

Demystifying Disability Grant Disbursement Instruments In South Africa's Social Security Agency

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Abstract

1 Problem statement

This article first notes the important perspectives from social security experts concerning the instruments used to improve the operations for handling disability grants. The discourse ensued critically evaluates the frameworks, policies, system inaccuracies and efforts made by various government relating to the operations for handling disability grants across the globe to improve the instruments of the South Africa's Social Security Agency used when disability grants are paid out to grantees. Sociologists in diverse areas of social security grants recognised the merits and demerits of the disability grant mechanisms, inefficacy experienced in grant distributions and the need for further employee training that is suitable for the appreciation of decisive service delivery strategies, capacitation, and participation of confederate (s), in all manner of social security establishments.

Methods Utilising the qualitative paradigm and considering the concepts used in critical theory, this desktop research posits that, the disability grants policy implementers have a significant role to play in supporting a common purpose from the policymakers towards efficiently providing this form of government social support to grantees.

2 Results

Although there are numberless actors who have been put in place by various social security agency model-based governance structures, which to a certain extent have hesitant strategic needs and consciousness, however there are more gaps in most of the instruments that have been adapted by the South African government to disburse disability grants that persistently engulf the system.

3 Conclusion

To this end, it is important for the South African government situated at the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), to pay attention to these instruments by evaluating their usability while paying social grants to maintain exacting skill, give employee attention and manage the scarce resources as part of enhancing social security philosophy for service delivery betterment.

Key words: demystifying, disability, grants, disbursement, social security.

INTRODUCTION

The Disability Grant (DG) instruments of the South African Social Security Agency are provided for as some of South Africa's most essential poverty alleviation instruments (SASSA, 2022) serving the physically challenged grantee needs for human survival. Effective disbursement and prompt service delivery, that is currently enforced through the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, is in itself a requirement, if not, the deliberate action from government that is aimed at making the disability grant needs a more liveable experience (Luthuli, 2019), and take such high standards to the world (Gabrielle, 2020) by modifying the key disability grant disbursement instruments into an unmatched, worldwide, recognisable service delivery yardstick.

This transformation ought to be driven by the SASSA vision which presents the agency as an institution which seeks to be a leader in the delivery of social security by means of administering quality customer-centric social security services to qualifying or possible beneficiaries, using values that ascribe to the promotion of democracy, and a culture of respect for

human rights, that being this agency's social cohesion which enforces transparency, equity, integrity, confidentiality and customer care centred approach (Gabrielle 2020, Luthuli 2019, SASSA 2022). Whilst most of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA 2022) strategic frameworks does mention transformation, good clientele, and effective service delivery, however, most of these remained silent about

This manner of approach further allows grantees and policy implementers to have a double-sided capacity, that being (Gabrielle 2019) the ability to declaim to the policy making strategies as recipients and implementers, in comparison to (Zindi and Shava, 2022) creating awareness campaigns, whereupon clients and officials are laid back and voiceless. Granting that, the online reviews and transference descriptions can be bitterly critical if they are modernistic, securable and serve as an oral communication within which the opinion and theory can easily allow policy developers to make abreast and aware decisions. Gabrielle (2021) stresses that, these can equally be circumscribed and bound to use except for if they are compacted to acquaint the disability grant strategies to occur in the agency course of time. In another interesting evidence of Breek (2018) it came out that, people understand the internet community to be a platform for raising all crucial matters of awareness. If SASSA had efficiency and effectiveness in mind when creating the online reviews platforms for clientele, this scientific journal opted to use grantee reviews obtainable across the different SASSA websites, counting Facebook pages, reports, minutes and so forth to conclude on the views that pertains to social grant service delivery, especially, that of the disability grants in question. Fraud and inefficiency which sprung up quite strongly as the birth of all problems at SASSA, seemed to be what prevents the agency from vetting efficiency as expected by the public.

the role to be played by policy developers towards curbing the major issues of fraud, inefficiency, and corruption this agency faces, up to this current era. Goldblatt (2009), Tigere and Moyo (2022) question the logic of SASSA top-down disability grant strategies that do not consider the input of policy implementers and grantees.

