ORIGINAL ARTICLE

EFFECTS OF COSMETIC URBAN-REGENERATION ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION-NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE.

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ABSTRACT

The essence of any urban- regeneration program is to elevate the living condition of the people as well as elevate the urban centre's functions brought down by informal and uncontrolled urbanization, but this must be done with the consciousness of the likely negative impacts that may accompany such program especially on socio-economic life of the people. This study examined the approach of Ogun State Government, Nigeria on road reconstruction/widening as a form of urban regeneration and its effect on poverty level of the people of Abeokuta, the State capital. 313 questionnaires (representing 5% of 6,247 affected properties) were administered on the affected owners/occupiers of properties on the six (6) selected roads undergoing reconstruction in the city. Using frequency count, the study's results revealed that the urban- regeneration program of road widening/reconstruction rather elevated the poverty level of people in the short run, but with anticipated improved welfare/poverty alleviation in the long run. The paper thereby recommended that in attempt to redress the effect of informal/uncontrolled urbanization, Government should have a program to cushion the short run negative impacts on the people before the long run positive impact start unfolding.

Keywords: Urban Centre, Urban-Regeneration, Poverty-Alleviation, Road Reconstruction.

1. INTRODUCTION

A study by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS-Habitat), in 2001, stated that nearly half of the Worlds' people are now city dwellers and more than one billion of the worlds' city residents live in inadequate or deficient housing. The problem is more felt in Africa, Asia and Latin America where half of the population are either homeless or living in houses which are dangerous to health and an affront to human dignity. In Africa and Asia the proportion of city dwellers rose from 25 percent in 1975 to 35 percent in 1995, and a little more than 37 percent of recent. It is predicted that the figure will reach 50 percent by the year 2025 [1]. Developing countries (Nigeria inclusive) today face greater urbanization challenges than developed ones unfortunately, the urbanization process in many developing countries, particularly Nigeria has not been accompanied with a corresponding supply of adequate housing, basic infrastructures and amenities or alleviation of poverty level. This has given birth to the development of informal settlements and slums compounded by poverty. The main urban places in Nigeria have long historical origins being major centres of politics, education, economic and sometimes religious activities, and of course, continue to play many of these roles till today. According to Abudulahi B. (2004), Nigerian towns can be classified under orthogenetic recognition and heterogenic recognition [2]. Orthogenetic represents pre-industrial and traditional towns, they are ancient cities that have been in existence before industrial revolution period and are characterized with an ethnic group with peculiar culture and lack formal planning which makes a noticeable effect when there is a need for urban physical development. The lack of formal planning also necessitated urban renewal program for most urban neighborhoods. Examples of orthogenetic cities in Nigeria are Abeokuta and Ile-Ife. Historical cities in Nigeria generally lack pre planning, they sprang and developed from villages and trade posts and still retain their old slum and semi-permanent structures. The heterogenic cities represent modern and industrial towns that were deliberately formed, planned and developed after industrial revolution or for a given purpose. Such cities include Abuja for nation's capital and New Busa for industrial purpose. Another problem of Nigerian urban centres is that they fit into what some scholars have tried to distinguish as "grown" and "planned" cities [3]. A joint study by the Lagos State Government and a United Nations group discovered that about 42 towns in Lagos state alone could be classified as slums and in dire need of upgrading or regeneration [4]. Asides Lagos, many other towns in Nigeria urban centers also need regeneration. Some studies have suggested that a concentration of social and economic problems will impact on residents at a local level. Living in a deprived area according to Westall et al. (2007), negatively affects life chances and can result in a vicious cycle of poverty and social exclusion which can span generations [5]. According to Osuide (2004), urban-regeneration is a deliberate effort to change urban environment through planned large scale adjustment of existing city areas to present and future requirement for urban living and working [6]. The purpose of urban regeneration is to (in addition to ensuring a good living and people's welfare), reduce the poverty level of a society. In essence, the urban regeneration program will attempt to rebuild rundown areas of

