

HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION PROVISION: IMPACT ON THE STUDENTS AND THE INSTITUTION OF OSUN STATE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, ESA-OKE.

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Abstract

The importance of quality hostel accommodation in tertiary institutions cannot be overemphasized. Their provision in campuses has great positive impact on the overall performances of students at large. Therefore, effort must be geared by all stakeholders towards their provision. This paper examines the importance, problems and factors responsible for lack of hostel accommodation in tertiary institutions generally and Osun State College of Technology in particular. These topical issues on hostel accommodation in tertiary institutions are driven home by a random survey through direct observations, administration of questionnaires and oral interviews. It was observed that about 78.4% of those interviewed preferred campus hostel accommodation considering its cost, security, and social benefits among others. The paper concludes and recommends that governments and other stakeholders as a matter of urgency and priority provide befitting hostel accommodation in our tertiary institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Quality of housing impacts largely on performance of the dwellers in all facets of life. This could be likened to the linkage between woman womb and an unborn baby; a defective womb will no doubt affect the health of the baby. Hence, housing and living is a matter of life and death.

Hostel accommodations for students in tertiary institutions are not exempted from this irrefutable fact as the provision is indispensable for learning.

Until recently, accommodation of students within the immediate environment in which they study had always been an integral part of the design and layout of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This arrangement fosters team and communal spirit among students and enhances learning which is better served by proximity of classrooms, libraries and laboratories to hostels (Daily Champion, November 5, 2004)

This laudable arrangement is no longer fully attainable with the ever increasing population of students admitted into tertiary institution (Uche, 2010). Many students now seek accommodation out of the school environment at distances not compatible with desirable educational dictates (Uche, 2010).

Hence, government seeks partnership in funding of tertiary institution hostels for sustainable education, government then introduces a cost sharing policy. The objectives of the policy are to expand participation in burden of hostel accommodation with partial contributors. (Ishengoma, 2004).

This no doubt gives opportunities to private investors and Estate managers to acquire land and build private hostels for students within campus accommodation and establish such at walk in distance to the academics rather than rented apartment off campus.

With this assertion, the aim of this study is to focus our attention on Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke where no single accommodation is provided within the school premises, then the assessment of its impacts on both students and the institution at large with the following objectives to establish reasons for lack of hostel within the campus, assess the number of students who are willing to enjoy such provisions; and to examine the socio-economic impacts on their educational attainment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ubong (2007), Hostel accommodation in tertiary institutions has not been receiving adequate attention. In his analysis, student's population is rapidly increasing while infrastructural amenities are declining in supply and their housing stock depreciating.

Ubong (2007) further revealed that accommodation of students in hostels in tertiary Institutions in Nigeria became a topical issue following the decision of the Federal

Government in 2003 to increase hostel fees from the rate of N90.00k (less than 1USD) per academic year to N10, 000.00k (about 73.43 USD) at the parallel market rate of N140.00k to 1 USD then), this did not go without meeting students wrath which was made manifest by various street demonstration.

THE RATIONALE BEHIND HOSTELS WITHIN CAMPUS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

If one once enjoyed or is enjoying quality hostel accommodation in a tertiary institution of learning, one would no doubt subscribe to the following assertions as noted by Ubong (2007):

