

Housing Programmes and Social Amenities in the Amathole District of the Eastern Cape

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an endeavour to investigate the implementation of housing programmes in relation to the access which they have to social amenities in South Africa. It has been based on a broader study of the implementation of housing programmes in the Amathole District of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The research sample comprised 276 participants, 250 of whom were residents of houses which had been provided by the housing programmes, 4 were municipal housing officials of the 4 selected municipalities, while the remaining 22 comprised provincial housing officials, representatives of political parties, municipal managers, councillors and social workers. The findings revealed that the toilets in the houses were generally in a very poor condition and that, in some cases, the houses had no toilets. Most of the houses were also adversely affected by a lack of basic essential amenities, such as the lack of a supply of clean water, a lack of electricity and the lack of a sewage disposal system. In order to ensure that the previously marginalised people of South Africa receive the social justice which had been denied to them for decades by the apartheid regime, providing houses with proper access to basic essential social amenities should be prioritised within a social developmental approach. In accordance with the democratic principles which are enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa, a bottom-up approach should be adopted for the implementation of appropriate interventions to ensure that the actual needs of the people are met.

Keywords: social amenities; Upgrade of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP); Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

Introduction

Throughout the world, the numbers of needy and vulnerable people without adequate access to housing are increasing at an alarming rate, with which developmental initiatives



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are unlikely to keep pace. According to reliable statistics and literature, this rate may actually double within decades (Gunter and Manuel 2016; Mutume 2004; Phago 2010; Pillay and Naude 2006; UN-HABITAT 2003). In South Africa, state capacity, corruption and mismanagement, a lack of participation of members of communities and other stakeholders have plunged the providing of housing into a state of malaise, in which access to social amenities is severely compromised (Lemanski 2008; Levenson 2017). Ruiters (2013) explains that South Africa is encumbered with a huge backlog with respect to investment in infrastructure for the development and management of water resources and water services, which also affects the housing programmes.

Inadequate sanitation and hygiene, particularly with respect to access to clean water and toilets, make living conditions in the housing projects extremely hazardous (Makube 2014; Zuzile 2013). The lack of water for the flushing of toilets obliges the intended beneficiaries of the housing projects to resort to unhygienic ways of disposing of human waste, which can also expose the already vulnerable women and children to the risk of sexual abuse. As clean water is crucial for the survival of all people, its unavailability or inaccessibility to the most marginalised population groups raises extremely pertinent questions concerning the commitment of the government to ensuring access to clean water for all (Heleba 2011). Throughout South Africa, reliable statistics show that there are serious shortages with respect to access to clean water, although access has been claimed to exceed 70 per cent (Cosatu 2011) and 23 municipalities have been reported to be in crisis concerning the provision of clean water (SAHRC 2015). Other studies have suggested that the lack of access to clean water may also increase the incidences of waterborne diseases (Manomano 2013).

Patel (2015) maintains that if the processes of allocating housing are not remediated, tensions will inevitably mount, particularly if houses do not provide much-needed social amenities, which has been witnessed throughout the country, as protracted conflicts between the government and the intended beneficiaries of housing projects have been taken to the streets. Lesufi (2002) explains that the failures of the government with respect to redistribution and growth require organised efforts on the part of the poor to tilt the scales and impose on the state a different development agenda, which is based on the need to promote the interests of the poor. Levenson (2017) extends the analogy by maintaining that the tilting of the scales would also result in a transformation of the welfare state.

Access to electricity is reported to be the lowest in the world in sub-Saharan Africa, with a score of 17 per cent. This general lack is attributed to poor institutional and management practices, although there is an abundance of fossil fuels and other energy resources (Davidson and Sokona 2002). Although legislative commitments have been made, access to electricity remains erratic in the housing programmes in South Africa. Other studies have identified a lack of integration among government departments as a hindering factor in the securing of access to electricity for all people, particularly in the areas in which the housing projects are located (Chakuwamba 2010). Bradlow, Bolnick and Shearing (2011) explain that although it had been assumed that the Reconstruction

and Development Programme (RDP) houses would replace the homes in informal settlements which the poor had built for themselves, owing to their poor quality and their lack of social amenities, these houses have further exacerbated the housing problems in the country. In this context, the assertion of Dominelli (2015) that social work has much to offer in terms of reducing risk, mitigating disaster, providing relief or long-term reconstruction is particularly relevant. This research paper draws inspiration from the following quotation by Vishanthie Sewpaul (2015, 697):

While social work does have its shadow side, it has always had an emancipatory thrust, with a commitment to doing no harm, social justice and human rights. By making the being for the 'other' principle the normative [one] in social work, the profession can contribute to an ethical politics and be constructed as politics with soul.

