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EVALUATING SLUM UPGRADING PROCESSES, OUTCOMES, CHALLENGES, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Rapid urbanization in Lagos State has intensified the proliferation of slum settlements, resulting in deteriorating housing conditions, inadequate basic services, and weakened environmental quality. Slum upgrading has emerged as a critical strategy for improving living conditions, yet the effectiveness, outcomes, and long-term sustainability of these interventions remain insufficiently understood. This study evaluates the slum upgrading processes in three selected communities namely Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan, by examining community participation, communication frameworks, housing outcomes, project efficiency, and sustainability mechanisms. Using a mixed-methods approach involving questionnaires, interviews, field observations, and evaluation checklists, the study assesses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of upgrading interventions. Findings reveal moderate relevance but limited effectiveness and efficiency, with significant gaps in housing quality, infrastructure provision, communication processes, and maintenance planning. Although some improvements in living standards were recorded, challenges such as inadequate funding, community resistance, unclear project goals, and inconsistent maintenance frameworks hindered programme performance. Sustainability prospects remain weak due to insufficient long-term planning and limited institutional support. The study concludes that slum upgrading in Lagos requires stronger community engagement, clearer implementation strategies, improved resource management, and robust maintenance structures to achieve sustainable urban transformation.

Keywords: *Slum upgrading, Housing quality, Community participation, Infrastructure provision, Sustainable urban development*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, particularly Lagos State, has witnessed rapid urbanization and unprecedented population growth over the past decades. By 2022, the country's population reached 217,139,124, with 54% of its residents living in cities, and this figure is projected to exceed 400 million by 2050 (Adedeji *et al*, 2023). Lagos is one of the most urbanized metropolitan regions in Sub-Saharan Africa and is projected to rank among the world's top three urban conurbations (UN-Habitat, 2020). While urban growth offers economic opportunities, it has simultaneously intensified urban management challenges due to inadequate regulatory frameworks, weak development control, and insufficient infrastructure provision. These challenges have constituted barriers to sustainable development (Ogunbiyi & Adeyemo, 2024; Adeyemo & Ajayi, 2025), and the rapid growth of informal and slum settlements (Ugonabo & Emoh, 2013).

The proliferation of slum settlements in Lagos has become a critical urban issue due to its adverse effects on the environment and the wellbeing of residents (Ifeoma *et al*, 2023). Slums represent settlements characterised by inadequate basic services such as sanitation, water supply, waste management, electricity, road access, and drainage; substandard and overcrowded housing; and insecure tenure (UN-Habitat, 2003; UN-Habitat, 2013). These conditions emerge largely from ineffective development planning and poor urban governance. The persistence of slums undermines efforts to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 11, which emphasizes inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities (United Nations, 2015).

Slum upgrading has therefore become a central strategy in ameliorating the socio-spatial challenges associated with informal settlements. As defined by Ahmed (2017), slum upgrading is the process of improving informal settlements through interventions that address environmental deficiencies, poor housing quality, and substandard living conditions. Beyond improving physical environments, slum upgrading contributes to environmental sustainability, infrastructure delivery, enhanced livelihoods, and social inclusion (Corburn & Sverdlik, 2017). Approaches to slum upgrading vary and include top-down, bottom-up, and participatory models, each with different levels of stakeholder involvement (Cronin & Guthrie, 2011).

In Lagos State, slum upgrading is closely linked to broader housing development and delivery efforts. Effective upgrading improves existing housing stocks while reducing overcrowding and mitigating the emergence of new slums. Major slum upgrading programmes in the state include the Ilasan Housing Estate, Ikota Housing Estate, Adeniji-Adele Redevelopment, Makoko interventions, parts of Shomolu/Bariga, Ifelodun/Ijora-Badia, Obalende, Isale-Eko, and Ebute-Ero. These initiatives were implemented under programmes such as the Lagos Metropolitan Development and Governance Project and the Lagos Megacity Project (Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency, 2020; Adama, 2020). Earlier interventions in the 1960s and 1970s focused on the redevelopment of “blighted” zones through forced gentrification, particularly on Lagos Island (Adenaike *et al.*, 2022). Contemporary approaches, however, emphasise social and economic empowerment while protecting community interests and strengthening social cohesion (Couch *et al.*, 2011).

