



The role of engineering and engineers in reducing inequality in South Africa

With the current legislation, how get we get engineers to serve society?

August 2021



YPF

Young Professionals Forum



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Introduction

- The growth of inequality has become a global challenge in both rich and poor countries
- In developing countries, inequality is closely mirrored TO high-speed urbanisation and industrialisation
- In South Africa, urban poverty is increasing with a high-speed and poorer communities are disadvantaged because of a lack of basic services
- South Africa's state of inequality is a long one and one that dates back to the colonial-apartheid period and legislation, viz:
 - land act (1913)
 - Urban areas act (1923)
 - Group areas act (1950)
- Collectively, this inheritance resulted in:
 - Segregation of race groups
 - Separate rural homelands for africans
 - Cheap migrant labour system for urban-based economic development policies
 - Delineated geography and natural resources
 - The rich also more substantial urban suburbs that are well serviced, while the poor live marginalised areas that receive a mandated minimum level of services

Background

- Post 1994, economic policy has encouraged the polarizing of South Africa's historical legacies with central equity objectives and economic plans, viz.:
 - Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP)
 - Growth, employment and redistribution (GEAR)
- These strategies resulted in an increase in both Gross Domestic Product Growth (GDP) and unemployment and inequality
- The Municipal systems act (2000) reinforced these in local government by prioritizing service delivery in municipalities with the highest economic potential
- The act also mandates urban planners to provide only the minimum levels of basic services to the poorer communities
- As districts develop their Spatial Development Frameworks (SDF) and Integrated Development Plans (IDP), wealthier provinces have more resources than the rural poorer provinces
- A third category of service delivery, viz, intermediate service delivery level has been established. These are established in provinces that contain both rural and urban municipalities (FS, MP)

Achievements

- Urban authorities are increasingly being held accountable for their inability to provide services to poorer communities
- Good service delivery has been delivered to richer, more industrialized provinces
- Why is this?
- Is service delivery a function of wealth?
- Does legislation empower the engineering fraternity to serve society?



Investment in infrastructure is a long term requirement for growth and a long term factor that will make growth sustainable.

— *Chanda Kochhar* —

AZ QUOTES

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Challenges

- Planners in poorer districts are confronted with high levels of poverty, poor infrastructure and residents who are unable to pay for services provided.
- More recently, the cadre deployment system of the new ANC-led government has resulted in high levels of nepotism, corruption and poor management skills in local municipalities (Giliomee et al., 2001).
- In addition, the Municipal Systems Act (2000) instructs planners to prioritize the development of first-order infrastructure and service delivery in municipalities with high economic potential confronting urban planners in South Africa with a contradictory mandate to simultaneously pursue both 'modernist' and pro-poor objectives
- There is a major rural-urban influx which is forcing richer municipalities to provide land and services for large numbers of newly arrived poorer residents
- Poor infrastructure, moreover precludes the development of technology such as waterborne sanitation in rural areas

Challenges

- Local authorities are confronted with three other integrated planning problems that constrain service delivery, viz,
 - political pressure,
 - an efficiency problem and
 - limited resources
- Municipalities that are controlled by opposition parties often find it problematic to obtain assistance from national government
- Violent service delivery protests divert resource allocations
- The unequal delivery of basic services is constrained by limited resources and poverty
- Unequal access is compromised by inefficiency, corruption and poor management



A successful society is characterized by a rising living standard for its population, increasing investment in factories and basic infrastructure, and the generation of additional surplus, which is invested in generating new discoveries in science and technology.

Robert Trout

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Findings

- High levels of poverty exist, and households cannot pay for services
- Poorer rural areas remain rural with the poorest levels of service delivery and low levels of inequality because of:
 - less varied economic activities, and
 - Having a smaller share percentage of wealth
- Service delivery levels in the richer, urban areas is higher
- Wealth inequality, is low in affluent, well established areas, as well as in marginalized rural ones.
- However, when comparing rural areas to urban areas inequality is higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas
- While in The rural-urban provinces with an aggregated intermediate service delivery level, have inequality levels that are low in rural municipalities and higher levels in urban ones that provide very different levels of service delivery
- Districts with intermediate levels of service delivery, reflect the highest levels of service delivery inequality.
- Wealth inequality is highest in areas that are in an industrialisation transition phase especially if the area includes both urban and rural municipalities

Proposed Recommendations

- Current legislation for infrastructure development is to be reviewed to empower infrastructure development planning to strategically reduce inequality by accommodating poorer residents in the development of modern industrial cities, thereby addressing the rural-urban influx challenge
- Improve the legislated minimum level of basic services to poorer communities to:
 - Allow for the transfer of technology to that supports modern industrialisation to rural-urban and rural districts to further address reduce migration to urban areas
 - stimulate varied economic activities
 - stimulate wealth creation in rural area
- Legislation is to re-enforce the forces of segregation rather than the socio-economic status
- Current resources in all spheres of the built environment is to be capacitated to industry level requirements to achieve the implementation of quality service delivery levels
- Strategically reduce access of cheap migrant labour in South Africa to create sustainable long term job opportunities
- Upgrade and expand existing small scale and limited economic activities in rural areas inclusive of planned for, formal settlement establishments to improve affordability of services in these areas
- Improve revenue collection through vigorous educational and Public participation initiatives



“Let us Capacitate our Nation for holistic equal economic growth to achieve our Common Goal to Eradicate Poverty and build a better South Africa for Generations to come in Our Land”

Tshireletso Rammutla

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Thank You!

