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URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING PROBLEM IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT): IMPLICATIONS FOR POOR COMMITMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY (NUDP)

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Abstract

One major product of urbanization, which poses serious challenge to urban planners, is rapid urban development, most especially that which is devoid of proper planning and control. Over the years, attempts to create a livable urban environment have yielded policies and programmes of action. Our experience in urban management in Nigeria has witnessed changes in actors and strategies, yet the problem remains the same. This paper examines the trend of urban development in and around the Federal Capital City – Abuja. It uses satellite image data from Landsat TM of 1987 and Landsat ETM+ taken in 2001 to monitor urban development in Abuja and some of its satellite settlements. The analysis reveals a rapid rate of development and the development scenario captured, using digital camera, shows that the quality of development in most satellite settlements was poor. Amongst others, poor management capacity, arising from lack of official commitment to the implementation of the ideals of the National Urban Development Policy (NUDP) is found to be a major problem. The study recommends institutional capacity building within the context of the NUDP and community – based settlement upgrading schemes as alternative to eviction and slum clearance. It concludes on the note that doing this will require high official commitment to policy implementation and adequate financial disbursement.

1. Introduction

Urban settlements all over the world are in a state of flux, a phenomenon characterized by constant growth and changes. Nigeria has one of the World's highest urban growth rates of 5.3% (FMWH, 2000). Statistics on urbanization trend show Nigeria as one of the most urbanized countries in Africa south of the Sahara. Urban population in most urban centers was observed to increase five fold between 1952 and 1982 and as at 1995, Nigeria has seven cities with a population of over one million people, 18 cities with over 500,000 people, 36 with over 200,000 people, 78

ies with 100,000 people and 5,000 cities with over 20,000 people (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1996). Following from this trend, the World Bank's record shows that the urban population in Nigeria is expected to increase to 100 million by the year 2010.

The trend of urban development in Nigeria has shown tremendous growth of major cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Ilorin, Port-Harcourt, Kaduna and Kano with Lagos attaining the status of a megacity. While these old cities have continued to grow in size, new ones like Abuja have also attracted rapid development in the recent times. This growth of Abuja city began in the early 1990s following the building of the new Federal Capital City (FCC) and the subsequent transfer of the Federal capital to Abuja in December 1991. As it were, the movement of the Federal Ministries and civil servants generated an influx of population to the FCC and the surrounding satellite settlements. The issue of concern is that the accelerated growth currently observable in the FCT is generating negative consequences as manifested in mounting population pressure and slum development with all its associated problem (Jinadu, 2001).

The problems of rapid urbanization in Nigeria are considered in detail in chapter one of the Nigerian National Urban development policy. Amongst others, the policy emphasizes uncontrolled, unplanned urban growth, development of sub-standard and sub-human environment plagued by slum squalor and grossly inadequate social amenities as being the negative consequences of rapid urbanization. The Nigerian Governments have responded to the multiplicity of urban problems through the formulation of policies and execution of development projects from time to time. However, the policy noted in section 2.8 that Nigeria's urban problems still remains seemingly intractable despite the responses and interventions. The situation forms the basis for the new Urban Development Policy with the laudable goal of developing 'a dynamic system of urban settlements which will foster sustainable economic growth, promote efficiently urban and regional development and ensure improved standard of living and well-being for all Nigerians'.

When the Urban Development Policy was formulated in 1997, the hope of having orderly urban development, efficient and well-managed urban system was nursed. However, six years after the impact of the policy is yet to be felt even in the Federal Capital Territory. This paper examines the urban development and housing situation in the FCT, using some satellite settlements as case study. It examine urban development trend and describes the nature of development as well as the associate problems in Abuja and some satellite settlements. The paper also examines the urban management problems and concludes with recommendations on how to manage this situation in the problem areas.

Historical Antecedent to Urban Development in the FCT

The Federal Capital Territory was created in 1976 following the recommendations of Justice Akinola Aguda committee and the promulgation of the Federal Capital Territory Decree of the 4th of February 1976 (Doxiadis Associates, 1983). At that time several write-ups by authors established that there were no major urban development in the area. For instance, Mabogunje and Abumere (1981) observed that numerous hamlets and villages that were nucleated in varying degrees characterized the cultural landscape of the entire FCT. Prior to the construction of the FCC therefore, the area was entirely rural and was dominated by small, sparsely populated settlements, with about 85% of the settlements having a population of between 50-500 inhabitants (Gaza, 1990 as quoted in Balogun, 2001).

