Journal of Geography, Regional Planning and Development
Homepage : https://journal.antispublisher.id/index.php/JGRPD
Email : admin@antispublisher.com

e-ISSN : 3032-131X
JGRPD, Vol. 1, No. 4, November 2024
Page 1-5

Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning

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DOI : https://doi.org/10.61796/jgrpd.v2i8.1579

Sections Info

Article history:
Submitted: September 23rd, 2025
Final Revised: October 15th, 2025
Accepted: November 1st, 2025
Published: November 06th, 2025

Keywords:
Climate Change
Adaptation Climate Change Adaptation Strategies
Urban and Regional Planning

ABSTRACT

Objective: *The paper examined Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning in Nigeria. The paper concluded that integration of climate risk assessment into urban planning, development of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions, climate-resilient infrastructure and building design, sustainable urban transportation systems, land use planning and zoning regulations, community-based adaptation and public participation and policy integration and institutional strengthening are the Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning that can be adopted in Nigeria. One of the recommendations of the paper, in line with the outcomes, is that the federal, state and local planning bodies of Nigeria should incorporate physical and regional development plans with holistic climate risk assessment. Planners in urban and rural areas in Nigeria need to focus on green infrastructure development that employs natural processes in climate resiliency. Examples are are the creation of urban parks, green roof, community gardens, the restoration of wetlands, and planting trees along roads or around water bodies. With the cooperation of professional planning and engineering organizations, the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing should constitute and implement climate resilience building codes. Such standards would highlight on usage of durable materials, better drainage system, higher foundations in the flood prone regions and designs that use less energy. Other infrastructure amenities like roads, bridges and drainage facilities ought to be constructed with the in anticipation of the predicted alterations in rainfall intensity and temperature in order to guarantee long life span and safety. Urban planners should integrate transport and land use planning to promote compact city forms and reduce dependence on private cars. Encouraging public transportation use not only mitigates climate change but also improves urban air quality and energy efficiency. The federal and state governments should strengthen the enforcement of land use and zoning regulations to control unplanned urban expansion and settlement in high-risk zones.*

INTRODUCTION

Climate change has emerged as one of the most critical challenges confronting human settlements and sustainable development in the 21st century. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as flooding, droughts, heatwaves, and rising sea levels have profound implications for urban and regional planning. Urban centers are the most susceptible because they contain more than half of the world population and they are densely populated in terms of population, infrastructure, and economic activities. The effects of climate change are heightened in most developing nations such as Nigeria due to rapid urbanization, inefficient planning regarding land use, and insufficient infrastructure which puts a huge burden on urban planners and policymakers to design efficient addressing solutions [1].

The concept of climate change adaptation in urban and regional planning can be defined as intentional activities aimed to adjust planning systems, policies and designs to ensure a lower vulnerability and increase the resiliency of the cities and regions to the effects of climate. It entails the incorporation of climatic factors in the development of urban areas where land use is zoned, infrastructure, and transport systems, and housing

development are incorporated. The planners should be able to think over structural and non-structural adaptation, such as green infrastructure, better drainage systems, urban forestry, sustainable building-related practice and community awareness campaigns. The aim is not merely to alleviate the negative manifestations of global warming, but also to develop habitable, viable and sustainable urban settings [2].

Urgent demand of climate sensitive urban and regional planning is needed especially in Nigeria and developing countries. Most of the cities are already experiencing the negative impact of flooding, coastal erosion, poor waste management, and heat stress. Conventional planning methods do not pay much attention to the dynamic and uncertainty of climate risks. Thus, incorporation of climate adaptation in planning systems provides a way to sustainable development and low-risk environment. It also promotes the realization of global agendas like Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate change [3].

The paper on climate change adaptation strategies in urban and regional planning aims at investigating the planning strategies, policies, and technologies that can improve the adaptive capacity of urban and regions. It will also explore the roles of various stakeholders government agencies, planners, community organizations, and international partners in implementing effective adaptation strategies. Through this, the research aims to contribute to the development of climate-resilient cities capable of withstanding and recovering from the adverse impacts of climate change while promoting sustainable growth and improved quality of life [4].

