

# The Squatters of Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Their Identity, Wants, Characteristics and Policy Options

Kio-Lawson, Datonjo

Department of Geography and Environmental Management, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria  
lively.stonesassembly@yahoo.co.uk

## Abstract

“Waterside” settlements in the city of Port Harcourt have a long history and tradition. Housing famine occasioned by the astronomical growth in the city’s population is said to be responsible for their springing up and expansion. While they are today part of the geography of the city, the problems associated with them have been nightmarish to every successive government in Rivers State. The effort of the government at different times to deal with these problems had yielded nothing. The plans put forward by the present administration of Hon. Ameachi to tackle the problems had met stiff opposition from the residents of the settlements thus leaving us with the serious question; Why? In view of this question, this paper has taken a clinical study of the “Waterside” settlements in the city. The aim is to provide answer to certain basic questions that has been hanging on our brows; who are these people, how are they fairing, what do they want? Through answer to these questions, the paper has made suggestion as to “what should be done” to tackle the problems of “Waterside” settlements in the city. This paper was concluded after intense days of field research. The information from the field coupled with the residual knowledge of the researcher as well as input from the works of previous scholars made the study a success. Primary data were collected through face-to-face interview with residents of the settlements

**Keywords:** Environment, Housing, Port Harcourt, Settlement, Waterside.

## 1. Introduction

“Waterside” settlements in Port Harcourt, the administrative capital of oil Rivers state has been a concern to every successive administration in the state. The social and environment problems associated with them had been nightmarish to both government and residents of the city. Though it had been established that “housing famine” in the city has been responsible for their springing up, the continuous astronomical increase in the city’s population had fuelled their expansion(Kio-Lawson, 2013). How? The city of Port Harcourt ranks among the fastest growing cities in Africa. From a small population of 235,093 in 1963, the city today boasts of a population over 1.5 million people(NPC,2006). As a result of the growth, the city has exhausted the original land space of 30,000 acres ceded to the colonial masters in the 1913 Hargrove Agreement for administrative convenience(Akpogemeh,1995). This rapid growth is not surprising considering the economic importance of the city; being host to several multi-national oil companies. While the city’s population was rising at an astronomical level, there has been no corresponding increase in the provision of residential accommodation. This is because housing provision has been completely left in the hands of the private sector with the government doing little or nothing in this direction. The ever increasing cost in building materials and the near absence of mortgage finance in Nigeria as well as the difficulties in obtaining loan from the banks has made it difficult for the private sector to meet up with housing demand in the city. The resulting implication was a high cost in renting a residential accommodation in the city especially in the planned residential areas(Kio-Lawson,2013). The difficulties in affording the high rent charged by private landlords compelled some residents to move away to provide “a roof over head” at the waterfront along the coastline where land is less desirable and cost of erecting a home is relatively low.

“Waterside” as they are popularly called has become a part and parcel of the oil rich city of Port Harcourt. Today there are thirty major identifiable “waterside” settlements in the city; two of the settlements earlier lost to the bulldozer of Governor Ameachi. The social, economic and environment problems associated with these settlements are unending and clearly visible to every resident of the city but the question regarding what should be done to curb these problems is far from being answered. The various attempts by successive government had not yielded any positive result. The attempt by the present civilian administration to carry out “total clearance and redevelopment” of the Waterside settlements met stiff opposition from the inhabitants of these settlements(Emeka,2009). On 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 2009, twelve protesters were shot by security forces at Bundu Waterside settlement(Amnesty International,2011). This singular attitude of the squatters of Port Harcourt has made this research inevitable. The research is therefore directed at providing answer to certain questions; who are these people, and what do they want? Answer to these questions will perhaps help us to advance better policy options to effectively tackle the nightmarish problems associated with these settlements.

## 2. Method and Techniques

With the demolition of two Waterside settlements by the present civilian administration in the state, there are

presently thirty two identifiable settlements in the city. Ten of these settlements were randomly picked for the study. A listing of all the settlements was made and further segmented into five groups based on their geographical proximity. Six settlements each were found in three groups while seven settlements each were found in two groups. Two settlements each were randomly picked from each group for the study. The main alley and minor alleys were identified in each settlement. Each alley was given an identity beginning from the letter "A". Four alleys were randomly picked from each settlement for questionnaire administration. A total of 1000 questionnaires were administered in the study. A systematic random sampling technique was used to administer 25 questionnaires in each of the alley selected for the study. A total of 100 questionnaires were therefore administered in each Waterside settlement selected. In each alley, after the first building and resident, an interval of 2 was used to select the next building and resident. Our target in each building is head of household. Relevant information were extracted and used for this study. Personal observation and oral interview were also employed where necessary. Relevant information from government establishments relevant to this study was also extracted. The response at all levels was very positive.

