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Investigating Incomes and Living Conditions of Farm Workers in the Rural Western Cape: A Case Study on Social Policy and Methodological Issues

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objectives of this study were to determine the accessibility of services offered to rural workers by government and to identify relevant methodological issues pertaining to household surveys. The study commenced in April 2001 and was completed in August 2001.

In the early phase of the project, the workers and their immediate families were surveyed to determine their living conditions and access to government services. This was followed by a phase during which workers were assisted in gaining access to government grants. The process by which grants are obtained was assessed in terms of whether it allows for the easy access to grants for rural workers. In the final phase of the project, further data was collected, specifically, detailed data on household expenditure. This was compared with data on income obtained in the earlier interviews. The practicality and accuracy of the methods used were assessed.

Data was gathered for the study by means of formal questionnaires administered to eighteen adults in the ten households of the workers on the farm. The data was analysed for correlations between the parameters such as health and education and income. The researcher also had extensive contact with officials of the Department of Social Development (DSD) to establish eligibility of households to the Child Support Grant (CSG). The small sample size in this study means that correlations suggested are unlikely to be statistically significant, and that the findings need to be checked against the findings of a larger sample. In support of the findings of the study, it was determined whether the people in the study could be generally viewed as 'poor' or not. Comparison with a number of different poverty lines suggested that most of the people could be viewed as poor. The broad conclusions to be drawn from the study are:

Access to information on eligibility for the CSG is difficult to obtain and delays and obstructs application for the grant. The researcher in this study found that despite speaking to a number of key officials in the DSD on the telephone, communicating by email, and also meeting face-to-face with some of the officials, he was not able to get clear and definitive answers to questions on the eligibility of people in this study for the CSG. Farm workers in the Western Cape very seldom have easy access to the forms of communication used here by the researcher, and it seems likely that many are failing to get the information they need in order to apply for the CSG. It is likely that many farm workers who are eligible for the CSG are not applying for the grant.

People in this study were also excluded from applying for the CSG because of the limit on the age of children (six years) for whom application can be made, and because of the low levels of income (R800 per month or R1 100 per month, depending on where care-giver and child live), above which application is not allowed.

Two households in the study were delayed in applying for the CSG because of contradictory information given to the researcher by DSD officials.

Findings in this study indicate that the quality of health services offered to the people in the study are adequate and that the services are affordable.

A correlation was suggested between the incomes of households and the amounts they remit to family outside of their households.

Findings support a correlation between the health of the people and their income. They also support a link between the health of the people and the quality of services associated with housing. Specifically, a link is suggested between the health of the people and the quality of sewage services to their homes.

There is also a suggestion that gender effects are distorting the correlations between health and income, and between education levels and income. The women in this study tended to have the highest education levels, but many of them had poor health

and some of the highest educated women were not employed. Many of the women had problems in the area of reproductive health.

In the area of education, while the findings here suggest that schooling is cheap and accessible, there is a suggestion that the quality of the education offered is not good. Many of the children in the study are behind in their schooling. The parents of children at school mostly have poor contact with teachers, and are not aware of the qualifications of the teachers or the number of students in classes. The amount of time spent by students on schoolwork outside of school time is low.

In terms of the methodology employed for this study, questions are raised about the appropriateness of a formal questionnaire based approach to data gathering. A long questionnaire, which includes some abstract questions and was also used in translation from English into Afrikaans and Xhosa, was very taxing on both interviewer and the interviewees.

The data gathered suggested that information on incomes is more accurate than that on expenditure. The income information was corroborated by information obtained from the employers of the workers. Data on expenditure was found to be incongruent with the information gathered on incomes.

1. INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this study were to determine the accessibility of services offered to rural workers by government and to identify relevant methodological issues pertaining to household surveys. The study commenced in April 2001 and was completed in August 2001.

In the early phase of the project, the workers and their immediate families were surveyed to determine their living conditions and access to government services. This was followed by a phase during which the intention was to assist workers in gaining access to government grants. As events turned out, only one household in the study was clearly within the criteria for eligibility for the Child Support Grant (CSG). They had not applied for this grant, so they were assisted in applying for the grant. Two other households were on the borderline of the criteria for eligibility for the CSG. Because of delays in gaining formation from the Department of Social Development (DSD), these households were initially not assisted in applying for the grant. They were later given information to guide them in applying for the grants. The people in one of these households left the farm before the end of the study. It is not known whether they applied for the grant or not. The process by which grants are obtained was assessed in terms of whether it allows for the easy access to grants for rural workers.

