

THE RISE OF URBAN SLUM IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS ON THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the rise of urban slum in Nigeria and its implication on the urban landscape its objectives are to find out the negative implications of the rise of urban slum on the urban landscape and find our strategies for solving the problem of urban slum growth in Nigeria. It used the survey research method, focusing on three (3) South-eastern cities of Nigeria - Owerri, Aba and Onitsha with a total of three hundred and twenty (320) structured questionnaires. The study finds out that the activities of urban slum dwellers have degraded and equally defaced the aesthetic value of the environmental landscape and that there is a significant relationship between the activities of slum communities and the defacement of the urban landscape in Nigeria. It recommends that Government and city planners should provide affordable land and low cost housing for the urban dwellers. This will enable people to own their property or rent as the case may be.

Keywords: Urban Slum, Urban Landscape, Implication, Population, Growth

Introduction

Shelter is one of man's greatest needs throughout his evolutionary journey. Our earliest ancestors, the primitive man, provided shelter to protect themselves from the vagaries of nature and equally from the threat of wild animals and from his fellow human beings. Most of the literature on human settlement and housing gain enough currency after the industrial revolution and urbanization that swept across Europe and later in the United States of America. At the beginning of the industrial era by 1700, London was the largest city in Europe with a population of only about 500,000. Within two centuries, however, London's population grew thirteen times larger, reaching almost 6.5 million (Chandler & Fox, 1974).

The rise of an industrial economy and explosive urban growth (triggered by rural-urban migration) were important dimensions of the rapid transformation of the Western

world from medieval traditionalism to modernity. But one thing is instructive here; the tremendous influx of people simply overwhelmed the capacity of cities to absorb them. Inadequate housing was a major social problem that was widespread among city dwellers. Most especially to the urban poor, with their engraved poverty of money, access and power, these mass of urban proletariats have little or no viable option than to seek for alternative living quarters in slums.

The rise of urban slum in developing countries like Nigeria is a thing of worry and concern for her national government and all stakeholders. Davis (2004) described Lagos (a major Nigerian city) simply as the biggest node in the shanty town corridor of 70 million people that stretches from Abidjan to Ibadan and probably the biggest continuous footprint of urban poverty on earth.

In the parlance of reality, the astronomical trajectory of urban slums over the years in Nigeria with its attendant negative implication on the urban landscape is one that calls for urgent attention as it has led to environmental degradation and destruction of the urban landscape as well as its aesthetics. This paper therefore has provided an in-depth analysis on the rise of urban slum in Nigeria as it affects her urban landscape.

Statement of the Problem

The rising growth of urban population in recent years has been attributed to the unequal development of the cities and their rural counterpart. Especially in developing countries like Nigeria, the urban centers remain the cynosure of attraction among the rural dwellers, pushing them in their regions in search of greener pastures. Unfortunately, the cities' carrying capacities (support system) usually do not meet the infrastructural and resource need of these new immigrants.

A major consequence of this sorry state-of-affair is the expansion and development of shanty or slum settlements to meet the housing needs of mostly the urban poor. Many urban dwellers who could not afford comfortable living quarters due to high cost of building their own houses, high house rent, exorbitant acquisition of urban land etc, have sort refuge in slums albeit its ñear-hell-statusø

Slums have also developed in major Nigeria cities due to increasing urban poverty, failed government policies and capitalist forces such as globalization that have brought further hardship to the urban poor. It is obvious that without active intervention by national governments, rapid unplanned urban expansion will greatly exacerbate what is already a human disaster as slums life consists of insecure employment, state persecution and eviction miserable existence and extreme poverty. Slums are noted for the destruction of the urban landscape and aesthetics through environmental degradation such as erosion, indiscriminate dump of refuse, open defecation and many more.

