GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO

# COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLDS SURVEY

# REPORT

## PHASE 1

OCTOBER 2020

ΣBOS
Bureau of Statistics

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# PREFACE

The Bureau of Statistics (BOS) is a department within the Ministry of Development Planning (MDP) established under Act No.8 of 2001 (Revised) to be responsible for all matters relating to official statistics as the principal data collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating agency. The mission of the Bureau of Statistics is to coordinate the National Statistical System (NSS) and produce accurate, timely and reliable culturally relevant and internationally comparable statistical data for evidence-based planning, decision making, research, policy, program formulation and monitoring and evaluation to satisfy the needs of users and producers.

This survey came as a global initiative in tracking social and economic implications brought by COVID-19 pandemic on the Lesotho's households. The main aim of this rapid impact survey was to have an overview and understanding of the effect of COVID-19 on the livelihood of Lesotho population in terms of health, education, livelihood, employment, and food security. The undertaking of this study is fully in line with our mission as an institution. I hope this report will assist the government of Lesotho and others in reducing the hunger and poverty in Lesotho brought by this pandemic by facilitating the targeting and design of interventions for maximum effect on permanently alleviating the sufferings of the hungry and the poor.

I wish to thank the team that contributed to the successful execution of this survey from data collection through to dissemination, particularly the World Bank, the Statistics Division of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) as well as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their technical and financial assistance. The extensive work of BOS technical team is acknowledged.

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**'MALEHLOA MOLATO**

DIRECTOR – BUREAU OF STATISTICS

# FOREWORD

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the entire world and Lesotho is no exception. The government has implemented several measures to contain the spread of the virus, including a nationwide lockdown and school closures. This caused various disruptions to the livelihood of the Basotho nation.

As the socio-economic fallout from the pandemic became apparent, the Government of Lesotho established the National COVID-19 Secretariat (NACOSEC) (formerly known as the National Emergency Command Centre), a multi-sectoral team headed by the Ministry of Finance, to manage and coordinate the response to the pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, current and relevant data became more vital and urgent, and the Bureau of Statistics (BOS), as the government department charged with data collection, analysis and dissemination of official statistics, launched the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact on Households Survey (CSEIHS), with financial and technical support of the World Bank. The aim was to provide data to facilitate an assessment of the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic in Lesotho and subsequently inform the formulation of appropriate strategies and policies to respond to the pandemic.

The survey covered a wide range of COVID-19 related topics. This includes questions on knowledge about COVID-19, behavioural strategies for reducing the risk of contracting the disease, access to essential services during the crisis, changes in employment, impact of different sources of income, household strategies to cope with the pandemic as well as social assistance received by households. This wide array of topics makes it possible to understand not only how different households have been affected by the pandemic, but also how they are coping with the pandemic.

The findings reveal strong knowledge and awareness about COVID-19 among Basotho. They also reveal an adverse impact of the pandemic on the livelihood and wellbeing of Basotho. Livelihoods have been disrupted with loss of employment and income, as well as rising food insecurity for a significant share of Basotho households.

These findings will inform the development and improvement of existing strategies and policy interventions in response to the pandemic. I therefore urge all Ministries, Departments and Agencies, development partners, academia, researchers and civil society organisations to consider the findings and implications thereof.

The Ministry of Development Planning appreciates the dedication of the BOS staff for extensive work during various stages of the survey. The Ministry also expresses gratitude

to the Basotho nation for their cooperation in providing the needed information thus contributing to the success of the survey.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of Lesotho, to thank our development partners, particularly the World Bank and the Food and Agricultural Organization, for their financial and/or technical assistance for the successful execution of the survey activities.

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**HONOURABLE SELIBE MOCHOBOROANE**

MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The novel Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) which was declared a pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO) has had negative economic impact in Lesotho. The lockdown measures that have been put in place by the government to reduce the spread of this contagious virus have had negative impact on businesses, schools and the working population. In order to manage and coordinate the response to the pandemic by different sectors, the Government of Lesotho established the National COVID-19 Secretariat (NACOSEC) (formerly known as the National Emergency Command Centre), a multi-sectoral team headed by the Ministry of Finance (MOF).

The Bureau of Statistics (BOS), as the government department charged with data collection, analysis and dissemination, conducted the first phase of the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact on Household Survey (CSEIHS) with financial and technical support of the World Bank. The aim is to support NACOSEC by providing data to facilitate an assessment of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in Lesotho and subsequently the formulation of appropriate strategies in response to the pandemic. The computation of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) benefited from technical assistance from the Statistics Division of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

## Key findings

1. **Knowledge and awareness of COVID-19**
   All households had knowledge of COVID-19. For most of them (78.0 percent), respondents acquired the information through Radio. For 98.9 percent of households, respondents cited use of masks as the main method for protection against COVID-19, followed by use of soap and water for hand washing at 98.4 percent.

2. **Behaviour and social distancing**
   About 88.4 percent of households had a respondent who avoided handshaking or physical greetings and 76.7 percent who used soap and water for handwashing. 17.5 percent of households stocked up more food.

3. **Access to basic services**
   The majority (86.9 percent) of households were not able to buy meat a week prior to the survey, while 68.1 percent and 38.7 percent of households were not able to buy tubers and grains (maize, sorghum and wheat), respectively.

   26.2 percent of households reported that a member of the household needed medical attention during lockdown. Of these, 69.5 percent could not access medical service

due to lack of money, followed by 23.7 percent who cited non-availability of medical personnel.

Only 4.9 percent of households allowed physical contact of their children with teachers while the remaining 95.1 percent used other platforms such as WhatsApp (84.9 percent), telephone (8.2 percent), online Apps (3.6 percent), SMSs (3.1 percent).

### 4. Employment status and income loss

For 33.5 percent of households, survey respondents were employed. For households for which the respondent was male, about 39.1 percent were employed compared to 29.8 percent for households for which the respondent was female.

59.3 percent of households had respondents who stopped working because the business or government offices were closed due to COVID-19 legal restrictions. About 30.4 percent of households had a respondent who did not work as usual during lockdown, largely because business or government offices were closed due to COVID-19 legal restrictions (29.4 percent).

### 5. Income loss

50.8 percent of households had access to income from wage employment while only 0.1 percent received income from unemployment benefits. Of those with access to wage employment income, 64.1 percent experienced either a reduction or did not receive income from this source during lockdown.

### 6. Safety nets

21.5 percent of households had received some form of social assistance since the outbreak of COVID-19. About 14.6 percent received assistance in the form of free food and 6.9 percent in the form of direct cash transfers.

### 7. Food insecurity

21.1 percent of the population is estimated to have been affected by severe food insecurity in June 2020.

# 1. BACKGROUND

The novel Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) which was declared a pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO) this year, 2020, has ravaged many countries in the world. Several measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus have been introduced across the world.

In Lesotho, the measures introduced by the Government include a nationwide lockdown from 29 March 2020 with the exception of essential services such as grocery shops, chemists/pharmacies, health facilities and limited public transport observing social distancing, temporary closure of schools, hotels, restaurants and bars. There were also restrictions on movement inside the country.

Globally the figures as at 15 October 2020 in 216 countries or territories stood at 38,394,169 confirmed cases and 1,089,047 confirmed deaths. In Lesotho, there were 1, 833 confirmed cases and 42 confirmed deaths (https://covid19.who.int/).

In order to respond to the crisis, the Government of Lesotho established the National COVID-19 Secretariat (NACOSEC) aimed at facilitating the formulation of appropriate strategies to respond to the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and enforcing the restrictions imposed to control the spread of COVID-19 within the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an urgent need for timely data and evidence to help monitor and mitigate the social and economic effects of the crisis. Responding to this need, the Bureau of Statistics (BOS), with financial and technical support of the World Bank, designed and implemented a household level survey to measure the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in Lesotho.

The questionnaire covers a wide range of topics including knowledge of COVID-19 and mitigation measures, changes in behaviour in response to the pandemic, employment, income, food security, access to educational activities and health services, subjective well-being, perceptions of the government's response, and household coping strategies.

# 2. SURVEY DESIGN AND RESPONSE RATE

## 2.1 Survey objective

The overall objective of the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact on Households Survey (CSEIHS) was to track the social and economic implications and household behavioural responses towards the COVID-19 crisis in Lesotho.

The survey is a nationally representative, longitudinal, household's level survey. It targets adults aged 18 years and above and was designed to provide reliable estimates at country level. The survey is conducted in two phases. This report presents findings from the first phase which was conducted from June 2 to June 25, 2020.

## 2.2 Survey design

The survey used a two-staged stratified and clustered sampling design, with the selection of 120 enumeration areas as primary sampling units (PSUs) or clusters at the first stage. In the second stage, a sample of households was randomly selected within each enumeration area, or cluster using an equal probability method, where the average number of households selected per cluster was 9.

## 2.3 Survey response rate

The response rate was calculated by dividing the number of complete households' interviews by the survey sample size (households selected). Therefore, the overall response rate for the survey was found to be 99.4%.

*Table 2. 1: Survey response rate*

| Household Interviews | Total |
|---|---:|
| *Households selected* | 1,080 |
| *Households interviewed* | 1,073 |
| *Households not interviewed* | 7 |
| *Household response rate* | **99.4%** |

# 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The total number of households is 557,900 of which one respondent was selected for the interview. For 39.8 percent of households, the respondent was male while for 60.2 percent of households, the respondent was female. It is worth noting that not all respondents were heads of the households. In about 62.7 percent of interviewed households, the respondents were heads of households.

The results from the first phase of the CSEIHS show that:

- The average household size was 4.2.
- The dependency ratio was 67.1.
- Number of children under the age of 6 = 302,442.
- Number of children aged 6-18 = 631,482.
- Number of adults aged 19 or more = 1,392,154.
- The highest level of education achieved by most respondents was primary school level at 47.0 percent.

*Figure 3.1: Distribution of respondents by district (%)*

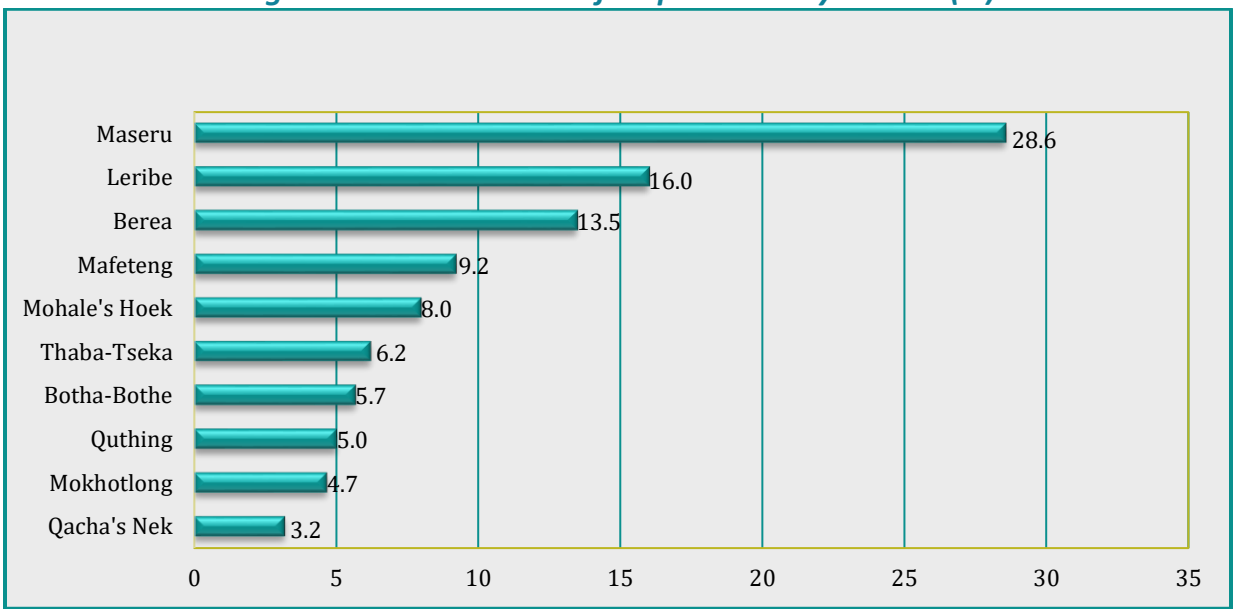


*Figure 3.2: Distribution of respondents by educational level (%)*

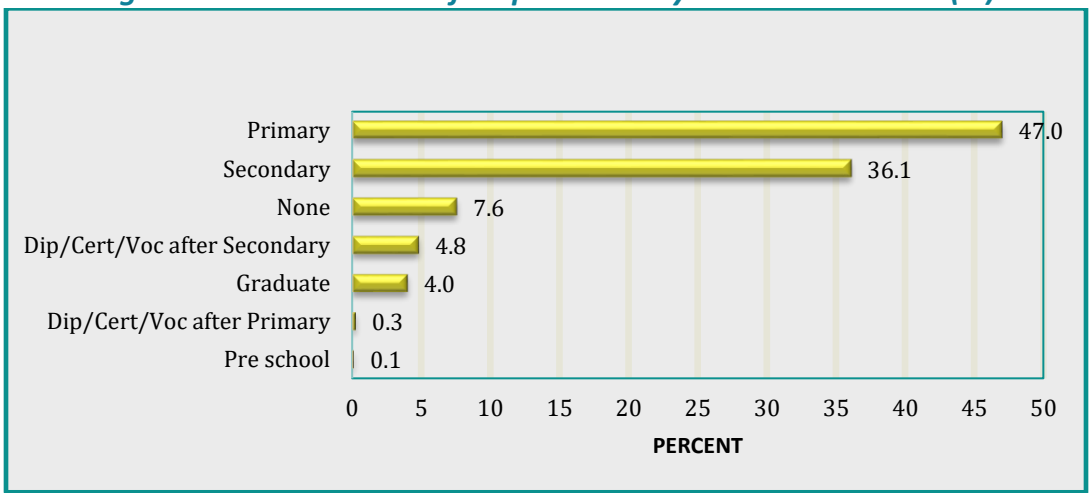
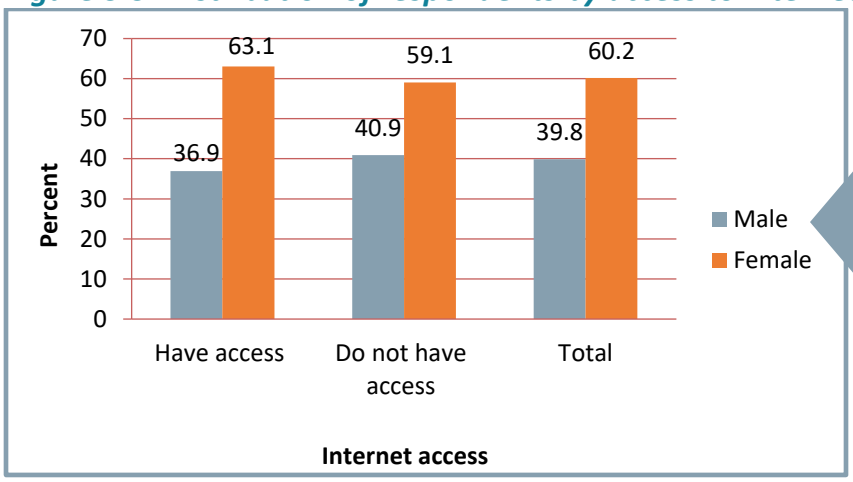


