

*Review*

# Quality of housing, urbanization, and environmental degeneration in Nigeria

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This paper examines quality of housing in Nigeria cities and the impacts of urbanization on environmental degeneration of urban built environment. The paper identifies the problems that have aided the degeneration to: Inadequate basic infrastructural amenities, substandard housing, overcrowding, poor ventilation in homes and work places, and noncompliance with building bye-laws and regulations. In order to examine the above mentioned problems, the study included secondary data. The secondary data involved available census data, official documents and other relevant secondary data were obtained from existing literature, on books and journals. The paper finds that the poor housing quality has serious adverse effects on environment and the health of city residents. Strategies for improving the built environment for sustainable living are suggested. The paper concluded that it is imperative to check and prevent further decay for harmonious living and sustainable developments.

**Key words:** Urbanization, environmental, degeneration, substandard, housing, housing quality, overcrowding.

## INTRODUCTION

The built environment in many developing countries particularly Nigeria is fast degenerating. The factors responsible for this can be attributed to rapid urbanization, rural-urban migration, and decades of steady economic downturn, decay of urban infrastructure and poor housing quality (World Bank, 2005).

Osude and Dimuna (2005) noted that the urbanization process in many developing countries particularly Nigeria, has not been accompanied with a corresponding supply of adequate houses, basic amenities and infrastructures.

These have created demand on housing stocks leading to high rents, overcrowding and development of slums settlements (Onibokun, 1972; Olotuah, 2005) and also have serious impact on the built environment and serious consequences on health of city residents. Another problem of the Nigerian urban built environment is non-compliance with building bye-laws and regulations. The major areas of default are in the area of zoning, setbacks, building along utility lines and non-adherence to provision of adequate ventilation (Osude and Dimuna, 2005).

## Urbanization in Nigeria

The phenomenon of urbanization is a consequence of population increase and migration from rural to urban areas and growth-centres. The urban growth rate in Nigeria today is put at 5.8% per annum (Draft NUDP, 2004). Rural economy is principally agrarian. But, under conditions of increasing population and diminishing rural resources, some contingent of rural population migrates to urban areas for helpful job security, higher education, higher income, better health and longer life. The result usually is disappointed and disillusion as the poor in some cities have a better life than those in rural areas. Old settlements are congested and crowded, new formations emerge without preliminary design and planning, and without preliminary design and planning, and without infrastructure.

The problem of uncontrolled urbanization in Nigeria is already with us in all our cities. The Draft National Urban Development Policy (NUDP, 2004) notes that, Nigeria towns are growing without adequate planning. Millions of

Nigerians live in sub-standard and sub-human environment, plagued by slum, squalor and grossly inadequate social amenities. The result is manifested in growing overcrowding in homes and increasing pressure on infrastructural facilities and rapid deteriorating environment.

In Europe, urbanization brought increased wealth and economic earnings, higher education, lower fertility, better health, longer life and more amenities. But in Africa, and indeed, in Nigeria, the opposite is the case. The Executive Director of African Population and Health Research Centre, Nairobi, observes that in African States, research has shown that urbanization is attended by reduction in earnings, and other social indicators, adding that rural communities have better social and economic indicators than those in urban slums.

### ***Urbanization and urban growth***

Nigeria has been experiencing a rapid rate of urbanization. In 1952, 10% of the population lived in urban centres with a population of 20,000 people and above. This increased to 20 and 38% in 1970 and 1993 respectively. By the year 2010, it is estimated that 60% of the population will live in cities. The growth in the size of cities has been equally rapid, in 1960; Lagos and Ibadan were the only two cities with more than 500,000 people. The number increased to 9 by 1980, and 14 by 1990. This is expected to rise substantially by 2010 (UNCSD, 1997, Agenda 21 - Nigeria).

A feature of urban environments, especially in Africa is the influx of rural dwellers into the urban areas in search of jobs. These jobs are sometimes unavailable and large segments of the unemployed in this migrant group are usually without a sustainable means of livelihood and may eventually be classified among the urban poor, thereby making up a part of the estimated 70% of the urban population that live in unplanned squatter settlements with no basic infrastructural services in cities like Lagos (NHCS, 1998).

### ***Population size and growth rate***

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the tenth in the world. These include the major demographic features as obtained from two major sources, viz.: the 1991 census and the PRB's World Population Data Sheet.

