

# PREVALENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY IN BOTSWANA 2023/24



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**STATISTICS BOTSWANA**

**PREVALENCE OF FOOD  
INSECURITY IN BOTSWANA 2023/24**

## PREFACE

**S**tatistics Botswana conducts the Quarterly Multi-Topic Survey (QMTS) primarily to generate labour force indicators and address data gaps that may be identified by stakeholders, as well as to support development frameworks such as Vision 2036, National Development Plans, Africa Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This statistical brief presents the findings of the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) module implemented as part of the Quarterly Multi-Topic Survey (QMTS) conducted in Quarter one (January to March) of 2024. The results are in reference to the past 12 months period. The results provide an update of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 2.1.2 - Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population.

The results showed that, at national level, 28.1 percent of the population experienced moderate food insecurity, 19.1 percent experienced severe food insecurity, while 52.8 percent were food secure or mildly food insecure.

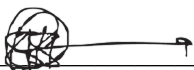
Compared to previous years the results showed that at national level, the proportion of the population that was food secure or mildly food insecure declined from 49.2 percent in 2018/19 to 46.7 percent in 2021/22, thereafter the proportion increased to 50.6 percent of the total population in 2022/23, and went up to 52.8 percent in 2023/24.

The proportion of the population that experienced moderate food insecurity fluctuated over the years. It went up from 28.6 percent in 2018/19 to 30.9 percent in 2020/21, and dropped to 27.1 percent in 2021/22. The proportion increased to 29.2 percent in 2022/23, before declining to 28.1 percent in 2023/24.

The prevalence of severe food insecurity went down from 22.2 percent in 2018/19 to 20.2 percent in 2020/21. The prevalence of food insecurity went up by six (6) percentage points between 2020/21 and 2021/22, from 20.2 percent in 2020/21 to 26.2 percent in 2021/22, there after it decreased to 20.2 percent in 2022/23 and further to 19.1 percent in 2023/24. The spike in the 2021/22 results could possibly be due to COVID 19 effects on household food security.

The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity (SDG 2.1.2) went up from 50.8 percent in 2018/19 to 51.1 percent in 2020/21, and reached a high of 53.3 percent in 2021/22, and recorded a decline of 3.9 percentage points in 2022/23 to record 49.4 percent. In 2023/24, prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity stood at 47.2 percent.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to the survey respondents and to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for their invaluable technical support.



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**Dr. Khaufelo R. Lekobane**  
**Statistician General**  
**June 2026**



## INTRODUCTION

Statistics Botswana (SB) in its mandate to produce official statistics, conducts surveys to produce indicators that inform on the impact of programmes, policies and interventions targeting national priorities. The indicators produced assist in reformulation, monitoring and reprioritisation to achieve desired outcomes on national priorities, as promoted through, the National Development Plans, Vision 2036, Africa 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals (national and international development frameworks).

In the first quarter of 2024 (Q1), the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) module was administered within the QMTS, capturing data for the preceding 12 months (2023/24). The survey was conducted across enumeration areas designed to be representative of the three national strata: Cities and Towns, Urban Villages, and Rural Areas.

The FIES measures the severity of food insecurity using eight questions on households or individuals experiences regarding access to food. The questions are answered directly with a yes/no response. The responses were analysed to produce the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Indicator 2.1.2: Prevalence of moderate to severe food insecurity and estimates of the proportion of the population facing severe, moderate food insecurity, as well as those who were food secure to mildly food insecure.

*According to the **FIES** module, with increasing severity of food insecurity, there is possibility for individuals to experience reduced quantity of food consumed with reduced portion sizes. In some cases they eat less and some meals are skipped. At the most severe level of food insecurity, they can go without eating for a day or more, with some members of the population experiencing hunger. The scale further reveals that the Population's experience of food insecurity may be characterized by uncertainty and anxiety regarding food access, compromising of the quality of diet and having less balanced and more monotonous diet.*

This statistical brief focuses on food insecurity for 2023/24 among members of the population and a summary of time series results from 2018/19 up to 2023/24 excluding 2019/20 which was not conducted due to COVID restrictions.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