In the final phase of the project, further data was collected, specifically, detailed data on household expenditure. This was compared with data on income obtained in the earlier interviews. The practicality and accuracy of the method used in the earlier phase was assessed.

2. METHODOLOGY

Eighteen adults in ten households were interviewed. Each interview was guided by a formal questionnaire¹.

- Of those interviewed, thirteen are workers on the farm.
- Five of the workers and two other adults interviewed live on the farm in three households.
- There is total of eleven children living in the ten households.
- The total number of people included in the 'community' surveyed is thirty.

In the households not physically situated on the farm, other than the workers themselves, only those adults who are likely to be active participants in the management of the farm after the handover were interviewed. These were the wives of three of the workers. The husband of one of the workers was not interviewed. Where necessary, the interviews were conducted with the help of a first language Xhosa speaker who provided translations.

The researcher made contact with officials at the DSD by telephone, email and in person to establish the criteria for eligibility for the CSG. He assisted three households in applying for the CSG. In one case, this involved providing transport to the mother of the child for which the grant was being applied and assistance with obtaining the necessary documents for the application. In the other two cases, the researcher provided simply worded printed instructions to the parents of the children on how to apply for the grant. One person from each of eight of the households was re-interviewed for data on household expenditure.

¹ Most of the questions for the questionnaire were drawn from the Kwazulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study Questionnaire, developed by the Southern Africa Labour Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town.

3. POVERTY ANALYSIS

A poverty line creates an index against which people can be said to be living in poverty or not. A paper by The National Institute for Economic Policy (NIEP)² provides a summary of the various forms of poverty lines. The NIEP defines poverty lines as follows:

Poverty lines are pre-determined and well-defined standards of living that must be reached if a person is not to be deemed 'poor'.

Poverty lines are calculated in a number of different ways. Some treat households as a whole. Some of these take account of the size and demographics of individual households and others do not. Some are calculated on the measured incomes of households or individuals, and others on consumption or expenditure. Some provide absolute criteria and others are 'relative', 'subjective', or 'dual'. Most poverty lines make use of a calculated or measured minimum level of food consumption, which allows for a person to live in good health over an extended time. Some take the poverty line to be the income or expenditure of the poorest sector of a population. This method would use, for example, the average food expenditure for the poorest 20% of a population.

No poverty line provides an exact measure for the differentiation between people who are able to maintain themselves in good health and those who are not. All have certain inaccuracies. The inaccuracies differ depending on the method used for calculation of a poverty line. Wilson and Ramphela³ also provide, in their book on the nature and extent of poverty in South Africa, a summary of the different poverty lines. They offer the following caution on the use of poverty lines:

² The National Institute for Economic Policy (2001).

³ Wilson and Ramphela (1998).

.....we learn that no adequate description of poverty can satisfactorily reduce it to a single number. Poverty is not one-dimensional; it has many faces

They refer in more depth than NIEP do, to the disaggregation of poverty data to allow for the comparison of different sectors of a population with a poverty line. For example, Wilson and Ramphela offer the following illustration of the extent of economic division along racial lines in the South African context:

Whilst almost one-third of all African households, for example, earned less than R500 per year in 1975, only one in fifty (2 percent) of whites were so poor.

They also mention certain graphical methods for demonstrating the extent of poverty in a country or region.

3.1 POVERTY LINES USED IN THIS STUDY

This study uses four different poverty line calculations to seek the answer to the question of whether the workers in this study would be viewed as 'poor' or not. The first poverty line referred to in this study is one found using the "Orshansky Method". The Orshansky Method makes use of a measure of the minimum energy content of food consumed, which allows for sustained good health. NIEP (2000) describes this method as follows:

The Orshansky Method finds the minimum cost of a bundle of goods that achieves the stipulated energy intake level and divides this by the share of the total expenditure allocated to food of a group of households deemed to be poor. For example, the bottom 20 percent of the population may be considered poor and its food share will be used to calculate the poverty line.

Using this method, NIEP calculated a poverty line of R6 399 per person per year in 1999. This poverty line is recommended by NIEP to the Committee of Social Inquiry.

