

EFFECTS OF THE DEMOLITION OF RESIDENTIAL HOUSES IN SELECTED PERI-URBAN AREAS OF NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Urban Development has been a direct consequence of the growth of urban cities throughout the world. This growth is attributed to population increase and widening of economic, political as well as technological and social opportunities. While urban growth is a positive development, it is curtailed with several issues; key among them is limited access to secure land and housing. Despite access to secure land and housing being a prerequisite for poverty reduction, thousands of Kenyans live under threats of demolition of houses and eviction. This study therefore sought to investigate how demolition of houses affects selected residential peri-urban areas of Nairobi County. Specifically, it was guided by the following objectives: Establish the effects of the demolition of residential houses on the health of the residents; assess the effects of the demolition of houses on residential ties and to analyze the effects of demolition of houses on the financial stability of residents. The focus of the study was Nairobi's Peri-Urban areas of Syokimau, Njiru, Ruiru and Karobangi North where there have been victims of evictions related to land ownership. These areas were selected because they are majorly inhabited by the poor and lower middle income earners. Both probability and non-probability sampling, specifically purposive and snowball sampling were employed in selecting 50 respondents. The inclusion criteria were those respondents whose houses were destroyed because of standing on illegal land. Data was collected with the aid of questionnaires which were self-administered as well as interview schedules. Analysis was done at two levels; quantitative and qualitative. Quantitatively, data was analyzed with the use of SPSS and presented in form of graphs, charts and percentages. At the qualitative level, data was analyzed through thematic analysis that entailed grouping the data into themes and then using it to compliment the quantitative data. In this analysis, direct quotations and excerpts were employed. The study established that demolition has far reaching consequences on the health, social ties, and financial stability of the affected families. Based on the findings, the study recommends that government improve accountability and transparency of land transfer and registration process to reduce cases of land encroachment. Demolition should also be done in humane way.

Key Words: Land Ownership, Urban Development, Peri-Urban Areas

1.1 Introduction

According to Thuo (2013), one of the most important indicators of change; be it social, economic or physical in any country is that of Urbanization. This statement is complemented by that of the UNCHS (2001) when it states that in Sub Saharan Africa, Urban Development is both a precursor and a signal of development. According to Owuor (2008), since its establishment, Nairobi city has witnessed a sporadic proliferation of population growth from a paltry 100,000 in 1940s to 350,000 at independence and 3 million in the 1990's. According to the KNBS (2019), Nairobi has a population of 4,397,073 people. According to Thuo (2013), rapid population growth means an increasing demand for urban land, particularly for housing and other uses.

Maina (2013) posits that as much as this increase is a panacea for opportunities for employment, better housing as well as education facilities and technology transfer; it also has the negative disadvantage of straining natural resources and existing social services and infrastructure. At the same time, this expansion provides room for illegal encroachment into public land and further legitimization of the same. More importantly, Siakilo (2014) avers that the problem of land in these areas emanate from Land Tenure Systems in place; there have been an off shoot of non-formal tenure systems in which there are varying degrees of legality or illegality. This entails both regularized and un-regularized and unauthorized subdivisions on legally owned land and various forms of unofficial arrangements. These scenario has presented challenges to land ownership, use and as a consequence; to urban development.

One of the most far-reaching effects has been the demolition of houses belonging to the affected; right from 2012, state authorities carried out mass forced evictions and demolitions in Syokimau and Embakasi on the pretext that these settlements were located near JKIA. More recently, Omulo (2021) reports that more than 5,000 residents in Njiru were left homeless after the government destroyed them to pave way for development. In 2020, residents of Kariobangi North were subjected to a similar undertaking which left them homeless. Therefore, it behooves for the investigation into land ownership, its use and consequences on urban development. It is therefore based on this background that the study examines the issue in relation to Nairobi's Peri-Urban Areas. Mwau et al. (2020) also observed that of Mukuru informal settlement were living in constant fear of evictions by well-connected landowners due to the prime local of their residences.

