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**MANAGING URBANIZATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CITIES IN NIGERIA:
A CASE STUDY OF OWERRI CITY**

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Abstract

Urbanization is a global phenomenon that is transforming human settlements. Economic growth and rapid growth of cities have brought enormous change to most cities in Nigeria, raising living standards and reducing poverty. Sustainable cities have been the major centres of economic growth and social development, generating new ideas and creating numerous new and existing jobs especially during the era following industrial revolution through economies of scale and agglomeration and fostering creative and innovative civil cultures. This paper provides an overview of issues related to managing urbanization towards sustainable cities. The survey method using questionnaire was employed in the study. The stratified, random and systematic sampling techniques were used in selection of Owerri City and 240 respondents from six zones of the city. Descriptive statistics were used in analyzing the data. The result shows that urbanization has brought enormous economic, social, political and environmental transformations of unprecedented portions to the cities but at the same time causing problems for rural development. There is a growing loss of productive agricultural land to peri-urban development and is increasing pressures for structural region in agriculture. The benefits that larger cities offer in opportunities for infrastructures are making it difficult for rural areas to compete and attract skilled persons to support development. The consequences of urbanization are poverty, high rate of unemployment, crime, alcoholic etc. The study therefore concludes that urbanization brought about economic growth and the rapid growth of cities also brought enormous change to most cities of Nigeria; especially in Owerri, and infrastructures should also be extended to the rural areas as well.

Introduction

Over the years, cities in both developed and developing countries merged as the dominant form of urban settlement. Cities have been centres of manufacturing and service industries that produce higher profit than the primary activities of farming and fishing. The acceleration of the urbanization process from rural – urban areas and in the world is largely due to an increased in migratory movements frequently caused by the abandonment of agriculture

as a result of modernization of tasks, industrialization processes, and growth of the informal economy in the metropolitan areas of the developing and developed world. (Kasarda and Parnell et al 1993).

Urbanization is a dynamic process that irrevocable intentioned with other aspect of economic, social and political development. Urbanization brings advances in human knowledge followed by technological inventions in diverse aspects of human endeavours leading to a lot of areas of specialization and professionalism. It is the shift of population from rural areas to cities and resulting to growth to urban (Ijeoma G.U. Ayuba and Moses Z. Wanda 2009).

Urbanization or urban drift is the physical growth of urban areas as a result of responses to population change. Urbanization is movement of people from rural to urban area by the United Nation. Urbanization is the rapid and massive growth and migration to large cities resulting to both positive and negative consequences. Some of the consequences of urbanization have been listed to include unemployment, sanitation, housing, water, sewage, fire, social welfare, etc (Alan Berger, 2008). Urbanization is a process of growth of urban areas, the diffusion of urban influences on the adoption of behavior patterns and cultural values generally associated with the prevailing mode of living in large cities and metropolitan areas. It is also the progressive concentration of population in towns and cities. The process comes into two ways namely, through an increase in the number of towns and also as a result of the increase in the size of individual towns. (Nwakanobi, 2007).

Urbanization – the spatial concentration of people and economic activity is arguably the most important social transformation in the history of civilization since man changed from being a nomadic hunter – gatherer and adopted a settled, subsistence agricultural way of life. While the timing and speed of urbanization have varied and are varying between countries, regions and continents, urbanization has taken hold everywhere. It has been proven to be an unstoppable and a mostly desirable phenomenon. Cities are the foundation of modern civilization; they are the engine room of economic growth and the centres of culture, entertainment, innovation, education, knowledge, and political power (Brian Roberts and Trevor Kanaley 2006).

Urbanization has brought enormous economic and social change and benefits to most African countries. It has been pivotal to economic development and the growing wealth of nations in the African region. Urbanization has been associated with the creation of jobs for millions of people and with reductions in absolute levels of poverty. Equally important, urbanization is changing the social fabric and culture of nations. It is redefining peoples' lifestyles, employment, welfare, social structures and institutions and creating new power relationships in households, organizations, and government. It is changing peoples' lives (Brian Roberts and Trevor Kanaley 2006). In most countries like Asia, urbanization involves around 44 million people being added to the population of cities every year. To put this in perspective, each day a further 120,000 people are added to the populations of Asian cities, requiring the construction of more than 20,000 new dwellings, 250 infrastructure to supply more than six megacities or potable water.

