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ASSESSING THE CAUSES OF URBANIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON HOUSING QUALITY IN CITY OF LAGOS

¹AKINYEMI, SAHEED O. ²HADIZA,
AHMED MUSA. ³SALAU, L. T.

¹Department of Estate Management and
Valuation, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa
University Bauchi. ²Department of Estate
Management, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna.
³Department of Estate Management and
Valuation, Federal Polytechnic Bauchi

Introduction

In developing countries, a substantial and growing proportion lives in or around metropolitan areas and mega cities, where their livelihoods depend to some extent on natural resources such as land for food, water and fuel, and space for living (Adesina, 2007). The population pressure means that resources in such zones are often overexploited. Nigeria has been experiencing a great transition from rural to urban oriented economy, which has been accompanied by the increasing mobility of production factors such as: capital, labour, technology and information to the urban cities such as Ibadan, Lagos, Kano, Benin, Aba, Kaduna etc. Consequence to the wide spread beliefs that the urban fringes are

Abstract

The phenomenon of urbanization is a consequence of population increase and migration from rural to urban areas and growth-centres. The urban growth rate in Nigeria today is put at 5.8% per annum (Draft NUDP, 2004). Rural economy is principally agrarian. But, under conditions of increasing population and diminishing rural resources, some contingent of rural population migrates to urban areas for helpful job security, higher education, higher income, better health and stay alive. However, in spite of multitude of generalizations in urban theories, little is known on the housing quality of this area. This study will therefore, examines the characteristics of the urban settlement with a

View to maintain sustainability on the housing quality of residential buildings in the study area as measured by the physical, socio-economic and environmental conditions in the city of Ikeja-Nigeria. The research employed qualitative method, making use of secondary data due to the nature of information required and the time frame required to conduct the study, this is to say the researchers are of the postpositivist methodological philosophy of research. The data were sourced from journals, textbooks, online daily newspapers and other online publications and field survey.

Keywords: *Urbanization, Housing, Impact, Quality, Assessing.*

fashionable area in urban literature especially in developed countries. Empirical studies have revealed a contrary view regarding the fate of cities in developing countries (Dupont 2005). The UN-Habitat report (2005) has indicated that, in the year 2025, 61% Of the 5 billion world population will be urban and most mega-cities will stand in what we call the 'south clusters'. About 85% of these developments will occurs at the urban hinterland widely referred to as peri-urban, suburbs, urban fringe, city edge, metropolitan shadow amongst other. Because of proximity to the city, and urban bias nature of development policies in Nigeria, the zone experiences much of urbanization processes and serves as buffer for future urban development.

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The phenomenon of urbanization is a consequence of population increase and migration from rural to urban areas and growth-centres. The urban growth rate in Nigeria today is put at 5.8% per annum (Draft NUDP, 2004). Rural economy is principally agrarian. But, under conditions of increasing population and diminishing rural resources, some contingent of rural population migrates to urban areas for helpful job security, higher education, higher income, better health and stay alive. However, in spite of multitude of generalizations in urban theories, little is known on the housing quality of this area.

This study will therefore, examines the characteristics of the urban settlement with a view to maintain sustainability on the housing quality of

residential buildings in the study area as measured by the physical, socio-economic and environmental conditions in the city of Ikeja-Nigeria. The conceptualization of changes we once had of urban cities was stereotyped and relatively simplistic, but it is now more complex. There is interest in the discipline of Housing on the physical characteristics of the urban zone.

This study seeks to fill the gap on the emerging socio-spatial transformations by advances knowledge on the physical structure and socio-economic characteristics of the residents of the urban cities in developing countries using Ikeja as a case study.

