



## Planning and Urban Governance in Developing Societies: The Example of Akure, Ondo State of Nigeria

### L'EXEMPLE D'AKURE D'ETAT D'ONDO DU NIGERIA : LA GOUVERNANCE URBAINE ET LA PLANIFICATION DES SOCIETES EN VOIE DE DEVELOPPEMENT

Aribigbola, Afolabi<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PHD, MNITP, RTP. Department of Geography and Planning Sciences, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.

\*Corresponding author.

Email: bodejoke@yahoo.co.uk

Received 29 September 2011; accepted 2 December 2011

#### Abstract

This paper explores urban planning practice and urban governance in Akure, Nigeria with the aim of determining the relationship between them. The paper discusses how planning can be used to promote and enhance good urban governance in developing countries. The data set for the study draws substantially from systematic survey of urban planning activities and local administration in the area. The paper found lack of linkage between urban planning and governance in the city. While the state Department of physical planning undertakes planning activities, the local government on the other hand is responsible for managing affairs of the city. The study also found that the city growing without adequate conscious planning inputs and no reference to planning by the managers of the city' affairs as represented by the local government council. The study emphasized the need to institute participatory planning and good governance in developing societies.

**Key words:** Urban planning; Urban governance; Local administration; Sustainable development; Physical development; Developing societies

#### Résumé

Cet article explore la pratique de l'urbanisme et la gouvernance urbaine à Akure, Nigeria, dans le but de déterminer la relation entre eux. Le document examine comment la planification peut être utilisé pour promouvoir et renforcer la bonne gouvernance urbaine dans les pays en développement. L'ensemble des données pour l'étude tire sensiblement de relevé systématique des activités de planification urbaine et de l'administration locale dans

la région. Le document trouvé absence de lien entre la planification urbaine et la gouvernance dans la ville. Alors que le Département d'Etat de la planification physique entreprend des activités de planification, le gouvernement local, d'autre part est responsable de la gestion des affaires de la ville. L'étude a également constaté que la ville en pleine croissance, sans adéquats entrées planification consciente et aucune référence à la planification par les gestionnaires des affaires de la ville, représentée par le conseil de gouvernement local. L'étude a souligné la nécessité d'instituer une planification participative et la bonne gouvernance dans les sociétés en développement.

**Mots clés:** Planification urbaine; La gouvernance urbaine; L'administration locale; Développement durable; Développement physique; Les sociétés en voie de développement

Aribigbola, Afolabi (2011). Planning and Urban Governance in Developing Societies: The Example of Akure, Ondo State of Nigeria. *Canadian Social Science*, 7(6), 119-127. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/j.css.1923669720110706.194> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720110706.194>

#### INTRODUCTION

Good urban governance has been identified as indispensable in achieving sustainable development in contemporary times particularly in developing world context. With more and more people preferring cities as their choice of settlement, the challenge lies not in stemming this tide of migration, but in managing and governing our cities better, to improve quality of life and living standards. The world's urban population has been growing rapidly from under 300 million in 1950s to 2.7 billion in 2000. Currently the urban growth rate stands at 2.5 percent annually adding around 55 million people to urban areas (issue paper on

governance). The cities in developing countries have been witnessing rapid and spontaneous growth in recent times resulting in a myriad of problems. The menace of urban sprawl and deteriorating environment, housing shortages, unemployment and other socio-economic and environmental issues prevalent in most developing countries have made new thinking and approaches to solving them indispensable if the security and welfare of city dwellers are to be guaranteed. Thus, the urban crisis in developing countries has attracted the attention of scholars, decision makers, donors and multilateral agencies globally and consequently the design of policies and programmes to combat it. Besides, extant literature indicates that the capacity of the nations to pursue their economic and social goals has begun to depend more and more on their ability to govern their cities. This is as a result of the realization that cities are engines of economic growth and hub of political and cultural fusion. Consequently, urban local bodies are now expected to plan and coordinate and oft times manage a plethora of urban facilities and activities. They include urban environment, urban transport, anti poverty measures; facilitate urban economy and productivity and human settlement development. This make formal planning indispensable and this is why it has been instituted and widely practiced in most societies. In many cases planning can allow cities to avoid the cost of slum upgrading, citywide development strategies and participatory planning. Thus, over the past few years, a consensus has emerged that improved governance is central to the sustainable achievement of development goals (Millennium Project, 2005).

