

RAPID URBAN SECTOR PROFILING FOR SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES (RUSPS) IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN PLANNING IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the application of rapid urban profiling for sustainability studies (RUSPS) in articulating city strategic plans in developing countries with the aim of determining its implications for urban planning in Ondo State, Nigeria. Ondo State is one of the 36 states of Nigeria where urban planning is undertaken by the state government. It discusses the usefulness of the methodology to urban planning and suggests how it can be applied to re-invigorate urban planning activity in the state. The paper draws on document analysis, qualitative research as well as systematic survey of planning activities, departments and agencies of government as well as individuals involved in urban planning tasks in the study area. Other relevant materials and data are sourced from published sources. The paper reveals that RUSPS has a lot of implications for urban planning in Ondo state, where it is at present wholly concerned with the approval of plans such as building and layout plans without overall city development strategies. The paper concludes that for planning to flourish and more importantly stem the growing slum formation and poverty in the study area, there is a need for a more fundamental rethinking of city planning and development approaches and actions to be inclusive, participatory and one to be undertaken at the local level. RUSPS offers this.

Key words: Urban Sector Profiling, Sustainability studies, urban planning, Developing countries, Master plans, City strategic Plans, Structure plan, urban assessment, urban governance and management.

1. INTRODUCTION

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 problems prevalent in most

developing countries has made new thinking and approaches to solving them indispensable if the security and welfare of city dwellers are to be guaranteed. 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. Therefore, as part of UN-HABITAT drive to address cities' crisis associated rapid urbanization in conjunction with the European Commission (EC) and other partners to support sustainable city development and also be able to address their urgent and diverse needs, found it necessary to develop a tool for rapid urban assessment to guide immediate and mid- and long-term interventions. Land use planning has witnessed notable changes in concept, scope, methodology and content in the last four decades. The process of land use planning had become more inclusive and participatory and engaging city dwellers to provide relevant information, identify and prioritize development opportunities, which must form the basis for formulating a flexible city development strategy/ structure plan as opposed to the old rigid 'master plan' (Falade, 2009). The latest methodology or approach being utilized following the leadership of UN- Habitat is known as Rapid Sector Profiling for Sustainability studies (RUSPS) first developed by the UN – HABITAT working with the European Commission on urban sector profile study in Somalia in 2003.

The Rapid Urban Sector Profiling is the first phase of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) and it is designed to support the achievement of Target 11 of the Millennium Development Goals by setting up slum improvement action plans in selected countries and towns. It applies inclusive urban governance and management using participatory methods to implement slum upgrading activities. Target beneficiaries of the programme include the urban poor, women-headed households and marginalized groups (UN-HABITAT, 2008). The Urban Sector profiling exercise has been extensively researched, piloted and developed with the goal of enabling improved and more effective urban management and implementation at the national and local levels. The first phase of the *Urban Sector Profiling* was successfully implemented in over 20 countries and has contributed to public policy to the extent that countries such as Egypt, the Kingdom of Bahrain and Nigeria have opted to finance the programme themselves. All in all, around 40 countries are now partnering to incorporate this study and process into their current urban management structures to better identify and agree on urban development capacity building and investment priorities (UN-HABITAT, 2008)

It is against the above scenarios, that this paper seeks to examine RUSPS approach to improving city planning and management structure in contemporary developing countries. The overriding aim is to outline its implications for urban planning in Ondo state, Nigeria. In doing this, the paper identifies and discusses the major components of the methodology, its relevance as well as its application generally to the articulation of structure plans aimed at providing city development strategies to meet MDGs targets

in developing countries especially in Africa that has been identified as lagging behind in meeting MDGs targets. And finally discusses its city planning implication in Ondo state where it is current a state activity as against the widespread local level activity in most developed societies.

2. CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RELEVANT LITERATURE

Urban planning is a dynamic profession 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 (APA, 2006). To achieve this, a number of approaches and methods have been employed which include master plan and structure plan approaches, and recently sustainable development approach. This has affected urban planning 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. These approaches ranges from the rational – comprehensive, disjointed incrementalism, mixed scanning, advocacy planning, sustainable city planning that emphasizes stakeholders or users participation in decision making and recently to rapid urban profiling for sustainability studies. The rational-comprehensive approach to urban planning has been embraced and utilized to plan cities in several societies. However, in 1970s as a result of problems associated with master planning approach, there was a change by the introduction of disjointed increamentalism and further by the introduction of structure planning, strategic plans and local plans in the 1980s, (Onibokun, 1999). Thus, urban planning in Western Europe during the 1980s was characterized by an increasing flexibility, the emergence of conservation policies, and deregulation, more rigid planning systems were often replaced (United Nations, 1996).

In the 1990s, the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in RIO in 1992 and the second Habitat Conference in Istanbul in 1996 resulted in the adoption of Local Agenda 21 and the Global and National Plans of Action for Human Settlements respectively. As fallout of these conferences, the significance of city planning is therefore again being addressed, but in the form of a negotiating process, with regulatory functions and guidance playing an important role (United Nations, 1996). Thus, the two conferences produced a new set of realities to the planning of human settlements and brought to the forefront new typologies of plans, which moved away from the rigid formality of master plans, towards a more flexible, indicative and proactive type of planning (Onibokun, 1999).

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 (United Nations, 1996). Further, the need to address the problem of slum formation and urban poverty in 2002 motivated the European Commission (EC) finalized the “*Consultative Guidelines for Sustainable Urban Development – A Strategic Approach*”, which defines urban strategies around two main pillars: urban governance and urban management. In the same year, UN-HABITAT launched the *Rapid Urban Profiling in Somalia*. The approach was based on these EC guidelines which was expanded by UN-HABITAT and finally tested and adapted to the country specific context. Profiling helped to design a variety of interventions that have been and are currently being implemented in Somalia with funding from a consortium of donors. The Somalia experience served as a blue print for the development of the *Rapid Urban Sector Profiling Project* (2004-2008), which in turn has led to the current expanded framework known as the “*Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme*” (2008-2011) (UN-Habitat, 2008).

The approach is a multi-sectoral approach, which profiles the specific urban issues by assessing main sectors of development. The initial RUSPS method concentrated in the core of four sectors: Governance, Slums & Shelter, Environment, and Gender. Later on two other sectors were added in Egypt, namely Basic Urban Services (BUS) and Local Economic Development (LED). In Nigeria’s application of RUSPS, because of the peculiar urban transportation problem, transportation component was added. In each sector, general background, regulatory framework, institutional set-up, performance and accountability, capacity buildings gaps are assessed and priority needs and projects are revealed.

It is a process that encourages the participation of local, central and regional institutions as well as the private sector, academia and civil society groups in urban decision-making. Additionally, the approach involves urban residents in helping to define the most pressing needs in tackling sustainable urban development. At the same time, the process is intended to build the capacity of stakeholders and institutions as well as teaches on how to apply a participatory urban assessment study. Emphasis is placed upon policy development to address urban poverty in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific countries. Accordingly, the profiles are a resource to tackle bottlenecks and identify opportunities for sustainable urban development. The goal of the RUSPS programme is “To strengthen local, central and regional institutional and key stakeholders’ capacities in settlement and slum improvement using an approach which is based on good governance and management approaches.

In summary, RUSPS is an accelerated action-oriented assessment of urban conditions in a city. It entails undertaking a rapid analysis of the current urban situation in seven thematic areas with relevant stakeholders. The studies focus on priority needs; capacity gaps and looks at how existing institutions at local and national levels respond to urban issues. The goals of the studies are to develop urban poverty reduction policies at local, national and regional levels, by assessing needs and possible response mechanisms and contribute to wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.(UN-Habitat, 2008).

