

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIO -ECONOMIC FACTORS ON RURAL
POVERTY: A CASE OF URINGU DIVISION OF MERU-NORTH
DISTRICT IN EASTERN PROVINCE, KENYA.**

BY

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DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree to any other University or any other institution of higher learning.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family: My loving wife Edith Gacheri and to my children, Abraham Kimathi and Miriam Nguta whose understanding, support and encouragement kept me going on, during my study period at the University of Nairobi.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A.I.D	Acquired immune deficiency
E.R.S	Economic Recovery strategy
G.O.K	Government of Kenya
H.I.V	Human immuno virus
I.F.A.D	International fund for agriculture development
I.R.D	Integrated Rural Development
J.I.C.A	Japan international co-operation
M.D.Gs	Millennium development goals
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
P.R.S.P	Poverty reduction strategy paper
SPSS	Statistical package for social sciences
UN	United Nations

ABSTRACT

Poverty is an issue of concern that affects the lives of mankind. Every government of any country struggles to alleviate poverty situation of their people. Majority of the poor people all over the world are found in rural areas. Rural poverty cut across all boundaries because it is found in both developing and developed nations. In Kenya the biggest challenge is to alleviate poverty. Soon after independence the government of Kenya launched a policy document, Sessional paper number 10 of 1965 that aimed at fighting poverty, ignorance and disease. This study sought to investigate the influence of socio - economic factors on rural poverty in Uringu division of Meru North district, Kenya. The objectives of this study were to: explore gender inequality on rural poverty, determine the influence of education on rural poverty, establish the relationship between land ownership and rural poverty, determine the influence of the level of income on rural poverty and finally establish the influence of culture on rural poverty. The literature review captured rural poverty on world perspective down to the study area that is Uringu division in Kenya. The research design used is descriptive survey, and correlation design. The tools of data collection were interview schedules and questionnaires. The target population was 7,760 households in Uringu division. Stratified sampling was done per location in the four locations that make up Uringu division. A sample of 100 hundred was used and proportionately distributed in those four locations. Binary logistic regression and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. Data was presented using percentages and frequency distribution tables. The study found out that gender inequality existed in Uringu division especially in land ownership. However this did not show any significant relationship with poverty. It is the size of land that had significant relationship. 61 percent of respondents had less than two acres of land indicating that no major agricultural activities could be carried out. Education level showed some significance at 0.05 level of significance. Income level was used as a proxy for poverty to determine whether people are poor or not. It was concluded that majority of people in Uringu division were poor since they earned less than one dollar per day as per international poverty line benchmark. Cultural practices did not show any significance with rural poverty. Finally recommendations were that women should be empowered to help them attain economic freedom. It was also recommended that land pieces be consolidated into bigger portions that are economically viable. Secondary and tertiary education should be supported in the area of study to broaden opportunities for people in the area and reduce overdependence on agriculture.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Poverty is a subject that is widely studied throughout the world because of its adverse effect on the lives of mankind. Social scientists have studied poverty in a number of disciplines like economics, sociology, geography among others. According to Pail and Oyeneye (1998), poverty, ill health, crime and other social problems, have been important areas of study and investigation since the beginning of sociology. Poverty is not a problem of the developing world only but it cuts across all boundaries. Studies done on poverty have cited a number of developed countries suffering poverty in their rural areas (Kathleen et al 2004). United States of America has been cited as one of those developed countries with high prevalence of child poverty compared with the general population (Cynthia 1999).

In the year 2000, 11.4 million U.S children under 18 were poor, representing 36 percent of the nation's poverty population. Rural areas are diverse and extent and nature of child poverty varies across non-metro counties, differentiated by population size, and proximity to metropolitan centres (Rogers 2007). According to USDA, economic research service, poverty is pervasive across all areas of the U.SA and yet rural and urban families each face their unique challenges in the face of poverty.

Rural poverty is practically non-existence in the European Union (EU) and northern Europe, but it is a growing threat to people in rural areas in Eastern Europe, and parts of Southern Europe (World Bank 2007). In those regions after the collapse of Soviet Union, many countries were left still going through difficult economic, social and political transition. In the context of rural poverty, Europe is a continent of sharp contrast. While poverty in parts of Eastern and Southern Europe is on the rise, human development indicators confirm that living conditions in all of European Union countries are among the best in the world (World Bank 2007). According to IFAD (2007), one out of five Europeans; that is 93 million live under poverty line.

In Asia on the other hand, poverty is a massive problem especially in rural areas and therefore reducing poverty for huge numbers of poor people there is crucial to achieving the primary Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty by 2015 (IFAD, 2007). Despite wide ranging diversities in the region, many poor people in Asia share a number of economic, demographic, and social characteristics, the most common of which is landlessness or limited access to land (IFAD, 2007). Poor households tend to have larger families, less education and higher underdevelopment. They also lack basic amenities such as safe water supply, sanitation and electricity. Their access to credit facilities, equipment and technology is severely limited (IFAD, 2007). Other constraints including the lack of market information, business and negotiating experience and collective organizations deprive them of power to compete on equal terms in the market place (IFAD).

According to Peil and Oyeneye (1998), poverty in Africa is widespread, and it is difficult to define with precision what its boundaries are. There are myriad of problems facing Africa today. According to World Bank statistics, a child dies every three seconds from AIDS and extreme poverty often before their fifth birthday. More than one billion people do not have access to clean water and more than 50 percent of Africans suffer from water related diseases such as cholera and infant diarrhea (World Bank statistics). more than 800 million people go to bed hungry everyday, and 300 million are children (UNICEF 2010). More than 90 percent are suffering long term malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency (UNICEF 2010). Three fourth of poor people in Western and Middle Africa, an estimated 90 million people live in the rural areas and depends on agriculture for their livelihood (World Bank - Facts about Africa)

According to Todaro (1992), Kenya is a country of great political and economic importance located in Eastern Africa. It has diverse geographical and climatic endowment. Three fifth of the nation is semi-arid desert, mostly in the North and the resulting infertility of this land, has dictated the location of 85% of the population, and almost all economic activity in the Southern two fifth of the country. Todaro (1992), argues that Kenya's standard of

living especially in major cities, is relatively high compared to the average of other Sub-Saharan countries. However widespread poverty, high unemployment and growing inequality make Kenya a country of economic as well as geographic diversity. According to Todaro (1992), agriculture is the most important economic activity and eighty percent of the population still lives in rural areas. Three million workers in Kenya are employed in Agriculture (Todaro 1992). According to the first report on poverty in Kenya vol. 2 of July 1998, poverty has been described as multifaceted phenomenon, whose causes is complex, and renders its measurement more complicated (G.O.K 1998). The magnitude and extent of poverty in any country depends upon two factors: the average level of national income and the degree of inequality in its distribution (Todaro 1992).

The challenges facing Kenya today is how to reduce poverty and achieve sustained economic growth for a healthy national development (G.O.K-P.R.S.P, 2001-2004). The government of Kenya is committed to addressing the challenges of poverty in consultation with key stakeholders in the economy, especially the private sectors, civil society organizations, and other development partners (G.O.K P.R.S.P, 2001-2004).

Todaro (1992) observes that elimination of widespread poverty and growing income inequalities, is at the core of all development problems, and in fact, defines for many, the principal objectives of economic policy.

In Meru-North district of Kenya, where Uringu is situated, causes of poverty are many. They include: low agriculture production causing food shortages, poor infrastructure, ignorance, and idleness, and insecurity, lack of land title deeds, environmental degradation, high disease incidences, and retrogressive cultural practices (G.O.K, Meru-North Development Plan, and 2002-2008). This study therefore intends to investigate the influence of socio- Economic factors on rural poverty, a case of Uringu division of Meru-North District in Eastern Province of Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Soon after Independence, the Government of Kenya launched session paper number 10 of 1963, which declared poverty, ignorance and disease as the priority items that were to be dealt with by the new independent country. However, many years after independence, poverty has been on the rise in Kenya (I.F.A.D, 2010). Poverty seems to be a paradox in a country that has the best developed economy in Eastern Africa, with relatively advanced agricultural and industrial sectors, and substantial foreign exchange earnings from Agricultural exports and tourism. Yet Kenya is a low-income country, with per capita income averaging about US dollar 360. According to IFAD (2010), Kenya is ranked 148th among 177 countries in the United Nations Development index. UN uses this index to measure a country's development in terms of life expectancy, education attainment and standard of living.

It has also been reported that more than half of the country's 31.3 million people are poor, and 7.5 million of the poor live in extreme poverty (IFAD, 2010). About 80 percent of the population lives in rural zones. Uringu division of Meru-North district in Eastern Province is among the rural communities in Kenya that has not been spared by this persistent poverty. The main causes of poverty in this division has been cited as being low agricultural production leading to food shortages, poor infrastructure, ignorance, idleness, insecurity, lack of land title deeds, environmental degradation, high disease incidence and retrogressive cultural practices (Republic of Kenya, Meru-North Development Plan, 2002-2008).

According to G.O.K -2002-2008, many projects that were planned to take place in this area did not take place due to irregular or no funding to on going or proposed projects, and this led to increased poverty in this area, instead of it decreasing. Besides the factors that have been mentioned as being the causes of poverty in this area of study, there are other socio-economic factors that could be in play. It is for this reason that this study sought to investigate the socio-economic influence on rural poverty, a case of Uringu division of Meru North District in Eastern province of Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study sought to investigate the influence of socio-economic factors on rural poverty in Uringu division in Meru-North district of Eastern Province, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Explore the influence of Gender inequality on rural poverty.
2. Determine the influence of education on rural poverty.
3. Establish the relationship between land ownership and rural poverty.
4. Determine the influence of level of income on rural poverty.
5. Establish the influence of culture on rural poverty.

1.5 Research questions

The following are the research questions which this study sought to answer:

1. How does gender inequality influence rural poverty?
2. To what extent does the level of education influence rural poverty?
3. What relationship is there between land ownership and rural poverty?
4. What influence does the level of income have on rural poverty?
5. How does culture influence rural poverty?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study of rural poverty in Uringu Division of Meru-North District in Eastern Province of Kenya, was necessitated by the fact that this area has remained poor, and lagged behind in development, although the government of Kenya has been committed to fighting poverty. The data which was gathered in this study could be used by the planners and other stakeholders interested in uplifting the standard of living for the community living in this Division. The study sought to examine the influence of socio-economic factors on rural poverty in Uringu Division, and find out what could be done to alleviate poverty. If Kenya has to attain her goals of development as stipulated in vision 2030, poverty eradication strategies must be put in place.

