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**The Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Education for Indigenous People in Uganda. A
Case Study of Karamojong Community**

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Abstract

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak from 2019 has impacted education systems of many countries around the world. Efforts to contain COVID-19 have led to the closure of schools in more than 100 countries worldwide. This situation has also left over one billion learners out of school. For marginalized communities such as indigenous people, the situation has been worse. This study investigated the impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous people's education in Uganda, with focus on Uganda's Karamojong people. The study is based on qualitative data gathered from newspapers. A total of 25 newspapers from five newspaper organizations in Uganda were used for this research. The gathered data were analyzed using the content analysis method.

This study explores the challenges and impact of Covid-19 on the education process of the Karamojong peoples. I focused on the possible strategies that can be applied to limit the challenges they encounter in the education sector as a result of Covid-19. The findings of the study shows that the Covid-19 situation has created both positive and negative impacts on Karamojong education. Secondly, the study found that the Karamojong are contributing to solutions to the negative impacts of Covid-19 by resorting to a traditional way of learning that involves the making wooden "seat packs" for use by student and teachers in the learning teaching process. This indigenous solution aligned with social distancing protocols, while being affordable to low-income earners.

The findings also show that COVID-19 has nevertheless had adverse effects on education for Karamojong in the form of learning disruptions, decreased access to education and research facilities, and high student debts. Attempts were made to use of technology as an alternative to the traditional teaching method. However, the online system of teaching was hindered challenges such as poor internet connection, unstable electricity supply, and poor digital skills. The study underscores the damaging effects of COVID-19 on the education sector in general, and highlights the need for all educational institutions, educators, and learners to adopt technology in order to improve their digital skills in line with the increasing role of technology in education.

Keywords: Coronavirus, Education, School closure, Indigenous Peoples, e-learning.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 caused increased tensions and disrupted every aspect of people's lives globally. However, its impact was different in various regions, and communities especially after the lockdowns and temporary shutdown of education institutions (UNESCO, 2020). Many countries whose education sector had severe challenges in providing quality and accessible basic education grappled with challenges in providing education to students on equal level during the lockdown periods. Those most affected by the situation are vulnerable communities such as indigenous people. A study conducted by Mahaye (2020) on the pedagogies of blended learning during the Covid-19 school closure indicate that the Covid-19 outbreak has increased the vulnerability of indigenous peoples. This indicates that countries with vulnerable communities are grappling with a lack of supporting infrastructure for online learning and access to education in this period of global health crisis.

A survey on learning inequalities in the United Kingdom conducted by Nicola Pensiero et al. show that areas with less or no online accessibility face learning inequalities as there is increased inability to access education during periods of closure of schools (Pensiero, 2021). This project explores this further to find out how the situation applies to the Karamojong community in Uganda. The Karamojong are recognized as an indigenous community in Uganda. They face challenges with educational performance due to problems of underdevelopment in their traditional regions in Uganda. The aim of this study is to explore their contribution to solutions to school closures and to identify existing inequalities in education brought about by Covid-19 pandemic.

1.2 Background

The Karamojong live in the North-eastern part of Uganda. With a population of around 988,429 peoples, they constitute up one per cent of the total population in Uganda (IWGIA, 2011). The Karamajong consist of clans and smaller ethnic groups such as *Matheniko, Bokora, Pian, Pokot, Jie, Dodoth, Ik, Ethur, and Jabwor*. They are indigenous to areas such as *Kaabong, Kotido, Amudat, Napak, Moroto, Abim, and Nakapiripirit* districts of north-eastern Uganda. They are a largest cluster of culturally and historically related groups in Uganda, with a local language called "Karimajong" (Brown, Kelly & mabugu, 2017). While pastoralism remains a common

livelihood activity among the Karamojong, some of them engage in agriculture to supplement their pastoralist way of subsistence.¹

Being a semi-nomadic pastoralist community, Karamojong people are “geographically, economically and politically isolated and are the most marginalized people in Uganda” (IPACC, 2011). Although they have adopted a mixed form of sustenance (Huisman, 2001), crop cultivation has been an uncertain source of because of the harsh and dry climate in the Karamojong areas of Uganda. In Uganda, these group of people of people remain closely attached to their cultures in terms of the way they dressing, their practice of Karamojong initiation rites, ceremonies, traditional dances, and many aspects of their culture. They have been successful at preserving their identity despite the introduction of development policies and projects in their regions (Litch, 2000). Their strict adherence to Karamojong society norms and customs, they are perceived as resistant to change or as unfriendly and harsh in how they strive to live by their traditional way of life (Brown, Kelly & Mabugu, 2017).

Being a group of people who continue to rely on land resources for their sustenance, Karamojong people are greatly affected by recent problem of climatic changes (Ariong, 2016). In 2015 for instance, the Karamojong faced a drought problem that left them with no food and water, and causing famine and hunger within the region (Ariong, 2016). As a result of that, some Karamojongs are forced by growing poverty rates to migrate to urban areas such as Kampala. Once in the city, they face exploitation and discrimination due their way of dressing. In the city of Kampala, Karamojong remain unique among the city population. They move around the city with their traditional clothes and other distinct accessories. Despite all of that, their presence in Kampala is still considered a threat by the larger multi-ethnic inhabitants of Kampala. This accounts for their discrimination and marginalization from public life (Brown, Kelly & Mabugu, 2017).

Apart from their practice of agro-pastoralism for sustenance, they also engage in other economic activities such as hunting and gathering, selling of firewood, charcoal, poultry selling, crafts, block laying, the extraction of stone, and local beer brewing (Brown, Kelly & Trevor, 2017).

¹ Uganda consists of many ethnic groups which are existing in Uganda found on <https://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/u-ethn.html> though my focus was on the Karamojong community and their origin.

1.3 Education in Uganda before Covid-19 Pandemic

Uganda education system in the 21st century evolved from previous missionary and colonial education system that continued after the country's independence in 1962 (Sidonia, Ochieng & Dvid, 2019). The structure of the education system consists of 7 years of primary education (ages 6-12), 6 years of secondary education (ages 13-18), and 3-5 years of post-graduate studies or university where students can choose between private and public schools. The primary level comprise the Universal Primary Education system (UPE) that the government implemented in public schools. The UPE has been in place since 1997 to provide free public education and improve enrollment (David, 2005). In general terms, education in Uganda faces challenges with funding and poor teaching and learning quality. This is also characterized by high teacher absenteeism and poor academic performance among students (Javira, 2021). In some public schools where the quality of teaching and learning is relatively high, there are problems of low attendance and low completion rates (UNICEF, 2010).

In the past, Uganda's education system did not create space for nursery and day care centers (pre-primary). However, in 2016 the National Integrated Early Childhood Development (NIECD) policy was launched to provide pre-primary education for children aged 3-5 years (Ssekamwa, 1997). This policy was developed to ensure that children will be physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally, and socially groomed for primary education. However, the policy was implemented by the private school system while the government concentrates on implementation at the primary to higher education level.

The schools in Uganda play significant roles in motivating school attendance among children. Public schools offer meals at reduced prices while parents in farming communities sometimes donate food items such as maize and beans to support the schools' efforts. In Karamoja, the World Food Program (WFP) has been supporting the government by providing food to school children to motivate them to attend school.

Like many sub-Saharan African country, Uganda faced many challenges in ensuring access to basic education even before the COVID-19 pandemic (UNICEF, 2010). A survey conducted by Tumwesigye et.al (2020) showed that 80% of Uganda's school-age children live in rural areas where private and public schools are characterized by a lack of resources. Many schools in the rural areas also have underdeveloped school infrastructure. Moreover, most schools in Uganda do not have adequate facility to support the online school system, as a teacher is

expected to be in class, especially in public schools, though this does not exclude private schools (Ssekamwa, 1997). Thus areas like Karamoja experience difficulties in accessing learning outcomes as they are experiencing high levels of teacher and student absenteeism, coupled with poor school infrastructure (Brown, Kelly, & Mabugu, 2017).

There have also been significant gaps between school enrollment in rural and urban areas. Statistics show that student's school attendance and completion at the primary level in urban areas are high compared to those in rural areas (Tumwesige, 2020). The level of literacy in rural areas is low, especially among females, while income levels are generally low in urban and rural areas.

1.4 Situation of education in Karamoja before Covid-19.

There is no specific education policy for Karamojong. It follows the Ugandan education policy as explained above. However, Before the Covid-19 pandemic began, the quality of Karamojong education had been low, and had been occasioned by high rates of drop-outs and low attendance rates (Brown. Kelly & Mabugu, 2017). The reason for this situation has been the refusal of Karamojong people to learn from the colonial power as far back as the period before 1995 (Litch, 2000). They considered education as a 'curse' placed on them by their grandfathers who were 'recruited by the pen' to fight in the World Wars (Litch, 2000). Having returned from the wars, grandfathers lost trust in formal education system. This has been the reason why few parents send their children to school, as education is considered as a system that is irrelevant to their lifestyle

To address this problem, the Government of Uganda created many initiatives to encourage Karamojong parents to send their children to school (Nakisanze, 2019). In 1998, the Ugandan government established the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) program. This program involved holding class sessions in two shifts to accommodate the pastoralist lifestyle and domestic tasks of Karamojong children. With assistance from the World Food Programme, this program ensured the provision of meals to school children to encourage school attendance. This program remained partly successful as parents sent their children to school just to have access to the meals being offered (Nakisanze, 2019). In the subsequent years, ABEK continued working to increase awareness of importance of education in Karamoja but still faces low enrollment due to factors such as their nomadic lifestyle, early and forced marriages, and poor learning centers. These factors generate low interest in schooling and learning among children in Karamojong regions (ABEK, 2006).

1.5 Problem statement and Research Questions

Education is important for indigenous communities' efforts to find creative ways to preserve their culture (Zhirkova, 20026). Many education policies have been developed to help Indigenous people participate in broader societies. With education systems developing and undergoing changes, the Covid-19 pandemic created new problems for education systems especially during the lockdown periods. This has affected the lives of indigenous people (Zhirkova, 20026).

The impact of Covid-19 on Indigenous communities varies from community to community. Various pre-existing barriers affect indigenous communities' ability to adapt to the preventive mechanisms undertaken to ensure access to education during lockdown. A report submitted to the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2020 on the situation of Indigenous Peoples in eleven countries states that;

“This situation of Covid-19 pandemic threatens situation of indigenous children and young persons, particularly those living in rural areas, who cannot access distance learning programs put in place during lockdowns because of limited access to infrastructure, such as internet connectivity and electricity”.²

The regions that have access to facilities like South America, where network connectivity is accessible, registered approximately 70% of school completion rate during the pandemic. The countries that registered a low percentage are in Asia, where it is reported that:

“[The] Internet may be accessed if the person has mobile data, and they go to a point in the village where there is [a] signal and since approximately 40% (...) use [a] mobile phone in the community, it is not a guarantee they have access to [the] internet. 1% use [a] laptop and none of them use [a]

² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_757475.pdf

*desktop and Africa appears as the worst region reporting low levels of accessibility with two countries presented”.*³

In March 2020, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda addressed the country on Covid-19 situation. In this address, he issued a directive for temporal closure of all education institutions in the country to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This was replaced by the distance and digital/online learning system to ensure that teaching continues at all levels of education (New Vision, 2020). This directive also meant that teachers are involved in providing teaching and learning materials (Lighting Africa, 2020). In many cases, the education institutions offered teaching lessons on the radio; following a school timetable issued by the Ministry of Education (Javira, 2020).

