

# CONSEQUENCES OF COMPULSORY LAND ACQUISITION ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF THE URBAN POOR IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

By

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## ABSTRACT

*Access to land in Nigeria, has been clearly explained by the 1978 Land Use Decree. Land can be allocated to an individual or corporate body by the government either through statutory or customary allocation of right of occupancy. Similarly, the decree empowers the Government via Section 28(1) to acquire land compulsorily from individuals and corporate bodies for provision of public services by invoking the Overriding Public Interest clause of the Decree. The Decree stipulated that, compensation should be given to victims of Compulsory Acquisition in order to alleviate their ordeals and sufferings. This paper examines the consequence of compulsory land acquisition on the livelihood of the urban poor in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Five areas that experienced these acquisitions were selected purposively (based on the fact that government conducted compulsory acquisition in the areas), namely; Sokoto State University complex, Bado quarters Housing Estate, Arkilla Housing Estate, Mana Housing Estate and Gidan Man Ada Housing Estate. Respondents for the study were selected via a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques and a total of 460 were arrived at. Major findings of the study reveal that Respondents were not adequately compensated and were provided with no livelihood alternative having taken away their houses and farmlands thereby exacerbating their situation of poverty. Respondents were of the opinion that compulsory land acquisition policy is anti-poor and it serves the interest of the rich and the elite. The study concludes by recommending proper compensation to the victims as well as implementing the recommendations of the Presidential Committee on Land Reforms during the late president Yar'adua administration which suggested compensating land-owners on the basis of the market value of the land.*

**Key words:** Compulsory land acquisition, Livelihood, Urban poor, Sokoto

## INTRODUCTION

Land particularly in the developing societies is the nucleus of human livelihood and the quantity or quality of land determines the extent of man's development (Yakubu, 1985). It provides man with a living space, with raw materials necessary for meeting his needs and opportunities. History speaks eloquently of the high regards with which man has viewed land over a long period of time. The ancient Greeks prayed to an earth goddess and people go to wars for the possession of land. Thus, land is an ultimate resource for without it, life on earth cannot be sustained (Clawson, 1971; Goodchild and Munton, 1985; Gore and Nicholson, 1991; Ellson and Roberts, 1992; Ganderton, 1994). The term land suggests different things to different people,

depending upon their outlooks and interests at that very moment. Land just like diamond is multi-faceted, depending upon the context in which it is used and the circumstances under which it is considered. However, as far as access to land is concerned, it is viewed as that volume of space that encompasses the surface of the earth, all things that are attached to it and the rocks and minerals that are just within it. Similarly, this paper will look at land both as a physical commodity and as an abstract concept in that the right to own or use it is as much a part of the land as the objects rooted in its soil (Home, 1986; Main and Cline Cole, 1987; Alias, Kamaruzzaman and Daud 2010; Dankani, 1998; 2011; 2012; Famuwiya and Omirin, 2011; Aluko, 2012).

Access to land and land tenure security are at the heart of all rural societies and agricultural economies. Having land, controlling it and using it are critical dimensions of rural and sub-urban livelihoods, and determine wealth and poverty. Land is not simply an economic resource (FAO, 2009). It is an important factor in the formation of social and cultural identity and in the organization of religious life. It is also an enormous political resource, defining power relations between and among individuals, families and communities under established systems of governance. In rural societies, landless or near landless people with insecure tenure rights often constitute the poorest and most vulnerable groups (Fabiya, 1984; FAO, 2009)

In Nigeria prior to 1978 government was finding it difficult to acquire land for developmental projects and provision of basic infrastructure principally due to the fact that individuals have almost absolute control of their land. This difficulty necessitated the government to on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, 1978 promulgate the 1978 Land Use Decree or otherwise known as the 1979 Land Use Act. It is the main legal document that stipulates ways through which individuals/corporate entities as well as the public/government can acquire land (FGN, 1978; Yakubu, 1985; Bichi, 2008). The Decree categorically states under Section 1 that:

*“All Lands are vested in the state Governor, on whose behalf and with whose express consent all grant of rights; interest in land would be made henceforth”*

The Decree went further to state that:

*“subject to the provisions of this Decree, all land comprised in the territory of each state in the Federation are hereby vested in the Military Governor of that state and such land shall be held in trust administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians in accordance with the provision of the Decree”* (FGN, 1978: 8)

By the above assertion, government is now in absolute control of land and its associated resources in Nigeria and individuals and organizations can now apply for land allocation from the government. On the other hand, the Decree empowers the government to take over land from individuals and organization by invoking the ‘Over-riding Public Interest Clause’.

The relevant section in this regard is section 28 of the Decree. Section 28(1), provides that:

*“It shall be lawful for the Military Governor to revoke a right of occupancy for*

*overriding public interest*” (FGN, 1978:56)

According to section 28(2), over-riding public interest in the case of statutory right of occupancy means:

- a. The alienation by the occupier by assignment; mortgage; transfer of possession; sublease or otherwise of any right of occupancy or part thereof, contrary to the provisions of this Decree or any regulations made thereunder.
- b. The requirement of the land by the Government of the state; in either case for public purposes within the state, or the requirement of land by the Government of the Federation for public purpose of the Federation.
- c. The requirement of the land for mining purposes or oil pipeline or for any purpose connected therewith.
- d. The requirement of the land for the purposes of laying it out into plots for allocations (FGN, 1978)

All except the first condition are entitled to compensation from the government for the land taken over from them for developmental and infrastructural provision in Nigeria. Compulsory land acquisition has been defined by FAO (2009) as the power of the state to acquire private rights in land without the willing consent of owner or occupant for the interest and benefits of the community. This power is necessary for social and economic development of society and the natural environment. A government cannot rely on land markets alone to ensure that land is acquired when and where it is needed. Land is needed for investments such as roads, railways, harbours and airports; for hospitals and schools; for electricity, water and sewage facilities (FAO, 2009).

