

SEMINAR

ON

NON-CONVENTIONAL & ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO SHELTER THE URBAN POOR:

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

BOMBAY/CALCUTTA/DELHI/HYDERABAD/AHMEDABAD

DELHI 15, 16, 17 JANUARY 1981

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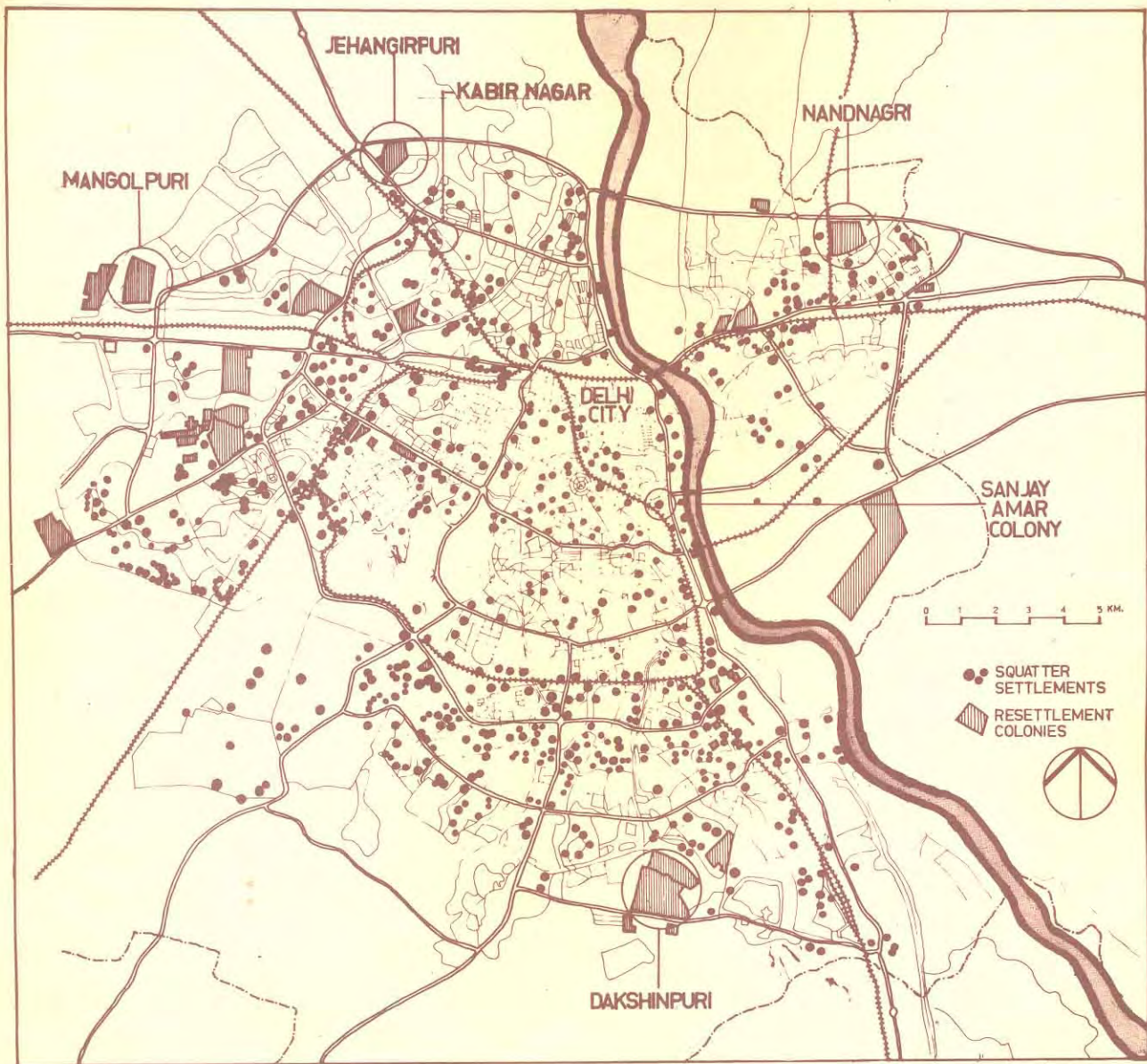
BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

People today are pouring into the cities of the developing world, swelling their numbers and size. Every year the new urban populations fall farther and farther behind in adequately meeting their housing needs. The growth of squatter settlements becomes a measure of the housing deficiency. If we look at the resources of these cities and their national governments, or at the housing and community development programmes of the United Nations and other international organisations, we see little hope that money from these sources can be found to provide conventional housing solutions.

