

Indicators - Lesotho Population Census, 2006

Theme		Total	Males	Females
Indicators				
Lesotho		1,876,633	912,798	963,835
	Total population			
Growth		0.08		
	Population growth rate			
Dependency		66.2	--	--
	Age-dependency ratio (percent)			
Life Expectancy	Expectation of life at birth (2006)	41.2	39.7	42.9
	Expectation of life at birth (1996)	59.0	58.6	60.2
Mortality	Infant mortality rate	94.0	102.5	83.9
	Child mortality rate	23.7	26.5	21.1
Marriage	Percentage of currently married persons in polygynous marriages	--	1.9	0.4
		--	--	4.4
Fertility	Mean no. of children ever born at age 45-49 years (all women)			
	Total fertility rate (1986)	5.3	--	5.3
	Total fertility rate (1996)	4.1	--	4.1
	Total fertility rate (2006)	3.5	--	3.5
	Median age at childbearing (1986)	--	--	27.8
	Median age at childbearing (1996)	--	--	28.9
	Median age at childbearing (2006)	--	--	25.8
		4.7	--	--
Education	Percent of population 6 years & over that had never attended school			
	Percent of school age population (6-24 years) still attending school	60.0	--	--
	Percent of school age population (6-24 years) that have left school	35.3	--	--
	Percentage that completed standard 7, Vocational and Diploma after primary	--	14.9	24.3
	Percentage that completed secondary and non-graduate	--	29.5	36.2
	Percentage of graduates	--	1.3	1.2
Literacy	Percent literate	87.0	79.7	93.6
Employment	Crude economic activity rates (percent)	29.6	38.4	21.4
	Labour force participation rates (percent) – General econ. activity	38.1	49.8	27.2
	Employed labour force participation rates (percent)	38.1	49.8	27.2

Household	Average number of persons per household	4.4	--	--
	Proportion of Nuclear Households	48.2	--	--
	Proportion of Extended Households	40.4	--	--
	Proportion of Mixed Households	11.4	--	--
	Proportion of Male Headed Households	64.9	--	--
	Proportion of Female Headed Households	35.1	--	--
Orphanhood	Number of orphans aged 0-17 years (2006)	221,403	11,729	110,674
	Number of orphans aged 0-17 years (1996)	130,245	--	--
	Percent of children aged 0-17 years whose natural father is dead	63.0	--	--
	Percent of children aged 0-17 years whose natural mother is dead	16.6	--	--
	Percent of paternal orphans cared for by a person other than own mother	43.3	--	--
	Percent of maternal orphans cared for by a person other than own father	54.2	--	--
	Percent of paternal orphans who are heads of household	0.3	--	--
	Percent of maternal orphans who are heads of household	0.4	--	--
	Ratio of orphans to non-orphans attending school who are aged 10 - 14 years	--	0.96	0.98
Internal Migration	Percent of Lesotho-born population that were lifetime migrants	--	47.0	53.0
	Percent of total emigrants who resides in the RSA	99.7	--	--
International Migration	Median duration of time spent in South Africa (years)	1 - 4	--	--
	Net migration rate	-62.1	-44.2	-17.9
Population Distribution	Density of population (2006)	61	--	--
	Density of population (1996)	61	--	--
	Density of population on arable land (2006)	658	--	--
	Density of population on arable land (1996)	588	--	--
	Percentage of Population with disability (Lesotho)	3.7	2.1	1.6
Disability	Percentage of Population without disability (Lesotho)	96.3	--	--
	Percentage of Population with disability, Born Disabled (Lesotho)	16.1	15.7	16.7
	Percentage of persons disabled for > 20 years	28.6	30.2	26.5
	Percentage of persons disabled for <1 year	6.0	5.3	6.9
	Percentage of persons disabled for 1 year in urban area	6.8	6.6	7.1
	Percentage of persons disabled for > 20 years in Urban area	26.0	26.7	25.2
	Percentage of persons disabled for 1 year in Rural area	5.8	5.0	6.8
	Percentage of persons disabled for > 20 years in Rural area	29.1	30.8	26.8
Youth	Share of youth to the population	23.6	24.1	23.1
	Youth's share to the Labour Force Population	39.4	19.5	19.9
	Ratio of Literate females to males (Literacy Parity index)	131.0		
	Unemployment rates (15-24)	13.1	11.4	16.0
Housing	Percent of residential dwellings built on land acquired free from chiefs	67.0	--	--
	Percent of residential dwellings built on purchased land	7.0	--	--
	Percent of residential dwellings built on inherited land	20.0	--	--
	Average number of persons per room	1.7	--	--
	Percent of dwellings with walls built of stone	38.7	--	--
	Percent of dwellings with walls built of cement bricks	45.5	--	--
	Percent of dwellings with walls made of burnt bricks	4.2	--	--

