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	PAGES
EDITORIAL BOARD.....	i
CONTENTS.....	ii
EDITORIAL.....	iii
ARTICLES:	
Community Based Organisations in the Sustainable Development of the Rural Area of Atiba L.G.A., Oyo State. Abegunde, A. A.	1
Urban Expansion and Physical Development Problem in Abuja: Implications for the National Urban Development Policy. Jinadu, A. M.	15
Perspectives on Spatial Aspect of Sustainable Water Supply in Benue State. Atser, Jacob and Beulah Ofem	31
Residents' Satisfaction Index in Selective Rehabilitation of An Urban Core Residential Area in Ogbomoso, Oyo State. Afon, A. O.	45
A Study of Urban Violence and Insecurity in Abuja. Agbola, Tunde	59
Anatomy of "Illegal Structures" in Akure Metropolis, Ondo State Olujimi, J. A. B. and O. S. Fashuyi	79
Land Value Determinants in Medium Density Residential Neighbourhoods of Metropolitan Lagos, Lagos State. Oduwaye, Leke	97
REFEREES.....	112
NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS.....	113

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URBAN EXPANSION AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM IN ABUJA IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY

A.M JINADU (MNITP, RTP)

Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Federal University of Technology, Minna

Abstract

One major product of urbanization, which poses serious challenge to urban planners, is rapid urban expansion, most especially that which is devoid of proper planning and control. Over the years, attempts to create a livable urban environment have yielded policies and programmes of action. Our experience in urban management in Nigeria has witnessed changes in actions and strategies, yet the problem remains the same. This paper examines the trend of urban growth in and around the Federal Capital City – Abuja. It uses satellite image data from Landsat TM of 1987 and Landsat ETM+ taken in 2001 to monitor urban growth in Abuja and some of its satellite settlements. The analysis shows that between 1987 and year 2001, the size of Abuja, IduKamo, Kubwa, KaruNyanyan, and Lugbe, increased by 89,265, 5,587, 13,453, 25,240 and 4,489 square kilometers respectively. This indicates a rapid rate of physical development. The scenario captured, using digital camera, shows that the quality of development in most satellite settlements was poor. Amongst others, poor management capacity, arising from lack of official commitment to the implementation of the ideals of the National Urban Development Policy (NUDP) is found to be a major problem. The study recommends institutional capacity building and community – based settlement upgrading schemes as alternatives to eviction and slum clearance. It concludes on the note that doing this will require high official commitment to policy implementation and adequate financial disbursement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban settlements all over the world are in a state of flux, a phenomenon characterized by constant growth and changes. Nigeria has one of the world's highest urban growth rates, which stood at 5.8 percent in year 2004 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Statistics on urbanization trend show Nigeria as one of the most urbanized countries in Africa south of the Sahara. Urban population in most towns and cities was observed to increase five fold between 1952 and 1982 and as at 1995, Nigeria had seven cities with population of over one

million people, 18 cities with over 500,000 people, 36 with over 200,000 people, 78 cities with 100,000 people and 5,000 cities with over 20,000 people (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1996). Following from this trend, the proportion of population living in urban centres is estimated at 45 percent (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) while the World Bank's record shows that the urban population in Nigeria is expected to increase to 100 million by the year 2010.

The trend of urban development in Nigeria has shown tremendous growth of major cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Ilorin, Port-Harcourt, Kaduna and Kano with Lagos attaining the status of a mega-city. While

these old cities have continued to grow in size, new ones like Abuja have also attracted rapid physical development in recent times. The problems associated with rapid urbanization in Nigeria are well documented and have been discussed in several fora. Amongst others, the 1997 National Urban Development Policy (NUDP) identifies uncontrolled, unplanned urban growth, development of sub-standard and sub-human environments plagued by slum, squalor and grossly inadequate social amenities as being the negative consequences of rapid urbanization in Nigeria.

