

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CORE AREA OF ILE-IFE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: The study examined physical and environmental characteristics of traditional core area of Ile-Ife with a view to providing a framework for effective implementation of readjustment and revitalization in the study area. The findings revealed that the environment is not good enough for human habitation due to lack of abasic amenities in the area. The study concluded that while housing facilities in the core area of Ile-Ife, like many others in Nigeria were in deplorable state, there is urgent need to attend to the concerned area for better living of the inhabitants of the area.

Key words: physical, core, environment and housing

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INTRODUCTION

The most visible and obvious consequences of urbanization in developing countries, such as Nigeria, is often rapid deterioration of urban housing and living conditions (Lewin, 1981). UN-HABITAT (2008), stated that only two African cities exceeded one million inhabitants in 1950. The number of such large cities reached nine in 1975 accommodating a combined population of about 19 million people. From 1975 to 2005 African cities exceeding one million rapidly increased to 43 with a combined population of 110 plus million people. By 2015, there will be 59, home to more than 169 million individuals. However, housing and the residential environment provide an extremely rich and fruitful area for the study of interplay of socio-cultural factors and environmental form (Onibokun, 1985). In a sense, housing is more than shelter; it has socio-cultural and psychological dimensions which must be clearly understood and taken into consideration in housing design, planning and execution.

Nigeria is one of the few countries in Africa which had many large pre-industrial cities before the colonial period. The largest concentrations of such towns in the south-western zone, which is by far the most urbanized area of its size in sub-Saharan Africa (Onibokun, 1990). One of the major factors which explain the development of pre-colonial urbanization in this area was the continuous internecine war among the Yoruba. This forced peasants to find refuge in walled cities, leading to high population concentration in such cities characterized with organic development.

On the other hand, the deplorable conditions of Nigerian core area environments have become a serious worry in recent times. Environment refers to all the conditions and influences

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affecting the development of an organism in its lifetime. Man's total environment includes all the living and non-living elements in his surroundings which could be natural or built (man-made), etc. in a complex network of systems (Okaba & Obong, 2006; Edu, 2006). It also refers to all natural resources, joint property of man of which one man's right of use must not adversely affect the right of use of other joint owners (Offiong, 2003; Verla, 2003; Eni, 2005; Obong, 2007b). The current global awareness of the environment and its pivotal role to human endeavours and survival started mounting with the 1972 United Nation's World conference on Human Environment.

As identified by Obong (2007b), three major segments of environment include the natural, built and personal environments. The built and personal environments are what to a large extent determine the conditions of a school environment. For example, the particular concern here is that it is the product of anthropogenic activities. As posited by Eni (2005), human beings have characteristically lived in two worlds. The first is the natural world of nature consisting of plants, animals, soils, air and water that preceded the existence of man by hundreds of million years of which man is an integral and inescapable part. The second is the world of social institutions and artifacts (built world) that man deliberately creates for himself using science, technology, culture, political organization, and so forth. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the physical and environmental characteristics of traditional core area of Ile-Ife with a view to providing a framework for effective implementation of readjustment and revitalization in the study area. It also identified and examined the socio-economic characteristics of residents' of the study area.

THE STUDY AREA

Ile-Ife is made up of two (2) local government areas, Ife East and Ife Central Local Governments, whose headquarters are at Oke Ogbo and Ajebandele respectively. The two (2) local governments comprise twenty one (21) political wards in the council areas with the population of 355,818,000 (Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, 2009).

