FOLK HOUSES IN SINDH
A STUDY IN CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
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MOHAMMAD SAFIRUDDIN

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
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**ABSTRACT**

Sindh has a long and rich cultural history dating back from Mohenjodaro Civilization (2500 B.C.). It has received waves of migrants from northern India, Gujrat, Punjab, Arab countries, Balochistan and other areas. The migrants have been fully absorbed in Sindhi culture. A number of indigenous house types in Sindh have developed. However the Punjabi house type brought by the migrant from East Punjab from 1932 onward has not fully acquired Sindhi imprint.

In the wake of invasion of modern architecture the rural houses are likely to undergo changes. Therefore the study of folk houses in Sindh has become important.
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Muhammad Safiruddin
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

House is not simply a shelter. It is a physical form given to culture, desires and dreams of a people. It embodies one’s religious beliefs and social needs. It represents the cultural heritage of group that inhabits it. It also reflects the climatic conditions, landform characteristics and the building materials available. Thus folk house is the material expression of the culture of the people and the physical conditions of the area.

Forms and Construction Materials

The folk houses possess distinct forms and character. It is imparted by the layout of the house and by the windows and doors and their placement in the house. The materials used in house construction also impart distinct character to folk houses. Folk houses are constructed with materials locally available like mud, stone, wood, leaves and grasses. But the manner in which these materials are used change the very look of the house. The house may be rectangular, squarish or round. The roof may be laid over a mud wall, a stone wall or wooden posts. If may be thatched with grasses or leaves or may be made of mud supported by wooden beams.

Typology

Many types of houses have emerged in the world. The round houses of Africa, the rectangular houses of Europe, the courtyard houses of South Asia, the platform houses of South East Asia, the long houses of the Pacific Islands and the igloos of Eskimos speak of a variety of houses found in different parts of the world. The houses differ not only from one region to another but they also differ from one cultural group to another within
the same region. That is why the study of houses has interested the geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, architects and other scientists for a long time. They have analyzed the evolution of houses from rock ledge to lean-to and eventually to huts and again from cave houses to pit houses and eventually to subterranean houses (Matmata House). The layout, the internal structure and differentiation within houses have been analyzed; the external forms, the roofs and walls have been studied. The orientation of the houses and superstitions if any involved with them have been probed into. Hart claims that the study of house types is the core of settlement geography within the broad spectrum of cultural geography.

**Background Literature**

Rapport (1969) gives a comprehensive analysis of vernacular house types in the world. Kniffen, (1965), Glassie and Buruskill (1971) analyzed the houses of North America, Liu (1957), Villiminit (1958), Taut (1958), Brunu (1983), and Engle studied the house of Japan and China. Sopher (1967), Khan and Chowdhury (1965) looked into the tribal houses of Bangladesh. Ahmed, (1952), Mukherjee (1962) and Dubey (1935) got interested in the houses of India. Not much work has been done on Sindh. The only article dealing with rural settlements of Sindh with a brief reference to house types is that of Nasir Khan (1957). Recently Dhanani, Mastoi and Safiruddin (1991) studied Chaunro House type of Thar. “Otaq” (multipurpose guest house of Sindh) has been analyzed by Khan, Dhanani and Safiruddin (1993). Rehman has tangentially talked about house types of Sindh. Therefore a big gap exists in the settlement geography of Sindh. The present work aims to bridge this gap to some extent.

**Sindh’s Geographical Conditions**

Sindh occupies southeastern part of Pakistan and exhibits a marked geographical diversity. It is a hot and dry region. Summer temperature remains above 32°C and winter
temperature around 15° C. The annual rainfall in most parts is below 25 cm. The whole
province would have looked dry and dreary devoid of vegetation but for the Indus river
which flows through its central part.
The canals taken off from the Indus have turned the central parts into green agricultural
area. The eastern part is occupied by the Thar Desert and the western part by hills which
are the outskirts of the Kirthar Mountains. The central valley is thickly populated whereas
the eastern and western parts are thinly populated.

**Sindh in Historical Perspective**

Sindh has remained the abode of man since the Stone Age. From that time onward man
has made steady progress. About 5000 years ago the famous Indus Valley Civilization
developed of which Mohenjodaro bears testimony. The fertile Indus Valley has attracted
invaders and settlers for many centuries. They largely came from west and in
comparatively smaller number from north and east. They came with their own culture and
with their own house types. With the passage of time changes in those houses were made
to suit the local conditions. Some features of the existing house were borrowed and the
indigenous houses adopted some features of the house introduced into Sindh by the
migrants. As a result a number of house types have emerged in Sindh. Wood houses in
southern Sindh and mud houses in western Sindh. It is time that the rural house types of
Sindh be studied because they are living documents of Sindhi culture. Under the impact
of Western culture and urban influence the rural house type of Sindh are undergoing
changes. After some years this great Sindh heritage will lose much of its character with
this in view the present study has been undertaken.

