

## Profiling the Characteristics of Squatter Settlements in Jabi District, Federal Capital City, Abuja, Nigeria

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### Abstract

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The study aimed at examining the characteristics of squatter settlements in Jabi District, Abuja. Its main objective was to update knowledge on the characteristics of squatter settlements in Abuja. The magnitude of socio-economic, environmental and health factors of these settlements on the squatters were considered. The study evaluated the characteristics of squatter settlement in Jabi using evaluation criteria such as living condition of the squatters and its impact on settlers. The study observed that 24% of the respondents use pit toilets in their houses while 40% agreed to open defecation. 26% agreed to using of commercial toilets within the settlements and 10% have water system toilets in their houses. For waste collection and disposal, 15.1% of the household had waste-bins while 45.1% agreed to discharge their waste by open dumping. 20% of the households agreed to discharging the waste into gutter/drainage and 19.8% agreed to burn the waste. 91.7% of the settlers agreed that the AEPA does not carry out any form of sanitation or remove their waste.

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**Keywords:** Development, Illegal, Squatter-Settlement, Squatter,

### 1. Introduction

Squatter settlement is considered as a residential area developed without legal claims to the land or permission from the concerned authorities to build because of their illegal status; infrastructure and services are usually inadequate (Abumere, 1999). There is no satisfactory definition of squatter settlement, as terms vary from culture to culture or nation to nation. Squatter settlements exist in both urban and rural areas and occupied by persons earning low incomes. Squatter settlements have been present for as long as there has been poverty (Meadows, 2010). Poverty and social ostracism are the primary causes of squatter settlement in most nations (UNECE, 1996). Squatter settlements exist not only in developing countries but in developed nations. In most cases, housing within these squatter settlements has been improvised and lacks basic infrastructure such as sanitation, water, health centers, schools, road and power. Approximately 1 billion people, or one in six people live in squatter settlements or slums worldwide according to UN Habitat (2007).

The Master Plan of Abuja listed 40 villages that would be relocated in the initial stage (Phase 1) of the Federal Capital City (FCC) growth. These settlements are within the areas earmarked for the City development as well as the five (5) kilometers of the Capital City site designed to protect the periphery of the City from development encroachments or unplanned expansion of existing settlements (Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), 1979). Additional 85 villages would also have to be relocated as the City expands to the 3.1 million ultimate populations (Jibril, 2006).

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Overall, the Master Plan estimated that about 264 settlements involving approximately 50,000 people as at 1977, could be relocated, if all the elements of the Regional Plan contained in the Master Plan were to be implemented (FCDA, 1979). It should be noted that the Master Plan favoured the option of relocation within the FCT to existing villages, which already have some of the basic community facilities.

This option might better address the potential socio-cultural preferences of the population who could potentially be served through existing community facilities (FCDA, 1979). The Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) have been unable to meet the demands from the urban population in shelter delivery, this has led to an extensive development of squatter or unplanned settlements (Jibril, 2006; Udeh, 2010). This gap has led to the growth of squatter settlements in Abuja. (Udeh, 2010). Squatter settlements have become part of Abuja, the new capital city and exist in all corners of the capital city. FCDA (2007) observed that there are over 28 squatter settlements within the FCC. Squatter settlements have become a big problem in Abuja, not only to the FCTA, property investors and private property owners but residents. Jibril (2006) noted that the changes in policies have affected the settlement of the original settlers. Some of the causes or reasons why squatter settlements are still present in the FCC may be attributed to inadequate regulation and freedom, weak planning and enforcement, changes on resettlement policy, amongst others. Jabi District is one of the districts within Phase 2 of the FCC and has four squatter settlements namely Jabi Samuel, Jabi Main, Jabi Yakubu and Jabi Hausawa. The Jabi Lake has become a landmark for tourist in Abuja. However, these squatter settlements lacking basic social facilities even with its close proximity to the world class and high/costly building, malls and hotels in Jabi District.

