

Problem and Prospect of Housing the Dead in Nigeria

Olajide, Sunday Emmanuel¹, ALABI, Oluwole Titilayo², AKINLABI, Tomide³

¹Dept. Of Est. Mgt., Federal Poly, Ado-Ekiti.

²Dept. Of Est. Mgt. Yaba College of Tech., Lagos

³Dept. of Est. Mgt., Rufus Giwa Poly, Owo, Ondo State

ABSTRACT: *It is a statement of fact that most of the researches center on the measures towards solving housing problem for the living. It may sound funny that the dead are facing problem of inadequate housing. Housing provision for the dead had been found to be in the neglect, where there are provisions, they are grossly inadequate. It is therefore the intention of this research work to consider the problem and prospect of housing the dead in Nigeria with special focus on South Western Nigeria. Data were sourced through the use of questionnaire, observation, direct interview, and use of related literature. Stratified Sampling technique was adopted. Result showed that majority of the deads were buried within the residential neighbourhood; not adequate provision was made by both private and public sectors toward proper housing of the dead; few purpose-built cemeteries were not properly maintained; health hazards were found to be imminent among others. It was hereby recommended that both the private and public organizations should embark on enlightenment campaign on the hazards inherent in burying within the house; adoption of the concept of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in providing standard and well maintained cemetery at different but suitable points within the city or town; existing cemeteries need to be secured and kept clean by the Local Councils and religious bodies; need to enact enabling laws whereby those who insist to bury their dead within the house are made to pay exorbitantly to curb indiscriminate burial was also seen to be relevant.*

KEYWORDS: cemetery, dead, housing, problem, prospect

I. INTRODUCTION

Essential, discussions and researches on housing problem, no doubt have become a global phenomenon. Both locals and internationals conferences and workshops have been organized on how to find lasting solution to the acute shortage of habitable accommodation worldwide. It is however appalling to note that with all the endless search for permanent solution to housing problem for the living, little or no effort is made to discover the need to proper house the dead. Some people erroneously believe that once one breath the last breath, everything about such soul is finished. This is far from the truth, until one is buried, it is not over yet. In fact, death is a possibility (assurance). It is just a matter of time. The Bible in Hebrew chapter 9 verse 27 affirms "it is appointed unto men once to die....." there is no record of any one that has lived forever on earth. Hence, the need to pay more attention to the disposal of the dead by individuals, corporate organizations and public institutions.

In the recent time in Nigeria, there had been cases of exhume of the dead for ritual; or money making purposes. This has been as a result of poor maintenance of the few available cemeteries.

Omosule et al (2013) observed that Town Planners in the developing world has lost sight of the inclusion of the third estate of man in their planning practices. They affirmed that planning is an activity system which involves an array of subject matters that include economic and physical development. They exploited an empirical method in finding out reasons why attention is not being paid to cemetery planning in the developing countries in general and Nigeria in particularly. They discovered general apathy on the part of respondents in discussing issues relating to cemetery development because of the sacred nature of the subject matter.

As a matter of fact, indiscriminate burial especially within the residential neighborhood had been seen to be very hazardous to human health. Life most often, well are dug within the residential areas and in most cases such waters are contaminated by the carcasses of the deads buried within the estate. The same thing happens to situation where there are burst water pipes. This has been discovered such that, this practice has caused big damage to the lives of residents (Olajide et al 2013, Basmajian, et al 2010, Balogun, 2010).

Planning, development and management of cemetery in the recent time is seen as a source of investment. In developed countries, cemeteries are used as tourist center serving as source of income for government, corporate bodies as well as private individuals. From the foregoing, it is intention of the writers to examine the problem and prospect of making adequate provision for the dead in Nigeria and South Western Part of Nigeria (The Yoruba's) in particular with a view of making cemeteries more attractive and investment driven.