Although some of the evictions are necessary to safeguard public land, the manner in which they are carried out raise a lot of concern. The Land Laws Amendment Act (2016) harbors provisions

that require special measures to be taken to protect children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities during evictions (Republic of Kenya, 2016). However, in many instances, evictions are carried out forcefully and inhumane manner. In the Kibera demolitions in 2018, police were accused of using excessive force and inflicting sexual abuse and harassment on women and girls (Mwau et al., 2020). In 2020, over 7000 people were displaced from their homes in Nairobi slums despite the country being in the middle of a pandemic (Yusuf, 2020). These demolitions attracted sharp criticisms as it lefts the affected families exposed to the threat of contracting the disease.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As the city of Nairobi continues to grow; this growth has also been accompanied with a huge population that needs houses because of the strain on existing ones. This has prompted many people to move to peri-urban areas in a bid to yield to this demand. As a result of this, many of them have found themselves in a quagmire where having bought land, it is later discovered that it belonged to the government (Public Land) designated for various purposes such as sewerage construction, road reserve, riparian land, rail reserve or even Airport land. These people have therefore had to endure painful loses in form of demolitions of their residential houses as well as business premises. This scenario has raised many questions about land ownership in the city because majorities of the people are usually unaware that they are sitting on illegal land. This has posed a big challenge to the government's own agenda of enhancing affordable housing as well as on urban development. The study there attempted to provide empirical evidence on the effects of the demolition of the residential houses on the health, social ties and financial stability. By bridging such gap, the study informs future studies and enhances the formulation of a well thought out humane housing policy.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study will be guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the effects of demolition of residential houses on health of residents in Nairobi's Peri-Urban Areas
2. To assess the effects of demolition of houses on residential ties in Nairobi's Peri-Urban Areas

3. To Analyze the effects of demolition of houses on the financial stability of residents in Nairobi's Peri-Urban Areas

2.1 Literature Review

According to Thuo (2013), Urban Planning is an essential component of urban development. It encompasses pre-existing land, buildings, roads, communal spaces, transportation, economic development, infrastructure as well as housing. One component of urban planning is Strategic Planning; it focuses on setting high level goals and determining desired areas of growth for a city or metropolitan area. Thuo (2013) further avers that land use planning is another strategy for urban planning. This concerns legislation and policy, adopting planning instruments like government statutes, regulations, rules and policies to influence land use.

According to Mandere (2010), urbanization in Africa has generally been more rapid and chaotic with deficiencies in regulation and infrastructural development. This rapid development is often accompanied with inadequate governance systems, infrastructural development and most often, it suffocates industrial and economic growth. This has earned the term 'African Crisis' (Rakodi, 2005). As Carrt (1997) puts it, peri-urban development is a transition development stage between rural and city. Peri-Urban areas have comparatively better roads, electricity than their rural counterparts, and this makes them attractive to not only the city dwellers, but also those who live in the rural areas that are not far-flung from the city.

According to Siakito (2014), Land Tenure security is very important in urban planning, particularly for peri-urban areas. Security of land tenure ensures the occupier of land that he/she will continue to occupy the land and benefit from the resources of the land without the threat or risk of involuntary removal, and that they cannot be evicted haphazardly except by means of a known and agreed legal procedure which must be objective, equally applicable and independent. Siakato (2014) further states that for a long time in Kenya, land issues have been at the forefront of the political scene since independence. There has been not only lethargy in land tenure policy implementation, but also widespread dissatisfaction of the same. This is because of irregular allocation of public land, corruption and inefficiency in the land administration system and the resultant ineffective mechanisms of resolving land disputes.

Thuo (2013) posits that peri-urban development is usually complex in several respects; first, there is normally no outright authority or anyone institution charged with the issue but rather a litany of competing and conflicting institutions that are often at times uncoordinated in their

approach to urban development. For example; several institutions are often in charge of land within their respective jurisdictions. An example is the case of where Kenya Railways, Kenya National Highways Authority (KENHA), Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KURA), County Governments and in the case of Nairobi, the Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS). All these have a stake in land issues as well as urban development. As a result, different levels of conflicts are normally manifested in the discharge of their respective mandates. This often complicates development in the peri-urban areas.

At the same time, decision making on land ownership issues in these areas is often slow, which leads to difficulty in the implementation of policies on urban development. Thuo (2014) proposes that in addressing land ownership issues in peri-urban areas, different actors who include the Ministry of Roads, Lands, Transport as well as the County Government need to coalesce in order to synchronize their decisions and plans to contain the unfettered negative effects on people residing in these peri-urban areas.

Therefore, based on the literature reviewed, it is apparent that there exists a gap in knowledge on the demolition processes, the effects of the demolitions and the post demolition support on the residents. To this end, issues such as the legal ownership of land, resettlement, land utilization as well as its consequences need to be reviewed in view of the past and recent contentions which have led to many people's residential properties and business premises being destroyed on the pretext of illegal settlement. This has affected housing and urban development besides rendering many families poor hence exuberating crime in the city. The demolition has had serious effects on the gross domestic product as well as gross national product.

