

## **Impact of Senior Civil Servants on Community Development and Urban Planning in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract:**

Urbanization is a reality of Nigerian settlement pattern like in other nations of the world. The high population of the country, the centripetal nature of cities arising from agglomeration impacts, the role of institutions particularly university education in attracting people en-mass, the increasing role of the private sector in economy with attendant multiple sources of employment generation, the natural allure of the city whether it is beneficial or not will all combine to continue to ignite urbanization in Nigeria. These incidents have been generating serious environmental problems and concern for both the government and interested stakeholders especially in the area of human settlement and sustenance of the environment with the implications on good transportation networks, potable water supply, sanitation, effective and efficient waste management, elimination of social conflict and crimes. This necessitates the need for community development and urban planning. A central goal of urban planning and community development is producing policies and programmes to promote economic growth in a way that will enhance the quality of life in the community where people live and work. Fortunately, majority of the professionals involved in community development and urban planning are Civil Servants with relevant education, certifications, experiences and specializations. This paper examines the impact of Civil Servants in urban planning and community development. The study employed intensive literature search as basis of information. A field survey on urban planning and community development was carried out with various contributions of relevant professional bodies. This paper concludes that the Nigerian Senior Civil Servants play a major role at combating the challenges of urban growth phenomenon through community development and urban planning so as to enhance sustainability of urban growth and development in Nigeria.

**Key Word:** Civil Servants, Community Development and Urban Planning

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Community Development is a broad term given to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens and professionals to improve various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities. According to the *United Nations*, "Community Development is a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and fullest possible reliance upon the community's initiative".<sup>1</sup> The *United Nations* also defines community development as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems"<sup>2</sup>. Community development is also understood as a professional discipline, and is defined by the International Association for Community Development ([www.iacdglobal.org](http://www.iacdglobal.org)), the global network of community development practitioners and scholars, as "a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organization, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings"<sup>3</sup>.

*Community Development Exchange* views community development as both an occupation (such as a community development worker in a local authority) and a way of working with communities. Its key purpose is to build communities based on justice, equality and mutual respect. Community development involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power, so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. It starts from the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used in creative ways, can be channeled into collective action to achieve the communities' desired goals. Community development practitioners work alongside people in communities to help build relationships with key people and organizations and to identify common concerns. They create opportunities for the community to learn new skills and, by enabling people to act together, community development practitioners help to foster social inclusion and equality.

Urban planning is also referred to as urban and regional planning, regional planning, town planning, city planning, rural planning or some combination in various areas worldwide. Urban planning guides orderly development in urban, suburban and rural areas. Predominantly, it is concerned with the planning of settlements and communities; urban planning is also responsible for the planning and development of water use and resources, rural and agricultural land, parks and conserving areas of natural environmental significance. Practitioners of urban planning are concerned with research and analysis, strategic thinking, architecture, urban design, public consultation, policy recommendations, implementation and management. Urban planners work with the cognate fields of architecture, landscape architecture, civil engineering, and public administration to achieve strategic, policy and sustainability goals. Early urban planners were often members of these cognate fields. Today, urban planning is a separate, independent professional discipline. The discipline is the broader category that includes different sub-fields such as land-use planning, zoning, economic development, environmental planning, and transportation planning.

An urban planner is a professional who works in the field of urban planning for the purpose of optimizing the effectiveness of a community's land use and infrastructure. They formulate plans for the development and management of urban and suburban areas, typically analyzing land use compatibility as well as economic, environmental and social trends. In developing the plan for a community (whether commercial, residential, agricultural, natural or recreational), urban planners must also consider a wide array of issues such as sustainability, air pollution, traffic congestion, crime, land values, legislation and zoning codes. The importance of the urban planner is increasing throughout the 21st century, as modern society begins to face issues of increased population growth, climate change and unsustainable development. The purpose of this study are to ensure rural and urban re-generation through people, and public/private participation by using the practitioners guiders in ensuring new outlooks of communities fit and habitable for human existence settlements and existence. As well to forestalls the rising incidence of stomps in urban centres, retard development in the rural areas and curbing crimes as a product of over-increasing population in cities, and towns in states capitals and administrative lead quarters in Nigeria.

