

# TUTDoR

## **The impact of coronavirus on the livelihoods of households in the Gauteng Province of South Africa.**

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**THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE  
GAUTENG PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

A Mini Dissertation

By

**TSEKE MAGOTIA JOY**

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**DISSERTATION**

submitted to the Faculty of Economics and Finance for the degree.

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in

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**

in the

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**TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

under the supervision of

**DR ESTHER MAKHETHA**

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the mini dissertation submitted for the degree of Masters in Economics Comparative Local Development at Tshwane University of Technology is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

MJ Tseke

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## **Abstract**

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach is defined as an approach used to address poverty. This is done by focusing on sustaining livelihood assets, opportunities, and constraints in order to help better the lives of the poor. If used effectively, the Sustainable Livelihood Approach can not only better the lives of the poor but also help to develop and build the local economy. The study is desktop-based research, and its main aim is to assess how the Covid-19 pandemic affected the lives of poor and vulnerable households in Gauteng Province, South Africa. This has been done by looking at the livelihoods of such households before, during and after the pandemic. Recommendations are made as to how different bodies, both private and government, can help poor people to sustain their lives and prepare for future events such as pandemics. One of the main findings of the study is loss of income and employment in most households of Gauteng during the pandemic. Hence, starting small businesses with the R350 from the government in order to generate income and employment was recommended.

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

MSME – micro-, small, and medium sized enterprise

SLA – Sustainable Livelihood Approach

UIF– Unemployment Insurance Fund

BGRF - Business Growth and Resilience Facility

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment

SARS - South African Revenue Services

TERS - Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme

SMMERF - Small, Micro, and Medium Enterprise Relief Finance Facility



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## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 became a major global threat to human health in 2020, which then led to governments trying to minimize the spread of the virus and moderate the negative health outcomes of the disease through the implementation of various policy measures. These included lockdowns, limited travel, imposed quarantines, and closure of businesses and schools (Josephson et al., 2020). In Southern Asian countries most, rural populations depend on agriculture and agriculture-related activities to sustain their livelihoods and about 50% are employed in the agricultural sector, the restrictions that came with the lockdown around 2020 affected them severely (Ahmad. et al., 2021). Countries that are heavily dependent on agriculture, like Bangladesh, found themselves faced with acute food insecurity during the lockdown due to the disruptions of transportation and supply chains together with high food price inflation (Ahmad. et al., 2021). Furthermore, there was a huge loss of jobs in the informal sector among micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). For example, in Nepal, a million informal sector workers were left unemployed due to the restrictions that came with the lockdown which led to business closures including among MSMEs (Ahmad. et al., 2021). In addition, Covid-19 became an economic burden to various countries including South Africa. Many countries declared states of emergency and imposed lockdowns. In some low-income countries in Africa, such as Nigeria, Malawi, Uganda and Ethiopia, as much as 77% of the population lost their household incomes in both the formal and informal labour markets. This in turn led to severe food insecurity (Josephson et al, 2020).

The South African economy was already in a critical condition before the pandemic. Growth projections for South Africa, at 2.2% in 2019 and 2.8% in 2020, were lower than for fellow countries in the continent (African Development Bank Group, 2020). When analysing the *Quarterly Labour Force Survey* for Quarter 2 of 2020, the number of employed persons decreased from 16.3 million in the first quarter to 14.1 million in the second quarter. Furthermore, data from Statistics South Africa (2020) show that in South Africa low-income households were the most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (Khambule & Simon, 2021), and this include households in Gauteng Province.

In terms of population, Gauteng is one of the biggest provinces in South Africa, with approximately 15 million people residing in it (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This amounts to 26% of the South African population (Visagie, 2013). The middle-income households were the most affected by the pandemic as those that were not in poverty prior the pandemic shifted to poverty stage during the pandemic (Fatti et al, 2021:38).

The objective of this study is to examine the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of Gauteng households. This examination is expected to result in a clear picture of how Covid-19 affected the economy and the lives of the citizens of Gauteng Province. The motivation for the study is to gain an understanding of the livelihoods of South African citizens, with a focus on Gauteng Province, before the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, it is to analyse how deeply, whether positively or negatively, the pandemic affected the livelihoods of households in Gauteng.

The theoretical framework used for the study is the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA). Social, environmental, and economic conditions are the three pillars of sustainability in people's livelihood. A Sustainable Livelihood Approach analyses people's current livelihoods with the aim of putting in place corrective measures to improve and sustain their livelihoods in the future. For instance, in a 2021 study conducted in the KwaDukuza Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, Isaac Khambule used the SLA and his study revealed that communities in the KwaDukuza Municipality were unable to sustain their livelihoods, as 96% of respondents were reported to have lost their business income, followed by 33.3% who had lost their personal assets, such as stock and home-based assets, and 37.3% who had temporarily lost their employment due to Covid-19.

It is against this backdrop that this research seeks to examine the effect of Covid-19 on the economy and the lives of the citizens of the Province of Gauteng, which holds a high proportion of 15 million South Africa's population, and is the nation's biggest provincial economy (StatsSA, 2023). The study differs from other studies that have already been carried out, as it does not only focus on the effect of covid-19 on Gauteng household, but also use sustainable livelihood approach to investigate how the Gauteng households were affected.

## **1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Globally, socio-economic aspects, such as labour supply, portrayed a decline due to the Covid-19 lockdown. This had significant effects on the overall economic activities that were needed to keep economies afloat. At a domestic level, the Covid-19 pandemic severely affected household economies and imposed unprecedented shocks on sustainable development due to the shutdown of many economic activities. A survey conducted by the British Plastics Federation in the United Kingdom on how Covid-19 affected the manufacturing businesses reflects that over 80% of respondents projected a decline in turnover over in the second and third economic quarters of 2020, with 98% declaring concern on the negative impact that the pandemic was likely to bring to their business operations (Agha et al., 2020)

In South Africa, the pre-pandemic unemployment rate was already high at 29.01% in the third quarter of 2019 according to the Labour Force Survey (QLFS) released by Statistics South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The hard lockdown that came with the pandemic added fuel to the fire, as we saw Moody's downgrading South Africa's sovereign credit rating to junk status on 27 March 2020 – this was at the time of the hard lockdown (Simpson, 2020).

In the South African context, the following studies were conducted on Covid-19. Elliot Mbunge (2020) investigated the socio-economic crisis caused by Covid-19 and how it disturbed several economic sectors and concluded that the pandemic imposed unprecedented and catastrophic effects on the South African health system, society in general, and the economy. Lillian Anderson (2020) researched the impact on household income and food insecurity and concluded that households with low levels of educational achievement and which depend on labour income were more likely to experience enormous real income shock that threaten the food security of their household. Burger and Calitz (2021) reviewed how Covid-19 affected the economic growth and fiscal policy of the South African economy. They concluded that, due to Covid-19, for South Africa to stabilise the debt/GDP ratio by 2023, the salary bill should be cut by 3.5% of GDP and the goods-and-

service budget by 1% of GDP. To achieve this Burger and Calitz (2021) said early retirements and retrenchments should be initiated.

However, none of the studies considered looking into the households of Gauteng Province using the Sustainable Livelihood Approach in order to ascertain how the pandemic was affecting the sustainability of the livelihoods of citizens. This study has narrowed this gap by focusing on how the lives of the Gauteng households were affected and by recommending sustainable livelihood strategies. In addition, there has been no study carried out in Gauteng Province specifically despite the fact that Gauteng is the most populous province in South Africa, with an estimation of population of approximately 15 million people (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Hence this study seeks to understand how households in Gauteng were affected by Covid-19 from a socio-economic point of view by using the Sustainable Livelihood Approach.

### **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **Primary research question**

How did covid-19 affect the economy and the lives of the Gauteng households?

#### **Secondary research questions**

How were the lives of the household before the pandemic?

What economic activities can be implemented in order to restore the live of the Gauteng households that were affected by the pandemic?

### **1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

#### **Primary objective**

To examine the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of Gauteng's households. This objective is expected to result in a clear picture of how Covid-19 has affected the economy and the lives of the citizens of this province.

## **Secondary objectives**

- To understand the livelihood of households, especially in Gauteng Province, before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- To document economic activities that can assist in restoring the livelihood of Gauteng households that were negatively affected by the pandemic.

## **1.5. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

**Coronavirus:** Coronaviruses are described in medical science as a “highly diverse family of enveloped positive-sense single-stranded RNA viruses”. They cause various diseases which include respiratory, enteric, hepatic, and neurological systems which differ in severity among humans and animals (Cai et al: 2020).

**Household:** A household can be defined as a group of individuals (composed of various types of relationships, such as families or roommates) who live together under one unit and share common living expenses and responsibilities and rely on each other socially and financially to meet their basic needs of life.

**Socioeconomic:** These are factors that relate to or involve a combination of social and economic factors. These factors include income, education, employment and health and social support (Agha et al, 2020).

**Sustainable livelihood:** A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both in the present and the future without undermining the natural resource base (Chambers & Conway, 1992: 7).

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a review of the literature covering the effects of Covid-19 on the livelihoods of people globally, in Africa and in South Africa through the lens of Sustainable livelihood development.

### **2.2. THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF PEOPLE**

#### **Globally**

Covid-19 spread around the world in 2020, disrupting the economy and the lives of people. The pandemic interrupted the educational system as schools and universities around the globe was mandated to close to minimize the spread of Covid-19. Some developed countries offered lessons and exams on online learning platforms. Students and educators had to learn new skills, have knowledge and adapt to the systems put in place for online learning. Even with online education provided, the educational sector still experienced challenges, as almost all the science students did not have access to laboratories to perform practical exams (Humayun et al, 2021:258). The pandemic also resulted as a global health crisis as even the most developed countries like the USA, German and UK also experienced the pressure of having to utilise limited resources to sustain the lives of citizens (Jackson, 2021:3). Despite USA being regarded as the most prepared country for the pandemic in the health sector globally, it still reported the world's highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths (Erondur et al, 2021:62).

With social isolations individuals were unable to participate in social activities that helps in gaining more knowledge and personal development (Ahuja & Bala, 2021: 200). The lockdowns and social contributed to the drastic disruption on social interaction, hence resulting in major mental health concerns amongst citizens and high-risk groups alike. The isolation during the pandemic also resulted in elevation of mental health issues. For example, countries like China, reported a high level of anxiety and depression, with the Iran reporting the highest level of stress and mental illness, Japan higher reported high levels of

fear and panic behaviour amongst citizens, and Canada with high level of health anxiety (Kohler & Wong, 2020: 2).

The pandemic affected the supply and demand and stock pricing around the world. For instead. in the USA investors withdrew from the stocks of USA firms that were highly exposed to China (Ramelli and Wagner, 2020:31).

## **Africa**

In Africa, countries like Nigeria prior Covid-19 breakout had fundamental challenges, such as high level of poverty, poor educational and health qualities. The pandemic came and worsened the economic challenges. The pandemic affected the well-being of households and human capital development, as schools were closed, jobs were lost or salaries were reduced, with loss of sales from small household businesses, and lack of healthcare for sick household member (Ogunniyi & Omotayo, 2024:2). The educational institution, which is the major source of human capital in Africa was mostly affected the peoples and government in the African countries had less knowledge and resources to operate work from home (Ehmer & Pitas, 2020: 2).

Nutrients and a healthy lifestyle contributes to the physical and mental wellbeing of an individual. Covid-19 also affected the Human capital, as some household incomes were lost or reduced, hence leading to food insecurities in many households.

In the African continent most countries lack developed financial systems and infrastructure. In countries like Nigeria, Algeria and Angola the price of oil crashed due lack of demand hence causing the currency to lose value (Balma & Sennoga, 2022: 11). African equities dropped severely as covid-19 was spreading due to investors not willing to risk on investments during the covid period. Significant African equity indices dropped with about 10–30% of their value during early March 2020 (O’riordan & Shipalana, 2020: 15).

## **South Africa**

Social capital are connections between people, social networks, organizations, and the norms of interchange and trustworthiness that surface between individuals. During to the lockdown South African, due to lack of alcohol, tobacco, school and workplace closure and lack of mobility people were angry, physiologically challenged and feared for their lives



(Adhikari et al, 2020: 3). The pandemic affected the psychological well-being of individuals and their level of happiness. People could only socialize through cell phones and social medias which was not enough for most as its not physical interaction and some, like elderly people did not have social media platforms (Jogi, 2021:17).

As much as everyone in the South Africa was affected by the pandemic, the most vulnerable population groups, such as low-income earners were the most affected, mostly in terms of loss of employment and loss of income during this pandemic (Nengovhela & Zantsi,2024:121). Households whom their source of income is wage labour and remittances were affected by the pandemic as there were salary cuts, businesses shut downs and retrenchment.

South Africa's financial market and economy was hit hard by the pandemic, business production and supply chain were interrupted. The rand lost its value by about 25% of its price against the US dollar and was downgraded to junk status (O's Riordan & Shipalana, 2020: 14). The transportation, travel and tourism, entertainment and hospitality sector also suffered due to restrictions of movement. As the schools were shut down households had financial strains of keeping school-aged kids at home and those that were in universities had challenges in acquiring proper working electronic gadgets and data (Ifeanyichukwu et al, 2020:178). Reduction in food consumption for disadvantaged kids due to the closure of schools and lack of resources for online learning had a negative effect on human capital foundation and childhood development, with potentially long-term consequences (Schotte & Zizzamia, 2023: 20). As educators were forced to adapt to online teach, it was difficult to some as they had to do so without proper training.

## **Conclusion**

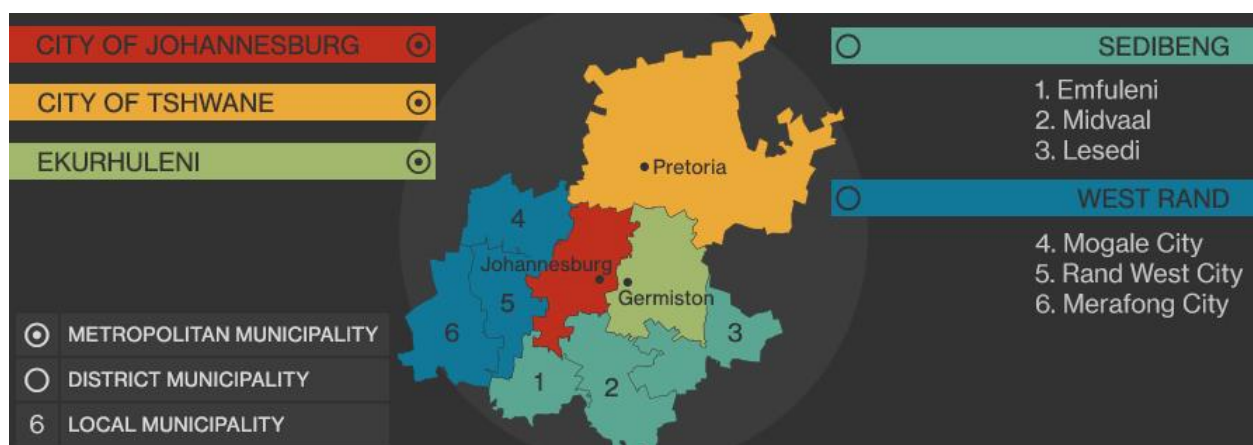
The pandemic was not only a local crisis but also a global and national crisis. Many countries around the glob was affected by the pandemic. The health system, educational system, human capital, economy, financial capital and social lives of people are the world ere affected. The less developed countries and the vulnerable households with low-level income were the most affected by the pandemic.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the research methodology and theoretical framework. The theoretical framework of the study introduces and describes what the research problem is, while the research methodology is the procedure and systematic methods that are used to resolve the research problem (Kivunja, 2018: 17). The research methodology and theoretical frameworks are important in a study as they reflect the way research is structured, and how data is collected and structured to reach a conclusion.

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

Gauteng is situated in the northern part of South Africa and is largely an urban province with three metropolitan municipalities – Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and Tshwane. It also has two district municipalities – Sedibeng and West Rand. The two district municipalities are each subdivided into three local municipalities. In Sedibeng the local municipalities are Lesedi, Midvaal and Emfuleni and in West Rand they are Merafong, Mogale City and Rand West. In Sedibeng the local municipalities are Lesedi, Midvaal and Emfuleni and in West Rand they are Merafong, Mogale City and Rand West.



