

The Right Season for Building Repair

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Lack of adequate funds, initiative and cooperation among members are the main impediments to proper maintenance and repair of cooperative housing society (CHS) buildings. As a result, scheduling of building repair is a major task by itself. Broadly, the following steps are necessary before actually starting a repair work:

- Deciding the scope of work
- Cost estimation
- Provision of funds
- Tendering

By the time these steps are followed properly, you find that monsoon is knocking at your door. Under the last minute pressures from the members and circumstances, many repair works are started in summer resulting into tremendous disadvantages and loss of control. On the contrary, if repair works are planned in advance and implemented in a **fair season**, which is between November and March, you get many strategic benefits, which are discussed below:

- Repair works invariably involve cement and repair chemicals, which perform better in a cool season. Some of the chemicals require special weather conditions to perform as desired. Low temperatures of the fair season offer longer pot life, better bonding with subsequent applications and faster curing. This results in better quality especially for works such as structural repair, waterproofing and plaster. In most common terms this would mean that there would be fewer cracks in plaster etc.
- In the fair season, construction materials are available more easily. Since harvesting is over, labourers are also available more easily. Due to cool weather the labourers get less tired and their output also improves. This offers two benefits: lower project cost (due to cheaper rates) and faster progress of work.
- A lot of water is required for repair works. Normally there is no shortage of water in this season.
- By their very nature, most repair works can be completed within 5 months (November to March). Thus, if the work is delayed for some reason, you have a buffer of 2 months before rains to ensure that you are still in control and do not become vulnerable to unforeseen circumstances. These two months can also be used to implement additional works especially for the renovation or beautification of the building.
- If you plan your repair work for the fair season, the seepage and flooding recently observed during the previous monsoon can be addressed appropriately in the work being planned. Similarly the effectiveness of the repair work carried out can be verified in the next monsoon.
- Normally a repair period is a period of great discomfort for the members of the Society. This is because of the presence of materials, equipment, dust and debris, removal of window grills and air conditioners etc. Plywood covers provided to windows and gunny cloth covering building faces cause poor ventilation. However, during the fair season the pleasant weather makes these less annoying.

Good quality, time bound progress, controlled costs and overall convenience are the important aspects of a repair work. The fair season (November to March) offers conditions, which are conducive to these aspects. It also provides a buffer of two months (April and May) to handle any delay or loss of control caused by unforeseen circumstances. This fair season offers benefits not only to the Society but it offers many operational benefits to the contractor also. Your members would also find it appropriate to start the work just after Diwali. We have experienced these benefits in several of our projects.

Well begun is half done. With the nature on your side, works executed during the fair season offer you good overall control; whereas those, which are started much later, often slip out of control and can lead to questionable quality, delays, higher costs and anguish to the members.

The next time you want to take up the repair of your building, make sure that you appoint a consultant well in advance so that he can guide you appropriately. If you are scheduling the building repair before the coming monsoon, you must plan to derive the maximum benefit from the season, which has already begun.

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