

The Headscratcher Of Urbanization And Infrastructural Challenges In Anambra State (1999-2016)

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Abstract: *This study assesses “Urbanization and Infrastructural Challenges in Anambra Stateskyviewing Selected Urban Areas in Anambra State (1999-2016)”. This study adopted Urbanization and Globalization Theory by Davis (2012) to assess the factors that are responsible for urbanization and infrastructural challenges in Anambra state. The method of data collection was descriptive survey design, 300 respondents were randomly selected from relevant government parastatals that are staff grade level 07 and above, who are conversant with urbanization and infrastructural issues and individuals within three major urban areas: Awka, Onitsha and Nnewi in Anambra state (comprising of business men/women, artisans, students, traders etc.). The statistical summaries of the result were presented in the form of percentage and tables using computer data analysis package such as the statistical package for social science (SPSS) and other relevant software to help interpret results. The stated hypothesis was tested using ANOVA. The results reveal that there is no significant difference among the factors that are responsible for urbanization and infrastructural deficit in the study areas from 1999-2016, the respondents also believe that there is no difference on the effects of infrastructural challenges on the living standard of urban dwellers in the study areas from 1999-2016, furthermore it was found that there is no significant difference on infrastructural supply in the selected study areas. Finally majority of the respondents suggested that the best solution towards urbanization and infrastructural challenges is to improve the quality of life in both urban and rural areas by provision of adequate infrastructural facilities in both areas. Based on the summary of study, the researcher recommends that; the government should endeavour to improve the quality of life in both urban and rural areas by provision of adequate infrastructural facilities in both areas*

Keywords: Infrastructures, Urbanization, Urban Centers and Urban Growth

Background to the Study

Infrastructure is the basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of a society like industries, buildings, roads, bridges, health services, governance and so on. It is the enterprise or the products, services and facilities necessary for an economy to function (Sullivan & Sheffrin, 2006). Infrastructure can be described as the set of interconnected structural elements that provide framework supporting an entire structure of development. It is the means of achieving an objective or set of objectives and also includes the objectives. It is an important term for judging a country, region or state’s and individual’s developments/status.

Generally speaking, infrastructure is essential for the sustainability of human settlement. Today, it is no longer arguable that the imbalances in the provision of rural infrastructure when compared with that of the cities have negatively impacted cities’ sustainability. In fact, the rural-urban imbalance in development provides an explanation for the unprecedented growth of urban centers and slums (Srinivasan, 2005).

Therefore improving accessibility to basic services such as safe water, electricity, sanitation, and social infrastructural facilities for residents has been acknowledged as one of the principal ways of promoting sound human settlements, good health, and appropriate and decent living conditions (Eziyi, 2012), little wonder why many people today migrate to the cities as a result of the attractions of the infrastructure elements that are found there.

Akpotor (2007) noted that providing infrastructure services to meet the demands of businesses, households, and other users is one of the major challenges of economic development in Nigeria. The availability of infrastructure has increased significantly in developing countries over the past several decades. In many cases, however, the full benefits of past investments are not being realized, resulting in a serious waste of resources and lost economic opportunities. This outcome is frequently caused by inadequate incentives embodied in the institutional arrangements for providing infrastructure services. While the special technical and economic characteristics of infrastructure give government an essential role in its provision, dominant and pervasive intervention by governments has in many cases failed to promote efficient or responsive delivery of services. A number of interrelated factors are responsible for the low level of infrastructure in developing countries, which, according to Fay (2003), accounts for about 13% of the global stock. The factors include insistent economic and political crises, rapid urbanization, inefficient infrastructural delivery systems, low investment in the sector and bad governance (Halpern & Mumssen, 2006).

Urbanization, which refers to the expansion in the proportion of a population living in urban areas, is one of the major social transformations sweeping the globe. It represents the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas with population growth equating to urban migration (Akhmat & Bochun, 2010).

Most Nigeria states, Anambra state inclusive is experiencing what can be referred to as over urbanization. That is a situation which relates to the proportion of a country’s population living in urban areas to the level of economic development. As such, with high rate of natural increase and many more people moving to the cities than available jobs, the net result is widespread. One of the most

visible and disturbing characteristics of the urban areas in Anambra State such as Onitsha, Awka and Nnewi is the decline of their infrastructural base. Onibokun (2009) elucidates this point further by saying that “as urban populations grow, and as available resources decline, public infrastructure is being degraded to the point where cities are seriously losing their capacity to operate as productive entities”.

