

REPUDIATION OF RESETTLEMENTS HOUSING SCHEME FOR BURA PEOPLE IN MIRINGA TOWN, BIU BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstracts

The Bura ethnic group of Northeastern Nigeria are found in Southwestern Borno State. Bura people hold to their cosmology, and it has an impact on their dwelling. Their compounds consist of several huts. The destruction of houses and life caused by the Boko Haram insurgency necessitates the need for the construction of mass housing at Miringa village by the government of Borno State. The traditional architecture and settlement patterns of the Bura people are not merely functional; they are a manifestation of their cultural heritage and mythological beliefs. By analyzing these elements, we understand how Bura people perceive their world and express their identity through the built environment. Understanding this synergy between culture, mythology, and architecture is essential for preserving the Bura people's rich heritage. The study explores and describes the lived experience of the ethnic people. The study is termed a qualitative hegemony, and the primary means of collecting data for an existential phenomenology study lies in the process of conducting in-depth interviews with participants. The study investigated the environmental relationships between Bura villages and their wards. The distribution of settlements in Bura villages can form specific patterns according to the characteristics of the region. The result of the study shows that the houses provided are not in conformity to the way of life of the affected Bura people. For example, space within the compound can be utilized for different purposes, such as ritual, vegetable garden, playground, and relaxation.

Keywords: Bura, Repudiation, Resettlement, Housing, Borno state-Nigeria, Way of Life.

Introduction

Bura people are inhabitants of Northeastern Nigeria, particularly southwestern Borno State. According to oral tradition, they have lived in that location for about 5 centuries (Dauda, 2013). Meek (1931) asserted that the Bura lived a sedentary life, which is equally confirmed by (Davies, 1956). Bura people hold to their cosmology, and their belief patterns have had a strong impact on their dwelling. Bura are predominantly agrarian; their choice of sites for farmlands and occupational practices plays a major role in their settlement patterns. Their settlement is scattered all over the rugged landscape of the area (Basir, 2006). The people live in sparsely and thinly scattered settlements based on kinship. This consists of clusters of compounds, each consisting of several huts (Hyeladzira et al, 2023). The destruction of houses and life caused by the boko haram insurgency necessitates the construction of mass housing at Miringa village by the government of Borno State. Unfortunately, these houses were largely rejected as a result of not conforming to the lifestyle and socio-cultural livelihood of the Bura people (Atamewan, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Housing is a fundamental human right according to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements 2006 (Chegwe, 2014). Providing adequate housing is capital-intensive, and in most cases goes beyond the capacity of most of the populace, especially low-income earners (Oladejo and Adediran 2023; Mohammed *et al*, 2022). As such, it requires government intervention (Mohammed *et al*, 2022). Most government intervention in housing provision is often targeted at urban dwellers, and there is little consideration for rural dwellers (Ezra *et al*, 2011). Nonetheless, where there is intervention in rural areas, there seems to be little or no recognition of end-users' cultural interpretation.

Umar et al (2010) reported in a study that any failure to integrate end-user perspectives in a design will result in the rejection of the dwelling space. In concurrence with the report, the so-to-be residents rejected several Government housing intervention projects in Miringa village in the Biu Local Government area of Borno State (Abubakar, 2021). Understanding the extent to which culture shapes the dwelling and settlement pattern of the Bura people is the focus of this study.

The aim of the study

The aim of the study is to assess the resettlement housing scheme for the Bura people at Miringa village.

Objectives of the study

- To examine the socio-cultural characteristics of the traditional Bura people.
- To examine the physical characteristics of the traditional Bura houses.
- To analyse the traditional house form of the Bura man.
- To study the place of myth in their pattern of traditional house;

Theoretical Framework of the Research

The inevitable synergy of both cultural heritages of the *Bura* traditional architecture and their intangible cultural myths necessitates an understanding of the extent to which these symbols shape their dwellings and settlement patterns. Intangible values in theoretical approaches are fundamentally defined in two different ways: as a shaping factor in settlements and dwellings. Intangible cultural values and culture are closely related and, therefore, it is conceptually developed as theoretical, especially during the decline of modernism, as noted by (Jenks and George, 1969). This approach emphasizes how architecture is not merely about form and function but also the deeper meanings and cultural narratives embedded within built environments.

