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# TANGAZA COLLEGE

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

(C.U.E.A)

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

Mission Department

## **THE RESPONSE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY TO GROWING POVERTY IN URBAN SETTLEMENT**

*(A Case study of Mathare Slum)*

*An essay submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of  
sacrae Theologiae Baccalaureus (STB)*

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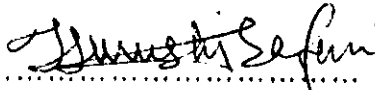
NAIROBI, Kenya.



# STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original Essay and has not been submitted to any College or University for academic credit. All information from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

Signed:



.....  
Mushi, Fidelis Safari M.I.

Date:

14<sup>th</sup> FEB. 2002

This Long Essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the College **Supervisor**

Signed:

.....  
Rev. Fr. Pierli, Francesco M.C.C.J.

Date:

.....

## ***DEDICATION***

To all the ***Camillian*** religious, to put more heart in their hands while exercising the Gospel of love in serving the sick-poor.

I also dedicate this work to the beloved ***family*** that brought me in the Christian faith.

***“ Ad majorem Dei gloriam “***

## Acknowledgement

*I would like, in the first place; to thank and praise the almighty God for giving me life to see this thesis through.*

*My sincere gratitude and appreciation go to my supervisor, Rev. Fr. Pierli, Francesco M.C.C.J of Tangaza College, for his untiring and valuable guidance in this work.*

*I would be failing in my duties if I did not thank my respective superiors, Rev. Fr. Camillus Neurey M.I. of Dar-Es-Salaam and Rev. Fr. Paul Guarize M.I. in Nairobi, and all the Camillian confreres from near and far; for their empathetic, moral and material support to this level.*

*I highly appreciate the prayers and a word of encouragement both from close and distance friends and in particular way the family back home.*

*I will always remember my fellow Tangaza students especially the Choir members for the hopeful wishes and tenderness.*

*Last but not least, I will offer a prayer of supplication for the faithful readers to my work namely: Mr. Mwaniki Joseph, Brothers Omenya Gabriel, Kivuva Robert, Morara Julias And the rest for their moral support.*

***“May God bless you and bring you the fulfillment of life, to portray the true image of Christ the way you did to me. Good people, without your intervention I couldn't have managed.”***

**To all, I say Thank you**

**God bless.**

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# ABBREVIATIONS

1.	<b>AIDS</b> .....	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
2.	<b>AMREF</b> .....	African Medical Research Foundation
3.	<b>Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam</b> ( <i>lat</i> )..	"Everything in the glory of God"
4.	<b>Bro.</b> .....	Brother
5.	<b>CCC</b> .....	The Catechism of the Catholic Church
6.	<b>C.U.E.A</b> .....	Catholic University of Eastern Africa
7.	<b>Cf.</b> .....	Confer, compare
8.	<b>Dt.</b> .....	Deuteronomy
9.	<b>D.C.</b> .....	District Commissioner
10.	<b>D.O.</b> .....	Division Officer
11.	<b>E.g.</b> .....	( <i>lat</i> )..... <i>exempli gratia</i> , for example
12.	<b>Etc.</b> .....	( <i>lat</i> )..... <i>et cet-era</i> , and other similar things /and the rest,/and so on
13.	<b>Fr.</b> .....	Father
14.	<b>ff.</b> .....	And the following
15.	<b>Gen</b> .....	Genesis
16.	<b>GOK</b> .....	Government of Kenya
17.	<b>HIV</b> .....	Human Immune Virus
18.	<b>i.e.</b> .....	( <i>lat</i> )..... <i>id est</i> , that is to say
19.	<b>Km</b> .....	Kilometer
20.	<b>KANU</b> .....	Kenya African National Union
21.	<b>Kshs</b> .....	Kenyan shillings
22.	<b>Mt.</b> .....	Matthew
23.	<b>M.I.</b> .....	( <i>lat</i> )..... <i>Ministero degli Infermi</i> , servants/ministers of the sick
24.	<b>M.C.C.J.</b> .....	( <i>lat</i> )..... <i>Missionario Congregatione Cordis Yesus</i> Missionary Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
25.	<b>Mr.</b> .....	Mister
26.	<b>NB</b> .....	( <i>lat</i> )..... <i>Nota Bene</i> , note well
27.	<b>NDP</b> .....	Native Development Party
28.	<b>Numb.</b> .....	Number
29.	<b>p.</b> .....	Page
30.	<b>pp.</b> .....	Pages
31.	<b>Publ.</b> .....	Publish
32.	<b>Ref.</b> .....	Reference
33.	<b>Rev.</b> .....	Reverend
34.	<b>St.</b> .....	Saint
35.	<b>SDP</b> .....	Social Democratic Party
36.	<b>TV</b> .....	Television
37.	<b>UN</b> .....	United Nations
38.	<b>Vat.</b> .....	Vatican
39.	<b>%</b> .....	Percentage

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## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

### *"THE RESPONSE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY TO GROWING POVERTY IN URBAN SETTLEMENT"*

#### **MOTIVATIONS**

My names are Bro. Mushi, Fidelis Safari. I am a Camillian religious from Tanzania. My home area is Moshi District in Kilimanjaro region. The District is divided into two Sub-locations, that is Moshi town and Moshi Village (my birth place). The Chagga people (tribe) in Moshi are the majority, whereas the Pare people are a minority.

I'm now thirty four years old. I spent half of my present age (including the primary and secondary education) in the village. During that period, I encountered a variety of enriching and challenging experiences. The Chagga people to a great extent cherish and embrace the traditional style of life.

In the seventeenth year, I underwent a traditional initiation ceremony which starts with the ritual of circumcision. This rite of passage accompanied with different teachings of traditional mores and way of life of the Chagga broadened my horizon of thought pattern. In this way, I appreciated my people's way of life. Thus, I had an opportunity of familiarising myself with the traditional values and norms. The values and norms are meant to enhance and restore peace and harmony in the society in communion with the spirit world. In fact, both the formal and informal education acquired, aim at perpetuating the values and norms of the society. In this aspect then the Chagga people are distinctively religious.

After my A-level education (forms five and six) in the seminary, I had a period of three years (1992-1995) for a personal vocation (life) discernment. Moreover, it accorded me free time to venture into the major cities like Dar-Es-Salaam, Arusha, Dodoma and Mwanza. By partaking of the new city life my spectrum changed and transcended the previous experiences in the village.

In my observation, the more I move towards the global society, the more the life style changes, whilst peace and harmony deteriorate. In fact, the hardships of life among city dwellers, in my own opinion, have something to do with the violation of the socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural systems. This reality always has the tendency of surpassing a given cultural set up. Hence, the major resolution requires a complete metanoia (that is an inward change of attitude from the root cause with the frame work of the traditional values due to the lack of traditional norms). The blind acquisition of the contemporary life styles has very destructive and incurable consequences. The intermarriage between the Western culture and the African traditional values and norms has

resulted to a half backed culture that has no ancestral reference. Most of the African cities (Nairobi included) have and are victims of poverty syndrome. This has opened avenues for the influx of other cultures which, have overtaken the traditional values and norms. In fact, some people are living in situations that can be literally described as sub-human.

The cultural shock that I experienced in the cities of Tanzania was further compounded upon coming Nairobi in January, 1995. In my pastoral experience with the people in Mathare, I have witnessed this cultural shock and it is an issue that will be gradually exposed in this study. In fact, this will definitely give a direction and be an area of focus in my future mission. My point of view will be centred on the real and practical situation based on the social, political, economic and psycho-spiritual deviations. We will therein give the survey, a theological reflection and an over view of pastoral suggestions.

Actually, the Western invasion has left many of the inhabitants always in misery and at times not even sure of their daily basic needs (bread, clothing and shelter). In this respect, the Catechism on the merciful Father, God of Love must be well integrated to such a society. Otherwise, despite the fact that I am a student of theology in the Mission stream and a future missionary, this being the point of concern; to specifically know the response of the Christian community towards the issue, I'm eager to review on this by the very reason that I also belong to that same community as a faithful of Christ.

### CHAPTERS IN A NUT-SHELL

We shall have a total number of four chapters in this case study. The chronology shows a prolegomena to the issue as our first chapter. In this respect, we shall have in the first place, point of insertion then scope of work, after which the working definitions will follow. The working hypothesis will lead to a brainstorm on the goal of our study, namely slum reality.

Chapter two is particularly a focus on the socio-cultural analysis. Therefore, it will give practical insights on the location of the slum, its history, societal divisions, level of issue, structures, cultural analysis and the most challenging issues. It is in this chapter that all our readers will have a tour to Mathare slum, though metaphysically.

Our second-last chapter gives a theological reflection on the slum reality. It intends to intermarry the human poverty with the evangelical poverty, whose aim is the kingdom that is already in our midst and is yet to be realised.

Finally, in chapter four we will discuss about the pastoral action ought to be taken by the Christian community to counteract the challenges. The appendix list is intentionally meant to update the readers with a deep knowledge of the reality in our issue and therefore to move us towards action on the stipulation.

The general conclusion will profoundly qualify the study with a clear and precise summary and the point of emphasis.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. PROLEGOMENA TO THE ISSUE

#### 1:0 Introduction

At the beginning of our study, it is preferable to put down the body of directives that guide towards the destiny. Our first chapter then is meant to specify the point of insertion and the view that imbued in me the zeal to dedicate myself to this issue. In a gradual exposition, we shall have the scope of work plus the working definitions. There after is the point of working hypothesis with a definite note on the Christian community.

#### 1:1 INSERTION

Mathare is the area of my weekly apostolate, and for this I am fortunate to experience slum reality which is and continues being a pastoral challenge of the missionary work of today. In this sense, however, unresolved and rampaging poverty persists as an endless phenomenon among the city dwellers.

In the real sense it (slum reality) looks sad and evokes a heart felt sympathy because of its marks of destitution (i.e. Street children/families, different types of immorality, oppression, exploitation, violence, etc.) that are seen around the beauty of the city. The town is coloured by both the very rich and the very poor classes, and the two are found incompatible, always striving to separate due to an overlapping style of life. This state of life has become a determining factor to relationships in the city, and so creating a discriminatory line to which the weak and less endowed end up in the so called *shums*.

The concrete social reality in the slum has led many into the hopelessness and insecurity; wherein lies the foundation of our mission

to respond to the needy. Therefore, the zealous response towards restoration of the poor will have to review on all the human spheres through which the seed of acute deprivation gets to grow.

## **1:2 SCOPE OF WORK**

Poverty is quite a general phenomenon, it hovers over the economic, political and socio-cultural aspects. Our frame work will be too selective and particularize on a given area of study. In fact our focus will be on Mathare slum of Nairobi, that is of course being inter-related with many slum situations around the City and obviously others from the global world circumstances. So, the mode of our study will appear to be more inductive than deductive, with an intention to analyze and evaluate this situation in the light of the Gospel.

## **1:3 WORKING DEFINITIONS**

Here we are given a definite concept of the terminology used in respect to the nature of our work.

### **1:3:1 THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

This is meant at substantiating the unity of the followers of Christ including both the Catholics and non-Catholics. Thus to become a member one has to profess the faith in the Baptism either of water, blood or desire. In fact it is an inclusion of all the people of good will (whose faith is either implicitly or explicitly based on the Christian values) hence this negates the notion by St. Cyprian "extra ecclesia nulla salus" (outside the Church no salvation).

The Scriptures recognize and both celebrate the life of individual persons held as great saints (eg. Abel, Enoch and Noah) before God started the history of the chosen race (Israelites) and also outside Israel (eg. Melchizedek, Lot and Job), after God had initiated the history of the chosen people. The God of Israel is seen as causing the appearance of

individuals of great holiness outside the specific history of salvation he was bringing forward with Israel.

According to St. Matthew's revelation, (13:36-43), the Christian community is both composed of holy and sinners, rich and the poor, believers and pagans. Since that is what the Church continues to be, the theology of Matthew then retains its value for good.<sup>1</sup>

### 1:3:1:1 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNION IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The theme is deeply rooted from the Scriptures due to the fact that, the very first Christian community (in the history of the Church) was characterized by the spirit pointing towards leading radical life of the Gospel. From the Acts 4:32-35, it is told of the people of one heart and mind with no needy person among them, having everything in common.

The community is an exemplary at mutual relationships in the manifestation of the love of God himself like in Dt. 6:5 (the first commandment of loving God abundantly). It was a group with an ideal "togetherness" in prayer, listening and common concerns. Their unity goes beyond the sharing of the same faith and social meeting into the economic up-heaves. Their heartfelt fraternity was purposely aimed at eliminating the difference between "the have" and "have-nots."

Just as in the community of Matthew, to live the love of Christ in practice is difficult due to the traditional circumstances and biases, but as for the Christians they must be ready for difficult choices as well. Christians therefore should never fear to criticize the negative aspects of a given culture in the course of the preaching of Christ as he conditioned his followers to do.

The faithful should realize that anything contrary to the message of Christ, cannot be a genuine human value and there is nothing to lose in

giving it up. Vat.II brings in the aspect of inculturation so as to Christianize our cultures by elevating them to supernatural level. This will help a lot in practicing the gift of our Christian faith.<sup>2</sup>

### 1:3:2 POVERTY IN MATHARE

Right from the history of the human existence, poverty has been a companion of human beings in every society. However, poverty seem to be point of concern to the modern world especially the Church. This is a situation where by a person remains in hopelessness. Our point of concern will stick to the socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural circles of Mathare slum.

Well, in accordance to the study of reports of the World Bank in 1994 and AMREF- GOK in 1997, poverty is defined as a multidimensional phenomenon comprising economic, political, physiological and psychological deprivation. Its manifestations are vulnerability, powerlessness, humiliation, inferiority, physical weakness, isolation, lack of assets and inaccessibility to basic needs.<sup>3</sup>

The issue will be widely discussed with the intention to expose the presence of "the needy society" in the Church of Mathare and the world at large. Having gone through the meaning and causes, the topic will aspire for a resolution that is to be manifested by the Christian community in their example of true Gospel life.

Next is the ideal view by Gustavo who defines poverty as "... a sub human situation. Concretely, to be poor means to die in hunger, to be illiterate, to be exploited by others, not to know that you are being exploited and not to know that you are a person."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The AFRICAN BIBLE, short NOTES on the Gospel of St. Matthew.

<sup>3</sup> Joel Mukama, Africa in need of a prophetic Church, in AFER (Oct./Dec., 1984), Vol. 40 Num.5&6,p.7

Aloys Ayako, Review of Poverty in Kenya, (Nairobi): Action Aid, 1997, p.6.

<sup>4</sup> Gustavo G., A Theology of Liberation, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, (1973), pp.288-289.

However, poverty especially in Africa might be a situation where by one cannot afford the basic needs of transport, food, water, health care and education. It consists of lower global expectancy, lower salary, higher population growth and increase in immorality. It is therefore a state of hopelessness to sustain one's life.

### 1:3:3 THE RESPONSE TO THE SLUM REALITY

Here we mean any answer that brings people closely in touch with the real situation. The greatest commandment given by our Lord Jesus Christ is specifically on the love of God with all our skills and the neighbour as one's self (Mt. 22:34-40). All our life preoccupations then have to do with actualization of this word.

