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# An assessment of the housing policy performance towards public low income housing provision and management in Lagos, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The paper observes that the problems of housing provision and management for the low income earners remain intractable in the society. By assessing the effectiveness of the public sector intervention in housing development for the group over the years, the paper argues that despite the existence of many policy directives, and unattainable goals statement such as 'housing for all by the year 2000, sixteen years after the target year, the problem of inadequate and unaffordable housing for the group has persisted and reached a critical state. It posits that within the context of the institutional framework, the current housing provision and management practices in Lagos require a paradigm shift to reduce the percentage of the citizens living in blighted residential environment. It employs interview and secondary data for assessment of the past and present low income housing programme performance towards a critique of the factors that are responsible for the policy 'somersault'. It appraises the factors militating against the attainment of sustainable housing development for the group and concludes by proffering a workable solution to the identified problems asserting that social housing development provides the way forward in attaining a sustainable housing development for the low income earners in Lagos.

**Keywords:** Housing; Basic Need; Housing Provision; Low Income Housing; Social Housing; Public Housing

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## **1. Introduction**

Housing represents one of the most basic needs of mankind after food and clothing. As an integral part of human settlement that fulfils basic need in which people live, it constitutes a critical component in social and economic fabric of a nation, and the performance of the housing is often seen as a barometer for measuring the health or ill health of a nation. As a social unit of space, the importance of living conditions, is recognised for centuries as a fundamental requirement for health, work efficiency, social-economic standards, productivity, general welfare, development of the individuals and community (Aluko,2004; Shaw 2004; Hood, 2005; Nubi, 2008; Ibem and Amole, 2010). As a package of services which occupier will like to consume (Mandelker and Montgomery, 1973; Agbola, 2005) look at housing as both a product and process. The product perspective sees housing as a residential environment where man seeks shelter, security, comfort and dignity. While the process perspective which appears very complex transcends issues such as dwelling design, provision, maintenance and neighbourhood services and regeneration.

Indeed, the emotional, social and economic importance of housing reinforces the ever increase in demand for housing to the extent that it far outstretches supply in the developing countries. In Nigeria, the supply of new housing has not been able to match the demand as a result of the ill preparation of the country for consequences of rapid population growth and unmanaged urbanisation in Lagos that represents the hopes Nigeria associates with cities. Perhaps this notion explains the National Technical Working Group Report on Housing (2009) remarks that little is understood about housing sector and most often, housing is neglected in Nigeria to the extent that little progress has been made in the provision of housing for the generality of Nigeria and the low income group in particular. The severity of the housing problems for the low income group is depicted by Olotuah and Bobadoye's (2009) comment on the inadequacy where between 60% and 75% of the group are observed to be either houseless, or live in self-made temporary structure, which do not only comply with planning laws, regulations and development control, but compounded by problems of overcrowding, poor construction standards, resulting in a density of 4.6 persons per room (Agbola and Agunbiade, 2007; Adelekan, 2009 cited in Ngoma, 2010). The housing conditions constitute a threat to the occupant's health in all aspects of life.

In the same vein, Hoelzel (2016) assertion corroborates previous observation that the housing problems ranging from lack of access to basic facilities, poor quality and physical conditions, proliferation of informal settlement evolved in response to government inability to provide adequate housing for the teeming low income population. This situation provides the need to take another look at the current housing sector in Nigeria in respect of low income housing group with a view to improving the national economic development. It is against this background that this study aims to assess the performance of the housing policy towards enhancing the low income group access to decent, affordable and sanitary housing in a healthy environment supported with infrastructural facilities and services. The objectives are: examining the need for low income housing provision for the low income group; examining the theoretical issues relating to low income housing deficiencies; evaluating housing policies performance within the institutional framework context and proffering solution to the low income housing problem for a sustainable urban development.

## 2. Need for low income housing provision

Housing is paramount to human existence and characteristic of its process of provision is the construction of a large number of residential buildings on a permanent basis with adequate physical infrastructure, and social services in planned decent, safe and sanitary neighbourhood to meet the basic and special needs of a population (Jacob and Ofem, 2007). Today like in many developing countries, Nigeria urban centres are plagued by huge housing deficit compounded by many factors (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Estimated Housing Needs in Nigeria Between the Periods of 1990-2020 (Agbola, 2004)

Income group	1990	2000	2020
Low-income	8,413, 980	14,372,293	39,989,286
Medium-income	7,770,005	13,273,291	33, 573,900
High- income	7,624,230	12,419,068	28,548,633

Table 1 indicates that the supply of new housing for all categories of income over the years are unable to match the demand and the gap continues in the face of ever increasing rate of population. The spatial products of housing problem in the country which are visible, complex and enormous manifest in such problems as poor urban living condition, overcrowding and inadequacy in qualitative and quantitative forms for the low income group. Describing the features of Lagos, (Hoelzel, 2016) states that its landscape reflects proliferation of slums and informal settlement which provide the accommodation need for the low income group.

