



An Investigation of the Socio-Economic Implications of the Violation of Land Use Laws in Kpakungu Area of Minna, Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Over the years, there has been a rapid increase in population of people and socio-economic activities at Kpakungu. The major reasons for this increase have been ascribed to the number of investments and socio-economic activities which have culminated in increased and deplorable living conditions. The residents, who are in desperate need of shelter to provide accommodation, tend to develop properties without taking account of the land use planning pattern or zoning regulation, thereby building properties that are not in conformity with the planning regulations. This study is aimed at investigation of the Socio-economic Implications of the Violation of Land Use Laws in Kpakungu Area of Minna and the state and rate of compliance with these laws. Questionnaire administration, Personal interview and field analysis were utilised. The results indicate that the population growth and socio-economic activities in Kpakungu have led to overstretching of facilities which encouraged over-crowding in the area and attendant consequences such as the growth of slums due to lack of plan and alteration to Minna city Master Plan. Therefore, State Government should review the laws enacted ensuring that households abide by such laws and set a fine for non-compliance with the laws. There is also the need to establish a housing policy to provide sufficient and affordable housing for the lower income group so that illegal sub-divisions on buildings for residential purposes can be eliminated.

Keywords: Compliance, Land Use, Planning, Environmental Laws, Violation, Slum, Regulation.

1. Introduction

A simple walk round the streets of Minna with one's eyes open afresh to the environmental conditions will tell that the majority of the people are living in squalid, dirty, unhealthy houses, streets and drainage lines [1]. Many cities of the world in general and developing countries in particular were not planned initially while only few of them started as planned developments. They therefore, began to develop as villages or trade centers but they increased in sizes to what are big cities and urban centres today. Such process of city growth has been marked with haphazard development, poor planning, urban sprawl and environmental degradation [2].

Districts which often spill over into the surrounding residential areas and industrial sites originally located around the outskirts are engulfed by other developments as the cities grow. Experience shows that, the variety of growth and changing of land use found in different cities complicate the process of identifying simple principles that govern the allocation of urban land uses [2]. Land-use planning often leads to land-use regulations also known as zoning, but they are not one and the same. As a tool for implementing land use plans, zoning regulates the types of activities that can be accommodated on a given piece of land, the amount of space devoted to those activities and the ways that buildings may be placed and shaped [3].

Law to protect mankind from environmental effects of his activities can be traced from the very ancient times; however, in those periods such regulations are mostly communal, and usually instinctively obeyed as being inherent and natural. The first recorded formal regulation or decree (law) in the field of environmental law was issued in 1273 by King Edward I, when in order to protect the health of his subjects he issued a decree prohibiting the burning of sea coal [4]. Environmental policy is any (course of) action deliberately taken (or not taken) to manage human

activities with a view to prevent, reduce or mitigate harmful effects on nature and natural resources, and ensuring that man-made changes to the environment do not have harmful effects on humans [5].

Environmental law can be seen as a body of laws which contains elements to control the human impact on the earth, but due to the non compliance with the law, the unpleasant social conditions created by pollutions, over crowding and diseases provided the stimulus needed for legal regulations. It was estimated that by the year 2008, more than half of the world’s human population of 3.3 billion people will be living in the urban areas. It is also estimated that by 2030, this number would reach an all time high of 5 billion with many of these people poor [6].The socio-economic activities of man results in waste generation, but the rate of waste generated differs from community to community. The world health organization [7] refers to waste as “something which the owner no longer wants at a given time and space and which has no current or perceived market value”

Indiscriminate disposal and dumping of refuse or waste has become a practice in Nigerian cities. Most of the waste dumps are located along residential houses, markets, drainages and on roads. The development of land use systems which meet the needs of present and future generations without causing environmental degradation remain one of the major challenges we are confronted with today. For sustainable development, such land use systems must have the capacity to prevent and control any form of gross abuse or unsustainable use of land resources [8]. Urbanization is therefore, an inevitable, but positive concomitant of economic change. The growth of slums, the concentration of poverty, as well as the illegal land use and their attendant social disruptions in cities pose a great challenge. It is also true that no state can achieve a significant economic growth without urbanization [9]. The essence of compliance with set standards, laws and regulations in property development is to ensure the health, welfare, comfort and general well being of the people residing around the areas after construction [9].

