

## ABSTRACT

# Poverty in St. Lucia: A Wealth of Responses

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*How do the poor respond to their poverty? This question represents the main concern of this study. The aim of the research is to highlight the variety of responses to poverty among poor persons. There exists a diversity of responses among the poor as they cope with their poverty on a daily basis. As such, attitudes such as fatalism and resignation may be evident among some poor persons but they are not the norm.*

*Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration is useful in this analysis. The theory emphasizes the role of human agency in spite of the forces and constraints posed by the structure. Poverty may limit a person's options for action, but it does not necessarily compel one to a specific or predetermined response.*

*The research methods are essentially qualitative but some quantitative data are also utilized. In order to fully appreciate and capture the diverse responses to poverty, it is necessary to engage in in-depth investigation and analysis.*

*Including both parents and children in poverty in this study further facilitates the objective of capturing the diversity of experiences of the poor. There is the underlying assumption that children have unique and significant experiences and should be allowed to share these. The analysis of the data involves categorization and in-depth discussion of the findings. In addition special cases of families in poverty and their responses to their conditions form part of the analysis.*

*The research demonstrates the variety of responses to poverty, which include resilience, alcoholism, prayer, precocity among children, and even fatalism among some persons. The importance of socialization is noted as a means of transferring values and attitudes from one generation to another. The qualitative method of investigation has proven useful in highlighting case-specific experiences and this has notable implications for intervention strategies.*

**Keywords:** Responses to poverty; fatalism; resilience; structure; agency; children in poverty.