In Sokoto Metropolis, government has compulsorily acquired land and properties from individuals mostly referred to as the urban poor. For example, land was acquired from individuals for the construction of Sokoto State University, 1000 units *Alu* Housing estate at *Bado*, 250 Housing estates at *Mana* Area, 500 units at *Arkill* and *Gidan Man Ada* behind *Giginya* Secretariat. Farmlands and properties of the urban poor were acquired without proper compensation to the victims (Dankani, 2012; 2013a and b; Shamaki and Dankani, 2012; Abubakar and Dankani, 2013).

The poor compensation often subjects the urban poor to untold hardship, loss of livelihoods and emotional stress. Victims are often left in a helpless situation as the compensation given to them could not be enough to start a normal life elsewhere or to replace what they lost (Mortimore and Wilson, 1967; Litchfield and Darin-Drabkin, 1980; Titman, 1985; Mamman, 1989; Lynch, Binns and Olofin, 2001; Ladan, 2004; Kakulu, 2007, Nuhu 2008; Nuhu and Aliyu, 2009; Obutu, 2012).

It is important to note that the compensation regime enshrined in the 1978 land use decree did not make provision for compensation for the market value of the land. Compensation for land taken in overall public interest is categorized as follows:

- a) Land:- the amount for compensation will be equal to the rent, if any, paid by the occupier during the year in which the right of occupancy is revoked.

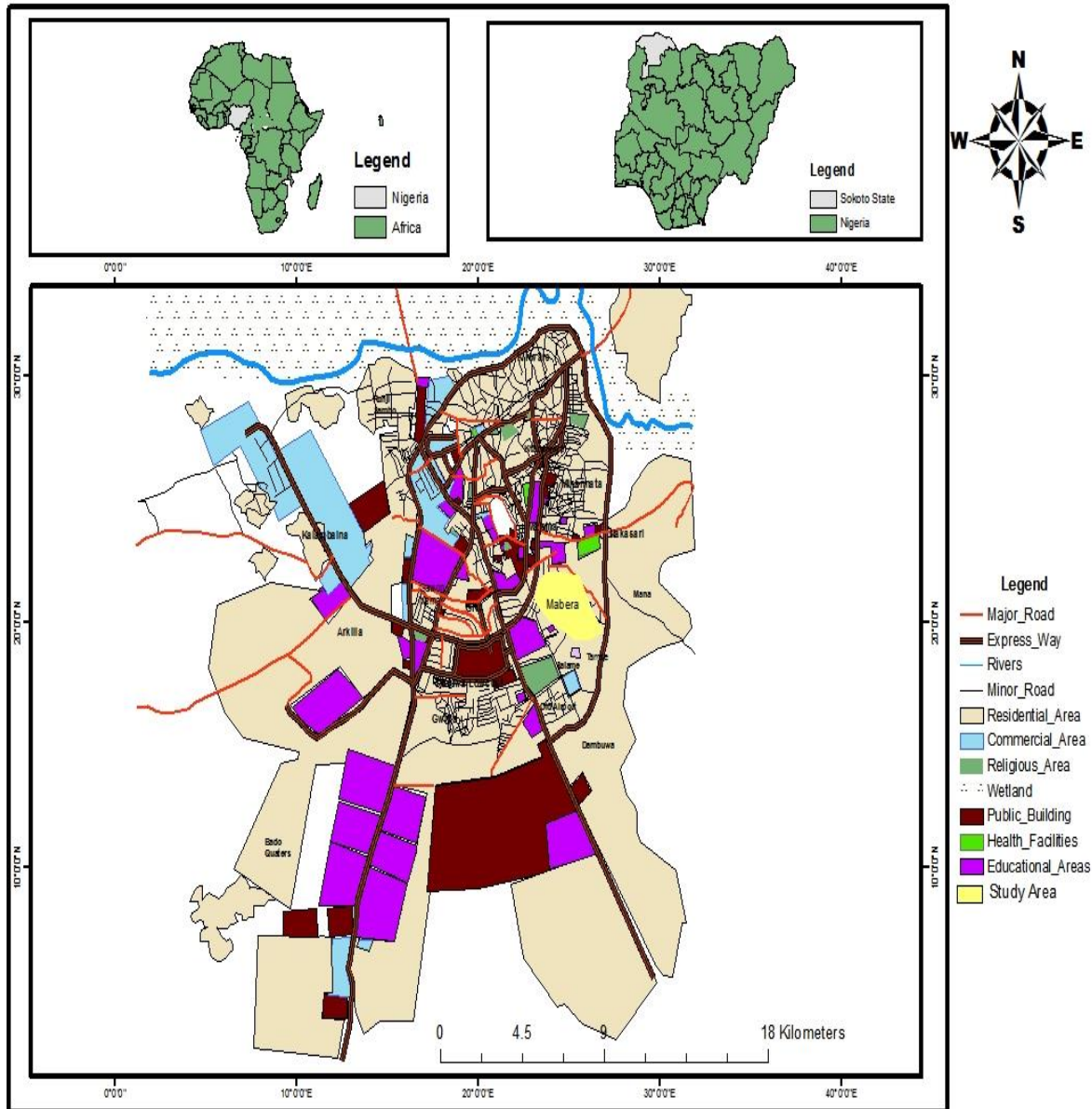
- b) Buildings:- (Excluding fixtures in or on them, such as furniture, wall-clock) mechanical installations and other associated improvements, the amount will be the replacement cost of these structures and assessed by the appropriate official, less any depreciation together with interest at the bank rate for delayed compensation payment. All amounts will also be assessed and paid to, the land owner for any improvements on the land in the nature of reclamation works.
- c) Crops:- the amount will be equal to their value as determined and prescribed by the appropriate official.

