

Social Protection: A Panacea to Alleviating Poverty in the Republic of South Africa

Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni,¹ Mandla Lindsay Khumalo,² Abiodun Olusola Omotayo³

Abstract: This paper examined the effectiveness of Social Protection as means of alleviating poverty in the Townships of Tsakane, Kwa-Thema and Duduza of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of Gauteng Province in South Africa. The study was expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in social protection services as a way of alleviating poverty. Stratified random sampling with a proportional representation method was employed to select 200 respondents. The data collection tool used was simple closed-ended questionnaires. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with respondents. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. Both descriptive (percentage, frequency et.c) and inferential statistics (binary logistic regression) were employed to analyze the collected data. The descriptive result reveals that secondary education was the highest (59, 5%) form of education among the respondents while 42 percent of the respondents have no income. Also the results revealed that 61, 5% of the respondents thought that government assistance made a difference in their welfare while 38, 5% thought otherwise. The binary regression analysis result revealed that the significant variables that had an effect on social protection were: the location of the respondents; their gender; their level of education; the type of dwelling of the respondents; and their income outside farming. The study concluded that access to social protection is a good panacea to poverty alleviation in the study areas. The study therefore recommends that the significant variables that had an effect on social protection be considered when measures of social protection are implemented.

Keywords: Poverty alleviation; social protection; binary logistic regression analysis; stratified random sampling; South Africa

JEL Classification: B55; I31; I32

¹ Institute for Rural Development and Community Engagement (IRDCE), Mangosuthu University of Technology, South Africa, Address: Mangosuthu Highway, Umlazi, Durban, South Africa, E-mail: omotayoabiodun777@gmail.com

² College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, University of South Africa, South Africa, Address: P O Box 392, Unisa 0003, South Africa, E-mail: solajub2007@yahoo.com.

³ Food Security and Safety Niche Area, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, North West University, South Africa, Address: Private Mail Bag X2046, Mmabatho 2790, North West Province, South Africa, Corresponding author: omotayoabiodun777@gmail.com.

1. Introduction

Social protection has attracted considerable research interest in the entire world. According to Norton *et al.* (2001) social protection is a tool to enhance social justice. It is crucial in ensuring an acceptable livelihood standard for poor communities. Norton *et al.* (2001), in their study, viewed social protection to be an important tool to advance security and welfare of vulnerable communities. Addressing the same issue of social protection, UNICEF (2014) revealed that social protection is constantly evolving in the whole world. A report by IZA (2010) confirmed that a consistent increase in unemployment puts a strain on social interventions. This is mainly because the more the people are unemployed, the larger the increase in the number of vulnerable communities. This greatly increases poverty and has a negative effect on the economy (IZA, 2010). According to Oduro (2010) the poor should both contribute to the growth process and benefit from it.

Access to social protection services has been hindered by barriers such as a shortage of information and awareness on the part of beneficiaries regarding their entitlement to the services (Ekben, 2014). Kubicek and Hagen (2000) agreed with Ekben (2014) in their study, suggesting that in order to minimize the barriers to access to social services, information and awareness should be addressed at the same time. They argued that even if a beneficiary is informed on a specific available service, a costly procedure could hinder the exercise if the individuals are not aware of a simple procedure to access the benefit. There is a need for information transparency (Kubicek & Hagen, 2000), and their study tried to address the socio-economic characteristics of social protection, perceptions and factors influencing the effectiveness of social protection.

South Africa is one country that is still battling with the issue of poverty alleviation although there are minute indicators of a decline in monetary poverty (State of the Nation Address, 2005). According to Somavia (1999), when poverty is on the rise, discomfort and self-centeredness increase greatly. Mbeki (2004) highlighted in the state-of-the-nation's address that poverty is widespread in South Africa and continues to disfigure the face of South Africa. Mbeki (2004) also stated that the struggle to eradicate poverty had been a cornerstone of the national effort to strengthen the new South Africa. South Africa is committed to reducing poverty and there have been several research projects carried out to address ways of curbing poverty. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) agreed in 2012 that South Africa was committed to reducing inequality and to a redistribution of wealth through taxes and cash transfers. One of the ways poverty could be addressed is through social protection. Social grants play an important role in minimizing money-metric poverty (Brockerhoff, 2013). The study, therefore, addressed and examined factors that influenced the effectiveness of social protection as means of poverty alleviation in South Africa. The main objective of the study was to determine

the effectiveness of social protection in alleviating poverty in order to guide policy makers on decisions relating to the effectiveness of social protection.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Area

This study was carried out in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of Gauteng Province. Stratified sampling with proportional representation method was used to collect 200 respondents from three Townships (Tsakane, Kwa-Thema & Duduza) of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in South Africa. The selection was based on the assumption that the population in the study area was stricken by poverty.