Following the creation of the FCT and the establishment of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), major construction work in the FCC started during the administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1979 – 1983). Successive governments later built Abuja and on the 12th of December 1991, the government of General Ibrahim Babangida formerly moved the seat of government from Lagos to Abuja. The relocation process occurred in phases from 1986 until 1997 when the remaining Federal Ministries were moved to Abuja by the administration of late General Sanni Abacha.

The transfer of the Federal capital from Lagos to Abuja set off the process of rapid urban development as noted in the introductory section. The next section examines the development trend between 1987 and 2001.

3. Urban Development Trend in Selected Settlements 1987 – 2001.

The construction of the Federal Capital City (FCC) started in 1980. Development trend in the city and ten satellite settlements were monitored using data from satellites images. Landsat TM image taken in January 1987 was interpreted and used to generate statistics of the level of urban in 1987. As seen in table 1 minor urban development had occurred in the settlements. Abuja city had grown to 15.862 Km² in size within seven years of construction while Karu/Nyanyan grew up to 2,725 Km². Idu/Karmo and Zuba also experienced minor urban development as the process of growth had already been set off by the existence of FCC in the area.

Table 1: Settlement Sizes 1987 – 2001

S/No	Settlements	Size in 1987(Km2)	Size in 2001(Km2)
1.	Abuja (FCC)	15.862	105.127
2.	Dutse Alhaji	0.092	1.743
3.	Gwagwa	0.237	3.147
4.	Idu/Karmo	0.464	6.051
5.	Karu/Nyanyan	2.725	27.965
6.	Kubwa	0.112	13.565
7.	Kuchigoro	0.024	1.084
8.	Lugbe	0.105	4.594
9.	Zuba	0.649	4.298

Source: Author's Analysis, 2003

The pace of settlement growth set up in the 1987 continued and culminated into the 2001 situation with all the settlements recording increase in their sizes (table 1). The growth statistics generated from Landsat ETM+ taken in December 2001 reveals a significant physical expansion of the settlement. The table shows that the size of Abuja, Idu/Karmo, Kubwa, Karu/Nyanyan, and Lugbe, increased by 89.265, 5.587, 13.453, 25.240 and 4.489 square kilometers respectively within fourteen years. An index of the rate of change calculated for the settlements reveals a significant rate of urban development. Table 2 shows that high rates of urban development were recorded in settlements with Kubwa (858.0%), Kuchigoro (315.5%) Lugbe (305.4%) and Dutse Alhaji (28.2%) having exceptionally high development rates.

Table 2: Settlement Sizes and Growth Rates, 1987 – 2001

S/No	Settlements	Size in 1987 (Km2)	Size in 2001 (Km2)	Newly Created Settlement Area (Km2)	Growth Rate (%)
1.	Abuja (FCC)	15.862	105.127	89.265	40.2
2.	Dutse Alhaji	0.092	1.743	1.651	128.2
3.	Gwagwa	0.237	3.147	2.910	87.7
4.	Idu/Karmo	0.464	6.051	5.587	86.0
5.	Karu/Nyanyan	2.725	27.965	25.24	66.2
6.	Kubwa	0.112	13.565	13.453	858.0
7.	Kuchigoro	0.024	1.084	1.060	315.5
8.	Lugbe	0.105	4.594	4.489	305.4
9.	Zuba	0.649	4.298	3.649	40.2

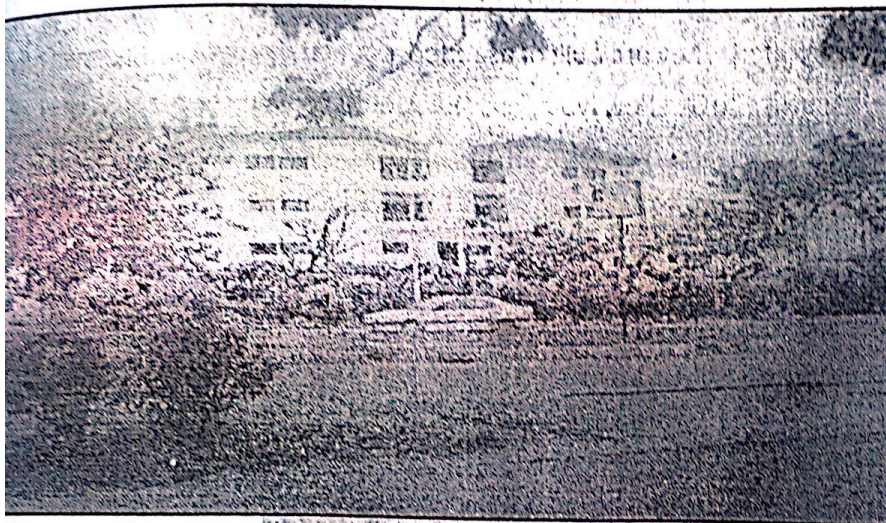
Source: Author's Analysis, 2003

is evidenced from the analysis of development trend that tremendous urban development occurred in Abuja and its satellite settlements in the period under review. In order to appreciate the nature of physical development in the area, digital camera was used to capture the scenario in the different settlements and this is presented in the next section of the paper.

