



People's Participation in Housing- Proposed Pilot Project

MN Ashish Ganju, Vinod Gupta, and Romi Khosla

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11 Eco Options 21, Mandir Marg, A2 Block, Aya Nagar, Phase 5, New Delhi-110047, India.

Tel. +91.11.26502584.

Fax. 26502567.

Website: www.greha.org

Email: grehadelhi@gmail.com

Today mass housing has become synonymous with low cost housing and the entire national effort in this field has been diverted to producing a cheaper house. Yet the numbers involved are of such magnitude that any amount of cost reduction exercise can not provide the solution for housing everybody.

Traditionally the individual who has built his own house has been intricately involved in the whole process. This made it possible for this identity to be established in his environment. Today the pace of development has taken away this close tie between the individual and the creation of his own environment. Large numbers of people are “designed for” by centralised agencies. This can cause further alienation unless the centralised agency concentrates on understanding the new demands of the housing activity and makes the process responsive once again to the individual needs. The task is, therefore, to evolve design strategies which allow the individual to p-participate once again in the building process.

The fundamental requirements of shelter are the same for rich and poor. Everyone needs light, ventilation, healthy and clean surroundings, access to facilities, etc. Whatever be the solutions to reduce cost, we have to find means to strengthen individual identity within the collective, and to provide the minimum environmental necessities.

The enclosed programme provides a basis by which a pilot study can be carried out in Delhi. It shows how the existing housing process can be revolutionised by introducing “People’s Participation” in mass housing. We enumerate below the five essential components of the project.

1. People’s Participation

1. Site Selection – Formation of mohalla committees in the existing settlement to be housed. Initial dialogue with people. Collection of data and preparation of socio-economic profile.

2. Choice of materials and methods of construction – Study of skills available with the proposed inhabitants. Identification of their desires and aspiration.
3. Planning and layout of site – Dialogue with the people to allocate house site according to preferences. Provision of community spaces according to the discussed needs.
4. Site development-t – Labour organisation and maximum utilisation of skills available within the community.
5. Design of houses – The design of the building system to maximise choice of possible house types and the phasing of construction. Each householder in consultation with the architect to decide on his needs.
6. Construction activity – House construction to be phased according to individual needs and resources.
7. Upgrading and maintenance – Responsibility of upgrading and maintenance of community facilities to be fixed at various levels – householder, mohalla committee, municipal authorities.

2. Physical Component

1. Community – cohesive group of 400 – 500 families.
2. Housing density 85 – 100 families/hectare.
3. Land requirement – 5 – 6 hectares within the city.
4. Average plot size – 40 sq.m.
5. Area of the house – 10 sq.m. to 30 sq.m. (on two floors)
6. Land allotted for community facilities – Kindergarten – 4 no. – 2,500 sq. m., Primary School 1 no. – 3,500 sq.m., Community centre (including mohalla committee office, temple/mosque/gurudwara/church, community hall, health and family planning clinic, shops – 1,500 sq.m.
7. Land for roads, footpaths parks and open spaces. – 22, 500 sq.m.
8. Land allotted for plots – 20,000 sq.m.

3. Financial Component

1. Cost of land Subsidy
2. Cost of development of land Rs. 6.0 lakhs including drainage, sewerage, water supply, electricity, bio-gas plant, roads, footpaths.
3. Seed capital for house building Rs. 3.0 lakhs
4. Cost of providing Community Facilities Rs. 3.0 lakhs (in a phased programme)
5. Cost of Survey, project management, and community development services. Rs. 0.9 lakhs Overall outlay – Rs. 12.9 lakhs.

Note: The nature of the project being experimental, the above figures should be read with a tolerance of plus or minus Rs. 2.0 lakhs.

4. Definition of role of development agencies.

1. The design and implementation team – collection and analysis of data, dialogue with people, organising of building activity.
2. Financing Agency – To provide the seed capital initially and to provide funds at different phases of development. To receive repayments.
3. Sponsoring Authority – To provide liaison between the community to be housed, the design team, the financing agency and the municipal authorities.

5. Design Considerations for the project

- i. Family interaction.
- ii. Group interaction.
- iii. The neighborhood.
- iv. Water, waste, energy.
- v. Micro-climate.
- vi. Finance management.

i. Family Interaction- Social Criteria

- Can the family adapt the house to various ways of living or is it just a box?
- Are these specific spaces provided in the house which are moulded to fit a purpose, or are they the result of a structural system?
- Is there an open space which is private to the house where it is possible to dry clothes, put away charpais, sleep in the open, dry and grind spices?
- Is there a place where you can clean or wash things without making a mess in the house?
- Is there enough place for storage? Is that space related to the belongings peculiar to the class or occupation of the persons living there?
- Is there space within the house where children of 3-5 years can play and the mother watch them while she is working?
- Can the family add their identity to the house or are they being regarded as goods to be packaged?
- Is it possible for the family to take pride in their house?
- Is the house easy to maintain?
- Does the method of construction make it possible for the family to participate in the building of the house?
- Can the house be grouped with other similar houses in some meaningful way?

ii. Group Interaction-Social Criteria

- Are there open spaces where groups can meet? Are these so arranged that they can be maintained by the inhabitants themselves.
- Is there a suitable place, adjacent to the house, where 5-11 year olds can play?

