

Urban Land Acquisition for Sustainable Housing Delivery in Akure, Nigeria

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The aim of this study is to identify problem associated with urban land acquisition for sustainable housing delivery in Akure with a view of arriving at means of mitigating them. The three principal survey techniques used include administration of questionnaire, interviews and observations. The choice of these survey techniques was to enable the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data for the study. The research samples used were drawn from both government and private owned estates in Akure. The study focuses on Ijapo Housing Estate, Obele Housing Estate and Afunbiowo Housing Estate. Using systematic random sampling, a sample size of 252 was taken which represent 5% of the total housing units in the selected estates. Although, 231 were retrieved in usable form which represent 91.7% of the 252 questionnaire distributed. Evidences from the study revealed that adequate supply of land is generally recognized as a prerequisite for sustainable housing delivery. It was also revealed that access to land for housing development in Akure is becoming highly problematic due to rapid population growth and informal land delivery system. The study therefore suggested that indigenious land owner's syndrome should be looked into and takes appropriate legal actions against it. Government should periodically carry out public orientation and enlightenment on public land acquisition matters which will easy the tight procedure for individuals so as to sustain efficient housing delivery in Nigeria.

Key Words: Urban land, acquisition, sustainability, housing delivery, Akure


Introduction

Land is fundamental to development, growth and housing delivery in any society. It is a crucial element in property development process and its acquisition is vital to achieving efficient and sustainable housing delivery in urban environment. Ominrin (2002) opines that access to land and property rights is a major key in economic growth and development. It is now increasingly being realized that economic development of any country depends on how efficiently land is distributed among citizenry and competing urban uses. It is pertinent to note that providing the populace with access to land and empowering them to make effective use of it is central to poverty alleviation. Olomolaiye (1999) observed that land is the main, if not the only asset held by the poor and their ability to claim and sell it is a critical element in social and economic development. Boonyabanacha (2009) emphasize that land and housing are significant assets for the poor; which do not only provide shelters but also generate income for the poor. Bello (2007) and Chukwujekwu (2006) argued that land is not just only basic to life but it also contain all necessities for life to exist and a

tool for obtaining social prestige, economic security and political power. It is noteworthy therefore to know that having unconstrained access to land is a tool against poverty and homelessness.

Acquisition to land comprises of availability of unusable lands, affordability of such lands, and ease of transaction with that lands as well as security of the owner's right (Ominrin, 2002). It is pertinent to note that prior to the British rule in Nigeria; access to land was governed by customary rules. However, this customary land tenure was considered less adequate to create access to land for all citizens for obvious shortcomings; such as insecurity of tenure, incessant rancour and litigation fraudulent of land sales, marginalization of non-land holding family members, among others.

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In 1976, the UN-Habitat conference held in Vancouver recommended, among other issues, public land management as a means of achieving equitable and cheap access to land for both public and private developments which was to be based on non-commercial criteria. This led to the promulgation of Land Use Act of 1978 in Nigeria with the aim of creating cheaper and easier accessibility to land for all Nigerians irrespective of their social status. However, available evidence shows that solution to land accessibility especially to the urban residents is yet to be in sight in Nigeria. Aluko and Amidu (2006) observe that the State intervention in land ownership and administration through the promulgation of the Land Use Act of 1978 has merely created a dual structure of land delivery systems. Therefore, customary and state systems prevail in the country with the consequence of double purchase of same land by the hoodlums locally called 'Omo-oniles'. This has led to more complicated land accessibility process. The thrust of this paper, therefore, is to examine how urban lands are being accessed for sustainable housing delivery, the cost implications of formal land delivery and the constraints to land accessibility by the urban residents.

Literature Appraisal

Housing has been universally acknowledged as one of the essential necessities of life and a major economic resource of every nation. Adequate housing provides the needed foundation for stable communities, social inclusion and sustainable environment (Oladapo, 2006; Onifade, 2013). According to Agbola (2005), housing is a structure of dwelling encompasses its design and basic inbuilt equipments such like the amount and allocation of space, lighting, sanitary facilities and other similar activities. Konadu-Agyemanyg et al (1994) and Oloyede, et al (2007) established a strong relationship among housing condition, good health, productivity and socio-economic development. Hence, its provision vis-à-vis acquisition of lands for effective delivery becomes imperative for sustainable development of any nation.

