



Contents lists available at

**Journal of Environmental Management and Safety**

Journal homepage: [www.cepajournal.com](http://www.cepajournal.com)



## **Towards The Improvement of the Existing Housing Situation in Achara Layout Enugu, Nigeria.**

**AKWU, Kingsley Chidozie**

*Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Agbani – Enugu.*

*Email: [akwu.kingsley@esut.edu.ng](mailto:akwu.kingsley@esut.edu.ng). Phone No: +234 703 306 228 8*

**KANU, Ejikeme Johnson**

*Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus.*

*E-mail: [ejikeme.kanu@unn.edu.ng](mailto:ejikeme.kanu@unn.edu.ng). Phone: + 234 806 398 417 7*

### **ARTICLE INFO**

#### **Article history**

Received 2 March 2014

Received in revised form 30th March 2014

Accepted 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Available online 16th April, 2014

#### **Keywords:**

*Improvement and Existing Housing Situation.*

### **ABSTRACT**

*Nigerian housing challenges are apparent and show a marked temporal variability in complexity and enormity. In most urban areas, the issue is not restricted to quantity but to the quality of existing stock. The same issue is applicable to Achara layout. Thus, the study is set towards the improvement of the existing housing situation in Achara Layout Enugu, Nigeria. The major research instruments used in this study are field observation and questionnaire. Based on convenience a sample of 120 was chosen. The systematic sampling technique was used to demarcate the area into 10 parts, and 12 blocks were chosen from every 30 blocks. A total of 120 questionnaires were therefore administered on a simple random basis with only 100 properly filled and returned. Findings showed a high occupancy ratio, high cost of rental accommodation, and the emergence of derelict and blighted urbanscape in Achara Layout. Based on findings, it is therefore recommended that, community sensitization, consumer feedback mechanism, reintroduction of sanitary inspectors among others be employed to help correct the ills in the area.*

*Copyright@ 2014 cepa*

## INTRODUCTION

Universally, housing is acknowledged as man's most basic need after food and clothing. In all ramifications it is more than mere shelter as it comprises not just the structure but other utilities, facilities and services which contribute to make housing functional. It includes access to physical infrastructure such as roads, electricity, telecommunication, security, and water, as well as organization, collection, and disposal of solid wastes (Wahab, 2002). It also includes much of the social infrastructure that enhances livability indices in and around individual and group of homes, such as education, health, shops, open spaces and employment.

According to Ezenagu (2000) it is an evolutionary and participatory process involving complex system of interaction between institutions, professionals, artisans and residents. As a process, housing involves the provision of a large number of residential buildings on a permanent basis with adequate physical infrastructure and social services in planned, decent, safe and sanitary neighbourhoods to meet the basic and special needs of a population (NHP, 2004).

Demand for housing is derived from household willingness to pay. The level of household income, its distribution and the prices of available housing and other goods and services are important influences on decisions about how much to spend on housing (Aluko, 2003). Similarly, housing entails a process of building our communities so that we can live comfortably by providing lasting and secure livelihoods which minimize resource depletion, environmental degradation, cultural disruptions and social instability (Jiboye, 2009).

In recent and near recent times lots of studies on housing issues abound (Aluko, 2003; Jaakkola, Hwang, and Jaakkola, 2005;

Adedeji and Owoeye, 2008; Jiboye, 2004 and 2009; Agbo, Envuladi, Adah, and Zoakah, 2012; and Parlasca, 2013). Jaakkola, Hwang, and Jaakkola, (2005) revealed that the presence of mould in building can pose health risk to babies, young children and the elderly people as well as those with skin diseases and people undergoing chemotherapy of which the most susceptible are children. Agbo *et. al.*, (2012) established that some health disorder such as typhoid and paratyphoid fever, diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, hookworm, ascariasis, shistosomiasis, genitor-urinary tract infections and many other intestinal and parasitic infections can be contracted through poor toilet facilities which may be a breeding ground for harmful bacteria, viruses and parasites.

Huge housing deficit is a common characteristic of virtually all urban areas in the world today particularly those in developing countries. Given the threat posed by urbanization and its adverse effects on the economy particularly on housing sector, the United Nations declare housing as a fundamental human right in 1971. In Nigeria, the supply of new housing has not been able to match the demand. In fact, the present economic depression couple with escalating cost of construction is further restricting the supply of both public and private sector's housing (Nubi, 2002).

