

Challenges of Upgrading Housing in Informal Settlements: A Strategic Option of Incremental Housing

Fahria Masum (Germany)

Key words: Informal settlements; Security of tenure; incremental housing, stakeholder participation

SUMMARY

Informal settlements development has been recognised as one of the important phenomena of cities especially in developing countries which triggered by high rate of rural-urban migration results in housing shortage, mainly for poor. Therefore, a search for solutions to informal settlements and the rising need for formal housing delivery have been a challenge and issues of high importance for many developing countries. Though many efforts have been given to the effective planning and policy approaches to formalise/ legalise the housing in informal settlements, in many cases the efforts remain ineffective. This paper suggests that formalisation or legalisation is highly contextual and associated with prevailing land tenure system. Furthermore, different stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in the informal settlement development processes influence the context also. Therefore, in analysing their extent of participation in housing formalisation process it is vitally important to take into consideration the context (socio-economic, historical, cultural and political aspects) of the country. The paper argues that a wide range of formalisation options should respond to the diversity of the needs of lower income people. Local situations and needs must be assessed and evaluated prior to the definition of the goals of formalisation policy. Therefore, the paper came up with the conclusion that it is crucially important to begin the formalisation process with the present and future need assessment and inquiry into the socio-political-cultural perspective to enhance the capacity of the community to improve and develop their housing. The paper also highlights few recommendations along with incremental housing approach that could be made to ensure that participation yields better results to realise a number of potential benefits.