



Research Article

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Understanding Rural Poverty and Mitigation Strategies in Mtwara District

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Abstract: The paper examined the understanding of rural poverty and possible mitigation strategies to curb it. The study was carried out in Mtwara rural district in the Mtwara region. The investigation involved 413 respondents. The study employed a mixed-method design so as to accommodate multiple approaches to data collection. Data were collected by using face-to-face interviews and field observation. The collected data were analyzed by the statistical package for social sciences and Microsoft Excel as the tools provide useful descriptive statistics and help in identifying trends, thus enabling the drawing of informed conclusions. The study revealed that the Mtwara rural district and the majority of its population are poor. For their livelihood; most people are engaged in mixed farming activities and some in seasonal small businesses. Social infrastructures are available and accessible, however, some of them such as water, need serious improvement to meet human beings' living standards. The Mtwara rural people argue that in cooperation with the government and development partners are ready for reliable mitigation strategies and thus poverty reduction.

Keywords: Rural Poverty, Poverty reduction, Mitigation strategies, Mtwara district, Tanzania

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INTRODUCTION

Poverty in most developing countries and Tanzania in particular has been identified as a rural phenomenon (Kafle *et al.*, 2019; World Bank, 2015). About 3.4 billion people in the world which is an estimation of 45 percent of world population are poor and live in the rural developing countries (Addae-Korankye, 2014, 2019; Kafle *et al.*, 2019). In the poverty literature, rural poverty in developing countries accounts for up to about 63 percent of world poverty, reaching 90 percent in some sub Saharan Africa (Khan, 2001)¹. In Tanzania, the literature on poverty reveals that 96 percent of all poor people live in the rural areas (M. P. Mandalu, 2019; NBS, 2014). This fact called for an investigation on rural poverty in the country and for this study Mtwara rural was targeted as it is one of the poor regions in the country (UNDP, 2014). The study intended to understand the rural poverty of Mtwara district peoples' understanding of the same and explore the possible mitigation strategies to address rural poverty in Mtwara district and all rural settings in the country.

In the period between 2011 and 2018 Tanzanian economy grew at an average rate of 6.7 per cent per annum which is impressive (Kinyondo & Pelizzo, 2020). Despite the high economic growth poverty in Tanzania has not declined significantly as expected (Kinyondo & Magashi, 2017). Poverty in Tanzania is still considered

and seen as a rural phenomenon (M.Mandalu, 2016; M. Mandalu *et al.*, 2018). Poverty continues to be the rural affair as most poor people in the country are located in the rural areas (M. P. Mandalu, 2019; World Bank, 2015, 2019). Between 2011 and 2018, the rural areas continued to be the poorest in the country despite the impressive economic growth (Kinyondo & Pelizzo, 2020). The southern region in Tanzania where Mtwara is located was also caught up by poverty and thus the need to carry out a study in Mtwara.

The Mtwara population experiences poverty as others in other regions of the country. In 2010, 16% of children were severely malnourished, 5% were severely underweight, and 1% were severely wasted. Moreover, as of 2012, there were 1.87 million people living below \$ 1.9 per day and 2.86 million people were living below \$ 3.10 per day in the southern part of the country. As of 2012, 81% households headed by male and 80% households headed by female were living below \$ 3.10 per day. Moreover, the distinction was also made between rural and urban areas in the southern region, moreover, it was noted that 59 percent of urban dwellers and 86 percent of the rural population were living in poverty below 3.1 percent per day (IFPRI, 2017).

The question of rural poverty has been addressed extensively through various approaches such as rural livelihood and poverty reduction (Kinyondo &

¹<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/issues/issues26/>

Magashi, 2017; Loison, 2015), rural poverty reduction (FAO, 2020), several rural poverty reports prepared by specialized organizations in the matter of rural poverty (IFAD, 2011). Some studies have detailed the causes of poverty in the African context (Addae-Korankye, 2014).

Despite the efforts by scholars and specialized organizations in rural poverty, rural Africa remains poor and the people are still living in Poverty (Osberg & Bandara, 2012), however, some parts of the continent have not been explored to understand the real situation on the ground and people's understanding of poverty has not been explored. This study therefore, intended to understand the rural poverty of Mtwara district and peoples' understanding of the same and explore the possible mitigation² strategies to address rural poverty in Mtwara district and beyond.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Mtwara rural district; it is one of the five districts of the Mtwara region. Data collection for the study took place between May and August 2022. Mtwara district is bordered to the north by the Lindi region, to the south by Mozambique, to the east by Mtwara-Mikindani Municipality and the Indian Ocean, and to the west by the Tandahimba district.

Research Design

This study intended to examine and understand the rural poverty of Mtwara district and explore the possible potential mitigation strategies to address rural poverty in Mtwara district. Poverty is a multidimensional

Sample selection

phenomenon that requires various approaches to study it. Therefore, the study employed a mixed method design that involves multiple approaches in the process of data collection.

Data Collection Techniques

Since the study employed a mixed-method design, it collected both primary and secondary data. The data were collected through interviews, in-depth interviews, and documentary reviews.

Secondary Data

The documents were collected from official offices of district government, ward, village governments and the regional library in Mtwara. The documents are valid and reliable as they are official government documents used by the government in its official activities and reference for socio-economic and political projects.

Sample

The study targeted Mtwara rural population so as to understand the Mtwara rural district poverty. The Mtwara population is largely rural with 77 percent of total population living in rural areas (NBS, 2016). The study dealt with a representative sample of the whole population. Mtwara rural district has 21 wards and 110 villages (DED, 2021). The district has 58,602 households with a total population of 228,003 whereby those living in the rural areas are 214, 654 persons equivalent to 86 percent (NBS, 2016).

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents as Identified for the study

Respondents	Type	Sum	Strategy	Methods of data collection
District Executive Director (DED)	Key informant	1	Purposively selected	In-depth interview
Ward Executive Officers (WEO)	Key informant	21	Purposively selected	Interview
Village Executive Officers (VEO)	Key informant	110	Purposively selected	Interview
Ward Development Officers (WDO)	Key informant	21	Purposively selected	Interview
Ward Education Officers	Key informant	21	Purposively selected	Interview
Ward Health Officers (WHO)	Key informant	21	Purposively selected	Interview
Households (HH) from each village	Two Purposive selected house hold (HH) - A better off HH - A poor ³ HH	220	Purposively selected by VEO	Interview

Researchers, 2022

² The action of reducing the severity, seriousness, or painfulness of something

³ For the purpose of research, this study adopted a poor person as according to the standards of Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF)

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Interviews

When a pilot study was carried out, the study realized that interview was the best means of collecting reliable data from the selected sample. Therefore, all data from respondents were collected through interviews except for the district executive officer whose data were collected through an in-depth interview by the whole team of researchers.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft excel as the tools provide useful frequencies, cross-tabulation, and help in identifying trends, and thus enabling the drawing of informed conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics

Findings reveal that the distribution accommodated all age groups from (20-24) all the way to 65+. The age groups with highest number of respondents were those of (30-34) which constitutes 16.5% followed by (35-39) and (45-49) which each constitutes 13.3% of all respondents. Therefore, the findings reveal that age of majority of the respondents fall in the range of 30-50 years equivalent to 51.8%. With further disaggregation, the findings show that about 67% of respondents were youth below 45 years. Since 46.7% of respondents were leaders (WEO, VEO, HEO, EDO and DEVO⁴), it also implies that most of the leadership positions are occupied by youth which should have a great influence of rural development as they are energetic and well trained given the level of their education.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents' Age and Sex (n= 413)

Age group	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
60-64	32	7.7	7.7	7.7
65+	48	11.6	11.6	19.4
20-24	10	2.4	2.4	21.8
25-29	26	6.3	6.3	28.1
30-34	68	16.5	16.5	44.6
35-39	55	13.3	13.3	57.9
40-44	36	8.7	8.7	66.6
45-49	55	13.3	13.3	79.9
50-54	30	7.3	7.3	87.2
55-59	53	12.8	12.8	100
Total	413	100	100	
Sex				
Male	275			
Female	138	66.6	66.6	66.6
	413	33.4	33.4	100.0
		100.0	100	

Field data, 2022

Gender/ Sex

The study reveals that there were 275 (67%) male respondents and 138 (33%) female respondents. This fact to some extent reflects the religious and cultural background of most societies in Mtwara rural. The fact that male respondents were the majority implies male influence in the findings of the study. Since the population is traditionally matrilineal, one would have expected more female respondents. However, traditionally the dominance of men in most African societies may have influenced the dominance of male respondents as head of household than the female (Mshana *et al.*, 2022).

