HOUSING PROBLEMS OF LOW INCOME GROUP IN WARRI METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

[1]Clarke, T. and [2]Digha, O.N.

Department of Geography
[1&2]Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education, Sagbama, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
E-mail: digbaopaminola@yahoo.com

Abstract: *This study examined housing problems of low income group in Warri metropolis, Nigeria. To achieve this study, the study generated data from field survey using questionnaires was adopted. The data generated were analysed using bivariate correlation analysis. From the study, it was observed that the low income earners in the metropolis are spread across areas of Okumagba Layout, Lower Eredjuwa, Enerhen road, Delta Steel town, Enerhen village, and Orhowhorun. Housing demand is high as a result of the increasing population and most of the occupants spend about 35-45% of their monthly income on accommodation in contrast to the 20% monthly income recommended by the United Nation. However, the quality of houses for low income group in Warri metropolis is poor and below standard. Slums are found in the high density (Jakpa road, Okumagba layout, Airport Road, Upper/Lower Erejuwa, Enerhen/Udu Road) areas of Warri metropolis. The standard dwelling units correlated significantly with household income at R = 0.913. It is anticipated that as the size of household income increases, the access standard dwelling units also increases. Therefore, the cost of houses should be reduced through the provision of low cost housing near public transport routes, infrastructure and community facilities. The need to improve the housing delivery mechanism via policy measures geared towards encouraging low income group should be strongly advocated by the National Housing Federation.*

Keywords: Low income earners, Housing, Housing standard, and Warri metropolis

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INTRODUCTION

Housing is no doubt an important national investment and a right of every individual, the ultimate aim of any housing program is to improve its adequacy in order to satisfy the needs of its occupants (Olotuah and Aiyetan, 2006). Adequate housing provides the foundation for stable communities and social inclusion (Oladapo, 2006). Adequate housing contributes to the attainment of physical and moral health of a nation and stimulates the social stability, the work efficiency and the development of the individuals (Olayiwola *et al.*, 2005).

Nevertheless, the housing situation in Nigeria is characterized by some inadequacies, which are qualitative and quantitative in nature (NHP, 1991; Oladapo, 2006). In Nigeria urban housing problems manifest in overcrowding, slum housing and the development of shanties in virtually every major city (Nubi, 2008). These problems vary from inadequate quantity and quality of housing to the attendant impact on the psychological, social, environmental and cultural aspects of housing. The cost of adequate housing is currently beyond the reach of most Nigerians. This, thus, brings in the financial dimension - the question of the affordability of housing. The challenge becomes not only to provide the houses but to make the houses affordable to the average Nigerian worker.

In Warri metropolis, low income earners are faced with the challenges of high cost of owning and maintaining a home relative to their incomes. As a result, many low income homeowners spend large shares of their incomes for housing, often diverting funds from other necessary expenses. Many can only afford homes of lower quality, and thus experience high levels of housing deficiencies ranging from damaged roofs to peeling paints. More so, do not have sufficient funds to maintain their units, leading to further housing deterioration and a range of negative consequences for individual occupants and surrounding communities. A significant number of low income home owners struggle with high housing cost burdens and physically inadequate housing in Warri metropolis. These problems are particularly acute for those with extremely low incomes. Even owners who have paid off their mortgages face on-going housing-related costs that often cut into their incomes and leave little for other necessities. Others face various levels of housing inadequacy, often because they can only afford lower-quality housing. Still others have special demographic characteristics, such as advanced age or disabilities that create specific housing needs. At risk are the health and safety of the occupants of these homes.

Most low income earners live in poor quality housing and in unsanitary environments in Warri and environs. This problem of inadequate housing has been compounded by the rapid rates of urbanization and economic growth. Housing difficulties is more serious for the low income groups where problems have been complicated by rapid growth, inflated real estate values, speculative activity, in flux of poor immigrants and lack of planning. One can also cite the increasingly significant shifts in the form and design of housing from the rooming form to flat and single family house forms as a factor responsible for acute shortage of housing for the low income groups. As it stands today even with the flat system in place, one can hardly secure a two-bedroom apartment for an average family in Warri metropolis; and in few places where they exist, the cost are too expensive for a low income earners living in the area to shoulder. All these problems combined together, acts to heighten housing needs in Warri metropolis as well as other cities in Nigeria. This paper attempts an empirical verification of housing challenges of low income group in Warri metropolis, Nigeria for the benefit of public policy.

