CHAPTER 3

HOUSING POLICY:
Background, Definition, Objective, Goals, Elements, Scope and Other Contents
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This chapter covers the details of Housing policies at the National level as well as at the State level. The Govt. policy in regard to housing so far introduced for implementation of various schemes, are the main contents of this chapter. Further this chapter is divided into two sections A & B. Section A covers the National Housing Policy & Section B covers the state Housing Policy of Assam.

Section-A

3.1 Over-view of National Housing Policy: The usual policy of government and public Sector institutions is to support and develop housing programmes on the basis of availability of resources and on their perception of housing demand and affordability, rather than on the basis of the requirements and affordability of prospective beneficiaries. As a result, housing schemes are formulated in a manner that often puts the schemes beyond the effective reach of the target groups, as the specific needs and affordability of the people are not taken into account in formulating the schemes. Also, affordability becomes a myth as no attempt is made to restructure payment schedules to match with projected economic capacity. Thus, an appropriate enabling environment is not created by the government, which can facilitate the individual to acquire the house, with minimum government investment and intervention. The National Housing policy of the government of India has highly laid emphasis on the need for public sector agencies to increasingly play the role of a facilitator of the housing process and create the enabling environment in which the requisite inputs would flow into the housing sector more easily than in the past.
National Housing Policy was recognized by the government at the end of 1980, which, interalia, laid that housing should be viewed as an integral part of the overall improvement of human settlement and economic development. In pursuance of the Global shelter strategy adopted by the United Nations, a draft National Housing Policy was formulated by the government and was tabled on both Houses in Parliament in May 1988. Subsequently, a revised National Housing Policy was tabled in parliament in 1992 and adopted by both the Houses of parliament in July, 1992. This document forms the basis for the new policy framework in which the shelter sector is to operate. The details of the policies are given below:

3.2 **Objectives of the National Housing policy:**

The basic objectives of the housing policy are:

- To assist all people, and in particular the houseless, the inadequately housed and the vulnerable sections and to secure for themselves affordable shelter through access to developed land, building materials, finance and technology;

- To create an enabling environment for housing activity by various sections by eliminating constraints, and by developing an efficient and equitable system for the delivery of housing inputs;

- To expand the provision of infrastructure facilities in rural and urban areas in order to improve the environment of human settlements, increase the access of poorer households to basic services, and to increase the supply of developed land for housing;

- To undertake, within the overall context of policies for poverty alleviation and employment, steps for improving the housing situation of the poorest sections and vulnerable groups by direct initiative and financial support of the State.
- To help mobilize the resources and facilitate the expansion of investment in housing in order to meet the needs of housing construction and upgradation and augmentation of infrastructure.

- To promote a more equal distribution of land and houses in urban and rural areas, and to curb speculation in land and housing in consonance with macro-economic policies for efficient and equitable growth.

- To promote vernacular architecture and to preserve the nation's rich heritage in the field of human settlements.

3.3 Goals to be achieve:

The main goals to be achieved in the next ten years would be to:

- reduce houselessness;

- provide larger supply of developed land and finance to different income groups;

- promote use of appropriate and energy saving building materials and cost effective construction technologies;

- assist in the upgradation of all unserviceable houses in rural and urban areas, with a view to particularly improving the housing conditions of the rural homeless and the inadequately housed, slum dwellers, Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes, and other vulnerable sections;

- provide the minimum level of basic services and amenities to ensure a healthy environment within the framework of integrated development of rural and urban settlements;
3.4 **Elements of National Housing Policy:**

The following are the main elements of Housing Policy:

- Housing norms
- Rural Housing
- Slums & squatter settlements and Housing for Urban Poor
- Supply and management of land
- Infrastructure
- Conservation of Housing Stock and Rental housing
- Housing finance
- Building material and technology
- Special programmes for disadvantaged groups
- Role of Government, private sector and the community
- Fiscal policy
- Legal and regulatory framework
- Human resource development
- Action Plan

3.4.1 **Housing Norms**:

Housing norms would be evolved at local levels with due regard to different geo-climatic conditions and life styles of the people. Efforts will be made to develop and promote use of cost-effective standardized housing designs for each geo-climatic region.
In rural areas, except those on the periphery of large cities, the size of the plot would not ordinarily be less than 85 square metres, with a provision for built-up accommodation of not less than 20 square metres, and with adequate provision of services. In urban areas, the size of the plot should not ordinarily be less than 25 square metres with a provision for permissible built-up accommodation and services on individual or shared basis in a neighbourhood adequately served with community facilities. In devising building standards, the special needs of the handicapped would be taken into account by the local bodies.

3.4.2 Rural Housing:

It is recognized that rural housing is qualitatively different from urban housing, in that the housing activity in rural areas is not so much based on cash economy and depends much more on land rights and access to resources. The strategy for rural housing will be based on:

- Support to varying needs of shelter including new construction, additions and upgradation;

- providing assistance by way of dissemination of appropriate technology and delivery system for promoting self-help housing.

- assuring land and tenure rights by enactment of enabling laws for conferment of homestead rights;

- prevention of alienation of homesteads on tribal land;

- avoiding unnecessary displacement or dehousing of rural settlements due to development projects; and where unavoidable, ensuring proper rehabilitation of the households, with full community involvement, according to the national norms in this regard;
- rehabilitation of households affected by natural calamities in terms of assistance for reconstruction and access to services, within the national scheme of calamity relief;

- preserving the customary and traditional rights of access to housing resources based on forest materials and common village resources;

- promoting the maximum use of indigenous building materials and construction techniques with due regard to geo-climatic variations in different regions;

- the coordinated provision of water supply, sanitation, roads, and other basic infrastructure services to existing and new habitations besides employment opportunities which will also help to reduce the migration to urban areas;

- the establishment of a suitable institutional structure including strengthening of existing organization at State, district and local level, with responsibility for the implementation, supervision and monitoring of rural housing schemes, and with the full involvement of beneficiaries, voluntary agencies and village panchayats;

- giving special attention to the needs of poorest segments of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other disadvantaged persons.

