

basin–South Asia

Regional Knowledge Platform

basin –South Asia Quarterly Newsletter / 2009 / No.14

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Enabling Mechanisms for Self Reconstruction

I am very pleased to be associated with the **14th Issue** of the Quarterly Newsletter of **basin-South Asia**, a regional platform and a chapter of the international basin network as this issue is bringing together a few articles on “**Enabling Mechanisms for Owner Driven Reconstruction**”. The network of agencies constituting **basin-South Asia** have been engaged, since inception, in the development of knowledge systems and promotion of collaborative action to enable access by the poor to sustainable livelihoods and habitats. As a part of their engagement with the subject of post-disaster reconstruction, they proposed the theme “Enabling Mechanisms for Self Reconstruction” for this issue of the Newsletter, but I have taken the liberty to modify the theme to “Enabling Mechanisms for Owner Driven Reconstruction” as the latter provides greater clarity of purpose and direction.

In the case of most post-disaster reconstruction experiences, humanitarian agencies and corporate business houses have preferred to engage contractors for turn key construction solutions, largely influenced by donor conditionalities and the constraints of rigid timelines for execution. We need to evolve context-specific solutions within a broad overall framework of post-disaster reconstruction possibilities. The post-disaster reconstruction experiences in Gujarat after the Bhuj earthquake, in Thailand and Sri Lanka after the Indian Ocean tsunami and in Pakistan after the Muzaffarabad earthquake provide us interesting insights on the wide variations in contextual solutions.

At the National Disaster Management Authority, among several priority concerns, we have also been grappling with the complex policy dimensions of post-disaster reconstruction, given the governance experiences of post-disaster reconstruction strategies in many mega disasters in India and elsewhere in the recent past. NDMA initiated a series of interactions with the ODR Collaborative which emerged as a Consortium led by Hunnarshala Foundation for Building Technologies and Innovations, Unnati, Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan, SEEDS, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), World Habitat Research Institute, Switzerland and UNDP India. With the support of NDMA, UNDP, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), IFRC, ACHR, Practical Action, Misereor Germany and BMTPC, a Regional Conference on Owner Driven Reconstruction was held at Gandhidham, Gujarat during 16th to 18th July 2008 to explore the policy dimensions of Owner Driven Reconstruction. Two components identified as being critical imperatives for an effective ODR at this Regional Conference were the facilitating and regulatory role of the State and the need for setting up appropriate

support mechanisms to enable and build capacities of disaster-affected communities to take informed decisions and implement ODR with necessary technical, supervisory and monitoring skills as well as access to information, credit, building materials, knowhow etc.

Gen N C Vij UYSM PVSM AVSM (Retd), Vice Chairman, NDMA inaugurated a National Conference on Owner Driven Reconstruction was organised by the ODR Collaborative on 20th January 2009 at New Delhi. As a follow up of this National Conference, NDMA is setting up a Core Group of Technical Experts to work out the modalities for institutionalizing ODR in the post-disaster context as well as in development housing through mass housing programmes for the urban and rural poor, identify the policy constraints and develop strategies for creating an enabling and at the same time flexible policy framework with backward and forward linkages, and explore the potential of developing Manuals, Checklists and Formats for assisting decision makers, civil society practitioners and panchayati raj functionaries to understand the phases of the ODR process, like the identification of eligible beneficiaries, identification of land if *in situ* construction is not feasible, choice of building typologies and appropriate multi-hazard resistant building designs, and enabling processes of information dissemination and adequate access to information, credit, building materials, technology, knowhow, etc.

The Government of Bihar is working closely with the ODR Collaborative to apply the framework of Owner Driven Reconstruction in the case of the houses destroyed and damaged in a large number of villages in several districts of Bihar affected by the Kosi floods of 2008. This may provide interesting learning opportunities for the ODR Collaborative and open up innovative context-specific solutions for post-flood reconstruction in the face of multiple challenges. One of the critical pre-conditions for effective disaster management is the existence of an enabling environment of good governance. We need to work together with domain experts, professionals and civil society activists to redefine the contours of good governance. The articles in this issue of the basin Newsletter take the debate one step forward, and hopefully the impact of the ODR concept would lie essentially in the diversity of opinions it is able to trigger. I look forward to your comments, reactions and recommendations on the way forward and thank **basin-South Asia** for inviting me to edit this Special Issue and share my thoughts.

