

# **BASIC NEEDS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN LESOTHO**

**REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SURVEY**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This initial inquiry into the basic needs of women and children in rural Lesotho, initiated by UNICEF at the request of the Lesotho Government occurs at an important juncture in both international and national contexts.

Beginning in the late 1960s, after nearly two decades of immense investments and intense activities in Third World development, the prevailing strategies and goals of the development process were seriously questioned. Strict economic goals of development often made it necessary to target the investments away from the most disadvantaged groups of the societies. It was hoped that once sustained economic growth took place, the benefits would trickle down to the disadvantaged groups and the initial disparities would be reduced. However, more often than not, the results were the opposite: urban economies grew at the expense of the rural sector; illiterate and unskilled labour lost their jobs to the educated and skilled; relatively wealthy farmers benefited at the expense of the poor and the landless. It seemed that for the poor and the disadvantaged to benefit, projects and programmes needed to be targetted directly at them to enable their full participation in the development process itself.

One of the groups that was bypassed worldwide or whose conditions were made worse by the economic and social forces resulting from the developmental process was women - women in general and rural women in particular. In Africa and Asia rural women participate in the agricultural work as much as the men do and yet all the agricultural modernization programmes are almost always addressed to men. If Developmental process did not incorporate one-half of the members of the society, not only the results of development would be unjust, but the rate of development of the entire society would be retarded.

It is this slow realization of the consequences of excluding women from active participation in the developmental process either through deliberate policies or through benign neglect, among individuals, groups and national and international agencies concerned about development that led to the observance of the International Women's Year and the Mexico conference in 1975. The Mexico conference was the first international forum of some consequence where serious concern over women's role in development was expressed. The conference drew up comprehensive plans of action at global,

and regional levels and guidelines for national action. However, it was also felt that profound changes in women's conditions could not possibly be achieved within a short period of time and the decade of 1976-1985 was declared as the United Nations Decade for Women to provide a period for sustained and effective action towards achieving the goals set at Mexico.

As the Women's Decade has entered its second half, national and international agencies are evaluating the progress achieved to-date and are taking a critical look at the strategies and policies for the future.

Bound very closely to the lives of women are the lives of children especially during the formative years from birth to the age of six. Mothers are directly responsible for the welfare of their children; grandmothers often lend a helping hand to reduce the burden of the mothers; women in the neighbourhood often agree to keep an eye on the neighbour's children when needed; older girls often share responsibilities with their mothers in looking after their younger siblings. Women's ability to work often depends on their maternal responsibilities and the welfare of the children could often be severely affected by the economic demands placed on the mother. Basic needs of children and basic needs of women cannot be looked upon in isolation.

Thus it is important that the UNICEF study looks at the basic needs of both women and children especially soon after the International Year of the Child. Coming at the beginning of the Third Five year plan of Lesotho as this study does, it is hoped that the results will be useful in planning programmes for the welfare of the children and women in the country.



*A majority of women in rural Lesotho are not engaged in any income generating activities. Their main task is bringing up the children.*

## CHAPTER II

### LESOTHO - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### Geographical Profile:

Lesotho is a small kingdom in Southern Africa, with an area of 30,350 square kilometers. It is the highest country in the world with all its land over 1,000 metres above sea level.

Lesotho has the unusual distinction of being surrounded by another country. It is bounded completely by the Republic of South Africa. It is situated between 28° and 31° south and between 27° and 30° east. It is thus one of the least tropical regions in Africa.

The country is bounded in part by a series of rivers, Tele, Senqu, Makhaleng and Mohokare. Between Makhaleng and Mohokare, the south-western boundary follows a beacons boundary fence. Mohokare forms the northern boundary, and western boundary. Between the sources of Mohokare and Tele, the eastern and southern boundaries follow a high mountain watershed.

Three quarters of the country is occupied by largely rugged and inaccessible mountains. These are mainly suitable for grazing, while only Lesotho than of the land is suitable for cultivation.

Lesotho is generally temperate with clearly marked seasons. Summer is the rainy season. The annual rainfall averages 700 mm in the lowlands and some 1,420 mm in the mountains. Some areas however get a mean rainfall of 480 mm because the mountains to the east and west impede passage of clouds. In the winter snow falls in the Maloti mountains and occasionally in the lowlands.

Although Lesotho has over 300 days of sunshine a year, the nights can be cold and altitude can make a difference. Letšeng-la-Terae, for example is a community located over 3,000 m above sea-level and experiences a mean temperature at night below - 10°C in winter accompanied by frost and strong winds.

Lesotho is predominantly a grassland. However it has got a variety of some indigenous trees which are common in river valleys and valleys of the mountain areas. Flowers exist in wild profusion along with aloes.

## Demographic Profile

The 1976 Census recorded a resident population of 1,064,161 persons, and a population of 152654 persons, who were resident outside the country. 55% of the resident population was aged 20 years or below and 10% of the resident population was aged 60 years or above. 49% of the total population were aged 20 years or below and 9% were aged 60 years or above. Thus we see that in Lesotho the economically active population is outnumbered by the dependent population.

Of the absentee population 85% were male. 83% of the absent males were aged between 20 years and 59 years, inclusive. In the age group 20 to 59 for the resident population, 64% were women. Thus we see that in this age range more men are away from home or not resident in the country. Almost all of these men are working as migrant workers in the Republic of South Africa. An inescapable fact is that most of the men folk in Lesotho spend most of their prime years as migrant workers in the Republic of South Africa.

## Education:

In 1979 there were 1064 Primary Schools with a total of 2843 classrooms and 4755 classes. There were 235,604 pupils enrolled and a total of 4782 teachers of whom 1695(35.4%) were unqualified. The pupil teacher ratio was 49.3:1. The overall picture of the primary school is overcrowded classrooms, and a high pupil-teacher ratio.

During 1979 there were 96 Secondary Schools. There were 597 classrooms and 555 classes. The total enrolment was 21406 pupils. There were 940 teachers of whom 178(19%) were unqualified. The pupil teacher ratio was 22.8:1. Thus we see that in the secondary schools there is an excess of classrooms and a low pupil: teacher ratio. The enrolment figures show that for a majority of the young, the Primary School marks the end of formal education.

There is one Teacher Training College controlled by the government. There are 13 vocational institutions and one university.

### Health:

The major health problems are venereal diseases, gastro-enteritis, and tuberculosis. In 1978 there were 19829 cases of syphilis and gonorrhoea, 13227 cases of gastro-enteritis and 1908 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis. The major causes of infant and child mortality are respiratory and intestinal diseases, often associated with protein-calorie malnutrition. Childhood diseases of measles and whooping cough cause concern.

Lesotho has 17 general hospitals of which eight are non-government and 9 are government run. In addition there is also a mental hospital and a leprosarium. There are over 100 clinics and dispensaries scattered all over the country. The decreasing first attendance at hospital ante-natal sessions in 1978 was indicative of the growing importance of clinics, in particular rural clinics.

### Nutrition:

The Food and Nutrition Coordinating office was established to coordinate all efforts at preaching nutrition education to the nation and also implementing nutrition programmes and policies. However the spreading of the nutrition gospel is undertaken by various ministries. The Ministry of Agriculture has a nutrition division, staffed with nutritionists and home economists, whose work is to conduct demonstrations and hold village-level courses on nutrition. Nutrition education is also provided by the Ministry of Health through the Health Education Unit, and also by the Ministry of Education.