The development of house sites and the upgradation of rural housing will be linked to activities under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), and other programmes for the creation of rural assets and employment.

3.4.3 **Slums and Squatter Settlements in Urban areas and Housing for Urban areas:**

Keeping in view the policies of planned growth of urbanization, income support and poverty alleviation, and together with steps to arrest the growth of slums in urban
areas, the Central and State Governments would take steps to:

- avoid forcible relocation or dishousing of slum dwellers;

- encourage in-situ upgradation, slum renovation, and progressive housing development with conferment of occupancy rights wherever feasible, and to undertake selective relocation with community involvement only for clearance of priority sites in public interest;

- expand provision of water supply, sanitation and other basic services in slum and other settlements occupied by the poor;

- ensure proper maintenance of amenities through community involvement and decentralized institutional arrangements;

- integrate the provision of physical amenities with basic services including maternal and child welfare services and health care, structured and community participation and involvement of voluntary agencies and management by local bodies;

- promote incremental construction and upgradation by poorer households through access to land and services, through technical support, outlets for low cost technology and materials, opportunities for skill upgradation and access to housing finance on flexible terms;

- provide night shelter and sanitary facilities for the footpath dwellers and the homeless.

3.4.4 Supply and Management of Land:

Supply of serviced land at affordable prices is a critical input for housing activity. It is widely recognized that the effective operation of the land market has been
affected by the existing legal and regulatory framework, lack of infrastructure, and the slow pace of release of serviced land by public agencies. This, along with other economic factors, has led to unwarranted increase in land price and housing costs, and widespread speculation and profiteering specially in larger cities. The exclusion of the majority of the poor from the formal market, their inability to build or acquire legal shelter has led to the proliferation of squatter settlements and unauthorized colonies.

The Central and State Governments would take initiative for:

i) promoting a balanced pattern of urbanization in order to reduce the pressure on the metropolis and large cities, with due regard to the need to control unregulated peripheral development on agricultural lands, unwarranted conversion of land use and the degradation of land resources;

ii) directing the activities of the public agencies towards increasing the supply of serviced land for various income groups and essential public purposes, with a preponderant proportion for the poorer sections;

iii) simplifying the existing legal provisions and procedures relating to the acquisition of land, to enable taking over possession of land speedily with due regard to the payment of adequate and timely compensation to land owners on negotiated basis, or by schemes of participative development of infrastructure under the town planning law or otherwise;

iv) modifying development control rules and norms of infrastructure provision and simplifying building approval procedures in order to facilitate the housing activity of different income groups especially the poor, and to reduce the cost of housing;

v) encouraging the involvement of licensed private developers in land
development, construction and infrastructure provision, with adequate safeguards to protect the consumers and increase supply of developed land for lower income groups;

vi) reviewing on a city-wise basis the use of land in the ownership of various public agencies and formulating specific plans for the efficient utilization of these lands for the city’s development;

vii) devising through new legislation, or through the more effective use of existing laws, the optimum use of land as a resource for housing and urban services and suitable measures for the redevelopment of land occupied by industries in a state of decline and/or causing environmental pollution;

viii) using fiscal and municipal taxation policy, including tax on vacant urban land, in order to curb speculative activities, and to increase the supply of land;

ix) coordinating the assessment of valuation of land and property by different Central, State and local agencies, for the levy of taxes, and for other purposes:

x) building up an effective information system of land and registration in the interest of efficient management of land; and

xi) specifically increasing the access of the poorer sections, women and vulnerable groups to affordable serviced land in areas located near, or connected by cheap transport to their work places.

In the light of suggestions received from various sources such as the State Governments and the affected parties, amendments to the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act will be introduced in order to remove the inhibiting effects of the legislation without diluting its social purpose so as to make available additional land for housing, especially for the lower income groups.
3.4.5 **Infrastructure:**

The National Commission on Urbanization has advocated concentrated investment in settlements of various sizes which can generate economic momentum, sustain economic growth, promote balanced urbanization, expand housing activity and facilitate equitable provision of services. It is recognized that public and private investment in infrastructure to expand the supply of serviced land needs to be stepped up through enhanced budget provision as well as institutional finance. Organizational arrangements would be strengthened for mobilizing and increasing the flow of funds for infrastructure. The Housing Policy envisages actions to expand infrastructure facilities and services by:

(i) Increased investments to be made by the Central, State and local agencies within the framework of regional plans as well as the development of growth centres in order to meet the rapidly increasing needs of serviced land, and to improve the availabilities of services in different settlements;

(ii) Adequate investments to increase the coverage of urban population to 100% for potable water supply and 75% for basic sanitation including the total elimination of manual scavenging with particular attention to the larger provision of basic amenities to the settlements inhabited by the poor;

(iii) Larger investments in public transport and traffic network to subserve the needs of the poorer sections for cheaper and speedier access to work places and to integrate transport, land use and shelter;

(iv) Special attention to the development of small and medium towns by strengthening their linkages with the contiguous rural areas as a part of integrated planned development of the region, and steps for reducing the migration to larger cities:
(v) Encouraging use of construction technologies which are cost effective, incrementally upgradable, and environmentally appropriate;

(vi) Support from State Governments for extension of infrastructure based on the participation of the landowners or of enterprises in new growth centres or townships and private developers or on innovative systems of infrastructure leasing;

(vii) Assistance by the State Governments to the local bodies to ensure adequate cost recovery, proper maintenance of services and upgradation of the capability of the personnel in local bodies and functional agencies;

(viii) Securing community support in the design, installation and the upkeep of services within the framework of the Urban Basic Services strategy and rural development programmes;

(ix) Strengthening the financial viability and implementation capacity of local bodies and functional agencies and augmenting their resources on the basis of the recommendation of the State Municipal Finance Commission (SMFC).