A study by Miller⁴ provides the second poverty line referred to in this study. Miller defines cash income of R18 000 per annum in 1996 as a poverty line. He argues for his choice of poverty line as follows:

The RDP, The SA Living Standards and Development Survey, and the Poverty and Inequality report prepared for the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality, have defined poor households as the poorest 40% of all households. In the Western Cape, 41,5% of all households earn less than R1 500 per month, or R18 000 per annum. R18 000 per annum is also a cut-off between two interval categories according to which household income has been categorised in the Census data. R18 000 therefore presented itself as a useful cut-off, and has been used throughout this paper.

Miller also uses a second poverty line, set at R6 000 per annum for total household cash income in 1996. He argues for his choice of R6 000 as the more extreme poverty line as follows:

R6000 per annum is R500 per month. The maximum pension or grant that an individual could qualify for from the Department of Health and Social Services at the time of the census was R430 per month.

In his speech to the conference on poverty in the Western Cape at Stellenbosch University on 8th June 2001, Professor Cornie Groenewald uses the expression 'ultra-poverty' to describe the quality of life of those living below this poverty line. The Western

Cape Minister of Social Services and Poverty Relief, Mr David Matlatse, also quoted Miller's paper in his speech to the conference. Corrected to April 2001 Rands, Miller's lower poverty line would stand at R8 430 per annum.

A paper by Professor Karen Charlton⁵ of the University of Cape Town defines a further poverty line in terms of whether households have food security or not. She defines the criterion for food security as follows:

A household is taken to be in food poverty when monthly food spending is less than the cost of a nutritionally adequate very low-cost diet.

Some of the data used by Charlton in her study were provided by Professor Potgieter of the Institute for Planning Research at The University of Port Elizabeth. That data includes information on which a Primary Household Subsistence Level (PHSL) can be calculated. The PHSL is a more sophisticated estimate of subsistence requirements than Miller's, as it takes account of the number of people in a household and their ages and genders. Charlton's study finds that 42.6% of households in South Africa do not have food security. The figure for the Western Cape is 23.9%.

4. WORKER'S ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT GRANTS

In this study, attention was focussed on the CSG, since there were households in the study who are or may be eligible for this grant and are not receiving it. The CSG is available to the care-givers of children aged zero to six years. The grant is available provided that the income of the care-giver is less than R1 100, or R800 per month, depending on where the care-giver and child live.

⁴ Miller (1999).

⁵ Charlton (forthcoming).

It has been documented that it is difficult to obtain good information on the CSG. The experience of researchers finding it difficult to obtain good information on the CSG is supported in a paper by Tilley⁶ for the Black Sash. She found that officials in different offices where CSGs were awarded had very different information on what was required from the applicant in the way of documentary proof of their financial status and their relationship to the child for which the CSG was sort. In a paper for NADEL, Zain⁷, finds that officials are still not properly trained to assist applicants for the CSG. She says:

The fast tracking of the CSG (The Project Managers foresaw a November, 1998 implementation date as adequate, while the minister and the NEC pushed for April 1998) resulted in poorly trained welfare officials.

She recommends that training be implemented for officials.

4.1 UPPER AGE CUT-OFF FOR ELIGIBILITY

In a study by the Economic Policy Research Institute, van Niekerk⁸ refers to the report of the original Lund Committee on Child and Family Support, (1996). This was the document on which the implementation of the CSG was based. The Lund Report recommended that the grant be available to children aged 0 to 9. Government did not follow this recommendation and made the grant available to children aged 0 to 6. Also, Zain (*ibid*) argues:

The age restrictions on the grants need to be lifted. This will guarantee two things: that the Department of Welfare is honouring the rights of the child, as a child is defined in the Constitution, and that a rank of young, black people is able to go

⁶ Tilley (1998).

⁷ Zain (2000).

to school, access healthcare, receive proper nutrition and basic services.

The Black Sash, in their submission to the Commission on Social Security, state:

Children above age 7 have no means of support (assuming they are not in foster care or care dependent).

An assertion (from an official in one of the calls made by the researcher) that other government programmes meet the needs of children older than 6 is refuted by the Black Sash in the same document. They state:

Poverty alleviation schemes appear to have failed. There is little money to send these children to school – school feeding programmes are not operating as intended

4.2 UPPER LIMITS ON INCOME FOR ELIGIBILITY

Van Niekerk (*ibid*) argues for lower income limits. He quotes the submission of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to the Child Support Benefit Proposal consultative process. The COSATU submission comments on the Lund Commission Report as follows:

..... it suggests that the system be limited to only the poorest 30 percent of South Africa's children, when it is claimed that nearly 70 percent of poor children under 6 years of age live with a care-giver who earns less than R250 per month and about 83 percent of children live with a care-giver who earns less than R800.

