

## CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIA'S URBAN ENVIRONMENT: THE ABUJA CASE

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### ABSTRACT

The continued growth of urban population in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa has brought along with it, a myriad of challenges. Exacerbated by high birth rate and a continued increase in the level of rural-urban migration, the economic, infrastructural, and social conditions in these urban centres have been incapable of providing a good standard of living for its inhabitants. With a population of about 188 million and a HDI of 152 in 188 ranked countries, urban centres in Nigeria are plagued with poor security, epileptic power and water supply, poor sanitation, health challenges, high cost of construction amongst other challenges (NPC, 2017). This qualitative study expands on current knowledge with regards to the current challenges facing Nigeria's urban environment with focus on Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria as a primary case. This paper also analyses some of these long standing challenges, their interrelatedness and how they exacerbate the inability of the Nigerian government to solving them. Furthermore, the conclusion lays a response to these challenges with recommendation on the process of unravelling the complex conglomerate issues.

**Keywords:** Developing Countries, Population Growth, Sustainability, Urbanisation, Urban Development.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Abuja is the current capital of Nigeria and it's located in the North Central region of the country. At the creation of Abuja, the government of Nigeria sought the idea of the city as seat of government, a place of and a symbol of unity, a melting pot of Nigeria's diverse cultures, and a magnet of diverse peoples and nations (FCDA, 1979). This sense of aspiration emerged from the urban problems experienced in Lagos, and also acted as a pilot for the policies and strategic guidelines for the urban development of the new capital city. Lagos was the former capital of Nigeria but was relocated to Abuja due to rapid rise in rent, over population, location of Lagos close to the sea side which was prone to attacks, overcrowding, rapid slum growth, health hazards, small land mass and saturated development down south.

The vision towards the creation of Abuja in the mid-1970s focused on the attainment of a city that would be developed based on a more-people centred urban planning and developmental policies. The city was envisioned to provide a sense of place for every Nigerian, irrespective of their tribe and status in the society. Thereby creating a city with emphasis on integrating and serving the people as a symbol of unity and greatness. With focus on sustainable urban development as its watch word (Jibril, 2006). The current outcome of the city is a combination of various challenges which includes high crime level, unemployment, health issues, poverty, overstretched public facilities/infrastructures, high population density and poor planning policies. Therefore rather than solving a problem by moving the capital the present state of the capital has not tackled the pressing challenges in which urban areas face within the country. The remaining sections of this paper would look at the definition of Urbanisation from a global perspective, urbanisation and urban growth, challenges/consequences of urbanisation, urbanisation in Nigeria's and its challenges and lastly recommendation/conclusion.

## **DEFINITION OF URBANISATION FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

Rapid urban explosion is agreed to be the most complex and important socio-economic and environmental phenomenon that has emerged between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Kessides, 2005). Urbanisation is understood in most cases as a shift from a predominantly rural society to an urban society which represents major irreversible changes in production and consumption and how people interact with nature (Allen, 2002). Discourses on urbanisation have changed from an interactional debate towards focusing on how the urban environments and the entire urbanisation process can be studied through a sustainability lens. By definition, urbanisation can be stated as a process by which rural areas become urbanised as a result of economic development and industrialisation (Peng et al, 2010).

The definition of urbanisation can be based on the change in population or the change in the nature of towns and cities. With regards to demographic growth, the term 'urbanisation' explains the redistribution of populations from rural to urban settlements over a period of time (UNDESAPD, 2014:15). It is also vital to affirm that what is seen as the key indicators of an urban environment differ from one country to another. It therefore, is imperative to be cautious against the use of urbanisation as a blanket term across all societies. It is also important to caution against a flagrant comparison of urbanisation across various societies, given the nature of the disparity that exists between them (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 2005; UN-Habitat, 2007). Peng et al., (2010) argues that the major difference between urban and rural environments is that urban environments are much larger, denser, and more heterogeneous societies as compared to rural environments which are much smaller, more sparsely separated, and possess less differentiated spaces. Urbanisation is argued to be the outcome of social, economic, environmental and political development that leads to urban concentration and growth of

bigger cities, changes in the use of land and transformation from rural to metropolitan pattern of organisation, governance and way of life (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 2005). Also Hall et al., (1973: 118) defines urbanisation as the use of land for urban purposes, focusing on people rather than on land or physical structures. It refers to the activities of the people (economic, social and cultural) and these factors define urban areas.