It is worthy to note that most of the urban poor affected by the compulsory acquisition are left worst off as their livelihood entirely rest on land as a resource. Majority of them are farmers and herdsmen whose life cannot be detached from land. The abolishing of the Compensation provision Decree 33 of 1976 creates new basis of compensation assessment applicable to land acquired after 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1978. Under the 1978 Land Use Decree no compensation is payable for land. What this means is persons whose lands were acquired are not entitled for compensation for their land and neither are they entitled to compensation for disturbance, severance and injurious affection. Sadly, the urban poor is at the receiving end of this unjust policy (Tanko, 2005; Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2006; Onokerhoraye, 2010).

This study seeks to examine the consequences of compulsory land acquisition on the livelihood of the urban poor in Sokoto metropolis in order to unearth the challenges faced by the urban poor after losing their land and properties to Government. The objectives of the study were to identify avenues through which respondents acquired land in the study area, determine the extent of land lots/properties taken over from the respondents, gauge the level of respondents satisfaction with the exercise and compensation and identify the exact amount of compensation given

## **THE STUDY AREA**

Sokoto Metropolis is located between Latitudes 12<sup>0</sup>46'N and 13<sup>0</sup>08'N, Longitudes 5<sup>0</sup>14'E and 5<sup>0</sup>30'E and at average elevation of 272m above sea level. The total population of the area is estimated at 1.1 million people as at year 2016 with an average annual growth rate of 2.6%, and an average density of 500 persons/km<sup>2</sup>. However, a density of over 1000 persons/km<sup>2</sup> is obtainable inside the metropolis (NPC, 2006; Sokoto State Government, 2016). Local inhabitants comprises mostly of Hausa/Fulani and other groups such as Gobirawa, Zabarmawa, Kabawa, Adarawa, Arawa, Nupes, Yorubas, Ibos and other migrants (Mamman, 1989). The predominant language is Hausa and occupation of city dwellers includes trading, commerce, domestication of animals with a reasonable proportion of the population working in private and public sectors. Population of farmers is on a decline (Mamman, 1989). Sokoto metropolis comprises mainly of two local government (Sokoto South and North local government areas) and portions around frontiers of four other local government areas (Kware, Wamakko, Dange Shuni and Bodinga). (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1 Map of Sokoto Metropolis**  
 Source: Administrative Map of Sokoto (2016)

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Information for this study was obtained via both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were obtained via administration of structured questionnaire to respondents in five areas affected by compulsory land acquisition namely; Sokoto State University complex, *Bado* quarters Housing Estate, *Arkillla* Housing Estate, *Mana* Housing Estate and *Gidan Man Ada* Housing Estate. The questionnaire dwells on the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and how compulsory land acquisition by the Government affects their livelihood.

Secondary data was sought from the State Ministry of Lands and Survey as well as Sokoto Urban and Regional Planning Board (SURPB).

Respondents for the study were selected via a combination of purposive and snowballing sampling techniques. Names of those affected by compulsory acquisition were obtained from the officials of the Ministry of Land and Survey. The list of names obtained from the officials of the Ministry which comprises of 116 names serves as the initial sampling frame. On the basis of the list snowballing sampling technique was adopted which yielded additional 344 respondents gives us a total of 460 respondents for the study. The operation of snowballing technique involves identification of victims of compulsory land acquisition and asking them to name other people involved in the acquisition so as to locate him/her for the purpose of administration of the questionnaire. This method enhances the cooperation of the respondents tremendously.

Data collected in the field were presented in the form of tables showing frequencies and percentages and following each table is the descriptive analysis and discussion of the findings. Likert Scale was used to gauge respondent's opinion on key issues relating to their livelihood after their lands were compulsorily acquired by the state.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section begins by examining the socio-economic characteristics of the sampled respondents as presented in Table 1. Investigation into the age of the respondents reveals that majority (32%) are between the ages of 41-50 years while 17% are less than 30 years old. Majority of the respondents are males with 95%. The society under study is patriarchal in nature and men are the majority of land and property owners. Analysis of information relating to educational qualification of the respondents shows that 63% of the respondents acquire Islamic education, 13% and 10% attended primary and secondary schools respectively and 14% attended tertiary education. It is important to state here that the dominance of Islamic education is due to the fact that majority of the inhabitant of Sokoto metropolis are Muslims who are well devoted to the teaching of Islam. Baba (2011) argues that the core north has a predominantly Muslim population and its long history of contact with Islam shaped its socio-economic and political framework long before colonisation by the British. Therefore, the introduction of Christianity, western education and colonial state structures by missionaries and colonialists threatened an established social order that derived legitimacy from its linkages with Islam. This resulted in apathy for western education and preference for Islamic education which is viewed as supreme.

Occupational distribution of the respondents reveals that majority of the respondents (74%) are farmers, Civil servants constitutes 11%, Business men and traders accounts for 3% and 6% of the respondents respectively while 6% engages in other occupations such as Masonry, commercial transportation and other casual work. The dominance of farmers among the respondents is based on the fact that most of the selected sites for this study are peripheral areas or areas around the fringe of the metropolis are mostly inhabited by rural populace whose primary means of livelihood is farming.