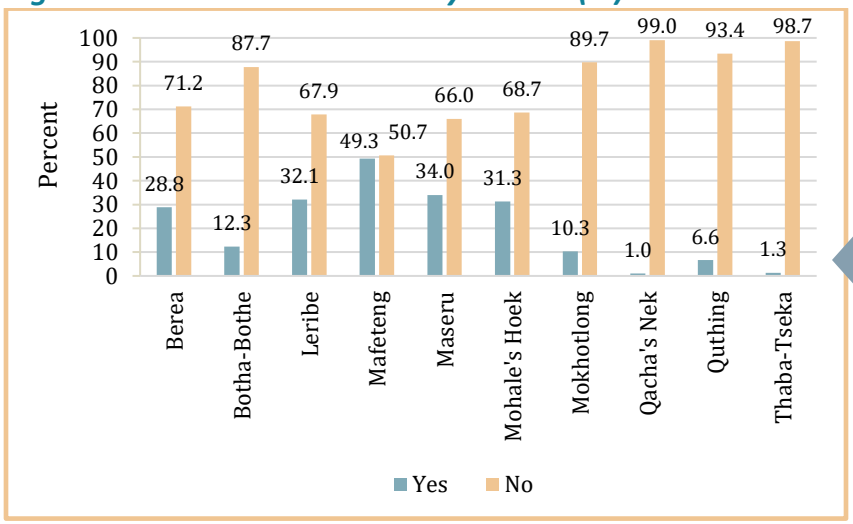

*Figure 3.3: Distribution of respondents by access to internet (%)*




***About 27.4% of respondents indicated having access to internet.***

***Most of the respondents with access to internet are female at 63.1%.***

*Figure 3.4: Access to internet by district (%)*



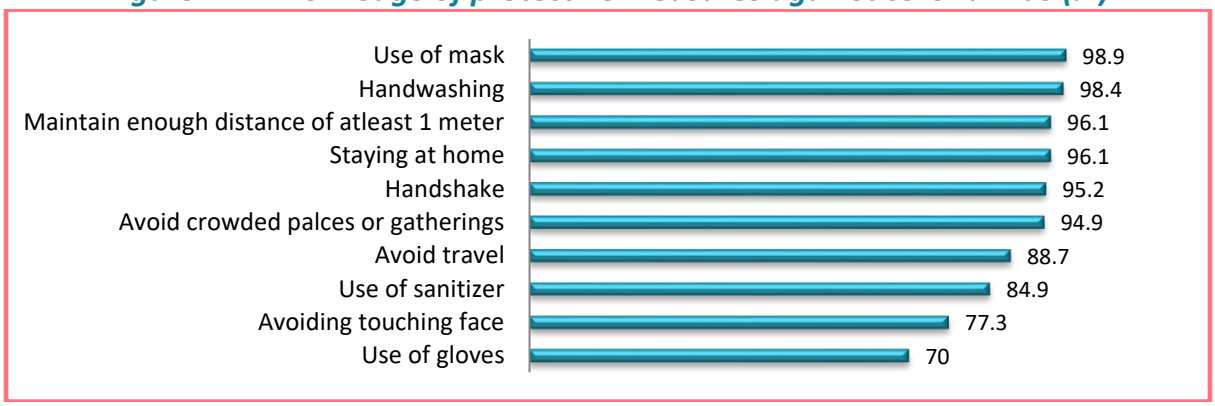

***More than 90% of households in Qacha's Nek, Thaba-Tseka and Quthing have no access to internet.***

# 4. KNOWLEDGE, PERSPECTIVE AND BEHAVIOUR

## 4.1 Knowledge of COVID-19

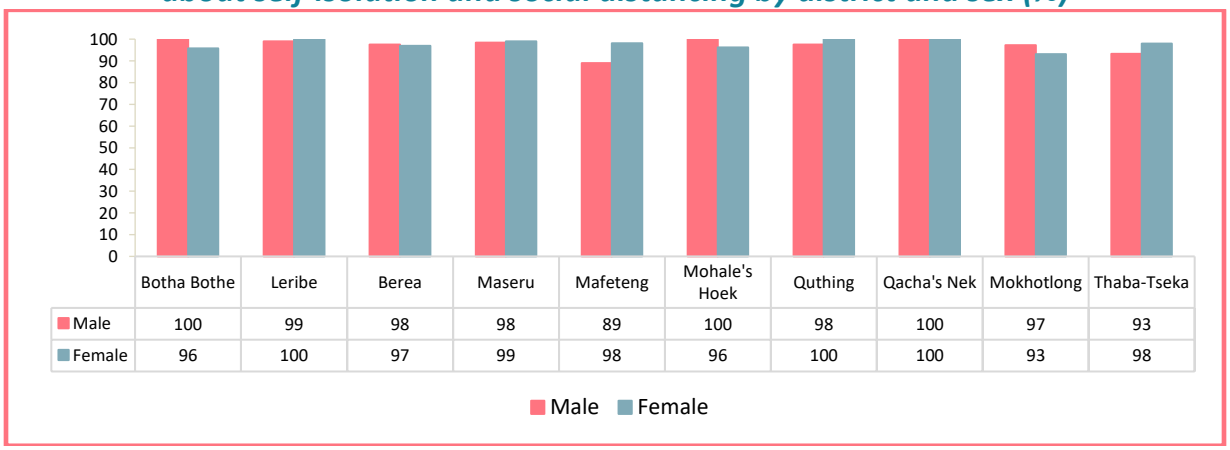
This section presents information on awareness of COVID-19 in Lesotho, sources of information, measures people for protection against COVID-19 and knowledge of the symptoms that manifest when a person is infected with COVID-19. The study shows that all Basotho households had knowledge about COVID-19.

*Figure 4.1: Knowledge of protective measures against coronavirus (%)*




Information about self-isolation and social distancing has reached most of Basotho households. About 97.8 percent of Basotho household have received information on self-isolation and social distancing.

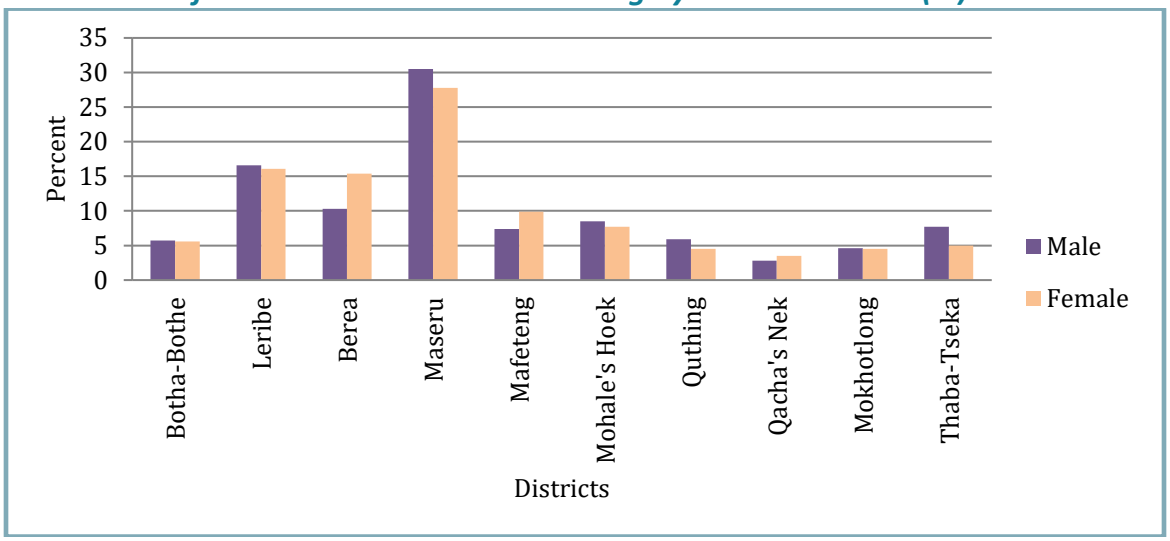
*Figure 4.2: Distribution of households with respondents who received information about self-isolation and social distancing by district and sex (%)*




| | Botha Bothe | Leribe | Berea | Maseru | Mafeteng | Mohale's Hoek | Quthing | Qacha's Nek | Mokhotlong | Thaba-Tseka |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 100 | 99 | 98 | 98 | 89 | 100 | 98 | 100 | 97 | 93 |
| Female | 96 | 100 | 97 | 99 | 98 | 96 | 100 | 100 | 93 | 98 |

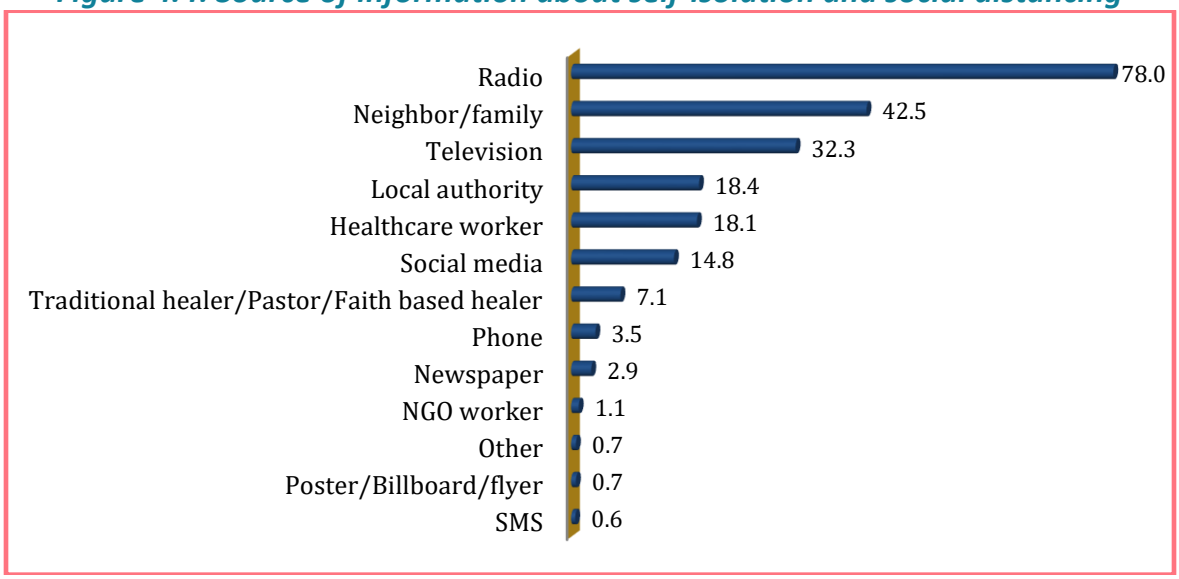
Among all the districts, Maseru recorded the highest percentage of households that had received information about social distancing and self-isolation.

***Figure 4.3: Distribution of households with respondents who received information about self-isolation and social distancing by sex and district (%)***




*Most households (78.0 percent) heard information on social distancing and self-isolation over the radio.*

***Figure 4.4: Source of information about self-isolation and social distancing***



## 4.2 Trust and perception

The government of Lesotho implemented targeted measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 and to assist Basotho affected by the pandemic. More than half ***(57.0 percent)*** of households had a respondent who was satisfied with the government's measures.

***Satisfaction with government's response to COVID-19***

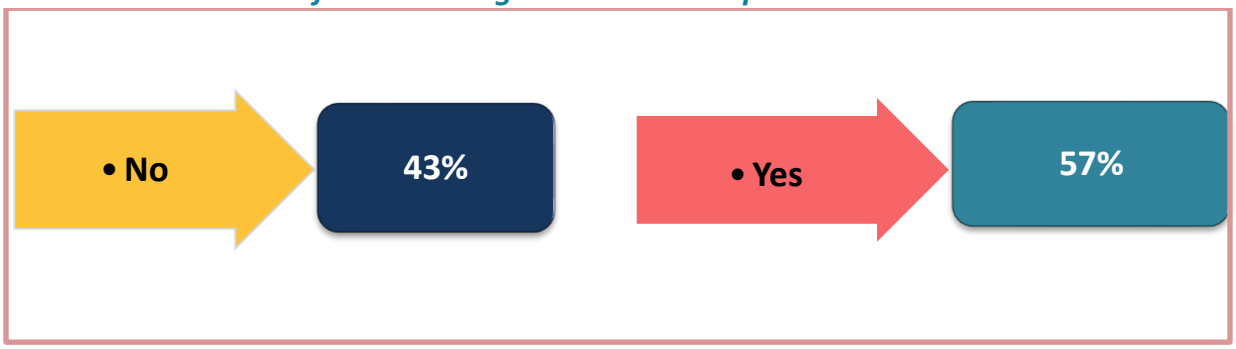
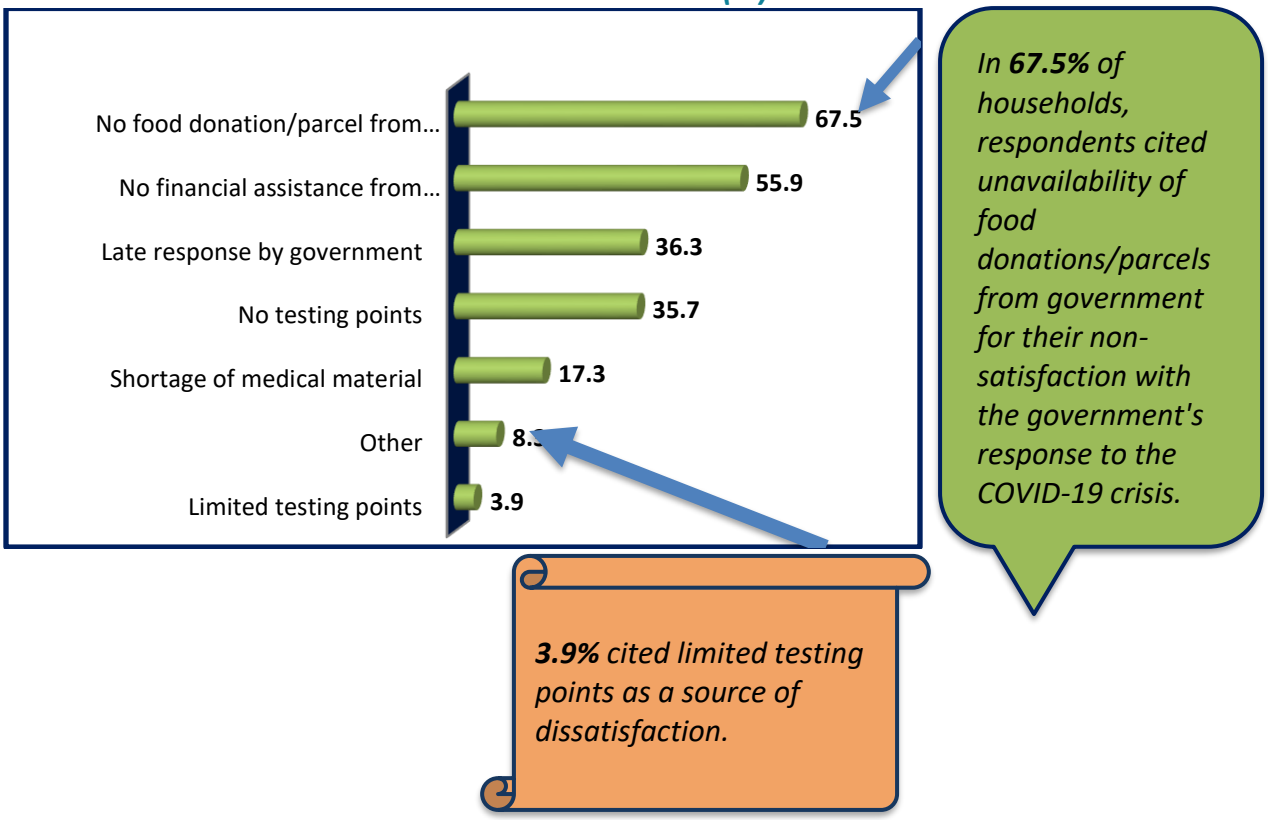
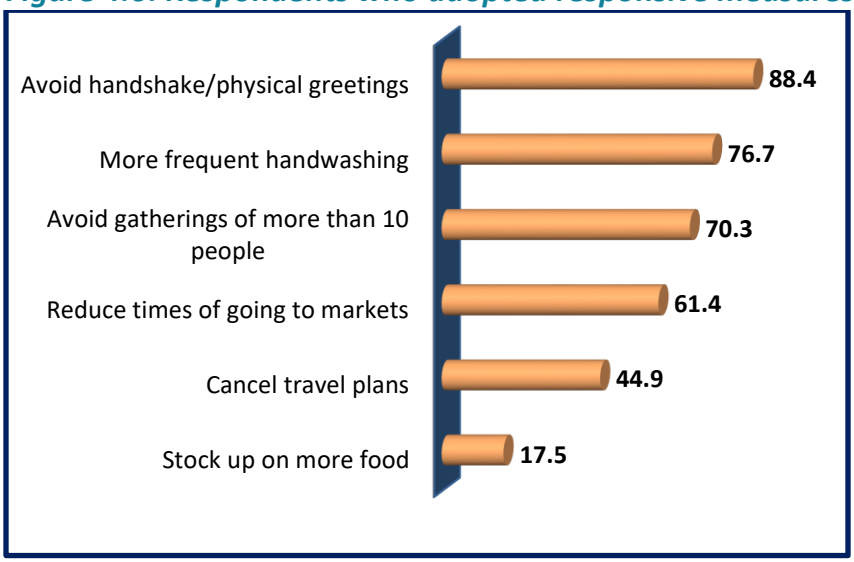



***Figure 4.5: Reasons for non-satisfaction with the government's response to the COVID-19 crisis (%)***



## 4.3 Preventive measures

*Figure 4.6: Respondents who adopted responsive measures (%)*




***88.4% of respondents avoided handshake or physical greetings while only 17.5% stocked up more food.***

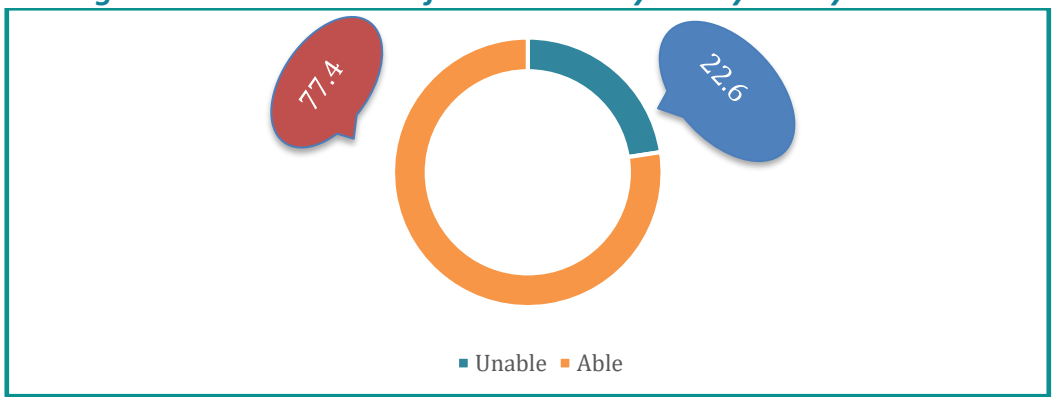
# 5. ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

This section presents households' access to basic services during the COVID-19 crisis, such as access to markets, health facilities, education, and financial institutions. The key market access indicators include household's ability to purchase medicines and various staple foods when needed.

## 5.1 Medicine

***22.6*** percent of households were unable to buy medicine a week prior to the survey.

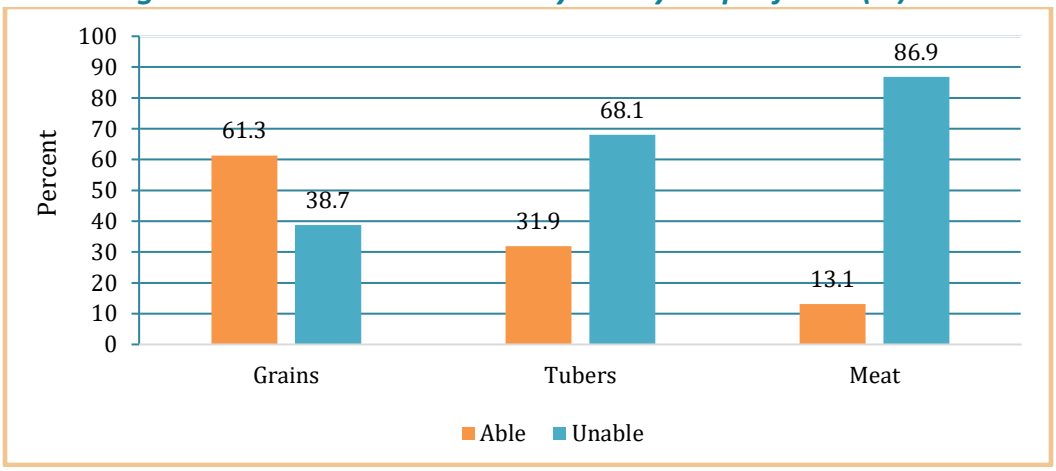
***Figure 5.1: Distribution of households by ability to buy medicine***




## 5.2 Staple foods

- ***38.7*** percent of households were not able to buy grains during lockdown.
- ***86.9*** percent were not able to access the market for meat, milk and eggs.
- ***68.1*** percent were not able to buy tubers during lockdown.

