

**Urbanization in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century:  
Some Reflections on Katsina Town, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

Urbanization has since the pre-colonial times been an important phenomenon in the Nigerian area. The process involved changes in structure, attitude, infrastructure and institutions, as well as acceleration of economic growth. Since its emergence in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Katsina city has been an urban centre due to its strategic location. Since then up to the post colonial area, the town remained an urban centre. However, it was from 1987 when it became a state capital that Katsina became a highly urbanized town with all the characteristic features to qualify it so. The paper argues that the creation of local governments and states in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and increase in petrodollar were central to the urban transformation in Katsina into a highly urbanized setting. It has been recommended in the final analysis that a serious commitment on the part of the government and people is imperative towards understanding the problems of urbanism with a view to addressing them.

**Introduction**

Urbanization has been an important phenomenon since the evolution of man, some millions of years ago. Human settlements began to emerge from the late stone age period as a result of the discovery of agriculture, which provided the basis for human settlement in one place. The coming of iron age in Africa accelerated the development of farming settlements in the form of clusters of villages and large settlements, hence the beginning of the emergence and development of states empires and kingdoms (Shillington, 2004: 36-39). Nigeria, which has been rated as one of the most rapidly growing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has experienced a phenomenal urbanization, and that its experience has been unique in scale, pervasiveness, and in historical antecedents.

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Katsina is a town created since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and was within the orbit of the former Hausa states. The opening up of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the emergence of Sokoto caliphate in the Western Sudan as a result of the Sokoto Jihad of 1804. The jihad led to the movement of people from one place to another, thereby resulting to the establishment of new settlements and the expansion of the old existing ones like Kano, Katsina, Gumel and Zazzau, among others. The old cities grew as areas of commerce, while others became both centres of commerce and administration. As a result of the jihad, Katsina emerged as the headquarters of the Katsina Emirate, thereby becoming an important urban centre in the Sokoto caliphate.

Urbanisation continued to be an important phenomenon in Nigeria during the colonial period. As part of the administrative organisation after the conquest of the Sokoto caliphate, the British created new administrative headquarters that led to the establishment of new urban centres like Kaduna, Sokoto, Maiduguri and Yola; and the expansion of existing ones like Katsina, Kano and Zazzau. Unlike the previous urban centres, the new ones had modern characteristics with central administrative buildings, major roads, segregated residential areas and railroads (Kankara, 2009). Although there was an absence of important features such as segregated settlements and railroads in urban Katsina, nevertheless colonial structures like central administrative buildings, and infrastructure such as roads, electricity, communications, market, courts, prisons, etc., all featured in the modern sense. The availability of these modern social amenities brought immigrant groups mainly from the southern parts of Nigerian in search of fortunes, especially as workers in the Native Authority office and commercial firms established by the British.

In 1960 Nigeria attained its independence and this marked the termination of colonial rule. The leaders of the independent nation attempted to restructure the country politically through local government reforms and the creation of states. These attempts marked another milestone in the urbanisation process of the Katsina metropolis as its population, and physical expansion continued to increase. In 1976 Katsina town became the headquarters of the newly created Katsina Local Government, and when Katsina State was created in 1987 the town continued to serve as the administrative headquarters. This position provided an important development in the physical expansion of the metropolis, especially with the influx of fortune seekers and the establishment of infrastructure by the governments. Thus these pressures opened up more residential, industrial and commercial areas in the town.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

Urbanization has been interpreted in different ways by different scholars to the extent that one single definition is hard to come by. Writers of sociology like Wirth (1968: 49) defined it on the basis of population density, size and heterogeneity. In other words an urban centre has more population concentration than a town or a village. Larson (1968: 580-588) fixed a population aggregate of 1,000 thousand people to distinguish an urban centre. However, Sjoberg (1964: 179-180) added some significant factors that urban centres constituted, like advanced technology, a complex organization, as well as having well-developed power structures. Achi (1985: 6) argued that population alone is not enough to serve as the only criteria to define an urban centre, and he mentioned others to include high level of technology, existence of city walls, and a variety of specialized services. Mabogunje (1974), an urban geographer, went further to mention some public services that prevailed in urban centres that included law and order, education, public health, transportation, communications and water supply. On his part, Carter (1994: 17) analysed urbanization population-wise and with functional role consisting of industries, shops, banks and offices and similar institutions.

