

**ETHNOGRAPHY OF WOODCARVING AND BASKETRY IN  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES IN KIRUHURA DISTRICT, SOUTH-  
WESTERN UGANDA**

**BY**

**EMMANUEL MUTUNGI**

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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, university or institution for an academic credit.

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**Emmanuel Mutungi**  
**Reg. No: PG/PHD/00102/2012**

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**Date**

This thesis has been submitted to the School of Graduate Studies for examination with our approval as the University Supervisors.

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**Prof. Felix Ngunzo Kioli**  
Department of Sociology & Anthropology  
South Eastern Kenya University.

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**Date**

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**Prof. Benson Azariah Mulemi**  
Department of Social Sciences & Development Studies  
Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya.

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**Date**

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## **DEDICATION**

To my wife and friend Shiphrah, my children Kwera, Nkwanzi, Igumira and Ihunde

## **ABSTRACT**

Many households in the globe continue to depend on woodcarving and basketry among other forms of traditional material culture to support their daily activities despite competition from factory-made items, whether imported or local. In other countries studies have shown how governments support such an informal sector, yet that is not the case in Uganda. In particular, households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties, Kiruhura district have been reported to use woodcarvings and basketry items, yet existing literature do not tell about factors contributing to the continued use of such items. It is also not clear how households in Kiruhura district perceive the use of woodcarving and basketry items in their socio-economic enterprises. Similarly, the contribution of these items to household socio-economic activities is not presented in any official government statistics. Therefore, this study analyzed the factors influencing the production of woodcarving and basketry items, investigated the perceptions of household members towards use of woodcarving and basketry items, and assessed the contribution of woodcarving and basketry items to household socio-economic enterprises in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties. The study was guided by the theory of practice by Pierre Bourdieu (1977). The study used ethnographic design. Study participants were selected using purposive and snow ball techniques. The study involved four key informants (two elders, one religious leader and one local leader), twelve informants (seven woodcarvers, five basket makers) who were interviewed in-depth and 36 people selected from households in Kanoni and Enagari-sya sub-counties that use woodcarvings and basketry in their socio-economic enterprises who participated in three focus group discussions (FGDs). In addition, participant observation and photography were also used to collect data. These qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. The study found out that the production of basketry and woodcarving items persist in the study area because communities cannot afford modern technology, and that households need to preserve their identity and cultural pride. The local perceptions about the production of traditional artifacts and the use of woodcarving and basketry items in household livelihood enterprises is influenced by factors external to the local culture such as world religions, western formal education structures and government policies that do not promote use of woodcarving and basketry items. Woodcarving and basketry items contribute significantly to local household socio-economic activities, yet some households and policy makers were not aware of this. There is need to create awareness about the importance of woodcarving and basketry in contemporary household social and livelihood initiatives. This can be achieved through sensitization campaigns supported by education institutions; faith based organizations and local leaders because these are socio-economic development actors who are in touch with the households.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
DEDICATION .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....	x
DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS USED IN THE STUDY .....	xi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiv
GLOSSARY .....	xv
<b>CHAPTER ONE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	5
1.3 Research Questions .....	6
1.4 Objectives of the Study .....	6
1.4.1 General Objective.....	6
1.4.2 Specific objectives.....	6
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	6
1.6 The Scope and Limitation of the Study .....	8
1.7 Theoretical Framework .....	9
<b>CHAPTER TWO.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	14

2.2 Factors leading to woodcarving and basketry production at household level .....	14
2.3 Household Perceptions of Woodcarving and Basketry .....	16
2.4 Woodcarving and Basketry in Socio-economic Development Strategies at the Household Level .....	26
2.10 Conclusion.....	33
<b>CHAPTER THREE .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>35</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	35
3.2 Research Design .....	35
3.3 The Study Area.....	36
3.4 Study Population .....	37
3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size .....	37
3.6 Data Collection Methods .....	39
3.6.1 Key Informant Interviews.....	39
3.6.2 In-depth Interviews.....	39
3.6.3 Participant Observation .....	39
3.6.4 Photography.....	40
3.6.5 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) .....	40
3.7 Data Analysis .....	41
3.8 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments.....	42
3.9 Ethical Considerations.....	42
<b>CHAPTER FOUR .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PRODUCTION OF WOODCARVING AND BASKETRY ITEMS IN HOUSEHOLDS.....</b>	<b>43</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	43
4.2 The Socio-demographic and Economic characteristics of the 12 informants involved in production of material culture .....	43

4.3 The historical perspective in the production of woodcarving and basketry items in households. ....	45
4.4 Scarcity of Modern Equipment and Production of Woodcarving and Basketry .....	46
4.5 Religion and Production of Woodcarving and Basketry .....	48
4.6 Demand as a factor Production for Woodcarving and Basketry Items .....	50
4.7 Cultural attachment and Production of Woodcarving and Basketry .....	51
4.8 Conclusion.....	52
<b>CHAPTER FIVE.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>PERCEPTIONS OF WOODCARVING AND BASKETRY IN KIRUHURA DISTRICT.....</b>	<b>54</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	54
5.3 Household perception of woodcarving and basketry items use in household socio-economic enterprises.....	57
5.3.1 The role of Woodcarving and Basketry items in facilitating household activities.....	58
5.3.2 Socio-political aspects of Basketry and Woodcarving Items in Households .....	61
5.3.3: Woodcarving and basketry in enhancement of social values and ethnic identity .....	67
5.3.4 Perceived Cultural, Economic and Utilitarian value of Basketry and Woodcarving Items ....	71
5.4 Conclusion.....	82
<b>CHAPTER SIX.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>THE ROLE OF WOODCARVING AND BASKETRY IN HOUSEHOLD SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE .....</b>	<b>83</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	83
6.2 Woodcarving and Basketry in Household Socio-economic Enterprises .....	83
6.3 Woodcarving and Basketry items reflect Social, Cultural and Environmental considerations ..	92
6.4 Conclusion.....	93
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>94</b>
7.1 Introduction .....	94



7.2 Summary .....	94
7.3 Conclusion.....	96
7.4 Recommendations .....	97
6.5 Suggestions for Further Research.....	99
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>125</b>
APPENDIX I: Informed Consent Form .....	125
Appendix II: Guide for in-depth interviews for Informants involved in the Production of Basketry and Woodcarving .....	126
Appendix III: Guide for In-Depth Interview with Informants not directly involved in Production but knowledgeable in Woodcarving and Basketry .....	128
Appendix IV: Focus Group Discussion Schedule .....	128
Appendix V: Observation guide for Woodcarving and Basketry producers .....	129
Appendix VI: Map of Uganda showing Kiruhura district and Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties .....	130

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

BTC	Belgian Development Agency
BTVET	Business, Technical Vocational Education and Training
DPSF	Decentralization Policy Strategic Framework
EU	European Union
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LC	Local Council
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WB	World Bank

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS USED IN THE STUDY**

### **Basketry**

The term basketry is used in the present study to refer to the philosophy and art of making artefacts such as baskets, by weaving or braiding long soft materials such as papyrus, banana fibre or assorted grass. Basketry results in many different types of products with an array of utilitarian and aesthetic value.

### **Basket(s)**

A basket is a container specifically woven from local organic material, mostly used in supporting agricultural activities as well as home chores.

### **Woodcarving**

Woodcarving refer to the philosophy and art and of making wooden artefacts It is an aesthetic production of functional or symbolic wooden objects used in households to support household socio-economic activities such as agriculture and other livelihood enterprises.

### **Material culture**

Tangible items of culture, such as woodcarvings and baskets, which people create to facilitate their day to day operations

### **Household**

The household is a group of persons related or not, living under the same roof, under the responsibility of a head whose authority is acknowledged by all the members. The ordinary household is composed of a head of household, his spouse(s), his unmarried children, and possibly his relatives or other persons to whom he is unrelated. The household can be limited to only one person or a person with his children.

### **Household production**

The production of goods and services by the members of a household, for their own consumption and exchange, using their own capital and their own unpaid family and kin-based labor (c.f Ironmonger, D. 2001:3).

**Socio-economic enterprises**

Socio-economic enterprises are the set of activities and organizations stemming from collective entrepreneurship which are organized to serve its members' pecuniary and social need. The enterprises derive from kinship structures organized democratically, with minimal government interference as the livelihood initiatives depend on the goodwill of kin and kindred.

**Milk container**

A wooden container carved out of wood and used for milking cows, serving and storing it

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: The socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the 12 Material culture producer Informants.....	44
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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 A modernized house for keeping milk containers.....	48
Figure 5.1 Ekitebe kya'nyineka (Stool).....	65
Figure 5.2 Ekyanzi.....	68
Figure 5.3 Orugyeegye.....	69
Figure 5.4 Kanyantwarire.....	72
Figure 5.5 Orugari.....	73
Figure 5.6 Endiiro.....	74
Figure 5.7 Ekitemere.....	74
Figure 5.8 Ekitenga.....	75
Figure 5.9 Eshekuro (Mortar and Pestle).....	76
Figure 5.10 Ekitara (granary).....	77
Figure 5.11 Omugamba.....	79
Figure 5.12 A prototype of milk containers.....	80
Figure 5.13 Emihaiha.....	82
Figure 6.1 obwaatobw'okunyuuka.....	85
Figure 6.2 Obwaatobw'okweshera.....	86
Figure 6.3 Ekinimba for serving cattle salt.....	87
Figure 6.4 Embaijo, Ekishoko, and Emparo.....	87

## GLOSSARY

<i>Abahima</i>	A sub-ethnic group of the Banyankole cattle keepers of Western Uganda.
<i>Abairu</i>	A historic sub-ethnic group of Banyankole crop cultivators of Western Uganda.
<i>Abajungu</i>	A term commonly used by Banyankole people of Western Uganda to refer to Europeans and local African people that adopt the European way of life.
<i>Abalokole</i>	A group of Christians who in addition to being baptized and confirmed in the Christian faith, publicly declare being ‘the saved ones’ and confess Jesus Christ as their ‘personal Saviour’.
<i>Amaato</i>	Wooden troughs carved out of specific trees such as <i>Ficus</i> sp ( <i>omukunyu</i> ) and <i>Albizia</i> sp ( <i>omusisa</i> ).
<i>Chapati</i>	Unleavened flattened bread, believed to have originated from Asia cuisine.
<i>Ebiibo</i>	A general name for woven baskets.
<i>Ekyanzi</i>	Milk container carved out of wood and used for milking cows, serving milk and storing it
<i>Ekinimba</i>	A wooden trough for serving salt to cattle and other domestic animals
<i>Ekirooto</i>	A cooperative society in South Western Uganda which supports women in producing crafts for sale out of local materials such as banana plant products. The term <i>ekirooto</i> means a dream
<i>Ekiseero</i>	A traditional Ankole basket where millet flour is kept before being used to prepare <i>akaro</i> (millet meal).
<i>Ekishaabo</i>	A big gourd for churning ghee that could store up to 15 litres of milk.
<i>Ekitara</i>	An indigenous granary that is either woven out of soft sticks or creeping plants or made of mud walls, used to store harvested crops

<i>Ekitebe</i>	A wooden stool reserved for the head of the family or reputable visitors.
<i>Ekitemere</i>	A wide open basket decorated with various motifs and used to collect vegetables, beans and sweet potatoes and other types of food from the garden.
<i>Ekitenga</i>	Big baskets used to carry harvested millet from the garden.
<i>Ekyanzi kya'nyineeka</i>	A milk container used to serve milk to the head of the family.
<i>Enkogooro</i>	A milk container used to serve milk to children.
<i>Ekyanziky'abagyenyi</i>	The milk container for serving milk to visitors.
<i>Emihaiha</i>	Intricately woven milk container covers originally made by women from natural fibres.
<i>Emisyo y'egyesho</i>	Hand-made knives used in harvesting finger millet.
<i>Endiiro</i>	Well decorated and fine woven baskets for serving <i>karo</i> (millet meal).
<i>Engyemeko</i>	A small container used to keep water for washing hands and the face. <i>Engyemeko</i> is part of the items in <i>omugamba</i> (an assortment of gifts given to the girls as they get married).
<i>Enjoga eshegyire</i>	A traditional beer pot woven with special creeping plants to make it strong and beautiful.
<i>Enjugano</i>	Bride wealth.
<i>Enjuy'ebyanzi</i>	A house where <i>ebyanzi</i> (milk containers) and other related items are kept.
<i>Orwabya</i>	Baked clay bowls for serving sauce, especially meat.
<i>Enyomyoy'akanono</i>	The main wooden support pole of a traditional Kinyankore house on which the weight of the house rests.
<i>Orugyeegye</i>	A platform for displaying milk containers and other items used in handling milk.



<i>Eshabwe</i>	A Kinyankore sauce made from ghee.
<i>Eshekuru</i>	A mortar carved out of wood used to remove husks from millet and also to pound cassava and ground nuts.
<i>Eshekurun'omuhini</i>	A mortar and a pestle.
<i>Eyojwa</i>	A type of soft grass used to spread in the house for sitting on.
<i>Icuba</i>	A wooden carved bucket used to draw water from the well to watering trough.
<i>Kanyantwarire</i>	A big basket woven by the bride-to be for transportation of millet grain her husband's home a week after getting her married.
<i>Karo</i>	Staple food made out of millet flour mixed with cassava among the Banyankole and other ethnic groups in Uganda
<i>Magendo</i>	Kiswahili word for smuggling or illegal/illicit trade that was common during the reign of President Idi Amin between 1972 and 1979.
<i>Chapati</i>	is fried bread that originated from the Swahili Coast and became popular as East African donut among communities of African Great Lakes.
<i>Obudeeya</i>	Polythene bags in which harvested crops are temporarily stored.
<i>Obwaato bw'okunyuuka</i>	A trough where bananas are squeezed to extract juice and later mixed with sorghum and fermented to make <i>tonto</i> (type of local beer).
<i>Okuceta</i>	Secret investigation carried out by the bride-to-be's family to establish how many cattle the groom's family has. This was done before the groom's family would pay the bride wealth.
<i>Okucwerwa ebintu</i>	The occasion when bride wealth is agreed upon by the family members of the bride-to-be and groom-to be.
<i>Okugyesha</i>	Harvesting process of cereals, such as millet.
<i>Okuheheza</i>	Winnowing millet grain or other foodstuffs using <i>orugari</i> where millet is dropped from about 1.5 metres from the ground.

<i>Okuhingira</i>	A ceremony through which the bride's parents officially give her away in marriage.
<i>Okuhuuta</i>	A traditional practice where a groom-to-be's family would visit the bride-to-be's family, aunts, uncles to show commitment and seek marriage approval.
<i>Okujuga</i>	Handing over the agreed bride wealth to the bride's family
<i>Okujugisa</i>	Inspecting and selecting the agreed upon bride wealth.
<i>Okukaranga</i>	Using a clay oven to roast millet or other food stuff.
<i>Okulokoka</i>	The act of accepting 'to be saved and proclaiming Jesus Christ as one's personal savior.
<i>Okurira ente</i>	A visit a man's family makes to the woman's family after the bride wealth had to be taken or when it is taken.
<i>Okushukururwa</i>	Being shown the truth or light about something.
<i>Okushungura</i>	A process of removing stones from millet or any other foodstuff.
<i>Okuteeka Omusika ahantebe</i>	A ritual performed by elders and relatives of the family when an heir is officially given instruments of power after the death of the head of the family.
<i>Okwitira</i>	Smoking of the milk containers.
<i>Omugamba</i>	A collection of milk containers and other items which is given as the main item during <i>okuhingira</i> (give- away) marriage ceremony.
<i>Omugambiw'obugyenyi</i>	An appointed person who makes the first visit to the home of the bride-to-be and who leads the marriage preparations.
<i>Omuhaiha</i>	An intricately woven round milk container covers.
<i>Omuhinigw'efuka</i>	A wooden handle for a hoe.
<i>Omusyogw'egyesho</i>	A knife for harvesting millet.

<i>Omwitsi</i>	The top layer of milk used to make ghee.
<i>Orubengo</i>	An indigenous millet-grinding stone among Banyankole.
<i>Orugari</i>	A woven basket used to separate pebbles, dust or other impurities from the grain during millet preparation.
<i>Orugusyo</i>	A clay modeled oven where millet and cassava are roasted before grinding.
<i>Orugyeegye</i>	A special place where milk containers are kept and attended to by women.
<i>Orureebo</i>	A temporary trough for squeezing bananas to make banana juice.
<i>Orwiiko</i>	A mingling pedal used in preparation of food.
<i>Tonto</i>	An alcoholic made out of banana. This is fermented in <i>obwaato</i> (trough) using sorghum
<i>Waragi</i>	An alcoholic drink distilled out of <i>tonto</i> .

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Woodcarving and basketry items are part of early human settlement products used in household socio-economic enterprises to support community livelihood (Unger, Schniewind & Unger, 2001). Globally, human beings always create, make and use a variety of material objects including products of woodcarving and basketry (Dant 1999; Woodward 2007; Appadurai, 1996). The items are used as a means for carrying out social functions, communicate and symbolize certain meanings, and locate community practices in a socially and spatially defined manner (Woodward, 2007). Further, the concept of man-made objects which this study refers to as material culture is explained by Woodward (2007:3) and Boli and Lechner (2001) as objects people encounter, interact with, and use in their daily activities to carry out social functions, regulate social relations and to document different categories of human expression.

Although material culture items such as those of woodcarving and basketry have been included in the development processes of many countries (UNESCO, 2009), some developing countries have not effectively done so. For example, while in Europe, national approaches for assessing the economic contribution of different cultural domains such as creative industries have already been included in measuring economic and social impact on human development (UNESCO, 2009), in developing countries there is lack of political will, awareness of the value of material culture items and documentation which hamper proper management of this sector (Ndoro, Mumma & Abungu, 2008). More so, Novellino (2005) and Laufer (1925) explain that traditional societies in Asia, Latin America, and North America produced material culture items such as baskets for preparation, storage and transportation of agricultural produce. Laufer (1925) posits that basketry was associated with developing and enhancing social relations in traditional Chinese cultures where brides would use baskets to offer gifts to their fathers-in-laws and for serving eatables or keeping clothes. Novellino (2005), Laufer (1925) and Overly (2005) further observed that baskets were important because they enhanced people's lives by perpetuating family networks, generating extra money or using them as barter items which enabled several families to achieve meaningful livelihoods.

In the United Kingdom (UK), material culture items continue to be produced, because the UK realized that the general attitude towards a stronger market economy in Europe was shifting towards cultural industries (Hermann, 2005). Adopting items for measuring economic growth whose economic value was derived from their cultural value such as the ‘traditional arts’ – visual art and crafts (O’Connor, J, n.d.) indicates the importance of material culture items. On the other hand, the Indonesian government supports basket making as a strategy for improving livelihoods because government perceives basketry production as extremely creative, unique, and producing increasingly green products, which could deliver a formidable array of choices in the world market (Pengestu, 2010). Indonesia is endowed with rich choices of fibers from numerous types of vegetation within its vast rain forests which could be used in basket making. More so, Indonesia has a variety of cultures and is located between two continents giving it a rich cultural heritage with countless social systems that support production of various material culture items appreciated globally (Muchtar, 2010). Aware of the contribution of indigenous production to community livelihoods, the Australian government supports the indigenous production of wooden items by allowing indigenous people to own large tracts of land (Koenig, Altman & Griffiths, 2005). This authorization of the indigenous people to own land, results in communities protecting the forests as an important resource hence preserving the environment (Koenig et al., 2005).

In Africa, the production of woodcarvings and basketry items was meant to support household tasks (Ridley-Duff, 2008) and improve wellbeing of communities. Urevbu (1997) argues that African societies had a well-established network of indigenous technology, which had a capacity for a technological revolution and development of Africa had it not been hindered by colonialism, a historical promoter of slavery which technologically castrated African technologies. In South Africa, for example, Nettleton (2010) and Masera (2001) observe that material culture items were important in developing people’s capacity to support their day to day activities and have both symbolic and utilitarian connotations in both traditional societies and contemporary households. Nettleton posits that South African baskets are objects that refer to histories and memories of the community and that they belong within a particular space. Similarly, basketry and woodcarving products are indispensable in daily livelihood pursuits and

hence local societies express themselves through the way they live with and use cultural objects (Dant, 1999). Furthermore, indigenous material culture items in Africa such as woodcarvings were believed to be dwelling places for supernatural powers (Dant, 1999; Novellino, 2005). While analyzing the art of woodcarving of West Africa, especially Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra-Leone and Mali, Azeez (2011) observed that an African traditional woodcarver could not just go to the forest to fell trees indiscriminately but had to first seek permission from the tree itself. In Ghana, woodcarvings were sacred and were perceived to be dwelling places for gods and the woodcarvers belonged to the chiefs (Boateng, n.d). However, use of material culture items such as woodcarvings and basketry items remain detached from the development strategies in many African countries and some countries have not structured them as an export items (Mukami, 2012). For example, although Kenya recognizes the contribution of informal sector and specifically the handicrafts such as woodcarvings and basketry items (Ronge, Ndirangu & Nyangito, 2002), and the government agrees on one hand that handicrafts make a significant contribution to the national economy of Kenya (Nyambura, 2014) but on the other hand the sector is not adequately supported. It is still considered to belong to low income brackets and consist mainly of the handicapped, illiterate and those with low academic qualification (Mukami, 2012).

In Uganda, despite the fact that households continue using woodcarving and basketry items and its production is increasing (Uganda Handicrafts Export Strategy, 2005), benefits from these items are not captured in any national statistics. For example, in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties the majority of households are engaged in farming – cultivating crops or rearing animals as their socio-economic activity. The households use woodcarving and basketry items in their farming activities yet, most households do not regard them as a factor of production. This is confirmed by UNESCO (2000) which observed that material culture products remain poorly promoted in Africa despite being a pillar to the economy of many African countries which provide employment as well as generating foreign currency. This could be as a result of what Mutungi (2013) argued that contact with the West put to sleep the production of African indigenous items.