Even with the figures mentioned here corrected to 2001 Rand values (from 1997 values), these suggest that the limits on income imposed for application for the CSG are too low. If there was a change in both the age cut-off and the upper limits on income for

⁸ van Niekerk (1999).

eligibility, then more CSGs could become available to the rural workers in this study, as well as the wider community.

5. FINDINGS

The small sample size in this study means that correlations suggested are unlikely to be statistically significant, and that the findings need to be checked against the findings of a larger sample.

Most of the households in the study can be regarded as 'poor'

This section investigates which households can be classified as 'poor' through the application of the different poverty line calculations outlined in Section 3.1. Using the "Orshansky Method", five out of the ten households in this study would be considered poor.

Miller uses a poverty line of R18 000 per annum (1996 Rands) for total household cash income. Corrected to April 2001 Rands, this line would stand at R25 300 per annum. Nine of the ten households of the workers on the farm fall below this poverty line. On the basis of Miller's second poverty line of R6 000 per annum (1996 Rands), corrected to April 2001 Rands, the poverty line is lowered to R8 430 per annum. Two of the households in this survey can be seen as 'ultra-poor'.

Applying the same criteria as Charlton, and on the basis of the data collected in the present study for spending on food, four households would be deemed to not have food security. The data for expenditure are probably not of the highest accuracy (see Section 6). One of the households shown to not have food security is the highest earning household in the study. This suggests that this conclusion would need to be checked in a further survey. On the basis of the Primary Household Subsistence Level for the

households in this study, only one household would be seen to be below the subsistence level.

Consistent and accurate information on the CSG grant and eligibility for the grant is difficult to obtain

The researcher undertook a long series of communications with the DSD in order to obtain information on government grants. This was done with a view to assisting the people in the survey in obtaining any grants for which they were eligible but were not receiving. At the end of the process, the researcher was still unable to know with certainty whether two households in the survey were eligible for the CSG or not. The last official the researcher spoke to said that the households where the eligibility was not clear should “just apply” for the grant and that the DSD would then only be able to determine their eligibility.

The researcher obtained information on grants from the DSD website, telephone calls to officials of the DSD, through email contact with one DSD official and from brief face-to-face conversations with two DSD officials. He also collected a document from the DSD office in Cape Town. The researcher phoned the DSD office in Cape Town a number of times, as well as the DSD District Offices in Worcester and Caledon. He also spoke on the telephone to the Director of Social Security in Pretoria and to her deputy. Some material was faxed to the researcher by DSD officials. In total, the researcher made twenty-four telephone calls to DSD officials. Eleven of these were seeking information on the CSG.

All of this strongly suggests that officials of the DSD are not well informed about criteria for eligibility for the CSG and/or are not well trained in communicating the information to members of the public. The person trying to gain access to the information (the researcher) has convenient and free access to telephones and was able to make a

number of calls with ease. This would not be the case for a person working on a farm. Such a person would have to take time off work to find and use a public telephone. The researcher is also fluent in both English and Afrikaans. Many farm workers do not have ease of communication in these languages and would find most officials unable to accommodate them in their own languages. It seems likely that some rural people are not receiving grants because they are discouraged from trying to obtain information about the grants and their eligibility thereto.

Applying for government grants is simple and well supported by the DSD

Notwithstanding the fact that it proved difficult to obtain information about eligibility for grants, and that information about the dates on which application could be made was not well communicated, the researcher's experience in assisting one person in the community in applying for a CSG supported the suggestion that applying for government grants is simple and well supported by the DSD. The process was as follows:

It was determined that only one household was clearly eligible for the CSG. The eligible household is comprised of three adults and three children. Two of the children are over the age of six and no CSG is available for them. The third child is aged two and therefore the CSG is available for her. The cash earnings of the household was measured as R818 per month. The actual criterion used by the DSD to determine eligibility for the CSG is the earnings of the primary care-giver and his or her spouse, where applicable. The applicant assisted by the researcher (on the 2nd May 2001) is the mother of the child for whom the grant application was made. She is unemployed and therefore has income under the limit of R800 per month (or R1 100 if in a 'rural' area or living in an informal settlement or both) and is eligible for the CSG.

