

## AN ASSESSMENT OF ACCESS TO HOUSING FACILITIES IN KANO METROPOLIS

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### ABSTRACT

*Urban centres in many countries are often characterised with shortage of housing. In the countries of the global south, this has been an issue that has generated a lot of concern. Governments have therefore adopted different approaches and several programmes in order to address this. The Kano State Government has responded to the increasing housing needs of close to three million people in the metropolis (2006 Census) by implementing housing programmes in the state. These include building of houses under 'owner-occupier housing scheme', the development of 'site and services', the allocation of new residential lay-outs and the construction of houses that are sold on 'cash and carry' basis in some parts of the metropolis. This paper provides an assessment of whether the various housing programmes have really improve access to housing facilities in the metropolitan area. The study utilised mixed method approach where qualitative and quantitative techniques were involved. A total of two hundred respondents were systematically identified from four different wards in the metropolis to take part in the study. The data analysed revealed that majority of the respondents (69%) believed the state government was far from resolving housing needs of the metropolitan area. This general opinion was observed to differ at the ward levels involved in the research and the difference was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 124.745$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ).*

**KEYWORDS:** *Housing; Owner-occupier; Metropolitan Kano*

### INTRODUCTION

Housing is one of the basic human needs that are highly required by the Nigeria's teeming urban population. Like other developing countries, Nigeria is experiencing a high rate of urbanisation, which makes demand for housing critical. Urban centres in Nigeria are therefore subsumed by this phenomenon. Research has indicated that the demand for housing in the developing countries generally is expected to increase significantly due to astronomical growth of the urban population, which is projected to double between the years of 2000 to 2030 (UNEP, 2007).

In order to address the absolute and potential housing problems that may be related to housing deficit in the metropolis; the Kano State government has introduced and implemented several strategies as part of its housing policy. Some of the earlier measures introduced include 'owner occupier scheme', 'site and services' and 'layouts of residential plots'. These strategies were found very effective in improving housing stock in some developing countries especially in Latin America where housing demand arising from rapid urbanisation exhibited some similarities with urban centres in Nigeria. Therefore, the implementation of these strategies by the Kano state government is intended to improve accessibility to housing facilities among the teeming population of the metropolis. This paper therefore assess the successes or otherwise of the strategies in ameliorating the housing difficulties of residents through improving their access to the government provided housing facilities.

The aim of this research is to assess the level of accessibility to housing facilities provided by Kano State Government. This is intended to be achieved through the following objectives:

- To explore the role of the public sector in improving housing accommodation in Kano metropolis.
- To examine the successes of state-run 'sites and services', 'owner occupier' schemes and 'plot layouts' in addressing housing shortages in the metropolis.

### *The Study Area*

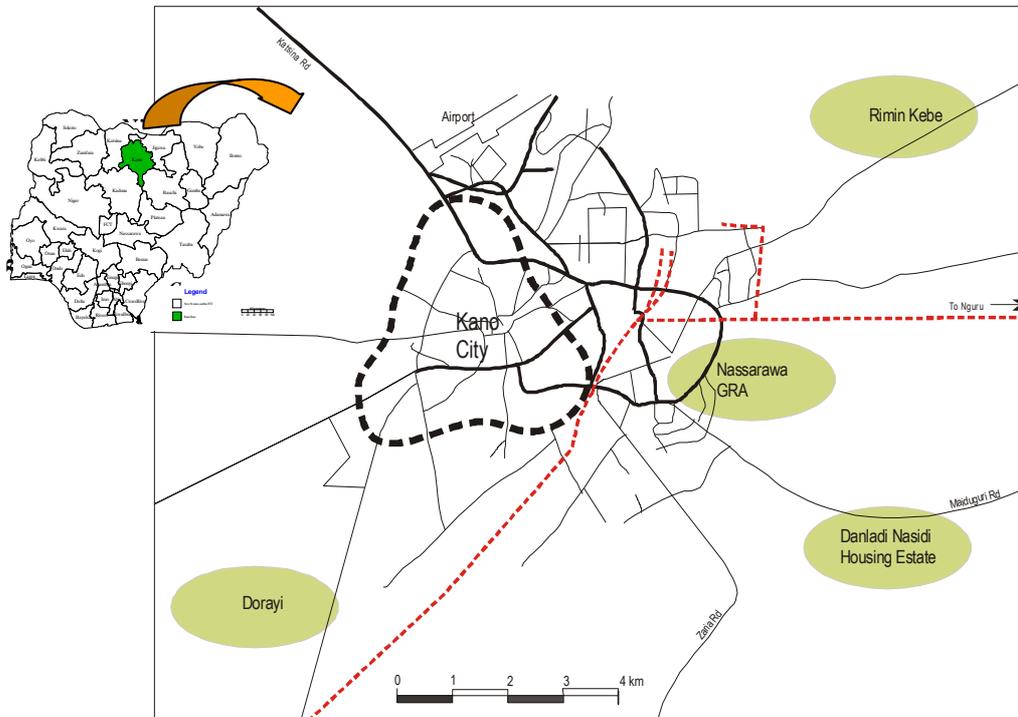
Kano city, the capital of Kano State lies between latitude 11° 57' to 12° 01' N and longitude 8° 28' to 8° 35' E. It falls under the Tropical wet and dry climate identified as AW under the Koppen's classification. The wet season in the area lasts for an average of four to five months, effectively from May to September while the dry season covers from October to April. The average annual temperature is about 27° C while the average monthly values range between 24°C to 32°C. The highest temperatures are usually recorded during the hottest months of April to May going to as high as 42°C. The months of December and January are usually characterised by Harmattan wind, which records the lowest temperatures sometimes less than 20°C (Olofin, 1987).