	Percent of dwellings with walls made of mud bricks and mud/sticks	6.9	--	--
	Percent of dwellings with cement floors	32.7	--	--
	Percent of dwellings with floors made of mud and dung	35.2	--	--
	Percent of dwellings with roofs made of thatch/straw	28.3	--	--
	Percent of dwellings with roofs made of corrugated iron	68.3	--	--
Household amenities	Percent of households that used electricity as the main fuel for lighting	9.7	--	--
	Percent of households that used candles as the main fuel for lighting	28.5	--	--
	Percent of households that used paraffin as the main fuel for lighting	60.5	--	--
	Percent of households that used electricity as the main fuel for cooking	2.8	--	--
	Percent of households that used gas as the main fuel for cooking	24.8	--	--
	Percent of households that used paraffin as the main fuel for cooking	15.7	--	--
	Percent of households that used wood as the main fuel for cooking	52.5	--	--
	Percent of households that used gas as the main fuel for heating	2.1	--	--
	Percent of households that used paraffin as the main fuel for heating	34.3	--	--
	Percent of households that used coal as the main fuel for heating	2.5	--	--
	Percent of households that used wood as the main fuel for heating	51.4	--	--
	Percent of households that used cow dung as the main fuel for heating	5.4	--	--
Sanitation	Percent of households with piped water on the premises	17.0	--	--
	Percent of households with source as piped water community supply	39.9	--	--
	Percent of households without toilets	42.0	--	--
	Percent of households with pit latrines	32.0	--	--
	Percent of households with V.I.P toilets	23.0	--	--
	Percent of households with sewage system	2.0	--	--
	Percent of households with septic tanks	1.0	--	--
	Percent of households that disposed of household refuse on communal refuse dump	6.3	--	--
	Percent of households that disposed of household refuse on the household's own refuse dump	87.8	--	--
	Percent of households where household refuse is regularly collected	1.5	--	--

Summary of Findings

Population distribution

The 2006 national census gave a de jure population of 1,876,633 with an annual growth rate of 0.08 percent. This implies a substantial decline from the annual growth of 1.5 percent during the period 1986 to 1996.

Most people, about 77 percent of the population reside in the rural areas of the country while the rest are located in urban areas. This means a significant rise in urban population from 16.9 percent in 1996 to 22.6 percent in 2006. However, the lowlands have the largest share of population throughout all the inter-censal periods 1976 to 2006 whereas senqu river valley has the smallest share. In addition, looking at the distribution by district, Maseru is the most rapidly growing district in Lesotho in the last three decades, while Qacha's Nek has experienced the least population growth throughout all the censuses. For the period 1986 to 1996, almost all the districts gained in population, Berea gained the highest followed by Maseru, while Bothe-Bothe had the lowest population change. For the period 1996-2006, Mokhotlong gained in population by 13.0 percent while Mafeteng lost in population by 9.8 percent.

Lesotho has a total land area of 30,355 square kilometers. The majority of the people are concentrated in the lowlands resulting in very high population densities. For instance, Berea has 112 persons per square kilometer. On the other hand, Maseru has the highest arable land density of 902 persons per square kilometer while Thaba-Tseka has the least density of arable land with 485 persons per square kilometer. However, the settlement pattern is predominantly rural with majority of the people living in small settlements.

Nuptiality and Fertility

Marriage is almost universal in Lesotho with only about four percent of both males and females remaining single beyond age 50. Males recorded higher SMAM than females, and the figures are 27.8 and 23.3. The difference of 3.5 indicates that marriage occurs later for males than for their female counterparts by about 4 years on the average. Polygamous marriage is more pronounced among males than females with rates being 1.9 and 0.4 percent respectively. Widowhood is more prevalent among females (17.2 percent) than among males (4.3 percent).