Two other households were on the borderline of the criteria for eligibility for the CSG. Because of delays in gaining information from the DSD, these households were initially not assisted in applying for the grant. They were later given information to guide them in applying for the grants.⁹

The DSD does not have a full-time District Office in Swellendam. Officials from the department visit Swellendam twice a month. The researcher established on which days during April 2001 the DSD officials would be in Swellendam. The researcher informed the applicant and on one of the appointed days, took her to the hall where the officials were available to assist people.

The actual process of applying for a CSG proved to be quick and easy. The applicant waited only a minute or two before being informed by the officials that she should write and bring in an affidavit with regard to the amount remitted to her by the father of the child, and should also get copies of the birth certificate of the child and her own ID document.

The researcher took the applicant to Swellendam Police Station to obtain the affidavit. Transport to the Police Station would have been an issue if the researcher had not been assisting the applicant. She would have had to walk about three kilometres to the Police Station and the same distance back. It is likely that she would have reached the hall where she was to apply for the grant too late if she had had to walk to the Police Station and back.

The SAPS dealt with the writing and certification of the affidavit quickly and in a polite manner. The detective behind the counter wrote the affidavit for the applicant. She

⁹ In mid August, the person who applied on the 2nd May for the CSG had still not heard from the DSD on whether the grant would be awarded or not. One of the households who had been told to 'just apply' had left the farm. It is not known whether they applied for the grant or not. The third household had applied and had not yet had a response from the DSD.

was happy with this level of assistance even though she would have been able to write the document herself.

The researcher assisted the applicant in obtaining copies of her ID document and the child's birth certificate. Here again, transport would have been an obstacle if the researcher had not been assisting the applicant.

Once back at the hall where the officials were processing applications, the applicant again waited for a very short time, perhaps five minutes, before receiving attention from the officials.

Processing the application took about ten minutes. The applicant was informed that she would receive a letter from the department within three months of application date informing her of whether the application was successful or not. The official who processed the application said that the applicant must contact the department if she did not receive a letter within three months.

The official who processed the application was somewhat curt - bordering on impolite - in communicating with the applicant. The applicant was a young coloured woman. The official was a middle-aged black man. He dealt with the researcher's (middle-aged white man) later question in somewhat the same manner. (He was helpful when the researcher spoke to him the next day on the phone.) The other official present, who had handled the earlier enquiry about which documents should be presented at application, was friendly and polite. She was a middle-aged coloured woman.

The community hall, which was the site for the application, was well located, in one of the historically disadvantaged areas of Swellendam. Most of those applying for grants would have been able to walk to the hall from their homes. The hall was somewhat stark, but quite adequate in terms of space and seating.

The DSD is ineffective in communicating the dates on which application can be made for grants

The researcher asked the person he assisted in applying for the CSG why she had not previously applied for a CSG. (Her child is two years old. Application could have been made at birth.) She said that she had difficulty finding out when the DSD officials would be in Swellendam. She said that she had gone to the application point a number of times before and found that she was there on the wrong day and that the DSD officials were not there.

It seems that the DSD is not effectively communicating dates on which it will offer its services to communities in Swellendam.

Information available on the CSG from NGOs in the area is incomplete or inaccurate

In the last of the telephone calls made by the researcher to DSD offices, he was prompted to visit the offices of an NGO in Swellendam offering assistance to people in obtaining grants. The fact that this prompt came so late in the process again suggests that DSD officials do not have the training and information to offer the best possible assistance to people wanting to apply for grants.

The name of the NGO is Paralegals. Paralegals offer free legal advice on a number of issues, including debt, unfair dismissals and other labour issues and government grants. They have offices in a number of other centres throughout the country. About 20% of the work of the office in Swellendam consists of assisting people with obtaining grants, mostly State Old Age Pensions. The person consulting with clients in the office had incorrect information about eligibility for the CSG.

The person in the Paralegals office suggested that the researcher also visit the office of the Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereeniging (ACVV) in Swellendam. She said

that the ACVV also assists people in applying for grants. The researcher visited the ACVV office in Swellendam. He obtained information about the history and present activities of the ACVV. Although it was created in 1904 with the purpose of providing economic and other support to white women, the ACVV now has, as official policy and practice, the commitment to assist any person who is in need of their services without regard to race. The information held by the Swellendam office on eligibility to the CSG was also inaccurate. They did have good information on what documents must accompany applications for grants and had a calendar of the days on which applications can be made.

