

# THE CONSTRAINTS OF INSUFFICIENT MANPOWER TO EXECUTE THE NATIONAL BUILDING CODE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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## Abstract

The National Urban Planning Policy recommends that there should be a corps of Architects, Builders, Engineers, Estate Surveyors and valuers, Quantity Surveyors, Land Surveyors and Town Planners in every state and every local government in this country for efficient execution of the Building Code. However, the attainment of this goal has been as illusion. This paper examined critically, the constraints of sufficient manpower to execute the National Building Code (NBC). It discussed the fundamental issues pertinent to existence of the code and critically revealed the population of students (undergraduates) studying environmental sciences. From the analysis also, a painful shortage of manpower in the field of environmental sciences was noticed. Finally, ways to overcome the constraints of sufficient manpower to execute the code among others were recommended for action.

## Introduction

The need to evolve a National Building Code arose from the following existing conditions of the cities and built environment:

- a. Planlessness of our towns and cities.
- b. Incessant collapse of buildings, fire infernos, built environment abuses and other disasters.
- c. Dearth of referenced design standards for professionals.
- d. Use of non-professionals.
- e. Use of untested products and materials.
- f. Lack of adequate regulations and sanctions against offenders.

In view of the above, the National Council on Housing and Urban Development deemed it necessary to initiate the process of evolving a National Building Code with a view to proffer a lasting solution to the hazardous trends in the building industry (FGN: NBC, 2006).

The aim of the code is to set minimum standards on building pre-design, design, construction and post-construction stages with a view to ensuring quality, safety and proficiency in the building industry. The scope, shall, subject to its adoption by the states, apply to and control all matters concerning the design and specification, costing, construction alteration, addition to, moving, demolition, location, repair and use of any building or structure, for existing or proposed building works within the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The standards specified in the code shall constitute the minimum requirement from which other regulations may be derived (FGN: NBC, 2006).

Now, the issue is no longer on the need to evolve a National Building Code. Suffice it here to say that the National Building Code was ratified and approved for adoption in all the states of the federation by the National Council of States on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 (Iroegbu, 2006). The fundamental issue now is that of the constraint of sufficient manpower to execute the code. According to Obiegbo (2007a), Obiegbo (2007b), Nduka (2007); Okoro (2007); Amobi (2007) and Akindoyeni; (2007) there is a painful shortage of manpower in all the professions involved in building industry with respect to the execution of the code. On this note therefore, it becomes pertinent to determine the fundamental issues responsible for the constraint of sufficient manpower to execute the code.

## Fundamental Issues Pertinent to the Existence of the Code

There are many fundamental issues according to Akindoyeni (2007) that are pertinent to the existence of the code. They are:

- i) This issue is derived from the Housing and Urban Development Policy which requires that every state of the Federation should enact an Urban Development or Planning law, The law must be in consonance with the Federal Policy. The state law is therefore, the vehicle that gives the code teeth. Lagos and Ogun States according to Akindoyeni have such laws which would allow them to adopt the code.
- ii) The Code must also be adopted by the states themselves.
- iii) The Code is not equivalent to a law, therefore, it does not provide for sanctions against contravention.
- iv) The professions must be united in their resolve to abide by the provisions of the Code, otherwise, it

would be useless.

- v) There is now, according to Akindoyeni, the constraint of sufficient manpower to execute the code. For example, there are less than eight hundred (800) Registered Builders in Nigeria today. Almost one hundred (100) of these are either dead or in permanent retirement. If every local government requires the service of only one builder to enforce the code, there are not enough builders to go round the local governments in Nigeria. Add to this, the need for consultant professionals; the need for consultant professions; the short fall in building alone is almost an insurmountable obstacle. The same is happening in all other professions except perhaps civil engineering and architecture.

To emphasize this phenomenon, it is known that the population of undergraduates in Nigeria Universities studying in environmental design related programmes will not be sufficient to fill future needs of Nigeria. Table I below shows the figures of student populations in Nigeria Universities.

**Table I:**

**List of Nigerian Universities offering Engineering and Sciences A - Federal Universities**

S/NO	INSTITUTION	ENGINEERING	ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
1.	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	Yes (1595)	No
2.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	Yes (2652)	Yes (1687)
3.	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-ife	Yes (4283)	Yes (1898)
4.	Amadu Bello University, Zaria	Yes (3012)	Yes(1582)
5.	University of Lagos, Lagos	Yes (3801)	Yes (1602)
6.	University of Benin, Benin City	Yes (4518)	No
7.	Bayero University, Kano	Yes (1946)	No
8.	University of Calabar, Calabar	No	No
9.	University of Ilorin, Ilorin	Yes (1948)	No
10.	University of Jos, Jos	No	Yes (1569)
11.	University of Maidugiri, Madugiri.	Yes (2522)	No
12.	Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto	No	No
13.	University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt	Yes (3569)	No
14.	Federal, University of Technology, Oweri	Yes (11867)	No
15.	Federal University of Technology, Akure	Yes (2416)	Yes (1508)
16.	Federal University of Technology, Yola	Yes (1471)	Yes (1569)
17.	Federal University of Technology, Minna	Yes (3928)	Yes (3111)
18.	Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna	Yes (N/A)	No
19.	University of Abuja, Abuja	No	No
20.	Abubakar Tafawa Belewa University, Bauchi	Yes	Yes
21.	University of Agriculture, Makurdi	Yes (976)	No