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cities and improve on poverty situation of society. Urban-regeneration remains a high profile and important field of government-led intervention, and policy and practice continue to adapt to the fresh challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, as well as confronting long standing intractable urban problems and dilemmas [7]. The Wise Group March addresses the inter-related phenomenon of spatial deprivation and unemployment and looks at the role that urban- regeneration and social enterprise can play in tackling these [8]. As government goes into action on enforcing codes and building regulations, eliminating slums and blight, constructing public improvement and road constructions, some families will be displaced from their houses, offices or shops. Practically, typical regeneration project destroys a great many houses. These are mainly houses classified as substandard or required for road re-construction by the regeneration authorities to make the required change or give way to achieve objective of the program [9]. Even some good ones may also be destroyed because they are judged to be incompatible with the proposed plan for the area or required to make the required change. Poverty is a major factor in urban congestion and environmental degradation. Poverty discourse and definitions are multifarious and highly extensive. However, poverty is pronounced when the basic necessities of life (which include adequate income, education, good health, security, self-confidence and certain freedoms) are absent. Poverty alleviation and local economic development, while being interrelated have implications for the environment. [10] observed a stronger link between physical planning and economic growth. [11] also advanced the opinion that poverty alleviation when not properly executed impacts negatively on the people as well as their environment. The thrust of current government policy in the action against poverty is to enable the poor and more vulnerable sections of society to achieve sustainable livelihoods. [12] records that 70.2% Nigerians survive on less than US$1 daily (this is even more than that in the current as it has risen to US$1.25), while 90.8% of the population lives on less than US$2 daily, also, [13] rates Nigeria as the 31st poorest country in the world based on a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy and standards of living. Over 64% of her population, approximately 81.5 million people are surviving on less than US$1.25 daily, the global absolute poverty benchmark. Corroborating this, Corroborating this, Tipple (2015) citing CAHF (2014) came up with income pyramid to maintain that Nigeria is 48% urban and 52% rural whose 55% of its populace earn below 1.25 dollars per day, 35% earn between 1.25 dollars to 2 dollars per day while the remaining 10% earn more than 2 dollars per day [14,15]. Jimoh (1997), claims that 8 out of every 10 urban households in Nigeria are poor [16]. The Federal Government of Nigeria had engaged in various programs with the intention to alleviate poverty, this was only able to reduce the national head count ratio at national poverty line (% of population) from 62.4% in 2004 to 62.6% in 2010 [17]. In Nigeria, the current level of decay in most cities has required urgent and remedy-able actions to avert the collapse of the urban system; urban built environments are decaying, and citizens on their own together with public institutions cannot save them. Some state governments have therefore stepped in to "help" the citizens with urban-regeneration program as their effort to regenerate urban centers and to reduce the level of poverty among the Nigerian poor; this was however done with different approaches. The questions agitating the minds of these researchers therefore are whether the aim of government on urban- regeneration was at par with the outcome of the program? Which of the various urban- regeneration approaches was adopted at this research study areas? What impact does urban-regeneration has on generality of citizenry in terms of welfare and poverty level? This study therefore attempted to provide answers to these raised questions. To accomplish the desire task of the study the remaining part of the study has been structured into 6 sections. The next section is on materials and methods adopted to achieve the objective of the study; third section is on summary of findings results; the fourth section was dedicated to discussion of findings based on data collected and analyzed; the recommendations were made before the study was concluded in the fifth section. Acknowledgement however forms the sixth section of this work subdivision.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study area for this work is Abeokuta the capital of Ogun state, one of the 36 States of Federal Republic of Nigeria. In order to bring the 'decay, informal and unplanned' to 'new, formal and planned' the noted urban- regeneration approach in Ogun state focused on road widening and reconstruction. Although the road reconstruction was spread across the 4 geo-political zones in the state: Yewa, Egba, Remo and Ijebu, the focus of this work is on Abeokuta representing Egba zone where 6 major roads were widened/reconstructed. The roads are: (a) Totoro-Ita-Eko –Lalubu road, (b) Ojere-Panseke – Adatan road, (c) Enugada-Sokori-Sapon-Sokenu- Idi-Aba road, (d) NNPC- Ewang-Abiola way- Moore Junction road, (e) Mokola-Adatan roa d and (f) Madojutimi- Asero road. Before the re-generation exercise, except IBB Boulevard and portion of Abiola way, all other roads in Abeokuta were narrowed and substandard with substandard old structures forming their avenues. Most of the structures have no setback to the roads and no parking space. Survey research design was adopted through the use of questionnaires which were administered through the cross sectional survey. Also general observations and interview were made to compliment the survey of literature on the subject matter fully explored through journals, textbooks, Ogun State Government publications and internet exploration. The questionnaire was semi-structured questions to test the view of the respondents. The study populations were the affected owners of property compulsorily acquired for widening and reconstruction of each road regenerated. The questionnaire solicited data such as: location of affected property, ownership, title, description, use, physical condition, affected portion of the property, effect of the acquisition, adequacy of

compensation paid if any, who were compensated, aftermath of demolition, and effects on livelihood among others. The sample frame that was adopted were all affected buildings for the 6 roads which was put at 6,247 (813, 1205, 1717, 958, 1044 & 510) representing road a, b, c, d, e & f respectively (Bureau of Lands & Survey, Abeokuta 2013) 5% representing 313 (41, 60, 86, 48, 52, 26) were taken as the sample size respectively. Random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample for each road to eliminate bias and allow the respondents to have equal chance of being selected. Information gathered from the administered questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

