

Abstract

Poverty continues to be the main challenge of human existence in many parts of the world. In Africa, it is the main source of agony among individuals and communities. In Kenya it continues to influence people's lives negatively as the majority lack the basic essentials of life including food, clothing, shelter, education and healthcare among others. In Chogoria Archdeaconry, poverty has continued to affect people's lives as most of the residents continue to struggle for their survival. In response to this, the Church in Kenya, especially the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), has endeavored to fight the scourge as part of her mission to the society. This study undertook to examine the effectiveness of the methods used by ACK in alleviating poverty in Chogoria Archdeaconry. The ACK has been involved in the fight against poverty in Chogoria Archdeaconry using various methods since its inception in 1974. Despite the Church's efforts to alleviate poverty, this community is beset with immense poverty as evidenced by the fact that people lack the basic human needs and services. This justified the need for such a study as there is need to underscore why poverty is persistent despite the church's effort to alleviate it. The study was guided by three objectives namely to investigate reasons for the persistence of poverty in Chogoria Archdeaconry regardless of Church's efforts to alleviate it, to determine the effectiveness of methods used by the church in her fight against poverty in Chogoria Archdeaconry, and to establish ways of making the methods used to alleviate poverty more effective. The study will add to the existing knowledge in religious studies and other related disciplines. The study was guided by the broad theory of psycho-social approach which was developed by Paulo Freire in 1968 which emphasizes that development should be seen as an improvement of quality of life. It was conducted in ACK Chogoria Archdeaconry, in the diocese of Meru. The Archdeaconry covers the administrative jurisdiction of Maara Sub- County in Tharaka Nithi County and the area has a population of 107,125 people. Data was collected from a sample size of 384 respondents. The study used descriptive research design and the sampling method used was simple random sampling for community members and purposive sampling technique for church members and archdeaconry leaders. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires, interviews and observation. Data was analyzed and findings presented using descriptive statistics. The study found that there are various reasons for persistent poverty in Chogoria Archdeaconry which include wealth acquisition rather than quality of life, leadership and corruption, the gap between the rich and the poor, unequal distribution of resources, agricultural conditions, lack of education, unemployment, dependency, laziness and drunkenness. The study revealed that the methods used to alleviate poverty include education, Anglican Development Services, Capacity building, Church and Community Mobilization Process and Microfinance. It further revealed that some of the methods used by ACK to alleviate poverty are not effective and that all these methods need to be improved so as to alleviate poverty in Chogoria Archdeaconry.