

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS TO FIGHT SCHOOL DROPOUT CASE STUDY OF TAYSSIR PROGRAM IN ZAGORA PROVINCE

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DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2021.v06i12.001 URL: <https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2021.v06i12.001>

Received: 10 Dec. 2021 / Accepted: 20 Dec. 2021 / Published: 30 Dec. 2021

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to highlight the role of Tayssir program in fighting school dropout in Tamezmoute community, province of Zagora. The study based on sociological approach of social protection that focuses on analyzing local, social, and territorial conditions related to the school dropout phenomenon. By relying on a qualitative method, techniques of observation and semi-directed interview to collect data. The results showed that the receiving of cash transfers help the rural families so much to carry out educational supplies. Therefore, encourage their children to join the school, even though the weak value of Tayssir financial grant and the delay of its distribution, which affected their management of school needs.

Keywords: Family, School Dropout, Social Protection, Tayssir.

Introduction

In order to achieve an integrated and safe social protection in diverse aspects of individuals' life. Many governments in third world countries, in partnership with international organizations have relied on treating the phenomena of poverty and vulnerability by conditional cash transfer programs. This important strategy has started in the nineties of the last century in Latin America and later on integrate both Africa and Asia. Programs such as Progres-Oportunidade in Mexico, Bolsa Familia in Brazil, and Red Protection Social in Nicaragua seek to the balance between the current and future goals fighting poverty by providing cash transfer to fund immediate consumption and encourage investment in human capital (Das, 2005).

Based on a new approach to treat the social issues, Morocco has created a group of national and regional institutions, and elaborated projects and programs such as, the National Initiative for Human Development, the Ramed Health Coverage System, and Tayssir Program to fight school

dropout. Their main objectives are to improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups. The creation of these institutions came as a result of many accumulated reasons such as:

- The uprising of "The Comera" (1980 -1981) in Casablanca due to the blow up of prices and the uprising of hunger (or students) in 1984.
- The application of the structural adjustment policy based on the recommendation of the world bank.
- The imposition of charging fees for education.
- The failed of the five-years plans to achieve an economic take-off, and to improve the quality of social services and to fight poverty and vulnerability. As well as reducing the gap between the rural and the urban areas in times that the demographic growth and the increasing demand for education.

In order to value human resources and achieve socio-economic development, by providing conditions for educational requirements for its citizens. The Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research (2008)launched in partnership with the Moroccan Association for School Support, the Tayssir program for conditional cash transfers within the framework of the Ministry's emergency plan 2009 – 2012, within the pole of actual investigation of compulsory education for the age group of 6 to 15 years, to achieve equal opportunities to enter compulsory education and fight school dropout, for pupils from needy families.

Previous Studies

Previous studies that have focused on social protection programs in their relationship with the school were characterized by their holistic nature, as evaluation studies to measure their impact on schooling for children in developing countries based on economic and developmental approaches. In the study of Chaudhry and Parajuli (2007), on the effect of the female educational scholarship program on attendance at the public school in Punjab, Pakistan; the empirical results indicated that the average effect of the program between 2003 and 2005 contributed to an increase in the number of female students by 6 per school for absolute change and a 9% increase in relative change. Moreover, the program helps children from poor families to go to school.

In case of Morocco, the study of Najy, Devoto, Duflo, Dupas, and Pouliquenfocused mainly on a random evaluation of Tayssir program, in its first stage, to assess the types of remittances in poor rural communities. The results showed that the program contributed to reducing school dropout

rates among children belonging to the targeted families by 76%. In addition, it shows no effect on giving the remittances to fathers or mothers and the extracted data from the family daily living prove that the program in all its forms (conditional and unconditional) increase parents' belief that education is a worthwhile investment (Benhassine et al., 2013).

In the same context, a study of National Observatory for Human Development (2019) on social support programs directed to education in the rural area indicates a development of quantitative indicators for education, and reducing the severity of dropout and school interruption. However, the mechanisms and tools of targeting contains many errors in terms of inclusion and exclusion, which can lead to a waste of resources and not meeting the great social demand.

As for the literature related to sociological and anthropological studies in this field, it did not focus directly on the study of social protection in relation to school dropout. On the other hand, we found other studies that discussed the problem of social security systems in industrialized countries. They are related to social insurance for a professional group, and the study of social protection between legal texts and living reality.

