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**URBANIZATION AND HOUSING CRISIS IN PAKISTAN:
CHALLENGES AND POLICY RESPONSES**

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan is undergoing rapid urbanization, with over 78 million people currently residing in urban areas, a number growing at an annual rate of 3.42%. This demographic shift has exacerbated the housing crisis, as the demand for affordable and adequate housing far outstrips supply, leading to the proliferation of informal settlements and slums. The housing crisis is further compounded by factors such as rural-to-urban migration, population growth, unplanned urban development, and ineffective land use policies. This study explores the challenges of urbanization and housing in Pakistan, focusing on the affordability and availability of housing, the rise of informal settlements, and the socio-economic implications of inadequate housing. It also examines government initiatives and policy responses, including public-private partnerships and international best practices, to address the housing shortage. The paper concludes with recommendations for sustainable urban development, emphasizing the need for equitable housing policies, improved urban planning, and enhanced collaboration between government, private sector, and civil society to ensure affordable housing for all.

Keywords: *Urbanization, housing crisis, Pakistan, informal settlements, rural-to-urban migration, housing affordability, urban planning, public-private partnerships, land use policies, sustainable development.*

Introduction

With the pace of urbanization accelerating in Pakistan, the need for efficient urban planning and management of cities has become paramount. This is necessitated by both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the challenges posed. The quantitative dimension involves the increase in the rate of urbanization. The rate of increase of population residing in urban areas outpaced that of the population increase overall. The qualitative dimension involves the provisioning of public goods and services, foremost of which is housing (Smiraglia et al. 2021). The proper provisioning of housing, linked to a 'right to the city' approach, implies the provisioning of affordable and adequate housing for all segments of the urban population as well as ensuring its adequacy in terms of provision of other basic services such as water, sanitation, health and education.

In Pakistan, the pace of urbanization has gathered momentum, especially in the new millennium. In 2014--15, the urbanization rate in Pakistan is officially recorded at 2.70 percent per year (Jabeen et al., 2015). Reports indicate that around one-third of Pakistan's population currently lives in urban areas, amounting to over 78 million people. This urban population is growing at an annual rate of 3.42%, which is amongst the highest in South Asia. Moreover, these demographic changes have led to notable transformation in the urban landscape of the country. As these trends are likely to further intensify in the period ahead with significant ramifications for the economy and society, there is now an urgent need for a better understanding of the process of urbanization, its spatial distribution and its impacts as a prelude to future urban planning and policy formulation.

Against this backdrop, the objectives addressed in the forthcoming essay are two-fold. First, given the noticeable changes in migration and urbanization occurring in the aftermath of the new millennium, an in-depth analysis is conducted of the demographic drivers of urbanization in Pakistan, focusing on inter-provincial and urban-rural migration. Second, a set of thematic issues surrounding housing, the most critical aspect of urban transition, is analyzed in the context of affordability and availability: a detailed examination of the dynamics, challenges and future concerns.

Urbanization Trends in Pakistan

Urbanization stands out as a vital and essential component that significantly influences population dynamics, working in conjunction with fertility and mortality rates. In recent years, the world has experienced a remarkable and escalating trend of global urbanization that cannot be overlooked. The movement of

countless millions of individuals from rural to urban areas is particularly pronounced, especially in the developing world where the shift is more evident. Pakistan, as a nation, is undergoing this urban transition at a pace that is particularly noteworthy when compared to many other regions around the globe (Qasim et al., 2023).

The geographic landscapes of the country are continuously being reshaped to accommodate the influx of people, and this rapid urbanization is exerting substantial pressure on the patterns of urban growth throughout the country. We can clearly observe the phenomenon of rapid urbanization in the significant transition and growth of numerous cities across various provinces in Pakistan. Various socio-economic factors are driving this change, including a noticeable uplift in the economy, a gradual shift in lifestyle preferences, and an increasing movement towards more technical and extensively developed facilities for living. These changes are particularly pronounced in urban settings within Pakistan. As such, an increasing number of people are being drawn from rural areas to urban mega-cities and towns, largely due to the improved quality of life and better-structured living facilities that can be more easily accessed by individuals moving away from their villages. The horizontal expansion of urban areas due to population growth and environmental variations is encroaching upon agricultural land, raising concerns regarding the potential decline in agricultural productivity. Affluence and various social factors are compelling individuals and communities to adapt to urban life, contributing to a notable urban influx in several cities such as Faisalabad, Lahore, Multan, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Kasur, Okara, and Sialkot, where the rates of rural-urban migration are particularly high. The demographic shifts observed over time reflect the significant changes occurring along the urban-rural axis, exhibiting the greater transitions within the country, which has historically been centered on agrarian products that play a major role in contributing to the labor force in dominant industries (Naz & Khan, 2021).

