

Resource-use Practices Influencing Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya

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Abstract

Globally, conflicts arising from resource-use are increasingly becoming common. These generated inter-ethnic violence that have caused death, strained relations among communities, led to loss of property, displacements, slowed economic growth and increased sex-related crimes. Despite the government, local communities, and NGOs among other institutions putting effort to minimize conflicts, they are yet to find a lasting solution. This paper was geared towards examining the nature and extent of resource-use practices influencing inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study used three theories, Incompatibility of Plural Society theory, Greed versus Grievance Theory and Primordialism Theory. The sample size for the study was 246 respondents. The study concludes that resource-use practices influence inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya. It further recommends that the major factors for nature and extent of resource-use practices on inter-ethnic conflicts be addressed by both national and county government right from the grass root level with the help of community members.

Keywords: Resources, Conflict, Inter ethnic, Peace, Violence.

1.1 Introduction

Resource-use practices influence on inter-ethnic conflicts is an old phenomenon that has affected many countries globally. Many Marxist and Non-Marxist scholars agree that ethnicity is a reflection of traditional societies' way of life in which communities stayed separately from one another and in which communication between different communities was very minimal (Jeong, 2017).

Instances of political fragmentation along ethnic lines are also present in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union (McGarry & O'Leary, 2013). Closely similar situations are also present in Canada, the United Kingdom, Spain, and France among others (Lemarchand, 2007).

In Africa, conflicts have thrived due to lack of consensus over land tenure systems, coupled by population pressure, agricultural commercialization, and urbanization in backdrop of weak or unrecognized conflict resolution programs as Cotula *et. al.*, 2004 affirm.

Kenya has had internal conflicts which have caused widespread economic disruption, example conflict between the pastoral Pokot and Turkana of North – West Kenya, lasting from 1969 to 1984.

Therefore, the need for a study to untangle the issues behind the recurring wars in the Nakuru and the failure of peace initiatives by both the government of Kenya and non-state actors.

In Nakuru County, resource-use related conflicts are particularly common. This often plunges the region into violence, especially during election periods (Muhammed & Kinge, 2016). Applying its methods on such a rich sample, this study would offer valuable insight into resource use practices communities elsewhere that live close to one another.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The persistent host and immigrant tension has led to recurrent violence in Nakuru County. The violence is caused by, manipulation of ethnic difference by the political class (Muhammed & Kinge 2016). These conflicts have affected the social-economic development of the people leading to rise of poverty prevalence rate, making more communities vulnerable to violent conflict and manipulation by political class.

According to Demuyne & Schollaert (2008), agriculture as an economic activity has influenced conflicts in many societies since it increases people's desire and need for more grazing land. Negative ethnic stereotypes also influence such conflicts. According to

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Martin & Nakayama (2013), the socio-cultural factors which influenced inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County especially in Kuresoi sub-counties included resource-use practices.

Increase in human population in Nakuru County, is faced with challenges such as high poverty levels, scarcity of resources, unemployment and gender inequality. Organizations have not much yielded fruit in the area for years, hence the need to find new ways and permanent solution of handling the problem (Koros, 2018).

1.3 Research objective

The general objective of the study was to investigate resource use practices influencing inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.4 Literature review

1.4.1 The Nature and Extent of Resource-use Practices Influencing Conflicts

Natural resource preservation, which link closely with resource-use practices is a fragile yet vital process for a society's for maintaining an economically stable society. How a society utilizes its natural resources influences the resources' ability to sustain its economy and determines the quality of life of residents. (Steyaert *et.al.*, 2007). According to the United Nations and European Union, the ability of a people to resolve conflicts peacefully relies on citizens' confidence on conflict resolution structures installed by the governing bodies. Klinke *et. al.* (2018) contends that violence is a likely result of an illegitimate or inefficient conflict management mechanism. Society, therefore, resorts to violence when it deems its political system is fragile, divisive, and unreliable. Building a strong conflict resolution system is to stem violent conflict, therefore, is in the best interest of governing bodies and their subjects.

It is unlikely that disputes over natural resources alone would result in conflict. Violent conflicts emerge mostly because of weak political systems, particularly when such systems fail to address issue of marginalization, discrimination, and inequality, and without instilling proper measures to ensure obedience to the law. Politicization of natural resource disputes also influences violent conflict (Cooper & Urpelainen, 2018).

