Who are the Beneficiaries of Free Primary Education in Lesotho?

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Abstract: The present article assessed the extent to which Free Primary Education is accessed by all Basotho children irrespective of their socio-demographic standing. Investigating if differences in participation rates between boys and girls have disappeared following the introduction of Free Primary Education is also another purpose of the study. Using the ten percent sample from the 1996 Lesotho Population Census and the 2001 Lesotho Demographic Survey, the findings of the study suggest that children's access to primary education is influenced by their socio-economic standing. The sex of the child and the child's relationship to the head of the household are associated with access. Male children were the major beneficiaries of Free Primary Education while female children of the household head were the least of the beneficiaries. The results further showed that female children who benefited were mainly non-relatives of the head of household while among male children grand children of the head and other relatives of the head were the major beneficiaries. It was also apparent from the study that when resources are limited to sending children to school female children were given a chance over male children. There is a need to address the gender imbalance with respect to access to education in Lesotho. Regarding participation gap between boys and girls, 2001 figures indicate that the gap has declined by at least 50 percent in the majority of cases. More still has to be done to afford Basotho boys access to primary education. Legislating for Free and Compulsory Primary Education is not enough to increase boys' access to primary education without change of attitude among Basotho men regarding herding of livestock.

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Introduction

The figures from the Ministry of Education and Training show that, between 1996 and 1999, enrolment in Standard One of Primary School Sector had declined by 8 percent. Between 1999 and 2000 enrolment in standard one of primary school increased by 75 percent while for the entire primary education sector, enrolment increased by 12 percent (Ministry of Education and Training, 2000). There is a general agreement in Lesotho that the introduction of Free Primary Education accounts for reversal of the declining trend of enrolment in Primary Schools in Lesotho. However, the question that remains unanswered is who the beneficiaries of Free Primary Education are. Since children's socio-demographic and environmental factors that influence the ability of children to attend differ, it is possible that the introduction of Free Primary Education alone might not be enough to enable all children to have access to education.

Available evidence suggests that characteristics of children such as migration status of parents or the child's relationship to the head of the household have an influence on access to education. Studies in South Africa have demonstrated that having a father who is a migrant increased access to education of older children while having a mother who is a migrant benefited the young children (Townsend et al., 2002). In Lesotho, it has been established that children of the head of household have more access to secondary education than other children who are not children of the head of the household (Makatjane, 2003). What is no yet established is whether this situation applies to Primary Education where parents do not pay school fees.

Between 1986 and 1996, the proportion of the population aged less than 25 years with both parents dead was 0.006. This increased three fold to 0.019 in 2001 (Bureau of Statistics, 1991, 1999 and 2002). Authorities in Lesotho attribute this drastic increase in orphanhood to the high HIV prevalence rate in the country. HIV is seen as a threat to government's efforts to achieve the millennium development goals (Government of Lesotho, 2004). The

government of Lesotho is thus under pressure to cope with the impact of the disease.

The well-being of orphaned children is one of the challenges facing the government. A number of activities have been introduced and intensified in order to increase access to education for orphaned children. Activities include provision of bursaries as well as healthcare and social welfare provisions (Kimane, 2005; Mochebelele, 2003). A great deal has been achieved in providing orphaned children with education, but there is no nationally representative figure to indicate how these orphans have benefited from the introduction of Free Primary Education.

In Lesotho girls have always outnumbered boys in primary education. It was argued that migrant labour system, which did not attach any value to education of boys, undermined the importance of affording Basotho boys access to education. Traditionally, boys are expected to herd livestock from as early as age 5. When they are old enough and healthy they would get a mine job in the mining industry of South Africa. However, it was not by design per say that girls had higher access to education, but rather the types of jobs that girls were expected to do as children were not incompatible with schooling as was the case for boys (Makatjane, 1981). Retrenchments of Lesotho mine workers, which started at the beginning of the 1980s, have shown that migrant labour system is unreliable and boys cannot be denied the opportunity of education in anticipation that they will get a mine job when they attain the age of 18. The question that remains is whether Basotho have started investing in the education of boys now that employment in the mining industry of South Africa is no more an option for Basotho men.