Consequently, economic activities have adjusted their scope and response to reflect these shifts, revealing a particular interest in the local regional settings that aim to either overcome or return to the more traditional occupation patterns associated with the generative labor class. Residents who are employed in urban centers frequently visit these localities for various daily activities such as ablutions, meals, and social gatherings, driven by their reliance on the ever-expanding urban facilities, both directly and indirectly. This dependency is strikingly evident when considering the

implications of socio-economic trends, including the heightened demand for residential and industrial services in urban centers (Golmohamadi, 2022). The evolving patterns of economic activities witnessed thus far in urban centers are increasingly reshaping the consumption habits and norms of urban inhabitants at a pace that surpasses that seen in rural areas. Policymakers and planners responsible for overseeing the privatization and industrial setup of urban centers must recognize this particular aspect of consumption that is evolving more swiftly than existing trends. In the context of such studies, new ventures ought to focus on developing small-scale, niche-oriented consumption activities that cater to the urban population's needs. Moreover, in the province of Sindh, there has been a significant transition observed in the landing population of Karachi. In addition to the metropolitan city, which boasts continuous improvements in its railway and road networks, the enhanced infrastructure is meeting the increasing demands for residential accommodations.

As a comprehensive examination, this paper aims to analyze the prevailing trends in urbanization within Pakistan, documenting the significant changes in urban growth and settlement systems over recent decades, highlighting the access to urban facilities within various cities and towns. The evolving explanatory models discussed in this paper can offer a bottom-up perspective on the interrelationship between urbanization and population dynamics, which holds great importance for policymakers tasked with addressing specific concerns such as housing availability. Ultimately, this paper seeks to pose critical questions surrounding the concepts of sustainability and resilience in light of the prevailing urbanization trends. By doing so, it characterizes the context necessary for a thorough examination of housing issues associated with urban expansion taking place across the diverse zones, cities, and towns throughout Pakistan. (Hashim Zaidi, 2011)

Rural to Urban Migration

Rural to Urban Migration. Urbanization is coupled with the phenomenon of rural-to-urban (R-U) migration. The increasing urban population grew from 28.9 percent in 1998 to 37.8 percent in 2006 and 40.8 percent in 2017. The main factors contributing to urbanization are highly classified into four: natural change, social change, commercial change, and economic change. Natural change includes high birth rates and low death rates in urban areas due to improvements in healthcare and sanitation. Social change is denoted as a shift in the societal pattern of living, like systems of education and family planning. Commercial change alludes the

establishment of a broader spectrum of non-agricultural activities. Economic change alludes reductions in employment opportunity in agriculture due to the mechanization and technological progression in agriculture sector (Jabeen et al., 2015).

R-U migration is centered on the economic problem of rural-urban disparities. Whenever rural living people wish to avail high paying urban jobs, they are persuaded to move into urban vicinities. The migration created by poverty is mostly involuntary and becomes critical as an unexpected climb in urban population producing a load on housing sectors which except in the developing countries of the world are normally identified as Ghettos and Jhopar Patties. Rural residents who cannot pay their ongoing consumption fall as corrupt resident in the neglected areas of town and ci., directly responsible for the creation of slums (Li2021) Such unplanned and illegal settlements normally cause environmental impairment and spread the disease harm which further complicates the already interconnected problem of wetness and unemployment. The vast increment in the urban population for the reason of unorganized R-U migration categorized difficult challenges for urban government of stewardship in the fields of housing, health, education programs, and the constitutional responsibilities of such an authority.