Poor urban planning and infrastructural deficit in the face of rapid urbanization is therefore regarded as one of the major problems confronting many urban areas in Anambra state in particular and Nigeria as a whole. The filth and infrastructural degradation that have over taken Onitsha, Nnewi and Awka is as a result of poor urban planning. The failure of land sub-division and servicing programmes to keep pace with rapid urban growth has led to wide spread illegal and informal developments, hence the growth of squatter settlements or slum areas, for instance, the housing clusters at Okpoko, Fegge, Amaikwo, Umubelu, Woliwo, Odoapku. Etc. According to Elekwa (2001), many development projects carried out in these areas were without regard to the environment and this poses potential health problems and other hazards such as flooding, congestion, confusion etc. This has hindered the extension of not only of water, electricity and solid waste collection services, but also adequate sanitation arrangements and road networks to such areas.

However, according to Ukah (2005) Anambra state political problems and godfatherism since 1999 - 2016 have been among the major hindrances towards infrastructural development and curbing of the massive urbanization trend in the state. Most governors of Anambra state have encountered godfatherism during their tenures, such experience include that of Emeka Offor and Governor Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinujuin 1999-2003, at every slightest opportunity, Emeka Offor demonstrated the power of his money and his ability to get what he wanted through his versed connections. He threw his support around Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju an urban-city lawyer and this marked a turning point in the Mbadinuju venture for governorship. With his versed wealth and connections, Offor saw to the emergence of Mbadinuju as the governor of Anambra state in 1999. From May 29, 1999 up to early 2003, the relationship between Offor and Mbadinuju was so bad that the state was badly affected politically, socially and economically. The bone of contention was how to share spoils of office, allocation of political offices and so on. In the struggle over the supremacy of the state, all developmental initiatives meant for improving the standard of living of the citizens where stalled. These clearly left the ordinary people as losers and victims of such unbridled power play. In the heat of these crisis, whatever may have been the good intentions of the governor throughout that period was frustrated, unrealized and brazenly halted due to the unlimited struggles by the king maker for material recompense- in the absence of which the governor was battled to a standstill. Since then, issues of godfatherism have contributed immensely towards infrastructural challenges in the state (Arowosegbe, 2009).

This situations remained and today both the state and the helpless citizens are the worse hit with all the ugly hangovers (Arowosegbe 2009).

Studies have shown that the rapid rate of urbanization in Nigeria coupled with infrastructural challenges have not been matched by a corresponding commensurate change in social, economic and technological development (Okpara, 2008). Urbanization has become a major factor contributing to excess labour force in the urban centers, which has continued to increase the rate of unemployment and other social challenges caused by the imbalances between rural-urban environments. When an area gets more populated, its infrastructure bumps up against its carrying capacity. For instance, roads no longer satisfy the demands of a growing population, and then farmlands and forests are sacrificed to strip malls and housing developments

The economy of the country in which urbanization is taking place has been described as stagnant and the growth of industrialization is negligible (Salau, 2002). The implications of rapid urbanization in Nigeria on employment, human and food security, economy, waste management, infrastructural facilities and services inter alia are alarming. Against this background, the concern of this research is to examine the urbanization and infrastructural challenges in Anambra state, with measures to greatly minimize the challenges are suggested in order to ensure sustainable developments in both the urban centres and rural areas.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will guide this study.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference among the factors that are responsible for urbanization and infrastructural deficit in the study areas.

H₀₂: There no significant difference on the effects of infrastructural challenges on the living standard of urban dwellers in the study areas

H₀₃: There are no significant solutions that will enhance greater infrastructural supply on urban standard of living in the study areas

Factors Responsible for Urbanization and Infrastructural Deficit

The geographical distribution of population globally has undergone major changes in the last century and will continue to experience significant transformations during the coming decades. The latter fact is essentially due to dynamic nature of migration. People continue to relocate from their usual place or region of residence (origin) to another (destination) in order to meet their desires and aspirations for good education and good health care (voluntary). However, other people are forced (involuntary) to relocate by

environmental shocks, such as, floods, famine, desertification, and earthquake; and human induced shocks, such as, violent conflict, warfare and insecurity, slavery, child and human trafficking among others.

Unequal opportunities, resources and the varying level of development between regions and states remains a major driver of migration stream between localities, states and regions, the class of which interstate migration also belong. This is particularly so as humanity's quest for greater socio-economic opportunities; for good education; access to good health care and generally improved wellbeing and good life is on the rise. These socio-economic opportunities and development are more in urban spaces; hence, the increasing rate of rural-urban migration with consequent regional development planning issues. The developed world became essentially urban about the 1950s; however, a greater proportion of the population of countries in most developing regions of the world, including Africa and Asia, are rural. However, it is estimated that more people will be living in urban areas than in rural areas in less developed countries by 2030 (UNDPF, 2011).

