

AN APPRAISAL OF HOUSING QUALITY CONDITIONS IN ILARO, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Quality housing is the goal of all localities; such assurance reflects a community's ability to respond to the needs of its citizens, as well as to accommodate growth and economic development. This paper focuses its study on housing quality condition in Ilaro, Nigeria. Assessing the quality of existing housing stock, quality of the housing environment, and the availability of the neighborhood facilities were the major objectives.

Data for the study were generated from both primary and secondary sources. 150 households were surveyed using random sampling. Information was obtained on basic socioeconomic, housing and environmental characteristics of the respondent's household.

This paper suggests the reintroduction of environmental inspectors, enforcing zoning and building regulations, direct government investment in urban infrastructure among others.

The paper therefore concludes that if the trend continues sustainable development in the area will remain unattainable.

Key words: Environment, Housing, Infrastructure, Neighbourhood, Quality

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the understanding of people concerning housing had grown to mean more than mere shelter which is just a building or enclosure for one to be accommodate. Housing is seen to include the neighbourhood, facilities, infrastructures and the totality of the environment as it affects and or influence the lives and wellbeing of the occupants. It is the process of providing functional shelter in proper sitting in a neighbourhood supported by sustainable maintenance of the built environment for the day –to –day living and activities of individuals and families within the community (National Housing policy, 2006). Housing therefore, transcends ordinary building structures to mean functional unit in a good neighbourhood, properly maintained, equipped with the basic facilities in which the occupier would live comfortably.

Housing (adequate shelter) is recognized world-wide as one of the basic necessities of life and a pre-requisite to survival of man (Agboola, 2004, UN–Habitat, 2006; Anofojie and Adeleye, 2011). Rapoport (2001) defines housing as a system of settings within which a certain system of activities takes place and therefore housing is more than the dwelling, the neighbourhood and its environmental quality profiles become important. In the traditional African setting, in particular, housing is, in fact, one of the greatly cherished material properties. However, providing qualitative housing is a concern, not only of individuals but also of governments. Researches (Mabogunje, 2002; Aribigbola, 2005; Olayiwola et al, 2005; Lawanson, 2006; UN–Habitat, 2006; Jiboye, 2010) have shown that decades of direct government interventions, both locally and internationally, in the housing sector have not been able to combat the problems of insufficient quality in housing. This is more serious in developing countries and Nigeria is not an exemption. Nevertheless, despite recorded failures, academics and professionals still invest much interest. Quality of housing and that of the environment have direct bearing on the lives of people in that community because; environmental quality and quality of live are two variables of same equation.

Quality living depends so much on the quality of the environment one lives in. According to Ebong (1983), as reported in Dung-Gwom and Ibrahim (2006), the quality of environment affects not only the well-being of a people, but also their productivity, manner of living as well as the ordinary decencies of their lives.

The desire to live in a house depends on how conducive and attractive the housing unit is. Conduciveness of a housing unit can be expressed by certain factors such as circulation space within the unit, the availability and affordability of basic amenities such as water, electricity, toilet facilities, occupancy ratio etc. attractiveness on the other hand is a function of the neighbourhood facilities (accessibility, shopping centres, schools, security, hospitals etc.) and quality of the environment (drainage system, method of refuse collection and disposal, road network etc.) personal taste, social value and affordability.

Housing of a good quality in a good environment is prerequisite to quality living. That is for people to have quality life; they need housing in the required quantity and quality in an efficient environment free from disease, robbery, assault etc. which facilitates their comfort and enjoyment (Fagbohun, 2003; Dung-Gwom and Ibrahim 2006). Therefore for people to function as they should, they need adequate housing in a conducive environment; functional housing units in a planned environment accorded the basic necessities for live ability. Assessing the conditions for housing in our cities therefore, becomes a necessity in order to determine their functions, conduciveness and liveability.

The aim of this study is to appraise the quality conditions of housing in Ilaro, Nigeria. The major objectives of the study include the assessment of the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents with respect their income and household size, the conditions of the infrastructure within the neighbourhood.

The quest to ensure that the population is properly and adequately housed for optimum functioning built environment motivated this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ratcliffe (1978) refers to housing as one of the components of planning since it gives shelter, security, privacy, investment and personal identity. With the exception of food, housing ranks highest amongst man's basic needs in the Nigerian Fourth National Development Plan (1981 – 1985), and goes beyond simple shelter to include utilities and community services such as energy, water supply, access roads, sewerage, refuse disposal facilities and the likes.