STUDY AREA

Warri metropolis is located between latitude 5°30'N and 5°35'N and Longitude 5°29'E and 5°48'E. Warri Metropolis is made up of Warri South, Udu and Uvwie Local Government areas. The areal expansion of Warri during the past two decades has been remarkable, from a small river settlement, Warri metropolis has grown to cover the surrounding towns of Effurun, Ekpan, Enerhen, Edjeba, Ogunu, Jakpa, Ovwian-Aladja, Udu Road, with the results that Warri is now over 100sqr.km (Efe, 2002). This areal expansion has led to decrease in land availability for building and thus results to problem of housing availability.

The area is also characteristics by hydromorphic soils, which is a mixture of course alluvial and colluvial deposits. The terrain is flat having an elevation of 6.1 m above sea level (Barbour *et al.,* 1982). The area is characterised by tropical equatorial climate with mean annual temperature of 27.44°C and rainfall amount of 3302.52mm. Rainfall period ranges from January-December, with the minimum value of 20.4mm in January and over 499.1 mm in September. The natural vegetation are rainforest and riparian plant covers. These forests are rich in wood and non-wood resources. Unfortunately, much of the rain forests have been destroyed as a result of centuries of human activities and interference resulting to grass land. Warri metropolis is one of the rapidly growing cities in Nigeria, with a population rising rapidly from 19,526 in 1933, 55,256 in 1963, 280,000 in 1980, 500,000 in 1991 to 536,023 in 2006. Thus, as population increases so also the demand for housing increases as well (Litman, 2007).

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Housing sustainability means housing which contributes to community building, to social justice and to economic viability at a local level (Morgan and Talbot, 2001). Newman defines sustainability as a global process that also tries to help create an enduring future where environmental and social factors are considered simultaneously with economic factors (Newman, 2002). He also defines what sustainability will mean for housing:

1. Ensuring there is a 'roof overhead' for the housing disadvantaged,
2. Ensuring housing is more eco-efficient, and
3. Ensuring housing is well located or is part of a project to improve locational amenity (Newman, 2002)

Morgan and Talbot argue that sustainability should be the main principle to design housing and one of the important dimensions of the housing quality. Development of sustainable housing refers to not only the development of building but also layout of the housing areas (Morgan and Talbot, 2001). The quality of dwelling life is not 'therefore, simply concerned with having a roof over one's head and a sufficient amount of living space, but also with social and psychological satisfaction. Sustainable physical design can contribute to quality of life' (Hasic, 2001). Hasic says that social and behavioural elements of housing design are the key to the success of the residential development.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The study adopts the field survey method of research design, which involves the use of questionnaires data. In doing so, the study area was stratified into four (4) homogeneous zones based on the existing residential land use type. These zones are made up of the following: High-density residential areas (Jakpa road, Okumagba layout, Airport Road, Upper/Lower Erejuwa, Enerhen /Udu Road. Low density residential areas (Delta Steel Town, G.R.A at Warri & Effurun) Traditional residential areas (Edjeba, Ugborikoko, Enerhen Villages) Fringe zone (Osubi, Ubeji, Aladja Orhowhorun and Ugbomro) which serve as control stations.

These areas also have identical land use type and housing patterns. In all, a total of 20 neighbourhoods were used for the study. These areas were chosen to reflect the characteristics of a particular residential land use type. In the administration of the questionnaire, a total of five hundred and twenty questionnaires (520) were administered to respondents of the 20 neighbourhoods representing 0.1% of the total population using on this basis forty questionnaires to each settlement based on five per cent of the marketers. To ensure an even distribution of the questionnaire a systematic sampling technique of selecting respondent on an interval of every 7^{th} house in each street, Bivariate correlation analysis was used to ascertain the relationship between housing standard and income.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Spatial Distribution of Low Income Group