3.4.6 Conservation of Housing Stock and Rental Housing:

The National Housing Policy envisages steps to be taken by the Central and State Governments and the financial institutions for:

i) appropriate modifications in the building regulations;

ii) special schemes for the repairs and renewal of residential buildings having a large number of occupants;

iii) fiscal and property tax incentives and financial assistance for expansion and upgradation of dwelling units and for proper maintenance of buildings;
iv) access to materials and technical assistance.

Investment in rental housing, especially for the lower and middle income groups will be stimulated by:

i) suitable amendments to rent control laws by state governments on the basis of the Model Rent Control law;

ii) provision of houses for industrial workers in new industrial areas or growth centres, by public and private employers as a part of project cost, and for stimulating this by appropriate fiscal concessions and institutional finance under industrial policy;

iii) encouraging individuals and groups to construct houses for partial or full letting by access to land, institutional finance, enabling regulations and incentives in central, state and municipal taxation of property and incomes.

3.4.7 **Housing Finance**:

It is envisaged that 20% of the requirement of investment in housing would be met by specialized housing finance institutions, insurance and banking sector, provident fund, mutual funds etc. and additional mobilization of household savings.

It is recognized that the formal system meets a small proportion of the finance required by different groups for a variety of shelter activities, and that the bulk of the population is outside its reach owing to a variety of structural and operational inadequacies of the system. It will be the objective of Housing Policy to promote easy access to finance for different housing activities and to evolve an elastic and widespread resource mobilization strategy to tap household savings in the formal and informal sectors. Steps would also be taken for the removal of constraint to the flow of finance into the housing sector, especially larger lending to the poor and the informal sector.
In the interest of long-term development of the mortgage market and assured resources for the housing finance system, increasing proportion of the resources of Insurance Sector, Unit Trust, Commercial Banks and Co-operative Banks will be channeled into housing with lending rates reflecting the average yields of these resources.

Apart from diverting increasing proportions of annual provident funds accumulations for housing-linked savings schemes for the P.F. subscribers, the workers in the organized sectors and public sector employees will be introduced.

It is envisaged that, as the apex agency charged with linking the housing finance system with the financial sector as a whole, the National Housing Bank (NHB) facilitates the promotion and regulation of housing finance institutions in the public and private sectors, refines their operations, and expands the spread of housing finance to different income groups all over the country, while functioning within the overall framework of housing policy.

The National Housing Policy recognizes the need to strengthen the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) and increase its resources for meeting in a larger measure the requirements for shelter provision for lower income groups in rural and urban areas, including the shelter-less and the slum dwellers, and for expanding infrastructure facilities in the urban areas.

The complementary roles of different agencies and institutions in public and private sector concerned with land development, house construction and finance will be supported.

Innovative savings and lending instruments will be introduced to integrate the housing Finance system into the capital market by enabling access of Housing Finance
Institution (HFI) to the funds on a competitive basis with other financial institutions and by permitting NHB and HUDCO to set up mutual funds for housing, apart from their access to external aid.

Steps would be taken in due course to introduce a secondary mortgage system in order to attract funds from a wide range of investors, including insurance and provident funds, and to integrate housing finance with the overall financial system.

The planning norms for housing at the neighbourhood and institutional level will be integrated with the lending guidelines of NHB and other financial institutions. Appropriate ceilings on plinth area and institutional finance will be stipulated in order to discourage large premises.

It is envisaged that the housing finance system as a whole becomes self-financing in the long run to meet the needs of different income groups and purposes, with longer repayment periods, graduated payments and simplified procedures, wherever, to ensure affordable monthly instalments and larger coverage across different urban and rural areas.

It is recognized that capital and interest subsidies for the urban and rural poor be targeted carefully, and that improvements be made in the housing finance procedures and shelter delivery system in order to bring down the cost of shelter for the poor to affordable levels. The subsidized housing programmes like the Indira Awas Yojna for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and freed bonded labourers will be restricted to the absolutely poor and the disadvantaged groups. The housing finance systems will be so devised as to respond on flexible terms to a variety of shelter needs of the rural and urban poor. The Government recognizes the need to make an in-depth assessment of the role of informal credit network and community based savings for housing and to devise
ways of establishing its links with the formal credit institution to enhance access of the rural and urban poor to housing finance.

The cooperative housing movement, especially, for lower and middle income groups, will be given assured access to institutional finance to supplement internal resources.

3.4.8 Building Materials and Technology:

As part of the housing policy, it is proposed to take steps for-

a) Stimulating the increased production and availability of conventional materials like cement, steel and bricks as part of industrial policy and promotion of small scale industries, even as steps are taken to economize the use of scarce building material and to promote low cost and environmentally appropriate technology and use of indigenous resources;

b) assured access of rural households to traditional materials including biomass and checks on indiscriminate commercial exploitation of forest resources, with due regard to environmental preservation;

c) encouragement for the use by public and private construction agencies of materials based on industrial and agricultural wastes, those based on local resources and alternate appropriate technologies;

d) selection, extension and promotion of proven technologies and building materials, and the use of materials conforming to standards and quality construction through the efforts of Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) and state government, and to provide financial and other assistance to entrepreneurs for the manufacture and marketing of appropriate and innovative materials;
e) incorporating the low cost technologies and materials in the national standards and specifications laid down by State agencies, and further requiring the public construction agencies to draw up plans for the use of cost effective technologies and materials to the extent of a least 10% of total annual construction;

f) training, technology extension and skill upgradation through a network of Building Centres in urban and rural areas set up by State agencies, research bodies and voluntary agencies, and dissemination of information to the actual users and communities;

g) building up an extension network for the spread of information on housing schemes inputs and low cost technology, shelter guidance centre, retail outlets for materials; and

h) strengthening existing R&D institutions and promoting the setting up of R & D facilities in other suitable institution by necessary financial support, and by obliging all public and private construction agencies to set apart at least 1% of the annual expenditure for R&D in housing.

