

A study of attitudes of primary school pupils from the slums of Nairobi towards environmental problems

Author: Mutinda, Jane Wanza

Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to identify the attitudes held by primary school pupils from the slums of Nairobi towards some environmental problems affecting them. The slums in Nairobi as any others in the world have serious housing problems, poor sanitary conditions, inadequate water for domestic use, and garbage/sewage disposal problems, just to name a few. The research drew its sample from pupils from the slums of Nairobi. Specifically, the 120 pupils included in the sample, were from Kibera, Mathare, Kawangware, Riruta and Kangemi. It was evident that the researcher was going to have problems in identifying which pupils come from the slums since most primary schools are just adjacent to the slums and cater for both pupils from the slums and from adjacent estates. As such, the researcher approached an organization in Nairobi with projects in the slums. Through this organization, the researcher was able to identify the right respondents. The researcher developed 24 items based on the Likert type of scale to measure attitude. The instrument included open-ended questions in which the pupils were required to fill in the appropriate responses. The researcher in the projects involved administered the questionnaires personally. The pupils responses were tabulated and converted into percentages and means calculated. Tables were prepared for all items. The research findings were: 1. Most pupils expressed the urgent need to have the slums improved in terms of water, proper sewage systems electricity etc. 2. Most pupils expressed their willingness to participate in activities to end environmental problems within their communities. 3. A fairly large group felt that housing and water are major problems in their localities. 4. A significant number of the pupils were aware of the implications of some environmental problems on their health. The researcher made several recommendations which could ease certain problems within the slums: 1. Non-profit organizations can be formed by local professionals who can work with community organizations within the slums to build sewers, better houses using local materials. 2. Mobile training teams should be set up by the government and nongovernmental organizations to visit local slums dwellers with information about sanitation and preventive measures against common diseases. 3. There is need to develop attitudes and practical skills which enhance environmental quality and reduces environmental degradation. The researcher also made specific suggestions for further research: 1. A comprehensive research can be done to find out the factors that have led to the growth of informal schools within the slums and the impact they have had on the slum community. 2. A research can also be done to find out the factors behind the persistent growth of street children in the city of Nairobi. This research can look at their background and the factors that have influenced them to take up the street business. 3. Since many organizations have taken up to assist people in the slums of Nairobi, a research can be conducted to find out the impact of such organizations on the communities in respect to education, health, and other significant needs.