This study therefore is to examine the effect of urbanization on housing quality. Social, economic and cultural characteristics as well as environmental issues associated with people living in this area are to be examined so as to impact knowledge that can transform these areas. This is because, it has been observed that little is known about the people living in the urban city of Lagos and those that have worked on it have not done much on Ikeja axis but rather on other city slum.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The study aimed at assessing the causes of urbanization and its effect on housing quality in the city of Lagos with a view to promote urban renewal and housing sustainability.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- I. To identify the causes of urbanization in the city of Lagos
- II. To examine the effect of urbanization on housing quality in the city of Lagos

Literature Review on Urbanization in Nigeria

The phenomenon of urbanization is a consequence of population increase and migration from rural to urban areas and growth-centres. The urban growth rate in Nigeria today is put at 5.8% per annum (Draft NUDP, 2004). Rural economy is principally agrarian. But, under conditions of increasing population and diminishing rural resources, some contingent of rural population migrates to urban areas for helpful job security, higher education, higher income, better health and longer life. The result usually is disappointed and disillusion as the poor in some cities have a better life than those in rural

areas. Old settlements are congested and crowded, new formations emerge without preliminary design and planning, and without preliminary design and planning, and without infrastructure.

The problem of uncontrolled urbanization in Nigeria is already with us in all our cities. The Draft National Urban Development Policy (NUDP, 2004) notes that, Nigeria towns are growing without adequate planning. Millions of Nigerians live in sub-standard and sub-human environment, plagued by slum, squalor and grossly inadequate social amenities. The result is manifested in growing overcrowding in homes and increasing pressure on infrastructural facilities and rapid deteriorating environment.

In Europe, urbanization brought increased wealth and economic earnings, higher education, lower fertility, better health, longer life and more amenities. But in Africa, and indeed, in Nigeria, the opposite is the case. The Executive Director of African Population and Health Research Centre, Nairobi, observes that in African States, research has shown that urbanization is attended by reduction in earnings, and other social indicators, adding that rural communities have better social and economic indicators than those in urban slums.

Urbanization and Urban Growth

Nigeria has been experiencing a rapid rate of urbanization. In 1952, 10% of the population lived in urban centres with a population of 20,000 people and above. This increased to 20 and 38% in 1970 and 1993 respectively. By the year 2010, it is estimated that 60% of the population will live in cities. The growth in the size of cities has been equally rapid, in 1960; Lagos and Ibadan were the only two cities with more than 500,000 people. The number increased to 9 by 1980, and 14 by 1990. This is expected to rise substantially by 2010 (UNCSD, 1997).

A feature of urban environments, especially in Africa is the influx of rural dwellers into the urban areas in search of jobs. These jobs are sometimes unavailable and large segments of the unemployed in this migrant group are usually without a sustainable means of livelihood and may eventually be classified among the urban poor, thereby making up a part of the estimated 70% of the urban population that live in unplanned squatter settlements with no basic infrastructural services in cities (NHCS, 1998).

Housing

The Housing has been universally acknowledged as one of the most essential necessities of human life and is a major economic asset in every nation. Adequate housing provides the foundation for stable communities and social inclusion (Oladapo, 2006). Konadu et al. (1994) have established a strong correlation between housing, good health, productivity and socioeconomic development. Also, Gilbertson et al. (2008) have observed that there is a significant association between housing conditions and physical and mental health of an individual.

Osuide (2004) suggests that: "Having a safe place to live in is one of the fundamental elements of human dignity and this enhances human development". People's right to shelter is thus a basic one and the provision of decent housing to all requiring them should be the guarantee of every civilized society and one of the criteria for gauging development.

Furthermore, So and Leung (2004) have also established a significant correlation between the housing quality and the comfort, convenience and visual acceptability of the house. Therefore the significance of adequate housing to the social well-being of the people in any society cannot be overemphasized. However, the provision of adequate housing in Nigeria and other developing nations alike still remains one of the most intractable challenges facing human and national development. Previous attempts by all stakeholders, including government agencies, planners and developers to provide necessary recipe for solving the housing problem have yielded little or no success. Thus, for the past few decades, access to adequate housing has remained one of the most unattainable expectations of the majority of urban dwellers in Nigeria (Jiboye, 2010).

Housing Quality

A normative definition of housing quality or housing quality standards generally refers to the grade or level of acceptability of dwelling units and their associated and immediate residential environment, including the design and functionality of housing structures, building materials used, the amount of internal and external space pertaining to the dwelling, housing utilities, and basic service provision (Meng and Hall, 2006). Housing quality standards are often used as norms or measures that are applicable in legal cases where there is some question as to the acceptability of construction relative to

prevailing laws or conventions that operate within the residential building industry.

