

Resettlement and Dynamics of Rural Change in Jebba Lake Basin, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT Resettlement in Jebba resulted from the creation of Jebba Lake in the early 80s to allow for construction of a new hydroelectric dam on the River Niger. Consequently about 6,000 rural residents from 42 villages were evacuated and resettled into 21 planned settlements. Resettlement was used as a tool for accelerated rural development with provision of some social infrastructures that brought changes into the new amalgamated villages. This study identified some of the dynamics of resettlement as well as sought the reaction of the evacuees about their satisfaction. About 30% of the rural household heads were interviewed through questionnaire administration and their reactions show encouraging improvement inputs in their new settlements, deprivation in the area of land, properties as well as dislocation of customary occupations were identified.

INTRODUCTION

Resettlement of large numbers of rural people has inevitably followed the construction of dams in Nigeria. In providing the waterpower to drive the turbine, a new lake now known as Jebba Lake was formed behind the dam on the Niger River, just three kilometers upstream of Jebba town. The dam project resulted in the displacement and relocation of about 6,000 people who inhabited 42 villages and thus were resettled into 21 amalgamated but planned settlements.

The socio-economic effects of dams and resettlement in the tropics and developing world has been reported by Viser (1972), Adalemo (1973), Oyedipe (1983, 1987), Abumere (1981) and Afolayan (1987) among others. From these studies and others, it is well established that in almost all cases, where dam construction has entailed relocation of local populations, the financial, social and psychological costs to the people have been unavoidably high (Lightfoot, 1979). In some cases, innovative changes have become inevitable (Colson, 1974; Arungbemi, 1983; Roder, 1992 and Olawepo, 2000a).

In the process of resettling the local population, some innovative inputs such as infrastructure, (roads, public health, electricity, new sources of water) were introduced into some of the settlements. One would therefore expect some dynamism in the socio-economic life of the people ten years after relocation, the degree of which depends upon the variation of these inputs. In most cases, resettled populace, are often seen

as poor, rural and with no option of withdrawal but to succumb to pressure coming from the national government. The argument is that no matter what innovative input into the planning, the legacies of project construction and consequent resettlement exercise can not replace the social and cultural deprivation suffered by the evacuees. This is most seen in the area of loss of customary rights of land, family affiliation, properties and other socio economic changes. However, the advocates of resettlement see it as an opportunity to bring rural scattered settlements together for proper planning and provision of infrastructure such as roads and communication links, potable water supply as well as new homes (Olawepo, 2000b).

The case of Kainji Scheme in Nigeria was a positive move to actively realign rural residents into enjoying modernization effects of resettlement planning. Oyedipe (1986) explained that one area of impact of the Kainji scheme was in the area of rural and agricultural development. One of the innovative changes that crept in was the draw down farming system now prominent along the perimeter of Kainji Lake. However, Brightmer (1983) working on the same Kainji scheme, water related diseases, forceful acquisition of family land, as well as non-replaceable entities that are lost for ever.

Arungbemi (1983) emphasized that it seems that failure of success of any resettlement scheme is not necessarily a question of whether the innovations intended are advanced (developmental) or not, but more of a question of the degree

of successful public participation leading to effective execution is involved. Examples of forced resettlement are often reported in literature than are instances of voluntary relocation with varied effects on the local populace (Scudder and Colson, 1982 and Olawepo 2000b..p2). This paper discusses the dynamics of rural change as effected by resettlement among settlements as well as assessing people's reaction to the changes that the scheme has forced upon them.

Jebba Region: Resettlement and Development

The National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) faced with the problem of increased demand for power initiated in 1958, a preliminary investigation into the feasibility of hydropower project on the River Nigeria, in the vicinity of Jebba (NADECO, 1959). The proposal to build a dam at Jebba, has since 1959 become a decision committed. The Jebba scheme came about as a result of the submergence of the settlements at the bank of the river to allow for the creation of Jebba Lake. Hence the people had to be evacuated and resettled elsewhere as stated earlier. Based on the above policies, resettlement committees were formed and cash compensation started in 1978 and completed in August 1982. The actual building options started in 1983 and final movement was completed in 1986. The formation of resettlement villages served as a tool for accelerated rural development as well as means for provision of infrastructure facilities into the villages.