1.7 Delimitation

The area studied is one of the divisions of Meru North district, occupied by Iiganis community of Meru tribe. They have almost similar cultural background and live in more or less the same climatic conditions. The researcher grew up in these conditions and had some advantage when collecting data from people, since he could speak and communicate in local language. Uringu division is large and has large population but the researcher used sampling methods when collecting data.

1.8 Limitations

A number of challenges were experienced; some people were not ready to volunteer information easily. The researchers overcome this by applying a number of data collection techniques including questionnaires and interviews. The population of the division was large and the researcher used a sample of a hundred households, spread in the four locations that make up Uringu division.

1.9 Assumptions of the study

The study assumed that the sampled household would give a representative picture of the situation on the ground. Secondly, it was assumed that the interviewees would co-operate and answer the questions asked truthfully so that the information gathered would be valid. It was also assumed the data collected would be accurate enough to give a representative picture of population.

1.10 Definition of Significant Terms

In this study certain terms were commonly used. These terms are as follows:

- Community:** The term 'community' was used to refer to the residents of Uringu division living together and sharing the basic conditions of a common life.
- Culture:** This concept is used to refer to age old traditions that have clung on some pockets of Tigania community that live in Uringu division.
- Education level:** In this study, the term education level is used to refer to attainment of formal education in primary, secondary or tertiary levels at the end of which an exam is administered, and a certificate of proficiency awarded. A person who terminates his/her studies before any of the levels prescribed by Curriculum will be considered a drop out at that level.
- Gender:** The term gender is used to refer to socially determined role relationships between males and females.
- Gender inequality:** Gender inequality is used to refer to unfair treatment of one gender by another on the basis of their sex.
- Land ownership:** In context of this study, land ownership is used to refer to the Person who has right ownership of land and final say on its use.
- Poverty:** The term poverty is used to refer to a situation whereby, a Population or section of population is able to meet only it's bare subsistence essentials of food, clothing and shelter in order to maintain minimum level of living.

Rural area: In the context of this study, the term “rural area” is used to refer to the country side away from major towns. Studies have found that many poor people reside in rural areas, where agriculture is their only means of livelihood.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Introduction

This chapter has dealt with the review of literature relevant to the study. It discusses the following: poverty, rural poverty, gender inequality, education and influence on rural poverty, land ownership, level of income, and cultural influence on rural poverty. The chapter also discusses extent of rural poverty on selected countries in the world outside Africa, in Africa, the situation in Kenya and in Meru-North district (Uringu). Finally, the chapter has highlighted challenges that have hindered the effort of fighting rural poverty in Uringu division, and how to break the vicious circle of poverty.

2.2 Poverty

According to Todaro (1992), poverty is referred to as a situation whereby a population or a section of population is able to meet only its bare subsistence essentials of food, clothing and shelter, in order to maintain minimum level of living. This is also referred to as absolute poverty.

The problem of poverty cuts across all the continents and permeates all the races. Studies that have been done even in developed countries show that poverty is a human problem that requires concerted efforts to eradicate. In China for example, poverty refers to people whose income is less than poverty line of dollars 1.25 per day set by the World Bank bench mark (World Bank 2010) Poverty has affected all aspect of china including the environment, health, Education and Agriculture It has disrupted families and communities, and sent millions from the poorer regions to the cities in desperate search for work. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/poverty>).

According to Rogers (2007), child poverty in America remains high compared with general population in the year 2000, 11.4 million U.S children less than 18 years were poor, representing 36 percent of the nation's poverty population. Rural areas are diverse and the extent of nature of child poverty varies across non-metro counties, differentiated by population size and proximity to metropolitan centre (Rogers, 2007). Olson (1996) argues that food insecurity is now a recognized public concern for food- rich countries such as the United States of America, as well as for poorer countries around the world.

According to World Bank report (2008), rural poverty, is practically non existent in the European Union (EU) and in Northern Europe, but it is a growing threat to people in rural areas in Eastern Europe and parts of Southern Europe. In those regions, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many countries are still going through difficult economic, social and political transition. In the context of rural poverty, Europe is a continent of sharp contrast. While poverty in parts of Eastern and Southern Europe is on the rise, human development indicators confirm that living conditions in all of European countries are among the best in the world (World Bank 2007).

In developing countries, poverty, situation is serious, more so in rural areas. In Kenya, for example, poverty has been on the rise over the past 30 years (IFAD, 2010). Since 1979, IFAD has invested a total of US dollars 115.0 million in 12 loan-financed projects and three grant – financed projects supporting the government's efforts to reduce rural poverty. According to IFAD (2010), Kenya's population has tripled over the past 30 years, leading to increasing pressure on natural resource, a widening income gap and rising poverty levels that erode gains in education health, food security, employment and incomes (IFAD, 2010).

Since independence the government of Kenya has shown commitment in her effort to alleviate poverty. This is reflected in government publishing a number of policy papers geared towards achieving broad based sustainable improvement in welfare of all Kenyans. Some of these policy and strategy papers are: National Poverty Eradication plan (NPEP); the Poverty Reduction Strategy

Paper (PRSP), the Nation Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC), Government's Economic Recovery Strategy paper (ERS) in 2003.

According to G.O.K – PRSP (2001), the challenges facing Kenya today is to reduce poverty and achieve sustained economic growth for healthy national development. The government is committed to addressing these challenges in consultation with Key stakeholders in the economy especially the private sector, civil society organizations, and other development partners (G.O.K- PRSP 2001-2004). According to GOK (2002), the strategy to achieve this entails the participation and inclusion of all Kenyans especially the poor, in the design and implementation of strategies aimed at tackling the challenges of poverty. This strategy is described as Participatory Rural Appraisal (P.R.A). P.R.A is designed to focus on rural communities, systematize rural participation and help communities establish resource management plans. According to J.I.C.A (2006), P.R.A is useful in remote rural communities that are often ignored by macro development strategies of national planning offices

2.3 Rural Poverty

Poverty is more widespread in rural than in urban areas (Peil and Oyeneeye 1998). Poor soils, lack of rainfall, the necessity of selling food immediately after harvest, and buying later when the price is high, all lower the income of farming families and pastoralists (Peil and Oyeneeye, 1998). Therefore rural poverty is that type of poverty which is common in the rural areas.

According to Japan international co-operation Agency (J.I.C.A) 2006, rural area may be defined as an area which is outside the outer boundaries of any city and its metropolitan area, with a population equal to or greater than 50,000. J.I.C.A (2006) observes that in Africa Township may be smaller than this, but still the area surrounding them may be regarded as a rural area. According to Adejuwon (1979), a rural settlement can be defined as village and hamlet normally inhabited by people engaged mainly in primary production. However the demarcation between rural and urban areas in many cases is not clear because of complex features and variables including physical development, such as housing, factories, Agricultural land , and so on (J.I.C.A 2006). The social

dimension of rural poverty is manifested in lack of basic needs such as, food, health and education, together with inability to engage in productive endeavors, among a host of other problems which the poor struggle with (Maina Kirubi, 2010).

According to I.F.A.D (2007), the causes of rural poverty include: low agricultural productivity, exacerbated by land degradation and insecure land tenure, unemployment and low wages, difficult in accessing financing for self employment, poor governance, bad roads, high costs of health and education and HIV/AIDS.

Kenya's rural poor include, small scale farmers (peasants), herders, farm labourers, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, household headed by women, people with disabilities, and AIDS orphans among others (IFAD 2007). Women are particularly vulnerable because they do not have equal access to social and economic assets. About 70 percent of women depend on subsistence farming as primary and often the only source of livelihood (IFAD, 2007). Therefore, empowering rural people is essential first step to eradicating poverty (IFAD, 2007) The United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number one is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. This goal target to halve the proportions of people whose income is less than one dollar a day. It also aims to halve proportion of people who suffer from hunger and extreme poverty by the year 2015.

The Kenyan's vision 2030, on the other hand, aims at creating a globally competitive and prosperous country with high quality of life by 2030 (G.O.K; Vision 2030). The vision also aspires to transform Kenya into a newly industrialized middle income country, providing a high quality of life to its entire citizen, in a clean and secure environment. At the same time the vision targets to meet the millennium development goals for Kenya by 2015. If this has to be achieved, poverty alleviation strategies need be given priority.

Rural poverty in Uringu Division of Meru –North District (Kenya), is not different. According to G.O.K, Meru –north development plan 2002-2008.

Planned government projects for the period 1997 to 2001, attained only 20 per cent implementation. This led to increase in poverty instead of a decrease, resulting in high percentage of people who could not afford basic services in the District. The main causes of poverty in Meru -North district have been cited as: low agriculture production causing food shortages, poor infrastructure, ignorance, and idleness, lack of land title deeds, environmental degradation, high disease incidence and retrogressive cultural practices among others (CIOK, Meru-North District Development Plan, 2002-2008).

The welfare monitoring survey report showed that 44.65 percent of the households live below poverty line, while the total numbers of individuals who are poor were 45.27 percent. Table 2.1 confirms this

Table 2.1 Absolute number of the rural poor in Meru-north District

Year	1999	2002	2008
Households below Poverty line (44.65%) *All households	113238	129994	153406
*1 Household below poverty line	50561	58042	68496
Individuals below poverty line (45.27%) All individuals	571,610	656,194	774,376
Individual below poverty line	258,767	297,059	350,560

Source: poverty in Kenya reports, District planning unit Maua, 2001

According to G.O.K, Meru –north development plan 2002-2008. The households below poverty line were projected to increase from 50,561 in 1997 to 68,496 in 2008, while the individuals below poverty line were expected to rise from 258,767 in 1997 to 350,560 in 2008. There is need therefore to step up poverty reduction strategies so as to cater for these poor people.

It is for this reason that this study sought to investigate the influence of socio-economic factors on rural poverty in Uringu Division of Meru-North District - Kenya. A lot need to be done if Kenya is to attain the vision 2030, and the Millennium Development Goal No.1, of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015.

2.4 Gender Inequality

The concept of gender tends to be widely applied to differentiate between men and women. According to Henslin (2003), the sociological significance of gender is that which the society uses to control its members. Gender is therefore a creation of the society, and has nothing to do with Biological characteristics that distinguish males and females. According to Chaudhry and Rahman (2009), Gender refers to socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men. Chaudhry and Rahman argue that the difference in roles and responsibilities among women and men stems from our families, societies and culture. The concept of gender includes our expectations about the, characteristics, attitudes and behaviours of women and men, and is vital in facilitating gender analysis. According to Chaudhry and Rahman (2009), the different roles, rights and resources that both the genders have in society are important determinants of the nature and scope of their inequality and poverty. These scholars argue that inequality in access to resources between women and men is most common in poor and developing countries.

