Housing Quality in Informal Settlements and Urban Upgrading in Ibadan, Nigeria

[A Case Study of Apete in Ibadan]

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Abstract

The paper examines the causes and characteristics of informal settlements in the assessment of housing quality. The paper identifies the problems that have aided informal settlements to: urbanization, poverty, growth of informal sector, non-affordability of land and housing shortage. The paper asserts that the informal settlements have serious adverse effects on the people's health, their built environment and housing quality. The secondary data was obtained from books, journals and seminar papers while the primary data relating to housing quality were obtained by means of structured questionnaire.

The paper argues that, although the urban upgrading possesses great potential for improving housing quality in informal settlements, there is a need to rethink and repackage the upgrading exercise so that majority can benefit from it. It is necessary to incorporate community participation into the urban upgrading in order to assist the very poor that cannot take care of their housing consumption needs. Therefore, government is encouraged to see informal settlements as a solution to new city planning rather than problem to the urban areas.

This paper suggests the implementation of policies and planning, physical infrastructural development, social economic improvement, environment and health improvement. Government, private and communities interventions on informal settlements are required in order to check and prevent further decay for sustainable development.

Key Words: Housing Quality, Quality of life, Informal Settlements, Urban Upgrading

AIM:

The study aims to identify the problems that have aided informal settlements in urban fringe of Ibadan and to find the effects urban informal settlements on housing quality.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To determine the characteristics of informal settlements
2. To examine the causes of informal settlements
3. To examine the socio-economic characteristics of the residents in the selected area
4. To evaluate the physical characteristics of residential buildings in the selected settlements

PROBLEM STATEMENTS:

Informal housing development is illegal and consisted of unauthorized colonies and squatter settlements which have generated much criticism globally. There appears to be an underlying stigma attached to informal housing, and the community perception of the quality of such housing does not seem very pleasing (Srinivas, 2003 and Sietchiping, 2000). Despite this general stigmatization, however, attempts to conduct empirical research to ascertain the validity of these criticisms and to evaluate the extent to which they apply to the informal settlements in urban fringes of Ibadan, Nigeria, are negligible. There is little factual evidence to ascertain the key problems and the specific factors of inadequacy in existing informal housing. In essence, this study contributes to knowledge in the field of informal housing, in terms of housing quality.

This paper therefore is to examine the relationship between housing quality, home base enterprises (HBEs) and informal settlements. Social, economic and cultural characteristics as well as environmental issues associated with people living in this area are to be examined. Also to determine the causes and characteristics of informal settlements so as to impact knowledge that can transform these areas. This is because, it has being observed that little is known about the people living in informal settlements especially at the urban fringes of Ibadan and those

that have worked on it have not done much on Ibadan fringes but rather on central city slum and effects they have on housing quality.

Information on the number of people living in informal settlements is often limited, since inhabitants are often only inadequately covered by formal censuses: census data may therefore not provide clear information of those living in informal settlements. Therefore, there is a need to know or to have comprehensive knowledge about informal settlements, people dwelling there, causes and characteristics of informal settlements, its effect on housing quality, environment and quality of life in general.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Deteriorating urban environmental conditions and their life-long implications on quality of life have become significant aspects of debates and discussions. Towns and cities in developing countries like Nigeria are growing rapidly (World Bank, 2005). In the urban areas, the pace and scale of the growth have outstripped the capacity to maintain acceptable standards of public health, physical infrastructural development, environmental safety and sustainable economic growth, therefore reducing the housing quality and quality of life in general.

1.1 Quality of Life

The term 'Quality of life' is used to evaluate the general well-being of individuals and societies but its meaning is very complex, very comprehensive and varies with time and the person's beliefs. (Giovanni, 1998) asserted that quality of life has to do with how people live, feel and understand their daily lives. This includes aspects such as health, education, housing, employment and participation in decisions. (Arnaldo Ribeiro,2005) notes that quality of life is a term that has emerged as a concept of living conditions, health and physical safety, mental and social ability. However, definitions of quality of life have also been diverse. It has to do with how each one sees himself and the community (Constanza, 2008).

Nevertheless the wide range of definition can be categorized into three major philosophical approaches to determining the quality of life (Brock, 1993). The first approach describes characteristics of the quality life that are dictated by normative ideals based on philosophical, belief and other systems. This approach to quality of life depend neither on the subjective experience of people nor on the fulfillment of their wishes (Diener and Suh, 1997). The second approach to defining the quality of life is based on the satisfaction of preferences. Thus, in this tradition, the definition of the quality of life of a society is based on whether the citizens can obtain the things they desire. The third definition of quality of life is in terms of the experience of individuals. In this approach, factors such as feelings of joy, pleasure, contentment, and life satisfaction are paramount.