Despite these efforts, Lagos continues to grapple with worsening housing shortages, estimated at 28 million units (Lagos State Government, 2023), alongside persistent slum proliferation and poor housing quality. Several factors have contributed to the limited success of slum upgrading initiatives, including inadequate stakeholder participation, weak institutional frameworks, poor implementation of upgrading plans, political interference, and insufficient financing (Adama, 2020). These limitations raise concerns about the effectiveness, outcomes, and long-term sustainability of slum upgrading programmes in Lagos State.

Although existing research has examined slum formation, environmental conditions, and housing challenges in Lagos (Adenaike *et al.*, 2022; Ifeoma *et al.*, 2023; Olajide & Lawanson, 2022; Morakinyo *et al.*, 2012; Oguntimehin & Olutide, 2017; Anugwom, 2023; Iweka & Adebayo, 2015; Jelili *et al.*, 2020), few studies have provided an integrated assessment of slum upgrading processes, their outcomes, associated challenges, and their role in sustainable housing delivery. This has created a knowledge gap in understanding the degree to which upgrading programmes have contributed to sustainable urban development in Lagos State.

Therefore, this study evaluates the slum upgrading processes in Lagos State, examines their outcomes in terms of improved housing and environmental conditions, investigates the challenges encountered during implementation, and assesses the overall sustainability of these programmes.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Slum Development and Slum Upgrading

Slum development in African cities, including Lagos, has been strongly associated with environmental degradation and socio-economic inequalities (Adama, 2018; Obilaonu *et al.*, 2023). Slums are defined as neglected urban areas where housing and living conditions are significantly substandard, ranging from overcrowded tenements to unauthorized squatter settlements (Morakinyo *et al.*, 2012). UN-Habitat (2020) describes these settlements as highly marginalized, characterized by poverty and habitation on unsafe urban land.

Slums typically lack essential municipal services, which includes water supply, sanitation, waste management, street lighting, and emergency access, and residents often have limited access to healthcare, education, and community facilities (Omoegun *et al.*, 2019). The persistence of these conditions undermines sustainable urban development and negatively affects quality of life.

Slum upgrading evolved from basic health and sanitation interventions to comprehensive programmes addressing environmental, social, and economic deficiencies (Adama, 2018). The

World Bank promoted this strategy across African countries in the 1970s and 1980s, emphasizing improved housing, land tenure reform, and poverty alleviation, with strong community involvement (Adama, 2018).

Global agendas such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have prioritized slum upgrading, with SDG 11 targeting inclusive, resilient, and sustainable human settlements. Slum upgrading has been recognized as a cost-effective, minimally disruptive approach that improves physical, social, and environmental conditions. In Nigeria, upgrading efforts have enhanced housing conditions, increased community participation, and expanded access to basic services (Adedeji & Arayela, 2018).

2.2 Factors Influencing Slum Development

Several studies have identified multiple contributory factors to slum formation. Morakinyo et al. (2012) attributes slum growth to population expansion, rural-urban migration, ineffective urban management, poverty, overcrowding, lack of secure tenure, and poor-quality housing. Slum proliferation is also associated with rapid urbanization and inadequate housing supply. Economic limitations push low-income households into substandard dwellings. Poor urban planning and ineffective regulatory frameworks compound these challenges. Neglect of building maintenance and lax enforcement of planning regulations also accelerate slum expansion. Therefore, effective slum management requires coordinated interventions from government agencies, landlords, and community stakeholders.