3. RESULTS

The findings of the research (as in combine data analysis tables 1) indicates that all the affected properties were located along the affected roads, 58% are bungalow without setback, family owned, built over 30 years ago with customary ownership. 96% of the properties were used for residential/commercial purposes and in most cases about a third portion of the building were affected for demolition for regeneration purpose. 51% of the responses indicated the physical condition of the properties as fair. As regards the compensation, 65% of the responses indicated that sufficient notice was given for the compulsory acquisition, but the compensation paid eventually was seen not to be sufficient and far below the owners expectation as subscribe to by 95% of the responses, moreover, 95% of the responses indicated that the occupants of the properties were not compensated, only the owners were compensated, this caused hardship on people especially the occupants because there source of income was negatively affected. The responses further indicated that 82% of the remnant structures after demolition were vacated and in empty state. 99% of the responses indicated that businesses and residences of the people were displaced by the road reconstruction exercise. The effect on physical planning indicate that commercial use will push away the residential use because the Ogun State Government policy on the spared portion of affected buildings is that re-development permission shall not be granted unless the structure be at least 3 storey commercial structures. Generally the present effect is negative on the livelihood and decrease in the employment level in the state as indicated by 57% of the responses, this is so because it renders many business activities paralyzed more than the residents displacement. The source of livelihood of the affected shop owners were negatively affected with resultant effect on the poverty level of the people. The 97% of the responses from respondents indicated that future effect will positively improve the welfare of people, increase the employment level and ultimately reduce the poverty level in the state. There was an inverse relationship between the short run effect of urban regeneration and long run effect of urban regeneration on the poverty level of the affected inhabitants.

Table 1: combined table on research findings.

Table	Question	Response options	Frequency	%)
1	PROPERTY DESCRIPTION	BUNGALOW	18	58
		DUPLEX	09	03
		ROW OF SHOPS	87	28
		STOREY BUILDING	34	11
		TOTAL	313	100
2	OWNERSHIP TYPE	FAMILY OWNED	281	90
		SOLELY OWNED	26	08
		JOINTLY OWNED	06	02
		NO OWNER	00	00
		TOTAL	313	100
3	PROPERTY TITLE DOCUMENT	SALES AGREEMENT	59	19
		PURCHASE RECEIPT	33	10
		CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY (C OF OC)	22	07
		NO TITLE	199	64
		TOTAL	313	100
4	USE OF PROPERTY	RESIDENTIAL ONLY	28	09
		COMMERCIAL ONLY	107	34
		INDUSTRIAL ONLY	11	04
		RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL	167	53

		TOTAL	313	100
5	AGE OF AFFECTED PROPERTY	1-10 YEARS	31	10
		11-20 YEARS	46	15
		21-30 YEARS	72	23
		31 YEARS ABOVE	164	52
		TOTAL	313	100
6	BUILDING SETBACK TO ROAD	NO SETBACK	183	58
		1-3M	84	27
		4-6M	33	11
		7M ABOVE	13	04
		TOTAL	313	100
7	BUILDING AFFECTED PORTION	WHOLE	39	12
		A HALF OF WHOLE	78	25
		A QUARTER OF WHOLE	87	28
		A THIRD OF WHOLE	109	35
		TOTAL	313	100
8	BUILDING CONDITION	POOR	44	14
		FAIR	159	51
		GOOD	72	23
		VERY GOOD	38	12
		TOTAL	313	100
9	NOTICE OF ACQUISITION	SHORT	12	04
		MODERATE	32	10
		ENOUGH	205	65
		NOT ENOUGH	64	21
		TOTAL	313	100
10	THE COMPENSATEE	OWNER ALONE	298	95
		OCCUPIER ALONE	04	01
		OWNER & OCCUPIER	00	00
		NONE	11	04
		TOTAL	313	100
11	COMPENSATION ADEQUACY	EXACT EXPECTATION	02	01
		ABOVE EXPECTATION	03	01
		BELOW EXPECTATION	298	95
		NOT COMPENSATED	11	03
		TOTAL	313	100
12	COMPENSATION TIMING	BEFORE DEMOLITION	83	26
		DURING DEMOLITION	78	25
		IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEMOLITION	75	24
		DELAYED AFTER DEMOLITION	77	25
		TOTAL	313	100
13	STATE OF UN-DEMOLISHED PORTION	VACATED	258	82
		RE-DEMOLISHED	15	05
		RE-OCCUPIED	18	06
		RE-CONSTRUCTED	22	07