So we shall examine the much that has been done with an addition of a personal proposal through which the community will be moved to be more optimistic.

### 1:3:4 URBAN SETTLEMENT

Population displacement is a constant phenomenon in the human history while rural to urban exodus is a positive element in the process of socio-economic development.

Nairobi, like any other African and the world metropolitan areas, deserves to be an urban city due to her many local and international structures, developmental issues and as a player in the world systems  
*(Ref. Appendix II, p. 59)*

Furthermore it (the city) is well equipped with a number of small (*Jua-kali*) and major industries, not only that but the prominent offices as well. It is of course a center for both the economic and political arena and so this character has always given a way to the ever-growing poverty among the great percentage of her dwellers.

In our study then, the theme will stick on the area typical of mixed cultural backgrounds, faiths, gender and life status, namely "slum."

#### 1:4 **WORKING HYPOTHESIS: Faith and service of the poor abandoned**

In reference to the Gospel of St. Matthew, it is said about the day of judgement, "...*whatever you refused to help one of these least important ones, you refused to help me.*" (Mt. 25: 31-46) This is a call to serving the most abandoned in the virtue of the Gospel, and thus becomes the only point of focus as a conclusion to our case study here.

### **CONCLUSION**

Chapter one intended to serve the readers by providing basic concepts. The nature of our goal here is to reach the point of special concern for the poor, which is ought of the Christian Community.

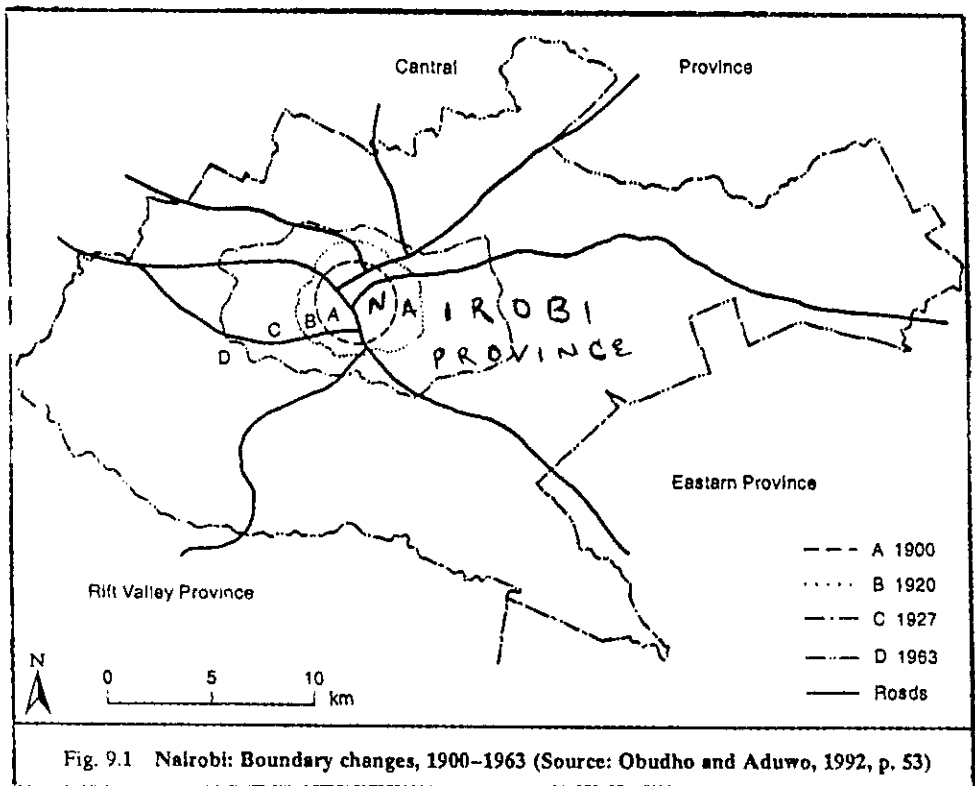
The real community of the followers of Christ is called to suffer with the suffering and rejoice with the happy. It has then to transcend the daily life into the suffering, death and joy of resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and master. Hence the response as such will reflect on the spirit of sharing both our faith and possessions so as to uplift the needy and marginalized. Our next chapter is going to analyze critically the nature of the society of our dealing.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS**

#### **2:0 Introduction**

From the previous chapter we are already introduced to the point of our concern. Mathare slum is situated in the City of Nairobi within Nairobi Province that borders Central, Eastern and Rift Valley provinces.



The place is a flock of different tribes (Luo, Kikuyu, Kisii, Kamba, Masai,...), races (Europeans, Indians,...), nationalities (Sudanese, Tanzaniapns, Ugandans and Congolese...), status people (rich, poor, educated, illiterate...) and faiths (Christian, Moslem, Hinduism, Traditionalists, Devil worshippers and many others plus a good number of other denominations).

Table 9.2 Nairobi: Population by race for selected years, 1906–1989

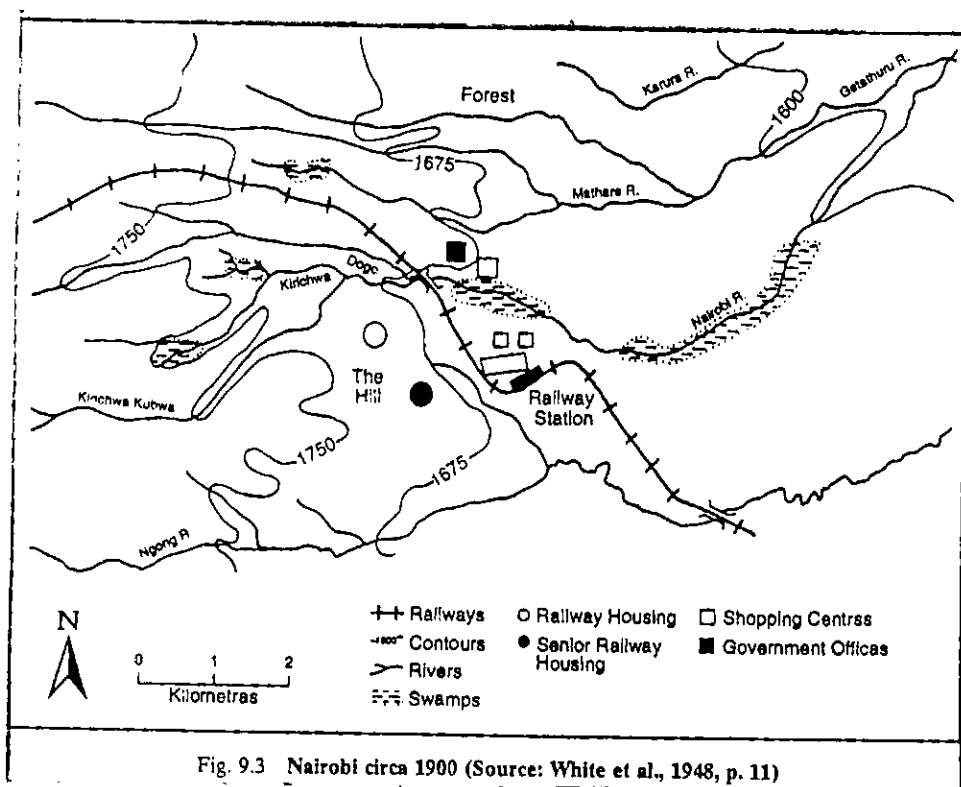
Year	Africans		Europeans		Asians		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1906	6,351	60.4	579	5.5	3,582	34.1	10,512	100.0
1928	19,112	64.0	1,492	5.0	9,260	31.1	29,864	100.0
1931	26,761	55.8	5,195	10.8	15,988	33.4	47,944	100.0
1936	27,700	55.8	5,357	10.8	16,549	33.4	49,606	100.0
1948	66,336	55.8	10,830	9.1	41,810	35.1	118,976	100.0
1962	157,865	59.2	21,476	8.0	87,454	32.8	266,795	100.0
1969	421,079	82.6	19,185	3.8	69,022	13.6	509,286	100.0
1979	768,032	92.8	19,050	2.3	40,693	4.9	827,775	100.0
1989	1,260,149	95.1	15,822	1.2	48,599	3.7	1,324,570	100.0

Sources: East African Statistical Department (1986), Republic of Kenya (1966, 1971, 1981, 1994).

The historical facts express about Maasai people (the herdsmen) as been primitively the indigenous of the present Nairobi.<sup>5</sup> Such a variety in the city today, has being for both the good and bad experience by different individuals.

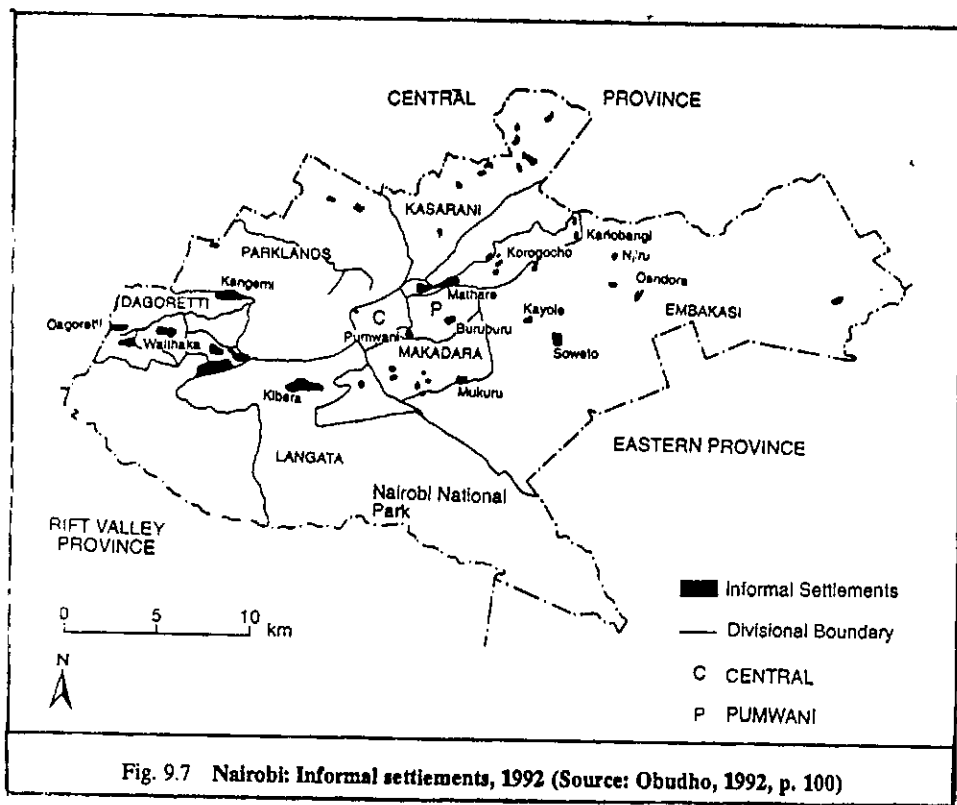
This chapter therefore deals with the poverty issue and its repercussions upon the slum. It is divided into seven sections. The first being the *location* of the slum, second is a *historical note*, then the third will highlight on the *societal divisions* that promote poverty. The fourth will talk about *level of issue* after which the fifth will narrate the *structures* that already exist in favour of the situation. The sixth section gives an observation on the *cultural analysis* in particular. Lastly, the seventh will examine the most *challenging issues*.

## 2:1 LOCATION



Oral Tradition tells about "Nairobi" been named from the Maasai name "enkare nairobi" meaning the place of good cold water that was conducive for livestock.

Mathare is one among the many slums present in the City of Nairobi, (such as Kibera, Korogocho, Pumwani, Mukuru, Dandora and the like). It is part of Kasarani division in the East section of the city, about 10Kms from the central business district. The slum is situated along Mathare Valley of River Nairobi and it is found in between Pumwani, Buruburu and Korogocho slums. The place is served by two parishes, that is St. Benedict and St. Teresa's, under the Catholic Diocese of Nairobi.



In general, Nairobi is marked with uneven population distribution. Among the many reasons for this would be the question of available cheap accommodation found in the slums, unlike Estates, also the distance from the industrial area. Unfortunately almost all the slums in Nairobi are situated in the low lands of the City, the areas that are subject to frequent floods and the heavy flow of waste materials. So Mathare ranges the second after Kibera in terms of population density.

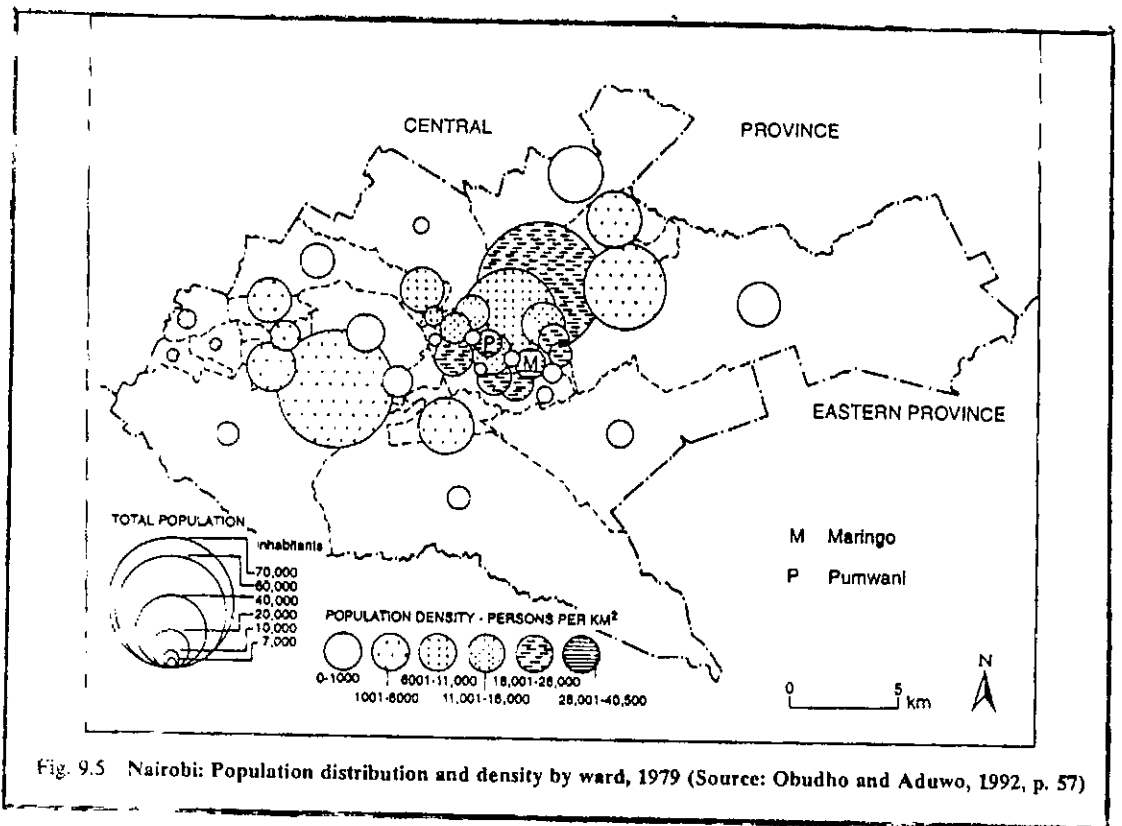


Fig. 9.5 Nairobi: Population distribution and density by ward, 1979 (Source: Obudho and Aduwo, 1992, p. 57)

The place is located in a remote area that is Mathare Valley, in fact it lacks basic facilities most remarkable amongst them being health services, education, shelter, communication skills. The hopeless situation in this slum leads majority of people to theft, child-labour, aggressiveness, alcoholic, street dwellers, prostitution, crime and other forms of immorality. All that one can sense is fear and danger on entering this sprawling slum.