## **METHOD OF STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to analyse the challenges facing Nigeria's urban environment. And the main method used to carry out the research was literature review of both published and unpublished materials, as well as archival materials. Also the research was centred on Abuja city which was the case study area. The present capital city was analysed with focus on how this pressing challenges has occurred due to rapid urbanisation. Also literature review was the main method used for analysing the study area. This was complimented with observations and professional experience garnered in Abuja as the researchers are experts within the field of sustainability and urban development. This paper provides sufficient data needed to investigate the problem of rapid urbanisation in Abuja and how this has impacted on the presented challenges people face within the capital city.

## **URBANISATION AND URBAN GROWTH**

As the world's urban population reached its tipping point in 2007, the UN-Habitat (2007) noted that these dramatic movements to cities was caused by push and pull factors such as attraction of opportunities for wealth generation, healthcare, jobs and infrastructure, amongst others. These changes from rural to urban societies and the continual growth of the urban areas have resulted in the phenomenon of "large cities" and "megacities". Large cities are defined as cities with a population of 5 million to 10 million inhabitants, while megacities are defined as urban areas with a population of 10 million or more. As at 2015, there were 43 large cities and 28 megacities in the world; this is expected to increase by the end of 2030 (UNFPA, 2015). Most megacities are located in the global south and the projection by the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN D.E.S.A) estimates that over half of this growth will occur in Africa and Asia, countries where the world's economic geography and growth is now shifting. As at 1990 approximately 75 per cent of all South Americans were living in urban spaces due to the unprecedented industrialisation that took place in the 1970s and 1980s. Europe ranked second with a little more than 73 per cent of the whole population living in urban areas. Africa, had the highest urban growth rate within the period 1960 - 1990, at about 4.9 per cent in comparison with the global annual rate of 2.8 per cent (UNCHS, 1992). This growth in urban population that has occurred throughout the past decades is a result of changes in both demography and development. It is feasible to note that developing countries are going to continue to increase substantially in population overtime, with continuing migration from rural to urban areas (UNFPA, 2015).

There would be high urban growth in Latin America, North America, Africa and Asia. Africa and Asia in contrast remain, to some level, rural, although their rate of urbanisation has picked up recently with 40 per cent and 48 per cent of their populations living in urban areas, respectively (UNFPA, 2015). According to statistics by United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, the world's population has grown drastically since 1950 from 2.5 billion to 7.3 billion in 2015 and is expected to reach 9.7 billion in 2050. Asia is shown to have 60 per cent of the global population, 16 per cent reside in Africa, 10 per cent in Europe, 9 per cent in Latin America and the

Caribbean, and the remaining 5 per cent in Northern America and Oceania. In the coming decades the level of urbanisation is projected to increase in all regions and major countries (Peng et al, 2010).

Africa and Asia is projected to be urbanising faster than the rest of the continents. These areas are anticipated to hit 56 and 64 per cent of the urban dwellers, respectively, by the middle of the twenty-first century (Chryssy, 2010; UNDESAPD, 2014). The rate of urbanisation is measured as average annual rate of change of the percentage of urban dwellers. Concurrently, countries that had traditionally high rates of urbanisation now have a slower pace. In overall the rate of urbanisation tends to slowdown as the total population are habituated in the urban area (Peng et al, 2010; UNDESAPD, 2014).

## **CHALLENGES, CONSEQUENCES, BENEFITS OF URBANISATION**

The report presented by the United Nations Human Settlement Programme on the state of African cities published in 2008, indicated that cases of serious urban sprawl and emergence of urban corridors exist in many parts of some cities in Africa (UN-HABITAT, 2008; NUDP, 2012). The increased population in the urban centres and the consequent reduction of population in these rural communities leads to a further reduction of the already scarce resource allocation. This therefore plunges them further into the circle of underdevelopment which creates the push factors that perpetuates the migration and also the pull factors that attracts economic development. These push factors of rural populations include circumstances that prevents the populace from earning decent livelihoods. This includes land deterioration, lack of adequate land, unequal land distribution, droughts, poor health systems, extreme poverty and religious conflict. Local economic declines are key push issues for moving to urban centres as well, while pull factors tend to inspire this rural population to move to urban centres for lifestyle reasons (Gugler, 1997). The biggest attraction is the industrial wages; people will move to cities as long as urban wages outweigh rural wages. Other factors are employment opportunities, attraction of better lifestyle, healthcare, education and basic infrastructures (Girardet 1996; Sajor, 2001: pg.12).