The binary logistic regression (BLR) model was used to determine factors which influenced effectiveness of the social protection programmes. In analyzing the data, variables that were the most representative of the study were selected. BLR was considered useful for the study in which the prediction of the effectiveness or absence of social protection was based on values of a set of socio-economic predictor variables (Norusis, 2004). The binary logistic regression is similar to a linear regression model but is suited to models where the dependent variable is dichotomous as in this study. Binary logistic regression coefficients were used to estimate odds ratios for each of the independent variables in the model. In the Binary logistic regression model, the relationship between the dependent variable Z , and the probability of the event of interest is described by the following link function (Norusis, 2004):

$$\pi_i = \frac{e^{z_i}}{1 + e^{z_i}} = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z_i}} = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z_i}} \quad 1$$

or

$$Z_i = \log\left(\frac{\pi_i}{1 - \pi_i}\right) \quad 2$$

where: π_i =probability of the i th case; Z_i = value of the independent variable for the i th case. The model assumes that Z is linearly related to the predictors. Thus:

$$Z_i = b_0 + b_1 X_{i1} + b_2 X_{i2} + \dots + b_p X_{ip} \quad 3$$

where X_{ij} = predictor for the j th case; b_j = j th coefficient and p =number of predictors. Since Z is unobservable, the predictors are related to the probability of interest by substituting Z in equa. 1

$$\pi_i = \frac{e^{z_i}}{1 + e^{z_i}} = \frac{1}{1 + e^{z_i}} = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(b_0 + b_1 X + \dots + b_p X_p)}} \quad 4$$

The regression coefficients in the above expression were estimated through an iterative maximum likelihood method using SPSS V.21 (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000). In the study, the dependent variable “Do you think social protection benefits had any improvement on your living standard?” was dichotomous. The expected response was either yes=1 or otherwise = 0. Independent variables used in the binary logistic regression analysis are indicated in Table 3.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Social Protection Beneficiaries in the Study Area

Table 1 displays socio-economic characteristics of respondents who were recipients of social protection during the period of study.

Table 1. Socio-economic Characteristics of Social Protection Beneficiaries

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Location		
Tsakane	80	40
Duduza	55	27.5
Khwa-Thema	65	32.5
Gender		
Male	83	41.5
Female	117	58.5
Age		
16-24	44	22.0
25-34	73	36.5
35-49	59	29.5
50-64	13	6.5
+65	11	5.5
Education Level		
No formal schooling	32	16.0
Primary completed	32	16.0
Secondary school completed	119	59.5
Certificate	17	8.5
Type of Dwelling		
Rented shack	13	6.5
Own shack	51	25.5
Rented RDP house	6	3.0
Bricks under corrugated iron	68	34.0
Bricks under tiles	18	9.0

Own RDP house	44	22.0
Employment Information		
Unemployed	98	49.0
Student	19	9.5
Self-employed	56	28.0
Employed	27	13.5
Income		
No income	84	42.0
R100-R1000	70	35.0
R1001-R4000	33	16.5
R4001-R10000	13	6.5
TOTAL	200	100

Source: Authors' Compilation

The results showed that most (40%) of the social protection beneficiaries interviewed were from Tsakane Township. The lowest number of social protection beneficiaries interviewed was in Duduza Township at 27, 5%. The remaining 32, 5% interviewed were from Kwa-Thema Township. From the results, 41, 5% of the respondents were males. Thus, there were more females (58, 5%) interviewed than males. The results also indicated that 22% of the respondents were in the age group of 16 to 24. Most of the respondents (36, 5%) were between 25 and 34 years of age. A total of 29, 5% of the respondents interviewed were between 35 and 49 years of age. Only 6, 5% of the respondents interviewed were between 50 and 64 years of age. The lowest number, 5, 5% of the respondents, were in the group of 60 years and above. In terms of education, 59, 5% of the respondents had secondary education while 16% of the respondents had no formal education and another 16% indicated they had completed their primary school, and only 8, 5% indicated they had certificate, this is similar to the finding of Omotayo, (2016).

