

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EMERGENCE OF
FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN LUNGA LUNGA
SLUM, MAKADARA DIVISION, NAIROBI CITY "**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a diploma to any other University

14 / 11/01

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Date

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University Supervisor



14 / 11/01

Dr. Steve M. Nangendo

Date

Dedication

This research project is dedicated in special memory to my late beloved father who provided me with the opportunity to pursue my goal and acquire a higher education. Without his constant love, encouragement and material support I would not have achieved this goal.

Also, I dedicate this work to my loving mother who has encouraged and supported me all throughout my study period.

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I therefore dedicate this work to them to symbolize my appreciation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PWHH- Poor Women-Headed Households

PAPS- Poverty Alleviation Programmes

H.I.V/AIDS- Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

UN- United Nations

UNDP-United Nations Development Programme

NCHS- National Centre for Health Statistics

IFPRI- International Food Policy Research Institute

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

SAP- Structural Adjustment Programme

CHW- Community Health Worker

TBA- Traditional Birth Attendant

NGO- Non Government Organization

CSW- Commission on the Status of Women

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ABSTRACT

This study set out to assess and identify the factors contributing to female-headed households in Lunga Lunga slum in Makadara Division. It sought to identify the problems and challenges faced by these women in their daily lives.

The population sample was selected from female-headed households residing in Lunga Lunga slum area. The principal informants were female in the study area. A total of forty informants were interviewed. The data were collected using personal interviews, case histories and focus group discussions. The methods of data analysis were mainly qualitative in nature.

The findings of the study revealed that the emergence of female headship in the area was influenced by various factors such as poverty, rural-urban migration, death and separation, marital instability and they reported that they faced a lot of hardships as female heads of households such as lack of credit facilities and training opportunities, unemployment, insecurity of land tenure and sexual exploitation.

Following these findings it is recommended that women should be given rights to land ownership and access to credit facilities and training opportunities in order to alleviate some of the problems they undergo. Also, to improve their living conditions the informants recommended provision of day care facilities for those mothers wishing to work or acquire skills.

There are some policy implications suggested within the context of the presented study. The study results imply that gender of the household heads can be used as a policy tool to identify vulnerable groups. Since the main problem in targeting is to identify vulnerable groups, policy-makers concerned with poverty alleviation can single out female-headed households as one of the key target groups deserving attention.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Female-headed households are increasingly becoming a social phenomenon in developing countries. Already two decades ago, policy attention was drawn to the striking numbers of female-headed households throughout the world. It was estimated then that between 4 percent and 48 percent of households in developing countries were headed by women.

This assessment intensified policy interest in female-headed households as a special social economic category in developing countries. In fact, female-headed households have now been selected as one of the priority vulnerable groups by the United Nations, together with migrants, the disabled and the elderly. (UN 1991) Studies done in Turkey reveal that there is a considerable increase in female-headed households over the last 45 years, with approximately 3.5 million people living in such households in 1993. In spite of this increasing concern, the fact and the nature of female headed households are ignored in the development planning process in Turkey, although the literature indicates that female headed households are more deprived than male headed households.

Generally, there are various factors that contribute to the emergence of female-headed households especially in developing countries. These include: economic disparities, marital instability, poverty, dysfunctional families, lack of education, rural urban migration, irresponsible male sexual behaviour, harmful traditional practices and armed conflicts.

1.1 Statement of the problem

There has been an emergence of female-headed households in Lunga Lunga slum area, which is the focus of this research paper. This paper would like to highlight some of the challenges faced by these households. These households tend to be the most deprived and I would like to examine the factors that contribute to the emergence of female-headed households.

The scope of the study is to find out the reasons or factors contributing to the emergence of these households and to also highlight the challenges faced by such households.

Unmarried motherhood is a major contributor to single-parent families and hence to the poverty experienced among children. Research indicates that almost one of every four children in the United States is now born to an unmarried mother, although this proportion is much higher among black women (61%) than white women (16%) in 1986(National centre for health statistics (NCHD), in 1988.

This research study, therefore, intends to answer the following questions:

1. What factors contribute to the emergence and increase of female-headed households in Lunga Lunga slum area?
2. Why are female-headed households more deprived and marginalised than other households?
3. What solutions can be identified in order to solve the problems faced by female-headed households?

1.2 Research objectives

1.2.0 Overall objective

To identify and assess the factors contributing to female-headed households.

1.2.1 Specific objectives

The study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- 1 To identify factors which contribute to the emergence and increase of female-headed households.
- 2 To determine reasons why female headed households are more impoverished and deprived
- 3 To highlight the solutions to the problems facing women headed households

1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

It is estimated that women head today one third of the world's household. For example. In urban areas in parts of Africa and Latin America, the figure reaches 50 per cent or more.

A particularly important contribution of recent research on women's productive roles has been the identification of women-headed households among the poor and recognition of their growing number. Over 40 percent of rural households in Kenya, Botswana, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Lesotho are headed by women (Youssef and Hamman, 1985). Such households are found in rural and urban areas and are characterized as lower in income, with younger children, fewer secondary sources of income, and as having less access to productive resources as compared to male-headed households. These households are more dependent than others on wage earnings from casual labour. Their nutritional vulnerability derives from higher dependency on purchased food or transfers in the form of food subsidies, as well as declining real wages and employment opportunities (Carloni, 1984). A substantial proportion of the female heads of households are also in the "prime" working age group (25-29), the period in the life cycle when the burden of household dependency is likely to be greatest (Merrick and Schmink, 1983).

The economic conditions of women headed households vary considerably, depending on such factors as the women's marital status, the social context of female leadership, her access to productive resources and income and the composition of the household. Therefore, all these factors justify why a study of this nature has been designed in the Lunga Lunga Slum area in Nairobi City.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The world's population of poor is commonly estimated at 1300 million persons (UNDP 1996: 20; ICQL 1996: 18). Women, especially in developing countries, bear an unequal share of the burden of poverty: an oft-repeated statement in this respect is that 70 percent of the world's poor are women (e.g. UNDP 1995: iii; United Nations 1996a: 6). 1/.

No scientific study, however, is cited to document this exceptionally high ratio, and a statistician or demographer cannot help harbouring doubts about its validity. With a 70/30 distribution, the global population of poor would comprise 910 million women and girls and 390 million men and boys—a 2.33 female/male ratio, and an 'excess' of 520 million female members. But although this is tall enough, there actually is more to it because children are hardly affected by the two phenomena that may contribute to the excess of females in poor households, namely male out-migration and excess male mortality.^{2/} The excess number of females is therefore concentrated in older age groups. Now, taking the age structure of the 1300 million poor to be similar to that of the whole population of the low-income countries, they comprise slightly more than 60 percent—about 800 million persons—aged over 15 (henceforth 'adults'). A 520 million sex imbalance will then translate into 660 million females and 140 million male adult poor, with a female/male ratio of about 4.7—twice the ratio based on the total population. It does not seem that an imbalance of close to *five females for each male among the adult poor* has ever been observed on any significant scale.

Good *observations* are scarce indeed, and solid statistical information on the reality of the gender bias in poverty is lacking. Large-scale assessments of poverty, for a start, only occasionally rely

on household surveys, the correct instrument for assessing levels of living and hence poverty. As a result, "much of the analysis of poverty and gender rests on assumptions and inference from very limited data and case studies" (United Nations 1995a: 129), a situation which fostered the circulation of 'guesstimates' of uneven quality.

Yet the information analysed during the 1970s did not point to large sex differentials in the incidence of poverty.^{3/} Could the feminization of poverty have progressed so quickly as to produce a 70/30 sex distribution in two decades? This idea is by no means widely accepted among scholars, and some recent assessments argue that women are not generally over-represented in poor households (Lipton and Ravallion 1995). It still is widely assumed "that women are disproportionately represented among the poor", but there is little "robust evidence" to support that assumption (Quisumbing, Haddad and Pena 1995: 1). Let us now examine what some recent field observations indicate to us.

