Full Length Research Paper

Analysis of the socio-economic characteristics and housing condition in the core neighbourhood of Akure, Nigeria

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The paper highlights survey on low – income settlements in the core area of Akure, the capital of Ondo State, Nigeria and examined the socio – economic characteristics of the respondent and the physical state of the building they occupy. It gathers field data with a structured questionnaire administered among residents of low income neighbourhoods of Akure using random sampling technique. The data were analysed using simple frequency and percentage distribution tables. The study showed that most of the residents are engaged in the informal sector of the economy (self employed), their income level is very low and that household size is very high .The survey carried out on housing revealed that most dwellings were constructed before 1960 and are of monolithic type. They are lacking in essential infrastructures and a large number (53.3%) are unsatisfactory by modern standards. While we are aware of the fact that findings of a study of this type may be more typical of the case than more general to other cities, there is every reason to believe that the issues involved are more national than local. The policy recommendations have therefore been geared to reflect this observation.

Key words: Cities, core neighbourhood, housing, urbanisation.

INTRODUCTION

Developing countries are experiencing a rapid rate of urban growth. This is manifested more in Africa where African cities are currently undergoing an urban transition at an unprecedented scale and pace; with an estimated population growth rate of 5% per year, the proportion of Africans' urban residents double every 15 years (UN, 2002). Urbanization in Africa is characterized by a high population momentum, rural urban migration and the appropriation and re-classification of land around the periphery of urban areas (Cohen, 2004). However, Africa's urban transition is occurring within the context of a vulnerable economic base exposed to vagaries and pressure of global competition (Kessides, 2005). Managing urban growth is one of the most important sustainable development challenges of the region in the 21st century (Rakodi and Leduka, 2003)

In Nigeria, the rate of urbanization has witnessed tremendous increase in the last two decades. For instance, census in the early fifties showed that there were about 56 cities in the country and about 10.6% of the total population lived in these cities. This rose dramatically to 19.1% in 1963 and 24.5% in 1985. Today, the national population is about 140 million with the urban population constituting about 30%. It is estimated that by the year 2020 the urban population would reach 68% (Opuenebo, 2007). The rapid increase in urban population in Nigeria since the early seventies was mainly due to immigration induced by the concentration of the gains from the oil sector in the urban areas.

Despite the available town planning regulatory laws and

control, physical development in cities of less developed countries remains an array of chaos and disorder. This has manifested in many urban problems such as slum, housing conditions, lack of infrastructural services among others characterise the high density areas of Nigerian cities. The problem of undesirable nature of housing in high density areas of Nigerian cities has remained a serious issue. The reason for this may not be farfetched. The areas do not only provide abodes for the poor natives who hold tight to extended family properties, but also provide locations of relatively high accessibility for businesses and services to immigrants. Consequently, there is the preponderance of the large proportion of urban dwellers living in housing and environmental conditions that are clearly an affront to human dignity.

Nigeria, unlike other countries in Africa does not suffer from the problem of a single, large, primate city, where all the development is concentrated. Some cities in this network such as Kano, Ile-Ife, Ibadan are pre-colonial in their defined configuration whilst others, such as Enugu, Port-Harcourt and Kaduna, have their origin in colonial period. Irrespective of their origin, however, the character of a good number of Nigerian cities have been transformed in recent times especially as a result of their designation as capitals of the 36 States created between 1967 and 1976 (Mabogunje, 1980). An example of such cities is Akure - the Ondo State Capital.

The impact of urbanization and its attendant consequences of gross inequalities in terms of housing quality, proliferation of slums areas, squatters and general deterioration manifest in form of poor environmental and health condition of the people. This has become a major policy issues, particularly in third world nations. This paper focuses attention on the analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of the residents and the quality of housing and its associated problems in the core area of Akure with a view to proffering solution for sustainable housing delivery system in the study area to facilitate a better quality life as well as maintain stable urban communities. This study is focused on the case of Akure which is the capital city of Ondo state in Nigeria.