3.1 Methodology

This research will focus on the peri-urban areas of Nairobi which entail Ruiru, Syokimau, Njiru and Kariobangi North. As such, the respondent were purposively selected based on their experiences during the demolition. This was also aided by the link from the affected with each area producing between 10 to 15 males and the females. Data was collected with the aid of questionnaires and interview schedules. Both interview schedules and questionnaires were constructed based on the objectives. This captured the demographic characteristics and the three objectives. The questionnaires and interview schedules were self-administered and collected for three months. Based on voluntary participation and confidentiality, the interviews were arranged prior to and lasted fifteen minutes each. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data was analyzed with the aid of SPSS and presented in form of graphs, charts and

percentages. On the other hand, qualitative data was analysed thematically to buttress quantitative data. This type of data was presented in the form of quotations and verbatim.

4.1 Research Findings and Discussions

4.1.1 Demographic Presentation of the Respondents

The study targeted 50 residents who were selected from Nairobi's peri-urban areas of Njiru, Syokimau, Ruiru, Kariobangi North and Ruai. All the questionnaires that were administered were returned duly filled and this represented a response rate of 100%.

4.1.1.1 Gender of the Respondents

A majority of the respondents, 80% were male while the remaining 20% were female. Since the men were the household heads, the sample was therefore appropriate in terms of eliciting the information that was required. The findings are presented below:

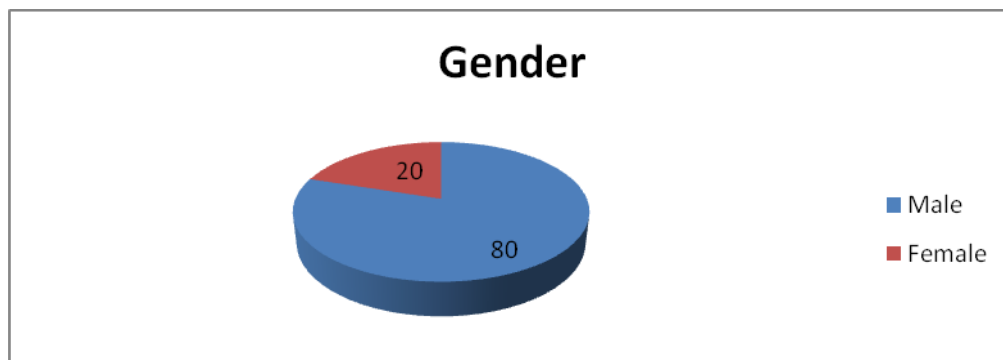


Fig 4.1

4.1.1.2 Place of Residence

The study was aimed at targeting those residents on Nairobi, particularly those who live in the urban fringes of the city. All of them therefore, 100%, were residents of Nairobi.

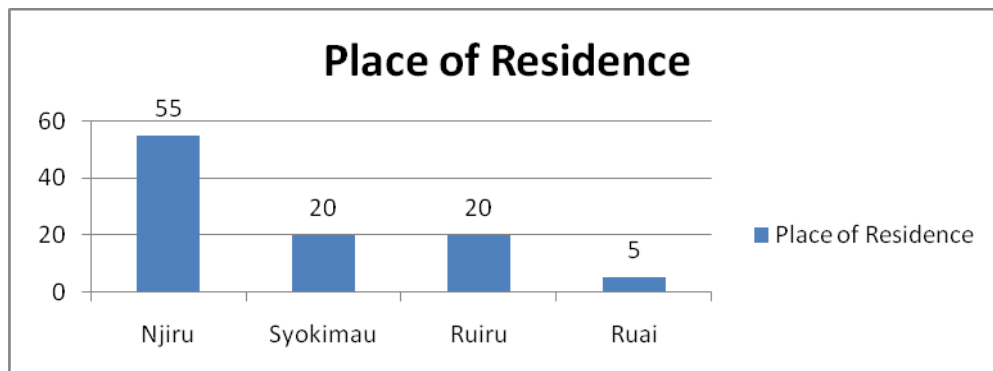


Fig 4.2

They were further asked to indicate the exact place that they reside; a majority of them, 55% were from Njiru, 20% from Syokimau, 20% from Ruiru and 5% from Ruai as can be seen from the figure above.

