



Quantitative and Qualitative Housing Problems in Akure, Ondo State of Nigeria

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The growth and emergence of developing cities as a result of the influx of people in search of greener pasture has adversely led to an acute shortage of housing in Nigerian urban cities. This study investigates the housing problems in the study area in accordance to the quantity and quality factors. Thus, a careful survey was carried out with the use of a structural questionnaire administered to the residents to evaluate basic housing problems and the efforts made by both the public and private sectors in the provision of housing in Akure, the capital city of Ondo State, Nigeria, as well as the conscious efforts made to solve the qualitative and quantitative housing problems confronting the ever-increasing population in search of better living conditions in urban cities. A total of three hundred (300) questionnaires were administered to obtain necessary information on the housing condition of the city. The collected data were analyzed with the use of systematic sampling techniques. The study shows that the demand for housing is higher than its supply, which shows that housing demand is at an alarming rate that has resulted in an acute shortage of housing in the study area.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Housing is the second-basic need of man after food; it goes beyond mere shelter. It is the totality of the environment in which man lives and grows, which meets his biological, material, and physical needs, and which possesses the minimum facilities for human health, body, and spirit [1,2]. Housing, according to Atubi and Oriero [3], is a residential environment that man uses for shelter and the environs of the structure needed or designed for his physical and mental health as well as his social well-being. It has been described as a sine qua non for healthy living and productivity [4]. The inadequacy of this essential element of living is a serious threat to the basis of man's existence. Some correlation thus exists between the quality of life and the quality of housing in which one lives. In developed nations, housing is an inherent right of every citizen of that country as part of their social security welfare [5,6]. Every citizen has the right to a decent home at a reasonable cost, i.e., affordable and in a desirable location (community) of their choice, with all necessary facilities and infrastructure put in place. Irrespective of economic, social, or political status, shelter is paramount to man. But this basic necessity of life is a mirage in some developing countries, such as Nigeria [7,8]. The deteriorating conditions of housing in the urban areas of developing nations have attracted international concern over the years, and this has been of great concern. This was critically highlighted at the United Nations Habitat I Conference held in Vancouver in 1976 and at the Habitat II Conference held in Istanbul in 1996. The 2002 National Housing Policy was to ensure that all Nigerians own or have access to decent, safe, and good housing accommodation at a reasonable and affordable cost through private sector initiative, with the government providing the encouragement and enabling environment. In Nigeria, the problem of housing is not a shortage of ideas and policies but a lack of political will, i.e., the ability to implement such ideas and policies to the letter [9,10]. An increase in population has a direct influence on housing, which can bring about a housing shortage, a high cost of rent, and a high standard of living. The housing problem is therefore a resultant effect of an upsurge in population, the cost of building materials. Importantly, non-usage of the local building materials, significantly the

available earth materials in the tropical regions [11].

2. QUANTITATIVE HOUSING PROBLEM

The various strategies put in place in the National Housing Policy over the past decade are undoubtedly expected to have yielded the required result, translated into a fruitful result in the sector, which is expected to have significantly reduced the quantitative housing shortage. The laudable program of the government to solve the housing problem in Nigeria has not yielded the required dividend as expected. Despite the public sector intervention in this critical area of human need, the housing situation in Nigeria has not shown a significant improvement. In comparison with direct housing construction, which entails site-and-services schemes all over the country targeted at complementing private sector initiatives, for example, the Afro Housing Estate along Oda Road, Akure, and the Zion city housing scheme established along Akure – Ilesha Road, Akure. With the addition of new dwelling units, the supply of decent and affordable housing still runs short in terms of demand. This in turn affects the productivity level and the physical and psychological well-being of the people. In the assessment of the wealth of a nation, which is measured in terms of the standard of living of its population, housing thus forms a major and critical part of this index. The Federal Government of Nigeria Third National Development Plan period (1975–1988) came out strongly in favor of housing due to the acute shortage of dwelling units. The level of government involvement was very pronounced as housing was given a place of priority in the national economy. A sum of N2.6 billion was allocated to housing, and a target of 202,000 units was set for the period. It is interesting to note that at the end, less than 15% of the houses were completed (World Bank Report, 1992). The increasing deficit of quantitative housing in urban centers and its attendant deterioration of qualitative housing in rural areas formed the main priority for housing by the defunct government. In 1978, the land use decree was promulgated. The Federal Military Government promised to have a second look at the decree. In 1980, a total of 40,000 units were to be constructed annually nationwide, with 2,000 units located in each state of the federation, including Abuja. At the end of the day, only 20% of the target was achieved.