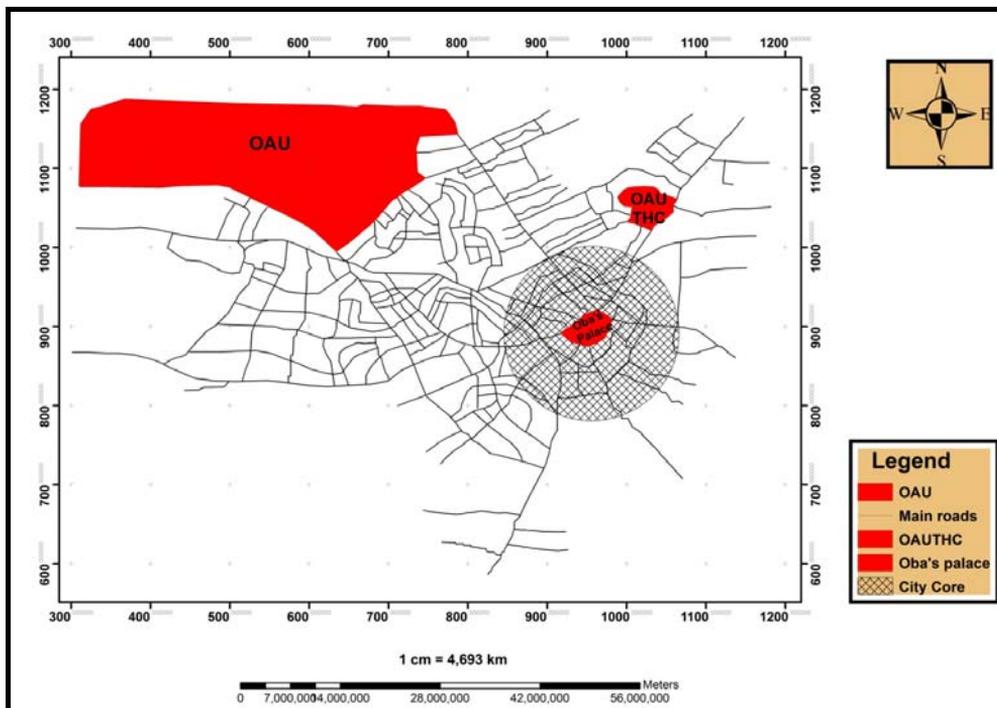


Figure 1. Map of the Study Area

Source: Ife Central Town Planning Office, 2005

The core, which happens to be the oldest residential portion of the city, consists of the oldest parts of the city. The study area conforms to the general morphology of the traditional core areas of Yoruba cities, with the major elements, which include the palace, the king's market (Oja-Oba) and the wards. According to Yoruba people, Ife is where the founding deities Oduduwa and Obatala began the creation of the world, as directed by the paramount deity Olodumare. Oduduwa is thought to have created the earth before he became the first divine king of Yoruba, Obatala is believed to have created the first humans out of clay. The Ooni (King) of Ife claims direct descent from the god Oduduwa, and is counted first among Yoruba Kings. He is traditionally considered to be the 41st deity (Orisha), the only one that speaks. According to historians, the town's habitation can be traced as far back a century. The meaning of the word „ife” in the Yoruba language is „expansion”; „Ile-Ife” means in reference to the myth of origin that is, „*The House of Expansion*”. In fact, the city is regarded as the origin of Yoruba culture, industry and people of Yoruba descent.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The house, according to Williams (2007) is a dwelling place, constructed as a home for one or more persons, whether a crude hut or a mansion, and whatever its degree of intrinsic architectural interests, it provides protection from the weather and adversaries. Godwin (1998) defined the house as „*the space that we can call our own, that gives us privacy and shelters us from the weather and intrusions of unwanted people*” (Olayiwola et al., 2005).

CAUSES OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

The house or dwelling unit to the typical African, is not just providing protection from inclement weather and a social interaction forum, it is also a setting for pursuing a livelihood; a place for communicating with the ancestors and a nucleus for organic extension (Osasona et al., 2009). And because the essence of the house is not limited to shelter alone, it is a space where a generation of families expresses its existence and preserves the history and identities of lineage.

Williams (2007) also observed that the physical characteristics of the house depend on the surrounding environment, available building materials, technological know-how, and some cultural determinants like the social and economic status of the owner. In addition, a typical dwelling is generally a product of physical constraints and social parameters. In African traditional built-form, symbolism was a dominant feature which is synonymous with function – the purpose to which both material and space could be put; and culturally-embedded interpretations of space-related phenomena – which relate to the determination of spatial pattern and organization, and the choice of construction materials (Osasona et al., 2007).

