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## How is government ensuring sound construction quality under PMAY?



*After the houses built under the Aasra Housing Scheme received demolition orders, realty stalwarts shared concerns regarding the quality of homes constructed under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). Will it meet the same fate?*

The *Aasra* Housing Scheme, launched in 2012-13 in Uttar Pradesh, was appreciated as it aimed at constructing low-cost homes in the interiors of the state. However, recently there was a mandate to demolish 216 houses built under the scheme in Kalinagar and 132 units in Bilaspur. Of the 216 houses, about 108 are close to completion. The reason cited for the demolition is poor construction quality and the fear that the structures could collapse any minute. The government housing scheme that was intended to house the poor is being declared a failure even before the construction is complete.

The sheer wastage of public funds on the *Aasra* Scheme highlights a major concern as the country awaits the successful implementation of the much-anticipated [affordable housing](#) scheme – Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). It raises serious questions in the minds of property experts – Will PMAY, too, meet the same fate? Will the houses constructed under PMAY be safe for human habitation? Will the pressure to create affordable homes lead developers to compromise on quality? To understand the government's efforts towards ensuring safety standards of these dwelling units, 99acres delved deeper into the matter.

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### How will affordability be ensured?

The concerns raised by realty stalwarts indicate that the scheme needs modifications for its successful implementation. Highlighting the same, Sumit Berry, Managing Director, BDI Group, avers, "The foremost requirement is to ensure affordability, the prime objective of the scheme. For this, the government should look into the issue of land prices which substantially add to the cost. There should be a single window clearance mechanism which will save developers from hassles. The government should also consider increasing the ticket size of projects to ensure economies of scale."

### What about construction quality?

While ensuring [affordability](#) is the first step, we also enquired how the government is making sure of the construction quality. Berry informs, "The government has evolved guidelines at state level and allows for third party quality monitoring of projects sanctioned under PMAY. States have been advised to draw up their quality monitoring and assurance plans involving third party agencies. This plan will include site visits by third party agencies and advisory to State and Urban Local Bodies/Implementing Agencies on quality related issues. On the basis of quality assurance report by such agencies, States and ULBs/IAs should take both preventive and curative measures to ensure the quality standard of houses and infrastructure constructed under the mission."

Further, the government has launched a training programme for rural masons to meet critical skill requirements for quality construction. House design typologies incorporating disaster resilient features have been finalised and are being used by the state governments under the programme. The workmanship and employability of the trained rural masons are being improved by ensuring their assessment and certification as per the qualification pack endorsed by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

### Role of technology

In addition to enhancing human skills, the government is also laying great emphasis on employing latest technology to support the scheme. Throwing light on the same, Berry says, "The government has set up a Technology Sub-Mission to facilitate adoption of modern, innovative, and green technologies; and building materials for faster and quality construction of houses. Technology Sub-Mission will also facilitate preparation and adoption of layout designs and building plans suitable for various geo-climatic zones. It will also assist states/cities in deploying disaster-resistant and environment-friendly technologies. Centre and the state would also partner with willing IITs, NITs, and planning and architecture institutes for developing technical solutions, capacity building, and handholding of States and cities. Besides, a technical cell will be set up in the Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) under the Ministry to support the Sub-mission."

Overall, PMAY seems to be better planned and, thus, has a lot of hopes are pinned on it. However, the actual success of the scheme would only be visible in the times to come when the homes planned under it are brought to reality.