

THE RURAL HOUSING SYSTEM: ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND POLICY
IMPLICATIONS. A CASE STUDY.

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THE RURAL HOUSING SYSTEM:¹ ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS.

1. Introduction and Summary

Current plans by Third World Countries (TWCs) to improve production and employment opportunities and living conditions in rural areas will require complementary improvements in housing. However, as yet, no workable and generalisable policies towards rural housing improvements exist. Present policies are polarised between those that ignore the rural housing sector and others that support (piecemeal) community development efforts or directly implement a few isolated rural housing projects.

The research will address the question "What is an appropriate policy towards intervention in rural housing under conditions of expanding rural populations and a national commitment to rural development?" It will address this question by examining the significance of rural housing, specifically its linkages to rural development objectives such as health, production and employment, and by comparing the indigenous rural housing system with existing government intervention to identify the potentials and weaknesses of each,^{and} particularly their complementarities.

A case study method will be applied focussing on a particular country and one to three sites within it, in which the indigenous and public interventions systems may be compared.

The results of the research will be a conceptual and empirical contribution to the now sparse and ambiguous rural housing field, as well as policy proposals specific to the case country and generalisable to other similar countries.

Footnote.

1. Housing as used here is divided into two basic components: basic physical infrastructure (water, waste disposal, small roads and foot paths) and shelter. Shelter is further divided into dwellings, community facilities (schools, clinics) and production and market facilities (brick kilns, mills, storage facilities and markets, etc.)

Rural, means a geographical area primarily involved in agriculture-based activities. The area would be equivalent to the smallest planning unit such as a rural district, block or thana. It may include settlements of approximately 50,000 population so long as these settlements remain primarily linked to agricultural activity through agro-industries, services, etc.

The rural housing system is the system of interactions through which shelter and physical infrastructure are created and maintained in the geographical rural space.

The terms, 'indigenous - exogenous, formal - informal' remain to be defined exactly for purposes of analysis.

2. Subject of Inquiry

There are three subject areas of inquiry that are described below in order of emphasis in the dissertation.

1. The primary subject of the inquiry is the indigenous rural housing creation and maintenance system, its constraints and potentials in meeting housing need and demand and the role of exogenous intervention in assisting this process. The hypothesis is that to most effectively meet housing need and demand selective intervention assisting the indigenous process is required rather than the "do nothing" or "construct housing units" approach that many governments currently adopt. To examine this hypothesis the indigenous rural housing system in one to three specific sites in a particular country will be investigated. The method by which this indigenous system combines local resources [land, finance, institutions, labor and skills, (managerial and technological) materials and technology] to create and maintain housing, will be studied. This indigenous system will be compared with examples of government housing intervention in these sites. The study will attempt to identify specific aspects in the indigenous system that require limited exogenous intervention with which housing could be produced that is more cost effective, distributes the economic benefits and costs of the exogenous investment more equitably amongst the rural population and produces a product that is ecologically and culturally more appropriate than is achieved through either the indigenous or the government

system. The study will also examine whether this limited intervention requires a level of government investment that is affordable by that country.

2. The secondary subject of inquiry will be the role of rural housing in promoting rural development objectives. The hypothesis here is that there are significant linkages between rural housing and such rural development objectives as improved health, production, employment and income generation and that rural housing intervention could help promote these objectives. To examine this hypothesis questions will be addressed such as the extent to which ill-health can be linked to inadequate housing conditions, to what extent rural housing construction, with its forward and backward linkages (ex. building materials industries, ^{door & window} manufacture, etc.) can generate sustainable employment and income. The study will attempt to identify aspects of housing for government intervention that would promote the objectives of improved health, production and employment.

3. The final subject of inquiry will be the trends in rural housing need and demand and their implications for government intervention. The hypothesis is that despite urbanization trends, rural housing need and demand will intensify in the coming decades because of demographic trends as well as increasing emphasis on rural programs such as integrated area development and spatial strategies focusing on rural towns. Rural housing will thus demand increasing government attention. To examine this

hypothesis studies will be undertaken to assess the inadequacy of the rural housing stock, the rate of deterioration, rate of increase of housing demand through rural house^{hold} formation, inter-rural population shifts (eg. from villages to rural towns) the rates of growth (in number of settlements and their populations) of rural towns relative to large urban centers and the extent of housing construction and improvements that will be the necessary complement to the success of planned rural development programs. The studies will attempt to demonstrate that the anticipated increase in housing need and demand justifies greater government attention to rural housing than is at present given.

