



**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CAUSES OF
HOUSEHOLD POVERTY IN BUSHENYI AND KAMULI
DISTRICTS:
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

The research sought to investigate what causes household poverty in Bushenyi and Kamuli Districts and evaluate the poverty reduction programmes that were operational between 1987 and 2010 from an anthropological perspective. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to investigate people's perception of household poverty, the socio-cultural factors that cause and perpetuate household poverty and to evaluate Government poverty reduction programmes. The analysis was guided by the culture and cycle of poverty theory and the community development model.

Available studies attribute household poverty to be essentially an economic problem and all solutions to reduce poverty in Uganda have been economic in nature. Despite this, poverty levels continue to rise, which brought the need to adopt a different approach to establish the causes, hence the anthropological approach.

The study took place in the counties of Buhweju and Igara in Bushenyi District, and Bugabula and Buzaya Counties in Kamuli District, with a total of 149 informants and participants that were chosen purposively and by snowball sampling methods.

The study findings indicate that household poverty is mainly caused and perpetuated by socio-cultural factors that are associated with value systems, beliefs, attitudes, and mind-set. They include marriage, large families, socialization, land ownership, attitude towards work, alcohol consumption, witchcraft, fatalism and ill-health. The causes in Bushenyi are not significantly different from those in Kamuli except on marriage and negative attitude towards work.

This study concludes that household poverty is a socio-cultural problem that manifest itself economically. The study recommends that the poor themselves be involved in the planning process, identifying their felt needs, and be mobilized to own the programmes initiated. The study also recommends that the existing poverty reduction programmes be redesigned and refocused by integrating socio-cultural aspects. Further investigations be done to establish why countries that have substantially reduced household poverty, have used their local languages.