In Nigeria, the rate of urbanization is increasing at an alarming rate. According to Ogunbodede (2010) urbanization rate in Nigeria is growing at an annual rate of 2.65%, this however varies from one state to another, due to the variable nature of accessibility to socio-economic services and opportunities such as, education, medical and healthcare services as well as security to mention a few. For instance, it is estimated that states such as Lagos, Anambra, Oyo, Rivers, Kano, Enugu, the Federal Capital Territory would attain population of over 10 million by the year 2020. The resultant effect of this is that there will be pressure on urban social amenities such as water, health care and electricity and most importantly the increase in commuting distance from one location to another or from one state to another. As observed by Egunjobi (2002) and Filani (2004), one of major challenges of contemporary and future urbanization and its emerging urban trends, is the fact that though, practically greater proportion of all urban population growth will take place in developing countries, these counties are currently experiencing the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment. In Nigeria, rapid urbanization in the coming decades will have profound implications for human health, as immense pressure will be put on health care delivery system, thereby raising health risks in the already increasing and vulnerable urban population in the country.

In addition, rapid urbanization due to interstate migration does have implication for urban mobility and transport connectivity across the geo-political zones. There are several socio-economic and environmental factors that facilitate the flow of people to urban centers. The fundamental factor is the increasing development gap and existing inequity between rural and urban areas, in the provision of socio-economic services and facilities, such as, education, health care system, good housing, employment opportunities, transportation and communication services, social stability, social conflict, and transport systems/connectivity.

Effect of Poor Infrastructural on the Living Standard of Urban Dwellers

The various obstacles militating against the effective mobilizing of resources for urban infrastructural development and management can be traceable to the governments and individuals in the country. On the part of the government, inadequate planning and the resultant unguided development often leads to over loaded infrastructure with incessant break down. Politicization of priorities lead to some urban areas being neglected while others are over served. Lack of funds and co-ordination of policies and execution of infrastructural projects usually lead to conflicts for instance, it is not uncommon for pipe line for the distribution of water to be uprooted and burst by road construction workers who cared less to repair them thereby causing avoidable wastage.

There is a fact that infrastructure is vital in urban community. The research of Arndt (2009) on Mozambique shows positive effects on trade and transport cost, and on agriculture and growth. Sida (2006) affirm that poor urban infrastructure and human development programmes for poor people delays economic growth and social development, increase poverty and may lead to unemployment.

According to Fatai (2011) the effect of poor infrastructure has lead to the flourishing of street trading, overcrowding and inadequate provision of services like transportation and the deteriorated road facilities resulting in congestion, noise and pollution. Activities have developed and located with no regards for transport distances or local natural conditions. As Okpara (2008) pointed out that over 60% of urban residents in some cities in Nigeria now live in unplanned and uncontrolled urban settlements. The instance of cities like Lagos and some others in South-Eastern Nigeria like Anambra, Abia etc has been characterized as a bedlam, sprawling with filth and stench from uncleared refuse and drainage.

Ravallion (2006) revealed that the underdevelopment and infrastructural deficit of the rural areas in Nigeria results from the negligence they suffer from different governments that have come and gone and the opposing focus these governments have on the urban areas. The migration rate and the rapid growth of these selected cities in South-Eastern Nigeria, when compared with the rural area, justify the fact that these governments have more focus of urban centers. Between 1991 population census and that of 2006, some of these selected cities (Abia, Anambra, Enugu and Imo) have almost double in number and not so much have been done in providing and improving infrastructure in them. Fatoye and Odusami (2009) noted that underdevelopment due to poor infrastructure encourages the massive migration of rural dwellers to the cities in search of better living conditions. And in addition to the natural urban population growth, the unchecked migration contributes to the proliferation in urban population. This, in turn, causes unprecedented city expansion, enormous over-stretching of infrastructural facilities and high rate of unemployment. As such, it could be said that the problems of Nigerian cities particularly that of South-Eastern part of the country revolve around rapid urban population growth through rural-urban migration

Furthermore, they ascertained that the environmental degradation is most evident everywhere and the state of infrastructural facilities is disappointing. Roads are in very advanced state of disrepair and maintenance of drains neglected everywhere, service delivery of water supply and electricity is erratic at best in many cases not available and mass transportation for urban residents is in poor supply.

In Nigeria, Jiboye (2009) have used residents' satisfaction with the physical presence and quality of basic amenities and neighborhood facilities to evaluate accessibility to neighborhood facilities in public housing. Findings of these studies indicate that the residents of public housing in these countries generally have poor access to basic services and infrastructural facilities. This is a clear result of migration over taking and over burdening the infrastructure services of not just Anambra state but Nigerian cities. Findings of literatures support the general view that there is a poor state of urban infrastructural facilities and services in most Nigerian cities. Government has not done enough to create the best conducive environment for the striving urban dwellers, the problem of poor infrastructures ranges from shortage of water supply, inadequate transport systems, lack of electricity to improper solid waste management (Basil, 2006).

