



AFFRODABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF LAND IN FEDERAL CAPITAL CITY, ABUJA, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the challenges of accessibility and affordability of land in Federal Capital City (FCC), Abuja from 1999 to 2010. There were 105,408 applications for land in FCC, while the six districts had 11,963 applicants. One hundred and eighty respondents were selected within the six districts for the applicant/beneficiaries and 30 respondents for institutional survey of land related departments. The findings revealed that land administration in FCC does not meet the principles of good governance in land administration because it lacks adequate affordability and accessibility. The institutional survey revealed that there is no coordination among the departments and agencies involved in land administration in FCC. The study concluded that land in the FCC is not affordable with 69% agreeing to it being expensive while residents also agreed that land in Abuja is not accessible. The study recommends that the FCTA should carry out a review of the Abuja Master Plan and invest heavily on infrastructure development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Land is one of the most important sources of wealth and security. Land continues to be the basis of frequent social upheaval (Burns and Dalrymple, 2008). Land is the most valuable possession of humankind and an important asset of any nation. UN/FIG (1999) posited that land is the ultimate resource, for without land, life on earth cannot be sustained and it provides the basis for life. It is both a physical commodity and an abstract concept, in that the right to own or use land is as much a part of the land as the objects rooted in its soil. Land is fixed in supply and is a basic place of human activities. Land is self-evident, it cannot be moved, it is the same everywhere, but has different purposes in different areas, it also presents different problems and constraints. Land is a non-renewable resource at a human time-scale.

In Nigeria, all lands are vested in the Government and are to be managed in trust for all Nigerians (FRN, 1978). Consequently the socio-economic life of most nations has a close relationship with their rights and interests over their land. As a result any action on land impacts on the life of the people (Bello, 2011). The legal framework for land administration in Nigeria is the Land Use Act (LUA) Cap L.5 of 2004, which was originally promulgated as Land Use Decree No.6 of 1978. The LUA adopted the nationalization of all lands in Nigeria as introduced by the Land Tenure Law of 1962 of the Northern Region (Ukaejiofo, 2008). Under the Land Use Act, all lands within any state are vested in the Governor of the state, thus the government holds all lands in trust for all Nigerians. Except for lands belonging to the Federal Government such as the FCT. It is also

aimed at providing guidance for effective land administration in the country. Government is the trustee of land as well as the administrator. By abolishing private ownership of land, LUA desired to facilitate access to land for public and private uses, promote tenure security, and curb land speculation; this had been driving land values upwards and out of the reach of most Nigerians.

Land administration and management systems in particular, are responsible for providing tenure security and access to land for all. In addition, it can provide accessible and affordable systems to mobilize land resources that ultimately assist in the alleviation of poverty. Good governance within land administration is essential for sustainable development both in terms of operational longevity, equitable stakeholder participation and benefits, and consistency in law and policy implementation. Weak governance will affect the poor in particular and may leave them marginalized and outside the law. Good governance in land administration is central to achieving good governance in society (Burns and Dalrymple, 2008). Zakout et al (2007) identified key principles of good governance for assessing land administration and there are; accessibility, affordability, security of tenure, efficiency and effectiveness, transparency, consistency and predictability, integrity and accountability, subsidiarity, autonomy and depoliticization, civic engagement and public participation, equity, fairness and impartiality and sustainability.

The creation of the new capital, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja was expected to give all Nigerians equal access to land and other related benefits in the city. This was the land policy that framed the Abuja Master Plan (Abumere, 1999). Since the creation of Abuja and the movement of

seat of power to Abuja in 1991, the city has expanded rapidly with limitations on land and the way it is managed. The rapid growth and development has given rise to high demand for land. Mabogunje (1999) emphasised that equal access, equal citizenship, environmental conservation, city beautiful, functional city, effective regional development, and rapid national economic growth were principles, promises and philosophy on which Abuja was premised. He further noted that the principle of equal access in land distribution and equity to all Nigerians was to foster greater integration within the nation and promote rapid economic development.