- Can children play Ball games or ‘Gulli-Danda’ anywhere near the house?
- Is there somewhere where old people can sit and watch the world go by?
- Is there a suitable place for scooters and cycles to be kept?
- Is there a specific place for planting trees and shrubs which can be easily maintained?
- Has the relationship of neighboring houses and their means of access been chosen for some good reason?
- Is there something worth looking at out of every dwelling or does one merely stare out at another dwelling opposite?
- Has the location of the nursery school been considered as an integral part of the grouping of houses?
- Can the barrow/bicycle vendor carry on his trade without getting in the way of the routine activity of the houses?
- Can ‘Holi’ be celebrated somewhere? Is there place for Puja, Diwali, Dussehra and weddings? Can festivities take place without disrupting other functions?

iii. **The Neighbourhood - Social Criteria**

- Is the scale of the house related to the size of the community? Is the size of the community related to a comfortable walking distance?
- can the number of houses provide support shops at natural pressure points in the layout?
- Is the kind and size of shopping related to the actual needs of the community? Where will the ‘Panwala’ go? Is there place for a Dhobi and a Milk-Booth?
- Does the location of the community facilities develop out of a significant relationship between the houses in the layout or are they just put in some left over open spaces?

- Has the occupation pattern of the community been considered in the layout of the houses or is the layout borrowed from an earlier pattern?
- Are the routes provided in the layout related to the direction in which the inhabitants are likely to want to go for work and recreation?
- Is emergency access for vehicles provided?
- Is it safe for children and women to walk up to their house after dark.
- Is the scale of the roads and open space sympathetic to the scale of the house and way of life of that particular community?
- Does the layout ensure that the community is not fragmented by thoroughfares passing through it?
- Are the larger open spaces located at natural pressure points in the layout so that their maintenance can easily be organised by the community?
- Has enough study been done about the particular cultural demands of the community?
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- Has the location of the vehicular routes serving the community been considered for safety - only vehicles at high speed need be completely segregated from pedestrian routes. In case the vehicular routes have to go through the housing layout, has enough thought been given to reducing the speed of the vehicle so that it is no danger to children, etc?
- Has the change over from vehicular to pedestrian routes been fully considered? This change over happens at car parks and public transport stops. Are their locations close enough to the houses?

iv. Water, Waste, Energy-Environmental Criteria

- Has the ecological impact of the scheme on the neighbouring areas been considered?

- Is the method of disposal of solid and liquid wastes chosen only as an extension of the existing patterns or has adequate thought been given to the particular needs of the community and the neighbouring areas, including the possibilities of recycling the wastes?
- Can the inhabitants easily dispose of the garbage themselves? Are the means of disposal of this garbage easy from the collection points?
- Is the long term quality and quantity of the water supply been ensured to meet the applicable standards?
- Are the means available for proper disposal of night-soils and is the waste removal system chosen to be in accordance with the habit and the standard of living of the inhabitants?
- Have the locally available energy resources been considered to meet the requirements of cooking, lighting and cooling etc?

v. Micro-Climate- Environmental Criteria

- Is there adequate protection from the weather in the open spaces and the House?
- Are the houses orientated to gain maximum benefit of the sun, breeze and rain or does the house merely exclude the weather?
- Have the materials for the house been chosen only for protection from one extreme of climate, or has the choice been made considering their specific performance with regard to the diurnal as well as the seasonal thermal variations?
- Has the amount and direction of solar radiation been considered off the walls, off the ground etc? Has the texture and colour of the materials also been considered?
- Has the wind flow through the individual house as well as a cluster of houses been designed for maximum comfort?
- Is the plantation design just a decorative element or has it been worked out to modify the climate and create a comfortable environment?

vi. Finance and Management

- Type of land tenure/ownership of house is a critical factor in determining the involvement in the housing process of the individual families as well as the agency sponsoring the development. Has this been fully considered in setting up a development philosophy which can generate a self maintaining housing system?
- How is the housing area connected to the work centres of the inhabitants? Especially in low income communities the proximity of the house to areas having employment potential is of prime importance.
- Has the financial burden on the inhabitants been calculated to be within their paying capacity?
- Are there financial resources available to give a complete house with optimum finishes? If not, what methods are being proposed to reduce the initial financial outlay.
- Is the cost being reduced only by downgrading specification or can other methods be proposed such as (a) component building systems which permit covered area increments to a basic unit without disrupting the functions of the house; (b) continuous upgrading of specifications without making any original finishes redundant?
- What is the basis for allocation to individuals of the houses within the scheme? Is it the special/community associations of the proposed inhabitants or is simply first come first serve?
- In the case of rehousing settlements has a provision been made in the budget for community development efforts and facilities like Creches, nursery school, elementary health care, etc?