

The impact of national building regulations construction essay



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Housing is a basic human need, and gaining access to housing is a dream that people of all socio-economic classes in both developed and developing countries may cherish. The principal reason behind this universal dream is that housing not only provides shelter for families, but also (specifically in the case of homeownership) serves as a symbol of achievement and social acceptance, as well as a vehicle for capital accumulation.

More important, in a country such as Ghana, where the extended family is still the anchor of society, homeownership is particularly significant because it is a vehicle that enables people, especially the well to do, to fulfill one of their most important societal obligations to their extended family, providing them with free accommodation and hospitality.

The United Nations (UN) recommended a definition of a house as a structurally separate and independent place of abode such that a person or a group of persons can isolate themselves from the hazards of climate such as storms and the sun. Housing in the context of a verb is defined as a means:

To provide living quarters for

To shelter, keep, or store in

To contain.

Despite the importance of housing to the individual families and its impact on the national economy, Ghana was still grappling with the major issue of regulating housing construction to increase the safety of occupants.

To enhance quality in the sector, the production of housing should be determined by the National Building Regulation that govern and constrain the design, construction, alteration, and repair of buildings. Such regulations are based on requirements for the safety, health, and quality of life of building users and neighbours, and vary from city to city. (Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, 1994-2010).

In line with the Ghana building regulations which was enacted into law in 1996 under legislative instrument 1630 by the 1st parliament of the first republic, building permits which are building development consents are granted to any worthy or prospective developer or person by a statutory authority or organizations to construct buildings in an approved location. The permits provide such guarantees that a proposed building or related structure is to a large extent suitable for construction. There is also the guarantee that the material specifications for the building are satisfactory, the general architectural, engineering and planning standards have been met and in every way conducive for human use whether for commercial, industrial production, recreation or worship activity.

The study examined the characteristics of housing developers. It further examined how housing development is affected by the application of the provisions of the National Building Regulations in the construction process. The study employed quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection from both primary and secondary sources. Questionnaire survey at household and institutional levels, key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions were some of the techniques used to collect the data.

The physical characteristics and conditions of the houses depend on the income levels of the developers/home owners. The very poor low income families start the process of home acquisition with less durable building materials - mud and swish constructions with thatch roofs. This gradually gives way for more durable building materials as the income levels rises.

In the light of these findings, it is recommended that the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly uses its decentralized departments in conjunction with the Regional Lands Commission and the Department of Stool Lands to embark on vigorous educational campaigns to educate developers on the need for land registration and the acquisition of building permits as well as the process that are involved. Besides, The Metropolitan Works Department (MWD) of the Assembly should educate prospective house owners on local building technologies that have been developed in the country.

CHAPTER ONE

1. 1. Background

Tamale is the capital town of the Northern Region, one of ten in the country. It is located within the Guinea Savannah belt. It is the fourth largest city in Ghana with a population of 293, 881 comprising 146, 979 males and 146, 902 females and with a growth rate of 3. 5%. The size of Tamale is approximately 922km sq.

Rapid population growth in developing countries and cities around the world in the last three to four decades has had serious challenges and consequences particularly on urban housing. UN-Habitat in 2003, described this problem as particularly worrying as it constitutes a crucial element that

affect the long-term outlook of humanity (UNCHS, 2003). Housing is increasingly becoming a scarce commodity in many cities such as Tamale due to rapid population growth. The provision of housing and other services for residents becomes an issue for residents and the managers of Metropolis given that the current housing situation has not been satisfactory. The pressures that come alongside the rapid population growth in the provision of housing units makes it easier for residents and managers of the city to pay little attention to the National Building Regulations and site structures in any given space and in any manner. The standards and quality control measures prescribed in the National Building Regulations have been compromised in the construction of some of the structures posing danger to occupants and sometimes warranting demolishing. In recent times, Ghana experienced the greatest disaster of the collapse of five-storey building at about 9. 45 a. m on Wednesday, November 7, 2012, apparently due to disregard of the National Building Regulations.