II. THE STUDY AREA

The cities of Abeokuta, Ibadan, Akure, Osogbo and Ado-Ekiti were used to represent the entire South Western Nigeria. Lagos is not included for its mega city nature and the general belief that Lagos is a representation of every ethnic group in Nigeria. The South Western part of Nigeria is dominated by the Yorubas, though with slight diverse culture and dialects but the uniqueness of Yoruba language and culture make them distinct. The Yorubas are considered suitable as their people generally believe that as far as Nigeria is today, they are homogeneous in many respect than any other geo-political zone. These cities represent the five odia states of Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Notwithstanding the fact that not much research has been carried out on the subject matter, effort is made to peruse some available write-ups in order to determine the degree of awareness on the planning and use of affordable and qualitative cemetery both locally and internationally.

In the editorial column of Tribune Newspaper May 12, 2012, the deplorable state of Sango cemetery in Ibadan was highlighted. The Historical background of the cemetery vis-a-vis the status and personality of different souls that were buried there. It was however argued that the Local and State governments had not done enough in the aspect of maintenance and provision of security. It was however suggested that the Authorities of Ibadan North Local government of must see it as a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that the cemetery environment is cleared and subsequently kept clean.

Olaniyi (2010) posited that one of the problems associated with Housing shortage is Nigeria is that professionals/researchers as well as government seems not to have reliable statistics of the category of people that needed to be housed and the type of design required by different cadre of people among others. He emphasized a wide difference in housing need for students, prisoners, aged people, lunatics, singles and households. He added that non-challant attitude of the private and public sectors in planning for proper housing of the dead had caused a lot of havoc for the society. Here, he mentioned indiscriminate sitting of burial grouped within and around residential neighborhood. He concluded by proffering that for Nigeria and Nigerians to find a lasting solution to housing problem, effort must be intensified to identify different categories of Nigerians that need housing. This, he believed would dictate the type of design needed for each recommended housing user.

In the view of Fashola (2013), the Chief Executive of Lagos State, Southwest Nigeria, he warned Lagosian to stop burying dead bodies of their loved ones at home as the action has serious climatic and health implication. According to him burying corpses at home was never good option for Lagosian, explaining that it portends danger to people. He added that the drilling of boreholes for water, there are prospects of getting toxins from decomposing corpses mixing with the water. He however noted the unconcerned attitude of government and other corporate bodies towards adequate maintenance of the existing cemeteries and the need to provide new ones. He emphasized the need to upgrade cemeteries to a tourist centres as it is being practices elsewhere.

Omosulu and Ajegunmo (2013) opined that there was high level neglect of cemetery planning and maintenance in Owo town in particular and Nigeria in general. They however recommended the use of geographical information system (GIS) for easy identification of grave site, storage and retrieval of information with regards to individual tomb. They also believe that cemeteries should be treated to lavish landscaping to make them beautiful and to serve as reminders of the beautiful Jerusalem on high. They concluded by asserting that for the sake of city development and sustainability, cemetery should not be taken as a dump site for the dead or a resting place for destitutes. It should be a dignity site for relaxation spiritual exercise, site for archeological excursion and a tourism centre just like the congressional cemetery in the United States of America.

Stretching the importance of final resting place (grave). the Holy Bible also highlighted the need for family cemetery. In Genesis 49:29-32 "Then Jacob told them (his children) soon I will die. Bury me with my father and grandfather in the cave in Ephron's field. This is the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite for a permanent burial place. There, Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried. There Isaac and his wife Rebecca are buried and there I buried Leah. It is the cave that my grandfather, Abraham bought from the Hittites. In Genesis 50:12 "so Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them. They carried his body to the land of Canaan and buried it there in the cave of Machpelah. This is the cave that Abraham had bought for a permanent burial place in the field of Ephron, the Hittite near Namre". The above quotations explain what used to be in the past in the area of providing or securing a befitting burial ground (cemetery) for the family. This is an evidence that there is a clear provision for the dead.

