Quality of Life of Poor Residential Neighborhoods in Oshogbo, Nigeria

Funmilayo L. Amao

Abstract—As a result of the high cost of housing, the increasing population is forced to live in substandard housing and unhealthy conditions giving rise to poor residential neighborhoods. The paper examines the causes and characteristics of poor residential neighborhood. The paper finds the problems that have influence poor neighborhoods to; poverty, growth of informal sector and housing shortage. The paper asserts that poor residential neighborhoods have adverse effects on the people.

The secondary data was obtained from books, journals and seminar papers while primary data relating to building and environmental quality from structured questionnaire administered on sample of 500 household heads, from sampling frame of 5000 housing units.

The study reveals that majority of the respondents are poor and employed in informal sector. The paper suggests urban renewal and slum upgrading programs as methods in dealing with the situation and an improvement in the socio-economic circumstances of the inhabitants.

Keywords—Environmental Degeneration, Housing, Poverty, Quality of life, Urban Upgrading

I. INTRODUCTION

POOR residential neighborhoods in Nigeria are increasing and posing serious problems to their own personal life and health. Slums and squatters are experiencing a massive change in the quality of life as they retain in the settlements that are characterized by numerous problems such as overpopulation, inadequate basic amenities, non-conventional housing and so on [1].

A. Quality of Life

The term 'Quality of life' is used to evaluate the general well-being of individuals and societies but its meaning is very complex, very comprehensive and varies with time and the person's beliefs [2] asserted that quality of life has to do with how people live, feel and understand their daily lives. This includes aspects such as health, education, housing, employment and participation in decisions. Reference [3] notes that quality of life is a term that has emerged as a concept of living conditions, health and physical safety, mental and social ability. However, definitions of quality of life have also been diverse. It has to do with how each one sees himself and the community [4].

B. Definition of Quality of Life

Nevertheless the wide range of definition can be

F. L.Amao is with Department of Architecture, LadokeAkintola University of Technology, P.M.B 4000, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria (e-mail: funmilayolanre@yahoo.com).

categorized into three major philosophical approaches to determining the quality of life. The first approach describes characteristics of the quality life that are dictated by normative ideals based on philosophical, belief and other systems. This approach to quality of life depend neither on the subjective experience of people nor on the fulfillment of their wishes [5].

The second approach to defining the quality of life is based on the satisfaction of preferences. Thus, in this tradition, the definition of the quality of life of a society is based on whether the citizens can obtain the things they desire. The third definition of quality of life is in terms of the experience of individuals. In this approach, factors such as feelings of joy, pleasure, contentment, and life satisfaction are paramount.

1. Indicators of Quality of Life

Quality is a product of subjective judgment which arises from the overall perception which the individual holds towards what is seen as the significant elements at a particular point in time. In assessing the quality of life, social indicators such as health and levels of crime, subjective well-being measures (assessing people's evaluative reactions to their lives and societies), cultural and economic indices are very important. According to Truckee, 2007 Indicators of quality of life can be categorized as follows: land use and infrastructure, natural environment, health and wellness, economic wellbeing, education and lifelong learning, public wellbeing, arts and cultural vitality, civic engagement, enrichment and innovation.

2. Measurement of Quality of Life

Two new scientific approaches to measuring quality of life have been introduced as: "objective" or social indicators, and the measurement of subjective well-being (SWB). Findings in social indicator and subjective well-being research have direct relevance to the fundamental concerns of societies and individuals. Therefore, Social indicators and subjective well-being measures are based on different definitions of quality of life.

Social indicators are societal measures that reflect people's objective circumstances in a given cultural or geographic unit. The symbol of social indicators is that they are based on objective, quantitative statistics rather than on individuals' subjective perceptions of their social environment. Housing satisfaction is a vital indicator of quality of life. Objectivity is one of the strength of social indicators. These indicators usually can be relatively easily defined and quantified without relying heavily on individual perceptions. Also, Strength of social indicators is that they often reflect the normative ideals of a society.

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
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Vol:8, No:4, 2014

Social indicators, however, suffer from several weaknesses. Firstly, social indicators are fallible, although social indicators are thought to be "objective," they are often contaminated by measurement problems. Another limitation of social indicators is the inevitable role of subjective decisions in selecting and measuring the variables.

The major advantage of subjective well-being measures is that they capture experiences that are important to the individual. Also, strength of subjective well-being measures is that when proven inadequate, they are often easier to modify in later studies than objective indicators. Third, SWB measures can be easily compared across domains by measuring the experience of wellbeing on common dimension.

C. Poor Residential Neighborhood

Neighborhood is the vicinity in which people live. Neighborhood has different characteristics which may be physical, social and cultural. The physical characteristics of neighborhoods relate to the quality of the numerous physical components of the residential environment. These components manifest from the housing unit to the whole urban environment. An important type of neighborhood for which information and understanding on quality of life is generally limited is the poor residential neighborhood.