Given this background, an initiative has been taken by the Ahmedabad Study Action Group (ASAG) along with Selavip International (Servicio Latino Americano Y Asiatico De Vivienda Popular), to organise a series of seminars on *Non-Conventional and Alternative Approaches to Shelter the Urban Poor: Local and International Experiences* in five metropolitan cities of India: Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad in January 1981.

The seminars are being organised with the following objectives in mind:

- (a) To expose concerned people to innovative ideas and non-conventional approaches being tried out in other parts of the developing world in finding solutions to the housing problems of the urban poor.
- (b) To share ideas, information and experience of the external agencies in the context of local problems, approaches and solutions. This will help in reviewing local on-going efforts in relation to others (national as well as international) and generate a climate for experimentation and adoption.
- (c) To get various local agencies—government, semi-government, non-government—together to review efforts collectively and to explore avenues of cooperation in evolving new, non-conventional approaches and solutions.
- (d) To use this opportunity to study, evaluate and document (to the extent possible) some of the relevant experiences (policies, programmes, schemes and experiments) tried out by the city in the past or in operation at present.
- (e) To use the preparatory period:
 - (i) to generate a city-wide dialogue and create awareness about the housing problems of the poor.
 - (ii) to bring into focus the limitations of conventional housing solutions.
 - (iii) to establish the need for adopting low-cost, non-conventional approaches.
 - (iv) to bring as many non-government agencies as possible together to share ideas and, if possible, to establish working relationships among them.
 - (v) to establish linkages and, if possible, working relationships between the government and non-government agencies.



THE DELHI EXPERIENCE

The problems of shelter in a rapidly expanding urban environment have rarely been responded to adequately. People's independent action has meant large areas of slum growing within the city fabric. Generally, this spontaneous activity had prompted city authorities towards 'slum clearance' as a 'solution'. Delhi has experimented with the resettlement programme in the last two decades. In the mid-seventies this policy of resettlement had been very brisk in developing large areas under site and services schemes. Delhi's resettlement programme, which was enforced by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) over a very short period of time, is perhaps the largest of its kind. This programme shifted official attention away from the traditional housing stress areas within the city, such as the old city of Delhi (Shahjahanabad), and the network of 'urban villages' which were trapped within the spread of post-independence housing colonies.

In order to present the Delhi experience at the Seminar, and keeping the earlier stated seminar objectives in mind, it was felt that a new look at the resettlement programme could form a good base for developing alternative approaches in the context of the housing demands of the poor in this city.

The preparatory period was used to generate a dialogue between several voluntary social-work organisa-

tions who are working with squatter and resettlement colony people, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and other concerned governmental agencies, academic and research institutions like the School of Planning and Architecture and the National Buildings Organisation, national and international funding organisations like the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) and UNICEF, and a team of independent professionals and interested citizens. The attempt was to create a bridge between the official understanding of the shelter problem of the poor and the perception of the poor themselves on their housing reality.

The voluntary social-work organisations (Action India, A. V. Baliga Foundation, Abner Memorial School, Delhi Catholic Archdiocese), who have been working with the poor in resettlement and squatter colonies over the last few years, provided the base for evolving case studies which cover a range of issues related to housing needs. They are presented as a direct expression of people's own experience of shelter, both within the city in the resettlement colonies.

In addition to the case studies, a representative household survey with a stress on shelter issues is being carried out in four of the resettlement colonies. Papers are also being presented to highlight the policy and practices being followed by the DDA, possible alternative shelter strategies, and a theoretical framework for looking at the urban shelter situation.



KABIRNAGAR

NANDNAGRI

CASE STUDY 1:

THE WEAVERS' HABITAT IN NANDNAGRI AND KABIR NAGAR

As part of the recent resettlement programme, a community of weavers, who for the past 15-20 years had squatted and developed a number of colonies in the centre of the old city, were moved to a new resettlement site, Nand Nagri. The plan was for Nand Nagri to be a well-designed weavers colony, with provision of work sites, water supply and other services, along with house sites. However, the plan has been realised only partially. Ironically only a few colonies were resettled. The others have decayed considerably since then. The process of resettlement dislocated the community from their marketing contacts and affected them not only eco-

nomically but also disrupted the social processes of the community.

The study would contrast conditions in the new and old habitat while presenting the people's perceptions of the impact of the resettlement process. It would also attempt to present the multi-dimensional role that external interveners (official agencies, social work organisations, political agents, etc.) have played in the community's life. The study would, therefore, critically examine the nature of resettlement while stressing the need for active community participation in processes which fundamentally affect their quality of life.