In his study in the formation of states in Hausaland, Smith (1976: 182-183) identified some basic prerequisite characteristics for the emergence of cities. **First, is location factor through its agricultural and industrial resources and places where long-distance trade routes converged would all come to**

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support a permanent trading population of diverse origins. Second, is the strategic factor by establishing fortifications to protect the urban community from outside attack. Other factors were dwellings of the great Iskoki and seat of a new political power, with the *Sarki* in the city and a hierarchy of specialized officials.

An urban historian, Oyedele (1987) regarded urbanisation as a complex phenomenon that consisted of many dynamics, some of which differ from one urban process to another. Ibn Khaldun (1958: 246) identified security as an important factor to the growth and development of an area, whereby if the location of a city guaranteed security, people would flock into it. In another study, Mile (2007) argued that urban revolution in Africa is so enormous that apart from affecting population and spatial settings, it also affects the total developmental process of the people generally. According to the views of some Euro-centric writers like (Breeze, 1966), African urban centres are built by whites and occupied by blacks.

Urban transformation, therefore, is a multi-dimensional process involving changes in the structure, attitude, infrastructure and institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth. It includes all efforts by a government, its agencies and private organizations and individuals directed at combating urban problems. It also includes the formulation of appropriate urban policies and effective implementation of such policies.) In his study on urban development in Nigeria, Mamman (1999: 45) stated that the physical expansion of an area comes about through the process of outward extension and internal re-organization. The outward extension is usually determined by a number of factors, including population pressure or congestion in the former area that is being accompanied with growth in the number and size of urban settlements or places.

There is no doubt that the creation of Katsina local government and Katsina state in 1976 and 1987, respectively, added another dimension in the annals of the physical expansion of Katsina town. Since then, the position of the town has been enhanced politically and economically as it joined the ranks of other important urban centers in the country. From the time when Katsina became a state, the town started witnessing rapid demographic changes. As a capital city, it attracted a large number of people from all parts of the state and beyond mainly because of the employment opportunities provided by both public and private sectors.

### **The Urban Transformation of Katsina Town**

The creation of the Katsina Local Government in 1976 was an important landmark in the urban transformation of Katsina as the period coincided with the oil boom era in the country, and consequently Katsina town began to witness important urban changes both in infrastructure and physical expansion. Also, the creation of Katsina State in 1987 is another important step in the development of the town. State capitals always attract both human and capital resources. Therefore, since 1967 when the first generation of states were created in the country, a new lease of life has been injected into the capital cities, as they experience growth and development (Liman & Adamu, 2005: 359). Since 1987 when the Katsina State was created and Katsina town chosen as the capital city, urban expansion became stimulated due to certain necessities such as the need for office and residential accommodation. Pressure from fortune seekers also opened up more residential, industrial and commercial areas, as well as infrastructure development in the town.

### **Establishment of Layouts**

The population of Katsina town continued to rise steadily when it increased from 100,418 in 1977 to 115,220 in 1980 and to 233,644 in 1991. On a 3.03% annual growth rate based on the 1991 Census, the city's population rose to 293,758 in 2000; and by 2007 the population had reached 528,641 (National Population Commission Office, 2001). Consequently, the population growth pressurized the Katsina State government to begin to identify and provide land for the

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development of the metropolis. For instance, in 1977 the Katsina local government established a planned residential layout in Kofar Kaura. It was the first layout established by the government for the future expansion of Katsina town outside the city wall.

The creation of Katsina State in 1987 added another dimension in the urban expansion of Katsina town. As observed by Kabir, the need of the growing population for accommodation and the need to establish a new urban centre with a new functional role as a fully-fledged state capital was the major cause of the urban changes (Danlami, 1988: 8-9). Consequently, between 1987 and 2007 the Katsina State government, through the Katsina Urban Development Authority (KUPDA), demarcated about 140 layouts for industrial, commercial and residential purposes, which increased the size of the town (KUPDA, 2011). By 1987 the total coverage of the metropolis, including its peripheral areas, was about 30km<sup>2</sup>. However, by 2010 the total coverage had reached about 500km<sup>2</sup> consisting mainly of expansion outside the walled city in all directions, but particularly along the southern and eastern parts.

