Peculiarity of Slums in Lagos Metropolis and Sustainable Environment, Urban Growth and Development in the African Melting Port of Nations

Kofo A. Aderogba and Bolaji O. Komolafe

ABSTRACT: Lagos Metropolis houses the largest slums in terms of number, areas of coverage and population in Nigeria. Activities and the aftermath effects have impacted on the general environment of the Metropolis. This paper studied slums in the Metropolis, identified their peculiarities, and make suggestions for sustainable physical environment. 5 slums were randomly selected for study. Visits were made to each of the five slums, namely Ajegunle, Mushin, Ilaje, Agege and Ijebu. Policies and programmes of the three levels of government in response to the challenges of slums were perused. State government documents on urban renewal was read. In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with the Heads of each of the slums. Similarly, 100 individual from each of the five slums provided primary information by responding to a questionnaire that contains 25 questions. Few photographs were taken. Qualitative content analysis was used in data analysis and presentation. Certain levels of poverty, income status, level of literacy, perception of the physical environment, general welfare indicators are peculiar to these slums. These diminishes the general quality of life in the melting pot of nations. But the study acknowledged that the inhabitants are particularly significant for manpower needs of the entire metropolis. The three tiers of government may have to rise to the responsibility of fast tracking urban renewal schemes in these communities and prevent development of new slums. There must be focused environmental education for the residents. Individuals and groups could be giving assess to loans; private property developers should be encouraged and supported to build and service low income housing units fortified with basic infrastructures; the government may take up the responsibility of providing low cost housing units and allocate same to the dwellers at reasonable cost. There must be deviations from the traditional urban renewal programmes.

Keywords: Slum, Lagos Metropolis, Sustainable Environment, Government Participation, Environmental Education.

Introduction

A *villa miseria* outside Buenos Aires, Argentina, may have the worst *feng shui* in the world: It is built in a flood zone over a former lake, a toxic dump, and a cemetery (Payne, 1989). Then there is the barrio perched precariously on stilts over the excrement-clogged Pasig River in Manila, Philippines, and the *bustee* in Vijayawada, India, that floods so regularly that residents have door numbers written on pieces of furniture. In slums the world over, squatter trade safety and health for a few square meters of land. They are pioneers of swamps, floodplains, volcano slopes, unstable hillsides, desert fringes, rail and road sidings, mountains of rubbish, and chemical dumps, that is, unattractive and dangerous sites that have become poverty’s niche in the ecology of the city (Davis, 2006).

Cities have absorbed nearly two-thirds of the global population explosion since 1950, and are currently adding a million babies and migrants each week. Dhaka, Bangladesh; Lagos, Nigeria; and Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, today are each approximately 40 times larger than they were in 1950. According to the *Financial Times*, China in the 1980s alone added more city dwellers than did all of Europe (including Russia) during the entire 19th century (de Sherbinin, Rahman, Barbieri, Fotso, and Zhu, 2009).

According to them and (Hindson and Mccathy, 1994) in this process of extensive urbanization, the planet has become marked by the runaway growth of slums, characterized by overcrowding, poor or informal housing, inadequate access to safe water and sanitation, and insecurity of tenure. It has been estimated that there were at least 921 million slum dwellers in...
2001 and more than 1 billion in 2005, with slum populations growing by a staggering 25 million per year, (United Nations-Habitat, 2011).

Incidentally, today, new arrivals to the urban margin confront a condition that can only be described as marginality within marginality, or, in the more piquant phrase of a desperate Baghdad slum dweller quoted by The New York Times, (2009) a “semi-death.” An International Labor Organization researcher has estimated that the formal housing markets in the Third World rarely supply more than 20 percent of new housing stock; out of necessity, people turn to self-built shanties, informal rentals, pirate subdivisions, or the sidewalks. These are moves of sheer survival. But because the geographic location of slums is becoming more and more marginal, the destructive power of natural elements leaves residents in an ever more vulnerable states.

