

ANALYSIS OF THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF STREET BEGGARS IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzed the living conditions of street beggars in Kaduna State. Primary data for this paper were obtained through questionnaire survey, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and In-depth Interviews (IDIs). Convenience sampling technique was used to select respondents for administration of questionnaire. Three hundred and sixteen (316) street beggars were sampled from strategic begging locations in the study area. Frequency tables were used to analyze the data collected through questionnaire survey using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 while data from the FGDs and IDIs were analyzed according to themes and content. The findings revealed that 60.7% of the respondents received all form of alms consisting food, money and material items from the people. The street beggars' major expense was on food and feeding which accounted for 98.4%. Street beggars claimed to have access to potable drinking water which was sourced often through hand dug wells. Malaria (58.6%) was the most common ailment associated with the beggars. Medical treatment was often sought by 65.8% of the beggars any time they fall sick and 55% of the beggars agreed to not always able to afford their medical bills. Rented apartments (55.4%) and personal houses (22.3%) were the commonest accommodation types among the street beggars which were mostly constructed with mud (76.3%). About 76% of the respondents have pit latrine in their places of residence while 21% practice open defecation. The paper therefore recommends that government should renovate existing rehabilitation centres and establish more where street beggars should be trained in vocational skills.

Key words: Kaduna State, Living conditions, Street beggars.

INTRODUCTION

Begging is an ancient and widespread phenomenon, which has remained a subject of discourse among scholars of several disciplines. It is a social problem that has become the means of livelihood for reasonably a large number of people. Namwata, Mgabo and Dimoso (2012) posited that it is common to observe beggars of different sorts roaming around the streets, squatting on major church environs, swarming here and there. The problem of beggary is not new and begging has been a traditional profession (Bulsara, 1945 cited in Kamruzzaman and Hakim, 2017). Begging cuts cross different socio-economic and demographic sub-group as some take to it as a profession while others claim they are bound to do it.

Scholars have defined begging in various ways. Fitzpatrick and Kennedy (2000) defined begging as to ask for money without any return of services. It is the practice of imploring others to grant a favour, often a gift of money, with little or no expectation of reciprocation (Dromi, n.d). Olawale (2007) conceived begging as the habit of someone (a beggar) soliciting for favour from others (potential donors) for survival and enrichment. Begging is the activity of asking for money as charity on the street (Delap, 2009; Kamruzzaman and Hakim, 2015). It is common to see begging conducted along the streets particularly in urban areas.

Amman (2006) observed that the populations of beggars are growing exponentially on Nigerian streets. The menace of street begging as a potential threat to Nigerian societal fabric is obvious. Eyo, Usoro and Usoro (2007) upholds the view that street begging is a national malady that has eaten into the fabrics of social, economic, religious, political and educational structures. Street begging is a menace that is rampant in Northern Nigeria (Mahmoud, 2006). For instance, a 2013 survey indicated that the population of beggars in Nigeria stood at 12.4 million. The North West zone hosts 5.1 million, the North East zone 3.5 million, North central zone 1.6 million, South west zone 7,600, South-South and South East zones has 9,228 and 8,200 respectively (Okolie, 2016). Binniyat (2013) stated that the population of beggars who seem to spend most of their time on the streets and public areas in Kaduna State is quite high.

The phenomenon of street begging is a result of a number of factors, such as poverty (real or imagined), religion, physical disability, culture, national disaster, civil war, bad habits (drug, alcohol, and gambling), family heritage, uncontrolled rural-urban migration, and psychiatric disabilities and disorders (Amman, 2006; Ogunkan and Fawole, 2009; Namwata, Mgabo and Dimoso, 2011). Similarly, the National Planning Commission [NPC] in 2004 noted that street begging often time arise from inability to provide basic needs for self and family among others. However, a critical look on the living conditions of the street beggars revealed that most of the street beggars come from vulnerable families or are being isolated from the society and their family (Thakker, 1997 cited in Uddin, Aktar and Sultana, 2014).

Beggars being considered as the highly vulnerable and poverty-ridden individuals of the society are often prone to abuse, deprivation of basic life necessities and unhealthy living conditions. A study conducted by Fireyihun (2011) found that beggars usually have difficulty of meeting their basic needs such as food, cloth and shelter as well as the needs of their children due to the fact that the amount of money they collect by begging is inadequate. Onagun (2016) further stated that most beggars lack significant helping hand to meet their daily basic needs. This provides a basis to analyze the living conditions of street beggars in Kaduna State where the number of beggars is quite high. The study covered issues on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of street beggars, spatial pattern of distribution of street beggars, factors influencing the spatial pattern of distribution, factors influencing street begging, living conditions and nature of livelihoods of street beggars, survival strategies adopted by street beggars and challenges faced by street beggars in begging activities.

