

Stakeholders Roles and Perception in the Implementation of Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan, Rivers State, Nigeria

Johnbull, Simeipiri Wenike¹, Ikiriko, Opiriba Karibi²

¹Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

²Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract: The study evaluated the process of implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Master Plan in Rivers State, Nigeria from its inception in 2009 to 2019. The study embarks on the role of stakeholders and their perceptions on the implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan. Survey questionnaires were administered to a total of 332 respondents in the study location. The study adopted passive-observational analysis style and thus utilised both primary and secondary data. The latter included face-to-face administration of a mostly pre-coded survey questionnaires drawn from the 3 study communities. The checklist of stakeholders in connection with the implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan includes: Government, Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority, community and civil society representatives, contractors, other government development agencies, the Press and Arcus Gibb. Community stakeholders who were the respondents were asked to rate (using the 5-point Likert scale ranging from “very successful” to “very unsuccessful”) the success of implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Master Plan. The modal rating at Omagwa, Igwurotali, and Aluu communities were: “Uncertain”, “Unsuccessful” and “Uncertain. The study concludes that, proper stakeholder engagement (Citizen Participation) is important; as stakeholder engagement in the plan implementation process is very fundamental in achieving a successful planning process and therefore should be encouraged. Some avenues through which GPHCDA could involve citizen in plan implementation include community fora, neighborhood meetings, FGDs, and others.

Key Words- Stakeholders Engagement, Master Plan, Implementation

I. INTRODUCTION

Plans are the synthesis of the gamut of the aspirations and visions of stakeholders made into strategic policies, programs and projects documented (in text and graphics) for implementation by a government statutory agency(s) within a timeframe which is evaluated periodically. Plans are of different layers including but not limited to Master Plans. The tripod of planning is all important part of the actualization of the goal(s) of any plan, however, one of the fundamental aspects of achieving the goals as set out in a Master Plan for a specific spatial space is the implementation of such a plan by the established implementation agency. The implementation of

a Master Plan which is the document (that contains public policy(s), programs and projects) is a major determinant of urban development and the government of the day has a major role to play. According to Keunta, (2010), Politics and public policy are the major factors that determine urban development.

Master Plan for urban development is one of the policy documents used to influence the growth of urban population, land use, infrastructure development and service provision. Implementation of the Master Plan determines the level of development of the geographical area it is meant to address. A Master Plan is usually designed for a specific period, between ten and thirty years.

It consists of an inventory of existing development in the geographic area of interest as well as proposals for future development.

The Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan is a holistic plan for the development of the Greater Port Harcourt City Area, which spans eight Local Government Areas of Rivers State, namely- the whole of Port Harcourt Municipality and parts of Oyigbo, Ogu/ Bolo, Okrika, Obio/Akpor, Eleme, Etche and Ikwerre Local Government Areas. It covers an area of approximately 1,900 square kilometres (9,190,000 hectares of land) with a projected population of about two million people (Ede *et al.*, 2011).

On the 2nd of April 2009, the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Law establishing Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority (GPHCDA) came into force. GPHCDA is a regulatory body with mandate to facilitate the implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan and build the New City called the Greater Port Harcourt City. According to the pioneer Administrator of the Authority, the whole project was “a call to duty with the mission to build a world class Garden City, thriving economically, operating efficiently, prosperously and assuring its residents a quality of life envied for its peacefulness, comfort and sustainability” (Cookey-Gam, 2010).

Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study covers Phase 1 area of the study location that comprises the Mbodo-Aluu, Omagwa

and Igwuruta communities. Phase 1 commenced in 2009 but it is still at the construction stage of the project cycle and is expected to have been completed by 2020. Phase 1 layout covers 1,692.07ha (16.921km²), extending from the Port-Harcourt International Airport junction across to Professor Tam David-West Road and part of Igwuruta. However, the intellectual scope is to carry out a process to evaluate implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan.

Background Information about The Study Area

Old Port Harcourt City was a port city established in 1913 during British colonial rule. It was named after Lord Lewis Harcourt, the then British Secretary of State for the Colonies (Owei, *et al.*, 2010; Ede *et al.*, 2011). Located within the southern coastal fringe of Nigeria close to the south-eastern hinterland, the city was established as a rail and seaport terminal for the exportation of coal and agricultural produce from the hinterland (Wolpe, 1974; Ikechukwu, 2015). The discovery of oil and gas in the late 1950 accelerated the industrial and commercial expansion of the city leading to its uncontrolled development and rapid expansion.