### **3. Squatters of Port Harcourt: Their Historical Background.**

Squatter settlement was not popular in the city of Port Harcourt until immediately after the civil war. Until then the "Waterside" of the city that today houses the squatters of the city was a functional "transit camp" for the fishermen from the riverine communities notably the Okrika fishermen, timber millers, wood sellers etc. Make shift structures were erected to provide temporary resting place or shelter in the course of their business(Okafor,1973). With the end of the Nigerian civil war, relative peace returned to the city. Those who fled from the city due to the hostility started returning. It was not very long after the hostility that the city assumed its full status as the administrative capital of the new state; Rivers State. The economic viability of the new State capital coupled with its advantageous geographical location soon made it a haven for people from different parts of the country; the Ibo traders from the East, the skillful Hausa traders and craftsmen from the North and the highly educated Yoruba's from the West. By the end of the 70's it was clear the original land space on which the city was standing had been over stretched by the competing land uses struggling for space in the city. One area in which the pressure was adversely felt was in the area of residential accommodation. The inability of the available housing stock to meet up with demand resulted into "housing famine" in the city. Cost of residential accommodation responded immediately catapulting into the sky. Those who could not afford the high rent especially the low income were shuffled out of the planned residential area. A social survey conducted in the late 70's showed that about 74.4 percent belonged to the low income(Ogionwo,1979) This was when some residents of the city turned to look at land at the "Waterside" of the city and saw it as an alternative place to provide a "roof over head". Here land was less desirable, the government and private home developers were not interested. Despite the difficult geographical terrain of the place; susceptible to flooding, the early settlers were able to overcome the hostility of the area and erected a "roof over head". Local mechanism was used to reclaim the low land to enable them carry physical structures (Kio-Lawson,2013). The success recorded by the earlier settlers in pushing back the waters and turning the less desirable land habitable turned the eyes of other city's residents toward these lands especially those caught in the web of "housing famine" in the city. By the end of the 80's the squatters had succeeded in creating an image for themselves and a voice among the city's dwellers. Today a significant percentage of city's population dwells in these settlements. An estimated population of close to 500,000 persons out of the city's dwellers are said to be squatters (McManus,2011).

### **4. Squatters of Port Harcourt: Who Are They?**

According to one of our respondents, Paa Jenewari Abel, seventy nine years old retired civil servant who was one of the early waterside settlers "when we started it was not easy, you have to overcome the water first before putting up structures, and for the urban rich and elite it was not an attractive place but for the poor and uneducated at least it provided a place to provide a roof overhead." Another respondent, Elder Amachree, a seventy three year old canoe builder, the early settlers were simply regarded as "poor, illiterates and insane people". But were they really "poor, uneducated and insane? "Yes, they were poor" were the words of Engineer Daso George, a staff of one of the multi-national oil companies in the city and one of those interviewed. Daso was born and brought up in Bishop Johnson Waterside. "I grew up in this settlement; my father was a fisherman, my mother, a bread seller. In those days the proceeds from my parents business combined was barely enough to feed the family of six persons. My two sisters could not be educated because my parents could only provide the school fees of the two boys in the family." While Daso's father was a fisherman, Peter Kalio's father was a local salt producer. Peter another respondent was one of those kids raised from the "waterside". "My father had nine children. My father's business was hardly enough to put food on the table for the family but he was determined that we should not be uneducated like him. So my mother started frying local bean cake known as "akara" for sale. Very early in the morning my mother will fry a large quantity of "akara", put it on our head and send us out into the street to hawk. That was how our school fees were paid. But it was a bitter experience for my

parents when their third child, my immediate elder brother was killed by a car in one of our usual early morning hawking business”. In the public schools it was easy to identify those that came from the Waterside settlements. According to Peter “we were always the ones to pay our school fees late, always short of the expected number of text books in the class, always with worn out uniforms”. Building materials