Population Growth and Urbanization Rates

Correlation between population growth and urbanization rates in Pakistan can be found in Table 2, and the figures in the cross-section are as follows: first row, the Punjab province followed by its numbers, and second row, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province followed by its numbers. The population growth and urbanization rates for Pakistan have increased by up to 5.18% and 3.85%, respectively, since 2007. It is noted that the faster population growth rates of total, urban, and rural areas have occurred in the KPK province, while the Sindh province shows the highest urbanization rates of total, urban, and rural areas in Pakistan.

The rates of urbanization are increasing more rapidly than those of population in the districts of the KPK province, except for the southern districts. Urban housing supply is accompanied with large differences in land value, which can be roughly classified into two patterns: scattered in northern districts and clusters in the southern ones. A city is a place where there is a high rate of urbanization compared to population growth. Cities are formed by the establishment of urban infrastructure and the development of similar housing facilities as rural areas. Nevertheless, cities in developing countries are in a vicious spiral of building low-quality

houses for migrants because of demographically precipitating urbanization (Lord et al., 2022) Due to expansive urbanization, cities in rural areas are seeking new buildings to replace low-quality houses in better locations. Concerns between the accelerating rate of urban population growth and declining quality of urban infrastructure were expressed in the early urban development literature. Similarly, throughout the mid-1990s, rapid urbanization was believed to challenge existing infrastructure and resource allocation by a network of municipalities, suggesting a new urban emphasis of inter-jurisdiction dependency over transportation and housing.

Housing Crisis in Urban Areas

The growing urbanization of Pakistan underscores the increasing housing needs of around 32.6% of the population residing in urban areas. It is estimated that over 30 million people settle in the top ten metropolitan cities including Karachi, Lahore, and Faisalabad. Unfortunately, the housing sector has not kept pace with this demographic transition due to unplanned urban development policies and population explosion at an annual growth rate of 6 to 7%. While public expenditures cater to five million people annually, around four million people settle in urban areas, which leads to the creation of approximately 500 new cities. In recent decades, the proliferation of informal settlements has occurred in response to an inadequate supply of housing which is unable to accommodate the rapid rate of urbanization. It should be noted that the provision of adequate, secure and affordable housing, as an essential urban service, is a matter of concern for developing countries (Malik and Khawaja2021).

The majority of the houses are privately owned; only 36% of the urban population own or occupy government or social housing, or rent commercial buildings, while the remaining 64% live in non-commercial private houses, including informal settlements. In Pakistan generally and in Sindh province particularly, the absence of some legal framework has resulted in direct evictions and social unrest in squatter settlements. Currently, around 35 to 45 million people in Pakistan are residing in squatter settlements or on land to which they do not have legal title. The majority of the urban population obtain settlements through informal means such as squatting, occupying empty land, or purchasing land with the assistance of friends or relatives. The qualitative survey carried out in Karachi in 2009 indicates that 65% of household heads in informal settlements obtained the space to establish a house from family. Uptake of informal space for private development is in accordance with the low investment required in the form of bribes

to get access to land. 68% of units surveyed are reported as self-built, either by the current head or by previous generations. By contrast, only 2.5% of units have been built by a formal private builder.

Housing Shortage and Informal Settlements

Pakistan's urban population has registered a significant increase over the past 50 years. Urban areas have been absorbing more than 5 million new residents a year over the last decade. A natural consequence of urban population growth is a continuous proliferation of informal settlements, which accounts for anywhere between 40 percent and 60 percent of the total urban built-up area in Pakistan. Despite their long existence, informal settlements still lack basic services and legal recognition (Boanada-Fuchs et al., 2024). They are seen as the most vulnerable settlements in terms of disaster protection and security. Moreover, residents of informal settlements face limited opportunities compared to their formal housing residents, such as access to basic services, healthcare, and education. In response to these challenges, the state has either bulldozed the entire settlement or tried to regularize it. However, the recent demolition of Gujjar Nullah, Islamabad, left hundreds of families homeless and also unmade those formally registered to the scheme.

