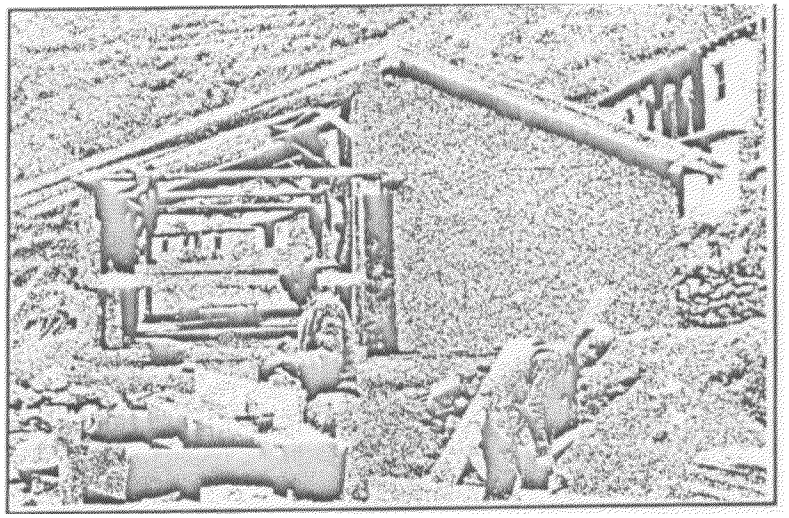
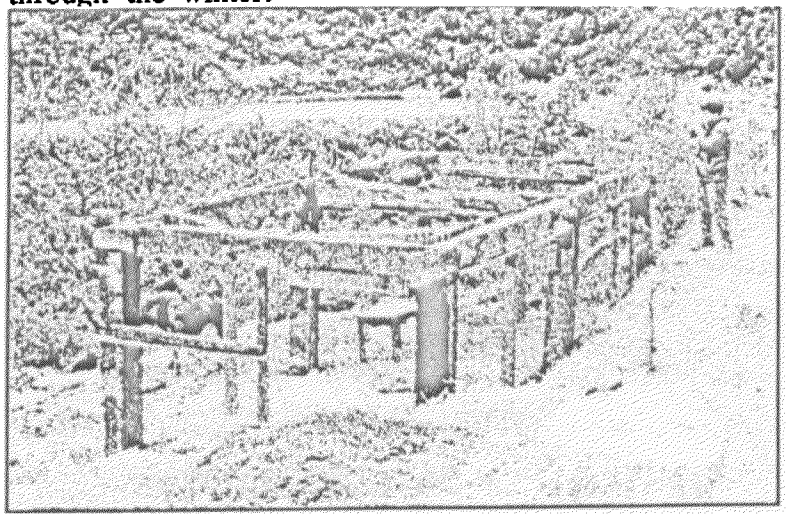
This is the only house that is being reconstructed in this village by the owner who has come from Bombay on leave to complete it in two months. The other villagers are not rebuilding as they are very apprehensive of the movement of the previously stable landslide on which the village is sited. A set of huge boulders that were dislodged during the earthquake threaten to descend on the village after the snow-melt. The people are refusing to built permanent shelters till "government experts" assure them of the safety of an appropriate site.

This six-roomed house is being built in chir and deodar wood (purloined at a price from the forest) on a foundation of stone in cement mortar. The timber in the house is not seasoned or treated and could be attacked by locally abundant termites in the near future. There will be no smoke from cooking in the building which could have ensure the preservation of the timber. The two carpenters in the foreground are from the village and have given up working on their own houses to earn money that will see them through the winter.

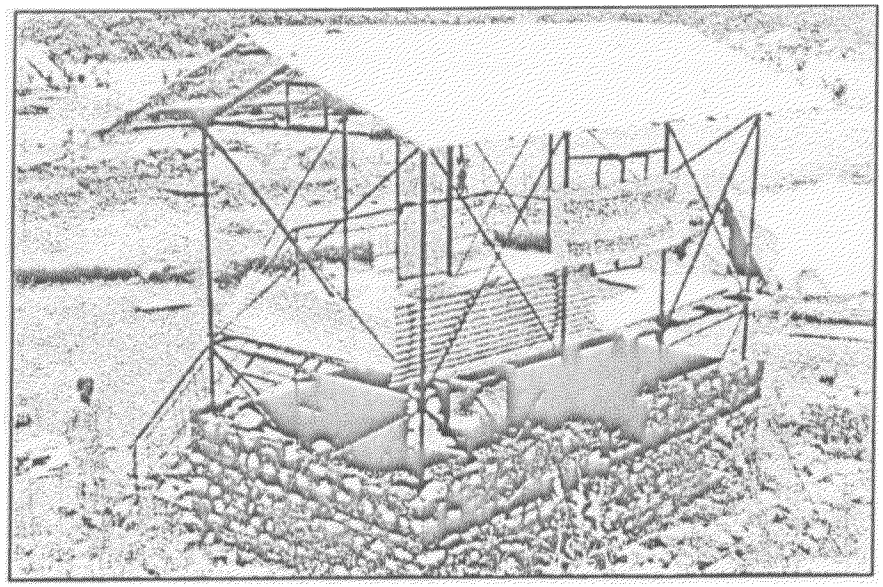


Reconstruction of building in timber in Village Ragsya, Pratapnagar Tahsil, Tehri Garhwal District



Reconstruction using an RCC frame tied at plinth and lintel level, beyond Ganeshpur, Bhatwari Tahsil, Uttarkashi District

This building alongside the road demonstrated the diffusion of the RCC framing principles for masonry construction, with horizontal bands at lintel and sill level and vertical columns at corners act as a frame. This has been built after the earthquake. Unfortunately, some of the local problems of RCC construction in the area have been repeated here including low quality aggregate and inadequate lap length for reinforcement bars.



Model house using tubular mild steel frame with CGI sheet roof: Village Maneri, Bhatwari Tahsil, Uttarkashi District

A model house constructed by the VHP at Maneri with a tubular mild steel welded frame with bolted angle struts, steel trussed roof structure, timber intermediate floor and roof planking with CGI sheet roof cladding. The walls of the ground floor are in Stone random rubble in cement mortar with steel framed windows and GI sheet door. The staircase to the first floor is constructed in steel with timber planking. The first floor walling is intended to be completed in timber planking or with cane "ringal" panels. The total unit cost is Rs. 57,000 with a covered area on both floors about of 90 sq.m. This design has a number of attractive attributes including: ease of erection; insulation with timber planking, lightweight first floor structure and broad harmony with current built form and lifestyles.

A deliberate forest fire set by villagers

Local people in almost all surveyed villages were extremely incensed that the Forest Department was not permitting them to take timber from adjoining forests before the snow, in order to build emergency shelters for reconstruction. In some places after they had been apprehended taking timber from the forest they retaliated by setting fire to the forest. This is a complex problem to solve (especially given environmental considerations for regenerating), human survival however will have to take short-term precedence - the local community will have to take responsibility of the timber that will be cut. It is useful to expedite-now, the recommendation to release the timber-grant for the next five years. This will enable villagers to start rebuilding since timber is one of the crucial building materials in this region.