

**PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF ALTERNATIVE BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES FOR RURAL
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

by

Tshiphiri Tshivhasa

(11500873)

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Institute for Rural Development

School of Agriculture



University of Venda

SOUTH AFRICA

Supervisor : Prof. J. Francis

Co-Supervisor : Dr M. Mwale

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ABSTRACT

Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Target 11 states, "By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers." Indicator 32 (7.2) of the MDGs clarifies the expected outcome as "the proportion of households with access to secure tenure." The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 mandates the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures in ensuring that everyone enjoys a right to adequate housing, social security and appropriate assistance. Since 1994, South African governments have created about two million housing opportunities, mainly benefitting the urban-based poor. In the process, rural housing was not sufficiently addressed due to lack of appropriate technology for construction. This implies that it was necessary to introduce alternative building technologies in order to speed up housing delivery in rural South Africa.

Alternative building technology was introduced in the Eastern Cape Province as a pilot human settlement project aiming to speed up housing delivery. However, the Ndevana community where it was piloted rejected the technology at the procurement stage. There was no clear reason for rejection of the technology. This justified conducting a study to explore public acceptance of alternative building technologies for housing development. The specific objectives of the study were to: (a) determine what community members perceived to be the ideal characteristics of alternative building technologies; (b) to establish whether the perceptions on alternative building technologies vary across the community; and (c) assess the reasons for the rejection of alternative building technology by community members.

Officers working in the Eastern Cape Department of Human Settlements (ECDHS), the Buffalo City Municipality (BCM), alternative building technologies (ABT) companies, community leaders and members of the case study area were the respondents. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to address the objectives. Purposive and systematic sampling methods were adopted. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and formal survey questionnaires were used to collect data. Content analysis, Chi-square and simple matrix analyses were carried out.

The key findings of this study provided empirical evidence on the reasons for the Ndevana community to reject ABT for housing development. It also served as guide to develop the best approach for the facilitation of community buy-in of alternative building technologies for housing development in the Eastern Cape Province. The results revealed various areas of social perceptions of ABT by the Ndevana community. These areas included community understanding and knowledge of ABT and their general perceptions regarding ABT. The

community perceptions on why ABT was rejected as well as their views towards the acceptance of the ABT were also presented in the results.

Some of the key results areas include the rejection of ABT related to cost for change, the community was not involved in the choice of their housing development using ABT, and they thought that ABT houses were non-habitable and could pose risks to the lives of the inhabitants. They also feared that the ABT houses might not enter the housing market and they might no longer benefit from the housing subsidy scheme if the ABT houses suffered extreme structural defects that might make them non-habitable. The community members believed that for ABT housing development to succeed there were certain issues that needed to be improved. Some of these issues include that ABT houses could be extended without structural defects, constant inspection should be done during the construction phase and proper consultation should be done to prepare the community for the implementation of ABT for housing developments. Whilst the ABT development administrators thought that the policy should be formulated to manage the implementation of ABT, the contractors who use ABT products suggested that the payment model should also be strengthened.

Key words: Alternative technologies, development, housing, public acceptance