Raeff *et al* (2020) define scientific analysis of culture as the relationship between human needs and culture. In line with this, several authors (Ogura, 2002) attempted to establish the direct link between traditional shapes and the prevailing culture. The study intends to adopt the theory of Bourdieu 1990; and Oliver 1975, framework for the relationships between culture and intangible

cultural values that can correspond to the formulation of the relationships between practices, representations, and habitus proposed by Bourdieu. Adopting the elements of linguistics theories of signs and symbols upholds a theoretical approach to formulating the relationships between culture and built environment as a system of signs (Michael, 2018). Evaluating Oliver and Bourdieu, approach from the scope of this study, it can be stated that myths in settlements and architecture encode the cultural expressions and meanings of the Bura people.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the place of myth and their link to the traditional architecture and settlements of Bura people. The study can be termed a qualitative study due to the fact that qualitative method is employed to analyses the study. The use of existential phenomenology to study the Bura people world of living and their architecture is of paramount relevance as a guide to the research methodology.

Research Design

Existential phenomenology as a methodology in research involves the study of a subject and its immediate environment (Fernandez, 2024). This directly relates to a scientific or logical approach to investigating facts, figures, and data.

The term existential phenomenology approach explicitly concerned with human existence or the human condition. This approach typically conducts in-depth interviews, analyse personal accounts, and engages in reflective practices to capture the richness and complexity of *Bura people* experiences. Phenomenological research design is particularly valuable when studying subjective experiences, emotions, and meanings that Bura people attach to various life events or situations. By employing this approach, researchers gain insights into the shared aspects of human experiences and lived experiences while also acknowledging individual variations from a qualitative perspective through this process.

Study Populations

A purposive sampling technique was used in examining some of the Bura people settlements and their dwellings that are affected, making a total of 102 populations. A convenient sampling procedure is used in sampling the 20 villages that are affected. 5 respondents for each village, making a total of 100 participants, were administered.

Sampling Procedure

Several basic guidelines are followed when selecting the participants for an existential phenomenology study. First, a participant who has experienced in the phenomenon of interest and is willing to talk about their, myth, belief, and traditional houses (Seamon and Gill, 2016). In addition, the participants are willing to participate in lengthy interviews and must give the investigator permission to publish the data in a journal.

Method of Data Collection

The primary means of collecting data for an existential phenomenology study lies in the process of conducting in-depth interviews with participants (Creswell 2007; Thomas and Pollio, 2002). The participant villages are Gur, Kimba, Mandragraw, Kaana, Mandafuma, Miya etc.

Results And Discussion

Built Environment Relationships

The study investigated the environmental relationships between the Bura villages and their wards. The results of the investigation are presented in Table 1.0 as follows:

Table 1.0 Built Environment Relationships: Comparative Studies of the Village Wards.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Distinct values	5	11.1

Beliefs	10	22.2
Rules	15	33.3
Customs	6	13.3
People and surrounding environments	4	8.9
Congruency	5	11.1
Total	45	100

Source: Author's Analysis 2025

Figure 1.0 shows a chart obtained from table 1.0 Ethnography of Human-Built Environment Relationships Out of the 45 total respondents, there were 5 (11.1%) who believed the (distinct value) plays a vital role and 90% of the houses built in *Gur, Buratai, Kimba, Mandaragraw, Kaana, Mandafuma, Miya* wards among others have distinctive values attached to them. This shows that distinct value has an impact on all the compound houses in the study community.