3. QUALITATIVE HOUSING PROBLEM

Nigerian housing conditions are an affront to health and a menace to human dignity. The available housing is fast deteriorating due to poor maintenance of the existing buildings, increasing costs of building materials, labor, and urban infrastructure, a lack of proper advantages of building orientations, and climatic factors to achieve a conducive built environment [12]. A lot of people huddled in shabby, overcrowded, and substandard housing accommodation with little or no maintenance is certain to evoke some reactions from the occupants of such housing. The housing delivery system is expected to improve and enhance housing quality and human dignity. It has been estimated that 75 percent of the dwelling units in Nigerian urban centers are substandard, and the buildings are sited in slums (Jagun, 1983). In 1990, Wahab showed that there had not been any significant improvement in housing quality, as only 32.8 percent of urban houses could be considered physically sound, while sanitary facilities were largely unsatisfactory in the buildings. The policy specifies that the government desires to encourage and promote the use of local building materials to reduce the cost of housing. This seems to be a good idea, but the problem with this is that the policy did not state how housing quality would be improved and enhanced under the policy. This is important because the 1991 housing policy indicated that about 3 million housing units would need to be upgraded. The 2002 housing policy did not specify how to achieve this [13]. Housing conditions have become poor and have even deteriorated with the high density of both buildings and the human population [14].

4. HOUSING POLICIES AND ACTIONS TOWARD SOLVING HOUSING PROBLEMS IN NIGERIA

4.1 The Colonial Era (1914–1960)

During this period, housing activities and policies of the government were concentrated in the provision of quarters for expatriate staff and for selected indigenous staff in specialized organizations in what was generally called the Government Residential Area (GRA). No conscious effort was made to see housing as a basic necessity since Native Nigerians were well accommodated.

4.2 The Post-Independence Period (1960–1979)

This was the period immediately after independence; emphasis was placed largely on the five-yearly development plans as the main drive for economic growth. Housing was not given the priority it deserved, especially as the Federal Government channeled most of its resources to prosecute the civil war between 1967 and 1970. In 1971, the National Council on Housing, consisting of state commissioners responsible for housing, was established. This led to the establishment of a national housing program in 1972. During the second National Development Plan period, housing corporations were formed in various states. The impact on housing was minimal; the period witnessed the first conscious and significant effort of the government to impact positively in the provision of housing. The Federal Government intended to construct a total of 59,000 housing units, 15,000 units in Lagos and 4,000 in each capital of the eleven states. Also in 1972, the Federal Staff Housing Board took over from the African Staff Housing Scheme and established a maximum loan of N80, 000 per person per housing project (Opara, 1996). In 1973, the Federal Housing Authority was established to coordinate nationwide housing programs. In 1975, a new Federal Ministry of Housing was established and was charged with the responsibility of initiating and co-ordinating the policies in housing-related areas. It was during this period that the government recognized the problem of low-income groups who earned less than N3, 000.00 per year. An anti-inflation task force and rent panel were set up in 1976 to review the structure and level of inflation and rent in the country. Their recommendation gave birth to the State Rent Tribunals, which were ineffective in controlling rents as it is difficult for one to control what one does not own, produce, or supply (Opara et al., year).

4.3 The Second Civilian Administration (1979–1983)

During the third National Development Plan, a total of 202,000 dwelling units were programmed to be constructed throughout the federation, with 50,000 in Lagos and 8,000 in each of the nineteen states of the federation. It is, however, important to note that at the end, less than 15% of the houses were completed (World Bank Report, 1992). The increasing deficit of

quantitative housing in urban centers and its attendant deterioration of qualitative housing in rural areas formed the main priority for housing under the defunct Civilian Administration. In 1978, the land use decree was promulgated. The Federal Military Government promised to have a second look at the decree.

In 1980, a total of 40,000 units were to be constructed annually nationwide, with 2,000 units located in each state of the federation, including Abuja. At the end of the government, only 20% of the target was achieved.

