

Full Length Research Paper

Effect of gender on household heads and housing condition in Osun State, Nigeria

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Housing is one of the basic needs of man, unarguably the third after food and clothing. It accounts for the social, cultural and economic value of a society; hence, quality housing is desired by all individuals. However, the rural areas have long been battling with challenges associated with condition and quality of housing. It is of note that many researchers have accounted for several factors affecting housing conditions in the rural areas but only few have documented the role that the gender of the household head plays on housing condition. In this study, household head refers to the eldest person in a house who most at times is also the bread winner of the family. This study hence, examines the role of household head gender on housing condition in Egbeda village, Iragbiji, Osun state. There are 94 inhabited houses in the village. Primary data were obtained through direct observation and questionnaire administered to all household heads in the village; the research is a census as 100% sample was done. Secondary data were obtained from the local planning authority. Descriptive and inferential methods were used in analyzing the data. Findings reveal that 58 households are headed by men while 36 are headed by women. Average income of women heads is low compared to their male counterparts. Although housing condition in the village is generally below standard, it was noted that houses headed by men are in better conditions than those headed by women. Data was subjected to chi square analysis and the research concluded that there is a significant relationship between housing condition and the gender of household head in the study area. Appropriate recommendations were made to improve the condition of housing in the study area.

key words: Gender, household head, housing condition, dwellings, rural areas.

INTRODUCTION

Housing is one of the necessities of life and central to man's existence. As indicated by Onibokun (1985), housing reflects the cultural, social and economic values

of a society; it is one of the indicators of a person's standard of living, place in the society and is a prime requisite for survival ranking only after food and clothing. This is supported by Fadamiro et al. (2004) who posited that housing is very fundamental to the welfare, survival and health of man.

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Despite this, housing is still being faced by a lot of

problems. These problems according to Fadairo and Olotuah (2013) range from inadequate quantity and quality of housing to the attendant impact on the psychological, social, environmental and cultural aspects of life. Housing problems in Nigeria have been recorded in both rural and urban centers. Ibimilua and Ibimilua (2011) submitted that while housing problems in the urban centers is characterized among several others by inadequate housing, unplanned development, improper maintenance of existing infrastructures, waste management menace, congestion etc., the rural areas in Nigeria which is defined as a settlement with population less than 20,000 with the primary occupation of the dwellers being farming and petty trading is characterized majorly with poor housing condition, poor value and absence of basic social amenities such as potable water, electricity and transportation networks.

A good housing condition is one that provides decent livable dwellings, clean surrounding of minimum acceptable standard of space, good environmental health and providing basic supporting facility (Ogundahunsi and Adejuwon, 2014). Several factors have been highlighted to have contributed significantly to the condition of housing among which is social status, income status, education level of users etc. As stated by the world health organization and cited by Ibimilua and Ibitoye (2015), A good house should have the following:

- (1) A good roof to keep out rain and downpour.
- (2) Good walls and doors to protect against bad weather condition and to keep out animals.
- (3) Sunshades around the house to protect it from direct sunlight in hot weather and retain reasonable heat in cold weather condition.
- (4) Wire netting at windows and doors to keep out insects like house flies, mosquitos etc.

It is believed that it is the responsibility of the household head to provide his family with a good housing condition capable of giving his family a good psychological and physiological wellbeing (Asiyanbola, 2011). Going by the African tradition and according to Aweda (1984), men are recognized as household heads and are always expected to provide the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter while women on the other hand are expected to oversee the basic household chores, keep houses, process and cook food and bear and raise children. But several conditions ranging from divorce to death of husband have seen women becoming heads of families on occasions.

While several factors such as role of government policies, neglects, settlement location, peoples' awareness level etc. affecting housing conditions in rural areas have been explored and documented by various authors, there are few literatures, if any on the impacts of household head gender on housing condition; this can be inferred from the findings of Agboola (1990), Woods (1994) and Asiyanbola (1997) who all noted that there

has been little contribution of researchers on gender and housing situation, those centered on gender and housing focus more on women and the meaning of houses, weakness of the law relating to family breakdown, women empowerment in housing development etc. and are centered more on the urban centers neglecting the rural areas.