UN-HABITAT launched the Global Campaign on Urban Governance in 1999 to support the implementation of the Habitat Agenda goal of "Sustainable Human Settlements Development in an urbanizing world." The campaign's goal is to contribute to the eradication of poverty through improved urban governance. There is a growing international consensus that the quality of urban governance is the single most important factor for the eradication of poverty and for prosperous cities.

The major impediments to grassroots development of physical planning in Nigeria have been associated with the recurring problems in the local government administration in the country. This assertion has been made purely on the premise that the local government as the third tier government, is in the best position to deal with development and planning functions at the grassroots. These functions which are particularly neglected in less developed societies are very essential for both physical and socio-economic development of any nation (Mba, 1998).

In sum, the new paradigms are centred on the principles of community participation through extensive consultation at all stages of the planning process; involvement of all stakeholders including women and other disadvantaged groups in the city, and Horizontal and

Vertical coordination. Therefore, the focus in recent urban planning and management practices have gradually shifted from measuring success primarily in terms of economic growth to giving equal considerations to environmental and social costs and benefits (UN, 1996). It is against above scenarios that this paper seeks to examine the place of planning in urban governance in sub-Saharan African utilizing the situation of Akure, Nigeria. The overriding concern is to determine the linkages between planning and governance as well as suggest how to improve sustainable city development in the area through programmed planning and development of the city.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS AND RELEVANT LITERATURE

Urban planning is a dynamic activity that works to improve the welfare of people and their communities by creating more convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient and attractive places for present and future generations (American Planning Association, 2006). To achieve this, a number of approaches and methods have been employed which include master plan and structure plan approaches, sustainable development approach and good urban governance as been championed by UNDP, world Bank and UN-Habitat. This has affected extant approaches and practices producing new principles, concepts and procedures for urban planning. These new approaches imply that planning must take into account economic, social, and environmental priorities, as well as provide an effective and enduring framework for decisions on location of new development and priorities for land use change, redeployment and regeneration.

Planning has been described as the system by which the use and development of land is managed for the benefit of all community (for uses such as housing, schools, shops, offices, factories, airports and community facilities). The overall aim of the system is to ensure a balance between enabling development to take place and conserving and protecting the environment and local amenities. The idea is to create better places for people to live, work and plan in (Gaunt, et al, 2006). Thus, planning directly affects our physical environment and in doing so influences our quality of life and general well-being (Gaunt et al, 2006). Planning focuses on the location and quality of social, economic and environmental change (RTPI, 2011). Thus, it involves twin activities - the management of the competing uses for space, and the making of places that are valued and have identity. It affects everyone, making policies, setting out visions for places and decisions about matters ranging from the location of major new transport or energy facilities and employment development, through to the development of new shops, schools, dwellings or parks needed by local communities.

Good Governance is closely linked with sustainable

human development (UNDP 1994). Therefore developing the capacity for good governance in a society is sine qua non to achieving sustainable development, through the elimination of poverty, and creation of enabling environment in which every member of the society can enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. UNDP defines governance as processes, regulations or the results of interactions between the legislative and executive governments, the civil society, the judiciary, and the people' (UNDP 1997). Governance is the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is the way a society organizes itself to make and implement decisions achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action.

It is therefore, the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. The rules, institutions and practices set limits and provide incentives for individuals, organizations and firms. Governance, including its social, political and economic dimensions, operates at every level of human enterprise, be it the household, village, municipality, nation, region or globe. — UNDP Strategy Note on Governance for Human development, 2000.

Urban governance has been defined “as the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city (UN-Habitat, Campaign, 2003). Good Urban Governance therefore focuses on the entrenchment and pursuit of certain principles and ideals in the city administration that promote inclusiveness and democratic norms in decision making with the view to enhancing the citizen well being. Good Governance is pioneered by UNDP (UNDP 1997) and was initially measured by nine elements, principles and themes, which include rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, strategic vision and participation. Good governance principles have been applied to different tiers of government such as national, regional (provincial) and at local level. UN Habitat has been in the vanguard of promoting Good Urban Governance at the local (city) level. The nine governance principles were reviewed and customized to urban administrative level during the UN inter-agency meeting in June 2001 and adopted five principles for measuring good urban governance.