### **Concepts of Community Development**

Amongst the earliest community development approaches were those developed in Kenya and British East Africa during the 1930s. Community development practitioners have over many years developed a range of approaches for working within local communities and in particular with disadvantaged people. Since the nineteen sixties and seventies through the various anti-poverty programmes in both developed and developing countries, community development practitioners have been influenced by structural analyses as to the causes of disadvantage and poverty, that is, inequalities in the distribution of wealth, income, land, etc. and especially political power and the need to mobilize people to affect social change. There are a number of international organizations that support community development, for example, Oxfam, UNICEF, The Hunger Project and Freedom from Hunger, run community development programmes based upon community development initiatives for relief and prevention of malnutrition. Since 2006 the Dragon Dreaming Project Management techniques have spread to 37 different countries and are engaged in an estimated 3,250 projects worldwide. The study will be explored base on the relevant approaches in analysing community development. This will gives insights to people engagement in community development activities. These include: System Perspective, Social Perspective, Virtual Perspective and Individual Perspective.

- ***Systems Perspective***

From a systems perspective, a community is similar to a living creature, comprising different parts that represent specialized functions, activities, or interests, each operating within specific boundaries to meet community needs. For example, schools focus on education, the transportation sector focuses on moving people and products, economic entities focus on enterprise and employment, faith organizations focus on the spiritual and physical well-being of people, and health care agencies focus on the prevention and treatment of diseases and injuries<sup>4</sup>. For the community to function well, each part has to effectively carry out its role in relation to the whole organism. A healthy community has well-connected, interdependent sectors that share responsibility for recognizing and resolving problems and enhancing its well-being. Successfully addressing a community's complex problems requires integration, collaboration, and coordination of resources from all parts. From a systems perspective, then, collaboration is a logical approach to ensure communities improvement.

- ***Social Perspective***

A community can also be defined by describing the social and political networks that link individuals, community organizations, and leaders. Understanding these networks is critical to planning efforts in engagement. For example, tracing social ties among individuals may help engagement leaders to identify a

community's leadership, understand its behavior patterns, identify its high-risk groups, and strengthen its networks<sup>5</sup>.

- ***Virtual Perspective***

Some communities map onto geographically defined areas, but today, individuals rely more and more on computer-mediated communications to access information, meet people, and make decisions that affect their lives. Examples of computer-mediated forms of communication include email, instant or text messaging, e-chat rooms, and social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Social groups or groups with a common interest that interact in an organized fashion on the Internet are considered "virtual communities". Without question, these virtual communities are potential partners for community-engaged health promotion and research.

- ***Individual Perspective***

Individuals have their own sense of community membership that is beyond the definitions of community applied by researchers and engaged leaders. Moreover, they may have a sense of belonging to more than one community. In addition, their sense of membership can change over time and may affect their participation in community activities<sup>5</sup>. The philosopher and psychologist William James shed light on this issue in his writings. James thought it important to consider two perspectives on identity: the "I," or how a person thinks about himself or herself, and the "me," or how others see and think about that person. Sometimes these two views agree and result in a shared sense of an identity, but other times they do not. People should not make assumptions about identity based on appearance, language, or cultural origin; nor should they make assumptions about an individual's perspective based on his or her identity. Today, the multiple communities that might be relevant for any individual — including families, workplace, and social, religious, and political associations — suggest that individuals are thinking about themselves in more complex ways than was the norm in years past.