The IPCC defines climate change as a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer." This definition emphasizes that climate change is not limited to short-term weather variations but involves long-term alterations in global or regional climate patterns due to both natural processes and human activities, particularly the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs). The IPCC highlights the human contribution through industrialization, deforestation, and fossil fuel combustion as key drivers of global warming. The UNFCCC defines climate change as "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods." This definition distinguishes between natural climate variability and anthropogenic (human-induced) climate change. It focuses on human responsibility for environmental degradation, encouraging nations to adopt measures to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations and mitigate further changes [5].

NASA defines climate change as "a broad range of global phenomena created predominantly by burning fossil fuels, which add heat-trapping gases to Earth's atmosphere." This definition focuses on the scientific and physical mechanisms underlying climate change, particularly the greenhouse effect. It underscores observable outcomes such as global temperature rise, melting glaciers, sea-level rise, and increasing frequency of extreme weather events issues that directly impact urban planning and human settlements. The WHO defines climate change as "long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns, mainly caused by human activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels." This definition stresses the public health implications of climate change, including heat-related illnesses, water scarcity, and the spread of vector-borne diseases [6].

It highlights the fact that climate change is not a mere environmental thing but also a social and health problem than requires adaptive city planning to be resilient and safe. National Aeronautics and Atmospheric Administration: identifies climate change as

permanent significant change in the statistic distribution of weather patterns over a period of time lasting up to decades or to millions of years. This definition is climatological and statistical in nature and points out the long term nature of climate change. It reflects the importance of data and scientific modeling in understanding changing patterns tools that urban planners increasingly use to forecast and mitigate the risks associated with climate variability [7].

United Nations Human Settlements Programme defines urban and regional planning as "a technical and political process concerned with the development and use of land, protection and use of the environment, public welfare, and the design of the urban environment." This definition highlights the integrated and multidisciplinary nature of planning. It encompasses economic, social, and environmental dimensions aimed at improving the quality of life in both urban and rural areas. American Planning Association defines urban and regional planning as "a dynamic process that involves designing and regulating the uses of space, focusing on the physical form, economic functions, and social impacts of the urban environment." The emphasis here is on the proactive and regulatory role of planning in shaping sustainable urban growth and addressing challenges such as congestion, pollution, and inadequate infrastructure [8].
According to Friedmann, planning can be described as a type of connecting scientific and technical knowledge to the actions within the public sphere. His definition presents the concept of urban and regional planning being both an applied science and a participative process in which knowledge and policy are integrated to make the decisions determining spatial development and social progress. Okpala believes that urban and regional planning in the developing nations is actually a planned process of integrating development efforts with the aim of attaining structured growth, efficient use of resources and better standards of living. It is especially applicable to Africa and Nigeria, where the focus will be on planning as the means of controlling the fast urbanization, diminishing poverty, and creating equal access to simple services. The definition given by Hall and Tewdwr-Jones states that urban and regional planning is the art and science of arranging the use of land and of the built environment, such as transportation networks, in a way that ensures the sustainable development of the community and the region. This is a broad definition which encompasses the two aspects of planning as a creative and technical process and connects spatial organization, environmental management and long-term sustainability [9].

RESEARCH METHOD

The Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning in Nigeria. Thee paper is a position paper that adopted a systematic literature review-based method. The method allows to collect and review the related previous literature from various online sources. With the aid of digital platform, the researcher collected secondary information to generate knowledge on this topic from 2015-2025. The position paper followed qualitative narrative design method. The researcher has visited different online sites to collect the previous literature and analyze the Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning in Nigeria. The previous findings are critically analyzed and presented in different themes as on theClimate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning in Nigeria [10].

This output of the literatures on the Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning in Nigeria presents an in-depth study and result that can infer conclusion on the topic. The study includes: online publication; conference paper,

journals sorted from from reputable international journals such as CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, Learn Techlib, SAGE, Nebraska and Springer [11].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning

Climate change adaptation strategies are critical components of sustainable urban and regional planning. They involve proactive measures designed to minimize the vulnerability of cities and regions to the adverse effects of climate variability while enhancing their resilience and capacity to recover from climate-related disruptions. In urban contexts, adaptation strategies are multidimensional, encompassing infrastructure design, environmental management, community engagement, policy frameworks, and technology integration. The following are seven key climate change adaptation strategies within the context of urban and regional planning [12].

