

Conflict-Induced Displacement Challenges in Buea Municipality: The Problems of Waste Management and Access to Potable Water

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ABSTRACT

Rapid urbanization compounded by urban poverty was one of the main challenges facing many Sub-Saharan African countries. The city of Buea, which is the 10th largest city in Cameroon, faced such problems due to unplanned development over the past four decades. In 2020, the population growth rate in Buea reached 42%, compared to 5.6% in 2005, especially in the peri-urban areas. This resulted in both direct and indirect pressures on available resources. Since 2019, Buea had hosted approximately 100,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) fleeing from the conflict between the Defense and Security Forces and the Separatist Groups operating in the South West and North West Regions. Consequently, the expansion of urban agglomerations in Buea brought about significant challenges for urbanites, whose quality of life was negatively impacted. This article examined the difficulties faced by urban dwellers in the growing city of Buea as they coped with the challenges of urban regeneration. The study aimed to identify the various challenges generally encountered by local inhabitants and the effects of unplanned population growth on the population within the urban space. To address these issues, the study made use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, consisting of in-depth case studies and a standardized survey questionnaire. The article identified ecological problems such as waste management and societal issues like access to potable water, which were created by the surge of unplanned urbanization in Buea. It also connected these problems with the general breakdown of city dwellers' trust in the municipality, stemming from allegations related to bribery, corruption, and poor governance.

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INTRODUCTION

Recent world statistics points to the fact that more people live in urban areas than in rural areas. The United Nations in its 2013 reports reveal that 54% of the world's population are now residing in urban areas (UN, 2013). In that same reports, they projected that by 2050, 66% of the world's population will be living in urban areas as compared to 30% in the 1950s. Since the 1950's, the urban population of the world has grown rapidly from 746 million to 3.9 billion in 2014 and is expected to reach 6.3 billion in 2050 (UN-Habitat, 2011). The urban growth rate is predicted at 5% per annum and it is estimated that over 300 million new residents will be added to urban

areas in the subcontinent between 2000 and 2030 (Kessides 2005). In Africa, rural-urban migration and high birth rate are the two dominant driving factors fuelling rapid urbanization (Boadi, et al., 2005). Africa is rapidly becoming one of the most densely populated continents. In 1950, Africa was the least urbanized continent with only 14.5% of the population living in urban areas, but by 1988, about 35% of Africa's population of 749 million people lived in was urban areas. Africa is currently urbanizing faster the UN projections indicate that the urban population will increase to 914 million by 2025 (UN Habitat 2011).

The UN (2005) estimated that 48% of the population in Cameroon lived in urban areas in 2005, and that urban areas were growing at an annual rate of 2.74%; but today the country has an urbanization rate of 59.9% implying that people living in rural areas are about 40.1%, with 3.3% annual rate of change in 2010. With an urbanization rate that has moved from 37% in 1987 to 52% in 2010, Cameroon, like other countries of the world is urbanizing faster than predicted. Unfortunately, this rapid growth is faced with the problem of squatter and unplanned urbanization (Balgah 2007). The urbanization rate in Cameroon has experienced a strong and steady increase between 2005 and 2010. The 1st National Urban Forum in Cameroon that held in 2014 revealed that urban areas were home to 10,091,172 out of the 19,406,100 inhabitants in the country. The urbanization rate thus increased from 28.5% in 1976 to 37.8% in 1987, 48.8% in 2005 and 52% in 2010. The urbanization rate in Cameroon has been witnessed principally around the peri-urban fringes (Fombe and Balgah, 2010).

The rapid process of urbanization have created extreme pressures on the limited resources in the urban areas; potable water supply, health care, hygiene and sanitation, floods etc. (Arcila, 2008). According to Kemal & Chigozie (2012), many governments of developing countries find it difficult to handle the rising urbanization due to poor governance, misappropriation of state resources, and high corruption rate (Kometa & Ndi, 2012). Cameroon still faces obstacles in implementing its urban policy, reason why urbanites find it difficult to cope with the rising cost of living in urban areas (Chang, 2009).