### **Historical Review of Community Development**

Community development approaches are recognized internationally. These methods and approaches have been acknowledged as significant for local, social, economic, cultural, environmental and political development by such organizations as the UN, WHO, OECD, World Bank, Council of Europe and EU. In the United States in the 1960s, the term "community development" began to complement and generally replace the idea of urban renewal, which typically focused on physical development projects often at the expense of working-class communities. In the late 1960s, philanthropies such as the Ford Foundation and government officials such as Senator Robert F. Kennedy took an interest in local non-profit organizations. A pioneer was the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation in Brooklyn, which attempted to apply business and management skills to the social mission of uplifting low-income residents and their neighbourhoods. Eventually such groups became known as "Community Development Corporations" or CDCs. Federal laws beginning with the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act provided a way for state and municipal governments to channel funds to CDCs and other non-profit organizations.

National organizations such as the Neighbourhood Reinvestment Corporation (founded in 1978 and now known as Neighbor Works America), the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) (founded in 1980), and the Enterprise Foundation (founded in 1981) have built extensive networks of affiliated local non-profit organizations to which they help provide financing for countless physical and social development programmes in urban and rural communities. The CDCs and similar organizations have been credited with starting the process that stabilized and revived seemingly hopeless inner city areas such as the South Bronx in New York City. Community planning techniques drawing on the history of utopian movements became important in the 1920s and 1930s in East Africa, where community development proposals were seen as a way of helping local people improve their own lives with indirect assistance from colonial authorities.

Mohandas K. Gandhi adopted African community development ideals as a basis of his India Ashram, and then introduced it as a part of the Indian Swaraj movement, aiming at establishing economic interdependence at village level throughout India. With Indian independence, despite the continuing work of VinobaBhave in encouraging grassroots land reform, India under its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru adopted a mixed-economy approach, mixing elements of socialism and capitalism. During the fifties and sixties, India ran a massive community development programme with focus on rural development activities through government support. This was later expanded in scope and was called Integrated Rural Development Programme [IRDP]. A large number of initiatives that can come under the community development umbrella have come up in recent years.

The main objective of community development in India remains to develop the villages and to help the villagers to help themselves to fight against poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, etc. The beauty of Indian model of community development lies in the homogeneity of villagers and high level of participation. Community

development became a part of the Ujamaa Villages established in Tanzania by Julius Nyerere, where it had some success in assisting with the delivery of education services throughout rural areas, but has elsewhere met with mixed success. In the 1970s and 1980s, community development became a part of "Integrated Rural Development", a strategy promoted by United Nations Agencies and the World Bank.

### **Historical Review of Urban Planning**

There is evidence of urban planning and designed communities dating back to the Mesopotamian, Indus Valley, Minoan, and Egyptian civilizations in the third millennium BCE. Archeologists studying the ruins of cities in these areas found paved streets that were laid out at right angles in a grid pattern. The idea of a planned out urban area evolved as different civilizations adopted it. Beginning in the 8th century BCE, Greek city states were primarily centered on orthogonal (or grid-like) plans. The ancient Romans, inspired by the Greeks, also used orthogonal plans for their cities. City planning in the Roman world was developed for military defense and public convenience. The spread of the Roman Empire subsequently spread the ideas of urban planning. As the Roman Empire declined, these ideas slowly disappeared. However, many cities in Europe still held on to the planned Roman city centre. Cities in Europe from the 9th to 14th centuries often grew organically and sometimes chaotically, but many hundreds of new towns were newly built according to preconceived plans, and many others were enlarged with newly planned extensions. Most of these were realized from the 12th to 14th centuries, with a peak period at the end of the 13th century.

From the 15th century on, much more was recorded of urban design and the people that were involved. In this period, theoretical treatises on architecture and urban planning started to appear in which theoretical questions were addressed and designs of towns and cities were described and depicted. During the Enlightenment period, several European rulers ambitiously attempted to redesign capital cities. During the Second French Republic, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, under the direction of Napoleon III, redesigned the city of Paris into a more modern capital, with long, straight, wide boulevards.

Planning and architecture went through a paradigm shift at the turn of the 20th century. The industrialized cities of the 19th century grew at a tremendous rate. The pace and style of this industrial construction was largely dictated by the concerns of private business. The evils of urban life for the working poor were becoming increasingly evident as a matter for public concern. The laissez-faire style of government management of the economy, in fashion for most of the Victorian era, was starting to give way to a New Liberalism that championed intervention on the part of the poor and disadvantaged. Around 1900, theorists began developing urban planning models to mitigate the consequences of the industrial age, by providing citizens, especially factory workers, with healthier environments.

