



**SWK5001W: Minor Dissertation**

**An exploratory study on the role of social protection programme in supporting children's education: The case of post-primary schools in Mafeteng district in the Kingdom of Lesotho.**

**Student Name and Number: Hape Mavis Ntili: NTLHAP002**

**Supervisor: Dr. Chance Chagunda**

**A concept note submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of the Master's Degree in Social Development**

**Faculty of the Humanities**

**Department of Social Development**

**University of Cape Town**

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## **PLAGIARISM DECLARATION**

I, Hape Mavis Ntili, do make declaration that this research report is my own original and unaided work. Other scholars' work cited in this research report has been referenced clearly using the Harvard Method of referencing. This work is submitted for the Masters' Degree in Social Development at Cape Town University. None of this work has been submitted prior to any institution for any degree or examination.

Signed:

Signed by candidate

Hape Mavis Ntili

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research report to my family and my Father, Ntate Khotso Raphael Ntli, with the continuous support they provided throughout my studies. This research report could have not been a success without them. May the Almighty God bless them mightily.

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated the role of social protection programme in supporting children's education at post-primary education level. The study focused on the non-contributory education focused programme, which is the Child Grant/Bursary programme (CGP/Bursary).

Qualitative method was used to conduct this study, with a case study approach focusing on three schools situated within Metsi-Maholo and Mamantso Community Councils in the district of Mafeteng. This is one of the ten districts in the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Data was collected through individual interviews and group discussions. Twenty-nine respondents were selected, based on their relationship with social protection programme.

The study discovered that for children to have access to post-primary education, the social protection programme gives them a chance to transition to tertiary education, where their careers are developed and their skills sharpened. The research findings further reveal that the social protection programme has also created capabilities for the parents/guardians to provide for the basic needs of their families.

The study showed that the CGP/Bursary programme plays an important role in enhancing children's education as it widens access, influences retention, stimulates attendance, promotes good performance and motivates completion in post-primary schools.

The study concluded with some recommendations which include the need for the government to review the scope of the programmes, in order to adequately address vulnerable children's needs in a more holistic manner. It is further recommended that the government should take a lead in mobilizing resources for schools and improve stakeholder involvement.

**Keywords:** Child, Education, Social Assistance, Social Protection, Cash Transfers, Child-sensitive social protection, post-primary school education, Kingdom of Lesotho.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CGP	Child Grant Programme
CT	Cash Transfer
CSG	Child Support Grant
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoL	Government of Lesotho
EU	European Union
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ISSN	Integrated Social Safety Nets
KB	Karabo ea Bophelo
LSL	Lesotho Maloti
MIS	Management Information System
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGOs	Non-governmental Organization
NISSA	National Information Systems for Social Assistance
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
NSPS	National Social Protection Strategy
OAP	Old Age Pension
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PMT	Proxy Means Test
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
TRS	Textbook Rental Scheme
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

# **CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Social protection is an element of social policy instrument utilized by African governments to curb poverty (Noyoo, 2021). According to Chagunda (2019), social protection is the set of initiatives aimed at providing social assistance to people who live in extreme poverty, and social services to those with special needs who require special care for them to access basic services. Social protection is globally recognised as a powerful tool for mitigating shocks and promoting conditions which are conducive to household resilience and economic growth (World Food Programme, 2020). The African countries also have demonstrated political will to design and implement policies aimed at constructing a suitable development path, this is also outlined in The African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, which advocates for achievement of a high standard of living for all citizens through social protection (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2018).

The government of Lesotho is one of the African governments which have adopted the social protection programme strategy to address social ailments like poverty, as well as limitations in accessing education and health care (Government of Lesotho, 2021). This chapter includes an introduction to the study, overview of the Kingdom of Lesotho, statement of the problem, rationale and significance of the study, research aim and limitation. The last part is the clarification of concepts. The study explored the role of social protection programme in supporting children's education, with a case study of three post-primary schools in the district of Mafeteng in the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Chagunda (2019) explained social protection as a set of initiatives which include social insurance meant for protection of people against the effects of livelihood challenges; and social justice for protection of people from being marginalised or abused, and from other social risks. Social protection has potential to improve capacity of families to acquire food, have access to health care services and education (Devereux, 2020). It plays an integral role in breaking inter-generational transferring of poverty as it supports human capital development (ILO, 2021). Besides addressing poverty, social protection provides support for wider developmental goals (Noyoo, 2021). Social protection measures which are designed well and implemented efficiently can produce major and numerous positive results in safety, health care services,

education and many other issues affecting socio-economic development (Chagunda, 2019). According to Gordon and Rose (2018), social protection has longer history of existence globally. In Central and Latin America, there exists cash transfers and school bursaries which are meant to support education. Oketch, Gogo and Soka (2020) have shown that in the United Kingdom, the school bursary programme for children from vulnerable families has increased their access to education. However, Oketch et al (2020) further mentioned that political influence causes unequitable distribution of school bursary funds thereby reaching a limited number of needy children. In African countries, social protection has increased enrolment and improved retention of children in post-primary schools but political influence and delay in payment of funds affect its effectiveness (Nyakund and Onsomu, 2023). Countries like Lesotho provide social protection programme like unconditional social assistance to vulnerable households to avoid taking their children out of school during hardships, thereby becoming safety nets with a long-term benefit (Carraro and Ferrone, 2020).

This study investigated the role of social protection programme in supporting education of children in the Kingdom of Lesotho, whether it improves the right of children to post-primary school education. Education is a fundamental right within the Lesotho Constitution which states that Lesotho will ensure that education is available to every citizen (The Constitution of Lesotho, 1993). The country of Lesotho has also ratified the legally-binding International agreements such as The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. These agreements, as well as the Lesotho Child Protection and Welfare Act 2011, have stipulated that education is every child's right. It is a vital element of social development as it develops personality of a human being, dignity and strengthens the respect and acknowledgement for fundamental freedom and human rights (Lesotho Constitution, 2005).

According to Franklin (2019), education is one of the important elements in achieving the socio-economic well-being of communities in developing countries. Burchi (2006) added that this argument is supported by the Human Capital Perspective as it considers education as part of a means to ensure economic growth. Education is also one of the development targets contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is a vital socio-economic phenomenon worldwide (UN, 2022). The Goal 4 of the SDGs advocate that countries must ensure that by 2030, all children, both girls and boys, access and complete free, impartial and quality primary and post-primary education, leading to significant and effective learning

outcomes (Grant, 2017). Reaburn (2016) argues that through education, individuals' capacity to have decent lives can be improved therefore be weaned from the hunger trap, and that it can play an important role in economic production and social change.

## **1.2 Overview of the Kingdom of Lesotho**

Lesotho is a developing country whose citizens are called Basotho with Sesotho as a native language. It is completely landlocked by the Republic of South Africa in the Southern African region. Her population, as per the 2016 census is 2.1 million people (GoL, 2016). The Government of Lesotho (2022) recorded 2.16 million people in 2021, and numbers were projected to increase to 2,174,825 in 2022. With its population growth sitting at the estimated 2.6 % per annum, Lesotho has an unemployment rate of 32.8% (World Bank, 2021). The high levels of unemployment in Lesotho can be explained by both the lack of opportunities resulting from a weak economy, and low levels of skills development (Kali, 2020).

Historically, the economy of Lesotho was heavily reliant on South Africa, notably remittances from South African mines, which employed a significant number of Basotho men (Fowowe and Ibrahim, 2016). This trend started in the late 1800s to the early 1900s, shortly after the discovery of gold in the Republic of South Africa, which later saw Lesotho becoming a labour reserve, convenient for South Africa's economic growth, but also to some extent beneficial to Lesotho's economic growth at the time (World Bank, 2021). Notwithstanding, Lesotho has, since its independence in 1966, made efforts towards building an economic base within its territory, while South Africa remains a significant economic partner in many ways (Central Bank of Lesotho, 2020). Lesotho has natural resources such as water and diamonds which contribute to the national revenue and economic development (World Bank, 2021).

Since the early 1990's the country has been hit hard by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which, undoubtedly, contributed to hiking poverty levels in the country, further eroding the social fabric of Lesotho society due to increased AIDS-related deaths and orphan-hood (Kali, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic also escalated the social and economic ailments of the Basotho nation, thus increasing the severity of poverty in Lesotho (UN, 2021). Jobs and businesses were lost, food insecurity intensified and government expenditure on health and social assistance increased (UN, 2020). Child population in Lesotho according to the 2016 census is 1,072,974, 363,526 of this population are orphans and about 10 to 13 per cent (125,000) of children are

vulnerable (Government of Lesotho, 2017). The Child Protection and Welfare Act (2011) has defined a child as a person who is below the age of 18.

To address and counter the negative effects of poverty, unemployment and other challenges of underdevelopment, the government of Lesotho has made the strengthening of human capital one of its key priorities, investing quite substantially in education (GoL, 2021). The government has to-date made strides in designing strategies for growth and development through policy-making and strategic development plans (GoL, 2018). The country has adopted both international and domesticated frameworks to inform its development processes.

### **1.3 Background to the problem**

African countries have increasingly recognised social protection as an essential poverty reduction instrument, governments have adopted it as their strategy in tackling extreme poverty and supporting economic growth (Schuring and Loewe, 2021). Bohl, Heden, Moyer, Narayan and Rettig (2017) define social protection as interventions and policies meant to improve capabilities of vulnerable groups of people to escape from poverty, recover from well-being shocks and manage risks effectively. It involves tools which fight against chronic poverty and vulnerability (Mackett, 2020). Social protection boosts capacity of households to procure food, have ability to get health services and support and retain children in school (Chagunda, 2019). It strengthens human capital advancement which in turn assists in breaking of poverty transmitted inter-generationally (GoL, 2021).

Besides addressing income poverty, social protection also supports larger developmental objectives (Chagunda, 2014). It supports children in improving nutrition, health, education, and reduces risks of such factors as child labour, trafficking (Kohler and Borat, 2020). Governments and other organizations in African countries, Lesotho not being an exception, develop social protection programme to mitigate negative impact of economic shocks on children and other populations (Bohl et al., 2017).

In the Kingdom of Lesotho, the social protection programme includes categories like social assistance which, amongst others, include school bursaries, conditional and unconditional cash transfers to the poor (Government of Lesotho, 2021). These cash transfers assist families during shocks to avoid taking children out of school, thus create long-term development benefits (Shahidi et al., 2019). Children in Lesotho are amongst the most vulnerable groups in society,

as they are affected by such things as lack of education, which violates their right to education (De Groot, Palermo, Banks and Kuper, 2021). This study investigated the role of social protection programme in supporting children's education in the Kingdom of Lesotho with the case study of the three post-primary schools in Mafeteng district.

#### **1.4 Statement of the problem**

Social protection programmes are meant to alleviate poverty, as it is one of major problems affecting African countries (Bohl et al., 2017). Lesotho is one of those countries which have adopted the social protection system in responding to issues of poverty. Social assistance is the main category of social protection (Shahidi et al., 2018). It consists of child grants, old age pensions and public assistance. These are all meant to alleviate poverty, while free-primary education, school feeding schemes, book rental scheme, post-primary and tertiary education bursaries are meant to support educational needs (Lesotho Government, 2021). In this study, the focus was on non-contributory social assistance including the child grant programme and post-primary school bursary programme. As Mackett (2020) mentioned, conditional non-contributory transfers are provided by governments to vulnerable people to boost their welfare, improve health and support education. The study focused on the role of social protection programmes in supporting the post-primary education of children in Lesotho.

Review of available literature in Lesotho indicates that current literature has concentrated on the role of social protection in primary school education. For instance, studies like those by Moshoeshoe (2020) and WFP (2018), have focused on social protection in primary school education. Little information is available on the role that social protection plays in post-primary school education. This is because thorough search of literature in Lesotho did not bring out adequate scholarly and academic publications on the phenomenon under investigation. Thus, little is known about the role that social protection is playing in post-primary school education in the Kingdom of Lesotho. These gaps in scientific knowledge motivated me to embark on this study. That is, it was intended to address the above gaps in scientific knowledge and broaden scientific knowledge on the subject of social protection and education not only in the Kingdom of Lesotho but globally.

## **1.5 Rationale/significance of the study**

As aforementioned, Lesotho has adopted the social protection programme system to improve the well-being of the nation (National Strategic Development Plan II 2018/19-2022/23, 2018). Education is one of the sectors in which vulnerable children are supported. Previous studies, like of De Groot et al (2021) and Moodley et al (2018), have shown that social protection programme is essential to reducing poverty in the families of poor people. They have also highlighted the importance these programmes have in securing access to education, especially school enrolment at primary and post-primary school levels in African countries. According to UNICEF (2019), out of 765 614 population of children in Lesotho, about 505 305 children are deprived of post-primary education. The NSPS II (2021) indicated that many children in Lesotho are vulnerable and poor and amongst who most of them attend lower post-primary education while very little number is enrolled in the upper one. This is an indication that completion rate is very low. This challenge has been ongoing even before COVID-19 eruption since the Lesotho Education Sector Plan 2016-2026 (2016) has pointed out that there is low level of access to post-primary education, especially for vulnerable children. This is a crucial level as it paves way to tertiary education where career is developed and skills sharpened.

According to the National Social Protection Strategy II 2021-2031 (2021), Lesotho continues to run the social protection programme to support education of vulnerable children. This study investigated the role of social protection programme in supporting children's post-primary education. It was triggered by the fact that the Lesotho government has implemented social protection programme supporting education but vulnerable children are still deprived of post-primary education and there is little knowledge about the role that social protection plays in post-primary school education. Scholarly and academic publications on the role played by social protection in post-primary education in Lesotho is not adequate. It was thus important to explore the role of social protection programme in supporting children's post-primary education in order to address these gaps in scientific knowledge and expand scientific knowledge on the investigated subject in Lesotho and globally. It was also aimed at informing policy for improvement in further policy development in order to enhance post-primary school education.

## **1.6 Research aim**

The aim of the study is to explore the role of the social protection programme (SPP) in post-primary school education, with focus on social cash transfers and post-primary school bursary in Mafeteng district in the Kingdom of Lesotho.

## **1.7 Research objectives**

- 1.7.1 To explore the role of non-contributory education-focused social protection programme post-primary school education.
- 1.7.2 To investigate whether social protection programme enhances fulfilment of children's right to post-primary education.
- 1.7.3 To investigate the CGP and Bursary programme implementation challenges and their effect on post-primary school education.
- 1.7.4 To identify the gaps which social protection programmes have in regard to enhancing children's post-primary education.

