Study highlights complexity in accessing benefits for low-income individuals

July 21 2023

Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

A recently published article introduces a conceptual framework for analyzing passported benefits, shedding light on the challenges that individuals face when accessing these additional cash or in-kind benefits.

The article, based on a case study from Israel, identifies five key dimensions of passported benefits and explores the administrative burden associated with each dimension.

The research highlights the pressing need for simplification, automation, and improved coordination to reduce the administrative burden and ensure that passported benefits serve as a streamlined pathway to social rights. The study titled, "Understanding Administrative Burden and Complexity in Passported Benefits: A Case Study from Israel," is published in the *Journal of Social Policy*.

Passported benefits are supplementary benefits provided to individuals who already receive direct cash benefits, aiming to provide extra support without bureaucratic processes. However, the article highlights that accessing these benefits can be challenging, leading to low take-up. To better understand these challenges, the study employs the concept of administrative burden, referring to the burdensome experiences individuals encounter when navigating bureaucratic processes.

The research finds that passported benefits in Israel are complex and decentralized, with diverse eligibility tracks and implementation. The study identifies five dimensions that shape passported benefits: the role of primary cash benefits in determining eligibility, level of automation, legal status, type of service delivery, and degree of decentralization. Each dimension contributes to the administrative burden experienced by individuals.

Eligibility for passported benefits in Israel goes beyond a simple connection to primary benefits, introducing additional conditions and distinctions. Automation plays a crucial role in determining eligibility, with some benefits being automated while others require active application from claimants.

The [legal status](#) of these benefits varies and affects their stability and potential for policy changes. Service delivery methods range from in-kind services to cash assistance and tax breaks. The decentralization of passported benefits involves multiple entities, adding complexity to the claiming process.

The study emphasizes that the complexity and administrative burden associated with passported benefits can lead to low take-up rates of the benefits. It highlights the need for simplification, [automation](#), and flexibility in the processes to reduce burden and improve access. Unifying take-up processes and developing assessment tools are also recommended to manage the administrative burden effectively.

The research draws attention to the importance of academic scrutiny and theoretical understanding of passported benefits, which have historically received less attention compared to primary benefits in the welfare state. The study calls for further research to better understand and address the intensity of administrative burden in passported benefits.