2.1.0 Survey data

In a study commissioned by the UN Statistical Division (United Nations. 1995a: 129-130), data from household surveys were compiled and analyzed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The sex distribution of the population was thus assessed in the poorer households of 14 developing countries (Bangladesh, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Madagascar, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, the Philippines and Rwanda) and eight developed countries (Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States). "Poorer households" for this purpose meant those in the lowest quintile for income; this definition is appropriate for us, as we refer here to an estimated poor population of 1300 million, or currently 22 percent of the global population.

The observations regarding the female/male ratio were the following:

With regard to the *developing countries* the number of females for 100 males was under 120 in half of the cases, and the *highest* ratio observed was /92 (in Botswana, the country with the

highest occurrence of women-headed households). All this contrasts with the 233 worldwide average implied by the 70/30 slogan. The *average* female/male ratio, weighted by the size of the rural poor population, was 116-half the purported 233.4/ This corresponds to 53.5 percent *proportion of women far* from the purported 70 percent.

Sex imbalances were even smaller in the *developed* countries. For example. Female/male ratios in the poorer households varied from a little more than 90 in Sweden to a little more than 130 in Australia, USA, implying proportions of women between 48 and 57 percent.

In brief where adequate data are available the average proportion of women among the poor is lower than 55 percent. It could be higher in places and countries not included in the study but it could be lower too, however, but scientific correction dictates that in the absence of data no claim can be made on the situation in those areas.

On the other hand, the numbers of women poor seem to *grow faster* than those of men poor. Could this make possible a 70/30 ratio *today?* Jazairy. et al (*op.cit.*) estimated the female/male differential growth rate at 1.2 percent, that is, 3.9 minus 2.7 percent, among the *rural* poor of developing countries between 1965-70 and 1988 (at the latter date the proportion of women among those poor would have been 60 percent.^{5/} A continuation of the said differential (at lower rates, to be consistent with the estimated 1300 million total number of poor world-wide) would have brought the proportion of women in that same population to no more than 62 percent in 1997. This could have raised the global proportion of women poor by at most 1.5 percentage points, far from the level of 70 percent.

Let us nevertheless examine whether a 70/30 distribution could *conceivably* have been true, for this exercise will teach us a lesson about using illustrative figures for advocacy.

2.1.1 Considerations on demographic consistency

An explanation commonly given for the supposed excess of female poverty is the occurrence of poor, women-headed households (henceforth PWHH), inasmuch as those households comprise

more female than male members do. Let us examine to what extent this can suggest a 70/30 sex distribution of poverty at the global level.

An estimate of the number of women-headed households by region is given in Table 1 (all estimates will refer to the year 1995, when the 70/30 slogan was already widely publicised). Average household sizes and proportions of women-headed households are estimated as of 1990. It is sensible to assume that values have not changed enough between 1990 and 1995 to affect the calculation significantly. Proportions of women-headed households are on the rise, but so are average household sizes in several developing areas (MacKellar *et al.* 1995: 851); these two factors tend to compensate each other where they apply. On the other hand, there often is some underregistration of women-headed households, especially in developing countries. Someone seeking a *maximum estimate* of the number of women-headed households world-wide may want to take it to be 25 percent (instead of 19 percent) of the estimated total number of households—in numbers, 355 million.

Table 1. Estimation of the numbers of women-headed households by major region, 1995.

Region	(a) Population 1995 (millions)	(b) Average household size	(c) Millions of households = (a) : (b)	(d) of Proportion women- headed	Millions of women-headed households = (c) x (d)	off
North Africa	158	5.7	27.7	0.13	3.6	
Sub-Saharan Africa	561	5.1	110.0	0.20	22.0	
Eastern Asia	1421	3.7	384.1	0.21	80.7	
Southeast Asia	482	4.9	98.4	0.13	12.8	
South/Central Asia	1367	5.7	239.8	0.10	24.0	
Western Asia	168	5.1	32.9	0.12	3.9	1
Latin America Caribbean	441 36	4.7 4.1	93.8 8.8	0.21 0.35	19.7 3,	
i Oceania	28	4.9	5.7	0.17	1.0	
Developed countries	1171	2.8	418.2	0.24	100.4	
World	5687	(4.0)	1419.4	(0.19)	271.2	

Sources: (a) United Nations 1996c; (b) United Nations 1995a. and MacKellar *et al.* 1995; (d) United Nations 1995a (sub-regional figures are either as published in the document or calculated from country data presented therein)

One should now estimate the proportion of PWHH among the women-headed households. First of all, what is the total number of poor households? One must divide the total number of poor by average household sizes—separately for developing and developed countries, in view of the very

large differences in household sizes and in the incidence of poverty. With regard to the latter factor. Table 2 reflects the common notion that, given the far greater population size and proportion of poor, absolute numbers of poor are overwhelmingly concentrated in developing regions: the figures correspond to a level of poverty incidence in these regions about treble that in developed ones (27 percent to 9 percent).

Average household size according to Table 1 is 4.7 in developing countries and 2.8 in developed countries. The average size of *poor* households, however, must be different: "poverty risk is almost always ... much greater among members of big households. Conversely, single-member households ... are heavily under-represented among the poor" (Lipton 1988: 39). Accordingly, and in line with empirical findings (e.g. Lopez, Pollack and Villarreal 1992: 89. 126) Table 2 assumes that poor households of developing countries have 0.5 more units on average than total households. For developed countries one may use a uniform household size as "both the predominance of big households ... and the scarcity of small ones ... among the poor are much less clearly established" (Lipton, 1988).

Table 2. Estimation of the numbers of poor households in developing and developed countries, 1995.

	Number of poor (millions)	Average household size	Poor households (millions)
Developing countries	1200	5.2	231
Developed countries	100	2.8	36
World	1300	(4.9)	267

-mally, one must distribute all households into the four categories resulting from the combination of the two criteria: {men-headed/women-headed} {poor/non-poor}. Women-headed households

do seem more vulnerable to poverty than men-headed ones, but where comparable data are available the actual difference in poverty incidence is not very great (see Annex).^{6/} Although the evidence points to a more modest bias, in order to supply a maximum estimate of female poverty one can assume, like for Table 3, that the incidence of poverty in women-headed households is 50 percent greater than in men-headed ones (over 25 percent to less than 17 percent). ^{7/}

Table 3. Estimation of the numbers of poor and non-poor, men-headed and women-headed households, 1995 (in millions).

	Men-headed households	Women-headed households	Total
Poor	177	90	267
Non-poor	888	265	1153
Total	1065	355	1420

The problems inherent in explaining excess female poverty at the level of a 70/30 ratio on grounds of the PWHH phenomenon become rapidly apparent:

- For the PWHH to contribute entirely to excess female poverty, one should assume that the sex structure of poor, men-headed households is *balanced* while that of PWHH presents an excess of female members. Since intra-household differences between male and female numbers due to differential mortality are limited, however, most of the female-male gap in the PWHH would be essentially due to the departure of males (migration, separation etc.). But then the absent males would necessarily be found in men-headed (including one-person) households, which would tend to bias the sex structure of those households towards a higher proportion of males. It follows that the PWHH contribute to excess female poverty only inasmuch as the absent males *are not themselves poor*.
- This reduces the weight of the *PWHH* argument considerably, for many of the absent males are probably poor, too. And if poor, men-headed households are twice as numerous as the *PWHH* as

in Table 3, a male bias in their sex composition will offset twice as large a female bias in the sex composition of the PWHH.

- Assuming a 1.0 average difference between female and male numbers in poor households and no poverty among absent males, it appears that the PWHH cause *significantly less than 100 million* units in excess female poverty. But even a 1.0 gap is an exaggeration. For developing countries the IFPRI study found an average gap of about 7 percent (53.5 minus 46.5) of the population; for a household size of 5 to 6, the gap would be about 0.35 to 0.4 units. It would be proportionally bigger in women-headed households, but not much bigger in *absolute* terms, because those households are smaller in size than average.^{8/} and it would be smaller (again in absolute terms) in developed countries, where all households are much smaller, especially women-headed ones.