Due to the problem of poor infrastructure, many schools were not prepared for the new digital education system. In Uganda, few households have access to electricity and internet connection. In a 2020 survey conducted by *Lightening Africa* show that 8% of household in rural areas in Uganda have access to electricity (Lighting Africa, 2020). The National Information Technology survey also carried out in 2017/2018 found that a limited number Ugandan households own home appliance such as radio, television, nor a computer. Similarly, on a few Ugandan households own at least 1 mobile phones with internet connection. The majority are unable to use mobile phones due to poor internet connection and high internet service charges (Tumwesigye, 2020). Due to this situation, a majority of students in rural areas are missing out on teaching and learning (Pensiero, 2021).

In Karamoja, most could not afford the cost of electronic and digital services needed to access digital education. Additionally, “88 per cent of parents are illiterate and cannot guide their children in reading and writing at home” (Brown, Kelly & Trevor, 2017). In Uganda, a high percentage of schools are accustomed to physical education. The closure of schools has created a learning deficit for teachers and students below 10 years who require physical guidance from teachers in the early years of their education (Daily Monitor, 2021).

Karamoja is an impoverished area where basic survival needs are limited. Many families and schools are unable to afford the charges associated with Data internet and electricity services.

³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_757475.pdf

Furthermore, digital resources such as computers, radios and online teaching tools require prior knowledge and skills, which are lacking among the school teachers in Karamoja (Korugrendo, 2011). Research data by ILO suggest that “approximately 46.6 per cent of adult indigenous persons in employment have no education compared to 17.2 per cent of their non-indigenous counterparts, which means that the likelihood of no education for indigenous peoples is almost 30 percentage points greater than for non-indigenous peoples (ILO 2019).

In light of the findings above, the covid-19 pandemic has taken a toll on students and leaving them with limited opportunities to have access to learning. This has also created inequalities in the regions where digital learning resources are absent. Many of the students from these regions lack the resilience and ability to learn independently. As the covid-19 pandemic continues, education in rural areas is harmed, thereby increasing underlying disparities. The goal of this study is to explore the impact of COVID-19 on education, and to explore the strategies that indigenous communities have adopted to ensure access to education in times of the covid-19 lock-downs. In line with that, the study seeks to find answers to the following research questions.

- 1) What are the challenges and impacts of Covid-19 on the education of Indigenous peoples?
- 2) What possible strategies have been or can be created to respond to the Covid-19 impact by Indigenous people in rural areas in Uganda?

1.6 Relevance

This project provides a critical analysis and reflection on the opportunities and challenges that the pandemic presents to education for Karamojong. The data for this study is gathered from newspaper reports in Uganda. The coverage of the covid-19 situation in Uganda has been wide in local newspapers. Thus, the newspapers provide information on the impact COVID-19 on education in Uganda. This study explores on how the situation has impacted education for indigenous peoples by focusing on the case of Karamojong, and how the crisis has affected teaching and learning in Karamoja.

This project will contribute to research on indigenous solutions to the impact of emergency situations on education in indigenous communities. This research will not only be essential to the cultures, peoples and contexts within indigenous peoples, but will focus on bringing aspirations to me as a student of Indigenous Studies and the program itself on issues relating to

COVID-19 impact on education institutions through investigating the after effect of COVID-19 epidemic on the Ugandan education system.

This project will also be relevant in raising awareness both directly and indirectly to other indigenous communities since it greatly focuses on limiting the educational gap and disparities in education sector caused by providing various strategies that can be taken incase such pandemics exist again.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter one introduces the background of the study, discusses the experience of education for Karamojong people, and the research questions. Chapter two consists of literature review and theoretical framework upon which this project is conducted. Chapter three has detailed explanations of my methodology and data material, and described how this research was carried out. Chapter four discusses the empirical data and chapter five analyzes the findings in relation to the research questions. Chapter six provides a conclusion and summary of the findings of this study and a reflection on the research questions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Previous research on the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on education

As the Covid-19 pandemic is still an ongoing phenomenon, there are few scholarly works on the impact of the lock-downs on education for indigenous people. At the time of writing this literature review, some schools were in the process of resuming.

2.2 General overview of Covid-19 pandemic

Corona Virus (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (Singhal, 2020). It emerged in December 2019 with unexplained cases of pneumonia recorded in Wuhan, China (He, Deng & Li, 2020). This disease has caused millions of deaths around the World and has left many people with lasting health complications. It is a contagious disease that spreads through contact with infected persons (Singhal, 2020). Since the outbreak in 2019, every aspect of human life has been affected including the education sector. Rising cases of infections saw the closure of many schools at all, thereby interrupting teaching and learning activities in many education institutions.

In Africa, many schools adopted the online system of education with minimal preparation. The traditional approach to education through classroom teaching was halted for almost two years. This was the situation for many schools in rural areas of Uganda, where disruptions in education affected early childhood education. Almost all education systems had to deploy distance and virtual learning solutions to ensure education continues whilst the schools remained closed. The radio service and national television were used to broadcast lessons in some countries, while teaching materials were also provided online. However, these solutions exacerbate existing inequalities in education, especially in marginalized communities and rural areas. Additionally, the distance learning approached removed the aspect of education that fosters socialization of learners (Huang. Tlili. Chang. Nascimbeni. & Burgos, 2020).

The immediate change from classrooms to virtual classrooms found schools unprepared as they had no time to prepare and adapt immediately to the virtual learning system. This mostly concerns areas that never looked at distance learning as a teaching method. Managing virtual classes and using technology required teachers to be trained for its new development, which

was impossible in some countries. However, in some regions like the United Arab Emirates, the Ministry of education provided e-learning courses to its teachers to manage this form of teaching; this was not possible in other countries like Uganda regarding e-learning (Huang. Tlili. Chang. Nascimbeni. & Burgos, 2020).

Covid-19 did not affect all regions in the same way as some countries incorporated the virtual learning and teaching method in their education system. In countries like Australia and Belgium, virtual learning is implemented with some minimal barriers to full usage of E-learning resources (Nathaniel, 2020). In the United States, “substitute teachers in some states were not receiving salary payments during school shutdowns and risked the loss of benefits”.⁴ As this situation left some teachers with no earnings, some teachers demanded school fees payment from parents, and those whose parents were not able to pay the school fees missed the opportunity to learn (Huang. Tlili. Chang. Nascimbeni. & Burgos, 2020)

2.2.1 Pandemics and education disruption

Covid-19 is not the only pandemic that has caused education disruption such as closure of schools. In the United States, between 2011 and 2013, there was a closure of schools due to inclement weather however, the closure lasted four days. However, the overall length of school closure during the Covid-19 pandemic generated a great difference in its existence from other pandemics, as explained below. This section involves pandemics that have led to school closure upon their existence, allowing me to generate the impact that pandemics create on vulnerable communities.

From 2013 to 2016, there was an Ebola pandemic in West Africa, which affected the enrolment of the youth from marginalized in public and private schools. According to Smith et.al (2021), Guinea and Sierra Leone were greatly affected by Ebola and had a high rate of school dropouts of around 17,400 youths. This was because most of the schools were used as treatment centers for Ebola patients, making it impossible for children to attend school. Schools in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone were closed for seven to nine months, which affected the education process. Smith et.al’s study indicate that poor household groups are mostly affected by the pandemic. They are also prone to school disruptions, as they are rather devoted to economic activities for survival and cannot access education (Smith, 2021).

⁴ ILO Secretarial Brief 2020, Covid-19 and education sector
file:///C:/Users/bba058/Downloads/ILO%20EDUCATION%20SECTOR.pdf

Ebola and COVID-19 differ in these ways: First Ebola Pandemic was easier to identify and isolate and the infection was greatly among the youth around 25-29 years old and 15–19-year-old. However, during the time of writing this project, I learnt that the infection rate of covid-19 among the youth is low and most patients shows mild symptoms (Berry and Davis, 2020). Secondly, during the outbreak of Ebola, few youths returned to school, and there was rampant stigmatization compared to COVID-19. However, both diseases are similar in terms of emphasizing personal hygiene as a mitigation measure, although “social” (physical) distancing has become associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (Berry and Davis, 2020).

To mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 on education, financial support and other necessary resources were provided to the poor students to ensure they stay in education (Carvalho, 2020). These funds support the necessary resources required by the poor students to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 on their education. During such pandemics, governments also face short of funds, which force public sector cuts during pandemic outbreaks. The government and education planners need to recognize the effects of the current pandemic on the most marginalized people, and to provide them with the necessary resources to ensure their return to school. This will cut the long-term intergenerational impacts that characterize the pandemics, especially in cases where the closure of schools call for changes in education systems.

2.3 Indigenous People and Education

The first section looks at the general impact of Covid-19 pandemic on education. The section presented marginalized peoples as groups that are greatly affected by the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. This makes it necessary to expand on the concept of “Indigenous people” and Education in this section. Before doing that, I this section highlights the definition of Indigenous people in Africa and Uganda to put the situation of indigenous peoples in Uganda and Karamoja in the indigenous context. Secondly, the section looks into the issue of Indigenous education and how both concepts can inform a greater understanding.

2.3.1 Indigeneity in Africa

To start with, there is no generally agreed yardstick for defining Indigenous peoples in Africa, as the term “Indigeneity” in Africa is contested by many Africans (ACHPR, 2005). Barume stresses that many African countries contest the various definitions and claim that all Africans can considered as indigenous people on the basis of colonialism. Yet countries such as Ethiopia were not colonized (Stavenhagen, 2009). Many scholars have defined Indigenous Peoples differently, since indigeneity differs from content to context (Dahl, 2012). Barume stresses that

the debates that occurred around the definition of indigenous people, which led the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous (UNDRIP), sought the agreement of African countries on the terms of defining indigenous peoples (Stavenhagen, 2009). Regardless of the contestations surrounding the term Indigenous peoples, some definitions that define Indigenous Peoples in the African context are seen below.

Saugestad (2008) defines Native Africans as first comers, non-dominant, and different in culture from the white ‘intruders’, and describes the natives as the colonized. This implies a distinction between the colonizer and the original inhabitants of the territories. It does not imply that all indigenous people were colonized, since countries like Ethiopia were not colonized. The International Labor Organization convention 169 (ILO) adopted in 1989, defines Indigenous Peoples as “People in Independent countries, who were regarded as Indigenous, on account of their descent from populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs at the time of conquest, colonization or the establishment of present status, retain some or all of their social, economic, cultural and political institutions” (Sissons, 2005)

Furthermore, the UNDRIP special reporter J. Matinez Cobo identified Indigenous Peoples as: “Indigenous communities, people, and nations are those which, having a historical continuity, with per invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories or parts of them” (Sissons, 2005). This definition outlines four criteria for defining indigenous peoples: cultural distinctiveness, priority in time, and self-identification (UNDRIP, 2007).

These definitions emphasized the issue of self-identification, which created room for the African that met the above criteria to have authority within their tribes and ethnic groups to self-identify as indigenous. However, Cobo argues that separating Africans into indigenous and non-indigenous groups instead creates separate classes of citizens, with different rights (UNDRIP, 2007).

In his discussion of indigeneity, Coates states that; Indigenous Peoples are composed of present descendants of territories formerly colonized partially or wholly by outsiders, but who presently live-in conformity to former colonial structures that are administered by nation states in which they live (Coates, 2004). These definitions all emphasize self-identification and look at the colonization aspect, but this leaves the African countries like Ethiopia, which was not colonized, as indigenous. Besides not being colonized, some people perceive themselves as

Indigenous. The above definitions also undermine many people who are considered or must have suffered within the conquest and marginalized or isolated (ACHPR, 2006).