CASE STUDY 2:

WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES ON RESETTLEMENT

Always seen as the dependants of men, women have been an invisible factor in urban planning. What men say about women, their needs, their role and their potential has formed the data base for policy makers.

Constituting nearly half the population, women play a central role in matters relating to housing, community development, nutrition and education. At low income levels they are also important contributors to the family economy. As such, developmental strategies, particularly those relating to shelter, ought to be extremely sensitive to women's needs.

What do women have to say? What is the low income urban woman's experience of the D.D.A. resettlement programme? What are its implications for her in terms of employment, functional living—(services such as water, rations, toilets)—health, community relationships?

This study attempts an insight into the differential impact of policy on women; it indicates alternatives suggested by the women themselves. Through statements, photographs and interviews recorded over a period of three months, it seeks to present the women's perception of official housing strategies in Jehangirpuri, a resettlement colony with a female population of over 50,000.

This study is juxtaposed with government policies, claims and statistics, to provide a constructive analysis of the D.D.A. housing programme from the women's perspective.

CASE STUDY 3:

PEOPLE'S HOUSING ACTION IN JEHANGIRPURI

At its inception, the D.D.A. slum rehabilitation programme offered every family to be resettled, a bank loan of upto Rs. 2000/- towards the construction of a new house. In Jehangirpuri, one of the largest of the D.D.A. Resettlement Colonies, a large majority of householders availed themselves of this loan to build themselves minimal 'pucca' shelters. However, due to a serious shortfall in the repayment of loans, this scheme was discontinued.

The severe floods of 1978 destroyed a large number of houses in Jehangirpuri. In the absence of the Bank's scheme, the Delhi Catholic Archdiocese (D.C.A.) started a housing programme as part of its wider involvement in comprehensive community development.

By involving local residents in the implementation of its housing programme, the D.C.A. is attempting to provide both financial assistance and the organised supply of building materials and skills, to those without 'pucca' shelter.

The D.C.A.'s housing programme, while showing remarkable success in comparison with the Bank's scheme, would still not qualify as being totally viable.

In comparing the Bank's Housing Loan scheme with the community's experience of the D.C.A.'s Building Programme, this study provides some insights into the need for tailoring support programmes to suit the particular needs of varying community structures.



CASE STUDY 4:

THE I.T.O. SQUATTER SETTLEMENT: A STUDY OF REPEATED SQUATTING

The Sanjay-Amar Colony is an agglomeration of about seven hundred shanty dwellings which have mushroomed in the shadows of the capital's institutional centre.

In the context of Delhi's Resettlement Programme, these squatters present a paradox: a sizeable portion of their community consists of people who have been resettled—but who have chosen to abandon their resettlement sites in favour of a return to squatting.

This phenomenon is perhaps a reflection of the dichotomy that exists between a squatter community's perception of its problems and official attempts at presenting 'solutions' to them.

The re-squatters are not unaware that they are illegally occupying D.D.A. land. As such they are fully conscious that they must live under constant threats, and be subject to continued insecurity.

Why do they choose this precarious existence? What are the necessities of their economic condition? What are the imperatives of their way of life? Why should a community, which has been offered alternative housing, persist in occupying a site which is unhygienic, illegal and already bulldozed once?

This study introduces the community and seeks to present their views regarding resettlement. It presents their suggestions towards making resettlement a less painful experience. It puts forward the community's solutions to its own problems.





THE CONTEXT PAPER

The case studies explore the living situation and shelter aspirations of the poor in some typical locations in Delhi. To make these situations comprehensible, the context paper examines the issues of migration patterns, the modes of earning and living, the meaning of housing needs, and the demands for an improvement in the quality of life. It highlights the task of devising means for a humane existence for the poor.

THE STRATEGY PAPER

The strategy for the provision of shelter for the urban poor will be determined by such factors as realistic standards, the location and availability of land, the availability of resources, etc. considered within the overall framework of the housing policy.

The involvement of the community and voluntary organisations at appropriate levels with governmental housing agencies will be important for the effective implementation of shelter programmes.

THE D.D.A. PRACTICES PAPER

Delhi has a unique experience in the country of the implementation of its development plan in the last two decades. Through an imaginative urban land policy the Development Authority has provided housing to more than three hundred thousand families in the form of developed sites and constructed dwellings. The paper will put forward the D.D.A.'s Policy framework for shelter and highlight the practices being followed.



