

Notes on Levels and Patterns of Child Labour and Child Work in Botswana

Gofaone Kgosidintsi and Serai Daniel Rakgoasi[§]*

Abstract

This paper uses the 2011 Botswana Population and Housing Census (PHS) to document the levels and patterns of child labour and child work in Botswana. The results show that only 2.1% of children aged 12 to 17 were involved in some kind of employment. The percentage of children involved in child labour is highest among older children, those heading households or children classified as spouses of heads of household. It is also high among those who were not related to head of households, and orphaned children. Other significant variations in likelihood of child labour were children who ever been in unions, children affiliated to non-Christian religions, children residing in Kweneng West District, Ngwaketse West District, and Ghanzi District, as well as children whose home language was 'Zezuru'/Shona, Ndebele and Sesarwa.

Introduction

Determining the level and patterns of child labour is important because child labour is economically exploitative to the child, hazardous, interferes with the child's education, and harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (Government of Botswana 2006). In addition, child labour undermines human capital development and future earnings; reinforces the vicious cycle of poverty, and runs counter to Botswana Vision 2016 of being 'An educated and informed nation' (Okurut and Yinusa, 2009). Vision 2016 is Botswana's long term vision aimed at improving Botswana's socio-economic and political wellbeing of the people of Botswana. Recent evidence shows that about 72.4% of school going children (7-17 years) were engaged in schooling only, 21.2% were involved in labour market activities as well as schooling, 2.6% were involved in working only, while 4% were not working and not schooling (Okurut and Yinusa 2009). Furthermore, analysis of the Botswana AIDS Impact Survey II and III indicate that there has been a decline in economically active children aged 12-17 from 3.2% in 2004 to 1.8% in 2008. Although incidences of child labour seem to be declining there is still a great deal of urban-rural disparities.

Hazardous work done by children in Botswana include collecting water and firewood over long distances, livestock herding, working in shebeens, working on the streets and working in agriculture (Government of Botswana 2006). In many countries, as is the case in Botswana, national laws and policies exist to protect the rights of children. However, the enforcement, implementation and monitoring of these various instruments remain a major constraint (University of Botswana and UNICEF 2012). Children who were not attending school, heading households or orphaned are most vulnerable to child labour (ILO and Government of Botswana 2006). An orphan crisis has intensely developed in Africa largely due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Recent Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) indicate that in Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe nearly 15% of all children under the age of 15 had lost one or both parents and more than 20% of 15 year old children in these countries are orphans (Guarcello, Lyon, Rosati and Valdivia 2004).

The largest increases in orphanhood will be evidenced in countries with the highest HIV prevalence rates like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. In countries with mature epidemics such as Uganda HIV prevalence may have declined or stabilised in part due to high mortality rate, consequently,

*Kgosidintsi Gofaone, Department of Population Studies, University of Botswana, email: Kgosidintsi.gofaone@mopipi.ub.bw and gofakgosi@yahoo.com

[§]Serai Daniel Rakgoasi, Senior Lecturer, Department of Population Studies, University of Botswana, email: rakgoasi@mopipi.ub.bw

the percentage of children orphaned may be high even though HIV prevalence has declined (Guarcello, Lyon, Rosati and Valdivia 2004). As the HIV epidemic matures in Botswana, like in Uganda, there will be an increase in the percent of children who are orphaned. With increased number of orphans will come new challenges to the government to try to expand its safety net to these potentially vulnerable children. The number of orphans in Botswana has increased tremendously in recent years due to the high and increasing HIV and AIDS casualties, from 21,109 in 1999 to 42,000 in 2003 (Republic of Botswana 2004). It is estimated that about 15% of children aged 12-17 years old in Botswana have been said to be orphaned and that 6% of the orphaned children are economically active (ILO and Republic of Botswana 2006).

Botswana is currently implementing a number of programmes aimed at mitigating the impact of orphanhood on children who have lost one or both parents. One such programme is the orphan care programme. First implemented in 1999, this program aims to alleviate some of the challenges that the orphaned are facing by providing food baskets, psychological counseling and to facilitating the waiving of school fees for orphan children.

Methodology

The paper uses data from the 2011 Population and Housing Census, which is the fifth in a series of post-independence national population and housing censuses conducted in Botswana since 1971. Child labour or child participation in formal employment is measured using responses to a question on whether the child did any type of work for pay, profit or home use for at least one hour in the seven days preceding the census.

