FIRE MANAGEMENT IN NAIROBI’S INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to determine the causes of fire outbreaks in informal settlements and management practices in Nairobi and establish to what extent, informal settlements are prone to fire outbreaks and to what extent government policy and information available on fire management is helpful in alleviating fire disasters.

Primary data was obtained from a selected sample of 100 household heads selected from Kibera informal settlement and also interviewing 10 key informants from key agencies that deal with fire disasters, policy implementation and slum upgrading projects. Secondary data was obtained from review of relevant books, journals, internet, fire reports and articles.

The study found out that fire in informal settlements is mainly caused by carelessness which may be taken to mean lack of knowledge on fire management. Many more fires are caused by electrical faults and poor infrastructure in the informal settlement.

The study concluded that a successful fire management policy should be put in place and it should include all the stakeholders in the concerned institutional and the residents themselves. The slum upgrading project should also be intensified so as to ensure that all informal settlements are well planned. The Government should also sort out issues of land ownership in informal settlements.

Based on the findings, the study recommends continuous training and awareness campaigns especially on the dangers of illegal electricity connections and a crackdown on those who continue to have illegal connections. Agencies that have been mandated to deal with fire emergencies should make their response swifter so as to lower the amount of damage and also reduce the number of casualties.

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