

Statistical Report

Provincial Statistics (Part 6) - North-West

1995

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NORTH-WEST PROVINCE HAS LOWEST LIFE EXPECTANCY

According to a Central Statistical Service (CSS) report entitled Provincial Statistics 1995 (report number 00-90-06), the population of the North-West Province has the lowest life expectancy of all the provinces. The North-West is to a large extent non-urban, since only 31,8% of inhabitants live in areas with some form of local authority.

This mineral-rich province covers 9,5% of the total area of the country. Being sparsely populated, it houses only 8,2% of the total number of all inhabitants (41 244 430) in the RSA. The population density in the North-West is 28,8 persons per km² - the third lowest in the country after Northern Cape and the Free State, and on a par with Western Cape. The African population in the province forms the overwhelming majority, namely 89,8% (3 008 470) compared to a White population of only 8,1% (272 210) of the total.

The North-West population has the lowest life expectancy of all the provinces. This is reflected by the Human Development Index (HDI) which measures 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. The life expectancy of 59,7 years in the North-West does not compare well with the national average of 62,8 years. The HDI also indicates an adult literacy rate of 69,5 for the North-West, compared with 82,2 for the country as a whole. **Adult literacy** refers to persons who are 15 years and older who can read, write and speak their home language. On the relative ranking of the HDI, the North-West compares well with countries such as Egypt and Swaziland.

The **October Household Survey (OHS)** a survey of approximately 30 000 households conducted by the CSS in 1994, is the source of a number of interesting indicators of development. This survey shows that:

- * 51,6% of all Africans/Blacks in the North-West live in fully paid off dwellings, opposed to 28,9% of Whites;
- * only 31,1% of all households in the province have running water in the home;
- * as a main energy source for cooking purposes, only 25,1% of African/Black households use electricity, while 37,2% use paraffin. Wood is the most popular energy source for heating purposes, and is used by 35,9% of Africans/Blacks;
- * the total unemployment rate (expanded definition) for the North-West is calculated at 36,6%. This is 31,3% in urban areas opposed to the 40,3% in non-urban areas. The rate for males is 28,4%, and for females it is 48,6%.

The annual per capita income of the North-West is R5 817 for 1993, the third lowest of all the provinces and well below the R8 704 for the country as a whole. The inflation rate for the North-West for 1995 is the second highest in the country at 8,7% - the same as the average for the RSA, and second only to the 9,3% of the Eastern Cape.

Although the main contributor to the Gross Geographic Product (GGP) in the North-West is the mining and quarrying industry, contributing 40,6% of the total, the trade, catering and accommodation services industries are playing an ever increasing role in contributing to the economy of the province.

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