Integration of Climate Risk Assessment into Urban Planning

Integrating climate risk assessment into planning processes involves systematically identifying, evaluating, and mapping climate-related risks such as floods, heatwaves, and sea-level rise before designing or approving development projects. This planning approach helps the urban planners to make viable choices regarding land utilization, zoning, and the location of the infrastructure depending on the level of vulnerability and exposure. Cities such as Lagos, Nairobi and Cape Town have introduced geospatial tools and climate modeling systems to evaluate risk areas to develop urban planning and growth in a sustainable manner. However, including climate risk analysis in the planning process can help the urban authorities avoid maladaptation, thus minimizing the possible losses of life and property. Urban planning involves incorporation of climate risk assessment in urban planning, and it is one of the core adaptation plans, as it ensures the urban development policies are informed by realistic information on climate vulnerabilities. It entails a systematic gathering and examination of climatic related information including the intensity of rainfall, patterns of floods, increases and decreases in temperature and forecast of sea level rise to make planning decisions. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and climate modeling and risk mapping allow urban planners to establish the areas that are most vulnerable to hazards. As an illustration, flood prone areas can be used as no-build or open space. When this kind of assessment is introduced to master plans and development control regulations, planners will be able to foresee possible risks and minimize how infrastructure and population may be impacted by disasters. Such an active strategy reduces not only economic losses but also increases the community safety and sustainability [13].

Green infrastructure is the process of utilizing natural and semi-nature systems like parks, green roofs, wetlands, and urban forests in an attempt to deliver ecological as well as climatic advantages. Solutions based on nature can be used to reduce flooding, improve air quality, reduce heat islands, and increase biodiversity. As an example, UN-Habitat observed that in cities, permeable surfaces and vegetation could be incorporated to ensure that water is absorbed naturally leading to minimization of urban floods. Apart from international capacity building, conservation and rehabilitation of ecosystems like mangroves, forest, and wetlands in the region improves the resilience of the region against harsh weather conditions. Such plans also give room to recreational areas and enhance the generality in urban aesthetics. Nature-based solutions and green infrastructure remain essential measures which aim at using the natural systems to increase the resilience of urban areas. These features involve green roofs, urban forests,

wetlands, bioswales, and permeable pavements, which allow stormwater to be controlled, control temperatures, and enhance the air quality. These systems act as buffers against flooding by absorbing excess rainfall and mitigating the urban heat island effect through increased vegetation cover. In regional planning, restoring mangroves and watershed ecosystems protects communities from coastal erosion and supports biodiversity. Moreover, green infrastructure provides social and economic benefits by creating recreational spaces, improving mental health, and boosting tourism. The incorporation of such natural systems into urban designs reflects a shift from hard engineering solutions to sustainable, ecologically sensitive urban planning [14].

Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Building Design

Climate-resilient infrastructure according to World Bank involves designing and constructing buildings, roads, bridges, and drainage systems capable of withstanding extreme weather events. Planners and engineers are encouraged to adopt adaptive building materials, elevated foundations, improved drainage systems, and heat-resistant designs. For example, in coastal regions prone to sea-level rise, urban planners integrate coastal embankments and flood barriers into development plans. Incorporating building codes and standards that account for projected climate impacts ensures long-term safety and sustainability of urban structures. Climate-resilient infrastructure and building design focus on ensuring that physical structures can withstand and adapt to the changing climate. This involves revising construction standards, improving materials, and adopting innovative designs that minimize climate-related risks. For instance, buildings in flood-prone zones can be elevated, and those in areas prone to high temperatures can be equipped with energy-efficient ventilation systems and reflective roofing materials. Roads, bridges, and drainage systems should be designed to handle higher volumes of water runoff. Adopting resilience standards in infrastructure planning ensures continuity of services during extreme events and reduces the costs of post-disaster reconstruction. Furthermore, integrating renewable energy systems such as solar panels into urban design reduces dependence on fossil fuels, contributing to both adaptation and mitigation goals [15].