The changes resulting from people moving into cities and other densely populated areas is urbanization. This process of increased population concentration can be deliberate and

planned such as Brasils' capital, Brasilia, which was planned by Town Planner Da'costa and was inaugurated in 1968. It can also be spontaneous and unplanned like shanty towns as in the rapid urban growth occurring in many developed countries. Urbanization transforms land use from rural to urban economy activities, and after the land itself, from a porous surface to a non porous one of asphalt and concrete. In addition, this progression in greater population density also transforms many patterns or social life, altering social life, altering both the social structure and the social organization of that area. (Macioris .J and Parrillo .V,2010).

Hirsch (1973) defines urbanization as "the societal process- that creates the dynamic system we call a city". In this case, we are concerned with the process and problems of change that takes place as a rural economy is transformed into an urban economy. It involves the transformation of the population production process and socio-political environment of a mainly rural economy that is relatively evenly distributed over space, labour – intensive and individualistic in character into an urban economy of relatively high spatial concentration, high specialization in the production of goods and services and close inter-dependence private and public, as well as a high level of technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.

It is particularly relevant that associated with the process of urbanization is an increase in spatial concentration, density which leads to close proximity, together with production specialization, results in pronounced interdependencies of various actors in urban areas. Density makes possible efficient collective purchase of goods and services, resulting in increasingly large social infrastructure and governmental budgets as the process of urbanization expands into ever increasing concentrations and areas of land, other terms and concepts results in the complexity and scale of human organization and interaction (Chapin 1970 pg 23).

Urbanization trend has given rise to lots of terminologies as the city expands. Such terminologies like metropolitan area or agglomeration, megalopolis megacity, global city or world city surfaced in the levels of urbanization. Beyond these terminologies other urban ecological surface which were product of urbanization are urban ecology which is an analysis of how people and activities spread out within an urban area. Community pattern of development occur in a sequence of phases by which man adapts to his urban environment and these social processes affecting land use bear a relation to one another. Terms like aggregation, dominance, gradient, invasion, succession, segregation etc surfaced. These processes exist primarily through the mobility of residents and shifts of land uses in the course of the daily adjustment and change which is constantly occurring in the urban core like Owerri in Imo State, Nigeria.

Sustainable cities have been the major centres of economic growth and social development, generating new ideas and creating numerous new and existing jobs especially during the era following industrial revolution through economies of scale and agglomeration and fostering creative and innovative civil cultures. This paper provides an overview of issues related to managing urbanization towards sustainable cities. Owerri city has the population of 401,873 (2006 Population Census). It comprises of Owerri Municipal Council, Owerri North and Owerri West L.G.As.

Urbanization is occurring rapidly in Owerri City, one of Nigerian's major cities. In its regional context, Owerri city has remained an important city since its founding because of its

position as the capital of Imo State. Owerri City has the population of 401,873 (2006 Population census).

It should be noted that Owerri City which comprises of Owerri Municipal Council, Owerri North and Owerri West L.G.As is a peaceful and a relaxation city. It has many relaxation centres, Secondary and Primary schools, Tertiary Institutions like Universities, Polytechnics, College of Education and Technical Colleges, There are Ministries, Markets etc in Owerri City which attract people to migrate from the rural areas, and their different destinations to Owerri City.

Recently its importance has taken on added dimension as the city has come to be one of the cleanest city as well as the Commercial, Institutional, Political and Administrative nerve centre of Imo State. This paper examines managing urbanization towards sustainable cities, to know whether urbanization could be managed and if economic growth and rapid growth of cities have brought enormous change to most cities in Nigeria, raising living standards and reducing poverty, Owerri in particular.

Urbanization Trends In Nigeria

History of Urbanization in Ngeria Before The Colonial Era

The history of urbanization in Nigeria can be traced back to the medieval period which was characterized by the revival of international trade and consequently the rebirth of the major cities in the then known world. Examples of such cities include Naples, and Pisa around the Mediterranean sea.

The involvement in medieval international trade led in Nigeria to the growth of urban culture in two main regions, the grassland and the North and the forest of the South-West. In the North, cities like Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Zamfara and Sokoto benefited from the trans-saharan gold trade of middle ages. Then, the present day Northern Nigeria was under the rule of Songhai Empire. The whole empire was divided into regions with each being dominated by principal city serving as collection centre for merchandize of the region. The good organization and their resultant stability fostered the rapid growth of Northern Nigerian cities. However, the major urban centres fluctuated with drastic changes in rulership from Songhai Empire through the Kanem Empire to the Fulani Jihad resulting to the complete destructive of some centres at one time or the other. Urbanization in the Western Nigeria started when the Yoruba people migrated to their present region from North Eastern Sudan between seventeenth and nineteenth century.