The Habitat Agenda defines equity, efficiency, transparency, and accountability as components of good urban governance. The task Force on improving the lives of slum dwellers stresses in addition to other principles subscribed to by community of nations: subsidiarity, civic engagement and citizenship, and security of individuals and their living environments Thus taken together according to the task force, these attributes

define governance that is close to all citizens, promotes the active participation of all in the city's political life and in decisions that affect them, and ensures living conditions for all, secured by law, that guarantee a safe, pleasant, humane, and livable environment (Millennium Project, 2005). Good urban governance means improving organization of the urban poor as equal partners in urban political and economic life, including budgeting decisions, financing practices, and the participatory upgrading, planning, and design of basic public services (Millennium Project, 2005). The World Bank identified three distinct aspects of governance: (i) the form of political regime; (ii) the process by which the authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; and (iii) the capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions.

The literature elaborated above described governance as the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is a way society organizes itself to make and implement decisions achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. Thus, in the on-going assessment of good urban governance in Nigeria, five key elements of good urban governance considered relevant to Nigerian situation has been identified and applied to evaluate urban governance in selected cities across the country. These elements are effectiveness, security, participation, equity and accountability.

---

## THE STUDY AREA AND METHODS

---

### The Study Area

Akure is a traditional Nigerian city and like other traditional Yoruba towns in the country, it existed long before the advent of British colonial rule in the country. The city is located within Ondo State in the South Western part of Nigeria. Ondo State is one of the 36 states of Nigeria. It lies approximately on latitude  $7^{\circ} 15'$  North of the Equator and longitude  $5^{\circ} 15'$  East of the Greenwich Meridian. Akure is a medium- sized urban centre and became the provincial headquarter of Ondo province in 1939. It also became the capital city of Ondo State and a Local Government headquarters in 1976. Consequently, there was heterogeneous massing of people and activities in the city (M.W. & H., 1980). The city's morphology has changed over time to assume its present status with its attendant land problems, as experienced in similar medium sized urban centres in Nigeria. Akure is located approximately 700 kilometres South West of Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria and about 350 kilometres to Lagos the former capital of Nigeria. It is located within the tropical rain forest region of Nigeria where rainfall is high through the year. The increased relative political



influence of Akure as a state capital since 1976 has greatly promoted its rapid growth and increased socio-economic activities resulting in its spatial expansion from an area of about 16 squares kilometres in 1980 to about 30 square kilometres in 2000 (Ministry of Works, Lands and Housing, 2000). The population of the city grew from 38, 852 in 1952 to 71,106 in 1963. Its population was estimated to be 112,850 in 1980 (DHV, 1984). The 1991 national population census recorded a population of Akure at 239,124, while its present population is about 387,000 (Ondo State, 2010). Besides being the seat of Ondo State government, the city accommodates offices of several Federal Government of Nigerian's ministries, agencies and parastatals including the Federal University of Technology, Akure among others.

## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The paper draws on document analysis, qualitative research as well as questionnaire administration to obtain information on selected residents of the state, agencies and individuals responsible for carrying out urban planning and governance tasks in the state. In addition, other relevant materials and data were sourced from published sources including government departments' publications, journal articles, newspapers, textbooks and internet, among others.

The methodology utilized in the study embrace in-depth interviews of key officials of Akure South Local Government Council (AKSLGC). The key staff of the council was interviewed to elicit information from them on the administration of the city. In addition, to face-to-face interview, data were also obtained through focus Group Discussion that took place on 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 2010 at the council Chamber of the LGA. The qualitative data as indicated above were generated through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in city affairs in the study area. NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, Community Development organizations, organized groups and societies including market women, Drivers' unions etc were also be consulted as key informants to provide information on the performance of officials charged with the responsibility of administering city affairs as well as how to achieve good urban governance in Nigeria.

In summary, the methodology adopted includes structured interviews and consultations with policy officers and Planners at Federal, State, and local government on the one hand and residents of the city on the other.