Jibril (2006) studied resettlement issues, squatter settlement and the problem of land administration in Abuja and found that failure of FCT Administration to evolve a workable resettlement policy led to the emergency of slums and squatter settlements within the FCC and the entire Territory. Udeh (2010) studied the impacts of development of FCC on selected settlements in Kura and found that gap between the supply and demand for housing has been widening with time. This according to Udeh (2010) has led to the growth of squatter settlements in Abuja. Adiuoku (2014) study on prospects and challenges of informal settlements in Abuja, the study considered analytical framework of poverty and homelessness with highlights on environmental, socio-economic and cultural feature associated with population growth. The study concluded that improvement and upgrading needed in the general quality of the physical conditions of the environment of urban slums and squatters' settlements in Abuja, Nigeria. Ezeamaka (2015) studied land administration in Abuja and concluded that land administration in FCC has not performed very effectively and has not met people's expectations. This has given rise to slums, squatter settlements within the City. Zubair, Ojigi and Mbih (2015) studied urbanization of the FCC, Abuja as a catalyst for the emergence of squatter settlements and squalors in and around the FCC. And found that squatter settlements and squalors have sprang up in and around the FCC due to poor housing scheme, which made proper accommodation within the city unaffordable for low income residents of the city who are mostly civil servants

The context by which these problems of squatter settlement exist is poorly understood to enable improvement or resolution. In view of this, therefore, this study is an attempt to examine the characterisation of squatter settlements in Jabi, Abuja. This paper seek to provide information on how squatter settlements characteristics and effects in Jabi, Abuja, using evaluation criterion such as living condition of the squatters and its impact on settlers. This work is limited to the existing squatter settlements in Jabi District of FCT, Abuja.

## 2. Study Area

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja falls within Latitudes  $7^{\circ} 25'$  N and  $9^{\circ} 20'$  North of the Equator and Longitudes  $6^{\circ} 45'$  E and  $7^{\circ} 39'$  East. It covers an area of about 8,000 square kilometers (FCDA, 1998). By virtue of the central location of the FCT within the national context it is placed entirely in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. It is bounded to the north by Kaduna State, and by Nassarawa State to the East and Southeast, to the Southwest by Kogi State and to the West by Niger State as shown in Figure 1. Ezeamaka (2015) noted that Abuja is centrally located and is easily accessible from all parts of Nigeria and indeed the principal activity city in Africa. The Federal Capital Territory, Abuja has an official population of 1.4 Million in 2006 but given the daily influx of people into the Territory, the population today could be well over 8 million people (Sumaila, 2012). Jabi District had a planned population of 32,622 according to the Abuja master Plan (FCDA, 1979), which does not include these squatter settlements.