## 2:2 HISTORY OF THE SLUM

In the course of expressing the social phenomena, we shall explore on the meaning of the term "slum" in a historical context.

In 1986 more than 600 million people (45% of urban world population) were forced to live in the fringes of large modern cities commonly known as *shanty towns* or *slums*. They differ from country to country according to a given language. Some of the terms used for them include: *bidonvilles*, *shantytowns*, *Canico*, *Mussequ*, *Takita*, *brarek* (to

mean "hut areas"). But whatever the name; the reality and the common elements remain the same.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently in many cities, misery permeates the streets even in the luxury areas. Human being sleeps beside side walls under old blankets, plastic papers or cardboard. No doubt, they survive under sub-human conditions. Such a condition applies to Mathare as well.

(Ref. Appendix I, p. 57)

Mathare valley was then *first stum* in Nairobi, followed by many others like Kariobangi, Kibera and Korogocho that came up recently due to the rising demand for housing within the low income bracket. The other slums, though not as old as Mathare, grew up rapidly between 1960 - 1980 under the impetus of the massive rural-urban migration.<sup>7</sup>

Table 9.1 Nairobi: Population for selected years, 1906-1994

Year	Area (ha)	Population	% increase p.a.
1906	1,813	10,512	4.4
1928	2,537	29,864	17.1
1931	2,537	47,944	} 6.5
1936	2,537	49,606	
1944	2,537	108,900	
1948	2,537	118,976	
1962	2,537	266,795	5.9
1969	68,945	509,286	9.8
1979	68,945	827,775	5.1
1989	68,945	1,324,570	4.8
1994 <sup>a</sup>	68,945	1,690,000	5.0 <sup>a</sup>

Sources: East African Statistical Department (1986), Republic of Kenya (1966, 1971, 1981, 1994).  
a. Estimated.

It is always misconceived that Mathare squatter settlement is the largest slum area in Nairobi followed by Kibera then Korogocho settlements, but according to the findings of this research, Kibera squatter settlement is by far the largest. (Ref. Appendix III, p. 62)

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Moschetti, Urban Ministry in Africa: need for new models. (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba publ, 1997), p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Oral information by the slum dwellers.

Today no urbanization occurs in Africa or in any other developing country without slum areas. In fact, some of the elements like: the historical colonization, urban life, political leadership and corruption, tribal clashes, and gender suppression are seen as the causes to slum reality and this is the proof that Mathare slum was not a spontaneous off shoot of the city, various important factors account for its growth. In fact it influences individuals and families by imposing on them certain primary rules of social life, which are no longer of the village and certainly, not the affluent part of the city.

Often when speaking of life in the slums, it is the negative side that is emphasized, as much as this may be true, anyway, considering the poverty, lack of water, sanitation, electricity and other public services including education and healthcare, the promiscuity and general disorder that are the order of the day.<sup>6</sup>

*(Ref. Appendix VII, pp. 67-68)*

Likewise, Mathare slum is a consequence of the urban migration. It has being an outcome of the situation right after independence whereas many people were found land-less especially in the most productive areas, and so moving towards the city in the struggle for sustaining families. For the sake of economizing a little of their earning, environmental conditions forced them to live in the temporary settlements along Mathare valley that was free of use. A constant increase of such residential areas resulted into a slum. However, such tents were later on grabbed by the rich and some were replaced by the present store buildings and yet by force possessing the ready made huts of the poor around the place by claiming to already have a title deed over the land.

In fact, the common problems not only at Mathare but the whole of slum issue in Africa and probably the world in general, which affect people's way of life, culture, religiosity and economy must include: poverty, unemployment, poor housing, lack of public services, denying people their civil land and human rights with other social injustices, and the ever increasing number of street dwellers.

### 2:3 **SOCIETAL DIVISIONS**

In reference to the inclusion of the variety of people with different background in the city, the urban reality has made a cause to societal groupings. Such small units of people were mainly fostered by the degree of access to actualization of the human individual potentialities. So, people with synonymous state of life or behaviour are found flocking together in terms of:

#### 2:3:1 **Ethnicity:**

The place is always note with a phase of tribal units. The Luo, Kikuyu, Kisii and the Luhya who are naturally separate from one another and even hardly can inter-marry. Each and every one is proud of his/her traditional customs.

The rental houses are also found in a kind of sections such that the Kikuyu, Luo, Kisii and Luhya each occupying a given (particular) corner in the slum, respectively. A mixture of two individuals of different tribes becomes accidental in a way that he/she will not get intimately close with the rest simply because of prejudices already existing in the society against one another. For instance a Kikuyu lady will definitely refuse a Luo, "the fish eaters" meanwhile a Luo is against

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel Moschetti, Urban Ministry in Africa: need for new models, (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba publ., 1997), pp.18-19

Kikuyu for their "Githeri" (traditional food) or both against Kamba people with their "Muthokoi."

Language becomes a linking factor between people, such that for an effective mission, it needs a prior knowledge on the tongue and background of each and every individual group in particular.

### 2:3:2 **Religion(s):**

Christians and Moslems are found to be peculiar from one another in terms of faith and beliefs. In anyway, the area has a number of about thirty Small Christian communities. The Moslems are also present with their special own way of adoration and proclamation. That is with the use of powerful loud-speakers in every early morning, on Fridays and the normal five prayer sessions a day.

Apart from these two main ones, we also have many other religious groups (sects) present in the slum. The Christians are divided into the various denominations. Despite the common goal that is "Christ", yet a Legio Marian can feel uncomfortable and rivalry with a salvation army while a salvation can accuse a Catholic of not knowing the Bible by heart. Most of them have been formed under the tribal basis. For instance, the Luo have got songs, Bible and liturgical modals of their own tongue and rhythm, the same applies to Luhya, Kikuyu and Akamba, so they only feel like praying once are set in their own tune.

However, the degree of hospitality and Christian love by one tribe to a stranger (member of another tribe) will very much depend on the kind of picture (prejudice) pre-existing among them.

The religious groups have got their own style of life through which they show off their presence and importance. In the spirit of fundamentalism, "Mungiki" sect for instance, becomes so aggressive to any element of evil system in the society.

### 2:3:3 **Classes:**

From the social point of view, Mathare area is overshadowed by a descending order of social hierarchy. This is being manifested in the dualistic nature of relationships, such as the landlords who take advantage over the poor, the elite whom by political and social status of governance get to exercise their power over the subject, superficially. There are also the street families that are totally dependent to providence for their daily needs unlike the medium class. Lastly, we have the class of job-seekers, they are found roaming around and at times being associated with immorality.

### 2:3:4 **Gender:**

There must be a difference from one single tribe to another according to a given cultural background, but the common element shared by all is that; a woman is always given a passive voice to public issues and decisions. The society (so called) of Mathare is found to be of male domination, women are ought to serve men at all cost and take care of children. The unmarried women (once careless) are being manipulated as objects for pleasure. Love in the families becomes an obligation to be exercised by women alone. Such is a situation typical to unending domestic violence, separation and divorce cases.

### 2:3:5 **Age:**

It is also possible to distinguish lives of people at Mathare through their character and behaviour that is determined by age. Popular understanding always tends to distinguish between the "cucu/shosho" (the old ones), teenagers (youth) and "watoi" (the children). The youth are the majority in the place and have got their own tongue (i.e. "sheng") unknown to the old. They are always moved by the modern styles

copying from the media (e.g. TV, Radio, papers, etc.). Most often the youth are subject to immorality against the old and children alike. Such can be the cases of robbing, rape, violence and the like. The group is used to alcoholism as they gather together to drink, smoke and sniff drugs and petrol from which they become majority of the HIV infected.

In terms of negligence and irresponsibility by an alcoholic family and pre-marital sex, the most affected persons are the children to the extent of becoming street dwellers for survival. Many of such kids already find it a part of life, living in the streets.

Poverty in the area stimulates in most especially the youth to swing with any individual person or group either political or religious given that the message holds an element of immediate solution to their hardships. In fact it is through this and many other sorts of divisions that society of people at Mathare grows from bad to malignant state.

## 2:4 LEVEL OF ISSUE

In fact, Mathare is just a single unit out of the whole issue of slum dwelling in Nairobi as a City, in Kenya as a Country, Africa as a continent and the world in general. Slum reality, that is poverty, has become a distinguishing character between first and third world countries. This must be in a way, an outcome of the historical colonial domination and more so the present neo-colonialism, the experience that almost all the nations in the world strive to come out free. However, the individualistic nature of the humanity at times becomes a supportive factor to the situation.

### 2:4:1 Slum dwellers

The presence of homeless, street and slum dwellers is an immediate proof and true example of poor in the entire World. The

overwhelming state of oppression and political torture, insecurity and political opponents is ever growing worse around the world and so is a cause to this reality, urban life.

#### 2:4:2 **Population and urbanization trends in the world**

While the challenges posed by human settlements together with forces and process that underline their growth; differ greatly in the developed and developing countries, there are certain demographic and urbanization trends that they share, even if unequally. The United Nations population and Urbanization projections and estimates are acknowledged as the most authoritative available, they must nevertheless be interpreted with considerable caution. They are in fact, extrapolations of observed data on fertility and moral rates, sex ratios, life expectancies, and rural-urban migration.<sup>9</sup>

##### 2:4:2:1 **Population trends**

Some 2000 years ago, the world's population probably numbered around 300 million and it took around 1,500 years to double. Only in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century did it begun to grow significantly from about 1750, at the outset of Europe's industrial revolution, until the 20<sup>th</sup> Century it grew at the unprecedented average rate of 0.5 % per annum. By 1900, world's population had reached about 1.7billion a six-fold increase in 150 years. From then on, the rate of growth doubled, remaining about 1.5% per annum until 1950.<sup>10</sup>

Year	Male	Female	Sex ratio
1948	94,755	24,221	391.2
1962	190,606	76,189	250.2
1969	303,219	206,067	147.1
1979	479,448	348,327	137.6
1989	752,597	571,973	131.6

Source: East African Statistical Department (1986), Republic of Kenya (1966, 1971, 1981, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

## 2:4:2:2 **Urbanization trends**

Population growth is more matched by the pace of urban pressure. In the mid-eighteen century, the first period in human history to witness sustained and accelerated population growth, no more than 3 out of every 100 persons lived in towns. It was only in 1900 that the first country, the United Kingdom, became predominantly urban. Even by 1920, only an estimated 14% of the world's population lived in urban areas, but in 1950 the proportion had reached one-quarter and by 1980 it stood at around 40%. If the present trends continue, nearly half the world's population will live in towns and cities at the turn of the century and the figure could reach 61% by 2025. Hence the number of urban dwellers is projected to increase by 1.1 billion by then, there could be 5.0 billion people living in urban areas, 3.3 billion more than in 1980.<sup>11</sup>

Anyhow, in accordance to the UN information, urban settlements in the developing countries are at present growing three times faster than those in the developed countries. (*Ref. Appendix II, pp. 59-61*) In this case we must agree together on the overwhelming situation of the slum question.

## 2:5 **THE STRUCTURES**

From this juncture we shall examine the different powers that govern in the place.

### 2:5:1 **Political Powers**

The people are so much moved towards politics. They have tendency to identify themselves with a certain party (e.g. NDP, KANU, SDP, etc...) given that the leader is gifted in the tongue to giving hope

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (Habitat), Global Report on Human Settlements Statistical annex, (Nairobi: 1995 Draft), pp2-14

and a brighter future and furthermore is a tribal mate. There can be day to night fighting and burnings of property, between groups of different view (opinion) especially when it comes to elections.

### 2:5:2 **Government Structures**

There are offices for D.C., D.O. and Chief, as to per our knowledge, the presence of these hold too little due to the hardships that people experience from the place and so they are always ready to be violent and rebellious from either of the above authority. Out of corruption for instance, chief can allocate piece of land for someone or a group but the very same plot might be found with two or even more other individuals having original title deed and thus causes chaos.

The City council is there initiating taxes and registrations, yet an illegal business dominating the place, may be through corruption as well. Also the government has put a police station around, to ensure that there is law and order, only that the mob psychology does not bother their presence especially when it comes to a serious issue in their need for strong reaction to opposition.

### 2:5:3 **Traditional Power:**

The different ethnic groups feel autonomous; they are also liable to tribal clashes in case of a minor misunderstanding. People praying together are found to be of different opinion and so are great enemies. Among the few tribes present, there is a kind of individualism of feeling being the majority and so, with more power and right to dictate over the rest. That is what causes life in the slum to have a lot of uncertainties in the course of fighting as to prove the most prominent.

### 2:5:4 **Religious Influence:**

We have mainly the Christians with the many denominations and the Moslem. Despite the hardships, God is still honoured especially by

the most pious faithful. Religions are as diverse as the slum inhabitants themselves and there is a strong attachment to religion. Splinter churches can be found all over the slum evidenced by flags and signs of crosses, even in residential houses. Many denominations are present in Mathare. There is also a Mosque in their midst. Many sects are spread all over the slum. There is a great demand of spirituality and for God since the situation is really degrading and suffering is experienced by all the poor people, children and women being the most vulnerable.

In many cases, the answer given by the people to their desire of meeting God, is to forget for a while about the problems by signing a membership to one of the charismatic movements present in the territory. Surely, they are more appealing because of the opportunity to fully shout, expressing oneself with all the problems in prayer, praising, and crying in an unending Sunday-worship. Actually, this is found to be an escape from the true reality.

#### **2:5:5 Non-Government Organizations**

There is quite a number of group organizations that try to address the needy at the place. Among them are the Polio Eradication group, members of UN, AIDS management group, Undugu society, Youth services from different parishes and Colleges, Student's associations (including C.U.E.A.), Mathare 4-A, Maendeleo ya Wanawake (women development) groups and some devoted Christians under "Legion of Mary" and the Small Christian Communities. Their mission is quite appealing, only that they lack central collaborative governance.

#### **2:5:6 The Unlawful Powers**

In this aspect we will realize the existence of some powers that highly overshadow the area and yet illegal. Some of these have naturally

sprung in the people's mind while to a great extent they are simply manmade.

Such can be identified as magic, some of the members could try to practice witchcraft sometimes as a source of income or else as a resolution to a kind of envy over others. Other powers emerge from the mob-psychology, this involves killing suspects of any case even if an innocent. This is realized in the people as they can decide to burn either a person or shelters out of slight inconvenience.

