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WITH GOVERNMENT DEFIANCE OF PLANNING REGULATIONS HOW FUNCTIONAL ARE FUNCTIONAL SCHOOLS.

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ABSTRACT: *The need to educate the child the world over is a universal norm. The need is in fact seen in developing countries such as Nigeria, as a major instrument for developing the child. Education is also associated with the child's liberty, upward liberating his mind and liberating him from the burden of colonial and of feudal experiences of his ancestors. In an effort to see Lagos State develop rapidly and educationally, an educational programme was established in the state between 1979 and 1983. This programme was to promote education in the state and to provide alternatives for the rather expensive private schools and meet the demand of the yearning. The public programme was especially meant to meet the educational needs of the poor, who could not affort the high school fees charged in private Institution.Thus the "Jakande Educational Programme" (JAP) so-named after the civilian governor of the state between 1979-1983 embarked on mass education for the citizens of the state with the main objective of bringing education to the door step of the poor through the "Free Education Scheme", that characterised the programme. The government' perception was that primary schools will function better when they are situated close to the homes of the students. The concept of functiona1 classrooms' were thus conceived along with the programme..The concept of "functional classrooms", as envisaged by JAP was full of good intentions. It was designed to have a lot of benefactors especially the children of the poor. The programme was also targeted to meet the 'Jakande Governments campaign mandate; run the schools at minimum possible cost, provide schools that would meet minimum requirements of learning and build schools within walking distances from student's homes. To fulfill the objectives of the 'JEP', there were constraints of money, space and time. A lot of land was needed. Jakande Government took maximum advantage of the Land use decree of 1978 which stipulated that all land belongs to Government; with the Federal and State governments have the legal right to allocate, dispose or grant land on short or long-term leases. The decree also allows acquisition of developed land considered useful, and for which compensation are expected to be paid. A lot of land (public and private) were acquired in different parts of the state for the programme. A survey of classrooms needed in the state was calculated at 22,000 classrooms. The scheme was thus christened "22,000 functional classrooms". The Schools were thus meant to be functional, but how functional schools?*

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the programme, using case studies with respect to location, land use, density environmental impact assessment architectural forms and materials employed in the construction of the schools.

KEYWORDS: Planning regulation, Functional Schools, Government Deficiency

INTRODUCTION

The debate on housing policy in developing countries has been on for some decades (Keivani and Werna a&b) and most policies are geared towards government initiated housing provision especially in the developing countries (Ikejiofor,1999;Onobokun,1990). The history of education in Lagos State dates back to the missionary activities in the later part of 19th century, who provided the foundation for the State's educational systems. Between the creation of State in May 1967 and 1983 three types of educational system can be recognized. These include the system developed between 1967-74; 1975;83. Prior to 1967, the area called Lagos State comprised of the Old Federal Territory and the colony division of the Old Western Region, each with its own distinct educational system.

The State inherited two primary systems which differed in duration and in respect of syllabi. The old Wested Region had a six-year primary school programme as against eight years for the Federal. This initial problem had to be tackled for uniformity when the state was created and it was the first major historical assignment.

Between 1975 and 1978, the Lagos State educational system was expanded and there were 427 classrooms (LSG pamphlet 1974). Later in this period, the ministry designed and launched four fovernment primary model schools one in each divisional headquarters at Epe, Ikorodu, Badagry and Ikeja.

Between 1975 and 1979 new local governments were created and Lagos State comprised Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland, Mushin, Somolu, Ikeja, Epe, Badagry and Ikorodu Local Government areas. The increase in the number of local governments was partly to spread educational facilities throughout the state. The year 1976 marked especially, a turning point for the educational programme in Nigeria as the federal government embarked on making primary education free throughout the Federation. Admission and registration of students made the available facilities inadequate. The "shift system" was the norm especially in Lagos State.

Having recognised some of the problems in the primary education set-up in the state, and with a programme of commitment to education as a priority; the Jakande government (1979-83) outlined measures aimed at reforming the education system, provision of neighbourhood schools in all parts of the state, so that no child will travel more than five kilometres from his home. Others are the complete overhauling of the administration of schools through 'the establishment of the Lagos State Schools Management Board; the abolition of Common Entrance Examination and making private primary school an illegal institution in the State.

To achieve these goals of JEP, new schools were built which are different in style, location and functions. The completion time for construction was also different from the previous systems. The number of schools soared within the first twelve months of the system (8.850 classrooms were provided). A new construction method was also adopted.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

Recently, a reconnaissance survey of the schools were made as case studies with respect to architectural planning and environment. Schools were visited; and planning and environmental analysis were carried out with respect to siting, neighbourhood impact and architectural character through physical measurements of buildings, photographs and general observation. Also as a parent, certain general economic and social characteristics were evaluated based on ones assessments, reactions from meetings of the PTA and interaction with other groups such as other teachers, parents and non-governmental organisations such as religious bodies and social clubs. The first observation made was that certain economic benefits have accrued to the parents as a result of the scheme. These include financial savings on transportation as children no longer have to go far to schools and books were supplied to the pupils by the government. (This particular decision is being revised).

