

An Evaluation of the Influence of Culture on Poverty: A Comparative Study of The Bukusu and Kikuyu Communities In Bungoma County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Poverty alleviation has been on the global agenda for quite some time now. Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger was even made top on the Millennium Development goals and has been carried on to the Sustainable Development Goals. The fight against poverty has taken different dimensions ranging from economic strategies, political, administrative restructuring to a social dimension. However, the poverty rate in Kenya is still very high, with 47.2% of its population living in poverty according to the 2005/2006 Household Budget Survey. Moreover, regional disparities in poverty incidences and failure of intervention strategies are matters of concern internationally. Even more disturbing are the disparities in poverty incidences among communities living in the same area with same conditions and opportunities. The study investigated the influence of culture on poverty. It sought to compare the poverty levels of Bukusu and Kikuyu communities in Bungoma County and to assess their cultural practices that either hindered or promoted eradication of poverty among the two communities. The study adopted descriptive cross-sectional design and used mixed methods convergence model.

Samples of 300 households were included in the study for the quantitative part. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). The findings of the study revealed that there were differences in the poverty indices of the Bukusu and the kikuyu communities. It further established that that the two communities observed different cultural practice, values, and beliefs. Cultural values, beliefs and practices were found to be either, facilitators for the increasing or reduction of poverty levels in the two communities under study.

Keywords: Culture, cultural practices, Values, Beliefs, Poverty, Culture of Poverty theory.

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