4.4 The Fourth National Development Plan (1980–1985)

During the 4th National Development Plan, a total of N1.9 billion was budgeted for housing by the Federal Government. An estimated N600 million was expended in the course of the implementation of the National Low-Cost Housing Scheme; however, the impact of this was quite negligible. Hence, the housing program became a failure for obvious reasons, which ranged from design failure to poor selection and political interference (with the politicians awarding building contracts to wrong and inexperienced contractors). Ever since, housing has immensely suffered budgetary allocation by successive governments.

In 1991, the federal government launched a new housing policy. The policy introduced decrees, which include the National Housing Fund Decree. When the leadership of that regime stepped aside, not much was achieved. The period witnessed poor, organized mortgage institutions that deviated from their primary aim; they all faded with time.

In 1992, the National Housing Fund Decree No. 3 came into force on January 31, 1992. The decree set up a fund to be managed by the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria. The year 2000 was targeted for providing direct 'direct' shelter for all; it was estimated that the country needed to construct about 7000,000 housing units per year in order to attain an overall target of 18 million by the year 2000. Therefore, the focus of the National Housing Policy was to ensure that all Nigerians own or have access to decent housing accommodation at a reasonable and affordable cost by the year 2000.

In 1994, the National Housing Programme was initiated by the then Minister of Works and Housing, which was launched by General Abacha on March 24, 1994. The program was a noble one to construct a total of 121,000 housing units in all 30 states of the federation and Abuja between 1994 and 1995. The target was to make housing affordable by having four housing types in view: low, medium, upper, and high-income groups, with prices ranging from N70,000 to N3 million per unit. The house type was later reduced from 16 to 11, and the cost was equally reviewed, ranging from N358, 000 to N4 million (Opara, 1996), but only a little could be achieved and successful.

Under the Vision 2010 program of both the federal and state governments, the attainment of the housing targets has been shifted to the year 2010. As in the past, the new horizon was launched with fanfare, but in terms of package delivery, the inertia has grown even worse than in the past, at least because of the continuing population explosion, the seemingly irretrievable decline of the economy, and the unabated sinking of public morality in respect of public resources management [15]. Thus, the housing shortage or deficit continues to sour both in terms of qualitative and quantitative value.

5. METHODS

5.1 The Study Area

Akure is the capital of Ondo State and the administrative seat of government; it has been in existence long before it was made the state capital of Ondo State. It lies approximately at latitude 7° 15' north of the Equator and longitude 5° 15' east of the Greenwich Meridian. Akure is a medium-sized urban center and became the provincial headquarter of Ondo province in 1939. It also became both the capital city of Ondo State and Akure Local Government Council Headquarters in 1976, hence the acute shortage of both qualitative and quantitative housing. Akure is located approximately 700 kilometers south-west of Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, and about 350 kilometers from Lagos, the former capital of Nigeria. It is located within the tropical rain forest region of Nigeria, where rainfall is high throughout the year. The increased relative political influence of Akure as a state capital since 1976 has greatly promoted its rapid growth and increased socioeconomic activities. The population of the city grew from 38,852 in 1952 to 71,106 in 1963. Its population

was estimated to be 112,850 in 1980 and 157,947 in 1990 (Ondo State of Nigeria, 1990). The 1991 national population census, however, put the population of Akure at 239,124, and its estimated population in 1996 was 269,207 (NPC, 1996). At present the city is estimated to have over 380,000 people.

The Objectives of the study are:

- To identified the effect of overpopulation on the housing problem in the study area,
- To identified the governmental policies effect on the housing provision in the study area, and
- To proffer solution towards eliminating housing challenges in the study area.

5.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires were designed and administered to the respondents, who were drawn from residents in various groups according to their socio-economic characteristics. A total of 300 questionnaires were administered with the use of

systematic sampling techniques to sample the opinion of the respondent, which was zoned into nine wards in which the city was stratified politically. Personal observation was made through a careful visit to various locations to collect relevant data on the physical condition of the quality of housing and the types of houses available.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that civil servants constitute a larger percentage of the respondents, which is 44%, as indicated in the table, as it is shown that Akure is the administrative city of the state. The traders have 23% as many women as men; this is not unconnected to the fact that most of the women are traders who received encouragement from the government through the construction of the neighborhood market in the state. 10% of the respondents are businessmen, while others, which include artisans, students, farmers, and unemployed people, constitute 24% of the respondents.

