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Building Safer Houses in Rural Bangladesh

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A safe house that safeguards its inhabitants from the destructive effects of natural elements is a basic human right. Substantial research has been carried out worldwide on developing hazard-resistant housing, yet millions of people in countries such as Bangladesh still remain at the mercy of natural hazards. It is not the lack of available solutions, but poverty that creates this vulnerability. What would be classified as a hazard in an affluent country, assumes form as a disaster here.

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and the University of Exeter, U.K., have been collaborating through a DFID-funded higher education link to conduct practical research into affordable technologies that could help those in need of safer homes. This included laboratory and field studies to develop improved understanding of natural and local building materials, behaviour of non-engineered rural construction, process of low-income home procurement, socio-economic aspects of low-income housing and participatory dissemination methods. It was also attempted to raise awareness of such issues among professionals and decision-makers through international seminars and national workshops. This book is a direct outcome of this link and its subject matter is derived from the experience gathered through the link. The underlying notion is that to be effective, technological improvements must be appropriate, accessible, available and, above all, affordable.

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