1.1.1 Indicators of Quality of Life

Quality is a product of subjective judgment which arises from the overall perception which the individual holds towards what is seen as the significant elements at a particular point in time (Olayiwola, et al, 2006).In assessing the quality of life, social indicators such as health and levels of crime, subjective well-being measures (assessing people's evaluative reactions to their lives and societies), cultural and economic indices are very important.

According to (Truckee, 2007) Indicators of quality of life can be categorized as follows: land use and infrastructure, natural environment, health and wellness, economic wellbeing, education and lifelong learning, public wellbeing, arts and cultural vitality, civic engagement, enrichment and innovation.

1.1.2 Measurement of Quality of Life

Two new scientific approaches to measuring quality of life have been introduced as: "objective" or social indicators, and the measurement of subjective well-being (SWB). Findings in social indicator and subjective well-being research have direct relevance to the fundamental concerns of societies and individuals. Therefore, Social indicators and subjective well-being measures are based on different definitions of quality of life.

Social indicators are societal measures that reflect people's objective circumstances in a given cultural or geographic unit. The symbol of social indicators is that they are based on objective, quantitative statistics rather than on individuals' subjective perceptions of their social environment. Housing satisfaction is a vital indicator of quality of life.

Objectivity is one of the strength of social indicators. These indicators usually can be relatively easily defined and quantified without relying heavily on individual perceptions. Also, Strength of social indicators is that they often reflect the normative ideals of a society.

Social indicators, however, suffer from several weaknesses. Firstly, social indicators are fallible, although social indicators are thought to be "objective," they are often contaminated by measurement problems. Another limitation of social indicators is the inevitable role of subjective decisions in selecting and measuring the variables.

On the other hand, Subjective well-being consists of three interrelated components: life satisfaction, pleasant affect, and unpleasant affect. Life satisfaction refers to a cognitive sense of satisfaction with life whereas affect refers to pleasant and unpleasant moods and emotions. Based on numerous findings that uncover a relative independence between pleasant and unpleasant affect (Bradburn, 1969), SWB includes both positive and negative affective experiences of the individual.

The major advantage of subjective well-being measures is that they capture experiences that are important to the individual. Also, strength of subjective well-being measures is that when proven inadequate, they are often easier to modify in later studies than objective indicators (Davis and Fine-Davis, 1991). Third, SWB measures can be easily compared across domains by measuring the experience of wellbeing on common dimension.

Subjective well-being measures also have a number of weaknesses. First, objects that produce particular findings have not been completely eliminated. Therefore, whenever possible, SWB should be measured by multiple methods that do not share common methodological shortcomings. Second, subjective well-being measures may not fully reflect the objective quality of community life in a place because they may be more dependent on temperament and personal relationships than on societal factors.

1.1.3   *Quality of Life in Informal Settlements*

Living in informal settlements often poses significant risks on health, education and well-being. Access to health and other services may be limited; overcrowding can contribute to stress, violence and increased problems of drugs and other social problems.

Social infrastructure, like water supply, sanitation, electricity, roads and drainage; schools, health centers, market places are below minimum levels. Water supply, for instance, to individual households may be absent, or community stand pipes may have been provided, using either the city networks, or a hand pump itself. Informal networks for the supply of water may also be in place. Similar arrangements may be made for electricity, drainage and toilet facilities with little dependence on public authorities (UN-HABITAT, 2003).

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

As a result of the high cost of housing, lack of good financing schemes, the increasing population is forced to live in substandard housing and unhealthy conditions giving rise to informal settlements (Olotuah, 2005). Informal settlements in Nigeria are increasing and posing serious problems to their own personal life and health. Slums and squatters are experiencing a massive change in the housing quality as they retain in the settlements that are characterized by numerous problems such as overpopulation, inadequate basic amenities, non-conventional housing and so on (Majale, 2002).

2.1   *Informal settlements*

Severe difficulties exist in defining 'informal settlements'. The definition of informal settlements is context-specific. Sietchiping, 2000 revealed that informal land use is characterized by overcrowding, deterioration, insecurity, absence or insufficient basic facilities. These conditions endanger the health, prosperity, safety or moral of the inhabitants and the community at large is unpleasant for living.

According to Srinivas, 2003 informal settlements are characterized by unauthorized use of vacant public or private land, illegal subdivision and/or rental of land, unauthorized construction of structures and buildings, reliance on low cost and locally available scrap construction materials, absence of restrictive standards and regulations, reliance on family labor and artisanal techniques for construction, non-availability of mortgage or any other subsidized finance. Various definitions have thus been proposed, but that suggested by the UN Habitat Programme is probably the most widely applicable. Informal settlements, can be defined as residential areas where a group of housing units has been constructed on land to which the occupants have no legal claim, or which they occupy

illegally; unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations(UN-HABITAT, 2003).