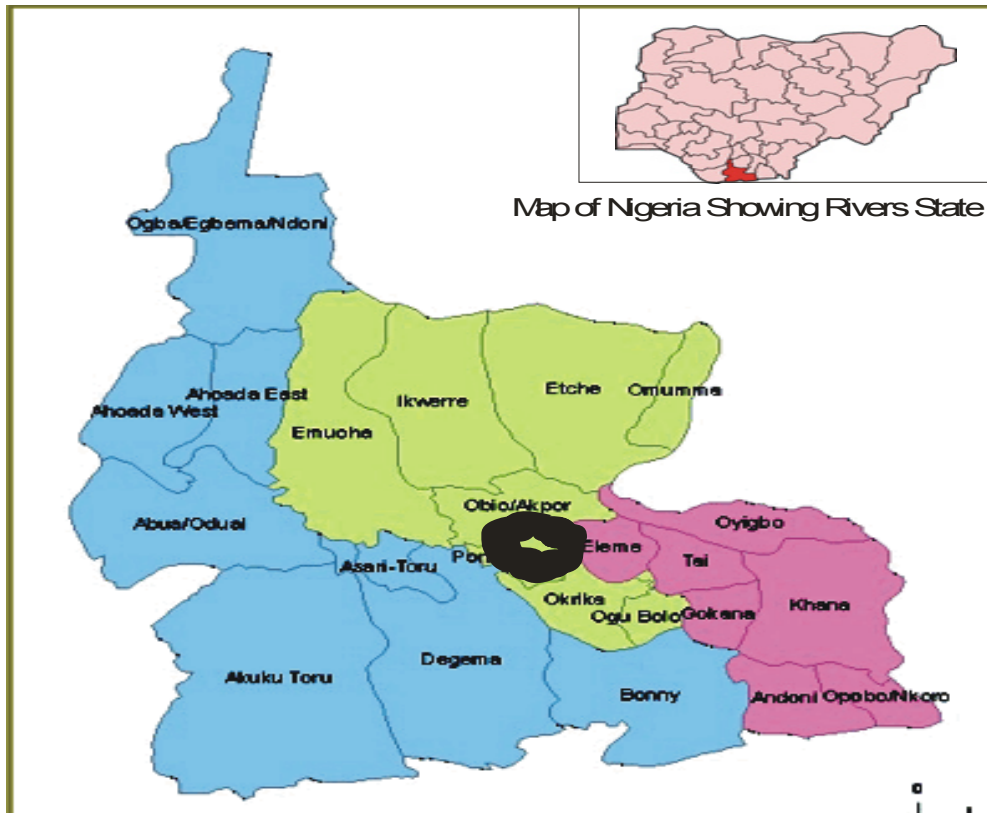


Figure 1: Map of Rivers State showing Port Harcourt, the Garden City.

then were mostly of corrugated iron sheet, cardboard, sheet and in some cases raffia palm. Electricity was completely absent and residential accommodation was owner occupier. The total environmental condition was a reflection of the social and economic class of the residents. A class that was regarded as the down trodden and whose voice was insignificant in the city’s population “our number was very minute in the midst of the city’s population” according to Elder Amachree. A greater percentage of them were self employed and those who were in the public service like Paa Jenewari can be counted and belonged to the lowest cadre of the service. Do we still have the same picture of these settlements today? No! Our observation had shown that the settlements had metamorphosed to create a new identity that cannot be ignored in the economic and political geography of the city. From an insignificant voiceless population in the 70’s, Waterside settlements had exploded to accommodate a third of the city’s population of over 1.5 million persons. How? The lack of adequate attention in the provision of low income housing by the government meant that the private sector continue to enjoy the monopoly of being the major provider of residential accommodation. The democratic government of Chief Melford Okilo that took over the mantle of leadership in Rivers State in 1979 made huge attempt in the provision of low income housing in the state but poor implementation stood against his vision. The return of democratic government in 1979 witnessed the springing up of beautiful modern residential accommodation in the G.R.A and D-line axis of the city meant for the high and medium income. This was not the same for the low income area. With acute scarcity in low income housing forcing rent to respond in that direction, the “Waterside” readily offered an alternative residential accommodation. Cost of land here was on the low side, so also was the cost of erecting a structure when compared to the cost in the planned residential areas of the city. At least here builders are free from the rigors of land and building plan registration. Control of development was also almost absent. By the middle of the 90’s there was already a high scramble for land at the “Waterside”. With this development, housing provision at the “Waterside” went beyond the provision of a mere “roof over head”. Beautiful and solid residential units that could go for modern architecture began to spring up side-by-side with make-shift residential units for which the settlements were initially noted for. Squatter settlement began to wear new identity or face. Can we still say, the waterside settlements are completely inhabited by the low income? Mr. Jonah Harcourt a

residents of Elechi Beach waterside for 20 years says; “No, that was long ago before I moved into this waterside. Today we have a blend of different economic class residing at the waterside.” A survey conducted in ten Waterside settlements on income level of selected household heads revealed the following in table 2.

