

## **The Socio-Economic Impact of Housing Shortage in Tshovani High Density Suburb, Chiredzi, Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

This study seeks to assess the socio-economic impact of housing shortage in Tshovani High Density Suburb. Housing shortage had not been taken aboard in development circles of the chiredzi city council and this had resulted in serious ramifications on socio-economic lives of the Tshovani urbanites. Quantitatively, questionnaires where used while qualitatively interviews and observations were employed in data gathering and presentation. The study revealed that overpopulation and poverty were the main cause of homelessness, and this lead to creation of undesirable living conditions which culminated to deviant behavior by children, widows, husbands with wives in the rural areas. It also resulted in poor education for children, malnutrition, increased crimes, and high diseased environment especially HIV and AIDS. Therefore there is need to establish site and service schemes, low income cooperatives, subsidized health schemes to residents and awareness campaigns especially on crimes and immoral behavior , HIV and AIDS for a sustainable urban livelihood to exist in Chiredzi.

**KEY WORDS: Socio-Economic, Urban Housing Shortage, Impact**

### **Background of the Study**

Tshovani High Density suburb was erected by Hippo Valley Estates as a settlement for its workers in the sugarcane estates. The suburb was commonly known as a “*komboni*” meaning a settlement that is not properly planned and usually constructed for farm workers. According to Hippo Valley’s plan the settlement was supposed to accommodate its workers only. The company constructed a small capacity of waterworks to cater for a small number of people. Chiredzi town was constructed as Hippo Valley’s shopping centre. However, after

Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, there was a sudden increase in population due to natural increase, the influx of A2 farmers due to the post independence land reform as well as the growth of Chiredzi into Central Business District (CBD) which provided more facilities like banking, retailing among others. The available shelter could not meet the growing population which left Chiredzi Town Council with no option but to build core houses commonly known as “*zvizvobgo*”.

Town Council responded by allocating residential stands up until year 1994. For the period between 1994 and 2007, there was no allocation of stands while population continued to grow. Shelter became a critical problem in Tshovani High Density Suburb. To support this idea, only 1300 high density stands have been allocated ever since 2007 and yet Chiredzi Town Council has 4500 on waiting list, (Chiredzi Council Statistics Office, August 2010). Chiredzi Town Council encouraged home ownership schemes as well as building of core houses where people could find somewhere to start from and then extend their houses from there. However, housing stands could not be further expanded due to limited land since Hippo Valley has occupied the Southern part of the town. Water supplies are also limited to support the whole of Chiredzi. Efforts by the Zimbabwe government to build low income shelter and to convert most municipal housing to low income shelter and to convert most municipal housing to home ownership (Grant, 1993), has not been witnessed in Tshovani like what was happening in other towns. The escalating costs of construction and huge backlogs have further worked against the efforts. It is for this reason that the research seeks to establish the extent of housing crisis and how it impact to the socio-economic lives of the Tshovani people.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is a critical shortage of accommodation in Tshovani High Density Suburb. There is evidence that majority of people are living in overcrowded environments. This has bred undesirable living conditions. Tshovani Suburb now has a growing number of shanties leading to poor sanitary facilities. The impact of the housing shortage in Tshovani has not been taken aboard in development circles of the Chiredzi city council. Therefore need is there to assess its socio-economic impact to the residents.

### **Aim**

To assess the socio-economic impact of housing shortage in Tshovani High Density Suburb

### **Objectives**

1. To identify the causes of housing shortage in Tshovani.
2. To assess the social impact of housing shortage in Tshovani.
3. To evaluate the economic impact of housing shortage in Tshovani.
4. To recommend alternative strategies in resolving socio-economic problems caused by housing shortages.

### **Justification of Study**

The study will be of significance to Chiredzi's Town Council particularly the Department of Housing and Administration in the sense that it will understand the criticality of housing shortage in Tshovani. In so doing the department will come up with best schemes to promote housing provision. Health Officers from Ministry of Health and Child Welfare in Chiredzi will be alerted on how housing shortage impact on the health status of people and their environment. Due to the study prospective business people of Chiredzi will find the need to negotiate with the Council to put in place rental controls so that the majority of people will remain with surplus money to support their business. Non-governmental organizations in Chiredzi like the Family Aids Caring Trust (FACT) will find this study of importance by providing help to families who have been affected by shelter shortage in the area.

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Origin and Evolution of Housing in Urban Areas**

Historically, the European settlers established urban settlements in Zimbabwe in the 1890s to meet their labour requirements. During that period the living standards of the indigenous populations were firmly centered on their rural homes. The Europeans had to force the African people to work for them by imposing taxes. These taxes meant that the men had to move to the towns in order to earn the necessary money (Musekwa, in Zinyama, et al 1993). Gradually, the African workers stayed longer in towns as more jobs became available and their needs increased under the influence of cash economy. Some workers started bringing their families to towns. By 1925, the Morris Carter Commission which was established to examine the land issue recommended that only those natives working for Europeans should live in urban locations and those native townships in native areas or reserves should be

established to provide the necessary environment for “detrribalized” Africans states (Patel and Adams, 1981).