Marital status

On marital status, findings reveal that the largest group was that of married respondents 341(82.6%) others were either separated, divorced or widowed. Those unmarried were 27(7%) of all respondents. Therefore, findings in the study are influenced by respondents who are married or were married at a given point of their lives and thus have experience of leading or being a family member. A further cross-tabulation between marital status and gender reveals an unexpected result

⁴ WEO = Ward Executive Officer, VEO =Village Executive Officer, HEO=Health Officer, EDO= Education Officer, DEVO= Development Officer

Table 3. *Distribution of Marital Status (n= 413)*

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	341	82.6	82.6	82.6
Separated	19	4.6	4.6	87.2
Divorced	16	3.9	3.9	91.0
Single	27	6.5	6.5	97.6
Widow	10	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022

Since the sample was dominated by male respondents (275 by 138), males were expected to dominate in each category of marital status. In the contrary, as indicated in table 3 above, among 19 separated respondents, 18 of them were female and 15 of them live with the children after separation. Likewise, among 16 divorced, 12 were female. These findings imply that women are more vulnerable to marriage conflicts and they carry most of the burden than men and this has a negative implication to economic activities. The obvious fact could be that since respondents come from a society that allows men to practice polygamy, then the men would likely not to be found divorced because they could still have other wives but the findings do not support the reality.

Objective I: People's Understanding of Rural Poverty in Mtwara district

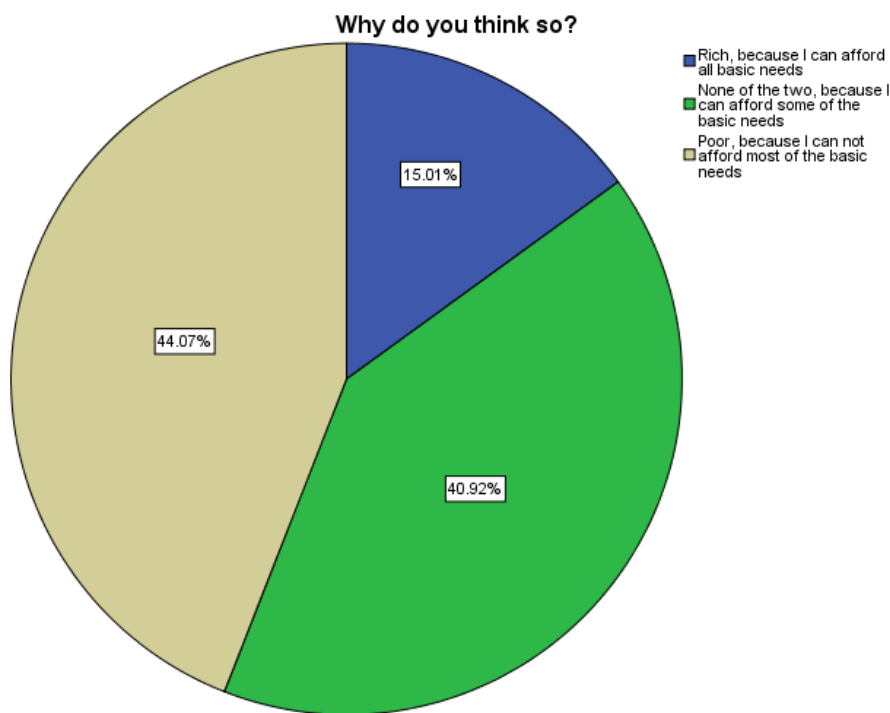
On people's understanding of rural poverty, findings revealed that 389 respondents equivalent to 94% said Mtwara rural is poor, while only 24 respondents equivalent to 6% said it was not poor. The view is supported by the findings which reveal that 182 respondents (44%) perceived themselves to be poor, only 62 respondents equivalent to 15% (*most of them local government leaders*) perceived themselves as rich, whereas 169 respondents (41%) argued that they were undecided as to whether they were poor or rich. Those who are neither rich nor poor and those rich (56%) claimed that there are lots of resources that could make them richer and more successful. Whereas some of those who said were poor argued that it was destined for them

to be poor, and that they could not change the situation. Some argued with a strong conviction influenced by their traditions and faith as argues the Cultural Belief Systems Theory of Poverty that poverty is transmitted from one generation to the other through sets of beliefs, values and skills that are socially generated but individually held (Bradshaw, 2006; Majid *et. al.*, 2012). Moreover, those who argued to be rich said so because they argued that they can afford their basic needs in life. While those who argued to be poor argued so because they cannot afford their basic needs in life. And for those who claimed to be neither poor nor rich argued so because they can afford some of their basic needs in life. Some of the basic needs mentioned by respondents include: food, shelter, cloths, health services, education and some cited even electricity as a basic need. Majority of them seemed to be aware of what basic needs are.

The Mtwara Rural Population is Poor.

When the study probed further about the status of the rural population, respondents contended as revealed by findings that 223 respondents (54%) argued people were poor and that they have low living standards because they were unable to afford their basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, education, electricity and health care. 133 respondents (32%) simply argued it was due to inadequacy of income, 30 respondents (8%) argued it was caused by issues related to agriculture productivity such as poor harvest from agriculture and lack of agriculture inputs, and 18 respondents (4%) claimed that poverty was caused by inadequate social infrastructure.

Figure 1. Distribution of Reasons of Poverty in Mtwara Rural



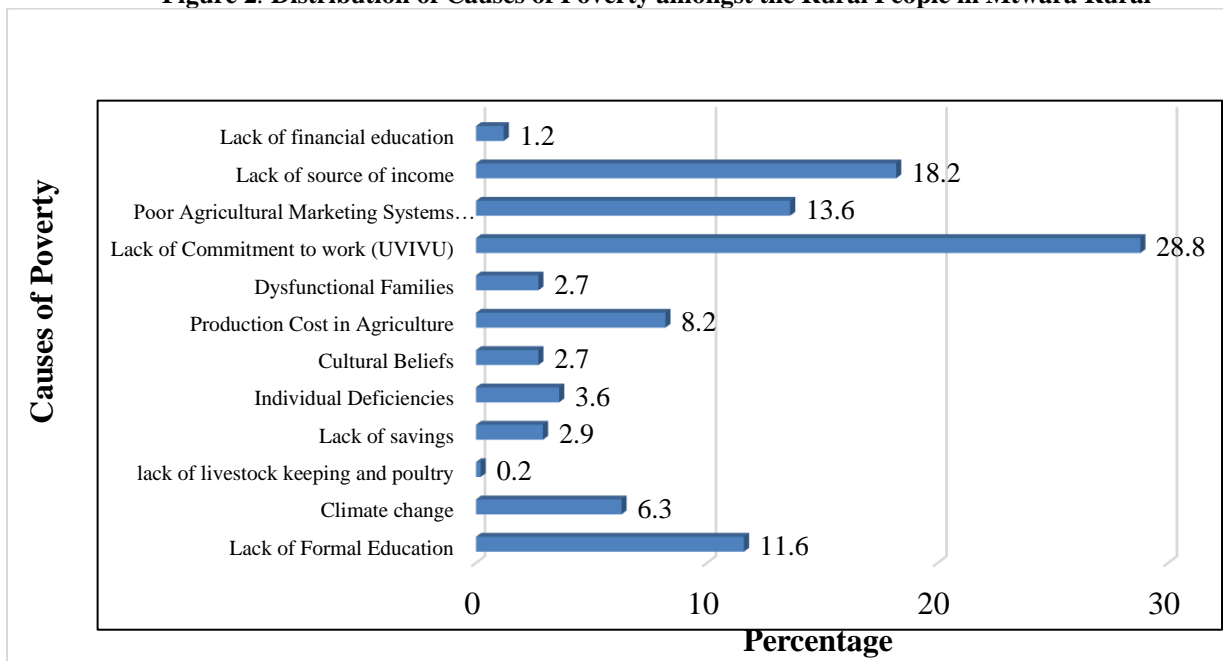
Field data, 2022

Causes of Poverty Amongst the Rural People

When asked about what causes poverty amongst rural people, findings revealed a number of factors. 119 respondents (29%) argued that people were poor because of laziness; they did not put enough efforts in their work. Categorically, majority of respondents complained that youths are not well taught about the value of work which results to lack of commitment to

work among them even in their adulthood. 75(18%) respondents argued that it was due to lack of source of income, 56(14%) respondents claimed that poor agricultural marketing systems caused them to be poor. 48 respondents (12%) argued that rural poverty was caused by lack of formal education. 34(8%) respondents argued that it was caused by production costs, 26(6%) argued that it was caused by a culture of lack of savings.