Majority of slums, according to (de Sherbiniin, Rahman, Barbieri, Fotso, and Zhu, 2009) and many authorities, begin with bad geology. The shantytown periphery of Johannesburg, South Africa, for example, conforms unerringly to a belt of dangerous, unstable dolomitic soil contaminated by generations of mining. At least half of the region’s nonwhite population lives in informal settlements in areas of toxic waste and chronic ground collapse. Likewise, the highly weathered lateritic soils underlying hillside favelas in Belo Horizonte and other Brazilian cities are catastrophically prone to slope failure and landslides. Rio de Janeiro’s more famous favelas are built on equally unstable soils atop denuded granite domes and hillsides that frequently give way - usually with deadly results.

Payne (1989) avers that Caracas, Venezuela, however, with a population of 5.2 million in 2005, is the soil geologist’s “perfect storm”: slums housing almost two-thirds of the city’s population are built on unstable hillsides and in deep gorges surrounding the seismically active Caracas Valley. At one time vegetation held the friable schist in place, but brush clearing and cut-and-fill construction have destabilized the densely inhabited hills and precipitated a radical increase in major landslides and slope failures - from less than one per decade before 1950 to the current average of two or more per month.

Like Edgar (2009) on South Africa, de Sherbiniin, Rahman, Barbieri, Fotso, and Zhu (2009) realised that all the classical principles of urban planning, including the preservation of open space and the separation of noxious land uses from residences, are stood on their heads in poor cities. Almost every large Third World city with some industrial base has a Dantalian district shrouded in pollution and located next to pipelines, chemical plants, and refineries: Mexico City’s Iztapalapa, São Paulo’s Cubatão, Rio’s Belford Roxo, Jakarta’s Cibubur, Tunis’s southern fringe, southwestern Alexandria, and so on. The world usually pays attention to such fatal admixtures of poverty and toxic industry only when they explode with mass casualties, as happened at Bhopal, India, in 1984, when an accident at a Union Carbide chemical plant killed 20,000 people.

Bayram (2004) assay that urban theorists have long recognized that the environmental efficiency and public affluence of cities require the preservation of ecosystems, open spaces, and natural services: cities need them to recycle urban waste products into usable inputs for farming, gardening, and energy production. And along with intact wetlands and agriculture, sustainable urbanism presupposes a basic level of safety - of meteorological, hydrological, and geological stability, and protection against disasters like floods or fire. None of those conditions can hold in most Third World cities. Suffering under a series of crushing pressures, most recently a quarter-century-old regime of Draconian international economic policies, cities are systematically polluting, urbanizing, and destroying their crucial environmental support systems.

Bayram (2004) as in Turkey observed that wealthy cities in vulnerable sites such as Los Angeles or Tokyo can reduce geological or meteorological risk through massive engineering projects. And national flood insurance programs, together with fire and earthquake insurance,
can guarantee residential repair and rebuilding in the event of extensive damage. In the Third World, by contrast, slums that lack potable water and latrines are unlikely to be defended by expensive public works or covered by disaster insurance.

The subject of human waste is, of course, indelicate; but it is a fundamental problem of city life from which there is surprisingly little escape. Lovly Josaphat, a resident of Cité Soleil, the largest slum in Haiti’s capital Port-au-Prince, told author Beverly Bell, as quoted by Davis, (2006):

“I’ve suffered a lot. When it rains, the part of the Cité I live in floods and the water comes in the house. There’s always water on the ground, green smelly water, and there are no paths. The mosquitoes bite us. My four-year-old has bronchitis, malaria, and even typhoid now … The doctor said to give him boiled water, not to give him food with grease, and not to let him walk in the water. But the water’s everywhere; he can’t set foot outside the house without walking in it. The doctor said that if I don’t take care of him, I’ll lose him.”