The 2008 food-related riots in Cameroon and other Sub-Saharan African countries confirmed the vulnerability of urban dwellers. Maria (2014) suggested that there are four broad obstacles to building sustainable cities; poor planning, lack of social services, increasing urban poverty, and low level of economic activities. Over the years, investment in urban infrastructure fall short of meeting the growing demand in urban areas (Anokwonke, 2012). Through urbanization, humans have created new ecosystems within which their interactions with nature are becoming too complex to comprehend (Ebong et al., 2004).

Urbanization in Buea dates back during the German colonial era, as the town was chosen as the capital of the German colony of Kamerun¹ (Ngwa, 1986).

¹ This was the spelling of present day Cameroon during the German era, 1884-1916.

During the colonial period, plantations were developed at the fertile slope of Mt. Cameroon. The colonial administration exported labour from the hinterlands to come work in these plantations, which increased the population of Buea. However, the population explosion 1993 when the lone Anglo-Saxon University was created, making Buea the seat of education as far as English Speaking higher education in Cameroon was concerned. Since 1993, the town has witnessed an influx of students in search of higher education certificate. Apart from students who come every year in their thousands, job seekers, businesses and other commercial activities flooded the municipality.

The National Institute of Statistics report published in 2007 showed that there has been a steady increase in the population of Buea from 24,584 inhabitants in 1976 to 32,871 in 1987, with a growth rate of 2.7%. Between 1988 and 2005, the population growth rate was 5.6%, with 90,088 inhabitants. In 2020, the population growth rate in Buea stood at 42% compared to 5.6% in 2005, especially in the peri-urban areas (NIS, 2016 - ECAM 4). Recently, another incidence have provoked an influx of people into Buea; the Socio-Political crisis that started in 2018 in the two English Speaking Regions of Cameroon. Buea have been considered as a relative clam town in the mist of the crisis and many individuals and families have found refuge in Buea. Statistics published by the government of Cameroon in its Humanitarian Plan for the North West and South West Regions revealed that an estimate of 74,966 have been internally displaced; 66,412 in the South West Region and 8,554 in the North West Region. Buea along registered about 3,000 IDPs bringing its total to 300,000 according to the Buea Council in 2018 (UNICEF, 2018, OCHA, 2018).

The Buea Council have been struggling over the years in projecting Buea as a clean and hospitable city. Despite their efforts, the city is struggling to mitigate the rapid and unplanned increase in population. The social amenities of the municipality are unable to keep up with the explosive growth of squatter communities and shanty towns. Presently, the town is facing housing problems like water rationing, low electricity voltage, poor hygiene and sanitation, and the eroding of the Bakweri² traditional system and

² The Bakweri are said to have migrated to their present locale on the slopes and foot of Mount Cameroon from an area east of the mountain in the mid-18th century. By the time the Germans arrived Cameroon in the late-1800s, the Bakweri were already completely, but sparsely, settled in the region around the mountain stretching from the south-western slopes of the mountain to the creeks on the outer reaches of the Atlantic Ocean. It is important to note for the purpose of the discussion

identity. Consequently, this expansion of urban agglomerations in Buea brings about challenges for the urbanites whose standard of living within the urban space is affected.

Statement of the Problem

The most perceptible effect of urban expansion is apparent at the peri-urban environment. The Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in 2009 said; *“with more than half of the world’s population living in cities today, we are indeed living in an urban century”* (UN-Habitat, 2009). Urban dwellers in Buea especially in the peri-urban areas face numerous challenges as a result of rapid and unplanned population growth in the past 10 years. The peri-urban areas in Buea like Bolifamba, Bomaka, Muea and Molyko are characterized by fast population growth, a mixture of planned and unplanned settlements, inadequate service infrastructures, environmental and health problems.

According to Statistics from the Buea Council in 2020, the population growth rate in Buea rose to 42% compared to 5.6% in 2005, especially in the peri-urban areas. This increase has put pressure on the available resources and the capacity of what the city can handle. The increase of population and that of household numbers did not come with an increase of household incomes, housing conditions, expansion of water supply and social amenities since the conflict induces migration.

