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# Use of the child support grant in households in Mahumani Tribal Authority, Giyani

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# CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY.

## 1.1. Introduction

The South African government has a social policy aimed at the protection of the most economically vulnerable group of people in the country. Millions of South Africans survive because of the country's basic income social grants (Richter, 2009). Government, through the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), dispenses social assistance grants to people in need. This form of assistance is by and large the highest anti-poverty component of government spending in South Africa and is intended to cater for a range of vulnerable individuals. Amongst all such grants, the Child support Grant (CSG) has the highest number of beneficiaries (South African Social Security Agency, 2010). The CSG is a monthly state-funded cash grant of R280 (in 2012) given to the Primary Caregiver (PCG) of a poor child. The grant reaches over 11 million children which makes up approximately 55% of the total number of children in South Africa. The caregivers of CSG children are overwhelmingly (96%) women (Vorster & de Waal, 2008).

Following the 1994 elections, the South African Government committed itself to a number of specific goals in the area of social policy, which include amongst others the elimination of poverty and the establishment of a reasonable and widely acceptable distribution of income and the provision of a reasonable income through provision of various social grants. The aim of government in providing such grants is mainly to reduce poverty and promote the wellbeing of its citizenry. After the Taylor Commission, which evaluated the entire social assistance mechanism (including all grants), and the efficiency with which such grants achieve the goal of poverty alleviation, a range of comprehensive social security services have been introduced to uplift the economic status of the poorest groups in society who may not have direct access to, or the ability to exploit economic resources. The Taylor Commission (2002) of inquiry into a Comprehensive Social Security System suggested a comprehensive social protection system for South Africa that sought to provide the basic means for all people living in the country to

effectively participate and advance in social and economic life, and in turn to contribute to social and economic development. However, social security measures may be insufficient by themselves to eradicate poverty. Other poverty-reduction and development interventions such as employment-creation strategies, income-generating projects, rural development strategies, and investment and trade initiatives were important. However, immediate social security measures, such as cash transfers and other indirect social security benefits (e.g. free health and feeding schemes) are essential for the basic protection for the poorest.

Social grants of various sorts have been introduced for the benefit of the needy, the elderly, the disabled and children. Guided by section 27(1) C of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996, every South African is accorded the right to have access to social security including, if they are unable to support themselves or their dependents, appropriate social assistance. Despite the various legislative measures, many people in Mahumani continue to live in poverty. That said, social grants (e.g. Child Support Grant) have become constitutional imperatives which grant social security entitlements on a non-discriminatory basis and aim to enhance human dignity, citizenship and social participation aimed at the creation of an environment for the sustainable social and economic advancement of all South Africans (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996; Patel, 2007). This means that the constitution remains the controlling law in South Africa, which if rightly understood and applied, provides a mandate for a an agency responsible for social assistance (SASSA) to focus on social security. In this way, the legal force of the constitution, which in itself is a constitutional imperative, largely provides solutions to the problem of poverty.

In the Greater Giyani Municipality, the majority of young persons under 18 years are unemployed and indigent (Greater Giyani Municipal Integrated Development Plan, 2010). These persons live on social grants provided for by the state to reduce poverty. Although government provides social grants to the needy and the vulnerable to reduce poverty, there are very many views that the grant is not only inadequate, but perhaps not used for its intended purpose (See Appendix 3 for examples). While some lessons from experience have identified a number of good practices about social grants, there are still a number of open questions. In particular, claims and debates continue a number of fronts, particularly with respect to dependency and

claims that there is a little care of such children by their caregivers (Sampson, 2009). This raises the question of what the CSG grant is being used for in the Mahumani Tribal Authority. Despite government legislation and intervention to fight poverty through social assistance meant for the young, the disabled and the old, together with various projects and programmes aimed at improving the livelihoods of the unemployed, poverty for many people within Mahumani Tribal Authority people has remained worrisome (Greater Giyani Municipal Integrated Development Plan, 2010).

This research study examines the use of the Child Support Grant (CSG) within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority (MTA), a community wherein the CSG is used as a lifeline for many households in the face of high levels of poverty, unemployment and very limited economic opportunities. This chapter provides a brief background of the community under study, the problem and purpose statements for the research and the research question that the study hopes to find answers for. Furthermore, the chapter provides the significance of the study and scope of the research. Mahumani Tribal Authority consists of six villages which have over five thousand households. According to the Greater Giyani Integrated Development plan (2010), 96% of caregivers in these households are unemployed, live on grants and are in a condition of severe poverty.

Currently, the CSG, which is a social benefit income support grant given to primary caregivers of children in need, is granted to children under the age of eighteen. These primary caregivers (PCGs) are entrusted with providing direct care to children. In case a primary caregiver is not a child's parent, such an individual needs to prove that he or she is the child's legitimate caregiver by means of an affidavit from police official, a social worker's report, an affidavit from the biological parent or a letter from the school principal at which a child attends school (SASSA, 2011). A primary caregiver responsibility would be to use the grant to mitigate circumstances that may otherwise lead to poverty and vulnerability within households. It is these parents or caregivers who play important child rearing role in households who decide on what to use the grant for. These fathers and mothers of children, or guardians are principal agents of positive change in households. They are principally responsible for managing households and using the CSG in providing care to their children. Therefore, it would be of interest to understand the

perspectives of these people who are in receipt of the CSG with regards to the use of the CSG as cash transfer within their households.

### 1.2. Background to the Mahumani Tribal Authority

The study on the use of the CSG in households in Mahumani Tribal Authority, takes place within six villages which are in the Greater Giyani Municipality, and under a traditional leader and tribal authority of Mahumani. According to the Greater Giyani Integrated Development Plan (2011), Mahumani Tribal Authority has the six villages, which are Nkomo Blocks A, B and C, Nsavulani, Shikhumba and Shawela. The community of Mahumani is mainly poor, unemployed and vulnerable. The research study takes place within this rural ward where 93% of its people live below poverty line, where only 0, 6% of people have a professional work, about 39% of the working population are farm workers whereas others are engaged in informal trade such as selling firewood, small scale farming, fishing and even survive on selling Mopani worms and African beer (Greater Giyani Municipal Integrated Development Plan 2010). The tribal authority has an extremely low level of economic activity and extreme conditions of abject poverty. With the majority of people within these communities struggling to survive, there have been cases of severe malnutrition reported from these communities. Most people within this tribal authority rely heavily on government social transfers for their livelihoods. Although the municipality, together with other private organizations have established a skills training center in the area, the center is now dysfunctional, people no longer enroll as those who enrolled before are still unemployed (Greater Giyani Municipal Integrated Development Plan, 2010). In a nutshell, the quality of people's lives in these villages looks bleak and leaves much to be desired.

### 1.3. Child Support Grant (CSG).

Over the past twelve years, the South African government had implemented a myriad of poverty alleviation measures, with social assistance being the biggest of them all, aimed at achieving the goal of a better life for all. As a result of campaigns aimed at promoting the right of access to social assistance, the number of social grant beneficiaries had increased significantly across

South Africa (Table 1,p6), in particular the Child Support Grant and Disability Grant and any other of children's grants (Patel, 2007)

The new government, faced with racial inequalities in State Maintenance Grants (SMG) (which were accessed mainly by Coloureds, Indians and Whites) had to redesign, equalise and expand grants to include blacks as the SMG did not comply with the equality provisions of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. With the phasing out of SMGs, CSGs were then introduced by the first democratically elected government of South Africa on 1 April 1998 (Patel, 2007) to contribute to the well-being of the poorest and most vulnerable children in society. The CSG is paid out to primary caregivers, which according to the agency's 2012 means test or qualifying criteria, earn a monthly income of not more than R1500. The income threshold for the means test has been reviewed and increasing on an annual basis to ensure that the grant is targeted to those most in need.

The Child Support Grant (CSG) is the state's largest social assistance programme in terms of the number of beneficiaries reached, and is currently the key poverty alleviation strategy targeting children. It is a targeted grant intended for those most in need of support. Applicants must provide information about their income so that SASSA officials can determine whether or not an applicant's total income is less than a stipulated amount. The primary objective of the grant is to ensure that caregivers of young children living in extreme poverty are able to access financial assistance in the form of a cash transfer. According to Orderson (2011), the means test criteria for accessing the grant are as follows:

- The child and primary caregiver must be a South African citizen or permanent resident and must be resident in South Africa;
- An income of less than R1 500 per month of caregiver;
- The applicant must be the primary caregiver of the child/children concerned;
- The child/children must be under the age of 18 years;
- The applicant and spouse must meet the requirements of the means test;
- The applicant must be able to produce his or her 13 digit bar coded identity document (ID) and the 13 digit birth certificate of the child; and
- The applicant cannot apply for more than six non-biological children.

CSG alone takes up the largest part of the social grants budget (Orderson, 2011) and is according to SASSA (2009), the largest social assistance programme for alleviating child poverty in the country. The CSG was recognised as providing assistance to 14.3 million children living in poverty (Martin, 2003). Since its inception, the age limit has been raised or extended for the poorest and that the uptake of the CSG increases significantly on an annual basis when compared with other grants. The grant is currently given to children younger than eighteen years. Various claims suggest that the CSG has a significant impact on the poor children and poverty stricken families (Martin, 2003; Patel, 2007 & Taylor, 2002). Whereas data on the increase in beneficiary numbers from 2005 to 2010 can arguably be associated with a success of the awareness campaigns and proactive registration (Department of Social Development, 2006)**,** this has therefore necessitated an understanding of the use of such grants (in particular, CSG) and the importance on how, if at all, the grant is giving South Africans the opportunity to enjoy their dignity within households.

**Table 1: No of beneficiary grants: 31 March 2006 – 31 March 2010)**

| Grant Type/Period | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Old Age | 2 146 344 | 2 195 018 | 2 229 650 | 2 390 543 | 2 546 657 |
| War Veteran | 2 817 | 2 340 | 1 924 | 1 500 | 1 216 |
| Disability | 1 315 143 | 1 422 808 | 1 408 456 | 1 286 883 | 1 264 477 |
| Grant in Aid | 26 960 | 31 918 | 37 343 | 46 069 | 53 237 |
| Foster Child Grant | 317 434 | 400 503 | 454 199 | 474 759 | 510 760 |
| Care Dependency | 90 112 | 98 631 | 102 292 | 107 065 | 110 731 |
| **Child Support** | **7 075 266** | **7 863 841** | **8 189 975** | **8 765 354** | **9 570 287** |
| Total | 10 974 076 | 12 015 059 | 12 423 739 | 13 072 173 | 14 057 365 |

Source: SASSA Annual Report 2009/2010

The provision of the social grants is assigned to SASSA as it provides social grants as its main social assistance expenditure and public protection social welfare against poverty and vulnerability. The Child Support grants (CSG) has the highest number of recipients and has

become the biggest of the South African social assistance grants in terms of the number of beneficiaries it reaches. As such, there is a need for research to understand the use of such a grant within households in order to monitor the effects of the policy and the targeted government spending . The research is an undertaking to create new knowledge that would contribute to an understanding of the use of the CSG. It will hopefully generate innovative ideas based on household practices and will inform government authorities on issues of social development. Furthermore, the study serves as a useful source of information to many citizens and policy makers with interest in social grants such as the CSG.

## 1.4. Qualifying Criteria for CSG Grant

The CSG is the largest and fastest growing social assistance measure in South Africa today. It is the government's third largest social investment programme and currently reaches out to about 15.4 million beneficiaries of which 10.7 million are CSG recipients (South African Social Security Agency, 2011). The CSG is means tested with the income threshold varying from R2 500 per month for a single person with children and R5 000 per month for married persons. A distinguishing feature of the CSG is that it is paid to the caregiver. The grant may be accessed by both men and women as primary caregivers. The primary caregiver is defined as someone who:

- *takes primary responsibility for meeting the daily care needs of that child;*
- *must be a South African citizen or permanent resident;*
- *both the applicant and the child must reside in South Africa;*
- *an applicant must be the primary care giver of the child/ children concerned;*
- *the child/children must be under the age of 18 years;*
- *the applicant and spouse must meet the requirements of the means test, and that*
- *Child cannot be cared for in state institution.*

  **(South African Social Security Agency, 2011, p1).**

## 1.5. Research Problem

Social assistance is emerging in many developed and developing countries as a leading social protection initiative to tackle poverty and vulnerability. Many countries have developed social policies and actions for the poor and vulnerable, which assist in enhancing their capacity to cope with poverty, and equip them to better manage risks. Such policies include amongst others, the social cash grant transfer, or what is commonly known as social grants, which is "a regular non-contributory payment of money provided by government or nor-governmental organisations to individuals or households, with an objective of decreasing chronic or shock-induced poverty, addressing social risk and reducing economic vulnerability"(Samson, 2009, p.43). Evidence suggests that these social cash transfers contribute to pro-poor growth by empowering poor households to lift themselves out of poverty. Brazil and South Africa are such examples (Samson, 2009).

Driven by the increased numbers of South Africans living below the poverty line and the need for social change to improve people's lives (Croome and Nyanguru, 2007), SASSA was formed to administer social grants aimed at dealing with poverty. Much as social grants are used as one way to mitigate the worst downside consequences of high-risk chronic poverty in South Africa, there has been less attention given to how CSG is used in specific communities. The responsibility of using the grant within households is shouldered upon the primary caregivers who are mostly women. Although decisions on how to use the funds to realize the objectives of the grant are mostly taken by these caregivers, less is known about the kind of decisions they take and conditions under which such decisions are taken. In the midst of many perceptions about misuse of social grants, there is little information about the use and choices that caregivers make (and what informs them in such choices) in so far as using the CSG.

## 1.6. Research Purpose

The purpose of the research is to understand how the CSG is being used within households in the MTA. It is assumed that the CSG contributes to the wellbeing of household and its outcomes in

relation to an improved access to services, health and nutritional status, care of children, child school attendance and overall family wellbeing. Engaging in the study will help to find out who the decision makers are and what decisions are made with regard to the utilization of the grant. Understanding the use of the CSG will generate and expand knowledge and understanding on intra-household power relations, accessing services, support systems and networks, managing household responsibilities and in addressing vulnerabilities in the household. The outcomes of the study will help to understand how the grant is used to assist in better targeting and mitigating poverty and vulnerabilities within households.

### 1.7. Research Questions

The main research question for this study is:

How is the CSG being used within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority?

The study is guided by the following sub-research questions:

- How are decisions arrived at regarding the use of CSG within households in the Mahumani Tribal Authority?
- What is the CSG being spent on within households?
- Is the CSG being used exclusively to meet the needs of children?

### 1.8. Methodology

Finding out how the CSG is utilized was best answered through a specifically designed qualitative case study conducted between January and March 2010 in six villages of MTA. The households were chosen purposefully in respect of their debilitating levels of poverty. Socpen data from the South African Social Security agency was used to identify CSG recipients in a residence code named for the villages under Mahumani Tribal Authority. For example, Sarah Mathebula (*Pseudonym*) of residence code 950200, ID 6804045599080 is a resident of stand No

2385, NkomoVillage, Next to Khandlele Shop. A total of twenty (20) interviews were conducted with household PCG of children for an hour in each household. The purpose of the interviews was to gather information, perceptions that would enable the researcher to create meaning and gain understanding from caregivers on the use of the CSG. In all the respondents, pseudonyms were used to guarantee anonymity.

