

**The Administration of the Disability Grant by the South African Social Security Agency within Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, Limpopo Province**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

I, Mantima Anna Sekele, hereby declare that the dissertation, *The Administration of Disability Grant by the SASSA within Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, Limpopo Province*, for the Master's in Public Administration at the University of Limpopo, hereby submitted, has not been submitted by me for a degree in any other university. I hereby declare that the research is my own work in design and execution and all material contained herein has been accordingly acknowledged.

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DATE.....

### **SIGNATURE**

Ms. SEKELE M. A.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The disability grant administration and dispensation has always been a challenge to the Department of Social Development and cause for concern from recipients of the disability grant. The Government decided on establishing the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) as an entity to specifically deal with the administration of social grants including the Disability Grant. A number of studies have been conducted around the management and administration of the disability grant. The purpose of this study was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration and management of the disability grant. It further shows that the South African government spends a substantial amount of money in dispensing this grant. It is therefore necessary to investigate through an empirical research if these funds reach their intended beneficiaries, namely, the disabled community.

This study employed the qualitative method which involved documents analysis, Questionnaire, interview and observation. Policy documents and reports from SASSA were analysed. Twenty applicants and twelve officials and three assessing doctors were interviewed.

The findings of the study reveal that, although the SASSA has an improved model in place to redress and to contribute towards the effectiveness of the administration, there are still certain policy areas that needs to be reviewed. These policy areas include, amongst others, the appeal process, turnaround time, access and processing of the grant. In view of the findings from this study, the major recommendation is that there is a need to review the current booking system to ensure that the applicants are not subjected to unnecessary transports costs, time and delays.

The SASSA needs to embark on vigorous and on-going community campaigns to educate the society on the operations of the SASSA and its jurisdiction within the Makhuduthamaga area.

**KEYWORDS:** Administration; applicants; assessment; beneficiaries; Care Dependency Grant; Disability Grant; Grant-in-Aid; Makhuduthamaga; Recipients and the SASSA.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In 1994, the Department of Social Development was tasked by the parliament with the provision and dispensation of social grants including the disability grant to the needy South African citizens. After several years of operational challenges in dispensing the social grants, a dedicated agency to deal specifically with administering the dispensation of the social grants was established as Social Security Services. In 2004, the Social Assistance Act No. 13 of 2004 was enacted. This led to the establishment of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). As from 01 April 2006, the responsibility for the management, administration and payment of social assistance grants was then transferred to the agency. The SASSA is a public entity; its purpose is to administer social grants and payment of social assistance to South African citizens who could not maintain themselves, those who cannot participate in the labour market such as people living with HIV/AIDS as well as those living with disabilities. SASSA is the focused institution responsible to ensure that government pays the right grant, to the right person, at a location which is most convenient to that person.

The provision of social assistance benefits constitutes the largest part of the government's poverty alleviation programme. Statistical report prepared by SASSA. (2013/2014) states that in December 2005, a total of 10.6 million people, including approximately 7 million children were beneficiaries. In that period the grant beneficiaries represented 22% of the South African population. By January 2013 the grant beneficiaries represented 23% of the population, an indication that the total number of social grant beneficiaries increased to 15.2 million, which includes 10.4 million children. The figures provided exclude other family members that may also benefit directly or indirectly because of being either dependents on the grant

beneficiaries or/and by either staying in the same household with grant beneficiaries. In the context of high unemployment rate, poverty, and the increasing HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa, it can be expected that the demand for social assistance grants will continue to rise. The SASSA, since its inception from the year 2004, has also experienced its own operational challenges to administer social grants nationally, provincially and as well as at the level where the actual agency operation takes place. The SASSA as a public institution was therefore established with the offices throughout the country, including the five districts of Limpopo Province and its twenty-five local municipalities. Sekhukhune District as a focal point of the study is one of the five districts in Limpopo with Makhuduthamaga, Ephraim Mogale, Fetakgomo, Tubatse and Elias Motsoaledi Municipalities as constituent entities. Although SASSA has generally made significant progress in dispensing the social grants in all the municipalities of Sekhukhune District, it is still beset with serious administrative problems.

Tumbo (2008:65) in his article argues that, the administration and management efficacy of the SASSA is compromised by issues of lack of appropriate, clear and comprehensive guidelines. An inconsistency of legislations and policies is another area of concern. Other concerns emanate from increased pressures on financial resources because of increased demand for social assistance.

This study was an attempt to investigate the capacity of the SASSA in administering the disability grant in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality in Sekhukhune District. This area, due to its terminal challenges of poverty, illiteracy, minimal existence of development in the area and a high rate of unemployment, was declared a presidential nodal point area by former president Thabo Mbeki in 2008 in order to speed up service delivery (Makhuduthamaga District Municipality 2009/2010 IDP). Based on the former president's declaration, government has put together some strategies and systems to address such gaps by considering service delivery improvement interventions as a priority. As a result of this, more institutions were decentralised to reach many communities in the local municipalities. SASSA form

part of the institutions which play a role in addressing the question of local development and service delivery.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The disability grant, as has been pointed out earlier is meant and designed to help individuals who deserve to receive the disability grant because of their physical or mental disability condition. The grant was envisaged to play a significant role in alleviating poverty in needy communities. However, in recent years there have been challenges in the disbursement of the grant to the deserving recipients. SASSA Third Quarter Performance Report (2013-2014) outlines that some of these challenges include increased uptake rate with high rejection rate and could raise some concerns by the SASSA, too much dependency on the grant by members of the community, lack of uniformity in application processes and procedures across the country. It has also been highlighted by the SASSA and the general public that there are some inconsistencies in the application processing of disability grant, which are from the application process stage until the payment of the grant. Hardy & Richter (2006:90-92) in their study also reveal that SASSA has some administrative challenges in information dissemination to clients.

The other serious challenge raised is that, despite the legislations set, SASSA still depends on the Department of Social Development for policy formulation as its reporting line. It was further revealed that the impact of political pressures affects the processes and procedures of disability grant administration in the SASSA. It is acknowledged that there have been some inconsistencies in the legislation changes by government regarding the dispensation of the grant since the inception of the SASSA. Such a legislative change was made and designed to accommodate people living with the HIV/AIDS which was later amended and reversed; as a result, the agency ended up with ineligible recipients on the system. To a large extent, an unnecessary high rate of rejected disability applications are reported, such unnecessary rejections impact badly

on the allocated resources of the Agency. The mentioned discrepancies were obtained from different responses the researcher received during engagements with SASSA officials in different offices. The other information regarding same was obtained from SASSA's Makhuduthamaga performance reports. It has also been observed by the researcher that due to administrative challenges in the Agency, some applicants are able to defraud the system by making disability grant applications more than once at different SASSA offices in order to try their success for the grant (SASSA Sekhukhune District 2013/14 Performance Report). Therefore, in view of the myriad challenges, this study undertakes to investigate the administrative challenges faced by the SASSA in administering the disability grant in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality. Having outlined the problem of the study the significance of the study will follow below.

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE STUDY**

This study undertook to assess and investigate the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration and management of the disability grant. Given that the government spends a substantial amount of money in dispensing this grant, it is necessary to investigate, through an empirical research, if the funds meant to assist the disabled community are disbursed promptly and that the disabled members of the community are able to access the grants. There have been several studies conducted with regard to disability grant administration across the country. Reddy & Sokomani (2008:75) in their findings reveal that the disability assessment process is found to be duplicative and expensive to the agency.

The information gathered and recommendations provided are intended to assist the SASSA with the efficient and effective administration of the disability grant. A study such as this may further assist government in its effort to provide prompt services to communities to find a lasting solution to the administrative organisational challenges generally experienced by SASSA. Again, policy-makers and practitioners can acquire relevant knowledge not only in the administration of disability grant, but also in the administration of public services. The study would eventually contribute to the social

services and the world at large.

#### **1.4 AIM FOR THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to investigate the administration of the disability grant by the SASSA in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, Limpopo Province.

#### **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study was to:

- a) To describe management approaches used to administer the disability grant in the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality.
- b) To analyse successes and challenges in the administration of the disability grant.

#### **1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study has the following questions:

- a) What management approaches are in place to administer the disability grant in the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality?
- b) What are successes and challenges in the administration of the disability grant?

#### **1.7. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Studies utilise some terminologies to outline meaning of the contexts in the study; as such terms which are utilised throughout the study are defined and explained below:

##### **1.7.1 Social Grant**

The free basic income earned by vulnerable or eligible members of the Society (Social Assistance Act 13 of 1996). Social grant also applies to grants that are received by

the destitute members of the society who are unable to financially support themselves and their dependents.

### **1.7.2. Administration**

Administration can be defined as the manner in which public affairs are carried out. Administration can also be referred to a group of individuals who are in charge of creating and enforcing rules and regulations. According to Olivier, Smit, Mhone & Kalula (2005:55) administration of the South African social security assistance system is divided between the government and the private sector.

### **1.7.3. Disability Grant**

Disability grant means a grant paid to a disabled person in terms of Section 9 of the Social Assistance Act, 2004 (Social Assistance Act No. 13 of 2004). This form of a means-tested grant is payable to persons who cannot take part in the labour market due to the physical or mental condition.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.8.1 Research Design**

Research design is a procedure that the researcher employs to collect, analyse, interpret and present data (Polit & Hungler, 1999:155). The case study used the qualitative approach to provide the in-depth information through semi-structured interviews conducted with SASSA officials. The method was to determine the execution of the administrative duties by SASSA officials, their capacity to administer and to determine procedures and processes in place to administer disability grant in the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality.

## **1.9 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT**

**Chapter One** outlined the general introduction including the background of the study, the rationale for the envisaged study, the significance of the study, the aim and objectives of the study.

**Chapter Two** provides the literature review, discussing related studies conducted by other researchers. The chapter gave a clear picture of what is happening in the area of study; the challenges and achievements were well outlined and the chapter also provides a theoretical underpinning of the study.

**Chapter Three** describes the principles in place to administer the Disability Grant. The chapter outlines the adopted model used by the agency.

**Chapter Four** outlines the research design and the methodology employed in the study. The chapter deals with the target population, sampling methods, data collection and instruments.

**Chapter Five** provides for the interpretation and data analysis of the study.

**Chapter Six** summarises the key findings of the study. It also offers recommendations on how to improve the administration of SASSA and what has to be done in order for the system to be efficient and effective, as well as procedures and processes to be followed in order to improve performance.