Evidences suggested that the prevailing global environmental degradation poses serious threat to sustenance of carrying capacity of the ecosystem (Marcuse, 1998; Peters, 2000); hence environmental sustainability has taken priority position in housing, infrastructure provision, planning, land use and urban development among others (Salama & Alshawaikhat, 2005; Aribigbola, 2008). Although, Marcuse (1998) was of the view that sustainability should not be considered as goal for housing or urban programmes on the account that many of bad housing or urban programmes are sustainable.

Meanwhile, Peters (2000) opined that the ecological and sociological „*footprint*” of cities has spread over ever-widened area and that fewer places on the planet earth are unaffected by this phenomenon. Changes in the ecology of urban environment occasioned by increasing population, overcrowded habitations and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources may account for this wide ecological footprint of urban areas which is not peculiar to developing countries (Stoel, 1999; Hales, 2000). They however, observed that the pace and scale of growth have outstripped the capacity to maintain acceptable standards of public health, environmental safety and sustainable economic growth in urban areas in less developed nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In Nigeria, for instance, several studies (Rashid, 1982; NEST, 1991; World Bank, 1992; Anih, 2004; Muoghalu & Okonkwo, 2004; Ijioma & Agaze, 2004; Nduka, 2004; Mba, 2004; Bulama, 2005; Ojeshina, 2005; UN-HABITAT, 2005b) have identified many of the environmental problems as having serious adverse socio-economic and ecological implications. Majority of these problems, it is argued, are traceable to a number of factors. These include the colonial antecedent of most Nigerian cities (Ogbazi, 1992; Iky, 1993), the high rate of urbanization (National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy, 2004), the bad psychological orientation of urban residents on the environment as well as poor environmental management practices (Meale, 1991; Agukoronye, 2004).

Generally, environmental problems are mostly due to developmental processes and are of local, regional and global effects. These effects are viewed as consequences of human activities, and are most often harmful on human beings, livelihoods, animal and plant lives presently or transferred to posterity (Simond, 1994; Acho, 1998; Danish International Development Agency, 2000; Kjellstrom & Mercado, 2008). This has far reaching implications on sustainable development, most especially in the face of declining economic fortunes. Therefore, urban environmental issues will continue to dominate sustainable development agenda in developing nations in particular and the world in general in the next few decades.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

1. Urbanization: Urbanization is caused by high population growth rate and rural- urban migration. Urbanization in Nigeria is characterized by city slums with serious environmental consequences. The problem has been described as acute and exemplifies the inability of development measures to keep pace with the rate of population growth. The problem of the disposal of sewage and refuse is quite serious because of the rapid rate of generation of non-biodegradable materials such as plastics (Jiboye, 2010).

Environmental conditions in cities have gradually deteriorated due to the rapid growth of the cities and the attendant inability of social services and infrastructures to keep pace with the rate of growth. Inadequate storm drains, dumping of refuse in drainage lines and construction of houses close to and even on the natural water channels have been shown to be responsible in that order for the increasing cases of flood in the urban centers. Environment problems associated with the increasing growth of urban slums including overcrowding in squalid housing conditions, poor quality or unavailability of basic infrastructures and social services, such as water and sewage facilities and even lack of access routes (NEST, 1992)

2. Overpopulation: Population is a major factor in all environment related issues. Overpopulation causes stress on the environment. Environmental problems such as overpopulation, degradation, erosion, desertification, etc. are caused by man's misuse of environmental resources. There are evidences everywhere of rapid decline in environmental quality and human living conditions occasioned by rapid increase in human numbers. In 1985, Mabogunje stated that because of the economic emergency that was declared in the country, the next few years were going to witness tremendous efforts at increased production and enhanced productivity in the country. Under such stressful situation, "it will be easy for people to become so exigent, worrying only about what to get out of the environment for their own immediate needs and uses, without caring very much for the consequence, especially for succeeding generations (Mabogunje, 1985).

CORE AREA ENVIRONMENT

The core segment of the urban population is indeed poor, and is constrained to limited, insufficient, crowded, cold and dirty shelter and a generally degraded environment (Galbraith, 1968; Mabogunje, 1980). The urban poor who are the residents of these areas are subjected to a life characterized by precarious conditions of nutrition and health, little or poor material possessions (Sada, 1975; Mabogunje, 1975).