3. THE STUDY AREA AND METHODS

The Study Area

Ondo State, the setting for the study is one of the 36 States of Nigeria and it came into existence on 3rd February, 1976 following the state creation exercise undertaken by the Federal Military Government in Nigeria that year. The state is located in the South-Western part of Nigeria and it lies between latitudes 50° 45' and 70° 52' North of the Equator and longitude 40° 20' and 60° 31' East of the Greenwich Meridian. The state was created out of the Old Western State and is carved into 18 Local Government Areas and three Senatorial Districts, namely; Ondo North, Ondo Central and Ondo South. The state enjoys high rainfall that varies from 2000mm in the southern areas to 1150 mm in the northern fringes. Its temperature range is between 21° C and 29° C. Humidity however, is relatively high. The state is one of the six states of South west Nigeria inhabited by the Yoruba ethnic group. The 1991 National Population Census showed that Ondo State had a population of about 2,249, 548, while the current population of the state according to the 2006 National Population Census is 3,441,024 (NBS, 2007). Some of the major cities of the state include: Akure the state capital, Ondo, Owo, Ikare, Okitipupa, Ore, Idanre, Idoani, Ifon, Ile-oluji, Odigbo, Oka Akoko, Igbara-Oke, Oke Agbe and several other smaller towns and villages.

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 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.

Application of RUSPS to Urban Planning

As indicated earlier, the RUSPS methodology was initially developed by UN-Habitat working with the European commission and Urban Sector profile Study in Somalia in 2003. From this period onwards, it has been embraced by over 40 countries in Africa and Latin America to study and prepare structure plans for their cities. In this section, effort is made to quickly discuss the use of the methodology in some specific urban environments where it has been utilized including Nigeria to develop city strategic development plans.

In the case of Egyptian cities, where RUSPS has been extensively used, they were confronted in the new millennium with the problem of accommodating rapidly growing populations in cities and providing them with tenure, infrastructure, and shelter while ensuring sustainability and enhancing economic growth (Doa, 2008). RUSPS in Egypt encompasses a national profile, as well as profiles for six cities. The Egypt RUSPS approach started with two cities; Alexandria and Suez. With the contributions of City Alliance and World Bank and the decision to use RUSPS as the front end of Cities Development Strategies (CDSs), RUSPS was conducted in another four different cities. Each city is published in a separate report which includes a general background, a synthesis of the six development sectors – governance, slums, gender, environment, local economic development, and basic urban services – and priority project proposals (Doa, 2008)

In Nigeria, Anambra State is the first to utilize the RUSPS methodology for the preparation of urban structure plans drawing from the Egyptian experience. Since the technique was new to Nigeria, the Team, 10 national consultants selected for the study and several staff of government drawn from Anambra State Ministry of Lands Survey and Town Planning as well as the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban development were trained in the new methodology. During the training participants were given the opportunity to review the RUSPS framework and agreed on it before it was applied to the cities of Anambra State. The RUSPs study in the state focused on seven thematic issues, namely; Heritage/historic areas, Gender, Governance, Environment, Slums /secure tenure, Basic urban services and local Economic Development. The various issues to be investigated were discussed among the stakeholders during the training and an agreed framework was produced. Figure 1 shows the logical framework of the application of RUSPS for the cities of Anambra State. Thus, RUSPS in Anambra State, Nigeria, was used for the profile studies of Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha from January to May, 2008.