According to the final figures of the 1991 census, the population of Nigeria, at the time, was 88.92 million. Projection of the population, using a 3.0% growth rate, shows that the population of Nigeria could be about 106 million in 1999. The Population Reference Bureau estimated total population of the country in 1999 to be about 113.8 million.

Population growth rate is influenced by the interplay of the three main demographic processes of fertility,

mortality and migration. This population increase directly bears on urbanization, requiring a whole range of urban services and infrastructure, together with job creation for the population able and willing to work.

### **Housing quality in Nigeria**

The definition of housing quality embraces many factors which include the physical condition of the building and other facilities and services that make living in a particular area conducive. The quality of housing within any neighbourhood should be such that satisfies minimum health standards and good living standard, but should also be affordable to all categories of households (Okewole and Aribigbola, 2006).

### ***Housing***

Housing is however an issue that touches on the life of individuals as well as that of the nation; a great importance is therefore ascribed to the role it plays in engendering human comfort by both nature and society. This is why Eldredge (1967) concludes that housing represents a bundle of goods and services which facilitate and enhance good living; and a key to neighbourhood quality and preservation. Likewise, Agbola (1998) notes that housing is a combination of characteristics which provide a unique home within any neighbourhood; it is an array of economic, social and psychological phenomena. In other words, housing could be seen as a multidimensional package of goods and services extending beyond shelter itself.

### ***Indicators for evaluating housing quality***

The need to appreciate the relevance of a habitable (qualitative) housing therefore, requires an understanding of the concept of „quality “which according to Onion, cited in (Afon, 2000), “is a mental or moral attribute of thing which can be used when describing the nature, condition or property of that particular thing”. McCray, cited in (Jiboye, 2004), noted that getting a definition of quality depends not only on the user and his or her desires, but also on the product being considered.

In essence, quality is a product of subjective judgment which arises from the overall perception which the individual holds towards what is seen as the significant elements at a particular point in time (Anantharajan, 1983; Olayiwola et al., 2006). In assessing the quality or suitability of housing, qualitative studies have identified some criteria as relevant indicators for quality evaluation in residential development. Among such is Ebong (1983) who acknowledged aesthetics, ornamentation, sanitation, drainage, age of building, access to basic housing

facilities, burglary, spatial adequacy, noise level within neighbourhood, sewage and waste disposal, air pollution and ease of movement among others, as relevant quality determinants in housing. However, Hanmer et al. (2000) conclude that qualitative housing involves the provision of infrastructural services which could bring about sustainable growth and development through improved environmental conditions and improved livelihood. In determining the quality of residential development, Neilson (2004) stipulates five basic criteria which provide that housing must be in compliance with tolerable standard, free from serious disrepair, energy efficient, provided with modern facilities and services, and that it must be healthy, safe and secure.

These indicators consist of variables such as; access to basic housing and community facilities, the quality of infrastructural amenities, spatial adequacy and quality of design, fixtures and fittings, building layout and landscaping, noise and pollution control as well as security. There are however indications from these various studies that a single variable may not be sufficient to assess the qualitative nature of residential development; therefore, housing acceptability and qualitative assessment should also take into account type of constructions, materials used, services, spatial arrangement and facilities within dwellings, function and aesthetics, among others (Olu-Sule and Gur, noted in Jiboye, 2004).

### **Environmental degeneration**

The unwise use of the natural environment due to ignorance, poverty, overpopulation and urbanization amongst others has led to the degeneration of the environment. The charges (degeneration) occur as Nigerians attempt to adjust their seemingly endless wants and desires for food, shelter, recreation, infrastructural facilities, and so on (NEST, 1992). These land use activities contribute to the overall development of the country but they equally produce negative impact on the environment. These negative impacts are referred to as environmental degeneration which implies "abuse of the environment" due to improper resources management.

### **Causes of environmental degeneration**

The causes of these impacts includes; urbanization, overpopulation, poverty and all kinds of pollution. These impacts have both negative and positive effects on the natural environment. It is the negative impacts of man's interaction with the environment that are discussed as follows.

i. Urbanization: Environmental conditions in cities have gradually deteriorated due to the rapid growth of the cities and the attendance inability of social services and

infrastructures to keep pace with the rate of growth. Inadequate storm drains, dumping of refuse in drainage lines and construction of houses close to and even on the natural water channels have been shown to be responsible in that order for the increasing cases of flood in the urban centres. Environment problems associated with the increasing growth of urban slums including overcrowding in squalid housing conditions, poor quality or unavailability of basic infrastructures and social services, such as water and sewage facilities and even lack of access routes (NEST, 1992).

ii. Overpopulation: Population is a major factor in all environmental-related issues. Overpopulation causes stress on the environment. There are evidences everywhere of rapid decline in environmental quality and human living conditions occasioned by rapid increase in human numbers.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (1988) National Policy on population for development also made the observation that "the present high rate of our population growth is already contributing substantially to the degradation of the ecology of the country.

iii. Poverty: There is an inextricable link between poverty and environmental degeneration. Poverty can be the cause or the effect of environmental degeneration. Either way, good quality environments cannot be achieved in the face of glaring poverty.