Several factors are responsible for the production of indigenous items such as woodcarving and basketry in any community. The processes of production of indigenous items build socio-

economic relationships because people come together during the production process. For example; Fathers (1980) observed that households engage in production of woodcarving not only to generate income but also to improve their relationships with others and their general living conditions. Sekules and Sturgess (n.d) and Heslop (2011) carried out studies and found out that basketry is fundamental to the success of species in colonizing and thriving in a wide range of environments and in helping to construct the thought processes. Tsutomu (2010) and Arnold (1994) argue that basketry items were produced to help community members in their daily activities such as to carry seeds while planting, harvesting crops, preserving the harvest or preparing various food items. These factors much as they could have illustrated the importance of woodcarving and basketry items in household socio-economic enterprises to policy makers and community members and more especially in Kiruhura where the items are used on a daily basis, the items continue to be relegated by both households and policy makers.

In addition to contributing to daily activities at household level, woodcarving and basketry items are perceived as symbolic items representing varied meanings. In Kiruhura district, households give woodcarving and basketry items as part of the gifts given out during marriage ceremonies in addition to factory-made items. Appadurai (1986); Overly (2005); Salmon (2000); Segall, Campbell and Herskovit (1968) argue that items carry meanings expressed through their utilitarian value, symbolism, and cultural interpretations. Ziegler (2007) argues that material culture items are embedded with economic value that strengthens social relationships. Material culture is a heritage of all communities in the world and different cultures assign artifacts meaning and relate them to their adaptation (Saber, Endutb & Raub, 2013). Despite the fact that households perceive woodcarving and basketry items to carry meaning and hence use them willingly, it is not clear why they do not promote their production and use in their daily socio-economic enterprises.

According to the National Development Plan (NDP) II 2015/16 - 2019/20 (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2015), Uganda intends to attain middle-income status by 2020. The government hopes to realize this through strengthening the country's competitiveness for sustainable wealth creation such as increasing sustainable production, increasing the stock and quality of strategic infrastructure, enhancing human capital development and strengthening

mechanisms for quality, effective and efficient service delivery. Seemingly, these are good interventions only if households are able to access them. It is not clear how this will be realized if households continue depending on subsistence production and living in rural areas (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2015) where they use material culture items which are not supported by government. Most communities in Uganda including those from Kiruhura district depend on subsistence production (MAAIF, 2015) using indigenous products such as woodcarvings and basketry items in their daily activities. However, there is no mention either by district reports or empirical studies if woodcarving and basketry items contribute to household productivity. Although, this may be a worldwide phenomena as Richard (2007) observes that there is a significant lack of data and literature to that effect, the contribution of woodcarving and basketry items in household socio-economic enterprises need to be captured.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Although indigenous woodcarving and basketry items continue to be used in several household socio-economic activities in different parts of the world, their contribution is not captured by some developing countries as an important factor of socio-economic production. In Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties in Kiruhura district, South Western Uganda, households still rely on woodcarving and basketry items in household socio-economic initiatives but these items are not regarded as important in these activities. There is limited literature that explains why households in Kiruhura district continue to produce and use material culture items despite the availability of modern technology that provide them with already-made items.

Although perceptions of woodcarving and basketry items vary in different communities and may influence production and use of such materials, perceptions of woodcarving and basketry items used in household in socio-economic enterprises in Kiruhura are not documented and therefore how they affect household socio-economic activities is not explained. There is no explanation why households continue using woodcarving and basketry items but at the same time strive to acquire modern equipment.



Similarly, the contribution of woodcarving and basketry items to household socio-economic activities is not presented in any official government statistics in Kiruhura district. This creates a gap on whether woodcarving and basketry items are important factors in household socio-economic enterprises. This is exacerbated by the fact that households as well as policy makers do not openly support the promotion of indigenous as important items in raising household incomes.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- i. What factors influence the production of woodcarving and basketry items in households?
- ii. What is the perception of households towards use of woodcarving and basketry items in socio-economic enterprises?
- iii. How do woodcarvings and basketry items contribute to household socio-economic enterprises?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 General Objective**

To examine the contribution of indigenous woodcarving and basketry in household socio-economic enterprises in Kanoni and Engari sub-counties of Kiruhura district, Western Uganda.

#### **1.4.2 Specific objectives**

- i. To analyze the factors influencing the production of woodcarvings and basketry items in households.
- ii. To investigate the perceptions of households towards use of woodcarving and basketry items in household socio-economic enterprises.
- iii. To assess the contribution of woodcarving and basketry items to household socio-economic enterprises

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Since material culture has been accepted as a development path way in other parts of the world, a deeper understanding of how material culture contributes to household socio-economic

enterprises is important. This study provides insight and evidence that enables material culture items to be recognized as factors in the promotion of government programs.

Studies on improving household incomes are core areas of research in the field of poverty reduction to which the present study is significant. The literature on indigenous knowledge has positioned woodcarving and basketry as the resources for raising rural household worldwide (UNESCO, 2009). The present study contributes to this literature by demonstrating how woodcarving and basketry can support household economies in rural and peri-urban areas in South Western Uganda. Government policy is clear about the need to improve household incomes and to transform Uganda from low income to middle income state by the year 2021 (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2014). The present study provides information to help government institutions, such as the National Planning Authority to design and develop appropriate technology to improve household income. The data from this study will also play a role in the formulation of guidelines for the promotion and recognition of material culture in household socioeconomic production.

The study findings are of great importance to households since they show that material culture is as important as any factor of production in household socio-economic enterprises. This contributes to the change of attitude with which material culture is perceived at household level. Material culture items are on one hand perceived as items of the past; items used because of lack of modern items or because households are backward yet, on the other hand material culture are perceived as items of identity and pride. The study findings enable households and policy makers to recognize material culture as a development resource.

The study findings are of value and importance to the government because evidence showing the role of material culture in household socio-economic is provided. This will enable government to put in place policies basing on the recommendations of the study which support material culture as a development path way and an important factor in household socio-economic enterprises. The study findings also contribute to two areas of research commonly studied within the domain of improving household incomes: availability of resources and applicable skills. In regard to availability of resources, the study shows that resources used for production of woodcarvings and

basketry items are within the environment. Households do not need to invest resources they do not possess to acquire the required resources, but rather they manage what they already have to produce items capable of getting them out of poverty. On the other hand, households use their own indigenous knowledge to produce the items making them part of their way of life.

The study is of great importance to the researcher as well as other material culture scholars because it enables them gain both theoretical and practical experience on factors that can promote household socio-economic enterprises leading to meaningful and sustainable growth. In addition, the study provides documentation for preservation and promotion of indigenous knowledge in household socio-economic enterprises. Although some studies have looked at trade of artifacts in Uganda (Belgian Development Agency, 2010), there are no studies that have considered production and use of woodcarving and basketry as part of the dynamic household enterprise. Therefore, study findings widen the discussion on the importance of indigenous practices such as woodcarving and basketry in household socio-economic enterprises.

### **1.6 The Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The study focused on the contribution of woodcarving and basketry items used in household socio-economic enterprises. In terms of subject matter, the study analyzed the factors why households produce woodcarving and basketry items, despite the existence of factory-made items. The study also investigated the perceptions of the households in regard to production and use of woodcarving and basketry in socio-economic activities. Lastly, the study assessed how the use of woodcarving and basketry items contributes to the success of household socio-economic enterprises. The study focused on woodcarving and baskets because the two are the most used indigenous material culture items in households.

In terms of limitations, woodcarving and basketry production was regarded as outdated by some families and others felt it was practiced by the poor members of the community and as such they were not willing to participate. Some of the participants especially older women were reserved about sharing their knowledge and sometimes not allowing me to take photos of some items that were in their custody. On the other hand, informants were reserved because the general perception in the area of study about the use of indigenous items in general and woodcarvings

and baskets in particular were regarded as a sign of poverty to some people. Although these challenges were overcome by use of ethnographic approaches that allowed close contact with the participants, purposive and snowball methods used to select the participants may limit the generalization of the findings to other areas because the sample was small and community perceptions were highly influenced by modern lifestyles.. However, gathering data from different interest groups using appropriate tools that were tested for validity and reliability ensured reaching at logical conclusions.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by theory of practice proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu suggests how human actions should be understood using three concepts namely field, capital and habitus. According to Bourdieu (1977), field refers to the social arena in which people maneuver and struggle in pursuit of desirable resources. According to Bourdieu (1977), human actions occur within a field and they are a product of habitus plus capital resulting into action.

In his explanation, Bourdieu (1977) says that central to the theory of practice is the concept of habitus. Habitus refers to the dispositions that are inculcated, structured, durable, generative, and transposable (Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus is ‘the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them’ (Wacquant 2005: 316). It is the system of dispositions as a product of history that helps to inform current and future human actions. Habitus, in this sense, has social and cultural agency, which does not exist in any one individual, but in tradition, practice, and other forms of tacit knowledge. Hence, habitus is a product of history that constitutes a system of dispositions, a past that survives into the present and perpetuates itself into the future.

Apart from habitus, Bourdieu says that human actions are also influenced by the field and capital which are the other aspects of the theory. Social fields are based on historically generated

systems of shared meaning (Walther, 2014; Bourdieu, 1997) which are universe and form the basis for agents or institutions to integrate and interact with one another within the field specific rules. The field's rules according to Bourdieu are not registered but are tacit in nature but always internalized by each member of the group and guide everyone's actions. According to Bourdieu, each member is guided by the internalized rules which make them to remain hopeful for a better result. Bourdieu (1986) argues that due to their unique rules, fields are autonomous and the autonomy is only relative as fields are embedded in a social space. Walther (2014) summarizes the field as a place of power relations in which practices of members are not arbitrary but understood and anchored in a specific social field.

Bourdieu posits that every member of the field needs specific quantity and structure of resources for one to be an active member of that field (Bourdieu, 1977). These resources are referred to as capital and Bourdieu distinguishes them into four types of *economic, cultural, social* and *symbolic capital* (Bourdieu, 1986) which are interconnected. The economic capital is related to a person's fortune and revenues. This form of capital can easily be converted into money and can easily be transformed into other forms of capital such as cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The cultural capital is especially transferred by family, education and may be institutionalized in form of qualifications. Cultural capital results into status and societal positions within a social field. Cultural capital can be a result of intellectual qualifications, inculcation and assimilation or acquisition. Bourdieu's social capital represents a person's position and relationship in the social set up. In social capital, one's network and relations to belong to a social field for example family group or association is vital (Bourdieu, 1986). The social capital allows members to access shared resources, knowledge and care. The last form of capital is the symbolic capital whereby honour and recognition are the main elements (Bourdieu, 1977). The symbolic capital combines all the other capital because human beings would want to be honored and recognized. The honour and recognition follows the rules of the field.

The theory observes that through the habitus, the past is integrated with the future, which results in practical knowledge of people in any particular situation. The theoretical concept of habitus proposes that practical knowledge is necessary for communities to participate effectively in socio-economic and cultural activities to deal with issues in their well-being. The habitus

produces practices which continue in any community and keep resurfacing as community changes, and they do not die out because they are determined by past conditions. Clair, Rodríguez and Nelson (2005) argue that the habitus produces practices which cannot be ascertained from the objective conditions, cannot be discovered by looking at the context of the situation, but can tacitly exist as social practices.

Different scholars in the field of anthropology and sociology have applied Bourdieu's Theory of Practice in different studies. Sullivan (2002) used the theory to understand education and the importance of this theory to researchers. In general, Sullivan's research found that cultural capital had some impact on educational attainment, though it did not explain all or even most of the social class effects. Cventicanin (2012), for instance, used the theory in a study of social and cultural capital in Serbia and found that any account of socio-economic change, transition and development in Serbian society had to begin with the conception of its current structure. Bjørnskov and Svendsen (2001) observe that social capital binds societies together, facilitates voluntary action which results in increased income and quite often becoming an actor of production. The two scholars further assert that social capital characterizes concrete relations at the micro-level, especially in socialization processes, and that there has been an idea of stocks of social capital at the macro-level.

The concept of the field fits in the present study because household members produce items depending on their occupation. Woodcarving and basketry production is the social field in which households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub- counties are effectively involved in. The households use their histories and past experience to make meaningful contributions in the current times and to prepare for their future. Using their habitus, they are able to compete in the present social field that has imported items from the other cultures. The advantage to continue producing and to attract market for their products is guided by a set of rules derived from the sense of honour and a disposition inculcated in the earliest years of life and strengthened by their past. Households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties engage in woodcarving and basketry production so as to support a particular social field they are engaged in. For example, woodcarving and basketry items are produced to support household activities in either the field of cultivation or rearing animals. In some cases, communities do not attach monetary value, but social value to

woodcarving and basketry items. Communities produce woodcarving and basketry because they want to produce food, prepare it or serve it. Communities also produce items as a means of sharing and team work. Items have symbolic meaning and each member of the community respects the field within which they are produced and used. The communities keep material culture items because the materials define the community's identity and pride. The concept of habitus therefore is relevant to the present study because it captures household member's perceptions and how they use the past so as to live a meaningful future. For example, whereas development strategies are bent towards modernization of household activities such as agriculture, households still use their past knowledge and skills

In the same way, woodcarving and basketry items as an integral part of the community's daily activities help households to understand each other. Indigenous items create a sense of ownership in the community, especially when people use and control what they have produced. Production and use of locally produced items help communities to be conscious of their behaviour and surroundings. According to Lau (2004), Bourdieu's methodology and theoretical premises are limited because they are directly opposed to phenomenological social constructivism. However, Sweetman (2009) observes that the theory effectively captures material culture, which builds on the past and an overall orientation to our way of being in the world. The present study agrees with Sweetman's observation that the theory of practice gives a fair understanding of material culture because woodcarving and basketry are practices that have been passed from generation to generation, and continue to support households despite not being supported by government as strategies for sustainable development.

The theory of practice is relevant to the present study because all of its tenets characterize woodcarving and basketry as important items that people attach symbolic meaning and use to improve their lives and livelihoods. Households produce material culture to satisfy their day to day needs and in a situation where each member participates and is respected with a sense of honour households employ the resources available to them, use the knowledge and skills got from experience and passed to them from the old generation.

The theory of practice is relevant in establishing the contribution of woodcarvings and basketry in household socio-economic enterprises in Ugandan cultures as part of the human production of devices for storage (Jones, 2007). Household members in rural Uganda understand baskets and woodcarvings as items which cannot be separated from their daily activities. Woodcarving and basketry items consequently become items of “honour and disposition inculcated in the earliest years of life and strengthened by their past” (Bourdieu, 1977:15). The objects are used as utensils and have embodied meanings (Cveticanin, 2012). Objects such as baskets and woodcarving have external symbolic meanings (Jones, 2007; Blumer 1969), in which people situate themselves in a particular space and temporal spans. Bourdieu’s theory is relevant to the present study because woodcarving and basketry are produced by communities depending on their demands of that particular time. Local communities produce woodcarvings and basketry items to be able to produce food, preserve it and to participate in other social functions within the community.

Indigenous basketry and woodcarving are social capital micro-level activities because they are practiced at households and hardly recognized by government. However, even when agriculture is fronted as a main economic activity, households, especially in rural areas such as Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties do not have modern equipment but depend on basketry and woodcarving as their social capital. In other words, woodcarving and basketry play a big role in household livelihoods and they are important factors of production. Moreover, Svendsen (2001) found that positive social capital was used in the emergence of the Danish cooperative movement in the second half of the 19th century. This finding therefore justifies woodcarving and basketry as supporting factors to household socio-economic enterprises.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature related to the study and specifically in line with the study objectives. The chapter examines the importance of material culture in household socio-economic enterprises. The first section analyzes the factors leading to the production of material culture such as woodcarving and basketry items. The second section investigates the perception of households towards material culture, and third section assesses the contribution of material culture towards socio-economic enterprises of households.

#### **2.2 Factors leading to woodcarving and basketry production at household level**

Ogungbure (2011) argues that no nation can produce all the technology that it needs for social progress no matter the level of their civilization. Therefore, the notion that developing nations and especially Sub-Saharan Africa have nothing to show in technological development is a fallacy because they should also contribute to their development process. Although there are undeniably obvious challenges with regard to the evolving of sophisticated technologies in Africa, the challenges do not mean that Africa does not produce quality, meaningful and functional indigenous items. There is no reason why households should use imported items from other communities of the world when they can use indigenous local materials for their livelihoods. As Ogungbure (2011) observes that the difference between the developed nations of America, Europe, Asia, the Far East, and the underdeveloped nations of Africa rests on their technological ability which is measured on how the nations' access, utilize, and exploit science and technology for solving socio-economic and human problems, otherwise Africa also has its strength in producing quality items.

IFAD (2013) observes that the failure of Western development strategies to recognize the contribution of ethnic material culture to development, contradicts the rights of local peoples to use their indigenous culture and knowledge systems, to participate in developmental issues. The fact that IFAD(2013) further observes that African creativities and innovations form part of a rich cultural heritage that exhibits mastery of technical knowledge in the textile industry, fine

arts and crafts, music and food technology. These are positive attributes that may be promoting the production and use of material culture in household enterprises. The bias and reduction in production and use may be as a result of the Western influence. This could be true because while explaining how Africa was unfairly treated and sidelined by the West, Urevbu (1997) refers to the unfair treatment subjected to Africans as castration of Africans from the development agenda. He argues that African societies had a well-established network of indigenous technology, which had a capacity for technological revolution and development. Colonialism hindered the local innovation and growth of material culture through its policies and ideologies that ignored indigenous input. The products of woodcarving and basketry therefore are informed by the circumstances communities operate in.

Production of indigenous material items depends on what the users want to achieve. If a community is involved in cultivating crops or rearing animals, the community produces items to support that activity. Items are produced to support the community's daily activities. The coming of Western ideology may have affected this thinking because imported items replaced locally made items. As new external influences were introduced in the communities, traditional technology was regarded as archaic and many Africans were made to think that indigenous materials did not support development. The imposition of colonial rule in most parts of Africa, weakened indigenous technology, which people depended on (Urevbu, 1997). The Europeans banned the manufacture of local products such as spears, arrows and other African weapons and made them illegal. Africans became producers of raw materials and the Europeans distributed the goods imported from their countries. This approach eventually succeeded in putting an end to the expansion of indigenous technology.

Production of material culture was discouraged because Africa was subjugated and dominated (Arowolo, 2010), the Western culture and European mode of civilization began to thrive and outgrow African cultural heritage. This affected the production of material culture because it was no longer considered a means of development. Western culture was instead regarded superior and a means for development. African ways of doing things became primitive, archaic and regrettably unacceptable in the public domain. Despite of the influence, still material culture is used in household enterprises. In Engari and Kanoni sub-counties, woodcarving and basketry

items are used in households; therefore it is important to understand their role in household socio-economic enterprises.

Kopytoff (1986) observes that biographies of things can make them relevant to whoever uses them and remove the obscurity of the objects. It is in this regard that traditional material culture objects claim another trajectory as commodities for sustainable household socio-economic enterprises. Woodcarving and basketry are produced due to cultural attachment. Several communities use indigenous items in different cultural functions such as marriage, initiation, and worship. Although production of African material culture was affected by the Western influence, indigenous material culture continues to be used in local activities by many communities across the continent. Material culture items may have continued to be produced because items have a social meaning, have an aesthetic appeal to others or people keep them to show their origin. Such assumptions are important to find out if they are the actual cause of production of material culture.

Similarly, material culture items have monetary profits due to their aesthetic value, which makes them appreciated by both the local and international consumers. Material culture items are not only used in the community where they are produced, but also other cultures use them as works of art. This gives them a different meaning that increases their market value as heritage commodities which are consumed by many people over and above their original social meaning. Appadurai (1986) observes that the meaning inherent in objects results in their economic value. Objects are produced by communities for a purpose, and that purpose is within the objects and hence their value. The production of woodcarving and basketry in Kanoni and Engaris-sya sub-counties are produced either to support socio-economic enterprises or the producers themselves earn income from them. However, households as well as the leaders have continued to regard these items as of less economic importance.

### **2.3 Household Perceptions of Woodcarving and Basketry**

Woodward (2007), Ember, Ember and Peregrine (2002) and Dant (1999) argue that indigenous items are important to communities. They are a means through which different human symbolic and utilitarian expressions are understood. As such, different communities produce items which

they assign meaning to ease their lives. Shannan (2002) argues that indigenous items are the expression of commonly held ideas and beliefs, while Jones (2007) maintains that artifacts have social relations that situate communities within their environment. Lindsay and Norman (1977) describe perception as a process of interpreting and organizing feelings to produce a meaningful experience of the world. When a person is faced with a situation, he or she relates it to a meaningful prior experience (Pickens, 2005). However, the meaning perceived may not be the actual reality but still it determines the outcome of the perceived situation. Hoffman (2009) talks about the aim of perception as to estimate the true properties of the world, hide the complexity of the world, and guide the adaptive behaviour, Basing on the social, economic and cultural dimensions of communities, woodcarving and basketry are assigned meaning in defining livelihoods of particular communities. Woodward (2007) explains objects as a sign of something else, a proxy for some other social meaning, a signifier communicating things to others and accomplishing some kind of a social work. Households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties use woodcarving and basketry as social items yet, they also have economic benefits. Even if some households benefit directly for example producers who sell material culture items, they do not consider such sales as an important livelihood pathway.

Consequently, perception ceases to be a creative mechanism through which people adjust and align their thinking and behaviour to situations around them. Instead of perception becoming an important mechanism for households to adjust and improve their surroundings, lives and livelihoods, they perceive their own strengths as archaic. It has always been a practice of households in any community to improve their environment by producing items such as woodcarving and basketry items. Human beings have a variety of man-made things that modify the environment and which are appropriated into human culture. Such objects were perceived as agents of change and form a culture which gives communities identity and the ability to perform their daily activities. This perception is continuously being eroded with the Western ideologies unless household with the help of their leaders start promoting production and use of material culture items.