2.2.1 Institutional and Regulatory Framework for Slum Upgrading in Lagos State

Slum upgrading in Lagos State is driven by multiple government institutions with statutory responsibilities:

- i. Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, which is responsible for physical planning, land use management, and enforcement of planning regulations.
- ii. Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency (LASURA) which implements urban renewal and regeneration programmes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
- iii. Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC) which develops and manages public housing projects, some of which serve as upgrading interventions.
- iv. Lagos State Ministry of Housing, responsible for formulating housing policies and manages housing projects.

The legal framework supporting upgrading efforts includes:

- i. Lagos State Urban and Regional Planning and Development Law (2019) – provides guidelines for planning, urban development, and building control.
- ii. Lagos State Housing Policy (2012) – addresses housing shortages and promotes affordable housing and slum upgrading through public-private partnerships.
- iii. Lagos State Environmental Law (2017) – promotes environmental sustainability through improved waste management, pollution control, and urban environmental protection.

These frameworks collectively influence the planning, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of slum upgrading projects.

2.3 Lagos State Housing Delivery Systems and Condition Regarding Slum Upgrading

Housing is a fundamental component of slum upgrading, involving rehabilitation of existing structures and provision of new units. Housing quality significantly influences health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life (Aduwoet *al.*, 2016). Housing delivery refers to processes through which housing units are produced, rehabilitated, and allocated, involving multiple stakeholders (Ihemeet *al.*, 2015; Tomori, 2014). Cities like Lagos and Abuja, characterized by rapid urbanization and population growth, highlight the competing demands of economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability (Ajayi et al., 2025).

Adegoke (2020) conceptualizes housing delivery through demand and supply dynamics influenced by economic conditions, population growth, income distribution, and government interventions. Supply-side considerations include existing housing stock, land availability, labour

and material costs, construction technology, and taxation. Tomori (2014) classifies housing delivery into formal systems, which involves direct government construction, serviced plots, mortgage financing, and subsidies, and informal systems which are driven by private builders, cooperatives, and self-help construction. These systems play essential roles in shaping the outcomes of slum upgrading programmes.

Lagos State has implemented several housing initiatives, beginning with the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) in the 1950s (Enisan & Ogundiran, 2013). Successor agencies such as LSDPC, NTDA, LBIC, and the Ministry of Housing have delivered thousands of housing units through various strategies, including site-and-service schemes, direct construction, and public-private partnerships. However, despite these interventions, Lagos continues to face significant housing deficits.

2.4 Challenges and Impacts of Housing Delivery

Housing delivery in Nigeria faces many challenges, including:

- i. Inadequate planning and regulatory inefficiencies (Gurran & Bramley, 2017)
- ii. Poor financial management and administrative bottlenecks (Anierobi & Obasi, 2021)
- iii. Poor implementation of housing policies (Adedeji *et al.*, 2023)
- iv. High land costs, inefficient property registration, and inadequate monitoring.
- v. High cost of building materials, insufficient housing finance, and shortages of skilled labour (Bamidele, 2019)

These challenges contribute to worsening housing deficits, increased rental costs, and reduced affordability (Adedeji *et al.*, 2023). Addressing these issues requires renewed housing policies, improved financing, and urban renewal efforts including slum upgrading.

2.5 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) offers a holistic lens for understanding the living conditions of slum dwellers through five capitals: human, social, natural, physical, and financial assets. This framework, rooted in applied social sciences, emphasizes community wellbeing and sustainability rather than purely economic growth (Takunda, 2016).

