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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNINHABITABLE HOUSES IN KWALA GEBANG VILLAGE, LANGKAT REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the physical conditions of uninhabitable houses, identify the factors that constrain communities from improving housing quality, and formulate effective and sustainable strategies for housing improvement in Kwala Gebang Village, Langkat Regency. this research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. the results show that most houses in Kwala Gebang Village are in poor physical condition, with inadequate ventilation and lighting, as well as insufficient sanitation. the main factors constraining the community in improving housing quality include economic limitations, lack of understanding of habitable housing standards, technical building constraints, and the limited effectiveness of government programs. the impacts of uninhabitable housing are evident in community health, safety, and well-being, including increased risks of disease, accidents, and psychological stress. applicable strategies include improving the targeting of government programs, encouraging active community participation, implementing technical housing improvements, providing community education and empowerment, and conducting continuous monitoring and evaluation. this study is expected to serve as a reference for planning effective, efficient, and sustainable housing improvement programs.

Introduction

Kwala Gebang Village, located in Lalat Regency, is one of the areas that still faces challenges in terms of meeting the basic needs of the community, especially related to decent housing. A house is a basic necessity for every individual, as it serves not only as a place of refuge, but also as a symbol of security, comfort, and family well-being. However,

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in Kwala Gebang Village, there are still a number of houses that are classified as uninhabitable, both in terms of building structure, materials, and supporting facilities such as sanitation, ventilation, and access to clean water.

Uninhabitable houses not only have an impact on the comfort of residents, but also pose serious health risks. Poor physical condition of the house, such as cracked walls, leaky roofs, damaged floors, and minimal ventilation, increase the likelihood of illnesses, such as ISPA, diarrhea, and other health problems. In addition, an unsafe home can also pose a risk of accidents, especially for children and the elderly. This problem is often exacerbated by the economic limitations of the community. The high cost of home repairs and lack of access to government assistance or social institutions make it difficult for residents to carry out renovations or repairs. In fact, improving the quality of housing is one of the strategic efforts to improve the quality of life of the community as a whole.

Figure 1. Improvement in the Quality of Uninhabitable Houses (RTLH) in Kwala Gebang Village, Langkat Regency

Based on the data obtained, Langkat Regency faces serious problems related to uninhabitable housing. It is recorded that there are around 18,624 units of uninhabitable houses (RTLH) spread throughout the district. This considerable number shows that there are still many people living in residential conditions that do not meet health, safety, and comfort standards. In an effort to overcome this problem, the Langkat Regency Government through Regent Syah Afandin targets the renovation of 1,000 RTLH every year. This program aims to reduce poverty rates while improving the quality of people's housing, so that it can directly support the improvement of residents' welfare.

The focus of this research, namely Kwala Gebang Village, shows conditions that are not much different from the general picture in Langkat Regency. This village has 397 building units with an area of about 15.32 hectares, of which about 60% of buildings show irregularities and the density level reaches 23-25% of units per hectare. This condition shows the existence of spatial planning problems and limited quality of housing

infrastructure that can affect the comfort and safety of residents. The Langkat Regency government's efforts until September 2025 to renovate RTLH in Kwala Gebang Village as many as 51 units, this is a real step in improving the quality of housing as well as providing an example of program implementation for other regions. From a social and economic perspective, the increase in the number of RTLH is in line with poverty indicator data in Langkat Regency. The poverty line increased from IDR 432,371 per capita per month in 2021 to IDR 453,383 in 2022, while the poverty depth index (P1) increased from 1.17 to 1.33 points. This shows that the problem of uninhabitable houses cannot be separated from the economic conditions of the community, where limited purchasing power is an inhibiting factor for independent home repair.

The government's program through the Housing and Settlement Areas Office (Perkim), which is listed in the 2019-2024 RPJMD, emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of housing as a priority for regional development. The implementation of the RTLH renovation program in Kwala Gebang Village is part of an effort to create an equitable, sustainable, and able to improve community welfare, especially for poor families who live in uninhabitable houses. Thus, research on improving the quality of RTLH in Kwala Gebang Village is very relevant. This research not only focuses on the physical condition of buildings, but also pays attention to the relationship with socio-economic aspects of the community, the effectiveness of government programs, and strategies to improve the quality of housing in a sustainable manner. The results of the research are expected to provide concrete recommendations for the government and the community to accelerate the repair of uninhabitable houses, thereby creating a safer, healthier, and more comfortable residential environment.

