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Assessing Factors Influencing Hygiene and Sanitation Practices in Soroti District: A Case Study of Arapai Sub-County

A lot of resources have been sunk into the water and sanitation sector by various actors; Government, local and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to improve the water, hygiene and sanitation situation in the country. In spite of all these, the sanitation situation has remained poor. Even households with sanitation facilities in place do not operate or maintain them. The study was conducted to assess the factors influencing hygiene and sanitation practices in Soroti district, a case study of Arapai sub-county. The study variables were: poverty, culture and illiteracy. Purposive sampling, questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussions and observation check-lists were used to collect data from the respondents. The specific objectives of the study were: to assess how culture influences adoption of hygiene and sanitation practices, to examine how poverty influences adoption of hygiene and sanitation practices and to assess how literacy levels influence adoption of hygiene and sanitation practices. The research questions were; what cultural practices affect hygiene and sanitation? How does poverty influence hygiene and sanitation practices and how literacy levels affect hygiene and sanitation practices. The findings reveal that poverty, illiteracy and culture influence hygiene and sanitation practices in Soroti district. In order to come out of this rather difficult situation, there is need for a critical analysis of the situation so as to design appropriate interventions. This also requires a joint effort by various development actors in the region so as to have a uniform approach to development intervention. Key areas that need action are: provision of adequate extension services, subsidisation of hygiene and sanitation materials, setting up of sanitation bi-laws, regular follow-ups, involvement of community based institutions like cultural and religious leaders, involvement of women who are the primary users of water and sanitation facilities and more research into the topic so as to get further insights into factors that affect hygiene and sanitation practices in the area.

Keywords: Hygiene and Sanitation, Soroti District