

(a) NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO.
(b/) Faculty of Social Sciences
Lesotho social science review

(872)

SN 1028-0790

SOCIAL SCIENCES REVIEW



December, 2007

Volume 11 Nos. 1 & 2

A JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

Lesotho Social Sciences Review Vol. 11 Nos 1 & 2

Board of Editors

Editor-in-chief: Associate Professor T. J Makatjane
National University of Lesotho

Dr HM Bello	National University of Lesotho
Mr C Chitereka	National University of Lesotho
Dr T. Koroto	National University of Lesotho
Mr M Makatsa	National University of Lesotho
Prof F. K Makoa	National University of Lesotho
Dr OG Mwangi	National University of Lesotho
Prof P Yalokwu	National University of Lesotho

International Advisory Board

Prof. Mafeje A.	University of Namibia
Prof. Doorbos M.	Institute of Social Studies The Hague
Prof. Lofchie M	UCLA California
Prof. Hyden G.	University of Florida
Prof. Saul J.	University of York
Prof. Raikes P.	Centre for Development Research Copenhagen
Prof. Weeks S.	University of Botswana
Prof. Othman H.	University of Dar-es-Salaam
Prof. Kwesi Prah	The University of Western Cape

All contributions should be sent to:

Editor-in-Chief
Lesotho Social Sciences Review
National University of Lesotho
P. O. Roma 180, Lesotho

The broad objectives of the journal are to facilitate interdisciplinary intellectual exchange and academic networking between Lesotho Social Sciences and other scholars in Southern Africa, the African continent and indeed the international academic community.

Articles submitted to the journal should be original contributions and should not be under consideration by another publication at the same time.

The journal will be published twice a year whilst special issues may be published at the frequency determined by the Editorial Board

Subscription rates per issue: Eastern and Southern Africa, USS30; rest of the world USS50. The rates include packing and postage

**LESOTHO
SOCIAL SCIENCES
REVIEW**

ISSN 1028-0790



December, 2007

Volume 11 Nos. 1 & 2

**A JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO**

Contributors

P. T. Tanga	Social Grants and The Fight Against Poverty In South Africa	1-20
T. F. Manyeli	The Evolution of Social welfare in Lesotho	21-33
E. E. Obioha and	Rural Women's Participation in Development	
B. I. Tilley-Gyado	Programmes in Nigeria: Socio-Cultural Explanations from Vendeiyka Benue State	34-49
D. M. Quaye and J. Remenyi	From Bondage to Economic Survival: Can Liberated Trokosi Make The Transition?	50-64
M. P. Makhetha	Purchasing Power Parity: Some empirical evidence on Lesotho	65-82
Bright Honu	Contingent Valuation Method for General Practitioners: A Cookbook Approach	83-96
J. O. Osiki	Empowering Distance Learners' Research Prowess through the Effective Utilization of Three Psychotherapies	97-113
M. Seotsanyana	Perceived Relevance of the National University of Lesotho's programmes: Views of Former Students	114-127
M. Raselimo	Promoting Environmentally Responsible Behaviour Through Indigenous Knowledge: A Challenge For Implementation of Education For Sustainable Development in Lesotho	128-141
T. G. Khati	On Diplomacy in Lesotho: Comparison and Contrast Between Lesotho's Pre-Colonial and Post-Colonial Diplomatic Agents	142-154

Social Grants and the Fight Against Poverty in South Africa

Pius T. Tanga*

Abstract

While the Republic of South Africa has one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world, the vast majority of its citizens, especially women are still languishing in poverty. Despite government efforts in the provision of social assistance and other measures to curb poverty, the situation does not seem to be abating. The precarious state of the poor has led to pressures on government from NGOs, civil society and other groups to revisit its policies and introduce a basic income grant that is not mean-tested. However, it is argued that this constitutionally enshrined right, which is already progressively being realized, is a fiscal burden that the government is struggling to contain, with some 5.5 million beneficiaries (Makino, 2004), let alone the introduction of a basic income grant. This article examines the living conditions of the poor, availability and accessibility of these grants to the poor. The impact of these grants on the lives of the poor as well as on the lives of their household members is also assessed. The findings reveal that there is little change on the living conditions of the poor as previous studies have indicated given the continuous deterioration of these conditions. Furthermore, accessibility and availability of these grants is still not satisfactory. The article concludes with a reiteration that the war against poverty is still a long way to go and recommends the introduction of a basic income grant as well as other measures to reduce poverty.

Introduction and background

Though social security is universally applicable, the poor, especially women have had a turbulent history of uncertainties, including death, disability, old age, illness, and unemployment. Before the introduction of social welfare services, the source of economic security was the family and extended family network as well as other informal networks that took responsibilities for the survival of the needy members of their societies. The growth of societies in complexity, both socially and economically, triggered the development of new organisations to protect the economic security of their members. It was against this backdrop that formal social security emerged to attempt to redress the economic insecurities and imbalances. According to Tanga and Stears (2002:2), the “forces of change have continued to shape the social welfare system on which many members of the society...look upon for one form of safety net or the other”. The introduction of social welfare services, therefore, was a response to the growing number of social problems such as destitution, crime, family breakdown, child neglect, etc.