### Agriculture:

Maize, sorghum and wheat are the major food crops. Yield is relatively low and fluctuates from year to year depending mainly on climatic conditions. Beans and peas are grown, but mainly as cash crops.

There is a relatively large number of livestock; particularly sheep, cattle, goats and chicken. There is a substantial export of wool and mohair.

Only some 13 percent of the country is suited to crop cultivation. This limited arable land which is primarily in the lowlands is subjected to heavy frosts, prolonged droughts, torrential rains and severe erosion. Lesotho derives a precarious livelihood from crop farming and livestock.

### Women and Development in Lesotho

Rural poverty is generally attributed to a rapidly increasing population combined with declining levels of agricultural output. Decline in agricultural productivity is absolute as well as relative to the consumption requirements of an expanding population. Lesotho which was an exporter of food grain till early 1900, now depends on imports for nearly 40 per cent of its food needs.

The failure of rural self sufficiency is reflected in an ever increasing dependence on the export of labour. Nearly half the adult male labour population is employed in the Republic of South Africa as migrant labour. This heavy dependence on migrant labour creates a situation in which there is a considerable gap between the de jure and de facto male population. As a result a great number of Basotho women spend much of their lives without the men on whom they depend.

Under South Africa's ever stricter influx control measures, particularly since the 1960s, Basotho women have been denied this opportunity for legal employment in South Africa. Increase in the job opportunities for women within Lesotho during the past decade has also been very limited. These factors and the necessity of looking after the rural household in the absence of its male members have confined women to less and less productive subsistence agriculture.

Income from such subsistence agriculture, forms only a very small percent of the wage income earned by the absentee migrant labour. As a result, capital for periodic inputs into agriculture, comes from the male wage earnings, which tends to restrict agricultural decisions to be made by women. In addition the land tenure system has preserved women's dependence upon husbands, through whom the rights to use of fields are acquired.

Technological innovations in agriculture has also tended to affect women adversely. The introduction of cattle drawn ploughs put an end to the

complementarity that once existed between male and female agricultural work. Responsibility for initial preparation became the duty of men, leaving weeding, harvesting and processing of the grain under the care of women, thus increasing the women's dependence on men in cultivation. The slowly increasing agricultural production technology is further likely to devalue the role of women in agriculture.

Apart from agriculture, women have also been engaged in the production of pottery, woven grass utensils, embroidered clothes etc. However, the expansion of the modern production sector into the villages through trading companies, super markets, cafes and persistent radio advertizing has increased the demand for imported utensils, clothing, foods etc., thus robbing many women of their traditional avenues of earning some income. If the resent policy in the Republic of South Africa to decrease gradually the number of foreign mine labourers takes hold, it is likely to further aggravate the position of women in Lesotho. As the employment opportunities decrease in the Republic of South Africa, rural men are likely to compete for agricultural roles which are presently being performed by women. Women who are used to impelementing decisions made at a distance will have to be satisfied to be meer on lookers. Women's role in agriculture is thus likely to be further devalued. Though at present income from agriculture forms only about six percent of the income of an average family with some migrant earnings, it still provides a large number of women with an oppportunity to participate in the developmental process of the nation through agriculture. Agriculture will remain for a long time to come, a provider of jobs for rural women. Any developmental process will have to take this factor into consideration.



*Women engaged in agriculture*

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

A PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

The data for this study were collected by a team of four field workers through interviews with the women heads of rural households, using a structured questionnaire. (see Appendix I). Interviews were conducted over a period of five months, between February and July of 1980.

The survey included a total of 624 households in 43 villages throughout Lesotho. The villages were chosen on a stratified random sampling basis to give adequate representation to the rural households from each of the four ecological zones. Table 1 compares the distribution of the households included in the survey with the actual distribution of the de jure households in the four ecological zones.

Table 1. Distribution of the Sample by Ecological Zones

ECOLOGICAL REGION	TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE SURVEY	NUMBER OF VILLAGES IN SURVEY
Lowlands	110 873 45.8%*	273 43.7%	18 42%
Foothills	58 683 23.5%	184 29.5%	12 28%
Mountains	49 351 20.4%	99 15.9%	9 21%
Senqu River Valley	24 782 10.2%	68 10.9%	4 9%
<b>T O T A L</b>	<b>214 815</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>43</b>

\* These are percentages of column totals.

As the comparison indicates the Lowlands and the Mountains are slightly underrepresented in the sample in comparison to the total de jure households in the two regions. This is explained by the fact that almost all the cities and towns lie either in the Lowlands or in the Mountains and very few at all in the Foothills and the Senqu River Valley zones. Because this survey is of rural households, the two ecological zones that contain most of the cities and towns are underrepresented in the sample.

The average size of the household in our sample, including the absentee members, is 4.9 persons per household. This compares favourably with the national average of 4.7 persons per household, according to the 1970 Census of Agriculture Report (1). The slightly larger size of household in our sample, when compared to the national average, indicates the predominantly rural nature of the households in our study.

Table 2 gives a further breakdown of number of persons per household. Slightly more than 26 percent of the households have three or less than three members while 38.7 percent of the households have six or more members per household. Of the households in the sample, 35 percent have either three or four persons in them.

Table 2. Number of Persons per Household

Persons....	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	Total
Number of Households.	23	65	76	102	116	102	54	34	52	624
Percent of Total.....	3.7	10.4	12.2	16.3	18.6	16.3	8.7	5.4	8.3	100

Details of the age distribution of the members of the household are given in Table 3 and Table 4. There were no women of age sixty and above in 515 of the households (82.9 percent) compared to 563 households (90.2 percent) having no men of the same age group. One hundred and three households had one woman and 59 households (9.5 percent) had one man of age 60 and above. Only five and two households, respectively, had more than one woman or man as its members.

Eighty-nine of the households (14.3 percent) had no women, and 201 households (32.2 percent) had no men between the ages of 18-59 as its members. There were one woman or one man in 394 (63.1 percent) and 325 (52.1 percent) of the households.

Table 3. Age Distribution of the Members of the Household by Sex and Ecological Zone

W O M E N	LOWLANDS (Household)	FOOTHILLS (Household)	MOUNTAIN (Household)	SENQU RIVER VALLEY (Household)	T O T A L
<u>60 and Over</u>					
Zero .....	220 35.3%	148 23.7%	88 14.1%	60 9.6%	515 82.7%
One .....	51 8.2%	33 5.3%	11 1.8%	8 1.3%	103 16.5%
Two .....	1 0.2%	2 0.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 0.5%
Three .....	1 0.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.2%
>Three .....	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.2%
<u>18 to 59</u>					
Zero .....	39 6.2%	35 5.3%	10 1.3%	5 0.8%	89 14.3%
One .....	159 25.5%	111 17.8%	74 11.9%	50 8.0%	394 63.1%
Two .....	53 8.5%	24 3.8%	11 1.8%	10 1.3%	98 15.7%
Three .....	15 2.4%	9 1.4%	3 0.5%	3 0.5%	30 4.8%
Three .....	7 1.2%	5 0.8%	1 0.2%	0 0.0%	13 2.1%
<u>6 to 17</u>					
Zero .....	145 23.2%	104 16.7%	58 9.3%	29 4.5%	336 53.8%
One .....	75 12.0%	47 7.5%	31 5.0%	25 4.0%	178 28.5%
Two .....	43 6.9%	22 3.5%	7 1.1%	10 1.6%	82 13.11%
Three .....	8 1.3%	9 1.4%	3 0.5%	4 0.6%	24 3.8%
Three .....	2 0.3%	2 0.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 0.6%
<u>0 to 5</u>					
Zero .....	190 30.4%	119 19.1%	63 10.1%	43 6.9%	415 66.5%
One .....	68 10.9%	51 8.2%	26 4.2%	20 3.2%	165 26.4%
Two .....	15 2.4%	13 2.1%	8 1.3%	4 0.6%	40 6.4%
Three .....	0 0.0%	1 0.2%	2 0.4%	1 0.2%	4 0.7%
Three .....	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%