Filani (1987) has succinctly shown that most urban centers in Nigeria are characterized by high densities of buildings, the crowding of large numbers of people into those buildings, lack of space for open air living between houses, poor health, substandard housing, and acute environmental and sanitary problems. The shortage of affordable and decent accommodation for the urban poor is thus a major housing problem in Nigeria. A number of studies have confirmed the deplorable conditions of urban housing in Nigeria (Onokerhoraye, 1976; Wahab et al., 1990; Olotuah, 2007). These studies affirm that 75% of the dwelling units in urban centers in Nigeria are substandard and the dwellings are sited in slums. The inadequacy of the quality of most of urban housing stems mainly from the poor physical state of the buildings. They further showed that the buildings are often unsafe and insecure and do not provide adequate shelter from the elements of weather. Also, several studies have shown the deplorable conditions of urban housing in Nigeria; for example: (Onibokun, 1972; Onokerhoraye, 1976; Jagun, 1983; Wahab et al., 1990; Olotuah, 1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2005). Jagun (op cit) affirms that 75% of the dwelling units in Nigeria's urban centers are substandard and the dwellings are located in slums. These results from combined effects of natural ageing of the buildings, lack of maintenance and neglect, wrong use of the buildings, poor sanitation in the disposal of sewage and solid waste, wrong development of land, and increasing deterioration of the natural landscape.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Various approaches have been used to explain the setting of urban areas. Among these approaches which are both descriptive and quantitative in nature are the Burgess (1925) Concentric Zones Models, Hoyt's (1939) Sector Model; and Ullman's (1945) Multiple Nuclei Model. These three models are described as ecological models. Other models include the Social Area Analysis and Factorial Ecology. Some of the models are not so general but they deal with specific urban features. Central to this study are those attempts, which strive to categorize settings according to their capacity to affect the behaviour of their inhabitants. This attempt to unravel „*person-environmental fit*“, according to Rapoport (1977), constitutes the core of the environmental approach to urban form. Caplan (1983) believes that residents will find fulfillment if neighborhoods are planned and built in relation to their expectations as expressed in the social-cultural and physical elements of housing areas. From the foregoing literature and conceptual issues, it can be seen that physical planning has a great responsibility to come up with peculiar residential designs that will fulfill specific users' needs in terms of socio-economic and cultural expectations. This will involve constant modification of established principles, concepts and models of residential area planning and will, no doubt, pose a great deal of challenge but will be based on principles of planning with the people.

METHODOLOGY

Data for the study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. For collection of primary data, the set of questionnaires, targeted at the residents of the study area; were administered using systematic sampling method on household heads living in one out of every ten (10) houses located in the identified seven (7) political wards that formed the core area of the traditional city. A total of 477 household heads were selected for questionnaire administration. Information was obtained on physical and environmental characteristics of residents' of the study area. Close ended questionnaires were designed for this study. They were structured in a way to reveal the physical background as well as environmental characteristics of Ile-Ife, Nigeria. In the process of examining the questionnaire, the author interpreted the question to those who were not literate and helped them in filling their questionnaire based on their response. Sources of secondary data included maps from Planning Office, journals, conference proceedings, unpublished thesis and books. Data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 17. Also, both descriptive (tables, pictures, charts, cross tabulation, agreement index) and inferential tools (regression and ANOVA) were used to analyze the data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the results and discussion of the findings obtained from the study. The section is divided into three (3) sections. Section one discusses socio-economic characteristics of the dwellers of core area of Ile-Ife; section two discusses the physical composition of the study area; while section three discusses environmental characteristics of the study area.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The household samples taken from the study area demonstrated the socio-economic features of the household which has significant influence on the implementation of urban renewal in the study area due to their socio-cultural attachments.