Urban planning started to become professionalized during this time. The Town and Country Planning Association was founded in 1899 and the first academic course on urban planning was offered by the University of Liverpool in 1909. In the 1920s, the ideas of modernism and uniformity began to surface in urban planning, and lasted until the 1970s. Many planners started to believe that the ideas of modernism in urban planning led to higher crime rates and social problems. Urban planners now focus more on individualism and diversity in urban centres.

### **Empirical Review of Community Development and Urban Planning in Nigeria**

Urbanization and the process of people living in urban centres in Nigeria predate the colonial adventure in the country. As at 1921 when the first Nigeria's population was estimated to be 18.6 million, about 1.5 million were already living in 29 cities whose population was 20,000 and above. When the actual census first took place in the country in 1952, the population was 30.4 million with about 10.6% of the population, that is, 3.3 million people living in 56 cities across the country. More importantly, there were 329 urban centres with population exceeding 5,000 people as at 1952. By 1963, when the second actual headcount took place the total population of the country was 55.6million and this increased to 88.5million in 1991, indicating that the population almost doubled within a period of about 40 years <sup>6</sup>.

Lagos became a British colony in 1861. In 1863, an attempt was made to control and regulate urban development in Lagos with a Town Improvement Ordinance at the instigation of the British colonial administration. The purpose, which was restricted to Lagos, was for development control and urban sanitation. However, formal general urban planning activities in Nigeria began with an ordinance of 1902, which empowered the then Governor of the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria to set up Europeans Reservation Areas <sup>7</sup>. This ordinance, which specified how European reservation areas should be located and separated from the native locations, was the first town planning regulation in Nigeria. With the regulations came the first conscious attempt to effectively plan for any settlement of a Nigerian town.

The first attempt to introduce spatial orderliness in the landuse patterns of Nigerian towns was contained in Township Ordinance No. 29 of 1917. The enactment of this ordinance was a watershed in the evolution of urban and regional planning in Nigeria. The ordinance applied to the whole country and was mainly

concerned with the delineation and classification of towns into first, second and third classes and the regulation of buildings, streets and bridges within them. The ordinance also stated the control of offensive trades and industries, the carrying out of urban sanitation and the establishment of local authorities for the administration of the designated urban centers. The ordinance was mainly prescriptive in character. It became necessary following the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates, and was mainly concerned with development control and not development planning.

In 1928, the Lagos Town Planning Ordinance was enacted. The ordinance established the Lagos Executive Development Board as a result of an outbreak of bubonic plague.

The board had copious power to undertake comprehensive improvement schemes in order to eradicate the standard environment cause of the epidemic. The Lagos Town Planning Ordinance was extended to the rest of the country by the Nigerian Town and Country Planning Ordinance of 1946. According to the provisions of the ordinance, the planning authorities were to effect control of the environment and the technique of control was to be through preparation of planning schemes prepared by the planning authorities. The ordinance made it mandatory for all land development activities to obtain the approval of the appropriate planning authority, and empowered the authority to accept, reject or modify any land use proposal. Most of the provisions of the 1946 ordinance were retained when town planning became regional functions e.g. Town and country planning law, Cap (123) of the laws of Western Nigeria 1959, and was adopted in 1976 by the Oyo State Government.

The import of urbanization in Nigeria is that the country has a pattern that is unique in Africa considering the rate at which it was intensified during and after colonial period. Population growth and urban development were stepped up through national political decentralization that led to creation of states from the regions in 1967 and subsequent states creation in 1976, 1991, 1992 and 1996. These processes created administrative capitals, rapidly increasing urban population due to both high rates of natural increase in population and rural - urban migration.

