

Poverty as a Driving Force to Insecurity in Slums within Nairobi

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Abstract

The rapid growth of poverty and insecurity in slums is alarming and needs more attention. The by city authorities to plan effectively and enforce land and urban laws has led to rapid and unplanned growth of informal settlements in major cities around the worlds. The purpose of this paper was to establish the relationship between poverty and insecurity in slum settlements within Nairobi Kenya. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 120 respondents. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires and interview schedules from respondents. Literature was reviewed from books, journals, periodicals and newspapers. The data collected was analyzed quantitatively using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and qualitatively through interpretation of the various responses generated, and the outcome presented by use of frequency tables, bar graphs, pie charts and cross tabulation where applicable. The findings and recommendations are beneficial to national government, county governments, civil society organizations, NGO's and international organizations concerned with eradicating poverty and insecurity in the society. It is envisioned that the research findings and recommendations will also provide planning benchmarks for provision of security and improved livelihoods in the slums. The findings will also add to the body of knowledge and could be a source of future reference by other scholars who might need to dwell on similar or related issues.

Keywords: Poverty, Slums, Insecurity

1.0 Introduction

In the last five decades, rapid urbanization has been one of the greatest socio-economic changes to occur in the world. It has brought with it many challenges; the major one being that of urban sprawl occasioned by rural-urban migration. This has resulted in flourishing of new kinds of slums and squatter settlements. It is envisaged that all future urban growth in developing countries will be absorbed by urban centres, which have a high average annual urban population growth rate of 2.3% compared to 0.4% in developed countries (UN-Habitat, 2003).

Most of the urban poor in the developing countries live in informal settlements or slums. Slums tend to be associated with inadequate provision of infrastructure and services. The increasing trends of urban population associated with unmatched magnitude in urban infrastructure provision in the slums or informal settlements have remained a major challenge in dealing with the slum phenomena. Economic and financial strains of many developing countries have led to little intervention in infrastructure and basic needs provision for the urban population resulting in slums or informal settlement being neglected. (UN-Habitat, 2003).

The high prevalence of slums is a great menace in most mega cities whereby research findings (UN-HABITAT Report: 2007) show that Asian continent has the first two largest slums namely; Dharavi in Mumbai, India and Orangi town slum in Pakistan respectively. In Africa, this menace is not an exception. Kambwe, the second largest city in Zambia after Lusaka the capital, has one of the most polluted slums from the remains of lead resulting from previous mining operations. Mogadishu in Somalia is also a city associated with informal settlement due to devastation of long term civil conflict that has rendered hundreds of thousands of people starve and wait for food from some organizations. In Kenya, informal settlement has grown up to almost all the cities in the country. This possess a myriad of challenges including poverty, growth of gangs, prostitution, poor sanitation insecurity among others.

The study focuses on Mathare slum which is characterized by rampant cases of insecurity associated with robbery with violence, murder, radicalization especially among youths and so forth. The study therefore, endeavored to determine how poverty works as a driving force to insecurity. It also sought to evaluate the relationship between poverty and insecurity.

1.1 Methodology

The study was conducted in three settlements within Mathare Valley Slums namely: Kosovo, Gitathuru, Mathare 4B. Mathare valley is located 5 Km on the northern part of Nairobi city at the following geographical coordinates: 1° 15' 36" S, 36° 51' 43" E and covers and estimated area of 157 hectares (UN-HABITAT, 2002). The Valley stretches from Pangani slopes along the Mathare River to the intersection of Gitathuru and Mathare Rivers. To the West, the Valley borders Pangani, to the north it is enclosed by the Mathare Police Depot, Mathare Primary School and Mathare Mental Hospital while to the South it borders Juja Road which separates it from Eastleigh and to the east it borders Huruma Estate.