2.1.1 Slums and Squatter settlements

There is no satisfactory consensus on the definitions of slums and squatter settlements, as terms vary from culture to culture. Slums are often perceived to be informal settlements. UN-Habitat defines slums as contiguous settlements where inhabitants are characterized as having: (i) insecure residential status; (ii) inadequate access to safe water; (iii) inadequate access to sanitation and other basic infrastructure and services; (iv) poor housing quality; and (v) overcrowding (UN-HABITAT, 2003).

On the other hand, squatter settlements can be defined as a residential area which has developed without legal claims to the land or permission from the concerned authorities to build; as a result of their illegal status, infrastructure and services are usually inadequate. It becomes clear from the foregoing that squatter settlements as distinct from inner-city slums, essentially constitute what is referred to as urban informal settlements.

As pointed out in HABITAT, 2003, it means slums are areas where people with land ownership live in poor environmental and socio-economic conditions and are different from squatters which are the settlements where people build houses without legal title to land.

2.1.2 Causes of informal settlements

The critical factors causing the formation of informal settlements are notably related to several major interrelated changes: (i) poverty; (ii) rapid urbanization and influx of people into urban areas; (iii) war, natural disasters and earthquakes leading to massive movement of people to places of opportunity and safety; (iv) Ineffective Housing Policies; (v) inefficient public administration, inappropriate planning and inadequate land administration tools. Manifestations of informality are attributed to the lack of effective planning, effective land management system and zoning regulations for urban development.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), poverty and social ostracism are the primary causes of informal settlements in most nations. Governments around the world grapple with fiscal deficits and therefore promote and subsidize industrial sectors that can revitalize the economy.

In addition, governments have implemented policies to provide housing for the urban poor but their efforts have proved futile. According to Housing the Urban Poor, several governments have pursued anti-urbanization policies. They have evicted people from informal settlements, razed the housing, and sent the dwellers back to the countryside. These measures fail to stem the tide of urban migration

Rapid urbanization and influx of people into urban areas is another major cause of informal settlements. Rapid industrialization and urbanization have brought an increase in the number of people living in urban areas.

2.1.3 Characteristics of Informal Settlements

Informal settlements are often studied in the context of informal housing, recognizing the fact that they incorporate predominantly informal housing developments. The informal settlements range from sub-standard slums to housing that does not have the proper development permit. Informal housing can be described as housing that does not conform to the laws and regulatory frameworks set up in a particular city (UN-HABITAT, 2003).

Informal settlements are mainly characterized by informal land tenure, inadequate access to basic services, both social and physical infrastructure and housing finance (Vienna, 2004). Other characteristics of informal settlements include: (i) lack of secure tenure; (ii) housing that contradicts city by-laws; (iii) housing built on land not owned by the housing owner; (iv) lack or inadequate access to basic public services; (v) substandard housing and inadequate building structures; (vi) illegal subdivision of buildings; (vii) poverty, criminality and social exclusion; and (viii)unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations (UN-HABITAT, 2003 and Payne and Majale, 2004).

2.2 Housing Quality

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).

2.2.1   Indicators for Evaluating Housing Quality

The need to appreciate the relevance of a habitable (qualitative) housing therefore, requires an understanding of the concept of 'quality 'which according to Onion, cited in (Afon, 2000), "is a mental or moral attribute of thing which can be used when describing the nature, condition or property of that particular thing". McCray, cited in (Jiboye, 2004), noted that getting a definition of quality depends not only on the user and his or her desires, but also on the product being considered.

In essence, quality is a product of subjective judgment which arises from the overall perception which the individual holds towards what is seen as the significant elements at a particular point in time (Anantharajan, 1983 and Olayiwola, et al, 2006).In assessing the quality of housing, qualitative studies have identified some criteria as relevant indicators for quality evaluation in residential development. Among such is (Ebong,1983) acknowledged aesthetics, ornamentation, sanitation, drainage, age of building, access to basic housing facilities, burglary, spatial adequacy, noise level within neighbourhood, sewage and waste disposal and ease of movement among others, as relevant quality determinants in housing.

However, (Hanmer et al. 2000), conclude that qualitative housing involves the provision of infrastructural services which could bring about sustainable growth and development through improved environmental conditions and improved livelihood. In determining the quality of residential development, (Neilson, 2004) stipulates five basic criteria which provide that housing must be in compliance with tolerable standard, free from serious disrepair, energy efficient, provided with modern facilities and services, and that it must be healthy, safe and secure.