Jebba Lake Basin is situated between Latitude 9°06' and 9°55' North and Longitudes 4°02' and 4°05' East. The dam is about 3 km upstream of Jebba Town. The reservoir created by this dam forms backwater up to Kainji, with an area of 270km² and a distance of about 100km. All the settlements on the submergence contour line of 105km below the sea level were submerged and subsequently resettled farther inland. Some of the resettled villages are Gbajibo, Bukah, Awuru, Mazhi, Kalema, Ly'aafu, Kumugi, Chegu and Kainti among other. The work of Arungbemi (1983) indicated that there are five indigenous ethnic groups in the reservoir area. They are Nupe (80.1), Hausa (19.4%), Lopawa (5%), Bussawa (2%), and Kamberi (0.8%) while the non-indigenous ethnic groups are Yoruba, Urhoho (see Arungbemi, 1983). These groups of settlers are mostly farmers and itinerant fishermen who

settled at the shore of the river Niger many years prior to inundation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The choice of data selection was guided by two major facts. The first relates to the policy of this specific scheme, while the other relates to aspects of socio-economic measures and values that were known to be introduced during the relocation exercise. The process of data collection was a random sampling of about 30% household heads involved in resettlement issues chosen from an estimated 2245 rural household heads. Thus, 679 were examined through the use of questionnaire administration. This involved a visit to all the 21 new villages for a period of four months. Secondary sources were also utilized especially published information on Jebba resettlement issues. For the purpose of discussion, simple tabulation and cross tabulations were used to explain the distribution of amenities and the reaction of the respondents.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Five major areas of rural change were identified and discussed extensively. These are spatial distribution of settlements, population change, social infrastructure, housing concentration and socio-economic as well as dislocation among the settlers.

Spatial Distribution and Settlement Layout

The resettlement of villages and people from the original location to a new environment is expected to have a generalized impact on spatial development and the socio-economic life of the evacuees. The issue of alternative resettlement entails Locational change for evacuees. In the study area, the choice of alternative site requires that they move to different locations where in most cases their old fishing methods are no longer appropriated.

On spatial redistribution of the settlements, they can be grouped into two on the basis of accessibility. These are the accessible villages are relocated within 5 - 15km of Trunk A road leading from Jebba to New Bussa, and are also served with not less than 5km of earth road during resettlement exercise. About 33% of settlements are found in this category. They include Gbajibo,

Bukah Sabo Peggi, Awuru 1 and 2 Chegu and Nasarawa groups. The in-accessible settlement are relocated farther above 15km from the Trunk A road, they have poorer public transport connection and within far distance either to River Niger or the main road. They include Kainti, Kalema, Kumigi, Salkawa and Futawa among others. Respondents in both categories were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with a number of aspects of Locational attributes. 55% of these in the first group felt satisfied which about 36% of the respondents in the latter group felt satisfied. It was however discovered that about 40% of the settlement are relocated within 30km from their former location, thus a lot of them still shared similar situational attributes of their original home.

Table 1 indicates the relocation co-efficient of the settlements. This ranges from 6km as in Mazhi to over 62km in the case of Futawa.

number of fishing camps the basin. This is particularly noticed in Futawa, Chegu, and Yankede in the northern edge and the fishing villages in the Nasarawa group. The survey also includes questions relating to information about the number of people, especially non-indigenes or settler that migrated to the new settlement within the past few years. Table 2 reveals that a high proportion of changes were noticed. A sample of the population of Gbajibo for example indicates that 30% of the population are non-indigenes who immigrated there shortly after resettlement. New buildings are gradually out numbering the resettlement buildings. This is an evidence of a successful adjustment and adaptation of the people to the new environment. Community life is thus seen as continuous with new commercial mixes within local surrounding. This might be because Gbajibo and Bukah are the two largest settlements with their associated

Table 1: Relocation co-efficient of resettlement

<i>Modes Distance in km</i>		
Minimum Distance 6km	Maximum 62.5km	Range 56.50
Mean 19.67km	Variance 211.73	Standard Deviation 14.54
Standard Error 3.17	Co-efficient of variance 73 94%	

Source: Authors Research, 2003.

For most settlements, the layout, of villages are changed since resettlement authorities had attempted to bring them up to modern standards. The villages are restructured in a longitudinal form in order to ensure better alignment of roads within the settlements. For most of them, a major transformation was a change from scattered traditional compound type of houses, to new structured, planned, compact and contiguous settlements. The structure is well laid out and served with streets, culverts and drainage system. About #9m was expended in reconstruction of the 21 villages during the exercise.

Population Change and Migration

Jebba Lake Basin witnessed a tremendous influx of people sine the past ten years after resettlement. This is mostly noticed in the amalgamated settlements of Gbajibo, Bukah and Awuru group. About 25% of the population comprised fishermen from Kainji Lake Basin up north who migrated down south to derive the expected benefit of enhanced fishing opportunity of the new Jebba Lake, whereby increasing the

advantages for markets such as traders and fishermen (mostly Yorubas, Nupes and Hausas). It could also be established that the two settlements have greatly become bigger than the pre-resettlement villages due to the system of amalgamation involved and the availability of social and infrastructures in the post resettlement villages.

Table 2: Population influx to Jebba Basin after resettlement

	<i>Change</i>	<i>No. of Settlement %</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>
1 - 5	7	33.3	33.3
5.01 - 10	5	28.8	57.1
10.01 - 15	3	14.3	71.4
15.01 - 20	4	19.1	90.5
20.01 - and above	2	9.6	100.0
Total	21	100.0	

Source: Author's Research, 2003.