THE STUDY AREA

Kaduna State is located between Latitudes 9° 02'N and 11° 32'N north of the Equator and Longitudes 6° 15'E and 8° 50'E east of Prime meridian (Figure 1). Kaduna State is bounded to the north by Kano, Katsina, and Zamfara States, to the west by Niger State, to the east by Bauchi

State and Nasarawa and Plateau States to the south. The State occupies an area of approximately 48,473.2 square kilometers. Kaduna State experiences a tropical continental climate with two distinct seasonal climates, dry and wet seasons. The wet season starts from May to October and is heavier in the southern parts with average annual rainfall of over 1,524mm than 1,016mm in the northern parts. The state has relative humidity of 56.6% with average daily minimum and maximum temperatures of 15.1°C and 35.2°C respectively (Kaduna State Development Plan [KSDP], 2013). The population of the State according to 2006 census stands at 6,113,503 (National Population Commission {NPC}, 2009). The area is a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic state with ethnic groups including Fulani, Hausa, Bajju, Atyp, Jaba, Adara, Gbagyi, Kurama, Ninzo, Ham, Koro, Kagoro, Gwong, Numana, Gure, Kaninkon, Moro'a, Kagoma, Kadara and so on. Kaduna State is an agrarian based economy with agriculture as its major economic activity which serves as the bedrock of other activities (KSDP, 2013).