Information is needed to plan, formulate policies and developmental strategies in the poor residential neighborhoods. Study of quality of life in the poor residential neighborhoods is important for the purpose of gathering, analyzing and presenting information on the physical and neighborhood qualities in a given city. This can be used to generate Housing Quality Index (HQI)/Standards that policymakers and governments can use in formulating sustainable housing policies. It also provides a baseline from which changes in policies and activities may be evaluated.

D. Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to assess the influence of socio-economic factors on quality of life in the poor residential neighborhoods of Oshogbo. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1) Identify the poor residential neighborhoods in selected areas.
2) Examines the characteristics of poor residential neighborhoods in the study area.
3) Examine the socio-economic characteristics of the residents in the selected areas.
4) Analyze the physical characteristics of residential buildings in the selected areas.

E. Expected Contribution

The result of the research is expected to serve as a guide in ensuring: Qualitative housing provision for low income residents in the poor residential neighborhoods of Oshogbo and the implementation of policies and planning, physical infrastructural development, social-economic improvement, environment and health improvement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Poor Residential Neighborhoods and Quality of Life

Living in poor residential neighborhoods often poses significant risks on health, education and well-being. Access to health and other services may be limited; overcrowding can contribute to stress, violence and increased problems of drugs and other social problems. Social infrastructure, like water supply, sanitation, electricity, roads and drainage; schools, health centers, market places are below minimum levels [6].

B. Effects of Poor Residential Neighborhoods on Quality of Life

In Poor residential neighborhoods, the decline in living conditions is accompanied by rapid deterioration of existing housing and homelessness [7]. The urban poor living in these neighborhoods are especially vulnerable to economic shocks; they lack access to services, safety nets and political representation.

The population growth which drives the increase of poor residential neighborhoods can impose pressure on the inhabitants. While the people are usually poorly educated, competition in the city is high and it is hard to find jobs. Pressures can also come from environmental hazards such as floods and fire. These pressures impact upon the well-being of the poor in these neighborhoods. Poverty can also create long-term pressures. People are unable to obtain adequate food, clean water and other basic services, as well as education. Their health and living standards often suffer when their settlements are situated close to sources of pollution. World Health Organization (WHO) notes that habitants are frequently ill as a result of the poor quality of their environment and exposure to disease. They are in a state of persistent poverty and frustration. Disasters may cause death and loss, while the poor housing and sanitation also threaten their health.

C. Housing, Environment and Quality of Life

Housing is an important component quality of life. Reference [8] notes that housing is a combination of characteristics which provide a unique home within any neighborhood; it is an array of economic, social and psychological phenomena. In other words, housing could be seen as a multidimensional package of goods and services extending beyond shelter itself. It is also the art of creating a living area through acquisition of land at the top of which buildings are constructed with provision of basic physical, social and cultural infrastructure. Reference [9] suggests that: "Having a safe place to live in is one of the fundamental elements of human dignity and this enhances human development".

References [10]-[12] cite that 75% of the dwelling units in Nigeria's urban centers are substandard and the dwellings are sited in slums. Housing in poor residential neighborhood are characterized by natural ageing of the buildings, lack of maintenance and neglect, wrong use of the buildings, poor sanitation in the disposal of sewage and solid waste and wrong development of land [6]. Reference [13] has also established a

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
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significant correlation between the quality of life and the comfort, convenience and visual acceptability of the house. Therefore the significance of adequate housing to the social well-being of the people in poor residential neighborhoods cannot be overemphasized. Quality of life may also address environmental quality such as quality of dwelling air, water and adequacy of open spaces for other land uses.

D. Poverty and Crime Rate in Poor Residential Neighborhoods

The reality associated with these poor residential neighborhoods is the poverty levels within which their inhabitants live, and the social exclusion to which they are subjected as a consequence of, among other factors, a lack of sufficient income to satisfy their basic needs [14]. Their daily challenges according to [15] include; limited access to employment opportunities and income, inadequate and insecure housing and services, violent and unhealthy environments, and limited access to adequate health and education opportunities.

He went further to state that poverty in poor residential neighborhoods is not just a collection of characteristics; it is also a dynamic condition of vulnerability or susceptibility to risks. The fact that they lack all these conditions and the necessity for employment to generate an income to satisfy their needs makes this urban environment a fertile ground for illegal informal activities including violence and crime.

III. METHODOLOGY

In order to reach the above mentioned objectives, the study will include a study intended to consolidate secondary data. The secondary data will include available land use maps of Oshogbo from previous publications. The National Population Commission, NPC census figure will be used for projecting population of the area and determination of sample size, official documents, case studies of successful intervention and other relevant secondary literature. In addition, this assessment will be based on existing information from reports, such as the most recent UN-HABITAT Global Reports on Human Settlements and State of the World Cities Reports.