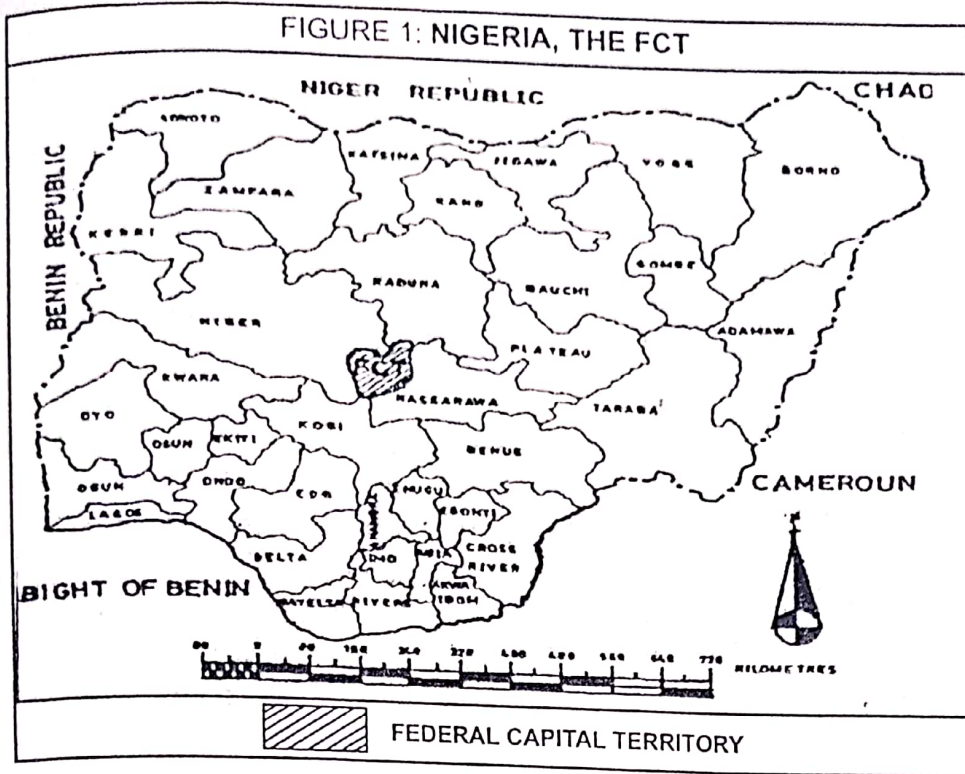
Successive Governments in Nigeria have responded to the multiplicity of urban problems through the enactment of physical planning laws, formulation of urban development policies and execution of urban development projects from time to time. With respect to policies, the various ad hoc measures taken in the colonial and immediate post colonial periods culminated in the preparation of a national urban development policy document for Nigeria in 1992. The comprehensive NUDP published in October 1997 followed this initial policy effort. The 1997 policy has since been reviewed by the Presidential Committee on Urban Development and Housing constituted in year 2001. The amendments to the policy as contained in Government's White Paper released in year 2002 forms the basis of the new Draft National Urban Development Policy published in January 2004.

The 1997 and 2004 draft policies have the identical goal of developing 'a dynamic system of urban settlements which will

foster sustainable economic growth, promote efficient urban and regional development and ensure improved standard of living and well-being for all Nigerians'. The strategies advanced in the policies stipulate pragmatic means of having orderly urban development, efficient and well-managed urban system in Nigeria. However, the impact of the policies has not been felt due to poor commitment and sometimes outright non-implementation of policy guidelines. This paper examines the rate of urban expansion and physical development situation at the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) after almost a decade of NUDP experience in Nigeria. It examines the trend in urban growth and describes the nature of physical development as well as the associated problems in Abuja and some satellite settlements. The paper also examines the urban management problems and concludes with recommendations on how to manage the situation observed in the area.

2. Research Setting and Context

The FCT was created in 1976 following the recommendations of Justice Akinola Aguda Committee and the promulgation of the Federal Capital Territory Decree on the 4th of February 1976 (Doxiadis Associates, 1983). It is located in the centre of Nigeria, approximately between latitudes 7° 25" – 9° 20" north of the Equator and longitudes 6° 45" – 7° 39" east of the Greenwich meridian (figure 1). The territory covers an area of 8000 km² and consists of six Area Councils, including Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Abaji, Kuje, Gwagwalada and Kwali Area Councils.



Source: Adapted from FCDA, 2002.

At the time of establishment, several reports by authors established that there were no major urban developments in the area. For instance, Mabogunje and Abumere (1981) observed that numerous hamlets and villages that were nucleated in varying degrees characterized the cultural landscape of the entire FCT. Prior to the construction of the FCC therefore, the area was entirely rural and was dominated by small, sparsely populated settlements, with about 85% of the settlements having a population of between 50-500 inhabitants (Gaza, 1990 as quoted in Balogun, 2001).

Significant urban growth became a common landscape feature at the FCT in the early 1990s following the building of the new Federal Capital City (FCC) and the subsequent transfer of the Federal capital to Abuja in December 1991. The movement of the Federal ministries and civil servants generated an influx of people to the FCC and the surrounding satellite settlements.

This sets off the process of rapid urban growth in the area. The issue of concern is that the accelerated growth currently observable in the FCT is generating negative consequences as manifested in mounting population pressure and slum development with all its associated problems (Jinadu, 2001).