These causes of rapid urbanisation have been as a result of migration, and an increase in population growth. This process of urbanisation comes with challenges/benefits such as increased population density, gentrification, overstretched public facilities and services, labour, development.

### High population density

As urbanisation leads to an increase in the population in a society, the number of people per unit of area increases. This increases the competition for resources amongst the settlers in these areas and the chances/ease of spread of an epidemic. Also, a high population density leads to a commensurate increase in the cost of living. Urban centres like Singapore, Zurich - Switzerland, Hong Kong, Geneva – Switzerland, Paris, London, New York, Copenhagen - Denmark, Seoul - South Korea, Los Angeles are the 10 most expensive cities to live in in 2016 (CNN, 2016). These costs have increased the rate of migration to these centres as people from smaller cities relocate for the prospects of better living.

### Over stretched public services and facilities

The increase in population is rarely commensurate with an increase in the available public services and facilities. This stress and lack of sufficient infrastructures, services and drainage systems has side effect and has serious consequences. This may often leads to environmental deterioration and improper/poor maintenance due to over use of infrastructure. Urban extension creates suburbs that are then dependent on services like automobile transport system to allow for easy

commuting to work but has resulted in heavy traffic congestion, and air pollution through fossil fuel use. In most cases in the developing world, cities cannot manage or handle the influx of urban migration which results in the growth of shanty towns and suburban slum areas associated with various problems (UNDEAP, 2014).

### Gentrification

Some of the consequences of Urbanisation are the loss of resources (both human and natural) from the rural areas. As mentioned, mega cities are partially caused when there is high rate of migration from the rural area to the urban centres. This occurrence, addressed by the dependency theory, occurs as the able bodied labour force migrates from the rural peripherals to the urban centre in their search for better working standards. This leaves the rural areas, lacking skilled and efficient labour, which further leads to their deterioration. Urban areas are known to be habitats to socio-economic disparities where we recognise a wide range of social standards, gentrification, social fragmentation and social cultural conflicts based on the various strata within the area. A significant number of urban poor are located on the outskirts of the city centre (Hall, 2001; Kotter, 2004)

### Development

Rapid urban growth and expansion results into new extensions been built around the edges of urban centres mostly taking up farmland and encroaching on other neighbouring cities. Though sometimes destructive on the natural environment this growth necessitates the need to provide utilities and road networks alongside services such as schools, recreational parks, healthcare, and retail parks (Sajor, 2001). The growth of these cities leads to megacities, which in turn creates manufacturing industries that provide locally made consumer products, job opportunities and extra tax revenue - but at the same time the presence of industry imposes heavy pressure on. The expansion of cities leads to the improvement of urban planning laws, rules and guides. This can help to guide development towards achieving a proper sustainable built environment; in essence, the extension of cities in most cases helps to advance urban development projects and creates provision of public facilities (Kotter, 2004). However, in a situation where an extension develops outside the law, and without the use of proper urban planning guidelines, the result is informal housing, squats and slums where most migrants themselves settle.

### Labour

In addition to this, urban spaces attract large volumes of highly skilled and unskilled labour based on the influx of people in search of better jobs; and also there is a high concentration of capital stock which then makes it attractive for investment. Urban agglomerations and bigger cities create income and investment, and these impacts on the local economies, which also has a positive influence on the surrounding rural environments.

## **URBANISATION IN NIGERIA**

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa, with an estimated population of 188 million citizens (Idowu, 2013). After Nigeria's independence, Urbanisation in Nigeria was to be propagated by the creation of new states in the late 1960s. During this period much resource was directed towards the new states and the development of their capital. Such actions inadvertently facilitated the continuation of the rural – urban migration (Daramola, 2010).

