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ILARO HOUSING QUALITY: IMPLICATION FOR ACTIONABLE POLICY

BY

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Abstract

Housing, being one of the basic needs of man, constitutes major feature of cities. Usually housing is as old as the cities, majority of which, in Nigeria, were developed haphazardly without any master plan that usually serves as a guide for orderly development. Thus, as time passes on, housing quality becomes derelict, poor and deprived in an environment devoid of basic infrastructural facilities and inimical to healthy living. A survey of housing stock condition in core centre of Ilaro Township was undertaken through reconnaissance, observation and administration of structured questionnaire. The core centre was delineated into 20 survey units with 5 households selected from each unit using systematic sampling technique. The heads of owner/occupier households were selected. A total of 100 respondents were surveyed but only 85 (85%) returned their copies for analysis. Data was tabulated and analysed using percentage. It revealed that existing houses were dilapidated without adequate room size, ventilation, toilet and cesspool. Also lacking in the area are sustainable sources of water supply, good motorable road network, drainage system and refuse disposal system. The inhabitants were living without any financial capacity to uplift their housing conditions. The paper concludes that it is very imperative for policy makers to come up with implementable blueprint for sustainable urban renewal in semi urban areas like Ilaro and other large cities across the country. Further development of urban periphery should be given adequate planning attention prior to any construction of buildings to avoid the continuation of the unpleasant scenario.
Key words: Core centre; Housing stock; infrastructure; poor quality; and policy making.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Evidence from literature revealed that most Nigerian towns and cities were developed without master plans leading to haphazard growth (Rasaki, 1988; Aluko & Amidu, 2006; and Olaniran, 2015). The houses were also constructed without any building plans and codes, with local workforce and mixture of imported and local building materials.

Provision of basic facilities both in the houses and within towns and cities were not given priority it deserves then. Hence, in the short-run, housing and urban environments are beset with many problems (Rasaki, 1988). The problems in turn affect the quality of the housing stock and render it economically, physically and functionally obsolete. In the long run this affects man's comfort and health.

Government intervention began in 1928 (Waziri1, & Roosl 2013). However, the formal interventions in form of urban renewal e. g. piecemeal, replacement or complete clearance and redevelopment have not reached all deserving towns and cities in the country. Even in cities where the presence of governments had been felt the results are not cheering.

Furthermore, there are various laws and policies, ministries and agencies and professionals in built industry in the country to ensure standard houses in serene environments. Nevertheless, the wrongs are still apparent in the towns and cities cores (Arts & Humanities Research Council, 2009).

The residents seem not to be capable of improving their well-being whereas past persistent failure and recent economic slump have engulfed governments' interventions. This complication needs actionable policy on the basis of accurate, updated and current information supply to address housing and environmental issues in human settlements.

Against this background information, this paper aimed at examining the socio-economic status of occupiers of the housing stock, physical conditions of the houses vis – a- vis basic facilities provided as well as quality of the environment in core centre of Ilaro Township. It is with a view to providing facts as they are to all stakeholders and stimulating absolute solution through sustainable policy.
Other sections in this paper are literature review, study area, research methodology, data presentation and discussion of results, conclusion and recommendations.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Housing, an apartment (may be a room) occupied as living space, is paramount to human existence as it ranks among the three top needs of humanity. It is as old as mankind and constitutes a major feature of cities all over the world.
African Continent is witnessing tremendous growth in urbanization and even the highest in the world (United Nations Human Settlements Programme {UN-HABITAT}, 2007). It was reported in 1980, only 28 percent of the African population lived in cities, in 2007 it had risen to about 37 percent. The annual urban growth rate in Africa then was 4.87 percent. Cities and towns in Africa are also growing at twice as the 2.5 percent growth rate of its rural population. In terms of numbers, currently about 300 million Africans live in urban settlements. This figure was expected to have reached about 500 million by 2015. The United Nations (UN) estimates that in the next 25 years, 400 million people will be added to the African urban population, putting tremendous pressure on cities and towns (UN-HABITAT, 2007).
If housing in all its ramifications is more than mere shelter as it embraces all social services and utilities that go to make a community a livable environment, then the pressure is already being felt in Nigerian cities and towns. It is estimated 2.3 million urban dwelling units are substandard, only 33% of urban houses can be considered to be physically sound, and 44% and 19% require minor and major repairs respectively to bring them to normative and structural quality (Ugonabo1 & Emo, 2013).
This is alarming especially when one considers the financial standing of Nigerians and the country itself. In Nigeria, some of the factors affecting the households are: high rate of unemployment, under-employment, low income (especially in informal sector), lack of sustainable infrastructural facilities, wanton misappropriation of public fund, and consequent neglect of public infrastructure and insecurity among others. They have led to unimpressive growth rates and poverty of the populace (Olaniran, 2012).
Poverty is lack of money to take care of human basic needs such as food, clothing, and housing. In Nigeria, urban poverty, as Table 1 displays, was 17.2% in 1980 37.8% in 1985, 37.5% in 1992 and 58.2% in 1996. It dropped to 43.2% in 2004 only to rise to 61.8% in 2010 (National Bureau of Statistics, {NBS}, 2005 and 2012).