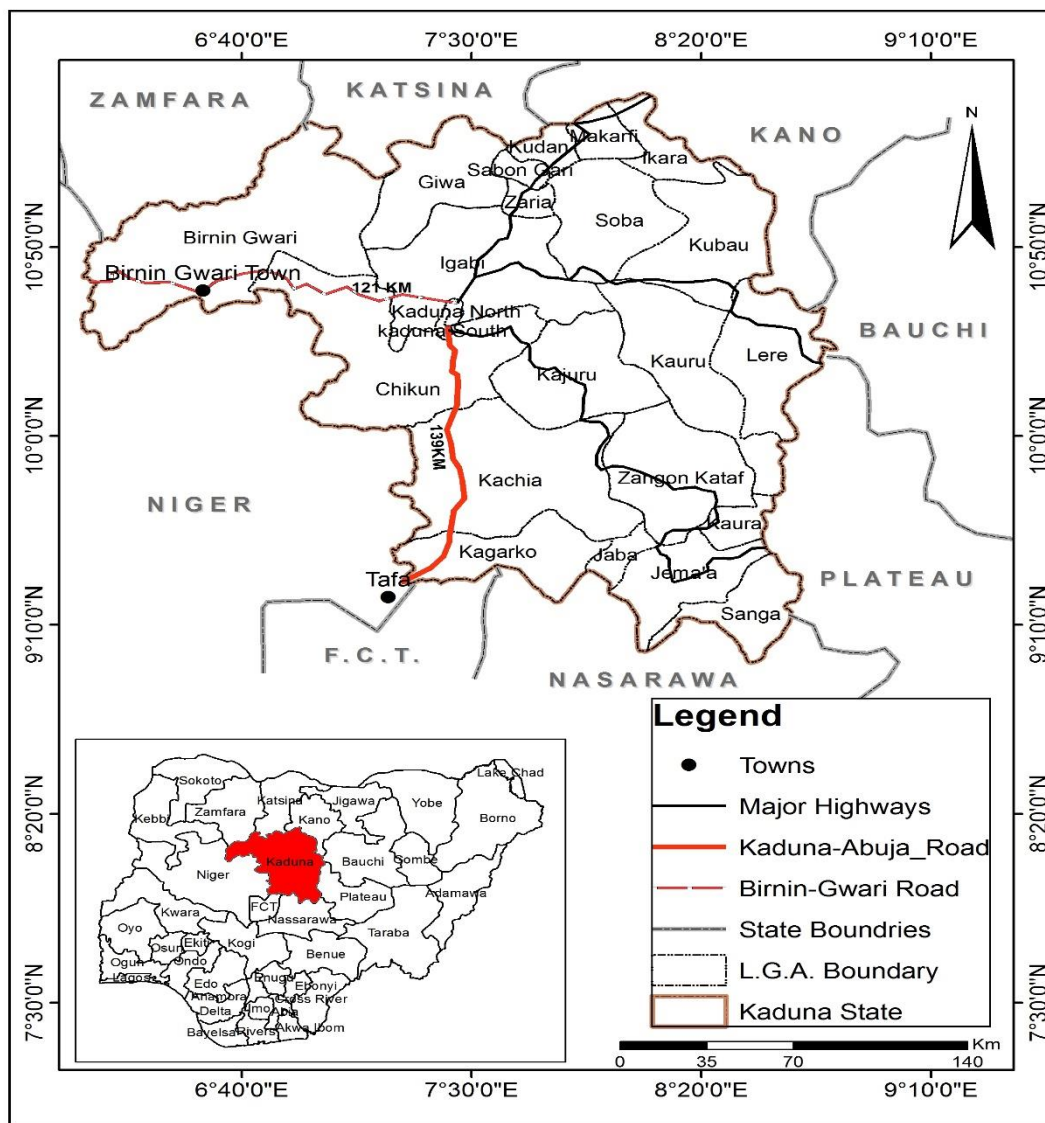


Figure 1: Kaduna State

Source: Kaduna State Ministry of Lands and Survey, 2016

According to Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture [KDCCIMA] (2014), Kaduna is a major commercial city, and is second only to Kano in the northern Nigeria. Almost all the major industries in Kaduna State are located in Zaria and Kaduna urban centres. There are also small and medium scale industries too numerous to mention that are very important in providing portable equipment for the rural dwellers. All of these serve as attractions for street begging activities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary data used for this study was obtained through the use of questionnaire survey, FGDs, and In-depth Interviews (IDIs). From the reconnaissance survey, the estimated population of 1,505 for street beggars in all the locations in the study area was considered as the study population. The three Local Government Areas (LGAs) with the highest estimated number of street beggars in each of the three senatorial districts of the State were purposively selected, namely; Kaduna North, Jema'a and Zaria LGAs. Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size. Convenience or accidental sampling technique was used to select 316 street beggars for questionnaire administration.

Two sessions of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in each of the selected LGAs was conducted involving three (3) male and female beggars to generate information on street begging. In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with the leaders of the street beggars, district heads and religious leaders was conducted to explore issues related to street begging. Subsequently, responses from questionnaire was coded, summarized and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data obtained through questionnaire survey while the FGDs and IDIs were analyzed according to themes and content.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 show that about 66% of the respondents were males while 34% are females. This is an indication that more males are found engaging in street begging in the study area than the females. This result has a negative implication for an urban economy as men are placed as family benefactors. This result corroborates Jelili (2006) which reveals that there were more male beggars in the city of Ilorin than female and also Arshad, Kamal and Arif (2014) which shows that 70% of the street beggars in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, were males. It however contradicts the result of Osagbemi (2001) which discovered that more females engage in street begging than the males in Jos. The age distribution reveals more than 47% of street beggars were above 50 years of age whereas 21.2% were below 30 years old. This demonstrates that older people tend to be more involved in street begging than the younger ones.

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	209	66.1
Female	107	33.9
Total	316	100.0
Age (Years)		
Less than 15	2	0.6
15-19	4	1.3
20-24	28	8.9
25-29	33	10.4
30-34	51	16.1
35-39	38	12.0
40-44	1	0.3
45-49	8	2.5
50 and above	151	47.8
Total	316	100.0
Religion		
Islam	215	68.0
Christianity	11	32.0
Total	316	100.0
Marital Status		
Never married	71	22.5
Married	196	62.0
Divorced	1	0.3
Widowed	46	14.6
Separated	2	0.6
Total	316	100.0
Type of Marriage Union		
Monogamy	77	39.1
Polygamy	119	60.9
Total	196	100.0
Highest level of Education		
Quranic	204	64.6
Primary	75	23.7
Secondary	33	10.4
Tertiary	4	1.3
Total	316	100.0
Daily Income		
Less than ₦1000	286	90.5
₦1001- ₦2000	27	8.5
₦2001- ₦4000	3	0.9
Total	316	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

With respect to religious beliefs, 68% of the street beggars practice Islam whereas only 32% are Christians. About 65% of the respondents had Quranic/Islamic education while only 35.4% had formal education with tertiary education accounting for 1.3%. The low level of educational

qualifications among the street beggars suggests they lack employment skills which will limit their potential to be gainfully employed. This is so because better education would have enhanced their economic earning capacity and hence street begging would not have been considered an option for survival. This result corroborates Ogunkan and Fawole (2009); Adedibu and Jelili's (2011) findings which reveal a high illiteracy level among beggars.

