



ASSESSMENT OF URBAN LAND USE CHANGE AND ITS EFFECT ON SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA

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Research Highlights

Many cities in Nigeria are characterised with various land use changes and developments resulting from the menace of urbanization. Tragically, many of these developments are sporadic and unguided, thus, infringing on the social sustainability of these cities. Although it is widely accepted that development must be sustainable, its connection with land use change has not been sufficiently investigated in scholarly discussion especially in Nigeria. This study through literature revision observed that while pursuing physical development occasioned by land use change, little or no attention has been given to the aspect of social sustainability; thus, posing challenges to the peoples' sense of urban liveability in Nigeria. It was recommended among others that changes in urban land use must be well monitored by the government agencies to avoid haphazard growth in the urban fabrics. The urban land users also must be responsible for adhering to land use guides so as to safeguard the interest in land of the unborn generation.

Research Objectives

This research aims at investigating the effect land use changes has on the social sustainability of cities in Nigeria with a view to providing a guide towards achieving a sustainable urban land space and wholesome urban development. Although researches have been conducted on sustainable development in Nigeria, not all the three pillars (i.e. a social, economic and environment) that constitute it have been successfully integrated at the implementation stage (Orekan & Eluyele, 2018), especially, the socio sustainability aspect. Land use changes (LUC) have widely been discussed along transformation that leads to changes of natural landscape to some other land uses owing to functional human economic activities (Paul & Rashid, 2016), another trigger of LUC in urban settings is corrective measures (such as urban renewal, rehabilitation etc.) undertaken by the state to ameliorate the haphazard developments arising from unsustainable use of land by the people. However, the failure of these measures to account for social sustainability indicators is scarcely found in the literature. This paper is significant in that it fills this gap.

Methodology

The study is a case study and literature-based research in which literature on keywords such as Land-use, Land-use change, social sustainability, urbanization, sustainable development, urban renewal was searched among case studies conducted in Nigeria.

Results

Government induced LUC occasioned by urban renewal programmes are embarked upon to achieve urban transformation, improved environmental air quality, enhance socio-economic practice, among others. However, its aftermath in Nigeria has always aggravation of housing problem, poor health condition, increased poverty, and social segregation. Dimuna and Omatsone (2010) reported that urban renewal at Lagos and Abuja brought untold hardship on the people. Tunmise and Abimbola (2015) compared the development and living condition of people in Makoko, Lagos and the Empire Square, London. The study showed that the situation at Makoko Lagos was a total disregard for social sustainability unlike the situation at the Empire Square, London. Social sustainability was not achieved in the Makoko area of Lagos State as the government could not provide affordable housing, access to social amenities and infrastructure among people





Findings

LUC occasioned by the governments' corrective measure to haphazard developments in many cities in Nigeria violate the social sustainability indicators. These indicators in urban context according to Mehan and Soflaei (2017) are social equity, satisfaction of human needs, well-being, happiness, quality of life, social interaction, social mixing (cohesion and inclusion), pride, sense of place and culture (identity), sense of community, and future focus. Furthermore, developmental projects are oftentimes politicised and thereby jettison social sustainability in the process. The view of UNDP (2016) that participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness, accountability decision, and strategic vision should be a guiding principle necessary to achieve socially sustainable projects.

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