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Evaluation of Urban Renewal Strategies towards Physical Growth of Nigeria

Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) is a term to denote systems employed to revitalize, regenerate urban area and cities in general. The basic mode acceptable worldwide are redevelopment, rehabilitation, revitalization and reservation. This paper presents each of these mechanisms in holistic term on one hand and discussion on areas where urban renewal had taken place in Nigeria which as case studies is presented. The urban renewal strategy impact on the physical growth namely building and environmental condition of these areas is also discussed. Therefore this research is carried out using secondary data obtained through study and evaluated. The outcome shows that renewal activities do displace and disrupt original inhabitant of an area and their economic activity. However, the overall positive impact indicates rapid growth and development both in the physical, economic structure which alternatively accentuate physical growth of Nigeria in general.

Keywords: Re-development, Growth, Environmental, Physical, Impact, Renewal

1. Introduction

The urban renewal strategy is meant to guide the growth of the slum communities in the urban areas, The Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) is a Nigerian government strategy to be implemented by the urban renewal agencies as well as relevant non- government departments and other stakeholders. Urban renewal strategy is planning effort to revitalize urban slum with huge and increased population. Every year, many Nigerians migrate to urban centers, the consequences of this trend result to overuse limited facilities and decay necessitating renewal. Slum is a regular feature of today urban centers. Lagos state is a typical model where decay of urban centre exists. One factor that influences the prevalence of slum is poverty. Osatuyi, (2004) wrote that the contrast in environment between where the poor and the rich lives in Lagos metropolis.

Urban renewal strategy spell out the principles, objectives of urban renewal, and the target , the role or renewal agency, the processing of projects, land assembly process, financial arrangement, the social impact assessment. In addressing the problem of urban decay, workable strategy for urban renewal should not be "slash and burn" process instead a comprehensive and holistic approach should be adopted to rejuvenate older government strategy. Moreover the objectives of the initiative must include harnessing the potential of towns and cities as engines of social and economic growth and development; creating orderliness and ensuring that components of the towns and cities function efficiently; as well as improve the aesthetics of the towns and cities to promote healthy living, promote tourism and enhance the urban economy.

The core concept of urban renewal strategy is uplifting the physical, economic social status of urban centers through the application of 4R business strategy or Principles: Redevelopment, Rehabilitation, Revitalization and heritage preservation. There is the need to understand the social elements and the social impact of the strategy by conducting a balance assessment before publishing and Gazette. Assessments should cover knowledge of the population characteristics of the proposed project area; the socio-economic characteristics of the area; the housing conditions in the area; the characteristics of local business activities including small shops and street stalls; the degree of overcrowding in the area; the availability of amenities, community and welfare facilities in the area; the historical background of the area and the cultural and local characteristics of the area. Urban renewal is rewarding but challenging.

Blighted areas are demolished and reconstructed and thus transformed the physical landscape for good. Nevertheless during redevelopment, residents are displaced and may be under compensated and some tenants and businesses are disrupted the achievement of urban renewal is highlighted by Law C.K (2010). Law C.K (2010). Wrote that the strategy of urban renewal rejuvenate, revitalized neighborhood conditions, turning it around entirely. However the challenges are enormous largely due lack of understanding between government and other stake holder. When government decides to re-develop, the affected public is largely outside the policy framework of governance, and hardly are they informed on time. The reason is not far fetch. Jimoh. et al. (2013) said that when action has been taken it is always ad-hoc, policies not properly defined.

2.1. Re-development of Badia East of Lagos State

The Lagos state government has disclosed plans to begin construction of 1,008 housing units to cater for displaced persons from Ijora/Badia area that was demolished in February 2013. The housing scheme to be developed in phase namely sets of six blocks comprising of 228 units is expected to be completed December, 2014. The re-development scheme encompasses 29 blocks of multi tenement apartments and a block of shopping and office complex, with each residential

block comprising of 12 units of mini flats, and 12 unit of each of one, two and three bedroom flats. The redevelopment goal of demolished Badia site is to transform Lagos state to a mega city. The transformation of this site also includes the construction of canal, canal bank road so that these urban slums shall cease to exist. The essence of redevelopment is to eradicate poverty; accentuate sustainable economic growth and physical growth of the nation. The building and residence composition analysis are shown below.

Table 1. Residents composition of Badia

Project site information
Area: 10.04 hectare
Affected buildings: 226
Affected household; 2, 237
Affected Population:9,000

Source: SERAC 2013; Premium Times August, 13, 2013.