Figure 2. Distribution of Causes of Poverty amongst the Rural People in Mtwara Rural



Field data, 2022

Moreover, 11 respondents (3%) argued that poverty was caused by cultural beliefs and same score 11 respondents (3%) argued that poverty was caused by dysfunctional families. 5 respondents (1%) argued that lack of financial education caused poverty amongst the rural people. As indicated in figure 2 above, respondents attribute four main causes of poverty among rural people namely lack of formal education, lack of commitment to work, poor agricultural marketing systems and lack of capital which altogether account for 72.2% of all the causes identified. This fact is supported by two theories of Individual Deficiencies Theory of Poverty and Cultural Belief Systems Theory of Poverty. The Individual Deficiencies Theory of Poverty argues that people get caught up in poverty due to their own inability to work hard and make better choices in life. This is what theorists in Bradshaw 2006 argue that individuals in poverty are responsible to some extent for being poor. The Cultural Belief Systems Theory of Poverty argue that poverty is transmitted from one generation to another through sets of beliefs, values and skills that are socially generated but individually held (Bradshaw, 2006; Majid *et al.*, 2012). The remedy for poverty caused by cultural belief systems is to change the culture by either abolishing some subcultures that perpetuate poverty and/or introducing new subcultures. This can be

done through informal and formal education programs and this applies to the situation in Mtwara rural.

Objective Two: The sources of Income and/or livelihood in Mtwara district

The study sought to find out what sources of income or livelihood the rural population depended on. The investigation intended to know what sources were depended on during rainy and what sources were important in dry season. Findings revealed that 220 respondents equivalent to (53%) were engaged with mixed farming activities during rainy season as their source of income. 191 respondents (46%) were civil servants, and only 2 (0.5%) argued to be engaged in business as their source of income. The different crops in the mixed farming which are sources of livelihood to people in Mtwara rural include: maize, paddy, cassava, ground nuts, legumes, millet, sesame, horticulture. Further, findings reveal some individuals 8(2%) were involved in livestock keeping as their means of livelihood. Further findings disclosed that 19 respondents (5%) were engaged in poultry as their livelihood. Fishing 18(4%) came out as a source of livelihood to a section of individuals especially those living along the coast of the Indian Ocean.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents' Responses on their Sources of Income:

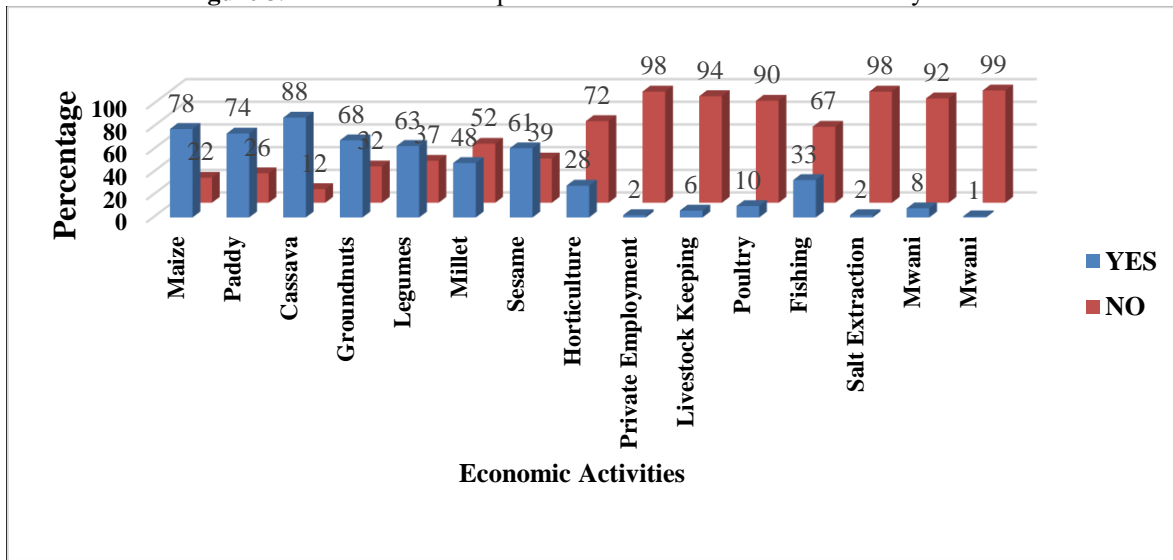
Economic Activity	Score	YES	NO
Maize	Frequency	240	173
	Percent	58	42
Paddy	Frequency	181	232
	Percent	44	56
Cassava	Frequency	278	135
	Percent	67	33
Groundnuts	Frequency	142	271
	Percent	34	66
Legumes	Frequency	147	266
	Percent	36	64
Millet	Frequency	123	290
	Percent	30	70
Sesame	Frequency	147	266
	Percent	36	64
Horticulture	Frequency	53	360
	Percent	13	87
Government Employment	Frequency	187	226
	Percent	45	55
Private Employment	Frequency	2	411
	Percent	1	100
Livestock Keeping	Frequency	8	405
	Percent	2	98
Poultry	Frequency	19	394
	Percent	5	95
Fishing	Frequency	18	395
	Percent	4	96
Salt Extraction	Frequency		413
	Percent		100
Sea weed (Mwani)	Frequency	3	410
	Percent	1	99

Field data, 2022

The study investigated on the respondent’s economic activities but also inquired from respondents on the economic activities on the entire Mtwara rural population. When 413 respondents (100%) were asked

about sources of income for other people in Mtwara rural during rainy season argued that they too dwelt on mixed farming, self-employment, livestock keeping, poultry, fishing, salt extraction, seaweed (Mwani), and business.

Figure 3. Distribution of Respondents’ Economic Activities in Rainy Season

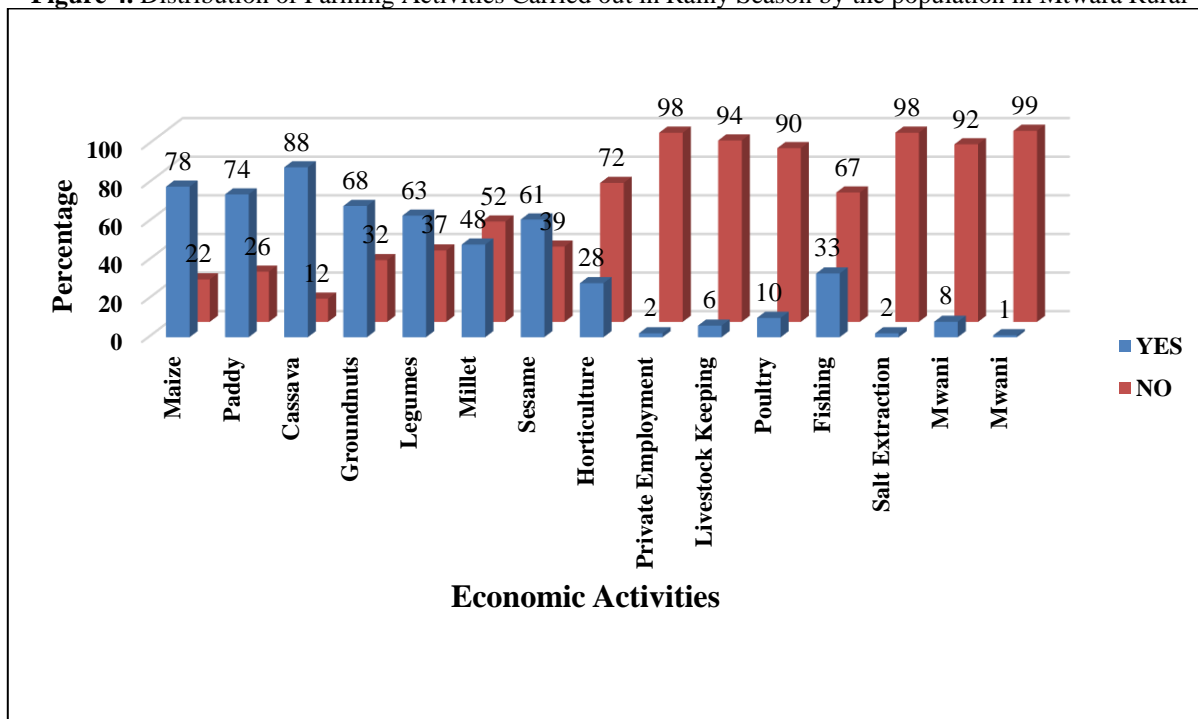


Field data, 2022

During rainy season, the study found most individuals were engaged on farming activities though at a small scale as their income generating activity. The people cultivate different types of crops. Findings revealed that 323(78%) respondents argued that during rainy season men, women and youth were engaged in

maize farming. Moreover, 307 (74%) said the population in Mtwara rural gets engaged in paddy cultivation during rainy season. Furthermore, 365(88%) respondents argued that the Mtwara rural population is involved in cassava cultivation as their economic activity.