THE STUDY AREA

Akure is a traditional Nigerian city and like other traditional Yoruba towns in the country, it existed long before the advent of British colonial rule in the country. The city is located within Ondo State in the South Western part of Nigeria. Ondo State is one of the 36 states of Nigeria. Akure lies approximately on latitudes $5^0 45'$ and 8 13' North of the Equator and longitude $45^0 15^1$ East and longitude 6 East of the Greenwich Meridian. Akure is a medium- sized urban centre and became the provincial headquarter of Ondo province in 1939. It also became the capital city of Ondo State and a Local Government Headquarters in 1976. Consequently, there was

heterogeneous massing of people and activities in the city (Ministry of Works and Housing, 1980). The city's morphology has changed over time hitherto from a small province to assume its present status with its attendant land and housing problems, as experienced in similar medium sized urban centers in Nigeria.

Akure, a medium sized metropolis in Nigeria is a typical example in the history of growth and development of towns in Nigeria. There is large scale of development since the change in the administrative status of the town in 1976 from divisional and provincial headquarters to its present status as a state capital. The seat of government moved to Akure and there was massive exodus to Akure. Physical developments such as residential, institutional and commercial buildings were concentrated towards the centre of the town.

The core area is situated at the centre of the town. There are 27 residential neighborhoods in the core area of Akure (Ministry of Works and Housing, 1980). This is the oldest part of the town. The buildings here are typically old; typifying local values, preferences and indigenous urban traditions. The crowding index is usually very high. The core area is classified as high density areas as the buildings are characterized by overcrowding with high proportion of people living in single rooms (Olotuah, 2005). However, this core area is dominantly made up of urban dwellers typified by low socio-cultural adaptation to present day city technologies; hence the peculiarities observed in the zone (Akinbamijo, 2004).

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Cities are of enormous political, social, cultural and economic importance in various countries in which they are located. Housing is one of the major determinants of the morphology of these cities. Housing as a unit of the environment has profound influence on the health, efficiency, social behaviour, satisfaction and general welfare of the community. It reflects the cultural, social and economic values of a society, as it is the best physical and historical evidence of the civilization of a country (Omole, 2010). Adequate shelter has always been one of the very basic human needs. Overtime, its provision has been met in the form of dwellings which are temporary or permanent, natural or adapted (Ojo, 1998). However, housing is more than shelter (Wahab, 1983; Oladapo, 2006). It is a permanent structure for human habitation, and has become a critical component in the social, economic and health fabric of every nation. Its history is thus inseparable from the social, economic, cultural and political development of man (Listokin and Burchil, 2007).

Studies have shown that the provision of appropriate housing, particularly for the urban poor constitutes a major challenge to development in most African countries and developing nations at large (Okoye, 1990; Lawanson, 2005).

The United Nations Habitat Report (1989) affirmed that a large proportion of the third world's urban population lives and works in very poor condition. Apart from the fact that the poor inhabit many different low quality forms of housing, there are two other basic environmental problems that are evidently noticeable. One is the presence of pathogens in the human environment due to lack of basic infrastructure and services. The second is crowded and cramped living conditions.

One of the primary objectives of the principle of sustainable development as contained in the Brundtland Report of 1987 relates to ways of ensuring a better quality life for everyone, now and for generations to come (HC, 2003; NAHA, 2006). This entails a process of building our communities so that we can live comfortably by providing lasting and secure livelihoods which minimize resource depletion, environmental degradation, cultural disruptions and social instability (Jiboye, 2009; Akiyode, 2009). Since housing occupies a central position in the sustainable urbanization agenda in Nigeria and other developing nations; and also since African traditional family housing unit constitutes a significant component of the urban housing stock, there is the need to ensure its adequacy in other to facilitate a better quality life as well as maintain stable urban communities.

Many cities in Africa and Asia are seriously affected with this condition. Most of these cities do not have sewer; hence, their human excreta and wastewater ends up in rivers, streams, canals, gullies and ditches untreated. To improve the life of the poor in such deplorable parts of urban centre through physical planning, Olanrewaju (2004) suggested, with particular reference to Akure that urban renewal in form of rehabilitation and upgrading programme will be suitable. This is in a view to providing the essential facilities and revive the outdated ones rather than embarking on total clearance and redevelopment that can affect the residents negatively.