Prior to the 1970, while the Nigerian economy was dependent on agriculture, the rate of rural-urban migration was very low. Data shows that “in 1952, 11% of the total population was classified as urban; however, by 1985 and 2002, the percentages of the population living in urban areas rose to 31% and 46%, respectively” (Ogun, 2010). The discovery of crude oil led to the increased migration of rural dwellers in the search of white collar jobs. Though this period saw an increased investment in infrastructure, increased jobs creation, and economic expansion, the rate of these expansions fell below the level needed to support the populations in the urban centres like Lagos, Kaduna, Kano and Port Harcourt. This upward trend in the growth of cities has continued since 1970s. Table 3 below shows the upward trend in urban population since 1985. This growth has seen about 18 cities rise to have a population of over 500000, with Lagos having a population of over 8 million.

**Table 1:** National and Urban Population trends for Nigeria 1985-2004

Year	National population growth rate (%)	Urban population growth rate (%)	Urban population as % of total
1985	2.8	5.7	31
1990	2.9	5.5	35
1995	3.0	5.4	40
2000	2.8	4.5	44
2002	2.7	4.0	46
2004	2.8	4.3	49

**Source:** World Bank, 2009

This migration and resultant urbanisation have been argued to have brought about a variety of problems such as poor security, extreme crime rates, high unemployment, high poverty rate, slums, insecurity and environmental degradation among others (Agbola, 2004; National Planning Policy, 2012). The continuous rate of infrastructural development was one of the major phenomena to occur between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with concentration of economic and administrative activities in key cities like Port Harcourt, Lagos, Kaduna, Ibadan, Enugu, Jos, Kano and Abuja. These states had high degrees of specialisation and larger population size and were known for various goods, services and government offices (Idowu, 2013).

This trend of urbanisation that has fostered the continuation of rural urban migration, has lingered on into the 21st century. As Nigeria’s population continues to increase at a rate of 2.67% (Trading Economics, 2016), it has also influenced rapid urban population growth. Such growth, however, has not been followed by adequate infrastructural development, planning or management of both the urban and rural centres. This has essentially resulted in the deterioration of the standard of living in these cities (Ogun, 2010). This case of rapid urbanisation with inequivalent development of infrastructure has propagated many challenges for urbanisation in Nigeria. These challenges include are further exacerbated by a concentration of resources and development in the urban centres, continual migration of resources from rural areas to urban centres, a lack of adequate long term planning for the development of cities and rural areas, and a lack of continuity in the planning and implementation process.

This lack of adequate long term planning for the development of cities and rural areas is partially due on the insufficient capacity, resources and lack of up-to-date data to implement proper planning (Jibril, 2006). The Federal government of Nigerian has repeatedly attempted the implementation of policies that will both maximise the population size while mitigating the challenges of urbanisation. Such development policies include the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), The Nigerian vision 20:2020, the Transformation Agenda and the 7-point agenda (Oluwatayo and Opoko, 2014; National Planning Policy, 2012). These national development plans, implemented by various administrations in Nigeria have focused on the development and implementation of concise urbanisation policies. They have, in varying degrees, put at the forefront of urban development, the sustained planning and implementation of housing schemes, and attempted to address the lack of funding to the housing sector and, tried to curtail the problem of inefficient city planning (National Planning Policy, 2012). The effect of these plans, their progresses and setback is best studied in the case of Abuja: The Federal Capital of Nigeria. Due to its designation as the national capital, it houses the headquarters of most government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). This therefore has made it the epicentre for the implementation of urban development policies and projects.

### **ABUJA CASE STUDY**

Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has been at the core of urbanisation since its designation as the Nation's capital in 1975 (Abuja Journal, 2017). In August 1975, the Federal government of Nigeria mandated that a special committee should assess the desirability of moving the then capital of Nigeria from Lagos to another location. The resulting report, suggested that an area of 8000 km<sup>2</sup> located in Nigeria's Middle Belt Region, south of the town now known as Suleja (formerly Abuja) and north of the confluence of Rivers Niger and Benue, should become Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. Through a series of stages, by December 1991, the President and his cabinet were relocated to Abuja (Alkali, 2005). This shift in the capital saw an unprecedented population growth. The National Population Commission shows that the population of Abuja which was less than 100,000 in 1989 had rapidly increased to 378,671 by November 1991 (National Population Census, 1991) and has continued to grow since then (Abuja Journal, 2017). This increase brought pressure on the still infant and developing infrastructure of Abuja city; this is most notably in the area of housing (Alkali, 2005).

