



# OWNER DRIVEN HOUSING PROCESS

Reconstruction  
Programme in Bhachau



South Asia



Malteser



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## FOREWORD

*Post disaster rehabilitation, and reconstruction programmes are driven by compulsions of coverage and speed: targets of number and time. In the process, very little importance is paid to people's participation, use of locally relevant material and technology and user satisfaction.*

*Gujarat earthquake rehabilitation stands out as an exception with several initiatives in the state that hinged on "owner-driven" processes for housing reconstruction. This booklet documents the experience of UNNATI for facilitating owner-driven reconstruction in Bhachau town in Kutch. The documentation was undertaken by Prof. C.N. Ray with coordination inputs by Vivek Rawal. The booklet observes that when external agencies change their role from a "doer" to "facilitator" of housing even large scale programmes can be implemented in shorter time with clearly visible people's participation and ownership. Owner-driven processes are instrumental in maximizing the positive-impact of reconstruction projects and also lend sustainability to interventions.*

*We hope, this document will help in popularizing participatory housing processes not only in post disaster rehabilitation but also in general housing delivery programmes. Suggestions, comments and feedback are welcome so that we can deepen our understanding on housing and habitat development and also improve practice.*

*Mona Chhabra Anand  
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*Binoy Acharya  
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## Background

An earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale devastated in Kutch, Gujarat on January 26, 2001. Substantial loss of life and damage to infrastructure was caused. Government of Gujarat responded to the earthquake destruction by setting up Gujarat State Disaster Mitigation Authority (GSDMA) and announced several packages for assistance in individual house construction with detailed guidelines about partnership with various organisations, particularly NGOs.

Concerted and rigorous efforts are being undertaken for the last 72 months to rebuild the demolished villages and towns in the earthquake affected areas. Many initiatives have been instituted to implement a "development oriented" policy for reconstruction. The process was relatively faster in villages as compared to the four towns of Kutch, where reconstruction and rehabilitation have faced several bottlenecks. With this background, the present study is an effort to explain the process of redevelopment, highlight special features of reconstruction and identify key problems faced during implementation.

### Devastation in Bhachau

Bhachau town with a population of approximately 35,000 and seven wards, found 93% of its houses collapsed on the day of the earthquake. Along with it, the community buildings, water tanks, hospitals and communication centres also turned into rubble, severely crippling life support systems. As per the government rehabilitation package, 5820 families were identified for housing assistance under different categories ranging from G1 (least damaged) to G5 (completely damaged) and hutment category. The compensation amount was determined based on damage assessment, status of land ownership and the proof of residence. Unfortunately this criteria saw 1767 families left out, in the absence of a legal title to land or proof of residence. Most of these families had migrated to Bhachau during the last few decades in search of economic engagement. Being poor, they could hardly afford to buy or rent a house in the town and settled at the periphery, mainly in low lying or hilly areas. These areas have been identified as Junawada, Sitarampura, Maninagar, Bhatpalia, Himatpura, Koliyasari, Rabariwas and Vadinagar.



Photo 1



Photo 2

**Photo 1:** Houses damaged in Bhachau during the Gujarat earthquake

**Photo 2:** Damaged temple in Bhachau

## Rehabilitation Programme

In response to the devastation, the Gujarat Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (R&R) Policy (Gujarat Government, 2001) was developed as a comprehensive multisector programme, aimed at rehabilitation of the people affected by the earthquake.

The housing reconstruction approach adopted by the government was characterised by several features, such as:

- Home owner driven process
- Public private partnership
- Thrust on retrofitting development and enforcement of safety guidelines
- Setting up of community participation
- Information dissemination
- Constitution of a state level disaster management authority

The State policies clearly made provision for the involvement of people and representative institutions in the decision-making process so that their priorities and aspirations were reflected in the programme deliverables. It was also aimed at involving civil society institutions like NGOs, community based organisations and women's groups through partnerships and collaborations in the implementation process. It was intended to help the beneficiaries and stakeholders to make informed choices regarding their habitat by disseminating knowledge on seismic technology, building materials and construction practices. The guidelines encouraged the participation of private sector, NGOs and expert institutions in the programme. A carefully devised strategy, it harmonised the emergency nature of reconstruction programme with a strong emphasis on community participation and seismic safety measures.

To facilitate reconstruction and redevelopment, area development authorities were formed in four major affected towns. Accordingly, Bhachau Area Development Authority (BhADA) was formed for taking responsibility of planned development in Bhachau town for a specified period. It was expected that BhADA would



Photo 3

Photo 3: UNNATI Reconstruction Programme

### Framework

Taking a cue from the community response, the Government of Gujarat provided two options : relocation or in-situ owner driven housing, through NGOs, under public private partnership. The in-situ owner driven housing was the predominant choice. This documentation consolidates the learning from this experience and subsequent processes which were facilitated by UNNATI in Bhachau town. The government policy was announced at a time when everybody was overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the disaster. Relocation of settlements to safer sites was proposed whereas people chose to move back from camp sites to the debris, sending a clear message for in-situ reconstruction.

**In the post disaster situation UNNATI focused on vulnerable people such as widows and the disabled**



Photo 4: Temporary shelters still in use

provide all the required institutional mechanisms to regulate and supervise the new development. The state level agency like Gujarat Urban Development Corporation (GUDC) was entrusted with new infrastructure development in accordance with the development plan and subsequent town planning scheme.

#### **NGO Interface**

UNNATI, a voluntary organisation with a mission to promote participatory principles, gender equity and social justice in the process of development, is working in Bhachau and nearby areas for the last six years. It has been engaged in promoting vulnerability focussed reconstruction with a framework of people's participation in earthquake affected areas. Its shelter support programme was designed to generate awareness through technical guidance and material support to marginalised communities. Community capacity building and advocacy for people centred housing process along with local agencies has remained the major focus.

In the post disaster situation, the organisation gave special attention to the needs of various sections of the population, particularly vulnerable people such as widows and the disabled. It was understood that a semi-permanent (interim) shelter was the central factor needed to secure and facilitate a quick recovery.