Sustainable Urban Transportation Systems

Transportation planning plays a significant role in climate adaptation. Sustainable transport systems (mass transport, non-motorized transport (cycling and walking paths), and electric vehicle infrastructure) can lower carbon emissions as well as enhance the quality of air in urban areas. Accessibility and mobility are also improved through the zipping of transport planning especially in cases of climate disruptions. Climate resilience in the transportation system means that the significant infrastructure is not impacted when there is a flood, heatwave, or a storm, so that economic and social life can be hindered to minimum. The transport systems are very important towards building resilience in the urban areas as well as minimizing environmental degradation. Sustainable transportation focuses on use of low-emitting, low-energy consuming and accessible means of transportation (constituting mass transit, bicycle tracks, pedestrian streets and electric cars). These systems do not only reduce green house gas emissions, but also increase mobility during the extreme weather situations offering alternative routes and means of transportation. Planners in cities need to combine transport planning with land use and planning to ensure development of compact cities with residential, commercial, and recreational developments easily reachable. With such integration, there is less car dependency, congestion, and pollution. Furthermore, availability of transport infrastructure that is resilient to the impacts of floods by flood-resistant roads and

climate-adjustable rail systems facilitates consistent movement of people during disasters to support the economic stability and emergency response [16].

Land Use Planning and Zoning Regulations

Land use planning and zoning are central to climate change adaptation. This strategy focuses on regulating where and how development occurs to minimize exposure to climate risks. Planners can restrict construction in flood-prone, coastal, or erosion-prone areas and encourage compact, mixed-use development to reduce environmental degradation. Implementing buffer zones, open spaces, and green belts helps absorb stormwater and improve environmental quality. Effective land use planning ensures that urban growth is sustainable, coordinated, and responsive to environmental constraints. In order to reduce exposure to climatic risks and. sustainability in spatial development, proper land use planning and zoning is required. Planners could direct the urban growth into not risky zones like floodplains, coastlines, and unsound slopes by setting the adequate land use rules. The zoning laws may be used to impose preservation, agricultural, or flood water capturing, but promote compact and mixed-use city designs to better utilize available space. Strategic land use planning also supports the preservation of ecological corridors and green belts, which play a role in temperature regulation and biodiversity conservation. In many rapidly urbanizing countries, enforcing zoning laws remains a challenge due to informal settlements; hence, governments must strengthen planning institutions and involve communities to ensure compliance.

Community-Based Adaptation and Public Participation

Community-based adaptation (CBA) allows focusing on involvement of the locals in designing, identifying and implementing adaptation strategies. Communities are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change so their knowledge and involvement are crucial in the development of context-related and sustainable solutions. Community workshops, participatory mapping, and local adaptation planning can be used in order to make communities inclusive and owned by the urban planners. Urban gardening, waste recycling and flood monitoring are the projects implemented at community levels that have been particularly effective in increasing resilience in the city in many African cities. Community-based adaptation (CBA) focuses on ensuring the communities are also engaged during the planning, designing, and implementation of climate adaptation strategies. By having the involvement of the residents, the adaptation strategies are always context-specific and culturally appropriate, as the residents usually have the valuable information about the environment which they are living. The local population can help in identification of risks and identifying local solutions to these risks through participation planning methods including workshops, community mapping, and use of focus groups where they help in identifying solutions to these threats including rain water harvesting, urban gardening, and recycling of wastes. CBA fosters social cohesion, empowerment and trust between the local governments and the citizens. It also enhances the sustainability of the adaptation measures by making sure that it is locally owned and committed [17].

Policy Integration and Institutional Strengthening

Effective climate adaptation requires strong institutions and coherent policies that integrate climate considerations into all levels of governance. Urban and regional planners must collaborate with environmental agencies, disaster management authorities, and policymakers to develop adaptive frameworks. Mainstreaming climate change into urban development policies, master plans, and regional growth strategies ensures consistency and long-term commitment. Besides, the introduction of climate

resilience offices, capacity-building of planners, and access to climatic finance are important to maintaining adaptation. The effective governance structures and institutions coordination are needed in climate adaptation. Policy integration entails mainstream incorporation of climate into all urban and regional planning policies such as the housing or transportation policies, disaster management as well as economic development policies. Developing national and local adaptation policies can guarantee accountability and consistency to climate action. The concepts of institutional strengthening involve establishing the capacity of the planning departments, improvement of the technical competencies in climate models, and encouraging inter-agency cooperation. The governments are also supposed to provide access to climate finance and maintain the involvement of the private sector in the development of resilient infrastructure. Well-established policies and institutions establish a favorable climate adaptation environment with long-term commitment and make sure that planning decisions are made in accordance with national and international climate commitments including the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [18].