According to Patel and Adams, 1981; Zinyama, et al, (1993) as a result of increased industrial development during and after World War II, the influx of Africans into towns assumed greater proportions and this led to the passing of the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act No. 6 of 1946. The Act required local authorities to set aside native urban locations and to provide in such areas native adequate housing for all urban African except those on approved private premises. The Act also required employers to provide free accommodation on his own premises or to hire accommodation in the townships for native employees. Accommodation in town therefore was tied to employment and had to be vacated when the occupier left their employment. The European’s reasons for creating native land were economic, health and security.

It was not until the 1950s that the government, seeing that the majority of local authorities could not cope with what was becoming a critical problem, made serious attempts to provide accommodation for the many thousands of urban Africans. Thus in 1961 Land Apportionment Act was amended to provide for the introduction of home-ownership schemes in municipal townships. However, limited finance militated against any mass transfer of urban houses to Africans and few could afford the full cost of a house and land. Europeans demanded African labour in the urban areas but both local and central government were not prepared to meet the funding requirements. They also failed to set aside suitable areas within reasonable distances from commercial and industrial areas (Zinyama, et al 1993).

The main obstacle to the provision of adequate housing has not always been lack of finance but rather a lack of will on the part of the authorities. Gargett (1977) points out that the government’s insistence that the solution to the African housing problem be found from within the financial resources of the African population excluded the application of the country’s financial resources to the solution of the problem.

### **Causes of Housing Shortage**

Lowder (1995) asserts that in Ecuador differences in the quality of new housing being built can be attributed to the wider political and social structure which determines how resources are distributed between places and individuals. So many factors have contributed to housing shortage in developed countries. In the United Kingdom, housing shortage came as a result

of urbanization. “Urbanization pressures came from the undisciplined London and its dormitory satellites facilitated by the improvement of rail and road transport networks together with increased realization of home ownership aspirations, initiated by the lower paid clerical and other workers,” (Carr 1994).

A United Nations Report (2008), states that inadequate housing be considered a multi-factorial epidemic, rapid urbanization, economic restructuring, natural disasters and political events such as regime changes and wars, all have contributed to the crisis. In China where the economy is modernizing rapidly, increasing urbanization in next few decades will create a need for more than 200 million new housing units. Lee (2009) asserts that urban housing shortages in China can be seen primarily as a result of (a) the state’s deliberately biased investment policy against the urban housing sector, (b) its decision to charge very low rents to urban dwellers and (c) steadily improving housing construction standards.

Zindoga (1999) says that low income earners in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region remain marginalized and in desperate need of adequate housing due to the rising costs and difficulty in security mortgage finance. The problem of housing faced mainly by the poor has been fundamentally complicated by lack of access to land for instance; the housing demand in Zimbabwe now stands at over one million units from 670,000 units in 1995, with the greatest shortages being experienced in major cities (Zindoga, 1999).

Knight (2001) asserts that South Africa is also facing a similar crisis. He says that its backlog in housing supply is exacerbated by high unemployment (in the neighborhoods of 50% in most townships) leaving millions of people unable to afford basic necessities. The Congress of South Africa Trade Union (COSATU) noted: “while Africans make up 76% of the population, their share of income amounts to only 29% of the total. Whites, who make up less than 13% of the population, take away 58.5% of total income.” The HIV/AIDS pandemic with 4, 2 million South African infected is adding to the development problem. It is estimated that GDP will be 17% lower for 2010 than it would be without AIDS.

Knight (2001) further accuses apartheid legacy as another cause of housing shortage. He said that Blacks could not live in “White” areas but had to live in townships or in impoverished rural areas known as Bantustans. Very little housing was built for Africans by the apartheid regime. As a result when the African National Congress(ANC) led government came to

power, there was only one formal brick house for every forty three (43) Africans compared to one for every 3, 5 Whites (Knight, 2001).

According to Meldrum (2006), Zimbabwe's forced demolitions have left an estimated 700,000 homeless. The Zimbabwean government has built only 3,300 houses for the estimated 700,000 people made homeless by its forced housing demolitions. Government claimed destruction was an urban clean up programme and the directive said the government would be providing new homes for those forced to sleep rough, but the idea was dismissed by some who said homes constructed were 'a wholly inadequate response.' Many were of such poor quality that they were uninhabitable.

### **Socio-Economic Impact of Housing Shortage**

"Housing affected health in many different ways" (United Nations Healthcare Report, 2008). It further states that deficient housing can compromise most basic needs of water, sanitation and safe food preparation and storage, allowing the rapid spread of communicable and food borne diseases. Other problems such as poor temperature and humidity regulation can lead to respiratory disease. Overcrowding brings both physical and psychological dangers. Living in non residential settings such as factory grounds often expose people to toxic chemicals that can cause both acute and chronic health effects.