Sakala and Noyoo (2022) in agreement with Hart, Wickenden, Thompson and David (2022) argued in favour of a disability

grant policy re-development, expansion and grass roots design approaches, that should be, driven towards creating effective grant disbursement processes that consider the needs of the person living with disability including their real human dimensions such as home settings, along with the ability to encourage grantees (Mazenda, Masiya and Mandiyanike 2022) to collectively reimagine and reshape the disability grant policy, as this becomes the heart pulsation of every effective and adaptable service delivery that is anticipated by both the agency and its grantees.

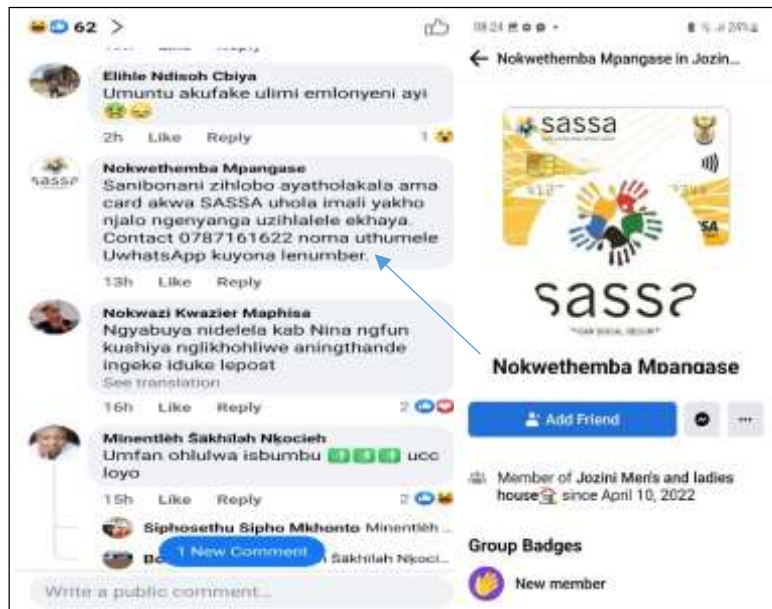
Vital are all possibilities and the provision of widened insights from different counterparts when planning the futuristic implements of the disability grants policy. Ndirangu, Gichane and Browne (2022) argued that desktop research turns out to be a more reliable method that must do identifying fields of advancement since it is purely voluntary, therefore, it is pointed out by earnest people, in such a way that (Schuckert, Liu and Law 2015) believes that because of this reader get to indulge with invaluable information The intention of this paper was to point out the observed reality using the aimless data on disability grant disbursement, as the SASSA, is being run for a day-to-day grant service delivery for human development.

Although the social networking websites can be observed as a reactionary for encouraging sociability and fits well for an increased productivity, reduced production costs, improved appearance of documents, enhanced creativity with an element of fun, ability to produce customized documents and reduced time to print (Neroda, 2021), it is also especially crucial for such online data to be educational, create awareness and for it to make a space for new solutions to emerge (SASSA, 2022). The corroborated evidence on grant disbursement efficacy fitted out for this paper assumptions, and the setting against which the online feedback from grantee, client, scholar, and the public reviews were understood and reasoned against.

The South African Social Security Agency fraudulent encounters shown in (Figure 1) proves that fraud is stretching to social network platforms, whereby fraudsters are observed recruiting invalid or ineligible clients from populist pages, to benefit unduly, thereby depriving the eligible candidates, and the

economy at large. The SASSA may be considered improvisational to the theory of strategic and viable grant policy if they address the increasingly alarming fraudulent encounters as advocated by Luthuli (2019).

Figure 1: Fraudulent Recruiter on General Facebook Page



The arrow in Figure 1 shows a fraudulent encounter from a lady by the name of Nokwethemba Moanoase recruiting publicly the ineligible grantees. The writing translator to: “Greetings relatives, you can now get SASSA cards to get paid your own share whilst fully relaxed at home. Contact 078 716 1622 or send a WhatsApp on the very same number. Evidence of this nature proves that there is not enough which is being done by the agency to bring fraudsters to book, and even those who have are given lighter sentencing, bribe their way out and be free again (Gabriele, 2019).

