

Marriage Statistics (2018)



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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 marriage. Marriage can include legal, social, and religious elements. It is usually understood as a male-female relationship designed to reproduce 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 overwhelmingly monogamous.

The 2018 marriage statistics report provides a summary of information on all marriages that occurred throughout the country during the period 2018. The Bureau of Statistics (BOS) obtains data relating to marriage from administrative records on marriages at Law office (Ministry of Law and Constitutional Affairs) and at National Identity and Civil Registry (NICR) 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 some 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 by this report.

Number of Registered Marriages

Table 1 shows the number and percentage distribution of registered marriages from 2014 to 2018. In total, there were 12,741 registered marriages in Lesotho within a period of five years. The highest percentage of registered marriages was in 2015 estimated at 20.9 and the least percentage was observed in 2018 with 18.0.

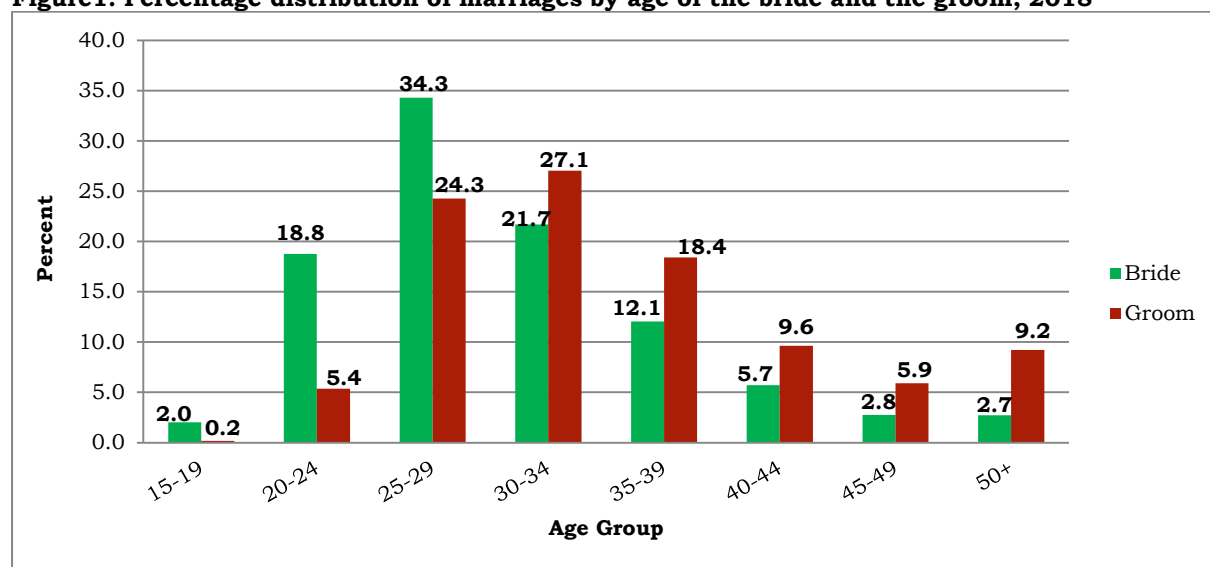
Table 1: Number of Registered Marriages in Lesotho, 2014 to 2018

Year	Number	Percent
2014	2,576	20.2
2015	2,660	20.9
2016	2,640	20.7
2017	2,577	20.2
2018	2,288	18.0
Total	12,741	100.0

Age at Marriage

Figure 1 indicates the percentage distribution of marriages by age of the bride and groom. It is observed that the age group with the highest percentage of brides was 25 to 29 years at 34.3 as compared to other age groups. The least percentage of brides was observed in age group 15 to 19 years with 2.0 as opposed to other age groups. The figure further illustrates that most grooms tend to marry at age group 30 to 34 years recording 27.1 percent while the least percentage of grooms is observed for age group 15 to 19 years with 0.2.