These indicators consist of variables such as; access to basic housing and community facilities, the quality of infrastructural amenities, spatial adequacy and quality of design, fixtures and fittings, building layout and landscaping, noise and pollution control as well as security. There are however indications from these various studies that a single variable may not be sufficient to assess the qualitative nature of residential development; therefore, housing acceptability and qualitative assessment should also take into account type of constructions, materials used, services, spatial arrangement and facilities within dwellings, function and aesthetics, among others (Olu-Sule and Gur, noted in Jiboye, 2004).

2.3   Urbanization and Housing Quality

As a result of urbanization and lack of economic opportunities in rural areas, many people move to the cities. They move to the cities that are already dealing with issues of overcrowding, infrastructure and high cost of living. This forces them to seek shelter in slums. United Nation Habitat in 2006 found that 90% of slum residents are in the developing countries with struggling economies.

In addition, cities were not mean to handle millions of people streaming in when designed. This impact the availability and affordability of housing, forcing millions to live in substandard dwellings.

2.3.1   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 urban poor 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.

2.4   Informal Settlements and Housing Quality

Housing is an important component quality of life. (Agbola, 1998) notes that housing is a combination of characteristics which provide a unique home within any neighborhood; it is an array of economic, social and psychological phenomena. In other words, housing could be seen as a multidimensional package of goods and services extending beyond shelter itself. It is also the art of creating a living area through acquisition of land at the top of which buildings are constructed with provision of basic physical, social and cultural infrastructure. (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".

(Onibokun, 1972, Wahab et al 1990 and Olotuah, 2005) sites that 75% of the dwelling units in Nigeria's urban centres are substandard and the dwellings are sited in slums. Housing in informal settlements are characterized by

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 and wrong development of land (UN-HABITAT, 2003).

Furthermore, So and Leung (2004) have also established a significant correlation between the quality of life 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 informal settlements cannot be overemphasized.

2.5 Housing, Environment and Informal Settlements

In informal settlements, the decline in living conditions is accompanied by rapid deterioration of existing housing and homelessness (UN-HABITAT, 2007). The urban poor living in these settlements are especially vulnerable to economic shocks; they lack access to services, safety nets and political representation.

The population growth which drives the increase of informal settlements can impose pressure on the inhabitants of informal settlements. While the people are usually poorly educated, competition in the city is high, and it is hard to find jobs. Pressures can also come from environmental hazards such as floods and fire. These pressures impact upon the well-being of the poor in these informal settlements. People are unable to obtain adequate food, clean water and other basic services, as well as education. Their health and living standards often suffer when their settlements are situated close to sources of pollution. The environmental hazards and vulnerable locations of informal settlements mean that the effects of the hazards on informal communities are great.

These inhabitants have little ability to provide for themselves. They live in a state of uncertainty as they have no tenure over the land they occupy are illegally. At the same time, people living in hazardous location such as swamp, canal setback, rail line setback, marginal land among others, have the continuous threat of unpredictable disaster. Both external and internal hazards affect their livelihoods. This makes them more vulnerable to environmental degradation, threats of eviction, ejection and demolition .World Health Organization (WHO) notes that informal habitants are frequently ill as a result of the poor quality of their environment and exposure to disease. They are in a state of persistent poverty and frustration. Disasters may cause death and loss, while the poor housing and sanitation also threaten their health.

2.6 Poverty and Crime Rate in Informal Settlements

The reality associated with these informal settlements is the poverty levels within which their inhabitants live, and the social exclusion to which they are subjected as a consequence of, among other factors, a lack of sufficient income to satisfy their basic needs (Paudel, 2003).Their daily challenges according to (Baharoglu and Kessides, 2004) include; limited access to employment opportunities and income, inadequate and insecure housing and services, violent and unhealthy environments, and limited access to adequate health and education opportunities.

He went further to state that poverty in informal settlements is not just a collection of characteristics; it is also a dynamic condition of vulnerability or susceptibility to risks. The fact that they lack all these conditions and the necessity for employment to generate an income to satisfy their needs makes this informal urban environment a fertile ground for illegal informal activities including violence and crime (Lumanti, 2005)

3.0 CASE STUDY 1: LAGOS

3.1 The Study Area

Lagos is located on the south-western coast of Nigeria, between latitude 6° and 7° North of the equator, and longitude 3° and 4° east of the Greenwich Meridian. The city has a total area of 1,090 km2 where about 208 km2 are covered by water and mangrove swamps. It became the first federal capital following the attainment of Nigeria's independence in 1960. The metropolitan area is an urban complex consisting of people from different ethnic, socio-cultural and economic backgrounds.

The current official population figure released by the national population commission of Nigeria is 9 million (NPC, 2006). UN estimates indicate that by 2015 the population of Lagos will be close to 12.5 million (UN-Habitat, 2010).