Table 1: Poverty Level in Nigeria, 1980-2010

Area	Year					
	1980	1985	1992	1996	2004	2010
National	27.2	46.3	42.7	65.6	54.4	69.0
Urban	17.2	37.8	37.5	58.2	43.2	61.8
Rural	28.3	51.4	46.0	69.3	63.3	73.2

Source: NBS, 2005 pg. 62 and NBS, 2012 pg. 23

Poverty determines what assets people get at any time of their life and this includes housing. Even fund through mortgage loan may be a function of income and one's relative position to poverty line.
U N – HA B I T A T, (2007) reports that New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) analyst estimates that by 2015 a staggering 345 million people in Africa will live in extreme poverty–US$1 a day or less–up from the 100 million when the Millennium Development Goals were first set. If the forecast for the next twenty years indicates that present trends continue, Africa will be the only Continent where the problems of poverty, urban as well as rural, will continue to worsen. That is, poverty will continue to concentrate in cities, especially if governments do not address the problems of urbanization and of the urban poor. This paper wants to fill this gap by sensitizing all the stakeholders on it.

The process of urban decay and renewal is a phenomenon that is usually associated with big conurbations like Metropolitan Lagos (Rasaki, 1988). In actual fact, this is also applicable to other small towns and cities in Nigeria, for instance, Ilaro, Awka, Onitsha and Nnewi (Ajayi & Bamidele, 2008 and Ugonabo1 & Emo, 2013).
Problems identified include: environmental degradation; urban decay, collapse of buildings, renewal, planning and development control; inadequacy of social services; inadequacy of infrastructure, public utilities and transportation; financial inadequacy vis-à-vis social responsibilities and burdens; and problems of law and order, insecurity of life and property.
Slums are identified when dwellings at household level have deficiencies in any of the following areas among others: durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions; sufficient living space which means not more than three people sharing the same room; easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price; access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people; and security of tenure that prevents forced evictions (UN-HABITAT, 2011)
This necessitates government intervention (actionable policy) to improve housing and environmental conditions in cities. Housing policy is a comprehensive working document as a guiding principles for housing programme in a given country to meet the housing needs of the citizens, that is, standard houses located in a good environment and at an affordable cost (Waziri1, & Roosl, 2013). It includes Public Private Partnership (PPP) and Community Development Associations' Projects (CDAP).
In Canada and Australia, housing adequacy has three gauges: occupancy standard of a maximum of 2 and a minimum of 1 person per bedroom; physical quality requiring presence of internal toilet, bathroom and kitchen with absence of need for major repair; and location that imposes less non-housing costs e. g. travel costs, gives access to essential services, family and friends (Gabriel, Jacobs, Arthurson, Burke & Yates, 2005).
Federal Government of Nigeria admitted and attributed failure of public housing programmes in the 1991 National Housing Policy to lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation of housing policy implementation. This is not achievable where there is no concerted effort to collect and use reliable information on quality of existing housing stock, neighbourhood environment and socio-economics characteristics of occupants. This is the gap, provision of information, that this paper is sets to fill.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This article takes after (Campanera, Nobajas, and Higgins, 2013) that make recourse to conceptual framework of socio-geographic analysis of urban environmental quality and well-being, that serves as basis for research into the person–environment relationship.
Again, quality of house that someone lives in is more than just a personal problem of individual. It has implications for a wider society in term of housing, health, employment, labour market performance, aged care, finance, community sustainability, economic development and urban and regional development (Gabriel et al, 2005).
It also takes after Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS) analysis of the determinants of many aspects of welfare and their interaction with the aim of conducting research to better understand household behaviour and its implications for government programmes as a tool for policymaking. Its objective among other is to improve communications among survey statisticians, analysts, and policymakers (Grosh & Glewwe, 1995).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey of housing stock condition in the core centre of Ilaro township was undertaken through reconnaissance, observation and structured questionnaire administered on the inhabitants. The core centre was delineated into 20 survey units with 5 households selected for the survey using systematic sampling technique. The heads of owner/occupier of the selected households of age 20 years and above were served with the questionnaire. A total of 100 copies of the questionnaire were distributed but only 85 (85%) were returned and analysed.
Data requirements include socio – economic characteristics of the respondents, availability of basic services and utilities in the houses and general conditions of the houses and their environment. Maintenance parameters include the conditions of walls, floor, roof, ceiling, doors and windows. Any major defect in any of the items is taken as poor, otherwise, the house was adjudged good. It was clearly explained to the respondents before asking them to fill the questionnaire. Observation of the houses were made and noted on the copies of the questionnaire collected from the respondents as a confirmation.
The respondents were asked whether they had toilet facilities and sources of water available with no classification. Well water as used herein includes water sourced from borehole. Room size of 3.6 metres by 3 metres was taken as standard. Adequacy of ventilation and light means the room had at least a window size of 1.2 metres by 1.2 metres.
Categorization of income groups on the basis of formal wages and salary in Nigeria by Ashaolu (1986) was adopted for use herein. Low Income people are those on level 06 and below, medium income people are on levels 07 -14 while high income people are from levels 15 and above. Federal Government of Nigeria ₦18, 000.00 minimum wage of 2011, which is still in force and applicable to the Federal, State and Local Government Civil