### **Characteristic of environmental degeneration**

Ahianba et al. (2005) analyse the characteristics of environmental degeneration as follows: Inadequate basic infrastructural amenities, substandard housing, overcrowding, poor ventilation in homes and work places, and non-compliance with building bye-laws and regulations.

i) Inadequate basic infrastructural amenities: Most of our urban centres lack essential basic amenities such as pipe borne water, electricity, and road network. Where they are provided, these facilities are insufficient or do not function due to neglect by relevant authorities.

Waste disposal is also a major problem in our urban centres, especially in most slum areas and squatter settlements. There are no planned disposal sites for refuse with a resultant indiscriminate refuse disposal on any available sites.

ii) Substandard housing: Shelter which connotes housing has a fundamental purpose of protecting man, his activities and his possessions from humans, animals and other enemies and from the supernatural powers that plague man. Osuide (2004) suggests that: "Having a safe place to live in is one of the fundamental elements of human dignity and this enhances human development".

Substandard housing in urban centres is a major problem of our cities. The problems resulted from the fact that they were never planned by experts but sprang from

villages.

iii) Overcrowding: Another noticeable characteristic of our urban centres is overcrowding; arising from over population and insufficient accommodation. Overcrowding is a major problem of our built environment especially in slums and squalid environment

iv) Poor ventilation in buildings: In some Nigerian homes and offices, ventilation is not included while planning for such buildings but this is the most vital aspect of construction that makes for comfortable living. Izomoh (2005) cited that most residential buildings have been designed and constructed with little or no consideration for the thermal comfort through the process of cross-ventilation.

v) Non-compliance with building Bye-laws and regulations: The consequence of non-compliance with building bye-laws and regulations are already manifesting and are being felt in our urban centres.

## URBANIZATION AND HOUSING QUALITY

As a result of urbanization and lack of economic opportunities in rural areas, many people move to the cities. They move to the cities that are already dealing with issues of overcrowding, infrastructure and high cost of living. This forces them to seek shelter in slums. United Nation Habitat in 2006 found that 90% of slum residents are in the developing countries with struggling economies.

In addition, cities were not mean to handle millions of people streaming in when designed. This impact the availability and affordability of housing, forcing millions to live in substandard dwellings.

### Effect of urbanization on housing quality

The rapid increase in the population of the urban centres has resulted in an increase in the cost of living, because of higher demand on urban commodities that are getting shorter in supply by the day. Thus there is a dearth and high cost of urban land, and high cost of housing, which is often in short supply and out of the economic reach of the majority of the urban households who incidentally fall into the low-income category. The greater percentage of the poor in the urban area lives in the slum area of the city. This is mainly because substandard accommodation there is very cheap and the neighbourhoods are in close proximity to their work places.

Substandard housing is the type of housing that does not meet the standards for living by people. These standards are usually set by governments and deal with how safe the dwelling is for people to live. For example, there may not be appropriate heating, plumbing, electricity or proper sanitation. Often substandard housing is deteriorated housing that has not been repaired or

temporary housing that does not meet building codes.

Unfortunately, the number of people living in the slums or substandard housing is increasing. Crime rates are also high in this area, since there is very little light at night and police protection.

Substandard housing is a serious issue. It can be a place where diseases spread quickly because of lack of sanitation and garbage disposal problems. Lack of clean water for washing and drinking can also cause diseases.

## HOUSING QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The quality of the environment in most urban centres in Nigeria is deplorable. This is not so much dependent on the material characteristics of the buildings (Mabogunje, 1980) but on their organization as spatial units. The slow process of urban planning and zoning, in the face of rapid urbanisation in most urban centres, has resulted in poor layout of buildings with inadequate roads between them and inadequate drainage and provision for refuse evacuation. Thus there is a high incidence of pollution (water, solid waste, air and noise) and inadequacy of open spaces for other land uses.

