MORPHOLOGY OF RURAL DWELLINGS

The houses\(^1\) are the emblems of settled life. It is a shelter, a means of regulating the climate to meet the basic physiological requirements of the body. They are one of the three basic needs of man i.e. food, shelter and clothing. In ancient days, the dwellings were constructed for the sake of subsistence, security \(^2\) or protection against the vagaries of climate. But now they are more than an abode as some of the socio-economic activities take place in them. The houses are basic and fundamental geographic phenomena on the cultural landscape. As such they reflect complex relations of man and his environment. Geography of the house reveals that impact of both physical and cultural conditions. As Kniffer remarks “Dwelling reflects the cultural heritage, current fashion, functional needs and the positive and negative aspects of non-cultural environment”\(^3\). Regarding the evolution of dwellings in the past, there is general assumption that the primitive man was confined to the caves\(^4\) due to his limited knowledge, technology and skill. After the cave dwellings these people started to live in first man-made dwelling, i.e., thatched huts. But with the passage of time through degrees of elaboration men have devised simple conical huts, tents, log dwellings, mud, brick and stone structures to serve house families and society in wider sense. Differences in form and function of these structures vary enormously. Thus, it may be advocated that the present form and structure of dwellings in the result of successive stages of evolution, social systems and cultural cults which evolved in the ancient past.

---

1. They need to protect themselves from the danger of wild animals brought them under the protection of some natural salters (Mishra, 1969, p.9)
4. It is generally believed that caves were the earliest form of human dwellings (Relgan, 1963, p. 373).
The term house has connotations. As a geographic element "House is meant to include not only the dwelling house ranging from the humblest huts of the poor to the most elaborate and massive city mansions but all other human structures as well where people congregate or where their goods are stored such as factories, warehouses, churches and stores etc."5 "The census house means a structure or a part of a structure inhabited or vacant or a dwelling a shop or a shop-cum-dwelling or place of business, workshop, school etc. with a separate entrance from the road or street and recognised as a separate unit"6.

In India about 73.87 percent of the total population of the country live in rural areas. Hence, the rural houses are the true index of the cultural and physical environment. As Houston observes "The House is primarily an element of landscape expressive of both physical conditions of the region and the conservatism of its inhabitants"7. Rural house exhibits more exactly the impact of physico-cultural environment to a great deal i.e. of geology on the building materials, climate on the structure and orientation of houses, vegetation on the roofings while of socio-economic conditions on the form and layout of the houses.

6.1 Layout of Dwellings

The layout of dwellings, and their design, are, to a great extent, influenced by social and economic status of persons within existing environment. The dwelling house in Manipur is planned on the ground in the shape of rectangle. The main reason is that such a plan would be helpful in the construction of the house and allocation of rooms. In Manipuri society a complete set of the dwelling house consists of eight buildings built around a common courtyard. They are the dwelling house, the eastern shed, (Sangoi), the southern shed, the northern shed, the wood-shed, the granary, the latrine, and the cow-shed. Some of these prominent sheds are built around a rectangular court-yard.

---

In the west of the courtyard stands the dwelling house and similarly there is the eastern shed in the east, the southern shed, in the south, the northern shed, in the north of the courtyard and the latrine, the wood-shed, the granary, the cow-shed are placed in convenient places in the west or the north or the south, or the east of the dwelling house. The system of the layout of the houses is used by different clans such as the Meiteis, the Muslims, the Brahmans and the Nepalis in the making of their homesteads. Out of these clans the Brahmans are found to have some special arrangements. In most of their homesteads the Brahmans have a big Mandop, a spacious rectangular building for performing religious ceremonies along with a temple and a kitchen.

Thus the regional patterns of houses are as complexes of interrelated socio-economic and religio-ritual distances governing the nature, pattern and type of different houses. Physical factors are also governing attributes concerning intra-dwelling spacing. In the hill areas different tribal clans live in different places. The ground plan of the house in the hill areas is found to be different from that of the plain. This is because of the fact that there is scarcity of levelled areas for building houses in the hills. It is difficult to make levelled spaces for building houses among the slopes of the hills. In the ground plan for a house there is a very small space to serve the purpose of the courtyard very near to the house in the eastern side of the house as that of the plain areas. In the hills different sheds like the granary, the piggery are generally placed at convenient places near to or a little way from the dwelling houses.