With this inspiration, the paper will endeavour to determine the extent to which the government has provided housing to targeted beneficiaries in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, with respect to the provision of access to social amenities such as clean water, toilets which are of acceptable quality, adequate sewerage systems and electricity.

Housing Policy Framework

The new post-apartheid government sought to ensure a redressing of the actions and programmes of the apartheid regime which had condemned the needy and vulnerable to abject poverty. A new housing programme, the RDP, was introduced to provide houses to those people with low or no incomes and who were without housing. It started in 1994 and is still being implemented throughout the country. The national constitution of 1996 underscored the commitment of the government to ensuring that there was an equitable access to housing for all people in the country, in terms of which the government was expected to pursue the progressive realisation of the right to have access to housing which was both adequate and of sufficient quality (Republic of South Africa 1996).

Other pieces of legislation which pertained to housing were also introduced, such as the Home Loan and Mortgage Disclosure Act, the Rental Housing Act, and the Upgrade of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) of 2009. The UISP was intended specifically to remediate the housing problems which were abundantly apparent in the dramatic proliferation of shacks and informal settlements, through upgrading and improving them. The obligation of the government to ensure that the right of access to adequate housing is upheld is also affirmed through its membership of the United Nations, under whose auspices all member countries are required to ensure that access to adequate housing which is of sufficient quality remains an inalienable legal and human right, which is enshrined in national constitutions and harnessed through local housing programmes (OHCHR 2009; SAHRC 2004).

In addition, these housing projects are also required to provide social amenities which comply with the standards of both international legislation and national legislation pertaining to water and sanitation. South Africa has drafted pieces of relevant legislation such as the White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation of 1994, the National Water Act of 1998, the Draft National Sanitation Policy of 1996, and the Water Services Act No. 108 of 1997 (Monyai 2003). In both the Housing White Paper of 1994 and the Energy White Paper of 1998 it was acknowledged that most of the needy did not have access to electricity in the locations in which they resided, and included in their aims a commitment to ensuring that all people will have access to electricity (DME 1998; Republic of South Africa 1994). These pieces of legislation were intended to guarantee secure supplies of electricity and connections to the beneficiaries of housing programmes. It is against the background of these commitments that the author of this research paper undertook to investigate the extent to which housing programmes are being provided with adequate social amenities. The pressing need to craft this paper arises from reports which have revealed great discrepancies with respect to access to social amenities in the housing programmes which are being implemented.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks which informed this study are the social developmental and bottom- up approaches. These approaches were adopted in order to understand, interpret and analyse the degree to which the beneficiaries of the housing programmes have adequate access to social amenities. The social developmental approach had been preceded by the residual model, which holds that social welfare institutions intervene only when systems of social support such as the family and community networks have broken down or failed (Patel 2015). The short-term nature of this type of intervention confines its use to periods of crisis (Patel 2015). It was the conventional model for providing welfare services during the apartheid era and served as an extension of the policy of discrimination against mostly black people and other people of colour who were poor and needy. By contrast, the social developmental approach advocates for the harmonising of economic growth with social development, in order to ensure that they benefit the needy and vulnerable populations of countries.

Harmonisation is achieved through macroeconomic policies which promote employment and people-centred economic development, in conjunction with social policies such as social protection and the provision of basic services (Patel 2015). Kaseke (2017, 470) believes that a developmental state can “promote both social development and economic development and social workers thus need to ensure that the developmental state prioritises social development”. Gray (2006) maintains that in order for the approach to be applied successfully, the government needs widespread institutional support, which is highly unlikely in South Africa at present, owing to high levels of unemployment, low economic growth and insufficient foreign investment. According to Sewpaul (2013),

social development does not necessarily require economic growth as a prerequisite and providing houses with adequate access to social amenities can be carried out in the absence of economic growth. Consequently, social work should consistently advocate for the transcending of social development in these programmes and also inform and advocate for political environments which create an enabling environment for investor confidence. As Gray (2006) has pointed out, doing so would also strengthen institutional support.

Secondly, the approach also advocates that developmental programmes should be rooted in human rights. Patel (2009) explains that the emphasis of the social developmental approach on human rights implies that failures on the part of the governmental to provide accessible services which are of acceptable quality may be questioned and challenged, on the basis of its concern with developing corrective measures to deal with inequitable and distorted development and to promote social justice in an increasingly unequal world. It is for this reason that access to housing is constitutionally guaranteed and, as Patel explains, it provides a benchmark against which to measure the achievement of social and economic rights (Patel 2009). Lombard and Twikirize (2014) maintain that social work can be a significant role player in promoting social and economic equality through its commitment to social justice and human rights, without forgetting, as Triegaardt (2002) points out, that South Africa as an actor in a global economy needs to be competitive in the world market because any instances of under-performance will inevitably have significantly adverse consequences for the poor and needy.