The upper age cut-off for eligibility excludes some 'poor' households

The effect of the low age cut-off for eligibility to the CSG can be seen in this study in that if the age to which children are eligible for the CSG was lifted from 6 to 9, one more CSG would be available to the community in this study. It would be in the poorest household – the same household as that in which the person already assisted with an application for the CSG lives. A further CSG granted to this household would add more than 10% to the income of the household.

The upper limit on income for eligibility excludes some 'poor' households

The effect of the low income cut-off for eligibility to the CSG can be seen in this study in that one household with very low earnings is disallowed from applying for the grant, and two others with even lower earnings may also be excluded. The household which is excluded has cash income of about R1 500 per month (four persons in the household) and the two which may be excluded (both with three persons in the household) have cash income of about R1 000 per month. (These two households are now applying for the CSG and may just qualify).

All three of these households are well below the poverty line used by Min (1999) in his paper. The data of Professor Potgieter at the University of PE do not support this picture, in that the household which is excluded and the two which may be excluded all have income higher than the subsistence level calculated from Professor Potgieter's data. If there was a change in both the age cut-off and the upper limits on income for eligibility then a further CSG could become available to the community.

Difficulties in accessing information from the DSD caused a delay in application for the CSG

The difficulties in gaining good information on eligibility for the CSG delayed the application of two households for the grant. The researcher assisted just one person in applying for the grant. At the time he did so, he was under the impression that only one household would be eligible for the grant. Subsequently he was given information, which suggested that two other households might be eligible. This was around the time of his last visit to Swellendam.

After his return from Swellendam, he wrote simple instructions for the two households who were still to apply for the grant and arranged for these to be delivered to the people in the households. This caused a delay of about a month and a half for the people making application for the grants. The people in one of these households left the farm before the end of the study. It is not known whether they applied for the grant or not. This delay raises the question of whether the means test approach to government transfers is counterproductive or not.

The following correlations and findings were also suggested by the data collected in the study:

Remittances to family outside of the household related to income

As expected, it is suggested here that the higher the income a household earns, the higher its remittances to family outside of the household. The ten households were grouped according to income – the five with the highest incomes, and the five with the lowest incomes. 'Income' was taken to include income in-kind as well as cash income. Those with the highest incomes sent on average 13.6% of their income to family outside of the households. Those with the lowest incomes sent on average 11.8% of their income to family outside of the households.

The data collected in the earlier round of interviews were used for this calculation. The earlier data is taken to be more reliable since income data collected at this stage were confirmed as accurate by reference to the actual payment records of the farm.

Incomes to households related to the general health of those in the households

It was found that the incomes to households are higher where the general health of those in the households is better. Respondents were asked to give an indication of their general health at the time of the interview, with reference of a scale from 1 to 5, indicating general health status from 'poor' to 'excellent'. Households were grouped into those where all the respondents indicated their health to be 'excellent' (four of the ten households), and those where at least one respondent indicated their health to be less than 'excellent'. Average income of households where all have excellent health was R681 per month. Average income of households where at least one person indicated their health to be less than 'excellent' was R562 per month.

Health of people related to the presence of good ablution facilities

It was found that the health of people in households where there are good ablution facilities is better than that of people in households where there are poor

ablution facilities. Households were grouped according to whether or not there were good ablution facilities available to them. Seven of the ten households had good ablution facilities. In the households where there are good ablution facilities, 24% of the people had been sick in the two weeks before the interview. In the households where there are poor ablution facilities, 40% of the people had been sick in the two weeks before the interview.

Gender inequalities in education level

The data suggested that there is a tendency in this rural area for women to stay at school longer than men. The gender split on the respondents was 50/50. The average education level of the women (grade completed) was 8.33. The average for the men was 6.67. There is a suggestion here that there is more pressure on men to leave school and start to earn income than on women. Two of the most highly educated women had left school because they were pregnant.

Gender effects on household income

The data from the interviews suggest that households in this context often do not have optimal income because women are less likely to have work, even though they may have higher education levels than the men. In this survey, five women have the highest education levels. Of these, only two are working. Two of those with high education levels who were not working were pregnant at the time of the interview.

The reproductive health of women in this rural context is poor

Of the nine women interviewed at the beginning of the study, two women had experienced three miscarriages, another had had two miscarriages and another had had one miscarriage. One woman had lost a child just one day after its birth. One of the two

women who were pregnant at the time of the first interviews lost her baby about two months later. This was her third miscarriage.

