

## URBANIZATION, HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

There is a wide range of demand on Lagos as an urban centre and pragmatic approaches to complement the urbanization process and its attendant problems need urgent attention. The dynamism of Lagos as an urban centre cannot be stopped, but precautionary measures can be taken to nip the bud in the anticipated fallouts of this trend. The paper examines the urbanization, housing and the dearth of infrastructure in Lagos. Although the city of Lagos has over the years sprawled and has become a mega city, with the symptoms of urbanization being inadequately supplied. The paper further examines the provision of infrastructure in Lagos in the last decade. The government had commenced a total rebirth of the entire gamut of decay and social disintegration through the provisions of basic infrastructure. Projects executed by the state government with respect to urbanization, housing and infrastructure were examined. And recommendations on how to further meet future challenges in Lagos with regard to urbanization were proffered

**Keywords:** Urbanization, housing, infrastructure, facilities, lagos.

### INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is rapidly changing the general morphology of most developing nations of the world of which Nigeria is inclusive. Man in his quest for survival, has structured his activities such that the environment in which he lives provide him with his needs. This depends on the technology available to him within his physical confinement. It is this physical or spatial manifestation of man's activities over space that give rise to settlements. These settlements exhibit certain differential characteristics to the extent that a distinction can be drawn between them. Thus, cities grow from settlement areas which serve specific functions and that people's activities in these centres lead to the constant expansion of cities on the long run. Bourne (1972) highlighted urbanization, immigration and natural increase as the three demographic components involved in the growth of cities. By these processes the peripheral areas are encroached, thereby sprawling into the rural areas. Lagos as an urban centre has continued to grow indiscriminately, degenerating physically and becoming expensive and unsafe to live in.

This paper focuses on urbanization, housing and infrastructural facilities in Lagos. Infrastructure is vital for economic development. One veritable parameter of assessment and indicator of status of any spatial, especially urban system is the state of infrastructure. The efficiency of any form of human activity, system, including an urban area, largely depends on the

provision of efficient infrastructural facilities and services. Hence, the significance of infrastructure in the proper functioning of an urban centre like Lagos cannot be over-emphasised. The planning a city does not only involve the basic requirements like roads and portable drinking water but also other services and commercial activities. The growth of slums in practically all the major cities in Nigeria is a standing condemnation of the failure of the professionals in the building industry.

Urban infrastructure covers a wide range of services and facilities, namely electricity, water, road, waste disposal, drainage, communication, primary health services, schools and housing as the key ones. These are more often provided by the government. Where urban infrastructure is adequately provided and efficiently managed, productive and profitable land uses are usually attracted towards such areas.

Human society constantly experience changes and these changes inevitable affect the physical development of cities and towns. If developments in these centres are not properly handled, according to Achi (2004), this could lead to degrading the physical environment and destroy the social elements. Unfortunately, this is the case with quite a number of Nigerian cities and towns, Lagos metropolis inclusive. Despite the fact that Lagos has ceased to be the capital city of Nigeria, the rate of urbanization of this city is alarming and unprecedented in the annals of city growth.

## URBANIZATION AND THE HOUSING PROBLEM

Generally speaking, urbanization is the upgrading of a rural area by the addition to it of the features that characterized city life. Urbanization results in an environment that is compositionally more heterogeneous, geometrically more complex, and ecologically more fragmented. UN-HABITAT article (2006), states that, the highest rates of urban growth are in sub-Sahara Africa (4.58%), followed by south-eastern Asia (3.82%), eastern Asia (3.39%), western Asia (2.89%). Cities are growing at much lower rate averaging (0.75%) a year in the developed world. Africa and Asia, which are currently the least urbanized regions in the world, will continue to dominate global urban growth through 2030. For instance, by 2020 all but 4 of the world's largest cities (mega-cities) will be in the developing regions, 12 of them are in Asia alone. At current growth rates, Lagos in Nigeria will be the third largest city in the world with a population of over 24 million by 2020.

Rapid urban growth has so many problems some of which include problems of urban planning and management, increasing urban poverty, growth of city regions and metropolitanisation. Slums emerging as the dominant and distinct type of settlements in cities, growth of black economy, divided cities (social and economic exclusion) and poor living conditions, without access to basic services.

According to the UNCHS/UN-HABITAT (2003) about 32% of the global urban population world-wide lived in slums in 2001. One out of every three city dwellers nearly one billion people live in slums today (UN-Habitat 2001, 2006). Although about 50% of slum dwellers were in south central and east Asia, 14% live in Latin America, and 17% in sub-Saharan Africa.