**Table 1: Waterside settlements in Port Harcourt**

S/No	Waterside Settlement
1.	Abuja
2.	Afikpo/Abba
3.	Andoni
4.	Awkuzu
5.	Bishop Johnson
6.	Bundu
7.	Baptist
8.	Captain Amangala
9.	Cemetery
10.	Egede/Akokwa
11.	Emenike
12.	Egbema
13.	Enugu/Aggrey
14.	Eastern By-pass
15.	Elechi Beach
16.	Ibadan/Yam zone
17.	Igbukulu
18.	Marine Base
19.	Ndoki
20.	NEPA
21.	Nanka
22.	Nembe/Bonny
23.	Orupolo
24.	Ogu/Okujagu
25.	Okrika
26.	Ojike/Urualla
27.	Prison
28.	Rex Lawson/Etche
29.	Timber/Okwelle
30.	Tourist Beach
31.	Udi
32.	Witt and Bush

Source: Author’s field report

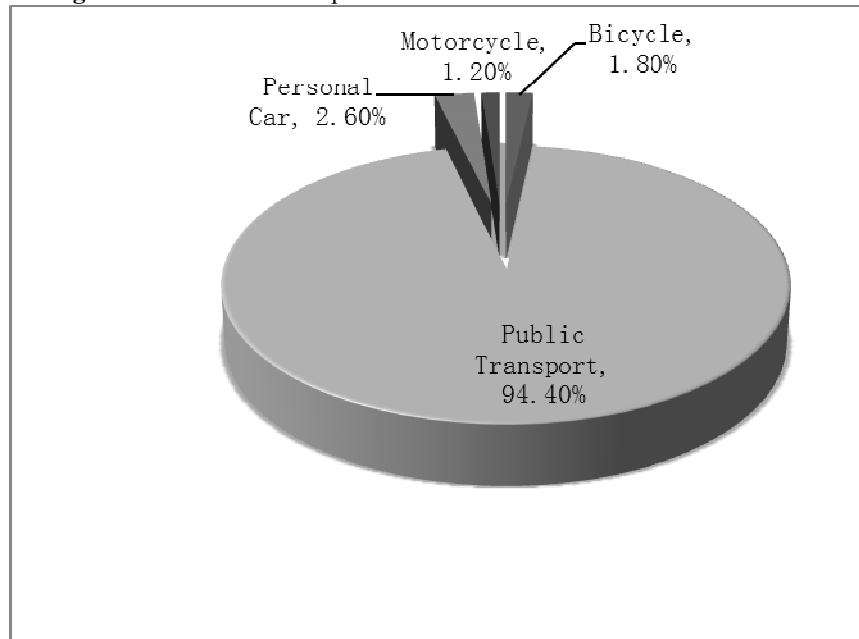
**Table 2: Income level of heads of household**

Name of Waterside	Income level/Month(in Naira)				Total
	Below 15,000	15,000-30,000	31,000-45,000	45,000+	
Bundu	48	30	12	10	100
Afikpo	52	21	15	12	100
Igbukulu	50	24	17	9	100
NEPA	47	28	15	10	100
Witt and Bush	59	21	13	7	100
Ndoki	45	24	21	10	100
Cemetery	35	24	15	16	100
Ogu/Okujagu	53	27	13	7	100
Andoni	51	26	13	10	100
Ojike/Urualla	50	23	17	10	100
Total	500	248	151	101	1000

Elder Amachree had told us that the early settlers were looked upon as “poor, illiterates and insane” but statistics today had shown a changed in status. Squatter settlements in the city of Port Harcourt do not only

provide a “home” for the poor but also for the medium and high income. The minimum wage approved by the government of Nigeria for public servants is eighteen thousand naira per month while those who earn below thirty-one thousand naira per month are classified as low income. From the table above it can be stated that only 74 percent(748) of those interviewed belonged to the low income cadre. The fact that 10.10 percent(101) of the household heads interviewed has a monthly pay of above forty-five thousand naira( which is within the comfort zone in the medium income bracket) shows that the Waterside settlement can no longer be regarded as territory of “human poverty and misery” as it was commonly regarded in the 70’s and 80’s. In Nigeria, ownership of personal car is one way of assessing one’s economic status in the society. The information available to us in figure 2 below has given us further supporting evidence on the identity and social status of the squatters of Port Harcourt today.

