

**WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION  
CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES IN KISUMU  
TOWN.**

**BY**

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*SES/PGE/37/96*

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENVIRONMENTAL  
STUDIES (HUMAN ECOLOGY).**

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**NOVEMBER, 2000**



## ABSTRACT

Urban areas confront several challenges as they seek to meet the increasing demand for available services and resources by the growing population. Kisumu is not an exception. This was a comparative study of an informal and formal settlement areas within Kisumu Town. The objective was to assess the provision of water and sanitation supply in these areas. This was done by identifying water and sanitation facilities within the residential areas under study; examining the implications of limited access to water and sanitation facilities on the health of the residents and the consequences it has on their environment; assessing the degree of concern by residents in regard to the provision of appropriate water and sanitation facilities; and assessing the coping mechanisms adopted by the residents to obtain water and sanitation. To conceptualise the study, the theories of "supply and demand", "rationalization" and "the culture of poverty" were utilised.

The sampling of the residential areas was based on differences in available services assuming that the formal (municipal) housing estate would have better facilities than the informal slum settlement areas. Respondents from each of the two settlements were sampled using the systematic sampling technique and referral sampling. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents and the key informants in order to obtain primary data while the secondary data was obtained from documented materials. The results were analysed using the Kruscall-Wallis computer package in order to generate comparative frequency tables.

The findings depict a negative trend encircling water and sanitation supply in both the formal and informal settlement areas as opposed to the prevalent view held by many that water and sanitation supply is a problem only in the informal settlement areas. There is evidence to show that Kisumu municipality has provided facilities to enable the provision of water and sanitation within the formal settlement areas but the facilities are not serviced nor are the residents getting any water and sanitation services. On the other hand, there are limited facilities within the informal settlement areas and yet the residents can obtain water by constructing boreholes or wells and illegally tapping water from the main water pipeline and selling the same to the other town residents. This has greatly compromised the health of residents and increased environmental problems within the area.

The widespread improvisation in the provision of water and sanitation services is a clear demonstration that the residents are aware of the related problems but are helpless

vis-à-vis the municipal council officers. It is equally observed that the availability or provision of a public service or a commodity may not necessarily depend on the ability to pay or the demand but on other non-economic and non-environmental considerations.

It is recommended that the whole institutional framework in operation in local authorities be overhauled to ensure the local authorities adhere to the laid down bylaws and that the principle of natural justice is upheld. Only then can negative trend encircling water and sanitation supply in Kisumu Town be reversed and the human and public health problems that are escalating within Kisumu Town minimised if not eradicated.