Most (90.5%) of the respondents earn less than ₦500 daily from begging activities while 0.9% get ₦1000 and above. The daily income of street beggars falls below the world poverty line of \$3 US Dollars per day per head. This implies that majority of the street beggars are poor. Regarding marital status, 62.0% of the respondents were married. Polygamous type of marital union (61%) was mostly practiced among the street beggars in the area while 39.1% were in monogamous union. Buttressing this, excerpt from the in-depth interview reveals that:

“I have four wives comprising of three with good sight and one blind” (Leader Blind Beggars, Anguwan Juma ward, Zaria).

Another discussant added that:

“I have 4 wives and 12 children that I take care of from street begging activities” (Leader of the Cripple Beggars, Limanci Iya ward, Zaria).

Type of Alms Received

Figure 2 indicates that 60.7% of the beggars received all forms of alms consisting of food, money and clothing from people whereas 38.7% received only money and food. In an In-depth interview with the District Head in Kanfanchan, He stated that:

“Emir of Kanfanchan usually assists the street beggars with cereals and grains during fasting and festive periods” (Adult Male).

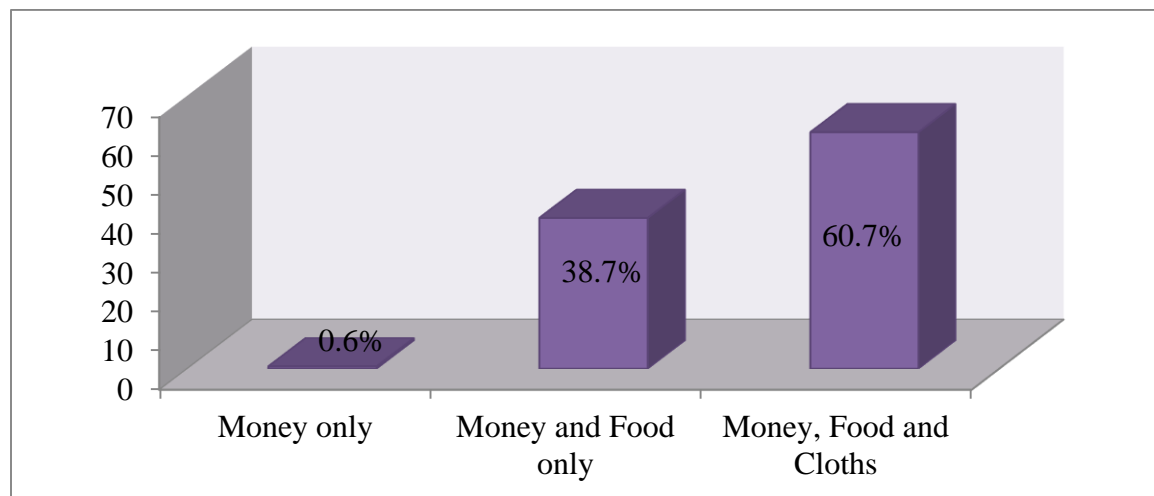


Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents according to Alms Received

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The street beggars receiving food, cloth and money could be attributed to the assertion of Jackson (2002), that some advance communities reduced street begging because of concerns that beggars may use the money to support alcohol or drug abuse. As such, those wishing to give beggars can rather give gift cards or vouchers for food or service and not cash necessarily.

Expenses Made from Begging Earnings

As indicated in Table 2, food/feeding is the major expense street beggars made with their earnings, followed by other expenses such as sending money to family members, purchase of water for domestic use and payment of transport fare. These findings show that street beggars essentially utilized their earnings to cater for their immediate needs and also that of their families.

Table 2: Type of Expenses of Street Beggars

Expenses	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Food/feeding	311	98.4	5	1.6	316	100.0
Payment of School fees	127	40.2	189	59.8	316	100.0
Pay Medical Bills	202	63.9	114	36.1	316	100.0
Buying of Clothes	187	59.2	129	40.8	316	100.0
Payment of House rent	74	23.4	242	76.6	316	100.0
Electricity/Energy bill	21	6.6	295	93.4	316	100.0
Other expenses	223	70.6	93	29.4	316	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Corroborating this finding, the leader of the blind beggars in Kawo, Kaduna North during in-depth interview said that:

“I use the money from begging to pay for my children’s school fees in a private school” (Adult Male).