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Gender inequality refers to inequality in conditions among women and men for realizing their full human rights. Gender inequality is a serious economic issue in Kenya, and addressing it will lead to improved outcomes, not only for women themselves, but for families and the society as a whole (Nalo D. cited in Ellis 2007:9).

In Pakistan, strong gender disparities exist in rural and urban areas among the provinces. According to Chaudhry and Rahman (2009), Pakistan is a patriarchal society where women suffer all sorts of discrimination, resulting in low social, economic and political status in the society. Men and women are conceptually

divided into two separate worlds. The household resources are allocated in favour of sons due to their productive role (Chaudhry 2009).

According to Ellis et al (2004), there is growing recognition internationally that gender equality is good for economic growth and essential for poverty reduction. Muteshi (2006), assert that most of the working poor in Kenya are in the informal sector and they are overwhelmingly women. Therefore, although women world wide are growing presence in labour market, many of them are in precarious works of informal sector. Muteshi (2006) observes that unless efforts are made to address economic security, poverty will not be eliminated nor gender equality achieved.

In Uringu Division of Meru –North District of Kenya, Gender inequality ranks as one of the factors contributing to poverty in the area. According to G.O.K – Meru –North District plan 2002-2008, women in the district are mainly involved in Agriculture production and taking care of the family, while men mostly are involved in small businesses such as Miraa trade or working in urban centres away from home. Thus women are left at disadvantage state, since they have to do chores such as searching for food, firewood and water. This heavy burden leaves little time for them to engage in economic activities.

There is also gender inequality when it comes to ownership of land. Land ownership is the preserve of Men in Meru –North district and thus women are not able to have access to title deed that they can use for accessing credit. Other areas of gender inequality are found in provision of Education. Discrimination against women exists such as giving priority to girl child education, domestic violence and neglect of families by men. These have been long standing issues and require proper attention because neglect of women and children is the root cause of poverty (G.O.K – 2002-2008).

According to World Bank Atlas (2002), one of the Millennium goals is to reduce inequality and empower women. This goal is ranked No.3. The Millennium declaration commits all UN member countries to promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women as effective way to combat

poverty, hunger, and disease and as a necessary means to stimulate development that is truly sustainable (G.O.K, Millennium Development Goals, Status report, 2005).

2.5 Education level

According to World Bank Atlas (2002) Education is a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and social well being, and laying the basis for sustained economic growth. It is essential for building democratic societies and dynamic globally competitive economies. The 1990 conference on Education for all held in Jomtien Thailand, pledged to achieve universal primary education by 2000. However, in 1999 there were still 120 Million primary school age children not in school. About 53 percent of them were girls, and 74 percent living in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The M.D.Gs set a more realistic but still difficult deadline of 2015 when all children everywhere should be able to complete full course of primary schooling.

As a means of eradicating poverty, the content of education is judged by economist for its contribution to the material progress of the society (Obone, 1977) According to Obone (1977), education has decisively civilizing or moralizing mission to the individual. This civic and cultural aspect of education fits him better to live constructively and in corporate spirit with his fellow human beings. Todaro (1982) observes that it is the human resources of nation not its capital or its material resources, that ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic and social development

Chaudhry and Rahman (2009) have argued that Education is the most important instrument for human resource development. It has become a universal human right and an important component of opportunities and empowerment of women. Gender inequalities in Education exist in almost all poor countries, and among the poor within these countries (World Bank, 2001). Gender inequality is now considered as an essential concept for analysis and alleviation of poverty because of its adverse impact on a number of valuable development goals (Chaudhry 2009). Girls' access to education is influenced by poverty in various ways. Recent evidence from West Africa suggests that poverty has much

contribution in gender inequality in access to education (Okojie, 2002). The importance of Education can not be under estimated. Among the many benefits, it has been found out that education enlightens a person, and helps him to understand his environment better and to be able to deal with his fellow human being in a more rational way (Obunc 1977). Secondly, Education must of necessity serve the material needs of the society; and for that reason the pace of education must match that of economic or industrial progress. In addition, Obunc 1977 argues that education provides skilled man power needed for economic development.

In Pakistan, Gender inequality in education has serious impact on rural poverty. Chaudhry (2009) has observed that the status of women in Pakistan is different from that of Western countries. While men dominate the world outside the home and perform their productive role as breadwinners, women have been restricted at home as a place where they perform proactive role as mothers and wives (Chaudhry 2009). According to Chaudhry (2009), male members of the family have been given better education and are equipped with skills to compete for resources in public arena, while women are imparted with domestic skills to be good mothers and wives. These women are given little opportunity to create choices for themselves to enable them to change the realities of their lives (Chaudhry and Rehman 2009). These scholars argue that increase in women's education boosts their wages and their returns in education.

According to World Bank 2001, and 2007 it has been found out that female education improves human development outcomes such as child survival, health and schooling. Klasen (2002) asserts that low female education had negative impact on economic growth as it lowers the average level of human capital. In Bangladesh, studies carried out shows that gender issues in poverty alleviation are not possible without empowering women (Siddique 1998). Siddique argues that vocational education for women should be given top priority to alleviate poverty. Nasir (2002) has observed that higher level of education is associated with higher earning.

Todaro (1982) quotes professor Harbison having said that human resources constitute the ultimate basis for wealth of Nations. He argues that capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, whereas human beings are active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, and build social, economic and political organizations (Harbison 1993). According to Todaro (1982), literate farmers with at least primary education are thought to be more responsive to new agricultural technologies than illiterate farmers. Trained craftsmen and mechanics who can read and write are assumed to be better able to keep up to date with changing products and with materials. Secondary leavers with arithmetic and clerical skills are needed to perform technical and administrative function in a growing public and private bureaucracy. University profession and general training were needed to provide essential professional and managerial skills, necessary for modernized public sectors (Todaro 1982).

According to G.O.K (1989 – 1993), the development of human resources fundamentally depends on the level and intensity of formal, non – formal and informal education and training. Since independence, Kenya education system has been subjected to more than ten reviews by special commissions and working parties (G.O.K – Development plan 1989 -1993). The guiding philosophy on education is that, in general, the education system should aim at producing individuals who are properly socialized and who possess the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to enable them participate positively in nation building.

According to GOK- Kenya's vision 2030, the journey towards prosperity involves the building of just and cohesive society, which enjoys equitable social development in a clean and secure environment. Wamuyu (2004) argues that a good education policy is the foundation of development and economic growth. Individuals with a basic education make informed decisions and better choice for themselves, their families and communities. Wamuyu observes that relevant education of high quality provides human resources for social and productive sectors, facilitating wealth creation and improved quality of life. According to Wamuyu (2004), Kenya has invested heavily in education over the years and more so after 2003 with introduction of free primary education. However, in

Meru –North and Uringu in particular, lower priority to girl child education has been a problem, more so amongst the poor families (GOK-2002).

2.6 Land Ownership

Access to land, and land tenure security are at the heart of all rural societies and Agricultural economies (IFAD, 2007). Having land, controlling it and using it are critical dimensions of rural wealth and rural poverty (Seltzer 2008). Land is not simply an economic resource, but it is an important factor in the formation of social and cultural identity and in the organization of religious life. It is also an enormous political resource, defining power, relations between and among individuals, families and communities under established system of government (IFAD, 2002). In rural societies, landless or near – landless people, and people with insecure rights often constitute the poorest and most, vulnerable groups (Seltzer, 2008). Poorer and marginalized groups tend to have secondary rights, and that rarely extend beyond use right, and what rights they have are often unprotected and weak, especially in the vulnerability, particularly in Africa (IFAD, 2007).

According to (IFAD 2007), land issues have an impact on the everyday choices and prospects of rural people. For example, issues of land access and security of land tenure strongly influence decisions on the nature of crops grown, whether for subsistence or commercial purposes (IFAD 2007). Such issues also influence the extent to which farmers are prepared to invest (both financially and in terms of labour), in improvements in production, in sustainable natural resources management and in the adoption of new technologies and promising innovation (IFAD 2007).

According to Seltzer 2008 land has always been involved in what we now call rural economic development. Those who own no land in rural communities were almost poor. The larger the land holding, the more prosperous the owner was likely to be. Seltzer (2008), asserts that the desire for land and its resource motivated European settlers to the new world, and the expected benefits of land ownership lay behind America's westward expansion. He argued that cheap land was that stimulus that drove American settlement and economic growth for 250

1998). According to Seltzer (2008) land ownership continue to be a ladder for individual betterment. According to IFAD- Rural Poverty Report (2001), the empowerment of rural poor through access to productive resources such as land, water, knowledge, technology and credit in addition to influence within decision making institutions, remain fundamental to rural poverty reduction.

In Uringu division of Meru – North district of Kenya, most land owners do not have title deed. This is because land adjudication progress, which started in 1966 is yet to be concluded. According to G.O.K, (Meru – North Development plan 2002 – 2008,) the adjudication process is hampered by many court cases and other arbitration processes such as land cases pending before land committee. In 2001, over 500 such cases were pending (G.O.K 2002-2008). Because of lack of title deeds to their land, majority of people are not able to make any meaningful development on their land for fear of being displace. At the same time they are unable to access credit for lack of collateral. There is therefore need to speed up land administration and settlement process if this area has to develop.

2.7 Level of Income.

The level of income refers to income that a person earns as remuneration for the factors of production that he has provided or supplied to others. The income so earned is used to sustain oneself. According to Drofman (1972), Man's income is determined by the quantities of productive factors that he/she contributes to the economy and by the prices, or wages Indire and Nancy Karanja,(2008), describes the income of an individual or firm as the money earned by selling services, goods, property or income from investment. An increase in income for an individual or household generally leads to an increase in demand for goods and services. The level of income increases the ability to purchase goods and services, and can determine individual's welfare.

In developing countries, some people have very low level of income. According to Todaro (1992), the magnitude and extent of poverty in any country depends upon two factors, the average level of national income and the degree of inequality in its distribution. The level of income also is used to define the

extent of poverty. Poverty as it has been explained is the situation whereby; a population or section of population is able to meet only its bare subsistence essential of food, clothing and shelter. Where an individual or a household's income is unable to meet his daily basic need, the situation is referred to as absolute poverty. International poverty line is an arbitrary international real income measure, usually expressed in constant dollars, usually less than one dollar per day. According to G.O.K – first report on poverty in Kenya Vol. II of July 1998, a household is considered to be poor if its members can not afford some recommended food energy intake, plus minimum allowance for non-Consumption. A poverty line derived from consumption of food and non food item distinguishes the non poor from the poor. The monthly absolute (overall) poverty line per adult equivalent in rural and urban are estimated at ksh.978 and ksh 1, 490 respectively in 1994. In 1997, the overall rural poverty line (or absolute poverty line) was computed at ksh.1239 per month, per adult -that is, Ksh.927 for food items and 313 for non-food items (G.O.K – Meru North Development plan, 2002 – 2008). Todaro (1992) claims that the elimination of widespread poverty and growing income inequalities is at the core of all development problems, and defines for many, the principal objectives of economic policy.