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This quarterly newsletter is a publication of the **basin-South Asia** Regional Knowledge Platform. **basin-South Asia** is the regional chapter of the International basin network.

This newsletter is published by **basin-South Asia** and is supported by Building and Social Housing Foundation, UK. The views expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the publisher.

Articles from this newsletter may be reproduced if fully acknowledged.

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This issue has been compiled by
Development Alternatives and
Sponsored by:



Building and Social Housing Foundation

Editorial Assistance:

Malini Trivedi (basin-South Asia Secretariat)

Printed by: Communication Consultants
63A, Bapu Park, Kotla Mubarakpur
New Delhi-110003, India

Cover photo:

Owner Driven House: Wattle and daub wall with MCR tiles
Courtesy: Binoy Acharya

Enabling Self Build Reconstruction – A case for granting official endorsement to unofficial realities

A house is much more than a physical structure or as an asset worth its value in commodity exchange. It is 'the place for manifesting and creating identity of self, and between self and community'. (Hamman, 1989, page 272). Experts and practitioners have, in the last past thirty years rejected the modernistic thinking propagating production of housing to favour age old practices involving building by owners. Such thinking seeks to derive alternate ways of habitation that are centered on the materials, needs and perceptions of the inhabitants. There is clear evidence that housing 'for' and not 'by' people results in compromised quality of housing.

Turner, 1976 (page 162) notes that "only when housing is determined by households and local institutions and the local institutions and the enterprises that they control, can the requisite variety [in housing] be achieved. *Self-made, habitual, traditional, the familiar* are different terminologies used over decades for processes that place the owner in the center of house construction process.

A House is not only considered as an effective collateral that serves to fulfill an essential need, it is also a valuable asset that helps build livelihoods especially in rural areas.

In post disaster contexts, housing is the foremost need for the survivors. It is a necessary component for ensuring dignity of women and protection of children and other vulnerable sections of the society from the elements. Reconstruction response from external actors – state and civil society, can potentially hasten the process of habitat development in regions that have suffered 'institutional neglect' or oversight. It has been seen that, areas worst affected by disasters are those that have suffered institutional neglect over years. Disasters thus bring these areas on to the development centre

stage. However, the pressure to 'deliver' on a 'timely' basis very often results in a knee jerk response that fails to deliver the longer term development goods. While people lose 'homes', agencies create 'houses and settlements'. Development that may have taken many years in a normal course of action is completed within a much shorter timeframe of three to four years.

The need for a 'development' perspective to disaster assistance calls for a change in practice during pre-disaster times. Beginning with people's empowerment to participate in local governance, there is a need for recognizing the roles that owners can play in habitat development and/or reconstruction. Empowerment and participation in local governance brings in the desired accountability in governance especially when it comes to realization of entitlements by the people. Comprehensive community involvement in the planning process from village level upwards will not only effectively address community needs but also help them prepare for disasters. It will also provide a space for age-old local wisdom with possible links to risk reduction and sustainable use of natural resources at the very minimum.

Although many development related methodologies and tools such as PRA and participatory design processes are already being used for disaster reconstruction, these need to be mainstreamed enough to be applied as a part of practice in non-emergency situations. Capacity building of masons and artisans in safe construction that is a visible component in most reconstruction programmes, needs to become a priority for habitat development in the normal course too. Community institutions need to be strengthened further on to not only ensure their participation but also allow them to play an important role in decision making, procurement and



Owner Driven Reconstruction

monitoring of construction activities. Once these become a part of normal practice, only then can efforts to mitigate disaster risks bear fruit.

Furthermore, a greater investment in 'safe habitat' has to be ensured such that all developments are disaster safe and do not increase disaster vulnerability of the region and its infrastructure. Building material banks, training centers, mason guilds and other enterprises whose capacities have been strengthened as a result of the reconstruction effort must be officially acknowledged as a resource and their experiences adequately used in the mainstream to mitigate the effect of future disasters.

If self-build reconstruction holds promise, then the approaches thereof must be granted official sanction and sufficiently large numbers of civil society groups need to come forward to fill the gap in habitat construction. It goes without saying that the task is beyond the capacity of any single agency or group and need synergistic linkages to be established among the different stakeholders.