The massive housing deficits has given rise to rapidly rising rents, overcrowding, upward leakage of units, shared households, growth of small-scale private sector housing in the outlying settlements of the city, and, in not a few cases, homelessness (Ikejiofor, 1998). It has also been noted by the Federal Government that the private sector investment in infrastructural development in Abuja would amount to about 35% of the total cost. This has unfortunately been at only about 5%, leaving the Federal government to cover 95% of the cost of developing Abuja (This Week, 1987). This has ultimately led to the Nigerian government being the sole provider for housing and infrastructural development in Abuja. Ikejiofor (1998:301) argues that "this may be either due to the fact that attractive returns on investment in Abuja are not yet guaranteed, or an indication that Abuja has not been able to attract a diversified populace, as a new centre of unity should". Also the bottleneck of bureaucracy in the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) may be a cause of the low private sector infrastructural investment witnessed. Evidence of this disparity that is witnessed in the lack of private sector investment in infrastructure in Abuja is the housing deficit faced. This, the former minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Senator Bala Mohamed noted, was at 17 million with Abuja accounting for about 10% of that figure (Vanguard, 2014).

Since Nigeria's independence, the continually changing governments have attempted to address these issues of urbanisation under different policy programs. From 1978 till date there have been four different policy programs that have been implemented with varying levels of success (Jibril, 2006; Mabogunje, 2001). But with the continual growth of urban populations, there have been limited success, of which some have argued, have been regression (when the population growth rate exceeds the rate of infrastructural development). Jill (2013) note that Abuja has a per capita income which is well above the national average, making it an appealing retail destination for investors and developers likewise, making Abuja a viable target for job seekers especially with the high unemployment rate of 13.3%. This creates a high per capital income cities which is surrounded in close proximity by low income communities. The continuation of such propagates the increasing rural-urban migration and hence the dilapidation of the urban centres. These have been major contributing factor to the sky-rocketing in the population of Abuja which as at December 2016 is calculated at 2.5 million (Jill, 2013).

This research therefore infers from the evidence that the factors responsible for Nigeria's rapid urban population growth rates includes:

- Natural population increases arising from high birth and fertility rates
  - This is due to improvement in health facilities;
- Rural-urban migration fuelled by economic factors like:
  - Search for better standard of living/healthcare facilities and basic infrastructures
  - Search for employments opportunities
- Creation of states which includes the
  - Creation (or relocation of) local governments and
  - Locations of public facilities like universities, industries, religious camps/retreats, hospitals, parks. These make the new capitals hot-spots for local investments.
- Location and development of new towns.

The table 2 below shows the population growth of Nigerians between 1921 to 2006.

**Table 2:** Population of Nigeria (1921-2006)

Year	Total Population	Urban Population	Urban Population (%)	Cities of 20,000 or more	Cities of 100,000 or more	Cities of 500,000 or more	Cities of 1,000,000 or more
1921	18,720,00	890,000	4.5	10	-	-	-
1931	20,956,000	1,343,000	6.7	24	2	-	-
1952/54	20,402,000	3,701,000	10.2	54	7	-	-
1963	55,670,000	10,702,000	19.2	183	24	2	-
1972	78,927,000	19,832,000	25.1	302	38	3	-
1984	96,684,000	31,906,000	33.0	356	62	14	-
1991	101,900,000	37,703,000	37.0	589	68	23	-
1999	110,650,000	43,500,000	41.0	774	76	28	5
2006	140,431,790	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Sources:** Adapted from Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2009)



### **Challenges facing Abuja's Urban Environment (Issues caused by uncontrolled Urbanism in Nigeria)**

After the shift of the Nation's capital from Lagos to Abuja in 1994, Abuja has seen a drastic rise in population till date (Alkali, 2005). This has overstretched the fiscal, technical and managerial capacities of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) to properly managing the usage of lands, provision of housing and basic infrastructure, maintenance of public services and keeping up with the incessant population growth. This continual growth in population along with the rapidly increasing urban population makes it important to analyse this problems and develop appropriate responses to the growing challenges (NUDP, 2012). Such responses must be implementable at the different levels of government in Nigeria (i.e. the Federal, State and Local government levels). Only by such, could sustainable urbanism be achieved.

