

ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGES FACING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SITE AND SERVICES SCHEME IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

¹Onyali, Ikenna Kenneth & ²Egolum, Charles C. (Ph.D)
^{1&2}Department of Estate Management, Nnamdi Azikiwe Univeristy, Awka, Nigeria
¹Email: ikennaonyali@yahoo.com

Abstract

The rapid urbanization and the high rate of population growth prevalent in the country created the need for an approach known as Site and Services Scheme to promote and enhance rapid housing provision to solve the housing problem in Nigeria. The Federal Government under the then Federal Ministry of Works and Housing introduced this scheme as a means of solving housing shortage in the country. The underlying principle of Site and Services Scheme is that the authorities would provide the land and the infrastructural facilities, while the individual allottee proceeds to build their houses in accordance with the approved building plan (National Housing Policy, 1991). The aim of this study is to analyse the challenges facing the Federal Government Site and Services Scheme in South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria. In order to achieve the aim of the study, questionnaires backed with interviews were used to elicit information from 143 respondents namely Land officers, Estate Officers, Town Planners, Surveyors, Architects, Builders and Quantity Surveyors. These respondents are professional staff of Federal Ministry of Works and Housing in South East, Nigeria. Descriptive statistics comprising tables, mean, variance and standard deviation was used in the data presentation and analysis. One-sample T-Test was used for the hypothesis. The findings reveal that lack of infrastructure, poor/ inadequate allocation of funds for Federal Government Site and Services Scheme, delay in payment of compensation on acquired land for Federal Government Site and Services Scheme, encroachment into Federal Government sites by State Government/Individuals, double allocation of plots, fraudulent land allocations, allocation of land to incapable allottees and litigations on some Federal Government Site and Services Scheme are the challenges facing the Federal Government Site and Services Scheme in South East, Nigeria. Strategies such as adequate funding of Site and Services Scheme by the Federal Government to ensure timely provision of infrastructure, execution of necessary survey and other works, prompt payment of compensation and well equipped site monitoring and development control team for effective control and management of the schemes, among others were proposed to enhance the performance of Federal Government Site and Services Scheme in South East, Nigeria.

Keywords: Analysis, Challenges, Federal Government, Site, Services Scheme

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of urban areas in most developing countries in the last few decades has led to shortfall in many sectors, primarily housing. The problem has been two-fold: on one hand, the majority of the people moving to the urban areas have lacked the necessary asset and financial holdings in order to acquire a "decent" house. On the other hand, the designated government

agencies and bodies have not provided sufficient housing units which are affordable for the poor majority in urban areas (Usoro, 2015). The proliferation of slums and squatter settlements has been a result of this scenario. But a growing understanding of the dynamics involved in the development and expansion of squatter settlements has led to a number of innovative housing schemes in various developing countries to solve the "dilemma" of housing particularly with the intention of improving the environmental quality of squatter settlements and provide it with the basic necessary infrastructure. One of such innovative scheme which has received wide acknowledgement and following has been "Sites-and-Services" Schemes (Aribigbola and Ayeniyo, 2012).

Majority of the low-income people have always been housing themselves "illegally" in most urban areas of the developing world. The Key departure from earlier housing schemes, like low-cost housing or subsidized high-rise housing units, is that it recognized the ability of the low-income households to build their own house, provided an opportunity was given. Particularly in the face of failure of the conventional housing approaches, coupled with a number of studies that pointed out the ingenuity and perseverance of squatters to house themselves, providing Site and Services Scheme only was seen as an answer to the problems of housing the poor in developing cities (Srinivas, 2011) . Many countries in South America, Asia and Africa took up this concept, and with the World Bank strongly advocating this approach and providing key finance for a number of projects, the idea received widespread approval (Izuogu, 1987).

