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Abstract

Urban poverty and the rapid growth of population have led to creation of informal settlements. However urban areas are composed of communities of people from different cultures who represent different interests and intense competition of resources. Conflicts occur therefore in competition for jobs, land, housing and other related opportunities. People belonging to less advantaged social status such as women, become increasingly vulnerable to the conflicts.

The ethnic, cultural and religious heterogeneity of urban settlers also means that people can no longer depend on their cultures to resolve whatever conflicts they have because there is no common culture. Further, different groups have different points of reference and are not usually under any obligation to consider other groups. The role of the government in conflict resolution therefore becomes very important because this is the main way of regulating people's behavior. In addition, some of the resources belong to the government or require government regulation to deal with especially land and service provision.

Non-formal conflict resolution mechanisms are also applied especially since the poor cannot afford to have conflict resolved by the state or other designated bodies. Similarly, most people do not understand how the system works and are often intimidated by it. In other cases, like access to land, there may be legal redress especially since structure owners do not have legal rights to land. The arrangements are mainly informal and the residents have no choice but dwell with conflicts on an informal basis.

To achieve the objectives of this study, both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were used. The qualitative phase consisted of face-to-face interviews, administered questionnaires.

The qualitative phases consisted several focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to selected members of the community in question. In essence, the
qualitative phase was used to provide more insights and findings obtained from the quantitative phase.

Certain areas were looked into that bring about the conflicts in Korogocho slums and the impact that conflicts have on the women in the area in question. These are such as social services, tenancy among others. Some of the main findings were that about 70% of the women in Korogocho are middle aged while 80% were single either by choice, through widowhood, abandonment, separation and divorce. Fifty per cent of the respondents had acquired the basic education i.e. primary level. The income levels are low and considerably marginal with 31% earning ksh 500 and below and majority drive their incomes from petty trade such as hawking, brewing and prostitution.

There are major recommendations of the study that first; there should be reduction of the rate of rural-urban migration that uses alternative development strategies including targeted rural development programmes.

Secondly, there should be deliberation of policies and programmes needed to address the level of livelihoods that characterize life in urban, slum communities across cities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thirdly there should also be an improvement on environmental sanitation including water, toilets, garbage and sewage services.

Fourthly, strengthening existing health facilities to better respond to major disease burdens of slum residents. There should also be an enhancement of access to qualify health care and education for all to bridge the gap and ensure slum children are not trapped in the vicious circle.