33.5% and 31.4% of the respondents (table 1) had primary and modern school education respectively. While 9.2% were secondary school leavers and 4.4% had more than secondary education. About 24.3% had no formal education at all. The structure of the family in the study area was the extended family type, where many nuclear families were found living under the same roof. This family consists of the father and sons. The inhabitants were predominantly polygynous with 91.0% of the respondents having more than one wife. Just 9.0% of the households were monogamous. The number of children by a family is a thorny issue among the Yorubas because it is regarded as being sacred and should be kept secret. However, according to table 1, 14.6% of the respondents had between 4 and 7 children while 27.3% had between 10 and 16 children. Other families 58.1% had between 17 and 25 children. This is a clear indication of high dependency on the working population. The high dependency factor may affect the households' ability to maintain existing structures. Based on a portion of table 1, the basic occupation engaged in by the households in the study area are farming, trading, artisanry and civil service. From the Table, it is evident that majority of the respondents were traders 32.5% and 31.4% were self employed. A small proportion of 1.5% were civil servants. Information on the income of household heads was very difficult to collect. First, they were not well educated; moreover, most of the respondents who were farmers and traders had no records of their sales. Also, they were not on fixed and regular income. The outcome of this, as shown in table 1, revealed that 35.6% of the respondents' earned less than #5,000 a month and 28.7% earned less than #10,000. It is possible that occupation, income and family size could have some effects on physical and environmental characteristics in the study area.

Table 1. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents
(Data source: Authors' Field Work, 2010)

Socio-Economic Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Level of Education		
Not educated	116	24.3
Primary school	160	33.5
Secondary school	44	9.2
Modern school	150	31.4
Tertiary school	7	1.4
Total	477	100
Occupation		
Agriculture	65	13.6
Trading	155	32.5
Civil service	7	1.5
Private employees	150	31.4
Artisans	45	9.4
Others	55	11.5
Total	477	100

Number of Wives		
1 wife	434	9.0
More than 1 wife	43	91.0
Total	477	100
Number of Children		
1 child	70	14.6
2-4 children	130	27.3
5 children and above	277	58.1
Total	477	100
Monthly Income		
Below #5,000	170	35.6
#5,001-#10,000	137	28.7
#10,001-#15,000	100	21.0
#15,001-#20,000	42	8.8
#20,001 and above	28	5.9
Total	477	100

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The physical condition of the study area was poor. This is because the study area was in the old residential neighbourhood. Majority of the building in the area 65.2% were used for residential purposes. Only 8.0% and 0.2% were used for commercial and industrial purposes respectively. Mixed (mixture of residential and commercial) uses accounted for 27.7% of the identified type of land uses (table 2).

Table 2, revealed that majority of the buildings (83.0%) was built more than 30 years ago. The age of the buildings together with the factor of material of construction of the buildings could affect the depreciation level of the building materials As shown in Table 2, 70.0% of buildings were constructed with mud, 20.3% with mud bricks and 9.6% with cement blocks. The predominance of houses constructed with mud is due partly to the economic status of the owner of the building who could not afford the cost of modern building materials as well as the age of the building itself. The building in the area is categorized into three according to their structural conditions. There were the good, fair or poor. The criteria for the classification are the age of buildings, materials of construction and the extent of maintenance. As could be seen from Table 2, 2.9% have classified as good, 48.6% of the building as fair, and 50.3% as being poor in condition. The fair or poor state of the buildings calls for the renewal of the buildings in the study area. From the above, it could be deduced that the study area is in deplorable state which necessitated for attention of the concerned authority.

Table 2. Physical Characteristics
(Data source: Authors' Field Work, 2010)

Physical and environmental variables	Number	Percentage
Land-use		
Residential	311	65.2
Commercial	38	8.0
Mixed	101	21.2
Institutional	12	2.5
Industrial	1	0.2
Religious	14	2.9
Total	477	100
Age of the buildings		
Below 10 years	10	2.1

11-20 years	29	6.1
21-30 years	42	8.8
30 years and above	396	83.0
Total	477	100
Material for construction		
Mud	333	70.0
Mud brick	97	20.3
Cement block	46	9.6
Total	477	100
Condition of buildings		
Good	14	2.9
Fair	223	48.6
Poor	240	50.3
Total	477	100

ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Various methods of waste disposal employed by the residents of core Ife are illustrated in the Table 3. Majority of the respondents (60.6%) dumped their refuse by the road side, 31.9% practised burning, while only 7.5% of the residents sampled used central collectors of the L.G.