Thirdly, democracy and the participation of government departments and other stakeholders are essential for promoting efficiency and ensuring that the programmes meet their goals and objectives adequately (Patel 2015). The democratic participation of the people is considered to be integral to the achievement of human development (Patel 2015). The approach also requires social developmental programmes to empower their intended beneficiaries to make decisions and to participate in a meaningful manner (Patel 2015). When the intended beneficiaries participate and take part in decision-making processes, the programmes become increasingly likely to meet their expectations and to achieve their objectives in a manner which ensures optimal benefits for their beneficiaries.

Fourthly, the principle of partnership ensures that the meeting of human needs becomes a national collective responsibility, which is fulfilled through collaboration among relevant stakeholders (Patel 2015).

Finally, the approach attempts to bridge the divide between micro and macro interventions, as social development needs to provide interventions which focus on the poor and on placing those who are socially, economically, and politically excluded at the centre of interventions (Patel 2015).

The bottom-up approach has replaced the top-down approach in social policies and programmes. The top-down approach was characterised by bureaucratic methods

of implementation in which beneficiaries served as passive recipients of social programmes, who were presided over by decision-making bodies which could impose structure on social programmes and dictate their goals and objectives and how they were to be implemented (Lecomte 1986 cited by Larrison 2002). Accordingly, the bottom-up approach was adopted to eliminate the shortcomings of the top-down approach. The bottom-up approach empowers the recipients of social programmes by availing them of opportunities to be heard, to participate in decision-making, to initiate the programmes, and also to influence them in order to ensure that they are implemented correctly with respect to the ways in which they hope to benefit from them. When this approach is applied, the main drivers of the projects are the beneficiaries themselves and their communities (Europa 2014).

Research Methodology

The data for this study were obtained from the Amathole district of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The Amathole district is one of the seven districts in the Eastern Cape. Survey questionnaires were administered to RDP and UISP housing officials and also to beneficiaries of both programmes. The questionnaires were administered in the offices of the officials and in the houses of the beneficiaries. The municipal managers, the social workers, the provincial housing officials, the councillors and the representatives of the African National Congress (ANC), the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM) were all interviewed in their offices in the Amathole district. The data were collected in June 2014 and analysed during July and August 2014. Four municipalities were selected to participate in the study, namely Nkonkobe, Mbashe, Nxuba and Mquma, because they were the only municipalities in the district in which both of the programmes were being implemented. The qualitative and the quantitative findings were triangulated, with the qualitative findings serving to support the quantitative ones. The two approaches were combined to increase the reliability and the validity of the findings, as using different research methods in tandem enables each to confirm and affirm the other (De Vos 2005). The quantitative study yielded a numerical assessment of the extent to which access to social amenities was provided (Neuman 2011), while the qualitative study generated an understanding of the perceptions, beliefs and opinions of the participants and the meanings which they attached to the research topic (Creswell 2014).

Research Design

Two designs were adopted to conduct this study, namely a case study and a survey. The research was exploratory, explanatory and descriptive in nature. The broader study employed a case study and a survey research design, with the case being the Amathole district and two housing projects, namely the RDP and the UISP housing programmes,

while the survey permitted a relatively large number of respondents to be included in the research sample.

The Selection of the Participants

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed to select the research sample. Probability sampling entailed the use of both multi-stage sampling and simple random sampling. The researcher selected one housing project per municipality, with the project which had the greater number of houses being selected in each case, and using simple random sampling to ensure that each beneficiary had an equal likelihood of being selected for the sample. The total numbers of RDP and UISP houses and structures which had been built in the four municipalities were 13 073 and 8 325 respectively. When multi-stage sampling is employed, the units under investigation are selected randomly. The researcher began by selecting one major RDP housing project and one UISP housing project from each municipality. The following housing projects were selected in each municipality:

- Nkonkobe: The Newtown RDP housing project with 662 houses in Fort Beaufort and the Ntselamanzi (Emaplangeni) UISP housing project with 85 houses.
- Nxuba: The Adelaide Location RDP housing project with 624 houses and Kwa Eskom with 54 UISP houses.
- Mnquma: The Smart UISP housing project with 75 houses and the Veza RDP housing project with 282 houses.
- Mbashe: The Mbashe UISP housing project with 76 houses and the Willowvale RDP housing project with 97 houses.

At the second stage, the researcher applied proportional probability in terms of the number of houses which had been built in each municipality, in order to determine the number of households which would be selected from each housing project cluster per municipality. As the RDP housing project has been administered for a longer time and has provided more houses than the UISP housing project, more houses needed to be selected from among the RDP houses than from among the UISP houses. Accordingly, a total of 150 RDP houses and 100 UISP houses were selected from the four municipalities. The houses were randomly selected, using stratified random sampling. On the basis of the demarcation of roads in the projects, the researcher selected at least five houses per stratum to ensure that each stratum would be adequately represented in the research sample. In order to ensure that the information which was collected would be relevant, rich and contextual, the researcher elected to collect data from the heads of households and the beneficiaries of the housing programmes.

