



“The Hand (out) that Rocks the Cradle”

Enabling or disabling the rural shift from ill-being to well-being? - The case of the South African Child Support Grant.

A Research Paper presented by:

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South Africa

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

Social Policy for Development

SPD

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The Hague, The Netherlands

December 2014

Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude is extended to all who have provided me with their unwavering support throughout the course of writing this research paper. I wish to specifically thank my supervisor Mr. Mahmood Messkoub and Ms. Auma Okwany my reader for their critical guidance and navigation of my thought process, their efforts have been invaluable. I would also like to thank my funding institution for the financial backing provided throughout the duration of this program. The external support I have received from colleagues and friends has allowed me to grow both professionally and academically.

A special appreciation from the depth of my heart goes to my family who have been my source of strength when needed most, they have been unrelenting in prayers and patience and this has certainly sustained me to the end. In conclusion I need mention that it would all have been futile and not possible if it was not the will of the Lord God Almighty whom I serve. I have been favoured tremendously-“Thy will shall be done”.

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|------------|--|
| AIDC | Alternative Information and Development Centre |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| CAI | Consultancy Africa Intelligence |
| CDW | Community Development Worker |
| CPI | Consumer Price Index |
| CONTRALESA | Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa |
| CSG | Child Support Grant |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| DSD | Department of Social Development |
| ECP | Eastern Cape Province |
| GHS | General Household Survey |
| GNU | Government of National Unity |
| HSL | Household Subsistence Line |
| IDP | Integrated Development Plan |
| KZN | Kwa Zulu Natal |
| NDA | National Development Agency |
| NDP | National Development Plan |
| NGO | Non –Governmental Organisation |
| NUMSA | National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa |
| OAG | Old Age Grant |
| OAU | Organisation for African Unity |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| ORTD | O.R Tambo District |
| FPL | Food Poverty Line |
| PPP | Purchasing Power Parity |
| SA | South Africa |
| SAHRC | South African Human Rights Commission |
| SASSA | South African Social Services Agency |
| Stats SA | Statistics South Africa |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| UNRISD | United Nations Research Institute for Social Development |
| VUP | Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme |

Abstract

This study aims to focus on the Child Social Grant (CSG) program in South Africa which has been categorised as one of the social grant pillars that represent recordable success in terms of its high uptake. It ventures into propelling that a reliance on this social cushion (in isolation from other income generating mechanisms) to enhance the economic position of the caregiver ‘the hand’ is self-defeating. The caregiver as the recipient holds the decision making power that determines how resources are cascaded at the level of the household therefore in implementation of social protection interventions of this nature, the policy focus should not exclusively be directed at the children but also at those who are responsible for the care of the children. In predominant situations of vast unemployment and lack of sources of income and provision, the CSG becomes a source of sustenance for the entire household, to all intents and purposes it meets only the most basic needs. It then becomes hardly surprising that even though there is a high take up of Child Support Grants, the majority of South African children continue to experience poverty in the form of both income and material deprivation.

The findings of this study will allow concerned stakeholders including government and civil society to critically assess and adjust policies on how to best maximise the benefits of social assistance within the South African historical and current context. It is envisioned that some recommendations that have emerged will contribute to the debate ensuing around the structural and institutional mechanisms that should shape social protection in South Africa. It would be of utmost relevance to assess how the system of social protection drives or influences vulnerability of benefactors and care givers.

Relevance to Development Studies

Furthermore, this research is relevant to development studies as it will help to provide the alternatives to reconcile and generate social protection developmental solutions that are unique to the South African situation. The research provides new angles unique to other works that have been produced in the past purely because it critically puts to test the existing models that explain the origin of South Africa’s social protection and welfare programme. It also seeks to couple that with post-apartheid and young democracy elements in particular how these define the “receiver” of social grants. With the help of academic mapping analysis through the literature, the media and conversations with recipients, government officials and civil society, the research has generated fresh data according to the research question which will be useful for future research.

Keywords

Child Support Grant, Social Protection, Social Exclusion, Rural Poverty, Out of Poverty Graduation, Child Well-Being, Dependency Theory, Empowerment

Chapter 1 – Beneficiaries or Breadwinners?

1.1. Twenty years in

The “hand that rocks the cradle” - an old age idiom that refers to the power and influence of the nurturer on the development of the nurtured (child).

This current year (2014) marks twenty years of a democratic dispensation for South Africa, the country is well within its rights in celebrating two decades free from apartheid, increased access to services such as electricity, water and sanitation (state non-cash transfers) and an expanded social protection programme (state cash transfers) and many other noteworthy socio economic developments such as provisioning of housing including land distribution in particular for the previously disadvantaged. These commendable reforms among others have raised an ongoing and heated debate within policy makers, civil society, private sector, and South Africans in general. It must be said that in political circles this commemoration has been cautioned to not conflate this festivity with injudicious rhetoric of achievement within this time period. One is justly of the informed view that the debate is fuelled by rising dissatisfaction with how some of the acclaimed achievements of this democracy have been tainted with rising income inequality, mass unemployment, inadequate health care and a variety of social ills such as violent crime, domestic violence, HIV and Aids related deaths, child headed households and some traces of racial intolerance. During the dawn of democracy in 1994, promises and commitments were pronounced and sanctioned by the new governance that included among others, reducing unemployment significantly over the years from 30 per cent in 2004 reduced to 15 per cent in 2014, needless to say the nation has not encountered this relief but has experienced a loss of about 1 million jobs mostly due to the global economic crisis¹. Indeed, on some levels, this debate has been stretched to the level that the new National Development Plan (NDP) introduced in 2011 to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality with the aim of protecting the most vulnerable to poverty is in itself, another dust gathering document.

In the wake of such deliberations on the socio- economic standing of South Africa, there emerges a chilling picture that concerns the ‘voiceless’, the child. Due to the high levels of economic insecurity, South Africa has to contend with high levels of unemployment. The provision of social assistance has been heavily relied on to address chronic poverty, while the wide-ranging origins of the state of poverty are not addressed through adequate channels of proper graduation of people out of poverty. According to the report by the National Welfare and Service Development Forum 2008, half of South Africa’s children reside in homes where there is no employed adult or caregiver, moreover as much as

¹ AIDC Political Economic Debates- Unemployment Continues to Accelerates after 20 Years of Democracy.

South Africa records a high absorption of the Child Support Grant (CSG) the dichotomy lies in the fact that 81% of the children in South African still live in poverty experienced through a lack of household income and material scarcity².

Gomersall et al (2013: 529) provides a historical picture when they point out that at the time the CSG was presented during the democratic transition, the profile of child poverty was very thin. Data was however being gathered through poverty hearings and initial household surveys that gave a picture of demographic and socio-economic data. Over time South Africa has been classified as a developing country of middle income streams, yet it is fact that poverty rates, and in particular child poverty rates are extremely high. According to the 2006 General Household Survey (GHS) it is estimated that 68% of children live in households with an income of less than R1200 per month. (Whitworth, 2013: 122). Recent figures enunciated by the Child Gauge Report 2012, only indicate a growing concern. Contrary to the expectation that the quandary of the poor child would have positively progressed by 2012, this report shows that social assistance pay-outs are still a vital source of income for childcare givers. As of July 2012, 11 Million children were recorded as reliant on the social grant system in order to meet their basic needs (Hall, 2012:88).

The concentration of child poverty is highest amongst the African and rural communities. Child poverty statistics are even higher within households that have low levels of education and without any regular source of income. While this scenario presents itself across South Africa's provinces it is notable that the Eastern Cape and Limpopo province record the highest incidences of poor children (Streak et al., 2009: 193-194). This data raises the question of whether situations of persistent rural poverty and unemployment rob the CSG of its intended purpose.

“The purpose of introducing a social grant for children was primarily to provide support for children in poverty. The principle behind this social grant was to ‘follow the child’” (Triegaardt, 2005:251). Further to the main purpose outlined above the CSG is tailored to key objectives that influence child well-being such as contributing to child nurturing costs, enhance low earnings, increasing incentives to seek employment and relieve low income traps. These primary objectives communicate clearly that the CSG is by no means the main singular form of poverty alleviation mechanism to be relied upon. The CSG to all intents and purposes should increase the ability of poor households to invest in productive capacities of its members. Key drivers of success towards this are investing in education and health of the child, this has far reaching implications for reducing the persistence of intergenerational poverty (Woolard et al, 2013: 376).

The Social and Economic Impact of South Africa's Social Security System commissioned by the Department of Social Development (DSD) in 2004 (ten years into democracy), propels the locus that the highest poverty reducing potential rests within the progressive beneficiary extension of the Child Support Grant. Increasing the entitlement age to 14 condensed the poverty gap by 16.6%, and the additional extension to 18 years condensed the gap by a further 21.4% (Samson et al, 2004:2). According to an Overseas Development Institute (ODI) study

² National Welfare Social Services and Development Forum- What's wrong with the social grant system in South Africa.

report produced by Hagen-Zanker et al this age increase came to effect in the financial year 2009/10 (Hagen-Zanker et al,2011 :2).

It is against this backdrop that the debate is centred, there is an extensive system of social grants paid to millions of individuals coupled with the deterioration in government finances in the past four years which raised awareness of the risk to the fiscal sustainability of this programme and further to that raises questions on its long term socio economic effects and prospects for out of poverty graduation for those targeted by the programme. This becomes a great social concern in that although state provision of a social poverty net is acceptable and expected in South African society this “safety net” in most cases becomes the main source of household income.

Having noted the above, Surender et al, (2010, 210-213) refer to findings from their research that point to little evidence that supports the notion that the CSG discourages individuals/recipients from seeking employment. They highlight significant structural barriers such as nepotism , corruption, geographical location and transportation as some of the key issues that respondents cited as contributing negatively to increased levels of unemployment among beneficiaries. The CSG amount is viewed by beneficiaries as having too little value for it to be the sole means of income and thereby diminishes the propensities of sole dependency on it. The interrelation of various elements of survival such other efforts to secure income including household income pooling will be explored in depth in subsequent chapters.

The main crux of this research though, is the investigation of what are the major enabling and disabling elements of this social beanbag in drawing households out of poverty and ultimately shift the South African rural child from a state of ill-being to well-being.

1.2. The post- apartheid historical shift

Historically the social assistance program In South Africa was leaned towards the benefit of a few, namely white people and therefore government spending toward social assistance was lower than the amounts being recorded in South Africa today. The post-apartheid period saw the South African government accept and develop new policies that sought to address the previous imbalances even with limited resources social spending emerged as the one of the government priorities in aiming the bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. This refocusing was based on redressing the imbalances of the past, eliminate discrimination with the recognition of social security as a basic human right. The social grant provisioning in South Africa is now focused on the child support, old age grant, care dependency, foster care, disability allowances, war veterans and grant-in-aid, these are the available social grants for access by citizens who qualify. “Despite the introduction of these grants a notable gap in the country’s social security regime is that there remains no provision for adults who are fit to work but unable to find work. This is a significant problem in the context of persistently high rates of unemployment – put at 24% in December 2009” (Whitworth et al, 2013, 123).

Linked to the countries apartheid past, poverty has a great racial element, a majority of Africans (the majority of the total population) are categorised as poor.

(May et al, 2000:31. Post the 1994 the country has made some progressive strides to redress these imbalance and a certain ratio of Africans became better off however they still remain poor in comparison to other racial groups. As of 2005 the national headcount rate of poor was 49% (upper poverty line) and the African headcount rate sat at a significantly high at 58%, contrasted to the coloured count of 35%, and 8% of Asians. It is more significant to note further that less than 1% of whites were poor, at both lines in these years (Bhorat, 2014, 222).

