



**Financial Implications and Impact of Mass Housing on Nigeria's National
Development: An Explanatory Study**

By

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Abstract

The provision of adequate, functional and decent housing has become a vital driver of motivation for enhanced national development in every society. It is in line with this understanding that successive governments formulate policies and establish relevant institutions saddled with the responsibility of undertaking mass housing programs as key prerequisites for the social contentment of the people. Therefore, this paper attempts to evaluate the impact of mass housing on national development in Nigeria. In order to achieve this, the paper employs



explanatory method of study and adopted the Social Welfare Theory which focuses on the use of humanitarian approach to ameliorate the sufferings of workers and their families as a theoretical framework. The findings show clearly that the cost of housing is not affordable for the citizens. It also discovered that the provision of infrastructures is essential for the effective delivery of mass housing. It identified some contributions of mass housing to include infrastructural development, employment opportunity, easy access to mortgage loans and grants. The paper concludes that mass housing has a significant impact on national development in Nigeria and recommends that the various tiers of government should formulate and implement people-oriented policies for the construction of affordable mass housing units annually for the citizens to enhance national development.

Keywords: Mass Housing, Financial Implications, National Development, Citizens, Nigeria

Introduction

Globally, governments are saddled with the responsibility of providing the needed services of creating a conducive environment for services to be provided. Among these services is housing which is a basic necessity of life and it affects the wellbeing of the populace and determines to a large extent the standard of living of the citizenry. In Nigeria, housing has been classified as the second most important human need after food. However, because of its importance to man, it has become a scarce commodity, hence governments make deliberate efforts to intervene in assisting the populace to acquire decent houses for their safety and health at reasonable price so as to enhance national development.

As such, successive efforts by governments are in the areas of formulation of policies, establishment of relevant institutions and launching of mass housing programmes to provide affordable houses to citizens in recognition of the need to motivate them to be more productive in order to enhance national development. This is in line with the understanding that housing is a key prerequisite to the social contentment of the people. In spite of these mass housing policies and programmes, gaps still exist between housing supply and demand. According to Vanguard Newspaper, the proportion of Nigerian population living in urban areas has increased from 24.5 per cent in 1985, to over 51 per cent in 2017, with urban population of over 99,967,871 (Vanguard, 2018). The housing demand is estimated between 38 and 44 million units while housing construction is roughly 100,000 units per year. This is insufficient taking into account the estimated 17 million units of housing shortfall in Nigeria (Fashola, 2018). Thus, the continuous search for permanent remedy to housing deficits in Nigeria.

Similarly, access to quality and affordable housing are indicators of economic growth of a country and it is seen as a measurement of Gross Domestic Product in advanced countries (Atterhog, 2014). According to Amos, (2014) the rapid rate of urbanization in Nigeria is however not matched by a corresponding development in technological, industrial and economic growth which is why there is enormous urban housing shortage in the country. The result of this is the rapid deterioration of housing in the urban centres and phenomenal increase

in quantitative housing needs arising from shortages in housing units that does not match the population explosion resulting in severe overcrowding in existing units, the growth of squatter settlements in the cities, and the emergence of slums. Ironically the cost of building a house in Nigeria is relatively higher while the average income level is relatively lower compared to global average (Emma & Vida, 2013). This means even when there is a supply of housing units, the price tag whether self-built or off the shelf purchase is out of the reach of majority of Nigerian thereby making affordable housing still a dream. Many Nigerians cannot afford the houses provided by the government; not to talk of that built by private individuals and corporate bodies. In making it relatively easy for low-income earners to own houses, the National Housing Fund (NHF) was established by the NHF Act of 1992 to mobilize funds that will facilitate the provision of affordable housing for Nigerians (Aikeju, 2018). According to Fadamiro, Taiwo, & Ajayi, (2004) despite all these efforts, many Nigerians do not have access to affordable housing and slums are the only sources of abode for the common Nigerian because there are problems associated with mass housing for enhanced national development in Nigeria.

The study is a qualitative and conceptual research. It made use of explanatory and discussion methods to present the data and findings from the works of various secondary sources and opinions of previous authors.

Mass Housing and National Development: A Clarification

Mass housing connotes different meanings to different people. Chinwe (2014) described mass housing as the provision of housing on a large scale by government or in collaboration with private sector for public purchase either on owner-occupier or leasing. This definition focused on mass housing for developmental purposes without considering welfare of public servants. It is thus, not considered for this study.