3.4.9 Special Programmes for disadvantaged sections:

Housing Policy would accord priority to the promotion of access to shelter for the houseless, inadequately housed and the disadvantaged groups such as:

a) households below the poverty line in all settlements;

b) rural landless labour including artisans;

c) the households dishoused by development projects and the victims of natural calamities;

d) scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and freed bonded labour;
e) widows, single women and women headed household including construction works below the poverty line;

f) physically handicapped.

3.4.9.1 Housing Needs of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes: It will be ensured with the help of state governments and Central Ministries that the developed land and housing units in rural urban areas constructed by state and local agencies, and those constructed by private agencies with the help of financial institutions, are allowed to families belonging to the scheduled castes/scheduled tribes in proportion to their composition in the population. The ongoing schemes for these communities would be further expanded in consultation with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

3.4.9.2 Housing Needs of Women: Adequate attention will be given, while devising programmes, to meet the specific needs of women in disadvantaged circumstances, in terms of joint or exclusive title to land and house, access to credit, home-based employment, maternal and child welfare, hostels for working women, and involvement in the provision of shelter and services, access to education and income-generating opportunities.

3.4.10 Role of Government, Private Sector and the Community:

The magnitude of the housing task calls for the involvement of several agencies including the government at different levels, the co-operatives, the community, and the private sector. The Government will devise and implement strategies which will enable the various agencies to complement the efforts of one another and to ensure the most efficient utilization of resources consistent with National Environment Policy (NEP). It would be the endeavour of central and State Government:
to act as the provider for the poorest and vulnerable sections and to facilitate the housing activity of lower and middle groups;

to control speculation and profiteering in land and housing;

to modulate housing policy to the diverse needs and resource endowments of different regions in the country;

to encourage, within the framework of housing policy and local planning, voluntary agencies in efforts to upgrade shelter, extend basic services, augment incomes and promote environmental conservation;

to promote decentralized execution of housing schemes in urban and rural areas under the supervision of local bodies which would be suitably strengthened within the constitutional framework to respond to the diverse needs of local population;

to reorient the housing agencies at the Central, State and local level to act more as promoters of housing activity rather than builders of houses and to concentrate increasingly on the supply of developed land and infrastructure, extension of appropriate technology, assisting people to take up construction and upgradation of houses and disseminating information on housing schemes.

The Housing Policy recognizes group-based or co-operative activity or community associations as the principal form of housing activity in many rural settlements and large urban areas facing shortage of land, and hence the co-operatives and other community-related activities, especially for slum dwellers and the rural poor, assisted through preferential allotment of land, access to finance and fiscal support.

The private developers and the organized sector will be encouraged to invest in various forms of housing and land development by access to finance, speedier approval
of schemes and other forms of support, removal of constraints to assembly and
development of land, while they will be induced to devote a significant proportion of
the investment in housing for lower and middle-income groups at affordable prices and
conform to non-exploitative practices.

Government recognizes the vital need to integrate housing activity and
employment. Training, skill upgradation and promotion of labour intensive and
decentralized manufacture of building materials and construction practices would be
encouraged, in order to maximize the economic benefits of housing investment.

Environmental protection will be emphasized in terms of the basic norms and
services for settlements, for neighbourhood planning and open spaces, control of
pollution, removal, disposal and utilization of liquid and solid wastes.

Through proper attention to planning and architecture, importance will be given
to the preservation of built up heritage and monuments, structures of architectural
value, and the preservation of special natural features.

3.4.11 Fiscal Policy:

Fiscal incentives will be provided in order to promote desired investment in
housing activity by the private sector and individuals, and to channel additional savings
for housing activity from households and enterprises.

In order to induce employers in the organized sector including industry to
provide housing for their workers, incentives will be given for investment in rental or
ownership housing, especially for low income employees.

Incentives will be given to promote the manufacture of new building materials
and components produced out of industrial wastes like flyash, and agricultural wastes,
and those which substitute the use of scarce resource like wood, and energy-intensive
materials like cement and steel.

In consultation with the State Govts., the levy of stamp duties and registration fees will be rationalized, especially to reduce the burden on housing for lower income groups.

Government would encourage housing schemes with approved guidelines in major cities to channel investment of Non-Resident Indians in convertible foreign exchange in residential property, and would extend appropriate incentives including speedy clearance by Central, State and local governments to stimulate a sustained and large in-flow of such investment.

3.4.12 Legal and Regulatory Framework:

The measures for removing legal constraints would cover apart from those mentioned elsewhere in the Document,

a) Provision in the Land Reforms and other relevant Acts to confer homestead rights on the occupants, ensure proper rehabilitation of those dishoused by projects, project tribal families from eviction, preserve user rights over forest and common lands etc.

b) Revision of Master Plan standards, land use plans, building by-laws, and infrastructure standards by the State Govts. and local authorities, based on the National Building Code as the guide. This will help reduce the cost of shelter, enable efficient use of land, and facilitate housing activity;

c) Making suitable amendments in the laws and procedure governing land acquisition in urban areas to ensure speedy assembly of compact lands with due regard to the interests of landowners;

d) Review and amendment of laws and regulations relating to town planning,
particularly the norms and standards for in-situ upgradation of low income settlements and housing;

e) Enactment of separate chapter in the present co-operative laws on group or co-operative housing activity in order to streamline their operation and to remove existing constraints;

f) Enactment of Apartment Ownership Act (AOA) in States not having such a law, and suitable amendments to the existing laws wherever necessary in order to provide for the transfer of occupancy rights of individual owners, management of common areas, and to enable the creation of charge on the apartment by lending institutions;

g) Steps for the removal of constraints to the flow of finance into housing and services especially larger lending to the poor and households in the informal sector through:-

- flexible procedures and collateral requirements as well as repayment schedules;

- amendments to the National Housing Bank Act to provide for speedy foreclosure of mortgages by housing finance institutions refinanced by NHB, so as to augment to resources of housing finance institutions further and to help in creating a secondary market for housing mortgage;

- universalization of the system of English Mortgage;

- simplification of procedure for registration of documents and execution of mortgages, and

- simplification of procedure for investigation of title and the introduction
of the True system of registration of title in a phased manner in urban and rural areas.
The implementation of this agenda will be ensured through the joint efforts of Central
and State Governments as early as possible.