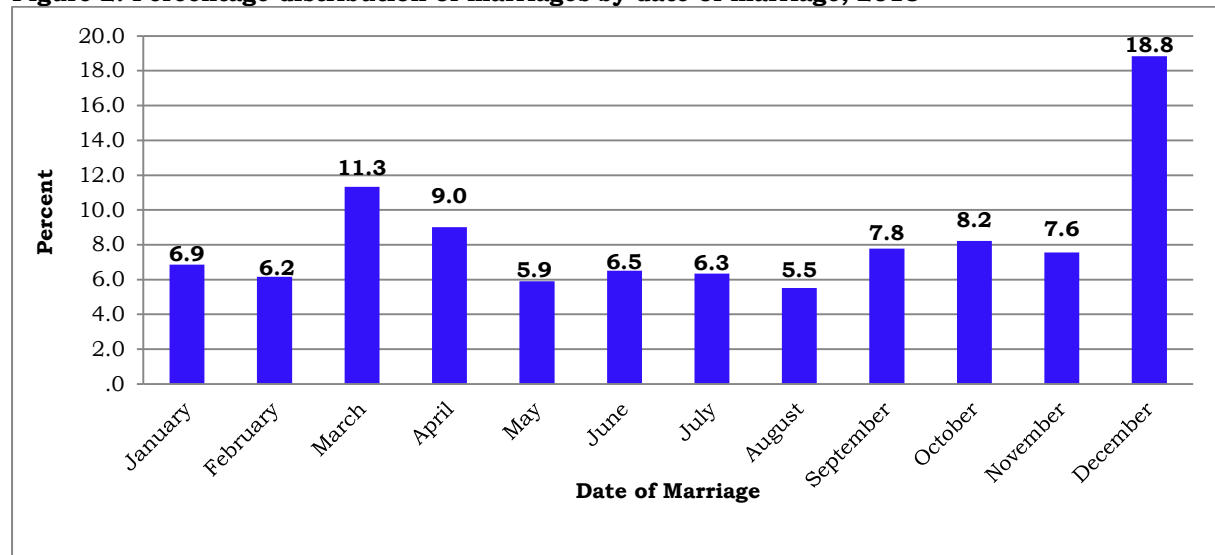
Figure1: Percentage distribution of marriages by age of the bride and the groom, 2018



Date of Marriage

The month in which marriage was solemnized is very crucial to couples that entered into union as it marks their wedding anniversary and entry point into exposure to reproduction. Figure 2 shows the percentage distribution of marriages by date of marriage. It shows that most marriages occurred in December at 18.8 percent while the least numbers of marriages were solemnized in August at 5.5 percent.

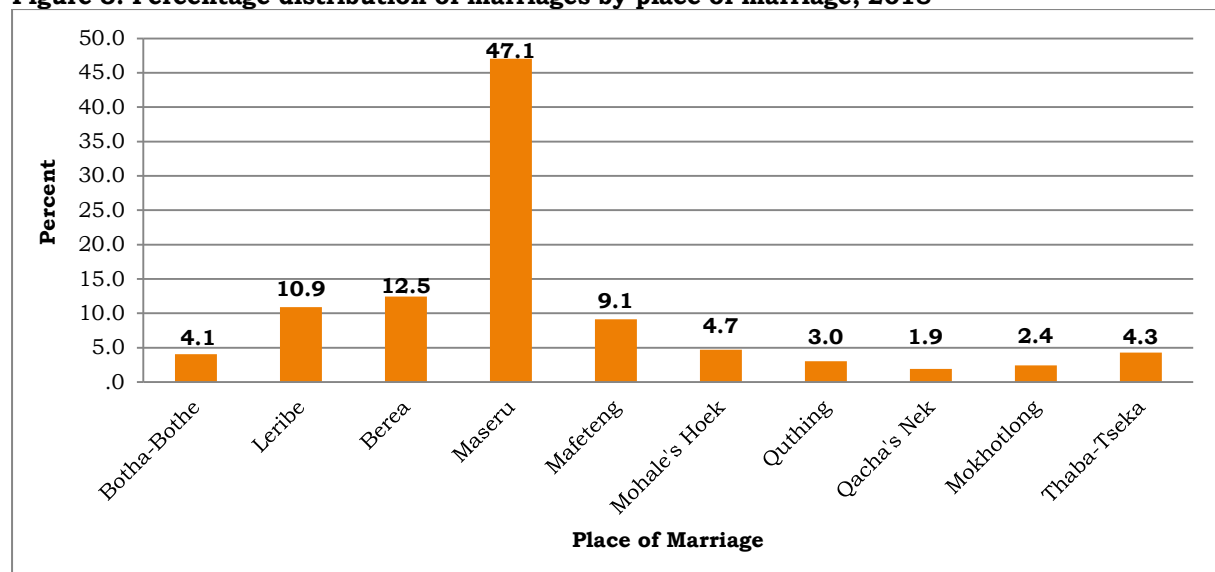
Figure 2: Percentage distribution of marriages by date of marriage, 2018