***Figure 5.2: Households' inability to buy staple foods (%)***



For all districts, the highest proportion was for households that were unable to buy meat, except in Botha-Bothe where the majority reported that they were unable to buy tubers at ***66.2 percent***. Leribe had the highest proportion of households who were unable to buy meat, followed closely by Mafeteng, Thaba-Tseka, and Quthing.

***Figure 5.3: Households' inability to buy staple foods by district (%)***

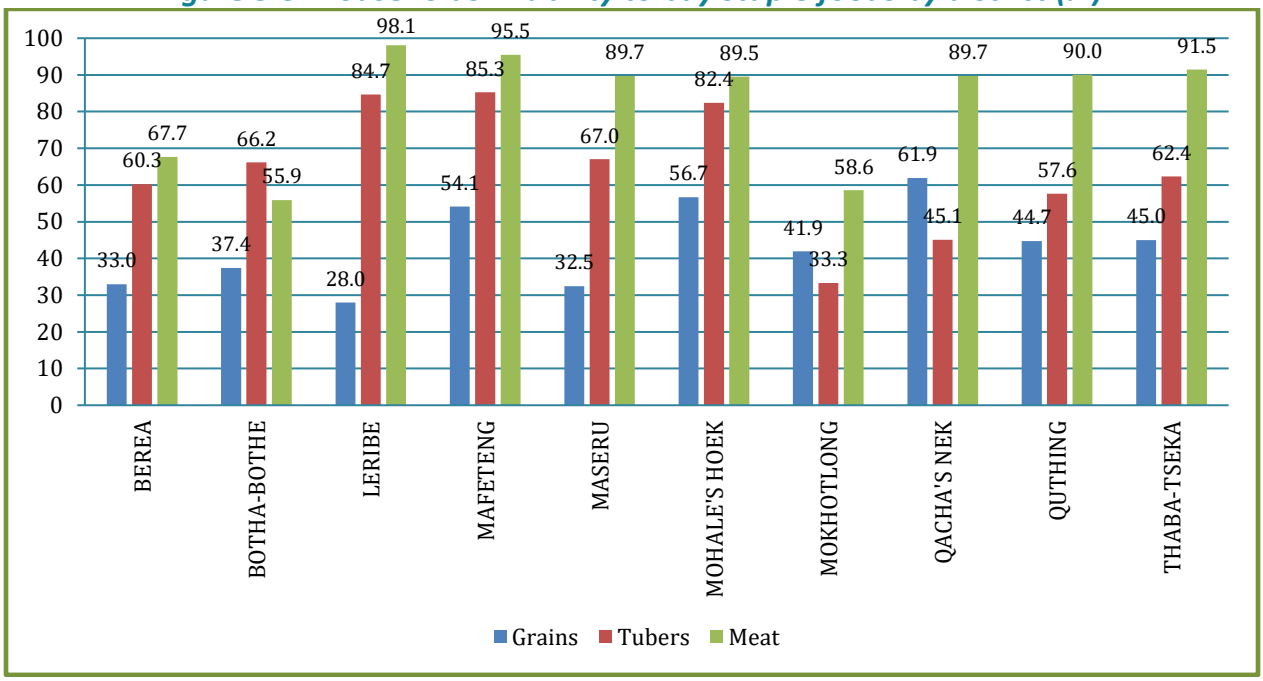
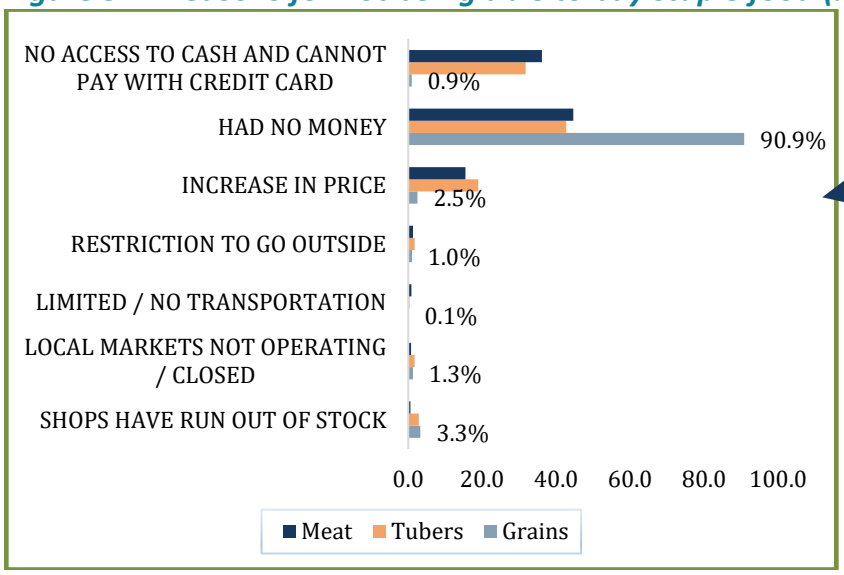



***Figure 5.4: Reasons for not being able to buy staple food (%)***




*Majority of households were not able to buy staple food because they had no money, with **90.9%** of them unable to buy grains.*

## 5.3 Health services

***26.2*** percent of households reported that a member of the household needed medical treatment during the lockdown period. Of these, 30 percent were unable to access the medical treatment.

*Figure 5.5: Households needing medical treatment during the outbreak*

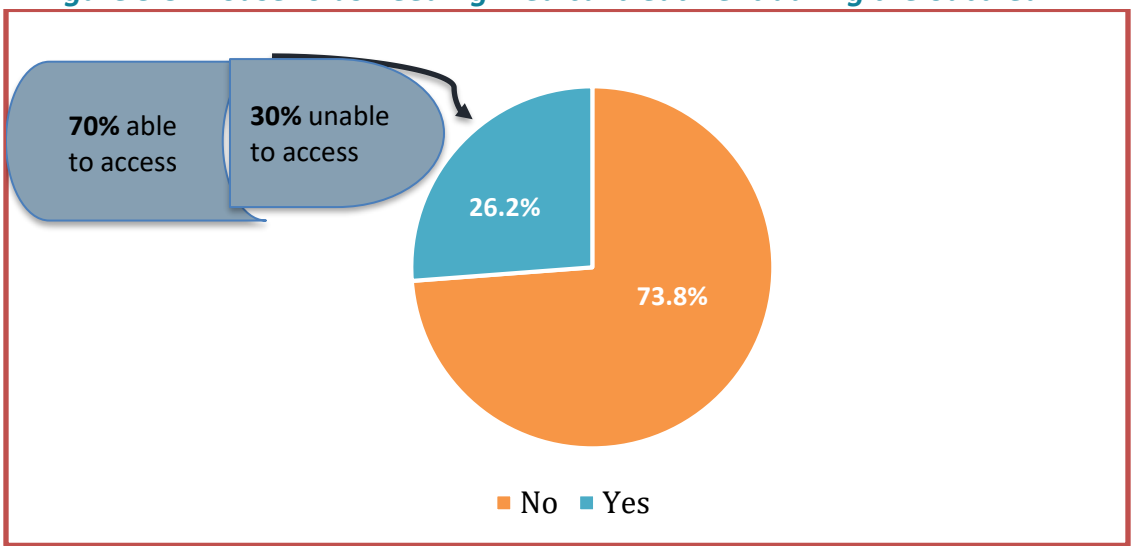
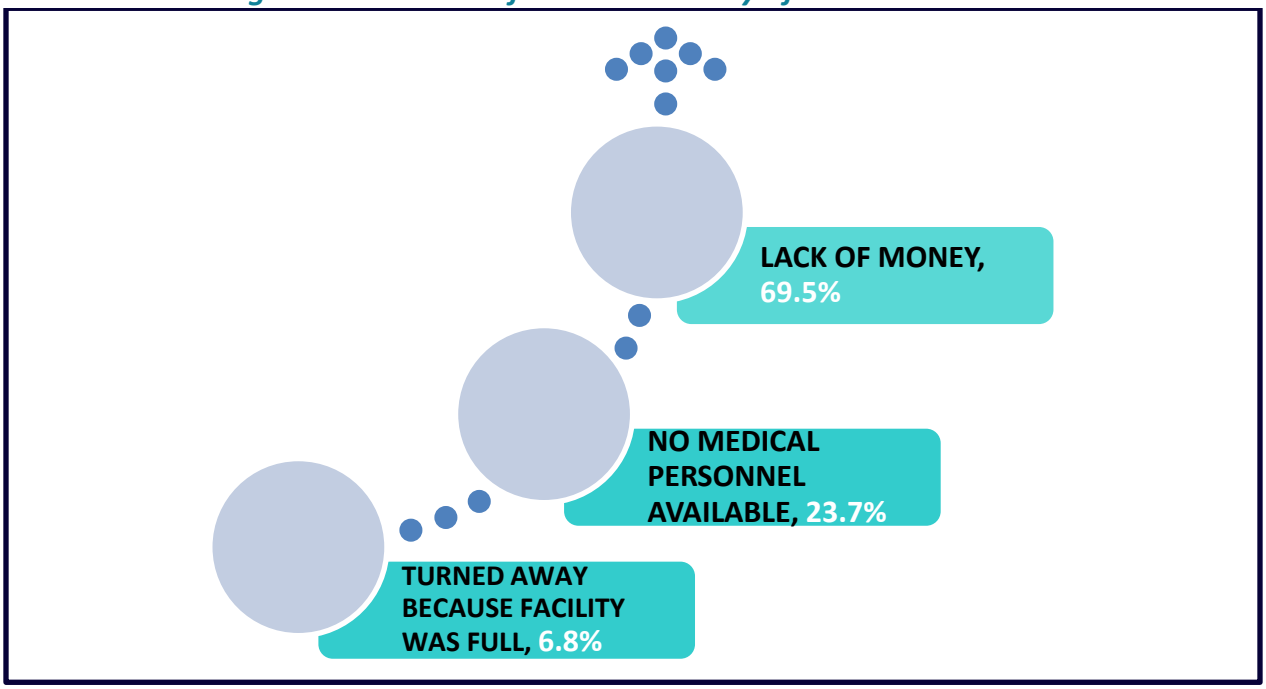



*Figure 5.6: Reasons for inaccessibility of medical services*



## 5.4 Education

About ***19.9 percent*** of households with children attending school before schools were closed as part of COVID-19 lockdown measures had their children engaged in some form of education or learning activities in the week prior to the survey. Most of the households ***(22.0 percent)*** had their children use online interactive applications to engage in education or learning activities, ***21.8 percent*** completed assignments provided by their teachers while ***18.8 percent*** listened to educational programmes on radio.

***Figure 5.7: Households with children engaged in any learning/education activities (%)***

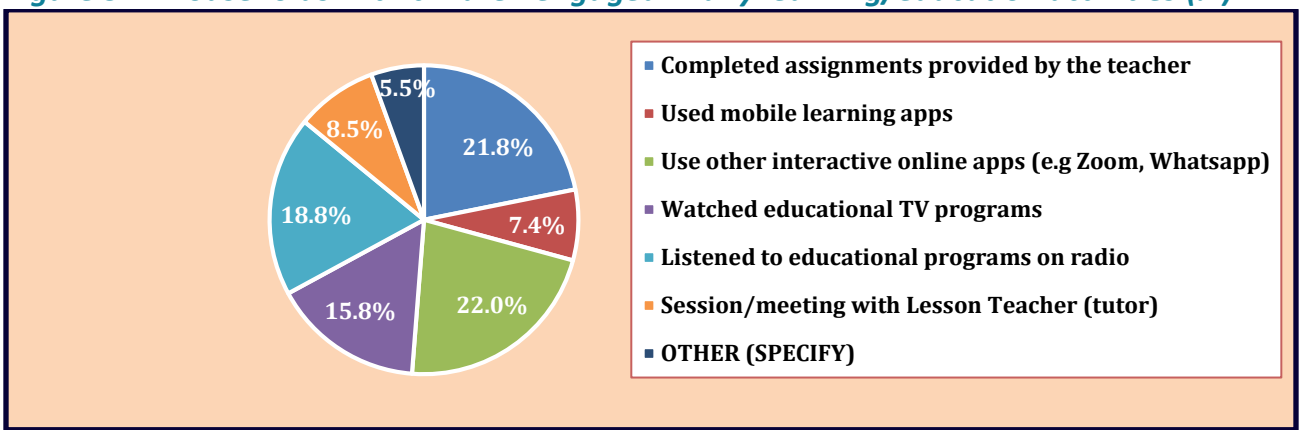
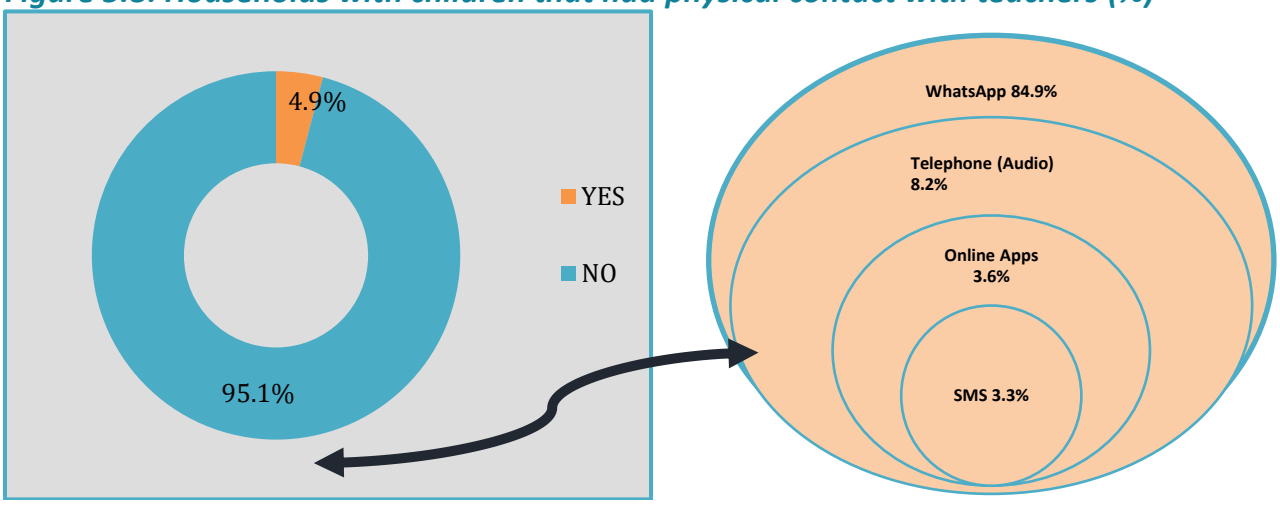



***Figure 5.8: Households with children that had physical contact with teachers (%)***




***Only 4.9 percent of households allowed physical contact of their children with teachers while the remaining 95.1 percent had other forms of contact.***

## 5.5 Financial services

***23.9*** percent of households had at least one member who needed to access financial facilities during the lockdown. Of these, ***3.5*** percent were not able to access financial services.

***Table 5. 1: Need for access to financial services (%)***

| | Need to access financial institution/agent (%) | Ability to access a financial institution/agent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Yes** | 23.9 | 96.5 |
| **No** | 76.1 | 3.5 |
| **Total** | **100.0** | **100.0** |

***Main reason for inability to access financial services***

***42.8% of households who were not able to access financial services cited restriction of movement during the lockdown period.***

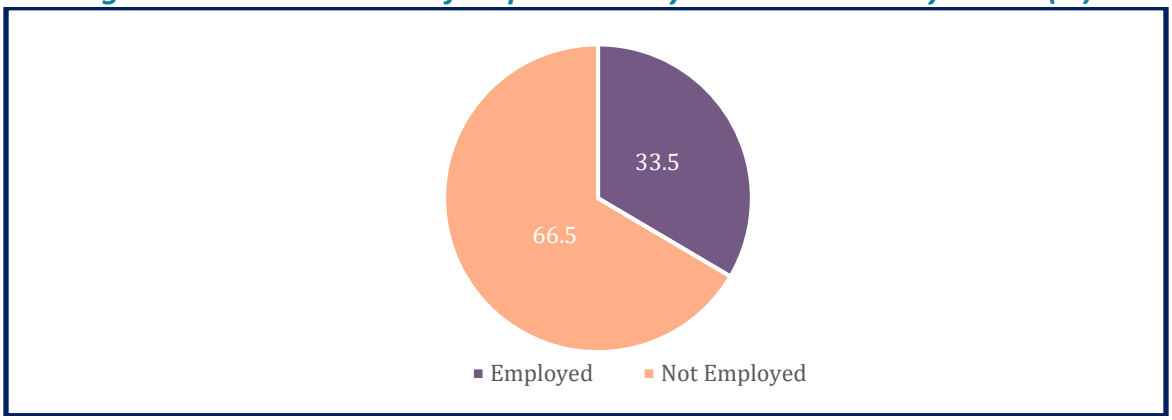
# 6. EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME LOSS

Employment questions were based on the standard 7-day reference period recommended by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to identify employed persons.