		TOTAL	313	100
14	IMPACT OF DEMOLITION	DISPLACEMENT OF BUSINESS	149	47
		DISPLACEMENT OF RESIDENCE	27	09
		DISPLACEMENT OF BUSINESS & RESIDENCE	134	43
		NO DISPLACEMENT	03	01
		TOTAL	313	100
15	PRESENT EFFECT ON LIVELIHOOD	HARSENESS	126	40
		DECREASE IN EMPLOYMENT	178	57
		INCREASE IN EMPLOYMENT	08	03
		NO DIFFERENCE	01	00
		TOTAL	313	100
16	FUTURE EFFECT ON LIVELIHOOD	IMPROVED WELFARE	192	61
		INCREASED IN EMPLOYMENT	112	36
		DECREASED IN EMPLOYMENT	09	03
		NO DIFFERENCE	00	00
		TOTAL	313	100

Source: Author's Field Work (2013)

4. DISCUSSION

Although, urban-regeneration is a designed effort to improve urban areas physical, environmental and socio-economic conditions of decay, but Government, the initiator of the program need to understand both the positive and negative impacts on the inhabitants. Urbanization in the city of Abeokuta has created series of urban problems, one of which is poor road network hindering free flow of traffic. The findings indicated that majority of the affected properties have no setback to the roads. In an attempt to solve this poor road network problem by Government, some roads needed re-widening and expansion, an action which require some houses to be demolished. But demolition of those houses mostly use for commercial purpose has negative economic effects on both their owners as well as their occupiers. Although Government is constructing blocks of shops along each newly re-constructed roads to accommodate the displaced occupiers while their owners have been fairly or poorly or not compensated up till the time of this research, but none of them has been completed for the displaced people to occupy. Majority of displaced occupiers have in addition to displacement, lost their established business goodwill and source of income for livelihood. Much of planning work of today must deal with the correction of earlier mistakes, which are the result of serious neglect of problem of urban centres and such errors must be avoided in future. As regard the study area, community regeneration seem to contribute to level of poverty of the people in the short run but it is hoped that the regeneration will alleviate the poverty in the long run, this is in term with [18] finding that the displaced persons in urban renewal project might find it difficult to cope at first, but with time they will find ways to adapt to new order.

5. CONCLUSION

Human consideration has a dominant position if the city must be formed into an appropriate place in which to live. Proper urban development in Nigeria, must consider all the problems of the urban community – physical, social cultural, aesthetics and economics with focus on poverty eradication but not poverty complication. The physical problem as well as socio-economic problem must be tackled together. Urban-regeneration would help to achieve a harmonious, attractive and aesthetically pleasing environment that would ensure current and future generation centers of delight. It must be done in a way that would also boost socio-economic development and the quality of life in urban centers. Nigeria can still achieve sustainable development and sustainable Human Settlement provided the stakeholders are ready to adopt and apply the norms and principles of good urban governance that will tolerate reduced level of poverty but not compound it. Effort should therefore be made by the government to cushion the effect of short run poverty while waiting for the alleviation to come in the long run. This is required if Government want people of the state to change their current clamoring for stomach-structure in the place of infrastructure. It is recommended that Government should accelerate the construction of the blocks

of shops embarked upon along each newly constructed road so that the displaced occupiers of the demolished shops can be accommodated and this should be at affordable rent and favourable lease arrangement. For subsequent exercise like this, it is recommended that Government should relocate the affected occupiers first before demolition of their houses and subsequent construction of roads. The issue of minimum setback to the roads should be strictly adhered to by the urban and regional planning authority because if this has been adhered to initially, there will not be a need for demolition of houses and compensation of their owners by the Government. Lack of adherence or enforcement of minimum setback can even create future planning problem to the newly re-generated urban roads in Abeokuta. Lastly, there should be a strong means whereby urban and regional planning officers can be held responsible for their past and current actions if such actions constitute planning problem during and after their planning stewardship.

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