Table 4. Age Distribution of the Members of the Household by Sex and Ecological Zone

M E N	LOWLANDS (Household)	FOOTHILLS (Household)	MOUNTAIN (Household)	SENQU RIVER VALLEY (Household)	T O T A L
<u>60 and Over</u>					
Zero .....	239 38.3%	174 27.9%	87 13.9%	63 10.1%	563 90.2%
One .....	33 5.3%	10 1.6%	11 1.8%	5 0.8%	59 9.5%
Two .....	1 0.2%	0 0.0%	1 0.2%	0 0.0%	2 0.3%
Three .....	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
<u>18 to 59</u>					
Zero .....	83 13.3%	77 12.3%	30 4.8%	11 1.8%	201 32.2%
One .....	141 22.6%	82 13.1%	65 8.8%	47 7.5%	325 52.1%
Two .....	32 5.1%	13 2.1%	12 1.9%	5 0.8%	62 9.9%
Three .....	13 2.1%	8 1.3%	1 0.2%	3 0.5%	25 4.0%
Three .....	4 0.6%	4 0.6%	1 0.2%	2 0.3%	11 1.8%
<u>6 to 17</u>					
Zero .....	136 21.8%	103 16.5%	45 7.2%	29 4.3%	313 50.2%
One .....	76 12.2%	52 8.3%	30 4.8%	21 3.4%	179 28.7%
Two .....	38 6.1%	18 2.9%	15 2.4%	15 2.4%	86 13.8%
Three .....	16 2.6%	9 1.4%	6 1.0%	2 0.3%	33 5.3%
>Three .....	7 1.1%	2 0.3%	3 0.5%	1 0.2%	13 2.1%
<u>0 to 5</u>					
Zero .....	185 29.6%	130 20.8%	62 9.9%	41 6.6%	418 67.0%
One .....	67 10.7%	45 7.2%	29 4.6%	22 3.5%	163 26.1%
Two .....	18 2.9%	8 1.3%	7 1.1%	3 0.5%	36 5.8%
Three .....	1 0.2%	1 0.2%	1 0.2%	2 0.3%	5 0.8%
>Three .....	2 0.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 0.3%

There were two or more than two women or men in 141 (22.6 percent) and 98 (15.7 percent) of the household.

As the above data show, there is a strong imbalance in the numbers of men and women between the economically active ages of 18 and 59. The ratio of men to women for this age group is 0.764. In other words, there are only 764 men between the ages of 18 and 59 for every 1 000 women of the same age group in rural Lesotho. In addition, 32 percent of the households have no men in the economically productive age group, leaving the economic survival of these households mainly the responsibility of women.

Tables 5 and 6 below give the distribution of boys and girls between the ages of zero to five and six to seventeen respectively.

Table 5. Distribution Per Household of Boys Zero to Five Years Old By Girls Zero to Five Years Old

		NUMBER OF BOYS ZERO TO FIVE				
		ZERO	ONE	TWO	THREE OR ABOVE	
NUMBER OF GIRLS ZERO TO FIVE	ZERO	292 46.3%	90 14.4%	26 4.2%	7 1.2%	415 66.5%
	ONE	88 14.1%	38 10.9%	9 1.4%	0 0.0%	165 26.4%
	TWO	35 5.3%	4 0.6%	1 0.2%	0 0.0%	40 3.4%
	THREE OR ABOVE	3 0.5%	1 0.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 0.5%
		418 67.0%	133 26.1%	36 5.8%	7 1.2%	624

\* The percentages are the percentages of the total.

Table 6. Distribution Per Household of Boys Six to Seventeen Years Old By Girls Six to Seventeen Years Old

		NUMBER OF BOYS SIX TO SEVENTEEN				
		ZERO	ONE	TWO	THREE OR ABOVE	
NUMBER OF GIRLS SIX TO SEVENTEEN	ZERO	194 31.1%	81 13.0%	35 5.6%	26 4.2%	336 53.8%
	ONE	74 11.9%	54 8.7%	39 6.2%	11 1.8%	178 28.5%
	TWO	34 5.4%	33 5.3%	10 1.6%	5 0.8%	82 13.1%
	THREE OR ABOVE	11 1.8%	11 1.8%	2 0.3%	4 0.5%	28 3.8%
		513 50.2%	179 28.7%	86 13.8%	46 7.4%	624

\* The percentages are the percentages of the total.

There were no girls or boys between the ages of zero to five years in 292 (46.3 percent) of the households in the sample.

Of the remaining 332 households, 178 households or 28.5 percent of the total had either one boy or one girl and the rest of the households, 154 (24.2 percent) had at least two children between the ages of zero to five years. The 332 households having at least one child in them will be the subject of further analysis when dealing with school education.

Of the 624 households in the survey, 194 households (31.1 percent) had no boys or girls between the ages of six and seventeen (see Table 5). Eight-one households (13 percent) had one boy, and 74 households (11.9 percent) had one girl. The remaining 275 households (44 percent) in the survey had two or more than two boys or girls between the ages of six and seventeen years.

Out of the 624 women who were interviewed 608 reported their educational attainment. Table 7 shows the levels of education of these women by ecological zones.

Table 7. Level of Education of Women Household Heads by Ecological Zones

	LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
	NO EDUCATION	STANDARD 1 to 3	STANDARD 4 to 6	STANDARD 7 and Above	
LOWLANDS	43 <sup>✓</sup> 16.3% <sup>?</sup>	56 21.2%	84 31.8%	81 30.7%	264 44.1%
FOOTHILLS	32 17.4%	33 17.9%	64 34.8%	54 29.3%	183 30.1%
MOUNTAINS	14 24.2%	17 17.2%	35 35.4%	22 22.2%	98 16.1%
SENQU RIVER VALLEY	15 23.4%	19 29.7%	15 23.4%	14 21.9%	63 10.4%
	114 18.8%	125 20.6%	198 32.6%	171 28.1%	608

$$\chi^2 = 13.298$$

$$p = 0.3477$$

✓ The cell frequencies are the numbers of women heads of the household.

? The percentages are the percentages of the row totals.

One hundred and fourteen women (18.8 percent) had received no education; 125 women (20.6 percent) had studied up to Standard Three or below; 198 (32.6 percent) reported their educational level between Standards Four and Six; and 171 (28.1 percent) reported to have studied up to Standard Seven or above. As the  $\chi^2$  of 13.298 and  $p$  of 0.3477 show, there is no significant relationship between the women's level of education and the ecological zone, in which they lived.

From the preceding discussion we may conclude that the sample for this study is representative of all the ecological zones of the country and the profile of the sample presented above is representative of the households in rural Lesotho.

The questionnaire contains five sections including the general information that was discussed in the preceeding section. The rest of this chapter will analyse the remaining four sections, namely income-generating activities, health, nutrition, and food sources. Information in these four sections will be analysed where necessary by the four ecological zones and where appropriate by the educational level of the women who were heads of households.

#### INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES OF THE RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

Wage labour constituted by far the most important source of income for a majority of the households. As their first source of income, 365 households (58.5 percent) depended on wage labour. Only 29 households (4.6 percent) said that they depended on wage labour as a secondary or tertiary source. (Table 8). Although no questions were asked as to what constituted this wage labour, it is more than likely that for the majority of the households, wage labour meant working in the mines.

Table 8. Source of Income

INCOME	FIRST SOURCE	SECOND SOURCE	THIRD SOURCE
Selling Livestock.....	93 14.9%	14 2.2%	2 0.3%
Selling Produce .....	97 15.5%	33 5.3%	11 1.8%
Wage Labor .....	365 58.5%	25 4.0%	4 0.6%
Joala Sales .....	34 5.4%	26 4.2%	3 0.5%
Handicrafts .....	11 1.8%	4 1.8%	0 0.0%
Others .....	11 1.8%	1 0.2%	0 0.0%
Not Reporting Any Income	13 2.1%	521 83.5%	604 96.8%

Agriculture and farm-related activities provided the major source of income for 190 households (30.4 percent). Ninety-three households (14.9 percent) reported selling livestock, and 97 households (15.5 percent) reported selling produce as first sources of income. Only 47 households (7.5 percent) reported any secondary income from the above two farm-related activities.

A total of 63 households (11.1 percent) received some income from selling joala. For 34 households (or 5.4 percent of the total) income from joala sales formed the first source of income.

Only 15 of the households interviewed said that they received income from handicrafts and, of these, handicrafts provided the primary source of income for 11 households.

Thirteen households (2.1 percent) reported no means of income. There were no second sources of income for 521 households (83.5 percent) and no third source of income for 604 (96.8 percent) of the households in the survey.



*People drinking joala. Joala sales are a form of income-generation for some households.*

### Employment of Rural Women

A total of 605 women responded to the question asking if the women themselves were engaged in any income-generating activity. Of these 108 women (17.9 percent) said that they were engaged in some form of income-generating activity. As Table 9 shows, there is a very weak association between whether or not the woman is employed and the ecological zone of her residence ( $p=0.05$ ). Women from the Foothills and Senqu River Valley zones are more likely to be engaged in income-generating activities than women from the Lowlands and Mountains.

Table 9. Are You Engaged in Income Generating Activity?

	YES	NO	
LOWLANDS	40 15.0%	226 85.0%	266 44%
FOOTHILLS	36 20.5%	140 79.5%	176 29.1%
MOUNTAINS	14 14.1%	85 85.9%	99 16.4%
SENQU RIVER VALLEY	18 28.1%	46 71.9%	64 10.6%
	108 17.9%	497 82.1%	605

\* All percentages are the percentages of the row totals.

Crotcheting, sewing, and grassworks were the three major forms of income-generating activities for rural women. Of the 108 women who were employed, 55 women (48.2 percent) were engaged in crotcheting, 27 (23.7 percent) were engaged in sewing and 16 women (14 percent) were engaged in grassworks. Associated activities provided income for 15 (13.2 percent) of the women. (Because women were engaged in more than one activity, the total may be more than 108.)

Of the women who were employed 30 percent were employed on a regular basis. An overwhelming majority of the women engaged in income-generating activities, 78 percent, reported that there were no women groups engaged in the same type of activities in their villages. Even when there were groups engaged in similar types of activities in the villages, women in our sample showed no particular interest in being part of them. Sixty percent of the women who had access to a group said that they did not want to be a part of it.

The average income earned by the women from their income-generating activities was rather meagre. Fifty-three percent of the women reported an average monthly income of ten Maloti M10 or less. Approximately 16 percent of the women earned, on the average, between M10 and M20; 18 percent said that they earned between M20 and M30. Only 12 percent of the women had an average income of more than M30 per month.

The problem facing the largest number of women engaged in income-generating activities was the lack of a market for their products. Fifty women (47.2 percent) pointed out the lack of a market as their major problem, and 11 women (10.4 percent) pointed out the lack of transport. Only 1 woman (1 percent) pointed out house duties as a problem interfering with her employment. Thirty-seven women (34.9 percent) said they faced no problems at all.

The women were evenly divided as to the satisfaction they derived from their employment. Fifty percent of the employed women said that they were satisfied with whatever they were doing, and 50 percent said that they were dissatisfied. Almost all the women (90 percent) who were dissatisfied, pointed to too little income from their activities their major cause of dissatisfaction...



*Most women are engaged in agriculture, but do not view it as an income-generating activity.*

### Unemployed Women

As we saw in the preceding section (Table 9), only 108 women were employed at the time of the survey. The remaining 516 women were asked as to the cause(s) for their not being employed. Of the 508 women that identified a cause, 327 women (64.4 percent) identified lack of any employable skill as the major reason they were not employed. Poor health and old age were identified as the causes for not working by 95 (18.7 percent) women. Lack of capital was pointed out as the cause for not being employed by only 25 (4.9 percent) of the women.

Table 10. Causes Given by Women for Not Being Employed

	LACK OF CAPITAL	HOUSE WORK	LACK OF A SKILL	OLD AGE	POOR HEALTH	DON'T WANT TO WORK	OTHER	TOTAL
Number of Women.....	25	24	327	28	67	16	21	508
Percentage...	4.9	4.7	64.4	5.5	13.2	3.1	3.9	100

As the data show, the house duties and responsibilities seem not to be a major cause for not seeking any employment. Only 24 women (4.7 percent) pointed to house duties as preventing them from being employed.

When the unemployed women were asked if they would be interested in developing any income-generating activities, of the 500 who responded, 321 (64.2 percent) said that they would be. Crocheting was the most popular choice, then sewing. Two hundred and fifty-six women (79.8 percent) chose crocheting and 162 women (50.5 percent) chose sewing as their potential occupation. Grassworks was chosen by 46 women (14.3 percent) and 25 women chose other activities like pottery etc.

Of the 321 women who were prepared to start some income-generating activity, an overwhelming majority - 300 women (93 percent) - thought that they would require some training before starting an activity. Almost all these women (98 percent) who thought that they required some training were also willing to undergo training if an opportunity was provided to do so.

Women who were unemployed at the time of the survey and were seeking some employment opportunity reacted more favourably to working with a woman's groups than women who were employed. A majority, of the women 95 percent who wanted to be engaged in some income-generating activity, said that they would like to be a part of a group if such groups were functioning in their villages.

Women appeared to be unsure of what help, if any, they would like to have to lighten their daily tasks so that they would be able to devote their time to productive activity. Two hundred and thirty-eight women (73.7 percent), said that they did not know how they could be helped by an external source. Only 54 women (16.7 percent) identified some form of tangible help that they could use, and all of them pointed out the need for some kind of child care, either in the form of a nanny or day care centres.

### Summary

Wage labour constituted the major source of income for a majority of the households in rural Lesotho. Only less than a third of the households derived their primary income from agriculture and livestock. Traditionally women oriented occupations like selling joala and handicrafts formed the major source of income for only 7.2 percent of the households. Nearly two percent of the households did not have any source of income and 83.5 percent of the households did not have any second source of income to supplement their daily needs.

Only less than a fifth of the rural women were engaged in any income-generating activities themselves. Income earned from these activities were very meagre in the case of the majority of the employed women, and this was the major cause for their dissatisfaction. The types of income-generating activities available to women were very limited. Almost all the women were engaged in one of the following three activities: Crocheting, sewing, and grassworks. Women found the marketing of their products the biggest problem facing them in their income generating activities.