The recurrence of Cholera Outbreak in Buea since November 2019, is an indication of problems effecting the provision of basic services in the city which has come as a result of the forced migration of people from rural areas to Buea that is consider relatively peaceful. The unplanned constructions within the city caused the Mayor of Buea after sensitization to proceed to the destruction of some houses in the municipality for non-respect of building norms. On the 18th of March 2023, Buea witnessed a massive flood, after critical investigations it was discovered house and waste had blocked the water way. This flood further exposed another serious challenge confronted the town which was waste management, as many households dump their waste

of dry water ways, hoping the rain water will eventually wash them away.

The problem of waste management became alarming in Buea between April to July 2024, that prompted the Senior Divisional Officer for Fako to called for a “Special Clean Up Campaign” geared toward sensitizing the inhabitants in his area of command. It is within these framework that this article is interested in exploring the challenges face by the city of Buea as a result of the conflict-induced migration. Consequently, this expansion of urban agglomerations in Buea due to has brought about pressure on the available resources for the urbanites whose standard of living within the urban space are affected. This article examines the difficulties faced by urban dwellers in the growing city of Buea as they cope with the challenges of urban regeneration and ensuring sustainable cities. The study aims to explore challenges of waste management and access to potable water faced by local inhabitants.

Study Area

Buea is the capital of the South West Region of Cameroon. The town is located on the eastern slopes of Mount Cameroon with an altitude of 1000m above sea level and a surface area of 870sq.km. Buea was the colonial capital of the German Kamerun from 1901 to 1919, and the capital of the Southern Cameroons from 1949 until 1961 (Dillon, 1990). The German colonial administration in Buea was temporarily suspended during the eruption of Mount Cameroon from 28 April – June 1909. In 1916 the Germans were defeated during the First World War and ousted out of Cameroon, Buea became the capital of British Southern Cameroon until 1972 when Cameroon became a Unitary Republic. The city still has a handful of colonial buildings, notably the palatial former residence of the German governor, Jesko von Puttkamer (Ngoh, 1996).

Originally, Buea population consisted mainly of the Bakweri people. However, due to its position as a university town and the regional capital, there are a significant number of other ethnic groups. The town is known for its receptive population living in a cosmopolitan setting with a constellation of 85 villages (Matute, 1999). The dominant economic activity in Buea in years back was agriculture which forms the backbone of the local economy. A great portion of the land of the town was for cash crops, cultivation by the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) Banana plantation. Presently, only the Cameroon Tea Estate at Tole still cultivate large portion of land for the cultivation of tea life. The people cultivate mainly food crops using rudimentary tools and depend on family labour. The

in this chapter that the population of Bakweri has always been relatively small in comparison to other indigenous Cameroonian groups. Also, the Bakweri have traditionally been very thinly spread and organized in small clusters over their ancestral lands. At independence, the Bakweri were estimated to be at most 16,000. As a polity, the Bakweri were largely fragmentary and acephalous. Thus, unlike some of their hinterland counterparts, pre-colonial Bakweri society was neither centralized nor possessed powerful paramount chiefs. (End here, then add a reference)

farmers produce mainly maize, cassava, yams, cocoyam, plantain, potatoes and various kinds of vegetables. The farm products are usually for home consumption while the surplus is sold to the local markets and the income derived spent on other basic necessities.

Apart from agriculture, Buea has emerged as a prominent center for higher education. It hosts the University of Buea, the first of two Anglophone Universities in Cameroon, and other governmental institutions like National Advanced School of Local Administration (NASLA), the National School of Penitentiary Administration (ENAP), the Advance School of Public Work Annex, the National School of Post and Telecommunication. The town also host the Pan African Institute of Development for West Africa, the Catholic University Institute of Buea and close 40 private higher institutions. These higher institutions have brought in thousands of young people and has been transformed into the business hub. As regional head quarter it has also has government workers and other who have settled in the town, thus increasing number of inhabitants triggers the need for a corresponding increase and efficiency in infrastructural development and service delivery (Kofele-Kale, 2003).