Whereas the perception of woodcarving and basketry like any other indigenous material culture items in developing economies was influenced by the Western understanding of material culture,

literature shows that the first studies in anthropology catalogued and described objects of non-European cultures, as material culture. According to Dant (1999) the main purpose of these studies was to use such artifacts as a means for retrospectively understanding human behavior and culture, understand the patterns of well-being that man had developed over time with a help of objects. Further, Dant (1999) observes that use of material culture objects is on social customs and practices rather than rational economic decisions. In that regard, artifacts are chosen as gifts, to express and confirm familial relationships, to follow social conventions or ritual practices. Family relationships have not ceased because families still exist, therefore the perception of material culture for the improvement of households should not be neglected. Today, communities perceive woodcarving and basketry in comparison with the foreign products. The comparison is as a result of the bias developed overtime against indigenous products due to Western influence; yet, indigenous items were meant to strengthened familial relationship.

Indigenous items are embedded with several meanings assigned to them by the users. The meanings cannot be ignored if useful interventions are to be applied to any community. As a result, ethnologists had to study artifacts such as spears, knives and shields so as to understand human behaviour and culture (Woodward, 2007; Te'mkin and Eldredge, n.d.) Ethnologists were mindful that material items evolve depending on the needs of the community; such materials represent a historical process that rests upon transmission of information from one generation to the next. Production of material items was a community responsibility where the old taught the young through apprenticeship. Material culture items are still embedded with several meanings today and should be promoted. Despite the fact that households have adopted the modern technology, they still keep some of their traditional items they consider to have embedded importance to them. It is therefore important to understand why such items are of importance to the households.

Modern approaches sidelined the use indigenous material culture as factor of development. Woodward (2007) suggests that the nineteenth century ethnologists studied indigenous items to disadvantage non-Western cultures. The dominance of Western cultures in contemporary development strategies explains why non-Western knowledge did not evolve alongside the

socio-economic demands of society. When African indigenous items were relegated, Western cultures blossomed because they served both the Western and the African communities. The assumption that Western ethnologists studied indigenous items to understand non-Western cultures and to design interventions that brought about cross-cultural dialogue, is not necessarily true because indigenous communities adopted the Western items and neglected many of their own creativity. Consequently, communities perceive indigenous items as of less quality compared to the Western produced items which was an attitude construct of the Western thinking (Waldron, 2010). Instead of developing indigenous technology which communities used in wood carving, basketry and other forms of material culture production, Western technology for which communities did not have appropriate competences were promoted making local communities passive informants in the development process. With the acknowledgement of material culture as an important factor for sustainable development (World Bank, 1999; UNESCO, 2013), there is need to create a positive perception of material culture among the communities.

In Pearson's (2011) review of civilization, he observed that civilization started in Egypt and spread to Europe and America. According to him, by 4000 B.C., people had settled in large numbers in the river-watered lowlands of Mesopotamia and Egypt. By the time invention of writing gave birth to history, urban life and the organization of society into centralized states were well established in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia and the Nile River in Egypt. According to Pearson's arguments, African indigenous items demonstrated systematic development process because they were used in the communities where civilization began. It is therefore important to establish how communities that positively perceived material culture as a sign of development ended up thinking that their material culture is outdated and archaic. Was the negative perception as a result of Western supremacy? If it was the case what about other parts of the world where it was also experienced and why do communities still keep their indigenous material culture?

The Western supremacy was not limited to Africa alone, but also in other areas where they established their contacts. In Asia, the Western influence also had an impact on indigenous items in terms of its perception of indigenous items and use. Kaufmann and North (2014) elaborate on how the history of The Dutch East India Company is fundamental in understanding the Western influence in Asia. The Dutch East India Company was formed during the first half of the

seventeenth century, when the Dutch supplanted the Portuguese in dominating European trade with the Indies. The Company's main activity was to control the spice market in Asia; however, they ended up influencing the Asia through material culture. They were, however, denied a chance to penetrate China. Even when Asian cultures were penetrated, communities did not abandon their original artifacts, but instead adapted and reconstructed the Western indigenous items to suit theirs. Kaufmann and North (2014) observe that Asian recipients of western cultural goods did not treat them passively, but took them up and adapted them to their new cultural environment. The Asian communities did not abandon their indigenous knowledge and skills for Western culture, but instead, they found a middle ground, which they used to improve their indigenous ones. However, developing economies such as Uganda are currently facing a challenge on how to harness their indigenous creativity and end up adopting total Western thinking and items.

The perception of woodcarving and basketry and other material culture items was affected because of the manner it was interpreted by the new groups that came to Africa. In fact, when anthropology started as a discipline, the prevailing view of scholars was that culture evolves in a progressive manner in all societies (Long and Chakov, 2009). Anthropologists based their argument on Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection that tracks the development of culture through time. Early ethnologists believed that most societies went through similar stages of development, such as hunting or savagery, herding or barbarism, and civilization. Further, it was advanced that change originated from within the culture, and development was internally determined (Long and Chakov, 2009). However, when it came to Africa, indigenous items were not considered as agents of development instead they were looked at as representatives of backwardness. Winthrop (1991) argues that the global movement during Europe's exploration, conquest and colonization of different parts of the world promoted Western products while African ones were perceived as poor quality, undeveloped and which could not support sustainable development. Winthrop's argument substantiates the claim that African systems and structures were negatively affected by colonization and missionary activities.

The categorization of non-western items as archaic and not able to support development was based on poor understanding of non-western ethnography (Ember, Ember and Peregrine, 2002).

The comparative ethnography and cross-cultural studies of material culture that the early ethnologists attempted was Eurocentric. It is against such inequality of interpretation of the evolution of culture that Winthrop (1990) introduced the idea of acculturation. This concept refers to culture changes that occur when there is direct contact between the members of two societies. The contact between the West and Africa was highly unbalanced because most of African material culture and innovation capabilities were sidelined by the Western materials. The practice, therefore, affected the perception of woodcarving and basketry. There is need for a deliberate effort to change the narrative that African material culture are archaic and promote a balanced acculturation where both cultures benefit.

It may not be true that acculturation improved indigenous societies because if it was so, some African leaders such as Kabalega of Bunyoro in Uganda would not have resisted the colonial rule. They resisted because people from Western cultures had wrongly interpreted non-Western values (Kaufmann & North, 2014). More specifically, Europeans did not understand the context in which these customs appeared (Ember, Ember & Peregrine, 2002). Furthermore, Ember, Ember & Peregrine (2002) explain cultural relativism whereby society's customs and ideas should be objectively described and understood in the context in which they happen in that particular society. It is therefore important that the surviving practices that households have kept for long since the contact with the Western world be promoted because

The Western ideologies did not understand or they overlooked the importance and meaning of indigenous items. Although Dant (1999) analyzed how objects are affected by changing times, African indigenous items such as woodcarvings and basketry items were not allowed the chance to respond to the changing times. Jones (2007) argument that social relations with objects and their meanings change as society changes, and that objects reflect users' biographies and are a significant social memory was not put into consideration when it came to indigenous items especially in Africa. Material culture, therefore, cannot be detached from the ways of life, beliefs and customs of a particular society. Each community has its own unique material culture which defines its existence and which connects different groups, creates identity among groups, and enhances the relationship between people and things. Perception of artifacts is also based on the fact that indigenous items have a social interaction and are embodied in social structures that



reflect the social world (Dant, 1999). Woodcarving and basketry link together members of several societies and is a means of sharing values, activities and styles of life in a more concrete and enduring way. Gosslain (1999) found that social norms and cultural taboos influenced production techniques of several items because each was meant to serve a specific purpose. However, the outcomes from many of the human enterprises that involve social norms and cultural taboos expressed in cultural objects remain uncertain.

In many African communities, traditional items had a symbolic code attached to them (Gosslain, 1999). Similarly, woodcarving and basketry represented certain aspects of community lives, such as authority, fertility or blessings. In addition, indigenous items enabled communities to understand ideas, beliefs, habits and values that allowed communities to properly function as social structures. Appadurai (1986) observes that items produced by communities have economic value and can be used for economic exchange. Traditionally, this exchange was in terms of barter trade where one would exchange an item for another item that one wishes to acquire. Kirindi (2007) observes that among the Banyankole, women from the *bahima* sub-cultures would exchange ghee for pots or food stuffs in a process referred to as *okucurika*. In many traditional societies, indigenous items such as woodcarvings and basketry were items of economic value and also for socio-cultural identification. Different communities were known because of the material culture they produced. In African cultures, some clans are named after the artifacts they produced. In Uganda, among the Banyankole for example, clans such as *abanogoozi* (potters) *abaheesi* (blacksmiths) and *abakomagi* (bark cloth makers) exist. The existence of such clan names illustrates how important traditional items were perceived among the communities. The importance traditionally attached to material culture is continuously getting and households are not able to utilize the modern technology. As a result households are stagnant and cannot realize meaningful development hence need for rethinking the use of indigenous material culture.

Indigenous items are physical objects human beings produce to perform their day to day activities (Dant, 1999; Prown, 2010; Miller, 2009; Woodward, 2007). The items are perceived to encompass beliefs, values, and attitudes, and assumptions of a particular community or society at a given time. Further, the production of indigenous items is believed to be a collaborative and

symbolic enterprise undertaken to mark human presence, the way they live and relate not to create wealth or attaching a price in the value embodied in the objects (Appadurai (1986; Dant, 1999). The above argument still is held among the community and as a result, woodcarving and basketry together with other forms of material culture not considered economic enterprises. Consequently, material culture is not adequately covered in development interventions of several governments especially in developing economies. In developing countries, many indigenous items have been neglected (Moreno, Santagata and Tabassum, 2005) because of the old negative stereotypes promoted by the Western ideology that they are of low quality and with less economic value. In several parts of the world, material culture items are produced to enable households survive in different situations. The perception of ethnic material culture therefore revolves around the contemporary needs of households. Despite the coming of Western and other external technologies, ethnic material culture items continue to be used to improve livelihoods.

While analyzing African sculpture, Fathers (1980) observed that indigenous items were functional and part of everyday life of many communities. Most communities would not properly function without indigenous items and it would be impossible to understand African cultures without understanding their indigenous items. In African societies, religion, government, education, work and entertainment were all closely interrelated, and art was deeply woven into the very fabric of social life, thereby playing a central role in binding together all community members and improving community livelihoods (Fathers, 1980; Douglas & Isherwood, 1978). Although the coming of Western artifacts could have affected the importance of indigenous items among the local communities, some aspects of indigenous items remained important to many communities. This is why several communities around the world have continued using indigenous items despite modern technology. In addition, woodcarving and basketry help in assigning responsibilities, determine maturity, and instill respect in a way a home or community is run (Vannini, 2009). Although Bourdieu (1984) considers objects as markers of aesthetics and cultural value, household members in Africa may not perceive material culture in a similar way because of the Western influence. Bourdieu assumes that perception of taste is based on particular social and class stratifications within the community and aesthetic and cultural value is appropriated through choice or one's taste. However, Bourdieu's argument leaves out indigenous communities who have been influenced by the external factors and were considering their own

creativity inferior. The perception of material culture in households is based on the notion that dominant social groups have the authority to define the parameters of cultural value. More importantly, aesthetic choice is learnt and ingrained in the thinking and way of life of a particular community. There is need therefore, to understand the perception of households towards material culture so as to promote them as important factors in household socio-economic enterprises.

There is sufficient evidence that indigenous material items can positively influence sustainable development in several communities. Woodcarving and basketry and other material cultures are part of the culture of any community. It is in this regard that UNESCO (2013) argues that culture is an integral part of the approach to sustainable development. The argument advanced by UNESCO indicates that indigenous items can be instrumental in the development process of communities because they are part of culture. As a result, UNESCO spearheaded the campaign to reconsider the notion that traditional cultures should be treated with respect because they can make an important contribution to the development (Kalantzis, 2003). UNESCO (2013) observes that cultural items make people who they are, and give them strength for achieving sustainable development. More so, utilizing cultural items and culture as a whole is a wellspring of innovation and creativity which provides deeper insights and answers to many global issues.

UNESCO acknowledges that culture holds potential in fostering sustainable development, both as an enabler and driver, which should be integrated in the global policy debates for future global development agenda. While UNESCO considers culture items such as woodcarving and basketry important factors for development and Miller (1994) agrees that that humility of objects gives communities value and become central in constituting a social order, in developing countries such as Uganda it is not the case. Woodcarving and basketry have remained items that were used by past generations and are not considered important in new interventions for development.

In many parts of the world, woodcarving and basketry are central in the daily operations of several communities. African gods for instance, are believed to have dwelt in various indigenous ethnic artifacts. It was against such background that when Christianity was introduced to African communities, proponents of it discouraged ethnic material items because they were aware of the attachment people hold on such items. The West assumed that woodcarving and basketry were associated with the African gods and therefore in contravention of the doctrine of Christianity.

Effah (2009) observes that conflicting systems and philosophies distorted the way Africans perceived the role of indigenous items in their religion. In most cases, religions from the East and West were insensitive to the cultural value of traditional African objects of worship. Western European powers grossly affected traditional cultures of indigenous African people leading to the loss of their skills, beliefs, social values and customs. African religion, which originally manifested through material items, was weakened, leading to less production of material culture items such as woodcarvings (Effah, 2009).

Perception of woodcarving and basketry is also influenced by the social interactions surrounding the production and use of items. Dichter (2012 cited in Berger, 2014) observes that whereas human beings perceive objects which they make, purchase or own as utilitarian, they also perceive them as reflections of their culture. Similarly, Njeru (2012) agrees with Dichter that without culture which includes material and non-material culture, people would lack identity. While studying the indigenous dress of the Mau Ogiek people, Nussutt, Nakuru, Kenya, Njeru (2012) found that the indigenous dress of Mau Ogiek united them as one community. Dant (1999) deepens our understanding when he argues that the perception reflects the social world of the particular community, perception of woodcarvings and basketry items reflects the social adaptation of communities. In Asia, baskets were traditionally produced as marriage gifts in addition to using them in food processing.

Woodcarvings and basketry have been identified as important factors in the development process (Todaro and Smith, 2003). Currently, woodcarving and basketry are acknowledged as economic assets (World Bank, 1999; Throsby, 2000) with possibilities of being engines of the economic development. It has also been advanced by Moreno, Santagata and Tabassum (2004) that indigenous items make a significant contribution to household incomes, and have continued to support household socio-economic activities. In several communities in Africa, the impact of Western beliefs and religion influenced the manner in which communities perceive woodcarving and basketry. Arowolo (2010), while critiquing the role of colonialism, the slave trade and missionary in Africa, argues that missionary work was used as a platform upon which Western civilization and cultures thrived and were sustained as the traditional values of Africa collapsed. Arowolo further argues that Africa had well established systems before the advent of colonialism

which was socially accepted and which promoted technological development. According to Arowolo's submission, woodcarving and basketry are now perceived basing on the cultural adaptation as a result of Western ideologies.

Households in Kanoni, Engari-sya sub-counties in Kiruhura district still produce and use woodcarving and basketry. However, there is no ethnographic study carried to establish whether communities perceive woodcarving and basketry in terms of their livelihoods. Despite the fact that woodcarving and basketry have been instrumental in livelihoods in several communities around the world (UNESCO, 2013; Word Bank, 1999) one needs to establish how households, particularly those in Kiruhura district perceive woodcarving and basketry in the current Western oriented development strategies such as modernization of agriculture (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2014).

#### **2.4 Woodcarving and Basketry in Socio-economic Development Strategies at the Household Level**

A few decades ago several governments around the world did not consider indigenous artifacts important factors in the development process (Todaro and Smith, 2003). Several governments regarded the modern industrial sector as an engine for development. However, the conversation has since changed. Today, cultural items such as woodcarving and basketry are acknowledged as economic assets (World Bank, 1999; Throsby, 2000). Indigenous items are regarded as the road to economic development whereby localized industries made up of micro and small sized firms contribute to household incomes. Furthermore, Moreno, Santagata and Tabassum (2004) observe that although several government economic systems have not officially recognized that indigenous items make a significant contribution to household incomes, indigenous artifacts have continued to support household socio-economic activities. In developing countries where modern technology is still scarce, households utilize traditional tools and resources that they can easily access. However, much of this contribution is not captured in development statistics of many developing countries.

While analyzing the role of culture, gender and development Soetan (2001:7) observed that:

It is imperative that cultural factors be integrated into current discourses and strategies for enhancing gender equality and sustainable development if the resulting outcomes are to be relevant to the realities of African societies and facilitate sustainable improvements in the quality of life and wellbeing of the people.

In several communities in sub-Saharan Africa, indigenous items such as woodcarving and basketry continue to support household activities on one hand but on the other to be despised as archaic (Scott, 2007). The production of items involves participation of both men and women. Clarke (2006) observes that although both women and men participated in the production of indigenous items, each gender had its specialty. Woodcarving and metallurgy were, for example, often the exclusive domain of male members of the community in most communities in Africa while pottery was considered women's art. Every member of the community produced items meant for a purpose, although communities did not directly attach economic benefits to the produced items. Production of indigenous items was an economic undertaking meant to improve livelihoods and remains so now. Although the Western ideologies tried to relegate indigenous items as less important in the development process (Scott, 2007), the explanation by the United Nations Development Programme justifies its importance. According to (UNDP,1996),development results from an economic growth in which a rapid and sustained expansion of production takes place, where productivity and income per head increases, a process that enhances the effective freedom of the people involved to pursue whatever they have reason to value. Communities value many of woodcarving and basketry items and therefore these items become essential in their development process. As Kalantzis (2003) observes, culture is an underlying force for socio-economic development, especially when it interacts with development at several stages. In this regard, material culture as a product of cultural creativity supports human progress, and is an essential factor for development.

All societies, including those in developing economies, are involved in activities that develop cultural heritage, cultural industries and cultural products, which create a large number of jobs both directly and indirectly. In this regard, UNESCO advocates for the integration of material culture in development strategies in order to improve the employment opportunities in many communities. UNESCO (2015) observes that in the contemporary age of technology, the art of rediscovering traditional ethnic items that have economic value makes homemade products

important in the development process. Moreover, the commercialization of such products can be a source of income to the community involved in production. On the other hand, the availability of primary materials for production in the local environment makes production of indigenous items a trade of community members that do not own other factors of production such as land.

The value of ethnic, cultural commodities is determined by consumer demand, which also determines production (Zhang, 2012). While studying the Tibetan carpets whose value increased across the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, Zhang attributes the success of the ethnic carpet production with the establishment of a carpet workshop by the Tibetan Government, the formation of the first socialist carpet factory, and the entry of international business ventures into the Lhasa carpet industry. The Tibetan carpets, therefore, became important, and improved in their quality and quantity because the government was interested and supported the sector. This shows that if the government realizes the economic benefits of a sector and supports it, the sector will empower the communities. This argument is strengthened by Geismar (2012) who observes that tribal art is one part of a wider economic set, within which objects and persons interact. Similarly, the Tibetan carpet factory story shows a development process supported by government intervention. Once policy becomes supportive of a local material production, demand for that product will increase, which will generate money and result in sustainable development.

Hogoort (2014) argues that promotion of material culture is part of the strategic policy agenda for development. The United Nations and Local Government (2004) observe that culture should be added as a fourth pillar of sustainable development because it cuts across in whatever society does in its development strategy. UNESCO (2013) advocates for culture as a central pillar of sustainable development because UNESCO believes that meaningful change takes place in a culturally defined community whose development is rooted in the specific values and institutions of its culture, strength and resources. Further, UNESCO (2015), while analyzing culture and sustainable development, observes a correlation between culture and sustainable development, thereby confirming culture's role as both an enabler and a driver of sustainable development. In that regard, woodcarving and basketry as products of culture which harness knowledge and resources within the environment have the potential to contribute to households, both monetary and non-monetary benefits that would enable communities to improve their livelihoods.

The economic contribution of material culture in a community should not be evaluated in terms of liquid cash but also through its social value. Despite being considered wasteful, archaic and shallow, indigenous material culture is alluring (Ger and Belk, 1999). Norris (2012) explains this argument by examining the complex interweaving of moral values, material goods and market economies. She examines the recycling of unwanted clothing into blankets which are distributed as humanitarian relief. The thesis of Norris' observation is that value can also be determined by the other non-monetary benefits drawn from a cultural commodity. Unfortunately, many developing economies neglected indigenous materials which supported their well-being due to implementation of policies predetermined by global financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund or World Bank. Although UNESCO, UNPD and other development agencies have started to support indigenous items as a development avenue, developing economies have already lost much of their cultural heritage. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2008) indicates that Africa contributes less than 1% of world exports of creative art goods. The report further argues that there is limited support capacity that exists on the continent, as well as the fact that most of the cultural industry production in Africa takes place in the informal sector. Indigenous items in this sense are not among the priority resources for interventions of African governments to reduce poverty, yet, at the global level, it has already been recognized.

Africa's ethnic diversity provides a variety of material culture items that can support development. The iron work in West Africa, carvings of Congo, the Hima interior designs, milk pot carving, and the Gisu pottery in Uganda, are some of the African artifacts that are admired globally. These are good items for household enterprises which the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2008:54) observes that "the bulk of commercial activity of these industries is in the hands of small, independent producers. It is in the informal sector that the African creative economy is more vibrant". In Uganda the 1995 constitution promotes cultural institutions, where most of indigenous items are used (Uganda Constitution, 1995). The 2007 cultural policy also recognizes culture as an important sector in development (National Cultural Policy, 2007). However, evidence from government policy papers such as Uganda's Vision 2040 (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2014) are not so clear on the importance of indigenous artifacts and other material culture items on the development process of the country.



Many governments concentrate on promoting the sectors of security, health, education and agriculture without consideration of the role of indigenous items as factors of production and items for community mobilization. There is evidence to this claim advanced by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2008) that policy makers do not link cultural and creative industries to development agendas which make some sections of the community to lag behind. However, the report gives more evidence that in some countries such as Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, where cultural and creative industries have been included in the development agenda; the marginalized communities have started getting income.