* Pius T. Tanga is a lecturer in the Department of Social Anthropology and Sociology at the National University of Lesotho

The continuous increase in the poverty of the vast majority of people especially women in a country that is hailed for its excellent statutory and legal frameworks are a source of worry to many. While significant progress has been achieved in the domains of political and civil rights, the accessibility to socio-economic rights for the poor is yet to reach an acceptable level. As Aliber (2005: 1) remarks, "poverty has turned out to be difficult to defeat" and according to him, overhauling the macroeconomic policy is not going to drastically reduce poverty on a massive scale. Though the Constitution guarantees the right to equality and intends to redress the past inequalities, there are still disparities based on gender, class and race amongst others. Kehler (2002: 2) remarks that the "life of the majority of people has deteriorated rather than improved". Kehler further reiterates that the current realities are characterised by lack of socio-economic development, extreme income disparity, social disintegration, high unemployment rates and immense poverty.

The system of social grants is the most important intervention impacting low-income households and individuals and as Aliber (2001:50) states that, "these grants are likely to remain an indispensable part of the country's anti-poverty efforts for the foreseeable future". However, it is a fiscal burden that the government is trying to contain. Though the importance of these grants has generally been acknowledged, they have however been criticised for not enshrining the notions of equity and social justice in the targeting of beneficiaries. According to Kaseke (1998:145), they have tended to exacerbate existing inequalities in income distribution as benefits accrue mostly to those who are better off. Above all, social welfare is still curative and remedial and this has prevented it from contributing significantly to the amelioration of poverty.

It is estimated that the total of the poor population in South Africa is between 45 and 55 per cent, that is 20 – 28 million people and this according to Taylor (2002) is irrespective of the measures used and about 60 per cent of the poor are not covered by the social security system. However, while expanded unemployment rate is estimated at 37.0 per cent, the official unemployment rate is estimated at 26.4 per cent (4.2 million) (Statistics South Africa, 2002). Most South Africans live in larger households of about six persons and this tends to make them poorer given the fact that in 1999 about 2.6 million unemployed had no work and total monthly household expenditure was less than R800. Out of this, women constituted 1.4 million. This overview of South African poor and women's situation is portrayed as precarious. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is high unemployment giving rise to delinquent activities among the youth and much dependence on grants on the part of women. The present trend shows that most families with household members ranging from four to ten, especially in the rural areas, depend on one person's grant which can either be child support or old

age pension or other type of grants. It has also been revealed that none of the grants is sufficient to maintain even the recipient, let alone the whole family. The NGO coalition and other stakeholders have therefore rallied in support of the recommendations of Taylor (2002) for a universal grant to every household member who is unemployed. The Taylor Committee (2002) also indicates that 11.8 million of the poor live in households with no assistance and 13 million live in destitution. As a result, many studies point to the need for a comprehensive and universal social security to all those who are vulnerable (Kehler, 2002; Kimani, 2000; Urquhart, 2001). Liebenberg and Tilley (1998:16) aptly opine that:

A large number of poor people cannot gain access to social assistance'. The present system is insufficient to guarantee a minimum standard of living and as such the authors concluded that it thus provides 'a basic, but inadequate, safety net for the poor in South Africa.

The basis on which everyone is supposed to have access to social security system is clearly spelt out in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, The Social Assistance Act of 2004, the White Paper for Social Welfare 1997 and the Taylor Committee Report (2002). The Constitution, for instance in its Section 27 (1) of the Bill of Rights, categorically states that "Everyone has the right to access social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance". The White Paper for Social Welfare (Chapter 1 (1), 1997), defines social security as:

a wide range of public and private measures that provide cash or in-kind benefits or both, in the event of an individual's earning power permanently ceasing, being interrupted, never developing, or being exercised only at unacceptable social cost and such person being unable to avoid poverty, and secondly, in order to maintain children.

According to the Social Assistance Act, No 13 of 2004, social assistance (grants) are for people who cannot support themselves and/or their families as stipulated in the Constitution of South Africa, Bill of Rights Section 27, paragraph 1 and 2 and it is one way of government giving people access to their constitutional rights. This paper therefore seeks to examine the situation of social grants as it pertains to the poor with particular focus to women. It also examines the situation of poverty as well as the question of whether women beneficiaries do so in their own rights in light of the stipulations of the White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997.

Aim and Objectives

The broad aim of this paper is to examine the social grants vis-à-vis the poor, particularly women, and the impact these grants have on their lives and families so as to determine whether the war against poverty is moving in the right direction. More specifically, the objectives of the paper are to:

- 1) Provide an overview of the socio-economic realities of the poor
- 2) Examine the living conditions and availability of basic services to the poor
- 3) Find out whether social grants create dependency and inhibit initiative or provide a source of investment
- 4) Ascertain household members to whom the grants are allocated and the adequacy of the grants
- 5) Examine the role of municipal and other stakeholders in social grants' issues and their perception of the adequacy of the grants
- 6) Find out the accessibility and availability of social grants to the poor in general and women in particular.

Scope of the paper

The focus of this paper is on government social grants that are benefiting the poor and women in particular in the form of social assistance. The findings of this paper are based on a study that was conducted in the Eastern and Western Cape Provinces of South Africa. Social assistance provided by the private sector and other personal social measures against contingencies are not examined. Six areas were selected for data collection, three in the Western Cape and three in the Eastern Cape; all of the areas have semi-urban as well as rural settlements.