Can other hypotheses account for the 'remainder' of the gap? The question seems futile in view of the magnitude of the unexplained difference: well over 400 million persons. At any rate the only hypothesis seems to be the occurrence of poor women in non-poor households, for example living-in maids. As no statistical information is available on such patterns of occurrence of poverty, one can only ask: *could* those women possibly be so numerous? The answer is clearly *'no'*: women working in the "Community, social and personal services" branch worldwide appear to be less than 120 million ^{9/} (and part of those only would fall into the category of relevance to us). These figures might underestimate the phenomenon, in particular as regards young girls; for the assessment of total female poverty, however, this would be irrelevant: the higher the number of girl poor in non-poor households, the lower that number in the households of origin, and the lower the female/male ratio in the latter.

The use of different parameters, within reasonable ranges, for the preceding calculations invariably lead to the same conclusion: given the huge numerical inconsistencies encountered, there is not a feasible scenario to support the 70/30 slogan. It would have been advisable to test

the likelihood of the latter in order to arrive at a more credible figure, which would not have unnecessarily cast shadows on the seriousness of the issue at hand—for if a cause for scepticism is offered, one may end up doubting the very existence of the phenomenon under examination.

2.1.2 Information and data needs

That the gender bias in poverty does not reach the very high levels sometimes attributed to it does not mean that the bias is not real or not growing. Indeed it seems to be both, although very unequally across countries and places. The first need appears to be to continue to document its magnitude and trends in a larger number of settings than has been done so far. to be able to address it where it exists. In so doing, attention to methodological issues will be warranted. It has been ascertained that female household headship is a heterogeneous phenomenon, and that looking into the causes for female headship is extremely relevant in studying poverty (Quisumbing, et al 1995:25-26). Also, in a policy perspective it is necessary to use additional methods of assessment besides those based on income, for gender biases and their causes may emerge more clearly through approaches that favour social indicators such as mortality, health and nutrition, time allocation as well as aim to assess individual capability factors for example access to resources, level of education.

It might be appropriate to give special attention to the poorest segments of population, since the bias against women sometimes appears to increase along with the degree of poverty (Lipton 1983: 48). Inasmuch as priority action within poverty-alleviation policies ought to address the poorer of the poor, any systematic bias in the composition of the population concerned may suggest targeted interventions and possibly help define them. Hence the value of assessing not only the differential incidence of poverty, but also its gender-specific causes. The rural-urban dichotomy, *inter alia*, will be of obvious utility here.

More empirical research is also needed in respect of another aspect of gender biases in poverty issues, namely intra-household inequalities in terms of welfare and control of resources. With

reference to the discussion on sex imbalances within the poor population, however, let us note that intra-household imbalances can hardly affect the sex distribution of poverty: they would have an impact at this level only if there were households where female members are below the poverty line while male members are above it. There is no known measurement of such patterns.

Of course, the above detracts nothing from the policy relevance of this issue. Some of the more publicised problems, such as gender biases in food consumption, or in-house health care, seem to have been overstated (United Nations 1996b: 13-14; Haddad *et al.* 1996: 5-22). On the other hand, education (even though gaps are narrowing), or the control of productive assets, remain real issues; and they are critical for strategies aiming at accelerating development as well as rendering it more equitable (Lipton 1988: 44-45; Quibria 1993: 7, 13-19). Better data coverage is needed, to assess those biases and their changes over time.

An indirect but significant benefit of more rigorous fact-finding will be to provide more relevant and convincing materials to be used in making decision-makers, as well as the general public, more aware of the magnitude and exact nature of these important issues.

End notes

1/ Not all UN bodies use these figures, in fact according to UNIFEM (1995: 7), "women constitute at least 60 percent of the world's one billion poor"

2/ For developing countries as a whole, the probability of dying by age five is, on average, only two percent higher among males than among females. Male mortality is higher during the first year of life, but thereafter the reverse is true (United Nations 1996b).

3/ See the evidence reviewed in Lipton (1983: 48-53).

41 Source for estimates of the rural poor population: Jazairy, Alamgir and Panuccio (1992: 404-405). The result is virtually the same if country indices are weighted by total population.

5/ A 60 percent level for rural areas could be roughly consistent with the UN-IFPRI results. But Jazairv, etal certainly overestimated female rural poverty, for they assumed: (a) that all women-headed rural households are poor (*op.cit.*: 470); (b) that no male absent from those households lives in other poor rural households, since the female/male ratio in these is taken to be 1 (*ibid.*); and (c) that women constitute 75 percent of the population of women-headed households. The latter assumption (which is not made explicit) is the most misleading: children represent about 40 percent of the population of poor households, and an even higher proportion in poor women-headed households because of absent adults; but even with 20 percent of boys and 20 percent of girls only, reaching an overall ratio of 75/25 would imply 55 females for 5 males among the adults. That the female/male ratio should reach at least 11. entails a rate of out-migration of male adults of the order of 90 percent, which seems preposterous on a scale of several tens of million households).

6/Also see Lipton (1988: 45); United Nations (1995a: 129); and Quisumbing, Haddad and Pena (1995).

7/ Our deliberate overstatement of 90 million PWHH for the whole world in 1995 compares with Jazairv. etal figure (year. 423) of 75.5 million for the rural segment of developing countries in 1988 (see footnote 5 above).

8/ Among countries where data are available, the median difference between men-headed and women-headed household sizes is 1.5 for developed countries and 0.9 for developing ones (United Nations 1995b: 12).

9/ The sum of numbers reported, for countries totalling 92 percent of the world population, is under 108 million (United Nations 1996d: 242-251).

2.1.3 Women headed-households in Africa

In Africa, rural areas are generally poorer than urban areas and rural women, especially women heads of households, are poorer than men in terms of food security, income, size of land cultivated and technology. These findings are particularly alarming in the face of increasing numbers of rural female-headed households across the continent, where in several countries women headed households account for almost 50% of the total rural households.

2.1.4 Factors contributing to poverty in rural areas

Therefore factors, which have been identified as contributing to poverty, include economic *crises, reforms and structural adjustment programmes*. In many countries such as Burkina Faso, Congo, Mauritania, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, structural adjustment programmes implemented in the face of economic crises have had negative impacts on households, and especially rural households. This is due to a variety of reasons, including decreased purchasing power of rural households due to the removal of government subsidies and price controls on food products and essential commodities, decreased government provision of agricultural and social services, and an increased emphasis on commercial crops.

Environmental degradation. The negative effects of desertification, deforestation and soil erosion, stemming largely from over-cultivation as well as recurring drought, have limited the ability of small farmers to provide food for their families and for sale. In a mutually reinforcing manner, environmental degradation increases poverty, which in turn threatens the environment, as farmers have no alternative to overexploiting the land or access to alternative sources of energy.

Changes in the number of women-headed households. As shown in Table 4. the percentage, of women headed households" ranges from 5% in Burkina Faso to 46% in the communal areas of Zimbabwe. In fact, the percentage of women headed households is increasing in all of the

countries for which data was provided. In Burkina Faso, for example there are more female-headed households in urban areas (11%) than in rural areas (5%).)

The main factor explaining this trend is the ongoing migration of men to other areas in search of employment due to decreasing returns from agriculture as in the case for Burkina Faso, Namibia, Mauritania, Morocco, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and. in the case of Southern Sudan, to war. The implications are largely negative for the rural population left behind, and especially for the members of female-headed households, which are typically associated with increased labour constraints, simpler farming systems, inadequate services and meagre incomes.

Table 4: Female headed Households In Rural Areas (percent)

Country	Year	Percent
Benin	19 (1992)	11
Burkina Faso		1
Congo	[22]	1
Mauritania	20 (mid-1980s)	1
Morocco	16	1
Namibia		1
Sudan	[24]	1
Tanzania		1
- Mainland	18 (1991)	1
- Zanzibar	7 (1980s)	11
Zimbabwe	46*	1

In some regions the number of female-headed households is considerably higher than the national average for example, in, the Central South region 13%: of rural households are headed by women). (IFAD.. 1993:74).