Indigenous materials have the capacity to contribute to transformation of communities. Pugh (2013) observes that material culture is powerful human agents that drives ideological shift in transformation of communities because they are capable of representing layers of cultural values. In modern societies items regarded as material culture in developing countries are produced under cultural and creative industries. Cultural and creative industries in Europe are part of a strategic means to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in all EU regions and cities, and thus contribute fully to the Europe 2020 Strategy. Local, regional and national authorities as well as the cultural communities are being sensitized to embrace cultural and creative industries as one of the development pathway. Europe has realized that the economic contribution of cultural and creative industries to GDP is higher than contributions from real estate, than that of the sectors such as food, beverages and tobacco manufacturing (1.9%), the textile industry (0.5%) and the chemicals, rubber and plastic products industry (2.3%). If Europe can benefit from cultural and creative industries when its economy has been modernized for a long time, it means that Africa or other developing economic systems which still have original indigenous cultural and creative cognition and skills could benefit from material culture for socio-economic transformation. In Vietnam, several cultural activities such as material culture were provided for in their five year socio-economic development plan (The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006). This indicates the importance of material culture in transforming of communities and empowering them economically.

In Europe, woodcarving is traced as far back as the 1400's (Streusand, 2002) when it was used for making playing cards and religious icons. Woodcarving is an old practice that enabled human beings to settle and develop from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic ages (Unger *et al.* 2001). Woodcarving has always been part of human activity and a means to tame the environment. For example, the Aborigines in Australia used termite and fungus resistant wood for various items including burial. Similarly, in traditional cultures in Ghana, woodcarving was expressively done under the strict supervision of chiefs, clan leaders, religious leaders or opinion leaders showing that woodcarving was part of community life and a respected profession (Boateng, n.d.).

Wood carving, basketry and other indigenous material culture items are not isolated from the development strategies of communities. There exists a strong link between woodcarving and basketry and the development process of many communities (Mutinda, 2014; The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, 2003; UNESCO, 2002). The handicraft has for many years been an important source of livelihood for millions of people, both in the rural and urban areas. In developing countries, studies show that involvement in the production of indigenous items such as woodcarving and basketry provides a stable source of self-employment to communities. On the other hand, production of woodcarving and basketry is sustainable and influences the development through the utilization of local resources. Similarly, indigenous woodcarving and basketry items and other items of material culture complement socio-economic development processes because they enhance household enterprises and the freedom of the people involved (United Nations, 1987). Communities achieve average livelihoods through utilization of indigenous material culture items. In addition, material culture is an important component of sustainable development despite the challenges of diversity which comes with globalization (UNESCO 2005).

Cultural studies revealed the economic impact of cultural activities on the development of local communities (UNESCO, 2009). The contribution of ethnic, cultural products such as woodcarving and basketry to the American economy became visible in the mid-1970s, when material anthropology moved to a new stage in the development of economic research. As a result of cultural activities and economic impact, in 1977 David Cwi and Catherine Lyall adopted a model of measuring the economic impacts of culture and art and applied it in a

Baltimore economic impact study to measure the contribution of traditional cultural items towards the economic growth of communities. This resulted in a new method of measuring economic impact of the arts and the model became a standardized methodological framework for measuring the economic impact of culture in six cities: Columbus, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, and Springfield (UNESCO, 2009). More countries such as Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela began to work on measuring the economic contribution of cultural industries at the end of the 1990s (UNESCO 2009) and it became one way of addressing the issue of poverty reduction.

Some efforts to promote indigenous items in Africa as reported by UNESCO (2009) include the initiatives of the Dakar Plan of Action in 1992, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), held in Mozambique in 2000, the 2003 Dakar Action Plan for the Promotion of Cultural Industries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, and the 2005 Nairobi Plan of Action for Cultural Industries. Although some African countries have started recognizing the potential of cultural industries in poverty alleviation (UNESCO, 2009; Sithole, 2000) and to build national identities, the contribution of cultural industries such as woodcarving and basketry is hardly captured in national economic statistics.

Although basketry and woodcarving enabled societies in different parts of the world to transit from one stage of development to the other, indigenous societies, especially in Africa are not utilizing woodcarving and basketry in their development strategies. For example, Uganda Vision 2040 remains silent on using indigenous items such as woodcarving and basketry to improve household incomes. The preference of government is directed towards wealth creation (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2012). The contribution of indigenous items such as woodcarving and basketry which are used on a daily basis is not captured. In Kiruhura district, where each household uses an item of woodcarving or basketry, such contribution is not captured in the district statistics or government plans. This discourages material culture producers yet families continue to use their products.

In Kiruhura district, households continue to produce woodcarving and basketry may be as a way to facilitate their livelihoods and cultural identity. However, there is no organized system

through which this production is supported. The skills for production are not taught in schools, there are no community guilds through which the young could learn the skills from and even in a home there is no gazetted time for producing indigenous items. There is no explanation as to why people have continued to produce and use woodcarving and basketry items despite the availability of modern technologies. This study therefore aimed at understanding the factors underlying the continued production of woodcarving and basketry through an ethnographic approach in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties.

No empirical study has been done in Kiruhura district or in the surrounding districts on why communities continue using indigenous items. More so, no study has considered if communities cannot improve their well-being through harnessing indigenous skills, knowledge and resources other than depending on Westerns technologies. This study set out to find out if households could be encouraged to use indigenous skills and items in their socio-economic enterprises instead of striving to access foreign technologies which are in most cases expensive.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed literature on how woodcarving and basketry are perceived, produced and used in the development of communities. The literature revealed that communities in different parts of the world assign meaning to different items of woodcarving and basketry. Further, indigenous items are the creative mechanism through which people adjust and align their thinking and behavior to situations around them and consequently conserve the environment. Literature also revealed that material culture items in developing economies were influenced by Western understanding. However, indigenous woodcarving and basketry items remain good agents of change because many cultures undergo certain transformations reflected in the objects produced in the community and determined by the surrounding circumstances.

African items were of high quality because they were produced basing on the users specific needs. The items were either produced to support household daily activities or to be used in a cultural function. Moreover, material culture items were found to have a monetary profit due to their aesthetic value, which makes them appreciated by both the local and international consumers. Literature also revealed that although a few decades ago, indigenous items were not

considered among development strategies; they are now important factors of development. It was noticed that creative industries create a large number of jobs both directly and indirectly. It was also found out that indigenous materials help communities to positively transform and compete globally. However, despite the mentioned attributes of material culture items such as woodcarvings and basketry items, African governments have continued to omit material culture in their development interventions.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research design, area of study, population, sample of the population, sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability of the instruments, administration of the instruments, method of data analysis and ethical issues.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study is grounded on ethnographic design. According to (Brewer, 2000:16),

Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally.

Ethnographers study social interactions, behaviors, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organizations, and communities by immersing themselves in the cultural life of the people they are studying (Reeves, Kuper & Hodges, 2008; Katebire, 2007; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Bernard, 2006). The field study lasted for a period of ten months; however the researcher continued to interface with the informants even when he was writing the report so as to understand more the subject.

The study adopted ethnography because the use of woodcarving and basketry items in Kiruhura district are integrated within the household set up and therefore the best way one would understand its importance to households was using ethnography. In Kiruhura district, there were no specific assigned time slots or specific workshops where production was taking place. Since ethnography helps researchers to understand human life and how they relate to their shared feelings, beliefs, practices, artifacts and social actions (Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2006) the design was deemed appropriate. The researcher was able to explore beyond what informants understand about woodcarving and basketry in relation to household enterprises. Ethnography was appropriate because the study focused on the close observation of social practices and interactions of individuals either in covert or overt manner without obstruction (Henn, *et al*, 2006; Silverman, 2010)

Since ethnography allows a researcher to investigate systematically the views of the people about a subject (Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2006) and to develop theories about the social world, the design was appropriate because the use of in-depth interviews created an appropriate atmosphere for informants to share their experiences within the ethical considerations of ethnography. Further still, ethnography was appropriate because the researcher was able to observe social interactions of the community in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties and also to freely talk with informants which other research designs may not have achieved.

In addition, ethnographic research design was adopted because it was successfully used by other researchers such as Barnard, 2006, Reeves, *et al* (2008), Mulemi (2010), Sobers (2010) and (Gill, 2008) who carried anthropological studies on different groups of people. Ethnography was used by scholars such as Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe-Brown while documenting social arrangements and beliefs of rural communities with whom they lived for a long time. Mulemi (2010) used ethnography to understand how patients of cancer cope with the challenges of the disease in Kenya. Ethnography becomes appropriate especially when the required data is sensitive, and the ethnographer needs a friendly method of inquiry that would generate in-depth information (Barnard, 2006, Reeves, *et al* 2008). The study of woodcarving and basketry falls in this same category because of the perceptions built around the use of indigenous items due to adaptation

### **3.3 The Study Area**

The study was carried out in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties in Kiruhura district, South Western Uganda. The study was interested in establishing the importance of woodcarving and basketry in household socio-economic enterprises and the two counties were selected to provide ethnographic data because the households in the two sub-counties had characteristics that the study was interested in. Whereas the study wanted to establish the importance of woodcarving and basketry in the entire Kiruhura district, Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties were selected because the demographic structure, income characteristics, production of woodcarving and basketry, and ethnic compositions represent those of the entire Kiruhura district. Even if Kanoni

and Engari-sya are presented as two sub-counties, they were originally one sub-county of Kanoni until in 2011 when Engari-sya was carved out and hence all the households in the two sub-counties have similar characteristics. The population of Kanoni and Engari-sya is approximately 8,259 households with a total population of 44,000 people (District Population Office, Kiruhura, 2013).

According to the district statistics (Kiruhura District Local Government Statistical Abstract, 2012), the two sub-counties have the highest population density of 132 persons per sq.km in Kiruhura district and are engaged in both crop growing and animal rearing sectors where woodcarving and basketry items are most used. Households are engaged in growing of bananas, maize, beans, finger millet, cassava, and ground nuts. In addition, households keep cattle, goats, chicken and pigs. The above household activities integrate woodcarving and basketry items in the process of production and therefore were appropriate to use Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties in determining the importance of woodcarving and basketry items in household enterprises.

### **3.4 Study Population**

The study population comprised of household members who were knowledgeable in material culture, especially those producing wood carvings and basketry as socio-economic enterprises. The target population included twelve producers of basketry and woodcarving items, two elderly persons, one religious leader and one local leader. In addition, 36 people were selected from households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties that use woodcarvings and basketry in their socio-economic enterprises to participate in the three focus group discussions so as to supplement on the data gathered from in-depth interviews.

### **3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

Because of the nature of the information that was required for the study, it was necessary to employ different sampling strategies so as to get views from different sections of the community. The study, therefore, opted for both purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select the four key informants. The Kiruhura district officials recommended Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties as having characteristics that could represent the district households because they were involved in both growing of crops and rearing of



livestock. Purposive sampling was also used to select the 36 participants who were involved in the focus group discussions (FGDs). Participants of the FGDs were selected to represent the views of all families involved in farming- crop production and animal rearing but using woodcarving and basketry items in one way or the other. On the other hand, snowball sampling was used to identify the participants that were involved in production of basketry and woodcarving items.

Participants involved in basketry production who were selected, were referred to as “B” participants and were given codes from B1-B5 while those involved in production of woodcarvings were referred to as “C” participants and were given codes from C1-C7. The point of entry to meet the informants was through the Local Councils (LCs), a local government establishment. Communities are governed from LC1 in charge of the village, LC2 for the parish, LC3 for the sub-county and to LCV in charge of the district. The study used LC3 at the sub-county to identify the first informant who identified the second until the point of saturation when the researcher felt that there were no more new ideas to influence the study differently. The number of informants that participated in the study was deemed sufficient because other ethnographers had already observed that numbers ranging from five to sixty are sufficient enough for ethnographical samples (Bertaux, 1981; Morse, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Kuzel, 1994, Bernard, 1995).

The key informants for the study were two elder persons who were knowledgeable in issues pertaining material culture among the Banyankole and community leaders, the community leaders - one religious leader selected to represent the religious views and one local council chairperson selected to represent the views of the government. Key informants were selected using purposive technique. The elderly persons were over 70 years of age and were recommended by informants as people who love culture and hence with a wide knowledge about woodcarving and basketry. The religious leader was also purposely selected basing on the recommendations of other informants as a senior leader who could represent both Christianity and Islamic faiths. The issue of religion could not be underestimated because in Kiruhura district, religion influences household perceptions of what they do, use or believe in. The area is predominantly Christian with the majority belonging to the Anglican faith, then Catholics and a

few Muslims. The religious hierarchy prescribes that an ordained leader either from Anglicans, Catholics or Moslems is senior in religious matters. Consequently, the selected informant was an Anglican priest who represented the religious perspective in regard to local material culture. The local leader was also purposively selected because he was the oldest serving local leader who was in charge of Kanoni sub-county before it was divided into two. Their validity as having wide knowledge was verified by the informants who recommended them for the study.

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods**

The data for this study was collected through different methods which include in-depth interviews, participant observation, focus group discussions, and photography. The techniques used were helpful because through them it was possible to understand and highlight the importance of woodcarvings and basketry items in household socioeconomic enterprises.

#### **3.6.1 Key Informant Interviews**

Key informant interviews were held with the four participants who were considered knowledgeable about the importance of basketry and woodcarving items in household socioeconomic enterprises. These included two elderly persons, a man and a woman who were both above 70 years of age hence considered knowledgeable about the subject matter and the religious and local council leaders who were senior members in the community.

#### **3.6.2 In-depth Interviews**

More so, in-depth interviews were also held with seven and five producers of woodcarving and basketry items respectively. The in-depth interviews concentrated on factors of production, perceptions and contribution of woodcarving and basketry items in household socio-economic enterprises of Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties.

#### **3.6.3 Participant Observation**

Five producers of material culture (three woodcarvers and two basket makers) were identified and observed for a period of time spanning eleven (11) months. Each one of them was observed three to five times in a period of two months. The observation started from the time when informants were producing their items until the time they sold the items, or used the items in

household activities. Observation concentrated on issues such as materials used in production of items; time of production of materials, place where the materials were produced; tools used in production; designs and motifs of the materials; market of the materials; buyers of the products; the price of the items; and general perception of the community towards the producers of the materials. The researcher first made contact with each producer and made an appointment. On the agreed day and time, the researcher would join the producer in the working place and would participate. Using the researcher's background as a visual artist, the researcher directly participated in the activities for production of basketry or woodcarving items. Notes on the observed patterns were made without distracting informants, and sometimes informants were recorded as they worked. Participating in production of these items increased the informants' trust and this enriched the information that was gathered.

#### **3.6.4 Photography**

In addition to methods described above, photography was used to capture items that were of interest to the research. Photographs were used because as Zemliansky (2008) and Petersen (2003) observe, photographs enrich the discussion and interviews, and they act as visual questions hence prompting informants to provide information about themselves and their everyday working life in a free manner. The researcher took photographs of various items found in several homes in the two sub-counties that would generate useful information for the study. The photographs were shown to the participants during the FGDs and in-depth interviews. Photographs brought back memories and served as catalysts for detailed discussions with informants. It was important to take and analyze photographs of woodcarvings and basketry items produced in the course of everyday events or those constructed specifically for certain ceremonial functions in the community. As Marshall et al (2006) observe, artifacts are rich in portraying the values and beliefs of informants in the setting. Artifacts help in developing a deep understanding of how households are organized, and which activities they are involved.

#### **3.6.5 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

To further understand the concept of woodcarving and basketry in communities, three focus group discussions (FGDs) were held. The first FGD was held in Kanoni sub-county, the second and third FGD were held in Engarisa sub-county. The FGD in Kanoni sub-county was held in

Mbogo parish, which has households that maintain larger banana plantations, gardens of cassava and groundnuts. The production of crops is a common characteristic among these families and creates a principle of homogeneity that facilitated equal participation. The common characteristic of the two FGDs conducted in Engari-sya which created a principle of homogeneity was the experience in both cattle rearing and crop growing. The participants selected respected each other during the discussion because all of them had experience in crop growing for the first FGD and experience in both cattle rearing and crop growing for the second and third FGDs. The discussions were held in Runyankole which is the native language of the people in Kiruhura district. All the FGDs were not segregated according to gender because use of woodcarving and basketry items is a household affair and each member is a participant.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Content analysis was employed to understand woodcarving and basketry items produced in the community and also to interpret the photographed items. Data were arranged according to emerging patterns in regard to factors leading to the production of woodcarvings and basketry items, household perceptions and the contribution of woodcarving and basketry to household enterprises. Recurrent themes, patterns and categories that captured the purpose of the study were identified and isolated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Several categories of related data were arranged according to the factors leading to the production of items, the household perception of woodcarving and basketry, and how woodcarving and basketry contribute to development. The formed categories were used to place generated ideas according to how many times they appeared. This categorization of emerging themes according the constructs of the study helped in building a picture to understand the role of woodcarving and basketry to household enterprises. The analysis enabled identification of patterns that created a connecting thread between the objectives giving logical conclusions of the study. Understanding the perceptions of communities about woodcarving and basketry helped to explain why and how households produce them and if such was helping them in attaining sustainable household income. It provided data on how communities perceive indigenous material culture, why it continues to be produced, who utilizes it, and how material culture impacts household socioeconomic enterprises.

### **3.8 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments**

The instruments of the study were pre-tested to generate the understanding of the phenomenon and create dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Eisner, 1991; Stenbacka, 2001). The researcher pre-tested the interview guide, and the checklist to five selected individuals who were informed about the Banyankole culture. This aimed at finding out if the tools would generate data in regard to factors, perceptions and the contribution of woodcarving and basketry to household enterprises. While the tools could be reliable to generate dependable data that create an understanding of the phenomenon, the extent of the accuracy of the tools to collect data with the characteristics of what the researcher wants had to be validated. Hence validity is the appropriateness of the research tool (Katebire, 2007; Winter, 2000; Creswell & Miller, 2000) in generating the desired data. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that sustaining the trustworthiness of a research report depends on its validity and reliability of its instruments, hence the tools were subjected to content validity. In this research the interview guides, and checklists were tested through asking two independent researchers if the tools were capturing the intended various constructs of the study.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Using the approval from MUERC as a proof for carrying out research for academic purposes, the researcher sought consent from the local leaders of Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties. Before carrying out an interview, take a picture, collect an item or hold a meeting in the community, the researcher first sought consent from the informants themselves. Where pictures of the items were taken, permission was given by the owners after assuring them that the study was for academic purposes. In case there was need to take a person's picture, it was explained to the person that the actual identity would be concealed. For older informants who were not comfortable with taking photos, their wishes were respected and no photos were taken in that regard. All informants were assured that the information they provided was confidential and was to be used strictly for academic purposes.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PRODUCTION OF WOODCARVING AND BASKETRY ITEMS IN HOUSEHOLDS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents findings, interpretations and discussion of objective one of the study, which is to analyze the factors influencing the production of woodcarving and basketry in households. Therefore, this chapter examines why households produce woodcarving and basketry items. It begins by analyzing the demographic characteristics of the informants to understand if these characteristics have a relationship with material culture production. The chapter covers several factors that influence the production of woodcarving such as scarcity of new technology, religious beliefs, demand for the items, and cultural attachment.

#### **4.2 The Socio-demographic and Economic characteristics of the 12 informants involved in production of material culture**

The demographic characteristics of the 12 material culture producer informants were an important measure in selecting them as having sufficient knowledge about the present study. The socio-demographic and economic characteristics were used to align the responses of the 12 informants to the objectives of the study. Demographic issues regarding informants' gender, age, material culture produced, time invested in the production of items, and income got were considered. The information pertaining to these informants is presented in Table 4.1

**Table 4.1: The socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the 12 informants**

	Woodcarvers	Basket makers
<b>Age range</b>		
18-39	1	2
40-69	5	2
70 and above	1	1
<b>Education</b>		
Informal	5	4
Formal	2	1
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
Not known	1	2
50000- 250000UGX	2	1
UGX 260000 – 600000	3	1
Above UGX 600000	2	0

Table 4.1 shows that most woodcarvers and basket makers were above forty years. Even when those that are in the bracket of 40-69 appear to be many, in actual sense most of them were above 60 years. This means that most material culture producers were getting old and there were no young ones filling in the gap. Most households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties continue to use products of woodcarving and basketry, yet the young who are supposed to take over from the old are not trained to produce indigenous material items. It is evident that there is need for the young to join the production of indigenous items to continue supporting household socio-economic activities. Educational levels of the twelve producers of material culture in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties also reveal that production was regarded as a trade of uneducated. Out of the twelve informants, three had had formal education. The formal education attained was also not significant as none of them reached standard seven. This means that most of the producers did not have formal training which explains the thinking expressed by some informants that material culture production was outdated and an activity for the uneducated. The ethnography also revealed that some producers of material culture items can earn even over Uganda shillings 600,000(Approx. USD 180).This is far much better than the minimum wage in Uganda. In Uganda, the minimum wage was last set in 1984, and is currently UGX 6000, an amount equivalent to about US\$1.6 per month (Nakueira, 2014)

#### **4.3 The historical perspective in the production of woodcarving and basketry items in households.**

The in-depth interviews with participants indicated that household characteristics in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties are influenced by historical factors such as traditional occupations of the households, and religious practices ushered in by the Christians and Muslims in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The main occupations of households in the two sub-counties of Kanoni and Engari-sya are livestock farming and crop cultivation. Available statistics indicate that 57.6 % of the population of Kiruhura district is engaged in livestock farming while 32.4 % is engaged in agricultural production (Kiruhura District Local Government, 2012). The four key informants submitted that Engari-sya sub-county is mostly engaged in livestock than Kanoni sub-county. Informants further observed that some household members are engaged in retail businesses of selling merchandise and produce. The study found that the owners of such businesses were running them as supplementary businesses in addition to livestock and crop farming. This was confirmed during the FGDs which revealed that households in Kanoni and Engari-sya belong to the historic cattle keeping (*abahima*) and crop cultivators (*abairu*) castes. This was consistent with findings of earlier studies on the history of Banyankole (Kamuhangire, 1992; Karugire, 1971; Morris, 1962; Kirindi; 2008), which indicate that the Banyankole co-existed in symbiotic occupations of cattle keeping and crop cultivation. While Karamura (1998) suggested that the relationship between the cattle herders and cultivators was traditionally exploitative as the *abahima* exploited the *abairu*, the present study argues that the relationship promoted the use of indigenous items in socio-economic enterprises. The study also found that material culture production, especially basketry used to be jointly done by women of *abairu* and *abahima* sub-groups. Women of both sub-group worked together to weave house interior decorations (*okucuranura*). Women would collect materials together and *abairu* women would weave several types of baskets while *abahima* women would weave milk container covers.