Based on the results of these studies, we conclude that they focus greatly on approaching the impact of cash transfer programs on children's access to education, and the importance of interaction patterns between families and educational frameworks in addressing the problem of school dropout. Indeed, the approach neglects the social conditions of families linked to their access and benefit from public development programs related to health, transportation, and work. These will affect the extent to which the financial grants are invested on the schooling of their children. Our work aims to highlight the role of the Tayssir program in fighting school dropout, with the disclosure of rural families' strategies for managing cash transfers, as well as exploring their horizons in encouraging and teaching their children.

Research Problem

The Zagora province is among the regions that benefited from the Tayssir program, which targeted in its first phase 132 rural communities, and was subsequently expanded every year to include various rural and urban areas. After its contribution to reducing school dropout rates from 508,303 students in 2015 to 407,674 students in 2016. However, it returned to record an increase in 2018 with 431876 students, representing 7.4% of the total number of students at the primary, intermediate and secondary levels (The Higher Council for Education, 2019a). This requires a sociological approach to the various factors surrounding the program to deepen the research and dismantle this paradox.

Due to the high levels of vulnerability and poverty among the local population, the Tamezmoute community is targeted by Tayssir program since 2012. The poverty rate in the community is 23.8%, compared to 28% of people living in a vulnerable situation(High Commission for Planning 2014.). This makes families among the problem of providing adequate conditions, to teach their children through the monthly grant that ranges between 80 MAD (8\$) and 140 MAD (15\$) (Benhassine et al., 2015), or spending it on providing daily sustenance to resist the difficult requirements of life. In the absence of integrated development based on economic, social and cultural projects, taking into account the local peculiarity of the area. Also, the lack of an integrated social support strategy targeting students from poor families and the insufficient financial resources allocated to them. This will affect on the efficiency of the material and quantitative approach to the program, which means its success is associated with the largest number of children access to school, apart from the integrated approach of taking into account the general environment of students to access services such as, health, transportation, nutrition, and housing... etc.

The basic problematic is:

How does the Tayssir program contribute to the fight against school dropout in the Tamezmoute community?

Sub-questions:

- What is the role of Tayssir program in addressing the problematic of school dropout in Tamezmoute community?
- How do families manage the conditional cash transfers directed to their children to access school in light of the precariousness of their social situation?
- What are the prospects of families in teaching their children in the future?

Sociological Approach of Social Protection

The main concern of sociology is focused on the social structure as a whole and the components it contains, the relationships and contradictions that occur between them, as well as developments and changes. It studies these aspects to understand, analyses, interpret and try to predict each one of them(Jones, 2010) . This desire to penetrate the gaps of current social phenomena, is what pushed the sociologists to study social protection as a subject that is no longer limited to economic, statistical and demographic studies. Indeed, social security has attracted a certain amount of attention from lawyers and economists, while it did not receive the

attention of sociologists until recently at least, given the social change that accompanied the formation of societies in its various stages down to what it is today.

Roland Sigg (1985) confirms that the effects of the ongoing economic crisis on social security programs are one of the main concerns of social security organizations, whose problems are often of an economic nature, wondering thus about the position and role of sociology in this process? However, being aware of the various aspects of the crisis, especially "the crisis victims" and the effects it has on their daily lives, which allows sociology to conduct critical analysis and contribute to all social security schemes.

The connotation and term "sociology of social security" first appeared in 1963, at the 4th Congress of Sociology in Mexico, as the beginning of the process of directing research arrows in social security institutions, followed later by the Evian Conference in 1966, and the Varna Conference in 1970 by the International Sociological Association; Which allowed researchers in the social sciences to exchange views and lay the first foundations for a sociology of social security(Sigg, 1986).

An adequate understanding of social security requires appropriate description of its salient features. This maybe in terms of traditional administrative categories such as, social insurance and social assistance related to fixed rates and contribution-based and non-contributory earnings, which are or have not been tested, but may include also more advanced social features such as those used by Esping-Andersen; It distinguishes between three "welfare state systems" in terms of social security arrangements. Likewise, Leibfried defines four types of European welfare states in terms of the relationship between societal poverty, employment policy and social security(Adler et al., 1991: 8). Thus, characterization is a prerequisite for sociological studies of the conditions that give rise to different forms of social security, and the development of social security measures in the past, present and future.

Method

In this study, we depended on the qualitative approach as an activity in a specific situation that determines the position of the observer in the world, and it consists of a set of intellectual and material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world into chains of metaphors, which Include field notes, interviews, conversation, photographs, audio-visual recordings, and personal notes(Fezza and Ahjj, 2019: 36). This gives us a wider scope to understand social protection and its interpretation through the meanings that people carry from it, especially in its relationship to the socio-economic and cultural conditions that enable families to give paramount importance to school in building life paths for their children.