All three subjects of inquiry should be addressed to make a comprehensive assessment of the significance of the rural housing system and housing policy implications. Data and time constraints may not permit equal attention to all three subjects. As indicated at the outset, I anticipate the dissertation will focus on the benefits and costs of the indigenous housing creation and maintenance system relative to examples of government interventions in housing. The questions of linkages and increased need and demand will be treated as contextual to this focus.

3. Importance of Knowledge Being Sought and its Contribution to the Field

The conventional position on rural housing is that it is of a low priority relative to other rural sectors and to urban housing. Furthermore rural peoples can more cost-effectively construct their own shelters than government can and therefore rural housing is not an issue for policy attention and government

intervention (Van Hyuck 1977, World Bank 1980).

Those who are for rural housing programs, support the construction of housing units in the rural areas, funded and implemented largely by central government using urban based resources-materials and skills (eg. the Malaysian government's rural housing program has consisted of the construction of 8000 rural housing units in the last three years - source Soysa: 1979). They ignore such issues as the financial and administrative feasibility of replicating such projects on a national scale and the loss of local multiplier effects by leaking the housing investment to urban resources. Those who stress the use of indigenous materials and skills by and large confine themselves to the technological or architectural aspects of the problem and thus also have not been able to suggest a convincing and implementable alternative within a national policy context (ex. some appropriate technology groups, Egyptian architect Hasan Fathy).

Some governments and international development agencies have recently begun to support intervention in the rural housing sector on the basis of both its linkages to broader development objectives and as a complement to the indigenous housing system in all its aspects (ex. Sri Lanka, reference Five Year Development Plan Government of Ceylon, 1972: 126, U.N. 1976)

However, this last, perhaps most promising approach, is handicapped by a lack of both conceptual clarity and empirical information. For example the arguments of both a recent meeting of rural housing experts and a study of rural housing finance draw heavily on urban low income housing studies (UN 1978, UN 1974).

One authority singles out the lack of information on rural

housing as the major inhibition to positive government action in this field (Soysa, 1972: 172).

At a minimum the dissertation will provide a rigorous analysis of housing systems in one to three rural contexts from which generalizable inferences can be drawn about appropriate government intervention. However, the dissertation's aim will be to suggest how, given existing government investment and capacities, public intervention can produce more cost-effective housing and have a wider more beneficial impact on rural population than current rural housing policies and practices achieve.

The strategy proposed will be the focusing of interventions on critical linkages, using and developing local resources and complementing the indigenous rural housing system. This strategy will be generalizable to other countries. An ambitious but not unreasonable aspiration for the dissertation is to 1) provide sufficient evidence to convince some governments to increase rural housing investment and design intervention in the ways suggested in the dissertation and 2) develop a conceptual framework, sufficiently grounded in empirical data to introduce some clarity and vigor to the now ambiguous and sparse rural housing field.

Finally it is also possible that the evidence may confirm that the rural housing sector should indeed be a low priority for public intervention.

4. Research Questions and Methodology

The three inquiry subjects in section two reduce to three specific questions, each requiring some overlapping and some distinct data sources and analytical methods. These questions and their research methodology are outlined below in the order in which they will be addressed, with questions 2 and 3 constituting the bulk of the research.

Qs. 1. What are the linkages between housing and rural development, particularly with regard to housing need and demand (through deterioration of housing stock, rural household formation, public development programs, growing rural towns, etc.), rural health, production and employment? This question will be pursued at the macro, national level as well as at the micro, site-specific case study level. At the macro level, aggregate information sources such as statistical census data and government^{studies} will be analyzed. Some statistical testing of the information may be undertaken. The results of the macro-study should guide the degree and direction of focusing desirable at the micro-level of research. For example, comparisons of characteristics of different geographic regions at the macro-level will guide the choice of specific case study sites. At this stage, it may also become apparent that data are so scarce regarding certain linkages that they are not worth pursuing or, conversely, which linkages can be most usefully

focused on, if it becomes apparent that to pursue all of them would be too unwieldy. At the case study level, information on the linkages will be gathered and analyzed using survey research techniques and on-site observations.