Purposive non-probability sampling was used to select the participants for the interviews and the housing officials, who were requested to respond to a questionnaire. Purposive

sampling was particularly useful in these instances, as it enabled participants who possessed the desired attributes to be selected. The social workers, ward councillors, provincial housing officials, municipal housing officials and the municipal manager were all selected using purposive sampling to ensure that those who were selected would be able to provide the in-depth information which was needed to conduct this study. As the ANC is by far the largest political party and has a great deal of representation in the government, two political representatives from the ANC were purposively selected from the Amathole District Office, while one representative each from the UDM, the DA and COPE were chosen from their respective district offices. As in most cases there was only one municipal housing official per municipality; they were also selected purposively. In Nxuba where there were two municipal housing officials, the researcher purposively chose the senior official, rather than his deputy, as he would be more knowledgeable concerning the housing programmes in the municipality.

In addition, multi-stage sampling enables the selection of large samples by breaking the target population down into manageable clusters, all of whose members are sampled, in the interests of obtaining a truly representative research sample.

Instruments Used to Collect Data

An interview guide with semi-structured questions enabled the one-on-one in-depth interviews to avoid deviating from the research topic, while a questionnaire which employed a Likert scale was used in the survey to collect the quantitative data. The researcher made use of an audio recorder to record the one-on-one in-depth interviews, with the consent of the participants.

Analysis of the Data

The quantitative data were analysed through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The process entailed coding the questionnaires and capturing the data into Excel, before using the SPSS software to analyse the data. The qualitative data which emerged from the interviews were analysed thematically. The data were categorised, ordered and arranged according to the themes which emerged from the process.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Fort Hare and permission was granted to enter the field and conduct the study in May 2014 (REC-270710-028-RA, Level 01). All participants were informed of the objectives of the study, its potential value and the implications of their participation. No participant was forced to participate and all who did so participated voluntarily and gave their informed consent. The participants

were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, should they desire to do so. Their identities were kept confidential, in order to respect their right to privacy, and at no stage were they revealed.

Results

This section of the paper will present the quantitative and qualitative results together to ensure a corroborative presentation of the perceptions of the various participants. The quantitative findings will be presented first, according to the themes which emerged from the analysis of the data that had been obtained from the in-depth interviews. The biographical details of the respondents will be presented first, followed by the themes which had been identified, which will be discussed in relation to the analysis of the quantitative data.

Biographical Information of the Participants

It was found that female participants constituted 55.6 per cent of the sample and male participants 44.4 per cent. Black people constituted 72.8 per cent, while multiracial people made up the remaining 27.2 per cent, as is shown in Table 1. In terms of marital status, single people constituted 51 per cent, married people 17 per cent, 11 per cent were widows, 8 per cent were divorced, 6 per cent were widowers, 4 per cent had been separated, and 3 per cent were cohabiting, as is shown in Figure 1. The majority of the participants were unemployed, 15.6 per cent were employed, 12.8 per cent worked as casual labourers, 16 per cent obtained their income from social grants, 4 per cent were self-employed, 1.6 per cent were students, and a small minority of 0.8 per cent were retired, as is shown in Figure 2.

