

Beyond flamboyant statistics on social welfare politics: should South Africa be worried about the child support grant (CSG)?

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Abstract:

There has always been an apprehensiveness of whether the child support grant (CSG) has achieved its primary objectives. There question on how the caregivers negotiate to tackle self-needs with the responsibility of CSG, especially in this economic hard-time when unemployment is rife. This study empirically examines the caregivers' livelihood, and their perception using qualitative methodology and semi-structured interviews. Twenty caregivers between the ages of 21 and 60 were sampled using purposive and snowball sampling in UMgungundlovu district of KwaZulu-Natal province. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data which reveals that most low-income families depend on the CSG income for survival as such CSG contributes enormously to poverty reduction in South Africa (Zembe-Mkabile et al., 2016). The finding also reveals that CSG ensures food security for the needy (Khosa & Kaseke, 2017; Mazeza, 2018). The finding shows that CSG reduces economic pressure on vulnerable teenage girls, as well as gives them the upper hand to negotiate sex (Mazeza, 2018), reduced infection risks and lower teen fertility (Grinspun, 2016). According to the finding, many caregivers utilise CSG to fund personal needs such as expensive hairdressing, airtime purchase, drugs and alcohol consumption, as well as family needs which need to be addressed. The study though does not pick up any link between CSG and population, it however recommends that the Department of Social Development, local governments, social workers, researchers and SASSA officials must partner to engage further monitoring and evaluation of CSG with the aim to review its utilisation and for prospective long-term effects.

Key words: child support grant, poverty eradication, economic development, population control, policy monitoring and evaluation, social welfare, caregiver, children welfare, and standard of living, citizens' relief.

1. Introduction

Social welfare refers to the social security system that the state provides all citizens with funds and services to ensure a certain standard of living and maximize the quality of life. The child support grant (CSG) is not an option as it provides the citizens relief of various kind. The CSG is currently regarded as unconditional (Aguero, Carter & Woodlard, 2006; Holmes & Bhuvanendra, 2013; Zembe-Mkabile, Ramokolo, Sanders, Jackson, Doherty, 2016; & Mazeza, 2018). The word 'unconditional' implies that there is no legal binding on how caregivers spend the grant. It is assumed that the grant is spent on the child or children whose caregiver(s) collect the money. During my initial reading around the topic while drafting the proposal for this study it was noted that many local researchers such as Khosa, (2013); Patel, Knijn, and Van Wel, (2015); Mduduzi, (2011); and Triegaardt, (2005), and international researchers such as Lindert, Linder, Hobbs, and De la Brière, (2007); Pozarny, 2015; Owusu-Addo, (2014) and Van Stolk & Patil, (2015) had done enormous work on the effects CSG on the children recipients. Most of these studies seemed to take for granted that caregivers within families are faced with many challenges (Tomlinson, 2013). The challenges that may affect their role to children under their care and these challenges may affect the objectives for which the CSG was established. This aspect thus remains what one may describe as a dark spot or a grey area. This, however, gives credence to the need for the study's outcome.

Meanwhile, in this hard economic time, as earlier acknowledged, the caregivers are faced with the challenges which may include material deprivation, low levels of education, lack of access to jobs and services, social isolation, mental and physical ill-health, and domestic violence, to mention but few. This left us wondering whether CSG as a social welfare programme truly delivers on its promises. This study was conceptualized to empirically ascertain whether or not the CSG policy delivers on its promises. This aims to circumvent the possible effects of inadequate monitoring of the programme can have on the recipients. For instance, the effect of assuming that CSG apparently delivers would continue to detract from the government's effort to promote good child development outcomes in South Africa. The study hence aimed to elicit caregivers' perceptions on the influence of CSG on the recipients' well-being. The study's objectives include to determining caregivers' perceptions concerning the roles which the caregivers play on the well-being of the child, the caregivers' conditions and benefits obtained from the CSG. In order to achieve the above objectives, the study posed the following research question: *what are the caregivers' perceptions on the influence of the CSG on children's well-being?* In order to ensure that the research question is adequately answered the study adopted the Ecological perspective as a theoretical framework. The significance of the theory is that it allows a thorough examination and scrutiny of how caregivers live their own lives their vis-à-vis responsibilities or roles on the children entrusted upon them.