4.1.3 Length of Stay in the Residence

The respondent's length of stay was an important parameter for the study. It was assumed that the longer they stay, the versed one is on the issues that were under investigation. From the figure below, a majority of them, 55% attested to have their residence for a period of above 2 years and another 40% for a period of between 1 and 2 years. The remaining 5% had lived in the residence for a period of below 1 year as can be demonstrated by the following figure:

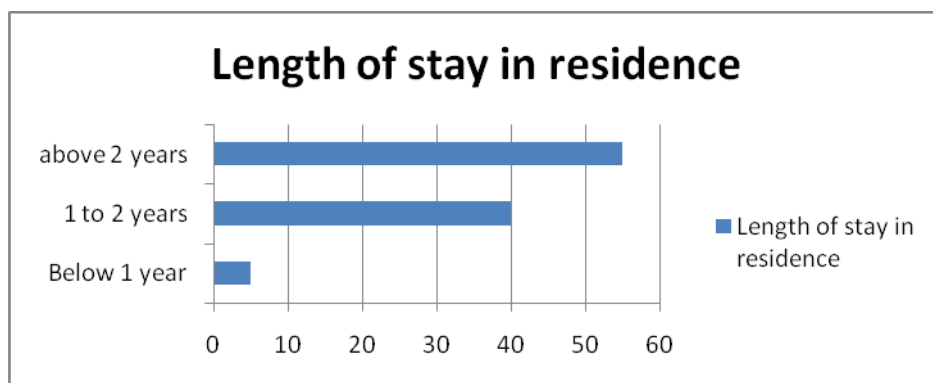


Fig 4.3

4.2 Effects of Demolitions of houses on health of residents

The study sought to establish how the demolition of houses has affected the residents; the first thing was to establish the length of time that the respondents had lived in the demolished houses. The results are presented below:

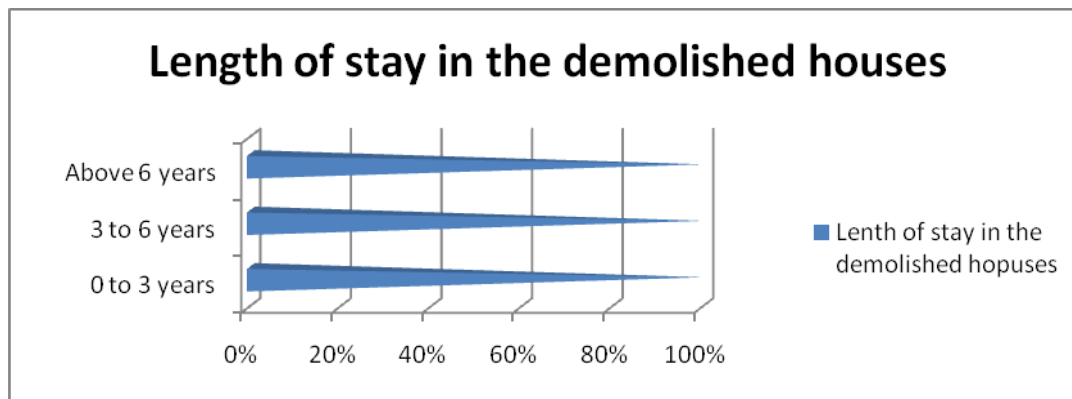


Fig 4.4

From the figure above, a majority of the respondents, 60% had lived in the demolished houses for a period of between 0 to 3 years. Another 20% had lived for a period of above 6 years. This was an apt demonstration that the respondents were experienced enough to understand the effects of demolition of houses. At the same time, the respondents were also asked to indicate their reaction to the demolition of their houses and the responses are presented in the figure below:

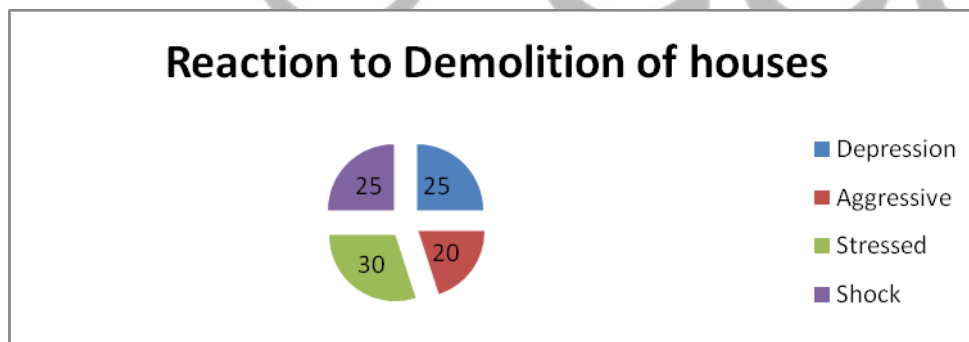


Fig 4.5

From the figure above, it is apparent that the residents underwent psychological effects after their houses were demolished. This occurred through the manifestation of the following behaviours and they stated. Those who experienced depression were 25%, those who experienced aggressiveness were 20% and those who were stressed were 30% and the remaining 20% were violent.

4.2.1 Types of Support Received after Demolition

The respondents were asked to indicate the types of support system they received by the adjacent community as well as the stakeholders. From the responses presented in the figure below, 40% indicated having received counseling services while 50% state that they received food. The remaining 10% stated that they received shelter. This indicated that besides the demolitions which rendered them homeless, the adjacent community was willing to offer psycho-social support.

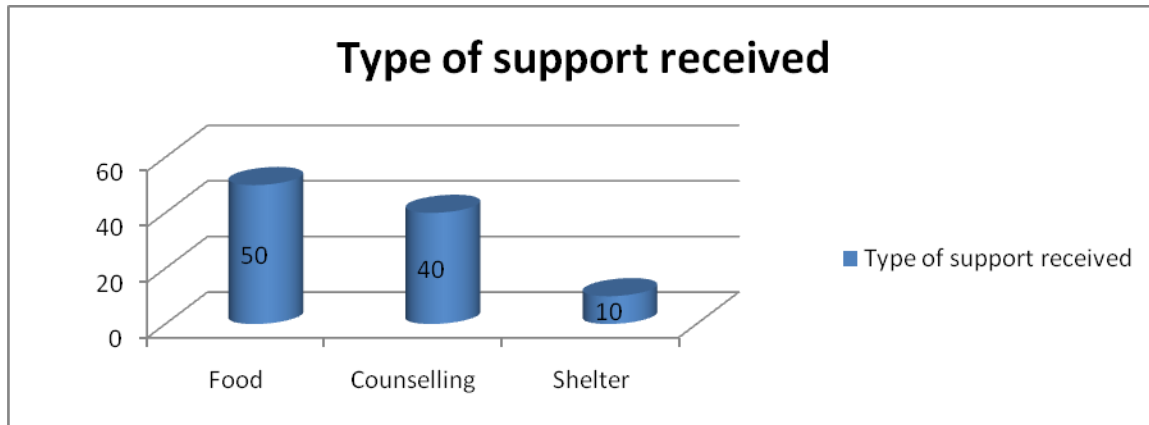


Fig 4.6

This support came in the form of food and upkeep by good Samaritans who were concerned about the welfare of the residents. Furthermore, apart from physical support, the members of the community also offered counseling support to the victims in a bid to assist them to cope with the predicament. This was mainly coordinated by religious institutions. Asked to state the costs that they had incurred in the demolitions, most of them, 80% averred that they had not only suffered direct economic costs, but also indirect costs on treating those medical conditions that had come as a result of the post demolition state of mind. These conditions ranged from stroke, diabetes, pressure and alcoholism.

It (the demolition) really affected my physical and mental health. I was stressed when I could not find a place to stay. I developed problems with my blood pressure due to over thinking. (Respondent 7, Male, 2021)

I suffered from ulcers due to the depressions that I had. (Respondent 31, Male, 2021)

In a bid to find out from the respondents their take regarding their perception on the reasons for the demolition of houses, they had divergent views. On one hand, the respondents stated that the

government ought to bring up affordable housing to cushion them from the state of homelessness that they have been rendered in. Others had the assertion that the demolitions were just a public ploy to bamboozle people; in actual sense, the land on which the houses were destroyed was for some prominent people in the government.

A majority stated that demolitions ought to give dignity to the people as one of the respondents stated:

Destroying people's houses amounts to solving a problem by creating another. Once a person's livelihood has been destroyed, how will that person be able to sustain his family/ what of paying taxes? The government ought to be considerate and look at the situation holistically. (Respondent 26, Female, 2021)

The excerpt above highlights the displeasure that most of the respondents had with demolition. The respondents felt that the demolition was not conducted in a humane way and ended up costing her and other victims their livelihood.