The Yoruba people led by the Oduduwa, founded Ile-ife (house of love). All the Yoruba people regarded Ile-ife. Sons of Oduduwa migrated in different directions to carve out kingdoms for themselves. Over the years, the Yoruba town evolved an elaborate power structure and hierarchical system of administration at both cities and kingdoms levels. The kingdoms were divided into provinces clustering around major ones. The existence of these urban areas created the need for rural-urban exchange. Goods manufactured in the urban centres were exchanged for agriculture products of the rural areas. There were also the inter-regional and inter-kingdom periodic markets. This situation remained until about 1817 when series of war (both internal and external) completely reshaped the urban outlook in Yoruba land. (Ijeoma G.U, Ayuba, & Moses .Z. Wanda 2009)

Urbanization During the Colonial Era.

The expansion and growth of the Nigerian cities in term of population and space during the colonial era can be attributed to two factors; these are the European conscience in form of trade and rivalry warfare going on among the Yoruba cities. Before 1885, British interest in Nigeria was high and concentrated in three major areas; namely, Lagos, Niger Delta River and the winter lands of the Delta. Lagos was known as the administrative trade centre of the colony while hinterlands were for the oil trade among British and European nations. The Royal Niger Company was in control of the oil trade in the Niger Delta and the cities like Brass, Opobo, Onitsha, Owerri, Aba and Asaba among others grew in population as people come to work in other towns and cities.

The trade expansion from Lagos to the interior has also contributed to the urbanization of many Yoruba towns and cities in the West up to the beginning of twentieth century. Moreover in the nineteenth to twentieth century, the development of infrastructure services between the North and South and the establishment of industries have increased the population of a lot of urban centres in Nigeria. In essence, with the coming of the colonialist, new settlements were created whilst some existing ones were expanded. As far as 1917 according to Suleiman (2003), the British colonial administration passed the township ordinance which categorized and aided the colonial administration in the distribution of amenities and infrastructure facilities such as road, rail ways, water and even electricity. The consequential effect was that new centres emerged and some former ones got facelift while others diminished in their relevance.

URBANIZATION FROM INDEPENDENCE TO DATE

Urbanization is a component of the process of modernization of the economy and society, it is a major factor that affects the re-distribution of population in Nigeria. The Nigeria Urban population had grown up tremendously at the twentieth century. As far back as 1921, when Nigeria's population was estimated to be 18.8million, at least 1.4 million Nigerians lived in 29 cities whose population exceeded 20,000. By 1952 when the first actual census took place in the country, there were 3.3 million people living in 56 cities representing about 10.50% of the total population of 30.4 million then, there were in the country 329 urban areas having a population exceeding 5,000 and above. By the 1963 census of 55.67 million people, the number of cities came up to 2,677. Out of this number 1,960 were urban centres with at least 9,999 people; then 553 were urban centres between 10,000 and 19,999 population; 129 were cities between 20,000 and 49,999; 31 were cities with between 50,000 and 990,000 and 24 were cities over 100,000 population. In 1991 census count with a population of 88.5 million people, urban areas were 555 and it rose to 593 in 1996. In 2006 census count, Nigeria population was 140,003, 542 with 774 urban centres of which 64 (about 9%), had a population of 50,000 while 21 had a population of over 300,000 (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2006 census Gazette).

It is also worth mentioning that in 1931, less than seven percent of Nigerians were in settlements with the population of 20,000 and above but the urban population increased to more than 40 percent at the end of the century. There are at the moment's seven cities with the population of more than one million inhabitants. Eighteen cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, then 36 cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants, seven cities with more than 1,000,000 inhabitants and 5,050 towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants (Onibokun 1989,

1990a). The 1991 census revealed a population of 88.5 million while the projection into the future suggests a doubling of the population within the coming two and a half decades. See the table below:

Table I Population of Nigeria 1921 – 2020

Year	Total population	Total urban population	% of total population	No of cities with population 10,000	No of cities with population 200,000	No of cities with population 500,000
1921	18,270	890	4.8	-	10	-
1931	20,056	1,343	6.7	2	24	-
1952/54	30,402	3,701	10.2	7	54	-
1963	55,670	10,702	19.2	24	185	2
1972	78,924	19,832	25.1	38	302	3
1984	96,684	31,902	33.0	62	356	14
2020	160,000	-	68.0	132	680	36

Source: Federal office of Statistics (1952, 1963) and projection by Onibokun based on 5% annual growth rate for urban areas, 2.5% for rural areas and 10% for State capitals.