** In the communal areas. approximately 60% of all households are headed by women.*

Women headed households are frequently faced with shortages of adult labour, which often results in declining food productivity, especially when coupled with the low level of agricultural inputs received by women farmers. For instance. In Morocco, the rural households headed by women are generally small, with 69 % having less than four persons. In Namibia, recent data from the Oshana region suggests that, although the size of land holdings between male and female-headed households is comparable, the amount cultivated is often lower for the latter due to labour shortages. Labour shortages may also lead women to turn to alternative crops that require less labour inputs, even though they may be less nutritious.

Women headed households tend to earn lower incomes than male headed households. Only in Mauritania do women-headed households appear to be better-off. This could be explained by the existence of a certain number of transfers and subsidies towards these households, especially in rural areas. In Benin, male headed rural households have an average revenue of 49.407 CFA (US\$ 96) per consumption unit and save 21 %; those headed by women have an average revenue of only 43.529 CFA (US\$ 85) and save 16%. In the Congo, 75% of the women interviewed in three districts received less than 200, 000 CFA (US\$ 390) per year, which is insufficient to cover subsistence expenses. In Tanzania, surveys indicate that rural women headed households have the lowest cash income. For example, In 1985, female-headed households earned 10% of female urban household earnings and 25 % of male-headed households in communal areas. In 1990. significant improvements were noted with female-headed households earning 61% of male headed households. In Zimbabwe, statistical indicators show that in terms of household income.

rural women headed households were 40% poorer than male headed households and 90% poorer than women headed households in urban areas.

Women headed households tend to have access to smaller and less fertile plots of land, and more limited access to the means of production than male headed households. For example, In Zimbabwe, in the communal sector female-headed households are likely to be allocated smaller parcels of land than male-headed households are. Findings from a recent survey suggest that *de jure* female headed households had the smallest farm sizes, varying from 40 to 80% of the land parcels belonging to male headed households.

When women are involved as agricultural labourers they appear to be remunerated less than men, which has negative implications for women headed households in particular. According to data collected by IFAD in the late 1980s, women tend to receive only 50% of men's wages in Mauritania, Sudan and Zimbabwe, while they receive 90% of men's wages in the Congo.

In Morocco, there are large variations in agricultural wages depending on the season, the region, the nature of the work, and gender. Women and girls are generally paid less than men and boys, despite a minimum wage guaranteed by the government. In Sudan, wages are lower for women than for men, which is also due to the fact that they are assigned work in the lower paying traditional sector.

In Namibia, to meet basic food needs, households are obliged to augment production from subsistence agriculture with cash or in-kind income from other sources. The main contributor to subsistence across households is direct cash income from formal employment. Female-headed households have fewer members employed formally or informally than male headed households. In addition, rising unemployment and social breakdown of the family have shrunk the amount and frequency of remittances.

2.1.5 Consequences of rural poverty

Rural poverty has implications for food availability and intake. For those countries where data were provided, the nutritional situation of rural women and children is worse than in urban areas, and in some cases, children in rural female headed households are particularly vulnerable.

In the Congo, between 1987 and 1992, the number of female farmers who suffered chronic dietary insufficiencies increased from 23 to 47%, while the number of growth children of farmers increased from 30 to 36%.

In Morocco, a 1987 study showed that, of children under five years of age, 35.7% suffered from malnutrition in rural areas, while the rate was only 21.4% in urban areas. In Zimbabwe, rural children are at greater risk of severe or moderated malnutrition, are twice as likely to be stunted, and have lower weight for age than urban children.

It appears that in certain countries, children of female-headed households have less food security and lower nutritional levels. For instance, In Namibia, female-headed households have more dependents but less means to obtain food and so face the greatest risk of poor nutrition among children, nursing mothers and the elderly. Data from selected rural centres in 1990 indicated that under nourishment and stunting were more prevalent in children of female-headed households, and that malnutrition levels were considerably higher in rural areas.

Conversely, in Tanzania, female-headed households tend to have less food security than their male counterparts. It has been reported that the 1992 drought impacted more strongly on women and children, especially girls, who tend to eat less in times of food shortages.

Also, women in Africa work from twelve to thirteen more hours a week than men. often averaging over 65 hours. The impact of such long working hours on women's health, coupled with low access to health services, needs to be examined further.

2.1.6 Inequality in women's access to, and participation in, the definition of economic structures and the productive process itself

2.1.6.0 Rural land ownership

The lack of access to land remains a major constraint for women farmers in Africa, and land reform programmes, as well as the tendency towards the break up and privatisation of communal land holdings — especially in areas of tribal and customary tenures, have led almost exclusively to the transfer of land rights to male heads of households (FAO, 1990a: 12). Even in countries where ownership and inheritance laws have been reformed in favour of women, in practice women do not necessarily have more rights to land, as local customs and lack of information act as barriers.

Customary land use practices can determine women's access to land in terms of land use rights or ownership. For example, in Mauritania, under customary law black African women do not have land property rights. In Namibia, rural women continue to gain access to land through men, and in Zimbabwe, women have no direct access to primary land use rights in the communal areas. While women do have legal rights of access in the freehold land sectors, they generally lack the economic resources to acquire such land. Conversely, in the Sudan, a majority of subsistence farmers operate under customary tenure in which women are only accorded usufruct rights to land.

In Africa, women tend to be unpaid labourers on their husbands' land and cultivate separate plots in their own right at the same time. However, while women may work their own plots, they may not necessarily have ownership and, thus, their rights might not survive the death of their spouse (Bullock, 1993; 45). In the case of male migration and de facto women heads of households, conflicts may arise as prevailing land rights rarely endow women with stable property or user rights (IFAD, 1993:25).

Land reform schemes have rarely worked to women's benefit. In fact, the reform schemes may replace a complex system of land use and tenure where women have certain rights in common

law and local practice, if not in legislation. The new land titles are almost always assigned to male heads of households, regardless of women's economic contributions to the household, their customary rights, or the increasing numbers of women heads of households (Bullock, 1993:45).

In the nine countries examined, women rarely own land and when they do, their land holdings tend to be smaller and less fertile than men's are. In some countries, women's formal access to land is increasing, while in those areas where customary law prevails and male traditional authorities allocate the land or where land is passed from father to son, women continue to receive smaller and less fertile plots. In some countries, such as Mauritania women are forced to rent land for their use.

As illustrated in Table 5, women generally hold less land than men, ranging from a low of 3% in Zimbabwe in the small scale commercial sector to a high of 25% of the agricultural land in the Congo and Tanzania. Nor do women appear to profit from land reform as they received only 5-23% of the land-use permits in Zimbabwe and only 6% in Morocco. In Tanzania, when village land was allocated, all rights were given to men and no provision was made in the law for widows, divorced or separated women. In contrast to traditional practices men were able to sell or rent their land without their wives permission. In Burkina Faso, the amount of land allocated to the household plot was smaller than women's traditional food fields, which had allowed them to sell a small surplus (Bullock, 1993:45).

Table 5: Women and Land Ownership

Country	Women's Land Holdings as Percent of Total Agricultural Holdings	Average Size of Holdings (Hectares)	
		Women's	Men's
Benin	11	0.98	1.76
Burkina Faso			
Congo	25		
Mauritania			
Morocco	14	0.5	1

2.1.7.0 Women and poverty in Kenya

Female-headed households are generally seen to be poorer than male headed households.

According to Rao Gupta's (1990) findings, based on a review of 45 studies that focuses on the relationship between female headship and poverty, it suggests that female-headed households are indeed poorer. The data reviewed indicate that "more often than not, female headed households were concentrated in the poorest socio-economic strata"(Rao Gupta, 1990).

Poor women working in the informal urban sector have child care needs similar to those of poor rural women, because they work for irregular periods in jobs that are low in productivity and long in hours both outside the home as petty traders or domestic servants, and inside the home doing piecemeal work for others.

The basic objective of any type of development is enlarging people's choices by facilitating equal access to opportunities for all people in society, sustainability of such opportunities and empowerment of people so that they participate in and benefit from the development process.

Poverty has various manifestations which, include hunger and chronic malnutrition, high levels of illiteracy; lack of sufficient income and inadequate housing; and social discrimination and exclusion from decision making bodies in all spheres of life.