## **1.8 Research questions**

- 1.8.1 What is the role of the Social Protection Programme in the form of social assistance in supporting children's post-primary education in the Kingdom of Lesotho?
- 1.8.2 What influenced government to introduce a social protection programme to support post-primary education?
- 1.8.3 What are the social protection implementation challenges which affect children's post-primary education?
- 1.8.4 Are there any gaps which the Social Protection Programme has in regard to post-primary education?

## **1.9 Study limitations**

The sample size in this study was twenty-nine participants, as a result limitation occurred because the experiences of individuals who participated in this study could not be generalised.

### 1.10 Clarification of terms/concepts

**A child** is a person who is under the age of 18 years (Lesotho Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2011).

**Education** is a process supporting the holistic enhancement of the child's body and mind according to his abilities (Murphy, 2015).

**Social assistance** refers to non-contributory grants for people who live in poor households (Shahidi et al., 2019)).

**Social protection** is the government or public endeavours to provide and boost income security for citizens (Chagunda, 2019). Social protection can also be defined as package of policies and programmes directed towards preventing, responding to and eradicating socio-economic vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation in an effort to provide coping mechanism for people to cope with shocks.

**Cash transfers** is another type of social assistance which is provided in a form of cash for either development or humanitarian purposes (Waidler and Devereaux, 2019).

**Child education** is a process where children are assisted to develop their skills, personality, and acquire knowledge (UNICEF, 2019)

**Child-sensitive social protection** set of policies and programmes aimed at responding to the range of social and economic vulnerabilities faced by children and their families (UNICEF, 2019).

**Post-primary school education** Second stage of formal education that is between primary school education and tertiary education and meant to equip children and adolescents with necessary skills and knowledge needed to compete in a changing world, and instill in them a sense of developing respect and understanding between people with diverse opinions, viewpoints, and values (Sumbizi and Kyando, 2021).

**Kingdom of Lesotho** is a country that is geographically surrounded by the Republic of South Africa in the Southern Africa Region, it is a constitutional monarchy, ruled by a King as Head of State (UNFPA, 2019).

**Poverty** is defined by Firmansyah and Solikin (2019) as a condition in which humans are not able to meet their basic needs being food or non-food, and live below poverty line.

### **1.11 Summary**

This chapter has presented the rationale, background and title of the proposed research study. The research questions, objectives and assumptions of the study have been defined. Some key terms in the proposed research study have been explained. The second chapter is the literature review. It outlined the study objectives, the theoretical framework and the supporting policy and legislation. In order to understand the structure of the study, a brief description is offered here explaining how it is presented.

### **1.12 Chapter layout of the study**

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

This chapter presents the introduction to the study and the rationale. Statement of the problem, aim and objective of the study, research questions, limitations and clarification of concepts are also outlined.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The literature review is presented in this study. The discussion is about the situation of children in Lesotho, the social protection programme in the Kingdom of Lesotho, and the significance of the SPP. It further discusses three other points being the selected programme for this study; the government CGP/bursary programme, access to education as the objective of the education-focused social protection programme, and retention and performance of children in schools.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that guides this study is presented. The policy and legislation guiding social protection programme in Lesotho are also discussed.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology

The chapter outlines the research design and methodology for this study. It does this by introducing the data collection tools for data collection, and the data analysis techniques used. It also outlines the method utilized to ensure reflexivity of the findings.

#### Chapter 5: Data presentation

This chapter presents data collected in this study and interprets findings. Tables, as well as pie charts, are utilized to display some part of data.

#### Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter presents conclusions made based on the findings of the study and the researcher's recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In exploring the role of a social protection programme in enhancing education of children, the literature review is presented. This portrays the connection amongst theory, policy and the social protection programme (Chagunda, 2019). It again looks at literature that supports this study. The study explored the significant ways in which the social protection programme supports children's post-primary school education. Education can play a noteworthy role building human capital, thereby strengthening people's abilities and capabilities in the reduction of poverty (GoL, 2016). Amartya Sen's capability approach gives direction in determining connection existing in capabilities of human beings and dissimilar development scopes (Chagunda, 2014).

The study investigated the role of a social protection programme in supporting children's post-primary school education. According to Brenyah (2018), after most countries gained their independence, education became the main development target for several countries in the Southern Africa Region, and in almost all of them, the level of attainment increased. ILO (2017) expressed that the level of achievement in education in Southern Africa increased drastically from an average of 2.9 percent in 1960 to 6.5 percent in recent years. Social protection programme played a major role in improving education, it has been globally recognised as a powerful tool to support education and promote conditions which are conducive for household level resilience (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2018)

### **2.2. Brief background of social protection**

In 1926 – 1939 and 1939 - 1949, there were outbreaks of the worst economic downturn being the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars which gave rise to a struggle in the economy of several countries and less privileged people were greatly affected (Chagunda, 2014). People therefore struggled to make ends meet as severe poverty rocked their countries (Kesternich, Siflinger, Smith and Winter, 2012). These events influenced the development of poverty reduction strategies, as the economy of many countries was severely affected; social protection, in the form of social assistance, was then established as states' remedy for the social and economic well-being of their nations (Leisering, 2020). In developing countries, social protection policies were initially introduced post the World War II, added Leisering (2020). The international development

agencies; ILO, UNICEF and World Bank, were the leading influencers of social protection policy in African countries (Devereux, 2020).

Social assistance, as the main category of social protection, was greatly used and it involves monetary assistance which is meant to wean people out of poverty and enhance education (Firmansyaha and Solikinb, 2019). Poverty is defined as the impaired capability of individuals or households to secure adequate resources so to meet minimum standard of living (World Bank, 2020). The cash transfer system is the government endeavour to boost the lives of those who are vulnerable and impoverished, social assistance policies and programmes are thus designed for effective regulation and administration of the disbursement of these cash transfers (Chagunda, 2019).

### 2.3 The social protection programme in the Kingdom of Lesotho

**Table 1. Existing social protection programme**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>Coverage</b>	<b>Benefit amount</b>
<b>Core social assistance programmes</b>				
Child Grant	Unconditional cash grant to mitigate child poverty, improve child health, and school enrolment	Poor and vulnerable households with children aged 0-17 years (NISSA 1-2, priority to NISSA 1).	6,000 households (covering 123,760 children)	Paid quarterly per household with 1-2 children M360, 3-4 children M600, 4 or above children M750
Public Work	Cash-for-work to promote environmental conservation and income support (maximum one month) annually	Able-bodied individuals living in rural areas (not poverty targeted)	80,500 individuals	1200 per month for maximum of one month per year
Old Age Pension	Unconditional cash grant to enhance the quality of life of	Elderly aged 70 years or older (universal)	83,700 individuals	Paid monthly, per elderly M800

	the elderly population			
Public Assistance	Provision of economic security to persons in need through unconditional assistance in cash or in-kind	Destitute individuals (Vulnerable Children, the severely disabled, severely ill and elderly) (various targeting methods)	12,700 individuals (in 2020)	M750 paid quarterly, per individual
<b>Main complementary social protection programmes</b>				
OVC-Bursary	Bursary to promote access to post-primary school education for orphans and vulnerable children	Orphans and vulnerable children enrolled in secondary school (NISSA 1-2 and self-targeting)		Bursary varies by grade and type of school (i.e. tuition & examination fees, registration costs, stationary, books
Tertiary Bursary	Loan or scholarship for students to promote access to tertiary education	Students enrolled in tertiary education in Lesotho or abroad (not poverty targeted)		Loan/scholarship varies from M7,000 (Lesotho) to M40,000 (South
School Feeding	Daily school meals to reduce child malnutrition and promote school enrolment, retention and attendance	All children attending primary schools and some pre-schools	400,000 children	M3.50 per day per child
Lesotho Liberation Army Pension	Non-contributory pensions to those who served in the army of Lesotho	Pensioners who served in the Lesotho Liberation Army or the African Pioneer Corp		
Community Development	Vulnerable households assisted to	Social assistance beneficiaries	1000 beneficiaries	

	establish sustainable livelihoods projects	and non-beneficiaries		
<b>Social security programmes</b>				
Social security benefit	Maternity, sickness, retirement, employment injury and survivor benefits	Public servants only		Maternity/sickness benefits paid by government, other benefits from contributory scheme

**Source – Government of Lesotho (National Social Protection Strategy) (2021)**

Social protection has been prioritised by the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho as it is one of the poverty reduction strategies (GoL, 2021). The National Social Protection Strategy II (NSPS) has been prepared by the government of Lesotho to reinforce social protection systems, hence they are shock-responsive (GoL, 2018). Devereux (2020) assert that the NSPSs are developed to respond to economic and social vulnerabilities of the most vulnerable people.

The Ministry of Social Development administers the provision of social grants, both core and complementary programmes for vulnerable people are managed by means of social assistance (GoL, 2021). Lesotho has ratified many international treaties like the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in her effort to respond to escalating poverty rates. Implementation is guided by the National Social Protection Strategy and the National Social Development Policy (Pellerano et al., 2014). Over 3% of Lesotho’s GDP is spent on social protection; both contributory and non-contributory social protection programs (ILO, 2016). Contributory social protection includes civil servants’ pensions, while the non-contributory programme includes feeding schemes, child grants, public assistance in cash, old age pensions, free primary education and the school bursary for vulnerable children (Peacocke, Tadesse, and Moshoeshe, 2018). This study will focus on the non-contributory programme including the child grant and post-primary school bursary programme, to explore their role, as they are meant to boost education at post-primary school level. Below is the elaboration on two programmes of interest in this study, the CGP and Post-primary school bursary.

### **2.3.1 The Child Grant Programme (CGP)**

The CGP is a conditional social grant, targeting poor households with children (De Groot et al., 2021). CGP is meant to improve the well-being of vulnerable children who live in the poorest families in the country of Lesotho (World Bank, 2020). The programme is administered by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) of the Government of Lesotho, and foreign aid comes from the European Union and UNICEF, which provide both financial and technical support (GoL, 2021). The initial launch of the programme took place in 2009 covering 1 250 households. Through consecutive expansions, by 2013 the programme reached coverage of five districts, namely Berea, Leribe, Mafeteng, Maseru and Qacha's Nek, and enrolled approximately 20 000 households which was probably the equivalent of 50 000 children (Debrew, et al., 2015). The grant was initially LSL 120 per household. The transfer was revised and adjusted in April 2013, the amount of money provided was changed based on the number of children residing in a household (UNICEF, 2019). The adjustments were as follows: families with one or two children receive LSL 360, those with three or four children receive LSL 600, and those with five or more children receive LSL 750 (UNICEF, 2019).

According to De Groot et al, (2021) the eligibility criteria for this grant is as follows: A household must have a resident child who is aged between 0 and 18 years, and be amongst the households categorised as being amongst the poorest in the community. The vulnerability status is identified through the Proxy Means Test (PMT) and community validation procedures. The World Bank (2020) mentioned that in the PMT, a household's wealth status or score is statistically estimated through gathering information on different indicators of wealth such as dwelling conditions, possession of land and assets. Households which fall under the first and second classifications of this score gauge are identified as being poor. Again, community leaders, in collaboration with villagers through public gatherings, identify families they consider to be worst off in their villages. Carraro and Ferrone (2020) added that those identified as poor by both the PMT and community leaders are eligible for the CGP, and are then registered in the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA).

### **2.3.2 The School Bursary Program**

The OVC bursary Program is administered by the Ministry of Social Development but it was initially managed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) from the year 2000 to 2012. The vision of the government of Lesotho is that the Basotho shall be a functionally

literate society with deep rooted moral and ethical values; enough and relevant social, scientific and technical knowledge and skills (Government of Lesotho, 2010). The prime aim is to increase access and efficiency of education and training at all levels, and to respond to the challenges imposed by HIV and AIDS in education (Government of Lesotho, 2021). To fulfil this objective, a bursary program was developed to improve access and retention of children in post-primary schools (UNICEF, 2017). The focus is on OVC below 18 years of age in post-primary schools, and those with disability in primary schools (Government of Lesotho, 2010).

## **2.4 Global, Regional and National debates on the role of social protection in supporting children's education**

Social protection programme is critical in the event of poverty as disadvantaged groups of people in communities are given means to survive (Wright et al., 2015). It has been globally recognised as a powerful instrument for supporting children's education and alleviating poverty (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, (2018). African governments, including the Lesotho government, also have shown strong political will to put in place policies aimed at combating poverty by investing in education (ILO, 2021). The previous studies have shown that social protection plays an important role on children's education as access to education has increased and has assisted in retaining children in schools.

### **2.4.1 Access to education**

The social grants, like child grants and the old age pension, have been proven to have a positive effect on children's education (Chagunda, 2019). According to Oketch, Gogo and Soka (2020), school enrolment has increased in the United Kingdom due to the social protection programme. The post-primary school bursary has eliminated the gap in attainment between those from poorer and rich backgrounds (Oketch et al (2020). Gordon and Rose (2018) added that in Mexico and Bangladesh, scholarships and cash transfers have not just increased children's access to post-primary school education but retentions as well. These social protection programmes are challenged by ineffective mechanism in targeting the most vulnerable and limited participation of stakeholder in policy formulation (Gordon and Rose, 2018). In African countries, there are several social protection programme which aim to improve school enrolment, and Ghana is one of the countries where access to education was increased by SPP (Checchi and Salvi, 2017). An evaluation of the provision of the child grants in Tanzania

revealed that the added household income boosted children's education in many and varied ways including dramatic increase in enrolment (Kebede, 2012).

According to Nyakund and Onsomu (2023), the bursary provision in Kenya has also increased enrolment in post-primary education while Gordon and Rose (2018) have expressed that social grants and school bursaries in the Republic of South Africa have played a major role increasing children's access to primary and post-primary education. According to De Groot et al (2021), social grants in the Republic of South Africa strengthen families' financial resilience and be able to support and maintain children in schools even during hard times. Oketch et al (2020) in identifying the challenges which affect the effectiveness of these initiatives mentioned that social protection programmes like school bursaries and grants in Africa are challenged by unequitable distribution of funds due to political influence and inadequate funds. The country of Lesotho has also adopted social protection programme mechanism to support children's education. Free primary education and school feeding are examples of those programmes intended to improve school enrolment (WFP, 2017). Since primary education is free and children get food in primary schools, they enrol in numbers, however their enrolment usually has no guarantee of performance, as some of the students enrol in schools just to get some food (WFP, 2018). This is where social grants are very effective, as families are enabled to absorb the costs associated with schooling such as uniforms, books and exam fees, even food (Moodley, 2018).