Adeleye (2012) asserts that the classification of housing depends on the number of rooms, existing comfort, form and the place where found. Agbola (1998) describes housing as an issue that touches on the life of individuals as well as that of a nation. As such, he ascribes great importance to the role played by housing in endangering human comfort by both nature and society. In addition, he stresses that housing which is a combination of characteristics provides a unique home within any neighbourhood, describing it as an array of economic, social and psychological phenomena. Jiboye (2004), therefore, asserts, "If the concept of housing is understood to represent the aforementioned expressions, then, housing designs and planning consideration should involve not only the physiological responses to the enclosed environment, but also the socio-cultural responses emanating from the socio-economic and cultural norms of the users. In this regard, all the ancillary services and community facilities, which are necessary for human wellbeing, including environmental and social services, personal safety and security, which are also essentials for housing should be provided."

In recent decades, there has been an increasing emphasis on the housing sector by different governments of the less developed countries (LDCs). Yet the sufficient and good quality provision of this basic need elude a high proportion of the population of these countries (Abiodun,

O. 1985b; Olayiwola et al, 2005; National Housing Policy, 2006). Housing is a basic human need. The understanding of its concept, as well as its components that provide for good quality, as is germane to this study is evaluated.

Housing Quality

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2014) defines quality as the standard of something when compared to other things like it; how good or bad something is. Afon (1998) asserts that quality cannot be considered differently from the process by which it is considered. Thus, standards housing are a measure of acceptability at a given time, place, in a given set of cultural, technological and economic conditions. According to Weldemann and Anderson (1985), planners and designers have used several criteria over the years to evaluate housing quality. These include:

- i. Economic criteria such as the relationship between rent and income;
- ii. Physical criteria such as the integrity of the dwelling and the present plumbing fixtures;
- iii. Social criteria such as the incidence of diseases and the degree which overcrowding of housing occupies.

Good quality housing standards are essential and basic to planning. These, not only ensure the safety and wellbeing of people but also promote beauty, convenience and aesthetics in the overall built-up environment. Good quality housing means more than a roof over one's head. It also means adequate privacy; adequate space, physical accessibility; adequate security, security of tenure, structural stability and durability; adequate lighting, heating and ventilation; adequate basic infrastructure, such as water supply, sanitation and waste-management facilities; suitable environmental quality and health-related factors; and adequate and accessible location with regard to work. All of these should be available at an affordable cost and should be determined together with the people concerned (Payne, 1977; Lewin, 1981; Olotuah, 2006; UN – HABITAT, 2006).

However, poor housing has repercussions across a whole range of other aspects of life, such as employment, as housing not only fulfils the basic human physical need for shelter but also

satisfies social requirements. A house provides a centre for an individual and the basis for family life, emerging as an important symbol of social standing and aspirations. Thus, the fulfillment of housing quality needs is a complex process. A good housing, therefore, must possess a general layout of good appearance, and comply with the general customs and habits of the people without which it may turn into a slum (Adeniyi, 1972; Lucas, 1990; Azubuike and Nkanginiemu, 1999; Sholamith, 2000; UNICEF, 2001).

However, past and current housing programmes have not paid adequate attention to housing quality (Onibokun, 1982 cited in Oni, 1988). Thus, inadequacies exist in housing. These inadequacies are treated under the following sub-topics: housing suitability, housing habitability, tenure security and freedom from crowding.

Goodman (1978) considers three indicators of housing quality: financial burden, crowding, unit and neighbourhood quality. His focus was on housing demand-type variables that influenced housing quality based on the premise that 'housing supply type variables are controlled by design. The determinants of housing quality in the Goodman studies were assumed to be; income, family size, education and race.

Perception of Housing Quality

Perception is defined as the process of attaining awareness or understanding of the environment by organizing and interpreting sensory information. All perception involves signals in the nervous system, which in turn result from physical stimulation of the sense organs (Wikipedia, 2012). Since the beginning of man, everyone has different perceptions of e.g. the environment, but these perceptions are also an expression of the time, context and culture each individual lives in.

