

THE STATUS OF DATA COLLECTION IN AFRICA; ZAMBIA IN PARTICULAR

1. DATA COLLECTION IN AFRICA; ZAMBIA

Background: The collection of demographic data was not initiated by current governments but by the colonial masters. However, this data was selective in the way it was collected due to its different various needs.

Prior to 1960, the state of demographic data collection in Africa was very unsatisfactory.

The main sources of demographic data at that time were administrative censuses carried out in the colonial era as well as national surveys taken in French-speaking Africa starting with the 1954 survey of Guinea and the 1955-1957 survey of Zaire (then the Belgian Congo).

The African Census Programme (ACP) was established with the assistance of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities - UNFPA (now called United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA) to assist African countries that lacked the financial or technical means, or both, to carry out their censuses in the 1970 round.

The ACP has helped a number of African countries to conduct, for the first time, a modern population census to ascertain the size and characteristics of their population and thus have a basis for demographic data analysis and applications at the national level.

In Africa, data collection of demographic information is being done through the population census, a number of demographic surveys and other sources such as CRS and administrative records however there are currently nagging circumstances, which include:

- i. Political interference
- ii. Financial constraints
 - Reliance is so much on donors for funding and all, such that if they pull out (mainly due to shift in priorities or areas of interest) of the survey then data collection is compromised.
- iii. Inadequate skilled human resources

- There is a lot of information that has been collected in the country but has not been disseminated. Some “researchers” are not able to interpret the researches done. They are usually interested in money and not in the actual work.
- Poor attitude - There is poor work culture in Least Developing Countries towards data collection on almost the entire population.

iv. Geographical barriers

- Some areas where people reside cannot be reached resulting in under enumeration.
- Even areas known, there is poor road network/ conditions; making it difficult to reach and enumerate population residing such areas

v. Civil strife/wars

- Some countries have had civil unrest and such undertaking data collection is not an exercise that could be undertaken. Safety of enumerators/ interviewers is critical.

There is a problem of migration data. In most LDCs, they usually record net migration as nil or zero because migration data is usually not available.

2. CENSUS, SURVEYS, CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEMS AND OTHER SOURCES AS COMPLEMENTARY SOURCES OF DATA

Introduction: The sources of social and demographic data are population and housing censuses, household sample surveys and administrative records. These three sources, if well planned and executed, can be complementary in an integrated program of data collection and compilation.

Social and demographic statistics are essential for planning and monitoring socio-economic development programs.

The subject of combining information from different data sources has gained considerable attention in recent years. The interest in this area is driven by the necessity to limit census

and survey costs and to lower response burden, to provide data at lower domains, which may not be covered by survey data for instance, and to maximize the use of available data in the country.

Analysis of data from these sources may help in estimating more precise demographic rates or at least shed some light on the accuracy of the various data sources.

COMPLEMENTARITIES OF THE THREE DATA SOURCES

1. Censuses provide the sample frame for demographic and health surveys and other types of surveys conducted during the intercensal period. The census, among other things, provides a sampling frame, statistical infrastructure, statistical capacity (it is part of a fundamental statistical base of a country) and benchmark statistics that are needed in conducting household surveys. For example, the 2013-14, and 2018 ZDHS used the 2010 CPH list of EA as a sampling frame. The list of EAs incorporates census information on households and population counts.
2. Data from household surveys can be used to check, for instance census coverage and content errors. For example, post enumeration survey was used during the 2000 and 2010 round of censuses in Zambia respectively to evaluate coverage errors. Likewise, census data can be used to evaluate some survey results.
3. In countries with well-developed civil registration systems, census and survey data can be successfully used together with data from administrative records. For example in the 1990 population census in Singapore, enumerators had pre-filled basic information, from administrative records, for every member of the household. This approach reduced interviewing time and enumeration costs. Since the register-based census provides only the total count of the population and basic characteristics of the population, detailed socio-economic characteristics are collected on a sample basis.
4. Data from administrative records can be used to check and evaluate results from surveys and censuses. For instance in countries with complete vital registration systems,

data on fertility and mortality from censuses can be cross-checked with that from the registration system.

5. Computation: Census data provide the denominators of population at risk for the calculation of vital statistics and rates based on the civil registration system.