In a study of Akure, Omole (2000) carried out an assessment of housing condition and socio-economic life styles of slum dwellers in Akure. The study was carried out with the aid of questionnaire administration on building and facility survey. Data were also collected from related government ministries and departments to find out government's intervention in this area. Findings from the study revealed that the area chosen for the study exhibit slum condition that has undefiled impact on the socio-economic lifestyles and the health of the residents, as well as the general outlook of the environment. Recommendations were proffered to guide the policy makers towards enhancing the lives of the residents of the area.

Toyobo et al. (2011) in the study of the correlates of socio-economic characteristics of housing quality in Ogbomosho Township, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study examined the socio-economic characteristics of residents types of houses, facilities and condition of buildings. A total of 204 questionnaires were administered using systematic random sampling techniques. Data were further analyzed with the aid of simple descriptive analytical technique. The hypothesis was tested using ANOVA. The study showed inadequate provision of facilities such as pipe-borne water, erratic power supply, poor solid waste management and presence of substandard houses in the study area. The study concludes however that, there is urgent need for enforcement of planning regulations to improve the housing quality and facilities in the study area.

Uwadiegwu (2013) examined an insider's perception of the structural profile of the socio economic and housing problems of the slum areas in Enugu city, Nigeria. The study aims at the identification of the structural profile of the socio-economic and housing problems of the slum areas. Five slum areas in Enugu City were chosen for the study consisting of three core and two peripheral spontaneous slum areas, namely Coal Camp, Obiagu, and Ogui Urban (core slum areas), Ngenevu and Jamboree (peripheral slum areas). 412 slum dwellers randomly selected from the chosen areas participated in the study. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) version of Factor Analysis (FA) statistical technique was employed for the data analysis. The technique reduced the 17 variables used for the study to 7 components or factors. The PCA also produced the structural profile of the variables with lack of housing amenities being the paramount. This is followed in descending order by household size, lack of job and low income, accommodation, tenancy and lastly security problems. It is therefore recommended that programme for the improvement of the slum areas in Nigeria should be phased in accordance with this structure.

Most of these researches confined their studies on general description of the ugly slum environment, to historical emergence of slums and to geographical and sociological analysis of slum areas. Some of these studies have even advanced new approaches to slum elimination but nothing about in-depth identification of the ramification and the manifestations of the profile of the problems confronting the residents of the core area. It is very important that the structural profiles of the socio-economic and housing problems of the core areas are clearly identified. The emerged problem structure will assist in the articulation of adequate renewal programmes for the core areas.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The study population was derived from 42 traditional and modern residential neighbourhoods in Akure metropolis as classified by Ondo State Surveys (1980) and adapted from Fasakin (2000). In this neighbourhood, 27 residential neighbourhoods were identified in the core area of the city while 14 were selected for ease of questionnaire administration because of the homogeneity of the residents and buildings in the core area. The core residential neighbourhoods from where samples were taken include; Gbogi, Owode, Imuagun, Odojoka, Araromi, Odo Ogadi, Odokoyi, Isolo,

Ijomu, Ilisha, Igbehin, Odopetu, Igishan, Oritagun, Ilemo, Erekesan, Erekefa, Idiagba, Ijemikin,Obanla, Oke-Aro, Eru-Oba, Irowo and Okegan. This shows that 50% of the total 27 residential neighbourhoods that is 14 neighbourhoods were chosen for the study. This represents fairly well all the core area in terms of spatial spread, quality and quantity of information required.

Thereafter, the study further adopted a random selection of 50 buildings drawn from each of the 14 chosen core-residential zones. This sampling procedure brought the sampling frame to a manageable size of 700. Thereafter systematic random sampling was used to select respondents in the classified residential neighbourhood. A structured questionnaire was prepared and administered to the respondents. In each of the buildings targeted, only one household was interviewed and the respondent was the household head. The variables that were employed in the analysis are sex, educational level, annual income, household size, length of stay in the present dwelling and physical characteristics of the dwelling and its surrounding such as age, state of repairs, access road and plot sizes. To further accomplish the objective of this paper, an hypothesis was formulated thus:

H_{01}: Socio-economic characteristics of the inhabitants / respondents have no relationship with the building occupied.