Indigeneity in Africa is greatly placed under cultural, ancestral customs and traditions different from the dominant society. All this could be used to characterize them as “Indigenous.” This is evidenced by the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights that came up with a new criterion for defining indigenous people in Africa. It also elaborates on the rights of indigenous peoples in respect to the survival of their traditional ways of life and their right to traditional lands and natural resources. Indigenous people in Africa suffer from discrimination from dominant societies because of their traditional way of living to preserve their cultures, and most are found in isolated regions (ACHPR, 2006).

2.3.2 Indigenous Peoples of Uganda and Karamojong Indigenous People

The term ‘Indigenous people’ is a complex term to define, as it applies differently to different ethnic groups in Africa. However, in light of the definitions above, the Ugandan government does not explicitly recognize the term Indigenous Peoples in relation to indigenous groups in Uganda. The term bears no definition under international and the regional human right law (IWGIA, 2011). However, it recognizes some internationally accepted indicators that help define Indigenous People such as the right to self-identification interpreted in most international law definitions. Some of the Indigenous People in Uganda include the Benet, the Batwa, the Ike, the Karamojong, and the Basongora. All of them reside within the borders of Uganda and are characterized by their traditional hunter-gatherer and pastoralist cultures.

Moreover, some of the characteristics specified above in defining Indigenous People are not applicable in identifying Indigenous Peoples of Uganda. First, Indigenous communities in Uganda have experienced the form of colonization that created historical injustices such as the loss of their lands. Some of their lands that were originally the grazing areas of the people were transformed into national parks. This links with Coate's (2001) definition, where he recognized the aspect of colonization in defining Indigenous peoples. Due to colonization, the Northern and Eastern regions remained isolated and disadvantaged, and the people became victims of violence and destruction of homes and properties (Coates, 2001).

Furthermore, the Indigenous peoples in Uganda have been identified as those that are attached to their traditional way of living. They are mostly pastoralists and hunter-gatherers and have

been recognized by the Indigenous rights movement due to their experience of dispossession of land and natural resources by the dominant groups (ACHPR, 2005).

Lastly, Smith et.al (2021) state that pandemics greatly affect poor and marginalized students when it leads to school closures. The virtual learning system creates a high rate of exit from the education system since many of such students are unable to afford the cost of digital tools required to participate in virtual learning (Smith, 2021). The situation of indigenous peoples of Uganda is characteristic of this challenge. Having been denied of their means of subsistence through the dispossession of their ancestral lands and natural resources, the Karamojong people are separated from the rest of Uganda, resulting in their continued impoverishment. They remain victims of social and political exploitation, while the 1995 constitution does not offer any significant protection to them as Indigenous People (IWGIA, 2019).

Most indigenous people are found in rural areas of the country and most of them are poor like the North-Eastern part of the country where the Karamojong reside. The high rate of poverty in that region compels the government to seek fund to support and help in the development of the marginalized communities through the implementation of sustainable development initiatives (The World Bank, 2015). In Karamoja families are often unable to support their children to learn at home because many families have low literacy skills. The only option for many families is to send their children to work. This is the reason why most schools in Karamoja commonly engaged in physical schooling to keep the children away from being forced by their families to work.

As can be seen above, the concept of indigeneity is relative. It is centered on a sense of distinctiveness and cultural coherence for those who live in remote or distinct locations and pursue a traditional lifestyle that is not consistent with modern societies. It concerns people who speak a distinct language, who struggle with/against concurrent claims for government authority, and who self-identify as belonging to a place before its annexation or colonization (Jacob, 2014)

2.3.3 Indigenous Education

Education also makes it more challenging as most countries and regions define it from their perspective. However, to provide a foundation, there have been different definitions regarding this term. I started by defining the term indigenous and thus looking at indigenous education. According to Jacob et al. (2014), when involving Indigenous concept, one should consider the relationship tied to the land, as people are spiritually connected to their language, culture, and

identity. However, in the context of education, “Indigenous education” is define as the path and process of nurturing future leaders. It entails Indigenous people gaining knowledge about the ways to preserve their indigenous cultures. They do this through scholarly materials like books about their history that are written for the future generation (Jacob. 2014). Through the means of education, Indigenous peoples can elevate their communication regarding technologies and the diverse ways of knowing about their needs and rights, and be able to speak and act on behalf of their people (Jacob. 2014).

However, like language, identity, and culture form part indigenous education. This form of education is a communal process that involves interactions among all members of the indigenous community. Indigenous education was adopted to create sustainable communities with the West-dominated education systems by allowing formal structures to stand. However, Jacob et al. (2014) state that the globalization of indigenous education has both negative and positive consequences. Education involves learning technologies that enable people to share ideas and knowledge. Due to intermarriages between the indigenous and non -indigenous peoples, to understand one’s ancestral background can be achieved through learning one’s background and one’s heritage.

Also, in terms of understanding legal rights in regard to services and land regarding indigenous people, education has also created this opportunity. Jacob et al. (2014) also state that education has been used at the “detriment” of indigenous people’s language, culture, and identity. This has been done through preservation policies implemented by the government with the intention of unifying nations to create communal equality. However, conflict still rise when dominant education systems favor prevailing languages and individuals rather than indigenous principles and practices that reflect their languages and arts, which represent many indigenous societies.

Indigenous education aims at a global view to enable indigenous peoples to develop an independent way of knowing. However, many non-indigenous scholars have written histories of indigenous peoples from outsider perspective, which affect the knowledge produced. This is because some information in the literature is left out. The involvement of indigenous scholars provides the insider knowledge required to understand one’s heritage.

Jeff Lambe.et.al (2003) also detail what indigenous education entails. They define indigenous education as a way through which traditional knowledge, culture and language of indigenous

people are developed and connected to make indigenous people “human beings”.⁵ Jeff Lambe et al (2003) state that Indigenous education facilitates an understanding of the differences in indigenous education. For Indigenous education to exist they state that the involvement of academic institutions and individual relationships between the mentor and the individual is important. His emphasized-on prerequisites for Indigenous education by assessing different situations for indigenous education to concentrate on. The most important aspect they concentrated on is in the area of validity and “diversity”,⁶ which can be equated to the truth. Indigenous education enables us to know the nature of the world and cultures in the social world and know their place of creation (Jeff. L, 2003).

2.3.4 Indigenous Education in Africa

The African continent is characterized by diverse languages and culturally distinct nation states and indigenous peoples who share similarities as being traditional, tribal and transnationally displaced people (Jacob, 2014). Despite the diverse languages, there are shared languages that were imposed during colonial rule. The mother tongue languages are commonly practiced at home, while the shared languages are used in schools. Many indigenous languages have been codified into written forms. However, this creates a political difficulty and is linguistically challenging, as the amount spent in formal institutions is more and thus as it increases, the status of knowledge grows, lessening the mother tongue at the sometime. However, African schools mostly serving high numbers of indigenous youth are characterized with limited resources per learners in Africa.

Education is looked at as a system introduced by “Western powers” i.e., the colonial masters and missionaries when they first arrived in Africa. As previously mentioned, African Indigenous education is not easily defined, just as the term ‘Indigenous’ lacks a generally accepted definition. However, Anthony et al (2021) also gives an African perspective that derives from African traditional education. The traditional form of education is developed locally by elders with the intention to instill cultural values and norms to members of the society. This means that the indigenous education in Africa focuses on the transmission of local knowledge to serve local purposes, and to pass cultural values from one generation to another.

⁵ Jeff used this term to give reasons why he went to school, he said, "He went to school so that they would honor him as a human being"

⁶ a person coming to know for themselves, on their own terms, guided but not directed by a mentor or role model, regardless of whether one is a Native or non-Native person or what nation one comes from

The knowledge is taught at all levels of a person's life - from childhood to stages of graduation (Anthony, 2021). This has produced experienced members of the indigenous society.

All the definitions above indicate that African education aims at teaching African traditional knowledge and skills, which are commonly transmitted through practical learning or orally to address issues within indigenous communities. When indigenous education is achieved, the skills acquired can be used for self-employment and maintaining the community's socio-economic and cultural structures. African Indigenous Education system faces challenges such as a lack of literacy and technological aspects. This is so because states are not promoting societal cultures like the way they promote the country culture (Anthony, 2021).

2.3.5 Right of education to indigenous peoples

As this project focuses on issues of education and language, I will also look at Indigenous people's rights from a general perspective. Article 15 of the (1993) Draft Declaration of Indigenous Peoples states that:

“All indigenous peoples ... have ... the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. Indigenous children living outside their communities have the right to be provided access to education in their own language and culture. States shall take effective measures to provide appropriate resources for these purposes” (May & Aikman 2003).

This right entails the need for the state to provide resource. However, indigenous communities are characterized by their vulnerability and there has been less concern for their development by states like Uganda.

The UNESCO advocates for the establishment of government-supported education policies on “inclusive education,” where emphasis is placed on equal learning opportunities. The report states that indigenous peoples are vulnerable in areas such as education, cultural disintegration, migration, displacement, residential segregation, gaps in access to technology, and ownership of media outlets”. It suggests to governments to create flexible models of education that accommodate both cultural and social diversity, as well as developing community-based models of formal and informal learning across generations.

2.3.6 Online learning and Indigenous Education: Challenges

The use of online learning has been a major challenge even before the Covid-19 pandemic. This is seen in research conducted by Rebecca A. Clothey (2015) on the impacts of online learning and the challenges that indigenous people have faced with the online learning system. Online learning has become common in many education sectors across the World. However, the rate of growth is low in terms of internet usage. The World states' report (2011) shows a percentage of 40.4%, with the largest users located in Europe, Asia and North America, while Sub-Saharan Africa is at the bottom (James, Cheng & Porter, 2015)

The differences in the user rate of online learning income is seen in other terms such as race, ethnicity and location. However, online learning is provided freely in some areas with problems of poor infrastructures and the inability of the end-users to apply online learning information. Thus, online learning will remain inadequate (James, Cheng & Porter, 2015). Based on that, their study indicate that rural areas, where many minorities are located, mostly have poor infrastructures than the urban areas.

Furthermore, most of the e-Learning frameworks and materials are written in English, and thus most African local languages are not represented. This creates learning difficulties for minorities in rural areas. Africa has different ethnic minority populations with various languages; English materials may not easily help if online learning is associated in such areas as they would need translation to understand the teachings still (Cheng & Porter, 2015). The research showed that using online learning in underserved indigenous communities increases the digital divide. They state that areas with low internet penetration and with poor audio transmission especially in remote communities will find difficulties in accessing education.

This suggest that emerging challenges related to the use of digital learning have created an inconsistent Indigenous education for students in Africa, where by 2009 only 8.7% could access internet through desktop computers. Another focus on existing inequalities and poverty in remote communities show how it creates challenges with digital programs, as well as the problem of funding which increases the costs associated with digital education (James, Cheng & Porter, 2015).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The education landscape is shaped by many factors that increasingly impact the lives of people in different ways. There are underlying opportunities and threats to cultural and ethnic existence, and the response approach that societies takes to adapt to these new challenges are

inadequate, since many societies are attached to their land, beliefs and cultures. These changes have negative developmental impacts. This chapter will discuss the concepts of education, decolonization, power relation, and resilience. These concepts complement each other in understanding how indigenous communities have handled the covid-19 pandemics.

