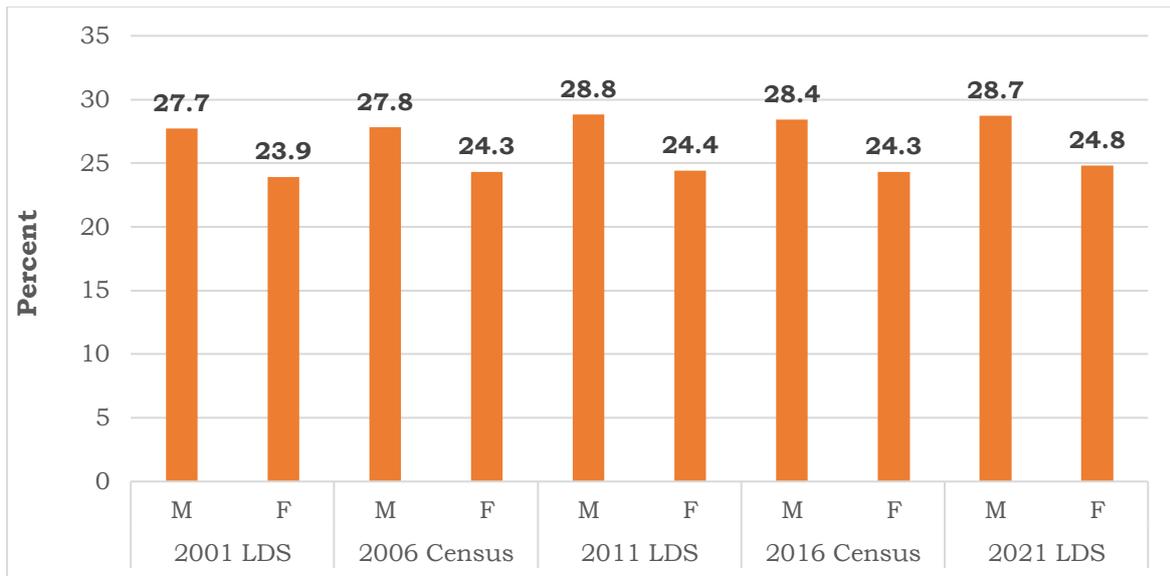
Table 5.2: Trend in Percentages of Persons Aged 15 years and above by Marital Status, Sex and Census/Survey years.

Census/Survey	Year	Sex	Never Married	Currently Married	Widowed	Separated/Divorced
LDS	2001	M	44.7	48.4	3.3	3.4
		F	30.9	46.9	17.4	4.7
Census	2006	M	44.3	48.2	4.3	2.9
		F	31.3	47.0	17.2	3.1
LDS	2011	M	46.0	46.5	4.7	2.8
		F	30.1	45.7	20.6	3.5
Census	2016	M	43.5	50.0	3.5	3.1
		F	30.5	50.9	13.8	4.2
LDS	2021	M	43.2	48.0	3.9	4.8
		F	31.9	44.1	17.6	6.4

Source: 2021 LDS

The SMAM for males and females has been increasing over the years implying delayed entry into marriage for both males and females as reflected in Figure 5.2. The implication here therefore, irrespective of whether both sexes delay time for their marriage, indicates late participation in reproduction. However, it has been noted that females still get married earlier than males.