He goes on to say that there is green, smelly water everywhere. “Every day, around the world,” according to public-health expert Eileen Stillwaggon, “illnesses related to water supply, waste disposal, and garbage kill 30,000 people and constitute 75 percent of the illnesses that afflict humanity.” Indeed, digestive-tract diseases arising from poor sanitation and the pollution of drinking water are the leading cause of death in the world, affecting mainly infants and small children. Open sewers and contaminated water are likewise rife with intestinal parasites such as whipworm, roundworm, and hookworm that infect tens of millions of children in poor cities. Cholera, the scourge of the Victorian city, continues to thrive off the fecal contamination of urban water supplies, especially in African cities like Antananarivo, Madagascar; Maputo, Mozambique; and Lusaka, Zambia, where UNICEF estimates that up to 80 percent of deaths from preventable diseases (apart from HIV/AIDS) arise from poor sanitation.

“At any one time,” adds a 1996 report by the World Health Organization, “close to half of the South’s urban population is suffering from one or more of the main diseases associated with inadequate provision for water and sanitation.” Although clean water is the cheapest and single most important medicine in the world, public provision of water remains widely inadequate, and often competes with powerful private interests. In Dhaka, vendors mark up the cost of water - often from municipal sources - by 500 percent; in Faisalabad, Pakistan, 6,800 percent. Unable or unwilling to pay the extortionate price of water from vendors, some Nairobi, Kenya, residents resort to desperate expedients, including, two local researchers write, “the use of sewerage water, skipping bathing and washing, using borehole water and rainwater, and drawing water from broken pipes” (United Nations Human Settlement Programme (2004). However, this paper has examined slums in Lagos Metropolis, identified their peculiarities, and make suggestions for sustainable physical environment of the entire Metropolis.

World Slums and Concept of Sustainable Development

From the foregoing and according to the United Nations [habitat] (2003), a slum is a heavily populated urban informal settlement characterized by substandard housing and squalor. While slums differ in size and other characteristics from country to country, most lack reliable sanitation services, supply of clean water, reliable electricity, timely law enforcement and other basic services. Slum residences vary from shanty houses to professionally-built dwellings that because of poor-quality design or construction have deteriorated into slums (United Nations [Habitat], 2003). They were common in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the United States and Europe (Ashton, 2006). According to her, more recently, slums have been predominantly found in urban regions of developing and undeveloped parts of the world, but are also found in developed economies (Ashton, 2006; Vale, 2007; UN-Habitat, 2011).
According to United Nations-Habitat (2013), around 33% of the urban population in the developing world in 2012, or about 863 million people, lived in slums. The proportion of urban population living in slums was highest in Sub-Saharan Africa (61.7%), followed by South Asia (35%), Southeast Asia (31%), East Asia (28.2%), West Asia (24.6%), Oceania (24.1%), Latin America and the Caribbean (23.5%), and North Africa (13.3%). Among individual countries, the proportion of urban residents living in slum areas in 2009 was highest in the Central African Republic (95.9%). Between 1990 and 2010 the percentage of people living in slums dropped, even as the total urban population increased. The world's largest slum city is in Mexico City (United Nations-Habitat, 2011 and 2013).

Slums form and grow in many different parts of the world for many different reasons. Some causes include rapid rural-urban migration, economic stagnation and depression, high unemployment, poverty, informal economy, poor planning, politics, natural disasters and social conflicts and at extremes, war (Pattson, 1988; Serageldin, Sollosso and Valenzuela, 2003 and 2006; Fernandez, 2011). United Nations-Habitat, 2011). According to them, Strategies tried to reduce and transform slums in different countries, with varying degrees of success, include a combination of slum removal, slum relocation, slum upgrading, urban planning with city wide infrastructure development, and public housing projects.

The United Nations Habitat (2003) avers that slum is a slang word meaning room, which evolved to “back slum” around 1845 meaning ‘back alley, street of poor people.’ Numerous other terms are often used interchangeably with slum: shanty town, favela, rookeery, gecekondu, skid row, barrio, ghetto, bidonville, taudis, barrio marginal, morro, loteamento, barraca, musseque, tugurio, solares, mudun safi, karyan, medina achouaia, braek, ishash, galos, tanake, baladi, hrushebi, chalis, katars, zopadpatti, bustee, estero, looban, dagatan, umjondolo, watta, udukku, and chereka bete. Figure 1 shows a glimpse of selected few scenery around the globe. Some are actually adjacent to the finest, the most enlightened parts, of the corresponding cities and towns.
In literature, locally in Nigeria (Edgar, 2009; Mabogunje, 2002; Morakinyo, Ogunrayew, Koleosho and Adenubi, 2012; Agbola, 2006; Omole, 2000; Morka, 2007 and Nwaka, 2005), and around the globe (Hindson and Mccathy, 1994; Chandramoulis, 2003; Durand-Lasserve, 1996; and Omwoma, 2013) various solutions have been suggested:

- Provision of tenancy rights to dwellers in order to ensure their housing is not infringed upon by government agencies.
- Building low-cost residences for slum dwellers so that proper housing can ensure their safety and hygiene.
- Making clean and potable water available.
- Encouraging proper sanitation and waste management.
- Controlling pollution levels.
- Providing transport facilities.
- Arranging for informal education.
- Making credit and finance available as per requirement.
- Introducing new programmes for income-generation.
- Providing a platform for sharing ideas, inputs and experiences and others.

However, these are only broad guidelines and there can be no single uniform model for urban planning that can be applicable to all circumstances globally (Agbola, 2006 and Mabogunje, 2002). According to them and Omwoma (2013), slum rehabilitation and upgrading are vital, but each city has certain distinctive political, cultural, environmental and economic factors which determine the extent to which such rehabilitation is feasible. Hence, if sustainable development should mean “maintaining a delicate balance between the human need to improve lifestyles and feeling of well-being on one hand, and preserving natural resources and ecosystems, on which we and future generations depend,” proper assessment has to be made and prospects evaluated before the problem can be properly and adequately addressed. The physical development of the slums and the entire Metropolis meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Materials and Methods

**Lagos Metropolis**

Lagos (Eko) started as a fishing shanty settlement. It has grown and developed to include Yaba, Ebute Meta, Oshodi, Apapa, Mushin, Ikeja, Agege, Ejigbo, Egbada, Ketu and a host of others settlements that have grown to the status of cities and towns on their own (Mabogunje, 2002; Agbola, 2006). The Metropolis fancifully and simply referred to as Lagos, has come of age with multiplicity of functions ranging from governmental, non-governmental, industrial, commercial, tourist, banking and finance, insurance, oil and gas, military, educational, transportation and communication and others. There is virtually no distinct community of West African region that is not well represented in the Metropolis. Almost every Nigerian family (of Nigerian origin) has a representative dwelling and or visiting Lagos at regular intervals of a month or less. Skilled and unskilled labours are readily available and dwelling within and around the Metropolis. Major conglomerates, national and international running businesses in Nigeria have their major offices (many of the times, with their Headquarters) located within the Metropolis. It is a melting port of nations. But shelter and urban infrastructures are major challenges for the urbanites and thus remain as major task against sustainable growth and development in the Metropolis (Mabogunje, 2002; Agbola, 2005; Morakinyo, Ogunrayewa, Koleosho, and Adenubi, 2012).

**Sources of Data, Collection, Analysis and Presentation**

5 slums were randomly selected for study. Reconnoiter surveys were made to each of the five slums, namely Ajegunle, Mushin, Ilaje, Agege and Itire. Major attributes of the settlements were observed and noted at each of the visits. Policies and programmes of the three levels of government in response to the challenges of slums were perused. State government documents on urban renewal were read and used. The State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development was of immense assistance in this respect. In-depth-interview (IDIs) were conducted with the ‘Heads’ of each of the slums. Similarly, randomly selected 100 individual from each of the five slums, through a questionnaire, provided primary information about the attributes and lives therein. The questionnaire was pretested at another slum but of the same metropolis, and adjustment made before administration. Records of crimes reported at the adjacent Police Stations/Posts were obtained. Few photographs were taken. Qualitative Content
Analysis as described and prescribed by Roberts (1997) and Krippendorff and Bock (2008) was used in data analysis and presentation; and so also applied was One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Likert Scale was used to analyse and present respondents’ feelings about the infrastructures at the slums. The words “ghetto,” “batcher,” “favela,” “shanty town,” “biddonville,” “barrio,” “skid row” and “rookery” are sometimes used interchangeably to mean slum. Similarly, the words “City,” “Metropolis,” and “settlement” are used interchangeably to mean Lagos Metropolitan Area. No other rigorous statistical tools were used for data collection, analysis and presentation but simple tables, charts and photographs.

