Women Empowerment

Gender Series Volume IX: 2017- 2022

EQUALITY

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

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Gender Series Volume IX:
Women Empowerment, 2017–2022

Statistics South Africa

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIGF	Country Indicator Gender Framework
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DDM	District Development Model
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EC	Eastern Cape
FPL	Food Poverty Line
FS	Free State
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GESF	Gender Equality Strategic Framework
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy
GP	Gauteng
GPSJS	Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey
GHS	General Household Survey
GRPBMEAF	Gender-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IIF	Integrated Indicator Framework
ILO	International Labour Organization
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LBPL	Lower Bound Poverty Line
LFPR	Labour force participation rate
LP	Limpopo
MMS	Middle Management Service
MP	Mpumalanga
MYPE	Mid-year Population Estimates
NC	Northern Cape
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
NPF	National Policy Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NW	North West
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPS	South African Police Service
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMS	Senior Management Service
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
UBPL	Upper Bound Poverty Line
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WHO	World Health Organization
WC	Western Cape

DEFINITIONS

Adults:	Persons aged 35–64 years.
Discouraged work-seeker:	A person who was not employed during the reference period, wanted to work, was available to work/start a business but did not take active steps to find work during the last four weeks, provided that the main reason given for not seeking work was any of the following: no jobs available in the area; unable to find work requiring his/her skills; lost hope of finding any kind of work.
Employed persons:	Those aged 15–64 years who, during the reference week, did any work for at least one hour, or had a job or business but were not at work (temporarily absent).
Employed rate:	Share of the labour force that is employed.
Gender equality:	Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.[1]
Gender Parity Ratio (GPR):	Is calculated as the proportion of the number of females by the number of males. Although these ratios are usually designed to measure the relative access to education of males and females, the ratios can be generally applied to calculate gender disparities or gaps on different socioeconomic indicators.[2]
Geo-type:	Census 2011 definitions for urban and rural have been applied. According to Stats SA, an urban area is defined as a continuously built-up area with characteristics such as type of economic activity and land use. Cities, towns, townships, suburbs, etc. are typical urban areas.
Head of the household:	A person recognised as such by the household and in most cases the key decision-maker, or the person who owns or rents the dwelling, or the person who is the main breadwinner.
Inactivity rate:	The proportion of the working age population who are not active in the labour market.
Informal sector:	The informal sector has the following two components:
	(1) Employees working in establishments that employ fewer than five employees, who do not deduct income tax from their salaries/wages; and
	(2) Employers, own-account workers and persons helping unpaid in their household business who are not registered for either income tax or value added tax.
Labour force:	Comprises all persons who are employed plus all unemployed persons.

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[1] United Nations. 1997. Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997. A/52/3. 18 September 1997, at 28: "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels."
[2] Koronkiewicz, M. 2008. Gender Parity Index, UNESCO, Bangkok.

Labour force participation rate: The proportion of the working-age population that is either employed or unemployed.

Long-term unemployment: Persons in long-term unemployment are those individuals among the unemployed who were without work and trying to find a job or start a business for one year or more.

Children: Persons aged 17 years and younger.

Not economically active: Persons aged 15–64 years who are neither employed nor unemployed in the reference week.

Persons in underemployment: Employed persons who were willing and available to work additional hours, and whose total number of hours actually worked during the reference period were below 35 hours per week.

Rural area Is defined as any area that is not classified as urban. Rural areas may comprise one or more of the following: tribal areas, commercial farms and rural formal areas.

Short-term unemployment Persons in short-term unemployment are those individuals among the unemployed who were without work and trying to find a job or start a business for less than a year.

Unemployment rate: The proportion of the labour force that is unemployed.

Urban area Is one which was proclaimed or classified as such (i.e. in an urban municipality under the old demarcation), or classified as such during census demarcation by Stats SA, based on its observation of aerial photographs or other information.

Working-age population: Comprises all persons aged 15–64 years.

Youth: Persons aged 15–34 years.

Derived Concepts:

Urban and rural were derived using settlement type classification according to the characteristics of a residential population in terms of urban and rural, degree of planned and unplanned (in the case of urban) and jurisdiction (in the case of rural). The four broad settlement types found in South Africa are:

a) formal urban areas

b) informal urban areas

c) commercial farms

d) tribal areas and rural informal settlements

Using the settlement type criteria, areas that are comprised of formal and informal urban areas are designated as urban. All other areas are designated as rural. Rural areas comprise commercial farms and tribal areas.

FOREWORD

This report forms part of a series of gender publications and is a sequel to the thematic report focusing on gender disparities in economic empowerment, published in 2018. It contains indicators on trends and patterns related to women empowerment, including an in-depth analyses of economic, social and political domains related to gender. These are based on a number of different surveys produced by Stats SA as well as administrative sources from external partners.

A number of indicators profiled in the report are critical for the evaluation of progress and monitoring of the National Development Plan (NDP) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets. Information about indicators identified in the report will inform policymakers and the general public on progress, challenges and how these need to be incorporated into South Africa's development agenda.

An analysis of the economic domain indicates a steady increase in women's share in the working-age population over the last 5 years. Despite the number of females in the workforce still exceeding that of males, males continue to participate in the labour market at a higher rate than their female counterparts. The participation rates of both males and females in 2022 were lower than in 2017; however, the gap between male and female participation rates remained relatively stable. Participation rates in 2022 were highest among males and females who lived with 5 or more children. Analysis of the median earnings of females as a percentage of the median earnings for males revealed that females' median earnings were 77,8% of males' median earnings, and that parity in earning was only reached with tertiary education. Furthermore, women continued to be more likely than men to be unemployed.

Achieving gender equity in positions of decision-making, both in government and in the private sector, is an important dimension of the empowerment of women. Leadership positions presented in this report include SMS and MMS positions in the Public Service as well as the representation of men and women in parliament, cabinet, provincial legislature and mayoral positions. In the public sector, men hold the majority of senior management posts (SMS) and middle management positions (MMS). Females who were younger (<=35 years old) than their male counterparts were more likely to have MMS positions. The cabinet reached parity in 2019 for the first time since the beginning of democracy, and the parliament also observed an increased representation of women.

The report also touches on perceptions of gender and social norms. According to the analysis of public perceptions of wife-beating, more women than men were found to be against it. Females were more likely than males to be aware of the social services and facilities related to Violence Against Women (VAW) in urban areas. Over 90% of both men and women said they had seen or heard of violence against women and children (VAWC) campaigns in broadcast media.

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Statistician-General

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Since 1994, the South African government has made a commitment to enacting progressive laws and promoting human rights, which are highly influenced by the ideals of gender equality and women's emancipation and empowerment. Women empowerment involves addressing the legacy of apartheid and changing society; notably the way power is distributed among women, men, institutions, and laws. It also involves confronting sexism, patriarchy, gender inequality, and systemic injustice. However, development programmes – including women empowerment in South Africa – have not yielded the desired outcomes due to historical barriers faced by women in different socio-economic domains, including the labour market, healthcare, political and justice system, resulting in the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Women empowerment has various definitions but can be summarised as the ability of women to have the power to make choices and control decisions and resources that determine their quality of life. The empowerment of women is a crucial tool through which the reduction of poverty, achieving and advancing the rights of women, gender equity, prosperity, and inclusive growth can be realised. Enabling elements of empowerment include increasing participation of women in education and the labour market implementing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. Empowerment of women is also a cornerstone of the National Strategic Plan of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, which argues that if women's economic situations are improved their susceptibility to abuse and violence becomes less.

South Africa has subscribed to a number of frameworks that are aimed at improving the quality of life of women. Nationally, women's empowerment has found its expression in the National Development Plan (NDP 2030), a blueprint of the country's developmental agenda. South Africa signed the declaration on Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030), founded on the premise of "leaving no one behind", including addressing issues that affect women, particularly those that serve as impediments to them realising their full potential. The SDG 2030 agenda has economic empowerment of women at its core, with goal 5 primarily focusing on "Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls." This goal provides an opportunity to reassess the critical role of women in societal transformations.[3] To address the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment in South Africa, the government has committed to the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP), which includes the economic empowerment of women, the youth and persons with disabilities. At a local government level the government has introduced the District Development Model (DDM), which is centred on empowering the marginalised population by advocating for integrated government coordination in addressing economic, environmental and social challenges over a prolonged period that transcend municipal, provincial and national election cycles.

Notwithstanding the barriers experienced by women in different socio-economic domains, some significant strides have been achieved in other domains such as education, where gender parity is reached and in closing the gender gap in rates of adult literacy. Gender inequality has been a challenge in the country from lacking women empowerment and a human rights view. Studies show that women have fewer opportunities for social and economic participation and less political representation than their male counterparts. Even though global, regional, and even local agreements and interventions advocate for women's empowerment, inequalities and discrimination across several socio-economic domains persist. Analysis of the gender disparities currently prevailing in several socio-economic domains crucial to women's empowerment is required to determine the extent of progress that has been made.

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[3] UN Women handbook, 2017.

In terms of representation in decision-making positions, significant progress has been made in reaching gender equity in the public sector. For example, in 2021, females in senior management accounted for 43,8%, and those in middle management positions accounted for 46,0%. Furthermore, South Africa ranks second in Africa and tenth in the world in terms of representation of women in Parliament.[4] Indicators assessed in this report will focus on three dimensions of empowerment, i.e. economic, social and political empowerment.[5] This thematic report will seek to unravel gender disparities in empowerment. It is the third report in a series of empowerment reports that have been published. The report will provide an in-depth analysis of different thematic areas fundamental in realising women empowerment using various data sources.

1.2 Legislative environment on women's empowerment

This section describes the legislative framework, policies, and measures implemented in South Africa that address women's empowerment and the movement toward gender equality. Through these agreements, women empowerment is regarded as central to realising men and women's rights and a way to achieve broader development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, health, education and welfare. The agreements also promote gender mainstreaming and regards it as a priority in measuring and tracking changes in levels of empowerment between women and men.

1.2.1 International Context

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

South Africa is a signatory to several international and regional agreements that have resulted in specific gendered obligations. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) initiated a move to focus on women's empowerment, among others, and countries are required to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promote women's and girls' equal rights.

The Convention provides the basis for realising equality between women and men by ensuring women's equal access to and equal opportunities in political and public life, including the right to vote and to stand for election as well as education, health and employment. State parties agree to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Countries that ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submitting national reports on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations at least every four years.

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) is one of the most important commitments to gender equality ratified by countries in driving significant global progress, especially in developing countries.[6] It affirmed an agenda for women empowerment and enabled the development of action plans and strategies currently integrated in national plans and policies. The BPfA also emphasised on the generation and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data and information to improve planning and evaluation of gender programmes and policies. The BPfA's key priorities flagged during the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, include:

- **Women and poverty** – eliminate and address the needs of women in poverty.
- **Violence against women** – prevent and eliminate violence against women by ensuring equality under the law and I practice.
- **Women and the economy** – promote women's economic rights, access to employment, including control over economic resources by harmonising work and family responsibilities for women and men.
- **Women in power and decision-making roles** – increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and political leadership.

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[4] Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 2019
[5] Kidder, T & Smyth, I.
[6] United Nations 1995. Beijing declaration and Platform for Action. Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs are a global call to action to end poverty, protect the earth's environment and climate, and ensure that people everywhere can enjoy peace and prosperity. Goal 5 of the SDGs seeks to achieve gender equality by 2030 and to end all forms of discrimination and violence against all women and girls everywhere, whilst also recognising and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, as well as ensuring women's full participation and equal opportunities for leadership in political, economic and public life.

1.2.2 Regional context

Gender Equality and Agenda 2063

Gender equality is prioritised in Agenda 2063 as a key component of Africa's future. Aspiration 6 and Goal 17 of the Agenda are most focused on achieving comprehensive gender equality to support people-driven development in Africa. Agenda 2063 emphasises two major priority areas to do this: eradicating violence and discrimination against women and girls; and empowering women and girls. The short-term plan for Agenda 2063 (2013–2023) prioritises economic rights, political participation and representation, women's and girls' empowerment, reducing levels of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls, reducing all harmful social norms and customary practices, and eliminating barriers to quality education, health and social services.

The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Strategy

The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Strategy 2018–2028 of the African Union (AU) is a multisectoral strategy that seeks to eliminate or reduce the main barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment. The GEWE Strategy is a blueprint for enhancing women's agency in Africa and ensuring that, through effective execution of legislation and sufficient financing of gender equality work, women's voices are amplified, and their concerns are effectively addressed. The strategy has four pillars summarised as follows:

The primary goal of Pillar 1 is to maximize opportunities, results, and e-tech dividends. It recommends giving women access to high-quality education and control over resources that may be used for production if they are to be economically empowered and effectively contribute to sustainable development. The GEWE strategy proposes to support and lobby e-Tech firms and financial institutions to fund start-ups and innovation hubs that promote and increase women and girls' equal and effective participation in the technology space.

Pillar 2 is concerned with resilience, dignity, and security. It acknowledges that violence against women and harmful traditional practices like early marriage and female genital mutilation compromise their rights to dignity, security and bodily and psychological integrity. The GEWE Strategy aims to end violence against women and girls (VAWG) and provide funding for initiatives to sanction VAWG.

Pillar 3 highlights the need for effective laws, policies and institutions to promote and protect women's rights.

Pillar 4 is concerned with voice, visibility, and leadership and acknowledges that in order for women to have a voice, they must be equally represented in all decision-making processes and be able to participate effectively, which requires the elimination of all barriers.

1.2.3 National Context

The South African post-apartheid government introduced many policies that target gender equality in the country. The following legislative frameworks and policies were passed post-1994 to improve the living conditions of women and to create a peaceful gender balance within South African society.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 states that all South African citizens have a right to be affirmed and enriched with democratic values of human dignity and equality. Given these human rights values, all citizens, including responsible government officials, must comply with such values and uplift the living conditions of their citizens.

The Employment Equity Act, Act No. 55 of 1998 was established to promote equal opportunity and fair labour practice in the workplace through the elimination of unfair discrimination and implementing of affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

The Gender Equality Strategic Framework (GESF) for Public Service came into effect in 2009. The framework is premised on the promotion and protection of human dignity and human rights of women, including women with disabilities. All government departments must include the following eight principles in their departmental action plans towards achieving women's empowerment and gender equality within the public service workplace:

- Transformation for non-sexism.
- Establishing a policy environment on women's empowerment and gender equality.
- Meeting equity targets by ensuring women's full participation and decision-making by employing 50% women at all levels of the SMS.
- Creating an enabling environment.
- Gender mainstreaming in all work of the department.
- Empowerment through capacity development for women's advancement and gender equality.
- Providing adequate resources for advancing gender equality.
- Accountability, monitoring and evaluation.

Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2013

The bill establishes a legislative framework for the empowerment of women and enables the representation of women in decision-making positions and structures by ensuring that all government departments and private companies fill a minimum of 50% of all senior and top management positions with women. The bill calls for all government departments and private companies to comply with gender transformation in the country. It emphasises access to opportunities and issues of education and training for women.

Advancing Gender Responsive Budgeting in South Africa

In 2019, the Cabinet approved the Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework (GRPBMEAF). This framework aims to introduce a gender lens gradually and systematically within the overall management of public finances. Therefore, gender-specific analysis and instruments are to be integrated at all stages of the budget cycle planning and fiscal strategy, budget preparation, budget execution, review, and external control.

1.3 Objective of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide analysis relating to gender disparities, trends and patterns in women empowerment, including an in-depth analysis of economic, social and political domains to ascertain progress toward gender equality, as illustrated in the framework of women empowerment in Figure 1.1. The report objectives are, therefore to:

- determine gender differences in women empowerment using secondary data from Stats SA and administrative data gathered from other sources; and
- analyse the progress made towards gender equality with regard to economic, social and political indicators.

Figure 1.1: The framework of women empowerment
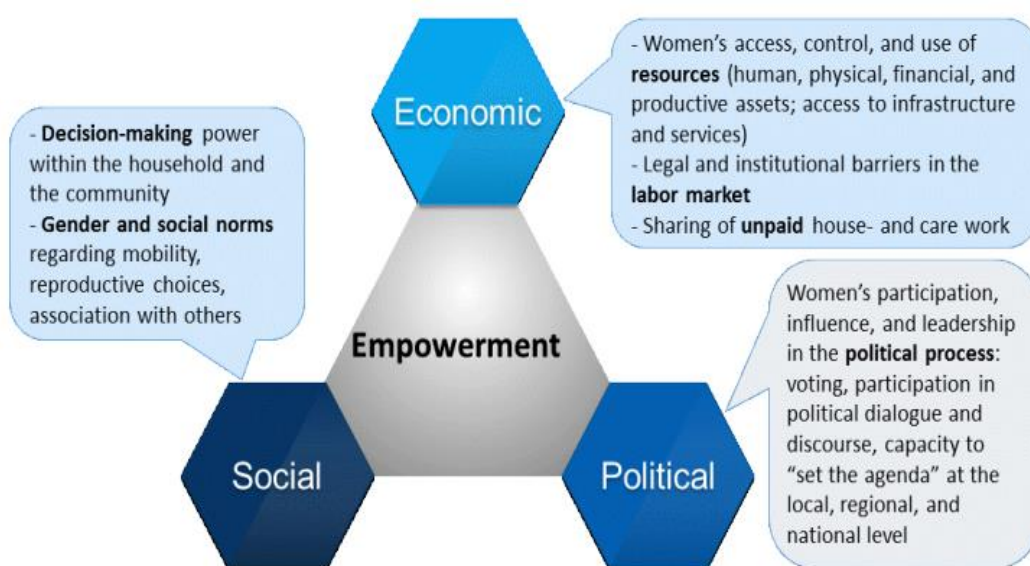
In this report women's empowerment is conceptualised under three domains economic, social and political.

Economic empowerment entails having control over finances and family resources, owning property, having access to markets, having employment opportunities, and being represented in positions of economic decision-making. Economic empowerment therefore enables women to have equal opportunities to enter the workforce, become financially independent, and rise to positions of economic power. Economic empowerment indicators will analyse how women fare in the labour market, their poverty status, ownership of resources and their earnings.

For women to be socially empowered, they must be free from discrimination, be protected from sexual and domestic violence, have access to family planning services, be more visible in public places, and see a change in the cultural norms that still view women as inferior to men. Social empowerment also includes providing women with education opportunities to better their lives. Social empowerment indicators will assess representation in decision-making positions, and perceptions of social gender norms.

Political empowerment involves having the right vote, increasing the representation of women in politics, and representation in local, provincial and national governments. Participation in the political processes and voting enable women to support the policies and causes they believe in. Political empowerment indicators will assess representation of women in national, provincial and local government positions and the electoral processes.

1.4 Data sources

The main data sources for the report are the surveys conducted by Statistics South Africa, which include:

- The General Household Survey (GHS) is an annual household survey which measures the living circumstances of South African households. The GHS collects data on education, health, and social development, housing, households' access to services and facilities, food security, and agriculture.

- The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) is a household-based sample survey that collects data on the labour market activities of individuals aged 15 years or older who live in South Africa

- The Census of Commercial Agriculture (CoCA) collects basic quantitative information on financial, production, employment and related information for the commercial agriculture industry in South Africa.

- The Non-Financial Census of Municipalities (NFCM) collects data on selected aspects of service delivery, including water, electricity, solid waste management, sewerage and sanitation, amongst others from the municipalities.

- The Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (GPSJS) is a countrywide household-based survey and the objectives of the survey are to provide information on the perceptions about citizen interaction, trust in public institutions, government's performance and effectiveness, experience of corruption, general individual perceptions and household and individual perceptions and experience of crime.

- The Survey of Employers and the Self-employed (SESE) provides information about the characteristics of businesses in the informal sector in South Africa which provides an understanding of their operation and access to services. The survey collects information on informal businesses from owners of such businesses.

One of the major challenges in monitoring progress towards attaining gender equity is the lack of data. Even as the official supplier of statistics in South Africa, Stats SA cannot produce all data required to measure gender-related indicators. Therefore, this report also used administrative sources of data analysis. Government departments collect a large amount of data as a part of their day-to-day administration. Administrative records contain a wide variety of data covering different socio-economic and demographic information, which is usually required to complete processes such as providing goods and services. Administrative sources of data used in this report were obtained from the following departments and Institutions:

- Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC);

- Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA),

- Gender Links

1.5 Layout of the report

Chapter 1:   Covers the introduction and briefly discusses the concept of women empowerment and the related legal and policy framework on women empowerment in South Africa. This chapter also seeks to establish the rationale for producing the report and describes the data sources used.

Chapter 2:   Presents the selected demographic indicators that will assist in indirectly measuring the influence of social institutions on gender equality, including the progress of women empowerment and their control over material resources.

Chapter 3:   Looks at women's participation in the South African labour market by focusing on the working-age population and gender trends in labour force participation, analysis on trends in employment gender disparities, and trends in unemployment. The analysis also looks at economic empowerment and resource equity for males and females, particularly social grants, access to communication and asset ownership.

Chapter 4:   Examines social empowerment from perceptions of social gender norms and ascertains gender equality in government decision-making using the Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (GPSJS) 2019 and 2021, and administrative data.

Chapter 5:   Analyses data sourced from the Non-financial census of municipalities 2017 and 2021 and administrative data from relevant government entities. Indicators in this section focus on representation in political decision-making positions and involvement of women in electoral processes.

Chapter 6:   Concludes the report by providing a summary of key findings.

1.6 Limitations of the study

Since the analysis largely relies on sample surveys and a weighting process to extrapolate sample estimates to population estimates, the absolute number of cases does not always correspond with census or

administrative data sources. In addition, due to the sample sizes of the surveys, disaggregation of indicators by sex and municipality may not be possible.

CHAPTER 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

2.1 Background

Demographic information is important in providing a broad understanding of the different characteristics of the population, which include but are not limited to sex, age and population group. More insight provided by the demographic profile will assist in indirectly measuring the influence of social institutions on gender equality, including the progress of women's autonomy, empowerment and control over material resources. This chapter also provides basic information about the number of households headed by females.

2.2 Basic demographics of the population

Map 2.1: Female population by province, 2022
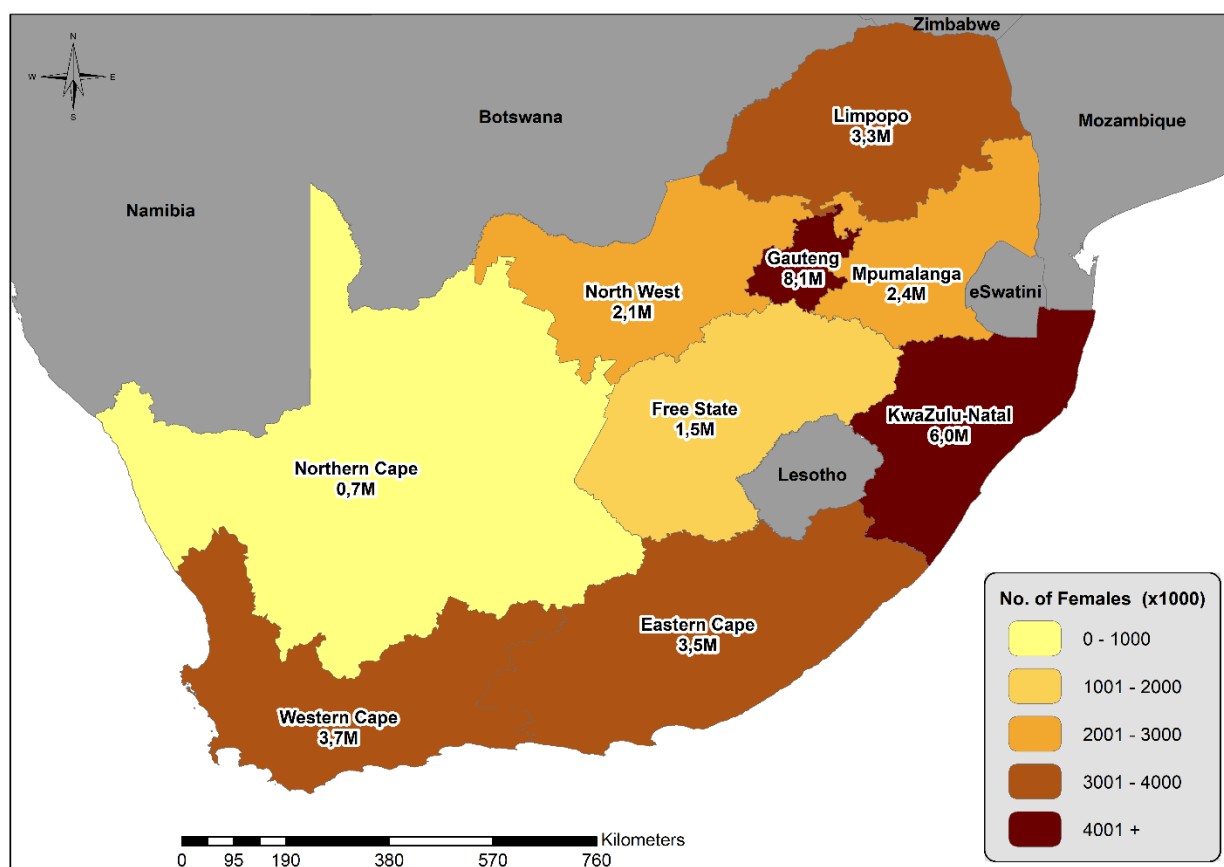
Source: MYPE 2022.

According to the 2022 Mid-year Population Estimates (MYPE), of the 60,6 million people in South Africa, 31,0 million (51,1%) were females. Gauteng comprised the largest share of the female population, with approximately 8,1 million people (26,0%) living in the province. KwaZulu-Natal had the second largest female population in South Africa, with an estimated 6,0 million people (19,4%) living in this province. Northern Cape remained the province with the smallest share of the female population of 661 000 (2,1%).

Figure 2.1: The percentage share of the total population by sex, 2017–2022
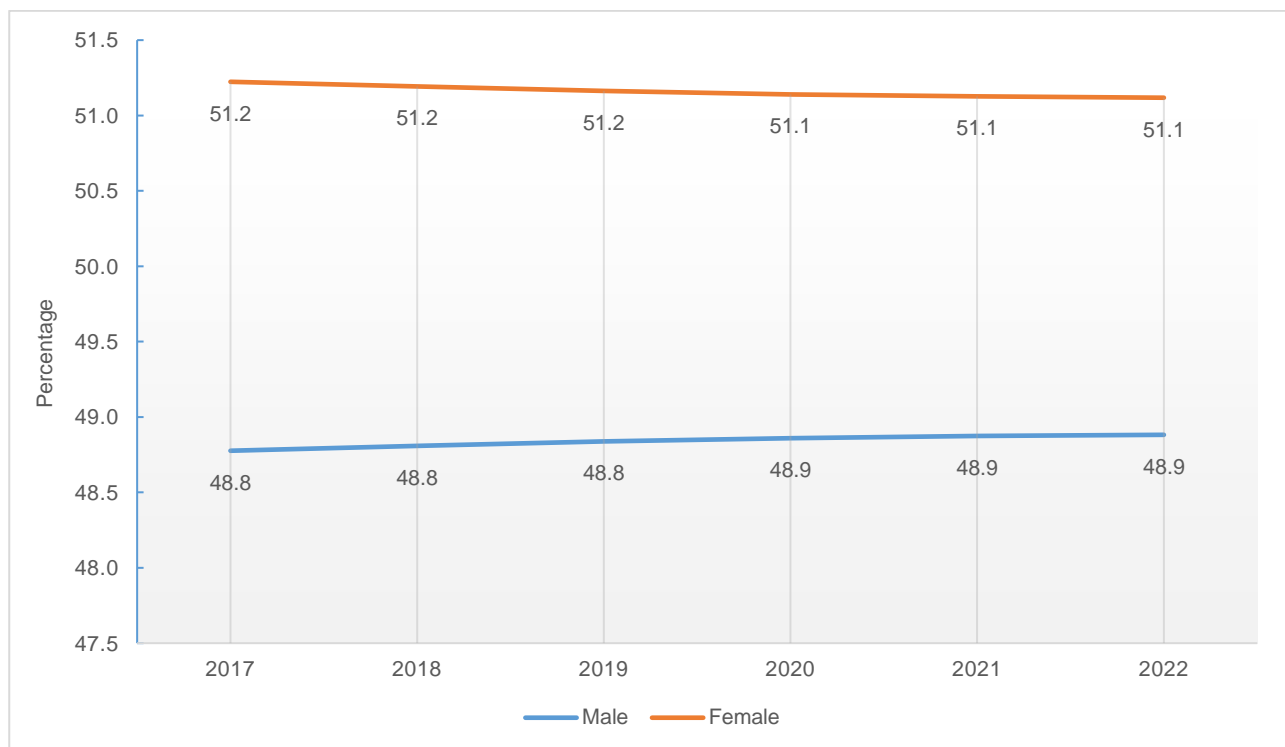
Source: MYPE 2022.

Figure 2.1 shows the percentage share of females in the overall population by sex over six years. Females reported the highest percentage share of the general population compared to their male counterparts for all the years. The female population remained stable, with a marginal reduction of 0,1 of a percentage point in the population size between 2017 and 2022. From 2017 to 2019, the percentage share of females in the overall population remained the same. Between 2019 and 2020, there was a slight decline of 0,1 of a percentage point among females, with the males increasing by the same percentage point. From 2020, the percentage share of males and females as the share of the total population remained constant (48,9% and 51,1%, respectively).

Figure 2.2: Percentage of females as a share of the total population by province, 2017–2022

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
EC	52.8	52.8	52.8	52.8	52.7	52.7
FS	51.7	51.6	51.6	51.6	51.6	51.6
GP	49.8	49.9	49.9	49.9	50.0	50.0
KZN	52.3	52.2	52.2	52.2	52.1	52.1
LP	52.9	52.8	52.7	52.6	52.5	52.5
MP	51.0	51.0	50.9	50.9	50.8	50.8
NC	50.7	50.6	50.6	50.6	50.5	50.5
NW	49.2	49.2	49.2	49.2	49.2	49.2
WC	50.7	50.7	50.7	50.7	50.6	50.6
RSA	51.2	51.2	51.2	51.1	51.1	51.1
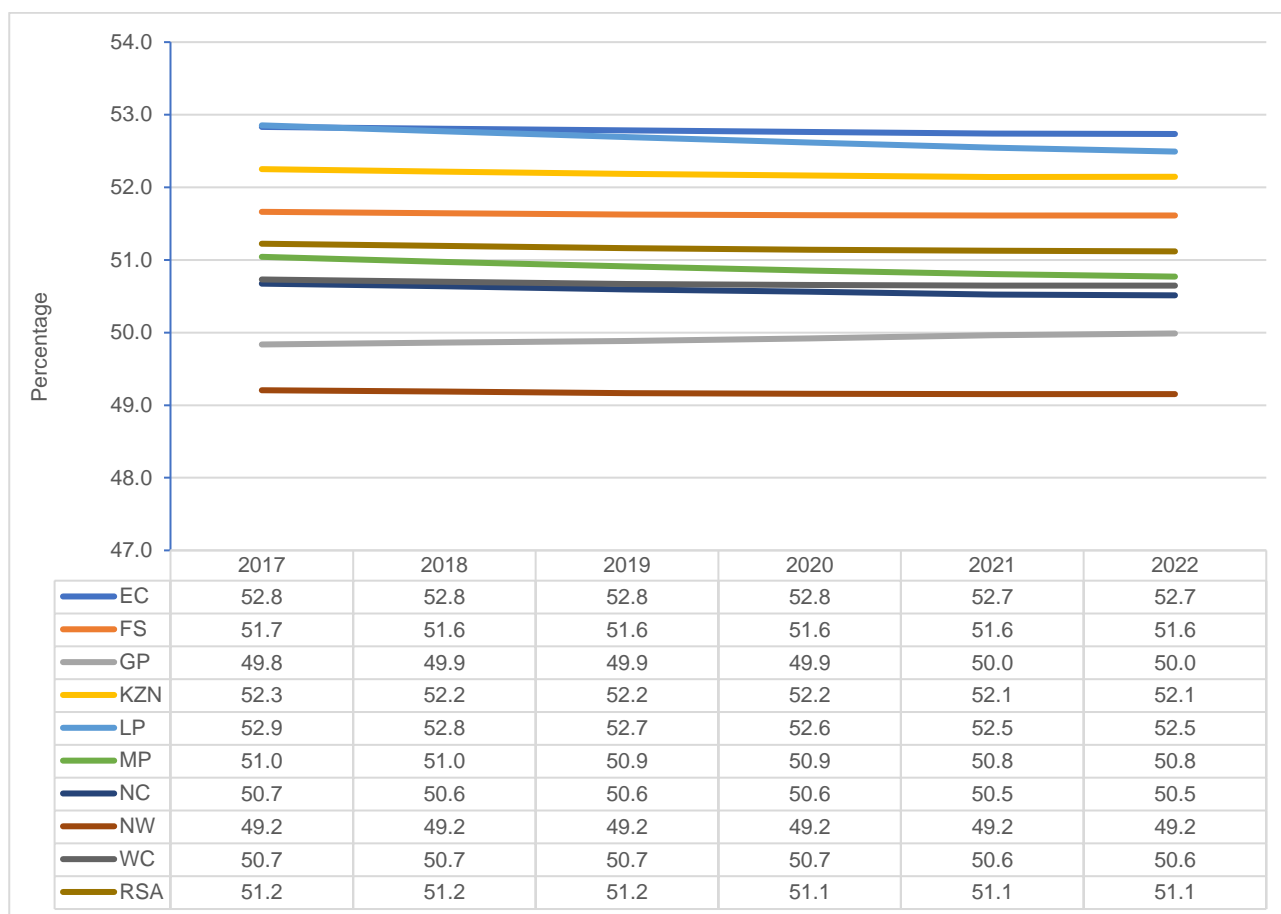
Source: MYPE 2022.

Figure 2.2 shows the percentage of females as a share of the total population within each province between 2017 and 2022. In 2020, the share of the female population within most provinces remained unchanged; however, there was a slight decline in the female population in Limpopo by 0,4 of a percentage point. The North West province had the lowest share of the female population at 49,2%. The analysis also reveals that Limpopo, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State provinces had higher proportions of females in all years of reporting.

Figure 2.3a: Distribution of population by age group and sex, 2017

Figure 2.3b: Distribution of population by age group and sex, 2022
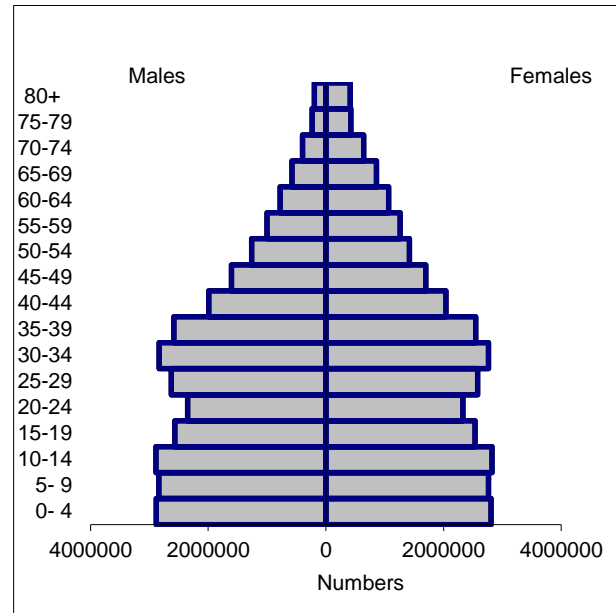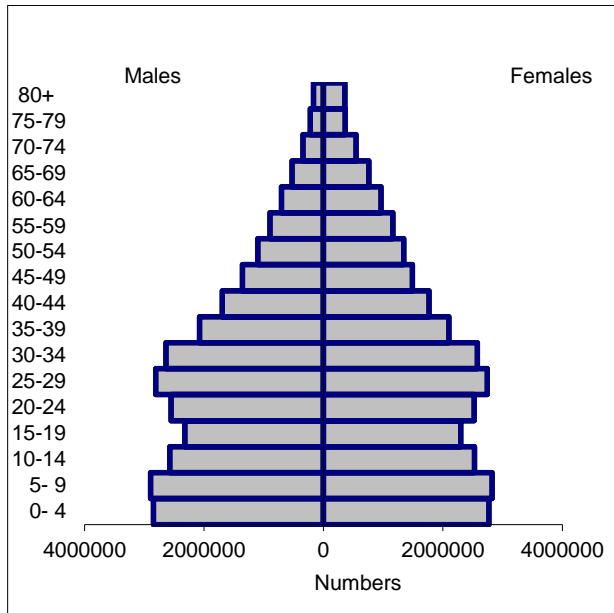
Source: MYPE 2022.

Figures 2.3a and 2.3b show the population distribution by sex and age group, and further indicate that South Africa has a youthful population, with a sizable youth bulge between the ages of 20–34 in 2017 and 25–34 in 2022. In 2017, there were 29,1 million females in South Africa, which increased by 1,8 million to 31,0 million in 2022. In 2022 the highest proportions of both males and females were those in the age category 10–14 years. Both males and females aged 20–24 years showed the highest decrease in population between the years 2017 and 2022. Conversely, males and females aged 35–39 years recorded the highest increase in population size. The pyramid also shows that men outnumber women from ages 0 to 39; however, beginning at age 40, women outnumber men. The pyramid also shows that in 2022, the population of those 80 years and older increased relative to 2017, with females recording the biggest increase.