The definition of low income group according to FGN (2004) is all employees and self-employed persons whose annual income is equivalent to salary grade of 01-06 within the public service. Interestingly, the national minimum wage is now N18,000 (Adedeji and Olotua, 2012; Fapohunda et al.,2013) or (\$47, per month at the rate of N380 per \$1.) This observation is corroborated by the previous UN Human Development Report of (2009) which remarked that 83.9% of Nigerians live below \$2.00 a day and cannot afford decent accommodation and pay the market rent rates and other incidental expenses to most landlords, who are pressed to get returns on their housing investments as soon as possible.

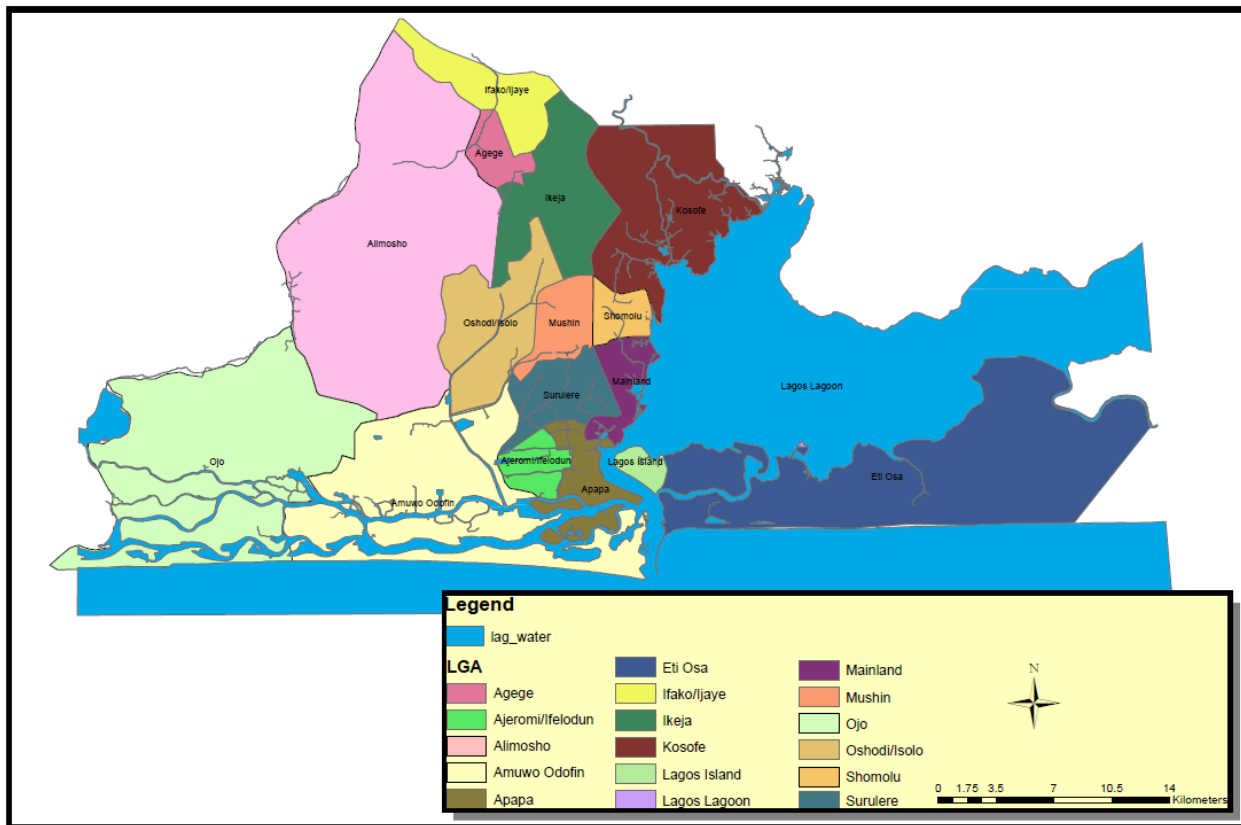
The World Bank observation that the country needs to produce about 720,000 units annually for the next 20 years to solve the problems indicates the enormity of the housing problem. Arguably the Nigeria 2020 development strategy which includes a vision to build 10,398,650 housing units between 2012 and 2020 (Housing Finance in Africa Yearbook, 2012, pp.111) reinforces the World Bank assertion.