In general it is found that the arrangement of rooms bring about the shape of houses. With the increase of population there has been a change in the ground plan of the houses. The dwelling houses being congested with the members of the family extra living rooms have been built by the north and the south on the extended verandah and the northern, southern and eastern sheds have been used as dwelling houses and consequently comes the change in the direction the dwelling houses face traditionally. The shapes of the dwelling houses are of I-shape, L-shape, U-shape and E-shape. (Fig. 6.1)
GROUND PLAN OF HOUSES

A  I - SHAPED HOUSE

B  L - SHAPED HOUSE

C  U - SHAPED HOUSE

D  E - SHAPED HOUSE

Fig. 6.1

S  Sanamahi (God's place)
WS  Wood Shed
C  Courtyard

TP  Tulsi plant
L  Latrine
BR  Bathroom

TP  Mango (Guest room)
K  Kitchen
SR  Store room

G  Granary
R  Shed with one side opened wall
R  House Rooms
The function and nature of utilisation of houses is a complex structure. The Meiteis used to construct the traditional dwelling house, known as “Yumjao Ka Mari” (Four-room big House). It is a big house having a number of parts with different functional names as “Mangon” (front verandah) consisting of “Phamen and Mangshok”, “Ningolka” (Virgin daughter’s room) “Phamen Ka” (Oldest owner’s room), “Chakkhum Ka” (Kitchen), “Sanamahi Ka” (the house god, Sanamahi’s room).

Now-a-days people have partially stopped constructing the traditional type of the dwelling house and in order to adapt to the present day civilisation most of them have started building houses having L-shape, U-shape, I-shape and E-shape and the like. Though the people construct different types of the dwelling houses it is customary for them to build each house facing east. This custom is related to the fact that in a year the people of the state faces two rain bearing winds-the South-west Monsoon and the North-east Monsoon. This might be the reason why every house in Manipur faces east to save the verandah from the vagaries of the rain bearing winds. It is also observed that the shape and size of houses reflect economic level of the people.

6.2 Essential Features of Houses

In Manipur both in the valley and hill courtyard locally known as Sumang is very important and distinguished. It represents rectangular open space of diverse size, shape, location, function and surroundings depending upon the need, available space or only the whim of the occupants. The courtyard of a richer family is well decorated being surrounded by walled rooms and with significance of plantation of beautiful flowers, well arrangement of drainage and pucca flooring etc. Usually in the centre of courtyard of Hindu family a small plant locally known as tulasi (a holy plant of Hindus) is planted but in the Muslim and Christian families such plants are not planted. In some huts of extremely poor and
extremely congested areas courtyard are arranged very small due to unavailability of space. Courtyard serves best in maintaining the ceremonial functions like marriage, Saradha and in the celebration of religious feast etc. As well as in the poor rural family it provides ample space for keeping the cattle and agricultural implements. It compensates the lack of sunlight in the ill ventilated compact rooms of the dwellings and is also used for drying, processing, husking and grinding of agricultural products. The another common feature of rural dwellings is the existence of inner or outer verandah. The inner verandah surrounds the entire length of the house in the back side whereas the outer verandah occupies the front side of the house. Inner verandah is commonly used for granary and kitchen by giving partition. This inner verandah partially protects the walls of the main building from rains and strong winds. Usually outer verandah is used for different purposes partitioning different rooms as guest room locally known as Mangon, reading room combined with sleeping room for the schooling children and one handloom is usually kept in its verandah. In addition, the goldsmiths, tailors and potters etc. use the front verandah for their professional works. Another outer verandah on the sides of the house is also constructed for keeping fodder, fuel and also as a cattle-shed.