4.3 Effects of Demolishing of Houses on Residential Ties

This study also focused on establishing how the demolition of residential houses by the government affects the residential ties existing in these areas.

The ties are in the form of family gatherings, fellowships, children playing together and education. Their responses were as follows:

4.3.1 Whether House was Demolished alongside Others in the Block

This was aimed to ascertain the extent to which the people living in a block were affected by demolitions. The responses were as follows:

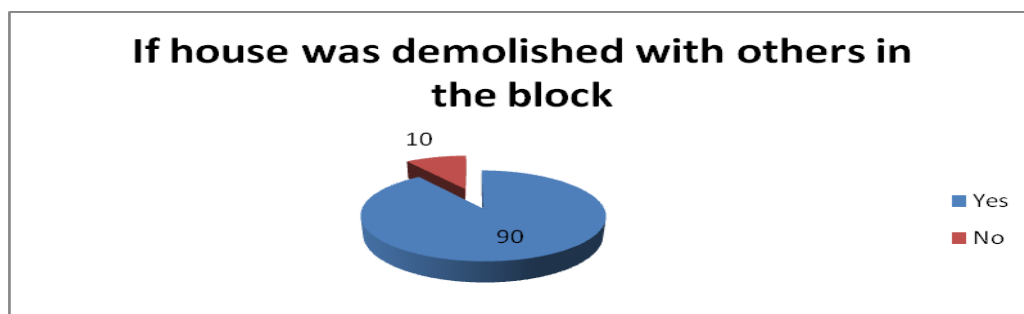


Fig 4.7

From the responses, it is apparent that houses in a block were concurrently destroyed by the government, as can be seen from the 90% response of those who answered in the affirmative. A paltry 10% answered in the negative. The houses that were affected ranged from 5 (20%), 3 (30%) and 7 (50%). According to the respondents, the motivating reasons for the demolitions were disguised; the bottom line was that there was always a hidden hand in the destructions; either to facilitate private interests or if for public reasons, enable individuals to gain.

Seven houses on our block were demolished. Everything came down and our property was destroyed; it seemed like a joke. (Respondent 19, Female, 2021)

All houses in that place have been demolished to pave way for the construction of a go-down. (Respondent 48, Male, 2021).

The extracts above illustrates that the demolitions affected many other families in the respondents' neighborhood. Some were left in disbelief; they could not believe that a place they call home could be destroyed in an instance.

As to where they were relocated, many of the respondents stated that they went to other residential places while others relocated to slum areas while others went back to their rural areas for lack of a livelihood.

4.3.2 Whether a Residential Association was in Place before Demolition

The respondents were also asked to indicate if there was a residential association that fostered residential ties. These associations help in making people living together have a sense of belonging besides assisting members in case of difficulties. Therefore, the respondents were asked to indicate if there was a residential association prior to demolition. The responses are indicated below:

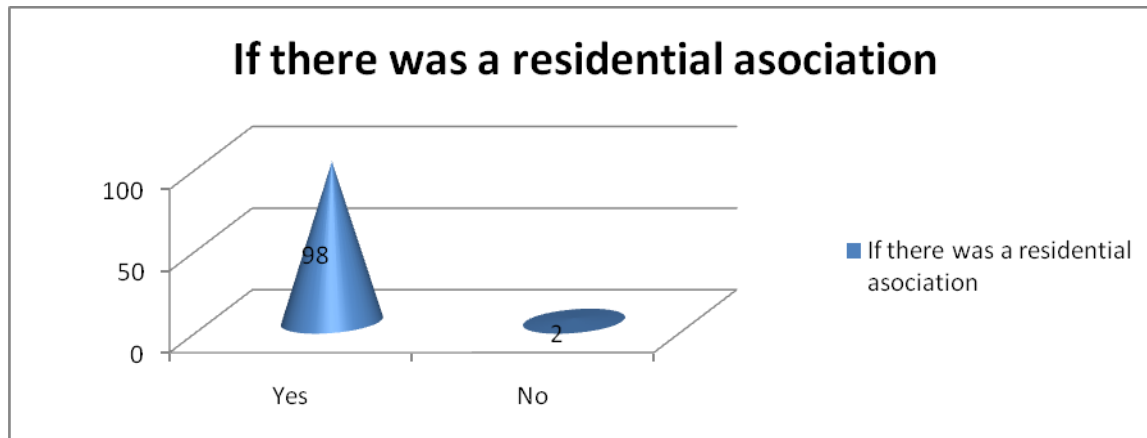


Fig 4.8

From the responses on the figure above, a majority of them, 98% answered in the affirmative while a paltry 0.1% in the negative. Therefore, this suggests that the demolitions weakened the social fabric. As to whether children still attend the same schools they used to before demolitions, many of them responded in the negative indicating that because of the relocation that they had engaged in, the distance could not allow the children to continue with the same schools while others discontinued with schooling.