Mathare is the second biggest slum in Nairobi, following Africa's biggest slum, Kibera (Care International 2009; UN-Habitat 2010) which is also located in Nairobi, Kenya. Mathare was "built" over many

years on top of a garbage dump as more and more people settled there (COHRE 2008). It is a long strip of tin and wooden shacks and earthen walls constructed on both sides of a small stream (see Fig. 2). The number of inhabitants in Mathare is estimated at between 600,000 and 800,000 (COHRE 2008). This settlement is developed within a valley crossed by the Mathare River which divides the area in two parts: Mathare Valley and Mathare North. It is divided into 13 villages: Mashimoni, Mabatini, Village No.10, Village 2, Kosovo, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, Gitathuru, Kiamutisya, Kwa Kariuki (MuST, 2012). It is cosmopolitan in nature, whereby virtually every ethnic is presented (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

The study targeted households in Kosovo, Mathare 4B and Gitathuru settlements (villages) in Mathare Valley Slums. Going by the population census of 2009, the three settlements had a total of 5,897 households with a population of 17,503 persons (Must, 2010). The research therefore will target Government Administrators, Community members, Religious leaders, Elders; Community based organizations and security agents.

The Research design employed for the study included both qualitative and quantitative. Data was collected by means of questionnaires and interviews schedules. Descriptive survey was used to obtain information from the population regarding the prevalence, distribution and interrelations of variables within the population.

This part discusses the population and sampling design, sampling frame, sampling technique and sample size. It indicates the participants in the study, their number and how they were selected. The research study therefore adapts the Descriptive and Stratified sampling technique. The spatial stratified sampling was used to map out households for the survey and was generated from a network of grids overlaid on the map of the settlements. In each of the settlement, grids was systematically identified and households within the grid extracted from the spatial database of the enumeration and mapping. The households were then selected through systematic random sampling. Through the utilization of randomization this sampling technique guaranteed that every household in the Mathare Valley Slums will have an equal opportunity for selection. It also assured the absence of both systematic and sampling bias ensuring that the sample was a representative of the entire population.

Sample size determination aims at selecting part of the population from which information will be drawn to form conclusions about the entire population.

The following formula by Miller and Brewer (2003) will be used to select the sample size for the study:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\alpha)^2}$$

Where:

α - Is the level of significance or margin of error (9%),

n- Is the sample size and

N- Is the sample frame.

In order to have a fair representative sample size, the sample size is determined at a 91% confidence level (At a 0.09 significance level).

$$n = \frac{5,897}{1 + 5,897(0.09)^2}$$

n = 121 households (Sample Frame used 120 households)

The study used primary data from questionnaires, interview schedule, observation schedule and focus group discussion which provided the primary data while document analysis was used to gather secondary data. Secondary data was gathered from the internet, journals and other reference materials from local NGOs.

Data was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science Programme (SPSS) which proved valuable in statistical analysis, data management (case selection, file reshaping, creating derived data) and data documentation. Photographs were analyzed through subjective analysis as they were objective. The analyzed data was then summarized into frequencies and percentages and presented in tables, bar charts and figures. Frequencies and percentages were adopted to present, discuss and interpret findings obtained. The research questions giving qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis procedures. The findings obtained were discussed and formed the basis for the research findings, conclusion and recommendations.

2.0 Results and discussions

This chapter presents the findings of the study at three levels guided by and in accordance to the study objectives and research questions. It presents results and discussions in the following manner: investigates how factors leading to mass settlement in Mathare Slums and determines the existing linkages between poverty and insecurity in Mathare slum.

2.1 Manifestation of Slums

Table 4.1 Manifestation of slums in the study area

Settlement	Manifestation of Slums
Gitathuru	Poor sanitation, poor/substandard housing, lack of access roads, Overcrowding, Lack of security of tenure, encroachment to riparian reserve, high density, insecurity, settlement on rugged terrain
Kosovo	Poor sanitation, open drainages ,poor/substandard housing, lack of access roads, business extension on road reserves, overcrowding and high densities, Lack of security of tenure, encroachment to riparian reserve, insecurity, settlement on rugged terrain.
Mathare 4B	Poor sanitation, open drainages ,open defecation ,poor/substandard housing, lack of access roads, Overcrowding, Lack of security of tenure, encroachment to riparian reserve, high density, insecurity, settlement on a flood plain

Source: Field Survey (2016)

From the table above, it is evident that the three slum section share similar characteristics ranging from high density, insecurity, poor sanitation and many others as indicated. However, Kosovo marked the highest level of insecurity and poverty levels while Gitathuru recorded the lowest incidences of insecurity and poverty levels. The above results agree with the UN-HABITAT (2003).