Lesotho is divided into four ecological zones whose modes of production differ between zones. The four zones are mountains, foothills, Senqu River Valley and lowlands. The mountains are suitable for animal husbandry while the lowlands are suitable for crop farming. Animal herding is normally an activity carried out by boys. Since herding is incompatible with formal schooling, this has tended to limit boys' access to education. The problem of animal herding notwithstanding, herding alone cannot be responsible for the

decline in the Standard One enrolment evidenced by education figures before introduction of Free Primary Education. Poverty was one of the factors behind the decline. This is more so now since the migrant remittance that used to be a major source of livelihood in rural Lesotho have been reduced following retrenchment of Basotho men working in the South African mining industry (Makatjane, 1998). What is of interest under these circumstances is to investigate how children living in different ecological zones, particular boys living in the mountain zone, have benefited from the introduction of Free Primary Education.

Due to an extended family system at least a third of children living within the household are not children of the household head. Grandchildren who are not children of the household head form the largest proportion of children within the extended family household. Among children of primary school going age (6-14 years) the proportion of grand children increased from 16 percent in 1996 to 23 percent in 2001. There is a need to investigate the role this change in household structure plays in children's access to primary education hence the present study.

The objectives of the article are, therefore, to:

1 investigate whether all children benefited from the introduction of Free Primary Education irrespective of their socio-demographic characteristics.

2 investigate whether there was any reduction in the participation rates gap between boys and girls following the introduction of Free Primary education in 2000.

Background

Lesotho is a mountainous and land locked country completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. The country lies between the southern latitudes of 28 and 31 degrees and eastern longitudes of 27 and 30 degrees. The country's main outlets to the sea are Durban and east London both in South Africa and they are respectively 740 and 800 km away from the capital, Maseru, (Makatjane, 1983).

The people of Lesotho (Basotho) are a homogenous group identified by one language Sesotho. Lesotho is divided into ten administrative districts and the capital city is Maseru, located within Maseru district. The country has a population of slightly over two million people. Of these, 17 percent reside in urban areas. The country has an environment that is relatively free from the various types of urban pollution that plagues other parts of the world.

Lesotho's ten districts are located within four ecological zones of lowlands, foothills, mountains and Senqu River Valley. Modes of production within the ecological zones differ. The lowlands are suited for crop farming while the foothills and the mountains are good for animal husbandry. Lowlands are characterised by tarred roads and access to facilities such as water and electricity. For instance, of the 7.2 percent of all the households in Lesotho with access to electricity, 78 percent of these households are located within the lowlands.

Lesotho is one of the countries with the highest literacy rate in Sub-Saharan Africa. The population aged five years and above who never attended formal schooling (estimated using the 1996 population census) is only 22 percent (Bureau of Statistics, 1999). The country is also considered unusual because females are more likely than males to be educated (Lucas, 1992). All indices of education used (e.g. school enrolment, population still attending and literacy rate) in the analysis of 1996 population census indicate that females are better schooled than males (Bureau of Statistics, 1999). Mortality in Lesotho is moderate by Sub-Saharan standards and a declining trend has been observed in the recent past. Infant mortality rate is 74 deaths per 1000 live births and life expectancy is 59 years for both sexes (Bureau of Statistics, 1999).

In 2000 there were 1283 primary schools in Lesotho. The table below presents their distribution by district. The districts of Maseru, Leribe, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek have the highest proportion of schools of more than 10 percent. Since the number of schools in a district is meaningless unless compared with the district population, the third column of Table 1 presents the population of the district per school as a crude indicator of access. The size of the population per school is smallest in Qacha's Nek and Mokhotlong with the least proportion of primary schools after Butha-Buthe. The high population per primary school observed for the lowlands districts does not come as a surprise since population in Lesotho is concentrated in the lowlands Internal migration is from the highlands to the lowlands particularly in districts such as Maseru and Leribe where industries are located (Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

Table 1: Educational Position of Lesotho in 2000

District of Teachers	Percentage Distribution of Primary Schools	Population per school	Proportion Unqualified
Butha-Buthe	5.8	1666	26
Leribe	13.1	2126	21
Berea	8.8	2590	24
Maseru	17.5	2078	22
Mafeteng	10.5	1749	25
Mohale's Hoek	11.5	1380	30
Quthing	8.7	1243	32
Qacha's Nek	7.2	864	32
Mokhotlong	7.4	944	35
Thaba-Tseka	9.4	1105	34

Source(s): Calculated from Ministry of Education (2000) and Bureau of Statistics (2000) figures.