## Urban Planning Process and practice in Akure

The institution of formal physical planning in Nigeria started in 1863 with the enactment of the Town

Improvement ordinance by the Colonial government (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1863). However, modern urban planning began in the country in 1946 with the enactment of the Nigerian Town and Country Planning Ordinance. Based on the 1946 Nigerian Town and Country planning ordinance, the Western Region where Akure is situated enacted its own Town and Country Planning Law that forms chapter 123 of the laws of Western Nigeria. This law among other provisions established Town Planning Authorities (TPAS), which were to control and guide the orderly development of the settlements within their jurisdiction by approving proposals for physical development and the preparation of development schemes and land use plans. Area Town Planning Authority (ATPA) was established in 1963 for the major cities and they took over building approval systems from sanitary inspectors and traditional chiefs that hitherto performed that function (Olujimi, 1993). At that period Akure Town Planning Authority was established to oversee the planning and physical development of Akure and some surrounding neighbouring settlements. In March 1979, as a result of the poor staffing situation and non-availability of a staff pension scheme, Ondo State Government abolished the Area Planning Authorities. In its place, a unified town planning control system was adopted which centred all town planning activities in the Town Planning Division of the Ministry of Lands and Housing. By the unified Town Planning System introduced in the state, Area Town Planning offices (ATPOs) were created at every local government headquarters in the state replacing the APA's (Olujimi, 1993).

Following the centralisation of planning in Ondo State in 1979, the task of urban Planning was taken over by the Town Planning Division (later Department of Urban and Regional Planning) of Ondo State's Ministry of Works and Housing. This responsibility has now been taken over by the newly created Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development since May 2009 (Falade and Aribigbola, 2010). The need to guide and control physical development of the city and to also cope with its rapid growth as an emerging state capital prompted the state government to commission the preparation of a master plans for it in 1980. The master plan prepared for Akure in the early 1980s has 2000 as its target year. Investigation revealed that since the 1980 master plan expired in 2000, no new embracing plan has been articulated for the city. Efforts were made in 1998 and 2010 to review and prepare new plans respectively for the city. In both occasions the efforts failed to produce desirable results. A review of the process of developing the plan shows that the consultants adopted the comprehensive approach where the consultant in conjunction with the government officials in the ministry determined the projects outlined in the master plans without involving the users of urban infrastructure and facilities in the city. (Aribigbola and Akinoyenu, 2007).

Besides the preparation of master plans for the city in 1980, another major instrument employed for planning the city is the use of layout plans preparation and approval process. In this approach, parcels of land are divided into plots of various sizes and for different uses such as residential, industrial, commercial, public and semi public uses. In this regard, members of the public particularly families are required to submit their proposed layout plans to the Area Urban and Regional planning Office for planning approval. Approved layout plans are required before planning permissions are granted to developer to commence physical development. Field investigation of the process of approval of layout plan reveals that it starts with submission of proposed subdivision plans. The plan is scrutinized by officers of AURPO to determine conformity of the plan with planning requirements and standards. Where a plan fall short of planning requirements, it is returned to the promoter for necessary corrections and amendments. When the promoter has complied with all requirements, such layout plans are accepted and recommended by the Area Urban and Regional Planning Officer to the Director of Physical planning in the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. Like in the case of master plan, there is no evidence of consultation or involvement of the public besides the promoters of such plans. This procedure subsists with reference to building plan approval process or practice, except that the Zonal Urban and Regional Planning Officer is the approving authority. However, the officer is expected to forward major projects such as industrial, commercial, institutional and public uses to the Director for approval. Such Development requires Environmental Impact Analysis Report (EIAR) and land use clearance obtained from the Ministry. Like the case of master plan preparation process the layout proposal plans are not usually subjected to public scrutiny and inputs that will guarantee their participation.

Other land use planning measures introduced in the city to improve and enhance its physical development include the submission of Environmental Impact Analysis Report (EIAR) on proposed projects such as industries, petrol stations, places of worships, schools and residential estate in excess of six flats on a plot of land. Another requirement is that proposed storey building plans and above must be accompanied with structural engineering design prepared and duly endorsed by a registered Civil Engineer.

