

# Coping with Accommodation Stress By Female Students in Nigerian Universities

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## Abstract

*Female students' in Nigerian Universities face some problems. Some of the problems are peculiar to them. The problems include erratic power failure, inadequate supply of water, over-crowding, poor facilities and poor and inadequate transport facilities.*

*The female students have devised coping strategies to deal with the problems. These include, the use of lamps and candles, using independent contractors to carry out repairs, and personal acquisition of some amenities.*

*This has its effects, which include frequent students unrest, anti-social behaviour, fire outbreaks and health hazards.*

*The paper recommends that adequate funding, provision of good transport facilities and the establishment of an efficient housing bureau are ways of finding a solution to the problems.*

## Coping with Accommodation Stress by Female Students in Nigerian Universities

### Introduction

Higher education has been the fastest expanding sector in Nigeria in the past thirty years. Since the 1960s, the expansion of higher education in Nigeria has been tremendous. In 1999, Nigeria could boast of about forty Universities excluding other degree awarding institutions. As higher education expanded in the country, there was an expansion in students' residential construction in institutions of higher learning that had residential policies. However students' admission soon out stripped the available accommodation for students. The economic situation in the country also affected the government subsidy, which hitherto was used amongst other things in the construction of students' hostels. There was a threat to the residential policies of many Universities, and eventually this led to some of them changing their residential policies to partial off



campus or non-residential policies. Some other Universities, especially the newer ones, from inception adopted the non-residential policy.

Some problems arose from the imbalance in the number of students admitted and the existing and inadequate accommodation. This position led to an imbalance in the system, resulting in many students becoming demoralized, disorientated and disorganized. This situation therefore affected the academic performance of the students in general.

With the expansion of higher education in Nigeria, the number of students that are offered admission increased and a sex imbalance was observed in the number of students admitted. More male students are admitted compared to their female counterparts. The factors responsible for the imbalance include cultural and socio-cultural factors. (This is outside the ambit of this paper). The University of Ibadan, Nigeria hereinafter referred to as U.I. in the 1996/1997 session admitted a total number of twenty thousand, four hundred and thirty four students (20,434). The breakdown by gender shows that thirteen thousand, five hundred and twenty (13,520) out of the total number of students were males and only six thousand nine hundred and fourteen (6,914) about one third (1/3) were females. (University of Ibadan Calendar 1996-1998).

This paper focuses on the female students in particular. The mismatch between students admission and the existing bed spaces is more glaring when the number of female students' admitted in higher institutions is compared to the existing facilities and bed spaces available for female students. A lot of stress is caused to the female students and the effects are devastating. The coping strategies that are devised by the female students in overcoming the stress caused by the problems of accommodation in Nigerian universities is the crux of this paper.

A lot of references will be made to the University of Ibadan. The reason is that, this University was the first University that was established in Nigeria in 1948, and there are a lot of similarities in the accommodation situations in Nigerian Universities as a whole. Coupled with the above fact, the present writer was an Assistant Hall Warden in the biggest female hall in the University for five years (5) and Acting Warden of the same hall for one month (1).

Finally in this paper, some recommendations on how to improve the situation are made.

### Students Accommodation in Nigerian Universities

To have a good picture of the state of student accommodation in Nigerian Universities, there is the need to give a general and brief history.

The very few literature on the administration of accommodation of students in tertiary institutions especially in Nigeria show that very little attention has been focused on the area. In Nigeria, the various higher institutions operate either the fully residential or non-residential system of accommodation or a combination of both systems. Many of the older Universities started with the fully residential system of accommodation or a combination of both systems. Many of the older Universities started with the fully residential system while the newer ones opted for the non-residential form. The two systems of students' accommodation will be discussed.



### Residential Accommodation

Residential accommodation within the campus is provided for students of tertiary institutions where the means do exist. (Sanumi, 1990) It is provided as a need for development of potentials and character, the preservation of culture, the inculcation of discipline as well as a form of education itself among several other factors.