In-depth interviews revealed that religious beliefs determined the kind of basketry and woodcarvings that were produced in the area. If an item was associated with traditional worship, such item was discouraged. Informants observed that Christianity is the dominant religion in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties. Islam is also practiced on a small scale. The local leader explained that the two sub-counties have three Mosques and the Anglican and Catholic churches



are the majority. In addition to the mainstream Anglican and Catholic churches, there are also small churches in the area under the Pentecostal movement. The most vibrant religious group in the two sub-counties is the *balokole* movement. This movement is part of the East African revival which came to the Ankole region in the 1940s (Karamura, 1998). During the FGDs, discussants indicated that in some churches where basketry was used for collecting tithe and the offertory, such baskets were decorated with motifs of the cross rather than the indigenous designs. Discussants reported that church leaders were not comfortable using baskets with motifs that may represent a god other than the Mighty God which Christianity preaches. Other informants argued that when baskets are decorated with church motifs they lead the worshippers to God. This implies that household members attach meaning to items other than mere aesthetic appearance. Foreign religions have become part of the social fabric of the community and are respected so much in the area to the extent that if one does not subscribe to any of the recognized religions, Christianity or Islam, such a person is not respected in the community. In addition, any household suspected to believe in traditional worship is discriminated in the community. The attitudes therefore held by the community about material culture are constructed around Western religion which people have practiced for a long time and determine what items to produce.

#### **4.4 Scarcity of Modern Equipment and Production of Woodcarving and Basketry**

The current government intervention is to move Uganda from a low income to a middle income state by 2020 (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2014). A number of interventions have been put in place since Uganda attained independence in 1962 and Museveni (2014: iii) summarizes the interventions as follows:

A number of economic policies and programs such as the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), Economic Recovery Program (ERP), Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) have been successfully implemented leading to a boost in economic growth. Since 2002, the economy grew consistently at an average of 6.4 percent and has since built sufficient momentum for takeoff. In order to consolidate and accelerate this growth process, Government in 2007 approved the Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework policy (CNDPF) which provides for the development of a 30 year Vision to be implemented through: three 10-year plans; six 5-year National Development Plans (NDPs); Sector Investment Plans (SIPs); Local Government Development Plans (LGDPs), Annual work plans and Budgets. Consequently, Cabinet approved the National Vision Statement, “A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years”. The National Planning Authority in consultation

with other government institutions and other stakeholders has thus developed a Uganda Vision 2040 to operationalise this Vision statement.

The interventions as summarized by Museveni are meant to eradicate poverty through profitable, competitive, sustainable and dynamic programmes such as modern agricultural and agro-industrial sector that would transform subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture. The intention of government is to continue reducing the number of people under the poverty line currently standing at 19.7% (World Bank, 2016). The government's desire is to shift households from subsistence production to commercial production. However, not every person has been able to transit from subsistence livelihood to modernized livelihood and as such many still utilize indigenous interventions. FGDs in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties revealed that woodcarving and basketry items are produced to support socio-economic enterprises of households. Participants reported that many households in Kiruhura district use at least one or two indigenous items in their production processes despite their level of development. Participants attributed the use of indigenous items to several factors, one of which is scarcity of modern equipment.

Informants of the study reported that the government policy of improved production does not empower them with tools and proper equipment to modernize their production. Many households try using their own resources. However, informants reported that although under the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), the government recommends practicing modern farming methods, for example, they are only given improved seeds but they lack modern equipment. Households therefore employ their traditional technologies and items to ensure maximum benefits from NAADS support. If a family gets improved seeds or breeds, the family uses indigenous items such as the watering troughs (ref. Figure 6.2 in chapter six) for serving water to the cattle. Informants revealed that some families can afford metallic or concrete troughs but others who cannot afford to, use wooden ones because they have the technology and materials to make them.

Modernization of communities demands that families shift from subsistence living to modern lifestyles where new technology and items are used. In Kiruhura district, families have shifted from traditional forms of farming where cattle would graze miles away from the home to the current controlled paddocks. This modern way of farming has necessitated clearing of farms to

increase on the amount and quality of pastures. FGD participants reported that because of this, communities can no longer get enough grass for thatching milk houses (Figure 4.1). They therefore make mud and wattle and roof with iron sheets or they integrate *orugyeegye* within the modern main house which is also made of iron roofs. The ethnography in Kiruhura observed that most homes were indeed built with burnt bricks and iron sheets. Another argument raised by informants is that as households keep on adopting new techniques in development as a result of modernization and globalization, the indigenous items produced are upgraded to suit the living styles of communities. Households in Kiruhura district, for instance, either own a separate iron roofed milk house (Figure 4.1) exclusively for milk or they integrate *orugyeegye* (the milk container display stand) in the contemporary homes.



Figure4.1: A Modernized house for keeping milk containers

Photo by Researcher in Engari-sya sub-county

#### **4.5 Religion and Production of Woodcarving and Basketry**

Both informants and FGD participants observed that production of artifacts in Kiruhura is determined by religious beliefs. Communities produce and use only items that do not contradict religious teachings, especially Christianity, which is the religion for the majority of people in Kiruhura district. Karamura (1998) explains that Christianity was introduced in Kiruhura district and other parts of Ankole in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by missionaries who had settled in Buganda. In 1940 there was a revival movement introduced in Kiruhura district and many families became

Christians of the 'Saved' group that publicly confess Jesus as personal Saviour (Karamura, 1998). Since then, religion is such a powerful influencing factor in Kiruhura that members of the community are guided by the religious doctrine. All items produced and used in a home must be in conformity with religious values, especially Christianity, which is dominant compared to Islam in the district. Any woodcarving or basketry item must be appreciated by religious leaders or else such item is not allowed to be used in public.

For example, in marriage ceremonies which are very important occasions in Kiruhura district, any indigenous item that is used in a marriage ceremony must have an approval of religious leaders. Although the ceremonies are a mixture of traditional and Western religious practices, western religious practices overshadow traditional ones. The functions are in two parts, one being the giveaway ceremony and the other, the church wedding ceremony. During the giveaway ceremony, the bride is given an assortment of gifts which include cows, cloth and indigenous items. The presents which the parents give to their daughter referred to as *emihingiro*, are first checked by the priest before they are shown to people. This is done to avoid presenting items that contradict religious principles.

Ethnography in Kiruhura further revealed that a number of woodcarvings and basketry items are used in places of worship. The items include drums, shakers, baskets and other music instruments. The items are differentiated from the ones used outside the church by decorating them with church related motifs such as the cross or biblical illustrations. Religious influence on what item to produce does not stop in churches, but also households use only those items that they perceive to spiritually link them to God. The religious informant reported that African artifacts carry a lot of meaning and if not checked and prayed for, some items can re-introduce Christians back to the African traditional religions. The religious factor is therefore very influential in which indigenous item communities use. FGDs in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties revealed that if a household is suspected to use an indigenous item not approved by the church, such household is discriminated against participating in community functions. A leader will never be elected from such family. Religion was therefore considered as one determinant in the production and use of woodcarving and basketry items among households in Kiruhura district.

#### 4.6 Demand as a factor Production for Woodcarving and Basketry Items

Another factor influencing production of woodcarving and basketry is their demand. Marketing of indigenous artifacts in the study area is both internal and external undertaking. Internally, communities create a market for their artifacts. If a family wants to acquire harvesting knives, for instance, the head of the family approaches a blacksmith. If one wants *obwato bw'okweshera*, the carver is called in to carve it. In that way, there is internal social well-being as a factor leading to production rather than monetary benefits. Producers of indigenous artifacts can exchange their farm products with products such as millet, groundnuts, cow ghee or a cow or goat.

When I carve *obwato bw'okweshera* (trough for serving water to cattle) or *ekinimba* (for serving salt) for a farmer, I'm either paid Uganda shillings 250,000- 350,000 (approximately 100 -150 US dollars, according to the dollar rate in 2014) or I'm given a young bull valued at the same amount of money. To me what the farmer has is what I take. Among the cows I own were paid to me. (Informant C2)

Informants observed that the demand for woodcarving and basketry artifacts among the community influences production. Informants also mentioned the external demand where items are bought by people from other cultures. This study established that indigenous artifacts were sold through two avenues. First, the items were sold through periodic markets where both the community members and external clientele buy items in the markets either from producers or middle men. Observation of buying and selling of woodcarvings and basketry items in Engarisa sub-county indicated that the items that are mostly bought are milk containers and serving baskets. FGD participants observed that milk containers and serving baskets are in demand because they are not only used by the Banyankole but also are bought by other tribes and visitors as artworks. Items are sold in several weekly and monthly markets located within and outside the study area. Producers sell their products to both local members of the community or buyers who collect the items for external markets.

The second avenue of selling items is located within the community. In this avenue, producers are commissioned to produce specific items that individual households desire to have. Informants reported that if a woman needs *eshekuro* or if a family needs a trough for serving water to cattle, a woodcarver is called and commissioned to produce the work. Such items include, but are not limited to, the discussed carved items and basketry items discussed in the

present study. The other aspect of this avenue of marketing is that buyers can find items in the homes of producers and buy directly from them. Usually producers of items are known and if one needs an item one buys directly from the producer. However, informants observed that it is always difficult to find a finished item of one's taste. The last aspect of the market within the community is when the buyer commissions large amounts of items from producers.

In this case the buyer works with the community and usually buys all or most of the products. Such a buyer was found with a group of women working under Bishozi projects. The women make baskets which they sell in Sweden under the patronage of a Swedish lady. Women are commissioned to produce baskets which are collected twice a year and sent to Sweden. The women make a variety of baskets based on the indigenous designs, but try to modify them to meet the demands of the Swedish market. In some cases the women are not paid, but instead are given second-hand clothes or other small items brought from Sweden. The women have moved away from producing baskets solely for home use to producing baskets for sale. The informants submitted that Swedish people buy the baskets as interior decoration items, for storing jewelry or to serve nuts and sweets. Some of the baskets are rejected because many of these baskets cannot be packed in dozens and require a big space, yet the buyer does not have it.

#### **4.7 Cultural attachment and Production of Woodcarving and Basketry**

Informants in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties reported that some indigenous items used in their homes have cultural attachments that brings out their identity and which cannot be replaced by the new technology. The informants listed a number of items which included the *ekyanzi*, *endiiro*, *eshekuru*, and *orugari*. These items are so important and to the communities there is no foreign item they could easily substitute them with. According to the informants, *ekyanzi* was one item that preserves milk in a special way. The informants argued that milk kept in *ekyanzi* takes longer to go bad, it has a special scent because of the smoking and most importantly it identifies them as Banyankole. The informants observed that because *ekyanzi* is so important to Banyankole, it is the main item on the gifts that parents give to their daughters as they get married.

Further, informants considered *endiiro* as the only decent container in which millet meal can be served. *Endiiro* was also cited as a marriage gift which the bride gives to elders as a sign of respect. Informants further argued that *endiiro* is a basket that demonstrates that the girl is hardworking and neat. *Eshekuru* was also considered irreplaceable among family indigenous items. Informants agreed that *eshekuru* is the only item used to remove husks from millet. They argued that millet is a staple food for many and *eshekuru* must be part of their household possessions. Another item was *orugari* which members believed it was an important item in food preparation. Informants argued that since *orugari* enables them to remove unwanted pebbles from most of the foodstuffs such as millet, beans and groundnuts, *orugari* was an important item in ensuring quality food stuffs in most families.

Ethnography in Kanoni and Engari-sya observed that households were integrating both traditional woodcarvings and basketry items in their daily activities. There was a tendency of households preferring to use the imported items irrespective of whether they have them or not. The study observed that households had shifted from living in grass thatched houses to iron sheet roofed houses. This development of changing designs of houses from local to modern architecture affected use of indigenous items. Many households believed that modern living patterns do not allow one to use indigenous items. The families that remain predominantly subsistence and relying on indigenous items such as woodcarving and basketry items were considered backward and sometimes such families were looked at as pagan families. This perception, therefore, drives each household to try and acquire modern items and discard their indigenous ones.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented factors that lead to the production of woodcarving and basketry in Kiruhura district. The study findings indicate that households produce woodcarving and basketry to meet the requirements of government policy of moving Uganda from low income to a middle income state by 2020. However, due to the fact that households cannot access the required inputs to realize the target by government, families use indigenous items as an alternative. It was further found that production of woodcarving and basketry in Kiruhura district is determined by religious beliefs. Only those items that do not contradict the religious teachings are produced and

publicly used as a sign of pride and identity. In addition, the chapter reports that the production of woodcarving and basketry is determined by their demand either external or internal demand. Items were produced to be used in the community or were sold to external traders who would take them for other purposes. The chapter also reports that indigenous items are used in different homes in Kiruhura district because communities have a cultural attachment to them and the items give the community an identity. The chapter also established that some items cannot be replaced by the new technology hence households continue using them.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PERCEPTIONS OF WOODCARVING AND BASKETRY IN KIRUHURA DISTRICT**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents findings, interpretations and discussion of objective two in which the perceptions of households towards woodcarving and basketry in household socio-economic enterprises is analyzed. A number of artifacts that are commonly used in households are presented, interpreted and discussed.

#### **5.2 Household characteristics and production of woodcarving and basketry items**

Discussants revealed that basketry and woodcarving were common among members without formal education which reflects the socio-demographic information in table 4.1. Discussants observed that educated people prefer paid up jobs rather than engaging in basketry and wood carving production. They reported that most households had their children in the few schools located within the two sub-counties and others go to other districts to study. Their observation was correlated with the literacy level in the study area of 69 % (Kiruhura District Local Government, 2012) which is almost the same as 71% national literacy statistics (Uganda, Statistical Abstract, 2015). The local leader gave an account of the educational status as follows;

In the two sub-counties we have one government aided secondary school and three private secondary schools and a vocational institute. Government has promised to take up the community school in Engari-sya sub-County as government school. Because we have few secondary schools in the area, households have children in secondary schools in other counties of the district and even other districts in Uganda. All children should be in school because government put in place Universal Primary education where all children study for free. Even government secondary schools are also free because they are under Universal secondary education arrangement. Actually, Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties have more than 20 primary schools with a total enrollment of 7201 pupils. We also have a few private schools and parents who wish and have the resources to pay send their children to those schools (The local leader informant)

The discussants however, revealed that although there is Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) where pupils and students do not pay school fees, parents are supposed to contribute scholastic materials. Parents are required to provide educational materials such as books, pens and meals for their children. However, parents fail provide the

materials and some households fail to send their children to school. The religious leader attributed failure of parents to provide materials for their children due to lack of awareness of the importance of education. He observed thus;

The reason why parents cannot provide scholastic materials for their children is because they think government should give them everything. Households do not have sufficient income sources because they wait for government to provide seeds, equipment, trainers and even market. Nobody thinks of using our indigenous knowledge as we wait government to support us. As a result household keep lamenting that they are poor or government is not supporting them when actually they have everything at their disposal. (Religious leader informant)

Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties are rural sub-counties with the majority of households depending on modest livelihoods. The entire district has 15% of the employed population engaged in paid employment, 41% are self-employed and 44% are unpaid family workers (Kiruhura District Local Government, 2012). The statistics imply that the majority of households have modest livelihoods and may not have sufficient capacity to acquire modern technology. Discussants and informants observed that households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties depend on indigenous subsistence systems for their livelihood.

Although some producers were not earning any money directly, but the fact that they were using the products in their daily activities explains the importance of material culture items in household enterprises. Although women were the ones earning less or not aware of what their earned, still what they produced contributed to household incomes. It was identified that women concentrated on catering for their families as men concentrated on wood carving. Elsewhere, Starrels (1994), Bastidas (1999) observe that women do much of the housework by spending more hours doing housework. The men had more time to concentrate while women had to look after the family and only work in awkward time slots. Moreover, women continue to perform most of the traditionally female tasks, which typically require daily attention. The study observed that men were involved in producing *Ebyanzi* (milk containers) and *amaato* (troughs) which were sold easily while women produced mostly baskets for farm use and to support household activities.

Administrative power in the area is decentralized and local council committees are in charge of households' administrative issues. This means that the Central government works through the

local councils, who in turn implement government programmes among the community. The local leaders are aware of household needs and have the capacity to select the right intervention that could improve household incomes. In-depth interviews with the local leader and the two elderly persons indicated that woodcarving and basketry and other indigenous skills are commonly used in the communities for sustainable development. The items are used during the process of growing crops, serving them, preservation of harvests and also as gifts in traditional social functions. Households collaborated in social and economic enterprise through their local leaders who played an advisory role and connected them to the central government. The local administration empowered the people and institutions at every level through increasing participation in decision-making; and assisting in developing people's capacities (Mugabe, 2004; Decentralization Policy Strategic Framework (DPSF), 2013; The Local Governments Act, 1997). Interviews with the 36 household members revealed that although the local leaders did not directly support household enterprises associated with basketry and woodcarving in the household, they were not against its use in empowering households.

The most used items among the households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties and which this study concentrated on are *ebyanzi* (milk containers)/*ekyanzi* (milk container), *amaato* (troughs) which include *obwaato bw'okunyuuka* (for squeezing banana), *ekinimba/ekigungiro* (for serving salt to cattle), *obwaato bw'okweshera* (for serving cattle water), *ecuba* (watering can), *eshekuro n'omuhini* (mortar and pestle), and *ekitebe* (stool). The non-specialized carved items include *orwiiko* (mingling pedal) *omuhini gw'efuka* (hoe handle) and *akatik'emboga* (pounding stick). Several baskets are produced in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties, especially by women, and these include *kanyantwarire* (marriage basket), *endiiro* (serving basket), *ekitemere*, *ekitenga*, *orugari*, (garden and food processing baskets) and *omuhaiha* (milk container cover).

Persons involved in woodcarving and basketry in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties were above fifty years of age. None of the carvers had a young person under apprenticeship despite the fact that apprenticeship was the oldest and respected method through which young people learnt such skills. Young people preferred formal education and hence formal jobs. A number of young people were in school or had gone through school. Those that did not have jobs were not willing to participate in carving items such as milk containers, but preferred to engage

themselves in retail business such as small groceries yet; they did not have the necessary resources for such businesses. The daughter of informant B2 whom I found helping her mother to prepare materials for making baskets observed that;

I cannot spend my time making baskets as if I'm an old woman. I went to school and I should be able to do work where they pay me. Making baskets is a job for those who never went to school as for me I will get a job and be paid money. If I continue making baskets with my mother, how will people tell the difference between my mother who never went to school and myself? I will have to get a job and get paid even if it is little. (Daughter of informant B2)

The young girl despite not having a job did not think what her mother was doing was important and may be one of the sources her mother got money for their education. She felt that basket making was demeaning considering her education even though it had no employable skills. Findings of the study indicate that if the government encourages such young people to engage in indigenous production of items such as woodcarving and basket making whose demand is no longer only local but also international as works of art, this will reduce unemployment. Informant C4 observed that;

The current use of indigenous items has shifted from keeping and serving food to selling them as interior decorations, souvenirs and gifts therefore increasing their usage. The items are no longer a village item because our family members who live in towns display indigenous items as artworks in their houses. The like them because they reveal their identity and this makes them proud. In addition, some urban families originating from the study area prefer to have indigenous items given out as souvenirs so as to promote their culture in other parts of the globe. (Informant C4)

### **5.3 Household perception of woodcarving and basketry items use in household socio-economic enterprises.**

The study found that woodcarving and basketry items are perceived as items produced to facilitate day to day functions of the households. The households do not put emphasis on pecuniary benefits though in some cases, basketry and woodcarving items are produced for commercial purposes. Further, in addition to facilitating the day-to-day activities in a home, indigenous materials are used for identifying specific communities and also to show different roles in a homestead.

According to the theory of practice, once human beings have perceived a particular situation they respond to it for the betterment of their lives. All human actions are guided by the social structure that exists within that community. Quite often, household members come together to share experience and ideas based on the rules of that social field. Likewise, households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties regard material culture as items that facilitate their social field- crop production and animal rearing. As the theory postulates households do not have any known rules to follow other than each member knowing that all must participate. Production of material culture is regarded as a meeting point where each member of the household comes contributes capital which could be economic, cultural, social or symbolic that improves the wellbeing of the community. However, the theory informs us that all these actions coming together, sharing resources, putting together individual capital for the common good is rooted in the past of that particular community. It is the system of dispositions as a product of history that helps us to inform our future actions. Bourdie refers to this scenario as habitus where the past informs the future. Hence, the perception of woodcarving and basketry items is based on the theory of Bourdie because households come together because of a common need, use their knowledge and resources basing on their past experience and in a bid for a better future.