3.2   Urban Upgrading of Informal Settlements in Lagos

There are as many as 200 different slums in Lagos, ranging in size from clusters of shacks underneath highways to entire districts such as Ajegunle, Maroko and Mushin (Gandy, 2006). (Morka, 2007) notes that, over two-thirds of the population of Lagos lives in the "informal settlements or slums scattered around the city.

The massive problems facing the city notwithstanding, the Lagos Executive Development Board was established with a mandate to clear the city of slums. Successive federal and state governments have taken several measures to "establish the necessary institutional frameworks to radically transform" Lagos into a functional megacity (Ilesanmi, 2009). At both the federal and state levels, some of the main measures taken thus far have included the creation of specialized agencies both at national and state levels to handle issues concerning housing for the urban poor and of specific housing policies designed to increase the provision of appropriate and affordable housing in Lagos.

Federal government measures have included plans to construct about 2,000 housing units in each state annually within the framework of the Fourth National Development Plan as well as the construction of about 143,000 "low-cost housing units across the country" (Ademiluyi, 2010). The World Bank-supported Lagos Slum Upgrading Programme, was instituted in 1999 (Abosede, 2006). Both the federal and state governments have also engaged in forceful evictions of slum dwellers. According to (Morka, 2007), such evictions, like those of July 1990 and April 2005, have been inappropriate and ineffective and have instead helped to fuel the growth of new slums or the expansion of existing ones with more complex dimensions.

3.3   Community Participation in the Badia Upgrading Programme

Badia, like many other informal settlements in Lagos, had become a highly attractive next frontier marked for demolition and eventual upscale development for affluent developers. In the State's estimation, Badia's poor were expendable and unworthy of the land.

On 15 July 1996, residents of 15 Lagos slum communities learned of plans by the Lagos State Government to forcibly evict them from their homes and businesses. Prior to the July 1996 eviction announcement and the partial demolition, the Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC) was already working within the Badia community providing basic human rights education, and helping the community to organize towards strengthening its capacity to engage various institutions of the government on critical issues and challenges confronting them. Working with community leaders, women, youth and associations, the organization designed and implemented various initiatives and activities, including outreach and sensitization meetings; focused group discussions; training workshops; creative use of local and international media; posters and handbills in the English language and the predominant Yoruba language were disseminated within the target communities.

More experienced leaders and organizers similar communities such as Maroko (that was demolished in July 1990) were brought in to share their organizing and mobilizing knowledge and experience, and to inspire the leaders and people of Badia.. These efforts helped many in the community to gain a new perception of themselves as persons imbued with certain rights that are protected by both national and international law.

They also learned that the government and the World Bank had certain legal obligations to them whether or not they had valid legal title to their lands. They learned that the World Bank and the government were under duty to consult them and ensure their active participation in the LDSP's design and implementation as well as to provide adequate notice, compensation, resettlement and rehabilitation to them should force eviction become inevitable in order to accomplish the project's purposes. To ensure effective coordination, monitoring and assessment of the various initiatives, the Community Action Program Committee (CAPCOM) was created in Badia. Staffed by volunteers from the community, CAPCOM also provided a platform for residents to share information, monitor the LDSP and keep SERAC rapidly informed of developments within the communities

In July 2003, the democratically elected government of Lagos State renewed its effort to forcibly evict the Badia community, the residents were better organized, mobilized and determined to keep their homes.

4.0   CASE STUDY 2: ABUJA

4.1   The Study Area

Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria. It is located in the centre of Nigeria, within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Abuja is a planned city and was built mainly in the 1980s. It officially became Nigeria's capital on 12 December 1991, replacing Lagos. The city of Abuja had a population of 776,298 (NPC, 2006).

The FCT covers an area of approximately 8,000 sq. km while the Federal Capital City (FCC) itself occupies 25,000 hectares. At creation, the FCT comprised of 845 villages, 150 of these within the FCC and up to 5km radius. In 2007, the Abuja Metropolitan Management Agency estimates a total of 16 squatter settlements with over

32,421 structures at various stages of being relocated in 2006, to new locations within the FCT. Nyanya is described as the fastest growing slum in Nigeria (Adams, 2007).

4.2   Abuja Urban Upgrading Programme

Eradicating and relocating of squatters has been described as a failed response of the 1960s and 1970s by the World Bank (The World Bank, 2002). This notwithstanding, what operates in Nigeria is worse than eradication and relocation of squatters residents. In the FCT, the squatters are ejected and their property which are described as illegal structures are demolished. The various demolition exercises in Abuja epitomized this. Ejection of squatters and demolition of illegal structures generates social, economic and political problems with their attendant security implications. It tends to portray government as insensitive to the plight of the citizenry. Demolition also results in financial losses both to the squatters and the government; and depletes the national housing stock (Lands Division, 1996). This approach is socially destructive and involves high community cost. The ultimate result has been the loss of these dwellings and the dispersal of the populations either into new slums or to swell the ranks of the existing slums while the area is being laid out and allocated for high class residential development (Omirin, 2003).