A review of the existing urban planning procedures and practices in the city indicates that in line with global thinking and agreements with respect to creating partnerships, and collaboration among all stakeholders in city affairs is lacking. Thus, city planning affairs are still being undertaken as explained above and by technocrats in the ministry without involving the general public (Aribigbola, 2006). Besides, investigations also shows that there are no current plans (master, structure or

citywide strategic plan) guiding the developments of the city. Field investigations also revealed that detailed master plans were last prepared for the major city in early 1980s. Therefore, the cities in the state are growing without and properly articulated and organised citywide plans except disparate and uncoordinated residential layout subdivision plans submitted by individuals, families and communities and agencies in the state (Falade and Aribigbola, 2010). Furthermore, investigations revealed that this fundamental task is undertaken by the state's Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development whereas the AKSLG which is in charge of administration is not involved at all in the conception and implementation of physical plans for the city. This is despite the fact that the LGA undertake projects and tasks that impinge on physical development in the city. This is in contravention of the 1992 Urban and Regional Planning Law that assigned some specific roles to local government with respect to city planning and development and accepted practice globally where planning is regarded as local affairs to be carried out at municipal or city or local authority level.

---

## URBAN GOVERNANCE IN AKURE

---

Nigeria is a federation consisting of 36 states and a Federal Capital territory, Abuja. The country is also divided into 774 local governments of which Akure South local Government is one of them. Before the 1976 Local Government Reform in Nigeria, several local government structures existed in the country. This was essentially because local government had become a regional or state subject under the 1951 Nigerian constitution (Mba, 1998). Thus, local government throughout the federation did not exercise appreciable degree of autonomy because of over concentration of power at the federal level. One of the consequences of this was that local governments had to operate under a structure that did not enhance development of local initiative (Egomnwan, 1984). Other consequences included highly limited financial resources as well as inadequate staffing and funding for local governments (Mba, 1998). Consequently, effort was made to solve these issues in the 1976 Local Government Reform. The most important issue in the 1976 Local Government Reform is that the Federal government constitutionally recognized local governments as the third tier government below the state government (Mba, 1998). With the reform, they were to have financial capacities, staffing and institutional framework to initiate and provide relevant services to their communities. Moreover, they were to have adequate resources to stimulate development at the grassroots (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1976). Other objectives of the reform include enhancement of public participation at the local level, as well as, improvement of basic services and infrastructure at the local and community levels (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1976). Since the reform came into existence, development

in Nigeria shows a trend towards decentralization of physical planning activities and or practices particularly since 1992 when Urban and Regional Planning law was enacted. Since then there has been increasing demands for a decentralized approach to city management in the country and increased political pluralism that seeks participatory governance.

The responsibility for administration and management of the study area falls mainly on Akure South Local Government Council of Ondo State. This Local government that was created in 1976 is headed by an elected Chairman being assisted by a Vice Chairman, appointed supervisors and elected Councilors. At the time of this study, there are no elected officers for the LGC but appointed caretaker committee headed by a Chairman and five other supervisory councilors. Besides AKSLG, there are other institutions or agencies involved in governing different aspects of the city. The important ones are identified and briefly discussed in this section. Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. This is a department of the state government and it is headed by a cabinet Commissioner who is responsible to the Executive Governor of the state for the administration and management of physical Planning and urban development in the state including Akure, the study area.

Ondo State Waste management Board, also an agency of the state government is responsible for waste collection and disposal in the city. Ondo state Property and Development Corporation is an agency of the state with the responsibility of providing housing for the public on a commercial basis. The agency created four housing estates that are planned and managed by it.

In running the affairs of the city, the AKLGC according to the chairman has a vision/mission statement. This could however, not be traced in any published document such as LEEDS, land use master plan, or structure plan among others. The members of the public are not aware of any published or stated vision/mission statement for the Local Government Area during the FGD Thus, it could be concluded the LGC does not have a formally adopted vision/mission statement nor any strategic plan including city master plan germane to urban planning and development control.

Policy decision making in the Local Government Council according the Chairman is quite participatory, the land lord associations, quarter chiefs and members of different political wards are usually invited to meetings where they are consulted quarterly. This gives room for the populace to be adequately represented in policy and plan making. Since vision / mission statement and plans of any type are not available, the process therefore cannot be participatory. No evidence of dissemination of vision/mission statement and strategic plans. The LGA does not have any of these strategic documents and therefore members of the public do not have access to them in the LGA Field investigations reveals that the

local government performs all its statutory roles except the establishment of home for the destitute and infirm (the home for the destitute in the Local Government 'Ago Ireti' is owned by the State Government), registering deaths and births, (the National Population Commission is in charge of registering births and deaths in the Local Government) and provision and maintenance of adult and vocational education (the Local Government believes it is the duty of the State Government). The LGA in carrying out of constitutional roles performs these function of making recommendations to the State Government commission on economic planning, collection of rates and licenses, creation and maintenance of cemeteries and burial grounds, slaughter houses, motor parks, naming of roads and streets, registers marriages, provision of public conveniences, sewage and refuse disposal, provision and maintenance primary schools. Others include provision of primary health facilities which are not adequate and well maintained.

