



Socio-Economic Characteristics and Survival Strategies among Homeless Youths in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the socio-economic characteristics of homeless youths in Ogun State, Nigeria, by examining their socio-economic profile, analysing their housing choice and social welfare, and examining the physical and environmental characteristics of homeless locations in Ogun State. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed to sample 119 homeless youths aged 18 years and above, across the three most populated homeless locations, namely, major markets (10), major motor parks (8), and flyovers (5) in Abeokuta, Ota, and Ijebu-Ode. Findings revealed that homelessness among youths in Ogun State is predominantly male-driven, with most respondents being young, single, and having a low level of educational attainment. Economic hardship, unemployment, and low income emerged as major drivers of homelessness, while social neglect, poverty, and high levels of insecurity were identified as the most pressing challenges faced by homeless youths in the study area. The majority had limited access to formal healthcare, sanitation, and government welfare support. Despite prolonged stays in informal locations, most respondents expressed a strong desire to exit homelessness and aspired to stable housing. The study concluded that to address homelessness in Ogun state is a multi-dimensional problem rooted in poverty, urban growth, poor planning, and environmental challenges.

Keywords

Youth homelessness, Socio-economic characteristics, Survival strategies, Informal livelihoods, Ogun State

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1. Introduction

Homelessness is a pervasive social problem that reflects deep socioeconomic inequalities and systemic failures in housing, employment, and social protection systems. It is broadly defined as the condition of individuals or families lacking stable, safe, and adequate housing (Fitzpatrick, Bramley & Johnson, 2013). Globally, homelessness has serious socioeconomic and public health implications as the homeless (especially the youths) are vulnerable to exploitation, crime, substance abuse, and mental health issues (Doe, 2022). Their exclusion from formal education and employment limits their prospects and contributes to cycles of poverty, insecurity, and urban disorder (Muniz, 2021). It has been established that over 1.6 billion people worldwide live in inadequate housing conditions, and approximately 150 million are homeless, with urban centres in developing countries experiencing the highest growth of street homelessness (UN-Habitat, 2020). Similarly, it was earlier documented that Nigeria has over 24 million homeless people, a significant portion being youth (UN-Habitat, 2014),

which may be a result of urban-rural migration. Although the nature of homelessness varies across countries, its root causes are often linked to poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing policies, and weak social safety (Bramley & Fitzpatrick, 2018). Socioeconomic characteristics play a central role in understanding the pathways into homelessness. Research shows that individuals experiencing homelessness often come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds marked by poverty, unstable income, and low educational attainment (Toro, 2007). In developing countries such as Nigeria, rapid urbanization, poverty, and inadequate urban planning have intensified homelessness. Many individuals migrate to urban centres in search of better economic opportunities, but the lack of affordable housing and employment leads them to live in informal settlements or on the streets (Adewale, 2018; Babalola et al., 2022).

In Nigeria, homelessness is a growing concern affecting millions of people across rural and urban areas (Adeodun, 2024).

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Despite being one of Africa's largest economies, Nigeria faces a significant housing crisis due to rapid urbanization, poverty, conflict, and inadequate government intervention (Bello, 2025). It is a multifaceted social problem rooted in economic disparity, rapid urbanization, inadequate housing infrastructure, and systemic governance issues (Macewan, 2021). Homelessness is a severe manifestation of poverty, impacting an individual's access to necessities and opportunities (Toro, 2007). It signifies a lack of secure and stable housing for individuals and families, which can lead to various health issues, including mental health problems, substance abuse, and infectious diseases (Fazel, Geddes, & Kushel, 2021).