## **1.10. CONCLUSION**

The chapter presented a plan of how the research will be conducted. As stated earlier the aim of the study is to describe the bureaucratic approaches that are used to administer the disability grant in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality and to analyse the successes and challenges that the agency faces. The study employs the qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews and questionnaires as research tools. The data is interpreted and the summary of the findings are reflected in the concluding chapter.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: ADMINISTRATION OF DISABILITY GRANT**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter one of the study provides the general introduction, the background, the significance of the study, the aim, as well as the objective of the study. Chapter two focuses on reviewing the current literature review on the administration of the disability grant by SASSA with special reference to Makhuduthamaga local Municipality. The study thus reflects on importance of reviewing the current literature and the reason why others studies has to be reviewed.

#### **2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW AS A CONCEPT**

Fink (2005:3) holds the view that literature review is a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and synthesising the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners.

On the other hand Mouton & Marais (1990:11) are of the view that the sociological dimension of research cannot be ignored in the analysis of the process of research. They further maintain that the variety of perspectives of man and society associated with divergent domain assumptions lead to situations where one cannot talk about the research domain of the social science.

Mouton (2001:86) holds that, it is of utmost importance that every research project begin with the review of the existing literature in its particular field of study. A good literature review makes the researcher aware of what has already been written to avoid duplication of study and unnecessary repetition. Such a review helps the researcher to consolidate the theoretical foundation of the study. Mouton further maintains that a review of literature helps the researcher to consolidate the theoretical foundation of the study. It is also through a literature review that a researcher discovers whether the study has significance or whether it will lead to a new knowledge.

Booth *et al.* (2012:3) maintain that a good research synthesis can generally give the most reliable estimate of the effectiveness of a specific intervention and it can identify gaps in knowledge that requires further research. They further maintain that without a proper literature review one will not be able to understand the topic fully, and one would not be able to identify what has already been researched about and what remains to be explored. In their study, they are of the view that technologies are always changing, database interfaces and search engines are continually being upgraded. They further state that, new topics continue to appear with regularity. The skill of information literacy acquired serves as a result that one may have a specific reason for reviewing the literature. In addition to ‘taking stock’ of what has gone before and identifying a niche for own research.

In 2004, a recommendation was made by government for the establishment of SASSA as an agency to be responsible for the administration and payment of social assistance. It was meant to act in the long term as the sole agency that will ensure the efficient and effective management; administration and payment of social assistance to needy citizens, for the prospective administration and payment of social security and render services relating to such payments. According to Fry & Raadschelder( 2014: 469) are of the view that Public Administration has matured not only in terms of how it has learned and tolerate a wide range of approaches, but also in the confidence with which it has transcended the initial substantive interests. In view of the above and also in view of the fact that Public Administration has to be in line with modern trends and dynamics of society, new approach becomes essential.

The SASSA Strategic plan (2011/12-13) indicates that the agencies' main four strategic objectives are; to build a high performance institution compliance to good governance, striving for operational excellence and lastly embarking on continued service delivery improvement. The agency has introduced the standardised business process nationally and in all service offices as a system to address inefficiencies like a lack of uniformity across the country. That was seen as one of the good operational systems and successes in the agency. The model is aligned to the "Batho Pele principles" in the sense that it puts the customer at the centre of all the operations that are performed within the value chain of grant administration. The model was introduced to speed up service delivery by reducing turnaround times on services and thus providing quality services to customers while maintaining effective control measures. Over and above, it became imperative that personnel officers at all times in all offices are adhering to regulations governing the administration of social grants.

With regard to the administration of Disability grant as the main focus of the study, SASSA introduced prioritized elements of the disability management model which are; screening, gate keeping, improved booking system, assessment process claims management and quality assurance of all approved applications. The model was introduced as a result of the administrative challenges experienced in dispensing the disability grant (SASSA Strategic Plan, 2011/12-2013). Despite the organization having these good systems in place, it depends mainly from the Department of Social Development as the custodian. For reaching out to beneficiaries SASSA also depends on the community structures for referrals of applicants. Given the above, it will be essential that issues of the abuse regarding social grant system cannot be ruled out and that mechanisms to deal with such challenges should be readily available.

The Department of Social Development maintains that, the disability grant is available to adults who are South Africans and permanent residents who have been proved to be incapacitated and unable to perform normal duties in the labour market due to illnesses and disability conditions (Reddy & Sokomani 2008:72). Despite the legislations set, it was revealed that the impact of political pressures like high

unemployment rate, poverty and many more promises that were made to the citizens by politicians in power affects the system negatively. The agencies' resources were found to be directed to illegible applicants based on the referrals received from such political structures, it was discovered that political structures are said to be mandating the agency to approve the non-qualifying applicants on the system. On the other hand (Goldblatt 2009:370) maintains that, the social model of disability sees disability as a socially created problem rather than an individual one. Accordingly, it becomes essential that society takes good care of the disabled.

The agency has best practices and systems put in place but despite that, there are still some anomalies such as operational challenges that were further investigated and researched about. For the SASSA to improve on its services rendered, certain administrative inefficiencies have to be addressed. Truter (2009:82-83) in her study reveals that, the problem is that disability grant may tend to have a measure for alleviation of poverty rather than a measure to provide for the special needs of people with disabilities. She further argues that given the absence of a safety net of social assistance and high unemployment figures it can be understandable but not acceptable, but could lead to fraudulent uptake of benefits by those who are not disabled or disabled to such an extent that they require special assistance. She recommends SASSA to consider social safety net as a mechanism to curb fraud, abuse and capacitation of personnel.

Truter (2009:82) further emphasises that, the fact that the means test as a screening measure to determine eligibility is not applied in a uniform manner, it could result in the arbitrary awarding of disability benefits. Also the officials that are applying such a means test should be properly trained because they can only fulfill their functions if are fully trained and capacitated. This will ensure that their slogan of paying the right grant to the right person at the right time and place is maintained and that its purpose as an agency intended to administer grant is implemented.

Reddy & Sokomani (2008:75) conducted a study which shows that assessing medical doctors complain of threats to their lives if they do not issue favourable reports to the disability applicants. The assessment process is found to be duplicative and expensive to

the agency. It is also pointed out that a medical officer provides a medical report that must be confirmed by a pension medical officer. SASSA was also found to have no uniform objectives assessing procedures; assessment of disability is highly subjective and varies from the medical officer to the other.

On the other hand, Hardy & Richter (2006:90-92) indicate that the SASSA has some administrative challenges in information dissemination to clients, major themes emerge from relevant stakeholders like home base care organisations, support group organisations who were either recipients or potential recipients of disability grant. Their study further reveals that, administrative law issues relating to problems with the non-uniform manner in which grant applications are processed, the review and termination of grants were found not to be communicated properly and information provided to recipients was insufficient.

Johannsmeier (2007) undertook the study for her Master degree in Development studies with the topic "*The Social and economic effects of the disability grant for people with disabilities and their households*". The research aim under was to document the social and economic effects of the disability grant and their household. Johannsmeier (2007) highlighted issues of disability grant reviews and disbursement. According to her study findings, the termination of the disability grant income becomes a financial shock due to the lapse of a temporary grant or a permanent grant that is unexpectedly terminated for a review purpose. Another dimension raised is on the method of payment by the SASSA, wherein disabled people are travelling to paypoints to receive their grants, the study reveals that, a pay point is regarded to be advantageous in an area that lacks facilities like banks whereby beneficiaries are compelled to collect their grants at community halls. The issue of concern is that beneficiaries are travelling to and from such points with hired cars owing to their disability conditions. She further emphasizes that this often negatively affected households especially those where the grant serves as the only source of income. It is also been raised by community workers that clients often experience problems relating to long queues at SASSA offices and at hospitals where the medical assessments are taking place, applications taking too long for processing and applications

outcomes not being communicated to them, most crucially rejections or refusals are not properly communicated to clients. Johannsmeier (2007) undertook the study for Her Master degree in Development studies. Her topic, "The social economic effects of disabilities and their households

A study conducted by Govender & Mji (2009:228) states that the disability applications for grants in South Africa have increased from 600 000 in the year 2000 to almost 1.3 million in 2004. This rise is said to have been attributed to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, South Africa's high rate of unemployment and possibly an increased awareness of constitutional rights. The Western Cape which has a disability prevalence of 3.8 million has also experienced an influx of applications. In addition to the statistics, the SASSA Sekhukhune District 2013/14 third quarter report states that, the disability grant applications have increased to 4.3 million in the year 2013.

Govender & Mji (2009) further reveals that unemployment and a lack of income are influencing patients to seek assistance in the form of disability grant. According to their research, most results demonstrated that recipients were found to be women between the ages of 21 to 50, who are poorly educated with chronic conditions.

Tumbo (2008:65) argues that disability assessment processes are not entirely objective but are found to be mainly influenced by subjective factors such as, the mood of the doctors during disability assessments sessions, emotions such as anger, sympathy, and feelings of desperation. Tumbo (2008) further argues that, there are perceptions by the assessing doctors regarding abuse of the system and abuse of the grant by recipients. He furthermore revealed the inappropriateness of the tasks from the agency and most crucially, lack of clear guidelines for assessments. Tumbo recommends a need for a clear uniform policy and guidelines for the management of grants, in addition he recommends the role of the doctors to be clearly defined, health practitioners at hospitals be fully trained and continuously orientated on disability grant administration processes.

Sibanda (2012) undertook a study for her Degree LLM Course work Labour Law. Her topic “*Social Security in Southern African Countries: Lessons from abroad*” Sibanda` aim of her study was to highlight the best and worse practices in the two states. While in her recommendations is urging for replacement of existing sub-regional framework for strengthening existing framework. She argues that the SASSA was introduced to be responsible for the payment of social assistance benefits, with the vision to manage quality social security services to eligible and potential beneficiaries effectively and efficiently, according to her this is however not the reality. Sibanda`s research, reveals that fake documents were often obtained from doctors taking bribes to falsely certify that someone had a disability in order to be eligible for a disability grant. Like Reddy & Sokomani (2008:75) Sibanda also mentions the frustration of doctors receiving threats from the applications if the outcomes of the application is not favourable. Adding to the problem she is emphasizing that there is a lack of a uniform system of objective assessment procedures. She aligns herself to Tumbo study, that agency services is itself inefficient and lacks internal controls.

