

HOUSING QUALITY AND NEEDS IN AN EMERGING URBAN CENTRE. A CASE STUDY OF IKERE EKITI, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

Adeyemo, A. and K. D. Dawodu
Department of Geography
College of Education, Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

A house is a space that we can call our own that gives us privacy .It shelters us from the weather and above all, from the intrusion of unwanted people. Housing is today seen as one of the three basic elements in the life of any community whose definition has metamorphosed from being a mere shelter to that of an environment This work therefore examines the housing quality and needs in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti state. The research involved the use of questionnaire and field observational methods of data collection. The findings are that most of the houses in Ikere-Ekiti are of the traditional type. These consist of small-sized rooms measuring about 2.4 square metres, with detached bathroom, kitchen and latrine, which are shared by all the inhabitants in each house. The occupancy ration shows an average of 9 persons per flat and 2 persons per room in the traditional housing type. An aggressive mass development of students' hostels by government, the organized private sector and interested individuals is recommended for improving the situation in Ikere-Ekiti.

Keywords: *Housing Quality, Housing needs, Occupancy ration, Privacy.*

Introduction

One of the basic needs of every individual, the family and the community in general is decent Housing. Known also as a shelter, housing refers equally to individual and separate dwelling units as to the entire residential neighborhood complexes. As a pre-requisite to the survival of man, it ranks second only to food. Housing is also regarded as one of the best indicators of a person's standard of living of his place in society. The house as a unit of the environment has a profound influence on the health, efficiency, social behavior, satisfaction and general welfare of the community. It provides privacy for family life. It is in realization of this inestimable values of decent housing that the Nigeria constitutions (1979 constitution, section 34, and 1999 constitution, section 38) under the fundamental human rights guaranteed the rights of every Nigerian to decent housing.

These sections guarantee rights to private and family life which state among others that "the privacy of every citizen, their home, is hereby guaranteed and protected (FGN, 1979, and 1999)" Despite this constitutional provision, the majority of Nigerians cannot boast of decent housing that can provide privacy for family life.

Man needs security, privacy and elements of personal identification which residential buildings can offer. As regards security, every human being needs protection against enemies and the harsh effects of weather condition. Individual's life and property to a certain level is relatively secured by decent housing. Fundamentally, every citizen has a right to determine the level of his privacy. Psychologically and socially, everybody has the tradition of identifying himself with the house in which he dwells Izomoh (1994) revealed that man at any point in time would want other people to appreciate the house that offers him the basic elements required to maintain a level of comfortability.

The purpose of this study therefore, is to examine the quality of housing and housing needs in Ikere-Ekiti. Various ways by which the housing units in the area could be increased are also advanced.

The Study Area

Ikere-Ekiti, The administrative headquaeters of Ikere-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State is the study area. The settlement which was founded about 1305 AD by some migrants from Ile-Ife came into recognition in 1989, when it was carved out of Ekiti South Local Government Area of the Old Ondo State. Ikere-Ekiti which is atimes called the gateway town to Ekiti State, has a total land are of about 204.588 sq km. according to Fadipe (1993), the geological survey of the area indicates that the town is underlined by low seated impermeable rocks whose outcrop from chin of round topped inselbergs that surround the town has made the town an attractive site scene.

Housing Quality and Needs in an Emerging Urban Centre. A Case Study of Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

The establishment of government's administrative machinery coupled with the historical background of the town have brought people from diverse socio-cultural background into the rocky settlement. The new job openings and her closeness to Ado-Ekiti town (the Ekiti State Capital) also attracted people from the surrounding towns and villages. Others came to establish the necessary ancillary services such as motor /bicycle repairing, driving, farming, masonry and general maintenance photocopy, typing e.t.c. services. The organized private sector was not left out as banks, hotels, sawmills, petrol stations, departmental stores and other small and medium-sized industries came into existence. With all these establishment in place Ikere-Ekiti started to experience the characteristic of an urban centre.