Man's perception of the environment is considered so fundamental that it becomes the main point of departure for any analysis of man-environment relations. A perception approach to man environment relations recognizes that for each objective element and relationship in the biosphere, there are many perceived elements and relationships as seen and understood by

different people and at different times and places. Man reaches decisions and takes action within the framework of his perceived sets of elements and links rather than any externally defined "objective set". The understanding of resident's perception provides better information on their reaction to issues which may lead to more enlightened decision of the policy maker.

Housing Habitability

Housing habitability refers to the physical condition of dwellings (structurally, internally and externally); the existence of basic household amenities (such as cooking, washing and heating facilities); and the condition of the environment surrounding the home. It also comprises the social, behavioural, cultural and personal characteristics of the inhabitants and the nature of the institutional agreement under which the house is managed (Raven 1976; Onibokun 1998, Nandinee, 1999; Ayo, 2007, Jiboye, 2004, 2008). In describing the physical conditions of dwellings, Nandinee (1999) asserts that the structural adequacy of housing is an important indicator. He investigated the determinants of structural adequacy as an attribute of housing quality. The essential components of habitability are that the house (and environment where relevant) is healthy to live in, is energy efficient (takes less energy to build and operate), and is resource efficient (uses fewer non-renewable resources and makes efficient use of renewable resources).

There is therefore, the need to embark on this study so as to examine and proffer practical measures for better liveability in the study area.

Study Area

Ilaro is the headquarters of the Yewa South Local government, now known as YEWALAND which replaced the Egbado division of the former Western State, and later became a part of Ogun State of Nigeria. Ilaro town is about 50 km from Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital, and about 100 km from Ikeja, the capital city of Lagos State. Other neighbouring towns to Ilaro, headquarters of Yewaland include, Ajilete, Oke-Odan Owode, Ibese, Oja Odan, Pahayi, Idogo-Ipaja, Papa-Alanto, and Imasayi

Ilaro is an area undergoing transition from traditional to modern settlement, it houses some tertiary institutions such The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, School of Nursing and CIFMAN Polytechnic (study centre) which results into drastic increase in population. The establishment of Dangote cement factory in Ibese, (Neighbouring town) also propelled people to relocate to Ilaro town, which they consider a safe haven. This has in no small measure increased the population in Ilaro. The residential districts within Ilaro consist of the central core which is traditional in its setting and pattern and the new residential areas. The central core is made up of compound houses, where all members of the extended family lived together. A cursory analysis shows that like most Yoruba cities, the highest concentration of the poor is found in the core area. As the city grew away from the traditional core, new residential areas are formed which are made up of houses and apartments owned by individuals or rented by families (Ayoola & Amole, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the aim of the study as mentioned earlier, thus, Ilaro (the study area) was divided into three residential zones, namely core, transition and sub-urban. The core area consists of the old Oba's palace, the traditional market place, referred to as "*Igboro*" and surrounded by many residential units. Next to the core area is the transition zone, while the sub-urban is the suburb or newly developed residential area or outskirts. For the survey, these residential areas were classified into three zones, namely; A, B and C, respectively. Systematic sampling technique was used in selecting residents to be sampled. Information was obtained on basic socioeconomic, housing and environmental characteristics of the respondent's household. Respondents were selected at random and interviewed in the process of administering the questionnaires. For the purpose of this study, the urban environmental infrastructure such as roads, drainage systems, solid waste management systems and building elements such as foundation, walls, roofs, were classified into good, fair and bad, those with one form of notable defect or the other but were still functional were classified as fair while those that were sound physically, aesthetically and structurally were classified as good.

The target person for the survey was the household head. 50 questionnaires were administered in each zone. In all, 150 households were surveyed by the aid of questionnaire. However, 132 (88%) of the questionnaire were successfully retrieved for analysis. Various statistical tools such as bar chart, pie chart, e.t.c. were used in analysis the data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Socio-Economic characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