Solutions towards Greater Infrastructural Supply on Urban Standard of Living

The development of any nation cannot be considered in isolation of the infrastructural facilities prevalent in the country in question. The state of civilization of the citizenry and the proficiency of workers in a nation in their respective fields, reflect the extent to which their infrastructure have been developed. The type of socio-economic services these infrastructures could render to the nation ranges from facilitating easy transportation, communication, business transaction and means of production to healthy and comfortable living within an urban area. It therefore means that the provision of reliable infrastructure is the pivot around which the success of any national development revolves.

With growth in urban population, there is a corresponding need for expansion of the infrastructure such as transportation, water, etc as well as other urban facilities. This, in effect, amounts to increasing the environmental carrying capacity of the urban area in order to enhance the livability of the city. Most of the urban cities in Nigeria seriously yearn for extensive renewal and upgrading programmes to stem the degeneration of the urban cities environments. Involuntary resettlement and forcefully ejection/evacuation through total slum clearance from past experiences are counter-productive, and should only be contemplated as a last resort. In the recent times, global experience has shown that urban renewal and housing strategies have shifted to participatory approaches – particularly public-private partnerships, for balanced housing delivery. This connotes accommodations of housing needs of all segments of the society – the low-income as well as the high-income groups' housing needs.

Integrated rural development action can also go a long-way to mitigate the gap between the urban and rural areas in terms of job opportunities and availability of basic infrastructure which are the main factors propelling high rate of rural-urban drift.

Ujoh (2010) note that as the population of an urban centre increases, its need for infrastructure such as transportation, water, sewage and facilities such as housing, commerce, health, schools, recreation and others increases, therefore, increasing the environmental carrying capacity of the urban areas is necessary for enhancing the livability of cities in Nigeria. Massive rehabilitation and expansion of urban infrastructure in the country should be taken more seriously. Most of the urban centres require extensive regeneration and upgrading programs. This would improve living condition as well as posit it against the culminating effect of urbanization. Considering the case of Maroko evacuation experience in Nigeria (Jiboye, 2005), involuntary resettlement has been proved not to be the best option in urban renewal programs. It should only be subscribed to as a solution of the last resort and clearly justified.

To arrest rapid rate of urbanization due to rural-urban drift, there is need to integrate rural development plans into the national strategies in order to bridge the wide gap between the urban and rural areas in terms of job opportunity and availability of basic infrastructure. Equitable urban land use and management systems, sustainable agricultural policies are also very imperative in this regard. However, it has been observed that across the globe, urban rehabilitation and housing development strategies are shifting towards participatory approaches, especially public-private partnerships. The potential of this approach to deliver both low-income and market-rate housing units must be explored (Adegun, 2011). Government on its part should ensure that adequate funds are allocated for shelter provision to the vulnerable group of the urban population.

The pattern, trend and characteristics of urbanization in Nigeria call for measures aimed at:

1. Critical review of plausible strategies for prevention of urban planning and development problems. This can be attained by proper urban administration and management of urban land and functional land uses by the Town Planning Authorities.
2. It would also include the provision of an efficient institutional framework that would manage the energy input and waste output and public education of urban residents on the advantages of safe and healthy environment.
3. Stemming the growth of the cities;
4. Controlling the rate of rural-urban migration; and
5. Improving the quality of life in both urban and rural areas.

Findings

Findings reveal that;

1. There is no significant difference among the factors that are responsible for urbanization and infrastructural deficit in the study areas from 1999-2016.
2. There is no difference on the effects of infrastructural challenges on the living standard of urban dwellers in the study areas

3. Furthermore the study reveals that there are significant solutions that will enhance greater infrastructural supply on urban standard of living in the study areas.

Conclusion

Many research findings show that while urban areas in Nigeria, as in 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. Educational facilities such as primary and secondary schools have not been able to accommodate the sharp increase in the number of pupils; the ratio of population to health facilities such as dispensaries, maternity homes and hospitals is unfavourable, health facilities are neither well staffed nor adequately equipped. The same findings apply to housing, employment opportunities and crime prevention facilities.

The pattern, trend and characteristics of urbanization in Anambra state in particular and Nigeria as a whole call for measures aimed at: (a) stemming the growth of the cities; (b) controlling the rate of rural-urban migration; and (c) improving the quality of life in both urban and rural areas.

Taking appropriate measures calls for a thorough understanding of the urban sector. Research is therefore inevitable.

Recommendations

The study therefore makes the following recommendations:

1. There should be an implementation of critical review of plausible strategies for urban planning and development problems in order to curb urbanization and infrastructural deficit in urban areas.
2. Provision of an efficient institutional framework that would manage the energy input and waste output and public education of urban residents on the advantages of safe and healthy environment in order to curb infrastructural challenges on the living standard of urban dwellers
3. The government should endeavour in improving the quality of life in both urban and rural areas by provision of adequate infrastructural facilities

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