2.8 Culture

According to Longman dictionary of contemporary English, culture of the society is defined as beliefs, way of life, art and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a particular society. Peil and Oyeneye (1998), explains culture as aesthetic side of the society, which includes art, music drama and literature. Culture of the people is passed on from one generation to another. A child is born into the society and learns its culture as he grows up (Peil and Oyeneye 1998).

Certain cultures, influence people in the way they dress, the food they consume and generally their way of life. Some cultures are retrogressive in that they infringe on human rights. For example some of the age old traditions that have clung on the pockets of Tiganla community living in Uringu division have played a big role in retarding the development in the area. Retrogressive cultural

practices such as, patriarchy culture, gender inequality, female circumcision, commonly known as Female genital mutilation (F.G.M) among others, are some of the main causes of poverty in Meru - North District (G.O.K - 2002 -2008). Patriarchy culture supports some of the outdated practices in the community, like belief that women should not inherit land, or property, early marriages, and notion that a women's place is in the Kitchen. According to Ellis (2007), culture and traditions continue to support male inheritance of family land, while there is lack of review and/or formulation of gender- sensitive family laws.

Cultural practices like female circumcision (F.G.M), was meant to be a ritual to mark the transition of girls from childhood to adulthood. This culture is retrogressive in that, once a girl is circumcised, some of them drop out of school because they consider themselves mature to engage in premarital sex and they end up becoming pregnant (G.O.K, 2002-2008). Other girls drop out because they might opt to get married instead of pursuing education. This has perpetuated poverty in Uringu division and Meru - North district among single mothers, and those who marry early before they complete primary education. Diseases such as HIV /AIDS may also be transmitted the same way (G.O.K- 2002).

An anthropologist Murdock (1937) surveyed 324 pre- modern societies around the world, and found out that in all of them, activities are sex typed. In some groups for example, taking care of cattle is men's work, while other groups assign this task to women (Henslin 2003). In Uringu division some roles meant for women and others meant for men have left women at a disadvantaged position when compared with their male counterparts. While Men are idle most of the time and others hang out in social places, women are left at home with a burden of taking care of the children, working in the farm and fetching water and firewood. These duties leave women with little time to engage in activities that can give them better income (G.O.K-2002).

Culture has also influence people to consume certain foods. In Uringu division some people have not accepted consumption of milk from small animals like ~~goats~~. Some old people can not eat chicken meat or eat eggs because it is a taboo, or claims that, this kind of food have a taste or smell, which is not

familiar to them. Chicken rearing, has also not been taken seriously as an economic activity in Uringu division. Where chicken are reared, it is on free range basis. Chicken rearing is not taken as a serious source of income in this area by many people. According to Adejuwon (1979), livestock have sometime been kept as status symbols rather than an economic asset, or a source of essential food. This scenario is common in Uringu division, where a household can herd a number of animals through out the year or several years without getting any returns from them. It is also common to see small animals like rabbits being reared by small boys just like pets, and when slaughtered adults can not eat their meat. All this is because of cultural influence. If people can change their attitude towards the consumption of say rabbit's meat, it can be a good source of animal protein. Adejuwon (1979) argues that no amount of scientific break through or technology in animal husbandry can have much effect, unless the present attitude of tropical people to animal farming and animal products are modified.

2.9 Extent of Rural Poverty on Selected Countries in the World

No society can be flourishing and happy of which by far, the greater part of the members are poor and miserable (Adam Smith, 1776). This quotation from the famous British economist depicts that poverty is universal. It cuts across all boundaries, but the magnitude and extent of poverty differ from country to country. This is dependent upon two factors; the average level of national income, and the degree of inequality in its distribution (Todaro, 1982). According to Todaro (1982), the growing gap between per capita income in rich and poor nations, is not the only manifestation of widening economic disparities between the world's rich and poor. Todaro (1982) also argues that it is important to look at the growing gap between rich and poor within individual less developed countries in order to appreciate the breath and depth of third world poverty. According to Todaro (1992), all nations of the world show some degree of inequality. One finds large disparities between incomes of the rich and poor in both developed and less developed countries. However, the gap between the rich and poor is generally greater in less developed nations (Todaro 1982).

2.9.1 Rural Poverty in America

According to Andrew (2007), the executive director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, poverty in America is often unseen, unacknowledged, unattended. Andrew asserts that American urbanites are sometimes surprised to realize that rural areas that are seen as places for food production have a poverty rate based largely on food needs. He argues that some farmers' family gets their food from programs for the poor, rather than their own gardens. The study conducted by National Catholic Rural Life Conference, USA rural populations are found to be older, poorer, sicker, less educated, and to have a perception of worse health status than their urban counterpart. The study found out that rural populations of America have higher infant mortality and injury-related mortality rates, fewer hospital beds and physicians per capita, and much less likely than urban residents to have private or public health insurance.

Health care across the United States in rural areas has its own special problems. In terms of job opportunities, rural areas provide fewer options than urban areas, with the types of jobs offered tending to be part time and minimum wage (Rogers, 2007). It has also been noted that poverty in rural U.S.A is not strictly a racial issue; nearly 80 per cent of non-metro poor, are actually white (Andrew, 2007)

According to Andrew (2007), in 1990, there were 9 million in rural areas of America, living in poverty, nearly one in five rural residents. Hand in hand with the poverty in rural America is lack of basic necessities, such as health care, good nutrition, education, and essential public services (Andrew 2007).

2.9.2 Rural poverty in Europe

According to (IFAD, 2007), Rural poverty is practically non-existence in European Union, and in Northern Europe, but it is a growing threat to people in rural areas in Eastern Europe and parts of Southern Europe. After collapse

of Soviet Union many countries are still going through difficult economic, social and political transition. In the context of rural poverty, Europe is a continent of sharp contrasts (IFAD, 2007). While poverty in parts of Eastern and Southern Europe is on the rise, human development indicators confirm that living conditions in all of the European countries are among the best in the world (World Bank, 2007). One out of about 93 million people lives under the poverty line. The poor include rural people in central and Eastern Europe and ethnic minorities such as Roma who are among the poorest people in Europe. The Roma comprise almost 40 percent of poor people in Romania and Bulgaria (IFAD, 2007)

2.9.3 Rural poverty in Asia

Poverty in Asia is a massive problem. According to IFAD (2007), More than two thirds of the world's people live in Asia and nearly half of them are in southern Asia. Poverty is basically a rural problem in Asia. In the major countries, 80 to, 90 per cent of poor people live in rural areas (IFAD, 2007). While Eastern Asia and South- Eastern Asia have made impressive progress in reducing rural poverty over the past three decades, progress has been limited in Southern Asia. Despite wide- ranging diversities in the region, many poor rural people in Asia, share a number of economic, demographic and social characteristics, the most of which are: landlessness, poor rural households tends to have larger families, less educated and higher unemployment (IFAD 2007). They also lack basic amenities such as safe water supply, sanitation and electricity. Their access to credit, equipments and technology is severely limited. Other constraints include lack of market information, experience and collective organizations. All these deprive them of the power to compete on equal terms in the market place.

2.9.4 Eastern Asia

Eastern Asia has been at the center of what has been called an "Economic miracle" (IFAD 2007). In the last three decades poverty in the region has been reduced by about two thirds. Gross domestic product has been growing by 7 to 10 percent each year and Gross National Income by about 7 per cent each year. Agricultural growth has contributed significantly to this economic growth (up

turn), especially those countries where egalitarian distribution of land took place and where macro economic policies relatively open. China is an outstanding example (IFAD 2007).

2.9.5 Southern Asia

Most of southern Asia has been left behind in the overall development (economic up turn) in Asia. In the past 3 decades, the economies of the southern Asia's countries have grown by 4 to 6 percent (IFAD 2007). Although poverty declined by one third, the incidence of poverty in terms of the percentages of the population living below the government's poverty line, is higher in southern Asia than in any other region in the world, except Sub-Saharan Africa (IFAD 2007)

2.9.6 India

In India women are too often victims of poverty. They have less access to, and control over land, credit, technology, education and health services in rural areas (IFAD 2001). An IFAD project mobilized woman into self-help groups and gave them access to Micro Finance. According to IFAD (2001), this has led to important changes in social patterns and norms. Women have become more independent economically and their decision making role in their families has increased (IFAD 2001).

2.10 Rural poverty in Africa

According to United Nations report, poverty in Africa is quite disturbing. Extreme poverty in Africa has been reported. Facts about poverty in Africa show that a child dies every second from AIDS and extreme poverty, often before their first birthday. More than one billion people do not have access to clean water, every year six million children die from malnutrition before their fifth birthday (World Bank statistic). According to the World Bank statistics, more than 800 million people go to bed hungry every day. It has also been reported that one third of the children in sub-Saharan Africa are under weight (UNICEF 2010). Pervasive poverty and social inequalities remain major constraints to sustainable development in Africa (IFAD 2003).

Globally inequality, particularly in trade continues to be a major contributor to

continued poverty in Africa. Income poverty is particularly severe in much of Africa (<http://www.eoearth.org>). However, there is considerable variation between income poverty level: less than 15 percent of Morocco's population lives on less than 2 U.S dollars per day. Between 1981 and 2001, the number of people living on less than one Us dollar per day in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) nearly doubled from 164 million to 313 million (World Bank). Across Africa, poverty is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas. The link between environmental resources and livelihoods of rural people is widely acknowledged. Rural people rely on the environment for a range of goods and services (<http://www.eoearth.org>).

In southern Africa region, there is high incidence of poverty in the majority of countries, due to combination of countries due to combination of various factors, including: High unemployment levels; limited access to productive resources such as land and capital which adversely affect rural women; urban biased development policies with high level of rural urban migration which has led to rural areas becoming unattractive, and put pressure on capital to provide social services; inability by governments, communities and other development agencies to effectively channel resources to poverty eradication programs; population pressure leading to cultivation of marginal lands; external factors, such as unfavourable terms of trade for most of the sub region, leading to limited resources to devote to poverty programs in a number of countries, the negative impact of structural adjustment programs, that some countries have been implementing; and persistent droughts. However the causal effect relationship of these factors on poverty varies from country to country. (ECA – SA- SRDC, Lusaka).