Objective of the Study

The rise of urban slum in Nigeria is becoming a national embarrassment as the view in utter disgust the sprouting of slums around our cities. This research study therefore is intended to found out:

- (1) The causes of urban slum growth in Nigeria.
- (2) The negative implications of the rise of urban slum on the urban landscape.
- (3) The strategies for solving the problem of urban slum growth in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- (1) What are the major causes of urban slum growth in Nigeria?
- (2) What are the major characteristics of urban slum settlement?
- (3) What are the negative effects of urban slum growth on the urban landscape?
- (4) What are strategies for solving the problem of urban slum growth in Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

This study will be meaningfully significant to academicians, demographers; regional and city planners etc and others involve human settlement development. It will be of immense importance to the government proffering workable solutions to the problems of urban slum increase in many Nigerian cities. Hence, it provided an in-depth insight on the negative implications of urban slum growth on the urban landscape.

It will also provide the needed information on the slum dwellers on how to improve their living condition and their environment.

Hypotheses

- H₁: There is a significant relationship between the activities of slum dwellers and the defacement of the urban landscape in Nigeria.
- H₂: There is a positive relationship between urban poverty and the growth of urban slum in Nigeria.

Methodology

To ensure that accurate data is gathered for the success of this research work, the study focused on three (3) Southeastern cities of Owerri, Aba and Onitsha. A total of Four hundred (400) structured questionnaires were distributed to the respondents out of which 300 questionnaires were retrieved, representing 75% of the original number distributed. The data collected were carefully analyzed by the use of simple percentage and for the hypotheses; they were tested using the chi-square statistical tool.

The Concept of Slum

Traditionally, the term 'slum' referred to housing areas that were once relatively affluent but which deteriorated as the original dwellers moved on to newer and better parts of the city. Recently as maintained by (UN HABITAT 2007), slum has come to include the vast informal settlement found in cities in the developing world. For the Encyclopedia Britannica (2010) a slum is defined as a densely populated area of substandard housing, usually in a city, characterized by unsanitary conditions and social disorganization. Among the social science and Human Geography, slum is a squalid section of a city, characterized by inferior living conditions and usually by overcrowding.

The definition provided by the United Nations agency, UN-HABITAT (2007) sees slum, as a run-down area of a city characterized by substandard housing and squalor and lacking in tenure security. This definition offers a technical and more comprehensive outlook on the dynamics and posture of a slum.

The characteristics of urban slum

From the definitions proffered above, there are common characteristics that can be deduced. The following forms the characteristics of urban slum.

- (i) Slums are usually densely populated: Many slum settlements are inhabited by overwhelming numbers of people who may not afford the formal housing arrangement of cities. Hence overcrowding is common place.
- (ii) Slums are inhabited by the urban poor. Most of the slum dwellers are from the lowest rung of the social ladder (the very poor, powerless and disadvantaged) of the society.
- (iii) Urban slum are characterized by urban decay; there is deterioration and decay of the existing urban infrastructures and services such as portable drinking water, electricity, sanitation, refuse disposal management and other social amenities.
- (iv) Slums building vary from simple shacks to permanent and well maintained structure. But it is instructive to maintain that virtually all slums lack tenure security and consequently, poor structural quality of housing is a common feature.

The causes of urban slum growth in Nigeria

(a) Rapid Rural-Urban Migration

This is one of the major forces fueling the growth of urban slums in Nigeria. Ware (1978) related rural urban migration in Africa to the availability of modern facilities such as piped water, schools, hospitals, supermarkets, recreational facilities among others in the urban areas at the expense of the rural areas. In most Nigeria rural communities, there are inadequate provision of basic socio-economic services and infrastructures such as good housing, transportation, portable water, medical services, financial institutions, recreational facilities, good nutrition, good job opportunities, quality schools and the like.

It is the above state-of-affairs that pull people in their thousands into the urban centres, only to be met with the stern reality that all that glitters may not be gold after all. Moreover, the support system of the urban centres are more often than not, hardly able to carry this new immigrants. Consequently, the effect of inadequate planning and ineffective land uses, have in no small way accelerated the emergence of urban slums or squatter settlements in Nigeria. The UN-HABITAT (2003) specifically identified the progressive decay in basic infrastructure such as piped water, electricity, beverage and roads as responsible for people in large African cities like Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, moving to unplanned settlements and urban periphery, where land is cheapest.

