

# **Housing Support Program for Destitute Women in the Earthquake-Affected Areas of Latur and Osmanabad (1994)**

## **Project Overview**

In the aftermath of the devastating 1993 Latur earthquake, thousands of families lost their homes, livelihoods, and social support systems. Among the most vulnerable were destitute women, including widows, single women, and female-headed households who faced significant challenges in rebuilding their lives and securing adequate shelter. Recognizing their unique vulnerabilities, MASHAL implemented a dedicated Housing Support Program for Destitute Women in the earthquake-affected districts of Latur and Osmanabad in 1994.

The project was supported by Oxfam (USA) and aimed to provide housing assistance to vulnerable women while promoting self-reliance through the construction of affordable, safe, and sustainable homes using locally available materials and community participation.

## **Project Objectives**

The project was implemented with the following objectives:

- To provide housing support to destitute and vulnerable women affected by the earthquake.
- To facilitate the reconstruction of safe and affordable homes using locally available materials.
- To promote self-help and community participation in the housing reconstruction process.
- To strengthen the social and economic resilience of women through access to secure shelter.
- To demonstrate cost-effective and culturally appropriate housing solutions suitable for rural communities.

## **Approach and Methodology**

MASHAL adopted a people-centered and participatory approach to housing reconstruction. The program focused on empowering women by involving them directly in planning, decision-making, and construction activities related to their homes.

The project encouraged the use of locally available construction materials and traditional building knowledge combined with improved construction techniques to ensure affordability, sustainability, and resilience. Technical guidance was provided to beneficiaries throughout the reconstruction process to ensure that houses were safe, functional, and responsive to the needs of women and their families.

Community participation played a central role in implementation, with local residents contributing labour, skills, and support to facilitate the reconstruction process. This approach helped reduce construction costs while strengthening community ownership and solidarity during the rehabilitation phase.

### **Key Interventions**

- Identification and support of destitute women and female-headed households affected by the earthquake.
- Technical assistance for planning and construction of low-cost housing.
- Promotion of self-help housing models that enabled beneficiaries to actively participate in rebuilding their homes.
- Use of locally available materials and traditional construction practices to reduce costs and enhance sustainability.
- Capacity building and orientation of beneficiaries on housing construction and maintenance.
- Community mobilization and facilitation of collective participation in reconstruction efforts.

### **Achievements**

- Supported vulnerable women in rebuilding their homes and restoring a sense of security and dignity after the disaster.
- Demonstrated the effectiveness of low-cost housing solutions using local materials and community resources.
- Encouraged community participation and self-help approaches in post-disaster reconstruction.
- Strengthened the resilience and social inclusion of destitute women within their communities.

- Contributed to the broader rehabilitation and recovery process in the earthquake-affected regions of Latur and Osmanabad.

## **Impact**

The Housing Support Program enabled many vulnerable women to transition from temporary and insecure living conditions to permanent housing solutions. By combining technical support, community participation, and affordable construction methods, the project helped restore confidence, stability, and self-reliance among beneficiaries.

The initiative also showcased the potential of community-based reconstruction approaches in post-disaster situations, demonstrating that housing rehabilitation can be both cost-effective and socially empowering when affected communities are actively involved in the process.

## **Project Details**

- Project Name: Housing Support Program for Destitute Women
- Location: Latur and Osmanabad Districts, Maharashtra
- Year of Implementation: 1994
- Funding Partner: Oxfam (USA)
- Target Group: Destitute Women and Female-Headed Households Affected by the Latur Earthquake
- Implementing Agency: MASHAL (Maharashtra Social Housing and Action League)

## **Conclusion**

The Housing Support Program for Destitute Women was a significant post-earthquake rehabilitation initiative undertaken by MASHAL in 1994. Through the support of Oxfam (USA), the project provided vulnerable women with access to safe and affordable housing while promoting self-help, community participation, and the use of local resources. The initiative not only addressed immediate shelter needs but also contributed to the long-term recovery, empowerment, and resilience of women affected by one of Maharashtra's most devastating natural disasters.