Adequate supply of land is generally recognised as a prerequisite for sustainable housing delivery system notwithstanding the important role it plays in the socio-economic life of people. Generally, it has been observed that access to land for housing development in urban areas in many developing countries of sub-Saharan Africa is becoming highly problematic with each passing day. In most African countries, urban land has increasingly become a commodity to be acquired and sold to the highest

bidder. The low-income earners who lack economic and political power to gain access to urban land in suitable locations for housing construction are experiencing severe land and housing accessibility challenges in sub-Saharan Africa (Adedeji and Olotuah, 2012). As a result of this, majority of urban residents are forced to live in slums and squatter settlements characterised by lack of secured tenure, basic services and general poor housing conditions, which are inimical to human, physical and economic development (Oruwari, 2006; Hall, 2007; Ademiluyi and Raji, 2008).

In Nigeria, considerable research efforts have concentrated on housing market while a few empirical studies exist on the general ordeals involved in attempt to secure lands for the delivery. Ominrin (2002) confirms that much attention has been devoted to housing problem but not enough consideration is paid to the constraints of land acquisition which in fact constitutes serious obstacle to efficient housing provision. Ominrin and Antwi (2004) argue that empirical studies that enhance understanding of formal and informal urban land delivery are relatively scarce. Ikejiofor (2004) shares a similar opinion that there have been little in-depth researches on new institutional approach to land management than could improve accessibility to land. The National Housing Policy launched in 1991, with the ultimate goal of ensuring all Nigerians have access to decent housing at affordable cost by the Year 2000, has been discovered to lack appropriate framework for access to land, thereby rendering the policy incapacitated in making the desired impact. In this regard, the principal goal is to identify the socio-economic and institutional factors that impede access to land. It has been documented that improved understanding of the specific ways in which policies, laws and practices are blended together can actually enhance an improved access to land. Aluko and Amidu (2006) in a similar opinion report that if Nigeria is to achieve meaningful level of economic development and achieve her goal of becoming one of the best twenty world economies in the year 2020, the issue of accessibility to land cannot be accorded less priority.

According to Mabogunje (2002), cited in Simon (2014), land acquisition difficulties and inability of most Nigerians to have access to long term mortgage finance coupled with government acquisition and allocation as stipulated in the land use Act of 1978 has posed serious barriers to potential developers in housing delivery. Procurement of genuine land is a serious issue. A situation where a plot of land is sold to two or more developers by indigenous land owners (called Omo-onile) as experienced in some cities in Nigeria in the recent time could hamper housing

delivery. The conventional methods of land and house ownership in most African cities are either inequitable or inefficient or both. The result is that they inhibit easy access to land for the development of decent housing. Literature review shows that land administration and tenure systems in sub-Saharan Africa are complex phenomena and a reflection of the unique traditional and political as well as socio-cultural context of the African society (Djire, 2007; Faye, 2008; Simeon, 2014)). The fact is that land is not just an economic asset and market commodity, but has political, social, cultural and spiritual connotations in Africa. This implies that land is of strong historical connotations and constitutes a significant proportion of source of livelihoods, income and employment in this continent (Lawal, 2000; Toulmin, 2006).

Considering the current challenges of Rapid City growth, consistent economic depression and high level of poverty; a study that seeks to improve understanding in the current state of urban land and housing delivery systems is probably most desirable. Payne (2005), cited in Aribigbola (2008), emphasizes that there is an urgent need to create conditions in which all sections of urban society especially the poorest and the deprived can obtain access to legal and affordable shelter in the ways that prevent the need for future distortion in urban development and land market. Owoeye (2013) and Owoeye and Adedeji (2013) identified poverty as major underlying cause of poor environmental condition which retards good health. Since the poor are incapable of paying for the required amenities for healthy living as well as procuring or having access to urban lands, they become the vulnerable set of the

urban populace who are mostly deprived of access to good housing. Against this backdrop of in-acquisition to land by the urban residents, insufficient relevant empirical research coupled with the need to improving the economy of Nigeria, this study therefore is structured to analyse constraints to land acquisition for sustainable housing delivery in Akure.