### Impact of housing quality on the environmental degeneration

Studies have shown the deplorable conditions of urban housing in Nigeria (Onibokun, 1972; Wahab et al., 1990; Olotuah, 2005; Jagun, 2003) sites that 75% of the dwelling units in Nigeria's urban centres are substandard and the dwellings are sited in slums. These results from combined effects of natural ageing of the buildings, lack of maintenance and neglect, wrong use of the buildings, poor sanitation in the disposal of sewage and solid waste, wrong development of land, and increasing deterioration of the natural landscape.

## CASE STUDY 1: OSHOGBO

Oshogbo is situated on latitude 7.7 and longitude 4.5E of Greenwich Meridian. It was founded in the late 18th century and originated as a traditional as well as cultural town which derives its name from the proclamation by the goddess of Osun River.

The town is known for her very rich arts and cultural heritage. Following the creation of Osun State in 1991, Oshogbo assumed the status of a State capital, having two local governments which are Oshogbo and Olorunda (Jiboye, 2009). Its population, based on 1991 census was 189,733 and the total land area was about 2,875 km<sup>2</sup> before it became the State capital (Akanji, 1994; Akinola, 1998).

Over the years, Oshogbo has witnessed tremendous

growth both spatially and in population. The establishment of a railway station is perhaps the most important single factor in the growth of Oshogbo. Apart from the railway, postal and telecommunication, NEPA regional station, road network and some small as well as large-scale business exist. Oshogbo thus became a major trading and distribution centre for people within and outside its immediate environment.

In recent times, the location of Oshogbo as a state capital coupled with other factors mentioned earlier has led to the influx of people from other towns and villages. Oshogbo exhibits both traditional as well as modern characteristics (Adenaike, 1991; Egunjobi, 1995). Its current population is estimated to about 845,000 (Wikipedia, 2010).

### **Physical characteristics of Oshogbo**

Oshogbo has a considerable variation in its physical pattern and growth. The Oba's palace and the traditional market (Oja Oba) acts as a central focus (Ojo, 1966). This is surrounded by residential districts which form the core of the city. This area comprises of buildings and development dated back to the pre-colonial period. Most of the buildings and infrastructure in the interior part of Oshogbo are already very old and in need of rehabilitation.

Next to the core area is the intermediate zone. This zone is made up of buildings and development which existed from between 1935 and 1960. Most of the dwellings here are of the contemporary types. This zone is followed by the periphery and the newly developed area. The houses here are of better quality than those of other zones.

It is however noted that development in Oshogbo is noticed as one moves from the interior towards the outskirts while most of the business districts are interwoven with residential districts (Egunjobi, 1995).

### **Effect of urbanization on housing quality in Oshogbo**

Despite the provision and availability of some basic infrastructures like water, electricity, telecommunication and road networks in Oshogbo, the level and condition of these facilities are still very inadequate as a result of the rapid rate of urbanization and population growth witnessed in the town in recent times.

The quality of housing amenities and infrastructures is generally poor and falls below the expected standard.

### **Possible solution to poor housing quality in Oshogbo**

Significantly, adequate housing contributes not only to national development but also determines the health, security, sanitation and socio-cultural and physical

wellbeing of the individual, the community and the nation at large.

## **CASE STUDY 2: AKURE**

### **The study area**

Akure is a traditional Nigeria city and like other traditional Yoruba towns in the country, it existed long before the advent of British colonial rule. The city is located within Ondo State in the South Western part of Nigeria. It lies approximately on latitude 70. 2 North of the Equator and longitude 50. 2 East of the Greenwich Meridian. Akure is a medium-sized urban centre and became the provincial headquarter of Ondo province in 1939. It also became the capital city of Ondo State and a Local Government headquarters in 1976.

Akure is located approximately 700 km South West of Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria. The population of the city grew from 144,544 in 1987 to 148,880 in 1988 and 153,347 in 1989 to 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 2006 was 353,211 (NPC, 2006). At present the city is estimated to have over 387,087 people (Wikipedia).

### **Characteristics of the buildings in Akure**

There are three neighbourhoods in the core area of Akure, namely Erekesan-Erekefa (A), Idiagba-ljemikin (B), and Obanla (C). Most buildings in these neighbourhoods are in very poor state, as less than 5% of them are in sound conditions (Olotuah, 2000b). The buildings require one form of repairs or the other to make them physically sound (Table 1).