Methodology and sample

There were two sources of data for this paper, secondary and primary sources. The secondary sources generated data from exploration of relevant literature pertaining to poverty and the social grants from various sources. The principal instrument for primary data collection was a semi-structured questionnaire, which contained 45 items. The respondents were made up of both sexes, especially poor women. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher and in some places with the assistance of colleagues. The researcher made use of Xhosa and Afrikaans interpreters in most places. The questionnaire was administered to a total of 219 respondents, 165 women and 54 men chosen according to stratified sampling procedures. The principal instrument was supplemented by two focus group discussions in the communities, one in Butterworth (Eastern Cape Province) with thirteen women and seven men as participants and the other in Wellington (Western Cape Province) made up of five women and two men. The aim of these group discussions was to elucidate information on the impact of basic services on their lives and perception on issues of social grants, and other factors. In addition, the municipal officials and government authorities and other stakeholders (NGOs) were interviewed in relation to their role and adequacy of the social grants. Five interviews were conducted; two with

NGOs' officials and two with municipal officials, one in each province and one with a group of four staff of the Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape. The results were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively with the use of tables to show the situation of poor people.

Type and value of grants

The Social Assistance Act stipulates five main types of grants, namely,

- 1) Old Age Grant (R740) which is paid to women who are 60 years and above and to men who are 65 years and above.
- 2) Disability Grant (R740) is paid to those who are 18 years or older and who are disabled for six months and more and as such, cannot support themselves because of the disability and other reasons.
- 3) War Veteran Grant (R758) is paid to people who are 60 years and above and had once served in the South African army during certain wars and such persons should be unable to maintain themselves as a result of physical and/or mental disability.
- 4) Child Support Grant (R170) is given to the caregiver who cares for the child or children and the number of children must not be more than six and each child should be under the age of seven. The caregiver can be the mother, the father, grandfather, relative, friend, or other of the child or children. In addition to this grant, is the Care-dependency Grant, which is for children who are severely disabled and thereby need special care.
- 5) Other Grants, which include Foster Child Grant (R530), is paid to persons to whom a child is placed in their care and Grant-in-Aid (R160), which can be paid to a person who is already beneficiary of another grant but needs full-time care from someone else.

The above social assistance (grants) is means-tested, depending on income and as such, not everybody is qualified to claim them. According to the Department of Social Development (2002) and IDASA (2002), Old Age grant tops all the other grants with the highest number of beneficiaries (1,905,222), followed by child support grant (1,574,927). Disability and foster care grants come next in terms of large beneficiaries. The least being care dependency and grant in-aid (34,989 and 5,453 respectively). Parent allowance and child allowance were phased out at the end of 2002. Current statistics however show that grant recipients of all kinds are about 5.5 million (Makino, 2004). The Department of Social Department reveals that the Child Support Grant which is a major grant witnessed a tremendous increase of beneficiaries from 34,471 in 1999 to over 1, 5 million in January 2002 and between April 2001 and January 2002, it has increased by 46 per cent. In order of coverage, from the highest to lowest according to province

is KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Northern Province (Limpopo), Gauteng, Western Cape, North West, Mpumalanga, Free State and Northern Cape.

Findings and discussions

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The data for this paper was collected from three areas in the Eastern Cape and three in the Western Cape with a total of 219 respondents shared between these areas as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents according to Province, area and gender

Province	Area	Respondents					
		Female		Male		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Eastern Cape	Butterworth	39	73.6	14	26.4	53	100
	Idutywa	20	80.0	5	20.0	25	100
	Komga	20	80.0	5	20.0	25	100
Sub-total		79	76.7	24	23.30	103	100
Western Cape	Wellington	25	54.4	21	45.7	46	100
	Ceres	36	90.0	4	10.0	40	100
	Robertson	25	83.3	5	16.7	30	100
Sub-total		86	74.1	30	25.9	116	100
Total		165	75.3	54	24.7	219	100

Table 1 shows that of a total of 219 respondents, 103 (representing 47.0%) were from the Eastern Cape made up of 76.7 % females and 23.3 % males. In the Western Cape there were 116 respondents (representing 53.0%) shared according to gender as follows: 86 (74.14 %) females and 30 (25.9%) males. Overall, Table 1 shows that of a total of 219 respondents, there 165 females (75.3%) and 54 males (24.7%). The bulk of the respondents, 43.8% were between the age brackets of 21-29 years old followed by those from the ages of 30-39 who constituted 21.5%. On marital status, 50.7% of the respondents were single. This high level of single persons, especially women is an indication that women are gradually being aware of their rights and as such; may not tolerate any maltreatment from men. On the other hand, only 32.9% of the 219 respondents indicated that they were married. Others were either widow(er)s, living with partners, divorcees or separated in that order. Educationally, 48.0% indicated that they have reached secondary school level, 38.8% ended at the primary school. Others had been to tertiary institutions or have never attended formal schooling.

Economic Realities

In order to adequately assess the economic realities of respondents, questions were asked on their employment status, personal and household

incomes and their monthly expenses. Table 2 shows according to province, the employment status of the respondents.