There is no doubt that this rapid urbanisation rate has resulted in various economic, cultural and environmental issues. The problems and challenges have created uncontrolled and unplanned cities resulting in millions of urban dwellers living in substandard dwellings mainly slums and shanty towns (Daramola and Ibem, 2010; Jiboye, 2010). Ogunleye, (2005) and Jiboye, (2011) argue that these issues raised by the uncontrolled urbanism in Nigeria include:

- The loss of Biodiversity
- High population density
- Risk of epidemic outbreak
- Security
- Reduced access to social infrastructure

The absence of effective advocacy and inappropriate programmes for promoting planned urban growth and development has further compounded the present problems. Urbanisation, in its rapid, uncontrolled, and unplanned form that occurs in Abuja and other cities in the global south, has unfortunately increased the level of poverty in these cities due to increased level of resource competition amongst an increasing number of people (Idowu, 2013). Evidence has shown that the issues of urbanisation are not limited to housing and the discomfort that they bring. Rather, they spread to other aspects of society. Below are some of the challenges and their effect in Abuja.

#### Housing and Urbanisation

In 2014, Nigeria reached its highest peak of housing deficiency of over 17 million (Afolayan, 2017). This deficiency according to is exacerbated by the lack of investment in housing market and the incapacity of traditional housing development practices. Sanusi (2003) also argues that the high bureaucracy and interest rates have stifled the rate of development of the housing system and restricted its growth. These shortages have caused the housing system to fall into a dilapidated state leading research like Adewale (2005) who described the housing standards as very poor, due to factors like overcrowding, poor substandard building materials and inadequacy of infrastructural provision like roads, drainages and other supporting facilities. Over 75 per cent of this housing within urban areas is substandard and located in slums and this paves the way for crime, poor sanitary conditions, poverty, gentrification, and lack of basic facilities amongst others (Oluwatayo and Opoko, 2014). Lack of adequate housing has increased the cost of housing in neighbourhoods that have better security and basic infrastructures. This leaves the rent in estates and city centres to rise to exorbitant rates while the cost of purchasing land and the acquiring of the needed permits in order for individuals to build on, is also

exuberant. As a result these, Abuja city (and other metropolis in Nigeria) is plagued with an increase in the cases of homelessness with many opting to live in slums where poor materials are used for temporary constructions, live in abandoned buildings or sleep under bridges and other public spaces.

The collapse of houses is another issue, resultant of the rise in urbanisation (NUDP, 2012). Furthermore, the increased challenges in construction and the costs of labour, and materials have led to an increase in the number of poorly constructed building. This has resulted in an increased number of building collapse. Ede (2013) notes that “the cost of these failures in terms of human lives and enormous economic waste, loss of investments, job, income, etc., cannot be over emphasized”. These failures also occur due to the unexpected stress from usage these structures experience. With the lack of adequate projection on the growth of these urban centre, the development of public and private buildings are sometimes not intended for the stress that is bestowed on them, leading to their unfortunate collapse.

### Poverty and Urbanisation

The World Bank describes poverty based on the characteristics of hunger, inadequate shelter, poor healthcare without access to medical care, no education and amongst others (Idowu, 2013). It is also seen as not been able to fend for the next day, a state of hopelessness and lack of basic needs. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) like the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) aims to eradicate poverty in order to upgrade living standards of people living in both urban/rural settlements. Statistics provided by the World Bank states that rural poverty reduced from 19 per cent to 16 per cent while in urban area it increased from 9 per cent to 12 per cent (UN-Habitat, 2007; Idowu, 2013). Between 1985 and 1992, extreme poverty rate increased from 10.1 million people to 13.9 million with a near threefold increase in the urban poverty from 1.5 million to 4.3 million people (UN-Habitat, 2007).