Figure 4. Distribution of Farming Activities Carried out in Rainy Season by the population in Mtwara Rural



Field data, 2022

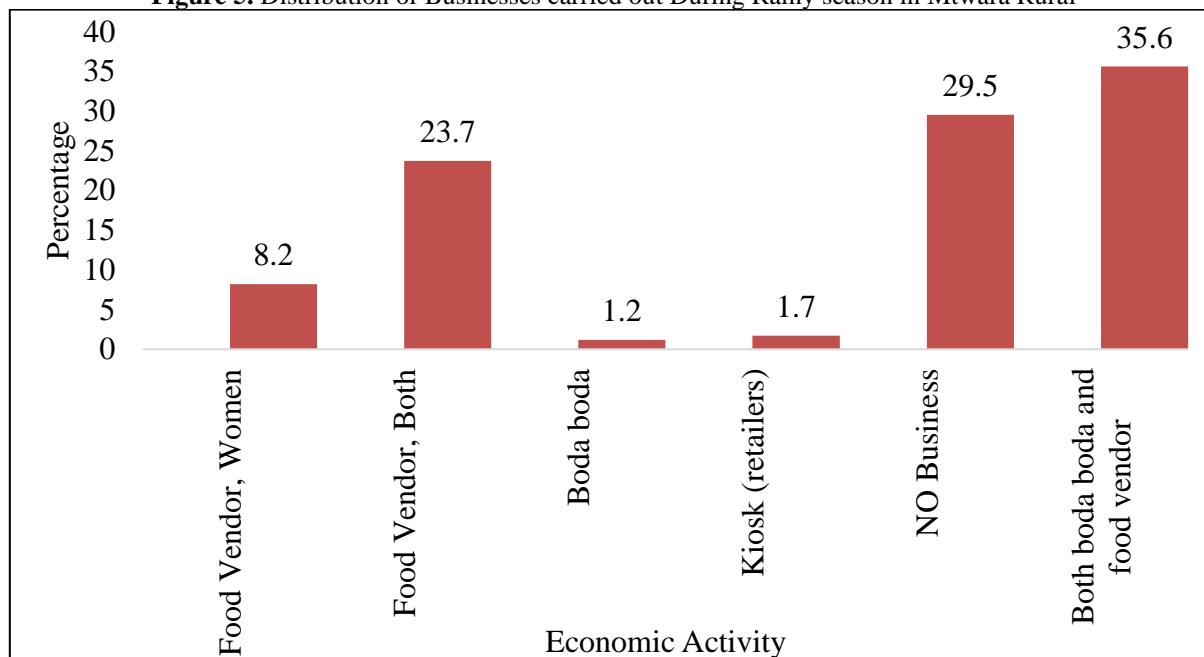
Moreover, 280 (68%) respondents argued that the population cultivates groundnuts as their economic activity, 262 respondents (63%) are involved in the cultivation of legumes as their source of income. 197(48%) respondents argued that a number of Mtwara rural dwellers engage in the cultivation of millet. 253(61%) respondents argued that some people take Sesame as their economic activity during rainy season. Horticulture is yet another activity carried out during rainy season as ascertained by 114(28%) respondents. Some individuals have employed themselves in other activities apart from agricultural ones. This is confirmed by 10 (2%) respondents. Livestock keeping is yet another economic activity carried out in Mtwara rural as demonstrated by 26 (6%) respondents. Poultry is an activity carried out by some residents of Mtwara rural as reveals findings of 42(10%) respondents. Fishing is common and indeed popular along the coast of the Indian Ocean as demonstrated by 137(33%) respondents. Salt extraction is carried out too though at a minimal magnitude as portrayed by 7(2%) respondents, Seaweed (Mwani) is another economic activity carried out in the coast of the Indian ocean as ascertained by 32(8%)

respondents. What is of great interest here to note is that most elderly persons engage themselves in some economic activities though of small size and with little success. The small size of activities and inefficiency is caused by ignorance which could be eliminated by engaging the extension officers available at least at the ward level.

Business

Moreover, findings revealed that during the rainy season, there are some individuals who engage themselves with business as their source of income. There are businesses of different types. Most of the businesses are mainly of small scale and they include: food vendor which is carried out in most cases by women but in other cases by men too. There are those involved with bodaboda⁵, others engage in kiosks as retailers. Findings reveal clearly that the Mtwara rural population is engaged on a variety of small businesses as indicated in figure 5 the dominant businesses are food vending (23.7%) and bodaboda (35.6%). It is also evident that a significant number of rural people in Mtwara do not do any business during rainy season.

Figure 5. Distribution of Businesses carried out During Rainy season in Mtwara Rural



Field data, 2022

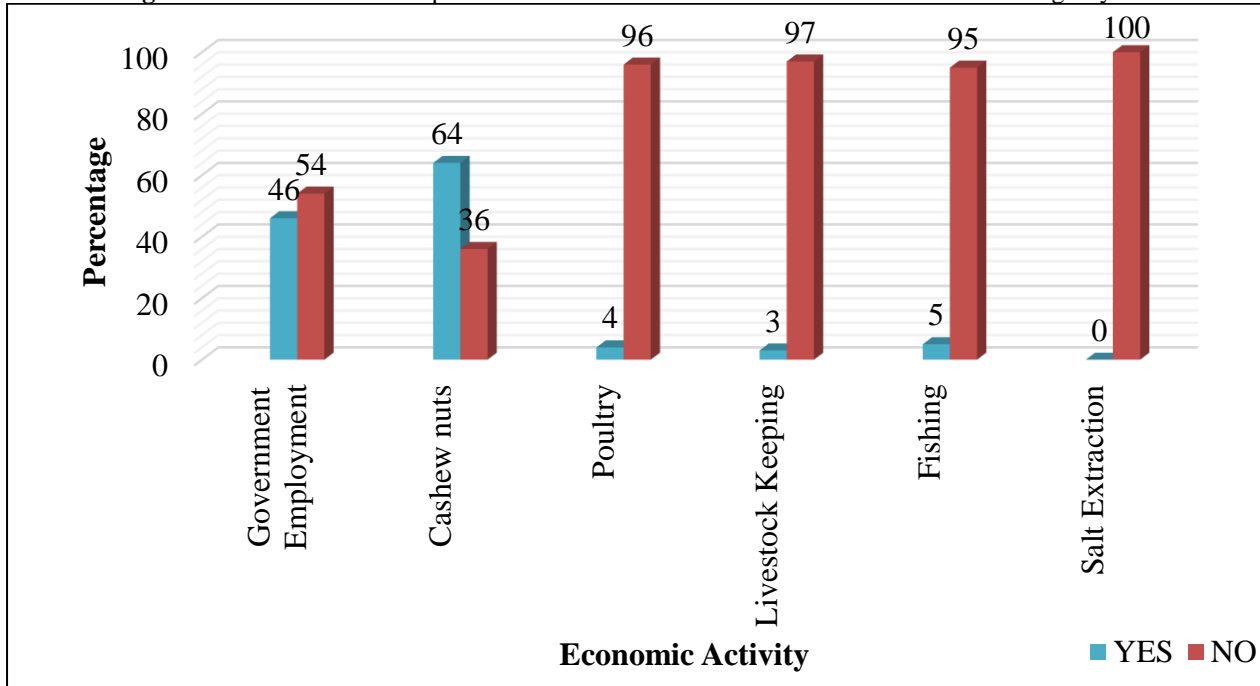
Economic activities Carried out During Dry Season

This was an interesting and necessary question to ask the respondents as in most rural areas the core economic activity is agriculture which in most cases is practiced during rainy season. The question was addressed to the individual herself/himself and then the 413 respondents were asked about what the whole population in Mtwara rural engaged on during the said period of time.

Findings reveal six different economic activities carried out during the dry season by the respondents. The activities which are sources of income were government employment 192(46%), cashew nut farming 263(64%), poultry 15 (4%), livestock keeping 13(3%), and fishing 19(5%).