3. Research Materials and Methods

This research utilizes satellite image data in establishing the level of urban growth between 1987 and 2001. The images used include Landsat, Thematic Mapper (TM) with 30-meter resolution taken in January 1987 and Landsat Enhanced Thematic Mapper plus (ETM+) with 30-meter resolution taken in December 2001. These images were visually interpreted using direct signature and pattern recognition approach. The image features were recognized and traced using the on-screen digitization function of the ERDAS IMAGINE software. The digitized lines and

polygon features were saved as vector coverages and transferred to Arc\View version 3.2a software for map composition. The statistical function of Arc\View was used to generate data on the sizes of the settlements in 1987 and 2001. The growth rate of each settlement was determined using the simple formula:

$$r = \frac{\Delta A}{nA_0} \times 100$$

Where:

r = growth rate

ΔA = change in area extent between 1987 and 2001

A₀ = Area extent of the base year (1987)

n = number of years(interval between 1987 and 2001).

The study also uses picture data from field survey. The Kodak digital camera was used to capture micro scenes of the nature of physical development observable in some of the satellite settlements.

4.0 Analysis of the Data and Interpretation of Results

4.1 Urban Growth Trend in Selected Settlements 1987 – 2001.

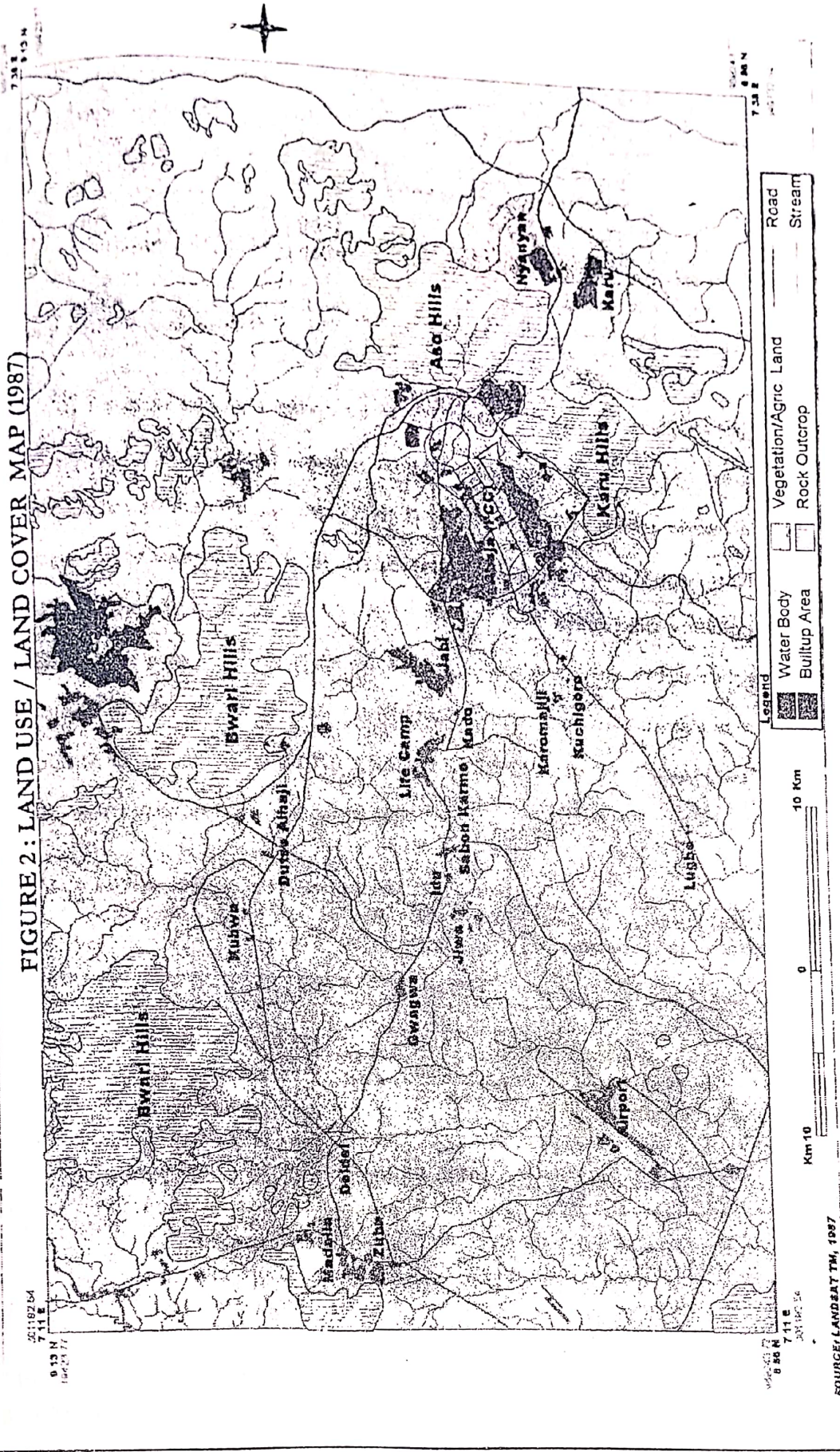
The construction of the Federal Capital City (FCC) started in 1980. Against the backdrop of preponderance of small rural settlements in the pre FCC period, the level of urban expansion in Abuja and ten satellite settlements was monitored using the satellite image data. Landsat TM image of 1987 was interpreted and used to generate statistics of the level of urban expansion in 1987. As seen in figure 2, minor urban growth had occurred in all the settlements. The Statistics in table 1 reveal that the size of Abuja city had grown to 15.862 Km² within seven years of construction while Karu\Nyanyan grew up to 2.725 Km². Idu\Karmo and Zuba also experienced minor urban development as the process of growth had already been set off by the existence of FCC in the area.