Beside Anambra state, RUSPS programme is already on-going in Nassarawa state. The Nassarawa state government signed an agreement with UN-Habitat for the preparation of a well rationalized and

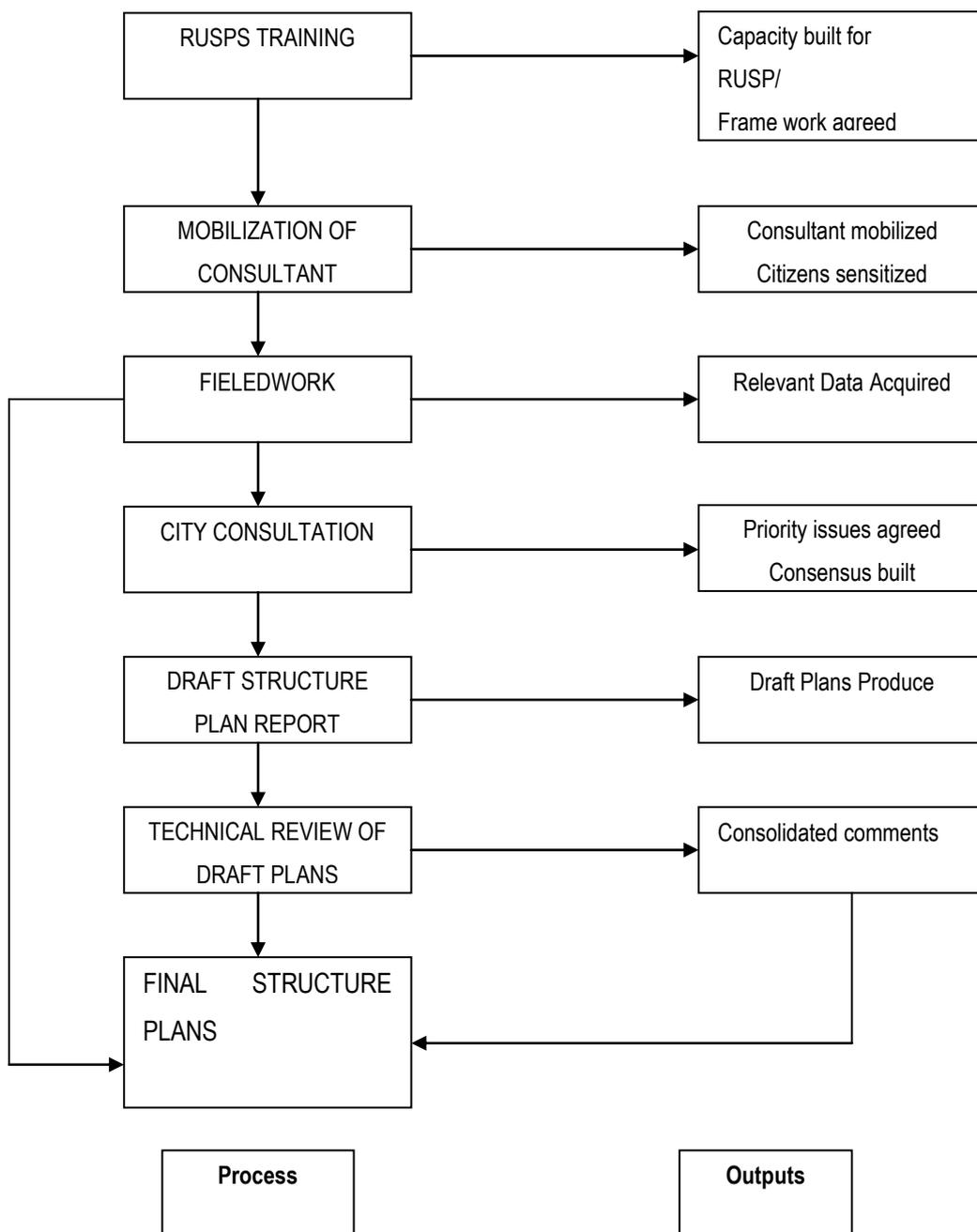


FIGURE 1 - FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONDUCT OF RUSPS
Source: Falade, J. B. (2009).

implementable structure plans for some of their cities, Thus, the articulation of city development strategies also known as structure plans for towns of Lafia, Keffi, karu and Doma are already progressing. Training of national Consultants has been undertaken and they are already working on the strategic plans for the selected cities. According to Falade (2009) the structure plans to be prepared for the selected cities will be aimed at providing city-wide development strategy to guide the development

of the respective cities for the next 20 years. The structure plans will be geared towards achieving the goals of Nassarawa state Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), Local Economic and Empowerment Strategy (LEEDS), the Habitat agenda, the Millennium Development Goals and the vision 2020 of the Federal Government of Nigeria (Falade, 2009).