**Figure 1: Map of Gauteng Province and its municipalities**

Gauteng is the primary economic and population hub of South Africa; therefore, it is necessary investigate how the Covid-19 affected it economically. In July 2021 Gauteng was classified as an epicentre of COVID-19 infections, with the highest recorded new cases of 6 531 per day. The Gauteng Provincial Government, working together with the national government, was then obliged to put measures in place to contain the spread of the virus (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2021: 24). The measures that were put in place involved

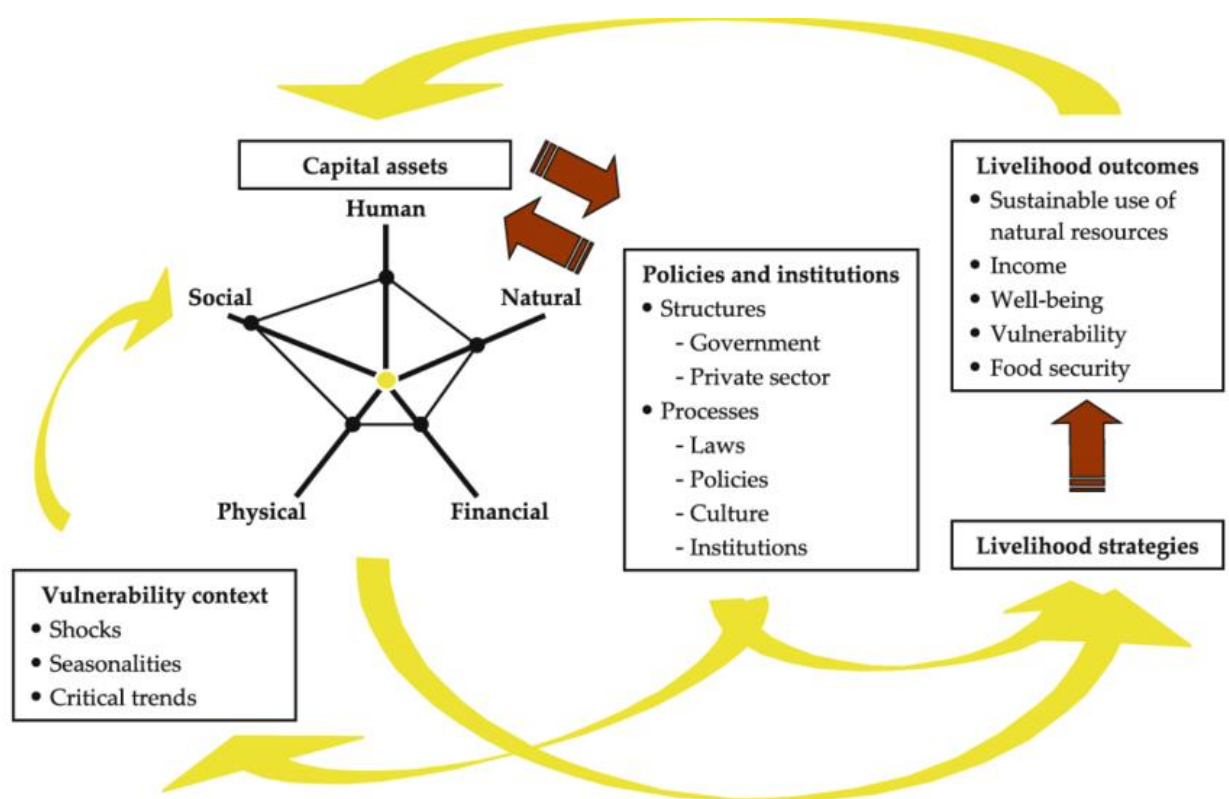
some economic activity being put on hold for a while. The suspension of economic activities had an overwhelming impact on the province's economy, hence affecting vulnerable households and businesses. This study therefore seeks to understand how households in Gauteng Province were affected by Covid-19 from a socio-economic point of view with the use of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach.

### **3.2. SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD APPROACH**

This study used the Sustainable Livelihood Approach to understand how households in Gauteng Province were affected, especially financially, by the pandemic. Furthermore, to assess Gauteng households' response to economic distress and environmental changes, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, sustainable livelihood research was required (Fitrianto, 2021:57). The Sustainable Livelihood Approach was thought to be the most appropriate method to investigate the economic difficulties caused by the pandemic in Gauteng households, as it is a holistic approach that was initially designed to assist in understanding the various causes of poverty and to help find sustainable livelihood solutions to overcome them (Fitrianto, 2021:57).

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach was developed in the 1990s by Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway, and since then, numerous researchers have been investigating the concept. Chambers and Conway (1992, 7) define Sustainable Livelihood as: "A livelihood with abilities, assets and activities that a human being needs to sustain a living; be able to cope and recover from stress and shocks, be able to maintain and enhance the abilities and assets in they have and which helps to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for the future generation; and which also contributes net benefits of livelihoods locally and globally in the short and long-run." Additionally, Acholo, McNamara and Morse (2009, 4) describe SLA as an example of the various approaches where sustainability is measured in terms of the availability of capital (natural, human, physical, social and financial). These approaches also examine the vulnerability context, in other words, the trends, shocks, and stresses, in which these assets exist. Capital can be understood as the strengths or assets or resources that a person or organisation possesses, and there are various categories that capital can be divided into, as listed briefly below (Acholo et al. 2009: 5).

- **Natural capital** is described as natural resource stocks (water, soil, air, and genetic resources) and environmental services (pollution sinks and hydrological cycle).
- **Human capital** is described as labour, the knowledge and skills that an individual holds, including physical capacity and good health.
- **Social capital** – this describes social resources, such as associations, affiliations, social claims, networks, and social relations amongst individuals.
- **Physical capital** consists of production equipment and technologies and infrastructure (this includes roads and buildings).
- **Economic and financial capital** consists of the cash, savings, credits, and or debts, and other economic assets that an individual holds.



**Figure 2: Sustainable Livelihood Framework**

**Source: Raniga and Ringson (2022: 312)**

The total amount of capital that each household possesses will be different from one household to the next. When researching or intervening to support a community it is important to explore the vulnerability context that exists for that community so that all the capital assets can be safeguarded or enhanced. This means understanding the kinds of shocks and stresses that a community typically faces (Acholo et al., 2009: 5). Hence the SLA will be used as a framework for this study, specifically focusing on economic and financial capital as it will assist in outlining the financial implications of Covid-19 on the households of Gauteng.

The main aim of the study is to narrow the gap of how Covid-19 affected Gauteng households by analyzing using Sustainable Livelihood Approach. When investigating financial capital, specific aspects, such as income and expenditure, budgets, savings and debts, food security as well as the assets each individual household will be examined. At the household level, the SLA envisions a livelihood as comprising assets and activities that an individual needs to achieve a socially and economically sustainable life (Khambule, 2022:3). Hence, when analyzing economic capital, aspects such as the amount of capital each household needs to be stable, taking into account the assets that each different household holds, needs to be contemplated.

### **3.2.1. HUMAN CAPITAL**

During the lockdown, some informal traders benefited from human capital in terms of the skills and experience they already possessed. In addition, they employed skilled individuals who had experience in the business world and who knew how to use social media platforms as a marketing tool. As there were restrictions like the stay-at-home rule during the lockdown, social media platforms like Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube were the most effective way to keep businesses running, as most people were at home and always on their phones and laptops (Raniga, T. & Ringson, T. 2022: 316). It was important to find people who already had the necessary skills and experience in operating various social media platforms so that the employers do not have to waste time having to train them and losing business in the meantime.

Technology with the right human capital, experience and skills was one of the ways to save some businesses, and employment.

### **3.2.2. ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL**

#### **Income and employment**

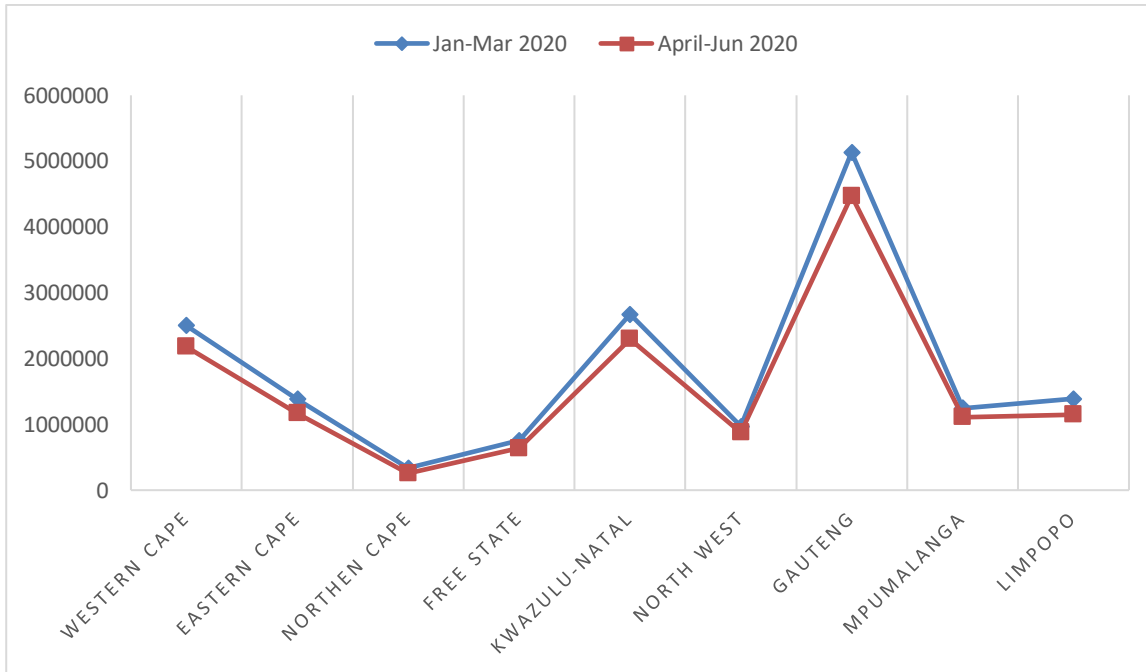
The pandemic came as a global public health crisis, hence affecting informal traders in several ways. One being that government had to put in regulations, such as restrictions of movement, to contain the spread of the virus, which then forced millions of traders to work from home (Yasenov, 2020). Secondly, the restrictions led to an economic downturn, hence forcing formal companies to downsize, liquidate their businesses or work fewer hours than normal. All these measures taken by business owners in turn affected the generation of revenue and income of employees and led to some business owners losing their businesses entirely (Brodeur et al, 2020). The livelihoods of employees who worked in these companies were affected as salaries were cut and some lost their salaries completely, hence making them unable to sustain their livelihood (Collins et al, 2020).

The pandemic hit the province at a time when economic growth was stationary, and the labour market was facing the strongest headwinds, with recorded high rates of unemployment (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2021: 27).

According to Statistics South Africa (2020:7), during quarter two of 2020, which was the time of the hard lockdown in South Africa, Gauteng, amongst all the nine provinces, projected the highest decline in the employment rate (see **Figure 3**). Gauteng showed a huge decline in the employment level, from 5 134 000 in the first quarter of 2020 to 4 473 000 in quarter 2 of 2020, amounting to a decrease of 661 000, confirming that Covid-19 affected the income of households in Gauteng.

Amongst the people who were still employed during the hard lockdown there were those employees whose salaries and working hours were reduced. KwaZulu-Natal declined from 2 672 000 to 2 297 000 (a decrease of 375 000), Western Cape declined from 2 501 000 to 2 179 000 (a decrease of 321 000), Limpopo declined from 1 387 000 to 1 151 000 (a

decrease of 236 000) and the Eastern Cape declined from 1 382 000 to 116 9000 (down by 212 000). Northern Cape recorded the lowest decline in the number of employed persons from 336 000 to 25 5000 reflecting a decline of 301000.



**Figure 3: Employment by province**

Source: Modified from StatsSA

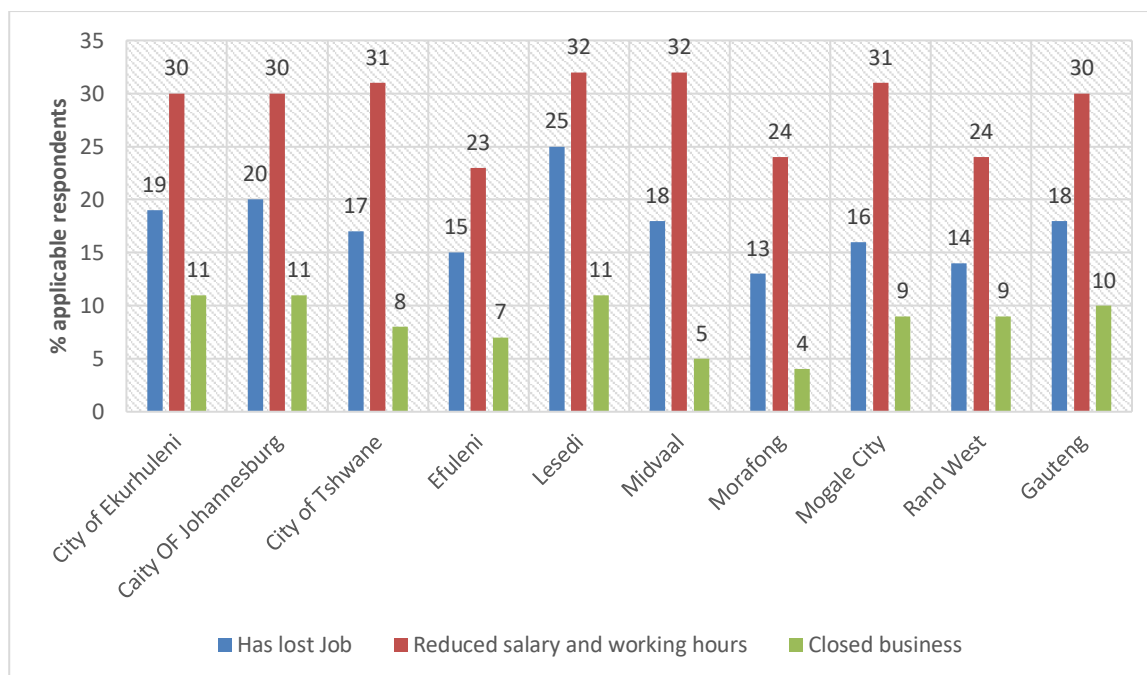
In a survey conducted by Gauteng City-Region (2021(a):32), Lesedi Municipality, with an estimated population of 125 879 population in 2020, recorded the highest percentage of persons who lost their jobs during the pandemic at 25% (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2021:58), followed by City of Johannesburg (20%) with a population size of 5 783 000 in 2020, then City of Ekurhuleni (19%) with a population size of 3 894 000 in 2020, and with the other municipalities ranging from 18% to 13%.

When it comes to reduction in salaries and working hours during the pandemic, Lesedi and Midvaal (32%) both recorded the highest percentage reduction, followed by City of Tshwane and Mogale City both recorded 31%, City of Ekurhuleni and City of Johannesburg both recorded 30%, and with Merafong (24%) and Emfuleni (23%) both recording the lowest percentages, meaning that Emfuleni was the least affected municipality in Gauteng.

The City of Ekurhuleni (11%), the City of Johannesburg (11%) and Lesedi (11%) recorded the highest percentage of persons who closed their business, meaning they were the most affected municipalities, followed by Mogale City and Rand West with both recording 9%. The City of Tshwane (8%), Emfuleni (7%), Midvaal (5%) and Merafong (4%) recorded the lowest percentage of persons who closed their business among the municipalities surveyed, so these municipalities were the least affected (see **Figure 4**).

In Gauteng, informal workers were severely affected by the pandemic as it seriously interrupted their incomes. The City of Johannesburg alone indicated that approximately 12 days into the 21 days of the hard lockdown, "the city distributed over 1 200 temporary permits to informal traders before being forced to stop the application process, due to the stampedes that threatened the safety of municipal workers and permit seekers" (Johannesburg, 2020: 1). These permits were only given to food traders and only traders that were registered on the database, leaving other street vendors who were not selling food and those that were not registered on the database with no household income as persons were only allowed to trade if they were in possession of permits (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2021: 257). This confirms that most of the households that depend on selling had their incomes severely affected by the pandemic, hence facing the threat of hunger and poverty. Loss of household income/ jobs, reduction of salaries and closing of businesses resulted in households in Gauteng not being able to sustain their livelihoods.





**Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who lost a job, had a reduction in salary and closed a business since March 2020, by municipality.**

**Data source: GCRO QoL 6 (2020/21).**

## Investments

Since the 2007/08 global financial crisis, investment growth in Gauteng has remained low. The pandemic has limited the chances of the province getting new investment (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2021: 27).

Both public and private investment in the province has not been doing well since 2016. The total fixed investments in Gauteng grew by 4.9% in 2015 then decreased drastically by 2.5% in 2016, since then investments have continuously decreased by an estimated minus 3% in 2019. Covid-19 came and made matters worse. (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2021: 27).

Covid-19 had a hugely negative impact on the global supply chain, leading to delays and cancellations of investment plans and investment deterioration in Gauteng Province (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2021: 27).

## **Inflation**

Even though inflation remained within the South African Reserve Bank limit of 3% to 6% in 2020, the prices of high-demand goods such as health boosters, food and non-alcoholic beverages went up by 1.4% on average between September and October 2020, making it a 5.4% annual increase (StatsSA, 2020 C), and alcohol (for example, a 750 ml bottle of whisky, gin or vodka) went up by R5.50. The tobacco price also increased drastically (a packet of 20 cigarettes went up by an extra R1.39). These drastic increases were a result of the panic buying that occurred when government announced the implementation of level 5 lockdown in March 2020 (BusinessTech, 2021a). There was also price inflation on healthcare products such as masks (Ngeleza, 2021: 107).

During the hard lockdown, only essential workers were allowed to carry out their duties. The taxi associations responded to loss of business by increasing taxi fares as there were fewer commuters using taxis. For example, taxis from Pretoria central to Mamelodi increased the fare by R5, from R20 to R25 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2020. Due to policies restricting movement that were implemented during the hard lockdown, restaurants and hotels had to reduce their prices, as many of their customers could no longer afford the prices they had paid before. This led to a total income decrease in the tourist accommodation sector of 98% in May 2020 compared to 2019 (StatsSA(d), 2020: 2).

When the government re-opened economic activities, in trying to recover from the loss that came with Covid-19, restaurants and hotels decreased prices in order to bring back customers (accommodation prices dropped by an average of more than 17% between 2019 and 2020,) (Lol, 2020).

There were also petrol price hikes. With these increased prices, households in Gauteng were unable to sustain their livelihoods, as some had lost their household income and for those that still had jobs the salaries remained the same.

To assess price inflation, a survey of a shopping basket of food was conducted. The survey found that in March 2021 the basket was 12.6% more expensive than in 2020 (Wegreif, 2021: 55),

### **Lack of savings**

A survey conducted in City of Tshwane Gauteng, found that most of the people living in informal settlements work as domestic workers, gardeners, cleaners, and waiters in restaurants or as street vendors, with an average wage of R150 to R300 (USD 8–16) per day on a normal day (Gibson, Nyashanu & Simbanigavi, 2020: 1447). These people living in informal settlements are the most vulnerable as they live from hand to mouth and are unable to save on a monthly basis as their earnings are too low. During the hard lockdown, since restriction of movement was one of the measures to contain the spread of Covid-19, earning opportunities for these informal settlement dwellers came to a standstill, resulting in no household income. Households without savings struggled to sustain their livelihood and meet their basic needs and for some budgets were already tight due to medical expenses that came with Covid-19 (De Kadt et al, 2020:5).

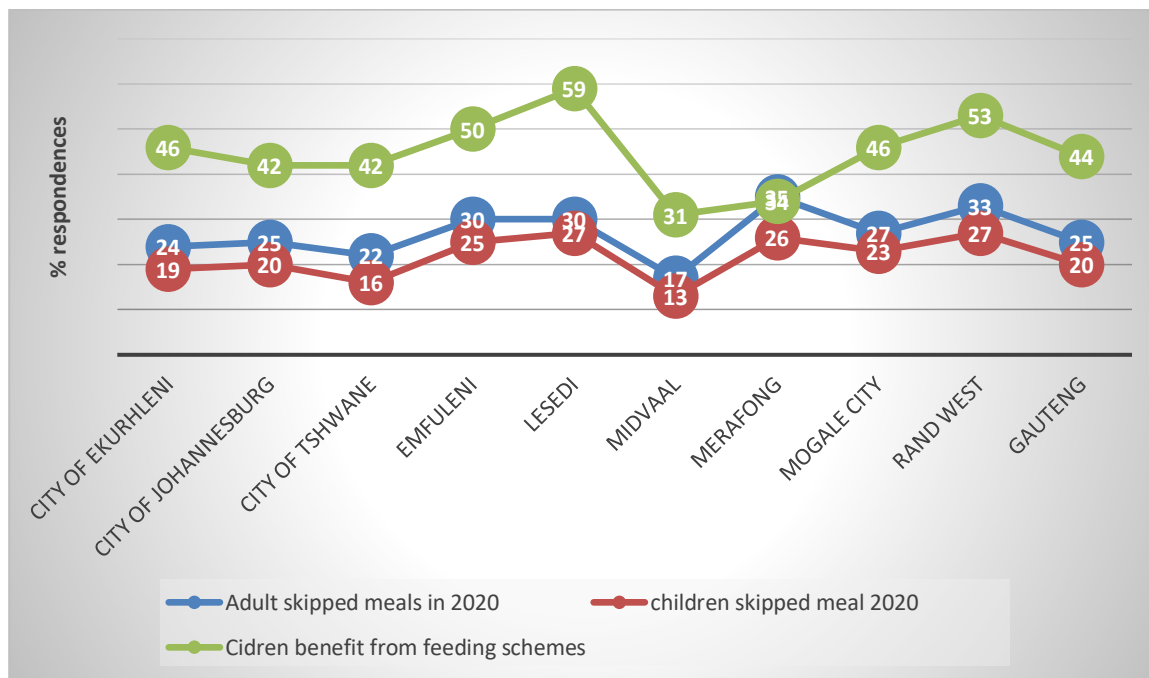
### **Food security**

One of the major issues in South Africa is the affordability of food and adequate intake of nutrition. The 2018 Global Nutrition Report Positions South Africa amongst other countries in the world experiencing a huge burden of malnutrition in terms of anaemia, i.e., iron deficiency, impeding growth in children (Development Initiatives Poverty Research Ltd, 2018).

Most companies, such as an airline company called Comair, were not operating during the hard lockdown (BusinessTech, 2020). When the government started allowing businesses to re-open for economic activities some companies were trying to cut costs by shedding employees as they could not afford to pay them anymore. This led to further hunger and shortage of food due to loss of household income (Gibson et al, 2020:1447). In Gauteng some vulnerable households had to depend on donations from government, relatives, and churches. Some households even had to skip some meals to survive. Vulnerable households are defined as households that are at a high risk of being attacked by unforeseen events, such as natural disasters.

**Figure 5** below shows adults and children from vulnerable households per each municipality in Gauteng, who skipped meals during the pandemic due to insufficient money to buy food.

Some school children from vulnerable households depend on school feeding schemes for food however, due to the closure of schools these children did not have access to feeding schemes (Dallimore et al, 2021:47). Therefore, the graph also reflects the percentage of children who did not have access to feeding schemes during the pandemic. Without a proper diet and nutrients children are likely to be affected emotionally and physically.



**Figure 5: Percentage of households' adults and children who skipped a meal in 2020 due to insufficient funds to buy food and children who benefit from feeding schemes, by Municipality**

**Source: Modified from GCRO QoL 6 (2020/21)**

As per Quality-of-Life Survey 6 (2020/2021), Merafong recorded the highest percentage of 35% of adults who skipped meals in Gauteng households during the pandemic, closely followed by Rand West with 33%, with Emfuleni 30%, Lesedi 30%, Mogale City 27%, City of Johannesburg 25%, City of Ekurhuleni 24% and City of Tshwane 22% all ranging in between 30% to 22%. Midvaal recorded the lowest percentage at 17%.

In terms of dependence on school feeding schemes, the highest percentage was recorded in Lesedi with 59% of households with children depending on school feeding schemes, followed by Rand West with 53% of households. All the other municipalities ranged from 50% to 34%, with Midvaal recording the lowest at 31%, meaning that Midvaal has fewer children who depend on feeding schemes for survival, while Lesedi has many children who depend on feeding schemes as a source of food.

Across Gauteng Province 65% of households have one or more children per household. Questions related to children who skipped meals during the pandemic and children who benefit from feeding schemes were asked in the households where there are one or more children (Dallimore et al, 2021:48). Lesedi (27%) and Rand West (27%) recorded the highest percentage of children who skipped meals due to insufficient money to buy groceries, followed by Merafong with 26% and City of Tshwane recording the lowest percentage at 16%. This indicates that most of the children in Lesedi and Rand West depend on feeding schemes, hence they suffered food insecurities during the pandemic, and they had to skip some meals. In Tshwane fewer children depend on feeding schemes.

To assist vulnerable households, which are mostly households with persons who receive grants, the Gauteng government gave out food parcels. The food parcels contained maize meal (10 kg), rice (5 kg), sugar (2.5 kg), soya mince (1 kg), baked beans (2 tins), peanut butter (880 g), cooking oil (2 l), salt (1 kg), tea bags (100 bags), tinned fish (2 tins), laundry soap (2 bars), dishwashing liquid (750 ml) and all-purpose cleaner (750 ml) (Ngeleza, 2021: 126). Table 1 shows the contribution of the food basket to the various food groups. A lot of starchy food (627%) was given to households, followed by sugar (500%) and salt (200%). However, the food parcel lacked dairy products, fruits, and vegetables.

**Table 1: Contribution of food aid parcels in Gauteng to different households (reference family of four)**

<b>Food group</b>	<b>Gauteng</b>
<b>Starchy Food</b>	627%
<b>fish, chicken, lean meat, eggs</b>	9%
<b>dry beans, split peas, soya</b>	100%
<b>milk, maas/ yoghurt</b>	0%
<b>fat, oil</b>	400%
<b>Vegetable</b>	0%
<b>Fruit</b>	0%
<b>Sugar</b>	500%
<b>Salt</b>	200%

**Source: Ngeleza. 2021: 126**

### **Government relief measures**

Government implemented the following relief funds for the vulnerable during the pandemic.

*1. The small, micro, and medium enterprise relief finance facility (SMMERF), which was available for a six-month period. The business growth and resilience facility (BGRF) targeted businesses that supply products which are needed to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE) (Mkhonza & Sifolo, 2020: 3).*

This SMMERF funding was given to any SMME if it was directly or indirectly affected by Covid-19. The company had to be registered and owned by a South African, 70% of its employees had to be South African, and it had to be in compliance with SARS and UIF. First preference was given to woman and individuals living with a disability (FSCA, 2020:1).

*2. Covid-19 which was intended to make pay outs to employers so they could pay employees whose work was temporarily terminated due to the pandemic and UIF short time / reduced working time options.*

3. *The South Africa Future Trust (SAFT)*, which transferred funds directly to employees of participating Small Medium-sized and Macro Enterprises through interest-free loans where employees themselves carry no obliged (South African Future Trust, 2020).
4. *Business Partners*: In addition to these schemes a trust was formed called Business Partners, whereby the Rupert Family and Remgro Limited formed a trust with a donation of R1 billion. SMMEs were allowed to apply relief of between R250 000 and R1 million in funding. The assistance was taken out in the form of a loan, which was expected to be paid back within a period of five years. To qualify, enterprises had to provide evidence of their companies' financial activities before the pandemic and prove that they comply with tax (Mybroadband (b), 2020).
5. *South African Revenue Services Support Programmes*: the SA Revenue Service allowed companies to defer 20% Paye payments and allowed a reduction and deferral of provisional tax payments for companies with a turnover of less than R50 million and which were tax compliant (SARS, 2021).
6. *Employment Tax Incentive (ETI)* assistance/ grants were provided to youth employment and were paid twice a year for employees aged between 18 to 29 years, with a salary of R2 000 to R6 500 per month. These benefits were provided to employers who had a good record of complying with SARS (SARS.2021).
7. *Tourism Relief Fund*: The Department of Tourism made funds available to assist SMME's in the tourism and hospitality sector for those who were vulnerable due to the new travel restrictions that were put in place to contain Covid-19. The funds were made available for accommodation providers, such as hotels, motels and BnBs, and travel-related services, hospitality and restaurants and travel and related services who were negatively affected by the pandemic (Department of Tourism: 2020).
8. *COVID-19 relief from SA banks*: Banks reduced and delayed the debtors' payments by three months, for home loans, car loans, cash loans and others. Bearing in mind that the debts were not written off and would still need to be paid. On 27 March 2021

some banks had already approved 14 827 in loans with a value of R18.16 billion. (South African Government, 2021).

9. *The National Film and Video Foundation* provided relief to film practitioners (National Film and Video Foundation, 2020).

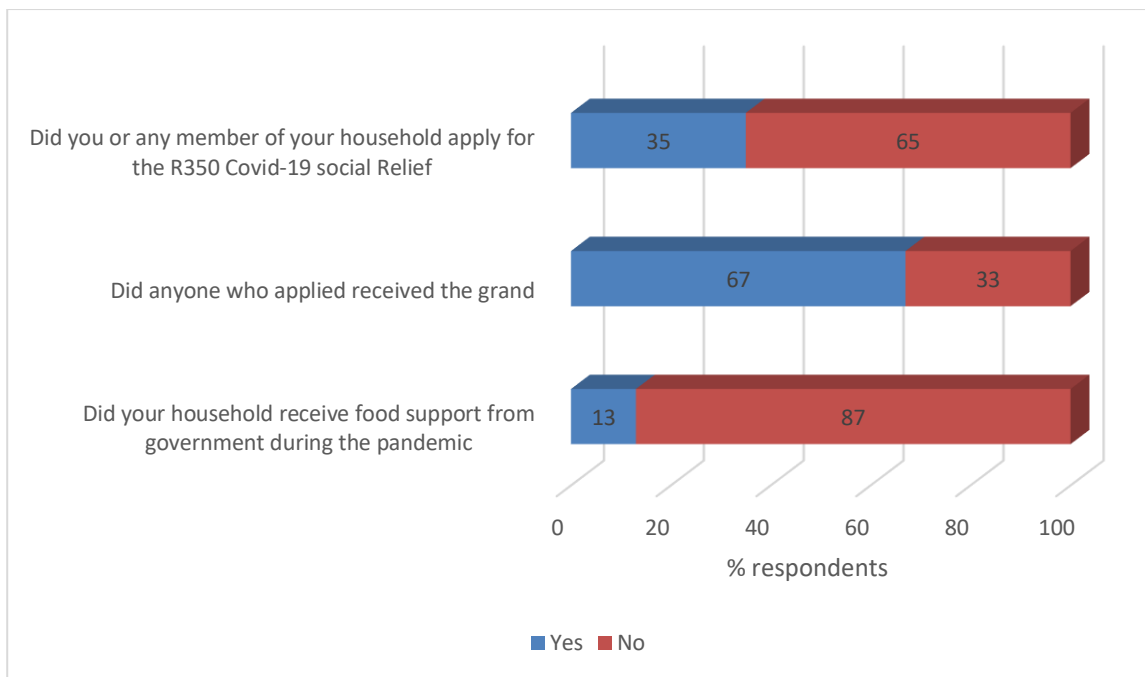
### **Government grants**

Before the pandemic the South African government paid approximately 18 million grants a month to about 12 million beneficiaries. Since the pandemic, the government has paid 4 million more in grants (Ngeleza, 2021:137). This is due to the increment of the disabled and elderly persons and children and the implementation of a new grant of R350 to unemployed persons (Government of South Africa, 2020). This shows that the government tried to help vulnerable households by increasing the grants that they were already receiving and also to assist the unemployed persons of the country by granting them R350 per month.

The government implemented the Covid-19 350 social relief grants for unemployed persons who did not receive UIF and food support for venerable individuals/ households who were severely affected by the pandemic (Fatti et al, 2021:1). The R350 was given to South African citizens between the age of 18 and 60 who are supposed to be working but can't find employment or those that earn less than R624 a month.