Kenya's per capital income remains far below the UN definition of poor countries. It is estimated that 11 million Kenyans live below the poverty line. The country's poverty is concentrated among small holders as they have less land, lower inputs, lower non-farm income, less technological innovation and lower educational levels. In 1974, the incidence of poverty for the rural areas of the country as a whole, was 33 per cent with practically all of the 1 million pastoralists living below the poverty line. In 1992, the incidence of absolute poverty in Kenya's rural areas had increased.

The weight of poverty falls disproportionately on women. Female members of poor households are often worse off than male members because of gender based differences in the distribution of resources within the family.

In rural areas, female-headed households tend to be among the poorest. Women head thirty per cent of households in Kenya and this trend is increasing due to a combination of factors. The percentage of women among the rural poor increased from 47 per cent in 1982 to 53 per cent in 1992.

The situation of urban and peri-urban dwellers is no better given the high cost of living and the lack of access to land for growing foodstuff.

Although the rate of participation of urban women in the labour force increased from 30 per cent in 1985 to 56 per cent in 1995 this has not translated into much gain as women still suffer from low productivity, low pay and long hours.

In addition, women are more at risk of unemployment than their male counterparts. In 1986 the rate of unemployment was 11.7, with 9.3 for males and 16.5 for women.

Women's experience of poverty maybe different and more acute than that of men because of gender based forms of exclusion resulting in their unequal access to economic opportunities.

Women receive a disproportionately small share of credit from formal banking institutions as the delivery systems do not take into account women's specific needs and their common characteristics, little experience in dealing with formal financial institutions, tend to have smaller business and are less likely to own land or other assets as collateral.

Women receive a much lower average wage than men do, because they are mainly concentrated in agricultural sector and in the informal sector where the rate of and potential for growth are relatively low.

In the Industrial and private sector, the majority of women are concentrated in the unskilled/ semi skilled categories. Thus, they have limited access to the opportunities and benefits of economic development.

Although women provide a crucial support base for the rural and urban economies, both in the labour force and in the household, their work remains unpaid, unrecognised and undervalued in economic measures such as gross domestic product (GDP), investment and employment.

Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have exacerbated poverty both in degree and extent, thus, deepening the subordination of women. The brunt of Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) is borne by women due to their centrality in life giving roles.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The Moser framework

In undertaking this research I have attempted to use the Moser framework which was developed by Caroline Moser as an effective tool for development planning. It recognises the triple roles of women, and also, it attempts to bring an empowerment agenda into the mainstream planning process by setting up gender planning as a type of planing in its own right, on a par with transport planning or environmental planning.

The framework consists of three concepts, namely, Gender roles identification/Triple roles; Practical and strategic gender needs; and. Categories of policy approaches to women and development/or gender and development.

According to Caroline Moser (1993), "The goal of gender planing is the emancipation of women from their subordination, and their achievement of equality, equity and empowerment. This will vary widely in different contexts depending on the extent to which women as a category are subordinated in status to men as a category" (Moser, 1993p1)

Tool 1: Gender roles identification/triple role

This tool recognises that in most societies low-income women have a triple role: women undertake reproductive, productive and community managing activities, while men primarily undertake productive and community political activities.

Let me explain briefly what these activities entail.

Productive work

Both women and men are involved in this work and it involves the production of goods and services for consumption and trade for instance, farming, fishing, employment and self-

employment. This is paid work but more often than not, women's productive work is less visible and less valued than men's work.

Reproductive work

Women mainly do this work and it involves the care and maintenance of the household and its members including bearing and caring for children, food preparation, water and fuel collection, shopping, housekeeping and family health care. This work is crucial to human survival and the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force yet it is seldom considered as "real work". In poor communities, reproductive work is, for the most part, labour intensive, and time-consuming. It is almost always the responsibility of women and girls. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the workforce (male partner and working children) and the future workforce (infants and school going children).

Community work

Moser divides community work into two different types:

First, community managing work: These are activities undertaken primarily by women at the community level as an extension of their reproductive role to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health care and education. This is voluntary unpaid work undertaken in "free time".

Second, community politics: these are activities undertaken primarily by men at the community level, organising at the formal level, often within the framework of national politics. This is usually paid work, either directly or indirectly, through status or power.

Moser concludes that women, men, boys and girls are likely to be involved in all these three areas of work. However, men are less likely to be involved in reproductive work. In fact, in many societies, women do almost all of the reproductive and as well as much of the productive work.

Tool 2: Gender needs assessment

This tool involves an assessment of needs and this tool recognises that women's needs are different from those of men not only because of their triple roles but also due to their subordinate position in terms of men.

The Moser framework distinguishes between two types of needs, namely, practical gender needs and strategic gender needs

Practical gender needs are needs identified to help women in their existing subordinate position in society. The women identify these needs in their socially accepted roles in society. However, these needs do not challenge the gender division of labour or women's subordinate position in society although they rise out of them. Practical gender needs may include: water provision, health care, income earning for household provisioning, housing and services, family food provision.

Strategic gender needs, on the other hand, are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society. They relate to gender division of labour, power and control and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equitably wages and women" control over their bodies. This implies that meeting strategic gender needs helps women to achieve greater equality. It also changes existing roles and therefore challenges women's subordinate position.

Strategic gender needs may include:

- Abolition of sexual division of labour
- Alleviation of the burden of domestic labour and child care
- The removal of institutionalised forms of discrimination such as rights to own land or property, marriage, divorce and custody of children
- Access to credit and other resources
- Freedom of choice over childbearing

- Measures against male violence and control over women

Tool 3: Disaggregated data at the intra-household level. This tool asks the following:

Who controls what? Who decides what? How? According to the Moser framework here, one needs to recognise that the allocation of resources within the household (intra-household allocation) is the outcome of bargaining processes. Thus, it is important to find out who has control over what resources within the household and who has power of decision-making.

Tool 4:WID/GAD policy matrix

This is mainly an evaluation tool for examining what approach is favoured in an existing project, programme or policy, though it could be used to consider what would be most suitable in future. It helps one to anticipate some of the weaknesses, constraints and possible pitfalls.

The approaches Moser defines are welfare; equity; anti-poverty; efficiency and empowerment. These policy approaches do not follow sequentially.

Tool 5:Linked planning for balancing the triple role

Women experience competing demands between reproductive, productive and community level responsibilities. The need to balance these roles severely constrains women in each of the roles.

Planning needs to link different activities such as home and transport or workplace and the environment. Will a programme/project increase woman's work in one of her roles to the detriment of her other roles?

Tool 6: Incorporation of women, gender-aware organisations and planners into planning

This is essential so as to ensure that real practical and strategic gender needs are identified and incorporated into the planning process. They need to be involved not just in the analysis of the situation, but in defining the goals and interventions.

In most third world societies the stereotype of the male breadwinner predominates and is quite misleading since the woman may be the primary income earner in the home but is not recognized as such. It is important for policy makers to recognize the triple roles of women because women's work is not valued due to its invisibility. Women are greatly constrained by the burden of simultaneously balancing these roles of productive, reproductive and community managing work. Any intervention in one area will affect the other areas. Thus, women's workload can prevent them from fully participating in development projects. When they do participate, extra time spent farming, producing, training or meeting, means less time for other tasks, such as childcare or food preparation. The two latter roles are seen as natural and non-productive and hence are not valued. This has serious consequences for women as most of their work is made invisible and fails to be recognized as work by those planners whose job is to assess different needs within low-income communities.

However, low-income households are not homogenous in terms of family structure. The most important household structure is the woman headed household of which there are two types. First, the de jure women headed households, in which the male partner is permanently absent either due to death, separation or divorce and the woman is legally single, divorced or widowed.

Second, the de facto women headed households in which the male partner is permanently absent due to, for instance, long term death work migration or refugee status. Here the woman is not recognized as a head of the household although she may have the primary responsibility for the financial as well as the organizational aspects of the household.

It is estimated that women head today one third of the world's household. In urban areas in parts of Africa and Latin America, the figure reaches 50 per cent or more. Although women who head

households do not constitute a separate category, nevertheless, their problem of the triple burden is exacerbated, which have specific policy implications. Thus, female-headed households cannot be ignored when formulating policies because they are a reality.

