



## Housing – A Critical Perspective.

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### **Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:**

**1. Paper / Proposal Title:** Liveability, design, and illegality: notes on state-sponsored housing in contemporary Delhi

**2. Format:** Written paper

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**4. University or Company Affiliation:** Jamia Millia Islamia, University of Delhi

### **5. Abstract (300 words):**

In much of India, provision for housing and shelter is still the preserve of the state and its various arms. In Delhi, for instance, the principle land owning agency, the Delhi Development Authority – successor to the colonial Delhi Improvement Trust – is tasked with creation of dwelling units and housing schemes along differential socio-economic affordability indices. In the past fifty or so years of its existence the Authority, DDA, has created close to 3.6 lakh dwelling units under various schemes. However, given the spiralling demographic pressures on land and resources in the national capital and given its own structural inabilities to realise its housing goals, the DDA's provisioning, especially for the urban poor, remains substantially inadequate. Moreover, DDA has been consistently faulted for poor construction quality, ill-conceived design, and shoddy infrastructural input: for example, its 2014 housing scheme saw close to eight thousand flats out of a total of twenty five thousand being returned by beneficiaries.

The question of liveability and design becomes significant in such a situation. The confluence of DDA's vision of centralised state planning framing needs as corollaries of quantifiable, statistically determined data with the (increasingly neoliberal) aspirations of urban dwellers produces a curious patchwork urbanity of illegal encroachments, extensions, and modifications across the spectrum of DDA housing. It is this patchwork urbanity, and the contours of liveability operating within its interstices, that this paper is interested in evaluating from the dual perspective of liveability and sustainability. Taking into consideration prevailing DDA design practices and various alternative frameworks suggested by the illegalities making DDA flats 'liveable', it will frame liveability as a factor of environmental, economic, and cultural sustainability and suggest ways in which liveability may be a more significant factor of design, and hence contribute to ameliorating the persistent crisis of state-sponsored housing.

### **7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Anubhav Pradhan

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Anubhav Pradhan is a doctoral candidate working on colonial ethnography and the British imagination of India under the supervision of Prof Baran Farooqi in the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. He has worked on articulations of space and denial in contemporary Delhi under the supervision of Prof Simi Malhotra, and continues to engage with various aspects of Delhi's convoluted urbanisms. He enjoys walking, reading, writing, armchair debating and has a few other hobbies like gardening, photography, coin collecting and philately in which he indulges occasionally. He is interested in the conception, production, and dissemination of cultural artefacts, fashions himself a bourgeois Marxist and a misogynist Feminist, and is a strong votary of sustainable development and the preservation of Delhi's (in)tangible heritage from ruthless development.

Neha Lal

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Neha Lal is a research scholar at the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi. She graduated from Lady Shri Ram College for Women in Journalism (Hons.) and completed her post-graduation in Sociology from the University of Delhi. She is currently working on her M.Phil thesis on 'Urban Aesthetics and City-making in Millennial Delhi'. Her research interests include urban studies- design and planning; governance and citizenship; and cultural studies. She has earlier worked on research projects and documentaries on politics of wall art (2014) and relationship on monuments and memory (2014-2015) in contemporary Delhi and population policy and demographic crisis in Singapore (2012).