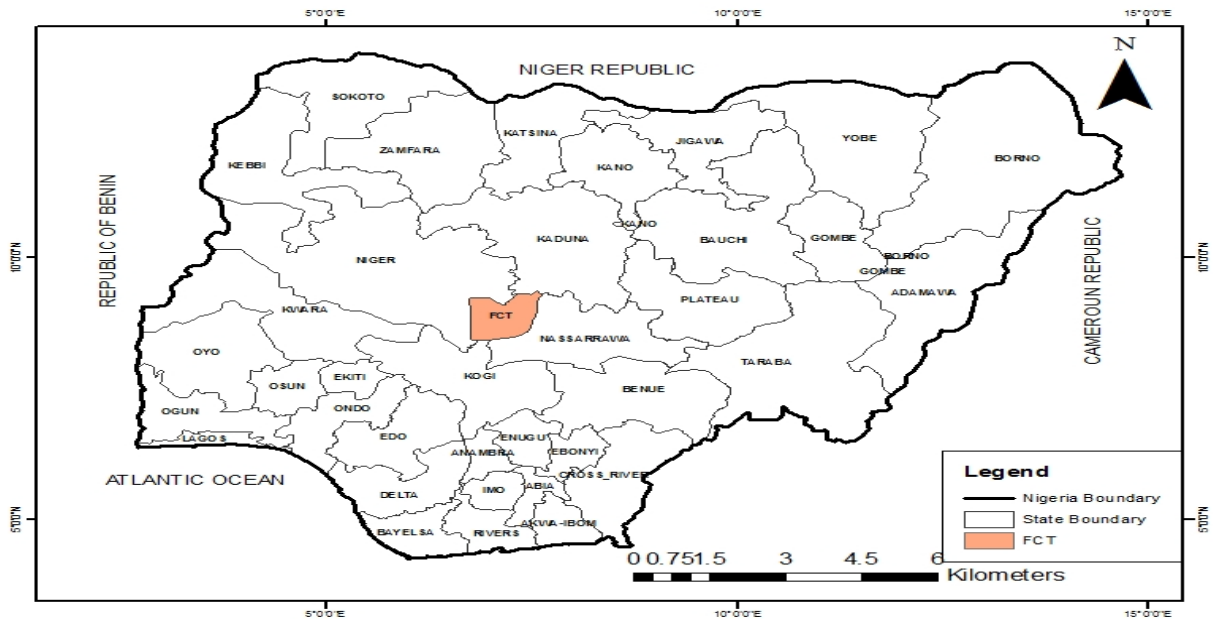


Figure 1: Nigeria Showing FCT, Abuja  
Source: AGIS, 2016

Figure 2 shows the FCC in FCT with the six Area Councils in the Territory. The FCC is located within the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). Jabi District is in Phase II of the FCC, which is made up of 19 districts. Jabi covers a total surface area of 486 hectare with about 140 hectare has natural features such as Jabi Lake, which is centrally located, rock outcrops and streams. Jabi District is bounded to the North by Kado District, to the East by Utako District, and Gwaripma District at the West and South by Diakibiyu District. However, the numeration carried out by the Department of Resettlement and Compensation of the FCDA in 2016 reported that population of the settlements was 8,342 and 1440 households as at 2016 (FCDA, 2017).

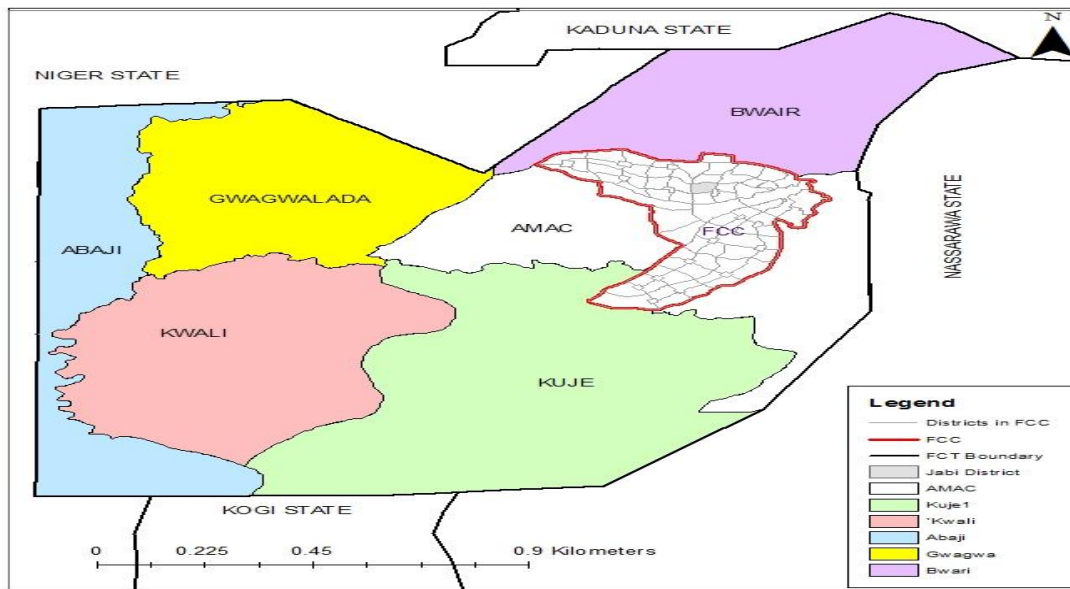


Figure 2: Abuja Showing Jabi District in Federal Capital City  
Source: AGIS (2018)

### 3. Research Method

Reconnaissance survey was conducted and oral interview was carried out on the residents of the study area. This enabled the researchers to have a better knowledge of the size of the study area. Furthermore, this enabled the researchers to determine the relevant issues to be addressed in the questionnaire and to ascertain the most appropriate sampling method and suitable statistical analysis to employ. The study adopted direct field observation; it involved interview and physical assessment. The interview questions were administered on each selected household. The information collected on site form the major bulk of the data. Other information was obtained from the Abuja Master Plan, while the maps were from the Abuja Geographic Information Systems (AGIS). The data were presented in tables and charts, while data analysis was carried using simple percentages and frequencies. The exponential model formula ( $P_n = P_0 (1 + r/100)^n$ ) was applied to project for the 2018 population to 8,881. Where  $P_n$  is Projected population,  $P_0$  is population of the base year,  $r$  is population growth rate and  $n$  is the number of years, which the population was projected (2018 – 2016 = 2). Purposive sampling technique was used to distribute the interview questionnaire by selecting at the interval of five households in the squatter settlements in Jabi District as shown in Table 1. This study collected socioeconomic data from the selected 350 households.