An outhouse locally known as Sangoi has its own importance in the rural dwellings. Sangoi is classified into three types as Makha Sangoi, Mamang Sangoi and Awang Sangoi according to their difference of locations. If the Sangoi is constructed in the east of the courtyard it is known as Mamang Sangoi whereas Makha Sangoi and Awang Sangoi are constructed in the south and north of the courtyard respectively. Majority of Sangoi is constructed in three rooms without having partition and pillars. Usually in the construction of Sangoi (Plate No. 1) three sides are walled and only one side is left towards the courtyard. Sangois are very useful for different purposes such as tailoring, goldsmith, carpentry, handlooms and like other cottage industries and used as store rooms for agricultural equipments and crops during rainy seasons (Plate No. 2).
Plate No. 1

Three side walled Sangoi of thatched roof with handlooms.

Plate No. 2

C.I. sheeted Sangoi (out house) with agricultural crops.
Fencing of thorns, bamboos, wood and plants surrounding the dwelling makes a common feature in the rural dwellings of the state. This is used for defence from cattle and thieves to keep the vegetables in the kitchen garden. This type of fencing is done throughout the rural areas of the state but in some houses where the family is economically sound it is arranged with brick walls and barbed wires. Along these fencing one gate is open connecting by an approach road with the north east corner of the courtyard. (Fig. 6.2)

Fig. 6.2
Location of House in a Plot

The most common features of the rural dwellings of the state is the rectangular plan maintaining single storeyed rooms of varying sizes with a few windows, sloping roofs of C.I. Sheet or thatch and open air Mangol (Guest room). The reason behind the presence of a few windows is partly security against thieves and partly the maintenance of privacy in the house. Presence of Kutchas lavatories is common in almost all the dwellings, except in a few houses of rich people. Our field survey reveals that dwelling’s front side and walls of the majority of the recent constructions are well plastered and whitewashed with leingou (white clay) or lime which give a good look and magnify the beauty of the dwelling.
6.3 Architectural Features

Both the traditional and present dwellings of Manipur represent a great architectural features based upon the cultural heritage of the past and present. Most of the well to do houses of the past have distinctive fancy patterns on the exterior of the walls generally painted by Leingou (white clay) which give picturesque view. Frontal portion of the thatched roof locally known as Sangmai (Fig. 6.3-A), Sandangkha (Upper portion of frontal wall) (Fig. 6.3-B)

![Fig. 6.3 Components of Traditional Houses](image)

![Fig. 6.4 Structure of Meitei Traditional House](image)
Pillars, doors and windows and well carved and coloured. The jhaloor (a narrow flank attached in the lower edge of C.I. Sheeted roof) is also usually well painted and carved specially in the majority of Muslim houses. In Maring (a tribal community) houses the front wall is well decorated with the horns of Sandang (a domestic animal) (Fig. 6.3-C). Mostly in the Nepali houses the half of the external wall is painted by leingang (red clay). From these above features it is clear that different archeological styles and structural types and models are resolved in the state from different physical and cultural diversities.

6.4 Factors Influencing House Types

Many factors are there influencing the creation of house types. Physical, cultural, building materials and socio-economic factors are strong factors in for the determination of house types.

6.4.1 Physical Factors

When we study the house types in a wide sense for the world as a whole or for any particular big continent the influences of physical factors in the diversity of house types are very remarkable whereas in the case of Manipur (a small state) the role of such physical factors is somewhat insignificant. As the state is very small, the physical influences given in different parts of the state are moderately uniform except the relief features. It is therefore, the types of houses under this physical environment are same in different parts of the state. Among the physical factors, geology, climate and vegetation appear prima facie. As “The climatic elements i.e. temperature, wind system, rainfall etc. influence the orientation and structure of dwellings.” Sloped roofs of the houses in different valley and hilly districts reflect the impact of rainfall as the state has annual rainfall above 200 cm. and thatched houses are generally fitted before the first showers of the monsoon. The courtyard (Sumang) is comparatively bigger in the valley than that of the hills as available flat space is plenty in the valley whereas it is limited in the hills due to its slope. Direction of winds and the storm influences the orientation of the houses. As the state enjoys both the monsoons North East and South West generally the houses are

---

8 Bhattacharya N.D., "Rural Settlement in Mursidabad 1966", N.G.J.I., p.III.
oriented in the east in order to save the mangol (a frontal guest room) from windy rain. Conditions of soil and climate determine whether the use of wood, earth or stone in the state. In the valley districts brick, clay and stone houses are plenty but in the hill districts such houses are very few. The wooden structure is predominant both in the valleys and hills but it is more common to the tribal peoples in the forested tracts of hill districts.