Other powers involve devil worshippers, the norms of their faith demand sacrifice of the human soul and blood that become food for their god. So the members who are present in the slum are found to be so aggressive in any act that acquire a sort of destruction especially killings; many of the "matatu" (public means) accidents are the outcome of such a faith. The experience also tell of such powers through thugs and criminals, these are very powerful to the extent of causing a constant fear to the people living or passing around Juja Road. This group is able of making guns on their own and use them for raiding some shops at night.

Lastly we have in the place the traditional norms (taboo), each and every tribe has got a difference on this, yet in a way they affect people's life. For some, wife inheritance is unquestionable and so causing many to death out of current plague of AIDS. Many other cases of this nature involve women genital mutilation, training of the teenagers on sexual matters at puberty and from there and then, sex is free in proving real male or femalehood.

This tells that policy making is not fully in the hands of the government not even the society itself, some individuals have worn to hold part in it.

## 2:6 CULTURAL ANALYSIS

There is a high tide of tribalism especially in the struggle for power. Despite the many religious rituals yet the practical life manifests a lot of hypocrisy and illusions. Morality in the place does not match the external manifestation and actions of some people who pretend to be prayerful and religious. In fact this can be compared to someone having a Rosary on the right hand and a sword on the left, praying for peace but ready to fight or kill.

The feelings of people simply justify their anger and stress that is being expressed out through violence and other dehumanizing actions. In this sense there is inferiority complex by women against the superiority of men, likewise the society members against authoritarianism.

The typical situation shows that once a rich is always a rich vis-à-vis the poor. There is confusion therefore due to the uncertainties for the future, a family with five or six children is worried on how to sustain the basic needs, education included.

Fortunately we still have some pioneers of the slum, their stories tell about big changes in life and relations by the present world at Mathare. Human being is created social as Mbiti says "to be is people", being an African, our attitude ought to make us more "the Africans" than Westerners. Many of our sisters and brothers in the slum tend to overlook themselves, they become too much utilitarian and so highly expecting something material from any prominent visit on the place. Such a behaviour has opened the door for manipulation as they even misuse each other. The state of blind imitation of foreign styles has driven most especially the youth to be un-couth from their own origin.

## 2:7 THE MOST CHALLENGING ISSUES

So to speak, life in the slum is by no other means conducive to the most poor of the city, as they can persevere hardships of water resources, sewerage systems with a solid waste disposal and many other subhuman conditions. Their life is full of insecurity, illiteracy and misery. The poor of the slum basically own nothing but physical energy that is even a cheap commodity by the rich. This is a result of the following:

### 2:7:1 **Health hazards:**

While in this place, to get sick means death. Many of the slum dwellers are so poor, unable to accommodate their patient in the Hospital (like Kenyatta National Hospital) because of the daily 300/= Kshs. bed fee. Furthermore, the ability to buy medicine and food is for them a difficulty. Some people are strongly believing in witchcraft traditional doctors and local charms as priority before going to hospital, hence for a poor sick to be known by an organization of either religious or other institutions it must be already to the point of death. The most common disease at Mathare is typhoid and for sure HIV/ AIDS, that is the most affecting among the youth. Like in any other part of Kenya, Malnutrition is also endemic of Mathare.

***Ref. Picture ahead.***

*"Feature of the situation in Western Kenya."*

***From DAILY NATION***

Monday, February 4, 2002. p.36

by: Nation TV.

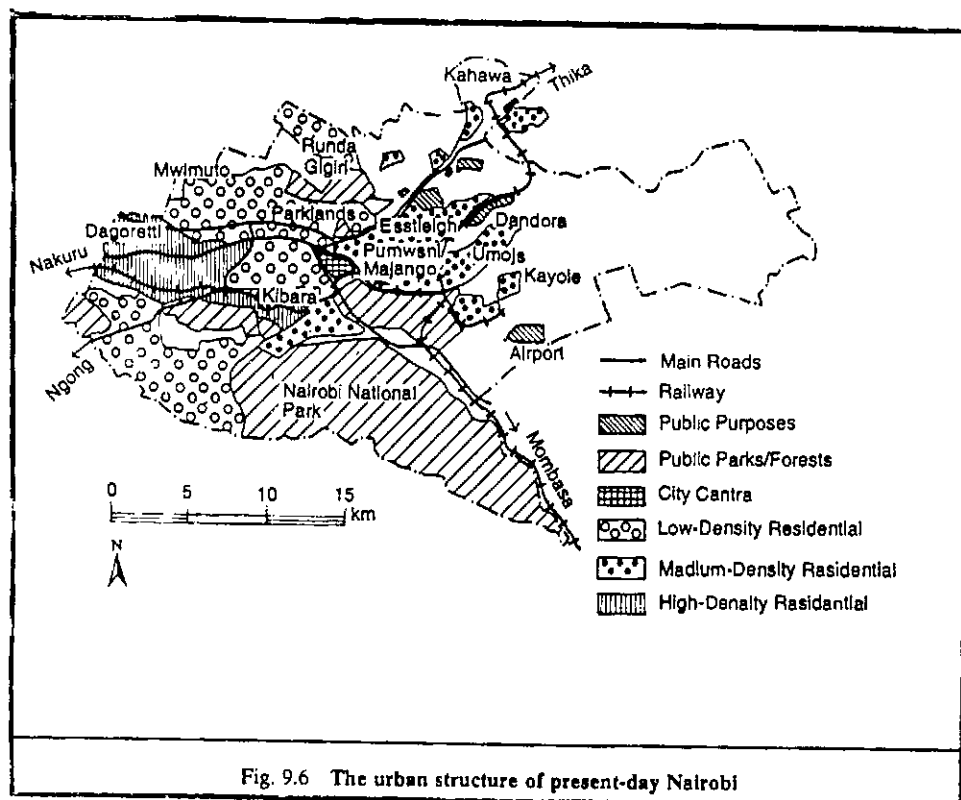


Approximately 5 children die of malnutrition in North Eastern Province every-day

Western Province: Kenya  
in the *Daily Nation*, Monday, February 4, 2002

## 2:7:2 Housing

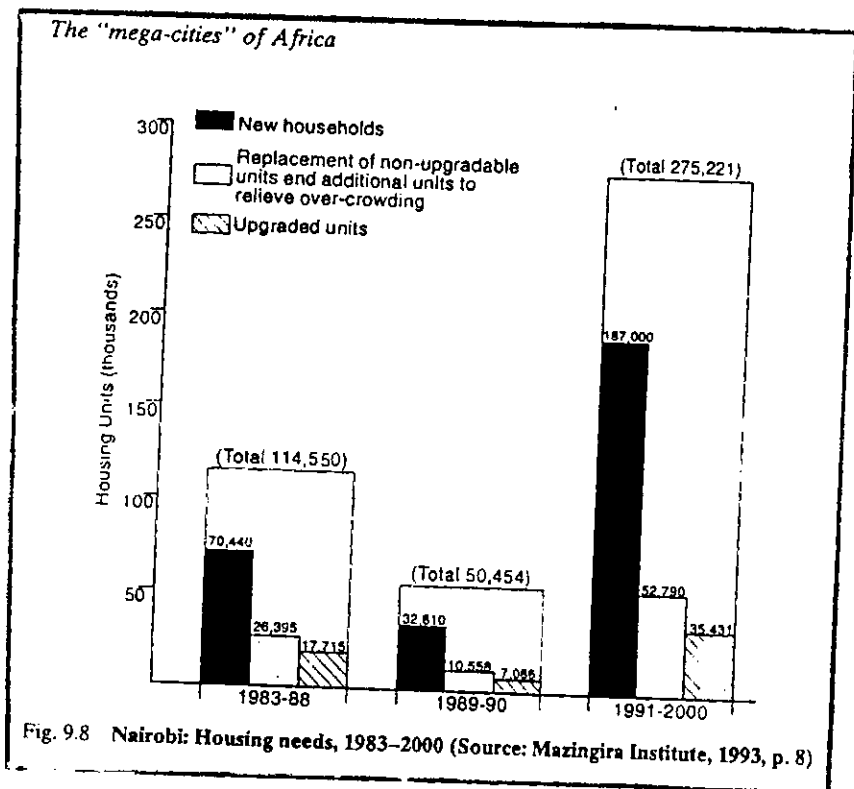
The pattern that exists today predominantly reflects the development of British colonial rather than traditional African settlement. Since from the independence (1963), the typical urban life has been day after day extending the roots as the number of immigrants grow. Obudho expresses this reality in the following figure:



Such a situation with an ever growing population must have resulted from uneven population distribution and density (Cf. fig. 9.5, p. 10), as a result, Mathare becomes a camp for the economic refugee. Accommodation rates per month range from 500/= to 1,500/= Kshs. in regard to particular services offered eg. water. Meanwhile, the income level by the slum dwellers according to the inquiry then, ranges from 1,000/= to 5,000/= Kshs. per month, meanwhile most of the women and youths remain jobless.

Generally the city has yet to meet the needs of her citizens with enough shelter. In Mathare many of the dwellers are conditioned for two

or three to share a room so as to contribute for the cost (rental fee), many of the families in the area are used to a single room despite the many children have, one room is partitioned into two or three sections using a curtain. Some young men and women told an experience of spending their nights in the night-clubs around and so are never bothered of rental fees. In this aspect Obudho strongly verifies on the need for housing facilities as follows:



Anyhow, the typical residential structure in the city have vividly divided people in terms of the human basic needs (food, shelter and cloth). Services and general human welfare in Nairobi have created a dualistic nature of life style that distinguishes between the rich and poor. So, life from one corner of the city becomes like butter and honey for the rich at the expense of the poor meanwhile on the other corner people sharing a cup of suffering. Obudho still gives a witness to this as follows:

The "mega-cities" of Africa

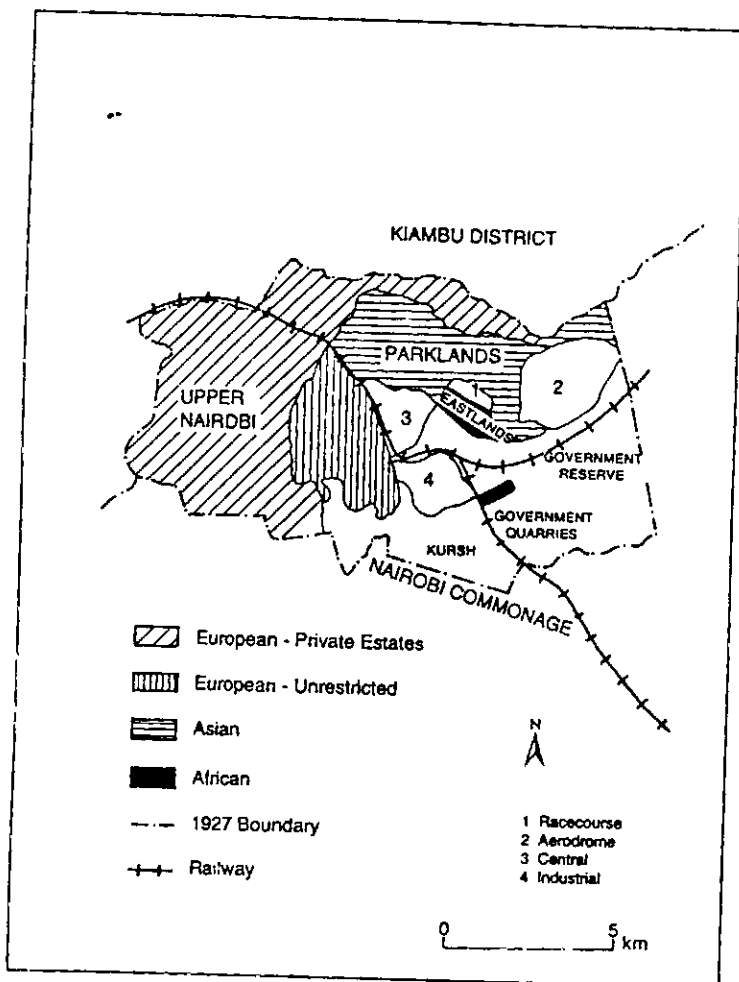


Fig. 9.4 The segregation of residential areas in Nairobi, 1909 (Source: Mazingira Institute, 1993, p. 2)

In fact someone staying at the place for the Europeans or Asians (eg. Karen, Muthaiga or Westlands), he or she must possess private means of transport and the housing design is always authorized by the city council. Their style of life is totally different from what the slum dwellers live. An African living in the area for the rich must in one way acquire the character i.e. good and proper house, security (watch man, dogs ('*Mbwa kali*') and probably electrical fence). Two people neighboring one another can hardly have time to socialize due to the individualistic style of life.

The houses in the slum are of various categories and sizes. Some are made of mud, others flattened tin and cardboard and some are of mud and wattle covered with plaster or corrugated iron sheets. The average room is 3 x 3 meters, and the occupancy rate is 5-6 persons per room with 3-4 children and 2 adults, (*Ref. Picture ahead*). The conditions of the dwelling are very poor with no ventilation and are generally overcrowded. The shelter is mainly for sleeping, as storage for family belongings or as mini-workshop because most of the activities take place outdoors.

### 2:7:3 **Street children**

They are a real fruit of urbanization due to the fact that in the urban area we have very poor families that can not cater for the basic needs. In the slum we have a good number of children born out of: pre-marital sex, prostitution, alcoholic families and rape, hence, such a behaviour allows in the sense of irresponsibility by the concerned. An answer to this has being the evil idea to high rate of abortion and throwing away of the new born babies, when such children happen to survive, they experience a hard moment of struggle for survival. Such a phenomenon has brought in a new generation with totally a new culture out of the experience undergone through.

### 2:7:4 **Alcoholism**

This is a bad habit embraced more by the youth out of their economic situation. The youth desire to become rich overnight by co-operating in the selling of drugs and making their world happiest by consuming. Many narrates the experience of forgetting for a while all the problems of life, in relief and relaxation just by means of drugs, (*Ref. Appendix V, p. 64*). This includes also the excessive use of illegal local brew from which many have gone blind.



### 2:7:5 **The “have” and “have-nots”**

Poverty in Mathare is as old as the slum is, presence of the poor comes after state of low or no income generating by the majority against the high standards of life in the city. This has made a cause of corruption, destitution and illiteracy in the young generation. Also poverty is thought to have promoted violence, prostitution and all sorts of immorality, for especially the youth would wish to miraculously become rich. They are the people unable to utilize even their own gifts and talents and as far as the research is concerned, the poor at Mathare look to be a concept because people are full of potentialities in need to be cultivated from the initiatives of the individual persons.

### 2:7:6 **Land use and condition of Houses**

In this case it is rather difficult to identify a middle class people. Mathare has got simply high and lower class. The lower class continue mourning the situation into a worse state meanwhile the rich surviving at their expense, in-terms of land and house rents. From *figure 9.4, p.26* we clearly see the fact that the main land in the city is occupied by executives. In this sense the poor majority enjoy very little on their own land due to the life in such a congested and unproductive area like Mathare. Such situation give a room to direct manipulation over the needy society.