Table 2: Employment status of respondents according to province

Employment Status	Province		Total
	Eastern Cape	Western Cape	
Full-time	9.5	8.7	9.3
Part-time	6.9	2.9	5.0
Casual/informal	14.7	6.8	11.0
Unemployed	44.8	49.5	47.0
Self-employed	1.7	9.7	5.5
Housewife	6.9	3.9	5.5
Pensioner	11.2	9.7	10.5
Student	4.3	8.7	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2 indicates that in the Western Cape, out of a total of 116 respondents, 44.8% were unemployed, 11.2% were pensioners while those employed made up only 9.5% and 6.9% representing full-time and part-time workers respectively. Also, in the Western Cape, self-employed, students and housewives accounted for 1.7%, 4.3% and 6.9% respectively. This high unemployment rate in the Western Cape may stem from the fact that there are periods called 'in-season' and 'out-season' when there are jobs and no jobs respectively. During the in-season, "there is work for whoever wants to work" since most of the areas are semi-urban and rural agricultural settlements (An official of an NGO interviewed in Robertson, Western Cape, on October 16, 2003). In the Eastern Cape, Table 2 reveals that of the 103 participants interviewed, 49.5% were unemployed, while self-employed people and pensioners each constituted 9.7%. Also, the results on the table indicate that 8.7% were students as well as 8.7% full-time employees; 6.8% were on casual/informal employment, 3.9% self-employed and 2.9% were working on part-time basis. Because of the lack of large-scale farming activities and large commercial enterprises in most parts of the Eastern Cape, the unemployment situation is worse than in the Western Cape.

Generally, Table 2 shows that in both provinces, the unemployment figure is 47.0% of the 219 respondents, full time, part-time and casual employees were 9.1%, 5.0% and 11.0% respectively. This corroborates with the projected unemployment rate of more than 40% (Taylor, 2002). Even self-employment was very low (12 participants which made up only 5.9%). Many reasons have been given to explain this low rate of self-employment; one of which is the fact that most of people are ignorant about income generating projects. One man stated, during a focus group discussion in

Butterworth, Eastern Cape on October 12, 2003, that “people do not know anything about income generating projects and need people to tell them how to start and where to get funding”. In addition, the general complaint against municipal authorities in this regard is that the officials should come to the grassroots and tell the population what is expected of them rather than rhetoric.

The findings reveal that out of the 219 respondents on the variable of monthly income, 36.1% had no personal income and as such lived on the income of others, 43.7% had an income range of R1-500, 19.6% had income ranging from R501-1000, 5.5% had income range between R1001-1500. A further 2.7% could afford a personal income of R1501-2000. Only 0.5% representing one person each had income in the following categories: R2001-2500, 2501-3000 and income more than R3000. Of the 139 who indicated a source of this income, 41.0% was from salary/wages, 17.3% from grants, 15.1% from pension and 26.6% from other sources such as remittances, occasional piece jobs, small businesses or gifts from children, relative and/or friends. Complaints by women on the reasons for not being able to start any group income generating projects in order to escape this unemployment situation are the lack of funds and the technical know-how. Municipalities, NGOs, CBOs and other stakeholders have not succeeded in building the necessary capacities required by these rural women to engage in such income projects (A woman during a focus group discussion in Wellington, Western Cape on October 18, 2003).

Similar findings were revealed with the monthly household incomes. Seventy-four respondents representing 33.8% had a household income of R1-500, 27.9% with an income of R501-1000, 18.7% indicated an income of R1001-1500. A further 8.7% showed a monthly household income of R1501-2000, 3.2% had a household income of R2001-2500 as well as the same percentage for those households with an income of more than R3000. Finally, 2.7% households had no monthly income. They lived on gifts and donations from friends and/or relatives, charity and other social networks. Closely related to household income were household monthly expenses. More than 72% of the respondents disclosed that their household expenses stood at the range of R1-500, a further 17.8% indicated that their expenses could be from the range of R5001-1000, and 6.9% could spent approximately R1001-2000 monthly. Only two and one could afford monthly expenses of R2001-2500 and more than R3000 respectively.

With the increasing prices of basic commodities, a household (of four to seven persons) living on monthly expenses of R1-500 shows the poverty rate that is plaguing the society, especially the poor women in the rural areas. This type of a situation is deplorable with poor living conditions, which is characteristic of many rural areas, especially in the Eastern Cape.

The findings corroborate those of Taylor (2002) which state that 11.8 million South Africans are living in poor households while 13 million are in destitution. No doubt, social vices such as delinquency, armed robbery, burglary, rape, sexual promiscuity and many others are ever on the increase as unemployment rises.

Housing arrangements and household composition

To determine the type of houses, respondents were asked to indicate the type of houses they are living in.

Table 3: Kind of houses inhabited by respondents according to province (%)

Type of House Inhabited by Respondent	Province		Total
	Eastern Cape	Western Cape	
Ownership	49.1	63.8	57.1
Rented	7.8	20.7	14.6
Traditional	2.9	0.0	1.4
Backyard	1.9	2.6	2.3
Informal	37.9	11.2	23.7
Other	0.0	10.9	10.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

As Table 3 shows that 57.1% of the respondents were living in owned houses, majority of which are Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and old municipal houses. While some respondents, 26.4% of the 92 staying in their own houses were not paying rent because they had finished paying. Others, 73.6% were still paying a monthly rent and many, 40.2% were paying more than R200 and the majority, and 44.6% were paying between R51-150. Those living in informal houses constituted 23.7%. Only 14.6% were renting; 2.3% lived in backyard dwellings, 1.4% were staying in traditional houses and the rest (10.9%) indicated that they were living in other type of houses. In order to elucidate information on the number of persons living in each household, respondents were asked to say how many people and children are living with them. This is illustrated in table 4.