Source: Group Badges (2022)

The South African Social Security Agency is recognised as a (national social security system in South Africa) that was brought into power in April 2005 and is expected to disburse social grants as a representative of the Department of Social Development, a national entity which enjoys the governance function over the Agency, even so, has no operative control

over it. This is to say, SASSA is charged with a responsibility to reallocate the function of social security from South Africa's provinces to the national sphere of government, and as such, they are expected to report to the Department of Social Development (DSD, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disability grant policy: strengths versus weaknesses The pronouncement made on the Social Assistance Act (13 of 2004) posits that citizenry are considered to be challenged with disability if they are (1) within the prescribed age (18), (2) owing to individual mental or physical disability, (3) unfit for any labour or employment placement by virtue of somewhat service which is the means needed to enable every citizenry to afford their maintenance. The magnitude of corroborated evidence certainly convinces one that quite a considerable number of European governments have come up with varying strategic frameworks that accounts for instruments which should resolve the universal disability challenges worldwide which South Africa is party to (Schidel, 2022). Still and all, it cannot be negligible to consider that as much as some of the developed country successful practices can mentioned as a better fit for service delivery, however, that may be different for emergent economies such as that of South Africa. Following the scourge of covid-19 quite a significant number of governments are revisiting their disability financial structures such as budgets to recover the losses that came with the magnitude of

Disability grants are a means to reduce poverty.

Conflicting views have risen around the instruments that are placed as the foremost reallocation strategies as well as the paramount tools for combating poverty which has proved to struggle over the years showing the in-use systems to be encircled with dramatic gaps that arise from the policy defects which are noticed on the disability grant policy during disbursement processes at SASSA (Mazela, Masiya and Mandiyabike, 2022). It is without a doubt that the strategic and viability of SASSA when it comes to tackling societal important stamping grounds such as disability, the agency needs to first grasp the real-life experiences that moves the people whom the agency serves. This article argue that SASSA cannot have as

requirement for grant applications the physical address of an applicant if they have not devised a particular strategy for dealing with applicants who are residing on the street as this immediately make them to restricted access to grants. f 'Providing the disability grant to all disabled persons who are unable to support themselves, including their dependents due to their limiting nature of disability conditions' is anything to go by, then the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, as the underpinning law of the disability grant policy, should be able to cater for issues that relate to physical addresses of the persons with disabilities who reside on the street in its provisions. There is no arguing with the fact that the persistent allegations of fraud and inefficiencies at SASSA have a potential to plunge taxpayers into a crisis state of economic burden, to a greater degree with the taxation which grows simultaneously with a very slow-paced social grant sustainability (Madonsela, 2022). An accounted for argument dwells on the fact that the growth in taxation tops the government agenda if one were to think unwavering loss that the status quo brought to all governments across the globe (Brewer and Gardiner, 2020; Edmiston, Robertshaw, Young, Ingold, Gibbons, Summers, Scullion, Geiger, and de Vries, 2022). Van Aswegen (2020) undertook research on the manipulative strategies such as those disguised as mechanisms for supporting the person living with disabilities to access the labour market created around disability, social welfare including labour market of the apartheid society to which the findings revealed that the disability group endure enormous pressure to work which is portrayed as a headway towards the recognition of this group's rights to work and influence.

Emergent challenges experienced by disability groups around social protection that pertains to accessibility across welfare institutions.

This analysis found evidence for problematic accessibility in social protection as observed in the varying experiences of persons living with disabilities (Mutwali and Ross, 2019). This difficulty to accessing this form of government support can only be attributable to issues such disability grant approvals that seem to be inefficiently administered by SASSA, and unjustly experienced by this disability group.

It remained unclear in the previous studies whether the receptivity of social protection by welfare institutions is considered as vital as it should be as exonerated in the corroborated evidence such as that of Santini, Socci, Fabbietti, Lamura and Teti (2022) which showed that under covid-19 circumstances, the measures of social protection could only be construed as system mounted with varying disparities in terms the service provided to disability grantees statelily in South Africa. In this paper, while the researcher referred to earlier work, it is pointed out that Santini, Socci, Fabbietti, Lamura and Teti (2022), discovered that the covid-19 pandemic has undermined the social protection measures making the life of grantee beneficiaries worse of world-wide which this about the sustainability terms which cannot overlook the strategic direction that the SASSA disability grant policy is taking because that is what can help the agency to come up with more innovative powers-that- be more to the layers of administration which races forward when it comes to dealing with the existing phenomenon.