### 2:7:7 **Employment**

Today even the university level are found from the slum in the struggle for life. The learned therefore ought to be creative and have personal projects for self reliance. It is the high time to make use of the one's own gifts and talents for a better life in future. At Mathare, some of the young people are enthusiastic to work but have no capital, meanwhile few of them have already started with small workshops.

Lucky enough, some women have tried to with small business activities of selling secondhand clothes and food stuff and others prepare local brew on which they managed school for their children.

### 2:7:8 **Sexual-Abuse**

Incest, homosexuality, lesbianism, rape, child-sex abuse, pre-marital sex and prostitution are all familiar entities in the area, though some in rare cases. Some people especially alcoholic opt for cheap sex, this situation is in a way compared to the biblical twin-cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19). Most of the illicit sex activities involve children and the youth by their relatives, men and boys, boys and boys and girls and girls. Some parents, like single mothers, use their daughters as commercial sex workers. Most of the women are officially not married but having lovers, there can be a mother of three even four children from different fathers (polyandry).

Finally, life in Mathare is really a hell; the seed to all such vices and suffering is poverty.

### **Conclusion**

Mathare slum portrays a phenomenon comprising economic, political, psychological and social deprivation. Its manifestations are social inferiority, powerlessness, isolation and lack of assets and the basic needs. This sub-human situation has led people to some social illness like crime, theft, sex abuse and child labour. The presence of different Churches and secular movements that aim to assist people for self-supporting is yet to be actualized. It is then a big challenge to us the missionaries today. The poor are getting poorer with a lot of ignorance over their rights.

Anyhow, there has being a slow reaction of the missionaries to face the challenges, but also it is encouraging the emphasis already put by

the religious on the “preferential option for the poor”, only that it is still too theoretical at present. Mathare slum is in great need of Church’s response towards the situation. In our next chapter we are going to look at the theological reflection towards the issue by the universal and local church and the poor themselves.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON SLUMS**

#### **3:0 Introduction**

Having gone through socio-cultural analysis, we now opt to reframe the slum reality in a Christian theological spectrum. The Scripture (both the OT and NT) is all about the revealed love of God, and so the Bible always becomes the book of liberating power of God that was revealed to us in a gradual manner to the apex in the Son, Jesus Christ.

#### **3:1 MEANING OF “THE POOR”**

It becomes a hard term to get a perfect definition, for it is a complicated concept. In our case however, the term will mean the one who finds himself or herself in a situation of weakness, dependence, humiliation, lacking means, power and social consideration.<sup>12</sup> One who lacks money, relationship, influence, intellectual ability, personal freedom, dignity and the spiritual nourishment as well.

In general, the poor is the one having a little if no possibility of changing the miserable economic, spiritual, social and psychological state without the help of another. This view point is very much identical to the social reality at Mathare.

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<sup>12</sup> J. Moltmann, God Means Freedom, Nairobi. Association of Theological Institutions in Africa, 1985.p32

### 3:2 SCRIPTURE REVIEW

Right from the historical actions recognized by faith of the chosen race (Israelites), from the ancient promise (covenant) up to the incarnation, God is always revealed to us as a liberator. He is the God of the needy. The Old Testament presents God's option for the poor needy been a long process starting from Exodus through Judges, Prophecy, Kingship, petition of the Psalms to the wisdom literature.

The slum reality brings in the concept of the life of Israelites in slavery, yet their deep experience in hardships manifested Yahweh's communion with them. In the wilderness, God was always their shield, serving them with both physical and spiritual needs. What they were asked for is *obedience* to the One God of their inheritance (Ex.20: 2-5ff) though sometimes they happened to trespass and went against the call to fidelity.

Our fellow brothers and sisters in the slums meet the same experience of oppression, exploitation, dark moments, physical and spiritual need, injustices and all sorts of immorality (Ex.6:4-9). Christ is to be incarnated more perfectly in their midst so as to give hope against the domineering fear. God always is willing to free his people, for them to serve Him freely (Dt. 5:6, 11:2), He gives his faithful servants the mission towards liberation as in Ex. 2:23-25, into the call of Moses (Ex. 3:1-6).

At last God sent His own son whose mission was to announce the climax moment for the human salvation as He pronounced: *"the Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim liberty to the captive* (Lk 4:18). In fact, poverty and oppression are before God and humanity, evil. Two things noteworthy, whenever the Israelites called, the Lord heard their cry for deliverance despite their infidelity. This fact applies to Mathare, they are lucky to have some religious and many other people of good will at their

service, but a good number of the dwellers turn-out to be hard-hearted. The grace of God is opposed to their wide practice of prostitution, alcoholism, witchcraft, exploitation and all sorts of violence. Hence therefore, Christ purposely came to reconcile the whole of humanity with God the father.

Anyway, the society in which we live is built on a complicated economic system whose principles favour the minority who are rich at the expense of the poor majority. This story is situated from the colonial era and it is still being promoted by the neo-colonialism of today. The first world enjoys the favour over the third world, the effects of the high quality of exploitation comes deeply to affect the most hopeless of the poor nations. Some individuals suffocate the majority like in Micah 2:1-2 *...woe to those who device wickedness and work evil upon their beds, when the morning dawns they perform it because it is in the power of their hands...they poses a man and his house plus his inheritance.*" After the long experience of suffering in the OT, God, by His own will opted to save humanity by sending His only Son, as realized in the event of Incarnation.

### **3:3 JESUS' SPECIAL CONCERN FOR THE POOR**

Jesus shows the ultimate and highest form of option for the poor in a three-fold manner: through his own personal life, his commitment towards the poor and his entire teaching about the poor.

#### **3:3:1 In His Own Life**

Jesus is born poor, brought up among the poor, living in poorly discriminated place *"can anything good come from Nazareth?"* (Jn 1:46), and his immediate family background reflected the low social class of carpenters and village peasants. His crucifixion impoverishes him, all

that he had, he is rejected, betrayed and denied by his immediate companions, abandoned by his disciples, and stripped naked and loses all the dignity as he is hanged in the middle of two criminals as a criminal too. He dies in a very dehumanizing state despite his divinity. Through the mystery of incarnation, the most powerful, transcendent God takes human form and becomes one like us in everything except sin through the life, words and deeds of Jesus Christ. God's solidarity with humanity as manifested when his only begotten son Jesus becoming one of us (the mystery of incarnation) is the ultimate expression of preferential option for the poor in that Jesus empties himself of Divinity and richness of being God and takes a state and poor form of humanity. This is reflected in Pauline theology particularly the christological hymn in Phi 2:3-11 *"... though he was in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God...he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave..."*

### **3:3:2 His commitment to the poor**

Jesus' commitment to the poor is reflected through his own personal testimony, life and witness. He eats, associates and empowers the marginalized, sinners, oppressed and outcasts. In solidarity with them he shares in their life struggle, questioning and challenging the oppressive social, religious structures and institutions that marginalize and discriminate against them. In fact his life, words and deeds manifested the universal love of the father a in concrete manner.

His life witness and commitment to the poor becomes a scandal for the custodians of law and elite class, but also a means, an invitation and an expression of the preferential love of the Father and mercy to the excluded, marginalized and sinners. His commitment to social justice takes a political tone at some instance but personally Jesus neither

sought nor aspired to be a political messiah as they hoped he would be but a servant of the least members of the society.

His death is a consequence of his commitment and the struggle of justice for the poor. He perfects the exodus experience and covenant through the new covenant of love of God and neighbour. This new covenant binds its faithful in friendship and not servitude. The measure of this covenantal love is his own love. *"love one another as I have loved you"* Jn 13:34, His death and resurrection seals this new covenant and transforms it into a universal covenant for all humanity.

### 3:3:3 **His Teaching**

Through his teaching, Jesus proclaims the advent and proximity of the kingdom of God. His message and mission is directed to all with a special preference for the poor. His proclamation of "goodness to the poor" produces dichotomy in society between those ready to accept and those who reject him, between the rich and the poor, between the custodians of law and the poor peasants. His teaching provokes a shift opposition from the custodian of law, scribes and Pharisees centered on the interpretation of law. His teaching has an empowering element as it raises conscientiousness to the ordinary people and re-awakens within them a thirst of liberation from oppressive social religious structures and invites them to abundant life. He teaches explicitly that 'the poor are blessed.'

His teachings are characterized by annunciation and denunciations and confirmed by his personal life witness. He announces the advent and proximity of the kingdom and its values and denounces all that which hinders the establishment of the kingdom. According to his teaching what counts above everything at the judgement day is the preferential love we showed to the least of our fellow human beings.

Mt 25:40 *"Amen, I say to you whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did it to me."*

Gustavo Gutierrez in his book "The power of the Poor in History," summarizes this preferential option for the poor as seen in the life, word and deeds of Jesus, by pointing out that: Jesus "was poor indeed, he was born poor, into a social milieu characterized by poverty. He chose to live with the poor, he addressed his gospel by preference to the poor. He lashed out with invective reaction against the rich who oppress the poor and despised them. And before the Father he was poor in spirit."<sup>13</sup> His life demonstrates a clear link between material and spiritual poverty and he remains a model and of evangelical poverty for our world of today. His option for the poor is characterized by different features and the essential ones are solidarity, conversion and commitment to justice.

### 3:4 THE POOR AS AGENTS OF EVANGELIZATION

The poor today are the agents of evangelization as we move on in the third millennium. The emphasis is to be put on the poor to get more in touch with their situation and so to preach Christ who is always journeying with them, because Jesus himself took his stand when he announced that his proclamation was the Good News to the poor. It is a certain situation that makes us poor and yet there are those who freely chose to be poor for the kingdom. A Christian who makes this choice does not choose poverty that is a curse in scripture and in history, but a choice for human persons.

Poverty is a state unacceptable for humans who are called by God to live the fullness of life. Poverty that is imposed by systems, and perpetuated by them, is a type of slavery that makes victims out of God's

<sup>13</sup> Gustavo G., The Power of the Poor in History, Mryknoll, Orbis Books, 1983. P.14.

people.<sup>14</sup> That is, the Church which arises in solidarity with the poor protests against the material poverty as being an expression of the world's sin. Therefore, the Christian who chooses enslaved people, must claim for freedom not only for himself/herself, but for all the oppressed.

Anybody who opts for the poor should insist on a different starting point for initial change, namely a priority starting with the poor. This should be his/her real force (viewing the poor as evangelizers) because we must strongly believe that today the Lord evangelizes us by the poor in our societies. God revealed himself in the poor and this is the same place where we encounter him today. This is the starting point of evangelization for all. Let us see the how Fr. Alex Zanotelli is in touch with the reality.

### 3:5 “..FROM HEAVEN TO HELL”

It was a sharing by Fr. Alex (from Korogocho), that it is amazing to see just in a short distance the big difference between Muthaiga (place for the rich) and Mathare slum, immediately from the expensively beautiful residence to the most decrepit. In fact there is too much difference in the life style by the persons living in Muthaiga and that from the neighbouring place (Mathare slum), it is just like moving from heaven (in the holiness) immediately into hell (in the suffering).

Slum reality today is giving a true manifestation of what happened right after the death of our Lord, he descended into hell and he proved a hero by rising from the dead. The slums look like descending to hell but Jesus Christ did it and rose again. In order to heal the different kinds of immorality in the slums, we are to go and be baptized in the slums and try to live their culture.

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<sup>14</sup> R. Mejia, (Ed.), The Conscience of Society, Nairobi. Pauline Publ., 1995. Pp.26-31.

Slum reality gives the very meaning of the breaking of bread, "... *this is my Body ...given for you ... do this in memory of me*"<sup>15</sup> With these words of consecration, the presence of God is made live in the people's life especially the sick and needy. Our call to ministry in the slum is comparable to that of Abraham and Moses who were sent to care for the welfare of God's family, and this human missionary act has being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

However, the Gospel of love will mean one thing for the people at Muthaiga and another thing to slum dwellers, this is because our God is the Lord of all, the rich and the poor, sick and healthy. Our response then has to do with re-incarnation of Christ in the hearts of these people. This is very vividly portrayed by the examples of the holy people who volunteered to live the Christian virtue for the needy. St. Francis of Asissi who was closely assisting the poor and the needy at all cost. Likewise the Blessed Daniel Comboni was always for the most poor oppressed and slaves, even his missionaries are found to be very sincere to the charism today. St. Camillus, the patron saint of both the sick and the servants of the sick, was revealed to radically live the message of the Gospel of good Samaritan by serving the poor sick in the Hospitals, prisons and private homes. This mission continues to overshadow all the world.

From the example of these few saints and many others, there comes a question: does our faith touch the reality? We are called to make the mission part and parcel of our being, considering the situation caused by unequal distribution of land in Nairobi, whereby about two million people are forced to squeeze in 1.5 acres of land. We are all pastors and so have to live poverty and simplicity of life so as to match them. Simplicity becomes good news to our people especially the poor

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<sup>15</sup> Eucharistic prayer One.

and marginalized.<sup>16</sup> The God we bring to the slums must be the God and Man together, just as Saint Mathew teaches: “*a disciple is never greater than the master and so whoever wants to serve the poor must renounce to be a hero* (Mt 25). We are called to be the Eucharist, the spiritual and intellectual food suitable for our suffering brothers and sisters.

### 3:6 FAITH VIS-À-VIS SLUM REALITY

“Faith is a free gift received through God’s grace,”<sup>17</sup> Our moral life then has its source in faith in God who reveals his love to us. Despite whatever situation encountered in life, faith is an obligation. “St. Paul speaks of the obedience of faith as our first obligation, he shows that “ignorance of God” is the principle and explanation of all moral deviations.”<sup>18</sup> Our duty to God is to believe in Him and bear witness to Him.

Most often, our people believe in prayer as being a magic function, meaning the faith is still at material level. God gives many gifts to his people, such gifts then become a well enriched potentiality of which once activated they are capable of producing different creativity. The most precious gift we received is the gift of life, in this we must treasure.

The slum reality specifically at Mathare, manifests people of little or no hope. Hope is always with faith and love, love being the most basic of the two (1Cor 13:13). The kind of structures and social divisions existing from the place, have set the people in constant fear and uncertainties. The charismatic movements that are spread all over, tend to cover-up the reality by dishing out answers to people’s situation through biblical verses. Once this is proved ineffective, the faithful tend

<sup>16</sup> Donald Senior, The Biblical Foundations for Mission, Maryknoll, 1983. Pp.44-53.

<sup>17</sup> From The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nairobi. Pauline Publ. Africa. 1995. Numb. 2087

<sup>18</sup> J. N. K. Mugambi, African Christian Theology, An Introduction, Nairobi. Henemenn-Kenya Publ., 1989 p.63

to hold back their previous style, in the different kinds of immorality, violence, tribal prejudices, political aspirations and the traditional believes.

It is in the course of trying to find out an immediate answer to prayer that many people tend to move from one denomination to another. This is a sign that they didn't understand yet the unity of Christ with His body, the Church. The many talents inspired by the Spirit have to work in us by knowing who God is, and for this to make use of such gifts for a daily living. Many of the youth and the hopeless in Mathare should get out of the despair and live the Christian unity through which God speaks.