### **Housing**

A milestone in the physical expansion of Katsina town was the construction of over 50 housing units by the North-Central State government in 1977 east of the Kofar Kaura, layout known as Kofar Marusa Low-Cost houses. Other houses that aided the urban expansion of Katsina were 152 housing units within Kofar Kaura Layout, and 248 at Batagarawa in 1982. The government also made efforts to reduce the burden of rent on housing in the town faced by civil servants deployed from the former Kaduna State as a result of the creation of the state. In response to this need, about twelve houses for the Secretary to the Military Government and commissioners were completed and furnished. Residential houses were also constructed by the government for other categories of civil servants. One of such constructed houses was No. 168 Ahmadu Coomassie housing estate consisting of three and two bedroom bungalows at *Dutsin Safe* built in 1989 by the Yahaya Madaki's administration. Also, in 1992, 22 housing units at *Goriba* Quarters were completed (KTHA, 2012). In another effort to provide residential accommodation to the people in the metropolis, the government in 2002 built 48 houses along Jibia road. Also, in 2005 272 houses were constructed along *Goriba* road at a cost of about ₦756m. The *Goriba* houses consist of 136 two-bedroom and 136 three bungalows with roads and drainages to provide good planning layout and accessible link roads within the estate and the GRA roads network (ibid). The construction of these houses has not only provided an opportunity for the people to own houses and lessened the burden of rent on housing, but has significantly stimulated the physical expansion of the town.

### **Education**

The government set the pace towards improving education not only in the town but in the whole State. This was achieved through rehabilitation and construction of workshops, classrooms, laboratories and schools (Katsina State MOE, 2012). There was rapid increase of primary schools in Katsina town: from eight in 1960 to about 28 in 1976, and to about 45 in 2007; while students' enrolment rose from 3244 in 2004 to 53,269 in 2007 (KTLEA, 2012).

Similarly, in order to promote tertiary education in the town, the Katsina College of Arts Science and Technology (KCAST) was established in 1973 along the Dutsin-Ma Road. On the opposite direction of the same road, the Federal College of Education was established in 1976. Again, as part of an effort to promote education in the State, more institutions of higher learning were established in the metropolis that included the Katsina State University (now Umaru Musa Yaradua University) in 2006 (*Katsina State Gazette*, 2006: 1). Non-governmental organisations were also not left out in the urban expansion of the town as the Katsina Islamic Foundation established the Katsina Islamic University in 1987 (Sani, 2005: 52). All these developments contributed to the urban expansion of Katsina town. There was also the proliferation of private schools to cater for the increasing demand that added to the expansion. Such private schools include Mariamoh Ajiri International Schools, Erudite Comprehensive Schools, Saldefi International Schools, Gobarau Academy, Global Science Secondary School, Hope International Schools, Onward Academy, Heritage International Schools, among others (Oral Interview, Kurfi: 2012).

### **Transportation**

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As transportation is an important ingredient for social and economic development, since its creation, the Katsina State Government has been improving transportation facilities. The Katsina State Transport Authority was established in 1987. In 2006 the airport (now Umaru Musa International Airport) was upgraded, and since then it has been offering local and international trips, including conveying Katsina State Pilgrims to the Holy Land. Also, the Katsina State Government in the 1990s undertook the construction of Katsina township roads and the dualisation of bypasses and gateway roads with a central verge, side drains concrete with pedestrians pavement, and provided with street lights (Katsina State MOW& T, 2012). Between 1987 and 2007 the construction of roads was carried out in about four phases. The rehabilitation and construction of new roads linked the capital city with its surrounding and neighbouring areas. Similarly, they not only reduced traffic congestion and occurrence of unwarranted accidents but also gave the town a good urban outlook. Additionally, they opened more communities with accessible roads, in addition to facilitating commercial transactions. The construction of the roads also provided opportunity to large number of unskilled labourers to be employment. In another direction, the constructed roads increased the development of motor and motor cycle transport services in the metropolis (ibid).

### **Health Services**

There were quite a number of developments carried out in the area of health that helped in the urban expansion of Katsina. For instance, the North Central State expanded the Katsina General Hospital. Following the creation of Katsina State new hospitals were built and old ones rehabilitated. In 1988 four maternal and child health clinics were built along the four gates of the town at the cost of #530,900.20 each, and placed under the control of Katsina Local Government Council. As part of increasing health care delivery system in the metropolis due to the growing population, the Katsina Local Government constructed many health centres at Tudun Yanlifidda, Sabuwar Unguwa, Abbatuwa, Inwala, Gidan Dawa.