Marital status differentials by district reveal that Quthing district has the highest share of single males (47.7 percent) while Thaba Tseka district records the lowest percentage (38.9). Maseru records the highest share of single females (38.9 percent). Thaba-Tseka still records lowest share (25.1 percent) of single females. Consequently, Thaba-Tseka records higher rates for the married males (52.0 percent) and females (53.6 percent) than the rest of the districts. Quthing district records the lowest and similar percentage of married males and females at 42.3 percent. The highest percentage (2.8) of polygamously married males is observed in Qacha's Nek. There are more (4.9 percent) widowed males in Mohale's Hoek than in other districts. Furthermore, Mohale's Hoek still records highest widowhood rate of about 19.7 percent for females.

The marital status differentials by Urban- Rural residence show that more unmarried males reside in rural areas (45.0 percent) than in urban areas (42.0 percent). There are also more unmarried females in urban (37.5 percent) than in rural (29.1 percent) areas. Widowhood is slightly higher in rural compared to urban areas and the rate is higher among females than males.

The marital status disparity by education show that 60 percent of males who attained the upper secondary education are never married, while the corresponding figure for females is 56.6 percent. Widowhood is more pronounced among females with no education and those with primary education.

The 2006 census shows a different age pattern of fertility from what was observed in the past censuses. Age specific fertility rates show high fertility in age group 15 to 19, and the peak is observed at the age group 20 to 24. The reported total fertility rate is 3.5 children per woman. The figure for women living in rural areas is higher (3.9) compared to that of urban women (2.6). The level of fertility decreases with increasing level of education. The highest total fertility level of 4.1 is observed among women with no education, while women with tertiary level of education have the lowest of 2.2 children per woman. Women classified as economically active have a lower TFR of 2.8 compared to 4.1 for those classified as not economically active. Completed fertility which had remained unchanged at 5.1 average children ever born per woman between 1986 and 1996, declined to 4.4 average children ever born per woman in 2006. About seven percent of females remain childless at the end of their reproductive ages.

Mortality

The life expectancy estimates derived from the 1996 census had raised curiosity among decision and policy makers. This was because ten years had gone by since the first case of HIV/AIDS was identified and the estimates of life expectancies showed further increases and reflected no impact of the pandemic on Lesotho's population. The recording and reporting of deaths from the vital registration system and routine surveillance data could not bear evidence of HIV/AIDS deaths and as a result had not borne warnings of the need to factor the impact of HIV/AIDS in preparation of estimates especially by population projections. The increases in mortality started being apparent through estimates derived from the Lesotho Demographic Survey (LDS) of 2001.

Estimates of mortality were made from data on deaths in the household in the past 12 months, total births and births surviving in the past 12 months, the age distribution of the censuses of 1996 and 2006, children ever born, orphan hood and widowhood data. The data on deaths in the past 12 months were able to capture the age schedule of mortality, revealing suspected increases in AIDS-related mortality among young adults aged about 20-50 which other datasets could not show.

Estimates of life expectancy at birth from the 2006 census data show an increase in mortality over the past 10 years. Life expectancy for males has declined by about 18.9 years during the past 10 years while that for females has also declined by about 17.3 years. National estimates of expectation of life at birth are 39.7 years for males, 42.9 years for females and 41.2 years for both sexes. The corresponding estimates for urban areas are 43.8 years for both sexes, 42.0 years for male and 45.7 years for females. The rural estimates are lower at 40.3 years for both sexes, 38.9 years for males and 41.5 years for females.

Infant mortality rate was estimated at 94.0 per 1,000 live births for sexes, 102.5 and 83.9 deaths per 1,000 live births for males and females respectively. This indicator suggests that mortality among infants in Lesotho is worsening having risen from 91 per 1,000 live births in 2004 for both sexes to the corresponding figure of 94 observed in 2006. This implies that MDG goal number 4 of reducing child mortality by two-thirds by 2015 might not be achieved if effective measures are not promptly taken. The increase in infant mortality may be associated with the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty and many other socio-economic factors. The 2006 results show that infant mortality rate is higher for children born to women residing in urban areas than those in rural areas. This could be a result of employed women in urban areas having less time to take care of their new borns. Infant mortality rate is also high among children of previously married women who were divorced, widowed or separated. For some of these women, the dissolution of their marriage could mean less access to resources such as financial, exposing them to poverty which could be the main driving factor behind higher death rates among their infants.