The urgency of this research arises from the real problems faced by the people of Kwala Gebang Village regarding their housing conditions. Based on government data, Kwala Gebang Village still has a number of houses that are classified as uninhabitable, both in terms of building structure, materials, and supporting facilities such as sanitation, ventilation, and access to clean water. This condition not only affects the comfort of life, but also has a direct impact on the health and safety of residents. The high risk of diseases, such as respiratory tract infections and indigestion, as well as the possibility of accidents due to the physical condition of a damaged home, puts families, especially children and the elderly, in vulnerable situations. In addition, the socio-economic aspect also strengthens the urgency of this research. Data shows that the poverty line in Langkat Regency has increased, and most of the residents living in uninhabitable houses come from low-income groups.

Economic limitations make it difficult for them to renovate independently, so the problem of unsuitable housing continues. On the other hand, the government has targeted the renovation of RTLH gradually, but the number of RTLH that must be handled is still very large compared to the capacity of the existing program. This research also has strategic urgency in the context of sustainable development. Improving the quality of housing is not only a physical improvement of buildings, but also an effort to improve the quality of life of the community, reduce poverty rates, and create a safe, healthy, and comfortable environment. The results of the research are expected to be the basis for the government, non-governmental organizations, and local communities to design more

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effective, targeted, and sustainable home improvement strategies. With this background, research on improving the quality of uninhabitable houses in Kwala Gebang Village is very relevant and feasible. This research not only provides scientific contributions in the field of housing and community development, but also provides practical benefits for improving the welfare of the people of Kwala Gebang Village in real terms.

Based on these conditions, attention to improving the quality of uninhabitable houses is very important. These efforts not only support the creation of a healthy and safe environment, but also contribute to improving the social and economic well-being of the community. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the condition of uninhabitable houses in Kwala Gebang Village and formulate a strategy to improve the quality of the house in order to provide optimal benefits for the community.

Problem Identification

Based on the background and existing data, several main problems related to uninhabitable houses in Kwala Gebang Village, Lalat Regency can be identified, including:

1. Unsuitable physical condition of the house
   Many homes have damaged building structures, leaky roofs, uneven floors, and fragile walls. Lack of supporting facilities, such as sanitation, ventilation, and access to clean water.
2. The economic limitations of the community
   The income level of most residents is low, making it difficult to repair houses independently. Low purchasing power is an obstacle in improving the quality of housing.
3. Impact on health and safety
   Uninhabitable homes are at risk of causing diseases, such as ISPA, diarrhea, and other health problems. Poor physical condition of the home increases the risk of accidents for children and the elderly.
4. Spatial planning and building density
   About 60% of the buildings in this village are irregular, with a density rate of 23–25% units per hectare, which affects the comfort and safety of the environment.
5. Limited effectiveness of renovation programs
   The government's program, which targets the renovation of 1,000 RTLH per year, has not been able to reach all uninhabitable houses. There needs to be a proper planning strategy and priorities to make the program more effective.

Based on the identification of the above problems, this study formulates several main questions as follows:

1. What is the physical condition of the house that is not livable in Kwala Gebang Village today?
2. What are the factors that are obstacles for the community in improving the quality of housing?
3. What is the impact of uninhabitable houses on the health, safety, and welfare of the community in Kwala Gebang Village?

4. What strategies can be implemented to improve the quality of uninhabitable houses effectively and sustainably?

Literature Review

Uninhabitable Houses (RTLH)

According to Purba and Himawan (2021), uninhabitable houses are houses that do not meet the requirements for livable houses, where the construction of the building is unreliable, the area is not in accordance with the standards per person, and is not healthy and dangerous for the occupants.

Habitable House Standards

Maryani and Eka (2023) explained that livable houses must meet several criteria, including: having good ventilation, adequate lighting, adequate sanitation, safe building structures, and access to clean water.

Uninhabitable House Repair Program

The uninhabitable house repair program aims to help low-income people in improving the condition of their homes to become livable. This program is usually implemented by the government by providing assistance in the form of building materials or stimulant funds.

Implementation of the RTLH Improvement Program

The implementation of the RTLH improvement program requires good coordination between the central government, local governments, and the community. In addition, there is a need for monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the assistance provided is on target and effective in improving the quality of community housing.

Factors Affecting Housing Quality

Some of the factors that affect the quality of housing include: the physical condition of the building, access to basic facilities such as clean water and sanitation, the socio-economic conditions of the residents, and government policies in providing livable housing.

Method

Types and Approaches to Research

This study uses a type of descriptive qualitative research. According to Creswell (2019), qualitative research aims to explore and understand the meaning that according to a number of individuals or groups of people are considered to come from a social or humanitarian problem. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the experience, views, and perceptions of the community regarding the condition of uninhabitable houses and efforts to improve them in Kwala Gebang Village.