Figure 5.2: Singulate Mean Age at Marriage for Period 1966 to 2021



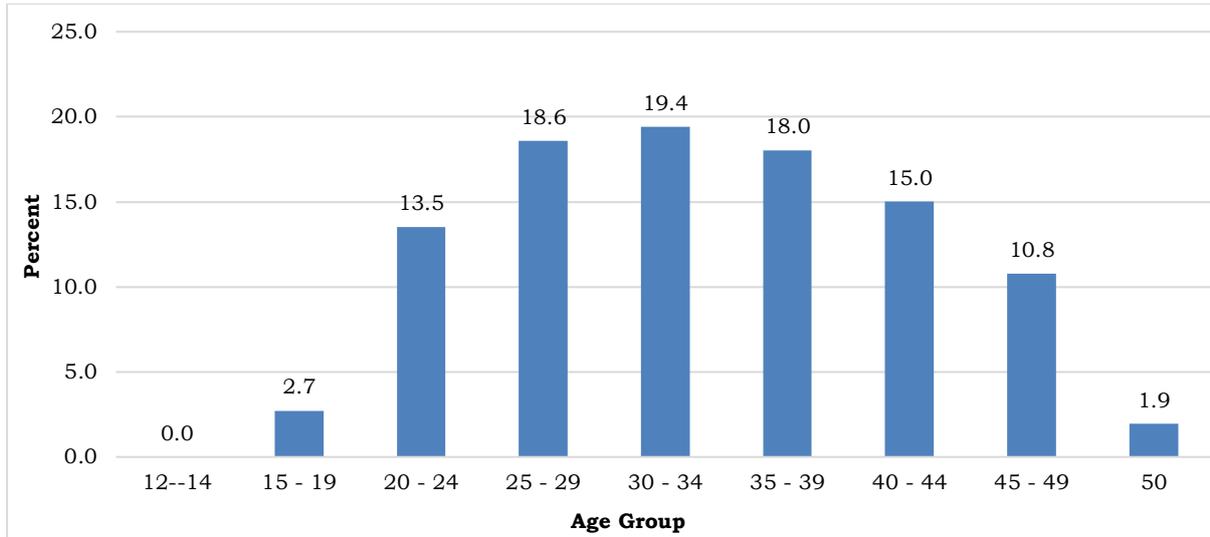
Source: 2021 LDS

5.2 Fertility

Fertility is one of the main components of population growth about which extensive international and domestic research has been conducted to identify its factors. Therefore, measurement of the rate of fertility and its effective factors is considered as the basic parameter not only in population expectations but also in the assessment of economic and social status of the society. The relationship between gender role and fertility has been assessed in a few studies. The fact is that changes in gender roles have different effects on men and women. Different views on gender roles in families create differences in individual behaviour that ultimately affect the decision-making process in the family (Golmakani N et.al 2013).

It is important to study and observe the age pattern of first childbirth because it directly has an impact on the lifetime parity of a woman. The earlier the commencement of childbearing, the higher the chances of high birth orders for that woman. Figure 5.3 demonstrates distribution of women by age at first childbirth. The figure reveals that the highest percentage accounting for 19.4 percent of childbearing women with their first childbirth were of age 30 to 34 years. The least proportion is of children and women aged 15 to 19 and 50 years who had their first live birth with 2.7 and 1.9 respectively.

Figure 5.3: Percentage Distribution of Women by Age at First Childbirth



Source: 2021 LDS

5.3 Mortality

Table 5.4 presents distribution of deaths by age and sex. The table reveals that male and female children aged less than one died at the higher rate than other ages with 9.85 and 8.67 percent respectively. The table further reflects that mortality seem to affect more males than females.

Table 5.4: Distribution of Deaths by Age and Sex

Age-group	Number of deaths			Percentage of deaths	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Less than 1	1,683	957	726	9.85	8.67
0-4	370	188	182	1.94	2.18
5-9	195	87	107	0.90	1.28
10-14	125	55	70	0.57	0.83
15-19	215	87	128	0.89	1.53
20-24	441	318	123	3.27	1.46
25-29	857	499	357	5.14	4.27
30-34	1,050	621	430	6.39	5.14
35-39	1,338	786	552	8.09	6.59
40-44	1,258	713	545	7.34	6.52
45-49	790	393	397	4.04	4.75
50-54	586	392	194	4.04	2.31
55-59	1,066	622	443	6.40	5.30
60-64	1,039	520	519	5.35	6.20
65-69	1,415	783	632	8.06	7.55
70-74	1,472	797	676	8.20	8.07
75-79	1,283	683	600	7.03	7.17
80-84	956	465	491	4.79	5.86
85+	1,947	750	1197	7.71	14.30
Total	18,086	9,718	8,368	100.00	100.00

Source: 2021 LDS

5.3.1 Infant and Under Five Mortality

Infant mortality is the death of an infant before his or her first birthday. The infant mortality rate is the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births. In addition, the infant mortality rate is an important marker of the overall health of a society (Xu JQ et.al 2021).

Infant mortality rate of 33 deaths per 1,000 live births estimated in 2019 which is lower than the 2016 estimate of 53 deaths of infants per 1,000 live births. It is not recommended to use estimates for births of younger women due to fewer reported births as the low maternal age disposes mortality risk during infancy.