Rural Change and Infrastructure

The planners of this scheme introduced some infrastructure facilities into the new Settlements, hoping that this would enhance the success of

the scheme. Efforts were also made to improve on the existing ones. Thus emphasis was laid on construction of earth roads, portable water supply, health facilities, primary schools and electricity and modern houses among others. As regards road development, new and better inter and intra settlement roads were provided. This ranges from 5km inter settlement road between Mazhi and the Dam, site, to over 23km of road between Gbajibo and Jebba. Mokwa road. Prior to settlement Gbajibo and Bukah were often cut off during the rainy season because of bad road and flooding of Eku river.. Some settlement such as Sabo Peggi, Nasarawa and Leaba are relocated beside Trunk A road from Mokwa to New Bussa. A 9km stretch of road also links Dada with Aderan to facilitate easy accessibility. Summarized very briefly, the result of our survey indicates that 75% of our respondents ply roads left behind by the builders, 14% indicates that new ones were constructed while about 11% used old roads. Despite all these serious transportation problems exist in the study area. The problem is not that of lack of roads, but facilities. Water transportation still forms a large share, as most of the roads are not motor able throughout the year.

Also, prior to resettlement, all the villages obtained 95% of their drinking water from the Niger. After resettlement efforts were made to provide water through wells and boreholes in some of the settlements. Pipe borne water from the boreholes were provided in Gbajibo and Bukah, using two 15KVA generating plants to pump ground water to overhead tanks. Villages that were also provided with mono pumps are Kumigi (2) Kainti (2), Sabon Peggi (2) and Nasarawa (2) Awuru/Futawa and Maxhi equally benefited from the scheme. Some wells were also provided in some other villages. Despite this, majority of our respondents (68%) are not satisfied with the supply. The Supply was supposed to be improved upon in the new villages, but in some cases, settlers abandoned their scattered water sources only to find that a centralized water supply was inadequate for concentration of more than few families. Bad location and in-adequate distribution are complained about at Awuru, Dokko, Yankede, Chegu and Tugan Manni Oili. Frequent drying tap is another major problem. Those settlements without wells or boreholes however still depend on River Niger for their water use. They include Mazhi, Lyaafu, Salkawa, Kalema and Dada to mention a few. Prior to settlement,

only Awuru had a primary school. During resettlement however, it was noticed that the relocation of settlement placed the villages into reduced closer to primary school facilities. Schools were built at Awuru to serve Chegu, Dokko, Tugan Manni Oilo, Tankede and Tugan Leaba, A primary school was also built at Gbajibo to cater for Gbajibo, Bukah and the amalgamated settlements. In all, it was revealed that 67% of the settlements are now within 2km of primary schools. This is a better form of accessibility when compared to the pre-settlement days. Health centres were also built at Sabo Peggi, Awuru Gbajibo and Kainti and were immediately handed over to the Local Governments. As at the time of this study, all the four centres were functioning. In terms of Locational accessibility to these health centres, settlements around Awuru, Sabo Peggi, Gbajibo Bukah, Kainti and amalgamated settlements around Gbajibo are better placed.

The amalgamation of many communities has also made it possible for them to benefit from the provision of electricity. Amalgamated towns of Gbajibo and Bukah were supplied with electricity. Apart from this electricity was supplied to the Nasarawa groups through an extension from Nasarawa main town. Despite this it was noted that electricity works at Awuru, Chegu, Dokko, Yankede, Olli, Leaba and Dada were not completed as at the onset of this study. In all, the impact of rural infrastructures in these settlements cannot be over emphasized. While settlements like Gbajibo, and Bukah have all the five facilities, Awuru, Kainti and Sabo Peggi have water, health centres, primary school and earth roads. Other settlements are virtually disadvantaged in forms of spatial spread.

Housing and Socio-Economic Change

Provision of modern houses was one of the main policies of resettlement at Jebba. All the 21 settlements have modern houses entirely different from former settlements. In all, about 1374 houses were built during resettlements. The ranges from 4 in Dada in Kalema to 13 and 338 in Bukah and Gbajibo respectively. It was observed that Gbajibo and Bukah. Being the largest of the settlements enjoyed a higher housing concentration than other settlements. It was however observed that the houses were poorly equipped. For example, only about 55% of houses in Gbajibo, 25% in Leaba and 20% in Salkawa have kitchen,

corridor and pit latrines. When asked to assess the quality of their houses, it was found that the new houses in the settlements contribute well to respectability and success of this settlement scheme. In all, it was noticed that these although better than the old ones are not provided with modern facilities as indicated in the plan. The problem of inadequacy was also shown as additional structures are found in most in most of the settlements. Many additional touches such as painting, room expansion, and fencing were added to the buildings as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Housing adjustment among the new settlements