Methodology

This article is a descriptive and explanatory case study that involves a mixed methods approach. The study combined the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially and involve integrations of the data at one or more stages in the processes of research. The study administered standardized survey questionnaires to government administrators (Delegation of Urban Development and Housing, Environment and Nature Protection, Public Health, Water and Energy), Buea Councils officials (especially those in charge infrastructure and development, Hygiene and Sanitation Department, Municipal Police), Health personnel (Buea Health District), Quarter Heads and local people of chosen by accidental sampling technique.

The researcher did not rely solely on the responses given by the respondents; the researcher made use of observation and Case Studies. This method helped the researcher understand the constant flood during the rainy season, why people dump waste where they deem fit, what the community and the Council do to solve these problems. Pictures were also taken to portray some of these problems observed. The Case Studies were reported by some of the respondents describing actual situations,

experiences in which they find themselves in problems concerning the environment. They explain real situations, causes of these problems, consequences and strategies used to combat these problems.

Presentation of Findings

Rapid population growth and unplanned urbanization associated with bad governance, corruption and administrative tolerance were identified as the principle causes preventing Buea from becoming a sustainable city. According to the respondents interviewed, documents consulted and personal observations, the population of Buea is continuously on the increase due to migration. This growth rate has mounted a lot of pressure on available resources and the absent of a well elaborated strategy to cope with the massive influx of people has compounded the situation.

The rapid urbanization witnessed in Buea has led to the increase in the demand for food, clean water, health care and energy etc. Consequently, the ability of the available resources to meet some of these needs has become threatened. With the increased population; there is inadequate supply of housing and infrastructure for the teeming population; as a result, the existing infrastructure and housing are overstressed, while unsanitary living conditions, including a filthy environment, unclean ambient air, stinky and garbage filled streets and sub-standard houses continue to dominate the urban landscape especially in the student residential neighborhood (Molyko) and it surrounding peri-urban peripheries like Bomaka, Muea, and Bolifamba.

Hygiene and Sanitation (Waste Management)

Within the framework of the Cameroon's decentralization laws, Municipal Councils are responsible for hygiene and sanitation of their respective municipalities. The situation of Hygiene and sanitation in Buea can be described as complex and marred with increased migration, changing consumption habits, poor community behavior and absent of community participation. Despite a twice a month compulsory "Clean Up Campaign" organize by the Buea Council, the situation is characterized by increased littering and open dumping of waste within the town. As the town expanded to it Peri-urban areas, the problem of waste management was at the center of the Council Development Plan. Resolving the problems of insufficient waste infrastructures amidst increases in waste generated in the city of Buea was pivotal. (Buea Communal Development Plan, 2012)

Consequently, in 2011 the Buea Council contracted the services of HYSACAM³ to be responsible for waste management. Notwithstanding, despite the efforts made by the garbage collection company, sometimes before it does its job, one can observe waste at major street junctions abandoned by households. In 2020, HYSACAM reports that Buea produces 120-160 tons of municipal solid waste daily (0.40-0.54 kg per capital), 76% of which is biodegradable and 24% non-biodegradable. According to the HYSACAM personnel interviewed, he revealed that; *“Waste was not to be abandoned at road junction by inhabitant, they were to bring out their waste only when the trucks are at their neighborhood. He decried the fact the inhabitants do not even know how to dispose of this waste before it is finally collected by HYSACAM”*.