**Table 1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Socio-Economic Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 30 Years	76	17
30-40 Years	106	23
41-50 Years	149	32
Above 50 Years	129	28
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	439	95
Female	21	05
<b>Educational Background</b>		
Islamic	289	63
Primary	61	13
Secondary	45	10
Tertiary	65	14
<b>Main Occupation:</b>		
Business	16	03
Civil Servants	49	11
Trading	27	06
Farming	341	74
Others (specify)	27	06
<b>Duration of Stay/Land Ownership</b>		
Less than `10 years	98	21
11-20 years	147	32
21-30 years	89	19
31-40 years	43	09
41-50 years	58	13
Above 50 years	25	05
<b>Average Income Per Annum</b>		
Less than N500,000 (\$)	207	45
N500,000 – N1,000,000.00 (\$)	137	30
N1, 000,000- N2,000,000.00 (\$)	74	16
Above N2,000,000.00 (\$)	42	09
<b>Source of Income</b>		
Agricultural Produce/Animal Rearing		
Salary	336	73
Business and other Sources	58	13
	66	14
<b>Means of Land Acquisition</b>		
Purchase	162	35
Leasehold	37	08
Inheritance	218	47
others	43	09

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2015

Attempt was made in this study to examine the duration of land-ownership as well as duration of stay in the study area by the respondents and the finding reveal that majority of the respondent owned their land for a period of 11-20 years, 19%, 9% and 13% of the respondents owned their

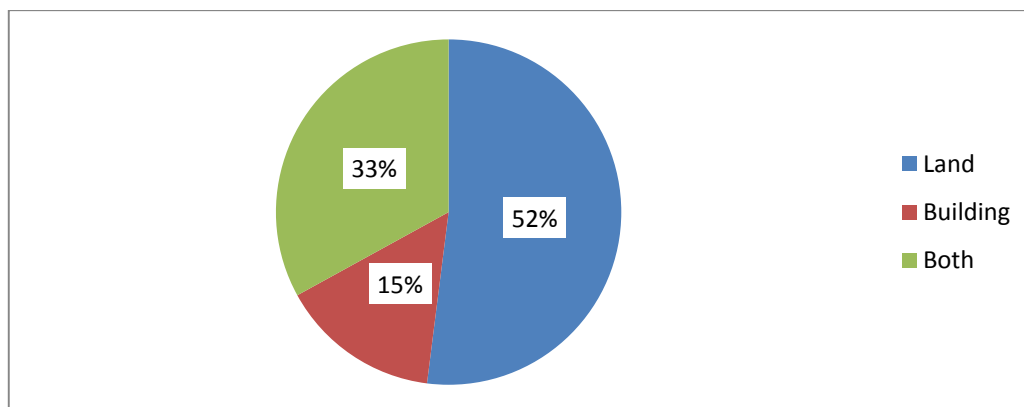


land for a period between 21-30 years, 31-40 years and 41-50 years respectively. Going by this finding one can argue that compulsory acquisition of land by government will exert psychological pressure and mental torture on the landowners.

Analysis of data with respect to income distribution of the sampled respondents show that 45% earn less than N500,000 per annum, 30% earns between N500,000 – N1,000,000 per annum. Similarly, 9% claimed to earn above N2,000,000 per annum. Going by this finding it is obvious that bulks of the respondents are low income earners and are often referred to as the urban poor. Further investigation into respondent's source of income shows that 73% earns income from agricultural produce and animal rearing, 13% from salary and 14% from Business and other sources.

Information regarding the means through which sampled respondents acquire land shows that majority 47% acquire land through inheritance, 35% through purchase, 8% through leasehold and 9% through other sources such as gift by parents or relatives. The predominance of purchase as the means of land acquisition could be attributed to the fact that land allocation by the State and Local government is very hard to come by and farm owners or landowners around the periphery or edges of towns and cities are often compelled to sell their lots due to the threat posed by the expanding city. Majority of Nigerians are disenchanted with seeking land allocation (leasehold) from Government thereby resorting to the informal land market to purchase land. Similarly, based on the fact that the society is predominantly Islamic, land acquisition through inheritance is widely practiced. Inheritance denotes intergeneration transfer of land rights when head of a household dies and the land and other property left behind are shared among his children and other heirs. Inheritance as a form of land acquisition is acknowledged under customary practice, Islamic law (Sharia) and the provision of state legislation including the 1978 Land Use Decree (Mortimore and Wilson 1967). In the religion of Islam, inheritance could be through both patrilineal and matrilineal lineages.

Figure 2 presents the nature of property acquired from the victims of compulsory land acquisition by the state government. Data in Figure 2 shows that 52% of the respondents claimed their lands were acquired, 15% claimed that their buildings were acquired while 33% stated that both buildings and land were acquired from them by the government for development of a State University and Housing estate in the study area.