Thus, this study seek to explore the impact of gender of household head on housing condition in the rural areas, using Egbeda village Iragbiji, Osun state as a case study. To achieve this, the study provides a null hypothesis that „there is no significant relationship between household head gender and housing condition. It is believed that this study will provide adequate information necessary to guide stakeholders, policy makers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the housing industry in the effective design and implementation of various housing development programs in the rural areas.

Study area: Egbeda village, Iragbiji

Egbeda village is a district settlement in Iragbiji town; the administrative headquarter of Boripe local government area in Osun state, Nigeria. Iragbiji town is situated on latitude 7°54'0"N and longitude 4°40'60"E, having a total population of 164, 172 people according to 2006 census. The settlement is located at the southern part of the town and bounded to the west by Osogbo- the capital of Osun state, to the east by Ibokun town and to the south by Ilase-Ijesa.

The seemingly very old settlement has a total population of approximately 600 people and 124 buildings covering residential, commercial, religious and health facilities with residential buildings accounting for the majority. Placement of building in this settlement is chaotic, haphazard and lacking planning regulations resulting in unregulated mixture of land use activities. Majority of these buildings are built of local materials like mud and brick with some edifices plastered with cement and roofed with corrugated iron sheets.

The houses are linked with narrow footpaths and are in need of renovation. The village enjoys the service of a health centre, a market, primary and secondary schools and two filling stations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Primary and secondary data were collected for the purpose of the research, the primary data was acquired through reconnaissance survey, direct observation, interviews and structured questionnaires. Secondary data was sourced from local planning authority and internet.

There were 94 residential buildings inhabited in the study area as of the time of the study; this was noted during reconnaissance survey. All buildings were studied and hence the research was a census as 100% sample was done. Interviews were conducted and questionnaires were administered by research assistants who are

in the field of architecture and had earlier been tutored for the exercise. The questionnaire was administered to the household head in each of the houses to acquire data on their personal and socioeconomic attributes and their perception as regards gender and decision making on matters affecting the built environment and essential community service provision.

Qualitative evaluation of housing condition of male headed households and their female counterparts was achieved by physical inspection (direct observation) of the condition of building elements such as floor, wall, ceiling, roof, kitchen, bathroom and toilet and are rated on Likert five point rating scale of quality that is, 1-Very poor quality (Considered unsafe for living), 2- poor (Major deficiency observed, requires major repairs), 3- fair (Significant deficiency evident but considered safe for living), 4- good (Neglectable deficiency noticed that is, requires minor repairs) and 5- very good quality (No deficiency noticed).

This rating was carried out by inspecting the plumbing systems, complete facilities and water supply in their bathrooms, kitchens and toilets and observing the physical deficiencies such as water leaks and rust in roofs, holes and cracks in walls and floors, cracked plasters, falling ceilings and general deteriorating appearance noticed in their buildings. This method was laid down by the Housing Assistance Council (1992), and has previously been used by various scholars.

The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (chi-square analysis) to determine whether there is a significant relationship or otherwise between household head gender and housing condition. The proposed null hypothesis to be tested is:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between household head gender and housing condition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research data shows that there are a total of 94 inhabited residential houses in Egbeda-Iragbiji, out of which 58(61.7%) are headed by men and 36 (38.3) are headed by women (Table 1 and Figure 1).

The predominant occupation in the rural areas is farming and petty trading, there is no exemptions in Egbeda-Iragbiji as 48 household heads (51.1%) engage in farming, 32 (34%) household heads engage in trading and only 14 (14.8%) household heads neither farm nor trade. Of the 48 heads that engage in farming, 39 (representing 67.2% of the male heads population) are men while 9 (representing 25% of the female heads population) are women. Of the 32 household heads that engage in trading, 24 (representing 66.7% of the female head population) are women while 8 (13.8% of the male heads population) are men (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Although the occupation distribution in the study area is a reflection of the assertion that men are generally stronger than women as farming requires more physical strength than trading, their age distribution is another reason. Findings reveals that 63.9% of the female head population are above 65 years of age (this is far above the retirement age in Nigeria) while only 32.8% of the male head population falls within this bracket (Table 3 and Figure 3). This is an indication that most women heads in the study area are weak and hence must have retired from strenuous farm jobs. This however reflected on their income distribution.