In 1992, the Katsina State government spent about #100m for the construction of Katsina State Specialist Hospital in the state capital. The government also established a Diagnostic Centre at the Katsina General Hospital in 1998 (Oral Interview, Akargerger: 2012). The number of patients attending hospitals has also been increasing over the years. For instance, in the year 2000 about 83,258 patients attended the Katsina General Hospital, but by 2004 the number had increased to 230,421. Also, in 2000 there were about 516 medical and paramedical staff, but in 2004 the number rose to 612 and 708, respectively, in 2007. In another angle, private clinics were established in Katsina town to complement government efforts in the delivery of health care services (Oral Interview, Ademilu: 2012). This development was partly a result of congestions in the Katsina General Hospital being the only general hospital in the town.

Individuals were also encouraged to establish private clinics to enhance their incomes. Because of this, between 1987 and 2007 there was a significant proliferation of private clinics in the capital city. Prominent among them include Amfani Clinic established in 1988 at No. 15 Funtua Crescent, Kofar Kaura Layout (Oral Interview, Ayemi: 2012). Other clinics include Alheri Clinic Katsina, established in 1991 at Kofar Kaura Layout, Lawrence Onoja Road, (Oral Interview, Johnson: 2012); Allah Ba Mu Lafiya Clinic (1997) at Maiduguri Road, (Oral Interview, Yusuf: 2012); Sauki Clinic in 2000 at Abdullahi Sarki Mukhtar Road, (Oral Interview, Iyaji: 2012); New Millennium Clinic in 2000 at Ahmadu Bello Way, (Oral Interview, Elija: 2012); and Amana Clinic in 2000 at Sokoto Road (Oral Interview, 2012).

### **Migrant Groups**

For centuries, several groups of migrants have been migrating to Katsina town for various reasons that hinge on either push or pull factors. A significant feature that characterized the arrival of these migrant groups is adding to the cosmopolitan nature of the town. The major tribes in Katsina

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are the Yoruba, Igbo, Nupe and people of the Republic of Niger. The Yoruba and Igbo were pulled to Katsina from 1903 by job opportunities in colonial trading companies or colonial bureaucracy, while others came as independent traders. The attainment of independence of Nigeria in 1960 led increased migration of migrant communities to the Katsina town for economic fortunes and job opportunities. Also, the hospitable attitude of the Katsina people and the creation of Katsina state in 1987 attracted more migrant groups who continued to play additional economic roles, particularly in the areas of handicraft and entrepreneurship. They were the people that provided the hordes of local mechanics, welders, spare parts dealers, water vendors, hoteliers, among others.

### **Other Infrastructure Development**

As a result of the creation of the state and increase in population in the metropolis, from the year 2000 to date water capacity production was doubled from 25m liters per day to 50m liters (KTSWB, 2012). As part of the state's urban water supply scheme, it has constructed boreholes at Dutsin-Safe Low-cost houses, Yammawa, Sabuwar Unguwar Kofar Kaura, Abbatoir, Barhin, and Makera quarters. The scheme has not only reduced water shortage problem in the town, but also relieved tension from Ajiwa Dam.

Similarly, the supply of electricity was boosted as new substations were established at IBB Way, Kofar Guga, Ajiwa Water Works, State Secretariat, State Polytechnic, and Umaru Musa Yaradua University to meet the growing demands of electricity supply. As part of the Katsina State Government effort towards boosting social and economic activities within the state capital, a new Katsina Central Market was commissioned in 1997 along Tafawa Balewa Way (Oral Interview, Wada: 2012). Also, the construction of the Katsina State Library Board and open theater in the town added to its physical expansion.

In response to the growing population and the need for easy administration, in 1999 the Katsina Emirate Council also reorganized the Wakili system by decentralizing the former four Wakili ward system into ten administrations, namely: Wakilin Gabas, Galadiman Gabasawa, Wakilin Arewa, Galadiman Arewa, Wakilin Yamma, Magaji Madu, Wakilin Kudu, Galadiman Kudu, Magaji Modoji, and Magaji Shinkafi. Thus, the number of wards in the town increased from 23 in 1949 (Abdu'Allah, 2009: 257) to 187 in 1998 (Magajin Gari's Office, 2012).

Population increase in Katsina town has also necessitated the emergence of centres of worship, especially mosques and churches. Before the creation of the state, there were only three Friday mosques in the town (Katsina Central Mosque built in 1935 and Kandahar and Shabbabul Islam Friday Mosques constructed in the 1970s). However, with the creation of the state, the number rose significantly. In the case of churches, the swelling number of Christians in Katsina town led to the establishment of more churches, adding to the expansion of the town (Oral Interview, Gambo: 2012).