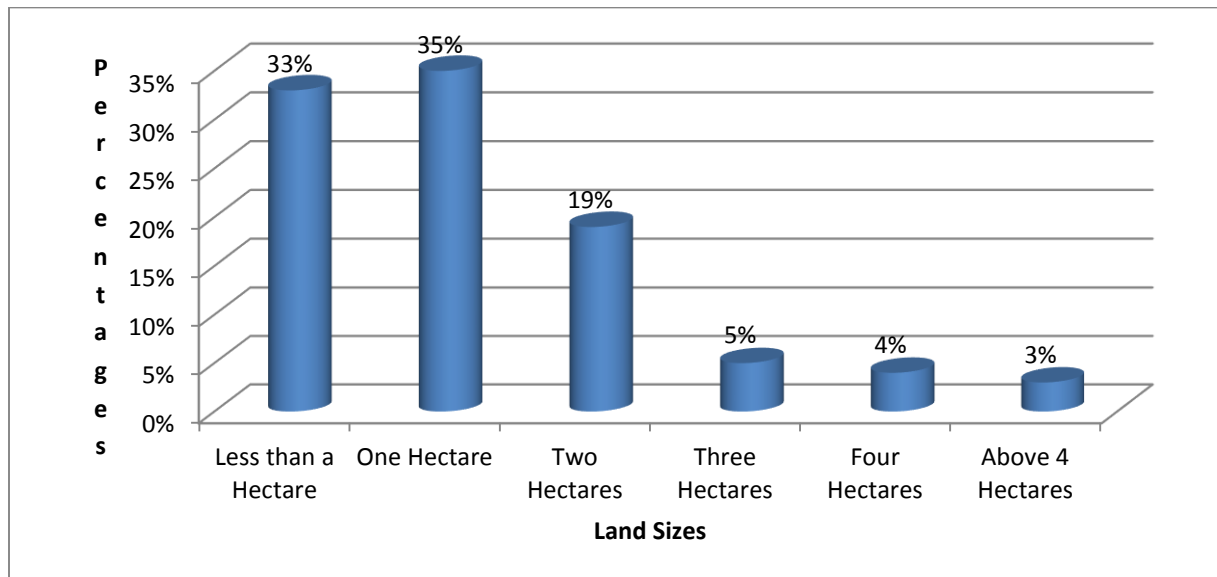


**Figure 2 Nature of property acquired**

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2015



Figure 3 gave an insight into the extent of land (in hectares) acquired from the respondents in Sokoto Metropolis.

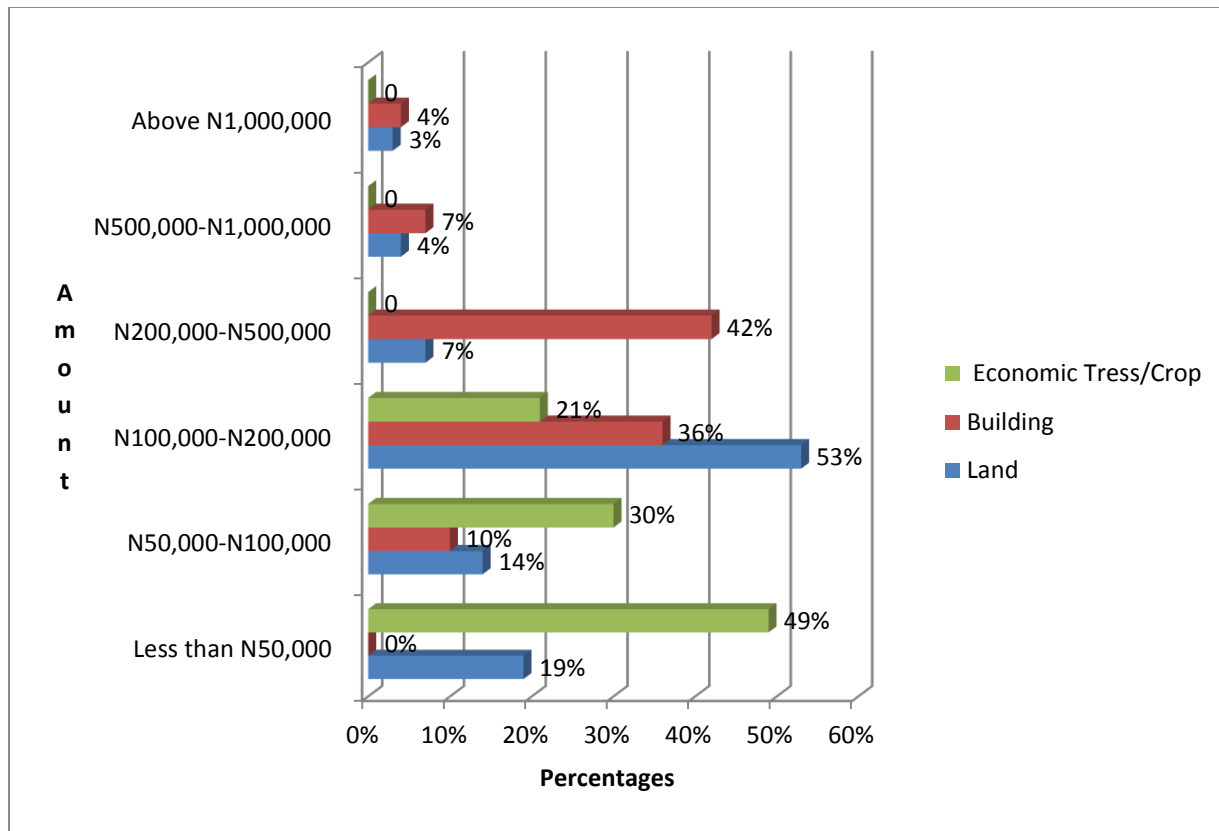


**Figure 3 Size of Farmland acquired**

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2015

Analysis of data into the size of farmlands acquired by the government from the respondents as shown in figure 3 revealed that majority (35%) claimed that one hectare of land was acquired from them, 33%, claimed less than a hectare was acquired by the government while 19% and 5% claimed two hectares and 3 hectares respectively. It is important to point here that inheritance and purchase are largely responsible for fragmentation of land holdings. For instance, when a family head dies; his land will be shared among the heirs and in most cases most of the heirs might get a small land lots due to fragmentation. Similarly, purchase has been largely reported to result of land fragmentation. Land owners often fragment land along the fringes of towns and cities in order to maximize profit and also to get buyers easily because the urban poor lack the much needed finance to purchase a large sized land. This seriously encourages land fragmentation and the proliferation of the informal land market in the study area. Availability of land along the fringes makes such areas to be targeted by government for developmental projects and provisions of educational and housing facilities.

The 1978 Land Use Decree has made provision for compensation to land and properties acquired by the state. As stated earlier, government do not compensate landowners the value of their land holdings rather, it refunds the amount a land owner paid to it as ground rent and tenement rent. Compensation is only given on the extent of development made on the land, such as building and economic trees. Data in Figure 4 shows the amount of compensation given to respondents by the government.