Materials and Methods

This research was carried out in Akure, the Ondo State capital Nigeria. Focusing on residential housing units, three public residential housing estates were selected in the city. They include Oba Afunbiowo housing estate, Ijapo Housing estate and Orita-Obele housing estate. Data collection for this study was essentially through *Survey Research Design (SRD)* with the aid of structured questionnaires, personal interviews and observation. Other sources include government ministries and establishments, journals, textbooks and internet facilities. The study covers three residential estates in Akure, namely: Obele estate, Afunbiowo estate and Ijapo estate. Housing population distribution, sample size taken for questionnaire administration and the location of the three estates is shown in Table 1. Altogether, 252 housing units were sampled for questionnaire administration using systematic random sampling technique at every 5th buildings in each of the estates. Owing to invalidation of 21 of the administered questionnaires due to observed inconsistencies; 231 (representing 91.7% of the 252 questionnaires administered) were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

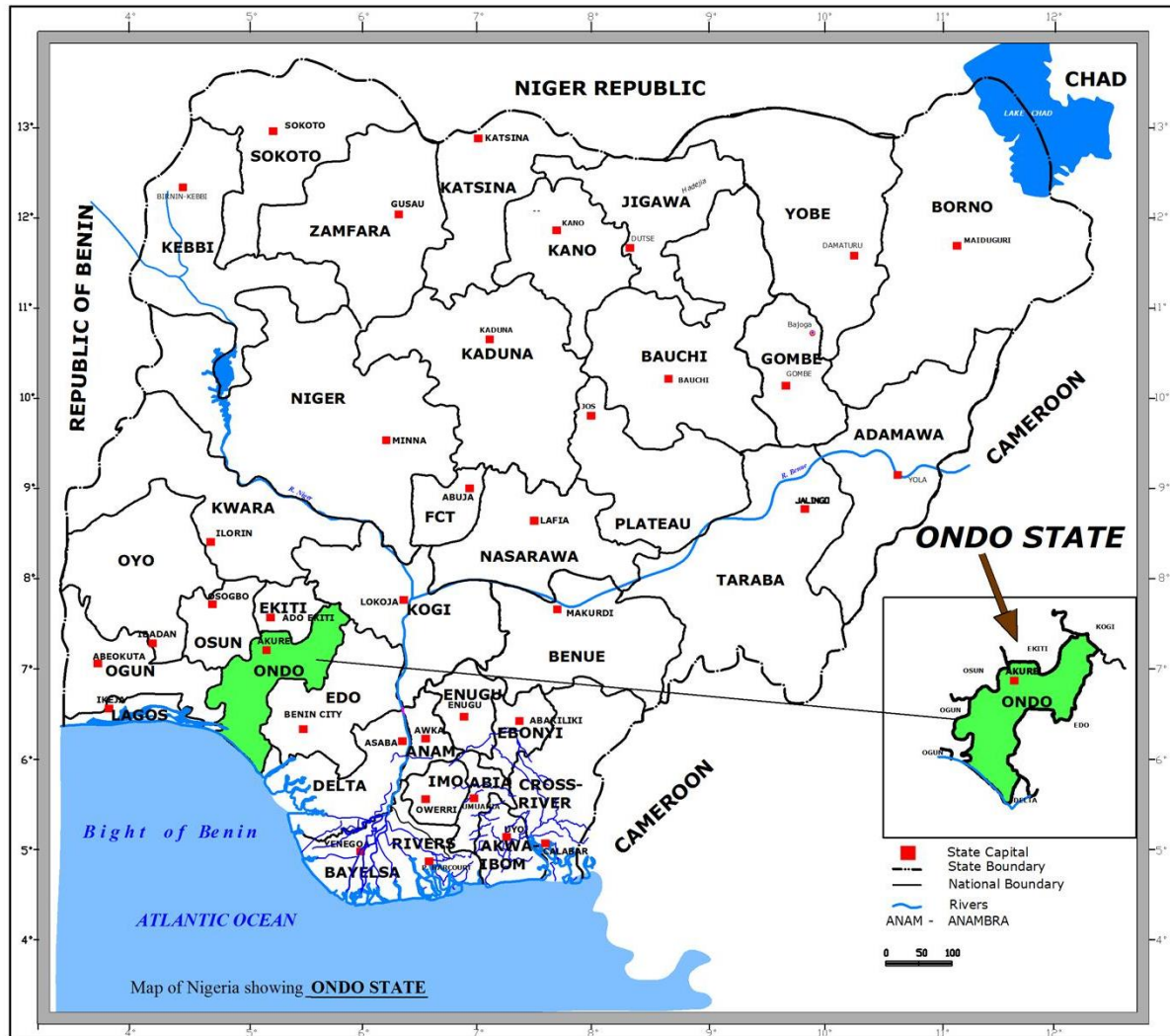


Figure 1: ONDO State in the National Setting, Source: Ondo State Ministry of Works and Housing, Akure (2014)