SLF shifted development thinking from state-centered approaches to people-centered strategies, acknowledging the everyday realities of vulnerable populations (Hendriks, 2010; Bennett, 2010). For slum dwellers, livelihoods are fluid, shaped by complex and dynamic urban systems. The SLF recognizes this complexity and the need for reflexivity as residents adapt continually to shifting conditions (Takunda, 2016). This framework is therefore relevant for evaluating slum upgrading interventions, examining how improvements in physical infrastructure, environmental conditions, and social services enhance the livelihood assets and sustainability of slum communities.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods, collecting data through questionnaires and interviews with residents of upgraded slum settlements and officials from the Lagos State Urban Renewal Authority (LASURA). Primary data came from questionnaires, interviews, and field observations, while secondary data were obtained from urban development and housing agencies, the Central Bank of Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, and other published materials. The study examined socio-economic characteristics, housing conditions, residents' perceptions of the slum upgrading process, and related challenges. The target populations were residents of Isale Gangan, Ajegunle, and Bariga, as well as LASURA officials. Population estimates were based on the 1991 National Census, projected to 2024, with the sample size calculated using Cochran's formula. A total of 204 residents were selected using simple random sampling, and LASURA officials were interviewed using an interview guide. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including frequency tables, percentages, cross-tabulations, and weighted mean scores.

4.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Slum Upgrading Processes and Housing Stock Demand Attainment

This section examines the processes of slum upgrading in meeting the housing stock demand in the study area. Issues examined include level of community involvement, upgraded area selection transparency, experience with communication, project information medium and present condition of your housing units.

4.1.1 Community Involvement

Sampled respondents across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan claimed community involvement was high (41.7%) and very high (14.2%) in slum upgrading processes. This finding emphasizes that community participation is essential to successful urban slum upgrading projects as noted by Iweka and Adebayo (2015). Therefore, increased community engagement in project such as slum upgrading is expected to result in greater project sustainability, this view is further stated by Oni-Jimoh and Liyanage (2018), the authors argued that community engagement is crucial for sustainable urban renewal, as it increases trust and long-term project success.

4.1.2 Experience with Communication

In addition to community involvement in slum upgrading process, the community experience with communication in respect of the slum upgrading project, notably an estimate of 32.4% sampled residents across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan claimed there was no communication during the slum upgrading process, 24.0% noted that the communication is unclear and inconsistent, 29.9% said communication is clear but sometimes delayed while only 13.7% sampled residents across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan noted that communication in respect of the slum upgrading project is very clear and timely. These responses broadly imply there is defective communication framework and process of slum upgrading in the selected settlements of Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan

4.1.3 Project Information Medium

Across the study areas (Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan) different medium are used to spread project information on slum upgrading projects, among these include through community meetings (17.6%), through official notices/newspaper publication (19.6%), through local leaders/representatives (33.3%), and word of mouth from neighbors (20.1%). However, about 9.3% sampled residents across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan claimed they were not informed and were not given any information of on the slum upgrading projects their settlements. From the responses, it could be seen that project information was largely shared through information communication across the study areas. This reliance on informal channels highlights potential barriers to reaching all community members, as formal communication mediums were limited.

4.1.4 Present Condition of Housing Units

From the responses a total of 20.6% rate their housing units to be very poor condition and 44.6% rate their housing units to be in poor condition. Cumulatively about 65.2% of the sampled residents in Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan claimed their housing units are in deplorable condition. This suggests that the slum upgrading programmes across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan has not effectively addressed poor housing quality.

4.1.6 Impact of Slum Upgrading Housing Units Quality

From the total sampled residents across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan only 23.0% and 7.0% reported that their housing quality was good and very good respectively, after slum upgrading project. This indicates that while there were improvements, the upgrades did not completely resolve quality issues. This suggests that there is need for improvement in slum upgrading process across the study areas.

4.1.7 Provision of Housing Units of the Slum Upgrading Programme

Across the study of Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan about 18.1% and 59.8% rated housing provision from the slum upgrading programmes as very poor and poor respectively. This shows that the slum upgrading programmes across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan did not adequately address housing provision issues in the study areas.

4.2 Slum Upgrading Evaluation

This was carried out through the use of checklist undertaken by the researcher across the three selected study locations in Lagos State. This evaluation shows varying scores for each location, reflecting both the successes and challenges faced in the implementation of slum upgrading in Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan. Also, the evaluation provides clarity into aspects where improvement is required across Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan.