Child mortality rate for both sexes stands at 23.7 deaths per 1,000 children between exact age 1 and age 5, while for males and females the rates are 26.5 and 21.1 respectively.

Orphanhood

The results for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing have shown that the number of orphans is increasing. The HIV and AIDS prevalence rates that substantially increased from 4 percent estimated in 1993 to 23.4 percent in 2004 has also resulted to an increase in the number of orphans from 130,245 in 1996 to 221,403 in 2006. This implies a 70 percent increase in the number of orphans over the ten year period. The bulk of the orphans (63 percent) are paternal orphans, while 16.6 percent are maternal orphans and 20.4 are double orphans.

The proxy indicator for measuring the vulnerability of these orphans is their living arrangement, particularly if they are not staying with either of the parents. About 13.6 percent of paternal orphans live with other relatives and other persons not related, while the corresponding figure for maternal orphans is 19.2 percent. These figures show that relatively high proportions of these categories of orphans are forced by circumstances to relocate and live in new environments.

Orphans as compared to non-orphans exhibit higher proportions (55.4 and 56.2 percent for urban and rural respectively) of children who ever fell pregnant yet lower proportions ever gave birth (39.1 for urban and 40.7 for rural areas), suggesting some pregnancy termination. Such a high proportion of pregnancies that was not carried to term raise a concern that needs to be addressed.

The majority (19,627 for males and 5,033 for females) of children who are working are concentrated in elementary occupations. Of these children, 56.1 percent are orphans while 43.9 percent are non-orphans. Also a large number (15,368 for males and 16,815 for females) of children were reported as housewives, and mainly performing household chores. This is a cause for concern given that such situation prevails despite the initiative by the Government of providing free primary education.

Internal Migration

Migration is selective by age, education and sex. It was observed that females had a higher percentage of lifetime migration and preferred short distance migration. Most of the Lesotho citizens were enumerated in the same district they were enumerated during the 1996 population census and Maseru District had the lowest percentage. Mountainous districts had experienced high percentages of out-migration, except Mokhotlong that experienced large in-migration. Mokhotlong had a net-gain of 3,039 to its population compared with, for example Qacha's Nek that had a net-loss of 3,509 of its population in 2006 relative to 1996. Majority of the citizens migrate to urban areas, mostly to Maseru possibly looking for jobs, as many of the industries are located in this district.

International Migration

The results revealed that the Republic of South Africa (RSA) is the major destination country for about 99.7 percent of all Basotho emigrants, especially males who leave Lesotho for other countries in search of better employment opportunities. The emigrants are mostly in the age range 20-49 years, and predominantly males. In fact, males constitute 71 percent of all emigrants, while females represent 29 percent. Majority of Lesotho citizens outside the country had lived continuously for less than a year in other countries. This may be due to accessibility and availability of transport to visit their homes because of short distances since almost all of them live in RSA. Those who had lived for one to four years might largely be citizens who went for educational purposes, as there is only one university in Lesotho that cannot cater for everybody. It was also shown that few of Lesotho citizens lived in the European and other industrialized countries. Most of the emigrants, regardless of sex have primary level of education; however more females had attained tertiary education. This supports other findings by scholars who showed that in Lesotho women are more educated than men.

Lesotho also experienced immigration where many people migrate into the country for different purposes. Majority of immigrants were either employed as regular wages/salary earners, employers, or own account workers in the private sector. They are in the age range 15-54 years. Those who were employers were located in the mountainous districts of Thaba-Tseka, Quthing and Mhales' Hoek.

On balance, the 2006 Census showed that Lesotho experienced a high net-emigration because the number of immigrants is rather small relative to the number of emigrants. Lesotho therefore needs to find means of creating employment opportunities in order to reduce the outflow of skilled labour needed for development.