2.2 Factors leading people to settle in Mathare Slums

The first objective of this study was to establish the factors that had contributed to the mass settlement in Mathare Valley. This section gives the researchers findings on the factors that have led people to settle in the Mathare Valley Slums.

2.2.1 Monthly Income of Households

Findings of the study indicate most of the households had a monthly income of less than 10,000 shillings. In total 92.9% of the households had to do with a monthly income of less than Ksh. 20,000 whereby 45.9% earned between Ksh. 5,001-10,000, 29.4% earned between Ksh. 0-5,000, 17.6% earned between Ksh. 10,00-20,000 while 7.1% earned more than Ksh.20,000 as indicated in the figure 4.6 below

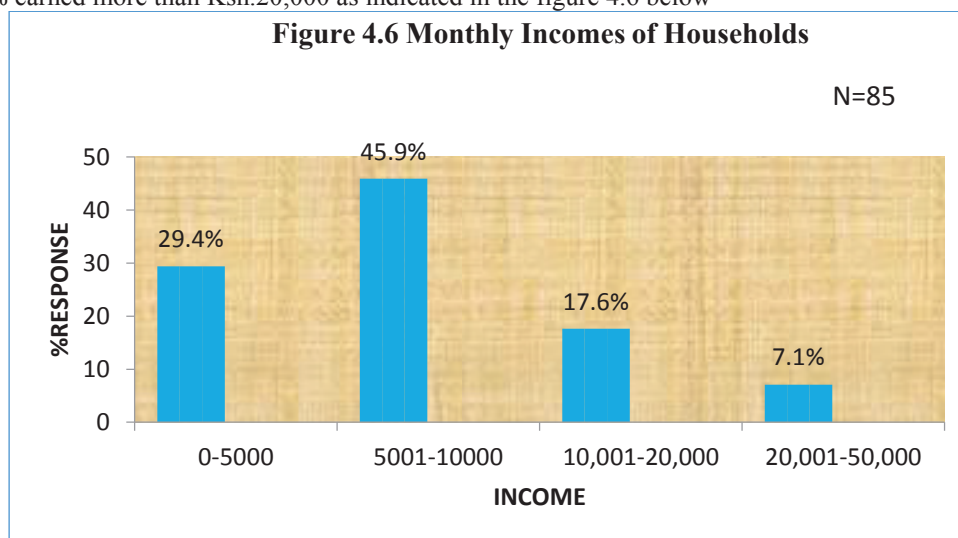


Figure 4.6 Monthly Incomes of Households.

At the time of the study, the dollar exchanged at a rate of Ksh.101 against a US dollar. As indicated in table 4.6 above the number of households that earned between 0-10,000 shillings were 75.3%. Considering that on average each household had 4 members then mathematically all these households (75.3%) were living on less than 1US dollar per person per day. That is.

$$\frac{\text{Kshs } 10,000}{4\text{person} \times 31\text{day} \times \text{Kshs } 101} = \$0.80/\text{person}/\text{day}$$

With income being a major determinant of household expenditure, as it puts a ceiling to the amount that can be spent within a period, it is then evident from these findings that the poverty prevalence in Mathare Valley slums is not only alarming but very high.

Discussions with various respondents revealed that the household earnings were not capable of sustaining the households. This was one of the major reasons that had forced the residents to settle in this locality. Figure 4.6 above shows the monthly income of the households.

