

**The Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute:
An analysis of the 2019 General Household Survey**



Overview and objectives

Many communities across South Africa are characterised by dire socio-economic conditions such as poor housing, inability to access health care, and the lack of amenities like water and electricity. Given the backdrop of very high poverty and inequality in a society that can essentially be typified as upper middle-class, SPII has produced an analysis of the 2019 General Household Survey.

These are the following objectives of this analysis :

- To assess the trends of key development indicators to gain a clear trajectory of progress and growth in South Africa.
- To provide a social justice perspective which puts people at the centre of development and ensures the progressive realisation of their socio-economic entitlements.
- To present a pre-COVID-19 baseline analysis. Thus highlighting how the impact of the pandemic on worsening inequality and public service delivery should drive the government to be more serious about aligning the post-Covid-19 recovery to the visions of global and national blueprints for inclusive development.

Feminist analysis

SPII has adopted a feminist lens to conduct its poverty and inequality research. This is in acknowledgment that feminism and gender equality are of paramount importance to building a fairer and more progressive post-COVID-19 economy. The role of women has been immense in responding to the pandemic in South Africa; including through work as frontline health workers and as primary caregivers to children and other relatives. Fulfilling the role of primary care-givers, women are very often denied equitable access to high-paying jobs, which in turn translates into less women being able to afford a better standard of living in South Africa.

With every rise of the unemployment rate and the deepening poverty levels, women are disproportionately affected. This is mostly due to the fact that women occupy informal sectors of labour that are not adequately supported or even recognised by formal economic structures.

Considering all this, each of the tables and graphs analysed below will be framed by a feminist perspective to socio-economic development.

This analysis adopts the definition of a household as being a collection of all individuals who live under the same roof and who share the same resources such as food, money and other amenities. Blood relations are not fundamental in the formation of a household (Stats SA, 2018).

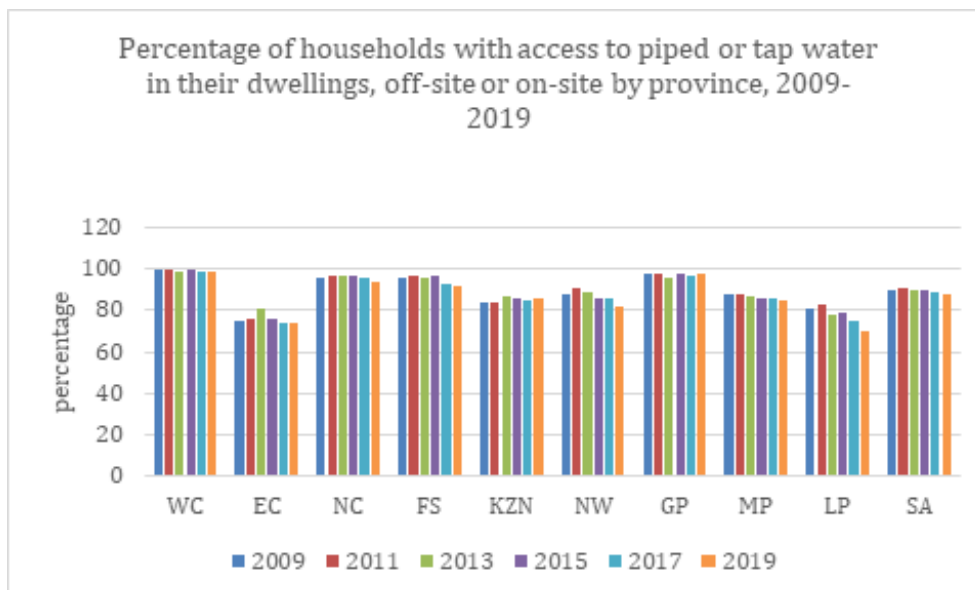
Drinking Water

Table 1: Percentage of households with access to piped or tap water in their dwellings, off-site or on-site by province, 2010- 2019

Province	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
WC	99,6	99,5	98,7	99,3	98,7	98,5
EC	74,9	75,7	80,7	75,5	74,2	73,9
NC	95,9	96,2	96,4	96,4	96,0	94,0
FS	95,2	96,8	95,9	96,2	92,8	91,9
KZN	84,1	84,2	86,6	85,3	84,5	85,4
NW	87,9	91,1	88,4	86,1	85,8	82,1
GP	98,1	97,8	95,9	97,7	97,1	97,6
MP	87,4	87,5	86,8	85,6	85,5	85,2
LP	80,9	82,9	77,5	78,8	74,7	70,2
SA	89,6	90,3	89,9	89,6	88,6	88,2

Source: Statistics South Africa (2020) General Household Survey 2019. P0318 . **Figure 10.1**

SPII's analysis:



Access to water has declined in six provinces. Between 2009 and 2019, access to piped or tap water has decreased by nearly 10 percentage points. The North West province has also

experienced a significant decline between 2009 and 2019, with the percentage point reduced by 5,7.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 requires access to clean and safe running water. It is therefore a serious cause for concern that the percentage of households that have access to piped or tap water has significantly declined in the majority of the provinces.