About 90% of all solid waste comes from households and in many neighborhood garbage points and pins have not been indicated making it difficult for collection. It was reported that; *“since there is no garbage bin provided for my neighborhood by HYSACAM for the disposal of garbage, I took upon myself as a Quarter Head to indicate an open space where people dump their garbage and we burn it after every 2 weeks or a month with kerosene.Here we just join both the biodegradable and non-biodegradable.”* Another respondent said that; *“We cannot say the HYSACAM people are not trying, but for the fact that in some neighborhoods like ours where garbage is collected after about 5 days, there is always the possibility to see abandonment of solid wastes along streets, streams, open space and burning of some waste which pollutes the atmosphere and even destroys the ozone layer causing global warming.”*

Garbage collection has been problematic in some neighborhoods in Buea since 2018, due to insecurity and the threat to HYSACAM workers by secessionist fighter who considered the company is “French⁴”. Within the context of persistent insecurity and threats, the garbage collection company have suspended collection in many neighborhoods. It was revealed that; *“...We have received threats to our presence in the town, our garbage disposal ground is at the outskirts of the town and our workers were attacked and killed, trucks burnt and other equipment”*. The

study found out that the former Mayor of Buea⁵ had issued a press release on December 18th, 2018 calling inhabitants to take measures to manage their waste and reassuring them of the Council efforts to ensuring HYSACAM resumes work.

The call for inhabitants to manage their waste with no further instruction and education have been counter-production According to the Head of Sanitation at the Buea Council, he revealed that; *“80% of the waste produce can be disposed of by individual because it is biodegradable. Only 20% is supposed to come to the collected by HYSACAM, yet people bring all the 100% of garbage and dump at the road, making management costly and difficult.”* He further said that; *“It is regrettable that inhabitants don’t respect the instructions given, which is that households are to bring their waste to the road only when the HYSACAM collection truck is at their neighborhood. It is unacceptable to abandoned waste on open air and worse on road junctions”*.

The study found out that the few collection points were very far from homes, the bins small to assemble garbage from homes. Therefore, inhabitants were forced to dump their waste into the environment. Such practice by urban dwellers are probably the cause of the large-scale litter problem in the city of Buea. Since there is no HYSACAM bin around certain areas and the fact that HYSACAM don’t access certain neighborhood some households have adopted indigenous waste management techniques were biodegradable waste are disposed in farms to serve as manure. Nevertheless, in Buea farm lands are fast giving way for residential areas, hence a good number of household have no option but to abandoned waste on road junctions. It was also discovered that the “Keep Clean” campaigns organize twice monthly is not effective. Many inhabitants and store owners are not involve in the clean-up of the immediate vicinity. The study interviewed some shop owners who said often they just close their shop till 12 Noon, when activities are due to resume. Many believe the campaign is another avenue for the council to make money. This point of view is equally shared by Taxi Drivers who often decide to buy a “Pass⁶” which permits them to work. Thus, the study found out that the population are not motivated or involved in the campaign that holds twice every month.

³ Founded in 1969 by the Granjouan family, Hysacam later on became a subsidiary of Sita (French company) and was completely nationalized after Cameroonian shareholders took over its capital in 1995. Their Mission is “to clean Cameroonian cities”

⁴ Secessionist fighters have engaged in a fight not only with the central government but every state intuitions especially those having link with France.

⁵ Mr. Ekema Patrick Esunge, Mayor of Buea Municipality from 2011 - 2019

⁶ The Pass are being sold by Driver Unions and only those who have a Pass are allowed to circulate/work during the period of the Clean Up campaign

The council on their part are expressing the absence of finance to pay the Hygiene and Sanitization Company, making it difficult for them to function properly. According to a Council Executive who said; *we cannot put all the blame on HYSACAM, it difficult for them to keep staff and maintain their equipment because the government have not disbursed the funds for their functioning.* The Council Executive further explained that; *The ongoing Socio-Political crisis has worsen the situation, the dump site is located in a zone where separatist have attacked HYSACAM workers, burnt the bulldozer and during Ghost Towns waste can't be disposed.* The study found out that the periods of Ghost Towns are the worst period where garbage are mostly found in dumps along the major road junctions of the town.