### **5.3.1 The role of Woodcarving and Basketry items in facilitating household activities**

Woodcarving and basketry items were found to be used in several activities at a household level. The items were used at several stages of farming and other household activities. Although woodcarving and basketry were produced to facilitate day to day functions, producers were also earning from the sale of the items. Informant C6 explained the way households perceive woodcarving and basketry as follows:

Each member of the household is supposed to contribute to the running of the household. Production of indigenous items is therefore important and is everyone's obligation. You cannot expect to buy every item to use in a home from the market. Our ancestors survived harsh conditions by using their environment and creativity. Indeed, each household should teach the young people how to survive without waiting to buy from sources they do not know. (Informant C6)

The Informant C6 was concerned that households should use the knowledge they have, utilize the environment they understand other than waiting for outside help. He was not looking at woodcarving and basketry items through the economic lens but a social lens. On the other hand,

another informant could not associate a granary to his income. To him, it was his obligation to have a granary but was not looking at it as an economic advantage. Informant C2 in Engari-sya sub-county, for instance, indicated that he could not understand how *ekitara* (woven granary) contributes to his income. When the researcher asked him why he owned one, he replied:

I made this granary so that I can preserve my harvest before I sell it. When you do not have a separate and safe place for storage, you are forced to sell your produce immediately because you do not want it damaged or contaminated. Again harvest kept in a granary dries properly and does not become damp. (Informant C2)

Although informants C6 and C2 were aware of the role of woodcarving and basketry, they were not aware that the two contribute to their livelihoods. Discussants of the FGD held in Kanoni sub-county reported that households keep their harvest especially maize, millet, beans and groundnuts in granaries after harvesting. The granaries are made of soft tree branches, reeds or mud and water. Informants reported that when they keep their produce in granaries, the produce is not easily destroyed by rain, it dries so well and does not lose colour hence maintaining high quality. When asked how he was benefiting from owning a granary, informant C5 says:

When I keep my harvest in a granary, I do not sell it immediately because I am sure that my maize is safe. It dries well and I can make sure that it is not destroyed by insects. I mix red paper and other drugs from the farm shop and spray from outside the granary. I wait for the time when prices have increased then I sell at better prices. Families who do not own a granary are forced to sell their maize immediately after harvesting and they are always paid less money. If you do not have a secure place for keeping your harvest, you will be forced to sell them immediately after harvesting before they are destroyed by the changing weather or attacked by pests and weevils. (Informant C5)

Informants C2 and B4 observed that many times traders buy produce cheaply from households who lack storage facilities for their harvests. Traders buy the produce at a cheaper price and later sell at high prices. Informants were aware that it is important to preserve harvest for better prices or for future use but were not taking the granary as an important avenue of achieving their target. This was proved by the fact that many households do not have granaries but instead keep their harvest in synthetic bags. This study argues that if households or policy makers realized the importance of a granary in ensuring food security, quality and improved market value, granaries would be encouraged in the community. Promotion of granaries in the community would result in quality produce and households would sell only when the market of items had improved.

Government intervention in directing and advising communities to preserve produce and other food items had worked during Uganda's economic war. The discussant revealed that during the reign of President Idi Amin, who was president of Uganda from 1971 – 1979, each family was required by law to have *ekitara* in which food was kept and could only be used during scarcity and with permission from the village chief. This law helped in preserving ethnic basketry and woodcarving because during that time there was a scarcity of essential goods therefore households had to use indigenous items. However, discussants could not understand how Amin's directive had a significant positive impact on their household socio-economic enterprises because it was during that time that households resorted to using indigenous items. Discussants were not able to interpret the president's action as a means of promoting food security. Amin's intention was that communities keep enough food despite the lack of essential goods. The use of *ekitara* (granary) during Amin's time demonstrates its importance which can be employed today to improve household enterprises.

Both discussants and informants in Kanoni and Engari-sya agreed that woodcarving and basketry items are important in identifying households as a Banyankole tribe. As the theory of practice observes that the past is manifested in the present and projecting the future, the households considered woodcarving and basketry as items that reflect their past. Douglas and Isherwood quoted in Lawrence (1998) showed patterns of continuity, use and importance of local items in indigenous communities. Many artifacts continue to be part of household activities but are never perceived in economic terms yet, they contribute to economic enterprises in households. Ethnography in Kiruhura revealed that households produce woodcarving and basketry because the items give them a cultural identity as Banyankole. When I asked the informants if the money they get from selling the items was not part of the income, they regarded it as a by the way. They felt that nobody will recognize them if they do not engage in crop growing or animal rearing. Material culture items were regarded as every household's responsibility and were meant to support household activity and identity. Informant B2 for example when asked how *endiiro* (basket for serving millet meal) is perceived and how often household use it she said;

*Endiiro* is an important basket in every home. Each home that serves millet meal, must serve it in an *endiiro*. I actually get puzzled when I attend functions in towns and I find people serving millet meal on plates as if it is cassava. It is very wrong and it demeans our culture as Banyankole. Millet meal is an important meal that has to be kept in *endiiro*

in order to remain hot. These days people in town do not understand who we are and I think that is why they want to change our customs.

Discussants in Kanoni agreed that *karo* must be served in *endiiro*. Both discussants and informants argued that the practice of serving *karo* on a plate during buffet in functions is an abuse of Banyankole tradition. Indigenous items are therefore perceived for the role they play to identify different traditions and practices.

### **5.3.2 Socio-political aspects of Basketry and Woodcarving Items in Households**

Apart from servicing the day-to-day activities in a home, indigenous materials are used to identify distinct characteristics of various community members and to segregate roles in homes. For example, families perceive indigenous materials as a means to assign responsibilities, determine maturity, and instill respect in a way a household or community is run. Informants perceived some objects, such as *ekyanzi* (milk container) as having a significant political value. The political value was based on the dynamics surrounding the use of the items. This was observed in the manner in which milk containers were exhibited on *orugyeegye* (platform) in a central location in a home, their sizes and treatment showed the pride of the community, the power dimensions and hospitality of households.

According to informant C6, there are three common designs of milk containers and these are: *ekyanzi kya'nyineeka* (milk container for the head of the family and also in the same category, but slightly smaller the milk container for the wife), *ekyanzi ky'abagyenyi* (milk container for visitors) and *enkogooro* (milk container for children). Informants C6, C4 and C3 observed that the milk container sizes represent social and hierarchy in a home. The biggest and most important *ekyanzi* belongs to the father who is the head of the family. His responsibility is to provide resources and to defend the family. The second in the hierarchy is the mother who uses almost a similar milk container as that of the head of the family. The mother feeds the family by looking after the children, preparing food, and keeping the house neat. The third in the hierarchy is the milk container in which visitors are served. Traditional families received visitors and therefore there were special milk containers for visitors in a home. According to informants C4 and C6 families expected visitors because African homes operated on an extended family model



and therefore they welcomed many visitors. The smallest milk container usually well decorated is the *enkogooro* which is a milk container for children. The milk container for children is normally carved from a piece of wood that shows two colour shades. This is achieved by carving the children's milk containers from the part of wood that had both the soft sapwood and the heavy hardwood. All these items are arranged on *orugyeegye* which is decorated with black and white African motifs.

*Orugyeegye* is traditionally located at *emwomyo yakanono* (centre pole of the house). Informant B3 was found attending to her milk containers in a house where *orugyeegye* was located and was happy to explain the importance of *orugyeegye*:

*Orugyeegye* was traditionally a centre of power and a reflection of roles and obligations in a kinyankole household. *Orugyeegye* was located in the middle of a homestead next to *enyomo y'akanono* (the main support pole of the hut). *Ekyanzi kya'nyineeka* (the milk container in which the head of the family was served) was placed next to the main pole of the hut because he was the head and a central figure in the family. The other milk containers were then arranged on either side of *ekyanzi kya'nyineeka*. The aim of placing the milk containers in that order was to show the hierarchy of power at home. The mother would have her place next to the *orugyeegye* because that is where she could serve the milk from. This was important because through it, women were able to participate in family matters because women would know how many cows were milked, which cow had the best milk, which one had more, which cow had the best milk for making ghee or serving to visitors. *Orugyeegye* was an important place for women because it gave women respect. Women were respected because they would decide who to serve or how much milk to serve you. (Informant B3)

According to the theory of practice, *orugyeegye* was a symbolic capital on which the family was governed. The items on *orugyeegye* were embedded with meaning that each member of the family understood and respected. The items were embedded with all forms of capital as explained by the theory of practice. To the women it was an economic and cultural capital because from the *orugyeegye* women were able to participate in family matters and from it they assumed their position as banyankole women. To men it was symbolic because the position of *ekyanzi kya'nyineeka* clearly showed that he was the head of the household. Woodcarving and basketry were perceived as a source of women's empowerment and a respect. This perception was observable in informant B3's home where a room was reserved for milk containers and other milk containers. It was in this room where *orugyeegye* was located that she spends most of

her time and effectively administers her family. Although the findings in the study area showed that some families were integrating *orugyeegy* in modern architecture, still the milk container for the head of the family was placed at the centre of *orugyeegy*.

Although material culture items were used to distribute roles in households, the present administrative structure does not favour women because modernization has put resources more in control of men than women. Men tend to control household incomes which disadvantage women who are actually directly involved in household economic activities. Women compete with men for milk because men want all the milk sold so that they control household incomes. Men also control the sale of crops that families produce. Men do not allow women to control income. If a woman sells an item, she is supposed to surrender the money to the husband. In this regard, informant B5 observed as follows;

My neighbours were in charge of a farm. The owner decided to churn all the milk instead of selling it to the cooling plant. He wanted all milk to be churned into ghee which he then sold in Kampala. Churning milk being a woman's job the woman was in charge of the activity. After three months, the man had no money because he was no longer selling milk. He then stopped his wife from making ghee and he resorted to selling milk again. To him his wife was becoming more powerful than him which he could not accept. (Informant B5)

The education system currently promoted in Uganda does not favour production and use of material culture items. The present ethnography ascertains that production of basketry and woodcarving for several uses is affected by the current education system which does not inspire young people to participate in traditional arts and crafts. As a result, the art of basketry making is continuously becoming unpopular in households as many young female members do not know how to make baskets. Informants indicated that the younger generation was not aware of the potential of basket making in livelihood pursuits. Informant B2 emphasized the importance of basketry in the socialization of girls into responsible and hardworking women. On the contrary, her daughter, whom she sometimes worked with thought that her mother was making baskets because she was not educated, which for her was a reason why she was not actively involved in basket making. However, other informants also felt that basket making was an important activity that trained young girls to be responsible future mothers.

The difference in perception of basket making among the young and the old as illustrated by the mother and daughter, showed how the young generation has reconstructed the meaning and value of traditional materials as something done by uneducated. Whereas the older generation had a different perception of material culture production, such as the woman who was working with her daughter to raise tuition for her children's education, the daughter felt that her mother was doing it because she never went to school. Although the mother was happy because through basket making she was able to support her children's education, she also thought she was making baskets because she never went to school. Both of them and even other women in the area were not aware that baskets are no longer for preparing and serving food, but they are used for other functions such as decorations in living rooms and also women use them for storing jewelry.

The milk containers were covered with meticulously woven covers – *emihaiha*. The milk container lids are woven by women in the same community. The manner in which milk containers were treated signified how they supported socio-economic enterprise because the handling and external display was used as a measure of hard work and cleanliness of households. Women spend a lot of time caring for milk containers. They do not use soap for cleaning then because they believe soap spoils milk. They use leaves of selected plants to wash them and after smoke them and cover them. The cleanliness of the milk and the hygiene is measured by *omwitiro* (the smell as a result of smoking the milk container). Discussants observed that hard work and cleanliness is judged depending the number of milk containers, and other items such as gourds normally referred to as *ebishaabo* (for churning milk) and *ebirere* (for keeping yogurt and sour milk) a household has and their treatment and display. FGDs in Engari-sya observed that successful families are judged by the number of milk containers that are displayed on *orugyeegye*. As the number of cows increase, the milk production per day also increases. Traditionally, each cow had its own milk container which means that as cows increased the number of milk containers also increased. Likewise, FGDs in Kanoni observed that a successful family would have more than one granary. In some cases, they would have a granary for millet, beans and groundnuts and one for maize. Such families were respected because they never experience a shortage of food. The use of woodcarving and basketry therefore was perceived to signify the socio-economic as well as authority within a family and community.

Another important item found in households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties and perceived as an artefact with socio-political dimensions is *ekitebe* (Figure 5.1). *Ekitebe* or *ekikarahansi* is an indigenous stool carved from the same tree species as milk containers. There are several sizes of stools carved for use in the community. Informants pointed out that each household has *ekitebe kya'nyineka* (stool belonged to the head of the family), and *ekitebe eky'abagyenyi* (a stool used by important visitors), such as uncles and in-laws. The rest of the family members would sit on the clean floor. The floor was always covered with *eyojwa* (soft grass).



Figure 5.1 *Ekitebe kya'nyineka*  
Photo by researcher

*Eyojwa* grass was collected by women and young girls and meticulously spread in the sitting area of the house. This was often supplemented with well-trimmed and treated animal skins. The stool for the head of the family was a fountain of power and a source of blessings. No woman or child was allowed to sit on that stool unless with the permission of the head of the family. *Ekitebe kya'nyineka* was highly respected and important to the well-being of the family. During marriage ceremonies, the father of the bride would sit on that stool to bestow blessings on his daughter and the father of the groom would do the same to receive his daughter-in-law. Regarding the importance of the *ekitebe kya'nyineka*, informant C6 noted:

It is on this stool that important decisions from the head of the family were delivered. *Ekitebe kya'nyineka* was a sacred and a fountain of honour. When a man grew older, the stool was given to the heir to continue with his legacy.

FGD results indicated that power and authority were embedded in the *ekitebe kya'nyineka*. Traditionally, communities believed that a father could use the stool to curse or bless his son and daughter-in-law. This made *ekitebe kya'nyineka* an important and respected artefact. When the head of a family died, elders and relatives of the deceased would perform rituals, among them was to officially allow the heir to use his father's stool which was referred to as *okuteeka omusika ahantebe*. The ethnographic data in this study, however, revealed that households were using the stool alongside contemporary furniture. Due to external influences, households in Kiruhura were not aware of the role indigenous items such as the stool played in a home. On the other hand, policy makers were not strengthening the use of indigenous items in improving household incomes but instead were promoting modern technologies yet, families could afford modern life. As a result, households were torn between modernity and tradition and this was influencing household perception of material culture in household socio-economic enterprises.

FGDs were in agreement that while the contemporary way of living has relegated the role of *ekitebe* because modern architecture plans and furniture provide each family member space to sit on, *ekitebe* had assumed a symbolic role in the home. Many homes in the study area had *ekitebe*, which was integrated into the modern furniture arrangement, and served as a power symbol in the family. The stool had the economic, cultural and symbolic capital because performed cultural, economic and social functions in the family. In situations where there were insufficient chairs in a house to cater for all visitors, the head of the family would use the *ekitebe* which showed the authority of the head of the family. FGDs revealed that many families living in urban areas had *ekitebe* displayed as an art piece or as an interior decoration. In rare cases it was also used as an alternative seat for the head of the family. Woodcarvers in the study area indicated that there was increasing demand for *ekitebe kya'nyineka* because people were acquiring them as part of their interior decoration. On the other hand, some informants observed that *ekitebe* was used by men to sit on as they harvested finger millet. Although the stool contributes to agriculture in this way, the fact that it is used by the head of the family or older women signifies respect given to senior members of the family. The manner in which the stool is respected in

household administration signified its importance in households. It is perceived as a source of power which makes it a good household enterprise to the producers because it is still used to sit on in a home both modern and traditional; it is used while harvesting millet and also collected as an artwork.

### **5.3.3: Woodcarving and basketry in enhancement of social values and ethnic identity**

Woodcarving and basketry items enhance social values and ethnic identity of households (Dant, 1999; Prown, 2010). In this study, the research wanted to find out if woodcarving was enhancing social values and ethnic identity especially with the influence of modernity. The reply is contained in the reply of informant B4:

Even if we are practicing modern farming where all the milk is sold, we still keep some in milk containers for our children and guests. Whenever our children and grandchildren came home from abroad or from Kampala, we serve them milk in the milk containers. We do this not because we do not have cups but to make them understand and appreciate their culture. We keep *orugyeegye* in our home to remind our children or our visitors of our origin and our values. In our culture, milk containers are a sign of respect and pride. Everything surrounding them whether the house, the lids or the other gourds on *orugyeegye*, are all items of ethnic importance that influence people's relationships and give them identity. (Informant B4)

The research then asked the informant if *orugyeegye* supports decision making in a household. This question was aimed to establish the role of women and men in the wellbeing of household and respect for various roles in a home.

Modern living has affected some of our practices. Traditionally, after milking from *ishaazi* (a place near the house where the cows are milked) the milk was brought in the house and handed over to women. The women would inquire which cow was the milk got from. The women would then decide in which milk container to keep it. Women would put the milk of each cow in selected milk containers depending on the quality of milk either for churning, or for drinking. This made women active participants in the affairs of a home. This practice enhanced participation of both men and women in family matters and also strengthened gender roles because men respected women in matters regarding the handling of milk and milk products. (Informant B4)

Human actions are a result of perceiving, making and desire to transform the world in which they live in (Bourdieu 1977), in the same way material culture supports the smooth running of

activities in households. The discussants in all the three FGDs in Engari-sya and Kanoni sub-counties reiterated that some woodcarving and basketry products were signs of pride and identity. Such items included milk containers, stools, serving baskets, and marriage baskets. Informants also observed that such items communicate to the world who they are and what they believe in.

One of the items perceived as a sign of identity and pride is a milk container. *Ekyanzi* (singular) or *ebyanzi* (plural) (Fig.5.2) is an important item in Ankole especially in households that traditionally kept cattle. The milk container is a traditional material artifact carved by *Bairumales*, but mostly used in *Bahima* homes. The milk container is respected as an item that identifies the Banyankole especially the cattle keepers from other tribes. Milk containers are important in many households because on the one hand producers get money by selling them to users and, on the other hand, milk containers facilitate household socio-economic enterprises.



Figure 5.2: Ekyanzi—usually carved indifferent sizes to cater for various interests  
Photo by the researcher in Bishozi Parish, Engari-sya sub-county

*Ekyanzi* is carved out of omusisa tree (*Albizziacoriaria*) as a non-spill container that balances on the centre. It is carved with specialized indigenous tools and skills from the inner part of the tree which gives it a black colour. After carving, the milk container is covered in black mud for 3- 5 days to further darken it. Milk container carvers are believed to have originated from Mitooma

district, specifically Ruhinda county in the former Bushenyi district, which was made an independent district in 2010 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2011).



Figure 5.3: A woman seated next to *orugyeegye*  
Source: Photograph by the researcher in Engari-sya Sub-county

As Boudieu (1977) explains the concept of habitus to one's behaviour and practices in a society, *orugyeegye* (Figure 5.3) is a place that makes women feel empowered, settled and in control of their families. *Orugyeegye* is a past being manifested in the present and mediates the future of the households. The informants and discussants in both Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties argued that being in control of one's surroundings builds positivity in one's life. They argued that people like responding to new experiences which remind them of the past, a past they knew, believed and have experienced and the one they wish to be associated with. These findings are useful in understanding the context in which people in the study area perceive woodcarving and basketry alongside imported technology and products. During the FGDs, participants observed that households use traditional artifacts in their daily activities because they are easily available. Some of the ethnic items were preferred because of the cultural values which the imported ones could not offer. As Miller (2009) postulates, association with everyday practical taxonomies embodied in material culture creates a bond between an individual and society. Households in Kanoni and Engari-sya perceived ethnic woodcarving and basketry not as commercial activities *per se*, but as a means to meaningful and sustainable livelihoods.

The present ethnography supports two main factors that shape perceptions of the relevance of woodcarving and basketry in the local household socio-economic enterprise. These are, the



mentally ascribed meanings, and national perspectives of ethnic identity and pride. Household members do not perceive woodcarving and basketry items in terms of their commercial value, but instead what the items are used for among the community. The presence of *eshekuru* (Mortar and Pestle, Figure 5.9) or *orugari* (Winnowing tray, Figure 5.5) in a home means that the family has the capacity to prepare a millet meal. A family that has milk containers belongs to the cattle keeping group and understands the issues concerning milk preservation. Indigenous items therefore represent the occupations of families, were embedded with and exercised the powers, such as noticing, recognition, and cognizance (Hanna *et al.*, 2000).

The above findings indicate that woodcarving and basketry in Kanoni and Engari-sya counties in South West Uganda can facilitate daily life activities without necessarily drawing on their economic value. FGD participants observed that households continue to use ethnic woodcarvings and basketry products despite the availability of imported items because the items enable them perform their day to day activities. Participants of the FGD held in the Kanoni sub - county pointed out that even if one had plates, it was unheard of to serve millet meal on a plate or meat stew on a plate. Millet meal is strictly served in *endiiro* and beef stew is served in *orwabya* (clay bowl). In other FGDs in Engari-sya sub-county, the participants observed that woodcarving and basketry are the basic inputs at their disposal through which households can deliver on government programmes. The participants observed that although they embrace government promoted interventions such as modernization of agriculture for improving household income, they do it using indigenous items. Government advocates for modernization of agriculture, but because families do not have the resources to acquire modern equipment, they use indigenous items such as baskets and woodcarvingsto carry out government promoted programmes.

The FGD participants also indicated that woodcarving and basketry items were important in their lives because indigenous items give them identity and pride. The items may not seem to have direct market prices, but are important to people's lives because, without them, households would find it difficult to survive. On the other hand, informants observed that it is a requirement and a cultural obligation that each home owns indigenous items for its day today activities. Some informants mentioned items that carry ascribed meaning as *orugari* (winnowing tray) *ekiseero* (basket for keeping millet flour), *ekitemere* (garden basket), *endiiro* (serving basket), and

*eshekuro* (pounding mortar). Other objects that were identified as a source of identity and pride to households were *ekyanzi* (milk container), *emihiaha* (milk container covers), *ekitebe* (stool), *endiiro* (serving basket), and *kanyantwarire* (marriage basket). These items are used in the garden while planting; they are used in harvesting, in preparation of food as well as serving it. The role of these items in the community is discussed in the subsequent parts of this thesis.