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An Introductory Overview of Post-disaster Reconstruction Approaches

When disasters cause large-scale destruction of the built environment, national and international governmental and non-governmental agencies are likely provide housing assistance to affected communities. Looking back at past disasters in different contexts we may notice that agencies employ a variety of reconstruction approaches. Ideally the selected approach should be based on a contextual analysis, on an assessment of local capacities and needs and on people's own skills, desires and aspirations. In reality however, agencies' choice for one or the other approach is often underpinned by different ideologies, pragmatic considerations, or by funds available for post-disaster recovery assistance within the framework of a particular disaster.

Though we all aware of the existence of different reconstruction approaches there are no formally recognized classifications. Agencies involved in reconstruction may find their own labels for their approach. In specific contexts old approaches may get new labels, without undergoing any substantive changes. Scholars and experts classify reconstruction approaches based on specific criteria, depending on the purposes of their analysis. For example, according to Barakat (2003), broadly speaking there are five approaches to post-disaster reconstruction, namely:

- 1) Providing transitional and temporary shelter
- 2) Repairing damaged houses
- 3) Building new houses
- 4) A 'building yard approach' whereby communities do the rebuilding, but outside agencies make materials and skills available and affordable
- 5) A 'financial facilitation' approach, whereby communities do the rebuilding, with financial help from outside agencies.

In this paper I will classify reconstruction approaches with reference to currently used labels and based on owners' role in housing reconstruction. With reference to concrete reconstruction experiences I had a chance to review empirically or through literature review, I make a distinction between the following approaches:

- 1) Contractor-driven approach ex-nihilo (CODEN): Under this approach houses are reconstructed by a contractor in a new site without any involvement of the house owner. The houses are generally allotted to the people upon completion – at least officially- randomly, e.g. through a lottery system. Though agencies behind this approach may claim that communities have been involved in the selection and approval of a new site and the house design, in practice such participation may be only nominal. In theory this approach has the advantage of being faster and the employment of the formal building sector is supposed to ensure better quality and compliance with approved building standards. In practice examples of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka and Indonesia indicate that this approach may lead (with some exceptions!) to housing and settlement arrangements that do not meet the socio-cultural and livelihood requirements of the people, and hence to high levels of frustration. They may be transformed as to meet their owners' requirements or they may simply remain unoccupied.
- 2) Contractor-driven approach in situ (CODIS): When houses are reconstructed in situ -in theory- they are rebuilt on people's own plots, meaning that people know which house is going to be theirs. Even if the house is built by a contractor like under the CODEN approach this allows house owners, formally or informally, some degree of control and participation. The house owner may be involved in quality control or in specific tasks, such as curing. They may also start suggesting or making by themselves additions or modifications already during construction. However, when house designs are standard it may be difficult to fit them into pre-disaster settlement layouts. This is why contractor-driven reconstruction in situ often ends up with similar practices and outcomes as those of CODEN.
- 3) Community-driven approach (CDA): A number of agencies in Aceh (e.g. UN Habitat, Uplink and GTZ) adopted what they named a CDA, which basically refers to what Barakat coined the

'building yard approach'. Under this approach, communities are extensively involved in the reconstruction process, though the degree of involvement and effective control over reconstruction may vary between and even within agencies. Under a CDA, the agency suggests one or more housing designs, technologies and materials – with or without involvement of the community-delivers construction materials, financial assistance (or a mix of both) and training. Instead of employing external contractors the agency may either encourages the formation of construction committees, which assume a leading role in construction or encourage the house owners, with financial assistance, to manage it on their own. The advantage of this approach as implemented by some agencies is its flexibility, local accountability and the control house owners have over reconstruction. The approach ensures access to construction materials and contributes to revive the local economy. It may also be a strategy to foster technological changes, e.g. to launch low-environmental impact construction materials.