Table 1: Settlement Sizes 1987 - 2001

S\No	Settlements	Size in 1987(Km ²)	Size in 2001(Km ²)
1	Abuja (FCC)	15.862	105.127
2	Dutse Alhaji	0.092	1.743
3	Gwagwa	0.237	3.147
4	Idu\Karmo	0.464	6.051
5	Karu\Nyanyan	2.725	27.965
6	Kubwa	0.112	13.565
7	Kuchigoro	0.024	1.084
8	Lugbe	0.105	4.594
9	Zuba	0.649	4.298

Source: Landsat TM 1987 & ETM 2001

FIGURE 2: LAND USE / LAND COVER MAP (1987)



The pace of settlement growth set in 1987 continued and culminated into the 2001 situation with all the settlements recording increases in their sizes (figure 3). The growth statistics generated from the map data (Table 1) reveals a significant physical expansion in all settlements. The table shows that the size of Abuja, Idu\Karmo, Kubwa, Karu\Nyanyan, and Lugbe, increased by 89,265, 5,587, 13,453,

25,240 and 4,489 square kilometers respectively within fourteen years. An index of the rate of change calculated for the settlements reveals a significant rate of urban growth. Table 2 shows that high rates of urban growth were recorded in most settlements with Kubwa (858.0%), Kuchigoro (315.5%), Lugbe (305.4%) and Dutse Alhaji (128.2%) having exceptionally high growth rates.

Table 2: Settlement Sizes and Growth Rates, 1987 – 2001

S/No	Settlements	Size in 1987 (Km ²)	Size in 2001 (Km ²)	Newly created Settlement Area (Km ²)	Growth Rate (%)
1	Abuja (FCC)	15.862	105.127	89.265	40.2
2	Dutse Alhaji	0.092	1.743	1.651	128.2
3	Gwagwa	0.237	3.147	2.910	87.7
4	Idu\Karmo	0.464	6.051	5.587	86.0
5	Karu\Nyanyan	2.725	27.965	25.24	66.2
6	Kubwa	0.112	13.565	13.453	858.0
7	Kuchigoro	0.024	1.084	1.060	315.5
8	Lugbe	0.105	4.594	4.489	305.4
9	Zuba	0.649	4.298	3.649	40.2

Source: Landsat, TM 1987 & ETM 2001

The analysis of the trend of urban expansion reveals that tremendous physical development occurred in Abuja and its surrounding satellite settlements in the period under review. In order to appreciate the nature of physical development in the area, digital camera was used to capture the scenario in the different settlements and this is presented in the next section of the paper.

4.2 Physical Development Scenario and Problems.

The scenario in Abuja and the ten satellite settlements feature areas of different physical characteristics and qualities. Generally, the entire housing environment is characterized by planned, unplanned and slum areas which are present in different degrees in all the settlements. Planned development features mainly in Abuja city and parts of Karu, Nyanyan, Kubwa (Federal Housing area) and Lugbe (Lugbe estate) where there are well laid out residential environments (plate 1)