The definition of housing quality embraces many factors which include the physical condition of the building and other facilities and services that make living in a particular area conducive. The quality of housing within any neighborhood should be such that satisfies minimum health standards and good living standard, but should also be affordable to all categories of households (Okewole and Aribigbola, 2006).

However, housing quality is a rather more complex concept with broader social and economic meaning. It accounts for both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of residential units, their immediate surroundings, and the needs of the occupants. Moreover, the concept of housing quality is relative as it relates to local standards and conditions. What is considered to be reasonable quality in one context may be considered poor quality in another context and vice versa.

Housing Quality Criteria

Four criteria provide the basis for identifying indicators to produce a meaningful Housing Quality Indicator, namely; objective criteria, scientific/technical criteria, management criteria and social and cultural criteria (Hall and Meng, 2006). Each class of criteria has its own considerations that govern the selection of specific indicators from available data resources, as noted below:

Objective Criteria Indicators Should:

- represent the local environment and should be comprehensive enough to address issues that include poverty and inequity in the housing sector;
- be sensitive to changes between different socio-economic classes, especially in terms of economic status indicators such as accumulated wealth and income.
- Scientific/technical criteria indicators should:
- be separable into geographically localized components and should be based on house hold level data so that they can be measured both locally and globally as well as spatially in order to identify statistical and spatial distributions of the HQI within a study area;

- be technically feasible to measure.

Management criteria indicators should:

- be easy to obtain from available data and subsequent calculations;
- be easy to understand, and cost-effective so that the analysis of housing quality and housing segregation can be effectively utilized by policy makers;
- be consistent and comparable so that housing quality and housing segregation can be monitored over time and can be compared between cities.

Social and cultural criteria should:

- include the preferences and priorities of the community in the housing programs;
- enable local participants to evaluate indicators selected from the above criteria to make housing improvement proposals acceptable relative to local norms and expectations.

HOUSING QUALITY SITUATION IN NIGERIA

The definition of housing quality embraces many factors which include the physical condition of the building and other facilities and services that make living in a particular area conducive. The quality of housing within any neighbourhood should be such that satisfies minimum health standards and good living standard, but should also be affordable to all categories of households (Okewole and Aribigbola, 2006). The housing situation in Nigeria is characterized by some inadequacies, which are qualitative and quantitative in nature (Oladapo, 2006). While the quantitative housing problem could be solved by increasing the number of existing stock, the qualitative inadequacies are enormous and complex. Despite Federal Government access to factors of housing production, the country could at best expect 4.2% of the annual requirement.

Market failure to provide affordable housing has created problems for households living below the poverty level by forcing them to occupy low-quality and overcrowded dwellings located either in decayed areas within the central city or in informal settlements located at the urban fringe (Meng, Hall, & Roberts, 2006). Inadequate housing affects a large proportion, perhaps more than 50%, of all urban residents in the developing world (World Bank,

2000). Moreover, poor urban infrastructure and deficient services, the absence of formal land titles, and generally poor local environmental conditions are now common characteristics of cities in developing countries. The social and financial distance between the urban poor and the economically better-off classes are reflected in the limited opportunities for the former to obtain housing through anything other than informal means. This limitation has produced a highly uneven and segregated distribution of housing quality across socio-economic classes and also over space (UNCHS, 2001; Meng et al., 2006). The most negative effect of housing supply shortages and housing inequities in Nigeria is the formation of slum areas at the fringes of virtually all urban areas. These areas are typically occupied by recent rural in-migrants and other low-income groups, and are often abandoned in terms of political and economic support (UN-HABITAT, 2003). High population and dwelling unit densities, poor housing conditions, limited services, high levels of pollution, and a lack of opportunity to obtain jobs, education, and accessible health care has contributed to entrenching a complicated poverty cycle that places great stresses on the health, livelihoods and overall well-being of the urban fringe poor (Andersen, 2003). Effective housing policies are needed to help remediate some of these problems and to close the gaps created by market-based housing shortages. In particular, access to housing of reasonable minimum quality must be promoted for those living below the poverty line.