The report goes on to say that such conditions of overcrowding have fostered physical health problems such as typhoid fever and bronchitis, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. In developing countries, over crowding and poor ventilation can encourage the growth of disease vectors such as mosquitoes, parasites bacteria and viruses. Noise and sheer physical safety including vulnerability to violent crime, contribute to anxiety and depression in both developed and developing countries. Health problem affects social life and at the same time is a drawback to economic growth.

Rowntree (2002) said that in the United Kingdom areas of high demand for housing will see increased homelessness and a crisis in public services as more nurses, teachers and other staff are priced out of the housing market. He further states that shortages will lead to overcrowding and homelessness but they will also have knock on effects for the whole society, driving up house prices in areas of high demand, inhibiting economic growth and making it harder for good quality public services to be delivered. According to Donahue

(2004) who conducted a research on the topic, he concluded that the state failure to meet housing demands has created a three class system of 'haves' 'have knots' and hidden homeless', a growing third class of people who live with relatives as friends because they can't find affordable housing. Housing is not affordable so much that people will move further away and communicate longer to their jobs or leave the state entirely in search of housing they can afford.

Kamete (2002) states that the housing problem in Zimbabwe has become synonymous with housing shortage. This mismatch between housing supply and demand has for long been accepted as the housing problem of overcrowding, obsolescence and other qualitative aspects.

In the city of Harare, according to Annual Report (1990), the major causes of death can be summarized as HIV related TB, pneumonia and diarrhea diseases. All these diseases are preventable and can be attributed to poverty, degradation, unemployment and overcrowded living conditions. In 1993, TB accounted for 70, 62% of the 2,982 communicable diseases cases investigated while there was a national increase in the incidence of diarrhea, says Annual Report (1990 ),the age group most affected by these diseases is the 15-50 year olds, who constituted 40% of the total number of deaths. As this is the most economically productive group, these figures gave socio-economic implications for the future.

In 1990, there were a total of 282, 775 cases treated for STD at the 27 primary care clinics in Harare which represent an increase of 14,7% from previous year. The report asserts that of the total number of patients 162, 361 were males while 120,414 were females. The Mbare group of clinics that is Matapi, Mbare Poly and Mbare Primary Care Clinics alone saw 45% of the total number of patients which points to link between overcrowding, poverty and sexual transmitted diseases. Of the Mbare patients, there were three times as many men as women, related to a degree to the character of the area which still has large numbers of migrant laborer workers living in the hostels. In 1993, 126,284 new STD patients were seen. The spread and incidence of STD has continued to grow in the last five years as both the living conditions of the poor became more desperate and more promiscuous patterns of living are adopted by both young and old alike.

Meldrum (2006) criticizes Zimbabwean government for demolitions of houses which left thousands of people homeless as "an abuse of human rights." He says loss of shelter causes stress by continual movement. People loose possessions and many loose their health and

even death. Chegutu had a dramatic increase in population being attributed by the establishment of mining operations which saw people flocking to the town to seek employment. This resulted in a host of problems related to urbanization including overcrowding, seen in the prevalence of illegal outbuildings, and frequent burst of pipes, sewer outflows (Guni, 1999). Groove (1995) adds to Guni's idea by asserting that fresh water resources are threatened by pollution as a result of overcrowding in these outbuildings.

According to Mafiko (1991) education sector is affected by lack of proper shelter. He says that Children at school, particularly those at senior school find it very difficult to do homework under crowded conditions particularly at night. It is even worse where other houses are not electrified, is dependent on candles the light is inadequate for reading purposes. Even where there is electric light its use is curtailed by the needs of the older members of the family. Education is also drawn back by housing problem as according to Mafiko (1991) who asserts that children are encouraged to participate in generating some income where parents' salary do not meet high rentals. This means that children's attendance at school is affected.

Lack of adequate accommodation and overcrowding has led to an increase in crime, particularly in crimes such as theft, assault and rape, child abuse, baby dumping and infanticide. Zinyama, Tevera and Cumming (1993), claimed that "it is too easy to break the lock on the wooden doors or to clamber through ill-fitting windows. With no place to sleep, many young men are on the streets, assault and rape are not uncommon in the overcrowded areas of Harare's High Density Suburbs. Women in hostels, for example, go in constant fear of attack, while families in houses with outside toilets similarly expressed fear of muggings and rape. In order to afford high rentals of their accommodation, women are involved in alternative survival strategies, like vending and small scale cooking of *sadza* outside beer halls. The distance of the wholesale markets from some of the high density suburbs results in venders leaving their homes as early as 2:00am as vendors selling fruits, vegetables and flowers must get to *Mbare Musika* or other flower wholesalers by 3:00am. While those who cook *sadza* outside the beer halls have to stay as late as 12:00 midnight. The social relationship with their families is totally broken.