According to a report of the World Bank, upgrading rejuvenates the existing community with minimum disruption and loss of physical and social assets (The World Bank, 2002). Therefore, government should always adopt the approach of urban upgrading rather eradicating and relocating of squatters. The first step in this approach is to ensure security of tenure for the property owners in this settlement. The next stage is to commence on the provision of municipal facilities within the area. Whatever the method being adopted, the planning and implementation should involve the community on a sustainable level.

5.0   URBAN UPGRADING IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Informal settlements upgrading includes improving access of informal settlements communities to basic physical and social infrastructure, economic opportunities, tenure rights, information and institutions, focusing on the poor and achieved with the active involvement of slum communities during the planning, implementation, monitoring and management process, and through contribution of part of their own resources required for development, operation and maintenance (Scholz, 2005). (Acioly, 2001) described informal settlements upgrading as a process of intervention in the physical, social, economic and juridical structure of an existing human settlement that was formed through spontaneous mechanisms and unplanned processes of land occupation.

In addition, health issues need to be addressed by providing clinics and health education programs, school facilities and teacher training are needed to provide basic education, and programs are offered to increase income earning opportunities and the general economic health of a community (Mason *et al.*, 1997).

It is important that the different approaches to informal settlements upgrading are properly understood before looking at procedures of urban upgrading and some of the challenges.

(a)   Conventional Informal Settlement Upgrading

Conventional informal settlement ('in-situ') upgrading entails the re-development of an informal settlement in a comprehensive and relatively complete fashion in respect of housing, tenure and infrastructural services. The full range of project fundamentals have to first be secured before such upgrading can be successfully achieved.

(b)   Self Help / Community Driven

This is typically a slower delivery method but one which offers several advantages including mobilization and realization of local social capital, greater ownership and control of the housing process by local residents, greater participation by residents in the design process, and potentially the achievement of a bigger or more valuable housing product as a result of sweat equity and / or a more cost effective construction process.

(c)   Relocations

Relocations may affect only a portion of the settlement or the entire settlement and may be temporary or permanent. The relocation of entire settlements, often to worse located land relative to livelihood opportunities and other amenities should be undertaken only as a last resort and in special circumstances such as health and safety

risks to residents, given the significant negative impacts on residents that typically flow from such wholesale relocations.

(d)   Non-Conventional In-Situ Upgrading

This approach is receiving increasing attention given the significant constraints in achieving conventional upgrading and identifying suitable relocations destinations for green-fields projects. Non-conventional upgrading takes two main forms:

1. The provision of interim relief measures and / or the initiation of initial upgrading measures to address key needs such as fire protection, basic sanitation, access to potable water, solid waste removal, basic health care, and improved internal access ways.

2. The delivery of a full upgrade solution but utilizing different methods and housing typologies

5.1   Procedures for Urban Upgrading

(a) It is important to consider a number of important procedures when translating the informal settlements program into local contexts; better outcomes have been possible because of:

(b) Changes in policy-making towards a strategic vision and planning for short-term, medium and long-term solutions;

(c) The creation of an effective governance framework that joins key actors across different fields and empowers voices of marginalized groups;

(d) The establishment of a platform for a dialogue between key actors and effective public private partnerships;

(e) The willingness to draw on existing practices and learn from other experiences to support the policy process; the eagerness for continuous learning and knowledge sharing;

(f) A new commitment towards fighting social inequality and establishing social justice;

(g) A thorough analysis of major causes affecting residents' living conditions;

(h) The establishment of efficient linkages between major policy fields - housing, land management and spatial planning;

(i) The development of urban strategies that focus on a settlement level but understand the importance of the settlement's connection to the wider social, economic, environmental and urban development processes

5.2   Problems of Urban Upgrading

A number of problems have prevented existing programs for informal settlements from achieving successful outcomes. Insufficient financial and human resources, burdensome regulatory rules, unclear administrative procedures, and unrealistic standards have all been reported as major barriers. The failure of many programs can be attributed to the misunderstanding of the deeper causes underlying the formations of informal settlements, such as social inequality and unequal redistribution of wealth, as well as to a limited application of such policy tools as integrated land management and spatial planning.

Responses to the housing question often remain very technical and the development of the housing sector has not been given a priority it deserves within the context of national economic and social development. The proper coordination between housing policy and other policies has yet to be developed. The belief in the market as a one-fits-all solution often further marginalizes alternative developments and reinforces the problems of informal settlements.