Goldblatt (2009:370) also undertook a study on gender, rights and the disability grant which states that, the disability grant is the third largest social assistance grant after the child support grant and the old age grant in terms of the numbers it reaches. Further, Goldblatt (2009) states that since the year 2001, the number of women recipients of the disability grant has been increasing. By the year 2005, the ratio of female to male recipients of the grant was 54%, Goldblatt also argues that, this may correspond to the increase in the number by those with HIV/AIDS since higher numbers of women were found to be infected than men. In his study Goldblatt (2009) reveals some of the administrative problems of the disability grant system in two provinces in South Africa. His study examines the general difficulties men and women have with the system. He presented his findings and recommendations as; administrative problems, inconsistent practices and procedures, difficulties of negotiations across governmental departments, deficient assessment panels, inadequate facilities, additional expenses and emotional costs. His recommendations in relation to the mentioned challenges are that, there should be some policy changes, coordination with other departments, procedural and structural changes.

In relation to the administrative challenges by SASSA and some dependencies on the grant by community members, some researcher recommend the government to introduce and provide with uniform and equitable grant to the needy citizens. Ferguson (2007:77-81) suggests that basic income grant could be a solution to the current dependency of grants. It was a proposal which was supported by several structures including Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), non-governmental organizations and by formal coalition of church groups. The proposal of basic income grant was for the modest payment of R100 per person per month, to be paid to all South Africans, irrespective of age and income. The idea behind the basic grant is that, it is a critique of dependency. She further points out that today any economically productive poor person is surrounded by dependents that must be supported. This dependency constitutes a ‘tax’ on the productivity of the poor. Ferguson theory supports the idea that, there would be no policing of conduct, no stigmatizing labels, there will be no social workers coming into homes and lastly there will be no costly bureaucracy to sort out who does and not qualify for the social grant.

Mathopa (2015) also undertook a study for her Masters in Social Work with the topic “*an exploration of alternative developmental programmes for HIV positive disability grant applicants*”. The goal of her study was to explore the need for developmental programmes for HIV- positive disability grant applicants, with the purpose of improving self-reliance. The researcher’s interest was to find out if there was a need for developmental programmes specifically for the disability grant applicants since there is no follow-up plan after the lapsing of disability grants.

Her concern was based on the fact that when the social grant is cancelled, it results in improved social conditions, such as guaranteed job placement or food security as, in reality, they end up with no source of income. In her findings it was identified that family commitments vary from one participant to the other. He further revealed that participants used 40% -50% of their social grants to cover for their household’s expenses and 40% towards their children maintenance. It is further revealed that about 50% of the grant is spent on personal use as other recipients have no children maintenance responsibilities. It is in this light that it was observed that when the grants lapses it raises frustrations and some emotional stresses and fear of not knowing to do due to loss of free income. The whole thing perpetuates the need for re- application and review for the further grant. Mathopa’s findings

reveals the need for citizens to participate in preferred developmental programmes to sought long term sustainable mechanisms.

On the other hand, another empirical study by East (2012) for a Master in Social Sciences degree conducted a study on “*investigation of the lived reality of the disjuncture between policy and practice in the implementation of South Africa`s Disability Grant*”. In her themes that emerged from interviews with SASSA Grant administrators. The theme that is repeatedly mentioned by the interviewees is the extensive paperwork involved in the application process. The respondents described their job as being 25% practical and 75% administration. East further points out that, an administration of the disability grant process by the SASSA is overburdening the system, she points out that there is a need to cut down duplication of processes. The findings in her study was that, The medical administration aspect of the Disability grant application process is seen to be littered with a confusion and misadministration., other common themes revealed that the assessing doctors commit mistakes on the forms due to high number of applicants or simply not filling the forms adequately; dates on consultations, time of consultation, and when being interrogated the doctors reply were “ *will it make a difference?* “. Doctors and heads of Departments of clinics were seen to be covering for the doctors mistakes and often use the “new doctor” excuse. This raises questions as to the effective training of the doctors by SASSA. East further points out that there seem to be some lack of uniformity in the administration of the disability grant across the country; her study was based on the Cape Town SASSA Offices. She recommended for uniformity, shortened disability application process and the smooth running of the whole process.

Mpinda (2014) undertook a study for his qualification in Master degree of science in epidemiology and biostatistics with the topic “Disability in Gauteng, South Africa: Levels, Distribution, Grant Allocation and predictors (2007)”. The research problem under the investigation reflects that, in the United States, majority of people living with the mental, psychiatric disability have a long history of being sent to long term residential facilities, orphanages or institutions for people with disabilities, where conditions are shocking and frequently violate basic human rights. His study further reflects that in South Africa, The constitution has a provision or the protection to everyone including people who are unable to support themselves and/or their dependents by providing appropriate social assistance. Mpinda further revealed that in Cape and Urban areas in the Western Cape it was found out

that disabled persons, males and females, in urban and rural areas, were receiving disability grant support, however, the prevalence of disability and its associated factors as well as the disability grant allocated is not well established in Gauteng. He also revealed that, there are a higher proportion of disabled males that are receiving disability grant than the disabled females.

### **2.3 CONCLUSION**

The administration and management efficacy of the SASSA is compromised by issues of inconsistencies of legislations and policies; for example the provision of disability grant to the people living with the HIV/AIDS has not been administered properly since the declaration was made. Researchers allude to lack of appropriate systems in the agency. Other areas of concern emanate from increased pressures on financial resources because of increased demand for social assistance, particularly disability grant, as outlined in the background of this study (Reddy & Sokomani 2008:49-50).

The studies conducted by various researchers as discussed above show most of the issues that reveal poor administration of disability grant by the SASSA. This includes the issue of awareness and administrative gaps by the agency on disability grant processes. The HIV/AIDS issue appears to be a major challenge for the government. It appears that government has no solution to address this matter. This resulted from a lack of uniform and standard approaches on the administration of grants. It has been discovered that SASSA has not been getting support from other departmental structures, all poverty and unemployment gaps are referred to the agency to be addressed by provision of social grant. The literature the current researcher gathers is a complex issue. It has to be well administered and those who minister it have to know the principles of administering social grants so that loopholes are closed and grants are disbursed to the right people. There are also issues that deals with the recipients many of whom that are not aware of procedures to be followed when applying for a disability grant, in other words is the issue of communication and awareness.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE PRINCIPLES TO ADMINISTER THE DISABILITY GRANT BY THE SASSA**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter reviewed the literature synthesizing what has been written about the disability grant administration. This current chapter discusses administrative principles employed by the agency SASSA in order to ascertain that the social grant reaches eligible individuals. The agency has in place its operational mechanisms in ensuring that service are rendered efficiently to the needy citizens. The disability grant administration system was introduced as prioritised management model by the SASSA. The model consists of five prioritized elements. Prior to the establishment of SASSA, different models were implemented by nine provincial departments, which led to clients to take the Department of Health and Social Development to court. The ruling was in favour of grieved clients. The clients` challenges were around issues of uniformity and inconsistencies by the Department on disbursement of social grants. The main problem was that there was no uniformity throughout the country. They argued that, grants disbursement procedure that was implemented in neither Eastern Cape Province nor Gauteng Province was different to Limpopo Province. The High Court took a decision that an agency needs to be established to administer and manage the issuing of social grants. It was again mandated that systems should be put in place to improve provision of services by the newly established agency. This led to development of the improved model on disability management as well as a vehicle to improve disability management as a whole. The Agency then adopted the model to help it to disburse social grants in a more uniform and efficacious way. This model is explained in the sections that follow as per the Social Assistance Act of (2004)

### **3.1.1. Screening**

Screening was introduced to ensure that only eligible beneficiaries who are referred by the department of health as disability is initiated by health are referred to SASSA for disability assessment. The element was introduced to verify if people referred are hospital, clinic and private medical practitioner's patients and they do have medical records for at least a period of six months in such an institution. This procedure is considered to be a pre-application process required to ensure that applicants are applying disability related grants i.e. disability grant, care dependency grant and grant-in-aid are booked and assessed appropriately. This step precedes all other processes in the application of any social grant by the agency.

### **3.1.2. Medical referral**

The element was introduced to ensure that the system is not abused by clients who normally shop around for disability grants, the process is sometimes referred to as "gate keeping" It is implemented to verify if clients were not assessed within three months as medical records are valid for a period of three months irrespective of the fact that they were recommended by doctors contracted to SASSA or not. The procedure is designed to control access to the medical assessment process. The issue here is that; clients should not be booked within three months after being assessed. All clients assessed complete an application to guard against clients being re-booked within three months in different offices or in same office where the application is made.

### **3.1.3. Improved booking system**

The booking system implemented by SASSA enable the organisation to ensure that clients are only booked upon presentation of completed referral forms by hospitals, clinics and private medical practitioners. Such referral forms shall provide for information of the doctor who completed it, the medical practice number, date of completion, and telephone number of the doctor. When a an applicant report at either a service point of the local office the minute an identity number of the clients gets captured on the system it should indicate that such a service recipient was assessed before and earlier than the set period of re application, as a result such a client shall not be allowed for an application. A notification letter should be presented to the service recipient; it is the responsibility of the SASSA official handing in such a letter that a thorough explanation is given as to the reason for such an action based on the PAJA, as one of the legislative framework governing the agency.

#### **3.1.4. Assessment process and claim management**

Doctors contracted by SASSA are annually trained to ensure that they become abreast with development in the Agency and issued with SASSA's medical guidelines so that there is uniformity in the awarding or recommendation of grants related to disability. Medical files are used to ascertain disability in clients seeking the grants. The doctor will look at the history of disability, management by hospital to verify if there is any improvement and whether clients have reach a level wherein their conditions will never improve irrespective of the intervention by the treating sources. The private medical practitioners are guided by World health Organization's guidelines as well. For example in the case of HIV related illnesses they will not look at CD4 count but will be guided by the clinical picture of the clients.

The issue of claims management of private medical practitioner's invoices is as well key as they make sure that local offices confirm the number of clients assessed and recommendations by such doctors before approval by districts for payment. The other issue relating to claims management is to ensure that they are paid within 30 days after receiving such invoices. The number of clients as reported by doctors will be verified against form registers from assessment centres that are sent on a weekly basis to districts for further processing.