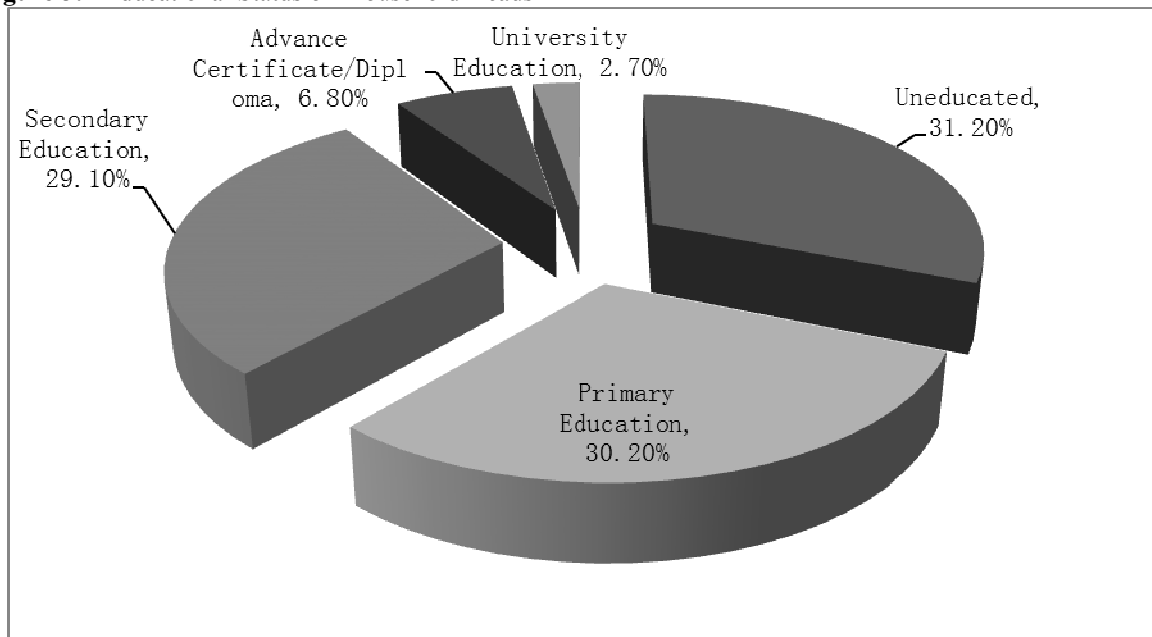
**Figure 2:** Mode of Transportation of Household Heads



From the figure above, 2.6 percent of the total number of household heads interviewed has personal cars. Considering the cost of cars in the Nigerian market, these people cannot be classified as low income which goes further to confirm our findings about the change in social status of the squatters of the city.

Do they still belong to the uneducated segment of the city’s population as earlier claimed? The answer to this question can easily be found in Figure 3 showing the educational status of 1000 household heads randomly picked from ten Waterside settlements in the city. From our analysis of the information available to us, only 31.2 percent of those interviewed belonged to the uneducated class. Among the squatters today are university graduates and holders of advance diploma or certificate. What this means is that the squatters of the city can no longer be regarded as an insignificant proportion of the city’s population. By their numerical strength and viability, they have become a strong voice in the polity of the city and contribute significantly to the servicing of the city’s economy. The settlements are also a “home” for many local craft and skills, and provide a reasonable proportion of the labour force needed by residents of the city for menial jobs.

**Figure 3:** Educational Status of Household Heads



## 5. Squatters of Port Harcourt: Their Characteristics

### 5.1 Housing Condition

Two major types of dwelling units are predominant in squatter settlements; (1) Face-me-I-face-you-A rooming type of dwelling where rooms are lined up facing each other with a common passage that serves as entrance into the dwelling. In some of this type of dwelling, the passage is also used as cooking area because of the absence of kitchen. Even where they are provided they are hardly adequate for the residents.(2) The second type of dwelling that is predominant is the single lane or wagon buildings that usually faces the alley. The length and width of this type of buildings are not to any specification, they depend on the land size. Besides these two predominant dwelling types are also some modern types of dwelling units with modern architecture that are springing up daily in these settlements. Though their number is very minute, they had succeeded in adding some colour to the face of Waterside settlements in the city. Room sizes in buildings vary and do not follow any specification. Building heights are also not to any specification. Some buildings can be as low as 1.9 meters while some room sizes can be as small as 3 x 2 meters. Buildings are usually erected without any respect for set backs with roofs touching one another in most cases. Thus most buildings are poorly ventilated and deprived of adequate sunlight. Three types of walling materials were commonly used in these settlements before; plywood, corrugated iron sheet (locally referred to as suit and suit) and the type where concrete block is used halfway with plywood or corrugated iron sheet used for the completion of the wall. Today the City Council has permitted the use of full concrete wall thus the use of the former walling materials is gradually disappearing from the settlements. Household facilities such as kitchen, toilet and others needed to give residents some measure of comfort are almost not available. Cooking is mostly done in the verandah or in the living room as the tenant may wish. While every dwelling is provided with bathroom only few besides the few modern housing units have their own toilets. The common toilet type used by a greater percentage of the squatter population in each settlement is the traditional “pier head” Those residents whose landlords have none, use the privately owned commercial toilets on payment of a token fee.