In 1977, a College of Education was established in the town by the government of Old Ondo State. A College of Education, like a propulsive industry has the capacity of attracting human and material resources to its location. The institution has attracted many people including Staff, students and others who came to take advantage of the associated ancillary services. Today the school has more than 15,000 students and a staff strength of about 2,000. Ikere-Ekiti consists of three main districts, they are Uro, Odo-Oja and Oke-kere. These three districts are further subdivided into quarters such as: Anaye, Atiba, Agbado-Oyo, Odo-Oja, Oke-Osun, Are, Afao, Oke-kere, Araromi, Kajola, Isaoye and Ikoyi. But for the purpose of this study, Ikere-Ekiti will be restricted to the following quarters. Anaye, Atiba, Agbado-Oyo, Odo-Oja, Oke-Osun, Ikoyi, Isaoye and Okekere. The study area is restricted to these eight quarters because they are the centres of activities in the area. A preliminary survey revealed that, more than 80 percent of students and 40 percent of the staff of the College locate their residences in these quarters. In this study, the eight identified quarters are reconstituted into Spatial closures for data collection, analysis and discussions.

Study Methodology

Various processes, procedures, methods and instrumentation by which data are sourced, specified, defined, collected, processed and analysed are termed research methodology (Fasakin 1992). Thus, Okoko (2000) sees research methodology as that which provides scaffolding for the validation and proper interpretation and analysis of research data; and these, in themselves, are *sin qua non* for the articulation and formulation of policies.

This study therefore utilise two of the most popular data collection methods in the fields of environmental and social sciences, i.e. the use of questionnaire and field

Observation. The questionnaire was structured such that it enabled the researcher to assess and collect the required data in all the aspects of housing. These include an examination of the housing unit itself, the internal facilities and the neighbourhood in which the housing unit is located. Field observation complemented the data collected through the use of questionnaire. Also this study adopts the suggestion that "occupancy ratio is a veritable measures of housing needs in any society" (Abiodun 1985). Furthermore, a direct field observation was undertaken by the researcher to fine-tune the questionnaire to suit the local environment. The housing veritable that were selected and their measurement indices are tabulated in table I. Fifty questionnaires were administered in each of the identified spatial closures (quarters). The equality in the number of questionnaires administered in each case does not imply same in terms of population or number of houses. The figures was used for convenience purpose.

An 100 percent response was ensured by the replacement of lost or misfiled questionnaire. The streets within each of the identified quarters were stratified and the houses were selected by randomization. The target population was the heads of the respective households or the persons responsible for the maintenance of the building.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Housing Quality: Oral interview with chiefs and some of the elders in the community revealed that the original conception of housing among the people was that of the physical phenomena built against uncontrollable elements in the environment and other forms of intrusion. It is on the basis of this general conception that most houses in the area were built. Thus, "housing quality" as to be defined now was not a critical issue at that time. In recent time, however, the perception of housing has been changing, most especially since the establishment of government presence and the College of Education in the area. The import of these statements is that housing quality is a recent phenomena in the area dating back to the last three decades.

Housing quality is measured in this study using the variables and indices outlined in table 1 and the result of the data analysed is presented in the table. The first column of table 1 shows the names of the eight residential quarters used for this study.

Journal of Environmental Research and Policies, Volume 8, Number 2, 2013

The 2nd, 3rd and 4th columns show the results of the three measured indices of housing types. The 5th and 6th columns show the percentage number of houses built with adobe sand and cement block respectively. The next two columns show the percentage distribution of houses with pit and water cistern latrine. The 9th, 10th and 11th columns show the type and location of bathing rooms within the houses in each residential quarter. The last two columns indicate the results of measured indices of the neighbourhood characteristics.

Table 1 shows that only 6 percent (24 flats) of the 400 sampled houses are flats, 19 percent (76 Rooming Houses) are of the rooming type while 75 percent (300 traditional adobe) are of the traditional type. Table 1 further revealed that 80 percent of all the houses in Ikere-Ekiti are adobe houses. This is because modern houses often designed as flats and built with cement blocks is a recent development in the area. Consequently, only 20 percent of the houses in the area are built with cement blocks.

The general characteristics of traditional adobe houses which are also very obvious in table 1, are that they are dominated by pit latrine, open bathroom located outside the main building and poorly drained neighbourhood. In the study area, 90 percent of the houses use pit latrine while the remaining 10 percent has water cistern toilets. Even then, the few individuals or families who are privileged to live in these modern houses are constrained to using the water cistern owing to lack of piped water. Table 1 further revealed that 49 percent of the sampled houses has open-detached bathrooms while only 16 percent has bathroom located within the main building. Finally, as many as 60 percent of the sampled houses has their neighbourhood flooded during the wet season while dustiness is the common feature during the dry season. From the foregoing analysis, some few inferences can be made.