Ogun State is one of the country's fastest-developing states bordering Lagos and serving as a key economic and industrial hub in the country. Currently, it faces significant challenges in providing adequate housing for its expanding population moving from rural communities to urban centres like Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Ota, and Sagamu. This has resulted in some of its residents experiencing housing insecurity, living in slums, uncompleted buildings, or without any shelter at all. Despite these associated problems, it remains an under-researched social problem in Ogun State, with most studies focusing on poverty and housing shortages rather than the socioeconomic characteristics of those affected. Understanding the socioeconomic characteristics of homelessness is essential for designing effective policies and interventions. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the socioeconomic characteristics of homeless youths in Ogun State, their socioeconomic profiles, and coping strategies, to suggest measures that can reduce youth homelessness and promote social reintegration. To achieve the stated aim, the study will examine the socio-economic profile of homeless youths in Ogun State, Nigeria, analyse their housing choice and social welfare, and examine the physical and environmental characteristics of the selected homeless locations in the State.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Youth Homelessness

Homelessness is a multidimensional social condition characterized not only by the absence of shelter but also by social exclusion, economic deprivation, and limited access to essential services. It ranges from rooflessness, insecurity, inconducive, and inadequate housing units (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2013). This approach emphasizes housing instability as a core feature of homelessness rather than absolute shelter deprivation alone. Specifically,

youth homelessness represents a particularly vulnerable subset of the homeless population that is young and strong, due to limited economic independence, weak social safety nets, and transitional life stages (Toro, 2007). This is commonly associated with rural–urban migration, family disintegration, unemployment, and interrupted education (Adewale, 2018). This set of population are, however, exposed to exploitation, criminal victimization, health risks (including mental health disorders), and substance abuse (Fazel et al., 2021).

2.2 General Perspectives on Homelessness

Globally, homelessness remains a persistent urban challenge despite improvements in economic growth in many regions. According to UN-Habitat (2020), over 1.6 billion people live in inadequate housing worldwide, with approximately 150 million experiencing absolute homelessness. Urban areas in developing countries are disproportionately affected due to rapid urbanization, population expansion, and insufficient housing supply. Studies from Europe and North America reveal that homelessness is strongly linked to structural factors such as housing market failures, unemployment, and reduced welfare support (Bramley et al., 2018; Macewan, 2021). Homelessness is also associated with significant public health concerns, including higher prevalence of communicable diseases, mental illness, and premature mortality (Doe, 2022; Fazel et al., 2021).

In developing countries, homelessness is closely tied to rapid urbanization, rural–urban migration, and inadequate urban planning frameworks. African cities face acute housing shortages due to population growth outpacing infrastructure development (UN-Habitat, 2014). Informal settlements, squatting, and street habitation often emerge as coping mechanisms for low-income urban residents. Further studies on homelessness across sub-Saharan Africa indicate that youth homelessness is driven by poverty, unemployment, family conflict, and migration in search of economic opportunities (Adeodun, 2024). As a result, homeless environments are frequently characterized by poor sanitation, exposure to environmental hazards, and limited access to public services.

Narrowing it to Nigeria, homelessness has become an increasingly visible urban problem affecting millions of people across major cities. UN-Habitat (2014) estimates that more than 24 million Nigerians lack adequate housing, with youths constituting a significant proportion. Despite Nigeria's economic potential, housing supply has

failed to match rapid urban growth and population increase (Bello, 2025). Major drivers include poverty, unemployment, high housing costs, social influence, prestige, insufficient child support, and weak housing policies (Adeodun, 2024; Isola-Muyideen, Yusuff, Abdul-Azeez, & Akinbami, 2025).

2.3 Youth Homelessness Survival Strategies

Homeless youths often rely on informal economic activities such as street trading, load carrying, transport-related services, and casual labour to survive (Muniz, 2021). While these activities provide immediate income, they are unstable and expose youths to exploitation and insecurity. However, the absence of effective social protection systems has left homeless individuals reliant on informal survival strategies such as petty trading, touting, and casual labour. These have been supported by limited access to healthcare facilities, leading to heavy reliance on traditional medicine and self-medication (Fazel et al., 2021). Although these strategies demonstrate resilience, they also highlight systemic exclusion from formal social and health institutions.