2. Theoretical Framework

The ecological perspective is based on the biological science of ecology, which scrutinises the interaction of people with their physical, social, and cultural environments and how each influence and shape one another as they compete and negotiate survival or adaptation (Gitterman, 2009). The theory refers to the social environment as the socialisation of friends and family, social and community networks while the cultural aspect of the environment comprises of values, norms, beliefs, and language that (re)shape the individual's views, perspectives, and expectations (Gitterman, 2009). The ecological perspective thus treats persons as active agents who shape, and are shaped by their environment (Lounsbury & Mitchell, 2009). Thus the theory allows a thorough examination of the nexus between the physical environments and the constructed world of the study's participants.

Furthermore, the ecological perspective holds the ideology that the person(s) and the environment's relationship can be described as being direct and positive (Gitterman cited in Teater, 2014). What does 'direct and positive imply? This implies that the individuals, families, groups, and/or communities strive to maintain a positive and healthy fitness between themselves, harmonise their cohabitation with prevailing circumstances by maintaining and managing the situations presented by the environment (Teater, 2014). Thus, creating a healthy environment. The process of maintaining a positive and healthy fitness between the persons and their environment is regarded as adaptation or adaptedness (Gitterman, 2009). The inability of the environment to provide the necessary resources, due to being unavailable, inaccessible, or non-existent leads to individual persons exhibiting negative feeling towards their environment. The theory also stipulates that the level of persons' understanding of the environment determines possible reaction (Gitterman, 2009). The negative level of adaptive fitness leads to stress feeling, obtainable where the government is irresponsive or where inadequate resources are provided (Teater, 2014). The ecological perspective focuses on the interventions which can actually improve the level of person or person's fitness towards the environment to improve the quality of interaction between the individual and environment (Gitterman, 2009). In this study context, ecological perspective provides the background upon which the state interventions would be expected, through social policies and legislations, to promote continual growth, development and potentialities of human beings in their respective environment. Thus, this explains how the state interventions increase opportunities and engagements between the individuals and the environment in terms of meeting their specific needs. The state intervention, such as the provision of the CSG is one example of purposeful intervention by the state targeting vulnerable groups in society. The theory also enables the study's literature review to focus on *social security policies* with emphasis on CSG vis-à-vis South African socio-economic context.

According to the Beveridge Report (1942), Social security is dated back to the United States' 1935 Social Security Act which stipulates provision of social amenities to the citizens. This includes the social security programme implemented in the UK (Cichon & Hagemeyer, 2007). Thereafter, most nations considered social security as a universal necessity, most especially to member states to the United Nations (UN) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) (Mpedi, 2008). South Africa, as a developing nation, has implemented numerous socio-economic policies to aid the transformation of previously disadvantaged families, and the well-being of their children. Amongst these policy programmes is the CSG which was implemented since 1998. The CSG grant is given to vulnerable caregivers for the provision of the child's basic needs. The social security system in South Africa seeks to provide the basic means for everyone living in the country but most especially the citizens.

3. Nature of Social security in South Africa

Since 1924 South African social security was reserved for White South Africans while Black South Africans were excluded (Triegaardt, 2005). This racial discrimination led to the South African Constitution of 1996 which made provisions for non-discriminatory assistance to previously disadvantaged people and people without means or the less privileged (see Section 27 (1c) of the constitution). Hence, social security in South African context remains the vehicle for the abolition and prevention of poverty, reduction of inequality and correction of Apartheid legacy (Mpedi, 2008; & Kaseke, 2010). Formal social security includes social insurance and social assistance. The social insurance is designed to protect income earners and their families against a reduction or loss of income because of exposure to risks (Kaseke, 2010). According to Triegaardt and Patel (2005), social insurance are benefits organised by the state through specified contributions by employers