2.2.2 Main Source of Income for the Household

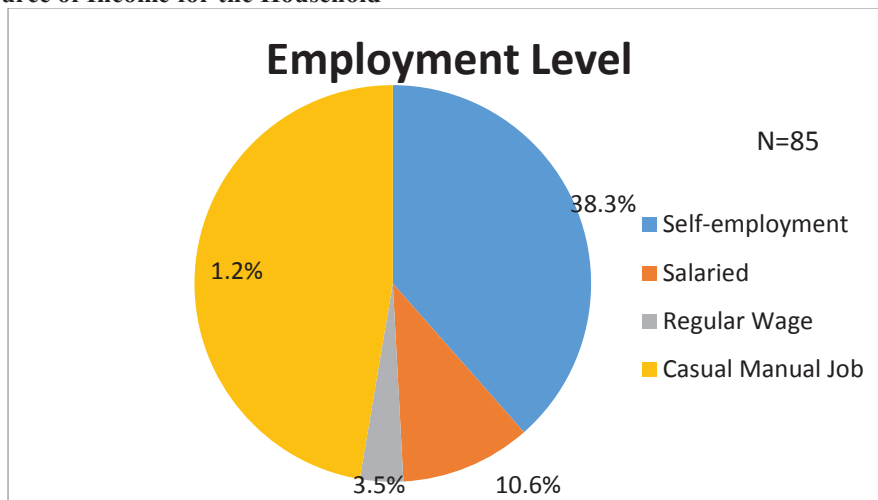


Figure 4.7 Main Source of Income for the Household

The findings of the study and as indicated in figure 4.7 above, most of the respondents involved themselves in casual/manual jobs with 47.1% of the respondents being in this category while 38.8% were self-employed, 10.6% were salaried and 3.5% were regular wage earners. For the self-employed the kind of economic activities they engaged in included; garbage collection, tailoring, cobbling, shoe shining, hawking, selling of groceries and shop operators among others. Some of the male respondents indicated that they engage in offloading at the busy Eastleigh Estate. Some of the female respondents indicated that they engaged in prostitution while others had to be employed as bar waiters.

On the other hand some females had to hang around the homes of the rich to be given contractual work in doing house chores like washing of utensils, washing of clothes and cleaning the compound. Among the wage earners, rental income from housing had the most number of respondents while one of the respondents was a pensioner.

Plate 1: Some of the Economic Activities within Mathare Valley



Numerous trading activities around Kosovo area

Garbage Collection as an economic activity

Source: Field Observation by Researcher (2016)

Observations during the field study, and as can be seen from the pictures above, revealed that there were so many economic activities that were ongoing within the slums. Most of the economic activities engaged by slum dwellers were provision shops, road side food selling, selling of charcoal and firewood and garbage

collection. The study noted that there was concentration of the economic activities along the access roads to take advantage of the heavy human traffic flow.

2.3 Origin of Households

The researchers sought to find out where the respondents had originated from before settling in Mathare by posing the question: 'Where were you living before you came to this area?' Table 4.8 below gives these findings.