Sites and Services Scheme therefore became an approach adopted by many developing countries, including Nigeria, to provide housing for the poor and under-privileged in the society with assistance from the World Bank (Usoro,2015). It is a scheme designed to solve the problem of acute shortage of housing in developing countries caused by rapid urbanization and the high rate of population growth (Oyinloye and Olanrewaju, 2015). It was conceived out of the need for an approach that will promote and enhance rapid housing provision to solve the housing problem particularly of low income families who could not afford the rising cost of constructing houses and of the high standards of housing development established by the government (Yap, 1998). The realization that providing a "complete" serviced house by government agencies is not possible or simply cannot be afforded by most low-income families prompted a shift in focus from supplying a fully serviced house to that of providing only serviced land. In the opinions of (Oyinloye and Olanrewaju, 2015), Affordability as one of the housing related problems in Nigeria can be minimized through Site and Services Scheme. Housing affordability is the ability to back up a desire for housing units with adequate financial resources such that other basic needs like food, transportation, education, health among others do not have a result suffer. According to (Usoro, 2015), the key characteristic of the approach is the beneficiaries "sweat equity" and other internal resources (community, financial and so on) in the actual construction and development of the house.

Therefore, the scheme generally entails public financial commitment for land acquisition, planning, design and installation of basic infrastructure, such as paved roads, water and electricity before the sites are allocated on leasehold basis to the public for housing development (Aribigbola and Ayeniyo, 2012). The rapid urbanization and the high rate of population growth prevalent in Nigeria, couple with the failure of the National Low Cost Housing Scheme created

the need for Site and Services Scheme so as to promote and enhance rapid housing provision to solve the housing problems in Nigeria (Oladokun, Bello and Agegunle, 2013).

The Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the Sites and Services Scheme in 1986 as a viable means of increasing supply of serviced plots at affordable costs in order to achieve housing delivery. The aim of the Scheme was to create easy access to develop land, which had for long hindered home ownership in Nigeria (Mikail, 2018). The concept was adopted and first domesticated in Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing in 1986 (Oniemola, 2014).

Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the Federal Governments at achieving sustainable housing delivery to the common people through the Site and Services Scheme, existing realities indicate the goals is far from being achieved. It is against this background that this research attempts to analyse the challenges facing the Federal Government Site and Services Scheme in South East, Nigeria.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1.1 Concept of Sites and Services Scheme

Site and services scheme is a programme carried out either by the government or private organization which involves facilitating a particular area with the essential infrastructural amenities so that private individuals or corporate bodies can carry out developments in such area at affordable cost. It is one of the housing scheme requirements carried out mostly by governmental bodies as municipal services because in nature it is not more capital intensive compared with other schemes. Plots of land (or sites) with infrastructure on it (or services) were provided, and the beneficiaries had to, in most of the schemes build their own houses, ranging from the subdivided plots only to a serviced plots of land with a “core” house built on it. Site Services Scheme allowed the owner of land to construct the house with a variety of building materials depending on his desires and preference as well as his income (Oladokun, Bello and Agegunle, 2013). In this scheme, residential plots are laid out with major infrastructural facilities such as road, schools, open spaces, health centers etc incorporated in the layout. It offers landless housing aspirants the opportunity and hope of a services plot of land with prospect of home ownership as incentive towards house building. Site and Services Scheme are the provision of plots of land either ownership or land lease tenure along with a bare minimum of essential infrastructure needed for habitation (Peal tic, 1982). The legal framework for site and services scheme in Nigeria is in the National Housing Policy (NHP, 1991) this policy document spelt it out as one of the strategies for assisting low income group. The philosophy behind the site and services facilities hinged on the fact that the medium and high income earners could easily source for funds and construct their own houses whereas the low income group may not find this easy. It was hoped that if the government develop sites and provide essential services, low income group could get allocation after paying some fees to cover what has been spent on the land and service provided and it will now be the task of the allottees to complete the houses at their pace and financial capability(Oladokun, Bello and Agegunle, 2013).

3. Research Methodology

Field survey research design was adopted for the study. The study adopted both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was generated through the use of oral interview and questionnaires designed specifically for the study. Secondary data were retrieved through text books, journals, internet sources, official publications, official gazettes, information from the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing etc.

The study population for this study comprised 143 respondents made of 28 Land Officers, 20 Estate Officers, 26 Town Planners, 24 Surveyors, 16 Architects, 14 Builders and 15 Quantity Surveyors from the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing (South East). The researcher studied the whole population of 143.

The descriptive statistics; mean, frequencies and percentages as well as one Sample T-Test tools was employed in the analysis of the data collected. Frequency tables and percentage techniques were used in the presentation and analysis of the data collected. The responses for each relevant question in the questionnaires were represented in tables, and the statistical results were used to compare the relative importance to various answers.