and employees. It is also referred to as a contributory scheme to cover specific risks; while social assistance provides aid in the form of cash or in-kind to needy persons, less privileged and people unable to support themselves. Kaseke, 2010). The disability grant, child support grant and state old-age grants, among others are grouped under social assistance. South African people also rely on traditional and informal social security systems. The traditional social security includes the extended family systems that care for the children, the aged, the sick and those who are disabled (Kalusopa, Dicks & Osei-Boateng, 2012). According to Kaseke (2013), traditional system centres on the principle of solidarity and reciprocity. This implies that risks are shared among members of the family while support is given within the assumption that it will be returned directly or indirectly. This, however, helps to develop a sense of unity within the extended family system among many cultures in South Africa. Amongst the implications of the “sense of unity” where risk is shared, and support returned indicated that the grant goes to solve many other distinct problems. The informal social security revolves around self-organised mutual aid arrangements such as stokvels and burial society (Matutu & Kaseke, 2014). Stokvels are informal savings schemes organised in black communities (Mashigo & Schoeman, 2010) which protect millions of South Africans, by providing financial security and social well-being (Response, 2012).

4. South Africa’s Child Support Grant (CSG)

Before 1994, the apartheid government had State Maintenance Grant (SMG), which was a policy that failed to reach the most impoverished communities but excluded Africans as beneficiaries (Triegaardt, 2005). Given the discriminatory nature of SMG, it was replaced by the CSG in 1998, which targets deprived children and families irrespective of their race (Coetzee, 2013). The CSG became a poverty alleviation strategy rather than a prevention strategy which seeks to support the income of the poor household to enable them to provide for the children’s basic needs with the clear objectives of (1) ensure greater access for poor children to an integrated and sustainable security system in the country; (2) provide a child grant on an equitable basis to those in need regardless of family structure, or tradition or race; (3) prevent children from unnecessarily entering or remaining in statutory substitute care; and (4) keep children off the streets and out of juvenile detention centres. In 1998, CSG involved a cash transfer of R100 per month to the primary caregivers of all eligible children under the age of seven. The age limit has been increased to eighteen years and the CSG is terminated when the child turns 19 years old, admitted to a state institution or has not claimed for three consecutive months. The grant can also be suspended if the child does not live with the caregiver anymore. The caregivers are eligible for the CSG only if they are South African by nationality. In April 2017, the amount of CSG was raised to R380 per month. The CSG is evaluated and recognized as the most successful unconditional social security programme (Holmes & Bhuvanendra, 2013; Adato & Hoddinott, 2010). The South African government in 2010 introduced a regulation that requires caregivers of CSG recipients of school-going age to show evidence that these children are attending school. It is expected that the school attendance certificate is produced for children between the age of 7 and 18 years. This is the first attempt within the South African social assistance system to impose conditionality although the same regulation states that failure to produce a certificate or proof for school attendance will not halt the caregiver from getting the grant (SASSA, 2016). It is of concern how caregivers with diverse motives and intentions arising from socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and constrained resources negotiate to resolve personal needs and that of the children entrusted in their care. The study utilised for the caregivers’ perception to understand the livelihood practices and the context in which they form their decisions to spend the CSG in respect to performing the responsibilities entrusted to them as caregivers.

5. Research methods

In order to gain more in-depth understanding of how the caregivers think, feel and interact with their responsibilities in their social world, the study employed qualitative research methods using exploratory research design. Exploratory research is social research conducted to explore a topic or to examine a new interest in a phenomenon (Babbie, 2011). Thus, the purpose of exploratory research design includes gaining a broader understanding of situation, phenomenon or community (Bless, Smith & Sithole, 2013). The sampling consists of caregiver CSG recipients who were resident at Mpophomeni, KwaZulu-Natal Province in South Africa. The sample of this study from a population of approximately 26 000 people living at Mpophomeni township (Stat SA, 2018). Purposive and snowball-sampling techniques were applied for selecting participants such that the two sampling techniques was used to select most appropriate participants that provide information that aid the achievement of the study's objectives. Purposive sampling implies that participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study (Maree, 2007). Twenty-five caregivers between the age of 21 and 60 who were beneficiaries of the CSG, were selected but 20 were available on interviews. These caregivers include those who received CSG between 2 to 5 years for number of children ranging from 2 to 5. The participants with previously disadvantaged background, who fall within the category of unemployed, unskilled and semi-skilled labour, living with the child and still has a personal desire to better him or herself. The snowball-sampling technique involves the accumulation of participants through a reference from the participants themselves (Babbie, 2011). The snowball-sampling technique allowed the participants to introduce a few other potential participants with the required characteristics.