2. How does the indigenous rural housing creation and maintenance system perform with regard to meeting housing need and demand and combining local resources (land, labour and skills (managerial and technological) materials and technology and institutions?

The information sources for this question will be primarily from the case study site, although there will probably be some written information and persons knowledgeable on the question in the major cities. For the latter case, library research and interviews in architectural and planning offices, universities and institutes and government offices will be undertaken. The bulk of the data sources will be persons on-site such as the community leaders, local government personnel, house owners and occupants, builders and contractors, money lenders and rural bank officials, etc. This and the following question will be analyzed for one to three particular sites. Survey research and case study methods, interviews, questionnaires, and on-site observations will be the data collection and analysis methods.

3. How, if at all, should exogenous public and private agencies intervene in the rural housing system? In particular, under what conditions and for what tasks are the indigenous, informal and the public or exogenous formal

systems best suited and how can they most effectively complement each other?

A comparison will be made between the indigenous and the public systems of intervention in rural housing, for such factors as cost effectiveness, distribution of benefits, ecological and cultural fit of product, use of local resources etc. The data sources and analytical methods will be the same as in question two. Benefit-cost analysis will also be used.

3. Preliminary Outline of the Written Product

1. Introduction and Summary:

The Problem. Research Scope and Objectives. Summary of Concepts, findings and recommendations.

2. The Rural Housing Field:

A brief literature review of the main concepts, policies and practices covering the following aspects: a) Housing in National Development, b) Rural and District Planning for National Development, c) Rural Housing Policies, Programs and Projects; the experience, strengths and weaknesses.

3. Rural Housing Concepts, Policies, Programs and Projects in Case Country (as in #2 but related to the country).

4. National Typology of Settlement and Housing Patterns: Ecological, cultural and economic influences on variations according to regions.

5. The Significance of Rural Housing: Housing need, demand and consumption patterns, housing and rural health, housing and rural production and employment.

5.1 The evidence at the cross-country level.

5.2 The evidence at the case study site level.

6. The Rural Housing Creation and Maintenance System (at the case study site(s) level.

Characteristics of and methods for combining the following factors: land, labor and skills (managerial and technological), materials and technology, finance and costs, institutions. Methods for mobilizing local

resources. A comparison of formal and informal systems.

7. Policy Implications and Proposals: Results of the Study.

7.1 An evaluation of the indigenous housing creation and maintenance system and current government intervention systems. What are the shortcomings in each, how can they be overcome and how can the two systems be made complementary? What institutional changes will be required? How would the distribution of costs and benefits change?

7.2 How do existing technological and managerial skills need to be improved to implement housing programs at the rural district level, specifically with regard to:

- rural development institutions;
- physical infrastructure and community building construction in villages;
- land use planning, environmental upgrading, sites and services, land title registration, taxation, etc., in expanding rural towns;
- small-scale building materials production and manufacturing industries.

7.3 What mechanisms for community participation can be effectively developed and applied in decision-making and implementation of housing programs?

7.4 What local technologies exist that can be effectively developed and applied to construction projects?

7.5 What types of housing construction and improvements are most needed, specifically those related to rural health, agriculture and animal husbandry?

7.6 What rural resource-based building materials industries and housing-related manufacturing industries can be developed to enhance rural production, employment and income generation at the district level, and perhaps serve an urban market as well?

7.7

Which geographical areas and rural towns are experiencing most rapid growth and are a priority for intervention?

The main emphasis of the proposals will be section 7.1.