The process of facilitating interim shelters was the same as permanent shelters. Families were provided material and financial support to take up reconstruction on their own at performed locations. People used their old building material from the debris to construct interim shelters which can be a starting point for external agencies to help strengthen the people's process on temporary housing. These shelters were found to be more useful as compared to tents that were not very comfortable in such a climatic regime. Tents were also unsuitable as shelters for a larger period of time. During the

### **Reconstruction Initiatives**

The Gujarat reconstruction and rehabilitation saw various interesting and unique initiatives, due to two reasons:

- The vast scale and intensity of NGO's involvement in physical reconstruction and community mobilisation; and
- The collaborative space created by the Government for the voluntary sector, as is clear in the state R&R policy.

Based on the figures projected in the 5th edition of 'Coming Together', at the end of two years after the earthquake, a total of 135,911 houses had been reconstructed in rural Kutch, 71 percent of which were self-constructed by the house owners and 21 percent of which were constructed by NGOs, including local, national and international agencies. Out of the total of 102 NGOs involved, 65 NGOs were a part of the public private partnership and 37 were working independently. Complex inter relationships were set up during the reconstruction initiatives in Gujarat.

rains, they were easily flooded making cooking and storage of materials etc. difficult. UNNATI identified this as a beginning to work for the affected population and in the process identified the needs of the most vulnerable groups.

## Stakeholder’s Involvement

### Local Communities

Families have been the driving force behind UNNATI’s shelter initiatives. Their direct involvement in the reconstruction of houses created a sense of satisfaction and ownership in the process and the product. The families were responsible for transportation of building materials and providing unskilled labour for the construction of their own houses. They were also involved in developing house designs, working out cost estimates and material planning during community meetings facilitated by the UNNATI team.

### Artisans

Artisans, such as masons and carpenters, (the building practices adopted in the programme were important in ensuring safe construction and hence their training was critical) played an important role in transferring knowledge regarding safe construction practices to families and in building local economy.

### Government Engineers

Gujarat Government had introduced a system whereby the families who chose not to be included in any NGO reconstruction programme received compensation depending on their entitlement. The compensation was released in three installments parallel to house construction phases. The first, comprising 40% of the total cost was paid

PROCESS FACILITATION BY UNNATI	
Stage -1	Identification of immediate requirements for relief and rescue operations and overall assessment of the post disaster situation
Stage -2	Survey and local level consultations for assessing the needs and requirements, socio-economic condition, extent of loss, issues related to land ownership, preference and expectations of the community
Stage -3	Formation of local committees to empower communities for negotiation and managing the development work. Help the committee in identifying locations for purchase of building materials and other requirements
Stage -4	Undertaking local level planning for making people aware of technical and legal complications related to different proposals of development plan and town planning scheme
Stage -5	Finalising the local strategy in collaboration with other NGOs to reduce conflict and duplication
Stage -6	Support the local committee in finalising individual applications for obtaining building permission and legalisation of land documents, building design, etc
Stage -7	Provide technical guidance for seismic safety measures and other technical support at the time of construction
Stage 8	Guiding the local committee and municipality for planning various infrastructure requirements like road, water supply, drainage and solid waste management



**An owner driven approach primarily laid the onus of responsibility and reconstruction of houses on the owner himself**



Photo 5

Photo 5: Community meeting



Photo 6

Photo 6: Material production by community



Photo 7

Photo 7: Demonstration of safety features

at the preparatory stage, the second upon completion of walls and the remaining 20% once the house was finished. Second and third installments were only disbursed after verification and certification by Government engineers, who were appointed for site supervision, overseeing the quality of construction and checking the use of basic safety features during the construction. They also would check the land limits, perform post-construction validation and issue completion certificates confirming eligibility for insurance and other benefits. Civil engineers were placed in all settlements to provide guidance and to supervise construction. This forced the residents to follow the guidelines given for seismic safety of the new construction and mitigated the ground reality where many residents spent the first installment without following the specific rules while constructing new houses.

Government engineers would visit each house during its different phases of construction, advise the home owner accordingly and sign a recommendation for the next installment to be released if the construction until that level had been satisfactory.

Government engineers focussed primarily on houses built using government compensation whereas UNNATI focussed on the left-out families. However, Government engineers had an important role in creating awareness among families.

The housing construction in Bhachau town by the Government of Gujarat has set guidelines and procedures for obtaining building permission with the objective of regulating development and ensuring safety of new construction. According to the package, housing assistance was being given to the house owners on the basis of damage assessment after the earthquake. House owners having legal land title and in G5 category were given assistance upto Rs. 1,50,000 in case of load bearing structures or Rs. 1,75,000 in case of RCC framed structures. House owners without legal land title could access upto Rs. 55,000 in G5 category.

The housing policy of Government of Gujarat is based on the principle of owner driven housing taking into account the extent of damage. According to this approach, the house can be built to suit the home owner's choice. The house owners could extend the houses as per their needs by adding their own contribution if they wanted. The Government only provided assistance for minimum area of construction with a ceiling on maximum support it would provide. Assistance was not viewed as the replacement cost, but as support for minimum safe construction for a family.



This approach was adopted to encourage communities to undertake building work themselves, with external financial, material and technical assistance. However, there is a need to understand the approach as owner driven reconstruction may or may not necessarily imply that people build the houses on their own.

Within the framework of Gujarat Earthquake Emergency Rehabilitation Programme (GEERP), largely funded by the World Bank, the Government included provisions of financial and technical assistance and subsidised construction material to enable people rebuild their homes themselves. According to GSDMA, under the GEERP, almost 200,000 houses, some 87% of devastated homes were rebuilt by the people, with financial and technical assistance from the Government. Similarly infrastructure was planned and built by the Government with support from the Asian Development Bank.