(b) High Urbanization and Urban Population Explosion

Brockerhoff (2000) maintained that high urbanization has in most cities resulted in rapid growth of slums and squatter settlements because government cannot cope with the population increase in terms of provision of serviced building plots. Urbanization generally has created a number of problems like shortage of dwelling units, mushrooming growth of shacks, encroachment of public land and expansion of unauthorized residential colonies. Brockerhoff (2000) wrote that urbanization in Delhi, India has led to planners complaining bitterly about slums as squatters take

over the small open spaces of the peripheral resettlement colonies into which the old urban poor were brutally removed in the mid 1970s. Furthermore, Wheln (2004) posited that one Third of world population lives in a slum with rapid unplanned urban expansion greatly exacerbating what is already a human disaster. Similarly, the UN-HABITAT (2003) report indicated that there are at least 550 million slum dwellers in Asia, 187 million in Africa, 128 million in Latin America and the Caribbean and further 54 million in the world's 30 richest countries. The astronomical growth of urbanization and urban population in the main, has asserted a lot of pressures on existing and limited social services so that adequate ratios in social services delivery easily fall short of expected ceilings thereby leading to the sprouting of slum settlement and shanties.

(c) Urban Poverty

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Africa and the Pacific (ESCAP) identified three (3) aspects of urban poverty namely: poverty of money, poverty of access and poverty of power. These aspects of poverty are indeed another critical element that fans the ember of slum growth in Nigeria.

For slum dwellers, their obvious lack of money means that they could hardly afford to pay for house rent or build their own houses within the formal land and housing markets of the cities. Furthermore, their poverty of access means that they lack access to basic social infrastructure and services provided by the government such as piped water, good road, good sewerage system etc. This has resulted in the urban poor, living in illegal and informal overcrowded, unsanitary and despicable slum settlements.

Poverty of power literally means that the urban poor are seen but not heard in the scheme of things within and around their environment. They lack the power to influence how cities are governed as decision making is concentrated in the hands of selected formal and informal elites. These conditions of poverty push people in the final analysis into building more and more slums in Nigeria.

(d) Lack of Tenure Security

The perpetuation of slums in major Nigeria cities such as Lagos, Abuja, PortHarcourt, Aba, etc could be attributed to the lack of secure tenure. By secure tenure we mean the right of all individuals and groups to effective protection by the state against arbitrary unlawful evictions.

People have secure tenure when there is evidence of documentation that can be used as proof of secure tenure status or when there is either de facto or perceived protection against forced eviction. The absence of the above requirements will simply mean that slum dwellers are unable to effectively enter into the formal housing and land market, thereby finding succor in slums.

(e) Globalization

Globalization as concepts have generated a lot of discourse. In fact apart from democracy, no other words have attracted attention like globalization in both national and international discussion. Globalization has the inherent capacity for the disarticulation and dislocation of a nation's socio-economic structure.

Our economy has been dictated by the forces of globalization such as International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) and World Bank. They influence and impose upon nations and governments liberal economic policies such as Subsidy removal, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Privatization and budget cuts.

The overall impact of globalization is that it has exacerbated over the past 25 years the desperate social and urban conditions of slum dwellers (UN-HABITAT, 2003). In Nigeria, building materials have remained exorbitant as a result of high import duties. And even when building materials are manufactured locally, the local industries have not been able to compete favorably with their foreign counterparts. This could be attributed to the former's apparent lack of capital, expertise, government support etc to thrive unlike the latter. This in the main, have contributed to people's inability to afford decent housing in cities.

The negative effects of urban slum growth on the urban landscape
Cities generally are strategic centers of beauty, peace and security as averred by Momodu, Dimuna & Dimuna (2011). But unfortunately, this wonderful description of cities especially in third world countries like Nigeria has been seriously dented owing to rise of slum in the midst of beauty.