Its people are predominantly Hausas of Islamic faith with some concentration of other ethnic groups of Christian background. Kano State is one of the oldest and perhaps the largest States in Nigeria.

It is popular for its commerce and agricultural production, which has been the mainstay of the economy of the state. Kano city has been known as prominent for its role during the trans-Saharan trade with Maghreb States of North Africa alongside Gao, Timbuktu and Katsina.

According to the 2006 population census, Kano has a population of over 9.3

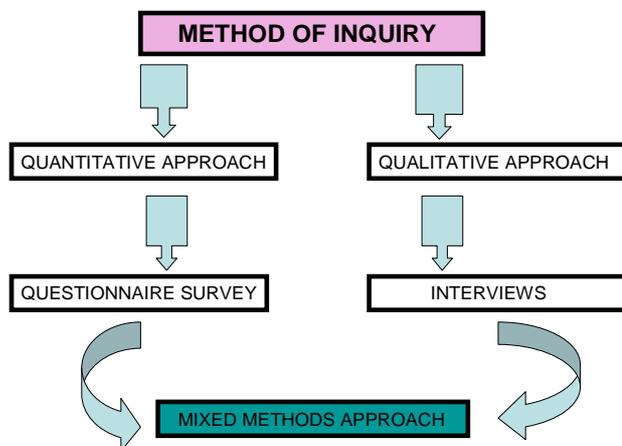
million, the metropolis accounts for 2.2 million people. This represents about 23 per cent of the total population and is concentrated within eight metropolitan councils. Four study sites were identified and selected from these areas, which includes Danladi Nasidi, Nassarawa, Rimin Kebe and Dorayi (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Kano Metropolis Showing the Study Sites**  
 Source: Cartography Unit, Bayero University Kano, revised 2008.

**Research Methods**

This research adopted a mixed method approach by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches in a complementary form as illustrated in figure 2.



**Figure 2: Mixed Method Approach**  
 Source: Fieldwork 2009

*Mixed Method*

The approach was adopted because of the benefits it affords researchers to utilize the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative techniques in a single piece of research. There is a wide range of literature that argues for the adoption of this approach including Bryman (1998); Creswell (1994); Fielding and Schreier (2001) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003). Furthermore, Lockyer (2006) noted that the use of mixed methods resulted in a more 'comprehensive understanding of the ethics of humour than would be gleaned from a reliance on one method' (p41). The mixed methods approach was adopted for this work because of the wide range of people that needed to be contacted to supply the data for the research. The approach has enabled a wide range of views of the members of the public to be listened to and retrieved, which has made it possible to answer the main questions raised by the study.

*Questionnaires Survey*

The questionnaire survey was chosen as one of the tools for the conduct of this research because it is one of the survey instruments that when used with a lot of precision, is highly practicable and would reliably generates substantial source of data. As a result, the questionnaire survey was used to explore the role of the public sector towards facilitating access to housing especially among the low-income urban residents. It served as a tool for the assessment of government policies on 'site and services' and 'owner occupier' housing schemes. These are issues that were directly related to the members of the public therefore, it was important that their

opinions were sought on how their lives were affected by these policies.

