

Revitalizing Degraded and Abandoned Lands: Reflections from Local Government Involvement in Mud Brick Production - Tanzania

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Abstract

The study assessed local government involvement in revitalizing abandoned holes and degraded lands around brick-making sites in Morogoro Municipality. Specifically, it delineated the effects of mudbrick-making activities on the communities surrounding the brick-making sites, identified alternative uses of the abandoned holes in the brick-making sites, and established the knowledge required by the community and brick-makers for improving abandoned land use for sustainability. Several techniques were utilised in data collection, including interviews and focus group discussions with village and ward leaders, district environmental officers, district community development officers, district planners, mud brick makers, and some members of the community from three specific wards, namely Kauzeni, Mindu, and Kihonda Maghorofani. The findings revealed a significant contribution of the mudbrick-making industry to enhancing income and improving the living standards of communities through employment creation. Particularly, women were involved in selling food to brick makers, while youth actively participated in brick-making activities. The abandoned holes resulting from soil extraction were repurposed for fishing, vegetable cultivation, and sugar cane production. The income accrued from these activities improved housing standards and increased social interaction among people from different regions, including seasonal migrants attracted to brick-making activities. Despite the noted positive effects, mud brick activities contributed significantly to land degradation due to the traditional technologies used in the process, resulting in large holes that posed risks to human and livestock lives. The study recommends enhancing brick makers' and landowners' awareness of implementing mud brick-making activities with appropriate sustainable environmental protection to improve the socio-economic status of both brick makers and the broader community.

Keywords; Abandoned Holes/Lands, Brick-Making Sites, Degraded Land, Local Government, Mud Bricks

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