Abuja has become a land of unity and destination of most Nigerians as well as other Africans due to its unprecedented rate of development. Land in FCT is under the Minister of FCT, who also is the Chairman of Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) as empowered by the Constitution of Nigeria (FCDA, 1998) to manage and administer land. The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) appears to have failed to enforce its powers as implied by the Constitution and the FCT Act to manage and administer land in Abuja. Developers and investors are not willing to invest their monies on such lands (FCDA, 1998). The FCTA initiated a land reform programme in 2003. The land policy reform and the restoration of the Abuja Master Plan were designed to arrest the *Lagosification* of Abuja (El-Rufai, 2004). A component of this land reform programme which was the computerization of the cadastral and land registry system, through the establishment of the Abuja Geographic Information System (AGIS). Abuja Master Plan has been acknowledged as one of the foremost instruments of land administration, management and physical

development planning to achieve effective land administration in Abuja. The Abuja Master Plan is indeed a vital reference point for land administration and management in Abuja (Mabogunje, 1999).

Ukaejiofo (2008) observed that the real problem with land administration is that Nigeria has not formulated a suitable land policy and that there are many disparate land administration systems in the thirty-six states and FCT. Nigeria therefore requires a well-articulated land policy to ensure a standardized and harmonized system and coordinated land management strategies at both local and national levels. He further observed that an effective land administration will give an opportunity to add value to Nigeria's land asset but not an off-the-shelf solution to equal opportunities for land acquisition, use and enjoyment for all Nigerians. Agbana (2007) specifically observed that institutional problems of multiple land allocating agencies and customary titles, poor management of consultancy jobs, corruption and abuse of privileges, land racketeering and neglect of professionalism are problems militating against effective land administration in FCT. Omole (2009) noted that one of the biggest challenges facing Abuja residents is the inaccessibility to land and housing in the face of rapid urbanization. Bello (2011) revealed that land administration under AGIS in FCT does not address unequal land distribution; management, acquisition and disposal of public land follow unclear procedure and are not applied transparently.

However, AGIS has not been able to effectively tackle the challenges of land administration in FCT as highlighted in studies by Agbana (2007); Omole (2009); Bello (2011); Omole and Akinbamijo (2012). These studies have shown clearly that the expected outcomes of the

changes in land policies and administration introduced by AGIS has not been achieved. It also has shown that land administration in Abuja, the Federal Capital City (FCC) does not appear to be efficient. The unanswered questions from these studies are whether the institutions that administer land in the FCT have achieved the expected outcome, whether good governance principles are used in land administration in FCT, whether the institutional mechanism has been put in place to aid effective land administration and how have these mechanisms performed? Whether land is affordable and accessible in FCC, whether land allocation in Abuja is granted without favour and land allocation is carried out on good governance principle in Abuja? Some of the unanswered questions have led to this study. This paper therefore is an attempt to examine the challenges of accessibility and affordability of land associated with land administration in Federal Capital City (FCC), Abuja.

2.0 THE STUDY AREA

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja falls within Latitudes 7° 25' N and 9° 20' North of the Equator and Longitudes 7° 39' East and 8° 45' East. It covers an area of about 8,000 square kilometers (FCDA, 1998). The Federal Capital Territory was carved out of Niger, Plateau and Kwara States. Niger State contributed the largest proportion to the Federal Capital Territory, accounting for 6,738 square kilometers (84.2%), while Plateau State contributed 903.8 square kilometers, (11.3%) and Kwara State gave 0.5% that is 358.2 square kilometers (Udeh, 2010).