Figure 2.4: Percentage distribution of females by population group, 2017 and 2022
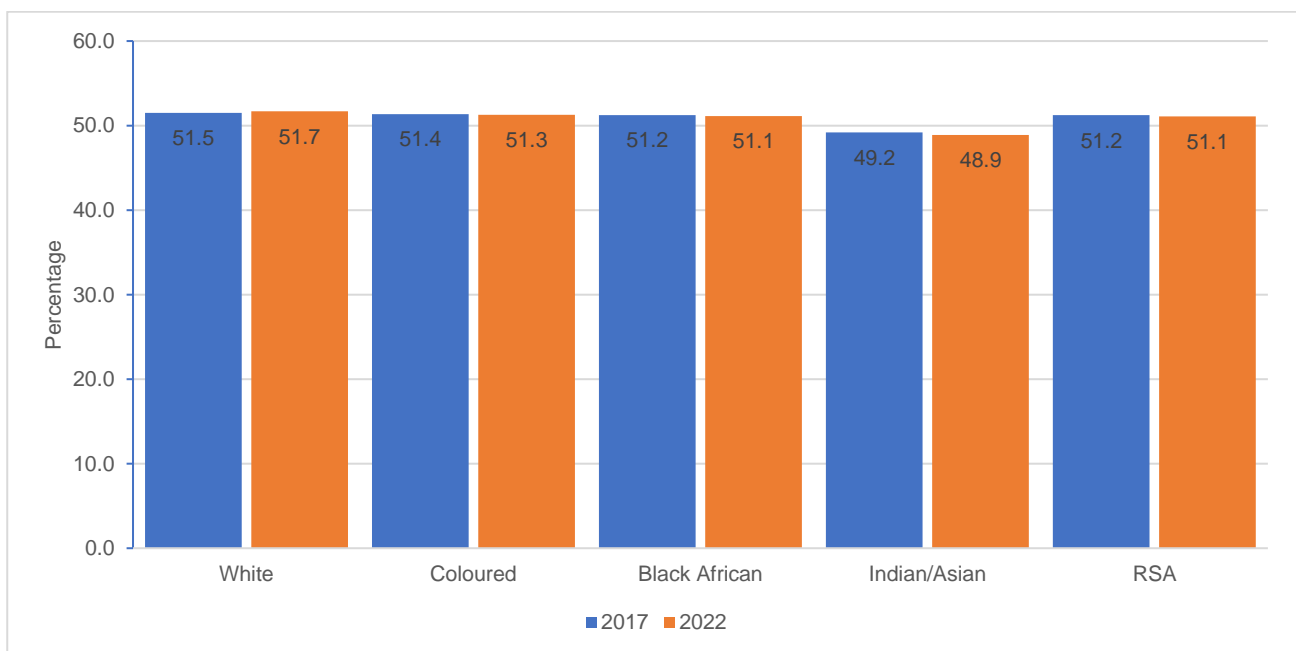
Source: MYPE 2022.

The whites were the only population group that showed a positive increase in the female population, while the other population groups recorded a decline in the proportion of females for the reporting period. The white population recorded a slight 0,2 of a percentage point increase from 51,5% in 2017 to 51,7% in 2022, which was above the national average (51,2% and 51,1%, respectively).

2.3 Characteristics of households

Map 2.2: Female-headed households by province, 2021
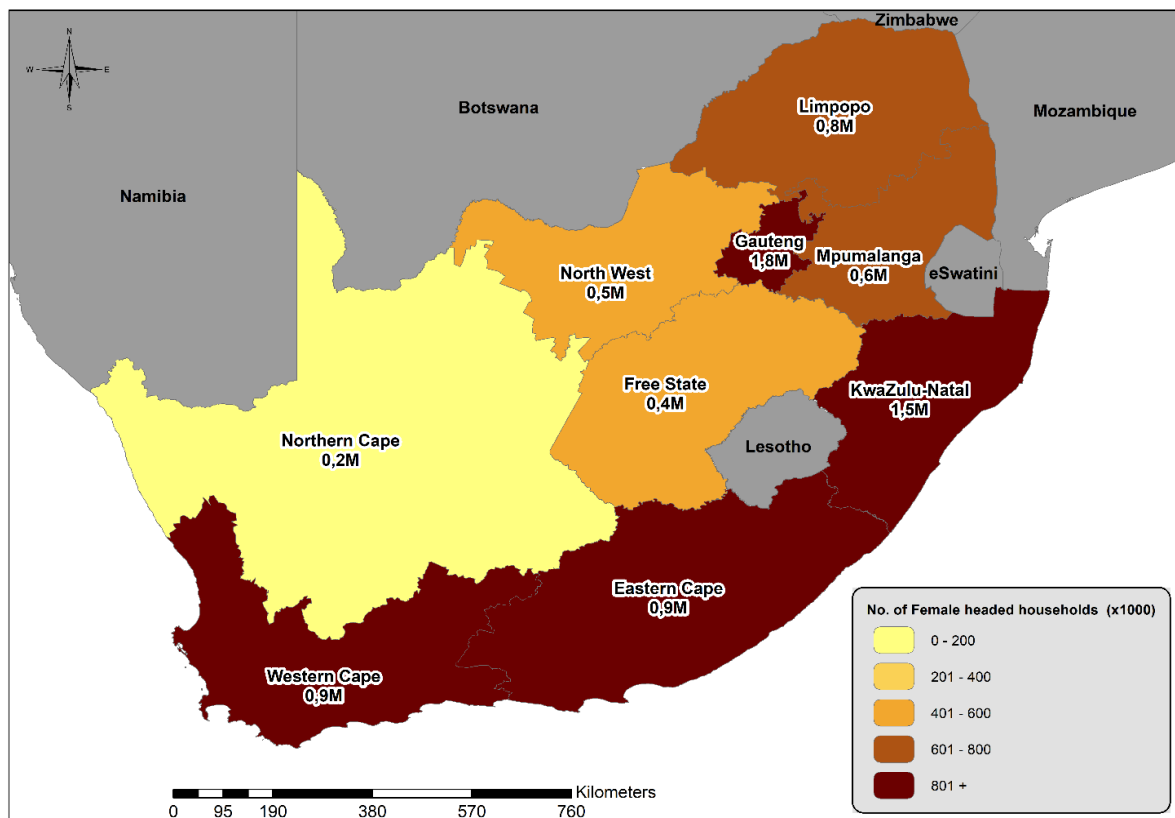
Source: GHS 2021.

In 2021, there were 18,0 million households in South Africa, and 7,6 million (42,1%) were headed by females. Gauteng comprises the largest share of female-headed households, with approximately 1,8 million female-headed households (33,9%) in this province. KwaZulu-Natal is the second largest female-headed households in South Africa, with an estimated 1,5 million people (48,3%) living in this province. Northern Cape remains the province with the lowest share of female-headed households of 149 670 (41,2%).

Figure 2.5a: Proportion of female-headed households to SA by province, 2017
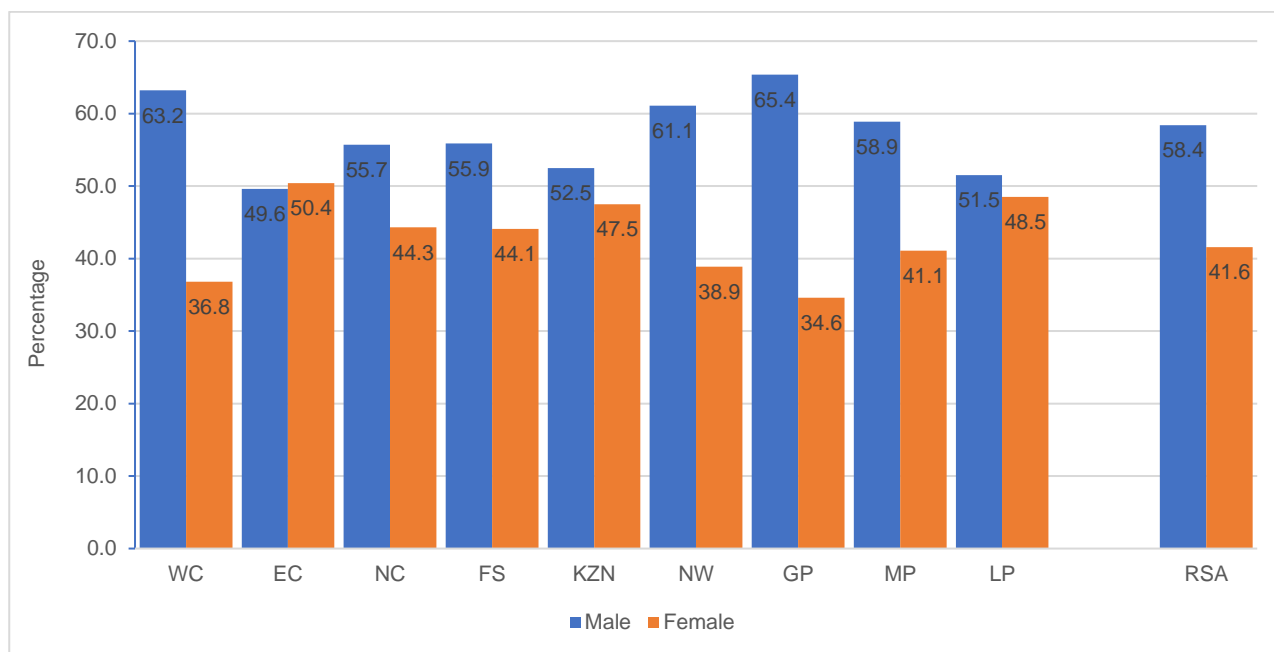
Source: GHS 2017.

Figure 2.5b: Proportion of female-headed households to SA by province, 2021
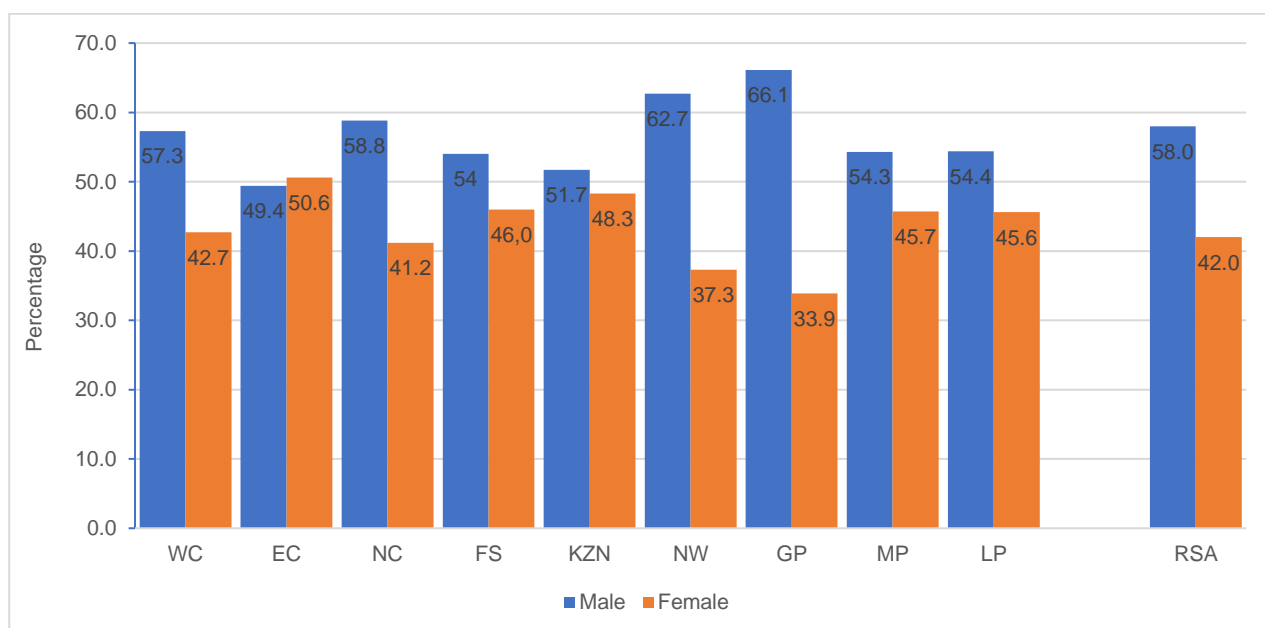
Source: GHS 2021.

Understanding the composition of household to identify female-headed households is important in gender analysis. Figures 2.5a and 2.5b above show that a sizeable number of households in South Africa were headed by males between 2017 and 2021. The analysis revealed that more than four-tenths (41,6%) of the households in South Africa were headed by females, which increased by 0,4 of a percentage point in 2021. Northern Cape, Gauteng, North West and Limpopo showed a decrease in female-headed households for the reporting period. In 2021, female-headed households were most common in provinces with large rural areas such as Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

Figure 2.6: Proportion of female-headed households to SA by population group, 2017 and 2021
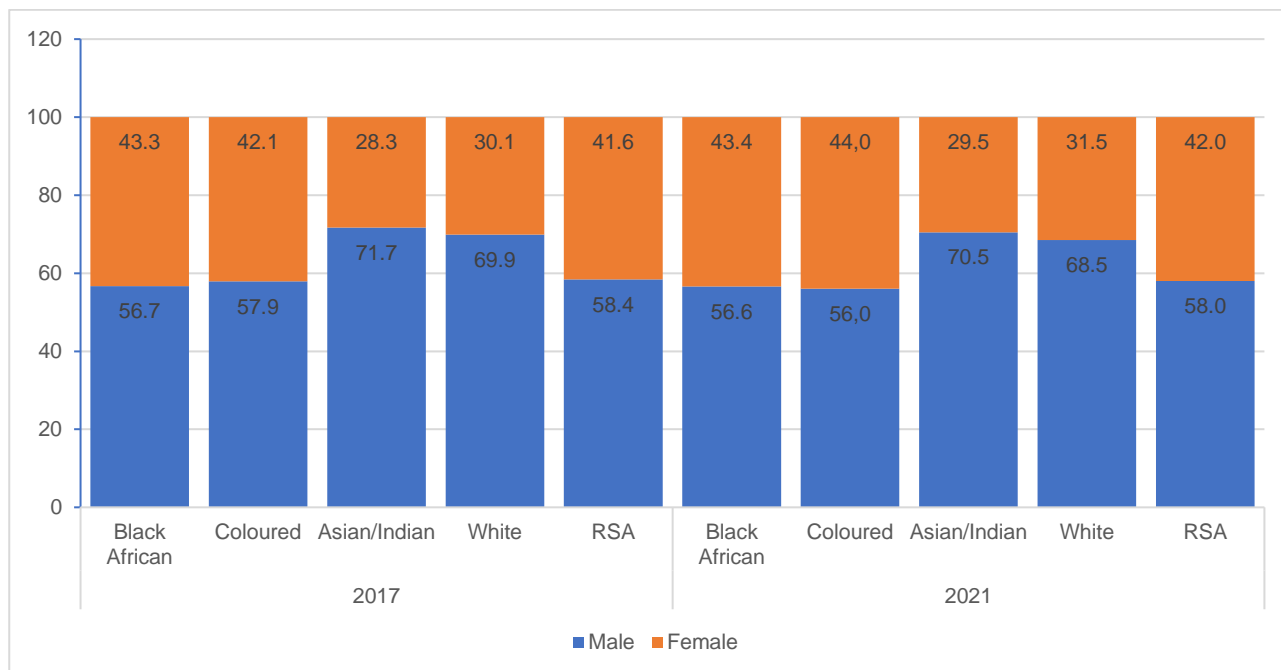
Source: GHS 2017 and 2021.

Figure 2.6 depicts that most female-headed households were among black Africans in 2017, followed by coloureds. However, in 2021 the coloured population had the majority of female-headed households with 0,6 percentage points, slightly higher than the black Africans. All four population groups showed an increase in the proportion of female-headed households.

Figure 2.7: Proportion of female-headed households without an employed household member by the presence of children, 2017

	2017 Male	2017 Female	2021 Male	2021 Female
None	58.2	41.8	60.2	39.8
1-2 children	29.8	70.2	31.4	68.6
3-4 children	25.9	74.1	26.3	73.7
5 and above	25.5	74.5	19.7	80.3
RSA	42.4	57.6	43.8	56.2
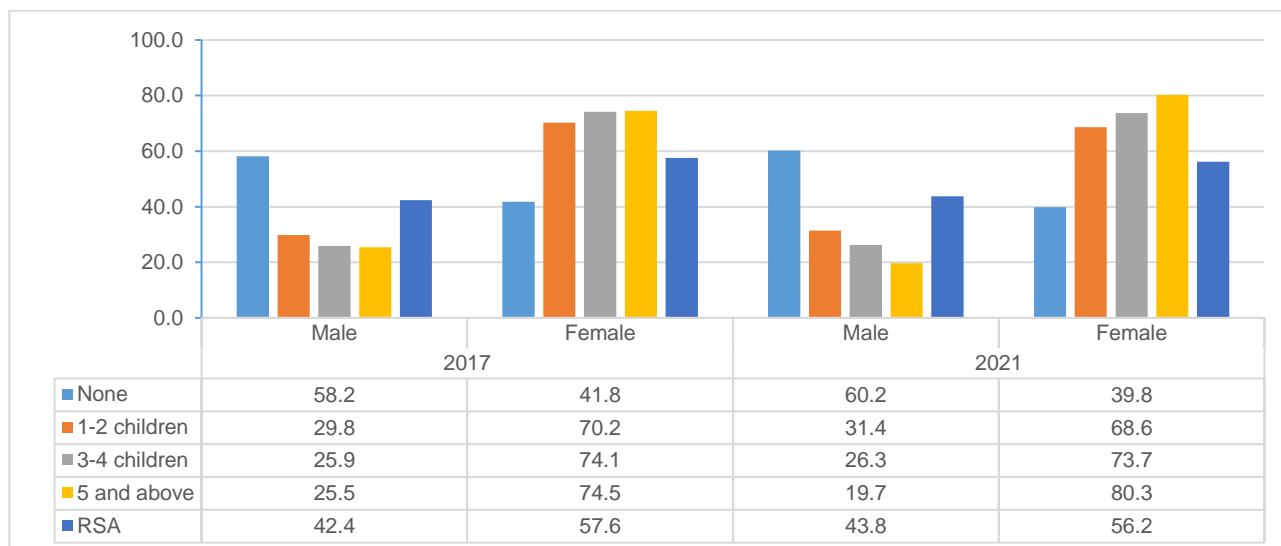
Source: GHS 2017 and 2021.

Figure 2.7 shows that for both years, there were more female-headed households without an employed household member (57,6% in 2017 and 56,2% in 2021) than male-headed households. The percentage of female-headed households without an employed household member increased along with the number of children, with the highest percentage being observed among those who had five or more children for both years (74,5% in 2017 and 80,3% in 2021). Conversely, the proportion of male-headed households without an employed household member was higher than their female counterparts for households with no children for both years.

2.4 Conclusion

According to the 2022 Mid-year Population Estimates (MYPE), the female population in South Africa was estimated at 31,0 million (51,1%). Females reported the highest percentage share of the overall population compared to their male counterparts for all the years. The white population is the only population group that showed a positive increase in the female population, while the other population groups recorded a decline in their female populations for the reporting period.

In 2021, there were 18,0 million households in South Africa, and 7,6 million (42,1%) were headed by females. Gauteng comprises the largest share of female-headed households, followed by KwaZulu-Natal; Northern Cape had the least. All four population groups showed an increase in the proportion of female-headed households. In 2021, female-headed households were most common in provinces with large rural areas such as Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

3.1 Background

Economic empowerment is regarded as a powerful tool against poverty.[7] Employment or running a business provides individuals with a strong sense of economic independence, enabling them to contribute to their household's welfare. Some studies suggest that if there are existing gender gaps in accessing economic opportunities, the quality and quantity of the labour supply will be distorted and inefficient, negatively affecting productivity and economic growth.[8] Therefore, the participation of females in the economy is vital as it gives them access and control over resources and enables them to earn income to support their households. However, more often, women experience barriers that restrict their participation in the labour market, particularly the traditional gendered roles that make women subservient to their male counterparts; for example, women are expected to engage in unpaid work, such as being caretakers and providers of household work. South Africa has policies in place designed to ensure that women and men have equal rights and opportunities. With all the mechanisms developed to try and close the gender gap, the country still experiences gender disparities in employment.

The chapter provides key indicators that inform progress on market participation in the development and economic empowerment context of women. The information provided in this section is mainly informed by the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), which is a key measurement tool for monitoring gender equality as it provides information on employment, unemployment, reasons for economic inactivity and other labour-related information. This analysis is taken further by linking economic participation and resource equity. The resources discussed in this chapter include social grants, access to communication and asset ownership

3.2 The working-age population

The working-age population comprises all persons aged 15 years and above. For reporting purposes, working age population will be those persons 15-64 years. The indicator is used to measure the share of the working-age population in the total population and how it varies over time. However, not everyone who is part of the working-age population is actively engaged in the labour market; some are employed, unemployed, or out of the labour force.

Table 3.1: Working-age population by sex and province, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017						2022					
	Male		**Female**		**Both sexes**		**Male**		**Female**		**Both sexes**	
Province	**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**
Western Cape	2 173	11,9	2 263	12,1	4 436	12,0	2 359	11,9	2 520	12,5	4 879	12,2
Eastern Cape	2 037	11,1	2 141	11,4	4 178	11,3	2 207	11,1	2 219	11,0	4 425	11,1
Northern Cape	394	2,2	388	2,1	783	2,1	404	2,0	419	2,1	823	2,1
Free State	927	5,1	959	5,1	1 887	5,1	948	4,8	977	4,8	1 925	4,8
KwaZulu-Natal	3 255	17,8	3 612	19,3	6 868	18,5	3 494	17,6	3 903	19,3	7 397	18,5
North West	1 275	7,0	1 226	6,5	2 501	6,7	1 303	6,6	1 409	7,0	2 712	6,8
Gauteng	5 068	27,7	4 837	25,8	9 905	26,7	5 670	28,6	5 216	25,8	10 886	27,2
Mpumalanga	1 392	7,6	1 448	7,7	2 841	7,7	1 522	7,7	1 547	7,7	3 068	7,7
Limpopo	1 784	9,7	1 879	10,0	3 663	9,9	1 939	9,8	1 978	9,8	3 917	9,8
RSA	**18 307**	**100,0**	**18 753**	**100,0**	**37 061**	**100,0**	**19 846**	**100,0**	**20 187**	**100,0**	**40 033**	**100,0**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

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[7] Elliott, C.M. 2008. Global empowerment of women: Responses to globalization and politicized religions. Routledge, New York.
[8] Abu-Ghaida, Dina, & Stephan Klasen. 2004. "The Costs of Missing the Millennium Development Goal on Gender Equity."

Changes in the size of the working-age population have a bearing on the labour market and the economy.[9] An increasing working-age population provides employment and economic growth opportunities while simultaneously creating challenges for job creation and absorption of new entrants, which has been the case in South Africa with soaring unemployment levels. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the working-age population between 2017 and 2022. During the 5 years, the working-age population in South Africa was estimated to have increased by 2,9 million from 37,1 million in 2017 to 40 million in 2022. Over a quarter of the country's working-age population resided in Gauteng, followed by KwaZulu-Natal (18,5%) and Western Cape (12,2%).

In terms of gender disparities, there were no significant differences in the distribution of the working-age population across provinces. Among males of working-age, Gauteng recorded the highest share of 27,7% and 28,6% in 2017 and 2022 respectively, while females also observed a similar trend of 25,8% for both years of reporting.

Figure 3.1a: Percentage distribution of the working-age population by sex, geo-type and marital status, Q1: 2017

Figure 3.1b: Percentage distribution of the working-age population by sex, geo-type and marital status, Q1: 2022
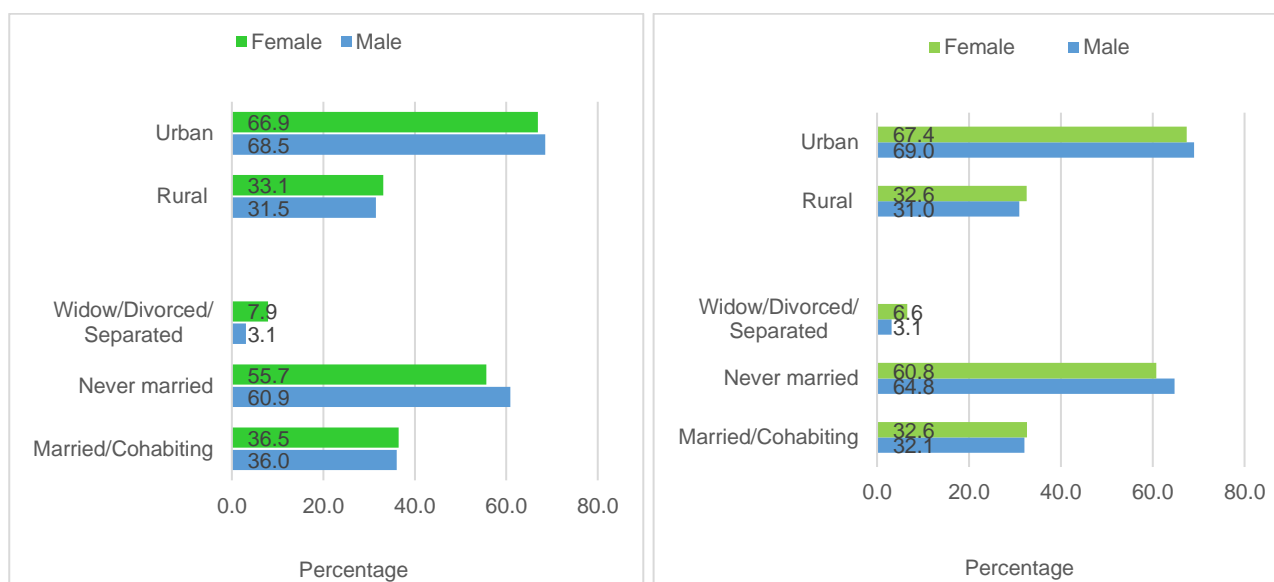
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Figures 3.1a and 3.1b show the working-age population by sex, geo-type and marital status between 2017 and 2022. The migration of people to urban areas is mainly influenced by the hope of accessing economic opportunities and basic services, linked to rural unemployment and development. The working-age population in urban areas slightly increased by half a percentage point during the period for both sexes, even though a gender gap of 1,4 percentage points was observed in favour of males residing in urban areas.

In terms of marital status, the proportion of males and females who were never married increased by 3,9 and 5,1 percentage points, respectively. Contrary, a decline was observed among the married/cohabiting males and females of 3,9 percentage points, respectively.

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[9] International Labour Organization, 2013.

Figure 3.2a: Percentage distribution of the working-age population by sex and presence of children in the household, Q1: 2017
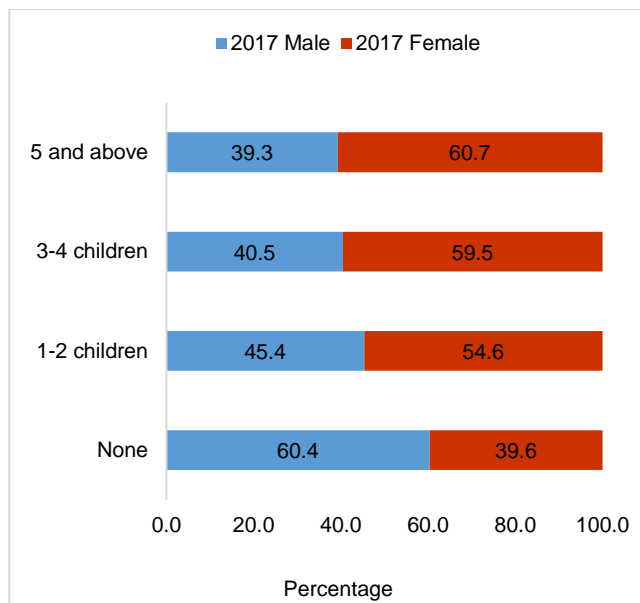
Figure 3.2:b Percentage distribution of the working-age population by sex and presence of children in the household, Q1: 2022
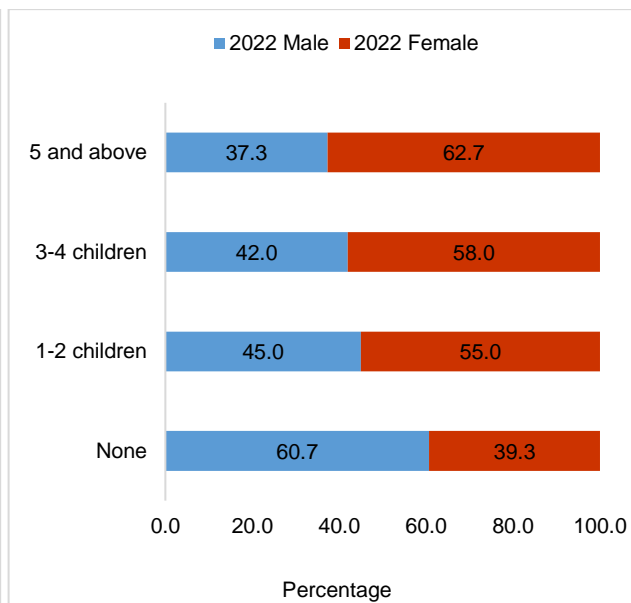
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Children are classified as persons younger than eighteen years. Figures 3.2a and 3.2b show the share of the working-age population living with children. These figures depict that a higher percentage of households living with children were found among female-headed households, ranging from 55% for those living with a child or 2 to 62,7% for those with 5 or more children. On the other hand, males commonly resided in households with no children at 60,4% in 2017 and 60,7% in 2022.

3.3 Labour force participation

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the labour force participation rate (LFPR) as the measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that is engaged in the labour market, either by actively working or looking for work. Labour force participation contributes to economic growth and sustainable development, and limited growth in the population of economically active individuals can negatively affect long-term economic growth, unless there are increases in labour participation.[10]

Many factors influence labour force participation, some of which are not easily measurable. These factors include variations in sex, population group, educational attainment, household structure and the geographic areas of the country, which include urban or rural settings.

From a gender perspective, the LFPR assesses whether there is equitable access to the labour market for females in comparison to males. It is therefore essential for several reasons; for example, the participation of females in the economy is positively associated with earning income, better access to and control over resources, providing for their households and reducing poverty.[11] This section examines gender disparities in labour force participation.

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[10] Daly, K. 2007. "Gender Inequality, Growth and Global Ageing," Global Economics Paper.
[11] Bravo, D. & Contreras, D. 2004. Income distribution 1190-1996: Analysis of the impacts of the labour markets and social policies, reforms and social review, 99-128.

Figure 3.3: Labour force participation rate by sex, Q1: 2017 – Q1: 2022

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	66.6	65.6	65.0	66.3	62.6	63.2
Female	54.6	53.2	52.6	54.5	50.2	50.7
Both sexes	60.5	59.3	58.8	60.3	56.4	56.9
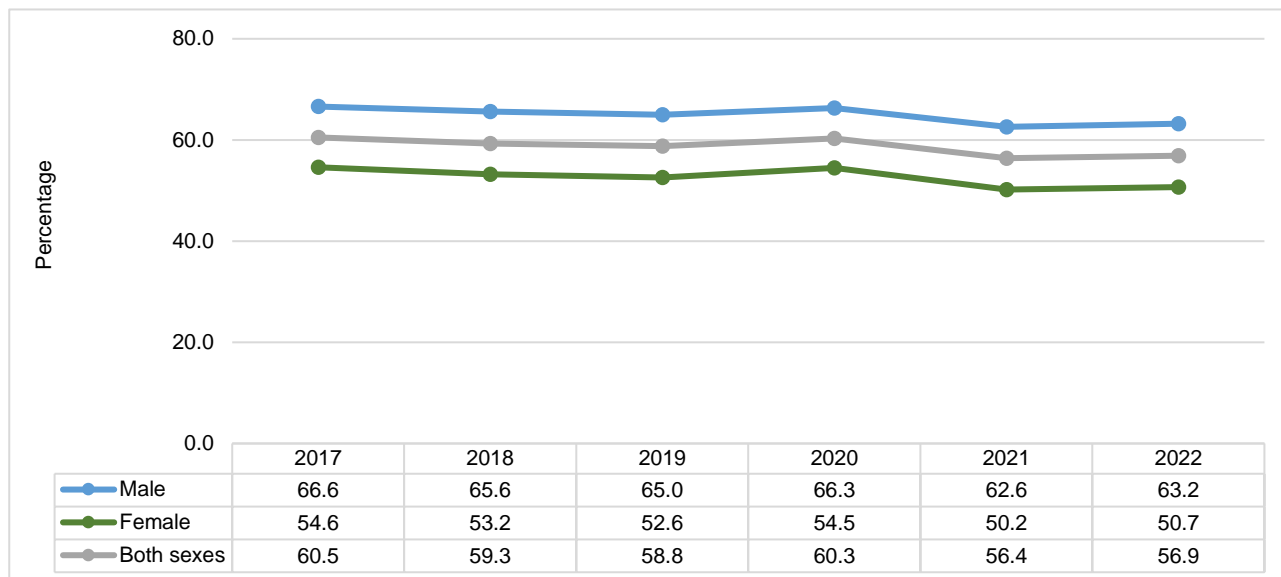
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 – Q1: 2022.

Figure 3.3 shows the labour force participation rate by sex as the proxy to determine the size of the South African economy's productive potential. Nationally, participation rates of males and females slightly declined over the period.

The labour force participation rates of males were higher than that of females throughout the period. Even though both sexes participated at lower rates in 2022 than in 2017, the gap between male and female participation rates remained stable over the years.

Figure 3.4a: Labour force participation rate by sex and province, Q1: 2017
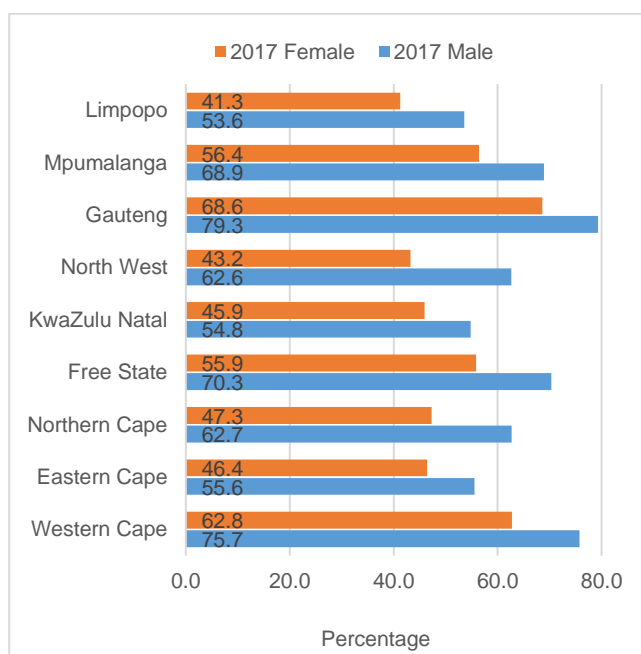
Figure 3.4b: Labour force participation rate by sex and province, Q1: 2022
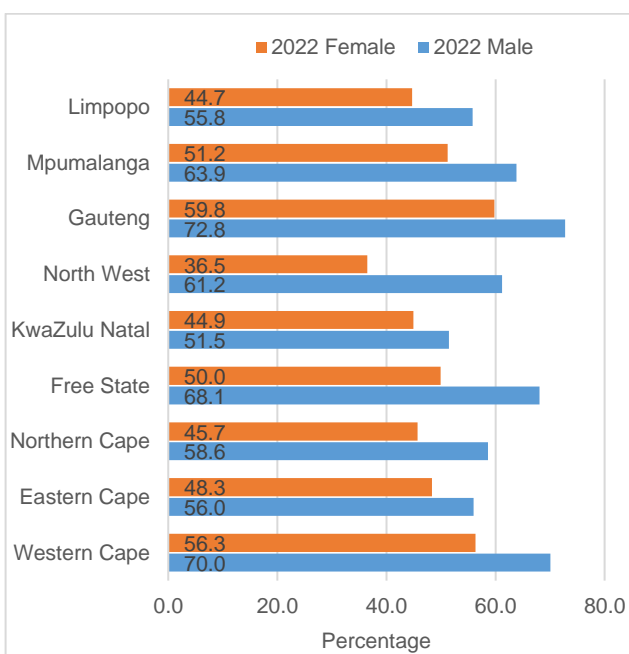
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Labour force participation rates have steadily declined over the years, and more recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which contributed immensely to unemployment and economic inactivity. Figures 3.4a and 3.4b show the provincial distribution of labour force participation rates between 2017 and 2022. The decrease in the national participation rates was reflected in the provinces, except for Limpopo and the Eastern Cape where there was a slight increase.

Despite the overall dip observed during the period, the highest labour force participation rate was observed among males; Gauteng reported 72,8%, followed by a 70,0% participation rate in Western Cape. The lowest labour participation rate for males was observed in KwaZulu-Natal (51,5%). For females, the labour participation rate was also highest in Gauteng 59,8%, followed by 56,3% in Western Cape, while the lowest labour participation rate is observed in North West (36,5%).

Figure 3.5: Labour force participation rate by sex, population group and educational attainment, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Black/African	Other	Black/African	Other	Black/African	Other	Black/African	Other
		2017				2022			
Graduates		93.4	90.9	91.6	85.0	89.5	92.5	87.4	83.5
Less than Matric		57.1	61.2	44.3	42.9	52.9	53.3	39.5	32.4
Matric		75.5	79.5	62.3	62.7	71.8	73.6	58.4	58.1
Other Tertiary		90.0	90.5	84.4	79.5	85.3	92.3	79.5	73.2
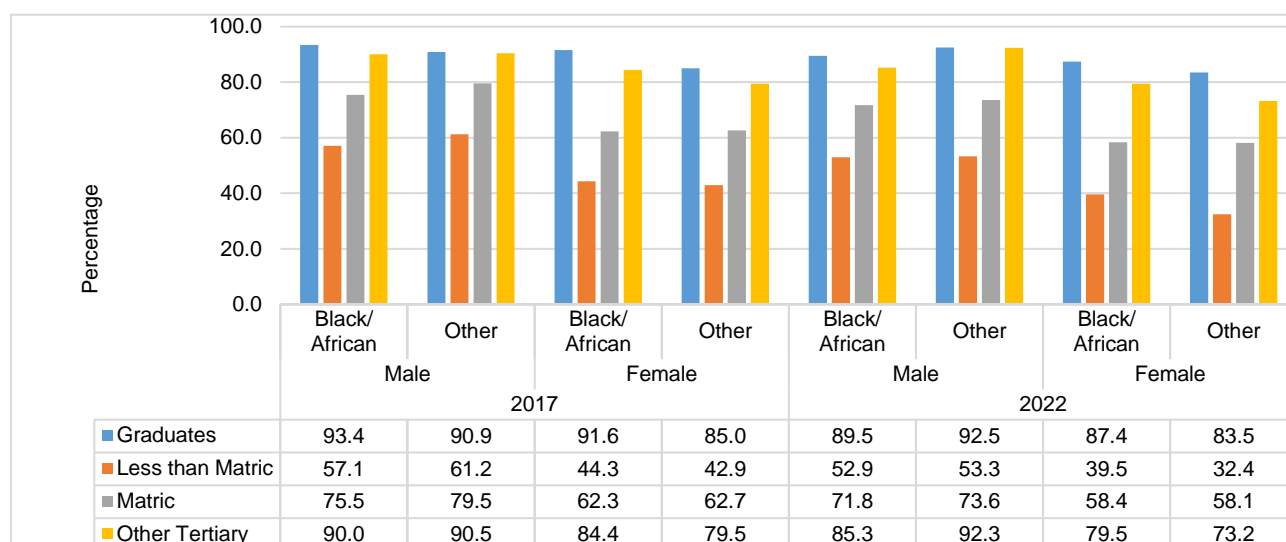
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Generally, population groups are not homogeneous, and South Africa is not different. Figure 3.5 shows labour force participation rates by sex, population group and educational attainment. In this report, the category 'other population groups' comprise whites, coloureds and Indian/Asian groups. Notably, a positive relationship between educational attainment and the labour force participation rate was observed for all population groups and sexes.