2.4 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Homeless Populations

One of the existing literatures identifies low income, unemployment, and limited educational attainment

as major predictors of homelessness (Muniz, 2021). Homeless individuals are predominantly male, young, and single, with restricted access to formal employment opportunities (Toro, 2007). Relating findings in literature, one can assume that low educational attainment can significantly constrain employment prospects and reinforce cycles of poverty. Supporting this assumption, Muniz (2021) noted that spatial poverty concentration and urban segregation increase homelessness risks by marginalizing low-income groups into informal urban spaces. Similarly, Macewan (2021) contends that rising income inequality creates structural conditions that make homelessness an inevitable outcome for economically vulnerable populations.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Area

Ogun State is a strategic and culturally rich state in Nigeria, serving as a vital link between Lagos and the rest of the southwest States. With a growing industrial base, strong agricultural sector, vibrant culture, and educational prominence, Ogun State continues to be a gateway to economic, academic, and cultural advancement in Nigeria. It was created on the 3rd of February 1976, and lies approximately between longitudes 2°45' E and 4°45' E; and latitudes 6°15' N and 7°60' N (see Figure 1).

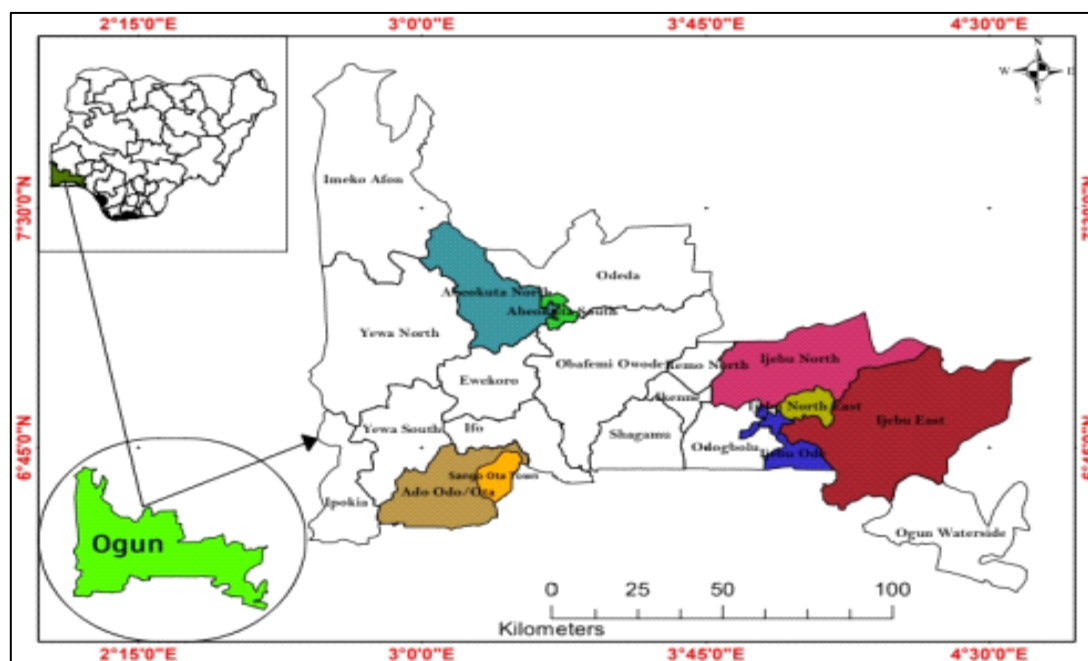


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the study area in Ogun State

Source: Cooperative Information Network (COPINE), OAU Ile-Ife, 2025

It occupies a land area of about 16,762 km², representing around 1.8% of Nigeria's total land

mass of 924,000 km² (Onibokun, 1990). It is a major industrial hub hosting firms like Nigerian Breweries,

Honda Manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and food-processing plants. As a Yoruba-speaking state, it is predominantly inhabited by the Egbas, Ijebus, Aworis (subgroups of Yorubas), with minority subgroups like Eguns, and Yewas (Ogun State Government, 2014). As a result of urbanization and migration, the state has been experiencing a high level of population increase from a population of 2,333,726 in 1991 (National Population Commission, NPC, 1991), to 3,751,140 in 2006, 6,379,500 in 2022, and 7,048,223 in 2025, respectively. This increase in population has, however, led to an increase in the homeless populace as housing demand is on the high side.

3.2 Conceptual Clarifications and Scope of the Study

In this study, the term youth homelessness refers to individuals aged 15–35 years who lack stable, safe, and adequate housing. This was adopted for three urban centres of Ogun State (Abeokuta, Ota, and

Ijebu-Ode respectively), where homeless youths were more pronounced as observed during the pilot survey. These were the major markets, roadsides (especially around the flyovers), and motor parks. It is worth noting that the mentally disorder people were left out of this study for safety reasons.