### **NGO/External Agency**

As an external agency, UNNATI created awareness through providing technical and material support to the families under its shelter programme. It organised *padyatras*, established training programmes for Government engineers, families and artisans to generate awareness and set up a citizen support cell in response to the advocacy issues. The training programmes with Government engineers included seismic and cyclone safe construction techniques. The project engineers worked closely with Government engineers, involving them in programmes to generate awareness. To this effect, models demonstrating seismic safe features were given to Government engineers as training aid for community level programmes. Besides this, meetings and video shows were carried out, booklets and pamphlets were distributed and exhibitions were placed in local *melas*.

As awareness spread, the affected families started looking for technical support from NGOs and other private agencies. UNNATI's facilitation process initiated in February 2001, proved to be useful for people mainly in settlements like Junawada and Vadinagar where most of the residents belonged to marginalised groups.



Photo 8

**Photo 8:** Government-community interaction



Photo 9

**Photo 9:** House reconstruction and retrofitting initiatives

**An owner driven housing can make a positive impact as the initiative is owned and managed by the affected population**



Photo 10

**Photo 10:** Semi permanent owner driven housing

## Key Processes/ Learning

- Field experience shows that housing in disaster affected towns like Bhachau should not be looked upon as a product. The process of how access and delivery of design, materials, skills, technology and finance takes place is important. A visit to any earthquake affected area will show that housing is a dynamic process, linked with other requirements. New needs come up as families add to structures or modify them to suit specific utilities. We often tend to dismiss this process of transformation as a 'problem' arising out of lack of education of the people and our inability to control/ police the process of transformation.
- Only a sense of ownership can ensure acceptance and maintenance as time goes by. Recent experiences from several places in Kutch, where there are corporate-built good quality housing lying vacant, clearly show that it is not just about quality of construction. In fact where the community does not participate in the planning process, there is bound to be a lack of sense of ownership.
- NGOs like UNNATI in Bhachau have played the role of a facilitator in terms of providing advice on building guidelines and other legal and administrative requirements. They helped the residents to come closer in forming local level committees and procure materials at a competitive price. These committees have played the most important role in helping people in all the matters of house reconstruction. It has followed the principle that within guidelines, people should have the choice of planning and building according to individual needs and requirements.
- Along with legal issues, availability of labour and material is seen as an important requirement which needs proper attention. Owner driven process has also sensitised the people as to how safety guidelines can be incorporated in building so that they get entrenched in the local construction practices henceforth.
- Local level committees, as seen in Junawada and in some other settlements, became the means for partnership among all the stakeholders like BhADA and NGOs on one side and the affected population on the other. It has resulted in interaction on equal terms and facilitate respect and dignity to each other. At this stage, all stakeholders have worked towards a mutual goal. This partnership has been seen more closely between NGOs and the community groups at the local level.
- Post earthquake reconstruction and housing in Bhachau indicates that empowerment is the core of participation and it can be achieved through conscientisation. It has become institutionalised through participatory process, which increased understanding and a sense of control necessary for making contribution to housing construction and disaster management related decisions. Having enough confidence to demand one's right and get them does not rest on conscientisation alone, but in generating one's own power and uniting with others in making demands, which are mutually beneficial. Empowerment also rests on the integrity of people and their culture, enactment of personal values and aspiration to preserve identity—all are necessary for sustaining the psychic energy required for disaster recovery, general development and change.

## Innovative Features

### Owner driven Housing

Owner driven housing is a guided process where the external agencies need to continuously assess whether their interventions are creating bottlenecks for empowered people's participation. The owner driven process can create maximum positive impact in terms of sustainability and replicability if there is effective stakeholder participation and engagement in all stages of the programme. Experience shows that this approach also provides the possibility of greater economic efficiency, allowing for larger built-up areas with limited resources.

Owner driven reconstruction processes are closest to the development initiatives as it is an integrated rehabilitation process that includes housing, health, psycho-social and livelihood initiatives. A participatory housing programme ensures vulnerability focus, recognition and application of appropriate building technologies based on local materials, use of local artisanal skills etc., as families are best positioned to understand local problems and find solutions.

This approach, however, runs the biggest risk of over dependence on peoples' own resources. The funds for construction can be generated either from family savings or from a compensation amount provided by the Government. This can and most of the time does slow down the process as many sub-processes such as on-site artisan training, release of installments of Government compensation, availability of local material in large quantities, community level conflict and so on can act as hindrances.

Without question, empowering the community is the most significant agenda for rehabilitation and development initiatives. It refers to the level of control the family has over the process and the end product. The Gujarat reconstruction effort saw varied initiatives. A few of them gave total control to the families while others preferred the adoption of villages. However, adoption of villages does not seem to promote owner driven housing as, (although participation is given prominence) the final choice and control remains with the implementing agency. This approach offers a few advantages, such as speed in construction, centralised monitoring and mode of payment independent of family's economic status. However, it restricts the involvement of the community resulting in lack of ownership for the project.

**Government policy created space for flexibility in reconstruction based needs and requirements**



Photo 11

**Photo 11:** Development plan discussed among people

## ROLE PLAYED BY DIFFERENT AGENCIES

### BhADA

- Apply to the District Collector for land regularisation of houses that are constructed/ retrofitted by NGOs and the houseowners themselves to follow up
- Make agreement with respective NGOs for reconstruction and retrofitting and ensure reimbursement from the beneficiary compensation to concerned NGOs
- Identify/ plots for in-situ construction of houses by NGOs and house owners in accordance with the development plan
- Ensure building plan approval for the beneficiaries of NGO support
- Approve and regularise houses constructed after retrofitting
- Provide regulative support in case houses that need to be retrofitted or regularised are larger than 25 sq. mt. and/or plot sizes are more than 50 sq. mt. in the absence of land title
- Call fortnightly coordination meetings to resolve any bottlenecks faced by NGOs or house owners
- Ensure provision of basic infrastructure services in all settlements
- Allotment of houses to beneficiaries at relocation site
- Designate a team of engineers to provide support for approvals and disbursement of installments
- Facilitate procurement of building materials at subsidised rate
- Provide space and basic infrastructure services (water, electricity etc.) to NGOs for material production, storage and other management related activities
- Provide completion certificate after construction/retrofitting of houses

