

# **An Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of Urban Development-Induced Resettlement Scheme in Nigerian Cities: A Case Study of the Nyamusala – ATC Road Construction in Jalingo Metropolis, Taraba State**

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## **Abstract**

Resettlement takes place when major construction projects, which are important elements of development, force people who have lived in a region for a long time to leave their homes, and their place in society, economic and agricultural activities, relationships and opportunities and any other immovable properties, to live in other places. This paper examines the socio-economic impact of the Nyamusala – ATC road construction in Jalingo Metropolis of Taraba state on the affected urban residents. Data was generated through the use of questionnaires, informant consultation, focus group discussion, and consultation meetings with government officials. The result of the study shows that unlike other development induced resettlement scheme in Nigeria and other developing countries, the Jalingo urban development induced resettlement scheme was very successful as it benefited the affected people. Although the process of the resettlement scheme fall short of the standard of best practices all over the world as the affected people were not involved in the decision making process, the study findings show that the affected people were better off after the project. Most of the affected people were paid cash compensation that was adequate enough to enable them build better houses than their former. This paper therefore suggests the need to create satisfactory policies and procedures in order to eliminate or minimize the adverse effects of relocation and resettlement both on the affected people and on the national economy.

**Keywords:** Assessment, Resettlement, Socio-economic Impact, Urban Development.

## **1. Introduction**

Urban centres all over the world owe their origin to the development of transportation [1]. For example, as improvement is made in the means and mode of transport so also is the increase in socio-economic activities which consequently leads to urban expansion. It is as a result of the importance of transport in the development of urban centres that Pederson asserts that ‘urban centres are the creatures of transport’. It is even more evident that transport does not only create urban centres, but also their sustenance depends largely on it [1]. Ojekunle further

maintain that the same transport that creates and sustains urban centres also constitute an agent of urban destruction.

Urban areas in the developing countries including Nigeria have put themselves in the development path but this path has not been people sensitive. Urban infrastructure and transportation projects that cause displacement include slum clearance and upgrading; the establishment of industrial and commercial estates; the building and upgrading of sewerage systems, schools, hospitals, ports, etc. Others include the construction of communication and transportation networks, including those connecting different parts of urban centres. In growing urban centres like Jalingo where most of the population live in low-income areas designated by the government as “slums”, a large number of these settlements are located on public land and land that are designated for road construction or expansion in the Master Plan. Therefore expanding the roads will directly mean relocating these settlements.

Resettlement takes place when major construction projects, which are important elements of development, force people who have lived in a region for a long time to leave their homes, and their place in society, economic and agricultural activities, relationships and opportunities and any other immovable properties, to live in other places [2]. Some scholars argue that the tragedy of displacement due to development projects is compounded because the affected bears the cost but have no share in the benefits [3]. Colchester points out that the experience of indigenous peoples with the development projects has led to cultural alienation, dispossession of land and resources, lack of consultation, insufficient or a complete lack of compensation, human rights abuses, and a lowering of living standards. The specific and strong cultural connection that many indigenous groups have with the land and the environment in which they live makes their physical dislocation potentially more harmful than is often the case for other groups [4]. Many have got very minimal compensation which is never enough to sustain a family with many children having education in private institutions. These effects are not only economic, but social, cultural, psychological and environmental as well.

Resettlement scheme is aimed at providing assistance to the displaced people so as to improve their overall living standards. Activities under this scheme include the acquisition of land for civil works, reconstruction of some of the basic civic amenities to the remaining population and host population and payment of compensation for economic losses and other rehabilitation benefits. The over-riding objective of resettlement scheme is to ensure that persons unavoidably losing land or property as a result of this road construction project attain equal or better livelihoods and living standards than “without” project status. The primary objectives of the resettlement programme are to mitigate the adverse impacts of the project and to assist the affected persons in resettlement and restoration of their income and livelihoods. The resettlement programme identifies (i) type and extent of loss of assets, including land and houses/shops and business enterprises; (ii) type and extent of loss of livelihood or income opportunities; and (iii) collective losses, such as common property resources and social infrastructure.