3.3 Data Collection and Analytical Techniques

This study adopted both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was obtained through the use of a set of questionnaires and a pilot survey on the homeless locations and ways of operation. While secondary data was retrieved from already available data sources such as journals and official documents, among others. Three major locations observed during the pilot survey were major markets, motor parks/garages, and flyovers/road sides. The physical counting of these locations resulted in 18 major markets, 15 major motor parks/garages, and 9 flyovers/roadsides homeless locations (see Table 1).

Table 1: Homeless Locations and Respondent Selection

Towns	Significant Homeless Location Categories	Locations Names	Number of Locations Samples	Number of Homeless Youths Sampled
Abeokuta	Major markets	Lafenwa Kuto Itoku Iberekodo Ita-Oshin Sapon Olomore Panseke	8	38
	Motor parks	Panseke Kuto Ita-Oshin Lafenwa Sapon	5	15
	Flyovers/roadsides	Itoku Oke-Sokori Sapon Oke-Ilewo Lafenwa	5	16
Ota	Major markets	Kayero Sango Oba Titi Dada Oju-Oore Iju-Atan	4	10
	Motor parks	Sango Ijoko Joju Oju-Oore	4	13
	Flyover/roadsides	Sango flyover	1	6
Ijebu-Ode	Major markets	Oke-Aje Ita-Ale	3	8
	Motor parks	Ibadan Lagos Imowo Olabisi Onabanjo Epe	5	8
	Flyovers/roadsides	Oba Adetona Lagos Express	2	5
Total			37	119

Source: Field Survey, 2025

For questionnaire administration, a purposive sampling technique was used to sample 119 homeless youths in Abeokuta, Ota, and Ijebu-Ode. This comprises 69, 29, and 21 homeless youths in Abeokuta, Ota, and Ijebu-Ode, respectively. On the other hand, the snowball sampling technique was employed to reach harder-to-find individuals. The data retrieved was analysed with the use of descriptive analytical data techniques.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Socio-economic Characteristics of Homeless Youths

Generally, the socio-economic characteristics of people affect where they dwell. It was therefore imperative to consider factors such as gender, age, marital status, religion, educational level, occupation, income level, nationality, and previous place of abode among other socio-economic characteristics (see Table 2). A comprehensive analysis of these attributes gives a better understanding of the respondents' status.

Table 2 presents the results of the analysis on the socio-economic characteristics of the homeless youth in Ogun State. As revealed in the Table, the majority (66.4%) of the respondents is young adult aged between 18 and 29 years. Males constitute the greater part (77.3%) of the homeless population, which is common in many contexts due to social, economic, and cultural factors that may make men more vulnerable to homelessness or more likely to live on the streets. Most (59.7%) homeless individuals are single, indicating that a lack of family or spousal support could be a contributing factor to homelessness. Divorced individuals also represent a notable proportion (14.3%), possibly reflecting family breakdowns. Over half (53.8%) have only primary education, and a quarter have no formal education, highlighting low educational attainment among the homeless youth. These likely limit employment opportunities and contribute to economic vulnerability.

In addition, a significant proportion (75.6%) of them originates from the South-West region, which could reflect regional economic disparities, migration patterns, or urban concentration in that area. With 53.8% Islamic practitioners, 38.7% Christians, and 7.6% traditional believers, most homeless youth engage in informal or low-income jobs such as touting (street hawking or informal transport services) and trading. A small percentage (2.5%) rely on begging, while others do manual labour or security work, indicating limited access to stable, formal employment. Further findings revealed that a significant proportion (33%) of them

were formally jobless, while others had informal or low-skilled jobs such as apprenticeships (12.2%), petty trading (17.4%), or farming (16.5%).