Equally important is the fact that pupils no longer had to spend longer time in traffic thus reducing the hazards involved in travelling. The sitting of schools close to the doorstep of the pupils was also an inducement to pupils and parents.

The provision of many schools, at once however, means less expenditures on other social activities, The need for more teachers at a time resulted in ill- equipped teachers without formal teacher training (a lot of school certificate holders were employed and some of average grade were given crash programme in teaching). The result is the tendency for decline in the quality of the education received in the scheme.

The loss of playing or recreational grounds and community space was also a disadvantage. Thus Lagos State citizens were deprived of spaces for recreational and community uses although such spaces were usable for the children in the environment.

For the purpose of deeper analysis into the merits and demerits of these functional schools' studies were carried out in a number of the schools as case studies. These include Abule Okuta Primary School, Bariga, Temidire, Idi-oro and Ogo Oluwa Primary Schools, Ghagada. Gbagada and Ajidagan Primary Schools, Gbagada. Other schools studied includes Anikulapo Primary School, Idi-oro-Mushin, and Anthony Model Primary School, Ajao Estate, Anthony Village.

Case study 1 Locations

Abule Okuta Primary School is located on Odunsi Street, off Tijani Road, Bariga. The neighbourhood consists mainly of residential and commercial land uses including other social services such as mosques and churches. There were small shops and display tables for selling goods were positioned at the front of most of the buildings

Case study II

Temidire, Idi-odo Ogo-Oluwa primary Schools in Gbagada, bye Oworonshoki Expressway. The schools' premises are situated along the Oworonshoki Expressway off Ajidagan Street in Pedro area of Somolu. They are open to public access, via the expressway and Somolu Community

with which they form a boundary. It is separated by a big wall on one side and a swamp on the other. With the road in front and the expressway on the remaining side, it is more of an 'Island with safety and security implications.

Case study Ill
Gbagada and Ajidagan Primary Schools. These two schools are located in the same compound along the boundary of Somolu Local Government premises and Ghagada. The land uses in the area are mostly institutional. To the west is a private Nursery and School (Grace Children's School) and to the East in Lagos State Ministry of Works (Somolu area office and Community Works Yard).

Case study IV
Anikulapo Primary School, Idi-oro/Mushin is partly on the land formerly occupied and belonged to the late musician "Fela" Anikulapo-Kuti" but was forcefully taken by Military government. The site is large and has good access from Ikorodu and Mushin roads. It is also not far from Yaba bus stop and Ojuelegba traffic nodes. It is surrounded by residential units (west and south sides) and railway lines and a steel company (Dorman Long abults the North side.

Case study V
Anthony Model Primary School is located in an obscure section of Ajao Estate as the junction of Adediran Ajao Street and Idowu Ajao Road. It is surrounded on all sides but one (the access road) by residential units. The units are wholly owner-occupied middle class housing.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANING

Onokerhoraye (1985) empirically classified housing standard in Nigeria into two categories: first, he identified space standard, which defines housing intensity development in terms of terms of plot sizes, number of buildings per unit area of land and occupancy sizes. The second relates to performance standard, which describes the quality of the environment which is important in the overall planning of the schools. Ball (2003) identified land acquisition and permissions from appropriate regulatory body as the first step into the development of the any building including the school building. Four interrelated processed leading to the production of commercial building like school building were highlighted by Sivam *et. al* (2001),Planning; land assembly; implementation; and final disposal of the finished houses. It was discovered that the planning stage consists of plan preparation and plan approval; land assembly consists of land acquisition, compensation to landowners and provision of finance to agencies; implementation consists of land development and construction; and finally, disposal consists of housing disposal, tenure arrangements and provision of finance to individual.

Case Study 1:
Hand dug open gutters run parallel to the street. Some of the gutters were blocked by sand. Along most of the gutters were stagnant waters which have coloured sewage in them.
There are also a lot of competing users around the school premises as exemplified by buses that ply the Bariga junction route using the roads that define the two sides of the school. Buses park around this school though, illegally. Clusters of people are therefore found hanging around in

this area most of the times. Other road users (vehicular! pedestrian) also use the access as a short route to Abule market in Bariga.

Case Study 2

The schools are separated by a big wall on one side and a swamp on the other. The access road runs in the front and the fourth side is the expressway.The schools are close to the street and their boundary cannot be distinguished from the public property line. The offset of the first school from the road seems inadequate. At the back of the schools is a strip of swamp that runs through the whole length of the section of Somolu/ Gbagada district. The swamp limits the school's expansion and its irregular nature makes it impossible for good utilization of the site. the school is divided into two parts namely the Ghagada Primary School and the Ajidagan Primary School. The Gbagada classrooms are built with concrete blocks while those at Ajidagan are built with timber. There is only one playing ground for the/two schools which obviously is inadequate.

Case Study 5

The architectural character (low quality of materials and construction) of the school is in sharp contrast to the adjoining buildings. This is often the case in respect of many of the schools location. The situation thus created is 'noise' in otherwise quiet neighborhood with its attendant negative effect on property values. The problem is further compounded by the fact that children of residents in the area attend the numerous private schools within the estate and its environs thus creating class consciousness. Children of the poor are often seen most of the time working back and forth in the area during school hours. The school in adding nuisance to the property value of the area occupies an area earmarked for open space for the neighborhood. It should be obvious that tenants of the area will not be happy with a situation like this which obviously is beyond their control.