Available statistics for Lagos situation concerning housing stock shows that out of the 1.4 million housing needs that were recommended by the master plan for the metropolitan Lagos between 1980 and 2000 only 140,000 units were satisfied. As at 2011, only 1.2 million houses are housing 17 million populations and the deficit is so huge that the State requires annual housing needs of 224,000 units per annum for the next fifteen years (Abosedo, 2006; Ugbodaga, 2011). Even where the housing dwellings have been provided, concern of affordability by the low income group is expressed in many studies by (Olotuah and Bobadoye, 2009; Bashorun and Fadairo, 2012; Jaiyeola, 2012). The problem of affordability has heightened the growing need

for housing researchers and decision makers to develop a better understanding of the structure, operation and dynamics of urban housing market in the face of the proliferation of slum communities which has increased from 43 identified by the World Bank in 1991 to more than 100 in recent times(Hoelez, 2016). The proliferation is frightening and calls for urgent attention by government and researchers in housing studies. However, Lagos State government has made attempts to ameliorate the housing problems through policies, strategies and programmes. Success in terms of the provision of adequate, decent and affordable housing units in this regard for the low income group remains elusive.

### 3. Study area

Lagos metropolis an integral part of Lagos State is located in the South-West coast of Nigeria between latitude 6.22 and 6.42<sup>0</sup>N of the Equator and longitude 2.42 and 4.22 <sup>0</sup>E of Greenwich meridian. It occupies a land mass of 3.6 sq. km representing 0.4 % of the land mass.



**Figure 1.** Map of Lagos Metropolitan Area (Lagos State Physical Planning, 2012)

The metropolitan Lagos constitutes the greater part of the habitable portion of Lagos State. The state is bounded to the north and east by Ogun State in the west by Republic of Benin and the south by Gulf of Guinea. It is about 800 km south of Abuja. It is described as the industrial and commercial hub of Nigeria. The fact

that Lagos is experiencing rapid population growth with an average annual rate of 3.7% makes it one of the fastest growing cities. The United Nations (2012) cited in Filani (2012) notes that with a population of 11.2 million in 2011, Lagos was the 19<sup>th</sup> most populous city in the world, and projected that this would grow to 18.9 million by 2025, resulting in the city becoming the 11<sup>th</sup> most populous city in the world. Administratively, the Lagos Metropolitan Area comprises of 16 Local Government Council Areas (See Figure 1). The Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC) provided 14,792 low income housing units in the 17 years of its existence (Olokesusi, 2011). The housing units are managed by Lagos Building Investment Company Limited (LIBC).

However, despite government's efforts to provide adequate housing, rapid population growth puts strain on the limited social and infrastructural facilities, as indicated by the statistics on housing deficit in Lagos. This has implication for provision of adequate housing for the teeming urban population towards rebranding Lagos image in the face of megacity status.

#### **4. The study approach**

The approach adopted in this research is a case study one that involves qualitative analysis that reviewed available relevant data obtained from government, from secondary sources including government publication, and other literature complimented by primary data obtained through author's in-depth interview with some of the officials of some agencies including Lagos State Development property Development Corporation (LSDPC) Lagos State Urban and Regional Authority (LASURA) and Ministry of Housing (MOH) that are relevant to housing provision and management in Lagos State. The officials of the various agencies interviewed were appropriately cited as key informants in the discourse analysis.

#### **5. Critical issues in low income housing deficiencies in Lagos**

Urbanisation is a global phenomenon which the trend has manifested in favour of population concentration in urban centres. Lagos, which epitomises the most notorious example of urban growth in the country; with its megacity status has a population of 16 million, future estimates suggests that in the near future, it will turn out to be the third largest megacity in the world (Brown and Kristiansen, 2009; Filani, 2012; Omolabi, 2012). Spatial development of Lagos revealed that it grew from a village seaport with an area of 3.97 km in 1861 to spatial expansion of 271.20 km<sup>2</sup> in 1976 to 3577 km<sup>2</sup> in 2005. The metropolitan Lagos area which covers 37% land mass of Lagos hosts about 85% the population resulting in a population density of 20,000 per km<sup>2</sup> (Ogunleye and Awomosu, 2011 cited in Ogunleye and Alo, 2011).