Table 2: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Homeless Youths

Socio-economic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-29 years	79	66.4
30 years +	40	33.6
Total	119	100
Gender		
Male	92	77.3
Female	27	22.7
Total	119	100
Marital Status		
Single	71	59.7
Married	26	21.8
Widowed	5	4.2
Divorced	17	14.3
Total	119	100
Level of Education		
Primary	64	53.8
Secondary	22	18.5
Tertiary	3	2.5
No formal education	30	25.2
Total	119	100
Nationality		
Nigerian	119	100
Total	119	100
Region		
South-West	90	75.6
North	22	18.5
South-East/South-South	7	5.9
Total	119	100
Religion		
Islam	64	53.8
Christianity	46	38.7
Traditional	9	7.6
Total	119	100
Present Occupation		
Load carrier	15	12.6
Begging alms	3	2.5
Tout	57	47.9
Trading	39	32.8
Night guard	5	4.2
Total	119	100
Previous Occupation		
Not working	38	33
Apprentice	14	12.2
Civil servant	7	6.1
Artisans	9	7.8
Petty trading	20	17.4
Tout	8	7
Farming	19	16.5
Total	119	100
Annual Income		
<=500,000	94	79.7
>500,000	24	20.3
Total	119	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

A few (6.1%) had formal employment as civil servants, suggesting some have experienced

downward social mobility. As a result of their status, a larger proportion (79.7%) of them earn low annual incomes (below or equal to 500,000 Naira). This confirms economic hardship and poverty as key factors in their homelessness.

4.2 Homeless Youths' Housing Choice and Social Welfare

As presented in Table 3, findings in this section established that most homeless youth once had a home and family of their own. This is supported by 26.1%, 14.3%, and 20.1% respondents revealing that their previous place of abode was living with their parents, matrimonial home, and family house, respectively. Very few (17.6%) squats with friends, and others (21.8%) were staying with relatives before becoming homeless. This finding implies that homelessness often follows displacement from family or social networks, indicating breakdowns in family support or economic pressures forcing individuals out of stable homes. Despite the various circumstances that led the population under study to become homeless, a significant proportion (84.9%) of them still wish to leave their current homeless state. This course is signalling a strong desire of the homeless youths for improved living conditions and possibly openness to intervention programmes. Surprisingly, the study took a further step by asking for their preferred new home type, and it was discovered that the majority (25.5%) of them want to move to outskirts of the city, while 21%, 5%, and 5.9% preferred having their personal home within the town, within public estate, and in private estates respectively. Those who preferred special housing or anywhere accounted for 10.9% each, while 21% still want to stay in a similar environment. In summary, there is an aspiration for stable and formal housing.

As been said, good health is the secret of wealth, which was directly applied to the respondents in finding out what time they usually go to bed. It was revealed that homeless youths may not be having enough required time in bed as a good proportion (68.9%) of them go to bed between 11p.m to 12 a.m. Similarly, the majority (84%) wakes up as early as 4 am-5 am. This suggests a relatively late bedtime, possibly influenced by their lifestyle, safety concerns, or work patterns. Homeless youths' paramount problem faced within the community is social neglect, poverty, and a high level of insecurity. These accounted for 42.9%, 22.7%, and 22.7%, respectively. However, these problems indicate societal marginalization, economic hardship, and safety risks. Despite the nature of their environment and lifestyle, they rarely fall sick. This is a claim that far above average (80.7%) of the homeless youths are rarely sick, against 3.4% that are regularly sick.

