

Clinton O. Aigbavboa and Prof. Wellington D. Thwala - Housing Experience of South African Low-Income Beneficiaries

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Since the inception of the South Africa Government Housing Subsidy Scheme to solve the countries housing problem for the disadvantaged and low income groups, there is limited information available to ascertain the beneficiaries experience since they have been living in the subsidized housing units. This paper presents an evaluation of the post occupancy experience of Housing Subsidy beneficiaries in the Gauteng province of South Africa. It is an evaluation of the occupant's experience since the inception of the policy to date, which is born out of the lack of POE monitoring. The paper present finding on the Socio-economic/demographic profile of the occupants since the housing units were allocated to them. Also, an evaluation of the right to housing is done, to ascertain if the right to housing as contained in the South Africa Constitution is being realized through the subsidized housing units. Others includes the level of beneficiaries' satisfaction/dissatisfaction, beneficiaries' home usage and the effect of the housing subsidy scheme on the present demand of housing in the country, since the government has approved housing subsidies for 3.1 million households and constructed over one and a half million housing units. Descriptive statistics were carried out on the data obtained through the use of occupant survey. Findings from the survey revealed that the original intended use of the houses by the government (private residential usage) is what the subsidized houses are being used for. The result of the socio-demographic profiles of the respondents revealed that the needs of the marginalized and the disadvantaged groups are being met, as all respondents were South Africa citizens. Also, beneficiaries were satisfied with their overall housing situation, but had complaints about certain aspects of the housing unit. However, the beneficiaries felt that most of their housing expectations were not met.

In contrast, beneficiaries' indicated that the subsidized houses had changed their lives and given them more comfort than previously experienced. POE studies help to avoid mistake previously made, save money, ensure proper construction of houses, and create a feedback system between dwellers and the Department of Human Settlement. The paper contributes to this body of knowledge. It is recommended that a wider systematic coverage of the subject through investigative and diagnostic POE and occupants need assessment should be carried in housing subsidy schemes in South Africa.

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