2.11 Poverty situation in Kenya

According to international fund for Agriculture development (IFAD 2010), poverty has been on the rise in Kenya. More than half of the country's 31.2 million people are poor and 7.5 million people live in extreme poverty. About 80 percent of the population including three out of four poor people lives in rural zones (IFAD 2010). The poorest of the poor are found sparsely population in arid zones of the country, mainly in the North, and over 80 percent of rural poor live

In high potential area surrounding Lake Victoria, and Mt. Kenya region.

According to IFAD report (2010), Kenya's population tripled over the past 30 years, leading to increased pressure on natural resources. Consequently, income gap widened, raising poverty levels and eroding gains in education, health, food, security, employment and incomes.

Kenya's rural poor includes small scale farmers, herders, farm labourers, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, households headed by women, people with disabilities and AIDS orphans among others. Women are particularly vulnerable because they do not have equal access to social and economic assets. According to IFAD (2010), women empowerment is necessary if poverty is to be eradicated in rural area of Kenya.

2.1.2 Poverty in Uringu Division Meru – North District of Kenya

A number of factors have been cited as being the causes of rural poverty. According to G.O.K – 2002, Gender inequality ranks as one of the factors contributing to poverty in the study area. Other factors include land ownership, which is the preserve of men in Meru-North district. Very few women own land in the district. This makes it difficult for women to access credit from banks and other financial institutions that may demand assets as security for loans. Discrimination in the provision of Education has also been a major drawback in Uringu division of Meru – North. School dropout rate is quite high more so among the girls This has encouraged early marriage and increased poverty in the area (G.O.K- 2002). Domestic violence and neglect of families by men has had far reaching effect on their lives of rural community of the division (G.O.K- 2002 – 2008). Other factors include environmental degradation, cultural practices, unemployment leading to low level of income and hence poverty in the division of Uringu, Meru – North (G.O.K meru North Development plan 2002-2008). There are a number of challenges and cross cutting issues that have become a stumbling in attaining the goal of poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth. These are high population growth, H.I.V /AIDS pandemic, gender inequality, disaster management and conservation These issues will require the concerted effort of the community and other stakeholders if any meaningful step towards poverty eradication is to be attained.

2.1.3 . Challenges in the fight against poverty

According to G.O.K (2002) there exist a number of challenges which act as obstacles to development in Meru North District. These obstacles cut across several sectors and require concerted efforts of all stakeholders in the district. They are as follows:-

2.13.1 Urban bias verses rural neglect

According to Hogendorn (1992) rural area had long been neglected. The official policy was usually marked by urban bias where in funds having been obtained in part through taxes on farming were funneled largely to manufacturing and show case projects designed to benefit urban populations. Rural bias were further reflected by food prices in cities being held down by subsidies and strict price controls (Hogendon 1992).The urban bias favored manufacturing sectors that was sheltered behind high tariff wall thus raising the prices paid by rural residents for goods they produced. In 1970s the optimism increased that rural area, including agriculture and other rural activities could provide an economic stimulus towards growth and could even be a leading sector. It is in light of this that government in developing countries including Kenya, started taking developments in rural area seriously. These factors have caused delay in fight against poverty in rural areas.

2.13.2 Land Tenure System

In Uringu division of Meru North district this can be reflected on the governments delayed work on land adjudication and settlements that started in 1966 and is dragging on up to date. Lack of swift action by government's official to solve of the problem of land adjudication has denied the community in this division an important asset that could help them to borrow finances for development. According to Hogendorn (1992) communal land tenure in which ownership is vested in a village or local ethnic group, is generally thought to inhibit productivity increase. Hogendorn argues that undefined land rights are more damaging as population grows, because when land is held communally the people who work on it, often have an attitude of "take out of it what you can get, put as little as you can".

2.13.3 Inheritance

Inheritance is another serious potential problem of tenure. Where farms are not passed on intact to one heir, but rather they are split among numerous heirs result in small or dispersed land holding (Hogendorn 1992). This is a problem that has led to land fragmentation in Uringu division.

2.13.4 Low, Irregular or no Funding to on- going or proposed project

This is another major handicap that has retarded development in rural areas of Uringu for a long time. According to G.O.K Meru –North –District plan (2002-2008), misappropriation of funds for project by management communities was cited as another major constraint in project completion. Project also suffers shortages of technical staff, and as a result many development project stall.

2.13.5 Poor Infrastructure Network

Lack of good roads, telecommunication and electricity is yet another serious hindrance to development. These infrastructures are poorly developed in the area of study.

2.13.6 Low adoption of technology

Failure to embrace modern technology by intended beneficiaries, for example majority of the people resisting change and continued use out of date technology in agriculture have led to poor yield.

2.13.7 Lack of credit

The governments has also cited inaccessibility to credit by traders as constraints to development and self advancement. This has been brought about by unfavorable lending conditions by financial institutions.

2.13.8 Environmental management and conservation

The United Nations ranks environmental sustainability as goal number 7 in the millennium development goals (MDGs). According to G.O.K- MDGs Status report for Kenya (2005), Environments and natural resources provide the base

for economic and social development, including poverty reduction. The vision 2030 aspires Kenya growth at an average rate of 10 percent per annum, and for this goal to be achieved, then, proper exploitation and managements of natural resource is of critical importance to national development and welfare of the people. It has been found that the greatest threats to our environments are posed by poverty. Deprived people are a major threat to the environments when the basic needs of adequate food, shelter, clothing and health service are not met (GOK-status report 2005.24). High levels of poverty negatively impact on the environment through: land degradation, leading to reduced land productivity and hunger, depletion of ground water table, pollution of water by effluents from industries and chemical fertilizers used for agricultural production. To ensure environmental sustainability, there is a need to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country's policies and programs.

According to Chiras (1998), environmental protection is being incorporated into a strategy called sustainable development; a means of advancing human civilization while protecting and even enhancing the environment. A sustainable development is a strategy for allowing progress to occur without destroying the environments (Chiras 1998).

In Uringu Division and Meru North as whole, poor managements of environment has been cited as one of the main contributors of poverty. Increased population has made people to occupy less arable land causing severe degradation. Hill tops have been cultivated without regard to damage caused to the environments (GOK 2002-2008). It has also been observed that shortage of land for farming has caused people to continuously cultivate small piece of land, without giving time for soil fertility to recover. Overstocking of animals has also led to degradation of environments and the result is poor productivity and hence increased poverty. In order to set off on the development path, these challenges must be dealt with to break the vicious cycle. The following model might help to explain this better.

2.14 Vicious Cycle of Poverty

According to Todaro (1992:509), vicious circle is a self reinforcing situation in which there are factors that tend to perpetuate a certain undesirable phenomenon, for example low income in poor countries, leads to low consumption, which leads to poor health and low productivity and eventually to the persistence of poverty. This model can be used to explain how similar situation in the area of study can be manipulated in order to overcome rural poverty. According to Nyam et al (2005), economic development is influenced by four basic factors. These are human resources, Natural resources, level of capital accumulation and technology. Underdevelopment arises if the available resources are not matched with the appropriate technology to facilitate production. Any imbalance between resources and technology, results in low output, and hence low incomes. Low incomes in underdevelopment economies perpetuate poverty due to low saving, and thus low capital accumulation. This then results in low production leading to a vicious cycle of poverty as shown in figure 2.1.

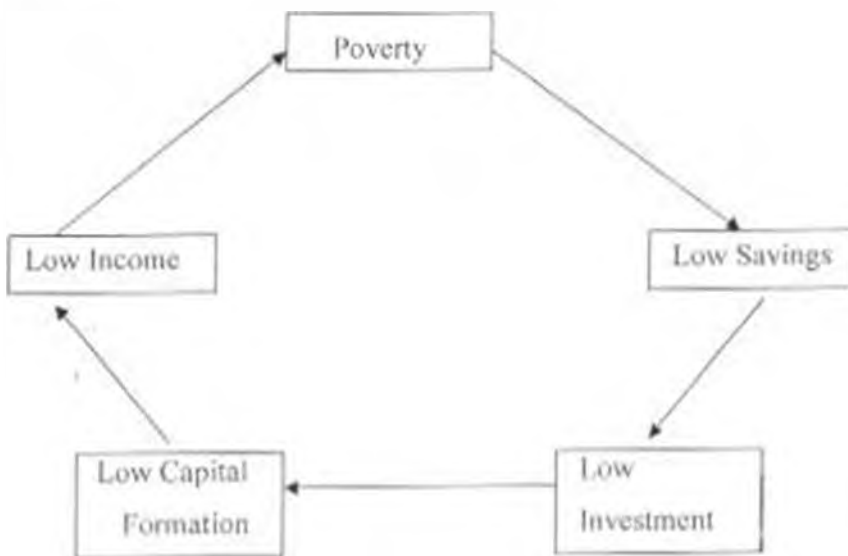


Figure 2.1: vicious circle of poverty

2.15 Conceptual Framework

This section introduces conceptual framework. According to Mugenda and Mugenda conceptual framework refers to when a researcher conceptualizes the relationship between the variables in the study and shows the relationship graphically or diagrammatically. It is a hypothetical model which identifies the concept under study and their relationship. The purpose of the conceptual model is to help the reader to quickly see the relationship. In this case the following conceptual framework explains the relationship between the dependent and independent variable variables to be studied. Figure 2.2 illustrates the conceptual frame work as follows:

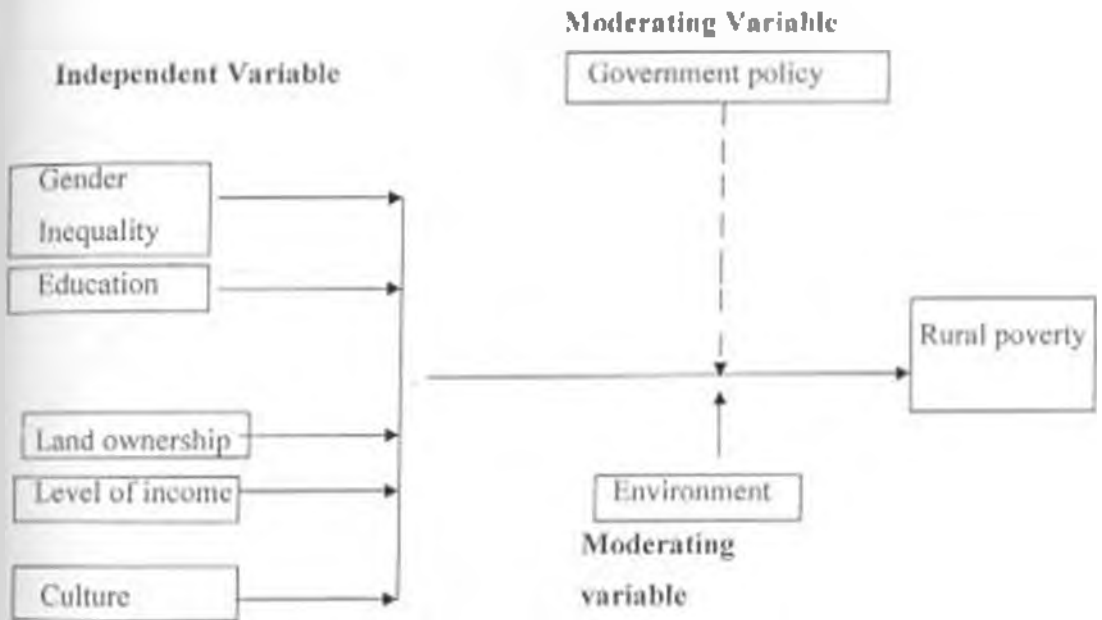


Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework

2.16 Summary

This chapter has dealt with literature review touching on the five variables relating to the topic of study. The topic of study deals with the influence of socio-economic factors on rural poverty. The issues that have been highlighted in the literature review include the concept of rural poverty, education level, and land ownership, level of income, cultural influence and rural poverty. The literature review has also highlighted in selected countries of the world both in developed and developing countries. It has also review literature on the extent of rural poverty in some countries of Africa, including Kenya and examined the rural poverty in the study area in Uringu division of Meru-North Kenya.

Finally, the model of vicious cycle of poverty is used to illustrate how the area of study can be taken out of poverty by injecting in the missing elements to spur growth. The chapter closes with conceptual framework.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the methods that were used for the study to collect the data which was used to answer the research questions. The chapter contains research design, the target population, sampling procedure, methods of data collection, validity and reliability. The chapter also explains the data analysis methods and finally the summary of the whole chapter.

3.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive research design. Research design keeps the entire element in a research project together. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), the major purpose of descriptive research is to describe the state of affairs as it exists. It involves a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orudho 2003). Correlation design was used because it enabled the researcher to assess the degree of relationship that exist between two or more variables. In this study the correlation design was used to address the causal effect relationship between the dependent variables and independent variables. Interview schedule were used to gather information from respondents and their narratives analyzed quantitatively

3.3 Target Population

According to Joetzold et al (2007) the area of study has 7760 household distributed in four location namely Nkomo with 2347 households, Kimanchila with 1868 households, Mbeu with 2821 households, and Kiorimba with 724 households. Since these locations do not have homogenous features in terms of their geographical location and population densities stratified technique will be used in order to obtain a representative sample. The sample size to be studied comprises 100 household distributed in entire Division. The number interviewed was allocated proportionately according Kothari (2004:63).

The formula used is follows: If P_i represents proportion of population included in stratum i , and n represent the total sample size, the number of element selected from stratum i , is $n \cdot p_i$ (Kothari 2004)

This was calculated as follows the sample size (n) = 100 to be drawn from a population size (N) = 7760, which is divided in four (4) locations that form 4 strata of sizes:

Nkomo (N_1) = $(2347/7760) \times 100 =$	30
Kimanchia (N_2) = $(1868/7760) \times 100 =$	24
Mbeu (N_3) = $(2821/7760) \times 100 =$	36
Kiorimba (N_4) = $(724/7760) \times 100 =$	10
Total	100

Table 1: Target population

Name of the group (Location)	Number of members (households)
Nkomo	2347
Kimanchia	1868
Mbeu	2821
Kiorimba	724
Total households in the division	7760

Source: Joetzold et al (2007)

3.4 Sampling Procedure

According to Kombo and Ironp (2006), sampling is the procedure of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in entire group. Stratified sampling was used in this study. The researcher used the four locations in the study area as the bases of forming strata, and then used proportion allocation methods according to the sizes in each location.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

The data was collected using well constructed questionnaires. Questionnaires are data collection tools or instruments that are used together information from

larger sample. Face to face interviews was also conducted with guided questions. The questionnaires were developed considering independent, dependent and moderating variables.

Interview schedules were also used mainly for majority of the population who could not read or write. The research also intends to use focused groups in this study. The data collected was edited and coded. The SPSS program was used to analyze the data. The analyzed data was then presented using percentages and frequency distribution tables.

3.6 Validity

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) the validity of test is a measure of how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure. The tools of data collection included questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion and observations. The questionnaire and the interview schedule questions were based on the objectives of the study to ensure that every question was relevant. The researcher also sought the assistance of the supervisor in ascertaining the validity.

3.7 Reliability

Reliability on the other hand is a measure of how consistent the results are from the test. The researcher used test re-tests method that enabled him to ensure reliability of the questionnaires by examining whether the same response would be obtained. Here the questionnaires and the interview schedules were administered two times to the same group of respondents during the pilot study. There was a time span between the first and second test. The scores from both test periods were then correlated and the stability ascertained. The degree of stability was ascertained by comparing the results of the repeated measurements. The coefficient of reliability was found to be high signifying test-retest reliability.

3.8 Methods of Data Analysis

Collected data was analyzed using descriptive and logistic regression. Descriptive statistic was used to establish the general characteristics of the

study population. Logistic regression was used to establish the cause and effect relationship between dependent variables and independent variables. Logistic regression was used since the dependent variable was categorical (categorized poverty in terms of poor or not poor). Both qualitative and quantitative data that was collected was edited and coded. The analyzed data was then presented using percentages, and frequency distribution tables.

3.9 Summary

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was applied in the study. Various research methodology items were explained as per their application. The explanation of these research methodology items followed the following sequence: research design, Target population, sampling procedure, methods of the data collection, validity, reliability and methods of data analysis which we

Table 3.2:

OPERATIONALIZATION TABLE

Objective or research question	Type of the variance	Indicators	Measure	Data collection	Level of scale	Approach of analysis	Level of analysis
To determine the influence of gender inequality on rural poverty	Independent	-Property ownership -Involvement in economic activities -Involvement in decision making	-Title deeds -Gender calendar -Heads of household	-Questionnaire -Interviews	-Nominal scale -Ratio	Qualitative Quantitative	Descriptive
	Dependent variable rural (poverty)	-Unemployment - income	-No. of people unemployed -proportion of people living on less than 1US dollar a day	Interviews questionnaires & observations	-Nominal -Ratio -Ordinal	Qualitative & Quantitative	Descriptive
To determine the influence of education on rural poverty	Independent	-Schools in the area -School going children -Literacy level -No of people in formal employment	-No of schools -Enrolment -Ability to read & write -Education level.	Questionnaires interviews observations	-Nominal -Ratio ordinal	Qualitative & Quantitative	Descriptive
To determine relationship between land ownership and rural poverty	Independent	-Title deeds -Land tenure system	-Document analysis (from lands office) -Gender issues in land ownership	Questionnaire Interviews -Observations	-Ratio scales - Ordinal (ranking)	Qualitative & quantitative	Descriptive

To determine the influence of income on rural poverty	Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -meals per day -Total earnings -quality of housing - technology in use - Type of schools for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No of meals per day -earning per day -type of building material used -type of animal kept
To determine the influence of culture on rural poverty	Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Child labour -Illiteracy -Strict traditions -Land owned communally -Keeping animal as status symbol rather than economic assets - Inferiority of women status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of children involved in child labour - Number of school dropout - Number of school going age not attending school. - Prevalence of female circumcision. -Number of under age marriages - Number of acreage owned by community - Number of household keeping uneconomical livestock.

Questionnaire Interviews -Observations	Nominal -Ratio -Interval	Qualitative & quantitative	Descriptive
-Questionnaires -Interviews -Observations	Nominal Ratio Ordinal	Qualitative & quantitative	Descriptive

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION.

Introduction

This chapter deals with data analysis, presentation and interpretation of findings. It comprises the findings of the whole research, based on primary as well as secondary data which was gathered from the field. Descriptive statistics and logistic regression was used to analyze.

4.2 Response Rate

A sample of 100 households respondents were interviewed using semi structured questionnaires. The data collected using these questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency distributions and percentages. The information was represented using tables and then interpretation was done. Binary logistic regression was used to determine cause and effects relationship between dependent and independent variables.

4.3 Profile of the Respondents

This was done by presenting the general characteristics of the respondents which included Gender of the respondent, inequality in land ownership between men and women, Respondents' education level, their monthly income, land ownership and the size of land owned by respondents. All this information was laid down in tables as follows:

Table 4.1 Gender of the respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	59	59.0
Female	41	41.0
Total	100	100

The information from the table shows that majority of the respondents were males with 59 percent, and females were only 41 percent of the total sampled.

Table 4.2 Inequality in land ownership between men and women

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	61	61%
No	39	39%
Total	100	100%

As shown in the table 4.2, majority of the respondents were (61%) of the opinion that gender inequality existed especially as far as land ownership was concerned. This can be attributed to cultural practices that land belongs to men, and women are not supposed to own land since they are subordinate to men.

Table 4.3 Education level of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	60	60
Secondary	26	26
College	13	13
University	1	1
Total	100	100

As far as education is concerned, most of the respondents had the lowest level of education, which is primary education standing at 60 percent of the total response. 26 per cent of the respondents had secondary education, while 13 percent had attained college level of education. Only one percent of the respondents had attained university level. Since education is a tool of empowerment, and most of the people in this area seem to be illiterate, it can be an indication that the people are poor. This can also be attributed outdated cultural practices such as female genital mutilation which encourages drop out rate. Female circumcision or (F.G.M.) was traditionally done as a transitional stage from girlhood to adulthood, and it was meant to prepare

young women for marriage. The persistence of this rite therefore encourages school drop out rates among girls and more so in primary level

Table 4.4 Monthly incomes of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Irregular Income	28	28
Less than 1500 (Kshs.)	22	22
1500 - 2900	21	21
3000 - 5000	12	12
5000 - 7000	6	6
10,000 - above	11	11
Total	100	100

Information from table 4.4 shows that 28 percent of the total respondents did not have regular income. Those who earned less than 1500 per month were 22 per cent of the total sampled, 21 percent comprised of those respondents who earned between 1500 shillings to 2900 shillings per month. Those people earning between 3000 to 5000 shillings were 12 percent. The income category between, 6000 to 7000 shillings per month were 6 percent, whereas 11 percent of the total respondents earned 10,000 shillings per month and above.