A number of independent covariates were investigated, including sex of child, age, school enrolment, education level, marital status, religion, relationship to head of household and orphanhood. Orphanhood was measured as a composite index comprising responses to two questions on the survival status of the child's biological father or mother, and shows whether the child is a maternal or paternal orphan, double orphan or not an orphan. Frequencies were used to find out emerging trends in child labour and cross tabulations were also used to identify determinants of child labour. This analysis was performed using IBM SPSS (version 19).

Findings

Table 1 below shows the characteristics of the sampled population. As of the 2011 census, there were 248, 573 children between ages of 12 and 17 years in Botswana. These form the basis of analysis in this paper.

Table 1 Distribution of Background Characteristics

	Numbers	Percent
Sex of Respondent		
Male	124640	50.1
Female	123933	49.9
Age of Respondent		
12	39890	16.0
13	40363	16.2
14	39800	16.0
15	42915	17.3
16	43149	17.4
17	42456	17.1
Highest level of Education		
Primary	100086	40.8

Secondary	145298	59.2
Respondents' Religious Affiliation		
Christian	200945	81.1
Other None-Christian	8064	3.3
No Religion	38677	15.6
Marital Status		
Married	1696	0.7
Never Married	242498	97.6
Living Together	3793	1.5
Marriage dissolved	367	0.1
Place of Residence		
Cities and towns	123651	49.7
Urban Villages	99827	40.2
Rural	25097	10.1
Relationship to head of household		
Head/Spouse	6028	2.8
Child/Grand Child	158970	75.7
Brother/Sister	15480	7.1
Other Relatives	33361	15.3
Not Related	4116	1.9
Did any type of work in the past 7 days		
No	243221	97.9
Yes	5151	2.1
Orphan hood		
Both parents alive	167786	70.8
Father only alive	13744	5.8
Mother only alive	41206	17.4
None alive	14411	6.1

Source: Statistics Botswana (2011)

The population of children between the ages 12 and 17 years is equally split between males at 50.1% and females at 49.9%. Over half (59%) of the population under 17 years had secondary education or higher, while two out of every five (40.8%) had primary education. Eight out of every ten (81%) were Christians and almost all have never been married (97.6%). Half of the population under 17 years resided in cities and towns (49.7%) while 40.2% resided in urban villages and only 10.1% resided in rural villages.

Just fewer than three in every 100 children (2.6%) were married or once married, and an almost similar proportion (2.7%) were head or a spouse to head of household. Just under a tenth (6.1%) were double orphans, under one fifth (17.4%) had lost their fathers and 5.8% had lost only their mothers.

The results show that 2.1% of children below 17 years of age did some kind of work for pay, profit, or home use for at least one hour in the seven days preceding the census. The majority of children in this age range were students (92%) while 6% were engaged in home work, 0.5% was reported to be sick and 2% were actively seeking employment. Close to three quarters (70%) of children under the age of 17, who were engaged in child labour, were paid in cash, 2% were paid in kind, 15% were working at own lands/cattle posts, 6% were unpaid family helpers, 7% were self-employed with no employees and 0.5% were self-employed with employees.

Table 2: Child's Economic Activity by Selected Background Characteristics

	Did work for pay	Did not do work for pay
Sex of Respondent		
Male	2.9	97.1
Female	1.2	97.9
Age of Respondent		
12	0.6	99.4
13	0.9	99.1
14	1.1	98.9
15	1.8	98.2
16	2.7	97.3
17	5.1	94.9
Highest level of Education		
Primary	2.1	97.9
Secondary	1.6	98.4
School attendance		
Still at School	0.2	99.8
Left School	22.0	78.0
Never attended School	24.5	75.5
Religious Affiliation		
Christian	1.6	98.4
Other Non-Christian	5.9	94.1
No Religion	3.6	96.4
Marital Status		
Married	10.8	89.2
Never Married	1.8	98.2
Living Together	12.0	88.0
Marriage dissolved	10.9	89.1
Place of Residence		
Cities and towns	1.1	98.9
Urban Villages	1.4	98.6
Rural	9.6	90.4
Relationship to head of household		
Head/Spouse	23.3	76.7
Child/Grand Child	1.1	98.9
Brother/Sister	2.7	97.3
Other Relatives	2.3	97.3
Not Related	16.9	97.7
Orphan hood		
Both parents alive	1.8	98.2
Father only alive	2.9	97.1
Mother only alive	2.6	97.4
None alive	3.5	96.5
Total	2.1	

Source: Statistics Botswana (2011)

Table 2 above shows the child's economic activity by selected background characteristics. A small percentage (2.1%) of children between the ages of 12 and 17 were engaged in some kind of work in the past seven days prior to the census for pay, profit or home use for at least one hour. A higher percentage of males were involved in work (2.9%) compared to females (1.2%). The percent of children aged 12 to 17 involved in child labour increase gradually from 0.6% for children aged 12 years to 5.1% for children aged 17 years.

