

Patil Estate Fire Rehabilitation and Housing Support Initiative, Pune

Background

In November 2017, a devastating fire incident severely affected the Patil Estate Slum located on the land owned by the College of Engineering Pune (COEP) along the banks of the Mula River in Shivajinagar, Pune. The fire destroyed approximately 450 houses, leaving hundreds of vulnerable families homeless. The affected community primarily consisted of waste pickers, informal sector workers, transgender persons, and economically marginalized households who had incrementally built their homes over many years.

Although there was no loss of human life due to the incident occurring during daytime hours, families lost their homes, personal belongings, livelihood assets, and important identity documents. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, MASHAL immediately mobilized its team and volunteers to support the affected community.

Project Implementation by MASHAL

MASHAL played a proactive role in relief, rehabilitation planning, and technical support following the fire disaster. The organization deployed volunteers to assist Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) officials in conducting damage and loss assessment surveys and identifying the needs of affected families.

Help Desk and Immediate Relief Support

To support the fire-affected households, MASHAL established a dedicated Help Desk at the site. The Help Desk assisted residents in documenting losses and facilitated the re-issuance of critical documents required for rehabilitation and entitlement claims.

In collaboration with the Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) and civil society donors, MASHAL coordinated the distribution of emergency relief materials, including:

- Food supplies
- Utensils
- Clothing

- Household essentials
- Temporary shelter support

The initiative ensured that assistance reached the most vulnerable families in a transparent and equitable manner.

Technical Assessment and Rehabilitation Planning

Building upon its earlier surveys conducted in 2012 and 2017, MASHAL undertook a comprehensive assessment of the settlement and developed both short-term and long-term rehabilitation strategies.

The assessment revealed that:

- The total plot area measured approximately 18,891 sq. m.
- Around 1,200 households were residing in the settlement.
- Approximately 450 houses were directly affected by the fire.
- The site included environmentally sensitive areas such as green zones and flood-line restrictions, limiting conventional redevelopment options.

MASHAL facilitated discussions with multiple stakeholders, including:

- Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC)
- College of Engineering Pune (COEP)
- Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA)
- State Government officials
- Urban planning and architecture professionals

The objective was to identify sustainable rehabilitation solutions while safeguarding the interests of affected families.

Short-Term Housing Rehabilitation Strategy

Recognizing the immediate need for shelter, MASHAL developed a low-cost incremental housing model that could be rapidly implemented.

The organization evaluated several construction materials, including:

- Fly Ash Bricks
- Burnt Bricks

- Bison Boards
- Ferrocement Systems

After technical evaluation, Fly Ash Bricks were recommended due to their:

- Fire resistance
- Durability
- Cost-effectiveness
- Ease of construction
- Local availability

MASHAL also prepared demonstration designs and technical drawings for incremental housing units that could be constructed quickly and safely.

Community-Led Reconstruction

With support from social workers and community networks, many affected families began rebuilding their homes using salvaged materials and locally available construction resources.

MASHAL provided:

- Technical guidance
- Housing layout support
- Construction advice
- Community mobilization assistance

The organization also facilitated discussions regarding financial assistance options for households unable to rebuild independently.

Housing Finance and Loan Proposal

Based on community consultations and household assessments, MASHAL proposed an innovative interest-free housing loan model to support reconstruction efforts.

Key features included:

- Estimated housing cost per unit: ₹1.50 lakh
- Proposed loan amount per beneficiary: ₹75,000

- Target beneficiaries: 275 households
- Total housing reconstruction requirement: approximately ₹4.12 crore
- Proposed repayment period: 37.5 months
- Monthly installment: ₹2,000 per household

The repayment mechanism was designed around community savings groups (Bachat Ghats), local leadership structures, and guarantor-based accountability systems to ensure sustainability and collective responsibility.

Key Achievements

Through this initiative, MASHAL:

- Conducted detailed damage and vulnerability assessments.
- Established an on-site help desk for affected families.
- Facilitated distribution of emergency relief materials.
- Prepared technical housing rehabilitation models.
- Engaged key stakeholders for long-term rehabilitation planning.
- Developed low-cost, disaster-responsive housing solutions.
- Proposed community-based housing finance mechanisms.
- Supported vulnerable households in rebuilding their homes and livelihoods.

Impact

The Patil Estate Fire Rehabilitation Initiative demonstrated MASHAL's commitment to disaster response, community rehabilitation, and inclusive housing solutions. By combining immediate humanitarian assistance with long-term planning and technical expertise, the organization helped affected families begin the process of rebuilding their homes, restoring dignity, and strengthening community resilience after the disaster.