School feeding programme began in the rural primary school, enrolment and regular attendance increased (Peacocke et al, 2014). Several factors like school uniform affected attendance and the child grant mitigated such challenges as parents/guardians were capacitated to provide for their children's school material needs (Pellerano et al, 2014). Besides school feeding and free primary education, the government of Lesotho implemented the post-primary school bursary for vulnerable children (Mehoebi, 2013). The school bursary pays school fees for students, therefore promoting enrolment and regular attendance (Government of Lesotho, 2021). Mehoebi (2013) further mentioned that there exists inclusion and exclusion errors in post-primary school bursary which need to be addressed, inadequate funds as well affect the effectiveness of the grant since a lot of vulnerable children are not assisted. The most challenging factor in Lesotho is that most of literature available on the role of social protection in supporting children's education in Lesotho is on primary school education. Literature on the

role played by social protection in supporting children's education in post-primary school is not adequately provided.

#### **2.4.2 Retention in schools and performance**

Social protection programme such as conditional cash transfers (CCT) directly target improvements in health and education of children in beneficiary households (WFP, 2020). In Indonesia, social safety nets have proven to be effective in reducing school drop-out (Nyakund and Onsumo, 2023). The same results have been presented by Oketch et al (2020) on school bursary in the United Kingdom, school-drop out among children from vulnerable households was mitigated. According to De Groot et al. (2021), receipt of social assistance is associated with an improvement in school performance as well as completion. In Sub-Saharan Africa, social grants and school bursaries have improved retention of children in schools, school drop-out rate has drastically decreased. School bursaries play a vital role in Kenya as well, it allows children in to retain in and complete post-primary school education, however persistent poverty still negatively affect children in their learning journey (Oketch, Gogo and Sika, 2020). The post-primary school bursaries' importance in Ghana extends to influencing good performance as students enrolled in bursaries never experience absenteeism perpetrated by school fees debts (Gordon and Rose, 2018). As a result of regular attendance, they perform well at school.

The Government of Lesotho developed bursary programme was developed as a response to a high unemployment rate, rising impacts of HIV/AIDS on households and high roll-out of Free-Primary Education (UNICEF, 2017). The main objective is to increase access to education and eradicate poverty. Due to social protection programme, most children are able to complete their post-primary education (Government of Lesotho, 2018). However, as mentioned by Mohoebi (2013), children still experience a high drop-out rate and low performance due to circumstances surrounding them like loss of parents or poverty.

### **2.5 Summary**

This chapter presented the literature review. It discussed the situation of children in Lesotho, the social protection programme in the Kingdom of Lesotho, and the global, regional and national debates on the role played by social protection on children's education. It further discussed on the CGP and school bursary programmes, access to education as the objective of

the education-focused social protection programme, retention and performance are covered as well.

## CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 Introduction

Presented in this chapter is the theoretical framework that supports this study and explores the part played by policy and legislation in human development in Lesotho. In this study, the capability approach, developed by Amartya Sen, provides the theoretical framework of analysis. This approach was chosen for its holistic assistance in analysing people-oriented development, which is human welfare involving, amongst other elements, education. It is backed by the social capital approach which suggests that investing in education is an important move towards ensuring socio-economic development (Nyakund and Onsumo, 2023).

### 3.2 Capability approach

The capability approach was invented by Amartya Sen to widen the concept of development from a narrow economic view point to a wide spectrum involving human development (Gasper, 2006). The capability approach argues that the GDP growth is not the prime drive behind development, but human development as well since it focuses on the improvement of freedom of people to decide on the kind of lives which they deem worthy (Kuhumab and Kuhumba, 2018). This approach was adopted when analysing the education component and the lack of freedom that vulnerable children in Mafeteng district experience. The capability approach considers lack and limited access to education as a deprivation of capabilities, and regards access to education as a human development component.

According to Sen (2001), freedoms are essential to the process of development and their attainment should be assessed on the basis of whether they are enriched and effective in contributing to their bearers' socio-economic well-being. In that case, education is vital to the development process as it is an investment in people, therefore it has to be of quality in order to contribute effectively in people's socio-economic welfare. As aforementioned, **The Human Capital Approach** in backing up this idea, suggests that education is part of a means to ensure socio-economic growth (Burchi, 2016). Nyakund and Onsumo (2023) also have the same sentiments that education is a crucial development issue that is essential to human capacity building, labour market and poverty reduction. Human capital investment is therefore one of the vital tools towards reaching the optimal level of socio-economic development.

This framework helps in understanding all components of human welfare and development, thereby assisting in the development of interventions for government, social service professionals and academics to guide vulnerable individuals to lead meaningful lives. Disadvantages such as limited access to health services and education, poverty, lack of job opportunities, and abuse, must be eliminated for people to enjoy their human rights and live lives to which they aspire (Kali, 2020). The framework assists in understanding the educational challenges experienced by vulnerable children and their families in Mafeteng district and the role that is played by the social protection programme in removing the unfreedoms that prevent vulnerable children from accessing education. This approach is an instrument to use to get insight into how a social protection programme contributes to building people's capabilities.

### **3.3 Policy and Legislation**

Social policies are directly associated with establishment of a developed society, and the delivery of comprehensive social services, which are a vehicle behind development (Noyoo, 2019). The purpose of social policies is to respond to, and inflict improvement in the negative impact of socio-economic and political defects (Hague, 2021). According to Noyoo (2021), social policy has no globally accepted definition but most of the definitions refer to main social policy features such as fulfilling the needs of the people and improving their well-being. Chagunda (2014) has a more straightforward social policy definition that it is any initiative that the governments decide to adopt in order to bring change or improve people's living standard. This definition fits well with the provision of social protection programme.

#### **3.3.1 The Lesotho Constitution 1993**

The Lesotho Constitution is the supreme law governing the kingdom of Lesotho (Nyane and Makhobole, 2019). The Constitution, under section 28 of Chapter 3, stipulates that education in the country of Lesotho shall be made available to all. Section 28 (b) sets out that the country shall adopt policies directed towards implementing free and compulsory education while Section (c) sets direction for secondary education and provides that the country should work towards providing it for free. It is evident that education is regarded a crucial development factor, as the government is obliged by the Constitution to ensure that citizens have access to it (Government of Lesotho, 2010). The Social Protection Programme supports education as an appropriate measure adopted by the Lesotho government in its endeavour to promote equality of life opportunities.

### **3.3.2 Child Protection and Welfare Act 2011 (CPWA)**

The CPWA of 2011 aims to establish a suitable and accommodative environment for the protection and welfare of children in Lesotho (Long and Green, 2014). It is drawn from legal entities like the Constitution of Lesotho, the United Nations Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2017). Part II of the Act confirms that every child has the right to education and to be provided with all the support needed to access education. It continues that the state must also create an enabling environment, for children with disabilities to access to education (Government of Lesotho, 2011).

### **3.3.3 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989**

The UNCRC is an international treaty which legally binds states to adhere to the child protection measures stated in this document (South African Government, 2019). This agreement outlines the social, cultural, economic, civil and political rights of every child irrespective of their religious affiliation, ethnicity or capabilities (Lesotho Government, 2014). Article 26 of the convention states that all children have the right to benefit from social security (UNICEF, 2004). The right to education is under article 28 of the convention, it further states that governments should strive for secondary education to be available to every child. The school bursary aims at making secondary education available to vulnerable children, by providing them with school fees to enable them to access it (Mehoebi, 2013).

### **3.3.4 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990**

The ACRWC is a regional human rights agreement that was implemented in 1990. It outlines the rights of children as well as defining principles for their status, it is a legal document which holds governments accountable for children's rights in African countries (Ekundayo, 2015). The Kingdom of Lesotho ratified this treaty in the year 1999. Signing this agreement meant that the government of Lesotho will be held accountable for all child protection issues set out in this document (Lesotho Government, 2014). Article 11 of the ACRWC states that all children have the right to education. The article further states in section 3(d) of the article that the governments shall strive to achieve full cognizance of this right and come up with strategies aimed towards encouraging regular school attendance and reduce drop-out rates (Niger Government, 2008). To uphold this right, governments of Lesotho, Kenya and Tanzania, to

mention a few, have adopted the Social Protection Programme as the poverty alleviation strategy which, amongst its objectives, is meant to support education.

### **3.3.5 Lesotho Education Act 2010**

The Lesotho Education Act of 2010 legalised compulsory primary education that is free and available for both boys and girls. It supports the Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals which advocate for free and quality universal basic education, and the eradication of gender inequalities in primary and post-primary education (GoL, 2010). The Act seeks to provide educational opportunities in an effort to promote human capital.

### **3.3.6 National Social Development Policy 2014**

The National Policy on Social Development provides an agenda for an effective implementation of a strengthened coordinated Social Protection Programme, and development, for prevention and reduction of poverty, deprivation in its forms and inequality in Lesotho (Government of Lesotho, 2014). The Lesotho Government recognizes the significance of social protection, as an effective strategy to address social and economic vulnerabilities, in a variety of legal and planning frameworks (UNICEF, 2019). The Constitution of Lesotho advocates for an environment that to responds to vulnerability, the government upholds this through social protection programme addressing such issues as health, education and work environment (Government of Lesotho, 2014).

### **3.3.7 The National Strategic Development Plan II (2018/19-2022/23)**

The NSDP II is the centerpiece of all development efforts in Lesotho. It implements the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063, which all advocate for quality education and recognize it (education) as one of the crucial socio-economic development dimensions (GoL, 2018). One of the objectives of the plan is to strengthen human capital by investing in such things as education and social protection. Human development is in the center of this plan and it has been argued by Kuhumab and Kuhumba (2018) that it plays a major role in development.

### **3.3.8 The National Social Protection Strategy II 2021-2031**

The NSPS II envisions a nation that is free from social and economic deprivations which, as Sen (2001) outlined, hinder development. Its objectives roll towards strengthening the Social

Protection Programme, in order for all Basotho to benefit from the country's economy. It aims, amongst others, to enhance measures focused on improving access to health and education, and create capabilities for vulnerable households (GoL, 2021).

### **3.4. Summary**

As mentioned earlier, the Social Protection Programme plays an important role in transforming the lives of poor and disadvantaged people in terms of accessing income, and provides a minimum living standard by improving the well-being of people who live under vulnerable circumstances thereby enabling them to lead normal and dignified lives (Wright, 2014). Social protection is a preventive measure that is meant to wean poor out of poverty and prevent them from falling deeper into the unacceptable levels of vulnerability.

The SPP has proven to be a positive government initiative to promote the well-being of vulnerable people in Lesotho. It enhances minimum standards of living for vulnerable households and supports education, thereby improves children's right and access to education. It is therefore critical to explore the role of the SPP in children's education so as to inform the decision and direction of policy makers and that of government in its effort to improve people's wellbeing and education. The following chapter outlines the research design, the approach used for data collection, study limitations and ethical considerations.

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

### **4.1 Introduction**

The study was undertaken in the Mafeteng district in the Kingdom of Lesotho. Hlalele (2019) describes it as one of the districts known for poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. This chapter describes the overall research design and methodology applied in undertaking this research. Methodology is understood as procedures for exploring scientific enquiry (Babbie, 2010:4). This chapter deals with research methodology, it covers the complete research process, the research approaches and procedures, and data collection, including its analysis.

Babbie & Mouton (2001) define a research methodology as the methods, techniques of sampling, and procedures applied in the research process. Babbie & Mouton (2006) added that these are methodological paradigms applied in conducting social research, including data collection and analysis. Methodology again comprises of principles and assumptions to be used in the research, such as research design, sampling, population, research instrument, verification, ethical considerations, reflexivity, possible limitations and ethical considerations (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Since this study is about exploring the role of social protection programmes in supporting children's education, a qualitative research approach was applied, as it is an appropriate methodological approach for exploratory research. Through qualitative methodology, the researcher is enabled to interact personally with the respondents, therefore the researcher gets to know them and better understand their life challenges and experiences (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014).

The qualitative research approach applied in this study was guided by an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism holds that qualitative research allows the researcher to understand social phenomena through the participants' experiences and perceptions (Thanh and Thanh, 2015). In qualitative research, the participants are not limited by specific questions and responses, but are allowed to give detailed explanations on the issue at hand, therefore the researcher is able to gather a wide view of the phenomenon (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Qualitative research is conducted through the use of methods including interviews, focus group discussions or group discussion, participant observation and the use of documents (Chagunda, 2014). The application of the research methodology in this study was described through

focusing on the research questions, goal, and objectives of this study; research approach, research design, research method, data analysis, data verification and inherent limitations of the study.

## **4.2 Research design**

The qualitative research approach was applied in this study as it is explorative. De Vos et al. (2005) define qualitative research as a multi-perspective approach to social contacts, aimed at constructing the holistic meaning of these contacts, based on the subjects' views as people and their behaviour. Subjects are studied in their environments and the data collected also refers to the meaning they attach to their behaviour. The objective of qualitative research is to describe and understand people's behaviour, rather than predicting it (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

An exploratory research design was applied as the qualitative research methodology in this study to, as Neuman (2017:11) asserted, to enable the researcher to examine a phenomenon about which information is less known. This was done in order to create a basis of broad ideas, to be deeply explored later. It allowed the respondents' perceptions to be appropriately emphasized. According to Punch (2005) theory can be generated from qualitative research, as it tries to find and understand people's experiences, emotions or feelings and their views on a certain phenomenon.

## **4.3 Population and sampling**

Research methodology provides a clear understanding on how the study was carried out, it is therefore vital for it to be well defined.

### **4.3.1 Population**

According to Burns & Grove (2009:24, 344) a study population refers to the total aggregate of all the subjects that meet the criteria for selection in the study. The study population has the same characteristics, attributes, or qualities that represent the entire grouped cases (Polit & Beck, 2012: 273).

The study investigated the role of social assistance programmes in supporting children's education, therefore the population was the post-primary teachers and principals, education officers from the Ministry of Education, social development/assistance officers from the

Ministry of Social Development, and parents of children who are beneficiaries of the selected type of social protection programme. Included in the population was the District Child Protection Team (DCPT) which is a district level coordination structure that focuses on child protection issues.

The respondents were selected based on the following characteristics:

For the individual interviews:

- Position - Principal, Education officer, MOSD officer
- Gender - Male or female
- Age - any age
- Education qualification- at least diploma
- Duration as the ministry's employee - not less than one year

Group discussions:

- Position - post-primary school teacher, DCPT member
- Gender - Male or female
- Age - any age
- Education qualification- at least diploma
- Duration as MOET employee or DCPT member: not less than one year
- Male or female parent/guardian of beneficiary of selected type of social protection programmes, aged from 20 to 70 years and currently living with the child concerned.

