

Problems of Implementation of Urban Development Plan in Developing Countries

Urban development planning and management in developing countries is the responsibilities of municipal/local, states/regional and central governments. Implementation of urban development plans, as we said earlier, faces serious hindrances. They range from political to economical, financial to institutional and from physical to socio-cultural problems. This paper identified the following problems of the implementation process

- **Ineffective policies guiding urban development plans implementation**

Policies for executing physical urban development plans and plans have been characterized by failures. Careful assessment and review of some of these policies reveals a variety of troubling evidence that many urban land policies promulgated by government are ineffective and, perhaps more alarming, they some time cause some significant harmful effects on social welfare and economic productivity.

- **Unsuitable urban physical planning methodology:**

The physical planning of most urban areas is being carried out through the preparation of urban master and structure plans to guide development of various land uses. The comprehensive planning approach adopted by the majority of planners in developing countries, based on the traditional paradigm of “survey-analysis-evaluation-plan-implement” is based on technocratic, time-consuming, and rigid procedures.

- **Excessive delays in approving urban physical development plans**

Proposed development plans and proposals require approval by planning and local authorities before their implementation according to planning regulations. This has been reported to take unnecessary long period of time thus delaying developments in most of the local authorities in Africa and Asia. In most cases, developers have had to go ahead with their developments with no regard for submitted plans and many of such developments (petrol filling stations for instances) have health and environmental consequences on the life of the society.

- **Weak institutional structure of urban physical development agencies**

In recent years, there has been considerable debate and criticism levelled at the structure and management of planning agencies and local government system in developing countries. Like many other institutions, most of the agencies and local governments were set up as an extension of the colonial administration. It is observed that the actual practice of the system of local government in some countries has departed from its conceptual framework as laid down in the relevant local government edits and laws. In most developing countries, for instance, the institutional and legal framework does not allow the central government to take local or municipal authorities to court when the latter violates planning regulations and vice versa. Institutional coordination problems arise between the planning agency and local government or state planning authorities and federal ministry in charge of town planning particularly in control of land and responsibility for waste collection and disposal and roads and utility management in urban areas.

- **Urban planning regulations places much emphasis on control rather than on guidance of urban development**

Planning legislations in form of land use plans, zoning, subdivision regulations, building codes, and other public policies shape and guide development. These regulations are normally adopted to help protect the urban and natural environment, gear infrastructure investments with development, and maintain and enhance property values. They are never meant to restrict or decelerate development but rather to direct and enhance it.

Most planning regulations and standards in developing countries have been considered to be too static and inflexible like some existing development control codes, the building and zoning regulations. The various acts and statutes for regulating urban development are too rigid and outdated and not conforming to the countries' current social, economic and political circumstances.

- **Urban political instability and interference in implementing urban physical development plans proposals**

Political interference is not uncommon in the local or municipal authorities in developing countries. This interference in the urban development control system has limited the local authorities' ability to fully regulate and control development. Powerful government officials have been known to enforce physical development plan approvals that do not meet the stipulated requirements. High demand for land parcel in cities has also led some authorities to overlook the standards required for various uses and abuse of development control especially open spaces.

There has been lack of adequate political support for the pursuits of the objectives and aims of town planning and development control in most developing countries.

- **Weak legal machinery for urban physical plan implementation**

Although some developers tend to comply with planning regulations, there are some violators especially the industries in the cities of developing countries. This is because the legal bodies are not strong to enforce pollution regulations on them or prosecute them whenever they violate environmental laws. Fines levied on such offenders are, most of the time, low and affordable; hence that do not deter them, when compared to gains they make from inefficient mode of production. Some planning agencies and local authorities often do not ensure widespread public participation in physical planning law making in much of the third world.

- **Inadequate awareness of planning activities and public participation**

The extent to which people are aware of the existence of planning activities and regulations is important because it partly determines the extent to which people will comply with these regulations. Lack of public participation and awareness of urban development plans and planning legislations lowers the chance of successful implementation of the plan and the degree of compliance with the required regulations.