For this reason, the approach to resettlement and rehabilitation concepts should deal with these issues in an integrated manner. To ensure that resettlement takes place in a well-planned way, and to minimize its adverse effects, it is necessary for people, NGOs and institutions who run the country to define their goals, policies and strategies for resettlement and rehabilitation. In particular, one of the problems observed by experts who have worldwide experience has been the inadequacy and inconsistency of laws regulating resettlement procedures in different countries (Nigeria inclusive) [2]. This paper examines the socio-economic impact of the Nyamusala – ATC road construction in Jalingo Metropolis of Taraba state on the affected urban residents.

## **1.1. Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study include;

- i. To assess the impact of displacement and resettlement as a result of road construction on urban residents in Jalingo Metropolis.
- ii. To assess the urban resettlement policies with regard to Nyamusala-ATC road construction on the affected urban residents.
- iii. To examine the level of consultation/participation of the affected people in negotiation process of the resettlement scheme.
- iv. To examine the level of success or otherwise of the urban resettlement scheme.

## 1.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on John Rawl's [5] theory of justice and to be specific the different principles he uses to justify the act of resettlement and rehabilitation. The connection with Rawl's theory is clear when we see that development projects such as transportation which displace whole communities can be utilitarian nightmares. There has been a considerable projection of the problem through the prism of social justice, vulnerability of the marginalized, gender sensitivity, impoverishment and such other psychological trauma, which occur when people are resettled. One of the most salient results of Rawl's theory is his conception of injustice as that which creates advantages for some parts of a community rather than benefit all. "Injustice," he argues, "is simply inequalities that are not to the benefit of all". Rawl's general conception recognizes some of the problems encountered by the "oustees" as *injustices*. An unsuccessful resettlement scheme cannot only fail to benefit displaced persons and family, but also, as the literature shows, can impoverish them [5]. In Rawlsian terms, it can create new inequalities by depriving people not only of income and wealth but also of social goods in two other categories: liberty and opportunity, and social bases of respect. Then, the first contribution of the Rawlsian general conception of justice is to synthesize these various impoverishing effects of bad resettlement plans as evidence of injustice. The second contribution is to support and somewhat strengthen standards for best practice in treatment of people displaced by development projects. The ideas of compensation and mitigation come nowhere close to satisfying this conception of justice, which would require that the condition of displaced people be improved not only in terms of income and wealth (conceived broadly to include access to land, to productive resources, and to other subsistence resources such as forests) but also in terms of liberty and opportunity (entailing consultation and self-determination for affected communities and individuals) as well as social bases for respect (including community social organization sufficient for cultural survival) [5]. This according to Rawl would suggest an alternative set of principles for justice in resettlement:

- i. The community and its members are not to be made worse-off in assets or resources (broadly conceived); on the contrary, the outcome is to be advantageous to them.
- ii. Displacement and resettlement are to be freely negotiated by the community, in a process in which all members are fairly represented.
- iii. Community members' social and cultural means of self-respect are not to be damaged by relocation.
- iv. A community has the right to refuse displacement if, in doing so, they do not perpetuate or impose deeper disadvantages upon other communities or other segments of the society.

Displacement and faulty resettlement can impoverish people by removing or degrading the assets or resources which they had formerly relied upon to provide for their own subsistence and income. Losses of this sort figure in five of the eight categories of "impoverishment" that Cernea and others have found to result from development-induced displacement:

## 2. Methodology

The data used for this study were collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through field observations, questionnaire, informal in-depth interviews and intensive discussions with the displaced household heads. Other primary data sources include files and memos of government ministries and departments. 120 sample household heads were randomly selected from the resettlement scheme based on availability. All the sample household heads filled the questionnaire assisted by field assistants. The research team used various techniques such as informant consultation, focus group discussion, and consultation meetings with government officials (from Taraba state ministry of works, housing and transportation and ministry of land and survey). Particular attention was given to the affected shops/businesses and those affected by loss of structure, making the affected structures largely unusable or unliveable.

Secondary data were obtained from published materials, journals and magazines. The frequency counts and item analysis method were used to analyse the data collected. The number and percentage of respondent's response was computed, after which the respondent's response were tallied and a comparison was made of the individual items of high and low response.