By 1965, the municipality became the site of Nigeria's largest harbour and the centre of Nigeria's petroleum activities (Wolpe, 1974; Izeogu, 1989). With that, there has been a constant influx of people into the city. Apart from the rise in population, the city has seen a corresponding leapfrogging physical expansion. Presently, the city's planning authority has struggled to cope with the rapid uncontrolled spatial expansion, population influx and overcrowding (VERML, 2009). Other studies have added that the existing infrastructure in the city has been in a deplorable condition, overburdened over time (Owei, *et al.*, 2010; Ede, *et al.*, 2011).

The GPHC Master Plan covers Port Harcourt City (Main Town) and the contiguous areas laid out for urban redevelopment, expansion, and modernization. It is an agglomeration or conurbation of the old Port-Harcourt City (inner core of the 1975 Master Plan) and parts of other Local Government Areas (LGAs) defined in the Greater Port-Harcourt City Master plan. The eight LGAs covered by the plan have been identified above and comprise of Port-Harcourt, Obio-Akpor, Okrika, Oyigbo, Ogu-Bolo, Etche, Eleme and Ikwerre, Oyigbo, Eleme, Okrika, and Ogu-Bolo LGAs are located in the east and south of the Central Business District. Obio/Akpor LGA is situated north of Port-Harcourt LGA while Ikwerre LGA is situated north-west of Obio/Akpor LGA, and Etche LGA is in the north-east.

II. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Concept of the Master Plan

A Master Plan is a dynamic, multifaceted, and comprehensive document that has different interpretations given by different scholars, but the intention has always been the same. For Kent (1964) the document serves as "ordinances or general plan with official statement of a municipal legislative body which set forth its major policies concerning desirable future

physical development of an area". The perception of Roger (1999) regarding Master Plan is "a traditional document in Britain with master or comprehensive planning that develops a plan to cover development, use of land in order to maximize the overall benefit, and then ensuring adherence to the scheme in the urban area". Black (1975) on his part refers to the term as "the official public document adopted by a local government as a policy guide to decisions about the physical development of a community". Whichever perspective the document is being looked upon, Master Plans are documents designed by Town Planners and allied professionals with legal backing which involves series of activities of all sectors in any geographical area.

However, the aim of a Master Plan determines the roles it will play. In any democratic society where the legislative body is involved in the master planning processes, a Master Plan document is one that should be able to draw the attention of stakeholders regarding challenges and opportunities (Black, 1975). For Black (1975), a Master Plan should be able to initiate policies through long-range appropriate phasing of the plan to provide a task for each period within its implementation period. Also, Kent (1964) asserts that a Master Plan should be able to serve as an avenue to convey policy directions by implementing agencies. He further asserts that a Master Plan document should also serve as an educational tool for those who access it. In the opinion of Roger (1999), a Master Plan should be able to serve as an avenue for exploration as it suggests many functions to the planning staff; the executives; operating agencies for physical development; voters; politician and the public at the drafting of the plan and its adoption. A Master Plan gives implementation direction for every development especially in the preparation of zoning ordinances, sub-division control, urban renewal, etc.

The Planning Philosophy of the Greater Port-Harcourt City Master Plan Model

The planning philosophy of the firm engaged for Greater Port Harcourt adopted the rational comprehensive planning model or rational planning, sometimes referred to as synoptic approach. This approach is based on the top-down planning strategy. The top-down approach is associated with the rational planning movement and uses the planning process to establish a uniform landscape and architectural style based on an idealized medieval village.

The City is visually attractive to the extent that it is known as the Garden City of Nigeria, but it is arguable whether such an appellation still fits its present state. The ways some urban features disconnect are apparent for Port Harcourt, so it is a generally held opinion of a need to reinstate values that can uphold the former status, create good and healthy living environment, and achieve sustainability and plan. The objective of the Urban Design Framework for the master plan is to create a new and exciting urban environment where citizens feel safe, their lifestyle is uplifted and investments are

protected through the application of known urban design principles (Ede, Owei and Akarolo;2008).