### 1.9. Significance of Research

The Constitution of South Africa recognises children's (persons under 18 years) rights to basic nutrition, shelter, health care and social services. South Africa has also signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which confers every child to the right to a standard of living adequate for his/her development. That said, the country has to make this provision a reality. Since the state takes care of its children through social security to mitigate poverty within households, the study critically analyses and provides feedback information to decision-makers and provides alternative strategies to meet the national social welfare goals without compromising the needs of children. With its highest number of recipients, the CSG appears to be the prime engine for social security and livelihoods amongst children and within households in most South African families. The use of the CSG remains of importance and has become a pillar for meeting the developmental objectives and as such, warrants a deeper study. Thus, the study of the CSG is seen as an integral part of the study of improved child welfare. The research is perceived to add to scholarly research and literature in the field of Child Support Grant to improve policy and practice. Lessons on how the grant is used to mitigate poverty and vulnerabilities are therefore vital and hence the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the management of social welfare.

### 1.10. Limitations of the study

The scope of the study is mainly limited to understanding and documenting the use of CSG by beneficiaries within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority in Giyani. The study mainly confined itself to interviews and any other secondary information in the form of social welfare reports and documents on the use of CSG. Records such as mass media and government documents provided a glimpse of necessary information which included amongst others, reports

and debates on people's perceptions around the use of CSG. Although the study was limited and confined to the area of Greater Giyani, of which Mahumani Tribal Authority forms part, a piloted questionnaire was also administered in the other surrounding villages in Giyani, Lulekani, Afcolaco and gaModjadji (Figure 1) as conditions in such villages were almost similar to that of Mahumani Tribal Authority. This enabled the researcher to understand the nature and severity of the research problem in respect of the use of CSG. However, the study did not aim to make findings that could be generalized to the larger population, but was aimed at gathering data that would enable one to bring knowledge about caregivers' practices in respect of the utilisation of CSG and the effects thereof, so that lessons and practices can be drawn and compared to other contexts.

**Figure 1: Map of Greater Giyani Municipality in Mopani district**




**Source: http://demo.demarcation.org.za.info**

## 1.11. Draft outline of Chapters

This research, which sought to understand the use of the Child Support Grant (CSG) within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority (MTA) is organised into six chapters as indicated hereunder.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The report comprises of six chapters, including this very first chapter. Chapter One provide background information on social grants, rationale for the study on CSG, context of the research study, a brief background of the community under study, the problem and purpose for the study, the methodology used to carry out the study and the need to carry out the study. The chapter has further outlined the main research question which served as a guide in undertaking the research on how and what CSG was used for within Mahumani Tribal Authority. The chapter further outlined the significance of the study in relation to South Africa's constitutional mandate and citizens' basic right to social welfare benefits. The research parameters were limited to the application of the study to construct the worldview of these participants, understanding what is happening as viewed by participants and in drawing inferential conclusions from sample data

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Chapter Two reviews the existing research literature on CSG in South Africa and identifies knowledge gaps that may not have been explored. The review of literature relates to the research question as groundwork for the research. Thus, the chapter summarizes existing findings with respect to the extent and characteristics of SCG and further identifying knowledge gaps in this regard. Also, the research covers and determines an appropriate use of CSG within households.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The methodology section discusses the design and process of the study undertaken in order to provide acceptable answers to the research questions. It reflects on how the research was conducted, the qualitative research method to s collected data, the description of the sample, instruments and procedure used (interviews and the use of documents) to arrive at particular findings. This includes administering the questionnaire for data collection from primary caregivers and the use of documents such as newspapers to establish valid, credible data. This chapter also provides information about the number of participants and how they were selected.

Chapter 4: Presentation of research results

Chapter Four presents the findings on the use of CSG within households. Presentation of findings reflects perceptions from primary caregivers. Sufficient evidence was presented through a thick, rich description. The chapter presents findings on social assistance that is important for understanding debates about the CSG in South Africa, and particularly, in relation to beneficiaries within Mahumani Tribal Authority.

Chapter 5: Analysis and discussion of research findings

This chapter discusses the data analysis and findings of the study.The analysis chapter presents the results of the study on the meaning of data collected in terms of research questions, or a story that has emerged in the findings. The aim of the analysis chapter was to make sense of the data collected by making connection between the results of the analysis and the existing research.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

The chapter gives a summary of the findings from the previous chapter, indicates how the results are related to the research problem and provides conclusion and recommendations based on the findings presented. The chapter also indicates the implications of the study for future research to pave way for further social development and welfare strategies for children within households.

The conclusion explains how the findings from the analysis of the use of CSG within households relate to the analysis of the CSG and draws out the implications of the dissertation for future research.

### 1.12. Conclusion

This chapter has mainly outlined the problem and framework of the entire study. It has specifically outlined the purpose of the study, the significance of the study and how the study was carried out. The study has also outlined the role of government in using its reasonable and legislative measures in fulfilling its constitutional mandate and responsibility to ensure people's right to appropriate social assistance if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents. It further outlines the importance of CSG in the lives of those in need. The numbers in Table one is a clear evidence of the number of beneficiaries that CSG is paid out to for the purpose of fighting poverty amongst those in need.

The chapter has provided some information about the incidences and depth of poverty as well as widespread, real life poverty and vulnerability within the communities under Mahumani Tribal authority, which have provided a strong motivation to undertake this study on understanding the use of CSG as a cash benefits and entitlement for the poor and needy children from the perspectives of primary caregivers. The next chapter is a review of literature on social welfare theory and its relevance to social development. The chapter provides some scholarly debates regarding what the CSG is mainly used for within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority, how decisions are arrived at regarding the use of CSG within households, its benefits to children and its use as an imperative to the improvements of social lives within households.

# CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON SOCIAL WELFARE THEORY AND USE OF CSG

## 2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a brief review of literature that discusses the development of Social welfare as a program in South Africa, why social welfare had become a social security policy option for South Africa, its intended purpose, and the Social Welfare theory as a basis to understand the use of the social grant (CSG) within households. The chapter provides some international experiences and arguments within academic literature that enables one to understand much about the use of the CSG. Importantly, the literature mainly focuses on how the CSG is being used within households, what decisions and how they are arrived at regarding the use of the CSG within households, what is the CSG spent on within households and whether the CSG is being used exclusively to meet the needs of children. Therefore, in an attempt to understand the use of the CSG within households, the social welfare theory, shall be presented as a theoretical point of reference.

## 2.2. Development of Social Welfare in South Africa

This section outlines the South African social welfare system from its early phases. The South African social welfare system is outlined here in order to provide an understanding of the development of social welfare from its earlier racial provisioning to a democratic society. It further put into context the role of social grants within structurally and divided households.

### 2.2.1. Social assistance system in the apartheid South Africa

The Origin of South Africa's racial discrimination social security assistance to the deserving poor dates back from 1920 with the introduction of an Old Age grant which was designed to lift the poor whites out of poverty and to establish an environment wherein racial hierarch was clear at that time. In terms of the Old Age Pension Act of 1928, all Coloured and White men over 65

years and women over 60 years were entitled to draw old age pension. Africans and Indians were excluded (Liebenberg & Tilley, 1998) at first. According to Lewis (1984, p.25), "white people could not maintain their position as a dominant race if too many sank into apathetic indigence, living with, or even worse, below the non-European majority". At its inception, the social assistance grant was meant to create a fence or dividing line between people of South Africa, maintain a racial privilege, and create a civilized livelihood and lifestyles based on racial segregation and discriminatory policies (Hancock, 1968). The provision of such a grant meant an acknowledgement that individuals were not only unable to sustain themselves, but were racially not equal and that black poverty was by then not viewed as important.

When the grant was initiated, blacks were excluded from receiving any social grant and the reasoning was based on racial grounds. Natives (African blacks in particular) were excluded because they were perceived as a threat to white supremacy, uncivilized hordes who live nowhere but in the reserves and that it was practically difficult to apply the machinery of an old age pension to barbarous and underdeveloped natives (Hancock, 1968). Granting such form of assistance to blacks was perceived as way to better African people, de-tribalise them, civilizing the uncivilized and above all, encouraging the uncivilized not to return to their *kraals* (villages) (Lewis (1984). Subsumed in the decisions made by the then government was that the poverty of individuals amongst whites was perhaps not common among natives, that Africans were to continue sharing poverty as the then government had no intention to consider them as a category of deserving poor who also needed some social assistance (Collie, 1924).

After forty years of social assistance serving only poor whites, there was some opposition to the provision of social assistance wherein black were excluded. Such a strong and fierce opposition within the Nationalist parliament was championed by Moris Kentridge who spoke against the exclusion of natives:

> *I strongly object to the absence of any provision from the payment of old age pension to the native poor. I do not represent a native constituency, but I do not see how in the name of common fairness we can tax the natives and then turn around and say to them you shall not share in the benefits of old age pension. South Africa will be first country*

> *to adopt an old age pension scheme from which the poorest section of the community will be excluded. Such a policy is no credit to either us as a civilized community or to the government which introduces it (*Seekings, 2006, p.17*)*

It was after Moris Kentridge's fierce contest to racial social assistance bill in 1928, that tentative de-racialization began to transform the South African welfare state into the major tool for redistribution that it is today. The Bill was criticized for doing too little for its inadequate benefits and discrimination against coloured pensioners._A key decisions made at the peak of apartheid was the extension of the anti-poverty instrument to African households. However, one unresolved issue is to date still the unemployed and the structurally unskilled individuals whom the government has not been able to deal with successfully in the long term. With this this kind of a situation, social grants remain the main source of income to many within a household. When anticipating political changes, the Nationalist government extended the payment of grants to cover the entire population in a form of a racial payout (Lund, 2011). By the end of the apartheid era there was already a social assistance system for every race in South Africa under the apartheid engineered Bantustans (Homelands) and the so called independent states of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei states.

### 2.2.2. Post-apartheid social assistance system

After the first South African democratic election held in 1994, various legislations and social security policy options were introduced. This includes amongst others the Social Assistance Act of 2004, whose objective was to provide for the administration of social assistance and payment of social grants in accordance with set criteria to all qualifying persons, regardless of race. The changes gave rise to new strategies to deal with social distress and poverty amongst poor people in the country. The government introduced amongst others, a specific grant for children, commonly known as the CSG for which in a number of studies (Case, 2001, Lund, 2011), its positive on child nutrition been captured.

The government's objective of the grant is to support those in need, reduce poverty, vulnerability and to assist people in being self-sufficient (SASSA Strategic Plan, 2010). To meet these

objectives, beneficiaries, through their primary caregivers, are taken care of, through the disbursement of the CSG and other grants. Caregivers, who in most cases are parents, receive the CSG grant (money) on behalf of their children, with the intention to mitigate poverty, vulnerability and to hopefully enable households to become self-sufficient in the long run. This desired state becomes the responsibility of a primary caregiver to make sure it is realized.

In the context of the new and democratic South Africa, the major role of social welfare is the mobilizations and development of resources to deal successfully with the social requirements of change and thereby participate in nation building. In its policy framework on the Reconstruction and Development Programme, the ruling party, which is this case, the African National Congress, (ANC) indicated as follows:

> *No political democracy can survive and flourish if the majority of its people remain in poverty, without land, without their basic needs being met and without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation will therefore be the first priority of the democratic government* (African National Congress, 1994, p.5).

The ANC‘s policy framework found its expression in government‘s provision of an income relief in the form of social grants. In the words of former state President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki:

> *“as endemic and widespread poverty continues to disfigure the face of our country, it will always be impossible for us to say that we have fully restored the dignity of all our people as long as this situation exists. For this reason the struggle to eradicate poverty has been, and will continue to be, a central part of the national effort to build the new South Africa” (*Mbeki, 1994, p.4*).*

Thus, the social grant is geared towards achieving the highest possible form of independence and natural fulfillment of the needs of each member of society. This includes various aspects of social security such as healthcare, food provision of employment, housing and education (Makiwane, Desmond, Richter, & Udjo, 2006). The social welfare theory is based on the

principles of public responsibility for those who lack the minimal provisions for good life. The basic feature of welfare state is social security or assistance intended to provide benefits during periods of greatest needs. This is a form of financial assistance (social grants) offered by the state to deserving citizens. Thus, social welfare theory is concerned with benefits "transfers, universal provision to all people in the society and service provision based on entitlement or a rightful claim to social welfare derived from citizenship rights" (Shaver, 1995, p.16).

Constitutionally, everyone has the right to have access social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). After following the necessary procedures, the caregiver receives the money every month for which the grant is intended to provide various social needs and household needs to alleviate various vulnerabilities. What happens after the money is received by the caregiver remains the responsibility of such primary caregivers, something which the study aims to establish its utilization. Although the intention of government in providing the grant to primary caregivers is to assist in care responsibilities, it has no control over the use of the grant once it is in the hands of a caregiver.

### 2.2.3. CSG as policy option for poverty alleviation in South Africa.

As guided by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) which clearly states the right to access to social security, the first South African democratically elected government, under former President Mandela took a decision that it was more beneficial, not just for the individuals, but for the nation to assist the poor through social grants to all South Africans. The Mandela government took a decision to phase out the racially biased State Maintenance Grant (SMG) which was accessed mainly by Coloured, Indians and a small percentage of White single parents (Patel, 2007). With the phasing out of SMG, additional grants were introduced, one of which is the CSG, a social assistance grant which according to the South African Social Security Agency (2009) is the highest with a number of beneficiaries when compared to the other grants. The grant, like many others, is aimed at mitigating poverty and vulnerability circumstances (Croome and Nyanguru, 2007), and is further aimed at instilling an element of self-sufficiency in

the long run (SASSA Strategic Plan, 2010). The effect of providing the poor and vulnerable with grants may be far reaching in the long term, starting with beneficiaries and the entire household, spreading out to the community, the local economy and eventually to the country as a whole. Whereas the government based its decisions on conviction to serve the poor, the current debate on how a grant such as the CSG is utilized requires some further understanding.

It is assumed that being a recipient of the CSG enhances the self-esteem of a beneficiary and caregivers. For example, a caregiver who receives a grant and is using it appropriately, becomes a provider of family livelihood. A sense of self-worth is then engendered upon a caregiver in making decisions about the improvement of family livelihood. A study conducted by Croome and Nyanguru (2007) suggests that giving caregivers grants gives them more ownership and teaches them to budget. Although some children may not know that they are receiving the grant, and cannot decide on how their money can be used, the assumption is that their caregivers would receive such a grant and use it to their benefit or interest.

Although perceived small, government believes that the CSG can arguably supplement household income and provide the poorest children with resources to meet basic survival needs. It is assumed that the CSG does not only keep children out of the street and out of juvenile detention centers, but also provides basic necessities such as food, health services and shelter (Lloyd, 2000). A study conducted by Patel (2005) on the nature and scope of social security in the Kwa-Zulu Natal indicated that if properly utilized, the CSG, which is a grant provided to deserving children in need can improve the lives of children through access to various services such as health

### 2.3. Social Welfare approach

In this research, an approach to social welfare is important in understanding social welfare services and in particular, the use of the CSG. In an attempt to situate the research within relevant literature and the current knowledge base, concepts such as social grant, social welfare state, Child Support Grant, beneficiary, caregiver and their relationships to the child wellbeing are explored to provide a better understanding and relevancy to research study. Central to social

welfare is the role that caregivers, who receive grant on behalf of children, play in becoming agents of change aimed at the development of a child and poverty alleviation.