Participation rates for black African males and females declined over the reference period for all education levels, which was contrary to other population groups. Amongst black African female graduates and those with other tertiary education, participation rates declined from 91,6% and 84,4% in 2017 to 87,4% and 79,5% in 2022 respectively. Nine in ten males who were graduates or had other tertiary qualifications had the highest LFPR compared to those with less than matric or matric; the pattern was similar for both years of reporting.

Table 3.2: Labour force participation rate by sex and the presence of children in the household, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017			2022		
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**
Children	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
None	77,3	65,7	72,7	73,3	59,6	67,9
1–2 children	63,8	55,0	59,0	59,9	51,0	55,0
3–4 children	52,7	45,7	48,5	49,7	42,7	45,7
5 and above	38,1	36,9	37,4	39,6	38,2	38,7
Total	**66,6**	**54,6**	**60,5**	**63,2**	**50,7**	**56,9**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

A gendered perspective of labour market participation is important in gender analysis. Studies have shown that women are faced with many responsibilities in their respective households that hinder them from actively participating in the labour force, such as childbearing, lack of affordable childcare, gender roles and work-family balance.[12] Labour force participation rates by sex and the presence of children in the household are depicted in Table 3.2, showing a linear relationship between the number of children in the household and participation rates irrespective of sex.

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[12] World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women, 2017.

Notably, participation rates were higher where there were no children in the household and more commonly so for males than their female counterparts. The results show that the number of children in the household was likely to decrease the labour participation of women in the labour market. Participation rates in 2022 were lowest among males and females who lived with 5 or more children at 39,6% and 38,2% respectively.

3.4 Levels of employment and employment rate

Employment is defined as work done by persons of any sex to produce goods or provide services, even if it's only for an hour; this can be for payment in cash or in kind. Gender differences in labour productivity are influenced by differences in the economic activities of men and women.[13] This section of the chapter presents an overview of gender disparities in relation to employment.

Figure 3.6: Employment rate by sex, Q1: 2017 – Q1: 2022

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	49.3	49.1	48.0	47.5	43.0	42.4
Female	38.3	37.9	37.2	36.9	33.1	32.2
Both sexes	43.7	43.5	42.6	42.1	38.0	37.3
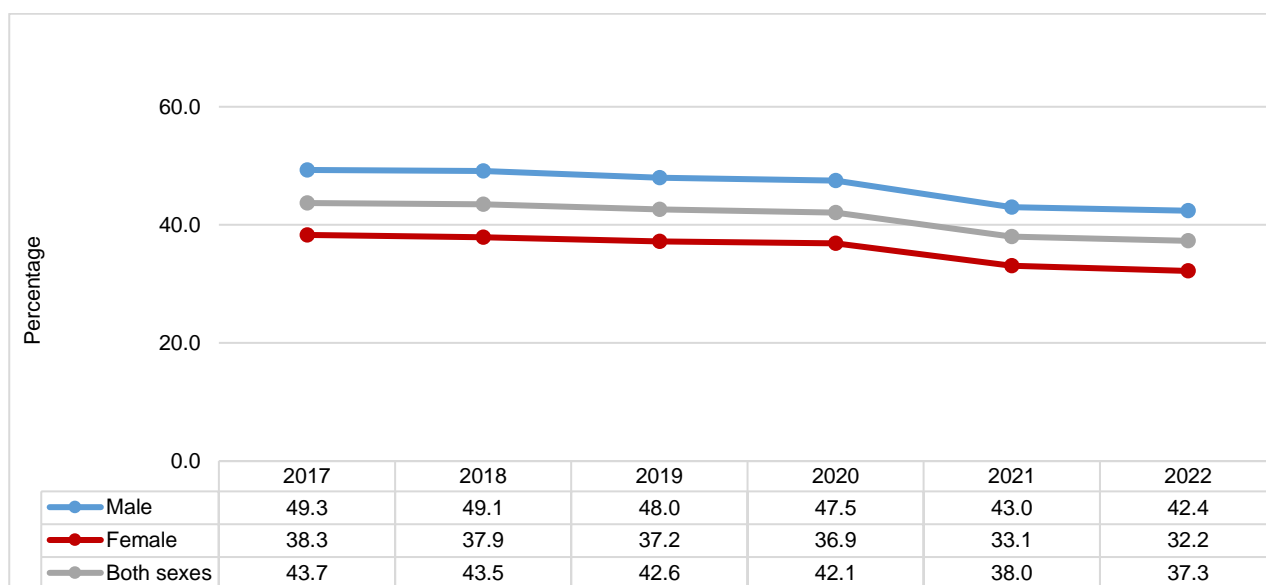
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 – Q1: 2022.

The employment rate measures the number of people who have jobs as a percentage of the working age population. Figure 3.6 shows a trend analysis of employment rates in South Africa between 2017 and 2022. Nationally, employment rates gradually declined from 43,7% in 2017 to 37,3% in 2022. The male employment rates were generally higher than that of females. The gender parity ratio in employment widened from 0,77 in 2017 to 0,75 in 2022, indicating that more males were employed than their female counterparts.

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[13] Dolado J., Felgueroso, F. & Jimeno, J.F. 2004. Where do women work? Analysing patterns in occupational segregation by gender, Annals of Economics and Statistics, 17/72:293-315.

Table 3.3: Levels of employment by sex and age group, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

Age group	2017			2022		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
	N(˙000)	N(˙000)	N(˙000)	N(˙000)	N(˙000)	N(˙000)
15–24 yrs	767	548	1 315	559	361	919
25–34 yrs	2 855	2 111	4 966	2 399	1 792	4 192
35–44 yrs	2 783	2 233	5 016	2 729	2 010	4 739
45–54 yrs	1 812	1 582	3 393	1 948	1 691	3 639
55–64 yrs	813	709	1 522	773	653	1 426
Total	**9 030**	**7 182**	**16 212**	**8 407**	**6 507**	**14 914**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

In addition to sex, age often produces an intersectional element in gender analysis. Table 3.3 shows that between 2017 and 2022, levels of employment decreased by 1,3 million. Females recorded the highest decline of about 675 thousand.

Within each age group, fewer females than males were employed for both years (2017 and 2022). In 2017, levels of employment were the highest for males aged 25–34 and females aged 35–44. In 2022; males in the 35–44 age cohort were the most likely to be employed whilst highest levels of employment for females were still found among those aged 35–44.

Figure 3.7a: Employment rate in relation to levels of employment by sex and age group, Q1: 2017
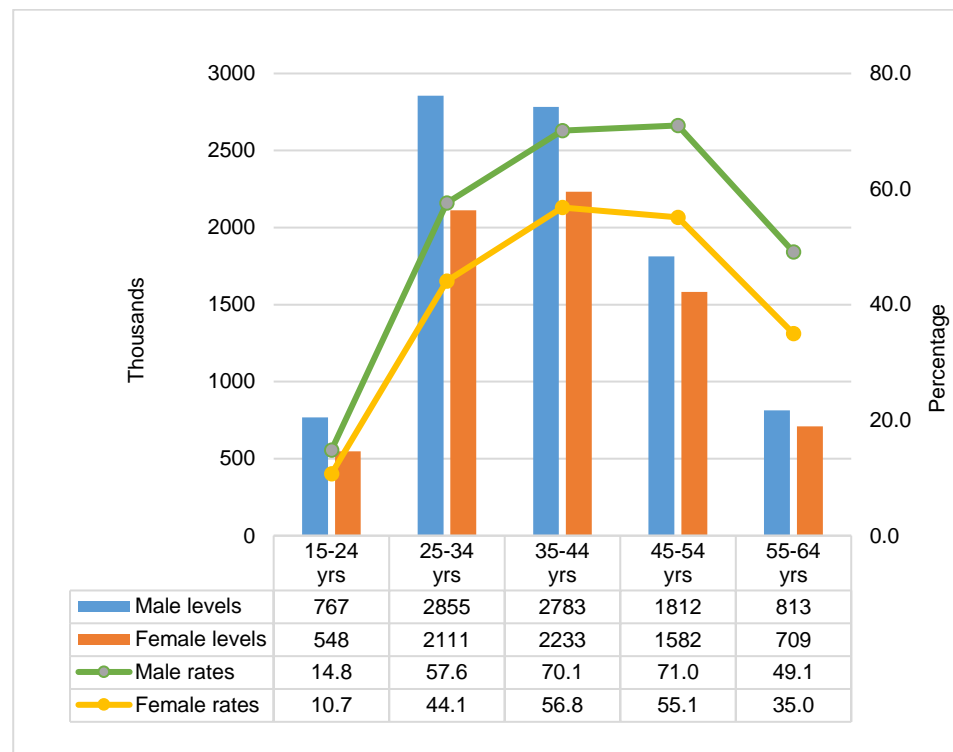
Figure 3.7b: Employment rate in relation to levels of employment by sex and age group, Q1: 2022

	15-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs
Male levels	767	2855	2783	1812	813
Female levels	548	2111	2233	1582	709
Male rates	14.8	57.6	70.1	71.0	49.1
Female rates	10.7	44.1	56.8	55.1	35.0

	15-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs
Male levels	559	2399	2729	1948	773
Female levels	361	1792	2010	1691	653
Male rates	10.9	45.2	61.5	62.9	41.0
Female rates	7.1	35.0	46.8	50.6	28.1
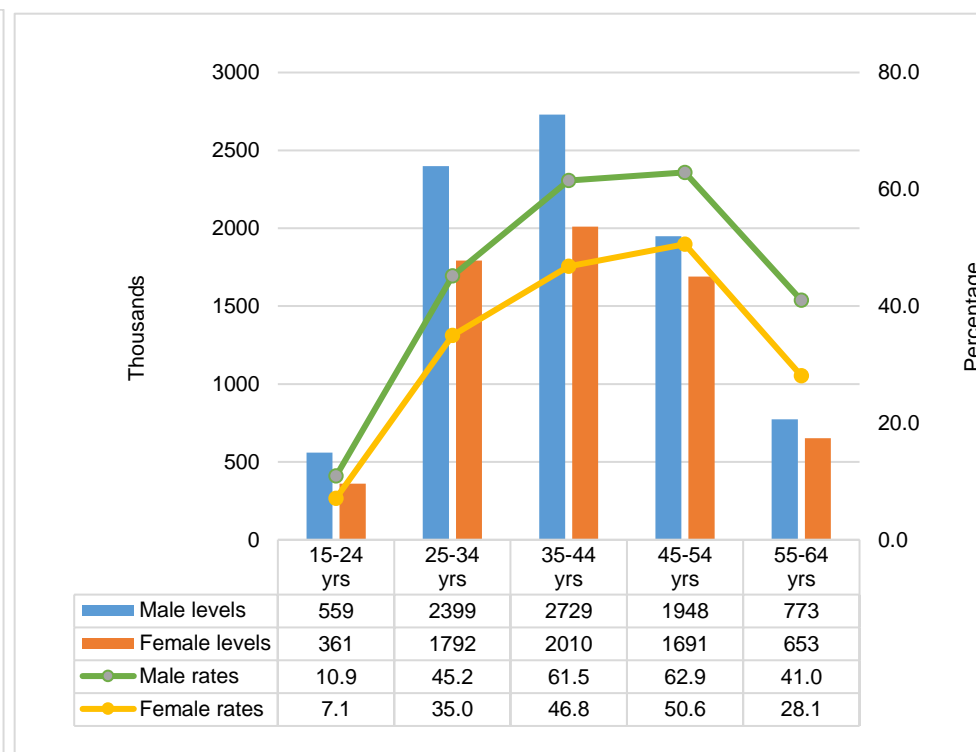
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Figures 3.7a and 3.7b illustrate the employment rates in relation to levels of employment for males and females classified by age group. Between 2017 and 2022, levels of employment for both males and females increased while their employment rates decreased. This is because the working-age (15–64 years) population for both sexes increased by 2,9 million over the 5 years. During this same period, the decline in the employment rates for males and females was almost equal at 6,9 and 6,1 percentage points, respectively. These findings suggest that job creation in the country is not expanding at the same rate as the growth of the population, regardless of sex.

The figures also show that since 2017, the employment rate for males has been consistently higher than that of females. However, trends in the employment rate for males and females follow a similar pattern. The employment rate for females peaked at 35–44 years and males at 45–54, and gradually declined thereafter.

Table 3.4: Share in the employment levels of individuals with tertiary education by sex and field of study, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017						2022					
	Male		Female		Both sexes		Male		Female		Both sexes	
Field of study	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	GPR	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	GPR
Agriculture/other	209	54,9	172	45,1	382	0,82	260	63,5	150	36,5	410	0,57
Arts and education/tourism	32	32,2	67	67,8	99	2,11	13	15,3	73	84,7	86	5,54
Economic and management science	163	38,5	260	61,5	423	1,60	185	47,2	207	52,8	393	1,12
Physical and mathematical/ engineering	340	74,5	116	25,5	456	0,34	272	73,2	99	26,8	371	0,37
Social studies/health sciences	209	51,8	195	48,2	404	0,93	139	46,1	163	53,9	302	1,17
Total	**953**	**54,0**	**810**	**46,0**	**1 764**		**870**	**55,7**	**692**	**44,3**	**1 562**	

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

A gender parity ratio (GPR) is a measure of gender equality; i.e. a GPR of 1,0 represents parity (equality), a GPR below 1,0 shows a disparity or a gender gap in favour of males, whereas a GPR of greater than 1,0 shows disparities in favour of females.

Table 3.4 shows the share in the employment levels of males and females with tertiary qualifications by field of study. Approximately two-thirds of males who were employed with a tertiary education were Physics/mathematics or engineering graduates (74,5% in 2017 and 73,2% in 2022), with a huge gender parity ratio of 0,34 and 0,37, respectively. On the other hand, employed individuals qualified in Arts/education/hospitality were more likely to be females (67,8% in 2017 and 84,7% in 2022), showing a gender parity ratio of 2,11, which doubled to 5,54 in 2022, respectively. These findings confirm gender stereotypes in choosing a field of study and, subsequently, occupations; the slow entry of women into specialised fields traditionally associated with males will delay gender representation within those fields, particularly in top management positions.

Map 3.1: Employment rate by province and sex, Q1: 2022
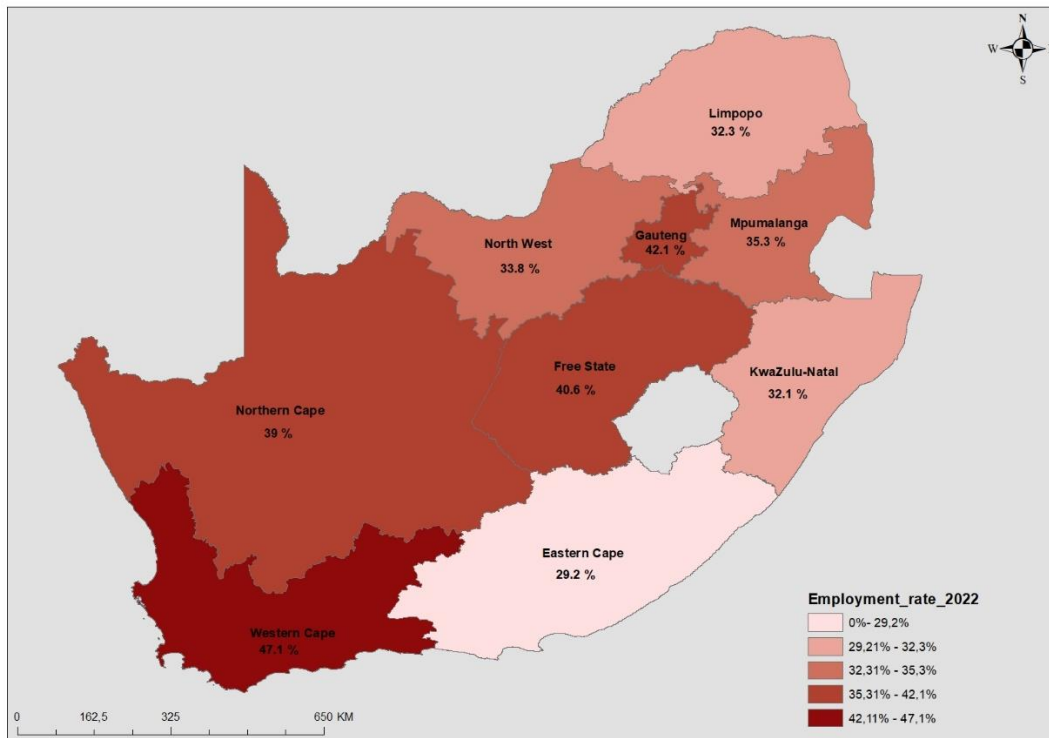
Source: QLFS Q1: 2022.

Map 3.1 displays employment rates by province in Quarter 1, 2022. Western Cape had the highest employment rate of 47,1%, followed by Gauteng and Free State at 42,1% and 40,6%, respectively. The province with the lowest employment rate was Eastern Cape (29,2%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (32,1%) and Limpopo (32,3%).

Figure 3.8: Provincial percentage point changes in employment rates by sex, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	RSA
■ Male	-8	-6.6	-1.2	1.8	-6.2	-4	-9.6	-8.6	-6.7	-6.9
■ Female	-6.2	-4.1	3.1	-1.9	-4.2	-5.4	-11.1	-6.7	-3.1	-6.1
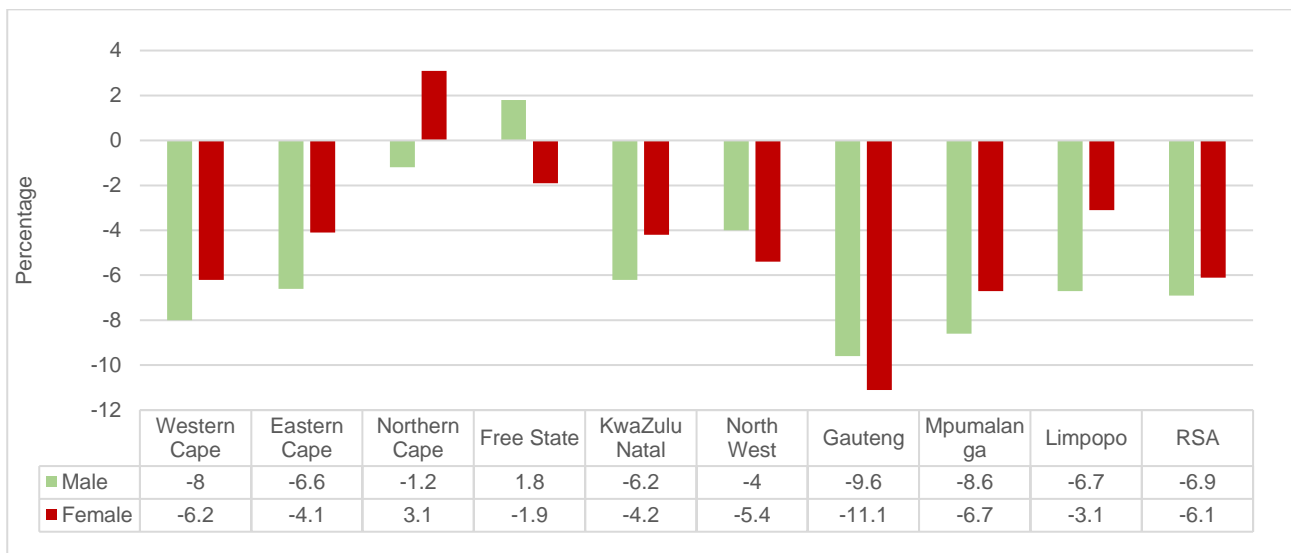
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Figure 3.8 illustrates the provincial percentage point changes in employment rates by sex over the five years. The national employment rates of both sexes declined by 6,9 percentage points for males and 6,1 percentage points for females.

An increase in the employment rate of males and females was observed in Free State and Northern Cape by 3,1 and 1,8 percentage points, respectively. In contrast, Gauteng had the highest decline in employment rates for both sexes by 9,6 and 11,1 percentage points for males and females, respectively.

Table 3.5: Employment rates by sex and geo-type, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017			2022		
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**
Geo-type	%	%	%	%	%	%
Rural	35,4	26,1	30,6	30,3	23,6	26,8
Urban	55,7	44,3	50,0	47,8	36,4	42,1
RSA	**49,3**	**38,3**	**43,7**	**42,4**	**32,2**	**37,3**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Employment opportunities usually vary by geographic location; historically, people have migrated from rural areas to urban areas, mostly males leaving females behind to look after children. Table 3.5 shows the employment rate by sex and geo-type for 2017 and 2022. During this period, males were more likely to be employed than females, irrespective of the settlement type.

The overall decline was most probably driven by the decline in the employment rates observed among males and females living in urban areas (7,9 percentage points difference). Although the employment rate of rural females declined by a slightly lower percentage compared to that of their male counterparts (2,4 percentage points and 5,1 percentage points, respectively), females residing in rural areas remained less likely to be employed.

Figure 3.9a: Employment rates by sex and educational attainment, Q1: 2017

	Less than Matric	Matric	Other Tertiary	Graduates
2017 Male	39.9	57.0	76.4	86.9
2017 Female	28.3	43.7	67.6	80.3
2017 RSA	34.1	50.2	71.5	83.5
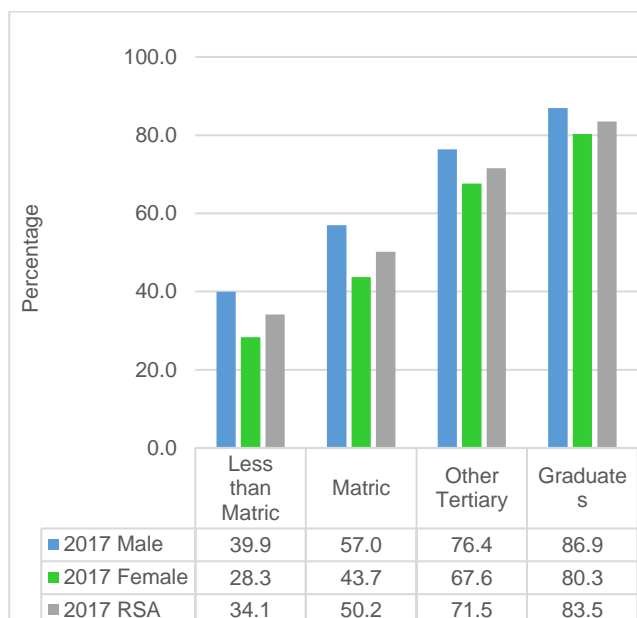
Figure 3.9b: Employment rates by sex and educational attainment, Q1: 2022

	Less than Matric	Matric	Other Tertiary	Graduates
2022 Male	33.1	47.3	69.7	80.5
2022 Female	22.0	35.7	59.7	73.6
2022 RSA	27.6	41.4	64.2	76.9
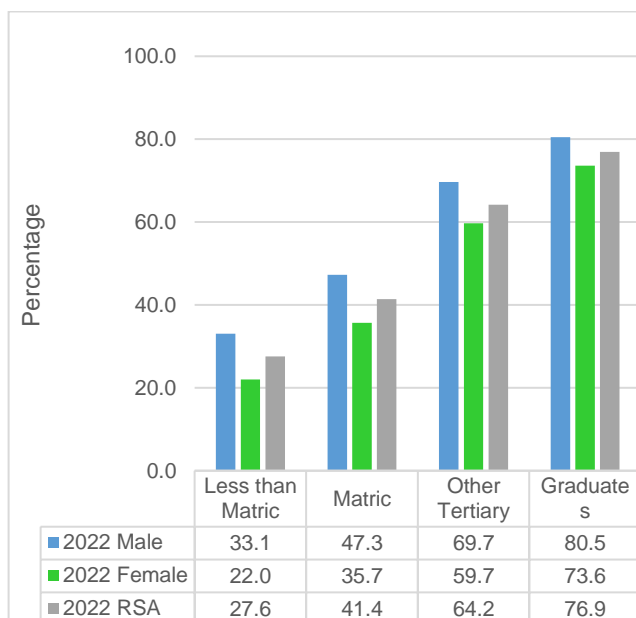
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Employment prospects for people with the highest levels of education are generally higher, and they are usually employed in higher-paying jobs as managers, professionals, and other related occupations compared to people with less education. Figures 3.9a and 3.9b demonstrate that little gender disparities existed in the employment rates of males and females with higher levels of education. In 2017 and 2022, male and female graduates had the highest employment rates, which may indicate that the higher the level of educational attainment, the higher the chances of being employed.

For both years, the employment rates of males with other tertiary education besides a university degree were almost the same at approximately 70%. The year 2022, however, saw females with other tertiary qualifications experiencing noticeably lower employment rates than their male counterparts (10,0 percentage point difference compared to 2017). On the other hand, the gender gap between employment rates amongst male and female graduates remained relatively the same over the 5-year reference period (0,92 in 2017 and 0,91 in 2022), favouring males. Gender parity as a measure of inequalities may, in this instance, suggest that education (particularly a university degree) can be an important tool to address gaps in employment.

Figure 3.10a: Percentage share in employment by sex and occupation, Q1: 2017

Figure 3.10b: Percentage share in employment by sex and occupation, Q1: 2022
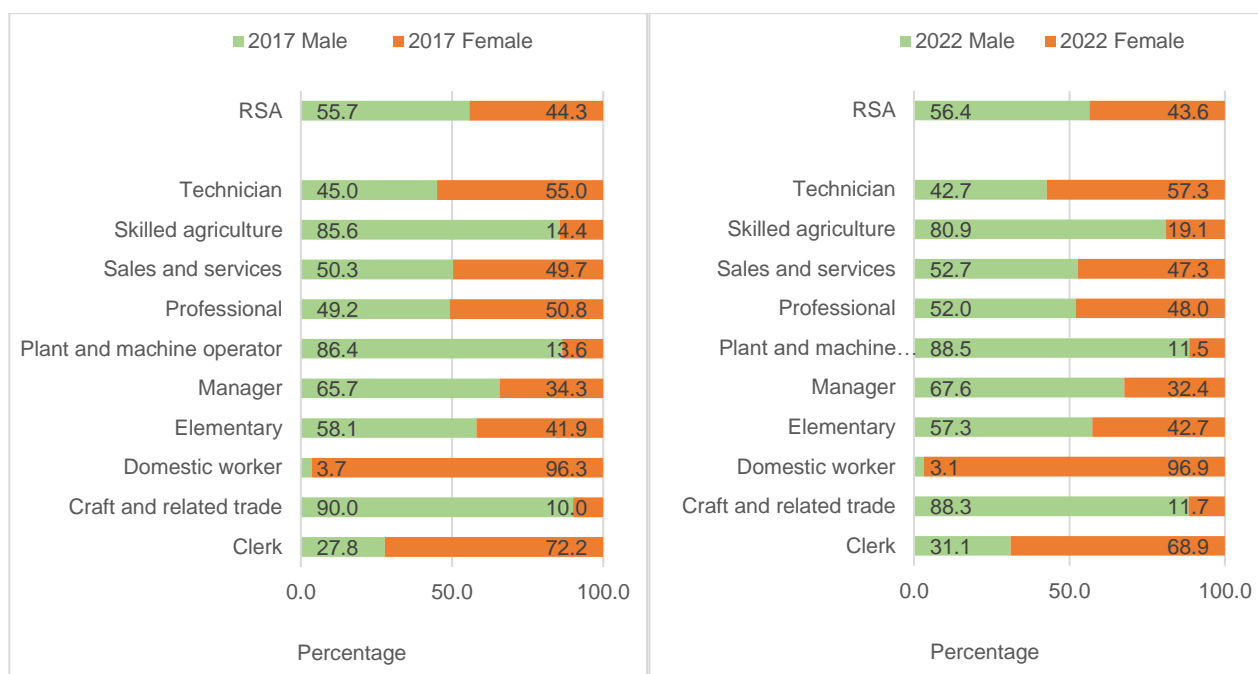
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Even when women can access formal employment, gender stereotypes and cultural norms often limit them to certain positions, which tend to be lower paid than men.[14] Figures 3.10a and 3.10b show the percentage distribution of occupational categories of males and females for 2017 and 2022. Working for households as domestic workers was a more common occupation among females than males. The second most common occupation for employed females was working as a clerk; more than two-thirds reported to be in this occupation.

There has been a noticeable improvement in the percentage share of females in skilled agriculture (4,7 percentage points) over the period. The gender parity index for skilled agriculture increased slightly from 0,17 in 2017 to 0,24 in 2022. Although still low, it does show that females are slowly venturing into skilled agriculture.

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[14] "Leave No One Behind: A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment." UNHLP. UNDP, 2016. http://www.womenseconomicempowerment.

Figure 3.11: Percentage share in employment by sex and industry, 2018
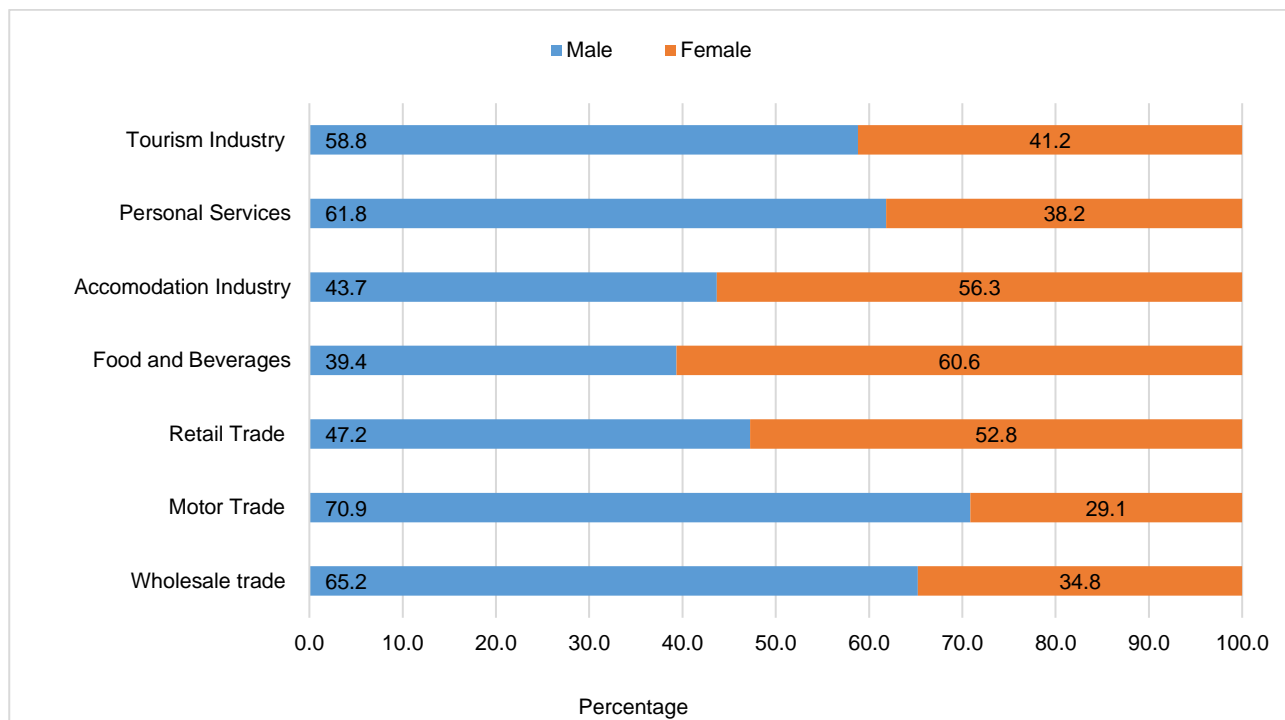
Source: Industry reports, 2018.

The graph displays the share of employment by sex for various industries in 2018. The food and beverages industry showed the largest employment of females at 60,6%, followed by the accommodation industry (56,3%), whilst females were least employed in the motor trade industry at 29,1%. This could be a result of females still participating in traditional gendered industries.

Economic activity between males and females in retail trade displays a more even distribution of employment with a difference of 5,6 percentage points, and a gender parity ratio of 1,12.

Figure 3.12: Percentage of individuals employed in commercial farms by sex, 2018
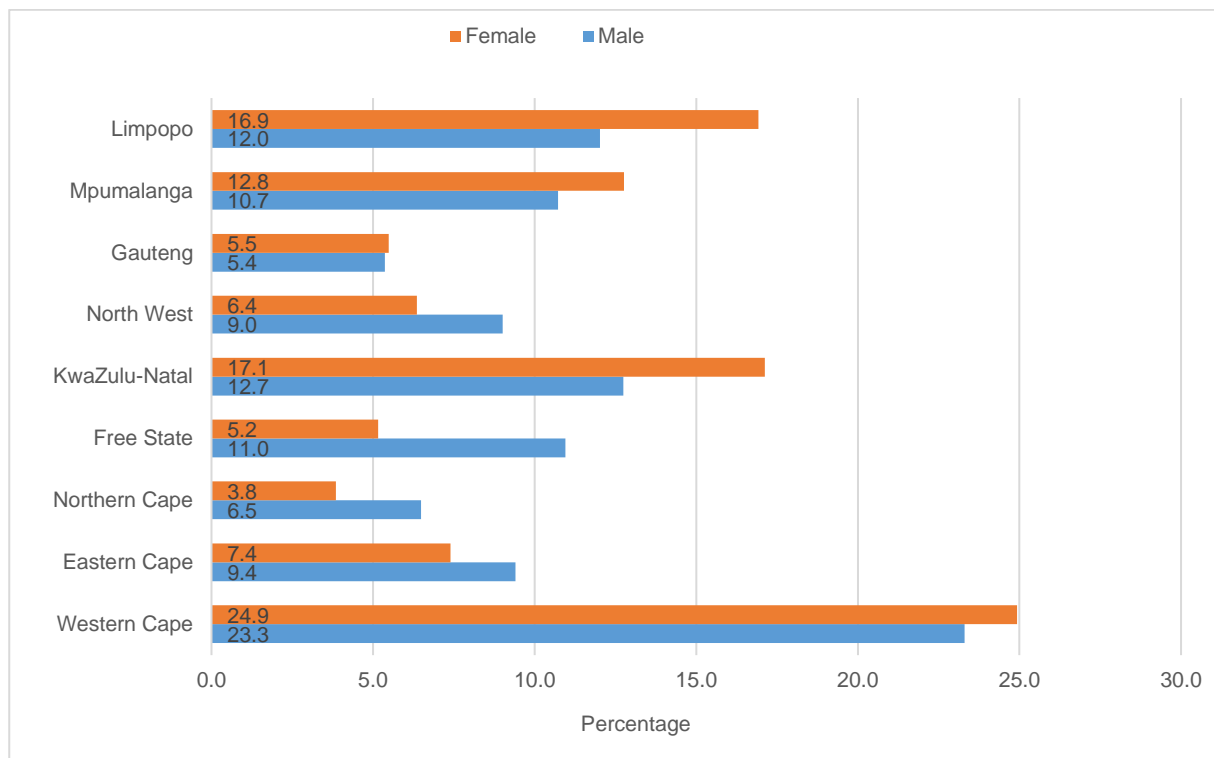
Source: CoCA 2018.

The census of commercial agriculture provides information on several aspects, such as the size, structure and nature of commercial agricultural farms in the country. It also sought to generate information on the industry's workforce; Figure 3.12 illustrates the provincial composition of individuals employed in commercial farms in 2018. Farm workers in the Western Cape mostly contributed to the industry, approximately a quarter of commercial farm employees were employed in Western Cape, followed by KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga farms.

Regarding gender disparities, in 2018 more females were employed on Western Cape farms compared to their male counterparts (24,9% vs 23,3%). The same trend was observed for other leading provinces. It is important to understand the composition of employees in the agricultural industry from the gender lens.

3.5 Business enterprises

This section provides information about males and females running their own business enterprises, i.e. those who operate as employers and/or own-account workers. According to the QLFS, employers are defined as persons running a business and employing at least one person. Own-account workers, on the other hand, are individuals who run their businesses on their own (i.e. not employing anyone).