Services, was also adopted. Accordingly, basic low income range is between ₦216, 000.00 and ₦490. 000.00, medium income range is from ₦490, 001.00 to ₦1, 750, 000.00 and high income starts from ₦1, 750, 001.00. Accurate income of people in informal sector was difficult to collect as there were no official records to use. It is then rational to take basic wages of the formal sector as gauge. It had also been established in the literature that people engage in informal sector earn less than those in formal employment. Therefore, attached allowances and income tax were ignored to make it adaptable for use. Data collected was tabulated and analyzed using percentage.

3.1 STUDY AREA

Ilaro is a semi-urban town in Ogun State in the South Western part of Nigeria with a population of 46,999 (Population, mongabay.com 2012). The town occupies a land area of 9.5 square metres. (Lasisi, 2009). Ilaro was the headquarters of Egbado Local Government in 1976 when Ogun State was created and later became the seat of Yewa South Local Government when Egbado was splitted into four local councils. Important features in the town include the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, the State Hospital, School of Nursing, High Court, Police Area Command Headquarters, Federal Prison Yard and Ogun State Stadium. Others include banks, industrial establishment, hotels, primary and secondary schools, petrol filling stations, etc. newly established Ibese Cement Factory is close by.

The study area starts from Alagbaa Street on the right side of Wema Bank PLC unto and through Udoji Road to Sabo junction from where it turns to the right to link Orisun Odoran Stream along Sabo – Gbogidi Road. The Stream serves as the western boundary from Kumoye area, Anglican Secondary School, Onipekere and Ilodo areas, behind Ire Akari Street up to Isale Petesi Alamu, then unto Egbo Road (Ona Egbo) and along the Road till it reaches Union Bank PLC then to the left side along Ona Ola Road back to Alagbaa Street junction.

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION

The presentation of data started with socio-economic characteristics: educational status, income and age of respondents. Then availability of basic utilities both in the houses and environment, physical condition of the houses and average occupancy rate per room.

Table 2: Educational Status of the Respondents

Education status	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
Primary School	40	47
Secondary School	30	35
Post-Secondary	15	18
Total	85	100

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Table 2 reveals that 47% had primary school education, 35% had secondary education and just 18% had post-secondary education. Therefore, majority of the respondents (82%) were Primary and Secondary School Leaving Certificates holders.

Table 3: Income of Respondents

Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Low	53	62
Middle	27	32
High	05	06
Total	85	100

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Table 3 shows 62% were in the low income category and 32% of the respondents were in the middle income level while just 6% were within the high income bracket. Therefore, majority of the respondents were Low-Income Earners.

Table 4: Age of Respondents

Age of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Percentage

20 – 29	0	0
30 – 39	10	12
40 – 60	45	53
Above 60	30	35
Total	85	100

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Table 4 depicts that 12% respondents were within the age range of 30 – 39 years, 53% were within the age range of 40 – 60 years. This is followed by 35% of people who were above 60 years of age as at the time of study.

Table 5 depicts that 18% of the respondents claimed that their houses had well/tap water supply while 82% did not have any type of supply. All the houses surveyed enjoyed electricity supply but only 26% of them had toilet facilities leaving74% without. All of the

Table 5: Availability of Basic Utilities

	Availabble		Not available		Total	
Basic Utilities						
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Well/Tap Water	15	18	70	82	85	100
Electricity	85	100	0	0	85	100
Toilet Facility	20	23.5	65	76.5	85	100
Refuse Disposal	0	0	85	100	85	100
Drainage System	0	0	85	100	85	100
Road Network	35	41	50	59	85	100
Parking Lot	15	18	70	82	85	100

Source: Field Survey (2015)

houses surveyed neither had any proper method of disposing their waste products nor proper drainage system. Just 41% of the houses were accessible by road network while very few houses, that is, 18% had provision for parking.