Accommodation within a hall of residence performs both academic and non-academic functions. According to Williams, (1963) the non-academic function relates to cultural, social and personal factors that are part of University education. The hall of residence is essentially an academic community.

The University of Ibadan that started in 1948 fully embraced a fully residential system of accommodation. The reasons for doing so are summarized below:

"It is the policy of the University to provide an environment that will assist each student in developing his or her academic and social potentials to the fullest. For this reason, the halls of residence are considered to be an integral part of the total educational enterprise at Ibadan University. The halls are not merely places to live in. For many months of the year they are "home" for the students". (University of Ibadan 1982).

Kenneth Mellamy the first principal of the University College that is now known as University of Ibadan further explained the reason for adopting a fully residential system. He said the Elliot and Asquith Commission had stressed the importance of making colonial University College entirely residential. (1958) Tamuno (1973) stated that the Asquith Commission favoured the principle of residential University because of the unsuitability of off campus accommodation, the necessity to supervise the health of the students closely, the widely different background of the undergraduates and the need to promote unity, the opportunity offered for broadening their outlook through the sharing of experiences and through extra curricular activities.

To Salter, (1976) accommodation of students in the halls of residence is a form of education itself. The educational dividend from such an investment is worthwhile. He further stated that if the residence is properly structured, it could be an important instrument of liberal education, which could help shape and mould the educated man.

Flynn (1977) favored residential accommodation because of what he referred to as the "need factor". He is of the view that since majority of students move away from their respective locality to study elsewhere, there is the need to be resident for a great part of their time in colleges or institutions. This is essential for foreign students.

Fairchild (1963) considers residential accommodation from the angle of education. She says it is a programme, a classroom in which learning experience occurs. It is a tool that can contribute to the educational objective of the institution. Summing it up, Fairchild says that residential accommodation enhances the intellectual growth of the student, result in character development, foster constructive citizenship and enlarge aesthetic appreciation. To her, character development is embraced during the students stay in the University. This training is acquired during contact with students, lecturers, University Officials during the period of stay. It is said that it is best accomplished in a residential form of setting like the halls of residence.

Segal (1963) on his part focused on the culture peer group experience as well as



the control of behaviour. To Fraser (1968), residential institution offers security, relief, reassurance, predictability, order, expansion of tastes and acquaintances for students.

Lindahl examined residential system of accommodation is examined from the perception of exposure and environment. He stated that residency within the University has a substantial impact on the intensity of a students exposure to the college community and the perception of the environment. To him, the system allows the student to spend the out of class hours in an atmosphere conducive to broad perspectives, acute sensitivity, intellectual curiosity and stimulating interaction. (1967) With all the arguments in favor of residential accommodation on campus, the University of Ibadan, which embraced the fully residential system at its inception, now operates the partial off campus system for some of its students.

To have a balanced view of the state of students' accommodation, it is desirable to discuss the non-residential system of accommodation.

#### Non-Residential Accommodation

The issue of non-residential system of accommodation in Nigeria has been extensively discussed. According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (1981), the adoption of a non-residential system of accommodation is a way of expanding the University system for learning. The argument is that it will enable more students to be admitted. It can then be said that the introduction of this system of accommodation into Nigerian Universities was based on Government Policy.

Flynn (1977) on the other hand said the system is desirable because of the exorbitant cost required for the building of decent residential accommodation considering the severe economic constraint. The clamor for off campus living by some institutions could therefore be attributed to inadequate funding. Shedding more light on this, Ikime (1973) using the University of Ibadan situation as an example said the University adopted this system at the time of financial crisis when the University was unable to build more halls of residence. The shortage of accommodation forced the University to adopt a strategy which eventually led to the off campus system for a category of students.

Salter (1976) is against this system. He considers it from the social effect and concluded that it "produces loneliness, isolation and robs of the social experience that living together in the hall of residence can offer to students".

With the arguments for and against both systems, the present features of students' accommodation in Nigerian Universities will be discussed.

#### Features of Students Accommodation in Nigerian Universities

There are basic amenities expected to be available in the accommodation provided for students in Nigerian Universities whether it is residential or non-residential.

