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Topic: Commemoration of 25 years

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1. ABSTRACT

1.1. Objectives of the study

“The country’s vibrant democracy is anchored in the Constitution which guarantees equal rights for all”, Phumla Williams said, Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) Acting Director-General on Friday, 12th April on South African Government News Agency. The Constitution of South Africa sets out the rights to equality and dignity. Section 9(1) provides that: “Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law”. Section 10 provides that: “Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected”. This study is done to investigate how efforts have been made by the state as well as organizations to ensure that there is a level of equality in our societies and that the dignity of the citizens is respected and protected.

1.2. Method employed in gathering data, processing and analysis

Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were both employed. A set of interview questions was put together, and informants from relevant fields of work were interviewed with an aim to gain a deeper understanding of both the challenges and successes experienced since 1994 till date. For example, I interviewed a doctor regarding the health context of the investigation and a circuit manager for the education context of the investigation. Both interviewees are relevant to the subject matter being investigated, respectively. For further and statistical information I consulted the relevant websites and articles such as “PER vol.5 n.2 Potchefstroom Aug. 12 (On-line version 1727-3781)”.

1.3. Summarized results

There has been evidence that revealed successes in early childhood development. The government has provided with proper infrastructure in our schools, although there is still room for improvement. In an effort to provide social protection in the schools for the purpose of quality learning and for the learners to successfully receive educational content, the government has introduced the National Schools Nutrition Program, feeding learners across the country in poor schools from disadvantaged communities. The challenges in our education include that teachers are often inadequately trained and in short supply, especially in rural areas. This may be due to teachers being reluctant to study further because the government does not give them encouragement in a form of increased salaries once a teacher is very qualified for the job; the salary remains the same no matter the qualifications you have. So, there is no difference between a more qualified teacher and a less qualified teacher in terms of salary.

South Africa has made progress in improving the health status of its people. There are a stabilized number of people living with HIV, which had escalated all through the 90s. There are organizations such as the Health Systems Trust and the South African National Aids Council that help patients to stick to their treatments and minimize the spread of HIV, respectively. National Health Insurance aims to ensure that all citizens are provided with essential health care, irrespective of their employment status or ability to make a monetary contribution to the NHI Fund.

The government has made progressive policies throughout the 25 years of democracy, such as the Reconstruction and Development Program where the government established a very extensive welfare system; the GEAR to stimulate faster economic growth, bring about greater macroeconomic stability, better reporting and increased

accountability; and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa to reduce poverty and unemployment rates.

Social justice has been dealt with. Currently, 89.9% of households have access to piped water; 63.4% to flush toilets; 63.9% to refuse removal services; and 87.6% to electricity. Legal Aid South Africa provides people who cannot afford lawyers with legal advice as well as represent their cases in court free of charge. These are valuable accomplishments for a relatively young democracy.

1.4. Principal conclusion

As much as we are celebrating 25 years of Freedom and Democracy in South Africa, evidence shows that indeed efforts have been made to ensure reconciliation, restoration of unity, nation building, equal opportunities and improving the quality of life of the people of South Africa since the dawn of democracy. However, the shackles of apartheid that deeply affected the lives of most of South Africans are difficult to undo. These include amongst others, the disregard for human rights principles, inclusivity, environmental and social justice. The discrimination, inequality, economic domination by the minority group, oppression and poverty continue to challenge our country.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Background information

- ✓ Apartheid translates from the Afrikaans word meaning apartness; it was the ideology supported by the national Party government and was introduced in South Africa in 1948. It called for the separate development of different racial groups in South Africa, called Bantustans. On paper, it appeared to call for equal development and freedom of cultural expression, but the way it was implemented made this impossible

2.2. Identified problems

- ✓ Apartheid made laws that forced the different racial groups to live separately and develop separately, and grossly unequal too. (Group Areas Act, 7 July 1950). The act assigned racial groups to different residential and business sections in urban areas in a system of urban apartheid.
- ✓ The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No 55 of 1949, was the law in South Africa that prohibits marriages between “Europeans” and “non-Europeans”.
- ✓ The Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953 later named the Black Education Act, 1953), was a South African segregation law which legalized several aspects of Apartheid system. Its major provision was enforcing racially separated **educational facilities**.
- ✓ Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, Act No. 49 of 1953, forced segregation in all public amenities, public buildings, transport and **health centers**, with the aim of eliminating contact between whites and other races.
- ✓ Apartheid was born in the political victory of radical white trade unions over both of their rivals. In short, this cruelly oppressive **economic** system was socialism with a racist face.