*Interviews*

Interviews were used because it was necessary to get the detailed opinions and views of various elite individual gatekeepers within the Kano housing system. A survey would not have been appropriate for this group because there are not many of them and they are experts, thus their individual ideas and view not some generalised sense of what most think is required.

*Fieldwork*

The fieldwork was conducted with the assistance of the ward heads in the four selected study sites. In order to manage the conduct of the survey within the four study areas, a timetable was drawn that was used to guide movement between the areas (Table 1). It was designed on a weekly basis so that the researcher spent a week on one site before moving to the next. A full circle between the study sites was completed in a month before the second circle began. Thus, the survey started from week 1 in Rimin Kebe and it was subsequently followed in week 2 by Danladi Nasidi and ended up in Nassarawa in week 4. The sequence was therefore repeated again in the same format the following month until the survey was completed. The essence of adopting this approach was to balance the data collection in all the study sites so that attention was not concentrated on one area to the neglect of the others. Through this approach, the questionnaire was progressively administered through all the four study areas.

**Table 1: Monthly Schedule of Field Work**

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
RIMIN KEBE			
	DANLADI NASIDI		
		DORAYI	
			NASSARAWA

Source: Fieldwork 2009

*Sampling Technique and Procedure*

The research was conducted using a probability sampling technique so that the conclusions derived from the sample were representative of the entire population. One of the reasons for the adoption of probability sampling is the population size of the metropolitan area. Therefore it is important to use a representative sampling technique that would enable the sample to be a good representation of the population. All the households in the four study areas were used as the population from which

the sample households were extracted. Accordingly, a systematic sampling technique was used to identify the respondent households in all four study areas. Furthermore, the process required a sampling frame for extracting the samples. Consequently, the National Population Commission was contacted from whom the housing register used for the 2006 population and housing census was collected. Thus, the register was used as the sampling frame; it contained the names of the wards, streets and house numbers.

A simple random sampling technique was further used only for the choice of the first number from the sampling frame, which was used as the starting point for the selection of the remaining sample households using systematic sampling technique in each study site. Subsequently, every 15<sup>th</sup> number was chosen until the total number of samples required was determined. In the four areas under study, random selection of the first number for the household was carried out using numbers from one to fifteen to begin the sequence of determining other household numbers that were considered as samples. In every study area, one hundred households were selected based on this procedure. Thus, for the four areas under study a total of four hundred respondent households were identified. Household heads were used to participate in the questionnaire survey. Only in a few cases where the household head was not available, was a senior member of the household interviewed as a substitute. The response rate for the survey was more than 60 per cent. The questionnaires administered were entered into a purposely made database on the computer on a daily basis if there are no problems detected with the entries.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey results have shown that government has not been able to seriously influenced access to housing facilities in the study areas; respondents were asked whether the government often met the demand for housing in their neighbourhood. A majority of the respondents (69%) were of the view that the demands were far from being met, 14% believed they were met,

while 17% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. As these policies were however general to the entire surveyed respondents, a further specific enquiry into state housing provision in relation to facilities provided by the State Housing Corporation revealed that 37% of the respondents expressed the view that they think people within their neighbourhoods have access to such facilities. However, 49% of the respondents said people in their neighbourhoods do not access the housing facilities, while 15% said they do not know. When the same question was analysed at the level of neighbourhood, the survey shows that opinions vary substantially depending on the neighbourhood (Table 2). The difference is statistically significant (chi-square = 124.745;  $p < 0.05$ ).

This significant statistical difference implies that the facilities are not spread evenly across the neighbourhoods. It means some neighbourhoods are given more preference over the others; this is because of the preponderance of influential people and/or people who are closer to the corridors of power in such favoured neighbourhoods. Thus, neighbourhoods dominated by the elites and wealthy members of the society are often where the facilities are concentrated. This is substantiated for example; by the response of residents of Danladi Nasidi and Nassarawa who returned the highest positive response confirming that they have access to housing facilities provided by the Government.

It was noted that most of Kano's residential neighbourhoods housed residents according to their socio economic positions.