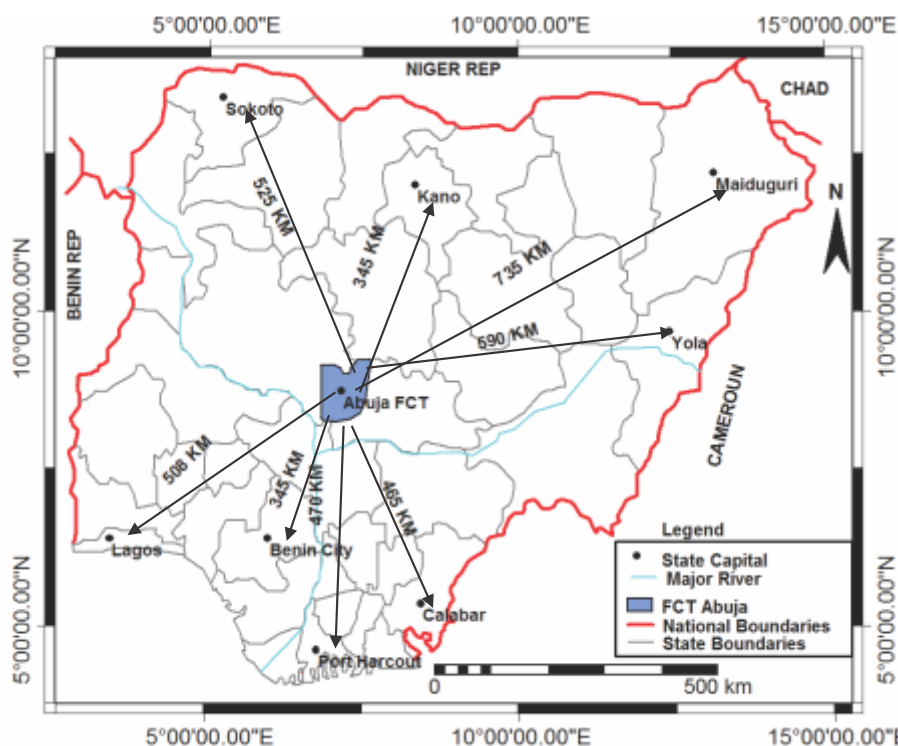


Figure 1: Distances on Road from FCT to Other Cities in Nigeria.
Source: FCDA (1979)

By virtue of the central location of the FCT within the national context it is placed entirely in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria (see Figure 1). It is bounded to the North by Kaduna State, and by Nassarawa State to the East and Southeast, to the Southwest by Kogi State and to the West by Niger State. Abuja is centrally located and is easily accessible from all parts of Nigeria and indeed the principal cities of Africa. The FCT, Abuja has an official population of 1.4 Million in 2006 according to National Population Commission (2006) but given the daily influx of people into the territory, the population today could be well over 8 million people (Sumaila, 2012).

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHOD

Data collected for this study were generated from primary and secondary sources. Primary

data were obtained by personal interviews, observations, and questionnaires. Two sets of questionnaires were used: applicants and beneficial, and institutional questionnaires. This was aimed at obtaining information from personal, organisations, and departments involved in land administration. Secondary data were from desk review (published and unpublished materials). These include literature from Abuja Master Plan and journals; land administration database and digital maps from Abuja Geographic Information Services (AGIS), census

figures from NPC, and other necessary information relevant to the subject matter to this study.

The sample size used in the study was based on a number of factors such as the nature of the variables, time, and the expected level of precision. Two (2) districts were chosen in each of the three Phases (I, II and III) of FCC. However, there is no physical development on Phase IV and as such was not included in this study. The field survey conducted by the researcher in June, 2013 was used to determine the sample size. There were 105,408 applicants for land in FCC as at December 2010. While the six districts have a total of 11,963 applicants. The respondents were selected in each of the six districts based on the percentage of the total size giving a total of 180. This represents 1.5% of 11,963 applicants. For the institutional survey, the number of staff of the land related departments involved in Federal Capital City

(FCC) were obtained from each department. There were a total of 2,149 members of staff in the land related departments. The respondents were selected in each of the departments based on the percentage of the total size giving a total of 30. Charts, frequency tables, and percentage methods are used in this paper. This statistical procedure was used to analyze the responses generated by this study. The simplicity in analyzing data and easy differentiation of the results.

4.0 DATAANALYSIS

Table 1 reveals that from the 180 respondents from the six (6) districts in FCC that 45.56% are of between the ages of 46-60 years of age.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents.