Majority of the unemployed women pointed out to lack of any employable skill as the major cause for their not being employed, and almost all women expressed great need for and willingness to undergo training if opportunities were made available to them. House duties and care of children were not serious obstacles that would prevent women from taking up some income generating activity.

Participation in women's groups was not highly favoured by women who were already employed. However, majority of the unemployed women who seek employment were willing to be part of women's activity groups.

#### PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

As it was pointed out earlier in this chapter (Table 5), there were only 332 households (53.7 percent) having children aged five years or below. When the women of these households are engaged in either house duties or other activities, they depend on three major sources for the care of their children. A little more than half the women (51.6 percent) left the children under the care of grandmothers, and 10 percent said that they used another sibling to look after their children. Approximately 38 percent of the mothers left their children with a neighbour or other relative while they were engaged in some activity and could not provide any attention to their children.

If these women were to take up some income-generating activity, they would use to some degree the same sources as mentioned above to look after their children. A grandmother was the choice of 52 percent of the women. Seventeen percent of the mothers said that they could leave their children with the siblings and 20 percent of the women thought that they could leave their children with a neighbour or relative. Only 10 percent of the women said that they did not know with whom they could leave their children.

Preschool education was not readily available to children in a majority of the households. (see Table 11). Some form of preschool education was available to children from 48.6 percent of the households. Availability of preschool education is significantly related to ( $p=0.0003$ ) the ecological zones. Only 36.7 percent of the households in the Foothills had some access to preschool education for their children, while preschool education was available to 74.4 percent of the households in the Senqu River Valley.

In the Mountains and the Foothills, 42.2 percent and 51.4 percent of the households, respectively, had access to preschool education for their children. Day care was the only form of preschool education mentioned as being available.

A majority of the women, 75.8 percent, wanted their children to be members of a group to receive preschool education. Only 24.2 percent wanted preschool education to be given in their own homes. However, 95.2 percent of the women were willing to send their children to a day care centre if the women were to take up employment and day care centre facilities were available in their villages.

Table 11. Availability of Pre-school Education by Ecological Zones.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AVAILABLE

LOWLANDS	72 51.4%	68 48.6%	64 18.6%
FOOTHILLS	36 36.7%	62 63.3%	140 40.6%
MOUNTAINS	27 42.2%	37 57.8%	98 28.4%
SENQU RIVER	32 74.4%	11 25.6%	43 12.5%
	167 48.4%	178 51.6%	345

$\chi^2 = 18.49$   
 $p = 0.0003$   
 $d.f = 3$

Cell percentages are percentages of row totals.



*Many boys in Lesotho have the responsibility of herding cattle. Because of this, some many never attend school, or some may enter school late, or for some it may mean attending school on an alternating system.*

Summary

A majority of the households in rural Lesotho have no access to preschool education for their children below the age of five. When preschool education is available, its major function is day care. Preschool education is less readily available in the Foothills than in the other three ecological zones of the country. Mothers showed no reluctance at all in sending their children to day care centres if they were to take up an income-generating activity.

## HEALTH AND SANITATION

Accessibility to health clinics for the households in the sample was scarce and difficult. Only 18.4 percent of the households had access to a clinic in their villages. For more than 68 percent of the households, it took more than one hour to reach the nearest clinic, and for 30.6 percent of the households, the nearest clinic was more than two hours away.

Horse was mentioned as the mode of transportation by 6.1 percent of the households, while 30 percent used motor vehicles to travel to the health clinics. More than 58 percent of the households walked to clinics.

A majority of the women interviewed 438 (71 percent) had visited a clinic, and 96.8 percent of them had taken their children with them. Common forms of service provided by the health clinics, as mentioned by the women, were: Vaccination (94.7 percent); health education (77.2 percent); nutrition lessons (70.3 percent); feeding programmes (79.7 percent) and family planning (60 percent).

Almost all the women interviewed 592 (95.5 percent) said that they would take the members of their family to a clinic in the event of a medical emergency. In the opinion of 563 women who responded to the question, there was no way of giving medical aid to a patient before reaching a clinic.



*Although clinics are far, most women do take their children to clinics.*

Sanitation

Approximately 20 percent of the households interviewed stated that they had their own latrines. As Table 12 indicates, there are fewer houses with latrines in the Mountains than in the other three zones. Only 7.1 percent of the households in the Mountains had their own latrines, while 26 percent of the households in the Lowlands, 21 percent in the Foothills, and 18 percent in the Senqu River Valley had their own latrines.

In 86 percent of the households having their own latrines, the women themselves cleaned the latrines.

As might be expected, almost all the households (89 percent) without a latrine of their own, said that the adults either used dongas or aloes as latrines while the garbage site in the village was used as a latrine by children of 92 percent of the households. Inspection by the field workers of the dongas and clusters of aloes used by adults as latrines showed that in 82.2 percent of the cases these locations were below the village, and in 10.6 percent of the cases the latrine sites were located in the middle of the village.

Table 12. Number of Households with own latrines by Ecological Zones.

DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN LATRINE			
	YES	NO	
LOWLANDS	70 26.0%	199 74.0%	269 44.5%
FOOTHILLS	37 21.0%	139 79.0%	176 29.1%
MOUNTAINS	7 7.1%	91 92.9%	98 16.2%
SENGU RIVER	11 18.0%	50 82.0%	61 10.1%
	125 20.7%	479 79.3%	

$\chi^2 = 15.89$   
 $p = 0.0012$   
 $d.f = 3$

The cell percentages are percentages of row totals

Of those households without a latrine, 92.5 percent wanted to have their own latrines. But almost 57 percent of those who said they would like to have their own toilet were also prepared to share a toilet with others if necessary.

In the majority of the households that want to have their own toilet, paying for the cost of its construction is not a problem. Seventy-two percent of the households said that they could pay for the expense of constructing the toilet. When asked if monthly payments would enable the households to bear the expense, only 2 percent of the households said that they would. Ninety percent of the households also said that they would be able to contribute by participating in the construction of the toilet. The site for the construction of toilet would not be a problem because 92 percent of the households had a potential site.

What kinds of assistance would the rural households require if they were to construct the latrines? Of the 479 households which said they would require some form of assistance, 40 percent needed help with construction materials and 35 percent needed monetary assistance in the form of loans. Tools were needed by 8.6 percent of the households and 6.5 percent of the households needed assistance in the form of pictures and plans for the construction of latrines.

### Hygiene and Water

A majority of the women interviewed, 59 percent, reported that they had had some instruction in hygienic methods. Clinics were the source of the instructions for 63.5 percent of the women, and 34.5 percent of the women had learned about hygienic methods at school. Other sources, for example, radio, provided information on hygiene for the remaining 2 percent of the women.

Springs were the most common source of water for the rural households. Four-hundred and forty-two households (71 percent) met their water needs from that source, and 20 percent of the households received water from pipe-borne sources. Boreholes provided water for 8.1 percent of the households and approximately 1 percent depended on rivers and other sources to meet their daily water needs. None of the households interviewed in the Mountains received water from a pipe-borne source.

According to the estimates of the field workers, for 56 percent of the households, the nearest source of water was less than one kilometre away. In 36 percent of the households, the members had to travel between one and two kilometres to get to the nearest water source. Eight percent of the rural households had to travel more than two kilometres to collect water for their daily needs.