Adebusuyi et al (2012) in their findings on why Yoruba will not bury their deads in the public cemetery, the following reasons were discovered:

- Burying their deads in the cemetery is considered a strange culture
- Burying the deads in the cemetery is like burying their deads in the foreign land
- Lack of proper maintenance

- Burying in the cemetery is like separating their departed loved ones from them
- The culture interprets to mean dishonoring their deads especially aged parents
- The protection of the residents and family is the responsibility of spirit of the deads buried at home. Hence, when the deads are buried in the cemetery, this strips the residents and families of this belief.
- Collection and concentration of graves in an area (cemetery) becomes night mire, frightened and attraction of evil spirit
- Activities of money making rituals through exhuming of the deads.
- For a person to build a house, ownership covers burying the owner within the house.
- It is the belief of Yorubas that our men and women, dead or alive should be seen around us.

However, the authors believe that efforts need to be intensified to enlighten the people on the use of cemetery and the benefit inherent. To accomplish this, it was suggested that government should proceed on more enlightenment programmes and gradual entrenchment of adequate security for the cemeteries, government to encourage other bodies to develop and manage their own cemeteries as a source of investment and that burial ground whether public or private should be located where people will be seeing it.

Olorunleke (2011) saw investment in housing to be consuming considerable percentage of the Nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He asserted that housing had become a major market in the world. As a way of regulating the market, there is need to shore up the value of property and improve on their marketability by discouraging burying the dead within and around residential area. A solicited a befitting public cemetery to be established in every major town to take care of the dead.

Having considered the existing write-ups and researches on the state of our cemetery and the need for adequate planning and upgrading, it is the intention of the writers of this paper to further consider the problem and prospect of housing the dead in Nigeria with a view to turning our cemeteries to tourist centers through adequate maintenance.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data is the fact received from an object that needs to be processed. The processed data becomes information which is meaningful for decision making. The main data set utilized in this paper, therefore, collected using a structured questionnaire administered to selected residents in the city capitals of Abeokuta, Ibadan, Osogbo, Akure and Ado-Ekiti all in the South Western Nigeria. A combination of systematic and purposeful samplings were used to select respondents. Effort was made through the use of research assistants to stratify the cities with the motive of targeting adults and professionals mostly in the environmental circle. In all, a total of 250 sets of questionnaire were administered on the respondents having 50 sets from each state. Data were also collected through observations direct interview as well as use of published and unpublished literature. Frequency table, simple percentages and simple statistical analysis were employed to explain and amplify the result of the hypotheses tested.

V. THE CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS

Many times, the results obtained in samples do not always agree exactly with the theoretical results expected according to the rules of probability..

Suppose that a particular sample a set of possible events $E_1, E_2, E_3, \dots, E_k$ can observe to occur with frequency $O_1, O_2, O_3, \dots, O_k$ called observe frequencies $e^1, e_2, e_3, \dots, e_k$ can expected or theoretical frequencies often we which to know whether the observed frequencies differ significantly from expected frequencies.

A measure of discrepancy existing between the observed and expected frequencies is supplied by statistical χ^2 (chi square) given by $\chi^2 = \sum_{j=1}^K \left(\frac{O_j - e_j}{e_j} \right)^2$ where if the total frequency is μ

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{O_j^2}{e_j} - \mu$$

If $\chi^2 = 0$, the observed and the theoretical frequencies agree exactly. The larger the value of χ^2 the greater is the discrepancy between the observed and the expected frequencies. To investigate agreement between the observed and the expected frequencies, we compute the statistic

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^h \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{(O_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}}$$

where $e^{ij} = \frac{n_i n_j}{n}$

VI. TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESIS 1

H₀: There is no relationship between peoples' culture and where they love to be buried
H₁: There is closed relationship between peoples' culture and where they love to be buried

Table 1 Observed and expected value of relationship between tribe /culture and where people want to be buried.

Choice of place to be buried	Tribe/Culture			
	Yoruba	Ibo	Hausa	Total
Residential	157 (150.72)	14 (19.83)	17(13.49)	188
Cemetery	33(39.28)	11(5.17)	5(4.55)	59
Total	142	87	10	239

Source: Authors Field Work 2013

$\chi^2 = 10.51$, $\chi^2 (r-1) (c-1)$ with $\infty = 0.05 = 5.999$ since $\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{tab}$ reject H_0 and conclude that there is relationship.