Meanwhile, pre-testing was implemented to ascertain the limitations of the instruments and also to validate the interview guide (Kvale, 2007; Khan, 2011). For instance, the pre-test implemented for this study reveals that the designed English interview guide that was also translated to isiZulu was efficient and needful. The pre-test also alerted the addition of five minutes to the initial 20 to 25 minutes was imperative. The pre-test also induced familiarising with the recording gadgets used during the interview. The three pre-tested participants were part of the 25 who signed the consent similar to participate freely, and the same semi-structured interview guide was utilized during the pre-test.

However, the semi-structured interview was used through face-to-face interviews to collect data. The interview guide provided the structure of what to be covered during the interview. The interview guide also contains predetermined open-ended questions that allow flexibility and freedom for probing questions and clarifications (Silverman, 2010; Braun & Clarke, 2013). During the interview, the interview guide allowed to clarify, adjust, modify and stay focused on research questions during and after the interview. Tape recorder was utilized to ensure accuracy in transcribing and summarising of the interview responses, which may not be possible with field notes only (Opdenakker, 2006). Tape recording allowed rewind and repeatedly listening to participants' responses for clarity during transcribing. It allows for an easy opportunity to cite or use direct quotations for emphasis during data presentation and interpretation.

The data collected were analysed using thematic analytic approach. Thematic analysis is a gradual, systematic process that aimed at identifying themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The thematic data analysis allows to firstly transferred the data from the field notes and transcripts to the computer, the synthesised and categorised the emerging, as well as underlying themes. These emerging themes were re-categorised according to the sub-research questions the particular

response was answering. In order to ensure proper and clear presentation of findings the themes marched with the quotations from the interview as the evidence and sources of interpretations. Data analysis encapsulates the processes whereby the available data is cleaned, examined, described and explained (Gibbs, 2008). The Tesch eight steps of analysing qualitative data was implemented because it provided clear, detailed guidelines on organising unstructured qualitative data (Creswell, 2009). The steps are: (1) reading the transcribed interviews carefully, vis-a-vis the field note to familiarised myself with the data without making assumptions; the ideas where noted as they come to my mind and I took note of all underlying meanings and frequenting topics; undertook the task of listing underlying topics and grouped the dater according to similar topics, major topic, unique topics, and leftovers; (4) fitting abbreviations were assigned as codes on identified categories of topics; descriptive wording or phrase were also assigned on the topics or categories; (5) Split or merge themes where necessary to form sub-themes; (6) these themes were accessed and re-organised to address the key research question; (7) cut and paste method was utilized to assemble relevant information form the collected data, as extracts, which was attached to each theme or sub-theme as evidence; and (8) preliminary scrutiny for each team was conducted to ensure that nothing is left out which was followed by the reporting the findings.

Table 1: themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-sub-themes
Participants' perceptions on the utilisation of child support grant	The expenses direct to child's needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expenses for immediate gratification • The expenses to secure child's future.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructive costs directed towards families and adults • Usage of CSG which tend to exclude the child's needs. 	
Participants' perceptions towards child support grant		
Participants' perceptions on how the child support grant can be used to benefit the child		

The fieldwork experience shows that two participants seemed to be afraid of audio-recorder. There is a possibility that such participants may provide socially desirable answers and make an attempt to withdraw from the real experience. It became imperative to continue to reiterate that the responses would be used for research purposes only. The participants were also informed of how confidentiality would be implemented in the study. The use of field notes was intensified. The inevitable limitation remains the inability to involve male caregivers who are CSG receivers in the study due to unavailability. The inclusion of male caregivers may have added value to the study.

