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The Impact of Urbanisation on Health Security of Urban Dwellers in Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Urban centres continue to attract people across social divides. So also is the environment, which changes with constant interactions among urban population who constantly harness environmental resources for their survival. This process comes with its attendant effects that could be either positive or negative. This process explains the rationale behind uneven population patterns among human settlements as well as the lopsided distribution of resources needed to make life worthy of living. The public utilities, health and social services continue to be largely unavailable and where they are available, they are inefficient, shoddy and collapsing. This study is therefore a novel attempt at making a modest contribution to academic discourse on urban studies. It tries to explore the impact of urbanisation on health situation and life expectancy of urban dwellers. The study made use of primary data, which was collected through telephone interviews. The participants in these interviews included scholars in urban studies, public health educators, social workers, and epidemiologists. This was complemented with data from existing literature from scholars in urban and health studies. The results from this study showed that urban environmental problems like inadequate water and sanitation, high infant mortality, lack of rubbish disposal, industrial pollution and its attendant respiratory infections and other infectious and parasitic diseases persist. This is therefore an indication of the deleterious status of socio-economic determinants of health that can hamper a healthy life expectancy.

KEYWORDS

urbanisation, socioeconomics, health, life expectancy, urban dwellers, migration

Introduction

As cities and towns achieved better economic, political, social and cultural advances compared to rural areas, the process of urbanisation is believed to have taken place. The manifesting physical reality here is a progressive increase in the number of people living in such towns and cities. Michele et al. noted that the degree of urbanisation of a country varies to the extent in which absolute changes in the urban and total national population manifest.¹ The density of urban populations thus offered significant cost advantages for governments in the delivery of essential goods and services, and for the private sector, in the production and consumption of such items. Urbanisation had become a driving force as well as a source of development with the power to change and improve lives.² It drives economic progress by concentrating people in cities, hence, the classification of cities as the engines of economic development and the centre of industry and commerce.³ Cities have spurred innovations in science and technology and in systems of law and government as well as facilitated the diffusion of information through interaction among diverse cultures.⁴

The term urbanisation has been defined in various ways by different authors. However, generally it is defined as the migration of people from rural areas to urban areas for better livelihood.⁵ It is also the transformation of a country from a rural agricultural based economy to an industrial-service based economy,⁶ it is the changes that occur in the density, size and heterogeneity of cities.⁷ It could also be taken as the multidimensional transformation of the rural societies into modernized societies. Urbanisation is, thus, mainly driven by inequalities between rural and urban areas in terms of technology and economic development, as everyone wants a better and improved life. Hence, people migrate to cities because of the social and economic attraction and the prestige that is associated with living in the city.

In practice, to characterise a positive or negative change of the degree of urbanisation, it is necessary to analyse the absolute changes in the components of the ratio, namely urban and national (urban and rural) population. Urbanisation, as a physical transformation of cities and towns has attracted a great variety of scholarly attention over the years. From these activities, clarifications of issues associated with urbanisation were made from several perspectives as they relate to human activities. For example, urbanisation in some

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- 1 M. Michele et al., *Demographic Factors of Change in Urbanisation Processes: Dynamics of National Urban and Rural Population Determining the Degree of Urbanisation*, European Union JRC Technical Reports, EUR 29861, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019, doi:10.2760/127903, JRC118028.
 - 2 UN-Habitat, *Habitat III: The New Urban Agenda*, 2016, <http://www.habitat3.org>.
 - 3 I. Turok, *Urbanisation and Development: Reinforcing the Foundations*, (in: *The Routledge Companion to Planning in the Global South*, G. Bhan, S. Srinivas, and V. Watson (eds.), Oxford 2017.
 - 4 M.P. Brockerhoff, *An Urbanizing World*, Population Bulletin, Population Reference Bureau 2000, No. 55(3), No 1-5.
 - 5 M.K. Kuddus and A. Rahman, *Effect of Urbanization on Health and Nutrition*, International Journal of Statistics and Systems 2015, No. 10(2), pp. 165-175.
 - 6 V. Henderson, *The Urbanization Process and Economic Growth: The So-What Question*, Journal of Economic Growth 2003, No. 8(1), pp. 47-71.
 - 7 S. Cyril, J.C. Oldroyd and A. Renzaho, *Urbanization, Urbanicity and Health: A Systematic Review of the Reliability and Validity of Urbanicity Scales*, BMC Public Health 2013, No. 13(513), pp. 4-11.

instances is viewed as the proportion of the total national population living in areas classified as urban while urban growth strictly refers to the absolute number of people living in those areas.⁸ Till date, urbanisation still enjoys empirical patronage from different academic perspectives like demography, urban and regional planning, anthropology, sociology, history, economics, philosophy and political science across the globe. Hussain and Imitiyaz for instance claimed that urbanised societies in which majority of the people live crowded together in towns and cities represent a new and fundamental step in man's social evolution.⁹ In their words, the way cities have influenced and shaped social life throughout the history have motivated scholars of urban studies to continue giving empirical attention to the origin and development of the urban form. The growing concentration of the world's population in major cities and towns in low- and middle-income countries made the relationship between urbanisation and development a major policy concern.^{10, 11}