The location of schools and mobility of people in Lesotho are influenced by presence of access to roads because of the mountainous nature of the country. Since most services are located within lowlands and urban areas in particular, teachers prefer to teach at schools with easy access to urban areas. Poor roads, infrastructure and services in rural areas account for high concentration of unqualified teachers within the mountain districts. In these districts at least 30 percent of the teachers in the district primary schools are unqualified, compared with 26 or less percent for the other districts (Makatjane and Peko, 2002).

Sources of Data

The sources of data for the study are the 10 percent sample of the **1996 Lesotho Population Census** and the **2001 Lesotho Demographic Survey**. Lesotho demographic Survey a nationally representative sample conducted in May 2001. The survey covered over 16000 households. More than 18000 children (age 6 to 14) were considered in the analysis of children's participation in education. From the census, 43 975 children were included in the analysis. Details of the survey design and other important aspects of the survey are given in the 2001 Lesotho Demographic Survey Analytical Report Volume I (Bureau of Statistics, 2002) while similar information for the census is given in the 1996 Lesotho Population Census Administrative Report Volume I (Bureau of Statistics, 1999).

The child's file for use in the analysis was created. The background information extracted included rural urban residence, zone, district, orphan hood status of the children and children's relationship to the household head. Current school attendance is used to measure children's participation in primary education.

Methodology

Descriptive analysis is used to describe the observed differences in children's participation rates in education between 1996 and 2001.

Information on where the child was residing in terms of district, zone and rural/urban residence as well as the child's orphanhood status and relationship to the household head is used for comparison. Since girls in Lesotho have higher participation in primary education, participation rates are calculated separately for boys and girls in all the comparisons. This is done mainly to establish size of participation gap between boys and girls following the introduction of Free Primary Education. Statistical tools are used to evaluate if the differences in participation rates between 1996 and 2001 are statistically significant. Logistic regression analysis is also used to establish existence of differences in participation rates after controlling for selected background information.

Limitations of the Study

Official age of entry into primary education in Lesotho is age six. Since Free Primary Education was introduced in 2000, the 2001 survey was undertaken only a year later. One should therefore look for a change in participation among the six and seven year olds. Those who first entered primary education in 2000 would be aged seven while six year olds in 2001 would be in grade one. Anybody could attend including older people, and because of this, using age as a control is not helpful. Furthermore, both the 1996 Population Census and the 2001 Survey did not ask respondents to indicate the class or grade they were enrolled in if they were still attending school. This also makes it difficult to use the grade in which one was enrolled in order to restrict analysis to individuals who were likely to be directly affected. Despite this limitation, the results of the study will still be valuable in establishing the beneficiaries of the introduction of Free Primary Education.

Characteristics of parents in terms of whether they are migrants or not have been found to be associated with children's access to primary education (Townsend et. al., 2002). This information is missing from both the 1996 census and the 2001 survey. This is because no question was asked about the characteristics of the parents of the child. Availability of such information could have been useful to evaluate the role of migration status of parents on

the education of their children, given the long experience of labour migration of Lesotho. Migration status of parents could also have helped to establish whether it is correct to suggest that grandmothers were managing to give grand children access to education through help of parents of such children who are migrants.

Results

Appendix 1 presents the results of participation by age, relationship to household head, orphanhood status, district, zone and rural urban residence of the children in Lesotho primary schools before and after the introduction of Free Primary Education. In the following paragraphs results pertaining to each background characteristic are discussed.

Participation by Age

According to figures in Appendix 1, ages 6 to 12 for males and 6 to 10 for females were the major beneficiaries of Free Primary Education with at least 10 percent increase in enrolment between 1996 and 2001. It is also discernible from the Appendix 1 that male children were the major beneficiaries of Free Primary Education. It is also apparent from the appendix that age six had the highest increase in enrolment for both girls and boys. Enrolment which had reached as low as around 30 percent increased to about 70 percent, recording more than 120 percent increase. Age 7 was also the age where enrolment was around 50 percent in 1996. This grew to over 80 percent in 2001.

