



CHALLENGES OF URBANISATION IN MOMBASA

GEOGRAPHY FIELD CLASS TO COASTAL PART OF KENYA

CASE STUDY OF MTWAPA MOMBASA COUNTY

BY

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I hereby acknowledge the efforts done by the department of Geography and Environmental studies University of Nairobi for organizing a geography trip to coastal part of Kenya. As a geography teacher, the trip has offered a good experience and eye opener in both physical and human economic geography. I also acknowledge my family and friends for their moral support during my time in the University of Nairobi. They have played a big role in making sure i achieve my academic dreams.

Abstract

Urbanization is a product of British colonial administration; it is therefore inevitable to developing countries like Kenya. Urban population and number of urban centers has been increasing since 1948. Most of the developing countries experiences growth rate after independence but the rate again declined from 1989 and up again in 2009. In Kenya, Nairobi had dominated in growth but since 2009, other urban areas are taking over. With the emerging of small and medium sized urban centers, towns like Mtwapa in Mombasa county is highly growing together with many other in the country. However, there exist a regional variation in urbanization levels, trends and patterns. This report however, focuses on urbanization patterns and challenges in Mtwapa Mombasa

1.0 Introduction

Mtwapa is a dusty place, about 15 km north of [Mombasa](#) and one of the fastest growing communities in Kenya with about 50,000 inhabitants. This is partly due to the lack of modern public transport (tram, metro) in combination with the chaotic traffic in Mombasa and the associated development of urban suburbs to new centers. On the other hand many Europeans settle there and bring development. Mtwapa is known as “the village that never sleeps”. Even long after midnight the pubs are busy frequented and even sellers are in the streets and a lot of people walk around. It is the centre of night life and prostitution in the area of Mombasa. Because of many Europeans building homes for retirement or spending winter time there, the place has become trendy for Kenyans too, and real estate prices and construction activity have risen dramatically.

The climate in Mtwapa is tropical wet and warm. The best travel time is from late November to mid-March. After that it gets uncomfortably hot with increased humidity. The worst travel time is in the main rainy season from April to June. Due to lack of sewerage in no time the roads are flooded and muddy and it is difficult to make any excursions. Mostly it rains only briefly and then the sun is shining again, but also continuous rain for days may occur. In the resulting puddles, the mosquitoes multiply abruptly and the malaria and dengue fever risk increases. Also in the 2nd rainy season, October/November, you have to reckon with inconveniences. like any other developing urban center; Mtwapa is facing various challenges socially, economically and environmentally

1.1 Problem statement

Rapid urbanization in Kenya has come with a mixed and complex blessing to the urban population and community at large.

This report is aimed at highlighting main challenges brought as a result of rapid urbanization in Kenyan urban center, a case study of Mtwapa Mombasa and possible solutions

1.2 Objectives

- Understanding the trends of urbanization in Coastal part of Kenya
- Highlighting main challenges associated with urbanization
- Understand the livelihood sources in Kenya developing urban areas
- An eye opener to real situation of developing urban areas

2.0 Literature review

Urbanization in is said to be inevitable to developing countries Like Kenya. Rapid growing population and mashrooming of small shopping center along busy Kenyan highways has caused the developments of peri-urban centers like Mtwapa. In the recent past, most of the shopping centers along the great north road and trans-African highway are rapidly changing their status from shopping centers to urban areas. Trade is the biggest driver in urban development and expansion. The spread and expansion of industries has also caused the development of urban centers.

The unsustainable growth of urban centers has come with mixed blessing in sorounding communities. Social , economic and environmental impacts to the residents are clearely visible in most of these young urban center. Most of them are characterized by poor urban planning, lack of adequate employment, waste disposal challenges, social vices and among them all, the area turn from self sustaining ecosystem to parasitic ecosystem.

3.0 Study area

Mtwapa is a small urban developing area, about 15 km north of [Mombasa](#) island and one of the fastest growing communities in Kenya with about 50,000 inhabitants. The town can be accessed through two main routes which is either from Mombasa island via a bridge at Shimo latewa or Mazeras Kaloleni Chonyi road. It borders Kenyan coastline to the East and vipingo ridges to the north. Mtwapa is known as “the village that never sleeps”. It is believed to be a Giriama community land.

4.0 Methodology.

A field study trip was organized between 21st to 26th November 2017 for the main purpose of visiting coastal part of Kenya main focus being Mombasa and Mtwapa towns. Various data collection methods were employed during the site visit including goggle map satellite images to compare the status of the then and now, observations, photography, interviews and literature review. Main focus of the researcher was on urban planning, population, transport, economic activities among any other environmental issues brought as result of urbanization.

5.0 Results and discussion

From the observation and findings Mtwapa is a small area barely 50 km squared. Though a small area, it host approximately 50,000 inhabitant (source 2009 census).Due to rapid population growth, growth of informal settlement is inevitable characterized by poor town planning with no proper access routes to the villages, poor sewage services and low standard housing.

There is a very clear difference between the rich and the poor clear shown by the type of buildings, some permanent storey houses and some low roofed makuti houses. Majority of the people in this small town are middle class people, envisaged by the villages they leave (unplanned Swahili houses).Majority of the people are small scale business community selling farmers products such as vegetables, coconuts, coconut palm wine and small food kiosks. Industrial employment included Milly fruit processors, textile Export processing zone, Umoja rubber shoe company, tourists hotels such as Sun and sand beach hotel and Serena beach hotel. It was noted that there is high number of bars and clubs than could be expected. Clubs like casuarinas, Black Havana among others were among the popular. In these clubs illegal activities such as prostitution goes on.

To sum up the above, several challenges were noted which are directly related with unsustainable urban growth;

- Increased level of poverty, vulnerability, social differentiation, inequality, segregation, exclusion and fragmentation.
- Inadequate and poor provision of services especially to the urban poor.
- Housing and slums incidences-development of slums from the need to accommodate growing population.
- Food insecurity-the urban poor cannot afford the meals
- Environmental concerns e.g issue waste production and poor waste disposal.
- Poor urban planning, development, management and governance issues



Figure 1: Slum incidence development



Figure 2: Poor urban planning hence congested roads



Figure 3: Vulnerability of females due to poverty



Figure 4: Challenges of waste management

To counter the issues noted, urban dwellers have adopted several survival techniques like

- ✓ Multi sourcing of cash incomes; people indulge in several activities to generate extra income.
- ✓ Own food production; people try produce their own food on the back yards of their houses e.g vegetables and other food crops.
- ✓ Reducing of expenditure; people come up with less expensive living styles e.g skipping of meals and having one meal per day instead of three, living in slums areas etc.
- ✓ Social networks in towns; small leisure centers have evolved where mid level people can refresh themselves eg palm wine centers, pool tables etc.
- ✓ Urban rural linkages; developing urban centers have developed mutualism relationships with rural setting. food comes in nearby rural areas in exchange of money and employments



Figure 5: In-equality, shown by different form of houses(permanent, makuti, iron sheets)



Figure 6: Adaptations, own food production



The urban poor enjoy themselves in Local wine(mnazi dens)

Figure 7: social networks of urban poor