1.4.2 Scarcity and Competition

When resources available cannot meet demand, they are said to be scarce. This to apply to forests, croplands, and water bodies (Schilling *et. al.*, 2018). Increased scarcity creates competition as people struggle to sustain their livelihoods. Depending on the situation, individuals or groups respond to scarcity in various ways including innovation, migration (Le Billion, 2001).

Scarcity can fall into three categories, that is, demand-induced scarcity, supply induced scarcity, and structural scarcity. When scarcity is demand-induced, it means that resources available can no longer sustain the increasing needs of the users. Factors like population growth, technological advancement and increased per-capita consumption may cause this form of scarcity. As for supply-induced Scarcity, it occurs when aspects like pollution, over-exploitation limits the environment's ability to produce as much as it used to. Structural scarcity, on the other hand. occurs when one group/individual takes full control of a resource and denies other groups access to it. The latter is usually a manifestation of poor governance, but it can also occur in a fairly functioning government structure due to land use policies (Kahl, 2018).

1.4.3 Poor Governance and Environment

While structures that govern resource access can help manage conflicts related to resource scarcity or grievances, they also have the potential to influence conflict if they are used to cause structural scarcity through corruption, exclusion, or and inequality (McKay *et. al.*, 2017). A closer look at a government's resource-use and dispute resolution framework can reveal a lot of issues causing disputes and pave the way for lasting solutions.

1.4.4 Trans boundary Natural Resources

Managing natural resources is not only confined to a community's borders. Water bodies, for instance, often extend to various borders. The same applies to damages and responsibilities associated with exploiting natural resources, such as pollution. The UN charter, while allowing countries to exploit their natural resources as they wish, also places the responsibility on member states to ensure that they do not damage the environments of fellow countries. But trans boundary resources needs multi state cooperation to manage responsibly, failure to which conflicts arise. As Zeitoun (2017) states, conflict may arise from trans-boundary resources because it is not clear how their responsibilities and benefits should be shared. Countries sharing natural resources may entangle in trans boundary resource conflict when one country feels that the other is consuming too much of the resource or when one country fails to adhere to agreed allocations or regulations.

In Africa and Asia, most direct conflicts are overlapping claims and disagreements over tenure. Forests, especially, are among the main subjects of tenure-related conflict. Although many Asian governments own land fully, this system borrows largely from the colonial system; hence it is not entrenched in the culture of the people. The people believe that the lands belong to them because they have been managing the forests, rivers and other natural resources as their

own. According to them, customary rights cement their claims as owners of these resources (Nwauche, 2015).

Although the legal and institutional structure in the country is intended to deal with conflicts in respect of natural resources, it has provided nothing in terms of reducing conflicts of natural resources because of systemic inadequacies. Conflicts over natural resources remain common and cause for great concern in Kenya.

Incompatibility of plural societies theory asserts that in an ethnically plural society inter-ethnic conflicts are necessitated by the exclusive allegiance to the interests of one's ethnic nationality and cannot be eradicated. This theory seems to be insightful in its approach of handling inter-ethnic conflict it emphasizes that independent would lead to anarchy and ethnic strife in struggle for hegemony. It also emphasizes on cultural unity and not political unity. This study sought to find out if inter-ethnic conflict in Kuresoi is not purely motivated by socio-cultural factors but by socio-economic factors and thus greed, the inter-ethnic violence is caused by, manipulation of ethnic difference by the political class (Muhammed & Kinge, 2016).

1.5 Methodology

The study examined the nature and extent of resource-use practices influencing inter- ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya. Descriptive survey method was employed because it allows the researchers to adopt a holistic approach in the study, thus enabling and utilizing research tools. It is not limited to one specific paradigm but may use either qualitative or quantitative approaches.

1.6 Limitations for the study

Constraints were bound to occur in any research activity. Some respondent were very busy which made it difficult to find the sampled group in due course, especially, the county officials on duty.

The researcher sought support of the departmental heads at the respective directorates as well as through arranged appointments with the officers to help collect data in good time. The targeted respondents might not adequately understand and respond to English questionnaires items to the study.

This challenge was overcome by the use of research assistants who were conversant with English, Swahili and the local dialect in extreme cases.

1.7 Results

1.7.1 Gender

The study sought to establish the gender of 246 household heads. The respondents were thus asked to indicate their gender and the results were as follows.