2.3. Problem statement

- ✓ The challenges that continue to impact negatively on our hard-earned democracy include amongst others the disregard for human rights principles, inclusivity, environmental and social justice. The discrimination, inequality, economic domination by the minority group, oppression and poverty continue to conquer in our country.

2.4. Summarized solutions

- ✓ Since the dawn of democracy, the ANC government, along with other parties in the national parliament, has made efforts to ensure reconciliation (TRC), restoration of unity, nation building, equal opportunities and improving the quality of life of the people of South Africa.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data collection methods

- ✓ Data collection is a process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem, test the hypothesis and evaluate outcomes. Data collection methods can be divided into two categories: secondary methods of data collection and primary method of data collection.

3.1.1. Secondary Data Collection Methods

- ✓ Secondary data is a type of data that has been published in books, newspapers, journals, online portals etc. There is an abundance of data available in these sources; therefore, application of appropriate set of criteria to select secondary data to be used in the study plays an important role in terms of increasing the levels of research validity and reliability.
- ✓ These criteria include, but not limited to date of publication, credential of the author, reliability of the source, quality of discussions, depth of analysis, the extent of contribution of the text to the development of the research area etc.

3.1.2. Primary Data Collection Methods

- Primary data collection methods can be divided into two groups:
 - ✓ Quantitative data collection methods are based in mathematical calculations in various formats. Methods of quantitative data collection and analysis include questionnaires with closed-ended questions, mean, mode and median and others. Quantitative methods are cheaper to apply and they can be applied within shorter duration of time compared to qualitative methods. According to my opinion, this method is not relevant to my research.
 - ✓ Qualitative data collection methods, on the contrary, do not involve numbers or mathematical calculations. Qualitative research is closely associated with words, sounds, feelings, emotions, colors and other elements that are non-quantifiable. Qualitative studies aim to ensure greater level of depth of understanding and qualitative data collection methods include interviews, questionnaires with open-ended questions, focus groups, observation, game or role-playing, case studies, etc. Qualitative research method is the method I used when conducting my study. I interviewed my informant and three other people.

3.2. Data collection, processing and analyzing

- ✓ Interviewing people from different sectors
- ✓ **Example of interview questions with ISC of Education in Meepong Circuit:**
- ✓ Can you give me a brief background of your educational journey?
- ✓ In your years of teaching, how has the education system of South Africa transformed?
- ✓ Please outline key challenges that you think our education system experiences in SA.
- ✓ Much as there are challenges, what can you say about the successes since the dawn of democracy?
- ✓ Within your circuit, are there any underperforming schools, if so, how many and what is your department doing to help improve learner performance?
- ✓ What could be the contributing factors towards this underperformance of learners?
- ✓ There is very little number of learners doing Mathematics and Sciences in schools. What could be the cause? Are there any measures that could be taken to address this matter?
- ✓ Do you think there is enough alignment between the skills taught in higher institutions and what is needed to grow the economy?
- ✓ **Example of interview questions with a medical practitioner in a medical institution in Khuma:**
- ✓ Can you give me a brief background of your medical journey?
- ✓ Are there any successes that you can briefly discuss about?
- ✓ In your years of experience, what can you say are the key challenges?
- ✓ Statistics say that 79% of doctors work in the private sector; what could be the cause of that?
- ✓ What could be done to attract those doctors to the public sector?
- ✓ Rural areas lack doctors as we know. Any measures to be taken to address this health issue?
- ✓ Does the health department help meet health needs of the citizens; and does it address the social issues too?
- ✓ How far does World Health Organization (WHO) help in the South African Health Department?
- ✓ Do you find the clinics and hospitals that you offer your services to lacking adequate resources?
- ✓ Any recommendations in regards to improvements in the health sector?

4. FINDINGS/ INTERPRETATION

4.1. EDUCATION

Education priorities set out in the annual address since the 1994, revealed that there has been success in early childhood development, infrastructure and social protection. According to the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Section 29 (1) provides that “everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible”.

SUCESSES

Major strides have been made both at early childhood development and the number of people with no schooling. South Africa has increased the number of its citizens achieving matric. South African government prioritized education and invest more in it than any department, more than any countries do. Black children now have access to quality basic education as compared to prior 1994. Stationary and all set books are delivered without costs.

One of the key social protection programs, the NSNP was introduced. Given the levels of household poverty and hunger, have two objectives: food security and education.