### **Strategies in Resolving Socio-Economic Impacts**

Lee (2009) places strategies made in China in an effort to resolve socio-economic impacts caused by housing shortage. He says that in 1977-78 after the fall of the “gang of four” the Chinese Government set out to solve the urban housing problem. Since 1979 investment in urban housing has increased dramatically, apparently in an attempt to compensate for its neglect during the Cultural Revolution. At the insistence of some Chinese planners, the government has also begun to experiment with several new policies. For example, the sale of houses to individual and the construction of private houses – the aim of which is to increase the urban housing stock.

Housing policies were also made available in South Africa. Knight (2001) states that in 1994 the African National Congress adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), an integrated socio-economic policy framework which is now the policy of the government. The RDP set a goal of 300,000 houses to be built a year with a minimum of one million low-cost housing to be constructed within five years. South Africa’s current housing published by Government in December 1994. Section 26 of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996, states that everyone has the right to have “access to adequate housing”. It is the government’s duty to take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realization of its right. Provincial legislatures and local government share responsibility with the national government for delivery of adequate housing. The constitution also states “no one may be evicted from their homes or may have their home demolished without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances. No legislation may permit arbitrary evictions.” In October 2000, the constitutional court made an important ruling on the government’s constitutional obligation to provide adequate housing for all and shelter for the children. The author goes further to say that the establishment of legal rights to housing began in 1997, when the Housing Act was passed. A comprehensive National Housing Code was issued in 2000. Other Acts that impact on having needs are Rental Housing Act (1999), to ensure that more houses are provided for rental purposes and to regulate the behavior of unscrupulous landlords so they do not charge exorbitant rents. The Act provides for dispute mediation between landlords and tenants from their homes with mediation.

Housing Consumer Protection Measures Act (1998) in South Africa aims to protect home owners from inferior workmanship. Builders are responsible for design and material defects, for those months, roof leaks for a year, and structural defects for five years. The Home Loan and Mortgage Disclosure Act (2000) encourages bank to grant home loans and requires bank disclose annual financial statements so that their lending practices can be monitored. Broad principles of housing include people centered delivery and partnership, skills transfer and economic empowerment, fairness and equity, choice, quality and affordability, innovation, transparency, accountability and monitoring and sustainability and fiscal affordability.

Zimbabwe is also facing the same situation of housing shortage. The importance of providing adequate housing for all is appreciated by government through the Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing (Chenga in Zinyama et al (1993); Mafiko (1991). The main and long term objectives are stated as being to ensure that there is adequate housing and related services at affordable prices for all, irrespective of geographical location or socio-economic grouping.

In an effort to achieve the objectives the government adopted the following strategies:

- a) Provision of serviced stands in an aided self help basis.
- b) Provision of an appropriate level and form of financial and technical assistances to have owners both in urban and rural areas.
- c) The setting up of brigades to undertake the construction of houses.
- d) Mobilization of people in solving the housing problem.
- e) Setting up and strictly housing standards in both urban and rural areas (GoZ, 1994; Mafiko 1991).

In early 1989 the United Nations Commission for Human Settlement (Habitat) endorsed a new Global Shelter Strategy which calls for adequate housing for all by year 2000, and whose theme is the “enabling approach”. The main feature of the enabling approach is the reduction of government role as a direct provider of housing so as to become an “enabler” and “facilitator” of local authority, private and informal housing process.

Post independence housing schemes included aided self help schemes. Over 7,000 serviced plots of 200 square metres each with ablution facilities only were allocated in Glen View.

Funded by USAID, the beneficiaries were meant to complete the whole house in ten years and receive title deeds (Musekiwa in Zinyama et al, 1993). Over 7,000 plots have been provided since 1984. Beneficiaries were supposed to be low income households with an income of \$175 per month. A maximum of 27, 5% of income was to be considered for loan payments over 30years. Beneficiaries were given the choice of using registered private builders, municipal – controlled building brigades or establishing their own building co-operatives. The site and service schemes have continued with the inauguration of the World Bank- sponsored schemes in Glen Norah, Budiro and Sunningdale in Harare. A recent innovation has been the use of building society funds to cover the costs of purchasing the stand and for the house construction (Mafiko 1991, Zinyama et al, 1993).

Recently a new initiative, “start Paying For Your House Scheme” was launched by President Mugabe to accelerate construction of flats for home ownership at affordable monthly installments and when the advance payment reach half the construction cost, the flat will be built and the balance of the building price will be paid off at 12% interest (Zinyama L, Tevera D and Cummings S, 1993).