The Local Government enjoys autonomy in carrying out its statutory roles in the area of rate collection, registration of marriage, collection of liquor fees, naming of streets, maintenance of markets and slaughter houses, and provision and maintenance of primary health services. However, it is s not completely autonomous in recruiting its staff, only the junior cadre i.e levels 1 to 6 are recruited by the LGA, while levels 7 and above are recruited by the Local Government Service Commission (a subsidiary of the State Government). The state government controls the expenditure of the LGC. Approvals are sought from the state government before the council can embark on developmental projects. Spending above certain amount also requires the approval of the state government.

On revenue generation, the LGA derived its income for three main sources of monthly allocation from the federation account, State Government allocations (10% of the allocation that accrues to the State from the Federal Government constitutionally belongs to the Local Government), and internally Generated Revenue (IGR) such as collection of rates, licensing fees, etc.

With regards to pro-poor policy, the Local Government lack explicitly formulated pro poor policies but has some programmes targeted at the poor in the following areas; health services, economic empowerment, street children and child labour, elderly and the physically challenged. At the basic health centers, there are waivers for the poor in terms of treatment of certain sicknesses such as malaria and tuberculosis. In assisting the widows and the physically challenged self reliant, palliatives such as grinding machines, sewing machines, generating sets, tool boxes, clippers, and cash are given to them to start up their businesses.

There are no policies or programmes on how basic services are to be distributed equitably in the city. Pipe Borne water supply is made available by an agency of the state government. The same is waste management



while electricity is provided by Power Holding of Nigeria Limited (PHCN). Enjoyment of these services is based on ability of individuals to pay.

Traditional rulers are actively involved in decision making that affects the people. The Akure South Local Government traditional ruler's council meets with the executives of the LGA once in a month to discuss political, economic and security issues as it affects the people. Traditional rulers are usually consulted in the decision making of the LGA through the Akure South Local Government council of Obas, which meets with the LGA executives once every month.

The National Housing Policy (NHP) and The Urban and Regional Planning Act 1992 assigned some responsibilities to the Local governments in housing delivery and urban planning respectively in the country. Investigations reveal that the LGC is not performing any of these roles except environmental sanitation where they discharge this function in collaboration with the state government. Independent public agencies carry out certain specialized functions in the city. One agency is responsible for solid waste collection and disposal, another for managing the water supply. A number of public bodies are also responsible for regulating and supervising Service organisations. Since these regulatory agencies have responsibility only for parts of the city, there is no way of preventing highly varied standards of service delivery and the consequent exacerbation of social inequalities in the city. The city receives its electricity from the national distribution network. This is distributed and managed by the Power Holding Company of Nigeria.

From the above, it could be seen that the local government take on board political, economic and social administration of the city without concern for planning and physical development of the city. This responsibility as indicated is discharged by the state through the Ministry of physical Planning and Urban Development

## PLANNING SYSTEM AND URBAN GOVERNANCE IN AKURE

The Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Decree (now Act) of 1992 made plan preparation and administration compulsory at the federal, state and local government levels. Under the law, land use plans are to be prepared by the federal, states and local governments. It also assigned responsibilities to the three tiers of government. In 1999, the Ondo State government enacted its own version of the 1992 National Urban and Regional Planning Law known as Ondo State Urban and Regional Planning Edict (Edict number 2 of 1999). The edict created State Urban and Regional Planning Board and Local Planning Authorities at the state and local government levels respectively. Thus, Akure Local government like others is expected to prepare plans including land use plans and other planning

activities in Akure.