#### **3.1.5. Quality assurance of approved applications**

SASSA introduced what is referred to quality assurance of all applications related to disability. This emanated from high number of complaints and appeals received by the SASSA from disability related grants whereby clients will be complaining that despite the fact that the hospitals and clinics will recommend them but SASSA will still reject their applications. SASSA contracted a consortium of medical practitioners to look at all assessments conducted by doctors contracted to perform assessments on behalf of the Agency. The terms of reference for such a team are to look at the reasons for awarding or rejecting clients who applied for disability grants, to check as to whether the medical forms completed by the doctors have sufficient information that will warrant recommendations by checking the diagnosis and whether people are able to perform daily living activities despite the medical condition. Those that are awarded to verify if indeed such medical condition

considering the fact that they are expects in the medical field will indeed render a client not to be able to compete in the open labour market given the medical condition.

## **3.2. TYPES OF DISABILITY GRANTS AND ITS APPLICATIONS BY THE SASSA**

### **3.2.1. Disability grant**

The disability grant as set out in the section 9 of the SASSA act and in regulation 290(b), (c), (d) and (e) a person is eligible for a disability grant if she or he physically or mental challenged, which makes him/her to be unfit to can compete in the labour market. Such an applicant should have attained the age of 18 years. The regulation further outlines that an applicant is either granted a permanent grant which is subject to review at any given moment, or a temporary grant which lasts for a period of six months.

### **3.2.2. Care Dependency grant**

The care dependency is the grant for the disabled children or a child that requires some full time care by someone due to their medical condition. In section 7 of the act, a parent, primary care- giver or a foster parent is eligible for a care –dependency grant in respect of a care-dependent child if an assessment confirms that the child, due to his or her physical or mental disability requires and receives permanent care or support services.

### **3.2.3. Grant –in Aid**

The other disability grant also administered by the SASSA is the grant –in-aid, it was researched that, the grant is meant for the aged who are also declared to be medically unfit to can be left alone owing to their physical and/or mental disabilities. Such elders require some regular and full time care like the care dependency grant above. In addition to the requirement as contemplated in section 12 of the Act, the person will be eligible for a grant-in –aid if he or she is in receipt of an older person’s grant, disability grant or a war veterans’ grant.

### **3.3 DETERMINATION OF MEANS**

The above mentioned grants are subjected to means testing too like other grants provided by the agency as stipulated in the section 6 of the SASSA act, as amended in exception of the grant-in –aid and foster child grants. That implies that the SASSA evaluates the income and assets of the person applying for a social assistance in order to determine whether the person`s means are below a stipulated amount This means test is a way of determining whether a person qualifies to receive a social grant as the grant is meant for those who have insufficient means to support themselves. The act further outlines that the income of the applicant is deemed to be an annual income for an applicant not in a spousal relationship, or half the annual income of the applicant and his or her spouse, where the applicant is in a spousal relationship, an income implies the following;

- Any compensation payable to an applicant or his or her spouse or dependent child in cash or otherwise
- It also refers to any profits, withdrawals or to her benefits derived from a business concern or farm of which the applicant or his or her spouse or dependent child is the owner or holds property rights in respect thereof.
- Any maintenance received from person obliged in law to provide such maintenance.
- Any income or financial support derived from a South African or international organization, excluding social assistance. (Social Assistance Act: 2004).

The following aspects were found to be standard disability criteria used for grant application; as per the Social Assistance Act (2004)

### **3.4 THE DISABILITY GRANTS QUALIFYING CRITERIA.**

SASSA has drawn up qualifying criteria so that eligible individuals are able to access the social grant. The following criteria are taken from the Social Assistance Act (2004) and it details who has to apply, the documents required and the annual income threshold for applicants.

#### **3.4.1. Disability Grant**

- An Applicant must be a South African citizen, a permanent resident or a refugee

- Must be a resident in South Africa
- Must be between 18-59 years of age
- Must submit a medical report confirming disability, which may not be older than 3 months at the date of application
- Must not be in receipt of any other social grant in respect of him/her.
- The spouse must meet the requirements of the means test
- Must not be maintained in an institution wholly funded by the state
- The amount paid is R1410.

**Documents required for an application.**

- An identity document of the applicant and spouse or refugee identity document of the applicant and spouse or affidavit
- Proof of marital status (divorced, widowed, married or single) or affidavit
- Supporting documents to prove income and assets **and** affidavit
- A medical assessment, which may not be older than 3 months, confirming the disability.

This was found to be a means test threshold for disability grant: **As at 1 April 2015**

**Assets threshold**

Single applicant	R 891 000
Married applicant	R1 782 000

**Income threshold**

	Per Annum
Single applicant	R64 680
Married applicant	R129 360

**3.4.2 Care Dependency grant**

- An applicant must be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee
- Both applicants and child must live in South Africa
- A child must be under the age of 18 years
- The spouse must meet the requirements of the means test
- The care dependent child/children must not be permanently cared for in a state institution
- Applicant must submit an assessment confirming that the child receives permanent care or support services.

### **Documents required for an application**

- An identity document of the applicant and spouse or refugee identity document of the applicant and spouse or affidavit
- The birth certificate of the child or an affidavit
- A proof of marital status (divorced, widowed, married or single) or affidavit
- Supporting documents to confirm income and affidavit
- Medical confirmation that child requires 24 hour care and support

The amount paid is R1410

This was found to be a means test threshold for Care dependency grant: **As at 1 April 2015**

### **Income Threshold for Parent or Primary Care giver**

#### **Per Annum**

Single applicant R169 200

Married applicant R338 400

- **(Note: The SASSA does not subject means test if care dependent child is placed in foster care. In this case, both care dependency and foster child grant can be paid in respect of same child).**

### **3.4.3 Grant –in aid**

- The applicant must be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee. An applicant must live in South Africa
- Must be in receipt of an older person's grant, war veteran grant or a disability grant
- Must require a regular full time attendance by another person to manage activities of daily living owing to his/her physical or mental disabilities
- Must not be maintained in any institution wholly funded or subsidized by the state.

### **Documents required for an application**

- An identity document for the applicant.
- Medical certificate confirming that the applicant requires regular attendance by another person
- Confirmation that is not a resident in state funded or subsidized institution.

The amount paid is R330.00

(NB) No threshold for Grant-in aid. Social Assistance Act (2004)

### **3.5 PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN APPLICATION FOR DISABILITY GRANT**

The Social Assistance Act: 2004 provides procedures and guidelines that are in alignment with principles of application process. The following are the principles, also included are methods, Suspension, restoration and lapsing of the social grant.

- An applicant or her or her appointed procurator applying for a social grant must present himself or herself an office of the agency or at any other designated place to request for a referral letter so as to present it to the treating source that is a qualified medical and health professional.
- The treating source will fill in the required information regarding the medical history of his or her patient.
- The referral letter is taken back to the office for an official booking to see the SASSA doctor who will and confirm the identity of the person being assessed
- The doctor will interrogate the referral letter from referring health professional
- The doctor will examine the applicant and confirm the existence of impairment, if any, interrogate adequacy and relevantly.
- Will assess the applicant for disability according to the guidelines
- Will complete the disability assessment form, normally provided by the SASSA
- The doctor will advise on further management of the impairment in cases of suboptimal treatment and refer as appropriate.
- The applicant gets notified of the income and then be referred for an application on the Social pension System (SOCPEN) for the purpose of capturing and verification of the application.
- The applicant will be served with a notification letter of either a rejection or an approval for a grant, also the manual register of every step is kept for records
- During disengagement as the last desk at SASSA offices the applicant will be interviewed if he or she is satisfied with the outcome, if not, SASSA has an internal reconsideration system in place, the applicant will be presented with some forms to register the complaint within 90 days upon receipt of the notification letter, and the complaint gets escalated for the reconsideration with a turnaround of 60 days. In a case wherein an applicant wishes to escalate further, he or she is referred to the

Appeal tribunal.

### **3.6. THE METHOD OF GRANTS PAYMENT**

If the grant is approved or awarded the South African Social Security Agency pays the grant the recipients in the beginning of every month and from the date on which the application was made. Should the application be rejected an applicant is notified in writing of the reason for the refusal of the grant application. An applicant has the right to request the decision to be reconsidered, and the right to appeal within 90 days of notification is granted. The payment cycle starts from the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month and lasts for about 15-18 days. The SASSA has introduced a pension visa card for every recipient wherein the pension can be either accessed at the paypoints or at any bank of choice and or at the preferred registered merchants.

### **3.7 SUSPENSION OF GRANT**

The following may result in the suspension of grant:

- Changes in the circumstances(financial and/or medical);
- Outcome of a review;
- Failure to co-operate when a grant is reviewed;
- Committing a fraudulent activity or misrepresentation
- Where grant was approved in an error

### **3.8 RESTORATION AND LAPSING OF GRANTS**

An application must be made for restoration of a grant within 90 days of the suspension. SASSA Act stipulates that: main reasons for lapsing of grants are;

- In case of death by the beneficiary and /or when a beneficiary is admitted at a state institution
- If the grant is not claimed for 3 consecutive months
- When the periods of temporary disability grant has expired
- If an applicant is absent from the Republic for a period of longer than 90 days
- If an applicant ceases to be a refugee
- If the child for whom the grant is received turns 18 year (Social Assistance Act: 2004).

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

Despite this model introduced and which is regarded to be the best tool by an agency to address operational challenge encountered, there are certain administrative gaps that need to be further investigated and researched about. The waiting period of application processing up to finality should still be improved. The process should not to be unnecessarily lengthy as indicated by beneficiaries. The Appeal process should be well handled and managed, the outcome should reach the applications timeously. The payment method and the disbursement process should atleast be in such a way that it suits the conditions of the disabled beneficiaries.

## **CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter dealt with the disbursement processes to be followed for an application of disability grant, its methods of payments and how the disability grant is maintained by the agency. In this chapter the importance of the research design and methodology used for this study is outlined. The research methodology and the research requirement are also outlined, these include the target population, sampling and sampling methods as well as the instrument for data collection and analysis.

This study used qualitative approach because the study solely depended on the administration aspect of the disability grant. The approach involved document analysis, questionnaire, interview and observation. Research methodology is said to be a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct the research (Mouton, 2001:155). In other words, research methodology is a detailed outline of what the researcher is intending to do and how the research is going to be conducted. According to Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi (2013:5), research methodology is a science that uses a systematic approach in solving a reasonable problem. It is about how the research is conducted to gain knowledge by mentioning the procedures to carry out the research.