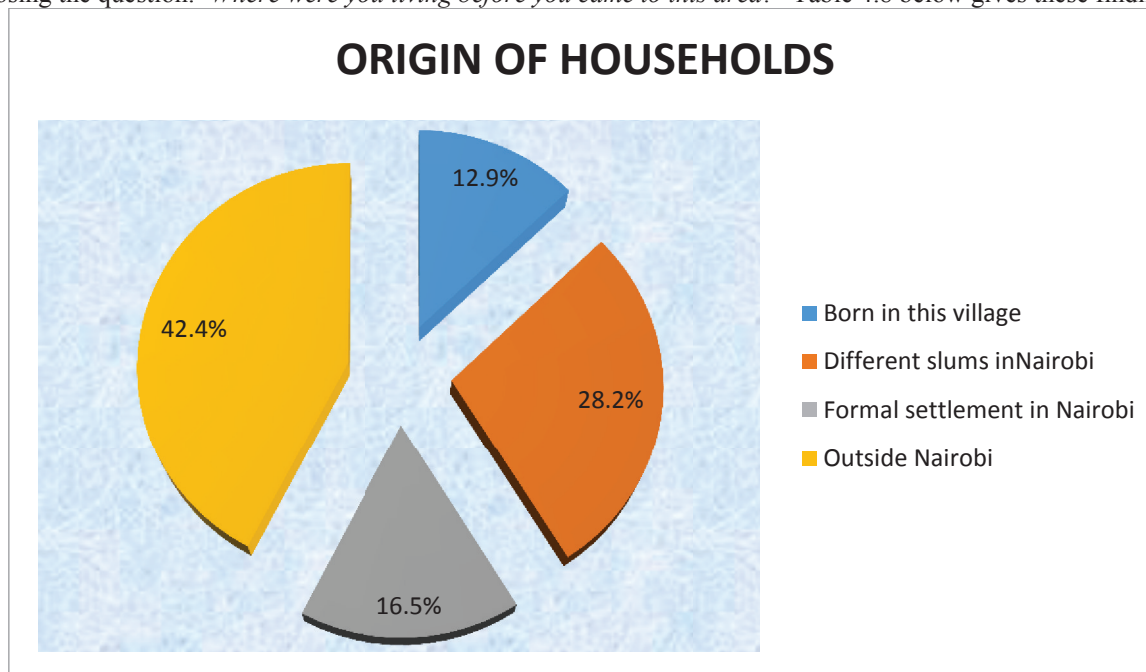


Figure 4.8 Origin of Household

Most of the respondents (42.4%) were living outside Nairobi before they came to Mathare while 28.2% had been living in others slums in Nairobi and 16.2% had come from formal settlements within Nairobi. These findings confirm that the major cause of proliferations of slums is high rate of urbanization. There is also a significant trend of inter slum migration with 28.2 % of respondents having migrated from other slums. If the slum situation is not checked then the slum phenomena will be irreversible as there will be a generation who's their lives will be shaped in the slums from birth as indicated by the 12.9 % of the households that had been born and brought up within Mathare valley slums.

2.4 Reasons for Moving to Mathare Valley Slums

This question captures the views of the 87.1% of the respondents who moved into the Mathare Valley slums from other areas i.e. they had not been born and brought up in Mathare and who in the slums circles were not considered as *Wazaliwa*.

Table 4.9 Reasons for Moving to Mathare Slums

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Affordable rent	22	29.7
Employment	27	36.5
Marriage	15	20.3
Evictions from another informal settlement	5	6.8
Came to live with a relative	4	5.4
Moved out of parents house to live alone	1	1.4
Inherited	0	0.0
Total	74	100

Source: Field Survey (2016)

Most of these respondents, 36.5%, had settled in Mathare while in such of employment while 29.7% had moved because of the presence of affordable rent and 20.3% had moved as a result of marriage. Respondents who had been evicted from other informal settlements and had thus opted for Mathare were 6.8%. Several respondents who were 5.4% of the total respondents had come to live with some of their relatives while one respondent indicated that the reason he had moved into Mathare was so as to be able to live on his own. Discussions with various respondents and village headmen revealed that poverty was the major cause of people

living within the slums. One of the headmen indicated that the poor moved into the slums as they provided low costs of living compared to the formal settlements in Nairobi. Their close proximity to centres or areas booming with economic opportunities was also a contributing factor to people moving into slums. Eastleigh, Ngara Market, the Jua Kali shades at Kamukunji and the Grogon area along Kirinyaga road were some of the places that a good number of the slum dwellers earned an informal source of livelihood from and which were considered to be a walking distance.

2.5 Linkage between Insecurity and Poverty

The research recorded that insecurity was high due to the high poverty level which was marked with unemployment and idleness among the youths. Kosovo recorded the highest rate of insecurity of 52.9% followed by Mathare 4B 32.9% and Gitathuru which recorded the lowest at 14.1% as shown in the figure 4.9 below