In Gauteng, 35% of Quality of Life (QoL) 2020/2021 participants applied for the Social Relief of Distress grant, 67% of those who applied received the grant and 33% percent did not. (Figure 11). Only 13% received food support from the government, this was due to lack of donations and lack of proper administration from government (Fatti et al, 2021:33).





**Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who received social relief and food support during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**SOURCE: GCRO QoL 6 (2020/21)**

## Debts

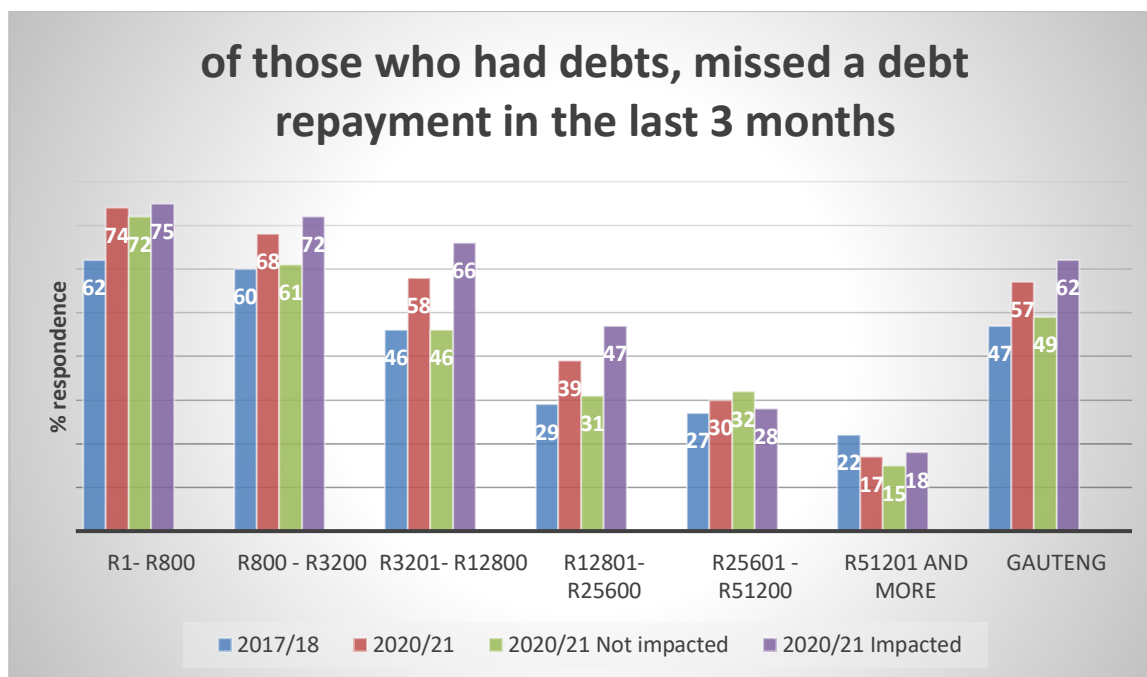
In June 2022 the number individuals who depend on the informal sectors as a source of income in Gauteng and who struggle with debts increased and most missed debt repayment, and this may be linked the COVID-19 pandemic (Maharaj, 2022:162). Informal sectors are part of the country's economy, and businesses in this sector are not taxed nor monitored by the government (Wikipetia, 2019). When it come to the formal sector, increment in the number of formal sectors workers who missed their debt repayment can be linked to the temporary job losses, reduced salaries and reduced working hours that occurred due to the hard lockdown, hence affecting household incomes. Some households had to sell personal possessions or take out financial loans to survive or keep their businesses afloat (Maharaj, 2022:162).

In a poll run by Debt Rescue, 85% of South Africans who participated on the poll indicated that they were affected by the Covid-19 outbreak however only 11% said they were unable

to pay their loans (Mail & Guardian, 2020). The remaining 4% were not affected by the pandemic hence they were still able to manage their debts. 11% indicated that Covid interrupted people's livelihoods and left them with debts that they were unable to pay.

Before the pandemic there were already a few households in Gauteng which were not paying municipal taxes. Due to the pandemic the number has increased drastically. For instance, Gauteng MEC of human settlements, urban planning, and cooperative governance and traditional affairs Lebogang Maile briefed the media on 25 April 2022 that households in Gauteng owed the municipality R70.3 billion, with businesses owing up to R20.1 billion (City Press: 2022).

**Figure 7** also reflects the lowest income category of households who were directly impacted by Covid-19, hence struggling with debt and those not impacted they both have over 70%. For those households with a minimum wage of R3 201–R12 800 per month, there is no difference in the percentage struggling with debt in 2017/18 and those not economically impacted in 2020, as both are at 46%. The results indicate that households that earn the lowest (R1–R800) were the most affected by the pandemic, hence being unable to pay debts. However, the overall percentage of households that were struggling with debt in 2020/21 was driven up significantly by those who were impacted economically, at 66%. Similarly, for those in the middle bracket of R12 801–R25 600, 47% of the economically affected were struggling with debt, compared to 31% of those who were economically shielded, a figure not much different from the 29% in 2017/18.



**Figure 7: Indicators of wider socio-economic impacts, by income group, 2017/18 and 2020/21, and by directly economically impacted or not impacted.**

**DATA SOURCES: GCRO QoL 6 (2020/21) AND GCRO QoL V (2017/18)**

In trying to assist the vulnerable the provincial government implemented a Debt Management Committee which was developed in 2019 to work with all municipalities to try to assist the affected municipalities with their revenue enhancement initiatives. For instance, in Johannesburg, strained households had to apply for debt relief, and if they qualified, they received 50% immediate relief (City of Johannesburg, 2019). The provincial government used the Debt Management Committee, which contains a Multi-Disciplinary Team of Revenue Experts, to assist struggling municipalities with developing a consolidated Revenue Enhancement and Debtors Management Plan and measures to ensure accurate billing in done to households (Gauteng Provincial Government. 2021:65)

### **Transportation**

Usually, people prefer to use public transport as a means of transportation to save on high level of petrol costs, but during the pandemic many did not prefer to use public transport due to the fear of contacting the disease. Those who had vehicles were forced to use their own

transport due to the need for social distancing. The fuel cost affected their household budgets as they were already struggling financially. When going to work many subsidise the expense of petrol through lift clubs, but due to the Covid-19 restrictions the number of people per car was restricted for social distance purposes, therefore owners of cars who were essential workers and depended on lift clubs for petrol money could not afford to go to work.

## **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted in Gauteng Province, South Africa. This was due to time and financial constraints that hindered the investigation from being carried out in other provinces in the country. The research focused on Gauteng households, as it included small business owners, farmers, and salaried employees (such as technicians and clerical/ secretarial workers). Such jobs are more vulnerable to economic changes (Felski, 2000: 35)

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used qualitative research methods. A qualitative research method uses non-numerical data that is descriptive and characterized such as loss of income. The data was gathered through extensive desktop research whereby information was collected online by obtaining secondary data from the body of knowledge on the topic. It is important to note that this is a literature-based study. It was also important to observe the situation of the economy and Gauteng citizens both before and during the pandemic to determine the extent of the damage caused by Covid-19.

### **Research paradigm**

A research paradigm is the pattern or philosophical way of the researcher's thinking or how he/she views the world. It is how the researcher analyses the methodological aspects of the research project to form the research methods that will be used and how the data will be analyzed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:26). Constructivists believe that all the knowledge a human hold comes from experiences and reflections on those experiences and disagree with the idea that there is only one methodology to generate knowledge.

The research philosophy that underpinned the study was a constructivist research paradigm, which refers to the world not being transferred or predicted but being constructed, and all

human knowledge being developed and transformed through an essentially social context (Golafshani, 2003: 603). The constructive research paradigm was considered to be suitable for the study as it does not generalize but looks at the experience of individuals involved and processes and experiences over time. This constructivist approach was used to inductively analyze qualitative data.

## **Research design**

The study used an explanatory form of research design. An explanatory type of research investigates why and how an event took place and the study used it because it was best suited to investigating the citizens' livelihood changes caused by Covid-19 as it had not been well researched previously. In addition, explanatory research looks for causes and reasons and provides evidence to support or refute an explanation or prediction (Boru. 2018), so it was relevant to the study as it helped to understand the causes and reasons for specific effects on the Gauteng Households.

## **Data**

The study used secondary data, as it is a desktop-based study. Secondary data is data that has been collected, processed, and published by other researchers. Secondary data was found to be well suited for the study as the researcher did not conduct the survey or interviews herself but rather used data that was available from a variety of sources, such as government and research institutions which are available online. Using secondary data is more cost-effective, quicker, and it is easier to collect the data.

The data used was accessed through an online search of the body of knowledge. This included reports, such as 1) Quality of Life Surveys, which are usually conducted by the Gauteng City-Region Observatory yearly, 2) statistical data (such as frequency and percentage at which the households income of Gauteng citizens declined since the start of the pandemic until the time of the study from Stats SA reports) and survey reports from the Statistic South Africa website, 3) peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, conference papers, and 4) online newsletters, articles, and government reports, specifically the ones focusing of the Gauteng households.

## **Data analysis**

Content analysis of the related literature was conducted and presented in the study. The content analysis provided knowledge and understanding of how Gauteng households were affected by the pandemic. A number of themes were used to integrate all the findings in order to gain a more coherent understanding of the study. And descriptive analysis was used to describe and summarize different data from the figures, tables and graphs that were obtained from Stats SA reports, and other relevant reports and peer reviewed articles.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Covid-19 pandemic has badly affected the livelihoods of Gauteng households, both adults and children. Many people in the research area lost their jobs, and large numbers were unable to afford basic needs and unable to pay their debts. Household that depends on the informal sector for an income were the most severely affected by the pandemic and most business were not allowed to operate during the hard lockdown. Even though the government tried to assist with putting measures in place to support the vulnerable who were affected by the pandemic, post pandemic it will still take a while for some households to recover from the extensive damage caused by the pandemic.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a review on socio-economic effects of Covid-19 on the livelihoods of people globally, in Africa, in South Africa and down to one of the largest provinces in South African, Gauteng.

This chapter also examines the state of the economy before and during and after the pandemic by looking at the statistics and different government reports and articles. It consciously analyses the damage caused by the pandemic. It also discusses how Gauteng households lived before the pandemic and how they are living now.

The chapter further explores effective socio-economic activities and sustainable livelihood approach measures that can help boost the economy and help restore the lives of citizens.

### **4.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECT OF COVID-19**

#### **4.2.1. GLOBAL EFFECTS**

Covid-19 affected the day-to-day life of human beings and hampered the worldwide economy (Afzal et al, 2020:2). The drastic spread of the virus led to governments in many countries restricting social and economic activities with the intention of reducing the spread of the virus (Khambule: 2022: 92). Many countries across the globe, such as South Asian countries, put a range of measures in place to contain the spread of Covid-19. These measures included closure of businesses, schools and higher learning institutions, restrictions on crossing borders and travelling, and bans on public gatherings. These restrictions imposed a massive threat to the economic and social sustainability of society (Ahmad. et al, 2021: 3).

#### **Impact on migration and remittances**

Most South Asian countries depend on foreign remittances as one of their main sources of foreign exchange earnings and household income. For instance, Nepal, where remittances contribute to about 27% of their national GDP (2019), and India, which is the largest receiver of international remittances in the region and globally, had remittances of US\$ 83 billion in

2019 (World Bank & Knomad, 2020: 10). As a result of restrictions on migration and travel, closure of businesses and loss of jobs abroad there was a massive decline in remittances, hence affecting the livelihoods of poor households (Ahmad. et al, 2021: 4).

### **Agricultural sector**

The measures put in place to reduce the spread of Covid-19 interrupted cultivation of some staple crops and some farmers had to throw away crops due to overproduction and travel and trade restrictions (Delardas, 2020: 2).

Certain harvest practices were affected by the shortage of available migrant workers and transportation problems, particularly in north-western India, where wheat and pulses are cultivated. During the pandemic, the prices of wheat, vegetables and other crops decreased, but buyers still had to pay more for them. In Bangladesh, farmers were unable to deliver harvested watermelon to markets during the hard lockdowns in 2020 due to transportation bans (Ahmad. et al, 2021:8). The closure of hotels, restaurants, sweet shops and tea shops drastically affected the sales of dairy products (Jayalakshimi et al, 2020: 310).

In the South Asian countries, the majority of the populations living in rural households are dependent on the agricultural sector and agri-related activities. Therefore, most of the rural population in the region are employed in the agricultural sector, which employs over 50% of the respective countries' labour forces. With the imposition of quarantine measures to combat Covid-19, movement of goods and services across borders was restricted; this affected the labour market, the agriculture-based rural economy and the livelihoods of those employed in the agricultural sector (Ahmad et al, 2021: 7). In China the pandemic affected the production, distribution and sales of vegetables and other agricultural products. Also, Covid-19 interfered with the seed supply chain, reducing the availability of seeds, and affecting the importation of agrochemicals and fertilizer, resulting in an overall reduction in the yield of agricultural produce (Afolabi, 2021: 2).

### **Travel and tourism sector**

Travel and tourism is one of the largest economic sectors across the globe. From 2020 to 2021, the international tourism flow decreased from 74% to 72%, resulting in an



overwhelming annual revenue loss of between US \$3.8 trillion and US \$4.7 trillion (Lenzen et. al, 2022: 1).

Covid-19 significantly affected travel and tourism in South Asian countries, which in 2018 created around 50 million jobs in the region, hence contributing significantly to national GDP. In India, the pre-pandemic tourism and travel sector employed about 43 million people, hence contributing over 9% of its GDP; in Pakistan, it contributed over 7% of the GDP; and in Nepal, the travel industry employed over a million people and contributed about 8% to the GDP (Ahmad. et al, 2021: 6).

**Table 2. Employment and economic contribution of tourism and travel industry in South Asia**

Country	Share of GDP (%)	Number of jobs in T&T (in thousands)	Share in total employment, most recent years (%)	Growth (2018 or latest year)
<b>Bangladesh</b>	4.4	2,414	3.9	11.6
<b>India</b>	9.2	42,673	8.1	6.7
<b>Maldives</b>	66.4	69	32.4	7.9
<b>Nepal</b>	7.9	1,051	6.7	3.6
<b>Pakistan</b>	7.1	3,850	6.3	7.4
<b>Sir Lanka</b>	12.5	1,000	12.1	12.4

**Source:** World Bank (2020)

In Bangladesh the tourism industry is a growing economic sector which in 2018 comprised 4.4% of total GDP (World Bank, 2019). Bangladesh's international tourism expenditure in 2019 was US\$ 1 208 million, which is a relatively reasonable value among the South Asian countries (Deb & Nafi, 2020).

An increase in the number of Covid-19 patients in Bangladesh at the beginning of March 2020, forced local governments of Bangladesh to put measures in place to contain the spread of Covid-19: these measures included closing borders, cancelling domestic and international flights, suspending all on-arrival visas of tourists, asking hotel and motel owners

to discharge tourists residing in their establishments. These measures affected the economy and the travel and tourism sector of Bangladesh negatively.

### **Other sectors**

Nearly 55% of the world's electronic goods are manufactured in China, and due to the coronavirus outbreak and quarantine measure this diminished to 40% in the first quarter of 2020 (Kumar, 2020). For the past few years, the IT industry has been India's dominant sector in economic development and Covid-19 affected it severely (Ahmad. et al, 2021: 7).

The medical industry was also severely affected, particularly in China and India. Indian companies supply approximately 70% of their medicines to China and supply medical products to many countries around the world. The Indian government limited the export of 26 large quantities of medicine and their formulas, which negatively affected the medical industry (Jayalakshimi. et al, 2020: 311).

Covid-19 also affected the educational sector across the globe. The closure of schools resulted in putting measures in place to ensure that learning continued, such as distance learning and attending classes online. This affected students' performance as some underprivileged learners had limited resources for online learning such as access to the internet and computers (Jayalakshimi. et al, 2020: 315).

### **Loss of jobs**

Due to global lockdown measures many countries' unemployment rate increased. For instance, in the United States of America, which is the world's biggest economy, approximately 26 million jobs were lost in the first quarter of 2020. In March 2020 unemployment in the USA topped 4.4%, which was the highest level of unemployment since August 2017 (Abbass et al, 2023: 03). There was also an increase in unemployment in Australia and South Korea (Abbass. et al, 2023: 04).