- **Reading/Learning Facilitated:** At any level of education (Primary, secondary, tertiary including postgraduate work), staying in the hall of residence or hostel enhances the desire to read. There are fewer distractions, and the activities of studious ones to read as well. It is also easier to relate to colleagues who are close by or to consult teachers on the areas where a student needs more explanations on a particular subject.
 - **Extracurricular Activities:** Students who reside in hostel enjoy greater access to sports, games, club and other social activities that are expected to make them more exposed socially than those living off-campus who may find themselves forced into domestic activities once they are at home.
 - **Security:** In spite of crises of cultism, students are more secured in campus than in off campus in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. This is because institutions maintain adequate security for students on-campus.
 - **Moral Training:** Satisfactory performance 'in character and in learning'. Moral training includes individual behaviour in group situations as in hostels. All institutions have Codes of Conduct that guide and regulate student behaviour in hostels.
 - **National Integration:** It is one of the desires of the Federal Government of Nigeria to use education as a means of attaining national integration. This is stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 1998). Unfortunately and unwittingly, policies such as the quota system and federal character are to some extent anti-integration. The principle of catchment area in admissions is such that parents advice their wards to select institutions in which their states fall so as to make it easier for them to secure admission. Thus a child could go through education up the doctorate level within his or her state of origin and thereafter lobby for posting to a neighboring State for the National Youth Service Corps Scheme (say between Bayelsa and Rivers States!). Where then would the young Nigerian meet fellow Nigerians from, other tribes? Is it in the Civil Service of his State of origin where he may end up working?
 - **Private Relationships:** Private relations in hostel rooms could blossom into live-time positive relationships that would be beneficial to both parties.
- This paper will focus on the above stated reasons for students staying in hostel.

PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS' HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION IN NIGERIA

Throughout the tertiary institutions in the country, hostel accommodation has been inadequate, where provided however, they are with limited facilities and poor funding.

According to Obasi (2005), one of the factors which are responsible for unfriendly environment in the hostels is the excessive increase in the student's population without corresponding increase in hostels and their facilities. There is unhealthy competition for the limited hostel spaces leading to high hostel fees, overcrowding, frequent breakdown and deterioration of available amenities. This has social consequences in the form of cultism and the existence of crime syndicates, prostitution and other vices nurtured in these run-down hostels. As observed by Aguda (2005), Estate Surveyors are scared of taking up the management of students hostels because of the volatile and troublesome characteristics of the students.

It is however, sad to know that some tertiary institutions are without hostel accommodations despite the benefit of such provision to learning environment. Osun State College of Technology is one of such institutions which do not have hostel accommodations that could be called hers. On this note, it will be good to examine the factors responsible for this as well as the supposed benefits to have been derived so far and suggest possible ways to have such provision in place.

A brief look at the hosting town of the institution, Esa-Oke will enhance the subject matter of this write up.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ESA-OKE

Esa-Oke is a Yoruba town located at $7^{\circ} 45' 50'' \text{E}$ 7.75833°N 4.8 coordinates of Osun State at Obokun local government area of Nigeria.

It is a town within the Ijesa North Federal constituency of Osun State, South West of Nigeria. It is a native Ijesa (Ijesha) community and shares boundaries with other town namely, Oke-Imesi, Imesi-Ile, Ijebu-Ijesa, Esa-Odo, and Efon Alaaye.

Omiran Adebolu, a member of the Olofin family of Ile-Ife, though disputably, was believed to have founded Esa-Oke after he left Ile-Ife in 1184 A. D.

The people of Esa-Oke are predominantly farmers who specialize in growing food crops such as Yam, Cassava, Maize, Rice and so on as well as cash crops such as Cocoa, Kolanut and so on.

However, the thrust of commerce is central to their activities and they participate in trading activities mostly across the Western and the Northern part of Nigeria. It commands special respect in the politics of Osun State as a whole due to its strategic positioning.

The assassinated Attorney General of the Federation and former governor of the old Oyo State, Bola Ige and other notable figures such as Adeyemi-Bero, among others are first civil citizens of the town. (Wikipedia).

STUDENT HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION AND OSUN STATE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, ESA-OKE.

The enabling Bill establishing the College was signed into law by the first executive Governor of Osun State Alhaji Isiaka Adetunji Adeleke on the 12th of October, 1992. By its establishment, the Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke rose from the ashes of the erstwhile Esa-Oke satellite campus of the Polytechnic, Ibadan, founded in 1981 to become an autonomous institution.

Taking into consideration, the past 22 year of establishment, the School is old enough to have accommodation of house at least about 50% – 60% of her students. Surprisingly, the institution has not been able to provide any of such over the last two decades despite having over 10,000 students in various departments of the institution (www.oscotech.edu.ng)

The school has all it takes to build hostel accommodation within the campus considering the large expanse of land available for use in the institution.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LACK OF HOSTEL IN OSUN STATE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, ESA-OKE.