Studies have revealed that the growth of the urban population has moved from 220 million in 1900 to 732 million in 1950 and its projection of reaching 4.9 billion urban dwellers by 2030.^{12, 13} The United Nations (UN) projects that the world population will expand from 6.1 billion to 7.8 billion between 2000 and 2025. 90 percent of this growth is predicted to occur in urban areas of less developed countries,¹⁴ and nearly all of the global population growth from 2017 to 2030 is predicted to be done in cities.¹⁵ It is also projected that the population of less developed countries will become increasingly concentrated in large cities of 1 million or more residents. Many megacities, with about 10 million or more residents, are springing up and these will play important roles in the world's urban future.¹⁶ Many of the largest cities are likely to absorb enormous population increments. Lagos, Nigeria, for example, was expected to add nearly 10 million people between 2000 and 2015, while Dhaka, Bangladesh, would add 9 million.¹⁷ According to Aliyu and Amadu, in Nigeria urbanisation remains a demographically driven phenomenon that has no corresponding socioeconomic dividends and benefits to the urban environment.¹⁸ The present study is thus an effort at understanding the impact of urbanisation on health and life expectancy

8 C. Tacoli, G. McGranahan and D. Satterthwaite, *Urbanisation, Rural-Urban Migration and Urban Poverty*. London 2015.

9 M. Hussain, and I. Imitiyaz, *Urbanization Concepts, Dimensions and Factors*, International Journal of Recent Scientific Research 2018, No. 9(1), DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2018.0901.1483>.

10 A. Shlomo et al., *A Planet of Cities: Urban Land Cover Estimates and Projections for All Countries, 2000–2050, Working Paper*, Cambridge, MA, 2010.

11 United Nations Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2011 Revision, 2012*, POP/DB/WUP/Rev.2007.

12 United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2014 Revision*, 2015.

13 A.A. Aliyu and L. Amadu, *Urbanization, Cities, and Health: The Challenges to Nigeria - A Review*, Annals of African Medicine 2017, No. 16(4), pp. 149–158, https://doi.org/10.4103/aam.aam_1_17.

14 M.P. Brouckhoff, op. cit.

15 United Nations Funds for Population Agency (UNFPA), *UNFPA Strategy for the 2020 Round of Population & Housing Censuses (2015–2024)*, 2020. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Census_Strategy_Final_July.pdf.

16 Ibidem.

17 I. Turok, op. cit. (Chapter 7).

18 A.A. Aliyu and L. Amadu, op. cit.

of urban dwellers and a modest contribution to urban discourse. Henderson examined the urbanisation process and economic growth arguing that government policies and non-democratic institutions promote excessive concentration.¹⁹ Their study shows that urbanisation does not really affect the growth of productivity but strongly affects the growth of urban concentration.

Methodological Framework of the Study

To achieve this, the study relies on primary data that was sourced through telephone interview sessions conducted among respondents sampled through snowball sampling. These respondents included scholars in urban studies, public health educators, social workers, and epidemiologists. They were selected from universities and their sister teaching hospitals. The combination of a university and its sister teaching hospital makes a cluster. Ultimately the study investigates five clusters, which include the University of Ibadan/University College Hospital, Ibadan, the University of Lagos/Lagos University Teaching Hospital, the University of Port-Harcourt, the Bayero University/Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, Kano, and the Ahmadu Bello University/ABU Teaching Hospital, Zaria. This was complemented with information from existing studies (archival materials). A total of four participants were selected from each of these clusters to make twenty participants altogether.

Discourses on Urban life in Nigeria

Urbanisation in Nigeria is described, and on the basis of the population increases an urban hierarchy is suggested, with Lagos on top, growing at a sustained rate four times the national average. The 1967 administrative reorganisation of the four regions into twelve states, and the growth as well as the change in the distributional pattern for federal monetary payments to these states, seems to be achieving decentralised concentration. The rapid rate of urbanisation accompanies an extremely high rate of unemployment in the cities. The urban migration is caused by public stimulation of urban activities and neglect of the rural areas.²⁰ This policy results in increasing income differentials and an overreaction to economic realities. Thus, the rapid rate of urbanisation in Nigeria is characteristic of economic growth without development.