Figure 3.13: Share of employers and own account workers by sex and sector, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022
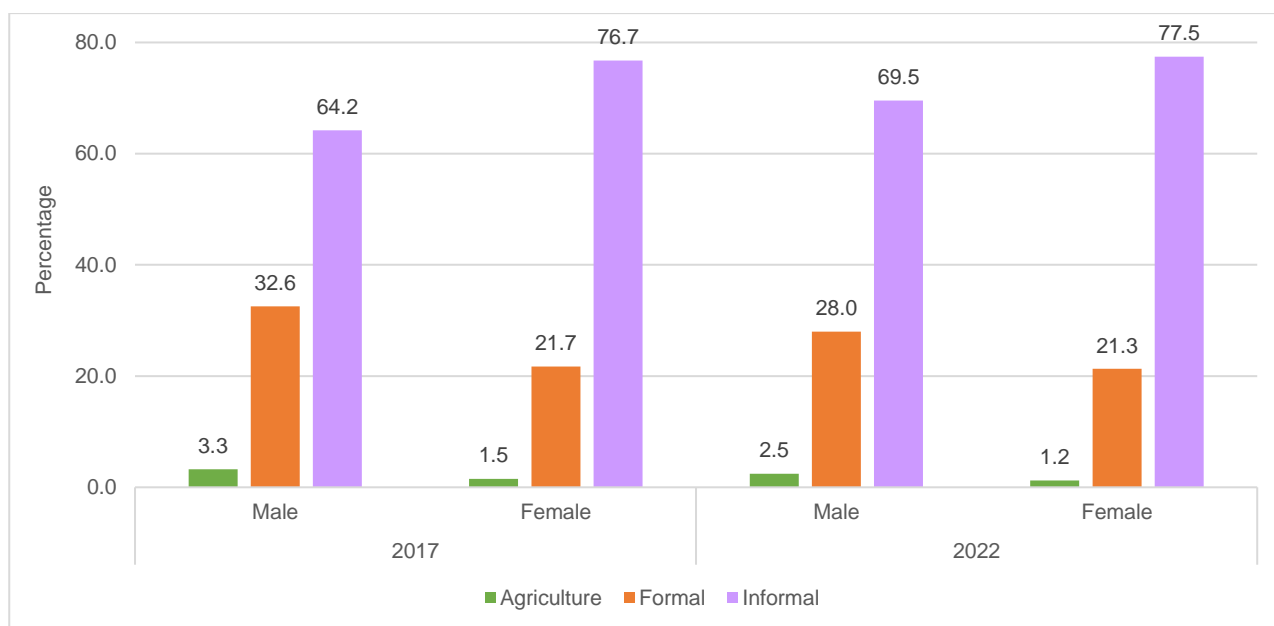
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Figure 3.13 shows the distribution of male and female business enterprises by sector. It shows that employers and own-account workers generally dominated in the informal sector and were least prevalent in agriculture.

The figure also shows that three out of four females (76,7% in 2017 and 77,5% in 2022) were operating businesses in the informal sector, and no major increases were observed during this period. The presence of males in the informal sector experienced a 5,3 percentage point increase over this period. The difference between male- and female-run businesses operating in the formal sector was 10,9 percentage points in 2017; a decline was observed for both sexes in 2022. Additionally, gender differences in the formal sector improved from a parity of 0,67 in 2017 to 0,76 in 2022, pointing toward a narrowing gap in the sector.

Figure 3.14: Share of of persons running informal businesses by educational attainment and sex, 2017
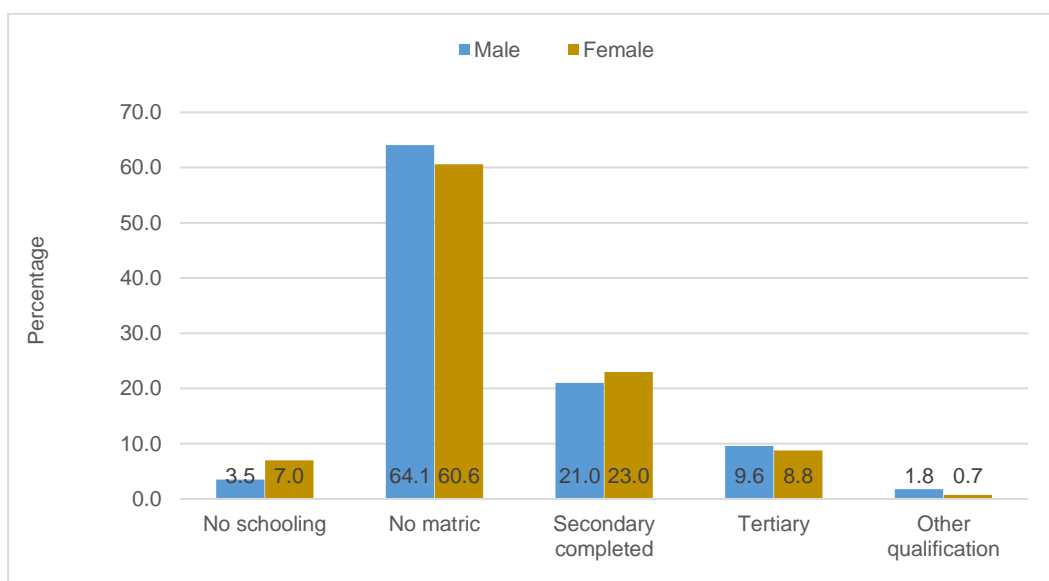
Source: SESE 2017.

According to Figure 3.14, over 60% of persons running informal businesses had the highest level of education less than matric, while only a fifth reported that they completed secondary education. On average, only less

than 10% of persons who possess tertiary qualifications as the highest level of education were running informal businesses.

There were minor gender differences observed between males and females running informal businesses in all the levels of educational attainment. However, females with no schooling were more likely to run informal businesses compared to their female counterparts.

Figure 3.15: Percentage of persons running informal businesses by sex and main reason for starting the business, 2017
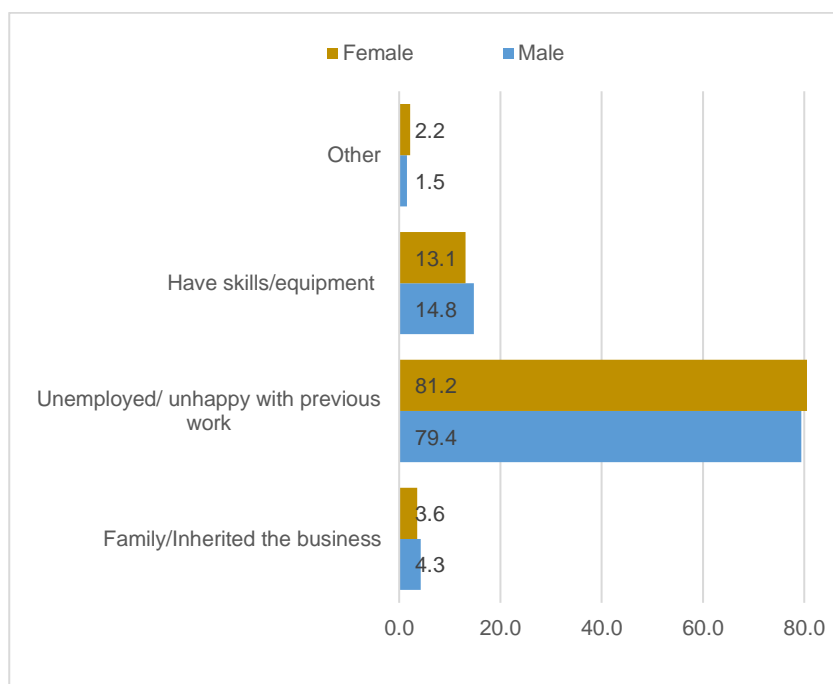
Source: SESE 2017.

The SESE questionnaire included 16 options where individuals were asked to indicate the main reason they started their informal businesses. Data were used to categorise these options, and for the purpose of this report these options were grouped into five broad categories, i.e. Inherited the business/continue with family tradition; Unemployed/retrenched/unhappy with previous work/no income; Have skills/equipment for the business; the rest of the options were categorised into 'other' option.

People start businesses for various reasons whether in the formal or informal sector. Figure 3.15 show the distribution of persons running informal businesses by sex and reasons for starting the business. Over three-quarters of people reported unemployment/ unhappy with previous work as the main reason they decided to start informal businesses followed by those who had skills and equipment to run the business. Notably, there was an equal distribution (GPR =1,0) of females and males who started businesses because they were unemployed/ unhappy with previous work.

Figure 3.16a: Share of employers and own account workers by sex and business size, Q1: 2017
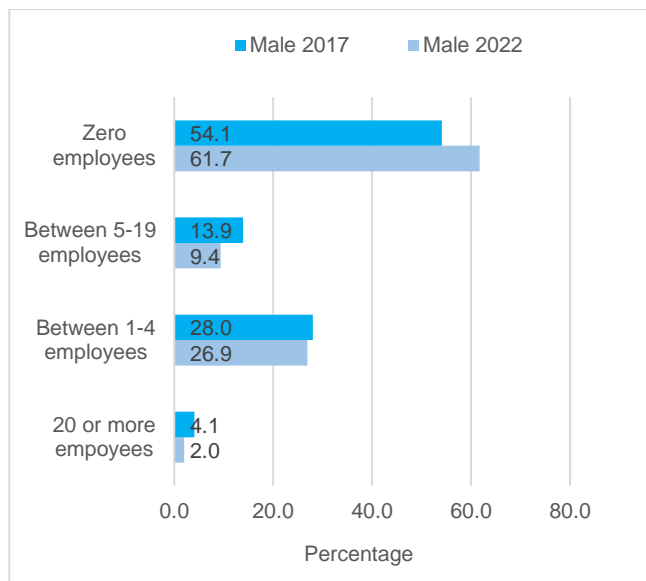
Figure 3.16b: Share of employers and own account workers by sex and business size, Q1: 2022
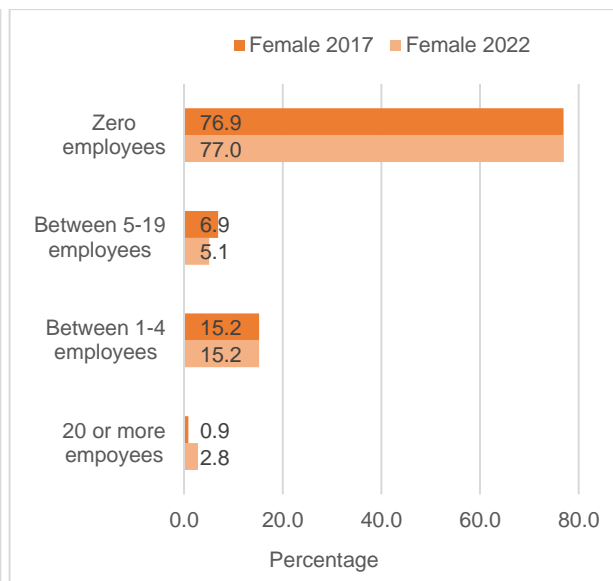
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

For the purpose of this report, the following analysis groups businesses into 4 categories, namely: i) Businesses, where employers are employing between 1–4 individuals are categorised as small-sized businesses; ii) Those employing between 5–19 individuals are referred to as medium-sized businesses; iii) Businesses employing 20 or more persons are labelled as large-sized businesses; while iv) Businesses employing zero employees are referred to as own-account workers/self-employed.

Figures 3.16a and 3.16b illustrate the distribution of business owners by the size of businesses over the period 2017 and 2022. Over the period, there have been a growing proportion of own-account workers among male and female business owners. Females were more likely to be own-account workers than their male counterparts. While the proportion of male own-account workers increased between 2017 and 2022 by 7,6 percentage points, that of their female counterparts relatively remained the same.

Of those employing one or more persons in their businesses (employers), the percentage of males who reported to be employing 20 or more people (owning large businesses) declined by 2,1 while an increase of 1,9 percentage points was recorded for females. The results show a decline in the percentage shares amongst females owning medium-sized businesses, while those running small-sized businesses remained relatively the same.

3.6 Levels of unemployment and the unemployment rate

Poverty reduction, unemployment and job creation are some of the main priorities stipulated in the country's National Development Plan (NDP).[15] Decreasing levels of unemployment is particularly important because of their direct impact on reducing poverty, as it affects both men and women equally.[16] However, the rate of unemployment tends to be higher for women than it is for men. This section explores gender differences in unemployment, focusing on various socio-demographic characteristics, duration of unemployment, types of job search methods as well as means of survival for the unemployed.

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[15] South African National Development Plan: Vision for 2030. Retrieved from www.npconline.co.za/medialib/downloads/home/NPC%20National%20Developme
[16] Frye, I. 2006. Poverty and unemployment in South Africa. NALEDI.

Figure 3.17: Unemployment rate by sex, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	26.0	25.1	26.1	28.3	31.4	33.0
Female	29.8	28.8	29.3	32.4	34.0	36.4
Both sexes	27.7	26.7	27.6	30.1	32.6	34.5
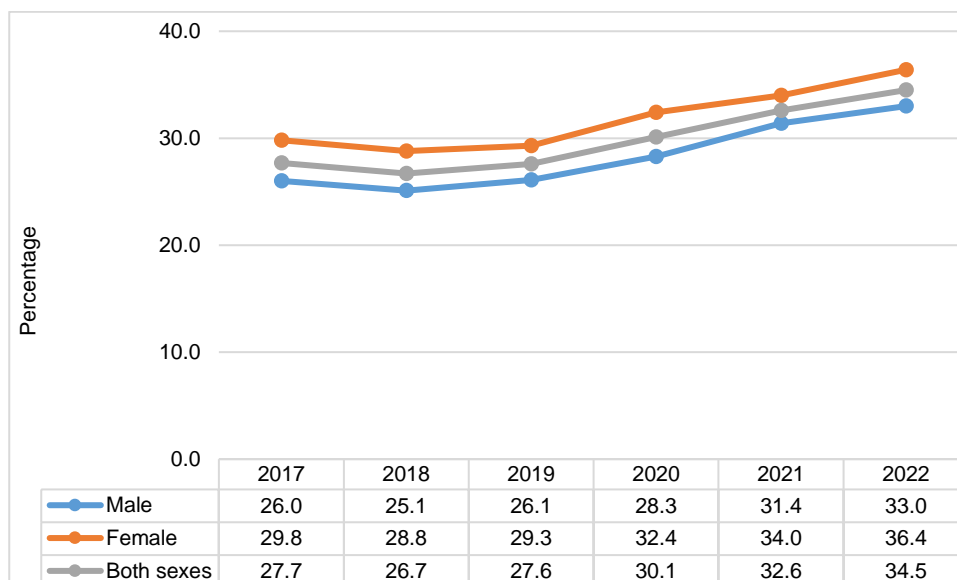
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 – Q1: 2022.

The unemployment rate represents the share of the labour force that is without work but available for and seeking employment. Figure 3.17 shows that national unemployment rates steadily increased to 34,5% in 2022 compared to 27,7% for the same period in 2017.

Between 2017 and 2022, female unemployment rates continuously remained relatively higher than the national rates and those of their male counterparts. The unemployment rate increased from 29,8% to 36,4% during the years of reporting.

Table 3.6: Levels of unemployment and unemployment rate by sex and age group, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017			2022		
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**
Age group	**N(`000)**	**N(`000)**	**N(`000)**	**N(`000)**	**N(`000)**	**N(`000)**
15–24 yrs	784	770	1 554	884	744	1 628
25–34 yrs	1 182	1 201	2 383	1 580	1 458	3 038
35–44 yrs	708	693	1 401	984	974	1 958
45–54 yrs	360	293	653	560	452	1 012
55–64 yrs	108	68	176	116	77	193
Total	**3 141**	**3 026**	**6 167**	**4 124**	**3 705**	**7 829**
%						
15–24 yrs	50,7	58,4	54,3	61,3	67,4	63,9
25–34 yrs	29,3	36,4	32,5	39,8	45,0	42,1
35–44 yrs	20,4	23,8	22,0	26,5	32,9	29,4
45–54 yrs	16,9	16,0	16,5	22,3	21,1	21,8
55–64 yrs	11,8	8,9	10,5	13,6	10,6	12,2
Total	**26,0**	**29,8**	**27,7**	**33,0**	**36,4**	**34,5**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Table 3.6 shows unemployment levels and the unemployment rate of males and females by different age categories. The table illustrates that between 2017 and 2022, levels of unemployment increased by 1,6 million. The number of unemployed males increased proportionately by 983 thousand, which was greater than the increase recorded for females at 679 thousand.

Compared with females, males were less likely to be unemployed as they had higher levels of employment (refer to Table 3.3). Age group variations revealed an overall increase in unemployment levels across all age groups over the reporting period. Notably, males and females between the ages of 25 and 34 accounted for the most unemployed compared to other age groups.

Overall unemployment rates grew by 6,8 percentage points from 27,7% in 2017 to 34,5% in 2022. The largest increases occurred among the youth, namely 15–24 years and 25–34 years. In 2022, gender gaps in unemployment rates showed significant variations, with the largest gaps occurring amongst males and females aged 35–44 years (1,24), meaning more females were unemployed. The gender gap was skewed towards males for those aged 55–64 years (0,77).

Table 3.7: Unemployment rate by sex and province, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017			2022		
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**
Province	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Western Cape	19,9	23,4	21,5	24,9	25,6	25,2
Eastern Cape	32,8	31,5	32,2	45,1	42,7	44,0
Northern Cape	29,4	32,4	30,7	26,4	23,2	24,9
Free State	32,0	39,7	35,5	27,1	36,3	31,1
KwaZulu-Natal	25,4	26,3	25,8	32,6	33,8	33,2
North West	25,4	28,3	26,5	30,3	29,9	30,1
Gauteng	27,2	31,7	29,2	34,0	40,3	36,7
Mpumalanga	28,7	34,7	31,5	36,5	41,2	38,6
Limpopo	16,8	27,5	21,6	32,1	40,0	35,6
RSA	**26,0**	**29,8**	**27,7**	**33,0**	**36,4**	**34,5**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Table 3.7 shows provincial variations in unemployment rates by sex. Nationally, unemployment rates increased from 27,7% to 34,5% between 2017 and 2022. The largest increase in the unemployment rate occurred in the Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces, recording 14,0, 11,8 and 7,5 percentage points, respectively. Northern Cape and Free State were the only provinces that showed a decrease in employment rates of 5,8 and 4,4 percentage points during the period.

When focusing on gender disparities, the male unemployment rate for Mpumalanga increased by 15,3 percentage points, while females experienced an increase of 12,5 percentage points over the same period. Northern Cape experienced the highest decline in unemployment rate for both sexes, although the decline was skewed towards females. The gender gap ratio for males and females residing in Free State showed a significant change (0,76 to 1,34), with more females becoming unemployed during the period of reporting. Females residing in the Northern Cape were less likely to be unemployed than males (0,86 in 2017 and 0,88 and 2022).

Figure 3.18: Unemployment rate by sex and educational attainment, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022
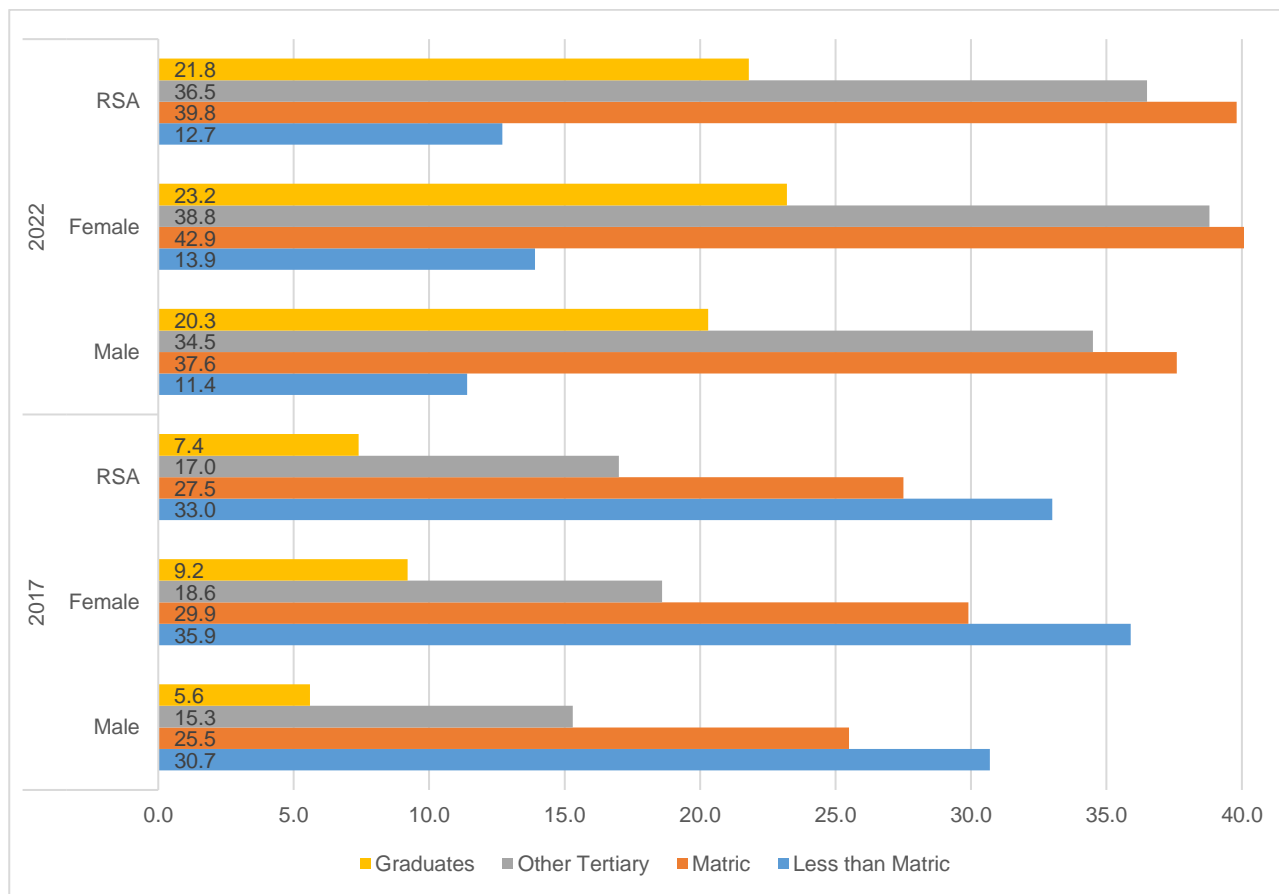
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Figure 3.18 depicts unemployment rates by sex and educational attainment for 2017 and 2022. In 2017, unemployed persons with less than matric were more likely to be unemployed than a person with higher educational attainments, with a national rate of 33,0%; this trend was also observed among males and females. However, in 2022 this group observed a drop of 20,3 percentage points difference; these changes had a negative effect on people with higher educational attainment (matric and above) who experienced soaring unemployment rates. A significant increase in unemployment rates was experienced by people with other tertiary education (19,5 percentage points). The difference between sexes was minimal for all education levels.

Table 3.8: Unemployment rate by sex and presence of children, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017			2022		
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**
children	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
None	23,4	22,5	23,1	31,5	29,5	30,8
1–2 Children	26,4	30,1	28,3	31,4	35,8	33,6
3–4 Children	33,3	37,3	35,5	39,8	44,7	42,5
5 and above	38,1	47,2	43,6	54,6	56,0	55,5
Total	**26,1**	**29,8**	**27,8**	**33,1**	**36,5**	**34,6**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

The presence of children can indirectly contribute to unemployment, particularly amongst women. This could be attributed to the financial resources associated with childcare and to cultural norms, whereby women are expected to care for their children until they reach a certain age.

Table 3.8 shows unemployment rates through a gender lens among households where there were children. Results showed a positive relationship between the number of children in the household and higher unemployment rates, irrespective of sex. Unemployment rates in 2017 and 2022 were highest among males and females who lived with 5 or more children at 43,6% and 55,5%, respectively, increasing by 11,9 percentage points over the period. When looking at gender disparities, males living with no children in the household had higher unemployment rates than their female counterparts. In contrast, females living with a child irrespective of the number in the household were generally more likely to be unemployed, and this increased with the number of children present.

Table 3.9: Graduate unemployment rate by sex and field of study, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017			2022		
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**
Field of study	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Social studies/health sciences	7,2	10,9	9,3	17,4	15,3	16,2
Arts/education/hospitality	4,2	8,0	6,9	7,5	13,1	11,4
Economic and management sciences	5,7	9,5	7,3	8,7	13,6	10,9
Physical/mathematical sciences/ engineering	5,5	7,5	6,1	12,1	6,3	10,5
Agriculture/other	3,9	9,3	6,3	12,2	22,8	16,8
Total	**5,6**	**9,2**	**7,4**	**11,4**	**13,9**	**12,7**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Despite a strong increase in the number of graduates over the years, unemployment continues to be a challenge, especially among certain segments of graduates. For this report, 'graduates' are considered to be those with at least a university degree.

Table 3.9 illustrates unemployment rates for male and female graduates by field of study between 2017 and 2022. Unemployment rates by the field of study showed significant variations, with the largest increase observed in the field of agriculture/other (10,5 percentage points) and the lowest increase recorded among the economic and management sciences graduates (3,6 percentage points).

Interestingly, when focusing on gender disparities, the unemployment rate of females in the physical/ mathematical sciences/engineering field was twice as low as that of their male counterparts (6,3% vs 12,1%) even during the inauspicious economic period. The largest gender gap was in the field of agriculture/other, with females unemployed with a GPR of 1,87. Persistent inequalities in unemployment rates across fields of study show engraved gender stereotypes, or prospective students are inconsiderate to prevailing labour market demands when choosing their field of study.[17]

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[17] Pauw, K., et.al. 2008. Graduate Unemployment in the Face of Skills Shortages: A Labour Market Paradox. South African Journal of Economics 76(1): 45-57. March 2008.

Table 3.10: Graduate unemployment rate by sex and age group, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017			2022		
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**
Age-group	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
15–24 yrs	32,8	28,4	29,8	39,7	29,1	33,6
25–34 yrs	6,1	9,9	8,1	22,2	22,5	22,4
35–44 yrs	5,1	10,3	7,7	6,7	9,8	8,2
45–54 yrs	3,5	2,7	3,1	5,0	6,1	5,5
55–64 yrs	3,4	5,6	4,3	6,0	1,6	4,1
Total	**5,6**	**9,2**	**7,4**	**11,4**	**13,9**	**12,7**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Table 3.10 depicts graduate unemployment rates of males and females by different age groups. Nationally, over half (56,0%) of the young graduates were unemployed (15–34 years) during 2022, an increase of 18,1 percentage points compared to 2017; this implies that the size of the graduate labour force increased over the period.

Between 2017 and 2022, the unemployment rate among female graduates increased by 4,7 percentage points, while it was even higher for their male counterparts at 5,8 percentage points. This was mostly driven by large increases experienced in the 25–34 age group (12,6 percentage points), also applicable to the same cohort male group (16,1 percentage points).

Figure 3.19a: Share of male and female duration in unemployment, Q1: 2017
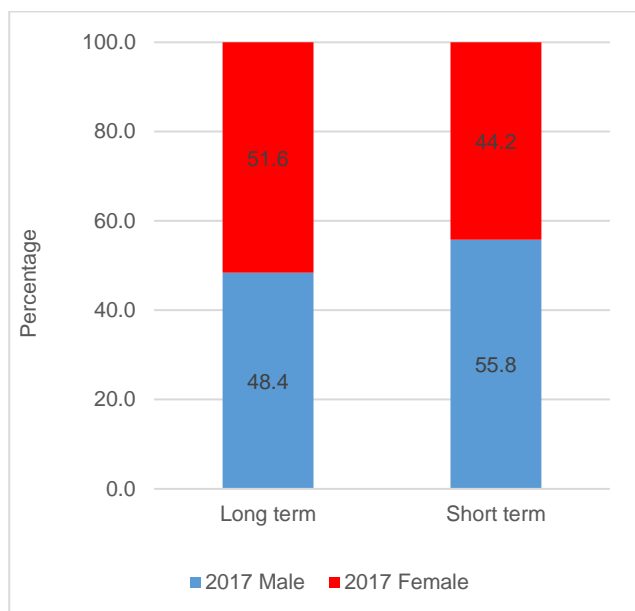
Figure 3.19b: Share of male and female duration in unemployment, Q1: 2022
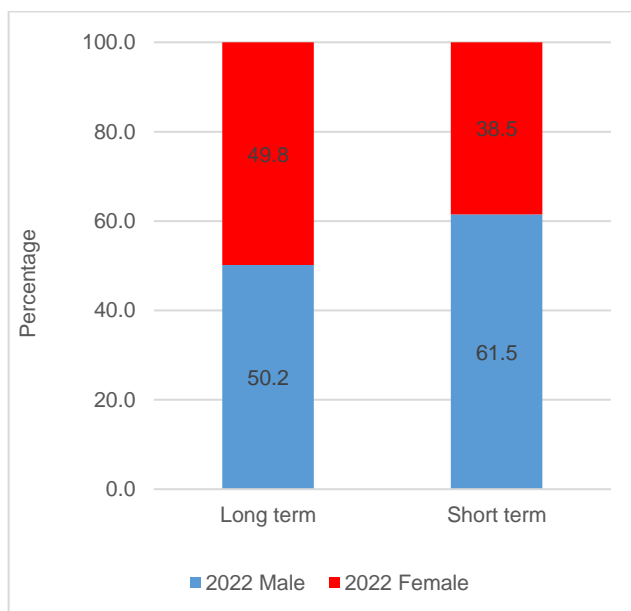
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Figures 3.19a and 3.19b illustrate percentage shares of males and females in the duration of unemployment, i.e. short-term and long-term unemployment during 2017 and 2022. This measure includes people who may have been out of the labour force for a long time (e.g. to study), and have only recently returned to become job seekers. In both years, males were more likely to be in short-term unemployment (55,8% in 2017 and 61,5% in 2022) than their female counterparts (44,2% in 2017 and 38,5% in 2022). The share of females in long-term unemployment was 51,6% in 2017 and 49,8% in 2022, showing a gender gap improvement from 1,07 to 0,99 in 2022.

Table 3.11: Share of male and female duration in unemployment by geo-type, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

Unemployment duration	2017											
	Male				Female				Both sexes			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	N ('000)	%	N ('000)	%	N ('000)	%	N ('000)	%	N ('000)	%	N ('000)	%
Long term	484	11,8	1 494	36,5	568	13,9	1 543	37,7	1 052	25,7	3 036	74,3
Short term	389	18,3	798	37,6	302	14,2	636	29,9	691	32,5	1 435	67,5
Total	**873**	**14,0**	**2 292**	**36,9**	**870**	**14,0**	**2 179**	**35,1**	**1 743**	**28,0**	**4 471**	**72,0**
	2022											
Long term	826	13,3	2 283	36,9	867	14,0	2 216	35,8	1 692	27,3	4 498	72,7
Short term	417	25,0	611	36,6	214	12,8	429	25,7	631	37,8	1 040	62,2
Total	**1 243**	**15,8**	**2 894**	**36,8**	**1 081**	**13,7**	**2 644**	**33,6**	**2 323**	**29,6**	**5 538**	**70,4**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Duration of unemployment can be influenced by many things, among others, sex, and the level of education, including those who are new entrants or returning to the job market for various reasons (e.g. females after a period of child-rearing/home-making). Table 3.11 depicts the duration of unemployment by geo-type. The percentage share of persons who were in long-term unemployment throughout reporting was mostly from urban areas, reporting 74,3% in 2017 and 72,7% in 2022. This trend was also applicable among males and females; both durations of unemployment were more prevalent among those living in urban areas than rural residents.

3.7 Job search methods and means of survival

This section provides an analysis of job search methods and the means of survival for unemployed persons. This analysis is important to understand the extent to which males and females rely on government welfare, savings and remittances.

Figure 3.20: Job search methods for the unemployed by sex, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	Male 2017	Female 2017	Male 2022	Female 2022
Approached someone for assistance	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.6
Enquired at work place/Sought assistance	66.4	65.6	58.5	63.2
Searched through job advertisements	13.8	17.8	6.1	8.2
Waited at potential work places	18.7	15.5	34.6	28.0
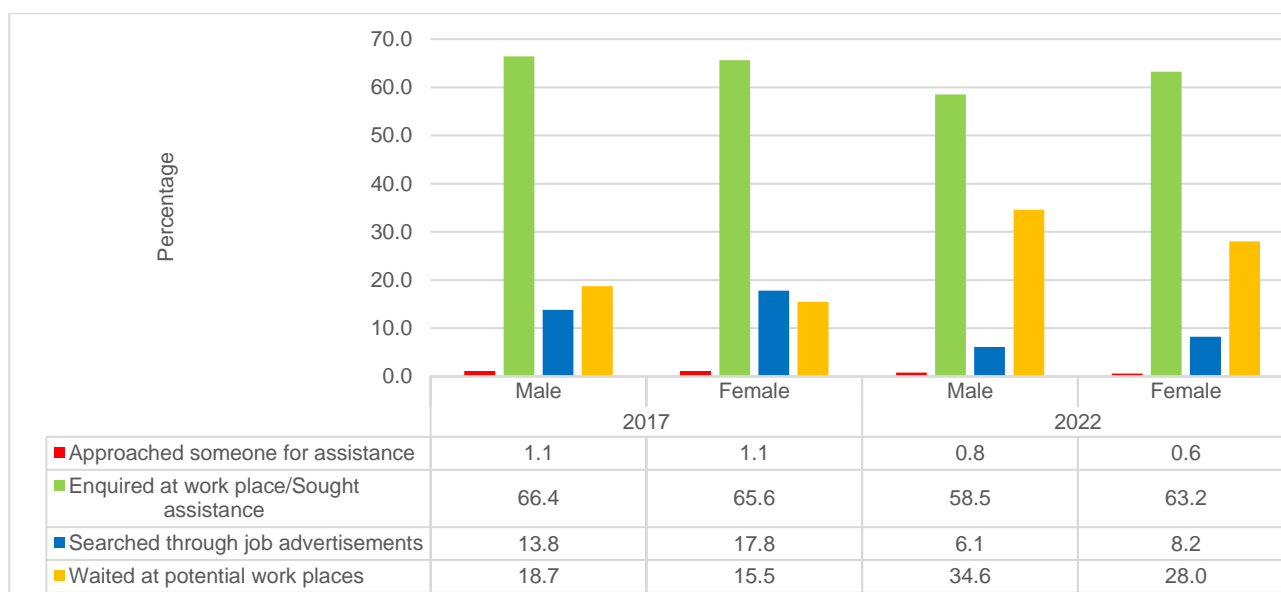
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

When searching for work, people use different methods. In this report, job search methods are grouped into four categories: a) searched through job advertisements – entailed looking through job advertisements in various forms of media such as newspapers and the Internet; b) approaching someone for assistance – includes seeking financial assistance or any means to start a business or looking for employment; c) enquiring at workplaces/asking for assistance from relatives or friends – including going to different companies, farms, or factories, and enquiring about vacancies or calling them to enquire; and d) waiting at potential workplaces – involves waiting or registering at employment agencies or trade unions and any other initiative taken to search for employment.

Figure 3.20 shows that mostly, people enquired at workplaces or asked friends/relatives when searching for work. The gender gap improved from 0,98 in 2017 to 1,08 in 2022 for this type of method during the years of reporting.

The second most used job search method varied by gender. In 2017, waiting at potential workplaces was the second most used job search method by males (18,7%), while females reported searching through job advertisements (17,8%). In 2022, unemployed males and females alike reported their second choice as waited at potential workplaces in their quest to search for employment. The gender gap widened from 0,82 to 0,80 for this type of method. The least likely method when searching for work was approaching someone for assistance – both sexes were not keen to utilise this technique.

Figure 3.21: Job search methods for the unemployed by sex and age group, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	Male 2017		Female 2017		Male 2022		Female 2022	
	Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth
■ Waited at potential work places	19.5	18.2	17.4	14.5	38.6	31.8	27.2	28.5
■ Searched through job advertisements	11.9	14.9	14.0	19.8	4.4	7.3	7.0	9.1
■ Enquired at work place/Sought assistance	66.7	66.2	66.5	65.0	56.5	59.9	65.1	61.9
■ Approached someone for assistance	1.9	0.7	2.1	0.6	0.4	1.0	0.7	0.5

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Youth are defined as persons between the ages 15–34 years. The pattern for job search methods was the same for both youth and adult job-seekers. It reflected similar findings, as shown in Figure 3.21 where enquiring at workplaces/seeking help from friends/relatives was reported as the job search method used the most.

In 2017 gender variations were observed, where a significant number of male job-seekers reported waiting at potential workplaces as the second most used job search method, while females reported searching through job advertisements as the second most preferred method of searching for employment. These gender differences were true for both youth and adults. The year 2022 saw a significant drop in male and female job-seekers who searched through job advertisements.

Figure 3.22: Means of survival for the unemployed by sex, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	Money previously saved	Social grant	Remittance
2017 Male	3.6	0.6	95.8
2017 Female	0.7	5.9	93.4
2022 Male	2.5	2.4	95.2
2022 Female	0.5	7.6	91.9
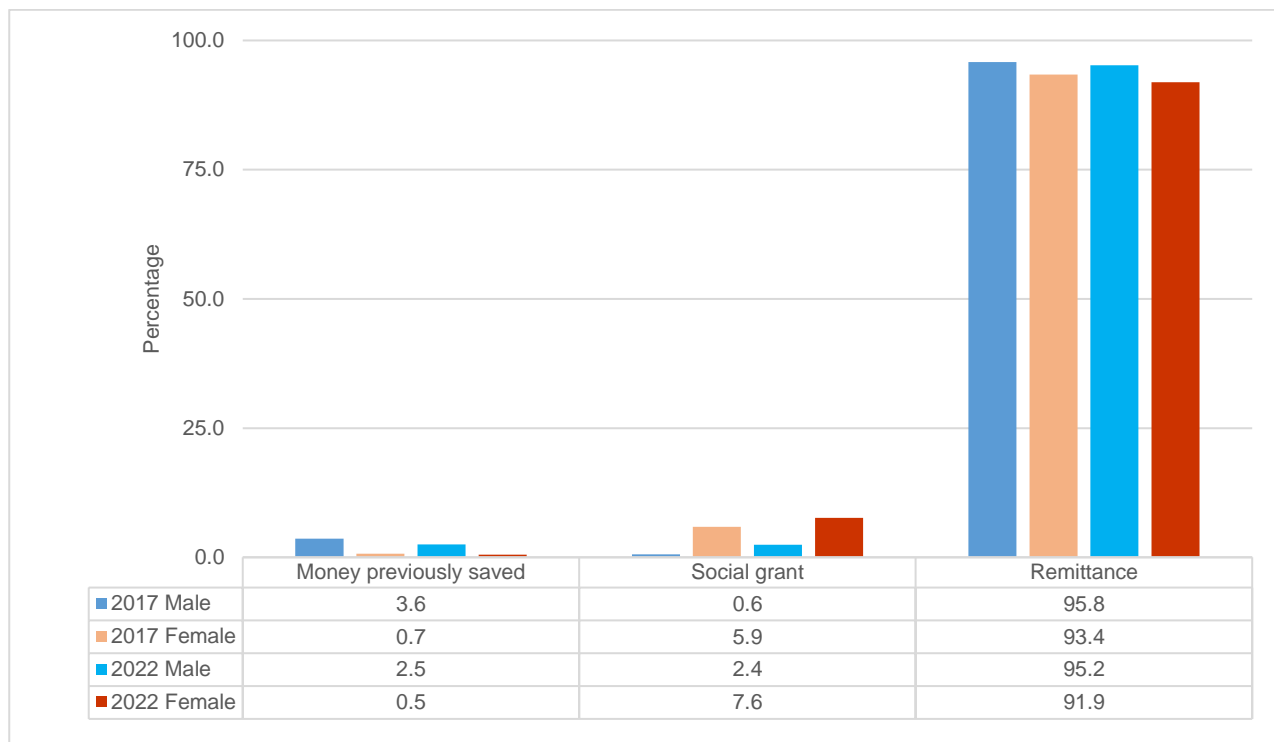
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Figure 3.22 provides an analysis of the means of survival for unemployed persons by sex. This analysis focuses on three options commonly used as sources of income for the unemployed: i) remittances – includes financial support from other people either within or outside the household, by a church or a charity organisation; ii) money previously earned – includes money from sources such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and money from savings or previous earnings; and iii) social grants – is money received through government social welfare systems such as old-age, disability, child support and foster care grants as well as any other social grants.