⁵ Riding motorcycles for carrying passengers

Figure 6. Distribution of Respondents' Economic Activities / Sources of Income During Dry Season

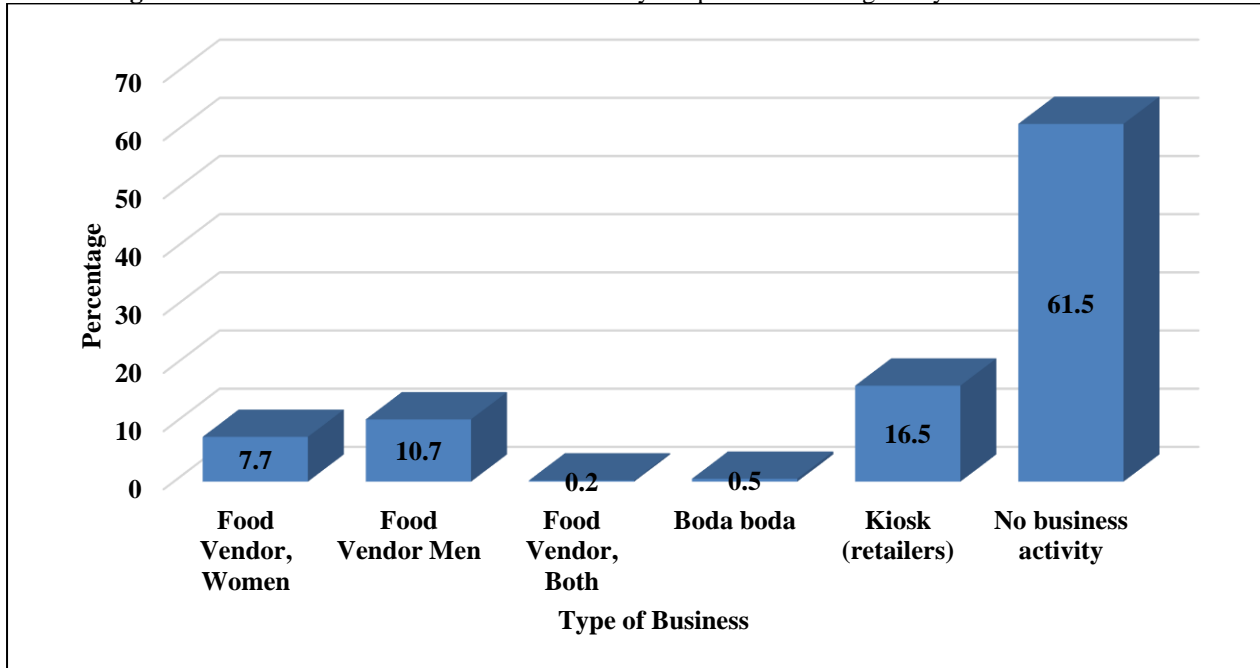


Field data, 2022

Others were involved in different businesses – women who were involved in food vendor 32(8%), men involved as food vendors 44(11%), carpentry 7(2%), kiosk (retailers) 68(17%), bodaboda and bodaboda and

food vendor 6(1%). Majority of respondents do not engage in business activities during rainy season possibly due to the fact that their core business is the government employment as indicated in figure 7 below.

Figure 7. Distribution of Businesses carried out by Respondents During Rainy season in Mtwara Rural

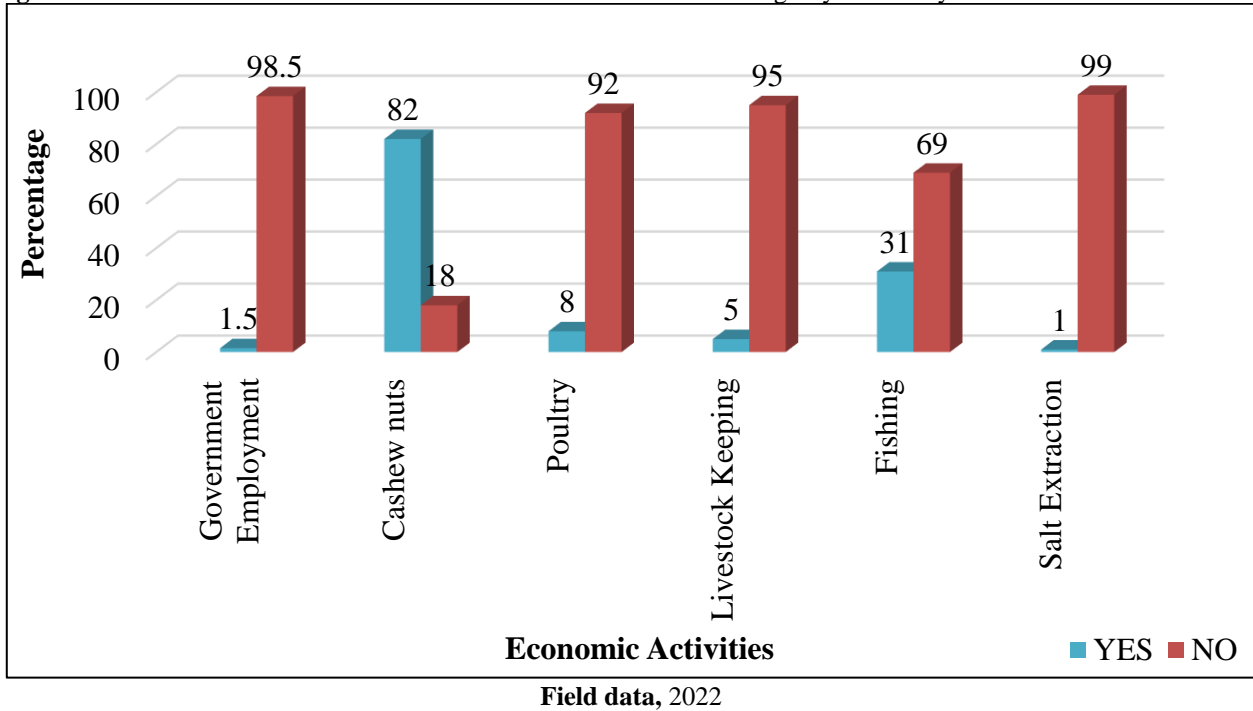


Field data, 2022

The 413 respondents were asked about what economic activities the Mtwara rural population (women, men and youth) were engaged on during dry season; they came up with seven economic activities

which are carried out by residents of Mtwara rural as their source of income.

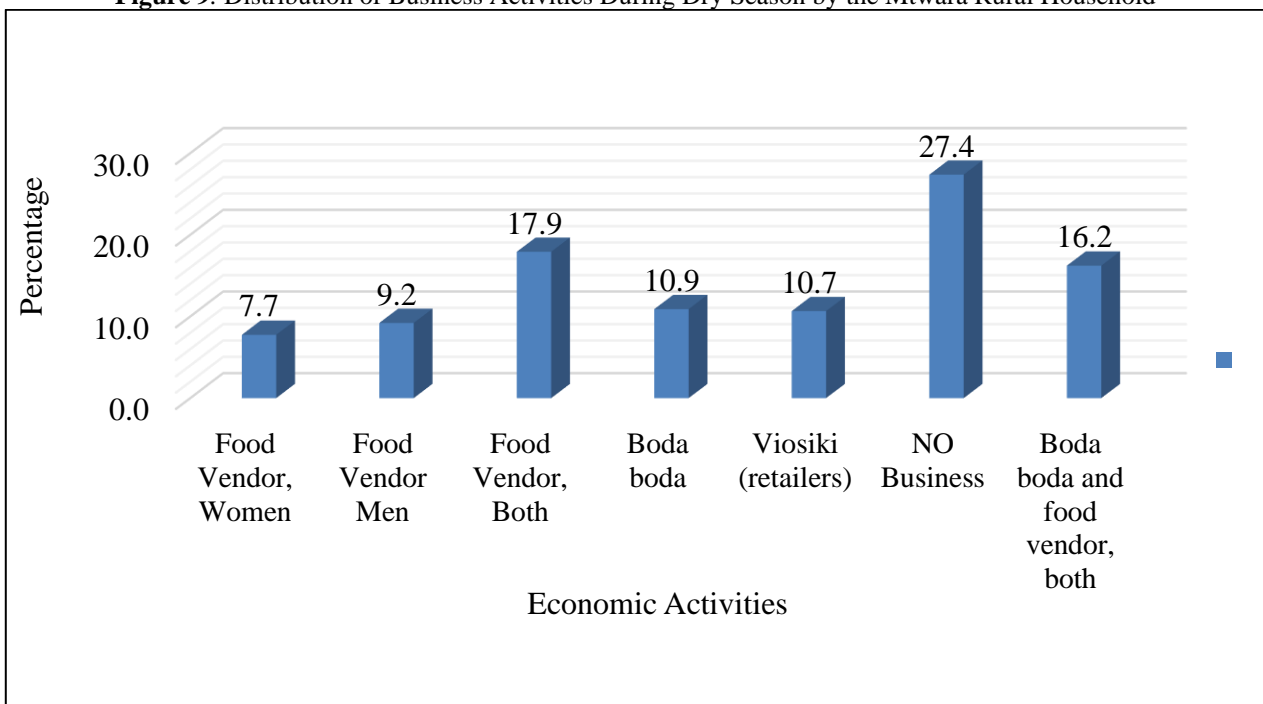
Figure 8. Distribution of Economic Activities / Sources of Income During Dry Season by the Mtwara Rural Household



Findings disclosed that 6 (1.5%) respondents identified government employment as a source of income to others, 338(82%) respondents said people engage in cashew nut farming, 31(8%) respondents argued that rural people engage on poultry as their source of income, 242(59%) respondents argued that rural people engage on business as their source of income, 20(5%) respondents said that the rural people in Mtwara engage on livestock keeping as their source of income.

