

Department of Development Studies

Policy Brief No. 14

July 2017

**Pakistan Institute of Development
Economics**

Thematic Focus: Urban Development

Promise and Reality: A Comparative Study of Housing Societies in Islamabad- Shanza Sohail (2014-2016)

This explanatory research seeks to explore the phenomenon of what the housing societies offer to the people and what the people get in reality. Based on qualitative research strategy, this research finds the language and imagery used by both private housing societies promising the provision of the desired lifestyle people hope to achieve.

Key Findings

1. The research highlights that the developing private housing societies, Bahria Town and Canyon Views, are involved in making widespread use of print and electronic media besides placing importance on property dealers to attract residents for them. The mostly developed cooperative housing societies, Korang Town and PWD, depend more on the word-of-mouth of property dealers and their residents compared to the use of technological advancements such as print and electronic media since cooperative housing societies are not allowed marketing. Their access to the general public is limited compared to the private housing societies.
2. Bahria Town, utilising a wider range of promotional activities such as print media, electronic media and word-of-mouth, has a more far reaching impact compared to the other three housing societies. The language used by developers and property dealers mentions the promotion of environment factors and other community facilities such as security, electricity and infrastructure.
3. Canyon Views carries out enough range of promotional activities which grabs the attention of the elite. The language used in interviews shows promotion of architecture and urban planning factors the most, while in the promotional material lifestyle factors are mostly promoted. Its promotional images also widely promote the community facilities as well. Korang Town and PWD, rely on word-of-mouth mostly to draw in residents.
4. The gap between promise and reality is found to be almost nonexistent in Bahria Town, giving high level of satisfaction to its residents. There exists some gap within Canyon Views though the residents seem mostly satisfied with their choice of living. In cooperative housing societies there exists a large gap between promise and reality. The residents of Korang Town and PWD seem to have lower levels of satisfaction compared to those living in private housing societies.

Policy Recommendations

1. The cooperative societies department needs to hold the cooperative housing societies accountable for the provision of all the facilities mentioned in the master plans of the housing societies as well as for the quality of facilities being provided, since not all have the means to live in private housing societies which provide a greater variety of higher quality facilities.
2. The culture of pursuing profit becoming prevalent in the real estate industry needs to be countered by focusing on providing an affordable good living standard for income segments other than the rich. Certain rules for marketing and promotion need to be introduced for housing societies in order to keep check over advertising of private housing societies. Regular monitoring of housing societies is required by both CDA and the cooperative societies department so as to have all housing societies abide by the rules and have them implement these rules effectively.