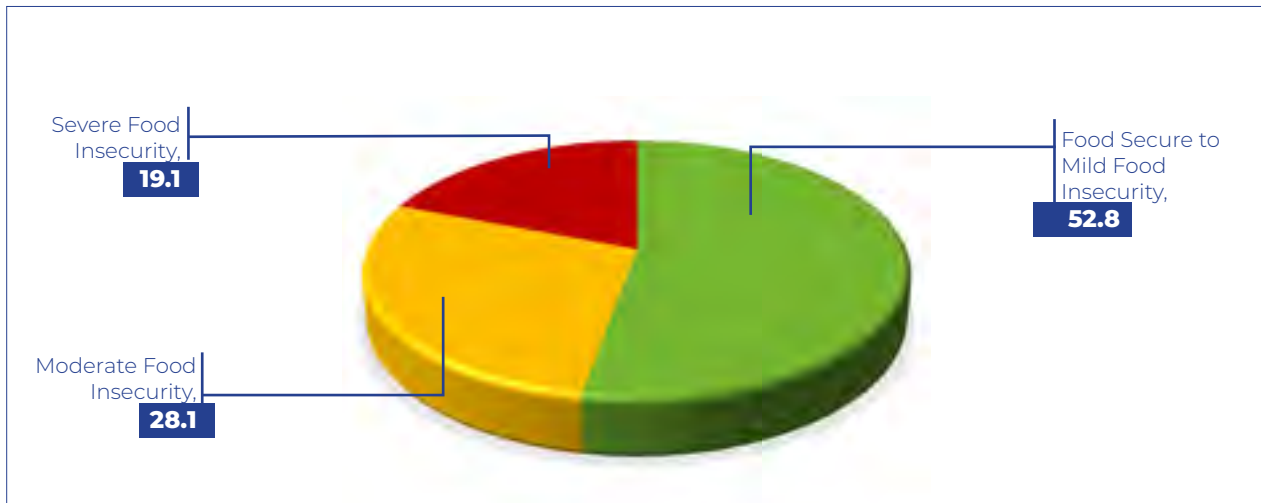
This section summarizes results for 'food secure to mild food insecurity', 'moderate food insecurity' and 'severe food insecurity'. Food secure to mild food insecurity is when individuals may occasionally struggle to get enough food or a variety of foods they prefer. Their dietary intake remains largely adequate, but they might experience worry about food access or eat less diverse meals. Moderate and severe food insecurity is experienced when people face ongoing uncertainty or limited access to sufficient, nutritious food, usually due to financial or other constraints. They may need to compromise both the quality (e.g., choosing less nutritious or less preferred foods) and the quantity (e.g., reducing portion sizes or skipping meals) of their diet, even if they are not experiencing severe hunger. Severe food insecurity is experienced when Individuals have depleted their food supplies and, in the most extreme cases, go for days without eating (often called the 'hungry').

## 2. PREVALENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY IN BOTSWANA 2023/24

### National Food Insecurity Prevalence 2023/2024

The results shown in **Figure 1** indicate that during 2023/24, 52.8 percent of the population were classified as food secure to mildly food insecure at national level, while 28.1 percent experienced moderate food insecurity, and 19.1 percent experienced severe food insecurity.