With regard to business carried out by the general population during dry season, results indicate that food vending (18%) and bodaboda (16%) constitute a significant proportion. The proportion of those who do not do any business is about 27% as indicated on figure 9 which is lower compared to the rainy season suggesting that people are more engaged in small businesses during dry season.

Figure 9. Distribution of Business Activities During Dry Season by the Mtwara Rural Household

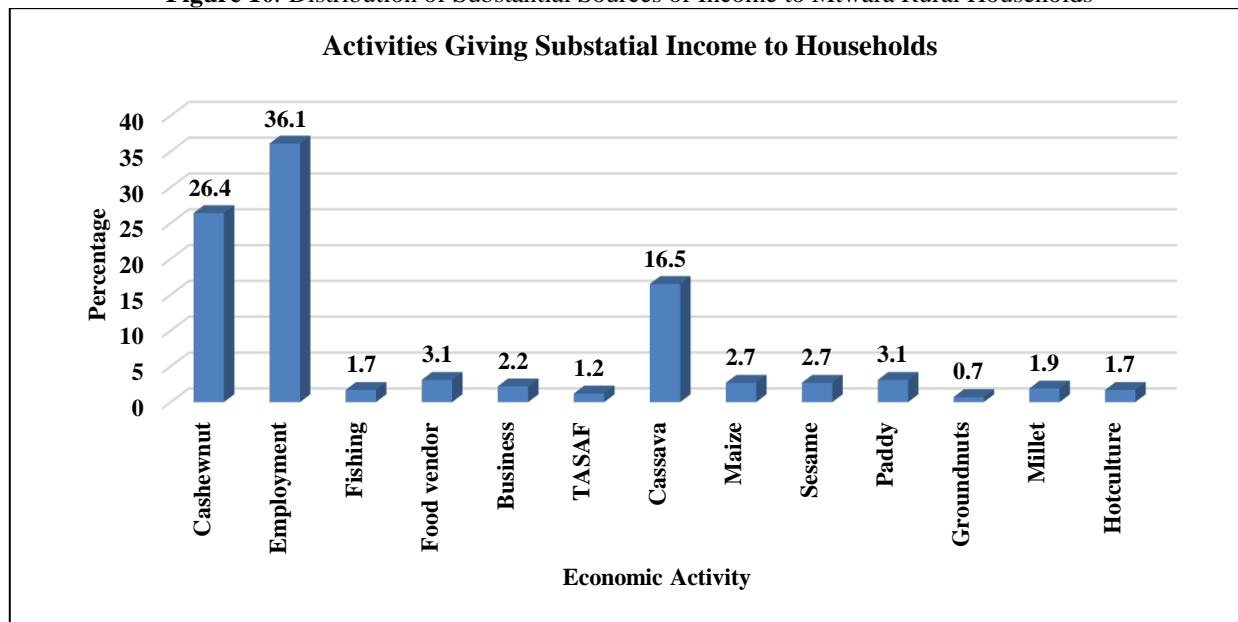


Furthermore, results also suggest that 128 (31%) respondents suggested Mtwara rural people along the coast of the Indian ocean engage on fishing as a livelihood, and 6(1%), respondents argued that some people carry out salt extraction as their source of income.

Substantial Income

Moreover, the study sought to find out economic activities that gave respondents substantial income. This means an individual could be having multiple sources of income and so the study sought to find out the substantial source of their income and table 10 below reveals the findings.

Figure 10. Distribution of Substantial Sources of Income to Mtwara Rural Households



Field data, 2022

Findings revealed seven different economic activities that provide substantial income to households in Mtwara rural: cashew nut farming 109(26%), government employment 149(36%), fishing 7(2%), food vendor 13(3%), business 9(2%), income from TASAF 5(1%), various seasonal crops 121(31%) that is Cassava 68(17%), maize 11(3%), Sesame 11(3%), paddy 13(3%), ground nuts 3 (1%), millet 8(2%), and horticulture 7(2%).

Objective Three: The available social infrastructures/ services present in Mtwara district

In understanding rural poverty in Mtwara rural, the aspect of living standards was a necessary aspect, and thus to grasp the fact, the study sought to find out the availability and accessibility of social services available in Mtwara rural. The study identified the social services as benchmarked by UNDP with indicators on health care and facilities, education, source of safe and clean water, security facility, prayer house, recreational facilities, and availability and accessibility of electricity.

Health care

Findings revealed that 150(36%) respondents affirmed that a dispensary was present in their village, 21(5%) respondents said that a health center that is superior in terms of services to a dispensary existed in

their village, 20(5%) respondents argued that both dispensary and health center existed in their village. However, findings revealed that 222(54%) respondents argued that there were no healthcare facilities in their village. Since the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM)⁶ Manifesto 2015 -2020 on health care articulates that there should be at least a dispensary in each village and a health center in each ward (CCM Manifesto, 2015), a further cross-tabulation indicates that there are only 3 health centers one in each of the following wards; Kitere, Tangazo, Mahurunga, and one district hospital at Nanguruwe. This is to say that only 3 wards out of 21, which is equivalent to 14% of the objective of each ward having a health center is achieved. With regard to dispensaries, only 42 villages out of 110 which is equivalent to 38% of villages have these facilities meaning that some good work has been done but a lot more needs to be done so as to attain the desired living standard whereby each village has its only dispensary and each ward has a health center as stipulated in the CCM Manifesto, 2015.

Education

On education, findings revealed that 191(46%) respondents argued there was a primary school in their village, whereas 21(5%) argued that their village had a secondary school. From the same findings, 101(25%)

⁶ CCM; the current ruling political party in the country. It oversees government businesses

respondents said there were both primary and secondary schools in their village. However, 100 (24%) respondents argued that there were neither primary nor secondary schools in their village. Since the Proposed Secondary Education Development Program II (SEDP II) (URT, 2010) argues that SEDP I succeeded in expanding secondary education access to rural students, a further cross-tabulation indicates that 17 out of 21 wards had a secondary school making this objective to be reached by 81%. From the findings, one finds that a good job has been done as the objective is only short of four schools. However, realities in the ground reveal that there is still high demand for more secondary schools, and thus much efforts need to be put in. With regard to primary schools, about half, 54 (49%) out of 110 villages in Mtwara DC have no primary school meaning that the objective of having one primary school in each village is far from being reached. This is a bitter fact that more than half of the villages have no primary schools; primary school as the name suggests gives the basic foundation to a child, and if Mtwara DC, which is part of Tanzania, is to attain the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, then there are needs to put more efforts in making sure each village owns a primary school.

The **Structural Theory of Poverty** applies in this study and corresponds with the findings of the study. Theorists believe that poverty originates from the structure's inherent characteristics of the economic, political, and social systems which basically produce inequality in almost every social aspect like schools, income, jobs, and political participation (Osei & Zhuang, 2020). The lack of primary schools in some villages may lead some children to miss an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills through education and thus make them unemployable when they reach working age. Lack of employment will in turn make them miss a reliable source of income and consequently throw them into the group of income poverty.

Availability and accessibility of water

Water is yet another important need for people to live to acceptable human standards. The study findings reveal various sources of water used by the people in the Mtwara rural district. 174(42%) respondents said tap water was available and accessed by people in their village. 10(2%) respondents argued that their water was taken from a traditional well, moreover, 65(16%) argued to be using trapped water⁷. Nevertheless, 35(9%) respondents argued that they had no whatsoever, source of water nearby their village. While it was reported that infrastructures to provide tap and deep-well water are available in 17 (81%) and 4(19%) out of 21 wards respectively, further evidence showed that the infrastructure is not spread in the majority of the villages because; about 51% of wards depend on trapped water (*maji ya kuokota*) to cater for the need of some of the inhabitants with about 26(24%) out of 110 villages

reporting to rely on this source of water, especially during the rainy season. This trapped water is neither safe nor clean and potentially risks the health of consumers. Much as the government is working hard to address the rural water problem to its citizens such as the water projects at Libobe and Dihimba, much efforts are still needed to address the matter in Mtwara rural district and so attain an acceptable living human standard and thus alleviate poverty from the region.

