Housing Delivery Methods for the Poor: A Global Perspective

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ABSTRACT: Due to rapid urbanisation and industrialization government was unable to provide housing to poor at global and national levels. To handle this situation various delivery methods for providing housing to poor were innovated and adopted. To The aim of the paper is to trace out the origin of housing delivery methods for the poor. The objective is to trace in global perspective and then to find out how the concept has been incorporated in Indian context.

I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of a set of philosophical debates around self-help in the 1950s and 1960s, and the recognition of the problems experienced by governments attempting to continue to meet housing needs through full provision, prepared the ground for the proposal and growing acceptance of the core housing approach, along with other forms of partial housing provision [1].

As colonial powers gradually relinquished control of developing countries throughout the world, a trend that affected African countries mainly during the 1960s the sustainability of inherited housing practices began to be questioned. One issue was a general recognition of the limitations of the mass provision of low cost housing by the State. The provision of completed houses for people with low incomes often in locations distant from city centres through direct State action was commonplace in many African countries from the 1920's until the 1960's.

As national budgets shrank, and as governments devoted smaller proportions of their budgets to housing provision, it became evident that the demand for housing was growing despite efforts to supply that demand. In developing countries, the movement of households from rural to urban areas, and high population growth rates in urban areas meant that demand continued to outstrip supply, and governments quickly realised that full provision was not sustainable. As a result, government housing programmes in most parts of the world "ran out of steam".

II. ORIGIN OF HOUSING DELIVERY METHODS AROUND THE WORLD [1]

An indication of the failure of government housing provision was the increase in the spontaneous settlement of people on land which they did not own, or the construction of initially impermanent forms of housing on land illegally sub-divided by the owners. As a result larger and larger proportions of urban residents lived in rudimentary shelter with few or no municipal services. (Gilbert and Gugler, 1992:114, and UNCHS, 1996a).

The emergence of this situation was observed firstly by anthropologists working in squatter settlements and slums in different parts of the world(Matey, 1992b:379ff) and then by several housing specialists who were working in developing countries or moving around the world supported by funding from donor agencies. This allowed a comparison of the forces that were shaping cities in much of the Third World.

It is difficult to establish the exact origins of ideas at the time, but the key self-help housing theorists who are most often quoted are John Turner (1965) and Charles Abram (1964). From the mid-1950s, John Turner, an architect, worked with William Margin, an anthropologist, on USAID funded upgrading projects in the urban *barriadas* of Peru.

Later, Turner began to publish his observations and did more empirical research work in the USA and Mexico. In his seminal work on the subject, "Housing by People", Turner spent much of his time comparing the fundamental qualities of unassisted self-help housing to those of formal State attempts to house low income households (1976). Unlike Charles Abram, in much of his earlier published work he seems to have stopped short of describing the physical manifestations of assisted self-help, such as sites and service or core housing approaches, preferring rather to expound on the fundamental principles of unassisted and assisted self-help.

Explicit in much of Turner's work is the assertion that the State and other interested parties (i.e. the private sector) should relinquish control of the housing process and that this should be achieved through the "resorption of government back into the body of the community".

Turner was urging that as much choice and freedom be granted to the occupants of urban housing (formal and informal) as was possible within the prevailing system of government, a suggestion that was, at a later stage, viewed with some scepticism by theorists such as Rod Burgess, who commented that

"*...Turner is naïve if he thinks that these groups are going to forsake their economic interests in a fit of charity*!"(1977:51).

Despite of recognised limits to devolved decision making and autonomy by people producing their own housing (Burgess, 1982), .Turner's written work can be seen as largely responsible for persuading academics, donor agencies, government officials and professionals that the creative activities of people in housing themselves (in informal settlements) should be seen as part of the 'solution' rather than as the major urban problem that it was perceived to be by many city officials.

At the same time that Turner was working in Peru, the urban planner Charles Abram's (1964) was working as a consultant to the United Nations Housing, Building and Planning Branch and took part in a large number of UN housing missions.

This allowed him to compare situations across countries and make observations about the impacts of urbanisation on human settlements. While he also added to the growing body of knowledge about the dynamics of 'squatting' and the nature of 'slums'. Abram was more direct in his description of ways that agencies such as the UN might intervene.

Abram discussed the method of house construction by people who did not have access to finance, referring to it as "instalment construction", or building "serially" (1964:174).

After the acquisition of land (legally or illegally), he had observed households who built sections of their houses as they could afford building materials. This process of construction was not confined to developing countries.

> "*Simple shelters have been built in all parts of the world and then expanded room by room or floor by floor until the house met the families' ultimate needs. Squatters have also put up rude shells and later extended them*". (1964:175).

There were often long lapses of time between more concentrated bursts of construction activity.