This prevalence of poverty has hampered the process of urbanisation. Primarily, the movement of labour, rather than benefit the urban (or developing) centres, tends to burden the available facility. This occurs when skilled or semi-skilled labour moves from the rural area to the urban centre, providing more supply of a specific skill over its demand. This excess of such skilled or semi-skilled labour therefore revert to performing other jobs rather than return to the rural area. This hereby deprives the rural areas of such needed skills while increasing the population density, increasing the propensity of security risks, the overstretching of infrastructure and social services, and the increase in population beyond the capacity of the state.

### Crimes and Insecurity

Urbanisation, as argued earlier, results in a rapid increase in the population density of a given area which creates security challenges. Jiboye, (2011a) argues that the rate of crime in Nigerian cities can be associated with the exploded growth in these places with juvenile delinquent youth and adults, poverty, and unemployment (Jiboye, 2011a; Jiboye, 2011b). NUDP (2012) in a report linked the increase in crime rate to the rising youth unemployment, gradual decline of traditional social values, breakdown of family cohesiveness and community spirit. These ensuing security challenges reduce the willingness for investment in these urban centres. The presence of an unsafe and high crime rate environment reduces the eagerness of investors to pour resources into the society. Another pressing security treats are the rise and spread of Boko haram, which is a terrorist organisation in North-East Nigeria and the operations of the Niger-Delta militants over the past decade has seen a loss in investments across Nigeria.

### Food Insecurity and Urbanisation

The oil boom in the late 1970s has had negative impact on the growth of the agricultural sector. “Oil money” is much easier to generate due to the fact that crude oil is drilled out and sold in comparison to agriculture where it takes a longer time to till the soil, plant, grow, harvest and then sell. Most skills in rural areas are found amongst agricultural farmers who depend on this source of livelihood to provide for their family (NUDP, 2012). Hence a high number of people involved in agricultural activities in rural areas abandon these activities and migrate to urban areas to look for jobs in the manufacturing, processing and informal sectors. This has led to a high decline in agricultural activities which has resulted in the importation of food like rice, tomatoes and flour. Such dependence on importation has invariably subjected the staple foods to international price fluctuation which constantly lies above the average earning power of Nigerians

### Unemployment

The rate of unemployment is high in Nigeria as a result of population growth, creation of fewer jobs and a high influx of skilled and unskilled to urban areas. Rural to urban migration has a massive impact on unemployment level of key destination cities because of the uneven migration of people across the country, mainly the rural to urban migration (Aworemi et al., 2011). It was estimated that, between 1998 and 1999, the unemployment rate increased from 5.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent in urban areas while on a national scale it increased from 3.9 per cent to 4.7 per cent in a similar period (USAID, 2002). Another factor for this was the migration of people from other neighbouring African counties seeking employment (NUDP, 2012).

These challenges posed by unemployment to urbanisation include the excessive reliance by a population, on the available social service while there is a limited growth of the economy. The imbalance constrains the healthy growth of urban (and rural) areas leading to either a lower standard of living or the growth of slums.

### Environment, Health and Urbanisation

Impact on the environment is one of the major challenges posed by urbanisation in urban centres in Nigeria; this specifically relates to issues like ecological degradation, pollution, habitat loss, desertification, soil erosion, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, flooding, and other factors. These factors have other sets of sub-categories such as pollution (water, land, visual and noise), global warming, traffic congestion and slum development and so on (Idowu, 2013). Cities close to the coast where oil is extracted and refined are prone to oil spillage and air pollution - examples are Lagos, Bayelsa, and Rivers. Also many health-related illnesses are from environmental-related problems. How people behave, act and react is as a result of what the environment has sown into their minds; this is why urban residents in slums experience high rates of prostitution, drug use, crime and violence (Daramola and Ibem, 2010). Other problems include poor waste management which causes diseases like typhoid, dysentery and malaria to spread fast. Most urban centres are known for large traffic congestion and the fumes from the exhaust pollute the atmosphere badly (Idowu, 2013). Cities are major contributors of Green House Gases (GHG). As a result, cities are increasingly witnessing the adverse effects of climate change arising from GHG emissions which could be reduced by paying more attention to the design, production and operation of buildings in urban areas (NUDP, 2012).