4. Results

Table 1: Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East, Nigeria

| S/No | State | Site(s) |
|------|---------|--|
| 1 | Abia | Amakama and Evangel. |
| 2 | Anambra | Amansea, Awkuzu /Umunya and Transnkisi in Onitsha. |
| 3 | Ebonyi | Ikwo. |
| 4 | Enugu | Republic Layout, Nkwubor and Ibagwa-Nike. |
| 5 | Imo | Owerri/Onitsha Road, Umuguma, Naze, Obukwu, Prisons Sites and Services Scheme, Portharcourt Road, Emekukwu Site 1, Federal Secretariat Extension, Aladinma Sites 1, 2 and 3. |

Table 2: Sites and Services Scheme and their stages of development

| S/N | State | Site | Infrastructure | | | Stage of development/ Condition |
|-----|---------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|---|
| | | | Accessible Road | Portable water | Electricity supply | |
| 1 | Anambra | Amansea | No access | Not available | Not available | Encroached upon by the Anambra State Government and presently on litigation, awaiting appeal court judgement. |
| | | Transnkisi – Onitsha | Fair access | Available | Available | Developed |
| | | Awkuzu/Umunya | No access | Not Available | Not available | Not developed |
| 2 | Abia | Amakama | Fair access | Available | Available | Partially developed |
| | | Evangel | No access | Not available | Not available | Not developed and in dispute with the natives community |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------|---|-------------|---------------|---------------|--|
| 3 | Ebonyi | Ikwo | No access | Not available | Not available | Not developed |
| 4 | Enugu | Republic Layout | Good access | Available | Available | Fully developed |
| | | Nkwubor | No access | Not Available | Not available | Not developed |
| | | Ibagwa-Nike | Good access | Available | Available | Taken over by Enugu State Government, allocated and fully developed. |
| 5 | Imo | Umuguma | Good access | Available | Available | Developed |
| | | Naze | Good access | Available | Available | Developed |
| | | Avu | Fair access | Not available | Not available | Partially developed |
| | | Imo State Federal Secretariat Extension | Good access | Available | Available | Developed |
| | | Obukwu | No access | Not available | Not available | Not developed |
| | | Emekwukwu Site 1 | No access | Not available | Not available | Not developed |
| | | Aladima | Good access | Available | Available | Developed |
| | | Prisons Site and Services Scheme | No access | Not available | Not available | Not developed |
| | | Owerri – Onitsha Road | Fair access | Not available | Not available | Not developed |

**Table
3:**

| | Infrastructure | | | Stage of development/ Condition |
|-------------------|--|---|---|---|
| | Accessible Road | Portable water | Electricity supply | |
| Percentage | 55.6% accessibility and 44.4% inaccessible | 44.4% availability and 55.6% unavailable | 44.4% availability and 55.6% unavailable | 38.9% developed/fully developed, 11.1% partially developed and 50% not developed |

Extent of development of Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East, Nigeria

The challenges facing the Federal Government Site and Services Scheme in South East

The researcher collected data on the Developmental Challenges, Financial/Budgetary Challenges as well as other challenges. The opinions of the respondents were sought and the results are contained in Tables 4a, 4b and 4c respectively.

Table 4a: Developmental Challenges Facing Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East

| S/N | Issue raised | SD | D | NO | A | SA | Mean | Remark |
|-----|--|----|----|----|----|-----|------|--------|
| 1 | Absence of basic facilities | 0 | 57 | 0 | 72 | 0 | 3.12 | Agree |
| 2 | Unavailability of infrastructural serviced plots | 0 | 0 | 0 | 84 | 45 | 4.35 | Agree |
| 3 | Absence of good access roads, | 0 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 97 | 3.50 | Agree |
| 4 | Improper drainage systems | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |
| 5 | Absence of portable water supply | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |
| 6 | Unavailability of good sewage system | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |
| 7 | Epileptic electricity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 55 | 74 | 4.57 | Agree |
| 8 | Unavailability of security services | 0 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 97 | 3.50 | Agree |
| 9 | Unavailability of individual (private) services | 0 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 97 | 3.50 | Agree |
| 10 | Unavailability of community services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |

Table 4b: Financial/Budgetary Challenges Facing Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East

| S/N | Issue raised | SD | D | NO | A | SA | Mean | Remark |
|-----|--|----|---|----|----|-----|------|--------|
| 1 | Poor or inadequate allocation of funds/budget | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |
| 2 | Inability of the government to disburse allocated funds/budget | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |
| 3 | Delay in payment of compensations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 97 | 4.75 | Agree |
| 4 | Inadequate manpower to the staff | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |
| 5 | Diversion of allocated funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |

Table 4c: Other Challenges Facing Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East

| S/N | Issue raised | SD | D | NO | A | SA | Mean | Remark |
|-----|---|----|---|----|-----|----|------|--------|
| 1 | Encroachment into available sites by State Government | 0 | 0 | 0 | 84 | 45 | 4.35 | Agree |
| 2 | Encroachment into available sites by individuals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 104 | 25 | 4.19 | Agree |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|----|----|----|-----|------|-------|
| 3 | Allottee's failure to take possessions of allotted sites | 0 | 23 | 0 | 73 | 32 | 3.89 | Agree |
| 4 | Double allocations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 106 | 3.64 | Agree |
| 5 | Fraudulent allocations | 0 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 106 | 3.82 | Agree |
| 6 | Land speculators | 0 | 0 | 0 | 85 | 44 | 4.34 | Agree |
| 7 | Allocations to incapable allottees | 0 | 0 | 0 | 97 | 32 | 4.25 | Agree |
| 8 | Available sites are on litigation | 0 | 61 | 0 | 68 | 0 | 3.05 | Agree |

Table 5: Solutions to the Challenges facing Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East

| S/N | Issue raised | SD | D | NO | A | SA | Mean | Remark |
|-----|---|----|---|----|-----|-----|------|--------|
| 1 | Ensure adequate funding by the federal government | 0 | 0 | 0 | 104 | 25 | 4.19 | Agree |
| 2 | Ensure timely provision of infrastructure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 84 | 45 | 4.35 | Agree |
| 3 | Ensure proper/adequate disbursement of allocated funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 104 | 25 | 4.19 | Agree |
| 4 | Prompt payment of compensations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 75 | 54 | 4.42 | Agree |
| 5 | Prompt development of sites by the allottees to avoid encroachment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 104 | 25 | 4.19 | Agree |
| 6 | Proper records keeping to avoid double allocation of plots. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |
| 7 | Provision of infrastructure by federal government before allocation of sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 100 | 4.78 | Agree |
| 8 | Ensuring that allottees are capable of developing sites allocated to them | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 129 | 4.00 | Agree |
| 9 | Enforcement of the law that States Government should not take over Federal Government sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 55 | 74 | 4.57 | Agree |
| 10 | Checkmating the activities of land speculators | 0 | 0 | 23 | 81 | 25 | 4.02 | Agree |
| 11 | Proper persecution of those involved in fraudulent Land allocations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 104 | 25 | 4.19 | Agree |

Presentation of Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis One: The Federal Government has not adequately financed the Sites and Services Schemes in South East.

Statistical Tool Used: One-sample T-Test

Reason for choice of Tool: One set of observations were compared with a known standard.

Degrees of Freedom: 22.

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis if the p-value is greater than or equal to 0.05.

Test Proper: The result (output) of test is presented in Tables 6 and 7 as shown.

Table 6: One-Sample Statistics for Challenges showing that Federal Government has not adequately financed Sites and Services Scheme in South East

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Challenges showing that FG has not adequately financed the Sites and Services Scheme in South East | 23 | 3.9487 | .42034 | .08765 |

The mean of the responses of the respondents on Challenges showing that Federal Government has not adequately financed Sites and Services Scheme is 3.9487 as can be seen in Table 6; the mean is greater than 3.0 which is the mean cutoff point.

Table 7: One-Sample Test for Challenges showing that Federal Government has not adequately financed Sites and Services Scheme in South East

| | Test Value = 3.0 | | | | | |
|---|------------------|----|-----------------|-----------------|---|--------|
| | T | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Challenges showing that FG has not adequately financed the Sites and Services Scheme in South East. | 10.824 | 22 | .000 | .94870 | .7669 | 1.1305 |

From Table 7, it can be seen that the p – value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05; this implies that the test is significant, meaning that the identified challenges are significant (valid). By this, we can assert that the Federal Government has not adequately financed the various Sites and Services Schemes located in the South East region; thus we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative.