### **4.2.2. AFRICA**

As Africa is the poorest continent with the highest level of economic insecurity, its countries and citizens were severely affected by the Covid-19 breakout.

### **Food and livelihood security**

The Covid-19 outbreak devastated the lives of Africa's public health systems, livelihoods and economies, with households that were already living with a food crisis being particularly badly affected. The pandemic also disrupted economic activities and access to food as well as basic services (Endris & Kassegn, 2021: 6).

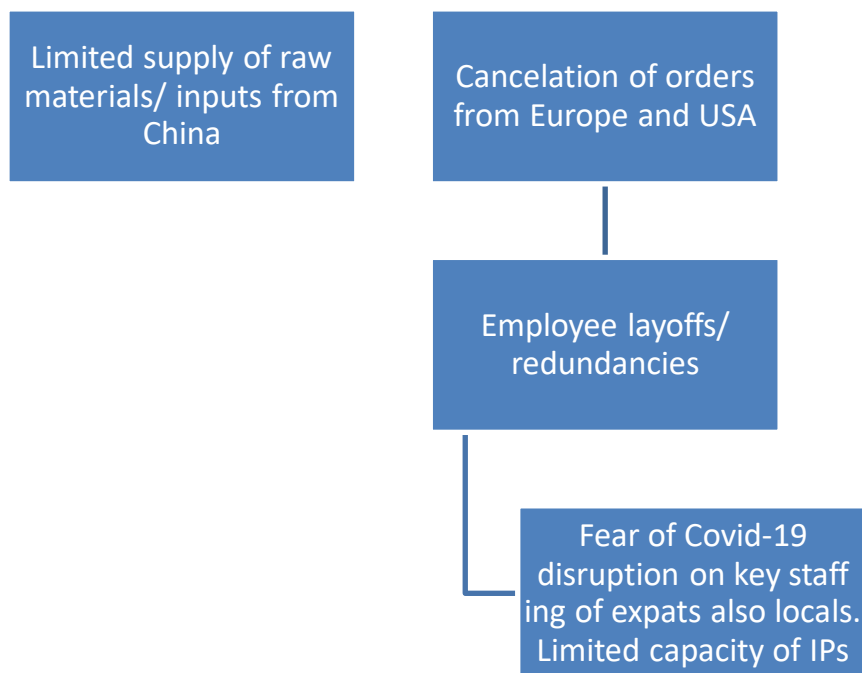
In East Africa, which consists of 13 countries that are diverse in various aspects, the effects of the pandemic were severe. From a socioeconomic point of view East Africa has a poor economy and low human development (Endris & Kassegn, 2021: 5). In 2020, Kenya and Ethiopia were the East African countries that were worst affected by Covid-19, with approximately 70% of the cases in the East African region (WFP, 2020a).

The Covid-19 pandemic increased the level of food insecurity across the continent. In Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda it was again the poorest households that were the most seriously affected. Nigeria suffered from the greatest prevalence food insecurity with approximately 76% of adults (63 million) experiencing food insecurity, followed by Malawi with 68% (6.2 million), then Ethiopia with 47% (24 million) and lastly Uganda with 33% (6.9 million) (Josephson, 2020: 6).

### **Industrial revenue**

In 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, some African countries derived significant revenue from export earnings from manufactured products. Ethiopia for example earned over a hundred million US dollars in export earnings in 2019 from products manufactured in the country's industrial zones (known as industrial parks) (Endris & Kassegn, 2021: 20). The objective of Ethiopia was to boost the industrial sector as a driver of private sector growth, and thereby to increase foreign exchange earnings and create millions of jobs for the young and growing number of citizens. This objective was severely disrupted by the closure of international borders as the pandemic which affected the industrial parks heavily (Endris & Kassegn, 2021: 20). The domestic labour supply was heavily affected, with employment layoffs and redundancies (see **Figure 1**). Over three-quarters of businesses showed a decline in sales and production volumes. On average sales decreased by 42%, and production by 40%. For the businesses that showed a decline, sales decreased by 57% and

production volumes by 56% (Mengistu et al., 2020). **Figure 1** shows the impacts of Covid-19 on the manufacturing sector in Ethiopia.



**Figure 8: Impact of Covid-19 on the manufacturing sector in Ethiopia**

Source: Endris & Kassegn (2021)

### **Agricultural sector**

The production of food in sub- Saharan Africa is low in comparison to the rest of the world. Therefore, food insecurity is a continuous challenge in the region. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, climate change, crop pests, nutrient depleted soil, diseases such as Spanish flu and civil unrest were the main contributors to low food production and distribution in the agricultural sector in the region (World Health Organization, 2020). Covid-19 added challenges to the already existing agricultural challenges in the region.

The outbreak posed unexpected shocks to the agriculture sector and the food supply chain in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, Covid-19 affected the production, distribution and consumption of staple foods like common beans in some African countries, such as Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Uganda (Chirwa, 2021: 1).

Lockdown measures and the restrictions of movement that were implemented to contain the spread of Covid-19 also resulted in a shortage of labour for agricultural production. In Nigeria, agricultural labour had to operate manually due to the unavailability of mechanized farming tools. Annual peak periods of agricultural activities needed a high number of labourers, but the restriction of movement limited access to farmlands by farmers and labourers. This resulted in reduced agricultural production across the country (Afolabi, 2021: 2).

### **Education sector**

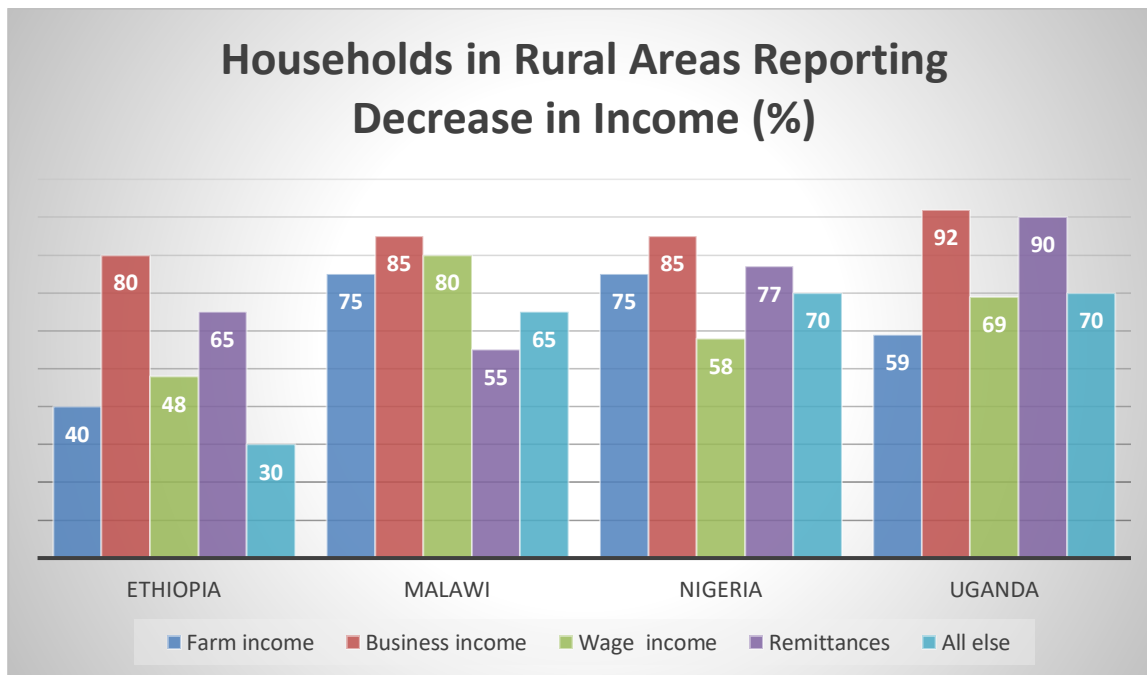
The education sector in Africa was also affected by the pandemic. During the hard lockdown in 2020 schools were forced to shut down with less privileged learners being the most affected. Although there was engagement with several technologies, such as radio programmes, educational television programmes and learning applications, to keep learning going in Ethiopia, Malawi and Nigeria, millions were still unable to access them (Josephson, 2020: 8). A survey conducted by Josephson (2020: 8) estimated that the proportion of households with school-aged children who were able to access these technologies was below 50%.

### **Job losses**

When countries across Africa, particularly looking at Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda, had states of emergency declared and citizens were instructed to stay at home, hundreds of millions of persons in these low-income countries found themselves unemployed, both in the formal and informal sector (Josephson, 2020: 5). Consequently, many households lost income across a variety of sources (see **Figure 9a**).

It is estimated that 256 million individuals – which amounts to 77% of the population across the four countries – lost income due to the pandemic (Josephson, 2020: 5). Households lost income from a variety of sources, including non-farm enterprises which were heavily affected by the lockdowns. Approximately 35% of households across the four countries operated in the non-farm enterprise sector prior to the pandemic, and most of them reported that their revenue decreased compared with pre-Covid-19 levels (Josephson, 2020: 5). Due to job losses some households could not afford even basic needs and had to come up with measures to cope with the shocks created by the pandemic. These coping mechanisms

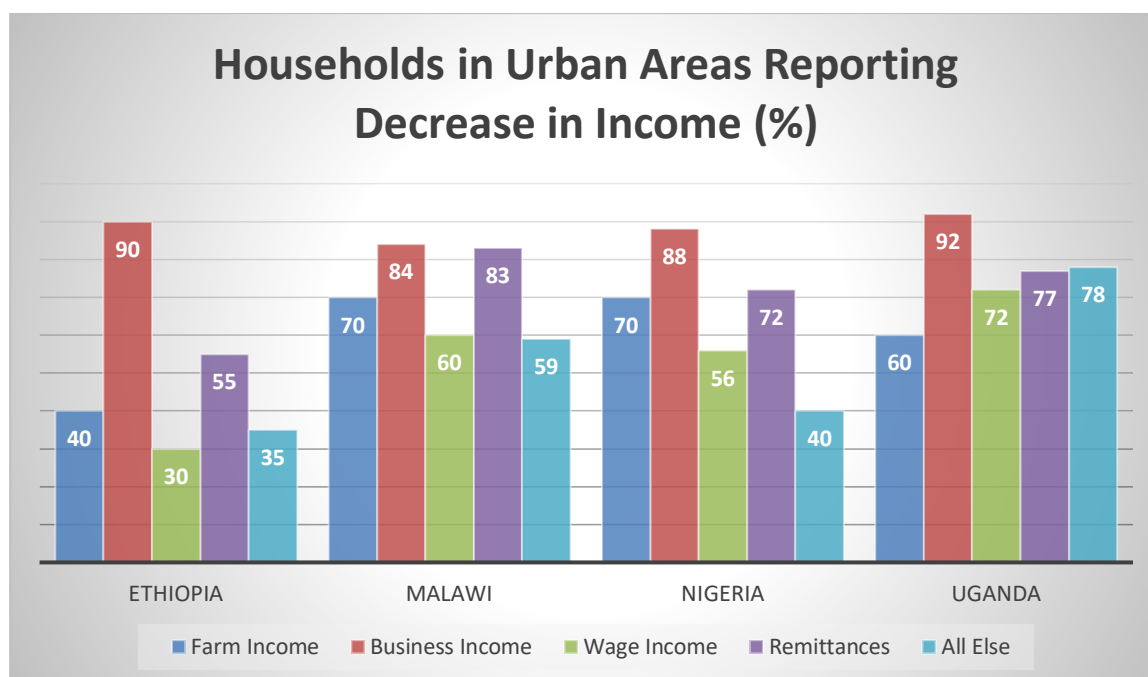
included living off savings, selling assets, reducing food or non-food consumption, receiving help from family, and receiving assistance from government (Josephson, 2020: 7).



**Figure 9 (a): Household income in the rural areas in 2020**

**Source:** modified from Josephson (2020)

Both Figure 9(a) and Figure 9(b) were extracted and modified from a combination of graphs of rural areas and urban areas reflecting households that reported a decrease in income by Josephson (2020:15). This was done to enable the reader to clearly view and understand how it affected both the rural and the urban areas.



**Figure 9 (b): Household income in the urban areas in 2020**

**Source:** modified from Josephson (2020)

Figure 9(a) shows the loss of income in rural areas in the year 2020, Uganda (92%) recorded the highest percentage of households in the business sector that lost their income, with both Nigeria and Malawi recording 85% and Ethiopia at 80%. In general, all four countries recorded above 80% of the households in the business sector that lost their income. When it comes to households that receive income through remittances, Uganda (90%) recorded the highest percentage, followed by Nigeria (77%) then Ethiopia (65%) and lastly Malawi (55%).

With households that receive their incomes through farming, both Nigeria and Malawi recorded 75%, with Uganda recording an average of 59%, and Ethiopia recording a minimum of 40%. In Malawi 80% of households that receive wage income in the rural areas lost their income, with Uganda at 69% and Nigeria at 58%, and Ethiopia recording a minimum of 48%. The average number of households receiving their income from farming for the four countries was 63.75.

For households that lost their income in other sectors, the percentage ranges from a high of 72% to a minimum of 30%. In conclusion, across all four countries, most households that earn their income through the business sector lost their income during the pandemic.

**Figure 9(b)** reflects the percentage of people who lost their income in urban areas.

Malawi (70%) and Nigeria (70%) recorded a high percentage of households that lost income through farming, followed by Uganda with an average of 60% and Ethiopia with a minimum of 40%. All four countries, Uganda (92%), Ethiopia (90%), Nigeria (88%) and Malawi (84%), recorded the highest percentage of loss of income in households that receive income through the business sector. Most households in Malawi (83%) lost their remittance income, with 77% of Ugandan households losing their remittance income and 72% of Nigerian households, among Ethiopian households 55% lost their remittance income. **Figure 9 (b)** also reflects a high percentage of households in Uganda (72%) which lost their wage income, with fewer households in Ethiopia (30) losing their wage income.

#### **4.2.3. SOUTH AFRICA**

South Africa was attacked by the Covid-19 outbreak in March 2020, and the only tool that was available to be used to reduce the spread of the virus was to impose lockdown on citizens and restrict social and economic activities (Anderson et al, 2020: 1). The measures imposed were unprecedented and had catastrophic effects on the South African health system, society, and the economy. Covid-19 also affected the sources of supply and the global economy (Current Medicine Research and Practice 10. 2020; 78-79). The pandemic resulted in declines in global growth and hence also affected the local growth.

The State of Emergency Act 64 of 1997, section 1(1) states that “Subject to section 37 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the President, by Proclamation in a Gazette may declare a State of emergency”. Section 37(1) of the South African Constitution states that a state of emergency should be declared “only if the life of citizens is threatened by war, invasion, general insurrection, disorder, natural disaster, or another public emergency”. In the case of the emergence of Covid-19 in the country, the President of the country was right to declare a national state of emergency, as we were already witnessing people from other countries dying from the disease.



The Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002, section 27(2, 3(b)) states that “the Minister may, after consulting the responsible Cabinet member, provide relief to the public”. As such, we saw the government providing relief packages to citizens. However, the government fund was not properly administered, and in some instances government officials looted the funds. There was also a lack of proper screening to ensure that the right people received the money (Anon, 2020).

South Africa has many challenges, such as unemployment, crime, poverty, gender-based violence, inequality and low economic growth, so the Covid-19 epidemic was an additional challenge, and it was made worse by corruption. Corruption remains a huge threat to all aspects of the economy (Mubangizi, 2020: 4).

There have been other strains of the coronavirus that affected the world before the appearance of the Covid-19 strain, however the effects of earlier coronavirus strains were not nearly as severe as that of Covid-19. For this reason, there have been few studies conducted on how the coronavirus affects the economy. While studies of the effects of Covid-19 have been conducted in various countries and regions, those that have been done do not focus specifically on how Covid-19 affected the economy and livelihoods of Gauteng households specifically. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore how the livelihoods of households in Gauteng Province were affected and to help develop solutions to restore the lives and livelihoods of citizens in the province.

### **SA agricultural sector**

When the government declared the state of emergency in South Africa due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development declared the agricultural sector as an essential service. The Disaster Management Act (2020 Regulation Gazette No. 11062) was amended to accommodate the situation and to enable the agricultural sector to continue in contributing towards food security (Arthur, et al. 2022:2).

Farmers who lived on their land were more privileged as they could continue farming; however, those who lived far and had to travel a distance had challenges (Arthur, et al. 2022: 2).

