

IMPACT OF CULTURAL CHANGES ON TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE: A STUDY OF GBAGYI SETTLEMENT (*Gidan mangoro*), MINNA, NIGER STATE

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ABSTRACT

The problem Nigerian Traditional Architecture is facing is the cultural changes. Cultural changes refer to the major and subtle changes that occur within a society. Culture has to do with the beliefs of the people, which may be tangible or intangible. Culture and human development are actively related. The way of life of building occupants and the way they use their shelters is of great influence on building forms. The aim of this research work is to assess the impact of cultural changes on traditional architecture. Interviews were conducted with some inhabitants of the study area. Facts were collected from 80 households using systematic random sampling method that took into consideration the population. Results showed that cultural changes has negatively affected Nigeria traditional architecture and suggested that the development and proper placement of high standard maintenance of culture in all levels of government across the federation is required for realistic progress and also, the researchers should be encouraged to dig deep into the details of the historical past to unravel the significance of such past cultures to our present needs through adequate finding.

Keywords: *Cultural Changes, Impact, Nigeria, Traditional Architecture.*

INTRODUCTION

Africa is a continent of traditional architecture in the world. The beginning of man can be traced to Africa. There is a general consensus among mainstream anthropologist that human first emerged in Africa about two million years ago. Since then, men have spread throughout the world, successfully adapting to widely climate and to periodic cataclysmic changes in local and global climate. The root of western civilisation can be traced back to Africa (Abutu, 2005). The way of life of building occupants, and the way they use their shelters is of great influence on building forms (Biyatu, 2000). The size of family

units who shares spaces, and how food is prepared and eaten, how people interact and many other cultural considerations will affect the layout and size of dwellings (Ugbadu, 2007). For example, the family units of several east African tribes live in family compounds that are surrounded by marked boundaries in which separate single-roomed dwellings are built to house different members of the family. In polygamous tribes there may be separate dwellings for different wives, and more again for sons who are too old to share space with the women of the family. Social interaction within the family is governed by, and privacy is provided

by, the separation between the structures in which family members live (Ojotu, 2001). By contrast, in Western Europe, such separation is accomplished inside one dwelling by dividing the building into separate rooms. Culture also has a great influence on the appearance of vernacular buildings, as occupants often decorate buildings in accordance with local customs and beliefs (Yelele, 2008). The material culture has some aspect reflected in the historical buildings and carved wooden objects which form essential parts of the traditional built environment (Onalo, 2009). Therefore, change in culture will lead to change in traditional architecture. Some ethnic groupings which have been viewed as primitive by anthropologist were shocked to discover that such ethnic groups also possessed quite complex systems (example, linguistic or social) of order, despite the externally primitive-looking circumstances in which they lived. Cultural changes refer to the major and subtle alteration that occurs within a society. Culture has to do with the beliefs of the people which may be tangible or intangible. Culture and human development are actively related. The culture of the group of people has several distinguishing characteristics; it is based on symbol. It is shared and learned and it is usually socially inherited with reaching consequences on the way and manner of living of an individual and

in turn traditional architecture. Culture also has to do with the way of life of the people.

Wuyechi (1996) identified the beginning of the nineteenth century as an era of intense tumultuous and for reaching changes in the history of western Nigeria. This marked change in the socio-cultural and economic structure is brought about by external factors such as intensified spread of Christianity and western education. Traditional houses are those which have not been designed by architects, but by local builders. Their design may be influenced by formal architecture but they embody cultural traditions which are a regional expression of the way their builders and users viewed their world within the constraints of their economic circumstances. Housing is subjected to such factors as social, structure, climate, economic, technology and culture. Other factors include defense (giving rise to fortresses and impenetrable fence walls and gates), accessibility, physiographic and orientation. Khan (1998) asserts that these factors, except culture, are form moderators, and culture is a determinant factor. Housing symbolises the socio-cultural heritage of the people and culture thus, exercises an overriding influence on the type and form of house evolved (Denyer, 1978). The configuration expressed by the building in a community is a pointer to it search for