**FIGURE 1:** National Food Insecurity Prevalence (Percentage Population)



### Comparison between FIES 2018/19, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022 /23 and 2023/24

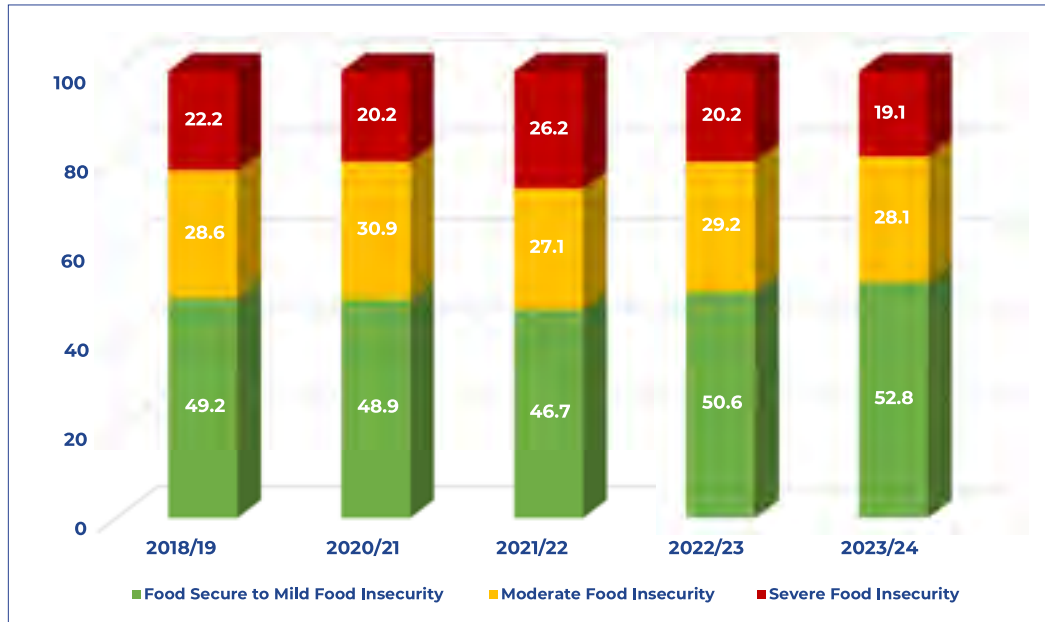
**Figure 2** shows a decline in the proportion of population that is 'food secure to mild food insecurity'; from 49.2 percent in 2018/19 to 48.9 percent in 2020/21 and 46.7 percent in 2021/22, followed by an increase to 50.6 and 52.8 percent in 2022/23 and 2023/24 respectively. **This suggests that while there were declines in 2020/21 and 2021/22, food security improved in the last two years of the reporting period.**

The prevalence of 'moderate food insecurity' in the population has shown fluctuations over the years, increasing by 2.3 percentage points from 28.6 percent in 2018/19 to 30.9 percent in 2020/21, followed by a 3.8 percentage point decrease to 27.1 percent in 2021/22, and then increasing to 29.2 percent in 2022/23, followed by a 0.8 percentage points decline to 28.1 in 2023/24. **These variations indicate stability in the population experiencing moderate food insecurity.**

The population experiencing severe food insecurity decreased by 2 percentage points from 22.2 percent in 2018/19 to 20.2 percent in 2020/21, increased by 6 percentage points to 26.2 percent in 2021/22, then reverting to 20.2 percent in 2022/23, before decreasing further to 19.1 percent in 2023/24. **Overall, this represents an improvement in the prevalence of severe food insecurity.**

The SDG indicator 2.1.2, which measures 'moderate or severe food insecurity', increased from 50.8 percent in 2018/19 to 51.1 percent in 2020/21, and further by 2.2 percentage points to 53.3 percent in 2021/22. In 2022/23, the proportion declined to 49.4 percent, and decreased further by 2.2 percentage points to 47.2 percent in 2023/24. **This trend suggests that the proportion of the population facing food insecurity has been reducing since 2021/22.**

**FIGURE 2:** National Food Insecurity Prevalence (Percentage) 2018/19 2020/21/2021/22 2022/23 and 2023/24



Between 2021/22 and 2023/24, **Table 1** shows a notable improvement in ‘severe food insecurity’ across all strata.

In cities and towns, the prevalence dropped by 5.1 percentage points from 17.6 percent in 2021/22 to 12.5 percent in 2022/23, and declined by another percentage point (1) to 11.5 percent in 2023/24.

In urban villages, the rate declined from by 6.8 percentage points from 24.8 percent in 2021/22 to 18.0 percent in 2022/23 and remained relatively stable at 18.4 percent in 2023/24.