6. Research Work Program

<u>Task</u>	<u>Timetable and Place</u>
1.1 Data collection and preliminary analysis of documented information on 1) the rural housing field, 2) rural housing policies, programs and projects in case country and 3) cross-country and case-country data on the linkages between housing and rural development.	Sept.-Dec. 1981. 4 months. In Cambridge, with a brief visit to case-country to identify and re-connaissance possible sites for study.
1.2 Identification of information required from field research. Design of field research and preliminary identification of sites to be visited.	
1.3 Output. Preliminary report on the rural housing field, policies, programs and projects in case-country and linkages between rural housing and rural development.	
2.1 Field research on the indigenous rural housing system and comparisons with intervention systems in case-study sites.	Jan. - June 1982. 6 months in case-country.
2.2 Data collection for subjects in 1.1 which are available only in country.	
2.3 Preliminary analysis of field data to insure data collection adequate prior to departure from case-country.	
2.4 Output. Preliminary report on indigenous vs. intervention systems in case-country.	
3.1 Final analysis of field data and documented information.	July - Dec. 1982. 6 months in Cambridge.
3.2 Output. Final report on	
1) Rural housing concepts, policies, programs and projects: an assessment;	
2) Indigenous vs. intervention systems in rural housing in the case-country. An assessment of benefits and costs, strengths, weaknesses and complementarities;	
3) Proposals for the design and implementation of intervention in rural housing in the case-country.	

3. HOUSING IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Housing in the Rural Context

3.1.1 Housing Conditions and Processes

Crooke, P. (1967) "Rural Settlements and Housing Trends in a Developing Country: Nigeria," International Labour Review 76(3):

India-National Committee on Science and Technology (1973) "Report of Planning Group on Rural Housing and Development," National Committee on Science and Technology, New Delhi, India.

Langely, P. (1975) "What Architecture for Rural Housing? An Analysis of the Rural Built Environment," African Environment (Environmental and Regional Planning Bulletin published by the Environmental Training Program, Senegal).

Soysa, C. (1975) "Draft Report of the Study Group on Rural Housing," Prepared for the conference convened by the Canadian International Development Center held in Manila, Philippines January, 1975.

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United Nations-Department of Economic and Social Affairs (1969) Rural Housing A Review of World Conditions United Nations, New York.

_____. (1975) Survey of Rural Housing in the Countries of Asia and the Pacific ESCAP Secretariat, mimeographed.

3.1.2 Housing in the Rural Economy

Anderson, D. and Leiserson, M. (1980) "Rural Non-Farm Employment in Developing Countries," Economic Development and Cultural Change 28(2): 227-248, January.

Dhamajia, J. (1976) "Non-Farm Activities in Rural Areas and Towns: The Lessons and Experiences of Iran," World Bank Studies in Employment and Rural Development No. 31, July.

Marsden, K. () "The Role of Small-Scale industry in Development; Opportunities and Constraints," in Friedman, J. et al. (eds.) New Concepts and Technologies in Third World Urbanization, Comparative Urban Studies-School of Planning and Architecture, University of California, Los Angeles.

Meyer, R. and Larson, D. (1978) "Rural Non-Farm Employment : The Recent East Asian Experience," Journal of Economic Development 3(1): 91-112, July.

Ruddle, K. and Chesterfield, R. (1978) "Traditional Skill Training and Labor in Rural Societies," Journal of Developing Areas 12(4): 389-398, July.

World Bank (1978) Rural Enterprise and Non-Farm Employment A World Bank Paper, The World Bank, Washington DC.

3.2 Policies and Programs

Bogle, J. () Dialectics of the Roles, Uses and Misuses of Infrastructure and Housing in Rural Development United Nations, New York ESA/HBP/AC 18/15.

Goodovitch, I. (1970) "Planning and Development in Rural Areas," in Israel Builds Ministry of Housing, Jerusalem.

India (1968) Handbook of Rural Housing and Village Planning Manager of Publications, New Delhi, India.

International Labour Organization (1975) "The Generation of Employment Through the Improvement of Infrastructure Facilities in Small Urban Centres in Developing Countries," prepared by Donald Fillinger, World Employment Programme, ILO, Geneva, July WEP 2-19.

Jahne, J. (1964) Principles and Practices of Planning Villages and Proposals for Rural Building Projects Asia Publishing House, Bombay, India.

Lele, U. (1975) The Design of Rural Development John Hopkins University Press (published for the World Bank), Baltimore, Maryland.

Offe-Amoyaw, K. (1975) "Rural Housing Policy and Programs in Ghana," Accra, mimeographed, February.

Ruttan, V. (1975) "Integrated Rural Development Programs: A Sceptical Perspective," International Development Review 47 (75): 9-16.