Nigerian housing challenges are apparent and show a marked temporal variability in complexity and enormity. In most urban areas, the issue is not restricted to quantity but to the quality of existing stock. The same is applicable to Achara Layout. The consequences of this development are a manifestation of high occupancy ratio, high cost of rental accommodation, and the emergence of derelict and blighted urbanscape which were observed in Achara Layout during preliminary investigation. Thus the study is set towards the

improvement of the existing housing situation in Achara Layout Enugu, Nigeria. Project of this nature when completed would be beneficial to the residents of this area as the area's aerial picture and face lift would have been secured.

Achara Layout is a medium density area located in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. It is bounded by the Police School and Christ Church, Enugu in the North; New Era Layout at the South, Uwani to the East and Idaw River to the West. The area has an undulating topography, a soil type of course aggregate and vegetation covered by trees, plants and shrubs. The area has an annual rainfall of 15mm. It is a residential neighbourhood with other land uses such as commercial, institutional and open spaces.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study which is an extract of the work investigated in 2014, relied on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data were obtained to aid the researcher with theoretical background of the subject matter while primary data were those obtained in the field. The major research instruments used in this study are field observation and questionnaire. Based on convenience a sample of 120 was chosen not considering the population of the entire Achara Layout. The systematic sampling technique was used to demarcate the area into 10 parts, and 12 blocks were chosen from every 30 blocks. These streets fall within them: Obioma, Ochi, Osumenyi, Umunaugwu, Agu, Umualor, Akpo, Umuaniede, Ugwuaji, and Ofoma. In line with the above, a total of 120 questionnaires were administered on a simple random basis with only 100 properly filled and returned.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Findings showed a high occupancy ratio, high cost of rental accommodation, and the

emergence of derelict and blighted urbanscape in Achara Layout. Based on the data presented as obtained from field observation, table 1 was on the housing types in the area, table 2 covered the materials used for housing construction in the area, while table 3 captured the age of buildings in the area.

As a result of inadequacy of the existing accommodation, coupled with high occupancy ratio per room, i.e. 3-5 persons living in a room and the recommended maximum is meant to be two (2) persons per room (from the manual for space standards and use of allocation by Vagale). The area utilities and services are therefore over utilized.

The remarkable high cost of accommodation observed in the area may be attributable to choice. According to Hulchanski (1995), housing choice is a response to an extremely complex set of economic, social, and psychological impulses in relation to housing issues.

As regards the emergence of derelict and blighted urbanscape in the area, Blumenfeld (1971) had this to say, "the urbanization process in many developing countries particularly Nigeria has not been accompanied with a corresponding supply of adequate housing, basic infrastructures and amenities". This has given birth to the development of informal settlements and slums. Another problem of our urban centres is that they fit into what some scholars have tried to distinguish as "grown" and "planned" cities.

A major contributor to the urban decay is negligent urban housekeeping, and irresponsible civic management; which has permitted its spread. Continuous neglect will mean that: physical decay of urban community will continue or be encouraged; obsolesces (obstruction to full production of housing) will continue to stretch over the built environment with its consequent

degeneration to the city. The deterioration of our urban centers has been a process, not a

willful act that may be corrected on command or presidential fiat.

**Table 1: Housing Types in Achara Layout**

S/N	Housing Types	Number
1.	One Storey Tenement Building	102
2.	Two Storey Tenement Building	395
3.	Three Storey Tenement Building	27
4.	Bungalow	8
5.	Uncompleted Structures	10
6.	Single Rooms	18
Total		557

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014.**

**Table 2: Materials Used for Housing Construction in the Area**

Housing Materials	Number
Block	538
Wood	19
Total	557

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014.**

**Table 3: Estimated Age of Buildings in the Area**

Estimated Age	Number	Percentage
Below 5	9	1.6
6 – 10	136	24.4
11 – 15	113	20.3
16 – 20	91	16.3
20 and above	208	37.3
Total	557	100

**Source: Fieldwork, 2014.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings of the study, the following are recommended: community sensitization, research on whether the landlords need loan and the modality of payment to improve the existing situation, reintroduction of sanitary inspectors, landscaping and other beautification tools to be employed in the area, performance driven, consumer feedback mechanism and affordable housing.