In fact the first commandment (I'm the Lord your God... Ex. 20:2-5) requires us to nourish and protect our faith with prudence and vigilance, and to reject everything that is opposed to it. There are various ways of sinning against faith including a voluntary doubt to the matters of faith, hesitation in believing and negligence to the revealed truth. This must be a sign as to why some of the slum dwellers decide to stay as pagans, practising devil worship, living to the maximum pleasure by means of rape and alcoholism and earning through robbery and magic practice. The many Churches present in the place are giving no solution for them but simply flattering. Some youth shared this: *'it is true that "haraka haraka haina baraka" ie. In hurry we get no blessing, but also "baraka baraka haina haraka" ie. a blessing is not in hurry to come, so it is better to find a shortcut despite the danger to lose life.'*

Our people in Mathare for sure they know who God is, yet in many cases they don't follow-up His precepts, we see in them more the God of the mind than heart. They need the God who always give "manna and Quails" (Ex. 16:1ff) without knowing that such gifts will come but

through their own hands as well. Their initiative is too little to compare with what they are able to do, given that there is true peace, unity and love.

## **Conclusion**

The preferential option for the poor has to be based on the concrete experience of modern society to the influence of the gospel. The Church has to be close to the ordinary people, identifying itself with the masses of the people. In fact, this option is not for poverty but for the individual human persons created in the image of God, by this then the Church continues Jesus' mission for the restoration of the whole humanity into the original image of God.

Jesus himself made this option for the poor straight from his birth to his death on the cross, he did this by the total solidarity with them. Hence this mission requires our total commitment fully to the poor. We have to work for justice in the society so that poor, the slum dwellers, AIDS victims and street children may be liberated.

Today, the institutional church of Africa is gradually moving from a position of paternalism to one of being in solidarity with the poor. There is a dawn in the church of Africa of a strong ecclesial presence among the poor. This should not be juxtaposed to an institution rather it should be helped to become fully ecclesial.

Our next chapter then ought to give a hint on the response of both the local and universal Church towards the issue plus a note of pastoral suggestions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. FACING THE CHALLENGES FOR PASTORAL ACTION**

#### **4:0 Introduction**

The contemporary society by now is undergoing numerous changes in all aspects of life: cultural, social, economic, political, and religious, some for the better and some for the worse. We do not need history to remind us that change is a reality of life and all creation is subject to it. By recognizing this fact then we become aware that the poor in our society need not only social change but also a drastic transformation in many other aspects of life.

This chapter is going to discuss much about the awareness and specific role of the poor towards social transformation. This aspect will materialize through their active participation in the various sectors of the course action.

Obviously we shall go through the role of the Church activating for success, that will be closed by a note of pastoral overview. One thing noteworthy is the importance of education for the poor to know their rights and so together we fight for liberation.

#### **4:1 Challenge to the universal Church**

In response to the new challenges of the poor, the Church has made some effort through the different papal encyclicals starting with *Rerum Novarum* (1891). This was to counteract the situation of insecurity, inhuman life of abuses and lack of honesty that was shown by the rich, and this was doubtlessly the source to social structures.

Pope Leo XIII in response to the problems arising from working places, made effort to exhort respectively the poor to deal harmoniously with their masters and the rich to love and honestly deal with their

workers. This was a challenging issue in the Church since it was for the first time it was forced to come out over the burning issue against the oppression. In his leadership, Pope Leo XIII had to face the reality of the industrial revolution by making an appeal expressing their degrading condition of work, that is about the long hours of work, low payments, no leisure nor insurance. This is what made the Encyclical the first major statement of Catholic social teaching of which many other encyclicals followed to re-actualize it, by confirming, developing and repeating though in a different perspective as it is observed from *Quadregesima Anno* of Pope Pius XI and *Octogesima Adveniens* of Pope Paul VI. In fact, the burden of unfair trade and debts affecting Africa is being speculated as heritage of an unjust regime since the time of Pius XI.

There after, Pope John XIII, in *Pacem in Terris* (1963) made the appeal for international relationships and solidarity among nations. His greatest contribution was the bringing of new impulses into the Church and confronting it to the needy and challenges of the modern world. Furthermore, the *Gaudium et Spes* became the most significant by results of Vatican II that requested for relevance in the actual society in perpetual mutation. The central matter in the teaching was for the poor to be recognized as a social class with right to their own organizations. This act was not simultaneously successful despite the effort put by the Belgian Bishops at Vatican II, anyhow, a clear option for the poor was still not achieved in Europe to the extent achieved in Latin America. Where as by the devastating situation of oppressed class the bishops had the access to make an option for them at Puebla in 1979.<sup>19</sup>

In this respect, Vatican II council has enabled the Catholic Church to emerge on with a liberal thought. The ruling class after its liberal

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<sup>19</sup> Gustavo, G., *Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll. Orbis Books. 1983. P. 38.

ideology allied itself to traditionalism to fight the common enemy, socialism. That means, traditional values and conservatism were revitalized throughout wealthy nations. Therefore liberal ideology quickly gained a ground in the Protestant dominated countries by stressing on the new higher criticism whereby the Scriptures were subjected to a radical historical and literary examination followed by its obvious consequence, skepticism.

By the fact that the working class was set apart from the Churches, they could not do better than serving the interests of the bourgeois and the middle classes. Hence then, Protestants and Catholic's traditional standpoint were able to reach the same result as long as the challenge of the organized poor of the working class was concerned. That is, the social Gospel corresponded with a program of service to the working poor in order to win them over the Churches against the danger of revolutionary socialism.

There has being enough effort made by the Christian ecclesiastical institutions to achieve a preferential option for the poor in a society dominated by character of exploitation and disparity between classes. It was in the *Lumen Gentium* the Church launched a ground for the Church's preferential option for the poor by integrating all social classes including the oppressed and the elite in the common belonging as God's people without understanding the Church institutionalization on account of the service that ensures the common well being.

In fact, such a decision in the Church entails the danger that was recognized in the second general conference in Medellin (1968), for it implies confronting the ruling power of the society and the reactions it gives. Hence the need to act in order to transform unjust structures at root of oppression rather than mere denunciation as means. Still in this

aspect, Pope John Paul II was recently (October, 2001) challenging the Diocesan Bishops to live an exemplary poverty, (*Ref. Appendix IV, p. 63*).

#### 4:2 **SLUMS AS A CHALLENGE TO THE LOCAL CHURCH**

Since the time of independence, many African countries have brought in unexpected growth not only of the Capital cities but the other towns and given birth to many new urban centres. With the emerging of the political independence, there was a dramatic surge in urban growth. Speaking of the years between 1960's and 1980, the Church in Africa, despite an initial reluctance, and despite a lingering anti-urbanism, began to establish an effective presence in the towns.<sup>20</sup>

Our observations have noted a historical problem of the pastoral ministry in these areas, being that missions were planted rather outside the centres of people, in this case the towns grew up without a Church nucleus. That was a source for a great number of Christians to settle down and may be loose the habit of Church-going until the time of missionary exploration. Anyhow, the rapid growth of the cities had brought in, more other problems such as unemployment, secularism, immorality, lost-migrants, street dwellers and the like. This is to say, the majority of the migrants to the cities and towns are youth as Pope John Paul II has stated in the last Apostolic Exhortation, *"The Church in Africa."*<sup>21</sup>

In fact, the African city areas developed as a place where the African culture is undermined more than anywhere else and the slums have being produced by a subhuman culture. They are the places in

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<sup>20</sup> Daniel Moschetti, Urbanization in Africa, Question of a Missionary Interpretation, Presence and Activity, Nairobi. New People, 1996. Pp50-51.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p51.

most need of well inculturated Christianity that will restore both Christian religiosity and African humanness in full hope.<sup>22</sup>

However, the urban situation calls for an urgent specific mission. Such a ministry so to say, is not well catered for here in Africa. The issue of pastoral care followed the established rural pattern of parishes, the cities are units in themselves and city life follows its own grouping, going across parish borders. Hence much missionary pastoral action should have been carried out on an urban basis, with specialized teams as already indicated by the Bishops of Tanzania in their response to the 1974 Synod in Rome.

This does not mean, however, that there is nothing being done for the people living in the urban centres. All the methods used for the care of spiritual and human welfare in the villages are also found in the urban parish.<sup>23</sup> What really is missing is an adaptation of these methods and new creativity to the urban situation and an overall plan for urban ministry that takes new factors of city life into consideration. So far, only youth ministry has made a step in this aspect. But more vision could have been sort for to rectify the problems of the city and its slums.

In his article, Fr. Alex Zanotelli, noted that there is a slow reaction for the Church to face the challenges, and above all lack of planning to meet them; and the socio-political-economic situation of the cities has indeed developed into one of the major issues for the Churches. In the countryside, poverty and lack of education is embedded in a society of basically equal standards of life, with an ancient tradition of sharing; in the cities it is contrasted with a much richer, middle and upper class

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

that seems to have nothing to do with the poor. Unfortunately this gap has also come to be reflected in the Church as well.<sup>24</sup>

The reality of poverty in the city is by all means calling for a true reflection and implementation of what is concrete for us the “preferential option for the poor,” as African Church and specifically as religious missionaries. There is a great need of response to an apostolate towards the professionals, business class, university level, unlearned, gender crisis, hopeless sick-poor and the disabled. According to the teaching in the encyclicals noted above then, our position is creating bridges between rich and poor for harmony and benefit of both. The poor need to be supported in taking their evangelization towards the rich-class which needs to be awakened to their Christian mission and duties.

The unity of the Members of the Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA) had as part of her pastoral agenda for several years, the question of urbanization. It was at the beginning of 1970's but for many years later further reflection on it was a bit reluctant. There was in fact no special committee that deals with new insights, information nor methodologies for an urban ministry. There has been some efforts put down but yet the most important element of network for sharing the experiences is still missing.<sup>25</sup>

This fact was openly expressed in the 1973 AMECEA meetings, that: there is an apparent deterioration in the effectiveness of the Church in urban areas as compared to rural areas, nor was the warning well heard that: if the urban apostolate is going to succeed, only specially trained people, clergy and religious as well as lay, should be assigned duties in urban areas. There is no doubt that the countryside is still

<sup>24</sup> Alex Zanotelli, Facing the problems of rapid urbanization, (in AFER 30, October 1998), 279.

<sup>25</sup> Daniel Moschetti, Urbanization in Africa, Question for Missionary Interpretation, Presence and Activity. Nairobi. New People. 1996. P52.

twice as well served in terms of personnel and worship facilities as the cities.<sup>26</sup>

In fact, original source of situation in the place of our concern, ie. Mathare slum, must be the worsening conditions in the city of Nairobi. Once special attention is given, especially by the Christian community from within and the local ordinary as well, the situation will definitely cease. But the question of poverty alleviation has to be zealously dealt with, directly from the hearts of the victim rather than a hand to mouth assistance by donors. We shall deepen on the special effort necessary for Mathare in particular.

#### 4:3 **The Church of Kenya in Response to the Poor-needy**

The Kenyan Episcopal Conference has been one of the active vocal voices in articulating the rights of the poor and fighting for their social integration. Ever since independence the Church voice has been like a conscience of the nation. In their numerous pastoral letters the concern for the poor has never been assumed or neglected. For instance, "as has been observed earlier in our previous pastoral letters, the existing gap between the rich and the poor needs everybody's attention, great contrast exist in Kenya today."<sup>27</sup> Or in relation to the social inequality in Kenya Episcopal Conference asserted that "the gap between the rich and the poor, between the powerful and powerless, is reflected in our country. Injustice still growing, a minority of people monopolize the good things of the country, while the very many people are unable to obtain even the basic necessity..."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. pp52-53 and A.E. Orobator, The Church as Family, Ecclesiology in its Social context, Nairobi. Pauline Publ., 2000. P29.

<sup>27</sup> *A Pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops of Kenya*, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1990. P34.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p9

The social concern for the poor is well pronounced in different pastoral letters of the Kenyan Catholic Bishops at last in their vocal political stand and social life but looking at the lifestyle of most religious as well as the property owned by the Church as an institution. One wonders whether the Church is really serving the rich minority or the poor masses! Is her mission in conformity with her social teaching as far as preferential option for the poor is concerned?

#### 4:4 PASTORAL SUGGESTIONS

##### 4:4:1 **Jesus: the sole liberator**

From the turning point of the Gospel of St. Mark, Jesus, the Messiah was expected to be a person of great honour, a political hero. Instead Jesus became a simple humble person, the one who underwent suffering unto death, this was contrary to people's pre-conception. Yet Jesus is very much privileged to intervene in the human struggle for liberation. His suffering and death was given meaning by the resurrection, in this fact then we see our way to a glorious salvation with a great hope to freedom. The word of Christ is the truth that sets human beings free, to responsible freedom of course.

Jesus is the word that was disclosed and made present in our midst through the Gospel, Sacraments and good deeds in the community. When Jesus announces His mission of liberation by quoting Isaiah 62:1-3, we really see a liberator par excellence, a wounded healer of both physical and spiritual life, whose only law is *love* and always confessing to one another. His life becomes a challenge to all the people of God as He even commissioned His disciples to proclaim to the whole world that liberation is essentially a change of heart in loving God and neighbour.

Jesus as our master liberator is saying to Mathare people and all those undergoing the same experience that the only means to emancipation is a change of heart. All have to uproot the ill-will structures that drive the society into fear and loss of hope. The vices of corruption, stealing, greed, power, hunger etc. have to be eradicated. Furthermore, it is a call for the religious missionaries while supporting the poor spiritually, economically even politically, to strongly stimulate the people's initiatives from the potentialities have.

#### **4:4:2 The Church's Collaborative Action**

Since the Church is defined to be a community of believers, she has then the responsibility to organise a co-operative effort in collaboration with the faithful.

##### **4:4:2:1 Relevant Effective Slum Ministries**

###### **(1) Formation and training religious leaders**

Leaders from the different sects and denominations are to be trained so as to solve the religious and above all also social, political, cultural, psychological and even economic matters arising. This is the high time to get use of the street preachers or rather we the Catholic to get in their shoes to healing people in public through the word of God.

The religious orders in the local Church are to be given the opportunity to exercise their charism especially those gifted at serving the street children like Don Bosco and many others, those for the sick like the Camillians and others, those for the poor like Franciscans. All other congregations must have, for sure, something to do with evangelisation of the most needy, and so the door needs to be more opened for them. This may in a way answer the very popular question of

“why so many congregations for the poor and yet poverty continues devastating our people?”

(II) **Health services**

The question of sanitation by cleaning the compound for a conducive environment has to be entrusted under the care of the people themselves. This is to be a voluntary work as a sign of unity also. Through the small dispensary present in the slum, people are to be taught on the health care services and be aware of the most transmitted diseases. Both the physical and spiritual services are to be undertaken care of.

(III) **Special Ministries for Rehabilitation**

For great phenomenon like street children, prostitution, drug abuse, alcoholic, divorced single mothers, AIDS victim, sexually abused and others, is a call for new specialised ministry especially in the slums. These realities are more and more present in all the different areas of the city and the most affected ones are the youth. There is therefore the need of establishing and setting up of specialised rehabilitation counselling centres which can allow these people to rebuild their self trust and positive human values. Such a program is already effective at Kibera slum for instance, with the association of *“Women Right of Awareness Program (WRAP).”* More than a simple counseling, people in the slum also are in need of security (the law that particularly protects them), moral support, financial aid, education and medication.