PROGRAMME

Venue: Vigyan Bhavan

January 15

First Session

- 9.00 to 9.20 Registration of Delegates
- 9.20 to 10.00 Introduction
D.D.A. Practices Paper
Discussion
- 10.00 to 10.15 Coffee Break
- 10.15 to 12.30 Introduction to Case Studies
- Case Study 1:
The Weavers, Habitat in Nand Nagri & Kabir Nagar
Discussion
- Case Study 2:
Women's Perspectives on Resettlement.
Discussion
- 12.30 to 2.00 Lunch

Second Session

- 2.00 to 4.00 Case Study 3:
People's Housing Action in Jehangirpuri
Discussion
- Case Study 4:
I.T.O. Squatter Settlement—a study of Repeated Squatting.
Discussion
- 4.00 to 4.15 Coffee Break
- 4.15 to 5.30 Report on Survey of Housing Types
Discussion
- Delhi Context Paper
Discussion

January 16

Third Session

9.00 to 11.00 Strategy Paper
Discussion on the Delhi Experience

9.00 to 11.15 Coffee Break

11.15 to 1.30 **National Experience:**
Case Study 1
Discussion

Case Study 2
Discussion

Case Study 3
Discussion

1.30 to 2.30 Lunch

Fourth Session

2.30 to 4.30 **International Experience:**
Country 1 Country 2
Discussion Discussion

4.30 to 4.45 Coffee Break

4.45 to 6.30 Country 3 Country 4
Discussion Discussion

January 17

Fifth Session

9.00 to 11.00 Recommendations

11.00 to 11.15 Coffee Break

11.15 to 1.00 Specific Follow-up Action

1.00 to 2.30 Lunch

2.30 to 6.00 Meetings with senior representatives of
selected government and voluntary agencies to
discuss collaboration, technical assistance,
possibility of further contact etc.

PARTICIPANTS

The seminar will be attended by:

- (a) The representatives of groups involved in settlements and related activities in Latin America, Central America, South East Asia and other parts of the world,
- (b) Observers from international agencies involved in financing, training, education and information-sharing on various aspects of the problem,
- (c) Resource Persons and experts from other Indian cities, and
- (d) Policy planners, programme designers and administrators, representatives of voluntary institutions involved in planning, research and action in the settlement and development fields; persons attached to concerned academic and research institutions, concerned professionals and interested individuals from different walks of life.

NATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Umapathy
Habitat Project
Hyderabad

Mr. Louis Menezes
Sites and Services and Slum Improvement
Madras

Mr. Bindheshwar Pathak
Sulabh Sauchalya Sansthan
Patna

Mr. Shires Patel
Slum Improvement Project
Bombay

FOREIGN PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Fundacion Salvadorena De Desarrollo Vivienda Minima—El Salvador: Fundacion is perhaps the only non-government agency in the world operating a World Bank financed Sites and Services and Squatter Upgrading Programme. What distinguishes its work is a programme based on the conviction that housing action could lead to social change.

Freedom to Build—Manila, Philippines:

Freedom to Build is presently serving about 6000 low income families in one of the Philippine government's resettlement areas in Dasmarias near Manila. Freedom to Build facilitates people's own housing initiatives by making available building materials, tools and skilled labour at reasonable prices. It has now started organising housing action groups in Philippines to present a united front in evolving appropriate policies on land, access to resources and other related matters.

Kompung Improvement Programme—Indonesia:

The Kompung Improvement Programme is the joint venture of the government of Indonesia and the World Bank to improve environmental conditions in Indonesia's main cities like Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya.

The organisational system attempts to involve the people at different stages of planning and execution.

Servivienda—Bogota, Columbia:

Servivienda, a voluntary group in Bogota, Columbia is providing conventional prefab houses to the needy poor. Its scale of operation, neat efficiency and some organisational innovations in financing and cost recovery are noteworthy.

SPONSORS

1. Delhi Development Authority
2. School of Planning & Architecture
3. National Buildings Organisation
4. UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
5. Action India
6. Dr. A.V. Baliga Foundation
7. Abner Memorial School
8. Delhi Catholic Archdiocese
9. Indian Council of Social Science Research
10. Institute of Town Planners, India
11. Servicio Latino Americano Y Asiatico De Vivienda Popular
12. Ahmedabad Study Action Group

CO-SPONSORS

1. Town and Country Planning Organisation
2. Housing and Urban Development Corporation
3. Municipal Corporation of Delhi
4. Indian Institute of Public Administration
5. Central Public Works Department
6. National Institute of Urban Affairs
7. Department of Social Works, University of Delhi
8. India International Centre
9. Delhi Chapter, Institute of Town Planners, India
10. Indian Institute of Architects
11. Northern Chapter, Indian Institute of Architects
12. Department of Environment
13. Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
14. Mobile Creche for Working Mothers' Children

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