HYPOTHESIS 2

H₀: Government and /or its agency have no significance role to play in the proper housing of the dead in Nigeria
H₁: Government and /or its agency have a significant role to play in ensuring proper housing of the dead in Nigeria

Table 2: Observed and expected value of relationship between government roles and the dead.

		Responses					TOTAL
		SA	A	I	D	SD	
Government roles	1	103 (85)	89(64.25)	0(18.5)	35(31.75)	23(48.5)	250
	2	5(87)	7(64.25)	27(18.5)	69(31.75)	142(48.5)	250
	3	143(87)	104(64.25)	0(18.5)	1(31.75)	2(48.5)	250
	4	97(87)	57(64.25)	47(18.5)	22(31.75)	27(48.5)	250
	Total	348	257	74	127	194	1000

Source: Authors Field Work 2013

$\chi^2 = 44.7178$ $\chi^2 \infty = 5.999$ since $\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{tab}$ we do not have enough in support of the null hypothesis we therefore conclude that Govt. has a significant role in ensuring a proper housing of the dead.

HYPOTHESIS 3

Table 3 Observed and expected of relationship between people religion and where they which to be buried

Choice of place to be buried	RELIGION			Total
	Christian	Islam	Traditional	
Residential	107(112.89)	76(69.16)	7(7.95)	190
Cemetery	35(29.11)	11(17.84)	3(2.05)	49
Total	142	87	10	239

Source: Authors Field Work 2013

$\chi^2 = 5.3518$, $\chi^2 \infty = 5.999$

Since $\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{tab}$ we do not have enough statistical evidence to reject H_0 . We therefore conclude that there is no relationship between peoples' religion and where they which to be buried.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The following tables are used to demonstrate data presentation and analysis.

Tables: 4 Religion of Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Christianity	148	59.2	59.2
Islam	92	36.8	96.0
Traditional Religion	8	3.2	99.2
Others	2	0.8	100.00
Total	250	100.00	

Source: Authors Field Work 2013

From table 4 above majority of the respondents were Christians (59.2%) and Muslims (36.8%). This could be as a result of the fact that they are the major religions legally recognized in Nigeria

Table: 5 Impact of Region on where Respondents wish to be buried

Option	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	155	62.0	62.0
No	95	38.0	100.0
Total	250	100.00	

Source: Authors Field Work 2013

Table 5 above shows a clear indication that the region of respondents has impact on where they wish to be buried in that 62.0% of the respondent agreed to this fact.

Table:6 Average Number of Tomb Per Compound

Average No of Tomb	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
10 and Above	9	3.6	3.6
7-9	19	7.9	11.2
4-6	27	10.8	22.0
1-3	137	54.8	76.8
None	58	23.2	100.00
Total	250	100.00	

Source: Authors Field Work 2013

Table 6 above shows that majority of the houses occupied by the respondents contain at least a tomb. This is manifested in survey of 76.8% of the total surveyed houses. This interpreted that most of the people within the surveyed area prefer to bury their dead within the house and its environ. This also interpreted that the practice of burying the dead in the house is gradually becoming endemic.

Table:7 Where Respondents wish to be Buried

Options	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Residential Houses	188	75.2	75.2
Purpose Built Cemetery	49	19.6	94.8
No Response	11	5.2	100.00
TOTAL	250	100.0	

Source: Authors Field Work, 2013

From the survey conducted as seen in table 7 above majority of the respondents prefer to be buried within the residential house (75.2%) while only 19.6% of the surveyed respondents indicated interest to be buried in a purpose built cemetery. This result may be interpreted that Government and its agency may require special strategy to convince people to change their choice for cemetery. Some of the reasons given for their choice of home include peoples' culture and poor maintenance and security of /in the purpose-built cemetery in various parts of the country among others.