Between 2017 and 2022, over 90% of unemployed persons mostly relied on remittances for their survival; this was true for both males and females, with no huge disparities. Over the same period of reporting, there was a decline in females who relied on remittances to survive (from 93,4% in 2017 to 91,9% in 2022), while for males there was no major change.

Furthermore, the percentage of those who survived using previously saved money also declined by 0,2 percentage points. Reliance on social grants by males and females grew, but by a smaller margin (1,8 and 1,7 percentage points respectively).

3.8 Economic inactivity and discouraged work-seekers

According to the ILO, the economic inactivity rate is the proportion of the working-age population who are not in the labour force. Various reasons can categorise a person as economically inactive, such as being retired, a student, a homemaker or too ill to work, including discouragement. Other factors influencing economic inactivity are sex, education level, age and looking after children.[18] The section will explore gender differences in economic inactivity and look into reasons provided by males and females for such. As it is sometimes reported, predominantly rural provinces tend to have high rates of females who have given up looking for work.

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[18] Matuszewska-Janica, A. 2018. Women's Economic Inactivity and Age. Analysis of the Situation in Poland and the EU.

Figure 3.23: Economic inactivity rate by sex, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	33.4	34.4	35.0	33.7	37.4	37.7
Female	45.4	46.8	47.4	45.5	49.8	49.5
Both sexes	39.5	40.7	41.2	39.7	43.6	43.7
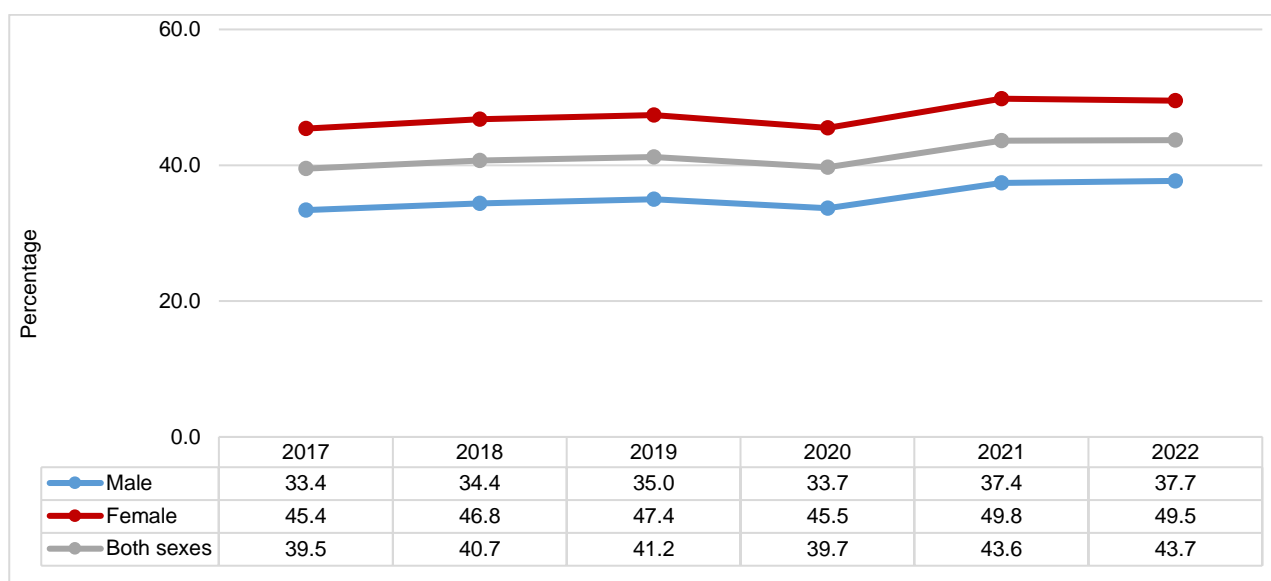
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Figure 3.23 shows economic inactivity rate by sex from 2017 to 2022. The results show that between 2017 and 2019 the economic inactivity rate increased by 1,7 percentage points, with a slight decline of 1,5 percentage points observed in 2020 which later peaked by 4,0 percentage points in 2022. The same trend was observed for both males and females during the period. When looking at gender disparities, females had comparatively higher economic inactivity rates than males. The gender parity ratios from 1,36 in 2017 to 1,31 in 2022, indicating that more females were more likely to be economically inactive than their male counterparts.

Table 3.12: Economic inactivity rate by sex and age, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017			2022		
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**
Age group	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
15–24 yrs	69,9	74,3	72,1	71,8	78,4	75,1
25–34 yrs	18,5	30,6	24,4	24,9	36,4	30,5
35–44 yrs	11,9	25,5	18,7	16,3	30,2	23,1
45–54 yrs	14,5	34,4	25,1	19,0	35,8	27,8
55–64 yrs	44,3	61,6	53,8	52,5	68,6	61,4
Total	**33,4**	**45,4**	**39,5**	**36,8**	**49,3**	**43,1**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Table 3.12 shows the economic inactivity rate of males and females for different age groups in the years 2017 and 2022. The results show that the economic inactivity rate was higher for females than their male counterparts for both years and all age groups.

The table also shows that the economic inactivity rate was higher amongst the youth (aged 15–24) than in any other age group. The 55–64 age category also had a comparatively high economic inactivity rate among females, with gaps of 28,2 percentage points in 2017 and 12,5 percentage points in 2022. The 45–54 and 55–64 age groups had the largest disparities between the sexes. It is also important to note that there was an increase in inactivity for both sexes and across all age groups between 2017 and 2022.

Figure 3.24: Economic inactivity rate by sex and marital status, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017 Male	2017 Female	2022 Male	2022 Female
Married/Cohabiting	13.1	37.0	16.4	41.2
Never married	45.6	51.2	46.6	53.5
Widow/Divorced/Separated	29.8	43.8	42.8	50.5
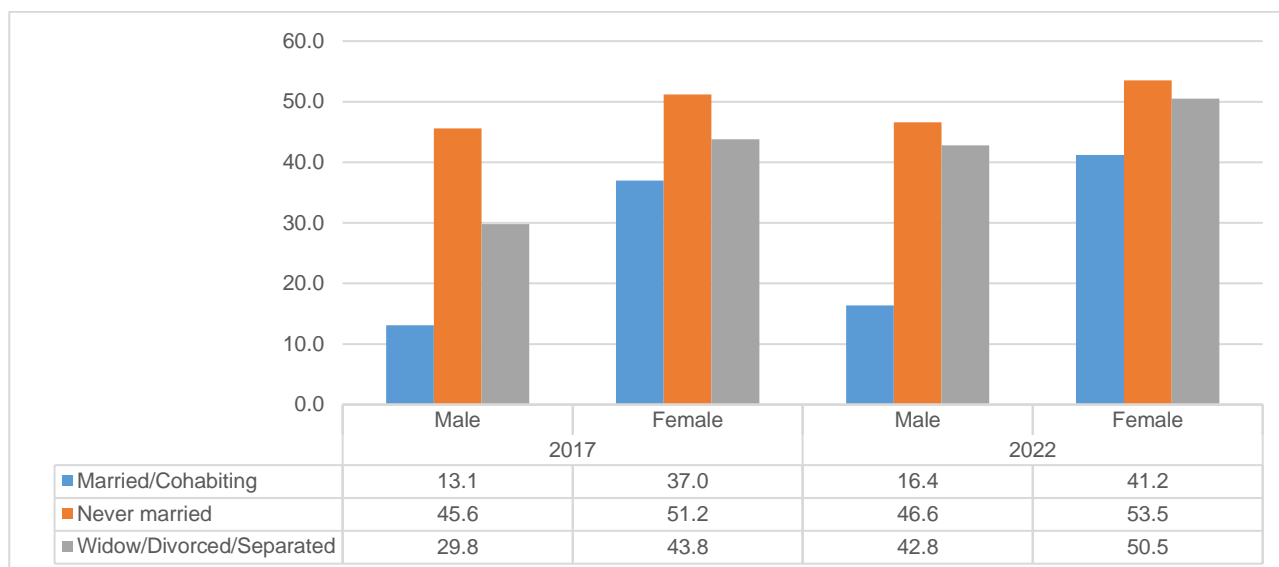
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Economically inactive people are a highly diverse group, and marital status plays a big differentiating role. Figure 3.24 shows the distribution of males and females who are economically inactive by their marital status. As shown, the economic inactivity rate was higher amongst females than their male counterparts in all categories. This was true for both years of reporting.

Additionally, the highest proportion of inactivity was among the group that had never been married in both 2017 and 2022. Males who reported to be married/cohabiting had the lowest rates of the three categories, with 13,1% in 2017 and 16,4% in 2022. Economically inactive females, who have never been married, recorded the highest inactivity rate at 51,2% in 2017 and 53,5% in 2022.

Table 3.13: Economic inactivity rate by sex and presence of children in the household, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

	2017			2022		
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**
children	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
None	22,7	34,3	27,3	26,7	40,4	32,1
1–2 children	36,2	45,0	41,0	40,1	49,0	45,0
3–4 children	47,3	54,3	51,5	50,3	57,3	54,3
5 and above	61,9	63,1	62,6	60,4	61,8	61,3
Total	**33,4**	**45,4**	**39,5**	**36,8**	**49,3**	**43,1**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

The presence of children in the household affects the economic inactivity of females more than males; caring for children indirectly includes household activities such as cooking and cleaning. Table 3.13 shows the economic inactivity rate by sex and the presence of children in the household. Generally, inactivity rates increased from 39,5% in 2017 to 43,1 in 2022; the effect was negligible for males with no children in the household but significant for those residing with 5 or more children.

The gender parity ratio between females and males who were not living with children was 1,51 in 2022. This shows that regardless of children in the household, females were more likely to be economically inactive. The highest rates of inactivity were reported among those who lived with 5 or more children, this applied to both sexes.

Figure 3.25: Percentage distribution of reasons for economic inactivity by sex, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

Legend: Scholar/student · Home-maker · Health reasons · Too young/old/retired · Discouraged job-seekers

		Scholar/student	Home-maker	Health reasons	Too young/old/retired	Discouraged job-seekers
2017	Female	37.6	27.8	9.4	9.9	15.3
	Male	52.4	4.8	15.1	9.4	18.3
2022	Female	33.4	25.4	7.6	11.8	21.8
	Male	45.2	4.1	13.0	11.5	26.2
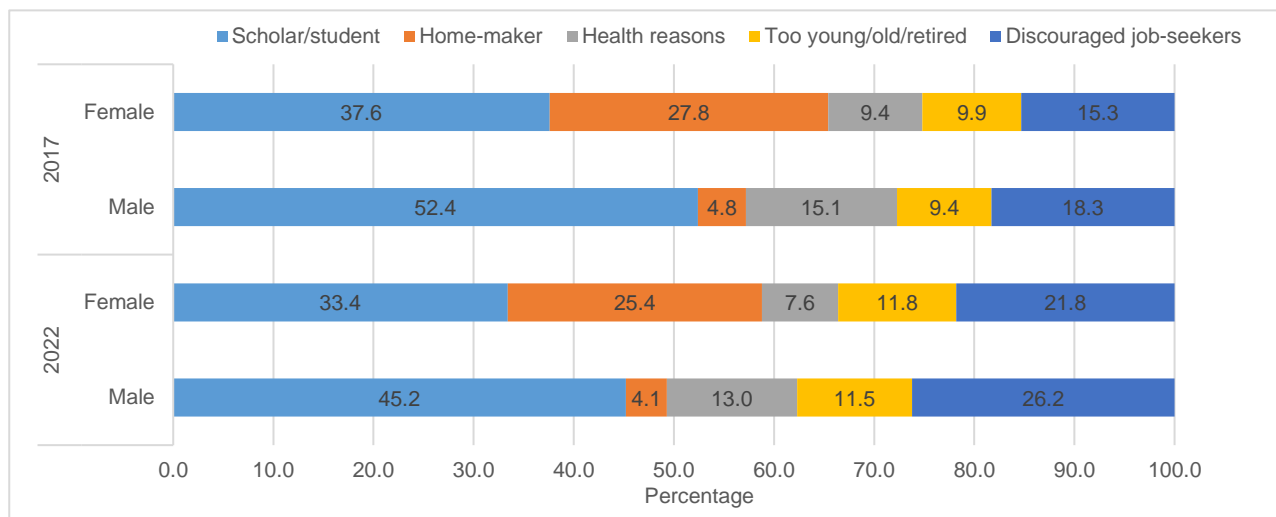
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Among the youth, the main reason for not participating in the labour market is often education. A sizable proportion of persons cited being a student/scholar as the reason for economic inactivity between 2017 and 2022. Figure 3.25 shows that between 2017 and 2022, among males the proportion who reported studying as the reason for economic inactivity was higher than that of their female counterparts (7,2 and 4,2 percentage points respectively). The second reason provided for economic inactivity varied by sex. In both years, discouragement was the second reason provided by males, while females were reported to be full-time homemakers. Among females, more than a quarter (27,8% in 2017 and 25,4% in 2022) were homemakers.

A sizeable difference was visible as far as one reason was concerned: discouraged work-seekers grew during this period. In 2022, one in five people indicated that they were discouraged in looking for work (a gender gap of 0,83).

Figure 3.26a: Female homemakers by marital status, Q1: 2017
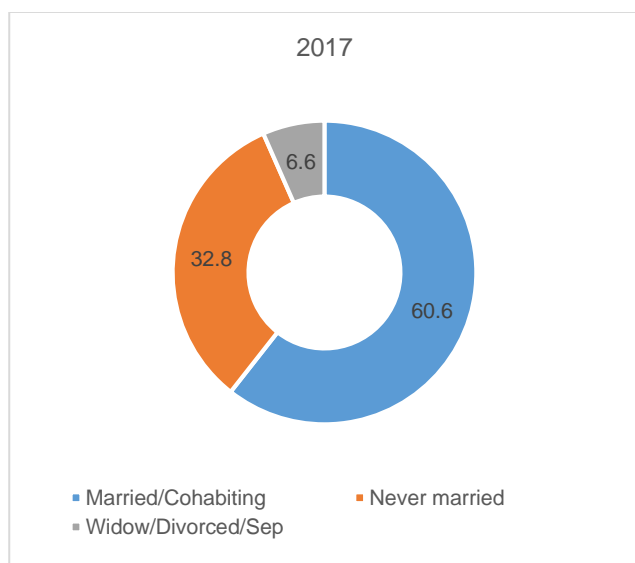
Figure 3.26b: Female homemakers by marital status, Q1: 2022

2017

Married/Cohabiting: 60.6
Never married: 32.8
Widow/Divorced/Sep: 6.6

2022

Married/Cohabiting: 59.9
Never married: 34.8
Widow/Divorced/Sep: 5.3
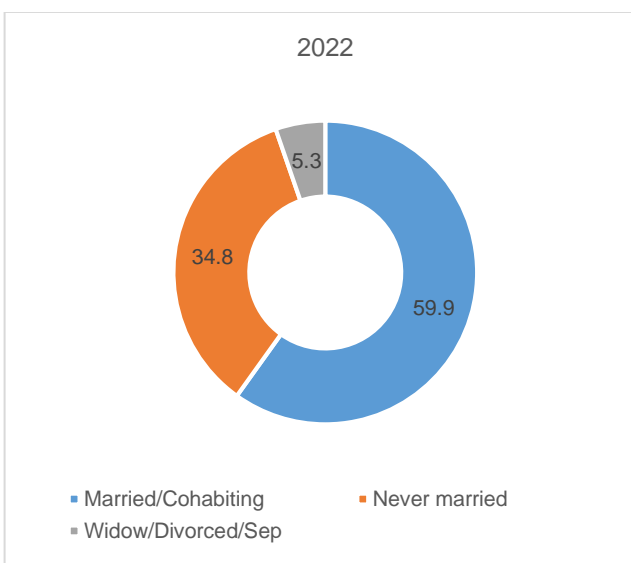
Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

One of the major reasons indicated by females for economic inactivity was being homemakers. An analysis of female homemakers by marital status is depicted in Figures 3.26a and 3.26b. It shows that a high percentage of female homemakers were married/cohabiting between 2017 and 2022.

It is important to note that in 2022, there was a 2,0 percentage point increase of economically inactive female homemakers who had never been married. Research shows that as women enter their reproductive age range (15–34 years), they are more likely to be affected by childbirth and marriage than older women.[19]

Table 3.14: Discouraged work-seekers by sex and province, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

Province	2017		2022	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Western Cape	56,1	43,9	52,1	47,9
Eastern Cape	50,1	49,9	49,5	50,5
Northern Cape	41,4	58,6	47,9	52,1
Free State	43,5	56,5	39,7	60,3
KwaZulu-Natal	46,5	53,5	47,7	52,3
North West	44,0	56,0	36,4	63,6
Gauteng	48,7	51,3	47,4	52,6
Mpumalanga	39,5	60,5	40,4	59,6
Limpopo	43,9	56,1	48,5	51,5
Total	**45,8**	**54,2**	**45,9**	**54,1**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

Discouraged work-seekers are persons who have ceased to seek work for various reasons such as no suitable available job in the area, lost hope of finding any kind of work and unable to find work requiring his/her skills.

According to Table 3.14, provincial percentages for discouraged work-seekers show that, in general, females were more likely to be discouraged than males within most provinces. In 2017, the Eastern Cape and Western Cape provinces were the only provinces that recorded a higher percentage of male discouraged work-seekers compared to females. North West and Free State provinces recorded the highest change of male and female discouraged work-seekers (27,2 and 20,6 percentage points) over the period. Usually, the discouraged worker effect is associated with the phase of recession in the economy, primarily influencing discouragement.[20]

3.9 Resource equity

The Sustainable Development Goal emphasizes the importance of expanding freedoms for all people by: eliminating discrimination against women; promoting gender equality; and increasing women's access to education, paid work, political representation and information and communication technologies (ICTs).[21] SDG 5 indicators highlight the importance of access and use of enabling technology to facilitate economic empowerment, in particular, information and communications technology. More recently, technology has played a vital role in informing and supporting the development of skills, accessing resources and enhancing women's participation across multiple sectors in society.

Through the usage of the internet, women are empowered to access resources that help them in dangerous situations, and access to communities that may be inaccessible in their areas. Access to the internet further ensures that women that would not complete their studies previously, have an opportunity to enrol in online studies and can complete their studies. Access to the internet helps young girls to get information and educate themselves with necessary information on women's rights at an early age. With this, young girls access knowledge for advocacy and protection. For the groups that are in communities that silence minority voices, access to the internet and social media enables those to share their voices and connect with like-minded individuals.22

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[19] Yount, K.M., Crandall, A.A. & Cheong, Y.F. 2018. "Women's Age at First Marriage and Long-Term Economic Empowerment in Egypt." World Development, 102(C), pp. 124-134.
[20] Benati, L. 2001. "Some Empirical Evidence on the 'Discouraged Worker' Effect." Economics Letters 70 (3): 387–95.
[21] United Nations, 2015.
[22] https://sites.uab.edu/humanrights/2017/01/18/female-empowerment-via-internet/

In developing countries, mobile phones are increasingly becoming accessible to both young girls and women. Access to mobile phones provides freedom in deciding when and where to use them for learning. When utilized effectively, they can help increase gender equality in education.

Table 3.15: The main source of income by the sex of household head, 2017 and 2021

| | 2017 | | | | | |
| | Male | | Female | | Both sexes | |
Main source of income	**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**
Salaries/wages/commission	6 034	66,4	3 057	33,6	9 091	100,0
Income from a business	933	71,6	371	28,4	1 304	100,0
Remittances	545	39,3	841	60,7	1 386	100,0
Pensions	209	60,6	136	39,4	346	100,0
Grants	1 160	37,3	1 947	62,7	3 108	100,0
Sales of farm products and services	6	54,7	5	45,3	12	100,0
Other income sources, e.g. rental income, interest	130	60,7	84	39,3	215	100,0
Total	**9 019**	**58,3**	**6 442**	**41,7**	**15 461**	**100,0**
	2021					
Salaries/wages/commission	6 110	66,0	3 149	34,0	9 259	100,0
Income from a business	1 146	75,8	366	24,2	1 512	100,0
Remittances	818	46,2	952	53,8	1 770	100,0
Pensions	310	60,5	202	39,5	512	100,0
Grants	1 671	38,7	2 646	61,3	4 318	100,0
Sales of farm products and services	13	59,8	9	40,2	22	100,0
Other income sources, e.g. rental income, interest	170	58,7	120	41,3	290	100,0
Total	**10 239**	**57,9**	**7 444**	**42,1**	**17 683**	**100,0**

Source: GHS 2017 and GHS 2021.

The table above illustrates the main source of income by sex of household head. In both years, the majority of the females indicated grants (62,7% and 61,3% respectively) as their main sources of income, followed by remittances (60,7% and 53,8% respectively), while their male counterparts indicated income from a business (71,6% and 75,8% respectively), followed by salaries/wages/commission (66,4% and 66,0% respectively) as their main sources of income. The evidence from international literature suggests that social grants can reduce poverty and inequality.[23] This initiative helps reduce poverty in South Africa and ensures that the SDG 1 of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere is attained.

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[23] Woolard, I. 2003. Social Assistance Grants, Poverty and Economic Growth in South Africa.

Figure 3.27a: The main source of income by the sex of household head and geo-type, 2017

	Urban			Rural		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
■ Other income sources	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.0	0.4	0.7
■ Sales of farm products and services	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
■ Grants	8.1	19.9	12.6	26.4	48.4	37.3
■ Pensions	2.8	2.9	2.9	0.9	0.7	0.8
■ Remittances	4.3	10.0	6.5	11.0	18.5	14.7
■ Income from a business	10.6	6.7	9.1	9.8	4.1	7.0
■ Salaries	72.6	58.6	67.2	50.9	27.8	39.4
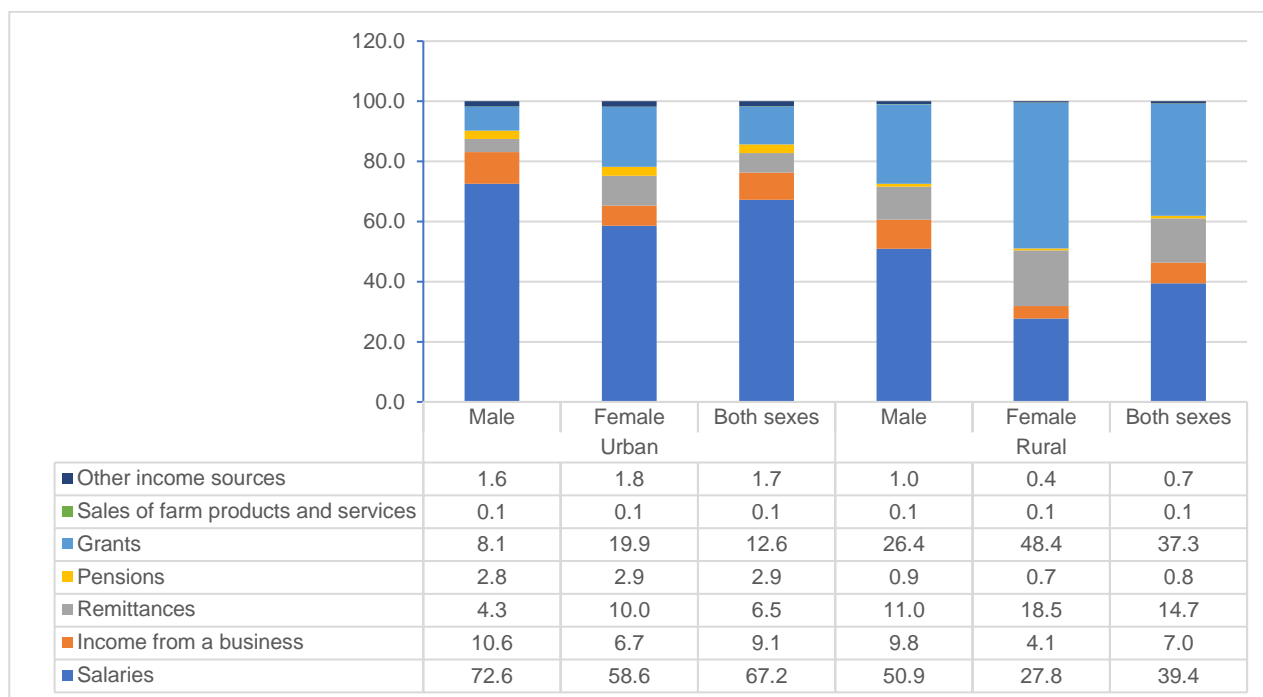
Source: GHS 2017.

Figure 3.27b: The main source of income by the sex of household head and geo-type, 2021

	Urban			Rural		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
■ Other income sources	2.0	2.4	2.1	0.9	0.2	0.6
■ Sales of farm products and services	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.2
■ Grants	11.4	26.9	17.6	29.2	51.8	40.0
■ Pensions	3.6	3.5	3.6	1.4	1.4	1.4
■ Remittances	6.4	9.9	7.8	12.3	18.1	15.1
■ Income from a business	11.9	6.0	9.5	9.5	2.9	6.3
■ Salaries	64.7	51.2	59.4	46.4	25.6	36.4
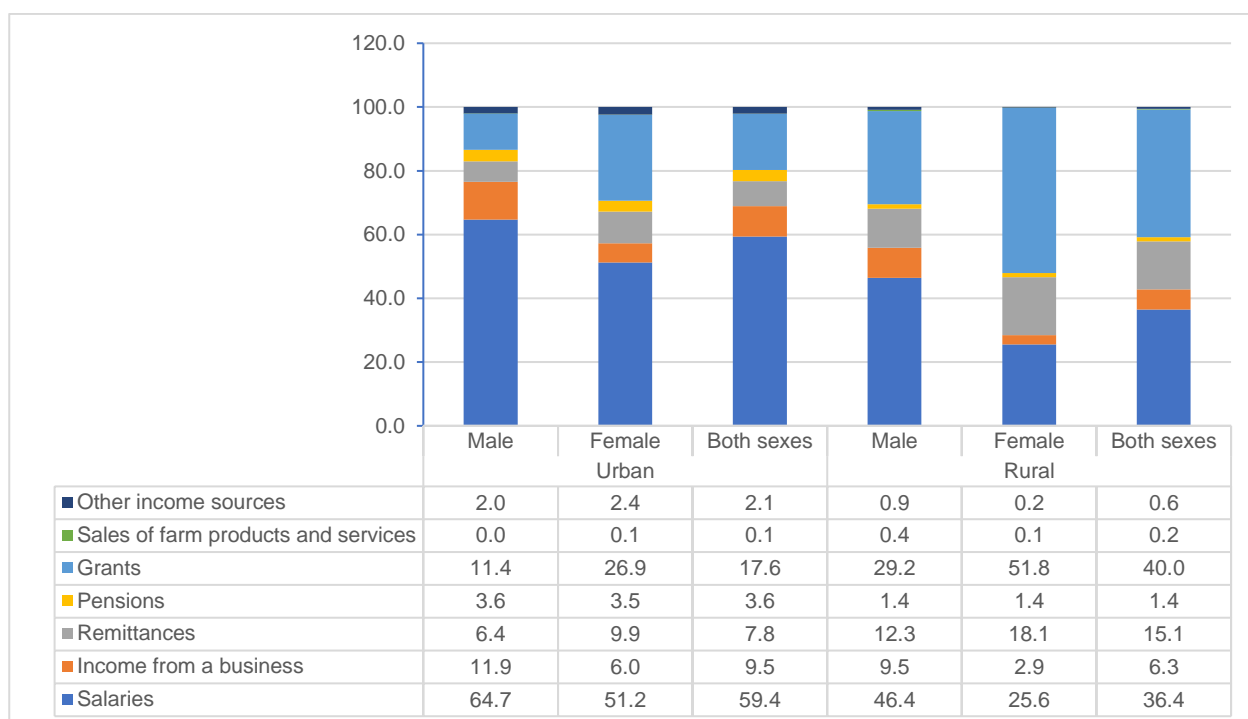
Source: GHS 2021.

Figures 3.27a and 3.27b show the main source of income by the sex of the household head and geo-type. The analysis reveals that in rural areas, 9,5% of males depend on income from a business compared to 2,9% of their female counterparts, whereas the disparity is less pronounced in urban areas where 11,9% of males were likely to be in business than 6,0% of females. On the contrary, females were more likely to receive grants than their male counterparts irrespective of where they reside. However, compared to 26,9% of females in urban areas, 51,8% of rural women received grants. This can be attributed to the unemployment rate in rural areas and the fact that women are more likely than men to be unemployed.

Figure 3.28a: Percentage distribution of social grant recipients in relation to the total population by province, 2017
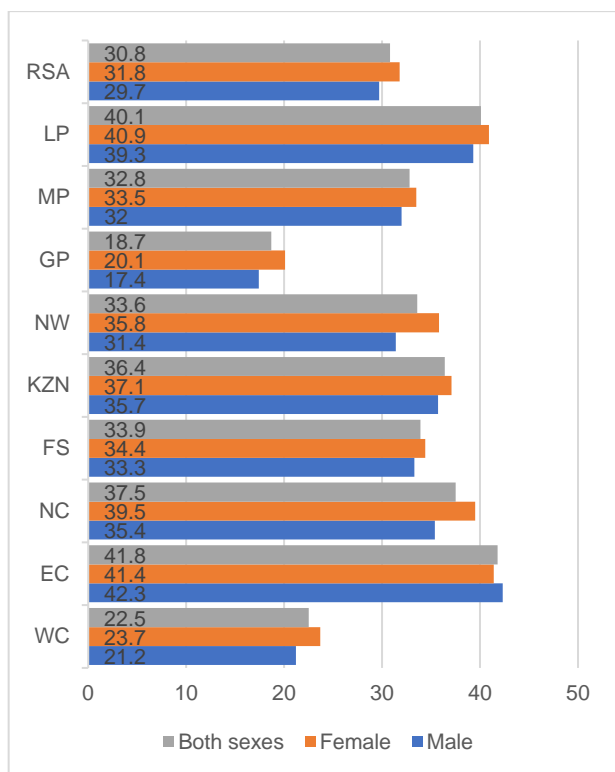
Figure 3.28b: Percentage distribution of social grant recipients in relation to the total population by province, 2021
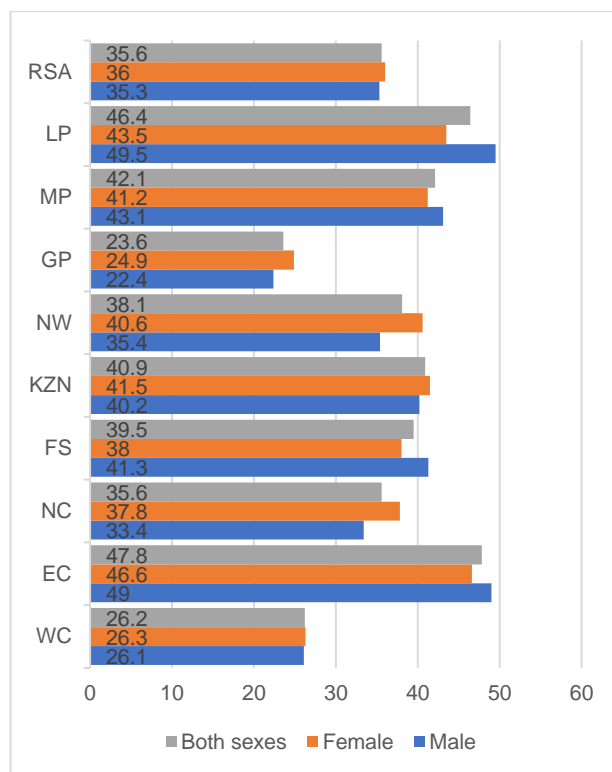
Source: GHS 2017 and GHS 2021.

Figures 3.28a and 3.28b show the distribution of social grant recipients among the nine provinces in relation to the total population. Both males and females in South Africa who received social grants increased by 4,8 percentage points between 2017 and 2021. However, males recorded the highest increase of grant recipients of 5,6 percentage points while their female counterparts recorded an increase of 4,2 percentage points. For both periods, individuals living in Eastern Cape (41,8% and 47,8% in 2017 and 2021 respectively) were the most likely to receive grants, followed by Limpopo (40,1% and 46,4% in 2017 and 2021 respectively). Northern Cape is the only province that recorded a decrease in the percentage of social grant recipients for both males and females between 2017 and 2021. Mpumalanga recorded the highest increase of social grant recipients for both males and females (11,1 and 7,7 percentage point increase respectively). Limpopo experienced the second-largest increase in the proportion of men receiving grants at 10,2 percentage points, compared to other provinces, but the smallest increase in the proportion of women receiving grants at 2,6 percentage points.

Figure 3.29: Median monthly earnings of employees by sex, 2017–2020

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Male	4000	4000	4000	4500
Female	3000	3033	3466	3500
RSA	3500	3500	3800	4000
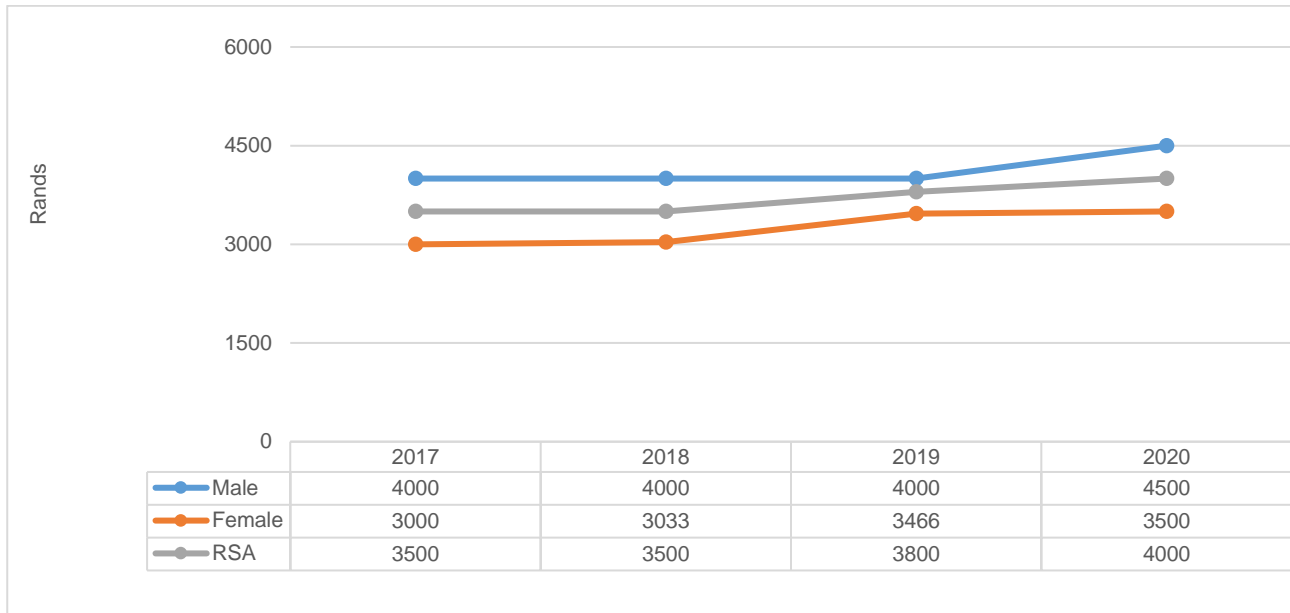
Source: Labour Market Dynamics, 2017–2020.

Figure 3.29 shows median monthly earnings of employees by sex. Between 2017 and 2020, the total median monthly earnings increased by R500 from R3 500 to R4 000. Overall, the increase in median monthly earnings among males and females remained the same R500. Median earnings of males were continually higher than the median earnings for females with a gap of R1000 in 2022.