Findings
Attributes of the Slums:

Four parameters (number of slums that had 4,000 and above inhabitants, average number of distinct family units, human diversity and number of reported crimes) were generally examined for the entire Metropolis within the period 1990 to 2014, a period of 25 years and projection is made to 2019, see Fig. 2 showing increasing trends of worse scenarios. The number of distinct slums of 4,000 people and above in 1990 was 11. This number increased to 13 in 1994 and 17 in 1999. The figure increased to 21 in 2004 and remains the same, 21 in 2009, that is, in a period of almost 10years. But increased to 24 in 2014. It is projected that the number may be as high as 29 in 2019. See Fig. 2. Similarly, average number of distinct family units in the sampled slums was just about 1,080 in 1990, but it increased gradually, over the years (25 years) to 5,500 units in 2014. It is projected that that it may be as much as 8,340 units in 2019.

By the same token, human diversity and number of reported crimes per annum show similar trends. Distinct races and tribes was 90 in 1990. It was 187 in 2009 and 195 in 2014. It may be as much as 201 in 2019. The figure for reported crimes was 2,080 in 1990 and it gradually increased to 3,600 in 1994; 4,400 in 2004; 4100 in 2009; and 5,500 in 2014, though 1999 and 2009 recorded fall in the figure.

![Fig. 2: Selected Attributes of the Slums in the Metropolis](image)

Table 1: Status of Welfare Indicators in the Metropolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welfare Indicators</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potable Water</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power from National Grid (Electricity)</td>
<td>Pilfered from national grid only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Network</td>
<td>Except pathways and wooden ridges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Peculiarity of Slums in Lagos Metropolis and Sustainable Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Location</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternity Homes</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markets</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools &amp; Colleges</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Law (Judicial Court)</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Hall</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>Not common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Services (Radio/Television/Phone etc.)</td>
<td>Available by proxy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Centre</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Post/Police Station</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Development Centre</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispensary</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Complaint Commission Office</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Centre/Youth Development Centre</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol/Fuel Filling Station</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Centre/Club</td>
<td>Not in existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Specified)</td>
<td>Palsy only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows a summary of welfare indicators as unanimously expressed by the 500 respondents and observed by the researchers: Potable water, hospitals and maternity homes, markets, schools and colleges, law courts, post office, police station/post, town hall, recruitment centre, dispensary, public complaint office, women development centre, petrol/gas filling stations, and recreation centres are not in existence in any slum. Suffice it to say that there are kiosks in front and or beside almost all chanties retailing such articles as biscuit, bread, soft drinks, beer, wine and spirits, *hot drinks*, beverages, pastries, fish, gari, onion and pepper, yam and so on. None of them sell any item in bulk. Power is often pilfered from the national grid by a few individuals and it is extended to every other residents that cares to tap from there.
Communication services are a lot easier particularly through Global System of Mobile Telecommunication (GSM). There were communication services masks close enough and sometimes, by accident, within the slums.

The population structure is examined by categorising the residents into male adults, female adults, children and aged. There were more male adults, 32%, followed by the aged, 27%. Female adults account for 25% of the populace and children account for 16%, the smallest. See Fig. 3 (a). Employment status was also examined. Apprentices/students account for the largest, 36%. Unemployed is 20%; employed is 27% and others (specified) account for 17%. Unemployed and apprentices/students alone account for 56% of the populace at the slums; see Fig. 3 (b).