**Table 1: Result of Survey Questions**

Settlement	2016 Population	2018 Population	Selected Household
Jabi Main	2,786	2949	117
Jabi Samuel	2,311	2,350	101
Jabi Yakubu	2,136	2,374	102
Jabi Hausawa	1,109	1,208	30
Total	8,342	8,881	350

Source: Fieldwork (2018)

### 4. Results and Discussion

The foremost objective of the Abuja Master Plan is to ensure that the city is developed according to the Master Plan and that the mistakes of Lagos are not repeated (FCDA, 1979). This study was aimed at examining the characteristics of these squatter settlements in Jabi. The magnitude of socio-economic, environmental and health factors of these settlements on the squatters were considered. In assessing the unsuitability of the living conditions within these settlements, the study focused on the field survey observation and the interview conducted on the head of household within these settlements.

#### 4.1. Demographic Characteristic:

The demographic and socio-economic features of the squatters are key to this study. This enables the study in understanding the dynamic of the relationship between the people (squatters) and the environment. Table 2 revealed that 21% of the respondents were within the ages of 21-35years, while 30.3% were within 36-60years, 36.6% of the respondents fell within the category of 60-75years, the remaining 11.4% were above 75years of age. The implication is that over 70% of the respondents are still working and providing for their families. Table 2 further revealed that 57.14% of the respondents were male and 42.86 % female. Further probe revealed that 45.7% of the respondents were married while 30% were single, 12.9% were widowed, and 11.4% divorced. This shows that the settlements are occupied by a very young and active.

The survey also revealed that 30% of the respondents are traders and 5.1% are civil servants. Twenty percentage of the respondents are involved in mini jobs and 12% are drivers. About 4.3% of the respondents are professionals while 10% are welders and 18.6% of the respondents that have no Job as shown on Table 2. Further probe, shown that 60% of the jobless respondents were job seekers (applicants). The professionals as observed by this study are sex vendors, medical providers, contractors' builders, engineers and teachers. The sex vendors refused further interview claiming the study was an attempt by FCTA to arrest and take them out of Abuja. The respondents with mini-Jobs are those engage in food vendor services, hair salon shoe repairs and barber shop operators. This implied that working class people are occupying these squatter settlements.

Table 2 furthermore revealed that 35.7% do not have any form of education, while 32.3% had primary education and 32% had secondary education or above. The no education involves the respondents that did not go to school but learnt a form of trade or the other and many of them can speak and write little English.

**Table 2: Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristic of the Respondents**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age Group</b>			<b>Building Type</b>			<b>Source of Water</b>		
21-35	76	21.7%	Block	140	40%	FCT Water Broad	0	0
36-60	106	30.3%	Mud	105	30%	Borehole	35	10%
60-75	128	36.6%	Zinc	18	5.1%	Well	88	25.1%
Above 75years	40	11.4%	Wood	18	5.1%	Water Vendors	227	64.9%
<b>Sex</b>			Metal	69	19.8%			
Male	200	57.14%	<b>Number of Rooms</b>			<b>Waste Disposal</b>		
Female	150	42.86%	One Room	196	56%	Bin	53	15.1%
<b>Marital Status</b>			Two Rooms	126	36%	Open Dumping	158	45.1%
Married	160	45.7%	Three Rooms	28	8%	Gutter/ Drainage	70	20%
Single	105	30%	<b>Toilet</b>			Open Burning	69	19.8%
Widowed	45	12.9	One Room with Toilet	38	19.4%	<b>Toilet Type</b>		
Divorced	40	11.4	One Room without Toilet	158	80.6%	Water System	35	10%
<b>Employment Status</b>			Two Room with Toilet	51	40.5%	Pit Toilet	84	24%
Traders	105	30%	Two Room without Toilet	75	59.5%	Open Space	140	40%
Civil Servants	18	5.1%	Three Room with Toilet	22	78.6%	Commercial Toilet	91	26%
Drivers	42	12%	Three Room without Toilet	6	21.4%	<b>Source of Power</b>		
Professional	15	4.3%	<b>Educational Status</b>			PHCN	235	67.1%
Welder	35	10%	No Education	125	35.7%	Private/Generator	88	25.1%
Mini-Job	70	20%	Primary Education	113	32.3%	Lighter/candle	27	7.8%
No Job	65	18.6%	Secondary Education	112	32%			

Source: Fieldwork (2018).