Participants

The selection was made on a sample that includes 10 rural families in Tamezmoute community, distributed over three villages: Ouaouzagor, Tansikhet, and Tighmar. It has a basic condition set by the researcher; that is families benefit from Tayssir program for a period which is not less than three years. The data obtained from the semi-directed interviews and observation to explain the respondents' answers, it will focus on areas of interest and special experiences that they felt, to show and solve the obvious contradictions in their answers(Horton et al., 2004). This will enable us to deepen understanding, answer the research questions through interaction with the respondents, and open a wider area for them to talk about their experiences with Tayssir program in relation to their students.

Data Analysis

Based on the qualitative method, which is characterized by its inductive approach and the researcher's interaction with the field data, we relied on objective analysis by deductively starting from the unpacking of data's observation and the raw semi-directed interview. Classifying them according to repeated ideas and assigning a specific symbol to each one of them, which allowed us to transform them into statements to associate the theoretical narration with the theoretical construction of study.

Research Field

Tamezmoute community extends over an area of 478 km, equivalent to 1.7% of the total territory of Zagora province. Its population is estimated at 11,697 people, distributed over 3661 families, representing 4.4% of the total population of Zagora, and it is considered as one of the densest populated rural communities(HCP 2014, n.d.). Moreover, it has 15 educational establishment (3 central schools and 12 subsidiary), two middle schools and a secondary school, in the villages of Toughza and Ikhf Nozro.

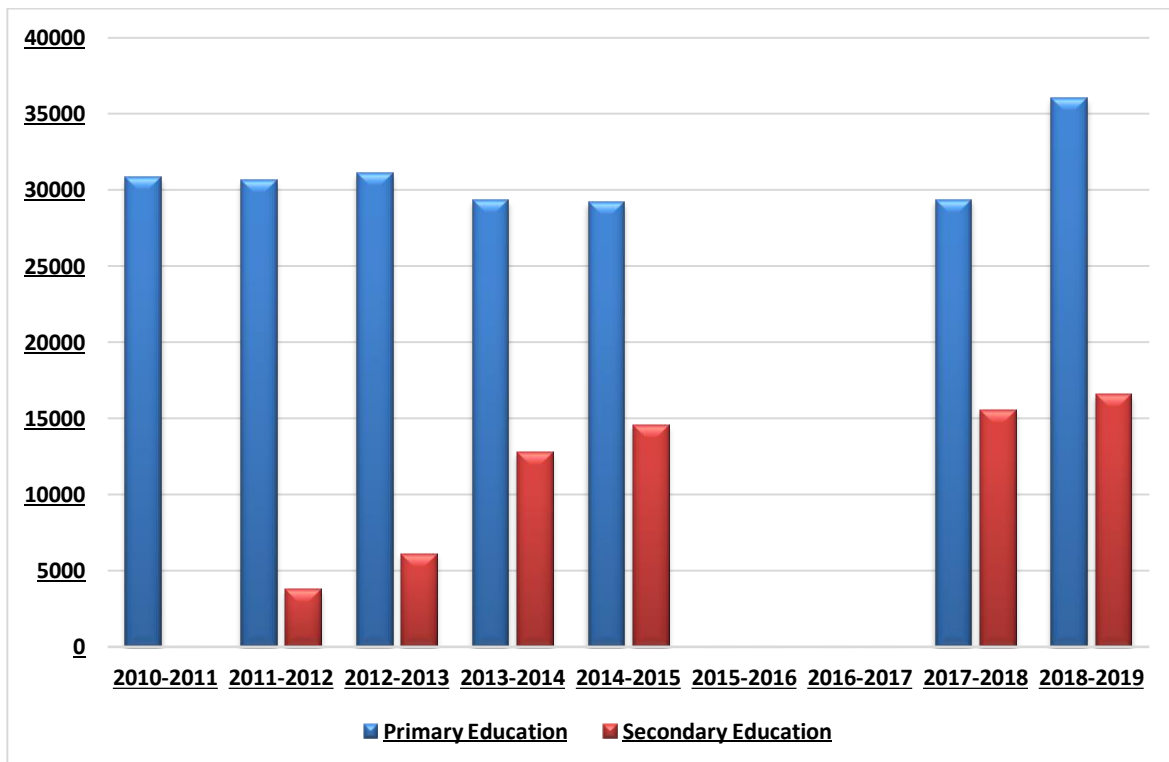
Results and Discussion

The Role of Tayssir Program in Decreasing School Dropout

Tayssir program has made structural changes in the socio-economic situation of Tamzemoutian families; by helping them to meet and fulfill the necessary needs, and providing better conditions for children to access to school. In light of the successive rise in living needs and changing consumption patterns in rural areas; affected by globalization, as a phenomenon indicating that

all people increasingly live in one world. So that, individuals, groups and nations become independent(Giddens, 2006: 50).