This hypothesis was tested with the aid of Pearson correlation in order to determine whether there is significant relationship between socio- economic characteristics of respondents and the buildings occupied.

Descriptive statistics was used in evaluation of the data collected. The frequency distribution was used to assess the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The research also made use of base maps, street guides and master plan reports especially in delineating the residential analysis zone.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

The sample in Table 2 shows that 83.8% are male, while 16.2% are female. The analysis reveals the dominance of male gender over the female in residential property occupation in the core area. The study also showed in Table 3 that majority of the residents (43.4%) had no formal education while about 38.9% that are educated had only elementary certificate. The implication of the low level of education of the people in the area undermined the importance of healthy environment. Therefore, it can be deduced that residents in the core area will be living below the minimum environmental standards.

The occupational and income distributions are closely related. The nature of occupation determines their level of income. The respondents that claimed to be self employed/craftsmen accounted for 49.87% while 22% are business men (Table 4). Civil servant accounted for 19.3%. Closely related to this is the income level of the respondents. A total of 38.2% receives monthly income below N10,000 and 35.7% receives between N10,000 to N20,000 while only 26.1% receives above N20,000 (Table 5). This finding revealed that the general income is below the national average of N18,500 per month. With this low income distribution, to afford good quality

housing is difficult, if not impossible. This is of importance to this study because with higher income, there is more disposable income with which to procure decent housing. This means the poorer residents are more in the high density area. Besides this, the household size distribution is high. The area has large families. Majority of the households were made up of between 7 people and above. This accounts for about 61% as shown in Table 6 followed by 4 to 6 household size (29%) while 10% has 1 to 3.

The tenancy of the house is another socio-economic variable considered in this study. Tenancy structure in the core area as shown in Table 7 showed the predominance of rental housing as 68% of respondents lived in rented housing units while 32% are owner – occupier. The finding from this research is in line with other studies (Olanrewaju, 1997; Ogunleye, 2011) which showed that a significant proportion of low income people in the cities of the developing world live in rental housing. Available statistics, as documented in the National Housing Policy (1991), indicate that the most predominant form of tenure in many of the Nigerian cities is rental accommodation, providing over ninety percent of the housing sector in the country (Ajayi and Asaju, 1993; Olanrewaju, 1997).

Building condition

Analysis of the types of building occupied as shown in Table 8 revealed that majority of the people were mostly found in multi-family (tenement) buildings (88.2%) while detached bungalow constituted only 6.2%. This result is similar to (UNCHS, 1989) which noted–that majority of urban inhabitants live in tenement shelters. The types of accommodation unit occupied by the respondents were also examined. The result showed that 37.8% and 26.2% of the households occupy room and parlour and one room respectively in the tenement category while 25.7% of the respondents live in 3 bedroom flats as shown in Table 9.

The study also analysed the age structure of buildings generally in the core area. The result shows in Table 10 that 48.1% of the housing stock especially in the high density area are over 45 years old (pre-1960 developments), 23.9% of the buildings were built between 1960 and 1975 while 16.4% of the total housing units is about 16.4% while the latest addition 1996 to 1999 accounted for only 11.6%.

The study revealed in Table 11 that 97.7% of the buildings in the core areas have plot sizes of 450 square metres and below. The implication of this is that the crowding index of the buildings will be very high. Hence the crowded and cramped living condition noticed in this area.