Table 3: Housing Choice, Options, and Social Welfare of the Homeless Youths

Cases Examined	Frequency	Percentages
Previous Place of Abode		
With parent	31	26.1
Relatives	26	21.8
Matrimonial	17	14.3
Squatting with friends	21	17.6
family house	24	20.1
Total	119	100
Willingness to Leave Present State		
Yes	101	84.9
No	18	15.1
Total	119	100
Preferred Location of Home		
Personal home within the Town	25	21
Public estate	6	5.0
Private estate	7	5.9
Special housing	13	10.9
Outskirt of the city	30	25.2
Another similar area	25	21.0
No specific place	13	10.9
Total	119	100
Time to Bed		
0	5	4.2
1	7	5.9
2	3	2.5
9	6	5
10	16	13.4
11	48	40.3
12	34	28.6
Total	119	100
Time Out of Bed		
0	5	4.2
4	65	54.6
5	5	29.4
6	9	7.6
7	3	2.5
8	2	1.7
Total	119	100
Major Problem Faced		
Poverty	27	22.7
Insecurity	27	22.7
Social neglect	51	42.9
Lack of good health	2	1.7
Limited access to education	6	5
Total	119	100
Sickness Occurrence		
Regularly	4	3.4
Frequently	19	16
Rarely	96	80.7
Total	119	100
Mode of Treatment		
Traditionally	76	63.9
Hospital	7	5.9
Self-medication	36	30.3
Total	119	100
Types of Assistance Expected from Government		
Nothing	33	30
Education	6	5.5
Empowerment	10	9.1
Job	21	19.1
Shelter	9	8.2
Total	119	100
Government Assistant Received		
Stipend	5	4.2
None	114	95.8
Total	119	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Hence, this study suggests a high level of sickness resilience among the homeless youth. Next concern is how they cared for their “once-in-a-while” sickness. Result here show that traditional medicine and self-medication dominate the study area, with very few of the respondents accessing formal healthcare. This may be due to cost, accessibility, or mistrust of medical facilities, posing risks for untreated or poorly managed health conditions. It was a surprise finding out that some (30%) of the homeless youths expected nothing from the government as support or assistance for their well-being. Those expecting help requested jobs (19.1%), empowerment (9.1), shelter (8.2%), and education (5.5%). This implies that they prioritized sustainable means of livelihood over shelter or education. With respect to their response is the realization of a very low level of government assistance received by just 4.2% of the population under study. However, having 95.8% of the respondents without any form of government assistance highlights a critical gap in social welfare support for the homeless population.

4.3 Physical and Environmental Characteristics of Homeless Locations

As seen in Table 4, three major homeless locations focused on in this study were the major markets, motor parks, and roadside/flyover. Among these three homeless locations, marketplaces accommodated the largest volume of homeless youths sampled in Ogun State, with 47.9%, followed by motor parks (32.8%), and roadside/flyover residents with 19.3%. This indicates that there is a high concentration of homeless youths' habitation in commercial or busy areas. In addition, a larger part (80.7%) of them has spent over 10 years in their current locations. Hence, it is suggested that the population under study is a relatively stable population despite the informal nature of their habitation. As for the comfort level of the environment, recognisable size (46.2%) of the respondents used hidden places for bathing, and more than half (57.9%) of them make use of the bush/open defecation of defecation. Other methods indicated were public bathrooms, hidden places, and water bodies. This result highlights poor access to proper sanitation facilities for the homeless youths in Ogun State. Another significant environmental problem facing homeless locations is inadequate waste management infrastructure. A wild dumping method of waste management system been practiced by 57.2% of the studied population. While a smaller portion uses dump sites or burning methods, both of which have environmental and health implications. On the aspect of cleanliness of the environment, the majority (61.3%) of the homeless are personally responsible for cleaning their environment, while

very few receive government cleaning services. A significant minority (36.1%) reports no cleaning at all, indicating poor environmental hygiene and potential for health hazards. Finally, it is worth noting that none of the respondents pays rent because the habitation is informal with squatter settlements and temporary shelters.

Table 4: Physical Characteristics of the Homeless Locations

Physical Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Habitation		
Flyover	23	19.3
Motor-park	39	32.8
Market space	57	47.9
Total	119	100
Length of Stay		
Less than 10 years	96	80.7
More than 10 years	23	19.3
Total	119	100
Types/Location of Restrooms		
Public bathroom	55	46.2
Hidden place	62	52.1
River	2	1.7
Total	119	100
Restroom/Toilet		
Public toilet	48	38.7
Bush/shot put	67	57.9
Water body	4	3.4
Total	119	100
Refuse Disposal Method		
Dump site	38	31.9
Burning	13	10.9
Wild dumping	68	57.2
Total	119	100
Cleanliness of the Environment		
By self	73	61.3
Government	3	2.5
Nobody	43	36.1
Total	119	100
Rent Payment		
None	119	100
Total	119	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