### 2.1. Study Area

Jalingo LGA is located between latitudes 8°47' to 9°01'N and longitudes 11°09' to 11°30'E. It is bounded to the North by Lau Local Government Area, to the East by Yorro Local Government Area, to the South and West by Ardo Kola Local Government Area. It has a total land area of about 195.1km<sup>2</sup>. Jalingo LGA has a population of 139,845 according to the 2006 population census, with a projected growth rate of 3% [8]. Presently, Jalingo town is experiencing increasing population and shortage of infrastructural facilities, including road connectivity. The present position whereby commuters from most parts of the town have to go round the town and through the roadblock area to get to ATC is quite cumbersome. Hence, the need for another road that will carry commuters from the town to the ATC area. This reason informed the construction of the Nyamusala – ATC road. The road which runs for a distance of 10.8km was awarded to P.W. Nigeria Limited on 19<sup>th</sup> of March, 2009 at the cost of N3,633,709,758.80. The Nyamusala – ATC road connects two extreme parts of Jalingo Metropolis. The road construction was embarked upon to improve connectivity in road network within the town and to facilitate movement of people and flow of commodities within the metropolis. The road construction is also meant to help in the expansion of the metropolis so as to accommodate the increasing urban population and need for more social amenities. The Nyamusala – ATC road links the new Jalingo modern market and the State Specialist Hospital at one end with the new Taraba State University and College of Agriculture Jalingo at the other end.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The result of the bio data analysis indicates that 74% of the respondents were male and 26% female. 80% of the respondents are married, 25% single and 5% widow. The result also shows that 46% of the respondents are civil servants, 34% are farmers, 16% are artisans and 5% are petty traders. 15% of the respondents claimed that their houses were completely demolished, while 74% claimed that their houses were partially affected and 10% lost their business premises. From the interview schedule, 82% of the respondents admitted being informed of the road construction while 18% claimed otherwise. All the respondents (100%) said that they were not consulted on their choice of type of compensation. Also, all the respondents claimed that they were not involved in the negotiation process of the compensation. The study findings show that apart from notification of the affected people of

government intention to construct the road network, there was no consultation or participation of the affected people in the project scheme. There was no such negotiation between the government and the affected people on the terms of the resettlement and compensation. Government officials from the state Ministry of land and survey evaluated the affected properties based on the official government approved ratios. The payment of compensation was therefore based on this individual property evaluation. Most of the respondents (62%) admitted being better off after the resettlement scheme while 38% claimed otherwise. These are mainly people who still have grudges or unpaid claims from the authority. About 71% of the respondents admitted that the compensation money paid to them was adequate to enable them acquire similar or better structure elsewhere while 29% claimed otherwise. 58% of the respondents said they were satisfied with the process of the resettlement and payment of compensation while 42% claimed otherwise.

The following measures were adopted to reduce project impacts both in terms of land acquisition and displacement and or/disruption: (i) acquisition of as little farmland as possible; (ii) demolition of as few houses/structures as possible; and, (iii) re-routing the alignment close to village instead of going through the village where possible. During the construction and aligning of the route, the objective has been to keep away densely populated residential areas. The principle followed here was that the quantity of demolished houses per kilometre of roads should be minimized through comprehensive analysis in terms of engineering, environment protection and resettlement feasibility.

The study findings show that Taraba state has an urban resettlement policy in existence. However, the implementation of the policy depends on the resources at the disposal of the government at the time of the project. As for the case study (Nyamusala – ATC road), the resettlement policy adopted was that of paying full cash compensation to the affected people (property owners) to enable them look for alternative places of their own for resettlement, thereby giving them the freedom to spend the money as they wish. The cash compensation was paid in lieu and/or lack of replacement land for redistribution. The compensation rate was based on the assessed value of the affected property and was done in such a way that the compensation money will enable the affected people to acquire land elsewhere and build a new structure that is better than their former houses. The study findings show that an estimated 30 households living in their own premises were seriously affected that they require relocation as a result of the project. Field investigation shows that there were about 350 households, whose buildings were not seriously affected. These people were also paid full cash compensation for them to relocate to new site but most of them prefer to reconstruct their houses on their current plot. This was against the interest of the government. The government is taken up this matter with the legal department because all affected households were paid full cash compensation for both the land they lose and the replacement cost of the buildings and structures affected by the project.