### NGOs

- Hold community meetings and conduct on site survey to shortlist beneficiaries in accordance with selection criteria from tentative list provided by Nagrik Sahyog Kendra and BhADA
- Inform all housing beneficiaries about type, designs, construction materials and cost of house to be constructed to ensure transparency in the process
- Make agreement with house owners for release of due installments from the Government to respective NGO
- Take up construction or retrofitting work as per approved design by BhADA and with consultation of house owners
- Take up construction of houses in participatory manner with the households.
- Participate in the periodic coordination of BhADA
- Carry out construction/ retrofitting as per the guidelines
- Help BhADA in preparation of case files for regularisation of plots
- Follow up and ensure legal document for land to each beneficiary
- Promote housing insurance for the houses constructed/ retrofitted

### The District Collectorate

- Approve cases submitted for land regularisation based on the list provided by BhADA
- Fix the price of land to be regularised through land price committee
- Provide legal documents to the house owners (in the joint name of husband and wife) for the land on the receipt of payment
- Release installments to house owners and NGOs on work completion
- Ensure registration of new land titles in the revenue department and issue property card for the same

### Nagrik Sahyog Kendra

- Educate citizens about all associated processes, guidelines and the progress through ‘Nagarvani’ and community meetings
- Public consultations for selection of beneficiaries for each participating NGO
- Revise beneficiary list on the basis of on site physical verification by different NGOs and their feedback
- Facilitate periodic coordination meetings along with BhADA
- Appraise BhaDA on operational issues
- Facilitate process of land regularisation for all the houses constructed/ retrofitted
- Preparation of case files for land regularisation process
- Follow up and ensure provision of legal documents for land to each beneficiary

The owner driven process is a tripartite partnership, involving the Government of Gujarat, the private sector (including NGOs) and the beneficiaries themselves. This partnership harnesses the strengths of each of these participant groups, thus producing a very practical and feasible implementation strategy for overall development.

**Bhachau Town Planning**

The housing reconstruction in towns has been late as compared to the rural areas due to varied complexities. The process for reconstruction of urban areas appears to be more tedious as it requires intensive study to make a development plan (DP). The process of preparation of DP, infrastructure plan and town planning schemes are normally seen as a long term development strategy and hence takes longer to implement in towns. However, for the four towns covered under earthquake rehabilitation programme special efforts were made to expedite the planning so that housing reconstruction could start along new guidelines.

**The government prepared a plan in a record time of about six months and helped in organizing the reconstruction work**

The DP is a statutory instrument for controlling, directing and promoting sound and rational development and/or re-development of urban areas with a view to achieving maximum economic, social and aesthetic benefit. It has land use demarcations such as residential, industrial, commercial, recreational, public and semi-public, road network, street pattern and traffic circulation system for present and future requirements. The DP of Bhachau was prepared in record time of about six months.

The statutory process of plan development was taken up by the consultants defined under the Town Planning Act. The community consultations as part of plan preparation were mandatory. UNNATI facilitated people’s participation (unofficially) to provide feedback in the process and expedite outcome of the DP. Careful analysis of the technical document showed long term implications on housing and livelihood of citizens living in various

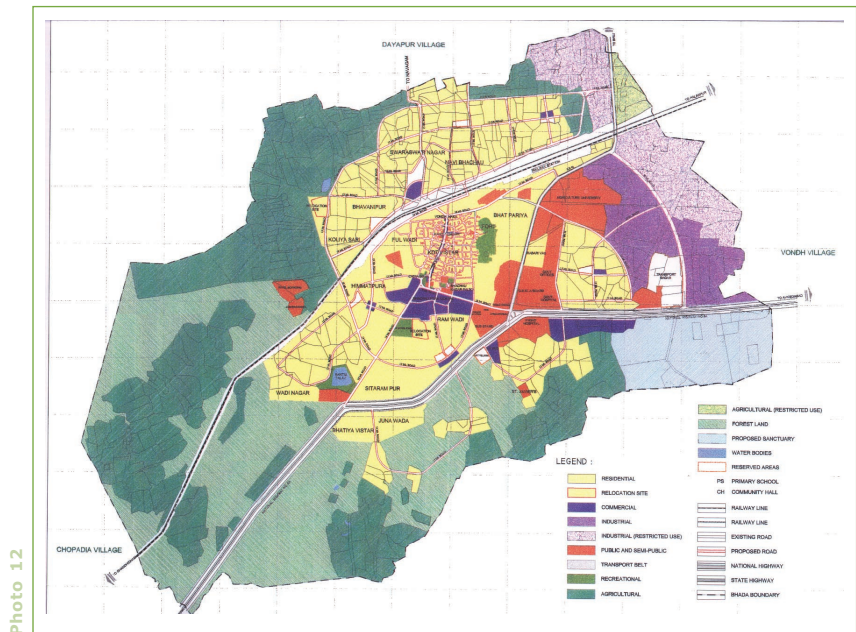


Photo 12

Photo 12: Urban planning



settlements. Therefore, demystifying a technical document in people’s language demystified the planning process and empowered the community for effective participation. A collaborative effort with UNNATI, GSDMA, GUDC and Development Authority was made to initiate a multistakeholder consultative process. The out come of first consultation made it clear that such a process in the initial phase could help in formulation of a collective mission statement involving people, consultants and the Government.

The Draft Development Plan was displayed to the public at the BhADA office where information was provided about plot locations under acquisition for widening of road. The residential area surrounding the main market, form the core of the town where widening of streets and relocation of some houses and shops were proposed to relieve congestion. However, people from other parts of the town were confused about being excluded from the proposed plan and they were not sure about the status of their settlement. Subsequent facilitation by the UNNATI resulted in following changes in the DP:

- The DP showed forest in place of the existing settlement of Junawada. This is one of the poorest settlements in Bhachau consisting chiefly of Rabari, Bhil, Muslim and Harijans involved in cattle rearing, brick kilns, salt pans, daily wage labour, etc. The Draft Plan did not acknowledge their existence and hence no alternatives were proposed. In the final plan as an outcome

of the public consultations, Junawada has been given its existing place in the new plan.