## 6.1 Employment status

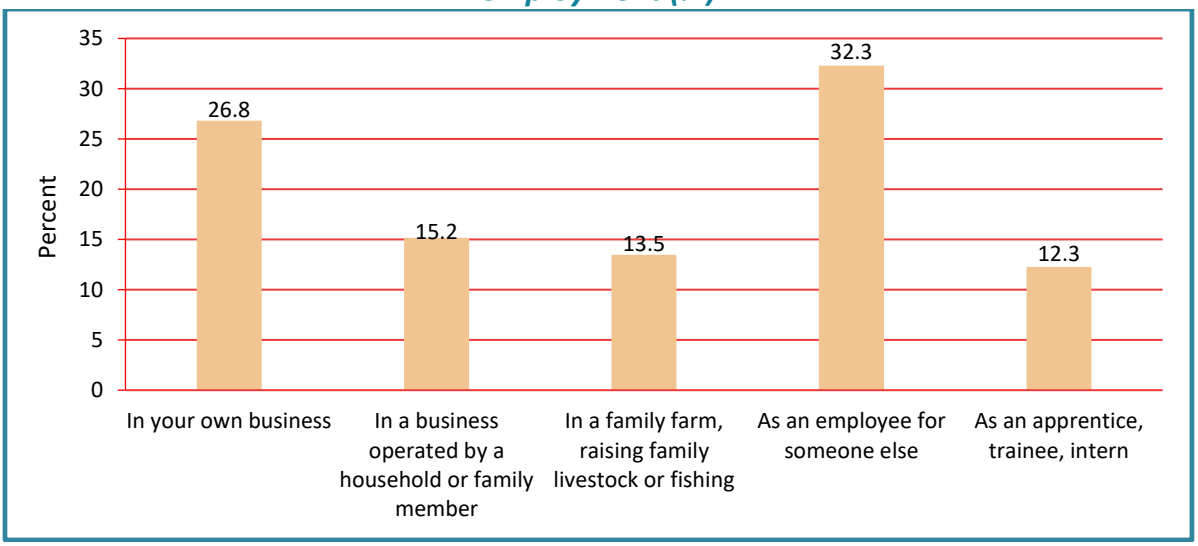
For ***33.5*** percent of households, the respondent was employed at the time of the survey.

***Figure 6.1: Distributions of respondents by economic activity status (%)***



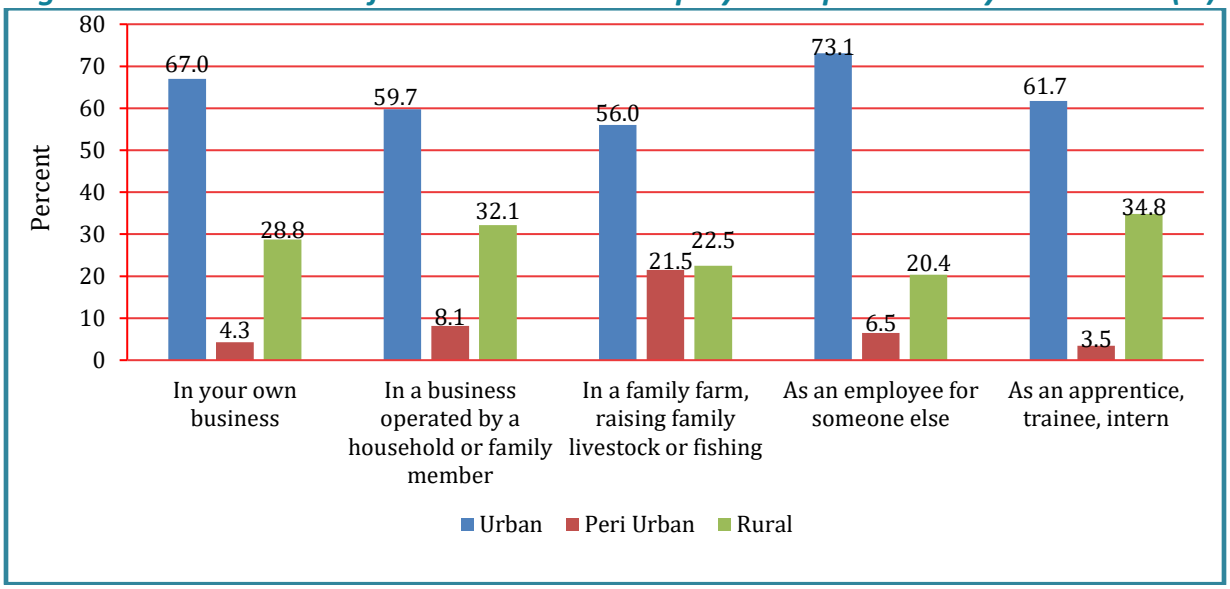

- Respondents who worked as employees constituted ***32.3*** percent.
- ***13.5*** percent of the respondents were involved in farming activities.

***Figure 6.2: Distribution of households with employed respondents by status in employment (%)***



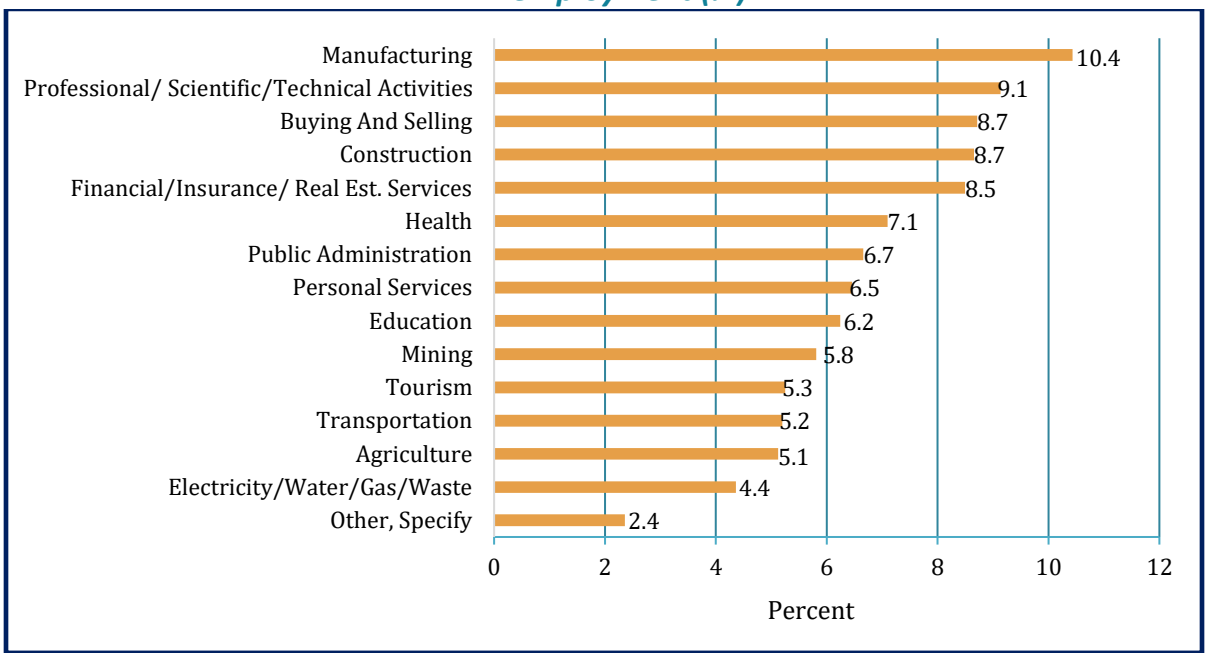
In general, most households with employed respondents were in urban areas with more than 50 percent in each category of employment status.

***Figure 6.3: Distribution of households with employed respondents by settlement (%)***




For ***10.4*** percent of households, the respondent's sector of employment was manufacturing.

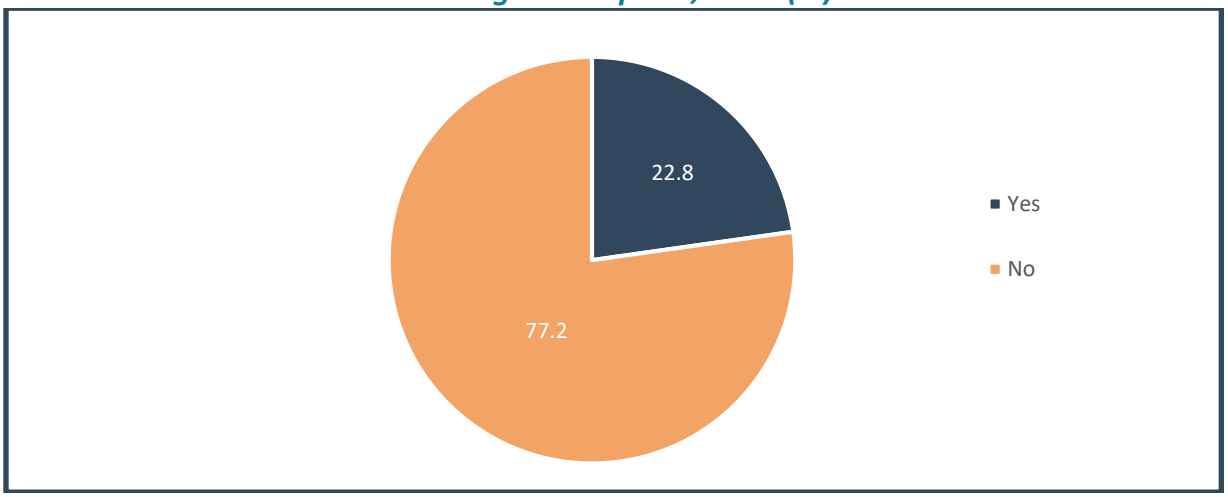
***Figure 6.4: Distribution of households with employed respondents by sector of employment (%)***



## 6.2 Impact on all work

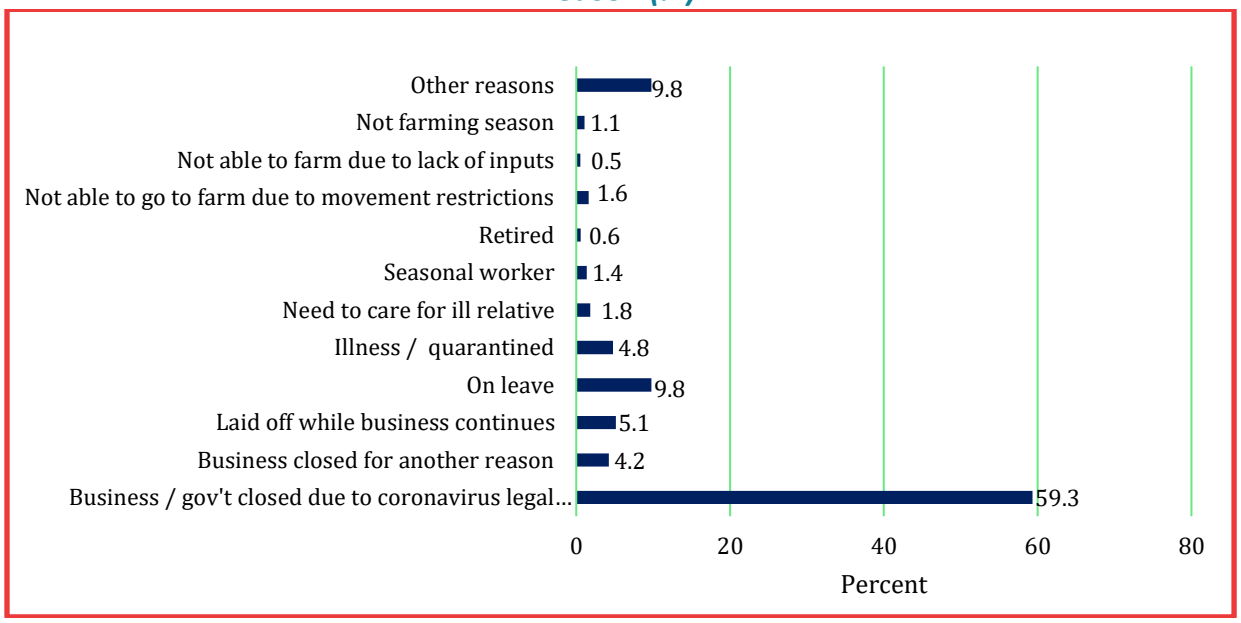
In ***22.8*** percent of households, the respondent was working before the outbreak but stopped working after the outbreak of the pandemic.

***Figure 6.5: Distribution of households with respondents who had stopped/not stop working since April 1, 2020 (%)***



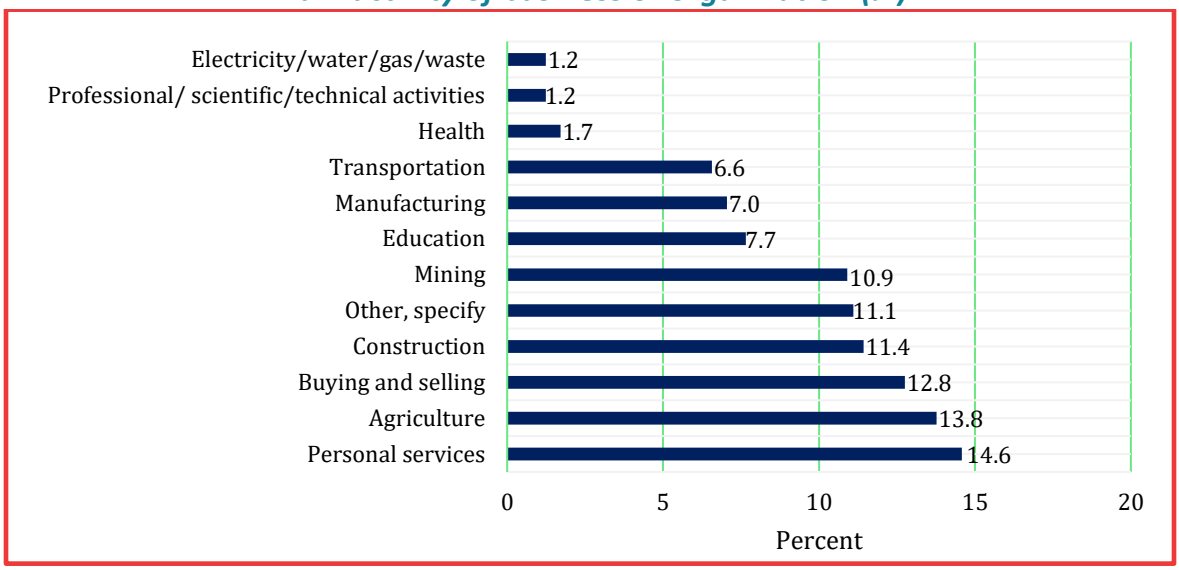

Most households (***59.3*** percent) had a respondent who had stopped working because the business or government offices were closed due to COVID-19 legal restrictions.

***Figure 6.6: Distribution of households with respondents who had stopped working by reason (%)***



For most households with respondents who had stopped working, the respondent had been working in the personal services industry at ***14.6*** percent, followed by agriculture at ***13.8*** percent.

***Figure 6.7: Distribution of households with respondents who had stopped working by main activity of business or organization (%)***




## 6.3 Impacts on wage work

About ***30*** percent of households had a respondent who did not work as usual during the outbreak. For households that had a male respondent, ***63.1*** percent had a respondent who did not work as usual, compared to ***91.4*** percent among households that had a female respondent.