The following have been noted as some of the reasons why the school shy away from providing hostel accommodation for her over 10,000 students.

Volatile and Troublesome Characteristics of Students:

- Aguda (2005) noted in his work that estate surveyors are scared of taking up the management of students hostels because of the volatile and troublesome characteristics of the students. In addition to, an official of Asset and Resources Management Company Limited (ARM) project financial advisers stated that, “contrary to government’s idea, we not only acquired land independent of government agencies, we also got these properties outside the university campuses to avoid possible vandalism in the event of riots where the hostels located within the confines of the school” (Simire, 2007). The above mentioned opinion spoke the minds of some of the respondents who were interviewed for the challenge.
- **Lack of fund from government:** - Government has always been noted for the bottle neck and bureaucracy of granting request from them, especially like that of

granting hostel accommodation construction. Responses from respondents show that random attempts had been made in the past for government intervention since the creation of the school for students' accommodation but to no avail.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

A random survey of the hostels housing the students of the tertiary institution of Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke from December 2014 to March 2015 with focused attention on those in and around the institution.

The data collection was through direct visual observations, administration of questionnaire and oral interviews. The study involves physical inspection of the private hostels off-campus and the interviews of students, staff as well as some parents stratified random sampling design was adopted in the collection of data from students.

OBSERVATIONS

It was observed that out of 1000 responses from questionnaires and personal interviews, 784 (i.e 78.4%), students preferred to stay at hostels within the campus considering the relative benefits of the facilities provided where such provision exist.

However, there preferences were hinged on the conditions that those facilities not regularly supplied in off-campus hostel are provided within campus. Some of the facilities include, regular electricity supply especially during academic session with the support of power generating set to augment the provision.

Also, water supply which is epileptic or erratic in some hostels is preferred to be regular within the school's hostels to reduce time wastage on fetching and sourcing for water. This time could be diverted to something more academic and resourceful.

Furthermore, security provision within the campus where student could move from one place to the other at any time of the day and night to classes to read or other academic work which may not be allowed if on off-campus.

Another aspect noted is the financial benefit to both students and the institution at large. For instance, the rent per annum of a single room ranges between N15, 000 to N25, 000 as against what operates in off-campus accommodation.

In a situation, whereby 100 room apartments were provided and given out at the rate of N10, 000 per bed space in a room of four hostellers that will give N40, 000 per room per session. It's certain that all the rooms will be allocated to students and that might give gross revenue of about N40, 000,000 per academic session. If we put cost of maintenance at say 40% (N16, 000,000) that will give net revenue of about N24, 000, 000. It will be recalled that, the minimum room a student can get which might not even meet standard of education was put at N15,000. If such a student was granted a space

in the hostel, he would save at least N5, 000 and enjoy better facilities and academic companions which would likely impact positively on his performances. The money saved could be used to buy more texts and other pressing expenses.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Considering the huge benefits associated with the hostel accommodation provisions in Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke within the campus, it is apparently a matter of urgency to provide befitting hostel accommodation. The inability of the tertiary institutions to provide such gives way for students exploitations by the landlords via their excessive increase in rental values of houses which most are not worthy of living therein.

Government directive on institution/private sector development partnership should be revisited because of its apparent failure to alleviate the accommodation problems in the institution.

Institutions' equity contribution should go beyond the provision of land. Financial contribution will reduce the loan burden on the developer in view of high cost of servicing loans.

Furthermore, government should as a matter of urgency, should go into direct hostel development in its institutions until the shortage of accommodation is considerably reduces.

When such hostels accommodations are eventually provided, they should be healthy and conducive for reading and learning. In addition, good maintenance culture should be strictly imbibed to secure the properties.

Conclusively, hostel accommodation provision in Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke is going to be a viable attempt and eventually be profitable to both the institution and the students at large. Infact, it will reduce parent's stress in looking for accommodation for their wards or children especially in their early year since it may be expected that fresher's and finalists will be automatically housed by the school in the hostels while the rest will be given to satellites.

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