Children are born every day in tens. They grow-up to become teens, and in twenty-five years and above, they become adults with responsibilities. Skilled and unskilled, some of this group either have no employment or at best with minimum income that can only be sufficient for a meal or two per day. Teenager, males and females whose parents live within the Metropolis are seeking for freedom. Others inadvertently migrated to Lagos. The first choice is to hang around at the slums. Finally, they settle there. Migrants from other countries, particularly African countries and the world at large are sizeable in number. Nigerians, from all states of the federation directly and inadvertently come and settle in Lagos. Slums are the first choice of place of abode, even after their guardian and wards might have shown them enough of Lagos and or when they presumed they must gain their freedom even if it just to live in biddonville, barrio/shanties. These are the major sources of the residents at the slums.

A Director at the State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development lament on the rates of increase in the number of slums and the population and conditions of inhabitants in each thus:

At all the Jakande Estates, all over the Metropolis, the standard of living are far below the stipulation of the World Health Organization nor the order/directives of the United Nations …. They are full [crowded], that is, in the simplest language we can put it. It was the policy of Urban Renewal of the government of UPN, presided over by Lateef Jakande that initiated it. But they are now worse than what they were purposed to solve. They are all slums and worse than similar shanties, batchers, around. … you know why? Each resident of Lagos that traveled home at Christmas/New Year period and or during Easter celebration, and Muslim brothers that goes home for Id-El-Fitr and or Id-El-Kabir comes back with at least a relation to come and start life in Lagos. …. What would you say about legal and illegal migrants from other West African countries and beyond? These migrants eventually end up at the slums. As at today, planning for them is a challenge. But one thing is clear, if there must be planning, it must be continual.
A slum dweller at Ilaje, one of the youngest but largest, proudly exclaimed with the followings at his residence (ghetto):

We are increasing in number per day but not at the rate the houses [chanties] are increasing. Many a time, the government and its agencies often come around to mess us up instead of helping to provide what we lack….we have Muslims, Christians and those that don’t believe in anything [atheist]. …pray [worship] here though some Christian brothers and sisters in particular do worship outside this place on Sundays. We deliver women of their pregnancies [babies] here, some go out to deliver but we bring-up the children here. We provide more than 75% of the construction labours, skilled and unskilled, found on any construction site from here to Bonny Camp on Victoria Island….

What he said is not significantly different from what we heard from Lateef Ajao at Ajegunle, another slum, in the south western part of the Metropolis:

As you can observe yourself, no road, no school, no post office, no Police Post, no hospital no maternity hospital [centre] …. We have our shops and houses and we are fine. No government want to help communities like this: Amukoko, Ajegunle, Itire, Iwaya, Babasale, Bariga and others. Children commute to schools in the morning and come in the evenings – Monday to Friday. If the government feels like doing something to assist us, that will be okay, otherwise we are fine …. We fend for ourselves but they should not disturb us on our land, Oba lo ni’le. [God is the owner of Land] …. 

Chucks a native of Ufuma in Anambra state (of Nigeria) migrated to Lagos with the notion that life is more kind to young school leavers in the Metropolis, but turned out to be something else and found himself in a slum; and he submits:

The population is not small at all, from Monday to Friday, in the morning, you will see stream of skilled and unskilled labours trooping out of this community to resume work in the Central Business District as nurses, drivers, clerks, office attendants, artisans, masons, teachers; and some middle level manpower working in the banks and insurance companies, hospitals and maternity homes, media houses, traders, shop keepers and so on. Well dressed, looking gay …. in the evening they look different (bored and worn out) because they might have been tired from work and having passed through the hectic traffic before getting here. The outgoing and incoming traffic of these able bodies are highest on Mondays and Fridays …. Some leave on Monday and hang around friends and relations during the week but only return home [to the slum] for weekend.

He added with pride and audacity:

No water, no electricity from government grid but we fend for ourselves. The houses (shelters) cannot be compared with what we have at Yaba, Ikoyi, Ikeja etc but we are contented. You can see what the houses [batcher] are made of. None of them has up to three rooms….we don’t pay for electricity even if it comes from the national grid. …. There is a small mosque and a K & S Church but majority commute to the outside to worship. Take it from me we are unique.