4.2.1 Ajegunle Slum Upgrading Evaluation

The slum upgrading project in Ajegunle had a moderate relevance, partially addressing housing needs and aligning with local policies and sustainable urban development goals. However, it lacked alignment with other urban initiatives and needed more community engagement. Effectiveness was low, as residents found project goals unclear, with limited measurable indicators and only partial success in housing and infrastructure improvements. Mixed effectiveness arose from community-specific factors and insufficient engagement, along with resource limitations. Efficiency was also rated low due to cost management issues, unanticipated delays, and resource use concerns, indicating planning and execution inefficiencies. The project's overall impact was moderate, contributing to poverty reduction and basic living standards but failing to achieve significant long-term socio-economic uplift. While positive ripple effects existed, broader impacts on policy and economic structure remained minimal. Sustainability was rated slightly sustainable, with doubts about ongoing benefits due to weak maintenance plans, limited local capacity, and uncertain political and financial backing. Although social inclusion efforts were present, stronger infrastructure support and continuous capacity-building were essential for sustaining benefits in Ajegunle.

4.2.2 Bariga Slum Upgrading Evaluation

In Bariga, the slum upgrading project had a balanced performance across all evaluation criteria. The project's relevance was moderate, aligning reasonably well with local housing needs, sustainable development goals, and national policies, though there is room for better alignment with community priorities and urban development plans. Its effectiveness was also moderate, as while residents found the goals clear, the implementation was inconsistent, with only partial achievement in housing and infrastructure objectives. While some upgraded housing units were delivered, improvements in sanitation and structural quality are still needed to fully meet the project's goals. Efficiency was moderate, with acceptable resource management and budget adherence, though delays were noted. The impact on living conditions was moderate as well, with some socio-economic improvements, particularly in living standards and social cohesion, but limited long-term structural or policy changes. The project's sustainability was rated moderately sustainable, as Bariga has a strong community capacity and local resourcefulness. However, ongoing maintenance and support will be crucial for long-term success. Lastly, the project's approach to social inclusion was moderately effective, though further support for vulnerable groups and the upkeep of services would enhance its impact.

4.2.3 Isale Gangan Slum Upgrading Evaluation

The slum upgrading project in Isale Gangan shows high relevance, aligning well with housing needs, local and national policies, and sustainable urban development goals. The project was tailored to the Lagos context, addressing community needs effectively. However, its effectiveness was moderate, as it met some objectives, but measurable outcomes were limited. The number of upgraded houses and infrastructure improvements were below expectations, indicating the need

for further action to achieve the full scope. Efficiency was also moderate, with adequate resource management, though some cost overruns and planning adjustments were necessary. Impact was rated moderate as well, with improvements in housing and living conditions, but limited long-term effects on economic opportunities or policy changes. While there were some positive ripple effects, the project did not significantly transform broader social or economic structures in the area. Sustainability was rated moderately sustainable, with some potential for ongoing benefits. Local organizations showed moderate capacity to support the project's outcomes, but the lack of comprehensive maintenance planning poses a risk to long-term success. Social inclusion efforts were fairly well addressed, but a more focused approach on vulnerable groups and community-driven maintenance could strengthen sustainability further.

4.3 Slum Upgrading Challenges and Coping Mechanism

This was conducted to identify the challenges and coping mechanism of slum upgrading exercise in Lagos State across the three selected study areas of Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan.

4.3.1 Challenges Faced During the Slum Upgrading Programme

Based on the responses from sampled residents in Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan funding constraints were the most cited challenge (37%), alongside land tenure issues (13%). These represents two major issues of urban slum programmes.

4.3.2 Major Barrier Impacting the Effectiveness of the Slum Upgrading

Based on the respondents' views across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan community resistance emerged as the major barrier (53.4%), this suggest the need for better community engagement strategies in slum development programmes to gain community acceptance as resistance is often due to insufficient stakeholder consultations.