With having the responsibility of social reproduction, women tend to stay at home, while caring for the sick and nurturing the well-being of societies. This entails the duty of securing water for all members of the household. When the lockdown measures were introduced in March 2020, many women had to go outside their homes, some even trekking for long distances, to access safe water sources. Suffice it to say, women have been subsidizing the role of the government in the provision of essential public services.

Sanitation

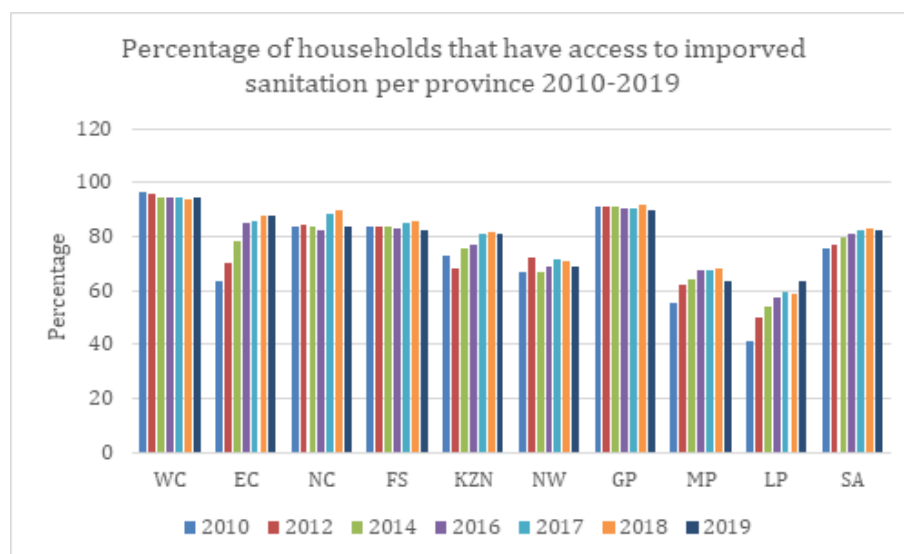
Environmental hygiene plays an essential role in the prevention of many diseases. It also impacts on the natural environment and the preservation of important natural resources. Proper sanitation is one of the key elements in improving the health status in all provinces of South Africa.

Table 2: Percentage of households that have access to improved sanitation per province, 2010- 2019

Province	2010	2012	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019
WC	96,7	95,5	94,5	94,3	94,2	93,8	94,5
EC	63,6	70	78,2	85,1	85,8	88,0	87,6
NC	83,7	84,6	83,9	82,6	88,1	90,0	83,9
FS	83,4	83,5	83,8	83,2	85,2	85,5	82,3
KZN	72,7	68	75,9	77,2	81,1	81,4	80,9
NW	66,5	72,2	67	69	71,7	70,6	68,8
GP	91,2	91,1	90,9	90,5	90,7	91,8	90,0
MP	55,4	62,4	64,4	67,5	67,8	68,1	63,7
LP	41,1	49,8	54	57,1	59,3	58,9	63,4
SA	75,4	77	79,5	81	82,4	83	82,1

Source: Statistics South Africa (2020) General Household Survey 2019. P0318 **Figure 11.1**

SPII's analysis:



Except for the Western Cape and Limpopo, access to improved sanitation has decreased in all other 7 provinces between 2018 and 2019. The Northern Cape experienced the greatest decrease of a 6,1-percentage point. Mpumalanga follows second with a decline of 4.4%. Yet again, it is concerning that sanitation did not improve for 7 provinces in a year, which calls into question the quality of service delivery in the provinces. During the pandemic, it has been women who mainly bear the brunt of ensuring that their homes and communities are clean.