Nixon (1964) listed some of the conditions for a good and ideal accommodation under any system. He said, it should be quiet enough to study, with a good public transportation system, a clean environment, it should be affordable, with enough space



for books and movement, a provision of an opportunity for recreation and social life and should have proximity to the library. The truth is that over the past years, students' residential accommodation in Nigeria and the University of Ibadan in particular has been at a crisis level. It is a shadow of its past glory.

This paper now considers the features of students accommodation in relation to the ideal situation stated by Nixon.

1. **Overpopulation:** This is a common feature in nearly all Universities in Nigeria. The factors responsible for over population are listed below:

- a. **Increase in Student Intake:** There has been an increase in the number of students admitted without a commensurate increase in the number of halls and bed spaces. It is noted that between 1952 when the first hall of residence was built in the University of Ibadan and 1987 when the last one was named, students' residential construction was then taken as an integral part of University growth and development. At that time, as students enrollment increased, a new hall of residence was constructed. However, overtime, the admission outstripped the student accommodation and other factors precluded the university from constructing new halls of residence. See Table 1.

Table 1: Student Population 1948-1993/94

Year	Population	Year	Population	Year	Population	Year	Population
1948	55	1963/64	2,016	1981/82	9,712		
1948/49	190	1964/65	2,184	1982/83	11,140		
1949/50	208	1965/66	2,687	1983/84	12,132		
1950/51	327	1966/67	2,729	1984/85	13,862		
1951/52	338	1967/68	2,569	1985/86	12,350		
1952/53	368	1968/69	3,117	1986/87	12,000		
1953/54	407	1969/70	3,380	1987/88	11,985		
1954/55	476	1970/71	3,661	1988/89	11,986		
1955/56	563	1971/72	3,904	1989/90	12,135		
1956/57	563	1972/73	4,110	1990/91	12,902		
1957/58	748	1973/74	4,817	1991/92	13,858		
1958/59	987	1974/75	5,661	1992/93	13,950		
1959/60	1,113	1975/76	6,961	1993/94	16,158		
1960/61	1,256	1976/77	8,593				
1961/62	1,644	1977/78	8,900				
1962/63	1,689	1978/79	7,785				

Source: *Digest of Statistics, U. I. Ibadan: Vol. 1, No. 1 (Nov. 1985); Vol. 3 No. 1 (Nov. 1988); U.I. Academic Planning Office, 1995.*







Elizabeth II Hall, a female undergraduate hall was built. It had a capacity for four hundred and twenty six students (426) but overtime the number increased as more beds were put in the rooms to accommodate more students. Between 1961 and 1961, three (3) other male halls were established. In 1957 and 1968, the Alexander Brown Hall and Tafawa Balewa Hall were declared open for male and female clinical and postgraduate students respectively. It was not until 1976 that Queen Idia Hall for female students, the second undergraduate female hall was declared opened. It had a capacity for three hundred students (300). In 1987, the Obafemi Awolowo postgraduate hall for male and female students was established with a capacity for three hundred and three students (303). It is clear from the above that there are more halls for the male students than for the females. It is also obvious that over the years the number of female students that are admitted into the Universities has greatly increased without a commensurate increase in the accommodation for them. See Table 2.

There is no doubt that up to the early seventies the number of females in Nigerian universities was small in comparison with their male counterparts. Before this time, there was no accommodation problem and there were adequate bed spaces for female students. Times have now changed and there is a very high increase in female students admission into Nigerian universities and the bed spaces are now grossly inadequate.

6. *Increase in the number of Beds per Room.* This is another feature of almost all students' accommodation. This increase was done both officially and unofficially to cope with the increase in students intake. The rooms were originally constructed with a definite capacity in mind taking into consideration all the conditions for an ideal student accommodation as stated by Nixon (1964).