- 4) Participatory approach (PA): Most agencies claim that their reconstruction approach is 'participatory'. However, 'participation' is a fluid and often, abused concept. Some agencies claim their approach was participatory because they discussed their reconstruction plans with 'village representatives'. In a stratified society these are generally the male elite who may have their own vested interests or little in common with the average community member. As pointed out by Davidson et al (2007) there is a continuum of possibilities for participation: at one extreme, users are involved only as labour force, whereas at the other, they play an active role in decision-making and project management. In this context, I define PA as an approach in which the agency, although assuming a leading role in reconstruction, does not engage a professional contractor and gives a major emphasis in involving the house owners

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Owner Driven Housing: Enabling Factors and Processes

[This case study is based on the deliberations facilitated by basin-South Asia to propose Government of India a National Rural Housing and Habitat Policy. Under this 18 state workshops were organised and a national workshop was convened. The other source used in this article is the initiative of Owner Driven Reconstruction (ODR) collaborative. The ODR collaborative has conducted a Regional Consultation at Gandhidham in 2008 and a state level consultation in Bihar. Subsequent to it, a National Consultation was organised in Delhi in collaboration with National Disaster Management Authority. This collated case study tries to bring together the owner driven housing issues for normal rural housing programmes as well as for post disaster reconstruction.]

Housing construction in rural India has been a people's process and more so it is an incremental process. Often it is viewed that house construction is separate from provisioning of drinking water, sanitation, roads and basic services. Policy makers and rural development practitioners view habitat development as an integrated process. Shelter reconstruction needs to be viewed in terms of habitat development. While individual owners build their own houses, government of India, particularly the Rural Development Ministry has been supporting housing construction of the poor through schemes like Indira Awaas Yojana. In the post disaster reconstruction, government and various development agencies have been supporting housing reconstruction.

In the post disaster reconstruction, in principle almost all agencies talk about centrality of participation of the owner. However, in practice the participation of the owners remain in the lower end of the spectrum. Engagement of the beneficiary – owners are mostly limited to being informed about the intent of the sponsor agency who rarely involve them in the decision making process. For people's ownership in the rebuilding process, participation needs to be translated from beneficiary to the ownership level. It has been experienced that when people are provided ownership in true sense in the construction, the level of people's satisfaction reaches at a higher level and there is increased adaptation of appropriate

local material and technology. It has also challenged the myth that owner driven housing takes longer time and costs less.

Over the years, it has been experienced that the government sponsored housing schemes and post disaster housing reconstruction programmes supported by government and development agencies have not been able to involve the owners, their aspiration, their needs, technologies and processes in the housing process. Many rural poor do not feel confident to accept the government housing schemes as they feel that with the government grant they will not be able to adhere to the building specifications. The specifications are more with regard to use of material (bricks, cement, iron) and technology which is mostly four walls and a concrete roof. In different parts of India, poor people have their own technology which they are familiar with. For example, in large part of Eastern India, poor people build their house through wattle and daub and a thatch roof in semi arid Rajasthan and Gujarat people build cob walls with mud roof. In many parts of Central India, people build walls of stones with mud mortar. There is a greater need to enable people to improve the use of housing material and technology which are disaster safe and improve the usability. However, the external agencies have been using alien material and technology making the local house owners mere silent recipients of the houses.

The owner driven housing requires a series of enabling policy and implementation support inputs.

Access to Land

Poor people do not feel encouraged to invest on housing as they do not have land title. There are cases where a community migrates and moves out of the main village and builds up a temporary housing, on available barren plots. Governments regard such people as encroachers and there are not many efforts to introduce a system to ensure a housing security for these people. For example, in Bhuj district, one community of Purasar village shifted and settled in the government waste land. Even though they have settled for years, neither house taxes have been collected nor have any

government services being made available to them. Similarly after disasters, many villagers have shifted to new locations but they do not have land title. There is a need to develop an inventory of land availability which the poor people can easily access. In this the gram panchayats need to be involved in identifying land for specific purposes.

Access to Finance

Access to financial support from government schemes and credit from financial institutions is a critical factor for housing infrastructure. A national rural centre fund can be created under the aegis of NABARD for refinancing to banks for rural housing. Many BPL families are never considered for availing the housing schemes. There is a need to develop a panchayat level beneficiary tracking system. Unless a person in the lower level has availed the benefit, the benefits should not go to the higher level in the list. The beneficiary tracking system with public accountability can build an inclusive approach to access government schemes. Such beneficiary tracking system can also be applicable in the post disaster situations.