## **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design is a procedure that the researcher employs to collect, analyse, interpret and present data (Polit & Hungler, 1999:155). The study used the qualitative approach to provide the in-depth information through semi-structured interviews conducted with SASSA officials, the disability grant recipients and from the new grant applicants. The method was used to determine the execution of the administrative duties by SASSA officials, their capacity to administer and to determine procedures and processes in place to administer disability grant for the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality.

Mouton & Marias (1989) further define qualitative research as the approach in which the procedures are formulated and explicated in a not so strict manner, but in which the scope is less defined in nature and in which the researcher does his or her investigation in a more philosophical manner. The qualitative approach provides rich information and seeks to deal with human experience, as such, is more concerned with transferability as a way of validating the findings. Leedy & Ormond (2010:67) concur that the qualitative approach is sometimes subjective and its creditability always depends on inclination towards impartiality of the researcher.

## **4.3 STUDY AREA**

The present study was conducted in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, situated in Jane Furse area. The area is located 124 kilometers South East of Polokwane City and about 247 kilometers North East of Pretoria. It falls within Sekhukhune District Municipality. Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality is extensively rural in nature and as such mainly falls under the jurisdiction of traditional authorities. (Statistics South Africa: A Community Survey, 2011).

## **4.4 TARGET POPULATION**

Brynard & Hanekom (1997:44) indicate that a population should preferably be divided into different, clearly recognisable sub population or strata. Polit & Hungler

(1997:223) define a population as the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria. For the purposes of this research, SASSSA administrative arrangements within the Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality served as the area of focus. The Municipality is made up of 189 settlements with a population of about 274 358 people and 65 217 households which amount to more than 24% of Sekhukhune District (Statistics South Africa: A Community Survey, 2011). Four SASSA service offices have been purposively identified for the envisaged study which focused on thirty-five (35) respondents as follows: three SASSA officials in each service offices within Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality at Jane Furse, Nebo, Manganeng and Schoonoord Service Offices which add up to twelve. Three outsourced medical doctors who are performing medical assessments and evaluation for potential recipients of disability grant were also identified. The other twelve beneficiaries were recipients of the grant and eight first time applicants of the disability grant, who formed part of the population. The target groups of such new applicants are females and males, aged between 18 and 59 years as a requirement for a disability grant in the SASSA. Below is an illustration of the structure.

**4.4.1 TABLE 1: AGE RANGES OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>Age range (in years)</b>	<b>Service Recipients</b>		<b>SASSA Staff</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>New Applicants</b>	<b>Existing Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Officials</b>	<b>Assessing Doctors</b>	
<b>Below 30</b>	1	2			3
<b>31-35</b>		2	2		4
<b>36-40</b>		2	3	1	6
<b>41-45</b>		4	3	1	8
<b>46-50</b>	3		4	1	8
<b>51-55</b>	1				1

<b>56-60</b>	2	1			3
<b>Over 61</b>	1	1			2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>35</b>

#### **4.5 SAMPLE**

For the purposes of this study, the researcher adopted convenient random sampling technique. Kent (2007:235) defines convenience sampling technique as the non-probability sampling technique in which respondents are chosen from a designated sample through their ability to answer the questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the SASSA officials; three from each service office identified for the research: Nebo, Jane Furse, Manganeng and Schoonoord, the total adding up to twelve officials.

The choice regarding the use of the officials were that officials at operational level were found to have more insight and experience in the administration of social disability grants field. Interviews were also held with three doctors who perform medical assessments on behalf of the SASSA in the area. Semi-structured questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher from disability grant beneficiaries who are currently on the SASSA system; three from each of four service offices which adds up to twelve.

To determine the cause of influx of new applications on the disability grant as it is alleged, first time applicants was included; two from each of four service offices, which add up to eight in number. Each SASSA service office was found to be assessing about 44 clients per week, which translates to 176 service recipients per month. The total number of service recipients assessed makes up to 704 for the entire Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, the area of study.

#### **4.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Data collection method is the process in which the researcher collects data for a specific research purpose relevant for a particular topic. The data collection for SASSA officials and assessing doctors was gathered through semi-structured interview, documents and questionnaires. The semi-structured interview used assisted in making follow-up questions to seek more clarification on administrative challenges. The researcher also collected data

from documents particularly SASSA annual reports and other similar official presentations of the SASSA. The questionnaire used consists of open ended questions.

#### **4.6.1 Semi-structured interviews**

This study used the semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview does not limit respondents to a set of pre-determined answers (unlike a structured interview). Eccles & Meyer (2009: 341) hold the view that, an interview serves as a conversation in which the interviewer questions the interviewee in order to gain information. This can be formal, informal, structured or unstructured. The researcher interviewed twelve SASSA employees, three medical doctors performing medical assessments on behalf of the agency. Employees were selected based on their line functions. Officials at management were then able to articulate the policy perspective with regards to how the administration is carried out in the agency while junior officials provided operational experience regarding the administration of disability grant.

#### **4.6.2 Semi-structured questionnaire**

The researcher used semi-structured questions to collect information from recipients of the disability grant, twelve current recipients and eight new applicants. The total number of the responses was twenty questionnaires.

#### **4.6.3 Observation**

The researcher also used personal observation method. The researcher successfully observed how the disability application process is administered in the SASSA Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality. In addition to that, the researcher was able to observe how applicants process flows including issues of accessibility, quality of work, confidentiality, the user friendliness of the system and most importantly access to the information, the waiting period in offices and turnaround time for application processing. Mpehle (2012:58) argue that observation is one of the method used in research to gather, analyse, and interpret data in order to evaluate whether the objectives of the research have been achieved or not. The observation method in this study enabled the researcher to consider how the disability grant process and procedure unfolds, from the screening point up until the grant payment as it is alleged to be the final stage of the

grant application process in the SASSA. Brynard & Hanekom (2006:47) state that the advantage of observation is that real-life behaviour can be observed, can be studied and be verified. The researcher in this study also used personal observation by physical visits to centres. The observation method assisted the researcher to collect more data that was omitted or deliberately withheld by participants. The personal observation method further assisted the researcher to witness real operational situations without asking the respondents, issues like if there was enough personnel to assist and cater for the disabled, the operating times at hospital centres and service offices where assessments by doctors takes place and most importantly the queue management as it seemed to be a challenge in the agency.

#### **4.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected used semi-structured questions, documents and interviews. The data was analysed using comparative method by grouping the similar responses together. The data collected using the interviewing method from the South African Social Security Agency and Social Development together with Community Development sectors. Data in a qualitative study is normally voluminous as such reviewing of notes will be considered. The researcher analysed data collected using the questionnaire and documents. In this study data analysis was thematically conducted from the emerging patterns of the collected data.

#### **4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations are important when conducting research. The participants in this study were informed that their participation was voluntary and their duty was to provide information willingly and they were further informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point if they felt like doing so. The purpose of the research was thoroughly explained to them. The researcher guaranteed anonymity of the respondents; they were

further informed that they could not suffer any psychological, emotional and physical harm. The researcher ensured that the results could not be manipulated to give the researcher's desired results. The researcher refrained from all forms of plagiarism and ensured that the work remained original. The permission to conduct this study was sought from the SASSA, Sekhukhune District office as the support office for the Makhuduthamaga Local Office.

#### **4.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined how the data was collected and analysed. The research design and target population were defined. The sampling method and the reasons for choosing the particular method were explained. The researcher was involved in conducting interviews and assisting in determining issues related to the research problem of the study. The chapter 5 focuses on the presentation and the analysis of the primary data of the study.

### **CHAPTER 5**

#### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

##### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter four of the study discussed the research design and methodology which included data collection tools and procedures. The primary focus of this chapter is to present the data collected, to analyse and to interpret it qualitatively. The analysis is based on the data collected through questionnaires (with semi-structured questions), documents as well as face-to-face interviews as discussed in chapter three above. The analysis is in two sections. Section 5.3 analyses the research findings from the questionnaire, while section 5.4 discusses the research findings from the interviews conducted with the twelve officials and three assessing doctors attached to the four Makhuduthamaga SASSA service centres. This chapter also provides possible solutions to the problem statement as articulated in chapter one of the research, which seeks to explore the administration of the disability grant by the South African Social Security Agency in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality.

## 5.2 SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS' SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Section A of the questionnaire deals with the socio-demographic data of the 35 respondents (purposively sampled) regarding their gender, age, marital status, position and title. The results of these categories are reflected below.

Information gathered with regards to the gender of the sample indicates that, in the new applicant category there are five males and three females. In the existing beneficiaries of the SASSA grants, six males and six females clients were sampled. The SASSA officials including those working in the offices (centres) performing administrative duties included nurses, administration clerks, supervisors and assistant managers, five were males and seven females and there are three medical doctors involved who are outsourced to perform medical assessment to the clients. Two of them were males and one female.

**5.2.2 TABLE 1: AGE RANGES OF RESPONDENTS**

Age range (in years)	Service Recipients		SASSA Staff		Total
	New Applicants	Existing Beneficiaries	Officials	Assessing Doctors	
Below 30	1	2			3
31-35		2	2		4
36-40		2	3	1	6
41-45		4	3	1	8
46-50	3		4	1	8
51-55	1				1
56-60	2	1			3

Over 61	1	1			2
TOTAL	8	12	12	3	35

Table 2 above, on the age range of the thirty-five (35) respondents indicates that the sample of clients purposively sampled included different age groups for both new applicants and existing clients for the SASSA.

This is intended to indicate a fair development to eliminate research bias on the ages of the respondents. The table also outlines that the SASSA officials performing various administrative duties pertaining to the social grants for the disabled people are relatively in the active age of 31 to 50. The assessing doctors are also in this active age of 36 to 50.

### **5.3 ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS FROM THE SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE**

The questionnaire was administered to 20 respondents. These were primarily the service recipients of the SASSA at the four centres of the Makhuduthamaga municipality in the Limpopo Province. Of the 20 respondents, eight were the new applicants and 12 existing service recipients. Each one of these was given identical semi-structured questions. The questions were categorised by the researcher into eight themes to be analysed as reflected below:

The views of the clients interviewed will therefore be analysed under the categories as outlined.

