

Housing Quality by House Type in NCR – A Study

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ABSTRACT:

Till the early twentieth century, housing was considered as a place to live in ignoring all other dimensions it plays in human life and socio-economic development of a nation. A house besides providing a living space also improves the physical quality of life in terms of cultural and personality development. Despite great advancements in science and technology, millions in our motherland face severe housing problems. In urban areas of developing countries, people face acute shortage of proper housing accommodation. Due to availability of better employment opportunities in urban areas, many people from rural areas migrate to cities leading to overcrowding thus increasing pressure on the limited housing as well as health and sanitary facilities. This results into the deterioration in quality of life in urban areas. In rural areas, the housing conditions are far from satisfactory, which have adverse effect on socio-economic progress of our nation. NCR being the heart of our country shows that housing conditions in Delhi are slightly better than NCR. But overall housing conditions in NCR are better than rest of India. More efforts are needed to improve housing conditions particularly in rural areas of NCR. So that in-migration to Delhi can be slowed down.

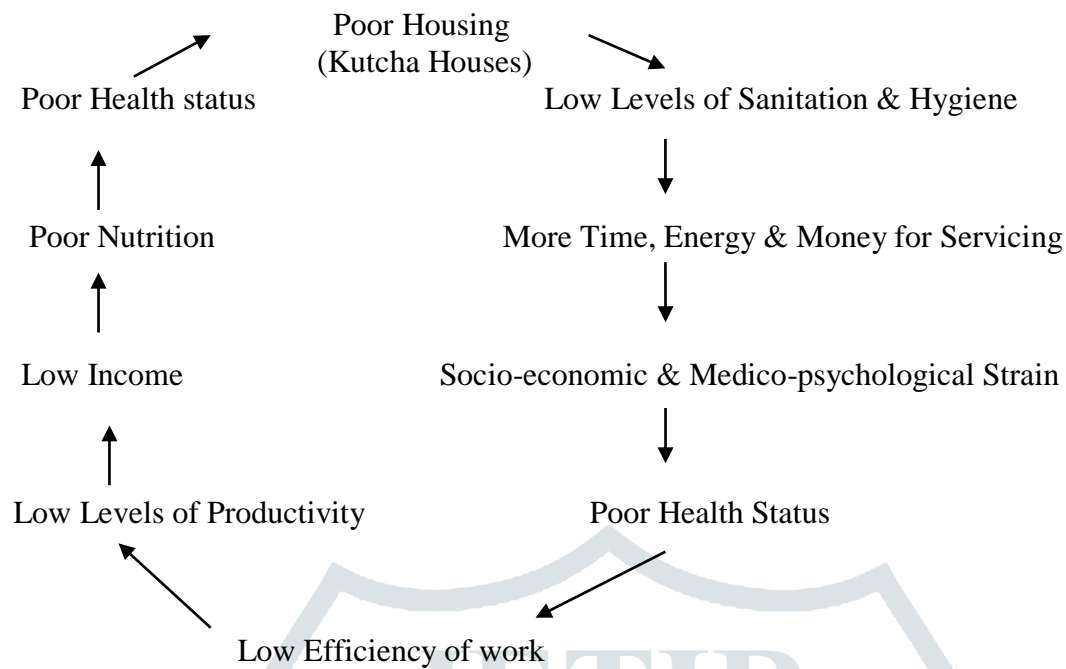
KEYWORDS: Housing Conditions, NCR, Disparity Index, Urban, Rural

1. INTRODUCTION:

A home is our basic social need. Its absence is a cause of socio-economic, psychological and health disaster as more than half the life span of a person is spent within the broad framework of home. A house can be many things in both appearance and its meaning and significance to those who live there (Pugh, 1990). As Jawahar Lal Nehru aptly said that a person is tied to his house and his neighbourhood. He spends most of his time therein. Satisfaction derived from within the house affects human life considerably. House is not a mere shelter but is a product of complex socio-economic processes (UNO, 1977). The construction material of a house reflects the quality of life of the household that lives in it. The quality of building material used not only reflect its durability to stand against harsh weather conditions such as excessive heat, cold and rain etc and other environmental factor but also give security to the residents against theft, fire etc. Nature of locally available building materials, climatic and environmental conditions and physical conditions of space and socio-economic status of a person are some of the factors which influence the quality of house (Sinha, 1965; Ramachandran and Padmanabha, 1967, Chand, 1995). The contemporary urban growth has caused a lot of deterioration in quality of housing (Pyare, 1977).

It is a well known fact that the houses of poorer sections of society are generally built with low quality construction material like mud, thatch, leaves, bamboo, wood etc. The poor housing structures create socio-economic, medico-psychological and spiritual strain on the occupant, due to their non-durability (Chand, 1995). This adds to the vicious circle of poverty as shown in the figure-1 below.

Figure-1 Vicious Circle of Poverty in Relation to Kutcha House



For poorer segments of society, locally available building material and climatic conditions play a major role in the house construction. But for the richer sections of the society, these two factors play a very little role in house construction. For them house is a status symbol and they spend a lot of money for good architectural designs and use durable and expensive materials for house construction. This means the type of building material used give a fair idea of one's economic status. One may say that the relative prosperity of an area can be gauged by making an in-depth analysis of the type of houses in that area. In the light of above discussion, an attempt is being made to understand and comprehend the quality of housing in terms of materials used for their construction in NCR.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The purposes of this study are

1. To analyse and comprehend the spatial patterns of housing in NCR.
2. To fathom the rural-urban disparities in terms of quality of housing.