The increasing number of people dying in Katsina town also necessitated the construction of more cemeteries at Rimin Badawa, Sabon Gida, Tudun Mutawalle, Kofar Sauri Gidan Dawa (1987), Sabuwar Unguwa (1993), Tudun Yanlifidda (1995), and Abbatuwa (2005). New extensions of the cemeteries were also carried out at Dan Marna and Dan Takum areas in the same period. New motor parks were also established that included Kofar Marusa Motor Park in 1991, Kofar Durbi Motor Parks in 1991, Kofar Yandaka Motor Park in 1991, Kofar Sauri Motor Park in 1991, and Kofar Guga Motor Park in 1994 (Works Department, KTLG, 2012).

**Table 1: Growth of Population in Katsina Metropolis, 1991-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Populatio n</b>	<b>Basis of Data</b>
1991	233,644	1991 National Census
1992	230,524	Projection (3.03% Annual Growth Rate)
1993	237,616	„
1994	244,926	„
1995	252,461	„

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1996	260,227	”
1997	268,233	”
1998	276,485	”
1999	284,990	”
2000	293,758	”
2001	302,795	”
2002	312,110	”
2003	321,712	”
2004	331,609	”
2005	341,810	”
2006	518,132	2006 National Census

**Source:** National Population Commission, Katsina, 2011.

Table 1 shows that there was a steady population increase in Katsina town. Therefore, population increase in Katsina is a strong factor to its urban development.

### **Modern Industries**

Industries have been playing significant roles in the growth, productivity and competitiveness of the economies of societies. Not only do they provide employment and income to the bulk of the population, they have also been acknowledged as critical breeding and nurturing ground for domestic entrepreneurial capacities, and technological innovations for private sector development. The establishment of industries also contributes to the physical expansion of an area. One of the major industries established was Hamada Carpets in 1978, followed by the Katsina Steel Rolling Mills in 1982 (now Dana Steel Company).

The creation of the Katsina State in 1987 was supposed to serve as a significant landmark in the establishment of modern industries in the Katsina metropolis. The position of the Katsina metropolis as the administrative headquarters of the state has increased the population of the metropolis. However, industrial growth in the metropolis has been very slow in spite of incentives offered by the government. From the date when the state was created in 1987, the government became determined to create a sound industrial base for the state, especially in the metropolis. Thus, the Katsina State Investment, Property and Development Company (KIPDECO) was established to oversee the state's investments, guide and help investors to establish viable industries. In addition, the department of Small and Medium Scale Industries was established in 2007 with the primary objective of boosting economic development through the promotion of small and medium enterprises. The department has disbursed loans to a number of enterprises that included carpentry, welding, block making, food drinks, plumbing, dyeing, trading, bakery, bicycle mechanic, tailoring, vulcanising, building and masonry, among others. The impact of the activities has been the creation of new entrepreneurs in the town, as well as contributing to its urban expansion (Oral Interview, Saulawa: 2012).

There are also a number of enterprises in Katsina town. These include hotels, wrist watch repairers, bookshops, photography studios, printing presses, fashion/saloon/laundry and hairdressing services, medicine stores, furniture works, security services, communication services, electronics and electrical goods, boutique stores, block industries, bakeries, motor cycle dealers, tyre stores, business centres, tailoring services, petrol stations, car wash centers, banks, pure water sellers, etc. The overall impact of these enterprises is that the rate of the physical expansion of Katsina town increased considerably. The enterprises have also provided employment to a number of people, and improved the standard of living of the people, apart from boosting the commercial position of the metropolis (Oral Interview, Sule: 2012).

### **Conclusion**

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The paper has demonstrated that the establishment of structures is a positive development in the physical expansion of Katsina town. The selection of Katsina as local government headquarters and a capital city has helped tremendously in attracting people to settle in the town as a process of urbanization. The creation of the Katsina State in 1987, and the emergence of Katsina town as the capital city added another climax in its historical urban transformation. The governments set the pace towards the provision of infrastructure such as layouts, schools, housing and health services among others. In addition to the above, the creation of the state has brought a fairly significant number of people to the town as government workers and fortune seekers, which subsequently led to an increase in the cosmopolitan nature of the town. Probably without Katsina being such, it would not have pulled such attraction.

The nature of the urban growth of Katsina has resulted into many urban challenges such as deforestation, soil erosion, insufficient drainages, flooding and collapsing of houses. As such, unless the government put an urgent attention towards solving the problems, the condition of the environment will continue to deteriorate. However, the government alone cannot shoulder all the responsibility: the private sector and NGOs can also offer positive assistance in this regard.

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