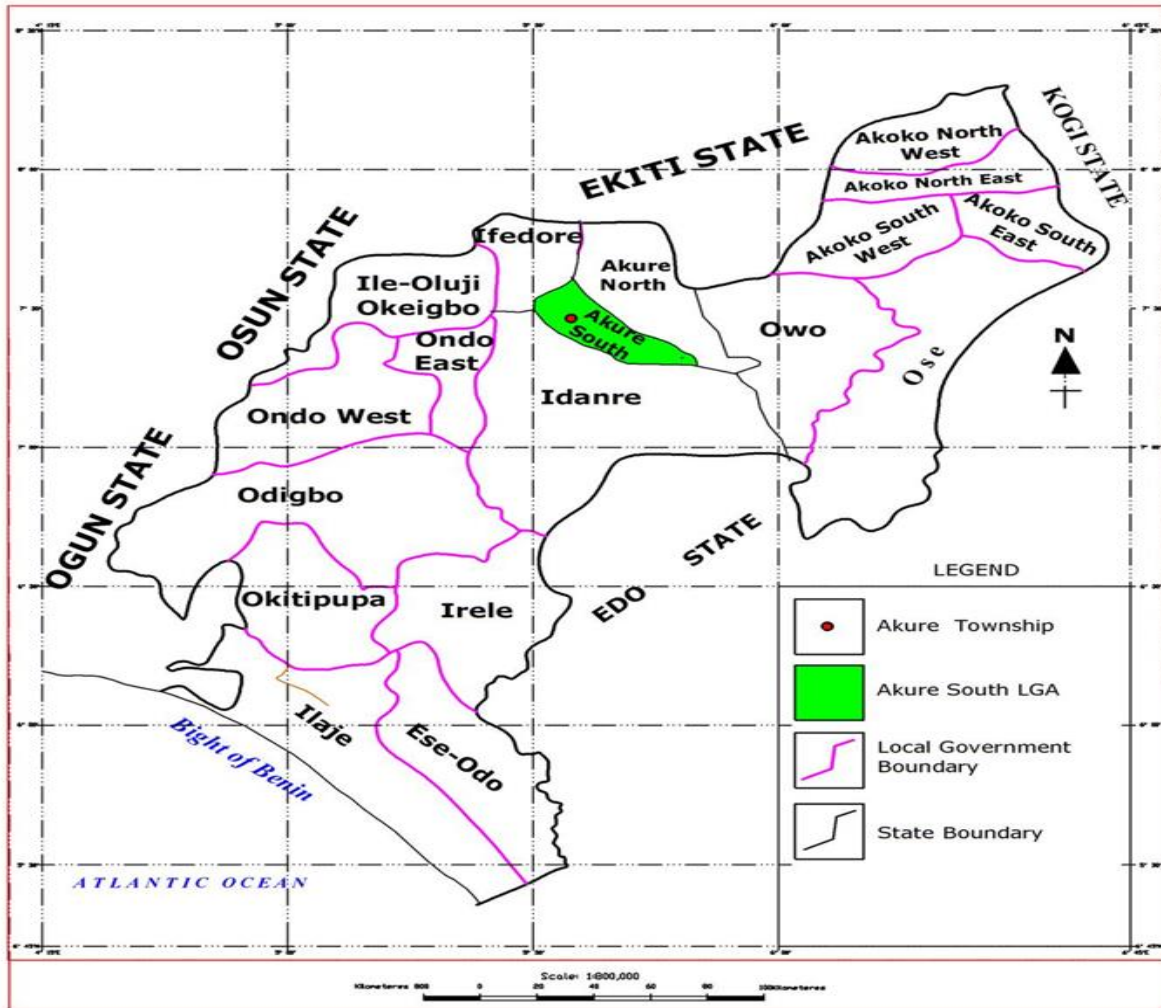


Figure 2: ONDO State showing its 18 Local Govt. Areas , Source: Ondo State Ministry of Works and Housing, Akure (2013)