6.0   METHODOLOGY

The main type of data, attributes, was used for the study. These were obtained from the primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources include; published materials from journals, textbooks, government publications and gazettes. Primary data was obtained through personal observation and questionnaire administration. Questionnaire was designed and administered to elucidate information on socio-economic characteristics, building conditions, infrastructural facilities and environmental condition of the study area. Direct observation was also used to validate claims and responses on physical, environmental and housing conditions of the study area.

This study adopts Survey Research Design method, because it allows the establishment of unique characteristics of the inhabitants and the ability to develop a detailed picture and intensive knowledge of the case study. A reconnaissance survey of the study area was carried out and it was observed that there are currently a total of 200

houses from which 10% were selected for sampling. Therefore, by approximation a total number of 20 houses were selected for questionnaire administration. Systematic random sampling technique was used hence; every 10th house was selected for questionnaire administration.

Data are presented on the socio-economic characteristics, building conditions, infrastructural facilities and environmental condition of the study area. Data collected give the opportunity to see the reality more closely, inferences are not based on theory or dogma but it is based on facts. It helps to know the social-economic situation and leads to the introduction of new theory such as theory of formality and informality.

Data collected from the respondents are reliable and the variability of results is reduced. It is relatively simple to analyze, correlate and inter-relate the data obtained from questionnaire using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPPS). Data received are useful in describing the characteristics, causes and housing quality of this informal settlement.

Consequently, very large samples are feasible, making the results statistically significant even when analyzing multiple variables. Many questions can be asked about informal settlement giving considerable flexibility to the analysis.

On the other hand, inability of the respondents to provide adequate information is one of the weaknesses of my data collection. This may be due to lack of knowledge, lapse of memory, inability to identify their motives and provide reasons for their actions, human biases of the respondents and Symantec difficulties.

It is difficult, to state a given question in such a way that it will mean exactly same thing to each respondent because two different wordings of the same question will frequently produce quite different results. Also, during the course of developing the general questions for all respondents, I noticed missing what is most appropriate to many respondents. I also observed that it may be hard for participants to recall information or to tell the truth about a controversial question.

The analyses of data are therefore presented below to explain characteristic, causes, housing quality and environmental conditions of the study area.

7.0   RESULT, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Objective 1: Characteristics of Informal Settlements

The study reveals that Informal settlements are mainly characterized by informal land tenure, inadequate access to basic services, both social and physical infrastructure and housing finance. Other characteristics of informal settlements include: lack or inadequate access to basic public services; substandard housing and inadequate building structures; illegal subdivision of buildings; poverty, criminality and social exclusion; and unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations

Objective 2: Causes of Informal Settlements

The critical factors causing the formation of informal settlements from the studied area are notably related to poverty and social ostracism. Rapid urbanization and influx of people into urban areas is another major cause of informal settlements. Rapid industrialization and urbanization have brought an increase in the number of people living in urban areas.

Objective 3: To examine the socio-economic characteristics of the residents in the
**   selected area**

Content analysis and the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPPS) were used to analyze variables. A brief description of the socio-economic composition of respondents in the study area reveals that 55% were males, while 45% were females. This explains the extent to which men traditionally dominate most households in Nigeria. The age range indicates that 80% of the respondents were either 40 years old or less than 40years old, respectively. Thus, suggesting the predominance of middle-aged tenants over older adults' tenants occupying most informal housing in the studied area. From the survey, 654% were married, while 35% were single. The socio-economic status revealed that 45% of the respondents are low-income, 30% are low- medium income, 20% are upper-medium income while only 5% are high-income. This suggests that only few people are comfortable with their income, showing that the majority of the habitants are poor.

Objective 4: House Quality in Informal Settlements

The study defined quality of the house in terms of ventilation, lighting, spaces, aesthetic, security, landscape, sanitation, type of construction materials and external environment of the house. Despite the fact the majority of the houses were constructed by the use of modern material, the study conducted reveals that about 50% houses studied were in poor condition, (35%) are in moderate condition and only (15%) are in good condition. Here one can argue that the construction of the house that emerging in Apete Ibadan is what individuals or households had been able to construct from their little income obtained in informal settlement.

The study reveals that it's the income of the household that determine the quality of the house; most of houses with poor condition are belonging of the low income category. Therefore the income has a great impact on the quality of house being constructed.

The Correlated Variables of Housing Quality

The correlation analysis reveals that a positive and significant relationship exists between housing quality and some variables like ventilation, lighting, spaces, aesthetic, security, drainage, landscape, sanitation, type of construction materials and external environment of the house. This implies that housing quality in their environment tends to increase as the conditions and availability of ventilation, lighting, spaces, aesthetic, security, landscape, sanitation, type of construction materials and external environment of the house improves within the study area.

