

Assessing Housing Inequalities on the Existing and Ongoing Construction of Houses in Lenana and Majengo Area of Narok Town

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Abstract: *This paper presents a review of housing inequalities in Lenana Estate and Majengo in Narok town. The researcher made use of descriptive survey as a research design in this paper, data was collected using questionnaires and observation data collection methods, the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25 and the results were presented in form of texts and figures. The results indicate that although Lenana Estate and Majengo area are close to each other, there is a difference in terms of housing amenities provision. This paper forms a basis for the County Government of Narok as well as the Housing developers in understanding the current status quo in housing provision in Narok Town and therefore will be in a position to deal with the housing problems in Narok Town to the areas considered worse and also areas considered to have better amenities. The paper will also be of use to the future researchers in housing.*

Keywords: Housing, Housing challenges, County Government of Narok

1. Introduction

Like many countries in the developing world, Kenya is experiencing housing challenges, however the challenge is usually different in every context. This study was conducted in Lenana Estate and Majengo area in Narok Town. The focus of the paper is to give a description of housing status quo in terms of provision of basic housing amenities in the two areas mainly focusing on the differences that exist between housing amenities in Lenana Estate and Majengo area. The paper is of relevance to the County Government of Narok in designing their strategic plan for dealing with housing issues in Narok Town. The paper is also relevant to the housing developers in Narok Town as it provides information on the status of housing stock in Narok own especially at this moment when the Kenyan Government in its endeavor to achieving the Kenyan Vision 2030 through the implementation of four main development agendas dubbed “the big four agenda”, one of the agendas being “provision of affordable housing”.

2. Literature Survey

This section prides a review of literature on the nature of housing provision in Kenya in general. The section gives a review of literature on the development of the housing policy in Kenya and then focuses on housing provision in Kenya as well as the challenges in housing provision in Kenya

2.1 A review of Housing development policies in Africa

In the years 1950s -1960s, approaches to housing development were defined by modernization paradigm; this led to the countries in Africa dealing with the cities’ development through a combination of urban master planning, slum clearance and development of public and state developed rental housing in order to deal with the gap between housing supply and housing demand in the cities. However, the approaches were becoming increasingly clear

to be too expensive to the intended population i.e. the urban poor.

With the realization of infeasibility of the approaches, to financial constraints and recognition by the international donors of the importance of informal housing construction, self-help building approach was introduced in the early 1970s which was mainly adopted and implemented by the World Bank and applied the concepts of slum upgrading and sites and services scheme. However, these approaches didn’t also succeed to problems such as the project took too long to be implemented, the officials interfered with the process since they had vested interests, due to land speculation as a result of implementation of sites and services approach, the project never benefited the intended population, among other problems[1]. In the 1980s, the world bank made a paradigm shift from sites and services scheme to creation and support for housing finance institution. Provision of housing finance together with the introduction of ‘enabling approach’ by UN-Habitat which involved provision of legislative, institutional and financial framework enabled the private sector, community members as well as individuals to take part in the development of urban housing sector[2].

In the years 2000s, policies to housing development have shifted, the shift was initiated in 1990s and revolved around planning and related themes. This led to the adoption of the millennium development goals in the years 2000, goal 7, Target 11 which calls for “significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020.

With the rapid development that has been taking place in African Countries especially after the ushering inn of the new millennium, it has called for the housing development policies shift to dealing with the challenges that is currently posed by urban growth [1], [3].

2.2 Housing Provision in Kenya

The right to adequate housing is enshrined in the various rights of the citizenry and the obligations to both the State and the citizens of Kenya. Article 43 1(b) of the constitution of Kenya recognizes that every person has the right to accessible and adequate housing, and to reasonable standards of sanitation. Article 21.2 of the Constitution of Kenya however describes that this right will be realized progressively whereby it will be the responsibility of both the National and County Governments to ensure that the citizenry accesses adequate housing to reasonable standards with the national government tasked with the responsibility of Housing Policy while the County Government charged with County planning and development, including— statistics; land survey and mapping; boundaries and fencing and housing[4].

Kenyan Vision 2030 has also recognized the need to plan for decent and high quality livelihoods for her population who will predominantly live in the urban areas by 2030 [5]. In realizing the Kenya Vision 2030, during the 2017- 2022 period, the government has considered affordable housing as one of the four main pillars of development to be achieved during their ruling period with the main objective of delivering 500,000 affordable new houses for Kenyan families across 47 counties which will be achieved by reducing the cost of home ownership by 50%, creating 300,000 new jobs in the construction sector, reducing average construction cost by 30% and reducing low income gap by 60% [6]

2.3 The challenge of housing provision in Kenya

Housing in Kenya is similar to other developing countries in that supply outstrips demand with an estimation of a deficit of 2 million houses[7]. Housing is one of the sectors that is facing profound challenges in Kenya [8]. Challenges to the housing sector can be attributed to intensive as well as delaying institutional and regulatory framework, high rates of rural-urban migration, economic decline, high poverty levels, limited research on low cost building materials, technological advancement in housing and the use of an old and out of date building code[9], [10]. Urban population in Kenya is growing at a rate of 4.2% every year [8]. With the mismatch between housing supply and housing demand which has led to hiked housing prices which on the other hand has led to the pushing of the low-income earners to the informal housing supply. Housing supply is dominated by the private sector in Kenya, with the high cost of building materials as a result of limited research on low cost building materials, the private sector has not been able to meet the housing needs of the low- and middle-income population. However, of late the government of Kenya in its endeavor to attain Kenyan Vision 2030 has introduced the big four agenda which one of them is providing affordable housing to the Kenyan Citizens [6].

3. Methods

The study was conducted in Narok Town. Narok Town is situated along the Great Rift Valley about 144km south west of Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. Narok Town is the

biggest town in Narok County and not only stands as a major center of commerce in the region, but is also home to the Maasai Mara Game Reserve, making it a great tourist destination and a significant contributor to Kenya's economy.

The town is located at latitude 1° 5' 0" South and longitude 35° 52' 0" East and lies at an altitude of 1,828m above the sea level and covers an area of 692 km² – one of the largest in the country.

Historically, the Narok area was occupied predominantly by the Maasai community, who lived a nomadic pastoralist lifestyle. In more recent times, however, the growth of small towns has changed the demography of the area, leading to a more mixed population and lifestyle. The town is currently a cosmopolitan Centre with most commercial activities (business) being carried out by settlers from other parts of Kenya.

The study was done in two areas in Narok Town i.e. Lenana Estate and Majengo area. The two areas are within the same administrative ward; however, the areas are miles apart in the provision of basic housing utilities. Assessing the inequalities between the two areas will be important to understanding the scenario of housing provision in Narok Town with Lenana Estate acting as a representation of the areas with better housing amenities and Majengo area a representation of the areas with poor housing amenities.

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study made use of the questionnaires and observations as methods of data collection. After data was collected it was analyzed using quantitative data analysis methods with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 20. The results of analysis were presented in form of texts and figures.

4. Results

The study revealed that housing structures in Narok Town take different forms which comprise of 77.5%, being residential, another form of housing structures in Narok Town comprise of structure that act as a residential house which is normally at the back and also as a business premise, housing structures also take the form of completely business premise. The building materials used for construction of housing structures in Lenana estate and Majengo area also varies; in Lenana estate most of the structures are constructed using stones, in Majengo area on the other hand, 37% of housing structures are made of mud, 56% iron sheets and 7% stones.

With regard to water supply in the households, the two areas under study manifest different scenarios. The study findings show that 76.9% of the households in Lenana Estate have got a direct connection to piped water in their houses, 15.4% have water in their yards, and the other 7.7% receive their water from water vendors. The scenario is different in Majengo area where 55% of the residents receive water from the water vendors, 26% of households have piped water inside their houses, 15% obtain water from wells in their compound, and 4% have piped water in their yards. Water

provision in Majengo is evidently inadequate, with the major source of water being from the water vendors which makes 55%, sometimes the vendors are unreliable especially during the dry seasons when the demand for water is high and therefore the water vendors are not in a position to meet the water demand.

Drainage system is an important element in any household [11], the study therefore had a focus on the access and the state of the drainage systems in Majengo and Lenana estate, Narok. The study findings show that in Narok Town, there is no established conventional drainage system, however, the County government of Narok in collaboration with Rift Valley Water and Sewerage Board has a proposal to develop a conventional drainage system. However, the house owners in Lenana Estate and Majengo have made some efforts to deal with human waste as well as runoff water from their households. Septic tanks are the dominant facilities in both Lenana Estate and Majengo area. However, a slight difference is evident and is mainly manifested by the maintenance of the septic tanks. In Majengo area, it is evident that most septic tanks are rarely emptied which leads to a heavy stench in the house holds. The situation is however different in Lenana Estate where there is frequent emptying of the septic tanks. With regard to the management of storm water, both Majengo area and Lenana share similar experiences where there is no adequate storm water drainage system; this has become a serious issue in Narok Town as whole as the lack of adequate storm water drainage system is attributed to the frequent floods experienced in Narok Town.

Solid waste collection is another area of focus in the study. Solid waste collection in Lenana and Majengo is either done by the County Government of Narok or the private sector. Study results shows that, 62% indicated that waste from their house hold was collected by the Narok County Government, 25% are private waste collectors and 13% of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of the same. The two areas under study reported similar experience with regard to solid waste collection. In areas where the waste collectors do not offer the service, the house owners either practice open burning or open dumping to get rid of the solid waste from their home steads.

5. Conclusion

This article provides a review in to the inequalities in housing infrastructural services provision in Majengo area and Lenana Estate in Narok Town. The paper is relevant to the county government of Narok especially the Department of Land, Housing and Urban Development as it will act as an eye- opener to the housing status quo in Narok and therefore aid the identification and implementation of avenues through which housing issues in Narok Town will be addressed.

The review indicates both areas are experiencing challenges in the provision of housing infrastructural services. However, there is a huge difference in the two areas Lenana Estate showing a better scenario than Majengo area. From the review, the major factor that can be attributed to the challenge is unplanned constructions where housing development has taken place without the owners acquiring

planning approval documents and therefore have got no considerations for the provision of public utilities. With proper planning, it becomes easy for the relevant bodies to provide the housing infrastructural services.

6. Future Scope

Housing issues are complex and requires the involvement of stakeholders, one of them being the researchers. The paper's scope is limited to the understanding of the inequalities in provision of housing amenities in Lenana Estate and Majengo area. However, understanding the inequalities is not a solution to the housing problems in Narok Town. Dealing with housing problems requires the understanding of the problem as it is well described in this paper and providing a solution to the problems. Future research focusing on the context specific solutions to housing problems in Narok Town is therefore paramount.

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