Within thirty years period between 1952 to 1982, the inhabitants in most major towns rose five times (see table 2) Kaduna, Kano, Ilorin, Jos, Lagos, Maiduguri, and Port-Harcourt had more than 1,000 increases in more than thirty years. Ibadan increased from 625,000 in 1963 to 2.84 million in 1982; Enugu increased from 174,000 in 1963 to 850,000 in 1982, Lagos which in 1952 was the second largest city in the country after Ibadan, had a population of just more than 250,000. In 1963 it had outstripped Ibadan to have a population of over 1.5million within its metropolitan centres. Currently, in 2006 census count Lagos has a population of 9,013,534 million inhabitants. Kano outstripped Lagos to have a population of 9,383,682 (see table 4). Moreover, by 2010 Lagos population was projected to become the third largest city worldwide. (See table 1,2,3 and 4)

Table 2: Population of some Nigeria Cities 1952 – 2006

Cities	1952	1963	1972	1982	% increase in 30 years	2000
Lagos	.27	.66	1.57	4.10	1418	6.90
Ibadan	.46	.63	1.48	2.84	5.8	4.70
Ogbomosho	.14	.32	.50	.81	79	1.50
Kano	.13	.30	.58	1.50	1,054	2.60
Ile-ife	.11	.13	.20	.32	199	.43
Abeokuta	.08	.19	.29	.62	41	1.32
Onitsha	.07	.17	.25	.31	309	.73
Oyo	.07	.11	.17	.28	293	.45
Port Harcourt	.07	.18	.35	.91	1183	2.11
Enugu	.06	.17	.22	.85	2244	1.75
Aba	.06	.13	.20	.33	471	.56
Maiduguri	.06	.14	.27	.71	1147	1.48

Zaria	.05	.16	.76	.42	678	.68
Benin City	.05	.10	.20	.51	846	1.30
Katsina	.06	.09	.14	.23	263	.42
Sokoto	.05	.09	.18	.46	775	.98
Calabar	.05	.08	.15	.39	816	.61
Kaduna	.04	.15	.35	.92	1935	2.41
Illorin	.04	.21	.41	1.10	2480	2.12
Jos	.04	.09	.18	.46	1076	.84
Minna	.02	.03	.09	.02	900	.41

Source: Nigeria Population Census 1952 – 1963

Table 3: Nigeria's Rural and Urban Population 1950 – 2025

Year	Rural Population	Urban Population	Urban Population as % of total
1950	29,295,000	3,340,000	10.1
1955	32,605,000	4,489,000	12.1
1960	36,220,000	6,058,000	14.3
1965	40,391,000	8,280,000	17.0
1970	45,252,000	11,319,000	20.0
1975	50,835,000	15,511,000	23.4
1980	57,188,000	21,242,000	27.1
1985	6,344,800	2,858,800	30.9
1990	70,383,000	38,169,000	3.52
1995	77,533,000	5,016,000	39.3
2000	84,853,000	64,768,000	43.3
2005	91,960,000	82,347,000	47.2
2010	98,435,000	102,831,000	51.1
2015	103,411,000	125,343,000	51.1
2020	105,458,000	148,935,000	58.3
2025	107,758,000	173,135,000	61.6

Source: Onibokun and Fanran (1995a)

Table 4: Population Total Census 2006 By Sex

State	Male	Female	Persons	Land	Sex Ratio	Proportion	Density
Abia	1,434,193	1,399,806	2,833,999	490224	102.5	2.02	578
Adamawa	1,606,123	1,561,978	3,168101	38823	102.8	2.26	82
Akwa Ibom	2,044,510	1,875,698	3,920,208	6674	109.0	2.8	507
Anambra	2,174,641	2,007,391	4,182,032	4815	108.3	2.9	869
Bauchi	2,426,215	2,250,250	4,676,465	49934	107.8	3.0	76
Bayelsa	902,648	800,710	1,703,358	9416	112.8	1.22	181
Benue	2,164,058	2,055,186	4,219,244	31277	105.3	3.01	135
Borno	2,161,157	1,990,036	4,151,193	75540	108.6	2.97	55
Cross-River	1,492,465	1,396,501	2,888,966	21637	106.9	2.06	134
Delta	2,074,306	2,024,085	4,098,391	17239	102.5	2.93	238