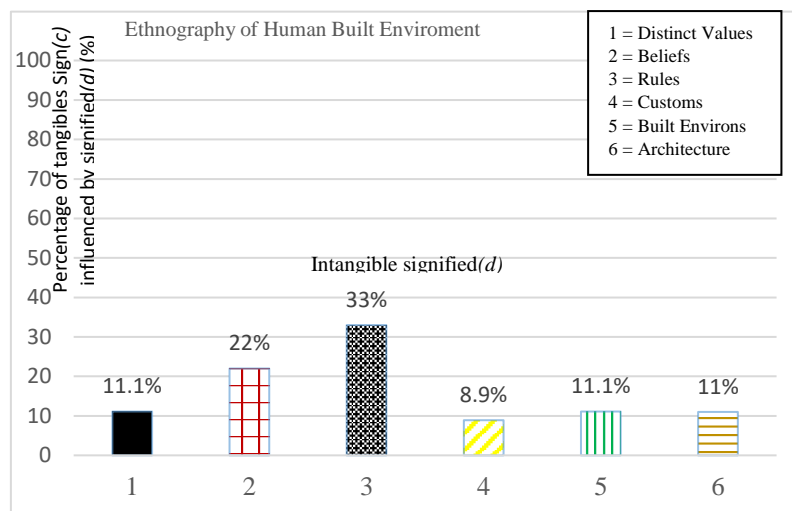


Figure 1.0 Built Environment Relationships wards sign(c)
Source: Author's Analysis 2025

From the total respondents of 45, 10 (22.2%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the beliefs they have in their ancestors have a great impact on their houses and 15 (33.3%) believe that guidelines and rules set within the community have control over the diameter of a compound and the size of houses. A total of 4 (8.9%) respondents are of the opinion that people and their surrounding environments belong to their ancestors. On the other hand, 5 (11.1%) respondents are of the opinion that rectangular forms or shapes should be for men (category B) whilst circular forms or shapes should be for women (category A). About 10 compounds have 11 men (13.4% - category B) living and sleeping in a circular hut meant for women (category A). With the information acquired from this descriptive analysis, it was gathered that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that some rules set within the community most especially those rules guiding the diameter of the compound and sizes should be made flexible and less stringent.

1.5.2 Settlements Distribution Pattern

The distribution of settlements in Bura villages can form specific patterns according to the characteristics of the region. Settlement patterns have qualitative characteristics, supporting comparisons of distribution patterns over time and space Table 1.1 Settlements Distribution Pattern below.

Table 1.1 Settlements Distribution Pattern

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
True	4	4.3
Not true	22	3.7
Don't know	67	72
Total	93	100

Source: Author's Analysis 2025

Figure 1.1 shows the opinions of the community on their settlements. This data is inferred from Table 1.1

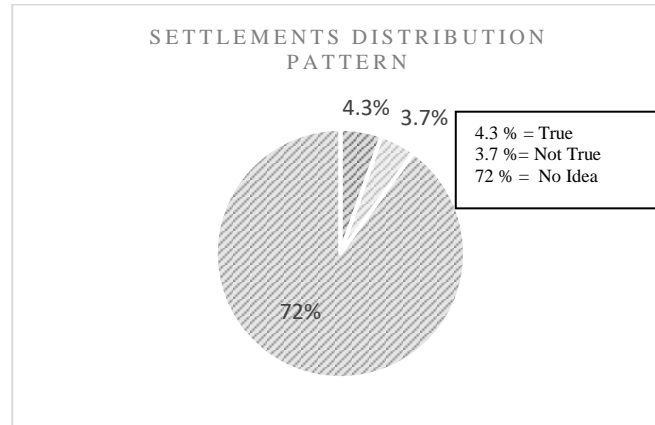


Figure 1.1 Settlements Distribution Pattern
source: Author fieldwork 2025

A total of 93 respondents, with 4 (4.3%) agreeing that settlement distribution patterns based on topography can be observed through variations in elevation and slope, resulting in clustered settlement patterns in low-lying areas to hilly terrain 10 compounds. A few of the respondents, 22 (3.7%), strongly agree that the patterns of settlements are based on slope, also reveal both clustered and dispersed settlement patterns, while a large population of the respondents, 67(72%), did not agree on any.

Physical Growth Pattern of Settlements

Factors influencing the patterns of settlements in Bura land are diverse, and they include transportation and socio-economic activities, distribution of infrastructural facilities and social amenities, economic development, social networks, and economic factors. Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Respondents Responses on Physical Growth Pattern of Settlements

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
True	30	50
Not true	10	16.7
Don't know	20	33.3
Total	60	100

Source: Author's Analysis 2025

Figure 1.2 shows respondent's responses to measures of the Physical Growth Pattern of Settlements.