Meanwhile, it is imperative to mention that the study design was exploratory. Babbie (2011) states that exploratory research is social research conducted to explore a topic or to examine a new interest in a phenomenon. The ethical clearance was obtained University's ethics committee before the initial inquiry began. The committee also ensures that the appropriate procedure in conducting the study is followed (Babbie, 2013). The participants were assured of confidentiality and informed of the study's objectives before giving their consent. The study validity was ensured by maximizing the pre-test during the study as a tool to ensure adjustment were made where necessary. The literature was intensively reviewed to attain a deeper understanding of the issue under study. The participants' names were removed to ensure anonymity was properly observed and that the participants' identity was not being linked to the study findings (Bless et al., 2013). Anonymity is the assurance that the identity of research participants remains unknown; this was achieved by removing any information from the data which can link the participants to the data or findings.

6. Findings

The pattern and themes identified in relation to the findings are presented using extracts from the data. Extracts from collected data are attached to the prevailing themes to provide evidence, and the particular participants concerned is referenced. For instance, *Yes! Of course, because they (i.e., the fathers) know the government is there to support and take responsibility for our children they themselves become very irresponsible in the lives of their children* (Participants12, 24 years old). The letter 'I' and 'me' refer to myself as the researcher, my comments and participants' responses. The biographical information of the participants such as the age, marital status, level of education, and employment status are presented in tabular form. The presentation of data findings precedes the extensive discussion of the findings. The demographic data of the participants is summarized as follow:

Table 2
Demographic details of the participants

Age	Frequency No = 20	Percentage %	Unemployed	Unskilled labour	Gender
21-30	14	70	12	2	F
31-40	3	15	3	0	F
41-50	1	5	1	0	F
51 and above	2	10	1	1	F
Total	20	100	17	3	
Level of Education	Tertiary	Secondary	Primary	No Education	
Percentage %	45	25	15	15	100

The chart below represents the size of the sample that is married and not married during the times of the study, as well as those who were employed and not employed.

Figure 1: Participants' marital status

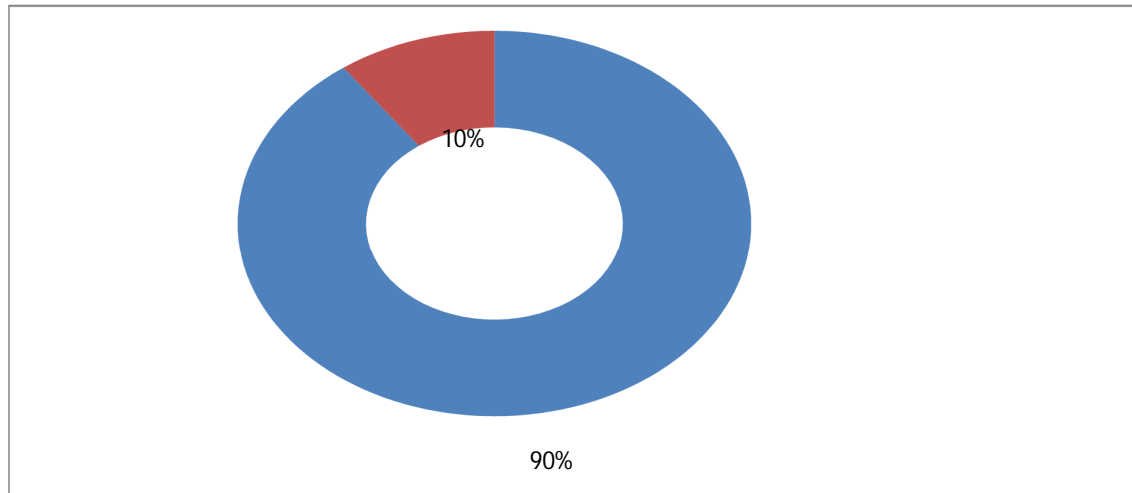
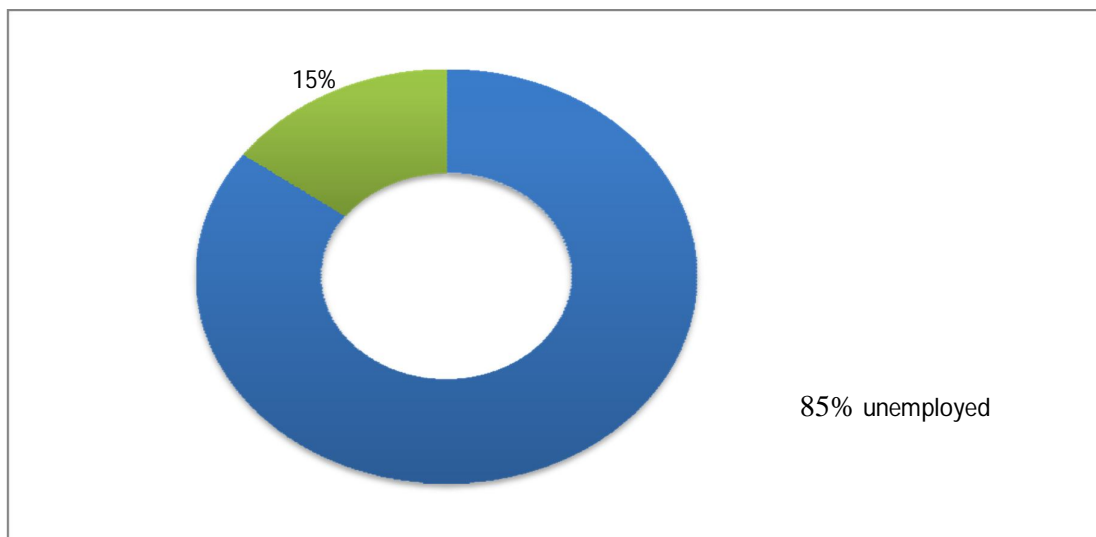