Sardjono, () Rural Housing and Community Facilities in Integrated Rural Development United Nations, New York ESA/ABP/AC/18/6

Shaw, R.P. (1980) "Bending the Urban Flow: A Construction-Migration Strategy," International Labour Review 119(4): 367-480, July/August.

Singh, R.L. (1978) "Transformation of Rural Habitat in Indian Perspective: A Geographic Dimension," International Centre for Rural Habitat Studies Research Publication No. 9, December.

United Nations (1979) Guidelines for Rural Centre Planning prepared by the DVH consulting Engineers for United Nations, New York.

_____. (1978) The Significance of Rural Housing in Integrated Rural Development United Nations, New York.

_____. (1974) Financing Rural Housing: Selected Policy and Techniques for Developing Countries United Nations, New York.

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Weller, J. (1967) Modern Agriculture and Rural Planning Architectural Press, London.

Van Dusseldorp, D. (1971) Planning of Service Centres in Rural Areas of Developing Countries International Institute for Land Reclamation, Wageningen, Netherlands. Pp. 15-48.

World Bank (1976) Public Works Programs in Developing Countries World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 224, The World Bank, Washington DC.

Yalan, E. (1975) The Design of Agricultural Settlements - Technological Aspects of Rural Community Development Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel.

3.3 Case Studies

Afshar, F. et al. (1977) "Case Study of the Selseleh Integrated Development Project," in International Conference on Rural Development and Technology: An Integrated Approach Pergamon Press, London (proceedings of a conference held at the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.

Dawson, A. (1978) Experience of the World Food Programme with Projects Related to Rural Housing, Settlements and Development: 1963-76 United Nations, New York ESA/HBP/AC/18/10.

Food and Agricultural Organization (1976) Rural Settlements in Developing Countries: Trends and Issues from Selected Experiences in Improving their Habitat United Nations Conference on Habitat, Vancouver, Canada.

Foundation for Cooperative Housing (1966) "Housing the Campesino: A Case Study of Cooperative Housing in Los Pocitos, Panama," Foundation for Cooperative Housing, Washington DC.

Larsen, C. (1978) Reaching the Assetless Rural Poor: An Assessment of Projects and Strategies for their Self-Reliant Development Rural Development Committee, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Ministry of Home Affairs, Republic of Korea (1980) Saemulundong Korea Samluha Printing Co. Seoul, Korea.

United Nations () Evaluation of the Bi-National Rural Housing Demonstration Projects in Colombia and Ecuador United Nations, New York (Sales #E77.IV.3).

Appendix 1.

1. Alternative Foci and Sponsorship Possibilities for Research

The following possibilities are being pursued each of which define a particular geographic context and focus for the proposal.

1. "The Housing Component in Land Resettlement Schemes."

The World Bank has funded several resettlement schemes in Malaysia and Indonesia. There is yet no agreement on what the nature and level of housing intervention should be in such schemes. Intervention has ranged from the provision of complete units to largely self-help. An evaluation of the experience of one or more schemes with differing treatments of the housing component, could be attractive to the World Bank.

I carried out an evaluation of an urban low-income and a rural community development project in the Philippines and Indonesia, last year and thus have some contacts and familiarity with that part of the world.

2. Shelter and Basis Physical Infrastructure Intervention in Rural District Level Development

Many countries are placing an increasing emphasis on area development strategies at the level of the rural market and service town and its agricultural hinterland. Responses to housing intervention again range from constructing complete villages (Algeria, Pakistan's 'agrovilles') to focussing largely on agricultural production and credit to the neglect of housing. The latter is the norm. The dissertation could either be an evaluation of the housing component of one or more area development projects or a study to determine what the nature of the

housing component could be for an area development project anticipated for a particular rural district. Alternatively, the study could also be an assessment of the existing housing system in one or more rural districts from which to suggest what type of government housing intervention would be feasible and desirable in such areas.

A comparison of conditions or experiences in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh or in one of these countries is a possibility. Pakistan's 'agrovillage' program - a rural development through rural urban center promotion approach - initiated several years ago has not been carefully evaluated. Bangladesh, partly because of its ecological conditions, has particularly poor shelter and physical infrastructure at the rural level the impact of which and its method of improvement have not been assessed. The latter country is also receiving much development funding from international agencies such as the World Bank and US AID. Such a dissertation could be pursued while working for an area development program or be a separately funded study.