With the emergence of the problem of inadequate accommodation for students, more bed spaces were created in the rooms by adding double bunks, and more wardrobes and furniture were also added to the existing ones. For example, Independence hall built in 1961 and designed for two students per room had the beds increased to four. Queen Elizabeth hall initially designed to accommodate two students in a room now accommodate between four (4) and eight (8) students in the same room. A newly constructed block of rooms in Queen Elizabeth hall initially designed to accommodate two students in a room now accommodate between four (4) and eight (8) students in the same room. A newly constructed block of rooms in Queen Elizabeth hall, known as "White house" which was constructed to reduce the accommodation problem was designed to accommodate sixteen (16) fresh students. In the 1999/2000 session, sixteen (16) double bunk beds were placed in the room to accommodate thirty-two (32) students.

7. *Construction of halls with wood.* The use of wood in constructing residential accommodation for students in Nigerian Universities is another feature. This was suggested and used in construction during the period of inadequate funding and economic stagnation to solve the problems of inadequate bed spaces where space



Table 2: Designed Capacity of The Halls and Number of Resident Students by Hall of Residence Overtime

Halls	No. of Bed Spaces as Designed	1980/82 No. of Students	1981/82 No. of Students	1982/83 No. of Students	1983/84 No. of Students	1984/85 No. of Students	1991/92 No. of Students	1992/93 No. of Students	1993/94 No. of Students	1994/95 No. of Students
Alexander Brown	733	729	729	729	729	729	800	800	800	-
Azikwe	738	959	959	959	959	959	999	999	999	-
Idia	204	254	333	426	448	465	1,200	1,200	1,200	-
Independence	710	935	935	954	935	1,001	1,002	1,002	1,002	-
Kuti	407	614	639	614	621	633	633	633	633	-
Meilanby	208	416	416	416	416	416	514	514	514	-
Queens	748	879	879	879	879	879	598	598	598	-
Bello	249	498	498	498	498	500	453	453	453	-
Teddar	195	389	389	389	390	390	390	390	390	-
Balewa (1)	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	-
Annex (ii)	80	80	80	80	80	80	-	-	-	-
Student Village (Awo)	294	-	-	294	294	294	1,132	1,132	1,132	-
Total	4,775	5,959	6,063	6,444	6,455	6,5527	7,927	7,927	7,927	-

Note: The reduction in the number of bed-spaces in some of the halls in the 1991/92 session is due to the demolition of the wooden structures. The 1994/95 session was scrapped due to crisis on campus and was merged into the 1995/96 session.

Source: Digest of Statistics, U.I. (Nov. 1985); Vol. 1, No. 3, Fieldwork, 1995.



permits. This is no longer a feature in the students' residential accommodation in the University of Ibadan although it was once used in Queen Elizabeth II hall. There are advantages and disadvantages in the use of wood for construction.

8. **Character Development:** There is evidence of emphasis on character development of the students that are resident on campus. There are provisions in place to ensure this:
  - i. Some experienced officials are appointed amongst the senior female or male members of the academic staff of the University to mentor and to look after the welfare of students and to ensure discipline.
  - ii. There are laid down rules and regulations that must be complied with by the students in the halls.
  - iii. Disciplinary actions are taken against students for any breach.
  - iv. In the University of Ibadan, three bodies are established to see to the administration of the halls of residence. There are the Staff Welfare Board, the hall Management and hall Executive council.
  - v. There are porters and supervisors in all the halls to monitor the activities in the halls.
9. **Rackeering:** This is a feature caused by the rationalization process of bed spaces. It has been a serious problem and it is a form of exploitation of the other party involved. The authorities in rationalizing the bed spaces, devised rules and regulations and prioritized how bed spaces will be given out to students. Under the rules, first year and final year students, foreign students, handicapped students and hall executives were all given priority for obvious reasons. Racketeering has been attributed to inadequate bed spaces. As a former official of one of the female halls, it was discovered that the issue of poverty couldn't be ruled out as a factor encouraging racketeering. This was found out as a practice amongst students who are in need of money especially the indigent or self sponsored students or those that may want to exploit other students. Such students on the priority list may decide to "sell" the bed space to other desperate and affluent students at an outrageous price. The selling price depends on the hall, the nearness to the lecture rooms, the library and the nearness to the center of activities, a bed space is officially given at ninety Naira (₦90) but "sold" for between nine thousand Naira (9000 Naira) and twenty thousand Naira (20,000). That is between ninety dollars (\$90) and two hundred dollars (\$200).
10. **Poor Transportation System:** This feature is found in both residential and non-residential systems of accommodation. Generally, in Nigeria, the transportation system is not well organized. Within the different campuses, buses and taxis are assigned to ply designated routes. The problem of overpopulation has an effect on the transportation system resulting in the inadequacy of the available buses and