The situations and remarks are the same at Mushin, Itire, Ajegunle, Okokomaiko and Ilaje. They are very unique: They lack basic facilities and amenities: pipe borne water, electricity, schools, maternity centres, modern markets etc. Electricity is illegally tapped by three or four individuals from within the slum for the benefit of others. Nobody pays electricity bill in any of the slums. Because the demand for power is minimal, a 15KVA generator is jointly used by three or more families but may be under different shelters. By and large, they are unrestrictedly connected to radio, television and Global System of Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) of all networks in the country – glo, MTN, Etisalat, airtel, visa phone and others.

Government Policies and Programmes

There have been slums as part of lives in the metropolis as in other urbanized cities and towns of the world (Agbola, 2006c; de Sherbiniin, Rahman, Barbieri, Fotso, and Zhu, 2009; Olokesusi, 2011; Chandramoulis, 2003; Omole and Owoeye, 2011). In Nigeria and particularly
in Lagos, the policies and programmes of Unity Party of Nigeria of Lagos State in the
government of Lateef Jakande have been the most realistic that ever come to fruition. Since
then, there have been some ineffective attempts by the state government.

Lagos State Urban renewal Authority (LASURA) a parastatal under the Ministry of
Physical Planning and Urban Development came into existence 1991 by virtue of Lagos State
Edict No. 7 of 1991. It was restructured from Lagos State Urban Renewal Board to reposition
it in 2005 vide gazette no. 25 volume 38 of 14th October, 2005 with a General Manager. The
responsibilities of the Authority include:

a. Monitoring and identifying areas qualified for upgrading and advising the State
Government on redevelopment or renewal programmes accordingly.

b. Preparing and implementing approved state urban upgrading and urban redevelopment
projects.

c. Holding, administering and maintaining government acquired properties within
redevelopment or renewal project areas.

The Authority also has as it functions:

- Implementation of the State policies on Urban Renewal.
- Identification and study of Areas for Urban Renewal.
- Drawing up Schemes for Renewal Programme
- Monitoring, Co-ordination and implementation of Renewal Activities and Interventions

From these, it drew its objectives to include:

- Facilitating the process of improving the living Conditions of People.
- Upgrading of Infrastructural facilities in blighted areas.
- Empowerment of the communities to create a sustainable environment.
- Provision of decent and affordable housing for the slum dwellers.

The Urban Renewal Authority (LASURA) is made up of massive structure (including General
Manager’s Office, Authority Secretary/ Finance & Administration, Legal and Estate Services
Department. (L & ES), Architectural and Engineering Department(A & E), Community
Relations and External Intervention Department, Research, Statistics and Enforcement
Department, Physical Planning Department, Accounts Department, Press and Public Relations
Unit, Audit Unit, Budget Unit and Information and Telecommunication Technology Unit)
approved to carry out the functions of the Authority and implement the policies of the
Government on urban renewal matters.

The Authority has as its vision to bequeathing an enduring modern environment at all
times......Making life better. The mission is to facilitate the process of improving the living
conditions in blighted areas through upgrading and empowerment of the communities thereby
creating a sustainable environment.

But these have not been realised in any part of the Metropolis. The residents at the
slums are yet to come to terms with the government policies and programmes of urban renewal
and the objective of LASURA. To the slum dwellers, it is probable just on paper and mere
propagandas.

**Peculiarity of the slums**

The slums are increasing in number, area extent and population of the residents. The
increase in the number of residents on each slum though kept on increasing, the extent and the
number of shelters are not correspondingly physical increasing. These invariably lead to
overcrowding that is peculiar to all of the slums and undue pressure on all that they live on.
These facilitate spread of diseases and epidemics any times there are any. Female adults (25%)
and children (16%), that is, 41% account for the largest proportion of the residents and thus
venerable to diseases and epidemics. There has not been consistent policies and programmes
to address the challenges of slums for sustainable environment. Directly and inadvertently,
though major sources of manpower they influencing lives in the Metropolis; they are major urban drawback; and huge hurdle in the development of the Metropolis.