6. Because censuses cannot be repeated frequently, household surveys provide a basis for updating some census information, especially at national and other large domain levels.

7. In most cases, only relatively simple topics are investigated in a census and the number of questions is usually limited. Census information can therefore be complemented by detailed information on complex topics from the household surveys, taking advantage of their small size and potential flexibility.

8. Collecting information on additional topics from a sample of the population, or households during the census are a cost-effective way to broaden the scope of the census to meet the expanding demands of social statistics. The use of sampling methods and techniques makes it feasible to produce urgently needed data with acceptable precision when time and cost constraints would make it impractical to obtain such data through complete enumeration.

In conclusion, censuses, household surveys and administrative sources should be viewed as complementary. This implies that, whenever possible, in planning for censuses and surveys common concepts and definitions should be used. Administrative procedures should also be checked periodically to make sure that common concepts and definitions are being used. The household survey program should be part of an integrated statistical data collection system within a country, including censuses and administrative records so that the overall needs for socio-demographic statistics can be adequately met.

3. THE ISSUES/SHORTFALLS/LIMITATIONS OF DATA COLLECTION SOURCES IN ZAMBIA

The sources of demographic data are: population censuses, household sample surveys, civil registration system. Each of the sources has its own advantages and limitations. This, however, does not preclude the complementary use of data generated through household surveys with data from other sources such as censuses and administrative records.

population censuses	household sample surveys	civil registration system	administrative records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor dependency • Expensive • Long processing Interval • Complex/Large undertaking • Political interference • Data quality is, in some cases, compromised • No information of a more specialized type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal mandates • Public cooperation • Sampling and non-sampling • Longitudinal surveys have a problem of high attrition rate of respondents and conditioning effect 	<p>The quality of data may be measured according to completeness, correctness, availability and timeliness,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different concepts and Definitions • Limited Coverage • Reliability • Timeliness • Availability of files • Errors/Omissions • Difficult to get a complete picture of the individuals in the population. • Not well developed 	<p>The quality of data may be measured according to completeness, correctness, availability and timeliness,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their complementary use with other sources is a big challenge because of lack of standardized concepts, classification systems coupled with selective coverage and under coverage. • Information from administrative records is often limited in content as their uses are more for legal or administrative purposes.

- CR legislation exist
- The DNRPC is the CR authority and ZamStats as the VS authority.
- For B&D - The Births and Deaths Registration Act Chapter 51 of the Laws of Zambia came into effect on 14 March, 1973;
- An Act that provides for a uniform law for the registration of all births and deaths in Zambia without distinction of origin or descent.
- Prior to this, there was no provision for registration of African births except for white, coloured and Asian races.
- Issuance of birth certificates was for many years centralized.

- SI No. 44 of 2016 – Birth and Death Registration Rules
- Registration > decentralized > districts; BR desks recently established in selected HFs.
- Decentralisation of issuance of birth and death certificates – currently at PRO
- System of CR is weak, fragmented and is characterized by weak linkages between the DNPRC and other institutions
- The existing system does not guarantee usable vital statistics to inform policy, planning, etc.; however, efforts are being made to improve CR

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

These include

- Many countries have in place household survey programs, which include periodic and ad-hoc surveys. It is advisable that the household survey program should be part of an integrated statistical data collection system of a country. In the area of social and demographic statistics, inter-censal household surveys can constitute part of this system.
- Given the competition for budgetary resources, producing and maintaining national registration systems for statistical purposes is not an appealing argument, particularly in less developed countries, since the system may not be considered cost effective if used only for statistics.
 - Relevant stakeholders in society need to continuously advocate for increased national budgetary allocation to CR.
- Strengthening/establishing infrastructure for CR.
- Strengthening the legislation system governing the registration of vital events to ensure compulsory reporting and enable full coverage.
- Training of registration and vital statistics staff is an important activity leading to strengthening of the civil registration and vital statistics systems. Seminars and workshops for personnel from within the systems should be scheduled periodically to exchange views on problems encountered in civil registration and vital statistics operations.

- There is need for sensitization and awareness campaigns among the people on the importance of CR.
- Whenever possible, in planning for censuses and surveys common concepts and definitions should be used. Administrative procedures should also be checked periodically to make sure that common concepts and definitions are being used.