**Figure 4 Amount of Compensation received on Properties acquired (in Naira)**

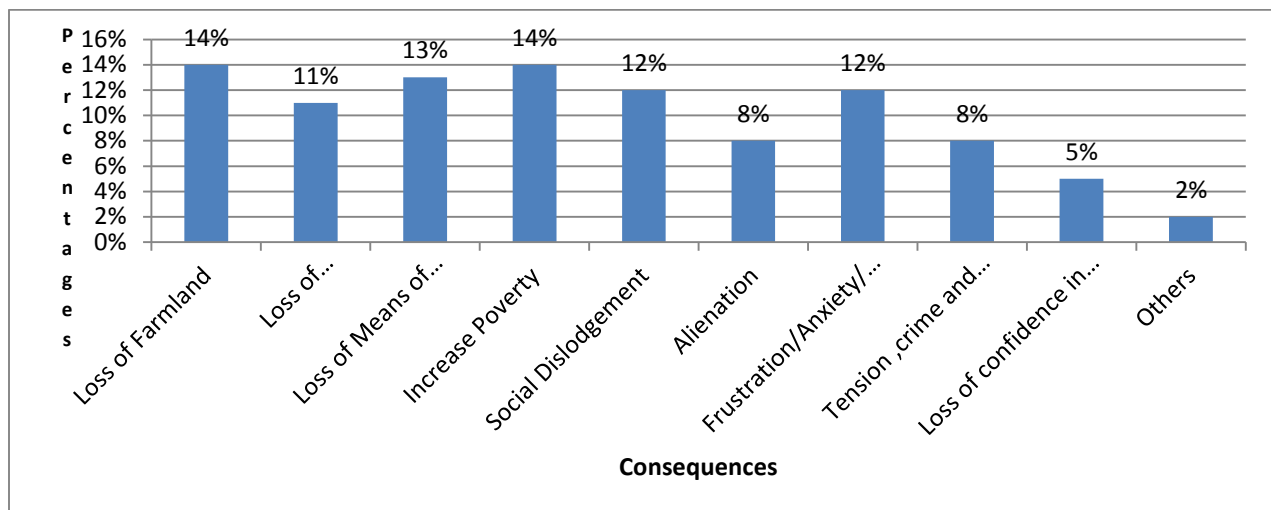
Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2015

Going by the data majority, (53%) of those whose land were acquired claimed to have received between N100,000-N200,000 as compensation, 19% received less than N50,000, 14% collected between N50,000-N100,000 only 4% and 3% of the respondents received N500,000- N1,000,000 and above N1,000,000 respectively.

Similarly, majority (42%) of those whose buildings and houses were acquired claimed to have received between N200,000 – N500,000, 36% claimed to have collected amount between N100,000-N200,000 while 4% claimed to have received about N1,000,000. With respect to those who received compensation on economic trees majority (49%) got less than N50,000 as compensation while 30% received between N50,000-N100,000 as compensation.

Considering the amount these respondents received, it is obvious that they were not adequately compensated. The amount given to them will not in any way replace what was taken away from them. In fact, majority will join the league of the landless and homeless. The implication of this is that, despite the fact that the process of the initiatives to compulsorily acquire land is basically meant to enrich lives, the process simply resulted in impoverishment of people, losing their capital assets and denying them access to basic human rights needed to improve standard of living.

Information Figure 5 reveals the consequences of compulsory allocation on livelihood of the sampled respondents.



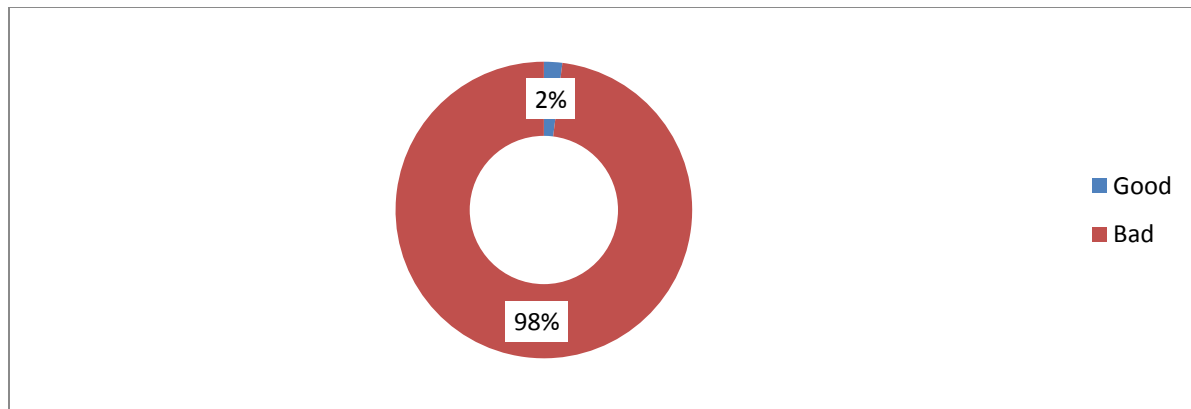
**Figure 5 Consequence of Compulsory Acquisition**

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2015

Analysis of data in Figure 5 shows the various forms of consequences of compulsory land acquisition from the point of view of the respondents themselves. Major consequences as stated by the respondents are loss of farmlands (14%), increase in level of poverty (14%) and loss of means of livelihoods (13%). Other include social dislodgement (12%), frustration, anxiety and hopelessness (12%), loss of housing/property (11%), alienation and tension, crime and violence accounts for 8% each. Other respondents cited other factors such as migration and its attendant challenges as the consequence of compulsory acquisition of land by Government.