A Master Plan is a comprehensive document aimed at strategically developing areas of need as perceived by stakeholders in that locality. City development underpins the conception and subsequent implementation of any Master Plan. An example of such is the Greater Port-Harcourt City Master Plan which is a 50-year strategic plan designed to integrate the old and new Port Harcourt City. The integrated Master Plan consists of transport, road, water, storm water, wastewater, land use, social infrastructure, and energy (gas and electricity) plans developed to be implemented in three phases. All phases of the development (including existing and future projects referred to as 'GPHC Development Projects') are scheduled to be completed by 2060 (VERML, 2009).

The Vision of the plan is "to transform the Greater Port-Harcourt Area into a world class city that is internationally recognised for excellence, and for the area to become the preferred destination for investors and tourists," (VERML, 2009: ES-1). Spatially, the plan covers an area of approximately 1,900 km² spanning eight Local Government Areas. It includes all the old Port-Harcourt city and parts of Oyigbo, Okrika, Ogu/Bolo, Obio/Akpor, Ikwerre, Etche and Eleme Local Government Areas (LGAs) (VERML, 2009; GPHCDA, 2010). The New City will be an extension of the Old Port Harcourt City and will allow for urban growth through planning and de-densification of the Old City, while gradually integrating both cities into one single unit (GPHCDA, 2008, 2010).

While the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority (GPHCDA) is the agency responsible for implementing the GPHC Master Plan, control of development activities is spatially shared between GPHCDA and the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development (MPPUD). GPHCDA was established by the 'The Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority Law' No. 2 of 2009 (GPHCDA, 2010). GPHCDA has been charged with the responsibility of facilitating the implementation of the GPHC Master Plan and developing the New City (GPHCDA, 2010). The objectives of the plan are primarily economic: that is, to enhance the standard of living and well-being of people in the city by transforming it into a functional, efficient, world class city with first-rate infrastructure and delivery of quality services (VERML, 2009; GPHCDA, 2010). The successful implementation of the Master Plan is projected to yield improved commerce options as well as increased investment opportunities. Apart from yielding economic benefits, previous studies have argued that economic development should also be placed in the environmental context for protecting environmental quality (Glasson *et al.*, 2005; Ede, *et al.*, 2011; UNECA, 2011; Akukwe and Ogbodo, 2015).

The comprehensive Master Plan comprises the land-use plan and other sectoral plans. Implementation of the entire Master Plan has been phased, commencing from Phase-1 through

Phase 2 to the Phase-4 projects. Phase-1 layout is in the northern axis of the Master Plan near the Port-Harcourt International Airport and is sub-divided into four manageable sub-phases A, B C and D (see Fig.1). Phase-2 layout is in the eastern axis near Etche LGA, while Phase 3 Project is in the south-eastern part of the Master Plan near Onne Seaport at Eleme. All phases will be connected by the Priority Road (M1 North-South Link Road), which is a dual-carriage freeway (VERML, 2009). The main anchors are Onne Seaport, Port-Harcourt Harbour and the Omagwa international airport.

Generally, the land use plan consists of high, medium, and low-density residential areas; commercial and industrial areas; cemetery; dumping site; international airport; University; open spaces, including riverine areas, golf courses, parks, gardens with landscape elements; rivers; metropolitan node; roads including major, minor, and other roads as well as future growth areas. Facilities include 24-hour electricity supply infrastructure; a network of good roads/streets and public transportation system; drainage and storm water management system; engineered sanitary landfill for solid waste disposal; surveillance; and efficient security systems among other things (VERML, 2009; GPHCDA, 2010). The plan tried to take advantage of the two transport nodes (Air and seaports) in its development agenda.

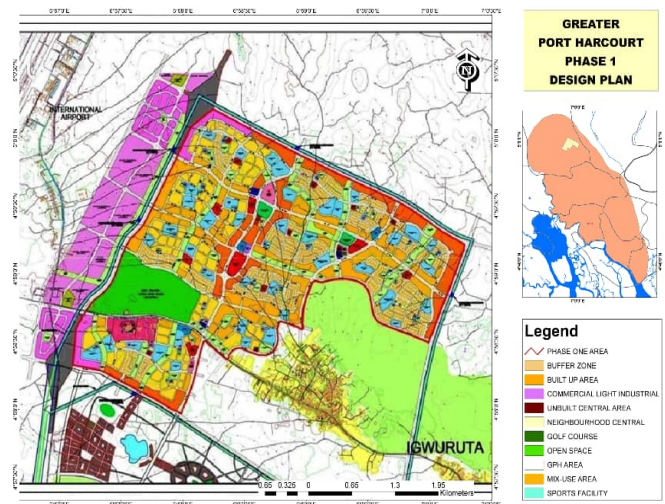


Fig.1 Phase 1 layout showing 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D Sub- Projects of the GPHCMP. (Source: Arcus Gibb, 2009)

