

A Theoretical Perspective on Rural Housing Development and the Problems Associated with Housing Developers in Nigeria: Evidence from Dass Metropolis

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Abstract

Housing is one of the basic needs of any society. It is a component of men's environmental interactions which is expected to serve important functions, like biological, Psychological, socio-cultural and economic needs of individual facilities and/or communities. Biological, man needs an environment within which he can take shelter and protection against external forces. Psychologically man needs housing so as to satisfy his personal needs such as privacy and self-fulfillment. Socio-culturally, housing is a symbol that reflects the status of an individual family or community. It also reflects the economic value of a society. Therefore, there is a need for a study of rural housing development so as to find solutions on how to improve the rural housing and also the living condition of rural dwellers. The study will be centered on issues related to the development of rural housing in the study area

1.1 Background of the Research

Housing as unit of environment has a profound influence on man's health, education, social behaviour, and employment, and productivity, awareness on development opportunities, safety, crime and general well being (Onibokun, 1985). Housing nowadays is not considered merely as an exercise in brick and mortar or providing roof over ones head. (Dwelling unit), rather, as it connotes a symbol of relationship between man and his environment. A shelter should have some basic infrastructural facilities such as clean water, drainage and sanitary facilities, electricity, access road and basic service, besides dwelling unit (Chike-OBI, 2013 and Sekar, 1991), An Approach to Evaluating Housing Benefits, *International Journal for Housing Sciences*). Therefore, the importance of providing shelter with basic utilities and services in any society cannot be over emphasized. As a matter of fact, housing reflects the level of economic development of a society (Onibokun, 1985 and Abd Aziz et al, (2011). In general, it provides the physical framework and the environment in which the economic, social and cultural values of a society are reflected.

In addition to these housing importance, Gyuse (2009) stated that rural housing serves as an abode or place of habitation as it accommodates most rural small-scale industries like pottery, dyeing, among others. It stimulates employment in the rural areas (Popoola, 1988),. It also serves as a place for storage, keeping domesticated animals and foster cohesion sense of belonging among rural dwellers. Rural housing development in Dass Local government Area has manifested many deficiencies worthy of conducting research. These problems include: use of perishable materials, weaker technological advancement, poor living environment, inadequate utilities, facilities and services, lack of funds to mention but a few.

2.1 Theoretical Underpinning

Despite the importance of housing, rural housing in Nigeria is still far from adequate (Aliyu et al, 2011). In Nigeria, the major problem of rural housing is not that of over-crowding or the aggregate demand as has been reported in the study carried out by Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER, 2010), Ibadan in collaboration with University of Ife in southern Nigeria. This study shows that only 15 per cent of rural household live in a single room. An average of 1.2 persons per room is required as against 72.5 per cent of a Lagos household who live in a single room with an average of 3.8 persons per room. 69.1 per cent of Kano household lives in a room with an average of 2.4 persons per room and 63.9 per cent of Kaduna households live in a room with an average of 2.1 persons per room (Folurunso et al, 2012, Onibokun, 1985). This indicates that rural people live in reasonably low densities.

Majority of rural people in Dass Local Government Area (the study area), as in many other rural areas in Nigeria depend on locally available and cheap building materials for their indigenous housing construction.

The materials are not only economical, but also tend to be easy to handle by local builders and traditional technology. However, these building materials are transient in nature and are susceptible to erosion agents and fire disaster (Heyer, 1981 and Noda, 1990; Reddy, 1993). Due to their non durability, they require high level of maintenance to sustain their usability and to ensure the structures durability; local labour and traditional technology are also major innate in rural housing construction (Zakari, 1990).

Provision of facilities, services and utilities improve rural housing development as well as the living condition of rural dwellers (Reddy, 1991). However, provision of such utilities, facilities and services in the rural areas of Nigeria are grossly inadequate especially in Dass Local Government. Poor drainage and sanitary facilities make the rural environment filthy which in turn results in to poor state of rural housing in Dass Local Government Area (Ibrahim, 1990). Therefore, there is a need for a study of rural housing development so as to find solutions on how to improve the rural housing and also the living condition of rural dwellers. The study will be centered on issues related to the development of rural housing in the study area

The aim of the research is to examine the present state of rural housing development in Dass Local Government Area and the problems associated with housing developer as a basis for making recommendations for improvement.