Under-5 mortality rate was estimated at 50 deaths per 1,000 live births for males and 37 deaths per 1,000 live births for females in 2019 as indicated in Table 5.5. In the same year it recorded 44 deaths per 1,000 live births for both sexes, however it is still above the prescribed SDG indicator 3.2.1 estimate of 25 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Table 5.5: Infant, Child and Under-five Mortality Rates Using Data on Children Ever Born and Children Surviving (Coale and Demeny North Model)

Age group	Reference Period	Both Sex			Males			Females		
		IMR	CMR	U5MR	IMR	CMR	U5MR	IMR	CMR	U5MR
20 - 25	2019.1	33	12	44	36	14	50	29	9	37
25 - 30	2017.2	36	14	50	38	15	53	34	13	47
30 - 35	2015.0	35	13	47	39	16	54	31	10	41
35 - 40	2012.5	42	19	59	43	20	62	40	18	57

Source: 2021 LDS

5.4 Maternal Mortality

The Government of Lesotho (GOL) is striving towards achieving Goal 3 of SDGs, which is aimed at ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being for all women (WHO, 2017). Under this goal the direct target 3.1.1 states that, by 2030, maternal mortality ratio to have reduced to less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births.

The government through the MOH took into consideration the SDG's and all other global, regional, and national strategies, policies and frameworks. Its goal is to achieve universal health coverage with a vision of a health population living a quality and productive life. The health policy covers all aspects of health and provides broad direction for the development and the determinants of health (NHP, 2016).

Table 5.6 presents percentage distribution of maternal deaths reported in households by age group and period of death. Maternal deaths reported within the household one year preceding the survey were common to females aged 30 to 34 years with 54.6 percent. Deaths reported 5 years prior to the survey show more maternal deaths experience estimated at 46.8 percent for women aged 25 to 29 years.

Table 5.6: Percentage Distribution of Maternal Deaths Reported by Age Group and Period of Death

Age Group	Deaths in the Past 12 Months	Deaths in the past 5 Years
15 - 19	0,0	2,8
20 - 24	9,1	8,3
25 - 29	21,7	46,8
30 - 34	54,6	27,6
35 - 39	0,0	9,0
40 - 44	14,6	3,1
45 - 49	0,0	2,4
Total	135	642

According to Table 5.7 many females in the age groups 25 to 29 and 30 to 34 years experienced maternal mortality with the proportions of 46.8 and 27.6 respectively. The similar pattern is observed within the same age groups for women who died while pregnant with 48.5 and 27.5 percent accordingly. Regarding deaths occurring to women while giving birth, the proportions were more pronounced for the age group 25 to 29 years estimated at 71.3 percent.

Table 5.7: Percentage Distribution of Maternal Deaths by Age Group

Age Group	While Pregnant	While Giving Birth	Within Six Weeks		Total
			After Delivery		
15 - 19	0,0	0,0	12,8		2,8
20 - 24	11,1	0,0	7,6		8,3
25 - 29	48,5	71,3	22,5		46,8
30 - 34	27,5	11,6	40,7		27,6
35 - 39	9,0	0,0	16,4		9,0
40 - 44	0,0	17,0	0,0		3,1
45 - 49	3,9	0,0	0,0		2,4
Total (N)	385	116	142		642

5.4.1 Trends in Maternal Mortality Ratio

The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) depicts the risk of maternal death relative to the number of live births and essentially captures the risk of death in a single pregnancy or a single live birth.

Figure 5.4 shows MMR trend by year of censuses and surveys. The results show that MMR has declined from 618 to 540 deaths per 100,000 live births in the past five years. This shows an improvement in the reduction of maternal deaths although it is still considered high, with regard to the stipulated SDG indicator 3.1.1 where MMR is expected to be less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030.

Figure 5.4: Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) Trend by Year of Censuses and Surveys



5.5 Life Expectancy at birth

Life expectancy at birth measures how long on average a newborn can expect to live, if current death rates do not change (OECD, 2011). In most regions of the world, life expectancy among women is higher than among men. Men are said to be “more vulnerable from the beginning of life,” with mortality rates among men being higher than those among women throughout the lifespan (Singh-Manoux A et.al.,2008).

Life expectancy at birth for males and females was estimated at 45 and 54 years respectively in 2001. It showed a decline in 2006 where males were expected to live at least 40 years and females 43 years, which could be attributed to HIV and AIDS which was rife at the time. It increased to 58 years for males and 65 years for females in 2021 suggesting that females live longer than males. Generally, females seem to be enjoying more life expectancies as compared to their male counterparts.

Table 5.8: Trends in Life Expectancy in Censuses and surveys.

Census/Survey	Year	Both sexes	Males	Females
LDS	2001	50.1	45.1	54.2
Census	2006	41.2	39.7	42.9
LDS	2011	41.8	39.4	45.3
Census	2016	56.0	51.7	59.6
LDS	2021	61.6	57.9	65.3

Source: 2021 LDS

Reference:

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