The children born of the slum condition have the sense of feeling it as part and parcel of life, so the knowledge of sanitation has to be offered for poor majority. Such a plan is already applicable at Riruta by the *“Riruta environmental group for cabbage collection.”* This serves from

health hazards, pollution and furthermore to create employment by the recycling of the stuff.

In short then, our people must be aware of their surrounding and always be future oriented. This is practical at Korogocho by the "Revelation Group" with their on-going Scripture reflection and always trying to write the Gospel of their own life as to challenge situation of their social circumstances. The Sisters of the Daughters of St. Paul have realized this need by making effort to erect mini-Libraries wherever possible especially in the slums. (Ref. *Appendix VI, pp. 65-66*).<sup>29</sup>

We are also to seek for contribution from street preachers if they may try their best at converting the hearts of people from immorality and political oriented mind. This will help to diminish the spirit of mob psychology into a mature behaviour.

#### (IV) Media

Through media, the world has become a global village and so it is an important tool in the modern times. The Church has to face the challenge of meeting her faithful especially the youth, more closely through such a sophisticated way for easier communication and education. This is somehow becoming an ideal through the "family TV" in Nairobi, but still we need in a more special way, a Catholic religious exposition into the world. We are also to get accurate information through such media lines and the awareness on the world of science and technology with objective sense by the slum dwellers.

Both the government and religious leaders have to support the interests of journalists in passing through genuine and right information on the city life. Using such tools like: Radio, TV, Computer, Video production, Writings like Magazines (e.g. The Seed, New People, AFER,

Parents, and others) and books. This must be a suitable means to educate and answer the various needs of the people in the cities and countryside.

(V) **Ecumenism and Dialogue**

Christian unity is very important, there are already symptoms of the urban privatisation of religion. This may contribute a lot to the losing of hope, since religion is becoming irrelevant to the life of people in the slum. There has to be an organised unity by the different sects, denominations and religions if they are so concerned to healing the slum victim.

The urban situation presents Churches with opportunity for sharing the person of Christ in a true witness and worship, through His word and the Sacraments. So the presence of various denominations has to make the ecumenical understanding and co-operation much easier for the Christian unity. Hence, a stronger social objectivity in the slum could as well help in establishing a good ecumenical and religious dialogue even with other religions.

4:4:3: **Saving the poor by the poor**

The Church has become the source of hope and relief for the hard pressed persons, unlike many other systems the Church has to live in more practice the Gospel of love regardless of tribe, race, status-quo, age or faith. Our Church is One, Holy, Catholic (of all), apostolic, and more else, the Church is by its nature a communion of people, Hence, the Church of Mathare is nothing other than the poor themselves.

Any step to be made then has to be in collaboration with the very people. The Church is able to touch some of the following areas so as to save the poor by the poor themselves. The Church does not need to dish

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<sup>29</sup> NB: Any person of good will is invited to make a request in response to this mission, use a copy of the

out money for this, people are to be trained on how to get holding one another may be through group work or "harambee" (fund raising) on which the donor can give a support. This will help them feel the sense of belonging to that community and the zeal to carry out responsibilities. This can be effective only by a collaborative ministry of the existing groups like Small Christian Communities, the Undugu Society, the Young Christian's Society, parish vocation club, the Girl's club, Mathare young Christian social and cultural club and probably through special unity of inter-faith dialogue of the Christians and Moslems.

#### 4:4:4 **Empowerment of the poor to Self-Transformation**

Having in mind the extent of the effort, energy, commitment and sacrifice demanded of the poor if they are to play their part per se to the work of social transformation, a preliminary preparatory step is needed. That is the liberation and transformation from the hearts of the poor themselves. They are to be trained against the attitude of dependency on the foreign donors. They are to activate their potentialities with more confidence to the level of their ability.

Liberation has to be an optimistic ideal for the victim, but silence will mean yes to the oppressor. Once in a certain situation, the victim can be responsible for the treatment received simply because liberation requires from them a consciousness of their true dignity and role in the society to which they belong. Self-liberation is therefore achieved through self awareness, will and the ability to organizing oneself plus the spirit of coordination by putting their effort together for an effective service in the environment they live. The spirit of voluntariness must, of-course exist in their midst, that will help to firmly defend and opt for their rights and

dignity.<sup>30</sup> The worst thing for any person is, not knowing the rules that keep intact one's rights and obligations, the unity of the poor will serve in sharing the little they have as a means to support one another, living the identity of their experience of poor person. In this manner, the poor have to make a step that is been expressed from chapter one, on the community life of the first apostolic life, regardless of tribe, tradition, gender, state of life, race or language. The goal here is a total elimination of inhuman and the dehumanizing factors that dominate society.

It is the poor themselves to express the evil motives that drives the social life, such as: discrimination, exploitation, oppression, tribalism, mismanagement and marginalization. The poor are to make some effort of their own physical and mental ability to creating and elevating their educational, spiritual and health precautions starting from the very environment they live. That is the key to liberation and it is own by they themselves. A well organized and united community of the poor can as well achieve a resolution to the economic situation. United together, the small scale business with agricultural products will cater for the family food. The same harmonious unity will guide them towards struggle for a true democratic political life, including also justice, peace, fraternity and freedom of speech. This exercise must start from the young generation that is practically the future of society so as to avoid the ever growing poverty inheritance. Everything is possible only with a courage to make a start. The poor are to start cultivating the zeal to practice their gifts and talents in the small scale activities that promote for self sufficiency, advancement and progress. Once the poor are already transformed, definitely the society is half-way through.

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<sup>30</sup> *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nairobi. Paulines Publ. 1995

## **Conclusion**

The role of the poor in social transformation is open to so many possibilities, some of which are considered in this work. The great deal for now is the kind of self-awareness of the dignity, rights and vocation of the poor. This is the question of the poor themselves to voluntarily assume the responsibility individually and collectively. This is the best position where the Church is really a good shepherd in becoming like the good samaritan.

### **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

In fact, poverty is something negative and degrading, scandalous and inimical to human dignity and therefore contrary to the will of God. Hence the above synthesis presents the theory of what a preferential option for the poor means and how it is founded in God's preferential love for the oppressed and the marginalized as manifested in the exodus event and in the life, words and deeds of Jesus Christ. Magisterium simplifies this theory even more into practical proposals and suggestions on how to apply an option for the poor into the different pastoral fields.

There have been many documents of the Church on the social phenomena with a very little implementation here in Nairobi and the slums in particular, said Father Alex Zanotelli.<sup>31</sup> There is no policy of the Church as regarding the slums, he continued! the concern of the Church is limited at the parish level and thus the problem of slum remains only a charismatic choice rather than option for the Church. But the mission of the Church is typically to side with the poor, to liberate the oppressed and free the prisoners. In short to fight any kind of evil.

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<sup>31</sup> NB. a sharing by Fr. Alex Zanotelli, a Comboni Missionary spending most of his time with the poor people at Korogocho slum in Nairobi, which is a short distance from Mathare.

What presents the pastoral challenge now is how to live these Christian ideals in the day-to-day life of an ordinary Christian. What pastoral praxis can we adopt as a local Kenyan Church and Nairobi Diocese in specific. The concrete answer to this depends on initiatives by each individual person, religious missionary congregations, communities or diocese. Anyway, Tangaza College has not been left behind in this, there was a three days seminar (November 12th to 14th 2001) in which the main speakers were Comboni Missionaries who are in the field, various slum dwellers (men and women), some students and lecturers from the college who are already involved to this mission.

Therefore the challenges are still there. The religious leaders at all levels have to realize and mould the type of formation given to the young ones, so as to meet the need of our times. We are called for a critique mind with a simple heart towards the seen; to be relational. For sure there will never be justice without love according to John Paul II's note on the World Day of Peace (1<sup>st</sup> January 1993), *'if you want peace reach out to the poor'*

Finally, I feel to have done a good job from which my personality and identity as a servant of the sick-poor, "*a Camillian*", is very much enriched. There are therefore, things noteworthy of our solidarity with the poor, such are: the call to conversion, living the evangelical poverty, empowerment and conscientization of the poor, then advocacy into their misery and of course giving more heart through liturgies and worship.

*Let us bless the Lord*

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## APPENDIX I

### Oral Information on the historical formation of slums in Nairobi

By Alfred Kinuthia Mathare

"History marks the presence of British colonizers to Kenya in the year 1890's, that comes after a kind of exploration. In fact the point of focus was to engulf Uganda in due of the Britons' strategic reasons. In their survey, some parts of Kenya like Kericho, Kiambu and Nairobi became the point of interest to utilize. They introduced Coffee plantations around Kiambu and tea growing in Kericho while Nairobi (because of the good climate and water available in plenty) was made a centre of organization, and thereafter (1896), the "Kenya - Uganda" Railway (KUR) was introduced to easier transportation and communication from Mombasa to Kisumu.

When the need of personnel arose for the Railway making, different constructions, quarries and the plantations, then Colonizers could use a forced labour that was captured from the Central and Western area, by force. Hence Nairobi was structured to be an administrative centre and the officials stayed at the present "Dagoret corner", so called (ie. the great corner), then some areas like Shaurimoyo, Makongeni and Makadara were planned for the workers' settlements, other places including Upper-Hill, Muthaiga and Karen were reserved for the whites. There after the use of Identity Cards (IDs) was introduced just for the sake of controlling the forced labour. It was clearly indicated in the IDs the place (area) of work (settlement) and so forbidden any movement from one place to another, severe punishment followed after any violation of this rule.

Any-how, since before Independence, around 1939 there already existed kinds of settlements in Nairobi first initiated by the whites. Nairobi was divided by the British, of which even the foreigners (Nubians from Sudan) were allocated more than 400,000 acres, that is currently "Kibera" site. As a good sign of urban migration the Nubians were over come by many other tribes that invade the area as they now claim for a title deed.

In the 1950s Kenyans were fed up of the colonial rule that was typically rude, the most fertile land was reserved for the whites and the government use and more however population in the towns especially Nairobi was highly growing, people with no sufficient accommodation meanwhile financially incapable. Some individuals organized to react against and they gang as a group to fight for independence in the "MAUMAU" that is the initials for the phrase "*Mzungu Arudi Ulaya Mwafrika Apate Utawala*" (meaning: let the whites go back for the Africans to rule).

Right after independence (1963), some individuals took the advantage to grab huge plots of land, while many of the freedom fighters remained ladles. From this point the urban migration was highly growing due to the freedom of movement and the need for financial support, education, good life in town plus a good number of other motivations.

The economic situation of the life in town rendered not to their expectation for food, shelter and clothing, so as to minimize the costs of living, people strive for a cheap accommodation that led to unplanned structures around the city. According to Mr. Kinuthia, before independence (1940's) residential areas were decently planned in a good order, while after independence we came to experience emergence of slum conditions by the unplanned hut areas in the free lands of the city with insufficient sanitation.

The economic situation of the life in town rendered not to their expectation for



Photo/Joseph Mathenge

Mr Yunis Ali, a former MP, airs his views when the Njonjo Land Commission visited the area yesterday. Members of the Nubian community in Lang'ata constituency petitioned the team over the issuance of title deeds.

# Give us title deeds, Nubians say

By WAHOME THUKU

The Nubian community in Langata constituency has asked the Njonjo land commission to ensure that they get title deeds.

Hundreds of squatters from the community demanded decent settlement on the more than 400,000 acres of land they claim was given to them before independence.

The community, which has its origin in Sudan, told the commission at the African Inland Church in Kibera that since they settled in the area more than

In a memorandum presented by their political and religious leaders, the community claimed ancestral ownership of the constituency.

"We have hosted other communities here who have instead turned into oppressing us," Mr Ismail Ramadhan.

Mr Ramadhan said in the last 39 years he had been unable to secure title deeds for the land despite all his efforts.

"In 1974, our former MP, Mr Yunis Ali, tabled a Bill in Parliament to have the title deeds issued to the community," he noted, adding that it was passed but the people were never settled.

government had the obligation to settle them anywhere else in the country.

The Nubian community in Langata has in the past been involved in bloody clashes with other communities over the land issue. In 1997, seven people were killed in such clashes, two of them shot dead by the police. Mr Ali described the slum areas as "hell".

"We have waited for justice since independence and we can only hope that this commission has come to save us," he said.

Mr Ali, who served as MP up to 1974

sidelined in making development policies.

"Time will come when the government will regret if it doesn't take action today," he added.

More than 20 groups presented their memoranda to the 22 member commission.

A Muslim leader Abraham Amber accused local administrators of ignoring Presidential directives to settle the squatters while a Muungano wa Wanavijiji organisation representative, Ms Peris Akinyi, appealed to the commission to

## Appendix II

### SLUMS AND SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS IN AFRICA

These are some of the African Cities and capitals where the slum reality is observed and the level of impoverishment is rapidly growing:

CITY	SITUATION
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bangui</b></p> <p>(Central African Republic)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-estimated population 500,000 in 1985</li> <li>-around ¾ of population lives in self-built housing</li> <li>-The city's sewerage system were constructed 1946 when population was 26,000 and has never been expanded.</li> <li>-almost all squatter settlements are dependent on pit latrines and lacks electricity and dependable supplies of water.</li> <li>-None of the settlements is the result of conscious planning and their inhabitants have no title to the land they occupy.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cairo</b></p> <p>(Egypt)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-estimated population is 7.7 million at the end of 1994.</li> <li>-has severe overcrowding, lack of basic services and deteriorating housing conditions characterize many parts of this rapidly expanding city.</li> <li>-more than 3 million people are estimated to live in the cemeteries of the city. While many others live in Mosques.</li> <li>-only 10% of the city's population are able to afford low-cost housing provided through public programs.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Freetown</b> (Sierra Leone)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-estimated population 480,000 in 1985, 650,000 in 1990</li> <li>-the city's rapid growth population has led to an increase in unplanned residential areas.</li> <li>-the high costs of land has caused the low-income groups into a very high density housing areas near the city center around river banks, steep hills and even the sides of garbage dumps.</li> <li>-most area of the city has no sewers and the sewage that is collected is discharged untreated into the sea.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lusaka</b> (Zambia)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-population estimated 740,000 in 1985, 1.3 million in 1995, more than ½ of the city's population lives in squatter settlements</li> <li>-despite the efforts that are made to upgrade the settlements, the social and physical infrastructure in many remains rudimentary.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nairobi</b> (Kenya)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-estimate population 1.2 million in 1985, 2.1 million at the end of 1994</li> <li>-unauthorized dwellings (slum areas) all around the city, 50-60% of the city's population lives in them</li> <li>-the city's largest squatter is Kibera</li> <li>-Mathare valley grew from 4,000 inhabitants in 1964 to more than 50,000 in 1970 and is occupied by more than 130,000 people.</li> <li>-many areas with unauthorized constructions have grown at comparable rates. Typically the squatter settlements have very high densities, their structures are rudimentary or non-existent. Few settlements have access roads or street lighting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Novakchott</b> (Mauritania)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-a small town with 5,000 inhabitants in 1965, it grew to 135,000 in 1977, and since then the population has doubled. In 1995 around 707,000.</li> <li>-most of the very large increase in population has been housed in illegal shanty or tent settlements.</li> <li>-Since 1972, the government has distributed 7,000 unserviced plots and an estimated 64% of the city's population today live in self-built settlements on these plots and in unauthorized settlements.</li> <li>-more than 2/3 of the city's inhabitants have no direct access to water.</li> <li>-large area of the country is decertified.</li> <li>-with some variations, the same living conditions</li> </ul>

	and the same rapid urbanization pace can be found in the main cities of Mali, Niger and Senegal.
<b>Quagadougou</b> (Burkina Faso)	<p>-population estimated 310,000 in 1985, 681,000 end of 1990, around 60% of the city's population live in a wide belt of spontaneous settlements built around the center.</p> <p>-there is lack of access to piped water, sanitation and electricity and their inhabitants have no tenure to the land they occupy.</p>
<b>Tunis</b> (Tunisia)	<p>-estimated population is 1.3 million in 1985, 2.1 million at the end of 1994.</p> <p>-in 1978 135,000 people lived in the city's old center at a density of 500 persons per hectare, with some 40% of all households living in a single rooms.</p> <p>-another 30,000 people lived in squatter settlements at an average density of 925 persons per hectare.</p> <p>-the Medina and the squatter settlements which housed 45% of the city's population, accounted for more than 10% of the city's total residential area.</p>
<b>Largos</b> (Nigeria)	<p>-it is for Africa what a Mexico City is for Latin America: a monster city consisting of islands, marshlands and sand banks which has doubled its population in 10 years, from 2.5 million in 1975 to 5million in 1985 and 11million at the end of 1994.</p> <p>-according to experts, Largos is nothing more than an enormous slum, whose island-part density is 2800 people per hectare, where running water reaches only ½ the population, with open sewers and uncollected waste.</p>
<b>Equatorial and Central Africa</b>	-Even if less proved by climatic conditions, nevertheless do not escape from this evolution and urban pauperism. Presently Kinshasa numbers more than 4.5 million, more than ½ of whom are settled in unwholesome surroundings.