It (the demolition) really affected the association as everyone went to find the best or a good place to stay with his/ her family as most of them were “hustlers” and the dynasty took over. (Respondent 13, Female, 2021)

Social ties were affected because we do not know where some of our neighbors relocated to; it was everybody for himself. (Respondent 33, Male, 2021)

As a remedy, the respondents were asked what they thought should be done to help people cope with the effects of demolition. The respondents stated that before such a thing occurs, there should be enough sensitization of the residents as well as provision of psychological counseling to prepare them in advance. This is because of the long term psychological effects that the demolitions have affected the behavior of children who have manifested truant behaviours. For example, there is an increase in truancy in the areas with 20% of them manifesting rebellion, 60% theft, 25% paranoia, 15% nervousness and 0.5% isolation.

4.4 Effects of Demolition of Houses on Financial Stability of Residents

Lastly, the study sought to investigate how demolitions of residential houses have affected the financial stability of residents. First, they were asked to indicate how much they had invested in the property that was demolished. The findings are as follows:

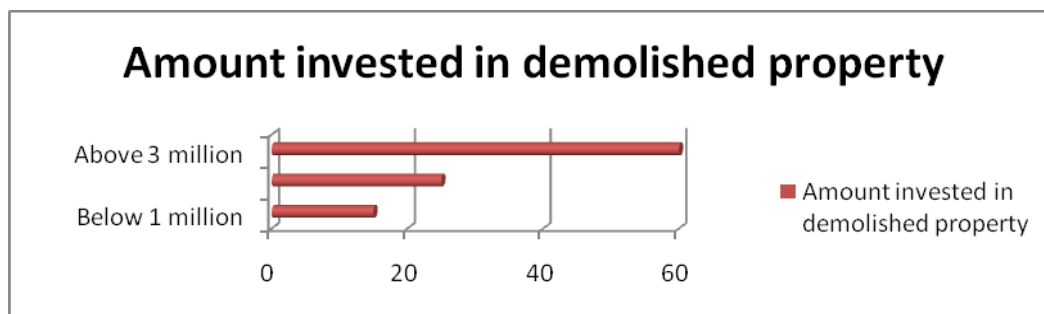


Fig 4.9

From the figure above, a majority, 60% had invested in the destroyed property a sum of more than 3 million Kenyan shillings. At the same time, those who had invested between 1 and 3

million shillings were 25% and the remaining 15% had invested below 1 million. This indicated that the destruction of the houses denied a majority a substantial investment they had put in it.

They were also asked to indicate the sources of the money that they used to construct the houses. 40% cited that they used savings while another 40% used loans they had secured from financial institutions to develop. The remaining 10% used proceeds from business while another 10% cited other sources such as insurance premiums, money from selling other properties and salary. This suggests that the residents were optimistic in the property that they developed gauging from the answer to the question as to whether they did a background check to ascertain the legality and authenticity of the land before transactions. They averred that they did due diligence and they ensured that they have the right documents. However, the documents were declared illegal. They were asked to indicate if their property was insured, 99.9% answered in the negative while 0.1% in the affirmative, meaning that they did not have viable compensatory mechanisms in place. They, therefore, were asked to indicate the plans that they have after demolitions; 60% stated relocation, 30% stated that they would resort to paying rent, while 10% were willing to litigate in court.

I am planning to relocate to another area where I can find cheaper housing: I had not planned for this, it had found me by surprise. (Respondent 14, Male, 2021)

I intend to rent a house nearby because the children are still in school, which is located in this area. I am hoping that the government will give us compensation so that we can rebuild our live. (Respondent 39, Female, 2021)

The respondents were then asked to indicate the measures that can be initiated to prevent an occurrence of similar type. A majority of them were of the view that it is the responsibility of the county government's planning and development department to make it clear and have systematic policies that will ensure people do not invest in property that will later be demolished as that would be against the government's own policy of creating affordable housing as enshrined in the Big Four Agenda. At the same time, they proposed that whenever the government was contemplating to demolish residential houses, it should have a relocation plan from the people in order to ensure continuity of their livelihoods.