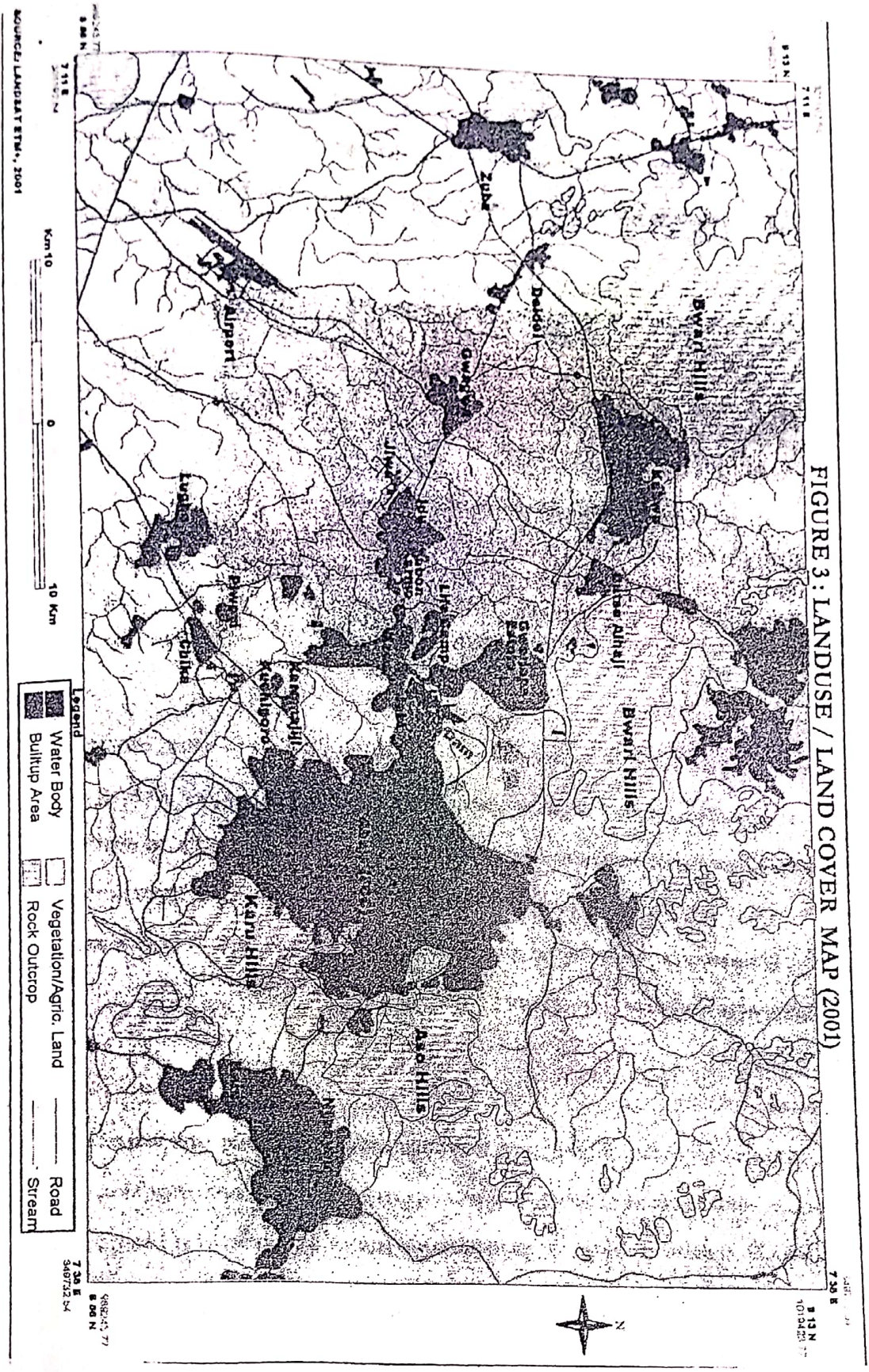
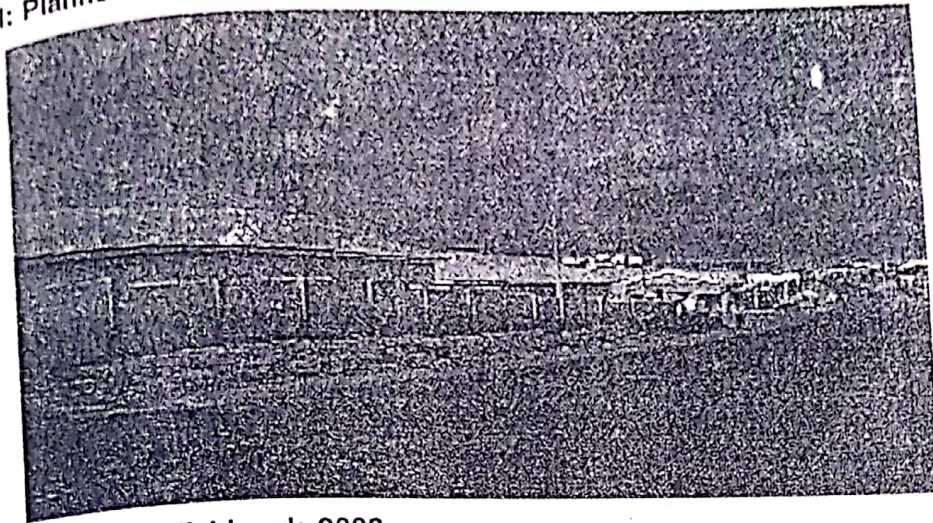


Plate I: Planned Residential Environment in Kubwa



Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2003.