In as much as the word social has to do with people in society, the word welfare is synonymous with the provisioning of income or services by the state (Fraser and Gordon, 1994). According to Pinch (1997), the term is often used in a pejorative sense to suggest that individuals who are reliant upon the state are in some ways inadequate since they are lacking in self-reliance. The word welfare is according to (Newman 2001), further used in academic circles in more general sense to refer to basic human needs. The use of the CSG grant takes place within the realm of social welfare and developmental state. A welfare state is defined as "a state in which organized power is deliberately used (through politics and administration) to guarantee individuals and families a minimum income irrespective of their market work" (Veit-Wilson, 2000, p.3). The Social Welfare theory, as it is applicable in a social welfare state, is aimed to narrow the extent of insecurity by enabling individuals and families to abate poverty and assist those in distress and "to meet certain social contingencies which lead otherwise to individual and family crises" (Briggs,1961, p.23).

There are two main approaches to social security. These are social insurance and social welfare approaches. Social insurance approaches are ideas about public and private employees receiving pensions after retirement. Employees make contributions towards their retirements, and would live on their pension contributions after retirement. The social insurance is aimed at providing social security benefits after retirement. Such beneficiaries do not have to immediately rely on the state welfare immediately post-employment or in their earliest time of retirement. The second approach to social security is social welfare, which applies to a welfare state. Social welfare approaches considers the needy, those who are not employed, and unable to provide themselves with the basic necessities such as food, shelter and basic health. Such beneficiaries are those that are entitled to social assistance as per section 27 (1) (C) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. This study adopts a social welfare approach, which is about social security benefits, or government programmes in which government money is regularly paid to people who are either old, ill or they are in a poverty state, that they are vulnerable to various risks and that that they require some form of assistance.

An approach to thinking about social welfare gained momentum immediately after the Second World War as an attempt by the state to responds to the demands both for socio-economic equality and for socio economic security aimed at promoting social justice, contributes to the equalization of living conditions and life changes between classes and groups (Patel, 2003). Social welfare, as it is applicable to a state, denotes a form of government in which the state, through legislation, takes on the responsibility of protecting and promoting the basic well-being of its citizens. Social welfare approaches protection promotion of the economic and social wellbeing of the country's residents, those who are unable to support themselves and their dependents. In the case of South Africa, this is an entitlement as outlined in the Bill of Rights, Section 27 (1) (c), which states that "everyone has a right to have access to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, p.13). The essential elements of Social Welfare theory include any legislation which guarantees income maintenance and other kinds of support for individuals and families in cases of not only poverty, but also diseases, sicknesses, old age and unemployment.

Besides the provision of social assistance services, there are various programs or interventions that government has embarked upon to deal with poverty or other social ills. This include amongst others, free basic services and housing for the needy, an Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) and support for Small, Medium and Micro enterprises to create job opportunities. However, the amount spent on social grants covers a number of residents and remains the highest compared to these other programmes combined. Social welfare, of which social grants are part, is perceived as the major intervention government has put in place and covers many of the poor households. In sum, social welfare approaches advocate that government activities should be designed to advance and enable individual families, groups and communities to cope with social problems of changing conditions. Such international advocacy seeks to promote the provision of a basic means for all people living in a country to effectively participate and advance in social and economic life, and in turn to contribute to social and economic development.

## 2.4. Social Welfare and the use of social grants: International experiences

There is a plethora of literature that talks to the use, benefits and the effects that the CSG has (Barrientos and Lloyd-Sherlock 2002). Numerous academic studies document the broad social and economic impact of these effective social security programmes. In Europe, charity was seen as a right and provision of charity as the duty of the state. In most non-African communities, the growth of welfare states meant the expansion of rights for the poor. It conferred social rights or citizenship and civil rights. Social rights, explained Marshall, (1948, p.8) "ranged from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized been according to the standards prevailing in society. According to the Department of Social Development (2004,p.2), "Social welfare programmes in Brazil and Argentina yield positive impacts in terms of reducing poverty, promoting job search and increasing school attendance".

Existing scholarship provides some information on the importance of social grants and any other income-support scheme and what role such social transfer plays in combating economic insecurity in the advanced capitalist countries. Such literature emphasizes the role of the state in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of social well-being of its citizens based on the principles of providing for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life. Empirical evidence suggests that cash transfers considerably reduce poverty in most developed countries. According to Barrientos and Lloyd-Sherlock (2002), some welfare states in developed nations have considerably lower poverty rates than they had before the implementation of welfare programs.

In most advanced capitalist democracies, organized power is deliberately used (through politics and administration) in an effort to guarantee individuals and families a minimum income by narrowing the extent of insecurity and thereby enabling individuals and families to meet certain 'social contingencies (for example sickness, old age, and unemployment) and by ensuring that all citizens without distinction of status or class are offered the best standards available in relation to a certain agreed range of social services (Esping-Andersen,1990, p.18). In developing countries such as Brazil, extreme poverty was reduced from 23% to 16% in households with pension

income than in those without pension income such as Argentina (Barrientos, and Lloyd-Sherlock 2002).

Indications are that social transfers are used by beneficiaries to cope with adverse outcomes of poverty, life-cycle contingencies (such as a spell of unemployment, illness or a disabling accident) any predictable life events that have a high probability of an adverse economic effect for an individual or family, for which the result can erode a household's capacity to sustain its normal livelihood base (Stephens, 1995).

### 2.5. The Social welfare debate

There have been various international contestations regarding social welfare and cash transfer. This section provides both arguments for and against social welfare wherein the advantages and disadvantages of social welfare and cash transfers have been outlined

#### 2.5.1. Arguments for Social Welfare.

Social welfare programmes, which bring with them the social transfer and social protection are considered as an important factor for reducing the poverty, vulnerability and stimulating economic activity amongst the least fortunate. It is assumed that social grants in South Africa play a critical role in reducing poverty, promoting social development and household development. According to Samson (2009), at the household-level, social transfers reduce risk by providing the security of a guaranteed minimum level of income and better enable poor households to send children to school, buy, uniforms and other school expenses. Samson (2009) further advances an argument for, and in particular, answers the question of why social cash transfers are important for poverty reduction, individual wellbeing and social development. Increasing evidence suggests the following results:

Firstly, social grants have been found to help create an effective and secure state. Grants build social cohesion, reduce conflict and create a sense of citizenship. According to Roy and Samson (2009), evidence relating to social pensions in Mauritius showed that grants contributed to the

social cohesion necessary to support the transition from vulnerability, high poverty rates into a high growth country with the lowest poverty rates in Africa. Similarly, Botswana's social pension provided the government's most effective mechanism for tackling poverty and supporting the social stability that encouraged the high investment rates required to drive Africa's economy over the past three decades (Samson, 2001). The second argument has been that social grants promote human capital development, improve health and education. Studies in South Africa and Latin America repeatedly document significant responses of health and education outcomes to social welfare programmes (Adato, 2007; Olinto, 2004; Samson 2004).

Thirdly, social grants enable the poor to protect themselves and their assets against shocks, enabling them to defend their long-term income-generating potential. Evidence from Ethiopia suggests that although droughts have significantly reduced household earning power for as long as 15 years later (Dercon, 2005, 2006), social cash transfers enabled households to resist desperate measures and had thus reduced future vulnerability. Fourthly, social grants combated discrimination and unlocked economic potential. In South Africa, transfers provided to women have had a positive impact on school attendance (Devereux, 2005; Duflo, 2000; Barrientos and Lloyd-Sherlock, 2002).

Fifthly**,** social grants support the participation of the poor in labour markets. Job search is often expensive and risky. In South Africa, workers receiving social cash transfers put more effort into finding work than those in comparable households' not receiving grants – and indications were that they are more successful in finding employment (Williams, 2007). The sixth argument is that social cash transfers stimulate demand for local goods and services. In Zambia 80% of the social transfers are spent on locally purchased goods, stimulating enterprises in rural areas. In South Africa the redistribution of spending power from upper to lower income groups shifts the composition of national expenditure from imports to local goods, increasing savings (by improving the trade balance) and supporting economic growth (Samson, 2004). In Namibia, the dependable spending power created by social pensions supports the development of local markets and revitalizes local economic activity (Cichon and Knop, 2003).

Lastly, social cash transfers create gains for those otherwise disadvantaged by economic reforms, helping to build stakeholder support for pro-poor growth strategies. Cash transfer initiatives have compensated the poor for reduced price subsidies in Mexico and Indonesia. Bolivia established a social pension with the proceeds from the privatization of public enterprises. This, according to Gelbach & (1995), has made a significant contribution to poverty reduction. Nepal and Senegal have also considered social transfers as an indispensable component of poverty reduction strategies. The impact evaluation of disbursing cash transfers in the two countries has according to Soares (2007), shown a significant positive impact on nutritional intake, access to health and education as well as reduction in poverty and inequality on the respective countries. This suggests therefore, that social transfers are important in poverty reduction.

### 2.5.2. Argument against Social Welfare approaches

There is however a range of literature that critiques how social grants have been used both in developed and developmental states such as those in the USA, UK and South Africa where the social assistance programmes is a predominant programme that government uses to addresses poverty. A study conducted by the Social Watch (2010) in some parts of the USA and also in the five South African provinces revealed that some officials abuse cash transfer and use it to serve a political ideological control function. In some instances, communities are encouraged to vote for party X so that they could access grants and other free basic services.

It is mainly argued that social welfare, which includes mainly the disbursement of social grants, encourages dependency and laziness. Although the social welfare theory argues for a humanitarian case for generous benefits to people in greater poverty within households, it is argued that it has failed to promote prosperity and self-reliance amongst the poor, but rather, a culture of entitlement and dependency, laziness and a burden on the state. According to Sheffield (2011), since the Unites States federal government got into the welfare business with the War on Poverty back in the 1960s, the poverty level has remained nearly the same whilst government welfare spending has soared. The social welfare dependency syndrome has become a debated issue in the United States, with the US President Barak Obama having been quoted as saying:

> *I think we should acknowledge that some welfare programs were not well designed and in some cases encourage dependency. As somebody who worked in low-income neighborhoods, I've seen it where people weren't encouraged to work, weren't encouraged to upgrade their skills, were just getting a cheque, and over time their motivation started to diminish. And I think even if you're progressive you've got to acknowledge that some of these things have not been well designed* (Sheffield, 9 July 2011)

President Obama may be correct to suggest that welfare system that promotes dependence is not well designed. However, the other scholars find social welfare helpful to the poor. Further in the United States of America, Justice Clarence Thomas vilified her sister:

> *She gets mad when the welfare mailman is always late with her welfare grant. That is how dependent she is. What is worse is that her kids, though entitled to the money too, are worse off. She uses the money as she pleases, ill-advised and inconsiderate, and has no motivation for doing better or getting out of the situation. The entire family is in a cobweb of a vicious and accelerated cycle of poverty (*Fraser & Gordon: 1994, p.315*)*

Implicit in Justice Thomas's assertion is that although to be poor may be objective and a real condition within households, to be dependent is subjective. Therefore, being poor cannot be regarded as a complete state in life, but something that requires men and women to use the little amounts wisely in order to get out of dependency and abject poverty. That said, it is argued therefore, that welfare theory, as applied in a welfare state, often undermines people's motivation to support themselves, isolates and stigmatizes welfare recipients in a way that for a long period feeds into and accentuate the underclass mindset and a never ending condition of dependency.

Laziness is not the only label used for grant recipients, but also irresponsibility such as squandering it on alcohol and on gambling. Harber (1995) argues that often women would have unwanted children in order to collect more grant money. Recently, some South Africa media

highlighted a handful of incidents where young women receiving the Child Support Grant have apparently not used it for the purposes it was intended. However, these accounts fail to contextualize the incidents, but the result that they simply reinforce prejudices about the irresponsibility of women, and poor women in particular (See Appendix 4 for examples). However, other studies conducted suggest the contrary i.e. that more of the social grant was spent by poor households on food items (Dough, 2003). Although there may be some abuse of grant money, a study conducted by the Duflo (2000) has indicated that this was not the norm and that grant money is mostly used responsibly by parents.

Whilst the notion that the grant would increase dependency and that the grant will make people reliant on others, rather than on their own resources had become predominant in certain quarters, others have argued to the contrary, that it would decrease dependence by providing poor households with a small, but reliable, income. Scholars such as Dough (2003) posit that destitute households typically rely on assistance from family, friends and neighbours who are frequently poor themselves. Dough (2003, p1) further asserts as follows:

> *In a society marked by massive wealth and enormous inequality, it would make more sense to mobilize the resources of the very rich to ensure the survival and dignity of the very poor. A grant financed via progressive tax rates, would redistribute wealth and diminish this form of dependence. It would have a developmental effect, enabling working families to invest more of their incomes in nutrition, education and health care - with corresponding productivity gains. It would also allow the poor to be self-reliant.*

Concerns about dependency are often premised on the belief that grants encourage immoral or economically undesirable behaviour. This objection takes several forms. Some people fear that a grant will make people lazy. Borrowing criticisms of welfare programmes in the industrial North Wheelock & Oughton (2001) say that social assistance grants remove any incentive to work or to contribute to the economy. Contrary to such assertions, Harber (1995) argues that although the grant money prevents people from falling into destitution, it would not be sufficient to discourage people from looking for ways to earn additional income to augment what they get from government.

Closely linked to concerns about laziness and merit are fears that people use grants irresponsibly squandering it on alcohol, cigarettes and gambling or that women will have unwanted children in order to collect more grant money. Contrary to the anecdotal evidence reported in the media, research indicates that more than 90 per cent of the money spent by poor households goes to food, education and transportation. A study conducted by Economic Policy Research Institute (2004) in South Africa found that households receiving a grant are also more likely to accumulate assets long seen as an important factor in escaping poverty. In short, concerns about dependency tend to overlook the developmental impact of the grant, that it would put more money into the pockets of the poor, stimulating consumer spending, stimulate both local economic activity and job creation.

Although most social scientists, policy makers and citizens support a welfare theory as applied in a welfare state, that it helps reduce the incidence of poverty, a growing number of critics assert that such programmes fail to decrease poverty because the citizenry has been made to believe that as long as such a state is in power, they are guaranteed of such a social transfer and that it would continue with the programme, which in some instances perpetuate a welfare poverty trap and discouraging the citizenry to do something to become self-sufficient and independent (Van der Berg, 1997; Van der Berg & Louw, 2004). It is important to note however, that in the case of South Africa, social welfare is increasingly legitimatized by the language of social rights and as such, the provision of social protection is seen to be the responsibility of the state, and less so of the family and individuals.