3.4.13 **Human Resource Development**:

The Development of human resource is a crucial component of the Housing Policy. Various steps are envisaged such as:

- the training and reorientation of architects, engineers, planners, administrators,
  and others to adopt low-cost and cost-effective approaches to planning of settlements and housing;

- increased facilities in the technical institution and colleges for the training of the various professions related to housing;

- promotion on a large scale of vocational courses at the school and post school level;

- formal and non-formal training facilities on a widely decentralized basis to upgrade skills of construction workers, artisans and petty contractors;

- upgradation of the skills and improvement of the working conditions of women construction workers;

- greater involvement of non-governmental organizations in the training of construction workers, both in the formal and informal sectors and assistance to urban self-employed to organize themselves in order to upgrade their techniques and get better access to working space, credit and marketing channels; and

- provision of non-formal training to facilitate maintenance and improvement of housing stock on a self-help basis.
3.4.14 **Action Plan**

Housing is a State subject. Given the wide variations in housing needs and resources endowments in the country, Governments of States and UTs would have to play the primary role in formulating action plans and programmes suited to local needs and conditions in consultation with local bodies and citizen groups. Perspective Plans of actions and short term plans for the VIII Plan will be formulated by the State/UTs taking into account the following factors:

a) A complete estimate of the number, type (economic category), and standards of dwellings to be constructed or upgraded both by the private and public sector and the units to be offered in the rental market.

b) Resource flow from the private, co-operative and public sectors, and the number and type of dwelling units to be constructed by each sector in States/UTs on ownership or rental basis.

c) Separate projections for rural and urban housing needs, including the resources required for each sector.

d) Distinguishing shelter needs of those in possession of a plot and desire to construct dwelling unit, those who are totally shelterless, those who can afford to acquire a built-up unit, those in need of repairs and renovation/extension of the dwelling units, and those in need of additional amenities.

e) The desired product mix and the resources required from State budget, institutional finance and local contribution in order to provide adequate shelter for different sections of the population.

The Action Plans would be formulated for each State/UT within a time frame of one year for time bound implementation by state and local agencies with the
involvement of central institution, private and co-operative agencies and built into the Five Year Plans, city and district development Plans.

An appropriate management information system on housing and urban services will be developed at various levels of government under the supervision of an Inter-Ministerial Group and a comprehensive Housing Census will be taken up during Eighth Five Year Plan.

The National Housing Policy will be periodically revised in the light of emerging needs of different sections of the population and the demands of the changing socio-economic conditions in different parts of the country.

As per the provision of periodical revision, National Housing Policy was again adopted by the Parliament in August 1994. The long term goal of the policy is to reduce houselessness and to provide minimum level of basic services and amenities to all. It is recognized that the magnitude of the problem calls for the involvement of various agencies including the government, co-operative, communities and the private sector. The policy envisages a major shift in the Government’s role towards being a facilitator rather than a provider. The facilitator role would amount to providing components that are not easily acceptable to individuals and also streamlining the procedures so that access to these component are made easy.

In view of above, Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) was introduced in 1985-86 in the central sector for the poorest of the poor belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and freed bonded labourers in rural areas.

However, the Housing patterns, types of Housing, physical Structure of Houses & living Style of cross section of peoples are different in different places.
The National Housing Policy has been announced at the National level as a whole. Considering the above, State Governments are also trying to develop their own housing policies. In view of that, the Government of Assam wholly endorses the need of a National Housing Policy and also formulated Housing Policy at the State level. Assam is one of the states which formulated State Housing Policy in Sept. 1988, and the same was finally approved in 1993 as Assam State Housing Policy. The same is now being applied in Assam. The features/contents of the ASH policy are given below:

3.5 Objectives of the State Housing Policy Assam:

(i) The basic aim will be to secure public participation to construct their own houses with assistance under various Housing Schemes, and for this purpose involvement of private entrepreneurship in house building and land development (Including Infrastructure development) activities will be encouraged. Emphasis will be given to the Houseless, Inadequately Housed, S.C. people to secure affordable shelter through access to developed land, building materials and technology.

(ii) To create a congenial environment by eliminating all constraints for the development of efficient distribution of affordable house and efficient system of delivering Housing units.

(iii) Expansion of basic services both in Urban and Rural areas and more emphasis should be given to the access of poor people to the services.

(iv) Within the over-all context of alleviation of poverty, employment generation and steps for improvement of Housing for the poorest section will be directly initiated by the Government.
(v) State will take steps to mobilize the resources for investment in housing.

(vi) Steps will be taken to ensure an equitable distribution of land and houses in Urban and Rural areas and to curb speculation in and housing.

(vii) Attention will be given to preserve the vernacular architecture on the basis of the geo-climatic, social and cultural heritage in the field of house settlement in the state.

3.6 Goals of the State Housing Policy:

The main goals to be achieved in next 10 (ten) years would be to -

(i) construct more houses for the poor, so that a dent is made in regard to housing shortages;

(ii) supply of developed land, finance to E.W.S. and L.I.G.;

(iii) develop low-cost building materials and cost-effective construction technologies;

(iv) upgrade rural and urban unserviceable house;

(v) construct house for S.C. and S.T.;

(vi) provide minimum level of basic services and amenities for healthy environment through integrated development of rural and urban settlement.

