

Nigerian Housing Policy and Implications for Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3

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Abstract

This paper examined housing policy in Nigeria and its implications for sustainable development goal. Various housing policies in Nigeria have failed to give the nation good housing. The paper gave reasons why these good housing policies have failed to achieve its goal as a result of faulty policy formulation and implementation. Elite theory anchored the study. The challenges facing housing policy in Nigeria were found to include inadequate studies on research and Rural-Urban migration, among others. The paper recommended new housing policy which must collaborate with Nigerian entrepreneurs, Local building materials and reduction in the cost of building materials which would afford every tax payer good housing in turn would help to transform our housing condition by the year 2030.

Keywords: Housing, Policy, Sustainable, Implication, Development.

Introduction

Housing is a vital fundamental need of every human-being as food and clothing. It is so fundamental to the good health and well-being of every human being, and one of the best indicators of a person's standard of living and his place in the society still remains his place of living (housing). Thus the location and type of housing can determine or affect the status of man in the society. The performance of the housing sector is one of the indexes by which the health of a nation is measured (ibimilua, 2015). Housing and housing problems is important to both rich and poor nations as well as developed and developing countries. The United Nations Human and Environment Conference gathered in New York, USA to consider the rights of the human family and healthy and protective environment which resulted to the millennium development goal of 2000-2015 to provide good

housing. On 25 September, 2015, 193 countries of United Nations General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals officially known as 257 transforming the World, The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development (UN, 2015).

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development with 17 sustainable development goals and its associated 169 targets, Under this goal, the goal 3 has to do with good health and wellbeing that means ensuring healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages, Sustainable development may be difficult to achieve without significantly transforming the way we live and where we live especially the developing countries like Nigeria.

World Health Organization (1961), stated that a good house should have the following items;

- ❖ A good roof to keep the rain.
- ❖ Good walls and doors to protect against bad weather and keep out animals.
- ❖ Sunshades all around the house to protect it from direct sunlight in hot weather.
- ❖ Wire nettings at windows and doors to keep out insects like house flies and mosquitoes.

Housing quality can be judged from the physical appearance of the building, facilities provided, quality of the wall used in the construction, eminence of the roofing (Mandelker and Montgomery 1973).

In Nigeria several policies and programme geared towards achieving good and quality housing scheme has been initiated by one administration or the other. In the 1999 constitution, section 16(1) (d) the Nigerian state is directed under the fundamental objectives and principles of state policy to provide sustainable and adequate shelter for all citizens.

Nigerian housing policy can be defined as the government's action on its peoples housing objectives. Basically, when government gets involved in the housing of its people either by taking action to provide shelter for her citizenry or by taking actions to improve the quality of the shelter of its people or to make housing affordable. In Nigeria, quite substantive public funds are invested in the housing programme with the large cities growing in Nigeria the issues remain how to provide both adequate

and economically affordable housing for average Nigerian. In Ezeani and Elekwa (2001: 226-228) Okoli observed with dissatisfaction that;

Nigerian housing problem has not been comprehensively studied, but there is enough information to conclude that the magnitude of the problem is quite serious. The colonial housing policy sought to provide houses at minimum rents to all colonial staff and a few necessary indigenous support staff usually clerks, prison officials, police and army. Therefore, the late 1950s and 1960s saw increased but still rather limited intervention by government in the provision of housing. Meanwhile, the post-colonial political leadership in 1960 continued on what was left by the provision of quarters to civil servants through the regional housing corporation that were established. Till date, Nigerian government has not been seen to have any housing plan for its work force.

With the expiration of the watch word "housing for all by the year 2000" and the millennium development goal "good housing for all by 2015", it is now pertinent to look into Nigerian Housing policy with an aim of finding a sustainable way of solving the housing problem that most Nigerians are facing especially the urban poor, which in turn will help in the realization of goal 3 of the sustainable development goal agenda of ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Statement of the Problem

Housing is one of the basic needs of man. Government at one time or the other in Nigeria has come out with one policy or the other to solve this basic problem. One is worried over the way public housing crisis has increased unabated not minding a number of governments applauded new policies and programmes geared towards addressing the problem. (Ibem, Anosike and Azuh, 2011). It seems also that when these policies are to be implemented, other factors are considered which leads to having substandard buildings, abandoned projects as one government will abandon an existing policy to another, leading to buildings that cannot stand the test of time. When the government feels like giving out the completed building interest becomes the watchword against seniority and merit. As government sitting and building of these houses are not workers or people oriented, rather a way of giving contracts to political cohort.

Corrupt practices of government operators have also enlarged the problem of housing in Nigeria leading to collapsed building; cost of maintenance most times seems to be higher than the once used to erect new buildings. One may not be mistaken if its assumed that government policies on housing is not responsive to the plight of Nigerian workers in providing durable and affordable housing.

Public Housing Policy: A Discourse.

Public housing and housing policy has been clarified in many ways by authors (Ndukwe, Nnaji and Nwuzor, 2015). Public housing means houses owned by government that is rented at a minimum rate to the needy, or it can be seen as housing provided, owned or managed independently by government or in collaboration with private sector for the purpose of providing mass housing to citizens and some key top government officials on owner-occupier or rental basis. While housing policy means a social policy by Federal, State or Local agencies with the aim of providing standard building to the people. There is consensus among researchers that the goal of housing provision in most countries of the world is the provision of subsidized housing to households and individuals who are unable to have access to decent housing at market prices (Ibem E.O and Amole, O.O 2010). Certainly, this will help to improve public health, reduce social injustice and poverty, ensure social order and accommodate population growth. This, as a matter of fact remains the target of the sustainable development goal, especially the goal 3.

