

The Role of Building Surveyors in Construction & Maintenance Value Chain in Light of Misadventure of COVID-19

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Key words: Capacity building; Cost management; Deformation measurement; Real estate development; Risk management; Standards; Urban renewal; World Heritage Sites; Disasters

SUMMARY

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Objectives-

Ivor Seeley in “Building Maintenance” put it most succinctly, that Building Maintenance is the Cinderella of the Built Environment, seen as a drain on legitimate profits. Yet without Maintenance, the Construction Industry is a wasted investment. Absence of or inadequate Maintenance is a danger to would-be users, of whatever asset has been built.

The COVID-19 pandemic the aspects of the Built Environment that we had let go, must be addressed to meet required standards, in terms of design, choice of materials, space specifications that permit “keeping distance” It became the by-word, in church, stores, stadia, practically anywhere where more than three people would share space, even in public and private transportation; lifts and escalators in public buildings.

Results:

To underscore impending doom of the absence of maintenance policy and legislation, or the negligent application thereof, that assure safe, secure, convenient, comfortable and up-to-standard conditions of assets put up at great expense. Investing in Real Estate commits massive, resources in assets with the assurance that condition surveys & audits and structural conditions of the assets meet the standards of performance, rather than spend almost the same sum in repairs and restorations

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Conclusions

Being casual about maintenance, leads to casualties. Lives depend on the standards duty of care, similar to the aviation industry where, once airborne, we must be assured that every box is ticked and verified to be in the best condition as per manufacturers' specifications and the statutory requirements. Regular and thorough inspection is necessary and certification of "fitness for intended purpose or use" is mandatory.

Significance of my work:

Increased populations, especially in urban centres, higher standards of duty of care is required in order to protect public and private built environments, including critical infrastructures. The ever increasing insecurity threats by terrorists and other organized crime means we have to rethink how well we can build back better and harden would be targets. A Disaster like the Solai Dam tragedy in Nakuru, where 48 died could have been avoided if regular inspection and certification were practised. Prevention is cheaper and better than cure, at the ratio of one USD to Fifteen USD. Mombasa's Fort Jesus, built, to protect the Old Mombasa Port, in 1593-1596 by the Portuguese and a UNESCO World Heritage Convention, was recently discovered to be slowly washing away to the sea, due to the rising sea level; State House, next door is not entirely safe either.

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