Participation by Relationship to the Household Head

Children of head have the highest participation rate followed by grandchildren and other relatives of the household head. Non-relatives have the poorest access to primary education. This is the case for both periods under consideration (see Appendix 1). The highest recorded participation rate is among non-relatives where participation increased by 88 and 47

percent for both boys and girls respectively. Participation of all boys and girls grand children revealed an increase of more than 20 percent.

Non-relatives were the major beneficiaries for both boys and girls. The second group of beneficiaries male grandchildren, followed by other male relatives. On the whole, male children were the major beneficiaries.

Participation by orphanhood status

Participation among boys increased from around 60 percent to above 70 but below 80 percent except for children whose parents are both alive. The participation of children in group is 84 percent. For girls, participation increased from around 75 percent to around 85 percent, except for girls with both parents alive.

Among male children, participation rates are increased by at least 28 percent. For female children the highest recorded increase was 25 percent. The major beneficiaries are children without parents while the least beneficiaries are girls whose mothers are dead. Comparing boys and girls, it is apparent that boys benefited more than girls and this is true irrespective of orphanhood status.

Participation by Zone

For both boys and girls the least increase in enrolment was observed in the Lowlands and Senqu River Valley followed by the Foothills and then the Mountains with the highest percentage increase in participation in Primary Education. Boys in the mountain zone were the major beneficiaries in that less than half of them were attending school in 1996 (47 percent) compared to more than two thirds (72 percent) reported as still attending primary education in 2001.

Participation by District

Participation in primary education increased by at least 15 percentage among girls and at least 20 percent among boys between 1996 and 2001. The exception was in Mohale's Hoek where participation increased by about a third (28 percent). On the average, among girls participation increased by between 15 and 20 percentage. Among boys, the increase ranges between 20 and 60 percent and it is highest in the districts of Mohale's Hoek, Qacha's Neck, Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka. Children, particularly boys from the mountain districts benefited more than children from the other ecological zones, (Appendix 1).

Participation by Rural Urban Residence

Urban areas have the least increase in participation rates while rural areas have the highest. For urban areas participation for boys increased by 18 percent while for girls it increased by 13 percent. In rural areas participation increased by 33 percent among boys compared to 20 percent among girls. For both rural and urban areas boys have benefited more than girls while generally urban areas benefited more than rural areas.

In conclusion male children registered the highest percentage increase in enrolment between 1996 and 2001 irrespective of the background characteristics of the children (please see Appendix 1).

Multivariate Analysis

At bivariate level t-test was used to test whether differences in participation rates were statistically significant between 1996 and 2001, and in almost all cases compared the differences were statistically significant (see notes to Appendix 1). Multivariate analysis is also carried out to test whether the differences are statistically significant, controlling other variables. The analysis is done separately for male and female children. This is done because participation rates differ between male and female children.

According to the results of the multivariate analysis in Table 2 both rural area girls and boys or girls and boys of the mountain zone are less likely to participate in education than their counterparts residing in urban areas or residing outside the mountain zone. This is true for both 1996 and 2001. With respect to the children's relationship to the household head, children of the household head had more access to education than non-children of the household head and this is the true for both boys and girls for 1996 and 2001. However, among girls in 2001 grand children or other relatives and children of the household head have equal access to primary education after controlling for other factors. As regards orphan hood status of children, children with both parents alive have more access to primary education than children with at least one parent dead. Among orphans themselves, these children have equal access to primary education except in few cases where differences are significant at 10 percent level. For instance, in 1996 it made a difference to girls if the father was alive even if the mother was dead. After controlling conditions that prevailed in both 1996 and 2001 over and above the other characteristics, the last column of Table 2 indicates that among orphans children with only a mother alive have a better access to education than children with both parents dead.

For all the models presented in Table 2 girls have better access to primary education than boys. It is also apparent from Table 2 that access to primary education was better in 2001 than it was in 1996.

Table 2: Odds Ratios from logistic analysis assessing association between selected characteristics and children's participation in primary education in Lesotho.