Resultant from this legacy of inequality, the number of people dependent on social grants in South Africa is expanding rapidly, coverage of non-contributory social grants is now larger than in any other African country, reaching around 14 million people which amounts to more than 28% of the population (Van der berg, 2010; Lund, 2002; Pauw & Mncube 2007). According to financial mail special budget report 2014, the South African minister of finance Mr. Pravin Gordhan has been recorded to indicate that “Social grant payments will therefore remain a significant portion of government expenditure at over 3% of GDP,” the same report indicates that social grant spending is projected to rise by an average 7, 4%/year over the next three years: from a total R118bn in 2013/2014 to R145bn by 2016/2017 (Financial Mail, 27th February, 2014).

In order to address the level of inequality and extreme poverty in the country, the South African government has implemented policies to reform and reconfigure the social protection program that is tailored towards poverty alleviation. Since its evolution to democracy in 1994, the South African government has taken on a rigorous reform programme aimed at improving the economic condition of its historically underprivileged citizens. Its commitment to poverty reduction has led to planning and implementation of series of initiatives targeted towards achieving a standard way of living and enhanced opportunities for its poorest populace (Surrender and Van Nieker, 2008: 325). One such initiative is the reformation of the South Africa social protection program which includes the Child Support Grant (CSG), Old Adult Pension and Disability grants. Neves et al state that social grants are a type of social protection, and as such they not only alleviate poverty and offer a safety net for the poor; but they also potentially advance social transformation (Neves et al, 2009: 4).

They note that empirical research has shown that cash transfers in South Africa improve the welfare of recipients and help to invest in human capital (nutrition and schooling), beside investments in productive assets and activities (ibid: 4). Surrender and Van Nieker (2008) on the other hand present a position based on a need to start “addressing poverty through community-based income generation projects: designed to encourage entrepreneurship among deprived communities by providing grants for small business creation” (Surrender and Van Nieker, 2008: 325). These are elements that surround the debate that, providing welfare (social grants) does not necessarily translate into elevating the poverty status of the recipient out of poverty line. Perhaps, effective social transfers can reduce poverty, which itself is not a homogeneous or fixed condition, this multi coloured face of poverty affects the poor child in varying ways.

1.3. The theoretical base – Multi -dimensions of child poverty and the CSG

The multifaceted nature of poverty has been debated over in various forums. Yet it still remains that it is not the multi dimensions of poverty that are subject of debate but the various mechanisms of measurement. Hulme at al (2001) advocate that a multi-dimensional approach is useful for designing safety nets, and even more appropriate if used to prevent the intergenerational transfer of poverty. This characterises poverty beyond just the elements of poverty of income and or consumption.

Scholars such as; John Iliffe (1987), introduce the main themes of the history of African poverty through the lens of the dichotomy of structural and conjunctural poverty. Structural poverty is categorised as the long term poverty of individuals as a result of their personal or social circumstances, while conjunctural poverty, is the temporary situation of poverty wherein ordinarily self-sufficient people may be thrown into poverty by the emergence of a crisis. It goes without saying that both these elements of poverty are in existence in South African society today in differential ways, certainly Southern Africa is still contending with what can be called a resource crisis that throws many to the poor category regardless of race. However historically , as earlier indicated, structural poverty applied to the people categorised as “blacks” through the then government system of segregation, it must be mentioned though that its legacy still has remnants in some areas of South African society today(Iliffe,1987: 4). According to Iliffe the poor are, 'weak individuals - the old, the handicapped and the very young', (Iliffe, 1987:7). This categorisation is relevant and applicable to those targeted for the CSG that intends to protect the vulnerable children and weak or incapacitated care givers.

Over and above the multidimensional approach, the context of child poverty for purposes of this research paper will also be viewed through an intersectional lens that contextualises the intersections of health, identity, education, employment and community participation as categories that are cross cutting. This approach is influenced by Saatcioglu et al (2014), whose work provides a multidimensional and intersectional look into the life of the impoverished. This approach assists the research process to further explore coping strategies to glaring inequalities faced by poor households, and this is important because the quality of children's lives can be drastically impaired by persistent poverty and a societal structure that increases vulnerability and exclusion.

The main players that are key in ensuring that mechanisms such the CSG are effective, are in the main the households that children reside in, inclusive of the intersection of how the various socio-economic dimensions influence resource allocation among household members. It becomes more important to investigate if these allocations are done to the benefit or the detriment of the child. Foundations that are critical for the rural child to escape the cycle of poverty that are explored in this paper include education, nourishment, health and human capital investment among others. These non-material measures will be pillars in providing a child biased view of the effectiveness of the CSG in alleviating poverty outside (but not exclusive) of income as the material measure.

The UNICEF (2012) social protection strategic framework suggests that child sensitive social protection systems should incorporate characteristics of alleviation of the outcomes of poverty on households, support them in their duty to support and nurture children, and advance the right to access basic services for those facing poverty and marginalisation. Sabates-Wheeler et al (2009) note that, in designing and implementing the social protection programs such as the child support grant, interventions should not exclusively be directed at the children but also at those who are responsible for the care of the children (Sabates-Wheeler et al, 2009: 109-111).

This study focuses on the Child Social Grant (CSG) program in South Africa which has been categorised as one of the social grant pillars that has been recorded as most successful. The CSG introduction of ‘primary caregiver’, breaking away from the former welfare convention that only recognised social assistance through biological, or legally defined adoptive parents or biological became imperative for efficiency and equality (Noble et al., 2008: 78). Much as the unit of analysis is the CSG, its effect on the care giver “*the hand*” and the beneficiary will be the secondary and integral units of analysis.

1.4. Research goals and central questions

With the year 2014, it is quite fitting for the country to undertake a process of reflection on how effective its democratic developmental policy framework has benefited the socio economic status of the country and its citizens. The objective of this research is to add to the discourse on the effectiveness of the CSG program, by presenting an emerging scenario that is viewed through the decision making power of the caregivers and households dynamics. This research investigates the explicit and implicit consequences of the CSG for impoverished communities in South Africa.

The key question that will guide the research process is: Does the South African Child Social Grant programme enable or disable the propensities of vulnerability to poverty? Emanating from this main question are the following sub questions:

- a) How does the CSG benefit children’s welfare and basic needs as they relate to health, nutrition, shelter and education?
- b) How do the social and economic activities of the “primary caregiver”, nurturer and grant recipient capacitate the household?
- c) What other (if any) income generating mechanisms do beneficiary households invest in as a supplement to the social grant?
- d) What role does the civil society have on the social grant programme and the voice of the child in South Africa?
- e) Does the CSG enable or disable the hand of the caregiver in child welfare provision?

1.5. Methodology

This research will rely comprehensively on the interpretivist research theory although it won't draw on a singular research theory. The methodological approach is influenced by two major philosophical trends namely the positivist and the interpretivist. While the positivist doctrines are based on the pillars of how measurable and objective knowledge generation is, the interpretivist school of thought is more inclined to an opposite view. Interpretivism can be defined broadly as the concept that includes a range of elements that encompass the meanings and experiences of human beings. According to this perspective people are at the centre of providing interpretations of their environments which are never constant but are always changing. This approach favours "naturalistic inquiry" and data is also gathered in a natural setting. As indicated earlier the research theory conducted here is not one dimensional and to that end the research methods employed will reflect a constructive framework looking into mainly with the way people construct their worlds. It seeks to understand individuals from their own point of view (Williamson, 2006). To this end local knowledge has been accessed through local media and press articles, engaging with community members and leadership in attempt to get an idea of the public and beneficiary discourses around the CSG.

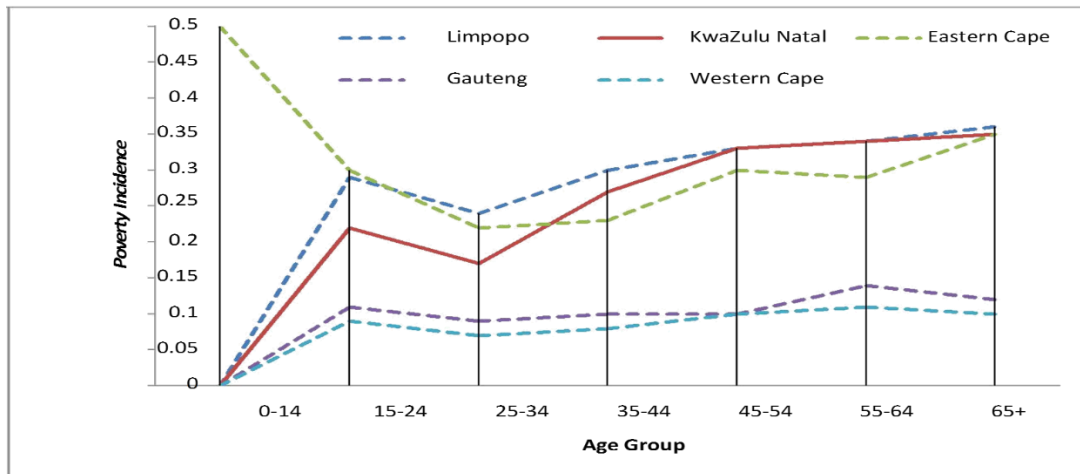
This approach falls under the ambit of the foundations of qualitative elements of the research gathering process. This process is unique in its application and can be applied to diverse environments. As it is, the centre of the research process is on the life world or existence of the surroundings of the respondents. The sub sections below provide detailed preview of the methods employed in this research paper.

1.5.1. Research area

Primary data towards this study was collected in the O.R Tambo district of the Eastern Cape Province (South Africa) between July and August 2014. The Eastern Cape Province (ECP) is situated along the southeast coast of SA. Recent statistics indicate that the ECP of "approximately seven million, representing 16% (third largest) of the South African population. The non-urban population amounts to nearly 4,100,000, and dense concentrations of rural and peri-urban settlements occur in other districts and areas (CAI, 16th January, 2013). This province is still one of SA's provinces that sits with poverty, inadequate infrastructure and unemployment at extremely high levels. According to the report produced by the National Development Agency, the ECP, a close second to Limpopo province is recorded to have almost the highest figures of poverty incidence, intensity and severity (National Development Agency, 2014: 52).

The figure below shows the extent of poverty by age group and more significantly indicates the ECP has the highest incidence of child (0-14) poverty,

Figure 1: Poverty age indicators by province



Source: National Development Agency: State of Poverty and Its Manifestation in the Nine Provinces of South Africa (2014:56)

1.5.2 Sampling and collection of data

Interview discussions were guided by setting a few key questions, allowing ample room for input from respondents and flexibility. Local fieldworkers or commonly known community development workers (CDW’S) were a great assistance in facilitation of the data collection process. At community and beneficiary level, a total of 10 household grant recipients were interviewed and two members of a local NGO working in the area of the study. At the level of implementation and policy making, two interviews were conducted with the department of social development and SASSA respectively with senior employees of these institutions. The perspective of civil society was solicited through an electronic “skype” interview with a representative of a historical civil rights based organisation.

The sampling approach has been based on both a purposeful and stratified sampling approach. The stratified site selection approach relates to the selection of the rural and child poverty stricken areas of O.R Tambo namely the Mqele and Tsolo localities. These areas were selected on the basis that they fitted the main study question criteria. CDW’s were extremely helpful in identifying random (within site) selection of respondents’ among the most poverty stricken households receiving the CSG. The purposeful sample of NGOS’ SASSA, DSD and Black Sash was drawn with the assistance of pre data collection research that helped navigate which are the most critical arms of implementation and discourse that need to be engaged with.

1.5.3. Ethical considerations and limitations of researching rural households

According to Christensen and Prout (cited in Holland et al. 2010: 362) power dynamics between the researcher and the study respondents will always be pre-

sent, depending on the socio-cultural contexts. It is then the researcher's responsibility to be cognisant of these relations and seek to ease or rather address these power imbalances.