Figure 2: The participants' employment status



The above demographic data focuses only on women most because caregivers are mostly women and women are responsible for children's care in the cultural context of the study's location. Very few male caregivers may be found, but they are very sporadic. The majority of mothers interviewed are unmarried purposefully chosen. The province has the highest number of mothers who never married statistically followed by Gauteng province of South Africa which most people often allude to the issues relating to exorbitant *lobola* (i.e., bride prize) the culture tax potential husbands. This works in favour of the study requirements where the ideal caregiver needs to have very limited support except for the CSG. The underlying rationale is that the livelihood of unemployed and uneducated caregivers would indeed reveal to which extent these caregivers are responsive or concerned about the children's needs. The issues surrounding exorbitant *lobola*, its gender implications and worrying tacit response the cultural custodians of these provinces, over the years, has decided given to the issue are beyond the scope of this

study. Being guided by the study's objectives which inform the formation of structured-interview questions and the research question, the emerging themes are:

6.1 Participants' perception on the utilization of CSG

The participants commended the good that comes out of having the CSG they seem to express both the shared positive sentiment. The recipients unanimously praised the child support grant for its enabling effect in assisting the caregivers and the children. In other words, since the money is given for free, the participants express gratefulness on the generosity shown by the government. The participants' gratitude comes from their admiration of the CSG for its reliability and regular. For instance, *it assists us when the children need school shoes, it plays its part, and there are many other uses that it has, like this one goes to pre-school and it's far from here so he needs to be taken by transport, how would they go if it was not for the grant with the child support grant they are getting, they can get pocket money and also school needs, everything is going well.* There is a unanimous view that CSG makes the children's fathers irresponsibility. In order to examine the usefulness of CSG as directed to children needs, three sub-themes are presented. These sub-headings are as follows: (1) the expenses for immediate gratification of the child; (2) expenses to secure child's future; (3) constructive expenses not directed towards the child's needs; and (4) the expenses direct to child needs.

6.2.1 Expenses for immediate gratification

Participants revealed that the children's school-related expenses such as school fees, school uniforms, and transport to school, school trips, pocket money and lunch box are prioritised when spending the CSG. These expenses towards education costs have encouraged school or crèche enrolment and attendance. This is captured in all the illustrations from the participants. For instance, participant 5, (24 years old) says: *"it assists us when the children need school shoes, it plays its part, and there are many other uses that it has. Like this one goes to pre-school and it's far from here so he needs to be taken by transport, how would they go if it was not for the grant with the child support grant they are getting, they can get pocket money and also school needs, everything is going well"*. The study findings also show that high expenditure of grant money is mainly on food associated with nutrition. The study findings also demonstrated that the grant recipients prioritise children's needs towards education. Cash transfer programs such as CSG provides a predictable and reliable source of income for necessities which can have significant effects upon the capacity of households to invest in human development.

