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Abstract

The magnitude of housing problems encountered in the country today has reached an alarming level. While the problems in the rural areas is mainly quantitative, in the urban areas, the nature of the problem is both quantitative and qualitative. In general, the problem is more acute amongst poor households, who constitute about 70% of the nation's population. Efforts by successive governments, via policies and projects, aimed at ameliorating the housing problems in the country have made very limited impact on the situation, especially as it concerns the poor. This paper is based on a study visit to Pakistan which included discussions with relevant actors, and literature surveys by the author. It has identified housing programmes in other developing countries like Pakistan, Cuba, Kenya and Indonesia which have successfully addressed the housing needs of poor families. Based on these case studies, the paper recommends strategies to decent housing. These include strategies which ensure that projects reach the target group, harness the resources of the poor, enjoy technical guidance, are affordable⁵ and thus sustainable.