Grocery stores and wholesalers, local spaza shops and street vendors were required to obtain permits from their local municipal offices to enable them to continue with their businesses. Failure to do so resulted in fines or imprisonment of up to six months (Jankielsohn et al, 2020: 5)

Some had challenges obtaining permits, hence this affected access to input and sales of produce. Informal traders who obtain products from farmers and sell them to the local market also experienced challenges, such as obtaining travel permits. Farmers also had challenges in having their inputs sold out and out of stock because citizens would panic and buy in bulk because they were afraid of stocks running out (Arthur, et al. 2022: 2). This challenge of shortage of stock had a negative impact on production workforce and resulted in high food pricing, which directly affected the affordability of food in South African households (Arthur, et al. 2022: 2). The inability of many households to afford food resulted in farmers having to reduce or stop production completely for a period, hence resulting in loss of income for farmers (Wegerif, 2022: 59).

### **Other sectors in South Africa**

The pandemic also affected the non-agricultural sector, as revenue dropped drastically from R10.3 million to R9.65 million in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the previous year before Covid-19 (StatsSA: 2023). Closure of schools was amongst the measures put in place to contain the spread on Covid-19. The academic calendar had to be readjusted and the Department of Education had to introduce virtual learning by providing classes via television and radio. These lessons were provided on SABC television and radio, DSTV, and E.tv stations (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020: 5). The Government of South Africa also joined hands with the private network providers to offer zero-rated applications and educational websites. The universities had to switch to remote online learning and therefore had to negotiate the price of packages of data with network providers, such as Vodacom, Cell C, and MTN, to enable students to access the internet so they could attend online classes (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020: 8).

In the area of travel and tourism, South African Airways, the national airline, was already in bad shape pre-Covid-19 as it had not made any profit for close to a decade and was highly dependent on government bailouts due to political interferences and poor management

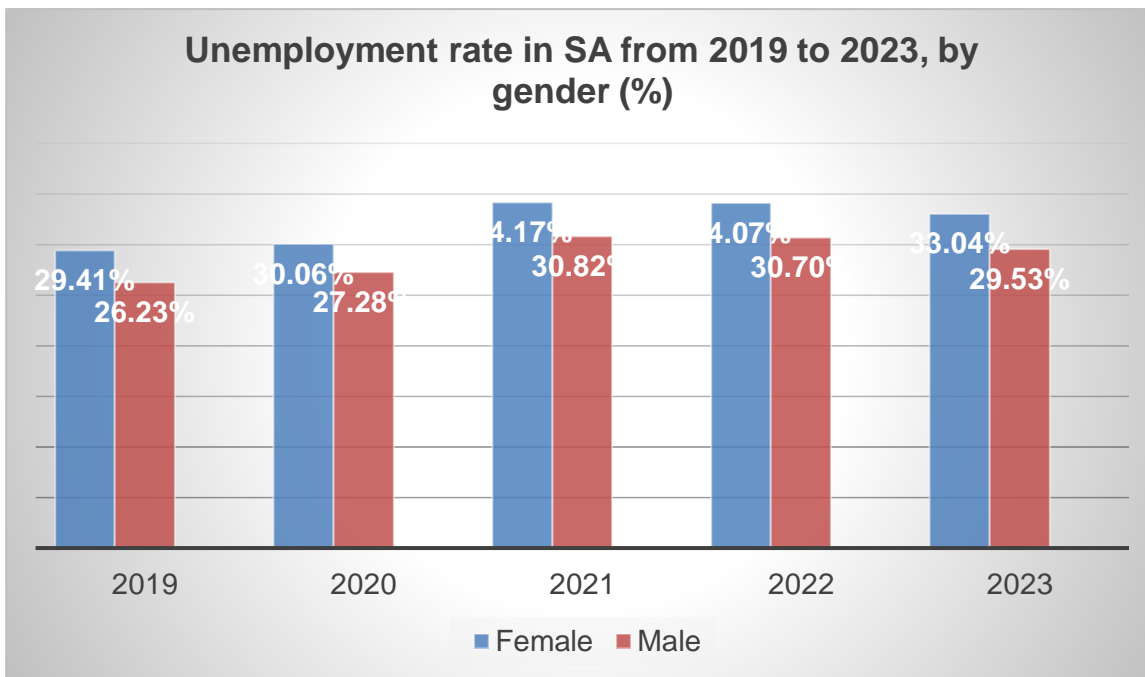
(Dube, 2021: 277). The restructuring that was implemented due the pandemic, such as closing of borders between countries, crippled the airline even more. From March 2020 to March 2021, South African Airways had no commercial flights which further deteriorated the airline's situation. The pandemic forced the airline into bankruptcy, and it was subsequently placed under administration (Dube, 2021: 277).

### **SA job losses**

In 2019, pre-Covid-19, the unemployment rate in South Africa was already high with 29.14% unemployment for females and 26.23% for males. The restrictions that were put in place to contain the spread of Covid-19, including temporarily closing some businesses, increased the level of unemployment drastically (see **Figure 10**). Even after the pandemic South Africa has not fully recovered from the high unemployment rate that came with the pandemic; in 2023 it sits at an unemployment rate of 33.04% in females and 29.53% in males, which is higher than before the pandemic. Females were the most affected by the pandemic (see **Figure 10**).

Statistics South Africa (2020) conducted a survey between 29 April and 6 May and on the 20th of May 2020. The findings revealed that 8.1% of the respondents in the survey lost jobs or closed their businesses due to the Covid-19 outbreak (Liedtek, 2020: 1). The survey found a decrease in the number of respondents who usually derive their income from salaries and wages from businesses or/and are employed in businesses, as well as individuals who are self-employed. One of the aspects that the survey reflected is that during the pandemic most households started using their savings and investments as a source of income to cope with the shocks of Covid-19. Some households with no investments and savings had to take loans from friends and family members and/or businesses to survive, and some had to claim from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) (Liedtek, 2020: 1).

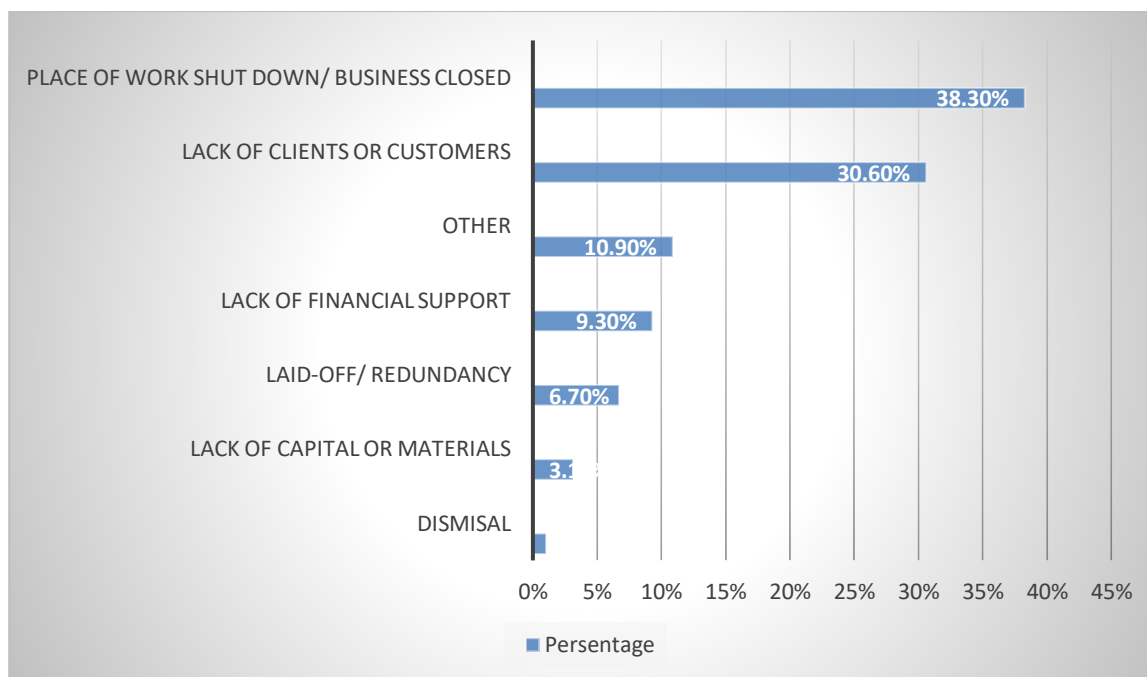
The survey also reflected that some of the individuals who still had their jobs and did not lose them due to Covid-19, had salary cuts which affected their livelihoods (25.8%), while over half (56.2%) still had their jobs with no salary cuts (Liedtek, 2020: 1).



**Figure 10: Unemployment rate in South Africa from 2019 to 2023, by gender**

**Source:** modified from Statista 2023

**Figure 11** shows that a large proportion of businesses were closed during the pandemic (38%) and that the ones that were open did not have clients/ customers (30.6%), meaning that the main triggers behind the high level of unemployment during the pandemic were the closure of businesses (38.3%) and the lack of clients/ customers (30.6%). Few employees were dismissed (1%) due to lockdown, meaning that dismissals contributed minimally to unemployment.



**Figure 11: Main reason for job loss or business closure during national lockdown**

**Source:** StatsSA 2020

#### **4.2.4. GAUTENG**

In terms of population numbers, Gauteng is one of the biggest provinces in South Africa, with approximately 15 million people residing in it (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant effect on the economic performance of the province.

##### **Gauteng business challenges**

The major challenge that business owners were faced with was how to keep the business open when business was moving slowly, and how to survive financially.

Among the economic sectors that were most severely affected were producers and retailers of alcohol. Alcohol bans were enforced on 27 March 2020 and by December 2020 the restrictions had still not been lifted. Alcohol enterprises usually make good sales in December, so the continued ban on alcohol into December 2020 affected the industry very badly and some businesses could not afford to keep their staff, so they had to retrench employees (Rogerson, 2021: 5).

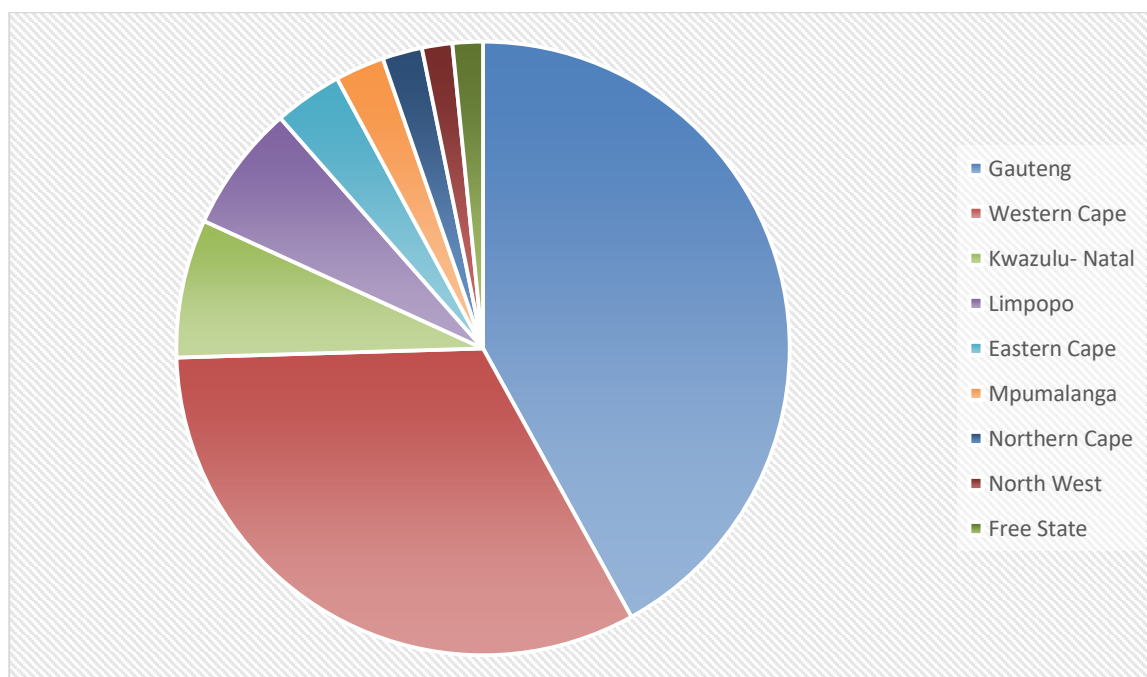
In a survey of 233 SMMEs conducted in Gauteng Province by Masadi (2020:3), 95% of the SMMEs confirmed that they were unable to pay their workers during the hard lockdown period. The SMMEs did not have any other means of income, such as rentals, wages or investments (Mkhonza & Sifolo, 2022: 3). This led to the businesses cutting down on staff and some closing the whole business operation.

### **Gauteng job losses**

For this study it was important to study the job losses in the Gauteng region. **Figure 12** indicates that in South Africa Gauteng (42.0%) was the province most heavily affected by the pandemic, followed by Western Cape (32.6%). The rest of the provinces share the remaining 25.4% (see **Figure 12**).

To be more direct, a survey conducted by Fatti et al (2021) reflected that 30% of the respondents in Gauteng witnessed reductions in their salary and working hours under the pandemic, hence putting a strain on the monthly income of the households of respondents.

Many people in the Tshwane informal settlements lost their means of household income during lockdown period. This led to an increase in hunger and a shortage of food. Even when the Covid-19 restrictions had been reduced and shops were open, some households had no money to buy food. They did not have savings that they could use to buy food hence they relied on food pack donations from churches around their area (Gibson et al, 2020:6). This shows that loss of household income and lack of savings led to huge food insecurity.



**Figure 12: Distribution of business closures during lockdown by province**

**Source:** StatsSA 2020

### **Gauteng educational sector**

In the education sector, Covid-19 caused disruptions to Gauteng households. The closure of schools due to Covid-19 disrupted the learning system. The government introduced digital learning, but most children did not have access to a working computer and the internet (Fatti, et al. 2021: 14). In cities like Johannesburg the pandemic caused panic, and even after schools were re-opened, some parents did not take their children back to school for fear that they would contract the virus, hence delaying their learning progress (Fatti, et al. 2021: 14).

### **4.3. GAUTENG HOUSEHOLDS PRIOR TO, DURING AND SINCE THE PANDEMIC**

This section analyses how Gauteng households lived prior to, during and after the pandemic. It was important to investigate the lives of Gauteng household before and after the pandemic to understand how their livelihoods were affected by the pandemic. Different themes are used to understand how Gauteng livelihoods were affected by the pandemic.

## **Income and loss of employment**

Income is vital for every household, as it is needed to provide basic needs therefore it needs to be sustained. According to Stats SA (2019: 66), 70.3% of Gauteng households received salaries as a source of income (see Figure 13 on page 52). In 2020 the households with household income through salaries decreased to 62.7% (Stats SA, 2020a: 18) (see Figure 14 on page 43). This gives a clear indication of how the Covid-19 outbreak affected households in the study area.