2. Study Area

Kpakungu is a residential settlement within an area of Minna the capital of Niger state, which is the focus area of the research. It is situated along Minna-Bida road. The indigenous residents are the Gwari speaking people. Minna being the state capital with administrative set up has attracted a considerable number of ethnic groups with different social and cultural background. From 2006 population census, kpakungu is about 201,429 out of the entire population of Minna. Males consist of 105,803 and females 95,626 given the total of 201,429. Kpakungu, the study area is a settlement located in chanchaga local government, Niger state and lies between latitudes 8o 20’N and 11o 30’N and longitude 3o30E and 7o 29’E. One of the 36 States of Nigeria was created out of the defunct North Western State on 3rd February, 1976, situated in the North Central geo- political zone. The State comprises 25 Local Government Areas grouped into 3 administrative zones A, B, C, with each zone having 8, 9 and 8 local government areas respectively. The State is bordered to the North by Zamfara State, to the North West by Kebbi State, to the South by Kogi State, to the South West by Kwara State while Kaduna State and the Federal Capital Territory border the State to the North East and South east respectively (Figure 1).

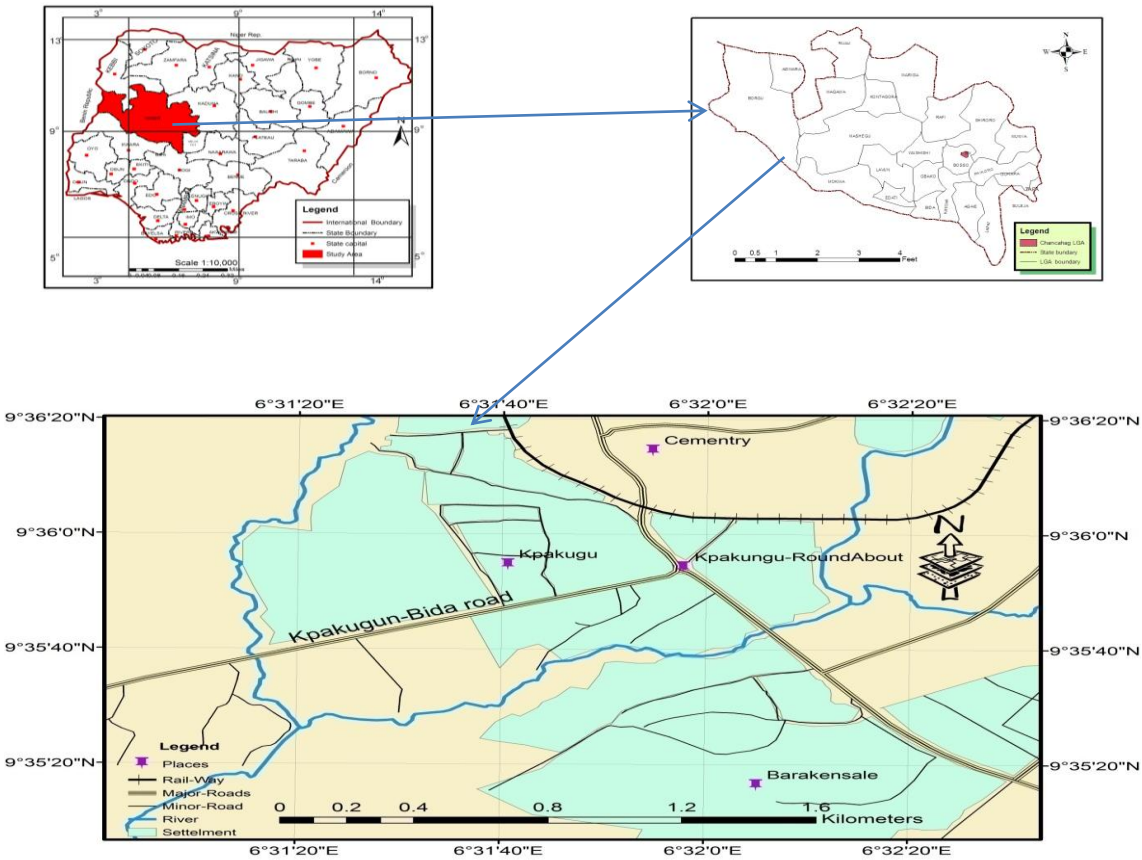


Figure-1.The study area (kpakungu, minna, niger state, Nigeria)

3. Materials and Methods

- a. The methodology used for this research employed the use of descriptive analysis. It involved the use of tables, charts and simple percentages.
- b. Data on the level of awareness and rate of compliance were collected through field survey and interviews.

- c. Data on laws to guide land use were collected through the interpretation of Niger state gazette
- d. Land use types and location of land use were interpreted using the Minna master plan.
- e. The Socio-economic indicators that have great impact in the violation of land use laws.

4. Results and Discussion

Table-1.Are there Environmental laws existing to guide land use in kpakungu

Laws guiding land use	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	114	46.3
No	132	53.7
Total	246	100

Table 1 depict that, 53.7% of the residents are not aware of the environmental laws existing to guide land use in kpakungu while 46.3% of the residents believed that there are environmental laws existing to guide land use in kpakungu but it is not being enforced by the agency involved in land use planning and development.