# NAIROBI SITUATION ANALYSIS

**Table 9: Informal Settlements in Nairobi**

Administrative Division	Individual Settlement	Area Covered by Informal Settlements (Hectares)	Estimated Population	
			1993	1999
Makadara	Mariguini	14.2	17,040	25,930
	Express	16.8	20,160	30,610
	Mukuru	54.4	65,280	99,330
		85.4	102,480	155,940
Langata	Kibera	225.6	248,160	377,620
	Mitumba	1.5	1,200	1,820
	Bamas	2.1	1,680	2,550
		229.2	251,040	382,000
Kasarani	Mathare	73.7	58,960	89,710
	Korogacho/Kinyago	49.2	56,580	86,090
	Thome	7.3	2,190	3,330
	Njathini	8.8	2,625	3,990
	Garba	13.8	4,125	6,270
	Githurai	21.8	6,540	9,950
	Kahawa	30.5	9,150	13,920
	Kamae	10	2,985	4,540
		215	143,155	217,830
Dagoretti	Ngando	12	6,000	9,130
	Ruta	15	7,500	11,410
	Karandini	23	11,500	17,490
	Kawangware	111	55,000	83,690
	Muslim Village	37	18,500	28,150
	Kangemi	75	37,500	57,060
	Dagoretti	14.5	7,250	11,030
	Waihaka	41	20,500	31,190
	Mutuini	45	22,500	34,230
		373.5	186,250	283,410
Embakasi	Maji Saba	39.7	11,910	18,120
	Kayoole	23.3	13,980	21,270
	Soweto	10	6,000	9,130
		73	31,890	48,520
Pumwani	Buru Buru	4.5	1,890	2,870
	Carlon Kitui/Pumwani Village	10	10,000	15,210
		14.5	11,890	18,090
Parklands	Runaa	11.5	3,450	5,250
	Kisumu	11.3	3,375	5,130
	Spring Valley	1.7	501	760
		24.4	7,326	11,140
All Divisions		1,015.00	734,031	1,116,970

Source: Reconstructed from Matrix (1993) and 1989/99 intercensal growth rate of 6.18 for Nairobi.



Bishops from around the world meet in the first session of the month-long synod at the Vatican.

## Pope challenges the bishops to be poor

A month-long meeting of the Synod of Bishops began last Sunday in Rome, designed to give fresh impetus to the role of the diocesan bishop. Attended by 247 bishops and a handful of theologians and observers, this 10th "ordinary general assembly" of the synod will continue until 27 October — just a day before John Paul II marks the 23rd anniversary of his election as Pope. Robert Mckenzie reports from Rome.

Senior members of the hierarchy have started examining how the bishop can more genuinely be a "Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World" — the synod's theme. Participants are using a 124-page working document (*instrumentum labors*) to discuss such wide-ranging topics as the bishop's spirituality, his administration of spiritual and temporal goods, his relations with the Vatican and ways of preaching to a changing world.

Pope John Paul inaugurated the gathering with a Mass in St Peter's, where he unexpectedly introduced a new item into the synod's agenda: poverty among the Church's highest-ranking officials. The Pope decided to challenge the bishops to lead lives of poverty so that their words might be more authentic. He pointed out that since poverty was "an essential trait" of Jesus and his ministry, it was therefore "an indispensable requirement" for bishops.

Drawing inspiration from the parable of Lazarus, the Pope said: "Poverty constitutes a precious message for the synodal assembly." But at a press conference the following day the "relator general" (or recording secretary) of the assembly, Cardinal Edward Egan, Archbishop of New York, admitted he had not read the Pope's homily or even heard it during the Mass because of the bad acoustics where he was seated. The relator general sets the tone of the synod discussions by delivering a keynote address on the first day and a report near the end of the synod summarising the main points raised by the bishops.

Pope John Paul, who had returned only three days earlier from a week's journey to Kazakhstan and Armenia, looked tired and frail. He spoke slowly and at times was difficult to understand. But his weakness did not weaken the potency of his message. "We must examine our attitude towards earthly goods and how they are used", he said, slumped on his chair in the gilded and marble basilica. "We are called to verify to what point in the Church there is a personal and communal conversion to effective evangelical poverty."

The bishops and cardinals sat expressionless, dressed in gold-trimmed chasubles that covered their tailor-made soutanes. After the Mass some of them were taken to their homes in chauffeured limousines. Messengers

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sedans. To such a backdrop, where many prelates still retain some of the trappings of a bygone clerical era, Pope John Paul's message looked like a scolding. He said bishops would not be credible unless "they show proof that their conduct is detached from private interests".

Not all bishops share the Pope's belief in the necessity of "episcopal poverty". Traditionally in the Church, poverty has been a vow lived, not by diocesan clergy, but by religious orders. And a couple of years ago an Italian cardinal argued that even the Church's preferential option for the poor lacked adequate theological foundations.

Pope John Paul also told the bishops they must be "prophets who courageously unveil social sins linked to consumerism, hedonism, an economy that produces an unacceptable divide between luxury and misery, between the few who are opulent and the

innumerable Lazaruses who are to misery".

Each of the bishops will have 15 minutes to make an eight-minute speech at the four-week assembly. They will attend several days of small discussion groups, from which they will draw up a number of proposals that will then be voted on by the whole body. The items that are passed on to the Pope for his consideration.

This gathering of bishops has been seen to highlight courageous ideas and proposals. But, if past synod assemblies are any indication, such initiatives are usually vetoed. Cardinal Jan Schotte, the Belgian secretary of the Synod of Bishops, said at the conference on 30 September that he had never presented a "realistic alternative" to the way things were done, and that the synod process was "not realistic". He particularly denounced

believed to have been put forward by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster, that the synod should come under the responsibility of the Secretary of State. The assembly was not part of the Roman Curia, said Cardinal Schotte.

# YOUTH AND DRUGS

The youths have all the reasons to cry for their only hope, a chance to see and experience the pain of losing their identity. To help these young people we need to put manure and fertilisers around the stem. They are our plants that need our immediate attention. To help them see that the big job they have a head of them what they are carrying is not a two-kilogram sack of loafs of bread but an important package of their lives. And therefore, the community needs to open towards this young generation. Let us journey with the young people towards an appointment of life. Life that is full hopes and promises in joy.

The world seems to be hostile to many of our people that is why perhaps many seek satisfaction else where in the world. But today we are challenged by these words of hope, Join them on their way to Emmaus. Remember A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.

Drug abuse is a complex problem that has no single or simple cause, but it arises from, and interaction of many factors. These factors include; pharmacological, biological, psychological, social-cultural and spiritual. The use of drugs matters a lot on one's health.

Using drugs as medicine is the normal usage of any kind of drug. And this is the positive way of handling drugs that are within our reach.

Drug Abuse is common among the young of our time. Every young person has got an explanation to any information about drug misuse. Many say taking drugs in excess is not as harmful as people think. It is only harmful when the body mechanism can not cope up with drug substances, and therefore they say such person is unworthy of living. These drugs are used for various reasons: to escape from problems, for pain relief, cool down one's emo-



tions, to do  
inhibitions  
pressure,  
When  
are use  
taken in  
quantity  
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destroys  
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people.

## Challenges met by a Youth.

The youth is challenged by his or her identity, the time trying to sort out himself or herself during the adolescence period. In this context amid many other factors they end up finding an utopia in drugs. Professor W says, "The young people know that they have been picking coffee and tea since they were able to walk but the economic situation has only marginally changed... The tendency among some is not worthy of living because they were posed to have been born" At the end of the struggling to realise one's expectations is met by these overlapping forces.

Looking at the psychological changes within the body chemistry of the youth, one is susceptible mood that swings wildly. This is because, it is at this age that youth's self identity becomes more demanding than any other stage. Remember my identity should be at your fingertips you meet Dr. Wanjohi he will tell you a young person is not only physically and biologically, he or she is also psychologically and spiritually. His or her dignity depends on what one is but on who one is a person created in the image and likeness of God." Experiencing the modern world with its erosion of traditional beliefs, emptiness, state of confusion, meaningless existence, self-alienation from God and this leads to a feeling of powerlessness, the youth seeks an alternative from the nearest source of pleasure and promotion and that is the excessive

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October 2001

Dear Father, Sister, Brother,

## Re: MINI-LIBRARIES 'READING FOR LIFE'

We are pleased to present to you a very important project, that is: Mini-libraries "Reading for Life". The aim of the project is to help people towards a behaviour change and to promote justice and peace in Africa.

The books offered touch four key areas: behaviour change, social life, human values and Christian virtues. The aim, as mentioned before, is to help starting a mini-library or restocking the library where it exists already. The project is in response to the growing need to cultivate and encourage the culture of reading with a view to:

1. Fostering behaviour change;
2. Promoting justice and peace (to take the words of Pope John Paul II, "how to teach... that ensemble of principles of solidarity and social justice that make up the social teaching of the Church");
3. Fighting the social evils of ignorance, poverty, AIDS (by knowing their roots and feeding the minds);
4. Deepening the Christian faith (or, as Cardinal Jan Schotte said at the opening of the Synod of Bishops: "to overcome the religious illiteracy of the members of the Church").

To achieve or, at least, to contribute to this purpose, Paulines Publications Africa is pleased to forward some of its publications, free of charge thanks to the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI) who paid for them. These books are therefore **not for sale**. They are to be circulated for personal reading, teaching and group sharing in Christian Communities, Youth Groups, etc.

To make the most of this GIFT, it is important that one person be responsible for the mini-library to co-ordinate its activity, to see that the books are well kept and to find ways of improving it by increasing the quantity of books.

**We suggest as follows:**

1. To find a suitable place where the books are easily accessible;
2. To make a card for each book. Every time the book is borrowed, the name of the borrower, signature, date of borrowing and date of return should be indicated on the card;
3. To advertise the mini-library to see that the books are circulated and read;
4. To charge a small fee. Over a period of time the funds could be utilised to add stock to the mini-library itself. All the titles supplied and many more are also on sale at the Paulines Book Centres and in other Diocesan Bookshops.

The number of mini-libraries is very limited. If you interested in it, please return this application to us. The applications will be considered according to the date of arrival: first come, first served! As soon as we receive your application, we shall inform you if and where you can collect the MINI-LIBRARY.

We thank you for your collaboration and remain,  
Yours sincerely,

Daughters of St Paul

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**APPLICATION FORM**

Name of the Organization/Parish/School.....

Address.....

Parish.....Diocese.....

Person who undertakes the responsibility of the Mini-Library .....

Who will benefit from it? .....

How do you intend to circulate the books? .....

.....

Signature of Parish Priest or Sister-in-Charge.....

Place .....Date.....

## APPENDIX VII

### APPLYING THE PASTORAL CYCLE TO St. TERESA'S AND St. BENEDICT PARISHES

#### THE CONCRETE SOCIAL LIFE AND PROBLEMS

1. The title deed under corruption
2. Shortage of water
3. Problem with the people for baptism
4. Unfaithful Church leaders
5. The number of the Christian Catholics is declining
6. Low participation in the Small Christian Communities
7. Some Christian communities don't involve all Christians to action
8. Some leaders misunderstanding one another
9. Community prayers reaches the few privileged houses only
10. Former leaders don't participate in collaboration with the new ones
11. No rules observed in the area
12. There is insecurity due to harassment of the people by the police especially at night
13. The buildings were not well put in Mathare
14. There is a lot of bravery
15. There is no strong unity among the leaders of the Church and of the Government
16. The house rent is coming up very high
17. Sanitation and the toilets are very "very" poor
18. Children have being spoiled due to films
19. People don't cooperate in the essential matters but the ill-will
20. Demolition on the side of chief of business and houses of people
21. Small business people mislead and exploit others
22. Lack of employment
23. Education system is not upgraded
24. There are so many obscure areas in the constitution of Kenya
25. There is fear in most of the few people to express themselves
26. Corruption even in the courtroom
27. The government is corrupt

28. Leadership in various areas is given to people with very poor education or not the right people
29. There is no freedom of movement
30. The increasing number of street children
31. There is a prejudiced tribalism in the country of Kenya, Mathare included
32. We have a lot of single parents (fathers and mothers) in the slum
33. There are a lot of people without a place to stay or a piece of land to dwell on
34. There is a lot of illiterate people or semi-illiterate like those who are unable to continue with their education. Even the drop-outs from the school
35. A lot of diseases because of the poor sanitation
36. Exploitation of women who lack a decent job
37. Exploitation of many workers who are paid very low salaries that are unrealistic since it doesn't match the needs of their families
38. Drunkenness due to the enormous sales of "chang'aa" (local illegal brew) and beer in the slum
39. Domestic violence, divorce and separation cases
40. Alcoholism and drug abuse especially by the youth
41. Immoralities like prostitution, rape, incest, homosexuals, abortionists, ...
42. Religious tensions among the sects and denominations
43. Starvation and malnutrition
44. Lack of good health services
45. AIDS devastating
46. Bureaucracy
47. Land grabbing is a common phenomenon

*NB: The above listed facts are a number of points marked from my sharing with the slum dwellers*