**Sustainable Neighbourhoods and the Impact of Covid-19 on Built Environment**

The emergence of Corona virus disease (Covid-19) pandemic is surely redefining the cultural landscapes of neighbourhoods across the globe. Therefore, understanding the persistence of local community under most unusual conditions of social change fluidity necessitated the need for people to adjust their way of living. Meanwhile, urban processes and social integration of urban neighbourhoods are understood through segregation of human settlements in urban environments (Olson, 1982).

Globally, human habitations across districts, towns and cities remained the centre stage of the pandemic with government activities, businesses, schools, offices, and worship centres shutting down to minimise crowds, leaving the built environment with a long lasting impact, because the built environment aids the spread of the pandemic and remains the focus of stakeholders. As people are confined to their spaces they are beginning to appreciate the benefits of operating from home. Suddenly, terms such as #Stay at Home#, #Isolate and Quarantine at Home#, #Lockdown# and #Work from Home# became common slogans used for preventive and protective guide against the pandemic as people try to operate activities in every endeavour from their home spaces.

Certainly as the pandemic spreads across human settlements, to contain infections and reduce the spread people are encouraged to restricts to their homes and neighbourhoods. Similarly, in contact tracing, palliatives’ distribution and all forms of human social welfare interventions, activities are limited to homes and neighbourhoods.

In contrast however, as the lock down restrictions extends beyond imagination majority of people who before now are not used to confinement within their homes for a long time became frustrated and bored. More so that the built environment is not necessarily planned to provide for people’s needs as they shield from the infections of the pandemic. Suddenly people began to demand for neighbourhoods and home spaces where they can live, worship, work, learn and exercise echoing possible local attachments as well as social bonds.

The question seeking for response is are our neighbourhoods planned to meet the reality poses by the impact of the disease?

Policies on wellbeing of urban inhabitants are sure to be ineffective particularly in developing nations due to non-considerations of peculiarities and local realities (Baffoe, 2019). It is thus evident that existing situations are likely deviant from the demands necessitated by the pandemic. Therefore, the need to rethink neighbourhood planning and housing design to meet the challenges of post Covid-19 pandemic. These challenges include working from home distance learning, virtual events, which tends to eliminate venue rent bills, as well as confinement stress and sick building syndrome effects. Similarly neighbourhoods should provide basic and regular needs of inhabitants within accessibility limits which is easily achieved by consideration of Mixed-use building design and development in neighbourhoods’ planning. House design should express isolation requirements as no health facility or architecture has accommodated all patients at the peak of the pandemic globally. These provisions will limit spread within micro built environments. In addition at district or neighbourhood levels data is easier to generate and manage, while surveillance can be enhanced and escalations contained.

It therefore infer that the design of our homes and the planning of neighbourhoods to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic is a responsibility that is more essential than ever for both architects researchers and those in practice. “Neighbourhood as a spatial unit undoubtedly offers the best lens to understand the anatomy of cities at a micro level” (Baffoe 2019). In order to increase the capacity base on sustainable and equitable districts and built environment, neighbourhoods should meet the tripod requirements of the pandemic- health, economy and security.

* **Health**

Building design and housing typology should incorporate flexible isolation and quarantine spaces while allowing for effective and uninterrupted domestic operations. Self-cleansing fittings and facilities should be recommended in the schedule of specifications in order to reduce cost and demand for maintenance as well as disease spread due to communicable surfaces. At district level management of data reduces the impact and eases the pandemic management architecture. Because, overwhelming health facilities and personnel are minimised as spatial segregations effectively measure the control and management of pandemic in urban environmental neighbourhoods.

* **Economy**

Neighbourhoods function as landscape of social and economic opportunities with employment connections, leisure interests and social networks (Kearns and Parkinson, 2001). Micro economic activities at the neighbourhood level through Mixed-use building development ensure socio-economic sustainability that considers local interest and peculiarities. Also, neighbourhood welfare associations and social intervention programme could be incorporated in the spatial planning to cater for issues such as palliatives’ distribution, case and contact tracing, stigma management as well as spread pattern detection.

* **Security**

Neighbourhood security architecture desires that during lock down both building units and the district in general are kept safe through community surveillance. Neighbourhood support facilities such as worship centres, grocery outlets, bank ATMs, energy and water distribution authorities are flexible and at alert. Spatial planning and social distancing are easily achieved without disorder and social cohesion is ensured. Further still, ensuring that neighbourhoods are geographically delineated with boarders makes urban governance and management system relatively easier.

Conclusively, neighbourhoods as places, community and policy units should be designed and planned to avoid poor hygiene, overcrowded facilities and should poses effective water and sanitation networks that will meet the requirements for self-isolation in homes. Data such as disease spread pattern, incubation period (1-14 days extending to 24days), and temperature of survival (below 26 to 27oC) are vital for house design and district planning. Also important is the age category/group living in the building/neighbourhood in order to carter spatially for the vulnerable group. Spatial epidemiology- spatial spread of incidences of diseases and relationship with factors of disease spread aids in categorising the spatial structure and important for health planners to assess the peoples’ interaction of the micro environment (Emmanuel 2019). In sum, neighbourhood as units describes effectively, the internal structure of cities thus the need for sustainable planning particularly with the changing cultural landscapes characterised by the Covid-19 pandemic.

**References**

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