Another social protection intervention, the elimination of fees for the poorest schools began in 2006. Today more schools are categorized as “no fee schools”.

Fees must fall was a student led protest movement that began in mid-October 2015 in South Africa. The goals of the movement were to stop increases in student fees as well as increase government funding of universities. In 2017, the government announced fee-free post school education and training.

NSFAS also raises funds in order to increase the funding pool for student bursaries.

NSFAS was no longer a loan but a bursary that covers tuition fee, food, accommodation, books and travel allowances.

CHALLENGES

Poor infrastructure and lack of resources in some school make quality and learning outcome elusive. Quality education is difficult to achieve as there are many intangible factors that impede progress.

The 1999 policy address by Nelson Mandela highlighted the non-delivery of text book, an issue that has embarrassed government many times thereafter. He called this “inexcusable” and went on to say: “If our administrations are unable to carry out such straight forward projects, then ordinary citizens like myself will feel justified in calling for heads to roll”

Lot of schools still need to be build, about 9000 schools are still using pit latrines, 300 schools are still without electricity – which must be corrected.

Teachers are inadequately trained and in short supply especially in rural areas, so students who want and need to learn simply cannot.

Learner retention is a greater concern with rising drop-out level from grade 10-12.

Despite being an economic power in sub-Saharan Africa and its massive financial investment into education, South Africa’s education performance is below that of many countries, including low income African countries.

4.2. HEALTH

South Africa's public health sector, since 1994 has been transformed into an integrated, comprehensive national service, driven by the need to address historical inequalities and provide its citizens with better health care services. Section 27 (1a) of the constitution of South Africa provides that; everyone has the right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care.

SUCCESS

The National Health Insurance is the financing system in South Africa that aims to ensure that all the citizens are provided with essential health care, irrespective of their employment status or ability to make a monetary contribution to the NHI Fund. Since 1994, the empirical evidence shows that South Africa is making progress in improving the health status of its people.

Statistic South Africa and the Actuarial Society of SA have noted a stepwise improvement in life expectancy from 2006 onwards. The Medical Research Council's rapid mortality surveillance report provided that, there has been improvement in infant and child mortality. Deaths from malnutrition and preventable diseases have substantially reduced. This may be result due to the wider availability of ARV treatment, TB treatment and increased prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission. There are fewer Aids deaths. There are a stabilized number of people living with HIV, which had escalated all through the 1990s.

The World Health Organization is determined to see the virtual elimination of TB and HIV by 2030. An innovative case management approach, introduced by Health Systems Trust (HST) in uMgungundlovu District, South Africa is helping patients to stick to their treatment, and become virally suppressed. Programmes such as the South African National Aids Council have been working hard with the government to minimize the spread of HIV through testing and counseling campaigns, the promotion of male circumcision, as well as driving social change to promote health-seeking behavior.

CHALLENGES

Health care in South Africa varies from the most basic primary health care, offered free by the state, to highly specialized high tech services available in the public and private sectors. However, the public sector is stretched and under-resourced. It serves the vast majority of population but is chronically under-funded and under-staffed. About 79% of doctors work in the private sector.

A major concern with regard to the physical environment is the lack of space in many ARV clinics; consulting rooms are often shared by a variety of disciplines of Health Care Workers consulting with different patients thus violating the patients' constitutional right to privacy. Waiting rooms are overcrowded, which can result with communicable diseases infecting other immune-compromised patients.

Research conducted by a group of South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) members at 38 municipal clinics over an 18-month period revealed minimal legal compliance with respect to health and safety requirements. The study also revealed that many clinics 'did not even have such basic supplies as soap'.

There is a limited and often inadequate supply of antiretroviral drugs at several ARV facilities, referred to as drug 'stockouts'. A serious consequence of ARV stockouts is that of drug resistance, which results in the need for more expensive second-line medication.

4.3 ECONOMY

Section 22 of the Constitution of South Africa provides that “every citizen has the right to choose their trade, occupation or profession freely, [and] the practice of a trade, occupation or profession may be regulated by law”.

South Africa has a mixed economy in which there is a variety of private freedom, combined with centralized economic planning and government regulation. South Africa joined the important bloc (BRICS) of emerging economies in 2010, in line with country’s foreign policy to strengthen South-South relations.

The economic policy paper released by Finance Minister Tito Mboweni recently shows that Treasury is taking new business growth seriously, potentially growing the tax base and increasing tax revenue, according to tax expert. Mboweni released the document, entitled “Economic Transformation, Inclusive Growth and Competitiveness; Towards Economic Strategy for South Africa”. The document promises economic growth of 3% points and a creation of a million jobs, if the proposed reforms are agreed to and implemented.

