So, the moment when these NGOs when these agencies come into the picture, many at times what they do is they perceive the local knowledge, they perceive that this system, this particular social system has failed to receive the expected conditions of life from the system. So, that is where you know the larger collective stress situations took place that how the system has failed.

But then the many of the relief operations, when they come into the rescue or the rehabilitation projects, they try to reject and in favour of the systems familiar to an exercised by the relief culture. So, they either depend on the, they either rely more on what they have already executed and also the relief culture though they try to undermine the local systems, they try to understand, undermine the local traditions.

And a victim culture is always being made aware of the failure of the local, traditional and indigenous systems to either anticipate the disaster or be able to cope up when it happens. So, basically the moment you, the institution comes in working to serve you and that is where they see that this whole system has failed, they never see that how this has survived all these years, how they used to live, what are the mechanisms that they do have, so that complete ignorance of lack of understanding of the system that brings a big gap.

That is where such kind of situations you know when they were made aware that your system have failed that is where they leads to the loss of faith in the traditional leadership and hierarchies of the social and the religious order making the distressed community still more prone to the external influence. So, some of the options you know that they come with a ready-made options either from what they have already done before.

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Such situations and awareness may lead to loss of faith in traditional leadership and hierarchies of social or religious order, making the distressed community still more prone to external influence.

Illustration by Tania Sen Gupta; Source: Pasupuleti 2011)

And they just give you this is options why not you take one of these.

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Doreen Massey (1995) has argued that 'place' is a social construct. In her view, "we actively make places" (1995:48) and our ideas of place "are products of the society in which we live" (1995:50).

'Can the vulnerability of a place is a social construct ?

Massey, D. (1995) "The conceptualization of place", in D. Massey and P. Jess (eds) A Place in the World?: Places, Cultures and Globalization. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 45–85.

Doreen Massey, a geographer she talked about place is a social construct and we actively make places and our ideas of place are the products of the society in which we live. On the similar context, can we not link the dialogue of can the vulnerability of a place is also a social construct because we are the responsible people, how we are making ourself vulnerable in that particular situation.

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Let's come to some of my own study which I am currently doing. This is on the Hudhud cyclone-affected areas. So, I visited some of the villages in Visakhapatnam which is in the coastal Andhra Pradesh and visited many of the government officials, the collectorates and the statistical department to see what other NGOs are working on and what kind of projects they are doing on and what how the damage statistics have been gathered you know.

So, many of these reports whether we talk about the damage statistics, how much loss of life is damaged, how much property has been damaged, they are narrowed down to the numericals, they are narrowed down to the surface structures of the society and they are often reduced to the statistical terms. So, you can say that estimated crop loss this much, area more than 50%, number of people evacuated, number of villages affected.

So, they are all narrowed down to numbers but that is where it is more to do with the economic aspect how much fund is required for it, how much investment is needed for that.

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If you look there is, these are some of the villages called Bheemunipatnam and you can see the traditional patterns of living, they have the thatched roof systems, which have a very low eaves because of the cyclone-affected areas and the coastal areas. So, they try to have this indigenous understanding of climatic, the local climatic conditions and it will also serving their way of life, how the fisherman's life is also celebrated and how functionally it works.

But if you look at the modern constructions, you can see even the drainage has left just alone like this, so which means the agencies are looked only at a house but not as a system of things, a settlement is not just only a group of houses, it is not just a thing, it is a system of things and it can incorporate the road layer network, the drainage systems, the electricity, the supply, water supply, so everything together that makes a habitat.

But here, when you go on an individual house for a house you build a house when NGO comes and build a house, you go away and that's it so what happens next, how it affects the neighbour, so that is where we are missing in that level. In many of the villages, where I have seen I visited that these damaged houses yes, they have been accounted that this has been partially damaged or fully damaged.

But then these are left isolated because they might have moved to other place or they might have been adjusted to in a new place but what happened to these. So, even after 10 years if you ever go to Latur earthquake affected areas or even in Tsunami, there are many villages we can see these damaged villages lying like that. So, there is no thought process of how one can even clean up this debris or how we can reuse these materials.