	Odds ratios						
	1996			2001		Both Years	
	Boys	Girls	Both	Boys	Girls	Both	Everybody
Zone							
Senqu River Valley	2.123**	1.520**	1.810**	1.526**	0.965	1.267**	1.619**
Lowlands	2.589**	1.670**	2.122**	2.793**	1.697**	2.267**	2.108**
Foothills	1.809**	1.337**	1.580**	1.709**	1.406**	1.570**	1.565**
Mountain (RC)							
Rural Urban Residence							
Urban	1.991**	1.550**	1.800**	2.557**	1.591**	2.085**	1.805**
Rural (RC)							
Relationship to Household Head							
Grand Child	0.845**	0.852**	0.849**	0.865*	0.911	0.881*	.865**
Other Relative	0.705**	0.822**	0.763**	0.688**	1.006	0.805*	.776**
Non-relative	0.067**	0.176**	0.093**	0.077**	0.474**	0.125**	.095**
Child (RC)							
Age	1.286**	1.445**	1.352**	1.042**	1.115**	1.070**	1.285**
Orphanhood Status							
Both Parents Alive	1.577**	1.827**	1.724**	1.423*	1.480#	1.423*	1.629**
Only Father Alive	1.040	1.529#	1.266	0.981	0.834	0.892	1.114
Only Mother Alive	1.111	1.280	1.209	1.157	1.059	1.096	1.173#
Both Parents Dead (RC)							
Sex							
Boys	na	na	0.542**	na	na	0.584**	0.556**
Girls (RC)							
Year							
1996	na	na	na	na	na	na	0.312**
2001(RC)							
Constant	0.052**	0.038**	0.062**	1.406	1.503	2.040**	0.338**

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, # p<0.1

Differential Gap in Participation Rates between Boys and Girls

One other interest of the study is the differences in participation rates between boys and girls. According to the figures in Table 3 there has been a decline in differences in participation rates between girls and boys but that there are differences in the amount of decline depending on the characteristics of the study population. Starting with age of the child, participation of girls was higher than that of boys by a percentage ranging

from 14 for six year olds to around 20 for the rest of the other ages in 1996. In 2001 the differences in participation declined to less than seven percent for ages 6 to 9 while for ages 10-13 the percentage in participation differences ranged between 10 and 13 percent. For the ages where differences in participation were above 10 percent, differences were still less than the minimum that was noted in 1996.

Urban areas recorded the least difference in participation between boys and girls while in rural areas the participation differences declined from 20 percent in 1996 to 9 percent in 2001. According to zone for both 1996 and 2001 lowlands and the Senqu River valley recorded the lowest differences in participation followed by the foothills while the mountains had recorded close to 50 percent in 1996, and by 2001 the differences were still around 20 percent. With respect to districts, in 1996 the differences ranged from 10 percent in Leribe to a high of 57 percent in Thaba-Tseka. In 2001 the differences had declined to less than 10 percent in the majority of districts except for Mafeteng and Quthing with 15 percent and Mohale's Hoek (13 percent). In Qacha's Nek the third highest differential of 25 percent in 1996, there was equal participation between boys and girls in 2001 with a difference of 6 percent.

With respect to Orphanhood status the differences are lowest among children with both parents alive for both 1996 and 2001. In 1996 children without a father had the highest difference of 33 percent and children without a mother recorded 26 percent while those with both parents dead recorded 28 percent. In 2001 children with at least one parent recorded a difference of around 10 percent while children with both parents dead recorded a high of 19 percent.

According to relationship to head, children of head and grandchildren recorded a gap of less than 20 percent in 1996 followed by other relatives while non-relatives recorded the highest gap. A similar pattern was observed in 2001 where the gap between children of head and grand children was 6

percent. The gap was 13 percent for other relatives while for non-relatives it remained above 100 percent.

Table 3: Primary Participation Gap Between boys and Girls and Gap Reduction: Lesotho 1996 and 201

Characteristic/ Variable	Participation Gap in	1996	2001	Gap Reduction (%)
Age	6	14	1	93
	7	20	2	90
	8	19	5	74
	9	16	6	63
	10	16	12	25
	11	17	10	41
	12	20	13	35
	13	20	12	40
	14	20	8	60
Urban Rural Residence	Urban	4	0	100
	Rural	21	9	57
Zone	Lowland	11	3	73
	Foothill	21	9	57
	Mountain	47	19	60
	Senqu River Valley	15	8	47
District	Butha-Buthe	14	7	50
	Leribe	10	5	50
	Berea	12	2	83
	Maseru	13	4	69
	Mafeteng	22	15	32
	Mohale's Hoek	24	13	46
	Quthing	20	15	25
	Qacha's Nek	25	6	76
	Mokhotlong	39	15	62
	Thaba-Tseka	57	21	63
Orphanhood Status	Father alive mother dead	33	11	67
	Father dead mother alive	26	10	62
	Both parents dead	28	19	32
	Both parents alive	17	8	53
Relationship to Head	Child	17	6	65
	Grand child	19	6	68
	Other relative	27	13	52
	Non-relative	244	170	30

