

CONSTRAINTS TO NIGERIA'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GLOBALISED ECONOMY: THE HOUSING PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's subscription to the world globalized economic order is tacitly illustrated by her adoption and implementation of United Nation's Resolution-compliant economic strategies—National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Privatization of government-owned enterprises etc. Housing, a germane human social need has not been given priority, yet it guarantees the health and productivity of the labour-force to propel the envisaged 21st century diversified Nigerian economy. From the urban and non-urban settlements selected for study, responses and data were sourced on questions relating to Nigeria's housing situation – the extent of the problem, socio-economic indicators and implications on human productivity. This paper inferentially concludes that the substantiality of Nigerian housing problem, with no evidence of pragmatic solution mechanisms in place or sight, makes her desire for an active and beneficial participation in the global economy a mirage. However, recommendations made towards alleviating the worrisome housing situation include general improvement of housing environment, with emphasis on the poor and rural dwellers' housings, infusion of more funds into the housing sector, encouragement of retention of rural labour-force in rural communities etc.

KEY WORDS: *Globalized Economy, Globalization, Rural Housing.*

INTRODUCTION

The world is gradually catching the cold from a sneezing economic order – Globalization. National economies are practically giving way to a villagised, de-territorised and borderless economic arena. Recent resolutions at summits of world leaders centred on the global plan to reduce by half, the current world population of the poor, in 2015. Health, education, social infrastructure etc now remain the main thrusts of the new Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs) foisted on member-nations by the United Nations.

It is however worrisome that in pursuance of the global developmental target towards improving the lots and well-being of the world populace, the United Nations and its member-nations have given little or vague attention to housing, yet it is a variable which guarantees the health and well-being of the human race scattered unevenly across the standing stock of the vast globe.

Considering the livability of the African environment Onwusonye (2005) recalls Paul Collier's assertion that "15% of Africans live in an environment considered minimally adequate for sustainable growth and development". Sangosanya (1988) posits that "Housing not only contributes to the attainment of a nation but also stimulates social stability, work efficiency and the development of individuals".

It is the position of the researchers that any nation desirous of active and beneficial participation in a global market must imperatively avail her citizenry of growth and health-promoting social needs and most importantly, affordable and decent housing environment. But Nigeria, with all the natural and human resources at her disposal, is yet to pragmatically address the provision of this compelling variable, preparatory to her active involvement in a global market where national economies, inspite of relative loss of identities, need to stand on virtually equal pedestals.

This research appreciates the challenges of the new order. It particularly assessed Housing problem beyond the limit of the Nigerian monolithic economy hinged on oil, a wasting fund-resource which currently generates over 90% of the National Income. It therefore considers Housing in the perspective of Nigeria's inevitable reversal to the old agriculture-dependent economy where it once enjoyed Comparative Advantage in the production of tropical crops such as

cocoa, palm-produce, groundnut, cotton etc.

Therefore, using empirical statistical tools at their disposal, the researchers paint a picture of the current Nigerian housing environment and conclude that Nigerian housing situation poses a big threat to her productive capabilities and capacities in all sectors of the national economy.

However, recommendations rooted in the findings of the researchers were made with a view to assisting all stakeholders in putting Nigeria in the good stead for the herculean task towards a beneficial participation in the global economy.

RELATED LITERATURE

Historical View

Several dates have been picked as marking the beginning of the Globalization process. A school of thought asserts that the old British Empire, in the 19th Century, championed the world's first known wave of globalized economy. It further asserts that the attempt at synergizing international economies was truncated in 1914, linking its demise to the assassination of one Australia's Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife by one Gavrilo Princip. (Milanovic, 2006).

Another historical perspective traced economic globalization to the collapse of the Eastern bloc in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a development that gave way to the ascendancy of a global

economy structured and governed by the interest of the western behemoth countries which now engage transnational financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as vanguards in the global spread of capitalism (Doreen, 2002).

A third dimension claims that Globalization is an off-shoot of the era of mercantilism where states like Portugal, Spain, Holland, Britain and France extended their sovereignty far beyond their national boundaries, to protect the interests of their various merchants (Adeniran, 2006).

However, the Globalization phenomenon has gone beyond origination or historical nicety. It has become the newel of the world economic order to which every domestic or national economy must necessarily be hooked for growth, sustenance and stability.