- Vadinagar, a valley settlement in the western fringe of the town, was proposed to be relocated. The owners were unfavourably disposed towards relocation. Vadinagar has been brought back to its original location by making necessary changes in the final landuse.

- The Draft proposed institutional land use in the area where Rabariwas was located. Earlier Government offices were



Photo 13-14: New construction along seismic safety norms

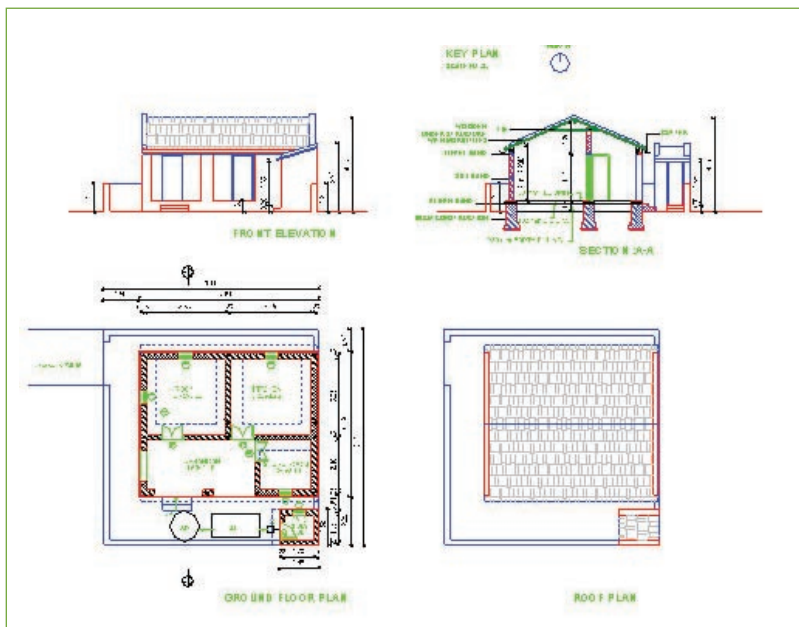


Photo 15: House plan for building permission



in Kot Vistar, middle of the residential and commercial area. After consultation, the proposed institutional area was reduced and Rabariwas accommodated at its existing location.

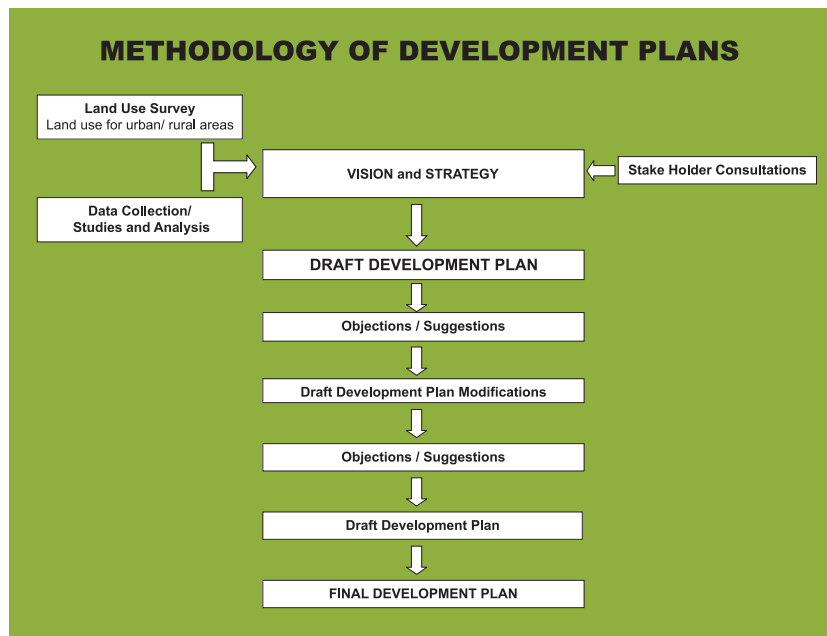
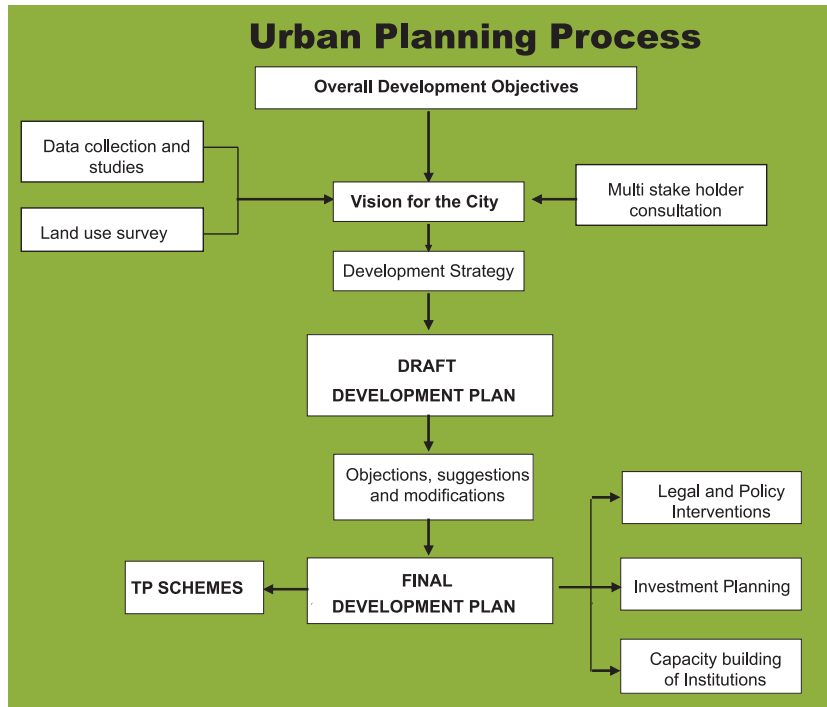
**Building Permission System**

BhADA established building codes to ensure construction of safer buildings. However, the process of acquiring building permission was complicated with various provisions involving file and paper work. Interface meetings between BhADA and residents on building permission provisions and application were organised.