2.3 Assumptions

The researcher attempted to conduct the study with the following assumptions:

1. That there is an increase of women headed households in Lunga Lunga slum.
2. That women headed households are more impoverished and deprived than other households.
3. That problems facing women -headed households can be resolved if there are gender-sensitive policies.

2.4 Definition of concepts/terms

Gender concept

Definition of gender :

Gender is not only a socially constructed definition of women and men; it is a socially constructed definition of the relationship between the sexes. This construction contains an unequal power relationship with male domination and female subordination in most spheres of

Gender refers to the socially and culturally defined relationships between women and men that is the way women and men are constituted in a relational network in relation to each other. It does not refer to men and women but their relationships. These relationships are culture specific unlike sex, which is universal. Gender is, hence, a social phenomenon; it is not biologically determined.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men in a given culture or location.

Gender is an approach to development that shifts the focus from women as a group to the socially determined relations between men and women. It focuses on social, economic, and cultural factors that determine how men and women can participate and benefit in project resources and activities.

Gender roles

These are roles ascribed by society.

Gender gaps

Those situations that arise when gender is not taken on board.

Gender blind

Making no gender considerations.

Engender

Make gender responsive (gender aware).

Empowerment

Having ability to make decisions.

Gender mainstreaming

In 1977, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) urged all UN bodies to formulate and put into effect a comprehensive policy on women's equality and to incorporate it into their plans, statements, objectives, programmes, and the policy documents. This process is known as *Gender Mainstreaming* and it was explicitly endorsed by the Beijing Platform for Action after the

UN fourth conference on women held in 1995 in Beijing. Currently, a number of countries have adapted a national plan for Gender mainstreaming.

Like most new concepts gender mainstreaming has elicited a lot of debate and to date, there is no consensus on its definition. However, it is agreed that gender mainstreaming must have its major goal, gender equality, by bringing forward a gender equality perspective on women's perspectives. It must focus on the full participation of women in decision making. It must look on the effect of gender mainstreaming and how it will affect the structuring and functioning of society and it involves a shift of actors.

A group of specialists, from Council of Europe, has agreed on the definition of gender mainstreaming as *"the (re) organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes so that a gender perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages by actors normally involved, in policy making. "*

Gender mainstreaming therefore attempts to take gender equality into the mainstreaming of society using various tools, actors and strategies. This way, a gender mainstreaming challenges male bias, domination and supremacy in all structures of society and makes it possible for both women and men to contribute to development and society and this contribution to be recognised and valued.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was applied in an attempt to achieve the objectives of this study. It focuses on the research design, the study area, the sources of data and procedures of collecting data, types of data collected and methods of data analysis.

The researcher employed mainly qualitative research methods through focused group discussions and personal interviews and case histories. In this context, the researcher's aim was to attempt to assess the factors contributing to the emergence of female headed households and the challenges faced in Lunga Lunga slum area.

The major instruments or tools for data collection were mainly primary data collected through focus group discussions, case histories, observation and personal interviews.

Secondary data were collected from reference books, reports and records.

3.1 Site description/ Research area

The study was carried out in Lunga Lunga slum area in Makadara division, which is situated at the eastern side of Nairobi. Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya. The division is divided into four locations, namely, Maringo/ Mbotela, Makadara, Kaloleni/Makongeni and Viwanda and these are all divided into sub-locations. Lunga Lunga is one of the eight slum villages in Mukuru area.

And, It is estimated that the total population of Lunga Lunga slum area is around 100,000 people.

Lunga Lunga slum is part of Mukuru area. Mukuru is a Gikuyu word meaning valley. The Ngong river cuts across the Mukuru slums. Due to its low level during the rainy seasons, the river is dirty with effluence from the factories and villages alongside the river. Hence, its water is dirty and unfit for human consumption. It poses danger during the rainy seasons. Due to its wide catchment area, it floods its banks and can easily drown children and unsuspecting adults.

Urban infrastructure services are virtually non-existent to the area residents and they have no access to electricity and portable water must be purchased from vendors for prices up to ten times higher than the rate charged by local authorities. A majority of the residents do not have access to proper sanitation. People are forced to pay to use pit latrines shared by approximately 50 people per toilet or alternatively use open spaces.

The problems in these slums are untold, ranging from poor housing, poor drainage systems, poor roads, paths, diseases, poor communication network, few schools, just to mention a few. The scourge of AIDS takes its toll in the slums where most women would engage in promiscuous sex for little gain. Alcoholism due to idleness, frustration at place of work or at home is worse in these villages. Most illegal liquor such as methanol, "kari kan" and "kumi kumi" are sold not considering their effect. For instance. In the month of November 2000, 80 lives were lost in Mukuru Slums alone as a result of consuming the illicit brew. It can be reduced by government's effort to stop its source and financing some villagers for micro enterprises.

Garbage lies permanently in stinking heaps, often blocking the drainage channels. The lack of sanitary facilities to dispose of human waste and garbage has led to serious environmental and health hazards including a higher incidence of water borne diseases such as typhoid, cholera and tuberculosis. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is another challenge that is currently facing the area

residents_

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There is a high influx of rural-urban migrants who come to settle in Lunga Lunga in search of non-existent jobs. Hence, there is over congestion leading to poor housing. Most families live in single rooms 3m x 3m and the structures are poorly constructed-having no place to rest out or to hang clothing to dry or even a place for children to play.

The houses are close to one another such that they leave small and narrow paths to pass through. There is lack of toilets and bathrooms. Hence, stench and filth of human faeces are visible everywhere.

Poor drainage is another problem and since the area is flat during the rain season the paths are impassable. The water floods and spreads even to houses along the paths and make the place very muddy and filthy. There are no trenches to contain the rainy water. The water is unclean and unsafe for drinking because of the pipes that pass through the sewage and it leaks. The environment is filthy mostly due to uncollected garbage, stagnant water and congestion of houses. Air pollution and water pollution become a health hazard to the slum dwellers. Noise, burning garbage and Industrial fumes are major causes of great physical difficulties and discomfort that the slum residents undergo daily.

Insecurity is rife due to the high unemployment and criminal activities perpetrated by idle youth. They include housebreaking, mugging, ambushes, rape, and child abuse, among others.

Political representation

The District officer and Divisional officers are situated out of the slums but within the division. The pitch of the problem is normally left to powerless chiefs and regular Administration police who are stationed near the people and within the slums. Lunga Lunga slum is within Makadara constituency and in the 1998 elections to parliament. Paul Mugeke represented it.

3.1.1 Health facilities

There is a city council clinic situated in the area. However, most of the residents prefer going for treatment in a clinic that is managed by a church organization (NGO). There are numerous private owned clinics, pharmacies and local traditional healers in the slum. The community health workers (CHWs) are trained in administering basic health and they include traditional birth attendants (TBAs).

3.1.2 Demographic and population structure

The most recent population census indicates that all the Mukuru slums hold up to 666,000 persons. The population ratio being one man to two women 1:2 while children and youths of between a day old to 25 years form 66% of the whole population in these slums. It is estimated that Lunga Lunga area holds up to 100,000 persons and, over 70% of it's households are headed by women. (District Development Plan-Nairobi)

3.1.3 Economic activities

The area is inhabited by low-income category of people with a small percentage of middle income people in the East and southern parts of the division. A third of Viwanda location is occupied by informal settlement (slums) while the other third is occupied by the industries. Most of the inhabitants of Lunga Lunga slum area are casual workers working around the numerous surrounding industries. The average income per capital is 412.96 per month. However, the average income per day is K.shs.93. Most of the slum residents of Lunga Lunga are vegetable vendors or rather they are in micro-enterprise business and could not be able to tell how much they earn per month. However, most of the incomes from such businesses are paltry. Other persons work in factories and other manufacturing industries as casual workers while it is a few who work permanently. Casual workers are paid lowly and cannot afford better housing. Most of the slum residents work in the manufacturing industries in the Industrial area close to their

village. Others practice small-scale business such as operating small shops, kiosks, vegetable and fruit selling and hawking various wares

3.1.4 Educational facilities

There are a few educational facilities in the area. There are two primary schools that provide quality education and are managed by church organisations. Private individuals own two primary schools. There are numerous day care centers and nursery schools for children under five years. Most of these nursery and day care schools are managed by private individuals and they are situated in the slums.