Urban Development Scenario and Housing Problems.

The scenario in Abuja and the ten satellite settlements feature areas of different physical characteristics and quality. Generally, the entire housing environment is characterized by planned, unplanned and slum areas which are present in different degrees in all the settlements. Planned development features mainly in Abuja city, which enjoys a well-laid out residential environment. Planned environments are also found in parts of Karu, Nyanyan, Kubwa (Federal Housing Area) and Lugbe (Lugbe Estate). As shown in plate 1, these areas are characterized by modern building and improved access. The buildings are of modern designs and they range from single flat apartments to duplexes and low-rise buildings.

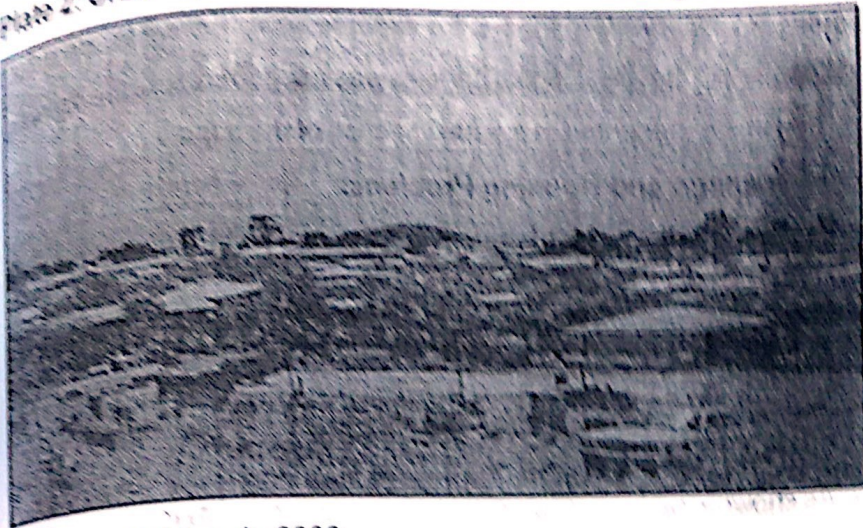
Plate 1: Planned Residential Environment in Abuja City



Source: Fieldwork, 2003.

Unplanned developments in the settlements manifest in urban sprawl and slum housing and their spatial extent vary from one settlement to the other. The problem of urban sprawl is most noticeable in the new areas of Lugbe Gwagwa and Karmo where extensive housing areas have been built haphazardly with poor access and services (Plate 2).

Plate 2: Urban Sprawl with Difficult Access in Gwagwa



Source: Fieldwork, 2003.

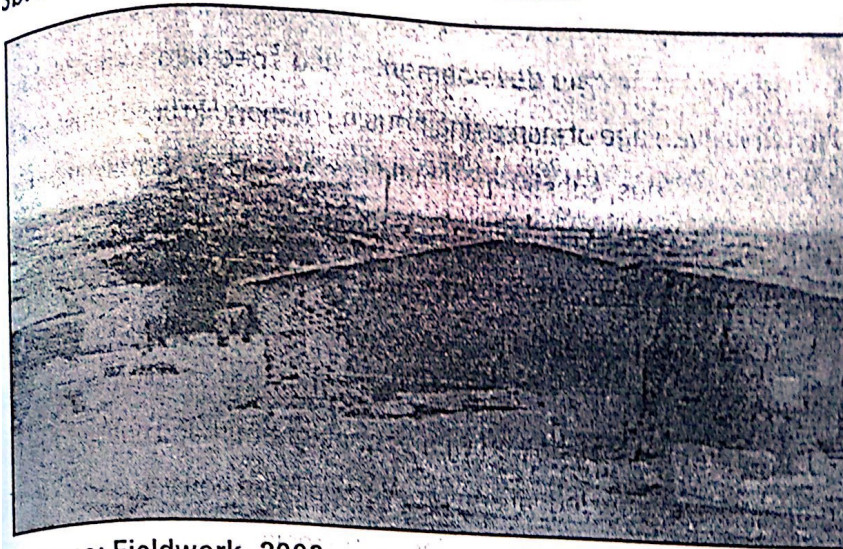
Slum development is a universal phenomenon in all the settlements. While localized slums/squatter settlements have developed in Abuja and old areas of Karu, Nyanyan, Lugbe and Kubwa, Large-scale slum areas have developed in Zuba, Gwagwa, Idu and Sabon Karmo. Generally, the slum areas are characterized by poor housing environment. The houses are substandard, small, congested and poorly ventilated. They are built of assorted, poor quality materials such as mud, planks and old zinc. Plates 3a and 3b show typical squatter settlement and slum houses in Abuja and Karmo respectively.