Analysis of the condition of the building in Table 12 also shows that majority of the buildings (43.1%) are poor. It further revealed that 35.3% are adjudged to be fair while

Table 1. Pearson correlation test of the relationship between socio-economic characteristics of respondents and the building occupied**.**

	BLD	SEX	AGE	MAS	EDU	OCC	INC	HHZ
BLD	1.000							
SEX	0.074	1.000						
EDU	0.803**	-0.117	-0.064	-0.223	1.000			
OCC	0.272*	-0.104	-0.042	0.014	-0.148	1.000		
INC	0.904**	-0.092	0.135	0.087	0.172	0.244*	1.000	
HHZ	-0.048	-0.120	0.082	-0.019	0.157	-0.104	0.230*	1.000

* Correlation significant at 0.05 levels
** Correlation significant at 0.001 levels
Source - Computed from field survey, 2010

Key: BLD = building occupied. (Naira); SEX = sex; AGE = Age of respondent (years); EDU = Highest educational level of respondent; OCC = Occupation of respondent; INC = Annual income of respondent (Naira); HHZ = Household size of respondent

Table 2. Sex of respondents

Sex	Freq	%
Male	434	83.80
Female	84	16.20
Total	518	100

Source - field survey, 2012.

Table 3. Educational status

Educational status	Freq	%
No formal education	35	6.7
Elementary	225	43.4
Secondary	201	38.9
Post secondary	57	11.0
Total	518	100

Source – field survey, 2012.

Table 4. Occupational distribution

Occupation	Freq	%
Civil service	100	19.3
Professional	46	8.9
Business men	114	22.0
Craftsmen and self employed	25 8	49.8
Total	518	100

Source – field survey, 2012

Table 5. Income level of respondents

Income class	Freq	%
Below N10,000	198	38.2
N10,001 – N20,000	185	35.7
N20,001 and above	135	26.1
Total	518	100

Source – field survey, 2012.

Table 6. Analysis of household size

Household size	Freq	%
1 – 3	50	10
4 – 6	150	29
7 and above	318	61
Total	518	100

Source – field survey, 2012.

only 21.6% are good.

The findings further showed in Table 13 that up to 90.9% of the dwellings in the area have access road. Only a few traditional bungalows, the pre-1960's buildings, have no access at all. All other areas show existing or demarcated access roads. The quality of these roads is another issue, a good number of them are tarred (30.9%) and some are not tarred (60%) but motorable, while some are footpaths (4.1%).

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

H_{01}: Socio-economic characteristics of the inhabitants/respondents have no relationship with the building occupied.

This hypothesis was tested with the aid of Pearson correlation in order to determine whether there is significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics of respondents and the buildings occupied. The result is presented in Table 1.

The result in Table 1 showed that education and annual

Table 7. Tenancy type

Tenancy								
Owner- occupier	818	35.0	82	35	60	39.2	323	32
Rental (tenant)	337	65.1	261	65	93	60.8	691	68
Total	518	100	343	100	153	100	1014	100

Source: field survey, 2012.

Table 8. Type of building

Household size	Freq	%
Tenement	457	88.2
Block of flats	10	2.0
S/detached Bungalow	11	2.1
Detached Bungalow	32	6.2
Duplex	8	1.5
Total	518	100

Source: field survey, 2012

Table 9. Type of accommodation unit occupied by respondents

	Freq	%
A Room	136	26.2
Room and parlour	196	37.8
2 (no) bedroom flat	18	3.5
3 (no) bedroom flat	133	25.7
4 (no) bedroom flat	21	4.1
More than 4 bedroom	14	2.7
Total	518	100

Source: field survey, 2012

Table 10. Age structure of building

Year	Freq	%
Before 1960	241	48.1
1960- 1975	124	23.1
1976- 1995	85	16.4
1996- 2009	60	11.6
Total	518	100

Source: field survey, 2012

Table 11. Size of plots

Plot size (m^2)	Freq	%
Below 450	506	87.7
451- 700	5	1.0
701-1000 and above	7	2.3
Total	518	100

Source: field survey, 2012.

Table 12. State of repairs

	Freq	%
Good	112	21.6
Fair	183	35.3
Poor	223	43.1
Total	518	100

Source: field survey, 2012.

Table 13. Access road within the residential neighbourhood

Household size	Freq	%
Tarred	160	30.9
Not tarred	311	60.0
Not motor able	26	5.0
Footpath	21	4.1
Total	518	100

Source: field survey, 2012.

income have positive significant relationship with the building occupied by respondents at $P<0.001$ level. On the other hand, the type of occupation of the respondents have positive significant relationship with the building occupied at $P<0.05$. However, sex and household size have no significant relationship with type of building occupied. We therefore, reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}).