As for the type of dwelling the respondents used, the results indicated that 6, 5% of the respondents rented shacks, 25, 5% of the respondents lived in their own shacks, 3% rented RDP houses, 34% of the respondents lived in houses under corrugated iron sheets, a small number - 9% of the respondents - lived in brick houses under tiles and 22% of the respondents owned RDP houses. The results also revealed that the largest section of the respondents interviewed (49%) were unemployed, 9, 5% were students, 28% were self-employed and only 13, 5% of the respondents were employed. With reference to income, most of the respondents (i.e. 42%) had no income, 35% earned between R100 and R1 000, 16, 5% earned between R1 001 and R4 000, and only 6, 5% earned between R4001 and R10 000 per month.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents Perceptions of Social Protection in the Study Area

Descriptive statistics were performed on the variables related to the perceptions of the social protection beneficiaries about social protection in their study areas.

Percentages were worked out to indicate positions with measures of central tendencies and measures of dispersions as indicated in Table 2. The results indicate that only 21% of the respondents perceived the government as committed enough to improve social protection, and 33% perceived government as partially committed. A total of 20% of the respondents thought that the government was not committed enough and 26% did not know whether the government was committed to improve social protection. According to the results 67% of the respondents thought that social protection was instrumental in achieving Millennium Development Goals and 33% did not. Also the results revealed that 61, 5% of the respondents thought that government assistance made a difference in their welfare, and 38, 5% thought otherwise.

Again, 20,5% of the respondents interviewed thought that social protection had an effect on their living standards, 11% thought it had no effect and 68, 5% indicated that it was hard to tell. Additionally, 31, 5% of the respondents indicated that information about social protection was adequately disseminated, 0, 5% suggested that the information was hard to read although it was accessible. While 26% suggested that the information was easy to access, they indicated that social protection information was hard to understand. A total of 42% of the beneficiaries suggested that they were not well informed. Respondents were also asked who they thought was responsible for disseminating information, and 49, 5% of the people indicated that local government was responsible for disseminating information to the beneficiaries. Only 5, 5% suggested that NGOs should be responsible for disseminating information, while 45% of the respondents pointed out that it is local government that should be responsible for information dissemination to social protection beneficiaries. Again the results revealed that 89% of the respondents thought that social grants were the most effective measure of social protection, only 1% thought community-driven schemes, and 10% relied on the government's Department of Public Works.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the perceptions of social protection beneficiaries

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Is government committed enough to improve social protection?		
Yes, social protection coverage and systems are satisfactory	42	21.0
Partially, the social protection coverage and systems need to be improved	66	33.0
No, because it lacks political will	40	20.0
Don't know	52	26.0
Is social protection instrumental in achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?		
Yes	134	67.0
No	66	33.0
Has the assistance made any difference in your welfare?		
Yes	123	61.5
No	77	38.5
Do you think social protection improved your living standards?		
Yes	41	20.5

No	22	11.0
Hard to tell	137	68.5
Do you think that social protection information is adequately disseminated in your municipality?		
Yes, the information is both easily accessible and understandable	63	31.5
The information is well disseminated but hard to understand	1	0.5
The information is easy to understand but does not reach everybody	52	26.0
No, potential beneficiaries are not adequately informed	84	42.0
Who do you think is responsible to disseminate information on social protection services?		
Local government	99	49.5
NGOs	11	5.5
Community leaders	90	45.0
Which social protection measures are the most effective?		
Social grants	178	89.0
Community- driven schemes	2	1.0
Public works	20	10.0
TOTAL	200	100

Source: Authors' Compilation

4.3. Results of the Estimated Binary Logistic Regression Model for the Effectiveness of Social Protection

Table 3 presents the results of the estimated binary logistic regression model following (Ijatuyi et al., 2018). The estimated model indicated an overall classification rate of 56%. This result indicated the degree of accuracy of the model and the reliability of the resulting estimated coefficients with their accompanying statistics. From the results the dependent variable would explain between 45,7% and 61,2% of the variation in results as indicated by the diagnostics. The location of the social protection beneficiaries had a negative, statistically significant ($P < 1\%$) effect on their standard of living. Thus, an increase in the location spread of beneficiaries reduced the effectiveness of social protection programmes. The plausible reason is that as beneficiaries stayed further from the receiving points of social protection, more expenditure was incurred on transport, thus reducing the net benefit of social protection. Information and other sources of social protection would not reach them effectively.