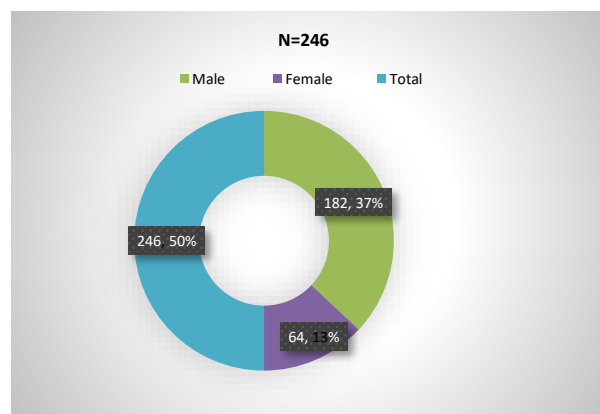


Figure 1: Gender of Household Heads in Nakuru County, Kenya

Source: Field Data, 2019

The results in Figure 1.1 indicate that out of 246 household heads, 182(37%) of the household heads were male while 64(13%) were female. The study therefore reveals that majority of the households are headed by male as opposed to their female counter parts as the research focused on interviewing the heads of household.

1.7.2 Age

The study sought to find out the age of household heads in Nakuru County, Kenya. The results from 246 household heads are shown in figure 2.

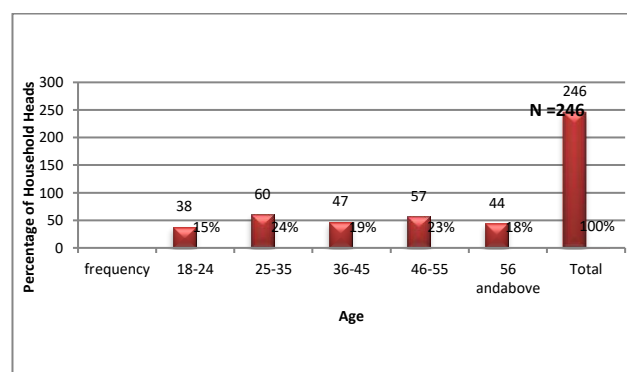


Figure 2: Age of Household Heads in Nakuru County, Kenya

Source: Field Data, 2019

The results indicate household heads in the age bracket 18 – 24 years were 38(15%), 25 – 35 years were 60(24%), 36 – 45 years were 47(19%), 46 – 55 years were 57(23%) and those above 56 years were 44(18%). These findings are consistent with the 2019 Kenyan census. Most of the respondents were below 56 years of age which is considered to be the reproductive ages. Respondents at this age are directly affected by recurrence of conflicts while those above the age of 56 have an immense experience of on the history of the recurrence of conflicts. Household heads at this age were key in

providing vital information on the recurrence of the conflicts. This is because they had lived in the areas longer and hence understood the dynamics of the conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.7.3 Marital status

The study sought to determine the marital status of 296 house hold heads in Nakuru County, Kenya. The results were indicated in Figure 3.

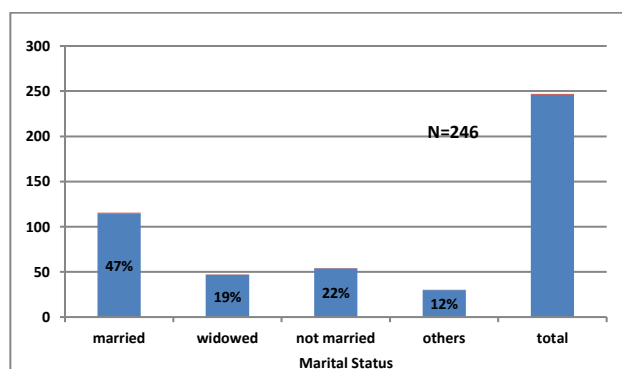


Figure 3: Marital Status of Household Heads in Nakuru County, Kenya

Source: Field Data, 2019

The findings of this study were consistent with the KDHS 2018 survey which indicated that 73% of women by the age of 19 years to 34 years, while men get married by the age of 25 years to 35 years (KNBS 2018). Therefore, majority of the household heads were adults and mature enough to give vital information on resource-use practices influencing inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, and as such were aware of the resource-use practices surrounding the inter-ethnic conflicts as this had a direct bearing on their lives as people who have families.

1.7.4 Education level

The study sought to determine the educational level of household heads in Nakuru County, Kenya. Education levels were categorized as: primary level, secondary level, tertiary level and others. The results are as given in Figure 4.

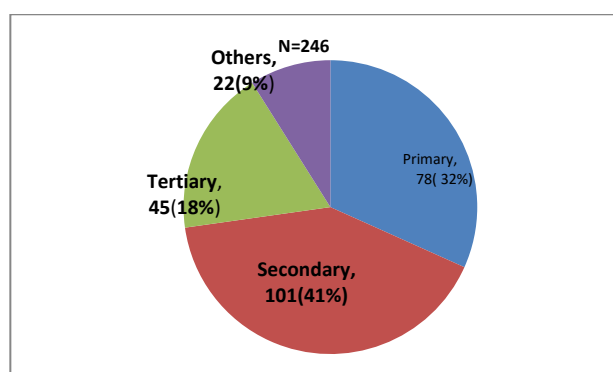


Figure 4: Education Levels of Household Heads in Nakuru County, Kenya, Source: Field Data, 2019

The results in Figure 4 revealed that out of the total 246 household heads, 78(32%) had primary education while 101(41%) had secondary education, 45(18%) had tertiary education and 22(9%) specified their level of education. Based on these findings, 32% of the household heads had the basic education only. Meaning a majority of them did not have the training skills or marketable skills.

1.7.5 Ethnic identity

The study considered ethnic composition as an important aspect in the analysis of ethnicity and escalation of ethnic conflict over resource-use practice in the region. The study established that Kuresoi sub-counties in Nakuru County, is a cosmopolitan region, with people from diverse ethnic affiliation. It was established that the most dominant group in the region are: Agikuyu, Kalenjin, Abagusii, Luhya, and Maasai. Out of 246 respondents, 54(22%) was Agikuyu, 18(7%) were Kalenjin, 34(14%) were Abagusii, 38(16%) were Luhya, 43(18%) was Maasai and 58(24%) were other ethnic groups.

The study indicated that the older generation has stronger ethnic ties than it is in the younger generation. The younger generation is brought together by shared institutions, culture, and shared goals; hence it is a positive aspect to bring cohesion in future (Umana-Taylor, 2018).

1.7.6 Nature and Extent of Resource Use Practices Influencing Inter Ethnic Conflicts

The study sought to establish the nature and extent of resource-use practices influencing inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study obtained data from questionnaires, interviews, FGDs and secondary sources of information. The results were as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Nature and Extent of Resource-use Practices Influencing Inter-ethnic Conflicts

Nature and extent of resource use practices influencing inter-ethnic conflicts		
	Frequency	Percent age
Increased Rape case	29	12%
Increased Robbery	54	22%
Increased Violence	114	46%
Others	49	20%
Total	246	100%

Source: Field Data, 2019

The results of the study revealed that out of 246 household heads, 29(12%) had been involved in rape case, 54(22%) had experienced robbery conflict, 114(46%) had violent conflict, and others 49(20%) indicated various forms of the nature of conflicts experienced in Nakuru.

1.7.7 Whether Households Had Ever Experienced Conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya

The study sought to establish whether household heads had ever experienced resource based conflict in Nakuru County, Kenya. The 246 respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had experienced conflicts in Nakuru. The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2 Whether Household Heads had ever Experienced Resource-use Conflicts

Whether Household Heads had ever Experienced Resource-use Conflicts		Percentage
Yes	229	93%
No	17	7%
Total	246	100%

Source: Field Data, 2019

results indicate that 229 (93%) of the households heads had witnessed conflicts while 17(7%) had not experienced conflicts in the area. Therefore a majority of the respondents had experienced conflicts. These findings agree with the responses from four FGDs and interviews that revealed that post-election violence recurred in the area and the conflicts affected various members of the community either directly or indirectly causing various impacts. The government officials such as the police and chief's reported that government intervention had been important in reducing the incidences of conflict in Nakuru.

This study is consistent with Koros (2018) who argued that Kuresoi has a population of 270,559(2019 census). The community is cosmopolitan, with the Kalejin forming the majority, followed by the Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya, Maasai and the forest dwelling Ogiek which is also considered a sub tribe of the Kalenjin.

1.7.8 Frequency of Resource Use Inter Ethnic Conflicts

The study sought to establish the duration taken between one resource-use inter-ethnic conflict and another as far as recurrence of resource-use inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru, is concerned. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Frequency of Resource-use Inter-ethnic Conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya

Frequency of Conflicts	Frequency	Percentage
Never	16	7%
Rarely	28	11%
Often	116	47%
Very often	77	31%
I don't know	9	4%
Total	246	100%

Source: Field Data (2019).