In Ondo state, the state's housing and land policy that seeks to improve the housing infrastructure and delivery by eliminating a number of problems including shortages of housing and access to land among others was articulated (Ondo State, 2005). Other policies that relate to land management in Akure include the sites and services programme, the infrastructure fund IDA project and urban Renewal and Slum Upgrading programme.

## URBAN PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE CITY DEVELOPMENT

Having examined the meaning and components of urban governance and particularly good urban governance that has been identified as pre-requisite for sustainable urban development on the one hand and urban planning on the other hand, it becomes incumbent to determine the relationships between the two in context of the study area. This is because as demonstrated good governance will imply instituting structures and practices to plan and monitor socio-economic and physical development of the city. An examination of planning practice and tradition in the city reveals that Akure South Local government council that is responsible for the administration of the city is not involved in planning and the control of physical development of the city. As presented elsewhere, in 2006 planning and control of development is undertaken by the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban development, a department of the state government, while the administration and management of the city affairs is the responsibility of the LGC. Besides, as recently demonstrated, majority of the residents of the city are excluded in decision making in articulating and implementing planning proposals by the Ministry (Aribigbola, 2006). This situation has not changed. The procedure discussed above still subsists. This is despite the fact that various planning and land use laws confers some role on the LGA in planning and urban development matters. At present, there is no urban planning Department and professionals in the LGA. Table 1 shows the staff strength of the LGC by department and gender of workers.

**Table 1**  
**Staff Nominal Roll by Department and Gender**

S/N	Department	Male	Female	Total
1	Primary Health Care	41	369	410
2	Administration	127	139	266
3	Treasury	80	156	236
4	Community Development	19	35	54
5	Agriculture	9	4	13
6	Budgeting and Planning	3	2	5
7	Works	86	11	97
	Total	365	716	1,081

**Source:** Department of Personnel Management, Akure South Local Government, 2010.

An examination of table 1 shows that it has seven departments of Primary health, administration, treasury, community development, agriculture, budget and planning and works. No department has been created for planning and control of physical development of the city in the LGA. This confirmed our findings that the LGC is not involved directly in planning activity in the city.

Again the 1999 federal constitution specifically assigned functions to the local government. The local government is given legal powers to manage urban areas in the country. As indicated earlier, planning directly affects our physical environment and in doing so influences our quality of life and general well being (Gaunt et al, 2006). The urban planning system and practice as it exist at present in the study area is fully undertaken by the state Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. The local government that is responsible for the day to day management of the affairs of the city is not involved in planning and determination of location of new developments as well as control of land use in the city. This responsibility is taken on by the state and yet the LGA carry out several activities impinging on land use and physical development in the city.

Other agencies that are involved in land use planning activities in the city include Capital and Urban Development Authority that was recently merged with the State Housing Corporation. The Corporation has a number estates established and controlled by the corporation without reference to the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. The Department of Urban and Regional Planning of Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development also controls the physical development activities on federal land and federal government housing estates in the State. These various agencies carry out land use planning and management tasks without proper reference to each other. Investigation reveals lack of coordination of their activities. This is at variance with the principle of sustainable city development. Besides, the above, land management in the city operates in a vacuum. Overall land use zoning plan and map for the city is not available to guide land use and management decisions in the city.

## URBAN PLANNING AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This paper has demonstrated that planning is not undertaken at the city level and local government level in Ondo state where Akure is situated. This has a lot of implications. This include that city is growing in an unorganized pattern. Physical development projects are put in places without determining their consequences ab initio on the general city affairs. Why the various agencies operate in isolation as against the need to collaborated and cooperate in organizing the socio-economic and physical

development of the city.

As indicated elsewhere, city planning activities especially proposals to initiate and execute land use planning activity is not participatory. An examination of planning documents and activities in the city revealed exclusion of the major stakeholders in preparation and execution of physical development project. As demonstrated in 2006, planning in the city excludes the majority of stakeholders in the city affairs in the city. From the above exposition and discussion good governance in the area of urban planning will involve public participation and inclusiveness, openness in terms of articulating and deciding on projects to be undertaken, their location as well as well as deciding on who will be responsible for executing the project. The study also revealed lack of pro-poor policies to ensure adequate housing and assist them the poor in accessing land to build their own housing.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Improving urban governance to improve the welfare of people requires well articulated and adopted plan of action. This is clearly lacking in the study area. There is a need to institute physical planning at the city or local government level in the area. Such a plan will take care of the needs of people for urban facilities and services that are unavailable and poorly provided at present. There is therefore a need to create Akure Planning Authority in line with the Urban and Regional Planning Act of 1992. There is also a need to prepare a master plan for the city. The plan will assist in identify problems facing the city as well as residents of the city and come up with feasible solutions to improve the unacceptable situation.