The complex building permit process created a barrier for local and self initiatives, requiring professional help from architects, engineers and other design professionals who were not easily available in the small town of Bhachau. The official form to apply for building permit was a 12 page document with a provision of 11 different fees. Private consulting professionals and firms registered with BhADA were expected to provide services at a cost. For construction of a small house the owners had to pay Rs. 7000 to 8000 for technical assistance. The total payment to BhADA in form of various fees was in the range of Rs. 3000 to 5000. Thus a owner had to spend a minimum of Rs. 10,000 for a mere building permission and design services out of the total assistance of just Rs. 55000 in many cases.

The 1767 families that were

**Facilitation by UNNATI helped in addressing problems of settlement having large number of marginalised communities**



**Bureaucratic enforcement of building code by local officials can be a serious hindrance to people’s own building initiatives**



Photo 16

Photo 16: View of Rabarivas

eligible for housing compensation yet unable to provide a legal document could not take up construction of houses by accessing second and third installments of assistance. Consequently, building permission was denied to them.

These families had either used their first installment for a purpose other than housing or had built without complying with General Development Control Regulations (GDCRs) and seismic safety guidelines of GSDMA. These families were in need of technical support for housing. It is in this context that BhADA along with Nagrik Sahyog Kendra (NSK) took the initiative of land regularisation process in Bhachau by mediating between citizens and the Government.

**Quality of Participation**

Six years after the disaster, a visit to the affected area showed that while donors, corporate houses and NGOs have worked in the town, the reconstruction programme can not be adjudged as fully participatory in terms of consensus in relocation, house design, materials to be used etc. In certain locations the houses were not aligned to people’s way of living as the material and technology used were not suited to the weather and cultural affiliations of the communities. In such cases houses built on relocation site were designed and built without any consultation with the local residents. Some agencies also distributed ‘readymade’ houses among the affected which actually ended up as a hindrance to the owner driven process by distorting the needs, selection process and finally the housing market scenario in the town. Many of the houses at relocation sites allotted through weak and contested process have led to sale and transfer of houses to people other than who were intended as original beneficiaries.

It is estimated that about 11 new villages in rural areas which followed the similar agency driven approach are lying unoccupied. Wherever owner driven processes facilitated the allotment of houses they were found more logical and readily accepted.

**Impact**

UNNATI has impacted the following:

- Strengthening temporary structures in Bhachau
- Totally safe houses constructed by families
- Demonstration and training of owners
- Upgrading and roof construction of houses that received less compensation

**Performance**

**Impact**

The UNNATI Shelter Support Programme was characterised by the importance it gave to owner driven reconstruction. It focussed on ‘process support’ rather than ‘product delivery’

and UNNATI played an effective role in 'development education' as opposed to 'service provision'. The organisations strongest impact has been successful inclusion of the vulnerable and poor in the reconstruction process, benefitting more than 1500 slum dwellers through its advocacy initiatives.

As reported during mid-term evaluation of UNNATI's Shelter Support Programme, at least 50 masons had been trained in safe building practices through on-field work and class-based training sessions. It has initiated the setting up of *Nagrik Sahyog Kendra* (Citizen Support Cell) in collaboration with GSDMA and BhADA and supported by regular meetings with the District Development Officer, Government ward engineers, World Bank officials, municipality and infrastructure planning consultants.

The first option for the house construction was offered at the same place where the old house stood, except in the old town where road widening required extra land. The BhADA officials and in many cases the settlement level committees took up actual verification to facilitate the construction process. NGOs also took up physical verification of the site to determine the future course of action in consultation with the concerned house owner.

The houses constructed without guidelines required many interventions. A policy needed to be formulated to enable the houses comply with all the guidelines. The issues were related to safety standards, area covered and GDCRs. NSK facilitated the design approval for modification of the houses and retrofitting. It facilitated the process by estimating this need, identifying house owners, linking them with NGOs who could take this process and follow it up with the development authority for approval.

Helping residents in getting the land title or making the house plans as per new guidelines, were found to be very important supports for a owner driven housing programme for the poor. The reconstruction programme needs to be guided by providing a standard set of

### Community based organization can fill up the gaps in reconstruction and housing activities



Photo 17

**Photo 17:** Demonstration on use of different local building materials (Technology Park)

### The Process of Facilitation

The DP in Bhachau can be summarised in the following steps:

- Identification of various stakeholders in the town
- Community mobilisation in different settlements
- Putting the draft document in simple language for people to understand and empowering them with information on what it proposes for each settlement.
- Close collaboration with GUDC, GSDMA, Development Authority and consultants.
- Providing a platform for articulating the concerns through multi-stakeholder dialogue and focussed group discussions.
- Articulating the outcome of these processes in technical formats with the consultants.
- Follow up on the issues and regular information to all the stakeholders on the status and progress.

technical guidelines for seismic and cyclone-safety, wind-proofing, etc. Such types of building guidelines should be framed following national norms, taking into account local geological conditions. NSK has compiled such information in the form of or vernacular booklet and distributed among communities in Bhachau.

Public consultation to explain building guidelines is also essential as local community may not find such documents useful without clear understanding of the need for building permission. NGOs and technical institutes can play an important role in such consultations.

The community or a community-based organisation, where ever possible, should ideally be involved in conflict-resolution, in ratifying the plans and in resolving individual issues, grievances, specific requirements, etc. in the reconstruction process. The role of this body becomes critical in the reconstruction of the public infrastructure, inclusion or exclusion of areas for planned development, identification of special groups like marginalised

communities, widows, handicapped etc.

### **Nagrik Sahyog Kendra**

The issues of development planning, building permit system, lack of security of tenure led to the need of a regular formal interface with the citizens and the Government authorities. It is with this idea UNNATI set up Citizen Support Cell (Nagrik Sahyog Kendra) in collaboration with GSDMA and Development Authority – BhADA. In January 2003, NSK was initiated and was given space in the BhADA office. Through the NSK, many activities have been undertaken, such as, regular 'falia meetings', publishing of a popular newsletter 'NagarVani', meetings with various Government authorities like district administration, GUDC, GSDMA, etc. One of the most important role that Nagrik Sahyog Kendra played was to develop a good reliable database on different issues taking the citizens and authorities in confidence which could form the basis of many decisions during the process modification and citizen concerns. This became an effective interface between the Government and citizens to facilitate rehabilitation process in Bhachau town.