Security

Security is a prerequisite condition for people to live in acceptable human living standards. On security findings revealed that 14(3%) respondents argued that there was a police station available in their village, whereas 99(24%) argued to have some sort of community security in their village. Nevertheless, 300 (73%) argued that there was no security facility in their village. A cross-tabulation further indicates that out of 21 wards, only 2 of them (*Mahurunga and Msimbati*) have a police station with the majority of villages relying on security organized by the local communities. This fact portrays a traditional reality about Tanzania, that the country in most parts of the country is peaceful and that security issues could be organized by the civilians themselves.

Prayer House

Prayer is a spiritual experience of an individual; it gives hope and fulfillment to an individual and thus is a component of human development. Findings revealed that 400(97%) respondents argued that there were prayer houses in their village, and 13(3%) argued that their villages did not have prayer houses. Findings reveal that almost all villages had a prayer house needed by the population for spiritual affairs. This aspect is useful to develop as most religions practiced in the district teach people to love one another; an aspect required for cooperation to attain human development.

Recreational Facilities

The study intended to investigate all facets of the life of the people in the Mtwara rural district including their way of recreation after a day's hard work. Findings disclosed that 103(25%) respondents argued that they used school playgrounds for recreational activities, whereas 2(1%) argued that their villages had their own playing grounds. Furthermore, 15(4%) respondents argued that there was a social hall in their village, moreover, 69(17%) respondents argued that their villages had at least two recreation facilities. However, 224(54%) respondents argued that their villages did not have any recreational facilities. This implies that more recreational facilities such as playgrounds which could be used for sport purposes and traditional festivals.

⁷ that is rain running water, trapped during rainy season, in traditional short wells

Table 5. Distribution of Recreational Facilities

Recreational Facilities	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
School Playing Ground	103	24.9	24.9	24.9
Village Playing Ground	2	0.5	0.5	25.4
Social Hall	15	3.6	3.6	29.1
At least Two Recreational Facilities	69	16.7	16.7	45.8
No Recreational Facilities at all	224	54.2	54.2	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022**Electricity**

Electricity accessibility is one of the indicators of human development in our modern world. Electricity was one of the social services that the study engaged. On electricity, findings revealed 305(73.8%) respondents argued electricity had reached their village as the lines passed over their houses but did not necessarily have it

in their houses. 89(21.5%) respondents argued that there was no electricity in their village and 19(4.6%) argued that they were not sure whether there was electricity or not in their village. This group is not the majority but sets an alarm; that having electricity alone is not enough the population needs to be educated on how to benefit from it as a mitigation of poverty in the district.

Table 6. Availability and Accessibility of Electricity

Availability and accessibility of Electricity	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Those who do not know?	19	4.6	4.6	4.6
There is Electricity	305	73.8	73.8	78.5
There is no Electricity	89	21.5	21.5	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022**Sufficiency of Social Services in the village**

The study sought to find out the sufficiency of the social infrastructure/ social services in respondents' villages and in the whole of the Mtwara rural district. Findings revealed 39(9.5%) respondents arguing that the social services in their villages were insufficient, whereas 16(3.9%) said that the services were sufficient. Moreover, findings revealed further that 411(99.5%) respondents called for improvement or an increase in the provision of social infrastructure in their village.

The study investigated the need of increasing social services offered in the village and in the whole district and respondents reacted according to the

sufficiency and /or insufficiency of the social services offered in the villages.

Findings on the need to improve healthcare facilities in the village revealed that 257(62.2%) respondents needed dispensaries in their villages, and 156 (37.8%) respondents argued there was no need of improving healthcare facilities in their villages as the services met their needs, instead, efforts should rather be put on other services. When more inquiry was made on whether a higher service in healthcare facility was needed 80(19%) respondents said it would be ideal to have a health center, whereas 333(81%) argued that there was no need for having a health center in their village.

Table 7. Demonstrates the Sufficiency and or Insufficiency of Social services in the village

Are social services sufficient in your village?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	5	1.2	1.2	1.2
Agree	11	2.7	2.7	3.9
Do not know	1	0.2	0.2	4.1
Disagree	186	45.0	45.0	49.2
Strongly disagree	210	50.8	50.8	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022

Education

Findings on education at 5.2 revealed some villages did not have primary schools and some wards did not have secondary schools. Investigation on whether there should be more primary schools in their villages; findings revealed 151 (37%) respondents called for more primary schools in their villages, whereas 262(63%) said there was no need of having more primary schools in their village.

Findings on whether more secondary schools should be built to improve the provision of secondary school education revealed that 59(14%) respondents called for more secondary schools to be increased, whereas 354(86%) rejected the idea of constructing more secondary schools instead called improvement in other social services notably improving water availability and accessibility.

Water

Findings on availability and accessibility of water at 5.3 called for improvement in the provision of water to the Mtwara rural population. Findings on sufficiency and insufficiency of water services revealed that 306 (74%) respondents called for improvement in the provision of water to ensure reliable availability and accessibility of safe water to people in Mtwara rural district. Observation and findings from the study compel action to address the scarcity of water in the villages that do not have reliable sources of water.

Security Services

Findings at 5.2 from the study reveal there are practically no police stations in all wards with the exception of only 2 that have police stations. Despite the scarcity of the said service; findings revealed 41(10%) respondents argued there was sufficient security in their village, and what is even more interesting 372(90%) respondents argued there was no need of having a police

station in their village rather they needed other social services. It is worth noting, despite the lack of police stations in most wards, the people in most wards and villages organized themselves to have a community system of security whereby every member of the community was responsible of the village's safety. In the villages where women were involved; they took security turns mainly in day time, and the men mostly in the nights.

Recreational Facilities

Findings revealed that 9(2%) respondents called for the improvement of recreational facilities in rural areas and 406(98%) respondents argued that there was no need on improving recreational centers what exists suffices the need. These findings suggest that there is a discrepancy between what the rural population needs and what is currently available. While it appears that the majority of respondents felt that recreational facilities are currently not necessary, there is still a need to address the concerns of those 2%.

Electricity

Findings from the study at 5.7 revealed the need to improve both the availability and accessibility of electricity. On the question of sufficiency and insufficiency findings revealed that 205 (50%) respondents argued that there is a need of improving the provision of electricity in rural areas, and 208(50%) respondents argued that there was no need of improving the provision of electricity as it suffices the needs as Table 8 below demonstrates the findings. The availability of electricity has been attained in most villages, however, accessibility to most Mtwara rural district dwellers is still a huge challenge to be addressed although findings illustrate the sufficiency of electricity at Table 8

Table 8. Availability and Accessibility of Electricity

Is electricity sufficient	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	205	49.6	49.6	49.6
No	208	50.4	50.4	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022

Roads Infrastructure

Observation and findings from respondents on the rural roads revealed that the roads are passable during dry season. During rainy season, most roads are not passable. When the respondents were asked if there was a need of improving the roads, findings revealed only 52(13%) respondents called for the improvement of roads, whereas 361(87%) respondents said there was no

need of dealing with road infrastructure but rather respondents advised the resources be used to address the insufficiency of other social services such as the provision of water and healthcare facilities. The Mtwara rural people propose as above despite acknowledgement of poor road conditions especially during the rainy season as indicated in table 9 below.

Table 9. Improvement of Roads' Condition

Are Roads in Good Condition?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	52	12.6	12.6	12.6
No	361	87.4	87.4	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022

Market Infrastructure

The study on social services included marketplaces. When asked whether there was a need of improving existing or construct new markets findings as depicted in Table 10 were not in favour of constructing new markets. Findings revealed that 22(5.3%)

respondents called for the construction of market infrastructure, whereas 391(94.7%) respondents said there was no need of dealing with market infrastructure but rather direct the resources to other services of much more importance to them such as water.

Table 10. The need for a market in the village

Do you need a market?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	22	5.3	5.3	5.3
No	391	94.7	94.7	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022

Telecommunication Services

For social services telecommunication was one of the areas that were investigated. Findings revealed that 17(4.1%) respondents called for the installation of telecommunication services, whereas 396(95.9%) respondents argued there was no need of dealing with telecommunication infrastructure but rather deal with other social services that were of greater importance. The team of researchers made observations as it went through the villages in the district and realized that telecommunication services are offered by different

service providers and so respondents use telecommunications that were accessible in their areas and which were not accessible to the researchers. This explains why the majority of respondents 396(95.9%) did not call for improvement in the provision of this social service. Thus, we can conclude that telecommunication is not considered one of the means of mitigating poverty in Mtwara rural and that it is not among the major issues facing the provision of social services in the district.