Nigeria's rural areas have been abandoned over the years. Public utilities and social services are largely unavailable. Where they are available, they are inefficient, shoddy and collapsing. Most villages lack functional amenities, such as schools, housing, hospitals, etc. The non-oil sector, particularly agriculture which is the mainstay of rural economy, has

19 V. Henderson, *The Urbanization Process...*, op. cit.

20 E. Onyenwe et al., *Habitat Fragmentation in Nigeria: A Cryptic but Devastating Phenomenon that Requires Urgent Attention*, International Journal of Fauna and Biological Studies 2017, No. 4(6), pp. 40-43.

suffered a huge decline. Poverty has deepened and living conditions and material well-being have declined steeply. Staying in a rural home under these conditions is practically unthinkable because it would signal a failure to succeed in life. The consequence of the lack of amenities and functioning institutions in the rural areas in Nigeria makes urban centres become more attractive which results in a rise in rural-urban migration.²¹

Remedy for the perennial intense urbanisation has been anchored in investment in rural areas in order to draw people away from cities. Yet, it has been constantly noted in the development process that rural and urban transformation are two sides of the same coin. Scholars thus claim that a development process of any country can hardly take off successfully if efforts are concentrated solely on rural and agricultural development.^{22,23} Moser sheds light on this with his position that increased productivity within the rural sector can only be sustained through simultaneous development in urban and industrial activities.²⁴ Urban centres provide social services for the rural population as well as the location for industrial enterprises engaged in the final stage of processing agricultural raw materials and markets for food crops from the rural areas. Urbanisation is thus an advantage to economy because it promotes economic development except if urbanisation is without adequate planning.^{25,26} Rapid urbanisation could only be beneficial if it is supported with massive capital formation that would be sufficient to off-set the low level equilibrium trap created by the rapid population increase.^{27,28} Williamson's hypothesis states that in the early stages of economic development, urban concentration is helpful but as time goes on, cities become more congested and the costs of living increase²⁹, while Henderson argues that political institutions and policies encourage urbanisation.³⁰

Aluko examined the consequences of urbanisation in Nigeria. The study used secondary and primary data. The primary data was collected through personal observations and direct interviews with the aid of questionnaire while secondary data was collected from the Lagos State Valuation office, journals, articles, research reports from government agencies and parastatals. Their study found that the population growth rate of the city has rapidly

21 I.O. Adelekan, *Vulnerability of Poor Coastal Communities to Climate Change in Lagos Nigeria*, Fifth Urban Research Symposium held in Italy, 2009.

22 C. Moser and J. Holland, *A Participatory Study of Urban Poverty and Violence in Jamaica: Summary Finding*, Washington, D.C.: Urban Development Division, World Bank, 1995.

23 C. Moser, *Confronting Crisis: a Comparative Study of Household Responses to Poverty and Vulnerability in Four Poor Urban Communities*, Environmentally Sustainable Development Studies and Monographs Series 1996, No 8.

24 C. Moser, op. cit.

25 E. Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, New York, 1970.

26 E.M. Hoover, *The Location of Economic Activity*, *The Economic Journal* 1948, No. 59(234), pp. 221-223.

27 V. Henderson, op. cit.

28 R.S. McNamara, *The Population Problem: Time Bomb or Myth?*, *Foreign Affairs* No. 62, pp. 1107-1131.

29 J.G. Williamson, *Regional Inequality and the Process of National Development: A Description of the Patterns*, *Economic Development and Cultural Change Journal* 1965, No. 13(4), pp. 1-84.

30 V. Henderson, *Urban Development: Theory, Fact and Illusion*, Oxford 1988.

increased, leading to the high cost of living in urban areas.³¹ Udeuhele assessed urbanisation and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. He identified that most urban areas have a number of slum settlements that causes a high level of social disorganization.³² The slums identified have high criminal rate, sexual behaviour, a high level of school dropouts and low educational aspirations, drug abuse and alcoholism, and a high rate of insecurity. Against the background of the position of scholars on urbanisation and its impact on every facet of human endeavours, this paper is complementing the existing studies through the exploration of the impact of urbanisation on the health of urban dwellers.

Incidence and Prevalence of Urban Problems in Nigeria

Over the years, the problem of urban growth in Nigeria and its attendant challenges has attracted attention of scholars over the years.^{33, 34, 35} The challenges across the cities, towns and their inhabitants include but are not limited to unemployment, deviance and expansion of squatter settlements.^{36, 37, 38, 39} Migration, poverty, growing insecurity, inadequate and deteriorating building, services and infrastructure have assumed a monstrous dimension in urbanising environment.^{40, 41, 42} These manifesting challenges, according to UN-Habitat, have seriously incapacitated the efforts of governments to better socioeconomic and environmental wellbeing of the citizenry especially in developing countries.⁴³ Meanwhile,