Poverty is another critical determinant factor responsible for inadequate housing for the low income group. Ogunwunike (1991) cited in Aluko (2010) defined poverty as a household inability to provide sufficient income to satisfy its shelter. An illustration of a comparative analysis of per capital income of other countries with that of Nigeria places her at a disadvantaged. For instance, while the per capital income of \$10,291; \$5,965; \$46,432, and \$43,654 have been observed for South Africa, Botswana, America and Sweden respectively, Nigeria per capital income is estimated at \$2,15 (Olotuah, and Bobadoye, 2009). Even in a situation where the minimum wage was revised to N18 000 (US\$116.24) in 2011, the housing finance in

Africa yearbook report of 2012 notes that about 80 percent of the population still earn less than US\$60 a month. This portrays a situation where affordable housing would continue to be a mirage amongst the low income group; moreover, the meagre and unsteady incomes compel slum dwellers to poor housing with inadequate supporting services. The condition is further aggravated by high cost of building materials, high rent, limited land supply and high land prices and acquisition obstacles. These factors jeopardise the accessibility of the low income group to decent and affordable housing (Ibimilua and Ibitoye, 2015).

Housing affordability is directly linked with income. It is defined by income of the population as that which costs no more than 30% of the income of the occupant household (Marks and Sedgwick, 2008 cited in Ableson, 2009). It is concerned with securing some given standards of housing or different standards at a price or rent which does not impose an unreasonable burden on household incomes resulting into housing stress (Andrews, 1998; Maclennan and Williams, 1990; Malpezzi et al., 1985; Marks and Sedgwick, 2008 cited in Abelson, 2009). Affordability is an issue of absolute poverty in that it embraces those households that could not afford even the minimum standard available. This notion agrees with Bichi (2002) and Morakinyo et al. (2012) findings that the low income and affordability are the major challenges confronting this group in the society, and deriving from this difficulty of mobilising sufficient funds with the National Housing Fund(NHF) the group require initiatives to some forms of assistance including housing finance.

Housing finance is a tool that is used to pay for housing, and technically, it is the actual money or capital funds for housing or real estate development without prejudice to its source, management, procurement, and utilisation. The role of housing finance is to make adequate housing affordable to ameliorate the problem of informality (UN, 2011). In the implementation of a successful housing provision process, availability of finance and adequate man power are vital determining factors. In Nigeria, housing is typically financed through a member of institutional sources that include private (formal and informal sources); as well as public sources including formal sources such as primary mortgage banks, merchant banks, insurance companies, consumer credit society as well as personal savings loans from money lenders, cooperation amongst others (FGN, 2012). These sources constitute the surest and realistic traditional way of accumulating savings towards housing ownership for occupation or rental. However, mobilisation of funds from these sources often prove inadequate and is being hampered by complexity of economic activities such as poor funding, high mortgage interest, hyper inflation rate that affects high cost of building materials, poor product design and construction cost (Aluko, 2004; Housing Finance Year Book, 2012). All these factors undermine the low income households' affordability and access to mortgage finance (Onibokun, 1990; Agbola, 2004; Akinmoladun and Oluwoye, 2007; Kuye, 2007; Adedeji and Olotuah, 2012).

## **6. Critical review of government intervention on housing provision and management for low income in Lagos Metropolis**

### **6.1. Evolution and theoretical explanations for public low income housing**

Historically, publicly provided housing started long time before industrial revolution (Macey, 1973). It was a strategy adopted as a response to housing problems that bedevilled cities in England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In Nigeria, the first attempt in public intervention housing provision was during the colonial period following the bubonic plague of 1928-1929. The plague led to the establishment of Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDB) in 1929, which later transformed to Lagos State Development Property Corporation (LSDPC) which was charged with the responsibility of planning and development of capital city of Lagos and later provision and management of public low income housing among others (Key Informant LSDPC, 2016). It planned the layout of Ebute-metta, and the housing scheme had only civil servants as its beneficiaries (Kabir and Bustani, 2011). The second attempt of government intervention resulted from workers strike of 1945 which emphasised the problem of housing shortage, and extemporised further government commitment to housing. The third attempt derived from the need to improve the living and housing conditions of people following the inevitable independence of 1960. This preparation resulted in the slum clearance of central Lagos in 1955 and the re-location of residents to famous Surulere housing scheme, marking the start of government housing development in the country (Aluko, 2004; Iweka and Adeyinka, 2014).

The theoretical explanation that justifies the government intervention in housing hinges on the economic theory and productivity theories. The economic theory rests on allocative inefficiency of the private housing market. The theory posits that both consumers and producers in the market strive to achieve optimality by either deriving the maximum utility from their budget or the maximum profit for their transaction based on the assumption of perfect understanding of housing market which is hardly met in the real world. Thus, government intervenes in housing delivery to correct market imperfections as well as provide any good which is considered a 'merit good' in public interest. Arguably, housing is a merit good and is provided in the public interest based on the understanding that a citizen of a nation whether rich or poor is entitled to a minimum level of housing consumption (Agbola, 2004).