taxis. In many instances, students are stranded in their halls of resident or at other places waiting for taxis or buses to transport them from and into the campus. It is not uncommon to see students within the campus trekking to or from lectures, or stranded at different stops or waving down car owners for a lift in the private cars.

The discussion so far has concentrated on the residential form of accommodation for Nigerian students. To have a balanced view, the features of the non-residential form of accommodation would be discussed. The bitter experiences of the older Federal Universities with regard to students' accommodation resulted in the evolution of the non-residential accommodation in Nigerian Universities. For example, the University of Lagos and the university of Jos that were established a few years later embraced the non-residential system. In Nigeria, recently established State Universities like the Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State adopted this non-residential system. In the case of University of Lagos, it was primarily conceived as a University, which is expected to provide tuition to non-residential students. Along the line this had to change. Factors such as high rent cost of transportation and traffic congestion led to the review of the non-residential policy. Presently, the University has about thirteen halls of residence (University of Lagos, Calendar 1996-2000). It should be noted that in almost all the Universities in Nigeria, an off campus or non-residential policy exist for all students in the second year in the University. This policy was adopted even by the universities that were founded with a residential policy in mind because of inadequate bed spaces.

The features of the non-residential system of accommodation for students in Nigeria are highlighted below.

1. *Inactive Participation of the Institution:* Some of the Universities in Nigeria that adopted the non-residential policy made provision for assisting the students in settling down in the off-campus residence through an officer called the Lodgings Officer. The duty of the lodgings officer is to identify and negotiate for good residential accommodation for the students near the University. The idea is that such accommodation should be University-Assisted Hostels. (University of Ibadan, 1996-1998; University of Lagos, 1996-2000; Ogun State University 1987-1992).

However in reality, this is not the case. The Universities are not actively involved in ensuring that students that are not provided with accommodation on campus settle down properly. The truth is that, students make their personal arrangements with the owners of any building where they are lucky to find a vacant apartment.

2. *Poor Transportation System:* Generally, the transportation system in Nigeria is not well organized. Students who are resident outside the University are faced with transportation problems caused by the inadequacy of vehicles that are in good conditions and traffic hold ups. In the University of Ibadan, in 1999, two new big buses were given to the students by the Federal Government to assist in easing this problem. This was in addition to



the existing buses and taxis already on the campus. Other Universities also benefited from this generous donation from the government. However the buses only ply certain routes and the districts where the students live in the various cities and towns where the Universities are located are so extensive that all routes cannot be covered.

3. *Lack of Control on Students:* This is a feature common in the non-residential accommodation. Under this system, there are no effective monitoring policies by the university authorities. Fellow students and not Senior University Officers who monitor students in the residential accommodation within the University regulate the conduct of students. The effect is that, the character development, which is one of the criteria for awarding degrees is lacking. The effect of this ineffective monitoring program is the high rate of immoral behavior and misconduct. This is a big problem for the University, because the students who live off campus constitute a sizable percentage of the total student population. This is not an ideal situation for young men and women who are just in their formative years.
4. *High Cost of Accommodation:* The cost of accommodation outside the campus is usually high and this is comparable to others houses in the neighborhood.
5. *Insensitivity to Student Needs:* Due to the fact that the off campus accommodation of students are not coordinated by the University, the conditions in such houses depends on whether it is in a high or low-density area. Since off campus buildings were not constructed particularly with students in mind, the facilities are like other houses around.
1. *Distance From the University:* As much as it is feasible, students that are not resident on campus try to look for accommodation near the campus. However this is not always the case. Factors like high rent and non-availability of rooms within the vicinity are responsible for the wide spread of student's off campus residence away from the University.