3.2 Population

The estimated population of Lunga Lunga slum area is 100, 000 people and women head seventy per cent of the households.

3.3 Population sample

The population sample consisted of 40 respondents who were all single women.

Other people such as the chief, village chairman, informal and opinion leaders were interviewed but did not form part of the sample.

3.4 Sampling technique

There was no sampling criteria used and every person was given an equal chance to be interviewed.

3.5 Methodology of data collection

3.5.1 Focus group discussions

One focus group discussion was held comprising of ten single women.

3.5.2 Personal interviews

Personal interviews were held and a total of twenty respondents interviewed.

3.5.3 Case histories

Case histories of ten single women were written.

3.5.4 Key informants

Key informers were composed of mainly single mothers/women, village elders, community leaders, community health workers, the local chief, village chairman and clients in the Lunga Lunga social office.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

Methods of data analysis were qualitative in nature.

3.7 Problems encountered in the field

Limitations

The researcher encountered some limitations in the course of the study. These limitations were as follows:

- Suspicion

Initially, a lot of the people were suspicious of my intentions and, hence, they were reluctant to give me information. They did not understand what purpose the information they gave me served. However, after deeper integration in the area, the residents warmed up to me. Also, with the assistance of the local chief and informal leaders the people were more receptive when they understood that it was not a political matter.

- Lack of time

Most of the people were too busy due to social and economic responsibilities attached to them.

I had to reschedule my time and work late hours and weekends in order to accommodate them.

- Lack of Secondary data

Documents, records and reports did not come in handy when the researcher required them for the extraction of information. Lack of relevant records, proper documentation and well-catalogued information slowed the progress of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the factors, which contributed to the emergence of female-headed households.

4.1 Background information on informants

4.1.1 Demographic characteristics

They were a total of 40 informants in the sample. These informants were aged between ages 21-55 years. A majority of these informants were in their childbearing age and had at least three children each. The youngest informant in the sample was 18 years old while the oldest was 55 years old. All the informants were single mothers and these were divorced, separated and never married and had children.

Table 6: Age distribution of the informants

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-20	5	12.5
21-25	9	22.5
26-30	7	17.5
31-35	6	15.0
36-40	4	10.0
41-45	3	7.5
46-50	4	10.0
51-55	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

4.1.2 Socio Economic factors

The informants had little or no education background. They are characterized by low literacy rate and low-income levels. Over 40% of the women reported that they earned about 100 shillings per day. (Table 7)

Table 7: Household income per month

Income in shillings	Frequency	Percentage
1000-2000	10	25%
2001-3000	21	52.5%
3001-4000	7	17.5%
4000-5000	2	5%
6000-10000	0	0%
	40	100.0 %

The findings show that majority of the single mothers interviewed had little or no skills and hence could not access any form of employment in the formal and informal sectors.

The data also show that the average income per month was between one thousand five hundred and three thousand shillings and their household expenditure far exceeded their income. (Table 7)

4.2 The emergence of female headed households

The study shows that the factors contributing to female headship include economic disparities, marital instability, irresponsible male sexual behaviour, poverty, dysfunctional families, and lack of education as well as rural-urban migration.

4. 2.1 Marital infidelity and instability

Marital infidelity was also voiced as a factor contributing to female headship. Some women said that their husbands were unfaithful and hence they annulled their marriages. According to some younger women irresponsible male sexual behaviour was also a major factor contributing to female headed households. They said that some men neglected their wives and children and sought the company of other women, thus, breaking their homes.

The m-laws also interfered a great deal with their marriage and forced their husbands to chase them away. Also, after the death of a husband the wives were driven off from their homes.

4.2.2 Economic disparities and poverty

Most women interviewed claimed that they were single mothers not by choice but due to circumstances. They cited poverty and economic disparities as factors contributing to the emergence of female headship. They reported that female-headed households tend to be generally impoverished due to unequal and limited access to economic opportunities and also due to lack of access to productive assets. This is especially prevalent in the rural areas where women do not own the means of production, and, hence, are forced to migrate to urban areas to seek for employment opportunities. In addition, women lacked the collateral (since they lacked ownership rights) to be able to secure loans from formal banking Institutions to embark on any business venture.

4.2.3 Death and separation

There are many social and cultural stigmas attached to a woman who is an unwed mother, widowed or divorced. Local residents shun such a woman and she has very few friends. Some men may tell their wives not to associate with her, especially when her husband dies under suspicious circumstances such as being murdered. Also, a woman who has divorced her husband becomes ostracised in the community or society in which she lives in. Other married women see this woman as a potential "husband snatcher".

The findings show that those women who were between the ages of 40 and 55 claimed that their husbands had died and left them widows.

4.2.4 Rural-urban migration

A number of women reported that they were forced to migrate to Lunga Lunga slum in order to seek better opportunities since in the rural areas there were no prospects of landing a job.

Others, claimed that they were chased away from their ancestral home after bearing children out of wedlock and had no choice but to settle in the slums where housing is affordable.

There has been a great influx of upcountry people coming to reside in urban slums due to the depressed economy which has impacted negatively especially in the rural area.

As a result, the agricultural sector has suffered a mighty blow forcing people to migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities. Women are worst hit because they do not own the means of production such as land.

4.3 Problems and challenges of female headed households

1. Somatization

Most women interviewed said that the society shuns them due to their single status. As a result the women have a very low self-esteem. Also their own families condemn them for being single. They also felt that their children also bore the brunt of this stigma and this negatively impacted on them because they were ashamed of not having a father figure in the home. This resulted in the children becoming rebellious towards their mothers because they no longer respected them.

Most of the single mothers said that they were not accepted by the community at large. Their families are usually neglected and treated as a bad disease.

Some widows claimed that their in-laws mistreated them following the death of their spouses and drove them out of their homes rendering them landless and as result they were forced to relocate and, thus, ended up in the slums.

2. Poverty

Most of these households are generally characterized as being extremely poor because the single mother is usually unemployed and with little or no skills at all. In addition, she has little or no education; she is the sole breadwinner and a majority of those interviewed claimed that they could not access casual work in the surrounding industries as compared to their male counterparts because of lack of skills and sometimes they had to look after their young children.

3. Prostitution and sexual harrassment

Due to lack of an income most of the younger single mothers living in Lunga Lunga slum are forced to prostitution in order to be able to provide for their families/children. They claimed that they resorted to prostitution as a means of earning a living. As a result they are exposed to

sexually transmitted infections including the dreaded H.I.V/AIDS which has become a real threat and challenge to the lives of especially single mothers. This is because when one becomes infected one is unable to engage in income generating activities and hence the family becomes impoverished. Specifically, the mother who is the sole breadwinner is unable to access medical care for herself, food, rent, clothing and school fees for her children. Consequently, when she dies her children who become orphans suffer a great deal because the extended family is reluctant to support these children.

Since most of these women are usually poor and without the protection of a husband, they are exposed to sexual harassment and exploitation from men who disrespect them because of their single status. They are branded "malayas" since they have no husbands. Their children are disrespected too, especially their girl children who are exposed to sex very early in their life. Some girls indulge in sex when they are between 11 and 13 years old.

The girls lack proper role models and parental love and thus resort to men.

These girls are most affected because they lack a father figure and have the wrong misconception of men.

Some of these girls drop out of school due to early marriages and unwanted pregnancies. They are also prone to contracting sexually transmitted diseases including H.I.V/AIDS, which poses the greatest risk to especially young girls.

Most single women reported that they abuse alcohol as a means of escaping from their frustrations in their lives. They are full of despair and hopeless because of their plight.

4. Lack of access to credit facilities and training

Also, the women reported that most female headed households lack access to credit facilities and training opportunities and this limits them in the sense that they have no skills and hence can not acquire work in the job market or even engage in income generating activities. Similarly, they

cannot play a role in society by improving their living conditions and also in improving the welfare of their children. They have enormous responsibilities such as paying school fees for their children and meeting other basic expenses such as food, clothing and shelter.