#### **5.3.4 Perceived Cultural, Economic and Utilitarian value of Basketry and Woodcarving Items**

Indigenous items have both economic and utilitarian importance to communities. The items are perceived as fulfilling certain requirements that make the communities perform and live meaningful lives. A number of items were found to be essential in families in Kiruhura and are discussed in the following part of this section.

*Kanyantwarire* (marriage basket, Figure 5.4) was perceived as a sign of identity and a source of pride. *Kanyantwarire* is woven by the bride-to-be as part of her preparation to get married. *Kanyantwarire* is a big basket whose size depends on the economic capability of the family and the ability of the bride to make it. Informants reported that *kanyantwarire* was not tagged to how expensive it was to weave, but how much millet grains the family had to fill it with. The making of the basket would start as soon as the bride wealth had been settled and wedding date fixed. Female members of the bride-to-be such as aunts, sisters, cousins and neighbours would work with the bride-to-be to weave the basket. Although *kanyantwarire* is no longer produced by local households in the study area, its relevance as a symbol of identity was significant to the present study. Its production, like that of many other indigenous artifacts, has been affected by the educational set up which does not allow the younger generation to participate in the production of woodcarving and basketry. In addition, western religions and modernity do not ascribe to the practice of making *kanyantwarire*.

The preparation for making *kanyantwarire* would start with women travelling in groups to collect materials such as *enfunjo n'obutami* (prepared from papyrus plants) from the swamp. *Enfunjo n'obutami* is extracted from tender papyrus stems. The outer part is carefully removed

and prepared in a special way. Natural pigments were used to dye the products in different colors. Once the materials were ready, the bride-to-be would start weaving the basket.

The process of making *kanyantwarire* was a concerted family effort. To produce an impressive basket, the entire community would be involved. Young women from different households would collect materials on an agreed day and this was with the approval of the men. Making *kanyantwarire* also involved men because men were aware that one of the girls in the community was getting married, and therefore they allowed their girls and women to participate. Women and girls would spend a whole day collecting materials and once the materials were ready, they worked in turns to make sure the basket was finished in time. Older women would help in applying appropriate designs in the basket which were locally known as *ekiganja*, *nyamuraza*, *enkokoraz'abahondane*, *empotore* and *akasing'ente*. A good basket gave respect to the girl and her family and the size of *kanyantwarire* was an indication of hard work, and cleanliness of both the girl and her family. A marriage function was a duty of every member of the community. (Informant B2)



Figure 5.4: Kanyantwarire  
Photo by researcher in Bishozi parish Engari-sya sub-county

*Orugari* (Figure 5.5) is used to separate pebbles, dust or other impurities from the grain during millet preparation. *Orugari* is also used to remove impurities from other foods such as beans or ground nuts. More so *orugari* is placed in front of the grinding stone to receive flour. After grinding the flour is kept in *ekiseero*. *Ekiseero* is slightly bigger than *endiiro* (Figure 5.6). Unlike *endiiro* and *kanyantwarire*, *ekiseero* is not decorated with basic designs.



Figure 5.5: *orugari*  
Photo by the researcher in Bishozi parish, Engari-sub-county

*Endiiro* is still used in households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties. *Endiiro* has assumed another role as a tourist souvenir. Many craft shops sell *endiiro* to both local and international tourists as an item with aesthetic value. Among the Banyankole, *endiiro* is used to serve *karo* (millet meal), one of the common meals among households. It is made from various materials such as papyrus and millet stems, however, in the contemporary communities synthetic materials are also used. *Endiiro* is decorated with different motifs as those of *kanyantwarire*. In traditional crop growing households in Ankole, a bride would give *endiiro* as an appreciation gift to her parents before she got married.



Figure 5.6: *Endiira*  
Photo taken by researcher In Engari-sya

*Ekitemere* (Figure 5.7) is another important basket used by households for serving food such as bananas, and sweet potatoes and also to harvest or collect fresh food from the garden. *Ekitemere* has a wide opening and is decorated with various motifs. Several households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties use *ekitemere* for several functions such as preparation and serving of food, and storage.



Figure 5.7: *Ekitemere*  
Photo taken by researcher In Engari-sya

Most of the informants and FDG participants reported that traditionally, *ekitemere* was used to carry millet to different homes for grinding in preparation for marriage. Before the introduction of milling machines, families used grinding stones and each family owned one. If a family

needed up 300 kg of millet flour to host a function, for example, many families were requested to participate in grinding the millet. The millet would then be prepared and distributed to several homes using *ekitenga* (Figure 5.8).

*Ekitenga* was an important basket during preparation for marriage ceremonies among the Banyankole households. Informant B6 reported that whenever there were preparations for a marriage function, women would converge in that family to prepare millet for the function. Each woman would come with *ekitenga*, *orugari* and *eshekuro n'omuhinito* the family intending to host the function. Women would prepare the millet and young girls and women would carry it to different homes (*Okusiisa*). Each home would take about 5kg of the millet for grinding. After grinding the millet, they would bring it back to the family before the function.



Figure 5.8:*Ekitenga*  
Photo taken by researcher in Kyegando parish, Engari-sya sub-county

*Eshekuro* (Figure. 5.9) is a household item carved out of the same tree as *ekyanzi*. It is a two piece item with the main piece half hollow-*eshekuro* and the other piece *omuhini* (a long rounded carved stick used for pounding). *Eshekuro* (pounding mortar) was found to be mostly used in households that grow crops. *Eshekuro* is carved by men from the crop growing households who



also carve milk containers and troughs. The main piece of *eshekuro* is designed with two grooves, one at the bottom and the other at the top which helps in lifting it and providing a firm grip as one prepares the food. The size of the *eshekuro* depends on the user's preference which is normally determined by the family size. *Eshekuro* is an important item in preparation of finger millet, which is one of the staple foods in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties.



Figure 5.9: *Eshekuro*(Mortar and Pestle)  
Photo by researcher in Nsheshe parish, Engari-sya sub-county

Field observation revealed that *eshekuro* is the only device used in removing husks from millet. Most households that were involved in growing millet owned *eshekuro*. Households prepare millet for subsistence and sale using traditional methods before taking it to the grinding machine. There were few households that were using the traditional *orubengo* (grinding stone) to prepare millet flour. Arguably, the increase in population in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016) in the last 10 years prior to the present ethnography implied an increase in the demand for millet as both staple food and a cash crop. This means that *eshekuro* does not only remain important in preparation of millet for home consumption, but also for sale. Similarly, *eshekuro* is also used as an interior décor in many urban homes, which increases its commercial value.

Generally, in Uganda, millet is used by over 50% of the country's population and is increasingly becoming a major source of household income (Wanyera, 2007). Millet is harvested from the garden using *omusyogw'egyesho* (a harvesting knife). The harvested millet is tied in *enganda* (bundles), carried home to the drying ground in *ebitenga* (big baskets) and later kept in *ekitara* (granary) (Figure 5.10).



Figure 5.10 Ekitara  
Photo by the researcher in Kyahugye

*Ekitara* is made out of soft branches which are woven together and sometimes enhanced with mud mixed with cow dung by smearing it to reduce the gaps between the branches. It is mounted on pedestal usually two feet from the ground to avoid the harvest to be destroyed by insects, weevils or rodents. After drying the harvest, households keep them in the granary. It is from the granary that households remove what they want to use at home or sell.

FGD participants revealed that recent environmental changes have affected the production of woodcarving and basketry in households because the materials are obtained from the environment. As the environmental patterns kept changing overtime and the land became drier, households resorted to clearing wetlands and forests to create land for grazing cattle and to grow crops. Participants observed that clearing of bushes to improve pastures for cattle tampered with



the natural vegetation such as swamps and forests where woodcarving and basketry materials were collected from. Similarly, informants observed that some items such as the *ekitara* that was traditionally woven out of creeping materials are no longer produced because creeping plants that were used have been cut down to increase land for agriculture.

The present ethnography shows that the local perception of basketry as a viable household enterprise was influenced by the imported items or formal employment. FGDs emphasized that the government needed to promote indigenous skills development right from primary to higher institutions of learning. Most FGD informants argued that although the government had started to recognize vocational education and training, there was a lot to be done especially in the rural and poor urban communities. This view is consistent with the Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (2009), which underscores the fact that Business and Vocational Education Training Policy (BTVET) in Uganda needs a favourable environment to function. This would entail an improvement in training, involvement of employers and the private sector who are supposed to utilize the products and skills, and changing the negative attitudes towards technical and vocational education programmes. Nonetheless, the current practice shows that indigenous items are not captured as a skill in the preferred formal education. The preferred education is training for white collar jobs. The students that join BTVET institutions are usually those that fail to join universities because of low grades or who fail to raise tuition. Community members, local leaders or policy makers do not realize that locally produced indigenous items significantly contribute to household enterprise

Milk containers are nowadays mostly used as marriage gifts and few families use them to serve milk. The milk containers are the main gift items in Banyankole wedding ceremonies. Whenever parents give away their daughters for marriage, they give them several assorted gifts meant to enable them start a new life. In the contemporary households, of Ankole communities, a bride's parents usually give her away in marriage with various gifts of which the main one is *omugamba* (a collection of milk containers and other items)(Figure5.11). InformantC3, a wood carver in Engari-sya sub-county receives more than five orders for *omugamba* which usually has six to ten milk containers, a watering can, a churning gourd and assorted containers. The informant had so much work that he is not able to deliver on the orders of customers in time. He produced these

alone despite having grown up sons. None of his children was willing to participate because the carving of milk containers was regarded as a work for uneducated adults. The community and policy makers did not consider the income C3 was generating out of milk container carving.



Figure 5.11: *Omugamba*. A collection of traditional gift items used in marriage;  
Photo by Researcher in Kanoni sub-county

If the government supports the producers of ethnic artefacts, they would upgrade their production techniques to meet the demands of modern living. One of the wood carvers, informant C5 in Kanoni Sub-county, for instance, carved prototypes of *orugyeegye* (Figure. 5.12). This prototype includes all the items on *omugamba* and they are arranged on a pedestal resembling *orugyeegye*. This item is given as part of *omugamba* during marriage ceremonies. The present ethnography indicates that the couple takes the prototype as a decoration piece to their urban home and leaves behind the actual items for parents to use at home. This innovation allows the carver to meet the social and utilitarian livelihood needs in both rural and urban areas. The actual milk containers remain in the rural homes and are used in handling milk while the prototypes are taken to urban homes as an interior decoration and symbol of ethnic identity.

This ethnography suggests that *ebyanzi* continue to be appreciated by many households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties. The manner in which households respect milk containers and appreciate them as both interior decoration and marriage gifts confirmed that *ebyanzi* are

important in the lives of local households. Furthermore, the demand for milk containers as the study witnessed in the monthly markets shows that demand is higher than supply.



Figure5.12:A prototype of milk containers mostly preferred by urban families as a symbol of their culture.  
Photo by researcher in Kanoni sub-county

In two consecutive monthly markets in the Kanoni sub - county during the fieldwork on which this analysis is based, two *ebyanzi* carvers were found selling milk containers. The carvers had gone to the market to deliver orders. They had a few milk containers for sale, but those who wanted a complete set for marriage gifts had to make orders. Despite the high demand for *ebyanzi*, the youth still perceived woodcarving as a profession for those who fail to go to school. One of the sons of informantC4 had learnt how to carve but abandoned the practice because none of his age mates was in the trade. He did not want to be a carver since some of the carvers were considered poor peasants. InformantsC4 and C6 were disappointed that the young were not willing to continue with the trade, yet for them they were getting old and too weak to continue carving. InformantC4 owns a modern dairy farm, he stopped woodcarving after he had accumulated wealth. However, he confirmed that his success in dairy farming had been supported by his 30 years in the woodcarving enterprise. He carved milk containers and invested the money from carving in establishing a dairy farm. Woodcarving therefore, has the potential to

provide a sustainable source of income which informant C4 translated into dairy farming. The story of informant C4 underlines the reality that carving milk containers is not only a source of pride and identity, but also a profitable economic activity which needs to be supported as a viable livelihood enterprise at the household level.

The present ethnography shows that traditional milk containers have assumed a different role from the original one. They have changed from being just mere containers for milking, serving or storing milk to an identity symbol and material for interior decor. The modern way of life and livelihood have influenced households not to consider milk containers as containers, but also as items that give them an identity. Consequently, the feeling of identity has raised the value of milk containers in households and their market commodity prices. However, milk is no longer a socio-cultural family asset but instead a purely commercial item. In some families *orugyeegye* is preserved as a symbol of culture to display African motifs painted on it and hardly keep the milk. Although the government is supporting the dairy production, the study found out that the government's approach to considering only milk for sale disadvantages other possible outcomes associated with milk that that would increase household incomes.

Closely related to milk containers is the *omuhaiha* (a milk container cover) (Figure 5.13). *Omu haiha* is decorated with the same motifs as those on the serving baskets. Materials for most baskets are collected by women and young girls as a group irrespective of whether one is from the cattle keeping or cultivating ethnic sub-group. *Emihaiha* (plural) are woven by women and like *endiiro* they are regarded as items that identify the Banyankole culture.



Figure 5.13:*Emihaiha*  
Photo by Researcher

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the demographic characteristics of the sample which helped in interpreting and understanding the data from the field. The demographic characteristics were useful in aligning responses of informants to the objectives of the study and also to understand the socio-economic characteristics of households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties. This chapter has shown that households produce woodcarving and basketry items to facilitate their day to day functions but not for pecuniary benefits. However, households also get income from sales though they do not consider it as a main source of income. Further, the chapter shows that woodcarving and basketry help in identifying distinct characteristics of various community members and roles of each member in a home. The chapter further shows that woodcarving and basketry are used to enhance social values and ethnic identity and have both economic and utilitarian importance to communities. The chapter shows how items are perceived in fulfilling certain requirements that enable communities improve their livelihoods by reviewing a number of artifacts.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE ROLE OF WOODCARVING AND BASKETRY IN HOUSEHOLD SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the contribution of woodcarving and basketry to household socio-economic enterprises in Kiruhura district. The chapter also examines how indigenous items can cause socio-economic transformation of communities.

#### 6.2 Woodcarving and Basketry in Household Socio-economic Enterprises

The present ethnographic analysis shows the contribution of woodcarving and basketry in household socio-economic enterprises in the study area. Findings of the study indicated that several indigenous items support household socio-economic enterprises. Informants identified several indigenous items that support socio-economic enterprises such as *amaato* (troughs). Troughs are produced in different versions depending on the intended use. The original trough was *obwaato bw'okunyuuka* (for squeezing bananas, see Figure 6.1). As the production of locally brewed alcohol was replaced with the factory processed western one, households appropriated other functions for troughs. *Obwaato bw'okunyuuka* was redesigned as *obwaato bw'okweshera* (trough for watering cows, Figure 6.2) and *ekinimba* sometimes called *ekigungiro* (trough for serving salt to cows, Figure 6.3).

*Obwaato bw'okunyuuka* (trough for squeezing bananas) is carved out of a trunk of a tree. The size of *obwaato bw'okunyuuka* is determined by the size of the tree trunk from which it is carved. Each household ordered a trough depending on the number of beer pots a family was able to produce. Not every home would have *obwaato bw'okunyuuka* because it was hard to maintain it, especially if one had a small banana plantation. *Obwaato bw'okunyuuka* was a community item as several families could use one by shifting it from home to home. If it was not being used, *obwaato bw'okunyuuka* was covered with *emboreera* (soft banana stems) to stop it from cracking. *Obwaato bw'okunyuuka* contributed a lot of lives of traditional communities because it

was an item that was communally owned and used in the production of beer which is an important community item. FGD participants from Kanoni sub-county indicated that in beer producing communities, a person who produced beer, would call neighbors and give part of the beer for free which was referred to as *entereko*. However, the beer was not only for drinking but was also a means through which society reached important decisions. Beer was served during marriage ceremonies, settling disagreements, appeasing the gods, and showing gratitude. Although modern lifestyles no longer support the use of local beer in many community occasions, the role of beer cannot be neglected hence the importance of *obwaato*.

It is possible that traditional beer making which was very common in Banyankole until the 1940s became less popular because of Christianity whose teachings were against it. Informants reported that beer brewing continued to decline because of modern lifestyles, weather changes, and the banana wilt disease. However, the influence of religion and modern lifestyles greatly affected the production of local beer. The Christian teaching, especially the Anglican revival doctrine of salvation, discouraged alcohol consumption, smoking, and other practices that contradict Bible teachings. As many people became Moslems and 'saved Christians', consumption of alcohol reduced because Moslems and saved Christians do not take alcohol. More so, as people embraced modern lifestyles, they shifted from using local products to using imported or factory made. This shift was a result of people believing that imported or factory made beer is a better quality and healthy. During the fieldwork for the present study, it was found that most trading centres in the two sub-counties were stocked with factory made and packed alcohol. Local brew was only found in Kamwokya, a local market in the Kanoni sub-county. Whereas the perception of already made items against locally made items contributed to the abandonment of indigenous skills, the troughs were not completely abandoned, but instead were appropriated to other uses such as serving water and salt to cattle.

The art of making beer was lost because factory made beer took over the locally brewed one. When people are found drinking *tonto* (local beer), they are regarded as poor. The production of *waragi* (gin) which used to be processed from bananas is now produced from many other products other than bananas. The production of our local beer is dying and this has affected the production of troughs. The banana species we used to squeeze for beer are no longer grown because the market for edible bananas has increased; people prefer selling fresh bananas. People have abandoned beer brewing. We also used to brew beer during important days such as Christmas, but these days we are not celebrating as a



community. Every household remains works alone, we have become individualistic. (Informant C4)

There was no family that made local beer on a large scale in the study area during the ethnography. Those who attempt to squeeze bananas for brewing beer or making juice, use *orureebo* (a temporary trough) which is made out of banana stem covers and leaves. However, the decline in beer brewing did not affect the use of troughs in the area.



Figure 6.1: *obwaato bw'okunyuuka*  
Photo taken by researcher in Bishozi parish Engari-sya

As many households shifted to mixed farming and almost every household started keeping cattle, the troughs were modified to be used for serving water and salt to cattle. FGD participants in Engari-sya reported that traditionally, cattle were served water and salt in troughs molded out of the soil. The troughs were delicate and hard to maintain because they required to be maintained each day from leaking. As families started practicing modern farming, wooden troughs became more appropriate. Unlike the traditional free range grazing of cattle, modern farming uses paddocks that require water serving points with a salt trough in each. This was achieved through using *obwaato bw'okweshera* (trough for serving water to cattle) and *ekinimba* (trough for serving salt to animals).

*Obwaato bw'okweshera* (Figure6.2) is made in the same way as *obwaato bw'okunyuuka*. However, unlike *obwaato bw'okunyuuka* which has a narrow opening, *obwaato bw'okweshera* has a wide opening, to allow several cows to access the water.





Figure 6.2 *Obwaato bw'okweshera*  
Photo by researcher in Nsheshe Engari-sya sub-county

Families in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties prefer using wooden *obwaato bw'okweshera*. The trough is not only easy to maintain, but is also durable, and does not hurt cattle as they drink water. This puts it on a higher demand in the study area.

*Ekinimba* (trough for serving salt to livestock, Figure 6.3) is carved from the same tree species as *obwaato bw'okweshera* or *obwaato bw'okunyuuka*. Like *obwaato bw'okweshera*, *ekinimba* has a wide opening to allow many animals use it at the same time. It has two holes at both ends, which are used to mount it onto stands above the ground. It is raised from the ground to enable cows access the salt as well as protect it from being destroyed by water and termites. *Ekinimba* is instrumental in rearing cattle because salt is one of the items cattle require for their growth and health. Each household that keeps cattle must have *ekinimba* for proper feeding of the cattle.

*Obwaato bw'okunyuuka*, *obwaato bw'okweshera* and *ekinimba* are carved by experienced wood carvers using specialized tools, namely, *embaijo*, *ekishoko*, and *emparo* (Figure 6.4). However, there are other less specialized items such as *omuhini* (hoe handle) and *orwiko* (millet mingling stick), which are carved in the crop growing sub-group in Ankole.



Figure 6.3: Ekigungiro for serving cattle salt  
Photo by researcher from Mbogo parish Kanoni sub-county

Most people use hoes in their day to day activities whose handles were carved by adult males in each home. In addition to carving *omuhini*, adult male members of the family carve *orwiko*. However, the same items are also sold in the market to those who cannot produce them at home.



Figure 6.4: Some specialized tools used in Woodcarving (From left to right)  
*Embaijo, Ekishoko, and Emparo*  
Photo by researcher from Mbogo parish, Kanoni sub-county

Findings from FGD participants in Kanoni and Engari-sya indicate that although woodcarving and basketry contribute to household enterprise, production has reduced in the area. However,

nine out of the twelve informants who were involved in indigenous production earn between Uganda shillings 50,000 and 600,000 per month. This income was used to supplement income from other family activities such as selling of farm produce.

Informants attributed the reduced household production of woodcarving and basketry items to two reasons. First, families no longer have access to raw materials due to population increase, which has resulted in sub-division of land among the densely populated counties in Kiruhura district (Kiruhura District Local Government, 2013). Kanoni, Enagari-sya, Kitura and Kashongi are the four densely populated sub-counties in the district. This has resulted in tampering with the natural vegetation to increase farming land by households. Many wetlands and forests have been reclaimed to increase farming area, yet, this was the natural habitat for indigenous material production. Second, formal education has alienated people, especially the young generation, from traditional carving and basketry skills. Many young people do not consider woodcarving and basketry profitable as working in a modern setup such as an office despite the fact that formal employment is scarce. Among the informants in the present study, 7 out of the 12 persons that were involved in the production of indigenous items had never gone to school. Even for those who said they had gone to school, only two had reached primary seven. This shows that woodcarving and basketry have remained a discipline for persons who did not attain formal training.