Global deleterious situation in disability grants

Debatable perceptions by different scholars which place the disability grant as set-off with issues of fraud and inefficiency are rather concerning. Useful study of (Urban Institute on the African American Economic Security and Role of Social Security) showed that twenty years later different government in African countries continue to improve their countries social security programs in an attempt promote reasonable disability grant benefits (Kijakazi, Smith, and Runes, 2019). This has been used to help government develop unassuming benefits which does not only oppress the disability group but also throw them into a state of poverty whereas they are getting social security. Studies of improving social disability instruments in policies are well documented, however, it is also well acknowledged that more changes are needed towards sharpening the disbursement of social security. This has also been explored in prior studies by Veghte, Scheur, and Waid (2016) which created an awareness on the short- sighted social security benefits which disfranchise the disability group.

One criticism of much of the literature on unreasonable social security benefits is that more challenges of being unable to support oneself are experienced significantly by disability

grantees. In the light of reported, it cannot exclude South Africa, the situation creating a crisis for many governments thereof.

An important implication of these findings of shown in the Disability Development Report (2018) on the issue of growing population of disability grant applicants that are denied social grant assistance across the globe although they satisfy the prescribed requirements is that the practice oppress the health system on the opposite end as majority of these victims get seek and subsequently cannot afford health care to which they ultimately rely on government fully. The data obtained is broadly consistent with the major trends by different scholars such as Gabrielle (2018) which that made remarks on the burgeoning social security exclusion phenomenon that was especially noticed during the year 2018. In agreement to some reports in the literature, there were other writers such as (Dlamini, 2022; Philip, 2020) who raised awareness on the growing scourge of social security accessibility issues which kept throwing the destitute below the poverty line that was not being attended to by numerous governments. These findings were quite unexpected and suggests that social protection issues exist in most developing countries which competes for government urgent attention.

CONCEPTUALISATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper used two theoretical frameworks, namely: Critical theory and the Theory of Change (ToC). The aim was to use Critical theory to critique SASSA disability grant disbursement mechanisms, whereas the Theory of Change assisted this research to develop and adapt necessary changes which were needed by the agency to improve on the administration as the agency disburse the disability grants. A critical theory is any approach to social philosophy that focuses on society and culture to reveal, critique and challenge power structures. With roots in sociology and literary criticism, it argues that is conceivable that many disability grantees lack adequate means to sustain a living despite being in a possession of social grants. Several theories have been proposed to promote social support by identical African governments, some focusing on the development of improvement strategies for disability grant benefits, others on the protection of disability groups and their families (Kijakazi, Smith and Runes, 2019). There exists a

considerable body of literature on call centre fraud by Indian government whereby vulnerable groups such as grantees of social grant were taken an advantage of over the phone scam used to steal money by manipulators of the system for self-enrichment purposes that in the wake of the incident got arrested by the ATLANTA-Federal agents as discovered by (Corra, 2020). Powell (2022) bring some information about the background of the problem that the inculcate ripped off the government a considerable amount of \$ 400, 000 in social grants. Since this incident it has become the American Department of Justice and Social Security office of the Inspector General priority to find more combative measures to combat the pertinent issues of phone call scammers.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and data collection

This desktop research first extracted the data from the PhD literature review findings by other scholars to make one meaningful paper on the impact of weak disability grant disbursement mechanisms. In the course of data assembling of perceptions, streamlining the literature that pertained to the disability grantees and responsible officials, including non-profit organisations which house disability grantees played an important role in that it enabled the research to focus on the real-life experiences which both the grantees social problems stem more from social structures and cultural assumptions than from individuals (Horkheimer, 1973).

Theory of Change is a methodology or a criteria for planning, participation, adaptive management, and evaluation that is used in companies, philanthropy, not-for-profit, international development, research, and government sectors to promote social change (Luthuli, 2023). It was also necessary to use the transformative paradigm as a research framework that centres around the experiences of marginalised communities such as the disability grantees, which included the analysis of SASSA power differentials which led to grantee marginalisation, and this helped the research to link its findings to Theory of Change actions the study designed which were intended to mitigate disability grant policy disparities.

RESULTS

From the exhaustive review above, key findings emerged. The researcher describes the results of Regional and local managers from SASSA, and the results from social workers and grantees of WCAPD, GPAPD and St Giles (St Giles), which showed the following:

Regional managers

This research findings on regional managers insofar as the disability policy is concerned at least hint that there is a notable impact caused by the everchanging Social Development and Welfare ministers which is an oversight offices which controls SASSA, and the subsequently affects the delivery of disability grants. Together, the present findings confirmed that SASSA is also faced by another challenge which has to do with the unsettled Regional Managers who keep moving from one province to another bears negative consequences to the disability grant policy. The and SASSA officials face when the disability grant is disbursed.