Globalized Economy: A Concept

Globalization as an economic concept is yet to gain a universally acceptable definition. Its perceived 'pains' and 'gains' variously shape and re-shape the articulations and postulations of scholars and socio-political commentators pitched in opposing ideological camps. Today, Globalization proponents are as varied and numerous in number as its opponents.

Akindele et al (2002) copiously quoted the arguments of many authors who either lend support to it or consign the phenomenon to eternal condemnation.

Prominent among the proponents were Gordimer (1988) who opines that "Globalization is synonymous to expansion of trade over oceans and airspace, beyond traditional alliances which were once restricted by old political spheres of influence and Fafowora (1998:5) who posits that it is "a process that deals with the increasing breakdown of trade barriers and the integration of world market". Fellman et al (2003:19) who describe the phenomenon as "an implication of increasing interconnectedness of all parts of the world as range of social, cultural, political and economic processes become international in scale and effect".

Arguments against a Globalized Economy are vociferous and intense. Oyelaran-Oyeyinka (1997) sees it as "an economic and technological arrangement "creating a borderless world". Akindele et al (2002) again identified Toyo (2000) as a passionate opponent whose view that Globalization is "an imperial policy; a final conquest of capital over the rest of the world", summarizes the aggregate position of the opposition.

The recent privatization exercise by the Nigerian government, in the opinion of critics of Globalization was a phenomenal illustration of economic subjugation and imperialism, locating the position on the following reasons:

- i. Inevitable expropriation of surplus and capital flight from economies of developing countries.

- ii. Loss of distinct economic identities and culture.
- iii. Difficulty in making unilateral and autonomous decisions in pursuit of national objectives. For instance while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) queried the Nigerian government on the over ₦400 billion budgeted on capital expenditure in 2001, the World Bank made substantial contribution to the drafting of the same budget.

However, regardless of the divergent views and virulent flaks against Globalization, nations across the world now strive hard to be active participants in the economic order whose sphere of coverage basically include the following reason as captured by Egbokhape (2003).

- i. Promotion of production specialization by nation with a view to broadening their scope of Comparative Advantage.
- ii. Internationalization of qualities and standards of domestic products for global demand and consumption.
- iii. Encouragement of accessibility of nations to more capital flows and technologies.
- iv. Promotion and enhancement of cheaper imports and larger export market.
- v. Increased integration of international economies.
- vi. Development of local technologies and capabilities towards the achievement of national goals.

Oyelaran – Oyeyinka (1997:10) sees it as creating a borderless world.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers studied the Nigerian housing environment in three (3) selected settlements - rural, semi-urban and urban settlements represented by Iwoye (Yewa South Local Government Area, Ogun State). Oru-Ijebu (Ijebu-North Local Government Area, Ogun State) and metropolitan Lagos (Lagos State) respectively. In pursuance of the objective of this paper, the vast Lagos metropolis was studied from two distinct neighbourhoods representing high-density residential area (Itire Road, Mushin) and Low-density locality, (Joel Ogunnaike Street, GRA, Ikeja).

Using a combination of simple random and systematic sampling techniques informed by peculiar geographical, demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the studied areas, data were sourced from the various categories of dwellers. This was complemented with a reconnaissance survey of the areas for physical observations and details on their housing environment.

Table 1 illustrates the data captured on Housing Requirement Performance, expressed in percentages, as collected from the studied neighbourhoods. The criteria adopted for assessment were physiological needs, psychological needs, protection against contagion and protection against accidents or injuries.

Table 1: Housing Requirement Performance (in percentage)

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS/VARIABLES	IWOYE 17	ORU-IJEBU 61	MUSHIN LAGOS 72	IKEJA GRA LAGOS 63
a.	PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS				
	Fresh & Pure Air	58.82	77.05	9.72	80.95
	Space for outdoor Living	88.24	63.93	4.17	74.60
	AVERAGE	73.53	70.47	6.49	77.78
B	PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS				
	Adequacy of Privacy	76.47	3.28	4.17	80.95
	Opportunity for normal family life	70.59	60.66	6.94	82.54
	Ease of household operation	47.06	68.85	6.94	82.54
	AVERAGE	64.71	44.26	6.02	80.01
C	PROTECTION AGAINST CONTAGION				
	Source of Water	0.00	86.88	59.72	100.00
	Availability of Toilet facilities	11.76	44.26	26.39	100.00
	Waste Disposal (Solid & Liquid)	17.65	47.54	48.61	96.83
	Exclusion of Vermin	11.76	70.49	84.72	100.00
	Sufficiency of sleeping space	35.29	78.69	41.67	80.95
	Interior Sanitation	17.65	31.15	25.00	100.00
	AVERAGE	12.74	59.84	47.69	96.30
D	PROTECTION AGAINST INT ACCIDENTS				
	Adequacy of fire protection	5.88	11.48	37.50	93.65
	Protection against interior injuries	5.88	26.23	45.83	96.83
	AVERAGE	5.88	18.86	36.67	95.24