3.7 Housing Norms as per the State Housing Policy, Assam:

For the State of Assam two-roomed houses with a verandah and low cost sanitary latrine is considered as minimum house for the people of Assam.

In rural areas except those on the periphery of large cities, the size of the plot would not be less than 280 sq.m. and in urban areas the plot size should not be less than 10 sq. m.
The building bye-laws for the urban areas should be revised immediately, and for optimum use of land, the apartment ownership Act, should be passed soon. There should also be provision for handicapped people in the bye-laws of the local Bodies.

3.8 Rural Housing:

The problem is so gigantic that unless the people take-up their own construction, it may be difficult for the Govt. to accomplish the same. The resources of different departments, (Financial, Technical and Manpower) who are engaged in different way for rural development, may be co-ordinated to develop the quality of rural life and thereby the achievement of rural housing will be possible. The rural water supply programme, Rural Electrification, Village Industry, Rural Road Construction, Rural Sanitation etc. are to be co-ordinated along with Rural Housing to bring about social and economical changes for better living condition of the people. House is an environment for living. Hence all the factors are closely associated with housing.

The type of skills necessary to construct the rural houses are available with the people (such as masonry, carpentry and semi skilled and un-skilled labour).

The people need the technical assistance and guidance and also scarce materials from the Agencies to go ahead with the work. Repayment of loans should have the flexibility of monthly, daily amounts suitable to the people and the collection to be done from door to door and by personal visit. It may be suggested that the recovery should be effected through the land revenue collection mechanism.

3.9 Slum and unauthorized Settlements:

In comparison to other cities of the country, the number of slum dwellers in the State of Assam is less. However, due to enormous explosion of population, slum has
grown-up in some towns, Keeping in view the policies of planned growth of urbanization and to arrest the growth of slums, considering the income support and poverty alleviation, the Govt. may take necessary steps to avoid forcible eviction of slum dwellers. Wherever feasible, they should be encouraged to upgrade their shelters. Slum improvement with necessary provision of water supply, sanitation and other basic services needs to be effected. Also, the Govt. should take necessary step for the provision of amenities like maternity house and child welfare services and health care by motivating the community participation and voluntary agencies and management by the local Bodies.

3.10 **Supply and Management of Land:**

In the absence of the large scale of land acquisition for land development schemes the majority of the people are deprived of developed land at affordable price.

A systematic acquisition programme may be launched immediately in the towns of the State. Institutional finance is also now available for this purpose. The acquisition of land under the provisions of Urban Land Ceiling (Act 1976) may be done. The policy should be that surplus land available to the Govt. may be shared between the Govt. Departments, Housing and Urban Development Authorities and Co-operative Societies on a case to case basis. With a view to better land management, a land bank may be created in which all land with Govt., Local Bodies, Housing Board, Development Authorities etc. may be polled for purposes of more equitable allocation and better management. Action may be taken by the Govt. to set up a Directorate of Land Management for Urban Areas to ensure that all land is properly surveyed, accounted for, protected sufficiently, managed and used in an optimal manner. For better utilization of land, areas to cover by construction of houses should be increased from 60 to 65 per cent.
Every owner of a building may be permitted to transfer by sale or by gift, the tenancy rights of a building to any member of his/her family and if construction is proposed on it according to the prescribed norms, then such a transfer may be permitted and registered so that the transferees are able to get loan etc. for construction as per rules.

It has been found that multi-storied constructions (Building having more than 4 floors) are being developed without much concern for the location, convenience of the occupants and their safety. A new policy for development of multi-storied building may be formulated soon.

With a view to facilitating re-cycling of land for better and more efficient housing, applications for reconstruction or improvement of old and dilapidated structures may be encouraged.

In all towns, well located lands are available with the institution/organizations and Government Departments which have not been optimally utilized. Without in any way, switching from existing operational programmes and subject to observance of healthy norms of planning and environment, these organizations may be encouraged to take up housing programmes and if necessary land surplus to their requirements may be utilized for housing and other public welfare activities. A special survey of such lands may be undertaken and completed by the Housing Department.

The Government may set up a Revolving Fund and money from it may be made available for land acquisition to the Housing Board, Development Authority etc. Serviced and developed land at affordable price is the primary requirement of housing activity. It is realized that land market is affected by existing legal and regulatory framework, lack of infrastructure and the slow process of release of serviced land of the public. These along with other economic factors have caused the continuous and sharp
increase in land prices and housing cost and have given rise to speculation in the urban market. As a result, majority of the poor people are excluded from the formal land market. In order to deal with this problem: (1) State Govt. should initiate action to promote a balanced pattern of urbanization in order to reduce the pressure in the towns in order to control the unregulated growth of slums on agricultural land, unwarranted conversion of land use and degradation of land.

(2) Activities of all the public agencies should be towards the goal of increasing availability of serviced land.

(3) Ensure optimum use of institutional land and Government land making the institutional surplus land available to the housing agencies. All such available lands should be under one institution as a land Bank for better management and equitable allocation. Existing legal provisions and procedures of acquisition of land may be simplified to enable taking over possession of land speedily, on payment of adequate and timely compensation to the land owners through negotiations or by scheme of participative development of infrastructure under Town Planning Laws, Simplification of development and control rules and norms, infrastructure provisions and building approval procedure will have to be made to facilitate expansion of housing activities among different income groups with special care for the need of the poor. With adequate safeguards to protect the consumers and to increase supply of developed land to L.I.G. and E.W.S. categories, licenced private land developers and those engaged in construction and infrastructure development will be encouraged.

(4) Each Master Plan will be reviewed and specific plans for the efficient utilization of institutional land will be prepared and implemented.
(5) By new legislation or through the more effective use of existing laws, suitable measures for re-development of land occupied by industries in a state of decline or causing environmental pollution, will be taken for the optimum use of land as a resource of housing and urban services.