#### **Theoretical Review of Community Development with Reference to System Theory**

This paper will describe these basic with System Theory concept in a way, which will relate them directly to community development, which was proposed in the 1940's by the biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1948. He emphasized that the real systems are open to, interact with their environments, properties through emergency, resulting on continual evolution. System theory is inter disciplinary in nature that cut across the system with the goals of discovering patterns and elucidating principles that can be discerned from and applied to all types of systems at all nesting levels in all the fields of research.

System theory provides an analytical framework, which can be used to describe some of the many factors involved in community development. A system comprises of complex activity so as the development in the society. Development is very crucial to the survival of human. Each part/sector needs one another to achieve their goals. Urban planning is not focused on a single hand but joint one. Especially in the hand of few who are privilege to holds political office, the civil servant/office holders serves as self help for individuals, assisting one another in the area of infrastructures and domestic needs to reduce rural-urban migration. This is done to make life easier as growth is not statics, therefore joint efforts must be encouraged for meaningful community development.

#### **Factors Responsible For Urban Growth in Nigeria**

The city is a mosaic of racial, ethnic, occupational, religious and ideological groups. Their differences generate both interdependence and conflict. It has been noted that neighbourhoods, communities and infact urban areas are sub-sets of the city. An urban area comprises several communities while a community consists of many neighbourhood (Henry, 2004). It is obvious that man cannot be detached from the happenings in the city right from birth through his entire lifespan, till his death. This underscores the critical position the urban centres represents in man's sustenance and welfare. The era of numerous creation of states and local governments in Nigeria has resulted into unprecedented acceleration of urbanization processes in all state capitals nationwide to the extent that it is feared that city dwellers in the country have outnumbered those residing in the rural areas and yet many more people are still desirous of moving into cities in search of paid employment. The rate of population growth has been spectacular in recent times. Compared to growth rate of 2.8 per cent annually for the total population, the urban population in Nigeria according to Alkali (2005) <sup>8</sup> over the last three decades has been growing close to 5.8 per cent per annum. Infact, the population of the urban centres in Nigeria constitutes about 48.2 percent of the country's total population and projections indicate that more than 60 percent will live in urban centres by year 2025. The basic factors held responsible for urban growth are discussed as follows:

- **Industrialization and commercialization:** the urban growth has been greatly stimulated by the new techniques of production associated with industrial revolution. The invention of machinery, the development of steam power, and the application of huge capital in industrial enterprises led to the establishment of gigantic

manufacturing plants which brought about the mobility of immobile groups of workers hastening their concentration around a factory area. For the sake of working with others and of high wages, people usually abandon rural work and stream into the industrial cities. While industrialization has stimulated city growth, trade and commerce have also played an important part in urban expansion. The development of modern marketing institutions and of methods of exchange has greatly contributed to the growth of cities.

- **Development of transport and communication:** The development in methods of transport and communication and the facilities, which cities offer, for satisfying the desire for communication also enhance urban growth. Industrialization depends upon transportation so that raw materials and manufactured goods can be carried in large volume. Likewise, in industrial cities, factory workers are being compelled to live near their places of employment, resulting in urban growth.
- **Economic pull of the city:** Cities provide more opportunity for personal advancement than do the rural areas. Modern business and commerce pull young men to the cities where they are paid munificent salaries. People live in cities, not necessarily because they like them as places of residence, but because they can get jobs there. Employment opportunities are more in the city than in the village.
- **Educational and recreational facilities:** these facilities attract people to the urban areas. They make appeals to the feelings and play impulses of children and adults alike. Naturally, on account of all these facilities, young men and women are attracted to the cities for higher education.

### **Nexus between Community Development and Urban Planning in Nigeria**

The scale and rapidity of urbanization in Nigeria, both in spatial and demographic terms, has fuelled the high demand within the cities for land, housing and social services. Most urban residents are denied decent means of livelihood. A majority of Nigerians in the cities live in slum settlements, with income levels below subsistence and a dominant mode of livelihood located in non-formal sectors. Most urban residents have no access to basic services such as primary health care and basic security. Most cities lack adequate supply of pipe borne water, huge mountains of garbage occupy large areas in the cities due to a lack or near absence of an efficient waste disposal system, proper health care facilities are inexistent, affordable housing is still a dream for workers, and the public primary and secondary school systems are in a state of near collapse.