4. URBAN PLANNING PROCESS AND PRACTICE IN ONDO STATE

In Nigeria, formal physical planning began 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 Ondo state was located 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). 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 in May 2009. The need to guide and control physical development of the major cities in the state and to also cope with their rapid growth prompted the state government to commission planning consultants to prepare master plans for them. In 1980 the contracts for the preparation of master plans for Akure, Ondo, Owo and Ikare were awarded to physical planning consultants. The master plans for Akure and Ondo towns were completed in 1983 and those for Owo and Ikare in 1985 and 1986 respectively (Olujimi, 1993). It should be added that master plans were not prepared for other towns in the state except Ore recently by the Federal government of Nigeria. Additionally, the master plans prepared were not adopted and therefore were not implemented

as proposed. Again, since 1980 when these plans expired, new master plans are yet to be prepared for them. 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 Akinyoyenu, 2007).

Beside the preparation of master plans for the major cities, another major instrument for planning in the state 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 promoters have complied with all requirements, such layout plans are accepted and recommended by the Area Urban and Regional Planning Officer to the Director of Urban and Regional Planning at the state ministry of Works, Lands and Housing for approval. Like in the case of master plan, there is no evidence of consultation or involvement of the public besides the promoters of such plans. It should be noted that approval of proposed plans are granted by the Director of Urban and Regional Planning without consultation with professionals in other related departments that have to do with the built environment. In should be added that the above procedure subsists with reference to building plan approval process or practice, except that the Area 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). Like the case of master plan preparation process the layout proposal plans are not usually subjected to public scrutiny that will guarantee their participation.

Other land use planning measures introduced in the state to improve city planning and development activities in the state 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 in a plot of land. Another requirement is that all storey buildings and above must be accompanied with structural engineering design prepared and duly endorsed by a registered engineer beginning from March 31st 2006

A review of the existing urban planning procedures and practices in the state 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 city developments in the state. Field investigations also revealed that detailed master plans were last prepared for the major cities of the state in the early 1980s. Therefore, the cities in the state are growing without 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.

5. THE RELEVANCE OF THE METHODOLOGY IN URBAN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The first phase of the programme was evaluated in 2006 and the result shows that RUSPS achieved very positive results in 16 different countries that completed RUSPS phase 1, the urban sector profiling for sustainability. The evaluation reveals that majority of stakeholders appreciates the participatory methodology which encourages a change in decision making processes and adjusts choice through complex needs assessments and situation analysis, Further, the approach motivates stakeholders to focus more on urban issues and development (UN-Habitat, 2006)

Having discussed the basic components, principles and procedures of RUSPS methodology generally and urban planning in Ondo state, it is necessary to quickly summarise or highlight the usefulness of RUSPS to city planning. This is absolutely essential to bring into perspective the desirability or otherwise of adopting the approach to city planning in the study area so as to be able to reverse the fast declining fortunes of cities in the area and Nigeria as a whole.

One of the most important benefits or strength of the methodology is that, it is a fast method of documenting a city's activities, needs, strengths as well weaknesses for the purpose of utilizing it to develop the city. In other words it is a quick method of understanding, gathering information and assessing, determining cities problems, needs as well as proffer solutions to such. The methods take a maximum of seven months to complete as against the traditional master plan that make take upward of two years or more to complete. In sum, the approach offers quick and fast avenues for understanding existing situations of urban situations. Of course one of the major problems of urban planning in developing countries is lack of adequate data and information on urban issues and activities. Therefore

applying this new methodology to urban planning will make the basic information on cities available for urban planning, management and investment purposes.