### 5.2 Environmental Condition

A network of alleys makes circulation in squatter settlement possible. Such alleys are always unpaved and characterized by potholes. Drainage is almost non-existent. The few available ones provided by individuals in front of their dwellings to allow waste water and surface run-off into the creeks are often choked with domestic waste. This explains the reason why water is always stagnant in those drains thus producing sickening sight and offensive odour at all times. The implication is high flooding especially during the rainy season leaving most families in water logged buildings at such times.

The use of domestic waste for reclamation purpose is a traditional practice among squatters in the city. Thus heaps of refuse is a common sight in these settlements. At high tide, some of them are carried into the creeks and help to pollute the water which is used sometimes for bathing by the squatters. The array of ‘pier



toilets” at the waterfront makes human excreta a common sight in these settlements. At low tide the situation is made worse by the strong offensive odour emanating from the toilets. There is also easy access for flies to human waste. The health implication is very obvious. Make-shift bathrooms where they are still in use are hardly maintained. It is common to see them surrounded by pool of filth or stagnant water with offensive odour.



Figure 4 The traditional “Pier Toilet” common in Waterside settlements in the city

Because of the absence of adequate space, it is common to see domestic animals almost sharing living spaces with their owners. Excreta from such domestic animals as dogs, goat, duck, sheep etc. are a common sight in the available open spaces and alleys in the settlements.

### 5.3 *Infrastructural Condition*

A prominent feature of squatter settlement is the complete absence of urban public infrastructure. Since they do not form part of the city’s master plan, they are hardly considered in the distribution of public infrastructure. Out of the ten squatter settlements picked for the study, only Gbundu has a public school. The government had in the past provided pipe borne water in some of these settlements but none is functional today. The government has also made some effort in the provision of “pier toilet” but they are hardly adequate considering the population of the squatters. Electricity is present in every settlements and this had helped small scale businesses to thrive and added some colour to night life in the settlement.

## 6. **Law and Order in Waterside Settlement**

Despite the fact that they are often left out in the distribution of urban infrastructure and services, the squatters had succeeded in developing their own form of internal governance through which their collective needs are attended to, through which lives and properties are protected. Apart from two squatter settlements that have police stations located very close to them the others cannot boast of any. The responsibility of maintaining law and order in these settlements is shouldered by a central committee; Community Development Committee, whose members are either elected or appointed. The responsibility of this committee includes: settlement of dispute, allocation of land to potential developers, maintenance of law and order. There is also the youth wings saddled with the responsibility of community policing. Matters which are beyond the control of these bodies are referred to the Nigerian Police for action.



Figure 5: Make-shift commercial bathrooms common in Waterside settlements. (Often patronized by those who have non in their dwelling units).



Figure 6: Water is always stagnant in the few available drains in waterside settlements with sickening sight and offensive odour. The use of domestic waste for land filling is a common tradition in waterside settlements.

### 7. Squatters of Port Harcourt: What Do They Want?

In the beginning, the government never gave any serious attention to the growing squatter population. They were regarded as an insignificant part of the city's population. But the sudden explosion in their population and the astronomical increase in their numbers coupled with the nightmarish problems associated with them soon gave the government some sleepless nights. Some of these nightmarish problems include; unfavorable environmental and social conditions, ever increasing crime rate, frequent militancy crises, cult related activities etc. This was when the government woke up from the error of not giving any check to the growing squatter settlements in the city. Some intervention programmes were carried out by the government to upgrade some settlements and reduce some of the social and environmental problems. One of such was the "total clearance and redevelopment" method adopted by the military government of Anthony Ukpo. Three squatter settlements were picked out as a test case to find out the workability of the project; Ndoki, Aggrey and Marine base Waterside settlements. The scheme was implemented successfully but it was far from achieving its overall goals. The inability of the government low cost housing scheme to accommodate all the displaced squatters led to the birth of new Waterside settlements adjacent to the newly built low cost housing estate thus placing a question mark on the intentions of the government. The return of democratic structures in 1999 saw a sudden rise in the profile of these settlements. This was because the election of 1999 and 2003 were marked with violence. The army of unemployed youths most of whom are primary and secondary school drop-outs residing in the settlements