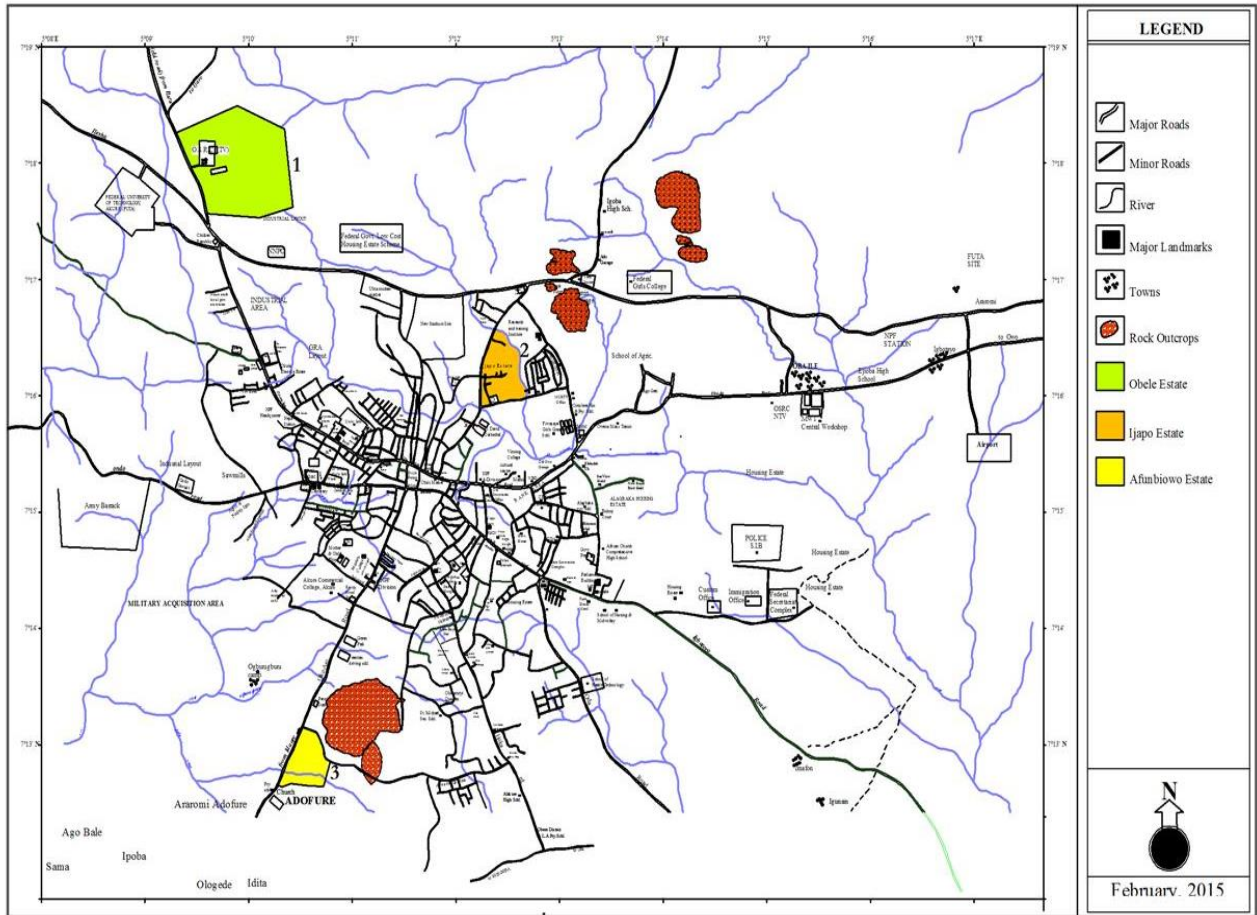


Figure 3: AKURE Street Map showing the Location of the Three Selected Estates , Source: Ondo State Ministry of Works and Housing (Updated by the Authors, 2014)

Data analysis and discussion

Table 1 shows the summary of the study location for this study; the number of housing units in each of the three estates, the number of questionnaires distributed

at 5% sample size and the total number possibly retrieved which was eventually used for the research analysis. Then, the discussions were made under different sub-headings.