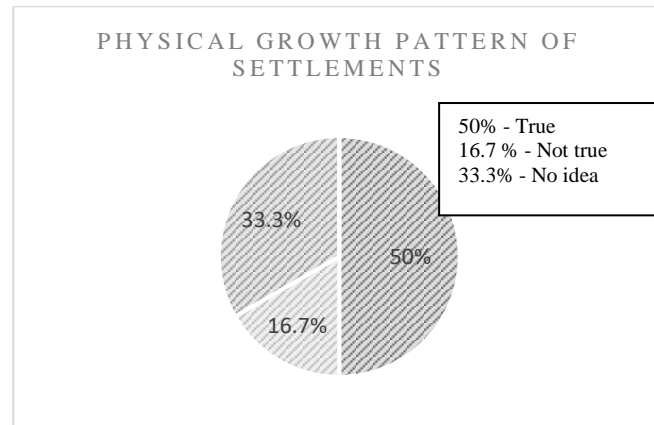


Figure 1.2 Physical Growth Pattern of Settlements
 source: Author fieldwork 2025

Of 60 respondents, 30 (50%) stated that settlement growth in the traditional Bura region is not well accounted for by the existing concepts of settlement growth. A group comprising 10 respondents (16.7%) were of the opinion that Settlements are known to change spatially with time, but the patterns of such changes vary and factors that encourage spatial change are diverse, while 20 (33.3%) respondents have no answer to the question. Therefore, Studies have shown that traditional settlements in Bura land exhibit growth patterns that reflect the culture of the people.

Respondent response on settlement patterns and architecture variations

The respondent responses on settlement patterns and traditional architecture of the Bura people were investigated and reported:

Table 1.3 Respondents responses on the settlement pattern and architecture variations.

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
True	3	6
Not true	9	17
Don't know	40	77
Total	52	100

Source: Author's Analysis 2025

Figure 1.3 shows a chart obtained from Table 1.3.

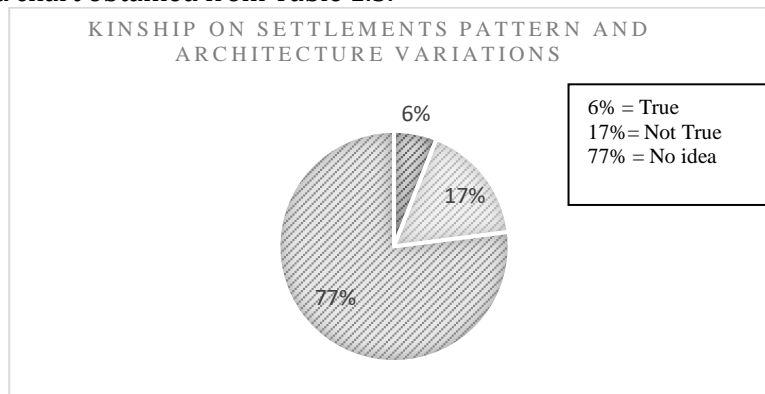


Figure 1.3 Respondents on the settlement patterns and Architecture
 source: Author fieldwork 2025

52% of the respondents agree that the pattern of needs affects the culture, 17% strongly disagree, while 77% of the respondents are undecided.

Traditional Architecture Elements

Traditional architectural elements in Bura villages are characterized by a long history, cohesiveness, and subtlety. They are based on culturally sensitive techniques, empirical knowledge, and locally available materials.

Table 1.4 Traditional Architecture Elements

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
True	4	4.3
Not true	22	3.7
Don't know	67	72
Total	93	100

Source: Author's Analysis 2025

Figure 1.4 shows the opinions of the community on Traditional architectural elements