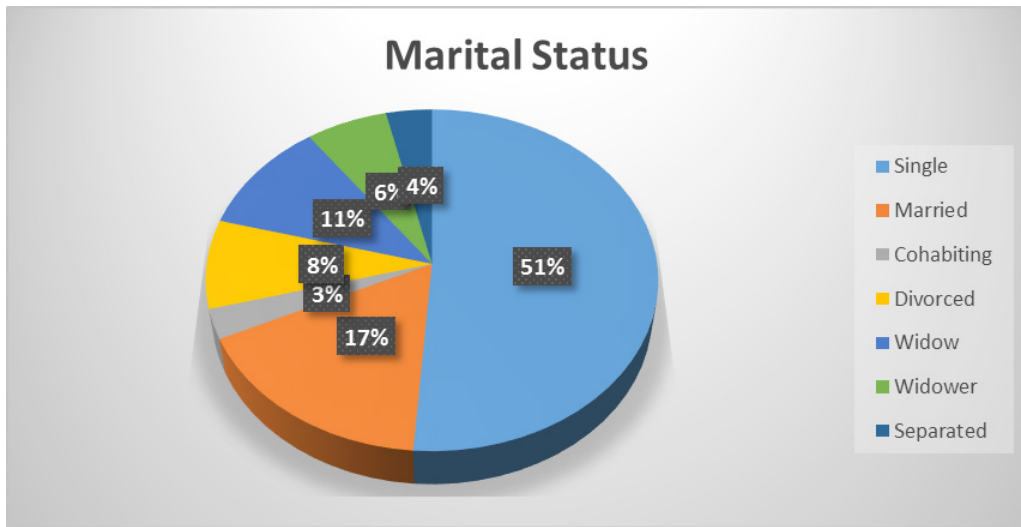


Figure 1: Marital status of the respondents

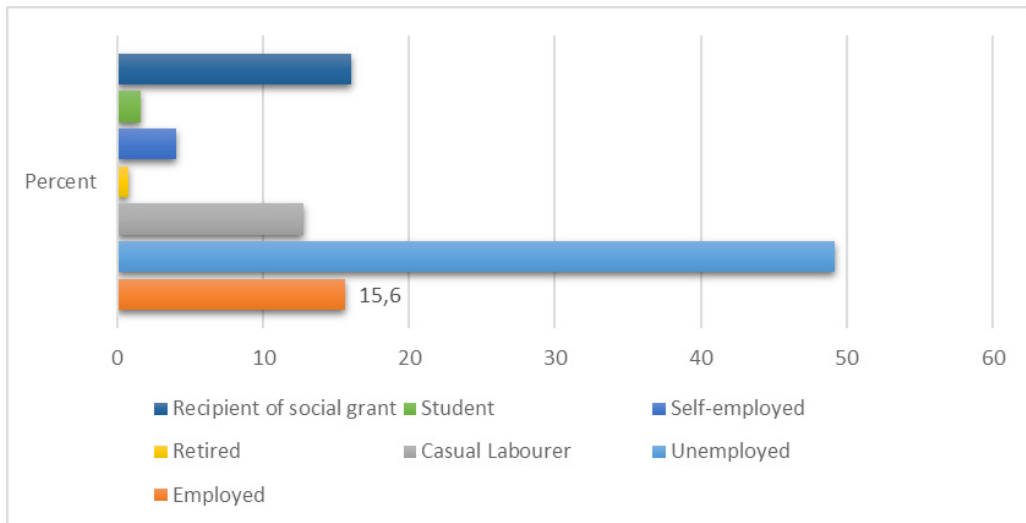


Figure 2: Employment status

Table 1: Racial distribution of the participants in the study

Race	Frequency	Percentage
Black	182	72.8
Multiracial	68	27.2
White	0	0.0
Indian	0	0.0
Total	250	100.0

Insufficient Access to Clean Water

It was found that most of the respondents did not have access to clean water in their houses. Those who indicated that they did have access constituted only 3.2 per cent of the sample, while those who did not constituted 96.8 per cent. These quantitative findings were further confirmed by the findings of the qualitative study, which also revealed that most of the houses do not have access to clean water. (See Table 2.) The following excerpts from the interviews confirm this finding:

The people struggle because they do not have access to clean water. The officials always tell them they will fix the situation, but it is taking too long. The people cannot do gardening or even live healthily in these houses. (Social worker)

This government must be brought to account because people are struggling without clean water. (Political party representative)

They really need water. No matter how many times they go to the municipality to complain, they will be told that they are sorting it out. (Ward councillor)

Access to clean water is vital for the survival and well-being of both communities and individual people. The problems which are associated with living in houses without water are too numerous to list and completely debilitating for those who are forced to live under such conditions. If the most needy and vulnerable people of South Africa continue to be deprived of their basic human rights, the persecution which they endured under the universally condemned apartheid regime is merely being perpetuated under the guise of a democratic society.

Poor Quality Toilets and no Toilets at all

It was found from the survey that 65.6 per cent of the respondents indicated that their houses had not been provided with toilets while 35.4 per cent indicated that toilets

had been provided. The qualitative findings provided additional details concerning the problems associated with the lack of toilets in most of the houses and the general lack of access to clean water. (See Table 2.) The interviewees said:

The toilets are very fragile and break easily. To make matters worse, no clean water is provided to the houses, which makes life in these houses very unhealthy and difficult. (Councillor)

The implementation has been a very difficult process, especially with the contractors, who did an expensive and shoddy job. (Provincial housing official)

I have observed that most residents from those houses use bucket toilets because they do not have water in their houses. (Social worker)

The inescapable conclusion is that the houses fail to meet even the most basic requirements for human habitation, as they were found to have either poor toilet systems or no toilets at all. The qualitative findings indicate that although the alternatives to which the people who reside in the houses resort are unhealthy, they have no other options. Those programmes and projects which are formulated and implemented, with the ostensible purpose of fulfilling the basic human rights of previously disadvantaged people, but which oblige them to live in conditions of abject squalor must surely constitute the most damning indictment of either the commitment of the government towards fulfilling its promises or of its ability to do so.