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- 31 O.E. Aluko, *The Impact of Urbanization on Housing Development: The Lagos Experience, Nigeria*, Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management 2010, No. 3(3), pp. 64-74.
 - 32 G.I. Udeuhele, *Urbanization and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Issues, Challenges and Prospect for National Development*, Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research 2018, No. 26(1), pp. 68-77, doi: 10.5829/idosi.mejsr.2018.68.77.
 - 33 A.J. Andrew, Challenges to Providing Affordable Housing in Nigeria (Paper Presented at the 2nd Emerging Urban Africa International Conference on Housing Finance in Nigeria, Held at Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Center Abuja, October 17-19), 2007, pp. 3-7.
 - 34 S.B. Agboola and T. Odunola, *Housing Policies and Programmes*, (in:) *Housing Development and Management: A Book of Readings*, T. Agbola, L. Egunjobi and L.O. Olatubara (eds.), Ibadan 2007, pp. 96-98.
 - 35 S.B. Agboola, *Housing Debacle*. Inaugural Lecture at the University of Ibadan, 2005, pp. 17-19.
 - 36 D. Satterthwaite, *Sustainable Cities or Cites that Contribute to Sustainable Development*, (in:) *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Cities*, D. Satterthwaite (ed.), London 1999, pp. 56-67.
 - 37 S.B. Agboola and T. Odunola, *Housing Policies...*, op. cit.
 - 38 A.O. Ilesanmi, *Urban Sustainability in the Context of Lagos Mega-City*, Journal of Geography and Regional Planning 2010, No. 3(10), pp. 240-252.
 - 39 O.M. Oladipupo and I.U. Anyanwu, *Slums and Deviance*, Journal of Health and Social Management 2011, 16(1), pp. 25-30.
 - 40 M.A. Balogun, *Migration and Urbanisation*, Journal of Cooperative and Physical Development 2010, No. 4(1), pp. 31-42.
 - 41 S.O. Adebari, *Equality and Equity in Urbanizing Society*, Journal of Cooperative and Physical Development 2011, No. 5(2), pp. 62-71.
 - 42 O.E. Aluko, *Sustainable Housing Development and Functionality of Planning Laws in Nigeria: The Case of Cosmopolitan Lagos*, Journal of Sustainable Development 2011, No. 4(5), pp. 142-145.
 - 43 UN-Habitat, *The State of African Cities 2010: Governance, Inequality and Urban Land Markets*, Nairobi, 2010, <http://www.zaragoza.es/contenidos/medioambiente/onu/535-eng-ed2010.pdf>.

sustainable development is possible only in an environment where everybody has access to basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter for a healthy and productive life that is in harmony with nature.⁴⁴

As illuminating as these expectations are, unfolding urban realities in Nigeria could not permit this. In the words of another participant of this study, urbanisation has resulted in environmental degradation due to uncontrolled human activities. In most cases, inappropriate infrastructure that does not commensurate with physical structures of the environment has been introduced in the name of transforming the cities. This has led to damaging of natural environment. The damages increase as the population surges forward.⁴⁵ Another submission reveals that inadequate sewer facilities have produced large volumes of polluted water. Urban dwellers in the process of meeting their needs at all cost due to their unregulated growth continue to construct houses in environmentally sensitive areas. Absence of conventional or clean energy like gas or electricity for cooking has prompted them to use wood fires intensively. The health implication of this compromise concerns air quality.⁴⁶ In the words of another participant, it was noted that the growing number of persons migrating from the rural areas to the urban centres portends a problem of overcrowding which would exacerbate the problems of communicable diseases and pollution.⁴⁷

In line with such claims, with well mapped out strategies for befitting cities, infrastructure is expected to be created in a sensible way to meet the needs of the population. These typically include availability of electric grids, sewer facilities, gas lines as well as expansion of roads in line with the growth of the population. Most of the houses that emerged in this manner often developed into informal slums and shanty towns as population increases. The slums and shanty towns serve as places of living for the in-migrants. The common feature in such dwellings is that they exist unofficially and are almost always not captured in official planning, hence the inadequate or non-existent public services in spite of the burgeoning populations.⁴⁸ Poor farmers and landless people gravitate to cities in search of work and an improved standard of living, but often find themselves living in poverty in the city and unable to find work. It is equally important to note that most of the migrants who move to the urban centres in search of paid employment leave their rural origin with a particular job in mind. Many cannot secure their dream job due to absence of or deficient academic qualification. Consequently, many end up in disguised unemployment because they are in poorly paid jobs. The aftermath of this often involves the problem of self-actualization and resorting to morally unacceptable and deviance activities.⁴⁹ The people within the slums are most often not within reach of public health care centres, hence the absence of government-operated primary healthcare facilities. People make do with self-medication

44 A.S. Adelowo, *Determinants of Sustainable Development*, Journal of Cooperative and Physical Development 2020, No. 14(1), pp. 13-24.

45 In-depth Interview/Male/Lecturer in Urban and Regional Planning/University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

46 In-depth Interview/Female/Public Health Educator/Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Zaria, Nigeria.

47 In-depth Interview/Male/Epidemiologist/University College Hospital Ibadan, Nigeria.

48 In-depth Interview/Male/Lecturer in Urban Studies/Geography Department, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria.