Discussion

The bivariate analysis suggests that boys were the major beneficiaries of Free Primary Education. This is particularly so in the mountain zone where animal husbandry is practiced and boys are engaged in herding animals. The districts of Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka were entirely located within the mountain zone. The lowest participation of boys was recorded among boys. Other than boys being beneficiaries of the Free Primary Education, rural areas particularly the mountain zone, have greatly benefited except that participation in these areas is still lower than that of urban areas or lowlands.

For children aged less than 10 years there was an improvement of at least 20 percent in participation rates in 2001 compared with what was prevailing in 1996. The improvement for ages 6 and 7 is overwhelming. This is expected, given that age 6 is the official age of entry into the first year of primary education. In fact improvements in participation rates in the rest of the other ages are most probably in relation to the first 2 years of primary education.

Non-children of the household head participated least in education both in 1996 and in 2001 and this was the case among boys and girls separately. It is noteworthy though that although boys who were non-relatives registered the highest improvement of 88 percent, they still recorded the lowest participation rate in both 1996 and 2001. This is not surprising given that more than three quarters of male non-relatives aged between 6 and 14 years are herdboys. As regards participation of children by orphanhood status, children with both parents alive are the only ones who are more likely to participate in education than children with both parents dead. This is true for both 1996 and 2001. Among girls in 1996 children with either both parents alive or only father alive were more likely to participate in education than children with both parents dead. By the year 2001 there were no differences in participation rates among the rest of the children, except for children with both parents alive. Children with both parents alive are more likely to participate in education than children with both parents dead.

According to the results of the multivariate analysis, children residing within the mountain zone are less likely to participate in primary education than children residing outside the mountain zone except in 2001. In 2001 girls residing within Senqu River Valley and those residing within the mountain zone had equal chances of participating in primary education. It is also discernible from the multivariate analysis that children (boys and girls) residing in urban areas have higher odds of access to primary education. With respect to orphanhood status, children with living parents have higher odds of participate on in primary education than to orphaned children.

There is a noticeable reduction in the differences in participation between girls and boys. Major reductions of at least 50 percent were realised in the majority of cases. Exceptions were for differences among children aged 10-13, children residing in the districts of Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing, children residing within Senqu River Valley, non-relatives of the head and double orphaned children where the reduction rages between 30 and 47 percent.

Conclusion

There is support for the claim that the introduction of Free Primary Education has increased participation in primary education. Urban areas recorded participation rates well over 90 percent while there is still more work in the rural areas, the mountain zone in particular to bring participation rates close to 100 percent. It is probably for this reason that the government of Lesotho is contemplating legislating not for Free Primary Education only but for Free and Compulsory Primary Education. Boys, particularly those residing in the mountain zone, were the major beneficiaries of Free Primary Education. Previously Basotho did not bother to send their boys to school because, among other reasons, boys were sure of getting mine work once they have reached the age of eighteen and were healthy. There is nothing to suggest that the situation has changed. Both at the bivariate and multivariate levels boys are less likely to participate in education than girls.

The results of the study further suggest that when resources dictate that a child has to leave school it has to be a boy. This could be driven by the gender bias in inheritance. That is, since male children qualify for inheritance, female children are given education as inheritance. This is particularly important since Basotho expected girls to be married. Once married they were not expected to return to their natal home even if there were problems with the marriage, except in extreme circumstances (Makatjane, 2002, Letuka et. al. 1998).

Orphan children are the other group of children who need special attention due to their vulnerability. The proportion of vulnerable children with either one or both parents dead increased from 13 percent in 1996 to 18 percent in 2001. But when it comes to access to education there does not exist enough evidence that orphan children are discriminated against. Among orphaned boys there are no significant differences in access to education except that they are less likely to participate in education relative to children with both parents alive and this is the case for both 1996 and 2001. For girls the apparent importance of the presence of a father disappeared in 2001. Children with either both parents alive or father alive were two times more likely to participate in education than children with both parents dead, but by the year 2001 all girls had equal chances of access to education irrespective of their orphanhood status.