4.3.3 Slum Upgrading Initiatives Improvement

From the research, it was discovered that of the major slum upgrading initiatives advocated for by sampled residents across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan is enhanced infrastructure and basic services (32.8%) and secure land tenure policies (27.5%). These were viewed as key improvements needed. These findings reflect recurring needs in urban redevelopment contexts, as highlighted by Oni-Jimoh and Liyanage (2018).

4.3.4 Residents Coping Mechanisms

Urban slum upgrading often results in disruption of their aspect of urban slum residents' life and there is need for measures to address this disruption. In this study, most residents (43.1%) relied on informal networks for support, showing the community's resilience and adaptability, this views and coping mechanism of the sampled residents in Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan implies high reliance on community support in informal settings.

4.3.5 Communities Coping Measures with Basic Services Lack

In addition to general coping measures respondents were asked to indicate their communities coping measures with lack of basic services, some of the measures adopted includes creating communal solutions (28.4%), and residents forming partnerships with NGOs (23.0%) to address basic service deficiency in their communities.

4.3.6 Strategies for Maintaining Livelihoods During the Disruption

In addition to general disruption, communities' services and infrastructure disruption, there is also disruption with economic livelihood, the sampled resident across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan were asked to indicate their strategies to cope and maintain their means of livelihood during the slum upgrading process. Majority of the respondents (43.6%) reported relying on

government assistance programs, demonstrating the importance of institutional support in minimizing disruption impacts.

4.4 Slum Upgrading Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability

i. Slum Upgrading Project Address Communities Housing Needs

From the responses of sampled residents, only 27.5% sampled residents believed the slum upgrading project met the communities housing needs while a total of 72.5% noted that the undertaken slum upgrading fails to meet the community housing need. This indicates a gap in Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan slum upgrading projects achieving one its central stated objectives.

ii. Modes Through Which Slum Upgrading Met Housing Needs

From the total respondents who claimed the slum upgrading project met their housing needs, the mode of this was further requested. Infrastructure provision was found to be the main measures their housing needs to meet, and this set of respondents accounts for (91.1%), of the total respondents who claimed the slum upgrading project met their housing needs. This suggests an emphasis on physical infrastructure over structural building improvements by the sampled residents across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan.

iii. Reasons Slum Upgrading Did Not Meet Housing Needs

Among the sampled residents in Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan who claimed the urban slum upgrading has not met their housing needs, majority (63.5%) indicated that housing units were neither adequate nor affordable, this reflects the issues with affordability in Nigerian urban housing (Anierobi and Obasi, 2021). Also, 23.6% and 12.8% claimed that the reason for their position that slum upgrading programme has failed to meet their housing need is because design and size of the housing units do not meet living requirements of families and lack of long-term planning for housing maintenance respectively.

iv. Project Met Objective of Improving Housing Conditions and Infrastructure

About 46.1% agreed that objectives were met while 53.9% noted otherwise. This imply that while some progress was made, the projects were not fully successful in addressing the housing and environmental challenges across Ajegunle, Bariga and Isale Gangan. This further implies that for more success in slum upgrading projects it requires clear, measurable targets aligned with community needs.

4.5 Measurable Indicators and Key Success Factors in Slum Upgrading Projects

In the evaluation of slum upgrading projects across Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan, the presence of measurable indicators to track progress was noted by 56.9% of residents, while 43.1% indicated no such indicators were evident. This suggests some level of accountability in the projects, though it highlights the need for more comprehensive monitoring frameworks to better assess various aspects of slum upgrading initiatives. Key indicators of project success, as identified by residents, included increases in rehabilitated housing units (38.8%), improved access to basic infrastructure (26.7%), better living conditions (26.7%), and enhanced building safety (7.8%). These responses suggest that infrastructure improvements are central to residents' perceptions of success in slum upgrading. However, concerns regarding resource utilization were significant, with only 25.5% of respondents feeling that resources (including human and financial) were efficiently used. The majority (74.5%) expressed dissatisfaction with resource management, pointing to a common issue in urban project management in Nigeria.