49 In-depth Interview/Male/Lecturer in Urban Studies/Sociology Department University of Lagos, Nigeria.

by patronizing herbal drugs hawkers as an alternative to the absence of healthcare services. This practice of self-medication has affected many, causing them to die young and to lose their ability to the extent that they are no longer productive economically.⁵⁰

The urban problem in Nigeria did not exclude the shortage of water supply, transportation and traffic congestion. One participant viewed water on a par with air. Water was classified as one of the crucial elements of human existence. According to him, water supply in terms of quantity and quality in Nigeria is in a terrible state. This always creates untoward hardship on those urban dwellers that are not close to other sources of water like streams, wells and regular rainfall.⁵¹ Further claims showed that the water problem is usually acute during the dry season when households wonder around cities in search for water for drinking and domestic uses. This problem cuts across social classes where those who can afford spend huge amounts of money for the private supply of water. Those who cannot afford this go for untreated water, which often leads to health challenges like cholera, typhoid fever and dysentery.⁵²

Respondents also named the transportation problem as another challenge in urban area. In the words of another participant, an increase in the population of urban centres has made the transport facilities provided by the government and private initiatives grossly inadequate. The transport system could no longer cater adequately for the growing population. This has led to a pitiable situation where the would-be commuters have to chase passenger vehicles at bus stops in order to secure a seat. This is most evident during the early hours of working days and in the evenings when workers finish for the day.⁵³ In order to meet up with this challenge, more vehicles continue to appear as the urban population increases, thereby translating into intensive use of automobiles. The need for security and convenience during travels and the need to maintain the status makes proliferation of private cars a necessity in a developing country like Nigeria.⁵⁴ The increased number of automobiles on the roads and problems of road design and maintenance in the cities coupled with a bad style of driving regularly result into traffic congestion.⁵⁵ All city-dwellers are, therefore, facing deterioration in their quality of life due to exposure to air and noise pollution that go along with traffic congestion. This, equally, has a negative long-term impact on the health and sustainability of their cities, yet the situation is like a recurring decimal that people in the city have learnt to live with.⁵⁶

It was further revealed that diseases were caused by unclean water, impure air and overcrowding. These are epidemics in some rapidly growing cities; health challenges like cholera, diarrhoea and other water-borne illnesses thrive in places that do not have water fil-

50 In-depth Interview/Male/Social Worker/Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital Kano, Nigeria.

51 In-depth Interview/Female/Lecturer in Urban Studies/Geography Department, University of Port-Harcourt Nigeria.

52 In-depth Interview/Male/Epidemiologist/Lagos University Teaching Hospital Lagos, Nigeria.

53 In-depth Interview/Female/Social Worker/University College Hospital Ibadan, Nigeria.

54 In-depth Interviews/Male/Lecturer in Urban and Regional Planning, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

55 In-depth Interview/Male/Lecturer in Urban Studies, Department of Geography Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

56 In-depth Interview/Female/Social Worker/Lagos University Teaching Hospital, Lagos, Nigeria.

tration plants, while infectious and respiratory diseases are caused by unclean air. Rapidly expanding cities and their huge traffic problems were noted by another participant.⁵⁷ In this situation, heavy traffic contributes substantially to unclean air through emissions of dust and carbon-monoxide. These health challenges are usually exacerbated when people do not have access to reliable and affordable healthcare services.⁵⁸ Lending credence to the above, the situation of children and mothers in the urban centres was looked at. According to one respondent, challenges in urban settings include a large percentage of households without safe water, excess calories consumed as fat, and with a low literacy rate, which means that they are likely to experience a low life expectancy at birth, a high infant mortality rate and a high level of maternal mortality.⁵⁹

Urbanisation and Health in Nigeria: Causes and Consequences

McDade and Adair documented social determinants of health that can enhance a healthy life, thereby increasing life expectancy.⁶⁰ These include better housing and living conditions, access to safe water and good sanitation, efficient waste management systems, and safer working environments and neighbourhoods. This list also included food security and access to services such as education, health, welfare, public transportation and child care. This explains the special attention usually given to urban and urbanising societies, so that the citizens live a healthy lifestyle. Scholars have argued that urbanisation offers a variety of opportunities such as improved health through access to health services, safe drinking water, quality education, reduced transmission of malaria, improved access to information and technology.⁶¹ Other advantages of urbanisation, according to Torres, include promotion of good health and prevention of diseases, a higher life expectancy, an increase in economic productivity, a higher level of education and literacy, better access to health care and social services, and an improved quality of life, among others.⁶²

However, there are others with a contrary perspective of what urbanisation portends most especially in the developing societies. When these are considered within the findings of primary data and outcomes of existing studies, it is obvious that the health situation of urban dwellers still needs special attention. The existing studies point to almost an absence of these determinants, hence scholars' attempts to point them out and make recommendations. For example, Omole noted that urbanisation exposes residents to various health

57 In-depth Interview/Male/Public Health Educator University of Port-Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Nigeria.

58 In-depth interview/Male/Lecturer in Urban Studies, Sociology Department, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

59 In-depth interview/Female/Epidemiologist Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, Kano, Nigeria.

60 T. McDade and L. Adair, *Defining the Urban in Urbanization and Health: A Factor Analysis Approach*, Social Science and Medicine Journal 2001, No. 53(1), pp. 55-70.