Patel and Adams (1981) suggest that the funds available to pension funds and insurance companies should be diverted from building societies and commercial office development to low-income housing. Local authorities should also be allowed a free hand in negotiating and borrowing from both internal and external resources. Non-governmental organizations which have played a commendable role in the provision of social infrastructure, such as schools, clinics, boreholes and crèches have not been forthcoming in the provision of shelter. It is hoped that these organizations will in future play a larger role in the provision of housing. Chenga (1993) suggest a new school of thought which argues that in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, substandard housing should be regarded as part of the existing housing stock. Despite these attempts by the government to resolve housing problem, Tshovani is still in housing problems which has socio-economic impacts on the residence of Chiredzi which has a great impact to human and environment.

## **Methodology**

Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed in the study by the researcher. A descriptive survey design expresses both the structure and the plan of investigation used to

obtain empirical evidence on relations of the problems. The population in this research consist of ten thousand (10 000) (Chiredzi Council Statistics Office, 2010). The study population of this research is those who are affected by housing shortage directly or indirectly. These include residents of council hostels, tied accommodation and private owners of houses in Tshovani High Density Suburb. It also includes Health Department, Chiredzi Town Council and the Zimbabwe Republic Police. Random sampling has been used in the study to draw a sample which is a representative part of a population. A sample size of one thousand (1000) was used to represent the total population. The houses are closely spaced thus the researcher randomly choose from every representative of private house owners, tied accommodation (company) and single-quarter residence (Council hostels / majaradha).According to Chiredzi Town Council (2010) Tshovani High Density suburb is composed of thirty (30) council hostels, two hundred and ninety seven (297) tied/ company houses and one thousand six hundred (1600) privately owned houses. In this regard, 10% is enough to represent the whole population. Hence 1000 questionnaires were distributed to respondents. Stratified random sampling was used to select fifteen (15) council houses from which ten (10) respondents from each hostel was given a questionnaire. From company houses one hundred households were selected from 297 houses of which three respondents from each household were given questionnaires. Out of 1600 privately owned houses 110 houses were selected randomly and five respondents from each household were given a questionnaire. Random sampling was more over preferred for its flexibility and simplicity, hence no logic was needed. The questionnaire has been used as a research tool in this study to address the causes of housing shortage in the suburb, the social and economic impact of housing shortage in the area of study. The questions have been structured in a way that they enrich the study with information towards best strategies to solve the crisis. Interviews were conducted with the Officer In Charge of Chiredzi (ZRP), Environmental Health Officer and Chiredzi Council Administrator. The interview questions have been structured in a way to complement the questionnaire questions especially where it had its limitations. The interview questions were meant to address causes of housing shortage in Tshovani, its social and economic impacts as well as best strategies to be implemented. The interviews were not conducted to other houses due to fear of victimisation in unfamiliar neighborhoods and in such instances observations were employed. Observations were conducted in the residential places assessing the sanitary condition, general living standards especially on population density and the behaviour of

people and social amenities. These areas include Chiredzi Bus Terminus, Chigarapasi beer hall, Majaradha residence, Masiza Nengere among others. Investigations on the possible causes and impacts of housing shortage in the suburb were also done. In the data presentation the researcher used Microsoft excels. The programme was preferred as it allowed graphical presentation of data. The researcher managed to come up with pie charts and graphs for easy understanding of a reader. The researcher also used descriptive statistics to present and analyse data.

### **Research Findings**

#### **Socio Demographic Profile of Respondents**

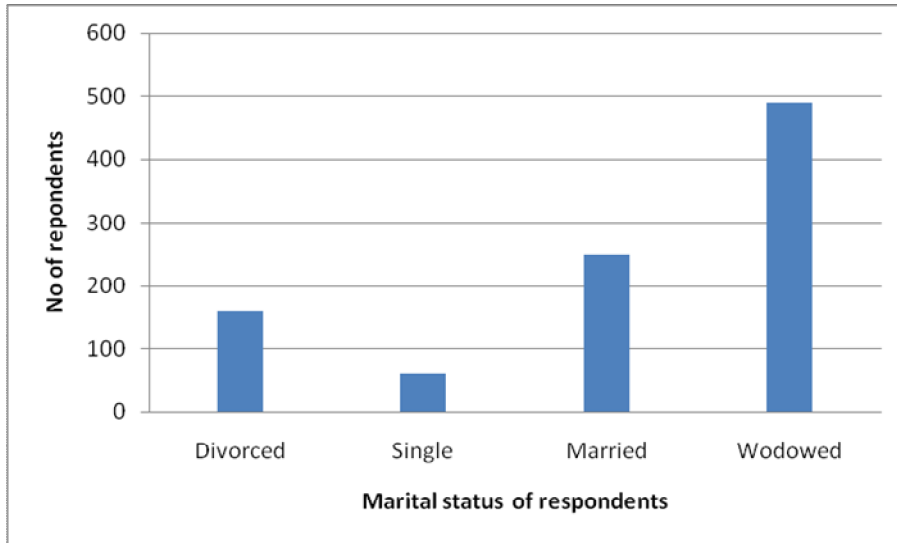
**Table: Age and sex Distribution of respondents in Tshovani**

<b>Age Group in years</b>	<b>Females (%)</b>	<b>Males (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
18 – 30	19	22	41
31 – 43	22,2	24	46,2
44 and more	4,8	8	12,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

The table 1 depicts that both sexes are involved but the majority are males constituting a total population of 54 percent while females only constituted a total percentage of 46 percent. The research has a large number of male respondents because some husbands still believe that their wives should remain in the rural areas where they practice farming to supplement their husband’s salaries in town. The most dominant age group lies in the 31-43 years constituting 46, 2 percent followed by 18-30 years, and 41 percent respectively. In support to this Carr (1997) postulated that the largest numbers of migrants came from adult age range between 21 to 35 years of age.