Interacting with individuals around issues that directly affect their livelihood such as poverty, access to basic services and their household incomes is often not the easiest or most comfortable topic for people to open up to, and therefore to some extent the research process encountered respondents who were not as willing to volunteer information regarding their experiences and lifestyles as grant holders. Respondents were advised that they are free to respond to questions to the extent that they were comfortable with them. Some moments of tension can be cited as well as moments when caregivers opted to plead silence to some questions or request clarification. These silences cannot be characterised as overt refusals, however the uncomfortable glares were enough indicators for the process to move swiftly and silently along. With respect one had to move on to the next line of discussion.

On the other hand practical elements that were planned for prior to accessing the targeted communities through local councillors who were sensitised on the nature of the research to ensure buy in and smooth reception from the community went a long way in ensuring the data gathering process was conducted in a receptive environment. The availability of targeted government officials at SASSA and the mother body: the department of Social Development (DSD) took some time to confirm and required a considerable amount of travelling, this hurdle was circumvented by utilising Skype interviews with senior officials, this was both time saving and enabled in-depth conversation.

1.6. Study organisation

Chapter one dubbed as the introduction, addresses the elements that define the context of the social policy problem. It further highlights the research question (main question and sub questions) research objectives, methodology and processes including its limitations. Chapter two is the theoretical explanations of the emerging debates on social protection in South Africa at the macro level and at a micro level delves deeper into theoretical constructs surrounding elements that enabling and disabling elements that foster out of poverty graduation, while painting a picture from the pre and post –apartheid era. Chapter three outlines and critically analyses how the respective care giver socio-economic activities and perceptions can be categorised and further provides a brief picture of other income generating mechanisms that beneficiaries invest in as a supplement to the social grant.

Chapter four is strategically placed to venture in reflecting the voice of the child through civil society has had on the debate that unpacks the impact of social grants at the policy and implementation level. The final chapter addresses conclusions and some recommendations for further research and analysis.

Chapter 2 -Theoretical Outline

Chapter one discusses the introductory elements of the core issues that surround the Child Support Grant (CSG) and ventures into highlighting the historical basis for the introduction of this grant in the South African context. This chapter highlights the respective review of literature surrounding dialogues which advance separately, social protection in the south, its progressive impact to the poor, the impact on child well-being and by and large the creation of pathways out of poverty. The theoretical outline will shed light on these varying approaches and examine their individual relevance.

2.1. Protective safety “nets” – The relevance of this “evolution” in developing South.

Global and developmental discourse cannot ignore social protection as a priority for both the global South and international policy development. This marks a fundamental paradigm shift to a growing recognition of the role of social protection as an essential tool in prevention of poverty and inequality. The work of Devereux, Wheeler and Esping-Andersen will form the core nucleus of this subsection.

According to Devereux and Wheeler (2004) Social protection is categorised as a reaction to the “safety nets” dialogue of the late eighties. They contend that the 1990 World Bank report referred to safety nets as one of the pillars needed to attack poverty. The 1990s saw an era where a paradigm shift was imminent in that the dialogue was introducing and integrating dialogue on livelihoods, risk, vulnerability, and many other elements that highlighted the complexity of the poverty debate. It is at this time, that social protection was slowly introduced and gradually introduced to the development discourse (Devereux and Wheeler 2004: 1). Social protection is defined as ‘public interventions to assist individuals, households, and communities better manage risk, and to provide support to the critically poor’ (Holzmann and Jørgensen, 2000: 2). The arguments propelled by Devereux seek to outline that social protection interventions in and of themselves carry a developmental and sustainability element that moves beyond temporary poverty alleviation, and thus should be integrated as a critical tool to assist policy-makers in navigating their quest to reduce chronic poverty (Devereux, 2002: 658).

Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004) further reflect on two pronged but connected strands within social protection deliberations, namely that of ‘out of poverty graduation’ or “trampolining” out of poverty and that focuses on a rights based and social equity approach the two are linked by their concern for poverty reduction in a sustainable fashion. These debated will be explored in depth in this chapter. Trampolining out of poverty is based on the World bank assertions of how reducing risk and protecting the poor against income and consumption variability will allow them to invest and accumulate – a “trampoline” out of poverty (World Bank cited in Devereux and Wheeler 2004). However there is still little or limited empirical manifestation in low income and developing countries.

“In low-income countries, social protection continues to be perceived by governments and donors as comprising fiscally unsustainable “consumption” transfers to the economically inactive or unproductive poor, which diverts scarce public resources from “productive” investment for economic growth, and therefore deserves lower priority as a poverty reduction tool” (Devereux and Wheeler 2004: 1). The second layer of the debate focuses on the long term propensities of social protection to provide solid pillars for poverty reduction, Devereux 2004 and others include in this pillars: “namely the positive relationship between livelihood security and enhanced autonomy or empowerment”. Social protection needs to move further from the narrow analysis of safety nets that are by and large gauged through the lenses of “economic protection to a real concern for equity and social rights. This rights based approach can be closely linked to the egalitarian model of reallocation and eradication of poverty, this done with the long term aim of improving and securing wellbeing and life chances (Esping-Andersen, 1999:80). The motivating factor is that quite a few forms of social protection are within the means of even the poor countries. And further to that more and more empirical evidence is surfacing on the potential that social protection has in contributing in direct and indirect manner to poverty reduction and a growing economy in many instances.

The Child Social Grant (CSG) falls within the ambit of social protection and as such these dimensions are important to reflect on as theoretical pillars with which this chapter will lean on. Social protection itself can be viewed and analysed in different ways. The narrow view as described by Devereaux is based the old fashioned notion of welfare that is provided to the deserving poor, a popular view among policy makers currently is the parrarel link of social protection and social safety nets (cushioning) , a broader view incorporates the element of conditionality that would include education including health subsidies as well as job creation programmes, while a more transformative view provides an extension of social protection to issues of empowerment and social rights (Devereux and Wheeler 2004: 3). The approach taken by this research will focus on the propagating for the adoption of the broad and transformative approach with its analysis of the CSG in South Africa.

2.2. Dynamics of Poverty in the South African context.

Poverty is a world-wide phenomenon, and also permeates the fabric of South African society, Townsend 2006, provides an analysis of poverty and its historical relation to income he further highlights that income as a yardstick of poverty measurement is still at the core of policy development. Income as a concept just as poverty is complex and multidimensional. According to Townsends analysis people are classified as poor when they are situations where they are facing scarcity in the areas of income and other key means to gain and sustain conditions of life together with material goods and services that will empower them to participate in society and through meaningful interaction with duties and roles they hold in society. Therefore magnitude and replication of types of deprivation should form a better and more credible yardstick.

South Africa has a high level of poverty and extreme inequality. In the South African context poverty is resonant in both absolute and relative terms, this application varies from province, class and race. Absolute poverty has been defined by scholars as the utter lack of resources to sustain life, while the relative poverty definition talks to the inadequate lack of income when compared to the average standards living, this is certainly the situation that manifests itself differentially in many South African households. The alleviation of poverty is one of the central goals in the country policy framework and influences almost all the social expenditure programmes in South Africa. To a great measure this has influenced the generation of data and debate on the characterisation of the South African welfare programme. As a pro- poor intervention the CSG was introduced in 1998 at a rate of R 100 per child, targeted towards those who are the child's primary caregiver (e.g. parent, grandparent or a child over 16 heading a family), not earning more than R34 800 per year if single and if having a spouse not have a combined income should not be above R 69 600 per year. The primary beneficiary (the child) must be under the age of 18 years and should not be under the care of a state institution. The current amount of the monthly pay-out to support eligible households in R 320 per child since October 2014 (Black Sash, 2014). The table below provides a depiction of the progression and increase of the CSG from 2008 to 2014. The grant has been steadily increasing by a measly twenty rand year on year. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) The average inflation currently sits at 6.28 % , is an vital factor utilised to determine the adjustments made to the nominal increases of South Africa's social grants (Oosthuizen, 2013;3).

Table 1 – Amount of the CSG year on year by Province

| The number of children receiving the Child Support Grant in South Africa, 2008 – 2014 | | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Province | Number of child beneficiaries at end March | | | | | | |
| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
| Eastern Cape | 1 478 176 | 1 564 602 | 1 668 408 | 1 769 949 | 1 837 801 | 1 843 684 | 1 777 042 |
| Free State | 453 730 | 467 743 | 527 077 | 583 524 | 617 311 | 637 075 | 630 717 |
| Gauteng | 954 500 | 1 022 984 | 1 153 481 | 1 276 109 | 1 387 159 | 1 581 756 | 1 548 796 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 2 094 613 | 2 282 246 | 2 439 781 | 2 623 772 | 2 726 635 | 2 746 888 | 2 662 100 |
| Limpopo | 1 270 893 | 1 358 313 | 1 460 328 | 1 584 855 | 1 497 044 | 1 588 489 | 1 626 113 |
| Mpumalanga | 655 695 | 690 944 | 750 661 | 806 581 | 1 008 223 | 1 051 626 | 984 641 |
| North West | 629 539 | 661 807 | 715 997 | 752 026 | 793 189 | 751 195 | 754 935 |
| Northern Cape | 180 982 | 200 387 | 224 346 | 246 233 | 262 488 | 277 835 | 275 849 |
| Western Cape | 471 847 | 516 328 | 630 208 | 728 901 | 797 881 | 863 440 | 865 753 |
| South Africa | 8 189 975 | 8 765 354 | 9 570 287 | 10 371 950 | 10 927 731 | 11 341 988 | 11 125 946 |
| CSG amount | R 220 | R 240 | R 250 | R 270 | R 280 | R 290 | R 300 |

Source: ³ (Hall, 2014).

To this extent it is imperative to outline the meaning and extent of poverty as it relates to the CSG. In defining poverty, Chambers 2006 highlights three main relevant clusters of meanings, from income-poverty as less reliable measure but has relevance nonetheless, material lack and low quality or no access to services,

³ Income and Social Grants - Child Support Grants (Hall,2014) cited in References

capability deprivation which Sen categorises as capacities present or absent to further human capabilities. All these clusters are resonant in the analysis of and definition of poverty in the context of this research. Although Chambers categorically states that these clusters have been defined or given birth to by the non-poor, his contention of development as a shift from ill-being to wellbeing is the basic measure of the effectiveness of the CSG as a composite measure (Chambers, 2006: 3-4).

To monitor and evaluate the collective impact of all poverty and inequality reduction programmes, it is necessary to capture the circumstances of potential beneficiaries – both the general population and groups that are identified to be the underprivileged. This can be accomplished by keeping an eye on the poverty level of individuals and vulnerable groups in the communities and society in general. This background section will provide a brief indication how the poor are profiled in South Methodological report issued by Statistics SA in 2008. In this report poverty is measured utilising several poverty lines, namely the national poverty lines (the food poverty line, as well as the lower-bound and upper-bound poverty lines which include food and non-food items) and international poverty lines (\$1.25 and \$2.50 corrected for Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)), which are used to monitoring the progress of the Millennium Development Goals. The rand values attached to each line from the report, are indicted below as:

- Food poverty line = R305 (in March 2009 figures) per person per month thus refers to the amount of cash needed by a person to consume the needed energy intake.

- Lower-bound poverty line = R416 (in March 2009 figures) per person per month. This refers to the food poverty line (R305) plus the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose total expenditure is equal to the poverty line.

- Upper-bound poverty line = R577 (in March 2009 figures) per person per month. This refers to the food poverty line (R305) plus the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose total food expenditure is equal to the food poverty line.

Utilising these figures, Statistics South Africa issued a press statement on the 3rd of April 2014⁴, indicating that poverty levels in the country have declined as the “number of people living below the poverty line dropped since 2006, a growing social safety net, real income growth, above inflation wage increases, decelerating inflationary pressure on households, expansion of credit and the growth in formal housing can be attributed to the drop in poverty level” (Statistics South Africa ,2014).