**Table 2: Access to Housing Facilities Provided by the Housing Corporation**

Neighbourhoods		Responses			No
		Yes	No	Don't know	
DANLADI NASIDI	%	79.0	12.9	8.1	62
DORAYI	%	1.3	76.3	22.4	76
NASSARAWA	%	63.2	24.6	12.3	57
RIMIN KEBE	%	16.9	69.0	14.0	71

Source: Field work 2007/2008

The data shows that Danladi Nasidi residents were by far the most likely to report that residents in their area had been able to access facilities provided by the Housing Corporation. This is because the area is a government housing estate and houses were predominantly allocated to public sector employees. It is therefore expected for the respondents to affirm the view that people in the neighbourhood have access to these facilities. On the other hand, the highest negative response came from Dorayi's residents. The neighbourhood houses a majority of low and medium income earners, most of whom are employees of the industrial sector. There is no government-housing programme located in the neighbourhood and therefore residents of the

area have not enjoyed that privilege of having access to housing facilities provided by the State Housing Corporation.

Respondents were further asked whether they personally applied to have access to housing allocation from the corporation: 62% said they did not apply while 38% said they did. Among the respondents who applied, 47% were successful while 53% were not successful. This shows that more than 50% of those who requested housing units were unsuccessful in securing access. The fact that a great majority of the people (62%) did not apply to have access to housing allocation is an indication that members of the public in the metropolis have lost confidence in the formal land and housing allocation system.

One of the reasons why a majority of the low-income group did not have access to state housing facilities was that access was much easier for the rich and wealthy elites than for poor urban residents. Even in the case of government low-cost houses that were meant for the low-income groups, the wealthy elites bought up the houses and subsequently rented them out and charged exorbitant prices. This was the case in Danladi Nasidi Housing Estate where a resident confirmed during this survey that he acquired a number of units in the area, which were now all rented out. The implication is that houses meant for the low-income group never filter down to the targeted beneficiaries. The government has not been able to check the excesses of these elites and the wealthy individuals who have been working against the realisation of its housing policies and programmes. In fact, one of the reasons for government inability to deal with this trend is because there is collaboration with some government officials and the likelihood of corruption cannot be ruled out.

The government for its part has not helped the issue of access to its housing facilities especially for the low-income groups. This is because one of the major obstacles identified that is preventing many urban residents from accessing decent housing is shortage of funds. The government is not helping their situation for example, on its built and sold houses. By demanding a down-payment to purchase houses whose prices are beyond the financial ability of the low-income and at times, even the medium income earners, government has systematically placed the low-income in a disadvantaged position. It could be argued that even in the owner-occupier scheme, the deposit required from beneficiaries is considered on the high side: sometimes about 20% of the house price was asked as in the case of Danladi Nasidi Housing Estate. Although, it does not imply that everybody should buy a house thereby making them take mortgages they can never be able to pay, it is desirable to make the conditions favourable for those who can afford it by demanding lower deposits and spreading the period of payment.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study highlighted the increasing demand for housing facilities in Kano metropolis due to urbanisation. It has shown that while housing problems are increasing in the study area, government efforts, though appreciable, have not made remarkable impacts in ameliorating the difficulties arising from housing deficiency. The

opinion of the respondents in this survey and taking into consideration the extent of the housing problems in relation to the scale of government efforts to address the problem, has shown that the housing programmes implemented in Kano metropolis have had no significant effect in resolving housing shortage. Thus it is recommended that government should address the issue squarely by tackling housing deficit, opening up more new layouts, creating additional site and services facilities in all areas of the metropolis regardless of their socio-economic positions and allocate more funds to finance new housing estates. This is in addition to increasing its support to the private sector to be fully involved in housing production in all parts of the metropolis.

Recently, the working class and other low-income earners in collaboration with some estate agencies, and farmland owners have introduced a scheme that is gaining prominence. They invite the Ministry of Lands to survey and mark out residential plots on some farmlands, secure planning approval from KNUPDA, and organise monthly instalmental payments of fixed amounts over a period. At the end of the payment period, the contributors are allocated plots of land. This has been organised by a number of public service unions in Kano and so far, it has empowered many working class low-income earners to acquire residential plots. This kind of arrangement, if extended for a mortgage facility would have a serious impact on reducing the housing deficit in the metropolis.

Therefore, to summarise, the study has highlighted on housing programmes embarked by Kano State government. It has also identified the problems surrounding effective implementation of the housing programmes. The study is of the view that housing policy is the determining factor affecting housing accessibility by recognising that without an effective and efficient land allocation system, a majority of urban residents would not have decent housing accommodation. Finally, it provides an assessment of how government housing programmes implemented in Kano metropolis fared in improving access to housing facilities. The conclusion arrived at is that while government efforts in providing housing facilities were appreciated, it is clear that they are not sufficient to achieve the desired impacts. As a result, recommendations were proposed for improvement in order to realise the desired objective of providing decent and affordable housing accommodation for the urban residents.

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