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Location and Subject of Research

This research was carried out in Kwala Gebang Village, Stabat District, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province. The selection of this location is based on the high number of uninhabitable houses in the village and the importance of this research to contribute to improving the quality of community housing. The research subjects consisted of:

1. Beneficiaries of the RTLH program, to understand the condition of their houses before and after renovation.
2. Village governments and related apparatus, to find out the role and policies in the implementation of the program.
3. Technical personnel implementing renovations, to gain perspective on the process and technical challenges in home renovation.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques used in this study include:

1. In-depth interview: Conducted with key informants such as village heads, beneficiaries, and technical personnel. This interview aims to explore in-depth information about their experiences, perceptions, and views regarding the RTLH program.
2. Participatory observation: The researcher is directly involved in the daily activities of the community to observe the condition of the house and the social interaction in the environment.
3. Documentation: Collect documents related to the RTLH program, such as implementation reports, photos of the condition of houses before and after renovation, and statistical data related to the number of uninhabitable houses in the village.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques according to Miles and Huberman (2019), which consisted of three stages:

1. Data reduction: The process of sorting, focusing, and simplifying data obtained from various sources.
2. Data presentation: Compile data in the form of a systematic narrative to facilitate understanding.
3. Drawing conclusions: Drawing conclusions from the data that has been presented, which is then tested for validity through source triangulation techniques and techniques.

Data Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study uses triangulation techniques, namely:

1. Source triangulation: Compare data obtained from various sources, such as interviews with communities, village governments, and technical personnel.
2. Triangulation techniques: Using a variety of data collection techniques, such as interviews, observations, and documentation, to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

Results and Discussion

How is the physical condition of the house that is not livable in Kwala Gebang Village today

The physical condition of the uninhabitable house in Kwala Gebang Village is currently still showing quite serious problems. Based on data from the Lalat Regency Government, Kwala Gebang Village has around 397 building units, most of which do not meet the standards of livable houses. About 60% of buildings show irregularities, with a density of 23–25% of units per hectare, thus affecting the comfort and safety of the environment. In general, such houses have a number of inadequate physical characteristics. Some homes have suffered structural damage, such as leaky roofs, cracked walls, and uneven floors. Limited ventilation and inadequate lighting cause air circulation to be suboptimal, so that the house becomes damp and prone to respiratory diseases. In addition, supporting facilities such as access to clean water and sanitation are also often unavailable or do not meet health standards, increasing the risk of infectious diseases and other health disorders.

The physical condition of this unsuitable house not only has an impact on health, but also on the safety and psychological aspects of the residents. Fragile or unstable homes increase the risk of accidents, especially for children and the elderly, while space limitations and building irregularities create discomfort in daily activities. This phenomenon shows that renovation programs and improving the quality of uninhabitable houses are very important. The Langkat Regency Government through the RTLH renovation program has made repairs to several houses, but the number of repairs is still limited compared to the existing needs. Therefore, this study is very relevant to describe the physical condition of RTLH as a whole, identify factors that affect the condition of the house, and formulate the right strategy to improve the quality of housing for the people of Kwala Gebang Village.

What are the factors that are obstacles for the community in improving the quality of housing

The improvement of housing quality in Kwala Gebang Village is inseparable from various obstacles faced by the community. Based on observations and various previous studies, these obstacles can be categorized into several main factors, namely economic, social, technical, and regulatory.

1. Economic Factors
   The main obstacle faced by the community is economic limitations. Most of the residents of Kwala Gebang Village belong to the low-income group, making it difficult to allocate enough funds for home renovations or repairs. The cost of building materials, builders' wages, and house maintenance often exceeds the family's financial capabilities, so many houses remain in uninhabitable conditions. This condition is strengthened by poverty line data in Langkat Regency which shows an increase from IDR 432,371 per capita per month in 2021 to IDR 453,383 per capita in 2022.
2. Social and Cultural Factors
   Social and cultural factors also affect the quality of housing. Some people have a limited understanding of the standards of livable houses, so the priority of home

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renovation is often not the main concern. In addition, lifestyle and habits of using space in the house can also be an obstacle to improvement, for example dependence on traditional houses that are difficult to modify.

3. Technical and Infrastructure Factors
   Technical obstacles related to the condition of old buildings that are already fragile, the use of poor quality materials, and limited access to building materials are significant challenges. In addition, supporting infrastructure such as access roads to houses, the availability of clean water, and inadequate sanitation systems also hinder community efforts to improve the quality of housing as a whole.
4. Regulatory Factors and Government Programs
   Although the government provides RTLH renovation assistance programs, the limited number of houses repaired each year causes some houses to not receive attention. Complicated administrative processes or lack of program socialization are also obstacles, so not all residents can take advantage of government assistance optimally.