Figure 3.30: Median female earnings as a percentage of median male earnings, 2017–2020
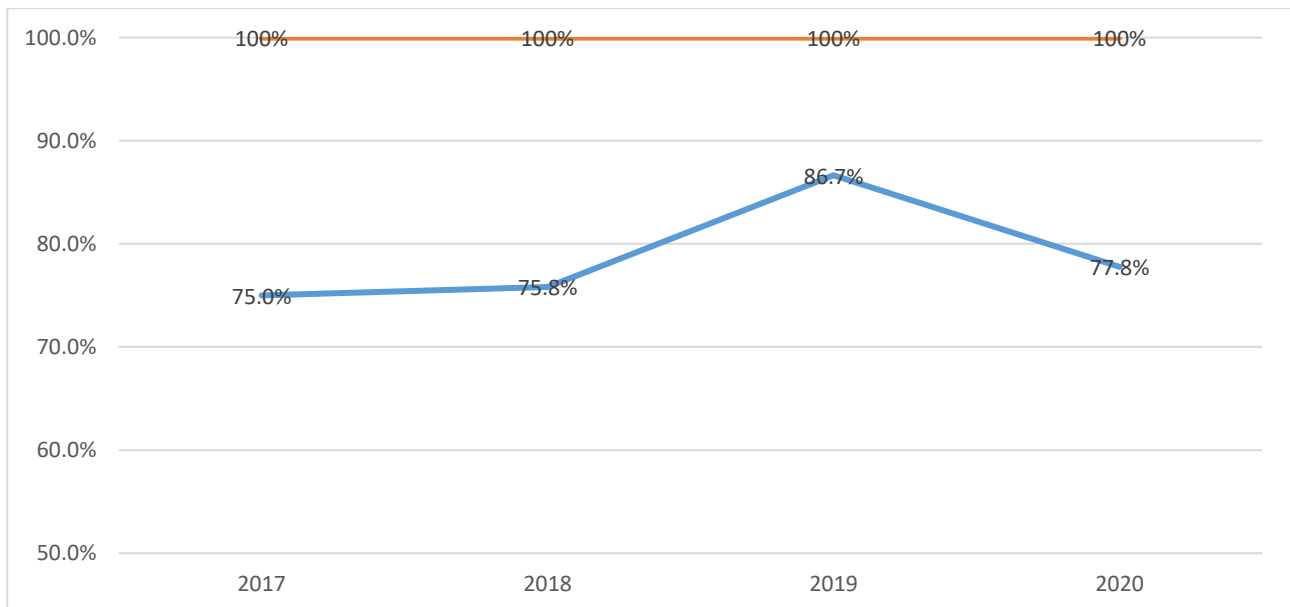
Source: Labour Market Dynamics, 2017–2020.

The median female earnings as a percentage of median male earnings fluctuated from 2017 to 2020. In 2018, the median female earnings increased from 75,8% to 86,7% in 2019 (by 10,9 percentage points). In 2019, a declining trend in median female earnings was observed. In 2020, women's median earnings were 77,8% of men's median earnings, which was below parity.

Figure 3.31: Median female earnings as a percentage of median male earnings by level of education, 2020
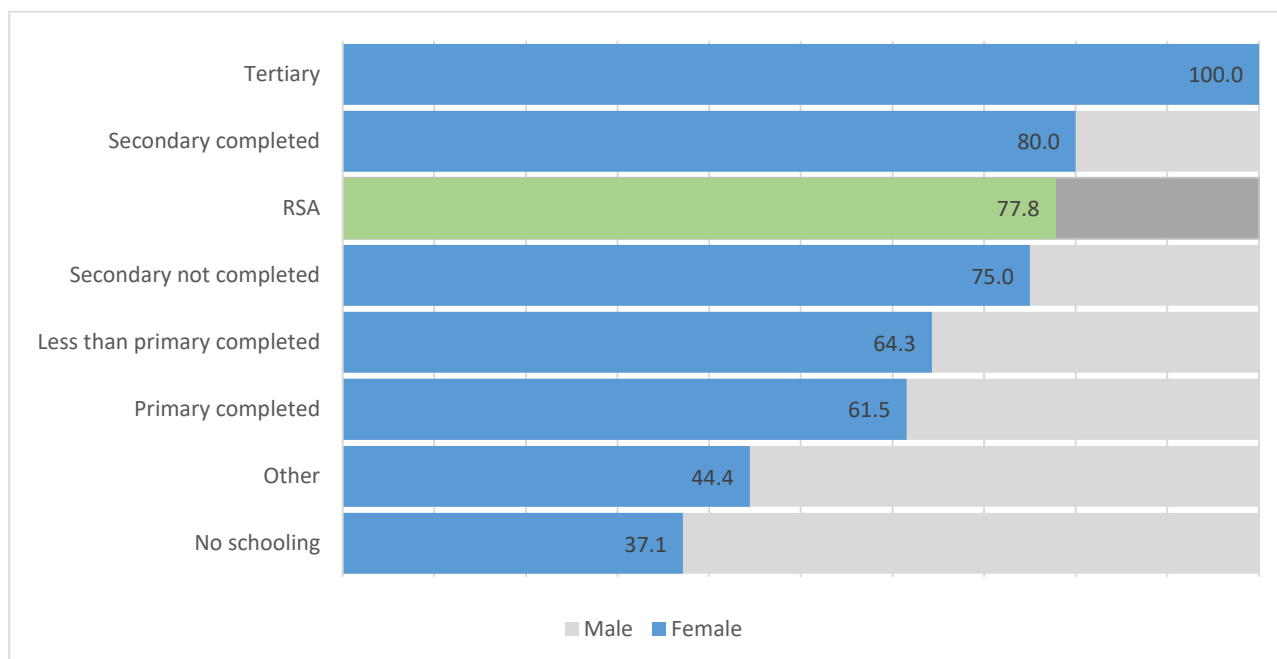
Source: Labour Market Dynamics, 2020.

The median is a widely used measure that best describes the distribution of earnings, as they are more stable over time. They accurately represent actual earnings in an occupation. The analysis of earnings highlights that a gender gap exists in earnings. The only median earnings that reached parity in 2020 were for tertiary education, while the median earnings for secondary education completed were slightly above that of South Africa by 2,2%.

Figure 3.32: Median female earnings as a percentage of median male earnings by province, 2020
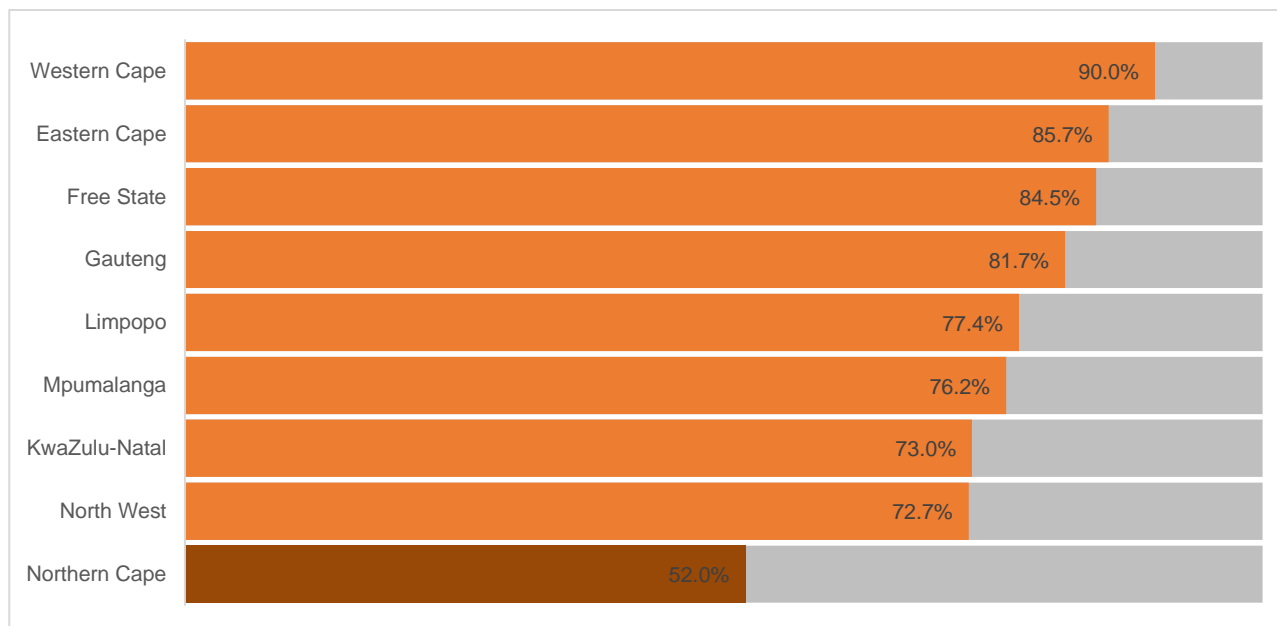
Source: Labour Market Dynamics, 2020.

Figure 3.32 shows the median female earnings as a percentage of median male earnings by province in 2020. Northern Cape has the highest gender pay gap, with females earning 52,0% of median earnings within the province, followed by North West (72,7%), KwaZulu-Natal (73,0%), and Western Cape the least at 90,0%.

Table 3.16: Percentage of households that reported to have skipped a meal by province, 2017 and 2021

Province	2017		2021	
	N ('000)	%	N ('000)	%
Western Cape	303	12,2	299	11,0
Eastern Cape	207	8,3	225	8,3
Northern Cape	94	3,8	107	3,9
Free State	136	5,5	140	5,1
KwaZulu-Natal	468	18,8	474	17,4
North West	332	13,3	342	12,6
Gauteng	601	24,1	764	28,1
Mpumalanga	274	11,0	305	11,2
Limpopo	79	3,2	64	2,4
RSA	**2 494**	**100,0**	**2 720**	**100,0**

Source: GHS 2017 and GHS 2021.

Table 3.16 shows the percentage of households that reported to have skipped a meal by province between 2017 and 2021. The highest percentage of the households that reported to have skipped a meal were in Gauteng (24,1% and 28,1%, respectively), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (18,8% and 17,4%). Limpopo had the lowest proportion of households that skipped a meal at 3,2% and 2,4%, respectively. Limpopo and Western Cape were the only provinces that recorded a decline in the households that reported to have skipped a meal between 2017 and 2021.

Figure 3.33: Percentage of female-headed households that reported to have skipped a meal by sex of head of household and province, 2017 and 2021

	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
2017 Male	55.2	40.6	46.1	51.5	43.0	54.8	57.9	47.5	45.4	50.6
2017 Female	44.8	59.4	53.9	48.5	57.0	45.2	42.2	52.5	54.6	49.4
2021 Male	50.8	51.3	58.1	41.4	45.5	58.1	58.8	53.5	62.7	53.5
2021 Female	49.2	48.7	41.9	58.6	54.5	41.9	41.2	46.5	37.3	46.5
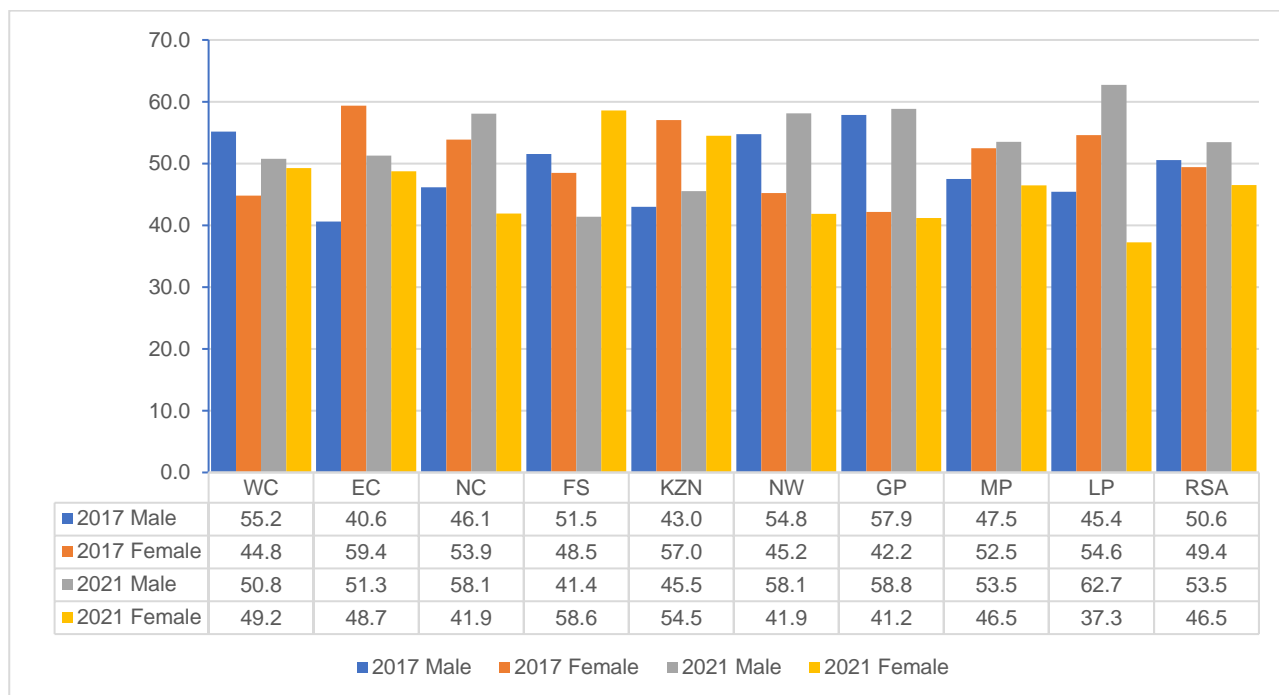
Source: GHS 2017 and GHS 2021.

Figure 3.33 shows the percentage of female-headed households that reported to have skipped a meal by sex of head of household and province. Gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial to end hunger, malnutrition and poverty.[24] Compared to men, women experience greater constraints in accessing resources, services, institutions, markets, decent employment and other economic opportunities.[25] A healthy diet has become an unaffordable luxury for close to 1 billion Africans.[26] In South Africa, the majority of people lost their jobs due to recession and the conditions made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic; as a result, more people struggle to put food on the table.

Nationally, more male-headed households than female-headed households reported to have skipped a meal in 2017 and 2021. Between 2017 and 2021, female-headed households recorded a 2,9 percentage decrease in those who have reported skipping a meal. In 2017, the majority of female-headed households that reported to have skipped a meal were observed in five out of nine provinces compared to their male counterparts. Those provinces are rural. In 2021, the majority of female-headed households in two provinces (Free State and KwaZulu-Natal) reported skipping a meal compared to the male-headed households. KwaZulu-Natal is the only province that recorded the majority of female-headed households that reported to have skipped a meal in both years.

Figure 3.34: Percentage of female-headed households that reported to have skipped a meal by sex of head of household and geo-type, 2017 and 2021
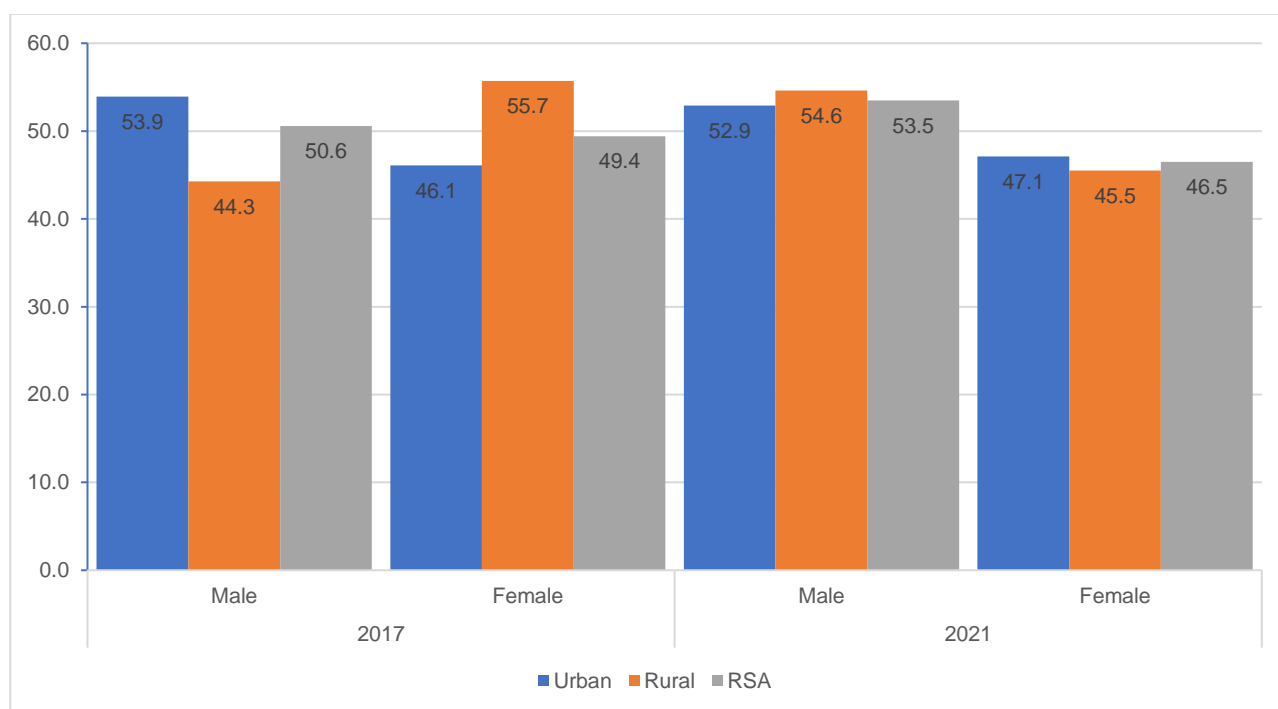
Source: GHS 2017 and GHS 2021.

The majority of male-headed households in urban areas reported having skipped a meal compared to female-headed households for both years. In 2017, most female-headed households in rural areas reported skipping meals compared to their male counterparts (55,7% and 44,3%, respectively). In 2021, male-headed households in rural areas who reported to have skipped a meal dominated compared to female-headed households (54,6% and 45,5% respectively).

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[24] https://reliefweb.int/report/world/women-are-pivotal-addressing-hunger-malnutrition-and-poverty
[25] https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures
[26] The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020 report.

Figure 3.35a: Proportion of persons living below food poverty line (2009, 2011 and 2015)
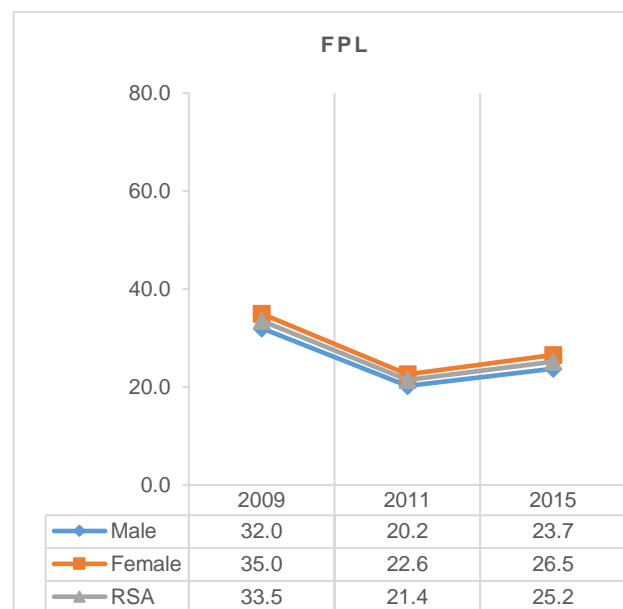
Figure 3.35b: Proportion of persons living below lower bound poverty lines (2009, 2011 and 2015)
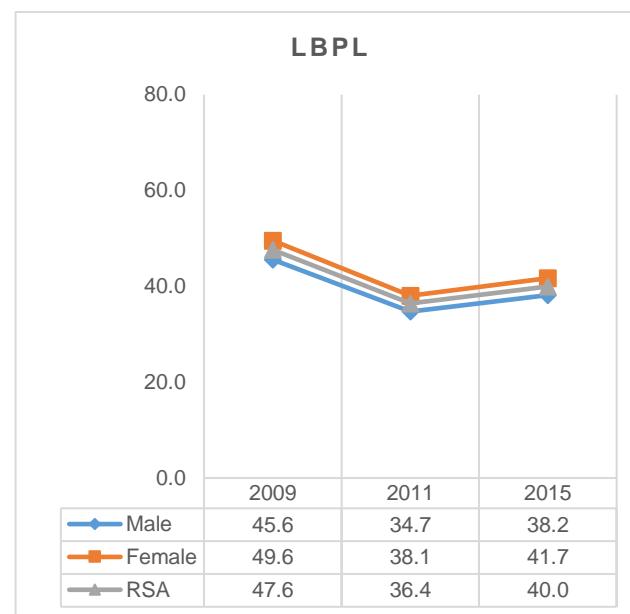
Figure 3.35c: Proportion of persons living below upper bound poverty lines (2009, 2011 and 2015)

FPL

	2009	2011	2015
Male	32.0	20.2	23.7
Female	35.0	22.6	26.5
RSA	33.5	21.4	25.2

LBPL

	2009	2011	2015
Male	45.6	34.7	38.2
Female	49.6	38.1	41.7
RSA	47.6	36.4	40.0

UBPL

	2009	2011	2015
Male	60.1	51.4	53.7
Female	63.9	54.9	57.2
RSA	62.1	53.2	55.5
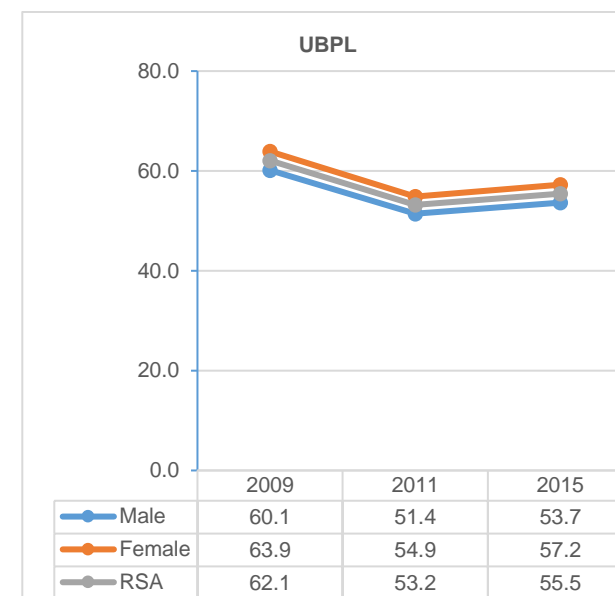
Source: LCS 2008/09, IES 2010/11 and LCS 2015.

Poverty can be measured in various ways. The Food Poverty Line (FPL) refers to the amount of money that an individual will need to afford the minimum required daily energy intake. This is also commonly referred to as the "extreme" poverty line; the rand values of the FPL were R318 in 2009, R335 in 2011, and R441 in 2015.

The Lower Bound Poverty Line (LBPL) refers to the food poverty line plus the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose total expenditure is equal to the food poverty line. The rand values of the LBPL were R456 in 2009, R501 in 2011, and R647 in 2015.

The Upper Bound Poverty Line (UBPL) refers to the food poverty line plus the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose food expenditure is equal to the food poverty line. The rand values of the UBPL were R709 for 2009, R779 for 2011, and R992 for 2015.

The figures above show the proportion of persons living below the FPL, LBPL, and UBPL in 2009, 2011, and 2015 by sex. In 2015, more than a quarter of the population were living below the food poverty line, 40% of the population lived below the lower bound poverty line whilst 55,5% lived below the upper bound poverty line. The disparity between the sexes has continually been higher for females than for males, with higher headcount, gap and severity measures at each point in time. The proportions of both males and females living below the UBPL increased by 2,3% each while proportions below the LBPL for males increased by 3,5 and 3,6 percentage points respectively.

The proportion of both males and females living below the FPL increased by 3,5 and 3,9 percentage points respectively (from 20,2% in 2011 to 23,7% in 2015 for males; from 22,6% in 2011 to 26,5% in 2015 for females).

Table 3.17: Dwelling ownership by type of dwelling and sex of household head, 2017 and 2021

	2017			2021			Gender parity	
	Male	**Female**	**Both sexes**	**Male**	**Female**	**Both sexes**		
Type of dwelling	('000)						**2017**	**2021**
Formal dwelling	4 320	3 726	**8 046**	5 790	4 922	**10 713**	0,86	0,85
Informal dwelling	476	282	**758**	579	453	**1 032**	0,59	0,78
Traditional dwelling	264	413	**677**	254	387	**641**	1,57	1,52
Other	9	4	**14**	6	3	**10**	0,49	0,53
Total	**5 069**	**4 425**	**9 494**	**6 630**	**5 765**	**12 396**	0,87	0,87
	%							
Formal dwelling	53,7	46,3	**100,0**	54,1	46,0	**100,0**		
Informal dwelling	62,8	37,2	**100,0**	56,1	43,9	**100,0**		
Traditional dwelling	39,0	61,0	**100,0**	39,7	60,3	**100,0**		
Other	67,1	32,9	**100,0**	65,5	34,5	**100,0**		
Total	**53,4**	**46,6**	**100,0**	**53,5**	**46,5**	**100,0**		

Source: GHS 2017 and GHS 2021.

Table 3.17 shows dwelling ownership by type of dwelling and sex of the household head for 2017 and 2021. The analysis revealed that the majority of households headed by males owned their dwellings compared to their female counterparts in the reporting period. In 2021, 53,5% of households headed by males owned their dwellings, compared to 46,5% of their female counterparts. In 2021, the percentage of female-headed households living in informal housing increased by 6,7% percentage points (from 37,2% to 43,9%), while the percentage of female-headed households who owned formal dwellings decreased by 0,3 of a percentage point (from 46,3 to 46,0%).

The smallest gender gap was observed among those owning formal dwellings for both years (GPI = 0,86 and GPI = 0,85 respectively), indicating that male-headed households were more likely to stay in formal dwellings compared to females. The proportion of female-headed households who own traditional homes was higher than that of their male counterparts in both years (GPI = 1,57 and 1,52).

Figure 3.36: Cellphone usage in the last three months of reference period by province and sex, 2019/20
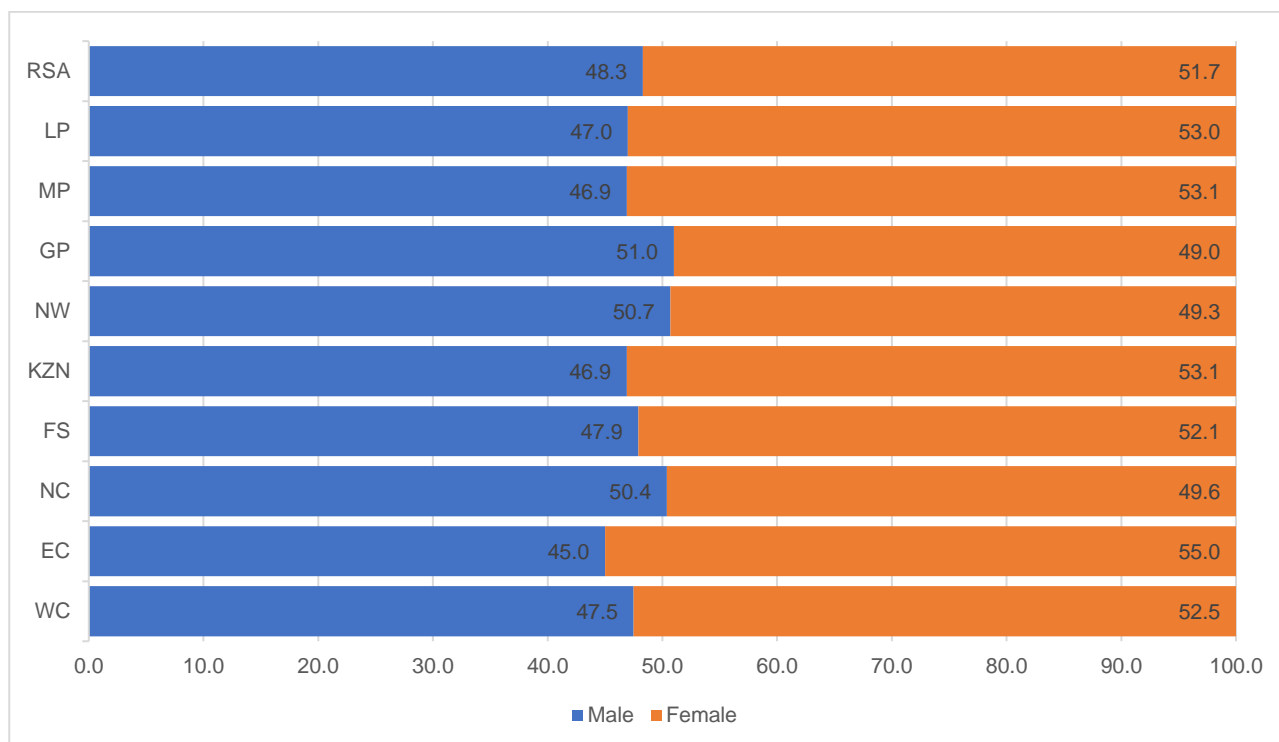
Source: GPSJS 2019/20.

Modern technology is essential for women empowerment and can help advance gender equality. The internet, digital platforms, mobile devices, and digital financial services offer opportunities to close gender gaps by enabling women access to knowledge and general information, generate additional revenue, and expand work opportunities. Indicator 5.b.1 of SDG 5 focuses on enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular, information and communication technology (ICT), to promote the empowerment of women. Nowadays, cellphones are used for various reasons such as virtual participation and access to financial services, thus ownership is an important indicator of gender equality. The Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (GPSJS 2020/21) asked individuals whether they used cellphones in the last three months preceding the survey.

Figure 3.36 shows cellphone usage in the last three months of the reference period by province and sex. In 2019/20, 51,7% of females reported to have used a cellphone in the last three months of the reporting period compared to 48,3% of their male counterparts. The majority of females in six provinces reported that they used a cellphone during the reference period compared to males. Gauteng, North West and Northern Cape were the only three provinces that recorded a higher proportion of males than females that used cellphones in the last three months of the reference period.

Figure 3.37: Cellphone usage in the last 3 months by province, sex and geo-type, 2019/20
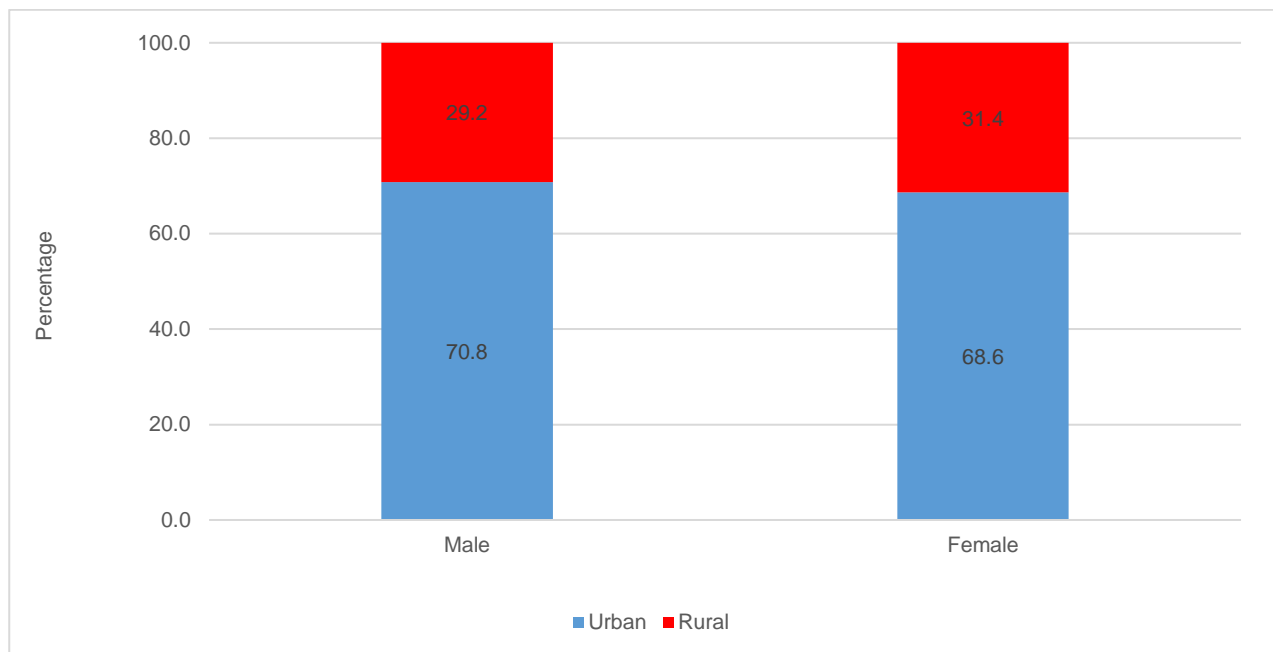
Source: GPSJS 2019/20.

Figure 3.37 depicts cellphone usage in the last three months of the reference period by sex and geo-type. Generally, cellphone usage was higher in urban areas compared to rural areas. The balance in usage of cellphones between males and females was slightly different in urban areas (70,8% and 68,6%) and in rural areas (29,2% and 31,4%).

Figure 3.38: Percentage of individuals who used a computer in the last 3 months by province and sex, 2019/20
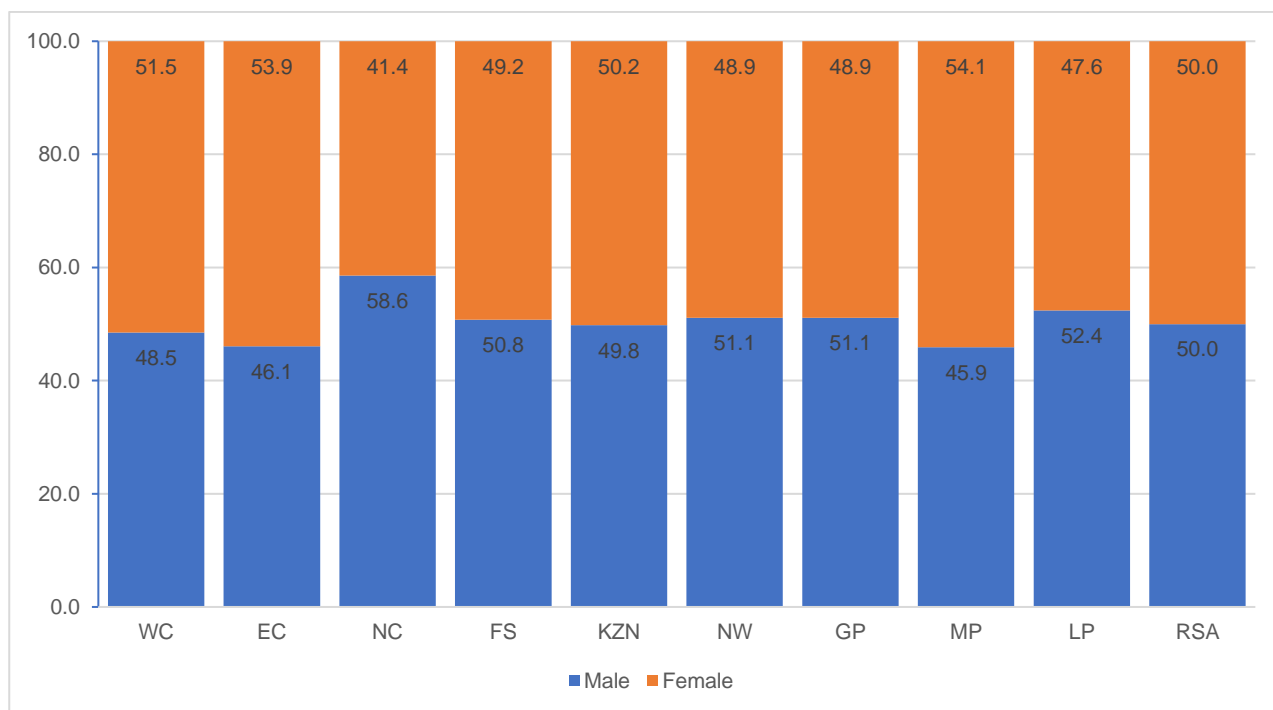
Source: GPSJS 2019/20.

Computers are some of the resources linked to women empowerment. They have been found to enhance employment opportunities, communication and information search, including providing women a sense of independence.[27] Figure 3.38 shows the percentage of individuals who used a computer in the last 3 months of the survey period (2019/20) by province and sex. The analysis revealed equal distribution of both males and females who indicated to have used a computer in the last 3 months of the reference period. Four out of nine provinces recorded a higher percentage of females who indicated to have used a computer in the last 3 months of the reference period compared to their male counterparts.

Figure 3.39: Percentage of individuals who used a computer in the last 3 months by sex and geo-type, 2019/20
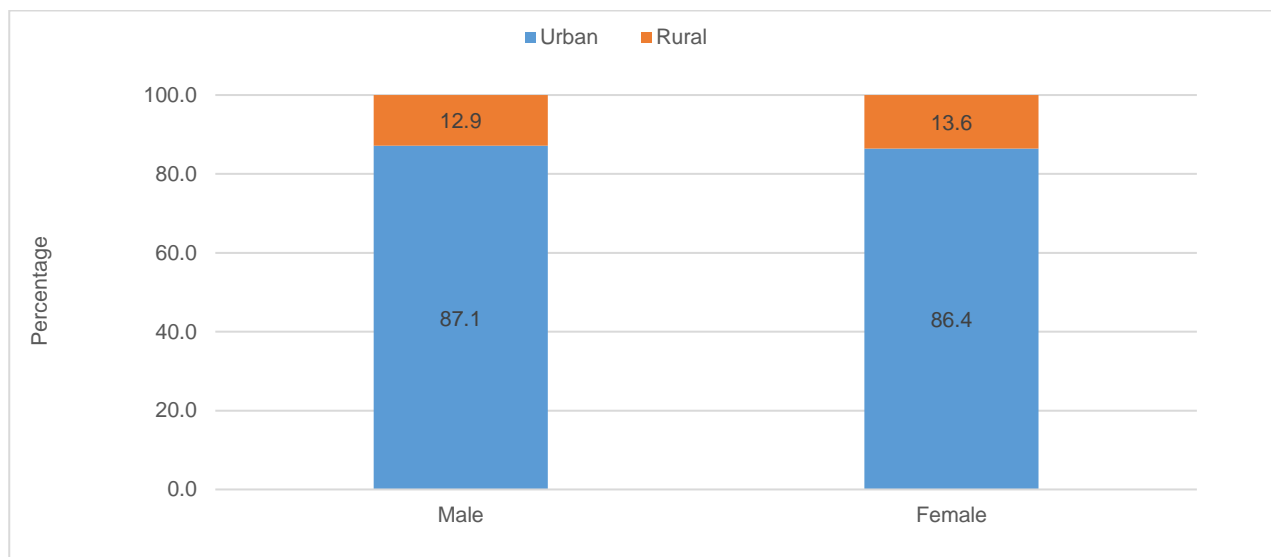
Source: GPSJS 2019/20.

