Effective Urban Management and Governance:
A Catalyst for Sustainable Urban Security in Nigeria

[1]Isa, K. & Wanda, M.Z.
Department of Urban & Regional Planning
The Federal Polytechnic
Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria
E-mail: [1]isakefas9@gmail.com
Phone: [1]+2347036150024

ABSTRACT

Insecurity has become a major challenge in Nigeria to the extent that the comfort of living, working and recreating in safety is eluding in most Nigerian Urban centers. The impact of the security situation seems to pervade ripple effects on several aspects of lives of the people, extending from human lives, properties, food security, politics, economy, health, education and morals. It therefore behooves a new approach rather than the application of entirely military approach to conflict resolution. This paper reviews the current security situation with the view to explore other policy options (Effective Urban management and governance) to address security challenges. Archival research strategy was adopted in which administrative records and documentations form the major source of data. The paper draws largely on research findings and other academic literature. The Paper identified Religions sentiment/fanatism, ethnic conflict, political disagreement, poverty, institutional failure, and absence of basic urban infrastructural facilities, as the major impediment militating against sustainable urban security in Nigeria. It recommends the adoption of an integrated frame work for urban management which will involve all the stakeholders responsible for urban management and governance. Reviving of the existing urban development and management policies to cope with the current security situation in the country should be considered speedily.

Keywords: Urban governance, urban management, Urban Security, Urban Violence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban Security is the Quality or condition of being free from danger, injury or damage (CHUD, 2002). It is a state of protection against debilitating life threatening events. Such threats can come from four main sources, Vis-à-vis Environmental hazards, natural disasters, interpersonal violence and social delinquency. Over the past decade, Nigeria has witnessed growing threats to the safety and security of towns and cities. In fact, the most distressing feature of life in present day Nigerian cities is the feeling of helplessness with which most residents approach problems of their safety and security. The impact of the security situation in the country can also be seen in the way people have now chosen to build and organize their Physical environments with high fenced walls, blocked streets leading to general distortion of the plans of cities (NITP, 2013).

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These situations call for proactive respond through effective urban management and governance to make Nigerian cities safe and secure place for all its citizens. This paper discussed effective urban management and governance as catalyst to sustainable urban security with reference to Nigerian cities. Specific objectives of the paper are; to stress the use of the current framework for effective urban management and governance; point out possible causal factors of urban violence in Nigeria; explain the pitfalls in the existing urban security management policies and to recommend possible measures to curtail urban security challenges in Nigerian urban centers.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Urban Governance

Un-Habitat (2004), defines Urban Governance as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authorities to manage a country's affairs at all levels". This comprises the mechanism, process and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their civic rights, assemble their objectives and mediate their differences. Similarly (UNDP, 1999), views good urban governance as when societal norms and practices empowers and encourages people to make greater control over their own development in a manner that does not impinge upon the accepted rights of others".

Moreso, CHUD (2002), sees urban governance as "the sum total of all the ways in which individuals and institutions both private and public participate in planning and management of the affairs of a city" It is a continuous processes through which conflicting interest of citizens are accommodate and cooperate actions in their resolutions are promoted. The objective of urban governance is to promote and create good local leadership, institutionalize democratic rule, facilitate citizen's participation, guarantee the use of public resource in a manner that is transparent, responsible, acceptable, just and effective".

2.2 Urban Management

Acioly (2003) defines Urban Management as "a sets of instruments, activities, task and functions that assures that a city can function". He further asserts that in such a city, "One can get water at home, roads can transport goods and people, land is provided for various activities essential for its citizens, that public interest is safeguarded against individual and firms interest and that repairs are carried out on infrastructural networks before it starts affecting the people". Davcy (1993), also affirms that ''Urban management refers to policies, plans, programs and practices that try to ensure that population growth is matched by access to infrastructure, housing and employment"

2.3 Urban Violence

According to WHO (2002),Urban Violence is "the intentional use of physical force or power threatened or actual against oneself, another person or against group or communities living in the Urban centre that either results or has a likelihood to resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation." Violence and crime has been used synonymously, but Okoko (2008), provides a distinction between the two terms. According to Okoko, "Crime is an act (usual grave offence) punishable by law". That is the breech of legal prohibition. He further defines crime as "an act that causes physical or psychological wound or damage and is against the law."