***Figure 6.8: Distribution of households with respondents who worked/did not work as usual by sex (%)***

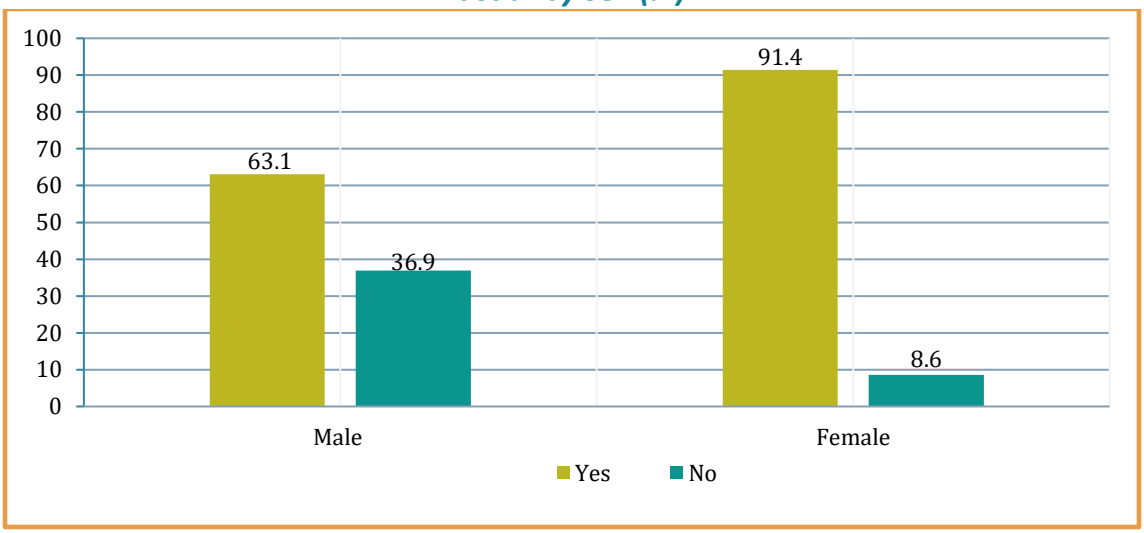
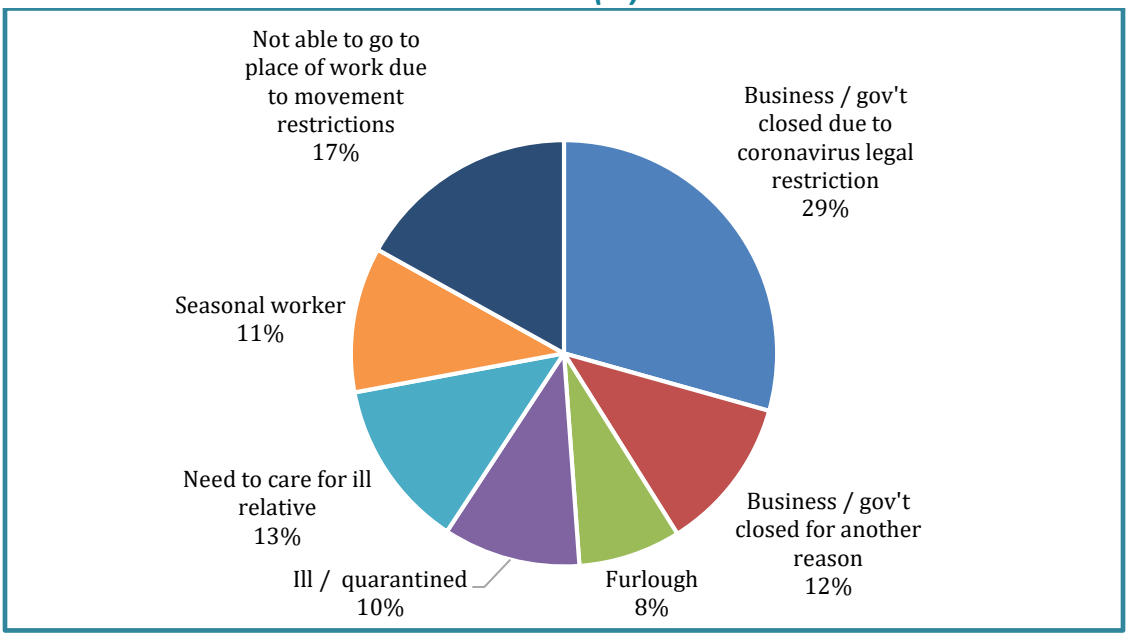
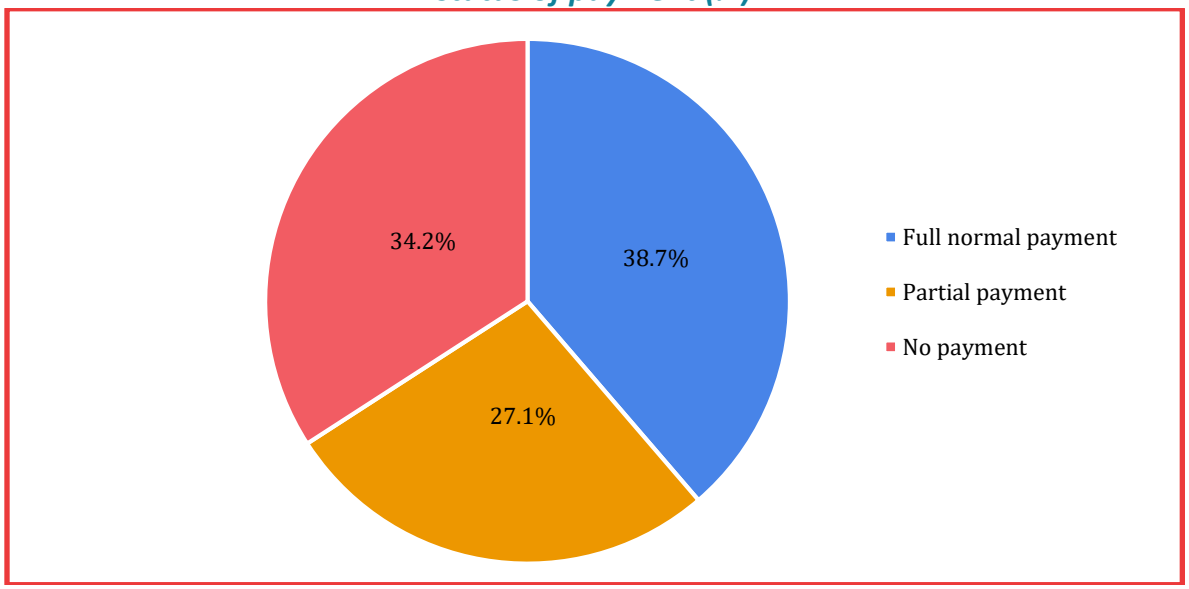


*Figure 6.9: Distribution of households with respondents who did not work as usual by reason (%)*




- For ***27.2*** percent of households, the respondent received partial payment even though they were not able to work as usual.
- In contrast, for ***34.1*** percent of households, the respondent did not receive any payment.

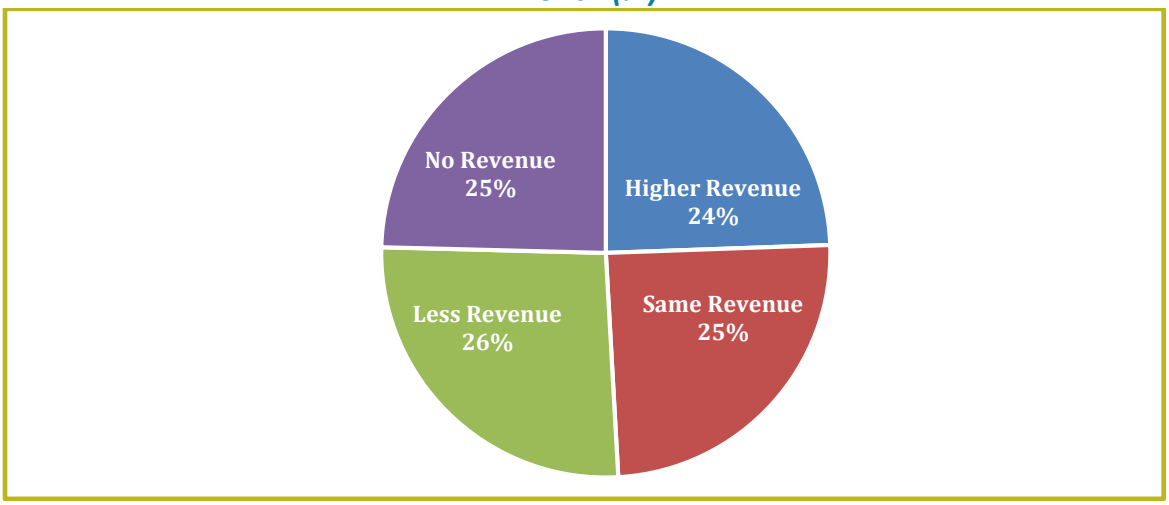
*Figure 6.10: Distribution of households with respondents who did not work as usual by status of payment (%)*



## 6.4 Impacts on family businesses

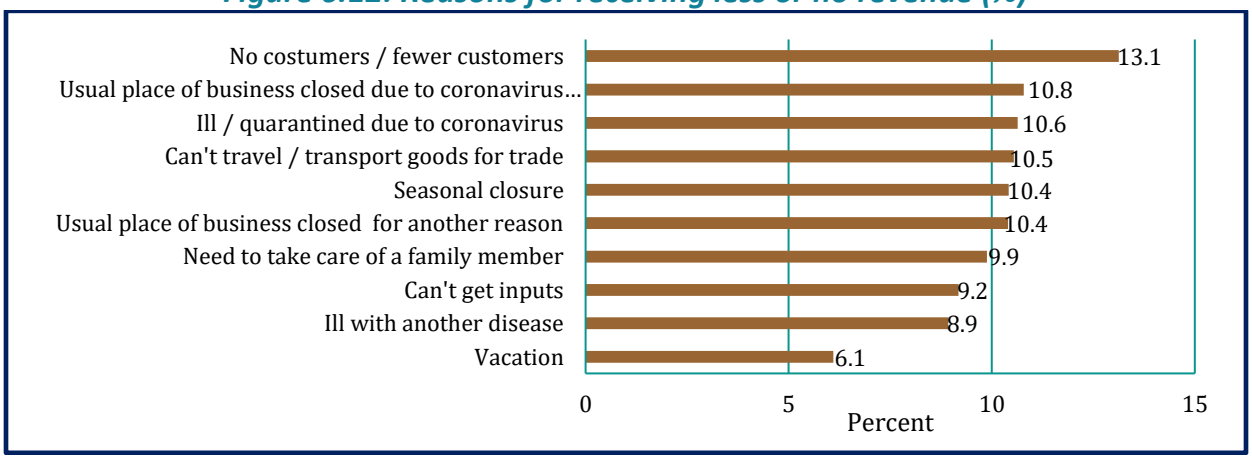
- ***43*** percent of households had at least one household member who operated a business, including a family business at any point in the year 2020.
- ***26*** percent experienced a reduction in revenue from family businesses during lockdown.
- ***25*** percent received no revenue.

***Figure 6.11: Revenue received from family businesses in comparison to the previous month (%)***




- ***13.1*** percent of the households received less or no revenue because there were few or no customers.
- ***10.8*** percent reported that they received less or no revenue because the usual place of business was closed due to COVID-19 lockdown measures.

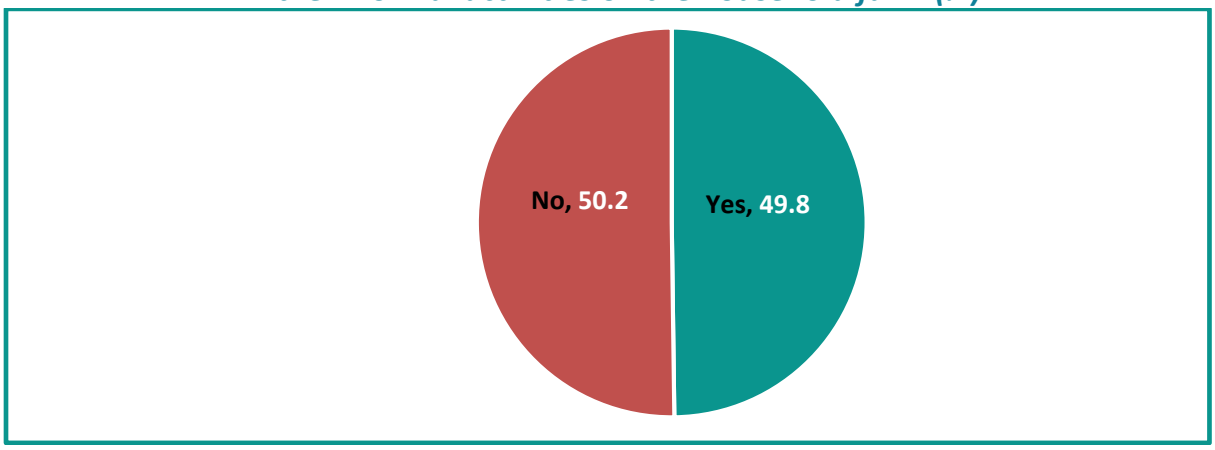
***Figure 6.12: Reasons for receiving less or no revenue (%)***



## 6.5 Impacts on farms

Half of the households reported that a member of the household had not been able to perform normal activities on the household farm.

*Figure 6.13: Distribution of households in which a member performed/did not perform their normal activities on the household farm (%)*

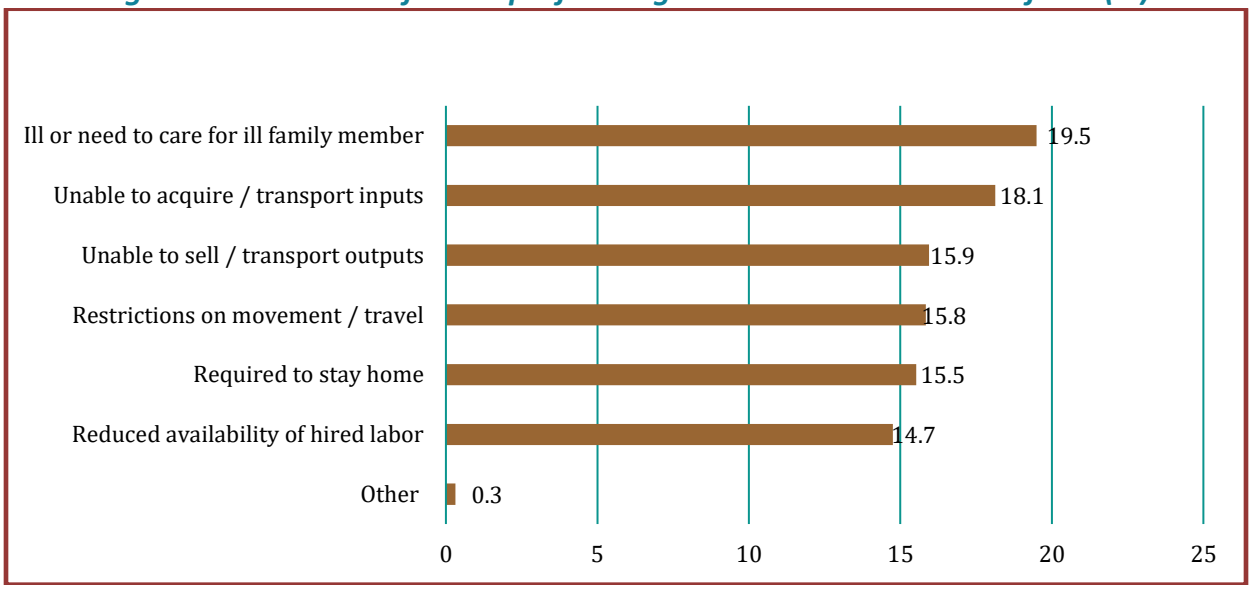



For more than 50 percent of households in Leribe and Maseru, a household member was not able to perform normal activities on the household farm during lockdown.

*Figure 6.14: Whether households performed farm activities normally by district*

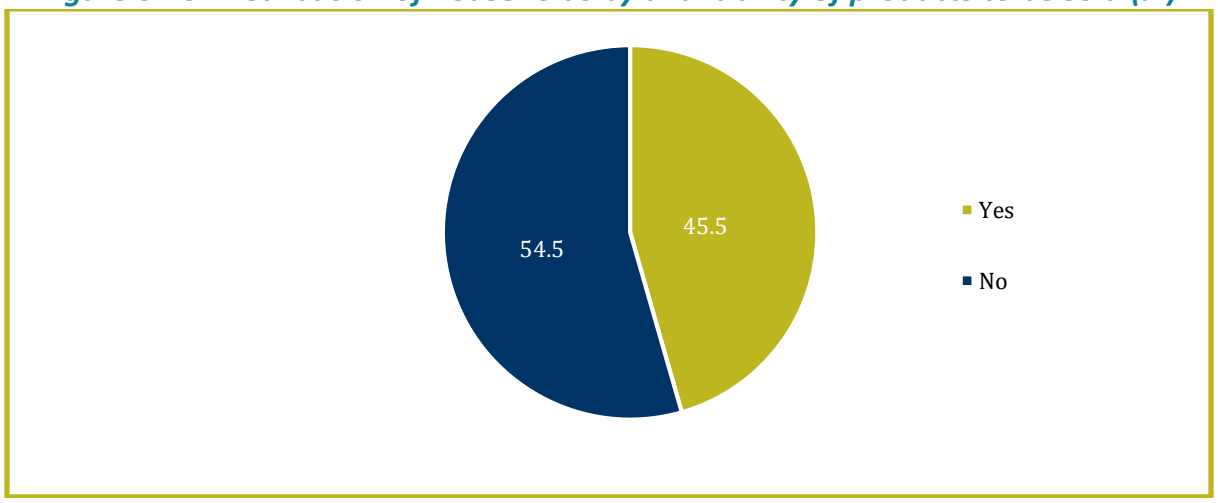
- ***19.5*** percent of households had a respondent who did not perform their normal farm activities because they were either ill or had to take care of ill household members.
- For ***18.1*** percent of households, this was because they were unable to acquire or transport inputs.

***Figure 6.15: Reasons for not performing normal activities on the farm (%)***



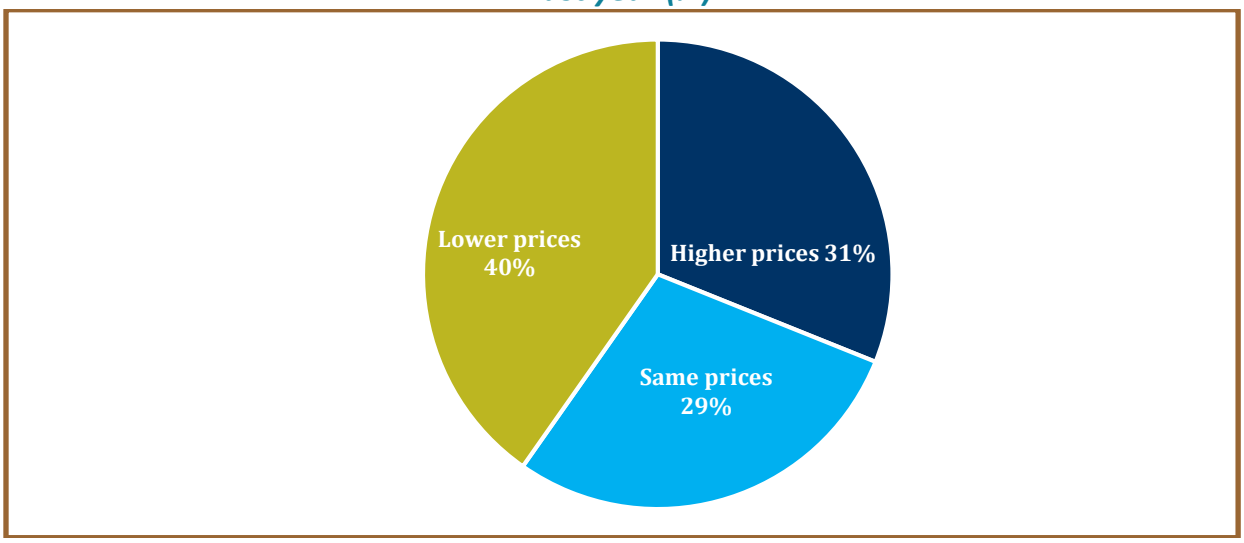

About ***46*** percent of households had products from their farm that needed to be sold since the beginning of 2020.