Chart 1: Increase of The Number of Tayssir Program Beneficiaries in Zagora Province



Source; Provincial delegation of the Ministry of national education in Zagora 2019.

The data from Chart1 show these changes, it indicates that there is an obvious increase of beneficiary students from Tayssir program over the years in Zagora province; For primary school, it is shifted from 30819 students in 2010/2011 to 36066 students in 2018/2019. On the other hand, the middle school shifted from 30,817 students in 2011/2012 to 16,579 students in 2018/2019.

In the past, the rural girl was deprived of the right to study and the parents' refusal to allow her continue her study in the middle and high school, due to the distance of these latter from the village, as well as the strong presence of sociocultural and religious factors in the local social imagination. Which makes it a space for practicing the universally recognized male domination, it is confirmed by the objectivity of social structures and activities of production and reproduction, based on the sexual division of labor, biological and social reproduction(Bourdieu,

1998: 33). This entrench women's ideas such as: the right place for girls is home to help their families with housework, farming and livestock, on the horizon to preparing them for marriage.

Ibrahim (52 years old) says that: « When we were one big family, my brothers and I agreed that when our girls reach middle school level, they will be taken out of school, like what happened with my daughter Fatima, but later; my brother violated the agreement and enrolled his daughter in middle school ». Nowadays, girls are increasingly completing their higher education, outperforming male peers in school results, which has contributed in changing the stereotypical ideas of families, and their belief that education is a right for everyone. As the results of the baccalaureate between June 2008 and June 2016, the success rate ranged between 40% and 59% for males, and between 45% and 63% for females in different majors (Ministry of education, 2017). Thus, embodying the school's role as a clearly organized educational mediator between the different educational media, especially in the process of assimilating the student into the general culture of society, and breaking the cultural boundaries that were placed in front of the villager (Anbi, 2014: 262).

The population's visions regarding the school results of their children were characterized by optimism and happiness, by achieving honorable results live up to the aspirations of their parents. Their efforts culminated and painted a smile in their faces in the hope of reaching the highest possible extent in future graduate studies. This educational attainment is expected to increase the demand for schools thanks to conditional cash transfers, after the high rates attendance and study time, to more learning and improving school outcomes. Ultimately, if the impact of the program continues over time, it will lead to higher cognitive development and long-term accumulation of human capital. The potential net increase in household income associated with transportation may adjust consumption patterns, increasing consumption of goods and services such as, food and books (Ferrando, 2012).

The Families' Strategies in Managing Cash Transfers

Tayssir program has targeted the mothers of students in the primary and middle school in Tamezmoute community, fathers were not allowed to register themselves in the program, after the results of the initial evaluation conducted on Tayssir were clarified that; the distribution of remittances to mothers has proven effective compared to fathers (Benhassine et al., n.d.). Thus, when a child is registered in the first year of primary school, mothers turn to the principal, who is in charge of managing the registration process and monitoring the commitment and attendance of students, in order to submit administrative papers required to benefit from Tayssir.

The nature of the person responsible for managing cash transfers varies according to the structure of the family, whether extended or nuclear, as well as the nature of social relations that binding its members. Apparently, women who do this within the nuclear family; it is characterized by its democratic tendency and its tendency towards equal relations between members (Anser, 2008: 290), given that their husbands travel for different periods of the year to work in abroad cities, because of the poor chances of obtaining a stable job that allow the husband to settle down with his family.

As for extended families that include an important number of individuals -sometimes reaching more than 20 individuals- despite the absence of some of their members throughout the year except for religious occasions. The responsibility of managing the house is assigned to one of the married brothers, either father or the grandfather; Mohammed (41 years old) who lives with his married brothers, their children, and his parents affirms that « *When my wife and the wives of my brothers receive Tayssir grant, they hand it over to me to spend it on the kids and the most priority things that concern us* ».