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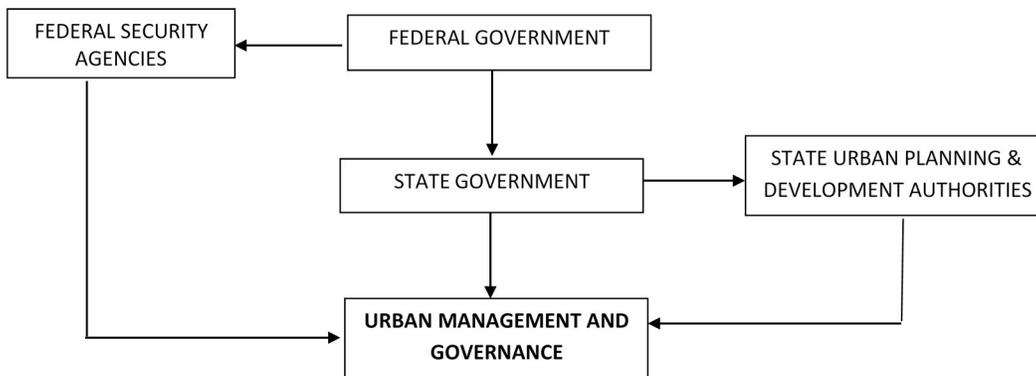www.isteams.net/ghana2020

Figure 1: Existing Frame work for Urban Management and Governance.
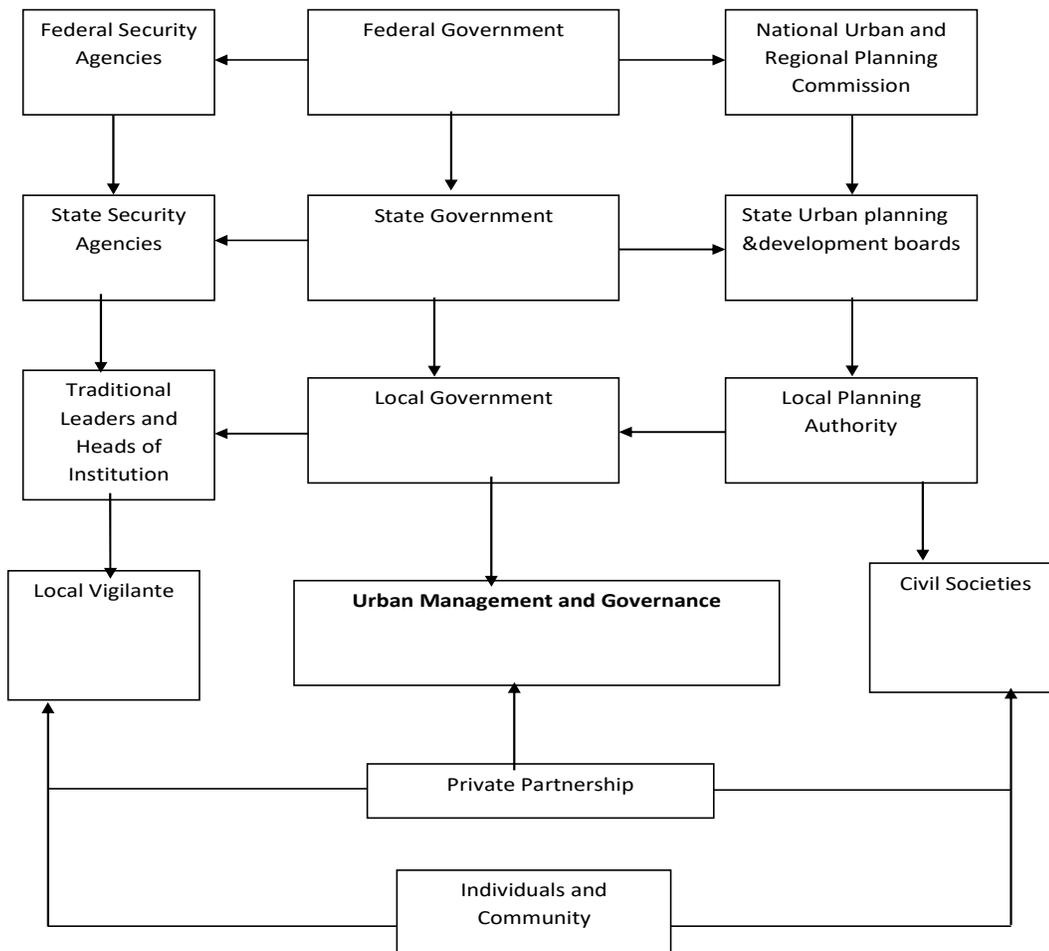
Figure 2: Frame work for effective Urban Management and Governance.
Source: Fieldwork

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3. METHODOLOGY

The research employs the archival research strategies in which administrative records and documentations forms the major source of data. The paper draws largely on the use of research findings and academic literature sourced from magazines, published and unpublished articles, books and journals to ascertain the causes and current urban Security situation and challenges in Nigeria.