***Figure 6.16: Distribution of households by availability of products to be sold (%)***



***31.1*** percent of households set higher prices of their products compared to the prices used the previous year.

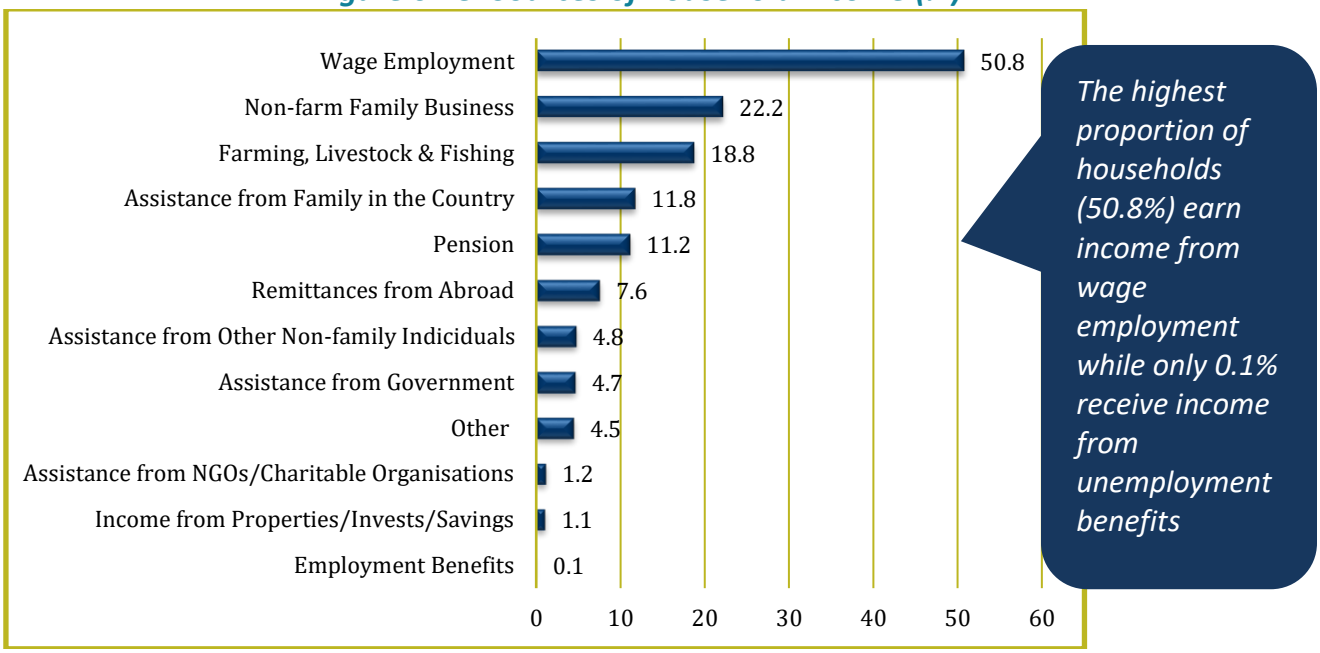
***Figure 6.17: Distribution of households by price change on products as compared to last year (%)***




## 6.6 Impact on household income

Analysis of data on households' sources of income in the last 12 months shows that about ***50.8*** percent of households derived income from wage employment.

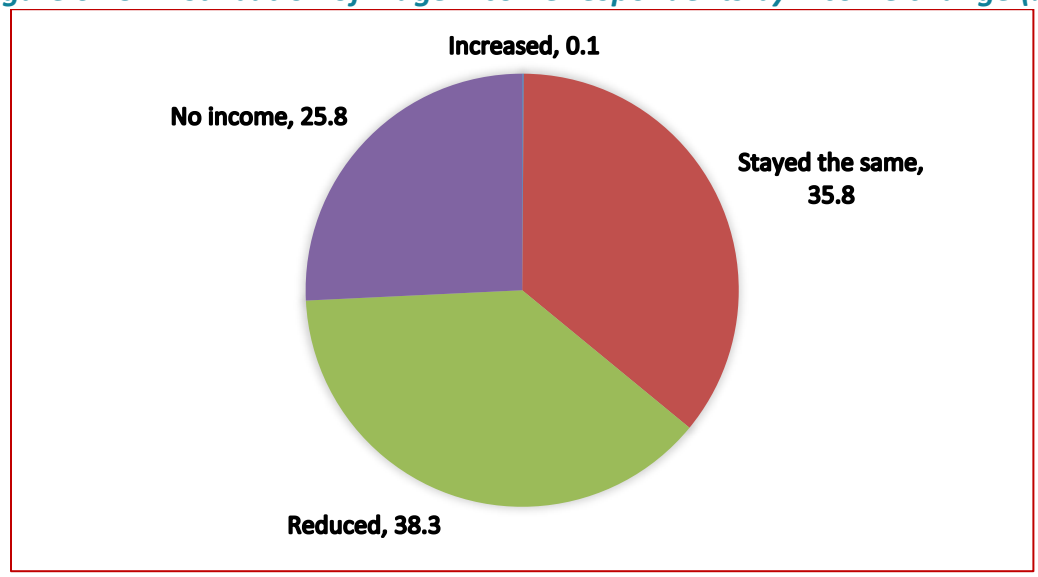
***Figure 6.18: Sources of household income (%)***



The outbreak of COVID-19 and/or the different measures implemented by government, employers, and traders in response to the pandemic has led to loss of household income.

- ***25.8*** percent of households suffered loss of wage employment income during the lockdown.
- ***38.3*** percent experienced a reduction in wage employment income

***Figure 6.19: Distribution of wage income respondents by income change (%)***



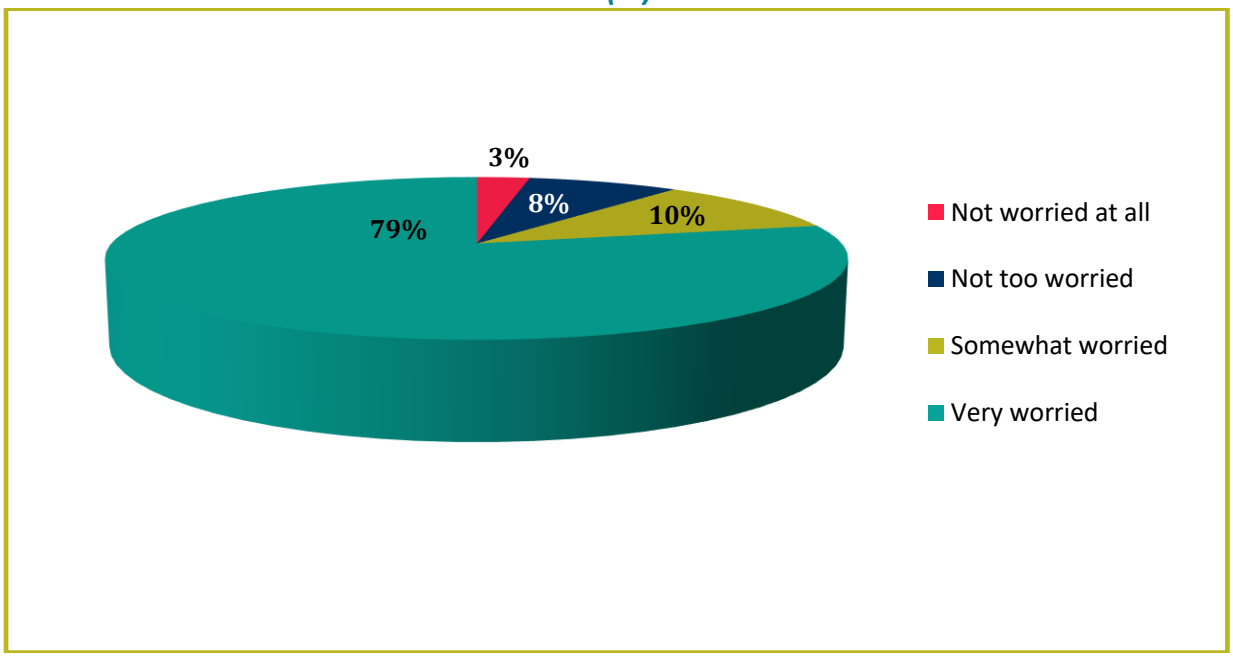
# 7. CONCERNS, SHOCKS AND COPING STRATEGIES

The challenges of coping with life during the pandemic continue to evolve in the world and Lesotho is not an exception. In the context of the pandemic, coping mechanisms can help people adjust to stressful events while at the same time helping them maintain their emotional wellbeing.

## 7.1 General concerns

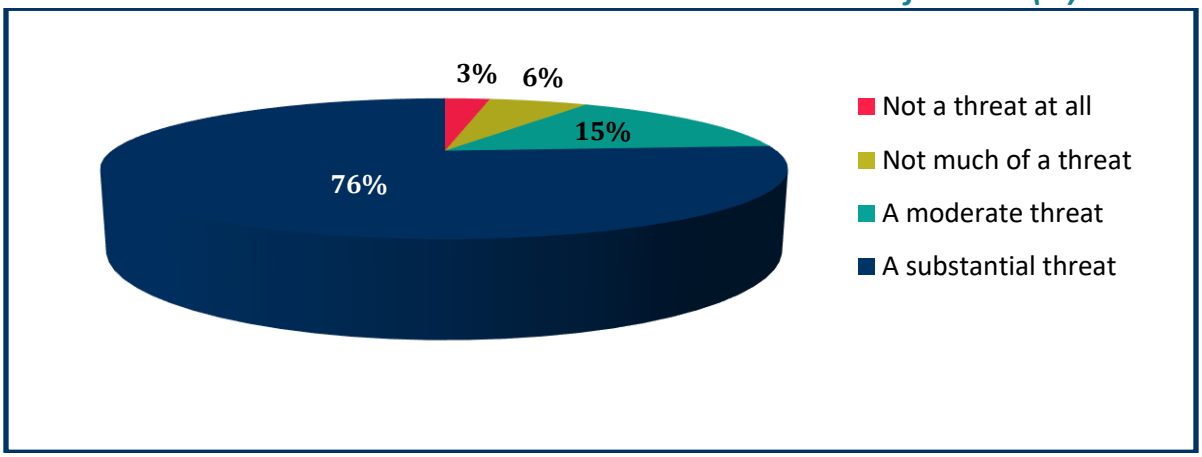
***78.8 percent of households had a respondent who was very worried about the possibility of them or someone in their immediate family becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 while only 2.7 percent had respondents who were not worried at all.***

***Figure 7. 1: Distribution of households with a respondent who was worried about the possibility of someone in the immediate family becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 (%)***



***For 76.2 percent of households, respondents indicated that the COVID-19 outbreak is substantial threat to household finances.***

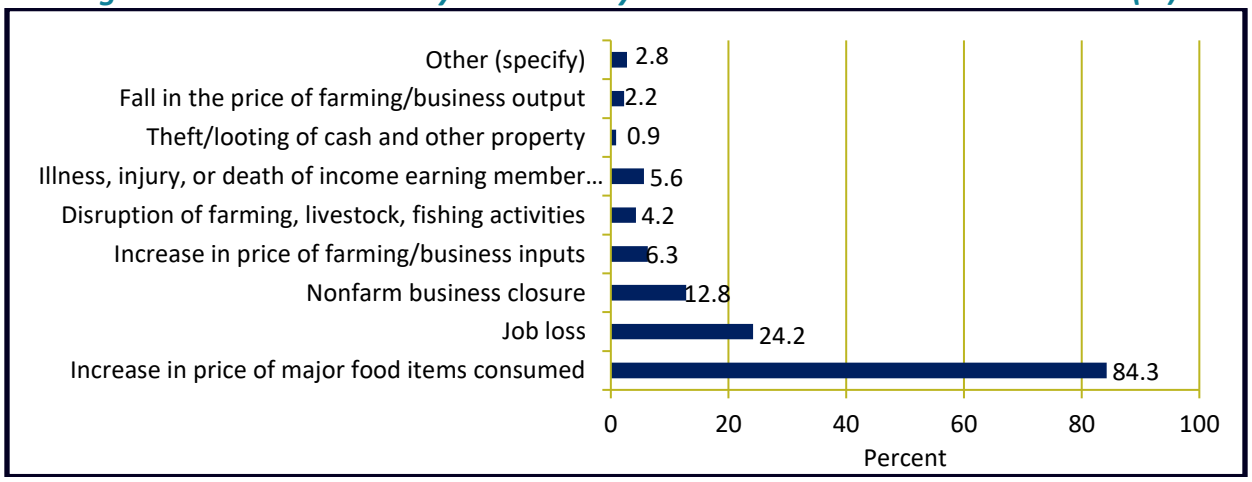
*Figure 7. 2: Distribution of households with a respondent who was indicated the COVID-19 outbreak is a threat to household finances (%)*




## 7.2 Shocks

- ***84.3*** percent of households reported an increase in prices of major food items consumed as directly or indirectly related to the outbreak.
- ***24.2*** percent considered job loss as directly or indirectly related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

*Figure 7. 3: Shocks directly or indirectly related to the COVID-19 outbreak (%)*

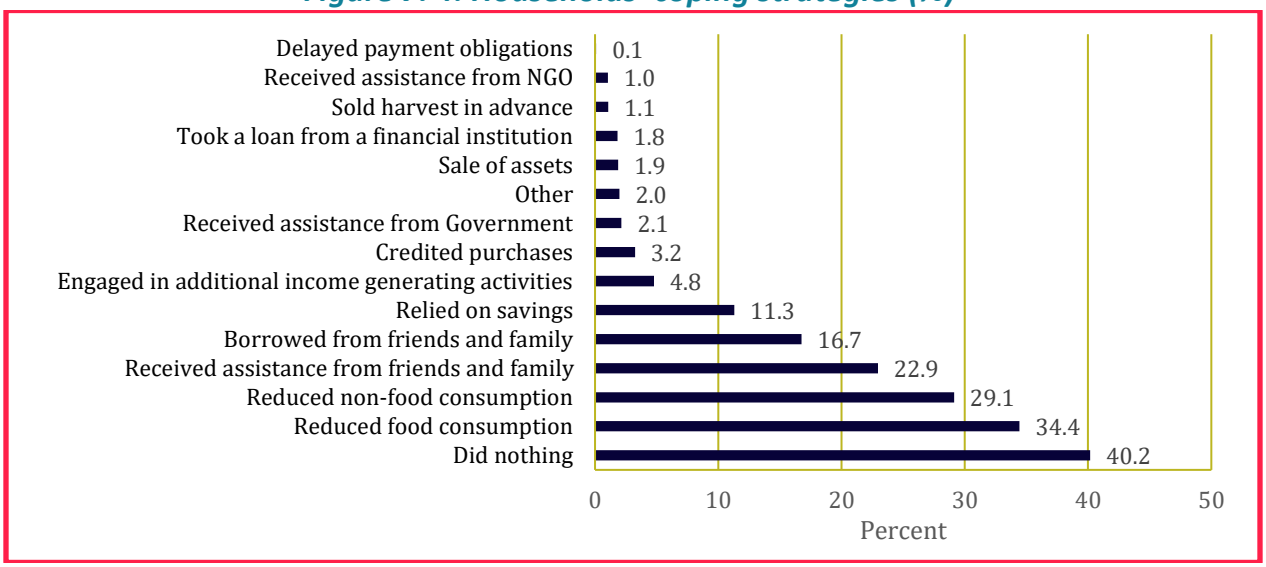


## 7.3 Coping strategies

COVID-19 impacted households in various ways and families resorted to different coping strategies depending on the nature of the shock.

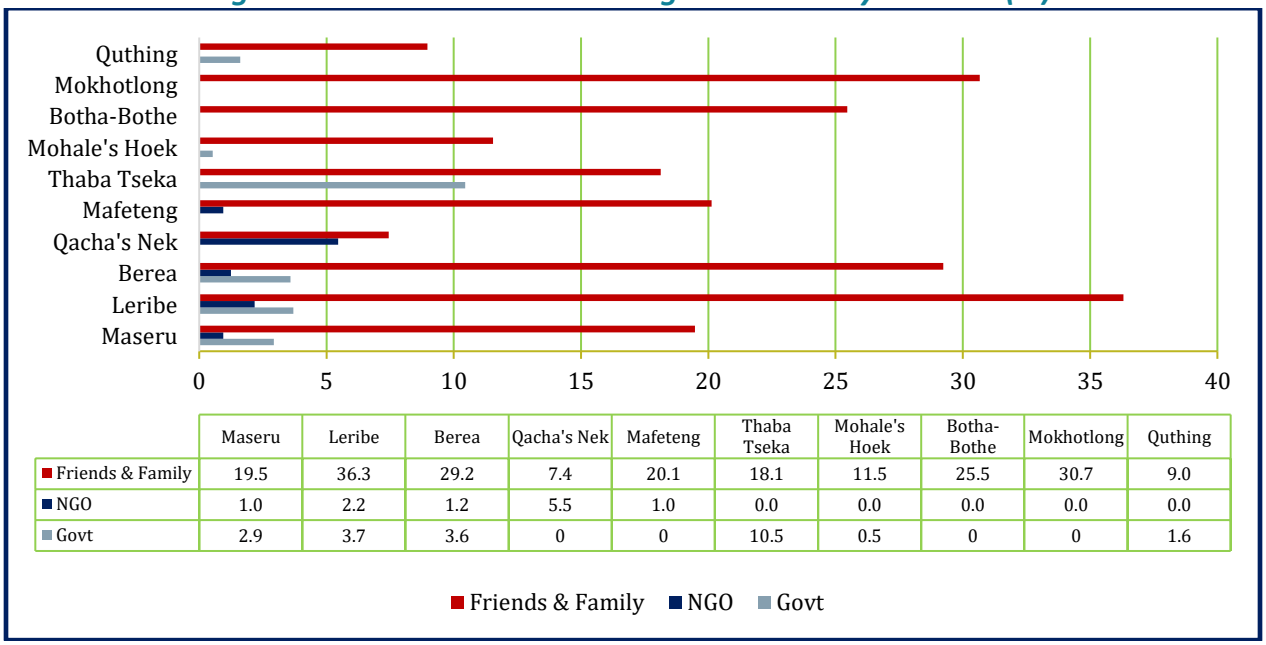
- ***34.4*** percent of households reduced food consumption to cope with the economic impacts of the pandemic.