SUCSESSES

South Africa successfully held its first democratic elections in April 1994 and the African National Congress (ANC) won with a majority vote to head the government of national unity. In order to rebuild and transform the economy after years of apartheid regime’s economic isolation and financial sanctions which were enforced by the international community, Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) which was part of the election platform of the ANC in the 1994 elections was chosen as the primary socio-economic program. RDP was successful in some areas such as social security in which the government established a very extensive welfare system.

Government introduced a macroeconomic policy framework called Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy in 1996 to stimulate faster economic growth which was required to resources to meet social investment needs. Under GEAR policy, fiscal deficit, inflation and government consumption targets were all slightly met, reporting figures of 2.2 %, 5.4% and 18% respectively by the end of 2000, bringing about greater macroeconomic stability, better reporting and increased accountability. Additionally, management of public finances improved drastically under GEAR and the only success seen with regard to GDP was that the negative growth rate of the early nineties was reversed.

GEAR was replaced in 2005 by the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) as further development on the first two developmental strategies followed post 1994. ASGISA envisioned the following aims: reduce poverty by 2010 and halving unemployment by 2014 from the 28% in 2004 to 14% by 2012; and also recognized that the policies implemented to address these issues needed to be at the forefront of economic policy decision making.

In early 2013, the government has introduced the National Development Plan (NDP)-2030 as South Africa’s long-term socio-economic development roadmap. NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. According to the plan, South Africa can realize these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive

economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships through society.

The economy of South Africa is the second largest in Africa, after Nigeria. As a regional manufacturing hub, it is the most industrialized and diversified economy on the continent. South Africa is an upper-middle-income economy by the World Bank. Economic growth is expected to reach 1.5% in 2019, rising to 2.1% by 2021.

CHALLENGES

Though the country is rich in resources, the people of the country have been exploited for decades and are poverty stricken. South Africa's GDP growth slowed from 1.3% in 2017 to an estimated 0.7% in 2018. The medium-term outlook is weaker than projected in the 2018 MTBPS ().

Persisting difficult trading conditions, pressure on operating costs, weakening local and global growth trends, and poor investment fundamentals are some of the economic challenges facing businesses in South Africa and the broader economy at present. This is according to Sakeliga's Economic Overview for Business Decision Makers, a quarterly publication produced in association with ETM Macro Advisors. There has been a widening of the national budget deficit over the first quarter of 2019, annualized government spending nearly 32% of GDP – historically high levels. Hefty expenditure and weak tax collection means that the National Treasury's deficit forecasts are likely to be breached.

There's disappointing GDP outcomes in the first quarter of 2019 – clearly, the recent boat of Eskom power cuts harmed productive endeavors of many businesses. Furthermore, widening budget deficits, steep state expenditure, and dysfunctional state-owned enterprises are weighing in against the prospects of improved business conditions.

Steep state expenditure and risky SOEs are increasing the risk of increased taxes at a time when serious questions may be asked about the soundness of government spending and investment. In spite of these pressures, government appears unwilling to affect real deregulation and market liberalization – lack of clarity on policy, with threats of greater regulation and intervention, is a real drag on the private sector.

Local businesses should keep a close eye on the deterioration of European and Asian leading indicators. These regions are important trading partners of South Africa.

4.4 SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social Cohesion and Social Justice in South Africa, a report released by the Department of Arts and Culture in 2012, defines **social justice** as “the extension of principles, enshrined in our Constitution, of human dignity, equity and freedom to participate in all of the political, socio-economic and cultural spheres of society”. World day of Social Justice recognizes the need to promote efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion, employment, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all. The General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 20 February as World Day of Social Justice. The day was observed for the first time in 2009, when member states were invited to promote the objectives and goals of the World Summit for Social Development.

SUCCESSSES

South Africa's constitutional democracy is 25 years old. The constitution of South Africa provides a foundation for human rights for all South Africans, a framework for a just and equitable society. Lauded across the world for its progressive integration of civil and political rights on one hand, and socioeconomic and cultural rights on the other, it serves as a powerful tool for communities to realize their rights. Section 26 of the Constitution sets out the right to adequate housing in South Africa.