3.1 Causal factors of urban violence in Nigeria

There is much controversy surrounding the urban violence in Nigeria. The predominant school of thought argues that "poverty is the major cause of urban violence' Singer (1997). Another school of thought argues that there is link between urban violence and politics as asserted by Okoko, (2008) that "urban violence is caused by multiplicity of factors such as ethnicity conflict, political disagreement, and absence of basic urban infrastructure, socio-economic pressure and poor public administration." Following similar lines, Moser (2004), identified four webs of factors that are responsible for urban violence in Nigeria such as political, institutional, economic and social factors.

However, there has been a rising trend in the economic literature which disputes these conventional theories and argued that urban violence is caused by lack of basic urban infrastructural facilities which is the bed rock of urban economy. The committee of housing and urban development (CHUD, 2002) observed that "in most Nigerian cities both physical and social infrastructure are inadequately provisioned and had undermined its economic efficiency and also compromised the competitiveness of Nigerian cities in global economic arena. Agbola (2005) testifies this fact as he asserts that "the crisis in most Nigerian cities has risen because of the inability of city authorities and urban managers to deal effectively with the rapid urbanization process and this in turn could be attributed to low entrepreneurial, technological and managerial capabilities."

The northern part of the country has been under siege since 2009, by persistent and precise deadly attack led by a religious fundamentalist group known as the Boko Haram (western education is forbidden). Though, the causal factors that play critical roles in their radicalization process were not clear. Halilu, Babaji and Adamu (2016), contend that "radicalism" and fundamentalism" has been largely linked to religion. Rasheed (2012) opines that the main goal of Boko Haram was to abolish democracy and institute sharia law as they claim to be fighting for justice and to purify Islam in northern Nigeria. But Joseph (2010) portrays that the new Political violence in Africa has some straight forward practical rationalities that transcend its original context from the growing problems of youth unemployment, weak social support, poor educational back grounds and socio-economic marginalization. This argument was complemented by Gow (2013) as he asserts that the entire link of the Boko Haram with national politics continues to attract controversies and concern. While Halilu and adamu (2016) crown it all by saying that militancy and extremism are often depicted as a fight over religion, ethnicity or recently over oil which is not connected with social injustice and economic inequalities.

The activities of the Boko Haram have made many researchers, academics, human right organizations and NGOs to give different opinions about the causal factors of the violence. However, majority opines that the ultimate causal factors are; frustration, corruption, social malaise, poverty and unemployment. Halilu, Babaji and Adamu (2016), pointed out that, the causal factors differ in the Niger Delta region because "the phenomenon of youth gang participation in militancy and extremist activities in the Niger Delta region was rooted in the crisis of governance." Frynas (2001) also affirms that Ken-Saro-Wiwa saw the struggle as a quest for self-determination and struggle for human right and environmental ethics.

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While Naanea (1995) and Osagae (1999) portrayed the crisis as a struggle against colonialism and minority agitation for fair deals in a negatively skewed federalism. Aghaelino (1999, 2004) opined that, the people discovered that the oil industries were not committed to fulfill the promises that were signed. Instead they discovered that the revenue from the region was used to transform cities like Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Enugu, Abuja and Kaduna.

Competition for oil wealth also fueled violence between ethnic group causing the militarization of the entire region by ethnic militia and formation of pressure groups such as;
- Movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta(MEND)
- Niger Delta People Liberation force
- Niger Delta Avengers
- Movement for the actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra

Violence continues in the region until the return to democracy and the election of Obasanjo led government in 1999. In 2009, a presidential amnesty programme accompanied with support and training of ex-militants proved to be a success. 3000 militants signed the amnesty deal.