(6) By modifying the fiscal and Municipal Taxation policies including tax on urban vacant land, efforts will be initiated to curb speculative activities and to increase the supply of serviced land.

(7) Transportation plan within the city should be so organized that the poorer sections and vulnerable groups settled in affordable serviced land areas and these areas are connected with their working areas by inexpensive means of communication.

3.11 Infrastructure: As suggested by National Commission on Urbanization attempts will be made to concentrate investment in settlement of various sizes which can generate economic momentum, sustain economic growth, promote balanced urbanization and expand housing activities and equitable provision of services. Action to strengthen organizational arrangements and mobilize institutional finance will be made for increasing the flow of fund for infrastructural development.

As part of this Policy the following will be taken up:-

(a) Increased investment by Central, State and Local agencies within the framework of regional plans and development of growth centres to make available serviced land on an increased scale and to improve the availability of services to different settlements.

(b) Aim to provide 100% coverage in regard to supplying potable water basic sanitation and a total elimination of manual scavenging.
(c) Larger investment in traffic and transportation network with the aim of providing adequate access to work places and to integrate the transport system into the general land use pattern.

(d) Cost effective construction technologies will be encouraged which are suitable for incremental upgradation. The emphasis will be on environmentally appropriate technologies.

(e) Participation of Enterprises who possess surplus land and private developers in innovative schemes of infrastructure development will be encouraged.

(f) The State Govt. will assist the local bodies to recover the cost of investments, proper maintenance of services and upgradation of services.

(g) Community support or people's participation, installation and up-keep of services with the framework of urban basic services and rural development programmes will be encouraged.

(h) Action will be taken to strengthen the financial viability and implementation capacity of the local bodies and functional agencies and also their resources will be augmented within the framework of the provisions relating to the State Level Finance Commission for the Municipal bodies in the 73rd Constitutional amendment.

3.12 Conservation of Housing Stock and Rental Housing:

The State Housing Policy envisages —

(i) appropriate modification of Building Regulation to ensure orderly and planned growth of urban areas.

(ii) special schemes for repair and renewal of residential building.
(iii) financial assistance for expansion and upgradation of existing housing stock.

(iv) access to building materials and technical assistance as also encourage use of material which are ecologically friendly.

3.13 **Investment of Rental Housing Scheme for the LIG and MIG:**

(a) State Rent Control laws will be amended on the basis of Model Rent Control Law.

(b) Housing for the industrial workers in new industrial and growth centres, by the public and private employees as a part of the project cost will be promoted with appropriate fiscal concessions and provision of institutional finance.

(c) Construction of houses by individuals for partial or full leasing purposes will be encouraged.

3.14 **Housing Finance:**

(i) State will take appropriate action to mobilize funds for housing from all sources available including house hold savings.

(ii) At present the formal financial system meets the requirement of very limited number of people. The bulk of the population is outside this system and hence action will be taken to promote easy access to finance for all housing activities and to evolve an effective resource mobilization strategy to tap household savings in the formal sectors.

(iii) Steps would also be taken for removal of constraints to the flow of finance to the Housing sector specially for the poor and weaker sections such as (a) forming co-operatives and maintaining account in the name of the co-operative. (b) enabling individuals to deposit their money whenever they can, i) by taking
security personal bond ii) by accepting equitable mortgage.

(iv) National financial Institutions engaged in housing development activities will be asked to formulate their technical as well as financial plans, taking into consideration the local factors like socio cultural and economic condition, geo-climatic condition etc., specially for the poor section of the people, so that flow of fund is increased to the housing sector.

(v) Complementary role of different agencies and institutions in public and private sectors concerned with land development, house construction will be supported by the Government.

(vi) Govt. of India will be requested to allow introduction of second mortgage system as soon as possible to all categories of people seeking housing loans.

(vii) Housing financing system should be made a self financing system to meet the needs of different income groups and different purpose and repayment procedure and system should be simplified where ever possible to ensure that people are enabled to repay loans and interest in the most convenient manner.

(viii) The capital and interest/subsidies for the urban poor will be carefully targeted and attempts will be made to improve the financing procedures to bring down the cost of shelter for the poor to affordable levels and cut down delay in the system. (ix) Govt. will assess role of informal credit network and community based saving system for housing and explore ways linking this with the formal credit institutions to enhance access of the rural and urban poor to Housing Finance. Co-op. Housing Institution for the E.W.S., L.I.G., & M.I.G. will be given assured access to the institutional finance to supplement their resources.
3.15 **Building Materials and Technology**: 

**Housing Policy envisages action for** —

(a) production of local building materials to promote low cost and environmentally suitable technology and to economize scarce building materials like cement, brick, steel.

(b) assured access of rural households to traditional materials including Biomass and check in indiscriminate commercial exploitation of forest resources.

(c) public and private construction agencies will be encouraged to use materials based on industrial and agricultural wastes, those based on local resources and alternate appropriate technologies.

(d) selection and extension of proven technologies in building materials and the use of materials conforming to accepted standard and quality through the efforts of Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council. Financial and other assistance to enterprises for manufacturing and marketing of appropriate and innovative materials will be given.

(e) Public construction agencies should draw plans with 10% of their annual construction cost to take-up construction incorporating low technologies and materials and if they are satisfied these should be incorporated in the State specifications, training in technology and extension and skill upgradation will be taken through a network of District Building Centres (DBC).

(f) District Building Centres will have extension network for the spread of information on low cost technology as also function as retail outlets for materials.
(g) Strengthening of R & D Centres. All the public and private construction agencies will be persuaded to set apart 1% of their annual expenditure for R & D in Housing.

3.16 **Special Programmes are being taken up by the Government:** The programmes for the following categories will be taken by the Govt.