The housing shortage is an outcome of the inability of the housing market to provide affordable and secure accommodation. In the case of Pakistan, several reasons trigger housing shortages, including the escalation of population growth, overpriced formal plots, and ineffective urban developmental regulations. The construction of dual carriage roads and bridges has demolished nearly 5,000 homes, leading to a substantial rise in homelessness. Instead of offering shelter or alternative accommodation, many tenants have been asked to vacate rental rooms. Amid the rampant price hikes and gigantic income inequality in the metropolis, purchasing even the least expensive accommodation is beyond reach. The major cause of informal development across the country is the lack of low-cost legal land and the limited financing available for purchasing property in the formal market (Hallett, 2021). There is a constant widening gap between the demand for housing and its supply in Pakistan due to the inefficiency of the existing public institutions dealing with urban land regulation and management. The fragmented jurisdiction without coordination and overlapping planning agencies have significantly contributed to the emerging housing crises.

Housing Affordability Challenges

The most critical yet challenging problem being faced by urban Pakistan right now in housing is affordability. The rising property values are making dreams of home ownership unachievable for many cities residents. Average in-hand income in urban sector is mostly lower than mark required to afford reasonable house on rent or as a investment. Besides the escalation in housing prices, plots and built up structures, vis-a-vis the regular income, the fast growing population of cities and even larger part of towns, is contributing towards the increasing housing affordability crisis. This surge in urban population has changed the scenario of civic amenities which directly or indirectly affect the supplies of new housing development (Rehman & Jamil, 2021).

Hence the increased demand of houses exceed the supply, giving rise to acceptance of demand of slums and katchi abadis in urban territories. Housing affordability can be defined as “a condition where a low or middle income family can afford to buy a reasonable house on rent as well as on ownership or invest in its indigence”. The current economy of Pakistan is facing the adverse situation, which is directly and sometimes indirectly contributing towards uplift of the prices of regular use commodities. Consequently expenditure to income ratio is being increased especially in 2% & 3% class families because with the induction of Kalabagh Dam, interest rates to housing finance have been hiked by 14% in past three years. There were almost no housing finance facilities in interior Punjab before 2006 and interest rates for housing finance ranged from 10%-16% in various districts and very few higher middle class families had invested in houses. This is exemplified by the services and ownership pattern of housing in the Punjabi capital, where an estimated 60 per cent of households live in slums or squatters (Hashim Zaidi, 2011).

Lack of many essential civic amenities of life i.e. education and health facility, road infrastructure, clean drinking water, energy, employment opportunities etc, are factors of investment. Out of aforementioned facilities, shelter or temporary structure is the most important item of investment. Whenever, there is the economic slowdown and shrinkage of regular income sources of 87% population of Pakistan, the investment in other than essential commodities is reduced to sustain their daily routines. During the last three years, macroeconomic conditions had made adverse effects on the economy of the ordinary class people particularly in the southern region of Punjab. Affected of KBD had commenced agitation against energy crisis in 2006 because Ittefaq Foundries, textile industries and many other medium and small enterprises of private sector are closed because the cost of production has been

increased about 100% due to load shedding. The inflow of electricity to these districts is now 6 hours daily against 183 hours weekly three years before. As a result of load shedding, mobility comes to stand still, transport fare increases, business is perturbed, retail prices of regular commodities are hiked, creating a spiral of inflation. Due to closure of industries, many labor families meet hand to mouth after 50% increase of stipend flats (Jabeen et al., 2015).

Factors Contributing to the Housing Crisis

Pakistan is home to an estimated population of 220 million people with a growth rate of 2.4 percent as of 2011. It has the highest urban population of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. Many factors are contributing to the housing crisis in Pakistan's urban areas. In the absence of effective housing policies and strategies, socio-economic conditions have created a severe housing crisis for the urban poor. The housing conditions of the urban poor remain inadequate; a significant proportion of urban poor lives in either squatter settlements or are encroachments of public and private lands which are subjected to severe deterioration caused mainly by natural and man-made reasons like fire or demolition by the concerned authorities in the name of illegal occupancy (Bishwakarma & Hu, 2022). Lack of access to data and policies, obligations, current vocabulary, and law enforcement is not provided by the proposed programs to the concerned local or provincial governments as a result that the living conditions of the huge informal middle and low-middle-income population in urban and semi-urban land come into a severe hallucination. City governments throughout Pakistan fail to initiate urban governance for poor housing solutions and urban development.