Housing Quality and Environment

The quality of the environment in most urban centres in Nigeria is deplorable. This is not so much dependent on the material characteristics of the buildings (Mabogunje, 1980) but on their organization as spatial units. The slow process of urban planning and zoning, in the face of rapid urbanisation in most urban centres, has resulted in poor layout of buildings with inadequate roads between them and inadequate drainage and provision for refuse evacuation. Thus there is a high incidence of pollution (water, solid waste, air and noise) and inadequacy of open spaces for other land uses.

IMPACT OF HOUSING QUALITY ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEGENERATION

Studies have shown the deplorable conditions of urban housing in Nigeria (Onibokun, 1972; Wahab et al., 1990; Olotuah, 2005; Jagun, 2003) sites that

75% of the dwelling units in Nigeria"s urban centres are substandard and the dwellings are sited in slums. These results from combined effects of natural ageing of the buildings, lack of maintenance and neglect, wrong use of the buildings, poor sanitation in the disposal of sewage and solid waste, wrong development of land, and increasing deterioration of the natural landscape.

URBANIZATION AND HOUSING QUALITY

As a result of urbanization and lack of economic opportunities in rural areas, many people move to the urban areas that are already dealing with issues of overcrowding, infrastructure and high cost of living. As a result, most people are forced to seek shelter in slums and urban fringe. United Nation Habitat in 2006 found that 90% of slum residents are in the developing countries with struggling economies. In addition, most urban settings were not designed to handle millions of people which directly impact the availability and affordability of housing, forcing millions to live in substandard dwellings with poor housing quality. This is mainly because substandard accommodation in the urban areas is very cheap.

EFFECT OF URBANIZATION ON HOUSING QUALITY

The rapid increase in the population of the urban centres has resulted in an increase in the cost of living, because of higher demand on urban commodities that are getting shorter in supply by the day. Thus there is a dearth and high cost of urban land, and high cost of housing, which is often in short supply and out of the economic reach of the majority of the urban households who incidentally fall into the low-income category. The greater percentage of the poor in the urban area lives in the slum area of the city. This is mainly because substandard accommodation there is very cheap and the neighbourhoods are in close proximity to their work places.

Substandard housing is the type of housing that does not meet the standards for living by people. These standards are usually set by governments and deal with how safe the dwelling is for people to live. For example, there may not be appropriate heating, plumbing, electricity or proper sanitation. Often substandard housing is deteriorated housing that has not been repaired or temporary housing that does not meet building codes.

Unfortunately, the number of people living in the slums or substandard housing is increasing. Crime rates are also high in this area, since there is very

little light at night and police protection. Substandard housing is a serious issue. It can be a place where diseases spread quickly because of lack of sanitation and garbage disposal problems. Lack of clean water for washing and drinking can also cause diseases.

POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO POOR HOUSING QUALITY IN IKEJA

Significantly, adequate housing contributes not only to national development but also determines the health, security, sanitation and socio-cultural and physical wellbeing of the individual, the community and the nation at large. The followings can be put in place;

- **Extensive Urban Renewal Programmes**

Most urban centres require extensive urban renewal programmes. The aim is to improve the environment in which the houses are situated and the programmes entail the redevelopment, rehabilitation or renovation of buildings. Because the residents of the neighbourhoods in the core areas of the city are culturally attached to the land it is impracticable to embark on total clearance and resettlement programmes. Slum upgrading and improvement should therefore be aimed at.

- **The Poverty Alleviation Programmes**

Poor housing is intricately linked with poverty and it is indeed informed by it, thus government has a definite role to play in addressing the high unequal distribution of wealth in the country. The poverty alleviation programmes of government should be stepped up to reduce unemployment rate in the country.

- **Public Housing Delivery In Nigeria**

The intervention of the public sector in the provision of low-cost houses, especially for low-income earners, is desirable and should be pursued with vigour. The housing programmes should be based on genuine local participation in order to ensure sustainability. This is because local communities are in the best position to identify their needs, and order their priorities. Local communities have valuable experience, a special understanding of their environment, their local building resources and the ways of making the best uses of them.

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