Furthermore, delays and cost overruns were reported by 39.2% of residents, with the primary cause being project design changes (50.6%). Other reported reasons for delays included land acquisition and clearance challenges (12.7%), community engagement issues (19.0%), and utility relocation problems (17.7%). These findings indicate a need for better planning and risk management to minimize delays and ensure more efficient use of resources in future slum upgrading projects.

4.6 Long-Term Impact and Sustainability of Slum Upgrading Projects

The primary goal of urban slum upgrading is to improve the living standards of residents by enhancing the environment, housing, and infrastructure. However, responses from residents in Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan reveal mixed outcomes. While 50.5% of respondents reported improvements in living standards, 49.5% noted no significant change, suggesting that the projects had a limited or uneven impact on long-term living conditions. Despite the positive intentions, the slum upgrading projects also produced unintended negative effects. A significant number of respondents (78.4%) reported ripple effects from the projects, with displacement (36.4%) and livelihood loss (50%) being major concerns. This highlights the complexity of slum upgrading, where improvements in physical infrastructure can be offset by socio-economic and environmental challenges. In terms of sustaining the benefits of the slum upgrading projects, a large majority of residents (84.3%) believed that the benefits could not be sustained over the long term. Only 15.7% felt that the improvements could be maintained. Those who were optimistic pointed to factors such as regular maintenance (48.4%) and partnerships with local microfinance institutions (35.5%) as key to sustaining the benefits. This underscores the need for robust post-upgrade management and maintenance strategies to ensure the longevity of the improvements made through slum upgrading projects.

4.7 Maintenance and Service Delivery Plans

Findings from the study show that although a substantial proportion of residents across Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan (87% of the total sample) report the existence of maintenance plans for infrastructure and services, the actual implementation of these plans remains inconsistent. The study also indicates that maintenance responsibilities are shared between government public works (37%) and community-based arrangements (35%). This reflects a mixed, participatory maintenance structure in which both public agencies and residents contribute to the upkeep of housing and public infrastructure. Such an arrangement suggests increasing local involvement, yet also underscores the need for stronger coordination and more reliable execution of maintenance efforts.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study set out to critically evaluate slum upgrading processes in Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan, with the aim of assessing their outcomes, implementation challenges, and long-term sustainability. The findings reveal that while upgrading initiatives demonstrate moderate relevance by aligning with community needs and policy goals, their effectiveness and efficiency remain considerably limited. Poor communication structures, insufficient community involvement in some stages, design inconsistencies, funding constraints, and delays caused by land tenure issues collectively undermine the achievement of project objectives. Housing conditions across the three communities show only marginal improvement. Most residents continue to live in overcrowded or substandard environments, and many reported that upgraded housing is neither adequate nor affordable. Although infrastructure improvements such as drainage, roads, and basic services were acknowledged, these gains were not substantial enough to significantly transform living standards. The persistence of displacement, livelihood disruption, and inadequate maintenance frameworks further constrains the long-term impact of the interventions. A critical concern that emerged is sustainability. Despite the existence of maintenance plans, implementation is inconsistent, with responsibilities divided between government agencies and community-based structures. Without strengthened institutional capacity, transparent monitoring indicators, and reliable funding mechanisms, the benefits of the upgrading projects are unlikely to endure. Overall, the study concludes that successful and sustainable slum upgrading in Lagos State requires a shift toward more inclusive, participatory, and well-coordinated framework. Enhancing community engagement, adopting clear and measurable project indicators, ensuring efficient resource utilisation, securing land tenure, and strengthening maintenance systems will

be essential for delivering meaningful and lasting improvements. To advance sustainable urban transformation, policymakers and implementing agencies must prioritise long-term planning, integrated stakeholder participation, and consistent post-upgrade support for slum residents.

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