Without equivocation, the growth of urban slums in Nigeria has negatively impacted on the urban landscape in the following ways. Firstly, slum settlements are usually located at the fringe of the cities along marginal land and water ways. Hence, incidence of soil erosion is common place because slum dwellers do not follow the approved plan by town planners.

Slum dwellers also lack access to basic social infrastructure like electricity and therefore must make use of alternative source of power like firewood for cooking. This has resulted in arbitrary destruction of forest with its attendant consequences on global warming. Slums have been responsible for the mountainous heaps of solid waste that deface Nigerian cities. Despite the promulgation of Decree 58 for the establishment of Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) on 30 December 1988 (Federal Military Government 1988) to "secure for all Nigerians a quality of environment adequate for their health and well being; to raise public awareness and promote understanding of the essential linkages between the environment and development; and to encourage individual and community participation in environmental protection and improvement efforts (FEPA 1989), the environment has not been adequately protected especially among the urban slum dwellers.

Wastes collection in Nigeria according to Adegoke (1989) is irregular and restricted to major cities. For the slum communities there is the absence or lack of proper refuse dumps and sewerage system. At the Ajegunle slums and Ebute-Meta (Lagos) and Ibu, Kwakwa and Karimo slums of Abuja (Federal Capital Territory) of Nigeria for instance, the defecation on open space, inside rivers, streams and lagoons is common sight. Furthermore, the mountainous heap of refuse dump deface the urban landscape, thereby endangering public health by encouraging the spread of odors and diseases, uncontrolled recycling of contaminated goods, and pollution of water sources (Singh, 1998).

Building houses in slums comes with enormous greater environmental cost. The majority of slums building erected along water course expose the environment to landscape and other natural disasters. It is also in slum neighborhoods that the activities of street

trading or hawking are rampant. The level of social disorganization in slums usually presents a despicable outlook of the urban landscape. Additionally, the activities of miscreants and criminals such touts (area boys), pick pockets, drug peddlers and prostitutes gives a demeaning view of their surrounding, thus re-enforcing the pathological description of communities as 'slum' despite their opposition to such appellation.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table: Increase in the number of urban slum dwellers

Question 1	Options	Responses	%
Do you agree that urban slum dwellers are on the increase in Nigeria?	Yes	200	66.7
	No	100	33.3
Total		300	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

The table above shows that 66.7% of the respondents agreed that urban slum dwellers are on the increase in Nigeria while 33.3% said No.

Table 2: Major causes of urban slum growth in Nigeria.

Question 2	Options	Responses	%
If yes which among these ones are the major causes of urban slum growth in Nigeria?	(a) rapid rural-urban migration.	40	20
	(b) High urbanization and urban population explosion	30	15
(N = 200)	(c) Lack of tenure security	40	20
	(d) Globalization	30	15
	(e) Failed government policies on housing and corruption	10	5
	(f) All of the above	50	25
Total		200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

From the table above, 20% of the respondents identified rapid rural-urban migration and lack of tenure security is the major causes of urban slum growth in Nigeria respectively, 15% identified high urbanization and urban population explosion, and globalization respectively, 5% identified failed policies on housing and corruption while 25% answered all of the above.

Table 3: Urban Slum Characteristics

Question 3	Options	Responses	%
Do you agree that Urban slum have some unique characteristics?	Yes	300	100
	No	-	-
Total		300	100

Source: Field survey, 2012.

From the table above, there is an overwhelming approval by all the respondents (100%) that urban slums possess some unique characteristics.

Table 4: Identified major urban slum characteristics

Question 4	Options	Responses	%
If yes, which among these one are the major characteristics of urban slum?	(a) Poor structural quality	20	6.7
	(b) Over-crowding	50	16.7
	(c) Insecure residential status	50	16.7
	(d) Inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructures	80	26.7
	(e) All of the Above	100	33.3
Total		300	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

From the table above 6.7% of the respondents identified poor structural quality a major characteristics of urban slum, 16.7% identified overcrowding and insecure residential status respectively, 26.7% identified inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure while 33.3% choose all the options listed above.