Place of Marriage

Figure 3 illustrates the percentage distribution of marriages by place of marriage. It shows that the highest numbers of marriages were registered in Maseru as compared to other districts with 47.1 percent while the least numbers were observed in Qacha's Nek district with 1.9 percent.

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of marriages by place of marriage, 2018



Marital Status

Table 2 indicates the percentage distribution of marriages by marital status of the groom and bride at the time of marriage. It shows that the highest number of brides were single when they were registering for marriage with 79.5 percent while the least numbers of brides were widowed with 1.2 percent. As for grooms, most (76.8 percent) of them were also single when registering for marriage while the least were either divorced or widowed with 2.7 percent.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Marriages by Marital Status, 2018

Marital status	Bride	Groom
Single	79.5	76.8
Divorced	1.5	2.7
Widowed	1.2	2.7
Customarily	17.8	17.8

Type of Solemnization

Table 3 presents the number and percentage distribution of marriages by way of solemnization indicated as legal Preliminary of Special License over Banns. It shows that most marriages were solemnised religiously (65.3 percent) as opposed to those solemnized at Home Affairs (34.7 percent). Out of 65.3 percent that were religiously solemnised, 62.2 percent were by Banns. Regarding marriages that were solemnised by Home Affairs, most of them were by Banns with 34.4 percent as opposed to 0.3 percent of those who had applied for a license.

Table 3: Number and percentage distribution of marriages by Type of solemnization, 2018

License/Banns	Number		Percent	
	Home Affairs	Religious	Home Affairs	Religious
Banns	787	1422	34.4	62.2
License	6	71	0.3	3.1
Total	793	1493	34.7	65.3

Annex

Registered Marriages, 2018

Year	Number
2014	2,576
2015	2,660
2016	2,640
2017	2,577
2018	2,288
Total	12,741

Marriages by Age Group, 2018

Age group	Bride	Groom
15-19	46	4
20-24	429	123
25-29	785	555
30-34	496	619
35-39	276	421
40-44	131	220
45-49	63	135
50+	62	211
Total	2,288	2,288

Place of Marriage, 2018

	Number
Botha-Bothe	93
Leribe	249
Berea	285
Maseru	1,077
Mafeteng	209
Mohale's Hoek	108
Quthing	69
Qacha's Nek	44
Mokhotlong	56
Thaba-Tseka	98
Total	2,288

Date of Marriage, 2018

	Number
January	157
February	141
March	259
April	206
May	135
June	149
July	145
August	126
September	178
October	188
November	173
December	431
Total	2,288

Marital Status, 2018

	Bride	Groom
Single	1,820	1,757
Divorced	34	61
Widowed	27	62
Customarily Married	407	408
Total	2,288	2,288

Way of Solemnization, 2018

	Religious	Home Affairs
Banns	1,422	787
Licence	71	6
Total	1,493	793