Figure-2.Buildings constructed at Kpakungu



Figure-3.Houses Built on Drainage Network

Figures 2 and 3 illustrates that buildings were constructed without regards to the environmental effects, drainages were blocked with waste materials and the environment is polluted as litters are seen at every corner of kpakungu. It showed that environmental laws are not properly understood about the negative effect it has on the residents and the entire kpakungu community at large.

Table-2.Environmental laws existing in kpakungu by NISEPA and NUDB

Laws existing in kpakungu	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	3	30
Yes	7	70
Total	10	100

Table 2 shows that there are particular laws existing for kpakungu area by the Agency involved. About 70% believed that while 30% believe that there are no laws guiding land use in kpakungu.Kpakungu is a residential settlement sited on the western side of the town and it gains an immediate access from Bida road on its southern side and consists of various land use types located at the same area.

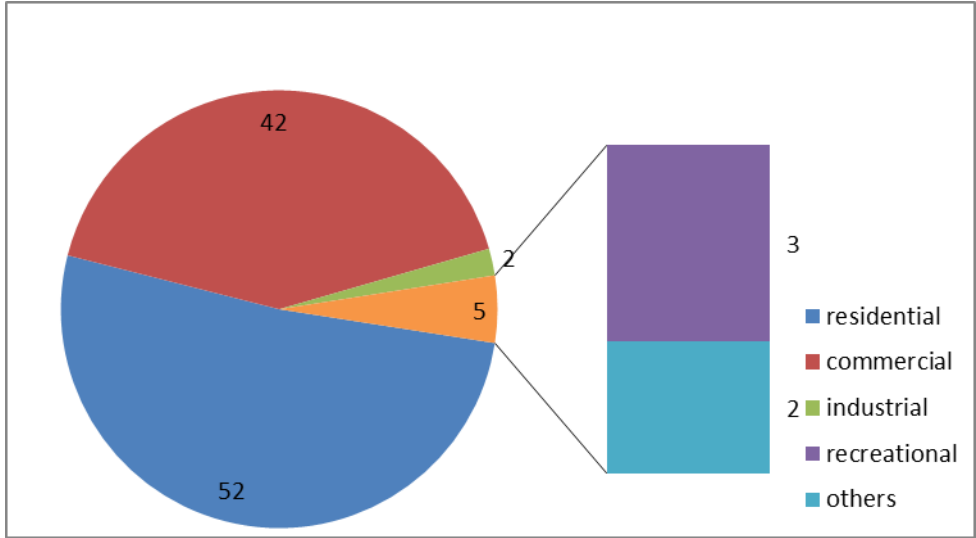


Figure-4.Land Use Types Present at Kpakungu Area

Figure 4 depicts that 51.6% of land use in kpakungu is for residential purposes, 41.5% of land use is for commercial purposes, about 1.2% is used for industrial purposes, 1.6% is used for recreation purposes, while 4.1% of the residents believed that there are other uses not necessarily the ones mentioned. Therefore, this signifies that majority of the kpakungu residents use land for residential purposes.

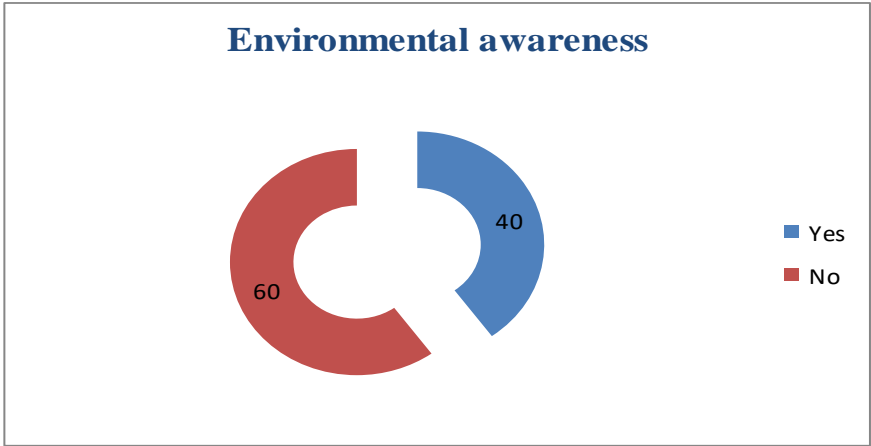


Figure-5.Awareness of Environmental Laws

Figure 5 depict that about 60% of the residents are not aware of environmental laws, while 40% of the residents are aware of the environmental laws but are not abiding by the laws because they believe it is not binding on them. It is believed that government must enforce a law before it can be adequately adhered to.

