

Provincial Statistics (Part 4) - Free State

1995

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Unemployment rate in the Free State was 24,4% in 1995

According to a Central Statistical Service (CSS) report entitled Provincial Statistics 1995 (report number 00-90-04) the unemployment rate in the Free State was 24,4% in 1995. The Free State has an adult literacy rate of 84,4%, compared with 82,2% for the Republic. Although it has the second smallest population of all the provinces, it has the fifth highest contribution (6,2%) to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country.

Situated between the Vaal and Orange rivers, the Free State is one of the largest provinces in the country.

With a surface area of 129 480 km² it is the third largest province - the Northern Cape (361 830 km²) has the largest surface area, followed by the Eastern Cape (169 580 km²). The Free State covers 10,6% of the total surface area of the RSA (1 219 090 km²). It is located in the centre of the country, with Lesotho sharing one of its boundaries, and is bordered by all the provinces except the Northern Province and the Western Cape.

Of the total population of the RSA, 6,7% reside in the Free State. This province has the second smallest population of all the provinces (2 782 470). Only the population of the Northern Cape is smaller with 742 030 inhabitants. The Black population group comprises the overwhelming majority (83,8%) of the total Free State population, whilst only 0,3% of all Asians and 2,1% of all Coloureds in the country live here.

Urbanisation is not very high in the province, with only 54,4% of the population living in urban areas (i.e. areas with some form of local authority).

Mining and agriculture contribute significantly to the Gross Geographic Product (GGP) of the province.

Free State contributes 6,2% to the national GDP, with mining and quarrying (20%) and manufacturing (14,6%) the largest contributors.

The life expectancy (61,9 years) of the population in the province is just below that of the country as a whole (62,8 years), as reflected by the **Human Development Index (HDI)**. This index is a measure of people's ability to live a long and healthy life, to be able to communicate, to participate in the life of the community and to have sufficient means to afford a decent living. On the relative ranking of the HDI, the Free State compares well with countries such as Sri Lanka and China. This index also indicates an adult literacy rate of 84,4% for this province in 1991, compared with 82,2% for the Republic. **Adult literacy** refers to persons who are 15 years and older who can read, write and speak their home language. The total unemployment rate (expanded definition) in the Free State was 24,4% in 1995. 16,7% Of economically active men and 33,8% of economically active women are unemployed.

For urban Blacks the unemployment rate was as high as 36,9%.

Provincial Statistics 1995, Part 4: Free State is an invaluable instrument providing decision-makers and planners in the public and private sectors with a demographic, socio-economic and economic profile of the Free State. It should also satisfy the need for statistical information on the Free State among researchers, developers, investors and the general public. The publication strives to give the reader an idea of the statistics compiled by the CSS as well as by other government departments such as the Weather Bureau and the Department of Education.

This is the fourth publication in a series of 10 reports published by the CSS, that undertakes a detailed statistical investigation of each of the 9 provinces of South Africa, with the tenth report on South Africa as a whole. Information provided in the report ranges from statistical demographic information on population, language and age groups, to information on tourism, housing and education. Labour statistics as well as various economic statistics on transport, mining, construction and the service sectors in the Free State are included.

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