

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## The Poverty and Its Implications among the South Sudanese Refugees in Uganda

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### **Abstract:**

Uganda is one of the countries out of 54 countries in the African Union (AU). It borders Rwanda in the Southwest, Tanzania in the South, Kenya in the east, South Sudan in the north, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the west. Uganda is still suffering from poverty despite many struggles to fight it.

Uganda is hosting South Sudan refugees of about 1.5 million people who fled the country due to 2013 and 2016 political wrangling over the leadership among South Sudanese leaders. Most of the displaced people fled and crossed to Uganda, seeking protection as a refugee in northern Uganda. The majority of the refugees were women and children. The districts occupied are Adjumani, Moyo, and Arua in northern Uganda, respectively. Being homeless they had to rely on a ratio that was insufficient to cater to the family.

It is not that straightforward to measure the level or degree of poverty. According to Anna Miller (2013), measuring poverty among refugees requires long periods. If we were to count all people below a certain poverty line at a particular time, we would know only half of the story behind those poor. Someone can fall below the poverty line in one period but climb above it in the next. On the other hand, someone can be persistently below the poverty line. Therefore, it is not enough to take only one snapshot of the scenario. One has to take into account that people can be either chronically or transiently poor and that there are a lot of movements in and out of poverty.

According to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources, Uganda - Poverty gap at \$1.25 a day (PPP) - actual values, historical data, forecasts, and projections were sourced from the World Bank in July 2022.

**Keywords:** Poverty, refugee, displacement, absolute or relative poverty

### **1. Introduction**

According to World Vision (2022), poverty is defined as 'a state where one lacks access to basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter'. Poverty is a severe disease in Uganda and other parts of the world. Uganda's government faced many implications because it hosted a greater number of refugees. According to United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) report (2022), about 1.5 million refugees came from neighboring South Sudan.

Though the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has played a significant role in providing the necessities to the displaced people, particularly the refugees, poverty remains a significant challenge among the refugees, for instance, vulnerable people such as elderly, children, disabled and women who are in high risks since they have left their own belongings in the country they fled from.

A researcher may not term it as "an absolute or relative poverty". It refers to the inability of individuals, groups of people, or even countries to access basic human needs, namely, food, water, shelter, and medical care (Nsamba:2014). The refugees in Uganda hardly get all the basic needs as some of the refugees are pastoralists in nature. Hence, their livelihood depends on cattle and other domestic animals, such as goats and sheep.

The researcher wanted to investigate more in detail the malnutrition that was also associated with poverty. However, some researchers made more investigations with their amicable solutions to settle the problem of poverty among the refugees in the country.

According to Prof. D. O. Ajakaiye and Dr. V. A. Adeyeye, there is no one cause or determinant of poverty. On the contrary, there are combinations of several complex factors that can contribute to poverty. For instance, negative economic growth, inappropriate macroeconomic policies, and deficiencies in the Labor market result in limited job growth, low productivity, wages in the informal sector, and a lag in human resource development.

Other factors contributing to a decline in living standards are structural causes or determinants of poverty, including increased crime, violence, environmental degradation, retrenchment of workers, fall in the real value of safety nets, and changes in family structures.

### 1.1. What Are the Main Causes of Poverty among the South Sudanese Refugees in Uganda?

- Safety net programs are of limited availability in Uganda, which increases the vulnerability of households to fall back into poverty.
- Diseases are another cause of poverty in Uganda among refugees. Infant and child mortality rates remain high, with 131 deaths per 1,000 births. Families in Uganda are often large with a lack of finances and resources. Larger families are highly likely to fall below the poverty line. Poor health also reduces a family's work productivity, causing poverty to be passed down through generations.
- There is little agricultural production due to a shortage of farming land. The native sometimes rejects farming to be carried out by the refugees themselves, increasing poverty among them.
- Shortage of cultivated land and overdependence of refugees on relief has remained a great challenge leading to poverty.
- The persistence of poverty in Uganda, particularly among the refugees despite significant poverty reduction, needs further governmental assistance and global contribution. More attention to foreign aid policy is needed to sustain poverty reduction among refugees.

### 1.2. What Is Poverty?

According to Grace Lubabaale (2019), poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon whose definitions and causes vary by age, gender, culture, and other social, economic, and political contexts. Many of the poverty dimensions are always hidden when people come to reality.

#### 1.1.1. Types of Poverty

There are many types of poverty encountered in Uganda. Among them, two types of poverties have been discussed below with some brief explanations. They are:

- Transient Poverty and
- Chronic Poverty

#### 1.1.2. Statement of the Problem

This research study will thoroughly investigate the causes of poverty and its implications among the South Sudanese refugees in Adjumani, Uganda. Paul Collier (2007) stated, 'poverty has been rising for the last quarter century while it has been falling in the rest of the developing world.' Globally, the number of people in absolute poverty has declined in the last 25 years, yet it is still increasing. Therefore, the researcher needs to find out why there is an increase in poverty in Uganda and other parts of the world.

Poverty in Uganda among South Sudan refugees is principally understood as the lack of provisions to satisfy basic needs. People in extreme poverty live under the poverty line estimated to be 2.50 United States dollars.

Currently, an estimated 1.5 million people live in poverty. It is reported that poverty in Uganda keeps rising day in and day out even if the government of Uganda has put up different measures to curb the rising numbers of poor people.

The major cause of poverty in Uganda is illiteracy, which is the manifest challenge that is perturbing Uganda. These high levels of illiteracy have given birth to a disease called malnutrition, unemployment, and the moment one does not have any source of income, that is a well-off start for the journey of poverty.

In one opinion, education is the best way we can use to fully eradicate poverty in Uganda among refugees by giving life skills training. If we are to tackle a problem, we uproot the causes. Illiteracy still stands as the major cause of poverty in Uganda, and it is what we should fight most.

## 2. Methodology

This study used both quality and quantitative research. All related data (primary and secondary data) were collected from different sources. Some questionnaires were designed to collect information to be analyzed for a proper finding.

## 3. Recommendations

- There must be a call for support for food distribution and other properties to be identified based on their customs for their livelihoods.
- Cattle and other domestic animals should be distributed to the elderly people, especially in communities whose life is based on pastoralism.
- Life skill training should be given to the refugees to help them have sustainable lives and earn a living.
- The government of the host country and partners should finance small projects and encourage entrepreneurship.

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