The placement and layout of the buildings in the neighbourhoods are amorphous and disorganized. The dominant house type in the areas is the rooming house built on one or two stories. In most of the buildings the few bathrooms and toilets are located completely outside, often times at the back of the buildings. The buildings are characterized by overcrowding, with high proportions of people living in single rooms. Olotuah (2005) notes that the average number of rooms occupied by a household in Akure, the capital city of Ondo state, Nigeria is 1.29 while the average room occupancy (number of persons per room) is 4.42. The United Nations Standard for Nigeria for room occupancy is 2.20; the World Health Organization (WHO, 1990) stipulates between 1.8 and 3.1, while the Nigerian Government prescribed standard is 2.0 per room (Okoko, 2001).

### **Urbanisation and housing quality in Akure**

The rate of urbanisation in Akure outpaces the rate of

**Table 1.** State of repair of buildings in the three inner-city neighborhoods of Akure.

State	Erekesan-Erekefa (A)	Idiagba-Ijemikin (B)	Obanla (C)
Sound	0.0	5.0	5.0
Requires minor repairs	74.0	35.0	55.0
Requires major repairs	26.0	60.0	40.0
Dilapidated	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Olotuah, 2000b.

economic development. Despite the enormous amount of money proposed for urban investment in the National Development Plan very limited investment is made in her infrastructure (Olotua, 2005). An increasing shortage of urban services and infrastructure characterize Akure town, and these are only accessible to a diminishing share of the population. The existing urban services are overstrained which often times lead to total collapse. A large proportion of the population does not have reasonable access to safe and ample water supply, and neither do they have the means for hygienic waste disposal (Olotuah, 2000). As argued elsewhere (Olotuah, 2002), the demand for urban services in Akure has grown over the years but the overall quality and coverage of public services have deteriorated.

### INTERVENTION IN HOUSING QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGENERATION

Environmental problems such as urbanization, over-population, poor housing quality and pollution become important paradigms in Nigeria in the last three decades. Similarly, Government, Non-governmental Organization, corporate bodies and individual's interests in reducing, stemming and mitigating the consequences of environmental degeneration is very recent. It was not until December 1988 that the federal Government passed the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) Decree 58 setting up FEPA to work out rules governing the handling of Nigerian's environment.

FEPA as an institution or agency is foreign to the people. It is not indigenous. The concept or idea did not evolve from the people's tradition or way of life. FEPA is far from the people and the environment. For FEPA to succeed, certain basic ideas about environmental management have to be conceptualized. Before the dawn of modernization, our people were tied intricately to their environment. They have the technology of utilizing the resources within the environment, and protecting same from despoliation. In this regard the concept of FEPA should be community based. The frame work which should be community based will be organize at the following levels: Ward and the local government level.

### The community participation approach

Hamdi (1995) describes community participation as "the process by which professional, families, community groups, government officials and others get together to work something out, preferably in a formal or informal partnership"

It is increasingly being recognized that the top-down approach to planning which assumes that communities do not know their infrastructural needs, has been the reason for the failure of many initiatives. The community participation approach believes that communities know their need and should be consulted and carried along in the decision-making process.

### Nigeria government's intervention

Improvement in urban housing is of utmost importance in urban development. Housing is in short supply and therefore a comprehensive review of the housing needs of the urban areas is imperative. More importantly the housing needs of the low-income earners, who constitute the vast majority of urban dwellers, have to be clearly discerned to engender adequate planning for them. In this regard the public sector has to clearly define its role, which indeed should be to facilitate an enduring environment for the private sector. A number of problems militate against the participation of the private sector in housing provision (Olotuah, 2005) and the public sector is favourably positioned to improve them.

### Public housing delivery in Nigeria

The intervention of the public sector in the provision of low-cost houses, especially for low-income earners, is desirable and should be pursued with vigour. The housing programmes should be based on genuine local participation in order to ensure sustainability. This is because local communities are in the best position to identify their needs, and order their priorities.

Local communities have valuable experience, a special understanding of their environment, their local building resources and the ways of making the best uses of them.

Thus housing that will be properly rooted in the cultural, climatic, socio-economic circumstances of the people can only emanate from within the communities.

### ***Extensive urban renewal programmes***

Most urban centres require extensive urban renewal programmes. The aim is to improve the environment in which the houses are situated and the programmes entail the redevelopment, rehabilitation or renovation of buildings. Because the residents of the neighbourhoods in the core areas of the city are culturally attached to the land it is impracticable to embark on total clearance and resettlement programmes. Slum upgrading and improvement should therefore be aimed at.