Finally, although urbanisation is not inevitable, it is also beneficial to the economic development of cities in Nigeria which are major engines of growth and centres of political activities. The implications of Nigeria’s rapid and unplanned

urbanisation are profound not just for the people living in cities and towns but more broadly for the Nigerian economy and indeed for peaceful political, social and environmental development. Promoting the development of the cities is therefore central to achieving socio-political stability, economic growth and environmental sustainability of the country. In addition, cities operate in the national human settlements system and there is the need to re-examine the linkages between the developments of rural areas and rural peoples and the growth of urban areas (NUDP, 2012; Idowu, 2013).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

Urbanisation possesses many benefits. The increase in the population and the industrialisation provides a higher level and availability of skill required to provide the necessary services for a good and prosperous life. The primary benefit of urbanisation is the economic value. The combination of diverse people, their idea and experiences, make urban centres a whirlpool of economic activities and industrialisation. The increased population and their proximity makes room for economics of scale, higher wages, foster an innovative environment and allows for the development complex systems. Though these benefits could be gotten from urbanisation, the research has also shown that the propensities for many issues to arise are high. As noted by UN-HABITAT (2013), urbanisation in many instances has led to increased poverty and deprivation. Browne (2014) notes that this increased poverty in urban areas manifests into the increasing number of urban slums and limited access to services like health care, education and security. There also is the increased vulnerability of people to oppression, and the environmental challenges that ensue.

The process of urbanisation cannot be left to chance. There is always a pertinent need for constant study in understanding, not only the historical and cultural factors that can affect the development of a society, but the employment of research analysis process to anticipate the challenges. Most, as shown in this study, arise from the unchecked population growth. This, as repeatedly argued, leads to numerous challenges that continually are exacerbated by the increasing complexity of societies.

Urbanisation in some cases results to urban development which is a multi-faceted process engaging the services of multi-disciplinary professionals. It entails coordinating and harmonising the various land-use decisions and building activities of a multitude of actors (government institutions and agencies, stakeholders, civil society organisations, and individuals) by the established planning agencies at all tiers of government in the country.

For the benefits of urbanisation to be harnessed, the following, though briefly stated, are the recommendations of this study:

- There should be consistency in policy developed within the urban development framework which should have a long term planning approach. Also these policies should be constantly revisited under short/medium term planning approach to follow current development within urban sciences.
- There should be consistent data collection which should feed into the research which should also affect the development within the changing nature of society
- Sustainability Urban Assessment Tool/Framework should be established in order to act as a mechanism for promoting the participation and collaboration of major actors involved in the process of achieving sustainable urbanism.
- Develop a capacity and promote a shared understanding by all actors of their roles and responsibilities in urban development and management.

- Build capacities of relevant agencies and actors to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities in promoting sustainable urban development and management and supervise the activities of the physical planning regulatory bodies.
- Rural spaces are home to people with very low productive skills which, when brought to cities, have little relevance for their sustenance. The difference between developed societies like in Europe is that when people migrate they bring in skills while in Nigeria most of the people from the rural spaces are farmers without skills, making them unable to contribute which creates an imbalance of skills. The government should encourage the development of skills in both rural and urban settlements in order to reduce the level of urbanisation and to help increase people's development.
- Most urban spaces in Nigeria are in their infancy and there are opportunities because the country is currently battling with urban planning problems and challenges, in the sense that most of the major metropolises are growing exponentially. The government can intervene in controlling the master plan and proposing a sustainable strategic growth pattern. Overall the researcher recommends that the government reviews master plans for sustainable purposes.
- Build and strengthen the capacities of relevant ministries, departments and agencies to facilitate the adaptation of sustainable urban development principles and also provide necessary support and incentives to the private sector to effectively participate in the establishment of sustainability assessment schemes.
- Build and strengthen the capacities of state planning boards and local planning authorities to implement these schemes using a top-down approach.

All this recommendation if properly taken into consideration will help in achieving a truly sustainable urban development in Nigeria.

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