

Press Release



South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

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Construction of a welfare state in progress

The number of social-grant beneficiaries has increased by more than 300% in the past nine years, according to the South African Institute of Race Relations.

In the 2009/10 financial year there were nearly 14 million social grant beneficiaries in South Africa. The child-support grant made up the highest share, with over nine million beneficiaries. The old-age grant was second highest, with over two million beneficiaries.

This is according to the latest *South Africa Survey*, published by the Institute in Johannesburg.

The National Treasury projects that by 2011/12 there will be 16 million social grant beneficiaries. Of these, more than ten million will be child-support grant beneficiaries.

Social grants are arguably a buffer against poverty for millions of poor South Africans, with 30% of the 49.9 million population now receiving such grants.

In 2009, 28% of the population was receiving some form of social grant. Women accounted for 53% of grant beneficiaries. Africans accounted for 89%. KwaZulu-Natal is the province with the highest proportion of social grant beneficiaries, even higher than the national average of 33%.

Nachi Majoe, a member of the Institute's research team, said 'South Africa is becoming a welfare state; the number of social grant beneficiaries is on a constant rise. Grants risk creating a dependency syndrome.'

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