For this purpose, the research employed the research data collected from the three provinces, namely: Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Gauteng province. This proceeded in two stages: 1) data collected from the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) officials ranging from administrators, local and executive managers of the agency, 2) the staff and grantees of the non-profit making disability organisations including the Gauteng Provincial Association for the Physically Disabled (GPAPD), the KwaZulu-Natal Saint Giles and the Cape Town Association for the Physically Disabled (WCAPD). The constituency was made of 15 grantees in each province, 30 SASSA officials and 10 social workers from disability organisations mentioned above.

Local managers

This analysis found evidence for the insufficient resources which SASSA local offices are supposed to use as means to help disability grantees yet superior offices are not providing. Another important finding hinged on the staff who regard themselves as inundated with too much work, great problems that pertains to undervalued understanding of the disability grant policy, very scanty means of comparisons between SASSA

provincial offices, including warn out premises. A further novel finding was that there was an existing challenge between SASSA and the Department of Labour regarding the records of employment statuses which are used to determine the applicant's means test which proved to have outdated information which creates chaos between SASSA and its clients. results also demonstrated two things. First, SASSA Executive management faces great challenges when it comes to vacant positions of managers. Second, more issues on budgetary constraints when it comes to commissioning the strategic policy advisors for the SASSA. Superior results were also seen for issues that concerns employment of medical doctors by SASSA on a full-time basis.

This research results further demonstrated that SASSA even fail to appoint auditors whose role generally is to oversee issues concerned with mismanagement of funds, including creative ways of handling institutional finances. This present study once more confirmed the findings about the issues which the SASSA faces surrounding the strengthening of autocratic models by this agency's committee known as Regional Management Committee (REMANCO) which this issue was not separated from concerns the developers had when it comes to an issue of transferring their supposed tactical leaders to the agency's local offices.

Social workers

This section summarises the findings and contributions made around the perceptions of social workers of WCAPD, GPAPD and the KwaZulu-Natal, St Giles. The result provided evidence to several issues connected to funding, the gap which existed between SASSA as a system and disability non-profit organisations. The results led to similar conclusion as that of Gabrielle (2018), where SASSA is challenged when it comes to disability grantees health and the available budgets to assist them over and above disbursing the disability grant.

Extensive results carried out showed that SASSA disbursement methods do not improve when it comes to a wide range of issues such as facility management, enough vehicles for social workers

to visit grantee homes as often as they wish to be. More results highlighted that little is known by SASSA executive management about the real issues experienced by local offices given their supposed absent nature, whereas there were no substantially better results than the rest of the problems when it came to problems about positions which had not been filled, the growing cases of fraud the agency faced, limited budgets, issues around increasing numbers of staff who were employed on a part-time basis, and, subsequently, demotivated and had restricted experiences as some engagements were only permissible to full-time staff.

Disability grantees

This paper results casts a new light on the grantees' perceptions on the disability grant disbursement by SASSA from the different provinces, that is, Western Cape, Gauteng, and KwaZulu-Natal, stately in South Africa. It was worth discussing some interesting facts around the issue of discontented disability grantees with regards to the disability grant amount paid by SASSA, as the article also showed concerns which this group raised on the agency long queues. Some discussed implications involved the struggle grantees face that pertained to long turnaround times this agency uses, apart from other frustrations that has to do with the issue of grant renewals after every period of 12 months which was despite the grantees living with permanent disability.

This article yields increasingly considerable results on data around the social workers who were considered aloof by grantees, and subsequently, they failed to observe several forms of abuse their clients experience in their homesteads. Another burgeoning finding was that of the grantees forced by poverty circumstances to borrow from loan sharks for the sake of survival, which also suggested that upon receipt, their disability visited, depending on donations for filling up fuel to vehicles used to visit grantees, not excluding issues of missing safety aspects of the areas being visited by the social workers. Another challenge that was clear from these results was that the social workers faced significant space challenges for accommodating many of their grantees, apart from the main challenge that pertained to miscommunication on important matters involving SASSA and the non-profit organisations,

thereby contributing immensely to client delays in terms of disability grant applications leaving them more than frustrated.