The Poverty Trends Report released by Statistics South Africa reveals that people living below the food poverty line (FPL) has dropped to 20,2% of the population. The poverty profile 2008/9 report published by Stats SA in 2012 further outlines poverty indicators can be derived on the basis of income or expenditure data including rental yields that are important as they form part of the consumption aggregate. The report suggests even further that poverty levels in South Africa witnessed a decrease between 2000 and 2006, but witnessed a massive increase between the year 2006 and 2009. Various factors were highlighted in the

⁴ Press Statement : Poverty Trends in South Africa, South Africa winning war on poverty

report including household expenditure decline and labour market deterioration which resulted in over 700 000 jobs being cut from the market between 2008 and 2009. Of the poor households, Indian/Asians had the highest proportion of persons suffering from chronic illnesses (18,8%), Coloureds and black Africans were tied for second with 6,9% each, and then whites recorded at 3,1%(Statistics South Africa, 2012: 38).

The poverty profile above when cascaded to the rural and poor child has been a major cause of public and mainstream media debate. International mainstream media has reported on the concerning levels of inequality in South Africa with particular reference to its effect on the child. Making reference to an article issued by the Telegraph, a UNICEF report concluded that 1.4 million children in SA live in homes that rely on dirty drinking water, while another 1.5 million survive on unflushable latrines and 1.7 million are dwelling in shacks or commonly known as “umkhukhu”. Four every 10th child four of them are attached to households where no one has employment and in instances of extreme and rural based poverty this number increases to seven. While the child support grant was introduced to alleviate the burden of poverty on the child, still one million who are eligible are not receiving this benefit (The Telegraph, 14th November, 2012).

As indicated in the preceding chapter, the vulnerable in society are the most wedged in the intersections of poverty and the most excluded, in this study the severity of exclusion of the child is examined through poverty traps in the spheres of domains of health, education, household earnings and family and community or civil participation. The analysis is based on how these arenas interact in trapping the vulnerable further into poverty.

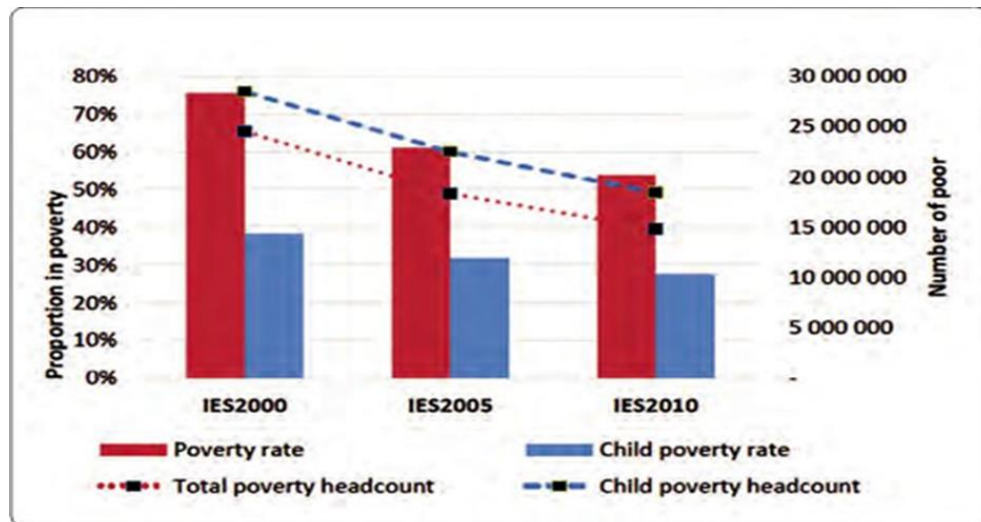
2.2.1 The Social Exclusionist Elements of the Child Support Grant

Where poverty prevails children of that society bear the brunt of that cross. At most times it has been said that the remnants of the burden of poverty increase the child’s propensities to remain trapped in the cycle of poverty. It thus becomes relevant to reflect on the cross –sectional elements that paint this picture of poverty, and more importantly the elements that intersect to drive exclusion, this exercise is useful in driving the research process to an analysis of additional efforts necessary to break free from the traps of incapacity due to poverty which will be unpacked further in chapter 4 of this paper.

According to Laderchi et al, social exclusion articulates the processes of marginalization and deficiency that may be present even in rich countries with broad based welfare arrangements, according to this analysis social exclusion becomes a key approach that focuses fundamentally on the dynamics and conditions that allow scarcity to ascend and preserve. As a concept social exclusion is a critical pillar to this research as it analyses to a large extent the structural characteristics of societies who have marginalised groups this lends itself to theory posing questions around equitable distribution. Equitable distribution cannot be analysed separate from highlighting the excluders and the excludedes (Laderchi et al, 2006:11).

Taking cue from the analysis above, one cannot provide a complete analysis of the poverty situation that surround benefactors of the child support grant external from the multi-dimensions that lead to exclusion and hindrance of children from progressing from a state of ill -being to a state of well- being. Poor or no access to health – care, low educational attainment and inadequate nutritional requirements limit a young person’s labour market prospects and thus may resultanty limit their prospects to survive above the poverty line.

Figure 2.1 National poverty rate in relation to child poverty rate

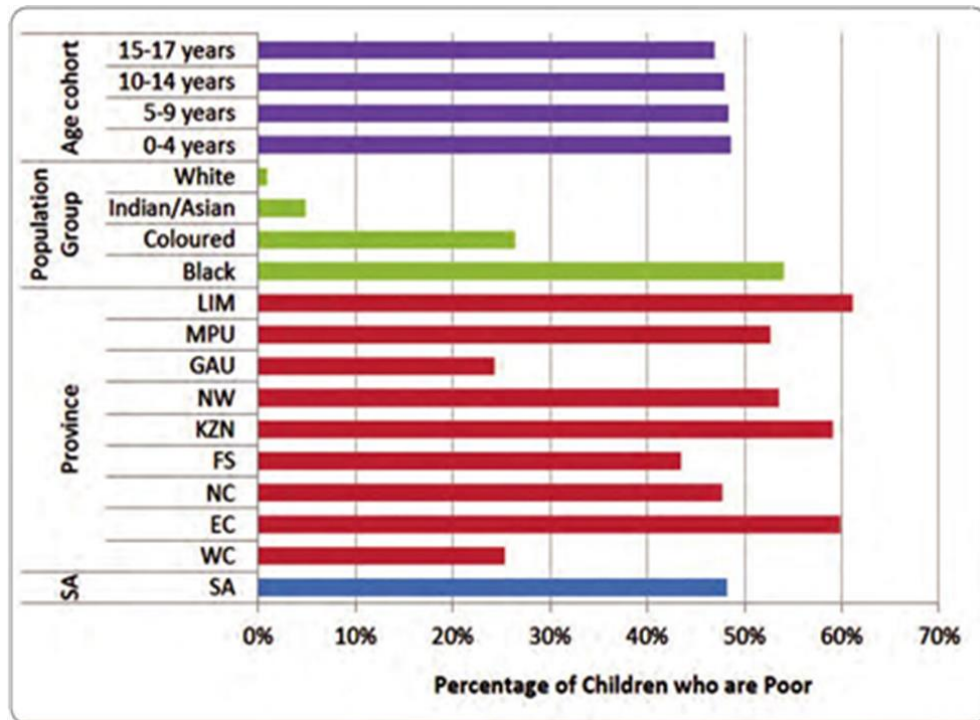


Source: Poverty traps and social exclusion among children in South Africa 2014 (SAHRC 2014: 42)

According to a study conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and UNICEF in 2014 that investigates the child poverty trap and social exclusion in South Africa, the country has made some visible inroads in reducing poverty levels however many still remain outside the mainstream economy and society, more significantly the study illustrates that children born into poor and socially excluded families are at high risk of being caught in a poverty trap (SAHRC, 2014:17). Figure 2.1 illustrates the downward trend between 2000 and 2010. The striking element of this graphical illustration is that in 2010, 10.4 million children (around 30 % of the population) are still living in poverty (SAHRC, 2014: 42).

The graph below indicates child poverty rates are highest among children between the age of 0-10, the overwhelming majority the black population concentrated in three main provinces Eastern Cape (60% poverty rate), KwaZulu-Natal (59%) and Limpopo (61%) provinces. Child poverty remains the common denominator in these figures (SAHRC, 2014: 42). These areas are where the CSG is most predominant and the section below will assess the various levels of impact of this program.

Figure 2.2 Multi sections of poor children in South Africa



Source: Poverty traps and social exclusion among children in South Africa 2014 (SAHRC 2014: 42)

2.3. Prevailing trends of long and short term impact

Samson in poverty insights 2009, contends that cash transfers reduce current poverty through enhancing poor people's access to food and other basic needs, evidence collected from South Africa confirms that cash transfers can lend positive outcomes in education, health and nutrition with no conditions attached, furthermore these studies have found that unconditional social grants diminish hunger for both children and adults, by providing household food spending and a assorted food plan, this goes a long way in improving children's height-for-age and weight-for-height indicators, these food security impacts are often gendered, with girls displaying faster increases than male counterparts. These trends have been recorded in the Southern African region of Zambia's pilot cash transfer programme (Samson, 2009:5).

Notable areas of positive short term impact that have foundations of long term benefits as highlighted by Künnemann and Leonhard include the increase in beneficiary age; The CSG was initially designed to accommodate children from birth to 7 years but has evolved over the time to include children up to 18 years. They maintain that "the child support grant increased the incidence of women searching for a job by 6% and women finding a job by 3%. (Künnemann and Leonhard, 2008:12). It was possible to record this success because the South African government did not maintain the traditional poverty line indication as reflected above. They designed criteria that are context specific with full knowledge of the socio- political arrangement of the society. This argument was

buttressed by Samson et al (2004:9), they note that South Africa choice of poverty line, absolute poverty line (HSL), a relative poverty line and a destitution line tend to demonstrate a greater impact of CSG in the country. The beauty of South African program is that it has evolved frequently to address a wide range of inequalities. Noble et al, posit that certain situations that have developed over the period of apartheid and colonialism such as single parents, customary marriages and polygamy, high rates of caring grandmothers and aunts, and fluid and mobile household structures had to be managed through introduction of this intervention. The CGS introduction of 'primary caregiver', broke away from the former welfare convention that only recognized social assistance through biological, or legally defined adoptive parents or biological and this has become imperative for efficiency and equality (Noble et al ,2008: 78).

Presently in South Africa, more than eight million underprivileged children have benefited from the State awards unconditional cash transfer (Govender, 2011, Noble et al, 2008) through the caregivers. Nevertheless, many critics have engaged in series of debates were questions have been raised about the South Africa unconditional Child Support Grant (CSG) program. "Amidst increasing demands on the state for social support, the question has been asked: should the Child Support Grant (CSG) be made conditional on education or health related behaviour to enhance its effectiveness?" (Noble et al, 2008: 1). While Govender (2011:7) argue that the conditionality of transfers will compel the parents/guardians of these children to ensure that the children regularly attend school and also utilise the health services on the one hand. On the other hand, he maintained that conditionality of the CSG is not realistic, because it does not deal with the root causes of education and poor health effect, which are primarily due to supply-side inadequacies. He continues to state that the Government should rather strengthen current poverty alleviation policies which seem to be impacting positively on poverty reduction.

UNRISD adopts a view that globalisation has had a severe effect on equitable social development in the developing countries as it has generated severe indebtedness, to the impairment of the capacity of governments to provide education, healthcare and social protection in holistic and comprehensive manner. According to this report globalization has threatened assets and standards, resultantly different sectors of the population are living under very different internal welfare regimes (Deacon & UNRISD, 2000:6). In attempting to augment the perspective presented above and highlight some of the contemporary debate around social welfare societies, we refer to Esping- Andersen analysis that puts South Africa squarely within the liberal model which is in most instances based on market dominance and private provision; more often than not in this model, the state seeks to ameliorate poverty and provide for basic needs, largely on a means-tested basis (Ferragina & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011). However this model in itself is not without critique as the stance adopted by Deacon et al above infers. Its sustainability and effectiveness when applied within the context of a developing economy comes under question. In political terms South Africa can best be described as a social democracy with the typical characteristics of the 'welfare state'. In totality social spending sits at approximately 60% of government expenditure, this includes a range of cash transfer pay-outs in the form of social grants. We now turn to setting the picture of how this welfare system contributes to key indicators of well-being through the eyes of the child.