#### **5.3.1 RESPONDENTS VIEWS ON TRANSPORT ISSUES**

The first three questions for the service recipients were on accessibility of the SASSA offices by the disabled and whether the transport used to get to the offices for the application process is affordable for them. The majority of the respondents lamented the fact that the offices were

far away from places they stay (since Sekhukhune District is dispersed and mostly rural). They also indicated that, the means of transport are public mini buses and buses, which are costly and not designed to take disabled people. They further pointed out that the majority of the service recipients require special seats as they depend on assistive devices like wheel chairs and crutches. All of the respondents indicated that they require some form of transport to the SASSA offices. A great concern was on the ones that are critically disabled and ill. Those indicated that they require special transport which comes very costly as the majority need to be accompanied and be taken care off throughout the application process. The views from the 20 service recipients indicate that transport to and from the SASSA offices is costly. The offices are therefore not so easily accessible since all of the respondents indicated the need for access to the offices for assistance in the application process.

### **5.3.2 RESPONDENTS VIEWS REGARDING THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

Most of the respondents concurred that the application process is fair. This was indicated by one respondent who asserted that “we are given quite fair treatment although the process is long”. The other respondent believed that the doctors sometimes arrived very late to the office for assessment, and as a result the process becomes very slow. The respondents also concurred that the office set up is conducive to cater for the disabled people. They further added that they are treated with respect, and confidentiality is observed and maintained at all times. However, one respondent argued that, given the number of recipients who visit these offices, expansion is needed so that many would be accommodated in comfort. He also alluded to the fact that there is a need for improved access by service recipients to the offices as it is difficult and costly to reach these.

### **5.3.3 OFFICE SETUP: CONDUSIVENESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The 20 service recipients (sampled new and old applicants) were asked to comment on the office set up and space. The 16 of the 20 respondents asserted that given the infrastructural

resources at the four centres, the offices conform to be ideal places for such activities and processes as they are accommodative. The other respondent highlighted that, the set up and space allow for confidential face-to-face interaction between the service recipients and the SASSA officials during interviews and reviews. They also concurred that the entry into the centres had ramps and supported structures which is quite conducive. However, four respondents complained that the waiting room is too small to accommodate all service recipients waiting to be served. They argued that usually during cold weather and rainy days some recipients have to wait in the office corridors. This may suggest the need for the expansion of the four offices.

#### **5.3.4 DISBURSEMENT: TURNAROUND TIME FOR PAYMENT**

The respondents were asked if the turnaround time was appropriate from the time of application in the office up to payment. The SASSA Act states that the turnaround time for any disability grant application process should at least take one to fifteen days in average. According to the improved model adopted by SASSA as illustrated in chapter 4 of the present study, a booking system should be applied to address the influx in the offices. This is a process wherein a referral letter is issued to the client to the treating source to provide for medical record of the applicant. The model emphasises this step to be the starting point for any disability grant application. The other processes like assessment by the outsourced doctor and up to the disbursement of the grant were also asked about. Most of them, 17 out of 20, which is 85% of the respondents, argued that the process takes long. Some have argued that they took over a year to receive their payments after going through the long and tiring process.

Only three clients were positive that such processes were really necessary as checks and balances are necessary, especially where money is involved. These processes seek to verify that only deserving cases should be identified and be paid out according to the standing statutes of the SASSA.

#### **5.3.5 RELEVANCY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE DISABILITY APPLICATION PROCESS**

All the 20 respondents were assertive that the process is unnecessarily long. They narrated how it had been difficult to be booked in as a way to gain access for a disability application process, to be assessed and wait for the application outcome. This delay is often costly as transport to travel to and from the offices is also expensive. They also complained about the time spent for many unnecessary visits to the office. Some advised that the application process needs to be shortened, such that when one is assessed by the assessing doctor, the systems should give results instantly to avoid delays. However, in terms of the need to ensure efficiency, the majority of the respondents do not see it that way.

The majority of the 20 respondents who applied for the disability grant are of the view that the process is unnecessarily long. The SASSA Third Quarter performance report (2013-2014) lamented some of the challenges bedevilling its operations in impoverished communities. Amongst these was inconsistencies and delays in the application process as has been confirmed by the recipients themselves.

### **5.3.6 THE APPEAL PROCESS FOR THE DISABILITY GRANT**

Of the 20 respondents who answered the questionnaire, eight were not even aware of the appeal process. However, 12 were aware but expressed their resentment as none of their fellows who were turned down and appealed were successful. It seems therefore that, once one's application is turned down the chances are even slimmer for one to appeal and get reassessed.

### **5.3.7 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DISABILITY REFERRAL PROCESS**

On the issue of referral process, some respondents observed that some genuine disability cases are turned down while those who are referred by powerful politicians such as chiefs, local councillors and other influential community leaders always succeed. The SASSA third quarter performance report (2013/2014) also notes and confirms that, "to a large extent, unnecessary high rate of disability rejected applications are reported". According to the

analysis, it was discovered that SASSA does not have a strict system to curb and do some form of gate keeping since every unemployed and sickly member of the society feels they all deserve to be granted a disability grant.

### **5.3.8 THE GRANT REVIEW PROCESS**

The disabled clients who benefit from the disability grant are reviewed after every 2-3 years. The review process is said to be a policy matter and part of monitoring of the social grant. This is done mainly to assess the recipient's condition and eligibility for further assistance. The majority of the respondents were found to be against this process. They allege that it often takes too long. The process of booking in for an appointment takes long and it also impacts negatively on their meagre finances given the fact that they do not live near the SASSA assessment centres. The process is often found to be too costly. According to some respondents, they lamented that the process of review is considered unfair and find it to be a waste of government resources to review a condition that was once declared to be a permanent condition. According to the SASSA disability grant guideline, every permanent disability grant recipient is subjected to a review process after every five years. The review process entails: medical condition, financial status and other administrative processes (Social Assistance Act No 13 of 2004).

### **5.3.9 SUGGESTIONS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS**

The last question on the questionnaire for the clients was for them to share with the researcher their compliments, frustrations or suggestions for the SASSA to become an efficient and effective organisation at the four service centres studied.

The following sentiments were summarised from the respondents' views:

- That the government is generally considered being successful for establishing and maintaining the disability grant for deserving people.
- That all four service centres in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality need to be expanded and be refurbished as the number of service recipients are increasing by the day.

- That the processing time be reduced so that the service recipients are not subjected to unnecessarily lengthy processes as alluded.
- That influential people in the community should not interfere with the application approval processes for the disabled.
- That the outcome of the assessment should be instant and be done through the SASSA Pension System and not doctors or officials informing them verbally and after a long period of time.
- The outcome should not be communicated only when an applicant enquires about application progress, or after several attempts made to collect the grant at paypoints.
- That the appeal process be improved as it is often takes long and could be frustrating to applicants.

The following is an analysis with regard to the face-to-face interviews:

Fifteen officials of the four SASSA service centres administering the disability grant were interviewed individually in their respective offices during operating hours. These comprised the three assessing medical doctors who conduct medical assessments for the agency. The responses were similar to those answered by the previous 20 respondents. The face-to-face interviews were consolidated to 11 themes which are listed below.

The responses of the SASSA officials for the four service centres in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality are later analysed in detail in the ensuing paragraphs. The 11 themes identified are discussed below:

#### **5.4.1 ACCESSIBILITY OF THE OFFICES FOR THE DISABLED PERSONS**

The 15 respondents note that all the four service centres are not easily accessible to service recipients serviced at those offices. They maintain that this lack of access puts constraints on clients given the fact that most applicants are physically disabled and others are mentally challenged. All the 15 unanimously complained that the Nebo, Schoonoord and Manganeng SASSA service offices of Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality were difficult to access for most of the recipients who needed this assistance. The majority of these respondents noted that this could be the reason Jane

Furse Service Office is often busier than the three already alluded to. Some respondents pointed out that they use more than one means of transport to reach the offices. Others stated that the Jane Furse office is the preferred place since it is centrally located and it is next to all the amenities needed, like Jane Furse Hospital, the police station for affidavits, which is one of the critical requirements when lodging for a grant application.

#### **5.4.2 THE APPLICATION PROCESS: TIMEFRAME**

The respondents were asked whether the current process is too long and unnecessary. Three of the assessing doctors (all) concurred that although it seems too long to the clients, to them it is not long because the system has to put some checks and balances to ensure that deserving cases receive what they should rightfully get in accordance to the Social Assistance Act No. 13 of 2004. However, of the 12 officials working at the centres, seven of were of the view that the system could be shortened to avoid several bottlenecks which often cause frustration to the clients. The other five officials (33%) agreed with the assessing doctors that wherever money is involved, a thorough scrutiny is vitally important.

#### **5.4.3 OFFICE SETUP: CONDUCTIVENESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Of the 15 service centre officials who were asked to comment on the conduciveness and confidentiality of the officers, seven of (46, 6%) asserted that, given the prevailing situation, the set up for the office is not considered a problem. The assessing rooms for interviewing clients are considered quite conducive for the purposes they are earmarked for. The three assessing doctors also commented that the assessing centres are regarded as conducive. Five of the officials (33%) were of the opinion that, although confidentiality is ensured as clients are interviewed on a one-on-one basis, it would still befit if the service offices could be refurbished to suit the needs of the recipients. They furthermore highlighted that necessary assessing equipment be procured for doctors to perform quality work.

#### **5.4.4 TRAINING DISABILITY MANAGEMENT**

The 15 officials were asked if they were trained on disability management system and all of them agreed that there was a policy document and clear guidelines in place which guide them on how to go about handling disability application process efficiently.

#### **5.4.5 KNOWLEDGE OF SASSA LEGISLATION REGARDING GRANTS**

One of the questions posed to the respondents was about their knowledge of SASSA legislation. All the 15 respondents were able to say how the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004 is linked to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The majority of the respondents also articulated the SASSA strategic plan (2011:12-13), which stipulates that “the agency’s main four strategic objectives are to build a high performance institution which is compliant to good governance, striving for operational excellence and lastly embarking on continued service delivery improvement.” The above findings indicate that the majority of the officials running the SASSA centres of Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality are generally knowledgeable on SASSA legislations.