Hypothesis Two: There are no significant Solutions to the Challenges facing the Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East.

Statistical Tool Used: One-sample T-Test

Reason for choice of Tool: One set of observations were compared with a known standard.

Degrees of Freedom: 10.

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis if the p-value is greater than or equal to 0.05.

Test Proper: The result (output) of test is presented in Tables 8a and 8b as shown.

Table 8a: One-Sample Statistics for Solutions to the Challenges facing the Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Solutions to the Challenges facing FG Sites and Services Schemes in South East | 11 | 4.2636 | .24748 | .07462 |

The Table reveals that the mean responses of the respondents on the solutions to the challenges identified is 4.2636, this mean will be compared to the mean cutoff point of 3.0. The T – test is presented in the next table.

Table 8b: One-Sample Test for Solutions to the Challenges facing the Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East

| | Test Value = 3.0 | | | | | |
|--|------------------|----|--------------------|--------------------|--|--------|
| | T | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Solutions to the Challenges facing the FG Sites and Services Schemes in South East | 16.935 | 10 | .000 | 1.26364 | 1.0974 | 1.4299 |

From Table 8b, it can be seen that the p – value of the test is 0.000, which means that the test is significant, implying that there are significant solutions to the challenges facing the Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East Nigeria. This further means that if these suggested solutions will be adopted, the various almost abandoned Federal Government Sites and Services Schemes in South East will be revived and they will bounce back to life.

5. Conclusion

The provision of housing by the Federal Government through the Site and Services Scheme is an excellent idea, but unfortunately, it has suffered a lot of challenges as has been shown in the foregoing chapters of this work. It is believed, however, that if the identified challenges are adequately addressed as per the solutions/ recommendations below, the programme will be a successful and credible alternative approach in reducing Nigerians housing deficit estimated to be about seventeen (17) million units.

6. Recommendations

After a critical analysis of the challenges facing the Federal Government Site and Services Scheme in South East, Nigeria, the researcher is of the opinion that to optimize the operations of the Federal Government Site and Services Scheme and put it on a pedestal to meet its mandate, the following solutions are recommended:

- i. The Federal Government (Federal Ministry of Works and Housing) should first provide infrastructure before allocating land to interested applicants. The allottees should bear the full or partial cost of providing the infrastructure through phased payment over a period of years.

- ii. The solution to the problems of encroachments and conflicts with the State Governments over land used or set aside for Site and Services Schemes by the Federal Government is the prompt development of such lands. Once land is allocated, provided with infrastructure by the Federal Government and developed by the allottees, there is no way it can be encroached upon by anyone else or taken over by State Government.
- iii. Where a State Government forcefully and illegally takes over a Federal Government Land, the latter should enforce its rights through the Court as there is no provision in any law in Nigeria which gives the State Governments such rights.
- iv. The Site and Services Programme should be adequately funded by the Federal Government to ensure timely provision of infrastructure, execution of necessary survey and other works, prompt payment of compensation and well equipped site monitoring and development control team for effective control and management of the schemes.
- v. Unserious applicants for land and land speculators should be shut out of the programme to ensure prompt development of allocated plots within the two-year deadline usually given by the Federal Government (Federal Ministry of Works and Housing) for development. The application forms should be scrutinized more closely to be sure that the applicants have the capability to develop the plots if allocated. Payment of land charges and taking possession of the allocated plots must be within the stipulated ninety (90) days which should be strictly enforced.
- vi. Due to budgetary constraints by the Federal Government in provision of infrastructure in Site and Services Scheme, Public Private Partnership arrangement (PPP) either by an individual or by allottees of schemes coming together under an umbrella association to provide infrastructure, should be highly encouraged.
- vii. All cases of fraudulent or suspicious allocations should be thoroughly investigated by the Management of the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing through any suitable avenue. The culprits should be severely punished to serve as deterrent to others and should be made to face criminal prosecution. Also verification of land allocations should be carried out annually to evade fraudulent allocations.
- viii. Adequate record keeping should be encouraged to evade double allocation of plots.

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