Further, field ethnography revealed that there is a need for government to support indigenous skills such as woodcarving because this may enable young people to engage in production rather than roaming the streets for employment. Informants observed that engaging young people in the production of indigenous items would provide an alternative pathway for many youth who do not join institutions of higher learning. The FGD participants from Engari-sya also indicated that if the government supported the use of indigenous items, households would stop destroying the natural habitat of material culture resources in an effort to increase their grazing land.

Although the Uganda government promotes modern agriculture as a pathway to addressing household poverty (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2014), this may not be successfully realized if material culture, such as woodcarvings and basketry items are not properly utilized..

The present study found that woodcarving and basketry were important assets that households were relying on to improve their incomes. Observation of household activities in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties revealed that each family was using either woodcarving or basketry items in their daily activities. This was done to realize government programs such as modern agricultural practices.

Individual producers of woodcarving and basketry items were directly benefiting. Informant C2 in Bishozi parish Engari-sya sub-county carves several household items such as *ebitebe* (stools), *ebinimba* (cattle salt troughs) and *amaato g'okweshera* (cattle watering troughs). He earns over 600,000 Uganda shillings a month. His items are bought by neighbours and he does not take any of his products to the market. Informant C2 reported that households always invite him to their farms to carve *ebinimba* and *amaato g'okweshera*. He uses tools from a blacksmith who lives within the same community. He believes that ethnic material artifact producers help household members to meet their daily socio-economic needs. In addition to earning over 600,000 Uganda shillings a month, C2 also cultivates several crops hence carving is not his only economic activity.

Carving *ebitebe*, *ebinimba* and *amaato g'okweshera* is not a full-time job as none of the twelve informants who were producing artifacts were doing it on a full time basis. The family of C4 was harvesting up to 15bags of millet of 100 kilogrammes each season, earning 1,800,000 – 3,000,000Uganda shillings (Approx. USD 500- 800) a season. In-depth interviews and observation in households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties revealed that whatever farming activity a household decides to engage in, indigenous material culture items play an important complementary livelihood role. Households use *emisoy'egyesho* for harvesting, *ebiibo* for carrying food; they keep their harvests in *ebitara*, use *orugari* to clean food and *endiiro* to serve *karo*.

All the informants and FGD participants concurred that families use indigenous items to improve their household enterprise. They observed that ethnic material culture items used in farming activities were easily accessible. Informants as well as FGD participants agreed that traditional items such as *orugari* were good in producing quality products. Informant B1 roasted millet on

*orugusyo* (clay molded oven) and cleaned it using *orugari*. The informant described *orugari* as a convenient item because she could manipulate it depending on what she was doing. The informant reported that she kept changing the manner in which she handles it depending on what she is doing.

Households in Kanoni and Engari-sya are mostly engaged in agricultural activities, mostly employing indigenous skills and tools in production. Women churn cow ghee in *ebishaabo* (gourds) covered with *omuhaiha* (milk container cover). Churning milk to extract ghee is one of the traditional practices that have the potential as a source of household income today. The exercise involves collecting *omwitsi* (the top cream of the milk), which is kept in *ekishaabo* for three days and on the third day women churn and get ghee. The ghee has a distinct smell and is used to prepare a special sauce called *eshabwe* among the Banyankole. The study established that there was an attempt by milk cooling plant owners who wanted to produce ghee commercially not using the traditional methods. Informants reported that people rejected the ghee which was produced using a machine because it tasted differently from the one churned by the women using traditional methods. Informant B3 claimed that the ghee collected from fresh milk “does not smell as ghee and cannot even make *eshabwe*”. Key Informant B3 observed:

The traditional method of making ghee is not just churning. It involves cleaning and preparation of *ekishaabo*, and selection of the milk. One must know the character of the cow whose milk you are using. Not that each cow will give you good milk. It also means that you cannot mix milk from different cows as if you are milking to sell to a milk plant. The ghee made at the cooling plant is not ghee; maybe, it is ice cream because ghee must mature when you keep it for some time. The one from the cooling plant if you do not keep it under refrigeration it will rot.

Households produce 15 -20 kilogrammes of ghee in a month. They sell a kilogramme between Uganda Shillings 14,000 and 15,000, earning approximately Uganda shillings 300,000 per month (about USD 100). Apart from being a source of income, the knowledge and skills as explained by key informant B3 above shows the socio-economic aspects embedded in making ghee. Making ghee enables women to access money because women sell the ghee and hence control the money from it. On the other hand, making ghee enables increased participation of women in family decisions because women decide which cow's milk was good for making ghee. This

enables women to know the history of each cow. It was also helpful because women would contribute to making decisions on which cow to give out as present because women knew the history of each cow. Although modernization of farming practices in the study area aims at improving household incomes, it threatens the collective family fabric that makes women effective participants in family matters.

Modern lifestyles undermine indigenous items such as woodcarving and basketry as important factors of sustainable development in the study area. The ethnography indicates that households prefer to live in modern lifestyles, yet they do not have the means to do so. This results in households recognizing the contribution of woodcarving and basketry items in their daily activities. Observation of families in the study area showed that education emphasizes grades not skills development. This attitude results in schools considering indigenous items as a second alternative to the preference. The present study does not argue against teaching computer skills in schools, but argues that creative subjects such as art and crafts should be taught in areas such as Kanoni and Engari-sya which do not have access to electricity. This would promote the production of woodcarving and basketry and enable the continuation of indigenous production.

Although families strive to earn incomes from better farming practices promoted by the government, they do not have the capacity to apply modern farming practices and equipment. On the other hand, families seem to shun indigenous ways of doing things because they believe such practices are outdated. Only a few of the households included in the ethnography were able to deliver their milk to the collection centres using aluminum cans because the cans are too expensive for a subsistence farmer. A can of 50 litres costs Uganda Shillings 250,000 - 300,000 (approx. USD 100) which, the study informants argued, was high compared to their earnings. Many families preferred delivering their milk in plastic Jerrycans, which buyers discourage. The government's move to modernize agriculture is good but it falls short of providing a transitional strategy for households to move from subsistence to modern agriculture.

### **6.3 Woodcarving and Basketry items reflect Social, Cultural and Environmental considerations**

Woodcarving and basketry production brings households together, and gives them collective responsibility and ownership. Households come together during the collection of materials, sharing skills and production of items. Because materials come from the environment, households protect the environment such that they do not lose them in case forests are cleared for other use. The Centre for Community Enterprise (2008) and Bland (2009) observe that woodcarving and basketry are social enterprises because they have the capacity to transform communities and to offer public services that are responsive, innovative and which could deliver multiple outcomes in society. The present study demonstrates that households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties engage in woodcarving and basketry as an appropriate way of sustaining their holistic well-being (White, 2008)

Further, woodcarving and basketry contribute to socio-economic enterprise because they are social enterprises. The production of items operates on the model of togetherness as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). This means that different homes come together and work as a team, which results in better quality and can be easily translated into a strong market strategy for the products. The informants indicated that collection of materials for woodcarving and basketry production is learning as well as a sharing experience for both men and women because it is done as a group irrespective of their cultural settings. Members from several households collect woodcarving and basketry materials from the environment and during that activity, the old teach the young cultural values and skills of production. Data from the field indicate that using woodcarving and basketry items in the production of contemporary items can help in delivering modern approaches to households more appropriate than using development strategies from the central government. Similarly, White (2008) observes that production of indigenous materials does not support compartmentalization of people's lives either by profession, tribe or location.

The concept of wellbeing in regard to woodcarving and basketry as household social enterprises is relevant to household livelihoods in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties. This is due to the fact that local households cannot manage to acquire modern equipment. Whereas one would look

at enterprises in terms of income, there are other values such as continuity of traditions that come with woodcarving and basketry production. Key informants attested that woodcarving and basketry items were important in creating a favourable situation for continuity of the family structure. Informant C2 noted that he was able to give his sons a stable foundation for their future by teaching them milk container carving. On the other hand, the mother of informant B1 who could not go to the garden anymore because of age spends all her time making baskets for sale. She commented on the importance of basketry as follows:

At my age, I cannot own my own garden because my back cannot support me to go to the garden. I cannot bend to weed the plants, I cannot harvest it and neither can I carry it. What I can only do now is to sit and use my hands to make *ebitemere* which people use to harvest millet, beans, and groundnuts. I sell them and the little money I get I use it for buying drugs in case I'm not well, give to church, or give to my grandchildren. I thank God because I can still see (Informant B1)

The above observation shows that assessment of wellbeing should be based on local priorities and perspectives. Households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties draw on woodcarving and basketry to improve their wellbeing in almost every activity.

## 6.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined the role of woodcarving and basketry in contributing to household socio-economic enterprises in Kiruhura district. It looks at how several indigenous items such as *amaato* (troughs) support household socio-economic enterprises. The chapter analyzes how *obwaato bw'okunyuuka* was redesigned as *obwaato bw'okweshera* (trough for watering cows) and *ekinimba* (trough for serving salt to cows). Further, the chapter reveals that woodcarving and basketry are practiced in most homes and are used in the socio-economic enterprises. Basing on the data from informants, the chapter shows how producers can earn income from woodcarving and basketry and how the income can support families to send their children to school, and pay hospital bills. Examples of success stories such as a group of women in Enagari-sya sub-county who produce baskets for a Swedish market shows how they have managed to educate their children using earnings from sale of baskets. It was further noticed through observation that households in Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties improved their income capacities through utilizing indigenous materials. The chapter concludes with an argument that Western influence cannot take away the role of indigenous items in supporting economic development.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations emanating from the research findings. The summary, conclusions and recommendations are based on the analysis of the role of woodcarving and basketry in household enterprise in Kiruhura district specifically looking at households' perceptions of woodcarving and basketry, what factors influence the production of woodcarvings and basketry items, and how woodcarving and basketry items contribute to socio-economic development. Further, the chapter discusses areas that need more investigation so as to fully position the study of material culture as an important intervention in household enterprise that can bring about sustainable development.

#### **7.2 Summary**

The study aimed at exploring the role of woodcarving and basketry in household enterprise in Kiruhura district. It sought to find out factors that influence the production of material culture, analyze the perception of household members towards woodcarving and basketry and assess the contribution of woodcarving and basketry to household socio-economic enterprise.

Findings on factors influencing production of woodcarving and basketry in Kanoni and Engarissa sub-counties reveal that woodcarving and basketry items are produced to support a socio-economic enterprise of households. The results indicate that factors that influence household members to produce woodcarving and basketry items include their historical occupations, lack of capacity to acquire modern equipment which government promotes and cultural attachment. In addition, the results reveal that religious practices also affect production of woodcarving and basketry items. Families produce and use only those items that do not contradict religious teaching. The results show that production is also determined by both internal and external demand. Internally items are used within a community either by paying for them or exchanging them with other items. The external demand involves items being bought by people from outside the community and taken away. Other factors for the production of woodcarvings and basketry

items include cultural attachment whereby community members produce and use items because items carry cultural meaning. Such items include *ekyanzi*, *endiiro*, *eshekuru*, and *orugari*. The results of the study suggest that communities are not able to substitute any these items with foreign items. Therefore, development interventions need to understand what indigenous items are produced and find a way of harnessing them in their development plans.

Community members' perceptions were analyzed in order to establish if woodcarving and basketry were regarded as important in household enterprise. The findings of the study reveal that household members see the production of woodcarving and basketry as a means to facilitate their day to day functions. Although some members realized pecuniary benefits, largely the community considered production of indigenous items as an obligation of every member of the community. Members considered woodcarving and basketry items as important in ensuring food security because through their use, the community was able to preserve their produce and mitigate food shortage. Further, the results reveal that woodcarving and basketry are important items with which communities identify themselves. The items bring out characteristics of various communities and the roles of each member of the community. Several items such as *ebyanzi*, *endiiro*, *eshekuru*, and *orugari* could easily identify a family's occupation and contribution in the community. In addition, results show that woodcarving and basketry items such as *orugyeegye* and *ekitebe* are important in demonstrating different power centres within a family or community. The research findings contribute to the general body of knowledge on how communities perceive woodcarving and basketry items and how these could be important in improving the wellbeing of communities.

With regard to the contribution of woodcarving and basketry to socio-economic enterprises, the results indicate that there was a significant contribution of woodcarving and basketry to the household socio-economic enterprises. Several indigenous items such as *amaato* (troughs) *endiiro* (serving basket), *orugari* (winnowing tray), *eshekuru* (pounding mortar) and *ebyanzi* (milk containers) support socio-economic enterprise. Results indicate that these items play an important role in increasing farm productivity. Results also show that many homes use basketry and woodcarving in cultivation, harvesting, post-harvest and preparation of food which result in improved livelihoods. Further, engaging in production of indigenous items enable some

individuals to earn substantial amounts of money which improve their livelihoods. Results indicate that despite households not regarding woodcarving and basketry as important factors in socio-economic enterprises, they use income from woodcarving and basketry to pay tuition for their children, settle hospital bills and attend social functions. Indeed, observation showed that some households had transformed from subsistence production to commercial farming using income from wood carving.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

This study found that production of woodcarving and basketry is influenced by factors such as failure of households to acquire modern technology, religious beliefs, demand and cultural attachment. It was evident that in Kiruhura district most homes are operating at a subsistence level hence integrating indigenous items was inevitable. The fact that families cannot easily acquire modern technology, they have no choice but to continue using indigenous items. Moreover, the communities can easily access materials for making the items and they possess the knowledge and skills for producing the items. Although religious attitudes has had an influence on the production and use of woodcarving and basketry items, the community continue to produce items which are not in direct conflict with religion. The community has also learnt to redesign the items to reflect the religious beliefs. As a result, woodcarving and basketry items continue to be part of the community and sidelining them from development strategies is hampering the development process of rural communities. The availability of external and internal demand is also clear evidence that woodcarving and basketry have a role to play in the livelihoods of the community.

This study established that although both policy makers and the community do not attach pecuniary benefits to woodcarving and basketry items, and the items are still perceived as every community member's responsibility, they contribute to the household socio-economic enterprise in Kiruhura district. The communities see woodcarving and basketry as a means to facilitate their day to day functions, but hardly do they link it to improving their household enterprise. On the other hand, families regard woodcarving and basketry as items for ensuring food security. This means that woodcarving and basketry could be used to improve household food security which

will result in strong households that could engage in other productive activities that could result into sustainable development. The fact that households identifies themselves with woodcarving and basketry items, and also attach issues of authority to some items means that they have a lot of respect for these items. It is therefore possible to mobilize, and unite communities using the items and be able to implement any development program. This is because households respect the items and work together in producing them.

Further, woodcarving and basketry items had a significant contribution to socio-economic transformation because several indigenous items clearly support socio-economic enterprises. Use of woodcarving and basketry in cattle rearing and crop cultivation improves livelihoods of the rural communities. It is evident that producers are also making an extra income even when they are producing items on a part time basis. As results indicate, farmers were improving their productivity by utilizing indigenous items and at the same time, producers were earning extra income. The increased productivity of farmers and increased income of producers of items is an important contribution of indigenous items to sustainable development.

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

Despite the fact that government has put in place policies with strategic interventions to transform the households from low income to middle income status, there is need to ensure that all households have viable socio-economic enterprises which can enable them benefit from the interventions. The interventions need to promote use of indigenous skills and technologies which households own rather than the imported and usually expensive technology. Interventions to transform households from subsistence production to commercial production can only benefit all households if they require resources that can be accessed by all. In situations where resources are constrained as the case of Uganda, households should be encouraged to utilize indigenous skills and resources in their enterprises because they can access them. This may be achieved by sensitizing the households through education structure; faith based organizations and local leadership because these are the sectors that are in touch with households.

The fact that many households subscribe to education, the Ministry of Education and Sports can help in developing a school curricular that promotes indigenous material production. This may

help to reduce the bias against indigenous items as a result of the Western educational ideology. The fact that households use woodcarving and basketry in their day to day activities including government supported programs, serves as a proof that indigenous items are still relevant and positively contribute to household socio-economic enterprises and should therefore be supported. This could be achieved by making material culture production a core and examined subject in schools and vocational institutions. The ministry may consider establishing an indigenous knowledge council of elders (IKCE) in every community that may train the young people in indigenous skills. The council would promote indigenous material culture items such as woodcarving and basketry production among the youth as one way of employment. The same council could train school teachers who would then train school children and students.

Faith based organizations could also endeavour to promote the use of indigenous items in religious places and functions rather than regarding them as outdated and ungodly. The fact that households are largely religious, they cannot comfortably use material culture items unless cleared by their respective religious leaders. Faith based leaders may need to appreciate that woodcarving and basketry production promotes unity among households, that production of indigenous items is a community of practice where several household come together for a common cause which does not contradict religious values.

The local leadership should promote use of material culture among the communities. The leadership may consider promoting use of material culture items because they are produced with inexpensive organic raw materials easily found in the environment. This approach could work because continued use of material culture will compel people to conserve areas where materials for production are found. Conserving such areas that are the source of ethnic material culture will result in conserving the environment since most of these materials are found in wetlands and natural forests. More so, increased use of material culture items may promote growing of more trees and other plant species for producing of these items. Government may consider supporting material culture production and use in socio-economic enterprises because it is important to realize that every person, individual or society should participate in meaningful development with a direct impact on wealth creation and broader human progress (UNDP, 2013).

### **6.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

This study established that in most government interventions aimed at increasing household incomes, material culture items (woodcarving and basketry) play an important role yet, it is not considered as an important factor. On the other hand, material culture items seem to attract an external market despite being relegated among the households. There is need for further research to find out:

- Why has demand for indigenous material culture items such as woodcarving and basketry by external market seem to be on the increase, yet it is relegated among the households?
- How much do indigenous items contribute to national statistics?

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I: Informed Consent Form**

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is **Emmanuel Mutungi**, a PhD student from Maseno University, Kenya. I'm requesting you to allow me share with you a few things in regard to my research. I want us to talk about woodcarving and basketry and how helpful, they are to socio-economic activity in your household/ community. I want to assure you that this information is for academic purposes and will also help in formulating policies that will improve household incomes and wellbeing. The information we share will remain confidential and specifically used for the above purposes mentioned. Will you afford me your time please?

**Thank you very much**



## **Appendix II: Guide for in-depth interviews for Informants involved in the Production of Basketry and Woodcarving**

*For the purpose of this study I will use B (for basketry) and C (for carving) I will not therefore record down your name. Thank you very much*

### **Part 1: Background Information (Socio – Demographic Characteristics)**

1. Can I write down your name for my personal remembrance (Optional)
2. Village \_\_\_\_\_ Parish \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sub-County \_\_\_\_\_
4. Gender of informant  
Male  
Female
5. How old are you now?
6. What is your current marital status?
7. Which faith do you subscribe to?

### **Part 2: Information on material culture perception**

8. When did you learn carving/ basketry?
9. How did you learn that?
10. Which items do you usually get?
11. How does the community perceive your items?
12. How often do you use material culture items at home?
13. How does community look at you in regard to producing these items?
14. How much time do you dedicate to material culture production?

### **Part 3: Information on Material culture contribution**

15. What items do you produce?
16. What do you use these products for?
17. Do you sell some of the items you make?
18. In which other way do you think you benefit from making these items?
19. Do most families use your materials?

20. Are your products bought by other people other than your community members?
21. Do you think you or the community can function without using your products or other indigenous products?

**Part 4: Information on factors influencing production of woodcarvings and basketry items**

22. When do you make these products?
23. How long and how many items do you produce in a month?
24. Where do you get your materials from?
25. Are they readily available when you need them?
26. Are your products appreciated by all households?
27. Does religion have a role to play in your production of indigenous materials?
27. Does the government support you in any way?
28. Do young people value what you are doing?

**Section 5: Information on socio-economic transformation**

29. Do you think households can survive without using basketry/ wood carving?
30. What do you say about the use of your product to household survival?
31. Do material culture items such as yours unite people?
32. Do you think communities can gain from the production of fabrics?
33. Would you recommend to the government the use of material culture in increasing family incomes?
34. Should material culture be promoted as a source of income among households?

*Thank you for taking your time to answer my questions*

### **Appendix III: Guide for In-Depth Interview with Informants not directly involved in Production but knowledgeable in Woodcarving and Basketry**

The conversation was aimed at establishing the following;

1. Knowledge about carving and basketry
2. Understanding who is involved
3. Avenues of learning carving and basketry
4. Origin of materials for woodcarving and basketry
5. Origin and meaning of designs on the baskets and carvings
6. Perception about the new technology
7. Participation of young people in production of woodcarving and basketry items.
8. Contribution of woodcarving and basketry to household enterprises
9. Government's role in production and use of woodcarving and basketry items

### **Appendix IV: Focus Group Discussion Schedule**

The FGDs tackled issues concerning the following;

1. Perceptions of the community about woodcarving and basketry
2. Contribution of woodcarving and basketry to agriculture
3. Materials used in production of woodcarving and basketry items
4. Processes of marketing of woodcarving and basketry items
5. Different uses of woodcarving and basketry in households
6. Time slots households commit to production of woodcarving and basketry material
7. The use of religion in production and use of Indigenous material culture
8. Processes through which community members discover how to bring about material culture
9. Reasons why households produce woodcarvings and basketry
10. Government support to the production of woodcarving and basketry items
11. Involvement of the young generation in production of woodcarving and basketry.
12. The role of woodcarving and basketry in the wellbeing of the households

## **Appendix V: Observation guide for Woodcarving and Basketry producers**

During the field study a number of activities were observed as well as several items basing on the following

1. Materials used in production of woodcarving and basketry items;
2. Time households were engaged in production of woodcarving and basketry materials
3. A space where production of woodcarving and basketry materials take place
4. Tools used in the production of woodcarving and basketry
5. Patterns and motifs applied of basketry and woodcarving items
6. A market where people sell their items
7. Buyers of the products
8. Price of the items;
9. General perception of the community towards the producers of the materials.

**Appendix VI: Map of Uganda showing Kiruhura district and Kanoni and Engari-sya sub-counties**