22.	University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	Yes (N/A)	No
23.	Nnanidi Azikiwe University, Awka	Yes (4088)	Yes (1312)
24.	University of Uyo, Uyo	Yes (1438)	Yes (1626)
25.	Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike	Yes (406)	No
26.	National Open University, Abuja	No	No

Source: FGN, NUC (2005)

Note: N/A = Figure not available

**B - State Universities**

S/No	Institution	Engineering	Environmental Sciences
1.	Rivers state University of science and Technology, Port-Harcourt	Yes	Yes
2.	Ambrase Alii University, Ekpoma	Yes	Yes
3.	Abia State University, Uturu	No	Yes
4.	Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu	Yes	Yes
5.	Olabisi Anabajo University, Ago-Iwoye	Yes	No
6.	Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos	Yes (220)	No
7.	University of Ado - Ekiti, Ado- Ekiti	Yes (547)	No
8.	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho	Yes (7115)	Yes (968)
9.	Imo State University, Owerri	No	Yes (N/A)
10.	Benue State University, Makudi	No	No
11.	Delta State University Abraka	No	No
12.	Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba, Akoka	No	No
13.	Kogi State University, Anyigba	No	No
14.	Niger-Delta University Yenagoa	Yes	No
15.	Anambra State University of Science & Technology, Uli	Yes (1691)*	Yes
16.	Kano State University of Technology, Wudil	Yes (247)	Yes (117)
17.	Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki	No	No
18.	Nasarawa State University, Keffi	No	No
19.	Gombe State University, Gombe		
20.	Kadunna State University, Kaduna	Yes	
21.	Cross-River State University of Science and Technology	Yes (N/A)	Yes (N/A)
22.	Plateau State University, Boko		
23.	Akwa Iboni State University, Lapai-Niger state	No	No
25.	Tai Solarini University of Education, Ijagun	Yes (N/A)	Yes (N/A)
26.	Kaitsina State University		
27.	Bukar Abba Ibrahim University		

Source: FGN, NUC (2005)

Note: (\*) = Figure includes Environmental Science  
N/A = Figure not available

### C - Private Universities

S/No	Institution	Engineering	Environmental Sciences
1.	Babcock University, Ilishan Remo	No	No
2.	Madona University, Okija	Yes	No
3.	Igbinedon University, Okada	Yes (483)	No
4.	Bowen University, Iwo	No	No
5.	Convenant University, Ota	Yes	Yes
6.	Pan - African University, Lagos	No	No
7.	Benson Idahosa University Benin City	No	No
8.	ABTI University Yola	No	No
9.	Redeemers University,	No	No
10.	Ajayi Crowther University, Ibadan	No	No
<b>11.</b>	Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin	No	No
12.	Caritas University, Amorji, Nke, Enugu	No	No
13.	CETEP University, Lagos	No	No
14.	Bingharu University, Jos	No	No
15.	Katsina University, Katsina	No	No
16.	Renaissance University, Enugu	No	No
17.	Bells University of Technology, Badagry	No	No
18.	Lead City University, Ibadan Oyo State	No	No
19.	Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State	No	No
20.	Wakari; Jubilee University	No	No
21.	Crescent University, Abeakuta	No	No
22.	Novena University, Ogume, Delta State	No	No
23.	University of Mkar	No	No
24.	Joseph Ayo Babala University Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State	No	No

Source: FGC, NUC (2005)

The statistics for the polytechnics is not readily available but the relative distribution will not be much different from those of the Universities. Demand for civil engineering is always the highest, followed by architecture. Demands for programmes in building, quantity surveying, estate surveying and land surveying are usually scanty. Hence, there is a painful shortage of manpower in these fields (Akindoyeni 2007).

Again, with the advent of Budget Monitoring and Price intelligence Visit (BMP1V), otherwise known as Due Process, and the recent approval of the National Building Code (NBC), most indigenous contracting or consultant companies would be debarred from participating in most Federal Government and some state Government projects, especially, in Lagos and Ogun States. Why these two states? They are according to Akindoyeni (2007) the two states in the Federation who have followed the stipulation of the Urban and Regional planning Laws (Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria) by enacting town planning Laws of their own, thus giving legal thrust to the building code. The implication is that the manpower supply will decrease the more if nothing is done to checkmate it.

#### Recommendations for Action

In the light of the preceding analysis, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Nigeria Universities (Federal, state and Private); polytechnics (Federal, State or private) and colleges of education (Federal, State or private) should encourage student enrolment in Environmental sciences if we must achieve the National Urban Planning Policy recommendation of professionals being posted in every state and local government in this Country.

2. Every state of the federation should enact an urban development or planning law following Lagos and Ogun states. The Law which must be in consonance with the federal policy, must be *domesticated* and tailored to suit our environment. This means that our code must not have its based from the foreign code.
3. We must always bear in mind that the code is not equivalent to a law, therefore, it does not provide for sanctions against contravention.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has reviewed extensively the constraints of sufficient manpower to execute the National Building Code (NBC). In conclusion, it can be deduced from the fore going that population of undergraduates in Nigeria universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, studying courses in environmental sciences in are in a painful shortage, compared to the number of local government and manpower needed to execute the code. For this to be possible, a lot depends on our ability to encourage youths to be choosing carrier courses in environmental studies. However, it was also observed that most states have not enacted urban development or Planning laws.

Several issues were therefore suggested such as enactment of urban Laws in all the states of the federation, which must be in consonance with the federal policy. However, we must bear in mind that the code is not equivalent to a law, therefore it does not provide for sanctions against contravention.

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