S/no	Age	No.	Percentage (%)
1	21- 30	20	11.11%
2	31- 45	41	22.78%
3	46-60	82	45.56%
4	Above 61years	37	20.55%

Source: Authors Analysis (2017)

The Land Use Act 1978 in Section 7 created a restriction on the rights of persons under the age of twenty-one years. The age distribution reveals that 11.11% of the respondents are within 21-30 year old who are most likely to be students and job seekers. Figure 2 shows that 56% are married, 27% are single, 11% divorced and 6% widowed. The status and size of households were expected to increase, as the early years bachelors will be in significant number. The Master Plan noted that there would be more married people by 2000 (FCDA, 1979). Whereas, 32.36% of the respondents are civil servants and 37.56% are into business. The survey revealed that respondents were mostly

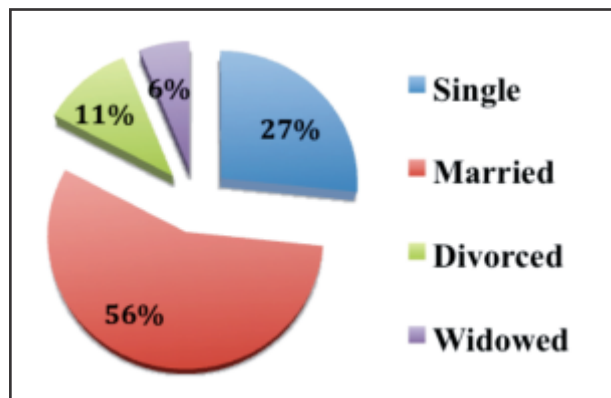


Figure 2: Marital Status of Respondents.

Source: Authors Analysis (2017)

civil servants, public servants (political appointees or elected offices) and business owners (traders, contractors, and self-employed individuals) as shown in Figure 3.

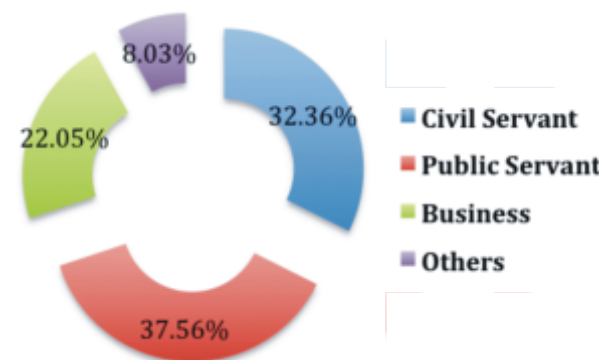


Figure 3: Occupation of Respondents.

Source: Authors Analysis (2017)

Figure 4 reveals that 41% earn an average monthly income of N20, 000- N50, 000, and 22% earn N50, 000 – N100, 000. Whereas 12% earn below N20, 000, and 15% earn above N100, 000 while 10% has no job.

5.0 RESULTS

Accessibility: Access to land is essential for people to raise and stabilize their income and to participate in economic growth (UNECE, 1996). Land administration should remove any unnecessary barriers to people's right to access

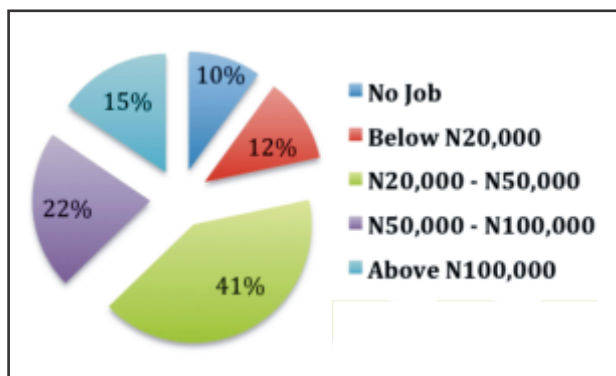


Figure 4: Average Monthly Income of Respondents.