The productivity theory postulates that increased work productivity and improved health are associated with good housing investment. Hence, there is a positive correlation between good dwellings and improved state of health of dwellers which stimulates government intervention in housing provision as a good (Agbola, 2004; Gilbertson et al., 2008). Over the years, the Nigeria government always adopts public housing programme as the method to correct housing market inefficiency and ensure a minimum standard of shelter for all the people of Nigeria (Iweka and Adeyinka, 2014). The question is to what extent have the actions of government solved the housing problems of low income group?

## 6.2. Achievements and failures of institutional framework for public low income housing provision and management

### 6.2.1. Achievements and failures

Policy makers and system analysts have shown interests to the spatial consequences of the rapid rate of urbanisation from factors of migration and its socio-economic implications on housing sector because it is

always the first to be hit by the influx of people to the urban centre (Olatubara, 2008). This notion is aggravated by the housing delivery effort that has often fallen short of urban growth and housing need considering the quality, quantity and location of housing that is always determined by the depth and vibrancy of its regulatory and institutional framework which relates to the concept of good urban governance. Literature has revealed that the most spontaneous response to housing shortage in most developing countries is offered by private sector. Nigeria is no exception, where the private sector contributes over 80% of the existing housing stock which are usually out of reach of the low income households, thus justifying the need for public sector involvement in housing delivery (Morakinyo et al., 2015).

Two approaches that are relevant to discourse on public housing provision in developing countries include government provided housing and government sponsored housing. The former is concerned with direct production and management and allocation of housing on a large scale, using various methods by local authority. The approach is characterised by the rent that is far from the market rent. On the other hand, the latter approach is nearer the market rents and managed by various kinds of landlords such as housing association and cooperatives. The institutions often carry out the construction, allocation and management of the units (Power, 1993 cited in Ilesanmi, 2012). Seemingly the former is more applicable to Nigeria.

Evidence from literature in Nigeria suggests that low priority has been accorded to housing sector relative to overall scheme of national development. Arguably, the low-cost housing is considered to be more of resource absorbing rather than productive in nature. This derives from the least solution arrive at by the government's interpretation of 'decent' housing which leads to the provision of housing units that are usually out of the reach of low income earners. Perhaps the only exception to the interpretation was under the administration of Governor Lateef Jakande between 1979 and 1983 described as golden era of housing in Lagos State when 10,000 housing units were provided by mortgage provision from LBIC with emphasis on low cost flats to cater for the needs of the civil servants and non-civil servant in the state (Osodi, 2016 cited in Hoelzel, 2016). This agrees with the key Informant Housing Expert (2016) statements that "the low income housing provision was a feat which was not performed by any government before 1979 and after 1983".

In Lagos, various succeeding governments have been challenged by the need to provide adequate and affordable low cost housing since 1955 up till now with a view to matching demand. For instance, the LEDB provided only 4502 housing units in 17 years between 1955 and 1972, whereas population escalated from 1.2 million to 3.0 million in 1972 ( Adedokun, 1982; cited in Akinmoladun and Oluwoye, 2007). Other agencies concerned with housing delivery within Lagos Metropolis amongst including LSDPC, Lagos State Ministry of Housing (MOH), Federal Housing Authority (FHA) Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban development, Lagos State Building Investment Corporation have not done much either. Olokesusi (2011) remarked that as at 2006, LSDPC has built a total number of 20, 572 units in 40 different locations in 23 estates comprising of 14, 972 low income housing units, 3,878 and 1,722 housing units for medium and upper income groups respectively (see Tables 1 and 2).

The figures in Table 2 above suggest that more low income houses were provided than any other types. Nevertheless, a major challenge that has confronted the method of allocation of these units is the



unfavourable nature to the target group as the units often end up in the hands of the rich who have capacity to purchase them and who in turn let the dwelling units out to the poor at exorbitant prices. Additionally, those housing units provided are linked with the prices which are too high that they are not affordable to the low income earners, depending on the location of these units, a 2 bedroom flat will cost between 2.5 and 6 million naira or \$15,625 - \$375,000 (Omolabi et al., 2012). This notion is corroborated by the report of Housing Finance in Africa 2012 which observes that Nigeria's 2020 development strategy suggests an average house cost of US\$50,000.

**Table 2.** Total Number of Public Housing Units in Lagos Metropolis (Jiboye, 2010; Olokesusi, 2011)

Income category	Number of estates	Number of housing units
High	6	1,722
Medium	11	3,878
Low	23	14,972
Total	40	20,572

Aside from the LSDPC, in an attempt to deliver the dividends of democracy to the people, through the (MOH), the Lagos State Government embarked on housing provision under the Millennium Housing Scheme which the ultimate goal is to 'provide numerous and affordable houses for teeming masses of Lagos State'. Out of the total housing units of 45,000 proposed in 1999, within the life time of the administration, in the rate of 10:20:70 for the high, medium and low income group respectively (Akimoladun and Oluwoye, 2007). Table 3 shows a wide difference between what was promised and what was actually delivered.