#### **5.4.6 ONE DAY TURNAROUND TIME: FROM APPLICATION TO DISBURSEMENT PROCESS**

The other question asked to the respondents individually was on the turnaround time of application process up to the disbursement, in line with the prescripts of the SASSA. On this question ten of the fifteen responds (66, 6%) agreed that, the system is generally considered to be efficient in processing the client’s data. This processing cannot be delayed by an individual. Accordingly, all offices that are electrified and cabled to suite the application process. The four service centres are able to process the grants applications as envisaged. The statement from the officials, however, contradict the service recipients’ views. The recipients complain that the process is too long and unnecessarily cumbersome. The other five respondents (33, 3%) were of the opinion that although the data is obtained and medical assessment done promptly, the other administrative checks, the verification and approval or declining process consume unnecessary time.

#### **5.4.7 DISABILITY GRANT ADMINISTRATION: RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS**

One of the questions was on the relevance of the disability grant and its effectiveness in alleviating the plight of the marginalised members of society. The majority of the respondents agree that the administration of the disability grant is in line with the impetus of the Constitution, which among other issues, thrives for equality and equity. One respondent remarked that the relevance of the disability grant is unquestionable but the effectiveness of its administration is another dimension which is very subjective and difficult to judge. Another respondent said that most, if not all deserving clients, are assessed and approved and subsequently paid within the prescripts of the organisation, therefore the SASSA is effective and necessary as an extension of government to administer social grants. From the responses expressed on this issue, it is indicative that the SASSA officials at these four service centres follow the prescribed dictates of their organisation and thrive to make it relevant and effective.

#### **5.4.8 SUITABILITY OF THE PAYMENT SYSTEM**

The disability grant is awarded to an approved applicant who will have been deemed suitable as prescribed by the guidelines. Some of these beneficiaries are on wheel chairs while others are mentally challenged and even epileptic, among others. One of the questions was on the suitability of the payment system on whether it is safe for such category of people. The 15 respondents agreed that the system is generally safe by all standards as the disabled beneficiaries who are challenged have officially appointed persons or a person who can collect the grant on their behalf; usually these are the immediate members of their families and only very few negative cases have been reported in this regard. The said procuration is also subject to review annually, according to the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004.

#### **5.4.9. NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME**

The other question asked to the respondents was on whether the applicants are notified of their outcome on time. The majority of the respondents acknowledged that these

applicants are notified of their outcome timeously. However, they indicated that this was an administrative perspective as they implement according to the dictates of the organisation. They further highlight that, despite the outcome being provided promptly to the clients, there were few offices that were unable to take application intake instantly, as a result often clients had to return for applications and be provided with system generated notification letter at a later stage.

Contrary to the respondents from the clients' side, the majority alluded to the fact that some would often wait for extended days to receive an outcome from their applications. In some cases applicants are not even served with such outcome letters.

#### **5.4.10 THE APPEAL PROCESS AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS**

Of the 15 respondents regarding the appeal process, all the interviewees concur that, given the *modus operandi* of the SASSA as an organisation, the appeal process is considered to be quite open and transparent. One assessing doctor asserted that the system is transparent as dictated by the 1996 Constitution of the Republic, Section 195(1) (g) and supporting statutes. Three of the officials working in the offices explained that clients would be satisfied if they were made aware about the appeal process, hence they are at liberty to file their appeals within the confines of the application guidelines. Accordingly, the appeals process is availed to the beneficiaries even before they apply for the disability grant.

#### **5.4.11 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS AND/OR COMPLAINTS**

The 15 respondents advanced the following summarised views pertaining to the improvement of the SASSA as an organisation:

- That the four service centres be refurbished to accommodate reasonable applicants and beneficiaries at any given time. The current arrangement in the agency is that, the service office can at least serve 44 disability grant applicants weekly excluding the other walk in applicants to the offices.

- The other factor is that, although the system is fairly timeous, more could be done to speed it up in terms of the system. This implied up-to-date office computer facilities which can process the applications quicker. This implies providing preliminary results to applicants quickly instead of them waiting for unnecessary and extended days than those outlined in the SASSA grants application guidelines.
- That all applicants who are approved should have bank accounts or be able to utilise the card system. A few short payments incidences have been recorded, where beneficiaries' grants (money) have been stolen either at paypoints or by people claiming to be assisting them.
- That mobile units be established to be designed in such a way that they are able to cater for medical assessments at the nearest possible points so that applicants or clients would not have to travel to the centres for medical assessment purposes.
- That politicians and influential members of the community should not interfere with the application processes for the disability grant approvals.
- That a vigorous and a continuous campaign should be carried out with a purpose of awareness to educate the citizens on grants application processes and the benefits thereof.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

The chapter presented an analysis of the views of the applicants and clients of the disability grants provided by the SASSA as well as those of the officials within Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality at the four service offices handling the processing and disbursements of such grants. The applicants and clients as well as the officials administering the four centres in disbursing the grants on behalf of government were deemed an ideal sample to draw empirical conclusions on the study.

Both the questionnaires and oral (face-to-face) interviews were used to draw evidence on the administration of the disability grant by the South Africa Social Security Agency within Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality area. The thematic approach of analysing data was used to compile the views from these 35 respondents who were purposively sampled for data collection.

In the next chapter summary, findings and conclusion are drawn.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study on the administration of the disability grant by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality area focused on the nature,

magnitude and challenges of administering the services to the citizens including the people living with disabilities. The literature review was conducted to scrutinise the views of prominent scholars pertaining to the administration of this grant to underprivileged communities and citizens. Data was collected from the four research sites which are the four SASSA service centres in the municipality. The views of the purposively sampled 35 respondents were analysed, discussed and interpreted in chapter 5. This chapter focuses on the summary of the findings, limitations of the study and conclusion.

## **6.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the present study was to describe bureaucratic approaches that are used by the SASSA to administer the disability grant in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality. The other objective was to analyse the successes that the agency employed in ensuring effective disability grant application processes together with the challenges encountered in the administration of disability grant.

## **6.3. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

Although the four SASSA service centres have several officials, the study only focused on the 12 officials. This sample may be small which implies that these findings cannot not be generalised across the country. The languages used for the clients in the semi-structured questionnaire was English. Although simple English was used some questions went unanswered. Either the participants did not understand the question or they did not know about the issues raised.

## **6.4 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The following are the findings of the study remarks of the study:

- Of the four centres offering the service to recipients, the three offices are accessible while the fourth one, being the Nebo service office is considered to be a difficult office to reach by most service recipients.
- Access for clients to the centres is not easy as some of the clients use body assistance

devices like wheelchairs and crutches to reach to offices. But on the whole the offices are regarded far away and difficult to reach.

- The current office setup is conducive as the agency ensures privacy and confidentiality at all times, although some respondents mention that, on busy days they often queue on office corridors for an extended period of time. The situation is worse on rainy days.
- The officials working at the four offices together with the three assessing doctors were found to be well conversant with legislation governing their services given that they receive training bi-monthly.
- Although most of the respondents maintain that the turnaround time for social grants applications often takes an extended period of time, some officials consider this process as a necessary measure to be taken because certain checks and balances have to be put in place to avoid inefficiencies including fraud. Some people applying for grants at many offices at the same time.
- The grant administration is relevant and a worthwhile service to the underprivileged members of the community as per the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996. Sec 195(1) (d).
- Politicians have been singled out as often interfering with the application process by often referring their members for assistance and “demanding” approval of same. This negates their role and unnecessarily puts pressure on the SASSA officials.
- The payment system was found to be unsafe for the beneficiaries since the majority of them are disabled and vulnerable and therefore, procurement should be compulsory to some of them.
- The processing and notification period is long. The appeal process has been described by the respondents as cumbersome, while the officials confirm that it is necessary to eliminate non-deserving cases and people who are deliberately defrauding the system.
- To clear the confusion and misunderstanding by the recipients regarding procedures in the application process, it is important and crucial that there should be vigorous ongoing community campaigns to educate the society on the operations of the SASSA and its jurisdiction within the Makhuduthamaga area.

## **6.5 RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS**

In view of the findings summarised above, the researcher recommends the following aspects for effective and efficient administration of the Disability Grant by the SASSA:

- That all four service offices within Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality area need to be expanded and be refurbished as the number of clients seem to be increasing daily.
- That the social grant application processing time be reduced from three to at least one day and that strict measures be put in place in ensuring compliance to it.
- That influential people in the community should be conscientised not to interfere with the application processes by referring their own people for political gain.
- That the outcome of the assessment should be known the same day of the application day and be done through the system not by doctors or officials informing clients after a long period of time. This aspect appears not to be addressing the quality assurance of the application system as per the adopted model by the agency.
- That the outcome should not be communicated only when an applicant enquires about the application progress, or after several attempts made to collect the grant at paypoints.
- That the appeal should process be improved as it is takes long and is usually frustrating to the applicants that are from far flung areas.
- The current booking system in place needs to be reviewed such that the beneficiaries are not subjected to unnecessary transports costs, time and delays.

## **6.6. CONCLUSION**

The aim of this research was to investigate the nature, magnitude and challenges faced during the administering of the Disability Grant by the SASSA within Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality. The study revealed that the SASSA officials are quite knowledgeable in their work and that they are always abreast of the dictates of their work functions. It can be concluded that the officials running the four service centres work within the confines of their

job descriptions and functions. The study has further revealed many citizens are not aware of the procedures required to apply for a disability grant. This calls for continual awareness campaigns on the part of the agency to educate the citizenry. This would allow SASSA to administer the disability grant in a more efficient and effective way.

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## **ANNEXURES: A**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES FOR GRANTS APPLICANTS (SERVICE RECEIPIENTS)**

#### **SECTION A: Demographic and background information**

This interview has been developed by the researcher to better understand the challenges people may have on Administration of disability grant by South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, Limpopo Province. The information provided in this interview session remains confidential and will be used only for the Research Purpose of Master degree of Public Administration dissertation for SEKELE M. A. The Interview will take 10- 15 minutes to complete. The following question will guide the interviews:

A1	<b>Record gender as observed</b>	Female	1
		Male	2
A2	<b>How old are you?</b>	..... Years	1
A3	<b>What is your Marital Status</b>	Never Married	1
		Married	2
		Separated	3
		Divorced	4
		Widowed	5
		Cohabiting	6
A4	<b>What describes your main work status</b>	Paid Work	1
		Student	2
		House keeper	3
		Self Employed/ Own business or farming	4
		Retired	5
		Unemployed(health reasons)	6
		Unemployed(Lack of employment)	7
		Volunteer	8
		Other (Specify).....	9
A5	<b>Service office</b>		1

**SECTION B: Detailed interview questions.**

1. Are SASSA Service Offices accessible for clients?

.....  
.....