Source: Authors Analysis (2017)

land and property. The mechanisms for accessing and acquiring land must be accessible, unbiased and efficient (Bello, 2011). Table 2 shows that from 1999 to 2010, there were 105,408 applications for land, only 42,018 were allocated land, thus showing that 39.86% were successful. Further probe reveals that 80% of the successful applicants used insiders in AGIS/FCDA, who helped them to fast track the process. The principle of accessibility empowers the people to raise and stabilize their income and economic growth (Williamson *et al.*, 2010).

Table 2: Land Application and Allocation Rate

S/no	Year	No. Application	No. Allocated	Percentage Allocated (%)
1	1999	1721	85	4.99%
2	2000	1651	302	18.29%
3	2001	5383	1045	19.58%
4	2002	5463	1014	18.56%
5	2003	3190	523	16.39%
6	2004	1559	333	21.36%
7	2005	19071	3747	19.65%
8	2006	14,982	18,060	120.54%
9	2007	10,881	12,690	116.63%
10	2008	10,177	1136	11.16%
11	2009	13,387	1805	14.48%
12	2010	17,943	1269	7.07%
TOTAL		105,408	42,018	39.86%

Source: AGIS (2013)

Table 2 additional shows that only 39.86% of applicants were allocated land between 1999 to 2010. The consequence of restricted access to land through the official channel results in people finding informal means to cope with their needs, which leads to land speculation and encroachment. Land speculation occurs when the demand for land, at the present time or in the near future, outstrips the supply of land. Speculation in the land market in FCT has made land unaffordable even for many and they are forced to find shelter illegally which in turn bring about several environmental problems such as creation of slums and squatter settlements, environmental deterioration, and an inefficient urban development pattern (Bello, 2011). In 2006 and 2007 there were over 100% allocation rate, (120.54% and 128.43%) which was due to Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) policy to allocate land to all old applicants before 2003 (FCTA, 2007). This was FCTA effort to clear all outstanding applications for land. The implications are that more people applied for land in 2009 and 2010.

Affordability: Figure 5 shows that 34% of the respondents agreed that land charges are very expensive and 35% agreed that it is expensive. In determining that the cost of land charges are affordable, the socioeconomic status must be considered. Affordability under the principles of good governance in land administration

requires that the cost of acquiring land and land related services should be affordable and reasonable. The high transaction cost and high charges are not good for investors and developers in FCC (FCDA, 1998). The rate of land transaction fees, which includes land application fees, processing fees, annual ground rent and premium paid on Certificate of Occupancy. The reasons given by FCTA and FCDA for increasing land charges is that the Abuja Master Plan is believed to be lagging and that for the past 38 years less than 30% of the development targets has been achieved. However, these increments were meant for the improvement of infrastructural development within the city (AGIS, 2007).

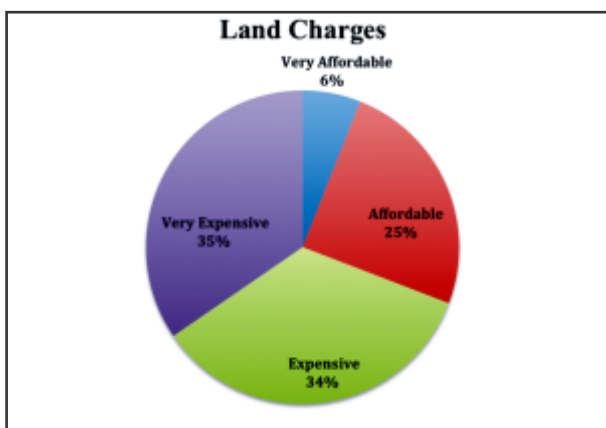


Figure 5: Land Charges in FCC.
Source: Authors Analysis (2017)

The result of land being unaffordable encourages bribery to officials of AGIS, FCTA and FCDA from the public. This has also discouraged formal land transactions such as registration, legal search, and others. Informal land transactions to obtain access to land are one of the major avenues left to the landless, this is illustrated by informal settlements or squatting. The effect of high cost of transaction decreases revenue collection and widespread loss of credibility for formal land administration and

the ultimate effect of impaired economic and social performance (Antonio, 2007).