#### **4.3.2 Sampling**

Sampling is about selecting a set of respondents from a larger population (Rakotsoane: 2012). It is worthwhile to mention that the sample size is an approximate representation of the population and not a whole on its own (Polit & Beck, 2008: 765; Burns & Groove, 2009: 42). According to Punch (2005), qualitative research yields information which is rich and fully detailed, therefore the sample size is usually small in size. The sample in this study was drawn from post-primary teachers and principals, the Mafeteng District Child Protection Team, Education Officers from the Ministry of Education, MOSD officers from the Ministry of Social Development and parents or guardians of beneficiaries of the selected type of social protection

programme. The sample consisted of 29 research participants who were interviewed through one-on-one individual interviews and group discussions.

The individual interview samples were structured as follows:

- Three (3) post- primary school principals, males or females of any age. They have not less than one year as MOET employees and hold educational qualifications of at least a Diploma.
- One (1) Education officer from Mafeteng district and (1) Education officer from central office, male or female of any age. They had at least not less than one year as MOET employees and held educational qualifications of at least a Diploma.
- Two (2) MOSD officers from Mafeteng district, (1) MOSD officer from central office, males or females of any age who had not less than one year as MOSD employees. They held educational qualifications of at least a Diploma.

Group discussion members were chosen according to the following sample criteria:

- Nine (9) post-primary school teachers, males or females of any age, who had not less than a year as MOET employees and held educational qualifications of at least diploma. Three (3) teachers from each of the three schools were interviewed.
- Three (3) Mafeteng District Child Protection Team members, males or females aged between 25 and 50 years. They had not less than two years as DCPT members and held educational qualifications of at least a Diploma. They also had not less than two years of experience in their respective jobs.
- Nine (9) parents or guardians of beneficiaries of the selected type of social protection programme. They were males and females aged between 20 and 70 years and currently living with the children concerned. The nine parents or guardians were selected from Metsi-Maholo and 'Mamant'so community councils, being the councils in which the three selected schools are situated.

#### **4.4 Data collection approach**

As Polit & Beck (2012), Neuman (2011) and Bryman (2012) have mentioned, sampling methods are classified in accordance with their probability or nonprobability status. They further assert that probability sampling techniques can be categorised through either simple

random, or systematic sampling, stratified sampling, or cluster sampling. The non-probability sampling techniques comprise convenience sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling, and judgment sampling.

The researcher in this study applied the non-probability sampling or purposive sampling as described by Polit & Beck (2012:517) to mean sampling method in which a researcher purposely selects the study participants on the basis of their ability to provide the required data. This method was selected on the basis that the research is exploratory; therefore, the researcher needs to explore, define, and analyse the role of the Social Protection Programme on children's education in Lesotho. Gerrish & Lacy (2010: 144) stated that through this method, participants will be enabled to give relevant information which portray their experiences. In this study, the sampling criteria were used to advance the already defined research objectives. Burns & Grove (2009: 344) define sampling criteria of a study as the researcher's standard for qualifying research participants' inclusion or exclusion in the study. The participants are therefore included or excluded based on the extent of their relevance to the study.

The sample was selected based on the characteristics of the population previously described in 4.3.1.

#### **4.4.1. Sampling procedure**

- Three (3) teachers and a principal were selected from each of the three sampled schools, and that gave a total of nine teachers and three principals. Details of teachers were requested from the principals to identify people who met the requirements as per the set sample characteristics, and those willing to participate were selected for interviews.
- Nine (9) parents or guardians of children who are beneficiaries of the selected type of social protection programme in the areas where selected schools are situated were selected. The child-headed households were excluded as children cannot be classified under the category of parents/guardians. It was revealed during the interview with MOSD officers that since child-headed households are considered to be more vulnerable than the households which are cared for by adults, when need arises, such households are provided both public assistance in cash and in-kind. A list of those parents or guardians was requested from the MOSD and a sample was

selected from it. The parents/guardians live with these children and know exactly the role which the social protection programme plays in improving their children's education. They were selected based on their availability and willingness.

- One Education officer from the central office and one education officer from Mafeteng district were selected from the MOET.
- One MOSD officer from the central office and two (2) from Mafeteng district were selected.
- Three DCPT members were also selected and based on their availability and willingness.

This made a sample size of three schools and 29 respondents. MOET employees including school staff, MOSD employees and DCPT members were selected on the basis that they have knowledge and experience about the implementation of the Social Protection Programme. It was also assumed that they have knowledge on the role of the SPP and whether it enhances children's education. The researcher wrote letters to the concerned ministries and chiefs, seeking permission to interview staff and village members.

The rationale in selecting the Mafeteng district was that not much research has been done in other districts, except in Maseru district as the capital district. The districts beyond Maseru have been understudied, therefore Mafeteng district was selected for this study. Three post-primary schools were randomly selected, but also on the basis that they are situated in rural communities, and they cater for poor rural learners who are beneficiaries of the social protection programme. They were also conveniently accessible for the researcher.

Creswell (1998) describes data collection as an act of gathering information to answer research questions. There are variety of techniques to use for data collection, including interviews, questionnaires, surveys, observations, focus groups, documents and records. Interviews can be structured or semi-structured and conducted face to face or over the telephone. Questions should be focused, clear and encourage open-ended responses. As Babbie and Mouton (2001) assert, interviews are qualitative in nature, therefore, since this study is qualitative, face to face interviews were used as data collection method. The study population comprised of different groups of diverse grades.

The researcher utilized semi-structured interviews. An interview guide was developed to obtain a comprehensive image of the role of social protection programme in enhancing Basotho children's education. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed for collection of data because Chagunda (2014) explains that it gives the researcher an opportunity to probe deep into the respondents' answers, and is mostly easy to use as there is a list of key research questions. Prior to interviews, information was provided to the participants that there would be no consequences for their responses so for them to feel free to provide genuine answers and without expecting anything in return.

The researcher-built rapport with participants first, as Greek (2002) pointed out that it is a way of seeking entry into the conversation and seeking the trust of the participants in order for them to engage in the conversation with eased minds. A digital recorder was used for recording in order for the researcher to concentrate both on respondents' verbal and non-verbal responses. The researcher sought the consent of participants and the consent forms were provided for signature. Participants were given the research schedule so that they could understand the research process. The interviews were recorded after getting consent from the research participants. Kelly (2016:298) states that recording audio is crucial for the researcher to capture all information provided by the participants. The interviews were conducted in Mafeteng district, in the country of Lesotho.

COVID-19 regulations were adhered to in order to minimize health risks and maximize protection. The researcher provided masks for participants before conducting the face to face interviews. Social distance was ensured by using well-ventilated offices and boardrooms that allowed for a 1.5m social distance. Wearing of masks during interviews was adhered to, as well as sanitizing with a 70% alcohol sanitizer prior and after the interviews. The researcher and one school had their own spray bottles containing liquid sanitizer, while the other two schools had gel sanitizer.

#### **4.5 Data analysis**

Data analysis, according to Leavy (2017:25) and Trent & Cho (2014:652) involves summarising and organising data. After data collection, the researcher organised it to produce meaningful interpretations. At this stage the researcher employed the eight steps of data analysis developed by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009:186). The steps include the following:

1. Transcribing all audio recorded interviews word by word and taking note of preliminary ideas.
2. Selecting the most fascinating interview, distinguish its meaning, taking into cognizance the importance of the content to the basic meaning.
3. Compile themes and clustering similar ones together, arrange them into columns and topic.
4. Applying appropriate abbreviations to certain topics
5. Converting descriptive definitions of the topic into themes.
6. Alphabetising the codes set for abbreviation of each category/theme
7. Gathering data per category/theme and compiling initial analysis of themes
8. Recording data, then compile the findings.

## **4.6 Data Verification**

According to Krefting (1991:215) there are four alternative models for demonstrating reliability, increasing thoroughness in qualitative research and for calculating the findings. These models include the value of the truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality (Krefting, 1991:215). Krefting (1991:215) and Leedy & Ormrod (2015:271) added that the alternate models are appropriate for the researcher to ensure thoroughness without sacrificing the relevance of qualitative research. Korstjens & Moser (2018) mentioned that the quality criteria for all qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

### **4.6.1 Credibility**

It establishes if the research findings reflect the original data gathered from participants and whether participants' original views are correctly interpreted (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It is the core validity in qualitative research, the aspect of truth-value is of utmost importance, the assurance that can be invested in the truthfulness of the research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Measures like giving participants the option to choose not to participate were used, as noted by Shenton (2004), to ensure credibility of the study. A voice recorder was also used, as Babbie & Mouton (2007) have shown that it ensures factual and adequate references of the study.

#### **4.6.2 Transferability**

Transferability involves the aspect of relevance or applicability. The researcher should provide a clear description of the participants and the research process, for others to evaluate the transferability between the findings and their own setting (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It is the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts with other respondents. According to Shenton (2004), transferability of the study may be boosted by the sampling approach. The purposive sampling approach was used in this study as it is appropriate in allowing collection of a wider range of data.

#### **4.6.3 Dependability**

Dependability is about consistency. Babbie & Mouton (2011) assert that dependability suggests that if the study is repeated with the same respondents, context and processes, it must yield the same results as in the first round. In this study, face-to-face interviews were followed by group discussions, which provided in-depth data, and ensured dependability which in turn added to the credibility of the study.

#### **4.6.4 Confirmability**

This is about neutrality. The focus here is on the process of interpretation of findings derived from the analysis, data and interpretation of the findings should be a reflection of the respondents' thoughts and ideas; it should not be the view or imagination of the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). De Vos et al (2011) mention that confirmability is the extent to which the same research results could be yielded by other research studies. To avoid researcher's bias, a voice recorder was used to capture interview contents so that the supervisor and other relevant parties could confirm the findings.

### **4.7 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity involves being aware of the researcher's own biases and favouritism and how the relationship between the researcher and respondents influences the subjects' responses (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher has to acknowledge the critical role that self-awareness plays in research, namely how the researcher's own biases could affect data collection, analysis and interpretation (Horsburg, 2003). It is therefore crucial to develop reflexive notes for one-on-one interviews, group discussions and observations so as to describe

the setting and characteristics of the interviews that were eminent during the interview (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Prior to the interviews, the researcher must be aware of their own biases as they need to be avoided. For example, the researcher might have their own views regarding the Social Protection Programme, since it is usually a topic on media and in communities. Therefore, the researcher might approach the research with their own biases. To avoid researcher's biases, the researcher followed Korstjens & Moser's idea to develop reflexive notes for interviews, audio tape transcription and data analysis, and to note their own relationship with participants and their own personal response to the interview setting.

## **4.8 Limitations of the study**

### **4.8.1 Data Collection**

According to De Vos et al. (2011), there are a number of limitations that can hamper the interview process. Data collection requires the researcher to be skilled in interviewing and building rapport with respondents (Rakotsoane, 2012). It involves listening skills in order to note important issues which might need clarification, identification of non-verbal communication, making the respondent feel relaxed and comfortable to respond and provide factual information (Chagunda, 2014). The experience of the researcher in conducting the research was beneficial at this point, the guidance of the supervisor as well. The time and location of the interview was convenient to the respondents. It was private and quiet, therefore free of interruptions. The subject of the SPP is usually affiliated with politics and that had potential to influence the responses. In this case, the researcher's introduction to the respondents was made clear enough for them to understand the aim of the research and position of the researcher.

### **4.8.2 Data Collection Device**

The voice recorder had potential of injecting fear in respondents thereby making them uncomfortable to give accurate information. Since it was necessary to use the voice recorder to record all information gathered in the interviews without missing important points, the researcher ensured that the respondents felt comfortable and safe to be recorded. Respondents, prior to interviews, were made aware that the audio recorder would be used, and the purpose

of recording was clarified. Their consent to be recorded was also sought. Names of respondents, children, schools and location were not mentioned during the audio recording, for confidentiality and anonymity purposes.

#### **4.9 Ethical considerations**

This section reviews the ethical considerations that were considered in this study as, according to Babbie & Mouton (2001), ethics ensure that the research is reliable and legitimate, and it is a way of avoiding harm to the respondents. Research ethics which were followed in this study include those by Punch (2005). Voluntary participation, informed consent, avoidance of harm, no deception of respondents, privacy, anonymity, debriefing and confidentiality.

##### **4.9.1 Voluntary participation**

Participation in any study must be voluntary (Babbie & Mouton: 2001). Participation was voluntary in this study, nobody was coerced or made to feel coerced to participate, so that they felt free to open up and give out information. Participants were provided with the option to accept or decline participation. The letters which were written to gatekeepers requesting permission to carry out a study in their territories indicated that participation in this study was voluntary, so that no one could be forced to participate. During the initial contact, the participants were made aware that participation was voluntary, no one was compelled to take part. This information was included in the consent forms which were issued to participants to take home to read during their spare time, so to understand what the study was all about and what role they would play as participants. The same information was repeated before the commencement of the interviews for the researcher to ensure that the participants understood all the details and were willing to participate.

In this study, participants had the right to withdraw their participation. Neuman (1997) suggested that they should feel free to withdraw their participation and be made aware that their decision would not result in any impact on them or their relationship with the interviewer. Before the interviews commenced, information regarding their right to withdraw their participation whenever they felt uncomfortable to continue was provided, because participation in this study was voluntary. It was clarified that there was no relationship between the research and social protection services, therefore withdrawal would not prevent them from getting services. This information was included in the consent form as assurance that participation was

voluntary, and should they feel a need not to participate or wish to withdraw their participation, they were at liberty to do so; their decision would not affect them in any way. Before participants signed consent forms, their right to participate voluntarily and withdraw at any time was explained to them.

#### **4.9.2 Informed consent**

Prior to conducting the research interviews, the researcher sought the respondents' consent and asked them to sign the consent form to show that they agreed to participate. According to Babbie & Mouton (2007), another approach to informed consent is by issuing an information sheet to the potential participants, containing all the information regarding the research. In this study, the researcher designed a consent form for participants to sign as evidence that they agreed and volunteered to participate.

Prior to conducting the research interviews, the researcher wrote letters to MOET seeking permission to interview education officers, post-primary teachers and principals. Another letter was written to MOSD requesting to interview the social assistance officers and the district manager. Other letters were written to the chairperson of the DCPT and the community council where the parents or guardians live, seeking to interview the members. The researcher designed consent forms which fully explained the nature and objectives of the study. The letters were hand delivered as this enabled the researcher to explain the purpose of the study and consent form in person.