Moreover, land markets and land use policies in all cities of Pakistan are severely mismanaged, which are deregulating the cities through unplanned developments. This has now been heavily contested in high courts of local cities. The urban planning department of city authorities does not monitor the development of authority as specified in the provided plans, and escalation from the survey section reported that planners and land get commissions in a designated private sector residential sector divided into commercial, and land allocated for amusement parks has been utilized in the development of residential colonies. After socio-economic conditions, this is another reason for the housing crisis in Pakistan's urban areas. Existing high-density cities can be even worse in terms of living conditions. Common properties are either illegally classified as commercial or encroachments resulted in the decrease of open spaces and the intromission of daylight in the

houses. This practice continues to make environmental improvements impossible in cities and is used as a political decision as brokers execute this arbitration.

Land Use Policies

In Pakistan, as in many rapidly urbanizing countries, cities are facing an acute housing shortage. The lack of affordable safe and secure shelter is the most pressing problem confronting the urban population in the developing countries (Jabeen et al., 2015). The rapid pace of population growth countrywide and the influx of the migrants towards the cities are the major contributors to the increase in the housing need. A long term moderation of population growth and the proper implementation of the land reforms are the pre-conditions for sound housing policies.

Land is the fundamental element for housing, agriculture and any other economic activities. However, rapid population growth and migration towards the cities have forced the cities to swallow the natural surroundings and to set up the artificial extensions. Consequently, towns no longer remain the simple places but they turn into the complex system of human buildings in which different cash crops and most essential part of the urban life in the form of the shelter are cultivated. A city is the place where the people interacts with one another, and it is the combinations of the sociological, economic and physical elements. In nations like Pakistan, rural is the one where the facility and opportunity are scarce and the urban life is the symbol of hope where the dream is to fulfill (Mansour et al.2023). Consequently, migrating from rural to urban life is the one of the dream of the millions and masses. The city which should be constructed according to the plan is becoming place of fast and unsafe building and the shelter of the human being are in and around the surroundings of the unsafe building and the methane structure places. The faster migration towards the city is creating the so much pressure on the cities and thus the physical and the socio-economic system is thrown from the natural order.

Population Density and Urban Planning

Urban population has already reached 50 percent in Pakistan and is expected to grow faster in coming years. As observed in other countries, it is likely that further urbanization will occur along the urban regions leading to formation of several mega cities. Rising urban populations pose great challenges to provide houses, job markets, and services providers. In many parts of the country, the high rates of urban growth, combined with restrictive environments for land provision, have resulted in escalating land prices increasing infrastructure and urban development costs,

while diminishing affordability. Urbanization is a major transformation that characterizes countries at various stages of socio-economic development, providing a new and different perspective on the state of a rapidly urbanizing Asia (Jabeen et al., 2015). Attempts to address rapid population growth and growing urban populations have led policymakers and local governments to introduce Urban Shelter Guidelines. Today, there is a virtual housing crisis in the country; rapid overpopulation accompanied with land shortages both in inner city and its surrounds have further aggravated the situation. For instance, overpopulation will result in increased demands for water supply, drainage facilities, houses and infrastructure. In the context of rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, governments often have limited resources and limited intervention capabilities that can result in uncoordinated and poorly authorized development within cities.

Increased population density has serious consequences for the quantity and quality of the environment and for mental and physical well-being of city dwellers. Housing shortages, congestion and environmental pollution are most commonly identified as the adverse effects of over urbanization. Outputs and discussions in forums in urban areas have public fractions that very often are concerned about issues, particularly the rate of urbanization and the increase in their populations. When objectives are not clear enough to different inputs that make up urban environments, scarce resources will be allocated inefficiently and poor management of these urban environments will prevail (Rashed, 2023) With consultative process, the guideline seeks to empower all stakeholders to jointly address urban challenges and to develop innovative management practices which are sustainable and environmentally sound. From a social perspective this approach aims to improve living conditions, social equity and employment opportunities for the urban poor. Therefore, ensuing conflicts and problems will be complicated. Thirdly, in view of the scarcity of resources available to local administrations, they tend to invest in housing properly rather than services.