Table 1. Occupation of the respondent

Occupation	Respondent	Percentage
Civil Servant	132	44
Business	30	10
Traders	66	23
Others	72	24
Total	300	100

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 2. Income profile of the respondents

Income Group	Respondent	Percentage
Below - 50,000	108	36
50,000 – 100,000	87	29
100,000 – 200,000	60	20
200,000 and above	45	15
TOTAL	300	

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 3. Age distribution of respondent

Age Group	Respondents	Percentage
20 - 29	63	21
30 – 39	105	35
40 – 49	87	29
50 and above	45	15
Total	300	100

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 4. Sex of respondent

Sex	Respondent	Percentage
Male	186	62
Female	114	38
Total	300	100

Table 5. Type of dwelling /housing in Akure

Housing Type	Respondents	Percentage
2 or 3 storey Building	15	5
Storey Building / (Duplex etc.)	30	10
Bungalow	114	38
Rooming House Type	102	34
Others	39	13
Total	300	100

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 6. Monthly rent in Akure

Cost of Rent	Low Income	Middle Income	High Income	Total	Percentage
4,000 - 5,000	28	9	0	37	37
5,000 - 15,000	19	10	0	29	29
15,000 - 25,000	3	7	1	11	11
25,000 - 35,000	1	2	4	7	7
35,000 - 50,000	0	1	11	12	12
Above - 50,000	0	0	4	4	4
Total	51	29	20	100	100

Source: Field survey 2023

The income distribution Table 2 shows that a large percentage of the respondents fall into the low-income group. This is clearly indicated by a total of 65% of the people earning below N100,000. The middle-income group of between N100,000 and N200,000 ranked next with 20%, while the high-income group with an income above N200,000 had the lowest percentage of just 15% of the total respondents. This result shows that the majority of the residents in the study area are low-income earners. As a result, people cannot afford to pay high rent. The income level is therefore a strong determinant factor of the type of house one occupies because it has a direct influence on the ability of the people to afford or pay for rent.

As shown in Table 3, with respect to the age composition, it is clear that 35% of the respondents fall between the ages of 30 and 39. Also, 40–49 years constitute 29%, and the remaining 15% are 50 years and older. It is therefore clear that the majority of the population (64%) falls within the age range of 30–49 years, which forms the productive working class or labor force of the population of the study area.

From Table 5, 5% of the housing types are two- or three-story buildings, while 10% of the housing types are storey buildings or duplex types of buildings. The bungalow type of buildings constituted 38%. The rooming housing type commonly called 'face-to-face' accounts for 34%, while 13% forms other housing types such as partially completed buildings and uncompleted buildings. Bungalows have the highest percentage simply because most families prefer

to stay and leave in private flats with their families. It is also to be noted that storey buildings are on the financial increase in order to maximize the limited and available land space within the metropolis. Rooming housing type 'face-to-face' ranked second. This is not unconnected to the fact that Akure is an ancient town that is characterized by ancient buildings, coupled with the income level of the people who can only afford relatively cheap accommodation because of their low-income capacity.

The monthly house rent in Akure is directly proportional to and related to the monthly income of the resident in the surveyed area. From Table 6, the low and middle-income earners constitute the largest proportion, which amounts to 66% of the total respondents who pay below N5, 000 annually as house rent, and most of whom live in the rooming house type, which is cheaper. 7% of the respondents pay between N15, 000 and N20, 000 as house rent. These categories fall within the high-income group that can afford to live in bungalows, two-story buildings, terrace houses, mansions, etc. Therefore, it can be deduced that a larger percentage of people pay an average of 76% of their income as house rent.

Considering the cases of Akure with reference to Table 8, 40 % of the total respondents have over six (6) persons per room ratio due to the fact that most of the people are low-income earners who reside in the rooming house type; hence, overcrowding [poor quality of housing] is synonymous with Akure residents as a major challenge confronting the inhabitants; this can lead to sleep disturbance, mental health issues,

and possible psychological stress. In addition, crowding increases exposure to risk factors associated with home injury, social tension, and exposure to second hand health issues such as poor hygiene practices.

Table 9 gave clear indication about low percent of new constructed housing unit added to the existing one hence it shows inadequacy of housing unit in the study area.