Table:8 Respondents' Responses to Issues Relating to the Subject Matter

S/N	VARIABLES	SA	A	I	D	SD	% tage Agreed	% tage Disagreed	% of No Responses
1.	The purpose built cemeteries are poorly maintained in Nigeria	103	89	0	35	23	76.8	23.2	0.0
2.	Government is doing enough in the	5	7	27	69	142	4.8	95.2	10.8

	provision of suitable home for the Dead								
3.	Government /its agencies have role to play in siting & managing cemeteries	143	104	0	1	2	98.8	1.2	0.0
4.	Culture /religion of people influence their choice of burial	155	81	5	4	5	54.4	3.6	2.0
5.	Do you believe issues relating to burial of the Dead had been negligently handled by parties concerned in Nigeria	97	57	47	22	27	61.6	19.6	18.8
6.	Do you believe that indiscriminate burials can be hazardous to health	77	102	6	30	35	71.6	26.0	2.4
7.	Do you believe enactment of laws to enforce use of cemetery can work?	43	62	17	20	108	42.0	51.2	6.8
8.	Can the concept of PPP help in the provision of adequate cemetery?	42	99	89	13	7	56.4	0.8	35.6

Source: Authors Field Work 2013

Key: SA= Strongly Agreed; A= Agreed; I= Indifferent; D= Disagreed; SD= Strongly Disagree; PPP=Public Private Partnership

The table 8 above shows the following:

- I. That the purpose built cemeteries are poorly maintained in Nigeria. 76.8% of the total surveyed correspondents agreed to this.
- II. Also, it was proved that government is not doing enough in the provision of suitable home for the Dead. This is shown from the surveyed findings only 4.8% disagreed while 10.8% were indifferent and 95.2% of the respondents agreed.
- III. Research findings also showed that Government and its agency have role to play in sitting and managing cemetery. 98.8% of the total respondents supported this.
- IV. It was also proved that issues relating to buried of the dead have been negligently handled by parties concerned in Nigeria. 61.6% of the surveyed respondents agreed to this while 18.8% did not respond.
- V. The belief of the respondents with the enactment of laws to enforce use of cemetery seems to be dangling as 51.2% agreed while 42.0% disagreed. 6.8% of the respondents were indifferent. This may simply interprets that government may require extra effort; dedication and popular strategy in ensuring that the implementation of the enabling laws see the light of the day.

VII. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1. Percentage of people that strongly agreed and agreed that indiscriminate burial can be hazardous are 30.8% and 40.8% respectively which approximately means 72% believed that indiscriminate burying of the dead is hazardous to the environment
2. It is observed that there is relationship between people tribe/culture and where they wish to be buried.
3. It is also observed that Govt. has a significant role to play in ensuring a proper housing of the dead. It is observed that there is no strong relationship between people’s religion and where they wish to be buried. It is however highly believed that indiscriminate burying of people is hazardous to the community.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having established the fact that little or no concern is given to issues relating to the third estate of man in Nigeria, this paper attempted to proffer the following points in order to at least ameliorate the problem:

- i. The need to intensify enlightenment campaign on the hazards inherent in burying within the house by both public and private sectors.
- ii. Government and Its agencies need to wake up from its slumber by including in the budget the need for proper planning, and efficient management of cemetery
- iii. In the area of proper maintenance, Local Government authorities should be saddled with the responsibility of recruiting staff for the maintenance of both public and private cemeteries
- iv. Application of the concept of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the provision of standard cemetery is hereby solicited whereby government providing the conducive environment (land) as well as Fund needed in form of loan while the private is left with the development and management..