Abram interpreted this mode of construction as being the result of lack of access to sufficient amounts of money to sponsor the building of whole houses, because of the absence of personal savings or the lack of access to appropriate financial packages. Turner also observed what he called "progressive development" in Lima, Peru (1965 and 1976:24) in which individual household members (whom he referred to as 'bridge headers') would move to an urban area ahead of their families to secure land, and then once they moved to the city would begin to consolidate that land through the incremental investment in boundary walls and then other elements of the house (these people being referred to as 'consolidators'). He also observed a correlation between this social process and the gradual improvement and expansion of the shelters (*i.e.* 'consolidation') which people built for them. This structuring of urbanisation patterns and settlement formation processes formed the basis for some of his earliest writing (Turner,1965), because Turner held that housing should be seen for what it *does* for people (*i.e.* housing as a 'verb') rather than as merely an object or product (*i.e.* housing as a 'noun'), the construction, or consolidation, process suddenly became more visible both to policy makers and to formal designers who had until then invariably designed impervious processes and completed structures with little consideration of how households would participate in the process of modifying the houses and plots. The next step in the process was an interesting one. One group of people, the self-help proponents, sought to take the positive aspects of unassisted housing production and to incorporate them into the formal system, either in terms of the ways that decisions should be made, or in the way that residents should participate in some or all stages of the settlement formation process. Sometime later, when assisted self-help projects had been attempted, there was a second group of (increasingly vociferous) self-help detractors who highlighted the fundamental contradictions in some of what was being promoted.

III. METHODS IN INDIA [2-6]

After the independence of India in 1947, the population of Delhi increased by leaps and bounds due to migration. The result was that new residential colonies started to sprout up without a proper layout or the basic amenities of life. To check this haphazard growth and unplanned development, the Central government in November 1955 set up the Delhi Development (Provisional) Authority. On the 30th of December 1957, the Delhi Development Authority – an11 member body with the Administrator of the Union Territory of Delhi as the ex-officio chairman, was constituted by an Act of Parliament, called the DelhiDevelopment Act, 1957, to promote and secure the development of Delhi according to plan.

To engage with the sector in the development of a new programme, national PHP Forums were held in October 2005 and February 2006, out of which a new PHP strategy was developed. The strategy recognized that a number of different approaches to community development needed to be accommodated with community involvement in the decision making processes, community empowerment and the leveraging of additional resources being the determining factors for making it a project.

This broadening of the scope of the PHP, with a focus on the outcomes of the housing process as a whole rather than just how the housing product is delivered, informed the development of the Enhanced People's Housing Process policy and programme.

EPHP therefore replaces the PHP and should be seen as a new housing programme, with dedicated support and funding for harnessing community initiative, community empowerment and building community partnerships. The EPHP provides for a process in which beneficiaries actively participate in decision-making over the housing process and housing product and make a contribution in such a way that:a) Beneficiaries are empowered individually and collectively so that the community ultimately takes control of the housing process themselves. This includes identifying the land, planning the settlement, getting approvals and resources to begin the development, contracting out or building the houses and providing the services, living in and upgrading their homes and continually improving the community;

b) Various partnerships are created;

c) Social capital is retained and expanded upon as the process builds on existing livelihood strategies and creates all kinds of associated poverty alleviation opportunities for the community;

d) Housing is valued as an asset far beyond its monetary value for all the value added components it provides for individual household members and for the family as a whole;

e) Housing citizenship is built, with beneficiaries being aware of their housing rights and responsibilities;

f) Local economic development is promoted with money spent being kept in the community increasing the local multiplier effect;

g) Stable communities with a direct stake in the future of their neighbourhoods are fostered

h) Houses are built that are better suited to the needs of individual households;

i) Women and the youth are more directly involved in the process, ensuring skills transfer;

j) Human settlements are built that a more sustainable because they are more inclusive and more responsive to the needs of the community and because communities have invested directly in the process.

IV. MOST COMMON STANDARDS [7-12]

The Standards Working Group's first task was to establish which standards it would need to consider. Members arranged informal surveys among their own organisations. Some of the standards identified are nationally developed and others were developed to meet specific local needs but have become widespread in their use. The 10 most common standards that are widely used at a local level to set requirements that are additional to the Building Regulations were identified as:

• Code for Sustainable Homes [7]
• HCA Design Quality Standards and Housing Quality Indicators
• Lifetime Homes and other accessibility requirements (for affordable housing) [8]
• Building for Life (not intended for use as a standard, but now widely used as such)
• Secured by Design [9]
• Energy/CO_2/renewable target ('Merton Rule's, etc [10]
• Public open space requirements [11]
• Space standards [12]
• Car parking standards
• Indian Housing Design Guide

Wherever possible, summary information was obtained from the organisations which own or operate all these standards so we could understand, from their perspective, the rationale behind them and the justification for their purpose and use.

V. CONCLUSION

The responsibility of developing a comprehensive affordable housing implementation plan remains with the City. Resources to support housing initiatives have been identified from City departments drawing upon traditional municipal areas of expertise such as planning,engineering, land use regulation, and social service coordination. The commitment of municipal tangible assets, money, and human resources are needed to provide a wide range of housing incentive plans and effective solutions. Involvement and engagement of various orders of government and community based organizations will be required to continue to implement the greatest range of affordable housing choices.

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