Table 4: Number of people and children living in households

Type of membership	Number of members	Province	
		Eastern Cape	Western Cape
All Members	0	0	0.8
	1-2	15.5	18.1
	3-4	35.9	29.3
	3-6	28.1	31.0
	6+	20.5	20.8
	Total	100.0	100.0
Children Living in the House	0	10.7	23.5
	1-2	26.8	45.5
	3-4	30.1	20.4
	3-6	50.2	9.5
	6+	2.2	1.1
	Total	100	100

Table 4 indicates that 50.2% of respondents in the Eastern Cape were living with five to six children, 30.1% were with three to four children; 26.8% were living with one to two children; 10.7% had no child in their households. Furthermore, 6.8% and 2.2% were staying with five to six and more than six children respectively. Still in the Eastern Cape, 35.9% had three to four adults in their households, 28.1% with five to six adults while 20.5% and 15.5% were in the same household with more six adults and one to two adults respectively. In the Western Cape, the situation was different, with those who living with one to two children constituting 45.5%. Also, 23.5% had no children living in their households; 20.4% were living with one to children in the Western Cape. While 9.5% were living with five to six children, 1.1% were with more than six children in their households. Regarding adults living in the households, 31% had five to six adults; 29.3% had three to four adults; 20.8% were living with more than six adults and 18.1% had just one to two adults. Finally, in the Western Cape, only 0.8% were living without any adult in their households.

The general trend as shown by the table is that a large number of people were living in the same household, a common phenomenon with poor households. Literature has shown similar trends whereby more than five people live in one house (Liebenbery and Tilley, 1998). The adult dependents may be as a result of not being able to sustain themselves economically and as such rely on those family or other relatives having one source of income or the other. However, the Africans will argue that this is in keeping with the African tradition of being 'your brother's keeper'. Concerning the number of children in the household, this was much more prominent in the Eastern Cape with 50.2% living with five to six children. In

relative terms, the Eastern Cape portrayed more children living in single households than the Western Cape. This may still be linked to the African tradition of having many children and this seems still to be prevalent in the Eastern Cape given the strong traditional ties and beliefs within that province. A further reason could be promiscuity among idle youths, which results in a high number of single parents.

Accessibility to social security benefits

As can be seen on Table 5, 82.7% were aware of grants (social assistance) while 17.4% had no idea of grants.

Table 5: Grants Awareness

Awareness of grant	Number	Percentage
Yes	181	82.65
No	38	17.35
Total	219	100.00

Of the 181 who were aware of grants, only 42.5% revealed that they were receiving grants. Taylor (2002) aptly remarks that many South Africans are not covered by the social security system and as such are very economically and socially vulnerable. Furthermore, 94.9% of the recipients were of the opinion that the grants were not sufficient to meet their basic needs, let alone their entire households which many of them are catering for, given the high prices of basic items on the market. Similarly, 72.8% of them depend solely on these grants, that is, without any other source of income. While 27.3% of others had other sources of income such as remittances from husbands, small business establishments or engaging in piecework. Asked whether they generated more income with their grants, only 9.1% indicated that they were investing the grants into small businesses like selling of liquor and other retail items around their dwellings. The rest, 90.9% were not investing the grants in anywhere but spend it on grocery. The reason advanced for this was that the amount is too small and as such they could not afford to buy monthly grocery and save/invest part of the grant, which could accumulate and serve as an initial capital to start off any business enterprise. According to Liebenberg and Tilley (1998), the inadequacy of these grants can not guarantee minimum living standards. Others have concluded that it provides basic but inadequate safety net to the poor (Kimani, 2000; Kehler, 2002).

Table 6 reveals the number of grants recipients in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by province and per type of grant (%)

Type of Grant	Province		Total
	Eastern Cape	Western Cape	
Disability	11.7	6.5	18.2
Child Support	22.1	37.7	59.7
Old Pension	7.8	14.3	22.1
Total	41.6	58.4	100.0

Table 6 indicates that of the 77 grant recipients, 41.6%) were from the Eastern Cape while 58.4% were from the Western Cape. In both provinces, Child Support grant recipients made up 59.7% followed by Old Age Pension with 22.1% while Disability grant constituted 18.2%. However, Child Support grant was the highest grant accessible in each of the province. While the Eastern Cape was followed by Disability grant with 11.7%, Old Age pension came second in the Western Cape with 14.3%. The absence of the columns for grants such as Foster Care and Care Dependency grants can be explained from the fact that no one indicated being a recipient of either of them. Child Support grant as the table reveals in the two provinces, accounts for a greater number of those accessing social security benefits followed by Old Age Pension and Disability in that order. This corroborates the national figures, which show that Old Age Pension and Child Support Grants are the highest accessible grants (Aliber, 2005).

Community projects to reduce poverty

According to 211 (96.4%) of the 219 respondents, there were no community-initiated projects in their communities to alleviate poverty. The few that existed were in Idutywa Municipality and included projects such as road construction, needlework, bead and craftwork (An official at Idutywa Municipality interviewed on October 8, 2003). On community-initiated projects, 216 (96.6%) indicated that there were no community-initiated projects. In all the areas studied, only Idutywa, in the Eastern Cape had needlework; and, Wellington in the Western Cape with a garden community project. The lack of knowledge on how to carry out projects and the type of projects as well as funding sources has been the major complaints of respondents.