The results revealed that 16(7%) of the respondents were of the opinion that resource-use conflicts never occurred,

28(11%) indicated that conflicts rarely occur, 116(47%) indicated that conflicts occur often, 77(31%) indicated that resource-use conflicts occur very often while 9 (4%) indicated they don't know.

The findings further agree with Kiboro (2018) who indicates that since independence, African countries including Nakuru have been searching for appropriate conflict management approaches to deal with the numerous and apparently intractable conflicts between states and among ethnic groups over the ownership and exploitation of natural resources. Ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya occur frequently, major conflicts have also led to exoduses of ethnic minority communities.

1.7.9 Duration of Stay by Household Heads In Nakuru County, Kenya

The study sought to establish the duration of stay for the household heads in Nakuru County, Kenya. The results are shown in Figure 5.

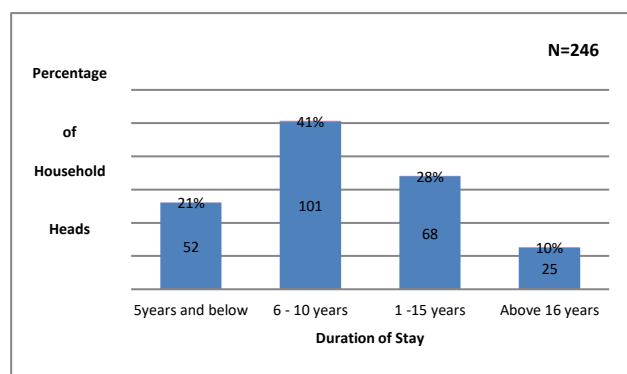


Figure 5: Duration of Stay By Household Heads In Nakuru County, Kenya, Source: Field Data, 2019

The results of the study revealed that out of 246 household heads, 52(21%) had lived in the area for 5 years and below, 101 (41%) had stayed in the area for a period of six years to ten years, 68(28%) had stayed in the area for eleven years to fifteen years and 25(10%) had stayed in the area for sixteen years and above. The duration of stay in Nakuru was important in this study since it would inform if the household heads had ever experienced recurrent resource-use conflicts or not. This was also important since other people have migrated to the area for business purposes, work or buying of land and have not stayed there for long and therefore do not have imperative information about Nakuru and resource-use conflicts. Household heads that had stayed for a longer period of time, had more important information about Nakuru.

1.8.0 Parties Involved in Resource Use Conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya

The study sought to establish the parties involved in resource-use conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya. The 246

respondents gave their feedback concerning, politicians, local community, youths and the intruders as parties involved in conflicts influenced by resource-use practices. The results are shown in Figure 6.

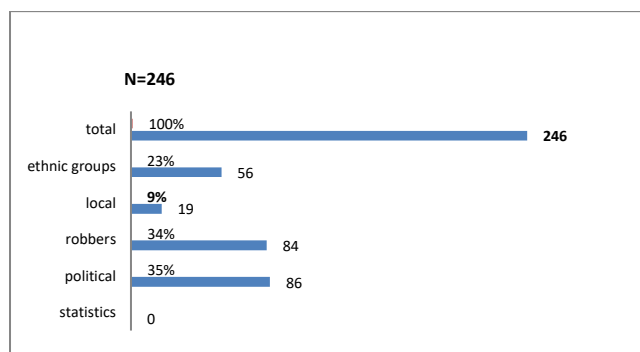


Figure 6: Parties involved in Resource-use Conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya, Source: Field Data, 2019

The results in figure 6 show that 86(35%) of the household heads agreed that political incitements were the major parties involved in resource-use inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, while 34(84%) were of the opinion that robbers were the major perpetrators. 19(9%) also indicated that the local community were involved in resource-use conflicts, 56(23%) of the household heads indicated that ethnic communities in Nakuru were also parties involved in resource-use inter-ethnic conflicts.

These results were consistent with the findings from the key informants where it emerged that politicians had been involved so much in inciting resource-use inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru. This is particularly during the election period where they target the locals, including unemployed youths since youths were more vulnerable to manipulation.

1.8.1 Types of Conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya

The study sought to establish the types of conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Types of Conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya

Types of Conflicts	Frequency	Percentage
Ideological	15	6%
Status	33	13%
Resource	103	42%
Inter-ethnic	95	39%
Total	246	100%

Source: Field Data (2019).