2.3.1. Child well-being and provisioning of social protection

Social protection policies formulated for implementation in developing democracies are increasingly facing a dual responsibility to provide responsive social protection policy frameworks and work towards advancing their “social contracts” with the citizens they serve. Esping-Andersen (2001), pens to paper this in what he coins a new welfare challenge. It is trite that economic and recessionary challenges that the world has encountered has had an effect on welfare provision and has continuous implications for provisioning of social protection. New democracies and developing states have to contend with the speedy advancement of technology and a social ethic that is influenced by universalism. This places these states in a position of constant reflection of where their social protection systems sit within the demographic revolution.

The role and definition of the family is equally evolving and the average child may no longer grow up in a traditional family environment with both mother and father. By translation the traditional means of income and family provision through paid and secure employment is no longer a guarantee in the 21st century. Social protection policies thus by and large need to be responsive to these changes but more specifically child oriented policies need to be regarded as social investment. By social investment what exactly are we referring to? For purposes of this research this is the direct and indirect investment made by progressive child centered protection to households that are providing for the child. It is based on the principle that the quality of childhood is more critical for determining later life chances. In a nut shell investments to generate and acquire capital needed much later in life need to be made in areas of education (school attendance including pass rates, food security , health and immunisation and societal organisation.

Much as the family unit is becoming diverse, so is the reception and utilisation of the policy provisions by those it benefits. Research conducted on the fabric and nature of poor households supports these unconventional means of indirect investment on the child. The concept of income pooling among poor families is one that deviates from the traditional ‘ring fenced’ income for a particular household to sharing income and expenditure items that directly and indirectly benefit the child. This further encourages particular household structures. The pooling of incomes is for managing wider household needs and in most instances in the South African context other social grants such as the Old Age Grant (OAG) are assimilated with the CSG for varying reasons such as sustaining the family, patching up expenses during income gap periods and economic shocks, the most common though being that the aged are facing a burden of care of their grandchildren mainly due to HIV related child orphans. This interlink between the OAG and the CSG has proven to be a positive link for child outcomes, in addition to this the OAG has an increased value by four times that of the CSG (Whitworth et al, 2013:127).

2.4. The dependency and graduation debate

This section will move from a position that tries to articulate that the concepts of dependency cannot and should not be examined from a singular and narrow locus. The frontiers of social protection brief 2010, provides succinct and elaborate definitions of the multi-facets of dependency. Dependency is defined along the context of aid provided to dependent who cannot meet their immediate basic needs without relief or assistance. However in analysis, it should be considered that there the notion of positive dependency that is grounded on helping those who cannot meet their basic needs, while on the other hand negative dependency refers to situations when immediate needs are met at a cost of reducing the beneficiaries capacity to meet their basic needs in the long term with no assistance. At another level there is the risk of the dependency trap: wherein beneficiaries make a choice to remain within the targeted range for social grants instead of opting to proactively initiate alternative means to 'graduate' out of the programme (Devereux, 2010:4).

It is worth noting that literature on this subject suggests that what is commonly known as the 'dependency syndrome' is an infrequent phenomenon in African social protection programmes, main reasons being cited are that transfers are rarely regular or large enough to create behavioural trend linked to ceased active or self-employment. Social transfers are regarded to reduce negative dependency in the sense that those who face constraints in accessing work and working capital can utilise cash transfers to look for work, invest in income generation which will have spill over effects in improving livelihoods and reducing dependency on external support. These theoretical perspectives that explain welfare in a manner that either causes dependency on the state or produces benefits to the poor would not otherwise have access to will be put to test in this research paper.

The intention is to explore the debate that dependency on the state is not a clear cut and across the board phenomenon, but one that varies according to the conditions in which the poor live in South Africa, exploring the main dependency discourses, assessing the strengths and weakness of one of the largest grants, namely the Child Support Grant and a look to the future of social assistance through analysis of one of the key areas of debate, and offer recommendations for improving areas of grant inadequacy (Pott,2012:74-75).

The initial decade following the end of apartheid political debate centred on poverty alleviation and redistribution. The current decade has been marked with a transition to issues of increasing spending, hand-outs, and the controversies around dependency (Surrender et al, 2010). Charles Murray, in the 1980s proposed an 'underclass thesis that carries the argument that among the population, there are considerable groups that their socio-economic conditions are determined by their own behavioural shortcomings; key among those being there are little or no attachment to the labour market. He propagates that paid work is not valued, and individuals are content to derive their income from state transfers, in which the state redistributes wealth to fund social welfare programs. Furthermore, social security facilitates passivity and dependence among the poor, and thus welfare helps to perpetuate poverty rather than alleviate it (ibid).

Murray (2006) is among the scholars regards welfare as a system that disincentives individuals from seeking employment, this argument can be applied in the

South African scenario in that the historical imbalances and legacy of social exclusion has by and large created an environment of entitlement rather than active employment in his argument. His discourse analysis suggests the viability of welfare to produce incentives for the poor to seek employment and participate in economic activity. This school of thought suggests that grants enable poor individuals to make high return investments that cash constraints would otherwise prohibit, such as facilitating job searches, financing migration, managing negative shocks, funding small enterprise creation, and improving productivity through better health, nutrition, and training (Surrender 2010). The main paradox amongst these two discourses is whether unemployment and poverty are a result of structural conditions of the labour market and the economy as a whole, or whether unemployment and poverty are a result of the structure and the inherent flaws in the social protection programme

As diverse and multi-stranded the concept of dependency is, so is the notion of graduation. This concept of graduation is a fairly recent entry in development discourse. To all intents and purposes it refers to a process where beneficiaries of cash transfers advance from a situation of dependence on external support to a situation of self-reliance, and graduation of the system of cash transfer. Again it should be appreciated that this concept is extremely difficult to outline and implement in particular at a practical level. However it can be simplified to imply an ability to generate and secure sufficient streams of nutrition and income, whilst being enabling a bouncing or “trampolining” effect against the immediate and future shocks. Elements of the CSG school going/ education conditionality provide a basis to secure investing in human capital, this will be explored further in the following chapter.

According to the DFID Cash Transfers Evidence Paper produced in April 2011 the extent to which cash transfers can move beyond poverty mitigation to poverty reduction and thereby elevating many households to above the poverty line, is influenced by features such as context, design and implementation. Key among these features are the depth of poverty; the scale and value of cash transfer provision, the duration of the programme and the methods employed for targeting such as simultaneous implementation of complementary initiatives (e.g. microfinance, agricultural extension) and the effective functioning of other public services. More importantly the ability of households to use this support to leverage step-wise changes in their circumstances is of critical importance (DFID, 2011:19). Sabates-Wheeler & Devereux (2011) promote asset-based approaches to poverty reduction and growth. This discourse redefines the significance of poverty by placing assets, entitlements and livelihood systems at the core of the debate, proponents of graduation have suggested that the pathway to fruitful livelihoods should be incremental through increasing households’ income and incremental assets over time.

This school of thought advocates that the use short-term asset transfers like a vehicle will have long term benefits for sustained economic empowerment to insecure and marginal households. Other scholars advocate that incrementalism may not necessarily work for households living way below the poverty line and more robust provision will be necessary (Sabates-Wheeler & Devereux ,2011: 4). As DFID report suggests the context and severity of poverty is an important aspect in the debate on poverty ‘graduation’. Sabates-Wheeler & Devereux (2011), cite the Rwanda: ‘Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme’ (VUP) which is aimed reducing extreme poverty in Rwanda through three components namely:

(1) Public Works short-term employment on community infrastructure projects to extremely poor households that have adult labour capacity, (2) regular unconditional cash transfers to extremely poor households with no adult member who is able to work, (3) financial Services that offers low-interest loans for productive enterprises, to individuals or borrower groups that must include Public Works participants or direct support beneficiaries(Sabates-Wheeler & Devereux ,2011: 9) .

This research paper puts to test these theoretical paradigms in depth and examines the benefits and blockages of each through a depiction and analysis of findings to trail whether the South African social protection (CSG) as an intervention on its own is adequate in reaching the goals it has set forth to accomplish. The ensuing chapter will provide the initial foundation of the outcomes of this process.

Chapter 3 -The Child Care Givers- Dependent or Self Sustaining? - Painting the picture from the O.R Tambo District

3.1. Background

“The Child Social Grant (CSG) has four immediate objectives. They are to: (i) ensure greater access for poor children to an integrated and sustainable security system in the country; (ii) provide a child grant on an equitable basis to those in need regardless of family structure, or tradition or race; (iii) prevent children from unnecessarily entering or remaining in statutory substitute care; (iv) keep children off the streets and out of juvenile detention centres” (Loyd 2000 cited in Triegaardt, 2005: 252).

This chapter analyses the concept of out of poverty graduation through outlining and critically analysing the data collection outcomes on the how the respective care giver social and economic trends be categorised. This part of the research paper does this by looking by looking at multiple facets poverty such as, social inequality, social exclusion and the interplay of elements related to being locked into the cycle of survival mechanisms to escape the trap of poverty. The sub questions below form the navigating point in presentation of primary data:

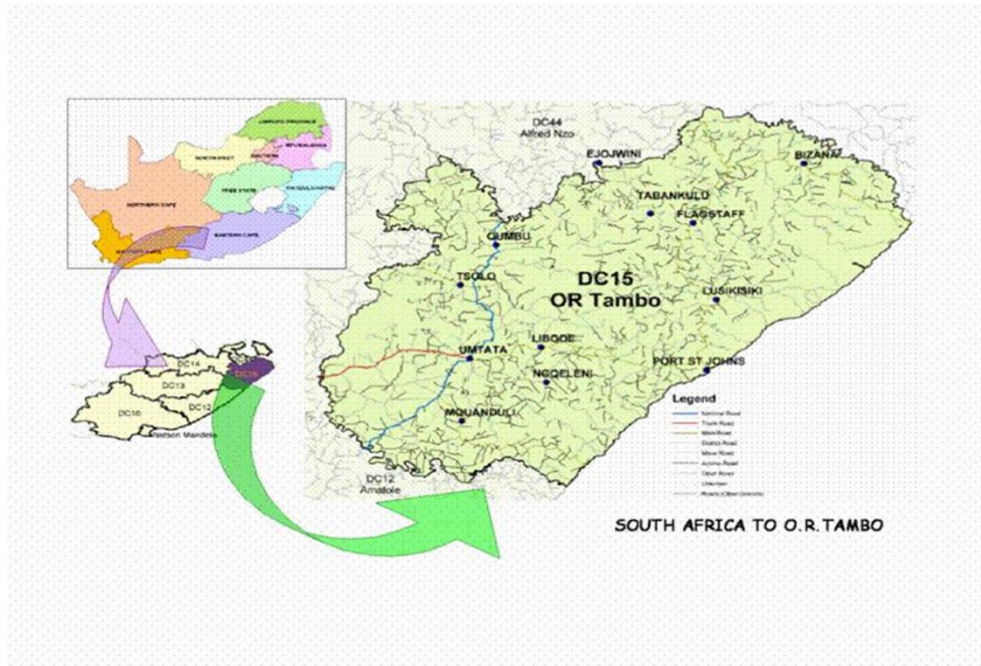
- a) How does the CSG benefit children’s welfare and basic needs as they relate to health, nutrition, shelter and education?
- b) How do the social and economic activities of the “primary caregiver”, nurturer and grant recipient capacitate the household?
- c) What other (if any) income generating mechanisms do beneficiary households invest in as a supplement to the social grant?