A slightly higher proportion of children with primary education were involved in child labour compared to 1.6% of children with secondary education. A small per cent of children who were still at

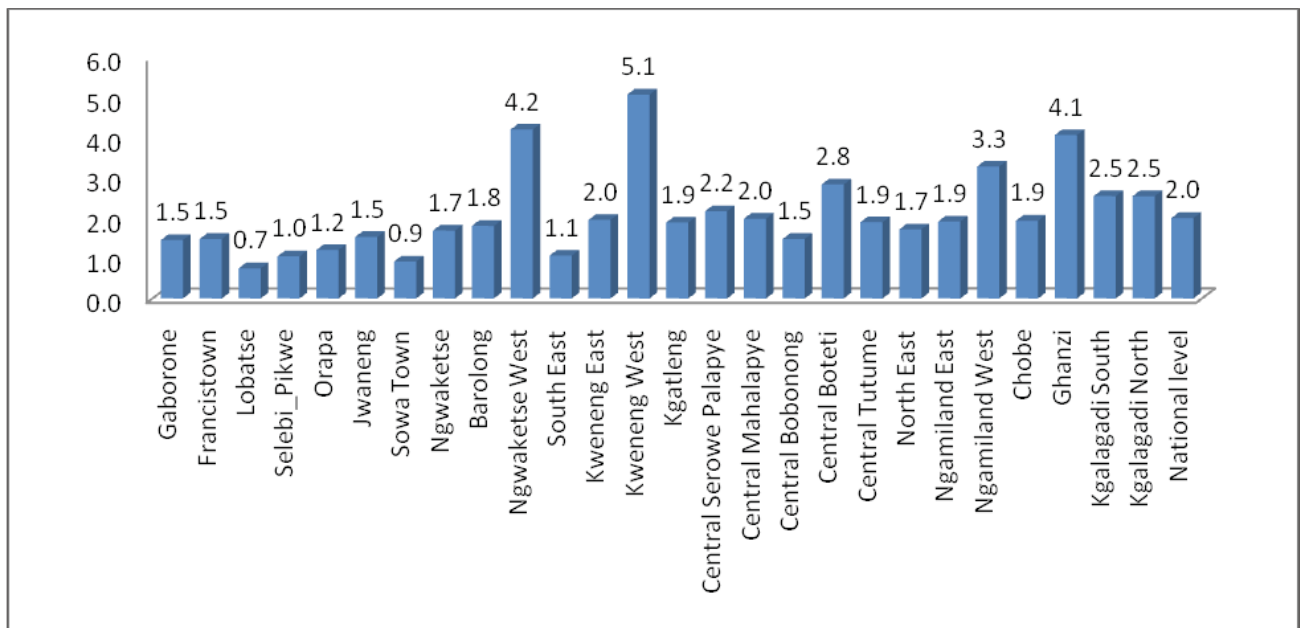
school (0.2%) were engaged in child labour compared to a fifth (22.0%) of children who had left school and a quarter (24.5%) of children who had never attended school.

A higher percent of other non-Christian religions (5.9%) were engaged in child labour compared to 3.6% who subscribed to no religion and 1.6% of Christians. A much smaller percent of children who have never been married (1.8%) were involved in child labour compared to over a tenth of children who are married (10.8%), living together (12.0%), and those whose marriage have been dissolved (10.9%).

A larger proportion of children who resided in rural villages (9.65%) were engaged in child labour compared to 1.1% of children residing in cities and towns and 1.4% of those residing in urban villages. The percentage of children involved in child labor was highest among children who were also heads of households or spouse to heads of households (23.3%) and those who were not related to the head of household (16.9%). This proportion was lowest among children who were grandchildren (1.1%); siblings (2.7%) or other relatives to the head of household (2.3%).