8.0 INTERVENTION IN URBAN UPGRADING IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

8.1 The Community Participation Approach

The Community Participation Approach believes that communities know their needs and should be consulted and carried along in the decision making process. Participation will not be meaningful if the people involved have no control over decisions taken by the organization to which they belong. (Walker, 2002) asserts that effective participation is achieved through de-concentration and de-centralization.

The participation of the community in improving the quality of their settlement is also an important resource that has to be tapped for improvement. There is increasing demand from many sides for more local involvement and community initiatives in planning and management of the environment (Wates, 2000). Land sharing is an approach which has brought about considerable settlement improvement by the initiative of the people themselves.

Upgrading programme based on this approach seeks to avoid taking over what individuals, household or community group can do for themselves. This strategy least disrupt people's social and economic life and encourages a spirit of self-help as residents are involve in determining priorities and preferences.

8.2 Government Intervention in Urban Upgrading

Successive generations of governments have recognized this and a number of approaches have been adopted in finding a solution to the dilemma of informal settlements. The two popular approaches used by the public authorities have been settlement upgrading and sites-and-services. Settlement upgrading has been an option where a compromise has been reached by the land owner and on a sharing basis; the squatter has been allowed to continue on the land parcel, but with a significant upgrading of the settlement's infrastructure and services. Where such land compromises or sharing has not been possible, the squatters have been relocated to another location, where varying levels of "sites"-and-"services" have been provided, with, again land lease or ownership.

There is no universal "quick-fix" solution that can solve all the problems of squatting in all parts of the developing world. Considering the inevitability of squatting, the need is primarily for a change in attitude towards squatting, squatters and squatter settlements. One such approach that has been receiving considerable attention from various government and public authorities has been the "enabling" approach, where instead of taking a confrontationist attitude, governments have strived to create an enabling environment, under which people, using and generating their own resources, could find unique local solutions for their housing and shelter problems.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations in this study are structured into broad areas on: how to alleviate the poverty of the residents, improve the level of infrastructural facilities, housing conditions and general environmental conditions of the study area so as to achieve a Healthy, livable, prosperous and sustainable human settlement. It is evident that decent housing is a major problem of informal settlement dwellers. This is largely due to their low level of

financial capacity coupled with inefficient land administration system which have further exclude them from urban life and increased their vulnerability to eviction, disaster and environmental health problem. Therefore, any attempt to achieve livable, healthy and prosper cities must as a matter of urgency address housing issue. This means that there must be a conscious effort focusing on provision of decent housing for the poor at an affordable rate. This can be achieved through different means such as site and services and compressive housing.

Also, the issue of land tenure must be looked into because land is a major factor of housing provision. It becomes very difficult to provide decent housing and basic services to the poor where the title or the interest on the land is uncertain. Furthermore, urban informal settlements dwellers can be encouraged to improve housing and general environmental conditions of their settlement through land regularization that guaranties security of tenure and provision of array of basic facilities. Improvement in the living environment of the poor will help them to be more productive and increase their income over time while security of housing and land tenure is expected to help the poor overcome the problem of social exclusion from urban life.

The amount of infrastructural facilities available in the informal settlements is grossly inadequate while some are not even available. Availability and adequacy of infrastructural facilities is a major factor that determines the environmental condition and livability of any settlement. Therefore, efforts should be directed towards upgrading the existing ones while those that are not available should be provided. This could be achieved through preparation of detailed infrastructure network plan for the community with population density being the major yardstick in determining the adequacy. The design should allow for individual self-funded incremental service connections and affordable capital, maintenance and user costs for services.

Therefore, deliberate effort should be made to improve the livelihood of this category of people. Their means of livelihood which is centered on informal sector should be recognized and be supported.

10.0   CONCLUSION

The major issues found in informal settlements studied included judicial and administrative failures, physical infrastructures and service problems, increasing socio-economic problems posing threats to their long term livelihood, and poor environmental conditions. If a formal urban planning system designed to improve the general amenity of informal settlements, the policy and implementation capability of government and the housing sector, and the range, availability and affordability of urban housing were to be developed, then this study has suggested the implementation of policies and planning, physical infrastructural development, socio-economic improvement, environment and health improvement, enhancing government build up of all organizations involved and responsible to improve informal settlements.

Therefore, informal settlement should not be considered as an anomaly but rather as the necessary response they actually represent in terms of the desires and needs of the poor to access the urban environment. Attempts to eradicate them will thus fail until these underlying issues of poverty and inequality are addressed.

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