Some scholar like, Tipple (2007), Valecia (2007) and Sengupta (2007) have argued that public housing provision involves policy formulation, institutional development; public housing provision involves policy actual housing provision, allocation and management. This has left the Nigerian housing policy with a lot of challenges which is related to policy formulation and implementation. Performance of public housing Nigeria from 1960 till date can be summarized showing that:

1. Public housing has had some significant achievement, which is far from satisfactory.
2. Lack of proper monitoring and evaluation of housing, policies and programmes in Nigeria. (Ibem, 2011).

3. The housing policies meant to provide decent and affordable housing to low-income earners, who, most times, did not benefit from the policy because of high cost of housing unit provided. (UN-Habitat 2016)-
4. Corruption, lack of continuity in government policy and Nigerian factor", have made these good polices" not to be satisfied when one assess the housing policy in Nigeria.
5. Nigerian entrepreneurs have not involved in housing policy which means that housing market is totally untapped.

Theoretical Framework

Elite theory postulated by Vifredo Paret (1848-1923), popularized by other elite theorists like, Mosca (1923), Michels (1956), Wright Mills, 1956) Dye, (1972) etc, will be adopted to explore this social problem. Elite theory contends that public policies are creations of the ruling elite. Public policy is viewed by the theory as the preference and values of the government or political elite (Dye, 1975). The elite who are few in society, wield power and influence, allocate values and rule. The masses are apathetic and ill-informed about public policies, while the masses only obey and are guided, controlled and governed by the few elites.

Henry (1995) in Ezeani (2006:299) concisely puts it:

...policy flows downward is divided according to those who have power and those who do not. Elites share common values that differentiate them from the mass, and prevailing public policies reflect elite's values, which may be summed up as to preserve the status quo.

The elites consist of those who hold leading positions in the strategic aspects of the society; they include political or governing elites, bureaucratic elites, religious elites etc. The elites have higher income, higher education and are drawn from upper socio-economic strata of the society. The elite share consensus that public policy does not need the input of the masses; rather they are made in the best interest of the citizenry. In this theory the elite assumes and occupies superior position, makes rules and policies for the ruled, who are meant to obey.

Housing policies are made without the input of the masses who should be the beneficiaries rather their own is to accept the policies. This exposes the main reasons why the housing policies in Nigeria have not succeeded in providing good houses to Nigerians not minding the huge since independence.

Challenges of Nigerian Housing Policy

The challenges that are associated with Nigerian housing policy include, inadequate research and studies on the formulation and execution of the policy, implementation challenge, and insufficient infrastructural amenities not excluding ineffective housing finance. Rural-urban migration and high rate of urbanization which has given rise to development of shanty towns with shanty and dilapidated houses still remains another major challenge. Urban housing are congested because of the push from the rural areas to urban areas with the natural increment in the population since the rural houses are generally poor characterized by lack of potable water ,toilet and decent environment, the tendency to cluster in the urban few houses becomes necessary.

Land which is the essential element of housing and housing policy has its own problem. Acquiring land in the Nigerian urban and some rural communities is very costly not forgetting the bureaucratic delays in the process of acquiring the certificate of occupancy and the approval of building plan. This problem is compounded by other challenges like low income, high rate of interest on mortgage loans, high cost of building materials, low preference for local building materials, and the shortage of social services. The national housing policy has refused to involve entrepreneurs' who will be part of the policy to address the quantitative and qualitative housing problems.

Since the sustainable development goal with its 2030 agenda of transforming the whole world is a global project the need to look into Nigerian housing policy with an aim of having a policy that will address the eradication of poverty and providing good housing for all in Nigeria by 2030.

Conclusion

Housing remains one of the basic needs of man and it is important to both developing countries. Nigeria and, in fact, the whole world have been looking for ways to solving this problem hence it has been manifested in all attempts to have development all over the world. In the sustainable development goal the target is to provide good health and well-being as a man's housing affects the person's well-being. Several policies and programmes have pursued this goal in Nigeria all to no avail. Nigerians still live in areas and buildings that do not meet with World Health Organization standards of a good house. The policy failure may be attributed to lack of monitoring and evaluation, elites making policies for the masses without their input, high cost of building materials, high cost of land and land acquiring in some communities, rural-urban migration corruption etc.

Without further delay if good housing policy aimed at providing affordable housing for the increasing population in Nigeria is not put in place one may predict that the sustainable development goal in area of housing may end like other global developmental programmes.

Recommendations

1. New housing policy in collaboration with Nigerian entrepreneurs. This new housing policy which will mandate the state and local government to provide avenue for local entrepreneurs to partner with the federal government to provide to all tax payers with affordable housing through the low cost building. This new housing policy will be people oriented as the other criteria of acquisition may not be there, since it is for all tax payers. Each local government will also come up with a monitoring committee which will monitor the project from inception to completion nominated by the people from wards to local government to state levels.
2. Local building materials should be encouraged Realistic housing objectives of upgrading slums, periodic erosion control since the sustainable development goals aims at transforming our world by 2030, such rural building materials should be transformed to something that will be used to build in the rural and urban areas.
3. Also building land should be made accessible and available for potential builders, stringent and obvious ways of acquiring land in the rural areas should be minimally reduce

Bureaucratic bottleneck notice in land and building registrations should be discouraged. Rather builders and other alleys in environmental management should be encouraged to make sure that the quality of buildings in Nigeria is of the acceptable standards Sustainable housing policy researchers should be formed; this will institute continuity in the housing policy and not each government coming with preferred policy. Also corruption and corrupt practices may also be reduced if the consciousness of having a sustainable development in the area of housing is instituted in Nigeria.

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