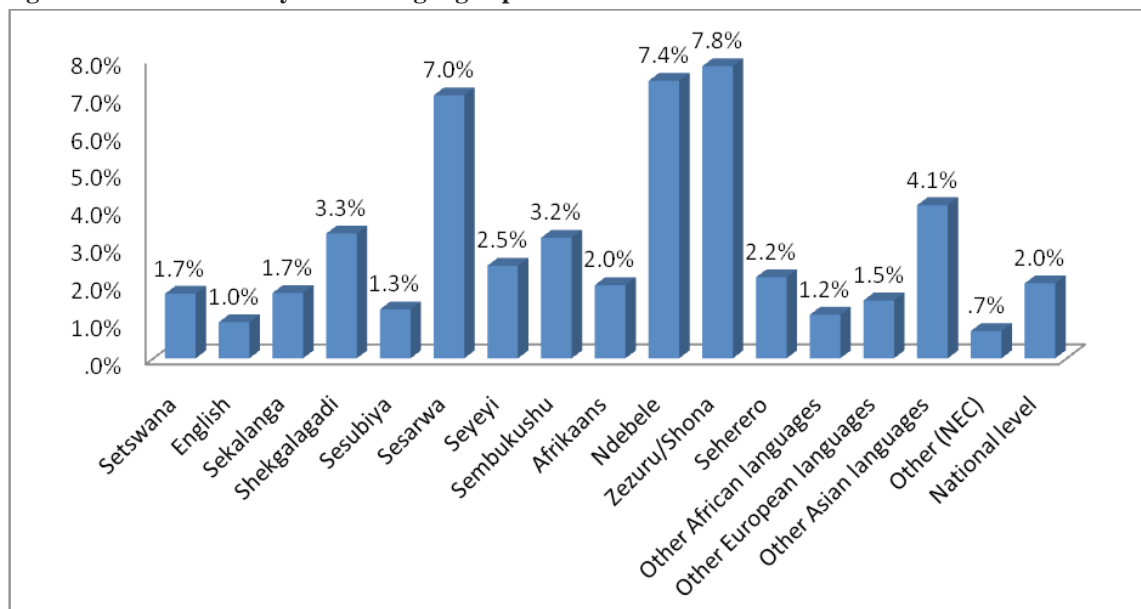
Table 2 also shows that a higher percent of children who had lost both their parents (3.5%) were involved in child labour, followed by children who had lost one parent (2.9% paternal orphans and 2.6% maternal orphans) and who had both parents surviving (1.8%).

Figure 1: Child Labour by District



Source: Statistics Botswana (2011)

Figure 1 above indicates the distribution of child labour by district. The graph indicates that at the national level only 2% of children have been subjected to child labour. However, there seem to be differences by districts with Kweneng West recording the highest percent of children involved in child labour (5.1%) followed by Ngwaketse West at 4.2% and Ghanzi by 4.1%. On the other hand, Lobatse recorded the lowest percentages of child labour with less than 1% of the children (0.7%) followed by Sowa Town (0.9%) and Selibe Phikwe (1.05%). For the remaining districts, percentages of child labour ranges from 1.15 to 2.55%.

Figure 2: Child labour by Main Language Spoken

Source: Statistics Botswana (2011)

Figure 2 above shows distributions of child labour by main language spoken at home. The chart shows that two percent of children in Botswana were subjected to child labour. The chart further shows that children who speak predominantly Zezuru/Shona (7.85), Ndebele (7.4%) and Sesarwa (7.05) had the highest proportions of children who reported that they had worked for pay in the past seven days prior to the census. Conversely a smaller proportion of children who speak mainly English (1.0%), other African languages (1.2%), Sesubiya (1.3%), Other European languages (1.5%), and Sekalaka (1.7%) were reported to have worked for pay in the last seven days prior to the census.

Discussion and Recommendations

As already mentioned above child labour is harmful to the child, it is also economically exploitative, hazardous, interferes with the child's education, or harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. In Botswana, unlike in many parts of the developing world, child labour is not rife. However, children in the rural areas, those who have dropped out of school, have been said to be vulnerable to child labour (Republic of Botswana 2006).

The results show that only 2.1% of children aged 12 to 17 were involved in some kind of work. However, these proportions were highest in males, older age groups, children with primary education, children who were affiliated with other non-Christian religions, children who ever been married or lived with a partner, those who reside in rural villages, and those living in Kweneng West District, Ngwaketse West District and Ghanzi District. This also involves children who speak mainly 'Zezuru'/Shona, Ndebele and Sesarwa. Furthermore, children affected included those who left school, never been to school, children who were heads or spouses of household heads and children whose parents had died.

It is, therefore, important to keep tabs on certain spatial and socio-demographic factors that have shown an association with increased likelihood of child labour, in order to protect children from the deleterious effect of child labour and participation in formal employment at a young age. These groups include; children heading households/children who were spouses of head of household, children who were not related to head of households, children who ever been married or lived with a partner, children residing in rural areas, children who were affiliated to other non-Christian religions and orphaned children.

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