Since someone who earns less than a dollar per day which translates to about 3000 shillings per month can be regarded as poor in Kenya as per international poverty line, it may be concluded that 71 percent of people in Uringu division live below the poverty line. Therefore, the data gives evidence that majority of people in Uringu division are poor.

Table 4.5: Land Ownership

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	72	72%
No	28	28%
Total	100	100

The data in Table 4.5 above reveals that about 72%, who are the majority own land, while 28% do not own land. Since the main economic activity in the area is agriculture, then there was indication that lack of land ownership may contribute to poverty to a certain extent.

Table 4.6 Size of land

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency
Less than one acre	24	24	24
Between 1-2 acres	37	37	61
Between 3-4 acres	10	10	71
Between 5-6 acres	3	3	74
Above 6 acres	1	1	75
No land at all	25	25	100
TOTAL	100	100	

Although majority claimed to have a piece of land, the size of land that they owned seemed very small. From the Table 4.6, cumulative frequencies show 61 percent had less than 2 acres of land, indicating that no major agricultural activities such as cash crop farming can take place in Uringu division. This can significantly contribute to poverty in the area since the people have low income levels.

Table 4.7**Persistence of cultural practices in Uringu**

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	64
No	21	21
Not aware	15	15
Total	100	100

The data shows that there were persistent cultural practices in Uringu division, 64 percent of the respondents were aware of such practices and 21% claimed there were no cultural practices in the division. Only 15 percent were not aware of the cultural practices in Uringu division. Since some cultural practices resist change, there was clear indication that these cultural practices had a role in perpetuating poverty. Keeping animals for status symbol rather than as an economic asset, to generate some income was one of the cultural practices that are common in the area.

The same cultural believes deny ownership of property by women. Cultural practices mentioned by respondents included Gender inequality, early marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (F.G.M.), Njuri-Ncheke, wife-inheritance, male chauvinism, boys' traditional circumcision.

4.8 Multivariate Analysis for the Factors Influencing Rural Poverty in Uringu Division

To determine the cause and effect relationship among the variables, that is the influence of independent variables on dependent variable, multivariate logistic regression was carried out. The choice of logistic regression was because the dependent variable was categorical. That is poor or not poor; the results are presented in Table

Table 4.8 Multivariate Logistic regression results:

Variable	Beta coefficient	Standard error	Exponent (B)	Significance
Size of land 3 acres and above (Ref.)			1.00	
No land at all,	3.678	1.080	39.585	0.05
Less than 1 acre,	3.444	1.087	31.313	0.05
Between 1 and 2 acres	3.263	1.089	26.127	0.05
Education level Tertiary (Ref.)			1.00	
Primary	0.997	0.770	2.710	
Secondary	0.025	0.808	1.026	
Culture practices Not aware			1.00	
Yes	-0.946	0.900	0.388	
No	0.231	1.133	1.260	
Inequality in land ownership No (Ref):			1.00	
Yes	-0.530	0.560	0.589	

The data on Table 4.8 shows that the size of land is significantly associated with poverty in Uringu Division. Those who had no land at all were 39.585 times more likely to be poor compared to those who had 3 and above acres of land. People with less than one acre were 31.313 times more likely to be poor compared to those who had 3 and above acres of land. People with between 1 and 2 acres of land were 26.127 times more likely to be poor compared to those with 3 and above acres of land. Therefore the results were significant at 5 percent (0.05) level of significance. This could be attributed to the fact that majority of people are semi-illiterate and they rely on land for livelihood.

There were no significant relationship found between poverty and level of education, culture, and inequality in land ownership between men and women in Uringu division. It could not be established why those variables were not significant, and therefore Bivariate analysis was carried out. This involved doing a regression analysis on each independent variable against the dependent variable. The results are presented in Table 4.9

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Table 4.9: Bivariate regression result for the factors influencing rural poverty in Uringu Division:

Variable	Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	Exponent B	Significance
Education Level: Tertiary; Ref:			1.000	
Education 1 Atleast Primary educ.:	1.609	0.637	5.000	0.05
Secondary:	0.154	0.664	1.167	
Size of land (acres) 3 and above: (ref.):			1.000	
No land at all:	3.450	0.939	31.500	0.05
Less than one acre:	3.127	0.914	22.800	0.05
Between 1 and 2 acres	3.080	0.862	21.750	0.05
Cultural practices: Not aware, (Ref.)			1.000	
Yes,	-0.740	0.697	0.477	
No	0.061	0.859	1.062	
Inequality in Landownership no land at all (Ref)			1.000	
Yes	-0.557	0.457	0.573	

The data in table 4.9 shows that there is a significant relationship between the education level of the respondents and poverty levels in Uringu division. People with at least primary education are five times more likely to be poor compared to those with tertiary education. The results were significant at 5 percent level of confidence. However, no significant relationship was found between secondary level and poverty levels in Uringu division.

Further the results show that size of land was significantly associated with poverty levels in Uringu division. People with no land at all are 31.5 times more likely to be poor compared to those with 3 and above acres of land. People with less than one acre of land are 22.8 times more likely to be poor compared to those with 3 and above acres of land. Those with between 1 and 2 acres of land are 21.75 times more likely to be poor compared to those with 3 and above acres of land. The results were significant at 5 percent level of significance. No significant relationships exist between cultural practices, inequality in land ownership and poverty in Uringu division.

4.2 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has dealt with data analysis, presentation and interpretation. Descriptive statistics has been used in this chapter. The data revealed that there was a relationship between education level and poverty land size and poverty; however no significance relationship existed between cultural practices and poverty or in quality in land ownership and poverty levels in Uringu division.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study findings. It summarizes the results which were obtained from the analysis of the questionnaires and interviews. The study was to determine the influence of social-economic factors on rural poverty; a case of Uringu division of Meru-North district in Eastern Province of Kenya.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The following is the summary of findings according to research objectives:

5.2.1 Explore the Influence of Gender Inequality on Rural Poverty

The type of analysis used includes descriptive statistics and logistic regression. The findings were as follows: majority of the respondents were of the opinion that gender inequality existed in Uringu division, more so in land distribution amongst the gender. Gender inequality was also observed in the roles assigned to men and women. Men performed fewer roles compared to women. For that reason men remained idle and this contributed to poverty.

5.2.2 Determine the influence of Level of Education on Rural Poverty

The analysis used includes descriptive statistics and logistic regression. The main findings were as follows: there were significant relationship between the level of education of the respondents and poverty levels. People with lowest level of education; that is primary education were five times more likely to be poor compared to those with tertiary level of education. The results were significant at 5% level of significance. However, no significant relationship was found between secondary level and poverty levels.

5.2.3 Establish the Relationship between Land Ownership and Rural Poverty

Type of analysis used included descriptive statistics and logistic regression. The study revealed that 72% of respondents owned land, 28% did not own land. This could be attributed to gender inequality in land ownership. Majority of women interviewed never owned land in Uringu division. However land ownership on its own did not show any relationship with poverty. It is the size of the piece of land that showed significant relationship with poverty in Uringu Division. After doing multivariate analysis it was found out that those without land at all were 39.585 times more likely to be poor compared to those who had 3 acres of land and above. Those with 1 and 2 acres of land were 26.127 times more likely to be poor compared with those who had 3 acres. The results were significant at 5% level of significance. This could be attributed to reliance on land for livelihood.

5.2.4 Determine the Influence of level of income on rural poverty

Monthly income of the respondents was used as a proxy for poverty. Using logistic regression it was found out that the majority of the respondents in Uringu division earned below Kshs 3,000 per month as their income. This translates to less than a dollar a day. It was therefore concluded that poverty existed in Uringu division. This was in line with international poverty line bench mark of one dollar per day.

5.2.5 Establish the Influence of Culture on Rural Poverty

The data showed that there were persistent cultural practices in Uringu division. 64% of the respondents acknowledged the presence of cultural practices in the area. However no significant relationship was found to exist between poverty and cultural practices in Uringu division. Even after conducting bivariate analysis it was found out that culture did not have significant influence on rural poverty.

5.3 Discussions of Findings

Logistic regression was used to determine the causes and effect of relationship between dependent and independent variables. Descriptive analysis was done to capture the general characteristics of the respondents which included gender of the respondents, inequality in land ownership between men and women, respondents education level, monthly income, land ownership and size of the land

owned by respondents.

5.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

After the analysis, it was found out that majority of the respondents were males with 59%, and only 41% of respondents being females out of the total sampled.

5.3.2 Gender Inequality in Land Ownership between Men and Women.

Analysis was done using descriptive statistics and frequency and percentage table drawn. The results revealed that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that gender inequality existed in Uringu as far as land distribution was concerned. The prevailing traditions do not allow women to inherit property from their fathers.

Just as the study had anticipated, the research findings revealed that inequality in land ownership existed between men and women. The study done by government of Kenya had cited land inequality as one of the main causes of poverty in Meru-North district. The study on the influence of socio-economic factors on rural poverty conducted in Uringu division did not show significant relationship between land ownership and poverty. However the size of land showed some significance. People should be discouraged from sub-dividing their pieces of land into small portions. Since it was found that the community relied on agriculture for sustenance, other means of earning a living should be sought. If this is done, sub division of land to different heirs could cease.

5.3.3 Education Level of the Respondents.

This variable was also analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency distribution and percentages table revealed that most of the respondents had the lowest level of education, which is primary education in Uringu division. 60% of the total respondents had primary education and below. Only 26% of the respondents had secondary education while 13% had attained tertiary level of education. 1% of the total respondents had university education.

Basing conclusion from that data, it was revealed that most people in Uringu division who were sampled attained only primary level of education. Since

education is a tool of empowerment, it may be an indication that people are poor because of the low level of education. The data showed that there was a significant relationship between the education level of respondents and poverty level in Uringu division. People with at least primary level of education were five times, more likely to be poorer compared to those with tertiary education. The results were significant at five (5%) percent level of significance. However; no significant relationship was found between secondary level of education and poverty levels in Uringu division. According to the World Bank report, education is referred to as a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality. The Government should encourage people to attain high level of education since higher levels of education could open more opportunities of employment and hence reduce rural poverty in Uringu division.