Policy Responses to the Housing Crisis

Pakistan is urbanizing. The share of the urban population is currently 36.4 percent, up from 34.8 percent in 2017. Urbanization is proceeding at pace, which has implications for public policy. However, the direction and the quality of urbanization is what policymakers should be focusing on, rather than just the rate of change. The need for cities and towns to become centers of employment, culture, education, and services is what differentiates the development of an economy at a fairly advanced stage of

transformation, such as Vietnam, from one at a much earlier stage in its development, such as Pakistan. Comprehensive strategies that link land systems and housing provision with urban planning and overall urban socio-economic development are critical for enhancing the development of the urban sector in a transformative way. Risks of urbanization have recently drawn the attention of urban governance in Pakistan, but parallel system-wide risks also deserve focus. (Arif et al.2023) In response to these developments, the public sector has helped create frameworks for more sustainable and equitable urban growth, with a focus on housing. The Pakistan government has initiated several initiatives to improve conditions of existing housing and housing affordability. However, initial research has shown that the influence of centralized policy is spatially concentrated, and national programs have been insufficient in meeting the scale of the challenge. Nevertheless, housing improvements and reductions in housing poverty have been achieved through a mix of developer-led programs and government-led upgrading initiatives. Innovative initiatives led by the public sector, such as partnerships between the Pakistan government and the Aga Khan Planning and Building Service to build housing and services upgrading in Gwadar and Gilgit, have been further explored. Efforts to map the scale of additional housing that might be delivered through private construction are also outlined, as are the challenges of enhancing the conjunction of health and housing services within existing government upgrading initiatives. The analysis indicates that a layered approach, combining national policies with city-wide investments, incentive schemes and local initiatives, will be required to meaningfully impact the situations of the urban poor and informal settlements.

Government Initiatives and Programs

In order to address the urban housing crisis in Pakistan, several initiatives and programs have been taken by the government over the past decades. While a number of its policies and strategic actions have focused on improving the physical and living conditions of the poor, converting slums into regularized or semi-regularized areas, and constructing low-cost housing for low-income groups, significant qualitative and quantitative housing concerns persist. The increasing pressure on land and its growing prices over time implies that poor and even minimum wage households (right through the districts where rents are normally lower) consider ownership of even a small, irregular dwelling unit as essential (Saiz, 2023). Such situations lead to the exclusion of low-paid workers from bridging the gap; and, therefore, they are

forced to reside at far-off or semi-regular settlements in an unjust, depressed living condition. It is imperative to regularize / document these settlements in order to allow them access to their basic rights, enhanced living conditions, and to encourage them to substantially invest in this housing. Such policies and strategies for regularizing land uses to legalize infringements and the necessary legal alterations are available, suggesting that this can be viewed as a critical step in the urban housing context of developing countries. The government also took steps to reduce costs, and provided funding to low-income borrowers through the House Building Finance Company, and encouraged various civil agencies to extend federal financial assistance for construction. Furthermore, the federal government decreased taxes on the housing sector, provided incentives to industries to produce inputs at minimum cost, and facilitated the creation of bricks and rubble factories that are designed to meet the housing industry's needs according to a one-window organization. Despite all these regulations, a series of policy and practical constraints were faced in making the desired impacts. In particular, the biggest bottleneck was that most of the housing schemes were neither completed at the expected time nor within the allocated cost, due to bureaucratic hurdles, planning policy constraints, and corruption. (Flyvbjerg & Gardner, 2023)

Public-Private Partnerships

With the increasing demand for housing market research on PPP models in Pakistan's context can be the new area of research. Housing construction is one of the largest urban markets in terms of workforce and fixed location. As a result of this, the significance of housing in the economy is high. Housing construction is an indicator of the level of economic activity in any country. It signals the health of the economy. If the level of economic activity is high, a large amount of housing will be constructed to accommodate the additional workforce employed. If construction activity slows down, housing shortage will generally increase, leading (among other factors) to housing crisis (Amos B et al., 2018).