Table 6: Physical Condition of the houses

Condition	Good/Available		Poor/Absent		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Level of maintenance	20	23.5	65	75.5	85	100
Adequacy of ventilation	30	35	55	65	85	100
Adequacy of light	30	35	55	65	85	100
Standard of room size	38	45	47	55	85	100

Use of ceiling boards	37	43.5	48	56.5	85	100
Use of mosquitoes nest	30	35	55	65	85	100
Rat prevention	5	6	80	94	85	100
Erosion prevention	25	29	60	71	85	100

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Table 6 depicts results of analysis on the condition of the houses surveyed. It reveals that about 76% of them were dilapidated while 65% of the houses were not adequately ventilated nor accessed adequate natural light during the day. It shows that 55% of the houses had no standard room size. About 57% of the houses had no ceiling boards, 65% had no mosquitoes net and 94% had no rat prevention devices to prevent mosquitoes, rats, insects, reptiles ec. from infesting the houses and their occupants. Occupants of 71% of the houses did not take any measure to prevent erosion from damaging their houses.

Table 7 **Average Occupancy rate per room**

Number of occupants	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	**0**	**0**
2	**0**	**0**
3	**1**	**1**
4	**20**	**24**
5	**40**	**47**
6	**23**	**27**
Above 6	**1**	**1**
Total	**85**	**100**

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Table 7 shows that minimum numbers of people living in a room is three (1%). About 24% of the households had 4 people in a room. Households with 5 persons in a room constitute 47%, for 6 persons in a room it is 23% and 1% for household with more than 6 persons in a room. Living in a room, 99% of households were having more than acceptable three people.

4.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Majority of the respondents (82%) did not have post-secondary education with only 47% having primary school education. This is a limitation on their employment opportunities and degree of income they could generate. Thus, 62% were in the low income category. The inhabitants were living with little or no financial capacity to uplift their housing and environmental conditions.

Refuse disposal and defecation by residents were carried out through open dumping grounds that were even some meters away from their dwellings. The dumping sites harbour rats, reptiles and insects which invade houses around them. The sites are burnt during dry seasons causing air and environmental pollution through release of smoke and fumes and whirlwind scattering refuse in the period.

During raining season the common practice is to dump the refuse and human faeces kept at home during the day in the open drainages provided along streets and major roads. This causes flooding and environmental pollution as the refuse is poured back to the surfaces down the roads.

Further investigation revealed that pipe borne water was no longer running. Private individuals have, however, come to the rescue of residents on sustainable supply of water. They dug or bored hole to access water and supply same for which they charge fees as their own source of income.

The roads were no longer passable in some areas due to damage by erosion. The drainage too had collapsed in many places. Some areas badly affected include Kumoye area, Onipekere and Ilodo areas,

Majority of the respondents were in their prime age, 30-60 years. They can still explore diversification of job to have more income in order to improve their living standard, housing and environmental conditions, other things being equal.

There was overcrowding in the area as at the time of this study. It was revealed that 99% of households were having more than acceptable three people living in a single room.

Data analysis revealed that majority of existing houses were dilapidated and without standard room size, adequate ventilation and day light, good motorable road network, drainage system, toilet and cesspool, modern refuse disposal system and source of water supply.

The study revealed that private individuals had, however, come to the rescue of residents on sustainable supply of water. They dug borehole to access water and supply same for which they charge fees as their own source of income. This is a kind of Public Private Partnership that works.

Houses in the study area are prone to plague that may emanate from invading rodents, insects, reptiles and mosquitoes. The practice of keeping refuse and human faeces at home during the day and dumping of same in the open drainages are dangerous to human health and welfare as the situation can lead to outbreak of deadly and contagious diseases.

Reconnaissance and observation revealed housing collapse was ravaging the study area leading to depletion of already inadequate housing stock in the country and may worsen the unpalatable issue of overcrowding being experienced in the area in particular and the country in general.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The paper studied socio-economic characteristics of people, housing and environmental conditions in the core centre of Ilaro. The study area had deplorable environment. Houses were overcrowded, poorly maintained and mostly devoid of services and infrastructure that make human habitation comfortable. People were in low income earners. There is urgent need for the stakeholders to come up with implementable policy and line of actions to arrest the unpleasant scenario in semi-urban centres.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Having identified the quality of existing housing stock in the study area, it is therefore imperative for policy makers to come up with implementable blueprint for sustainable urban renewal in semi-urban areas like Ilaro and other large cities across the country.

Further development of urban periphery should be given adequate planning attention prior to any construction and development to prevent continuation of urban decay into the suburbs.

Allocation of resources to capital projects by all tiers of government in the country should be aimed at long-term growth and poverty reduction.

The masses of this country should be sensitized to understand and agree that houses where they live impact upon their lives, performances, achievements and comfortability, hence, they should accord housing the priority it deserves in spending their meager incomes. They should, therefore, endeavour to continually upgrade their present housing conditions.

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