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EXPLORING CRIME VICTIMIZATION OF PEDESTRIAN USERS OF UNDER AND OVERPASSES: A CASE STUDY OF THIKA SUPERHIGHWAY IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCTV - Closed Circuit Television

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

KARA - Kenya Alliance of Residents Associations

KENHA - Kenya National Highways Authority

KURA - Kenya Urban Roads Authority

MSME - Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise

NCC - Nairobi City County

NCPC - National Crime Prevention Council

NMS - Nairobi Metropolitan Services

NMT - Non- Motorized transport

NPS - National Police service

NTSA - National Transport and Safety Authority

PWD - Persons with Disabilities

RTA - Road Traffic Accident

USA - United States of America

WHO - World Health Organisation

ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the phenomenon of crime victimisation of pedestrian users of overpasses and underpasses in Kenya using a case study of Thika superhighway in Nairobi City County. It's specific objectives were to establish the demographic and social-economic attributes of potential victims of crime; the extent to which law enforcement personnel nfluence crime victimisation of pedestrian users of the under and overpasses; and assess the extent to which sensitization of pedestrian users of the passes influence their crime victimization. A descriptive research design was adopted whereby 60 primary respondents and 8 key informants were interviewed using structured interview schedules. Primary and secondary data collection methods then employed to collect the relevant data and information. The study established that potential victims of crime comprise of the economically productive segment of the population who are either working, seeking work or attending school. Consequently, the security and safety of this population should be guaranteed by the state, since they are at risk of various crimes such as assault, sexual assault, rape, mugging and robbery among others. In fact, a significant majority (84%) of the potential victims asked for increased law enforcement patrols so as to minimize their risk of victimization at the study sites. A majority of the potential victims (98.3 %) were concerned about the inadequate enforcement as evidenced by inadequate police patrols at the underpasses and overpasses, as well as the near permanent occupation of the facilities by informal traders, homeless people and criminals some of whom commit crimes in broad daylight. A majority of them (71%) were also of the view that pedestrian safety sensitization can reduce their crime victimization at the overpasses and underpasses. A multi-agency security approach comprising of NTSA, NPS, Kenha, and county enforcement department towards road safety and crime victimization on pedestrian road users is therefore recommended. Furthermore, the National Police Service and Nairobi City County Enforcement department should beef up their presence at the sites thus enhancing crime prevention and control. This should be augmented by additional situational crime prevention measures such as video surveillance, burglar proofed security lighting as well as prompt crime investigations on the study sites.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Worldwide, Criminal Justice Systems are focused on combating crime itself and the fear of crime, these being amongst the widespread and chronic social problems in the contemporary post-industrial society. Regrettably, the built environmental design factors such as natural surveillance and maintenance contribute directly and indirectly to crime commission. According to Cozens & Love (2015), environmental elements that give a public utility's legitimate users a sense of security can deter illegitimate users and would-be offenders from committing crime. In this regard, users of over and underpasses may need help due to the perceived fear of crime victimization perpetrated on them while using transportation infrastructure, failure to which these pedestrians may end up crossing the road at undesignated points (Wetungu, 2010) thus resulting in unresolved pedestrian-vehicular traffic conflicts, Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) and subsequent loss of lives and bodily injury. This study seeks to explore issues that contribute to the perceived fear of crime victimization and RTAs in underpasses and overpasses, which leads to underutilization of road crossing infrastructure.

Instructively, pedestrians shun using existing pedestrian road crossing infrastructure due to various reasons such as insecurity, crime victimization, poor designs and/or poor lighting. Their alternative response is to cross the main road illegally thus endangering their lives and that of motorists. This leads to unresolved vehicle–pedestrian conflicts on public roads and ultimately contribute to an upsurge of pedestrian-caused RTAs and the resultant loss of lives, bodily injury and damage to property. In 2021, Nairobi Metropolitan Services figured that underutilization of pedestrian road crossing infrastructure in the city was a major contributor to RTAs, possibly due

to the fear of crime victimization. However, specific crime statistics of offences committed at the overpasses and underpasses are not available since crime statistics are categorized along predetermined general criteria without regard to the place of commission. This leaves decision-makers with an information gap about what strategies to implement to prevent `pedestrian RTAs and crimes.

In 2018, WHO observed that global fatalities attributable to RTAs increased to an average of 1.3 million per year, with 93% of them occurring in developing countries. Pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists disproportionately bear the fatalities burden, especially those living in developing countries such as Kenya and other sub-Saharan African countries. WHO (2018) as well as Sapkota et al. (2016) estimate that at least 50% of the victims of road accidents are in the age group of 15 to 49 years. This is an age bracket that is generally considered to be active and economically productive.