- v. Cemetery planning and design to be included in the curriculum of the Urban and Regional Planning as well as Surveying and Geo-informatics in higher institutions.
 - vi. Introduction of fine or toll for those who insist to bury their dead within the residential building. This can be accomplished through enactment of enabling laws aiming at curbing indiscriminate burials.
 - vii. Provision of adequate security for the existing and newly developed (proposed) cemeteries to reduce if not eradicating the business of trading with human parts that is becoming too rampant.
 - viii. It is hereby suggested that more planning researches should be carried out on this subject matter.
 - ix. Since death is a must, lectures on life after death should form part of student curriculum in schools.
 - x. Public health workers as well as urban and town planner to inspect and grant or refuse approval whenever wells or boreholes are to be dug where grave(s) are sited within the residential environment.
- This would go a long way in curbing water related diseases arising from indiscriminate burial within the house

IX. CONCLUSION

The intention of this paper is to critically examine the problem of Housing the dead in Nigeria with a view to suggesting sustainable recommendations that would aid proper planning and maintenance of the third estate of man. This, to a great extent has been achieved. It was proven that government agencies had not done enough in this respect. The little efforts from the private sector were found not complemented by the public sector, hence, evidence of poor maintenance of the few available cemeteries. In this respect, the concept of public private partnership is suggested.

An obvious fact around the world is that the organization of land use activities is seen as a major fact in bringing into fore the various components of planning in such a manner that a unit of purpose is introduced into the complexity of the urban fabric. It is however observed that in carrying out their statutory assignment, planners as well as other professionals around the globe have lost sight on the inclusion of the third estate of man in their planning activities. As a matter of fact, it is becoming a major concern that the developing world is gradually furthering their history and evolution, they are oblivious of the fact that the dead represent their past and by extension their evolution, and as a result their memorial suppose to propel their desire for cultural and spiritual fulfillment by studying what they represented while alive (Omosulu et al, 2013).

In conclusion, it is the belief of this research work that if all issues discussed in this paper are thoroughly considered by parties concerned, death and burial will become part of man, interesting and a matter of tourism as it is practiced in the developed countries.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adebusuyi, D and Olawale, A-H (2013): Collective Collections on "Why Yorubas Bury their Dead at Home", weekly Trust Online, Wednesday 23rd January, 2013
- [2] Balogun O (2010): Water and Life: Any Hope for Survival? Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the Obiakor Lecture series of the Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria
- [3] Basmajian C and Coutts, C (2010): Planning for the Disposal of the Dead in Journal of the American Planning Association, Florida USA Vol. 15 No. 1
- [4] Carpel V and Seville W (2006): Planning for Cemeteries. Planning Commissioners Journal Number 64 Vol.11.
- [5] Egbuiwe, R,N (2008): Where the Dead are Buried: Property Rights and Poverty Alleviation in Africa. A Dissertation Presented to the North Eastern University Boston, Massachusetts.
- [6] Fasola, B.R (2013): "Fashola warns Lagos Residents to Stop Burying Dead Bodies in their Houses". Keynote Address at the 5th Climate Change Summit Held at Eko Hotels and Suite, Victoria Island, Lagos Southwest Nigeria, Daily Post Online Newspaper Wed March 14.
- [7] Holy Bible: Genesis Chapter 49 verses 29 to 32 and Chapter 50 verse 12. New Living Bible Obafemi, O.S, Ige S.O and Ajao I.O (2009): A study of Power Holding Corporation of Nigeria (PHCN) service delivery at Ilorin, 2nd International Conference & Exhibition School of Science and Computer Studies, Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti page 175-180.
- [8] Olajide, S.E and Abiodun O.A (2010): Socio-Economic and Environmental Impact of Indiscriminate Burials on Property Transactions in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria Journal of Environment and Earth Science Vol 3 No 1. 2013 Pp 131-138.
- [9] Olaniyi R. O (2010): Who needs Housing? A Seminar paper Presented during EMSA Week, Moshood Abiola Polytechnic Abeokuta, Ogun State
- [10] Olorunleke Remi (2011): Housing as a veritable Investment. Public Enlightenment to the Obas and Chiefs in Ekiti State against Burying in the Home, Unpublished Paper.
- [11] Omosulu S.B and Ajegunmo, G (2013): The Neglect of Cemetery as a Unit of Planning in Owo, Ondo State, Extract from Conference Proceedings, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria Pp 448-462.
- [12] The Nigerian Tribune (2012); The Deplorable State of Sango Cemetery, Tribune House, Ibadan, Oyo State May 12.