Since 1994, the government has provided more than 3.7-million opportunities to people to live where they choose. For the past 10 years, the Socio-economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI), together with other public interest legal services, has worked with communities, social movements, individuals and other non-profit organizations to advocate for social change. It has done this through a combination of public interest litigation and applied legal research, by providing education and training, and through policy and media advocacy to address gaps in policy and practice, so that the most vulnerable members of society are not left behind.

The Upgrading Informal Settlements Programme, part of the Department of Human Settlements' National Housing Code of 2009, supports municipalities to work with communities to provide tenure security and basic services. Currently, 89.9% of households have access to piped water; 63.4% to flush toilets; 63.9% to refuse removal services; and 87.6% to electricity. These are valuable accomplishments for a relatively young democracy. Community Advice Offices (CAO) served as centers for resistance in communities during Apartheid. Advice Offices have now become centers of democracy and assist people in accessing their rights. As community-based institutions through which paralegal services are rendered to the public free of charge, they assist directly in facilitating access to justice. Their services include legal advice on issues of unfair dismissals, sub-standard service by service providers, consumer protection, interpretation of legislation and government policy, helping with accessing State services such as Birth Certificates, ID applications and Social Grants.

They are also able to escalate matters when necessary by referring cases to Legal Aid South Africa, university legal clinics or public interest lawyers. Most Advice Offices address specific socio-economic problems affecting the community and are usually staffed by people from within the community.

CHALLENGES

After more than two decades of democracy "South Africa is still battling with issues of poverty, inequality, unemployment, and hunger" (Statistic SA, 2013). This reality is also reflected in the latest Pulse of the People research study, which identifies the most important challenges to be met by the South African government as unemployment (87%), poverty (59%) and crime (57%).

South Africa has one of the world's highest gender based violence rates. South Africa Crime Statistics recently released a report revealing that the number of reported rapes rose from 3.9 % translating to 41 583 cases in the year, the highest in four years.

"Violent crime in South Africa is fuelled by high levels of alcohol and drug abuse, and the fact that victims are often abused and killed by the people they know makes it difficult to control", police minister Bheki Cele told reporters in Cape Town.

Despite a lack of directly comparable data, xenophobia in South Africa is perceived to have significantly increased. Xenophobia violence undermines the rule of law. This year,

major violence incidents occurred in various cities and metropolis, when foreign nationals were attacked and displaced.

In South Africa, by comparison, 10.2 million people (approximately 20.2% of the population) lived below the bread-line of R321.00 per month in 2011. According to the LCS 2014/15, approximately 40% of South Africans were living below the poverty line. More than half of South Africa's population is living in poverty, data from Statistic South Africa revealed. According to the Poverty Trends report for 2006 to 2015, 30.4 million people (55.5% of the population) are living in poverty).

5. CONCLUSION

In the past, during the times of Apartheid, the education system was not one but was differentiated between racial groups of which we, black people, found ourselves being forced into the education system called Bantu Education. It was a degrading one and was aimed at impeding the development of black children, and the black communities as a result. Today, after 25 years of freedom and democracy, the government uses one education system that is inclusive and allows all racial groups to develop at the same time; the poor, the previously disadvantaged and the vulnerable all get the same quality education. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) cuts across racial boundaries. Education is used as a system to drive equity and dignity to all South African citizens.

The health of black people was not well considered during the apartheid era; they lacked health care facilities and had to fend for themselves. However, today the government gives all citizens free access to medical health care; there is free and easy access to medicines. Although ARV and TB, along with other medications, may be expensive for the government to purchase from private companies and from other countries, the government supplies the local clinics and hospitals for them to be accessible to the citizens, free of charge.

South Africa faced economic sanctions during the apartheid era and so the economy of the country couldn't grow. Upon democracy, the government made policies to improve the economy. These include the RDP, GEAR, ASGISA and the document of Economic Transformation, Inclusive Growth and Competitiveness: Towards Economic Strategy for South Africa; released by Finance Minister Tito Mboweni recently. The policies evolve with the present challenges.

The apartheid government was totally and harshly against social justice. It called for separate development of different racial groups in South Africa. Africans were not afforded social justice. They lived in poor living conditions and were often wrongfully arrested. The government of today has done efforts to provide citizens of the new South Africa with proper housing, water and electricity. These factors contribute towards achieving social justice in our societies. Legal Aid South Africa enhances equality before the law, especially for the black, poor people of this country, who are financially disadvantaged. The dignity of the citizens is respected and protected through this initiative. Financial boundaries are crossed in order to contribute towards an equitable and dignified life for all citizens.

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