### 2.6. CSG conditions and other grants in South Africa

The South African government, through SASSA provides social grants to those citizens in need. These are set of public actions that address poverty, vulnerability and exclusion as in relation to vulnerable groups as they provide means to cope with life's major risks throughout the life cycle. Such grants are intended to increase the effectiveness of investment in health, education and sanitation as part of an essential package of services for citizens, thus making progress towards a

range of Millennium Development goals. One important social grant, which has the highest number of beneficiaries is the Child Support Grant (CSG), a regular social transfer from government targeted at poorer households with children to reduce child poverty and vulnerability, and helps to ensure children's access to basic social services and reduce the risk of child exploitation and abuse. This grant is paid to primary caregiver who is regarded as any person, whether related to the child or not, who takes primary responsibility for providing a child's daily needs on behalf of beneficiaries (intended recipients of state social grant). Caregivers are responsible for ensuring that the child is fed, clothed, immunized, given access to health care and for using the money to benefit the child.

A child's ability to get the grant depends on the financial situation of the primary caregiver. To qualify for the CSG, a beneficiary is subjected to a means test of assets and income CSG applicants would qualify only if they do not have any other source of income or if their income is below certain level. In terms of assets (which includes property, motor vehicles, any savings or investment, any life assurance policies and/or any household possessions), a primary caregiver's assets should not exceed R451 200 if they are single and R902 400 jointly if they are married. Such applicants would not qualify if they have assets that can be used to support themselves or a child, but also if an applicant income is over R2 400 per month or R4 800 in the case of married persons per month. Other grants are also subjected to a means test.

CSG (Table 2), which is means tested is granted under the following conditions: that the primary caregiver must be a South African citizen or permanent resident, that both the applicant (caregiver) and the child must reside in South Africa, that the applicant must be the primary caregiver of the child, that a child must be under the age of 18 years and that the child cannot be cared for in a state institution (South African Social Security Strategic Plan, 2010).

Table 2: Numbers of children receiving the Child Support Grant in 2011

| E. Cape | FST | GAU | KZN | LIM | MPU | NCP | NWP | WCP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1,790,621 | 588,907 | 1,296,574 | 2,653,122 | 1,609,285 | 819,657 | 250,956 | 735,388 | 750,300 |

Source: SOCPEN system (31 May 2011)

According to Socpen system report (2011), Limpopo has 1,609,285 children receiving CSG. Of these children, 47 807 (3%) are from Mahumani Tribal authority (Wards 10, 22 and 23) (Greater Giyani Integrated Development Plan, 2011).

**2.7. The use of CSG within households in South Africa**

Social grants are effective in addressing the problem of hunger in particular and basic needs in general. Various studies indicates that social grants spending in South Africa is mainly on basics such as food, fuel, transport, clothing, fuel or electricity, communication, education, housing and other household operations. Most importantly, the CSG and other social grants are significantly and positively associated with a greater share of household expenditure on food, and the increased spending on food is associated with better nutritional outcomes (Lloyd, 2000). According to Cashin (1995), the prevalence of hunger amongst households with children that receive social grants is lower when compared to those households with comparable income levels. Cashin (1995) further argued that the use of social grants improves learner education. Purchasing school supplies, uniforms, tuition and transportation makes a child feel better. That said, social grants income help pay the otherwise unaffordable expenses of attending school. Secondly, when properly used, CSG relieve the opportunity cost of school attendance and in making a long-term investment in education.

Social Security benefits received by a caregiver on behalf of a child do not reduce the parental support obligation, but is being used to augment such benefits. Parents and caregivers are still obliged to take care of their children, and would do everything in their powers to the benefit of a child. Consistent with the findings in South Africa, that pensions provided to women have

greater impacts on the welfare of the household, a study conducted in Tzaneen (Limpopo) reported a strong association between the presence of female caregivers, school enrolment of girls and augmenting such a grant. Naidoo's study (2008) revealed that caregivers participate in social and community services such as *'stokvels*'[informal social security] and small business that are perceived to generate more money to augment the little grant received. In some rural areas, grant recipients use the money to buy tomatoes and sell as hawkers. A study conducted by the Unicef (2008), revealed that caregivers used social grants (including CSG) to participate in *stokvels* or informal savings groups, which in turn allowed them to save for items that required larger payments. In that study, one caregiver further indicated the money helps a lot in the home, not just for buying food, but that one can join burial societies as well. Therefore, grants are used on different aspects to stimulate local economic activity and to create demands for a range of goods and services

Female caregivers receive the grant and positively use it for child benefit. This include amongst others, buying oranges for sale for the purpose of starting a micro business. Similar to South African situation, the New Zealand study confirms that increased parental income is positively associated with child well-being, and concludes that income gains have the potential to make significant cumulative difference to the lives of children (Meyer 2002). Therefore, Social Security benefits received were often used as an addition for income. The benefits are thus substitute support, as support is derived from social transfer income. This approach has also been adopted in the majority of states where in some instances, children were sent to school whilst mothers spend time working on the farms to augment social benefits received from government social security agencies.

### 2.8. Arguments against CSG as a social grant in South Africa

There are arguments that the CSG is being misused (Makiwane & Udjo, 2006). There are arguments that CSG is associated with an increase in child fertility in South Africa, and that social grants promote dependency (Makiwane & Udjo, 2006). Such views emanate from perceptions about the items purchased by caregivers with social grants and also to visible child-specific situations, For instance, on the visible child situations, it is pointed out that certain

children in the communities are not at school, or not wearing uniforms, or were without shoes, as indicative of improper use of the grant. In the context of current development thinking and agenda, provisioning of social security, and the CSG in particular, has an important role to play in sustaining poverty reduction efforts.

However, "conventional economic theory suggests that social grants may undermine labour force participation by reducing the opportunity cost of not working" (Samson, 2007, p.13). Some (see Spicker, 2005; Pinch, 1997) argued that grants encourage a household formation response that impedes job search and thus perpetuate the poverty trap it creates through dependency. The Centre for the Analysis of South African Social Policy and the HSRC (2008) has explored the existence of a so-called dependency culture in South Africa, investigating in particular whether social grants have engendered such a culture. The study found a very positive attitude among both the existing social grant recipients towards work. Therefore, there was no evidence that social grants generate a culture of dependency.

There was further speculation that the CSG discourages work-seeking among the recipients or caregivers. In a study wherein respondents were asked for their views about whether the CSG is too high and discourages people from looking for work, there was little support for this proposition. Instead, 71% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposition (Lund, 2004; Patel, 2012). The data stands in sharp opposition to claims that there is a dependency culture among people not working. In essence, the findings of the research studies by Lund (2004) and Patel (2012) suggest the evidence against the notion of a dependency culture amongst South Africans who live in households that receive grants.

The third and most popular view about CSG is that it encouraged teenage pregnancy. Studies have shown that the child support grant (CSG) helps ease the burden on women, who bear the brunt of coping with poverty, and does not encourage teenage pregnancy. According to Patel (2007), there was no correlation between CSG and teenage pregnancy. What the findings revealed was that the grant paid per child improved the quality of life of the very poor in South Africa. About 55% of South African children receive the child support grant, which is the most far-reaching social support in the country to date. About 44% of the households surveyed were

living on less than R1 000 a month and supplementing their income with hawking and hairdressing. The allegation that the grant encouraged teenage pregnancy was therefore unfounded.

The CSG is considered as a social grant that motivates risks. It is an incentive which is not a determinant of behaviors, but a contributory factor to behaviour. Spicker (2005) indicated that some incentives could be a motivation and can influence action, an argument which finds most expression amongst many South Africans. In the context of CSG, Spicker (2005) argues that the grant may influence teenagers to have children and thus create perversity (behaving in an unreasonable way, especially by deliberately doing the opposite of what people want you to do). This notion has however not been tested enough.

Perhaps the most prevalent argument against social grant is the one that is perpetually reinforced by mainstream media wherein according to Orderson (2011), nameless and faceless perceptions are that social grants are a burden to the state and society. This perception however, seemed to also come from government and ruling party authority. President Jacob Zuma's raised the allegations that young women abuse social grants system by either falling pregnant on purpose to collect CSG, spend the grant on drinking spree and gambling (Richter, 2009). In a statement which was perhaps unfortunate, full of assumptions and perhaps contrary to government policy and constitution, ANC and South African government President, Jacob Zuma said the following when addressing a women's gathering in Gugulethu in 2008:

> ***The government needed to tackle the problem of schoolgirls who fall pregnant and young mothers who left their babies with grandmothers while they exploited social grants. We want to end this so that we can be a nation that has values (*****Daily Sun, 2 July 2011*****)***

Such stereotypes, prejudices and stigma attached to CSG were however not left unchallenged. Contrary to popular beliefs that young women gets pregnant to access cash grants, a coalition of organisations working to extend social security to children's rebuttal was that young mothers do

not exploit grants given to them by the state for their own purposes. In response to a statements made by ANC President Jacob Zuma, the Alliance for Child Entitlement to Social Security argued to have a significant body of evidence that showed young mothers did not exploit social grants. According to Alliance director Patricia Martin, while the abuse of state funds should always be a matter of concern, there was no evidence of widespread misuse of CSG (Arnold, Conway & Greenslade, 2011). In addition, a body of research conducted by Soul City and Love life showed that many young girls fall pregnant not because they want to get the child support grant. The Human Sciences Research Council (2006) further concluded that there was no relationship between teenage fertility and the (child support grant), that there are no grounds to believe that young South African girls are deliberately having children in order to access welfare benefits.

Amid a plethora of arguments and debates around CSG, South Africa's social security system continues to be progressive, developmental, substantially reduces deprivation, and has a potential to dramatically diminish the prevalence of poverty in South Africa. According to Barrientos and Lloyd-Sherlock (2002), CSG reduces poverty. The CSG payout and extension is said to have reduced the poverty gap by 8 % through increasing the real grant payment in South Africa (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2002). Thus, combining the higher CSG age extension and an increase in the amount of payout had shown a reduction in the total rand poverty gap from 21 to 29%. These findings are consistent with international lessons of experience, as well as with studies of social system from other developing countries.

### 2.9. Summary of key experiences on CSG

Both national (South Africa) and international experiences revealed that the use and effects of social grants (child support grant in particular) has been effective in reaching poor households and has further improved children social welfare (food security in particular) within beneficiary household. A regular grant payment was said to directly reduce household's vulnerability to hunger by allowing the purchase of food, and thus enhances food security. Furthermore, social grants provided a sustained food security and regular access to health services (Van der Merwe, 2000). Therefore, social grant payment is said to inevitably lead to improved nutrition. Whilst

better nourishment tend to improve the health of household members and their resistance to illness and that the regular grant payment give household members better access to vaccinations for disease prevention, treatment and can also lead to better performance of a child at school, the use of such grants within households had remained not only something worth pursuing to get a better understanding, but also a contestation amongst various scholars. In South Africa, the receipt of a CSG is positively correlated with the beneficiary attending school. The receipt of grant appears to decrease the probability of school dropout (Aguero, Carter, and Woolard, 2007). This implies that cash transfers such as CSG increases access to education, improve performance levels and thus reduce the need for households to resort to child labour.

Local and international evidence further shows that increasing family incomes through cash transfers or subsidies reduces poverty levels in households, and enhances the children's development, educational achievement and health status (Arnold, Conway & Greenslade, 2011). Simply put, social grants provide effective, immediate relief for the needs of poor children. LIoyd (2000) has argued that CSG has essential benefits, that it ensures a greater access for poor children to an integrated and sustainable social security in the country, that it provides a grant on an equitable basis to those children in need regardless of their family structure, that it prevents children from unnecessary entering statutory substitute care, and that it keeps children off the streets and out of juvenile detention centers. According to Grinspun (2004), although small, the grant is used to supplements household income and provides the poorest children with resources to meet basic survival needs.

### 2.10. Conclusion

South Africa’s social welfare system is important in the eradication poverty and reducing inequality. Social assistance grants are an important pro-poor item of government expenditure and an intervention in reducing poor people’s ability to access basic rights such as healthcare, education, housing and food. Literature indicates that households that receive social grants use the money to send young children to school provide better nutrition for children. Therefore, the assumptions behind the Social Welfare theory is that CSG is perceived to have significant beneficiary effect at various levels and have potential to transform society. Provisioning of such

a grant and a better use thereof, takes the villages and the whole country forward as a better cared population can start investing in its own future. Literature has however not only indicated the importance of social welfare theory, how, if the grant is well used, recipient of CSG can enhance the self-esteem of a beneficiary, but also how beneficiary access to basic services addresses poverty and vulnerabilities through.

The literature review has provided some insight into the importance of CSG in poverty-alleviating and in support of the income of the household to enable them to care adequately for the child, and to provide for child basic needs. Furthermore, international studies have provided some insight into the importance, value and effect of cash transfers, an essential element to the effect that CSG made a significant contribution and mechanism for assisting those with childcare responsibilities. Advocates for conditional cash transfers (CCTs) point to the beneficial impact conditional grants have on the children and families that receive them. They note that CCTs in other countries have resulted in decreased levels of poverty, increased levels of children's school enrolment and attendance, and improved health of children.

International studies indicate that social grants are important to improving the lives of those vulnerable. Hall & Wright (2010, 19) indicated that "social grants decrease child poverty headcount and contributes substantially to the income of the poorest households". Case (2005), Budlender (2008) and Williams (2007) indicated that such cash transfers increase school enrolment levels among child beneficiaries, improves children's health and nutritional outcomes and reduces the incidence of child hunger.

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1. Introduction

This research methodology chapter outlines the qualitative methodological approach adopted in carrying out the study. Guided by the purpose of the study, which is to understand how CSG is used within households, an interpretive research design for qualitative study is used as a justification and explanation for the method to facilitate a deeper understanding on the use of CSG in households in Mahumani Tribal Authority, Giyani. Such understandings and experiences are derived from the perspective of primary caregivers. The collection and interpretation of data through qualitative research methods enabled the researcher to understand the complex reality of a given situation.

## 3.2. Research Approach

This study on the use of CSG in households Mahumani Tribal Authority is qualitative. Some describe the qualitative approach or paradigm as constructivist approach (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and interpretive approach (Smith, 1989). Qualitative research methodologies are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. The goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely interpretive (Myers, and Newman, 2007, p.11). In this research study, the interpretive approach is used to interpret and understand situations in terms of their actors and hence it is often called interpretive and subjective. This means that the direction of inquiry, data analysis and interpretations arise out of, and remain in the life under study. Meaning is understood from the perspective of the participants (meaning is derived through social interaction). An interpretive study assumes and recognises that multiple

social realities exist, recognises "the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims towards interpretive understanding of subject's meanings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p.23). All research (whether quantitative or qualitative) is based on some underlying epistemology and assumptions about knowledge  Based on the underlying interpretive research epistemology, the research attempts to understand phenomena and context through the meanings that people assign to them as the situations emerge.

In the case of this study, the researcher conducts the study to its subjects or respondents in a natural setting (Cresswell, 2003). The researcher, who in qualitative research is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis, often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives. Such constructivist perspective is according to Merriam (2001), used to better understand any phenomenon for which little is yet known.