Data gathered revealed that 36.1% of the female head population earn below 10,000 naira per month, 33.3% of their population earn between 10,000 to 18,000 naira. This an indication that 69.4% of the female head population earn below the 18,000 naira minimum wage agreed to the Nigeria federal government in 2011 by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) (Labour Law Review, 2012) hence, they live in abject poverty and only 30.6% of their population live above the minimum wage range (that is, 19.4% earn 19,000- 30,000 naira, 5.6% earn 31,000 to 40,000 naira and 5.6% earn 41,000 to 50,000 naira per month) as against their male counterparts who have 51.7% of their population earning above the minimum wage range (that is, 25.9% earn 19,000 to 30,000 naira per month, 15.5% earn 31,000- to 41,000 a month and 10.3% earn between 41,000 and 50,000 naira per month) while only 48.3% of their population earn below 18,000 naira minimum wage per month (that is, 20.7% earn below 10,000 per month and 27.6% earns between 11,000 and 18,000 naira per month) (Table 4 and Figure 4).

Data analysis shows that 75% of the female heads population inherited their dwellings apparently from their late husbands, 22.2% of them are owners of their dwellings, only 2.8% houses freely, and none lives in a rented apartment. However, 53.4% of the male head population are direct owners of their dwellings, 32.8% inherited their dwellings, most of which are passed down from their late parents, 6.9% of them stays in rented dwellings and 6.9% houses freely (Table 5 and Figure 5).

Housing condition

The condition of each dwelling in the study area was objectively rated after a thorough examination of the conditions of their walls, floors, ceiling, roof, kitchen, bathroom and toilets (Table 9 Figure 9). Findings revealed that, 27.6% of dwellings headed by men and 61.1% of dwellings headed by women are found to be in a very poor state. 36.2% of dwellings headed by men and 22.2% of dwellings headed by women are found to be in a poor state. 15.5% and 20.7% of male headed dwellings are in fair and good conditions respectively, 8.3 and 8.3% of their female counterparts stays in fair and good condition dwellings respectively.

The summary of this is that 63.8% of male heads stays in either very poor or poor condition homes, 36.2% of them stays in either fair or good dwellings while 83.3% of their female counterparts stays in either poor or very poor homes and only 16.6% of them stays in either fair or good condition dwellings (Table 6 Figure 6).

Decision making as regards the built environment

Dwellers opinions were sought as regards participation of each gender heads in taking decisions on matters

Table 1. Household head distribution by gender.

Variable	Male headed households	Female headed households	Total
No	58	36	94
Percentage (%)	61.7	38.3	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2016.



Figure 1. Egbeda Village, Iragbiji, Osun State, Nigeria (Source: Google Earth Map , 2016).

relating to the development of the built environment such as provision of essential facilities, drainage dredging, water channeling, electric pole repairs, market, school, health facility siting etc. Findings show that 87.0% of the male head population and 86.1% of the female head population see this as exclusively the men affairs (Table 7 and Figure 7).

However, majority of the female heads said they are satisfied with it. This is an indication of their total submissiveness to the male authority. A number of reasons can be given to support this result. Firstly, it appears that the result is in support of the findings of Aina (1998) and Asiyanbola (2005) who both noted that the submissive nature of the African women especially Nigeria is as a result of the patriarchy society they find themselves.

The term patriarchy has been used by various authors such as kramarae (1992), Stancy (1993) and Aina (1998) to describe the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination or better words, male authority and female oppression. According to them, patriarchy structure has been a major feature of

most African society from time immemorial; it is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women.

Asiyanbola (2005) explains patriarchy especially in Nigeria as a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex which provides material advantage to men while placing severe constraints on the role and activities of women. Findings of Aina (1998) revealed that most African countries especially Nigeria out of their patriarchy clearly defined sex roles while various taboos ensure conformity with submissiveness. These taboos however see men taking charge in all decision making and gives women no choice than to accept with submissiveness (Table 7). Oral interviews with some female heads explain this better. A female head was quoted as saying:

“Who are we to go against our men’s decisions? If not for old age, it is a taboo for a woman to head the family. As a woman, if your husband dies at a tender age especially when you are still productive, you will be willed to one of his younger siblings indicating that since our bride price

Table 2. Household heads occupation by gender.