Primary data relating to quality of life were obtained by means of structured questionnaire administered on a systematic sample frame of 500 household heads, from a sampling size of 5000 housing units. The primary data includes five hundred household questionnaires, this will be was used to elicit information on the socio-economic characteristics of respondents of the poor residential neighborhoods in the selected Areas of Oshogbo metropolitan region.

IV. RESULT, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Objective 1: Identify the Poor Residential Neighborhoods in Selected Areas

In order to reach the above mentioned objectives, the study included on consolidates secondary data. The secondary data consist of available land use maps of Oshogbo from previous publications and Osun State Ministry of Land. The National Population Commission, NPC census figure were used for projecting population of the area and determination of sample size.

Objective 2: Examine the Characteristics of Poor Residential Neighborhoods in the Study Area

The study reveals that poor residential neighborhoods are mainly characterized by informal sectors, inadequate access to basic services, both social and physical infrastructure and housing finance. Other characteristics of poor residential neighborhoods include: lack or inadequate access to basic public services; substandard housing and inadequate building structures; illegal subdivision of buildings; poverty, criminality and social exclusion; and unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations.

Objective 3: Examine the Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Residents in the Selected Areas

Content analysis and the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) were used to analyze variables. A brief description of the socio-economic composition of respondents in the study area reveals that 60% were males, while 40% were females. This explains the extent to which men traditionally dominate most households in Nigeria. The age range indicates that 80% of the respondents were either 40 years old or less than 40years old, respectively. Thus, suggesting the predominance of middle-aged tenants over older adults' tenants occupying most housing units in the studied area. From the survey, 65% were married, while 35% were single. The socio-economic status revealed that 55% of the respondents are low-income, 25% are low- medium income, 15% are upper-medium income while only 5% are high-income. This suggests that only few people are comfortable with their income, showing that the majority of the habitants are poor.

Objective 4: Analyze the Physical Characteristics of Residential Buildings in the Selected Areas

The study defined quality of the house in terms of ventilation, lighting, spaces, aesthetic, security, landscape, sanitation, type of construction materials and external environment. Despite the fact the majority of the houses were constructed by the use of modern material, the study conducted reveals that about 50% houses studied were in poor condition, (35%) are in moderate condition and only (15%) are in good condition. Here one can argue that the construction of the houses that emerging in poor residential neighborhoods are what individuals or households had been able to construct from their little income obtained from informal sectors.

The study reveals that it's the income of the household that determine the quality of the house; most of houses with poor condition are belonging of the low income category. Therefore the income has a great impact on the quality of house being constructed.

The correlation analysis reveals that a positive and significant relationship exists between quality of life and some variables like ventilation, lighting, spaces, aesthetic, security,

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Architectural and Environmental Engineering
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drainage, landscape, sanitation, type of construction materials and external environment of the house. This implies that quality of life tends to increase as the conditions and availability of ventilation, lighting, spaces, aesthetic, security, landscape, sanitation, type of construction materials and external environment of the house improves within the study area.

V. Recommendations

Recommendations in this study are structured into broad areas on: how to alleviate the poverty of the residents, improve the level of infrastructural facilities, housing conditions and general environmental conditions of the study area so as to achieve a Healthy, livable, prosperous and sustainable human settlement. It is evident that decent housing is a major problem of poor residential neighborhoods. This is largely due to their low level of financial capacity coupled with inefficient land administration system which have further exclude them from urban life. Therefore, any attempt to achieve livable, healthy and prosper cities must as a matter of urgency address housing issue. This means that there must be a conscious effort focusing on provision of decent housing for the poor at an affordable rate. This can be achieved through different means such as site and services and compressive housing.

Therefore, deliberate effort should be made to improve the livelihood of this category of people. Their means of livelihood which is centered on informal sector should be recognized and be supported.

VI. Conclusion

This study has shown that the majority of residents of poor residential neighborhoods in Oshogbo belong to the informal sectors. The finding on the assessment of quality of life indicates some inequalities among the residents; with middle and high income apparently demonstrating a higher level of housing quality compared to low income. This is expressed in terms of the quality and adequacies of infrastructural facilities, building designs, elements and fixtures rated in the study.

However, these variations were caused by factors such as; poverty, time of development, lack of maintenance of buildings and absence of adequate physical planning in the affected area. Despite noticeable disparities in housing quality amongst the studied areas, socio-economic factors had significant influence on the overall quality of life. The finding confirms that the quality of housing or residential development in poor residential neighborhoods is influenced and determined by the socio-economic factors among other related factors.

Significantly, adequate housing contributes not only to national development but also determines the health, security, sanitation and socio-economical and physical wellbeing of the individual, the community and the nation at large [16]. It is of necessity that attention is paid to ensuring qualitative housing provision for the people, especially low income. Therefore, there is the need to improve existing housing stocks within the poor residential neighborhoods.

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