Table 1: Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval

S/N	Housing Estates	Location	Status	Total No. of Housing Unit	5% Sample Size Taken	Questionnaire Retrieval
1.	Obele Estate	Along Akure-Ijare Road, Akure	Private	1,673	84	80
3.	Afunbiowo Estate	Along Akure-Idanre Road, Akure	Public	1,633	82	72
2.	Ijapo Estate	Opp. Federal College of Agric. Akure	Public	1,726	86	79
	Total			5,032	252	231

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Socio-Economic Background of Respondents

As shown in Table 2; 55.8% of the respondents were males while 44.2% were females. Generally, the level of education of respondents is high as majority (79.3%) claim of being graduates of tertiary institutions. Only 3.0% have no formal education; while 4.3% and 13.4% have only primary and secondary education respectively. This is quite understandable being residential estates. Residential

estates are mostly occupied by the elites. No wonder majority are either civil servants (44.2%) or business tycoon (35.0%). This affects their level of income as majority (above 60.0%) earn average income above ₦50,000 monthly. This category of people should have the capacity to acquire lands for housing purpose. But the remaining population whose monthly income is much lower will definitely find it difficult to venture into such.

Table 2: Socio- Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-Economic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex Distribution		
Male	129	55.8
Female	102	44.2
Total	231	100.0
Educational Level		
No Formal Education	7	3.0
Primary	10	4.3
Secondary	31	13.4
Tertiary	183	79.3
Total	231	100.0
Occupational Distribution		
Student	29	12.6
Civil Servant	102	44.2
Business work	81	35.0
Unemployed/Retiree	19	8.2
Total	231	100.0
Income Distribution per Month		
Below ₦ 15,000	18	7.8
₦ 15,000 – 25,000	31	13.4
₦ 26,000 – 50,000	83	35.9
₦ 51,000 – 70,000	65	28.1
Above ₦ 70,000	34	14.8
Total	231	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Land Availability and Acquisition Procedures

Acquisition of lands in the study area was essentially through purchase either from individuals (39.8%), government agencies (30.8%) or estate agents (21.2%). Only 8.2% acquired theirs through family inheritance. Among these people, only those acquired their land from government seem not to have problems with indigenous land owners during

document validation. Many are faced with various problems ranging from double purchase, denial of ownership/undue delay in securing full ownership, multiple ownership/sale disputes to legal action by third party, title wrongful boundary, and family stool dispute. In view of this, professionals were involved in the acquisition process. Figure 4 clearly show the percentage involvement of professionals by the respondents in securing their landed properties.

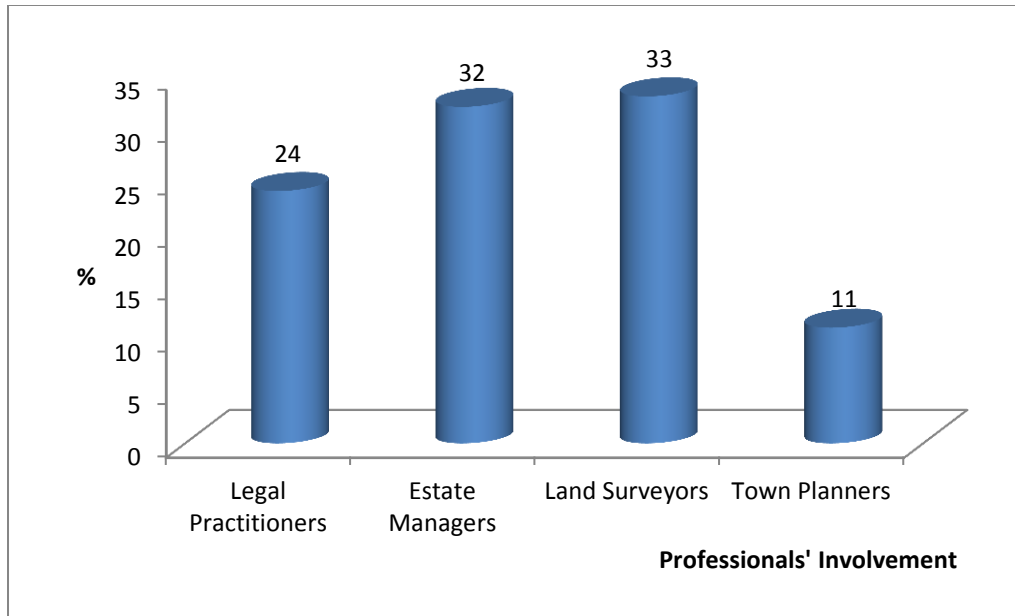


Figure 4: Professionals’ Involvement in Land Acquisition in the Study Area, Source: Field Survey, 2014

The cost and value of land varies in the study area. About 30.0% of the respondents said lands are sold between ₦1,000,000 and ₦2,000,000; 26.0% said is between ₦500,000 and ₦1,000,000 while 19.0% alleged it is sold up to ₦5,000,000. In view of this,

acquisition is classified based on financial capability of prospective land speculators. Lands are not readily available in all the estates. Thus, Figure 5 shows the assessment of availability of land in their percentages.