Poor Sewerage Systems

A total of 25 per cent of the respondents indicated that their houses had been provided with sewerage systems, while 75 per cent indicated the contrary. (See Table 2.) These quantitative findings were borne out by the following excerpts from the one-on-one in-depth interviews:

There are no sewerage systems to speak of in these houses. We are not sure why these people were settled in houses without sewerage systems. It is very bad, given that waterborne diseases are rampant under such conditions. (Political party representative)

The people are always protesting, but nothing is happening. (Social worker)

It's true that sewerage systems are lacking and it's a serious problem faced by these residents. (Provincial housing official)

These findings reveal quite unequivocally that the houses would be without hygienic toilets, even if a reliable supply of clean water were to be provided to them. Although the dumping grounds of Dimbaza and Limehill were the products of the supreme malice

of the apartheid regime, it is bitterly ironic to reflect that similar conditions should be created as a result of incompetence, corruption, self-interest and apathy.

Inadequate Supply of Electricity

In order to ascertain whether the houses of the beneficiaries had lights and electricity, the beneficiaries were asked in the questionnaire whether or not their houses were provided with electricity. A total of 21.2 per cent indicated that their houses were provided with electricity, while 78.8 per cent indicated that they were not. These findings were corroborated by the themes which emerged from the interviews. (See Table 2.) Relevant excerpts are provided below:

The people living in these houses are not safe and secure. This is because most of these houses do not have electricity and they have been waiting for so long to get electricity installed in them. (Social worker)

It's true, there is a problem of crime, as these houses have no electricity. (Political party representative)

Life without electricity is a problem for the residents, because there are high levels of crime. (Ward councillor)

These findings reveal that although houses are being provided, the lack of electricity in most of these housing projects is likely to promote the incidences of crimes such as burglaries. Life without electricity adversely affects every conceivable aspect of the socio-economic well-being of the people whose lives the housing projects are intended to improve. The wretched circumstances in which their lives are mired could destroy their hopes and aspirations and confine them to a no man's land in which those whose human rights have been shrunk to the right to endorse the actions of the government on election days are condemned to live out their lives in a twilight world of broken promises. It is to be hoped that further research can be undertaken in order to pursue the themes which have emerged from this study and that doing so will result in appropriate pressure being applied on those who are tasked with ensuring the well-being of the country's neediest and most vulnerable citizens, to grant them dignity and social justice at last.

Table 2: Provision of electricity, clean water, sewerage systems and toilets

Electricity	Frequency	Percentage		Toilets	Frequency	Percentage
Provided	53	21.2		Provided	86	34.4
Not provided	197	78.8		Not provided	164	65.6
Total	250	100.0		Total	250	100.0
Clean water				Sewerage systems		
Provided	8	3.2		Provided	50	25
Not provided	242	96.8		Not provided	200	75
Total	250	100.0		Total	250	100

Discussion of the Findings

Black people constituted the great majority of residents, while the numbers of people of colour were significantly lower. This distribution accords with national statistics (SSA 2010) and also serves to confirm that the RDP has embraced the spirit of post-apartheid South Africa by including all races and cultures in the social programmes, particularly those population groups which had once been marginalised (Patel 2005).

With respect to marital status, the findings show a preponderance of single people, by comparison with married residents and those who had other marital statuses. Studies have shown that there are relatively few married young people in South Africa, as many tend to marry late in life (Thornton 2008), possibly owing to the harsh economic conditions which prevail among previously disadvantaged population groups. Other studies which have been conducted in South African settings have also found that there are more single than married people (Gutura 2014; Mujoko 2014), which is particularly evident in the case of populations living in houses which have been provided by government housing programmes (Manomano 2013). A great deal of research has found that single people are particularly prone to poverty, contracting HIV and AIDS, and becoming the victims of crime in South Africa (Barnett and Whiteside 2006; TAC 2007).

The high numbers of unemployed people in these houses are confirmed by reports which indicate that the neediest and poorest people in South Africa are unemployed (Hofmeyr 2008; Swanepoel, Erasmus, and Schenk 2008). Other researchers have cited a lack of consultation with the unemployed as a factor which aggravates rates of unemployment, while at the same time maintaining that consultation should be incorporated into a bottom-up approach in programmatic interventions (Erasmus 1999).

Although international and national legislation and policy documents require that social amenities be provided to all people, including the beneficiaries of housing programmes, it was found in this study that most of the houses of the respondents to the questionnaire lacked access to these basic social amenities. The lack of access to clean water is a reflection of a greater national problem, as although 89.4 per cent of households in the country have access to piped water, less than half have access to water in their homes, and dissatisfaction with the quality of water remains widespread (Peyper 2016). The general lack of access to clean water has dire implications for the health and well-being of the beneficiaries of the housing projects. As most of them are either unemployed or earn low incomes, there is a need to balance the dynamics of their economic status and their living conditions, in order to enable and promote investment in the housing projects.