Table 3. Environmental Characteristics
(Data source: Authors' Field Work, 2010)

Waste disposal		
Open dumps	289	60.6
Burning	52	31.9
Central collectors	36	7.5
Total	477	100
Water supply		
Bore hole	40	8.4
Tap water	7	1.5
Well	430	90.1
Total	477	100
Drainage system		
Open drainage	337	70.6
Closed drainage	32	6.7
Underground	08	1.7
Total	477	100
Toilet facilities		
Water closet	28	5.8
Pit latrine	292	61.2
Bucket system	157	33.0
Total	477	100

According to the study, 90.1% of the respondents got water through well, while 8.4% got water through bore-hole. The remaining 1.4% houses had access to pipe borne water and none made use of vendor to get water. The result of the analysis revealed that majority 70.6% had access to open drainage, 6.7% had closed drainage within their neighbourhood and 1.7% had underground system in their area (table 3). Therefore the environment is not good enough for

human habitation due to lack of adequate water, indiscriminately disposal of waste and the state of drainage found in the area. Also, more than three-fifth (61.2%) made use of pit latrine, less than two-fifths (33.0%) made use of bucket system and few (5.8%) had access to water closet within their respective buildings.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF LAND-USE AND WASTE DISPOSAL IN THE STUDY AREA

Table 4 reflects the chi-square test between land-use and waste disposal the study area. The result showed that the chi-square (X^2) value of 42.23 was significant at $p=0.000$. This is an indication that land-use determined the modes of waste disposed in the study area.

Also, the result of regression analysis revealed that significant relationship existed between land-use and waste disposal in the traditional core area of Ile-Ife. This result is further validated by the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test, which explains the linear relationship and level of significance between the dependent variable (waste disposal), and the independent variable (land-use). It yielded an F- ratio of 438.72, which is significant at the 0.01 level (table 5 and 6).

Table 4. Chi-Square Tests
(Data source: Authors' Field Work, 2010)

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	42.234	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	6.859	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.719	1	.110
N of Valid Cases	10		

Table 5. Regression coefficient of Waste Disposal
(Data source: Authors' Field Work, 2010)

Land-use	B	Std error	Beta	t	Sig (P)
(Constant)	8.908	252	-	5.082	0.41
Land-use	0.414	0.81	0.123	4.757	0.001

p significant at 0.01

Table 6. The overall F-test value from the regression of community shrine
(Data source: Authors' Field Work, 2010)

Model	R	R-square	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.801	.770	645.653	1	243.653	438.721	.001
Residual			214.323	459	.249		
Total			140.554	460			

p significant at 0.01

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS OF CONDITION OF BUILDINGS AND DRAINAGE SYSTEM IN THE STUDY AREA

Table 7 reflected the chi-square test between condition of the buildings and drainage system in the study area. The result showed that the chi-square (X^2) value of 24.891 was significant at $p=0.000$. This is an indication that drainage system affected the condition of buildings in the study area.

Table 7. Chi-Square Tests
(Data source: Authors' Field Work, 2010)

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.891	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	8.471	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.917	1	.110
N of Valid Cases	10		

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION OF STUDY FOR POLICY FORMULATION

This study has examined the physical and environmental characteristics of traditional core area of Ile-Ife, Nigeria. In doing this, it has examined physical and environmental characteristic of the core area and also the state of existing infrastructure in the study area. It has been established in this study that most of the buildings in the study area were in deplorable state which needed urgent attention and the whole environment was not good enough for human habitation. However, the inhabitants of the core were attached in tradition, seemingly conservative, and unaware of the magnitude and dimensions of the housing and environmental problems around them.

The study concluded that while housing facilities in the core area of Ile-Ife, like many others in Nigeria were in deplorable state, there is urgent need to attend to the concerned area for better living of the inhabitants of the area.

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