Adetokunbo (2015) viewed mass housing as a process of developing home ownership and most importantly assisting low income earners to have their personal place of abode. However, his definition did not highlight indicators of mass housing schemes that enhance workers' welfare. It rather focused on expanding mass housing for increase affordability and did not state the source of funds that would ensure sustainability. Adetokunbo's mass housing is not apt for this study.

This study, however, is in consonance with the definition of the National Housing Policy (NHP) (2012) which defined mass housing as the system of providing asizeable quantity of residential buildings for public and civil servants, with sufficient infrastructure and public utilities. This includes planned, safe, decent, affordable, durable and hygienic surroundings to meet the essential and unique demands of the population.

National development, on the other hand, has been defined by various authors in different ways. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2011) viewed national

development as a qualitative and quantitative improvement in the living conditions of people of a state in line with national objectives, as indicated in its National Development plans.

Nwolise (2012) views national development as the process of transformation of economic facet of the state through human and technological advancement and application to produce higher per capita income, good roads, bridges, speedy communication and other facilities. The author hinges his definition on economic transformation of a country and human capacity to improve infrastructure for national development. Sadique (2012) conceptualizes national development as the political, social, environmental and economic progress of a society and its transformation through human and technological advancement to produce higher per capita income, industries and national infrastructure.

The above definitions as good as they appear are not apt for this study. This study conforms with the definition of national development by Tolu and Abe (2011) as “the reduction of poverty within a society and the improvement in the standard of living of the members of that society. They further stated that, it involves meeting the basic material needs such as food, shelter, education and healthcare. It is also concerned with non-material requirement such as participation in economic and political decisions affecting the condition of individuals’ lives and their wellbeing.

Theoretical Framework

Social Welfare Theory is adopted for this paper. The Social Welfare Theory was propounded by Joshi in 1969. The Social Welfare Theory originated in the desire of a humanitarian approach to ameliorate the sufferings of the workers and their families. This could be on account of the beneficial effects of comprehensive industrialization and the adverse social consequences on labour problems which have evolved in the process of transition from tradition to modernity (Josh, 2017). Joshi, in his Social Welfare Theory, talked about services which include provision of accommodation, amenities, adequate canteens, rest and recreational facilities, sanitary and medical facilities. Others are arrangement of travel to and from work, including social safety measures as it contributes to develop the conditions under which workers are employed (Josh, 2017).

The Social Welfare Theory is apt for this study because it looks at how welfare has been used by industries as an administrative strategy to improve the productivity of workers by providing accommodation. Non provision of accommodation for citizens and other work-related issues could lead to poor working and social life of workers and a decline in performance or efficiency of the personnel (Josh, 2013). The provision of accommodation and other related benefits could spur the workers to action in their daily activities. It confirms that when this need is met, it would ease off related anxieties and put them in a better frame of mind thereby enhancing national development. The Social Welfare Theory is most applicable in this study considering that the provision of accommodation for Nigerians through mass housing would

enhance national development.

Mass Housing and Nigeria's National Development: An Explanatory Note

There are several policies and programs adopted by the Federal government of Nigeria in her bid to make available mass housing for the generality of Nigerians, particularly the low income earners. This section attempts a presentation and explanation of such policies.

Policy of Owner Occupier Housing Scheme: The Federal Government of Nigeria under monetization policy sales its properties through Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria to workers occupying them. Monetization policy means converting intocash, the fringe benefits being enjoyed by civil servants as part of their remuneration package and condition of service (Ayapere, 2005). However, under the scheme, the government houses which were for the use of bureaucrats and other political office holders were to be converted into private property (Bakare, 2011). The policy provides those civil servants occupying government houses can own the houses by paying 10 per cent of the value of the house off front. While the 90 cent per will be calculated and spread across remaining years of service be deducting monthly in their salaries through Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria. The provision of the policy especially as regards to the sales of government properties helps civil servants to own houses which motivated them to be more productive. The workers who were hitherto living in government properties benefited from the policy by keying in the scheme and subsequently owning thehouses.