### ***The poverty alleviation programmes***

Poor housing is intricately linked with poverty and it is indeed informed by it, thus government has a definite role to play in addressing the high unequal distribution of wealth in the country. The poverty alleviation programmes of government should be stepped up to reduce unemployment rate in the country.

## **STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

It has been established that our urban environments are degenerating. Therefore, governments at various levels must step in and "help" the citizens. Also, international agencies must assist in the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development. These tools should be used effectively to ensure a healthier urban development for sustainable human development. To achieve this process we must do the following.

### **Creation of aesthetics value and beautification of urban environment**

Architecture of the environment can satisfy some of the psychological needs of the people in a community. Visual pleasures relax a troublesome heart and aids longevity. The psychological impact of a pleasant surrounding is of considerable help in fostering a spirit of community belonging, civic pride, integration and enjoyment. Good landscaping is a powerful tool to achieve a pleasant environment. Landscaping contributes to visual satisfaction, which has a profound effect on the psychological nature of man.

Therefore, developments should attempt to provide for aesthetics and beautification especially through the creation of open spaces of a design quality to accompany such development. Beautiful environment and community can be created only through a deliberate search for

beauty, backed by a lively appreciation of the visual world by the people.

### **Development of urban and rural settlements**

We must ensure that all our urban and rural settlements are developed in an orderly fashion to achieve goals and objectives of good planning. Therefore, the three tiers of government should take urgent steps to stem the degradation of urban settlement caused through lack of adequate planning (Ahianb and Dimuna, 2005).

### **Stimulation of an effective urban and rural development programme**

Motivation of effective urban and rural development programme by the provision of basic amenities, services and infrastructural facilities would encourage development in the rural areas and consequently, serve as growth poles and springboards for the redistribution of population and traffic patterns for balanced development.

### **Efforts of international agencies**

Continuation of efforts of international agencies by being supportive of their programmes aimed at improving our environment. Presently in Nigeria, the World Bank has been involved in some urban renewal projects to ensure better environment; through UNDP- Assisted projects. These UNDP-Assisted projects have helped to deliver better quality and cost-effective basic services to urban residents especially the poor. Most of these projects were a response to rapid and unplanned urban growth, often on environmentally vulnerable land with poor infrastructure. It is necessary that these efforts should be supported by the various tiers of government, that is, federal, states and local governments for good housing development.

It is imperative that the international agencies should be directly involved in their own initiated projects to achieve better results. This is important, because funds previously donated by these international agencies were diverted; while the donors' intentions were ignored and neglected. A typical example is the ADP sponsored Urban Water Projects, which has been abandoned in some states in Nigeria and ignored and neglected to date by successive administrations.

### **Enlightenment and education of people on sanitation and environmental matters**

The provision of facilities required for achieving good disposal systems are measures that favour preventive environmental decay. The mass distribution of refuse bins by Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is

a welcome development. Also, the availability of incinerators, septic tanks and soak away pits and the use of water closets as contained in the Environmental Sanitation Programme instituted by the Federal Government in 1984 are good measures taken which is helping tremendously to improve housing quality.

The Waste to Wealth (Recycling) programme of the Lagos State Governments is very commendable. Other state governments and especially Local Government Authorities in the country must join in eradicating from our markets heaps of refuse which litter the environment.

### Standards for housing are strictly adhered to

Standards for housing, which prescribes minimum conditions under which a building, or part of it, may be lawfully occupied as a dwelling are strictly adhered to. Therefore, the need to respect laws regulating zoning, setbacks and adequate ventilation is very vital. Cross-ventilation which is one of the design considerations for buildings helps to reduce the high interior temperature, achieve thermal comfort in buildings, and achieve a state of dryness in the rooms.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper discusses the incidence of poor housing quality in Nigeria and the negative effects emanating from it. It notes the occurrence of rapid rate of urbanisation occurring in the country, the consequences of which have been severely degenerated urban environment. It reports the poor housing conditions in the urban cities of Nigeria especially at the core areas of Akure and Oshogbo the capital city of Ondo and Osun state respectively.

This paper also proffers recommendations to improve them and reduce environmental degeneration. It is my belief that if these recommendations are implemented that our cities will grow in an environmentally harmonious way. Further unplanned growth and decay would be checked and prevented. These measures would prevent poor housing quality, save our built environment and improve the life expectancy of the average Nigerian.

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