Toilet facilities

Table 3: Percentage of households that have no toilet facility or that have been using bucket toilets per province

Province	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2019
WC	2,7	3,2	4,6	4,8	5,5	3,2
EC	16,1	13,2	8,4	6,3	3,7	4,7
NC	6,4	6,3	9,2	6,1	3,7	6,1
FS	5,4	6	8	5,3	2,6	3,3
KZN	5,9	5,7	4,9	4,1	2,5	1,5
NW	4,9	5,7	5,1	4,1	3,4	2,2

GP	1,3	1,9	1,9	2,3	1,8	2,0
MP	6,8	6,4	7,2	4,8	1,7	1,9
LP	9,5	6,3	5,5	5,2	2,2	1,7
SA	5,8	5,4	4,9	4,2	2,8	2,4

Source: Statistics South Africa (2020) General Household Survey 2019. P0318 **Figure 11.3**

SPII's analysis:

Between 2018 and 2019, the percentage of households that have no toilet facility has risen in 5 provinces, the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free state, Gauteng and Mpumalanga, respectively. The Northern Cape experienced the largest rise of 2,4%. Access to adequate toilet facilities is vital to prevent the spread of diseases and most importantly it is a fundamental human right. There have been several stories in the past years of children drowning in pit or make-shift toilets, as such it is very worrying that access to toilet facilities did not improve in most provinces.

Coming from a feminsit lens, women and girls also face the added risk of sexual abuse when they go outside to use makeshift toilet facilities.

Health

Table 4: Percentage distribution of the type of health-care facility consulted first by the households when members fall ill or get injured by province, 2019

	RSA	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP
Pharmacist	110	18	107	ND	5	4	5	61	5	ND
Traditional healer	42	4	1 267	ND	ND	7	9	7	ND	10
Private Doctor	3 603	719	271	69	192	494	212	1 236	209	200
Private Clinic	362	28	15	4	29	45	15	181	12	32
Private hospital	530	71	25	10	33	80	22	264	16	9
Public hospital	1 182	265	107	26	58	191	61	287	82	106
Public clinic	11 205	816	1 267	233	597	2 144	886	3 009	998	1 254

Other public institution	41	ND	3	ND	ND	10	15	8	ND	ND
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Source: Statistics South Africa (2020) General Household Survey 2019. P0318 **Table 5.4**

SPII's analysis:

In all provinces, public clinics are the most preferred health facility that individuals first contact. Nationally, 11.2 million people visit a public clinic first, then the second most popular choice is a private doctor (3 million people) and this is followed by a public hospital (1.1 million people). Since the majority of the South African population largely use facilities in the public health sector, it is no surprise that the public health system has been under immense strain during the COVID-19 pandemic. The problem is not the number of people that depend on the public system, but rather that we have a crippled public sector that struggles to provide adequate healthcare for all.

There is also a shortfall in the public health workforce, thus further worsening healthcare delivery. Nurses (mainly black women) constitute the backbone of South Africa's national health system. During this pandemic, they have been overworked, had to put their lives at risk while caring for the sick, in addition to facing the risk of Gender-based violence either travelling to or from work at night or the early hours of the morning.

Housing types and ownership

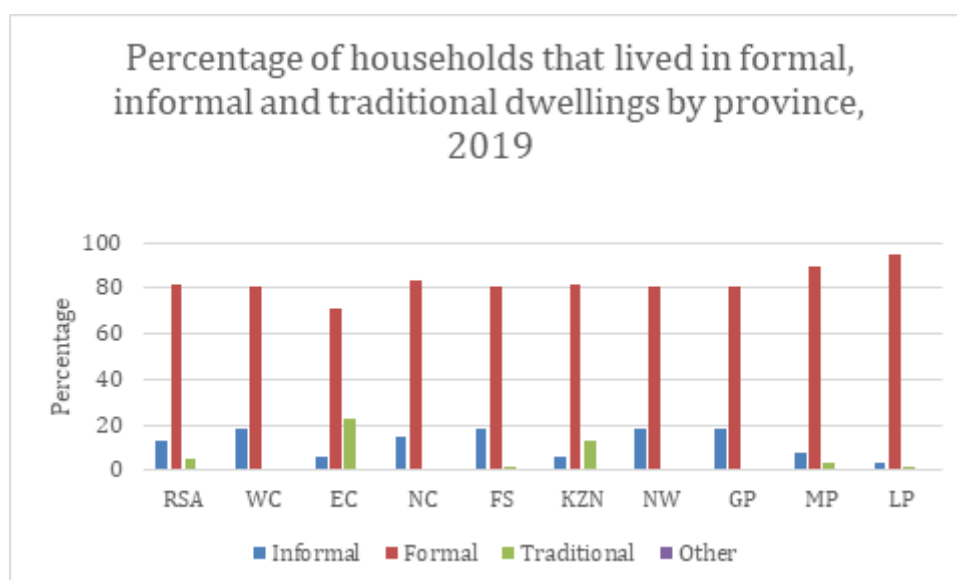
The characteristics of the dwellings in which households live and their access to various services and facilities provide an important indication of the well-being of household members. It is widely recognised that shelter satisfies a basic human need for physical security and comfort.