The stages of the research is illustrated in figure 1 below:

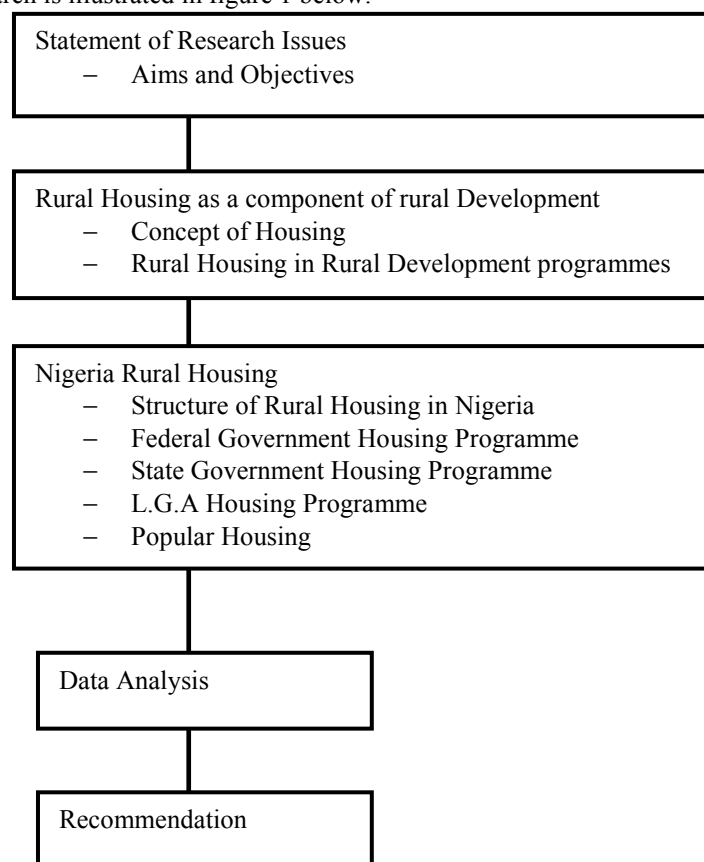


Figure 1: Stages of the Research Plan (Literature Survey, 2013)

2.1 Dass Local Government Area as the Study Area

Dass emirate was made Local Government Area in 1976 when Bauchi state was created. According to the National Population Commission (NPC) 2006 Census provisional result, Dass Local Government Area has a total population of 203,213. Dass Local Government shares common border with only two Local Governments of the state, viz: Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area to the East and South and Toro Local Government Area to the North and West. Dass Local Government Area comprises many ethnic groups among which are Bankal, Jarawa, Wadanci, Zubul, Polchj, Hausa & Fulani ‘. The Local Government Area is pedomanaxitly rural with only Dass town as an Urban centre.

2.2 Housing Forms and Structure in the Study Area

The indigenous rural housing form in Dass Local Government Area is generally circular with steep pitched spiral thatch roof. In some compounds found also rectangular form of housing. Combination of both circular and rectangular forms is common. The changing from traditional circular form to rectangular is succumbing to the

interaction with other innovations, and assimilation of the housing design. The circular and/or rectangular units are grouped in clusters and fenced around to form a compound housing. The structural organisation or spatial arrangement of the component units of compounds do not derive from the contemporary theory of community planning.

Majority of the rural compounds are occupied by extended families structure in which the family size and housing form and structure are dynamic. That is, it is a process of constant changes leading to growth, subdivision or decline. Therefore, the house is constantly adapting to the changing family needs. The individual families in the study area at the initial stage were allocated with sufficient land by the government to accommodate its building needs at the time and with the consideration of future growth and activities of the household (Yogi, 1978).