**Table 3.** Total Number of Housing Units Completed Between 1999 and 2005 (Akinmoladun and Oluwoye 2007)

Housing Types/Year	Economic	Medium	Upper medium	High	Total
Jubilee Housing Scheme 1999	120	-	-	-	120
2000	1507	-	-	-	1507
2001	-	912	96	-	1008
Alliance Housing					
2002	454	-	-	-	454
2003	-	-	-	-	-
2004	138	270	1560	-	1830
2005	-	68	52	64	321
Total	2219	1250	1708	64	5240

The total units that the administration was able to deliver between 1999 and 2005 is 5240 (11%) of what was initially promised. Indeed, out of the 5240 housing units, provided 42%, 23.85% and 1.22% were distributed among the low, medium and high income groups respectively.

The federal government contribution to housing provision for the low income group leaves much to be desired in Lagos. The first attempt by the federal government to intervene in direct housing provision for the low income was enshrined in the third national development plan period (1975-1980).The federal

government aimed at providing 60,000 residential units mainly for low income and middle income group throughout the federation with 4,000 units being provided in each state and Lagos was to be provided with 15,000 units under the national housing programme. These units were increased to 202,000 in 1977 comprising of 46,000 units in Lagos. Available evidence suggests that within the plan period, only 8,500 units were completed in Lagos representing less than 20% of the target (Okoro, 2009).

The 8,500 units provided are not only inadequate, but unaffordable to the low income group. As the social, economic and environmental problems become aggravated, the NHF programme initiated in 1994 that proposed the production of 121, 000 housing units and less than 5% was achieved. One thing that is evidently clear from the series of government policies aimed at housing provision efforts is that government and the Nigerian public have not been coping well with the massive backlog of unmet housing need because of various policies summersaults resulting in increased existence of a gap between the housing supply and demand for the low income group in particular (Agbola, 2005; Raji, 2008).

The review made earlier suggests that the high hopes, noble pledges, and huge sums of money sunk into housing sector which characterised the hall mark of good urban governance associated with various public intervention programmes seemed not sufficient to forestall the housing programmes failure because of lack of political will (FGN, 2012), seemingly from the institutional performance perspective.

Other alternative mechanisms of mass production of housing units disregarded include site and services and core housing. Even where such houses were built from direct construction, the taste and preferences of the target population are not articulated and available evidence shows the units are invariably transformed (Aduwo, 2011; Ekop, 2012). Additionally, the failure to relate the issue of housing development to indigenous technology such as building design, material usage, construction methodology, capacity development as well as research development are pertinent factors that can explain the poor performance of public low cost housing in Nigeria generally and Lagos in particular (Key informant, Housing Expert, 2016).

It is obvious from previous discussions that the contribution of the public sector to the low income housing stock leaves much to be desired. To this end, towards enhancing access to affordable, adequate and decent housing, in relation to the policy goal of housing provision for the low income group, the system cannot rely on direct construction methods anymore. Since the system cannot compel the private sector housing market to produce dwelling units for the low income group for their use, without direct subsidy, the need arises to explore the non-conventional housing units' delivery towards solving the housing problems of the low income group in Nigeria.

### *6.2.2. Assessment of institutional performance of housing provision and management in Lagos*

The appraisal of a government can be measured with the level of the implementation and effectiveness of its policies as an indicator of good urban governance. The concept is defined as the sum of many ways in which public, private and civil society organizations participate in the planning and management of the community affairs of a city, while many others have argued that the policy provides the foundation upon which actions are based (Ogu and Ogbuzobe, 2004, Kehinde, 2010; Ibimilua, 2011; FGN, 2012). Housing policy is expected to achieve a housing goal which is feasible through the execution of housing programme to ensure that all

Nigerians own or have access to decent, safe and sanitary housing environment in a healthy environment with supporting infrastructure facility at an affordable cost. However, (Oshodi, 2016 cited Hoelez, 2016) opined that the policy is yet to make any appreciable impact in the Lagos housing market. This is confirmed by the (Key Informant MOH, 2016) that stated: “the policy failed because it was not in the public domain, and the policy which is expected to pool resources together is grossly abused and due to reasons of politics and economics, the Lagos state backed out of the policy”. Additionally, there is no substantive housing policy in Lagos state, the clear direction of Lagos State development is provided by Lagos State Development Plan 2012 -2025 (Hoelez, 2016).The document defined various strategies that are to bring about effective provision and management of housing for all citizens to have access to their desired choice of housing within affordable cost. Indeed, it is worthy to note that institutions are concerned with the direct and indirect implementation of this goal are many including; MOH, LSDPC, LBIC, LASURA, New Towns, among others. The performance of these institutions is highlighted as follows:

Hoelez (2016) observes that the development plan’ encouragement of the relevance of social housing provisions as a means of addressing housing problem through public private partnership (PPP) is remarkable. However, the use of ‘affordable housing’ phrase seems to confuse the institutions responsible for housing provision as their products were already overpriced beyond the reach of the majority of Lagos residents (Hoelez, 2016).

The MOH established in 1999 with the sole aim of providing good, adequate, quality and affordable shelter as a basic need for the citizenry. According to the (Key Informant, MOH, 2016), towards fulfilling’s this mission, the MOH adopted the PPP that operated through direct construction process. It has been observed that in about two decades of its existence, the ministry has been unable to provide adequate housing for the people. Statistical evidence from literature revealed that since 2007, the total housing provided by this Ministry is 10,000 units, amounting to an average of 1,250 units per year (Hoelez, 2016).

Furthermore, the LSDPC that was formally and officially established in 1972 charged with the responsibilities of provision and maintenance of the low income housing units during the ‘golden era of Jakande’ administration has seemingly shifted priorities from the provision and management of low income housing to provision for both residential and commercial purposes that is market oriented driven (LSDPC, 2016).

In addition, the New Town Development Authority (NTDA) established in 1981, was charged with the responsibility of site and service schemes and provision of infrastructures in all government estates. In the discharged of responsibilities, its activities have been found to be geared towards serving the needs of middle and high income housing sector as against the low income sector where the actions are mostly needed(Osodi, cited in Hoelez, 2016).

Another institution responsible indirectly with the management of low income housing estate is Lagos State Urban and Regional Authority (LASURA) established in 2014 with focus on urban regeneration and slum upgrading of all blighted areas in Lagos including the low income public housing estates. This agency’s effect in transforming Lagos to liveable city from the challenges of informal settlement and slum condition has been insignificant judging by the fact that the Agency is an offshoot of Lagos State Urban Removal Board

that has been in existence since 1991. Indeed, LASG (2008) observes that all the public low income housing estates have suffered decay from backlog of neglect which probably explains the reason why occupiers of these estates are very dissatisfied living in them and the proliferation of slum communities in Lagos from 43 in 1991 to 100 communities presently.

The Lagos Building Investment Company (LBIC) established in 1980 was charged with the responsibility of mortgage provision for citizens to finance their housing practically in the area of purchase and maintenance. Evidence from literature and response from key informant's interview (2016) suggests that the activities of the agency is more connected with the target beneficiaries comprising of the High and Medium income at the expense of the low income group that is more in need of their assistance. The review above provides the basis to consider other approaches since government efforts have proved ineffective in housing provision and management for the low income such factors as instability of policy and institutional deficiency among others (Omolabi and Erinle, 2014).

## **7. Way forward**

In an attempt to complement the effort of LSDPC in housing provision which to date has delivered about 20,000 units, Lagos, State government through MOH defined as one of their goals partnership arrangement with private sector to provide houses for the people has identified more than 30 sites for housing purposes in the past 7 years. Despite the attempt, government has to do more as 60% of residents are still tenants and housing demand is estimated to be approximately 2.17 million for the teeming population of the megacity (Lagos Housing Market Finance, 2009). Some of the strategies adopted to meet the housing demand in the metropolis include the involvement of direct labour; contractor financed project implementation; private sector participation schemes. The comparison of the number of housing units developed by the State Government through PPP vis-à-vis the number required, presents a picture of inadequacy of the State's efforts to resolve the housing gap in Lagos. Statistics indicates that out of the 9719, housing units that have just being completed of the 224, 000 units being expected, it is only 168 units that are provided for the low income. The inference drawn from literature is that the low income housing provision is still not a priority in the schemes of things as the various measures adopted have done little to address the situation in view of the intensive capital nature of housing project. Moreover, the concept of affordable housing embraced by the government in the recent time seemingly tends to edge out the low income group from being a beneficiary of such housing policy. Against this background, this study proposes social housing development scheme as a way forward to improve the low income housing policy performance.