So, these are all many aspects one can think of, so what you can see in the whole village is bits and pieces of the rubble, which has been damaged by the cyclone or damaged houses in between you are building a new houses, so there is no understanding of the old part but only they are looking at what we are constructing, you know.

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For instance, this is a story of a house as a joint family house and many of these poor houses, the government has given only 5000 rupees as a kind of support to rebuild their house, the roof and the reality is 3 families still live in the same house. So, I was wondering how could they able to live in these houses. So, then they said, yeah we mostly sleep here being a coastal area we can sleep there because that 5000 was not sufficient for us to keep all the rules.

So, what we do is we negotiate with our neighbours and they sleep on the nights in their verandas. So, that is how, when you narrow down to numericals or you narrow down only to the 5000 rupees or a particular amount to be given, I think if you don't monitor it, how they are going to build up and after two years this is the case. So, I think this is where one has to look at.

It is not how much you are providing but how much they have done and what needs to be done, this is where a reevaluation has to be done in these kind of cases. There is another case, like where different corporate agencies come like for example this was a project by Infosys Foundation where, as a part of their corporate social responsibilities, they try to come and deliver the housing solutions.

And when you look at this housing, they have a very good road network, they have very good houses, brick and concrete houses, this is slightly far away like 2, 3 kilometres; 3, 4 kilometers from the shore but then at least when I visited this place not many people have occupied this places, maybe now people might have taken but at that point of time not even a single person have occupied these houses.

I used to take some interviews with them and then I asked a fisherman why, they said our fishing needs are very different, we want to stay close to the seashore though we like a particular house but still our needs are little different. So, in gradual process, they also have worried about how the local politicians and their networks, how they can grab these houses on the name of fisherman's that is also one of the threat which even fishermen feel about.

So if, the fisherman has a different cultural need and similar to the Gibellina of understanding of the uniform and the standardized forms of housing and how it often gets rejected by the communities because of their cultural needs, livelihood needs.

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That is where, we say about the house is a denotative whereas, a home is a connotative. The house or a small dwelling describes the structure whereas, the home is symbolic of the life spent within it. The home is a connotative of the deep structures of the social system and how these are reflected 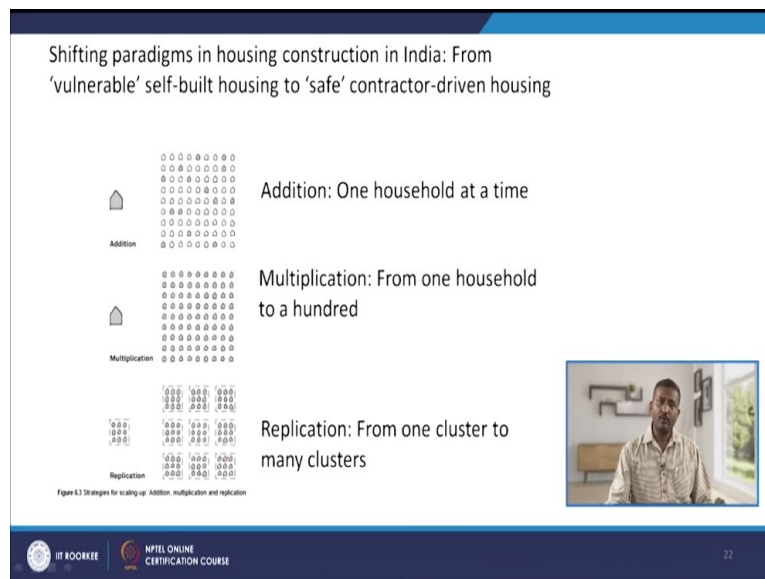in family's relationship to the domestic space it occupies. So here, what we are able to see is that it is not just the four walls which a house is all about.

It is about the family, it is about their social relationship, how the social space is created, so Henri Lefebvre talks from the conceived space, which the planners or the foundation have vision like this in a modernistic understanding and the perceived space, how they try to adjust with it and the lived space come with a longer run adjustments, longer than accommodation, how the habitual practices set this place with a different meanings, how they manifest these places with the cultural dimension.