### Summary

Accessibility to health clinics was difficult for the majority of the households. Only 18 percent of the households interviewed had a clinic in their own village. However, a large majority of the women had visited a health clinic, and they depend on the clinics for four major services: vaccination (94.7 percent), feeding programmes (79.7 percent), health education (77.2 percent) and nutrition lessons (70.3 percent), and family planning (60 percent). Almost all women saw health clinics as the only source of help in case of a medical emergency.

Only one-fifth of the households had their own latrines, and almost all the households without latrine desire one. The majority are willing to pay for the cost of constructing a latrine. Sites for latrines are available in the case of 92 percent of the households. Construction materials and loans to help meet the cost of building latrines were the two important areas where the households needed help.

A little more than one-half the women interviewed had had some form of instruction in hygienic methods; the clinics were the most important source for such instructions. Almost three-fourths of the rural households depended on springs to meet their daily requirements of water, and close to one-half of these households depended on springs that were unprotected or were below their villages and so more likely to be contaminated.



*Water is a problem in many places. In this picture we see some women washing.*

## NUTRITION

To get an insight into the eating habits of the respondents, we looked into the sources of food and its availability. We also looked at whether they had received any information or instruction in nutrition. We asked the people content questions to find out whether they understood balanced diet. We then went on to find out what the women and their families had eaten during the previous day.

### Fruit and Vegetable Sources

We asked respondents whether they had gathered any wild vegetables during the previous seven days. 97(16%) of the respondents said they had gathered wild vegetables in the previous seven days. Thus we see that gathering wild vegetables is not a frequent way of obtaining vegetables. But at the same time as gathering of wild vegetables is seasonal, it is difficult to assess how important wild vegetables are in the people's diet.

The respondents were asked whether they had their own vegetable garden, and if so, the interviewer was to note whether it was weeded, fenced in, and whether there was a sign of a seedbed or compost heap. The results are given in Table 13.

**Table 13:** Ownership of a vegetable garden and the condition of the garden by ecological zone.

	Do you have a garden		Does it appear weeded			Evidence of a seedbed		Evidence of a compost heap		Fenced in	
	Yes	No	Fully	Part.	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Lowlands	125 45.8%	148 54.2%	65 52.0%	33 26.4%	27 21.6%	33 26.4%	92 73.6%	23 18.4%	102 81.6%	105 84%	20 16%
Foothills	86 46.7%	98 53.3%	36 41.8%	22 25.6%	28 32.6%	9 10.5%	77 89.5%	8 9.3%	78 90.7%	57 66.3%	29 33.7%
Mountains	57 57.6%	42 42.4%	22 38.6%	21 36.8%	14 24.6%	20 35.1%	37 64.9%	12 21.1%	45 78.9%	32 56.1%	25 43.9%
Senqu Valley	42 61.3%	26 38.2%	14 33.3%	18 43.9%	10 23.8%	21 50%	21 50%	15 35.7%	27 64.3%	29 69%	13 31%
Total	310 49.7%	314 50.3%	137 44.2%	94 30.3%	73 23.5%	83 26.8%	227 73.2%	58 18.7%	252 81.3%	223 71.9%	87 28.1%

The results show that about half of the respondents had a vegetable garden. The percentages of people who own a vegetable garden were fairly distributed with no significant difference between the geographical zones. Generally the gardens were weeded if somewhat partially. Seedbeds were not much in evidence. This might be because of the survey time, since in most cases seedbeds are seasonal. It doesn't look like most people make compost heaps and use compost for fertilization of the soil. About seven out of ten of the gardens were fenced in somehow, giving protection to the crops.

The respondents were asked to name vegetable they had grown in their gardens. But in coding this information only one vegetable was assigned against one respondent, so we were unable to assess the varieties of vegetables grown, and which might be the most popular vegetables. However 113 (36.5%) of those who had gardens had grown nothing in them. Asked whether they had bought any vegetables during the previous seven days, 437 (70%) respondents replied in the affirmative. The results are given in Table 14.

Table 14: Number of households who bought vegetables during the previous week by ecological zone

	Bought	Vegetables .
	Yes	No
Lowlands	211 77.3%	62 27.7%
Foothills	137 74.5%	47 25.5%
Moutains	53 53.5%	46 46.5%
Senqu Valley	36 52.9%	32 47.1%
Total	437 70.0%	187 30.0%

The results show that a majority of the households could obtain vegetables, through purchasing them. However it is not clear from the results, how often this happens. We also observe that the vegetable markets are more used or available in the lowlands and foothills than it is the case in the mountains and Senqu Valley. We found out that there were communal gardens in four villages in the survey and that participation was very low.

Vegetable production is low. Over one third of those who had gardens had nothing growing in them. Also the fact that a majority of the respondents had purchased vegetables during the previous seven days shows that the production of vegetables was low.

Asked whether they had eaten any fruits during the previous seven days 280(45%) of the respondents said they had eaten fruits during that period. Featuring highest was apples with 53% followed by peaches 26% and oranges 14%. Other fruits made up the remaining 7%. It is clear that fruits are obtained through purchasing as apples and oranges are usually imported. These two fruits (apples and oranges) were more common in the lowlands and foothills, than in the mountains and the Senqu Valley.

We also found out that 317(51%) respondents had preserved some fruits and vegetables. Peaches were the most commoly preserved fruit as 97% of the respondents had preserved peaches. Bottling was the most commonly used method of preservation with 75%. Drying was used by 10% of the

respondents, and both bottling and drying was used by the remaining 15 percent.

Meat and Milk Sources

The respondents were asked if they owned any animals, and if so, whether they had slaughtered any in the preceeding twelve-month period, and how many they had slaughtered in the same period. The results are displayed in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Animals owned and slaghtered during the past twelve months.

		Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Pigs	Chicken	Other
Do you have	Yes	312 50%	119 19.1%	132 21.2%	162 21.2%	332 53.2%	19 3.0%
	No	312 50%	505 80.9%	492 78.8%	462 78.8%	292 46.8%	603 97.0%
Did you slaughter any in the past 12 months?	Yes	82 26.3%	67 56.3%	79 59.8%	72 44.4%	284 85.5%	14 73.7%
	No	230 73.7%	52 43.7%	53 40.2%	90 55.6%	48 14.5%	5 26.3%
How many did you slaughter	One	48 58.5%	28 41.8%	19 24.1%	48 66.7%	28 9.9%	2 14.3%
	Two	18 22.0%	21 31.3%	24 30.4%	14 19.4%	34 12.0%	10 71.4%
	Three	11 13.4%	9 13.4%	11 13.9%	3 4.2%	33 11.6%	0
	Four	1 1.2%	6 9.0%	13 16.5%	4 5.6%	28 9.9%	1 7.0%
	Five	1 1.2%	0	6 7.6%	1 1.4%	30 10.6%	0
	Many	3 3.7%	3 4.5%	6 7.6%	2 2.8%	131 46.1%	1 7.0%

With the exception of chicken, the number of animals slaughtered over a twelve-month period is very small. Only those who had chicken could have had regular meat supply from their own animals. Even the regularity of this is in question, since even those who slaughter chicken were probably not in a position to slaughter say one bird every week.

We asked the respondents whether there were any butcheries in the villages. There were butcheries in seven villages.

The respondents were asked whether they had served meat to their families in the previous seven days and 400(64%) said yes. Of these 400, 63% had eaten meat, and 32% had had chicken. Other types of meat accounted for the remaining 5%.