In respect of toilet facilities, Table 10 indicates that a larger percentage of buildings in Akure rely solely on the use of pit toilets; this accounts for about 40.3 percent, while 38 percent use water

closets. The table indicates that 15.7 percent of the buildings in the study area did not have basic toilet facilities, and residences in that area are prone to open defecation; hence, the buildings in that zone are substandard and fall short of adequate housing requirements, which is a serious indication of poor quality of housing in the study area.

Water is one of the basic necessities of life. Table 11 shows that a larger percentage of residents depend heavily on wells as a source of water for domestic use, with an average of 41 percent falling under this category. While boreholes account for.

Table 7. Percentage of Income spent on housing in Akure

Income (%)	Respondent	Percentage
Below 20	110	36.7
20 - 30	75	25
30 - 50	54	18
60 -70	37	12.3
Above 70	24	8
Total	300	100

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 8. Household ratio/ size

Household size	Respondent	Percentage
1 –2	15	5
3 – 4	27	9
5 – 6	36	12
7 – 8	120	40
9 and above	102	35
Total	300	100

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 9. Condition of buildings in Akure

Building Condition	Number of Building	Percentage
Very Good (New Construction)	48	16
Good	163	54.3
Fair	65	21.7
Poor	24	8
Total	300	100

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 10. Toilet facilities in Akure

Toilet types	No of Building	Percentage
Water Closet	114	38
Pit Toilet	121	40.3
None	47	15.7
Others	18	6
Total	300	100

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 11. Source of water supply in the study area

Source of water supply	No. of Building	Percentage
Portable water	74	12.3
Boreholes	102	17
Deep well	246	41
None	148	24.7
Others	30	5

Source: Field survey 2023

Table 12. Method of Waste disposal in Akure

Waste disposal method	No. of Building	percentage
Waste management	49	16.3
Dump site	138	46
Dung hill/ Incinerator	84	28
Others	29	9.7
Total	300	100

Source: Field survey 2023

One of the indicators of housing quality is the system of refuse collection and method of disposal, which are very important in determining the environmental quality of housing. In respect of the study area, the Ondo State Waste Management Authority, which is solely responsible for waste collection and disposal, is no longer functioning as before, thus waste disposal is mainly deposited into dung hills or dump sites and burned, thereby constituting an environmental hazard. This constitutes about 46 and 28 percent of the study area, as seen in Table 12. Thus, the method constitutes environmental pollution, which results in the depletion of the ozone layer, hence climate change

6.1 Policy Implication

The results of this study show an avoidable housing problem in terms of both the qualitative and quantitative nature of the housing condition in the study area. It also revealed that the houses in the city lack basic facilities that make housing conducive to living. Housing facilities are expected to improve and enhance housing quality. It is imperative, therefore, to make housing affordable at the lowest cost possible for the citizen. The formulation and implementation of housing policy in Nigeria should take good cognizance of the socio-economic situation of the vast majority of the people. The total neglect of housing delivery by the private sector, which is conscious of maximizing profits at the expense of the housing purpose and citizenry, cannot address the perennial housing shortage or provide desirable qualitative and quantitative housing. Government efforts should be geared toward the provision of social housing, country homes, the use of local building

materials, and a critical review of the land use decree to enhance national housing policy that will ensure affordable shelter for Nigerians. The local content act should be extended to the use of local building materials, whereby the government and Nigerians will be mandated to patronize locally made building materials that have a positive influence on the economy.

7. CONCLUSION

Akure, being an ancient town, deserves an urban renewal strategy to be implemented to upgrade and improve the existing dilapidated housing stock, as the inadequacy of this necessity of life poses socioeconomic and human well-being challenges. The inadequacy of housing in the study area can be attributed to the wide disparity between housing needs and demand and the slow delivery of housing. Thus, the numerous housing problems confronting this country call for concerted effort and greater concern by giving priority to the housing sector of the economy. This paper therefore examines the socio-economic status of the people of Akure and the environmental context of housing policy conception and implementation in the city. It established that a significant proportion of the people in the city of Akure are facing serious qualitative and quantitative housing problems. Hence, it is high time that the government encourage the provision of low-income housing on a larger scale. This can be achieved through the encouragement of the building research efforts of our various research centers in building materials and technology.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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