Table 11. Improvement of Telecommunication Services

Improve availability and Accessibility of Telecommunication	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	17	4.1	4.1	4.1
No	396	95.9	95.9	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022

Objective Four: Mitigation Strategies to Address Rural Poverty in Mtwara District

The establishment of mitigation strategies to address rural poverty in Mtwara district was one of the objectives of the study. Respondents were asked if there

should be a way of alleviating poverty in their villages. Findings revealed that 404(98%) respondents called for a way of alleviating poverty in their villages, whereas 9 (2%) did not see the necessity of alleviating poverty.

Table 12. Distribution of Responses on the Establishment of Poverty Mitigation Strategies

Respondents Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	359	86.9	86.9	86.9
Agree	45	10.9	10.9	97.8
Disagree	1	0.2	0.2	98.1
Strongly Disagree	8	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022

What should be done to address poverty in Mtwara Rural District?

When respondents agreed on establishing mitigation for poverty reduction in Mtwara rural; the next question was what should be done to address poverty from people’s villages, and a number of responses came out. Findings revealed that 201(49%) respondents called for education on commercial agriculture to be given to the Mtwara rural people, especially farmers. Further findings revealed that a score of respondents 186 (45%) called for all children who have reached school age to go to school because those with formal education understand issues better than those without it.

Moreover, further findings disclosed that 202(49%) respondents argued that youth were to be trained and encouraged to love work and work hard. Further findings had respondents 181(44%) demanding better prices for their agricultural produce. The findings depict that the farmers in Mtwara rural should be trained on commercial agriculture so that they are able to engage in agriculture professionally and so yield high produce to fight poverty. A score of respondents as illustrated in the table below called for mandatory formal education to children so that they acquire knowledge and skills to fight poverty in the right manner. Nearly 50 percent of all respondents called for youth to change their attitude on work; they should learn to work hard and thus fight poverty because laziness was said to be one of the causes of poverty as demonstrated at section 3.2 of the findings.

Table 13. Mitigation Strategies to Alleviate Poverty in Mtwara rural district

Train Farmers on Commercial Agriculture	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	201	48.7	48.7	48.7
No	212	51.3	51.3	100
Total	413	100	100	

Compulsory Formal Education for all children of the school age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	186	45	45	45
No	227	55	55	100
Total	413	100	100	

Youth trained to work hard & love work	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	202	48.9	48.9	48.9
No	211	51.1	51.1	100
Total	413	100	100	

Field data, 2022

Further findings revealed that 188(46%) respondents called for entrepreneurship education or training for people in Mtwara rural. The suggestion of entrepreneurship education to people living in the Mtwara rural district comes as a response to the findings that there was so much laziness amongst the Mtwara rural population particularly the youth as presented at section 3.2. It is possible that people do not love hard

work and stay idle because they have no entrepreneurship skills to liberate themselves from poverty. As for the improvement of social services, the findings suggest a significant number of respondents 190(46%) demanding for improvement of social services so that in turn the people use the same services to improve their economic activities and thus walk away from poverty.

Table 14. Distribution of Responses of Mitigation Strategies on Poverty Alleviation

Entrepreneurship Education for Poverty Alleviation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	188	45.5	45.5	45.5
No	225	54.5	54.5	100
Total	413	100	100	

Improving Social Services for Poverty Alleviation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	190	46	46	46
No	223	54	54	100
Total	413	100	100	

Loan with low interests for Poverty Alleviation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	199	48.2	48.2	48.2
No	214	51.8	51.8	100
Total	413	100	100	

Commercial Agriculture for poverty alleviation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	194	47	47	47
No	219	53	53	100
Total	413	100	100	

Livestock Keeping and Poultry for poverty alleviation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	55	13.3	13.3	13.3
No	358	86.7	86.7	100
Total	413	100	100	

Field data, 2022

Further findings revealed that 199(48%) respondents called for loans with affordable interest that could help individuals start businesses and thus fight poverty. Moreover, further findings revealed 194(47%) respondents calling for commercial agriculture as a reliable means to fight poverty in Mtwara rural. More findings revealed that 55(13%) respondents called for livestock keeping and poultry as a means of poverty-fighting. This is a relatively small proportion implying that the population in Mtwara rural does not have a

culture of livestock keeping, despite massive land in the district, which would have been a good mitigation strategy for fighting poverty.

The Responsibility of Poverty Alleviation in Mtwara Rural District

The findings put forth a number of mitigation strategies to address poverty in Mtwara rural district. From that point, the study sought to find out from the

respondents' point of view who was responsible for poverty alleviation in the district.

Findings revealed six different responses to the question, however, all six responses mentioned all stakeholders in different combinations that would participate in the fight against poverty in Mtwara rural. Some argued that the responsibility of poverty alleviation is for the people themselves 46(11%), those who argued it was the government's task, were 29(7%), those who

said; people and government 100(24%), and those who argue it is people and development partners 9(2%), government and development partners 3(1%), people, government, and development partners 226(55%). From the findings, we realise that the majority of the respondents were aware of the importance of partnership in poverty alleviation, and the enhancement of economic development in the district.

Table 15. Distribution of Responses on the Responsibility of Poverty Alleviation in Mtwara Rural District

Respondents	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
The People themselves	46	11.1	11.1	11.1
The Government	29	7.0	7.0	18.2
People and the Government	100	24.2	24.2	42.4
People and development partners	9	2.2	2.2	44.6
Government and development partners	3	0.7	0.7	45.3
People themselves, the government, and the development partners	226	54.7	54.7	100.0
Total	413	100.0	100.0	

Field data, 2022

How can poverty be alleviated in the Mtwara district?

After establishing the stakeholders responsible for poverty alleviation as indicated in Table 15 above, the next question of the study was how poverty would be alleviated in Mtwara rural district. The responses were grouped into themes, and the findings revealed that 201(49%) respondents urged there should be the provision of loans to individuals and groups as a means to alleviate poverty. Further findings revealed that 191(46%) respondents argued there should be subsidies given by the government to those in the agriculture and fishing industry. Findings revealed that 199 (48%) respondents argued there should be a mandatory policy for youth to work hard. Further findings revealed that

212(51%) respondents called for education on income saving for investing later on. From the findings, it is clear that the people in Mtwara rural district are ready to work despite findings that revealed laziness, in section 3.2, in some pockets of the district. Respondents called for loans to start some businesses; this call coincides well with 212(51%) respondents who called for training on saving for investment in the future. These findings reveal a great need for entrepreneurship education, skills, and funds to run income-generating activities in the Mtwara district. Moreover, cashew nut farmers call for government subsidies so that they are able to produce at low cost so as to benefit economically at the market and thus participate in poverty alleviation.

Table 16. Distribution of Responses on How Poverty can be Alleviated

Provision of loans to individuals and groups	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	201	48.7	48.7	48.7
No	212	51.3	51.3	100
Total	413	100	100	

Agricultural and Fishing inputs subsidies	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	191	46.2	46.2	46.2
No	222	53.8	53.8	100
Total	413	100	100	

Mandatory Policy for youth to work	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	199	48.2	48.2	48.2
No	214	51.8	51.8	100
Total	413	100	100	

Education on income saving for future investment	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	212	51.3	51.3	51.3
No	201	48.7	48.7	100
Total	413	100	100	

Field data, 2022

Further findings disclosed that 204(49%) respondents argued that there should be an investment in cashew-nut peeling factories so as to add value to the cashew crop as a mitigation strategy for poverty alleviation. Further findings revealed that 202(49%) respondents called for the introduction of commercial agriculture amongst farmers, and 185(45%) respondents

called for the introduction of reliable markets for farmers' agricultural products to mitigate poverty in the Mtwara district. Further findings reveal that cashew-nut farmers want to add more value to their products as a sure strategy for poverty alleviation; that can be witnessed in table 17

Table 17. Distribution of Further Responses on How Poverty can be Alleviated

Investment in Cashew nut Peeling Factories to Add Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	204	49.4	49.4	49.4
No	209	50.6	50.6	100
Total	413	100	100	

Commercial Agriculture	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	202	48.9	48.9	48.9
No	211	51.1	51.1	100
Total	413	100	100	

Reliable Market for Agricultural products	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	185	44.8	44.8	44.8
No	228	55.2	55.2	100
Total	413	100	100	

Field data, 2022

Achievement

The investigation has achieved the objectives of the study. All necessary information was captured, analyzed, and have been discussed to bring forth the findings and interpretation. These findings could be used to address real issues in the Mtwara rural district and inform policy makers on understanding rural poverty and mitigation strategies in Mtwara district as perceived by the people themselves.

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