Ebonyi	1,040,984	1,132,517	2,173,501	6421	91.9	1.55	338
Edo	1,640,461	1,577,871	3,218,332	19819	104.0	2.30	162
Ekiti	1,212,609	1,171,603	2,384,212	5888	103.5	1.70	405
Enugu	1,624,202	1,633,096	3,257,298	7660	99.5	2.30	425
FCT Abuja	740,489	664,712	1,405,201	7754	111.4	1.00	181
Gombe	1,230,722	1,123,157	2,353,879	17982	109.6	1.68	131
Imo	2,032,286	1,902,613	3,934,899	5183	106.8	2.81	359
Jigawa	2,215,907	2,132,742	4,348,649	24516	103.9	3.11	177
Kaduna	3,112,028	2,954,534	6,066,562	45711	105.3	4.33	133
Kano	4,844,128	4,539,554	9,383,682	21277	106.7	6.70	441
Katsina	2,978,682	2,813,896	5,792,578	24971	105.9	4.11	232
Kebbi	1,617,498	1,621,130	3,238,628	37728	99.8	2.31	86
Kogi	1,691,737	1,586,750	3,278,487	29582	106.6	2.34	111
Kwara	1,220,581	1,150,508	2,371,089	34368	106.1	1.69	69
Lagos	4,678,020	4,335,514	9,013,534	3496	107.9	6.44	2,578
Nasarawa	945,556	917,719	1,863,275	27271	103.0	1.33	68
Niger	2,032,725	1,917,524	3,950,249	74109	106.0	2.82	53
Ogun	1,847,243	1,880,855	3,728,098	17001	98.2	2.66	219
Ondo	1,761,263	1,679,761	3,441,024	15194	104.9	2.46	226
Osun	1,740,619	1,682,916	3,423,535	8700	103.4	2.45	394
Oyo	2,809,840	2,781,749	5,591,589	28245	101.0	3.99	198
Plateau	1,593,033	1,585,679	3,178,712	27217	100.5	2.27	117
Rivers	2,710,665	2,474,735	5,185,400	10432	109.5	3.70	497
Sokoto	1,872,069	1,824,930	3,696,999	33777	102.6	2.64	109
Taraba	1,199,849	1,100,887	2,300,736	60292	109.0	1.64	38
Yobe	1,206,003	1,115,588	2,321,591	46910	100.1	1.66	49
Zamfara	1,630,344	1,629,502	3,259,846	35171	100.1	2.33	83
Nigeria	71,709,859	68,293,682	140,003,541	96390	105.0	100.00	149

Source: Federal Republic of Nigeria 2007: Census 2006

Apart from regional differences in the proportion of urban dwellers in Nigeria, there has been rapid growth of some specific urban areas due to the Nigerian national pattern of investments, institutions and industrialization. Industries and higher education institutions, for instance, Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Teachers Colleges, Technical Colleges and Secondary Schools among others are almost all located in urban centres. Their locations contributed immensely to rapid urbanization since urban centres provide jobs opportunities. Many people also migrate from the rural areas or villages to take that vocational advantage.

The concentration of industries varies from one location to another. Lagos city has the largest number and also the highest percentage of industrial establishments. Cities like Ibadan, Kano and Aba came second, third and fourth respectively in number and percentage of industrial establishments. The number and percentage of the other cities are minimal compared to the four cities mentioned. In this regard, Lagos has attracted more migrants than any other city in the country and therefore urbanization problems are more pronounced in Lagos than any other city in Nigeria.