The results of the analysis also suggested that gender had a negative but statistically significant ($P < 1\%$) effect on the standard of living of social protection beneficiaries. The gender variable was entered as a dummy variable where male respondents were recorded as 1 and females as 0. This result therefore implies that an increase in males resulted in less effectiveness of the social protection programmes, other factors being held constant. On the other hand it means that an increase in women increased the effectiveness of the social protection programmes. The programme thus improves welfare, i.e. standard of living, with an increase in the number of women recipients. The findings of the present study seem to differ from the findings of Kabeer (2008) who pointed out that challenges faced by men differed from those faced by women.

Some of these barriers could be gender based and others could be escalated by inequalities and discrimination.

That researcher argued that such findings suggested that women were disproportionately represented among the poor. This did not only limited women's access to labour market, but also often confined employed women to poor remuneration, and more unstable forms of wages and self-employment, particularly in the informal economy, without access to social protection. The study pointed out that women were more susceptible to human rights violations, spreading poverty and insecurity that often characterized their fragile states. Such factors emphasized the need for further understanding about the rationale, policy and programme effects of a gendered approach to social protection. Barrientos (2008) pointed out the difference made by gender of social protection on the effectiveness with which it increases investment and promotes more efficient resource allocation within households.

Furthermore, results also showed that level of education had a positive and statistically significant ($P < 1\%$) effect on the standard of living of social protection beneficiaries. Level of education played a major role on social protection; it positively affected social protection as a means of alleviating poverty. This implied that, other factors being equal, beneficiaries with higher education were more likely to use the benefits of social protection more effectively than their counterparts. A plausible reason could be that beneficiaries with a better level of education were more likely to be better allocators of social protection resources, in contrast to their counterparts who were less educated. The education for all global monitoring report (2010) pointed out that social protection measures were needed to help poor households manage risk to mitigate the negative effects of poverty on education.

The type of dwelling had a negative, statistically significant effect ($P < 1\%$) on the standard of living of social protection beneficiaries. The results indicated that access to social protection decreased with increased access to better types of dwellings of social protection beneficiaries. Thus the beneficiaries living in lower types of dwellings were the ones who were more likely to access social protection. Some literature suggests that providing people with houses, as social protection measure, is an important factor in poverty alleviation. According to a study by Boudreaux (2008), house allocation to beneficiaries can result in the escalation of income through its effect on access to credit. The study pointed out that in the South Africa, studies don't find any evidence of this effect. This could be as a result of the beneficiaries of housing subsidies are cautious of the risk involved in using their property as collateral.

Income had a negative but statistically significant ($P < 1\%$) effect on the living standard of social protection beneficiaries. The results show that, with other factors held constant, an increase in income would decrease one's chance of receiving social

protection. This outcome is quite consistent with the objective of social protection policy. Literature has shown that reliance on a capped wage level to promote targeting may represent a rather blunt approach, resulting in somewhat approximate targeting outcomes. A capped income will also reduce the reduction in the poverty gap resulting from programme implementation, with direct negative social protection consequences, and will reduce the likelihood of capital accumulation in the medium term, with negative implications for medium-term transformative outcomes (Appleton & Collier, 1995).

Table 3. Parameter Estimates of Binary Logistic Model

	B	SE	Wald	Sig	Exp (B)
Location	-1.354***	0.385	12.377	0.000	0.258
Gender	-1.989***	0.579	11.816	0.001	0.137
Age group (yrs)	-0.403	0.303	1.769	0.184	0.669
Education level	1.325***	0.391	11.460	0.001	3.763
Type of dwelling	-0.863***	0.174	24.536	0.000	0.422
Employment	0.211	0.253	0.679	0.404	1.235
Income	-0.953***	0.215	19.6700	0.000	0.385
Constant	11.584	2.281	25.801	0.000	107396.15
Diagnostics : Cox and Snell R square = 0.457	Goodness of fit-2 Log likelihood = 152.227 Nagelkerke R Square = 0.612 Overall = 56.0%				

___ P-values are for slopes; ***P<0, 01; ** P<0, 05 and *P<0, 10 Significant at 1%, 5% and 10 % probability levels, respectively.