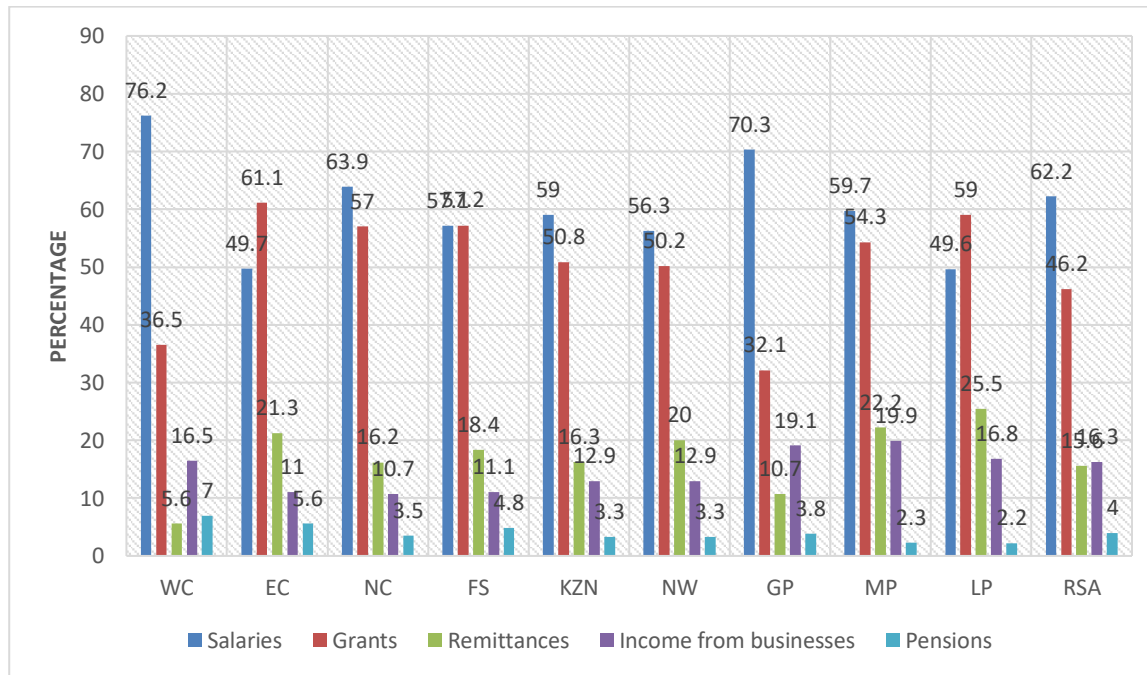
Some Gauteng households receive their income through remittances. In 2019 10.7% of Gauteng households were receiving income through remittances (Stats SA, 2020: 66), in 2020 the number of households who received income through remittances decreased to 6.6%. The reduction in the percentage of household income through remittances means that some households were left with no household income.

According to the GCRO's Quality of Life Survey (QoL) (2020/2021), which was conducted between October 2020 to May 2021, with a sample size of 13 616 across all the Gauteng Municipalities, approximately a third of the survey's respondents who were employed prior to March 2020 had salaries or reductions in working hours, with one in five losing employment. As outlined in Chapter 3 Lesedi (25%) recorded the highest percentage of households that lost their income during the pandemic. Lesedi together with Midvaal (32%) recorded the highest percentage of households whose salaries and working hours were reduced during the pandemic (QoL, 2020/2021). This means that 32% of households in Lesedi and Midvaal had a high chance of suffering from food insecurities as loss of income may result in being unable to afford basic needs. With finances being affected, the livelihood was also affected as not having enough money to buy basic needs such as food affects the physical body of a human.

Some businesses temporarily closed, with some permanently closing. Those that temporarily closed had to let go of some employees as they did not have the capacity to afford all the employees due to lack of revenue during the closure of business. The closure of business left many households with no income to sustain their lives (Skinner & Rogan, 2020: 4).



One of the main sources of loss in household income is loss of employment. Between the second and third quarter of 2020, 560 000 jobs were lost in Gauteng making the livelihood of households to be difficult. Manufacturing and mining are a big source of income in both West Rand and Sedibeng, however even before the pandemic both sectors were already shedding jobs, so the pandemic worsened the situation and led to more job losses (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2021: 35)



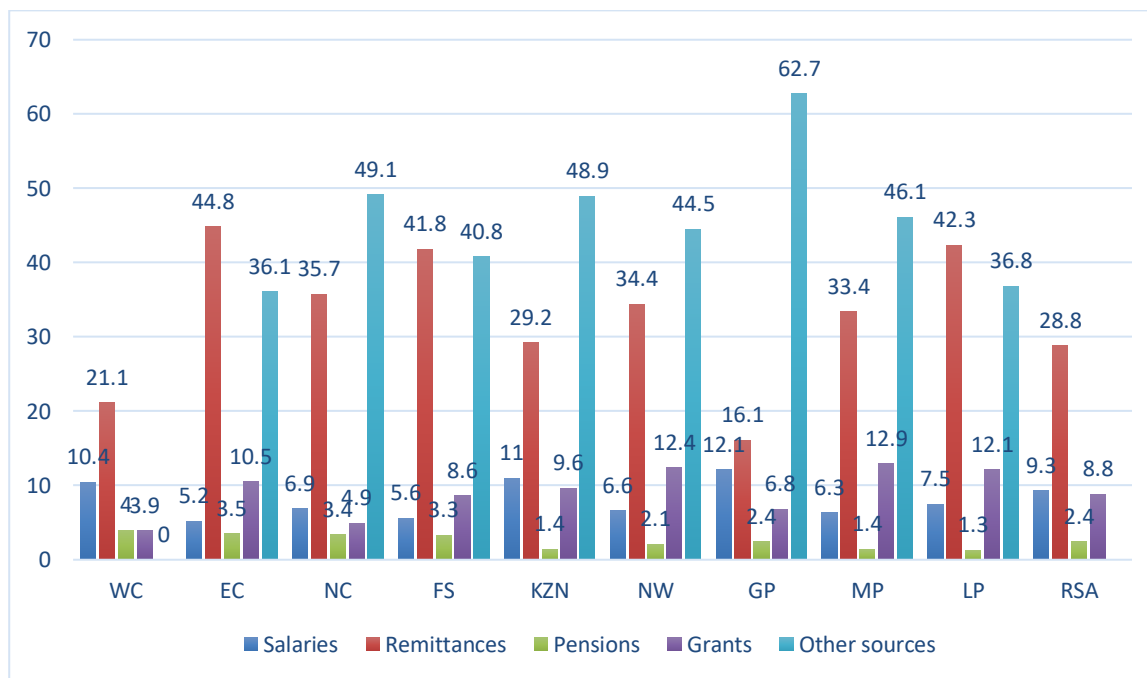
A household can have numerous sources of household income; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.

**Figure 13: Percentage of sources of household income per province, 2019**

**Source: Stats SA (2019)**

In 2019, 76.2% of households in the Western Cape depended on salaries as a source of income, come 2020 only 10.4% of the households were depending on salaries as a source of income; this shows a huge decline (65.8%) in salaries as a source of income, hence indicating that most households lost their source of income due to the pandemic. Gauteng also showed a decline in salaries as a source of income. In 2019, 70.3% of Gauteng households had salaries as a main source of income but come 2020 only 62.7% had salaries as a source of income, hence showing a 7.6% decrease in households receiving salaries as

a source of income. In 2019 in Gauteng 19.1% of households were depending on money from businesses as a source of income, in 2020 the percentage decreased to 16.1%, which means that 3% of households closed their businesses in 2020. Closure of businesses does not mean only loss of income for the owner but also loss of income to the employees in those businesses, hence affecting their livelihoods and access to basic needs.



**Figure 14: Percentage of main sources of household income per province, 2020**  
**Sources: Stats SA (2020a)**

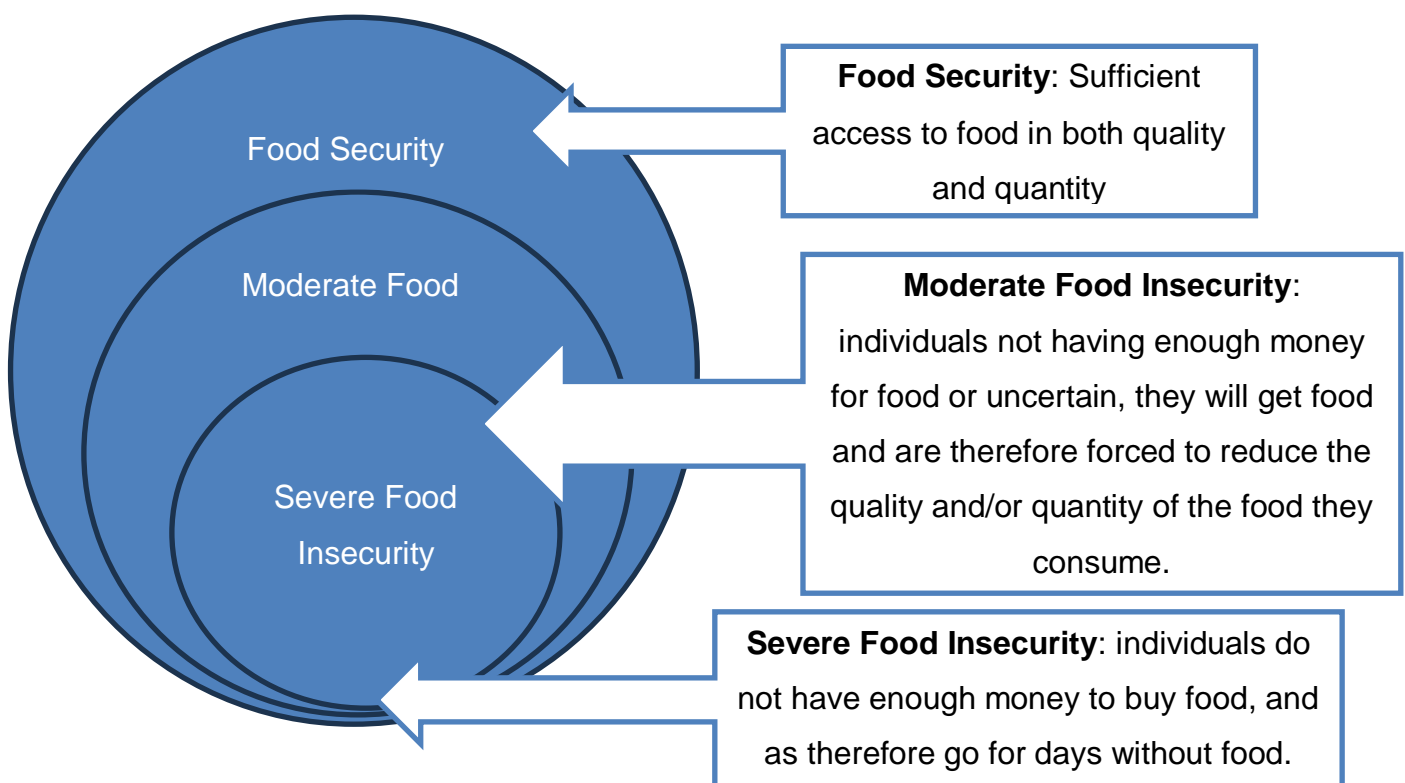
## Food insecurity

A human body needs both economic and physical access to enough food to be productive and healthy, therefore sustainability is important to insure a well-functioning mind and body. Food insecurity can be grouped into three categories, namely, food security, moderate food insecurity and severe food insecurity (**see Figure 15**).

Food security is when households or an individual has access to food in both quality and quantity. If households have quality food in good quantity, they will be able to function well on a daily basis. Having enough food of good quality can also help with keeping the mind and body of a human healthy. Therefore, households who had quality food in good quantity

during the pandemic were still functioning well and were healthy. Moderate food insecurity is when households or individuals do not have enough money for food or are uncertain that they will get food and are therefore forced to reduce the quality and or quantity of the food they consume. Reduction of food intake in humans affects the day-to-day functioning of a human body, the households that had to reduce food intake during the pandemic might not have been able to sustain their level of activity due to lack of nutrients in the body.

Severe food insecurity is when households or individuals are in a worse situation whereby they do not have money to buy food and can even go a day or many days without eating (StatsSA, 2020b: 4). Households that had no money to buy food had to depend on donations, as a lack nutrients in the body leads to a weak immune system, which can be attacked easily by Covid-19.



**Figure 15:** Food insecurity levels measured by the FIES in SDG Indicator

**Source:** FAO

In 2019 about 13.7% of households in Gauteng were moderately affected by food insecurity, with 5.8% of households severely affected (Stats SA, 2020b: 16). In 2020 24.5% of Gauteng households were moderately affected by food security, with approximately 16.6% severely affected (Stats SA, 2020b: 16) (see **Table 3** on page 58). This reflects a 10.8% increase from 2019 to 2020 in households which were either severely or moderately affected by food insecurity, therefore proving that Covid-19 played a huge role in increasing the percentage of food insecurity in Gauteng households.

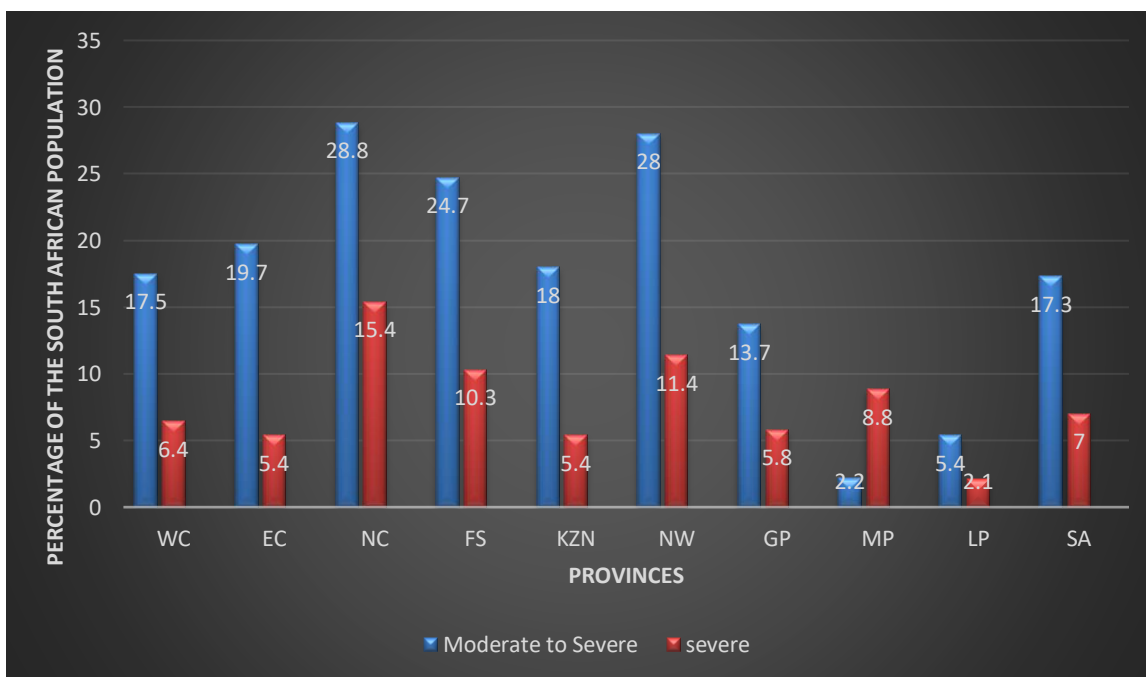
One factor that contributed to food insecurity during the pandemic was loss of jobs. Some households found themselves unable to sustain their lives, as they did not have enough capital to afford basic needs, such as food (Gibson et al, 2020:1447). Some organisations, such as churches, community centres, farmers, agricultural organisations, and non-profit organisations, made donations to vulnerable communities, therefore households that did not have food survived through those donations (Ngeleza, 2021: 130).

As already discussed in Chapter 3, across different municipalities in Gauteng there were households that did not have enough food, so the family had to skip meals. The Quality-of-Life Survey 6 (2020/2021) by StatsSA, as outlined in Chapter 3, found that 35% of adults in Morafeng missed their meals during the pandemic as they had no money to buy food, which is the highest recorded percentage across all the Gauteng municipalities. It may be that adults in Morafeng skipped meals so that the children could eat as they did not have enough money to buy food to sustain their lives. The survey also found that children from various households also skipped some meals. Due to closure of schools, which was one of the restrictions to contain the spread of Covid-19, some children from vulnerable households who depended on school feeding schemes as a source of food security found themselves without food. Lesedi recorded the highest percentage of 59% of households with children depending on school feeding schemes. This indicates that most of the children in Lesedi are from poor households, hence depending on school feeding schemes to sustain their livelihoods.

Agriculture also plays a vital role towards the development of the economy and contributes significantly to household food security (Stats SA, 2019: 60). Agriculture is important as it provides a household with food security, can create jobs, and enables farm owners to

employ individuals and pay them salaries to sustain their livelihoods and provide food for their families. Agriculture was also important during the pandemic as some herbs, like ginger, lemon and moringa, were used to boost the immune system so that Covid-19 could not attack the body easily.

In 2019, 17.3% of people across all South African provinces were projected to be suffering from moderate to severe food insecurity, while 7.0% were projected to be suffering from severe food insecurity. Northern Cape (28.8% moderate and 15.4% severe) and North West (28.0% moderate and 11.4% severe) were the provinces said to be the most affected in the categories moderate and severe food insecurity (StatsSA, 2020b:06). This indicates that a large proportion of households in Northern Cape and North West were unable to sustain their livelihoods, hence they did not have enough money to buy food to sustain their households.