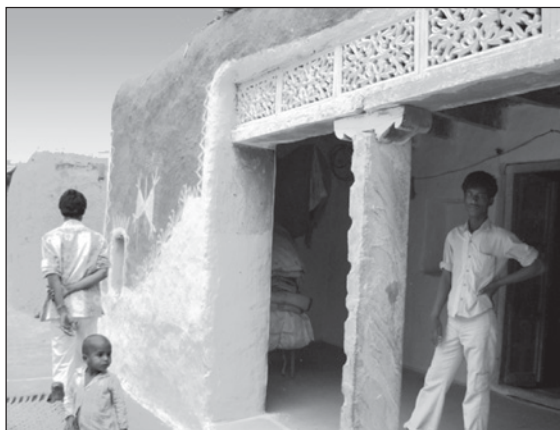
Facilitating Delivery Mechanisms

Facilitating technical and housing material support enables owners to build and rebuild their houses. Governments need to make policies and delivery mechanisms to make construction materials available nearer to the habitat. Technical guidelines and supervision are also equally important. In the post Gujarat earthquake the government not only created mass awareness about earthquake engineering but also provided engineers to help households to adapt new technologies and designs that are seismic resistant. Government also controlled the prices of cement and steel to check escalation during construction. Such a provision need to be developed for regular construction as well as post disaster reconstruction.

Facilitating Owners Participation

Visualising the owner's participation in the housing, the Government of India in its

flagship programme, Indira Awaas Yojana moved away from contractor driven housing to owner driven housing. However, currently the states as well as civil society organisations are also directly delivering houses in normal and post disaster situations. There is a need to clarify the role of civil society institutions for external donors to work in an owner driven framework. Finally the housing process needs to be guided and owned by the individual owners. This does not lessen the task and the responsibility of external agencies. The state policy need to be articulated so that external agencies do not marginalize the owner in taking decisions with regard to design, choice of technology and material.



Owner Driven House: Adobe wall with mud roof

In a consultation held at Gandhidham, Gujarat, in July 2008 on Owner Driven Reconstruction, it was listed that the state has the following key roles in ensuring an effective Owner Driven Reconstruction Policy:

- i. Undertake moral responsibility for safety.
- ii. Co-ordinate reconstruction efforts and ensure quality, equity, non-discrimination and ensure other legal requirements.

- iii. Ensure regulation and enforcement for safety.
- iv. Put in institutional mechanisms for sustainability.
- v. Create mechanisms for participation and regulation of NGOs and donors.
- vi. Ensure appropriate exit of the agencies.
- vii. Enable local leadership and governance bodies to own the process of reconstruction as context, history, nature

of disaster and vulnerability vary from place to place.

The ODR workshop further retreated that in a post disaster reconstruction timely and transparent, damage assessment, announcement of the support and realistic timeframe are crucial factors to improve people driven housing.

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in project planning, housing design, choice of construction materials and construction. Defined in this way PA may be similar to what in Aceh several agencies called CDA, though under the CDA people did not necessarily have much say on house design and construction materials.

- 5) Subsidiary housing approach (SHA): In the context of Gujarat I found many local NGOs that adopted what I named a 'subsidiary housing approach' (Duyne 2006). Under this approach, the agency does not engage directly in housing construction, but complements government compensation with additional material and technical assistance. Agencies that adopted this approach were concerned to ensure that marginalized communities would obtain the support to which they were entitled and to complement it with additional support where it was assumed to be qualitatively or quantitatively insufficient. This approach was also used by some NGOs to promote affordable and environmentally sustainable building technologies. This approach basically refers to what some agency called the 'owner-driven approach plus'.

- 6) Owner-driven approach (ODA): The term 'owner driven approach' was used for the first time within the framework of post-earthquake reconstruction in Gujarat, where it was adopted on a large scale by the Government of Gujarat. ODA refers to a reconstruction approach based on a combination of financial and technical assistance and a regulatory framework that would ensure access to

good quality and affordable construction materials. A similar approach was re-proposed after the tsunami in Sri Lanka and Thailand and after the earthquakes in Pakistan and Peru, because (a) it proved to be potentially the fastest most cost effective and empowering approach and (b) because in all cases the World Bank as a funding agency had a strong influence on the government's reconstruction policy. The fact that we organized a conference with the aim of supporting the Government of India to develop a national policy for owner-driven reconstruction disaster indicates that we believe that this approach may indeed be the most empowering and dignifying approach towards reconstruction. However, also owner-driven reconstruction entails some risks that need to be fully understood and kept into account. The key for a successful owner-driven reconstruction lies in providing an enabling environment, e.g. ensuring equity and support to the most vulnerable people, access to good quality construction, technical support, etc. This requires not only a capable government but also a good cooperation between government and civil society organizations.