Table 5: Percentage of households that lived in formal, informal and traditional dwellings by province, 2019

	RSA	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP
Informal	12,7	18,7	5,5	14,9	17,9	5,5	18,4	18,7	7,3	3,6
Formal	81,9	81,0	71,2	83,3	80,6	81,3	81,0	80,5	89,6	95,2
Traditional	5,1	0,2	23,0	1,0	1,3	13,1	0,7	0,1	3,1	1,2
Other	0,3	0,2	0,3	0,8	0,2	0,1	0,0	0,7	0,0	0,0

Source: Statistics South Africa (2020) General Household Survey 2019. P0318 **Figure 8.1**

SPII's analysis:



The Western Cape and Gauteng have the highest percentage of households that lived in informal dwellings in 2019. These two provinces are largely urban and many people migrate to the metros within these provinces in search of opportunities and some resort to living in informal settlements while searching for something better.

Informal settlements also face challenges of poor access to water and sanitation which raises concerns of containing the spread of diseases in these dwellings.

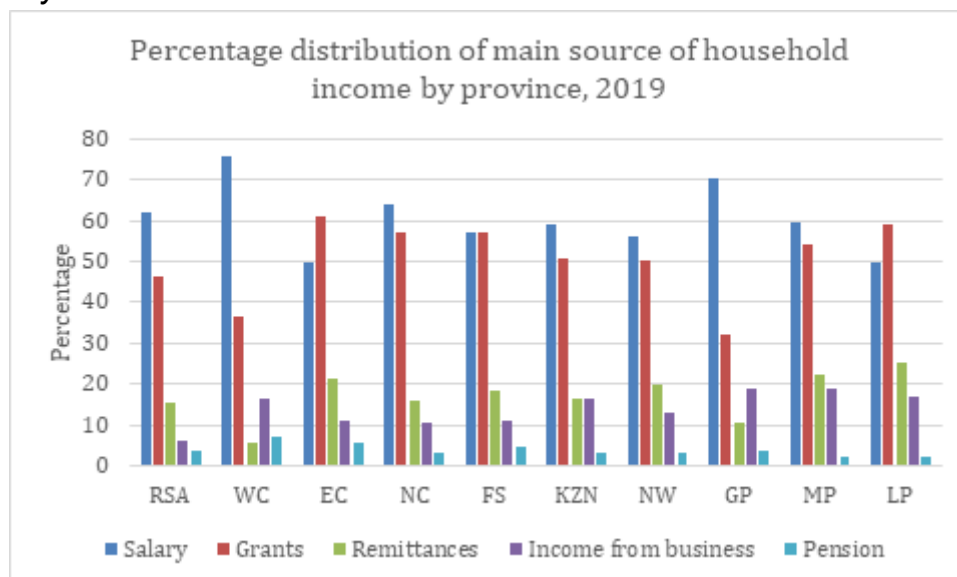
Household sources of income

Table 6: Percentage distribution of main source of household income by province, 2019

	RSA	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP
Salary	62,2	75,5	49,7	63,9	57,1	59,0	56,3	70,3	59,7	49,6
Grants	46,2	36,5	61,1	57	57,2	50,8	50,2	32,1	54,3	59
Remittances	15,6	5,6	21,3	16,2	18,4	16,3	20,0	10,7	22,2	25,5
Income from business	6,3	16,5	11,0	10,7	11,1	16,7	12,9	19,1	18,9	16,8
Pension	4,0	7,0	5,6	3,5	4,8	3,3	3,3	3,8	2,3	2,2

Source: Statistics South Africa (2020) General Household Survey 2019. P0318 **Figure 16.2**

SPII's analysis:



The Western Cape and Gauteng had the largest percentage of households with salary-based income, which were 75.5% and 70.3%, respectively. Grants were the most common source of income in Eastern Cape (61,1%) and Limpopo (59,0%) which can be explained by the high levels of unemployment in these two provinces ([SPII Unemployment Analysis Policy Brief Q3](#)). Remittances were also an important source of income in Limpopo (25,5%), Eastern Cape (21,3%), Mpumalanga (22,2%) and North West (20,0%).