Despite the fact that the affected people were not involved in the negotiation process, the study findings show that the compensation to individual households was adequate for them to rebuild their houses to their taste in any part of the metropolis. All effort to get information on the criteria used for the property evaluation from the officials of the Ministry of Land and Survey could not avail. The officials insist that the criteria used vary with projects over time and that such information is classified and as such they can not give it out. Those who were paid compensation refuse to disclose the actual amount paid to them as compensation but insist that it was adequate. The members of the community who were not affected by the project said that the amount of the compensation ranges between five hundred thousand naira (US\$3335) to five million naira (US\$33335) depending on the size of the property and the already developed structure on it.

Many of the affected people were able to use the money to buy land in their location of choice and built better houses than their former and still have some money left to invest in other productive economic activities. Field investigation further shows that even people whose landed properties were partially affected were paid full compensation while they still retain their former location. Result of the interview schedule and focus group discussion show that the people were better off after the displacement and resettlement. This was evidently clear

from the response of people who were not affected as they too wished they were affected so that they could enjoy the benefit of the compensation.

In the ideal case, if the terms of resettlement are negotiated freely between the state (and project) and the displaced community, then arguably the relocation is not involuntary at all, and no liberty has been lost. As the literature shows, consultation with people who would be displaced by development projects generally falls well short of this ideal. [7] observed that “many government agencies decide in secrecy on displacement needs, amounts, procedures, terms and deadlines, without the consultation and participation of those who have their most vital interests at stake. This often forces people to exercise participation by opposition and demonstrative resistance, rather than by bargaining and cooperation in finding the best possible solutions” [8].

On one hand, imposed displacement or resettlement that is not freely negotiated with the displaced community would not only fail to make everyone better-off, in terms of liberty, opportunity, and self-determination, but also would directly disadvantage this community in particular. On the other hand, it would also be unjust for the community to withhold consent if the project were actually necessary for raising opportunities elsewhere and thus (moving towards) equalizing them within the larger society. The general conception of justice, then, cuts both ways. It raises a standard for states and projects to consult with potentially displaced communities, but it also sets a standard for those communities, should they find themselves in a negotiating position where refusal of the project might have unjust effects on other communities and other sections of the society [8].

Undertaking resettlement to World Bank standards is not necessarily about paying more compensation to project affected people. It is about involving those affected: maintaining dialogue throughout the resettlement process and giving those to be resettled a say in where and how they will be moved [9]. Compensation in itself is not sufficient to measure/gauge justice in resettlement programme. It is conceptually inadequate. The idea of compensation is an idea of replacement, and while in theory this could be an idea about replacing lost opportunities, the practice of compensation is inevitably a practice of material replacement: money for land, land for land, house for house. Rawls’s conception, among others will also require material replacement, and a great deal of it. But the point is that the idea of using material replacement as a criterion for justice is simply a bad idea. The reason why it is bad is that even with material replacement, resettlement can still leave people worse off. Replacement land may not be as productive. If it is equally productive it may require different cultivation techniques that the resettled population are not familiar with. Families may not be able to use monetary compensation to purchase equivalent land or housing because they are also encumbered by other obligations, such as debts or bride-wealth obligations. But resettlement, even with compensation, may leave them worse-off in more subtle ways, with respect to social goods of other kinds. In order to avoid injustice vis-à-vis the non-economic goods of liberty and social bases for self-respect, certain powers need to be accorded to affected communities, including (a) the power to freely negotiate displacement and resettlement and (b) the power to replicate, revive or reinforce the social networks and associations among their members, which are their social means for sustaining their belief in themselves [8].

The improvement of urban infrastructures and environment in Jalingo metropolis through the construction of the Nyamusala – ATC road has increased the value of land along the roads and promoted the development of land and trade in the area. Many new buildings have been springing up on both side of the new road. Findings from field investigations show that the value of land has greatly appreciated in all the areas traversed by the new road. Plots of land (100m × 50m) that were formerly sold at less than fifty thousand naira (N50,000) now cost more than two hundred thousand naira (over 400 percent increase).