Good urban governance will require adequate planning to guarantee and meet the basic needs of all urban dwellers particularly the poor that are often excluded in the scheme of things. It will also promote participation of all in the city' political life and decisions that affect them etc. Good governance cannot take place or flourish at the local or city level if planning is not instituted and practiced at that level. This is because, it is the activity that will determine the future direction of growth and control development in all its ramifications be it social, economic and environmental in a desired and agreed way. It also implies involving organizations of the urban poor as equal partners in urban affairs. Need to institute planning at the local level in the area Planning should be made participatory and should involve urban poor as equal partners in the development of the city. Contrary to the assertion that "virtually all local governments in low-and middle-income countries have a physical planning Department and procedures for designation of land for housing, amenities, industry infrastructure, and services (Millennium Project, 2005). The Akure South local government like all local government ion the state



do not have a physical planning department, it is not involved in formal planning. There is also a need for legal and institutional changes to promote and straighten city governance and by extension city planning. Good governance assures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources.

---

## REFERENCES

---

- American Planning Association (APA) (2006). *Urban and Regional Planning Career Information*. Retrieved from <http://www.planning.org>
- Aribigbola, A. (2006). Public participation in planning in developing countries: the example of Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. In M. Mourshed (Ed.), *Proceedings of GBEN 2006 Global Built Environment: Towards an Integrated Approach for Sustainability* (pp.70–80). 11–12 September, 2006, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK.
- Aribigbola, A., and Akinyoyenu, A. F. (2007). An Assessment of Urban Planning Initiatives, Mechanism and Practice in Nigerian Cities: The example of Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. *The Journal of Geography and Planning Sciences (JOGEPS)*, 1( 1), 34-43.
- DHV Consulting Engineers. (1984). *Ondo State Urban Development Project. Project Preparation Study, Final Report*. Department of Lands and Housing, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- Egonmwan, J. A. (1984). *Principles and Practice of Local Government in Nigeria: An Insight into the Problems of Public Policy Formulation and Implementation* (p.201). Benin City, Nigeria: Aka and Brothers Press.
- Johnson, Falade Bade and Aribigbola, A. (2010). Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability Studies (RUSPs) in Developing Countries: Implications for Urban Planning in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Theoretical and Empirical Researches on Urban Management, Bulgaria (TERUM)*, 5 (14), 1-13.
- Federal Government of Nigeria. (1863). *Town Improvement Ordinance*. Lagos, Nigeria: Government Press.
- Caroline, Gaunt, Elin, Gudnadottir and Louise, Waring (2006). *The Handy Guide to Planning Statre, Nigeria*. 11-15 May, 2009 in UN House, Abuja .
- Mba, H. Chike (1998). Local Government Autonomy and the national Physical Planning Policies and Laws: Towards Complementarity og Governmental Objectives. *Journal Of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners*.
- Millennium Project (2005). *Taskforce on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers: A Home in The City* (p.104). UK: Earthscan. Rertived from <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org>.
- Ministry of Works and Housing (1980). *Akure Master Plan 1980- 2000*. Akure.
- Olujimi, B. A. J. (1993). The Administration of Physical Planning in Nigeria: The Ondo State Experience. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 25, 115-126.
- Onibokun, A. G. (1999). *New Concepts and Emerging Trends in the Practice of Urban and Regional Planning*. Lead paper presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) Akure 27-29<sup>th</sup> October 1999.
- UNCHS (1996). *An Urbanising World: Global Report on Human Settlement*. Oxford, London, New York: UN-HABITAT.
- UNDP (2007). *Human Development Report 2007/08*.
- UN-Habitat Global Campaign on Urban Governance in Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://www.unhabitat.org/campaigns/governance/> and from <http://www.gdrc.or/u-gov/governance>
- United Nations (UN) (1996). *Strategies to Implement Human Settlements Policies on Urban Renewal and Housing Modernization*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: United Nations Publications.