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in millions of job losses in South Africa, moreover, women have been disproportionately impacted by the job losses. Many female caregivers rely on incomes from the Child support Grant and earnings from informal work in order to generate enough income to ensure a sufficient livelihood. Between June and October 2020, Caregivers received an additional R500 to the existing CSG (R440).

Civil society called on the government to make the additional R500 permanent as this would ensure the grant is above the food poverty line (R565). Unfortunately, it was announced in the 2020 MTBPS that the additional grant would stop. South Africa's economy is currently in a depression and women who lost their jobs are struggling to find new employment and they are still expected to meet all the care-related needs of their children and sometimes other household members.

Social grants

Table 7: Percentage of individuals and households benefiting from social grants per province, 2019

	RSA	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP
Persons	30,9	23,4	43,0	33,5	35,2	36,2	34,0	19,2	34,1	39,0
Households	45,5	35,8	60,6	55,9	56,6	50,0	49,6	31,5	54,1	58,2

Source: Statistics South Africa (2020) General Household Survey 2019. P0318. **Figure 7.1**

SPII's Analysis:

Grant beneficiaries were most common in Eastern Cape (43,0%) and Limpopo (39,0%) and KZN (36,2%). According to the latest Labour Force analysis, these are the provinces with the highest unemployment figures([SPII Unemployment Analysis Policy Brief Q3](#)).

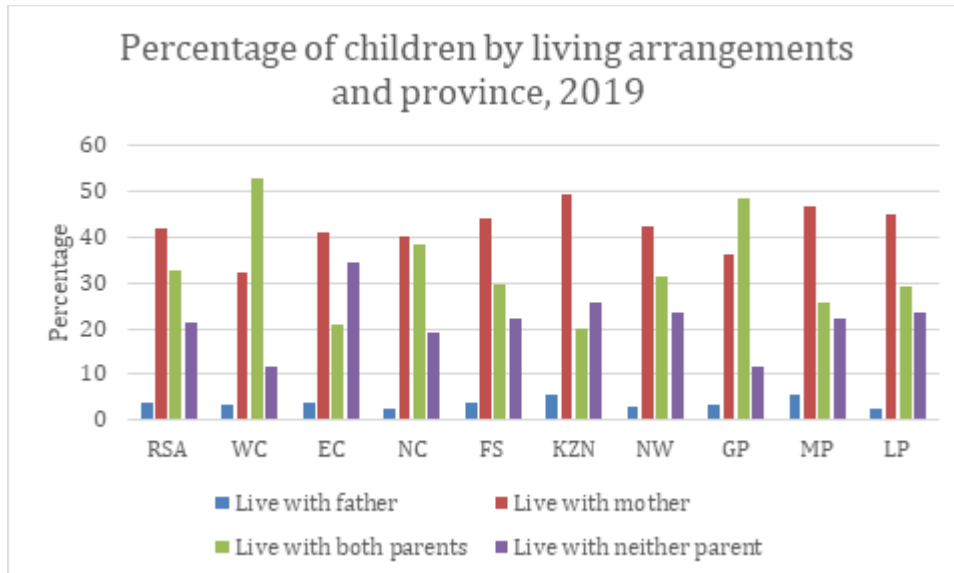
Living arrangements of children

Table 8: Percentage of children by living arrangements and province, 2019

	RSA	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP
Live with father	4,0	3,2	3,7	2,4	4,0	5,7	2,9	3,6	5,4	2,4
Live with mother	42	32,2	41,0	40,0	44,1	49,1	42,5	36,3	46,5	45
Live with both parents	32,7	52,9	20,7	38,3	29,6	19,8	31,3	48,5	25,6	29,1
Live with neither parent	21,3	11,8	34,6	19,2	22,2	25,5	23,4	11,5	22,4	23,5

Source: Statistics South Africa (2020) General Household Survey 2019. P0318 **Figure 3.6**

SPII's analysis:



Caretaking has been dominantly shouldered by women in many parts of the world, and South Africa is no exception. With every rise of the unemployment rate and the deepening poverty levels, women are disproportionately affected. This is mostly due to the fact that women occupy informal sectors of labour that are not adequately supported or even recognised by formal economic structures.

Fulfilling the role of primary care-givers, women are very often denied equitable access to high-paying jobs, which in turn translates into less women being able to afford a better standard of living in South Africa. The burden of reproduction also means that women are labelled as home-makers, both in the household and biologically. This can be seen in the graph above which indicates that the burden of caring for children falls primarily on the single mothers more than their male counterparts.