#### 4.2. Building Conditions:

Forty percentage of the respondents lived in houses constructed with concert blocks, 30% in Mud houses, houses made form zinc and wood materials recorded 5.1% each, while metal constructed houses were 19.8% as shown in Table 2. The result of the interview and the physical survey had differs as shown in Figure 3. However, this was due to settlers being ashamed of stating the building type the settler and family occupied.

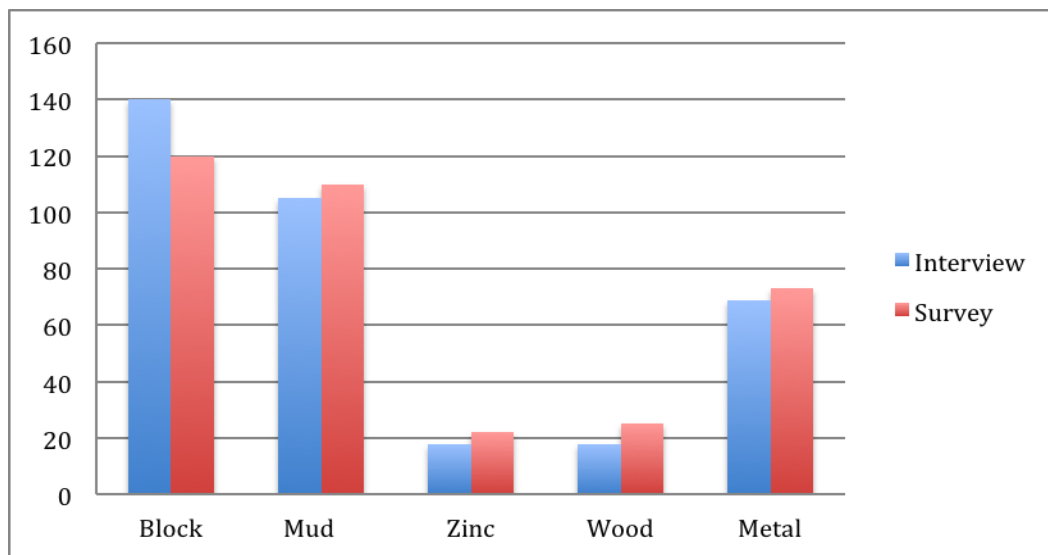


Figure 3: Comparison of Physical Assessment and Respondents Responses  
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

The physical assessment revealed that many of the houses built with blocks were badly built and poorly finished, because professionals did not carry it out. On the numbers of rooms occupied per household, the study observed that 56% of the respondents lived in one-bedroom houses, and 36% were living in two-bedroom houses and 8% were living in three-bedroom houses representing the lowest. This implied that there were more one bedroom or self-contained houses within the squatter settlements in Jabi.

#### 4.3. Toilet:

The study also revealed that 19.4% of the one-bedroom houses had inbuilt toilet which is regarded as self contained apartment while 80.6% were using shared toilets. For two-bedrooms, 40.5% had inbuilt toilets which in many cases are regarded as flats while 59.5% of the respondents living in two-bedroom houses shared toilets with other tenants. The respondents living in three-bedroom houses agreed that 78.6% had inbuilt toilet and 21.4% disagreed as shown in Table 2. Further probe into the toilet facilities revealed that toilet types in Jabi Squatter settlements are water system, pit toilet, open space and commercial toilet. The study observed that 24% of the respondents use pit toilets in their houses while 40% agreed to use open spaces (undeveloped land and farmlands) for defecation. 26% agreed to use of commercial toilets within the settlements and 10% have water system toilets in their houses as shown in Table 2. This is attributed to the fact that the settlements are not connected to the sewage line and that the buildings are constructed without approval. Thus, there will be more likelihood of waterborne diseases like cholera, diarrhea and malaria. This is in agreement with the position of the Abuja Master Plan (FDCA, 1979) that without the provision of a good sanitation system in FCC there will be outbreak of diseases.