The researcher also met the school principals to obtain details of teachers so as to identify prospective participants. A list of parents or guardians of children who were enrolled in the selected type of social protection programme and living at places in which selected schools are situated, were requested from the MOSD, to identify prospective respondents. Before the participants were selected, the parents/guardians' list was confirmed with community councilors to establish whether children still lived with those parents or guardians.

The researcher then visited MOET, MOSD, DCPT, selected schools and the villages, to have initial contact with participants, and sought consent from them to participate in the study. The researcher explained what the study was about, details of the consent form and voluntary participation, as well as the participants' right to withdrawal. It was also explained what part they would take as participants, the ethical information protecting them, and how they would

provide data. Copies of informed consent which fully explained the nature and objectives of the study were then provided to the participants to reflect on the information.

The researcher, on the agreed day, communicated with the participants telephonically to obtain consent. On the day of the interview, the researcher repeated the information about the study purpose and participants were given opportunity to give clear consent before participating in the study. On the day of the interviews, after the researcher verbally explained the study objectives and informed consent, the participants were given a chance to ask questions where each needed clarity. When they understood, they volunteered to participate, the researcher then requested them to sign the informed consent form for evidence that they agreed to participate. The interviews then commenced.

#### **4.9.3 Confidentiality, Privacy and Anonymity**

Babbie & Mouton (2007) mentioned that confidentiality means that any information revealing the identity of the respondent should be inaccessible to anyone, unless the respondent has given such consent. Confidentiality in this study was ensured by using the data provided by participants for academic purposes only, information was prevented against external access other than by the authorized persons, being the researcher, supervisor and examiners. Again, the researcher did not share sensitive information or participants' details with any unauthorised persons or other participants. The information was kept in a file on the researcher's personal computer which is password and malware protected, to ensure protection from external access. The recorded audio was also destroyed post transcriptions.

The participants were informed that the research was for academic purposes, therefore information would be accessed by the supervisor and examiners. Again, participants' privacy during interview sessions was ensured by holding interviews in a private place without audience or interference of loud voices. Principals and teachers were interviewed in the principals' offices because there was no unauthorised entry in such offices, as entry was authorised by secretaries only. Education officers, MOSD officers and DCPT members were interviewed in their ministries' boardrooms, where receptionists were requested to ensure no unauthorised entry and put a meeting-in-progress tag on the door. Parents and guardians' interviews were held at the community councils' offices, where unauthorised entry was prevented, and since many services are offered daily at the community councils' offices, their presence there did not catch anybody's attention.

Their identity was also kept anonymous, as defined by Snyder (2002) to mean exclusion of any identifying information, be it names of respondents or sites of interview. In this study, the use of pseudonyms is applied instead of real names of participants. The pseudonyms are used in data analysis, and the researcher included relevant information only. The respondents were requested not to include their names during the audio recording, and the recorded audio file was destroyed post transcriptions.

#### **4.9.4 Deception of respondents**

Deception means giving false information with the intension of misleading respondents into believing what is not true, for the researcher's own benefit (Cozby, 2009). Deceiving participants breaches the principle of informed consent and causes harm to them. In this study, only true information regarding the intention of the research was provided to participants. They were not led to believe that their participation would help them to get grants or any other social assistance support. During the initial contact with participants, the researcher provided factual information about the purpose of the research and the role of the participants in the research. This information was also included in the consent form which was left with the participants to read at home while they awaited the date set for the interviews. Before each interview started, participants were reminded of the purpose of the study as well as their roles as participants. There were no empty promises made.

#### **4.9.5 Debriefing**

Debriefing is an opportunity granted to respondents to speak about the experience of the interview session after the completion of the interview. Debriefing helps to correct problems caused by the research and another way of debriefing respondents is by discussing their feelings at the end of interviews (Cozby, 2009). In this study, personal questions were not asked in order to avoid psychological harm. The researcher, after each interview, accorded participants the opportunity to speak about the experiences of the interview session, in order for the researcher to correct problems that might have been caused by the research.

#### **4.9.6 Avoidance of harm**

In this research, the researcher avoided personal questions that could put the respondents in an emotional state. Cozby (2009) asserts that harm can be incurred by the loss of confidentiality.

Therefore, the researcher avoided breaching the confidentiality agreement and the informed consent agreement, in an effort to avoid causing any harm. Since this study is about social assistance, it had the potential to trigger the respondents to reflect on their experiences, which might even include being denied services. In this case the researcher avoided requesting respondents to share traumatic experiences.

Again, there could have been a risk of potential psychological harm, especially for parents or guardians, as they shared their experiences in regard to their children's educational journey, which could have involved traumatic experiences. Participants were requested to share information which did not trigger emotional harm. Arrangements were made with the counsellor who works at the clinic near the community council office, to provide counselling, should the need arise.

In the case of teachers, they work in an environment in which there are cases of children with different heartbreaking backgrounds, and this had the potential of causing emotional harm to the teachers while the interviews were in progress. They were also requested not to share information which could cause emotional harm. Arrangements for counselling were made with the counsellor; in the case of schools which are nearer to the clinic. Other arrangements were made with social workers from the Community Based Organization; in the case of schools situated in the communities in which such organizations are based. No psychological harm was foreseeable for MOET and MOSD officers, but arrangements for psychological care was made with the nearby hospital psychologists, in case a need arose. Debriefing sessions were offered at the end of the interviews, in order for the researcher to establish the need of each respondent. Fortunately, no need for counselling arose for any of the participants.

#### **4.10 Summary**

The research design, as well as methodology, have been described in this section, their differences have also been explained. Methods of data collection, analysis and verification are also discussed. The role of the researcher in reflexivity, while taking into account the neutrality needed in conducting the study, has been outlined.

## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents data collected from the district level and sampled schools. The chapter addresses issues concerning the CGP/Bursary programme implementation challenges encountered at different levels, and how education is affected. Findings regarding the challenges which the district and the schools experienced are presented. The presentation also includes the effects of these challenges on children's education and views on how this programme can be strengthened. Issues discussed in this chapter point to the role of the SPP on children's education, the differential experiences brought about by the implementation of this programme and their weight on children's education.

The study was conducted in district of Mafeteng in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho with three post-primary schools sampled. Data collection was done through interviews, in which the interview guide was developed. Amongst the interviewees were the two MOET officers, three MOSD officers and DCPT members from the Mafeteng district. The sampled schools' principals, teachers, and the parents were also interviewed. All other interviewees were interviewed individually except for three teachers from each school, DCPT and parents who participated in the focused group discussions. Three parents of CGP/Bursary beneficiaries were selected from the areas in which each school was situated.

The questions included schools and district background information. Also covered were issues on the role of the SPP in supporting children's post-primary education in the Kingdom of Lesotho, the drive behind the development of the CGP/Bursary programme and the challenges in their content and implementation. The interview guide encompassed questions on this programmes' role in improving children's right to education, the gaps identified and views on strategies which have potential to improve the CGP/Bursary programme.

### **5.2 District Profile**

Mafeteng is one of the ten districts of Lesotho with an area of 2 119 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 57 059 as per the 2016 census (GoL, 2016). It is in the southern part of the Kingdom of Lesotho, the northeast part borders on the district of Maseru while the southeast part borders on Mohale's Hoek District (GoL, 2008). It is classified under the lowlands zone with an elevation of 1500

m (4 900 ft.) 1800 m (5 900 ft.) above the sea level (GoL, 2008). It is one of the districts in the country of Lesotho with the majority of inhabitants living under poverty with high rates.



Figure 1: Map of Lesotho with Mafeteng marked with blue. (Source, Internet)

**Table 2 Profile of participants**

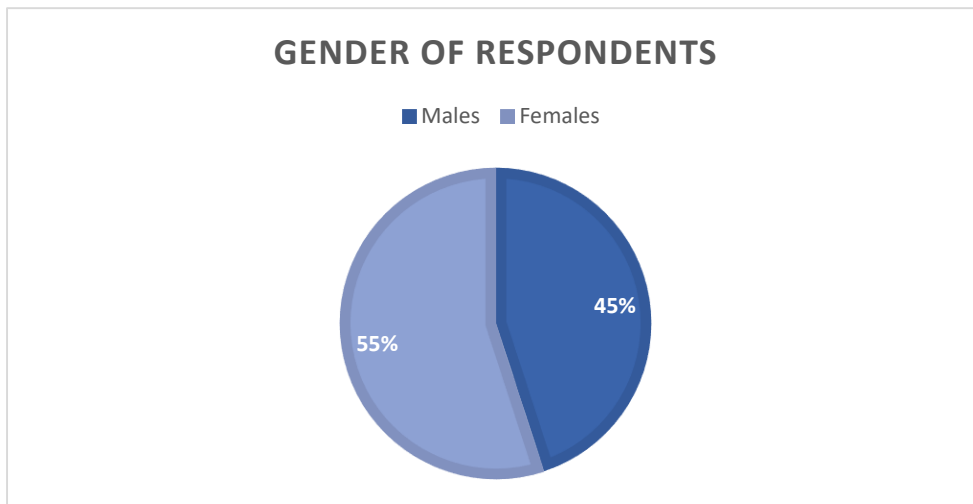
Respondents	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	# of years in service
<b>MOET employees</b>					
MOET 1	M	52	Masters	Education Officer	21 years
MOET 2	F	35	Degree	Education Officer	10 years
Principal A	M	53	Honours	Principal	22 years
Principal B	F	50	Degree	Principal	20 years
Principal C	M	45	Masters	Principal	13 years
Teacher A1	F	42	Honours	Teacher	15 years

Teacher A2	F	27	Degree	Teacher	4 years
Teacher A3	F	31	Degree	Teacher	6 years
Teacher B1	M	30	Degree	Teacher	4 years
Teacher B2	F	32	Degree	Teacher	6 year
Teacher B3	F	25	Degree	Teacher	1 year
Teacher C1	M	37	Degree	Teacher	9 years
Teacher C2	M	40	Diploma	Teacher	12 years
Teacher C3	M	35	Diploma	Teacher	7 years
<b>MOSD employees</b>					
MOSD 1	M	41	Degree	Social Development Officer	13 years
MOSD 2	M	40	Degree	Social Development Officer	13 years
MOSD 3	F	39	Degree	Social Development Officer	10 years
<b>DCPT members</b>					

DCPT 1	F	40	Degree	Social worker	12 years	
DCPT 2	F	39	Degree	Legal Officer	10 years	
DCPT 3	M	27	Degree	Project Officer	4 years	
<b>Parents</b>					<b>children in HH</b>	<b>sponsored children in HH</b>
Parent A1	M	68	Standard 7	Unemployed	3	1
Parent A2	F	56	None	Unemployed	4	1
Parent A3	F	42	Form A	Unemployed	2	2
Parent B1	F	53	Standard 5	Unemployed	4	2
Parent B2	F	70	Form B	Senior Citizen	5	2
Parent B3	F	29	Form E	Street vendor	4	1
Parent C1	M	39	None	Unemployed	3	2
Parent C2	M	51	Standard 4	Unemployed	4	3
Parent C3	F	25	Standard 7	Unemployed	6	3

Table 1 consists of the profile of participants on the variables of gender, age, education, occupation, number of years in service, number of children in the household (HH) and number of children who are sponsored. (Source: Respondents, 2022)

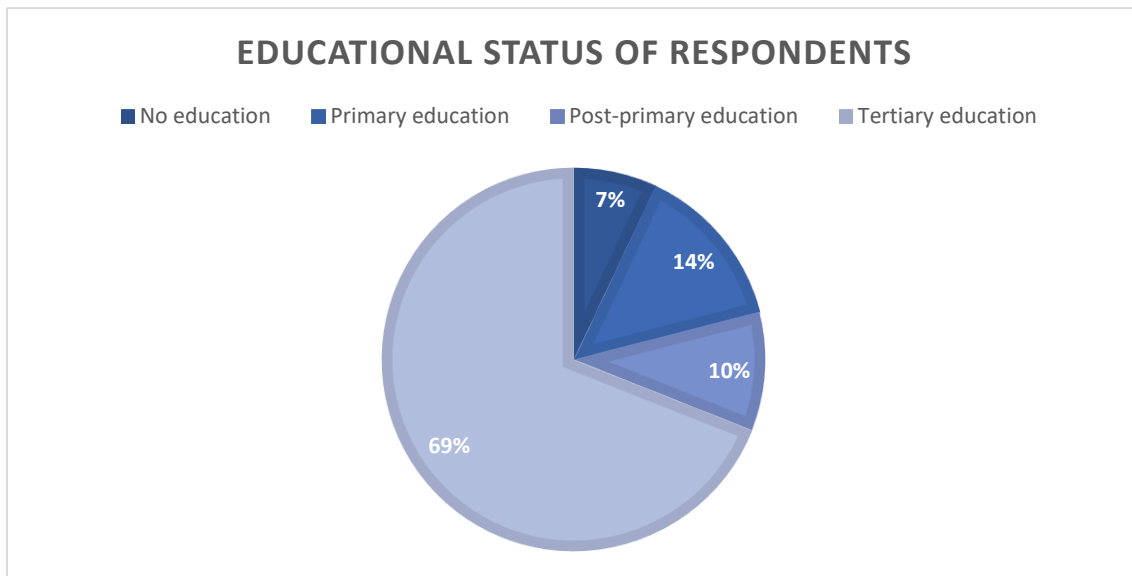
**Figure 2**



**Source: Field Research (2022)**

Figure 2 displays the profile of participants' gender. Females were more represented than males. Amongst the 29 participants, 9 were parents/guardians, of whom six (6) were females and three, (3) males. This portrays the fact that since women are entrusted with caring of children, they are more vulnerable to poverty than their male counterparts. As mentioned in UN (2021), women, irrespective of their economic status, are looked upon to care for orphaned or vulnerable children, they therefore experience poverty more than men. This is reflected by a large number of females who are recipients of the CGP. The education level ranges from no education to tertiary education. The statistics show that a large number of parents/guardians in Lesotho are unemployed and grants are their main source of income.

