Investigation of informal housing challenges and issues: experiences from slum and squatter of Lahore

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Abstract
The twin problems of uncontrolled urbanization and shortfall of affordable housing for low income groups are the bane of almost all developing countries. This is true in case of Pakistan undergoing rapid urban transformation with 207 million population at present. According to UN resources, half of the country's urban population i.e. more than 27 million people continue to live in informal settlements. Lahore being the second largest city, is home to 11 million people, covering more than 300 informal housing settlements in the form of slums and squatters. Adoption of informal housing is a depiction of poor governance system, showing little concerns for welfare of urban poor. This paper investigates the issues of informal housing based on field research and in-depth interviews of the residents of Karol Ghatti slum and Qalandarpura squatter. The objective of the study is to understand the complex phenomena of informal housing development by digging out respective reasons and their impacts on dwellers as a part of their daily survival challenge. Results confirm that inhabitants of slum and squatters exhibit socio-economic deprivations and lack basic infrastructure. This paper delivers a complete synthesis informal housing issues by providing social, environmental, operational and physical constructs, which can lead to thorough understanding and thus, are viable approaches to tackle the challenge of slums and squatters at a national level.

Keywords
Squatters, Slums, Urban poor, Informal housing, Lahore, Pakistan