The most serious problems confronting cities, towns and their inhabitants as identified in Agenda 21(1996) include the following: Inadequate financial resources, lack of employment opportunities, spreading homelessness and expansion of squatter settlements, increased poverty and a widening gap between the rich and poor, growing insecurity and rising crime rates, inadequate and deteriorating building stock, services and infrastructure. Other problems include lack of health and educational facilities, improper land use, insecure land tenure, rising traffic congestion, increasing pollution, lack of green spaces, inadequate water supply and sanitation, uncoordinated urban development and an increasing vulnerability to disaster.

As extreme as this view may sound, it shows the pains of largely under-performing urban centres. The urban centres might not have failed but they are far from functioning well. All these have seriously challenged the capacity of government at all levels to realize socio-economic development and environmental protection, which are all components of sustainable development. Therefore, an efficient service delivery through effective Public Policy and Administration and citizen participation do become an issue of great concern and urgency for urban development in the country.

### **Factors Affecting Community Development and Urban Planning in Nigeria**

Nigeria as a nation has been experiencing an accelerated shift of her populations from rural to urban areas. This rapid rate of urbanization has engendered several challenges and problems similar to situations in other parts of the world. Today's Nigerian city, according to Mabogunje (2002)<sup>9</sup> is typified by substandard and inadequate housing, slums, and lack of infrastructure, transportation problems, low productivity, poverty, crime and juvenile delinquency. Urbanization, according to him is the root cause of the high rates of environmental degradation, pollution and social delinquency. Nigeria ranks 151st on the Human Development Index of 177 countries worldwide<sup>10</sup>. Urban development problems in Nigeria could be viewed from both socio-economic and environmental perspectives. Increase in the urban population has resulted in the proliferation of slums and informal peri-urban settlements otherwise known as shantytowns. The shanty towns as described by Aina (1990)<sup>11</sup> are deprived settlements characterized by excessive residential densities, largely uninhabitable housing and the absence of sanitation, basic infrastructure and social services. They harbor migrants from the rural areas who are unable to fit into the economy of the city and so tend to find solace in informal activities and crime. The proliferation of these shantytowns results in the unwieldy expansion of the urban centres which poses a major planning problem as provision and management of roads, drainage and sewage systems among other infrastructure proves very difficult. Furthermore, shantytowns, a consequent of urbanization, cause increases in the incidence of urban poverty, diseases and epidemics, environmental pollution, urban conflicts and crime.

At the fifth session of the UN Commission of Sustainable Development, the Government stated that; “The problems and challenges posed by rapid urbanization in the country are immense”. Among these are inadequate shelter resulting in overcrowding, inadequate and inefficient transportation systems, poor infrastructure facilities and services, development of slum areas in cities such as Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, and Port Harcourt, and generally poor environmental conditions. In the Government's various efforts at attaining sustainable human settlement development, several constraints to planning and implementation of physical development have been experienced. These constraints include: rapid rate of urbanization; declining socio-economic standards; fund limitations; human resource Public Policy and Administration deficiencies; fluctuating political will; un-integrated policy focus; dearth of base maps; inadequate database for planning and monitoring; and insufficient foreign technical assistance”.

## **II. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **Empirical Investigation of Urban Planning: Case Study**

This study employed a survey research design. A survey design provides a qualitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of autonomous communities. For this study, five different communities were considered for investigation. These are: Alaro, Idiito, Adebayo, Alemuloke and Bembo; all within Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. These were strategically explored due to their urban nature. The survey was carried out with a team of Surveyors, Town planners, Civil Engineers, Public Administrators and Health Workers. The various buildings and their associated facilities, public utilities, road networks, etc. were thoroughly observed. Questions were asked from a good number of the residents. The entire population used for the study was 250 people, that is, 50 people from each community. The respondents were selected using simple random sampling techniques.