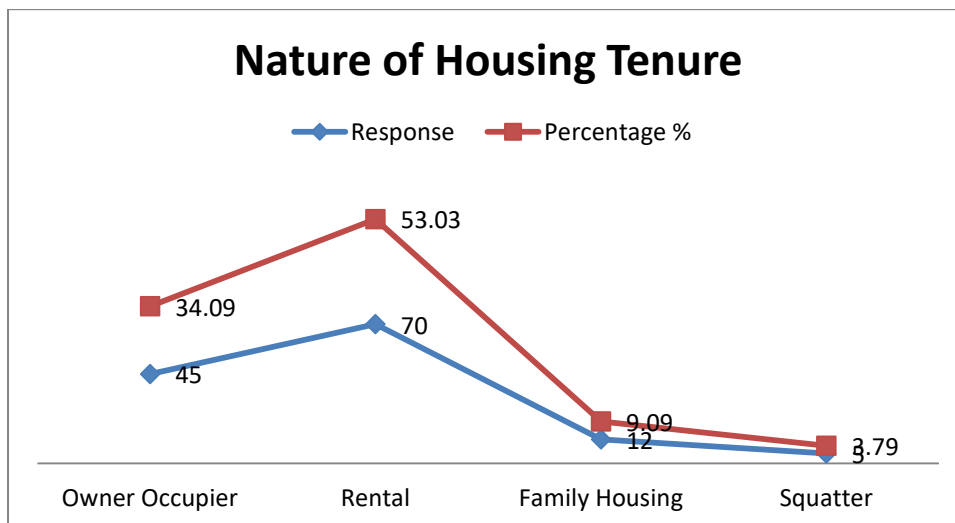
Occupation	Response	Percentage %
Civil Servant	44	33.3
Farmers	15	11.36
Businessmen/women	40	30.3
Craftsmen	12	9.1
Students	21	16
Total	132	100

Source: Researcher's Field survey, 2017

Table 2: Income Distribution of Respondent

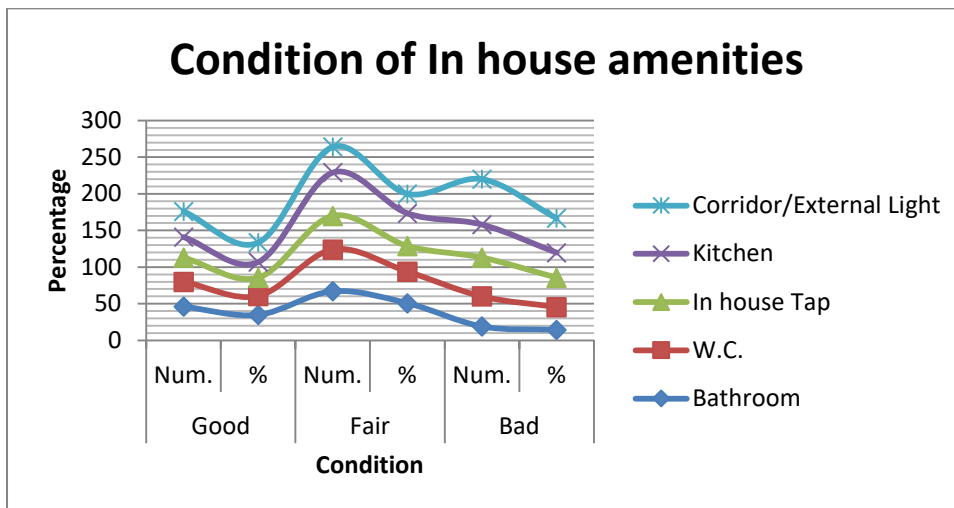
Income Range	Response	Percentage %
<10,000	10	7.58
11,000-20,000	22	16.67
21,000-30,000	36	27.27
31,000-40,000	19	14.39
41,000-50,000	20	15.15
>50,000	25	18.94
Total	132	100