61 Ibidem.

62 C. Torres, V. Canudas-Romo and J. Oeppen, *The Contribution of Urbanization to Change in Life Expectancy in Scotland 1861-1910*, Population Studies Taylor & Francis Journal 2019, No. 73(3), pp. 387-404, DOI: 10.1080/00324728.2018.1549746.

threats,⁶³ and urban dwellers suffer from obesity and over nutrition which contributes to chronic diseases.⁶⁴ Urbanisation could speed up the spread of diseases⁶⁵ increase the rate of mental disorders,⁶⁶ increase unemployment, cause environmental degradation and low quality housing, exposure to all forms of pollution and overcrowding which enhance disease transmission.⁶⁷

Eckert and Kohler reviewed research on urban-rural and intra-urban health differences in developing countries and investigated if there is a health advantage in urban areas. In their study, urbanisation has an insignificant but positive relationship with life expectancy while common risk factors for chronic diseases were more prevalent in urban areas. Their study concluded that urbanisation may either improve or worsen health and therefore, urbanisation alone should not be considered as a solution to health problems but should rather be accompanied by a reactive health policy.⁶⁸ Nkalu and Edeme investigated the extent to which environmental hazards affect life expectancy in Africa between 1960 and 2017 using the generalized autoregressive conditional heteroscedasticity (GARCH) model.⁶⁹ Their findings showed that environmental hazards reduce life expectancy by one month and three weeks, income increases life expectancy at birth by one year and six months, while population growth increases the life expectancy at birth by five years and five months.

Oni-Jimoh, Liyanage, Oyebanji and Gerges explored the causes, advantages and disadvantages of establishing urban slum dwellings in Nigeria arguing that an appropriate policy may contribute to an effective provision of affordable housing that would meet housing needs and solve the urbanisation problem in Nigeria.⁷⁰ Their study identified several factors that caused urbanisation in Nigeria, such as trade and politics, industrialization, moving Nigeria's capital city from Lagos to Abuja, creation of new states and infrastructure. They also noted that urbanisation causes poor health among of many urban dwellers. Urbanisation has improved the economic growth and development, enabled the use of modern equipment and methods, enhanced technological advancements and encouraged the establishment of educational institutions. Conversely, disadvantages of urbanisation include overpopulation, acute shortage of land space, increase in criminal activities, high costs of living, pollution, among others. Their study concluded that the negative impacts of urba-

63 F.K. Omole, *An Assessment of Housing Conditions and Socio-Economic Life Styles of Slum Dwellers in Akure, Nigeria*, Contemporary Management Research 2010, No. 6(4), pp. 273-290.

64 M.K. Kuddus and A. Rahman, op. cit.

65 R. Godfrey and M. Julien, *Urbanization and Health*, Clinical Medicine Journal, London 2005, No. 5(2), pp. 137-141.

66 D. Bhugra and A. Mastroglanni, *Globalization and Mental Disorders-Overview with Relation to Depression*, National Library of Medicine 2004, No. 184, pp. 10-20.

67 V. Yiengprugsawan, et al., *Social Demography and Health Outcomes Among a National Cohort of 71,516 Adults in Thailand*, International Journal of Population Research 2011, pp. 2-9.

68 S. Eckert and S. Kohler, *Urbanization and Health in Developing Countries: A Systematic Review*, World Health and Population 2014, No. 15(1), pp. 7-20.

69 C.N. Nkalu and R.K. Edeme, *Environmental Hazards and Life Expectancy in Africa: Evidence from GARCH Model*, SAGE Open Access Journal 2019, pp. 1-8.

70 T. Oni-Jimoh, et al., *Urbanization and Meeting the Need for Affordable Housing in Nigeria*, Intech Open 2018, pp. 1-19.

nisation on the nation outweigh the positive impacts and that achieving affordable housing will raise home ownership and improve the country's human development index.

Bergh and Nilsson investigated the relationship between life expectancy and globalization in 92 countries and their results showed that urbanisation was positively but not significantly related with life expectancy.⁷¹ Malaria mortality is more strongly associated with urban environment than diarrhoea is. Cyril, Oldroyd and Renzaho systematically examined the properties of parameters used to measure city areas between 1970 and 2012 in Sri Lanka, Austria, China, Nigeria, India and the Philippines.⁷² They found that increased urbanisation entails deleterious health outcomes, as well as access to and enjoyment of health care services. Their study concluded that measures used in the evaluation of cities should be standardized. Yiengprugsawan, Caldwell, Lim, Seubsman and Sleight compared three (rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-urban) life course urbanisation groups in Thailand.⁷³ Rural-urban and urban-urban groups suffer adverse health risks, poor self-assessed health outcomes and poor psychological condition. Urbanisation transmits socio-geographic changes that are associated with transitions in health risk behaviours and health outcomes alike. The study suggested that health programmes need to focus more on urban health and there should be regular surveillance of urban populations for health-risk behaviour.

