



Kingdom of Lesotho



**Report**

**Statistical**

**No.3: 2019**

## Marriage Statistics 2017



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## **BACKGROUND**

### **Introduction**

Marriage is a legal union of persons of opposite sex in the context of Lesotho. The foundation of the family for most societies is through the relationship between individuals of opposite sex which forms a union called marriage. Marriage can include legal, social, and religious elements. It is usually understood as a male-female relationship designed to produce children and successfully socialize them. Historically, most societies have allowed some form of polygamy. Most of the world's populations including Lesotho now live in societies where polygamy is less common and marriages are generally monogamous.

The 2017 marriage statistics report provides a summary of information on all marriages that occurred throughout the country during the period 2017. The Bureau of Statistics (BOS) obtains data relating to marriage from administrative records on marriages at the Law office (Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Law and Constitutional Affairs) and at the National Identity and Civil Registry (NICR) Office at Ministry of Home Affairs. The data is then compiled, analyzed and published by the Bureau of Statistics.

Information on marriages is tabulated by place of occurrence and not place of residence. This is because marriages involve two individuals (the Bride and the Groom), who may have different places of residence.

Information is also provided on other characteristics of marriage such as date of marriage as well as some socio-demographic characteristics of both the Bride and Groom, that is; age at the time of registering marriage, previous marital status, district of solemnization, and whether special license or banns was issued.

### **Data Limitations**

There are two systems of marriages in Lesotho, namely, Customary Law and Civil Law system. It is important to mention that not all marriages have been presented in this report because there are some marriages that are endorsed by the village chief (under Customary Law); these marriages are not registered with the Registrar of Marriages hence they are not covered in this report.

## Number of Registered Marriages

Table 1 presents the percentage distribution of marriages from the year 2013 through to 2017. There were a total of 15,005 marriages registered during the five – year period. The highest number of marriages was recorded in 2013 estimated at 30.3 percent. The least incidences of marriages occurred in 2014 with only 17.2 percent. The table further shows the pattern of registered marriages which had more marriages in the last five years as compared to four years after 2013 where marriages were almost falling within the same range.

**Table 1: Number of Registered Marriages in Lesotho from 2013 to 2017, 2017**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
2013	4,552	30.3
2014	2,576	17.2
2015	2,660	17.7
2016	2,640	17.6
2017	2,577	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,005</b>	<b>100</b>

## Age at Marriage

In this sub-section, the age at which the bride and the groom were at the time of registering their marriage is discussed. Table 2 portrays the percentage distribution of marriages by age of the groom and of the bride. It shows that females tend to marry earlier than their male counterparts. This indicates that the majority of females enter into marriage at younger ages than males but the opposite is true for males from age group 15-19 to 30-34 years, reflecting more brides than the grooms. At older ages (from age group 30-34 years and above), the opposite seems to prevail where there were more grooms than brides, indicating that more males enter into marriage at older ages as opposed to their female counterparts.

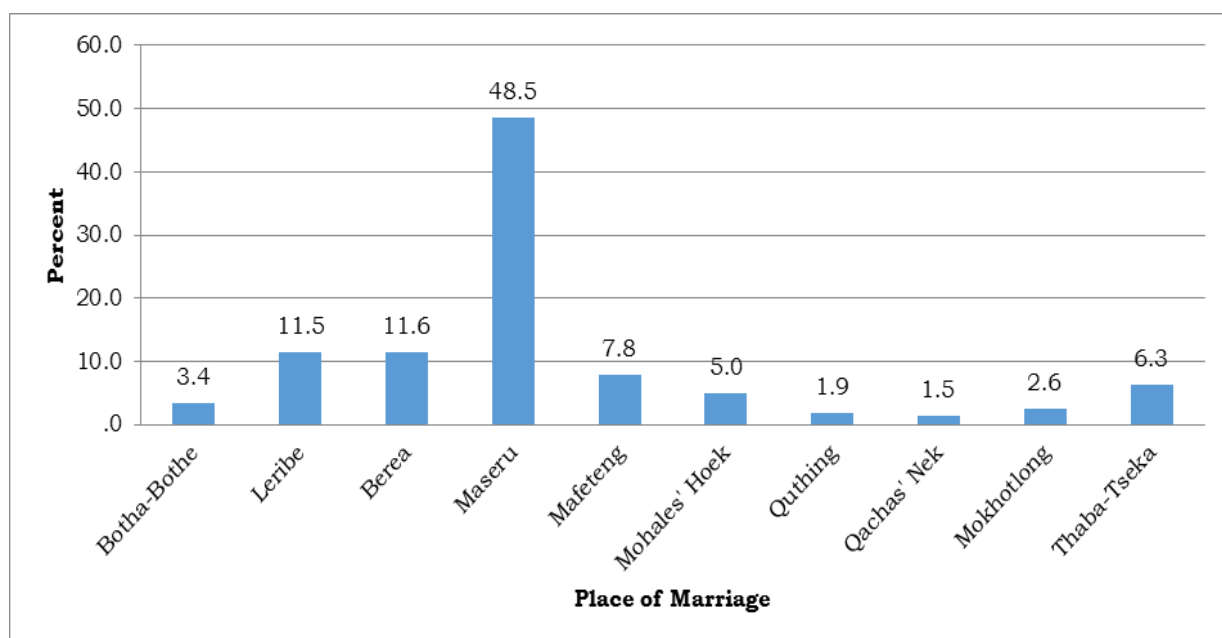
**Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Marriages by Age Group, 2017**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Bride</b>	<b>Groom</b>
15-19	2.4	0.1
20-24	21.5	5.5
25-29	32.6	26
30-34	21.3	28.2
35-39	11.7	16.8
40-44	5.5	9.5
45-49	2.6	5.5
50+	2.5	8.3