Provision of Loan Facilities to Acquire House: With the multiplication and escalation of prices of houses and building materials, the need for intervention by the government in it provision has become more urgent than ever before. The FGN through Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria came up with National Housing Fund Scheme since 1992. The mandatory contribution of 2.5 per cent, of the salary of contributors to the scheme, entitled civil servants to access a housing loan. (Joseph, 2017). However, the creation of the National Housing Fund Scheme should not deter public servants from exploring other avenues of provision ofaffordable housing scheme to complement the efforts of government.

The National Housing Fund Scheme has provided developed packages over the years to make funds more accessible to contributors in order to own their houses. In the same vein, Cooperative Societies provide property loans to their members at affordable prices in order to assist them to own their houses. This self-initiative further shows the importance of houses in the lives of an individual.

Offer of Home Renovation Loan: Home Renovation Loan is a package introduced by the National Housing Fund Scheme to assist contributors who might not qualify to access housing to benefit from it. It is a soft loan from one to 5 million payable over a period of time through the beneficiaries' salaries. Home Renovation Loans plays a key role enabling personnel who

hitherto thought they might never benefit from the National Housing Fund Scheme due to some of its conditions. The loan is acting as a bridge to bring all contributors on board to access loans from the scheme. According to Bakare, the package which was introduced in 2016, has so far benefited a lot of workers cutting across all categories.

The Impacts of Mass Housing on National Development in Nigeria

There are several impacts of Mass Housing Schemes on Nigeria's national development. These include infrastructural development, employment opportunity, direct government support as well as easy access to mortgage loans and grants.

Infrastructural Development: Mass Housing contributes to Infrastructural development significantly to human development, poverty reduction and national development. This is achieved through the development of electricity and roads, accompany major housing projects. The mass housing scheme has provided access to remote areas through the construction of roads meant to serve its estates, to ease transportation for the host communities and estate tenants. In the same vein, the boreholes and mini water projects constructed also serve adjoining communities. This attracts people to build houses outside the estates making them home owners and enhance their more as well as national development.

Employment Opportunity: In Nigeria, the housing sector contributes about 0.38 per cent to GDP compared to 30 and 70 per cent in USA and the UK respectively (Ahmed, 2018). Many skilled and unskilled work forces such as masons, painters and carpenters among others dominate the housing sectors. This portrays the economic potential inherent in mass housing for enhanced national development. The mass housing projects has been a major source of employment for both skilled and unskilled labour.

Direct Government Support: The initiation of mass housing for the citizens are attributed to direct government support. The government demonstrated strong political will and got involved directly towards developing housing schemes for their citizens by setting up the Federal Housing Authority. Consequently, the schemes helped in providing sustainable mass housing for low-income earners in the country for enhanced national development.

Easy Access to Mortgage Loans and Grants: The provision of mortgage loans and grants that could be accessed helped in achieving sustainable progress in providing affordable homes for the citizens. The benefit of the loans helps them meet the yardstick for mortgages by increasing their equity contribution towards acquiring a home. Therefore, the easy access to mortgage loans and grant is an essential requirement for development of mass housing schemes in order to enhance national development.

The Challenges of Mass Housing for National Development in Nigeria

Land Use Act 1978: The Land Use Act 1978 is the legal framework regulating land ownership and land allocation in Nigeria. The Act vested the power of land ownership, town planning and building permit on the state governors. Oftentimes the land allocated for mass housing by

government are far away from city centres thereby negatively affecting the attraction of the property to prospective buyers. The mass housing estates hitherto has faced some difficulties in acquiring title deeds for lands as well as perfecting Certificate of Occupancy for the individual beneficiaries particularly land allocated by states. The cost of land particularly in highbrow states could be as much as 20-30 per cent of the total cost of the project (Ewurani, 2019). The problems associated with land acquisition include government bureaucracy, difficulty in acquiring title deeds, compensation, and sentimental attachment to land from various communities. These problems have limited the operations to about 15 states of the country, despite allocating lands in all the 36 states including the FCT (Handbook, 2017). The Land Use Act therefore constitutes a problem for efficient delivery of mass housing, thus affecting national development.