2. Do you require any transport to access SASSA offices?

.....  
.....

3. Is the transport fee affordable?  
.....  
.....
4. Is the disability application process fair?  
.....  
.....
5. Is the Office setup conducive and accommodative for disabled people?  
.....  
.....
6. Do you think Doctors/Patients confidentiality is maintained in this office?  
.....  
.....
7. Are you familiar with the disability grant requirements and eligibility for applicants?  
.....  
.....
8. Is the turnaround time of application to Payment reasonable?  
.....  
.....
9. Is the application system working effectively?  
.....  
.....
10. Is the prescribed booking system fair for clients?  
.....  
.....
  
11. Is the application system relevant and efficient in rural and peri- rural Municipality like Makhuduthamaga?  
.....  
.....
12. Do you think the application system is beneficial for rural communities?  
.....  
.....
13. Is the application process regarding disability grants tiring?  
.....  
.....

- 14. Is the length of the application process long?  
.....  
.....
- 15. Is there any waiting period regarding applications?  
.....  
.....
- 16. Is your grants payment payable within same month of application?  
.....  
.....
- 17. Do you think the referrals plays an important role in the application process?  
.....  
.....
- 18. Is the payment system okay and safe for the disabled and mentally challenged beneficiaries?.....  
.....
- 19. Do you get the whole grant amount at all times at paypoints and banks? If NOT, please elaborate  
.....  
.....
- 20. Are you notified of the outcome of the medical assessment promptly? If NOT, please elaborate.....  
.....
- 21. Is the Notification of the application outcome documented and understandable?  
.....  
.....
- 22. Are you aware of the appeal System introduced by the agency?  
.....  
.....
- 23. Do you think the Appeal system is effective?  
.....  
.....
- 24. Are there any challenges of poverty in Makhuduthamaga according to you?  
.....  
.....

25. Is the referrals system effective?

.....  
.....

26. Do you think the Review process necessary?

.....  
.....

27. Are you happy about the annual review of disability grant?

.....  
.....

28. Is the process regarding reviews tiring?

.....  
.....

29. Are there any frustrations or compliments would you like to share regarding the disability grant applications in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality?

.....  
.....

**ANNEXURE: B**

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAFF (OFFICIALS)**

The purpose of this semi-structured interview is to obtain information from the South African Social Security Agency Staff/Assessing Doctors of Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, Limpopo Province.

The information provided in this interview session is confidential and will be used only for the Research Purpose of Master's degree of Public Administration dissertation for SEKELE. M. A. The Interview will take 10- 15 minutes to complete.

**SASSA STAFF (OFFICIALS AND ASSESSING DOCTORS)**

A1	<b>Record gender as observed</b>	Female	1
		Male	2
A2	<b>How old are you?</b>	.... Years	1
A3	<b>What is your Marital Status</b>	Never Married	1
		Married	2
		Separated	3
		Divorced	4
		Widowed	5
		Cohabiting	6
A4	<b>Position/Occupation/Title</b>	Medical doctor	1
		Nurse	2
		Administration	3
		Manager	4
		Service provider (e.g. CPS)	5
A5	<b>Service office</b>		1

1. Do you think SASSA Service Offices are accessible for clients?

.....  
 .....

2. What is your opinion regarding the current application process? Is it too long and unnecessary?

3. Is the current Office setup conducive and accommodative for disabled people?

4. Is the current Office setup safe for Officials? For example, violent medical cases.

5. Do you think doctors/patients' confidentiality is maintained in this office?

6. Where you trained on disability management issues? If so, how often?

7. In your duties to recommend applicants for eligibility, do you have any knowledge on medical matters? if yes , elaborate

.....  
 .....

8. Are you familiar with SASSA Policies and Legislative framework regarding management of grants including disability?

9. Is the turnaround time of application to Payment in line with the prescribed prescripts of the Agency?

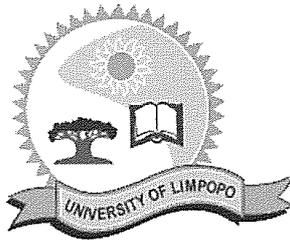
- 10. Is the current application system working effectively?
- 11. Is the prescribed booking system favourable for the clients?
- 12. Is the current administrative disability system relevant and efficient in rural municipality like Makhuduthamaga?
- 13. Do you think the system is beneficial for rural communities?
- 14. Do you think the current grant administration system has addressed paper-based problems sufficiently in administration of grant?  
(e.g. backlogs, rigidity and slowness of processing grants applications, etc.)

.....  
.....

- 15. Do you believe the period of the application process has been reduced also?
- 16. Are there any backlogs regarding applications?
- 17. Are there any backlogs regarding payments?
- 18. How many disability grant Applications do you receive daily on average?
- 19. Do you think the referrals system plays an important role in the application process?
- 20. Is the medical information provided by the treating sources beneficial and helpful for medical practitioners to arrive at an informed decision?
- 21. Is the payment system okay and safe for the disabled and mentally challenged beneficiaries?
- 22. Do they get what is due to them at all times at paypoints and banks?
- 23. Are the clients notified of the outcome of the medical assessment promptly?
- 24. Is the notification of the application outcome documented and understood by applicants?
- 25. Is the appeal system introduced in the agency?
- 26. Do you think that beneficiaries are aware of the Appeal System and that this system is effective?
- 27. Is there an influx of disability applications? If yes, what factors contribute to the influx?.....  
.....  
.....

- 2.8 Is the annual review process efficient and necessary?
- 29. Are there any associated backlogs regarding reviews of grant recipients?
- 30. Please elaborate and advise on any best practice you think the agency should adopt and implement.

.....  
.....  
.....



**TURFLOOP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP**  
University of Limpopo

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Tel: (015) 290 2852, Fax: (015) 290 2830, Email: [Fulufhelo.Netswera@ul.ac.za](mailto:Fulufhelo.Netswera@ul.ac.za)

02 July 2014

**TO:** Sekele M.A  
Master Student TGSL

**CC:** Prof. Phago  
Supervisor

Prof. Phago  
Head of Department

Ms P Manamela  
Principal Administrative Officer (TGSL)

**FROM:** Prof F.G Netswera  
Chairperson TGSL Higher Degrees Committee

**OUTCOME OF THE HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEE MEETING**

Dear Sekele M.A

I am delighted to let you know that your master research degree proposal served at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership (TGSL) School Higher Degrees Committee (SHDC) meeting that sat on 30 June 2014. The following are the decisions that were taken by the committee:

Committee Decision	
1. Proposal is APPROVED	
2. Proposal Approved with minor MODIFICATIONS (Proposal need not to be resubmitted to the committee but to the HOD)	X
3. Proposal NOT approved (Proposal should be resubmitted to the committee)	

You are kindly requested to consult your supervisor regarding the changes that need to be effected on your proposal.

The submission date for the corrected/ reviewed proposal is **14 August 2014**.

Sincerely

Prof F.G Netswera  
Chairperson: TGSL Higher Degrees Committee

*Finding solutions for Africa*



**University of Limpopo**  
Research Development and Administration Department  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 2212, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email:noko.monene@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEECLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 28 January 2015

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/14/2015: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** The administration of the Disability grant by the South African Social Security Agency in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality, Limpopo Province

**Researcher:** Ms MA Sekele

**Supervisor:** Prof KG Phago

**Co-Supervisor:** N/A

**Department:** Public Administration

**School:** Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership

**Degree:** Masters in Public Administration

  
**PROF TAB MASHEGO**  
**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031.

- Note:**
- i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
  - ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.  
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.



REQUESTION LETTER TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

M. A SEKELE

25 August 2014

The Regional Executive Manager  
South African Social Security Agency Limpopo  
43 Landros Mare Street  
Polokwane  
0700

Dear Sir/ Madam

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY FOR MY MASTERS DEGREE IN SASSA MAKHUDUTHAMAGA LOCAL OFFICE AND ITS SERVICE OFFICES.**

I would like to make reference to the above.

I am currently a registered student for a Master degree in Public Administration with the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership, University of Limpopo. The topic for my dissertation reads: **'Administration of disability grant by South African Social Security Agency, Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality. Limpopo Province.**

My data collection instruments are intended to utilise semi-structured interviews with employees (SASSA officials, Medical Doctors and CPS staff) and semi- structured questionnaire with applicants of the disability grants at Makhuduthamaga Local office, Sekhukhune District of the Limpopo province. These respondents will not be forced to participate in the study against their will but will be advised on this important ethical matter. The collected data will also be used solely for the purpose of my studies and the names of the respondents will only be known to me as a researcher.

For further information, please contact Prof K Phago who is my supervisor and HoD of the MPA programme at his office numbers: 015 290 2842 or email at: [pauline.moeketsi@ul.ac.za](mailto:pauline.moeketsi@ul.ac.za)

②

REQUISITION LETTER TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

I would appreciate your favourable response to my request in order to ensure that I successfully complete my studies.

I hope you will find this well.

Kind regards,

Ms Sekele. M. A

University of Limpopo (Masters Student candidate)

Mobile: 082 6728344/0788814442

Email: [annase@sassa.gov.za](mailto:annase@sassa.gov.za)



ENQ: NDOU NH

TEL: 015 291 7451

REF: 2/10/3/2

TO: SEKELE MA  
P.O BOX 3017  
POLOKWANE  
0700

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT  
SASSA LIMPOPO REGION

1. The above matter bears reference to your letter dated 20 August 2014.
2. Kindly be informed that approval for your request to conduct research on the "Administration of Disability Grant by the South African Social Security Agency in Makhuduthamakga Local Office Municipality, Limpopo Province", has been granted by the Chief Executive Officer.
3. You are expected to sign a declaration of secrecy before you commence with your research and the findings should be shared with the Agency.
4. The Agency wishes you all the best in your studies.

Kind Regards

**MALULEKE RE**  
**ACTING SENIOR MANAGER**  
**HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT**

DATE: 2014 October 08



[ *paying the right social grant, to the right person,  
at the right time and place. NIALO!* ]

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