IMPLICATIONS OF INFORMAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN ABEOKUTA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of informal housing have been largely viewed as problem and described as spontaneous, unplanned and uncoordinated development without necessarily complying with the planning and building regulations. Events have shown that government eviction and ineffective execution of intervention strategies to mitigate the implications of informal housing have further fueled its growth and proliferation in Abeokuta as in other cities. Little or no work has been specifically done or consensus reached on intervention strategy to adopt. The research aimed at assessing the implications of sprawling development of informal housing in Abeokuta, Nigeria with the view to evolving intervention strategies for low-cost housing delivery. A survey research method was used in the selection of respondents. Data was collected through structured questionnaire and direct field observation on 384 systematically randomly selected household heads or adult-occupants within the study area of Abeokuta. Data obtained were processed to make inferences with descriptive statistical analysis, multiple regression, ANOVA, correlation matrix, independent sample t-test and factor analysis with extraction method of principal components analysis in relation to the study objectives through SPSS software package version 21.0. Findings revealed a physical development situation that has propensity to degenerate into a deplorable living condition, but not precarious. The socio-economic characteristics are found to be jointly responsible for the emergence of informal housing and are vital factors in the formulation, implementation and performance evaluation of housing policy, strategies and programmes. These factors are supportive of statutory revenue enhancement, economic and physical development that possesses inherent solution for low-cost housing delivery in growing cities like Abeokuta, Nigeria. The study concludes that, with inclusive governmental and professional intervention through regeneration, informal housing can be a viable and sustainable platform for increasing the housing stock, especially for the urban-poor through collaborative approach in an integrative manner.
1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

Informal housing has variously been described by researchers. Informal housing has been described as urban neighbourhood or districts that develops and operates without formal control of the state. They co-exist but not synonymous with squatter settlements and slums (Kim and Ross, 2011). It has been described as an integral part of the urban landscape, developed in contrary to the laid down laws/regulatory framework concerning the area and a testimony of the poor's ingenuity (UN-Habitat, 1999; 2003 and 2007). Hasan, (1998) and UN-Habitat (2009) also revealed it as a phenomenon fairly homogeneous in nature, complex and diverse in manifestation for which solutions could not be generalised but needed to be context-specific. UN-Habitat (2009) further revealed a number of names, either colloquial or as connotation, by which informal housing is being described by various authors and sometimes used interchangeably. They include informal settlements, impermanent or semi-permanent settlements, informal housing, illegal or unauthorised settlements, unplanned settlements and uncontrolled settlements.

Kim and Ross (2011) further observed that, they are economically, spatially and socially integrated with their urban context, without which most developing cities appear to be unsustainable. Yet the desire to remove them persists while linking it to issues of urban imagery and place-identity. These descriptions or viewpoints highlight the attitudes and approaches towards informal housing or informal settlement, ranging from negative, neutral and positive dispositions (Srivinas, 2005).

Viewpoints for, against and indifferent revealed informal housing or informal settlement have suffered from definitional problems. What can probably be deduced or inferred from many of the descriptions or explanations aptly describes informal housing
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