2.4.1 Education and decolonization

The definition of education depends on the terms it is associated with. Education is understood differently in terms of learning and teaching, which allows a person maintain a sense of physical, social and cultural being. Education can be carried out in a formal or informal way (Curtis, Ward, Sharp, & Hankin, 2013). In case of the formal approach, the process of teaching requires setting up structures like classrooms. The informal approach involves e-learning tools like radios, mobile phones, and computers designed by the government, with an assessment process that leads to the award of certificates.

Education is also a collective effort of the government, teacher and schools, and parents (Curtis, Ward, Sharp, & Hankin, 2013). Developments in information and communication technology will facilitate online and virtual classes. However, this approach to education creates opportunities to access information in from anywhere, although it may not allow for practical subjects in science projects that require practice in a laboratory (Curtis, Ward, Sharp, & Hankin, 2013).

Even if formal learning requires learners with potentials and physical structures such as schools, colleges, and universities, the extent to which it can operate requires appropriate learning techniques and a share of responsibilities between teachers and students to attain it. Digital learning can incorporate formal changes but through appropriate funding strategies, education policies, and technological initiatives that align with the changing world (Curtis, Ward, Sharp, & Hankin, 2013).

2.4.2 Decolonization

The concept of decolonization and indigenous education stem from the shared experiences of indigenous peoples in ensuring their development against the influence of power and control brought about by colonialism. In present days, efforts have been taken by Indigenous communities to create processes of preserving their traditions through education. Through decolonization, Indigenous communities have incorporated learning through the creation of traditional/nomadic schools (Zhirkova, 2006). Therefore, decolonization in the context of education focuses on identifying how colonization has impacted education. It also focuses on

unsettling colonial structures, systems, and power dynamics in educational contexts where indigenous peoples reside.

Decolonization in education involves various kind of teaching in the informal to formal setting. It concentrates on the sociocultural approach to understanding and functions in Uganda's education system in the formation and transmission of knowledge (Pratt, Louie, Hanson, & Ottmann, 2018).

Given the importance of decolonization, education has transformations as Indigenous peoples are opting for self-determination, social justice, and democracy. More so, decolonization has led to the indigenization of education, where emphasis is placed on maintaining indigenous knowledge, traditions, culture. This is a primary focus on issues relating to attaining their democracy and social justice as part of self-determination (Pratt, Louie, Hanson, & Ottmann, 2018). However, though most nation-states have not paid attention to these concerns, many have turned to international law (Pratt, Louie, Hanson, & Ottmann, 2018).

Decolonization has contributed to education it enabled Indigenous people to have representation and be at the forefront to arguing for better treatment, recognition, and restitution for historical injustices. More broadly, it created space for the recognition of indigenous people's self-determination within nation-states (May & Aikman 2003).

2.4.2 Power relations and distinctions in education

To explore these complex issues, I refer to Terry Wotherspoon et al's (2015) definition of power relations in education. According to them, "power relations shape and regulate the operation of educational practices that are concealed by adherence to principles of democracy and notions of scientific standards of truth and objectivity, so that success and failure come to be attributed more to individual initiative than to structured inequalities". They provide different dimensions for understanding and examining the relations of power and education that are affected by social positioning and scholarship around the world, which create status and privileges among classes of people (Jacob, Cheng & Porter, 2015).

Power and social positioning around economic resources influence concerns over economic resources within each social area. Both formal and informal indigenous education resources are generated by nation states and thus, these determine the kinds of assets and capacities that help in ensuring continuity. The concerns show that efforts from indigenous peoples and minority representatives play a great role in what is achieved. This theory does not only look at an equal

distribution of social services to ensure that education services are achieved, but emphasize that when power is properly handled, and all parties participate. In such a situation, there would be no unequal status among people in society setting. This facilitates the efforts of indigenous people and other minorities to gain increased recognition support for education (Jacob, Cheng & Porter, 2015).

The period of colonization influenced the present experiences of indigenous communities, as they had to be integrated into the dominant groups and institutions. The institutional setting and education system follow prescribed rules within specific country and decided by the state. Bourdieu stresses that as power exists, it can be influenced by interest, representation, and preferences of the state. In Uganda, the government implements laws that the representatives in the government first debate on. However, the debates focus on the urban area where the dominant people live.

Power plays a larger role in increasing the resources that are important for education, although each institutional area has its expectations. However, it still ensures that there's support if pandemics occur. This includes supporting the areas that need emergency assistance such as creating relationships for education to continue even in times of school closure. For example, they can take part in the distribution school materials in public schools. This is possible if the state and its peoples establish good relationships. (Bourdieu 1990, pp. 80–81).

The field of education is greatly influenced by power struggles and strategies that need to be adopted for its development. Contemporary societies mostly demand that the curriculum can be differentiated to access some type of knowledge. However, this request is mostly denied. This is viewed as restricting some type of knowledge of cultures of individual societies that should be taught (James, Cheng & Porter, 2015). These dynamics have consequences for some segments of the population, as it favors the interest of the majority.

Power relations also shape and regulate the operation of educational practices by following principles of democracy that relate to truth and objectivity. The outcome reflect individual contribution rather than structural inequalities (James, Cheng & Porter, 2015). This indicates that whenever education performance in Karamojong is low even when power is handled properly, the responsibility for poor performance during lockdown periods would be placed on the students for not making use of the opportunities provided by the state.

In conclusion, the overview above enables us to see that education, decolonization and power align when appropriate strategies are taken into consideration for all the population. This is

especially the case when democracy and hierarchy follow changes in education. These have less impacts in periods of pandemics that affect education systems.

Chapter Three: Methods and Data

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the methods I used to gather data for this study. Here, I explain how data was collected and processed to arrive at the findings of the study. I will also highlight the experiences and challenges I encountered in the process of gathering and processing the data. The main source of data is newspapers, combined with the content analysis method. In adherence to the ethical consideration and research regulations, I discuss my position as a researcher in relation to the focus of the research, and how that influences my analysis of the data gathered for this study.

3.1 3.2 Data sources

The main source of data for this research are secondary sources by way of newspapers. A total of five Newspapers from Uganda were used. These include the Daily Monitor, New Vision, the Observer, the Independent, and Cyclone Times. Although there are many newspapers in Uganda, these selected newspapers are among the few that are easily accessible online for free. Some of the other newspapers available online require paid subscription before they can be accessible. However, I had no funds nor funding from the University to pay for the subscription. This limited me to the five selected newspapers mentioned above. Furthermore, some Newspapers in Uganda are not published online, and accessing them would require my physical presence in the country, which was not possible due to travel restrictions brought about by the Covid-19 global outbreak.

I gathered the data in the period between 2020 and 2021. This period was a period when the Covid-19 outbreak had peaked. At the same time, the Newspapers had no descriptive year search engine which limited me to obtaining data before those periods and specific months but using that from that period. This limited my access to data before Covid-19 occurrence relevant to the project.

New Vision is a government-owned Newspaper in Uganda that publishes in English- language.⁷ It is published daily in print form and online. The Monitor is an independent English newspaper

⁷ <https://www.newvision.co.ug/>

published online.⁸ The Observer is a Ugandan weekly Newspaper, and it is one of the largest privately-owned newspapers in the country. It is also published in English language. The Independent is a newspaper that covers general and business news. It was established to provide independent platforms for reporting and discussing public issues. It covers the East African regional news and publishes in English. I used one article from this newspaper.⁹ The Cyclone Times is a private newspaper in Uganda, published in English.¹⁰

3.2 Content Analysis

The content analysis method revolves around knowledge generated from the study of contents obtained from texts and speeches to develop meanings and intentions contained in messages (Krippendoff, 2018). Furthermore, Boréus and Bergström consider it an unobtrusive method of social research as it is used to study sensitive topics to corroborate findings attained by other methods (Boréus, K., & Bergström, G, 2017). In contrast, Kerlinger (1986) defined content analysis as a “method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables” (Kerlinger, 1986).

These definitions of Content analysis methods focus on the authors of messages and show emphasis on objectivity and validity when interpreting communications from texts to obtain meaning from various recipients and authors as it provides interest in analyzing different kinds of written texts and pictures. Boréus and Bergström state that any kind of text can be content analyzed and understood from a wide range of themes presented in Newspapers. Content analysis explores and analyses the arguments presented in Newspapers and magazines to draw the presence of different disciplines and expressions from various media regarding changing trends (Boréus, & Bergström, 2017). It is also suitable for finding patterns from larger body of materials, especially in Newspapers, to retrieve the number of articles published and reduce them into categories from complex classifications.

In dealing with content analysis, Stempel states that one must follow four methodological issues such as "selection of units of analysis, developing categories, appropriate sampling content, and checking the reliability of coding (Stempel, 1989).”

⁸ <https://www.monitor.co.ug/>

⁹ <https://www.independent.co.ug/report-health-education-and-tourism-hit-hard-by-covid-19/>

¹⁰ <https://cyclonetimes.com/>

In conducting this study, I set my research questions and objectives of the project that I explored in my first Chapter. This enabled me to focus on the aspect of the content I attained when searching online to obtain data that is relevant to my research.

Secondly, Content analysis looks at selection of topics regarding the project to be able to answer the research question (Boréus, & Bergström, 2017). Boréus and Bergström stress that from a set topic of the project, the research must obtain and streamline the data collected (Boréus, & Bergström, 2017). This helps in gaining meaning in each content presented in the texts. By obtaining each theme after interpretation of texts, the small texts create a greater understanding of the empirical data. To be able to access the idea of all the texts will require a focus on the differences and similarities within the Newspapers articles chosen, and then formulate a set of topics that are relevant for the project (Boréus, & Bergström, 2017). Using content analysis enabled me to lower the number of articles and assess their differences and similarities in terms of different topics (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2020).

I incorporated content analysis by reading through all the newspaper articles chosen for the study. After that, I arranged the contents according to the period of publication and created a list of topics and concepts from the articles from which I can develop meanings and interpretations from the data (Gilje, 2020). After reading through my data, I applied a “systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns” from all the news articles. This enabled me to efficiently yield the data needed to answer the research question (Hsieh & Shanon, 2005). This process is referred to as a “coding frame” (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2020).

The process of content analysis enabled me to conduct preliminary examinations of the various topics and data presented in the Newspaper articles. In analyzing my data, before coding down, I wrote down the definitions of each case in each Newspaper article to create the content categories. In doing so, I focused on individual participation, community involvement, and views represented by the indigenous community of the study population to incorporate the indigenous knowledge and represent their cultural values. This enabled me to obtain various themes relevant in answering the research question, hence obtaining the objective of this project.

In my research, I tried to locate the Karamojong representation or minority point of view. I focused on the impact of Covid-19 through a hermeneutic approach that concentrates on “unique principles and procedures to interpret and understand social phenomena” in a

methodological setting (Gilje, 2020). This enabled me to create categories as the researcher by using a systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes to answer the research questions of this project (Hsieh & Shanon, 2005).

3.3 Ethics, reflexivity, and positionality

In writing about research ethics, Abukari Kwame states that “due to the past experiences of indigenous peoples and their communities, issues of reflexivity, ethics and self-locating are critical components of the indigenous research paradigm which researchers must openly declare”. These concepts relate to self-locations as a concept that ensure that the researcher is not influenced by the research process. This is to enable the researcher to be open-minded while conducting research. I have looked at these concepts below respectively to indicate how I used them in this study.

3.3.1 Ethics

To conduct research with indigenous peoples often requires many ethical approvals depending on the context they reside. This could be either from universities, national governments, indigenous people’s communities, or the respective country where indigenous people reside. These ethical issues help the researcher obtain the necessary approvals and be respectful to the indigenous people’s experiences such as traumatic experiences from past research engagements.

