

74. Role of societal norms in raw sewage disposal in water sources, Mukuru Slums, Nairobi County, Kenya

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80

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Abstract

A sustainable sanitation system is economical, socially acceptable, technical, institutional, and environmentally friendly, cutting across the service delivery chain. Raw sewage disposal into water sources is a significant environmental and health concern in many informal settlements in Kenya, due to inadequate access to proper sanitation facilities leading to water source contamination. Despite the severe environmental and health impacts, there is limited knowledge about the factors influencing these practices. Therefore, this study's aim was to determine the role of societal norms influencing the discharge of raw sewage into water sources in Mukuru slums, Nairobi, Kenya. Materials and Methods: A cluster proportionate random sampling was used to identify household heads, while key informants were purposively selected. A quantitative study of 246 household heads was collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using the Pearson Chi-Square Test at 95% Confidence Interval. Qualitative findings supported the data transcribed and manually presented in narratives. Results: The study findings revealed that 96.1% of raw sewage was discharged into water sources (river/tributaries), while 87.7% witnessed raw sewage disposal practices. These have majorly contributed to poor sanitation within slums and water pollution for city dwellers and people living downstream. The raw sewage disposal practice was associated with societal norms such as belief (85.1%), pressure from communities (46.6%), collective responsibilities (43.4%), societal networks (46.4%), reluctance to invest (49.4%), communication, cooperation and coordination (43.8%). Conclusion: This study concludes that poor societal norms contributed to raw sewage disposal into water sources. The study recommends community education on values such as beliefs, collective responsibilities, the presence of social networks, proper communication, cooperation, and coordination to prevent raw sewage disposal in the area and create an enabling environment for all. Further study recommends researching climate change's effects on sanitation infrastructure in informal urban settings.

Keywords: *Societal Norms, Raw Sewage, Disposal, Community Engagement, Sanitation,*