The interviews were conducted to complement the findings from the documentation review in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the CSG in the Eastern Cape Province. The aim was also to review areas and/or issues that were not necessarily addressed in the documentary analysis and to seek clarity on some areas that were not conclusively analysed in the first stage of the review process.

The map below provides a pictorial view of the Eastern Cape and the geographical location of the O.R Tambo district in relation to the rest of South Africa. This district is classified as the most densely populated in the province, 108 people are recorded per square kilometre, an overwhelming majority of 82 % of its populous live in poverty and 70.76% are without employment. OR Tambo integrated development plan classifies this district as a Category C2 municipality, which shows the reader that it is largely rural and has capacity limitations at municipal level (OR Tambo DM⁵, 2012).

⁵ Programme of Support to Local Economic Development in the Eastern Cape District Profile: O.R. Tambo District Municipality (DC15)

Map 1: O.R Tambo District



Source: O.R Tambo draft integrated development plan (2012: 32).

The sample population of this study is comprised of ten households with an average of 5 children eligible for the CSG. Only 4 households are dual headed and the rest are categorised as “single mother” headed households. The majority of these caregivers rely on odd jobs such as domestic work for additional income. None of the households own a vehicle or have enough disposable income to make high level capital investments. This brief background brings us to an initial analysis of social exclusion.

Silver, in social exclusion and social solidarity: three paradigms, introduces her argument by providing a picture of how capitalist democracies have transformed through economic restructuring. These changes have seen the emergence of social problems that challenge many assumptions characteristic of welfare states. According to Silver many people still suffer from social insecurity and are increasingly counting on means tested programmes or they are in fact just without any social protection. Silver contends that such developments give space for understanding the new notion of social disadvantage such as the ‘new poverty’ and ‘social exclusion’ (Silver, 1994:531).

Silver traces the origins of the concept of social exclusion to French history of the 1960’s where certain social categories were unprotected under social insurance, a further and much telling analysis is the reference to social exclusion as ‘the ones that economic growth forget’ (Doncelot and Roman cited in Silver,

1994: 533). The testing of the enabling and disabling debate of the CSG explored in this paper will be underpinned by these social concepts, among others.

3.2. The effect of the CSG in household income and the welfare of the Child.

“In most cases, cash programmes cannot raise the consumption of children directly, but instead supplement the incomes of families with children, with the assumption that the standard of living of children in these households will also improve. The impact of cash transfers on poverty among children therefore depends on the response of the household” (Alderman et al., 1997 cited in Barrientos et al, 2006: 541). This emphasises the increasing importance of understanding how households allocate resources with their own environment which is influenced in long and short run by not only individual inclinations but also by cultural and societal norms and economic conditions. While these are the major external variables that influence the decision making in the household, there are many variables that influence the development of the child, key among these are; race, gender, power relations within the household, community stature; and household income. Research indicates the effect of permanent income to child welfare is much larger than the effect of current income however the combination and influence of other values cited above diminishes the singular influence of permanent income (Blau, 1999: 263). It is important to note that, for the purposes of this section income is the primary variable that is tested and that it is not tested in complete isolation and ignorance of significant co-variables. This section will highlight in some detail the effects of household income on how the CSG is expended and whether this spending ultimately benefits the child in households of the O.R Tambo district.

3.2.1. Profile of the caregivers sources of income

The inability of the unemployed care giver to separate the role and purpose of child social support to household income is a major challenge in rural and poverty stricken communities. The lack of this separation increases tremendously the risk that the CSG may not benefit the child to its intended levels. Hall (2009), approaches the significance of an employed adult from not only the perspective of providing regular income, but also the potential of bringing additional benefits to the household which include health insurance, unemployment insurance and other elements that can provide a positive influence to children’s health, development and education. Hall shares the common view that the right to social assistance is one that seeks to ensure that those living in poverty are able to meet basic maintenance needs. Government steps in its obligation to support children directly when their caregivers are crippled by poverty to do so. Social assistance is designed as “Income support” through the cash grant, this assertion by Hall is critical in clarifying the role of the CSG, which according to findings is blurred and to a large extent not effectively capacitating the majority of care givers in the research sample.

This was evident in that more than half (67%) of beneficiaries interviewed utilised the CSG as their only source of income and 23% combined CSG with other sources as income. This data was generated from responses to questions posed to caregivers, whether they consider the CSG as the only source of income. The majority of the respondents responded in the affirmative while equally there was glaring limitation of the lengths the grant can go in empowering the caregivers in their responsibility towards the child.

Mr Mkunkwana from Ixorha is a single father who recently lost his wife indicated that:

“There is no other categorisation of the CSG according to my perspective, it is income that government gives me, I have a huge responsibility to ensure these kids are fed and for that I need money. I cannot look for work now that my wife has left us but at least we can eat from the little that the government is giving me”.

While Ms Njokwana a domestic worker from Kwa Payne taking care of 4 children that her sister left for her care responded that:

“All these children are on my shoulders, that little cent that government gives me is income yes, but I can’t even say it’s enough. If I did not get the odd jobs cleaning and doing washing I would never survive, the grant helps me a lot with transport to get to town and do washing for people who want a helper. There is too much to pay for so we have to take it and add it to the family budget. I am the one who is responsible for deciding how to spend the money to benefit the whole house”.

Additionally based on the other respondents assertions it became clear that the respondents saw the CSG as a means of survival of household sustenance in the most basic sense.

3.2.2. The multi-level analysis of the CSG and household expenditure

At the level of the household, four major expenditure items stand out as core elements that are resonant within respondents, these are elementary to survival being food, electricity and lighting, clothing and transport. Food and household groceries emerge as the major priority element. One respondent that resides about 120km from the town of Umthatha (the central town in the O.R Tambo District), became quite adamant about how the cost of the electricity card utilised for lighting and cooking and charging cell phones was a huge expenditure item for her household. Cited below Mrs Mashalaba of Mqele village indicates the following:

“If you cannot allocate a lot of the money the grant gives to transport, how do you get to town and purchase electricity and bulk foods? I am not even going to talk about being able to get my cell phone charged so that I can place orders for cheap clothing material to sew for my children, it is not easy my dear sister if I do not buy bulk mealie meal and sacks of potatoes we will all go hungry in this house”.

By and large these elements of the household budget have a direct and indirect effect on the child, if parents and care givers are able, however limited, to provide food, lighting and clothing to their children they have provided the basics and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs may concur with this as physiological needs form the primary layer of the needs pyramid. However these are “basic” needs

that may be a requirement for survival but may not meet the standard for ensuring the longevity and sustainable development of the child, they are requirements necessary to ensure the short term sustainability of the household however it becomes a concerning question if they indeed contribute to fuelling the wholesome development of the child (Walter, 1994:119-120).

“School attendance” fall next in the list of priorities. The consideration of the caregivers to their own ranks of priority indicate that subsistence is at the top of the list. A household interviewed in the village of Tafalehashe were both parents are unemployed and are taking care of their grandchildren after the passing of their daughter, reveals the following:

“Do not get me wrong education is valued in this household, that is what we told our daughter, yet in the midst of the struggle we are going through we cannot afford to take all the money that we get from the grant and take these children to fee paying schools, we already pay for their contract transport to school, if they are hungry and don’t have any shoes and uniform, tell me how will they even listen to the teacher?”

An evaluative study conducted jointly by UNICEF , the Department of Social Development and SASSA (2012) supports these findings , The qualitative research undertaken by this study reports that children miss days of school, and or drop out of the system completely as a result of a conglomerate of economic and social issues emergent from lack of provision at household level. The key reasons are based on economic inability relating to issues cited initially such as no money for school fees, uniforms, shoes, transportation at an economical level, the picture is even more bleak when household gender and power relations are placed at the fore in rural communities. Bower supports this view has the indication from their research highlights that despite high initial school enrolment almost a quarter of children still make journey of than 30 minutes to their schools, this distance becomes more of a mammoth task when viewed from the rural child perspective (Bower, 2014:120).

3.2.3. Child Welfare

Since children are dependent on others, they are either exposed to or protected from poverty by virtue of their families’ economic circumstances. This simply means children lack real control of their well-being until such time that they reach or approach adulthood (Gunn and Duncan, 1997: 55).

Scholarly research on children’s early development and the African charter on the rights and Welfare of the child adopted by the OAU in 1990, are explicit that health, nutritional development and education is a critical and important aspect for the well-being of the child (Bourdillon,2006: 7). There are various indicators that can be used to measure the well-being of the child, although these were not measured in data collected for this study, they are noteworthy. Coetzee, M. (2014) in her article: *“Do poor children really benefit from the child support grant?”* provides some critical pillars of measurement by the following key indicators:

- Health and nutrition measured according to:
 - The standardised height-for-age of children;
 - The household’s monthly expenditure on food; and

– The household’s monthly expenditure on adult goods (e.g. alcohol and cigarettes), that refers to money spent on items not for the benefit of children.

Although this research’s findings could not provide any definitive findings that prove or disprove measurement of the above, it is worth mentioning that to date 1 child out of 5 still goes hungry in South Africa (Hall 2010 cited in Bower 2014:115).

- Educational attainment:

Whether a child attends school and the number of times a grade has been repeated are elements when combined together provide a merged picture of children’s well-being. Empowering children in particular the rural poor with good health, and the requisite skills or abilities needed to be, contributing residents and positive agents of change throughout their lives, is a critical element in early childhood development. The effect of the CSG should thus be measured against this objective.

The responses gained from the interaction with households around the expenditure incurred by households to a large extent communicates that elements that are critical to child development are being met albeit at a concerningly minimal level. The amount of the CSG becomes only a drop in the ocean of household demands when it is dispensed to caregivers without any other sources of income. This can be deduced in Mr and Mrs Jongile’s responses below:

‘Both of us as mother and father of this household we are looking for jobs everyday but it is not easy , we have settled to pay a monthly transport contract so that the children go to school that we know they will not ask us for many things additional from school fees. The positive thing is that that school still has the sandwich and milk they give them during break, we cannot always give them money for tuck or even food in the morning before they go to school. Some these modern schools ask for money for trips now and again and we cannot afford that on the little grant we get’.

These utterances confirm that the standard of education received by children in this household is compromised because of the situation of poverty the parents found themselves in. Many rural “mud” schools have been closed down and this has led to influx and increased distances to substandard schools that have limited facilities and inferior quality of teaching. The capacity government transfer grants to increase the human capital of low-income children should be high priority in policy formulation, the main purpose should not just be focused on school attendance but the quality of education needed to improve poor children’s long-term life chances.