The first is that most of the houses in Ikere-Ekiti are of the traditional type. These consist of small sized rooms measuring about 2.4 square meters which are poorly ventilated. Secondly, the houses have shared latrine, shared bathroom and shared kitchen. Thus one of the most important objectives of housing (i.e. to provide privacy) is not fully satisfied by the houses in the study area. Also, pit latrine and open detached bathrooms do pollute the environment and can cause serious disease such as cholera. Furthermore, such place favours the breeding of some type of vermin shallow due to rocky nature of the town and poor drainage system.

Thirdly, the fact that most of the houses are flooded during the wet season due to the rocky nature of the town and poor drainage system implies that they are relatively inaccessible for most part of the year.

Each succeeding dry season is characterized by dusty weather conditions, when the incoming dust laden north easterly winds push in to the southern fringes around November. The wind bring with it dust particles, which can cause sneezing, coughing, running nose, headache and can lead to filthy environment.

From the above therefore, one may summarize that the quality of the housing stock in Ikere-Ekiti is very poor. Only about 20 percent (see table 1) of the houses in the area are fit for human habitation.

Housing Needs: In this study, housing needs is measured by the “occupancy ration”. The occupancy ratio measurement is based on the two most popular types of housing designs in the area. These are “flat” and the “rooming” patterns. The results are tabulated in table 2. Columns 3, 4, and 5 show the results of the measured indices for the “flat type” of housing in each residential quarter in the area. The 6th column shows the total number of rooms in each residential quarter. Column 7 revealed the occupancy ration or the average number of persons per room in each of the quarters.

The result of the data analysis presented in table 2 revealed that only 24 (or 06 percent) of the 400 sampled housed are designed and built as flats. The 24 flat accommodate 36 different families with a total population of 216 persons. These figures yielded an average of 9 persons per flat in the area. The table shows that there are 2,588 rooms in 376 traditional and rooming types of houses sampled in the area. These 2,588 rooms are inhabited by 6,028 persons. In this case, the figure yielded a sample ratio of 2 persons per room in the area.

In Nigeria, studies on housing needs (onibokun, 1973) Abiodun (1985) and Izomoh, (1994) have revealed that the occupancy ration in most of our urban centres are more than 2 persons per room. By implication, there is a high demand for housing in Nigeria towns and cities including Ikere-Ekiti. The housing problem at Ikere-Ekiti is worsened by the fact that about 80 percent of the houses in the area are of the traditional/rooming types. These are characterized by small-sized rooms measuring about 2.4 square meters. A room of this size can hardly accommodate two beds for two different persons. At this point, it can vividly be concluded that the occupancy ratio of Ikere-Ekiti is high and that housing situation in the area is worse than what obtains in most towns and cities in Nigeria.

Housing Quality and Needs in an Emerging Urban Centre. A Case Study of Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

So far, this paper has been able to examine the quality of housing units and their needs in Ikere-Ekiti. The research relied heavily on data collected from the filed by means of questionnaire, oral interview and personal observations. The following are the findings in the study area: about 80 percent of the houses consist of small rooms measuring 2.4 square meters. The houses are poorly ventilated, very dark and dirty, to the extent that mosquitoes, cockroaches, rats and other disease carriers are common features in the rooms. The associated facilities, which include, open bathrooms, kitchens and pit latrines are detached from the main building and are shared by all the inhabitants in each house. Most of these facilities are filthy, unhygienic and provide breeding place for some types of vermin. The neighborhood in which most of the houses are built are consecutively flooded during the wet season and dusty in the succeeding dry season. The people are yet to imbibe the concept of landscaping. Most of the houses are without building plans and were built haphazardly.

Like in most towns and cities in Nigeria, Ikere-Ekiti experiences over-congestion in most houses. The occupancy ration is about 2 persons per room and 9 persons per flat in the area. Consequently, there is a high demand for more housing units in Ikere-Ekiti.

The following recommendations are therefore advanced based on the findings of this study. The government of Ekiti State, the authority of the College of Education, the organized private sector, Ikere-Ekiti Community as well as concerned individuals should as a matter of priority and urgency engage in an aggressive mass development of students' hostels. And with the rate of increase in students population now that the College is affiliated with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka for its B.Ed Regular programme and Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Ile Ife for its B.Ed sandwich programme couple with the increasing volume of businesses in the town, more purposeful efforts have to be made to improve on this essential human need.