At the beginning of each school year, parents face the obsession of managing and allocating an important part of the expenses for the schooling of their children, which coincides with the occasion of Eid al-Adha, puts families in a cautious position to avoid spending school remittances. Due to the delay of the distribution of financial grants in recent years, some families borrow from relatives until they are obtained, and they are invested primarily at the primary level in the acquisition of educational supplies, children's clothes, and household needs. On the other hand, we find that the cost of teaching children in the middle school is quite high in comparison to the primary school. By paying additional fees that, include transportation ranging from 100 MAD (11\$) to 150 MAD (16\$) per month; as Tamezemoute community has one middle school in each of Irshag and Ikhf Nozro villages. Both are far from the community center about 5 kilometers.

The cost of school transportation has created a widespread controversy among the population in recent years, given that its high value compared to the socio-economic situation of families. Hafida (40 years old) says that: « *School transportation is very expensive, as it costs me 2400 MAD (268\$) annually, which is the same grant I got this year after deduction of three-month* ». In addition, the population asserted that conditional cash transfers are insufficient to cover the costs of schooling and transportation.

The Future Prospects for Families to Educate Their Children

If the rural school is not the subject of scientific research, undoubtedly it will be the subject of social mobilization that does not falter (Alpe & Faguet, 2009: 45). This engagement and community mobilization towards school gave parents and pupils' mothers an opportunity to hold their hopes on children's future to fulfill their dreams and aspirations. Which were once the preserve of some lucky people in completing their higher education, and holding positions, to evaluate their socio-economic status. These aspirations collide sometimes with the weakness and fluctuation of the children's academic level. At other times, harsh circumstances force them to leave school and look for a job to help the family.

The viewpoints of respondents were characterized by a kind of optimism in following children's schooling track, despite of all that is being circulated among the population; that Moroccan educational system lost its value over the years. While private education has proven itself to bet on it to change the thinking, culture of their children, and leading them towards success. As the preliminary results of the national research (The Higher Council for Education, 2019b) clarified that: 74.3% of parents in Morocco think that the private school is the best, compared to 17.7% who consider the public school is the best. This preference for private education is due to the availability of qualified teachers and pedagogical administration that provides safety conditions for students. In contrast, 88% choose public school since it is free education.

Furthermore, some families consider public school as a space for production and reproduction of the same socio-economic conditions. Because of, the high rates of unemployment among young people and graduate students in the local community. Ibrahim (52 years old) who is expresses these discrepancies and contradictions in the educational system: « *When I ask my elder son about his plans after college, he told me that he is lost and he doesn't know which path is going to take, since what he was studying at the college is different of what the job market requires* ». The current schizophrenia exists between the contents of education and training and between the public cultural and social fields, as well as the increasing contradiction between educational outcomes and between the economy and production sectors. It indicates that the school system is incapable of being a major engine for development and a lever for societal change. (Faoubar, 2009: 91).

The optimism that characterized the families' vision was matched by realism in some school experiences, which lead to the expelling of a number of students because of failing three or more times. This expressed by Zaid (43 years old) who is lives with his married brothers in a big house that includes 23 persons, among them 13 students. What they have in common is that they repeat at least once, due to the absence of an educated person who can help them review their lessons, especially their parents are illiterate. Zaid asserts that: « *I believe that none of them can complete*

the study in the future ». This is also, what was concluded in study of Tayssir related to the professional expectations of certain educational levels (IPA & JPAL, n.d: 24-25), as a response to the question of what is the occupation of a child who has probably finished primary school for 25 years? 28% of parents replied that: their children are unemployed or inactive, and for girls 91% of parents state that they become housewives.

Briefly, the views variation about the Moroccan school is due to its failure to meet ambitions of students. As it lost much of its social and symbolic value, especially after its role in social mobility diminished, and the prevalence of unemployment among university graduates. The teenage student become more attracted by emigration to work abroad, or professional sport, and for girls they choose marriage (EL Achhab, 2014: 20).

Conclusion

Tayssir program played a major role in changing the representation of rural families about the school in Tamezmoute community, and it clarifies the importance of education in the current era, which becomes as an urgent necessity to keep up the technological development. As well as its contribution in encouraging families to send their children to school; by providing the necessary needs and transportation, which positively affected the school results. Moreover, the weak of financial value and the delay in its distribution created some problems during the school year, which meets Eid al-Adha in recent years. There is also a difference of opinions among village families about the public school, between those who consider it a space that provides various elements of success to achieve the social advancement. Among those who consider it as a space that reproduces the same socio-economic conditions, in light of the high rates of unemployment among graduates.

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