Table 5
Population under Nigerian Local Government, 1991

Population Class	Number of LGA
1 Million and above	1
800,000 – 999,000	2
500,000 – 799,000	7
300,000 – 499,000	21
100,000 – 299,000	387
20,000 – 99,000	123
TOTAL	541

Source: National Population Commission 1991

Roles of Urbanization in Socio-Economic Development

Urbanization has brought enormous economic and social change to most African countries. Urbanization has been associated with the creation of jobs for millions of people and with reductions in absolute levels of poverty. For most of human history, sustainable cities have been major centres of economic growth and social development, generating new ideas and creating numerous new and existing jobs especially during the era following the industrial revolution through economies of scale and agglomeration, and fostering creative and innovative civil cultures. Cities are social, economic and political entities that have developed in response to the actions of countless individuals and relationships among wide array of institutions and organizations. They also neglect past decisions about construction and density, land use, transportation, economic development, political processes and representation, and social planning.

Urban areas are centres of innovation from where social, economic and technological ideas spread to the country side. It has long been recognized that urban areas, especially large cities, are places where cultural diversity flourish. Cities are the locations where a knowledge-based economy grows and consequently they are assuming an evermore influential role in the economic, political, informational, and cultural affairs of society. Cities are also ideally sited to address many issues associated with the inclusion of newcomers, such as reducing the social and residential exclusion of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, increasing social and spatial access to public services and employment, and constructing democratic, efficient, and equitable local governance structures. Sustainable cities also has the distinction of organizing and regulating many activities of daily urban life that are prosaic, but nevertheless crucial to the social and economic inclusion of residents. In Nigeria, life change survival are met most importantly in cities therefore, the cities have continued to witness massive build up of people overtime although the phenomenon is not restricted to Nigeria.

Problems of Urbanization

Most urban centres in developing countries like Nigeria experience a lot of problems simply because the urbanization process taking place is not yet embedded in environmental culture of many people. The problems and the challenges thrown by high rate of uncontrolled

and unplanned urban development are numerous. Nigerian towns and cities like Owerri are developing without enough planning.

Having set the scenario of urbanization in the world at large, one is mindful of going through the problems of Nigerian urbanization. The primary effect of differential levels of urbanization is the generation of varying levels of regional development. During the colonial period, their interest was on export oriented urban wise but disruptive and unorganized in rural areas. That was why our rural areas were unorganized as centres located within organized export-oriented regions and the articulated transport channels gained more in growth and function. Attempts at national integration after independence witnessed the presence of two regional processes.

The development of hierarchy of urban centres and attraction of their locational advantage of some specialized administrative, manufacturing and political functions. Besides the urban puxess, the rate of development has been affected by the demographic factors of age/sex composition as well as the characteristics of population size. This differential implication on population in terms of demographic factors has obvious implications in the provision of infrastructural services and investment. The urban growth therefore, will affect the rate of economic growth as some areas as stated earlier were developed parts of the country, while others were least developed in terms of regional economic development. It boils down to the fact that there were urban dimensions in spatial development, in the sense that the largest urban centres are located in the most developed areas; the medium – sized centres are in the moderately developed regions and areas with no urban centres, that is the rural areas are in the least developed zone.

The obvious economic pattern is clearly seen as one moves around between the hierarchy zones, one witnesses varying degree of economic growth which leads to the fact that there is no economic integration which invariably leads to the isolation of the rural areas and loss of human resources through out migration to the urban centres. That deviation hunts Nigerian rural areas. It hurts to hear and perceive that even the urban centres have failed to fulfill the expectations both of those who live in them and those who depend on them for certain basic social services. Mabogunje (1974) categorized these failures as employment, livability, manageability and serviceability. Marion Clawson and Hall (1973) collaborated the thoughts of Mabogunje thus “The city was essentially the place of opportunities, both economic and social, but these were paid for by foul air smoke-laden skies unemployment, high rents, crime and alcoholic as the country side on the other hand, offered a much superior physical environment” The urban centres had been sentenced as having failed to carry out their expected governmental functions.

Even this mild court sentencing infuriated Uyanga the more when in 1982, he expressed his anger in these words “The deterioration in the liveability of our centres over the years has been the result of population pressure on existing poor urban services and facilities compounded by economic base stagnation in some traditional centres, crowded accommodation, congested streets and buses, squatter settlements, sporadic refuse dumps and a breakdown in waste disposal arrangements, water and electricity failure and shortages, poverty and crime rate, pollution, filth and unattractive physical environment.”

Mabongunje (1974) Omokhodion (1975) declared “The poor environmental quality of many Nigerian cities is an evidence of the poor quality of their management”. He went on to say that “Urban management consists of three elements: the administration of the city activities, the ability to generate adequate resources for this purpose and the capacity to anticipate future changes in their scope and magnitude”.