Nigeria by the 2006 census had a population of over 140 million people. About 45% of this population lives in the urban areas. The significant trend has been the spectacular rate of the country's urbanization, which averages 5% yearly. This is about the highest urbanization rate in the world. It is no wonder that, there has been a widening gap between urban population growth and housing supply and need. By 2000, the housing deficit in Nigeria was estimated at over 8 million housing units. Today, the housing deficit has doubled to over 17 million units. This has compounded many of the problems found in Nigerian cities today, one being the development of slum areas almost everywhere in the urban areas. About 60-70% of urban dwellers in Nigeria live in slums (Dung-Gwom 2004).

## Slums

Slums vary widely in terms of their location, spatial forms, socio-economic and environmental characteristics. It could be argued that no two slums are the same as they differ in their history, growth and development, opportunities and challenges (Dung-Gwom 2007). Slums can be unplanned neighborhoods that have run down or sporadic and chaotic unplanned neighborhoods that have emerged and grown organically. Some have even described them as the slums of hope or slums of despair (Peter 1979). UNCHS/UN-Habitat (2003), defines slums as neglected parts of cities where housing and living conditions are appealingly poor. Slums range from high density, squalid central city tenements to spontaneous squatter settlements without legal recognition or rights sprawling at the edge of cities. Also, slums refer to areas that are unplanned, neglected, overcrowded, decayed, squalid, lack of accessibility to facilities, utilities and services.

Infrastructural facilities such as roads, water electricity, telecommunications, and safe disposal of wastes play key roles in achieving societal welfare as well as socio-economic and political growth of urban and rural areas. However, infrastructure deficiencies have adversely affected economic development and are particularly acute in urban centres where large concentrations of poor households live in slums and squatter settlements. Suffice to say that the poor often benefit most directly from good infrastructure services because the poor are concentrated in settlements subject to unsanitary conditions, hazardous emissions, and accident risks (World Bank 1994, UN-HABITAT 2001).

The World Bank report (1990) has established the link between infrastructure and poverty. According to World Bank (1990) access to at least minimal infrastructure services is one of the essential criteria for defining welfare. Consequently, the poor has been identified as those who are unable to consume a basic quantity of clean water and who are subjected to unsanitary surroundings with extremely limited communications which are beyond their immediate settlement. As a result they have health problems and fewer employment opportunities. Similarly, the squatter communities surrounding most cities in developing countries typically lack formal infrastructure facilities, a condition arising from non-permanence of their tenure. It has been noted that at the periphery of urban areas of many developing countries where the poor are concentrated, cost and availability of public transport become key factors in their ability to obtain employment. Briceno-

Garmendia et al. (2004) noted that in recent time, the Development community has emphasised that by promoting growth, reliable and affordable infrastructure can reduce poverty and contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

## INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE IN LAGOS

### Urbanization in Lagos

Urbanization is rapidly changing the general morphology of most developing nations of the world of which Nigeria is inclusive. It is estimated that, the rate of urban growth in Africa is unprecedented when compared with developed countries of the World. According to Olotuah (2009), the average annual growth rate in Africa is 4.7% and 4.6% between the period of 1960 and 2000. It can be inferred that the rate of urbanization in Nigeria, especially Lagos the formal capital city of the country is increasingly due to a number of factors. Urbanization is not a new trend in the metropolitan Lagos, apart from being in the south, rain forest belt and tropical zone of the World. Its strategic location and being a major trading route/port, during the pre and post colonial era had significantly contributed to the urbanization process of Lagos and its environs.

The political configuration of Nigeria before 1900 and between then 1906 showed that the Lagos Colony and Lagos Protectorate consisted of the present south western Nigeria. However, with the Richard's Constitution of 1946, Nigeria was split into three distinct regional powers; the Northern, Western and Eastern Regions respectively. While under the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954, Nigeria became a Federating unit maintaining the existing three regional status quo. This remained till October, 1960 with Lagos area made the Federal Capital Territory or administrative Capital of Nigeria nation.

It is important to note that the present Lagos State was created on May 12, 1967 by the then Military Head of State General Yakubu Gowon. This new status conferred so many responsibilities on the metropolitan Lagos and however, with more problems associated with urbanization. Apart from political/administrative advantage, the territory had also enjoyed great industrial patronage during the first civilian rule of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the first premier of the Western Region. During the period under mention, more than thirty industrial estates accompanied by infrastructural facilities and Utility services sited in Lagos alone. These includes among others: Ikeja, Matori, Ilupeju, Ogba, Oregun, Ikorodu, and Yaba industrial Estate. Others are Apapa, Ijora, Amuwo-Odofin etc.