We asked the respondents whether they had served milk to their families during the past week, and if so to which members of the family milk had been served. They were also asked to say how the milk had been obtained. 393(63%) of the households had served milk to their families. Of these 47% had served milk to the whole family, 46% had served it to children and the remaining 7% had been served to the respondents only. 37% had got the milk from their own cow, 59% had purchased the milk and 4% had received it from clinics and other programmes.

Asked whether their families had had eggs in the course of the previous week 230(37%) said they had given eggs to their families. We did not ask about the way in which the eggs were obtained.

It seems that somehow meat, milk and eggs do feature to a limited extent in the diet of the people. The sources of meat are scarce. The main source of milk is through purchasing. From where the milk is bought we are not very clear, whether local or from elsewhere as we did not ask for this information.

#### Information about nutrition

We asked the respondents whether they had listened to a nutrition lesson; whether they had listened to a radio programme on nutrition; and also whether they had seen posters on nutrition. Table 16 on the next page below gives the results.

Table 16: Information sources about nutrition by ecological zone.

	Listened to a Nutrition Lesson		Listened to Nutrition Programme		Seen a Poster on Nutrition	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Lowlands	147 53.8%	26 46.2%	162 59.3%	111 40.6%	118 43.2%	155 56.8%
Foothills	90 48.9%	94 51.1%	85 46.2%	99 53.8%	85 46.2%	99 53.8%
Mountains	45 45.5%	54 54.5%	43 43.4%	56 56.6%	26 26.3%	73 73.7%
Senqu Valley	47 69.1%	21 30.9%	42 61.8%	26 38.1%	44 64.7%	24 35.3%

From the results we find out that efforts to reach the people concerning nutrition education have reached a fair number of the respondents. However a good proportion of the people has not been reached through these efforts.

Knowledge about Nutrition:

In this section we asked two questions on knowledge about nutrition. In the first question we gave a list of foods which a wife gave her husband on a given day. These were starch and vegetables only. In the second question we gave a list of foodstuffs made up of starch and proteins only. In each question we asked whether the diet was balanced or not, and if so what other foodstuffs were necessary to make the diet balanced.

In the first question on starch and vitamins only, 80 (13%) of the respondents said the diet was not balanced and the rest said it was or did not know. Of those who said the diet was not balanced 81% named a protein as the required foodstuff to balance the diet. In the question on starch and proteins only, 52(8%) of the respondents said the diet was not balanced. Of these 62 % named a vitamin as the required foodstuff to balance the diet.

We compared the responses to these questions to whether the respondents

had received any information on nutrition. The results are given in Table 17 below.

Table 17: Knowledge of nutrition against information received on nutrition

		Protein and Starch Only		Vitamin and Starch Only	
		Diet not Balanced	Named correct Substitute	Diet not Balanced	Named correct Substitute
Listened to nutrition lesson	Yes	39 75%	26 81.3%	58 72.5%	50 76.9%
	No	13	6	22	15
Heard radio programme	Yes	39 75%	26 81.3%	58 72.5%	50 76.9%
	No	13 25%	6 18.8%	22 27.5%	15 23.1%
Seen nutrition poster	Yes	33 63.5%	22 68.8%	50 62.5%	42 64.6%
	No	19 36.5%	10 31.2%	30 37.5%	23 35.4%

The results show that knowledge about a balanced diet is very much related to the amount of information one has obtained on nutrition.

Food Consumed the Previous day:

It has generally been accepted that asking people to recall what they have eaten the previous day is a relatively valid way of gaining an insight into their eating habits. We asked the respondents to name the foodstuffs they had eaten the previous day: in the morning, at lunch, and at supper. They were also to mention anything they ate or drank between these meals. The foodstuffs were classified into the following categories: meat or meat substitutes; milk or milk products; green vegetables; yellow vegetables; and fruits. The results are given in Table 18 on the next page.

Table 18: Foodstuffs eaten the previous day.

	Yes	No
Meat or meat substitutes	268 42.9%	386 57.1%
Milk or milk products	114 18.3%	510 81.7%
Green vegetables	423 67.8%	201 32.2%
Yellow vegetables	23 3.7%	601 96.3%
Fruits	12 1.9%	612 98.1%

From the results we see that the most commonly available foodstuffs are the green vegetables. There is a fair amount of proteins in the foodstuffs of the people interviewed. However fruits seem to be lacking a lot from the diet.

We wanted to find out how many people had a balanced diet. By a balanced diet we meant people who had at least one of meat and meat substitutes or milk and milk products, and one of green vegetables or yellow vegetables or fruits, in their diet the previous day. Table 19 gives the results on balanced diet.

Table 19: What was consumed the previous day.

Starch only	88 14.1%
Starch & Protein only	99 15.9%
Starch & Vitamin only	226 36.2%
Balanced diet	211 33.8%

About one-seventh of the interviewees had had a diet comprising starch only. About one in six of the respondents had had starch and protein only in their diet. Vegetables are common in the diet of the respondents, with 70% of the respondents having had vegetables in their diet the previous day. About 50% of the respondents had had some proteins in their diet. From the results it does seem probable that about half of the respondents may be faced with a shortage (if not serious) of proteins in their diet.

We asked the respondents whether the food taken the previous day was typical of what they normally ate. The results were: 284(45.5%) said that it was typical of all days; 234(37.5%) replied that it was almost typical of other days; and 106 (17%) said definitely it was not the same as on other days. A majority of the people interviewed had almost constant eating habits - if we take those who said the diet was typical of other days and those who said it was about typical of other days. The diet could have been different for only 17% of the respondents.

We asked the respondents who had children aged five years or less to name the food they had given to a child, chosen at random in that age group, on the day preceding the interview. The results are displayed in Table 20.

Table 20: Food eaten by children five years or below the previous day

Starch only	21 7.3%
Starch & Protein only	102 35.4%
Starch & Vitamin only	61 21.2%
Starch & Protein & Vitamin	104 36.1%
TOTAL	288 100%

Less than one tenth of the children had had a diet of starch only. Over a third had had protein only in their food. About one fifth had had vitamins only in their diet and over a third had a balanced diet. Proteins are more common in the diet of the children. Over half of the children had either a protein or vitamin in their diet.

### Fuel used in cooking

The respondents were asked to state the type of fuel they used for cooking their food. Table 21 gives the results of type of fuel used.

Table 21: Types of fuel used.

Kerosene only	80 12.8%
Cow dung only	94 15.1%
Wood only	133 21.3%
Kerosene and cow dung	28 4.5%
Kerosene and wood	38 6.1%
Cow dung and wood	30 4.8%
Kerosene, cow dung and wood	214 34.3%
Coal	3 0.5%
Other	4 0.6%

Kerosene, cow dung and wood were the most commonly used types of fuel, accounting for almost 99 percent of the types of fuel used.



*Fuel shortage is a problem. We see a woman gathering maize stocks to use as fuel.*

### Summary

Production of vegetables was low. Picking of wild vegetables is an occasional habit for most women, and this source is mainly seasonal. About half of the households interviewed had a vegetable garden. The gardens were generally protected. But there seems to be little use of compost, and this could seriously affect production of vegetables. Over a third (36.5%) did not have any vegetables growing in their gardens.

Vegetables are available through purchase in all the areas, but this is less so in the mountains compared to the other ecological zones. Preservation of vegetables is almost completely not practiced.

Fruits are mainly obtained through purchase. The percentage of people who ate fruits within a seven day period is low at 45%, and only 1.9% of the households had had fruits the previous day. Preservation of fruits seems to be common, but the quantities preserved are not clear from the survey. Peaches are the most commonly preserved fruits.