Table 1: Income Distribution in Residential Zones in Warri and Environs

Zones	Neighbourhood	Total Respondents	Below ₦13,000	%	₦13,000 - ₦50,000	%	₦51,000 and above	%
	Jakpa road	26	13	5.7	9	5.2	4	3.4
	Okumagba layout	26	19	8.3	4	2.3	3	2.5
	Airport Road	26	11	4.8	11	6.4	4	3.4
	Upper Erejuwa	26	12	5.2	9	5.3	5	4.2
	Lower Erejuwa	26	15	6.6	8	4.6	3	2.5
	Udu Road	26	13	5.6	9	5.3	4	3.4
A	Enerhen Road	26	14	6.1	8	4.6	4	3.4
	Delta Steel Town	26	15	6.5	9	5.3	2	1.8
	G.R.A at Warri	26	4	1.7	9	5.3	13	11.0
	G.R.A at Effurun	26	7	3.0	8	4.6	11	9.3
B	PTI Road	26	7	3.0	11	6.4	8	6.9
	Edjeba	26	9	3.9	8	4.6	9	7.6
	Ugborikoko	26	17	7.4	4	2.3	5	4.2
	Enerhen Village	26	15	6.6	8	4.6	3	2.5
C	Ekpan Villages	26	13	5.6	7	4.1	6	5.1
	Osubi	26	5	2.2	14	8.1	7	5.9
	Ubeji	26	6	2.6	12	7.0	8	6.9
	Aladja	26	12	5.2	7	4.1	7	5.9
	Orhowhorun	26	14	6.1	5	2.9	7	5.9
D	Ugbomro	26	9	3.9	12	7.0	5	4.2
Total		**520**	**230**	**100**	**172**	**100**	**118**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

***A-High-density residential areas; B-Low density residential areas; C-Traditional residential areas; D-Fringe Zone

Table 1 reveals that most of the respondents in the residential areas have an income below ₦13,000 monthly while very few have income above ₦51,000. This is an indication that there is high numbers of people who are in the low income group class according to Gbakeji and Rilwani (2009) classification of income groups which states that those in the low-income category have monthly income not exceeding ₦13,000, while those earning between ₦13,000 and ₦50,000 are in the medium income group. The high-income group comprises those whose monthly incomes are in excess of ₦50,000. However, in Warri and environs the highest numbers of low income group spreads across areas of Okumagba Layout, Lower Eredjuwa, Enerhen road, Delta Steel town, Enerhen village, and Orhowhorun (see Table 1 and Fig 1).

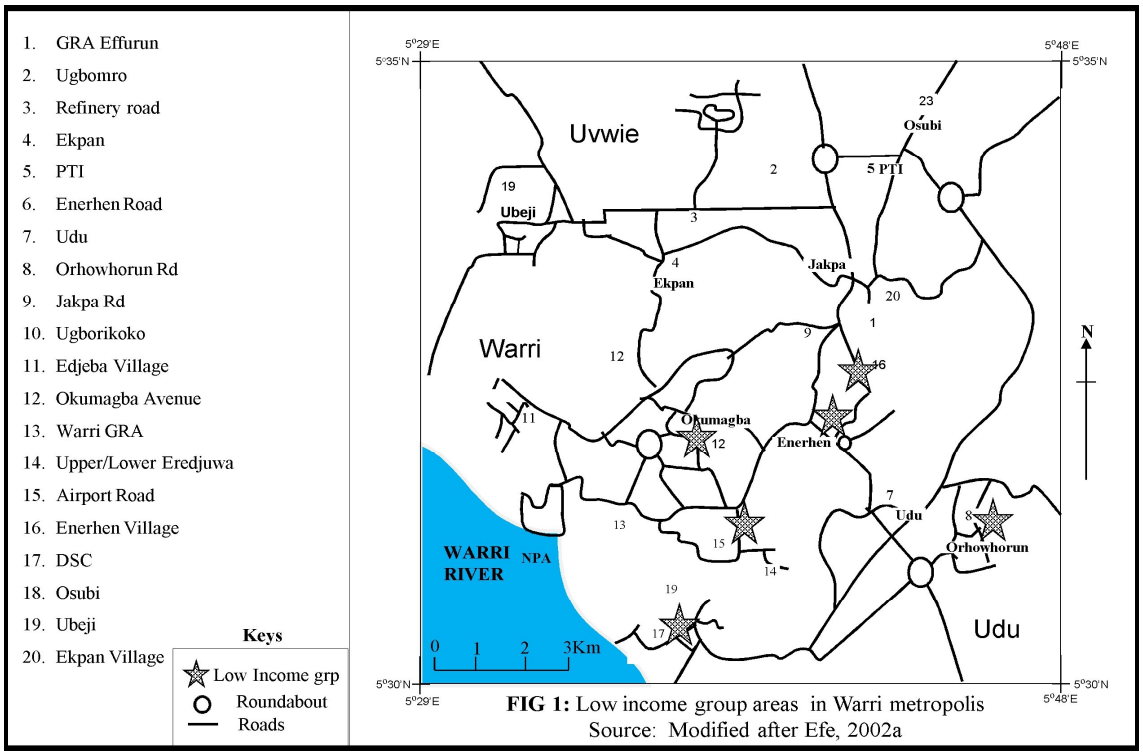

FIG 1: Low income group areas in Warri metropolis
Source: Modified after Efe, 2002a