**Figure 16: Percentage of the population affected by food insecurity by province in 2019.**

**Source: StatsSA, 2019**

Limpopo recorded the highest number of individuals who suffered moderate food insecurity (28.9%) and severe (18.2%) food insecurities in 2020. This means that amongst all the provinces Limpopo households were the most affected when it came to food insecurities during the pandemic. This was followed by Mpumalanga, with moderate to severe (23.5%) and severe (16.6%). Gauteng was moderately affected by food insecurity, moderate to severe (24.5) and severe (12.9), these percentages indicate that Gauteng was moderately affected by food insecurity, not severely affected.

When we compare Gauteng food security in 2019 and 2020, in 2019 Gauteng recorded 13.7% moderate to severe and 5.8% severe and in 2020 the province recorded 24.5% moderate to severe and 12.9% severe: this shows a difference of 10. 8% in the category moderate to severe and 5% in the category severe. This increase from 2019 to 2020 shows that the pandemic affected food security in Gauteng Province.

**Table 3: Percentage of the individuals affected by food insecurity in South Africa in September 2020**

Province	Global Monitoring	
	2020	
	Moderate to severe	Severe
Western Cape	21.4	13.7
Eastern Cape	16.6	10.2
Northen Cape	17.6	9.7
Free State	21.8	13.0
Kwa-Zulu Natal	26.4	16.4
North West	21.7	12.9
Gauteng	24.5	12.9
Mpumalanga	23.5	16.6
Limpopo	28.9	18.2
South Africa	23.6	14.9

**Source: FAO and SAVAC, 2020**

## **Government grants**

Before the pandemic the South African government paid out 18 million grants a month to about 12 million beneficiaries around the country. Since the pandemic, the government has paid an extra 4 million in grants (Ngeleza, 2021:137). This shows that the government made an effort to ensure that South Africans were given support to sustain their livelihoods during the pandemic.

In 2020 the Gauteng local government had to increase its expenditure budget for social relief programmes to assist households with providing basic needs. In the Provincial Adjustment budget R181.9 million was allocated to Social Development for income relief and food relief programmes, which included supplying food parcels to vulnerable households during lockdown (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2021: 35). Vulnerable households benefited from the programmes as they were handed food parcels and shelter was provided for those that were homeless. The government also helped in providing personal protective equipment (such as masks) for those that could afford to buy them, to ensure that they were also healthy and protected from being affected by Covid-19.

According to the Quality-of-Life Survey QoL 2020/21, in Gauteng 35% of respondents made applications for the Covid-19 grant for Social Relief of Distress from the government, however only 67% of the applicants received the grants. This was due to lack of resources and offices from which people could get assistance; this means that some households were without food and were unable to sustain their livelihood during the pandemic.

When it comes to food parcels and the relief provided by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), some of the relief did not reach those who were vulnerable and in need as government processes were slow to respond, and there were only a limited number of social aid offices (Ngeleza, 2021: 141). Therefore, to cope with the stresses caused by Covid-19, adults and children from different households had to skip some meals. Due to lack of proper planning and implementation from government, some vulnerable people did not get assistance to sustain their livelihoods and did not have enough food.

The Department of Social Development together with the municipalities provided shelters for homeless people: a total of 47 shelters were provided in both City of Tshwane and City

of Johannesburg (Ngeleza, 2020: 125). This was done to better the livelihood of the vulnerable.

### **Savings and investments**

Savings and investments are very important as they help sustain the livelihood of households during difficult times. Most small businesses in Gauteng do not budget for investments as they live hand to mouth on the earnings from their business. Such businesses found themselves with no capital to sustain their businesses during the lockdown (Mkhonza & Sifolo, 2022: 3).

During the pandemic it became clear that it is important to invest in digital advertising, as some businesses that used e-commerce resources during the pandemic survived. Govender and Ramsern (2023: 27) argue that businesses that invested in digital marketing strategies and used e-shop platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic survived. Digital technologies helped some businesses enhance productivity and performance in some SMMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic (Mkhonza & Sifolo, 2022: 13).

#### **4.4. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES THAT CAN ASSIST IN RESTORING THE LIVELIHOOD OF GAUTENG HOUSEHOLDS NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC**

As employment is vital to household income and it enables households to sustain their livelihoods, persons who are still unemployed due to the pandemic should consider going the business route to restore their lives and have household income. All businesses start small, so the R350 grants can go a long way if the unemployed youth use them wisely. The unemployed youth of Gauteng who receive grants should start small businesses, such as buying and selling snacks, or consider going into agriculture, by buying seeds, planting, and selling the final products. This can assist in reducing the high level of unemployed youth and can also help in creating employment opportunities as the small business grows. Therefore, the government should keep distributing the R350 grants and create programmes to educate unemployed people on how to start a business, how to sustain a business's cash flow and give financial education.



Government should work together with people who lost their businesses due to the pandemic and should consider giving them small loans so that they can be able to start their business from scratch. Low amounts of loans will enable them to pay back the loan quickly with the profit of the businesses and feed their households at the same time. Business owners should start making investments and taking insurances for their businesses to sustain their businesses during tough times and in case of natural disasters like Covid-19. Entrepreneurs must also invest in advertising online and on social media platforms, as digital advertisements reach more customers today. During the lockdowns, businesses which went digital survived the pandemic.

Government can also intervene by implementing a skills development programme to educate individuals who are not moving with technology, by educating them on how to advertise their business online and teaching them how to operate different social media platforms that can help grow their business.

Gauteng households should try to find additional forms of income (known as side hustles), for instance recycling plastics and carports to create decorating tool and selling them to generate more household income. Households should also start drawing up monthly budgets to meet their needs and wants, depending on their income. They should avoid overspending on non-essential items (wants) to accommodate monthly saving. Sticking to the monthly budgets and making savings will assist households to afford basic need and avoid food insecurities in hard times like the pandemic in the future. Gauteng households should also start educating themselves about investments and start investing as investments help in difficult times.

The research indicated that some children depend on feeding schemes as a source of food, this means that even after the pandemic, there are children who skip meals during the weekend when school feeding schemes are not providing them with food. Therefore, the government should start a programme to provide food parcels to vulnerable households on a regular basis and call for public and business owners to assist with donations. Churches and businesses, which assisted the vulnerable households with food parcels during the pandemic, should continue to do so if they can afford to.

#### **4.5. CONCLUSION**

Across the globe, Covid-19 affected the economy and livelihood of populations at every level: in Africa, in South Africa and down to Gauteng Province. The restrictions that came with the pandemic disrupted the agricultural, education, travel and tourism sectors (socio economic aspects) around the world, hence increasing the level of unemployment. Many households are still trying to recover from the pandemic as a lot of jobs were lost during lockdown; hence the purpose of this study was to explore how livelihoods were affected in the households of Gauteng Province and to help develop solutions to restore these lives.

Prior the pandemic most of the households had better livelihoods than during the pandemic. Some had jobs and businesses but lost them to the pandemic, resulting in food insecurity and inability to sustain their livelihoods. The inability to save and invest also contributed to food insecurity and business closure, because if individuals had investments and savings during the pandemic, they would have used them for a while to sustain their livelihood and restore their business after economic activities were opened.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlines effective recommendations based on the findings of the study and the implications to the policy.

### **CONCLUSION**

This paper was a desktop-based study. A desktop-based study is a study carried out on a computer by searching on the internet, available materials on a specific phenomenon being studied. Advantages of a desktop-based study is that it is cost effective and voluminous material is accessible on a high level of speed. The researcher chose to use a desktop-based study for the reason that it is easy to collect a lot of material in order to understand a phenomenon and identify the gaps from the already existing material. The aim of the study was to investigate how Gauteng citizens were affected by the pandemic, how they lived before the pandemic and the economic activities that can be implemented to restore their lives.

In chapter 2 the three legs of sustainable livelihood approach which are social capital, human capital and financial capital were used to give a reflection of how covid-19 affected the globe, Africa and South Africa. In chapter 3 the two legs of sustainable livelihood approach, which are social capital and financial capital were used to analyse how covid-19 affected household of Gauteng and the financial measures that the government put in place to try assist sustain the lives of Gauteng citizens during the pandemic.

The findings revealed that the Covid-19 outbreak and lockdown that was put in place as a measure to contain the virus affected, the social capital, human capital, financial capital, employment and businesses, and threatened the food security of Gauteng households, as economic and social activities were prohibited. Social capital are social relationships and connections amongst individuals living and working in a specific society, enabling that society to function effectively. Social capital is a source of gaining knowledge and building trust amongst individuals. The pandemic interrupted the social interactions between individuals, in workplaces, schools and communities, causing mental issues to some individuals. Human Capital refers to a worker's skills and experience, such as the education, good health, intelligence and training.

Human capital and the labour market were badly affected by the pandemic as, businesses closed down and increased the unemployment rate, salaries were cut down and trainings to improve the skills of employees in the workplace were stopped. Employment is the state of being paid for the work you do. A business refers to an organization or enterprise that runs for commercial, manufacturing, or professional reasons. Financial capital in the money, debts and investments that an individual or a business holds. Business closure and salary cuts affected the income household and caused food insecurities. As individuals became unemployed and some salaries being cut it became difficult for some household to pay their fees, bonds and car debts. Some investors pulled out as they were afraid to lose out to covid-19 and some individuals cashed out the investments to survive their financial problems during the difficult times.

The findings also revealed that the jobs, household income and educational system were badly affected, and people had to adapt and live with the changes that came with the pandemic. Households had to reduce their monthly expenditure, and some had to adapt to skipping of meals. Employees had to adapt to the working from home situations by installing Wi-Fi connections and solar panels in case of loadshedding for those that can afford. Due to salary cut some can no longer afford petrol so they have to adapt to using public transportation, such as buses or do lift clubs.

The paper also looked at different socioeconomic activities to determine how the lives of Gauteng household were before and after the pandemic. The paper showed that the vulnerable households were the most affected, and that the live of Gauteng households were a bit better before the pandemic as people had better household income and less food insecurities. The paper also revealed that even though government used its deferent departments to try to give short term solutions such as providing financial support and food parcels to the vulnerable, long-term measure are needed in order to restore the lives of Gauteng houses. The Government and the private sector will have to work together to try continuing giving out food parcels to the needy, proving financial support to small businesses to help create jobs and generate household income and offering programmes business and financial management.

The paper did not explore how the pandemic affected the physical and the natural capital, hence studies on the phenomenon need to be conducted in future.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

As many people did not receive the relief funds due to lack of facilities, in the future governments should place offices in accessible places where citizens can easily access them.

Government should also plan and put budgets aside for natural disasters such as Covid-19 to avoid borrowing of money from other countries. Government should start programmes that can provide people with loans at low interest rates to help vulnerable small business owners who lost their business during the pandemic. Government should also start financial programmes to educate vulnerable business owners on financial management. In addition, banks should offer lower interest rates for vulnerable business owners who are unable to get loans from government. The recipients of the R350 grants should consider starting small business with the money as this will lower the high unemployment rate and create jobs as these businesses will need more hands as the businesses grows.

Business owners should start learning the digital way of doing business, e.g., advertising their business on different social media platforms, ensuring that in the future, when natural disasters like Covid-19 happen, their business will not suffer loss of income.

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## ANNEXURE A: DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT

TUT emphasises integrity and ethical behaviour with regard to the preparation of all written assignments, abstracts, proposals, dissertations and thesis. Although the lecturer will provide you with information regarding reference techniques, as well as ways to avoid plagiarism, you also have a responsibility to fulfil in this regard. Should you at any time feel unsure about the requirements, you must consult the lecturer concerned before submitting your written tasks.

You are guilty of plagiarism when you extract information from a book, article, web page or any other information source without acknowledging the source and pretend that it is your own work. This doesn't only apply to cases where you quote verbatim, but also when you present someone else's work in a somewhat amended (paraphrased) format or when you use someone else's arguments or ideas without the necessary acknowledgement. You are also guilty of plagiarism if you copy and paste information directly from an electronic source (e.g., a web site, email message, electronic journal article, or CD ROM), even if you acknowledge the source. You are not allowed to submit another student's previous work as your own.

You are furthermore not allowed to let anyone copy or use your work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own. Students who are guilty of plagiarism will forfeit all credits for the work concerned. In addition, the matter will be referred to the Committee for Discipline (Students) for a ruling. Plagiarism is considered a serious violation of the University's regulations and may lead to your suspension from the University. For the period that you are a student at the TUT, the following declaration must accompany **all** written work that is submitted for evaluation. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and is included as an annexure in the particular assignments, abstracts, proposals, dissertations and thesis.

**Declare the following:**

<b><i>I (full names &amp; surname):</i></b>	<b>Magotia Joy Tseke</b>
<b><i>Student number:</i></b>	<b>212086185</b>

1. I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this proposal is my own, original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether from a printed source, the Internet or any other source) due acknowledgement was given and reference was made according to departmental requirements.
3. I did not copy and paste any information directly from an electronic source (e.g., a web page, electronic journal article or CD ROM) into this document.
4. I did not make use of another student's previous work and submitted it as my own.
5. I did not allow and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his/her own work.

***Signature*..... *Date*.....**

## ANNEXURE B: ETHICS REVIEW CHECKLIST

<p>The following checklist provides a quick way to establish whether your research project involves potential ethical issues. This checklist must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research. If you answer YES to any of the items, you MAY require ethical approval for the research project. Please contact any member of the TUT Research Ethics Committee for guidance.</p>		
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the project involve a clinical trial, i.e. the testing of any novel medical or pharmaceutical interventions?		X
Is physiological/physical stress, pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from participation in the study?		X
Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the research participants?		X
Is emotional/psychological stress, anxiety, or more than mild discomfort likely to result from participation in the study?		X
Could any research participant or his/her family/community be at risk or be adversely affected by their participation in the research project? It includes any form of cultural, social or financial risk/harm.		X
Are the research participants asked potentially sensitive, incriminating, confidential or personal questions about themselves (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or their organization (e.g. work satisfaction)?		X
Does the project require the collection of any body tissues (e.g. muscle biopsy) or fluids (e.g. blood, urine) from the research participants?		X
Does the project involve the use of human/animal specimens and/or samples that were originally collected for purposes other than this research?		X
Will the study involve recruitment of TUT staff and/or students as research participants? <b>Note 1</b>		X
Are any of the research participants limited in their ability to give informed and voluntary consent, i.e. a member of a vulnerable population? This includes clinic patients, TUT staff members, TUT students, children,		X

elderly, terminally ill patients, mentally disabled, institutionalized and prison groupings. <b>Note 2</b>		
Do you have a known/special relationship with any of the research participants (e.g. lecturer-student, practitioner-patient and friend/family relationships)?		X
Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)?		X
Will any kind of incentive (including compensation for time and transport) be offered to research participants?		X
Are any intellectual and/or cultural property right issues (e.g. traditional healer practices) relevant to the data/results of the research?		X
Does the project involve specialized procedures that are by law reserved for registered professionals, e.g. physicians, biokineticists, nurses?		X

	YES	NO
Does the project involve the genetic manipulation/modification of any organism/plant?		X
Does your project involve any experiments on vertebrate animals?		X
Will the research project have a direct impact on the natural environment/eco-system (e.g. collection of soil samples or plant material, the implementation of a rehabilitation programme and the disposal of chemical waste)?		X
Has any organization provided financial or in-kind support for this project? This refers to potential conflict-of-interest issues that may affect the unrestricted publication of the research results. It includes direct material, the implementation of a rehabilitation programme and the disposal of chemical waste?		X
<b>Note 1:</b>		

<p>Where the study involves recruitment of TUT staff and/or students as research participants the <u>following documents must be submitted for review</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research questionnaires (i.e. paper-based format, electronic format, structure interview)</li> <li>• Information Leaflet</li> <li>• Informed Consent documents for the respective participant groups</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Note 2:</b></p> <p>Where the study involves participants of a vulnerable population (this includes clinic patients, children elderly, terminally ill patients, mentally disabled, institutionalized and prison groupings), the following documents must be submitted for review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research questionnaires (i.e. paper-based format, electronic format, structure interview)</li> <li>• Information Leaflet</li> <li>• Informed consent documents for the respective participant groups</li> <li>• Letters seeking consent to enter domains</li> <li>• Assent in the case of minors</li> </ul>		