Table 2. Building condition before demolition

Variables	%
Buildings with planks bamboo	47
Concrete in deplorable condition	29
Concrete blocks houses	24

Source: Jimoh H.O, Omole F.K., Field survey 2011

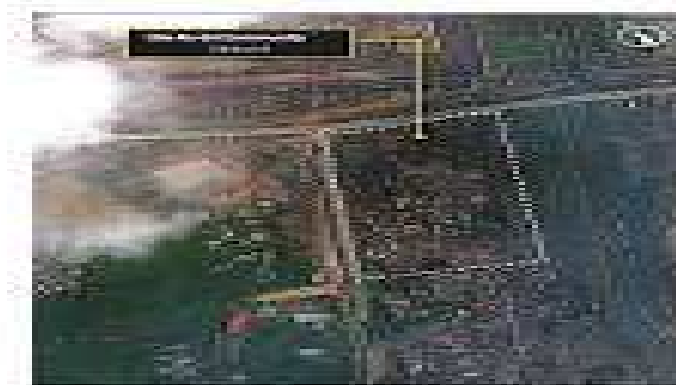


Figure 1. Satellite image of Badia before demolition
Source: bigstory.a.o.org



Figure 2. Building condition of Badia East before demolition
Source: bigstory.ao.org



Figure 3. The Nature of Badia East Environment
Source: bigstory.ao.org



Figure 4. The Nature of Badia East Environment
Source: bigstory.ao.org

Following the demolition of Badia East site, the proposed project development information is provided as shown below:

Table 3. Satisfaction with Building and Environmental Conditions

Variable	%
Satisfied	4.8%
Not satisfied	95.2%

Source: Source: Jimoh H.O.; Omole,F.K. Field survey 2011

Table 4. Project Development Information

Area of land	10.04 hectares
Numbers of Proposed buildings	1,008 flats
Projected household	12,000

Source: LASURA, 2013



Figure 5. A satellite image of Badia East after demolition
Source: bigstory.ao.org



Figure 6. Proposed Dwelling
Source: omojuwa.com, 2013

3. Results and discussion

No matter how good urban renewal schemes are, they are associated with attendant problems. One of the problems is displacement of original inhabitant of the slum area, thereby rendering them homeless. SERAC (2004) states that 9,000 people were displaced in Badia East of Lagos, they had no alternative place to sleep but sleeping outdoors in open and under a nearby bridge, exposed to rain and mosquito.

Another negative consequence URS is loss of inhabitant means of livelihood and failure of government to adequately compensate displaced people. From the case examined, Oluwatosin P. (2014), asserted that a total of 226 structures that served as homes and business were completely destroyed thus affecting an estimated 2,237 household. During the exercise, images from media provided a vivid evidence of displacement as shown below. The analysis in table 5 shows that given that land area is fixed.



Figure 7. Images of displaced persons
Source: Guardian, 2013

Table 5. Comparison of data

Existing Situation	Current Situation
Area: 10.04 hectares	Land Area: 10.04 hectares
Existing buildings: 226	Proposed buildings -1,008 flats
Affected Population:9,000	Projected population 12,000

Source: Field output, 2013

From the above analysis it is obvious that the same parcel of land is used but accommodated more physical buildings with better facilities as shown in plate 5, and with good road network and clean environment within the neighborhood compared to the 226 buildings affected. Moreover as result of redevelopment more than the 9,000 persons initially displaced can now be accommodated. Another advantage of redevelopment is the street furniture provided to light and beautifies the landscape. Urban renewal strategy therefore promotes the growth of physical structures and infrastructure of Nigeria.

4. Conclusion and recommendation

Urban renewal strategy is a veritable tool that accentuates regeneration and overall growth of the physical facet of Nigeria. From the case study discussed and evaluation of the urban renewal strategy used, the following recommendations are useful for national interest:

It is better government and any urban renewal agency intimate the public of governmental concern to revitalize inhabited area ahead of the exercise. Provision of alternative accommodation must be provided for the people that will be affected so that they do not become destitute overnight;

Compensation in kind or of monetary value must be given them in advance before instructing them to leave their home and the vicinity. The compensation must be better than whatever they lost, and to care for inconveniences of relocation; and Social impact assessment should be collected as part of the freezing survey to be conducted immediately after the publication of the proposed project in the Government Gazette. The URA should submit the reports of both the social impact assessments conducted by it to state when it submits a development project.

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