

Availability of social grants and teenage fertility among the Black South African population in post-apartheid South Africa: Are both associated?

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## **ABSTRACT**

It is estimated that about 42% of South Africa's population live below the national poverty line of R3,500 per month (approximately US \$ 500 per month). The percentage of the Black population in South Africa living below the poverty line is about 50% percent. The Black population constitutes over 75% of South Africa's population and has the highest dependency burden and highest unemployment rate compared with the other "race" groups in the country.

The negative social consequences of teenage fertility have been noted by several studies and include lower educational attainment, as the teenage mother often discontinues her education, increased parity, as the teenage mother has another child quickly, a higher divorce rate, as teenage marriages break up faster than other marriages, especially if the bride was pregnant at the time of marriage, lower income, increased poverty and dependency.

As part of its poverty alleviation programme, the South African Government offers child support grant to non-income and low-income earners who are single parents. The current value of the child support grant is R260 per month (approximately, US\$ 38 per month) and the age limit of children for whom parents can receive the child support grant is 17 years. The impact of the child support grant on fertility in South Africa has aroused interest in the last couple of years and sparked debate about the unintended consequence of the child support grant: increase in teenage fertility due to the child support grant. Despite this debate, no empirical evidence has been produced to establish that the child support grant increases teenage fertility in South Africa.

This study seeks to answer the question: is there an association between social grant and teenage fertility among the Black population in post-apartheid South Africa? The source of data for this study is Statistics South Africa's 2007 community survey. The sample size for the survey comprised 947 331

individuals from 250 348 households. The analysis of the data in this study would include logistic regression to determine whether receiving child support grant significantly increases the odds of teenage fertility if other variables remained constant. Among the explanatory factors that would be controlled are education of teenage mothers, survival status of mother, survival status of father, household income, place of residence (rural or urban). It is expected that the results of this study would shed light on the debate regarding the relationship of the child support grant and teenage pregnancy in South Africa.