I have lived and worked for several years in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and speak the main languages. I could effectively undertake field research in this region

3. "The Housing Component in a Policy of Basic Needs" and the I.L.O.

The World Bank[^] have been researching and funding basic needs approaches in several Third World countries. Most

exponents include housing as a basic need. How-

ever, there is least research or agreement on how to measure, assess and formulate a policy for housing relative to other basic needs sectors (health, education, etc.)

. Research on this issue may be fundable thru the U.N., I.L.O. & W.B. & useful to them & to many TWCs ^msympathetic to ^{or applying} the basic needs approach. The research could focus on the experience of a particular country such as Sri Lanka which has both a successful basic needs policy and an active rural housing program.

Housing was treated as a basic need

along with health, nutrition and education in the integrated development project I worked with in Iran. Housing as a basic need was one of my Phd. general exam focuses. My preparation for such research is thus practical and theoretical.

4. "Rural Housing in Muslim Countries" A research proposal investigating one or more rural housing conditions and, correspondingly, appropriate professional interventions could be funded by the Aga Khan Foundation. The Award program of the foundation is preparing a conference on rural housing' to be held in China this October, 1981, for which I am contributing a case study from Indonesia. The foundation also funds rural community facilities construction in countries such as Pakistan . Research that would indicate how they could most effectively channel this funding may be attractive to them.

5. "The Role of Housing in National Development: The Case of Angola"

Some colleagues of mine are currently consultants

on rural housing to the Angolan government (Ministry of Construction & Housing). Their task is to propose a rural housing policy for the country and, specifically, to set up and initially guide the activities of a "Centre for the Research and Development of Popular Housing." I have a job offer from the government and am exploring the possibility of doing my dissertation within this framework.

I have worked/as an architect-planner and was also a member of the central planning council and coordinator of the building section of an integrated rural development project in Iran. I have also undertaken research on informal housing construction in rural areas and small towns in Pakistan, Iran, Oman, Egypt and Indonesia.

I am hopeful that on the strength of the dissertation topic and my experience, one or other sponsorship possibility will be made available.

2. Arrangements for Contact with Supervisor and Readers.

My period away from Cambridge will be spent on data collection and field research. I shall keep in touch with my committee by post which should be adequate for that stage of the research. I shall also probably work closely with someone knowledgeable on the subject in the country of my research.

Appendix 3.

3. A Further Note on Subject of Inquiry.

The focus of the research will be the indigenous rural housing system and an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses in meeting housing need and demand. The primary hypothesis is that housing intervention can be most effective when complementing the indigenous system, rather than replacing it.

Given the limited availability of central government resources, rural development of necessity will need to be a decentralized, local resource-based effort. The rural housing sector, probably more so than most other sectors, is locale-sensitive. Fortunately, it is also amenable to local resource-based solutions and offers valuable clues on how to design selective intervention to take into account the local material, cultural and political constraints and potentials.

The indigenous rural housing system, imperfectly but relatively effectively, combines the factors of land, finance, materials and technology, labor and skills (technical and managerial) to produce housing that is functionally and culturally appropriate to local conditions. Ingenious, cost-effective and energy-conserving techniques in design and construction, and methods for organizing finance, labor and skills (sometimes rooted in traditional practices of collective endeavor) are used.

Answers to such questions as what customs govern the combining of the factors involved in housing, the forms and spaces that emerge and the way they are used reveal the

culture of the society. Who finances, who builds, to whose benefit and to whose cost reveals the society's income and power structures. How these processes are changing and how they are perceived to need to change, reveal the new demands on, and aspirations of, the society. These factors cannot be ignored in deciding what type of intervention is required and how it can be implemented given the conditions at hand.

This focus will form the bulk of the research and provide valuable insights into the ecological socio-cultural and economic aspects of rural housing as a system. It will suggest the most effective ways for designing and implementing rural housing ^{programs,} given similar conditions in other specific sites and given public and private willingness to invest in this sector.

However, in most countries this investment is too low to significantly improve rural housing conditions.