Cost of Infrastructure: Basic infrastructure and building materials are essential for the effective mass housing projects. These infrastructures dictate the category of the environment and cost of the houses. The cost implication of providing quality infrastructure therefore affects the prices of houses and impact on the provision of mass housing for national development. Essential infrastructure like access roads, electricity and provision of water is vital to the provision of mass housing. These infrastructures affect the quality of the location and cost of the houses. For example, the cost of providing infrastructure in Kurudu Estate for instance was estimated at ₦800 million for the provision of roads, culverts, electricity and water (Ewurani, 2019). The cost of providing quality infrastructure within the mass housing estate therefore affects the unit cost of houses and impact on the provision of mass housing for enhanced national development.

Stringent Loan Conditions: Across the world, known sources of housing funds are from governments, private enterprises, mortgage banks, individual savings and insurance. However, in Nigeria sources of loans for housing are mostly from Federal Housing Authority (FHA), Federal Government Staff Housing Loan Board (FGSHLB) and Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN). The loan conditions include 3 - 6 per cent interest rate payable over a period of 30 years. The number of houses acquired through individual efforts outweighs those acquired through established housing estates built by either government or private developers. Mass housing developing agencies is limited by the high interest rate charged by private and commercial banks which in most cases is between 22 - 35 per cent, limited payback period and collaterals of about 5 – 10 years. All these limitations continue to affect the realisation of achieving housing for all by Year 2020 (Litikang, 2019). The combination of high population that are below poverty level and low incomes implies that about 85 per cent of Nigerians cannot afford a mortgage loan to buy the most basic home of about ₦5 million even at concessionary interest rates (Akande, 2019). The commercial and mortgage banks have played less vital role at efforts of housing provision in the country. The reason was that banks do not grant the privilege for enduring lending which housing projects demands.

Cumbersome Process of Acquiring Lands: The Land Use Act 1978 has not largely provided the intended uniform measures to standardise the land ownership and facilitate its availability for development. According to Jinadu (2019), the NHP has so many loopholes among which are lack of supplementary legislation and lengthy process for obtaining Certificate of Occupancy (C-of-O) and letter of consent. The inability of Land Use Decree to clearly spell out rights and powers of the FGN as trustees of land obviously hampers its effort to acquire suitable lands in the states. The inability of citizens to acquire choice lands on concession from inception has been the major setback of the scheme. The cumbersome process of acquiring lands therefore constitutes a challenge in the provision of mass housing under for enhanced national development in Nigeria. **Lack of Transparency and Accountability:** The quest for transparency and accountability of government housing programmes is due to the inability of the current scheme by the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria through National Housing Fund Schemes to meet the aspiration of the citizen. Lack of transparency and accountability encourages corruption such as diversion of funds selling of houses to non-contributors and inflated prices. These scandals involving government officials have attracted public attention and have done more damage to their overall credibility of government programmes.

Low Income: The national minimum wage is now thirty thousand naira (₦ 30,000.00.) However, by August 2021 must state yet to implement the new policy. Ideally, the salary of a civil servant should be enough to plan to own a house which is a physiological need based on the Need Theory of Maslow. Hence, the income of the civil servants is thus central to appreciating and benefiting the intervention of the government towards provision of affordable housing. The average income of the civil servants poses a great challenge to the success of housing scheme. The prices of houses offered by must government housing schemes are well beyond target population. Affordable Housing Scheme most times ended off been bought by wealthy individuals in the society. They in turn rent out to the same citizens who were supposed to be the beneficiaries and thus the aim is defeated. The inability of the low-income earners to benefit from a mass housing scheme often cause the target beneficiaries not to trust government initiatives and this would adversely affect scheme. This often create a situation whereby the government may be trying to address the housing need of their personnel while in reality they are not because basic income is not sufficient enough to afford them to key in to the scheme.

Mass Housing and National Development in Nigeria: The Way Forward

One of the means of addressing Nigeria's housing deficit is the re-positioning of the Family Homes Fund Limited. The Family Homes Fund Limited is a partnership between the Nigerian Sovereignty Investment Authority as a founding shareholder and the Federal Ministry of Finance which came into existence in 2018. The fund is designed to draw contributions from state and federal government in order to cover the housing shortfall in 15 years' time. The fund is an ambitious housing focused fund in Africa South of the Sahara. The Family Homes Fund Limited set aside about ₦1 trillion by 2023, to assist millions of Nigerians realise the dreams of

owing a house (Anthony, 2019). Through partnership with great players in the housing sector, the fund plans to facilitate the supply of about 500,000 homes by 2023, thus enhancing national development. To be eligible for selection to work with Family Homes Fund Limited, partners will be either public or private sector operators including co-operatives with impeccable track record of building homes. A partner must be able to show proof of financial prowess to meet project costs not covered by Family Homes Fund Limited financing, particularly pre-scale, pre-development and statutory approval cost (Anthony, 2019). Qualified beneficiaries are able to lease a decent home for a monthly cost not exceeding 40 per cent of their family income including an option right of refusal at any time. The implementation and execution of the fund could serve as a workable prospect to facilitate the provision of mass housing on national development.