Living conditions and basic services

A set of questions were asked to find out what basic services the respondents were having access to and at what cost. Table 7 illustrates the responses of the respondents.

Table 7: Accessibility of respondents to basic services

Does the household have access to the following basic service?		Province	
		Eastern Cape	Western Cape
Pipe-born water	Yes	32.0	85.4
	No	68.0	14.7
Electricity	Yes	42.7	89.7
	No	57.3	10.3
Flush toilet	Yes		85.4
	No	34.0	14.7
Rubbish removal	Yes	66.0	100.0
	No	82.5	0.0
Health facilities	Yes	36.9	93.1
	No	63.1	6.9

Table 7 reveals that while 68.0% of respondents had no access to pipe-born water in their dwellings in the Eastern Cape while in the Western Cape, the situation was better with 85.4% having water in their houses. The table further shows that in the Western Cape, 89.7% had access to electricity while in the Eastern Cape, 57.3% had no electricity in their houses. Regarding flushing toilets, the Western Cape had 85.4% of those with flushing toilets and the Eastern Cape rather had 66% of those who did not have flushing toilets. As a result of many respondents (85) not having flushing toilets, 62.4% used nearby bushes, a further 31.8% used dip holes and only 5.9% indicated that they were using bucket system. Literature has suggested that the impact of lack of proper toilet systems is the cause of many diseases in the communities and other unhygienic sanitary effects, which have very serious consequences for the population (Tanga and Stears, 2002). As to whether rubbish were being collected, everybody in the Western Cape had their rubbish removed from their homes by the municipality while in the Eastern Cape, 82.5% had their rubbish normally removed either by the municipality and those from Butterworth vicinity, by a private company called "Clean and Green Project" from Umtata. Concerning health facilities within their communities, the Eastern Cape shows that 63.1% of the respondents had no access to health facilities. However, these facilities exist within walking distances. In the Western Cape, 93.1% have one type of health facility or the other.

The above analysis therefore shows that many people in the Eastern Cape lack many of the above basic facilities such as toilets, electricity, pipe-borne water amongst others. This corroborates many recent findings putting the province amongst those lagging behind nationally in basic facilities and as a result, one of the least developed. No doubt, without these basic facilities, living conditions are bound to be so poor with accompanying

negative aftermaths of diseases, deteriorating health conditions, high crime rate and unhygienic environment (Aliber, 2005).

Acquisition and cost of some basic facilities

Those respondents who indicated that they do not have water in their dwellings gave reasons such as water not being supplied (97.7%) and the rest, 2.3% indicated that they could not afford. Those who said piped-borne water was supplied particularly were mostly from Idutywa, the Goven Mbeki RDP houses in the Eastern Cape constructed in December 2001 and other informal settlements in both provinces. According to municipal rules, informal and/or squatter camps are not supposed to be supplied with electricity, except those people on municipal and social development allocated plots (An official of Wellington Municipality interviewed on October 18, 2003 revealed this).

One hundred and ninety-five (72.6%) and 79.5% respondents considered water and electricity respectively as not being affordable. However, some municipal officials believed that electricity is the cheapest source of energy since it can be used for a variety of purposes unlike other energy sources. However, the official agreed that those without money will definitely see it as being expensive, thought a unit is only 40 cents (VAT inclusive). Other alternative energy sources for those who did not have electricity are paraffin, candle, gas and firewood. An official who was interviewed and asked about the cost of electricity at Wellington on October 18, 2003 had a different view from the many respondents who indicated that electricity was expensive. He commented as follows:

Electricity is quite a cheap commodity because if you look at what you can do with it, comparing it with other sources of energy, for example petrol, diesel, paraffin, firewood, you will know that electricity is a cheaper source of energy. You can cook with it, watch your TV and can do everything with it and we sell it now for 41 cents (VAT inclusive), without VAT, it is only about thirty-something cents.

However, my opinion is that it is cheap ...but it may be expensive for somebody who doesn't have money.

In terms of schools and crèches in all the provinces, 79.5% and 74.9% respondents indicated respectively their existence in their communities. Most of the schools and crèches were within walking distances, less than 15 minutes as indicated by most respondents. Finally, children in primary and secondary schools go to school unaccompanied while women and girls were said to be those who often accompany kids to crèches.

The role of local government and other stakeholders in enabling the poor and women in particular to have access to social grants

The of Department of Social Development and Welfare that is charged with the administration of social security and making accessible grants to all those eligible has service offices or centres spread within municipalities where applications and processing of social grants are done. However, many eligible people still go without these grants because the spread of offices as purported is not enough since people have to travel long distances to service centres and many may not afford transport most often as they have to visit the centres several times (Officials of an NGO interviewed at Butterworth on October 10, 2003). Apart from simply processing applications, the Department of Social Development and Welfare undertakes "awareness campaigns in communities during meetings and educate poor people about these grants and other services that the department offer. In addition, social workers serving in communities are the 'eyes' and 'ears' of the department" (Officials of the Department of Social Development, interviewed at Butterworth on October 10, 2003). The official went on to say that the Department also funds community initiated projects as well as their own initiated projects to alleviate poverty such as food security programmes which target female-headed households and child-headed households. These programmes involved crop production, poultry and piggery. Other projects specifically targeting unemployed women are cooperatives. These programmes are undertaken in collaboration with the Departments of Public Works, Labour and Agriculture.