In Nigerian context, urban management has never gone beyond the more routine administration, if at all they are managed. The shoddy and trashy of these urban areas-towns call for an appropriate institutional and legislative machinery for managing them efficiently. Duru (1972) has drawn attention to the disproportionate growth of urban elements in several countries of Africa as a problem similar to the disproportionate growth of the physiological aspects of the human body. He refers to this as “Urban hypertrophy” and defines it as a process characterized by the failure of urban based resources and amenities to provide an adequate level of support for the urban based population. If Breese’s (1966) argument of “Subsistence urbanization” can be cross-matched with hypertrophic urbanization, one may conclude that a kind of hypertrophic subsistence have quipped many large centres in Nigeria. “Subsistence urbanization” refers to an urbanization of a large proportion of individuals living under conditions that may be intrinsically worse than the rural areas from which they had come and not having available the kinds of work, housing, amenities, and opportunities which they expected. The rate of the urban problems increased and their solutions tended to have been left for the individual urban dweller.

Okonjo (1971) Hodder and Ukwu (1969) all accepted and observed that the failure of Nigerian towns to strictly conform to the rank size rule is because the development of urban centres is as yet immature, it is difficult to ignore the hypertrophic characteristics of these towns as not being contributory. Schatzl (1973) has shown that this process of urban imbalance is increasing in the country and the failure to fit into the rank size rule is considered on evidence of hypertrophy which results from spatial and social mobility among Nigerians, the change in values and the desire for mobilization and the interplay between the rural and the urban. The imbalance of spatial distribution of urban centres in the country calls for remedial action and national strategy to stimulate development.

Again, the factors responsible for the problems include the following

1. Lack of effective management and maintenance of existing facilities due to the absence of appropriate and effective organizational and administrative structure.
2. Lack of reliable data on which to base any meaningful infrastructure planning and investment decisions.
3. Undue interference in the daily running of the agencies providing public utilities by their parent ministries, thus constituting a major constraint on their performance
4. Poor pricing and cost recovery mechanism on the part of utility providers
5. Even increasing cost of materials, equipment and some parts makes provision and maintenance of urban infrastructure very difficult.
6. Inadequate manpower, both in quantity to plan implement, manage and maintain the existing infrastructure.
7. Lack of maintenance culture
8. Lack of expertise to cope with the rapid global change in the development of equipment

9. Poor mechanism and methods of revenue assessment, collection and management.
10. Low technological base which has resulted to acute problems of urban growth and
11. Poor distribution and wastages.

Materials and Methods

Data Collection

This research covers Owerri City which was divided into six zones using neighborhood enclaves as the yardstick for stratification. Data were collected with the use of questionnaire copies which were administered using the combination of stratified sampling technique, random and systematic sampling. Each zone had its share of questionnaire copies and a total of 240 respondents were served the copies of the questionnaire. Data for the study were both from primary and secondary sources, mainly oral sources from personal interviews, official records and private papers. The secondary sources were mainly works by European and Asian writers, and works by indigenous historians, Town Planners, found in books, journals, periodicals and in the internet. Direct observation was another technique which was adopted to bridge the gap in information and to illuminate the issues raised.

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics were used in analyzing the data

Result and Discussion

Table 6

Place of Residence (Origin)

Zones	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Owerri Municipal Council (Zone 1)	42	17.5
Owerri North L.G.A (Zone 2)	26	10.8
Owerri West L.G.A (Zone 3)	20	8.3
Douglas/Control Post New Owerri (Zone 4)	40	16.7
Aladinma / Ikenegbu (Zone 5)	60	25.0
Suburb Areas (Zone 6)	52	21.7
Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

From table 6, it is observed that most of the respondent live in Owerri Municipal Council Area, Aladinma/Ikenegbu, Suburb Areas, and Douglas/Control Post/New Owerri.

Table 7

Sex Respondents.

Zones	Male Frequency	Female Percentage Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Owerri Municipal Council (Zone 1)	40	30	29.2
Owerri North L.G.A (Zone 2)	14	10	10.0

Owerri West L.G.A (Zone 3) Douglas/Control/	15	9	10.0
Post New Owerri (Zone 4)	32	22	22.5
Aladinma / Ikenegbu (Zone 5)	28	20	20.0
Suburb Areas (Zone 6)	12	8	8.3
Total	141	99	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 7 reveals that out of 240 respondents, 141 were male and 99 were female.