The statement by Ike (1991) best describes the situation of students' accommodation in many Nigerian Universities. He said

"Many hostels in Nigerian University cannot claim to provide health/learning environment for their students. The official students allocated to each room often exceed the number for which the room was originally built. Unauthorized occupants aggravate the situation. The toilet and bathroom facilities are unable to cope with the increased student population, creating health hazards apart from the negative psychological effects the slum-environment has on students"



### Coping Strategies by Female Students in Relation to Accommodation

The problems arising out of the present features of students' accommodation in Nigeria have caused a lot of stress for students generally and female students in particular. They have reacted to the problem in various ways and have devised many strategies to cope with the problems. These strategies are discussed below.

- (1) *Use of "Errand Boys"*: Electricity and water supply are some of the municipal services supplied to the University by the government. It is taken for granted in many other countries, but it is a matter of concern in many Nigerian Universities, though there are generators to supplement in cases of power failure.

As the student intake increased in the Universities the demand for water also increased. The wells dug and the boreholes constructed as additional water supply became inadequate. It has been observed, that the female students use more water than their male counterparts.

The coping strategy devised to prevent a stressful state by the female students is the use of "errand boys" to fetch water for a token fee. These "errand boys" are mostly the children of the junior members of staff, who live within the University. They come around the female halls after school hours to assist the female students to fetch water or wash clothes in return for a token sum of money.

- (2) *Use of Lamps, Lanterns and Candles*: To cope with the problem of constant power failure, students resort to the use of lanterns or candles and the rechargeable lamps for the more affluent students. The candles and lanterns are not conducive to good health and safety.
- (3) *Squatting*: "Squatting" is a strategy devised by the students to cope with the problem of inadequate bed spaces. The term is used for a situation where a student who is not legally given accommodation in the hall of residence, stays in the hall with a friend, relative or fellow student at a fee or free of charge. (See table 2) The illegal student is called a "Squatter" and the legal occupant who permits the squatter is a "landlady". Squatting is against the rules and regulations of all the Universities and though the authorities do not condone this act, the problem of squatting has become a matter of concern.



Table 2: Average Number of Squatters in the Halls (1993/94 Session)

Halls	1993/94 Session No. of Students	Official No. of Students Per Room	Average No. of Squatters	Total No. of Squatters	Total No. of Students
Alexander Brown	800	2	0.15	60 860	
Azikiwe	999	4	3	749	1,748
Idia	1,200	4	3	900	2,100
Independence	1,002	4	3	752	1,754
Kuti	633	3	2	422	1,055
Mellanby	514	2	2	514	1,028
Queens	598	4	3	449	1,047
Bello	453	3	2	302	755
Teddar	390	2	2	390	780
Balewa	206	1	1	206	412
Awolowo	1,132	3	3	1,132	2,264

Source: Field Survey, 1995.

- (4) *Permitting Official Increase in Bed Spaces.* The students devised the strategy to ease the problem of accommodation. The consent was given to the authorities by the students to add more beds into the rooms to accommodate more students. More beds than were meant for the rooms were placed in such room. This strategy eased the problem of accommodation a bit but resulted in the congestion of the rooms with its attendant problems.
- (5) *Coping Strategy for Married Women:* Married female students have their peculiar problem. No University makes provision for accommodation for its students with married women in mind. These category of women in order to have their privacy, conjugal visits, or nurse their babies, have no option but to live in BQs at the exorbitant prices or in an off campus residence either in their homes or a rented apartment. It has been observed that during the examination period, many of them move back to the campus as squatters or "floaters". Unlike "squatters," "floaters" have no fixed place to stay. They move around from one friend to another, or to relatives within the hall to spend a night and then move on to another person.