It has been found that in many housing projects in the country, such as those at Sekhukhune and Vrede, the residents are very frustrated as a result of the lack of access to clean water in their houses. In other housing projects, although water is supplied, it is often unfit for human consumption (Manomano 2013; Nabudere 2013; SAIRR 2006). Devnarian and Matthias (2011) explain that in many South African rural schools access to clean water is so limited that learners are obliged to carry water for long distances to use at school. Nicholson (2013) describes the squalid conditions in RDP houses in Mazista in the North West province, which have no water or electricity and the toilets are infested with maggots.

Although the intention to provide houses may be commendable, the means which have been adopted in order to do so raise many questions. However, there can be no question that the poor deserve better treatment, in order to bring them into the mainstream economy. Their present plight is ably clarified by a study in which social workers were asked to define poverty and they did so in terms of access to housing, electricity, water, food and clothing (Schuermans and Visser 2005). In addition, according to the most recent survey data concerning the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) for South Africa, 10.3 per cent of the population are multi-dimensionally poor, 17.1 per cent live in near multi-dimensional poverty, and the breadth of deprivation stands at 39.6 per cent (UNDP 2016). These statistics eloquently describe the characteristics of the targeted beneficiaries of housing programmes and serve to explain why providing houses without access to social amenities is likely to be expressed through protests and other violent representations.

Patel (2015, 293) explains that despite the progress which has been made in reducing poverty in South Africa and regardless of how it is measured, “income poverty and inequality” continue to undermine the transformation of South African society. According to Monyai (2011, v), there is a paradox concerning social policy in South Africa, in that the majority of those who are marginalised at present are those who had been excluded by the apartheid regime, even though state intervention claims to be targeting them, which signifies an embarrassing failure in the incremental equalisation

of opportunities within a context of broad social inequalities. Other researchers have been even more outspoken, by publicly indicting the government and declaring that a government which fails to secure access to clean water for its people is guilty of crimes against them and should be charged accordingly for denying its people the liberty to enjoy the basic human right of access to clean water (Schuermans and Visser 2005).

Muller (2007, 33) maintains that there is a political component to the supplying of water in South Africa, which includes a technical debate concerning the nature of the problems which affect the adequate supplying of clean water. In addition, an institutional politics governs budget allocations between and within the various spheres of government, and there is also a tension between a rights-based approach to the provision of services and the politics of sustainability and conservation. This complexity is further compounded by the global water debate, with its human rights, economic, anti-privatisation and imperialism, and environmental dimensions.

The tendency for attending to the needs of the poor to become mired in complex bureaucratic relationships and conflicts of interest has prompted Sewpaul (2015) to call for politics with soul, which is characterised by being for the “other”, and which provides a significant impetus for the social work profession to call for and to reinforce a debate for the “other”, in order to save the many lives which are endangered by a lack of access to safe drinking water. Lombard (2013) makes a compelling case for working together now for the Global Social Work Agenda for Social Development by maintaining that although poverty is not a new phenomenon, the resources to end it are now available. This position is shared by Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015), who assert that social workers should be in strategic positions to challenge the hegemonic forces which militate against achieving this objective.

The general lack of adequate toilets was another significant finding of this study. Similar conditions have been found to have prevailed for more than eight years in the RDP houses in Mookgophong in Limpopo. As a consequence, the residents have been obliged to erect pit toilets, which are unhygienic. The residents have also expressed their inability to understand why the municipality has been unable to provide them with proper flush toilets (Mashaba 2013). The residents of some of the projects in the Chris Hani District and Fort Beaufort have been unable to use the toilets which have been provided to them owing to a lack of access to water, and have therefore resorted to other less hygienic methods to dispose of their waste (Baumann, Bolnick, and Mitlin 2002; Hunter and Posel 2012; Zuzile 2013).

These findings raise serious questions concerning the commitment of the government to meeting the earlier Millennium Development Goals and the present Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal Number 6, which aims to ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all people. According to the United Nations (2017), although there is sufficient fresh water on the planet to provide clean, accessible water to all people, owing to bad economics or poor infrastructure, a great many people are dying

from diseases which are associated with inadequate water supplies and poor sanitation and hygiene.

Another finding of this study, namely the lack of sewerage systems appears to be equally present in housing projects in other parts of the country, particularly RDP housing projects (Dlamini 2004). The residents of the Azani/Izinyoka Informal Settlement in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality have complained that the health concerns which have plagued their poorly built RDP houses have been compounded by the dysfunctional sewage system, which has rendered toilets useless, and that political squabbles have aggravated the crisis, as none of the relevant officials has accepted responsibility for rectifying the matter (Chirume 2018). According to the relevant literature, a lack of adequate sewerage systems has also bedevilled the housing projects in Harmony Park in Mpumalanga, as the few houses which had been built were found to lack sewerage systems (Ganiyu 2016). These circumstances are well known to cause the spread of waterborne and airborne diseases, which is an exceedingly poor reflection on a country which claims to have committed itself to alleviating the plight of the poor (Deacon 2007). Patel (2016) maintains that one of the principal causes of the general disappointment in both the RDP and the UISP houses is the lack of participation of the people who are intended to benefit from the programmes.