Gender effects on the relationship between health and income

The data suggests that the relationship between health and income is distorted by the gender imbalances mentioned above. While a correlation between health and income is suggested, this correlation is probably weaker because of the gender effects. Two of the five women with high education levels have poor health. One of these women is not working.

Gender effects on the relationship between education levels and income

The data suggests that the relationship between education levels and income is distorted by the gender imbalances mentioned above. There appears to be a weak or non-existent correlation between education level and income. The average income per person for households where the average education level of the adults in the house is at grade 8 or higher is R608 per month. The average income per person for households where the average education level of the adults in the house is less than grade 8 is R610 per month. This is mirrored by a weak or non-existent correlation between education level and health.

The average general health for those with high school education is 4.00 (where 5 represents 'excellent' health and 1 'poor' health). The average general health for those with less than high school education is 3.88. The gender effect here can be seen in that, while the women in the survey had higher education levels than the men, they had poorer health: the average education level for women was grade 8.33. The average education level for the men was 6.67. The average general health for the women was 3.67, and for the men, it was 4.44. This may explain the weak relationship between income and education levels.

Health services are accessible and cheap

The data suggest that health services are easily accessible to the workers and their families. All households are within 4 kilometres of a state clinic and within 5 kilometres of a state hospital.

In the two weeks before the interviews, eight people in the households of the workers had had medical care. Five of these had attended state clinics. None of these had been asked to make any payment for the services they were offered. One person spent time in hospital. She did not pay for her hospital treatment, although she was charged R170 for an ambulance to take her to the nearby (approximately 120 kilometres) town of Worcester to hospital.

Two people saw private doctors. One paid R65 for the consultation and medicine. The other did not pay, although this was because a dog had bitten her and the owner of the dog paid for the treatment.

Educational services for children are easily accessible and reasonably cheap

All six of the school age children in the worker's households attend school. All six of them walk to school. There are therefore no costs associated with transport to school for any of the households. None of the children walk great distances to school. One child walks four kilometres to school, and the others less.

The average amount per student paid in school fees is R98 per annum. All the households where there are school age students for which there is data (three out of four) are spending less than 1.5% of their income on school fees. None of the adults are attending any adult education classes.

School age children are able to attend school

The fact that all six of the school-age children in the households are attending school suggests that the economic pressures on households to withdraw their children from school are not great.

The educational experiences of the households indicate that the quality of educational services may be poor

The data raises questions about the quality of educational services in a number of ways:

- Of the six school age children in the households, four are behind in their schooling. One is three years behind. On average, they are one year behind.
- The parents of three of the children had had personal contact with the teacher/s of the children. The parents of four children had not. (There is data here on one child who lives in the town but not with the respondent.)
- Only one respondent knew the number of children in her child's class.
- The amount of time spent working on schoolwork at home also suggests a lack of motivation. On average, primary school students spend 22.5 minutes a day (weekdays) working on schoolwork at home. The time spent is as low as 20 minutes for high school students.

6. CRITIQUE OF METHODOLOGY

The conventional questionnaire based approach to collecting data used here proved to be taxing for the researcher and the respondents. The process was taxing for the following reasons:

- The questionnaire was long. The interview with the first respondent took several hours, after which the interviews mostly took around forty minutes. This was time

taken out of the working day and there may have been some anxiety around this for the respondents.

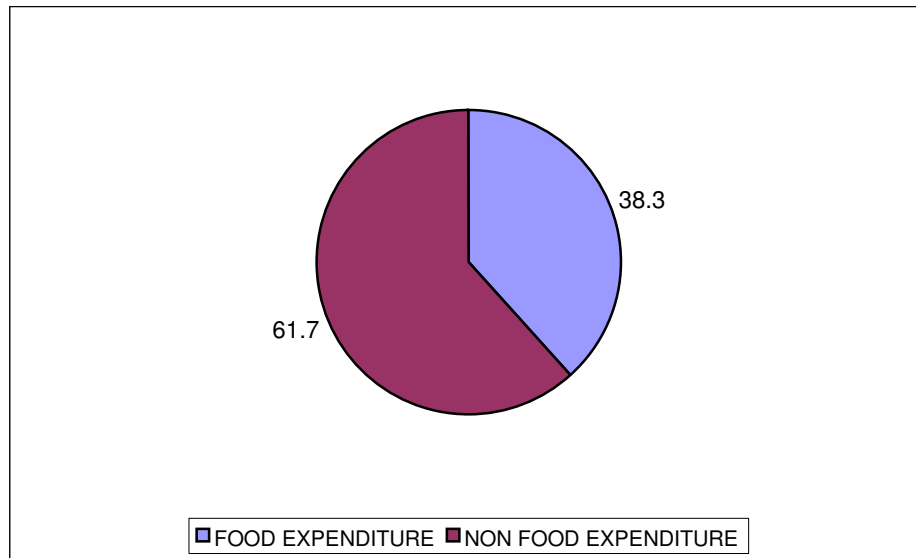
- The questionnaire was used in translation, from English into either Afrikaans or Xhosa. Accurate translation into Afrikaans was done by the researcher. Translation into Xhosa forced the involvement of a third person, since the researcher has very little knowledge of Xhosa.
- Some of the questions asked were abstract. For example: "What is the lowest wage in Rand per day that you would accept for a casual or day job?" Others asked about matters which were difficult for the respondents to assess. Questions on the value of in-kind payment were of this nature.

