

Emergency Preparedness at Christian Places of Worship. The Case of Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam City-Tanzania

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Abstract

Tanzania has been experiencing a number of emergency incidents at places of worship that caused damage to properties and loss of lives of worshipers. Most recent reported cases include the February 2020 stampede that occurred in Moshi where 20 people were killed when rushing to be anointed with the blessed oil. Another disaster rife scenario was the case of bomb attack in a Catholic Church in Arusha in May 2013 where one death was reported due to stampede after the blast. This study assessed emergency preparedness at places of worship in Dar es Salaam focusing on Kinondoni Municipality. The random sampling method was used, where by twenty (20) places of worship were randomly selected, one (1) from each ward in Kinondoni municipality. The data collection methods were literature review, observations and interviews. The study revealed that all of the surveyed places of worship were at risk of fire, 85% were at risk of crimes and 80% at risk of diseases. Additionally, 75% were at risk of attacks, 20% at risk of floods and 20% at risk of stampede. Only 45% had fire fighting equipment and 20% had assembly points. There should be regular provision of emergency preparedness trainings to worshipers and staffs.

Keywords : Emergency Preparedness, Christian Places, Kinonondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam City - Tanzania.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Background of the Study

Major emergencies and disasters have occurred throughout the history and as the world's population grows, resources become more limited, communities are increasingly becoming vulnerable to the hazards that cause disaster (Perrow, 2007). Emergencies occur quickly and without warning and they can have a devastating impact on the affected individuals, businesses and community facilities. Emergencies and disasters do not affect only health and well-being, frequently a large number of people are displaced, killed, injured or subjected to a greater risk of epidemics (Westlund, 2007). Places of worship are considered as safe and peaceful areas where violence and emergencies cannot occur, but acts such as fire, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and arson have been reported to affect them (FEMA, 2013). It is believed that in addition to being a place for prayer and worship, places of worship house precious historical and religious items. These premises have been serving as a community center as well as acting as refuge to those in need (Ramsey & steenkamp, 2020). Churches and other places of worship have a unique challenge when it comes to crime prevention, security and safety. The incidences indicating manifestation of disaster risks abound on a global scale. During the 2015 hajj in Mecca on 11th September at least 87 pilgrims were killed and 184 were injured when a construction crane crashed into the Mosque. A week after the crane collapse in Mecca, 719 pilgrims died and 800 were injured due to stampede (Mathebula, 2017).

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