## **III. RESULT**

After compilation of the survey reports, it was discovered that over 75 percent of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with urban lifestyle. Their major complaints include: congestion of people and buildings, poor economy, poor physical planning, virtual lack of such basic infrastructure and socio-economic amenities as good road networks, inadequate improved health facilities, poor education system, lack of potable water supply, high rate of unemployment, increase in crime and other social vices, and pollution. The pictures (figure 1) shown below depict the typical condition of the communities under consideration, which is a reflection of major urban areas of Nigeria, which lack proper planning.





Figure 1: showing condition of the communities lacking proper planning in major urban areas in Nigeria.

### **The Nigerian Civil Servants: Who Are They?**

The Civil Service Manual Handbook states that: “The Royal Commission on the Civil Service (1953-1955) has described the Civil Service as Servants of the crown, other than holders of political or judicial offices, who are empowered in a civil capacity and whose remuneration is paid wholly or directly out of moneys voted by parliament”. In the Nigerian context, *a Civil Servant is simply someone employed by the Civil Service Commission and paid by the Government out of moneys voted for the purpose by the National or State House of Assembly*.

The **Nigerian Civil Service** consists of employees in Nigerian government agencies other than the military. Most employees are career civil servants in the Nigerian ministries, progressing based on qualifications and seniority. Determination of policy is the function of ministers, and once a policy is determined, it is the unquestionable and unquestioned business of the Civil Servant to strive to carry out that policy with precisely the same goodwill, whether he agrees with it or not.

Adebayo (1999:92)<sup>12</sup> stated that the Civil Service is not a creation of modern times. It has its roots in history and dates back to the time of ancient civilizations. He espoused that dating back to 462 B.C, Pericles, a leader in ancient Greece, introduced a scheme for the compensation of officials thus facilitating the continued participation in public administration by citizens who had to work daily for their living. He also captured that the Han Dynasty in the Chinese empire in 202 B.C recognized the need to have a permanent body of officials to implement government decisions. To deliver our nation from the threats of the 21st century, there is no substitute to a professional, committed, knowledgeable and well remunerated Civil service. The challenges for reinventing governance also mean reinventing the Civil service.

Micheal Bentil, a Ghanaian Expert in Public Administration and an International Civil Servant, writing on 50 years of Civil Service reform experience in Anglophone Africa, stated that: “The Civil Service plays a vital and indispensable role in the government of any country, indeed when one considered the experience of post war France and Italy it is not altogether fanciful to say that a country can be governed relatively well without ministries or even a political head of government. However, it may not be easy to have a functioning government without civil service”.

### **Nigerian Senior Civil Servants as Effective Community Developers and Urban Planners**

Urban centres are known to be areas with intense agglomeration of activities. This has led to specialization in different endeavours in urban centres and the attendant demands for urban services such as housing, transportation, health, education, water supply, recreation, etc. Although Nigeria has fairly long history of urbanization, physical planning of cities and urban centres is a recent phenomenon. This is attributed to inherent lack of concern of the colonial administration for the general welfare of indigenous cities and their dwellers for a long period. It is also partly because it took sometime before the problems of rapid urbanization manifested and appreciated in Nigeria<sup>13</sup>. In recent past, the awareness of the need to plan has necessitated the Nigerian government to pay noticeable attention to the physical planning problems and continuous deterioration of urban centres in the country.

Among government’s attempts to resolve urbanization problems in Nigeria is the creation of town planning departments within the relevant Federal and State government ministries, while local planning authorities were also established at the local government levels. In addition, several ad-hoc planning related bodies were set up among which are the Ministries of Housing and Urban Development, Works and Housing, etc. with a view to managing the cities and improving their environmental conditions. All these ministries are



being managed by Senior Civil Servants with relevant education, certifications, qualifications, specializations and experiences adopting specific strategies to tackle the challenges of sustainable urban growth and development in Nigeria through the following:

**(i) Provision of Adequate and Affordable Housing for All:** The housing problem in Nigerian cities centres on inadequacy in quantity and quality. There is palpable gap between demand and supply. This can be tackled by developing and promoting the use of locally produced building materials as a means of reducing housing construction cost, in collaboration with the Nigerian Building and Road Research Institute (NIBRRI); promoting measures that will mobilize long term and affordable funding for the housing sector by restructuring and re-capitalizing the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (apex mortgage institution in the country) for better performance; developing a well-managed land information system and computerization of land registries in the country; deliberately imbibing a private sector led housing provision through the introduction of incentives such as serviced land and tax rebates; and promoting the use of indigenous professionals, appropriate design and technology in housing delivery.