Before starting this research, I applied for approval from the Norwegian Data Protection Office for Research (NSD). An approval was granted after fulfilling all ethical requirements. The requirements of NSD involved determining the category of people students are going to work with. However, there is no category of indigenous peoples. Rather, they are a vulnerable group of people with whom caution must be taken with conducting research for. Thus, NSD also requires the fulfilment of necessary ethical requirements before research can proceed. Caution is taken to ensure that data collected about the people are stored both safely and legally. This is to ensure that the end results especially negative consequences of the study are reduced (NSD, 2020).

I adhered to the principles of respect, relationality, reciprocity, and responsibility in designing a framework to govern my actions and reactions during this process. This is important especially when collecting data from documentary sources that greatly focus on indigenous organizations (Chilisa, 2020). As a researcher, following these concepts earlier at the beginning of this chapter, my interests were a second priority to that of the community I was working

with. My approach was guided by Linda Tuhiwai Smith's argument that any research project must be thoroughly considered, not merely as a single contribution to the body of academic knowledge, but rather in respect of indigenous peoples' interests and needs (Smith, 2012). I had to respect the decision of the informants. I also had to provide the names of the Newspapers I used. At the time, I respected the authors. I did not include their names because the data presented was governed by the institutions that oversee the respective newspapers. I had to provide the names of the Newspapers I used. I presented in my research and made sure that my presentation of the data respected the Indigenous community this study focuses on. Some of the data I used were presented by the Indigenous community themselves. An example is the Karamojong resilience organization's website (karamojaresilience.org).

Maurstad raised concerns about ethics and politics of research, saying that researchers must know the social and cultural context that knowledge is embedded to know what to protect and reveal (Maurstad, 2002). As a researcher from Uganda, with some knowledge of the study population, I am familiar with the context and I aware of my responsibility to conduct research with the Indigenous people. I had to present and select the Newspapers that were useful and transparent without personal concerns or politically induced articles. I understand that including political aspects was not my goal but to raise concern regarding the knowledge of this pandemic, and ensuring that the concerns of indigenous peoples are presented.

Furthermore, dealing with online data, especially from newspapers, involves data that have been coded already. Thus, such data are not first-hand information, as some critical data are left out. However, since the project was carried out during Covid-19 period, and during election time in Uganda, many articles were politically oriented. The newspaper publications around that time were biased against the government. As a researcher, knowing that the existence of Covid-19 occurred during the election period, I was aware of the political bias in newspaper publications, and my aim was not to oppose the government but rather to raise the concerns presented that are helpful to Indigenous communities. This has influenced the type of data I gathered, since I had to ignore some parts of the research findings and concentrate on the data that are relevant to my research questions.

3.3.2 Positionality

According to Anna-Lill Drugge, a researcher's origin or position within the colonial academic structures has a significant impact on the nature of research (Drugge, 2016). Based on that, self-positioning regarding the field of study is of importance. Kwame illustrates this by providing

examples to show his reflexivity (Kwame, 2017). He stresses the need for a researcher to position himself to limit the conflict of interest with the project. This is to enable transparency when conducting research and to present the experience of indigenous peoples (Kwame, 2017).

I am part of the Muganda tribe located in the central part of Uganda. This means that I am a non-Karamojong. However, I became interested in the Karamojong community for a number of reasons. While growing up, I always saw the Karamojong people on the streets of Kampala and read news reports about issues concerning their education. Being a person who received formal education in a well-resourced private school, I could see the contrast with the Karamojong region where students' performance is generally low.

As a mother who is writing this academic text, I feel obliged to see to it that the inequalities in education regarding the Karamojong is seen as a need for social justice; where education is made accessible to all regardless of the pandemic situation affecting all regions in Uganda.

3.3.3 Reflexivity

According to Chilisa (2012), reflexivity is the assessment of the influence of the researcher's background and ways of perceiving reality, perceptions, experiences, ideological biases, and interests during the research. This is so because the researcher is the main data collection instrument, and the one who analyses, interprets and reports the findings (Chilisa, 2012). This concept indicates that the researcher should follow and respect the norms of the indigenous community that he/she is conducting research with.

I am not coming from the Karamojong community, but I don't pretend to think of myself as someone from outside of the ongoing system and what the indigenous people are experiencing in terms of education in Uganda. However, being a Ugandan makes me an insider to the settler-indigenous relationship in Uganda. This has helped me to identify the origin of various authors, especially those from the study population.

Studying indigenous studies has widened my understanding of what rights indigenous peoples have, which motivates the need to do this research (Crawhall, 2011). The Karamojong community is a wider group of indigenous community. The group bears many documented platforms and many researchers have done research about them. This was beneficial in obtaining the information I needed for this study. There have been advancements in the background and education sector in Karamojong.

3.4 Challenges

Since the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing, there is a challenge of finding research publications about it. Many researchers could not have access to the field due to the restrictions that were put in place to limit its spread. This is a challenge I also encountered. The restrictions limited the relationship between the researcher and the field, with some advantages. Some information presented might not represent real situations on the ground. Some of the information would be relevant if one met the people who worked in their communities to take their own views.

To start with, this research was expected to involve interviews, but the interviews could not be carried out due to travel restrictions. I had to switch to online data since I could not get feedback directly from the participants. I also did not receive the funding I needed to access other Newspapers with paid subscriptions. Most of the newspapers in Uganda required subscription in order to access past information about Covid-19, except what is presented to the public in news reports. This limited my search as I only used those I could access, and yet some important data would be gotten from those other newspapers I used and would give a broader view.

Another challenge I encountered was the effectiveness of information provided in newspapers on different websites in Uganda. In Uganda, many authors and reporters freely release information on these websites as there are quite limited restrictions on what information they provide. In addition to that, most of the information they provided are biased towards their interests. Thus, I have a challenge in selecting whose data to use and not to use.

Chapter Four: Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the impacts of Covid-19 on education. It contains detailed analysis of the Newspaper articles, i.e., the 25 articles gathered from 5 newspapers. Initially, all articles focus on the impact of COVID-19 on education. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section shows the Impact of Covid-19 on the education of indigenous people. This is separated into sub-section that show the positive and negative impacts. The second section shows the possible strategies that are provided to respond to the impact of Covid-19. The third section shows the contribution of indigenous people in ensuring the continuation of education before the schools' closures. These findings relate to the main research questions and the minor question stated in chapter one. In this chapter the word is used to refer to the communities in Karamojong.

4.2 Impacts of covid-19 on education as represented in the Newspapers on indigenous peoples.

The Daily Monitor newspaper showed students of Lokares Primary school who were having Physical education (PE) in a field. The expression of the kids showed a discomfort as some were not in shoes. In contrast, no one wore school uniforms or sports uniforms for this activity (Daily Monitor, January 10, 2021). The newspaper also showed the discomfort that the Karamojong region faces regarding the free education offered in this region. The Daily Monitor (2021) points out the existence of few schools and the challenge of qualified teachers to enhance the learning process with less educated children. Thus, the paper shows that the government concentrates more on urban regions and leaving out the rural areas in the aspect of development. The rural schools are characterized by low quality public schools and negative attitudes towards education.

First, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic created a change, as it was accompanied by a total closure of schools to reduce its spread. This has never happened before in the country expressed by these newspapers. Besides the need to ensure education continuity, the Ministry proposed a response plan that involved the use of distance learning. E-learning technology was incorporated, and this was followed by the Ministry of Education and sports directive on the use of television, radios and internet (New Vision, July 28, 2021). The Ministry took up a responsibility of distributing home study materials to learners in areas that could not access the

public Radio and television (UBC). This included schoolbooks and putting various attempting questions in newspapers for students to practice (Daily Monitor, January 03, 2021). The Daily Monitor newspaper report (2021) showed that the Ministry of education printed 5.4 million copies of study materials for primary and lower secondary learners (Daily Monitor, May 17, 2021).

The Daily newspaper displayed a picture of a girl holding the study material, and the writer expressed that she was in her final grade of primary school¹¹. The joy of receiving this learning kit expressed on her face with smiles gave her hope that she would continue school. However, the author showed that the family has no radio and thus she would miss out on the lessons taught on radio. Despite that, she will have a chance to continue learning using the learning kit materials.

However, online studies were encouraged, where teachers could be able to teach directly to their students even when at home. Parents were encouraged to help in ensuring that the pupils can take up their duties in doing their homework and taking lessons as scheduled (Daily Monitor, June 11, 2021). In the same newspaper, the writer indicated that the government also assured the people that there would be a distribution of radios to rural areas to ensure that pupils could attend their lessons as per the schedule plans for all levels of education periodically.

With all the above, the concept of impacts presentation within this field and the data available looks at two side effects. The newspapers presented the positive and negative impacts that covid-19 has had on the education system in Uganda indigenous peoples. I will start by presenting the negative impacts.

4.2.1 Problem area 1: E- learning creating inequality in access to education

The Monitor newspaper indicated that there is an unequal distribution of internet services in Uganda, which makes it impossible for student to embrace e-learning in all areas. The newspaper presented a statistical figure to support this. It analyzed an urban-rural gap in internet use. The analysis shows that in the rural regions, only a few people could access the internet service. This translates to low number of students of around 14 percent that could embrace e-learning. The newspaper showed the discomfort of changing from the formal schooling. There is high tax charged to access the internet and this limits families, and schools in rural areas to

¹¹ I could not secure the permission to use the pictures.

access the internet. The report also looked at how expensive the gadgets costs for both the computers, phones, radios that most households have no money to have this and the schools as most are public schools and their level of incomes are low leaving these areas missing on the opportunities for their school and pupils to miss out on the continued education amidst the pandemic. The writer's views focused on the child's right to education as it infringed upon the challenges to accessing the internet and electricity or computer devices (Monitor, July 21, 2021).

Another reporter from Monitor expressed dissatisfaction with e-learning. He mentions that this method has not been fully used in the education sector in Uganda, and only a few schools are accustomed to it. He saw it as requiring more work than the formal teaching method. In practical terms, it requires parents and schools to keep children engaged with academic work than before, when the parent left everything to their teachers. He stresses that online studying has not been easy due to the costs involved, i.e., paying teachers to purchase data is costly. In the article, their figures show how costly it could be, but these costs are not affordable, especially in rural regions where the cost of living is low. The newspaper also expressed the discomfort parents experience and the perception behind using the e-learning method. They expressed the fear of using online learning, which is considered as “an array of online predators”. Easy access to pornography through the pop-up adverts is also a concern. With this, the communities which are tied to their cultures experience challenges in incorporating online studies and thus consider the radio and television programs as efficient for them (Monitor, October 2, 2021).

With regards to the aspects of radios and television, newspapers also expressed the discomfort of these too. The New Vision newspaper reports that some large amount of money was released to help in long-distance learning through purchase of radios for all Uganda families. This is to enable children to have continuous access to education. The ten statement was quite personal as he said that the money “vanished like a ghost” since the radios did not reach all areas as expected, as well as the printed home materials (New Vision, July 28, 2021). Another newspaper expressed similar concerns, as it looked at the concern of Radios not reaching all poverty-stricken areas especially in rural areas, and discomfort that the Radio, Tv programs are not helping rural pupils (Monitor, May 1, 2020). The newspaper shows that these claims were made when he visited Kamuli and Buyende. The writer expressed the views that people expressed when the Speaker of Parliament of Uganda Ms. Rebecca Kadaga visited. Many claims were made about the characteristics of rural regions in Uganda. Most rural areas have weak tv signal and unreliable electricity supply. As expressed above in regard to the radio

lessons that most rural regions were using, there was still challenges as requests were made that lessons needed to be “localize down” to common radios of all rural areas to effectively help pupils and the parents to easily guide their children (Monitor, May 1, 2020). In most rural regions, it is a luxury for people to own a television, as few homes have electricity but also accessing televisions is not common. The monitor newspaper showed a picture of several children gathering around a television set. There were many children gathered around a single television set, yet lessons were to be adjusted on the television set. They were of different years, which left me wondering who will be first to learn, and the level of concentration will be low as they all will need to stay to watch for the first time (Monitor, June 11, 2020).