### Marital Status of Respondents

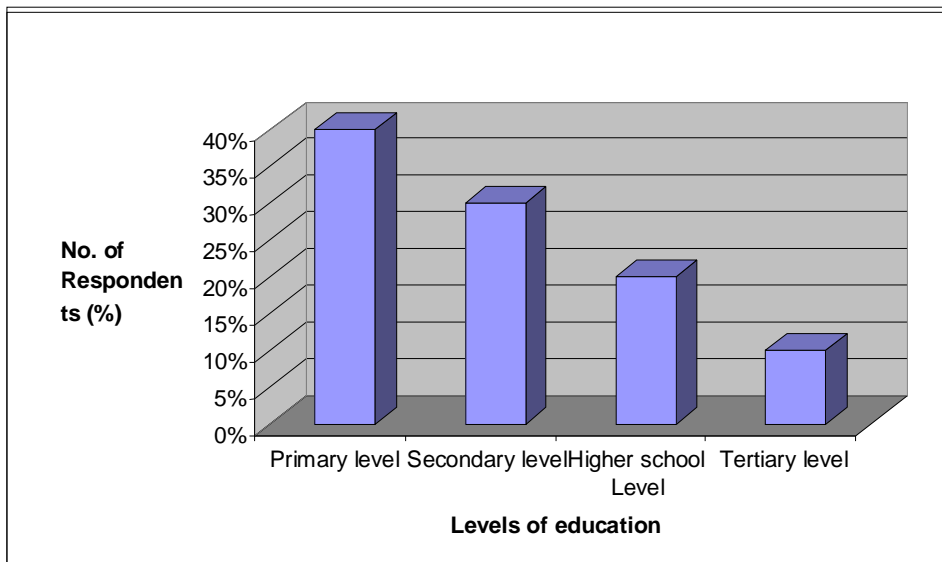


Source: Field Survey, 2011

### Figure 2: Marital Status of Respondents

From the figure 2 it is evident that the widowed are striking the highest number compared to the rest of the groups. This situation is attributed to the AIDS pandemic which comes as a result of homelessness. From the study carried out, it was seen that there is a strong correlation between overcrowding and divorce. Because of the living conditions, some of the respondents opted to stay single than getting married. It is evident from the figure 2 above that only a quarter of the total populations are married while three quarters are single parents.

### Educational Levels of Respondents



Source: Field Survey, 2011

**Figure 3: Educational Levels of Respondents**

From figure 3, the results show that a total of 40% have their education below primary school this situation makes it difficult for them to be employed in the formal sector. Most of them work in informal sectors or are self employed. The percentage of the educated people decreases as one goes up, showing that only a few residents of Tshovani suburb managed to pursue with their education. Generally the majority of the residents are illiterate which poses a great challenge in the acquisition of houses by residents.

### Causes of Housing Shortage in Tshovani

Causes Of Housing Shortage	% of Respondents
Overpopulation	40
Low Income	30
Unemployment	20
Retrenchment	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, 2011

From table 4 above, the majority of respondents 40% blamed overpopulation as the major cause of housing problem, followed by low income, unemployment constituting 20% and retrenchment was the list. On low income respondents said that even though they are formally employed most of their average salaries ranged between fifty dollars and two hundred dollars which hardly provide them with basic needs. Those who were in the informal sector also complained, that their profits allowed them to survive with barely little. Therefore, they could not afford to stay in proper housing. Respondents blamed Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) as the cause of the problem. Some said that they were once formally employed but were retrenched from work in 1992 as ESAP came into effect. No one would want to go back to rural areas but the economy continued to be tougher for them. Many opted to stay in a single room where they could afford rentals. One man revealed that he had been unable to find employment since 1970s and claimed to have had a thriving electrical repair business, until the advent of ESAP. Not only had he earned enough to rent two rooms, but was able to employ two assistants. But with current hard times, people have decided to do without gadgets that needed repairing, and he has had to retrench his workers and now work alone leaving them vulnerable housing crisis.