Secondly, the development of staff quarters should be the focus of the College authority now the road linking the College is tarred. This will have the plural advantage of reducing accommodation problems in the town and at the same time enhancing academic culture among the staff of the College. In addition to this, the concept of "housing revolving loan scheme" should be established and extended to the College staff. This would encourage the staff to embark on the development of their personal houses which will give them a sense of belonging. It will equally reduce the present number of staff who are residents in Ado-Ekiti and Akure owing to non-availability of enough flats in the study area.

Thirdly, the effects of the recent hike in the prices of petroleum products especially "petrol" which has prevented many College Staff who are residents in Ado-Ekiti and Akure to come to the College with their cars will be cushioned. Many of them will prefer to reside within the College environment and avoid daily excess burning of fuel. This will in turn boost their standard to living and make them punctual and regular in their places of work.

REFERENCES

- Abiodun, J.O. (1985): Housing problems in Nigerian cities, in Onibokun Poju (ed) Housing in Nigeria NISER, Ibadan pp 49 -62.
- Fasakin, J. O. (1992): Development Quantitative indices for the Institutional Research Sponsored by Ondo State Polytechnic, Owo.
- Izomoh, S. O. (1994): Housing problems in Nigerian Urban Areas, in Akinbode Ade et al (d): Social-Economic Perspectives in National Development EDSU press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979): The 1979 Nigeria constitution Federal Ministry of information, Lagos.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999): The 1999 Nigeria constitution. Federal Ministry of information, Abuja.
- Fadipe, A.A. (1993) Geology and the mineral and groundwater Resources in Ebisemiju (ed) Ado- Ekiti Region, A Geographical Analysis and Master plan, Alpha prints, Lagos.
- Okoko, E. (2000): "Rental Housing and Evictions in Low-income Neighbourhood in Akure" Ife Social Sciences Review.
- Omole, F.K. (2001): Basic Issues in Housing Development. Femobless publications, Ondo, Ondo State.
- Onibokun, A. G. (1973): 'Environmental Issues in housing habitability', Environment and Planning. 461-476.

TABLE 1
HOUSING QUALITY (PERCENTAGES)

QUARTERS 1)	HOUSING TYPES			BUILDING MATERIALS		LATRINE		BATHROOM		NEIGHBOURHOOD		
	NUMBER OF FLATS 2)	NUMBER OF ROOMS 3)HOUSES	NUMBER OF TRADITIONAL ADOBE 4)	MUD 5)	CEMENT 6)	PIT LATRINE 7)	WATER CISTERN 8)	WITHIN 9)	OUTSIDE 10)	OPEN 11)	NOT FLOODED 12)	FLOODED 13)
ANAYE	12	28	60	84	16	88	12	16	36	48	20	80
ATIBA	04	12	84	90	10	92	08	06	30	64	26	74
AGBADO-OYO	02	08	90	88	12	96	04	08	38	54	38	62
IKOYI	10	32	58	72	28	84	16	32	34	36	40	60
ODO-OJA	02	10	88	80	20	90	10	10	38	52	36	64
OKE-OSUN	12	42	46	58	42	80	20	40	38	22	62	28
ISAOYE	02	12	86	86	14	94	06	12	32	56	48	52
OKEKERE	04	08	88	84	16	96	04	06	32	62	50	50
TOTAL	06	19	75	80	20	90	10	16	35	49	40	60

Source: Field Survey, 2012

TABLE 2
HOUSING NEEDS (OCCUPANCY RATIO)

QUARTERS	FLATS				TRADITIONAL/ROOM ADOBE		
	NUMBER OF FLATS	NUMBER OF FAMILY(IES)	TOTAL NO OF PERSONS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER FLAT	NUMBER OF ROOMS	TOTAL NO OF PERSONS	NUMBER OF PERSONS PER ROOM
1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	7)	8)
ANAYE	06	12	59	10	308	770	3.0
ATIBA	03	03	18	09	288	840	3.0
AGBADO-OYO	01	02	12	12	392	940	2.0
IKOYI	05	08	42	08	360	900	3.0
ODO-OJA	01	01	09	09	294	600	2.0
OKE-OSUN	06	06	48	08	308	690	2.0
ISAOYE	01	01	07	07	298	600	2.0
OKEKERE	02	03	21	11	340	688	2.0
TOTAL	24	36	216	09	2,588	6,028	2.0

Source: Field Survey, 2012