6.4.2 Cultural Factors

Social customs and the conservatism of the people produce some effect on the architecture and orientation of dwellings. In hindu society of the state, as the south direction is supposed to be the abode of Yama, the lord of death, they avoid the direction of the house oriented in the south besides even the main gate of the dwelling also not directed in the south. A small holy plant called Tulasi is planted at the centre of the courtyard of Manipuri Hindus. They recognise the plant as Brinda Devi (a goddess) and worship for every morning and evening.

6.4.3 Socio-Economic Factors

Socio-Economic factors are not less important in dictating the house types than the natural one. With the advancement of science and technology different readymade items of house construction materials are available in the market. According to the basis of socio-economic status the capacity to purchase such items is decided. The group of persons who are able to purchase such materials like C.I. sheet, iron rod, cement, concrete, brick, stone and wood etc. built their houses in pucca and semi-pucca forms. On the other hand the peoples who are under the poverty line could not purchase such finished items therefore they made their dwelling with the cheap and easily available materials like wood, bamboo, cane and thatch etc. It is therefore an important factor in the distinction of house types. The part played by socio-economic conditions is best effective in the decision of size and shape of dwellings in every region. The sample study reveals that the variation is distinctly visualized in every village of the state (Plate No. 3).
IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION ON HOUSE TYPES IN THE SAME LOCALITY

Plate No. 3

House of well-to-do family

Plate No. 4

House of poor family

The peoples who are in the lower group of socio-economic conditions occupy small dwellings like one-room or two room houses etc. mostly in the hilly parts and marginal areas of the villages whereas richer people in the bigger dwellings of four or five rooms in the central part. Besides socio-economic conditions makes a clear distinction in the beautification, cleanliness, comfort and construction in between poor and rich people.

6.4.4 Building Materials

Environmental and economic conditions of the people are reflected in the use of building materials. Generally, the rural dwellings are built with various materials available at hand. According to Dickens and Pitts⁹. “Houses reflect the nature of a region since their character is related to the environment and to the cultural heritage of the people who build them. Houses reflect the nature of the rock material or the vegetation which is the basis for their construction.” Hence the type of rural dwellings of the region depends largely on the availability of local building materials, the product of soil and vegetation.

The region of this state has varying types of building materials. The predominant building materials used in the dwellings of the rural areas of the state are mud, brick, corrugated iron and zinc sheets, wood, bamboo, reed and thatches etc. In the past days people made their dwellings with the cheap and easily available materials like, mud, bamboo, wood and thatches because of their convenience. Mud or earth, the most universal of all building materials, shaped easily without any skilled artisan were used in the Manipur valleys as water is easily available but in the hill districts where mud soil and water being not present such type to mud houses are not found. In such areas, instead of mud houses wood, bamboo and thatch houses are more commonly predominant as such materials are easily and cheaply available.

In the valley districts of the state the rich and well-to-do people generally build their houses of burnt bricks or stone. C.I. sheet roofed houses recently become common as it is easily available in the near markets. From the sample study it is found that wooden construction, bamboo and mud walled and C.I. sheeted roof houses predominated about 60% of the total rural dwellings of the state in the valley districts. In the isolated hilly regions thatched houses are more common because the dwellers face manifold problems to purchase such building materials based on their economy and transportation. From our survey it was further revealed that most of the rural population of the state is living in congestion which further emphasises their level of poverty.