- (6) *The Use of Independent Contractors:* This is a coping strategy adopted by many female students in particular to make life a bit more comfortable for them. They personally employ the services of any independent contractors such as carpenters, electricians, and painters from outside the University to carry out repair work in the rooms they are allocated to. The practice was that damages of facilities within the hall are reported to the hall authorities whose responsibility it is to ensure that necessary repairs are carried out. However lack of funds may delay the repair work. The fact is that the maintenance department, which was responsible for cost of repairs of damaged facilities like plumbing and electrical works have stopped bearing the cost due to inadequate funding from the Federal Government. The hall management that should be responsible finds it difficult to do so due to the decrease in the hall maintenance allocation. To cope with the stress caused by such broken down facilities, female students in the halls of residence in Nigerian Universities have resorted to calling on independent contractors who are paid by the students to carry out the repair works.
- (7) *Personal Acquisition of Amenities:* Some of the services offered by the hall management are poor because of inadequate funds. Some female students have overcome this problem by acquiring for themselves things like beddings, bed covers, wardrobes, cookers and other things the hall had the responsibility of providing. These things are brought in by students and returned home at the end of session.
- (8) *Business Involvement:* There have been very heavy financial burdens on the female students who are accommodated within the halls in Nigerian Universities. This has been attributed to inadequate funding from both the government and the Universities to the halls. The halls management has resorted to generating funds and this includes the imposition of different types of hall dues that causes financial burden on the students. Some indigent female students have coped with this stress by getting involved in other businesses in addition to the academic work. Such businesses include: baking of cakes, sale of clothes and cosmetics from within the congested rooms.
- (9) *Introduction of Campus Cab and Requesting for Lift:* To cope with the problem of poor transportation within the campuses, the Student Union Government of the some of the Universities introduced some campus cabs into the campuses. The cabs owners charge some amount of money for the services. Mostly the female students use the facility while some other students are not able to afford such a luxury because of the economic depression in Nigeria. The female students have also coped with the situation of inadequate transportation system by asking for a ride from car owners coming into or driving outside the University campus.



- (10) *Safety network*: The female students are faced with many dangers arising from the problems of accommodation. The coping strategy adopted by female students who have to live in Boys Quarters that are far away from the center of activities and who have to walk to the hostel at night is to organize group walk. In the wake of rampant cases of mugging and raping of female students, female students were noticed to have joined judo and karate lessons at keep fit centers.
- (11) *Moving into the Campus During Exams*: The examination period is usually stressful for female students who live outside the campus. The reason is that students resident within the campus organize group discussions during this period and this is usually in the night. At such times, a large number of these students move into the campus either as "squatters" or "floaters", whereby they read and sleep in the lecture rooms till the early hours of the morning and then go to the nearest female hall for a bath and change of clothes.

### Overall Effects

The residential and non-residential system of accommodation in its present state has its effects. These effects are discussed below:

1. *Students Unrest*: According to Ojo (1995), one of the causes of students' unrest in the Universities in Nigeria is the inadequate supply of electricity and water. Using the University of Ibadan as an example, he said students generally feel threatened when these imperative necessities are not available in the University. He observed that prolonged period of electricity failure and inadequate water supply has led to students' unrest.
2. *Antisocial Behaviour*: Due to the large number of occupants in the rooms either legally or illegally occupants, there are reports of antisocial behaviour which are against the University rules. These include:
  - i. Constant fighting
  - ii. Surreptitious luring into secret societies.
  - iii. Prostitution: Studies on prostitution have revealed that many female students in Nigerian Universities go into part time prostitution to survive economically for the duration of their education. (Bamgbose, 2000).
  - iv. Raping and Mugging: The isolation of some residential accommodation, constant electricity failure, inadequate transportation especially at night have resulted into a high rate of raping and mugging of the female students.