Adopting the non-quantitative approach in this study on the use of CSG in households in Mahumani Tribal authority had enhanced knowledge and understanding of pertinent and critical social factors that according to Neergaard and UlhØi (2007), provided insight that could not have been achieved through quantitative means. Therefore, to understand the use of CSG in Mahumani Tribal authority, the study used the qualitative approach as a basis to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

### 3.3. The basis for qualitative study

The basis for the qualitative research method is that reality is grounded and generated through social interactions between individuals. That said, for a researcher to understand how the grant is used, one has to interact with those to whom the responsibility to use the CSG grant is shouldered. As Rosen (1991) puts it, understanding phenomenon and why people do what they do and the decisions they make involves getting inside the world of those generating it. In this way, the researcher would be able to understand and provide socially constructed experience and meaning from the perspective of the participants (meaning is derived through social interaction). Therefore, in order to understand the use of CSG as experienced by those whose lives are part of, it is important to understand their unique natural circumstances that form part of their decisions

with regards to what the use the grant for and why. The interactive method of generating knowledge, which is a basis for qualitative research, recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the interviewer and the respondents, and aims towards interpretive understanding of subject's meanings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) wherein 'discovered' reality arises and is reaffirmed from an interactive process. Through the application of this theoretical basis, the researcher was able to learn much more about from the caregivers in the Mahumani Tribal Authority, their social relationships with those children and the complex interplay of social realities that may have determined the actions and choice of what the money was used for.

### 3.4. Research Design

The design of the study is a basic interpretive and qualitative study. Guided by the purpose of the study, a qualitative research approach was chosen and undertaken with a view to understand how and what for is CSG is being used in the social and contextual household environment. The intention of undertaking this study in a naturalistic context was to develop an understanding of respondents or rather understanding things through the participants so that the phenomena can be described in terms of the meaning it has for the participants.

The qualitative research methodological perspective is an appropriate process to undertake this study on the use of CSG within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority. It is a vehicle through which this study gathers information and creates as according to Maree (2011, p.55), "the way of knowing reality is by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon". That said, this methodology attempts to locate individual actions in their context, i.e. understanding why they act the way they do as individuals real-life situations or circumstances are unique. As such, the findings of this study cannot be generalized as they bring out clarity on how people make meaning of phenomenon in a specific context, thus aiding greater understanding of the human condition (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Therefore, it is not a researcher who decides what counts as knowledge, but what the participants view as knowledge, emerging from interactions between participants and researcher and interpreted by the researcher.

### 3.5. Role of researcher

The researcher's quest for gaining knowledge and understanding was limited to the things to which one was exposed and had experiences of phenomenon under investigation. In this case, the role of the researcher was to interact and collaborate with participants to gather data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Thus, the researcher, who is a familiar person in the area, was an instrument through which data was collected, interpreted and later analyzed. To the best of my abilities the researcher's role was performed objectively, without bias and assumptions. The researcher asked probing questions to get to the deeper levels in the conversations. Being a villager within the MTA, it was not difficult to establish rapport with respondents. Because the researcher shared the language with respondents, it was easy to establish trustworthiness.

### 3.6. Data collection.

As the study focused the use of CSG in households, data were collected from primary caregivers in their households. Data were collected from twenty (20) primary caregivers who are beneficiaries of the CSG. The researcher visited some pay points where Cash Paymaster Services (CPS) pays out social assistance grants. The researcher identified and approached primary caregivers and asked for permission to interview them in their respective homes guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher knew and understood the primary language of beneficiaries (Xitsonga) and as such, found it better to collect data using the language which the interviewees understood.

#### 3.6.1. Primary data collection: Semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, who in this case were primary caregivers. A semi-structured interview was concluded because they allowed follow up questions to be brought up during interview. They were intensive, in-depth interviews designed to get detailed responses from subjects (Lofland, 1971). This enabled a researcher to elicit rich, detailed

data from respondents. The researcher required information concerning interviewee's considered opinions and personal experiences on how they utilize the grant. These are difficult to obtain through structured interviews where rigid questioning prevents opportunities to pursue interesting angles. According to Connel, Lynch and Waring (2001), the semi-structured interview capture insights that may otherwise be lost to the imposition of structured questions. A set of questions were asked to respondents in order to facilitate discussions and to enable individual (caregiver) to construct their experiences and the meanings they had. Semi-structured interview allowed for a fairly open discussion framework that allowed the interviewer the flexibility to probe for details and to gain a range of insights on specific issues. This form of interview encouraged communication and provided an opportunity for learning (The interview schedule is attached as Appendix 2).

### 3.6.2. Sampling

The study was restricted to households whose children are CSG beneficiaries and have no formal source of income. Interviews were conducted with twenty recipients living in twenty (20) households in six village areas across Mahumani Tribal Authority (between January and March 2011).

The key informants were purposefully sampled based on the following criteria. Firstly the caregiver was a biological parent, their children were within the current grant paying age (18 years and younger), and that the caregivers received the money as cash at a pay point. It was then more convenient to sample these beneficiaries as the researcher could visit to the pay point as per schedule of payment cycle. It was also easier to sample such beneficiaries as opposed to those who received their grants through either the post office or the banks as they could not be easily identified. Thus, purposeful sampling enabled selection of participants who were most able to provide information that enabled the researcher to answer the major research questions.

### 3.7. Data analysis

The data analysis chapter interprets findings and creates meaning of the results based on interviews. It is in this chapter that the results findings are discussed in relation to the following main research question: How is the CSG being used within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority? Data analysis is defined as "working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, meaning and discovering what is important" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p.145), and making meaning out of textual data (Cresswell, 2003). It is a technique wherein reports are collected to produce findings or concepts that are not arrived at by statistical methods.

Information was analysed through coding and classified into themes. The purpose of coding was not only to describe, but more importantly to sort, organise, and discard data not directly relevant to the research purpose and to acquire understanding of the phenomenon of interest, to obtain general sense of the information, identify patterns and reflect on its overall meaning and make sense of the data. By coding the raw data, the researcher allocated specific meanings to the specific part or categories of data to make dataset manageable and sensible. Data were also analysed during the data collection process by selecting information relevant to research questions. That is, data analysis was done simultaneously with data collection. The researcher did not wait until all data are collected as that would have made the researcher lose the opportunity to gather more reliable, relevant and valid data (Merriam, 2002, p.14).

### 3.8. Data presentation

After all the data had been collected and the analysis been completed, a thick, rich description of households was presented to convey what the researcher has learnt. Data were presented in categories, themes, explanations, commentaries and in a sufficient descriptive narrative form. The report provides descriptions from field notes of what was observed, experienced and learned through interaction with primary caregivers within their households. This includes observational

detail necessary to make the story and observation experience meaningful. In addition, data in the form of quotes from respondents were included to illustrate the findings of the study.

### 3.9. Validity and reliability

The use of reliability and validity are common in quantitative research. Since reliability and validity are rooted in positivist perspective, they are in this research, redefined for their use in a naturalistic approach or qualitative research to establish truth or understand phenomena in a real world and context-specific settings. According to Patton (2001, 57), "validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, when analyzing results and judging the quality of the study". A good qualitative and reliable study generates understanding a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing (Eisner, 1991). In qualitative research validity and reliability have been used to show quality, rigor and trustworthiness, dependability, neutrality and conformability. Good quality studies are according to Seale (1999, p.266), "established through reliability and validity in qualitative research to provide trustworthiness of a research report which lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability"

From a qualitative research perspective, "reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality" (Seale, 1999, 465). It is also through this association that "the way to achieve validity and reliability of a research get affected from the qualitative researchers' perspectives which are to eliminate bias and increase the researcher's truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon" (Golafshani, 2003, p.604). The trustworthiness of the data collected was arrived at by comparison to using previous research and that decreased the deficiencies and biases which come from using a single data source, corroborate and strengthen findings and reduce the risk of false interpretation.

In some instances, the researcher went back to primary caregiver to confirm, verify data that was collected. This process of member-checking allowed an interviewee a chance to clarify or refine certain aspects of the interview. The researcher also asked the participants to comment on the

interpretation of the data, that is, the researcher had taken the tentative findings back to participants and asked for confirmation of such interpretations. This process was followed because understanding of meaning and knowledge creation in qualitative research is validated through a social construct (Kvale, 2002). The result of the findings and interviewee perceptions from the study were objectively, confidentially (using pseudonym) presented in accordance with the goal of the study.

### 3.10. Ethical considerations

The researcher chose to conduct this study in a community where she was raised. This was an advantage as the researcher was not considered as an outsider, but rather someone who was trustworthy, speaking the local language and a true daughter of the soil who understood the conditions of the people of Mahumani Tribal Authority. In this study, the following ethical issues relating to the protection of the participants were considered.

Before embarking on the study, a written request for participation (Appendix 1) was handed to the selected participants and a verbal consent obtained from respondents prior administering questionnaire. Their participation and contributions to the study was requested as they were considered as important persons who could shed some light with regard to the purpose of the study. It was further explained to respondents (Appendix 1 attached) that their participation was voluntary, and that they were free not to participate, or withdraw from participation without adverse consequences to themselves.

### 3.11. Conclusion

The methodology chapter provided a broad conceptual outline of this qualitative research study The qualitative approach employed in this study provided an opportunity to ground findings in both concrete realities and well-developed understandings of household situations that often dictate how and what for the grant should be used. Most importantly, the chapter outlined how the researcher went about understanding what “truth” means in a study like this one. In this study, the researcher strove for a research design that was both appropriate for the purpose of

generating understanding of the use of CSG. The methods employed in this study provided opportunities to ground findings in concrete realities and was used to facilitate understanding of the phenomenon under study.

# CHAPTER 4: THE USE OF THE CSG-PRESENTATION OF DATA

## 4.1. Introduction

This chapter lays out the findings of the respondents' experiences on the use of Child Support Grant (CSG) within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority (MTA). The chapter describes the caregivers' practices and experiences from research conducted in April and May 2012 in six villages of Mahumani Tribal Authority, one of the poorest areas of the Greater Giyani Municipality. The responses derived from 20 caregivers (details provided in Table 3) highlights caregivers reported use of the CSG in relation to aspects such as nutrition and food security, school attendance, children and family care and access to other services.

In this chapter, the research looked at spending of CSG money within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority. A lot of detail is provided in this chapter in order to provide as much information as possible on this issue. Thus, the chapter has been a window into the spending decisions that are made It should however be noted that these are the uses that were reported to the researcher and not actually observed in practice. Therefore, responses reflected in this section should be interpreted with this in mind.

## 4.2. Demographic and social profile of households

This section outlines the demographic and social profile of households and CSG respondents or beneficiaries that participated in the research study. Mahumani Tribal Authority is divided into three wards (wards 10, 22 and 26) and has a population of 18 814 (Greater Giyani IDP, 2010). As indicated in the respondents' profile (Table 3), all respondents were female, mostly younger than 36 years, had never studied beyond matric and were unemployed, self-employed or seasonal employees. Each household had an average of nine members (mostly school going children of younger than 18 years). There were also some instances where there were one or two children over the qualifying age (18 years) whose lives depended on grants received by other family members as their only regular source of income.

**Table 3: Respondents Profile**

| | | Number |
|---|---|---|
| **Respondents** | **Total number of respondents** | **20** |
| **Gender** | **Male** | **0** |
| | **Female** | **20** |
| **Marital Status** | **Married** | **6** |
| | **Single/Never married/ Widowed/divorced** | **14** |
| **Age** | **35 and below** | **12** |
| | **36 and above** | **8** |
| **Highest formal education** | **Matric certificate or less** | **17** |
| | **Post matric qualification** | **0** |
| | **Never went to school** | **3** |
| **Employment Status** | **Permanent employment** | **0** |
| | **Seasonal/Temporary employment** | **4** |
| | **Self employed** | **7** |
| | **Unemployed** | **9** |
| **Average Number of family members within household** | **Average Total household members** | **9** |
| | **Average Children / grant recipients** | **5** |
| | **Others not receiving any grant (either under or over qualifying criteria** | **3** |
| | **Others family member receiving a grant (grannies who receives Old age pension)** | **2** |

Generally, the households were predominantly composed of young family members, adult parent(s) and older persons of 60 years. This information points to an increasing care responsibility associated with the care of younger children in these communities. Except for casual work such as using donkey cart to collecting firewood and sell, brewing of *Umqomboti* (African beer), using donkey cart to draw water from the river and sell (R2 per 25*L*) small business activities such as selling some fruits and snacks at schools, working as farm workers during harvest time, none within the households had any formal employment. Their traditional households structures (traditional dwelling huts with floors plastered by cow dung), made of traditional materials were a true reflection of grinding poverty and unemployment within the households.

In one household, the situation was dire, emotionally touchy and terrible two mud roundavels (huts) and one roomed house for thirteen people. Teenage boys and girls had to share a sleeping place or else they had to ask from their neighbours for accommodation. The most distressing situation was to see the poor conditions under which the children lived. One caregiver had nine children and was expecting a tenth baby. The unemployed mother [who cannot even volunteer for cooking at a school feeding scheme because she has enough on her hands to take care of the children] receives CSG for her seven children. Neither she nor her husband is working and he depends on the CSG to finance his job seeking attempts.

The six Mahumani villages have five primary schools, two high schools and two health centers. Except for the two villages at which these health facilities have been built (Nkomo B and Shawela), the other communities have no health facilities and as such, are compelled to travel long distances to access healthcare facilities. A newly established village, Nkomo blocks C (established over the claims that the residents were witches and were banished from other villages) has no school or clinic. Children and parents have to travel for over 10 kilometers in a thick bush to access either some basic education or healthcare facilities. There are some RDP houses in this village. From the above information provided in Table 3, it can be inferred that the household members are predominantly the youth with relatively low levels of education.

### 4.3. CSG recipients.

Considering the numbers of children within these households, indications are that there is a high uptake of children eligible for the CSG as compared to other social grants. The respondents, who were all female biological parents, received the grant at a pay point. Most of the households were female headed (Table 3 above) parents who cared for the children receiving the CSG. This indicated that beneficiaries who received grants for their children actually cared for these children in their homes, and is contrary to the belief that beneficiaries receive grants for children they do not actually live with. These women have had an incomplete high school education. It suggests therefore, that the poor are living in households with high unemployment and low levels of education which may have some negative income and poverty levels and may be difficult to satisfy basic family needs and other nutritional requirements within households.

### 4.4. The use of CSG within households.

Information on what the CSG was spent on was obtained verbally from the twenty respondents. Respondents were asked to say what they had bought using the CSG money, who made the decision to buy it, and why they bought such item(s). Respondents were encouraged to provide such information and with some prompting where possible. In this instance, respondents outlined some of the items that the CSG was spent on across households. This included amongst others, groceries. A number of recipients received more than one CSG. Depending on where they stay, the kind of services they could freely access, different beneficiaries use the grant for different purposes.