Own animals as a source of meat are not an adequate source for a regular supply of meat, for the households. There is a shortage of points from which meat could be purchased in the villages where interviews were conducted, with only seven villages having a butchery. The most commonly used meat is animal meat (beef, lamb) with chicken the second most popular.

Meat, eggs and milk do feature in the diet of the people, though to a limited extent.

Information on nutrition has reached about half of the population, but there is still a good proportion of the population which has not been reached.

The people's knowledge of nutrition is suspect. The people who gave correct replies were very few in both question on nutrition. Though a good number had information on nutrition it seems that only a few had learned anything. The people who were more likely to answer correctly were those who had had some information about nutrition.

The percentage of people who had not had a balanced diet, the previous day is large, at about two thirds. The number of children who had not had a balanced diet was high at about three fifths.

Cooking of food poses a big problem for the rural woman. Slightly less than three fifths of the respondents mentioned kerosene as the fuel they use for cooking. Many of the respondents own only one primus stove and as such preparation of meals takes a long time. About the same proportion used cow dung for cooking. This means that many women have to spend a lot of time collecting cow dung, as those who have their own cattle are not that many. About two thirds used wood as fuel. The term wood as used here ranges from shrubs to actual wood. There is a shortage of forests in Lesotho and the women have to spend a lot of time gathering wood or shrubs for fuel.



*Women's role in agriculture is limited to taking seed and food to the fields. They need to learn some skills so that they can use their spare time more economically.*



*Cooking on a cow-dung fire.*

## CHAPTER IV

### RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned in the introduction (page 2); bound closely to the lives of the women are the lives of children, especially during the formative years from birth to the age of six. Mothers are directly responsible for the welfare of their children. Basic needs of children and women cannot be looked upon in isolation. The nutritional knowledge and practices of the mother will determine the nutrition of the child. The environmental setting for the mother, e.g. latrines, water sources, etc. will directly bear on the environment in which the child grows up and his exposure to health hazards. The mother's attendance to clinics will determine to a large extent the treatment of infectious diseases and immunization that the child receives.

It is with this view that in our recommendations we focus more on actions or support directed at the mother, since the basic needs of the child can only be truly catered for when the basic needs of the mother have been catered for.

#### Income Generating Activities:

Our data shows that 60 percent of households depend on wage labour as their primary source of income. Considering the high incidence of migrating migrant labour in Lesotho, a high proportion of the wage labour would be income from absentee male population in the Republic of South Africa. Crop production provides major income for only 15.5 percent of the households although 67.5 percent of the households own fields.

Only 16.5 percent of all the households interviewed reported a second source of income, of which crop production formed 5.5 percent of the total households.

Thus according to our data only 21 percent of the households earn any money income from crop production, although 67.5 percent of the households own field(s). So 68 percent of the households with fields do not earn any money income from their fields. The reasons for the above phenomena may be many:

First lack of capital for providing sufficient inputs - labour, fertilizer, seeds etc, for proper cultivation; Second absence of male household member; third lack of participation, or lack of initiative of women in agriculture where necessary. It's also interesting to note that the women participating in the survey never mentioned agriculture as one of the women's activities from which they derived an income. However data from other studies indicate that a fair proportion of women are engaged in raising garden crops and preservation of fruits. From this we are to conclude that women derive very little cash income or no cash income at all from these agricultural activities.

Considering the fact that the important inputs, namely land and the willingness of women to be involved, involved in an income generating activity are present, agricultural activities like garden crops, fruit trees etc. which are more acceptable to women, be explored. This requires assistance from organizations, external both to Lesotho and to the village community.

For a successful outcome, the women will require assistance in forming an appropriate mechanism through which capital for fertilizer and water management can be provided, and produce could be sold to marketing outlets.

These problems of capital, management and marketing be tackled simultaneously. Before such a programme could be implemented nationally, a small number of villages be chosen at different parts of the country as pilot projects.

UNICEF should identify an organization within Lesotho with capabilities:

- a) to organize women into groups where groups do not exist;
- b) bring technical resources from other agricultural organization whenever necessary;
- c) organize training for women in garden crop management, and
- d) organize marketing outlets.

UNICEF's assistance could be channelled to women through this organization. A similar type of organization will be required to channel assistance to women in other types of income generating activities, namely crocheting, knitting, sewing and handicrafts which were identified by women as potential income generating activities. This programme should be supported by providing a design artist who would from time to time come up with new patterns etc, which could be readily made available to the women individually or in groups.

#### Pre-school education

Pre-school education should serve the purposes of the educational needs of the child, free the women so that they can take part in income generating activities; and produce employment for local women, whenever possible.

Though majority of the women say that the care of their children will not be a problem if they were to be engaged in some income generating activity, almost all of them are willing to make use of pre-school education opportunities for their children if available. To be successful the pre-school education should be cheap, village based and controlled and run by the villagers.

In the villages where the pilot income generating activities are carried out we identify some women with some education and give them a short and intensive training in the pre-school-child care. These women after training be given material and organizational assistance in establishing simple play-pens, and provision of educational material. Apart from these initial supports the running costs of the pre-school education should be met by the community.

#### Hygiene, water and latrines:

Close to three-fourths of the households in Lesotho still depend on springs as their major source of water to meet their daily needs. Majority of these water sources were situated below the village and are more likely to be contaminated. Again 52 percent of these water sources were unprotected.

Until the rural water supply schemes for the nation are implemented, a cheap and simple mechanism for protection of these springs should be implemented with the assistance of the members of the village. Preference should be given to villages with unprotected springs situated below the village.

The data show that there is a great need for, and acceptability of latrines in the rural areas of Lesotho. Of the 80% of the households without a latrine, 92% want one and 57% are willing to share a latrine with the neighbour if necessary. Almost all the households which needed a latrine the majority are prepared to meet the costs either directly or through a loan. Among the major causes for not having own latrine, they mentioned lack of technical know-how and lack of materials.

In order to speed up the construction of latrines a national fund be set up, through which matching assistance could be provided to the individuals in the form of a grant or a loan or both. This fund could be entirely in the form of materials with labour coming from the people. This should be preceded by the formation of a technical committee to study appropriate latrine designs for Lesotho. Their recommendations should be consolidated into simple to follow construction designs and techniques to be made available to households.

In order to make this programme a viable one, the fund should concentrate its activities in selected areas so that sufficient supervisory and technical assistance could be provided to individual homes in the construction of latrines, with a minimum.

### Nutrition

Present major sources of information about nutrition in the rural Lesotho are nutrition lessons, through a clinic, radio and posters. However, indications are that these means have not been effective. For example only a very small percent of the women interviewed knew what constituted a balanced diet. The conclusion one can draw from this is that either the media is not appropriate in conveying nutrition information, or the messages conveyed through these media are not effective. However as these media have been successfully used in combination or alone for imparting nutrition to the masses in other parts of the world, (example Nepal, India, Pakistan, Columbia etc) the conclusion we could draw is that the structuring of the messages is ineffective. UNICEF should appoint a media committee to help the producers of radio programmes, posters and materials for clinic workers. To help the producers to create more effective programmes and materials.

### Clinics

A substantial majority of the rural women visit clinics despite the difficult accessibility to the clinics. Less than 20 percent of the households were within an hour distance away. This willingness to use clinics could be further strengthened by providing more intensive health and nutrition programme. This is all the more important since the survey data show that, knowledge of proper nutrition is very low among the rural women.

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