3. **Risk of Fire Outbreak:** The use of wooden structures in the construction of some of the residential buildings, erratic power supply and inadequate cooking facilities has resulted in fire outbreaks in halls of residence. In Queen Elizabeth II hall in U.I, the wooden buildings that were constructed in the wake of acute accommodation problems were razed down during a fire outbreak. This in effect resulted in the displacement of the residents and compounded the problem of inadequate bed spaces.
4. **Health Hazards:** Overcrowding in the rooms occupied by the residents in the halls is a health risk and may result in an outbreak of epidemic. Female students have reported cases of insomnia caused by too much noise, irritability and other skin infections. In addition, many of the students' residential accommodation are in buildings with staircases. Erratic power supply in such buildings may cause accidents. It is a health risk to put hundreds of students in a hall and not provide them with adequate water to flush their toilets regularly (Ike 1991).
5. **Poor Academic Performance:** The financial burden carried by many female students in order to survive the hardship and stress has caused divided attention between academic excellence and survival. The effect is a less than satisfactory academic environment for the students. The isolation of some of the residents occupied by female students has restricted their movement to the library and to group discussions. Some of the female students have complained that this has its effect on their academic work.

### Recommendations and Conclusion

The fact that there are coping strategies adopted by the female student does not suggest that the situation should continue to be tolerated. Urgent step should be taken by all those concerned to find a lasting solution to the present situation. It is in this light that the following recommendations are made.

- i. **Adequate Funding:** Sufficient funds should be made available to solve the problem of accommodation of students. Education as the fastest growing sector should be given enough attention before the situation goes out of control. The democratic government has shown great interest in education than other past governments have done. The University subsidy should therefore be revived. Any attempt to introduce the paying of economic rent by students will trigger of a demonstration by students as it has always done in the past. The financial burden on them and their payments is already too much. Funds could also be raised through endowment funds specifically for building new halls. The Alumni Association of the University is a very important body that can be used to source for funds. Many of the members are in top positions that can influence donations towards the construction of more residential halls. This was done in Queen Elizabeth II hall of the University of Ibadan, where some new blocks of rooms are



being constructed for the female students. The University of Ibadan in particular has a large expanse of additional land within its confines that has not been put into much use. Part of the land could be put into use for such a purpose.

- ii. **Stringent action on "Squatting":** The hall management should look critically into the problems of squatting and racketeering. These are acts of misconduct under the University of Ibadan rules and regulation (199). Students caught indulging in such acts should be penalized.
- iii. **Full Utilization of Facilities:** Concerning the problems already discussed above in the halls of residence, all the Universities in Nigeria should fully utilize the resources they have at their disposal. The various departments and units that are relevant should make their manpower available to assist the University.
- iv. **Efficient Transportation:** The problem caused by inadequate transportation within the university has reduced considerably. This is because of the intervention of the Student Union Government of the University of Ibadan that introduced two types of services namely, the use of registered buses and cars for transportation in the campus. These are privately owned cars and buses that are converted for transportation purposes to generate income for the owners. The use of motorcycle as a means of transportation has also been introduced to operate during the evening time in addition to the campus taxis.
- v. **Ineffective Housing Bureau:** A Housing bureau with efficient Lodging Officers should be established. The officers who must ensure that the conditions in the apartments are suitable and ideal for learning should coordinate the accommodation of non-residential students. A well coordinated off campus living where rules and regulations similar to the ones in halls of residence could be enforced should be planned. This will ensure character development of the students.

### Conclusion

The present features of residential and non-residential accommodation in Nigerian Universities are not too impressive. This was not the position between 1948 and the mid 1980s. The students spend a greater part of the year in the residential accommodation on/off campus residents. This is "home" for that period. Homes, whether provided by the University within the campus or off campus are the primary environments. Residential and non-residential accommodation should be safe, secured, healthy, and meet the needs of a person physically, socially, culturally and psychologically. A health home should have a safe and sufficient water supply, safe and accessible sanitary waste management and should be free from pollution, diseases, noise and overcrowding. The present state of the accommodation provided for Nigerian students fall short of the expectations of what a "home" should be.

If Nigerian universities are centers of academic excellence, that encourage the advancement of learning and the University of Ibadan in particular awards its certificate



based on learning and character, then a good and conducive accommodation within or outside the university is *sine qua non* for the students.

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