Table 5: Slum communities and defacement of the urban landscape

Question 5	Options	Responses	%
Do you agree that the activities of slum communities will deface the urban landscape	Yes	220	73.3
	No	80	26.7
Total		300	100

Source: Field Survey

From the table above, it is lucidly clear that slum communities deface the urban landscape. Hence, 73.3% of the respondents answered yes while 26.7% answered no.

Table 6: Urban Poverty and Increase of Urban Slums

Question 6	Options	Responses	%
Do you agree that the urban poverty can increase the growth of urban slum in Nigeria?	Yes	210	70
	No	90	30
Total		300	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

From the table above majority of respondents represented by 70% agreed that urban poverty can increase the growth of urban slum in Nigeria while 30% answered No that is to say, the more there are urban poverty, the likelihood that urban slum will grow tremendously.

Table 7: Major negative effects of slum growth on the urban landscape.

Question 7	Options	Responses	%
What are the major negative effects of urban slum growth on the urban landscape?	(a) Indiscriminate dump of refuse	70	23.3
	(b) Source of environmental degradation like erosion, lands etc	60	20
	(c) Spread of air pollution in form foul odors.	65	21.7
	(d) Defacement of urban beauty and aesthetics	45	15
	(e) All of the Above	60	20
Total		300	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

From the table above, 23.3% of the respondents identified indiscriminate dump of refuse as one of the major negative effects of urban slum growth in the urban landscape, 20% identified source of environmental degradation like erosion, landslide etc, 217% identified spread of air pollution in form foul odors, 15% identified defacement of urban beauty and aesthetics while 20% identified all of the above options listed.

Table 8: Strategies for solving urban slum problem:

Question 8	Options	Responses	%
What are the strategies for solving the problem of urban slum growth in Nigeria	(a) Provision of affordable land and housing for urban dwellers.	70	23.3
	(b) Equal distribution of infrastructure between the urban and rural dwellers to reduce urban migration	50	16.7
	(c) Collaborative effort by government, NGOs and International bodies in implementing urban slum policies	20	6.7
	(d) Embarking on slum up-grading	20	6.7
	(e) Improving the socio-economic condition of the urban poor	60	20
	(f) All of the Above	80	26.7
Total		300	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

From the table above, 23.3% of the respondents identified provision of affordable land and housing for urban dwellers as one the strategies for solving the problem of urban slum growth in Nigeria, 16.7% identified; equal distribution of infrastructure between the urban and rural dwellers to reduce urban migration, 6.7% identified collaborative effort by government, NGOs and international bodies in implementing urban slum policies and embarking on slum up grading respectively, 20% identified improving the socio-economic condition of the urban poor while 26.7% answered all of the above.

Test of Hypotheses

Under this heading the researcher tested the hypotheses made at the beginning of the research work. The key questions were used to test the two hypotheses chi-square statistical tool is used for the testing. Nwadiaro (2008) gave the formula of chi-square thus;

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$$

Where X^2 = chi-square

F_o = Observed frequency

F_e = Expected frequency

Hypotheses 1

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between the activities of slum dwellers and the defacement of the urban landscape in Nigeria.

Question 5 of the questionnaire is used to the hypothesis: Thus; Do you agree that the activities of slum communities will deface the urban landscape?

Table 9: Calculation of X^2 on the Activities of Slum Dwellers and the Defacement of the Urban Landscape.

Options	Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² /Fe
Yes	220	150	70	4900	32.7
No	80	150	-70	4900	32.7
	200	300	0	9800	65.4

$$X^2 \text{ cal} = 65.4$$

Using 1% level of significance and a degree of freedom of one (1) (ie $k-1=2-1=1$) then read the X^2 from the X^2 table which is 6.635).