The Urban development – induced resettlement scheme in Jalingo metropolis contrasts greatly with resettlement trend in developing countries and Nigeria in particular. For example in the Kano River Irrigation Project resettlement scheme (in Nigeria), land was re-allocated to the affected farmers in continuous plots equal in size to the total plot holdings before preparation, less than 10% used for infrastructural development [10]. In the Tiga dam

resettlement scheme in Kano state about 13,000 people were resettled as a result of the construction of the dam. The people were forced out of their homes. They were regrouped and resettled on an almost barren land far from water and made dependent on water tankers. There was cries of inadequate compensation and allocation of land. The Alau dam resettlement scheme in Borno state (Nigeria) affected 32 settlements with a population of 7,158 listed for resettlement. Only two of them (Alau and Adereki) with a population of 1,062 were resettled and compensated. Compensation was also paid to farmers in some other settlements but the people are yet to move [11]. This means that when a site is acquired, the people may not be able to move because they had spent their compensation money. Even those from Alau and Adereki who were resettled at Ngafate (New Alau) complained of inadequate compensation and long distance from their farms [12]

In both the South Chad Irrigation Project and Tomir River areas (in Nigeria) the peasant lands were compulsorily acquired with compensations paid only for private properties and economic trees and crops, thereby calling to use the provisions of the 1978 Land Use Act (LUA) [13]. The land was prepared and broken into plots of 4 ha in sizes which were given to farmers willing to participate in the scheme. Such farmers were offered sub-leases on a year-to-year tenancy. Those who did not wish to participate were free to move out of the project area, but no alternative lands were provided [10]. A study carried out by [14] shows that of the 100 farming families surveyed in the South Chad Irrigation Project, New Marte area (in Nigeria), 70 percent complained of inadequate and unfair compensation, 90 percent of this group claimed that only a small fraction (25%) of their holdings were paid for, while the remaining 10% claimed that they were not given compensation for anything at all. None of the farmers was compensated for housing [14].

In the Bakolori dam resettlement scheme (Nigeria) the farmers were dislocated together with their families and livestock and even those verified as entitled to compensation had their payments delayed by bureaucratic bottleneck [15]. About 20% to 40% of the pre-project holdings of the peasants were retained by the authority of the Bakolori dam project without any compensation paid. The loss of lands and compensation engendered tension which was exacerbated by the poor handling of the resettlement scheme by the Bakolori dam project authorities. The situation erupted into a serious violence in April 1980 in which many farmers laid down their lives in an effort to defend themselves and what they saw as their legitimate right. The loss of lives has obviously left an imprint on the nations' consciousness and has provided a classic example of how a planned development could all go wrong if not adequately implemented and monitored [15]. The social cost of the Bakolori dam project was evidently high and has been cited as an example of the strong need that there is for institutional and legal reforms in the approach to development projects in the country in order to protect people and the environment [1].

In the Lake Chad resettlement scheme of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) affected people, the Local Government Authorities and Village heads volunteered some pieces of land for the resettlement in each of the affected communities [9]. Compensation was only paid for land used for infrastructural development such as building of schools, health centres, market stores, etc. Even at that, there were people whose lands were used and were not paid compensation. Compensation for land used for resettling the displaced people was not paid for and as such the host communities refused the resettled people the opportunity to erect permanent structures of their own at the resettlement sites [12]. Each time the resettled people attempt to build permanent houses in the resettlement areas, members of the host communities who own such land will engage them in a fight and forcefully stop them, insisting that the land has not been paid for. The resettled people were equally not allocated any land to cultivate, thereby making the process of their rehabilitation very difficult [16].

The Kainji resettlement scheme was the only successful resettlement scheme ever carried out in Nigeria and has been recommended as a model for modern resettlement scheme [17, 18]. Before the project proper, an inventory study of the land use and ownership including number and sizes of individual plots was taken. The affected people were directly involved in the search for new sites. Compensation was paid for destroyed crops and economic trees as well

as buildings. Housing of different types and grades were built for the affected people and official assistance in evacuating the people to the new sites was provided [17].

#### 4. Conclusion

This study has shown that apart from notification of the affected people of government intention to construct the road network, there was no consultation or participation of the affected people in the resettlement scheme. Although most of the affected people were paid adequate compensation, success/justice in resettlement scheme is not all about adequate compensation but also involvement of the affected people in the decision making process. Although the process of the resettlement scheme fall short of the standard of best practices all over the world, the study findings show that the affected people were better off after the project. There is need to create satisfactory policies and procedures in order to eliminate or minimize the adverse effects of relocation and resettlement both on people and on the national economy.

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