***Figure 7. 4: Households' coping strategies (%)***




Households received assistance from three major sources during lockdown: friends and family, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and government.

***Figure 7. 5: Households receiving assistance by districts (%)***




| | Maseru | Leribe | Berea | Qacha's Nek | Mafeteng | Thaba Tseka | Mohale's Hoek | Botha-Bothe | Mokhotlong | Quthing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friends & Family | 19.5 | 36.3 | 29.2 | 7.4 | 20.1 | 18.1 | 11.5 | 25.5 | 30.7 | 9.0 |
| NGO | 1.0 | 2.2 | 1.2 | 5.5 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Govt | 2.9 | 3.7 | 3.6 | 0 | 0 | 10.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 1.6 |

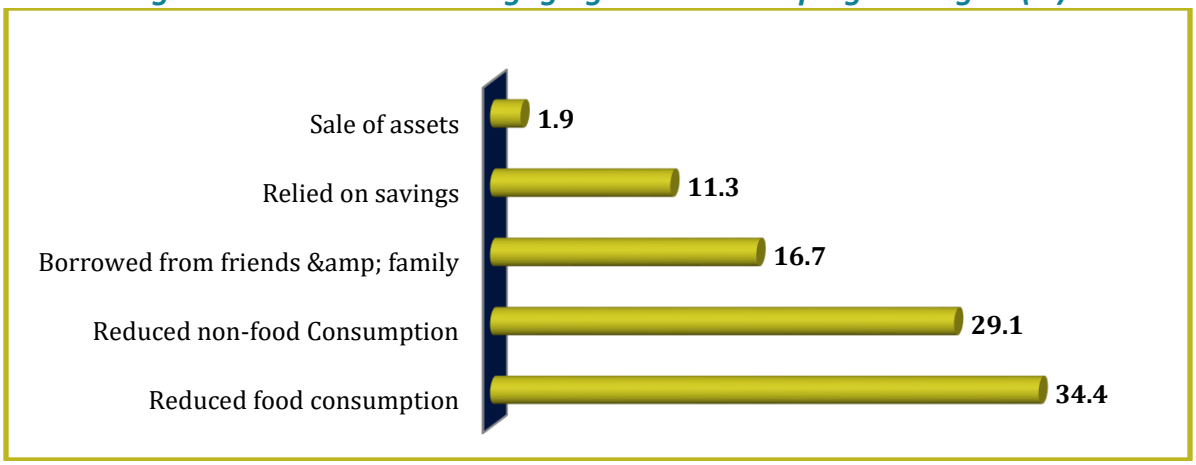
*Most households who received assistance from the government were in Maseru district (10.5 percent) as opposed to only 0.5 percent of households from Mohale's Hoek district.*

*Majority of households who received assistance from the NGOs were in Qacha's Nek district and few from Mafeteng and Maseru.*

Adverse coping strategies are those that might further enforce the negative socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

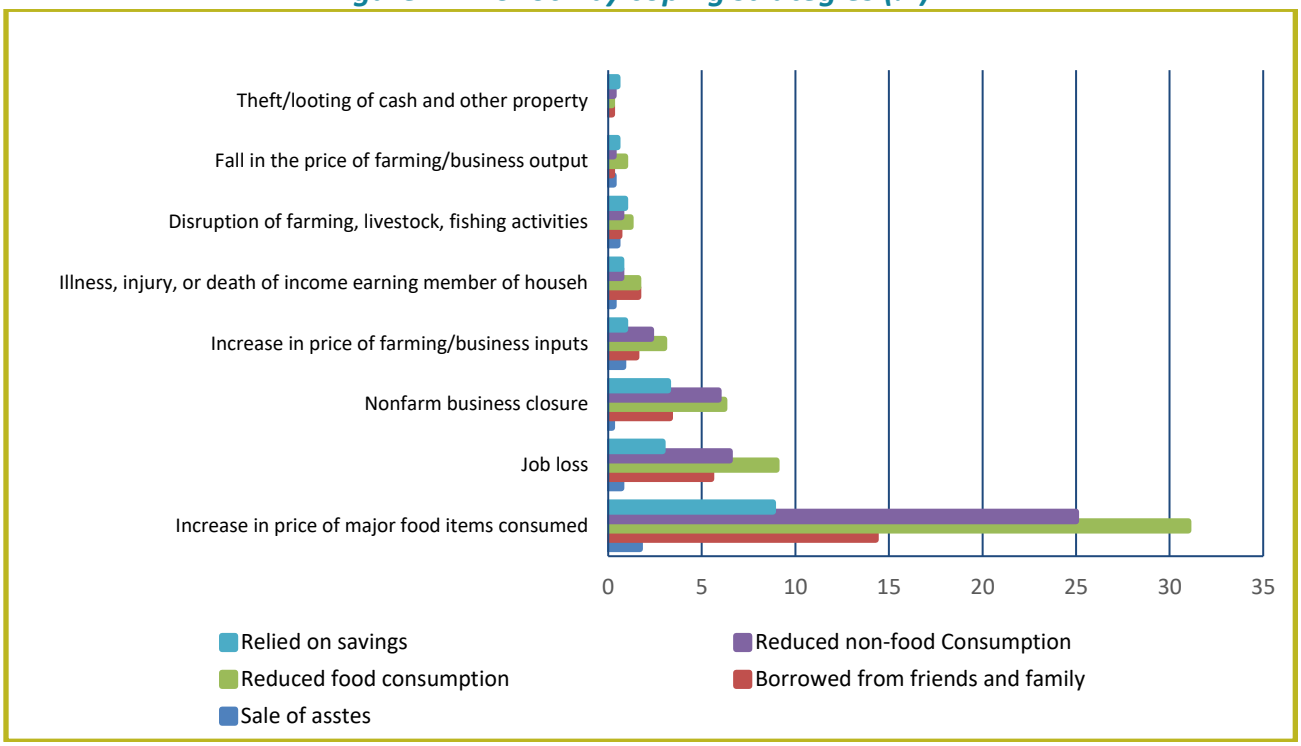
- ***34.4%*** *of households reduced food consumption.*
- ***29.1%*** *of households reduced non-food consumption.*
- *Only* ***1.9%*** *of households sold assets.*

***Figure 7. 6: Households engaging in adverse coping strategies (%)***



Increase in prices of major food items consumed led to ***31.0*** and ***25.0*** percent of households reducing food and non- food consumption, respectively.

***Figure 7. 7: Shock by coping strategies (%)***



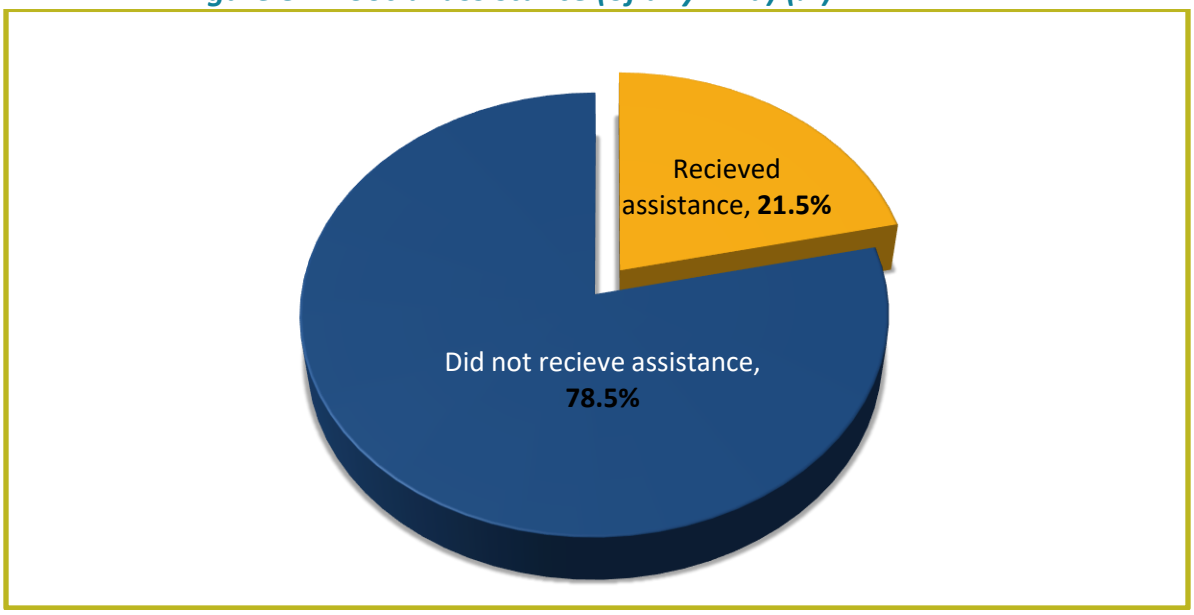
# 8. SAFETY NETS

Livelihoods are a vital means of making a living. They encompass people's capabilities, assets and activities required to secure the necessities of life. COVID-19 has adversely impacted livelihoods and will heighten the need for greater coverage of vulnerable populations by social protection systems. In particular, there is need to extend coverage to informal sector employees. This will put additional pressure on the government budget.

## 8.1 Type of social assistance received by households

- ***21.5*** percent of households had received some form of social assistance since the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Of these, ***14.6*** percent received social assistance in the form of free food.
- ***6.9*** percent received direct cash transfers, while ***2.0*** percent received other in-kind transfers (excluding food).

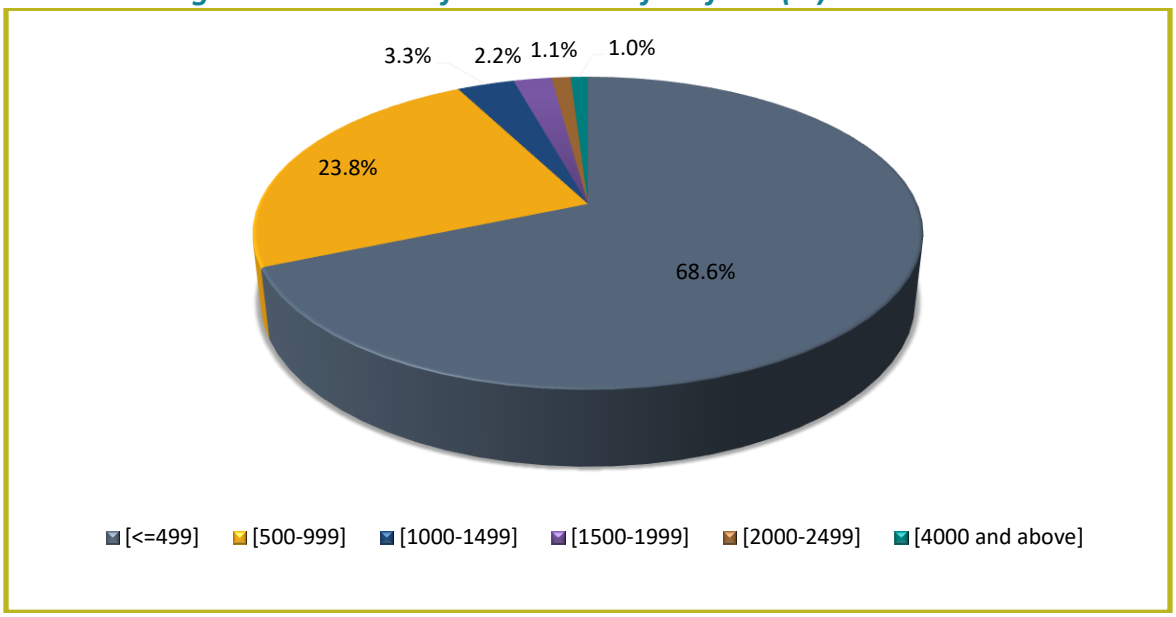
***Figure 8. 1: Social assistance (of any kind) (%)***




## 8.2 Value of social assistance received by households

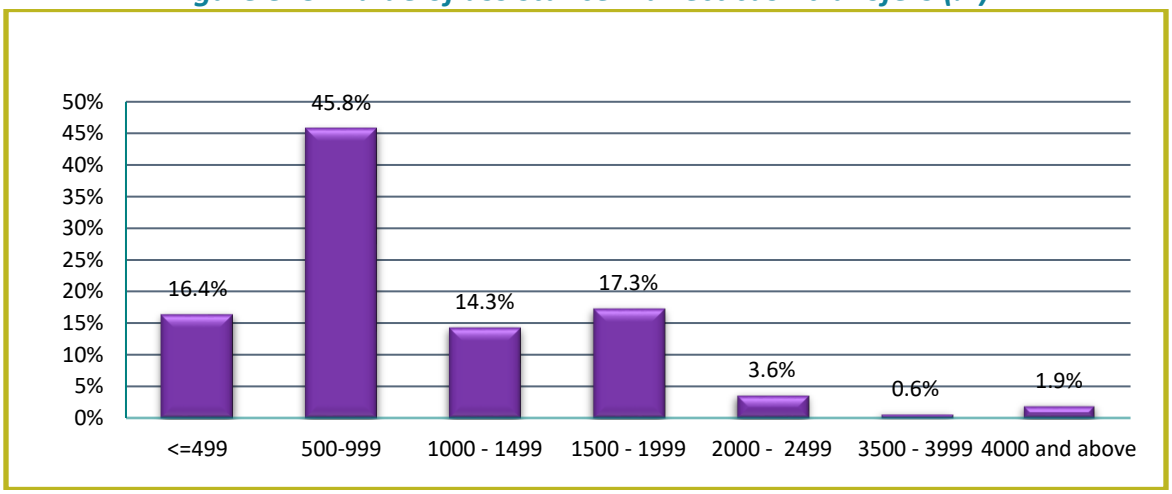
- Among households that had received assistance in the form of free food, ***68.6*** percent received assistance of up to 499 Maloti, while ***23.8*** percent received assistance of between 500 and 999 Maloti.
- ***3.3*** percent had received between 1,000 and 1,499 Maloti.

*Figure 8. 2: Value of assistance – free food (%)*



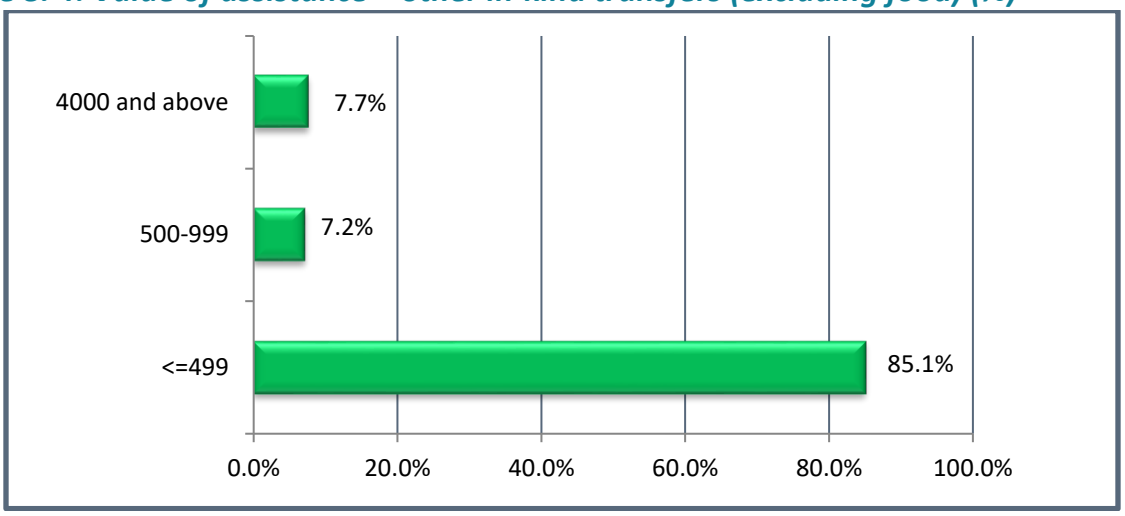

- Among households that had received assistance in the form of direct cash transfers, ***45.8*** percent had received between 500 and 999 Maloti since the COVID-19 outbreak, while ***17.3*** percent received an estimated value between 1,500 and1,999 Maloti.

*Figure 8. 3: Value of assistance – direct cash transfers (%)*




- Among households that had received assistance in the form of other in-kind (excluding food), ***85.1*** percent received assistance of up to 499 Maloti, while ***7.7*** percent received 4,000 Maloti or more.