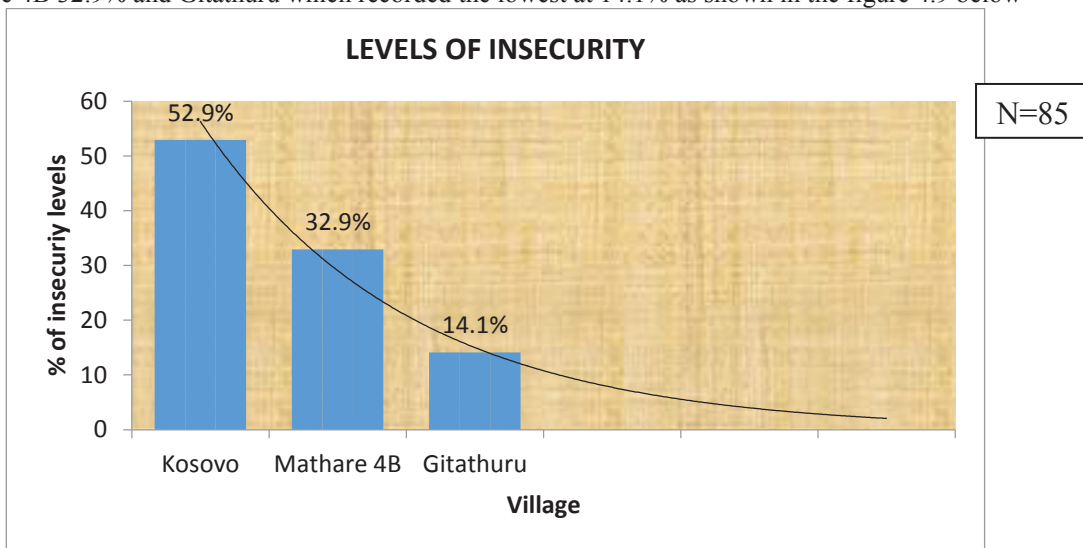


Figure 4.9 Levels of insecurity in the study area.

As recorded the higher the poverty level, the more likelihood of people to engage in criminal activities thus propagation of insecurity level, this is in accordance with Verstegen (2001) who links poverty and insecurity. Kosovo which experienced the highest level of poverty recorded the highest level of insecurity incidences from young people being radicalized into illegal sects such as Mungiki, Siafu, 40 Brothers, Matakwei Group, Kosovo Boys among other gang cells. Moreover, they are further radicalized into terrorist groups that are the Al-Shaabab terror group where they are promised “good life.” As a result, the country as whole suffers as it was just witnessed in the recent Garissa University Attack.

2.5.1 The Common Crimes experienced in the Study Area

Table 4.3 Common crimes in the study area

Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Pick-pocketing	3	3.5
House breaking	6	7.1
Mugging	5	5.9
Kidnapping/Abduction	4	4.7
Physical Assault	25	29.4
Sexual Assault	17	18.8
Robbery	16	20
Murder	9	10.6
Total	85	100

From the study, the respondent experienced high cases of physical assault in both day and night time which was recorded to be 29.4% followed by sexual assault at 20% where women were victimized and harassed by their male counterparts. Robbery was also experienced at a considerable rate of 18.8% which went hand in hand with murder at 10.6%. Pick pocketing recorded the lowest with 3.5%

2.5.2 The relationship between the community and security agencies

Kosovo recorded to having the poorest relationship with the security agencies around thus explaining the high cases of insecurity incidences in the area while Gitathuru recorded to be having a relatively good relationship with the security agencies explaining the low insecurity cases. Mathare 4B, however, recorded the relationship to be average.

Table 4.4 Relationship between community and security agencies

Village	Relationship
Kosovo	Very Poor
Gitathuru	Average
Mathare 4B	Poor

From the field study and as per the table above, it is evident that there is a high disconnect between the security agents and the general public, that is, community policing is poor in the study area. The respondents from Kosovo were very bitter to security agents that proved to be negligent to their roles of protecting the public. During the field research period, two people, one a high school girl was raped and killed in cold-blood while the other, a four year old girl was also raped, killed, burnt with acid to destroy evidence, whereby even the eyes were plucked out in a span of one week. This brutality is aggravating the already strained relationship between the security agents and the public.

Furthermore, in all the sections of the study area, the respondents indicated that it was unsafe to move around and about after it clocked odd hours such as late in the evening, 8PM and early in the morning, 5AM due the unavailability of the police forces at the crime prone areas such as the bridge paths and along the narrow and dim-lit streets.

Moreover, the police and other security agents in the study area are not engaging the public as expected in the Community Policing Act. Despite the fact that police forces' camps are situated in and around the Mathare slums, the disconnect between them and the public render their presence irrelevant. This further aggravates the correlation between poverty and insecurity whereby for example, due to insecurity thus curfews, people tend to get into their premises early and leave late in the morning which reduces their economic production hence poverty.