### 4.4.1. Basic necessities

Despite the small amount of the CSG, the grant is mainly used to buy food, electricity, water, transport to access health services and contributions towards future funeral services they may need. These beneficiaries buy water from either those who have boreholes (they buy a 25*L* of water at R2.00 or R1.50 depending on the owner of the borehole) or from the owner of a donkey cart who could get water from the river. For all household chores, they had to buy the water; as a result they used the water sparingly. Those who could not afford to buy water resorted to travelling more than thirteen kilometres to Klein Letaba River to do washing where they shared the water with domestic and wild animals. Grants recipients, in their own words, indicated as follows:

> *Ni tirhisa mali ku xava swakudya swa ndyangu kuri hi kota ku dya hinkweru ka hina swo fana na matamatisi, mugayo, kavichi, swikotela swa xixevo na swin'wana*
>
> ***[I use the money to buy food for the family so that we can all eat, like tomatoes, maizemeal, cabbage, tinned fish and others.]*** **(Anna, 2 April 2012).**

> *Ni xava gezi, mati ni thlela ni yi tirhisa ku ya tsungurisa vana ekliniki*
>
> ***(I buy electricity, water and also use the money to transport the children to a nearby clinic)*** **(Betty, 7 April 2012).**

### 4.4.2. Income Generation

To mitigate any further vulnerability within households, others use the grant to generate further income to support their families. Respondents said the following:

> *Mina na xava ni xavisa, ni baka magwinya ivi ni xavisa eswikolweni, na malekere na ti cheese naks. Lebyi i vusiwan lebyi hi nga lo tswaleriwa byona. Va hi nyike vana va*

*famba va ya ku tshama eJoni, va kholwa vaya kuma vavasati vo antswa ku tlula hina. Hambi swiri tanu, na kari na ringeta ku hanyisa vana va mina*

***(I buy and sell, I bake fat cooks and sell at schools, together with sweet and cheese snacks. This is the poverty I was born into. They [the men] gave us children and left for Johannesburg only to find other women who are perhaps better than me. Be that as it may, I am trying my best to take care of my children)*** **(Catherine, 8 April 2012).**

*Ni xava miroho , matamatisi, tincondo na marumbu ni xavisa. Nkari wun'wana ni yi tirhisa ku pfuna papa wa vana ku tizamela swa vona leswi swi pfunaku a ndyangwini, hi hlanganisela ni hakela Maeteko*

***(I buy some vegetables and sell, tomatoes, tincondo na tinhloko, tingingiya (chicken feet and heads, gizzards). I sometimes give it to the father of my children to use it for something that will help us in the family. Once we get the profit, I pay for Maeteko funerals)*** **(Dudu, 11 April 2012). (See Figure 3)**

***I use the grant money to make mqomboti (African Beer) and sell on a weekends. There are always people at my place on weekends. I use the money grant to pay for my son's driving school license for his uncle promised to employ him as a taxi driver. My team and I have begun making RDP bricks for in our village to build toilets. We hope this will take us somewhere as long as people still needs bricks. If properly used, this i*ncome alleviates poverty *(Mapula, 22 April 2012).***

***I use the money for stokvel[2] and to buy fruits and vegetables to sell as micro enterprises (Lettie, 28 May 2012)***

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*Stokvel[2] is a South African word for a group of persons who agree to pay regular amount of money and take turns to receive a lump sum. Such money is often used to buy groceries and other household items. Stokvel is a form of informal social security and often organized through parties at members 'homes*

**Fig 3: Dudu's vegetable stall in a local business Centre**



*Ya hi pfuna shem, a swi fani na loko unga ri na nchumu. Loko kuri mina, ani nge swi koti ku hanya ni ngari na mali ya grant*

***It (the Child support grant) helps us, and it is better than nothing. As for me, I can't live without a grant)*** **(Maria 27 May 2012).**

### 4.5. Financial Decision making within households

This section addressed the question of who in the household decides how the CSG is spent and what the CSG is spent for. Decisions as to what the money had to be used for varied amongst caregivers. Much of the varying factors were as a result of the nature of the composition of such a household. In some instances, concerns were that if the primary caregiver does not have control of the money, it is less likely to be used for the benefit of the child. Most CSG recipients were women and the expectation was that a woman would be more likely to spend the money on essential items that benefit the children. When asked who decides on what to use the grant for or

how decisions are arrived at regarding the use of CSG within the households, the responses were as follows:

> *Hambi vana hi tswale swin'we, mina na teka xiboho kuri mali yi fanele yi endla yini. A swi pfuni nchumu ku nyika mali ka papa wa vana hiku mali leyi,yi horiwa hi mina, na swona na swi tiva kuri ku laveka yini la kaya. Hambi swiri tano na va nyika nyana mali.*
>
> ***[Even though the kids are ours, I decide as to what the money should be used for. It does not help to give the money to the father because it is me who had registered these kids and receive the money on their behalf. I know what is needed at home. However, I do give him some money]*** **(Esther, 14 April 2012)**

As for Fanisa, a Mozambique born beneficiary married to a South African male, her response was as follows.

> *Ni kota swona swa ku xava khavichi. Mali hinkwayo ya vana lava va nthlanu na vambiri ni fanale ni nyika tatana. Handle ka swona, a hi nge tleli*
>
> ***(I can only buy cabbage with some money. The rest of the money goes to the father of the children to keep it. Otherwise we shall not sleep at home as the husband would beat me up) (Fanisa, 15 April 2012)***

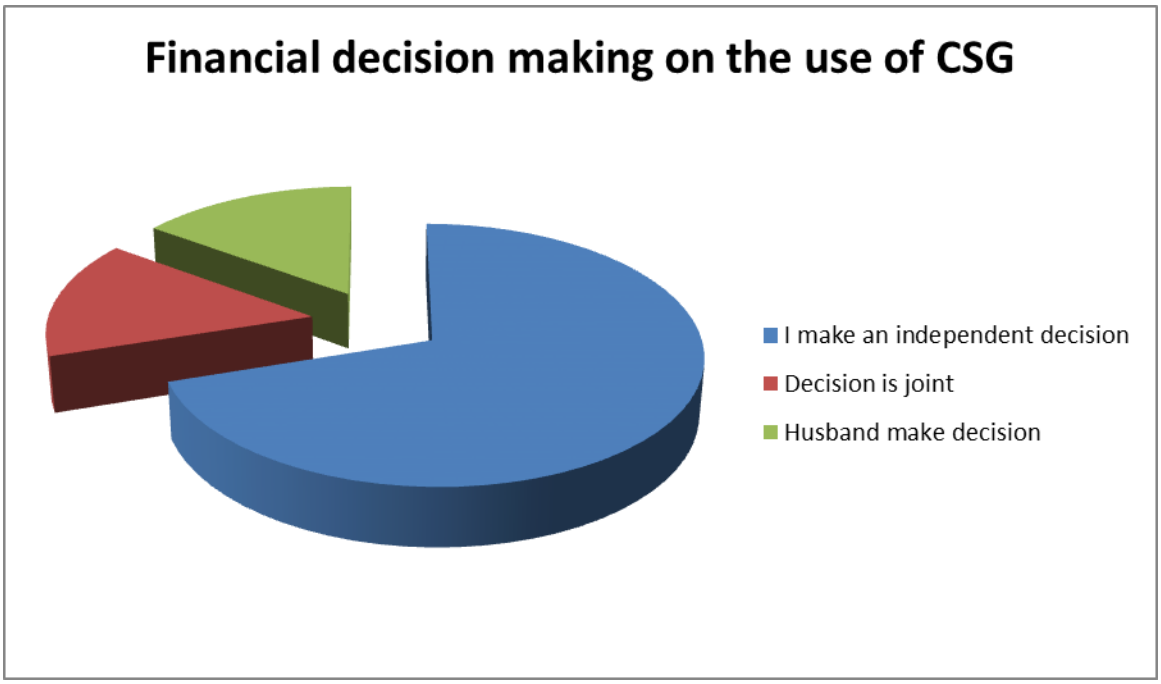
A significant number of women (who mostly were single parents and had no resident partners) indicated that they were involved in the financial decisions regarding what the grant was to be used for

> ***As a single parent, I decide on what to use the money for. The children are mine and are taken care of by myself. There is no need to consult anybody on what to spend the money for on those children who are under my direct care (Majozi, 28 April 2012)***

Although the majority of women are recipients of CSG for their children, some were not in a position to decide the welfare of their children because of cultural and societal beliefs about their worth. They often become compromised in the process due to their marriage cultural conditions. However, the responsibility of taking care of children, which is overwhelmingly in the hands of caregivers, who in the case of Mahumani Tribal Authority are female caregivers had resulted into empowering these women who have since developed an increased decision making capacity

towards a betterment of their children's wellbeing (see Fig 4). Women are the main decision makers in the use of CSG towards a wide a range of household categories such as clothing, food, stokvels, and other groceries meant to achieve their household needs and care of children. Of all the respondents interviewed, only three had no say in the decision towards the use of CSG. It can therefore be inferred that the use of CSG is more often a result of the decision that women make in their caregiving responsibilities. Regardless of traditional gender roles amongst married women, these women seemed to be gradually becoming more autonomous, personally empowered and making their opinions heard in so far as the use of CSG was concerned.

**Fig 4: Decision making on the use of CSG within households.**




Given the responses from CSG beneficiaries, the following conclusions were arrived at. The CSG was not exclusively used to meet the needs of the children. It was used to feed the entire family as households needs included for those who may not have been benefactors. It could further be mentioned that regardless of whatever ailments that each of the family member could contract, the same amount could be used for transport purposes to access free basic and primary healthcare services.

***By the grace, poor kids are less often sick. They do not frequent the clinic except for those teens that come for other services (Mildred, 22 May 2012)***

Thus, it may be that caregivers used the grant to make provision for basic healthy necessities which reduced the burden for having to take their children to clinics and hospitals for medical attention.

**4.6. Other activities that CSG is used for.**

Besides food, caring for children and some monthly fee of R70 is paid to some Funeral Undertakers (which often covers 12 persons and provide ordinary funeral cover) to cover them in cases of death in the family. Respondents indicated they also use CSG to pay for the annual dipping fee of R50 (for those with cattle only), annual tribal tax (R100) which allows them to get confirmation of residence in case they would need to present proof of residence to either banks or furniture shops where they open accounts, lay-buy or buy on credit. Grace, a mother of 5 (and pregnant with a sixth) whose children already receive CSGs, receives a Temporary Disability Grant due to her undisclosed ailments. Grace emphasized the importance of using the grant to make some payment to the tribal office:

***I have to pay such fees because when if I do not pay, I will not get a letter of proof of residence from tribal office to allow me to register the child for a birth certificate so the child can access a grant. I do not want to experience what I experienced when I had to open a bank account in order to get the money for my late husband who was unfortunately killed in the process of road construction. I could not open a bank account without proof of residence from the tribal office (Grace 28 April 2012).***

Money was also set aside for Christmas purposes, as Jane explained:

*Hi hlenga ti R100 n'wheti yin'wana na yin'wana hi ri sikisi. Hi nyika munhu wun'we hi nh'weti. Hi xavela vana va hina mpahla hi mali leyi kambiri hi lembe. Nkari wun'wana hi veka mali kuta kota ku xava grocery hi khisimusi*

***(We collect R100 from each one of the six of us and then give it to someone every month. We buy children's clothing with the money, twice a year for each one of us. We sometime keep the money for Christmas groceries)*** **(Gabaza, 19 May 2012)**

### 4.7. Views from officials of the South African Social Security Agency

Staff at the district office Pay point Monitoring division of the South the South African Social Security Agency was asked for their observations about what the grant was used for immediately after the grant was received at a pay point.

***Grannies buy vegetables like cabbage. Blind people don't buy immediately. Perhaps they have to sort out the money first. There are more loan sharks these days and this has become a worrying phenomenon. There is nothing we can do about it immediately the money is out of our machines into their hands. It is upon them to decide what to use it for. As for CSG children, those with four or five children would also buy something for their children at home – cabbage, spinach and often queue to pay for Maeteko Funeral services or any other service of such kind. Young girls buy less often and I guess they prefer buying something for their children at Shoprite stores (Joseph Ramafalo, 22 May 2012).*** [1]

### 4.8. Conclusions

Generally, caregivers are the recipients of the grant and report using this money for the benefit of those in their care, in this case, their children and other family members. From the separate

[1] ***NB: Loan sharks are persons or money lenders that offer loans at extremely high interest rate. The term usually refers to illegal activity or predatory lending with extremely high interest rates. Loan sharks sometimes enforce repayment by threat or violence. In the case of social grants, loan sharks keep the card and ID with which a grant recipient access his or her grant. They only hand it when such a person receives a grant, and immediately take the card, ID and the amount they need after a grant has been paid out.***

interviews conducted, the most frequently cited use of the grant was with respect to food expenditure (mentioned by all respondents). Food-related expenses covered general groceries such as eggs, biscuits, maize-meal, yogurt, as well as child-specific food, such as formula milk, baby food, food for lunch boxes and school lunches. Soap and nappies were also highlighted by some respondents] and child related expenses. Other uses, though much less cited, included clothing (as well as shoes), transport, health care, burial societies and business investments to generate further income

The findings of this study revealed that all the respondents or beneficiaries were unemployed mothers, and that CSG was the only regular source of income in their households. In some instances, the grant was augmented with other sources of income such as small business activities. The qualitative responses provided some insight which provided personal explanations and experiences from the CSG beneficiary perspectives and why they thought the grant was important to their lives and that of their children in their struggle for survival. Contrary to other views that some are just lazy to find employment, respondents have also indicated how, they also use the grant to generate more income or add to state social assistance. Thus the grant mitigates against severe deprivation and vulnerability among children in the dimensions of food, water, sanitation, health, shelter and education and access to other social services. Responses from this study suggest a great deal of evidence supporting the view that CSG contributes to poverty alleviation not only amongst the children who the grant is meant for, but to the entire family.

# Chapter 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

## 5.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the findings of the research as presented in the previous chapter. The findings are analyzed in relation to the purpose or primary objective of the study, which was to understand how CSG is being used within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority (MTA). The previous chapter presented the study's findings as they related specifically to the purpose and main guiding research questions posed at the beginning of the study. Data presented focused on CSG spending, decisions about spending and the use of the grant for children.

This chapter not only analyses findings from the main data sources being the interviews and observations, but also compared the findings with some empirical studies (practical experiences) to ascertain their consistency or inconsistency. The chapter considers the findings as a whole, and posits that the findings and analysis contributes to the currently dominant debate and knowledge in the field of social assistance. It is therefore in this chapter that the results found are discussed in relation to research questions by making links between the evidence obtained and existing knowledge.

The analysis, which is based on findings is interpretative and was derived from this specific context. The synthesis is reported under several headings relating to different dimensions of the research questions and the experiences of respondents. Most importantly, the analyses were derived from evidence from field study (visits into caregivers' households) and were rich enough to draw tentative conclusions in relation to this community.

## 5.2. Household profile

All respondents to the interviews were women and most lived within their households as single parents. There were male caregivers amongst the respondents. . Although the research was based on a relatively small sample, prior research studies and literature have noted that most of CSG recipients or caregivers are females (Patel, 2011). The results of further show that most of the CSG recipients were found to be unemployed young adults without any post matric qualification. There may be several possible explanations for these results. Firstly, it may be that such caregivers might have grown up in families that were less fortunate and therefore had no access to post matric schooling could not afford to tertiary education due to financial and other family related circumstances, thus leading to outcomes wherein they were unable to proceed with schooling. The education factor may relate to their unemployment status. Secondly, most of these women had five children who were receiving the social grant. Considering the conditions within such households, it can therefore be assumed that the size of the families were relatively high. This can therefore be assumed that (though not generalizable to all CSG beneficiaries in South Africa) most Mahumani Tribal Authority recipients do come from families with poor backgrounds and difficult socio economic circumstances. Therefore, the findings suggest that, and are consistent with the view that the grant is well targeted at the very poorest of the poor (Lund, 2006) and the most vulnerable beneficiaries with huge domestic and care responsibilities.