Another aspect of the perceived inequalities was the claims that rural areas had poor roads and insecurity in some areas, which lead to inaccessibility to these areas. This leaves many scholars in rural areas unable to receive the opportunity by those responsible to distribute the study materials (Monitor, May 17, 2021). The Monitor newspaper indicates that most of the regions did not have materials delivered to them because the Ministry had run out of materials to distribute. Another reason that was that Agago District was not able to receive these study materials because of the flooded bridge (Monitor, May 17, 2021). However, besides the ninety percent of home-schooling materials distributed, areas such as Karamojong and Kabong districts missed the opportunity based on claims of insecurities caused by cattle rustling.

With regards to the schools found closed, the suppliers returned with the study materials. Similarly, the distribution of radios reached only a few households in rural regions. With regards to those who did not have to wait. There is low or no hopes of continuing studying as their families cannot afford buying radios (Monitor, May 17, 2021). This statement shows that not all schools managed to receive either radios or homework material, thus leading to inequality as many missed this opportunity that would ensure that they continue to receive education.

The AP newspaper indicated that due to Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the need to ensure continuity in education created a lost generation of learners who are familiar with physical schooling. The desire to fit in had consequences that affected students’ motivations to study (Ap News November 1, 2021). Another Newspaper showed expression of children who stated that the teachers were fast and gave them no opportunity to ask questions (Monitor, May 1, 2020). These affected the students who were familiar with being in class with these opportunities available. However, these opportunities they cannot be attained yet they must

wait for more lessons without understanding the one before hand. This leaves them behind, and thereby leading to poor performance.

In the case of families that could not access e-learning, their children ended up going to farms to help their parents while school sessions continued. Some of them did not even know that education continued during the school closures. One newspaper showed a kid cleaning gold at Bukana island. This is because of school closure after the Covid.19 outbreak. There was lost hope for children in public schools as they could not afford the requirement or have access to these materials (Monitor, February 01, 2021).

Most of the data gathered from the Newspapers indicated that many schools in rural regions have not started to run online classes to mitigate the impact on learning. This includes students in Karamoja, since running online classes does not seem to be feasible for most rural schools in Uganda due to lack of access to the internet. In other words, the current (**ICT**) infrastructure and the distribution of access in the urban and rural areas have created inequalities in among Ugandan citizenry. This is especially between students who live in urban areas and those from rural area such as the poor people who can barely afford to access the internet. Considering such divide, the Speaker of Uganda has requested the Ministry of Education and Sports and private schools to not compel children to use online education. Rather, they are advised to device other ways to ensure that the vulnerable in society have education (Monitor, May 01, 2020).

As seen above, to grant equitable access to e-learning for all students in Uganda is a challenge. The sudden shift towards e-learning will further widen the inequality gap and will leave a section of students behind. Similarity, the author of Daily monitor maintains that inequalities existed in accessing education even before Covid-19. The writer provided different cases where he narrates that indigenious or small villages have been left out in areas of development and infrastructure. This did not allow for access to use of digital systems, and hence leaving them out to the new strategies evolving around new technologies (Monitor, April 19, 2021).

4.2.2 Problem Area 2: Covid-19 has led to an absence of physical/formal schooling incorporated with distance model or homeschooling

The newspapers raised concern about physical schooling as it has been the common approach of teaching. In this approach, children were required to attend schools where they gathered to learn different things. The monitor newspaper indicate that Covid-19 has changed their basic

way of life, which involved shopping and going to school to logging on Zoom for online classes (Monitor January 6, 2022). The culture of physical schooling was questioned prior the COVID-19 pandemic as it was to be replaced with home schooling. The newspapers showed that the shift to home schooling was seen as a “bad joke” especially among parents who were not used to seeing their kids at home, while playing the role of teachers even though they were illiterates. It was not possible for them to teach their children at home (Monitor, August 9, 2021).

The observer news also reported that education provides many intellectual and financial benefits to society. Schools also served as a place where children develop mentally, physically, and socially. Without schools, children become susceptible to many environmental risk factors that may impede their development. The writer incorporated this with a picture of a parent trying to teach her two daughters on a computer in a sitting room. These were kids who were used to studying with their friends and now they must be at home to study. This kind of change makes kids miss the school environment and experience loneliness (The observer September 16, 2021).

The newspapers also expressed that studying from home would not be a problem. However, due to the immediate change from the traditional school system, many students in the villages find home school challenging as it requires printed materials, access to internet connectivity and having phones/ laptops/radios/Televisions which were not a requirement to access formal school before Covid-19. As most of them cannot afford these facilities, the school environment becomes more preferable because it takes all that away (The observer September 16, 2021). Another newspaper showed that public schools in Uganda, especially in indigenous communities, were not equipped to go online when the pandemic struck. This led their learners to miss the education opportunities provided (AP News, November 1, 2021).

The observer also showed the importance of formal schooling; the newspapers showed that Uganda is a country where school is valued as it is considered as a place where children know the purpose of studying, have breaks to play with friends and the environment the is purposely built for academic excellence. So, the changes to make home both an academic and learning institution are not only a burden to the home but also affects their level of concentration compared to being at school (The observer September 16, 2021).

Monitor newspaper expressed the toll that home schooling has had on children with special needs. The writer emphasized that schools offered help to learners to study as they were used to being around their teachers who directed them to study. But the changes that were made

created discomfort, as they had to see their teachers online. More concern arose especially for blind children, since they need physical help to continue learning. Another issue that was indicated is that the schools with children with special needs were most affected, since the schools served as spaces where they are fed and taken care of. The meals encouraged many children to enroll and complete school (Monitor September 16, 2020). However, in another newspaper, the author notes that parents who were used to sending kids to school and did not have to prepare meals at home the kids used to have them at school. The school closure left them with the pain of thinking about how to feed their kids. Yet, they had opened their pockets to zero balance to clear fees dues before Covid-19 (Cyclone Times April 14, 2020).

The newspaper showed the grievances of parents point to the fact that the pandemic has affected their sources of their livelihoods and undermined the prospects for the continued schooling of their children (Monitor, January 03, 2021). Since the Covid-19 outbreak, there were some candidates who had to sit for their final exams. The schools closure disrupted their affected them in a way that they had to postpone the exam to the following year.

Formal schooling did not require the purchase of self-study learning materials, but the change to homeschooling required this. Though the government provided some learning materials, the newspaper articles show that many of the students did not know how to use the learning materials for online education. This is followed by complaints from students about their problem of not understanding the radio and television lessons. Here, a reporter in Monitor showed the arguments that the children also complained about the pace of the teaching offered by the teachers. This means that the majority of students missed the lessons in school in place of doing home chores. The children miss their schools as they were understood personally with each having their own strengths and weakness. In the case of homeschooling, however, this is not possible since the teachers are fast in teaching. They value time for other lessons and programs on the schedule, and consequently leaving other students behind. This leads to poor performance as the students have no one to consult. It also limits feedback from learners to teachers in cases where their parents are not aware of what is being taught (Monitor, January 07, 2021)

Lastly, upon opening after Covid-19, the Ugandan education cycle will have changed in the approach to teaching. This will ensure a shift to remote online learning framework in the teaching curriculum. The positive reports in some newspapers indicated a sudden shift away from the classroom and affects future plans paints for the online learning system even during

post-pandemic. Its impact on the education sector, through the adoption of ICT in learning curriculum review, and in the delivery of higher education programs in Uganda, It is still a long way, considering the bias it faces (Monitor, January 4, 2021).

4.3 Possible strategies to respond to impact of COVID-19 on education

In light of the challenges faced in responding to the impact of Covid-19 on the education of Rural people, the newspaper articles had proposed strategies for responding to the challenges by suggesting a shift to online classes. This suggestion is difficult to achieve in Uganda for the following three reasons.

First, most of the schools have little (or no) experience in conducting online classes especially in rural areas. The Monitor news author expressed this challenge by reporting that most teachers do not seem to have adequate skills to run online classes because they have neither been trained nor have been involved in online teaching in rural areas (Monitor, January 10, 2021). The New Vision paper also states that the government has become preoccupied with issues of national transformation. This has led to a lack of attention to the people in the villages, which explains why they have poor infrastructure. This has also resulted to the absence of private schools in these indigenous communities. The private schools are mostly found in urban areas or cities in the country (New Vision, August 9, 2021).

Secondly, having limited access to internet or technology is accompanied with expensive internet service and poor infrastructure for teachers and school managers are barriers to providing distance learning. Thirdly, many students and parents (including teachers) in the rural areas are not computer literates. Those with computer skills do not have opportunities to work with computers because the societies are unable to afford computers and thus focus on physical schooling.

The physical education is intended to enhance learning abilities. The learning gap caused by distance/online learning, leaves some learners disadvantaged by the system because most pupils are in despair when it comes to online and distance learning. As discussed in the sections above, virtual education, in particular the school education during COVID-19 school closures, is inadequate, fragmented, and uncoordinated. It was pointed out that the repercussions of the school closures on access to teaching and learning resources have significantly widened the gap between the disadvantaged students who reside in the outskirts of the country and those who

reside in the urban areas. In the section that follows, a discussion of the challenges and strategies for addressing the situation is made.

Putting strategies in place to ensure children return to school is important because children from low-income families are more affected by the COVID-19 school closures. They are affected by interruption in class time and economic uncertainty (Monitor, April 19, 2021). This statement gives indications that the impact of COVID-19 on indigenous people who live below the poverty line will be devastating. Thus, some children from low-income parents will never return to school when schools reopen because they are expected to support their families. Therefore, the challenge for the Ugandan school (Monitor, April 19, 2021). This newspaper points out that authorities should trace all the children who do not return to school and devise strategies to encourage the parents to send their children back to school.

Furthermore, the article states that schools may need to provide flexible learning approaches so that students are not deterred from returning when school resumes. Additionally, schools may consider providing economic support (e.g., hardship fund or scholarships) to students who are worst hit by the pandemic or whose economic condition has been a barrier to attending schools (Monitor, April 19, 2021).

4.3.1 Introducing evidence-based interventions to recover lost lessons

Disruptions in education activities following the school closure will have lasting effect on students. Recovering the lost learning might take a very long time as it requires a carefully worked out recovery plan. To assist students in such a stressful situation, the authority must introduce evidence-based interventions or reform-oriented actions that aim to facilitate the recovery of the lost learning when schools reopen. For this, schools may survey the need of students and design some catch-up lessons (Monitor, April 19, 2021). In other words, this strategy would require that the authority devise measures to cater for a good quality of student intake, perhaps by running extra classes, additional materials or remedial courses in the first year to ensure recovery of lost lessons during the closures (Monitor, June 16, 2020).