Access to Potable Water

The production of potable water in Buea started in 1984, with the German's building a catchment and treatment center around the Mount Cameroon Forest Reserve. After the independence and Reunification of Cameroon in 1961, the National Water Supply Company (SNEC), took over this installations with a supply capacity of 6,360 m³ per day for an estimated population of about 50,000 (Tosam, 2009). The

problem of water shortage and rationing of water became alarming in 2009 when youths undertook a protest march to the water utility company demanding end of water rationing that goes for weeks. The provision or access to potable water since 2010 have been considered as basic human right by the United Nations. Regrettably, many households in Buea still dream of enjoying this right, thus, they suffer and incur additional economic cost to have potable water.

The notion of water scarcity often is being misunderstood to drought, according to the World Health Organization; water scarcity is found where availability of water is below 1700 cubic meter per capital. Today, Buea counts three catchment points and one treatment center. In 2013, the government of Cameroon constructed a new catchment in Buea to meet up with the growing demand of potable water. Despite these additional catchment points inhabitants are still complaining of water scarcity especially around the densely populated areas like Molyko, Bomaka, Muea, Bolifamba, Great Soppo, Bokwango. Information gotten from the CAMWATER office in Buea indicated that the areas covered by their installations of water have grown from 20 areas in 2003 to 31 areas in 2022.

Table 1: Evaluation of Water Production and Consumption in Buea

Year	Production (m ³) June – August	Production (m ³) February - April	Consumption (m ³) June – August	Consumption (m ³) February - April
2019	277,810	250,254	166,906	170,580
2020	265,600	242,365	188,701	192,089
2021	195,651	117,725	132,730	136,110
2022	214,814	179,243	146,199	145,074

Source: CAMWATER Statistics.

From the statistics in Table 1, CAMWATER provides more water than what is consumed as the production and consumption varies depending the season. According to statistics from CAMWATER revealed that from 2003 to 2013 water productions stood at around 9,000 m³ to 10,000 m³. The development of an additional catchment in 2013 have added about 100,000 m³ annually of water production in Buea. The figures shows that less water is being consumed within the period of June to August because inhabitant harvest rainwater, unfortunately, the water is not portable and the storage capacities are very limited by households to store the water for a long period.

It is worth noting that other community schemes do exist to provide localities not covered by CAMWATER with natural spring/stream water. We posed the question to CAMWATER officials to understand why the rationing of water when production outweighs the consumption. It was revealed that; *“The coming of the Small Soppo catchment was to reinforce the production of water, but we still need to ration water because transporting water to household depends on other factors like low pressure, electricity is inconsistency to power the pumps and unaccounted water as a result of destruction of pipes and pipe leakages. We depend solely on electricity to pump water, with the growing population and demand, gravity or pressure alone cannot serve even 20% of the demand”*

The study discovered that in the 1970's the notion of water rationing did not exist, because community member did not depend solely on the water utility company to supply them. The Buea Municipality host many natural water springs and streams and many households depended on this water sources. The high demand for space for the expansion of settlement and other urban functions have resulted in the encroachment of buildings and other land use activities on catchment areas (Kometa, 2009). This has resulted in the degradation of the catchments,

thereby reducing the supply of water. In Bomaka, about 50 – 70 % of the streams have been reclaimed, thus reducing the capacity of the stream to serve the neighborhood. Another challenge preventing the daily supply of water is the aging installations; no significant innovations have been carryout to build storage tanks. CAMWATER still depend on infrastructures that were developed in the 1980's with which it cannot supply water for 24 hours.

Consequently, the demand for water has outpaced supply and this has forced the water utility company to ration water. Increasing water rationing have created scarcity of potable water in many localities in Buea. This situation has left the population of Buea, with no other option than to fully embrace boreholes as a principle source of drinking water. However, this new norm only benefits the rich who have economic capacity to drill one. The poor urbanites are left to struggle on a daily basis, queuing around water catchments or public taps that rarely run at all.