To make a case for increased investment in rural housing and make the research generalizable at national and international levels and useful for national policy analysis, some evidence has to be presented to demonstrate that rural housing intervention can significantly promote broadly accepted rural development objectives.

The secondary hypothesis for research will therefore be that there are significant linkages between the rural housing sector and rural development and that a rural housing policy can promote broader rural development objectives by being designed to selectively intervene where these linkages

are strongest. The linkages and potential interventions include the following:

Rural health conditions could be much improved by upgrading the current grossly inadequate rural housing conditions. Such factors as the close proximity, sometimes shared, shelter for man, farm animals and food and grain storage (which encourages disease-carrying insects and rodents) enhances the likely contribution of poor housing to rural ill health.

Improved housing for farm animals and food and grain storage could also increase rural production. In some areas, 50 percent of grain losses result from poor storage conditions (United Nations, 1976). Much non-farm production -- cottage industries, etc. -- occur in the dwelling unit. Productivity could be raised through improving these units. Industrializing or otherwise collectivizing cottage production would also require housing construction. Finally, housing construction, with its high labor and wage components and its forward and backward linkages to related industries, such as building materials and door and window manufacture, could be a major catalyst for promoting rural production, employment and income generation (Shaw specifically cites housing construction in small rural towns as the tool for "bending the urban flow away from the metropolis", Shaw, 1980). This section of the research will analyze the necessary evidence to increase the willingness of public and private entities (whether international development agencies, governments, private foundations, charities,

households, or individuals) to channel more of their resources into rural housing. It will also provide useful insights into what particular types of housing intervention these resources should support.

However, in the final analysis the argument for intervention in rural housing depends on the assumption that need and demand in this sector are increasing and that rural development is a national objective. If, in fact, the evidence is that rural populations are rapidly decreasing and/or that there is no national commitment to develop the rural areas, the policy proposals emerging from the above two sections of the research will be difficult to sustain. Thus the third section of the research will examine the following, although only sufficiently so as to set the foundation and context for the previous major research issues. In brief, this ^{third} hypothesis is as follows:

Despite urbanization trends, rural housing as a policy issue will become increasingly important in this coming decade. The already highly inadequate and often deteriorating rural housing stock, coupled with the increasing housing demand generated by rising rural populations, expanding rural development programs and inter-rural population shifts (e.g., from villages to rural towns) will intensify the need for public intervention in rural housing. The renewed interest in reinforcing planning capacity at the rural district level, integrated area development strategies and spatial strategies focusing on the rural market, service and agro-industrial settlement may provide both the raison

d'etre and the planning framework within which to formulate and implement such housing policy.

Appendix 4.

4. A Further Note on the Rural Housing Field.

The current emphasis on rural development has not been accompanied by a similar emphasis on rural housing. Housing as a policy concern continues to be urban focussed in response to the urgent and visible pressures from migration and on the assumption that, in rural areas, housing is of low priority relative to other needs and can be adequately dealt with without government intervention.

Thus Van Huyck (1977) categorically states, "Experience has shown that rural housing generally makes little sense as a public sector activity because rural people have sufficient skills and technology to build traditional houses out of local materials at the least overall cost. Funds can be more effectively spent on other needs."

The World Bank takes a similar position arguing that rural people face fewer material and institutional constraints in improving their housing than low-income urban people do.

Most government policies follow such views. At best, rural housing gains some policy attention in agricultural land settlement schemes (e.g. Federal Land Development Authority Program in Malaysia, Uda Walwe Scheme in Sri Lanka). In such schemes, and in other isolated cases of intervention in rural housing, more often than not, the approach has been to construct a relatively few highly subsidised low-cost housing units (e.g. the Malaysian government has constructed 8000 rural housing units in the last 3 years). Most rural housers argue for an expansion of this latter approach.

The discussion of an appropriate government policy in the rural housing sector today is somewhat similar to that in urban low-income housing during the late 50's and early 60's. Then too positions were polarised between those who argued that housing was unimportant relative to other directly productive sectors and therefore should be ignored, and those who proposed the construction of subsidised public housing. It was not until a number of empirical studies were undertaken on the role of the housing system within the urban political economy that an effective low-income housing policy was formulated (Abrams, 1964 and Turner, 1966).