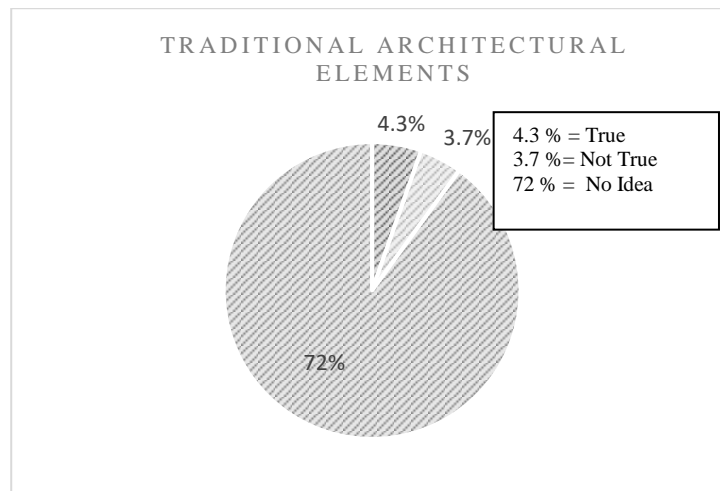


Figure 1.4 Traditional architecture elements
source: Author fieldwork 2025

A total of 93 respondents with 4 (4.3%) agreeing that they are based on culturally sensitive techniques, empirical knowledge, and locally available materials. A few respondents, 22 (3.7%), strongly agree that the use of local materials is best for traditional buildings, which look and perform their best when built from traditional, locally available materials. A large proportion of the respondents, 67 (72%), fall into one of these two categories.

Respondent responses on the use of space

Table 1.5 on the chart illustrates the opinions of the respondent regarding the establishment of a compound and how space is utilized. This domain measures community effort: It enables people to work together to influence, change, and exert control over the issues that affect their lives.

It is about a collective focus rather than a response to an individual crisis.

It challenges inequitable power relationships within society and promotes the redistribution of wealth and resources in a more just and equitable fashion.

It is based on participative processes and structures, which include and empower marginalized and excluded groups within society.

It is based on solidarity with the interests of those experiencing social exclusion.

It presents alternative ways of working and seeks to be flexible, dynamic, innovative, and creative in approach.

It challenges the nature of the relationship between the users and providers of services.

It is a wholly positive endeavor that challenges the prejudice and discrimination faced by its community without being discriminatory to any other community.

Table 1.5 Respondents responses on the use of space

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Community development on track	35	56.5
Community developmentally at risk	17	27.4
Community developmentally vulnerable	10	16.1
Total	62	100

Source: Author's Analysis 2025

Figure 1.5 shows the chart obtained in Table 1.5.

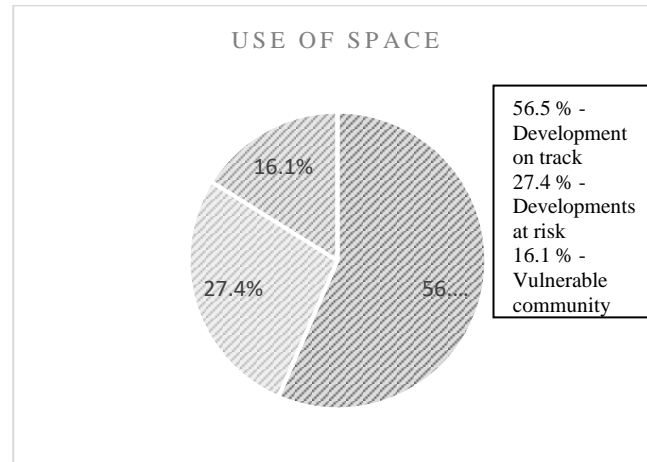


Figure 1.5 Use of Space
source: Author fieldwork 2025

From a total of 62 respondents, 35 (56.5%) indicated that the development of a compound is based on communal effort. 17 (27.4%) acknowledged that the lack of communal effort in a community is at risk. Another 10 (16.1%) of the respondents are of the opinion that if all effort is lost, the community is vulnerable.

Conclusion

The effort to understand the traditional architecture, dimension, orientation, of the Bura people is brought about by the identification of their myth and way of life. Therefore, the study focuses on both the tangible and intangible factors of the Bura people. The tangible factors are their vernacular architecture and elements associated with. Their intangible factors are their symbols and the influence on their traditional myths and belief systems. The intangible and the tangible plays a vital role in the Bura people Dwellings and any attempt to temprerd with their ancestral believe may lead to total rejection by the community. The houses provided are dissimilar to the way of life of the affected people thus lead to toatl rejection of the people. For example, space within the compound can be utilized for different purposes, such as ritual, vegetable garden, playground, and relaxation, which is the focal point in a Bura man's house has completely elimated. this action make the community to repudate resettlements housing scheme.

Contribution to knowledge

1. Stakeholders involved in the building industry should consider the end-users first, before embarking on a project in rural areas.
2. Users' participation should be encouraged in the housing scheme.

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