Besides, the studies focused on priority needs of cities. This in essence, will aid significantly in identifying needs and problem areas that required urgent interventions and actions from the municipal or relevant authority concerned with city affairs. The methodology placed serious emphasis on full public participation through consultation and consequently the outcome of such exercise will be more legitimate and enjoy the support of majority of all stakeholders in city affairs as well as their commitment including financial commitment that are lacking at present. In sum, it will enjoy more legitimacy and support of the vast majority of city stakeholders because it encourages inclusive decision making process that is lacking at present in Nigerian urban milieu.

Another vital strength or advantage of the approach is that it is less expensive in terms of cost to accomplish when compared to the rigorous approach of the conventional master plan approach. By extension, the methods contained in the approach avoid the rigorous procedures established in the conventional master planning approach that has not been successfully utilized in Nigeria. The approach is capable of reinvigorating urban planning in Nigeria that is current not receiving adequate attention in most state and therefore can be used to redress urban planning and development problems as well as provide a platform to guiding and controlling urban growth and development in a participatory and inclusive manner.

6. URBAN PLANNING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The above exposition and analysis revealed that RUSPS is a quick or rapid method of understanding urban situations and in articulating city strategic development plans in developing countries including Nigeria where Ondo State is located. On the other hand, it also revealed that city planning in Ondo State is centralized as it is being undertaken by the state's Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, that the major cities in the state lack current physical plans to provide a framework to guide and direct city growth, weak institutional framework as well as exclusive urban planning which does not involve major stakeholders in city activity. The introduction of RUSPS suggests the availability of a new approach that can be deployed to quickly and rapidly catch the essence and basic issues of cities to promote its growth and development. Thus RUSPS provided a tool to be better informed about basic urban services of a city, its problems, challenges that can be manipulated to chart a way forward for it. Applying the approach to city planning in Ondo state will help significantly in understanding the situations of the cities that are currently not available, provides an avenue for city consultation on how to

improve the cities as well as agreements on how to accomplish city growth and developments. This is essential because, besides the general problems plaguing cities, cities problems and issues are little known here. Therefore application of RUSPS will assist the authorities in understanding specific city problems and how to surmount them. It also implies that partnerships are essential and can be harnessed to improve city life and welfare of urban dwellers particularly the urban poor that dominate urban landscape in developing countries. It also implies that there is a need to change from the rigorous and technocratic planning approaches that has not be successfully utilized in any city in the state and Nigeria in general to a less rigorous and inclusive approach of RUSPSs.

This calls for re-orientation, training and retraining of urban planners and decision makers in the built environments in Ondo state and Nigeria. It also suggests a need for new planning legislation and approaches to city planning. The RUSPS methodology underscores the vital roles of all stakeholders in urban affairs including municipal or city authorities where they are available, local, state and federal governments and private sectors including NGOs in the design and implementation of city development plans and projects. This is lacking in the study area and in several cities and states of Nigeria. Efforts should therefore, be made to get all stakeholders to participate in urban planning to obtain its legitimacy and support for its achievement. Additionally, RUSPs provides a platform or opportunities to sensitize and motivate city dwellers to participate in city affairs and by extension community development.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Cities in developing countries will face different and greater challenges as the increased rate of urbanization impact on the cities. The resilience of current planning methods and processes is being tested. Planners and decision makers also face difficulties in the form of less secure financial allocation to planning and increased expectation of planning roles to some of the multi dimensional problems of cities in developing world including Ondo state, Nigeria. Planning and planners should continue to focus on strategies to bring quick but effective solutions to the problems of cities. This will put them in the best position to foster diverse and dynamic urban growth in the contemporary times. RUSPS methodology provided for this in context of developing world. However, efforts must be made to adapt and adopt the approach to urban planning in the state if sustainable city development is to be achieved. This will help to create structure plans for the cities that lack up-to-date master plans to guide, direct and control their developments at present in a sustainable way.

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