Table 2. Evolution of Water Rationing in Buea Municipality (1990-2020)

Years	Rationing Interval
1990	6 hours
1995	1 day
2000	2 days
2005	3 – 4 days
2010	4 – 7 days
2015	7 – 14 days
2020	14 – 28 days

Sources: CAMWATER Statistics

From Table 2, water rationing saw a consistent increase from few hours to days. According to information gotten from CAMWATER, rationing varies from neighborhood to neighborhood, the most affected areas included Bokwango, Molyko, Buea Town, Bomaka while areas like the Clarks Quarters and the Government Residential Area (GRA) are least affected. The study found out that inhabitants in this area depend greatly on boreholes and trekking for long distance to get water from sometimes doubtful sources. It is also important to note that preserving water in containers for long can be problematic because they is a risk of high contamination.

Peri-urban dynamics in Buea have been characterized by changes in land use, including a sharp decrease in agricultural use, down from 80% in 2000 to 50% in 2014. There has also seen a progressive increase in settlements, from 9% in 2000 to 23.3% in 2014. This number has triple today as Buea since 2019 have been classified as one of the town enjoying relative peace in the mist of the armed conflict effecting the English speaking regions. The pressure on land use have increased the non-respect and violation of town planning rules, many people do not comply to town planning rules that are given to them when they are about to build. They make a mockery of it, and many build without even obtaining a building permit from the Buea Municipality at the detriment of the town.

According to interviewed official of town planning department of the Buea Council;*“people do not respect urban development rules and municipal norms. Rules are put in place to be respected not only*

by local populations but also the Council officials. People even obtain their building permits before commencing their constructions, yet this gesture seems to be for formality as they do not construct with regards to the dimensions specified on the certificates obtained. Some even build directly on their boundaries leaving no space for passages, hence making accessibility very difficult for both people and natural resources like water.”

According to those interviewed; town planning rules and regulations in Buea Municipality are not properly adhered to. According to decentralization laws, it is the duty of the council to ensure that people respect the town planning rules by building only where they are supposed to and avoid water channels and footpaths in the town. The council is also to ensure constructions are not done close to the rivers, water catchments, drainage and water ways. This eventually causes the town to suffer from environmental problems like floods, congestions, outbreak of disease etc.

Conclusion

The high demand for land in Buea have pushed construction of homes to some difficult and inaccessible sites which make waste collection difficult. Hence, most people dump their refuse on any available land and along river channels, polluting it thus making it not suitable for home consumption. The study found out that waste management remain a major problem for the city of Buea, especially when unauthorized urban growth has outpaced the ability of

the Municipal authorities to provide adequate facilities for collection and management of waste.

The problem of water rationing have forced inhabitant to turn to alternative sources of water. But with uncontrolled urbanization and the non-respect of construction especially around streams and catchment areas, many nearby streams which would have served as backup to the water demands of the population during times of prolonged water cuts are also facing pollution due to increased human activities, car washing points and the development of mini-markets whose waste are dumped in the stream.

The rationing and shortage of water in Buea, raises the question of how the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and the prevalence of Cholera effective. Both diseases require huge usage of water for hand washing, clean drinking water and keeping environment clean. The cholera outbreak has been blamed on open defecation which accounts for the recurrent cholera outbreaks. The study acknowledged that, the reluctance of the population to participate in the clean-up campaigns can be resolves engaging in a Top-Bottom approach to it. The Cameroonian authorizes can learned from the model used in Central African Republic and Rwanda. In these countries, the Presidents are fully involved in the campaigns, thus creating a

Just as reported by Amawa (2012) some neighborhoods in Buea, houses are constructed without access, toilets, and on water ways. According to those interviewed, the cause of the non-compliance of town planning rules in Buea is the corrupt nature of council officials. Some of the interviewees held the view that the reasons for the negligence to uphold town planning rules and regulations is the fact that officials most at times accept bribes from victims, making others to believe that violating the rules put in place for town planning is possible. Some officials close their eyes and recommend for the granting of building permits without properly checking the localization site to ensure that the construction will not impede proper urban regeneration of the city. Worst of all, citizens who can afford to bribe are always the beneficiaries while those who do not have money to bribe always suffer. It is believed that when you are threatened with demolition of your buildings, the best way to silence the municipal agents is to offer bride and continue construction irrespective of the consequences the structure will pose to the community.

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