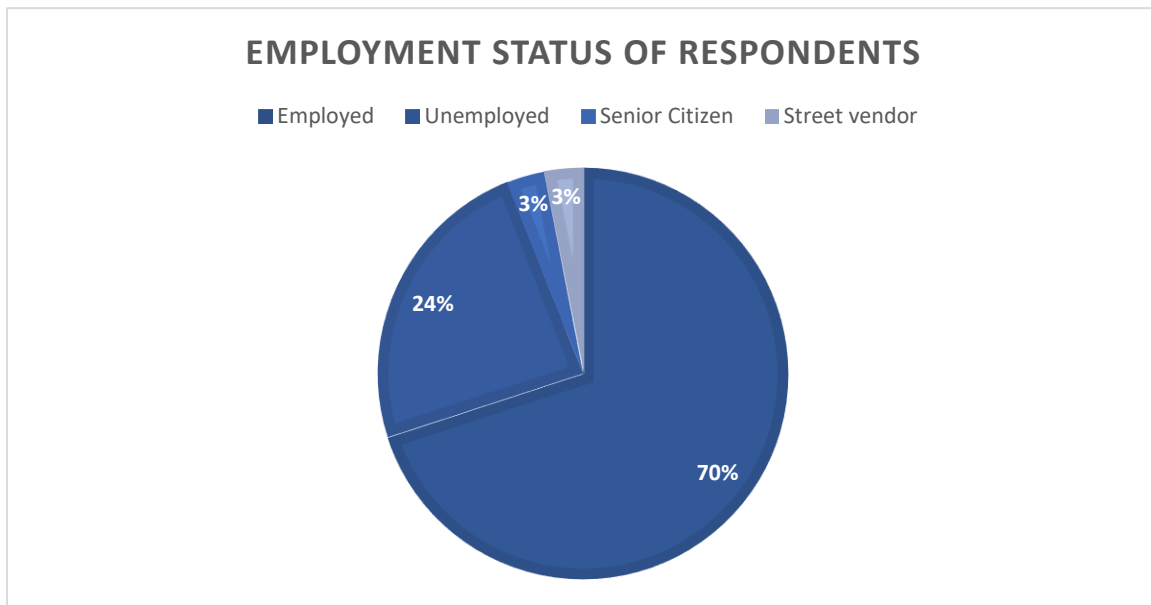
**Figure 3**



**Source: Field Research (2022)**

Figure 3 displays the educational status of respondents. It shows that their educational status ranges from no education to tertiary education. The respondents from MOET, MOSD and DCPT are service providers and have studied up to tertiary level. The parents/guardians' educational status ranges from no education to post-primary education; most of them studied up to primary level. It is revealed that people in the rural communities, as mentioned by the World Bank (2019) have a level of education which is too low for them to participate in the job market, and also have no employment or business opportunities near their areas. This is why they flock to urban areas or nearby countries like the Republic of South Africa to seek employment, leaving children alone and struggling to make ends meet. The children end up dropping out of schools. Their lack of education forces them to depend on the Social Protection Programme for survival and children's education. This shows that education is an important socio-economic dimension.

**Figure 4: Employment status of respondents**



**Source: Respondents, 2022**

Figure 4 shows the employment status of the participants. Most of respondents are employees from government and NGOs. The findings indicate that a large part of nine parents/guardians who participated in this study are unemployed and depend on CGP for income while others have other means of income. It was earlier mentioned by GoL (2021) that the country of Lesotho is experiencing a high rate of unemployment and high expenditure on social grants. A severe lack of job opportunities forces people to depend on social grants for survival, and it is even worse in the rural areas where people experience absolute poverty. The CGP is too low to cover children's needs, as a result it cannot remedy the poverty situation in Lesotho. There is therefore a need for government to create job opportunities.

### **5.3 Capacity of the district**

The findings revealed that the CGP is managed at central level, while bursaries are managed at both central and district level. In the CGP, the district delivers the service of case management only, involving but not limited to resolving family disputes perpetrated by the misuse of funds. There are three senior social assistance officers at central level; one for bursaries and two at the CGP desk. There are two more bursary administration officers at central level. In the districts, there are twelve bursary administrators; one officer in each of eight districts, and two in Maseru and Leribe districts, as they are more populated than other districts. Unlike the

staffing of bursary administration, there are no district officers employed to focus on CGP or social grants, so any officer may be appointed to add social grants duties on their job description. The district bursary administrators play administration roles associated with collection of applications and the selection of beneficiaries. Payments are processed by the central office. Below is the fee structure approved by the government of Lesotho and expected to be implemented by all schools registered as per the categories in the table, the payments of bursary are done based on this structure.

**Table 3: Rationalized fees structure**

<b>SCHOOL TYPE</b>	<b>APPROVED FEES</b>
Theoretical day government	M1,115.00
Technical day government	M1,215.00
Other public theoretical day	M1,415.00
Other public technical day	M1,515.00
Theoretical boarding government	M2,863.00
Technical boarding government	M2,963.00
Other public theoretical boarding	M3,613.00
Other public technical boarding	M3,263.0
Combined	M1,000.00
Combined Boarding	M2,563.00

**Source– (MOET, 2012)**

Table 2 shows the structure of rationalized fees as per the MOET external circular Notice no.7 of 2012. All schools under government administration are expected to set fees based on the structure, in order for more vulnerable children to access post-primary education. Theoretical schools are those which offer theory subjects only while the technical schools include practical subjects in their curriculum (GoL, 2012). Below is a table showing the schools in Mafeteng which are under the government administration.

**Table 4: Post-primary schools in Mafeteng district**

<b>Proprietorship</b>	<b>GoL</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Churches</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of schools</b>	13	8	21	42

**Source (MOET, 2022)**

The table above shows that the number of government schools is lower than that of schools which are non-government owned. This shows how difficult it is for vulnerable children to access post-primary education as those schools that are non-government owned, charge higher fees, and the government does not support all vulnerable children. The MOSD participants mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic increased the number of vulnerable children, as many people lost their lives, leaving children orphaned. DCPT members also added that other people lost their jobs, and some of the children had to drop out of school because their parents/guardians were no longer able to afford fees. The participants at district level all shared the same idea, namely that the government should work towards designing the free post-primary education policy, for all Basotho children to gain access to post-primary education.

#### **5.4 Schools Data**

In this section, data from the three sampled schools is discussed. The discussion includes the framework of discussion of findings, and the discussion of findings. According to the principals, teachers and parents, children in these schools are faced with problems like poverty,

HIV/AIDS, food insecurity, orphan hood and abandonment, as parents leave children to seek employment in the Republic of South Africa, but do not return.

It is stated in UN (2020) that HIV/AIDS is one of the social ills experienced in Lesotho. The death of parents due to HIV/AIDS forces children's guardianship to be under grandparents, other relatives or on their own. Most of children who were assisted when the school bursary programme was implemented in these schools, were twice orphaned, as they were the main target. Currently the children who are assisted under the CGP/Bursary programme are of different vulnerability statuses, ranging from orphans to children from vulnerable households.

### **5.5 Framework for discussion of findings**

In this study, the capability approach was used as a framework of analysis for the research findings. This approach was suitable as it guided an analysis of education issues and the unfreedoms that children, families and schools in Mafeteng encounter.

**Table 5: Framework of analysis**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>	<b>SUB-CATEGORIES</b>
The role of the Social Protection Programme on children's education (Respondents, 2011)	Social Protection improves children's education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widens access</li> <li>• Stimulates attendance</li> <li>• Influences retention</li> <li>• Promotes good performance</li> <li>• Motivates completion</li> </ul>
Social Protection Programme effect on preserving families (Respondents, 2022)	SPP increases parents/guardians' capabilities to care for their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide food</li> <li>• Provide clothes</li> <li>• Pay health care services fees</li> <li>• Buy school needs like the uniform</li> </ul>
Social Protection Programme role in the economic-development of a country (Respondents, 2022)	School bursary increases vulnerable children's chance to access tertiary education for skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-primary school fees payment</li> <li>• Payment of learning material</li> <li>• High completion rate</li> <li>• Increased chance of employment</li> </ul>
CGP effect on children's and families' well-being (Respondents, 2022)	CGP improves children's health and that of their entire families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Improved nutrition</li> <li>• Health care</li> </ul>
Objective of government to support education through Social Protection Programme (Respondents, 2022)	SPP increases attainment of education for vulnerable children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High enrolment rate</li> <li>• Less dropout rate</li> <li>• Food security</li> </ul>

## 5.6 Capability approach and data analysis

**Table 6: Capability approach and findings**

<b>Deprivations</b>	<b>Government Intervention</b>	<b>Respondents' Experience</b>
Lack of access to education	-Free primary education policy -School bursary programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment of tuition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to education improved</li> <li>• Opportunity to transition to post-primary education</li> <li>• Right to education fulfilled</li> <li>• Opportunity to transition to tertiary level for skills development</li> <li>• Literacy level improved</li> </ul>
Lack of basic needs: food and clothes	Child Grant Programme School feeding programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition improved</li> <li>• Improved focus in class</li> <li>• Access to warm clothes in winter</li> <li>• Procure school uniform</li> </ul>
Lack of learning material	School bursary programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment of books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved access to learning material</li> <li>• Keep abreast with syllabus</li> <li>• Improved performance</li> <li>• Improved learning desire</li> </ul>
Income poverty	Child Grant Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable source of income</li> <li>• Food security improved</li> <li>• Ability to pay for health services</li> <li>• Transport to schools and clinics/hospitals</li> </ul>

Table 4 showed different problems which respondents encountered in their societies. In Table 5, the capability approach emphasizes that these deprivations cause people to be vulnerable to poverty. The table shows government’s interventions in responding to these deprivations, and how the interventions changed people’s lives. The capability approach argues that the root cause of these disadvantages should be eliminated, for people to live harmoniously in their communities (Sen, 1999). The deprivations presented in the table prove that children from vulnerable households do not enjoy their right to education, therefore they are also denied access to resources and opportunities.

### 5.7 Further discussion on findings

Table 3 presented different themes which emerged from data analysis of this study. They include, amongst others, the many roles of the Social Protection Programme in supporting children’s education in the Kingdom of Lesotho. The roles include widening access to education, stimulating attendance, influencing retention, promoting good performance and motivating completion of schooling. It also goes further to assist parents/guardians to support their children along their education journey.

**Table 7: Profile of Schools**

Name of school	Year founded	Proprietorship	Number of learners	Sponsored learners		Distance from town	Tuition	Type of school as per the rationalized fee structure
				ISSN	Self-target			
School A	1979	Anglican Church of Lesotho	823	38	13	57km	M1515	Public theoretical day school
School B	1982	Anglican Church of Lesotho	1020	19	24	45km	M2600	Public theoretical day school

School C	2002	Community	572	41	22	48km	M1415	Government theoretical day school
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Table 6 presents the profile of the sampled schools. It shows that the sampled schools are all located far from the town. The table confirms that community schools are more populated with vulnerable children than those owned by churches and that is probably because tuition costs less. It is revealed in Table 6 that schools which are not owned by government charge more for tuition, and others do not comply with the standardized fee structure. The data in Table 5 supports these findings. This reveals that, as mentioned by Mohoebi (2013), vulnerable children who are not under any external support, struggle to access education due to high tuition fees.

### **5.7.1 NGO education-focused programme in schools**

The children in Mafeteng schools benefit from government and non-government education-focused programmes, however the NGO support covers a low percentage of learners. The NGO assistance is from Karabo ea Bophelo (KB) which is an NGO, mandated, amongst others, to provide child protection services. The Higher Life Foundation (HLF) also offers support. KB and HLF assistance consist of tuition fees, stationery, text books, and a hygiene kit (bath soap, face towel, roll-on, body cream, toothpaste and brush, shoe polish and brush, washing powder). Also included in the KB package is time with a tutor, whose duty is to assist children with school work, and refer them to other service providers when need arises.

### **5.7.2 The CGP/Bursary programme**

In the interview conducted in January 2023 with the MOSD officer, it emerged that the school bursary was implemented in 2002, covering tuition and note books and text books, but that this bursary has not been kept up to date with the rising costs of the package. In 2009, the CGP was implemented, and merged with the school bursary in 2015, to form a single package referred to as the ISSN (Integrated Social Safety Net). It consists of the CGP package combined with the school bursary package. The CGP objective, amongst other objectives, is to support children's education, while the school bursary is meant to increase access to education for

vulnerable children. They were merged to address the educational needs holistically (Government, 2020).

According to MOSD officer 3 (2022) there are two classifications of bursary applications; the ISSN-target and self-target. The ISSN-target applicants are the CGP beneficiaries and self-targets are non-CGP beneficiaries. The difference between the two is that the ISSN-target selection in bursaries is guaranteed, they just have to submit documents like the child's birth certificate, the parent/guardian's identity document, a death certificate in the case of a deceased parent, and a school admission letter. The self-target selection into bursaries is not guaranteed, it is means tested; the selection criteria is mainly based on orphan-hood. Other cases are dealt with based on the severity of vulnerability. The application documents for self-target include application letter written by the parent/guardian or the student, and must be authenticated with the chief's stamp. A letter from the chief referring the applicant, the birth certificate of the child, death certificates of deceased parents, a school admission letter and the parent/guardian's identity document are also required. The applications are then captured between January and February, then sent to the headquarters for the preparation of payments.

### **5.7.3 CGP/Bursary Implementation challenges**

This section presents the experiences of schools and the communities regarding the CGP/Bursary programme implementation. Challenges include delaying payment of the grant and of school fees, overcrowded classrooms, lack of support from government to schools, and rationalized fees.

#### **5.7.3.1 Delay in payment of school fees and CGP**

The government delays to pay for tuition and book fees in post-primary schools. This negatively affects the school finances because they have to utilize the school's budget to fill the gap caused by this delay. They therefore have to put some of the school's operational plans on hold and wait for the government to pay its debt.

*“Government delays to [pay] for fee, we therefore utilize school funds on expenses which have to be financed from the fees and that means some of our plans as per the operational plans have to be put on hold waiting for government to pay.” (Principal A)*

*“Sometimes some of our plans fail completely because of spending our funds on government funded children, this delay interrupts our school development plans.”*  
(Teacher A3)

There are post-primary private teachers whose salaries are paid from the schools’ finances and the government delay in paying fees forces the schools to pay them from the school’s savings which are sometimes not easy to recover.

*“The school sometimes runs some fund-raising activities to boost our finances and have some savings for financial back-up, but the government delay to pay fees forces us to use our savings on some expenses.”* (Principal B)

*“Since we have a shortage of teachers, the school has employed private teachers whose salaries are paid from the fees. Due to government delaying to pay, the teachers get paid from the school funds interfering with the school budget.”* (Principal C)

Teachers also stated that the payment delay is quite a concern, it denies children access to learning material like stationery and textbooks thereby affecting their performance.