The next solution is the need to develop the Nigeria mortgage Re-Finance Company. The Nigeria Mortgage Re-Finance Company (NMRC) is a public-private sector led initiative aimed at improving access to finance for Nigeria's housing market. Shareholders of the Nigeria Mortgage Re-Finance Company include the FGN, the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Agency (i.e. the Nigerian Sovereign Wealth Fund), development finance institutions (such as the IFC and Shelter Afrique) as well as various primary mortgage banks and commercial banks in Nigeria. The Nigeria Mortgage Re-Finance Company is essentially a re-financing institution which provides our mortgage lending banks with increased access to liquidity and long-term funds. By deepening the available liquidity in the housing finance market, the Nigeria Mortgage Re-Finance Company will help to bridge the funding costs for residential mortgages in the country, to finance the Nigeria Mortgage Re-Finance Company. Okonjo-Iweala, (2014) asserted that the FGN negotiated a US\$300 million financing agreement with the International Development Association (IDA) on very concessionary terms. Of this sum, about US\$250 million will be disbursed in installments to Nigeria Mortgage Re-Finance Company as Tier 2 Capital subject to various establishment of a Mortgage Guarantee Facility for lower income borrowers; while US\$25 million will support the development and piloting of Housing Microfinance Products.

Another way forward is the need to simplify land titling procedures. Simplifying land titling is another task we have focused on. Houses must be built on land, and people invest in their homes only if they can be assured of security of tenure. Families also want assurance that their real estate investments will serve as a secure asset for themselves and their loved ones. Due to Nigeria's Federal structure, ownership rights for land are vested in the office of the Governors of various State Governments. And the delays in obtaining the so-called "Governor's consent" for land titles creates frustration and uncertainty for many housing developers and home owners. The FGN initiated a pilot scheme with some selected State Governments which were willing to fast-track their land approval procedures. The Governors committed to supporting the Nigeria Mortgage Re-finance Company initiative by providing the enabling environment for mortgage origination. Specifically, the FGN asked these State Governors to commit to simplifying property registration, to provide access to serviced plots of land for developers. Others are to

implement a standardized mortgage and foreclosure law and to assign dedicated officials to liaise with the Nigeria Mortgage Re-finance Company on this initiative. Furthermore, simplifying land titling procedures holds another good solution of improving the activities of AHS in provision of houses to civilservants.

There is also need for improvement of the income of Nigerians. The mass housing scheme cannot work if there is no improvement in the income of the people, this means that the Federal Government has to look into existing salary structure and do all necessary reforms in the segment (El-Rufai, 2011). Also, the Federal Government has to enforce every organization that has workers to implement the minimum salaries scale irrespective of the number of workers in that organisation. The harmonization of salary scale for all workers will strengthen the enablement of the private companies to be more effective. The lifetime income of an average Nigerian discounted with the expected inflation should be able to provide a decent house for him. In this scheme, government subsidy to the citizen will come in the form of provision of housing estate and land for the private companies involving in the building of houses.

Lastly, applicable regulations and policies should be reviewed. Nigeria should fix its housing policies and regulatory framework including those required for effective operation of Real Estate Investment Trusts. Furthermore, to cater for the vast majority of Nigerians, government should consider other forms of inexpensive housing ideas such as pallet homes, outbuilding, shipping containers, etc.

Conclusion

This study evaluated mass housing and its impacts on national development with a view to enunciating strategies to reposition the scheme for efficient service delivery. The findings showed clearly that cost of housing is not affordable for the citizens. It also discovered that the provision of infrastructures is essential for the effective delivery of mass housing. It identified some contributions of mass housing to include infrastructural development, employment opportunity, Easy Access to Mortgage Loans and Grants. Therefore, in line with these findings, the paper concludes that mass housing has great financial implications and significant impacts on national development in Nigeria.

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