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The target population comprised household members from each of the three communities and was regarded as a Primary Sampling Unit (PSU). Multi-stage sampling technique (Kish, 1965) was applied to select household respondents. The sampling stages were as follows:

- Sketching each PSU, including housing units and assigning codes to them.
- Listing residential housing units, and their constituent dwelling units to obtain an ordered list of dwelling

units (hence households, since each dwelling unit is occupied by a household) in the community to serve as a sampling frame.

- c) Drawing the sample of households from the ordered list of households, applying systematic sampling (a probability sampling method) (Kish, 1965).

In each selected household, the head was chosen as the respondent. For households where the head of household is absent, an adult was chosen.

The total number of households in each of the three (3) PSUs was obtained through listing, as described above. The Taro Yamane formula was then applied to determine the appropriate (representative) sample to be studied (See computation below).

The Taro Yamane formula is given as:

$$N = n = N / [1 + N (e)^2]$$

Where: n = Sample size, 1 = Constant, N = Population Size, e = Sampling error (5%) (this is the level of precision) = $e^2 = 0.0025$. This formula was adopted for sample selection for the study with details of the population, household size and actual sample size are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sampling Details

S/No	Sampled Communities	1991 Population	2019 Population (Projected Using 6.5% Growth Rate)	Actual No. of Households (HH) (Obtained from Listing)	No. of Households Selected
1	Mbodo-Aluu	834	4,861	6,147	45
2	Omagwa	2,805	16,356	21,545	157
3	Igwurutali	3,821	22,280	27,355	199
	Total	7,460	43,499	55,047	401

(Source: NPC, 1991; NPC, 2018; NBS, 2016; Researcher's Fieldwork, 2019)

*Note- The actual number of households obtained from listing was used in sampling the projected figures are only included here for purposes of comparison.

IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Stakeholders Involved in the Implementation of the GPHC Master Plan

A project is successful when it achieves its objectives and meets or exceeds the expectations of the stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals who either care about or have a vested interest in a project (Smith and Love, 2004). They are the people who are actively involved with the work of the project or have something to either gain or lose as a result of the project. Key stakeholders can make or break the project. Even if all the deliverables are met and the objectives satisfied, if key or critical stakeholders are not happy, nobody is happy.

The checklist of stakeholders in connection with the implementation of the Greater Port City Master Plan is large and it includes: Government, Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority, community and civil society representatives, contractors, other government development agencies, the Press and Arcus Gibb, as listed below.

1. Government (State);
2. GPHCDA;
3. Community;
4. Contractors;
5. Other Government Development Agencies
6. Press;
7. Arcus Gibb (the designer).
8. Firms
9. Local NGO's
10. International NGO's
11. UN-Habitat, etc
12. Amnesty International
13. Other World Organizations

With the aid of stakeholder mapping (See Fig. 2), stakeholders were grouped into three, primary, secondary and tertiary, taking into consideration their adjudged importance and influence:

A. Primary Stakeholders

1. Government;
2. GPHCDA;
3. Communities;
5. R/State Ministries (Lands, Housing, Physical Planning and Urban Development)

B. Secondary Stakeholders

4. Contractors
6. Press;
7. Arcus Gibb (the designer).
8. Firms
9. Local NGO's
10. International NGO's

C. Tertiary Stakeholders Group

11. UN-Habitat, etc
12. Amnesty International
13. Other World Organizations

Stakeholder mapping was carried out for this research to identify and interview the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Master Plan and their level of involvement. Figure 2 shows result of the mapping exercise.