The accuracy of the method is called into question by the lack of coherence between some of the information obtained in the first round of interviews with that obtained in the later round. Very good data was obtained for the incomes of the respondents in the first round. The quality of this data was confirmed when the researcher was allowed access to the actual payment records of the farm. A detailed comparison was made for three of the respondents. One quoted cash income about 5% higher than his actual cash income. The other two both quoted cash incomes about 3% lower than their actual cash incomes.

In the later round of interviews, the respondents were asked to estimate their household expenditures in all the areas of expenditure. The total expenditures for each household, obtained by adding these estimates together, amounted in all but one case to amounts significantly different to the figures for income. The average of the absolute values of the differences was 56.7%. The standard deviation was 37.7. This suggests that the accuracy of the data obtained on expenditure was poor. This may require a more concrete way of collecting data on expenditure.

A further indication that the data obtained for expenditure may be unreliable is that the proportion of claimed household cash income which is claimed to be spent on food is on average only 38.3% (see Figure 1). Households are on average claiming that they spend just over a third of their cash income on food. It is more usual for households with low incomes to spend about half of their income on food.

Figure 1: Average household food expenditure as percentage of total cash income



7. CONCLUSIONS

The broad conclusions to be drawn from this study are:

Access to information on eligibility for the CSG is difficult to obtain and delays and obstructs application for the grant. The researcher in this study found that despite speaking to a number of key officials in the DSD on the telephone, communicating by email, and also meeting face-to-face with some of the officials, he was not able to get clear and definitive answers to questions on the eligibility of people in this study for the CSG. Farm workers in the Western Cape very seldom have easy access to the forms of communication used here by the researcher, and it seems likely that many are failing to get the information they need in order to apply for the CSG. It is likely that many farm

workers who are eligible for the CSG are not applying for the grant. Information on the CSG supplied by NGOs in the area was also poor.

People in this study were also excluded from applying for the CSG because of the limit on the age of children for whom application can be made, and because of the low levels of income above which application is not allowed.

Two households in the study were delayed in applying for the CSG because of contradictory information given to the researcher by DSD officials.

Findings in this study indicate that the quality of health services offered to the people in the study are adequate and that the services are affordable.

A correlation was suggested between the incomes of households and the amounts they remit to family outside of their households.

Findings support a correlation between the health of the people and their income. They also support a link between the health of the people and the quality of services associated with housing. Specifically a link is suggested between the health of the people and the quality of sewage services to their homes.

There is also a suggestion that gender effects are distorting the links between health and income, and between education levels and income. The women in this study tended to have the highest education levels, but many of them had poor health and some of the most highly educated women were not employed. Many of the women had problems in the area of reproductive health.

In the area of education, while the findings here suggest that schooling is cheap and accessible, there is a suggestion that the quality of the education offered is not good. Many of the children in the study are behind in their schooling. The parents of children at school mostly have poor contact with teachers and are not aware of the qualifications of the teachers or the number of students in classes. The amount of time spent by students on schoolwork outside of school time is low.

In terms of the methodology employed for this study, questions are raised about the appropriateness of a formal questionnaire based approach to data gathering. A long questionnaire, which includes some abstract questions and was also used in translation from English into Afrikaans and Xhosa, was very taxing on both interviewer and the interviewees.

The data gathered suggested that information on incomes is more accurate than that on expenditure. The income information was corroborated by information obtained from the employers of the workers. Data on expenditure was found to be incongruent with the information gathered on incomes.

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