The layout of individual compound emphasises a hierarchy of spaces ranging from public space (Dandali) for the community uses to semi-public (Kofar Gida) at the entrance of each housing unit and finally the private space in the interior of the houses (courtyard) (Cikin Gida) where no male visitor is allowed. At the entrance of compounds, a visitors' room (Zaure) is built where the household head and male members of the compound take rest, eat, discuss, carry out some economic activities like weaving and receive male visitors. The 'Zaure' entrance leading into the house is situated in such a way a male visitor can no peep into the private space of the compound.

Around 'Zaure' courtyard (semi-public space), there are built room (s) for unmarried young men and male guest room. In houses where 'Zaure' is absent, the entrance is made in such a way that one side of the compound fences over lapped and/or a screen fence is added to block/prevent direct on looking into the inner house by male visitors or passers-by. In the interior of houses, the layout is made in a manner that a central open space (courtyard) is created where most of the domestic activities are performed. This space is regarded as the private area. In extended families, multiple courtyards are found to form separate areas within the compound which is where each married unit occupy and is separated by a screen fence. There are openings that link each unit to the family courtyard and/or other units.

Kitchen is a very important component of rural housing. In the housing layout it occupies a strategic position in or around the courtyard. It is located in a manner that women in the house have direct access and linkage with it. Kitchen in Dass rural areas is not only use for cooking and eating but also serves as a place for goods production by women. However, most of the kitchen in Dass rural areas is not use for storing.

Granary is one of the important features in rural housing development in Dass Local Government Area. Primarily it serves as a storage facility to rural dweller where farm produce are stored. In the housing spatial arrangement, granary occupied a very strategic place purposely for its security and safety. The location of granaries in the compound has a direct correlation to the household head room for proper supervision and security. it is located close to the household head's room or directly in the direction to his window or door so that he can look at it from his room directly. It is often located far away from kitchen for its safety and the fear of fire disaster. Hence most of the granaries are constructed with mats and/or mud with thatch roof.

Another important feature in rural housing development is the compound wall/fence. It is developed for a number of reasons which includes defence, safety, privacy, security and preventing the escape of domestic animals. Compound wall posters serve as cohesion and sense of belonging among the members of the same household. In the society where Islamic culture has taken deep root, the walls of compound are developed to provide certain degree of privacy necessary for the segregation of the sexes (purdah). In other compound where such a premium is not placed or where a farmer depends upon his wife/wives labour on the farm purdah is not practice in such a household and emphasis on the degree of privacy is of little or no significance.

Apart from privacy, compound wall provides much security, creates sense of belonging and cohesion among members of the compound. Often, an opening is made beside the main entrance as backyard entrance. This kind of entrance is common in Dass rural housing. It is used for taking manure and other solid waste to a distant or nearby farmland, entrance when returning from farm (work) and for the domestic animals. A simple structure is erected for chicken and is situated close to wives' room for closer supervision and security. Livestock house is normally located at one end of the compound or at the entrance. This is because, they require more space and to reduce their interference with the courtyard beside their security.

Toilet and bathroom in the rural housing layout are located directly behind rooms or at the extreme end of the compound. It is enclosed by constant fence or wall to provide privacy needed. Indeed, in some compounds this is conspicuously absent because people of such houses disposed their waste indiscriminately around in the nearby bush or farmland.

The aim of the research is to examine the present state of rural housing development in Dass Local Government Area and the problems associated with housing developer as a basis for making recommendations for improvement. In order to achieve this aim, this research would adopt a survey research and would use both qualitative and quantitative research technique. This research would require information from private developers who are categories into private individual developers and corporate developers. To achieve the specific

objectives of this research and answer the research questions, information local building material, housing type in the study area, type of labour for housing construction, facilities, utilities and services available in the dwellings etc are required. Hence, this research would stand on a tripod. The private individual developers, the corporate developers and the financial institutions concerned with financing residential development would form the respondents for this research.

The population of this research would be all rural housing developers who develop structures and apartments within the study area; estate surveyors and valuers and financial institutions concerned with financing rural residential development in Nigeria. The choice of such individual developers is to have an up-to date information and perception.