Unplanned developments in the settlements manifest in urban sprawl and slum housing and their spatial extent vary from one settlement to the other. The problem of urban sprawl is most noticeable in the new areas of Lugbe, Gwagwa and Karmo where extensive housing areas have been built haphazardly with poor access and services.

Slum development is a common phenomenon in all the settlements studied. While localized slums\squatter

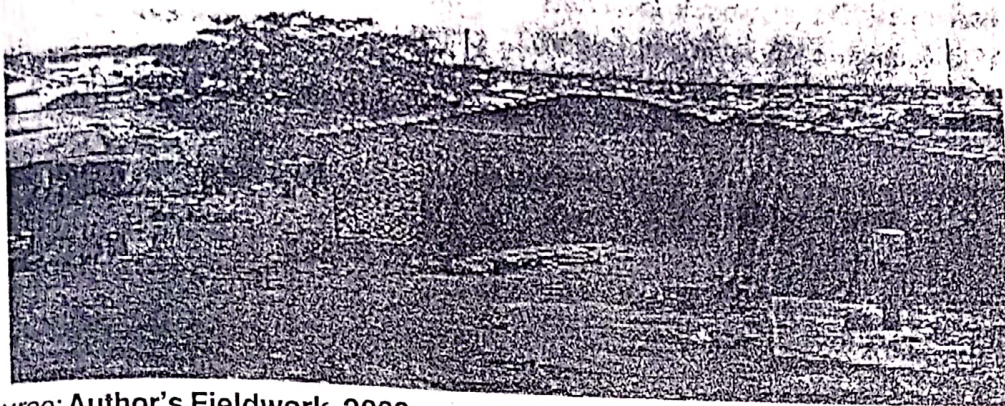
settlements have developed in Abuja and old areas of Karu, Nyanyan, Lugbe and Kubwa, large-scale slum areas have developed in Zuba, Gwagwa, Idu and Sabon Karmo. Generally, the slum areas are characterized by poor housing environment. The houses are substandard, small, congested and poorly ventilated. They are built of assorted, poor quality materials such as mud, planks and old zinc. Plates II and III show typical squatter settlements and slum houses in Abuja and Karmo respectively.

Plate II: Mabushi Squatter Settlement in Abuja City.



Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2003.

plate III: Large Scale Slum Development in Karmo

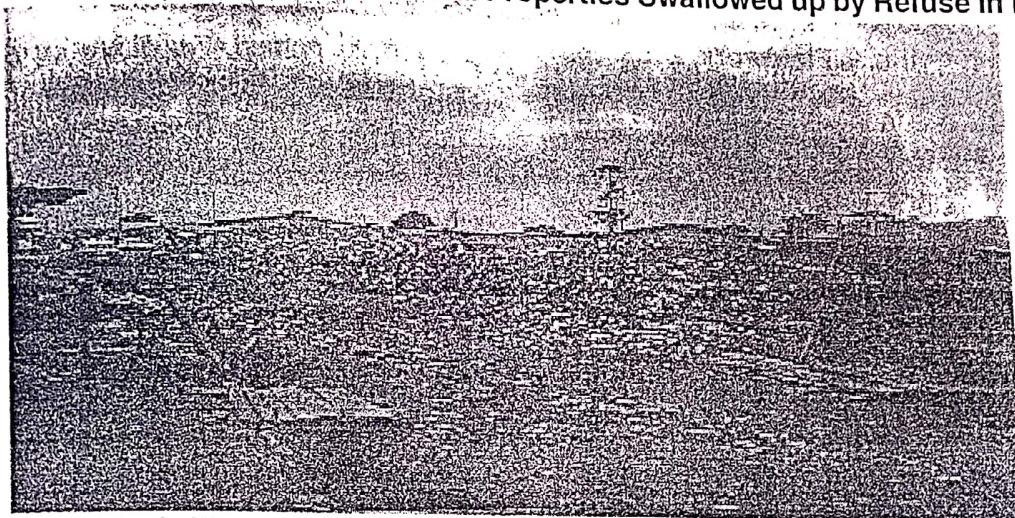


Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2003.

Apart from the substandard and poor housing quality, the slum areas also feature poor access roads and deteriorated environment. In Gwagwa, Idu and Sabon Karmo for instance, there are no tarred roads except the single carriage Die-die-FCC link that passes through the

settlements. The entire residential areas in these settlements are serviced by narrow, winding roads with severe drainage problem. The general environment of the slum settlements is poor with common cases of heaps of refuse taking over the roads and residential properties (plate IV).