Figure 3.39 shows the percentage of individuals who used a computer in the last 3 months of the reference period by sex and geo-type. The percentage of individuals who used a computer in urban areas was higher compared to rural areas, irrespective of the gender of the individual. Conversely, in the rural areas, the majority of females (13,6%) reported to have used a computer in the last 3 months compared to males (12,9%) with a 0,7 percentage point difference.

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[27] J.A. Tacchi, K. Kathi Kitner & K. Crawford. Meaningful Mobility, vol. 12, Feminist Media Studies (2012).

Figure 3.40: Internet usage in the last 3 months by location, sex and geo-type, 2019/20

	In mobility – use of the internet while mobile	Work	Home	Place of education	Another person's home	Community internet access facility	Commercial internet access facility	Other locations	RSA
■ Urban Male	74.3	47.0	52.3	12.0	11.5	10.8	10.2	0.6	27.3
■ Urban Female	73.9	44.5	51.1	12.7	8.4	9.4	8.9	0.6	26.2
■ Rural Male	76.2	25.8	26.7	7.5	2.5	3.1	4.3	0.3	18.3
■ Rural Female	76.0	20.7	22.5	10.1	1.7	3.3	5.0	1.1	17.6
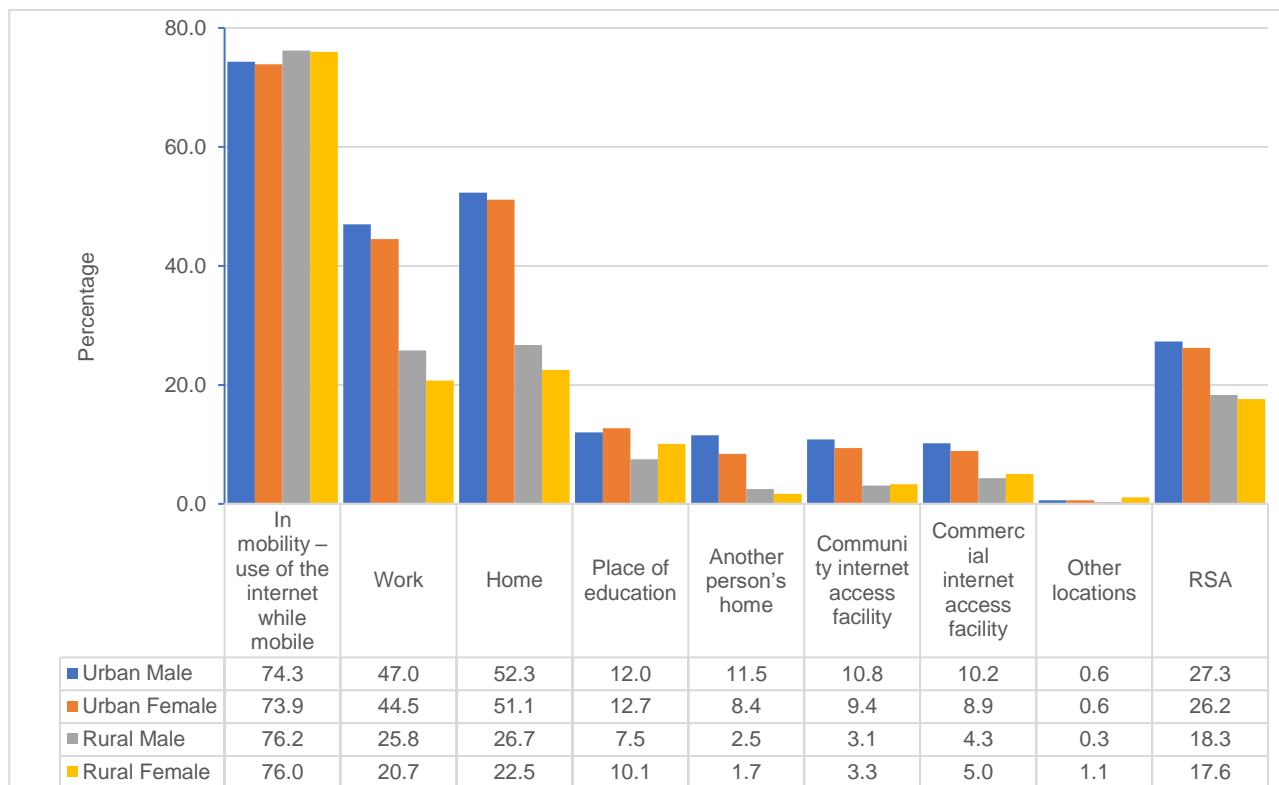
Source: GPSJS 2019/20.

Nationally, the majority of males indicated to have used internet more than their female counterparts irrespective of where they reside. The majority of males in both urban and rural areas reported that they have used in mobility use of the internet while mobile more than females. Generally, the usage of the internet was more prevalent in urban areas than rural areas irrespective of the place of access. Over half of urban area residents (52,3% for males and 51,1% for females) used internet at home compared to their rural counterparts.

Table 3.18: Number of owners who farm for themselves full-time or part-time by province and sex, 2007 and 2018

Province	2007			2018		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
	N ('000)					
Western Cape	5 744	1 625	**7 369**	5 119	1 331	**6 450**
Eastern Cape	3 284	638	**3 922**	3 250	849	**4 099**
Northern Cape	3 863	706	**4 568**	3 975	998	**4 973**
Free State	5 396	983	**6 379**	6 523	1 594	**8 117**
KwaZulu-Natal	2 579	829	**3 408**	2 202	621	**2 823**
North West	3 702	695	**4 397**	4 139	1 055	**5 194**
Gauteng	855	264	**1 118**	1 860	477	**2 337**
Mpumalanga	2 485	730	**3 215**	2 251	602	**2 853**
Limpopo	2 169	647	**2 815**	2 221	586	**2 807**
South Africa	**30 076**	**7 116**	**37 192**	**31 539**	**8 114**	**39 653**
	%					
Western Cape	77,9	22,1	**100,0**	79,4	20,6	**100,0**
Eastern Cape	83,7	16,3	**100,0**	79,3	20,7	**100,0**
Northern Cape	84,6	15,5	**100,0**	79,9	20,1	**100,0**
Free State	84,6	15,4	**100,0**	80,4	19,6	**100,0**
KwaZulu-Natal	75,7	24,3	**100,0**	78,0	22,0	**100,0**
North West	84,2	15,8	**100,0**	79,7	20,3	**100,0**
Gauteng	76,5	23,6	**100,1**	79,6	20,4	**100,0**
Mpumalanga	77,3	22,7	**100,0**	78,9	21,1	**100,0**
Limpopo	77,1	23,0	**100,0**	79,1	20,9	**100,0**
South Africa	**80,9**	**19,1**	**100,0**	**79,5**	**20,5**	**100,0**

Source: CoCA 2018.

Table 3.18 shows the number of owners who farm for themselves full-time or part-time by province and sex for 2007 and 2018. Nationally, males recorded the highest percentage of owners who farm for themselves full-time or part-time in both years (80,9% and 79,5%) compared to their female counterparts. Although male owners dominated in both years, males recorded a 1,4 percentage point decrease in 2018. The majority of males in all the nine provinces reported that they were owners who farm for themselves full-time or part time in both years compared to their female counterparts. In 2007, Western Cape (7 369) recorded the highest number of owners who farm for themselves full-time or part-time, followed by Free State (6 379); Gauteng (855) had the least. For the reference period, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo were the only provinces that recorded a decrease in the percentage of females who were owners farming for themselves full-time or part-time.

3.10 Conclusion

A growing working-age population provides opportunities for employment and economic growth. The provincial analysis of the working-age population in South Africa was estimated to have increased by 2,9 million from 37,1 million in 2017 to 40 million in 2022. Over a quarter of the country's working-age population resided in Gauteng, followed by KwaZulu-Natal (18,5%) and Western Cape (12,2%).

Labour force participation rates have steadily declined over the years, and more so recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite females in the working-age population exceeding males, their participation rates in the labour force remained lower at 50,7% in 2022 compared to 63,2% of males. A gendered perspective of labour market participation showed a positive relationship between the number of children in the household and participation rates, irrespective of sex. Participation rates in 2022 were lowest among males and females who lived with 5 or more children at 39,6% and 38,2% respectively, increasing by 1,5 percentage points for males and 1,3 percentage points for females.

Generally, employment decreased by 1,3 million with females recording the highest decline of about 675 thousand. Results suggest that job creation in the country is not expanding at the same rate as the growth of the population, regardless of sex. During this same period, the decline in the employment rates for males and females was almost equal at 6,9 and 6,1 percentage points respectively. Analysis of employed individuals with tertiary qualifications showed varying gender gaps in different fields of study. Approximately two-thirds of males who were employed with tertiary education were Physics/mathematics or engineering graduates, with a huge gender gap of 0,34 in 2017 and 0,37 in 2022. On the other hand, Arts/education/hospitality graduates were more likely to be females, showing a gender parity ratio of 2,11 which doubled to 5,54 in 2022. When looking at occupations, working for households as domestic workers were more common among females than males. The second most common occupation for employed females was working as a clerk; more than two-thirds reported to be in this occupation. Regarding ownership of business enterprises, females (76,7% in 2017 and 77,5% in 2022) were operating businesses in the informal sector and were more likely to be own-account workers than their male counterparts.

Unemployment is gender neutral; it affects males and females equally. Overall unemployment rates grew by 6,8 percentage points from 27,7% in 2017 to 34,5% in 2022. Males and females between the ages of 25–34 years accounted for the most unemployed when compared to other age groups. The presence of children indirectly contributes to unemployment, particularly amongst women. When exploring this effect, unemployment rates in 2017 and 2022 were highest among males and females who lived with 5 or more children at 43,6% and 55,5% respectively.

Unemployment rates by the field of study showed significant variations, with the largest increase observed in the field of agriculture/other (10,5 percentage points) and the lowest increase recorded among economic and management sciences graduates (3,6 percentage points).

Resource equity as part of economic empowerment explored ownership of certain assets as a proxy of autonomy. The majority of females indicated grants followed by remittances as their main sources of income, while their male counterparts indicated income from a business and salaries/wages/commission as their main sources of income.

Nationally, the majority of male-headed households reported having skipped a meal compared to female-headed households in both years. The majority of females reported having used their cellphones more than their male counterparts for the reference period. Gauteng, North West and Northern Cape were the only three provinces that recorded a higher proportion of males than females that used a cellphone in the last three months of the reference period.

Nationally, the majority of males indicated to have used the internet more than their female counterparts irrespective of where they reside. Generally, the usage of the internet was more prevalent in urban areas than rural areas irrespective of the place of access.

Males recorded the highest percentage of owners who farm for themselves full-time or part-time in both years compared to their female counterparts in all the provinces. Although male owners dominated in both years, males recorded a decrease in farm owners in 2018. KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo were the only provinces that recorded a decrease in the percentage of females who were owners farming for themselves full-time or part-time.

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

4.1 Background

Empowerment of women is core to South Africa's processes of sustainable development, which includes leaving no one behind by addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities. Achieving women's empowerment depends on the interplay of several factors, such as addressing social discriminations that exist based on sex, disability, race, religion, and changing perceptions and gender norms that dictate women's role in society.

Social empowerment of women involves freedom of movement, economic security and stability, decision-making, and free participation in a society with equal opportunities for advancement.[28] Therefore, advocacy of laws and regulations, discouragement of social norms about discriminatory gender roles and providing public infrastructure will go a long way toward making women's empowerment a reality.

This chapter will examine social empowerment from perceptions of social gender norms and ascertain gender equality in government's decision-making positions using the Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (GPSJS) 2019 and 2021, and administrative data.

4.2 Decision-making roles

Gender equity in decision-making positions, both in government and the private sector, is important in empowering women to occupy positions of power, where they can effectively participate in planning, making decisions, recommending policies, and coordinating empowerment efforts.

Figure 4.1: Trend analysis of female share in senior (SMS) and middle (MMS) management positions in the public sector by sex, 2018 to 2021

		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	MMS	55.1	44.9	54.8	45.2	54.4	45.6	54.0	46.0
	SMS	58.4	41.6	57.6	42.4	57.0	43.0	56.2	43.8
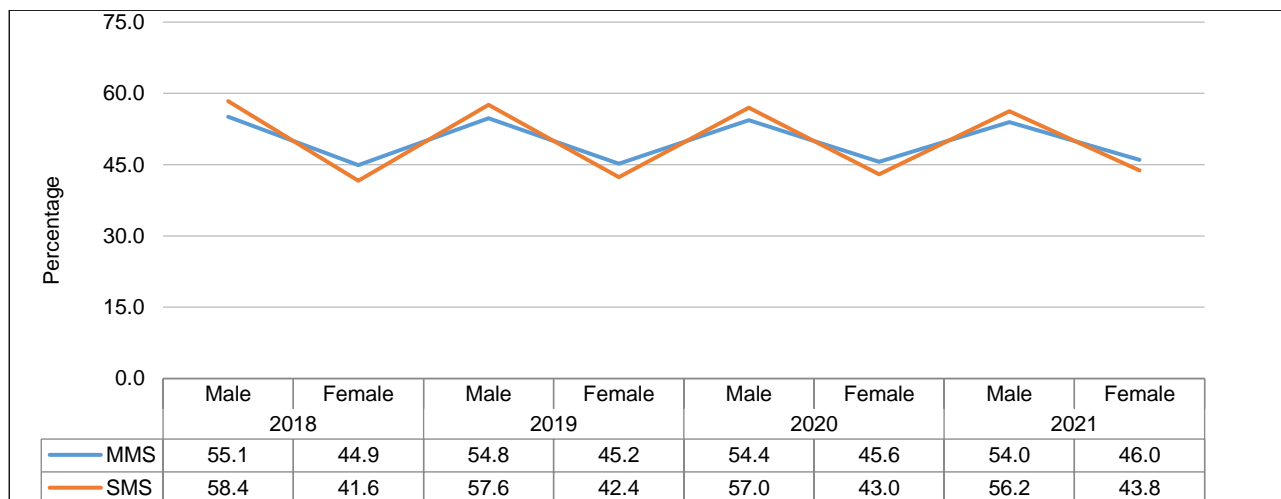
Source: DPSA, 2018–2021.

Since the government's promulgation of the Employment Equity Act of 1998, institutions are continuously striving for equitable representation of designated groups in various occupational categories. The act provides action plans for transformation and guidelines for building capacity in workplaces, including women's representation at senior management levels (set at 50,0%), and employment of persons with disabilities (2,0%). Studies show that women tend to be overlooked for promotions because of pressures to advance in careers and concurrently fulfilling their domestic/childcare burden.[29]

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[28] Gibbs, A. & Bishop, K. 2018. Combined economic empowerment and gender-transformative interventions. Evidence Review. What Works to Prevent VAWG programme.
[29] Human, L. 1993. The development of black and female managers in South Africa: Why many affirmative action programs fail. Management Education and Development.

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of senior and middle management positions in the public sector over 4 years (2018–2021). Males occupy most senior management positions (SMS) in the public sector. Their composition ranged from 58,4% in 2018 to 56,2% in 2021, while their female counterparts occupied 41,6% in 2018 and slightly increased to 43,8% in 2021. A similar trend was also noted among middle management positions. The gender parity ratio narrowed during the period of reporting from 0,71 to 0,78 for SMS positions and 0,81 to 0,85 for MMS positions respectively – with SMS positions far from parity.

Table 4.1: Percentage distribution of females in senior (SMS) and middle (MMS) management positions in the public sector by sex and geo-type, 2018 and 2021

Position and age group		2018						2021					
		Male		Female		Both sexes		Male		Female		Both sexes	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
MMS	<=35	1 035	10,6	1 186	15,0	2 221	12,6	607	6,5	764	9,6	1 371	8,0
	36–55	7 273	74,7	5 876	74,1	13 149	74,4	6 984	75,0	6 087	76,7	13 071	75,8
	56–65	1 413	14,5	864	10,9	2 277	12,9	1 710	18,4	1 079	13,6	2 789	16,2
	66+	10	0,1	6	0,1	16	0,1	6	0,1	1	0,0	7	0,0
	Total	9 731	100,0	7 932	100,0	17 663	100,0	9 307	100,0	7 931	100,0	17 238	100,0
SMS	<=35	164	2,8	189	4,6	353	3,6	67	1,3	76	1,9	143	1,5
	36–55	4 344	75,2	3 228	78,4	7 572	76,5	3 808	72,4	3 169	77,4	6 977	74,6
	56–65	1 235	21,4	689	16,7	1 924	19,4	1 353	25,7	840	20,5	2 193	23,4
	66+	32	0,6	12	0,3	44	0,4	31	0,6	9	0,2	40	0,4
	Total	5 775	100,0	4 118	100,0	9 893	100,0	5 259	100,0	4 094	100,0	9 353	100,0

Source: DPSA, 2018–2021.

Table 4.1 shows the age distribution of management positions in the public sector. Generally, approximately two-thirds (74,4%) of MMS personnel were between the ages of 36–55 in both 2018 and 2021. Similarly, the highest percentage (76,4%) of SMS positions were occupied by those aged 36–55 years old for both females and males in both years. This age cohort recorded a gender parity ratio of 1,04 skewed towards female managers.

Among MMS personnel, females in the youth age group (<=35 years) were more likely to hold MMS positions than their male counterparts (4,4 percentage points difference). The same trend was observed in SMS positions in 2021. Between 2018 and 2021 the proportion of both males and females in SMS positions in the age group 56–65 increased whilst a decrease was observed for those aged 36–55.

Table 4.2: Percentage distribution of females in top management positions in the private sector by geo-type, 2017 and 2022

Geography type	2017						2022					
	Male		Female		Both sexes		Male		Female		Both sexes	
	N(˙000)	%	N(˙000)	%	N(˙000)	%	N(˙000)	%	N(˙000)	%	N(˙000)	%
Rural	89	74,0	31	26,0	120	100,0	78	80,3	19	19,7	97	100,0
Urban	764	66,4	387	33,6	1151	100,0	670	67,6	320	32,4	990	100,0
RSA	**852**	**67,1**	**418**	**32,9**	**1270**	**100,0**	**748**	**68,8**	**340**	**31,2**	**1 087**	**100,0**

Source: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

All organisations, including those in the private sector, must adhere to the Employment Equity Act. Table 4.2 shows the percentage distribution of females in top management positions in the private sector by geo-type for 2017 and 2022. It should be noted that a slight decrease in representation of top management positions in the private sector occurred during the reporting period. The majority of top management positions in the private sector were occupied by males both in rural and urban areas. The gender parity ratio in urban areas widened during the period from 0,51 in 2017 to 0,48 in 2022.

Figure 4.2a: Percentage distribution of females in top management positions in the private sector by population group, Q1: 2017
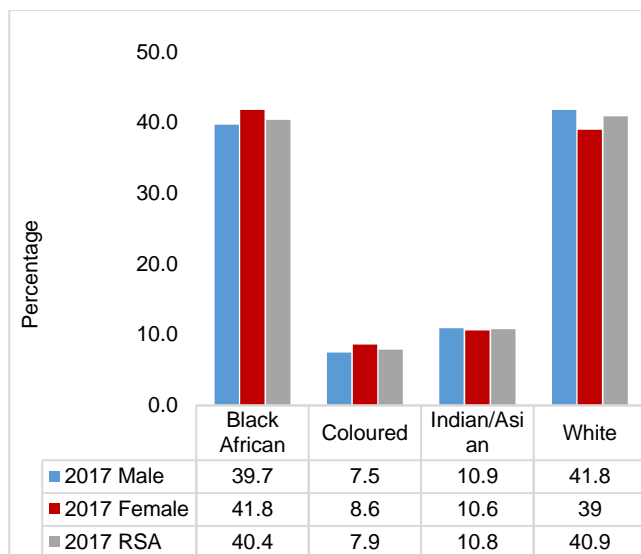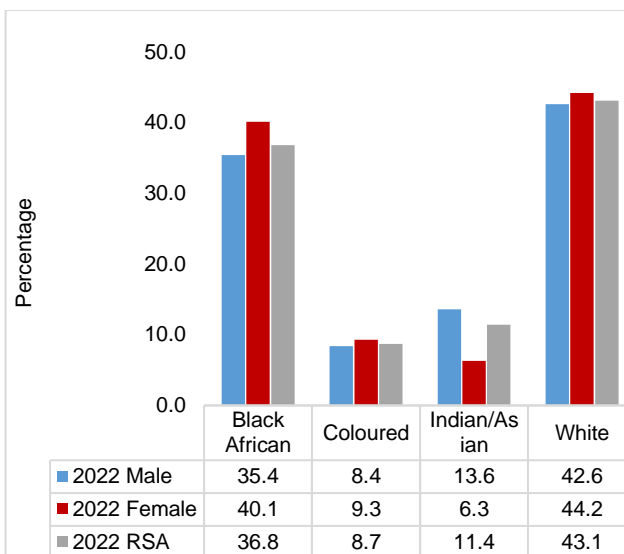
Figure 4.2b: Percentage distribution of females in top management positions in the private sector by population group, Q1:2022

	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
2017 Male	39.7	7.5	10.9	41.8
2017 Female	41.8	8.6	10.6	39
2017 RSA	40.4	7.9	10.8	40.9

	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
2022 Male	35.4	8.4	13.6	42.6
2022 Female	40.1	9.3	6.3	44.2
2022 RSA	36.8	8.7	11.4	43.1

Source: QLFS Q1: 2022.

Figures 4.2a and 4.2b show the distribution of positions in the private sector by sex and population group. Among males, a higher percentage of personnel occupying management positions in the private sector were white and black African males, and the same trend was observed among females. On average, four in ten managers who were in these positions were black African or white females, surpassing their male counterparts and recording 1,13, and 1,03 gender gaps respectively.

The figure highlights the improvement in the representation of coloured managers in the sector for both sexes. It should be noted that a slight decrease in the representation of black African managers and Indian/Asian managers was recorded during the period.

4.3 Perceptions of gender and social norms

Violence against women (VAW) is one of the barriers to women's empowerment as it negatively affects their ability to choose and make decisions, especially if they constantly live in fear of violence either at home or at the workplace.[30] Violence against women often occurs in the context of cultural ideologies that support it, and these ideologies may influence what individuals believe.[31] Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of attitudes about VAW is important when developing strategies for the prevention of violence.

It is important to understand the truthfulness of people's perceptions of gender equality to improve the effectiveness of efforts to increase gender equality in society, and for educational efforts to be more targeted.

[30] Raghavendra, S., Carney, P., Duvvury, N. & Callan, A. 2013. "Intimate Partner Violence: Economic Costs and Implications for Growth and Development." Women's Voice, Agency, and Participation Research Series 2013 3.
[31] Schuler, S., Yount, K.M. & Lenzi, R. 2012. Justification of Wife Beating in Rural Bangladesh: *A Qualitative Analysis of Gender Differences in Responses to Survey Questions. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3721193/*

Table 4.3: General individual perceptions on gender roles and equality by sex, 2020/21

|		Male		Female		Both sexes	
Perceptions		**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**
Women participation in elections	Agree	18 484	93,1	19 837	93,6	**38 321**	**93,3**
	Disagree	1 374	6,9	1 367	6,4	**2 741**	**6,7**
Views on women earning more	Agree	10 503	53,6	11 955	57,2	**22 458**	**55,5**
	Disagree	9 087	46,4	8 947	42,8	**18 035**	**44,5**
Women independence	Agree	17 941	90,3	19 403	91,2	**37 344**	**90,8**
	Disagree	1 921	9,7	1 876	8,8	**3 797**	**9,2**

Source: GPSJS 2020/21.

Beliefs affect affirmative action programmes and their implementation, causing gender-based discrimination in labour markets and society. Even though females have long attained the right to vote and stand in elections to compete for political office, they remain vastly underrepresented in local and national parliaments. Soliciting perceptions about their participation in elections is important to gauge South Africans' views on the matter. The Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (GPSJS 2020/21) asked whether males and females view gender equality and roles in the same manner by asking three questions about women's participation in elections, views on women earning more than men, and if they should be independent.

Table 4.3 shows general individual perceptions of gender roles and equality between 2020/21. Over 90% of both males and females agree that women should have a role in elections and also advocate for their independence. When it came to women earning more, expressed beliefs about wage disparities differed substantially across the sexes. Approximately half believed women can earn more than men; 53,6% of males and 57,2% of females.

Even though the government imposes policies aimed at closing the gender wage gap, such as equal pay legislation and reporting requirements for private companies, women continue to earn lesser wages than men in some instances.

Figure 4.3: General individual perceptions of gender roles and equality by geo-type, 2020/21
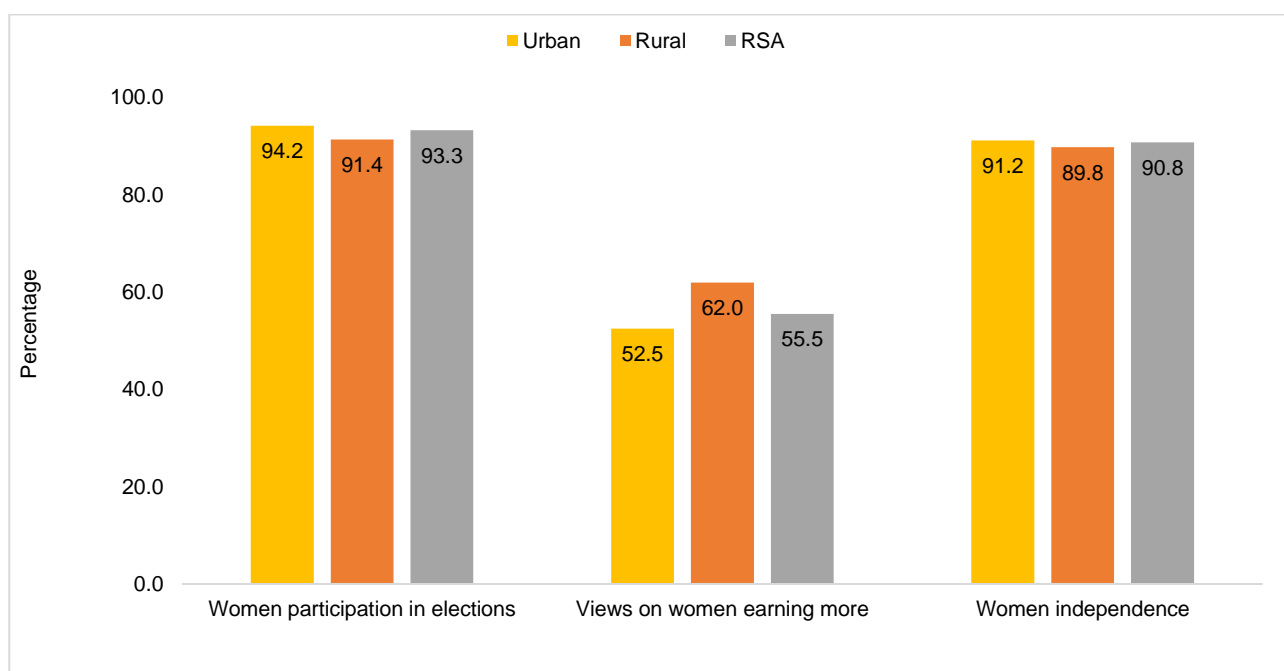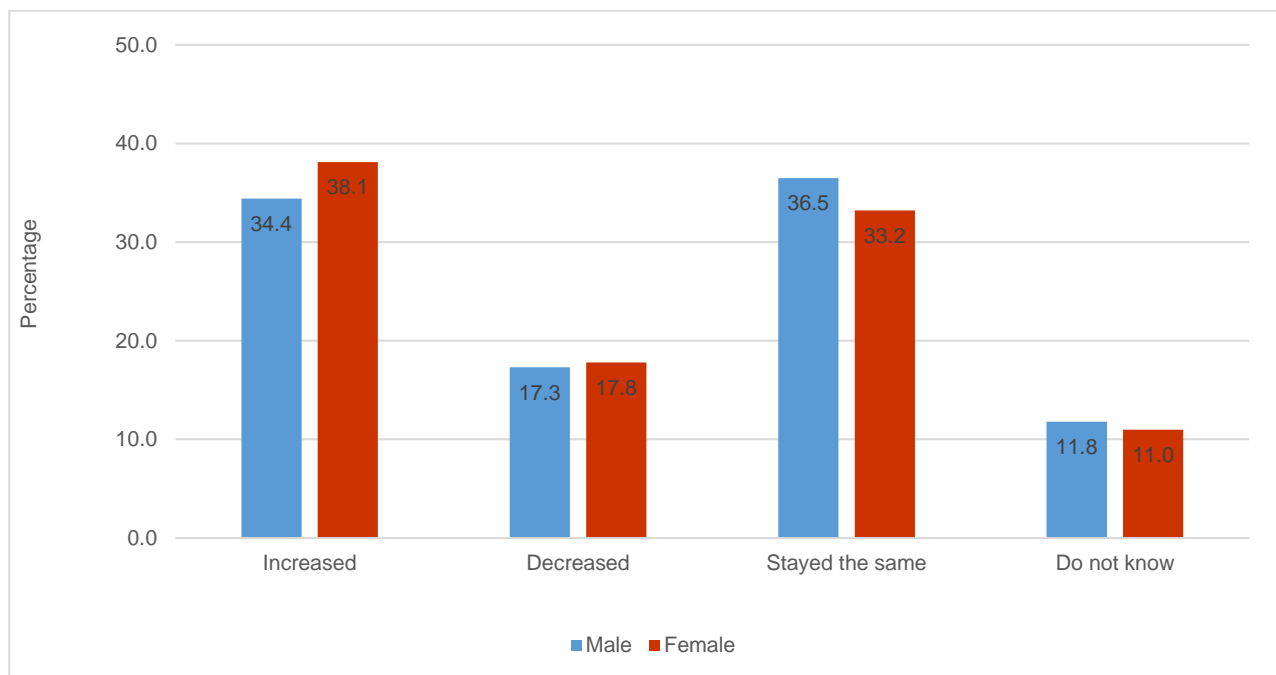

Source: GPSJS 2020/21.

There are a number of people in rural areas that live under the governance of traditional leaders. In some cases, the environment can be characterised by patriarchal norms and customary practices that hinder women's independence and empowerment.[32] Figure 4.3 shows general individual perceptions of gender roles and equality by geographical types between 2020/21.

The figure highlights that in both urban and rural areas, approximately 9 in 10 persons agree that women need to participate in elections and should also be independent. Regarding the belief that women should earn more than men, only 62,0% of persons in rural areas and 52,5% of persons in urban areas agreed.

Figure 4.4: Percentage of individuals by whether gender-based violence has increased, decreased or remained the same in their area by sex, 2020/21

Source: GPSJS 2020/21.

The GPSJS 2020/21 solicited people's opinions on whether gender-based violence had increased, decreased or remained the same in their area.

Figure 4.4 shows that over a third of females (38,1%) compared to males (34,4%) think that gender-based violence has increased in their area. The figure also shows that males constituted a higher percentage (36,5%) of those who believed that gender-based violence has stayed the same compared to their female counterparts (33,2%).

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[32] Khunou, S.K. 2009. Traditional leadership and independent Bantustans of South Africa: some milestones of transformative constitutionalism beyond Apartheid.

Figure 4.5: Percentage of individuals who believe that violence against women is justified under certain situations, 2020/21
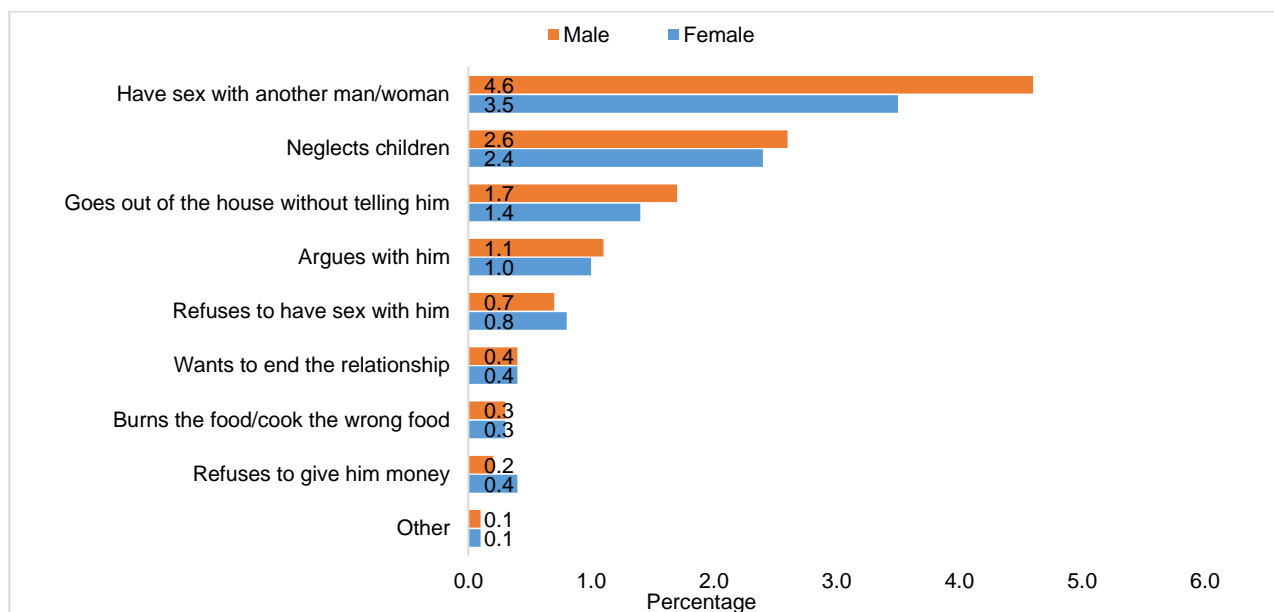
Source: GPSJS 2020/21.

Figure 4.5 shows the proportion of males and females who believed that wife-beating was justified by the type of situation. In all types of situations, over 90% of persons did not believe a man/husband should hit or beat his partner/wife, with a higher proportion of females than males discouraging wife-beating. However, 4,6% of males and 3,5% of females agreed that having sex with another man warranted a beating.

The results show progress and re-emphasise government interventions to eliminate VAW, despite some individuals' continued beliefs that husbands are justified to beat their wives in certain instances. Given that societies raise both girls and boys, unprogressive social gender norms and beliefs are likely to be perpetuated from generation to generation if not eliminated.

Exposure to VAW may involve many risks such as injury and trauma. Disclosing or seeking help may be prevented by several barriers, which can include unemployment, low educational status, economic dependence and experiences of violence. These have been associated with staying in an abusive relationship and were also identified as obstacles to the disclosure of violence.[33] It is important for women to know and have access to information and services related to VAW.

Figure 4.6 shows the percentage of individuals who are aware of social welfare services or facilities related to VAWC by sex and geo-type in 2020/21.

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[33] Plichta, S.B. & Falik, M. 2001. Prevalence of violence and its implications for women's health: *Women's Health Issues. 2001 May-Jun; 11(3):244-58.*

Figure 4.6: Percentage of individuals who are aware ("Yes") of social welfare services or facilities related to VAWC by sex and geo-type, 2020/21
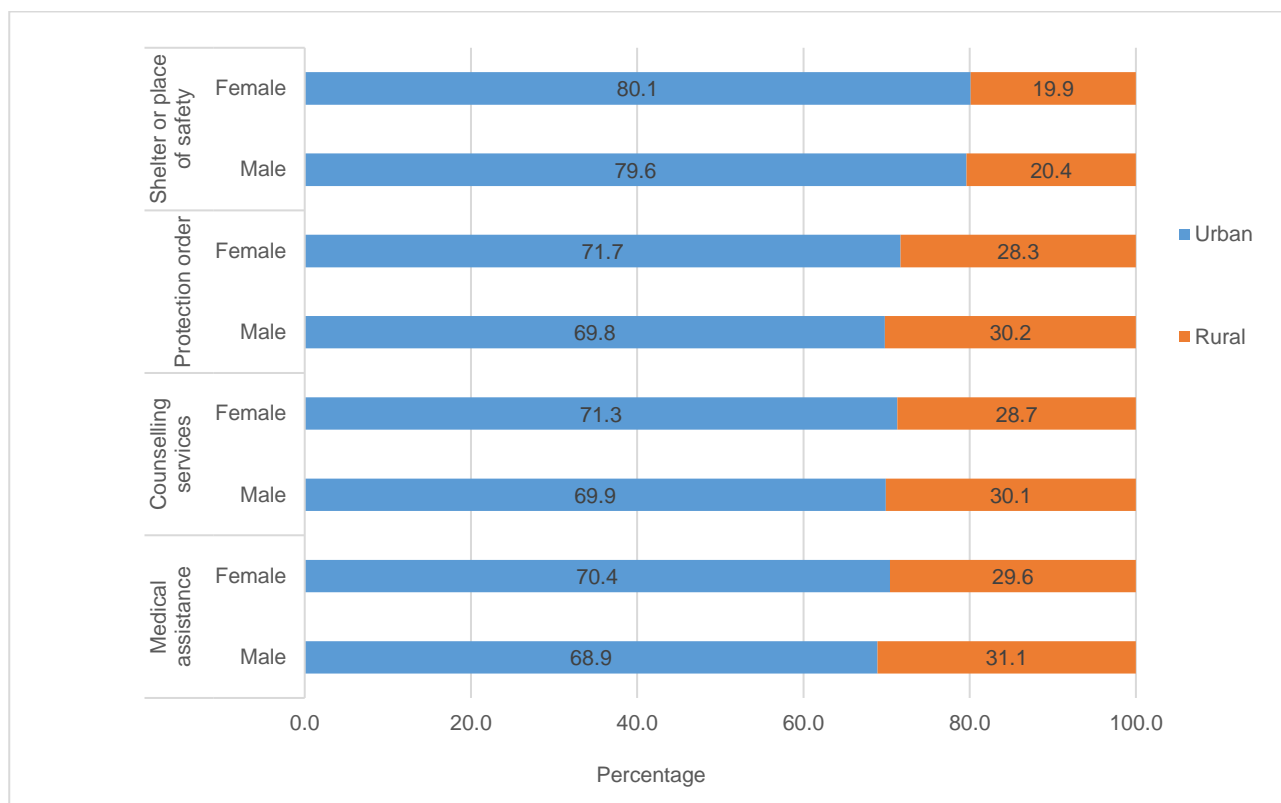
Source: GPSJS 2020/21.