6.2.2 The expenses to secure child's future

The participants acknowledged that despite school-related expenses, they use CSG to pay for the child's educational plan and life policy. For instance: *I use it to pay stuff like educational plan and funeral policy that because I had the income to take care of the rest* (Participant 20, 30 years old). The part of CSG which goes to solve caregiver's needs is considered by the caregivers as a future investment to secure the child's future. The participant considers CSG not only supportive to the recipient child or children but also maintains and improve the caregivers' lives and opportunities. Thus, CSG allows beneficiaries access to facilitate and necessities that have a direct influence on a child's present and future wellbeing. As proclaimed by Participant 3 (21 years old) who said: *"I use the grant for my own personal use, like buying airtime, doing my hair, buying whatever I need or wants"*. The caregiver's wellbeing is tantamount to the child's better future, at least, in the understanding of African family support network, the child is not separable from the caregiver or the expenses that are not directed towards the child's needs, but also for the caregivers.

6.2.3 Constructive expenses not directed towards the child's need,

These other categories of expenses used to fulfil the family needs, and the financial needs of the caregivers are regarded as constructive expenses in this study. The participants agreed that they utilise CSG money for their personal needs. It is however, quite interesting how convincingly the participants believe that part of CSG spent on personal and general family needs are well spent. Thus, the participants argued that CSG spent on family needs is spent constructively. For instance, the participant 18 (21 years old) said *"I am unemployed no one else is employed in the family, so there is no other extra income, so there is only the grant"*. This implies that the child's family welfare is considered part of the child's interest. The participants, however, affirm that certain family expenses fulfilled with CSG are neither directly connected to the child, nor indirectly connected to the child's upbringing or interest. These caregivers' personal expenses paid with CSG are also believed by most unemployed participants to have been spent constructively, or, at least justifiable such as airtime purchase, toiletries, cigarettes, hair-dressing cost, caregiver's education cost, stationaries to mention but few. It is well put by participant 8 who was 24 years during the time of the study *"I wanted to pay for my books, and I did not have the money, and I used that money to buy books because exams were by the corner..."*. This could be a shred of evidence that the part of CSG which goes to benefit the adults' personal needs are at the detriment of the child, but this is difficult to say if the caregiver is truly unemployed; and if the money goes somehow to empower the caregiver. Like in the case of participant 11 (34 years old) who said *"I sometimes borrow money for small businesses then when I get the grant money, I use it to pay slowly. It is sometimes not the full amount when you pay slowly..."*. There is an issue of caregivers who abandon the child entirely and use the entire money for personal needs, even for buying drugs.

6.2.4 Utilisation of the child support grant that excludes the child's benefits.

This is the scenario or cases where the caregiver recipients are misusing the CSG. Thus, the CSG is misdirected or utilised not at the best interest of the child, but for personal gain of the participants. For instance, there are situations CSG are used for the caregiver's hairdressing, nails-dressing and alcohol consumption as seen in the response by participant 1 (33 years old) *"Eish! For women, they do their hair and nails the children end up not benefiting. She could be talking about herself! There are fraudulent-related cases such as people who actually are not the caregivers, staying with the child or entitled to receive CSG claim the grant as seen in response by participant 3 (23 years old) "... she does, she give birth to a child she dumps the child to the mother; she gives birth to another one she dumps again to the grandmother? She goes and register for CSG, she does not give the grandmother the money, she goes with it somewhere and misusing it, but the children need to be feed, they need clothing; they need to go to school, and they don't even go for immunisation because the grandmother is too old and doesn't know about all those things..."*. It is, however, difficult to decipher whether or not those who abuse the system did not fall pregnant or gave birth pre-meditated for personal gain or misplaced investment on CSG.