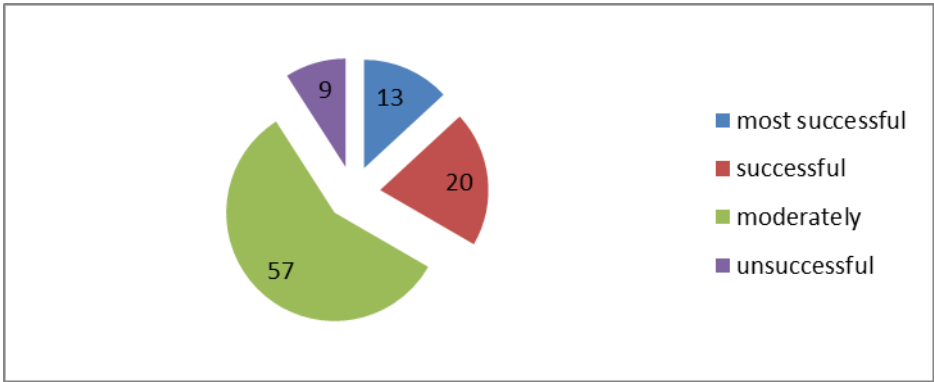


Figure-6.Performances Rating of Awareness Campaign for Kpakungu Residents

Figure 6 present the rating assessment of the efficiency of NUDB and NISEPA as rated by the kpakungu residents. From the analysis, 13% of the residents ranked NUDB and NISEPA as most successful, 19.9% of the residents think that the performance of both NUDB and NISEPA is successful, 57.3% rated NUDB and NISEPA as moderately successful and finally 9.8% rated NUDB and NISEPA as unsuccessful. From this analysis, it shows that the performance of Niger state urban development board and Niger state environmental agency is relatively average and appreciated by the kpakungu residents but calls for improvement to make their impact felt in the study area and the society at large.

Table-3.Level of Compliance with Environmental laws

Level of compliance	Frequency	Percentage of the Total
Excellent	22	8.9
Good	46	18.7
Poor	121	49.2
Very poor	57	23.3
Total	246	100

Table 3 depicts that about 49.2% of the kpakungu residents rated the level of compliance as poor, 23.2% rated the level as very poor. This may be because majority of the residents are not aware of environmental laws, or of agencies concerned with land use planning and environmental protection. This indicates that the level of compliance is generally poor in kpakungu.

Table-4.Socio-economic Implications of the Violation of Land Use Laws in Kpakungu

Socio-economic implications	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	162	66
No	84	34
Total	246	100

Table 4 indicate that about 66% of kpakungu residents believe that there are socio-economic implications associated with illegal land use and non-compliance with environmental laws while about 34% of the residents are of the view that there are no implications associated with illegal land use. This result strongly indicates that there are socio-economic implications associated with illegal land use and non-compliance with environmental laws at kpakungu, whether the implications are felt or not.

There are laws guiding development as enshrined by Niger State Gazette, but the laws are not enforced to guide land use in kpakungu area and the state at large.

The result showed that there are different land use types which include: residential, commercial, industrial and recreational land use at kpakungu and it signifies that majority of the kpakungu residents’ uses land for residential purposes. The physical layout at Kpakungu hinders the provision of depots for effective collection of solid waste. Therefore, the environment serves as toilet to most residents in the area, especially for children. These contributed to poor management of canals and channels.

About 60.2% of the residents are not aware of any environmental law existing to guide land use in kpakungu. About 60% of the staff interviewed are not satisfied with the level of compliance with the land use act and environmental management at kpakungu but believed that when properly enforced kpakungu will be a socially and economically attractive place to be. Also, the kpakungu residents rated the level of compliance as poor, this is because majority of the residents are not aware of environmental laws.

The various socio-economic activities and establishments along Minna- Bida road attracted population to kpakungu and this resulted in increased housing demand thereby increasing the growth of slums in kpakungu, also, the environmental conditions of some properties around the neighborhood are prone to disaster and thereby can lead to scaring away of investors.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In view of the present circumstances and situation in kpakungu, environmental condition with respect to laws governing land use planning and management pose a great challenge, thereby encouraging the growth of slums and poor management of city canals/channels. Actually, there are laws and also enforcement organs but violation of the laws still persist due to lack of measures set aside for offenders.

It is therefore recommended that Niger State Government should review and enforce the Environmental laws existing to guide development in kpakungu and the state at large by establishing a housing policy to provide sufficient and affordable housing for the lower income group so that illegal sub-divisions on buildings for residential purposes can be eliminated thereby sustaining land use pattern, that the regulatory authorities should be proactive in ensuring environmental protection and land use management for effective land use control and management and Landed property owners or occupiers should ensure that they obtain building approvals before constructing or change in use of their property to ensure effective land use control.

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