The municipalities have a role to play in making grants accessible to the poor and poor women in particular. Municipalities do fund projects at a limited scale because they are faced with budgetary constraints and other resource limitations. One official at Idutywa municipality interviewed on October 8, 2003 stated that:

Municipalities are under-capacitated in order to cater for such activities. Grants are a new venture which municipalities do not have the exposure and the experience. There is therefore the need for capacity-building at the local level.

Other stakeholders such as NGOs are lending support to the Department of Social Development and Welfare as grassroots organisations to make women aware of these grants and other services offered by government departments which people are not aware of. This is done through TV and community radio programmes as well as awareness campaigns, meetings, workshops and seminars (Officials of an NGO interviewed at Butterworth on October 10, 2003). These organisations do have their own community projects, which are funded through other donors or bigger NGOs.

Adequacy of grants for household livelihood

It was unanimously agreed during the five interview sessions that were conducted with more than 15 officials from government, municipal and NGO sectors that no grant is sufficient to maintain even the recipient, let alone other household members. An official of the Department of Social Development and Welfare, interviewed at Butterworth on October 10, 2003, argues that:

In the case of Child Support Grant, the R160 is not sufficient but as a department we are saying that this is what we are contributing towards the child's upbringing. As a parent, you have the responsibility of the upbringing of the child.

Similarly, it was stated that within the Eastern Cape for instance, an average household of at least six persons living on one person's grant is bound to be insufficient with the high cost of living. A similar view was echoed by another official who equally agreed on the insufficiency of these grants to sustain recipients, but noted that 'Old Age Pension is fair as well as Disability Grant and Foster Care Grants'. An official of an NGO interviewed in Robertson on October 16, 2003, argues that if the amount is much for Foster Care Grant:

The temptation will be that some people will want to foster children so as to get the money for themselves instead of innate desire to care for other suffering or unfortunate children.

During a 'Women Parliament' in the Eastern Cape on August 9, 2002, it was unanimously agreed that the grants, irrespective of type should be increased to R1000 (Officials of an NGO interviewed in Butterworth on October 10, 2003).

Grants accessibility and problems encountered by potential beneficiaries

There is high awareness of social security benefits but the accessibility is still low despite government claims of almost meeting the target. In the Eastern Cape, an estimated coverage of about 45-50% has been achieved (officials of Butterworth Municipality interviewed on October 8, 2003). "With time, we are soon reaching the target groups that we are supposed to" (Officials of the Department of Social Development and Welfare, interviewed in Butterworth on October 10, 2003). Despite this rhetoric, the potential recipients faced a multitude of problems ranging from personal to service delivery problems, emanating especially from birth certificates, identification documents and others at the Department of Home Affairs. In addition, the grants inadequacy has unanimously been recognised by recipients, government, NGOs and other stakeholders.

Many problems contribute to this low coverage of grants accessibility to poor people. Apart from transport and other personal problems, there is the acute problem of birth certificates delay with complications arising from surnames disparity between that of the parent and that of the child. Furthermore, there is also the problem of issuing identification documents due to a variety of reasons, which also include name disparity, distorted finger prints and request of bringing older people to testify for ages among others. All the officials interviewed shifted the above problems to the Department of Home Affairs. An official of Idutywa Municipality interviewed on October 8, 2004 sums the situation this way:

Social security benefits are not adequately accessible because it is problematic and difficult for women to have access since the municipality is spread and 99% are rural. People have to sit and wait for long hours to be interviewed so as to determine their eligibility. Some just end up abandoning the process because they cannot afford transport to travel to the centres many times. Some wait for other opportunities when they can have transport to come and try again. Many people come from the rural areas to the town centres which are about 30-50 km away from their places.

Conclusion

The poor women's economic realities as well as those of other poor people within South Africa are still very precarious given the prevailing high unemployment rate. This situation is worsened by the fact that their educational level is low as well as lack of capacity building. Social grants were thought to be a source of great relief to many in reducing poverty to a certain acceptable level; though, it does provide some safety net for the poor, it is still grossly insufficient and many depend solely on them for their livelihood and that of their family members. Many recipients have not taken initiatives to improve their lives through other economic activities. However, most respondents who wish to do so lack the funds and direction. A vast majority therefore spend the meagre grants on groceries without enough to be invested into other economic ventures, which could generate more income for the family.

Furthermore, grants have more specifically benefited children through Child Support Grant and the old people. Few poor women have benefited from Old Age Pension and Disability Grants but only indirectly benefit from the grants they received on behalf of others such as Child Support. Therefore, they do not benefit on their own rights from the social security system immensely. A majority of the poor women in the study were found to be single mothers, who are most often prone to poverty which is transmitted to subsequent generations.

Recommendations

The fundamental issue about South African social security system is its accessibility and availability to poor people and poor women in particular. In this light therefore, the department should take concrete steps towards public education and awareness campaigns, especially in the rural areas to inform the masses about grants as well as other services offered by the Department of Social Development and Welfare. There should also be the establishment of mobile service centres that can be reached by all in communities. More importantly, since problems of birth certificates and identification documents emanate from the Department of Home Affairs, the Department should liaise with Home Affairs and other related Departments so as to solve these problems.

