

**FINANCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES FACED
BY CAREGIVERS OF ORPHANS IN KITUI CENTRAL DISTRICT, KITUI
COUNTY, KENYA**



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ABSTRACT

Caring for orphans is an enormous task. Caregivers are rarely prepared to take extra burden of caring for children who are not their biological children after the death of their parents. They are faced with a myriad of challenges including psychological stress due to the notion that an extra burden has been added to them. Lack of adequate support from the community makes this task more challenging. This situation is not different in Kitui District. The purpose of this study was to determine financial, psychological and social challenges faced by caregivers of orphans in Kitui Central District, Kitui County, Kenya. The research questions were formulated in line with the research objectives. The study was guided by three theories which included crisis theory as advanced by Erich, the attachment theory by Bowlby and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The research adopted *ex-post facto* research design. The target population was all orphan care givers in Kitui Central District. One hundred and six caregivers were purposively sampled. Three sets of questionnaires were used to collect data. The data was then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer software. The analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative descriptive statistics. The study found out that despite the financial difficulties the family remains the strongest and most permanent unit of care for the orphans. Majority of the caregivers reported truancy as the most unruly behavior expressed by the orphans. Social capacity still remains as an essential ingredient in orphans care. Similarly majority of the care givers were old women. In conclusion it was found that psychosocial and economic challenges influenced caregivers' provision of services to orphans. Similarly it was concluded that although, majority caregivers faced serious psychological and social challenges, they were still willing to carry on with the care giving services to the orphans. It was recommended that the government and other stakeholders in the community be involved in addressing challenges, which orphan caregivers face. The result may be useful to both the government policy makers and the Non-governmental sectors, in assisting caregivers overcome the challenges of caring for orphans.