The study found out that the major type of conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya was resource as indicated by 15(6%) of the household heads, 95(39%) indicated inter-

ethnic conflicts, 33(13%) indicated status and 15(6%) indicated ideological.

1.8.2 Economic Activities in Nakuru County, Kenya

The study sought to establish the major economic activities from house hold heads in Nakuru County, Kenya. The results were as indicated in Figure 7.

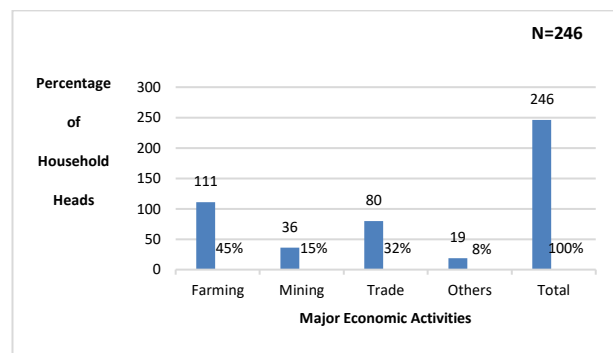


Figure 7: Economic Activities in Nakuru County, Kenya Source: Field Data, 2019

The results from the study revealed that out of the 246 households, 114(45%) identified farming activities as the key economic activity in Nakuru, 80(32%) of the household heads identified trading of goods as one of the economic activities with 36(15%) identified mining activities as an economic activity while the rest identified others 19(8%) economic activities.

1.8.3 Resources Present in Nakuru County, Kenya

The study sought to find out the resources present in Nakuru County, Kenya. The results were as indicated in Figure 8.

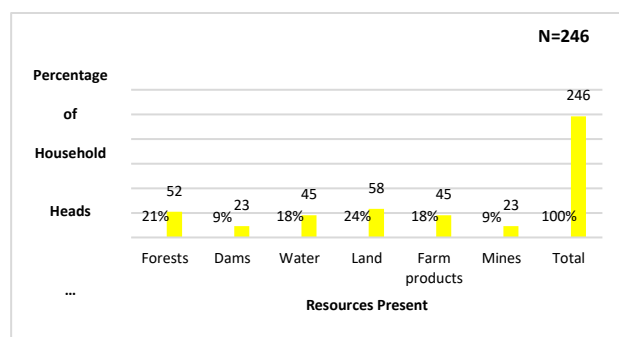


Figure 8: Resources Present in Nakuru County, Kenya Source: Field Data, 2019

The results in Figure 8 revealed that 58(24%) of the respondents agreed that land as resource is present in Nakuru County, Kenya. Land being a major resource in the region largely contributes to ethnic conflicts as everyone wants to have. Land issues often arise in the area leading to misunderstanding between the ethnic groups and eventually conflicts.

1.8.4 Utilization of Resources in Nakuru County, Kenya

The study sought to find out how the resources present in Nakuru County, Kenya are utilized by the residents. The results from households' heads are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Utilization of Resources in Nakuru County, Kenya

Utilization of resources	Frequency	Percentage
Basic needs	45	18%
Financial benefits	185	75%
Pasture	16	7%
Total	246	100%

Source: Field Data, 2019

The results in Table 5 revealed that 185(75%) of the household heads indicated that they utilize the resource presents in the area for financial benefits. Most of the farm produce is taken to the market for business purposes to enable them be financially stable in clearing their bills. Children get their school fees from the farm products and also help the households in maintaining their livelihoods 45(18%) of the household heads agreed that the resources present play a big role in ensuring they get their basic needs like water and food while 16(7%) of the households said that the resources present help in terms of pasture for their livestock.

1.9 Discussion

The study explored the effects of resource-use practices on inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya. Some of the effects were death, displacement of people, loss of property, low income, ethnic differences and children left orphans. The results from this chapter further reveal that resource-use practices on inter-ethnic conflicts cause displacement of people, death, low income, insecurity and mistrust among the community members. The study revealed the effects on socio economic dynamics, effects on infrastructure development, effects on inter-ethnic relation, effects of social inequality and the extent to which resource-use practices influence inter-ethnic conflicts in the area. The study also established the measures that have been put in place to mitigate inter-ethnic conflicts arising from resource-use practices.

2.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that nature and extent of resource-use practices influence inter-ethnic conflicts in Nakuru County, Kenya.

2.1 Recommendation

The paper recommends that all the major factors for nature and extent of resource-use practices on inter-

ethnic conflicts be addressed by both national and county government right from the grass root level with the help of community members.

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