Plate 3a: Mabushi Squatter Settlement in Abuja city



Sources: Fieldwork, 2003

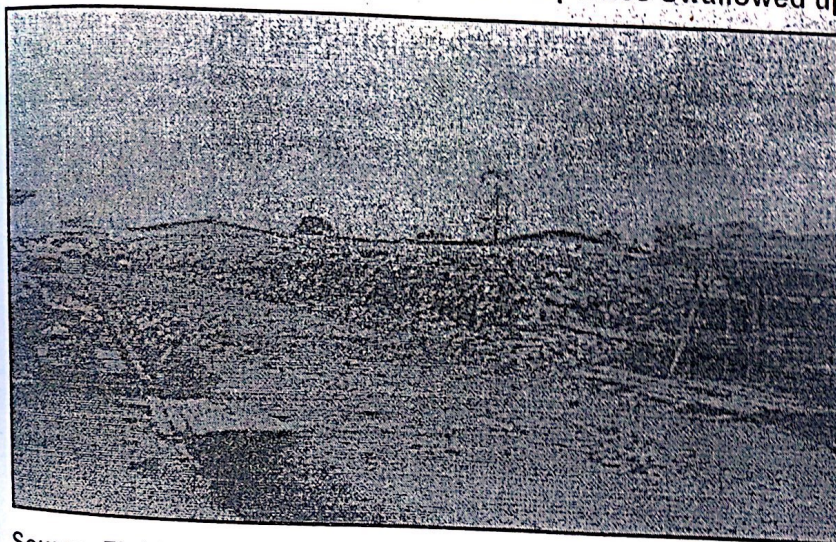
3b: Large Scale Slum Development in Karmo



Sources: Fieldwork, 2003

Apart from the substandard and poor housing quality, the slum areas also feature poor access roads and deteriorated environment. In Gwagwa, Idu and Sabon Karmo for instance, there are no tarred roads except the single carriage Diedie-FCC link that passes through the settlements. The entire residential areas in these settlements are serviced by narrow, winding roads with severe drainage problem. The general environment of the slum settlements is poor with common cases of heaps of refuse taking over the roads and residential properties (plate 4).

Plate 4: Access Roads and Residential Properties Swallowed up by Refuse in Idu



Source: Fieldwork, 2003

The observed rapid urban development and the preponderance of unplanned and poorly serviced environment have certain negative consequences for the FCT. In physical terms, development pressure, arising from population influx and high demand for housing and infrastructure, has resulted into illegal, congested and haphazard development. Land speculators and informal building investors have taken the advantage of increasing housing demand to build ramshackle and poorly serviced accommodation. Thus, substandard buildings as well as encroachment on public lands and river flood plains characterize physical development in Zuba, Gwagwa, Idu, Sabon Kamo, Kuchigoro and parts of Lugbe, Yanyan, Karu and Kubwa (plate 5). With reference to encroachment on public land, the buffer zones between the Outer Northern Express road and Kubwa as well as that between Zuba and Madalla have been converted to commercial and residential developments. These problems combined with poor neighbourhood quality, due to poor hygiene, to create a generally overcrowded, unsanitary and polluted housing environment, which has negative implications for health and the well being of the residents.

Plate 5: Showing development Encroachment on River Flood Plain in Zuba



Sources: Fieldwork, 2003

The scenario painted above shows that, contrary the lofty goal and objectives of the National Urban Development Policy (see sections 4.2 and 4.3.1 of the policy), efficient urban development and management still elude most settlement in Nigeria. As it were, the situation in most of the satellite settlements studied poses a serious challenge to urban planning and constitutes a threat to urban social order as conceived in section 6.1 and 6.2 of the Policy. The next section of this paper examines urban management problems in the area and some desirable solutions.