Plate IV: Access Road and Residential Properties Swallowed up by Refuse in Idu



Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2003.

The observed rapid urban development and the preponderance of unplanned and poorly serviced environment have certain negative consequences for the entire FCT. In physical terms, development pressure, arising from population influx and high

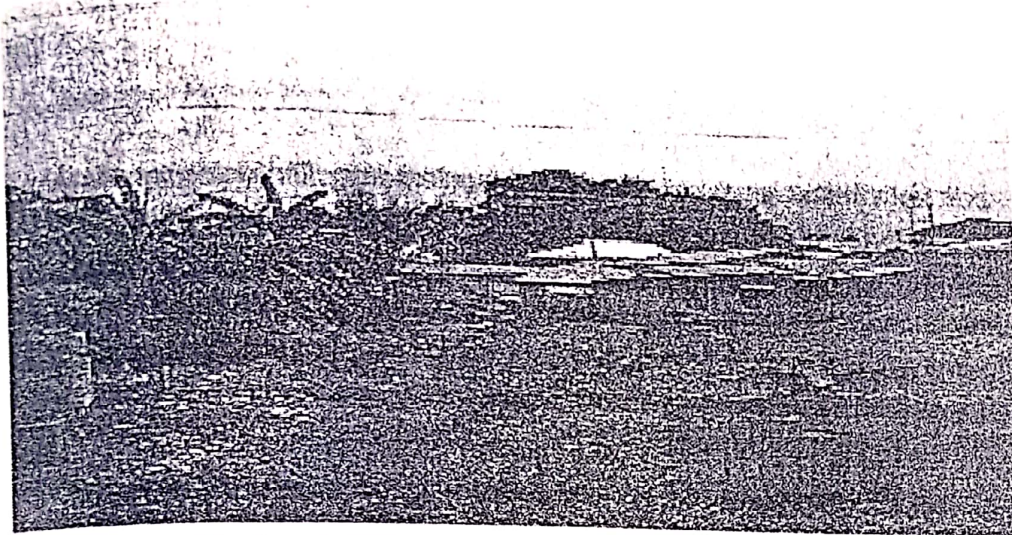
demand for housing and infrastructure, has resulted into illegal, congested and haphazard development. Land speculators and informal building investors have taken the advantage of increasing housing demand to build ramshackle and poorly

serviced accommodation. Thus, substandard buildings as well as encroachment on public lands and river flood plains characterize physical developments in Zuba, Gwagwa, Idu, Sabon Karmo, Kuchigoro and parts of Lugbe, Yanyan, Karu and Kubwa (plate V).

With reference to encroachment on public land, the buffer zones between the outer northern express road and Kubwa as

well as that between Zuba and Madalla have been converted to commercial and residential developments. These problems combined with poor neighbourhood quality, due to poor hygiene, to create a generally overcrowded, unsanitary and polluted housing environment, which has negative implications for health and the well being of the residents.

Plate V: Development Encroachment on River Flood Plain in Zuba



Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2003.

The scenario presented above shows that, contrary to the lofty goal and objectives of the NUDP (See sections 4.2 and 4.3.1 of the 1997 policy), efficient urban development and management still elude most settlements in Nigeria. As it were, the situation in most of the satellite settlements studied poses a serious challenge to urban planning and constitutes a threat to urban social order as conceived in section 6.1 and 6.2 of the policy. The next section of this paper examines urban management problems in the area and some desirable solutions.

5. Discussions

Urban problems in Nigeria have their

roots in the financing and institutional arrangement for service delivery (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2002). The physical development problems observed in most parts of the satellite settlements are attributed to poor management arising from poor institutional capacity and official inactivity. The Regional Planning Section of the Department of Lands, Planning and Survey of the FCDA is charged with the responsibility of preparing Master Plan for the satellite settlements and ensuring development control. The Zonal Area Offices of the Department, which were established in 1988, are directly in charge of the preparation of Action Area Plans, execution of development proposals, development

control and enforcement of standards in the different Area Councils.

Despite the establishment of urban management institutions with defined functions and responsibilities, the reality on the ground shows that the existing institutions could not effectively manage physical development in the FCT. Several problems inhibiting effective planning administration and land management were identified in the 1999 report of the Ministerial Committee for the Appraisal of Physical Planning and Development Issues in the FCT. These, amongst others, include:

- (i) Delay and sometimes outright non-implementation of Action Plans for some satellite settlements;
- (ii) Delay in the provision of infrastructure on many new layouts, which creates hindrances for developers and gives room for encroachment and illegal development;
- (iii) Inadequate human and material resources in the Zonal Planning Offices. The problems here include shortage of manpower, inadequate office and residential accommodation, lack of office equipment and transportation problems;
- (iv) Non-application of effective development control, a situation which results in rapid growth of illegal development;
- (v) Poor co-ordination between the Regional Planning Division of the Department of Lands, Planning and Survey and the Zonal Offices as well as role conflict between the Zonal Planning Offices and

the Area Councils.