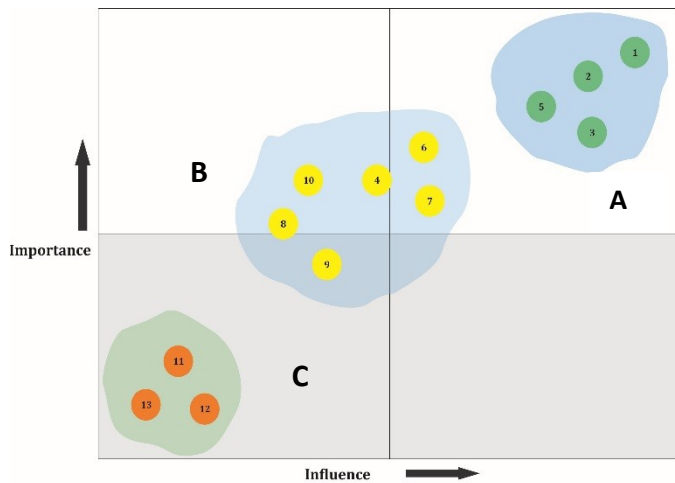


Figure.2: Mapping of Stakeholders of the Greater Port Harcourt City Plan Implementation Process

Legend

- a. Primary Stakeholders
- b. Secondary Stakeholders
- c. Tertiary Stakeholders
- 1. Government
- 2. Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority
- 3. Communities
- 4. Contractors
- 5. Other Government Development Agencies
- 6. Press
- 7. Arcus Gibb (Planning Consultants)
- 8. Firms
- 9. Local NGOs
- 10. International NGOs
- 11. UN Habitat
- 12. Amnesty International
- 13. Other World Organisations

Stakeholder mapping was carried out for this researcher in order to identify and interview the various stakeholders involved in the implementation process and their level of involvement in it.

Stakeholder Perceptions of the Implementation Process

Community stakeholders (respondents) were asked to rate (using the 5-point Likert scale ranging from “very successful” to “very unsuccessful”) the success of implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Master Plan. The modal rating at Omagwa, Igwurutali and Aluu were; “Uncertain”, “Unsuccessful” and “Uncertain, representing 47%, 63.8% and 51.4% of their respective distributions, respectively (Figure.3).

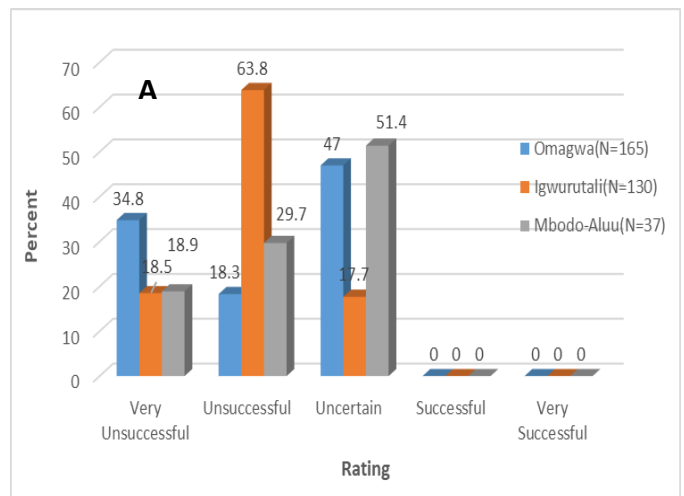


Fig. 3: Community Stakeholder Success Rating of the Implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan (Source: Author’s Field Survey, March 2020)

Perceptions of the Implementation Process by Secondary and Tertiary Stakeholders

The study results revealed the perceptions of both the secondary and tertiary stakeholder groups as classified in Figure3. In the secondary category, a former staff of Arcus Gibb -- the Planning consultants for the GPHC Master Plan said the vision of the successful implementation of the Master Plan has been destroyed by non-release of funds to the Authority since 2015 to the time this study was conducted. It was further revealed that his former employer (Arcus Gibb) has closed the office and since relocated back to South Africa.

When the Press (the Federated Chapter of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Rivers State Chapel) was contacted to obtain their opinion on the master plan implementation, their response was that there is no implementation of any Master Plan in the proposed New City. The only thing they attested to was the construction of the New Stadium (Adokiye Amiesimaka Stadium) and possibly the New GPHCDA office) and that all other developments had been stalled.

With respect to the tertiary stakeholders’ category, there was no engagement as offices of the identified and listed stakeholders could not be located as at the time of the study

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Stakeholders Involved in the Implementation of the GPHCD Mater Plan

A project is successful when it achieves its objectives and meets or exceeds the expectations of the stakeholders. As explained earlier, stakeholders are individuals who either care about or have a vested interest in a project (David and Steve, 2012). They are the people who are actively involved with the work of the project or have something to either gain or lose because of the project.

In the opinion of Stone (2014), critical stakeholders can make or break the success of a project. Even if all the deliverables are met and the objectives are satisfied, if key or critical stakeholders are not happy, nobody is happy.

