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Maharashtra Housing Experts Oppose Proposed Self-Redevelopment Changes

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Housing experts and activists across Maharashtra are raising concerns over proposed changes to the state's self-redevelopment policy, drafted by the Pravin Darekar Committee. The revisions, they argue, significantly weaken the incentives that were key to the success of the 2019 policy, potentially discouraging housing societies from choosing self-redevelopment over builder-led projects.

Under the 2019 rules, housing societies that opted for self-redevelopment were granted a 10% additional Floor Space Index (FSI) and a 50% discount on Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) premiums, which are benefits designed to make these projects financially viable without the involvement of private developers. The new proposal replaces these with far smaller concessions: a 10% increase in carpet area for flat owners and only a 10% premium discount.

Critics warn that these changes could make it harder for societies to manage rising construction, compliance, and financing costs. They say the reduced benefits will diminish the appeal of self-redevelopment, forcing many societies back to conventional redevelopment models dominated by private builders.

The proposed policy also introduces new eligibility criteria that have sparked opposition. Buildings would need to be at least 30 years old to qualify, and any located on roads narrower than 9 meters would be excluded entirely. Housing advocates call these conditions arbitrary and exclusionary, pointing out that many older residential areas in Mumbai, Pune, and other cities have narrow roads despite having buildings in urgent need of redevelopment.

Activists are urging the state government to focus on administrative efficiency rather than reducing benefits. A widely supported suggestion is to appoint a dedicated Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer to act as a single-window authority for all self-redevelopment approvals. Supporters believe such a step would reduce delays, cut bureaucratic red tape, and make the process more transparent for housing societies.

Proponents of the original 2019 policy stress that self-redevelopment allows societies to retain ownership of their land and buildings, ensure better quality construction, and decide the design and amenities based on residents' needs. They argue that weakening financial incentives and imposing restrictive eligibility rules will undermine these advantages and limit the number of societies willing or able to undertake such projects.

Some housing experts also highlight that self-redevelopment can address urban renewal needs without displacing residents or creating disputes over profit-sharing with developers. They warn that without adequate support from the state, Maharashtra risks slowing down a model that could contribute to sustainable urban development and empower cooperative housing societies.

The state government has yet to finalize the revised policy, and further consultations with stakeholders are expected. However, many in the housing sector believe that unless the proposed changes are reconsidered, the self–redevelopment scheme may lose much of its relevance and effectiveness, reversing the progress made since 2019.