5.3.4 Monthly Income of the respondents

After data analysis, it was found out that 71 percent of the respondent below income level of kshs.2500 existed in Uringu division. Given that international poverty line benchmark stands at one dollar per day, it was clear that majority of the population in Uringu division suffered absolute poverty. Monthly income was used as a proxy for poverty. Monthly income was used to classify people in Uringu division as poor or not poor. The conclusion was that the majority of people in the division could be classified as poor. Level of income of a household or an individual determines whether somebody can be classified as poor or not poor. Those with higher Levels lead better lives since their purchasing power is increased. However, income levels are determined by many factors. Dorfman (1972) claims that man's income is determined by the quantities of productive factors that He/ she contributes to the economy and by the prices or wages. Indire and Karanja 2018 also described the income of an individual or firm as the money earned by selling goods or services, or income from investment. Since high income improves ones welfare, it can be concluded that low income levels in Uringu division is the cause of rural poverty. To improve peoples' level of income, the government needs to look for ways of boosting productive activities of the community in Uringu division. Income generating projects can be initiated to solve the problem of unemployment and this may break the vicious circle of poverty for the residents of Uringu division

5.3.5 Land Ownership

After analysis the results showed that about 72% of the respondents in Uringu division owned lands while 28% do not own land at all. The issue of land ownership could not show any relationship with levels of poverty. For further clarity, analysis was done using the sizes of land owned by the respondents, and it was found out that sizes of land significantly related to poverty levels in Uringu division. It was clear that although majority claimed they owned land, the sizes of the land that they owned were so small to be used gainfully for agricultural production. The small sizes of land were not enough to grow cash crops. Only food crops which earned them little income to help them improve their standard of living. Further more, the small sizes of land could not allow modern farming methods to be applied in the area of study. It was therefore concluded that the sizes of land significantly contributed to poverty in Uringu division. Since majority earned incomes from farming activities in Uringu division, bigger pieces of land can be encouraged by the government planning the rural settlement by zoning those areas to be built and those to be used for agricultural purposes.

5.3.6 Persistence of Cultural Practice in Uringu Division.

64% of the respondents were aware of the existence of cultural practice in Uringu division. 21% claimed there were no cultural practices in the division, while only 15% of the respondents were not aware of the cultural practice in Uringu division. The results revealed that cultural practices existed in the division. However no significance relationship with poverty levels. Among the cultural practice mentioned included gender inequality, early marriages, female genital mutilation (FGM) Njuri-Ncheke, wife-inheritance, traditional boy's circumcisions were the ones that featured most. However there was no significant relationship between culture and poverty in the study area.

Contrary to the expectation of the research, culture did not show any significance influence on rural poverty in Uringu division. This might be due to the size of the sample selected. It can be recommended therefore that study be done using larger sample in other areas to certain if any significant relationship can be found

5.4 Conclusion

The research was conducted in Uringu division of Meru-North district in Eastern province of Kenya. The study sought to determine the influence of socio-economic factors on rural poverty in Uringu Division. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn as per objectives of the study: Gender inequality was found to exist in a number of areas. Concerning the gender roles, women were found to have more roles compared with Men. All the household duties were left to women and men only assisted in taking care of the animals and land preparations. Women on the other hand did all other duties including those done by men. The study revealed that women supplied most of the agriculture labour in Uringu division. Since many households did not keep animals or where animals are kept they did not require a lot of attention, majority of men were idle most of the time. The work load for women was found to be so heavy that they were left with little time for income generating activities. This contributed to rural poverty in Uringu division.

The study found out that education and size of land were the major determinants of poverty levels. Cultural practices on the other hand were not significantly related to poverty levels. The income level was used as a proxy for poverty. Gender inequality featured in both land ownership and gender roles. Men were favoured when it came to inheritance as compared to women. This was as a result of culture. Most men were unemployed and idle, spending most of their time in drunkenness and in market centers while women were living under heavy burden of being suppliers of labour for agriculture and doing other household duties and taking care of their families.

5.5.0 Recommendations

Empowerments of women to enable them attain some economic freedom. This can be done through affirmative action, government passing legislation in support of women land and property inheritance and training programs for capacity. If women could be allowed rights to property ownership, they can use this as collateral to acquire credits from financial institutions and other lenders.

and should be consolidated into bigger pieces to be of right size for agricultural productivity. Landlessness should also be addressed since this hindered many people in Uringu division from earning some income.

The government should break the vicious circle of poverty by investing more in secondary and tertiary education in order to empower people to diversify their economic activities. If this could be done residents of Uringu division can be freed from being totally reliant on small pieces of land for their livelihood. This is because data results collected in the study area revealed that respondents with tertiary education were well off compared with those with only primary level of education.

Distance to the water point should be reduced by the government initiating water project in Uringu Division this is because from the data results it was found out that very few households had clean piped water. Most people in the division traveled over a kilometer in search for water and therefore wasting a lot of time that could otherwise be used in other useful economic activities

Credit facilities should be extended to the members of the community especially women to boost agriculture production and start small scale businesses that can help them earn bigger incomes and hence reduce poverty levels in Uringu division.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Since the sample studied was small further research need to be conducted using larger sample in Uringu division in order to find out other factors that influence on poverty.

there factors beside socio- economic factors can be studied to get the real truth about rural poverty in the division.

There is a need to research on how acute shortage of water in Uringu division has contributed to household poverty. This is because majority of Uringu residents did not have clean water in the compound and spent a lot of time in search of water.

Poor infrastructure such as bad roads, lack of electricity for lighting and for driving machines need also to be examined.

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX I

Letter to seek authority to collect data in Uringu Division Meru North District

**BOX 1611,
MERU**

**THE DISTRICT OFFICER
TIGANIA WEST MERU NORTH,
P.O BOX 149
KIANJAI**

Dear Sir,

REF: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA IN URINGU DIVISION

I am a university of Nairobi student undertaking masters in project planning management at Meru extra- mural centre. I am required to do research and write a report on the influence of socio-economic factors on rural poverty. Since I have chosen Uringu division as my study area, I wish to request for permission to collect information from the residents in all the four location in the division. The information gathered will be kept confidential and it will be used for academic work only.

I humbly request for your authority

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully

Sign

Paul Mutabari Mukuthuria

APPENDIX II
QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I: General Information

Gender

- a) Male ()
b) Female ()

2. What is your marital status?

- i) Single ()
ii) Married ()
iii) Divorced ()
iv) Windowed ()

Age

- Below 20 years ()
20 – 30 years ()
30 – 40 years ()
40 -50 years ()
50 – 60 years ()
Over 60 years ()

4. Type of a house living in

- Permanent (stones) ()
Semi-permanent ()
Temporary ()
Mud walls but iron roofed ()
Mud wall other material ()

5. Source of energy for heating /lighting or cooking

- i) Firewood ()
ii) Gas ()
iii) Solar ()
iv) Paraffin ()
v) Electricity ()

6. How much do you use for fuel per month (state the amount in shillings).

- a) 10-50 shillings 100-200 shillings
()

b) 300-500 over 500

() ()

Do you have clean piped water in your home?

Yes () No. ()

If no how far is the water point?

a) In the compound ()

b) Outside the compound less than 50 metres

()

c) Less than 1 km ()

d) 1 KM and above ()

9. How long do you take per day to fetch water?

a) 30 Minutes ()

b) 1 hour ()

c) More than 1 hour ()

10. Where do you get firewood/charcoal?

a) From own farm ()

b) Buying from the market ()

11. Employment status

a) Employed ()

b) Self - employed ()

c) Unemployed ()

d) Retired ()

PART II

GENDER INEQUALITY

What is your marital status?

Married ()

Unmarried ()

13. If married under whose name is the land the family owns registered

Husband ()

Wife ()

Joint ()

In your opinion is there any inequality in land ownership (i.e. between men and women)

Yes () No ()

15. Who determines how a piece of land is to be used

a) Husband ()

b) Wife ()

c) Mutual agreement between the two partners

16. i) In your opinion do you think inequality in land ownership has a role to play in propagating poverty?

Yes () No ()

ii) Briefly comment what should be done to make land available to both gender

17. From the list below mark the activities that are done by men

i) Fetching water ()

ii) Helps in firewood collection ()

iii) Prepares the farm ()

iv) Participates in household duties ()

v) Taking care of animals ()

vi) Cooking ()

vii) Preparing children for school ()

Others specify

18. Do you consult your wife/husband in all the decisions you make for the family?

a) Yes ()

b) No ()

c) Rarely ()

19. Do you support the idea that inheritance should be shared equally between males and females?

Yes () No ()

20. As a household head what are your daily activities?

a) Housework ()

b) Farm activities ()

c) Business /self employment ()

d) Employed on permanent terms ()

e) Others specify

EDUCATION LEVEL

Which is your highest level of education?

(Tick where appropriate)

Primary level

Standard 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,

Secondary level

Form 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

College

Certificate ()

Diploma ()

University

Degree ()

Post graduate ()

M.A / MSC ()

Others specify

How has your level of education helped you in life

Helped me to acquire some skills for survival ()

helped me to get employment ()

No benefit ()

i) Do you involve your children both boys and girls in day to day household duties?

Yes () No ()

ii) If so does this affect their school attendance?

Yes () No ()

iii) If yes who is affected most

(a) Boy(s)

(b) Girl(s)

LAND OWNERSHIP

Do you own a piece of land?

Yes () No ()

If yes, how big is the piece of land?

Less than one acre

between 1 & 2 acres

3- 4 Acres

5-6 Acres

Over 6 acres

26. How much of this land is put under agriculture?

Less than an acre

1 to 2 Acres

3-4 Acres

Over 5 acres

If your land is used for agriculture about how much do you harvest per acre.

Indicate the amount of harvest you make per year

Type of crop	
Maize	
Beans	
Horticulture	
Bananas	

27. i) A part from crop farming do you rear animal?

Yes () No ()

ii) If yes what kind of animals?

Cattle ()

Goats ()

Sheep ()

Chicken ()

Rabbits ()

28. In your opinion are the yields from your farm able to support your family

Enough () Not enough ()

29. How else do you support your family?

a) Earning from employment ()

b) From casual labour income ()

c) From family business ()

30. On average how much do you earn from animal keeping

Less than 500.00 per month ()

More than Shs 500.00 per month. ()

Nothing ()

31. In your opinion would you consider rearing of the animals as a source of regular income to support your family?

Yes () No ()

LEVEL OF INCOME

32. What economic activity are you involved in that earns you income

a) Agricultural activities ()

b) Business ()

c) Employment on permanent terms ()

d) Casual labour earning ()

33. Approximately how much incomes do you general from that economic activity per month.

a) Less than 1,500.00 ()

b) 1,500 to 2,500.00 ()

c) 300-5000.00 ()

d) 5000 – 7000.00 ()

e) 10000-15000 ()

f) Over 15,000 ()

g) Not regular income ()

CULTURE

Do you know of some of the traditions that have persisted in Tigania Division?

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

How have these traditions been a hindrance to development e.g

Agriculture

Property ownership

How has the cultural practices interfered with

Inheritance

Ownership of land & property

Leadership