Secondly, there should be the implementation of the recommendations of the Taylor Committee (2002) that proposed an adoption of a universal social security system for the country, with the introduction of a basic income grant whereby every unemployed adult receives R100 monthly. In this way, every poor person will have access to such a grant in their own right not simply as indirect beneficiaries. Also, other unemployed household members would automatically qualify for the grant since it would not be based on means test and other eligibility requirements as the present system requires. Furthermore, the municipalities should fulfil their constitutional obligations by radically providing community projects and programmes in order to alleviate poverty. The poor should be provided with capacity building for self-reliance efforts and should be trained in vocational and the income generating activities. Municipalities should also encourage group joint projects through lending money to such groups at zero interest rate.

To improve on living conditions, basic services should be made available to the poor through special charge rates since services must be paid for so as to sustain their continuous supply. These services include water and electricity as well as health facilities, housing programmes for the poor, provision of toilet in informal settlements. The non-existence of these services and facilities has created unhygienic and unpleasant environments.

Finally, the creation of jobs through government and other stakeholders' structures and through favourable investment policies cannot be over-emphasised because the general cry everywhere is lack of employment opportunities and projects for the poor, especially women and youths. Although the government-led schemes for development and job creation such as Poverty Alleviation Fund, the Flagship Programme for Unemployed Women with Children less than Five Years, Support to Small, Micro and Medium-Enterprises (SMMEs), and The Land Redistribution and Rural Development Programme are laudable initiatives, they have had little

impact on the poor. There is therefore the need to revisit the policies and strategies of these cherished programmes because they have good intentions but do not meet the needs of the poor, especially women.

The implementation of the above recommendations could drastically change the lives of poor women and the general poor persons who are battling with the war against poverty in different spheres. The implementation could also lead to progress in the war against poverty.

References

- Aliber, M. (2001) "Study of the Incidence and Nature of Chronic Poverty and Development Policy in South Africa: An Overview". PLASS / Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies. Background Paper 3. Cape Town: Human Science Research Council. Available at www.hsrc.ac.za/research/output/outputsByPerson.php?id (Accessed June 2004).
- Aliber, M. (2005) "Synthesis Report of the 2005 Development Report: Overcoming Underdevelopment in South Africa's Second Economy". (Commissioned by UNDP, South Africa and Development Bank of Southern Africa and launched 1 July 2005. Pretoria: HSRC, UNDP and SADB. Available at www.hsrc.ac.za/research/output/outputsDocuments/3455_Aliber_synthesis-reportofthe2005developmentreport.pdf (Accessed February 2006).
- Department of Social Development (2002) Fact Sheet No.1: *Social Grants Beneficiaries*, March. Available at www.welfare.gov.za/factsheetNo1. Accessed July 2004.
- Department of Social Development. (1997) *White Paper of Social Development*. Notice No. 1108. Available at www.polity.org.za/html/govdocs/white_papers/social971.html. (Accessed February 2006).
- Department of Social Development. (2004) *Social Assistance Act* No 13 of 2004. Available at www.info.gov.za/gazette/acts/2004/a13-04.pdf. (Accessed February 2006).
- IDASA: Budget Information Service. (2002) "Budget 2002 misses great opportunities to support the poor". Press Release. Cape Town: IDASA. Available at www.idasa.org.za/bis. Accessed October 2004.
- Kaseke, E. (1998) "Social Welfare in Southern Africa: The Need for Transformation" *Social Work/Maatskaphike Werk*, 34 (2): 144-149.

- Kimani, S. (2000) *South Africa's Social Security System: An Examination of the Eligibility and assessment criteria used for the state disability grants*. Research Report No. 16. Cape Town: NADEL Human Rights Research and Advocacy Project.
- Liebenbery, S. and Tilley, A. (1998) *Poverty and Social Security in South Africa: Poverty Background Paper*. SANGOCO Occasional Publication Series No. 7. Cape Town: SANGOCO.
- Makino, K. (2004) "Social Security Policy Reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Focus on the Basic Income Grant". Durban: University of Natal Centre for Civil Society Research Report No. 11.
- Stats SA (Statistics South Africa) (2002) *Labour Force Survey*. Pretoria: Stats SA, March.
- Tanga, P. T. and Stears, L-H. (2002) "Gender and Household Vulnerability in Rural Momo Division of Cameroon". A Paper presented at the South African Sociological Association (SASA) in East London on 'Citizenship, Living Rights and the Public Intellectual' from June 30 - July 3.
- Taylor, V. (ed.) (2002) "Transforming the Present – Protecting the Future". Report prepared for the Department of Social Development by the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa. Pretoria, South Africa.
- The Republic of South Africa. (1996) *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996*. Available at www.polity.org.za/html/govdocs/constitution/saconst.html (Accessed September 2005).
- Urquhart, C. (2001) 'Long walk for women' in *PSP Gender Issues*, Newsletter of the European Union Parliamentary Support Programme, 13 Ed., October – December: 2-3.



This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons
Attribution – NonCommercial - NoDerivs 3.0 License.

To view a copy of the license please see:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

This is a download from the BLDS Digital Library on OpenDocs
<http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/>