Community sensitization is necessary to increase the knowhow of the landlords as well as the tenants of the obtainable in housing in modern times. Research on

whether the landlords need loan and the modality of payment to improve the existing situation would go a long way of helping especially where finance happens to be the restrictive factor. Reintroduction of sanitary inspectors would help ensure cleanliness and health of residents. Landscaping and other beautification tools to be employed in the area so to enhance the general quality of the environment.

Residents interested in rental of housing accommodation should be encouraged to do so base on the performance driven capability of the housing facility. However, this falls partly in the area of community

sensitization. Consumer feedback mechanism is a means through which consumers of housing reports back how they are enjoying any given housing facility. This becomes a very vital tool for any interested government in decent accommodation of her citizens to carry out effective monitoring. Affordable housing has inherent costs that come with it in addition to construction and maintenance costs. Depending on alternative plans to situate affordable housing units, communities may be revitalized or destabilized. While revitalized communities would see increasing property values, additional businesses, and creating jobs; destabilized neighborhoods might experience increasing crime and lowering property values. In terms of market outcomes, the choice for affordable housing would work to stabilize and revitalize neighbourhoods.

## **CONCLUSION**

The housing challenges in Nigeria and more specifically Achara Layout and the attending consequences of this development informed this study. The study was set towards the improvement of the existing housing situation in Achara Layout Enugu, Nigeria. The study relied on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data were obtained to aid the researcher with theoretical background of the subject matter while primary data were those obtained in the field. Based on the findings in this study, recommendations were made. It is hoped that the recommendations would bring about remarkable positive housing change and the standard of living of the residents which will also give a face lift in the area's urbanscape.

## REFERENCES

- Adedeji, Y., and Owoeye, J. O. (2008) Environmental Sanitation and Health of Slum Dwellers in Akure: *Knowledge Review* (a multidisciplinary Journal); National Association for the Advancement of Knowledge (NAFAK), University of Benin, Benin-City, Nigeria 17 (2): 57-67.
- Agbo, H. A., Envuladi, E. A., Adah, U. G. and Zoakah, A. I. (2012) "An assessment of toilet facilities in Secondary Schools in North Local Government Area of Plateau State", *Greener Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 2 No. 4, pp. 091-094.
- Aluko, E. O. (2003) Housing Values and Determinants of Housing Submarkets in Nigeria. *Journal of Nigerian Institute of Town Planners*. Vol. XVI, October pp. 56-68.
- Blumenfeld, H. (1971) *The Modern Metropolis – Its Origins, Growth, Characteristics, and Planning*. Cambridge Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press.
- Ezenagu, V. C. (2000) *Fundamentals of Housing*, Awka: Fountain Publishing, p. 18.
- Hulchanski, J. D. (1995). "The Concept of Housing Affordability: Six Contemporary Uses of the Expenditure to Income Ratio" (PDF). *Housing Studies* **10** (4). Retrieved 2011-12-08.
- Jaakkola, J. J. K., Hwang, B. F., and Jaakkola, N. (2005) "Home dampness and moulds, parental atopy, and asthma in childhood: a six-year population-based cohort study", *Environ Heal Perspect*, Vol. 94, pp 657-662.
- Jiboye, A. (2004) The Socio-cultural responsiveness of household-size on Housing quality Oshogbo, Nigeria. *The Anthropologist*, 6 (3) 169-174.
- Jiboye, A. (2009) the Challenges of Sustainable Housing and Urban Development in Nigeria. National Housing Policy (NHP) (Draft), (2004), p.22.
- Nubi, T. O. (2002) "Financing Low Income Housing in Nigerian Cities: Need for Paradigm Shift" Proceedings of National Conference on the City in Nigeria. Organised by Faculty of Environmental Design and Management. Ile-Ife: OAU, October, pp. 340-345.
- Parlasca, P. (2013) The Housing Sector in Europe – Household Consumption Long Term and During the Crisis. *RICS research report*, pp. 7-17.
- Wahab, K. A. (2002) "Urban Housing in Nigeria" Proceedings of National Conference on the City in Nigeria. Organised by Faculty of Environmental Design and Management. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife October. Pp 73-78.
- Vagale L. R.: Manual of Space Standards for Urban Development <http://mamma.com>.