**Strategies to Reduce and Transform the Slums**

Many strategies have been popular in literature to deal with slums around the globe and in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos. These include slum removal, relocation, upgrading, public housing and planning with city-wide infrastructure and others. Table 2 accentuate on the popular opinion of dealing with the slums of today. A respondent picked more than one choice. Slum relocation had 90%, planning with city-wide infrastructure had 88.80% and establishment of public housing programme caught the attention of 70.40%. But prevention of slums from coming into existence, and slum removal each attracted 100%, that is all the respondents, 500, would most prefer complete removal of the existing slums and prevention of additional slums coming up. See Table 2.

**Table 2: Strategies to Reduce and Transform Slums**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slum Removal</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slum Relocation</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>90.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slum Upgrading</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>60.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning with City-wide Infrastructure</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>88.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Housing Programme</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>70.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of starting &amp; Growing</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Specified)</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>81.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: It may be combination of a number of these variables.

**Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation**

The slums in Lagos, like most others around the globe, are compact settlement with collections of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate sanitary and potable water facilities in unhygienic conditions. Welfare services are generally poor. Their growths have been largely unplanned and haphazard. This is probably explained by the fact that about one-fifth of the total Metropolitan population lives in the slums and squalor chanties. Furthermore, the rapid urbanization in conjunction with industrialization and lack of infrastructural and employment opportunities in rural areas have led to mass rural-urban migration that has resulted in the growth of the slums. This is compounded by the shortage of developed land and high prices of land beyond the reach of the urban poor for housing. All of the slums and squatters are made of unconventional materials such as bamboo, straw, low quality wood and tin and plastic sheets. Population density ranges from 450 to 4,210 per hectare and a minimum of five people share a room (of not more than 12 x 12ft), which is highly congested and unhealthy. This poor housing and lifestyle cause a number of problems for the environment of the city generally: They are major urban drawback and a huge hurdle in the development of the Metropolis in particular and the region in general. In addition, each slum problems are manifold: living conditions are deplorable, crime rate is high, sanitation is poor, child mortality is high, education levels are low and diseases are rampant. But the situation has to be tackled and the issues have to be faced.

There must be concerted efforts of Urban Physical Planning Division of the Metropolis, environmentalists, and governments at all levels, and the slum dwellers to challenge the slums:
There must be guided land development at every part of the cities and towns such that the growth of additional slums will be avoided;

NEMA, SEMA and LEMA may have to keep eyes on the existing slums to prevent disasters and risks and also to mitigate in case of any emergencies/disasters;

With the assistance and support of the central government, the slums may be cleared and re-planned with adequate urban infrastructure such as potable water, electricity, schools, maternity homes, etc.;

Regardless of the issues of land ownership and land tenure system, the slum dwellers may be assisted by the Metropolitan, State and Federal governments to finance affordable housing units;

Banks and financial institutions may be encouraged to give soft loans to slum dwellers to provide themselves with adequate housing units, the loan should be guaranteed by either the Federal or the State government;

There must be enormous education on environmental sanitation and personal hygiene for the residents of the slums;

Though seemingly odd, it may be desirable for entrants/migrants into the Metropolis to be identified with assured residents and jobs. This will probably largely control influx of miscreants and jobless into the city and consequently prevent the growth and development of slums; and

In all ramifications, the central and state governments may have to utterly discourage rural urban migration into the Metropolis in particular and the entire cities and towns of the country.

However, the challenges of slums (and squatters) should be beyond political motives. It requires social and cultural integration which should be more urgently addressed rather than investing funds and scares resources sporadically to remove and or renew blindly the areas occupied by the slums. Slum dwellers need to be made aware and educated of the need for improvement in the living conditions, and they must readily involve themselves with every phase of any renewal and rehabilitation wherever and whenever. Practical and innovative approaches need to be put into practice to integrate slums within the cities. Government political wills, policies and programmes must be drastic and consistent to pay special and inclusive attention to slums; and make concerted attempts to address this problem proactively and continually.

References


Davis, Mike (2006). In the World’s Slums, the Worst of Poverty and Environmental Degradation Collide, Orion Magazine, Orion Online (October 30).


Peculiarity of Slums in Lagos Metropolis and Sustainable Environment