Figure 1: Line Chart showing Nature of Housing Tenure



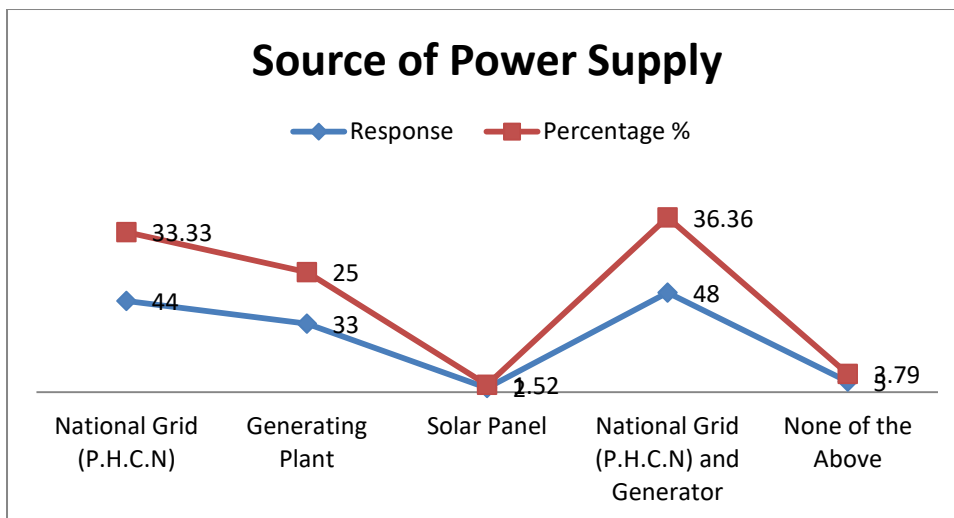
Source: Researcher's Field survey, 2017

Figure 2: Line Chart showing Condition of In House Amenities



Source: Researcher’s Field survey, 2017

Figure 3: Line Chart showing Source of Power Supply



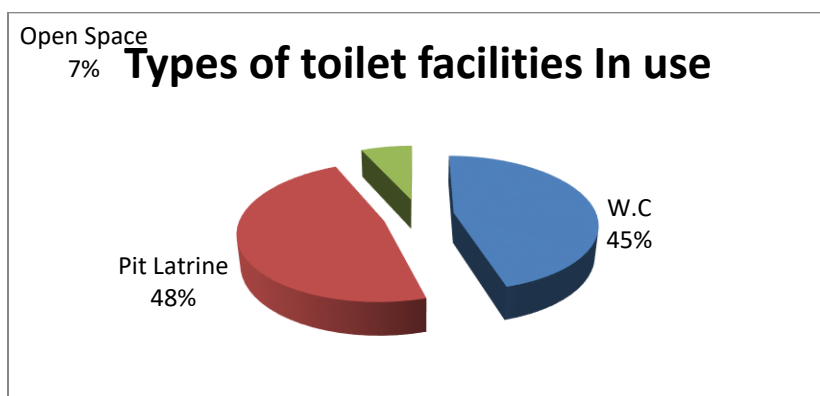
Source: Researcher’s Field survey, 2017

Table 3: Physical Condition of Housing Units

Building Elements	Good		Fair		Bad	
	Num.	%	Num.	%	Num.	%
Foundation	67	50.75	48	36.36	17	12.88
Wall	48	36.36	51	38.64	33	25
Floor	40	30.3	44	33.33	44	33.33
Roof	34	25.76	53	40.15	45	34.09

Source: Researcher’s Field survey, 2017

Figure 4: Pie Chart showing Types of Toilet facilities in use.



Source: Researcher's Field survey, 2017

Table 4: Condition of Neighborhood Infrastructure

Building Elements	Good		Fair		Bad	
	Num.	%	Num.	%	Num.	%
Drainage System	4	3.03	13	9.84	115	87.12
Road Network	38	28.79	77	58.33	17	12.88
Electricity Supply	35	26.52	38	28.79	59	44.7
Refuse Collection/Disposal	12	9.09	19	14.39	101	76.52
Tap water Network	4	3.03	12	9.09	116	87.88

Source: Researcher's Field survey, 2017

Table 4: Approximate Age of Housing Units

Age of Structure (yrs)	Response	Percentage %
<10	39	29.55
11-20	40	30.3
21-30	18	13.64
31-40	20	15.15
41-above	15	11.36
Total	132	100

Source: Researcher's Field survey, 2017

Table 5: Materials Used for Construction

Materials	Response	Percentage %
Cement Blocks	110	83.33
Mud Bricks	12	9.09
Timber	0	0
Compressed Earth Bricks	4	3.03
Cement and Bud Bricks	6	4.55
Total	132	100

Source: Researcher's Field survey, 2017

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The character of households is often determined by their income which in turn determines their class in the society – the status of the house they live in, the food they eat, the nature of the neighbouring environment, etc. This motivated the investigation into households' occupation and the result is presented in Table 1. The study area is inhabited notably by civil servants (33.3%) and Businessmen/women (30%). An average state civil servant earns a meager amount as salary in Nigeria. It was obtained that 27.27% of the respondents earned about ₦21, 000- ₦31, 000 only as income in a month. Larger part of this income is spent on non-housing expenditure thereby leaving households with no options than whatever kind of accommodation their income can afford notwithstanding the availability of the basic housing facilities.

