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Critical Design Thinking Principles and Their Application in Designing Independent Living Communities for Elderly Persons

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ABSTRACT:

With an increasingly aging population, the demand for safe, accessible, and socially integrative housing is a pressing concern. Independent living communities for elderly persons are one alternative to institutional care that may help promote independence with age-related needs. This paper studies how critical design thinking principles may be applied to designing such communities-user-centric and inclusive approaches to focus on national and international case studies to draw the best practice of design intervention through a critical study of the design of a group housing project at Vijayawada. A questionnaire and interviews with residents were taken into account, documenting the real experiences of aged citizens in regard to their physical, social, and psychological requirements. The findings point out the inadequacies of current housing solutions, such as a lack of accessibility features and limited social engagement opportunities. The paper concludes with actionable recommendations, including universal design principles, smart technology integration, and community-centric spaces that foster well-being and connection. By underlining empathetic and iterative design processes, this research draws attention to the possibilities of critical design thinking for the creation of adaptive, age-friendly living environments that can promote quality of life among elderly people.

Keywords: Critical Design Thinking, Co designing, Independent Living Communities, Aging Housing, Universal Design.

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