The resulting urban programs of area upgrading and sites and services are now being applied in a limited manner within the rural context. The tendency to apply urban concepts, observations and solutions to the rural context is not uncommon. In the rural housing finance literature, for example, the characteristics observed amongst urban low-income residents vis-a-vis savings, borrowing and lending with regard to housing investment is assumed to be true for rural residents as well (United Nations, 1974).

The above responses to rural housing indicate that they have preceded systematic inquiry into the housing sector in rural areas rather than emerged from such an investigation. A gap exists in the literature on the role of housing in the rural context and on the policy based on a systematic investigation of this role.

Addressing this gap may require a way of

conceptualising and structuring the issue^{of} rural housing such that it moves away from both the physical determinism of the low-cost housing approach as well as the 'hand-me-down' urban concepts of upgrading and sites and services. The problem needs to be defined from within the rural context and in terms of the current aspirations for rural development.

From such a perspective, planners may be better able to formulate policy and not dismiss the sector as some now do. Thus, given more information on the health and production effects of the rural dwelling, planners may be less satisfied with the present condition of rural housing regardless of its lower cost. Given more information on the rural industrialisation and employment generating potentials of a healthy rural housing sector, planners may be more inclined to view the sector as a potential rather than a problem with a low priority. And knowing more about how the indigenous rural housing system functions, planners may be able to design intervention to act as a complement and catalyst to this system and, thus, be more cost effective in the use of public funds. Soysa (1972: 172) concludes that very little information is available on rural housing and this lack of data is a major factor inhibiting positive government action in this field.

A start has been made in defining rural housing policy in the manner presented here. A recent meeting of experts on rural housing in integrated development defined its significance in terms of establishing its linkages to population distribution (specifically rural town development), health, productivity, income distribution, and agrarian reform (United Nations,

1976). The Five-Year Development Plan of Sri Lanka states:

"... the rural housing program will generate a demand for building materials, furniture and other local products which will promote industrial activity in the rural areas. It will also promote employment opportunities (Government of Ceylon, 1972: 126)".

Community participation through self-help construction also figures prominently in much rural housing literature and in rural housing programs, drawing its justification on the triple assumptions that: collective self-help is firmly rooted in rural traditions; rural underemployment can be tapped through self-help, and participation enhances local capacity for political development (Soysa, 1979: 176).

While the above approach of defining the significance of rural housing on the basis of its perceived linkages with the rural economy and rural development objectives may be more useful than previous approaches taken, the problem remains that many of the perceived linkages are assumed, not established.

Knowledge about the rural housing sector, useful to the planner, is extremely limited. The United Nations experts meeting manifests this problem by being constantly forced to cite urban studies because of the lack of evidence arising from studies carried out within the rural context. (United Nations, 1976).

Spatial planners stressing rural town development, do so in the absence of knowledge about how such towns are coping with the housing and construction needs of their presently expanding populations and how additional investment will affect these needs.

Those proposing participatory rural housing practices still need information on when such practices merely mask traditional or recent exploitative uses of the rural poor and under what

circumstances they represent genuine opportunities for promoting development.

Basic needs exponents, almost unanimous on identifying housing as a basic need, are equally unanimous in not knowing quite how to assess this need and suggest policies for it (Ghai & Alfthan, 1977; Khan, 1977; Hicks & Streeten, 1979)

Some of the confusion about rural housing is expressed in the myriad of institutional arrangements through which governments attempt to deal with the sector. In many countries, the sector is being dealt with through an ad-hoc division of responsibility between government, semi-government, private voluntary and church organizations. In others, it is the sole but small responsibility of the Office of Community Development (Thailand). In Indonesia, the Ministries of Public Works, Social Welfare and Interior, are all heavily involved.

Thus, while the field of rural housing is beginning to be redefined in ways that may make it more useful for planning policy, this redefinition is still at a very preliminary stage. Much conceptual and empirical work needs to be done along the lines mentioned above, to clarify some of the ambiguities and to better define policy for government programs that are increasingly impinging on this field in TWCs. The proposed research will contribute to the conceptual and theoretical aspects of this field by testing its assumptions against empirical data. It will contribute to the empirical aspects through a new case study example and it will help clarify what policy should be in this field by analysing it in ^{one} case country.