With the impact of development of living styles and modernity, the number of pucca (brick) houses are increasing in number day by day in the rural areas of Manipur specially in the valley districts. The resume of such orientation is that the pucca houses are the symbol of social prestige now as well as it gives respectability, and also provides other advantages, i.e. cleanliness and better utilization of space. Moreover, it makes more advantages in the vertical expansion of settlement which solves partially the problem of increasing population. In the hill districts such pucca buildings are very few because the hilly soil of the state is not agreeable for manufacturing bricks, on the other hand
the transportation from the nearby valley districts also is inconvenient due to its bottleneck communication. Thus, from the above analysis it is clear that the influence of local available building materials is remarkable in the house types of the state.

6.5 Distribution of Rural Dwellings

The spatial distribution of the rural houses has been most uneven in all respects in the state. There are 2182 inhabited villages with 215790 dwellings in the state. Out of this, 114183 houses are concentrated in 456 villages of four valley districts while 101607 houses in 1726 villages of five hill districts. The general density is more than nine dwellings/sq.km. Fig. 6.1 shows the density of houses in terms of aerial unit districts in the study area. The highest density of dwellings/sq.km. is recorded in Thoubal district with 64.4 of 31314 houses in 87 villages followed by Imphal (58.9) having 68083 houses in 324 villages and Bishnupur (42.0) with 19269 houses in 45 villages (Table 6.1). This is mainly because of fertile soil, better means of communication and higher order of central places. Further from Table 6.1 it is apparent that the lowest density of dwellings is recorded in the Tamenglong district (2.9) followed by Chandel (3.4), Ukhrul (3.9), Churachandpur (4.9) and Senapati (10.0). Such low density of dwellings is mainly due to the Geographical control such as the high relief, roughed topography, poor means of transportation network and high erosion of soil. Thus, the contrast in the economic regions of the Manipur valley is the important factor for a grater concentration of dwellings towards the valley districts.
Table 6.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Rural Area (in Sq. Km)</th>
<th>Total No. of Dwellings</th>
<th>Rural Population</th>
<th>Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senapati</td>
<td>3271</td>
<td>32827</td>
<td>107310</td>
<td>101096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamenglong</td>
<td>3291</td>
<td>12608</td>
<td>44593</td>
<td>41685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churachandpur</td>
<td>4564</td>
<td>22496</td>
<td>7437</td>
<td>68281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandel</td>
<td>3312</td>
<td>11248</td>
<td>31946</td>
<td>29395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoubal</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>31314</td>
<td>94524</td>
<td>91980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishnupur</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>19269</td>
<td>59423</td>
<td>48180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imphal (East &amp; West) 1156</td>
<td>68083</td>
<td>212365</td>
<td>207214</td>
<td>419579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukhrul</td>
<td>4544</td>
<td>17945</td>
<td>57997</td>
<td>51278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>22182</td>
<td>215790</td>
<td>682385</td>
<td>649109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled and computed by the author (with the help of data collected from the Census Department, Govt. of India, Imphal).

6.6 Rural House Types

The state exhibits different types of dwellings not only within a settlement but also from one area to another. The house type of the state is studied on the basis of intensive field work for a long time on the purposive random sampling of 14 villages from different districts of the region. The main criteria for the study of house type is as follows.

6.6.1 House Types Base Upon Building Materials

The type of rural dwellings depends largely on the availability of local building materials the product of soil and vegetation. Remarkably such type of materials guides the hand and the mind of the builder. According to the available forms and features from the field the following types of houses are commonly notified.
MANIPUR
DENSITY OF RURAL HOUSES

SCALE

INDEX
HOUSES PER SQ. KM.

BELOW ..........40
40 ...............60
ABOVE ..........60

Fig. 6.5
(A) Flat Brick Roof with Brick Wall (pucca brick house)

The pucca brick houses (Plate No. 5) are the most prestigious dwellings in the society. It gives many advantages for the better living of human beings but the number of houses are very few because the materials are very costly and some materials like iron, rods, cement and other decorative items are imported from outside states. In the villages where rural service centres and urban character is available such houses are seen. The percentage of this type of houses calculated from the data of field survey of sample villages in different districts is less than 1%. Thus, the pucca housing are very negligible compared to other categories.