- 7) Cash approach (CA): CA and ODA are believed by some to refer to the basically the same approach. In particular the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) has been a strong advocate for cash approaches for relief and reconstruction. SDC was also successful in mobilizing other Swiss NGOs to support cash-based housing

reconstruction after the Tsunami in Sri Lanka (Ayesan et al 2006, Harvey 2007). Some see the difference between CA and ODA in terms of strings and conditions attached to financial assistance, whereby there would be close to none in case of CA and several possible ones in case of ODA (Schilderman 2008). The approach is also increasingly popular for relief aid and is based on the trust that people know best what is good for them (Harvey 2007, Peppiat 2004). Under a cash approach emphasis is on the distribution of financial assistance and less importance is given to need to embed such assistance in a number of enabling measures as (ideally) in the case of ODA. This approach thus entails the risk of reproducing pre-disaster vulnerabilities and of neglecting the needs of the most vulnerable.

These approaches often overlap or present themselves in the real world in different combinations. No reconstruction approach is inherently 'bad' or 'good' and all of them entail some advantages, challenges and risks. In advocating for an owner-driven approach, we thus need to remain equally critical and keep stressing all the context-specific enabling measures that are critical to its success. Otherwise ODA may just become another buzz word of development agencies' vocabulary and not lead to the desirable global improvements in post-disaster reconstruction.

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Enabling Mechanisms for Successful Reconstruction

Planners and decision makers often underestimate the owners' capacity and contribution to the reconstruction process. In a country like India where achieving high quality and timelines are big challenges, housing reconstruction process is often considered as a supplier driven approach especially in the post disaster reconstruction. By making it into a demand driven process, the beneficiaries can become potential partners and stakeholders and assist in the process of achieving *housing for all* with total habitat development.

The state, executing departments and agencies can act as *enablers* or *facilitators* by filling the gaps through proper guidelines and policy development, capacity development, educating the community, enabling their access to resource and empowering the beneficiary across class and society for achieving the mission. A high quality of construction can be achieved with mechanisms to ensure adherence to building codes and to good technical assistance and supervision. The disbursement modalities of the financial assistance further contribute to good construction quality.

Mainstreaming homeowner construction will cease to be a challenge if there is *willingness* and *commitment* at planning level, particularly at the policy planners and executing agencies.

The four enabling pillars of successful reconstruction are –

1. Capacity development

A comprehensive capacity development system has to be put in place to cover the various needs for capacity building across the community, the government and the executing bodies. While the state takes the primary responsibility, academic institutions, resource agencies, executing agencies need to proactively involve themselves in the development of the capacities which should not just end with training programmes but should be utilized in the actual process of reconstruction. Some of the skills learnt may even aid in further choosing their livelihood options for the community.

The capacity building should in a nut shell target

- Beneficiary level-Beneficiaries, community
- Executor level – masons, construction workers, supervisors, engineers, NGOs
- Planning and monitoring level-policy planners, experts, NGOs

2. Participation of the community

The fundamental principle of the owner driven reconstruction is to allow and provide opportunity for the beneficiary in the planning and execution process of the housing reconstruction and habitat development. Success of the programme is greatly increased through participation of the beneficiaries during site selection, house design, choice of sanitation models, waste management, and conservation and environmental issues required, based on the consensus of diverse stakeholders. Integrated habitat planning approach to housing would greatly benefit reconstruction and housing programmes. Implementation procedures of large housing programmes need to include community audits of expenditures, quality monitoring and participation. Quality monitoring would also benefit from making information available pertaining to housing programme, which include details of funds, procurement, beneficiaries and selection process.

3. Quality assurance and monitoring system

It is crucial that there are systems, resources, as well as capacities to monitor the quality of houses being constructed. In an owner driven approach proper back up system is required to enable the beneficiary to monitor the construction to the desired level. This requires educating the beneficiary and community about the benefits of the programme, financial resource details like unit cost, break ups, material consumption. One example of this is the Government of Tamil Nadu's housing reconstruction programme where all the beneficiaries have been provided with a *beneficiary hand book* providing details of construction materials requirement, options on house designs and eligibility for housing benefits.