4.3.2 Engaging with parents and teachers

The approach of engaging parents and teachers is another strategy that works effectively in situations where parents have undergone formal education. Families are viewed as central to education because they play important roles in children's learning process (The observer,

September 16, 2021). This means that despite the disparities between families in terms of ability to teach children at home, engaging parents in the learning process remains beneficial. This strategy is possible if there is high level of cooperation and collaboration with parents. In that regard, schools may organize periodic workshops and online discussions to inform parents about their curriculum in local languages. On the other hand, teachers should be trained on how to work with parents whose backgrounds are very different from their own (Monitor June 16, 2020). Other suggestions such as the setting a selection criteria for teachers by schools should be considered. Due to the absence of a selection criteria, some teachers were sharing wrong information on televisions, thus suggesting that teachers too need to be trained on the new system (Monitor June 16, 2020).

4.3.3 Using local volunteers and locally trained facilitators to support learning

In cases where the above strategy is not administered because parents have no basic education, especially in the indigenous communities, local volunteers and locally trained facilitators can be used. It is important that local governments and schools work closely with the local communities, especially in cases where schools remain closed (Monitor June 16, 2020).

Some of the impacts outlined by the newspapers include the government's inability to deliver radios, television, and other critical learning materials. This situation results from government's failure to include local community facilitators who are familiar with the region, and could easily deliver the items provided by the Ministry of Education (Monitor, July 19, 2020). Schools can request the local people who are familiar with the local language and culture of students to participate as volunteers. Furthermore, locally trained facilitators might potentially support the education of out-of-school children and young people when they are provided guidelines on how to support the children (Monitor, 25 May 2020). Local facilitators can teach basic literacy and numeracy skills to children who have never been to school or those that have dropped out of school. However, the impact of local facilitators depends on their ability to communicate and use their mother tongue in the teaching and learning process.

4.3.4 Supporting through both online and offline methods

Many respondents indicate that the inequalities that revolve around access to digital devices and internet in Uganda vary between regions and group of students. Most concerns were on the group of students and parents from poor backgrounds or from remote areas where access to digital means and internet is lacking. Most probably the group where parents have access to mobile devices but no access to the internet. Parents and older siblings might not have sufficient

digital literacy to use digital resources. However, the newspaper showed concern that policies and practices introduced should favor all groups effectively if all these are considered.

For example, the first group can be helped if various policies or action plans are introduced to ensure and address individual students' needs. For instance, for most children living in remote areas with no or limited access to digital devices and internet can obtain resources that are accessible to parents, potentially via post-offices or local leaders to deliver to their respective communities.

The second group could be supported via radios, television, and text messages. The priority to none or low-tech approaches that are accessible, user friendly, and cost effective is critical to sustain the delivery of education. In many poor, rural, isolated communities, the technologies already at hand are mostly radios, and mobile phones (though few may not use mobile phones). Before considering the latest and new gadgets, utilizing technologies or resources which already exist (and are being used and sustained) in such communities is central.

The Ugandan government runs a few classes on radio and television, but all students do not receive access to such lessons. This is because many indigenous communities have no access to radio and television. It should also be noted that even when rural children have access to lessons on radio and television, it is unlikely that those children will receive adequate assistance from their parents because many parents are illiterate. In this context, local volunteers can be requested to visit children in person (maintaining a social distance) to support them. In order for this to happen, local governments and schools should work together. Another option could be for schools to run face to face classes by implementing measures such as maintaining social distance, students attending classes on a Rota basis, introducing a behavior management policy to comply with social distancing measures, restricting students from sharing items, and making the wearing of face masks compulsory.

Furthermore, special attention should be given to children with special needs, as they may not benefit equally from the strategies mentioned above. Similarly, Covid-19 has affected all areas, and this was also evidenced by a respondent's view on how Entebbe social needs children center was affected by Covid-19 (Monitor September 16, 2020). For instance, virtual classes need to be conducted both in national and local languages. This should include a comprehensive framework to address each student's need while paying attention to parental literacy levels, atypical living situations, physical/mental abilities and learning needs (Monitor, 25 May 2020).

4.3.5 Training teachers to run online classes and consider students' access to technology

In the current situation in Uganda, the online classes offered in a few institutions are running without a proper plan and/or vision. Teachers are simply forced to do the job. This situation raises several questions about whether teachers are able to run online classes. Do they not need training on online teaching? Do all students and teachers have access to internet and digital devices? In this context, one respondent argued that one of the fundamental challenges is that our decision-makers in Uganda tend to assume that everyone has access to the internet. This assumption drives the implementation of the current online education policy. Policy makers tend to ignore the fact that teachers need training to ensure that the new policy of online studies takes place. Furthermore, considering that most people in Uganda, especially from indigenous communities, give priority to their food to sustain their lives during such a crisis. Because of this pandemic, many people are dying of hunger, and some have committed suicide because of the food shortage. In such a context, the internet cannot be expected to be affordable to each student in Uganda. Therefore, the realities on the ground must be taken into consideration before decisions are made.

A teacher from one of the school points out that obtaining efficient online learning outcomes requires teachers to be adequately trained. It also requires students to be equally exposed to online learning resources. Thus, besides imposing the policies, the teacher would be efficient if they were first trained in all areas, irrespective of their location, since the government is aware of the inequalities that exist in the education sector (Monitor, April 19, 2021).

Other actions are needed to be taken to reclaim the losses created by the pandemic in the education sector and to ensure that children in rural areas receive fair opportunities. There is urgent need for increased investment in education by making education a large part of the national budget. Special attention should be paid to the administration of national examinations.

Whereas there has been an improvement over the years in this area, these are likely to regress if enough is not done to bridge the gap that has been created by Covid-19. This gap manifests in the wide disparities between rural and urban school-going children. For instance, many children in rural areas have been at home for one year without going to school (Monitor, June 19, 2020).

The second factor we ought to consider is how to narrow the learning gaps created by Covid-19 through special programs for children in rural areas. This can include improving conditions of learning environments for these children, as well as improving teacher motivation (Monitor, June 19, 2020). Rural areas rarely attract private education investments. That is why sufficient budget for public schools tailored to the needs of rural children is important. The return to school will be affected by the stress that parents have been through in varying degrees. Going back to school is not a matter of announcement that school is open. Where user fees apply, it is also an issue of affordability. However, besides the above strategies, a lot of thinking needs to be done to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on education, and to close the widening gap between learners as a result of location. This is the time for all stakeholders in education to work together for better results (Monitor, June 19, 2020).

4.4 Positive impact of Moving to digital infrastructure

The story of Covid-19 will forever stay in our minds, though it created challenges and opportunities. However, COVID-19 has made us think of alternative ways to teach students in case similar pandemic situations arise (Monitor, April 27, 2021). Although few schools and universities have run online classes in Uganda, the pandemic has created a drastic change in the education sector in the form of digital classes. Most schools did not have digital classes as explained in the first chapter. Therefore, the government's support to schools strengthens their capacity to run online classes. During this pandemic, the focus was on virtual learning on electronic platforms such as television, radio and online education. This requires a need for support on access to internet and technology, as most students cannot afford these technologies to limit the inequalities. The covid-19 pandemic has led educational administrators and policymakers to create an opportunity for the introduction of new learning modes that can be accessible to everyone, to prepare for emergencies, and to make the system more resilient.

It is assumed that a pandemic of this scale happens in waves and is cyclical and people will need to learn to live with it. Introducing distance learning within the education system as a priority will help facilitate this option, thus will minimize the negative impacts if it is well planned and adjusted to fit into academic calendars as an alternative and innovative learning in education.

4.5 Using Mobile Furniture to keep children in school

For the education sector, innovations have been made to revolutionize the education system. In Uganda indigenous communities have invented a way to see that their children could continue

to attend school. This is possible because there have been several standard operating procedures that are followed to curb the spread of Covid-19. For the education sector, “innovation has been made by indigenous communities in Uganda. This involved the seat pack, a personal bag that turns into a mobile bamboo chair with a writing surface. This is quite favorable to create distancing while limiting the spread of Covid-19 as illustrated in Fig 1” (Monitor, April 27, 2021). The newspaper mentions that the seat packs were tailored to address the challenges faced by schools that lack desks and could find it able to maintain social distancing. This idea was implemented to ensure that a teacher could accommodate more than one student in an area and limit the challenges of long distances from one house to another. “It limits time as it also works as a writing pad as the 600-gram school bag unfolds into a seat” (Monitor, April 27, 2021).

A seat pack is eco-friendly as it turns into a personal bamboo chair with a writing surface creating mobile classroom. The seat pack is 90 per cent cheaper to make and distribute than the traditional-classroom desk. This idea of mobile classroom makes the safest school today and works well especially in rural areas, as it is cheaper and can be created by many people in the community. This has greatly been helpful, and it shows how indigenous communities can contribute to mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

With school closures in Uganda presenting remote learning options such as television and online lessons, the 79 per cent rural schools (aged 6 to 12 years according to Uganda Bureau of Statistics) are left with one option to continue studying. Seat packs have been developed and with school-child feedback and mentorship, the seat packs will be useful if rural communities take them to classrooms upon opening of schools. This is because it meets the pandemic regulations on social distancing and can be used by schools with limited space. Additionally, students can be taught under trees with a comfortable seating arrangement, as it ensures conserving tree cover in the long term (by replacing wood-based furniture with portable, light-weight bamboo seats attached to the school bags).

In the Monitor news report, it is stated that the mobile furniture “will facilitate post-Covid-19 literacy (reading and writing) for 10 million school children by furnishing 200,000 classrooms with seat packs by 2030,”. However, besides being useful to most rural areas, it has a challenge of shortage, as the number of seats needed by school outweighs supply capacity. These communities express the view that although it is an important opportunity for them to ensure education continues, they have overwhelming number of children that may not have access to

that opportunity. In light of that, they still need active support from both the local and foreign entities that believe in impactful education for all children.

Chapter Five: Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss and make a reflection on the findings of my research. In light of the research questions, I reflect on how the findings relate with the theoretical framework and will provide a general observation of the analyzed data.

5.1 Has Covid-19 pandemic created challenges to education on Indigenous People of Karamoja?

The study population of this research project is a society that resides within the rural regions in Uganda. The presented analysis shows the inequalities between the urban and rural regions regarding education. These inequalities have come about as a result of decolonization, which has led to many changes introduced in the education system. The result has been the creation of divisions between within schools and between public and private schools. Here, most private schools had introduced the digital learning, and it is in these schools where facilities like computers, and good structures are available. These facilities are often unavailable in government schools located in Karamoja. The government schools are characterized by poor structures, inadequate classes, and challenges with shortage of teachers and school materials.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created both negative and positive impacts, as some people were able to obtain free education materials. The Daily Monitor newspaper reports showed a picture of girl holding the study material, the writer expresses that she is in her final grade of primary school, the joy of receiving this learning kit expressed on her face with smiles gave her hope that she would continue school. However, the author showed that the family has no radio and thus she would miss out on lessons taught on radio. That notwithstanding, she will have the chance to continue learning while using the learning kit materials and radios. A majority of people in Karamoja who did not receive these items are sending their kids to farm or making them help with house chores.

The data dealt with the interaction between Education and power simultaneously. The analyzed data indicated that those responsible for the distribution of materials could not reach all areas. This shows a lack of corporation at the local level. Yet, they have the power to involve the local leaders in Karamoja to ensure that all schools and families gain access to these materials.

The findings also showed that Karamoja has poor infrastructures such as roads. The limits government representatives from delivering the needed education resources to Karamoja.

However, it is still the duty of the government to ensure that roads are developed in these regions. At the same time when power is incorporated effectively, there will be increased resources in such areas, and this will not generate complaints about inadequate resources to support the Karamojong. By so doing, they will not miss out on education opportunities even during school closures.