## 5.3. Living conditions

Some beneficiaries lived in appalling households. Some had no proper shelter such as the RDP houses, which by South African standards is a very basic social-economic right to shelter. Their houses were made of mud and wood. (Fig. 6). The South African government often builds such basic RDP houses and provides for people who are either poor, not working or who are earning less than R2000 per month. This translates into the fact that access to socio-economic rights, including the access to basic services, is limited by government's allocation of its available

resources. This further meant that services much needed by such persons were yet to be accessed. Service delivery or lack thereof, impacts not only on standards of living, health status and well-being, but also affects the overall general living conditions, socio-economic conditions of communities, and therefore impacts on the overall quality of life. Women are the ones who constitute the majority of the poor and who live mostly in very poor households or settlements, which have little or no provision of services.

Some houses made of mud bricks and ordinary grass (not thatch grass) did not even have proper doors, thus making the family more vulnerable. There was a single parent habitation in two households with seven CSG recipients wherein it was not conducive for any normal human life. In such families CSG was the only and main source of livelihood. In such homesteads, some even shed tears when they related their circumstances and the use of CSG. There was a clear indication that they used the grant for the entire family of nine, with no other alternative to augment the grant. The fact that almost all of the respondents or caregivers lived with their children in the households was hypothetically an indication that CSG served them in the family of their origin.

**Fig. 6: A CSG household in Hluphekani (literally meaning where poor people stay)**



The social profile of the respondents across the households suggests that the area had a fairly young and unmarried population. However, a few of respondents were either divorced or their partners were deceased. This finding (with more female children than male) further provides some support for the conceptual premise that the South African rural population is gradually becoming predominantly female gendered society, owing to migration of males to urban areas, thus leaving care responsibilities to women who have to face the harsh realities of poverty and other social ills that such migrations may bring (Statistics South Africa, 2010).

### 5.4. Decision making with regards to the use of grants

Decision making structures within households had an influence on the way the CSG was utilized. Although the CSG is targeted at children, it is received by an adult caregiver. This has implications for the intended outcomes of targeting and whether a child benefits, as this depends on the decision made by either the caregiver or decision maker in a household. In terms of decision-making concerning the use of CSG in this study, the majority of respondents indicated that the primary caregiver (grant recipients) decided alone, or took decision on the use of CSG. Many primary caregivers justified responses on their sole control of the transfer on the basis of their superior knowledge of the child's and household needs. In instances where there were spouses in household, responses provided suggested that decision making was mostly unitary or cooperative. This conclusion was however drawn from responses and not from any observable decision making process. The following response was common:

***I am the one who takes decisions because I know what my child needs***

With regards to decision-making, the challenge with the CSG is the fact that the amount is based on the needs of the child, and that any decision should be about the child, but a child cannot be singled out as he or she lives in a household. Therefore, how the grant reaches the child depends on the household decision-making structure. The findings of the study do not support the assertions, allegations and unconfirmed media reports that that children often go to school without proper school uniform, that grant recipients are irresponsible, squander the money on alcohol and on gambling, that caregivers (women) would have unwanted children in order to collect more grant money. The results of this study have however corroborated a great deal of previous work which found decisions on what to use the money for are most importantly biased towards a child (Harber, 1995; Dough, 2003; Basic Income Grant Coalition, 2011). The results were also consistent with Orderson's (2011) CSG study on the Cape Flats where women made key decisions in terms of using the CSG for the purpose of their children's schooling purposes and specific household priorities.

Although in some quarters, women's participation in decision-making in various aspects of their households well-being remain inadequate and often compromised by tradition and socio-economic circumstances (Xingwana, 2011), the fact that most of them are beginning to take decisions on the use of CSG without first consulting with their spouses suggests that they are becoming firm on matters pertaining to the lives of their children. Therefore, it can be assumed that CSG empowers women. This assertion confirmed Lund's (1996) findings that in instances where tradition still reign supreme, where tradition seemed to overpower rational thinking, where men often have a tendency to take unilateral decisions, women have begun to take a lead in ensuring that CSG is used for child benefits.

### 5.5. Spending on CSG and other services

Every respondent indicated that the grant money was mainly used to buy food, clothing and to access basic services such as health facilities. The school going children also seem to benefit from the grant as most of the respondents were indicating that they can pay for school trips of their children and buy them school uniforms whereas some could not afford that due to the limited amount of the CSG and the number of household members. The results are consistent with those of other studies by Gordon & Fraser (2004) and Seekings (2006) that spending in households that receive social grants focuses more on basics like food, fuel, housing and household operations, and less is spent on tobacco. The results further corroborate LIoyd (2000) that they use the grant for the educational purposes of their children

It is worth noting that an important finding emerging from the analysis of 'who the grant is for' is that grinding poverty in many households mean that households use the grant as a general household budget rather than for child specific needs. In this context, some observations that the grant was not spent on children and is misused are not necessarily reflective of 'misuse' of the grant, but that the family needs to spread the cash transfer across multiple members. The fact that there is no grant targeted specifically at the unemployed, and the fact that poverty is a significant challenge amongst many poor households, CSG is often used to address any other household need. Consequently, too much strain is placed on CSG as some households struggle with poverty.

The Child Support Grant is also used to generate some income, spur job search, investment and other schooling related expenses. The fact that some caregivers do have some small businesses confirms the assumption that although the money is little, it spurs some to positive thinking and finding ways to generate further income. This corroborates Patel (2012)'s assertion that the grant is often used not only as a source of income, but also used to further supplement and generate family income. This is good and encouraging as this could gradually lead to future entrepreneurs who may be self-reliant. Therefore, having considered the positive spinoff that the grant may, it is possible that CSG can make a contribution towards generating further income.

There was information that suggested that the grant is used for a good cause within their families. Patel's (2012) study on gender dynamics and the impact of CSG in Dooringkop, Soweto summed up Brenda Chaka (SASSA official from National Office in Pretoria) story who said:

> ***There are those who use the grant for a good cause. There those who that are saying the grant is small, it is not enough, but is making a difference to them. The grant is actually helping. It is actually adding value to them and the unemployed. It gives them a sense of responsibility. It gives them dignity to actually be parents to the children and to actually assist in running the household.***

Social grants (CSG) are disbursed to caregivers for children and are aimed at reducing poverty and vulnerability (Economic Policy Research Institute, 2004). The CSG was designed with the intention of targeting caregivers (women) as recipients in the expectation that they would be more likely to spend on essential items that will benefit the child. Caregivers and women in particular play a decisive role in realizing the objective for which the grant is disbursed for, which is to break the poverty trap. A report by the Department of Social Development (2008) indicated that a proportion of CSG recipients have control over the financial decision-making.

This is significant and suggests that primary caregivers have control over the spending of the CSG grant money. Although the findings of this study were based on perceptions about financial decision-making on the use of CSG, it is encouraging to compare the findings which seems to be consistent with Makiwane, Desmond and Udjo (2006) that there is a higher proportion of women in rural areas (57%) that indicated that they were involved in the financial decisions making on the use of CSG.

It was further said the grant was used to access medical facilities. Considering the health of the beneficiaries and that of the other household members, the health conditions of household members did not show any signs of diseases such as anemia, an iron deficiency sickness caused by lack of dietary iron (causes delays in brain development), kwashiorkor and marasmus (conditions most commonly seen in starving children) and any other vitamin deficiency-related diseases. It can therefore be assumed that CSG money is put to good use (buy food) as present findings seemed to be consistent with other research (Lund, 2004; Patel, 2012) that CSG was pooled to cover household expenses such as expenditure on food.

There are services that the caregivers have to pay for with the CSG money. These include amongst others, rising electricity and other necessities, buying water at R2.00 per twenty liters [for cooking and drinking] from people who have drilled boreholes in their backyard. Washing and bathing is often done at the river well (as water is not flowing) some kilometers from the villages. The absence of free basic services may divert the use of CSG for these basic needs and compromise and finally erode the gains already made through social grant. The intentions of the grant are somehow being undermined by lack of service delivery (water). This happens in many instances where there is a problem in function of government services or problems with tribal or formal bureaucratic level of administration. Although people do not necessarily pay to get a birth certificate, they pay for proof of residence each time they seek such a proof for the purposes of doing other things such as opening bank account, accessing Home Affairs services and buying furniture. This further strain stretched the utilization of the grant. Walking for longer distances to do some washing exposes caregivers (women and children) to many forms of abuse. These findings were unexpected and suggest that rising prices erode the grant, its intended benefits and adds an additional care burden on grant caregivers

The findings further confirmed the results from other countries wherein it has been demonstrated that social transfer (grants) given to mothers is likely to be spent on children and to be used for the benefit of the family and the household (Haddad, 1999; Kabeer, 1994). CSG is further spent on public service good such (which is free in the villages) as water because of inefficient service delivery, which erodes the value of social grant and the optimal use of social benefit. Because of the nature of governance structures within tribal authorities, caregivers often pay for services such as tribal authority stamp confirming residence approval. Although this assists beneficiaries in getting services from other institutions such as banks, this service should not be charged considering the fact that this is for the purpose of serving children.

### 5.6. Effects of CSG on Households

CSG has both positive and negative effects on household members. However, it appeared that the extent to the grant reduces poverty depended on the decision that individuals took within households. In some households, the research has found that poverty remains more extensive amongst children even after the massive injection of cash via the CSG into those households. Much as the grant had made some positive contribution to child welfare and that it had given the majority of respondents some personal and decision power, it had, in some cases, created some sour intra household relations. This notion has been captured by the words of one participant:

> ***I can only buy cabbage with some money. The rest of the money goes to the father of the children to keep it. Otherwise we shall not sleep at home (Fanisa, 15 April 2012)***

The above information corroborates Coetzee (2011) that grants may have both positive and negative socio economic impacts on the livelihoods and vulnerability of family members within households. Therefore, the impact of CSG on poverty among children therefore depends on the response of the household (Alderman, 1997), which are determined not only by individual preferences but are also strongly influenced by prevailing social and cultural norms and by

economic conditions. However, indications from this research points for example, that CSG received by women have a positive impact on the living standards of their children. This is consistent with Haddad (1997) who found that female beneficiaries had a better use of the grant as opposed to male beneficiaries, and also that it improves the nutritional status of children if it was received by a woman, but not by a man. It is therefore impossible to ignore the role that women play in household care responsibilities.

Various lessons could be learnt from the research findings. Although each family had a different story to tell, the overarching information gathered was that the grant is helpful to their family needs and was used for different things as per caregivers' decisions. Although not the subject of this research, the notion that the grant encourages teenage pregnancy (refer to Appendix 4), makes people to be lazy and not seek employment or people in general to have more children seems unfounded. Such popular, strongly and commonly held views and assertions that grants were often abused (Refer to appendix 3) were vehemently denied by grant recipients.

### 5.7. Conclusion

The analysis of the research findings confirmed that almost all respondents use their grant money for food, school uniform, and funeral policies, to generate further income and for other services necessary for social development. The findings were consistent with that of Lund 92011) who found out that the grant is reaching children living in households in deep rural poverty and that it has positive measurable impacts on among other things, child nutrition and school attendance. Caregivers have indicated that although the money is not enough, they use it for the purposes of serving the interests of their children and the entire household to improve their lives. Their perception was that they could better take care of their children and that the grant was making their lives better. This meant that the grant is important in securing their livelihoods. The findings further reveal that the funds received by the grant beneficiaries are used to support many more individuals than the actual grant recipient. For example, there was a household with 12 family members (with 9 children receiving CSG), 2 unemployed parents and a granny who

received a grant. The entire family survived on nothing else but social grants. It is important to note that CSG is well targeted to poor households that are in most cases vulnerable to poverty, without which these households would fall far below the poverty line. Therefore, CSG does contribute to social protection and building livelihoods within poor households. Cash grants directly reduce poverty of some of the most vulnerable. Therefore, CSG directly improve the living standards of the poor, reduces poverty and inequality. The main aim of the grant has been found to be taking care of the beneficiaries and the entire household. From the study, the money does not take care of the beneficiaries only but the family as a whole.

Four general points emerge from the analysis in this chapter. First, whatever the intended and perceived purpose of the CSG, it is used primarily as a basic household income, and as such, it is used to buy basic food and consumption needs for the whole household. Second, the female caregivers who receive the grant have control of the grant in terms of financial decision making regarding the use and distribution of a grant within the family. Lastly, men were found not be recipients of the grant, but have (though few in the case of married couples) wanted to have control over the CSG.

# CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6.1. Introduction

In this final and concluding chapter, the researcher reflects upon the findings in the light of previous findings on the use or CSGs. The chapter presents the major conclusions and recommendations based on the main findings of this research. The study provides some valuable knowledge about the use of CSG within Mahumani Tribal authority for policy makers. The chapter further explores some implications and limitations of the research study as well as recommendations for further or future research study that could be carried out.

In brief, the study was aimed at understanding how is the CSG being used within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority, how decisions were arrived at regarding the use of CSG within households in the Mahumani Tribal Authority, what the CSG being spent on within households and whether the grant is being used exclusively to meet the needs of children? Based on the research findings, the following conclusion is arrived at, that the CSG grant is a child benefit used to serve not only child needs but also household needs. This happens because a child is served within household and as a results, the money is used for other household needs, that caregivers are the primary decision makers with regards to how, when and what the grant is being used for, that the grant is mainly used for food and access, generating income and for other social services.

## 6.2. Background and purpose of the study

Social grants had become the main social assistance expenditure that government provides as a public protection social against poverty and vulnerability. Payment of social grants is carried out by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). Amongst all types of social grants, the Child Support grants (CSG) has the highest number of recipients and has become the biggest of

the South African social assistance grants in terms of the number of beneficiaries it reaches. As such, this study sought to understand the use of Child Support Grant (CSG) within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority (MTA), a community wherein CSG was used as a lifeline for many households in the face of high levels of poverty, unemployment and very limited economic opportunities.

A qualitative research method was to understand how CSG was used in MTA. As Rosen (1991) argued qualitative research methods provided an understanding phenomenon, what people do and why they do what they do or what informs the decisions that they made. Findings in this study provided some information regarding the use of CSG within Mahumani Tribal Authority, which may be applicable to areas with similar socio-economic circumstances. Much as a there is debate on the negative effects and the possible abuse of CSG, the research findings were that CSG was mainly used for food for the household, and that it was not exclusively used to meet the needs of the children. It was used to feed the entire family as households needs included for those who may not have been benefactors. The analysis of the research findings confirmed that CSG directly reduce poverty of some of the most vulnerable, was meant to improve the living standards of the poor, and reduces poverty and inequality.