Table 8

Occupation

Zones	Civil Servants	Students	Company Workers	Business People	Percentage Frequency
Owerri Municipal Council (Zone 1)	47	13	-	10	29.2
Owerri North L.G.A (Zone 2)	12	2	5	5	10.0
Owerri West L.G.A (Zone 3) Douglas/Control/	11	3	4	6	10.0
Post New Owerri (Zone 4)	20	10	8	16	22.5
Aladinma / Ikenegbu (Zone 5)	6	30	5	7	20.0
Suburb Areas (Zone 6)	8	6	2	4	8.3
Total	104	64	24	48	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 8 shows that civil servants were 104, students were 64, the number of company workers were 24 while business men were 48. Finally civil servants record the highest number in Owerri city, followed by students, business people and company workers.

Table 9

Educational level of respondents

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Primary	32	13.3
Secondary	121	50.4
Tertiary	87	36.3
Total	240	100.0

Source: Field work, 2015

Table 9, shows the educational level of respondents. The table indicates that 13.3% of the respondents had primary school education, 50.4% had secondary education and 36.3% represents those with tertiary education.

Table 10

If unemployment can be a major factor for rural-urban migration.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Yes	198	78.4
No	32	13.3
Don't Know	20	8.3
Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

Table 10 reveals if unemployment can be a major factor for rural-urban migration. 78.4% indicated yes, 13.3% indicated No while 8.3 indicated Don't know. Therefore unemployment is major factor for urbanization.

Table 11

Major Problems of Urbanization in Owerri City

Problems	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Traffic Congestion	116	48.3
Crowded accommodation/high rent	71	29.6
Pollution	17	7.1
Crime rate	29	12.1
Poverty	7	2.9
Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Work, 2015

From table 11, it is observed that the major urbanization problem in Owerri city is traffic congestion which accounts for 48.3 percent of the responses, followed by crowded accommodation/high rent (29.6) percent and the least is poverty (2.9 percent). It can be imagined in a city where traffic congestion is the major problem of urbanization.

Table 12

Benefits of Urbanization

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Provision of employment opportunities	90	37.5
Provision of social amenities	50	20.8
Reductions in absolute levels of poverty	40	16.7
Transformation of land uses	60	25
None of the above	0	0
Total	240	100.0

Source: Field work, 2015

Table 12 shows the benefits of Urbanization. It is observed that the major benefits of urbanization are provision of employment which accounts for 37.5%, followed by transformation of land uses which accounts for 25%, provision of social amenities which accounts for 20.8%, reduction in absolute levels of poverty which accounts for 16.7%. No respondent disagrees with the benefits of Urbanization.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study therefore concludes that urbanization has brought about economic growth and rapid growth of cities also brought enormous change and benefits to most cities of Nigeria, Owerri in particular. It is associated with the creation of jobs per millions of people and with reductions in absolute levels of poverty, provision of social amenities and transformation of land uses. It is redefining peoples' lifestyles, employment, welfare, social structures and institutions and creating new power relationships in households, organizations, and government.

This study has identified some of the factors that are responsible for urbanization problems, which includes; lack of maintenance culture, lack of effective management and maintenance of existing facilities due to the absence of appropriate and effective organizational and administrative structure etc. and also the problems of urbanization such as unemployment, poverty, traffic congestion, crowded accommodation, crime rate, high rent, alcoholic, pollution, electricity failure and water shortages, a breakdown in waste disposal arrangement, filth and unattractive physical environment.

The urbanization process should and could be executed more efficiently and effectively. This would increase the benefits of urbanization by diminishing constraints on economic productivity and improving living standards and urban amenity. It would also reduce the human, economic and environmental costs. Central to achieving this end is improvement in governance. Effective governance plays a central role in sustainability and amenity of cities through the provision, either directly or indirectly; of infrastructure and services and the management of the social environmental, and spatial effects of urban development. Urban planners should also be involved in planning of the cities.

Also provision of employment opportunities, provision of social amenities should be extended to the rural areas as well. By doing this, people from the rural areas would not migrate to the urban areas in search of greener pasture. And this will improve the quality of life of the Owerri people and enhance the functioning of trade, economy and many other essential services. It is therefore necessary to have a reformed policy and institutional frame work to control the management of urban and rural services. All these geared towards sustainable cities.

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