5.1 Summary and Recommendations

5.1.1 Summary

The study sought to investigate how demolition of residential houses in Nairobi's Peri-Urban areas affects the residents in several realms, namely health, residential ties as well as financial

stability. It was established that the demolitions have a far reaching effects on the residents in several respects. There is an increased incidence of health cases among the affected, there is also fragmented residential ties as well as well as reduced financial ability by the residents whose investments are usually in ruins. It was denoted that there should be a more holistic, considerate and more long term approach towards the issue of demolishing of the residential houses in order to avoid reversing the gains made in housing as well as hampering the attainment of the government's goals of creating affordable housing as enshrined in the Big 4 Agenda.

5.1.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the study recommends the following:

- The state with the support of other stakeholders should ensure pre and post demolition plans, and resettlement strategies.
- The Government should come up with an open, transparent and accountable mechanism that is verifiable which will ensure that those who want to invest in land do not invest wrongly
- Demolitions should be carried out humanely to avoid the systematic disruption of livelihoods
- Psychosocial support should be organized to the victims whose houses are destroyed to avoid creating a social crisis that can be manifested in truancy
- Legal redress ought to be available for those who carried due diligence in purchasing their property

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESPONDENTS

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is intended to collect data on the **effects of demolition of houses on the residents living in the Peri-Urban Areas of Nairobi**. Any information will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

SECTION A

1. Kindly state your Gender: Male Female
2. Are you a resident of Nairobi? Yes No
3. Indicate place of residence; Njiru Syokimau Ruiru Kariobangi North
Other.....
4. Indicate your length of stay at the residence: Below 1 year 1-2 Year Above 2 Years

PART B: EFFECTS OF DEMOLITIONS OF HOUSES ON THE HEALTH OF RESIDENTS

5. For how long had lived in demolished
house? 0-3 Yrs 3-6 yrs Above 6 years
6. How was your reaction on the house here
demolish Shocked Depressed Stressed Violent
7. List types of support you received after the
demo ns(tick) ancial Counseling Food Shelter Other (specify).....
Explain.....
.....
.....
8. Tell me how was you felt health-
wise.....
.....
.....
9. Have you incurred increased costs on your lth
since the demolition took place? Yes No

10. Indicate the health conditions that you have been treating: Pressure Diabetes Stroke
Any other.....
11. I would like to know your perceptions of reasons for demolitions

PART C: EFFECTS OF DEMOLISHING OF HOUSED ON RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL TIES

12. Was your house demolished alongside others in the same block? Yes No
- b) if yes explain, if no, move to question 22.....
13. How many of your houses in the block that were affected?.....
14. Where did the households relocate to?.....
15. Did you have a residence association before the demolition? Yes No
- b) if yes explain, if no, move to question 16
16. How was the association affected after the demolition?.....

PART D: EFFECTS OF DEMOLITIONS ON CHILDREN LIVING IN THE RESIDENCE

17. Were the children that used to be residents of the demolished houses affected? Yes No
- b) If yes explain, if no, move to question 18
- b) If yes, state how they were affected.....
18. Do the children still attend schools they used to before the demolition exercise? Yes No
- b) If no, where do they attend school?.....
19. List measures that should be put in place to help children cope with the effects of demolitions

.....
.....
.....

20. Tell me how demolition has affected behaviors children in these areas: Truant Theft/crime
Aggressive Other(specify).....

21. Do children manifest these behaviors : Threats worry nervousness Sadness
Unhappy Isolation Others (specify).....

PART E: EFFECTS OF DEMOLITIONS OF HOUSES ON FINANCIAL STABILITY OF RESIDENTS

22. How much had you invested in the property that was demolished?

0-1 million 1-3 million Above 3 million

23. How did you get the money that you used to acquire the property?

Savings Loans Business Others (specify)

24. Was the property insured? Yes No If yes explain, if no, move to question 22

25. If no, what compensation plans do you have after the demolitions

Litigation Relocation Rent None

Other (specify).....

26. What do you think ought to be done to prevent similar incidents from happening in future?

.....
.....
.....
.....

27. Suggest ways of helping those who lost their property

.....
.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU