

Challenges of Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) Houses in South Africa

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Abstract

Beneficiaries of the Reconstruction and Development Program houses (RDP) are facing challenges related to RDP houses, hence, stakeholders and community individuals are criticizing the program of RDP. The study investigated the challenges facing RDP housing in Gauteng. A quantitative approach was adopted. Structured questionnaires were designed and distributed to department of housing and to RDP home owners. 60 Questionnaires were distributed and 50 came back complete and eligible to use. Random sampling method was used to select the respondents. The findings revealed that the building sizes are too small; poor ventilation system inside the building; improvements out of the formal system resulting from small size; affordability problem affecting middle income earners; absence of sufficient land for huge scale housing ventures; misuse of houses by the housing recipients by leasing them out; bigger scale of informal landlords who creates informal housing stock; corruption and or dishonesty on land transaction; poor sanitation maintenance in the building; a lot of backyard dwellers and shacks around the building were some of the challenges obtained from the study.

Keywords

Challenges, Houses, Gauteng, Reconstruction and Development Program

1. Introduction

Housing is a necessity and a basic human right and need. For many decades, people globally have been facing severe housing problems, which resulted to severe shelter deprivation (Zukin et al, 2015). Significant pressure surrounding housing problems has given birth to numerous housing legislations, policies and programmatic intervention in South Africa (Mafukidze & Hoosen, 2009). This has led to programs such as Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), Growth, Employment and Redistribution Program (GEAR), Housing Act such as the Rental and Mortgage Acts and the National housing code of 2009 among others (Mafukidze & Hoosen, 2009). The legislation were to ensure that every one has the right to quality and adequate housing. The Government of South Africa has embarked on the housing program which is the RDP, to assist the South African citizens. RDP houses are mainly built on the outskirts of cities, where large portions of land are available at a lower cost. This has created huge problems for the beneficiaries regarding traveling to work and schools and even medical facilities are a problem (Gryling, 2009).

Only South Africans are eligible to apply and get the houses, generally, the families collectively must be earning R3,500 per month or the sole provider must be unemployed. They also have to comply with certain requirement and their names would be placed on a waiting list (Gunter, 2013). The RDP housing system is not always fair and effective. Since sometimes have to wait for more than ten years whilst waiting for a house. In some cases people who already have received their houses would rent their properties and move back into their shacks. The spouses and or relatives would re-apply for a house and in some cases get another house. Moreover, the government is trying to create a fair system, but the people working for the government are somehow corrupt, since they do get tempted to accept bribes from desperate people who have been waiting for years (Parliamentary liaison office, 2017). Hence the study would look into the challenges of RDP housing.

2. Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP)

RDP was introduced by the ruling party the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994, to redress the imbalances of the past and redirecting economic development (Parliamentary liaison office, 2017). RDP housing is a low cost housing system provided by the government for poor South Africans with a combined income of R3500 or less (Gryling 2009). The program of RDP is not only to construct new houses but reconstruct or redevelop existing buildings for low cost housing. For example, old ruined building in the CBD of all major cities can be reconstructed to low cost housing, and this is a relatively cheap option (Gyling, 2009). The aim of the RDP is have an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy that would address problems brought about by the lack of equitable development under apartheid. The issues are poverty, unemployment, health, provision of water, electricity, good education. In addition the construction of housing for the millions who, due to legacy of apartheid, could not afford to own properties (Parliamentary liaison office, 2017).

Below is a list of six principles made up the political and economic philosophy underlining the RDP framework (Parliamentary liaison office, 2017):

- An integrated and sustainable program
- A people- driven process
- Peace and security for all
- Nation building
- Linking reconstruction and development
- Democratization of society

3. RDP Constructed to Date

Human rights include access to food, education, health care, water and decent housing which is embedded in the South African constitution. Hence, the government of South Africa has taken measures to achieve those human rights (DHS, 2010). According to StatsSA (2016), 15.3% South African households were living in RDP dwellings in 2014. The vision of national Department of Human Settlements is to provide adequate, affordable, decent, secure, viable housing environment in the year 2030 (DHS, 2010). Table 1 below reveals the number of RDP house constructed to date. The South African government has provided almost 4 million households with RDP houses since 1994. The majority of these houses are from the Gauteng Province with 31%, followed by Western Cape with 15% and then KwaZulu-Natal with 14%. These Provinces alone account for 60% of the RDP houses provided in South Africa (StatsSA: 2016).

Table 1: Government subsidized dwelling (RDP houses) by province

Province	RDP	Not RDP	Do not know	Total
Western Cape	571 997	1 335 243	25 023	1 932 263
Eastern Cape	386 802	1 372 311	13 423	1 772 536
Northern Cape	105 541	244 759	2 987	353 287
Free State	289 414	652 680	3 966	946 060
KwaZulu-Natal	559 302	2 300 600	14 335	2 874 237
North West	261 693	976 842	9 184	1 247 718
Gauteng	1 227 729	3 641 899	77 161	4 946 790
Mpumalanga	241 801	987 316	9 110	1 238 227
Limpopo	260 976	1 331 224	7 412	1 599 612
South Africa	3 905 254	12 842 874	162 602	16 910 730

Source: StatsSA (2014)

4. Gauteng Province



Figure 1: Map of Gauteng Province
Source: Gauteng Tourism Authority

Gauteng Province is considered as South African economic hub. Gauteng Province contributed a third to the country total Gross Domestic Product (GDP), although it is the smallest in terms of area size (StatsSA, 2016). Gauteng Province comprises of three metropolitan municipalities namely Johannesburg, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni and two district namely Sedibeng and West Rand. According to 2011 Census data indicate that 12.2 Million people reside in this Province. The Gauteng Province also experience housing backlog , although South African government has provided a considerable number of house-holds with RDP houses, the demand for RDP houses remain very high. Table 2 reflects the strategic plan for the Gauteng Department of Human Settlement (GDHS) for the period 2014/2015 to 2018/2019 indicates that there is a backlog of over 600 000 houses (GDHS Strategic plan:2014).

Table 2: Gauteng Housing Backlog

Name of Municipality	Backlog
City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality	256 480
Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality	203 361
Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality	120 498
West Rand District Municipality	44 186
Sedibeng District Municipality	62 490

Source: GDHS Strategic Plan (2014/15 – 2018/2019)

5. Challenges to RDP Buildings

1.1 Corruption and mismanagement

Corruption is prevalent everywhere in the world especially is South African housing project, which add more to the housing problem that already exist. In 2010, one thousand nine hundred and ten (1910) government official were arrested over benefiting from the subsidies meant for the housing beneficiaries (Ratsatsa, 2010). Moreover, 20 housing project were identified to be jeopardized by dodgy contractors between government officials and contractors. Research revealed that the wasted amount was around R2 Billion Rands (Ratsatsa, 2010). According to Herrle et al (2015), if corruption is not adequately addressed it will cost taxpayers a lot of money while worsening the housing problems more and more each day.

Berrisford (2008) argued that certain contradictions and conflicts over how city municipalities in South Africa intervene in relation to urban land can also be key drivers of corruption. The complexity of the interventions carried out, combined with increased value of city land (because of high demand and limited supply) and poor policing of commercial crime, results in a high potential for corruption. For example, residents in an informal settlement in the

Greater Johannesburg Metro have revealed how they had paid up to R25,000 (US\$18,500) to secure more permanent housing in a nearby residential development, only to find that the units had been sold to other buyers. Affected residents' attempts to stand their ground and seek justice have so far come to nullity (Joburg, 2014).

1.2 House are too small for occupation

The size and spacing of houses should enable privacy and confidentiality for a family living with their children and relatives (Manomano, 2013).

1.3 Poor construction

The quality of material used for constructing the RDP houses is usually poor quality material. Reports done by (Baumann, 2003, Moolla et al., 2011, Chakuwamba, 2010, Bradlow et al., 2011), shows that roofs, walls, doors, floors and windows are mostly poor standard as most are reported to be crumbling, pulling off, breaking without any external influence, but due to poor material and workmanship. Knight, (2001) stated that majority of the people who were allocated RDP houses are unhappy with the houses. Criticism of the houses includes the quality and size. Some RDP houses are so small and badly built that people joke that they are so small you need to go outside to change your mind.

1.4 Poor location of housing projects

Poor location of the housing project as it is located in the outskirts of town where the land is cheap (Huchzermeyer, 2010, Manomano, 2015 & Jo Burg, 2014). RDP houses are mainly built on the outskirts of cities, where large portions of land are available at a lower cost. This has created huge problems for the beneficiaries regarding traveling to work and schools and even medical facilities are a problem (Manomano, 2013). According to Aigbavboa and Thwala (2013), sufficient housing entails enough space, affordability, basic infrastructure and services such as water supply, sanitation and plumbing system management, security of tenure, strength and safety of the building, proper ventilation and heating systems, accessibility to the property, easy access to amenities (schools, churches, workplace, health care centres, libraries and shopping centres) and an appropriate quality of environment and welfare components.

1.5 Lack of involvement of stakeholders and beneficiaries in the housing Projects

The involvement of people is very crucial (National Housing Code, 2009), especially the bottom up approach should be used. In most cases, beneficiaries, are involved at the later stages of projects and their involvement is very minimal with limited room to sanction their expectations (Manomano, 2015). According to Chakuwamba (2010), the involvement of the beneficiaries and other stakeholders is still problematic and not being considered in the implementation of these projects would result in endemic violence, especially in areas around Gauteng. The beneficiaries were very frustrated over the failure of the government to guarantee what they wanted such as roads, water and electricity. Moreover, the lack of involvement of other stakeholders has been bemoaned to be a precursor to social problems (Manomano, 2013).

1.6 Urbanization and unemployment

This factor has caused severe housing problems with its interrelated link and relation to unemployment (UN HABITAT, 2009). People from rural areas come to the urban areas searching for employment opportunities and tend to stay in squatter shelter or slums. This has caused huge burden on government since they have to deal with housing shortages emanating from such factors (Manomano, 2013). According to Joburg, (2014) lack of housing left many living in overcrowded houses, backyard dwellers and shacks, brought about lives without privacy and putting more risk on their well-being, Ntema & Marais (2013) stated that overcrowding is the results of housing shortage and observed as a survivalist technique for those leasing backyard shacks or rooms and in this manner underscores the issue of high unemployment in the area. Majority of South African residents (24, 1%) are unemployed and more often than not search for modest occupations in the urban communities and frequently tempted to transform their low cost properties into revenue generating projects. If the recipients of low cost housing rent out their homes for money to non-recipients, regardless of whether neighbourhood or remote, the activity comes down to the defeat of the expressed goals and its vision. It is, hence, going to be difficult for the state to eradicate shacks and informal settlements by 2030 if South African residents are the ones disappointing the provisions of their legislature. It will take the South African government past 2030 to destroy shacks and informal dwellings, given the way that beneficiary qualifies once for an RDP house (Ntema & Marais (2013)

1.7 Abuse of the Property by Beneficiary

Beneficiaries do misuses the houses given to them, many report have shown that they end up renting them out, selling them out and go back and reside to their shacks. Some sell because they are not satisfied with the houses given to them (Manomano, 2013). If this continues then housing problems would worsen. Rogerson & Letsie, (2013) in Gunter (2013) noted that informal housing market in South Africa is characterised by poverty and lack of control, it is within this sector that the most vulnerable of the urban poor find themselves and equally the sector that provides the least support and poorest legal framework in which transactions take place. This part of the housing market was on the way to be an exploitative progressive market, where free market activity are misshaped by access to assets and acknowledgment of features below standard. Gilbert, (2013), argued that the informal rental housing stock has prompted various little scale landlords who lease out rooms inside their home; in any case, it has again made a bigger scale informal landlord who creates informal housing stock on hunched down land for the selective use of the rental market.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Approach and Design

This study adopted a quantitative approach as the purpose was to investigate the challenges of RDP houses. A well-structured questionnaire was distributed to different home owners and staff in the housing department. The questionnaire were sent via e-mails to staff members and the rest were delivered to the RDP beneficiaries in the Gauteng province. 60 Questionnaires were distributed and 50 came completed and eligible to use and reflects 83% response rate. The study was conducted from reliable scholarly sources such as articles, journals, books, publications, websites. The Data obtained through the questionnaire were tabulated and frequency/percentage of the respondents to each of the questions asked were then analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data were analysed using excel to produce the summaries of the various responses. The MIS was then used to determine the rank of each item. The ranking made it easy to cross-reference the relative importance index.

6.2 Point Linkert Scale

5- point linkert scale was adopted for the study which gave a wider range of possible scores and increase statistical analyses that are available to the researcher (Mashwama et al., 2017). The 5 point scales were transformed to mean item score abbreviated as (MIS) for each of the challenges of RDPs.

6.3 Computation of the Mean Item Score (MIS)

The computation of the mean item score (MIS) was calculated from the total of all weighted responses and then relating it to the total responses on a particular aspect. The formula is used to rank the Challenges of RDPs frequency of occurrences as identified by participants.

$$MIS = \frac{1n1 + 2n2 + 3n3 + 4n4 + 5n5}{\sum N}$$

Where;

n1 = number of respondents for strongly disagree

n2 = number of respondents for disagree

n3 = number of respondents for neutral

n4 = number of respondents for agree

n5 = number of respondents for strongly agree

N = Total number of respondents

7. Findings and Discussions

7.1 Challenges to RDP Buildings

Table 3 reveals that RDP buildings are too small, by ranking it first with the highest with MIS= 4.65; STD=0.92); Poor proper ventilation system inside the house was ranked number two, with MIS=4.24; STD=0.92); Improvements out of the formal system resulting from small size of dwelling was ranked third, with MIS=4.21; STD=0.95); The fourth ranking was the affordability problem affecting middle income earners was ranked 4th with the (MIS=4.18; STD=0.87); Absence of sufficient land for huge scale of housing ventures achieved a 5th with MIS=4.06; STD= 0.87); Misuse of the properties by recipients by leasing them out was rated number 6th with (MIS=3.94; STD=0.74); Bigger scale of informal landlords who create informal housing number was ranked 7th with (MIS=3.91; STD=0.71);

Corruption and dishonesty on land transaction was ranked 8th with a (MIS=3.91; STD=1.08); Poor sanitation maintenance in the building was ranked 9th with (MIS=3.85 and STD=0.66); Backyard dwellers and shacks around the building was ranked 10th with (MIS=3.79; STD=1.07); Poor or no collection of refuse garbage by the local municipality was ranked 11th with (MIS=3.79; STD=0.98); Poor quality of dwelling was ranked 12th with (MIS=3.79; STD=0.69). Selling of the RDP house by the owner was ranked 13th with (MIS= 3.68; STD=0.81). The findings further revealed that overcrowding of family members in the building was ranked 14th (MIS=3.29; STD=1.06); No or poor plumbing system inside the building was ranked 16th with (MIS=3.88; STD=0.84); Lack of access to information by occupants of the building was ranked sixteen with (MIS=2.76; STD=0.65); Buildings are too close to each other and overcrowded was ranked 17th (MIS= 2.71; STD=0.52); Abandoned building by the owner was ranked 18th with (MIS= 2.71; STD=0.52); Poor access to quality services was ranked 19th with (MIS=2.62; STD=0.74); Lastly Poor quality of building material used to construct the building was ranked last with (MIS=2.59; STD=0.89).

Table 3: Challenges to RDP Buildings

CHALLENGES	MIS	S.D	RANK
The building size is too small	4,65	0,92	1
No proper ventilation system inside the building	4,24	0,92	2
Improvements out of the formal system resulting from small size	4,21	0,95	3
Affordability problem affecting middle income earners	4,18	0,87	4
Absence of sufficient land for huge scale housing ventures	4,06	0,85	5
Misuse of houses by the housing recipients by leasing them out	3,94	0,74	6
Bigger scale of informal landlords who creates informal housing stock	3,91	1,08	7
Corruption and or dishonesty on land transaction	3,91	0,71	8
Poor sanitation maintenance in the building	3,85	0,66	9
A lot of backyard dwellers and shacks around the building	3,79	1,07	10
Poor or no collection of refuse garbage by the local municipality	3,79	0,98	11
The quality of the building is so poor	3,79	0,69	12
Selling of RDP building by the owner	3,68	0,81	13
Overcrowded of family members inside the building	3,29	1,06	14
No or poor plumbing system inside the building	2,88	0,84	15
Lack of access to information by occupants of the building	2,76	0,65	16
Buildings are too close to each other and overcrowded	2,71	0,80	17
Abandoned building by the owner	2,71	0,52	18
Poor access to quality services	2,62	0,74	19
Poor quality of building material used to construct the building	2,59	0,89	20

8. Conclusion

The key challenges to RDP buildings were the following: the building size is too small, no proper ventilation system inside the building, improvements out of the formal system resulting from small size, affordability problem affecting middle income earners, absence of sufficient land for huge scale housing ventures, misuse of houses by the housing recipients by leasing them out, bigger scale of informal landlords who creates informal housing shacks, corruption and or dishonesty on land transaction, poor sanitation maintenance in the building and a lot of backyard dwellers and shacks around the building. Therefore, stakeholder involvement is key in order to eradicate the challenges of RDP housing at the same time meeting the needs of the beneficiaries.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that community engagement must be number one priority and the bottom up strategy should be used before any housing project is executed. The contractors building the houses must be checked thoroughly to see if they meet the required standard. To secure the quality of the structure the defect liability period must be increased in terms of years this alone can improve the life of the structures.

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