A bottom-up approach is not being employed and there is no commitment towards adhering to the principles of the social developmental approach, with its emphasis on human rights and democratic participation. Patel (2016, 2746) maintains that the limited or non-involvement of communities in the planning, design or even evaluation of the programmes, renders the projects open to manipulation by other interests, be they political or personal. According to the United Nations (2017), the costs of not correcting problems of this sort are huge, for both the people concerned and for the economies of countries. Poor hygiene and unsafe water are believed to be responsible for nearly 90 per cent of disease-related deaths, and children are particularly adversely affected. The economic consequences of not investing in water and sanitation absorb 4.3 per cent of the sub-Saharan African GDP. Without better infrastructure and management, millions throughout the world, including in South Africa, will continue to die every year and there will be increased losses in terms of biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems, which will further undermine prosperity and efforts towards creating a sustainable future.

The finding that many of the houses did not have access to electricity has also been found to be the case in other housing projects throughout South Africa. In Leaches Bay, in the West Bank in East London, residents have waited for more than a decade since their houses had been built in 2004, but still they have no electricity or running water. In some cases the residents have vacated the houses, as the lack of social amenities makes living in them very difficult (Vuso 2016). The lack of electricity has been cited as one of the chief causes of the crime which plagues the housing projects. Throughout the country it has made the houses in the housing projects unsafe for the beneficiaries

of the projects (Mpehle 2012). More research needs to be conducted to investigate the actual implementation of the provision of electricity, how long it should take to be accomplished and why it takes so long at present.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations were encountered during the conducting of the study, particularly during the carrying out of the fieldwork. Some of the participants in the interviews initially felt uncomfortable, fearing that expressing their opinions could implicate them, but after the aims and objectives of the study had been carefully and clearly explained and they had been properly informed of the precise nature of the study, they agreed to participate. Obtaining the research sample proved to be difficult, as it was difficult to identify the research population in the absence of published records. The researcher was obliged to rely on the unpublished records of various government departments to extract samples for each group of participants. Although most of the participants were Xhosa-speaking and had little command of English, the interviews were conducted in English, with the assistance of two research assistants who were conversant with the language, culture and traditions of isiXhosa, and who acted as interpreters and assisted by translating the responses of the participants into English, which made it possible to collect and analyse the data.

Conclusion

While the provision of houses may be perceived as a commendable gesture, the findings of this study show conclusively that efforts to provide adequate housing to the needy and vulnerable have been fatally compromised by a lack of access to basic social amenities. There is clear and indisputable evidence of a lack of capacity, political will and commitment on the part of the Department of Human Settlements, a lack of meaningful collaboration with other relevant ministries, such as the Department of Water and Sanitation, and also of a widespread culture of corrupt practices. In terms of both the social developmental approach and the principles of the bottom-up approach, a lack of political will and a lack of collaboration inevitably result in social programmes and policies failing to achieve their objectives. The consequences of a lack of basic essential amenities have been identified as, but are not limited to, waterborne diseases and premature deaths, crime and sexual abuse, a strain on the GDP and on the economy as a whole, and violence, as a result of intense dissatisfaction. The bottom-up approach requires the beneficiaries of social programmes to be empowered to participate, initiate and decide upon how programmes are to be implemented, in order to ensure that these programmes are implemented in a manner which meets their specific needs.

All of these categories of consequences attest to a failure to recognise the obligation of the state to play a social developmental role in order to fulfil the commitment which it

made to the people who had been marginalised under apartheid, and to how the bottom-up approach has been neglected in favour of extending domination and perpetuating and exacerbating their marginalisation.

Recommendations

In the light of these findings, the author of this paper recommends the creation of a parliamentary portfolio committee to audit and provide recommendations with timelines for improving the social amenities which are provided to the housing projects. Further qualitative research should be carried out, particularly in the form of conducting in-depth interviews with the beneficiaries of housing projects, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of their perceptions of their needs and aspirations. As most studies in the field of social work have tended to investigate research topics such as social grants and social security, social work faculties and departments need also to create an enabling environment for research studies of human settlements and the role which they play to promote self-worth, human dignity, the strength of communities and the sustainability of environments. The findings of studies of this type could play a decolonising role in relation to the perceived silence of social work with respect to human settlements, and further promote the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development.

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