The ability of households to partake actively in the housing market depends on the size of their income. This was investigated and the result is as shown in table 2. Only 18.94% of the respondents earn above ₦50, 000.00 monthly. Given these amounts as income cannot guarantee them housing loans, hence renting which accounts for 53.03% of the respondents become the necessary available alternatives (Figure 1).

Condition of Housing Facilities / Amenities

Housing facilities were assessed to determine their availability and functionality and Figure 2 presents the result. Out of the 132 houses surveyed, only 27% have functional amenities. About 33% do not have or have or have non-functional amenities. The poor conditions of in-house facilities make living conditions terrible and unbearable. Most houses are substandard, and without basic facilities like in-house taps, water and toileting facilities. Where the facilities are provided, they are never maintained as their priority is to feed the family rather than fixing a broken washing closet unit. Cooking activities take place on the corridors as kitchens are being converted to living rooms or bedrooms due to increase in family size. Clean water for domestic purposes such as cooking and drinking is not available as shown in

Figure 4 presents the type of toileting facilities used in the study area. 48% of households use pit latrines, 45% use washing closets (which most often run out of water and become non-functional) and about 6% use open space. Bulks of the houses 53% are tenement type (Figure 1) built for rental purposes and mostly without plan approvals where the provisions of toilets are considered secondary. Both the pit system and the open space are unhygienic. The pit systems make the homes stuffy while rain washes the excreta on water ways back into the wells thereby making them unsafe for consumption. In addition, malfunctioning of in-house facilities such as fans, air conditioning etc. are compounded by epileptic power supply in the study area because majority of the respondents depends on the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) for their supply as shown in Figure 3, About 33% rely on PHCN, 3% do not have access to any form of power, while 25% use generating plants. The use of generators have become the order of the day in Nigeria because of epileptic power supply from PHCN this adds to the running cost of housing for those who can afford it. Most houses at the fringes of Ilaro are not connected to the national grid and those who cannot afford generators accept living in the dark which makes life very uncomfortable and irritating. Such areas are so dark at nights that hoodlums can take advantage to perpetrate their evils /dastardly acts. In summary therefore, most houses in the study area lack basic facilities, the few that are provided are out of function due to shear neglect or inadequate maintenance.

Availability and quality of neighbourhood infrastructure

Housing infrastructures were surveyed to determine their conditions and the result is shown on Table 4. The study area lacked functional and necessary basic infrastructure such as good roads, drainage systems, waste management systems as 59.5% houses do not have access to these facilities. They are either not provided at all or the few available ones are not functioning properly. Hence most houses are accessible through narrow foot paths, with no allowances for construction of drainage channels. The few channels available have become refuse dumping pits

as proper refuse collection and disposal points are not provided. Hence refuse dumps are common sights in Ilaro and the first rain of the year do wash these waste into peoples' houses making them vulnerable to diseases such as typhoid fever, cholera etc. Based on the assessment of the infrastructure, the study area can best be qualified to have a poor Housing quality conditions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ilaro is a typical low income settlement marred with numerous housing problems. These are social, environmental and economic in nature. These problems manifest in shortages of accommodation units, sub-standard buildings, overcrowding, inadequate and non-functioning social amenities, unsatisfactory and unwholesome environmental conditions. Similarly, the environmental and economic conditions of the study area exhibited the characteristics of slum neighbourhood typical of fringe settlements in most Nigerian towns, characterized by unplanned developments, uncoordinated system of development and long term neglect by the government.

From these findings, the following measures are suggested as means of resolving the deplorable housing conditions in the study area as well as others with similar problems.

1. Professionals in the built environment should alone be permitted to carry out their professional work and quackery be eliminated through enforcement of laws.
2. All the constructions and Building works should be properly approved before construction commences.
3. Development control mechanisms such as building setbacks should be strictly enforced. This will allow space for road construction to improve accessibility, construction of drainages etc.
4. Layouts with sites and services must be provided by the government at a cheaper rate to facilitate structural and coordinated development within the metropolis.

5. Adequate waste management schemes must be put in place. The occupants are tax-paying citizens who have rights to the welfare befitting every other citizen.
6. Drainage should be constructed in all the residential zones to reduce the effect of erosion experiencing in the study area.
7. The government should make a deliberate effort to redevelop/renew the area in order to improve the quality of lives of the slum dwellers.
8. Monthly environmental sanitation programme be re-introduced and enforced strictly in order to keep the environment clean.

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