### 6.3. Conclusions in relation to research questions

The available evidence gathered through research study demonstrates that CSG serves not only child needs but also households needs, that caregivers are the primary decision makers with regards to how, when and what the grant is being used for, that the grant is mainly used for food and access to other services and to generate further income. It is further concluded that if properly managed, CSG can assist in building a healthy society in care activities. The research further concludes that CSG is reported as being in good use by primary caregivers within Mahumani Tribal Authority and that is a contributor to mitigating poverty and vulnerability, promotes child wellbeing and creates better livelihoods within poor households. Importantly, CSG beneficiaries also cared for others who were not in receipt of a grant, thus illustrating care responsibilities and family obligations of the caregivers beyond the children for whom the grant

was received. Put simply, CSG created a better care for children and family members within households

### 6.4. Implications for researchers and policy makers

The study highlight various implications for those interested in the use of CSG within Mahumani Tribal Authority and possibly beyond, particularly when considering that CSG is a recognized social assistance and protection strategy against chronic poverty and vulnerability amongst the poorest of the poor in many South African communities.

The first implication is that  appropriate policy responses to childhood poverty, vulnerability and CSG extension is therefore important for the future of children and that of their parents. As a government programme, CSG was reported to yield positive effects of on child wellbeing and sustainable livelihoods.

Secondly, although CSG seems effective as a direct transfer, it may be weak on long-term as it requires fiscal sustainability. This implies that if government proceeds with CSG extension, there would be a need for an increased state revenue or tax base. In addition, if state service provisions remain as weak as it is now, caregivers would use the grant to pay for free services such as water. Therefore, lack of the delivery of better services such as provision of healthy pipe water may seriously undermine or reverse the gains made though social transfer provisioning.

Lastly, despite various contentions and negative social discourse around CSG, namely that it encourages dependency, that CSG is abused, it is important to note that CSG is a social security right for those unable to support themselves and their dependents. According to the research findings, CSG was found to play a critical role in terms of providing basic nutrition and meeting the very basic survival needs. Contrary to such assertions, the research found that the grant was beneficial to children The findings not only attest that the grant is put to good use, but further denounces the notion that the money is used for gambling, liquor or drugs. This explains the relatively good use of the grant and care responsibilities by caregivers. Furthermore, these

findings have important policy implication for the need to further extend or increase the social grant. Regardless of such contentions, the state is liable [unless any limitation to social assistance is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity] to uphold its welfare responsibility, take reasonable and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of the right to social assistance (RSA, 1996) as children are protected by South Africa's Bill of rights, policy and legislation.

### 6.5. Suggestions for future research

The conclusion of the study highlighted some important aspects for those interested in further research on CSG and/or other social grants. The study suggests a significant need for a further longitudinal study on tracking the impact of food prices and electricity and having to pay for basic services on social grants, the changes in CSG spending pattern, the effect that this have on the ability of recipients to use the grant for food and what gets dropped form their expenses as a consequence. Secondly, further research could determine if the findings of this research are consistent across other different grant types.

If social grants are aimed at reducing poverty, it is necessary to conduct a continuous impact analysis study with a view to understand not only the role of social assistance in reducing poverty and promoting household development, effects on health, education, housing and vital services. In addition, the study could be commissioned to assess the impact of social grants on labour market participation and labour productivity. The study could further be commissioned to understand the effect of grant on savings. Such research should consider dimensions of poverty such as prevalence, depth, severity and the need for social assistance in the context of the current spiraling rate of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. Knowledge of the prevalence, depth and severity of poverty is important for understanding the use of CSG (what the grant is required to do) as the dimensions of poverty is useful in understanding the nature of households within which CSG is used. As long as debates around CSG rage, an understanding of the use of CSG (and possibly other grants) will remain a subject of interest.

## 6.6. Conclusions

It is against the backdrop of widespread poverty, social injustices and realization that the poor and needy South Africans cannot overcome their positions through their individual efforts that government provides social assistance to the poor households and thus making a significant contribution to household income and poverty alleviation. This qualitative research study on Child Support Grant has shed light on a wide range of relevant issues on the use of CSG. Although every Child Support Grant is nominally assigned to a specific caregiver, in practice it is an income transfer to the household and is used in most cases to purchase food and other basic needs for the entire household. This is due to poverty and limited alternative income in recipient households, and therefore seems unavoidable.

As government continues to pay CSG and other social grants payouts to beneficiaries, as beneficiaries continue to use the grant to care and support their children, the lives or wellbeing of children improves. Such social assistance should be automatically adjusted by the inflation rate every year, and regularly reviewed to assess whether it needs to be raised in real terms. This study documented how CSG has been used and the findings were that the grant played a vital role in reducing poverty and promoting social development. With CSG as a social assistance program, government is making progress in utilizing its anti-poverty strategy to deal with the challenge of poverty. However, social grants alone cannot solve poverty amongst those plunged into poverty circles. CSG is well targeted and is an effective tool in reducing child poverty. It improves access to services, health and nutritional status, care of children, child school attendance and overall family wellbeing. Generally, CSG is effective in reducing the incidence of poverty for households receiving the grants. The social grant is well targeted particularly to recipients in need. It is however important to note that the extent to which CSG reduces poverty is influenced significantly by the decision-making structures in the grant-receiving households.

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## 8. Appendices

Appendix 1: ***Consent Letter***

Dear Respondent

*Request for your participation in Research study*

***Topic: Use of Child Support Grant within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority, Giyani***

I would like to take this opportunity to request you to participate in a study on **Use of Child Support Grant within households in Mahumani Tribal Authority, Giyani.** The purpose of the research is to understand the use of CSG within households. It is assumed that CSG contributes to the wellbeing of household and its outcomes in relation to an improved access to services, health and nutritional status, care of children, child school attendance and overall family wellbeing. Understanding the use of CSG will generate and expands knowledge and understanding on intra-household power relations, accessing services, support system and network, managing household responsibilities and in addressing vulnerabilities in the household. The outcomes of the study will help to understand how the grant is used to assist in better targeting and mitigating poverty and vulnerabilities within households.

If you agree to participate, the researcher will administer questions that will take approximately ninety minutes of your time in the comfort of your home. The results of your participation will help in understanding the use of CSG within households. Your participation is voluntary and confidentiality is guaranteed. If at any time during the interviews you wish to withdraw your participation, you are free to do so. However, you are encouraged to fully participate as your contribution is much more important.

Thank you for the courtesy of your assistance.
B.E. Baloyi

**Appendix 2: Research Questionnaire**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Respondent No:** | |
| **Interview Date** | |
| **Time** | |
| **Locality/Village** | |

**Please note that there are four parts to these research questions**

**Part 1:** Biographical Questions

**Part 2:** Decisions arrived at regarding the use of CSG within the households

**Part 3:** Services for which is CSG being used within household

**Part 4:** Effects of CSG on care responsibilities and in addressing vulnerabilities

| **PART 1: Biographical Information** |
|---|

1.1. Name of respondent.....

1.2. Location/Village: ……

1.3. Age Category

| 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60 + |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1.4. Personal Status

| Gender | | Level of education | | | | Marital Status | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | F | Primary | Secondary | Tertiary | Never | Single | Married | Widowed |

1.5. Employment/Occupation

| Employed | Casual employment | Unemployed | Pensioner/ other grant recipient | Community Projects/ informal business | Other sources. Specify_____ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

1.6. No of family member within household?

***Interview questions***

**1. Household Income: What are the sources of household income?**

1.1. No of children receiving CSG within household?

1.2. Any other family member receiving a grant except CSG?

1.3. Number of persons receiving an income within household?

**2. Who decides how to use the grant?**

2.1. Who is receiving the CSG on behalf of child/children?

2.2. Do you immediately use the money after receiving it?

2.3. Who decides what CSG is used for within households?

2.4. Do such decisions cause any difficulties within households?

**3. What services is CSG being used for within households?**

3.1. What services and amenities do you have access to, e.g. running water, telephone, school, health services, electricity?

3.2. Which of the services and amenities stated above do you use CSG for?

3.3. Do you belong to any community social clubs such as stokvels, burial societies and grocery clubs?

3.4. How do you contribute to these social clubs?

3.5. Where do you get money to make such contributions, if any?

3.6. How do children benefit specifically from these services?

3.7. Can you manage on this grant?

**4. What effect does CSG have on care responsibilities such as household needs (food, clothing, shelter) and social services (basic health and education)?**

4.1. How much of the grant is used for buying food? What is rest used for?

4.2. What is your staple food?

4.3. How often do you give your kids/household fresh vegetables?

4.4. How do you get these vegetables?

4.5. What illness do you encounter in your household?

4.6. Have things improved since you started getting the grant. Has it made a difference to your life?

Thank you

## Appendix 3: Poem on the use of Child support Grant

***SELLO SA NGWANA***

Below we publish a poem by one of the concerned children who recited it during the Deputy President's visit to Manthe village. It is a Setwana poem that lamented the manner in which some parents uses social grants for their own benefit instead of the intended reasons. She appeals to all mothers and caregivers to use this money responsibly.

The poem goes like:

Mme o dirang ka madi a me a digrant?
O apara dibogate,
O ya soloon,
Moriri wa gago oa phatsima,
O lepeletse.

Ao! Bosetlhogo jo bo diriwang ke bo mmarona,
Boausi, bommangwane,
Le botlhe ba ba sa dirising madi a rona sentle.

Bona fela jaaka re le makgasa,
Re lesweleswe ga re na dijo tse diitekanetseng.
Kgalema rre Zuma, kgalema.
Bosetlhogo jo bo kana bo tla fela leng?

Mme motswana a re kgakakgolo ga kena mebala,
Mebala e dikgakaneng.
Puso e re file madi gore re je,
Re apare, reithute ka madi ao.

Mme ke rapela Modimo gore a tsene mo go rona,
Gore re itsi gore rebotlhokwa rona Ma-Afroka Borwa mantshonyane
Bana ba mmala wa sebilo,
Re setshaba sa kamoso

***By: Palesa Kebinelang***

update
April 2011

sassa
SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY

**Below is an English translation of the Poem**

Below is a Tswana lamentation by one child [Palesa Kebinelang] about the use of Child Support grant. Directly translated, the poem goes:

*Mom, what do you do with my social grant money? You wear jeans, you go to a salon, your hair shines, and you look beautiful.*

*Oh how ill considerate our mothers can be, our sisters and aunts, and all those who do not use our money appropriately.*

*Look at us - we are still young and toddlers. We do not have enough food to eat. Can Zuma please calm this? When is this hardship going to end?*

*Government gave us money to use it for food, wear and for education. I pray to God to enter into the hearts of our parents to realize that we are the future*

**Appendix 4: Perceptions on the use of CSG**

# PREGNANT FOR R270 A MONTH

## Several teens responding to a study conducted by the health dept, said they fell pregnant to be able to claim child support grants

Nelie Erasmus

POLOKWANE - Some families in Limpopo encourage or force teenagers in the family to fall pregnant in an effort to gain access to child support grants.

The monthly amount paid to those who qualify for this grant is R270.

The motif behind this is to alleviate poverty, but this might be counter-productive as it results in many learners dropping out of school, often to never return again.

A total of 15,5% of teenagers responding to a study conducted by the department of health and social studies in Limpopo, indicated they fell pregnant to be able to claim child support grants.

The trend is increasing, especially in the Waterberg and Mopani areas.

More than 30% of the teenagers in the study had multiple sex partners and many were turned away at clinics where they wanted to obtain contraceptives. Over 70% of pregnancies were unwanted, and alcohol played a role in nearly 10% of resulting pregnancies.

Nearly 70% of teen moms claimed they were raped during their first sexual encounter, with more than 25% being statutory rape, meaning the victim was younger than 16 when raped.

Statutory rape showed the highest incidence in Waterberg and Mopani, while explicit rape was the highest in the Sekhukhune and Vhembe areas.

Having sex with a person younger than 16, even with that person's consent, constitutes statutory rape and is a criminal offence.

The report did not elaborate on the teen mothers' ages, but it is believed some were younger than 16.

Poverty plays a significant role in teen pregnancies - according to the report, 35,7% of teen mothers were orphans.

During the 16 Days for No Violence Against Women and Children, it seems there is a very high level of violence against teenage girls in the province, and it continues to be a growing trend.



# Use grants wisely or they'll be taken away

By GODFREY SIGWELA

THE South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) has issued a warning to people using grant money to gamble, buy liquor or drugs.

But Sassa said it was willing to help those who genuinely need more. It was responding to the story in *Daily Sun* yesterday under the headline, "Gambling for food!"

Sassa spokesman Luzuko Qina told *Daily Sun*: "We acknowledge the story. But Sassa cannot allow a situation where child support grants are not used for the benefit of children.

"That child support grant is meant for the wellbeing of the child, not for the parent's needs.

"Sassa, with social workers, can investigate and determine whether the grant is being used for the benefit of a child or not.

"If not, the grant could be terminated and a caregiver or guardian nominated for its receipt."

Source: DAILY SUN Friday 22 July 2011 page 5

**Appendix 5: Snapshot in the life of women who receives and use CSG**

Tanya, 20 and Edwina, 17, Abrahams, are sisters - two of several women whose only means of survival is the social grant. Small of stature, they could be mistaken for 15-year old twin girls – very possible due to malnourishment. The two sisters live off the R250 (minus the ten and back charges) rand per month they receive from the State for each of their two children. The 240 rand is spent on "nappies, milk, food and something for the pot". They live with their foster mother and during the month, do "odd" jobs- domestic work to supplement their income to buy basic foodstuffs. These young women find themselves scrambling to survive, underweight and having [not] only enough money to support their children with basic food.

I meet Rihanna Johnson (26), she reeked of alcohol and admitted she's had a few drinks and addressed me in Afrikaans. "I drink to forget about my problems." What problems", I ask? "Ek moet skarrel om te liewe" (I have to hustle to survive"). Only twenty-six and a mother of an 11-year old son, she is unemployed and homeless. Unable to afford the rent, she lives on the goodwill of strangers. The child support grant is her only income for the month. With this money she has to buy food for her son and pay her debts. "I borrow R50 from the money lender and then have to repay her debt plus interest". Domestic abuse by strangers she drinks with is another reality she faces. 'I have to find a way to live and make a way'.

Community organizations have noted that domestic violence is a concern in the area and on closer inspection of the statistics, crimes against women and children have been on the increase, especially brutal attacks against women. These are the cases we know about, and of the women who have reported abuse we know there are many who don't. The women's survival stories, offer a window into their lives; the exclusions they face and the simple hard choices they make.

"We have opted for the free government 3 month contraceptive injections. In the women's case it is a cheaper option and saves much needed cash". Simply put, they cannot afford to buy sanitary towels and this form of contraception is cheaper and saves them about R20 rand a month, even though the long-term impact of this form of contraceptive on their bodies could spell disaster for their future health. This is simply a cheaper option, which saves them money that could instead be used to buy much needed food for which children whose fathers have never supported them

As the young women relate their stories, they are clear that their children are their priorities but admit that it is a struggle to survive. When they do collect their grant, for a brief moment they imagine having money [ not having to think where the money is coming from] -eating a treat like fish and chips and doing window- shopping, dreaming of the day when they can afford to buy clothes for the children without having to count their cents. They briefly imagine a moment of excess and indulging in eating a 'luxury meal' like MacDonald's and buying clothes- things that many of us take for granted.

**Oderson, C. (2011). 2010 Annual Ruth First Memorial Lecture, University of the Witwatersrand: Voices from the Margin. *African Studies*. Vol 70 (1), 156-165.**