

# What Do Shelterless Want after a Disaster?

Accelerated urbanization is a reality that India cannot afford to ignore anymore. It is estimated that by 2030, 40% of the country's population will be residing in its cities. Such a huge influx of people into India's cities will invariably put a lot of pressure on its already distended urban infrastructure leading to acute shortages. For instance, India currently records an urban housing shortage of approximately 20 million units, of which 57% are designated for the economically disadvantaged sections and 40% for low-income groups.

The exhibition "State of Housing State of Housing - Aspirations, Imaginaries and Realities in India" organized in Mumbai in February 2018, took stock of the housing challenges faced by India's low income groups in the country's cities. There is also a need to think of this challenge in terms of the disaster recovery process.

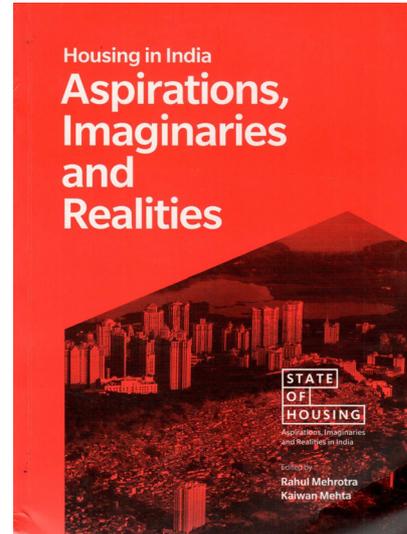
Reducing Risks and Building Resilience in the shelter sector does not have an overview of aspirations, imaginaries and realities that can be used, and will remain usable in upcoming recovery process. The unfolding of rebuilding shelter in Kerala after the floods, and Tamil Nadu after the cyclone in 2018 remain more of the same?

Rahul Mehrotra offers a template to approach rebuilding shelter to those who wish to update and widespread shelter after disaster. In his new publication titled, "Housing in India: Aspirations, Imaginaries and Realities" Rahul offers a system wide as well as systematic way of thinking about a range of rebuilding challenges India faces, from a house to the entire settlement.

What we derive from the Volume 1 is helpful to Risk Vulnerability Resilience (RVR) work as we find that first gap in Building Back Better (BBB) shelter is that there is no history of rebuilding shelter, even when there is.

How did Nehru see the rebuilding shelter after the Partition, and more, after floods and droughts that caused food shortage and kept almost one third of citizens without any shelter possibility for over a decade. Did independent India look at shelter rebuilding in any new or independent way or continued what the British rebuild after any floods or cyclone?

Was any re-thinking on housing and settlement planning coming from the victims and vulnerable? Where? How? And did in-sight added any advantage to the victims or replaced



them in the vulnerable as well as at risk position? To what degree did housing and settlement rebuilding coordinate together? And when they did, did it cause any advantages? And for this was there any re-imagining of the role of the State?

The time has come for National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) to see if the rebuilding of shelter is adequately covered so that India retrofits millions of unsafe shelters to fulfill the ambitious promise of offering a *pucca* shelter to each Indian citizen by 2022. ■

- Mihir R. Bhatt