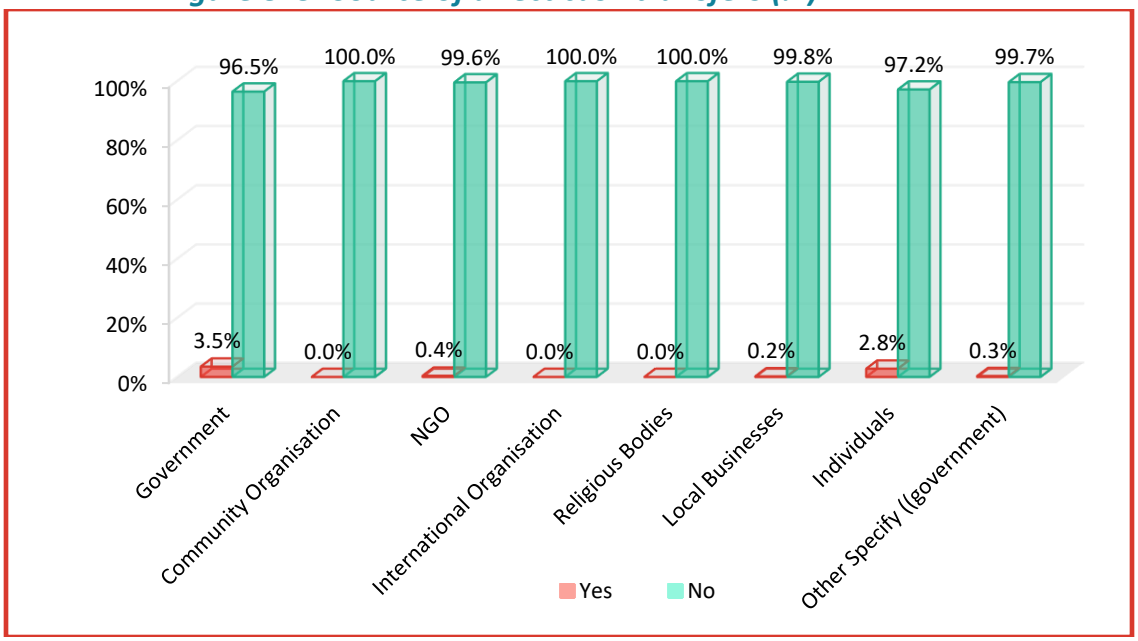
*Figure 8. 4: Value of assistance – other in-kind transfers (excluding food) (%)*




## 8.3 Sources of social assistance received by households

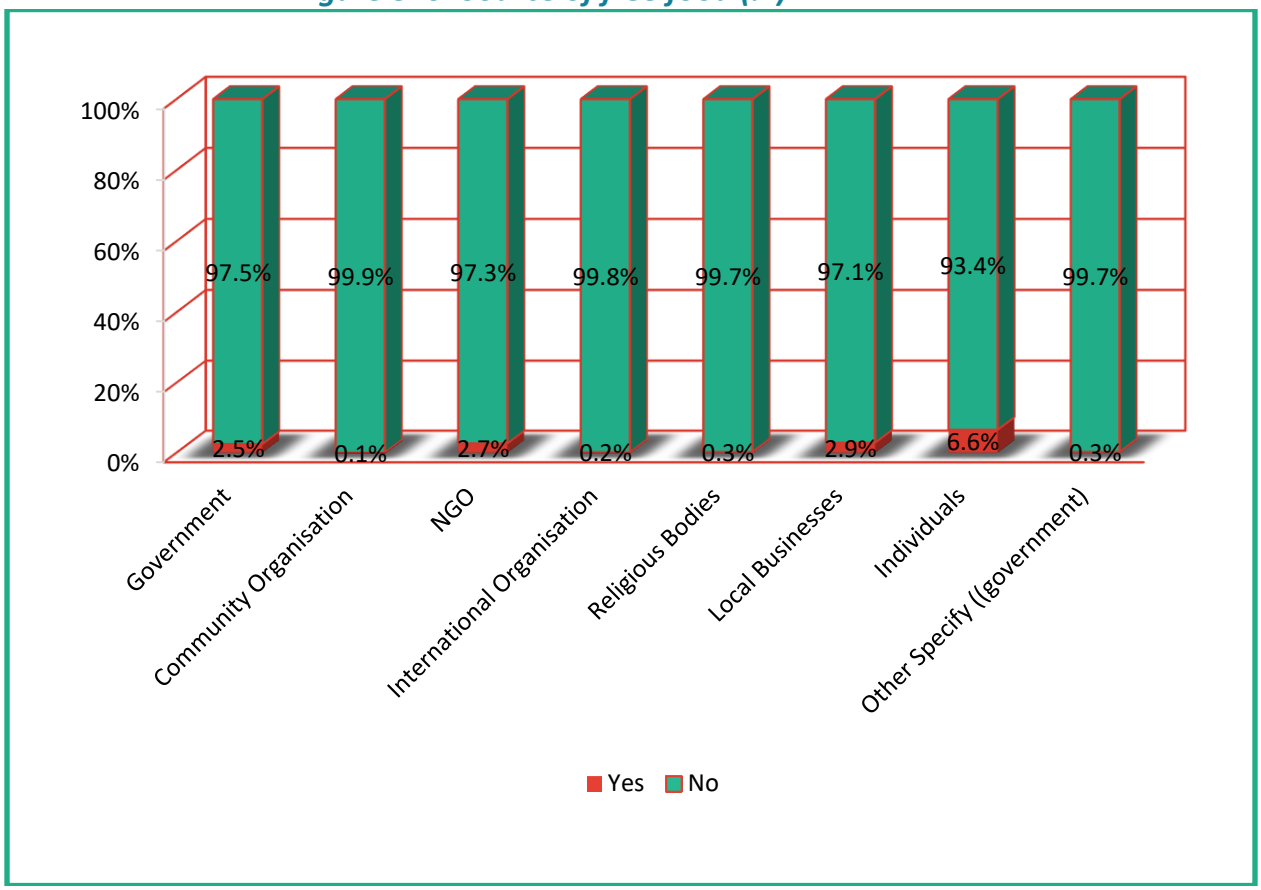
- ***3.5*** percent of households had received direct cash transfers from government, while ***2.8*** percent had received them from individuals, followed by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other sources at ***0.4*** percent and ***0.3*** percent, respectively.
- No households had received direct cash transfers from community organisations, international organisations, and religious bodies.

*Figure 8. 5: Source of direct cash transfers (%)*



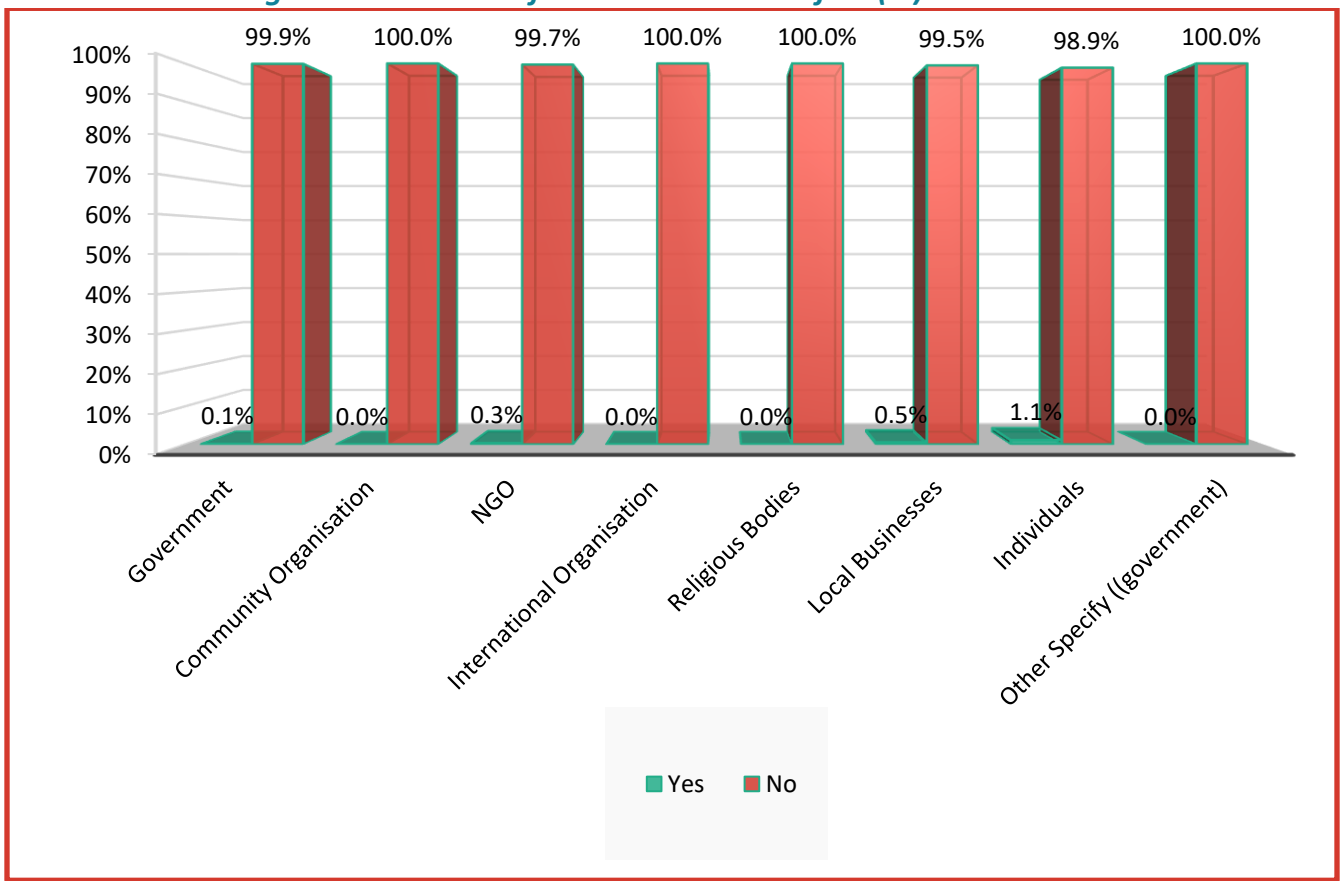
- Individuals have been the main source of free food since the outbreak of COVID-19 (***6.6*** percent of households), followed by local businesses (***2.9*** percent) and NGOs (***2.7*** percent).
- ***2.5*** percent of households had received free food from government.
- ***0.2*** percent and ***0.3*** percent of households had received free food from international organisations and religious bodies, respectively.

***Figure 8. 6: Source of free food (%)***




- ***1.1*** percent of households had received other in-kind transfers from individuals since the COVID-19 outbreak.
- ***0.5*** percent and ***0.3*** percent of households had received other in-kind transfers from local businesses and NGOs, respectively.
- No households had received other in-kind transfers from community organisations, international organisations, and religious bodies since the outbreak of the pandemic.

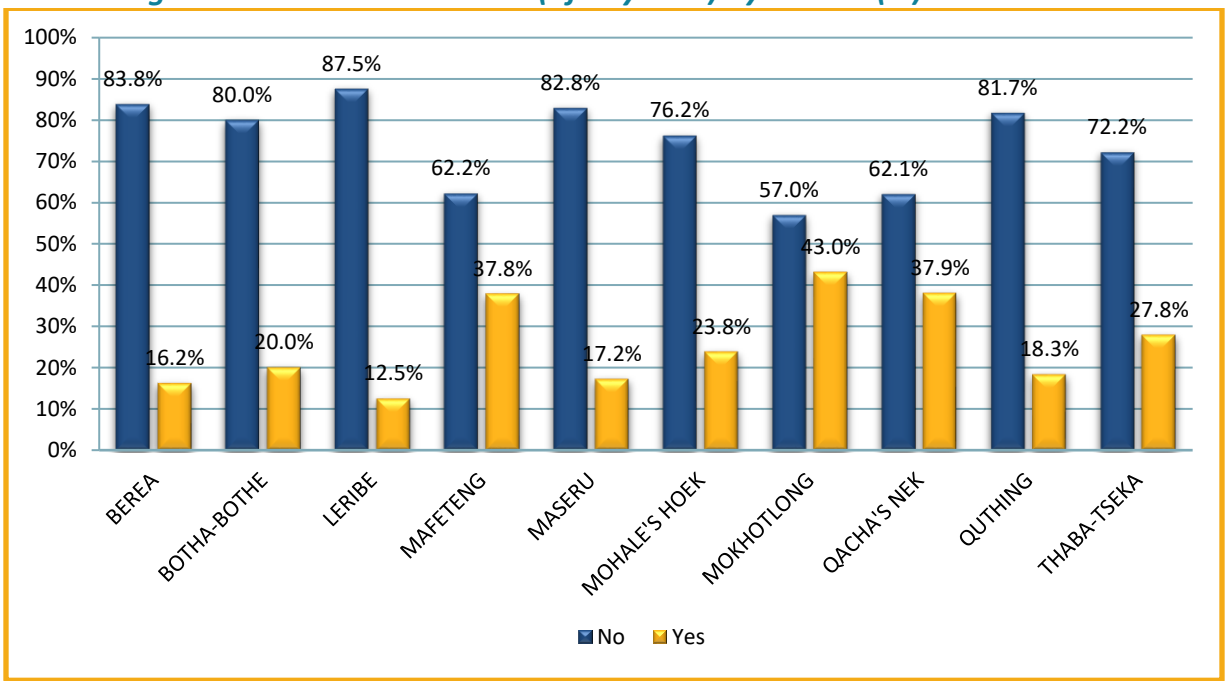
*Figure 8. 7: Source of other in-kind transfers (%)*




## 8.4 Social assistance by district

- About ***43.0*** percent of households in Mokhotlong had received some form of social assistance since the outbreak of COVID-19. ***37.9*** percent in Qacha's Nek and ***37.8*** percent in Mafeteng had received social assistance.
- The lowest proportion was in Leribe where only ***12.5*** percent of households had received some form of social assistance.
- In Maseru district, ***17.2*** percent of households had received some form of social assistance.

*Figure 8. 8: Social assistance (of any kind) by district (%)*




- NGOs were the main source of assistance in Qacha's Nek with about ***47.9*** percent followed by Quthing with ***46.4*** percent of households.
- ***55.3*** percent of households in Berea had received social assistance from the Government, while ***64.5*** percent and ***69.3*** percent of households in Botha-Bothe and Thaba-Tseka, respectively, had been assisted by individuals since the COVID-19 outbreak.

*Table 8. 1: District and main source of assistance (percentages)*

| District | Government | Community Organisation | NGO | International Organizations | Religious Bodies | Local Businesses | Individuals | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BEREA | 55.3 | 0 | 4.8 | 0 | 3.2 | 9.6 | 23.1 | 4.0 |
| BOTHA-BOTHE | 16.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19.2 | 64.5 | 0 |
| LERIBE | 24.5 | 3.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25.2 | 46.6 | 0 |
| MAFETENG | 16.4 | 0 | 30.1 | 6.1 | 0 | 12.5 | 51.3 | 0 |
| MASERU | 44.1 | 0 | 7.3 | 0 | 3.8 | 15.9 | 26.4 | 5.8 |
| MOHALE'S HOEK | 18.3 | 0 | 27.3 | 0 | 0 | 2.4 | 52.0 | 3.8 |
| MOKHOTLONG | 17.4 | 0 | 2.3 | 0 | 0 | 17.6 | 68.7 | 0 |
| QACHA'S NEK | 17.3 | 0 | 47.9 | 0 | 1.6 | 17.7 | 9.4 | 7.6 |
| QUTHING | 11.8 | 0 | 46.4 | 0 | 0 | 21.2 | 20.6 | 0 |
| THABA-TSEKA | 11.0 | 0 | 4.3 | 0 | 0 | 19.5 | 69.3 | 0 |

- About ***37.9*** percent of households in Qacha's Nek had received assistance in the form of free food since the outbreak of COVID-19.
- ***31.3*** percent of households in Mokhotlong had received free food, while ***17.4*** percent had received direct cash transfers.
- ***6.8*** percent of households in Thaba-Tseka had received assistance in the form of other in-kind transfers (excluding cash).

***Table 8. 2: District by type of assistance (percentages)***

| District | Free Food | Direct Cash Transfers | Other in-kind Transfers |
|---|---|---|---|
| BEREA | 9.8 | 5.7 | 0.8 |
| BOTHA-BOTHE | 10.6 | 3.9 | 6.8 |
| LERIBE | 11.7 | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| MAFETENG | 30.3 | 12.6 | 3.3 |
| MASERU | 5.8 | 9.9 | 2.2 |
| MOHALE'S HOEK | 14.6 | 9.2 | 0.0 |
| MOKHOTLONG | 31.3 | 17.4 | 5.8 |
| QACHA'S NEK | 37.9 | 0.0 | 1.7 |
| QUTHING | 18.3 | 0.7 | 0.0 |
| THABA-TSEKA | 25.7 | 3.7 | 2.0 |

# 9. FOOD INSECURITY

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) module of the survey asked respondents to answer to eight questions about household's access to food. Based on their responses, the surveyed individuals are assigned a probability of being in one of three classes, as defined by two globally-set thresholds: food secure or marginally insecure; moderately food insecure; and severely food insecure. FImod+sev is the sum of the proportion of the population affected by moderate food insecurity plus the proportion classified as severely food insecure. As a separate indicator (FIsev) is computed by considering only the severe food insecurity class.

*Figure 9. 1: Food insecurity along a continuum of severity*

People experiencing moderate food insecurity face uncertainties about their ability to obtain food and have been forced to reduce, at times during the year, the quality and/or quantity of food they consume due to lack of money or other resources. It thus refers to a lack of consistent access to food, which diminishes dietary quality, disrupts normal eating patterns, and can have negative consequences for nutrition, health and well-being. People facing severe food insecurity, on the other hand, have likely run out of food, experienced hunger and, at the most extreme, gone for days without eating, putting their health and well-being at grave risk.

| | Moderate or Severe (FImod+sev) | Severe only (FIsev) |
|---|---|---|
| | **June 2020** | **June 2020** |
| **Lesotho** | ***62.0*** (± 5.0) | ***21.1*** (± 3.8) |

***FImod+ sev*** *is the proportion of the population experiencing* ***moderate to severe*** *food insecurity.*

*Results show that* ***62.0%*** *of the population in Lesotho was affected by moderate or severe food insecurity in June 2020.*

***FIsev*** *is the proportion of the population experiencing* ***severe*** *food insecurity.*

***21.1%*** *of the population is estimated to have been affected by severe food insecurity.*

# 10. WAY FORWARD

COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving situation. Effective government response is key not only to the containment of the disease but also to formulating initiatives to minimize the pandemic's socio-economic impacts on the livelihood and wellbeing of the population. Such a response needs to be underpinned by high frequency household surveys to allow for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of the pandemic.

Accordingly, the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics (BOS) will conduct the second phase of the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact on Household Survey (CSEIHS). The findings from the analysis will capture new developments arising from the pandemic. This will inform the country's real-time monitoring and response to the pandemic through the National COVID-19 Secretariat (NACOSEC).