**(ii) Ensuring Environmental Sustainability:** The key challenges in the environment sector in Nigeria include land degradation, pollution, storm water control and erosion, desertification, inefficient use of energy resources, loss of biodiversity, environmental disasters through fire outbreaks, flooding, petroleum pipeline vandalism, and deforestation. Many of the cities in the country are not planned as a result of which many people keep moving and developing without any plan or projection. This led to the creation of Ministry of Environment, Urban and Housing, Ministry of Niger Development, the Niger Delta Development Commission, the National Emergency Management Agency and Federal Environmental Protection Agency by the Federal Government of Nigeria aimed at setting the country on the path of sustainable urban growth and development.

**(iii) Good Governance and Enhanced Urban Development:** Government realizes that good governance is fundamental to national development and that sustainable urban growth and development cannot be achieved on its own without sustainable peace and democracy. This is why strong emphasis is placed on ensuring a stable political environment, sustenance of democratic principles and government geared towards achievement of improved living conditions of the citizenry most especially. To achieve the objective, several anti-corruption measures have been put in place by the government. Some of these include Anti-Corruption Act, the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission, Code of Conduct Bureau and Public Complaints Commission and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). All these measures have to some extent gone a long way at promoting good urban governance and development in the country.

**(iv) Poverty Reduction and Economic Empowerment Strategies:** Poverty eradication, which is one of the indispensable requirements for sustainable urban growth and development, is one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria presently. The extent and severity of poverty in the country has worsened in recent years to the extent that the country now ranked as one of the 25 poorest countries in the world despite the resources (both human and natural) that abound in the country. The majority of the citizens are poor due to massive under-employment and outright unemployment, uncontrolled inflation, governance inundated with greed, corruption, non-existence of economic opportunities for poor due to epileptic power supply, lack of accessibility to land and capital by the average Nigerians. In an attempt by the government at enhancing economic growth and reducing the level of poverty in the country, there is a need to create an environment where business can thrive. The Nigerian government should formulate policies that will be geared towards re-orienting values, reducing poverty, creating wealth and generating employment.

**(v) International Cooperation for Development:** The country has been playing prominent role in cooperative initiatives that have been benefiting Nigerians, thus charting new course for sustainable growth and development. Having realized that there is likelihood of more people living in urban areas than rural areas of the country and the need to ensure that the pace of urbanization in the country does not jeopardize the country's overall development, all tiers of government in the country decided to introduce the implementation of integrated development strategies to stimulate development of not only the citizens of the country but also citizens other countries migrating to Nigeria from the neighbouring countries.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Urbanization is one of the indicators of radical, physical, economic and social transformation that the society is passing through as a result of development. It is also the real strength behind economic growth and development of many cities of the world. Many research findings show that while cities in Nigeria, as any other developing countries, have been growing at a very rapid rate, there has been no commensurable growth in the

rate at which social services and infrastructural amenities are provided. The result has been a gradual decline in the quality of the environment and in the quality of life. The need to adequately and efficiently plan the human environment cannot be over-emphasized.

To achieve good urban management within any society, the contribution of the professional bodies is very essential. To ensure a sustainable urban growth and development in the country there is an urgent need to ensure efficient and transparent public sector administration and management which are committed to sound economic policies' formulation and implementation.

In view of this, the unique qualities possessed by the Senior Civil Servants will go a long way in the actualization of the aforementioned strategies of the Nigerian government in all the three domains of policy-making, planning, and monitoring.

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