3.2 Pitfalls in the Existing Urban Management Policies
The National Urban Development policy prepared in 1991 issued formerly in 1997 is a document that was prepared to address a number of critical issues such as urban government, Urban Security, Urban transportation and other metropolitan problems. The policy did not meet up with its challenges because it fails to facilitate the all-inclusiveness of citizens in governance due to constitutional bottleneck. It also failed to combat urban security and transportation problems.

Similarly, the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning (Decree No. 88 of 1992) was promulgated to address some of the inequalities of the Nigerian Town and Country Planning ordinance of 1946. However, the implementations of the law are not yet set up in some states and at the local government level. The National Urban and Regional Planning Commission is yet to be established at the national level. The decree also has inherent lapses that the previous urban development policies have inherited from the past legislations.

The Urban development Bank Act of Nigeria (Decree No. 51 of 1992) provides for the incorporation of public Limited Companies to foster the rapid development of Urban infrastructure and give technical assistance to the state and local government not only in the preparation, implementation and maintenance of the infrastructural services to boost economic development and also to help in generating fund from the capital market for these purpose. The bank has failed to perform these functions. The National housing policy and all its agencies were also set up to mitigate urban housing problems. The housing policy also failed to fulfill these functions
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3.3 Possible Measures to Cope Urban Security Challenges in Nigeria

The goal of National Urban Development Policy is to develop a dynamic system of urban settlements which will foster sustainable economic growth, promote efficient Urban and regional development and ensure improved standard of living and wellbeing of all Nigerians. If that is the case, it is pertinent therefore to make it compulsory for all citizens to participate in decision making and programme implementation.

This will help to formulate management policies that will ensure partnership with all stakeholders involve in urban management and governance, (see figure 2). The free market economy compels greater attention to partnership with the private sector in the delivery of many services in our urban centers (housing, infrastructural facilities, waste disposal, and transportation management).

The Urban development Bank must be re-positioned to meet the challenges of its mandate; citizens' participation and partnership with the organized private sector must also be involved in the management of urban services and must be fostered and sustained by the rule of law. Available legal services in the management of urban local governments and other stakeholders must be strengthened. The federal constitution need to be reviewed to create an avenue for states and local government security agencies and also to create room for traditional leaders and heads of institutions, civil societies and private partnership to be involved in urban security management.

The existing Town and country planning laws and regulations need to be revised in order to ensure the adequacy in addressing current urban development and management problems. All existing public institutions involved in urban management at the three tiers of governments should be restructured and the capacity of all agencies and bodies charged with the responsibility of monitoring of all existing federal policies related to urban development should be strengthened.

4. CONCLUSION

It was observed that the present state of affairs in Nigerians Urban cities has been occasioned by incessant security and managerial problems. The existing frame work for urban development and management failed to incorporate all stakeholders involve in urban management as a result the frame work failed to cope up with the security challenges. The Paper affirmed that Religions sentiment, ethnicity conflict, politics, poverty, institutional failure, and paucity of basic infrastructural facilities are major contributory factors militating against sustainable urban security and governance in Nigeria. It was also observed that the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning law of 1992 has not been implemented fully by federal, state and local government. This has rendered the existing frame work for urban management ineffective.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings from the research, the following reccomendations are made

1. Government should established an appropriate institutional frame work for Urban development and management to promote the integration of the effort of the private sector, civil society, traditional leaders and heads of institutions in ensuring the safety and security of cities.

2. Amend the existing constitution and restructure all the existing public institutions involved in urban management at the three tiers of government and where necessary create new ones like "neighborhood watch", "Bangers" or "Vigilante" with a view to ensure effective response to the security challenges

3. Increase the number, quality and equipment standards of the law enforcement agencies to meet up with international standards and also mandate local governments to establish community policing and establish police community relations committees (PCRS) in different wards and neighborhoods within the urban center.

4. Government should ensure enforcement capacity of states planning boards and local planning authorities to implement the provisions of the Town planning laws for orderly development of our towns and cities.

5. There is the need to review the existing law and constitutional provisions in respect of the nation's local government to give them more powers and responsibilities with respect to promotion of local economic development, providing more infrastructural facilities and services.

6. The federal Government should implement all the provisions of the Nigerian Urban and Regional planning law of 1992 (which provides for the establishment of Urban and Regional Planning Commission); Creation of state Urban Planning and development Boards and local planning authorities as well as the implementation of the white paper on urban development and housing.

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