Lanrewaju examined the impact of urbanisation on environmental degradation and housing quality in Nigeria using Osogbo and Akure as a case study.⁷⁴ His study revealed that rural dwellers migrate to urban areas in search for jobs that are mostly not available. This group becomes the urban poor because they lack sustainable means of livelihood and they make up 70% of the urban population. Lanrewaju characterized environmental degeneration as substandard housing, inadequate basic infrastructural facilities, overcrowding, poor ventilation in workplaces and homes, among others. His findings suggested that low-cost houses should be provided for low-income earners by the government. Also, unequal distribution of wealth in the country should be addressed.⁷⁵ This would improve the housing quality and life expectancy of the average Nigerian.

Abidoye and Soroh examined the effects of urbanisation on the nutrition of children in Nigeria.⁷⁶ Urbanisation has led to health and social problems, especially in the welfare and nutrition of primary school children aged five to ten. Children raised by single parents were clinically malnourished, according to a study carried out by the Indian Institute of Public Health (IIPH). Ohwo and Abotutu reviewed the environmental impact of urbanisation in

71 A. Bergh and T. Nilsson, *Do Liberalization and Globalization Increase Income Inequality?*, European Journal of Political Economy 2010, No. 26(4), pp. 488-505.

72 S. Cyril, J.C Oldroyd and A. Renzaho, *op. cit.*

73 V. Yiengprugsawan et al., *op. cit.*

74 A.F. Lanrewaju, *Urbanization, Housing Quality and Environmental Degeneration in Nigeria*, Journal of Geography and Regional Planning 2012, No. 5(16), pp. 422-429.

75 *Ibidem.*

76 R.O. Abidoye and K.W. Soroh, *A Study on the Effects of Urbanization on the Nutritional Status of Primary School Children in Lagos, Nigeria*, Nutrition and Health Journal 1999, No. 13, pp. 141-151.

Nigeria.⁷⁷ Environmental problems in Nigeria include soil erosion and flooding, pollution, deforestation and wetland destruction, global warming, loss of habitat and ecology. These threaten the goal of environmental sustainability through urbanisation. Sustainability can be achieved if rural areas are developed and when there is an enabling environment for marketing rural products. Torres, Canudas-Romo and Oeppen examined the contribution of urbanisation to changes in life expectancy in Scotland.⁷⁸ Their findings showed a direct relationship between high mortality and negative effect of population redistribution to urban areas on survival in Scotland during the study period.

Conclusion

Nigeria continues to experience rapid urbanisation as its population doubles with the manifestation of what Gries and Grundmann referred to as a historic transformation of human social roots and a rapid replacement of a rural culture with a predominantly urban culture.⁷⁹ Food producers are being ignored and rural areas have bad roads and lack electricity, storage system and mechanized farming among others and this is a serious threat to the food security. The rural population continues to migrate towards urban zones creating a situation where the majority disadvantaged population is confronted with a constant degradation in living conditions.⁸⁰ Within this purview, pressure on the existing infrastructure and facilities in the cities continues. The implication of this is that the present and subsequent status of the housing, health and living condition of people in urban areas will continue to worsen until existing infrastructure and facilities in the cities are improved upon as the population rises. The findings of this study corroborated earlier findings by Aluko who found that traffic congestion and all forms of pollution with a rapid population increase still thrive.⁸¹ This study confirms that problems like inadequate safe water supply, squalor and shanty settlements, poor sanitation, solid waste management crises, double burden of diseases and inefficient, congested, and risky transport system manifested in the study by Aliyu and Amadu are still true.⁸²

Larose's work provides some insight into the cause of this situation. He writes that the concentration of substandard quantities of domestic waste scattered randomly over an urban territory/area gives rise to a shortage of available drinking water supplies, as well as constantly increases the risk of infectious diseases, especially for marginalized popu-

77 O. Ohwo and A. Abotutu, *Environmental Impact of Urbanization in Nigeria*, British Journal of Applied Science and Technology 2015, No. 9(3), pp. 212-221.

78 C. Torres, V. Canudas-Romo and J. Oeppen, op. cit.

79 T. Gries and R. Grundmann, *Fertility and Modernization: the Role of Urbanization in Developing Countries*, Journal of International Development 2018, No. 30(3), pp. 493-506, doi:10.1002/jid.3104.

80 S.I. Omofonmwam and G.I. Osa-Edoh, *The Challenges of Environmental Problem in Nigeria*, Journal of Human Ecology 2008, No. 23(1), pp. 53-57.