3.3. Involvement in other Income generating projects

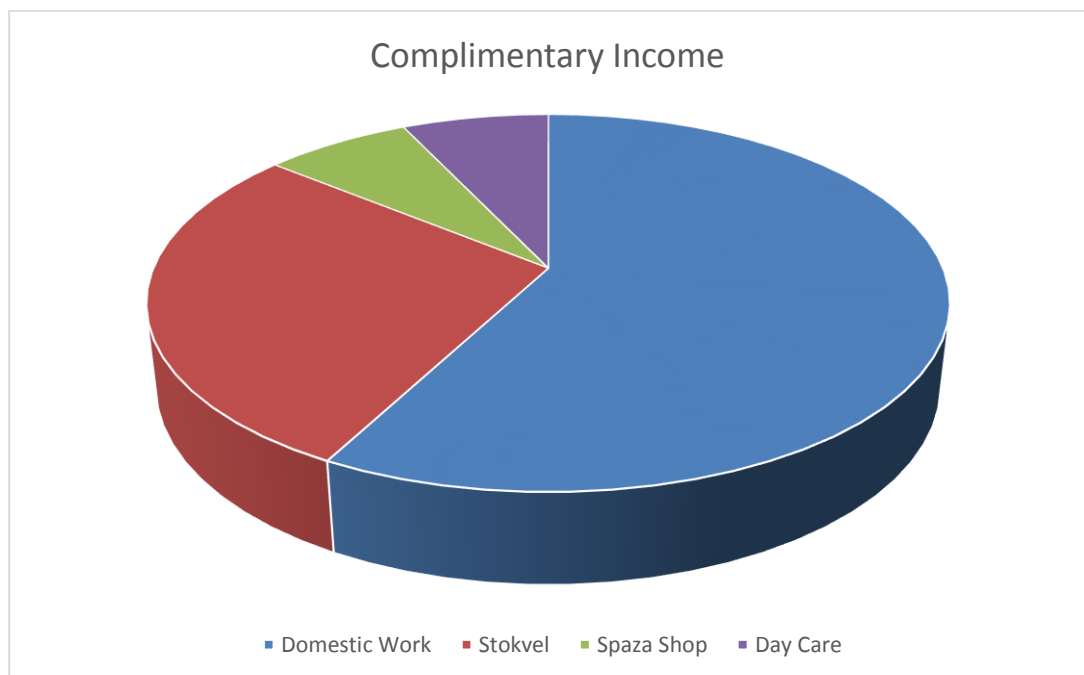
Ulriksen(2013), notes that the CSG recipients are reliant on other sources of income which include public assistance , private maintenance often paid by the father of the children , donation support from families (mostly in kind) , among other forms of assistance. This author further indicates that additional income earning strategies for the poor should not be ignored and that they are diverse including formal and informal employment. It seems that only a limited amount

of research has been conducted to interrogate the full nature of additional income generating activities, and by implication how much they alleviate the burden of income poverty.

The research outcomes for this section indicate that most of the respondents did not take part in income generating projects, largely because they were not available. It became clear post the collection of data, that domestic work or odd jobs were the major source of complimenting the CSG. It was significant to note though that the culture of communal and mutually beneficial savings through “stokvels”⁶ was a common trend that ensured families have additional income support for the months of December for Christmas celebrations and again in January for purchasing of school related costs at the beginning of the New Year. One household indicated that rather than paying for day care they have opted for running a community day care in their household. This assists with income, it must be noted that the respondent faces challenges of families who do not meet their monthly commitments to pay, this limits their potential income base yet they cannot send the children back to their homes.

The pie chart below illustrates the alternative and complimentary income generating mechanism of households:

Figure 3: Complimentary Income analysis



Source: Field data analysis by author

⁶ Conceptualised as “credit unions” or informal cooperatives that allow members to borrow from savings at low interest rates.

3.4. Significant implications of the CSG on the rural communities.

It also seems that the role of children in contributing to household income is increasing. During qualitative interviews those beneficiaries with older children mentioned that the only way to survive was for their children to start earning an income. It emerged in those cases where households made up for the lack of income through “Spaza shops” or mini community supply stores, a child had started to contribute to household income through working in these family run stores. In Tsolo for example, one beneficiary’s daughter paid her own school fees from money she earned as a baby sitter (working weekend shifts) and the other participant’s eleven year old son help direct cars and grocery trolleys at a local store. The maximum they took home was about 15R. Other children sold sweets in school and used that money to buy school items for herself and her little siblings.

The community based stokvel is a community activity that Ms Mzimane requested we attend, and in observation it is an activity that bonds the community together, the majority of the stokvel members are grant recipients and this opportunity is utilised to engage with other members mostly women on their challenges around their families, children schooling and organising transport contracts for children among other societal issues.

Groceries, school related costs and transport are the most popular use of the CSG with some minimal amounts of the grant being spent on funding additional income generating projects. These household expenses although intended to benefit the household, have spill over effects on benefitting the child albeit indirectly. Secondary to the physical benefits of grant expenditure, it is apparent that the grant is encouraging the social benefits too.

That 8 of the 10 households of respondents continued other income based activities (however minimal) after the grant had been spent is very encouraging and shows that the grant has a potential of meeting its aim of enhancing existing and creating new opportunities to be economically active. It further affirms the position that CSG cannot be utilised as the sole household source to ensure childhood development and welfare.

3.5. Some deductions from the caregiver capacity assessment.

Beneficiaries report that generally their quality of life had seriously dropped (without any additional sources of income) and that they are already cutting out on life essentials like food. They also experienced problems in covering other main household overheads such as rental, power and clothes. The payment of school related costs such as school transport and fees is a tiresome and difficult responsibility to meet. In cases where the CSG was the only source of income, the households visited were clearly in dire straits, especially where the basic infrastructure to sustain the household to benefit of the child was non-existent, for example beds and cooking facilities. This compromises food security for the child, the interrelation of this indicator with development concerns as social

protection, sources of income, rural and urban development, changing household structures, health, access to land, water and inputs, retail markets, or education and nutritional attainment become key considerations of the form and shape of the CSG going forward (Altman et al, 2009: 346).

In the South African context, obtaining a job in the formal sector of the economy is a basic requirement for escaping from poverty. Although the availability of jobs ultimately depends on the rate and labour-intensity of economic growth, individuals stand a better chance of obtaining jobs if they have skills that are in high demand in the labour market and are in close proximity to areas where opportunities exist or may become available. Large portions of the poor in South Africa, however, live in areas where job opportunities are scarce, and their prospects in the job market often are constrained further by little or inferior education. The chapter that follows ventures in analysing to what extent the voice of civil society and beneficiary participation has had on the debate of the impact of social grants and how this debate has found its space in social grant administration, incorporating the role of all stakeholders concerned. It will also provide an indication of elements of social inclusion and exclusion for CSG.

Chapter 4 -A voice of the voiceless: The role of Civil Society in shaping policy discourse and increasing access.

This section will provide a picture of the lengths and breaths of the civil society voice in influencing the broader debate around the effects of the CSG on the child and also to a large extent the care givers as the direct recipients of this cash grant. Research suggests that there is compelling evidence to suggest that civil society studies and initiatives demonstrate the usefulness of the CSG in addressing child poverty and has contributed significantly to CSG policy changes. The custodian of the policy framework on the CSG is the Department of Social Development (DSD), according to Overy 2010, is another arm of government where civil society research has been essential as it relates to how it has empowered the department in areas policy priorities, budgeting and generally ensuring that policy assertions and innovations around the CSG are formulated on a factual basis and technical responsibility rather than political agendas. The findings presented in this section will demonstrate the character of the civil society voice transversally across the varying actors, namely: beneficiaries, implementers and policy makers.

Blas et al 2008 indicate that if governments should be deemed successful in their interventions to diminish inequality in healthcare and social service provision, this should be manifested in the least in three manifestations. The first manifestation should come in securing the provision of basic services including the protection and promotion of human entitlements to services that are elementary as health care and education, this coupled with the right to a decent standard of living, and this will go a long way to contribution to transformation and equity in distribution of resources. Secondly, they should have established and clearly articulated legislative frameworks to influence the action of others and their own that are maintained and monitored. Lastly, there should be monitoring of the health and socio economic status of various population groups, health outcomes, this done to monitor progress of interventions targeted to curb inequities and to utilise monitoring reports to influence further action. This backdrop initiates key and relevant measures that be used by civil society to gauge government's progress as it relates to the three spheres. More significantly though, is the position that Blas et al advance on the role of civil society as actors that can be influential in driving society towards progressive social, political, and economic reforms. In this area civil society actions can include those of informal community groups, civil society organisations including labour unions, social movements (Blas et al 2008:1686).

In accordance with the perspective above, one significant organisation that this journey landed this research to, is the Black Sash, a human rights organisation that provides mainly free rights based education and fly's the banner that upholds social and economic justice as a fundamental right of every citizen. As an organisation tilted towards disadvantaged communities it seeks to empower citizens to hold the government accountable to its obligation to attend to the basic

needs of the needy in society. This organisational vision and mission has identified a clear and glaring gap between delivery of services and how communities claim their rights to the very same services.

And in the words of the education and training manager:

“Our primary aim is to encourage the society, this done with a particular hint towards those that have a history of previous of relegated rights. In observation this is more effectively carried through community based forums that can best impart an understanding of the social grant framework in local communities and more importantly to those who have no knowledge of claiming their rights”.

There emerges common expectation, or rather it should be that intended beneficiaries of government social protection policies and interventions have a participatory right or influence in how they are formulated, delivered, and evaluated. Should a government cease from constructively engaging a potential and or targeted community on how certain social determinants of child social protection will benefit the communities and household were the child is placed, this decreases the likelihood of these policies being appropriate, accessible and in the ultimate end being effective.

The work that is conducted by Black Sash bears a close resemblance to Browne’s (2013) analysis of the theory of change that influences social cash transfers. On the one hand, Browne posits that cash transfers can play an essential role in reducing poverty and vulnerability through addressing the elements that cause societal fragility, and consolidating the state-citizen liaison. On the other hand the provision of social protection cash transfers by the state is a generally effective intervention that ignites the poor’s capacity to demand for services and improving education and health outcomes. The example of the Kenyan Hunger Safety Net Programme is one that carries weight, as it has motivated beneficiaries to monitor delivery and make the necessary demands should payments be late. According to Browne, this programme contributes to creating a culture of accountability which also boosts local government relations with benefitting communities, this has a positive influence in rebuilding trust and accountability of public institutions.

These perspectives articulated above are confirmed by the statement given by the national advocacy manager: *“Our primary aim is to bridge the gap between the delivery of social services by government or what is we refer to as the duty to protect and the ability of the average South African to understand and claim those rights and social benefits”.*

4.1. Relevance of civil society in shaping policy discourse.

Even at the initial stages of the Child Social Grant debate during the mid to late 1990’s, the voice of civil society was quite robust and essential in shaping the shape and form of this child protection mechanism. It was however divided and somewhat discontent as it was not involved in the government initiated Lund Committee in 1994. It became a matter of urgent redress as civil society took to the streets in protest of some the recommendations of this committee, in particular those that related to the cash pay-out of only R75 a month, this benefit at the time would only benefit children only till the age of seven. In 1997 the

CSG was increased to R135 and eligibility extended to child reaching the age of 12 years. The process of state and civil society engagement ultimately led to evolution of the CSG to incorporate children up to the age of 18 in 2010, currently the pay-out sits at R320 per month (Overy, 2010: 3).

Post the 1997 period, civil society has been evidently active in shaping the policy and implementation dimensions of the CSG, there has been a consistent and concerted effort to raise community awareness to an observable extent of emerging organisations crafting programmes to assist those eligible with the application process. These initiatives were coupled with strong calls by civil society to government to extend this support programme further and for it to be inclusive of the excluded. A timeline of significant changes to the age cohort inclusion date from 1997 increase to the 2005 extension to 14 years, the 2009 increase to 15 years and finally the 2010 amendment that included children to 18 years. The swift evolution to a significant level communicates how the state has been responsive to calls by civil society. According to Overy, These extensions have led to a substantial increase in the number of children benefiting to the tune of over 2 million additional beneficiaries from 2009 to 2010 (Overy, 2010:6).

Black Sash is a prominent organisation that has led the engagement with government on these issues including raising the concerns and calls to increased departmental efficiency in implementation. This was confirmed by the Provincial Director of the Department of Social Development (DSD) as he narrated what he labelled as:

“A long, narrow but ultimately mutually beneficial process of engagement with non-governmental organisations, to the extent that they have been part of the stakeholders that have held us accountable as government, I would say they have been a critical navigation tool and a good ear on the ground”.