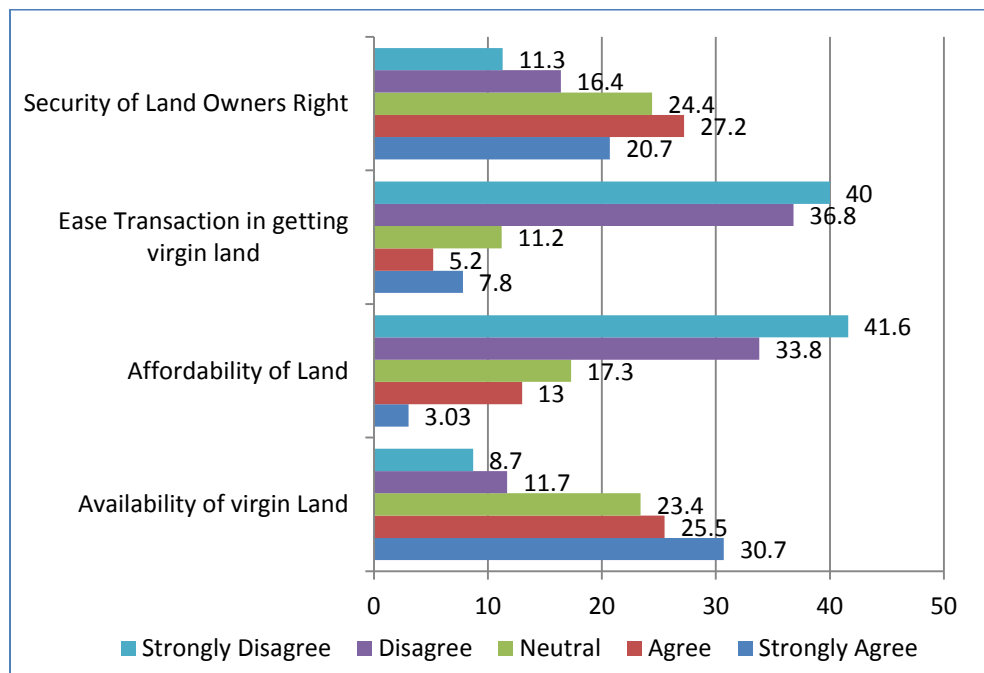


Figure 5: Assessment of Land Availability in the Study Area, Source: Field Survey, 2014

Land Use Activities in the Study Area

Various activities to which lands are subjected to in the study area were assessed. The dominant land use is residential, which accounts for higher percentage of land use in the area. This was followed by

commercial, educational, recreational and industrial land uses in that order as shown in Table 3. From the table, there is a clear evidence of drastic increase in the percentage of residential land use. This is as a result of peoples’ general need for housing in Akure.

Table 3: Initial and Present Land Use Classifications in the Study Area

	Initial Land Use		Present Land Use	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Residential	127	55.0	149	64.5
Commercial	54	23.4	42	18.2
Recreational	9	3.9	12	5.2
Educational	32	13.8	23	10.0
Industrial	9	3.9	5	2.5
Total	231	100.0	231	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2014.

Challenges Encountered in the Acquisition Process

Adequate supply of land is generally recognised as a prerequisite for sustainable housing delivery system. However, it has been observed that access to land for housing development in urban areas in many developing countries is becoming highly problematic. The general belief among most informed observers and stakeholders in Africa is that government

misappropriation of land, fake titles, land disputes and prevailing conditions in land market arising primarily from rapidly growing urban population. Unfriendly and inconsistent land policies as well as inefficient land administration strategies have contributed to current urban land accessibility challenges (Faye, 2008). However, problems highlighted in Figure 6 are frequently faced challenges by land owners in the study area.