Discussion

To accomplish the objectives of the study, descriptive statistics was used. The results revealed the township with the highest number of respondents interviewed. Most of the respondents were from Tsakane. After the descriptive statistics analysis, it became apparent that the level of education in the study areas was very low. Very few people had tertiary qualifications, but a substantial percentage of the respondents had completed their secondary school. This suggested that these townships fell under the category of poor communities. The results of descriptive statistics revealed that there were a lot of people living in shacks (25, 5%) in the study areas. This finding could cause a health problem to the people living in these townships. Govender *et al.* (2011) seemed to agree with the idea that housing affected health, through a range of factors. Although some of the residents in these townships lived in shacks, the percentage of proper housing with corrugated iron sheet was fairly high at 34%, compared to the other structures. The need for social protection in the study areas was still high, as revealed by the results. Most of the people earned very little. The results suggested that a huge percentage (42%) of the respondents were not getting an income. This suggested that most the respondents in the townships were unemployed. Most of those that were employed earned an amount between R100

and R1000 per month. This amount of income is very little in these hard economic times.

From the binary logistic regression model, the results revealed that location of the respondents, gender, level of education, and type of dwelling all had an effect on social protection. This was an indication that these factors were essential variables and could be used as determinants of social protection. With an overall percentage of 56 the results showed the degree of accuracy of the model and thus the reliability of the resulting estimated coefficients with their accompanying statistics. The dependent variable was explained between 45, 7% and 61, 2% of the variation in results. As indicated by the non-significance of the goodness of fit, the model fitted the data well. The high level of unemployment in South Africa contributes to the level of poverty encountered. Classification rates of 44% for effectiveness of social protect and 56% for non-effectiveness of social protection were observed. Usman (2009) reckons that poverty is a global and major concern in developing countries. The study highlighted that a huge number of people in the world lived on less than two dollars a day. This greatly affects human dignity. Somavia (1999) agreed with Usman (2009) and labelled poverty and unemployment as an offence to humanity. Barrientos and Hulme (2005) indicated that social protection had a solid focus on poverty reduction and was exerting support to the poor. Social protection emphasis is mainly on income maintenance and supporting living standards (de Haan, 2000). The major emphasis of social protection is on highlighting the causes of poverty and its signs (World Bank, 2001a).

The working class faces minimum risk of being affected by poverty, as indicated by the results of this study. This was indicated by the significance of the levels-of-income variable. This therefore suggests that the unemployed are more likely to be poor than the employed or people getting some sort of income, whether from their own business or from some support by family members or other sources. The level of education also proved to be significant with regard to the effectiveness of social protection. The more educated the respondents were, the less likely they were to be poor, as they got better jobs which they are qualified in. The type of dwelling indicated that the ones that lived in shacks were less likely to be affected by poverty. This is probably because living in a shack indicates not being able to afford to live in a better establishment. They were also the ones who were mostly unemployed.

Gender was also significant in the results. According to Kabeer (2008) the shift on gender equality is viewed as a critical factor in attaining MDGs. Kabeer (2008) further highlighted the difference women and men face which can reduce opportunities for women according to typology. Holmes and Jones (2010) seemed to agree with Kabeer. They suggested that addressing gender forms of vulnerability was important because it attracted gains in gender equity and could help in poverty reduction. High levels of vulnerability faced by women have a negative effect on

productivity. Kabeer (2008) addressed the likelihood of girls being kept out of school for domestic chores, rather than boys. Gender cash-transfer beneficiaries can render a massive difference to the effectiveness of social protection (Barrientos, 2008). There are links between various forms of strategies in South Africa. Social protection and economic development are interlinked. The present study focused on the effectiveness of social protection in alleviating poverty in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of the Gauteng province of South Africa. In Table 3 the binary logistic regression used in this study showed the degree of significance of different variables which had an effect on social protection. This outcome indicated that these variables were important determinants of social protection. From the outcomes, employment seemed to play a crucial role in alleviating poverty. The results suggested that the unemployed in the study areas are more likely to be poor. The level of education also proved to be significant in the area of effectiveness of social protection. The more educated the respondents were, the less likely they were to be poor as they got better jobs for which they were qualified. There is still a need to improve the living conditions in the study areas. This was indicated by the fairly high percentage of people living in informal structures. They were also the ones who were mostly unemployed.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

It was concluded that gender had an effect on social protection. This was indicated by the significance of this variable in the results. An effective social protection system can be fully functional with a framework of solid social and economic environment. There is a high need for more research in the area of social protection in the changing world. This will assist in addressing the ever changing needs of the poor. The study recommends that the significant variables that had an effect on social protection be considered when measures of social protection are implemented. These variables were: the location of the respondents; their gender, their level of education; the type of dwelling of the respondents; and their income.

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