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That is where the lived space comes into it and I think I will summarize on how in the first version of build back better by Michal Lyons and Theo Schilderman and Camillo Boana's work, how they even brought some of the compiled work of various scholars from different regions India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Peru, Colombia, Turkey and all other places. So, the model which generally which has been followed in the reconstruction processes is one is an aspect of addition.

Like what they do is sometimes approach is through a singular NGOs like okay, there are 5, 6 houses this NGO will sponsor, another 5, 6 houses this NGO will sponsor, so that time the NGO only looks at that house, they only talked about one house, one at a time, one family because their contract is all about delivering 2 or 3 or 4 houses whereas in the multiplication model from one house to a 100.
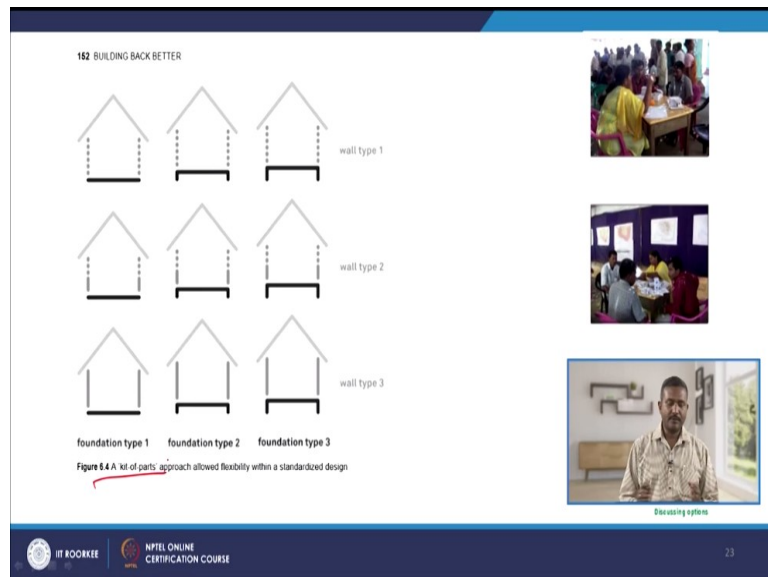
So, here this is where the agency driven construction, so what they do is they develop a schematic or a model of a particular house and they replicate it whether it is a township, whether it is a cluster, so in that way, they try to develop as a uniform and the standardized

models of it and this is mostly as an agency-driven process. Whereas the replication, it is basically a cluster has been developed and that would be replicated in the whole settlement but here in this and this in the agency driven process what happens is you the agency will not consider a lot of differential aspects especially, in terms of space requirements, the communal response to it and the needs or the situational analysis, how it has changed before disaster and after disaster.

A woman loses her husband in the disaster, what happens to her, what kind of house she needs you know, so this kind of understanding is not really goes within this process because it's only takes for the model and how it is repeated for 100 houses whereas here, this involves a longer run engagement to understand each neighbourhood, a group of families.

It will take time but the problem with this is the media pressure will be there, the political pressure will be there, the institutional pressure will be there, so a lot of constraints which will add on to this aspect. In the second model of the contractor driven what they do is they try to develop a kit of parts approach.

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For instance, they develop a template of walling material, the foundation and the roofing material or whatever. So, they try to give a template over and then people were asked to choose within that so in that way, the kit is provided and there is a little flexibility adopted in the standardized design process whereas in the second process of application, where Benny Kuriakose have worked on 2,000 designs for 2,000 houses.

So, that is where a deeper engagement is required with the community and they have to actually interact with the community and finally, they developed over 7 to 8 alternatives and again and one-to-one interaction with the architects has been allowed and that is why even the other further final modifications have been developed. This requires a very thorough bottom-up process of it.

I hope you understand the cultural issues and what are the ways of designing and how it has been overlooked and as a response what are the consequences of it and what are the various models of designing the housing. Thank you very much.