### **Social Impact of Housing Shortage**

#### **Living rhythm become the same**

The study brought to light that housing shortage in Tshovani suburb has quite a devastating effect in the social life of residents. The single room that tenants stay is their entire living space which means that they must sleep, eat, cook and relax all within this room. The implication of this includes that “living rhythms: must necessarily be the same for all occupants, generally patterned on husband’s needs. This means that when he has to rise early or goes to sleep early, so must every occupant of the room which is not sustainable.

#### **Break up of family unit**

Housing shortage has led to the break up of family unit. Families interviewed stressed that overcrowded living conditions have seriously affected family cohesion. For example, where families exceed the available sleep and living space, families become physically divided. To cope with the situation, some parents sent their young ones back to their grand parents in the rural areas, while others are forced to encourage some of the older children especially the boys to sleep away at night time. Many mothers interviewed did not know which member of

her family would be at home that night and most expressed not only anxiety but fear for their children as “an older child implies those as young as twelve”. Some go to sleep with friends who are in a more fortunate situation while others simply roam the streets. Domestic workers who stay with their employers also face the same situation in that the employer imposes a limit on the number that can live on his premise. Chiredzi’s Tshovani suburb has a high rate of male migrant laborers who rent rooms in hostels while their families remain in the rural areas. Some of these men return home every month end. This is not always the case as for some; contact with families is irregular, perhaps twice a year. Majority would want to have their families living with them in town, but could not afford to accommodate them. The separations of husbands and wives have caused husbands to have informal relationships with other women within urban areas.

#### **Lack of Privacy**

Leasing a house together in Tshovani High Density Suburb places an enormous strain on married couples, for a “single-roomed house: necessarily implies the total lack of privacy for any member of the family”. This lack of privacy is felt enormously by women and when interviewed they were visibly distressed by the effect of overcrowding on their marital relations. Even the presence of a curtain shielding a corner of the room was not sufficient to offer the couple privacy. The situation was more serious where families share a room separated from each other by a curtain. Many women acknowledged the fact that their husbands stayed out late at night to avoid the crowded conditions, generally sitting drinking in the beer halls and “shabins”. They also expressed fears that their husbands may be going elsewhere for sex, “where he has more privacy” one said, while another added “maybe he finds girlfriends who have no families.” Many mothers were also concerned about the effect of such activities on their young children, all of whom were sleeping close to them.

#### **Change of Moral Behavior**

Parents were more gravely concerned about the effect of overcrowding on their children. Choosing or being forced to sleep away at night has resulted in many boys being involved in house breaking and theft while a large number of girls find the so called “sugar daddies”. In council hostels, it appears to be common practice for girls to find “a bed” in rooms of men whose wives are away in the rural areas. In consequence many teenage girls became pregnant. One interviewee describe some families in the hostels as having up to three

teenage daughters with children of their own but fathers unknown, all living with their parents in the same room.

Although overcrowding is a factor responsible for a change in the moral code of a society, general lack of other family members particularly the aunt “*vatete*” who traditionally had responsibility not only for the moral and sexual education of brothers’ daughters, but also in charge of their sexual conduct has impacted negatively to the lives of Tshovane residents. The loss of this defined relationship has placed responsibility of a girl’s upbringing on the shoulders of the mothers. Some mothers find it difficult to discuss with their children particularly on this issue, depending on the degree of cultural emancipation. And girls are turning to their peer groups for advice and guidance .this automatically has worsened the vulnerability of Tshovane children.

### **Crimes**

Many of these young girls have been seduced by older men with promises to pay for their education. The result of such promiscuity has been an increasing number of back-street or self induced abortions. Most of these are carried out by young girls who out of fear of their parents’ wrath of being economically unable to support them are driven to such desperate action. Assault and rape have become increasingly common and young girls and women expressed constant fear of such attacks. Even where family owns the house such fears are realised as some housing schemes including outside toilets. Women run the risk of being attacked at night as they go to the toilet. One married woman who sells cooked mealies over the weekends complained that she was constantly harassed by men who think that as she is rendering a service to the public; she is also looking for love affairs.

### **Suffering from AIDS and Other Diseases**

Single parents, divorce or widowed often find it very difficult to earn enough money to house, feed and clothe their children. Many turned to prostitution as a means either to earn a living. The horrific consequence of the disruption of normal marital relations, coupled with growing promiscuity and exploitation of the young by the corrupted and debauched older men and women is HIV and AIDS pandemic. Overcrowded conditions of poverty ridden areas are historically linked to certain illness. The incidence of TB for example continues to rise steeply; the situation is exacerbated by the high rate of overcrowding and homelessness. Respiratory diseases also results from cooking with paraffin within the same room to

unhygienic surroundings; public toilets at bus terminus which are always filthy due to numbers who use them, blocked drains, uncollected refuse, heaps and the resultant flies. Contaminated foodstuffs, uncovered food at markets, fruit and vegetables washed in public toilets in the absence of water points was revealed as interviewees complained. Vegetables lying in mats on wet ground, caused by dirty water flowing from toilets and food cooked outside beer halls said Chenga (1986) in his study of housing programmes in Zimbabwe is causing ill health to residents.

