The aim of this research was to understand how elderly people in the Kom region were surviving without effective social security systems in Cameroon considering that survival among elderly people in the Kom region of Cameroon had become increasingly difficult with the advent of the economic crisis in the early 1980s. This crisis affected institutions as well as family resources thereby reducing their capacity to render support especially to its elderly members. With the help of face to face interviews conducted during my field work with a sample population from the Kom area, I was also able explain to what extent the elderly people could possibly survive on their own initiatives as well as those obstacles and challenges involved in the process.

The effects of the crisis leads to wide spread poverty forcing households units as well as extended families to also limit their financial and material support to older family members and to also start considering as important only their most immediate family members as their primary beneficiaries (that is their spouses and kids) of the resources available. Understandably, the elderly people usually in the country sides as in the context of the Kom region are mostly affected as they gradually see the active members of the households and the family units moving out to the urban areas to meet up with the realities of modernisation and urbanisation. The harsh reality of the disintegration of family structures sets in as households can no longer carry on its responsibilities as a social security institution.

The struggle for survival by the elderly people is again explained in this research as being aggravated by certain factors. While some elderly people faced the challenges of surviving amidst difficult traditional beliefs and customs which of course impacts seriously on elderly women in particular, other factors like bribery and corruption within State institutions continues to act as speed brakes on the progress of the elderly people in the Kom region.

As part of my findings, one of the most important understandings was how to link my hypothesis to the problem which was trying to understand the effects of the crisis on a long standing tradition of household support on its members. The lack of an effective social security system is not unique to many societies especially in Sub Saharan Africa as suggested in most of the documented sources I used for this research that include diverse UN web pages, the CIA World Fact Book, published journals, library sources ,articles as well as internet sources. However, these rich diverse sources had something in common which was the calling for a global reaction towards improving the situation of the elderly people.

Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Keywords
elderly
survival
social security
households
Cameroon

Säilytyspaikka-Förvaringsställe-Where deposited
Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter-Additional information