The findings of the study do not support the idea that the traditional system of the extended family has disintegrated. Participation of Orphaned children does not suggest major indications of discrimination. This is because heads of households consider them as their children which are in accordance with the traditional practices. The increasing proportion of children within the household who are not children of the head does support the practice of extended family system. This is particularly so because the proportion of non-relatives of the head is small relative to that of grand children and other relatives.

In response to whether or not increased participation rates are due to the introduction of Free Primary Education, it is essential to mention that the importance that Basotho attach to education goes as far back as the colonial era. Other than the fact that Moshoeshoe I, the first king of the Basotho, asked the missionaries to establish schools in Lesotho, part of the hut tax that Basotho men were paying included a portion which was a levy towards education (Makatjane and Peko, 2002). The decline in enrolment prior to 2000 is an indication of the difficulty parents forced to afford education of their children. This may explain the increase in enrolment after the cost of education has been removed. Although among others, the introduction of Free Primary Education was an attempt to ensure that the basic human right to education becomes a reality for all Basotho children, it is equally correct that the introduction of Free Primary Education is an indication that Basotho continue to put emphasis on education.

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Appendix 1

Participation rates of children aged 6-14 years by sex and socio-demographic variables: Lesotho 1996 and 2001

Age	Sex	1996	2001	Difference (%)
6	Male	28	71	154
	Female	32	72	125
7	Male	46	83	80
	Female	55	85	55
8	Male	59	86	46
	Female	70	90	29
9	Male	67	88	31
	Female	78	93	19
10	Male	73	85	16
	Female	85	95	12
11	Male	75	86	15
	Female	88	95	8
12	Male	74	82	11
	Female	89	93	4
13	Male	74	81	9
	Female	89	91	2
14	Male	71	77	8
	Female	85	83	-2
Relationship to head				
Child	Males	66	85	29
	Females	77	90	17
Grandchild	Males	59	82	39
	Females	70	87	24
Other relative	Males	60	79	32
	Females	76	89	17
Non-relative	Males	16	30	88
	Females	55	81	47

Orphanhood Status				
Father alive mother dead	Males	57	76	33
	Females	76	84	11
Father dead mother alive	Males	58	79	36
	Females	73	87	19
Both parents dead	Males	54	72	33
	Females	69	86	25
Both parents alive	Males	65	83	28
	Females	76	90	18
Zone				
Lowland	Males	71	88	24
	Females	79	91	15
Foothill	Males	61	82	34
	Females	74	89	20
Mountain	Males	47	72	53
	Females	69	86	25
Senqu River Valley	Males	66	79	20
	Females	76	85	12
Urban/Rural				
Urban	Males	79	93	18
	Females	82	93	13
Rural	Males	61	81	33
	Females	74	88	19
District				
Butha-Buthe	male	66	83	26
	Female	75	89	19
Leribe	Male	72	87	21
	Females	79	91	15
Berea	Males	68	86	26
	Females	76	88	16
Maseru	Males	69	89	29
	Females	78	93	19
Mafeteng	Males	64	79	23
	Females	78	91	17
Mohale's Hoek	Males	59	79	34
	Females	73	89	22
Quthing	Males	59	71	20
	Females	71	82	15

Qacha's Nek	Males	60	83	38
	Females	75	88	17
Mokhotlong	Males	51	79	55
	Females	71	91	28
Thaba-Tseka	Males	42	67	60
	Females	66	81	23

Notes:
1 Participation rates differences between 1996 and 2001 are statistically significant at 5% for all groups except for females age 14 where the differences are significant at 10%
2 Participation of children with both parents alive is statistically higher than that of the rest of the other children but the differences between the rest of the children are not statistically significant for both years for male children
3 Participation rates differences are statistically significant at 0.5 level for both 1996 and 2001 for male children except the difference between grand children and other relatives where the differences are not statistically significant
4 Participation rates differences are statistically significant at 0.5 level for both 1996 and 2001 for female children except the difference between children of head and other relatives where the differences are not statistically significant in 1996 and the differences between children of head and other relatives as well as between other relatives and grand children which are not significant for 2001