(B) Sloped Roof of C.I. Sheets with Brick Wall

Next to pucca houses (Plate No. 6) this group of houses stood in the second position of prestigious. The dwellers who are better in socio-economic conditions in the society built such type of houses. It shares about 6% of the total dwellings of the state. The main concentration of these houses are in the valley districts such as Imphal, Thoubal and Bishnupur near to the rural market centres but in the hilly districts such houses are comparatively very few in number except the rural market centres.

(C) C.I. Sheeted Roof and Wooden Structure with Mud and Bamboo Wall

As woods are easily available in the state wooden structured houses are predominant. In the past days the houses of the region were roofed with straw and thatch but it has recurrent annual damage by the elements of weather and climate. Therefore such houses are almost oriented to the C.I. sheeted houses with he development of economy. Such houses of C.I. sheeted roof and wooden structure with mud wall occupies about 30% of the total rural houses of the state while 45% in the valley and only 15% in the hill districts.
(D) Thatched Roof with Unburnt Bricks Wall

The soil of Manipur valley is very suitable for making bricks. This construction is very simple, easy and economical as well as can be free from strong winds but it is easily collapsible in the earthquake stroke. Now-a-days in the state the popularity of such houses (Plate No. 9) have become decreased and widely modified in the wooden structures. The number of such houses are very small in the state. Its percentage to the total houses of the state is less than 1%. Out of 1780 houses of the 14 sample villages from different parts of the state only fourteen houses are found of such type.

(E) Thatched Roof with Mud Wall

This is conventional house type in the state. The cost of such houses is very low because it is made of local materials mud, bamboo and thatches but it needs more labour in the construction of mud wall. In such houses (Plate No. 8) all the walls are generally made of mud obtained from the nearby places of the plot. After enough mud is taken out the place becomes a pond which can be used as water reservoir in future. The thickness and height of walls vary generally from 45cm. to 60 cm. and 4 feet to 9 feet respectively. Their construction proceeds in stages with damp adhesive mud making successive layers of 15 to 30 cm. in height. When one layer is completed and dried, a fresh or new layer is added over it after two or three days. This successive process is continued till the required height is enough.

(F) C.I. Sheeted or Thatched Roof with Wooden Wall and Floor

In the isolated hilly areas of Manipur timbers are abundantly found. Therefore, the tribal peoples of the state use flanks for the construction of wall and floor. The roof is sloped towards both sides as the rainfall is moderately high in the state particularly in the hills. The roof is either made of C.I. sheets or thatch according to the prosperity of the family. Such houses (Plate No. 7) are more common in the hill districts like Chandel, Tamenglong, Churachandpur and Ukhrul but in Senapati District it is comparatively less than that of the other hill districts because of inadequacy of big timbers.
DIFFERENT HOUSE TYPES OF DIFFERENT BUILDING MATERIALS

Plate No. 5
Flat brick roof with brick wall

Plate No. 6
Sloped roof of C.I. sheets with brick wall

Plate No. 7
C.I. sheeted roof with wooden wall

Plate No. 8
Thatched roof with mud wall

Plate No. 9
Thatched roof with unburnt brick wall

Plate No. 10
Thatched roof with bamboo and mud wall
(G) Thatched Roof with Bamboo Structure and Mud Wall

In the consideration of cost it is the cheapest houses type in the state. It is also made of easily available local materials. These houses (Plate No. 10) are the common features of poor people's dwelling. This type of house is very simple to construct that everyone of the people has knowledge and experience to build such houses. In this construction the pillars, walls and other frameworks are made of bamboos. Thatch, paddy straw, reed and sugarcane leaves are used as roof materials. Such houses are highly vulnerable and damageable from wind and fire. As the rural areas of the state is dominated by poor peoples of agricultural workers and isolated hill dwellers such type of houses are moderately plentiful in the state. From the sample study it is found that 30% of the total rural houses are dominated by these groups of houses.