This is further supported by the findings of Namwata, Mgabo and Dimoso (2012) in urban areas of central Tanzania which shows that majority of street beggars (72.8%) reported they spent their money on food expenses, 8.1% spent their money on school and medical expenses whereas, 6.5% spent their money on buying of clothes for members of their households. On the other hand, house rent and electricity bill payments represent the least expenses made by the street beggars.

Access to Potable Domestic Water and Source

Table 3 shows that majority (98.1%) of the respondents had access to water for domestic uses. Among those who had access to water, about 44% sourced it from hand-dug wells.

Table 3: Access and Sources of Water

Access	Frequency	Percent
Yes	310	98.1
No	6	1.9
Total	316	100.0
Main Source of Water		
Pipe borne	29	9.3
Borehole	74	23.9
Hand-dug well	136	44.2
Water tanker	7	2.1
Water vendor	64	20.5
Total	310	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

This result clearly shows that hand-dug well was the most utilized and readily available source of domestic water for the street beggars. Nonetheless, the well water source is easily contaminated because it is often unprotected. Consequently, the contaminated well water source serves as a mechanism to transmit communicable diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery, typhoid and guinea worm infection. The least source of water (2.1%) is water tanker. The expensive nature of this water source which street beggars may not be able to afford could be the possible explanation for the least use of this water source.

Common Ailment and Frequency of Falling Sick

Malaria and typhoid is the most common ailments (80%) experienced by the respondents as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Common Ailment and Frequency of Falling Sick

Common ailment	Frequency	Percent
Malaria	185	58.6
Typhoid	81	25.6
Diarrhea	8	2.5
Others	42	13.3
Total	316	100.0
No. of Times Fell Sick		
Daily	11	3.5
Weekly	32	10.1
Monthly	60	19.0
Yearly	54	17.1
Twice a year	19	6.0
Thrice a year	92	29.1
Others	48	15.2
Total	316	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

This could be attributed to poor personal attitudes like eating and drinking without washing their hands, unsanitary environment and non-use of mosquitoes treated nets. This agrees with the finding of Salami and Olugbayo (2013) which reveals that malaria was common among international migrants' beggars in Ibadan South-western Nigeria. Also, showed was that 29.1% of the street beggars fall sick thrice yearly, followed by those who usually fall sick once in a month. This rate of occurrence is an indication that the street beggars are highly susceptible to diseases. The least number of times beggars fell sick was daily representing only 3.5% of the total respondents. This might be for those suffering from one terminal illness or the other.

Health Seeking Behaviour and the Place of Treatment

Table 5 reveals that about 66% of the respondents seek medical treatment any time they fall sick. Among the respondents that always seek medical treatment, 72.3% get medical treatment from public hospitals.

Table 5: Medical Treatment and Place of Treatment

Seeking Medical Treatment	Frequency	Percent
Yes	208	65.8
No	108	34.2
Total	316	100.0
Place for Medical Treatment		
Public hospital	151	72.3
Traditional/herbal	?	?
Private hospital	46	22.3
Dispensary	11	5.4
Total	208	100.0
Reason for not Seeking Medical Treatment		
High medical charges	62	57.4
No close health care facility	10	9.3
Religious/cultural belief	9	8.3
Others	27	25.0
Total	108	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The fact that medical treatments in public healthcare facility such as primary healthcare centres are subsidized could be the reason street beggars seek medical treatment in public hospital. Also, the fact that the common ailment among the street beggars does not require long medical care and treatment might account for their high medical seeking behaviour. High medical charges is the main reason street beggars do not seek medical treatment during ailment, followed by others such as self-medication, use of patent medicine shops within the neighbourhoods and herbs which accounts for 25% of the total respondents.

Place of Residence, Type of House and Monthly Rent of Street Beggars

Table 6 reveals that more than half (55.4%) of the street beggars live in rented apartments.

Table 6: Place of Residence, Type of House and Monthly Rent

Place of Residence	Frequency	Percent
Street	3	0.9
Family/Personal house	70	22.2
Relatives house	34	10.8
Rented house	175	55.4
Government rehabilitation centres	34	10.7
Total	316	100.0
Type of House		
Mud house	241	76.3
One/two room cement block apartment	14	4.5
Multiple tenant accommodation	61	19.3
Total	316	100.0
Monthly Rent		
Below ₦2000	140	80.0
₦2000- ₦4000	35	20.0
Total	175	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

This is followed by those that have their own personal houses (22.2%). In support of this, during the FGDs conducted at Kawo ward Kaduna North, a participant clearly stated that:

“I have no house but rented one with the little I get from begging. I have a wife and 2 children, only when I go out to begging that I get money to cater for my family. My siblings cannot cater for my family” (Adult Male).