2.6 Strategic Measures to fight Insecurity and Poverty

Findings of the study revealed that some members of the slum communities had been able to come up with measures to prevent and mitigate insecurity and poverty. For example, the community engaged in economic activity such as small gardens for agricultural activities (Kales, Cabbages, "terere", etc), small-scale livestock keeping (Chicken, pigs and sheep rearing), small green groceries, and bicycle repair and garbage collection among others.

Some of the measures taken by the community to fight insecurity included the 'Nyumba Kumi initiative', which is a government security initiative meant to link grass root community to national government. This is whereby the community acts as intelligence giving information to the elders in charge of the " Nyumba Kumi" who then give the information to public administration such as chief who finally give the information to National Government such the Inspector General of Police.

Some of the recommended strategies put in place to alleviate poverty and insecurity include:

i) Fair Resource Distribution

The community proposed that the Government should promote equity in resource distribution such as health facility, sewerage infrastructure, and electricity connections.

ii) Eradicating unauthorized breweries

There was a community outcry as most of the youths are lost in drunkenness of illicit brew such as "*changaa and busaa*", which has diminished the productive population (socially, economically and politically). This has further intensified the level of poverty and insecurity. They therefore, recommended that the breeding place of these illicit breweries should be closed down completely.

iii) Proper Leadership

From the study, the public in the study area expressed much complains about poor leadership implications that have led to extreme poverty and high levels of insecurity. This is more so in elective positions. There were calls for reformed leadership in slums areas.

The findings of the study indicate that 36.5% of the respondents had settled in Mathare in search of employment while 29.7% had moved because of the presence of affordable rent and 20.3% had moved as a result of marriage. Others had moved into Mathare as a result of evictions from other informal settlements while other came to live with their relatives. Nevertheless, this study finds poverty as the leading contributor to the settlement of the residents in the slums and by extension the result of high insecurity in the area. The proximity of Mathare to the CBD (Central Business District) and the Eastleigh - business hub provided an opportunity for those earning meager wages and salaries to cut costs on various budget lines. Some of the cost cutting measures include walking to and from work and low monthly rent. There are a section of households who were born and brought up in the slum, for this category of people the slum defined their community and the social structure within which they had to contend with. Security in slums as identified in the research is a major issue hence majority of criminals in form of illegal gangs would use slums as hiding places as it would be hard to trace them when they disappear in the overcrowded and densely populated areas.

The study indicates a high level of insecurity which is an implication of poverty. Kosovo area recorded the highest level of insecurity -52.9% which is marked with high level of poverty as most of the young people are primary school dropouts, most are indulging in consumption of illicit brew and drugs and many are idle due to unemployment. Furthermore, Kosovo recorded that women were used in being the master-mind behind criminal activities in the area. Mathare 4B followed where the insecurity level was recorded to be 32.9% and Gitathuru recording the lowest 14.1%.

Due to the challenges associated with electricity connection from the Kenya power and Lighting Company through a slum power project mainly tripping of power most of the households had resulted to illegal connections. During the field work the study was able to observe that many of the household's had poor wiring of their electricity connections with loose wires hanging dangerously. Electricity blackouts were a major contributing factor to insecurity during the night time that gave the criminal gangs ample time to conduct their acts. This was the very reason why a curfew was placed in the study area to ensure the safety of the residents. The respondents noted that as early as 8pm, people should be settled in their houses and should not too leave early in the morning (before 5AM).

3.0 Conclusion

In conclusion the study has established that challenges associated with security planning for urban slums are majorly because of the high poverty level where the daily income is below one dollar. This coupled with lack of secure tenure and high unemployment rate. Failed urban policies and competing and conflicting interests within different actors in the planning sector have contributed to the poverty level hence insecurity. The wide existing gap between the government security agencies and the community further increases the insecurity level.

The study concludes that employment provision is most effective when it's linked with other initiatives and when communities participate in decision making through partnerships and collaborations with national and local governments and private sector. By making slums an integral, creative and productive part of the city, equitable policies for investment in urban infrastructure and services for urban slums would be realized hence improving the living conditions of the slum dwellers thus eradicating poverty which further kicks insecurity out of the study area.

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