Table 2: Slum Environments in Warri and Environs

Slum environment	Number of respondents in each zone zones				
	High density	Low density	Traditional	Fringe	Total
Yes	161	19	56	72	308
No	21	85	48	58	212
Total	182	104	104	130	520
% of slum in the entire zone	52.3	6.1	18.2	23.4	100

Source: Field work, 2011

Table 2 shows zone with slums in Warri and environs. It is revealed that 52.3% of slums in Warri and environs are found in the high density (Jakpa road, Okumagba layout, Airport Road, Upper/Lower Erejuwa, Enerhen /Udu Road) areas while, 6.1% of slums in Warri and environs are found in the low density (Delta Steel Town, G.R.A at Warri/Effurun, and PTI Road) areas. This is an implication that residential neighbourhoods around the high density areas tend to have more slums as compared to other areas.

Table 3: Housing Quality in Warri and Environs

Quality	No of respondent	%
Standard	156	30
Manageable	52	10
Poor	312	60
Total	520	100

Source: Field work, 2011

Table 3 shows the housing quality standards in Warri and environs, where 60% of the respondents are of the view that the quality of houses in Warri are poorly built and are below standards, while 10% are of the view that the quality of house in Warri and environs are manageable. However, more than 50% of the houses in Warri and environs are below standard inspite of the high cost of rental. Thus, the quality of the housing is poor and clearly an affront to human dignity.

Factors Hindering Low Income Group from Accessing Decent Accommodation

Table 4: Factors Influencing Choice of Dwelling

	Order of Influence									
Factors	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
Numbers of room	7	1.3	141	27.1	139	26.7	53	10.2	180	34.6
House quality	59	11.3	233	44.8	189	36.3	0	0	39	7.5
Environmental	312	60	101	19.4	59	11.3	48	9.2	0	0
Social Amenities	132	25.5	0	0	133	25.7	241	46.3	14	2.7
Household income	10	1.9	45	8.7	0	0	178	34.3	287	55.2

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 4 shows factors influencing choice of dwelling of respondents where 5-very high, 4-high, 3-moderate, 2-low, 1- extremely low. In the distribution of how choice of dwelling is influenced, 55.2% of the respondents are of the view that their household income determines their choice of dwelling, while 7.5% of the respondents determine the choice of dwelling on the basis of the house quality.

Table 5: Model Summary

		Standard Dwelling	Household Income
Standard dwelling	Pearson Correlation	1	.913**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	520	520
Household income	Pearson Correlation	.913**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	520	520

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows the correlation analysis table for access to standard dwelling and household income in Warri and environs. However, the access to standard dwelling correlated positively with household income at R = 0.913. Thus, 91% of access to standard dwelling is attributed to household income which implies a strong positive correlation. Succinctly, as household income increases, the access standard dwelling increases as well. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that the access to standard dwelling is significantly related to household income.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that there are more low income earners in the metropolis who earn below ₦13,000 and are spread across areas of Okumagba Layout, Lower Eredjuwa, Enerhen road, Delta Steel town, Enerhen village, and Orhowhorun. However, household income plays a very crucial role in the housing and neighbourhood preferences of residents and residents spend 60%-100% of their income on house rental thus, implying that the cost of house rental in Warri metropolis is so high. Slums in Warri metropolis are found in the high density (Jakpa road, Okumagba layout, Airport Road, Upper/Lower Erejuwa, Enerhen/Udu Road) areas. Succinctly, as population increases in Warri and environs, the demand for housing increases as well (Olotuah, 1997).

The quality of houses for low income group in Warri and environs is poorly built and are below standards. The household sizes of the respondents across the metropolis also show a remarkable pattern. This is an indication for the demand of larger apartment. The access to standard dwelling unit correlated with household income. To achieve sustainable housing, there is a need to provide community facilities, compact design, pedestrian friendly design, by involving community in the design process through the provision of government subsidies.

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