Source: *Field survey by Researchers (2008).*

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Rural Settlement (Iwoye)

- i. The housing environment of the studied rural community reasonably satisfied acceptable physiological and psychological requirements of an ideal residential housing as shown in Table 1, 73.53% and 64.71% of the

sampled dwellings met the needs respectively.

- ii. The bane of the rural housing environment is primarily the exposure of dwellers to various vectors of contagious diseases. Again, Table 1 shows that dwellers in the sampled area (Iwoye) were inadequately protected against contagions. Non-

availability of toilet facilities and exclusion of vermin (11.76%), poor interior sanitation (17.65%) etc support this exposure. Water was sourced from nearby streams while solid refuse disposal was mainly to “designated” dumpsites located at village outskirts.

Emerging Urban Settlement (Oru-Ijebu)

The town exhibits a fair housing environment as illustrated by the performance under the various indicators – physiological needs (70.47%) psychological needs (44.26%) and Protection against diseases (59.84%). However, study revealed that only 18.86% of the sampled dwellings were protected against fire and other interior accidents or injuries. (Table 1).

Urban Low-Density Neighbourhood (GRA, Ikeja)

Urban low-density residential areas represented by Joel Ogunnaike Street, GRA, Ikeja remarkably satisfy virtually all performance requirements of a decent housing environment. A percentage range of 77.7% - 96.30% in all indicators justifies this assertion.

Urban High-Density Locality (Itire Road, Mushin , Lagos)

This locality exhibited the poorest performance. The studied locality had 6.94% and 6.02% in physiological and psychological needs respectively. Protection against disease-carrying contagions (47.69%) and that against interior Accidents (36.67%) were still

below average. All these features are a threat to human health and productivity.

However, research further showed that all parts of the studied metropolis (Lagos), regardless of land-use, suffer both air and noise pollution from vehicular movements, industrial emissions, shouted conversations etc. All these affect the health status and productivity of urban residents.

CONCLUSION

All over the world, oil is being discovered and harnessed for economic use. The continuous discovery of oil and other sources of energy by other nations may soon become a big threat to Nigeria’s current prominence and relevance in an oil-propelled global economy. Coupled with this imminent happenstance is the wasting nature of oil being a fund resource which is exhaustible owing to exploitation and use.

However, Nigeria’s hope for an active and beneficial participation in a knowledge-driven global economy finds expression in her inevitable reversal to an agriculture-based economy. Her natural and human resources and endowment put her in a good stead for the re-establishment of her age-long Comparative Advantage in the production of cocoa, palm produce, groundnut, cotton etc. It is in the context of this ‘vantage premise that government, its agencies and other stakeholders need address the worrisome housing problem with a view to improving the well-being, productivity and efficiency of the entire citizenry. With this, the country can raise

a labour-force for an active and beneficial participation in the globalized economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings, discussions and conclusion above, the following recommendations are proffered:

- i. Government should infuse money generously into the Housing sector. All socio-economic strata of the citizenry must handsomely benefit from this financial infusion whose use for housing purpose must be closely monitored by government to discourage diversion.
- ii. With legislations and administrative framework, government should provide the enabling environment for both the formal and informal institutions and individuals, including professionals, engaged in housing delivery. This will go a long way in improving housing quality in the country. Resultantly, the productivity and efficiency of the nation's labour-force will be enhanced.
- iii. Rural Integration Programme by government must be adopted and implemented towards curbing the spate and rate of rural-urban drift. This should necessarily include the provision of social and infrastructural facilities in rural communities. Examples are hygienic water supply system, waste disposal, electricity etc.
- iv. Housing delivery by all stakeholders should not be limited

to direct construction and allocation only. Incentives like concessions, subsidized mortgage finances and building material procurement etc towards home-ownership by a large segment of the population, should be given. Again, this would have an across-the-board boost on human productivity that will prepare Nigerians for the challenges of a globalized knowledge-driven economy.

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