### **Place of Marriage**

The place of marriage shows the district in which the marriages were registered. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage distribution of marriages by place of marriage. It shows that most marriages were registered in Maseru district with 48.5 percent. The districts of Berea and Leribe had approximately equal number of marriages estimated at 11.6 and 11.5 percent respectively. Qacha's Nek registered the least number of marriages with only 1.5 percent.

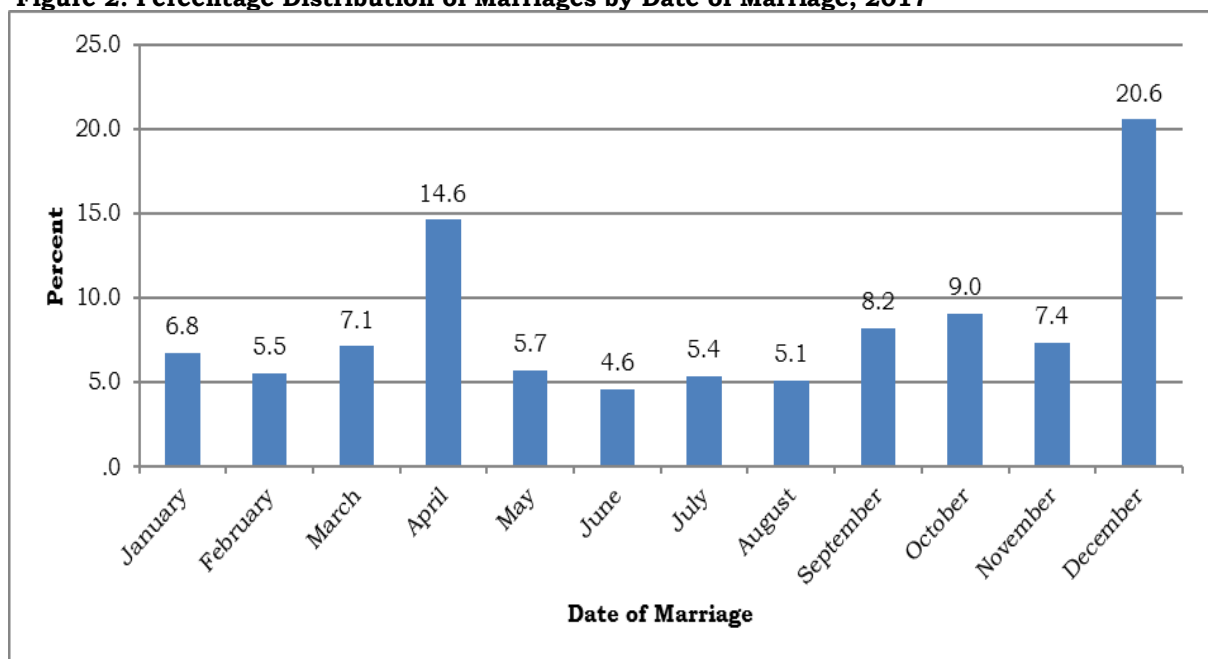
**Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Marriages by Place of Marriage, 2017**



### Date of Marriage

The date of marriage more especially the month in which two people get into union is very crucial in their lives because it marks their wedding anniversary. It also emphasizes the fact that marriage is a life changing transition which allows a person to change a marital status from being single to having a spouse. The date of marriage shows the month in which the marriage was solemnised. It shows that most marriages were solemnised during the month of December accounting for 20.6 percent, followed by April with 14.6 percent. The least number of marriages were solemnised in June estimated at 4.6 percent.

**Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of Marriages by Date of Marriage, 2017**



### Marital Status

Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of marriages by marital status of the groom and of the bride at the time of marriage. The table shows that 86.5 percent of brides were reported as Single at the time of marriage as opposed to 84.6 percent of the grooms. On the other hand, there were more groom widows and divorcees than there were brides at the time of registering their marriage. Similar percentages of both brides and grooms were already married at the time when registering their marriage represented by 12.4 percent.

**Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Marriages by Marital Status, 2017**

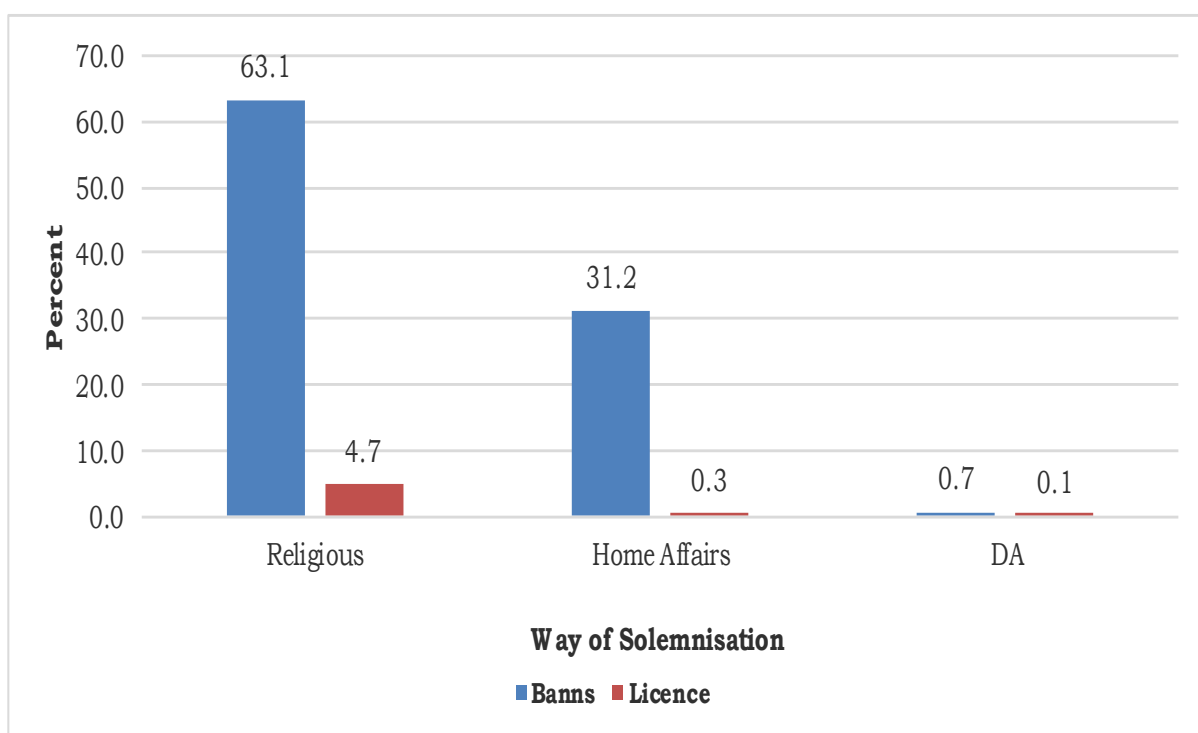
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Bride</b>	<b>Groom</b>
Single	86.5	84.6
Married	12.4	12.4
Divorced	0.4	1.3
Widowed	0.7	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,577</b>	<b>2,577</b>

### Way of Solemnisation

There are two types of authority under which a marriage may be solemnized in Lesotho. These are through publication of Banns (An announcement, especially in a church, of an intended marriage) and Special License (a document issued by state authority authorizing a couple to marry). Some marriages are solemnized by a Civil Official: District Administrator (DA) while others are solemnized by a Clergyman.

Figure 3 shows that most marriages were solemnised religiously and it was by banns constituting 63.1 percent. The second largest group is that of marriages solemnised at Home Affairs with 31.2 percent. The least number of marriages were those that were solemnised by the DA, those who had applied for licence recording 0.1 percent and those of Banns estimated at 0.1 percent.

**Figure 3: Percentage Distribution of Marriages by Way of Solemnisation, 2017**



## Annex

### Trend in Registered Marriages

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>
2013	4,552
2014	2,576
2015	2,660
2016	2,640
2017	2,577
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,005</b>

### Marriages by Age at Marriage

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Bride</b>	<b>Groom</b>
15-19	61	3
20-24	553	143
25-29	841	670
30-34	548	726
35-39	301	432
40-44	143	245
45-49	66	143
50+	64	215
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,577</b>	<b>2,577</b>

### Marriages by Place of Marriage

<b>District</b>	<b>Number</b>
Botha-Bothe	87
Leribe	297
Berea	298
Maseru	1250
Mafeteng	201
Mohales' Hoek	129
Quthing	48
Qachas' Nek	38
Mokhotlong	66
Thaba-Tseka	163
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,577</b>

### Marriages by Marital Status

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Bride</b>	<b>Groom</b>
Single	2,230	2,179
Married	320	320
Divorced	10	34
Widowed	17	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,577</b>	<b>2,577</b>

**Marriages by Date of Marriage**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number</b>
January	174
February	142
March	184
April	377
May	147
June	119
July	138
August	131
September	212
October	233
November	190
December	530
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,577</b>

**Marriages by Way of Solemnisation**

<b>Way of Solemnisation</b>	<b>Religious</b>	<b>Home Affairs</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Banns	1,627	803	17	2,447
Licence	121	7	2	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,748</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2,577</b>