81 O.E. Aluko, *The Impact ...*, op. cit.

82 A.A. Aliyu and L. Amadu, op. cit.

lations.⁸³ This was reiterated in the study by Udeuhele where he observed that unsanitary waste disposal, such as defecation in streams, refuse dumping in pits, rivers and drainage canals could be expected to affect surface and groundwater quality.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the degree to which the human population has access to a water source also influences the level or extent of pollution and contamination.⁸⁵ Evidence of insufficiency of decent housing is a manifestation that slums and shanty towns that inherited the urbanisation system in the colonial era still remain undisturbed.^{86, 87, 88}

Challenges like a steady increase in crime rates and insecurity, poor nutrition due unaffordability of food cities and the resulting exacerbation of existing illnesses, diseases, unhealthy ageing, increased mortality rate, etc., will continue to add up to the existing urban health crisis. Cities are consistently becoming home to high concentrations of poverty. Inequalities between the rich and the poor are very obvious in the urban areas as wealthy communities coexist alongside and separate from what UN-Habitat (2007a) referred to as slums⁸⁹ and informal settlements. Such settlements through observations could be found in virtually all urban centres in Nigeria through their characteristic features, as highlighted by Agbola.⁹⁰ The data collected for this study shows that it is obvious that the crippled economic situation in the country will continue to make life within the slums more terrifying than what Adelekan previously described in her study.⁹¹

Urban slums are especially prone to having abysmal health conditions. This is evident from the absence of government-operated primary healthcare facilities. Habitat studies show that households living in housing that is overcrowded, poorly ventilated, lacking adequate sanitation and safe water are constantly susceptible to infection.⁹² Diarrhoea is one of the leading causes of death among slum dwellers.⁹³ Untreated human excrement and used household water find their way into rivers, gullies, streams and ditches, and thereby constitute a major public health hazard.

83 F. Larose, *Locus of Control and Perceptions of Environmental Risk Factor: Inhabitants of Slums Facing Domestic Garbage*, Swiss Journal of Psychology, 2000, <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/236847770>.doi:10.1024/1421-0185.59.3.137.

84 G.I. Udeuhele, op. cit.

85 O.I. Ojo, K. Ogedengbe and G.M. Ochieng, *Efficacy of Solar Water Disinfection for Well Waters: Case Study of Ibadan Slums*, Nigeria International of the Physical Sciences 2011, No. 6(5), pp. 1059-1067.

86 D.O. Olarewaju, *Town Planning: a eritable means for poverty reduction*; 38th Inaugural Lecture; Federal University of technology, Akure, 26 October 2004.

87 A.O. Ilesanmi, op. cit.

88 O.M. Oladipupo and I.U. Anyanwu, op. cit.

89 A slum can be defined as a heavily populated informal settlement characterized by substandard housing and squalor.

90 S.B. Agboola, *Housing Debacle...*, op. cit.

91 I.O. Adelekan, op. cit.

92 UN-Habitat, *What are slums and why do they exist?* Kenya, 2007b, <http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads>.

93 A.K Adebayo and A.C.O. Iweka, *Sustainable Infrastructure Upgrade in Slum Settlements of Lagos Nigeria: The Role of the Architect*, Environmental Research, Engineering and Management 2014, No. 2(68), pp. 53-60.

Recommendations

Despite the seeming advantages of urbanisation, it could be gathered from the above that if drastic policy measures are not taken, especially in a developing country like Nigeria, devastating consequences may follow, particularly such that relate to the health status of the people in the country. Therefore, some policy measures have been recommended below.

There is an urgent need to provide more social amenities in the rural areas and to upgrade the existing infrastructure there. This is a major way to curb overcrowding in our urban centres. If all public utilities were available in rural areas, it would discourage people from migrating to urban centres. This is because most people migrate from rural areas to urban centres with an expectation that their quality of life will improve. Provision of electricity, good roads, portable water, functional primary health care centres, schools, etc., are necessary in the villages so that the people living there too will enjoy some comforts and will be able to lead a good life and consequently not migrate to cities.

Urban slums should be reduced to the minimum if not totally eradicated. This is because many social vices and health challenges occur in such places. People living in such places should be catered for. Most of the times they do not have jobs and therefore, providing welfare stipends for them will go a long way to alleviate their suffering and reduce the poor urban population. Health care facilities should be provided so that medical care is accessible and affordable. Houses should be built for people living in the slums and other public utilities too should be provided for them.

The use of clean energy for cooking and lighting should be encouraged among the people especially those living in the urban centres so as to avoid air pollution that constantly comes from the biomass fuel as a source of energy. This will also positively impact people's health. Efforts should be geared towards recycling solid waste. Most of solid waste is generated in urban centres and this affects the environment negatively, which eventually hugely affects people's lives. However, if this solid waste is recycled, apart from producing wealth it will also contribute to the population's better health. This could be achieved through public-private partnership.

Finally, more cities mean more infrastructure, therefore the government should always map out plans that will take into consideration the future trend of even more cities, whereby adequate facilities and infrastructure will be provided when needed. Hence, a robust plan and its effective implementation will help such cities to continue to grow, while people's health will not deteriorate. It will also require general and efficient attention to the planning and monitoring of urban factual development as well as the provision of essential public services. A shift towards a public-service-centred approach, towards urbanisation, health security, human rights and sovereignty would bring significant benefits, not only for Nigeria's constitutional and administrative development, but also for comparative and international policy purposes.

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