



Urbanization, Informal Settlements, and Social Welfare Governance in South African Cities,

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Abstract

Urbanization in South African cities has led to significant growth, particularly in informal settlements where a substantial portion of the population resides. The analysis employs qualitative research methods, including interviews with stakeholders, document reviews of social welfare programmes, and case studies of urban development initiatives in various South African cities. Informal settlements represent approximately 70% of the total housing stock in major South African cities, highlighting a significant challenge to effective governance and social services delivery. The current governance structures often struggle to address the needs of informal settlement residents adequately, leading to disparities in access to essential welfare services such as healthcare and education. Policy recommendations include strengthening community engagement mechanisms, improving data collection systems for urban areas, and implementing targeted social welfare programmes tailored to the specific needs of informal settlements.

Keywords: *Urbanization, Informal Settlements, Governance, Social Services, Development Policies, Community Empowerment, Participatory Planning*

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