ARCHITECTURE

Architecture designs and materials employed in the schools are basically uniform throughout. Foundations are either raft or strip. The foundation is dug up to 600mn and filled with blocks. Stone and hardcore were used to fill the voids after which concrete cement is poured to seal the bonds. A 9cm concrete slab is then poured on the floor and exposed without further rendering, leaving a coarse and rough surface.

Structural framing is round steel column (7.5cm) and the low block wall represents the skin. A blackboard partition defines a classroom. The spacings between the steel columns varies between 1.2m — 1.4m and is pnncipallly responsible for the structures. Window and door openings are left without frames and sleeves.

The roof is pitched and it is composed of timber trusses, rafters and purlins placed 1cm centre to centre externally, the roof is then covered with corrugated iron sheets. Ceiling and facia boards are absent, there is no provision for drainage channels and landscaping are absent in any of the schools.

Mechanical system for ventilation and illumination are not provided. Equally absent are auxiliary facilities such as assembly/dining halls and special programme areas (library, science and nature study rooms).

There are problems associated with the scheme. These include problems related to siting (locations) and population of students. Others are the implementation of the scheme and conditions of the physical structures (architecture).

In terms of their sittings and planning, the physical characteristics of the schools in most cases have no aesthetic value (see pictures); in a lot of cases they create visual obstruction and nuisance. Their presence generate noise in otherwise quiet neighbourhoods especially when pupils engage in extra curricular activities such as playing and singing.
The sites chosen for the schemes were not appraised before their selection and were thus not guided by planning regulations and standards. Thus a number of sites do not positively respond to their environment with respect to access, size, noise and adjacent uses. Some schools are located at or near traffic generators, e.g. Ajidagan School, Oworoshoki expressway, Anikiulapo-Kuti School, Idi-oro, some are near marsh lands or swamps. Hence they are regularly flooded, mosquito infested and creating health and environmental hazards.

A survey of the Gbagada/Somolu area with respect to the location of the primary schools (Ajidagan, Omololu, Temidire, Abule Okuta) revealed that many sites are not properly utilized. The site for Ajidagan primary schools is very small, having no playing areas. Similarly, Omololu Primary School, Surulere is situated on the land which was the only communal land, serving all age groups. The Anikalapo Primary School in Idi-Oro is located in a busy and noisy area close to the traffic concentration around the Railway line and the steel industry.

Closely related to location is the topography of the areas. The soil conditions and orientations vary from place to place which the design disregarded. Layout of the classroom blocks in most cases makes circulation within the school.

The non-provision of artificial lighting also makes it impossible to teach pupil with audio-visual aidä or to show films of interest to the children. The students are also robbed of watching some educative programme meant for school children on the television during school hours.

The roof materials is aluminium (a-good heat conductor) which transfers a lot of heat into the space on sunny days and the uncomfortability therefrom is compounded by absence of ceiling materials that can reduce the heat. Sanitary facilities in most schools surveyed are inadequate, and are mere after thoughts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT ON ARCHITECTURE

Recommendations

There should be provision of auxiliary spaces such as dining room/assembly area, science rooms and library. Roof over-hang must not be domineering in such a way that it excludes lights at certain time of day. Ceilings for insulation must be provided and facia board for wind and rain

control be constructed. Floors must be well paved to make maintenance easy, pleasant to the eyes and makes pupils feel secure. There should be provision for electricity and good drainage system. Windows and doors must be provided for weather control. Security, sanitary facilities and adequate refuse collection system should likewise be provided.

1. Concrete or block construction methods are hereby advocated but not timber, because of timber's suspectability to fire outbreak and poor sound control.
2. Partition should be sound-proofed and no corridor should run through the classrooms. Classrooms must be accessed from external corridors as against the interior corridors provided.
3. What could also have been done or avoided? Schools should not have been sited in the heart of residential units, industrial areas, market areas or busy and noisy roads. They should be built in a quiet and peaceful environment with fairly good access for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Schools must be built on fairly large areas with opportunity for play areas and general landscaping.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, comprehensive survey and master plans are to be provided the neighbourhoods and districts to determine their needs. This should be carried out to involve collation of data, and its evaluation to determine proper placement and use of facility(ies) based on preference and priorities of each neighbourhoods matched with available funds. There is also the need to involve the people residing in such areas so as to make contributions (participatory planning) and come up with planning options for development goals to get maximum benefit. The planning decision should not be seen as an imposition by the government on ad-hoc basis.

A debate has always been waged by concerned groups and individuals, that, wouldn't it have been better for the government to build a specific number of schools. Also work on building materials with manufacturers, as well as Nigerian Road and Building Research Institutes, towards incorporating some of the positive aspects of the Yoruba traditional architecture. A Lot of problems bordering on shelter for all can no doubt be solved through incorporating Yoruba traditional architecture into modem architecture.

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