

Critiquing the State of Infrastructure Surrounding RDP Houses: The Case of Golf Course 2011-2013 Study, Eastern Cape

Tatenda Manomano¹ and S.M. Kang'ethe²

¹*University of Free State, Social Work Department, Box 339, Bloemfontein 9300, 85A*

²*University of Fort Hare, Department of Social Work and Social Development*

Private bag X1314, ALICE. 5700, South Africa

E-mail: ¹<200706055@ufh.ac.za> and ²<skangethe@ufh.ac.za>

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ABSTRACT This study sought to give a critique of the state of infrastructure surrounding RDP house with a case of Golf Course 2011-2013 study in the Eastern Cape. The study triangulated both the qualitative and quantitative approaches in collecting data with the qualitative as the dominant approach while the quantitative was less dominant. The qualitative approach took the form of a case study while the quantitative approach took the form of a mini survey. The study was explorative, explanatory and descriptive in nature. The study employed one-on-one in-depth interviews to solicit the views, opinions and feelings of the participants on issues such as the state of infrastructure while the quantitative employed the likert designed questionnaire interview to solicit the perceptive levels of the participants. An interview guide with unstructured questions was used to administer the in-depth interviews. The findings from the study among other things revealed that there were no tarred roads; streetlights, schools and shopping malls while on the other hand there were drainage and sewerage facilities but the lack of clean water defeated the purpose of the drainage facilities. The researchers recommend for an assessment of the state of infrastructural provision around RDP houses in order to determine the extent of the need to ensure they are provided to all houses without among other things.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the need to meet the challenge of shortage of housing has attracted global bodies such as the United Nations and international instruments to compel most national countries to ensure that their people have access to qualitative and adequate housing (UNDHR 1948; UNHABITAT 2003, 2009). The challenge is more pronounced in African countries, South Africa included as scholars indicate the pervasiveness of the challenge (Mutume 2004; Olayiwola et al. 2005). For South Africa, the housing challenge has been inherited from the previous Apartheid Government that instituted oppressive, discriminative policies that socially and economically subjugated the black South Africans from owning essential basic goods and services such as shelter as well as access to education (Goebel 2007; Knight 2001 as cited by Mafukidze and Hoosen 2009: 02). It therefore became of necessity for the Post-Apartheid government to introduce the Reconstruction and Development Programme that saw the construction of RDP houses around South Africa. Infrastructural development was also one of the principles of the programme to ensure that the people enjoy qualitative services (Republic of South Africa 1994).

However, it appears that on the ground there are indications that this principle has been highly ignored as most RDP houses are challenged in terms of infrastructure. For example, in Diepsloot, Soweto, roads around RDP housing locations in some cases are not even there and in some places they are very bad causing terrible discomfort because they have potholes and other hindrances to the users (Diepsloot 2013). Furthermore, in Cape Town some RDP houses are still struggling without water and toilets also indicating a serious infrastructural challenge (Water and Sanitation Issue No. 7 2011). As if that is not enough there has also been a tendency of building RDP houses far way from other communities where there are services close by and moreover if these services are around these houses it also reduces criminal activities (Reuter 1994 as cited by McVeigh and Wolfer 2004: 81, 2013). Another shocking revelation indicated residents of Elias Motsoaledi, Johannesburg who were promised more than 1000 RDP units protesting for lighting around their houses (Olaide 2013). It is however against the complaints and gaps surrounding infrastructure that this paper sought to critique the state of infrastructure surrounding RDP Houses in South Africa. This paper builds on evidence from various lit-

eratures but mainly from the 2011-2013 study of Golf Course Estate in Eastern Cape South Africa.

Problem Statement

Country wide, the South African government has attempted to address the housing shortages facing many of its poor and vulnerable people. Contrastingly, though more than one million houses have been constructed for these people, it is disappointing to discover the many faults and complaints associated with infrastructure around these RDP Houses. The state of roads is in total disarray as they are either absent or in a very bad condition for vehicles to move around these areas. Moreover, a lack of streetlights greatly jeopardizes these beneficiaries of the RDP houses as it increases their insecurity which also poses great emotional turmoil and psychological loss due to fear of crime. To this end, it appears that the provision of these so called RDP houses has not met the pledge by the government to provide its people with adequate and safe houses that are dignified. It therefore proves to be a dumping and pauperization process of the poor people who are in genuine and desperate need of low cost adequate and safe houses. This paper therefore is a critique of the state of infrastructure surrounding RDP houses and with a possibility to document possible recommendations to the government based on the findings.

Study Aims and Objectives

The study has been derived from a broad research study that sought to explore the perceptions of the RDP Housing beneficiaries on the extent to which the project meet their housing needs with a case study of Golf Course Estate in Alice Town in the Eastern Cape Province. To that effect the main aim and objective of this article is to critique the state of infrastructure surrounding RDP Houses.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. These researchers believe that triangulation was

especially useful as both methods confirm and corroborate on another (De Vos 2005; Barbour 2008). The quantitative took the form of a mini survey while the qualitative took the form of a case study. The qualitative approach enabled to collect opinions, feelings, attitudes and views of the participants while the quantitative enabled the researcher to collect the magnitude of the perceptions of the participants on the RDP houses (Neuman 2006; Burns and Burns 2008). The design was explorative, explanatory and descriptive in nature.

Methods of Data Collection

The qualitative data collection was enabled by the use of an interview guide with unstructured questions as a data collection tool; while the quantitative data was collected using a likert designed questionnaire to collect the quantified magnitude of the perceptive levels of the beneficiaries.

Research Instruments

This study utilized an interview guide as a data collection tool with unstructured questions. The study also utilized a likert designed questionnaire to collect information from 50 residents on their perceptive and satisfaction levels on the state of infrastructure around the RDP houses. The study utilized one-on-one in-depth interviews to collect information from 22 beneficiaries of RDP houses, a social worker, and an RDP Housing administrator. The RDP housing administrator and the social worker were especially important as key informants because the RDP housing administrator was knowledgeable about the administration of the programme while the social worker as a professional is concerned and involved with the welfare of the people.

Sample Selection

The study utilized both probability and non probability sampling methodologies in selecting the participants. Probability sampling methodology entailed the use of stratified and simple random sampling techniques to select participants for the mini survey while non-probability sampling methodology entailed the use of purposive sampling to select participants for the one-on-one in-depth interviews. Purposive sam-

pling was especially useful to select participants that carried the characteristics of the research study questions (Moule and Goodman 2009). Simple random sampling was especially useful because of its tenacity in increasing generalization of results and especially where a larger sample is to be selected (Moyé 2007). Stratified sampling was especially useful because of its ability to reduce the probability error (Weisberg 2009).

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher was assisted by a research assistant from the Department of Social Work to collect data from the study participants who were subjected to one-on-one in-depth interviews as most data that was collected was in Isi Xhosa. All the data that was collected was audio taped through informed consent from the study participants. This data was transcribed later on by the researcher and field notes were also taken to complement the data that was audio taped. Since triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative approach was utilized it also meant that both analyses were also going to be used (qualitative and quantitative data analysis). The qualitative data was analyzed using the content thematic analysis whereby the raw data was re arranged, categorized and ordered into themes as depicted by the emergent views of the study participants. The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Research Domain

This study was conducted in Golf Course in Alice town in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The 22 beneficiaries for the in-depth interviews as well as the 50 participants for the questionnaire interview were interviewed in their houses whereas the RDP Administrator and the social worker were interviewed in the comfort of their offices in Fort Beaufort and Alice respectively. The data was collected in November 2012 and was analyzed in December and January 2013.

Table 1: Gender of the study participants

No.	Ethnic group	Frequency	%	No.	Gender	Frequency	%
1	Black	44	88.0	1	Male	19	38.0
2	Coloured	6	12.0	2	Female	31	62.0
3	Total	50	100.0	3	Total	50	100.0

FINDINGS

Profile of the Participants

The findings indicated that 88 percent of the study participants were Black South Africans whereas 12 percent were coloured. The findings from the study also indicated that 38 percent of the study participants were males as compared to 62 percent who were females (see Table 1). This scenario indicates a state of gender discrepancy which could be attributed to the fact that they are the ones who are also poorer in South Africa which clarifies their outnumbering of males in these programmes.

Marital Status

On marital status the findings indicated that 60 percent of the study participants were single; while 28 percent of the study participants were married; whereas 6 percent constituted the widowed; while those that were either, divorced, windowed or separated constituted 2 percent respectively (see Table 2). These findings indicate that there were many single people heading these houses. This state of affairs could indicate as well that there is need to assist these through entrepreneurship programmes and access to funding to help them kick start income generating projects that can sustain and help them progress well through life. It could also stabilize them into marriage as well in case poverty conditions limit them from entering into marriage.

Table 2: Marital status

No.	Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Single	30	60.0
2	Married	14	28.0
3	Divorced	1	2.0
4	Widowed	3	6.0
5	Windowed	1	2.0
6	Separated	1	2.0
7	Total	50	100.0

Employment Status

The findings from this study indicated that 52 percent of the study participants revealed that they were unemployed while 32 percent of the study participants indicated that they were employed whereas 6 percent of the study participants revealed that they were casual laborers; while 2 percent indicated that they were self-employed and 8 percent revealed that they were students (see Table 3). These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

'Yes the houses are bad but at least we need jobs; how can we survive in these houses? What are we going to eat?'; 'We don't know what our tomorrow is?'; 'No lights, no roads, we are shut out of the normal life, but until when?'

These findings indicate that most of the participants were unemployed and this indicates that the government needs to push towards entrepreneurial training of these beneficiaries as well as developing the infrastructure to make their future businesses in that location fruitful. This is because, normally an area can also determine whether you do have a market or not, by its infrastructure. It is also noticeable that a few were casual laborers which would mean that income generating projects as well as vocational based training could also be another alternative towards enabling them to have a source of income. All these issues would obviously require an extensive assessment and inquiry into what suits the beneficiaries by seeking the views of the beneficiaries as well as the general public and policy-makers as well as private stakeholders.

Table 3: Employment status of study participants

No.	Employment status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Employed	16	32.0
2	Unemployed	26	52.0
3	Casual	3	6.0
4	Self	1	2.0
5	Student	4	8.0
6	Total	50	100.0

Drainage and Sewerage Available but No Clean Water

The findings from this study revealed that 100 percent of the study participants indicated

that drainage and sewerage facilities were provided; while 100 percent of the study participants indicated that there were no roads as well as street lights (see Table 4). These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from beneficiaries who were subjected to a one on one interview:

'We are thankful for these drainage and sewerage but I always cry sometimes, what should we do if there is no water; if you go the municipality you are told to go to Buffalo Municipality; where would I get money considering our livelihood?'

These findings indicate that the government has made major strides in ensuring that at least these houses have drainage and well as sewerage facilities around them. It is imperative for houses to have this infrastructure around them as they channel waste from the homes to disposal sites for the council or water works to recycle among other things. This will also enhance the dignity of these beneficiaries. It is however disappointing that though these houses have sewerage and drainage facilities there were no water supplies for this drainage and sanitation facilities to work properly. To add on, it gives a worrying picture of how the beneficiaries are dealing with human waste and urination as well.

Lack of Street Lights around RDP Houses

The findings from this study indicated that all beneficiaries revealed that there were no street lights around their houses (see Table 3). These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

'Golf Course has a lot crime, yet we don't have any street lights around our houses; we are so insecure and always panicking about what will happen if you open the door at night?'

The unavailability of lights indicate that the area is not a safe haven as perceptions indicate that *'you cannot afford to risk your life to walk out in the darkness of Golf Course because there is a lot of crime; we really need lights'*. The lack of lights has created a state of fear and insecurity around them as they are not certain of what will happen if they do any business or social event that extends into the night. It is therefore contended by these researchers that, there is a need for the government to practically maximize the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) by creating an enabling environment for Eskom as well as RDP housing administration and the respec-

tive municipalities in ensuring that these locations without lights can enjoy this infrastructure. It is believed that this will also form part of the qualitative and adequate housing as housing is holistic in nature of which it must also encompass the brightness of locations. This will also assist school going children to study hard flexibly and this will benefit the country as it also points towards increased independence of its people.

Lack of Roads is Destructive

The findings from this study indicated that there were no roads around RDP Houses in Golf Course (see Table 3). These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

‘You know these roads are very stony, even cars avoid coming inside the location because the negotiation with the roads is too tough if not difficult; sometimes we think do they (government) also think of us’.

The findings also revealed that there were no road networks save for stony and bumpy roads that surrounding RDP Houses. It is however suspected to be adding to psychological and emotional loss given the pain they indicate that *‘the roads of ours they are so bad and stony and no taxi would risk coming to our houses’*. It therefore becomes imperative for the government to consider as part of its road works and budget for roads on these houses. This could also attract investment into these areas which could also benefit these beneficiaries in terms of access to services as well as employment opportunities.

No Primary Schools for Our Children

The findings from this study indicated that 16 percent of the study participants revealed that primary schools were very far; 50 percent indicated that they were far whereas 34 percent indicated that they were not far (see Table 3). These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

“You wonder how our kids are going to grow up in an environment like this, without schools and yet they have to travel long distances to

the schools in town and its very dangerous and expensive”.

These findings indicate a serious challenge of lack of primary schools around the RDP Houses in Golf Course. This is a very important infrastructure that can also nurse the children educationally. It is also very important for such institutions to be located closer and in the locations where people are residing. This is because they are supposed to serve the interests of the people. Therefore the government needs to seriously look into immediate construction of those primary schools around RDP houses. This will also minimize expenses and chances of dangerous things happening on these children such as child trafficking and abduction.

Lack of Secondary Schools around RDP Houses

The findings from this study revealed that 28 percent of the study participants indicated that secondary schools were very far while 52 percent revealed that they were far and 16 percent indicated that they were not far (see Table 3). These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview;

“It worries me so much because our children struggle with travelling to go to these secondary schools in other locations; and it even affects their performance and motivation; why can’t the government build secondary schools for us?”

These findings indicate that most beneficiaries were not happy with the disturbing fact that they were not provided with secondary schools around their houses. It has been worsened also by the fact that the other secondary schools from other locations are very far for their children and this has negative effects on their motivation and competency. It is therefore respectful for the government to reinforce developmental policies towards ensuring that the people have easy access of secondary education as a way of attempting to increase the ability of many people to access this vital resource.

University/ FET College (Further Educational Training) are Critical for Our Children

The findings from this study indicated that 44 percent of the participants revealed that University/FET College were very far while 48 per-

cent indicated that they were far whereas 8 percent indicated that they were not far (see Table 3). These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

"We don't have a University or an FET College but FET colleges are highly needed closer to our houses so that our children can be trained easily than struggling to travel to other FET Colleges and Universities".

These findings display that this location of RDP houses has been severely facing problems with regards to enabling their people to go to an FET College or University. It is however pivotal also as a measure to reduce unemployment by increasing employability hood of the people through ensuring that these institutions are around these houses. This is because such infrastructure molds and builds the skills of the people towards better citizenship that can liberate themselves socially and economically.

Lack of a Shopping Mall

The findings from this study indicated that 24 percent of the study participants indicated that the Shopping Mall was located very far while 54 percent revealed that it was located far and 22 percent revealed that it was not far (see Table 3).

These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

"It is a very disheartening scenario that we do not have any shopping mall around our houses to get banks, cheaper goods and services or jobs and just to relax".

These findings indicated that the lack of a shopping mall around these houses is severely disadvantaging these beneficiaries. This is because their houses are now in a state similar to a wilderness where they do not have any source of income or job opportunities as well as access to basic goods and services at affordable prices. It is an issue that the government and other stakeholders should take seriously because this housing programme sends feelings that it might be dumping or pauperizing the needy and vulnerable. It is an issue that as social workers we feel that these people's social functioning can also be greatly affected if this form of infrastructure is lacking in their communities because shopping malls also enable exchange of ideas and information.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study revealed a state of skewed gender discrepancy in that there were

Table 3: Provision of infrastructure around RDP houses in Golf Course

No.	Primary schools	Frequency	%	No.	Secondary schools	Frequency	%
1	Very far	8	16.0	1	Very far	14	28.0
2	Far	25	50.0	2	Far	28	52.0
3	Not far	17	34.0	3	Not Far	8	16.0
4	Total	50	100.0	4	Total	50	100.0
No.	University/ FET college	Frequency	%	No.	Shopping mall	Frequency	%
1	Very far	22	44.0	1	Very far	12	24.0
2	Far	24	48.0	2	Far	26	54.0
3	Not far	4	8.0	3	Not far	11	22.0
4	Total	50	100.0	4	Total	50	100.0
No.	Roads	Frequency	%	No.	Street lights	Frequency	%
1	Not provided	50	100.0	1	Not provided	50	100.0
2	Total	50	100.0	2	Total	50	100.0
No.	Drainage	Frequency	%	No.	Sewerage	Frequency	%
1	Provided	50	100.0	1	Provided	50	100.0
2	Total	50	100.0	2	Total	50	100.0

more females than males. These findings agree with national statistics that estimate that there are 1.6 million fewer African men than women in South Africa (Belay 2007). It could be useful if the government considers affirmative action to assist poor women through income generating projects 'IGPs' (Kang'ethe 2010; Manomano 2013). The findings reveal that there were more black South Africans than colored. It confirms the statistics that indicate that there are a few colored people in South Africa constituting 9 percent of the total population and also that there are more blacks than colored (Adhikari 2009; Statistics South Africa (SSA) 2010). Also other perceptions indicate that along the stratification of society in South Africa poverty is associated with the Blacks and no wonder they are also many in this RDP Housing programme (Hendricks 2003). The findings from this study indicated that there were more participants who were single than those that were, either; married; divorced; windowed, separated, or widowed. This could be due to the fact that single people are also the ones most affected by poverty (Rodgers 2006 as cited by Manomano 2013).

The findings from this study indicated that most of the study participants were unemployed. This state of affairs also confirms the high levels of unemployment in South Africa (McGrath and Human Sciences Research 2004). This situation requires an understanding into the situation of the unemployed, their expectations as well as survival strategies and their participation in the labor market which will assist policy making, decision making and rolling out of a comprehensive framework for employment strategies (Erasmus 1999).

Furthermore, the findings indicated that though there were drainage and sewerage facilities there was no clean water provided for these houses for the beneficiaries to utilize the toilets normally and for other purposes as well. This state of affairs is also witnessed by the beneficiaries of RDP houses in Fort Beaufort, Eastern Cape Province. The efforts of the government to provide low cost houses through the RDP are at stake given the water challenges facing the beneficiaries. This is because beneficiaries of these houses have resorted to the bucket system even if the drainage facilities are there (Tau 2011). This is disappointing considering that they cannot enjoy this right because of lack of

clean water facilities. It therefore indicates that there are serious gaps in the construction of these houses that are also amounting to the poor state of infrastructure around RDP houses.

The findings revealed a discrepant lack of streetlights and roads around RDP Houses. This appalling situation is also being faced by the residents of Mahikeng in North West Province as well as those of Tshikota in Makado Municipality. These residents have raised serious complaints surrounding the lack of mass street lights as well as bad roads around their houses (New Age 2013; Lin Media 2013). Furthermore the findings also indicated that there were no primary and secondary schools, University/FET Colleges. Elsewhere in Slovoville, Soweto there are no schools around the RDP Houses raising serious concerns on infrastructure and this is discouraging given that many people in South Africa do not have secondary education (ETU undated; Shisaka Development Management Services 2011). Huchzermeyer (2003) contends that the lack of these services among others closer to these low cost houses perpetuates a vicious cycle of separation between these people and the mainstream economy. The findings also indicated a serious challenge regarding the lack of a shopping mall around RDP houses. The lack of shopping malls can also pose immense challenges towards the survival of the people because they are disadvantaged from taking advantage and enjoying the economic opportunities they would have thus enjoyed without any problem (Huchzermeyer 2003).

CONCLUSION

Inadequate infrastructure surrounding RDP houses is a serious matter that demands a committed response to address this issue. Challenges such as lack of street lights as well as roads present unbearable living conditions as they further marginalize the people as well as opening them up to abuse from crime and social ills. Therefore, such a scenario creates a forbidding environment for employment opportunities, healthy lifestyles, safety and security and this can further pull the people back to Apartheid living conditions. It is therefore imperative that the government organize its policy implementation towards avoiding these problems as well as towards ensuring that the needs of the people are met.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from this study as well as other experiences from South Africa indicate that there is need for the government to prioritize the completion of these RDP houses by ensuring that they have all infrastructural facilities. This challenge could be bolstered by making use of the Integrated and Development Plan, for different government ministries to work together towards installing services for these houses. This is because a lack of water facilities or roads may mean that there might be no integration between the various departments concerned with the houses and roads. It therefore gives room for these researchers to also recommend for a paradigm shift towards the planning and implementation to ensure that it results in the holistic implementation of these housing programmes. This is because combined and coordinated efforts are likely to yield more results than from a single body.

These researchers also think that if the government can create an enabling environment for the development of infrastructure around these houses from the private and NGO sector, it could also result in increased employment opportunities for these people. This can also be a significant effort towards reducing the impact of poverty as well as strengthening the livelihoods and sustainability of these communities. This could also be strengthened by formulation of policies that promote that relationship.

It is also crucial for assessments to be carried out to measure the costs and need associated with infrastructural development around these houses in order to adequately address the challenges. This could also involve beneficiaries, councilors, traditional leaders such as chiefs, police, church leaders, political parties' leaders among others. This will instill accountability and transparency of the government to the people especially when various members of the community are also part of the drive.

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