6.3 How CSG utilisation can be improved (participants' perspective)

The participants were concerned about possible impacts their life challenges may have on the child. Most participants suggested ways in which the government can distribute the money, as well as facilitate proper usefulness. These suggestions include establishing a taskforce that can possibly inspect the children's livelihood with the caregivers, the process that must include interviewing each recipient child. According to participant 20 (30 years old), who says *"I feel that with SASSA they need to upgrade the system, the review is done once per year, you go there you say I am still staying with the child, but there is no proof that you are staying with the child. I feel like if they will do visit to just double check if you are really staying with your child. Like*

when I went to do my review, they said there is no need to come with the child...". The participants also suggested that just as South African Competition Court regulate price-fixing, the SASSA must find an effective platform to reprimand perpetrators who misuse, steal or abuse the CSG. There is the idea of government handing out vouchers instead of money, as well as stipulating specific stores where these voucher are accessible or convertible as participant 7 (21years old) clearly puts it "*corruption I once watched a documentary, overseas I think America and they are given vouchers other than money. If your kid is like from 0 to 2 years, you are given a voucher for food and cloth, and then you go to the shop and then your buy specifically those things. I think the government of South Africa is doing a bad thing as of money; it's better if they give vouchers. If your child is more than 3 years to 5 years, you go and change and given the vouchers*". On one side, albeit the participants' view ensures that use of vouchers would promote the use of the grant to the best interest and benefit of the child. On the other hand, the study by Aker (2012) found that vouchers are not easy to implement as compared to cash transfers. Aker (2012) also found that although cash transfers increase households' savings as compared to the voucher, cash transfers had lower levels of food insecurity as compared to the households receiving a voucher.

7. Summary of finding, conclusion and recommendation

This study reveals that CSG indeed constitutes the only source of income for so many families who benefit or receive the grant. The caregivers interviewed accepted to invest and fund self-development projects with CSG as their last resort. According to Nevis, et al. (2009), the CSG facilitates the recipients' engagement in informal economic activities and display an increased tendency to borrow from informal, relationship-based sources such as family and local shops. On one hand, most unemployed primary caregivers utilise to cover family needs. On the other hand, the caregivers utilise CSG for personal needs such as expensive hairdressing, airtime purchase, transportation, drugs, and alcohol consumption, at the expenses of the child's well-being and get away with such travesty. Hence, the CSG can ultimately be misused by the recipients who might not be the caregiver. Also fraud hinders the usefulness of the grant. The finding highlighted that majority of the beneficiaries of the CSG are female single parents, and a large percentage of these women are unemployed, which reflect the prevalence of income poverty in relation to CSG significance.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that CSG though contributes to the well-being of the children or beneficiaries, the government seems to have run out of options or remain tacit and would not act. The study's findings contribute to the intervention measures that aid the utilisation and development CSG and maintain the child's well-being in South Africa. The corollary question is whether the government have other possible options to ensure that CSG is spent accordingly? This study helps to provoke conversation and dialogue, as well as calling researchers to engage this topic CSG further for more precise policy insights. Although CSG also provides income to recipient's family, as well as access their basic needs, numerous violation happens without check.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the Department of Social Development, local governments, researchers, social workers and policymakers may partner to engage further in monitoring and evaluating aiming to eradicate poverty. The recipients suggested that the adoption of vouchers instead of cash, as a punishment for caregivers who misuse CSG. If they are found abusing the CSG, they should be given vouchers instead. Subsequent studies on the viability of vouchers as compared to cash transfers for the CSG are recommended specifically to south African context. According to Woolard and Leibbrandt (2013), cash transfer programs such as CSG provides a predictable and reliable source of income for necessities which can have significant effects upon the capacity of households to invest in human development. The study further recommends that SASSA officials must work together with relevant stakeholders in monitoring and reviewing utilisation and possible long-term effects of CSG. The study recommends that the social workers should work with local communities together with the government to educate the parents on the responsibility of the father vis-à-vis the Child Maintenance Act. Thus, the CSG should not be viewed as a substitute for fathers' financial provision for child maintenance. In the best interest of the child, the study recommends an intervention such as schools and home visits, taskforce or inspectors.