The stakeholder mapping exercise grouped stakeholders into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary, taking into consideration their adjudged importance and influence:

The primary stakeholders were seen to be most relevant to the study and their inputs were regularly and effectively utilized in the thesis.

Group two stakeholders' perception shown in section 4.5 as enunciated by a former Arcus Gibb staff noted that, the vision of the successful implementation of the Master Plan has been killed by non-release of finances to the Authority from 2015 to date. It was further revealed that his former employer (Arcus Gibb) has closed the office and since relocated back to South Africa.

Corroborating the above position, the Federated Chapel of the Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ), Rivers State said the master plan was not being implemented in the proposed New City. The only thing they attest to was the construction of the New Stadium (Adokiye Amiesimaka Stadium and possibly the New GPHCDA office) while, other developments had been stalled.

The tertiary category of stakeholders was not engaged as their supposed offices as listed stakeholders' offices could not be located as at the time of the study.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this research was Process Evaluation in relation to the Implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan which has added to the existing stock of knowledge in Master Plan implementation in Nigeria.

During the study, several challenges impeding the implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt Master Plan to achieve a world class city development were identified. Some of the challenges identified include poor stakeholder engagement, and inadequate financing of projects by partners and sponsors. Over the years, the Rivers State government of has been the sole sponsor/financier of the Greater Port Harcourt City Development project.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The Rivers State Government should ensure:

Proper stakeholder engagement (Citizen Participation). As established earlier on, stakeholder engagement in the plan implementation process is very fundamental in achieving a successful planning process and should be encouraged. Some avenues through which GPHCDA could involve citizen in plan implementation include community fora, neighborhood meetings, FGDs, and others.

- ii. The design and execution of projects outlined in the plan should be discussed and voted on to ensure that they reflect the needs of the people. Citizen engagement in the plan implementation will infuse a sense of ownership in the people and encourage them to monitor the progress of the implementation, which has been lacking as revealed in the study.

REFERENCES

- [1] Berke,P., Backhurst, M.,Day,M., Ericksen,N., Laurian,L., Crawford,J.,&Dixon,J.(2006)What makes plan implementation successful? Anevaluation of localplans and implementation practices in New Zealand. *Environmentand Planning B:Planning and Design*,33(4),581–600
- [2] Calkins, H.W.(1979)“The Planning Monitor:An Accountability Theory of Plan Evaluation,”*Environment and PlanningA*, 11(7), 745-758.
- [3] Cookey-Gam, A. An Overview of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan and Opportunities in Building a World Class City over the Next 20 Years; Greater PortHarcourt Development Authority: Portharcourt, Nigeria, 2010.
- [4] VERML. Greater Port-Harcourt City Phase 1A Development Environmental Impact Assessment; Greater Port-Harcourt City Development Authourity: Port Harcourt, Nigeria, 2009.
- [5] Government of Rivers State of Nigeria (2008). Greater Port Harcourt City Development Master Plan 2008. Accus Gibbs. Vols 1-4
- [6] Ikechukwu, E. (2015) The Socio-Economic Impact of the Greater Port Harcourt Development Project on the Residents of the Affected Areas. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 3, 82-93. doi: 10.4236/jss.2015.31010.
- [7] Izeogu, C. V. (1989). Urban development and the environment in Port Harcourt. *Environment and Urbanization*, 1(1), 59-68.
- [8] Kent,T.J.(1964).*TheUrbanGeneralPlan*.SanFrancisco:ChandlerPublishingCo.
- [9] Keunta,K.(2010).*AnAssessmentoftheImpactofForm-BasedCodeand ConventionalZoning on FortMcPhersonRedevelopment*. M.scThesis, School of Cityand Regional Planning,GeorgiaInstituteofTechnology,U.S.A
- [10] Owei, O. B., Ede, P. N., Obinna, F. C., & Akarolo, J. (2008, September). Land market distortions in Nigerian cities and urban sprawl: the case of Abuja and Port Harcourt. In *44th ISOCARP Congress*.
- [11] Roger,A.R.(1999).*PlanningforPerformance:DevelopingProgramm esthatProducedResult*.
- [12] UNECA, 2011. National Strategies for Sustainable Development in Africa. United Nations
- [13] Wolpe, H. (1974). *Urban politics in Nigeria: A study of Port Harcourt*. Univ of California Press.