6.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Accessibility: Table 2 reveals that From 1999 to 2010, 42,018 out of 105,408 land applications were successfully allocated land, 39.86% successful rate. Further probe reveals that 80% of the successful applicants used insiders in AGIS/ FCDA, who helped in one way or the other to get their applications approved. The survey of the mode of land acquisition shows that only 39.86% of applicants were allocated formal land by FCTA. It further revealed that land developers acquire more land through informal means (open market) and this results in high cost of housing and rent. The implication of restricted access to land through the official means is that people find other means to meet their needs, which leads to land speculation, squatter settlements and encroachment.

The findings of this study shows that there is lack of adequate accessibility to land in the Federal Capital City (FCC). This results in denying of access by other users and informal settlements within FCC. All these are among the leading causes of high cost of land, houses and house rent in FCC. Inequitable land distribution and restricted access to land through the formal means resulting in people finding informal means to meet with their needs, which may lead to land speculation, illegal development and encroachment. Thereby giving rise to land speculation, when the demand for land, at the present or future, outstrips the supply of land. Property developers and investors are quick to recover their investment that is they wait for prices to increase and sell their tenure at a very

high profit. The land related departments are too bureaucratic; their processes are slow and lengthy, more often resulting in huge cost (mostly unofficial). Due to lengthy and costly procedure land owners and investors seek alternatives. Physical access often requires removal of illegal structure by Development Control or involvement of court order.

Affordability: The current land charges were considered to be very high as shown by the field survey. Figure 5 reveals that 35% agreed that land charges were very expensive and 34% believe that it is expensive, thus 69% agreed that land charges were high. The Survey also revealed that only 31% agreed that land is affordable in FCC. Therefore, land is not easily affordable in FCC. The survey further reveals that land charges and transaction fees are very expensive compared with the monthly income of applicants, thus land is not easily affordable in FCC. Very high cost of transaction and land charges leads to inappropriate practices such as corruption and bribery. The implication of lack of adequate affordable land includes fewer formal land transactions, reduces land registration, and reduces revenue generation and encourages informal land market. The development of the city in phase and administrative bottlenecks on award of infrastructural work causes lack of adequate availability of serviced land (such as roads, water, light, sewage and drainage system). Allocation of land within districts without infrastructures makes land inaccessible and undevelopable. Land speculation and high land charges in FCC has made land unaffordable and has led to growth of slums and squatter settlements in FCC.

The implications of these are increase house rents both residential and commercial, high cost of living and doing business, high cost of land

and properties, environmental deterioration, reduced investment potentials, inefficient urban development and more informal settlement. This study has established that land is not affordable in FCC, high land charges from cost of application (N100, 000), tax clearance, and now international passport are required as means of identification for any transaction. The high charges discourage registration and consequently investments on land. Speculation in the land market in FCC has made land unaffordable. Many are forced to find shelter illegally, which creates slums and squatter settlements, environmental deterioration, inefficient urban development pattern and illegal sub-divisions within the City.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The study has examined the affordability and accessibility of land in the Federal Capital City (FCC) Abuja. It has achieved this through analysis of the data on the applications and beneficiaries of land in FCC, alongside is the institutional survey from the land related departments in FCC. The study concluded that land is not affordable and accessible in FCC, by drawing relevant pragmatic recommendations based on the findings from all the survey and analysis carried out. It is therefore believed that the findings and recommendations of the study are pertinent to the improvement of the affordability and accessibility of land in the Federal Capital City (FCC) Abuja. To achieve affordability and accessibility of land in the Federal Capital City (FCC) Abuja.), the following are recommended:

- i. The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) should carry out a total review of the Abuja Master Plan after 38 years of its existence.
- ii. The FCTA should invest heavily on

infrastructure development and also involve private sector in the development of FCC to meet peoples expectations and also review downward the cost of land Charges in the FCC.

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