This is in line with the study of Toyobo et al. (2011) in the study of the correlates of socio- economic charac-teristics of housing quality in Ogbomosho township. Oyo State, Nigeria where the hypothesis tested confirmed that there is significant difference between the socio-econo-mic characteristic and housing quality in the study area and that this is responsible for different form of houses in the study area. The income and educational background of residents determine the quality of housing. Therefore, adequate efforts should be made by develop-ment control at local planning authorities for effective up-grading programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY GUIDELINES

The results of this study indicate serious housing affordability problems in the study area. It also revealed that the majority of householders in the city lack basic facilities that make housing conducive and by extension promote the development of the built environment which the housing policy aim to address. The implications of this are that social, environmental, economic and other serious problems will result from meeting the challenges of residential housing. It is an immediate and rapidly growing problem in all parts of Nigeria. All the available evidence would seem to indicate that the pace of urbanization is likely to continue to accelerate in the next decade or two. It is therefore of great importance that the extent of this development and all the implications thereof are clearly appreciated by various governments at all levels. The policy implication for future residential property development planning of the study area concerns the problems of redeveloping the existing inner core of the city. Since the failure of slum clearance scheme suggest that whole sale clearance of sub-standard housing area particularly those built up during the pre colonial period are not practicable in Nigerian urban areas (Onokerhoraye, 1977; Fourchard, 2003). There is the need for the public authority to devise strategies which can contribute to the amelioration of some of the land use problems in such areas. Another policy implication which can be drawn from findings of this study relates to the need for public authorities to prevent the emergence of the existing problems in the future residential land use development in the major cities of this country. This suggests that adequate and effective measures to ensure residential land use development control should be introduced.

Based on the major findings in the study, the following recommendations are put toward as policy guidelines for sustainable housing delivery in the area of study. The first recommendation is the need for upgrading programme through rehabilitation/renovation approach as well as provision of urban basic services. This simply involves rejuvenation of affected parts of the area by retaining some structures that are retainable; rehabilitate old buildings and structures, upgrading the roads that are not tarred and introduction of more roads with a view to opening up the blighted areas. It also involves improving the existing infrastructures as well as providing new ones. These are improving the structural quality and aesthetic of the areas.

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. The generation of employment opportunities, otherwise known, as economic revitalization is highly needed in the area. This will help to improve the level of capital base and potential for

capital formation among the residents that will enhance their level of provision for basic household facilities and proper maintenance of buildings. This approach offers future proceed that can sustain any improvement effort that may be put in place to revive the area.

There is also the need for integrated urban infrastructure and services needed not only to reduce existing deficiencies as revealed from the findings of this study but also to meet growing need of rapidly expanding infrastructural facilities in an integrated project framework like water supply, sewage, drainage, solid and other essential public services, for example, schools, health facilities, public markets. Since rental housing constitute the largest proportion of housing market in the city core, government should develop an effective and efficient rental housing market by involving in its direct participation through production of new units and housing facilities along with the environmental and infrastructural facilities. Government should also introduce social housing (local council housing) which is an umbrella term referring to rental housing which may be owned and managed by the state, for social gains or profit maximization or a combination of the two, usually with the aim of providing affordable housing. This will go a long way in reducing the current astronomical price.

CONCLUSION

Rapid urban development has brought dynamic changes to large and medium size cities in the developing countries. The decaying nature of the core areas in Nigerian cities and other developing countries over the last decades has also brought into focus the need for housing researchers and decision makers to develop a better understanding of the structure, operation and dynamics of urban centres. This paper discusses the socioeconomic life style and the housing conditions and the problems emanating from it. It notes the occurrence of rapid rate of urbanisation occurring in the country, the consequences of which have been severely degraded urban environment. It reports the poor housing conditions in the core areas of Akure, the capital city of Ondo state, Nigeria and proffers recommendations to improve them and reduce the poverty level of the residents.

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