**Table 1.** Population of Lagos State.

Year	Figures	Remarks
1991	5,724,896	1991 National census
2005	8,366,626	Projected
2006	9,013,534	2006 National census.
2009	12,316,638	Projected

Source: Field Work (2009)

**Table 2.** Population Distribution of Lagos State on Local Government Basis, 2006 Census.

Local Government	LGA Head Quarters	Population Distribution		Total
		Male	Female	
Agege	Agege	238,456	223,287	461,743
Ajeromi/Ifelodun	Ajogunle	352,273	335,043	687,316
Alimosho	Ikotun	665,750	653,821	1,319,571
Amuwo/Odofin	Festac Town	173,742	155,233	328,975
Apapa	Apapa	123,163	99,823	222,986
Badagry	Badagry	119,821	117,910	237,731
Epe	Epe	91,925	89,809	181,734
Eti-Osa	Ikoyi	158,858	124,933	283,791
Ibeju-Lekia	Ikodo	60,729	57,064	117,793
Ifako-Ijaye	Ifako	219,109	208,628	427,737
Ikeja	Ikeja	171,782	145,832	317,614
Ikorodu	Ikorodu	268,463	259,454	527,917
Kosofe	Kosofe	358,935	323,837	682,772
Lagos Island	Lagos Island	110,042	102,658	212,700
Lagos Mainland	Yaba	170,568	156,132	326,700
Mushin	Mushin	326,873	304,984	631,857
Ojo	Ojo	315,401	293,772	609,173
Oshodi/Isolo	Oshodi	325,207	303,854	629,061
Shomolu	Shomolu	207,519	196,050	403,569
Surulere	Surulere	260,509	242,356	502,865

Source: National Population Commission, 2006s

The resultant effect of this include enhanced population, rural-urban migration, which are the first symptoms of urbanization. The population of Lagos Metropolies had over the years increased astronomically. This is shown in the Table 1.

The breakdown of 2006 figures is further analyzed into different local government areas of the state in Table 2. Even though the figures are said to be controversial it is being used by Federal Government, as the 2006 census figures are yet to be broken down.

### Highlights of Urbanization Problem in Lagos

Without mincing words, the resultant problems emanating from this urbanization process/trend are enormous. They are as follows;

- \* Transportation problems such as traffic congestion;
- \* Haphazard and uncoordinated physical development;
- \* Overcrowding and high population density;
- \* Substandard and inhuman living conditions;
- \* Paucity of housing stock and associated facilities, such as water and electricity; and
- \* Wastes disposal system and secured sewerage system are grossly inadequate.

Furthermore,

- Lack of basic social services / infrastructures;
- Evidences of slums/ghettos and squalor occurrence e.g. Maroko, Ajegunle, Orile/Amuwo, Ipori-olaleye, Agege etc.
- Indiscriminate dumping of refuse leading to flooding;
- Pollution of land, waterways, air etc;
- Urban violence/crime e.g. Area Boys etc;
- Urban poor juvenile delinquency; and
- High rate of unemployment and under-employment, leading to low economic base/per capital income.

### Current Initiatives of Lagos State Government

The current initiatives and pro-active rules of the Lagos Government post 1999 to date have been geared towards solving the highlighted urban in Lagos. Although, the Federal Government moved the administrative capital of Nigeria to Abuja but Lagos still remains the commercial nerve centre of the country. In essence, the population of Lagos has not decreased, which was one of the reasons adduced in the ill-fated "Flight" to Abuja in April, 1992. It is on record that, Lagos is daily increasing and witnessing increase in population and its attendant problems. The Lagos State Government appreciated this trend and started to address the issue of infrastructures upon which the development of any society or nation can only thrive. At the onset of the civilian rule in 1999, the Lagos State Government embarked on the following projects;

#### (a) Roads Construction/Rehabilitation

The State Government is taking both construction of new roads and rehabilitation of roads in the State as matter of priority. While the existing ones are being widened/expanded, walkways, medians are being introduced to accommodate the envisaged/projected volume of traffics. The traffics include motorists, pedestrians and even cyclists. The type of roads being constructed is taking into cognisance the terrain/soil type of the region.

#### (b) Construction of Bridges/Over-Head Walkways

In order to alleviate the sufferings of the pedestrians in Lagos, the Lagos State Government initiated over-head walkways for mostly pedestrians at critical traffic points whereby they can have respite and be pruned to less dangers in attempts at crossing the ever busy Lagos roads. Similarly, new bridges are being constructed to stern the traffic bottleneeses e.g the new Amuwo-Odofin,

Abule-Ado interchange, at Orele-Iganmu, these projects cost several billions of Naira. Equally a bridge is conceived to link Ikorodu town and Ilubirin/Forshore to reduce the congestion on Lagos-Ikorodu roads. In the linter lands, similar programmes are being put in place to link the existing places and new settlements.

#### (c) Construction of Harbours/Improvement of Waterways

The State has the advantage of having natural harbours of which the Lagos State Government wants to exploit by improving the waterways as a veritable medium of transportation.