### **Economic Impact of Housing Shortage in Tshovani**

#### **Education is drawn back**

Housing shortage in Tshovani High Density has also economic implications. The single room that occupants stay being their entire living space means that children at school, particularly those at higher levels find it very difficult to do homework under these crowded conditions particularly at night. If dependent on candles, the light is inadequate for reading purposes, and even where there are electric lights, its use is curtailed by the needs of the older members of the family. Patel and Adams (1981) support this idea when they say that husband needs in the house override the needs of every one else if they are staying in a single room. Children's education is disturbed by the parents who sent children to participate in generating income to supplement their income. To meet the cost of food and accommodation, parents use their children to go look for part time jobs or informal jobs like selling of fruits and vegetables, washing of cars and many other works. This disturbs the education of children as they lack time to do their homework.

#### **Lack of property**

Majority of families who are tenants of single rooms or two small rooms own very little or no furniture as every inch of the limited floor space is needed for sleeping purposes for the member of the family. They do not have any motivating factor to buy furniture like wardrobes, to place the items. Paraffin which they use for cooking purposes or lighting covers their clothes and furniture with soot which means that they will have to buy new clothes again and again. Respondents complained that they lose their property every time they shift from one house to another. Their furniture and property especially the fragile ones are broken that they won't manage to replace them.

### **Money for Hospitalization**

HIV and AIDS related diseases resulting from prostitution suck every dollar in the house due to treatment and special diets for the patient. Money will be needed again for burials and care for the affected. Equally sexually transmitted diseases require a special treatment which pumps out money.

In Tshovani suburb, the houses are closely packed such that there is no space to grow vegetables like rape, covo, tomatoes and onions which are needed to cut on food costs. It therefore means that everything that has to be consumed in the house needs to be bought. In the end some families are suffering from malnutrition as they lack balanced food required.

Effort by some families in building new houses is affecting the family's economy to the extent that their feeding roasters are changing to one meal per day. As another respondent said, "building new houses has led to bad feeding practices because money is directed to building and other areas like food suffer." This study similarly indicates a correlation between poor diet and building houses as most of those interviewed mentioned that one of the expenses to be cut when building materials are needed is food. Respondents commented that

"To cope, we had cut down our food supplies and most of the time we ate only sadza and lacto and vegetables".

"To supplement my husband's income, I returned in the rainy season to grow maize and after harvesting 50-60 bags of maize was able to assist in meeting the cost of building materials".

"It was so costly to build that we hardly had any more for food and so we sent our children to their grandparents in the rural areas, we hardly eat meat".

From the sentiments above, it shows poor diet is a direct indication of economic hardship. Businesses are remaining small because of lack of proper shelter. Most of the small scale self employed workers have no proper working places. They usually operate from their residential zone. These include carpenters, shoe repairers, sellers of scrap metals and batteries. Respondents said that their businesses could hardly grow because they have no space to put their materials. It's impossible to have a lot of tools and machinery in the same room where people sleep.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is evident from the study that children's behavior is affected negatively because they sleep away at night due to lack of space in the house. The bonding among family members is disrupted as a result of accommodation crisis. Many people end up suffering from Aids and other diseases which result from overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions. Crimes have proved to be the lifestyle of young people who are unemployed in the suburb. The family's financial wellbeing has been drawn back by lack of proper housing in the area. Children's education is disturbed as school children spent much of their time in part time jobs trying to earn money for rentals while less time is put in studies. Families end up acquiring little if any property in the house because every inch of the floor area is occupied living no space to place in property. Even businesses like shoe repairing, carpentry and so on remains small due to lack of space to place their tools and machinery. Families remain poor as a result of hospitalization and medication bills demanded by hospitals if a family member gets sick of Aids or other poor sanitary related diseases like cholera. With the lack of space in the backyard to grow vegetables and keep chickens the family will have to buy everything that they consume in the house. In the end, some foodstuffs are removed from meals in order to meet high rentals leading to malnutrition. To ameliorate and rectify the adverse impact of housing shortage like risk of acquiring HIV and AIDS and diseases resulting from overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions the is need for subsidized health schemes. Health officers should gain interest in monitoring every activity that leads to the spreading of diseases for instance health clean ups, provision of purifying tablets, urgent report of any sewage spillage. There is need of the council, government, and other stakeholders to provide shelter through flexibility in building and servicing of stands, planning layout and use of alternative building materials. This ensures provision of housing facilities to everyone. Even the least fortunate will end up having their own proper shelter which will allow bonding with their family member without other members living in the rural areas. The Town Council should set in motion The Aided Self help Site and Service scheme. It should embark on the development of ultra-low cost housing as an answer to shelter requirement. In broader perspective, the government should introduce housing levy to all its employees and start constructing single room units, which employees will expand.

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