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1. 2. The research problem

The rapid development of housing production for domestic, commercial and industrial use in the Metropolis which is viewed by many as good signs of positive development rather give cause for alarm as many of these buildings
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are constructed without due regards to the provisions of the National Building Regulations. The disregard of the National Building Regulations exposes a substantial number of the buildings already in occupation to the dangers of collapsing as serious cracks can be found in walls. The recent Melcom building collapse in Accra testifies to the fact that there are existing buildings constructed without complying with the provisions of the National Building Regulations.

Additionally, inadequate knowledge of sound building practices on the part of self-help developers often leads to poor quality of buildings. This results from the inability of developers to seek technical advice on material selection and usage due to constrained budget.

The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly has recognized the significance of this type of housing strategies but it is faced with monstrous task of effectively controlling the development. It is against this background that, the study seeks to investigate the impact of the National Building Regulations as a guide to good construction practices on housing construction projects delivery with the view to creating awareness of its provisions for compliance to increase public safety.

1. 3. Research objective

The study seeks to analyze the characteristics of houses constructed using the guidelines of the National Building Regulations in the Tamale Metropolitan Area with the view to encouraging builders and owners of buildings to comply with the regulations to maximize safety.

Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the following;

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1. Examine the characteristics of the houses in relation to the provisions of the National Building Regulations;
2. Analyze the process of housing construction in relation to the use of building professionals;
3. Examine the effects of non-compliance to the National Building Regulations the production of housing units;
4. Recommend appropriate strategies for controlling development process to ensure public safety.

1. 4. Research questions

How do the characteristics of houses relate to the specifications provided by the National Building Regulations in the Tamale Metropolitan Area?

Why would house owners and builders not obtain the services of building professionals?

What are the effects of engaging the services of non-professionals alone in the construction process of houses in the Tamale Metropolitan Area?

Why would owners of buildings not acquire building permit before starting construction?

1. 5. Significance of the Study

The housing arrangement and their features in the Metropolis make one to wonder if they were constructed in accordance with the requisite planning schemes.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3. 1. Introduction

This chapter of the research provides details on how the study was carried out. It includes the sampling method, the sources of data and the various tools and techniques employed in gathering the data. The chapter also provides the methods that were adopted in the data processing, analysis and reporting.

3. 2. Selection of respondents

The house owner is the main target unit from which data was obtained in the study area. To arrive at this unit, a three-stage sampling was done. First, the Sub-Metropolitan Councils under the District Assembly structure were identified and used as the clusters. There are three Sub-Metropolitan Councils in the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly, namely; Tamale Central, Tamale North, and Tamale South. The second stage of sampling involved selecting communities from each of these Sub-Metropolitan Councils. A total of three communities were thus selected, one from each Sub-Metro. In selecting the communities, purposive sampling was employed. The third stage of sampling was choosing the target units i. e. the house owners. Here, house owners were randomly selected in a systematic pattern in which the researcher identified the main streets in each suburb in north -south or east-west direction. Starting from one end of the street and at the first house on the right, houses were selected on an -every other house' basis. Half the respondents were selected from one side of the street and the other from

the other side. This method was chosen because of the long list of the desired sample, making sure that the element of periodicity did not influence the data obtained. Respondents were the house owners who were either resident or non-resident.

The sample size for each community is in proportion to the number of houses in the community as indicated in table 3. 1. Approximately 21% of the number of houses owners in 56

each community was taken. The total number of house owners interviewed in the Metropolitan Area is 400 representing about 2% of the total number of houses in the Metropolis. The figures 3. 1 and 3. 2 below show the nature of the sampling frame and the study areas respectively.

400 respondents (House owners)

200 House Owners

81 House Owners

119 House Owners

Kakpayili

Jisonaayili

Shishegu

Tamale South

Tamale North

Tamale central

Sub-Metro Councils

Tamale Metropolitan Aarea

Northern Region

Figure 3. 1: Sampling Structure for Data Collection

Source: Author’s Construct (2009) 57

Map of Ghana

Northern Region

KEY

STUDY AREAS

Source: [www. maplandia. com/ghana/northern/tamale/](http://www.maplandia.com/ghana/northern/tamale/)

Figure 3. 2: Map showing Tamale and the Study Areas 58

Table 3. 1: The Sampled communities with their respective samples Selected Suburbs

Total number of houses

Sample Size

Jisonayili

390

81

Shishegu

574

119

Kakpayili

969

200

Total

1, 933

400