#### 4.4. Waste Management:

The physical assessment quickly revealed that a lot of waste are generated by the habitants of the squatter settlements. The activities of the settlers such as trading, food vendors, mini-markets, shops and drinking bars. The waste disposal types were classified into four (4) categories, which include domestic waste bin, open dumping, gutter/drainage and open burning. 15.1% of the household had waste-bins while 45.1% agreed to discharging their waste by open dumping. 20% of the households agreed to discharging their waste into open gutters/drainages and 19.8% agreed to burning the waste in their homes as shown in Table 2. The implications of this are that the general environment is littered with waste and the gutter are filled up and blocked due to volume of waste discharged daily. Plate 1 shows the open dumping site in Jabi Yubaku.



Plate 1: Open Dumping Site in Jabi Yubaku  
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

Waste disposal education is a vital information to a healthy environment, the findings of the study revealed that only 24% of the respondents had a form of orientation toward how to dispose of their waste, while 76% of the illegal squatter have no form of awareness on how right to dispose waste as shown in Figure 4.

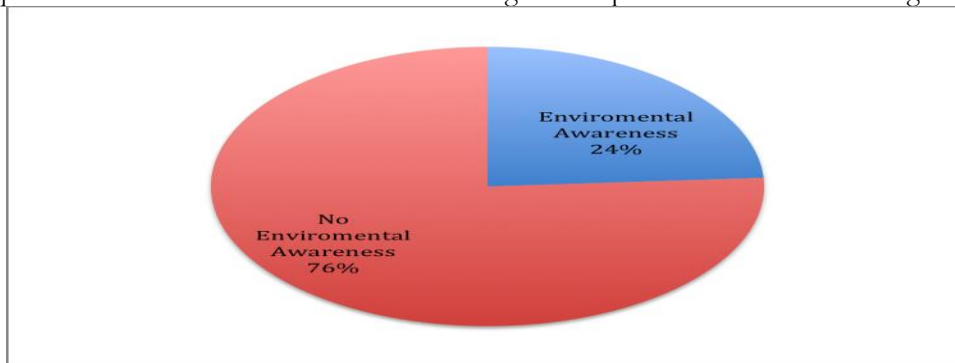


Figure 4: Environmental Awareness Level of the Respondents.  
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

In order to gain a better understanding, the study probed further by seeking to know if the Abuja Environmental Protection Agency (AEPA) carries out her duty by disposing waste within these settlements as at when due. Majority of the squatter settlement residents represented by 91.7% agreed that the AEPA do not carry out any form of sanitation or waste removal in the environs while 8.3% disagreed as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Result of Survey Questions**

S/no	Question	Yes	No
1	Are you well Informed about waste disposal?	84 (24%)	266 (76%)
2	Does the Environmental Agency carry out the waste as When Due?	29 (8.3%)	321 (91.7%)
3	Are you aware of the health effect of poor waste disposal?	274 (78.3%)	76 (21.7%)
4	Are there drainages around your house?	302(86.67 %)	48 (13.7 %)
5	Is your room well ventilated?	156 (45.6%)	194(55.4%)

Source: Fieldwork (2018)

The physical assessment revealed that the AEPA only collect and remove the waste dumps around the settlements but do not enter inside to pick up waste. And Plate 2 show the gutter in Jabi Main littered with waste. Most squatters sweep out waste from their home directly into the gutters



Plate 2: Gutter and Drainage Littered with Waste in Jabi Main  
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

Table 3 further revealed that 78.3% of the respondents have no idea on the health implication of poor waste disposal and only 21.7% have a form of awareness and information on how their waste should be disposed. Drainage channels and system are not planned but developed by the individual households or settlers in order to channel water and waste out of their homes. 86.67% of the households have open gutter around the room or buildings, and only 13.7% are not directly exposed to open gutters and drainages as shown in Table 3.

About half of the respondents believe that their houses have very good ventilation with well-structured window units that allows free airflow into their rooms or household. Forty-six percent of the households disagreed to living in a well-ventilated home. The physical survey and assessment carried out by the researcher was dissimilar to the respondent's idea of well-ventilated home. Plate 3 shows the spacing between households and rooms within the settlements, which was 0.7meter. It is clear that the window cannot open fully because of the spacing between the houses from Plate 3.