This research would use multi stage cluster sampling. Dass Local Government Area has twelve wards. Thus, the population of this study would be selected through simple random sampling. For the purpose of the research, six clusters would be selected (n) cluster. Simple random technique would be used to draw the sub sample. The study would also use a non-probability sampling, judgmental or purposive, technique to select the respondents concerned with rural housing development.

For the purpose of this research both primary and secondary data would be used. Primary data would be obtained from private individual developers, corporate developers and financial institutions. Also, secondary data would be obtained from bulletins, magazine, national abstract of statistics and other sources. Data for this research would be obtained through self administered questionnaire, structured and unstructured interviews, and direct observation.

The data collected would be presented using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Tables, chart and various measures of centrality and dispersion would be used to present and analyze some data. In order to measure the perception of developers on rural housing development, a 5 point likert scale (modified) developed by Ajzin (2002) would be adopted. Also, the level of willingness or intention to borrow would be measured using the same scale. To establish the relationship between rural housing developers' perception and willingness, Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) and correlation analysis would be used to analyze the data.

Also, a chi-square analysis would be used to analyze the level of significance of various constructs to be used in the research. ANOVA test would also be conducted to determine if there is significant difference between conventional and rural housing development.

3.1 Expected Outcomes of the Research

From the review of related literatures, rural housing in Dass Local Government Area as in many other rural areas in Nigeria may be full of deficiencies. From the anticipated findings of quantitative housing needs, overcrowding may not exist in Dass rural housing. Therefore, quantitative needs may not constitute a problem of rural housing. Also land as a component of housing development may not constitutes housing problem in Dass. The major problem of .Dass rural housing may be that of quality as in many other rural areas in the country. The nature and scope of housing problems varies from housing component and quality elements tp the other. Combination of both elements may constitute the problems of rural housing development in Dass.

One of the major problems of housing development is that of building materials. Local building materials may be extensively used because they are cheaply available, and easy to handle by traditional technology and local labour. The problem of these materials is non-durability (transient), lack structural strength and requires high level of maintenance. Negligence of which can lead to structural collapse. The materials are also susceptible to erosion agents, high fire risk and harbour insects. 'Aesthetically, thatch roof is less satisfying although, it beautifies seer to enhance with high conical form reaching out into the skyline against a clear landscape" (ABU, 1981).

Modern and durable materials are generally scarce in rural areas and where available, other factors hamper their use. These factors include the cost of the materials and lack of skilled artisans labour and technology. Another problem of housing development is the cost of building materials which is becoming higher and higher beyond the reach of the common man. This is because of high inflationary trend of the Nigeria's economic development. The cost of conventional building materials is increasingly going high beyond the reach of majority of rural dwellers since the mass of rural inhabitant are low income earners.

3.2 Prospects of Rural Housing Development in the Study Area

In recent years there are remarkable changes in rural housing form and structure in quest of people demanding more and decent houses. This is because of the remarkable improvement in the level of prosperity, educational standards, income and living conditions with attendant increase in people's expectations. The form and design of building is changing from the traditional circular huts to rectangular form. Rectangular form may account for one quarter of the houses based on the pilot study conducted while circular form may score half and the mixture of circular and rectangular forms may account for the remaining balance. Changing from traditional circular to rectangular form reduces the problems of utilization reduction factor (space left unoccupied) of space. Utilization

reduction factor of a circular building with predominant rectangular furniture may be higher than the rectangular building.

A total of houses built in mud walls and rendered with cement plaster based on the pilot study conducted may score 35.97% while mud walls with zink roofing may account for 27.10% and 3.05% may be vernacular type of building. This is an indication that more and more durable materials may be gradually used in housing which reduces the level of maintenance frequency. There may also be gradual changes in the use of labour and technology in the study area. The use of unskilled labour may gradually disintegrate and shifting to skilled artisan in housing. The changes may include: the activities of bricks laying, plastering, floor finishing and in roofing. There may also be shifting from traditional technology to modern in housing process as changes occurred in labour.

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