It is also important to note that the Government of Gujarat took a positive initiative of regularising 50 sq. mt. of housing plot. It was also decided to take up in-situ regularisation and minimise the relocation. Relocation was suggested only in cases where there was conflict with the DP. The entire process of land legalisation and issuing building permission can be easily identified as major success for the strategy of NGO facilitation process followed in Bhachau town.

### **Lessons for Government**

The first installment was provided before the formulation of technical guidelines or bylaw mechanisms for approval of design. As a result the families used the first installment for purposes other than house construction. The fall out was that a number of low income families found it difficult to access the second installment, as they did not have the foundation and plinth ready for future construction. Thus, it is important to have a support mechanisms ready before disbursal of payments.

During the initial phase of policy making, there was confusion as to whether the amount being paid for permanent rehabilitation was 'compensation' or

'assistance' for reconstruct. While it was termed as assistance, the norms of payment was that of compensation (a unit cost was paid for the amount of square feet lost, making the basic remuneration inequitable). Thus, it is imperative to clearly state the type of assistance and develop norms in an equitable way.

The technical guidelines disseminated by the GSDMA, facilitated and monitored by Government and NGOs, ensured that different settlements and communities could choose different designs, as long as they followed the common technical guidelines. This aspect worked when local level community groups came forward to help residents.

The settlement level monitoring by engineers from local body and also from NGOs to some extent monitored possible violations of guidelines. But in many cases there were reports of corruption as residents were allowed to build the way they wanted. This was also related to the time taken for receipt of the second or third installment.

Technical support through grassroot organisations working in the area of livelihoods, health, education etc. who were not in any partnership with the Government, resulted in duplication, or low value-addition to activities.

It is essential to make a statement to NGOs and other partners in civil society, waiting to participate in the permanent rehabilitation efforts that their interventions could begin once the Government policy has been framed; and that ad-hoc shelter or livelihood interventions must not be undertaken till the nature of Government partnership and

<b>Owner Driven Approach</b>	<b>Agency Driven Approach</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favours in-situ reconstruction mostly</li> <li>• Promotes traditional type of houses where increased safety can be ensured</li> <li>• Leads to construction of larger houses that can fulfill the family needs</li> <li>• Promotes local artisanal participation</li> <li>• Provides flexibility for customisation as per every family's needs</li> <li>• Uses local materials and promotes recycling of any material that owners may have</li> <li>• Allows family to leverage its own resources and capacities</li> <li>• Strengthens local economy</li> <li>• Suitable to local climatic context</li> <li>• Uses community know how to maintain and extend such houses</li> <li>• House allotment is not an issue of conflict</li> <li>• Ensures transparency and accountability in the process</li> <li>• Results in high level of satisfaction</li> <li>• Strengthens local capacities to build safe houses in future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favours relocation mostly</li> <li>• Promotes 'urban type' houses</li> <li>• Results in smaller size of houses insufficient for the family needs.</li> <li>• Depends on industrial products and outside contractors</li> <li>• No such flexibility. At best provides 2-3 models to choose from</li> <li>• Brings industrial material and no recycling is possible</li> <li>• Doesn't recognize any family capacities or fails to leverage any such capacities.</li> <li>• Does not contribute to the local economy</li> <li>• Usually not suitable to local climatic context</li> <li>• People do not know how to maintain and make extensions</li> <li>• Allotment process is usually contested and has conflicts</li> <li>• No such accountability and transparency</li> <li>• Usually very low level of satisfaction</li> <li>• Doesn't add to any such capacities</li> </ul>

issues such as land ownership, development plan, town planning schemes are prepared through public consultation and participation. To assist the process a time period may be indicated.

**Lessons for NGOs**

Temporary shelters were constructed as immediate relief to the residents. However, even after five years many such shelters are still used for different purposes. Most of the poorer communities are using these structures either as a kitchen or a sleeping unit.

The NGOs have used alternative and sustainable technology options, such as stabilised earth/mud, blocks, cyclone hooks, asbestos roofing etc. However, the beneficiaries are not sure about the efficacy of these materials in the long run. This experience needs to be studied properly and an appropriate guideline prepared to encourage the use of newly tested materials and technology.

It is helpful to identify a key resource institution at the local level, who are familiar with local conditions or have already developed contacts with different community groups and have technical expertise in the area of shelter reconstruction. Those organisations which are likely to become focal point for policy feedback, can also be used by organisations working outside the area for information, advice and critical feedback.

Partnership is achieved when all stakeholders, including the affected residents, interact on equal terms and extend respect and dignity to each other. At this stage, all stakeholders should work towards a mutual goal. In Bhachau this partnership has been seen more closely between NGOs and the community groups at the local level.

Agencies can play a facilitating role in terms of providing advice on building guidelines. Within the guidelines people should have the choice of planning and building according to individual needs and requirements. Encouraging community participation through simplified design and technical details will empower the residents to undertake housing on their own.



Photo 18

Photo 18 : Safety awareness drives



Photo 19

Photo 19: Ready made housing by donor agency

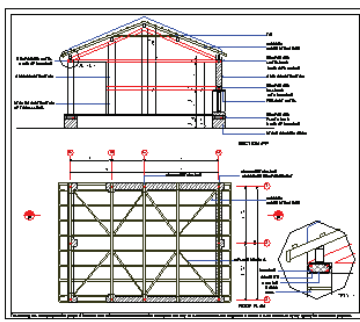
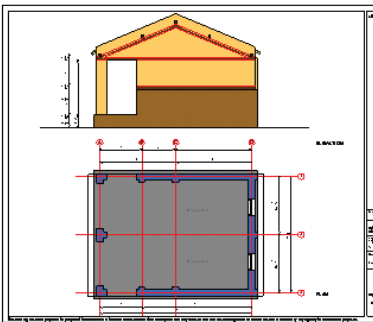
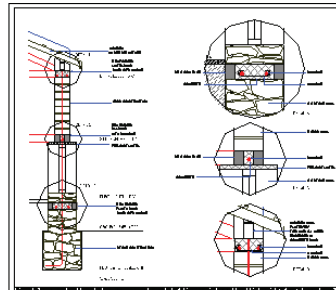


Photo 20

Photo 20: Detailed features under structure of tiled roof





Systems need to be set up for easy availability of building materials and labour which can ensure early construction of shelters at a reasonable price and assured supply in time.