Going by the above findings, it is obvious and clear that victims of compulsory land acquisition are subjected to untold hardship. Majority lose their land which is the only tangible resource at their disposal. They rely on it for sustenance and livelihood opportunities. To some, finding a replacement for their land and housing is virtually impossible thereby pushing them down the poverty line. This situation is often accompanied by frustration, hopelessness and in most cases crime and loss of confidence in the government and rule of law. Some respondents cited clash with government officials and destruction of governments property as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction with the way and manner the government acquire their land while others reported that they collectively presents their case to the Sultan for his intervention. From the foregoing discussion, it is glaringly clear that there is a serious problem with compulsory land acquisition procedure policy in the country and the consequence is that, victims are often left worst off, hopeless and with bleak future.

Figure 6 provides respondent's opinion about the compulsory land acquisition policy in Nigeria and Sokoto State.

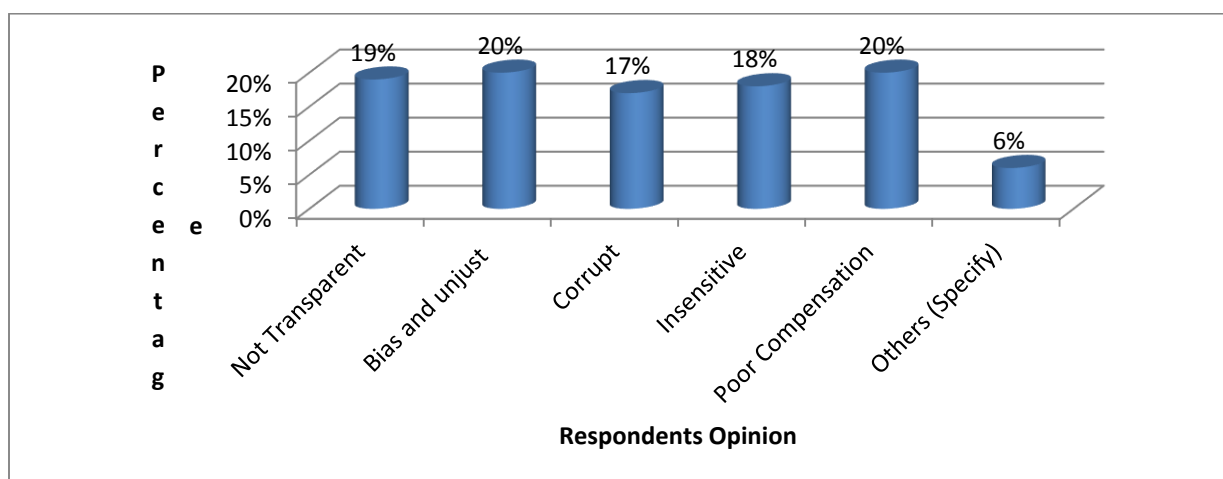


**Figure 6 Respondents’ Opinion about the Policy of Compulsory Land Acquisition**

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2015

Respondents view about the policy of compulsory acquisition as shown in figure 6 reveals that majority (98%) rated the policy as bad. They argue that the policy is aimed at making the rich and the elites richer while making the poor poorer. The respondents further state that the policy procedure and process neglects the basic steps of compulsory acquisition as enshrined by law.

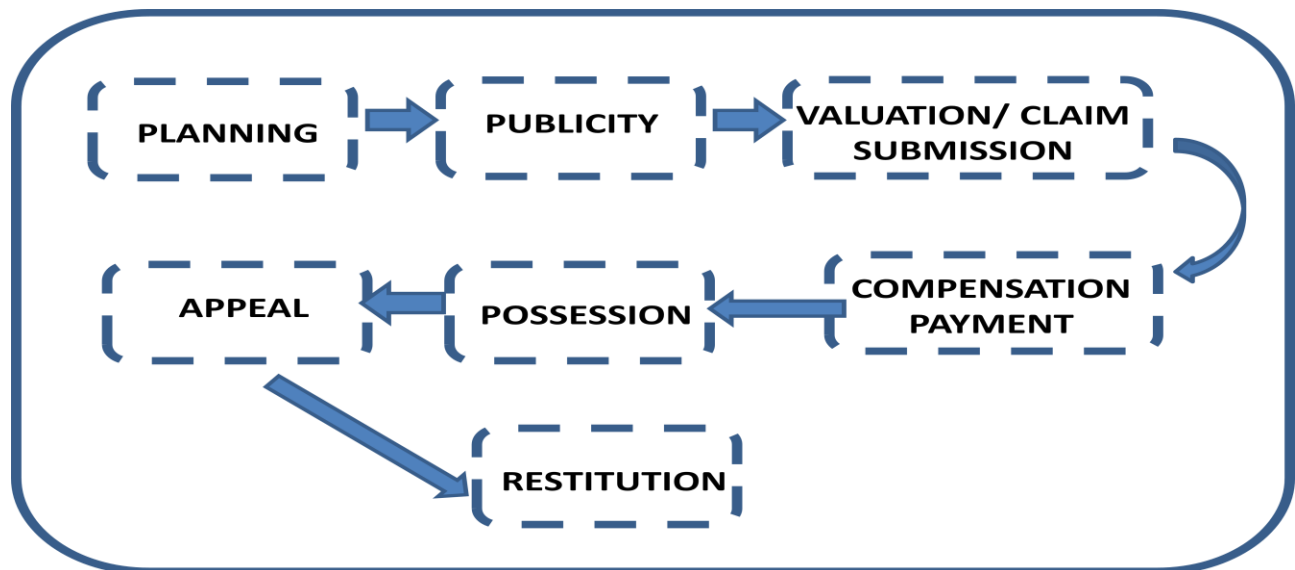
Data in Figure 7 reveals respondents view about the process of compulsory acquisition and why they rated it as bad. Majority of the respondents viewed the process as Bias, unjust and discriminatory to the poor (20%). Another 20% of the respondents cited poor compensation as the reason why they view the process as bad. 19% of the respondents believe the process is not transparent and everything is done in secrecy and the outcome is made compulsory to the victims without proper information flow and with no provision for appeal. The respondents (17%) are of the opinion that the entire exercise is bad because of its non-transparency is full of corruption and corrupt practices. This makes government officials and urban managers too powerful and corrupt as well as insensitive to the plight of the poor in the society as stated by 18% of the respondents.