6.6.2 House Types Based Upon Communities

Among the human folk of the state there are different communities being diversified in their art, culture and traditions. Traditionally such communities inherit their house types. On this basis the types of houses of the state are analysed as seven types such as Mao type, Kabui type, Tangkhul type, Meitei type, Plainsman type, Paite type and Maring type (Fig. 6.6). The central valley of the state Imphal, Thoubal and Bishnupur districts are mainly dominated by Meitei and Muslim communities while Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel, Churachandpur, Tamenglong and Jiribam sub-division are dominated by Mao, Tangkhul, Maring, Paite, Kabui and Plainsman respectively. It is noteworthy that the main type of houses and their distributional pattern could be visualised according to their shape, size and building materials.

6.7 Some Remarks

From the above discussion of morphology of rural dwellings it is concluded that house is a basic human need, in which most of the people live. Since several physio-cultural, socio-economic and religious-ritual aspects directly or indirectly affect the structure and form of rural dwellings, a unique harmony of habitat, economy and society is testified
VILLAGE MORPHOLOGY-TORBUNG

Fig. 6.6
by their internal and external structural pattern. In spite of post-independence development of industrial and communicational landscape causing general improvement in dwelling conditions, the perception of house as home and its basic structure are the same in the rural areas of the state under study.

6.8 The Awakening to the Problem and Its Scope for Development

In the above analysis we have attempted a general survey of the rural dwellings and their several problems. As a matter of fact, it can be stated that the present pattern of distribution of rural dwellings in the state is maldistributed. The shape, size, nature of construction, dilapidated structures and outdated design of these dwellings vary so much that it is difficult to arrive at a uniform definition of “House”, a term which we commonly use to denote our 'place of residence'. Therefore, it needs a careful diagnosis by a board of experts, and planned surgical treatment by the hands of efficient planners. To have a sound economic base for all round development of the state as a whole, a more rational and balanced residential land-use pattern is a must. The unequal distribution of the residential units and sub-standard or rural dwellings of the state are the sources of major problems. In fact, the existing residential units of the rural areas of the state were established long ago, without giving proper consideration to the real needs and potentiality of the surrounding areas.

The only step to overcome this uneven distribution is a thoughtful long term planning by conducting a detailed survey of the potentiality and actual needs of the inhabitants. The author feels that in order to achieve these goals, the large open spaces which have been recently incorporated in and around the rural areas, must be planned in such a way that the existing shortcomings in the residential land use pattern can be modified and
the future housing schemes be implemented under the various Rural Development Programmes sponsored both by the State and the Central Government viz; Indira Awaz Yojana (IAY), Social Housing Scheme under Economically Weaker Section (EWS), Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) etc. in a phase-wise manner may prove ideal.

In order to improve different morphological structures of rural dwellings of the state, it can be emphasised that a team of experts consisting of geographers, architects and town planners, sociologists, economists, civil engineers, etc. should be entrusted with the task of preparing an ideal master plan for the state as a whole so that the mistakes and defects already committed can be removed in the near future.

It is further observed that after these improvements have taken place, the rural masses of the state will undoubtedly gain in health and wealth. The local authorities will spend less money on maintaining health and medical services, etc. but will receive more money in the form of taxation. The cost of development will thus be balanced by the gain in amenities in the long run.

To summarise, it may also be further put forth that the reorientation of our rural society, the revival of the social and economic integrity of village community on cooperative lines and the establishment of a greater link between the towns and their region, are some of the essential items to be included in the development programme for bridging the wide gulf between the towns and their surrounding villages of the state under study.
Plate No. 11
Traditional house of Maram community

Plate No. 12
Collecting water from handpump by village women

Plate No. 13
A typical house (roof with bamboo) at Jiribam

Plate No. 14
Mandop (A typical community hall)

Plate No. 15
Bamboo transportation by floating along the Jiri river

Plate No. 16
Aerial view of rural settlement (Bengi & Thokchem)