*“The government delays to pay post-primary school fees, denying children access to books. The school always tries to sort this out by spending from the school budget although the funds are usually not enough to cover the books for all children; therefore, they have to share.”* (Teacher B1)

*The other problem is that the school does not help them with stationery, meaning those whose parents/guardians are not able to buy stationery for them attend school without exercise [books], and this affects their performance.”* (Teacher C3)

*“This issue affects teachers and students because it affects teaching and learning, it is not easy to teach children who do not have learning material, they use one book to write notes for close to three subjects. This delay impacts negatively on quality education.”* (Teacher B2)

Regarding the issue of grant payment, the parents/guardians explained that the grant is supposed to be provided on a quarterly basis, but that is not the case; the government takes too long to disburse the grant. This delay impacts negatively on the children as Moodley

et al (2018) mentioned that some families depend solely on the grant for income. They are therefore not able to pay for post-primary school books when the government delays the payment of fees. This leads to them incurring debt, in order to buy school essentials and food for the children.

*“The government delays to give us money. They said we will get money quarterly, but they take up to two quarters to disburse grants for one quarter.”* (Parent A2)

*I am an unemployed single parent; my family depends on the grant for income and it helps me to buy food for my child. Delaying to give us the grant compels our children to go to school without eating.”* (Parent B1)

MOSD confirmed the dilemma created by delayed payments, but mentioned that the ministry is working towards remedying this issue.

### **5.7.3.2 Overcrowded classrooms/lack of support from government to schools**

Another challenge as shown by the participants is of the overcrowded classrooms caused by CGP/Bursary programme as more children were enrolled in schools following the government’s promise that their school fees will be paid for. According to Mohoebi (2013), the government implemented this programme without clear plan on supporting schools to cope with implementation challenges. There is no support for infrastructure development to accommodate increased number of children, recruiting more teachers and supporting schools with other resources. The 1:50 teacher-pupil ratio and quality education outlined in the education policy of 2020 are no longer adhered to at schools since the aim is for children to access education and the schools cannot go against the government’s objective by rejecting qualifying children’s applications.

*“We have a problem with our classrooms, they are so overcrowded that we struggle to reach the needs of each child or give each child the attention deserved.”* (Teacher A3)

*“The government introduced this wonderful programme but it seems they never had a plan to support post-primary schools cope with increased enrolment rate.”* (Teacher C2)

*“Teachers work under a lot of pressure teaching up to seventy children per classroom. The grade 8 classrooms are even worse; they are so overcrowded with new students.”* (Teacher B3)

### **5.7.3.3 Rationalized tuition fees**

The rationalized fee policy was passed in 2009 to ensure that post-primary schools charge the same amount of fees. Table 6 shows the fees as per the category of schools. The policy was implemented in public schools to allow more Basotho children to access education (Gol, 2009). The participants showed that this has created hiccups in the schools’ finances because children pay less fees but the government does not support them with enough infrastructure to provide for them. The government has also failed to employ more teachers, and it is not easy for the schools to employ private teachers due to the low fees, resulting in quality education being compromised in the process. According to MOET and MOSD participants, some of the schools do not comply with this policy. The principals and teachers mentioned that the standardized fees are too low for schools to meet the high economic demands of managing a school. This denies vulnerable children access to such schools, as not all of them receive government support.

### **5.7.4 CGP/Bursaries role in children’s post-primary school education**

This part provides an answer to the main question which is “what is the role of the Social Protection Programme in supporting children’s education?” Participants identified the role of the SPP which contributes in enhancing children’s post-primary school education, thereby fulfilling their right to education. The roles discussed include widening access to post-primary school education, and influencing retention, stimulating regular attendance in post-primary school level, promoting good performance and motivating completion in post-primary school level. Another role includes building parents/guardians’ capabilities to care for their families.

#### **5.7.4.1 Widens access to post-primary school education**

The objective of CGP/Bursary programme, as per the participants’ view, is for the government to increase access to post-primary school education for vulnerable children. The participants believe that the government has achieved its objective because the number of vulnerable children in schools has increased due to the government support. This

opinion is supported by Oketch et al (2020) as they earlier mentioned that access to secondary school education in Kenya increased due to bursary schemes. However, that achievement is partial, because there are still lots of vulnerable children in schools who are not assisted under this programme, and some have dropped out of school to look for work, while others have not been to post-primary schools after completing primary level.

*“The government’s objective for introducing the education-oriented programme is to assist many children from needy families to access post-primary education.”* (Principal A)

*“I think the government has achieved its objective but partially because there are many vulnerable children who are not assisted by this programme.”* (Principal C)

*“The number of children who do not pay fees on time is usually half of all children who are not assisted by government and it proves that their families struggle to raise money for fees.”* (Principal B)

Teachers also added that the government should increase its coverage to accommodate self-sponsored children as they also need to be assisted by the government because their families struggle to make ends meet. The SDG 4 advocates for free secondary education in order for all children to enjoy their right to education. Other children even drop out because their families cannot afford to pay fees. This situation worsened during the COVID-19 outbreak, as parents/guardians lost their sources of income and never recovered, many children did not return to schools because they could not afford to pay fees.

*“Our government is trying to help a large number of the Basotho children to have access to education. They have to do more than that because there are still vulnerable children out there who do not attend school due to financial challenges, parents are not working therefore lack financial muscle to pay fees.”* (Teacher B2)

*“Others children dropped out because their parents have no money to pay fees, a lot of them lost their jobs due to COVID-19 and have not been able to find work or get their jobs back. The government should consider increasing coverage.”* (Teacher C2)

#### **5.7.4.2 Influences retention**

The other role of CGP/Bursary programme is to influence retention of students in post-primary schools. Paying school fees and having money to buy uniform and food impacts positively on the children's desire to stay in school and learn. School drop-outs due to fees decrease drastically with the introduction of the programme. It is mentioned in UNICEF (2019) that social protection programme discourages school drop-out.

*“This government assistance has propelled children to stay in school rather than dropping out due to lack of fees.”* (Teacher A3)

*“Our children, although government sponsored, used to struggle with food and dropped out of school. Ever since children were assisted with both the grant and bursary, they stay in schools because their families are able to buy food.”* (Teacher B2)

#### **5.7.4.3 Stimulates regular attendance in post-primary school level**

As shown by the principals, the CGP/Bursary programme stimulates attendance. Since the government pays their fees and books, and provide money which assist them to buy such things as uniform, they are motivated to attend school. Checchi and Salvi (2017) shared the same sentiments and asserted that social protection programme in Ghana improved secondary school attendance as the government supported children's education. Teachers further mentioned that lack of uniform also affects attendance as it lowers down children's self-esteem and they lose sense of belonging. Children therefore get demotivated to attend school but the child grant has solved that challenge because, as De Groot et al (2021) stated, parents are able to buy uniform and even food for their children.

*“When children have not paid school fees, they are sent back home and that demotivates them, it affects their attendance. They get embarrassed and decide to drop out.”* (Principal C)

*“The government delays to pay fees and we follow up with the ministry in charge not the parents. Children therefore attend school even when the government has not paid.”* (Principal B)

*“Children lose self-esteem when they do not have school uniform, they end up missing school.” (Teacher A1)*

*“Bursary sponsored children used to miss school due to lack of uniform, CGP solved that problem.” (Teacher C1)*

#### **5.7.4.4 Promotes good performance**

The participants expressed that the CGP/Bursary promote good performance in post-primary schools. Regular attendance allows the children to be in line with the syllabus and for teachers to easily identify the children’s needs so to assist timeously. This, therefore, provides children a good chance of performing well at school.

*“Children miss many topics when absent and it is never easy for them to recover, but when they attend regularly, they are able to follow the syllabus and pass.” (Principal A)*

*“Another thing is that their regular attendance helps teachers to be able to assess them through tests and identify where a child needs special attention.” (Principal C)*

Teachers also noted the importance of regular attendance and its influence on performance. Teachers again, like Moodley et al (2018), expressed that nutrition also influences school performance. Children used to be weak due to hunger and slept during classes but after the CGP was introduced, many children benefitted and the lives of many changed.

*“We used to struggle with children who would sometimes sleep in the classrooms and we learnt that they come to school without eating breakfast as a result they get weak and tired.” (Teacher A3)*

*“Ever since their families were enrolled in CGP, their lives began to change as their families were able to buy food. Their performance also began to change because they were able to concentrate in class.” (Teacher C2)*

*“It is so hard to meet learning needs of children who attend school irregularly due to fees or other educational needs. The CGP/Bursary programme has lessened our difficulties, many children now attend school regularly.” (Teacher B3)*

#### 5.7.4.5 Motivates completion

The CGP/Bursary programme is also perceived as a good motivation for children to complete post-primary school level. Oketch et al (2020) pointed out bursary schemes influence children to complete post-primary level as is the case in Kenya. Kebede (2012) also emphasized that social protection programme in Tanzania plays a pivotal role in motivating children to complete primary and post-primary education. The government has provided children a good chance of attending school, that has paved their way to post-primary level completion.

*“The government has given these children a chance to start their post-primary school level journey without worrying about fees, they have a chance to complete like many who completed.” (Principal C)*

*“Our school is situated in a rural area where many families are vulnerable. Many children are now able to attend school, therefore have a chance to completed.” (Principal A)*

*“We have graduates from many universities whose post-primary education was supported through bursary. These current students are lucky because they even have the grant to buy food and uniform.” (Principal C)*

Teachers and parents had the same opinion that the CGP/Bursary programme has motivated children to complete post-primary school level.

*“The CGP/Bursary programme support children to complete school as their fees are paid for and are provided the grant to buy other needs.” (Teacher B1)*

*“The consistency of government paying fees encourages children to return to school every year without worrying about the fees until they complete.” (Teacher C1)*

Parents expressed that they respect the government for supporting their children’s education as they could not have paid fees, because they are unemployed. The CGP is their only reliable source of income, and through it the government has helped them to support their children’s education. The CGP/Bursary has therefore encouraged their children to complete the post-primary education level.

*“My grandson was able to complete primary level because it is free and now he will be able to complete post-primary level because the government pays fees for him and I am able to buy uniform with the grant.” (Parent C2)*

*“Government support helps our children to complete post-primary school. My children could have never accessed school if it was not of the grant and bursary.” (Parent B1)*

#### **5.7.4.6 Builds parents/guardians capabilities to care for families**

The government has developed a good strategy which has not just supported the children but their families as well. Social grants according to Chagunda (2019) build capabilities of parents to care for their children. They are enabled to buy food for good nutrition, pay for health care services and educational needs to support their children’s education. Shahidi et al (2019) highlighted that one of the benefits of social assistance is to improve access to health care services and education. Parents/guardians are unemployed and struggling to make ends meet therefore it would have been challenging for them to pay school fees and provide other school needs if the government did not support them. They showed that the government has supported the fulfilment of their children’s right to education.

*“Our government has come up with a good thing here and it has helped both the children and us, because since we are poor and unemployed, we could not have had money to pay school fee.” (Parent A3)*

*“I applaud our government for their help, our children go to school and we are enabled to buy uniform, pay for other school needs with the money we get.” (Parent B1)*

#### **5.7.5 Suggestions on how to Strengthen CGP/Bursary programme**

This part deals with the participants’ suggestions on how the CGP/Bursary programme can be strengthened. Suggestions outlined include family support, stakeholder communication and revisiting of the rationalized policy, or the development of the free post-primary education policy.

##### **5.7.5.1 Family support**

The CGP/Bursary programme play an integral role in supporting and enhancing children’s post-primary school education but there are several issues which affect their learning

process. Challenges like lack of family support and guidance affects children's education. It sometimes leads to problems such as psychological distress, early pregnancy, early marriage, child neglect and abandonment, which all interrupt children's education. Some parents/caregivers have neglected and abandoned children in order to seek employment for themselves in the urban areas or in the Republic of South Africa. They do not return to their homes. Children, especially the older ones, sometimes have to drop out of school to provide for themselves and their siblings.

The participants suggested for the government and NGOs to design the programme meant to help and guide parents to shepherd their children's education in order for children to stay in schools and focus on their studies as is the government's objective for implementing initiatives like the CGP/Bursaries. They again suggested that the government should not neglect sponsored children, as paying fees is not enough, they should also make constant follow up with schools on the wellbeing of the supported children in order to respond timeously where there are challenges limiting the effectiveness of the CGP/Bursaries programme. Parents/guardians as well, must learn a more effective way of communicating with their children and encourage them to perform well.

#### **5.8.5.2 Stakeholder communication**

Schools experience several challenges due to government non-support. It is evident that the government developed and implemented the CGP/Bursary programme without planning on how to support and capacitate post-primary schools, in order to accommodate the increased rate of enrolment and cope with challenges that have arisen. The participants suggested that the government should collaborate with stakeholders to revisit the programme, and develop better techniques to ensure the smooth running of the programme. The effectiveness of the CGP/Bursary depends on the good working relationship amongst all concerned components.

*“All the stakeholders involved in CGP/Bursary programme need to communicate in order to come up with solutions, parents and children should not be left out, they should be consulted as they also are stakeholders in the education sector.” (MOSD 1)*

*“Those in charge have to make forums in which to exchange those ideas for the betterment of government initiatives. The programme objectives can never be achieved when schools are turned into being poor institutions.” (DCPT 2)*

### **5.7.5.3 Rationalized fee policy adjustment/development of free post-primary education policy**

The cost of living has increased, therefore the government has to revisit the rationalized fees policy to align it with the economic demand, for schools to sustain the provision of quality education. Schools have become financially poor because of this policy, and the lack of financial support from the government. The respondents recommended that the government should increase the amount of fees for sustainability of schools, and create employment so for parents/guardians of unsponsored children to be able to pay fees. Another idea raised by respondents was for the government to provide schools with subvention, in order to meet them half way. The third suggestion was that the government has to source funds in order to develop the free post-primary education policy, then provide the schools with subvention to survive. In that way all Basotho children’s right to education will be fulfilled.