In the same breath the department liaison of the South African Social Services Agency (SASSA) pointed out:

“We have still sought to maintain and insist though on some stringent measures that assist us to monitor who really qualifies and if the grant actually benefits the child, and by so doing we avoid having to dispense state resources to those who are either not in need or are misusing them”

The statement above, by a broad margin, indicates that the road of civil society to state engagement been nothing short of speed bumps. A clear case in point is the conditionality that Budlender 2003: 3 points to as ‘ensuring that school-age children were in school’. A debate that ensued due to this conditionality was based on the responsibility placed on the caregiver to provide proof of school attendance to the department or risk suspension of the grant pay-out. However civic initiatives to have this “conditionality” reviewed resulted in regulation put in place in 2009 that placed this responsibility back to the governments lap through the school heads who are responsible to produce such reports, more significantly if the reports are not produced to the satisfaction of the department. It does not become a forgone conclusion that the grant will be revoked or suspended but rather that the department will deploy local social workers to assist in obtaining this information. Budlenders view is that the intensive lobbying targeted at the level of the national ministry resulted to a number of positive changes.

It is worth noting further, that this inclusion of social workers at the local level institutionalises the interaction of state and beneficiaries. Field observation and

interaction with the Mqanduli Community Advice Centre, a local development agency under the support of the Social Change Assistance Trust paints a dual picture:

“It is a fact that we can’t deny, SASSA is still not accessible to many care givers especially the aged pensioners, fraud and false payments is an issue we deal with frequently. For instance, one case we had to deal with was a pensioner who was receiving her pension grant because she was getting the CSG, when in fact she was qualified for both since she was taking care of two orphans. This had such an extremely negative impact on her household, and we managed to liaise with the satellite office to help her, it took a lengthy process and was difficult to correct” (Community Development Worker).

This picture is dual in that, although it confirms that there is a connection at some level with the implementing agents at the local level, the extent to which these institutions contribute to administrative efficiency of CSG is at a minimal level.

Patel, 2011 refers to the prevalence a number of implementation hurdles that have been encountered since the inception of the grants. Among many challenges some of the prominent ones are human resource skill and infrastructural inadequacies relating inaccessible office hours of services, lack of IT support, lengthy waiting including long queues, and a staff compliment that is not sufficient to meet the demand of services. At the level of administration, research conducted by civil society organisations points to a disconnect and lack of coordination among departments such as home affairs that is responsible for birth registrations and SASSA that is responsible for processing applications. These inefficiencies have tremendously contributed to delays in processing the grant and has excluded many who are eligible due to the requirements and the burden of proof placed on care givers without the necessary support. There is the additional element of transport costs for those rural communities separated from the government based services locations.

Through , rigorous efforts by civil society the Department of Home Affairs has adopted a process of registering births through community road shows and the introduction of mobile units responsible for registration in particular in rural areas. The community development workers that assisted community entry for this research affirmed that these mobile information units have decreased the burden for both the recipients of these services and the local municipal offices who had been in the past inundated with requests to facilitate these services although it was outside their scope and mandate. However, advocacy groups are still relentless in their quest to engage the state to improve services that hinder accesses to the CSG as such administrative challenges only end up penalizing children who live in communities where these services do not exist, these are mostly the poor and most vulnerable children.

4.2. Enhancing community participation

Pendlebury et al provide an analysis of the context of children and youth participation on governance and decision making in South Africa. It is commendable that South Africa has established parliamentary processes that engage the children and youth through sectoral parliaments. These are youth parliaments that provide a forum for young people to give insight to their concerns within pro-

vincial parliaments. At the local level, ward committees are the structural arrangement in place to empower locals including youth and children to participate in problem analysis and strategies to curb them. A significant finding of the research undertaken by Pendlebury highlights the contrasting views to youth and children participation. One that is characterised by a cynical and dissatisfied attitude and one that has some positive traces of empowerment. At one level youth and children that were engaged were disillusioned and felt that the local sphere is dominated by a corrupt and nepotistic political culture with no space for incorporating the voice of the 0-18 age cohort. While on another level as was evident in the Kwa Zulu Natal (KZN) province, there seemed to be a beacon of hope as the voice of youth and children was heard in an NGO initiated assessment of the national budget in 2006/7, this led to the introduction of a child friendly Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process in local municipalities of the KZN province (Pendlebury et al, 2014:141).

This model is certainly yet to be adopted in the target province of this research paper, the Eastern Cape Province. Much as youth parliaments have been rolled out documentary analysis of child friendly provincial frameworks and legislation cannot provide any indicators of youth and child involvement. This is further illustrated from the data collection engagement process with a young girl of 17 who is a volunteer as a community development worker, commonly known as CDWS.

“I decided to use my spare time as a community volunteer because I need to stay away from the street culture of drinking and getting pregnant at an early age. I feel that my peers need to be educated that government cannot do what it has promised. The grant is only a means to support the members of the community that are willing to take care of us those who don’t even have parents. For me it’s only a short term means to make sure you don’t sleep hungry. So young people need to be more involved in local community decisions especially how we can influence government to increase this grant, but we are not part of the local decisions, I am not even talking of those decisions made by the powers that be in their big offices. It’s very easy to be disappointed and give up, but I have found hope being part of the ‘Siyavakala’- (We seek to be heard), youth forum as it has given me and many other young people the motivation that we can change our own situation.”

4.3. The civic role that imparts a rights based community culture.

According to Elke Zueim 2011, South African social movements influenced by civil society participation have drawn connections between material necessities, stark inequality and basic rights. He specifically mentions that South Africa has long stood out for its high levels of income inequality. Zueim outlines and stresses significance of the role of civil society movement in pre and post-apartheid policy discourse, this can be testified by the role associations such as NUMSA and CONTRALESA played in fostering the negotiations for a Government of National Unity (GNU), initiated from 1994 and ceased in 1997. The impact of this civic voice in addressing and confronting the issues of material inequality and political rights has taken its space in defence of the material rights of specifically the rural child in South Africa.

A comparison between Brazil and South Africa civil society voice clearly points out the fact that in both these developing countries civil society is characterised as vibrant and engaging on the state making claims on the state on social protection issues in particular as they relate to implementation. This being the case, it is equally fitting to conclude this section with an endorsement of this food for further analysis - :

While civil society has an established voice within the South African state, it would be an error to not direct the reader to a poignant state of affairs that marks the 20th anniversary of democracy within the country. A mark that has an adverse effect on future progressions of civil society effectiveness and more specifically the impact of this voice on the key success drivers of the CSG. The quotation that follows captures the concerning elements of state and civil relations as the country moves to another twenty years in democracy.

According to Evans and Heller (2013:18), “In South Africa, the broad-based civil society organizations that emerged from the anti-apartheid struggle have “become estranged from political society”. This view is cemented in that South Africa is increasingly being viewed as the single party democracy with the ANC as the dominant electoral party that has extended its hegemony over popular civic organizations. (Heller 2011a, cited in *ibid*).

Chapter 5 -Towards another twenty years- Is the “glass half full or half empty” for the poor child in South Africa?

“Twenty years into democracy, South Africa is in trouble. Achievements have been many since 1994, and much has changed for the better, but now the storm clouds are gathering on many fronts and the country is sliding when compared to global competition and in terms of its own requirements and ambitions” (Bernstein, 2014: 20).

A very sombre tone to begin with as we conclude this paper, however the stark reality faces us all. Much as we cited in the initial chapter the strides that have been reached by South Africa in attempts to bridge gaps of apartheid past, it would only be naïve to ignore recent realities faced by society of local governments uprisings by citizens in attempts to actively demand for better (basic) services, that such a high level of discontent is resonant at the local sphere, which is the implementing arm of government policies on reform on its own speaks volumes to concur with the above statement. The South African citizen (including the child) may just have to brace themselves for a dusty road albeit it may be paved with good intentions.

Over and above contending with an unhappy citizenry the South African government also faces the dilemma of snail paced economic growth and immensely high unemployment glazed with a skills gap in particular within the youth cohort, this combination packages itself to form one of many destructive challenges in the country. In briefly highlighting this picture it becomes even more concerning is the divisions among the highest levels of government and lack of consensus on socio – economic growth path the country should follow.

Having said all the above, it must also be said that South Africa and other developing countries such as Mexico and Brazil, took huge steps in investing in large-scale social protection interventions during the 1990's. A wealth of research has confirmed that these programs have not only worked but they gone a considerable stride in reduction of immediate and intergenerational poverty, stimulate the economy to some extent within rural settlements (Hulme et al, 2014: 317). In the South African scenario it has been confirmed even within this study that by no means is this programme useless and fruitless expenditure from government, if anything this study has found a common tread among respondents that indicate that without this cash pay-out many households would be robbed of basic bread and butter. After all the dust is settled one is tempted to ask the question; what does all this mean for the beneficiaries, viewed with both the eyes of the child who's well-being is utmost and the caregiver who's hand natures the growth and development of the child.

5.1. How can the CSG be incorporated with other measures of support for poor children?

The current developmental progression in SA relies on employment as a vital socio-economic tool, it is increasingly being seen as the missing link in addressing mass poverty. Secure employment certainly has its advantages in that it is coupled with employee benefits such as medical aid and unemployment insurance that would cover households from sudden shocks or changes in the economy. On the job training will also assist in the skills gap challenge we have already highlighted above. However in the wake of economic downturn and the decreasing reliance on human skill as technology takes over, this surely cannot be the sole mechanism that households rely on to supplement the CSG and advance children wellbeing. This section will seek to briefly suggest that without practical and immediate joint mechanisms with the CSG to improve the status of the household, the unemployed caregiver shall remain locked in the wave of poverty and the implication will be increasingly incapacitated in their duty to provide an protect for household inhabitants in particular the child.

In supporting the discussion above, it should be advocated that if this programme is to be sustained more generous family transfers need to be planned for if South African society expects to decrease child poverty. Backman goes a step further and suggests that in fact dual earner support can be hypothesised to have a stronger effect on child poverty than traditional family support, since dual-earner transfers are earnings-related and to a greater extent compensate for shortfalls in earnings due to childbirth, and also increase household income through incentives for higher female labour force participation. As part of this approach this would protect single mothers or woman headed households from poverty to a greater extent than support to traditional family structures. This is not only because dual-earner transfers provide higher benefits but also, as argued above, because they are often combined with better availability of childcare services, a precondition for labour force participation among single parents. Thus we can expect that the effect of dual-earner support will be reduced when the extent of public childcare service provision is controlled for at country level. (Bäckman et al, 2010: 282)

5.2. Food for thought as we approach another two decades

Recent theoretical and empirical work constantly reinforces investment on the development of human capital and stresses the importance of conditions in early childhood in determining long-term outcomes. Altman et al (2009), stress that greater economic participation are a critical part on building upon the gains that the current social protection programme has laid out for South African households. However the current reality is that job creation does not meet the demand and hence is slow to reach millions of citizens in need. Altmans view provides a workable strategy in this transitional period to economic growth, that of more intense plans to reinforce non-grant livelihoods to decrease marginalisation.

Throughout this paper the conceptualisation of social protection has been presented as a phenomenon that incorporates both basic and economic needs and

in making this a reality the role of the state cannot be expressed strongly enough. Basic security (or social security for contingencies) in a developing and changing economy such as South Africa is no longer sufficient enough without increasing income insecurity and decreasing vulnerability of the countries workforce.

South Africa's welfare state is terribly unsatisfactory, given the society's wealth, world- leading inequality and record of social mobilization against injustice. The repeated claim that South African welfare grants lift people from poverty needs to be considered critically as even households who receive double benefits for example the CSG and the OAG are still locked in an unending poverty cycle.

The state's still has great potentially vast job-creating capacity was never fully utilized aside from a few short-term public works activities; expediting the land and housing programme may reach commendable strides if delivered at appropriate rates.(Bond, 2014 : 14-15).

And in finality much as the state is critical organ, the role of civil society should not only regarded as a tool to save face or for compliance it should be seen as a critical navigating towards the advancement of a social policy that benefits the poor and the child.

Without the capacity of the capable "hand ", the cradle can only crack and ultimately shutter.

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