Material selection can be left to the residents without any attempt to market so called cheap/low cost materials. Some agencies are traditionally fond of popularising certain types of materials without providing alternatives.

The design brief should be simple and reflect an understanding of the social and cultural realities of the community. At the same time design should be proposed within the context of funding for each unit of housing under different categories. Incremental housing is another alternative that should be part of the initial design.

Working guidelines need to be put in place to ensure earthquake resistant structures, resistance to high-speed winds like cyclone, etc. Owner made designs need modifications that can be done through formal and informal education/communication. Mason training programme is directed to achieve this goal but the residents need to be a part of it.

Owner driven with safety guidelines process should be used to sensitise the residents so that it is entrenched in the local construction practices henceforth without any support of external agencies. The cases of contractor driven housing has clearly depicted that owner driven housing is the best alternative for successful completion of housing projects in disaster affected areas.

**Concluding Observations**

Mobilisation of community groups for peoples’ oriented town planning was the entry point of some NGOs in Bhachau. It helped to mobilise community groups for greater reconstruction activities including housing and settlement level infrastructure. Facilitating a flexible and community oriented town planning within a given time frame in the earthquake affected area is critical for successful reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Poor and backward community’s requirements and aspirations for a better settlement and housing can be made possible through participatory research and advocacy. The focus is on mobilisation of community groups by making these groups partners in development rather than projecting them as beneficiaries for post disaster reconstruction. This is essential in breaking the gap between bureaucracy and disaster affected community.

Housing programme for construction of new houses or retrofitting the damaged houses or even houses built without seismic



Photo 21

Photo 21: Organisations working on post tsunami rehabilitation: Response team visiting owner driven housing projects in Gujarat

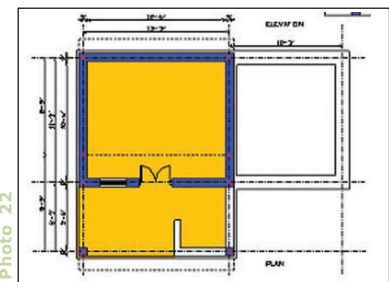
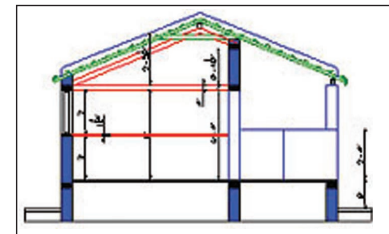
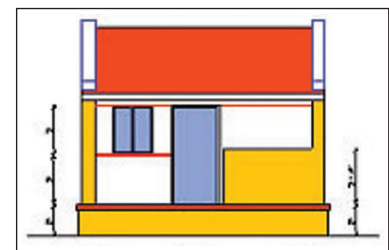


Photo 22

Photo 22: Typical house plan for Harinagar

consideration are best implemented when it is part of the overall development of the settlement by using the principle of strong local partnership. Demand driven technical advisory supports are seen as an important input in promoting participatory housing and infrastructure development.

Participation in all the activities may not follow any particular model or form but should be a continuous process with a clear commitment of helping the marginalised groups. It can be best identified as gradual development which has taken a long time of about five years. The first two years were crucial as networking and public consultations took place during this phase. The third and fourth years saw housing and related activities which includes designing, application for permission and actual construction. The fifth year was for overall completion of housing related activities and consolidation of local organisations for various other developmental activities.



**Photo 23:** Community linkages for identifying left out families

The people of this region are known for their hard work, determination and resilience in the face of a disaster. This has been identified as an important asset in rebuilding the devastated town and villages. The speed and success of owners driven housing has to be seen in this context.

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## About UNNATI

UNNATI is a non-profit, voluntary organization, registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860. The mission of UNNATI is: To promote social inclusion and democratic governance so that vulnerable people are empowered to effectively participate in the mainstream development and decision making process and vulnerability is reduced.

UNNATI works in Gujarat and Rajasthan with programme offices located at Ahmedabad and Jodhpur. A field centre has been established in Bhachau, Kutch for grass root level practices and training on disaster preparedness and promotion of citizen leadership.

UNNATI works in collaboration with multi stakeholder participation through research, public education, direct field level mobilisation and implementation and advocacy. While UNNATI works from direct grass root level to policy level environment it derives its inspiration from the struggle of the vulnerable and strength from the collaborative partners.

UNNATI works on two thematic areas:

- Social Inclusion and Empowerment

On the area of social inclusion and empowerment the programme and activities are:

- Capacity building of local level institutions on social development perspectives (Participation, gender, vulnerability reduction, dalit rights, disability, peace and harmony)
- Collaborative campaigns through research, workshops, public education and direct mobilisation on dalit rights, gender justice, access for people with disability.
- Direct field level implementation of community based rehabilitation programme in disaster/emergency situations. It is aimed to protect and promote the interest and rights of people with disability, women and other vulnerable groups in the rehabilitation process.
- Take up research and advocacy on issues affecting the vulnerable people.

- Civic Leadership in Governance

On the area of civic leadership and governance the programme and activities are:

- Promote citizen participation in democratic process (Gram sabha and other local level institutions) through public education and campaigns in order to build a responsive civic leadership.
- Strengthen the capacity of the elected representatives (Panchayat and Nagarpalika) through training and information support so that their credibility is enhanced among the people and they feel confident to practice transparency and accountability.



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