**Figure 7 Respondents Opinion about the Process of Compulsory Land Acquisition**

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2015

From the above findings, one can argue that the real process of compulsory land acquisition is not been followed judiciously. In an ideal situation, the process should follow the sequence depicted in Figure 8 below:



**Figure 8 Stages and Processes of Compulsory Land Acquisition**

Source: Adopted from FAO, 2009

1. **Planning:** This involves the Determination of the various land options available for meeting the public need in a participatory fashion. The exact location and size of the land to be acquired is identified. Relevant data are collected. The impact of the project is assessed with the participation of the affected people.
2. **Publicity:** Notice is published to inform owners and occupants in the designated area that the government intends to acquire their land. People are requested to submit claims for compensation for land to be acquired. The notice describes the purpose and process, including important deadlines and the procedural rights of people. Public meetings provide people with an opportunity to learn more about the project, and to express their opinions and needs for compensation.
3. **Valuation and submission of claims:** Equivalent compensation for the land to be acquired is determined at the stated date of valuation. Owners and occupants submit their claims. The land is valued by the acquiring agency or another government body. The acquiring agency considers the submitted claim, and offers what it believes to be appropriate compensation. Negotiations may follow.
4. **Payment of compensation:** The government pays people for their land or resettles them on alternate land.
5. **Possession:** The government takes ownership and physical possession of the land for the intended purpose.
6. **Appeals:** Owners and occupants are given the chance to contest the compulsory acquisition, including the decision to acquire the land, the process by which the land was acquired, and the amount of compensation offered.
7. **Restitution:** Opportunity for restitution of land if the purpose for which the land was used is no longer relevant.

**Table 2 Respondents view about Compensation paid**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Very Adequate	00	00
Adequate	09	02
Inadequate	93	20
Grossly inadequate	358	78
	<b>460</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2015

Compensation whether in financial form or as replacement land or structures, is at the heart of compulsory acquisition. As a direct result of government action, people lose their homes, their land, and at times their means of livelihood. Compensation is to repay them for these losses, and should be based on principles of equity and equivalence (FAO, 2008). Investigation into respondents view about compensation paid to respondents' shows massive dissatisfaction. For instance in Table 2, majority of the respondents (78%) claimed that the compensation is grossly inadequate and 20% viewed it as inadequate. It is important to reiterate here that government in Nigeria only compensate for improvements made on land not the market value of land. In the study area any land less than 0.5 hectare is hardly compensated and the amount given to one hectare of land is N100,000.

In a normal situation legislation should ensure fair processes for determining valuation and compensation. Similarly, compensation for building as enshrined by law is often equivalent with the cost of replacement of the building at the time compensation; sadly the amount received is grossly inadequate for the victims to replace what they lost. It should be noted that while the public interest in keeping costs as low as possible is important in this respect, this concern should not deprive people of the equivalent compensation they need in order re-establish their lives after the loss of their land.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined consequences of compulsory land acquisition (by government) on the livelihood opportunities of the urban poor. Major findings of the study reveal that most of the victims of compulsory land acquisition in Sokoto state are the urban poor. Educationally, majority of the respondents are not literate in western education and this strongly limits their opportunity in being gainfully employed and at the same time be able to stand for their right in the face of injustice. They are also handicapped in comprehending and assimilating the provision of the law with respect to their right(s) to appeal any decision or action deemed not favourable to their collective interest due to lack of education. Financially they lack the resources to challenge the actions and decisions of urban managers and land administrators. Land is the major means of livelihood of most rural communities and urban fringe settlers in Northern Nigeria, taking it away simply amounts to pushing them down the poverty line. The study also found out that the compensation given to these respondents is grossly inadequate and incapable of enabling them to replace what they lost. In fact what respondents lost is beyond monetary aspect, they are also confronted with social dislodgement, loss of family and community ties as well as other psychological strain and stresses. The process of compulsory land acquisition, according to the respondents is not transparent, full of bias, corrupt practices and absolute disregard for the livelihoods of the urban poor.

The study recommends that despite the fact that Compulsory land acquisition is the right and power entrusted in government to obtain private lands without a determined consent of the owner for societal development, it is also important for government to note that when invoking overriding public interest they should ensure that the process is completed in an equitable and transparent manner. People should not be impoverished because their land was acquired by government. Equitable and transparent procedures are also needed for economic growth: compulsory acquisition will destabilize the economy if investors perceive that their rights to land are not adequately protected by the government.

Legislation to establish the government's power to compulsorily acquire land should be written clearly and with precision. It should ensure that people know what their rights are throughout the process, and that the decisions and actions of government officials are well structured and controlled. Unclear laws and regulations can lead to poorly-implemented procedures, inequitable compensation, reduced tenure security and even conflict. They may erode public faith in governance and the rule of law, and increase project costs.

To promote social and economic growth, governments should review and revise the laws and regulations that govern the compulsory acquisition of land. Legal frameworks should be aligned with other legislation that protects land rights, and specifically those that protect the vulnerable, including women and indigenous people. Legislation should include principles of due process and other protections for affected owners and occupants. Government should implement the recommendations of the Land Reform Committee set up during the administration of Late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua which recommends compensating landowners on the basis of the market value of the land.

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