This is an indication that most street beggars in the study area could be classified as beggars on the street since they spend most of the day on the streets begging for alms, but they often return to their homes in the evening after spending the day on the street begging. A few of the street beggars reside at the rehabilitation centre. However, the view of Okunmadewa (2001) that the existing rehabilitation homes being a mockery and an insult to human dignity, since they lack basic necessities of life might explain why a few of the beggars reside in the rehabilitation centre. About 1% of street beggars lack house to go back to, they therefore live and sleep on the streets. An excerpt from in-depth interview with the District Head of Shaba Ward (Kaduna North) reveals that:

“The street beggars sleep on the corridor of some people’s houses constituting a nuisance onto them, defecate everywhere thereby making the environment look dirty” (Adult Male).

Table 6 further indicates that mud constructed compound house (76.3%) are the commonest type of house the respondents live in whereas only 4.5% live in one or two room cement block

apartments. Also observable is that about 70% of the respondents that live in rented apartments pays less than ₦2000 monthly.

Type of Toilet Facility

Figure 3 shows that 76% of the respondents had pit toilet facilities in their places of residence, followed by 21% who defecate openly while only 3% had water closet system.

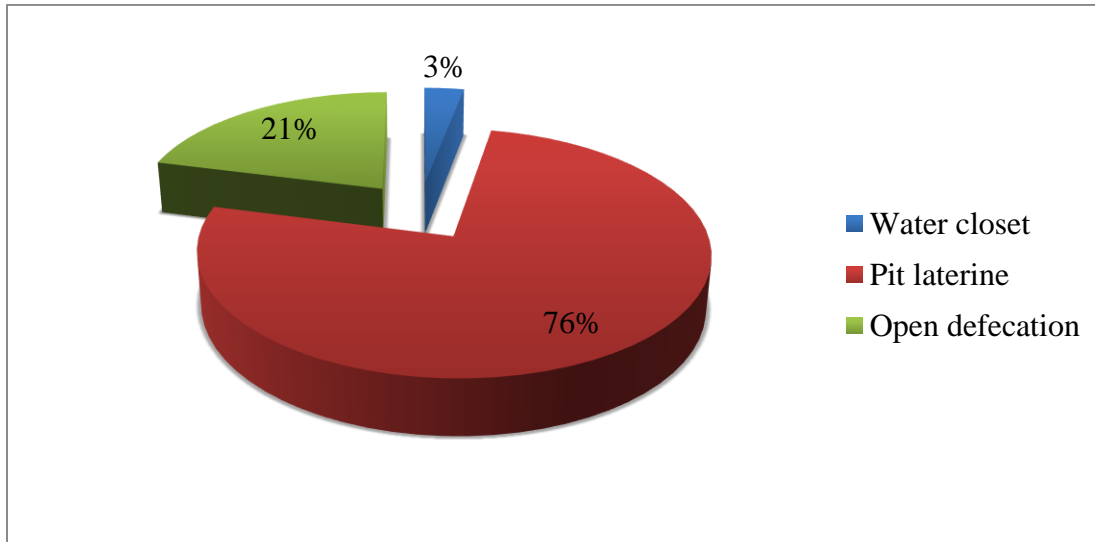


Figure 3: Toilet Facility

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Non-participatory field observation reveals that street beggars' residents were characterized with various environmental irritants which included poor solid waste disposal, poor waste water disposal practices, and dirty drainage system, among others. Moreover, the general poor condition of the pit toilet further aggravates the poor environmental conditions of the street beggars' residents which directly affect their health status.

CONCLUSION

This study attempted the analysis of the living conditions of street beggars in Kaduna State. Data obtained from the street beggars found at their strategic begging locations. The study revealed that street begging is a common societal problem in the State. It was found that the street beggars lived in unhealthy conditions characterized by lack of basic household facilities and were often unable to meet their daily needs expenses. The study therefore recommends that the present rehabilitation centre should be properly renovated with good household facilities by the State government. The government in collaboration with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) should encourage and support skills acquisition programmes in rehabilitation centres where street beggars could be trained and empowered economically.

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