Plate 3: Spacing Between Households in Jabi Hausawa  
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

#### 4.5. Source of Water:

The study observed that 10% of the household agreed to have boreholes as their main source of water, while 25.1% have wells within their compound and 64.9% buy water from water vendors. Further probe revealed that some of the water vendors travel over 2 to 9 km to fetch water from the Jabi Lake while other buy from households with borehole water. The study further observed that none of the households were connected to FCT Water Board thus the settlers do not have public water supply.



#### 4.6. Source of Power:

The study discovered three (3) categories of power source in the settlements, namely Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) (Public), Generators and lamp/ lantern. The study exposed that 67.1% of the respondents agreed to use direct public generated power supply from PHCN. While 25.1% agreed to use privately generated power supply and 7.8% have no power supply but use lamp or lantern as shown in Table 2. However, the physical setting of the settlements observed that the streetlights reflect light into these settlements but there were no streetlights within the settlements. And overhead and open wiring methods were used as shown in Plate 5. This implied that aerial view was jam-packed with wires flying from one roof to another and might led to fire outbreak.



Plate 4: Power line Flying Over Households.  
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

#### 4.7. Educational Facilities:

The field survey revealed that there is no school within these squatter settlements in Jabi District. Further probe shows that the children living within these settlements go to school outside their settlement, and revealed that there exist three (3) pre-primary classes, which were carried out inside people houses and without any signpost to identify their location. The Master Plan provided school at other location within the District (FCDA, 1979). The implications are that the children travel and, in many cases walk over 2km to school, thus, education is not accessible to these squatter children considering the minimum distance required for siting a school in Nigeria.

#### 4.8. Health Facilities:

The study reveals that the squatter settlements do not have any hospital or clinic, though have a number of chemist and medical stores. On the perception of the squatter's settlers, on if the FCTA have plans for the provision of health facilities in this area, the study revealed that 90.5% of the respondents disagreed that the FCTA has plan to provide health facilities for the settlers, while 9.5% are of the opinion that health facilities can not be provided for them because the land is illegal. Further probe from the Abuja master plan reveals Jabi Samuel (one of the squatter settlements) is sited on the District Health Center (DHC) location. The study further revealed that 98% of the settlers use other health facilities outside the squatter settlements. The settlers also agreed to going to medical shops within the settlements. This implies that the settlers are involved in self-medication and long travels to Wuse Hospital, which is the closest Public hospital to the settlements.

## 5. Implication and Remedies

FCT, Abuja is one of the fastest developing capitals in the world, though urban growth has become part of city are unavoidable due to population increase due to inflow of people from other parts of the country for greener pasture (better jobs). However, such growth must be planned and the urban poor must be considered in the planning process. This can be considered as one of the weakness of the Abuja Master plan. The consequences of squatter settlements in Jabi District are that the quality of urban environment has become very poor for human health. The settlements are not suitability for human living and basic infrastructures are lacking. The implications of the general environment being littered with waste may lead to out break of diseases. The absence of portable water in these settlements will also contribute to spread of diseases and poor sanitation. The poor housing infrastructure may lead to the development of slums in Jabi and other parts of the city.

There is no “tailor made” solution to the problems of squatting development but solution varies from place to place. One of such solution is the relocation of squatters to other sites outside the FCC, FCDA will provide sites (plots of land) for the residents and provide basic infrastructure. The study recommends that the FCTA should make access to land easier to residents and especially the urban poor. The cost of land in FCC is not affordable for the low-income earners and the FCTA should monitor and stop the speedy and continuous growth of squatter settlements. The department of Resettlement and Compensation of FCDA should make efforts to relocate squatters in these settlements to planned location/sites. The FCDA should carry out long time enlightenment and awareness campaign on the consequences of squatter settlements and cost lost on people that acquire illegal land. The FCT Administration should encourage low-cost housing schemes and site & services programs to control the rapid growing squatter settlements in FCC. The AEPA should deploy cleaners and trucks to take away the waste from these settlements.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has shown that the basic social facilities needed to making life better do not exist in these squatter settlements in Jabi District. These facilities include schools, hospitals, sewage system, waste disposal management system, water and good roads. Therefore, one can easily deduce that the reasons why the FCT Administration has not provided these infrastructures and facilities were because the settlements are illegal and against the Abuja Master Plan. However, the environmental and socio-economic effects go beyond these settlements but the whole residents of Jabi District will be affected in one way. The findings of this study have confirmed that there exist high levels of shortage of infrastructure, which affects the environmental and living conditions of the settlers.

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