(i) For the houseless, inadequately housed and disadvantaged groups.

(ii) Shelter to those below the poverty line.

(iii) Rural landless labour including artisans.

(iv) For those deprived of their shelter by development project or due to natural calamities.

(v) S.C., S.T. population and freed bonded labour.

(vi) Widows, single woman and women headed house holds including woman below poverty line. & (vii) physically handicapped.

3.17 **Housing needs of S.C. & S.T.:**

Benefit under the Housing Schemes to the S.C. & S.T. families in the proportion to the size of their population will be provided. Recommendations of the S.C. & S.T. Commissions will be accommodated in Housing Schemes.

3.18 **Role of Govt. Private Sector and the Community:**

To tackle the large problem of providing adequate housing, participation by the State Govt. at different levels, the co-operatives, the community and the private sector is essential. The State Govt. has to formulate the policy and finalize strategies defining the roles of State Govt. private sector, co-operatives and community etc. in house
building activities. It is expected that all these agencies will complement each other keeping in view the National Environment policies.

It will be the endeavour of the State Government —

(i) to provide Housing facilities for the poorest and vulnerable sections of the society and also to facilitate housing activity for lower and middle income groups.

(ii) to control land speculation.

(iii) to encourage within the frame-work of Housing Policy and local planning, voluntary agencies in efforts to upgrade shelter and extend basic service.

(iv) to promote decentralized execution of Housing Schemes in urban and rural areas under the supervision of the local Bodies.

(v) to re-organize the Housing Agencies at the State level and local level to act as promoters and catalysts of housing activities rather than builder of houses on a large scale.

(vi) to concentrate on supply of developed land and infrastructure, extension of appropriate technology, assisting people to take up construction and upgradation of houses and also circulating information on Housing Schemes.

The Govt. will integrate housing activity and employment training skill. Upgradation and promotion of labour intensive and decentralized manufactures of building materials and construction practices will be encouraged to maximize the economic benefit of housing investments. The Govt. will be give proper attention to planning and architecture. Importance will be given to the preservation of built-up heritage and reconstruction of structures etc.
3.19 **Fiscal Policy**:

(1) To increase investment in Housing by the private sector, individuals and by householders additional incentives such as tax rebate will be considered.

(2) Investment in Housing Schemes by the non-resident Indians will be encouraged.

3.20 **Legal & Regulatory framework**:

The State Govt. will take measures for removing the legal constraints as regards house building activities on the following points —

a) Provision in the reform enactments and other relevant Acts to confer homestead rights on the occupants and for ensuring proper rehabilitation of those deprived of land by development projects.

b) Planning and Building Bye-law standards will be revised in consultation with the National Building Code. This will help in reducing the overall cost of shelter, efficient use of land and facilitate housing activities.

c) Making suitable amendments in the law and procedure governing land acquisition in urban areas to ensure speedy assembly of compact lands with due regards to the interest of land owners.

d) Review and amendment of law and regulations relating to town planning, particularly the norms and standard for the site upgradation of low incomes settlements and housing.

e) Enactment of separate chapter in the present co-operative laws on group or co-operative housing activity in order to streamline their operation and to remove existing constraints.
f) Enactment of Apartment Ownership Act in order to provide for the transfer or
occupancy right of individual owners, management of common areas and to
enable the creation of charge on the apartment by lending institutions.

g) Steps for the removal of constraints to the flow of finance into housing and
services especially to ensure larger flow to the poor households.

3.21 **Human Resource Development**:

Development of human resource for housing purpose is very important for a
successful implementation of the National Housing Policy.

The following measures will be pursued —

1) The architects, engineers, planners, administrators will be asked to adopt low
cost building materials and cost effective techniques in construction. Training
for the purpose will be organized to motivate the professionals.

2) In the technical institutions and colleges more facilities will be given for
training of various professions related to housing.

3) Vocational courses on housing activities will be arranged in the schools and at
the post school level.

4) Formal and non-formal training facilities on housing activities to upgrade the
skills of construction workers, artisans and petty contractors will be organized.

5) Women workers in construction will be given facilities for upgradation of
their skill.

6) More involvement of the non-Governmental organizations in the training of
construction workers and assistance to urban self-employed sector for
upgradation of their skills.
7) Non formal training facilities for maintenance and improvement of housing stock on a self-help basis.

3.22 **Action Plan:**

Housing being a State subject the primary role in formulating action plans and programme suitable to the local needs and conditions will have to be performed by the State Govt. on a priority basis.

**The following points may be considered while formulating the plan —**

a) Preparation of a complete inventory of the number, type (economic category) and standards of the dwellings in existence and to be constructed/upgraded both by the private and public sector and the units to be offered in the rental market.

b) Assessment of the resource flow from the private, co-operative and public sectors and the number and type of dwelling units to be constructed by each sector on ownership or rental basis.

c) Preparation of separate projections for rental and urban housing needs including the resources required for each, for the next 15 years.

d) Distinguishing the shelter needs of those in possession of a plot and desire to construct dwelling unit, those who are total shelterless, those who can afford to acquire a built-up unit, those in need of repairs and renovation/extension of the dwelling units, and those in need of additional amenities.

e) The desired mix housing types and the resources required from the State Budget, institutional finance and local contribution in order to provide adequate shelter for different section of the population.
f) Action plan will be formulated by the State Govt. within a period of one year and time bound implementation will be done by State, local and co-operative agencies in the five year plans of the city and district development plans.

g) Information management system of housing and urban services will be developed at various levels of Govt. and a comprehensive housing census is proposed to take up during the 8th Five Year Plan.

The State action plan on housing activities will be revised periodically on the basis of the National Housing Policy being revised from time to time.

**Note & Reference:**

Housing polices refers, both National Housing Policy & Assam State Housing & its amendment.


3) State Housing Policy, Assam, Town & County Planning Deptt. Dispur, Govt. of Assam.