provided a bulk of the foot soldiers used by both the ruling People Democratic Party and the opposition to play their dirty politics (Kio-Lawson, 2013). The era also experienced a rise in militancy activities and oil theft in the State. The geography of these settlements provided the platform for both activities to prosper in the state. The Chief Press Secretary to the Governor of Rivers State Mr. Blessing Wikina had stated that “The most important aspect of this whole thing is security and development. Once there was shooting at Abuja Waterfront, when the Governor and the Brigade Commander got there they saw those bad boys swimming and sailing across from the settlement to the other side of the water” (Ochereome, Onah and Onoyume, 2009). The resulting implication was an increase in crime in these settlements; arson, rape, murder etc. Sleeping with two eyes firmly close during this period became impossible in the city of Port Harcourt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi having grown up in the city and being a part of the democratic structure that took off in 1999 has full knowledge of the problems associated with these Waterside settlements. On assumption of office as the Governor of the State in 2007, he read out an intervention programme his government has mapped out for the Waterside settlements; total clearance and redevelopment. This plan was vehemently opposed by a large majority of the squatters for which the programme was intended to benefit. A little above 70 percent of the sampled populations from the ten Waterside settlements picked for this study are not in support of the governor’s strategy. About 52 percent of those who are not in support of the governor’s strategy claimed that theoretically the idea seemed sound but practically because of the political maneuver that usually surround such exercise especially during the allocation of complete structures they may lose out. They maintained that in previous exercise like the Marine base, Aggrey and Ndoki Waterfront redevelopment scheme, there were lots of political interference that shuffled out most of the original inhabitants during the allocation exercise; only less than 30 percent of them succeeded (Kio-Lawson, 2013). Another group approximately 27 percent are not in support of the governor’s programme for fear of losing their business customers while 13 percent are afraid of losing the community solidarity and internal security which the settlements enjoy and which are lacking in the planned residential areas of the city.

What then do they want? The squatters interviewed had agreed in common that upgrading the settlements is the best option if we intend to introduce some sanity into the area. Circulation in the settlements is one of the greatest challenges. They had also agreed in common that providing a main road (tarred) to run through the settlement and some secondary roads (paths) to be paved and provided with some side drains running to the creeks will help in; (a) check the problem of flooding during heavy rainfall (b) help reduce the problems of choked drains and stagnant water associated with the settlements (c) increase economic activities in the settlements as the availability of such main road will ensure that more goods and services get to the squatters (d) the availability of such road will also ensure that police patrol and fire service vehicles get access to the settlements. The present circulatory network in the area does not guarantee safety for any police officer wanting to make arrest. For Jonathan Isikima, a respondent, a mason living in cemetery waterside; “We contribute significantly to the economy and politics of the city therefore the government should also remember us in their budget. We are appealing to the Governor to also consider us in the distribution of health centres and primary schools across the state”. The general opinion therefore among the squatters is that the proposed government housing scheme cannot guarantee housing for all of them. Therefore improving the quality of life in the Waterside settlements through the provision of certain urban infrastructure will be preferable. Secondly, the squatters are skeptical about the sincerity of the government intentions towards the area. Some view it as an indirect way of pushing them into homelessness.

## **8. Conclusion/Recommendation.**

Previous experience had shown that “total clearance and redevelopment” cannot totally end the issue of squatter settlement in the city which is the intention of the government of Hon Ameachi. Study has also revealed that the problems of Waterside settlements are not in their physical environment alone. The proposed strategy of the government is only targeted at the physical environment alone without any attempt at tackling the factors and elements that had led to their formation process and expansion. This explains the reason why the strategy is simply looked upon as an indirect way of shifting their geographical location or fuelling the springing up of new settlements. The lack of answer on the part of government to the question of “displaced residents” as was evident in the Abonema Wharf and Nzemeze Waterside settlements brought down two years ago places a serious question as to how the government intends to deal with the issue promptly.

In as much as the intentions of government is to improve on the environmental quality of the settlements, subjecting a greater percentage of the squatters to homelessness as seen in previous exercise will only aggravate the already existing “housing famine” in the city. The squatters have a right to be part of any decision that bothers on their welfare. Even though the government plan on paper seems sound but in terms of total goals achievement, two factors will definitely work against the government;

- (1) The government does not have a full statistics of squatters in the city.
- (2) Its lean finances cannot square up to such gigantic project of providing accommodation for the entire squatter population.