The decision rules are to:

- (1) Accept H_o and reject H_1 if $x^2 \text{ cal} \leq x^2 \text{ tab}$
- (2) Reject H_o and Accept H_1 if $x^2 \text{ cal} \geq x^2 \text{ tab}$

Since $65.4 (x^2 \text{ cal}) < 6.635 (X^2 \text{ tab})$, the researcher therefore accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which says that there is a significant relationship between the activities of slum dwellers and the defacement of the urban landscape in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

H_1 There is a positive relationship between urban poverty and the growth of urban slum in Nigeria.

Question 6 was used to test the hypothesis thus- Do you agree that urban poverty can increase the growth of urban slum in Nigeria?

Table 10: Calculation of X² on Urban Poverty and the Growth of Urban Slum

Options	F ₀	F ₀ -F _e	(F ₀ -F _e) ²	(F ₀ -F _e) ²	(F ₀ -F _e) ² /F _e
Yes	210	150	60	3600	24
No	90	150	-60	3600	24
	300	300	0	7200	48

X² cal = 48

X² tab = 6.635

The decision rules are to:

- (1) Accept H₀ and reject H₁ if X² cal ≤ X² tab
- (2) Reject H₀ and accept H₁ if X² cal ≥ X² tab

Since 48 (X² cal) > 6.635 (X² tab) the researcher therefore accepted the alternative hypothesis (H₁) which states that there is a positive relationship between urban poverty and the growth of urban slum in Nigeria.

Discussion of the findings

This study centered on the rise of urban slum in Nigeria implications on the urban landscape. Our results show that the activities of urban slum dwellers have degraded and equally defaced the aesthetic value of the environmental landscape. This means that our first hypothesis in the alternative form is accepted. Hence, it states there is a significant relationship between the activities of slum communities and the defacement of the urban landscape in Nigeria. From the data analysis also, it is evident that urban poverty has indeed fueled the growth of urban slum in Nigeria Urban dwellers from low and disadvantaged socio-economic status have moved into slums due to the high urban rent, exorbitant urban land and general unfavorable economic condition in Nigeria.

Conclusion

From the findings the researcher drew the following conclusion that the growing trend of urban slum in Nigeria has indeed presented a serious environmental impact on her urban landscape. Urban slum dweller that usually lives at the fringe of the city and marginal land-water course, flood-prone areas etc have exposed the land to erosion. Their indiscriminate dump of refuse, general unhygienic life styles and overcrowded living space has without doubt defaced the landscape. Slum growth in Nigeria are perpetuated by numbers of forces such as rapid rural-urban migration, globalization, lack of tenure security, increasing urban poverty, high urbanization and urban population explosion among others.

Recommendation

The following strategies have been recommended by the researcher for solving urban slum problem.

- (1) Government and city planners should provide affordable land and low cost housing for the urban dwellers. This will enable people to own their own property or rent as the case may be.
- (2) Government should endeavour to improve the socio-economic condition of their citizens. This will help to reduce urban poverty and also reduce the mass influx of the rural dwellers especially into the urban centers. Infrastructural development should be a top government priority both in rural and urban centers.
- (3) The government should be wary in accepting the carrot dangled and presented by the agents of globalization and liberal market policy such as WTO, World Bank and IMF. This is so because these western economic models have the tendencies of disarticulating and dislocating of the Nigeria economy and her populace especially the urban poor.
- (4) The idea of complete disappearance of slums in Nigeria is a long prayer waiting for its distance amen. It is a social fact that slums dwellers will remain no matter effort to evict them, hence government is collaboration with livic societies and NGOs, International bodies like Slum Dwellers International (SDI) etc should work to up-grade existing slums. In Nigeria some parts of Ajegunle districts (Lagos) notable for its slums outlook have been up-graded for decent and comfortable living.
- (5) There should be effective implementation of government policies on housing. Appropriate regulations on formal land markets should be pursued while corruption should be fought head-long.

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