5. Discussion of Findings

The key findings of this study provide a critical lens into the lived experience of homeless youths in Ogun State, revealing a complex interplay between structural economic failures, household disintegration, and the adaptive resilience of a marginalized demographic. The demographic profile shows predominantly male homeless youth (77.3%), 66.4% of whom are aged 18-29, and 59.7% single. This aligns with the growing “masculinization of homelessness” often observed recently (Rose and Johnson, 2017). However, a critical finding is the presence of former civil servants (6.1%) and individuals with tertiary

education (2.5%) among the homeless. This suggests that homelessness in Ogun State is not merely a condition of the "traditionally uneducated" but is increasingly capturing individuals who have experienced downward social mobility. This trend points to a volatile labour market where even formal qualifications do not provide a sufficient buffer against systemic economic shocks. Also, the high concentration of touts (47.9%) and traders (32.8%) reflects an informal survivalist economy. These youths are not unemployed in the traditional sense; rather, they are "hyper-employed" in precarious, low-yield activities that provide immediate daily cash flow but offer zero long-term security or path toward formal housing.

These findings reinforce existing literature on youth homelessness as a structurally driven urban phenomenon closely linked to socio-economic marginalization and housing system failures. The socio-economic profile of homeless youths in Ogun State predominantly young, male, single, and with low educational attainment aligns with earlier studies (Toro, 2007; Muniz, 2021), which identify these characteristics as key predictors of homelessness. From a housing studies perspective, this demographic composition reflects a population with limited access to housing affordability, secure tenure, and labour market integration, thereby increasing their susceptibility to housing exclusion. The predominance of informal and low-income livelihoods further situates these youths within the informal urban economy, limiting their capacity to transition into formal housing markets.

The study also highlights the critical role of household disintegration and weak social safety nets as pathways into homelessness, consistent with the literature (Adewale, 2018; Adeodun, 2024). The fact that a significant proportion of respondents previously resided in family owned or shared housing underscores the concept of housing instability, rather than absolute rooflessness, as a precursor to homelessness (Fitzpatrick et al., 2013). Their expressed willingness to exit homelessness and preference for more stable residential options including peripheral urban locations reflect a latent demand for affordable and accessible housing, which remains unmet within the current urban housing system.

In terms of welfare and service access, the findings reveal a pronounced level of social exclusion and institutional neglect, particularly in relation to healthcare and government support systems. The reliance on informal healthcare practices and self-medication corroborates Fazel et al. (2021), who noted that homeless populations often experience significant barriers to accessing formal health services. Furthermore, the minimal

level of government intervention observed underscores systemic gaps in social housing provision, welfare delivery mechanisms, and urban governance frameworks. This is consistent with broader findings in developing countries as presented by UN-Habitat, (2014) and Bello (2025).

The environmental and spatial characteristics of homeless settlements particularly their concentration in markets, motor parks, and under flyovers demonstrate the role of urban spatial structures in shaping homelessness patterns. These locations function as informal habitation nodes, offering proximity to economic opportunities but lacking basic infrastructure. The poor sanitation conditions, inadequate waste management practices, and absence of formal service provision observed are indicative of environmental deprivation and urban service deficits as established by UN-Habitat (2020).

Moreover, the extended duration of stay among many respondents suggests a transition from temporary homelessness to chronic homelessness, reflecting persistent exclusion from formal housing systems. This situation underscores the interplay between structural inequality, urban poverty, and housing market dysfunction (Macewan, 2021). Overall, the findings confirm that youth homelessness in Ogun State is multidimensional, requiring integrated policy responses focused on affordable housing delivery, economic empowerment, and inclusive urban governance.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Homelessness in Ogun State is a multi-dimensional problem rooted in poverty, urban growth, poor planning, socio-economic, and environmental challenges. To address these problems, there is a need to prioritize inclusive housing policy, infrastructure provision, and economic empowerment. This will help in tackling homelessness among the youths and ensuring a dignified and secure life for all its residents, as well as a long-term economic growth for Ogun State residents. Also, government, policy makers, NGOs, and financially buoyant individuals should assist in the provision of housing units and support services for the homeless (most especially, the youths) to improve their access to education, employment, and healthcare, thus giving them the better life they deserve.

7. Limitations of the Study

- The mobile and unstable nature of the target population limits sample consistency.
- Some respondents withhold sensitive information due to fear or trauma.

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