Occupation	Male headed households		Female headed households	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Farming	39	67.2	09	25
Trading	08	13.8	24	66.7
Others	11	19	3	8.3
Total	58	100	36	100

**Figure 2.** A single family apartment (Source: Authors field survey, 2016).**Table 3.** Age distribution of household heads by gender.

Age range	Male headed households		Female headed households	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
35-45	8	13.8	0	0
46-55	10	17.2	6	16.7
56-65	21	36.2	7	19.4
Above 65	19	32.8	23	63.9
Total	58	100	36	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2016.

**Figure 3.** Brazilian rooming single family apartment (Source: Authors field survey, 2016).

Table 4. Household heads monthly Income by gender.

Income in naira	Male headed households		Female headed households	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Below 10.000	12	20.7	13	36.1
11.000-18.000	16	27.6	12	33.3
19.000-30.000	15	25.9	07	19.4
31.000-40.000	09	15.5	02	5.6
41.000-50.000	06	10.3	02	5.6
Above 50.000	00	0	0	0
Total	58	100	36	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2016.



Figure 4. Brazilian rooming single family apartment (Source: Authors field survey, 2016).

Table 5. Household heads tenure status by gender.

Age range	Male headed households		Female headed households	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Owner	31	53.4	08	22.2
Inherited	19	32.8	27	75
Rent	04	6.9	0	0
Free Houser	04	6.9	01	2.8
Total	58	100	36	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2016.



Figure 5. Building surrounding condition (Source: Authors Field Survey, 2016).

Table 6. Housing condition by household head gender.

Housing condition	Male headed households		Female headed households	
	Mean (x)	Percentage	No	Percentage
Very poor	16	27.6	22	61.1
Poor	21	36.2	08	22.2
Fair	09	15.5	03	8.3
Good	12	20.7	03	8.3
Very good	00	0	00	0
Total	58	100	36	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2016.

**Figure 6.** Environment condition in the study area (Source: Authors field survey, 2016).**Table 7.** Decision making in built environment development and essential service provision (Household head perception).

Perception of built environment development	Male headed households		Female headed households	
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
Exclusively male affair	47	81.0	31	86.1
Women Involvement	11	19	05	13.9
Total	58	100	36	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2016.

has been paid, we are one of their properties and whatever they decide, we have to follow".

Another one was quoted as saying:

"Our men are our lords; we belong to them, whatever they decide for us we abide by. Even as a Muslim by fate, my religion supports this".

The second reason that could be given lies in their religious beliefs. Oral interviews with the various heads

indicated that most residents are either Muslim or Christian by fate. The submissiveness of the female heads may not be unconnected with their fate and this may be inferred from the findings of Adamu (2004) and the Holy Bible. Adamu (2004) in a study he conducted on the Nigeria Muslim Hausa community in 2004 inferred that the Muslim and Quran extensively preached that the women should see the men as their lords; they should respect their decision and be submissive to them. The Holy Bible (NKV) on the other hand in 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 11 to 12 and 1 Corinthians chapter 14 verse 34 to



Figure 7. A single family apartment (Source: Authors field survey, 2016).

Table 8. Chi-square result.

Variable	Chi-square χ^2	Degree of freedom df	P value
Household head gender and housing condition	10.62	3	0.014

($\alpha = 0.05$) Source: Authors field survey, 2016.



Figure 8. Brazilian rooming multifamily rented apartment (Source: Authors field survey, 2016).

35 preached that women stays silent and enjoin them not to head but rather be submissive to their men.

The third reason can be said to be due to the economic prowess of the men over women (see table 4). According to a press released by the Global Gender Gap report 2015, the very wide gap between men and women across the world is a major factor of the male dominance and women marginalization. Although several attempts has been made to forestall a balance between these gaps and remove discrimination against women.

