

heritage of the region. These decisions were based on the following assumptions:

- People are helpless victims. They need to be provided with cash and kind. The government thus decided to take a soft loan from the World Bank worth millions of dollars.
- Permanent shelter is the main need of the victims. Other needs can follow.
- The 52 villages that were heavily damaged are located on land which is not safe from earthquakes. Therefore they should be relocated.
- Traditional construction methods and materials (namely wood and stone) are the main culprits. Therefore modern earthquake resistant materials and technologies using concrete should be introduced.
- Post-earthquake reconstruction is an opportunity to modernize ‘backward’ rural villages and provide them with ‘city-like’ house designs and villages.

According to the Maharashtra Earthquake Emergency Rehabilitation Programme (MEERP), the first of its kind in India, conceived and executed with the help of a soft loan from the World Bank, the affected villages were divided into three categories based on pre-defined criteria,<sup>1</sup> namely (Government of Maharashtra [GoM], 1993):

1. Category A – Villages to be relocated.
2. Category B – Villages to be reconstructed *in situ*.
3. Category C – Villages where repairs and seismic strengthening and a retrofitting programme would be implemented.

Most of the ground plans for relocated villages were prepared by engineers in the local town planning office. The layouts of these villages were mainly ‘city-like’, with wide streets forming a grid pattern, and row or cluster housing. This is contrary to traditional settlements, which were characterized by narrow streets, a hierarchy of public and private open spaces used for religious and other activities, and clusters of housing with distinct typologies influenced by traditional occupation patterns (Figure 6).

The houses were again divided into three categories on the basis of land tenure of the family.<sup>2</sup>

Housing was given first priority in the rehabilitation process. Accordingly, 52 villages were to be relocated with essential services and infrastructure. New standards were set for housing construction that advocated the use of ‘earthquake-resistant technology’. The government managed to arrange the participation of a large number of non-governmental agencies in the programme, including commercial firms, international donor agencies, religious groups, political parties, etc. These agencies came up with a variety of building technologies to demonstrate seismic resistance. These included precast concrete panels, geodesic domes with ferrocement, *in situ* reinforced concrete, hollow concrete blocks, etc. It is worth noting that almost all the agencies advocated the use of concrete.