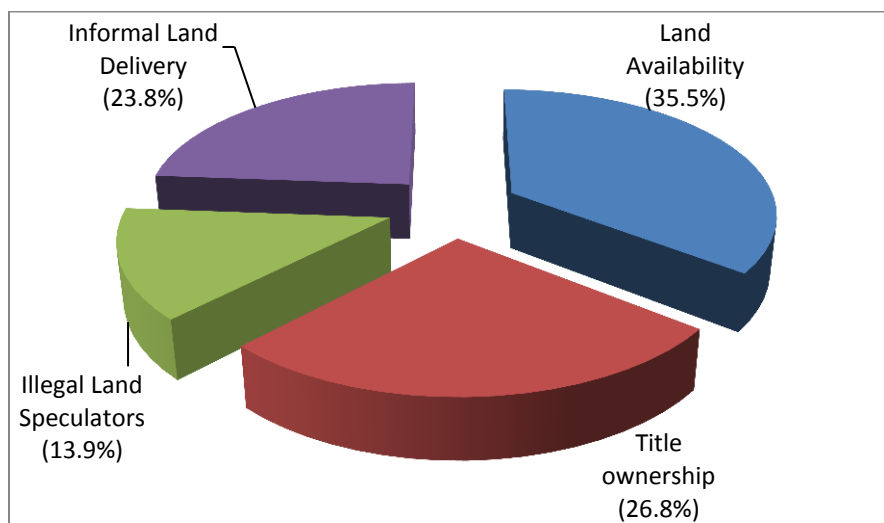


Figure 6: Challenges Encountered in the Acquisition Process Source: Field Survey, 2014

Summary of Findings

Evidence from the study revealed that adequate supply of land is a prerequisite for sustainable housing delivery system. However, it has been observed that access to land for housing development in Akure is becoming highly problematic with each passing day. The existence of legal dualism in land tenure, centralized and over complicated procedures for registering and obtaining land titles, restrictive and discriminatory land use policies, the indigenous land owners' syndrome as well as multiple payments for land are notable impediments to ease access to land for sustainable housing delivery. The current pressure on land due to rapid population growth and inadequacies associated with formal and informal land delivery systems have contributed to increasing lack of accessibility to land for housing in Akure.

Findings equally show that the Land Use Act has not succeeded in making land readily available to Nigerians because the process of accessibility to land is long, complicated and expensive. The efforts of the public and the private sectors at ameliorating the shortage of housing affordability for the low income earners have not produced significant strategy for solving the housing problems in our urban centres. In the past few years, Nigerian economy has witnessed serious macro dilemma characterized by slowdown in economic activities, low capital utilization, growing accelerated inflation, and intensified exchange rate depreciation as well as highly perverse interest rates. The high rates of interest through mortgage finance have not made procurement of capital for housing development attractive to developers.

Recommendations

In view of the various problems observed in the study, some policy recommendations are proffered which are aimed at reducing and easing the current friction in urban land acquisition for sustainable housing delivery in Akure, Ondo State. They include:

1. Government to carry out periodic public orientation and enlightenment programme on matters relating to acquisition of lands; especially on procedure, availability, accessibility and security of land tenure system.
2. Efforts should be made to address the problem of indigenous land owners' syndrome. Appropriate legal actions should be taken against it where necessary.
3. There is no doubt about the low level of awareness in the efficacy of the use of local materials in housing development due to socio-cultural barriers. Consequently, an inward

approach and enlightenment of the public and professionals in building industry on the efficacy of local materials will enhance housing delivery.

4. Mortgage loans should not be for construction of new houses alone, but for people to be able to buy plots of land for housing purpose, make improvement on existing houses and rent accommodation. In this wise, housing cooperatives need to be encouraged to carry out this responsibility since most individual achieve better things through cooperative societies.

Conclusion

Housing is a critical component in the social and economic fabric of all nations. No country is yet satisfied with the level of its housing provision and delivery to the various economic groups that make up its citizenry. Thus, most nations continue to clamour for relief on housing problem. In addressing this, good urban governance becomes necessary to promote increased access to land, credit facility for affordable housing that is well serviced and environmentally sound for the low income people. In all, workable national policy framework where the duties and responsibilities of each stakeholder in housing delivery will be stipulated will assist sustainable public and private housing delivery in Akure.

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