The GPSJS 2020/21 asked questions about individuals' awareness of social welfare services or facilities related to VAW, which included shelter or places of safety, protection order, counselling services and medical assistance in case such services were needed.

In comparison to males, females in urban areas were more likely to be aware of social services and facilities related to VAW. This varied according to the type of services, such as shelters or places of safety (80,1%), venues to get protection orders (71,7%), counselling services (71,3%) and locations to get medical care (70,4%). In contrast, more males than females were aware of where to get social welfare services or amenities in rural areas.

Figure 4.7: Percentage of individuals who have heard or seen "Yes" campaigns against VAWC by sex and geo-type, 2020/21

	Male	Female		Urban	Rural
■ Broadcast media	92.4	92.6		93.4	90.6
■ Print media	47.5	46.0		55.7	26.4
■ Social media and internet	31.9	30.9		35.5	22.1
■ NGOs, CBOs and others	19.1	20.3		23.4	11.3
■ Road show campaigns	29.2	29.6		35.7	15.2
■ Religious institutions	37.6	37.4		42.5	26.1
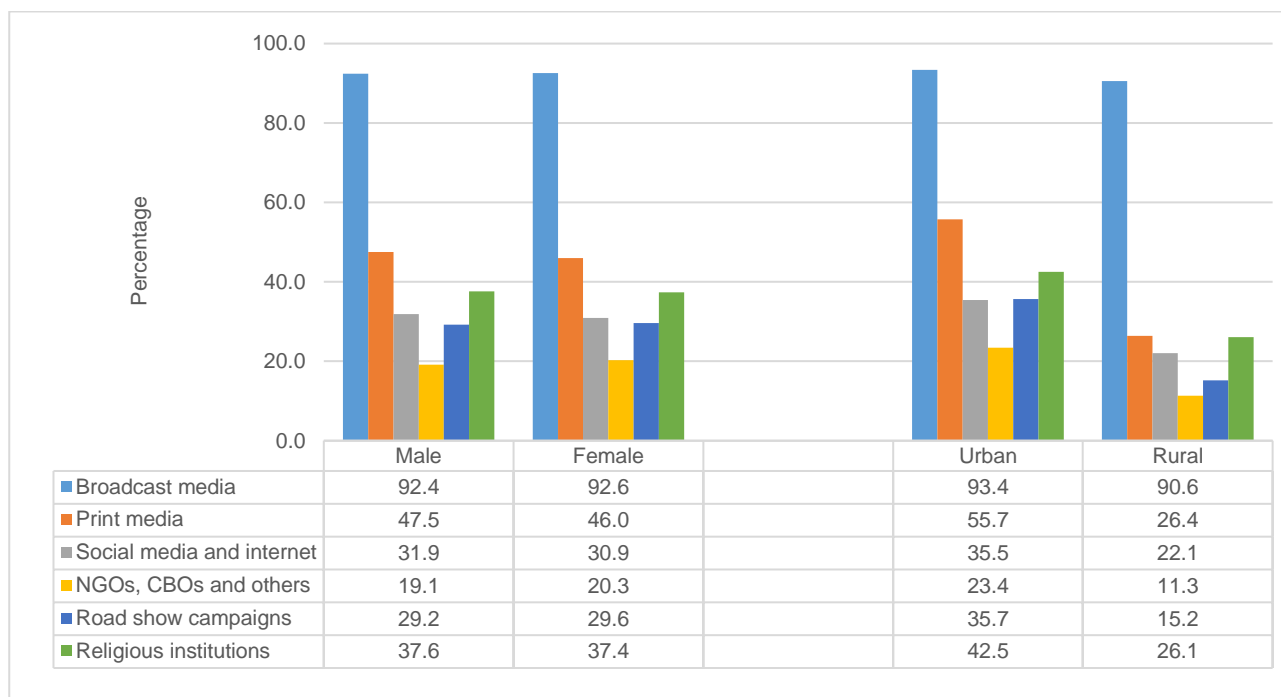
Source: GPSJS 2020/21.

Figure 4.6 shows the percentage of individuals who have heard or seen campaigns against VAWC by sex and geo-type in 2020/21. Above 90% of both males and females indicated that they have heard or seen campaigns of VAWC on broadcast media. There were no significant gender differences in all sources of information. In urban areas, print media and religious institutions are frequently used information sources for campaigns against VAWC in addition to broadcast media. In rural areas, however, less than 30% of individuals have heard about campaigns against VAWC on different platforms except for broadcast media, where 90% of people have seen or heard about the campaigns.

Figure 4.8: Individual perceptions by whom they think commits the most acts of gender-based violence by sex, 2020/21
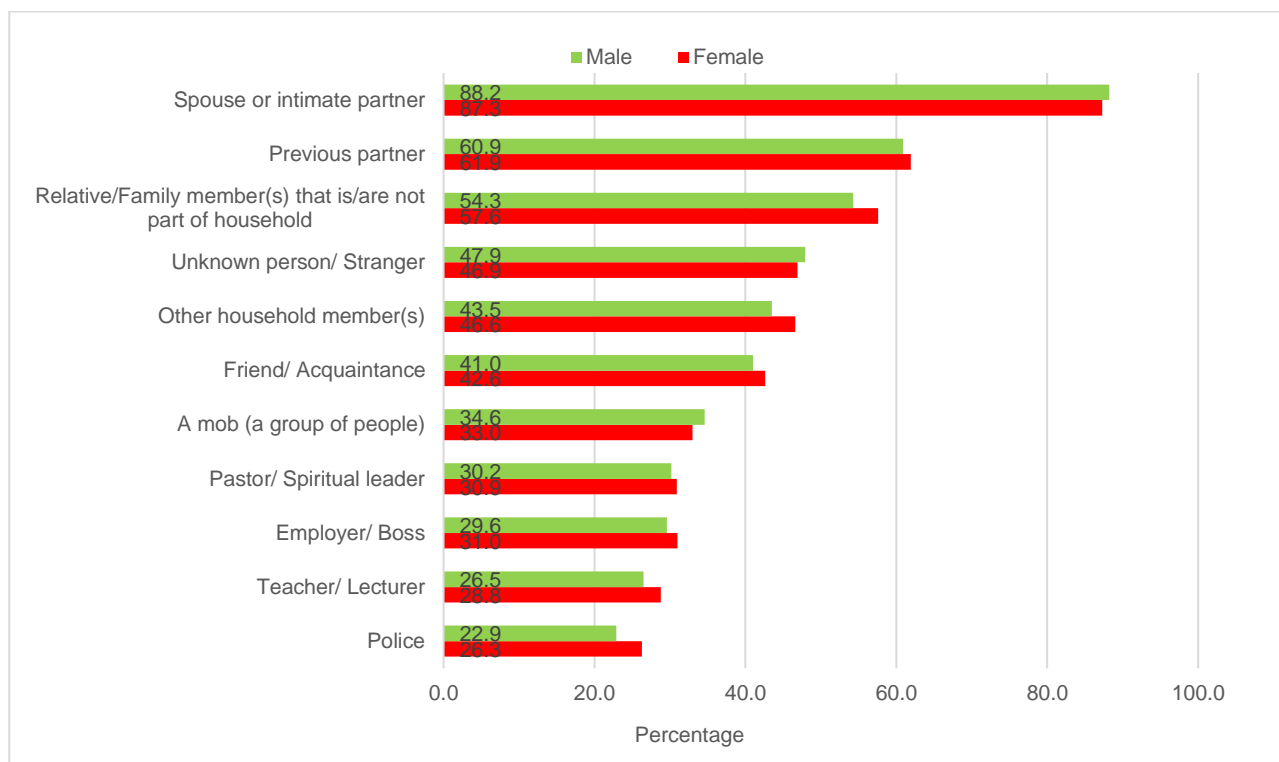
Source: GPSJS 2020/21.

Figure 4.8 shows the percentage distribution of those who are perceived to commit most acts of gender-based violence. Studies have shown that controlling behaviour among men is significantly associated with a higher likelihood of physical, sexual and emotional violence, and that most acts of gender-based violence are committed by persons known to the victim.[34]

The results depicted in the figure above show that over 80% of both males and females believed that spouses or intimate partners commit most acts of violence. This is followed by those who believe a previous partner, relative or family member that is part of the household and unknown person or stranger commits the most acts of gender-based violence.

Table 4.4: General individual perceptions on whether all kinds of VAWC should be reported by sex and geo-type, 2020/21

All kinds of violence against women and/or children should be reported	Urban				Rural			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	%
Strongly agree	9 465	69,2	10 976	73,8	4 104	65,9	3 979	62,0
Agree	4 027	29,4	3 776	25,4	2 074	33,3	2 388	37,2
Disagree	160	1,2	96	0,6	16	0,3	34	0,5
Strongly disagree	31	0,2	33	0,2	29	0,5	18	0,3
Total	**13 683**	**100,0**	**14 881**	**100,0**	**6 223**	**100,0**	**6 419**	**100,0**

Source: GPSJS 2020/21.

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[34] Johnson, M.P. In: Couples in conflict. Booth A, Crouter AC, Clements M, editor. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum; 2001. Conflict and control: Images of symmetry and asymmetry in domestic violence; pp. 95–104.

Acts of violence against women and children may include coercive actions towards victims, including emotional abuse, threats, and physical and/or sexual violence. Studies show that perpetrators of violence commit such acts to purposefully affect their victim's independence, confidence and self-esteem. As a result, VAWC is underreported.[35]

Table 4.4 shows perceptions of persons aged 16 years and older who were asked whether any kind of violence against women and children should be reported. Results reveal that the majority of males and females agreed/ strongly agreed that VAWC should be reported (98,6% and 99,2% respectively).

4.4 Conclusion

The chapter explored social empowerment from the perceptions of social gender norms to ascertain gender equality, and understand the progress made in the public and private sectors in adhering to the Employment Equity Act. In the public sector, males occupy most senior management positions (SMS) and middle management positions (MMS). The composition of SMS positions ranged from 58,4% in 2018 to 56,2% in 2021, while their female counterparts occupied 41,6% in 2018 and slightly increased to 43,8% in 2021. The younger (<=35 years) females were more likely to hold MMS positions than their male counterparts.

Elimination of gender inequalities and violence against women has been at the helm of the government's priorities. When exploring the perception of wife-beating, the results showed that in all types of situations, a higher proportion of females than males did not encourage wife-beating. However, 4,6% of males agreed that having sex with another man warranted a beating. In comparison to males, females in urban areas were more likely to be aware of social services and facilities related to VAW. Above 90% of both males and females indicated that they have heard or seen campaigns related to VAWC on broadcast media.

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[35] https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/understand-domestic-violence/types-of-abuse/emotional-abuse/

CHAPTER 5: POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

5.1 Background

South Africa is usually rated as a success story for women's representation in government, with the highest percentage of women in parliament and a range of progressive laws that promote women. Based on the Gender Africa index South Africa is ranked second after Rwanda based on the representation of women as members of parliament. The targets legally mandates that at least 50% of positions in decision-making organs at national, regional and local levels are held by women.
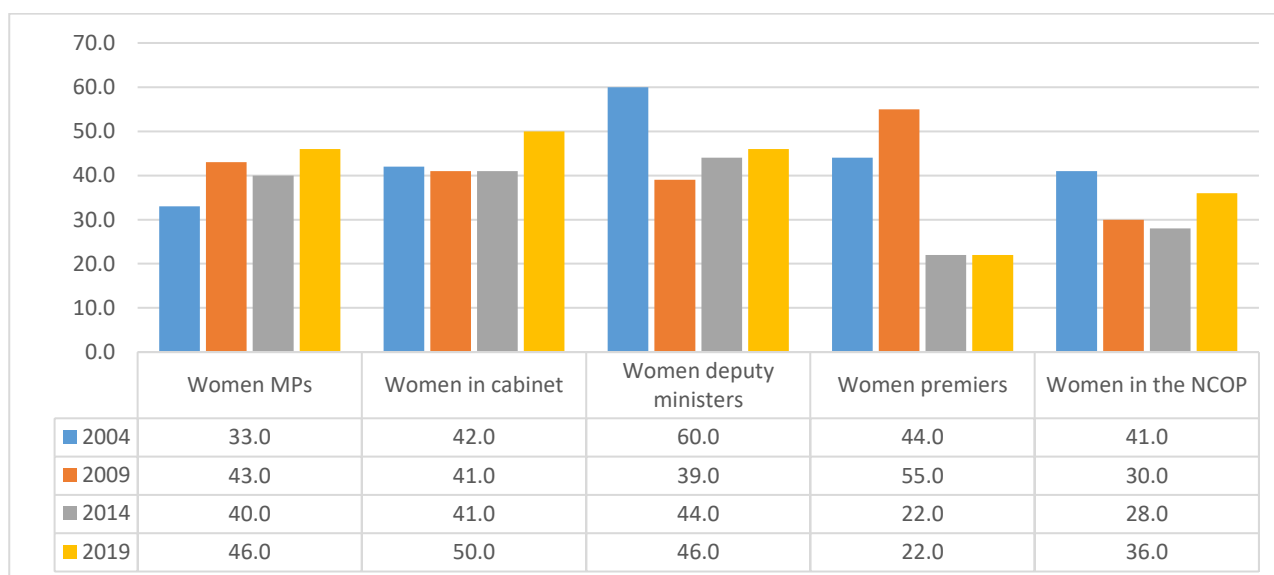
Global statistics clearly show that women are under-represented as leaders, elected officials, and voters due to cultural and social norms that limit their participation in the political process. Increasing women's political participation and leadership are vital mechanisms that support women to realize their human rights, and are also crucial for economic and social development around the world. Studies have found that longer exposure to women's political representation increases women's overall labour force participation, the share of public employment opportunities allocated to women, and women's access to public amenities, such as roads and health services. This section will focus on representation in political decision-making positions and involvement of women in electoral processes.

5.2 Decision-making positions

Women's participation in decision-making processes is critical when assessing women's economic empowerment, gender equity and other developmental goals.[36] Achieving gender equity in positions of decision-making – both in government and in the private sector – is crucial to providing women with responsibilities for planning, making decisions, recommending policies, and coordinating empowerment efforts. Research shows that this allocation of power and responsibility has been useful in initiating adjustments to laws and national plans to include gender equity.[37]

Decision-making positions at national level and provincial level

Figure 5.1: Decision-making in political executive positions in South Africa by sex, 2004–2019

	Women MPs	Women in cabinet	Women deputy ministers	Women premiers	Women in the NCOP
2004	33.0	42.0	60.0	44.0	41.0
2009	43.0	41.0	39.0	55.0	30.0
2014	40.0	41.0	44.0	22.0	28.0
2019	46.0	50.0	46.0	22.0	36.0

Source: Gender links, 2019.

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[36] IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance). 2005. *Women in parliament: Beyond numbers*. Stockholm, Sweden: IDEA. http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/.
[37] Maaitah, A.I., Hadeel, A., Hmoud, O. & Muntaha, G. 2011. Arab women and political participation, *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 12,7-26

Figure 5.1 shows that almost thirty years after the arrival of the new democracy, males continue to dominate in government decision-making positions in the country. According to the gender equality targets, government departments and companies need to ensure filling a minimum of 50% of all senior and top management positions with women.

From 2004 and 2019, South Africa witnessed an increase in the proportion of seats held by women in parliament, from 33,0% in 2004 to 46,0% in 2019. This represents the largest proportion of women in Parliament since democracy. The cabinet, which is the most senior level of the executive branch of the government of South Africa comprised of the President, the Deputy President, and the Ministers, indicates parity and the highest proportion for the first time as 50,0% of the cabinet is comprised of women. In terms of deputy ministerial positions, Figure 5.1 shows that the percentage share of females in deputy ministerial positions decreased between 2004 and 2019 from 60,0% to 46,0% in 2019, reflecting a deviation from the 50% target.

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) is constitutionally mandated to ensure that provincial interests are taken into account in the national sphere of government through participation in the national legislative process, and by providing a national forum for consideration of issues affecting provinces. Figure 5.1 shows that the percentage of women in the NCOP decreased from 41,0% in 2004 to 28,0% in 2014, and increased again to 36,0% in 2019. The Premier is the executive authority of a province and together with the executive council are responsible for implementing provincial legislation and any national legislation assigned to the provinces. The percentage of women premiers peaked at 55% 2009 and decreased to 22,0% in 2014 and 2019 respectively.

Decision-making positions at the local level

Local government is the sphere of government closest to the people, and is responsible for providing basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation to communities across the country. Elected every five years during municipal elections, mayors and councillors sit on the municipal council, which is the decision-making and political body directing the mandate of the municipality.

Figure 5.2: Executive mayors and mayoral positions by sex and province, 2021
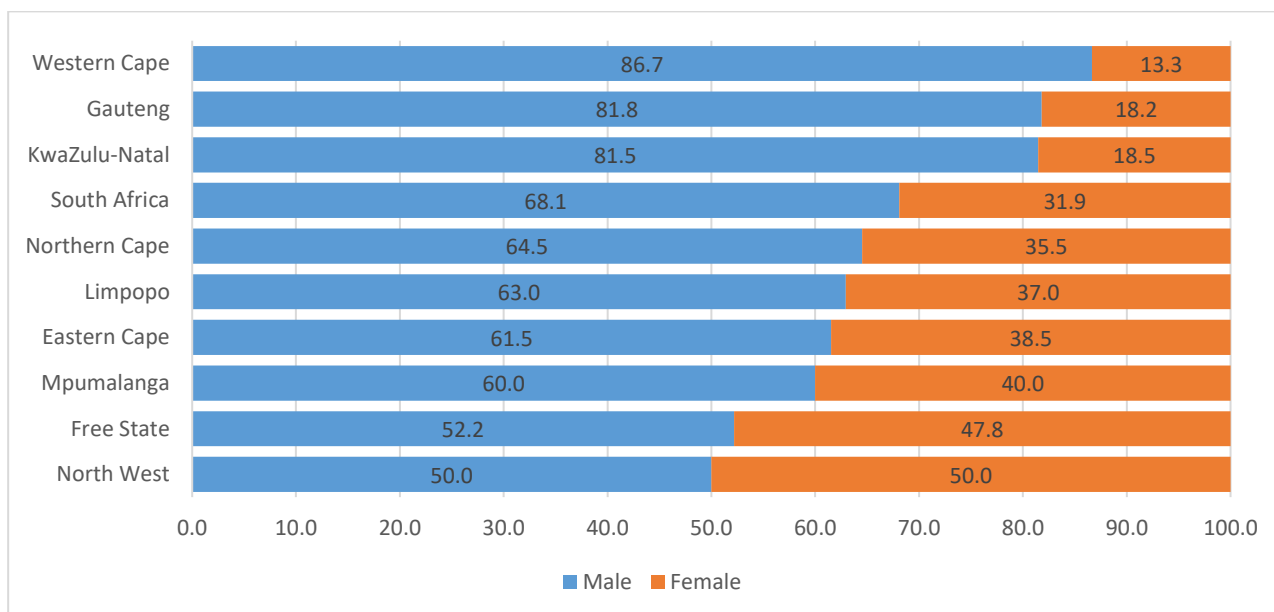
Source: Non-financial census of municipalities, 2021.

Figure 5.2 shows the provincial distribution of mayoral positions in municipalities across the country in 2021. Nationally, males were more likely to hold mayoral positions than females (68,0% vs 32,0%). The North West is the only municipality with parity regarding mayoral positions. The two provinces which had the lowest representation of female mayors were Western Cape and Gauteng.

Figure 5.3: Full-time and part-time municipal councillors by sex and province, 2021

Province	Male	Female
KwaZulu-Natal	63.8	36.2
Western Cape	61.4	38.6
North West	60.0	40.0
Gauteng	59.8	40.2
South Africa	59.1	40.9
Free State	57.2	42.8
Eastern Cape	56.6	43.4
Limpopo	56.3	43.8
Mpumalanga	56.1	43.9
Northern Cape	55.6	44.4
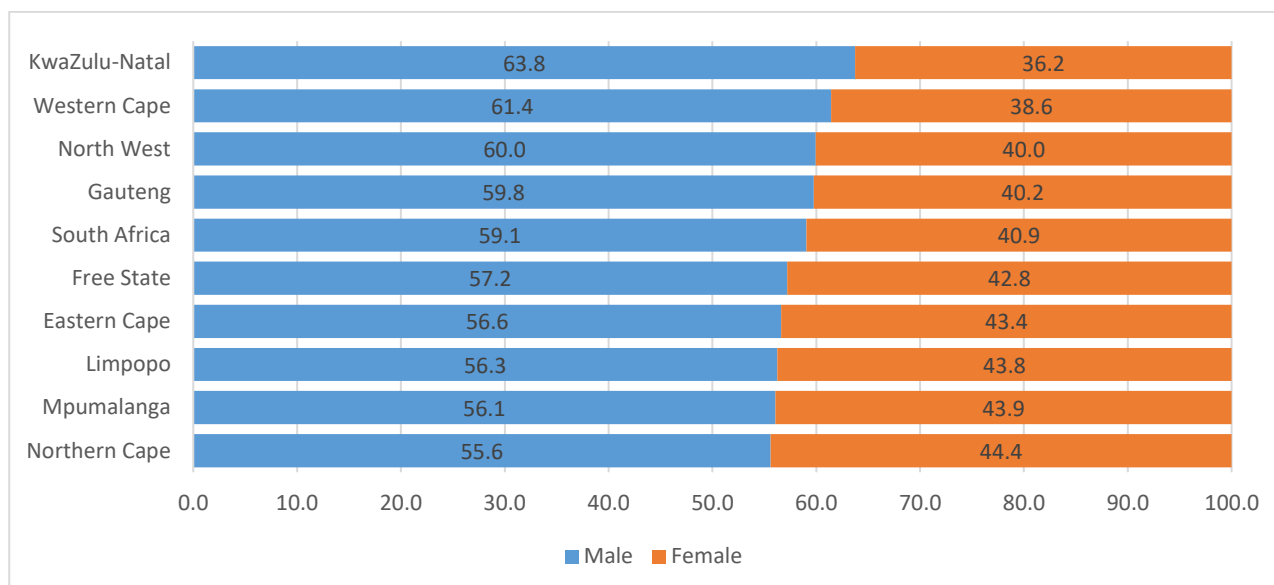
Source: Non-financial census of municipalities, 2021.

Councillors are entrusted to work in local communities to address development and empower people. This requires gender mainstreaming and sensitivity, i.e. being aware of the issues around gender, and ensuring that these are taken into consideration when drafting programmes and making decisions. Figure 5.3 shows the gender distribution of municipal councillors at local government in provinces during 2021. Nationally, 40,9% of the municipal councillors were females. The two provinces that had the lowest representation of female councillors were Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

5.3 Voters' roll certified for national and provincial elections, 2019

Elections provide an opportunity for communities to make their voice heard and give positive input on their issues and the quality of life they want. The South African electoral system requires all eligible voters to register as voters. After registering, a person's information appears on the voters' roll, which is used to plan elections and spot fraud because it indicates the expected number of voters in each voting district. According to the IEC, voter turnout refers to the proportion of eligible voters who cast a ballot in an election.

Table 5.1: Voters' roll by age group, 1999 and 2019

	1999		2019	
Age groups	**N(`000)**	**%**	**N(`000)**	**%**
18–19	700	3,9	341	1,3
20–29	5 135	28,3	5 298	19,8
30–39	4 520	24,9	6 683	25,0
40–49	3 305	18,2	5 479	20,5
50–59	2 080	11,5	4 228	15,8
60–69	1 396	7,7	2 737	10,2
70–79	744	4,1	1 337	5,0
80+	272	1,5	647	2,4
Total	**18 152**	**100,0**	**26 750**	**100,0**

Source: IEC, 2019.

Table 5.1 shows the voters roll by age group, and shows that since its inception ahead of the 1999 national and provincial elections, the voters' roll increased from 18,1 million to 26,7 million registered voters. In terms

of age, the biggest category of voters were those aged 20–29 years (5,1 million), which represented 28,3% of the roll in 1999, and those aged 30–39 years (6,7 million), representing 25,0%.

Table 5.2: Voters' roll by sex and province, 2019

Province	Male		Female		Total	
	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	%
Western Cape	1 411	45,1	1 717	54,9	3 129	11,7
Eastern Cape	1 445	43,0	1 918	57,0	3 363	12,6
Northern Cape	290	46,4	336	53,6	626	2,3
Free State	656	44,9	807	55,1	1 463	5,5
KwaZulu-Natal	2 409	43,6	3 116	56,4	5 525	20,7
North West	806	47,3	897	52,7	1 703	6,4
Gauteng	3 074	48,2	3 307	51,8	6 381	23,9
Mpumalanga	885	45,4	1 066	54,6	1 952	7,3
Limpopo	1 060	40,6	1 549	59,4	2 608	9,8
South Africa	**12 036**	**45,0**	**14 713**	**55,0**	**26 750**	**100,0**

Source: IEC, 2019.

Table 5.2 shows that there was a noticeable gender gap in registration in the 2019 elections. The National voters' roll showed that women made up more than half (55,0%) of all registered voters.

Provincial differences show that the province with the highest proportion of registered voters was Gauteng at 23,9%, followed by KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape at 20,7% and 12,6% respectively. The voter registration gap between men and women also mirrors the national picture. According to Table 5.2, the proportion of eligible women voters who were registered to vote was higher than that of men in all provinces. The Eastern Cape and Limpopo recorded the largest gender disparities in gender registration, at 19 and 14 percentage points, respectively.

Table 5.3: Voters' roll certified for local government elections, 2021

| Province	Male		Female		Total	
	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	%	N(`000)	%
Western Cape	1 396	45,0	1 716	55,0	3 112	11,9
Eastern Cape	1 397	43,0	1 856	57,0	3 253	12,4
Northern Cape	288	46,0	334	54,0	623	2,4
Free State	631	45,0	781	55,0	1 413	5,4
KwaZulu-Natal	2 371	44,0	3 076	56,0	5 448	20,8
North West	787	47,0	884	53,0	1 672	6,4
Gauteng	2 957	48,0	3 239	52,0	6 196	23,6
Mpumalanga	859	45,0	1 045	55,0	1 903	7,3
Limpopo	1 059	41,0	1 527	59,0	2 585	9,9
South Africa	**11 746**	**45,0**	**14 459**	**55,0**	**26 205**	**100,0**

Source: IEC, 2021.

Local government elections occur once every five years to elect municipal councils to represent the people's interests at local level. The municipal voters roll is important as one can only cast a ballot in the electoral district in which they are registered to vote. Table 5.3 shows the local government elections displayed a similar pattern to the national elections, with a higher proportion of females (55,0%) registered to vote than their male counterparts. Provinces that had the highest share of females registered to vote were Limpopo at 59,0%, followed by Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal at 57,0% and 56,0% respectively. Map 5.1 shows the distribution of voters across the country and indicates that Gauteng had the largest percentage of registered voters at 23,6%, followed by KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape at 20,8% and 12,4%, respectively.

Map 5.1: Voters' roll certified for local government elections, 2021
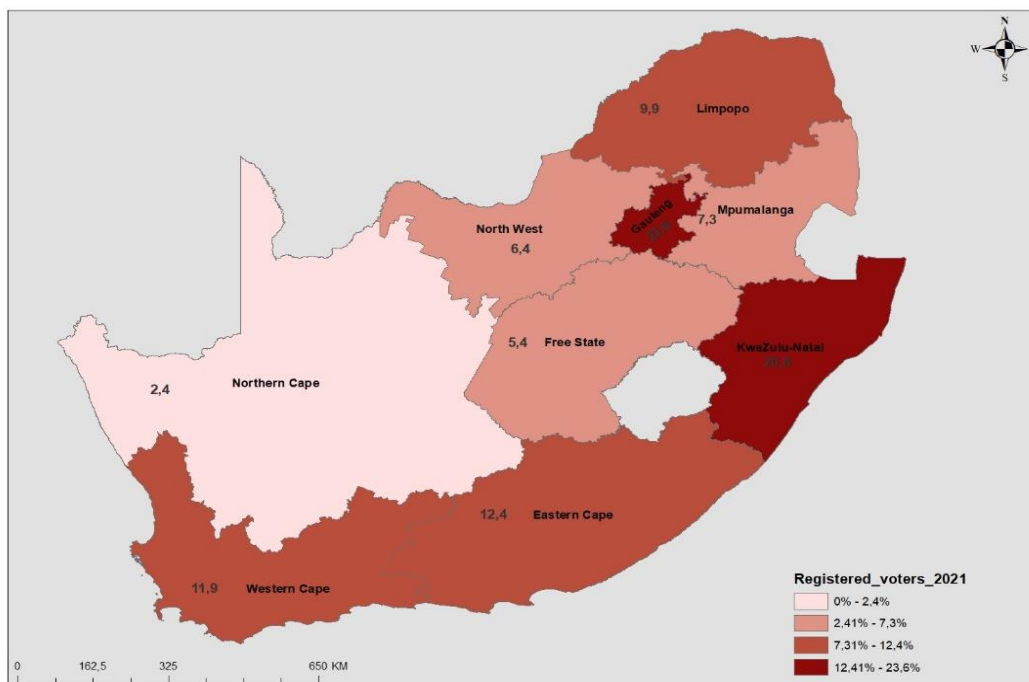
Source: IEC, 2021.

Figure 5.4: Voter turnout by sex and province, 2019 and 2021
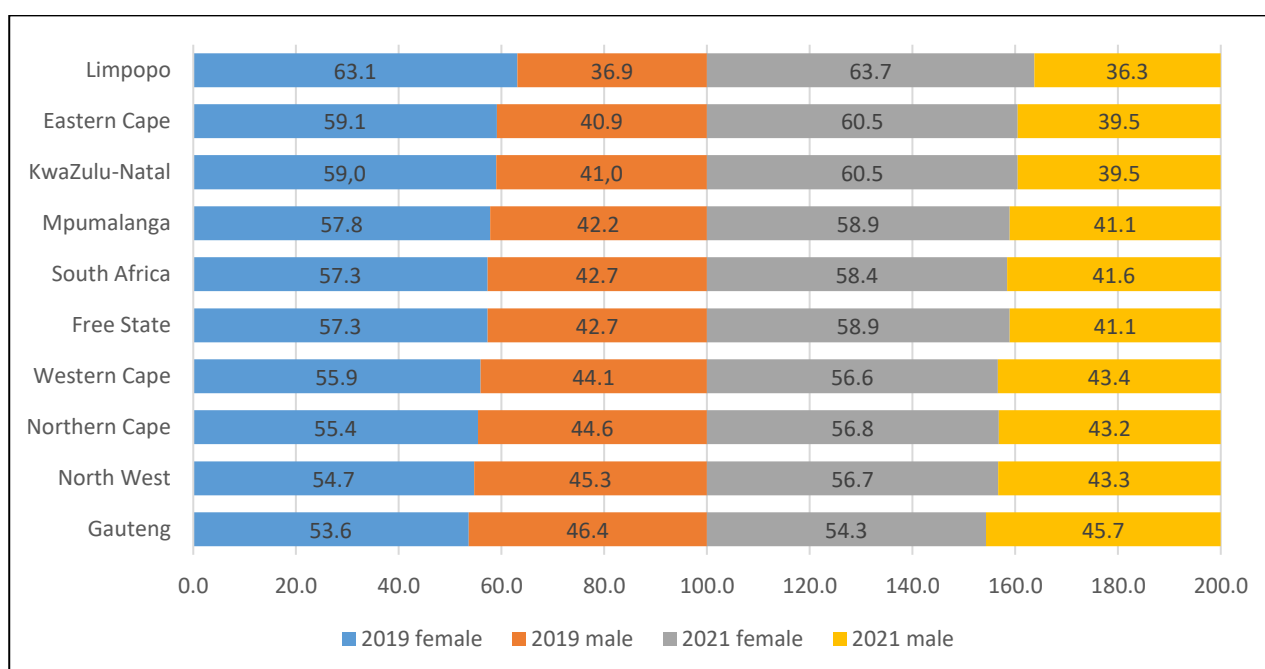
Source: IEC, 2021.

Figure 5.4 presents the voter turnout for the 2019 general election and the 2021 local government elections. The results show that females were more likely than males to vote in both elections across all the provinces. Provincial differences indicated that at the general elections in 2019, the highest turnout of female voters was in the rural provinces of Limpopo (63,3%), Eastern Cape (59,1%), KwaZulu-Natal (59,0%) and Mpumalanga (57,7%). Similarly, the local government elections in 2021 showed that the highest percentage of female voters was in Limpopo (63,7%), Eastern Cape (60,5%), KwaZulu-Natal (60,5%) and Mpumalanga (58,9%).

5.4 Conclusion

The analysis has shown progress toward gender equity in political representation, at least at the national level, even though there are still significant gender gaps in favour of men at the provincial and local municipal levels. The analysis also highlighted a higher participation of women than men in voter registration and voter turnout, both in the general elections and municipal elections.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The report analysed women empowerment from the social, economic and political domains using secondary data from Stats SA, as well as administrative data obtained from external sources. The main objectives were to assess gender disparities and the progress in gender equality in women empowerment over the period 2017 to 2022. The economic domain focused mainly on labour market participation and ownership of resources, and the social domain analysed disparities in representation in decision-making positions and perceptions of social gender norms. The political domain analysed disparities in the electoral processes by analysing the voters' roll and turnout, and in representation in national, provincial and local government governance positions.

Economic Domain

In terms of gender disparities in economic domain, there were no significant differences in the distribution of the working-age population across provinces however, disparities were observed in the participation rates, employment rates, unemployment rates and inactivity rates. The findings indicated that males' participation rates and employment rates were higher than their female counterparts. During the review period, male and female employment rates decreased by 6,9 and 6,1 percentage points, respectively, which indicated that the number of jobs being produced in the country was not growing at a rate equivalent to that of the population. Graduates had the highest employment rates, and men and women with higher education levels experienced less gender disparities in employment rates. A review of businesses by the size of the business revealed that females were more likely to be own-account workers than their male counterparts whilst males were more likely to own businesses that employed one or more people.

Between 2017 and 2022, the country's overall unemployment rate increased by 6,8 percentage points, increasing from 27,7% to 34,5%. In both years, female unemployment rates were higher than male unemployment rates, and provincial dynamics indicated that Eastern Cape had the highest unemployment. Males were more likely to be unemployed in short-term unemployment than females in both years (55,8% in 2017 and 61,5% in 2022 vs 44,2% and 38,5% respectively).

In addition, across all age groups, a higher proportion of women than men were found to be economically inactive. The rate of economic inactivity was generally higher among young people (15–24) years and older people (55–64 years). People who had 5 or more children in their households had the highest inactivity rates. In both years, being a student was given as the primary reason for inactivity; men cited discouragement as their secondary reason, whilst women cited being a homemaker.

Looking at the disparities in resource equity, most females between 2017 and 2022 relied on grants, followed by remittances, as their main sources of income. The majority of males indicated their primary sources of income as business revenue along with salaries/wages/commission. Furthermore, in 2020, female median earnings were found to be 77,8% of male median earnings. Parity in earnings was only reached with tertiary education. Poverty analysis showed that females had higher headcount, gap, and severity values among all three poverty lines.

Males recorded the highest percentage of owners who farm for themselves full-time or part-time in both years compared to their female counterparts in all the provinces. KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo were the only provinces that recorded a decrease in the percentage of females who were owners farming for themselves full-time or part-time. Between 2017 and 2022, more females than males used cellphones. Gauteng, North West, and Northern Cape were the only three provinces where male mobile users outnumbered female users in the last three months of the reference period. However, more men used the internet more frequently than women.

Social Domain

Social empowerment looked progress made in the public and private sectors in adhering to the Employment Equity Act as well as the perceptions on gender norms. In contrast to the gender equality targets, which call for at least 50,0% of senior and top management positions to be held by women, the data showed that men dominate in government decision-making positions both at SMS and MMS levels. An analysis of perceptions on violence against women (VAW) revealed that a higher percentage of women than men did not support wife-beating. However, 4,6% of men agreed that engaging in sexual activity with another man warranted a beating. Females in urban areas were more likely than males to be aware of the social services and facilities associated with VAW. More than 90,0% of both males and females indicated they had seen or heard of VAWC campaigns on broadcast media.

Political Domain

The political domain of women empowerment assessed women's participation in politics. The progress showed that cabinet reached parity as 50,0% of the seats comprised of women and the proportion of seats held by women in parliament increased from 33,0% in 2004 to 46,0% in 2019. At local government level, males were more likely to occupy mayoral and councillors positions than females. More women than men registered to vote and turn out to vote in the general and municipal elections in 2019 and 2021, respectively. The provinces with the highest share of women registered to vote in the most recent local government elections were KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Limpopo.

Conclusion

This report has highlighted that between the years 2017 and 2022 there are still gender disparities despite the progressive laws and interventions aimed at women empowerment. The main objectives of the report were to determine if there are gender differences and to analyse progress towards gender equality.

Indicators of women empowerment showed gaps in favour of men for labour participation rates, employment rates and levels, and median earnings while females had higher unemployment and inactivity. Resources were also found to be unequal, with men owning more formal homes than women and women having lower median earnings than men. Despite the progress showing an increase in younger women holding middle management positions, decision-making positions were still more likely to be held by men. Politically there is significant progress towards gender equality in parliament with the women in parliament seats having increased since 2004 and with a 50,0% parity in cabinet. However, at provincial and municipal level disparities in the decision making positions as municipal and councillors are still dominated by males. In addition there report highlighted that females make up the majority of voters for both the national and local government elections.