Type	Change	No of People %
Painting	152	22.38
Room Expansion	234	34.46
Repairing Doors/Windows	163	24.46
Fencing (Zana)	435	64.06
Re-Roofing	326	48.01
Additional Buildings	273	40.20
Total	679	100

Source: Author's Research, 2003

This is an indication that the people have adjusted successfully and settled into new life. In terms of socio-economic change, new activities have opened up around the new settlements. The growth of Gbajibo and Awuru into bigger fishing markets has boosted the economic of the new areas. Apart from this, other markets sprang up in the resettled villages. In general, the markets are noted for sales of fish and agricultural products and are within reasonable distances to resettled villages. It is hoped that in few years to this time, those markets will enhance the rate of economic development. Despite the fact that over 75% of our respondents indicated a higher inflationary trend in the new settlements, about 67% agreed there has been tremendous increase in the median family incomes when compared to the pre-settlements times. This has enabled them to acquire more lands, built new houses as well as purchasing more household materials they could not afford in the pre-resettlement locations. Only a few of them (25%) however related this to the relocation impact. 40% of those who keep livestock however complained of reduction in their flock due to loss of grazing land from the relocation exercise. It has been reported also that there has been increase in fishing output by over 65% the fishermen. Despite this, there has been no improvement in fishery technology as fishing

market is not yet organized or different from the previous patterns. This confirms the work of Ayanda (1988) in similar findings in the study area.

Dislocation, Social Deprivation and Satisfaction

By and large, despite the positive contribution of the resettlement to social change, a lot of our respondents identify areas of deprivations during the exercise. Mostly affected is in the area of occupational dislocation, it was noted that resettled families experienced considerably occupational dislocation and major disruption of domestic economy. Settlers that were relocated not far from their former locations were able to retain some of their old occupations of fishing, hunting and farming. This affects mainly Nasarawa, Sabo Peggi, Chegu, Dada, Mazhi and Lyaafu. On the other had, settler that were relocated farther away from former locations experienced major dislocation, for example, about 14% 12% and 7% of the fishermen from Futawa, Kalema and Kainti respectively changed farming rather than fishing. Many of the full timers are now engaged in other part time business, which formerly would have not been of interest to them as a result of inability to participate in their old occupations as in former locations. Many former fishermen presently settled in some of the villages within farther distances to the Niger (about 25.25%) have indicated their intention to move to water side locations temporarily to enable them go back to fishing. This means more transitory fishing camps are on the increase around the lakeshore. Those mostly affected are at Kainti Chegu, Nasarawa, Kalema and Yankede. About 48% of the Nupes resettled in Kalema are still emotionally attached to fishing and would prefer it to farming which they were forced by the change in location to practice.

In all, about 48% of our respondents have one form of Change or the other. However, the focus of this dislocation encompasses not only lack of community business unit among the settlements, but conditions affecting the viability of traditional economic occupational adaptations. (i. e hunting, fishing and farming were disrupted.

Apart from occupational change, deprivation was also observed in the amount of land lost by individual farmers, This greatly threatened the success of the scheme in places like Mazhi, Salkawa and Giriji where farmers noticed they

could not hold enough farmland as in their former locations. At the pre-resettlement period, a farmer cultivated as large as 6.5 hectare of land consisting of several plots. This has been reduced to about 2.01 hectare or less at the post resettlement time. About 81% of our respondents indicate that their farms are smaller but now closer to house, 35% indicated that the land is A few (7%) also mentioned that their present farm lands were previously used and therefore their fertility has been exhausted. Clearly, the evacuees have less farmland than they had before resettlement. From these and other responses, it could be deduced that despite the positive dynamics of rural change, evacuees felt deprived in the area of occupation, loss of land and cultural affiliation with similar findings and postulations by Afolayan (1987) who studies Sasa resettlement scheme in Ibadan area of Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The study reported in this research mainly examined resettlement activities in Jebba Lack Basin and identified some dynamics of rural change brought by resettlement. The amalgamation of rural settlements has allowed for provision of social amenities in several villages, a situation that has proved difficult in the past was thus simplified. Despite this, the acquisition of the resettlers' land and consequent relocation has deprived them of some cultural afflictions, customary occupations and rights. It is however necessary, for effective co-ordination of sustainable development in the resettled villages, that a new community development committee be established by the Federal Government. Its member should consist of the representatives of the government, and the communities concerned. The committee will not only hear complaints and rectify faults as they occur, but seek to promote integrated rural development for the benefit of the resettled villages. Resettlement therefore, if

properly co-ordinated to include in built social infrastructure, could be a panacea for rural development in the third world countries where resettlement is on going and inevitable. This is what the critics of resettlement worldwide are not seeing.

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