RTAs have significant financial ramifications for developing nations. Wijnen and Stipdonk (2016) concur with Manyara (2016) that the analysis of social costs is based on the income level of a nation and is calculated as a percentage of GDP. The social costs for developed nation's RTAs vary from 0.5% - 6.0% of the GDP, while social costs for developing countries RTAs ranges from 1.1% to 2.9% of the GDP. Similarly, Manyara (2016) estimates the cost of RTAs in developing nations at 1.3% to 3.0% of the GDP. Wijnen and Stipdonk (2016) observe that a large proportion of these costs relates to RTAs injuries which constitute at least 50% of the social costs for both developed and developing countries. RTA fatalities constitute an average proportion of 23% and 30% of the cost respectively. In 2021, the financial cost of RTAs in Kenya was estimated at 266.16b USD per year, derived from an annual GDP of Kshs 1,2098.2b (https://www.centralbank.go.ke/annual-gdp/). To address the RTA threat, comprehensive

measures are required, including public awareness campaigns, effective policy formulation and enforcement, and pedestrian road crossing infrastructure design to reduce the RTAs socio-economic burden.

Manyara (2016) observes that Kenya has continually experienced a progressive rise in Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) over time. In fact, the Kenya Police Annual Report for the year 2020 reports that RTAs progressively increased by 15% and 39% in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, respectively. Of these RTAs, pedestrian-caused RTAs progressively increased by 30% and 46.3% in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, respectively, implying that pedestrian RTAs comprise a major proportion of the increase in total RTAs and thus a key focus for any road safety programme. In the same period, pedestrian deaths exponentially increased by 13.7% and 15.4%, while pedestrian injuries also increased by 25.9% and 40.9% in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, respectively. This loss of lives is regrettable and is further compounded by the exponential increase over time, which is therefore a key concern for any road safety program in the country.

According to the Kenya police report 2019, this countrywide scenario is replicated in Nairobi City County, where a total of 1,608, 1,629 and 1,965 RTAs were recorded in 2018, 2019 and 2020. This represents a progressive annual increase of 1.3% and 20.6%. Of these RTAs, pedestrian-caused RTAs continually increased from 338, 389 to 395 in 2018, 2019 and 2020, respectively. In 2020 alone, there were 334 pedestrian deaths and 705 pedestrian injuries resulting from 395 pedestrian RTAs in Nairobi City County. This data implies that pedestrian RTAs comprise a significant proportion of the aggregate RTAs in Kenya and by extension Nairobi City County. Overall, the national and Nairobi county trends are similar and point to an exponential increase in pedestrian RTAs over time, constituting a significant proportion of total RTAs. This implies that there is a corresponding exponential increase in the social costs

associated with both the fatalities and injuries resulting from pedestrian-caused RTAs and is, therefore, a call for action to devise and implement strategies geared towards the reduction of the pedestrian RTAs and subsequently, the resultant social costs.This study explored the extent to which key preventive measures, namely law enforcement and public sensitization, influence pedestrian RTAs and crime victimization of pedestrians in Nairobi county with specific reference to Thika superhighway.

According to Nairobi Metropolitan Services (2021), 66.3% of all reported RTAs fatalities in Nairobi City County are Non-Motorized Transport (NMT) users, with pedestrians being the most at risk road users responsible for at least 64.5% of RTA deaths reported in Nairobi city county, while the remainder accounts for bicyclists and its variants. NMS (2021) further notes that ten roads in Nairobi, namely Mombasa Road, Airport North road, Waiyaki Way, Langata Road, Outering Road, Kangundo Road, Eastern Bypass, Thika Superhighway, Jogoo Road and Juja Road account for 55.5% of all the fatalities.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (2013) opines that nearly 60% of households in Nairobi earn KSh 20,000 or less per month, which makes it unlikely that they possess a bicycle, motorcycle, or automobile. As a result, more than 40% of all excursions are made on foot. Kjellqvist (2014) notes that 95% of Nairobi roads have very high pedestrian traffic . He further observes that most of the existing pedestrian crossing infrastructure in the city is unsafe and poorly maintained. This exposes pedestrians and other NMT users to the risk of crime and victimization when using road crossing infrastructure, especially underpasses and overpasses. Therefore, this study sets out to explore crime victimization in pedestrian under and overpasses and its perceived role in pedestrian RTAs so as to inform effective road safety programs.

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