Social housing development according to Oxley and Dunmore (2004) is not different from other housing development. It is a value based, normative approach to housing implying affordability, suitability of location, quality housing, accommodated within a legal entity. It is use to describe any accommodation which is provided for those who could not operate in the market to provide their own roof (Reeves, 2005). It involves the construction of new housing units or the rehabilitation of older ones and provision of housing of a sufficient scale and quality to meet the needs of the target household group which in this case is the low

income (Golland and Blake, 2004). It is usually developed according to a different set of 'rules' from that in the market sector which is usually developed to satisfy the demand for owner-occupation. The social housing is normally developed for household to rent thereby catering for two main household circumstances households that cannot gain access to housing finance and households that wish to be more mobile and is conventionally associated with a fundamental requirement for housing minimal provision and basic quality standard for the target group. The concept of social housing is ameliorate the housing problem for the low income group in Nigeria in view of its affordability concern as it operates at rents below what might be considered market rents. This is done with a proviso that the housing developers are prepared to accept less than a market rate of return on their investment, otherwise supported by a form of subsidy from government from taxation or land value from planning process to make the units affordable.

Three different ways of social housing provision identified in literature include non-profit type owned and managed by the private non-profit groups such as religious organizations, government or cooperative or community housing comprising of housing controlled by members of the cooperative and private sector which is subsidized by government where provisions were made to support builders; owners or tenant (Sazamaa, 2000).

The social housing development will go a long way to enhance the achievement of the goal of housing delivery to teeming population of low income group in Lagos, Nigeria based on its components which include approach, institution and housing product. In terms of the approach, it is based on a long term commitment on the part of social housing institution and the residents of the stock to provide housing on a sustainable basis, with the involvement of residents in the finance and management of the units and living condition in a meaningful and empowering way.

The institution is usually in form of a voluntary housing movement and association which do not seek to make a profit, legally constituted, financially viable and sustainable, with long term commitment to the provision of a housing and quality of life solution for its residents. The scheme provides for inclusiveness, incorporating residents as key stake holders with legal rights in terms of how it undertakes its activities and provides training for its members (Bramley, 1993; Ramphal, 2000). The appropriateness of this concept to the Nigerian situation derives from the fact that it draws together, the means of provision, affordability, need and security of tenure which are the banes associated with public housing provision in Nigeria for the low income earners.

The scheme is justified based on the fact that the unregulated market mechanism cannot produce results that will entirely meet social needs and political objectives more so social housing does not deny low income group access to decent housing due to limited personal resources (Oxley, 2000).

The advocates of social housing recognize that housing is a basic need of mankind which impinges on quality of life. The concept of social housing has been adopted in many developed countries including Canada, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England, among others where government is using the approach of inclusionary zoning to provide a proportion of lower cost housing within new housing developments (Adejumon, 2008). The best practice in social housing rests on the premise that the predominant form of social housing is of public rental housing which is intended for allocation to households unable to pay the full

market cost of housing which conforms to officially acceptable standards and norms. Omolabi and Erinle (2014) on the other hand remark that if the scheme is not properly handled, it could result in the creation of single form of urban development that has the tendency for alienation and isolation.

The application of social housing principle is possible in Nigeria that is adversely affected by the high cost of building materials, poverty, lack of effective implementation of strategies, poor infrastructure and services provision among others. Thus, there is need for a revolutionary strategy involving non-market in Nigeria. The advantages derivable to the low income group from this scheme includes improvement in the quality of life of people, provision of sustainable way of reducing housing deficit in Lagos and facilitating the socio-economic development of the people by unlocking complimentary benefits in the realm of wealth creation, employment generation, inclusionary tendencies and promotion of good urban governance.

However, operational issues begging for attention include the political will to fund the project from various sources, effective regulatory institution on social housing towards monitoring the process and enactment of a law that specifies the functions and legal provisions of social housing.

## 8. Conclusion and recommendation

The paper observes that housing is a fundamental right for every citizen in a country irrespective of his status. Nigeria is not an exception and it observes that the low income group in Nigeria constitutes those earning less than 2\$ US Dollar per day and are usually found in informal and formal sectors characterized by low productivity and income. Consequently, towards fulfilling its social responsibility, the government has always considered housing provision for this category through direct construction. These housing units are often characterized by non-inclusion in decision making concerning the nature of the housing units. Additionally, the housing units are often inadequate in quality and quantity, high rent, bad location, infrastructural provision, and unrealistic target on the part of government among others. These public low income housing estates often suffer from neglect after construction and thereby do not satisfy the needs of occupants. The paper therefore proposes the concept of social housing development as a way forward in meeting the housing needs of low income earners. Social housing is preferable to direct construction to alleviate mass housing shortage as it is concerned with, target, affordability, needs, quality of life, security of tenure, inclusiveness, institutional and management of housing provision and living condition on a sustainable basis.

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