Discussion

The paper revealed that integration of climate risk assessment into urban planning, development of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions, climate-resilient infrastructure and building design, sustainable urban transportation systems, land use planning and zoning regulations, community-based adaptation and public participation and policy integration and institutional strengthening are the Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning that can be adopted in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The paper examined Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning in Nigeria. The paper concluded that integration of climate risk assessment into urban planning, development of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions, climate-resilient infrastructure and building design, sustainable urban transportation systems, land use planning and zoning regulations, community-based adaptation and public participation and policy integration and institutional strengthening are the Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Urban and Regional Planning that can be adopted in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the paper recommends the following:

1. Nigeria's federal, state, and local planning authorities should integrate comprehensive climate risk assessments into physical and regional development plans. This process should involve mapping climate-vulnerable areas such as floodplains, erosion zones, and coastal regions using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing technologies. The inclusion of risk data in master plans will enable planners to anticipate potential hazards and guide urban growth away from high-risk areas, thereby reducing the socio-economic impacts of climate-induced disasters.
2. The green infrastructure projects by the urban and regional planners in Nigeria must focus on employing natural systems to be resilient to climate change. This can be manifested by creating urban parks, green roofs, community gardens and restoring wetlands as well as planting trees along roadways and waterways. Such environmental solutions have a role in taking in the flood waters, cooling down cities, and enhancing air quality. Green building codes should be undertaken by government agencies and encouraging agencies to use eco-friendly building technology will help to increase the level of environmental sustainability.

Climate-resilient building standards should be generated and implemented by the Federal Ministry of works and Housing in consultation with the professional planning and engineering organizations. These standards ought to focus on the use of long-lasting materials, use of better drainage systems, raised foundations on places that are prone to floods and designs that are also energy efficient. Infrastructure facilities, roads, bridges and drainages must be built knowing the expected variability in the intensity and temperature of rainfall, which would be effective and safe over a long period of time.

The Nigerian government ought to invest in environmental transport networks like mass transit systems, non-motorized transport (bicycle lanes and walking paths), as well as electric network to alleviate emissions and increase mobility whenever there are climate-related disruptions. Transport and land use planning should be incorporated by city planners to encourage compact form of cities also minimized privatization of cars. Promotions of public transport in use does not only reduce climate change, but also enhances air quality and energy efficiency in the city.

To contain ad hoc urbanization and settlement in the high-risk areas, the federal and state governments need to enforce land use and zoning laws more firmly. The urban and regional planning laws can be revised to include the principles of climate resilience, with the granting of development approval being conditional to assessing environmental impact and risk. Moreover, the resettlement programs should upgrade or move informal settlements in susceptible zones by involving the affected communities in participative resettlement programs that do not infringe upon their rights and livelihood.

Local communities are also critical in making them resilient in crises of climate change. Nigerian governments and planning agencies should thus consider strategies of community-based adaptation (CBA) where the residents will be involved in the decision-making process, disaster preparedness and management of the environment. There should be more education campaigns on waste management, water conservation, and climate-smart agriculture to the people. Local innovation should also be incorporated into formal adaptation frameworks to achieve culturally-relevant and sustainable results by using traditional knowledge.

The ability to adapt effectively needs good institutions and policy coherence. To ensure that the process of adaptation is placed on a co-ordinated basis, Nigeria needs to form or intensify the climate resilience units in the urban planning agencies on all the tiers of the government. All the national policies of development such as housing, transport and energy sectors should be mainstreamed in terms of climate. Moreover, the provision of climate funds through the efforts of international bodies, like the Green Climate Fund (GCF), African Development Bank (AfDB), among others, should be requested to finance the project of adaptation. Capacity-building programs for urban planners, engineers, and local government officials are also essential to enhance technical expertise in climate-responsive planning.

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