The problem of housing shortage is particularly acute in many urban areas of developing countries for a variety of reasons such as high rate of rural to urban internal migration, limited housing finance, escalating land and construction cost and inefficient construction sector. Additionally, urbanization also exacerbates the pressure on infrastructure and social services (O. Ibem, 2010). A substantial amount of policies has been introduced in the last few decades to address the housing crisis in developing economies. Among these policies, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have stood out as an innovative means of increasing private sector

investment in urban housing-related activities. The assumption underlying the endorsement of PPPs for low-cost housing relates to the view that public sector provision has not been effective in meeting the rising demand for affordable shelter. There is a growing recognition that public enterprises often fail to allocate resources efficiently. Critics argue that cost parameters preclude competitive operations by the public sector operators resulting in inefficiency and continued dependence on state support. Privatization advocates maintain that transferring ownership will in general eliminate the cost-distorting element of profit, leading to a more efficient use of resources. There is thus a presumption that the adoption of market principles in delivering infrastructure and services can lead to efficiency gains.

International Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The article overviews international best practices and draws lessons in an attempt to bridge the gap between the common practices and the immediate housing challenges in Pakistan. The general, supporting, and modifying factors are discussed that determine the effectiveness in the worldwide strategies in a local setting, arguing as well that global housing solutions could serve as stepping stones in further improving the housing sector in urban Pakistan.

This portion introduces best practices and lessons learned over the world in addressing housing issues and to assist urban Pakistan in exploring feasible and effective housing policies and strategies. Since social, economic and cultural contexts differ vastly cross-nationally, what may be considered ideal in one setting could be irrelevant or inappropriate in another, emphasizing the necessity of adaptation? Urbanization continues on at a fast pace. With more and more people migrating into urban centers, pressures and challenges will keep mounting. It remains important for policy makers and practitioners to keep abreast of the latest urbanization patterns as well as to evolve the most effective schemes to cater to local contexts and challenges (Arif et al.2023).

From the literature, a number of favored strategies to tackle housing issues are identified, focusing on a list that is considered to be most highly innovative and effective. These include public housing strategies, mixed-income community building, public-private partnerships, and housing provision for the poor. The substantive outcomes of these unique housing policies are discussed as well. As urban conditions and cultures change, lessons worldwide could show the way to selected local national, as deeply rooted, they may pave the way for further improvements, generating long-term positive impacts on the housing sector there.

This is particularly relevant to urban Pakistan where fast-growing cities grapple with emerging housing challenges and existing strategies seem far from sufficient. The literature also, however, endorses some supporting and modifying factors that may determine the effectiveness of the effectiveness of the housing solutions to selected local national contexts. In this context, five cases of successful housing strategies are studied along with the in-depth assessment of the factors lying at the roots of their success.

Conclusion

An exploratory analysis of the urbanization process, current housing crises, and urban housing policies in Pakistan reveals a multitude of significant challenges along with suitable strategies and policy responses that must be considered. The primary issues present in the urban housing sector in Pakistan have arisen due to the natural growth of the urban population, which has been exacerbated by a rapid influx of rural-urban migration. This migration is largely driven by advancements in technology within the agricultural sector, coupled with a notable deprivation of fundamental facilities, social amenities, safety, and security in remote areas. Unfortunately, state policies have often displayed a bias towards urban development, often at the expense of rural economies and communities. It becomes essential, therefore, for the state to devise effective means of compensating the affected populations for the disconnectivity experienced as a result of new infrastructure projects and urban arrangements. Concurrently, there is a strong suggestion that efforts be made to enhance the resilience of cities against climate change, ensuring they are not only environmentally safe but also economically enticing and feasible. This transformation of urban areas into attractive places for growth and havens of peace is paramount. The challenge lies in protecting the overall urban environment while ensuring that the lives and livelihoods of impoverished individuals are not compromised this balancing act will require deftness and a profound commitment to democracy and human rights.

Furthermore, the state, in partnership with various concerned sectors, is obliged to endeavor towards achieving spatial and social justice within the urban landscape. The involvement of other welfare organizations, civil society, and NGOs can be instrumental, particularly if the state is able to effectively implement strategies that are free from developer biases or favoritism. Additionally, it is crucial that the competent authorities operate within a framework that is transparent, accountable, and democratic, allowing them to act in accordance with established policies and plans. In conclusion, it is hopeful that urban

development can progress in harmony with the vision of sustainable development, facilitated through the genuine involvement of stakeholders at all levels. However, realizing this dream presents substantial difficulties, and achieving it may indeed be only partially accomplished. Nevertheless, persistent efforts must be taken to benefit urban dwellers as well as the urban environment itself, ensuring a brighter, more equitable future for all.

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