Agreeing with the squatters that upgrading of the existing settlements seems to be the best option for now. This will involve not only providing some infrastructure and services that will improve quality of life in the settlement but also introducing some element of development control. The Ministry of Urban Development should formulate some new development control mechanism in the settlements to enhance the physical state of the areas. The State Environmental Sanitation Authority should liaise with the Community Development Committee to enforce some measure of sanitation in the settlements.

The main alley which is easily identifiable in each settlement should be expanded and paved to make room for vehicular access. Owners of structures and residents that will be affected in the process should be adequately compensated. Some of the minor alleys should also be paved with side drains provided running to the creeks to help reduce the problems of stagnant water and flooding during rainfall. Street lights should be provided along the main and minor alleys to help enhance security at night. As a check to prevent further expansion of Waterside settlements, a ring road should be provided where it is possible to fence off some settlements. In such cases, the appropriate land authority should ensure that local land reclamation across the road is strictly prohibited. Government should go the extra miles of sand filling some low land in the city which are possible future target for attack by squatters to raise more homes. Seventy percent of such land should be allocated to the Squatters and development strictly supervised. Since the public water taps are not running due to the failure of the government to activate the water pumping stations it is recommended that the government should provide public water boreholes with water taps provided at interval of fifty meters radius in each settlement to give them access to portable drinking water. The control and management of such boreholes and water taps should be left in the hands of the CDC in each settlement. A police station should be provided in each settlement to help in promoting security. Primary schools, markets, recreational and health centres should be provided where the population can sustain one. Special fund should be set aside by the Government yearly to tackle the social and environmental problems associated with this section of the city. Part of such fund should be directed at providing skill acquisition programmes for the army of jobless youths in these settlements. A department in government should be established to facilitate and create jobs placement and engagement for the trained youths. Where it is possible, loan should be provided for some of the trained youths to enable them start their own trade. This will help in reducing the level of criminality associated with the settlements and strengthen the gains recorded so far in the city by the government in the battle against militancy and oil bunkering.

One area perhaps in which further research may be necessary is; the role of the Squatters of Port Harcourt in the economic development of the city.

### **Acknowledgement**

I am grateful to Peter Kalio, Daso George, Elder Amachree and Paa Jenewari for their contributions to the success of this research work.

### **References:**

- Emeka, A.(2009)“Igbo Hegemony in PH May Brew Another Tribal War” Nairaland Forum: Online Available <http://www.nairaland.com/339254/igbo-hegemony-ph-may-brew> ( Oct.17,2009)
- Amnesty International ( 2011) “Port Harcourt Residents” Online Available [www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR44/017/2011/es/Bebc3906-4fdc-4179-a258-11f53aa1d80e/afr440172011en.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR44/017/2011/es/Bebc3906-4fdc-4179-a258-11f53aa1d80e/afr440172011en.pdf) (Dec.3-17)
- Kio-Lawson, D.(2013) “Marginal Settlement in Port Harcourt,the Garden City: The Geography of Horror” Scientific and Academic Publishing, vol.3, no.3 World Environment, pp 77-84, June 2013.
- McManus, D.(2011) “Port Harcourt, Nigeria:Waterfront Slums” Online Available [www.e-architect.co.uk/africa/port-harcourt-slums-nigeria](http://www.e-architect.co.uk/africa/port-harcourt-slums-nigeria) (Sept. 27,2011)
- National Population Commission (NPC), Abuja, Nigeria.2006
- Ochereome, N .Onah,G. Onoyume, J. (2009)”Port Harcourt Waterfront:Confronting the Curse of Oil City” Vanguard. Online Available: [www.vanguardngr.com/2009/12/the-port-harcourt-waterfront-confronting-the-curse-of-an-oil-city/](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/12/the-port-harcourt-waterfront-confronting-the-curse-of-an-oil-city/)(Dec.9,2009)
- Akpogeme,,O.S (1995) “A Guide to Port Harcourt Metropolis and its Environment” Kraft Books Limited, Ibadan Nigeria.
- Okafor, S.O (1973) “The Port Harcourt Issue:A Note on Dr. Tamuno Article(PDF):African Affairs. Royal African Society, Oxford University Press 72(286):74.
- Ogionwo, W. (1979) “A social Survey of Port Harcourt” Heinemann Educational Books Nigerian Limited. Nigeria.

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:  
<http://www.iiste.org>

## CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

**Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

## MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

## IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