Among these attempts are the first world conference on women held in Mexico in 1975, the second held in Copenhagen in 1980, the third held in Nairobi in 1985, the fourth world conference on women held in Beijing, China in 1995 and several continental moves all targeted at sensitizing the world to the unwarranted and unacceptable marginalization of women which deprives them of their fundamental human right. However, despite all these, the report of the Global Gender Gap 2015 indicated that even after a decade (2006-2015), the

Table 9. Housing variables condition.

Variable	Male headed households (N=58)					Female headed households (N=36)				
	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
Wall	15 (25.9)	21 (36.2)	11 (19.0)	11 (19.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (63.9)	07 (19.4)	04 (11.1)	02 (5.6)	0 (0.0)
Floor	17 (29.3)	22 (37.9)	09(15.5)	10 (17.2)	0 (0.0)	21 (58.3)	08 (22.2)	03 (08.3)	04 (11.1)	0 (0.0)
Ceiling	15 (25.9)	22 (37.9)	09 (15.5)	12 (20.7)	0 (0.0)	22 (61.1)	07 (19.4)	03 (08.3)	04 (11.1)	0 (0.0)
Roof	16 (27.6)	20 (34.5)	08 (13.8)	14 (24.1)	0 (0.0)	21 (58.3)	10 (27.8.)	02 (5.6)	03 (08.3)	0 (0.0)
Kitchen	16 (27.6)	21 (36.2)	08 (13.8)	13 (22.4)	0 (0.0)	22 (61.1)	09 (25.0)	03 (08.3)	02 (5.6)	0 (0.0)
Bathroom	17 (29.3)	20 (34.5)	09 (15.5)	12 (20.7)	0 (0.0)	22 (61.1)	09 (25.0)	03 (08.3)	02 (5.6)	0 (0.0)
Toilet	16 (27.6)	21 (36.2)	09 (15.5)	12 (20.7)	0 (0.0)	23 (63.9)	06 (16.7)	03 (08.3)	04 (11.1)	0 (0.0)
Mean (x)	16 (27.6)	21 (36.2)	09 (15.5)	12 (20.7)	0 (0.0)	22 (61.1)	08 (22.2)	03 (08.3)	03 (08.3)	0 (0.0)

Figures outside brackets represents frequencies; Figures in brackets represents percentages (Source: Authors field survey, 2016).



Figure 9. Brazilian rooming single family apartment (Source: Authors field survey, 2016).

global gender gap across health and education has only closed by 4% with the economic gap closes by just 3% and hence, suggested that it will take approximately 118 years to close the gap completely. Nigeria however ranked number 125 among countries gender gap ratio according to the report.

Test of hypothesis

In determining the relationship between household head gender and housing condition, the proposed null hypothesis which stated that "There is no significant relationship between household head gender and housing condition" was tested using chi-square analysis. The result of the chi-square test is shown on Table 8 Figure 8.

This result shows that the relationship is significant at 0.05 significant level (p value < 0.05). The proposed null-hypothesis was hence rejected and a new one is formulated that "there is a significant relationship between household head gender and housing condition".

Conclusion

The outcome of this study has shown that household head gender has an impact on housing condition, although housing condition in the study area is generally below acceptable standard, findings revealed that male headed households still have a better condition compared to their female counterparts and male heads are generally regarded than women heads in decision making on matters related to the built environment, this is because of the economic and political stability of men over their female counterparts, religious beliefs and the patriarch society they find themselves.

This is however in line with the findings of Cater and Trevour (1989) and Asiyanbola (2005), who in their studies observed that men are powerful and women powerless in crucial decisions making about the built environment. Also, women household heads are found to earn very low compared to their male counterparts, most of their earnings are spent on feeding (first basic need of men) thus making improvement on the condition of the

dwellings they live in a less priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Rural women especially those in their old age and widows should be given special care and assistance by the governments, NGOs, policy makers and stakeholders in the building industry. If possible, special programs and policies should be put in place for them.

(2) Architects and builders should explore more ways, process and techniques of designing and building low cost houses for the poor as this is a better way of relieving the generally poor rural dwellers.

(3) Governments and stakeholders in the housing industry should incorporate gender perspective in rural settlement planning, development and evaluation.

(4) Women should be enlightened on the important role they need to play in decision making on matters relating to the built environment as this is the only way sustainable policies can be ensured.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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