cultural identity and self-actualisation. Culture is not to be confused with traditional architecture. Though there are links between the two. Traditional architecture can also include buildings which bear elements of polite design: temples and palaces, for example, which normally would not be included under the rubric of vernacular (Rebeto, 2000). In architectural terms, the vernacular can be contrasted with the polite, which is characterised by stylistic elements of design intentionally incorporated by a professional architect for aesthetic purposes which go beyond a building's functional requirements (Kojo, 1999). Culture and human development are actively related (Robo, 1998). The culture of the group of people has several distinguishing characteristics; it is based on symbol and it is shared and learned. Culture also has to do with the way of life of the people and it may be material or non-material type. The material culture has some aspect reflected in the historical buildings and carved wooden objects, which form essential parts of the traditional built environment (Audu, 2001). Shelter is of supreme importance to man and it has been identified as a prime factor in man's struggle for survival. Kinkiyi (1966) commented that primitive man developed various dwelling forms including food taboos and restrictions within several economies of scarcity. The research areas is Gbagyi village (Gidan

Mangoro), Niger state, Nigeria. This village is located along Minna –Bida express way. The main occupation of dwellers is farming. Though, other occupations exist like carpentry, teaching, cleaner and trading. The dwellers in these villages are predominantly Muslims and practice polygamy. The aim of this research work is to evaluate the impact of cultural metamorphosis on traditional architecture. The objectives of the research work are: to know the past culture of the northern Nigeria; to know the process of gradual changes of the culture of the northern Nigeria; to know the causes of cultural metamorphoses; to ascertain the future cultural metamorphosis and the implications on the future traditional architecture.

RESEARCH METHOD

For the purpose of this research work, interviews were conducted with some inhabitants of the study area. Facts were collected from 80 households using systematic random sampling method that took in to consideration the total population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The buildings in the study area are rectangular in shape but the granaries are circular in shape. Each household is made up of a compound which consists of houses arranged around a courtyard. Each compound had iron roof covered on rectangular huts rooms

which are spread around common spaces or courtyards. Houses are made of mud but most common houses are made with the use of sandcrete blocks for walls. The village that was studied has been facing resettlement due to development. For instance is the mass housing project for civil servants within the state which claimed some parts of Gidan Mangoro. Thus, it became necessary to understand these spaces for design that meets the need of the end user. According to Scargil (1979), a house type also seems as a mirror of cultural traditions. Education is the major organ of change bringing civilisation, urbanisation acculturation of the people which invariably leads to developments. Urban development can be viewed as changes brought about through the process of growth, expansion or urbanisation of the rural place, especially the evolution of a city from its original small settlements to what it is in the present time. Four prominent factors are identified, education, commercial activities, capital city privileges and banking. In the interview conducted on some residents of the study area, 80% of the respondents believed that education played a vital role in the development that impacted on the identities and cultural heritage of the study area. Next in line, were commercial activities and the capital city privilege of the city which is the remaining 20%. Also, 68% believed commercial

activities helped in the transformation of the value of heritage in the city.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The village studied has been facing resettlement due to development. For instance is the mass housing project for civil servants within the state which claimed some parts of Gidan Mangoro. That is why it is necessary to understand their familiar spaces for design that meets the need of the end user. The culture of the group of people is based on symbol; it is shared, learned and it is usually socially inherited with reaching consequences on the way and manner of living of an individual and in turns traditional architecture. Culture has some aspect reflected in the historical building materials which form essential parts of the traditional built environment.

The four major factors affecting the built environment has been identified to be: spread of education, location as capital cities, commercial activities, administrative role and agrarian activates. Majority of the respondents in the study area believed that education played a vital role in the development that impacted on northern Nigeria identities and cultural heritage. Some of the respondents believed that the other three factors played a vital role in the development that impacted on northern Nigeria identities and cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

The research work was to assess the impact of cultural changes on traditional architecture. Interviews were conducted with some inhabitants of the study area and facts were collected from 80 households using systematic random sampling method that took in to consideration the total population. The results showed that education is the major factor that causes inadequate regard for culture as it affects traditional architecture while urban development is the next factor that causes inadequate regard for culture as it affects traditional architecture.

Cultural metamorphosis has affected traditional architecture of the study area. In order to find lasting solution to this problem, the development and proper placement of high standard maintenance culture in all levels of government across the federation is required for realistic progress. Researchers also should be encouraged to dig deep into the details of the historical past to unravel the significance of such past cultures to our present needs through adequate findings. Government should take more active role in the issues of urban heritage. Use of modern structural materials to stabilize the structure of the old buildings.

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