Involvement of beneficiary with proper coordination mechanism backed up by techno-social support will build trust and eliminate post reconstruction conflicts.

One model which can be referred in this context is the positive experience in Nagapattinam District, where a district level construction monitoring body was formed by the Government and civil society partnership. This body monitored the construction process which paved the way for greater transparency of programme implementation at the district and sub-district level enhancing programme quality and effectiveness. Such mechanisms at state and district level when appropriately set up can be utilised to value add to the process

in terms of periodic quality audits, getting feedback from the community and act as a forum for coordination and troubleshooting.

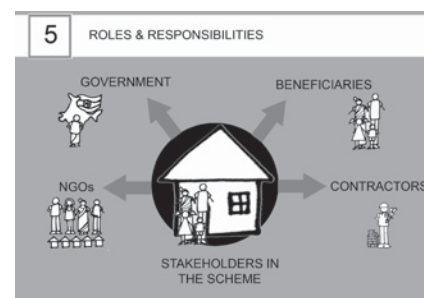
4. Coordination

Post disaster experiences show that *inter agency coordination* and *interdepartmental coordination* are key to successful and meaningful provision of services and amenities such as water, sanitation systems, waste management, power and operation & maintenance. This also gives an opportunity for appropriate planning, midcourse corrections or modifications during execution stage of the reconstruction both in technical and social areas. The primary responsibility for coordination lies with the State Government to authorize these systems for the benefit of the programme.

A proper *grievance redressal mechanism* needs to be in place for the benefit of the beneficiary to fall back on. In case of dissatisfaction with the project benefits, the beneficiary should have access to contact and register his/her grievance which will get addressed.

Efforts have been made to institutionalize *self reconstruction/home owner reconstruction* in the post disaster scenarios in the past and a few successful models have emerged at community level. Nevertheless, some risks and limitations of the owner-driven approach are – technical know how, capacity to deliver and ensure quality housing with services and amenities not restricted to only design alternatives but also execution and occupancy of the constructed houses. The reconstruction strategy must evolve with the situational context while considering the available resources as well as the nature and volume of reconstruction. Minimum standards need to be established in terms of providing safe housing and infrastructure with realistic planning and project management arrangements.

A comprehensive housing and habitat policy needs to be derived through consultative processes involving the community by empowering and enabling them to access and exercise control over reconstruction process for the best result in terms of satisfaction, timeliness and sustainability.



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South Asia

Regional Knowledge Platform



Auroville Earth Institute aims to research, develop, promote and transfer earth-based technologies which are cost and energy effective.



Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Pakistan works to improve the built environment through the provision of technical assistance and construction management services.



Centre for Ecocentric Development and People's Action, Nepal is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working for "People Centered, Eco-Centric Development."



Coastal Area Disaster Mitigation Efforts, India is a network of twenty voluntary organizations working for disaster preparedness of Fishing Communities in India.



Exnora International, India works as a catalyst in bringing about local initiative and community participation in overall improvement in quality of life.



Grambangla Unnayan Committee, Bangladesh is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working for people affected by extreme poverty, exclusion and disease.



Maithri is supporting Panchayat Raj institutions for developing perspective plans on basic need fulfillment and natural resource management through capacity building processes.



Orissa Development Technocrats' Forum, India works to facilitate an effective rural housing delivery system through appropriate technologies and sustainable livelihoods.



Trust for Village Self Governance, India is a charitable trust focusing on local self governance in villages for creating sustainable employment through habitat development.



Practical Action, Sri Lanka, works with poor communities to develop appropriate technologies in food production, energy, transport, shelter and disaster mitigation.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), India is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Swiss Foreign Ministry.

Secretariat



Development Alternatives is a not-for-profit sustainable development enterprise that designs and promotes programmes and products which, through the use of alternative technology, contribute to the enrichment of human life.



Gram Vikas, India is a rural development organization, working with poor and marginalized communities of Orissa since 1979 making sustainable improvements in the quality of life.



Unnati is a non-governmental organization working over the last 15 years for "civic leadership promotion and strengthening local self governance."

basin-South Asia Regional Knowledge Platform (basin-SA) is committed to "developing knowledge systems and promoting collaborative action within South Asia to enable access by the poor to sustainable habitat and livelihoods."