#### (d) Construction of Markets/Commercial Centres

As a result of its location, Lagos has remained the undisputed leader in commercial activities in Nigeria. Apart from the existing ones, market improvements are being given prominence in the scheme of things, for traders and buyers. Existing ones are being pulled down to pave way for modern and functional markets e.g. Oshodi/Mosafejo market, Oshodi, Alade modern market, Ikeja, etc. The peculiarity of these innovations lie in being modern, spacious with conveniences put in place.

Also, the concept of neighbourhood markets are being encouraged and explored. Most of these markets are known for specific materials sold in them e.g Alaba International Market, Ojo is for Electronics/Electrical related goods, Ladipo/Oshodi is for automoto parts, etc.

#### (e) Hospitals and Health Related Infrastructures

The construction of comprehensive health centres is being patronized in nearly all the major towns and communities in the entire State. This is to de-congest the two major hospitals at Ikeja (Ayinke House) and Lagos Island (Maternity House). Existing maternities, dispensaries are paving way to comprehensive health institutions fully equipped and staffed.

#### (f) Construction of Rehabilitation of Schools

The Lagos State Government has commenced the construction of the prototype design of public schools to covers every nooks and crannies of the state.

#### (g) Abattoirs/Slaughter Houses

The Lagos State Government considered the health of the people as basic through what is being consumed at the various slaughter houses. It is given this a priority with the construction of Oja-Oba, Agege and Ikorodu abattoirs.

#### (h) Conception of Urban Renewal/Slum Upgrading Schemes

Concerted efforts are being made to rejuvenate the hitherto slums and squalors in the state to more conducive environments through comprehensive urban renewal/slum upgrading programmes. Examples of these are Orile-Iganmu axis, Isale-Oja, Agege, Ajegunle/Ajeromi axis, Isale-Eko axis and Maroko/Ajah among others.

- (i) Street Lighting  
The provision of street light stands out in the present efforts of Lagos State Government under the civilian administration from 1999 till date.
- (j) Housing Schemes  
The housing situations in Lagos are precarious, to the extent that many people cannot find accommodation within Lagos State. Several people have found their ways into the neighbouring states of Ogun and Oyo. Both Ogun and Oyo states are therefore beneficiaries of this population explosion.  
Lagos State has embarked on diverse housing programmes for the low, medium and high income earners. This is being handled by the Lagos State Development Corporation. The sites are spread over the state eg. Ojolero and Ogba.
- (k) New Towns and Development Plans  
The Lagos State Government is coming up with new town schemes to serve as models and places of abode for the citizenry.
- (l) Others
  - (i) The creation of Ministry of Physical Planning and Infrastructures meant to handle specifically all that has to do with infrastructures.
  - (ii) The creation of Ministry of Lands to monitor, regulate, and organize the use of lands in the state, upon which forms the bulk of taxes or internally generated revenue for the various developmental initiatives of Lagos.
  - (iii) Construction of organized car parks.
  - (iv) Landscaping of open spaces, loops etc. as recreation areas.
  - (v) Conception of Metro-line (in the pipeline/on the drawing board).
  - (vi) Encouraging Community/Citizen Participation through the creation of Local Development Boards/Areas.
  - (vii) Development of Efficient Transportation System through traffic lights, construction of bus stops, introducing lay-byes and spurs, road signs.
  - (viii) Construction of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) for crime prevention.

All these infrastructures being put in place have given the city of Lagos a unique position, in the country and even beyond.

## CONCLUSION

Urbanization must truly reflect the provision of infrastructures; or simply put, urbanization must be complemented by the provision of basic infrastructures for it to be truly called a process that will bring life into any community. The innovative moves of the Lagos State Government have been enumerated in this paper. It is a pointer that good things can as well emanate from urbanization process if concerted efforts are mustered by all stakeholders who take keen interest in good governance of our cities for the benefits of all. Consequently, an attempt has been made Lagos State Infrastructure Development Initiatives. It is the considered opinion of the authors that all these will go a long way in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper gives the following recommendations in order that the efforts of the present government in Lagos would be sustained for many years to come.

1. Non Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations and other private individuals that are interested in the provisions of infrastructures should be involved in the process of provision of infrastructure at the local government and the state levels.
2. Collaborative joint venture of mega-city concept between Lagos State, Ogun State Government and Federal Government should be vigorously pursued to deal with the urban sprawl in the two neighbouring states.
3. Encouraging Community/Citizen Participation through the creation of Local Development Boards/Areas;
4. Development of Independent Power Projects to be able to power the various moribund industries/factories and business concerns in the state.
5. Development of the moribund/abandoned metro-line transportation project.

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