5. Urban Management Problems and Solutions

The physical development problems observed in major parts of the satellite settlements are attributed to poor management arising from poor institutional capacity and official inactivity. As we know, the Regional Planning Section of the Department of Land, Planning and Survey of the FCDA is charged with the responsibility of preparing Master Plan for the satellite settlements and ensuring development control. The Zonal Area Officer of the Department, which were established in 1988, are directly in charge of the preparation of Action Area Plans, execution of development proposals, development control and enforcement of standards in the different Area Councils.

Despite the establishment of urban management institution with defined function and responsibilities, the reality on the ground shows that the existing institutions could not effectively manage physical development in the FCT. Several problems inhibiting effective planning administration and land management were identified in the 1999 report of the Ministerial Committee for the Appraisal of Physical Planning and Development Issues in the FCT. These, amongst others include:

- * Delay and sometimes outright non-implementation of Action Plans for some satellite settlements.
- * Delay in the provision of infrastructure on many new layouts, which create hindrances for developers and give rooms for encroachment and illegal development.
- * Inadequate human and material resources in the Zonal Planning Offices. The logistic problems here include shortage of manpower shortage, inadequate office and residential accommodation, lack of office equipment and transportation problems;
- * Non application of effective development control, a situation which results in rapid growth of illegal development;
- * Poor co-ordination between the Regional Planning Division of the Department of Lands, Planning and Survey and the Zonal Offices as well as role conflict between the Zonal Planning Offices and the Area Councils.

These problems have combined with indiscriminate sale of land by the traditional Chiefs and shady land speculations to compound physical planning problem in the area.

The current situation reveals poor and ineffective institutional capacity for urban management as noted in section 2.8 of the NUDP six years ago. It is an indication that Nigeria has not benefited from the formulation of the NUDP due to the problem of non-implementation and non-application

of the lofty ideals of the policy. There is therefore the need to revoke and implement the relevant sections of the policy to ensure efficient management of new development in Abuja and other parts of Nigeria.

One major and immediate requirement for adequate management of the situation in and around Abuja is to strengthen the capacity of the existing planning institutions as recommended in section 4.4.5 of the NUDP. The capacity building should cover the provision of adequate human and material resources needed for effective monitoring and control as well as staff training and re-training in modern approaches to urban management. In addition to these, there is the need for a change in attitude and methods. It is high time the planning agencies change their apathetic and lazier fare attitudes, which allows encroachment and illegal development to take place and/or slums to develop before thinking of solution. The situation in and around Abuja is such that planners have watched, and are still watching with impunity, the formation of large-scale slums and haphazard development. This lazier fare-planning attitude must stop.

The method for dealing with the existing slum housing in the satellite settlements like Zuba, Gwagwa, Idu, Karmo, Lugbe, Piwoyi, Nyanyan-Maraba, and Karu should also change from the old method of slum demolition. The Urban Development Policy's goal on urban environment is to ensure an orderly development of Nigeria's urban settlements in a way that guarantees a decent livable environment' and one of the objectives is to 'upgrade the existing slums and squatter settlements and control the emergence of unplanned settlements' (see section 7.4 and 7.5.1). Although sections 4.3.3 and 9.5.2 of the NUDP contradict the upgrading objective and support slum, clearance and the declaration of 'Redevelopment Areas', there is the need to review old strategies and do things differently.

Experiences have shown that slum clearance is socially and economically costly. It is a temporary rather than permanent planning solution as it normally leads to the re-emergence of slum(s) elsewhere and nearby. Given the numerous success stories of best practices in slum upgrading and innovative settlement management from countries like Kenya, Sudan, Angola and Botswana amongst others, a viable solution lies in the institution of community-based settlement improvement programmes in the different settlements. The improvement programme should focus on regularization of land tenure and facility up-grade through public-private and community efforts. Above all, there is the need for planning intervention and control at the urban fringes to prevent them from haphazard development.

6. Conclusion

The physical development scenario painted in this paper reveals a rapid, uncontrolled urban development, which manifests in poor, congested and unsanitary housing environment around the Federal Capital City- Abuja. This situation is a replica of the nature of new developments around most major cities in Nigeria and it is an indication of poor commitment and non-implementation of the lofty ideals of the NUDP. There is the need for adequate official commitment to the implementation of the NUDP in terms of institutional capacity building and the disbursement of the required finances for efficient urban management. In the case of Abuja and its environs the manpower and logistic problems must be addressed. Above all, the Federal Government should facilitate and accelerate the relocation of all settlements with the Phase II and Phase III Development Area of Abuja City and settle all compensation as well so as to forestall land controversies, illegal occupation and slum development in the area.

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