3. METHODOLOGY:

Keeping objectives in mind, the study is carried out at household level. The data is taken from census of India household tables. The houses are divided into three categories on the basis of durability of houses. These are Kutcha house, Semi-Pucca house and Pucca house. While the most durable are the pucca houses with all three parts (roof, floor and wall) made of durable materials. Kutcha houses are those with all parts made of non-durable materials whereas semi-pucca houses either have one or two parts made of durable materials. Some statistical techniques such as simple percentage and Sopher's Disparity Index (D.I.) as modified by Prof. Kundu and Rao in 1986 are used. DI is calculated as follows;

$$\text{Disparity Index} = \log \left(\frac{x_2}{x_1} \right) + \log \left(\frac{200 - x_1}{200 - x_2} \right) \quad \text{where } x_2 > x_1$$

And range method is used to categorise the values of Disparity Index.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

There is predominance of pucca houses in NCR as about $3/4^{\text{th}}$ of the households live in pucca house as compared to only 6.7% in Kutcha houses. But NCR has slightly less proportion of households living in pucca houses in comparison to National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD), which has about $4/5^{\text{th}}$ of households occupying pucca houses. NCR has more households living in semi-pucca and Kutcha house than NCTD. In NCR, predominance of pucca houses is largely due to the higher levels of urbanisation, industrialisation, agricultural development and literacy as compared to the nation as a whole. To get a much better and clear picture of type of houses and their distribution, rural urban breakup is taken into consideration. Examining the rural and urban areas separately, it is found that urban areas have higher percentages of households living in pucca houses in comparison to rural areas both in NCR and NCTD. In rural areas of NCR, households living in pucca houses constitute only 70.4% whereas it is 79.2% for NCTD. This may be explained by more urban influence on the surrounding rural areas of Delhi and high degree of industrial and agricultural development mainly due to truck farming. Besides this, burgeoning demand for low rent housing by in-migrants to the city, forces them to go to surrounding rural areas, which enhances income levels of the rural population. Thus increase in their purchasing power. In urban areas, NCR has more than $4/5^{\text{th}}$ (84.8%) of the households living in pucca houses, whereas this percentage for NCTD is only 80.1%. This can partly be explained by the large number of slums and squatter settlements in Delhi. Another factor is that with increase in demand for housing and simultaneous spatial expansion of an urban area, village that lie in immediate agricultural hinterland also become an integral part of urban settlement. Generally, the houses in these villages are predominantly built of Kutcha and semi-pucca materials except of well-off households. These two factors together explain lower percentage of households in pucca houses in Delhi in comparison to NCR.

Semi-pucca houses follow pucca houses both in rural and urban areas. In rural areas of NCR semi-pucca houses constitute about $1/4^{\text{th}}$ (22.5%) of the households whereas in urban areas, there percentage is much lower i.e. 10.4%. NCTD has lower percentage of households in semi-pucca category with 15.4% in rural areas and 13.9% in urban areas. Higher percentage of Kutcha households in rural areas (7.1%) of NCR as compared to the rural areas (5.4%) of NCTD shows that rural areas of NCR enjoys poor quality of life as compared to rural Delhi in terms of housing structure. Reverse is true for urban areas of this region. This indicates poor economic condition and predominance of locally available materials in rural NCR. It also shows growth of slums and squatter settlements in urban Delhi.

Table-1 Shows Rural-Urban Disparity Index (Pucca Houses) in NCR- 1991

| Sr. No. | Classes of D.I. | Frequencies | Districts/UT |
|---------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | >0.2 | 4 | Meerut, Gaziabad, Gurgaon, Alwar |
| 2. | 0.1 – 0.2 | 3 | Bulandsahar, Panipat, Rohtak |
| 3. | < 0.1 | 4 | Delhi, Sonipat, Faridabad, Rewari |

The urban areas of all the districts of NCR have higher proportion of households living in pucca houses in comparison to rural areas. But this difference is not uniform in all the districts. Some districts have higher rural urban differences than the other (Table -1). The highest disparities occur in districts of Meerut, Gaziabad, Gurgaon and Alwar, which have more than 0.2 rural-urban disparities in terms of proportion of households living in pucca houses. The lowest disparity is found in Delhi and Faridabad, which is very close to zero. The districts of Bulandsahar, Panipat and Rohtak have rural-urban disparity between 0.1 and 0.2. The higher rural-urban disparity shows the wide gaps in economic condition of urban and rural areas of these districts. The urban areas are economically much better than rural areas of these districts, which also indicate the differences in the levels of living of the population, infant mortality rates, maternal mortality rate and morbidity. The districts with low rural-urban disparity levels show low rural-urban differentials in terms of socio-economic development.

5. CONCLUSION:

The levels of urbanisation, industrialisation, agricultural development and locally available materials play a big role in the distribution of house type in NCR. In urban areas, government housing agencies and private builders while in rural areas economic status of a person or household play a major role. High proportion of pucca houses predominates in both rural and urban areas of NCR but urban areas have larger share of pucca houses. Kutchha houses constitute very low percentages in both rural and urban areas of the region. If a regionalisation is attempted for NCR according to house type, then districts with better housing conditions are Rohtak, Sonipat and Rewari, having more than 80% of households living in pucca houses. Delhi, Panipat, Faridabad, Gurgaon and Bulandsahar fall in the range of 75% to 80%, while the rest have below 75% but above 60%. NCTD has slightly better housing conditions as compared to NCR. But overall housing conditions in NCR are better than the whole nation. Still more and more efforts by government agencies, private builders and housing societies is needed to improve housing conditions in NCR to check migration to Delhi. Efforts should more on rural housing front as little or no attention is paid by our policy makers and administrators for the development of rural housing sector.

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