One of the scholars who looked at the distinctions between power and education has emphasized the aspect of democracy when incorporating new systems in education (James, Cheng & Porter, 2015). This aspects link together in cases where the government need to introduce new systems to ensure that all areas will benefit from them before incorporating them to reduce the inequalities that exist. Although the covid-19 pandemics was an emergency, the government would have taken some time to train the communities that lack skills in the new system. While schools were closed down for a long time, the findings indicate that teachers and parents did not have time to train themselves on the new digital system. This has been the case because they had little or no knowledge about how to use the internet.

5.2 Decolonization and Karamojong peoples

Uganda was colonized by the British from 1894 to 1962. The Karamojong peoples practiced cattle rustling and as a result of colonialism. During colonialism, the British set aside grazing lands in the Northern part of Uganda for the Karamojong to graze their animals. Upon attaining independence, the Karamojong were considered nomadic pastoralists (Huisman, 2001). However, they continue to wear their traditional clothing and living their lifestyle. The Karamojong rejected many presidential decrees to change their ways of life and adopt a modern lifestyle. The constant attempts by subsequent governments have made them the target of marginalization by post independent regimes (Kagaha et al., 2009).

The North-Eastern part of Uganda has the last three districts, which are considered the poorest districts in Uganda. Being home to the Karamojong people, Karamoja remains one of the most marginalized and least developed area in the country (UNDRIP, 2005). This historical experience also applies to education policies for Karamojong people. Africa's education entailed preparing children for other responsibilities. They grow into adults under the direction of elders of the society. This form of education aims to instill cultural values and traditions for the society, and is carried out through songs, telling stories, participation in community games and many more (Boateng, 1983). As a result of colonialism, there was continuous process of change where formal education existed and children were taught by professional teachers to

learn new languages, and how to read and write. This formal education was imposed on all with the aim to introduce civilization. However those that resisted the new order are labeled uncivilized and backward (Otiso, 2006).

In Uganda, changes made in education system after colonialism have empowered and enabled peoples in Karamoja to participate in educating their children. As the findings show, efforts have been made to offer free education in areas where low importance is attached to education by the Karamojong.

5.3 Relating Education and power

The study findings show the devastating effects of COVID-19 pandemic on education, as well as the barriers that hinder students and school engagements in online education during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The results show that educational activities were negatively affected due to the pandemic lockdowns. Some of the identified effects include learning disruptions, limited access to learning facilities, especially school materials, and loss of interest in learning among students.

The finding is in line with earlier assertion by Onyema et al., (2020), where he also analyzed the multiple problems Covid-19 pandemic created for the education sector, including the adoption of digital methods in education and how it leads to decreased education opportunities for underprivileged students in rural areas. As a result of decolonization, the concept of online education was introduced mostly in the 21st century as a mode of civilization. In Uganda, it was not compulsory for all schools to incorporate this system, although it is a common practice in the private school setting. Based on the findings, it is observed that the approach requires a kind of flexibility that allows the facilitators, mentors and motivators to work together (teachers, students, parents). The findings indicate that this was not the case, especially in many rural areas due to absence of digital skills. In addition to that, the school policies focused on traditional approach of having teachers and students learning in school. This has created a digital divide for the Karamojong who are saddled with issues of poor electricity and unavailable internet service.

Among the numerous challenges, inadequate facilities appeared to be the main impediment to online education during the pandemic. Most of the Newspaper articles in the findings agreed that inadequate facilities such as lack of computer and internet facility were the major factors that limited their engagement in online education. Similarly, poor electricity service,

unavailability and accessibility issues, and network issues, have also created numerous problems for accessing education during the COVID-19 lockdown in poverty-stricken areas (Onyema, Eucheria, Obafemi, Sen, Atonye, Sharma, & Alsayed, 2020).

The result of the study shows that the covid-19 pandemic has disrupted education activities and opportunities for indigenous people in Uganda. It displaced students and teachers and created multiple barriers in teaching and learning. Due to that, indigenous communities were blended into the traditional teaching techniques to assess how they continue with learning. This satisfies the main objectives of this project, which is to explore how indigenous communities contribute to the mitigation of the impact of such pandemics.

The study indicates that the COVID-19 lockdown increased pressure on parents and educational institutions. This is stressed by OECD report 2020 where the study showed that school closure can add stressors to students who are already contending with challenges associated with poverty and would require support to ensure the readiness of students and schools to learn during the pandemic (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

The finding also recognizes the need for technology in education particularly in times of emergencies. This assertion was also supported by Onyema (2019), where suggestions stress on the integration of emerging technologies in education, which would create flexibility in the changing learning environments and supports possible strategies that emphasize innovations. It also considers all parties in promoting the policies in learning systems to ensure that there are no inequalities in education as the findings indicate (Onyema, 2019).

The findings suggest possible strategies which are necessary to see that online study is successful. However, they also involve traditional means, while suggestions regarding what these indigenous communities can adopt are provided. However, these do not contradict, as they are also in line with the OECD report of 2020, which indicates the various strategies that can be incorporated in response to ensuring education continuation during the Covid-19 pandemic (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Among these, they presented twenty-five ways to responding to inadequacies in both schools, families and teachers that are considered when initiating such policies of online learning among communities or countries. They presented several factors to consider to ensure that there are no inequalities and missed opportunities in education. These factors border on aspects of education and power delegations. Some suggestions look at:

“Establishing a task force or steering committee that will have responsibility to develop and implement the education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. To the extent possible ensure those in the task force represent different constituents in the education system or school network and bring important and diverse perspectives to inform their work, for example various departments curriculum, teacher education, information technology, teacher representatives, parent representatives, students, representatives of industry when relevant” (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

This is not far from the strategies provided in the findings, and the responses have been used by countries. Thus, the strategies in this finding are relevant in ensuring that education is accessed and considered.

Findings also indicate that it is also necessary to rely on low-cost technologies such as radio and educational television and consider useful innovations that have been traditionally developed in respective areas. These are important because they enable real-time interaction between students and teachers for students who need physical care and guidance (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

Findings also show that Covid-19 has affected Indigenous communities both positively and negatively. This is particularly true in cases where the governments has been able to realize the gaps that exist in education. Many schools did not incorporate e-learning solution, which now creates the need to develop the education sector for that purpose. However, as studies show that parents, teachers and students are becoming overly restive, and tend to not be informed about whether the closure of schools remains in place or when it will be lifted.

Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusive Remarks

6.1 Summary

The primary objective of this study was to find out the contribution indigenous communities have undertaken to ensure the continuation of education amidst the challenges faced during the closure of schools due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. I tried to find out the challenges and impacts indigenous communities faced in Uganda especially the Karamojong community, where I presented both the positive and negative impact as the Newspapers indicated, here I was also presented with the suggestions that these Indigenous peoples in Uganda suggested that would have been done to ensure effectiveness in achieving education during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Secondly, I showed a contribution that Indigenous communities of what the Karamojong community had invented to ensure they were not left out besides the inability to access the resources for digital studying to their pupils. The study was based on data gathered from Newspapers, which made it necessary for me to attain my study's objective. When I gathered data, I used the content analysis research method to significantly understand the pattern in these newspapers and get useful information for my study.

In chapter one, I presented my topic, a background of education in Uganda and Karamojong before Covid-19 to help the reader understand what education was for the study population before Covid-19 pandemic since the topic is related to COVID-19 pandemic that is still existing and problem statement of my study.

In chapter two, I reviewed previous research and literature on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. I looked at other pandemics on how they have affected Indigenous people compared to Covid-19 had created. I also presented literature concerning education, involving indigenous education, as I also presented the different ideologies of the African indigeneity concept, including the theoretical framework. I also introduced the challenges that I faced and the ethical issues that were involved during my topic

In chapter three, I presented the methods and data I used. Here I showed how I practically managed to analyze the data I had presented in my study project. In chapter four, I presented my analyzed data as presented in the Newspapers, which involved data on the impacts and challenges of Indigenous peoples regarding education during Covid-19 pandemic. It also includes the possible strategies or suggestions presented in the Newspapers that could be

undertaken. This is followed by the idea of a tool presented that Indigenous communities are using to see that education continues in their area.

Chapter five looks at the discussion of analysis where I presented the reflection for my findings in relation to the theoretical framework that I used for this study. Lastly, Chapter six includes a summary, contribution of the study, and conclusive remarks.

6.2 The contribution made by this study.

The study highlights the changes that Covid-19 has created both negatively and positively from other pandemics before. Since it is still ongoing, the study registers possible strategies that can be adopted to see that there are no inequalities in education, especially if such pandemic exists that creates a troll of education.

The study also highlights that some of the challenges faced by Karamojong people in achieving education are derived from the authorities positioned to see that the serviced are directed to them. The study portrayed that power should be well balance without discriminating any society, to limit the inequalities of education achievements in Indigenous communities.

Through the findings, the study helps to show the contributions that Indigenous Peoples have undertaken during the pandemics. There were suggested strategies that might have not been undertaken and deem important which are presented in this study that can be used since the pandemic is still ongoing. These can help and cub the inequalities that exist in education and ensure that Indigenous communities are also considered a first “priority” when developing new systems in education. This study also shows that Indigenous communities have a long way to go but still, when supported and helped by those in authority, they can play a significant role in whatever pandemic strikes on education too.

The study used power, education, and decolonization concept to analysis the situation as most data greatly looked at these aspects, and their relationship indicates that if these work hand in hand, it can help improve the condition of education in Karamojong. The study would contribute to the growing knowledge on Coronavirus effect on the education sector and the need to integrate both traditional and technology in education.

6.3 Conclusion and Recommendation

The newspaper articles I used provided a situational analysis of the state of education before and during the COVID-19 closures of schools in Uganda and Karamojong community. It has

analyzed interventions on the impacts the pandemic has had on school education, pointed out some of the challenges arising from the school closures, and suggested some responses and strategies for the management of the impacts and provided how Karamojong community has adopted the Seat pack tool to educate their peoples as they could not incorporate the needs to have access to digital learning system.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created educational disruption with the government having no firm grip on the educational system. This is because the pandemic required emergency measures to be adopted since schools were not sure when they would open. Yet, there was to ensure that students continue to learn amidst the closure of the schools especially when there was a need to undertake immediate actions to be taken to avoid the stagnation of the education system.

Jentoft (2003) also stresses power-sharing and partnerships as key aspects of development and co-management, therefore involving a task force on education in Karamojong needs to be set up under the leadership of the relevant ministry to explore possibilities where strategies provided can be undertaken as they can provide short-term measures which would enable both teachers and student to compensate for the loss that they experienced (Jentoft, 2003).

Most students in Karamoja have almost no access to technology, therefore the new measures would be effective primarily if the state would ensure to capitalize on low-tech approaches depending on community accessibility and provide some e-learning platforms to those students who have access to technology. As much has been lost during the pandemic, this study calls out on the possible strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education to undertake a range from low-tech alternatives to hi-tech or no-tech options depending on what each community can access.

It is pleasing to see that the government of Uganda launched the provision of learning materials and distribution of radios under its Ministry of Education. Now, the need is to equip and train society on these new digital measures incorporated as they would be used in case such pandemics exist. However, different public and private schools should provide different online teaching/learning systems separately depending on their accessibility like combining the traditional technologies (radio, TV, landline phones) with mobile technologies to reach their populations residing in the outlying parts of the country. This will also require upgrading the service platform in areas facing difficulties accessing these services, which would be great

effort in enhancing education service platforms. Mobilization of all service providers should be undertaken, especially in most disadvantaged communities.

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