Majority of the women interviewed claimed that they had little or no formal education and hence could neither read nor write.

5. Hazardous environment

Most women reported that the environment they live in is a health hazard due to poor sanitation, and lack of proper drainages and waste disposals and garbage disposal facilities. Also congestion poses a major health risk to them and their children. As a result of living in these poor conditions they are often exposed to diseases such as tuberculosis (T.B), typhoid, dysentery and malaria. Their children suffer from malnutrition due to lack of a proper diet because of the mother's inadequate income or sometimes ignorance.

6. Insecurity of land tenure

Most women reported that the greatest problem was insecurity of land tenure. They claimed that they lived in perpetual fear of being evicted from their homes or their homes being demolished by the local administration. They wondered where they would go because they were poor squatters on the land. They also claimed that they could not develop the land due to lack of capital but the problem was further compounded by lack of security of tenure.

Also the local administration chiefs, village elders and youth wingers were harassing them by demanding bribes whenever they wanted to start a small business such as selling "sukuma wiki" or operate kiosks from their premises. The women also complained that they could not build or

expand their houses even when they had their own plots because of exploitation from the local administration that extracted bribes from them.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the research findings.

5.1 CONCLUSION

- Access to credit facilities and training opportunities

In order to improve the living conditions of the female-headed households it was felt that women needed to be offered credit facilities and training opportunities. This would enable them to engage in income generating activities and provide them with skills to manage their business.

- Provision of non-formal education and Training in leadership skills

The single mothers recommended that training in leadership skills and provision of non-formal education was crucial because it would enable them to identify their needs and resources, plan and implement their activity and learn skills necessary in group discussion and keeping records. A number of women have used these groups to ascend to leadership roles in churches, welfare and kinship types of associations as well as to form merry go round groups.

It was noted that adult literacy classes are not relevant to women's needs hence low enrollment. Therefore, there is a need to provide relevant education that targets women's needs and aspirations.

- Access to land ownership rights

Women should be given rights to land ownership and not just usufructory rights as this limits them to just having access to use the land and not ownership rights which will enable them use this land as collateral in acquiring loans for starting business ventures.

Women should lobby for land and legal reforms to ensure that they are not discriminated upon.

Land allocation and its development in the slums should be done to improve the living conditions of the slum residents. Recently under a presidential directive the Minister of lands is to survey and give plot ownership title deeds to those living in the Korogocho slums. Similar directives should be given for those living in Mukuru slums. Alternative settlement should be given to those who will be left out in that process.

- Enhancement of poverty alleviation programs(P.A.Ps)

The micro enterprises that are aimed at alleviating the root causes of poverty such as unemployment and the resultant idleness should be started and the deserving slum dwellers be actively involved in them. Furthermore the government should on a wider scale that is aimed at a national development start projects that are viable and able to absorb the human resources from the slums. The programs and ensuing policies would be important in the gradual increment of gross national development (GNP). Thus, pushing most destitutes up from minimum survival.

- Provision of affordable primary education for slum children.

The government should start schools in the slums that are public and non-profit and have a low fee structure to enable children from the slums whose parents cannot afford to pay receive basic education. Sponsorship programs for poor children living in the slums should be enhanced so that they can proceed with their education. Those children already involved in scavenging, glue sniffing and begging in the streets should be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their original homes.

- Take appropriate measures to abolish the sexual division of labour and traditional practices that reinforce it and are prejudicial to the well being of women.
- Mainstreaming gender-disaggregated data. The absence of disaggregated data based on separate records for men and women is one source of gender blindness in formulating policies and programs. This leads to bias against women because women's unpaid household work is not included in national statistics. If it were computed as productive output in national income accounts, global output would be increased by more than 30 per cent. Inadequate data and ineffective use of available data hinder the proper assessment of women's contributions and monitoring of relative improvements of their status.
- It should be recognized that there is not much use in introducing large-scale programs without taking the differentials into account in the household level so that programs can reach those in need. Female-headed households should be singled out by policy-makers as an integral part of the plans and programs in Kenya. The study results imply that gender of the household heads can be used as a policy tool to identify vulnerable groups. Since the main problem in targeting is to identify vulnerable groups, policy-makers concerned with poverty alleviation can single out female-headed households as one of the key target groups deserving attention.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Formation of groups and co-operative societies

It was recommended that women should form savings groups and cooperatives where they would be able to save and access loans for school fees or capital to start a business.

2. Sensitization workshops and awareness raising campaigns needed pertaining to issues affecting women in particular and the community in general. Such issues include family planning, H.I.V/AIDS, alcoholism, child abuse, legal issues, civic education and drug abuse.

In addition, seminars and workshops on gender sensitization should be organized so as to empower both women and men.

3. Acquisition of skills such as dressmaking/ tailoring, weaving, how to start a small-scale business. This will lead to gainful employment in the informal sector or self-employment. This will enhance women's self-reliance.

4. Provision of day care facilities

Mothers who wish to work or advance their skills should access these day care services.

5. Expansion of water programs should be carried on in these slums.

6. Avail appropriate technologies aimed at reducing the workload of domestic responsibilities in order to provide more time for recreation and training and participating fully in the development process of their country.

7. Removal of negative attitudes and harmful traditional practices such as early childhood marriages that hinder women's participation in public/political spheres, through information, education and communication.

8. It was also recommended that women should fully and actively participate at social, cultural, political and trade union levels. This can be realized through raising political and social awareness programs of civic education and mass communication to ensure that women are given these responsibilities.

However, firm political commitment and concrete action is needed to eliminate discrimination against women.

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ANNEX

Distribution of urban households by poverty stratum, by sex of head of household: 12 Latin American countries, 1994.

		Indigent	Other poor	Non-poor	
Argentina	Male	1.6	9.2	89.2	
	Female	1.0	7.5	91.1	
Bolivia	Male	13.8	27.3	58.9	
	Female	15.5	25.8	58.7	
Brazil *	Male	16.0	22.7	61.3	
	Female	17.1	21.5	61.4	
Chile	Male	5.9	17.9	76.2	
	Female	7.5	15.9	76.5	
Colombia	Male	16.2	24.5	59.3	
	Female	16.1	24.0	59.9	
Costa Rica	Male	4.5	12.0	83.5	
	Female	9.8	14.0	76.2	
Honduras	Male	39.0	28.6	32.4	
	Female	45.8	29.2	25.0	
Mexico	Male	6.6	23.2	70.2	
	Female	4.0	21.3	74.7	
Panama	Male	7.6	16.6	75.8	
	Female	12.1	16.2	71.7	
Paraguay	Male	14.3	27.2	58.5	
	Female	19.3	21.3	59.4	
Uruguay	Male	1.2	5.0	93.8	
	Female	0.8	4.0	95.1	
Venezuela	Male	11.8	26.4	61.8	
	Female	18.7	30.8	50.5	

Source: *ad hoc* tabulations from national household surveys. Female indices: CEPAL 1996: 202. Male indices: unpublished tables. CEPAL

Appendix A

Interview guide

1. What is your name (optional)?
2. What is your sex? Male_____or female
3. How old are you?
4. How many children do you have ?
5. What is your marital status? Single_____Married_____Widow_____Divorced or
Separated
6. What is your educational level? Primary_____Secondary_____College.
7. What do you do for a living? Casual worker_____Self employed
Employed_____specify (other)

8. What is your average income per month? 1000-2000_____2000-3000____3000-4000____5000-6000_____6000-10,000_____over 10,000_

9. How long have you lived in Lunga Lunga slum?

10. What propelled you to move to Lunga Lunga?

11. Are you single by choice? If not, please state the factors contributing to your single status?

12. What problems and challenges do you face as a single parent/mother? Please name three.

(a)

(b).

(c).

13. What solutions would you propose to the above stated problems?.

14 What are the merits and demerits of single motherhood?

15. What are the most pressing community issues or problems you would like to be addressed?

Please state three in order of priority.

(a)

(b)

(c).

16. What recommendations would you propose in order to improve the living standards of female- headed households in Lunga Lunga area ?

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