These problems have combined with indiscriminate sales of land by the Traditional Chiefs and land speculations to compound physical planning problem in the area.

Although the Nigerian Government commits itself to the establishment of appropriate institutional framework for urban management and the strengthening of the capacity of all agencies and bodies responsible for policy implementation (Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.5 of the 1997 policy), the current situation reveals poor and ineffective institutional capacity for urban management in most cities. Also the problems of inadequate number and quality of manpower at the Local Government level still persist despite the fact that the Government committed itself to increasing the quantity and improving the quality of manpower needed for urban development and management in section 4.4.14 of the 1997 policy. These are indications that Nigeria has not benefited from the formulation of the NUDP due to the problem of non-implementation and non-application of the lofty ideals of the policy. There is therefore the need to invoke and implement the relevant sections of the policy to ensure efficient management of new development in Abuja and other parts of Nigeria.

One major and immediate requirement for adequate management of the situation in and around Abuja is to strengthen the capacity of the existing planning institutions as recommended in section 4.4.5 of the NUDP. The capacity building should cover the provision of adequate human and material resources needed for effective monitoring and control as well as staff

training and re-training in modern approaches to urban management. In addition to these, there is the need for a change in attitude and methods. It is high time the planning agencies changed their apathetic and laissez-faire attitudes, which allow encroachment and illegal development to take place and/or slums to develop before thinking of solution. The situation in and around Abuja is such that planners have watched, and are still watching with little interest, the formation of large-scale slums and haphazard development. This laissez-faire-planning attitude must be discouraged. Development control in planning is a daily affair and act of encroachment and illegal development should be challenged at first attempt.

The method for dealing with the existing slum housing in the satellite settlements like Zuba, Gwagwa, Idu, Karmo, Lugbe, Piwoyi, Nyanyan-Maraba, and Karu should also change from the old method of slum demolition to slum upgrading. The Urban Development Policy's goal on urban environment is to 'ensure an orderly development of Nigeria's urban settlements in a way that guarantees a decent livable environment'. One of the objectives is to 'upgrade the existing slums and squatter settlements and control the emergence of unplanned settlements' (see section 7.4 and 7.5.1). Although sections 4.3.3 and 9.5.2 of the NUDP contradict the upgrading objective and support slum clearance and the declaration of 'Redevelopment Areas', there is the need to review old strategies and do things differently.

Experience has shown that slum clearance is socially and economically costly. It is a temporary rather than permanent planning solution as it normally

leads to the re-emergence of slum(s) elsewhere and nearby. Given the numerous success stories of best practices in slum upgrading and innovative settlement management from countries like Kenya, Sudan, Angola and Botswana amongst others, a viable solution lies in the institution of community-based settlement improvement programmes in the different settlements. The experience of unauthorized squatter settlement treatment programme in Khartoum, Sudan, where 90% of unauthorized settlers were granted land title should be shared (Together Foundation and UNCHS, 2001). The improvement programme should therefore focus on regularization of land tenure and facility up-grade through public-private and community efforts. Above all, there is the need for planning intervention and control at the urban fringes to prevent them from haphazard development.

6. Conclusion

The physical development scenario presented in this paper reveals a rapid, uncontrolled urban development, which manifests in poor, congested and unsanitary housing environment around the Federal Capital City-Abuja. This situation is a replica of the nature of new developments around most major cities in Nigeria and it is an indication of poor commitment to, and non-implementation of the lofty ideals of, the NUDP. There is the need for adequate official commitment to the implementation of the NUDP in terms of institutional capacity building and the disbursement of the required finances for efficient urban management. It must be emphasized here that the problems of non-implementation of Action Plans, delay in

the servicing of new layouts and inadequate material and manpower resources identified in section six of the paper are all connected to shortages of fund for urban management. Government should therefore invoke and implement section 4.4.6 of the 1997 policy, which seeks to 'ensure continuous flow of fund from various sources for urban development'. In the case of Abuja and its environs the manpower and logistic problems must be addressed. Above all, the Federal Government should facilitate and accelerate the relocation of all settlements within the Phase II and Phase III Development Area of Abuja city (with the exception of few large population centres like Idu and Karmo) and settle all compensation as well so as to forestall land controversies, illegal occupation and slum development in the area.

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FIGURE 2: LAND USE / LAND COVER MAP (1987)