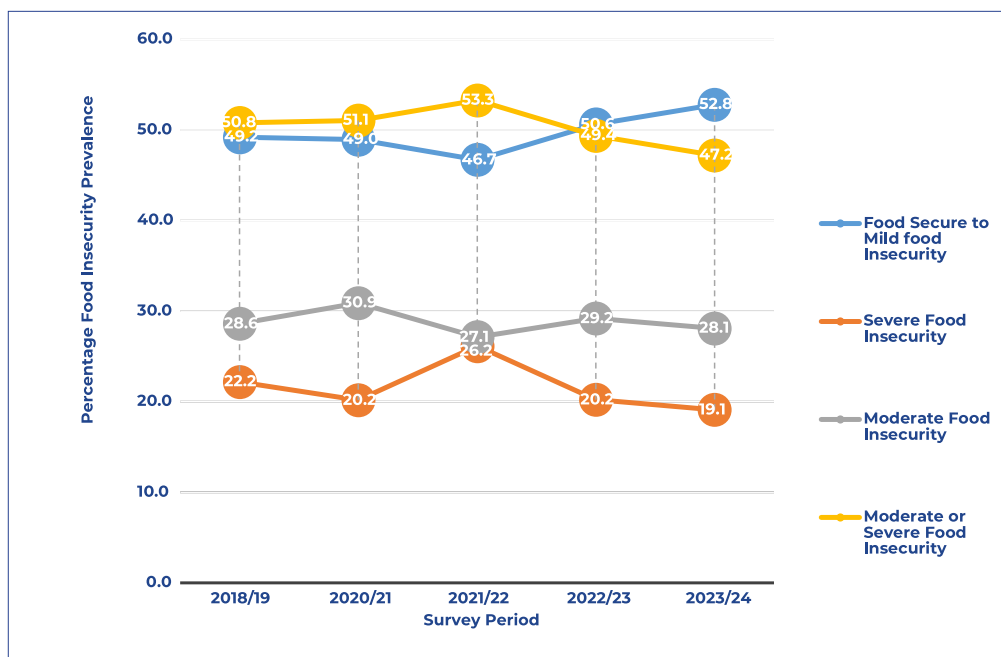
In rural areas, severe food insecurity declined by 5.1 percentage points, from 33.5 percent in 2021/22 to 28.4 percent in 2022/23, and further decreased by 3.3 percentage points to 25.1 percent in 2023/24.

**Table 1:** Prevalence of food insecurity by Strata between 2021/22 and 2023/24

Strata	2021/22				2022/23				2023/24			
	Secure to Mild	Moderate	Severe	Moderate or Severe	Secure to Mild	Moderate	Severe	Moderate or Severe	Secure to Mild	Moderate	Severe	Moderate or Severe
Cities_towns	65.1	17.3	17.6	34.9	66.3	21.2	12.5	33.8	67.5	21.1	11.5	32.6
Urban_villages	46.8	28.4	24.8	53.2	51.2	30.7	18.0	48.8	54.3	27.3	18.4	45.7
Rural_areas	35.7	30.9	33.5	64.4	40.2	31.4	28.4	59.9	40.9	34.0	25.1	59.1
National	46.7	27.1	26.2	53.3	50.6	29.2	20.2	49.4	52.8	28.1	19.1	47.2

**Figure 3** shows a linear presentation of the trend in food insecurity prevalence from 2018/19 to 2023/24. An inverse relationship is evident (as expected) between ‘food secure to mild food insecurity’ and ‘moderate or severe food insecurity’ (SDG indicator 2.1.2). From 2018/19 to 2020/21, moderate or severe food insecurity line stayed above the ‘food secure to mild food insecurity line. From 2022/23 onward, ‘food secure to mild food insecurity’ line is above ‘moderate or severe food insecurity’ line, indicating an improvement in food security and a reduction in overall food insecurity.

**FIGURE 3:** Food Insecurity Prevalence (Percentage of Individuals/Population)



## CONCLUSION

Statistics Botswana incorporates the FIES module in the quarterly multi-topic survey annually to support computation of the food security indicators to track progress in the SDG Target 2.1: To end hunger and ensure food access by all people. The target is that the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, should have access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round by 2030. It is hoped that stakeholders will support the continued data collection to closely monitor the SDG indicators as we get closer to 2030.

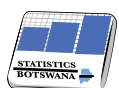




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