IMPLICATIONS

It is evidenced in the SASSA misguided disability grant disbursement systems that the in-use policy needs improving. This means that obsolete disbursement mechanisms ought to be removed for the agency to be regarded as adept institution which can take place in respect to the relevant measurements of the Theory of Change (ToC). The article's popular belief is that the disability grant policy astuteness state should be able to point up to the dire needs of grantees if government is to address what appears as issues of efficiency, as it is what will ultimately make the policy become fit for a purpose insofar as disbursement is concerned.

It is by now generally accepted that proper functioning agencies have their policies as drivers towards effective and efficient disbursement during the process of administering social grants. Hence, the stressing of having SASSA disability grant policy as an adaptive method to avoid the typical culture of embedding systems into dispensable outmoded systems that are opposed to change can done away with. It can be generally agreed that this article implies that the embedding of grantee needs into the disability grant policy remains valueless in situations whereby the non-profit organisations who house the persons living grant is not only demanded by these loan sharks, but also by the abusive family members who apparently forcefully controls the grantee money as they feel the need that they should contribute towards their household responsibilities. The results found that there is no clear support for the issues connected to grantee transport fees as they need to regularly visit SASSA offices to sort different issues using the same grant money, whereas some planned comparisons between the provinces also revealed that most of the grantee's homestead are not conducive.

The results confirmed that this most disability grant disbursement instruments were not a good choice for the desirable effective and efficient service as the article considered quite a wide range of issues that pertained to inadequate holding areas for disability grantees at SASSA offices, challenges around grantees who live with blindness yet

must queue for service and not to mention the high volume of complaints around the agency's unclear information systems. In this section, this research also illustrates some experimental results which showed a considerable number of grantees from different provinces who believe in sporting activities, and other social engagements to be the best strategy that the agency can use to help most grantees win their emotional battles that comes with being the person living with a disability. This be accompanied by the importance to correctly interpret the results insofar as making the reader understand that more than the disability grant money grantees were also interested in receiving assistance which enhance their general quality of life. with disabilities are silenced by the agency systems during the process of policy formulation. This approach can impair the grantees needs in terms of being given the rightful development and be allowed to exercise their independent rights to choosing whether they prefer to work or do business while in receipt of grant as evidently the grant is not enough to meet all their needs which then affects livelihood.

Such practices by SASSA are indicative that there is a lack of being able to fulfil the disability grant purpose by the agency if one is to argue from a perspective that the SASSA policy appear to be disabled, by the existing SASSA policy systems, therefore, it fails to adequately introduce the plans that are more developmental in nature. It is then ironic to believe that such policy can realistically integrate the persons living with disabilities back to the mainstream of the society, for which the evidence in this article clearly shows that the group has been excluded for a significant number of years by the apartheid government. Again, what can be very small and difficult to observe is the issue of grantee service provisioning which fails dismally to cultivate correspondingly with the socio-economic changes.

The implications then are that this challenge immediately throws grantees backwards whereas the main purpose of social grant should be considering the real life demands when issuing grants to beneficiaries. This change may alter or improve the aspects of real livelihood challenges that grantees face on their daily basis which as things stand seems like they are fighting a losing battle with the government. It is equally important to

highlight the fact that SASSA along with the grantees the endure a common goal.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes by arguing that the SASSA challenges are not something new, although they have been written about by several scholars, however, there is very little notable improvement. On this basis, the researcher concluded the disability grant administration should be adapted to the real needs of grantees and not what the agency assumes are the actual needs of these individuals.

The findings of this article can also be understood in a context of projecting the voices of all the parties involved in the disability grant disbursement exactly as they are affected, both individually and collectively, referring to (grantees, officials, and social workers in their varying levels). It was difficult to arrive at any conclusions regarding pipelined disability improvement strategies of SASSA as the researcher simply could access and interrogate them to see what may have been missing from that which appeared as a novel usable strategies. It is important to note that these Remaining issues are a subject of investigation at SASSA insofar as having an adequate and clear policy which is fit for a purpose. In summary, this paper argued that the disability grant policy will remain valueless if the current disbursement mechanisms are not improved.

The results provided a basis for SASSA to revisit their agency disbursement strategies as that holistic approach can empower the disability grantees who evidently appear to be constantly thrown into a state of destituteness because of the weak disbursement systems in place.

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