By understanding these various obstacle factors, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the obstacles faced by the community in improving the quality of housing. Furthermore, the analysis of these factors will be the basis for recommendations for effective and sustainable strategies for the improvement of uninhabitable houses in Kwala Gebang Village.

How does the impact of uninhabitable houses on the health, safety, and welfare of the community in Kwala Gebang Village

The condition of uninhabitable houses (RTLH) in Kwala Gebang Village is not only a physical problem, but also has a significant impact on the health, safety, and welfare of the community. A house that is damaged, leaking, or has an unstable structure puts residents, especially children and the elderly, at a high risk of accidents, such as falling, falling off roofs, or slipping on damaged floors. In terms of health, RTLH with poor ventilation, lighting, and sanitation creates a humid and dirty environment. This condition increases the risk of developing infectious diseases such as respiratory infections, diarrhea, and skin disorders. In addition, limited access to clean water makes it difficult for people to maintain the cleanliness of their homes and the surrounding environment, so that the overall health of families is threatened.

The psychological impact and social well-being are also felt. Living in an unsafe and uncomfortable home affects people's quality of life, reduces their sense of security, and causes stress in the long run. This indirectly impacts the family's economic productivity because more time and energy is taken up to deal with home problems or the health of family members. This phenomenon shows that livable houses are not only physical problems, but are closely related to social, economic, and public health aspects. Therefore, this study is important to analyze in depth how the condition of RTLH affects the welfare of the community in Kwala Gebang Village. The results of the research are expected to be the basis for the planning and implementation of home improvement programs that not only focus on the physical of the building, but also improve the health, safety, and quality of life of the community as a whole.

What strategies can be implemented to improve the quality of uninhabitable houses effectively and sustainably

Improving the quality of uninhabitable houses (RTLH) in Kwala Gebang Village requires a planned, comprehensive, and sustainable strategy. This strategy must consider various factors, ranging from the physical condition of the building, the economic capabilities of the community, to government policies and local community support.

1. Government Strategy and Public Policy
   Local governments have an important role in providing renovation programs and livable housing assistance. The program needs to be designed on target, by prioritizing the houses whose condition is most concerning. In addition, the government can provide incentives in the form of material assistance, renovation cost stimulants, or housing loan interest subsidies for low-income people. Increased coordination between related agencies is also needed so that the program runs effectively and efficiently.
2. Community Participation Strategy
   The success of the RTLH quality improvement program also depends on the active participation of the community. A participatory approach can be done through village deliberations, citizen involvement in the renovation process, or the formation of working groups for the maintenance and maintenance of the house. Community involvement will increase a sense of ownership, ensure the sustainability of repairs, and minimize the risk of damage due to lack of maintenance.
3. Technical Strategy and Infrastructure
   Technically, improving the quality of a home must pay attention to durable building materials, safe and comfortable design, and adequate ventilation and sanitation systems. The application of simple but effective technologies, such as cross-ventilation, the use of quality local materials, and the improvement of building structures, can improve the quality of homes at a more affordable cost.
4. Education and Empowerment Strategy
   Education and counseling to the community regarding livable housing standards, home maintenance, and the importance of sanitation are also important strategies. With enough knowledge, people can be more proactive in maintaining the condition of their homes and the surrounding environment, so that home repairs are not only physical but also sustainable.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy
   In order for the RTLH improvement strategy to be effective, it is necessary to have a periodic monitoring and evaluation system. This monitoring aims to ensure that the renovated home is truly livable, that the assistance is on target, and that repairs can last. Evaluation of program results can also be material for improvement for the next strategy.

By integrating government strategies, community participation, building techniques, education, and evaluation, improving the quality of uninhabitable houses in Kwala Gebang Village can be carried out effectively and sustainably. This approach not only improves the physical condition of the house, but also the health, safety, and welfare of the community as a whole, thus supporting better village development.

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Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded as follows:

1. Physical Condition of the House

Most of the houses in Kwala Gebang Village are classified as uninhabitable. Structural damage, lack of ventilation and lighting, and inadequate sanitation facilities are the main characteristics of RTLH in the village.

2. Community Constraint Factors

The main obstacles include the economic limitations of residents, low understanding of livable housing standards, technical building constraints, and limited access and effectiveness of government programs in repairing houses.

3. The Impact of Uninhabitable Houses

RTLH has a negative impact on the health, safety, and welfare of the community. The risk of infectious diseases, accidents, and psychological distress increases in families living in unqualified homes.

4. Housing Quality Improvement Strategy

Effective strategies include: planning and implementing targeted government programs, active community involvement, implementing technical home repairs that meet standards, community education and empowerment, and continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure the sustainability of improvements.

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