*“The government must consider increasing the amount of rationalized fees and create employment for people to work and be able to pay fees.” (Teacher C3)*

*“If school subvention policy could return then we will be alive again. The schools engage in farming activities to support the well-being of vulnerable children in schools, as a result the government must support schools to improve such projects.” (Teacher C1)*

*“The government does not reach all vulnerable children, a lot of them are still unsupported. The government has to work towards implementing free post-primary education so to ensure all children access to education.” (DCPT 3)*

## **5.8 Summary**

An analysis of the findings of this research study is provided in this chapter. It outlined the district and respondents’ profiles, framework for discussion of findings, and discussion on findings. The findings revealed that the Social Protection Programme in the Kingdom of Lesotho plays quite an integral role in supporting and improving children’s post-primary

education, however some teachers had negative views as they argued that a lot of vulnerable children are not covered under grants and post-primary school bursary. The roles range from improving access to post-primary education, to motivating completion of schooling. The SPP further builds parents/guardians' capabilities to care for their families. Suggestions on how to improve the effectiveness of the CGP/Bursary programme were also outlined, and included family support, stakeholder communication/involvement and the development of free post-primary education to ensure the fulfillment of every child's right to education.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, conclusions, policy implications and recommendations are presented. It also includes sections on the value added to the existing knowledge and area of further research. The study explored the role of a social protection programme in enhancing children's education in the Kingdom of Lesotho. Conclusions of this study are presented according to its sub-objectives. It concludes with some recommendations on ways to strengthen or improve the Social Protection Programme, so to ensure its effectiveness.

### **6.2. CONCLUSIONS**

#### **To study the role of a non-contributory education-focused social protection programme in supporting children's post-primary education**

Respondents have shown that the CGP/Bursary programme has a positive effect on children's post-primary school education, as it widens access to education, influences retention, stimulates attendance, promotes good performance and motivates completion. Government pays fees for sponsored vulnerable children and provides a grant which is helpful in buying school items which are not covered under post-primary school bursary government support, such as the school uniform. It gives lot of vulnerable children a chance to be enrolled in post-primary schools, thus giving them access to post-primary education. Although the respondents mentioned that the government delays in paying fees, children do not miss school or drop out due to the non-payment of fees.

This government support therefore provides motivation for children to regularly attend school and confidently remain in schools. Retention of learners coupled with their regular attendance results in good performance, as children are conversant with all the topics in all the subjects. Teachers also get a chance to identify the learning needs of all children, and they can take action to assist where there is a need for special attention. Attending to children's learning needs increases their level of understanding, which in turn improves performance. All these factors contribute towards successful completion of post-primary education, putting children in a good position to transition to tertiary education. However, the government needs to re-look into the post-primary bursaries package to include all the necessary items needed for schooling. Items like the uniform and other learning material must be provided for, in order for this

programme to be effective. The CGP should only be used to provide needs such as, but not limited to, food, health services and school learning trip fees. More so because the child grant is little and meant to cover the whole family, not individuals, so it might not be easy for large families to provide food and school needs at the same time; they might still suffer poverty despite being supported. Again, the findings revealed that the social protection programme in the Kingdom of Lesotho plays an integral role in supporting and improving the post-primary education of children, it has also strengthened capacity of parents/caregivers to care for their children.

**To investigate whether the Social Protection Programme enhances children's right to post-primary school education.**

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the Social Protection Programme plays a vital role in supporting children's post-primary school education. It also concludes that, as a result, children's right to education is improved. However, the CGP/Bursary programme does not reach its goals fully, because findings have proven that the CGP/Bursary has mainly focused on increasing access to education, ignoring issues around the failure of sponsored children to attend and complete post-primary school level at a high rate. Instead, they drop out or fail at a high rate. Another issue is lack of support to schools in order for them to have capacity to accommodate an increased degree of enrolment. Classrooms are congested, there are fewer teachers, and the quality of post-primary education is therefore compromised. Right to education comprises access, regular attendance, good performance and completion with good marks to allow proper transition post-primary to tertiary education. Contrary to this desired outcome, in the case of overcrowded classrooms and understaffed schools, children do not get quality education. That is a concern noted in the Lesotho NSDP II, namely that performance in post-primary schools is not satisfactory. This goes against the goal 4 of the SDGs, which according to UN (2022) provide that countries are expected to make sure that by 2030, both boys and girls access and complete quality primary and post-primary education.

Some of the respondents have shown that they use CGP to transport children to better schools. It is therefore of vital importance for government to capacitate rural schools to provide quality post-primary school education, equal to that of urban schools, in order for all children to enjoy their right to education comfortably. The government should therefore partner with stakeholders in strategizing a way forward towards providing quality in post-primary school

education, and reach the optimal level of fulfilling children's right to education. The issue of partnerships relates to the point which was discussed earlier; that there is a need to strengthen stakeholder communication and participation in policy formulation, as strong coordination could contribute much towards the achievement of the programme objectives. Again, it is recommended that the government should strive towards developing and implementing a universal free post-primary education policy in order for all children to enjoy their right to education. This will also be an effort towards achieving SDG 4 which advocates for provision of free secondary education, and must be coupled with support to schools like, as suggested by respondents, providing them with subvention in order to ensure sustainability.

**To investigate the CGP/Bursary programme implementation challenges and their effect on post-primary school education.**

The findings have pointed to the substandard planning and inefficient implementation of the CGP/Bursary programme, as well as the lack of capacity at school level, as some of the barriers which negatively affect the programme. These factors undermine the effectiveness of the programme in supporting children in their post-primary school education journey. Planning and implementation of this programme seem to have been done without thorough research and logical evaluation of the problems experienced by vulnerable children in post-primary school level. These loopholes in the delivery of programme goals influence high drop-out rate, and lead to low completion or pass rates in post-primary education level. The CGP/Bursary programme, with strong stakeholder involvement, must therefore be revisited and borrow much from the UNICEF (2019) requirements of effective social protection which include essential foundation at policy, implementation and administration levels. The most essential component of these requirements is foundation of evidence (UNICEF, 2019); it will be of great importance to gather information that forms basis of the revisited version of the CGP/Bursary policy as that will shape the programme into responding effectively to children's needs in post-primary school education.

As aforementioned, school enrolment alone does not define access to post-primary school education, it comprises of efficient and effective teaching and a good learning environment. It also needs building of strong partnerships. All these lead to strong programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The findings led to a conclusion that there are root causes of factors

affecting access to post-primary school education and they were ignored in the conceptualization and planning of the CGP/Bursary programme. There is a need to carry out a programme evaluation exercise, it will definitely reveal these issues and point the right direction to take in redesigning the CGP/Bursary policy and programme content. In addition, the CGP and post-primary school bursary programmes have been merged to form one programme but their guidelines are still different causing confusion in issues such as the selection criteria. The example is that in CGP selection criteria focuses on vulnerability of the households not age of parents whereas in the post-primary school bursary selection depends on such variables as age of the parents, ceiling is 55 years of aged. That meaning some of applications of children from families which are not CGP beneficiaries get rejected when parents are aged less than 55 years but application of beneficiaries whose parents are of similar age are accepted. Policies therefore have to be merged so as to address some confusion caused by merging of the two programmes. It is again concluded that based on the selection criteria, there are exclusion and inclusion errors in the CGP/Bursary programme which must be addressed.

It has already been mentioned earlier that there are issues beyond payment of fees and provision of grants which affect children's post-primary school education and effectiveness of the bursary programme. Parents/guardians have to be made aware of their responsibility in supporting children in their post-primary school learning journey. There seems to be limited knowledge in the communities about the children's right to education, therefore there should be intense sensitization of this phenomenon to communities, and with partnership of stakeholders. As suggested by respondents, it is also important to develop a programme aimed at empowering parents/guardians to support their children's post-primary school education and caring for families, and themselves as they also need to take care of themselves. This will contribute in enhancing children's post-primary school education as children will get necessary support from family level.

There seem to be limited knowledge in the communities about the children's right to education, therefore there should be intense sensitization of this phenomenon to communities, and with partnership of stakeholders. As suggested by respondents, it is also important to develop a programme aimed at empowering parents/guardians to support their children's post-primary school education and caring for families, and themselves as they also need to take care of themselves. Again, children suffer emotional distress due to challenges they experience in the

world around them, therefore the government in partnership with stakeholders needs to develop a psychosocial support programme in post-primary schools, so as to address children's needs in a holistic manner. The above discussion provides answers to the fourth objective, gaps in social protection programme have been identified and remedies suggested.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

These are recommendations to the government and its stakeholders.

The findings revealed that the social protection programme in the Kingdom of Lesotho plays an integral role in supporting and improving the post-primary education of children. The government should therefore strengthen this good work.

The government needs to re-look into the post-primary bursaries package to include all the necessary items needed for schooling. Items like the hygiene packages, school uniform and other learning material must be provided for, in order for this programme to be effective. Some of the respondents have shown that they use CGP to transport children to better post-primary schools. It is therefore of vital importance for government to capacitate rural schools to provide quality post-primary school education, equal to that of urban schools. The government, in partnership with stakeholders should strategize a way forward towards providing quality post-primary school education.

The government should strengthen stakeholder communication and participation in policy formulation. Some of the challenges experienced in CGP/Bursary programme and post-primary school education are due to lack of stakeholder participation and need stakeholder involvement for them to be resolved. Again, there is a need for government to capacitate post-primary schools with all resources needed for learning and increase capacity for social protection service delivery so to ensure effective rendering of services.

It has been revealed that the communities have limited knowledge about the children's right to education, therefore there should be intense sensitization of this phenomenon to communities. As suggested by respondents, it is also important to develop a programme aimed at empowering parents/guardians to support their children's post-primary school education and caring for families.

It is also recommended that since the CGP and post-primary school bursary programme have been merged, their policies should also be merged, but, first, the CGP/Bursary programme needs to be evaluated. The evaluation will lead to a proper merging of the CGP and school bursary programme policies as there is a strong need for evidence to form base in reviewing this programme. Lastly, it is recommended that the government, as it designs its long-term plans, should strive towards planning for development and implementation of a universal free post-primary education policy in order for all children to enjoy their right to education. This policy, as suggested by respondents, must be coupled with provision of subvention to post-primary schools in order to ensure sustainability.

#### **6.4 Value Addition to existing knowledge**

There was little information available on the role that social protection plays in supporting post-primary school education in the Kingdom of Lesotho, existing studies concentrated more on primary school education. This study has addressed this gap as it has added information on the role played by social protection programme in supporting children's post-primary school education. It has broadened scientific knowledge on the subject of social protection and education not only in Lesotho but in Africa and globally.

#### **6.5 Areas for further research**

Based on the findings of this study, there is a need for evaluation research on the social protection programme aimed at supporting post-primary school education in Lesotho. This will reveal whether the programme is serving its purpose and reveal the gaps which negatively affect its effectiveness so for the government to act accordingly. Through the mixed methods approach, the evaluation research will point the right direction to take in redesigning the social protection policy so to ensure its effectiveness in post-primary school education.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### CONSENT FORM

I.....give consent to participate in this study. Objective and procedures of this study were clarified to me. I also understand that I am not coerced to participate, I voluntarily take part and I am at liberty to withdraw anytime without bearing any consequence. I also understand that the interview will be recorded, confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all times. It has been explained to me that the recordings will be destroyed post transcriptions.

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2



### INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Topic: An exploratory study on the role of social protection programme in supporting children's education: The case of Mafeteng district in the Kingdom of Lesotho.**

**Interview Guide (MOET, MOSD, DCPT)**

#### **Profile of respondents**

Period as employee.....

Gender.....

Age.....

Qualifications.....

#### **District profile**

How many post-primary schools exist in Mafeteng district?

How many vulnerable children exist in Mafeteng district?

How many vulnerable children are covered by the bursary scheme in Mafeteng district?

How many vulnerable children are covered by CGP in Mafeteng district?

How many vulnerable children are covered under the ISSN?

How many vulnerable children exist in the district?

**Profile of the school (Principals)**

Name of the school..... (Government Church  
Community)

How many learners exist in this school.....

How many children are beneficiaries of CGP/school bursary in this school?

**NGO educational programmes**

Besides the government cgp/bursary programme, which NGOs provide bursary or any assistance aimed towards enhancing children’s education and what do they cover?

**To explore the role of social protection programme in supporting children’s education.**

Which none contributory education-focused government programme exists in this school and what is their objectives?

What influenced government to introduce the educational social protection programme?

When did this schools implement this programme and who is responsible for identifying and selecting eligible learners?

What is the role of this programme in supporting children’s education?

**To investigate the CGP and Bursary programme implementation challenges and their effect on education.**

Are there any CGP/Bursary implementation challenges experienced?

If yes, what are those challenges and how do they affect education?

What remedies are in place to address these challenges?

**To identify the gaps which social protection programme have in regard to enhancing children’s education.**

Are there any gaps which social protection programme have in regard to improvement of children’s education?

In your opinion, has the objective of the programme been achieved, explain?

In your opinion, what can be done to improve and sustain this programme in order for education to be improved so for the children’s right to education to be fulfilled?

## Appendix 3



### Focus Group guide for parents/guardians

#### Personal information

1. Age.....
2. Gender.....
3. Occupation.....
4. Are you living with the child.....
5. Relationship to child.....
6. How many children are there in your household.....
7. How many are under CGP/Bursary support.....

#### Government programmes

9. What kind of assistance do children benefit from?
11. What are the objectives of the programmes?
12. Who are beneficiaries of these programmes?
13. What are the application requirements and how accessible are they?

#### To explore the role of social protection programme in supporting children's education.

14. What challenges do parent/guardians encounter in assisting children to access post-primary education?
15. What are the roles of social protection programme in enhancing children's post-primary education in the Kingdom of Lesotho”?

16. Does the government do enough to meet communities half way in tackling these challenges?

**To investigate the CGP and Bursary programme implementation challenges and their effect on education.**

17. What are other educational expenses that are not covered under the programmes?

18. Are there CGP/Bursary implementation challenges that you/children experience?

19. What contribution is expected from parents in supporting the children's education?

**To identify the gaps which social protection programme have in regard to enhancing children's education.**

20. Is the government SPP effective?

21. What can be done to further improve children's education and for effectiveness of this programme?

## Appendix 4



**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

Department of Social Development

University of Cape Town Rondebosch 7701 South Africa

Phone: +27-21-650-3483

E-mail: [taryn.powell@uct.ac.za](mailto:taryn.powell@uct.ac.za)

2 December 2022

*Student:* **Hape Mavis Ntili (NTLHAP002)**

*Outcome:* **ACCEPTED**

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your study, ***AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S EDUCATION: THE CASE OF POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS ON MAFETENG DISTRICT IN THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO.*** The reference number is SWK-REC-2022-SR032.

I wish you all the best for your study.

Signed by candidate

Yours sincerely

Dr Shanaaz Hoosain

Senior Lecturer

Chair: Ethics Review Committee

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**The University of Cape Town is committed to policies of equal opportunity and affirmative action which are essential to its mission of promoting critical inquiry and scholarship.**