**Analytical Framework**

The basic houses types and their subtypes have been identified on the basis of external
forms and internal structure. The distribution of house types has been described and
analyzed in the light of cultural and physical set-up. In the absence of written material the work is primarily based upon field survey.

**Field Survey**

More than a year was spent in intensive field survey of Sindh. Later spot survey of some areas were undertaken for rechecking.

For field survey Sindh was divided into a number of regions based upon social and physical conditions. From every region sample villages were surveyed. Field survey included mapping, sketching and photography of the houses and the villages. The layout and internal structure of the houses were studied. Material used for house construction and the mode of construction were investigated. Socio-economic conditions of the village and those of the owner of the house were found out. With the help of these surveys, the major house types and their subtypes have been identified. The evolution of the house types and their distribution have been analyzed in the light of cultural succession, migration waves, physical set-up, religious and socio-economic conditions.

As a result of extensive and intensive field survey the following house types were recognized

  Chapper  
  Kothi  
  Waung  
  Chaunro  
  Punjabi

The details of these house types are presented in the pages that follow.

It is expected that this will be a contribution to the Cultural Geography of Sindh.

Before the house types are described in detail, it will be worthwhile to have a look at the physical set-up and cultural background of Sindh.
CHAPTER 2

THE PHYSICAL SETTING

The houses are anchored in land. They must have access to water but should remain safe from flood. The houses provide shelter from heat, wind and rain. The trees, the shrubs and grasses provide building materials particularly for the indigenous houses. Therefore a description of landforms, climate and vegetation of Sindh provides appropriate environmental setting for the study of rural house types.

PHYSIOGRAPHY

Sindh can be divided into three large physiographic regions: (Map 2.1)

1. Western Hilly Region
2. Central Indus Plains
3. Eastern Desert Area

Western Hilly Region

The south-western part of Sindh is occupied partly by the Kirthar Mountains and low hills. These mountains and hills are of the Tertiary age. The Kirthar Mountains form the boundary between Sindh and Balochistan. The Kirthar Mountains rise to more than 1000 meters forming barrier between Sindh and Balochistan. It is possible to cross the Kirthar at several points. The earliest route lies at the south, which connects Karachi with the Hub.
The south-western part of Sindh is covered with a number of low hill ranges, the Kambhu, Dumbar, Bhit, Bhadra and Lakhi. The southern part of south-western Sindh has such a rough terrain that it is called Sindh Kohistan (kohistan means hilly area). The south-western part of Sindh like other parts of the province is arid. The hill torrents flowing down the Kirthar do not carry large quantity of water. They become active when rainfall takes place. They flow eastward towards the Indus River but fail to reach the main stream. Some farming in their narrow valleys is practised during the rainy period. Over large part of rugged dry south-western Sindh, animal herding is common.

The Indus Valley

The Indus River flows through the central part of Sindh. It is in Sindh that the Indus River enters into the Arabian Sea. The Indus has built a large delta at its mouth. The Indus is a large river, about 29,000 km long, with 950 km of its course in Sindh. The Indus River has built a wide flood plain in Sindh. The Indus has moved east and west within this flood plain. During the rainy months (July and August) the lower areas along the bank are flooded. In years of severe floods vast areas beyond the banks go under flood water.

The Indus Valley of Sindh is most urbanized, economically prosperous, heavily populated and culturally rich. This has remained the main attraction for many migrants entering Sindh. It is there that the largest varieties of rural house types are found.

The Eastern Desert

The eastern part of Sindh is occupied by an extensive desert called Thar. It is covered with dunes, longitudinal in the south and transverse in the north. The dunes, are separated by narrow elongated depressions called ‘talis’.

The life in the Thar desert is difficult. Water is scarce and is obtained from 100 to 200 feet deep wells. Rainfall which takes place sporadically fills up the depressions. The
water is used by men and animals as long as it is available. In the dry spells which are common many persons temporarily move to areas where water is available. They come back to their original homes when rainfall takes place. Under harsh climatic conditions the animals are worst sufferers. They die in large numbers. Animal herding is the main occupation in Thar desert. Cattle, sheep and camels are the main animals reared. “Barani” (rain-fed) agriculture is practised in patches. Minimum number of house types is found in this area. Of the house types Chaunro is the most common.

CLIMATE

Sindh experiences tropical arid climate. Summer remains hot over most of Sindh except the coastal area (Map 2.2). The mean monthly temperature in the hottest month, June remains above 32°C. Sindh then becomes a hot oven, with temperature at 36.9°C at Jacobabad, 34.1°C at Hyderabad, 33.40°C at Chhor and 36°C at Sukkur (Map 2.3). Jacobabad recorded temperature of 53°C on June 3, 1919 which remains the highest temperature recorded in Pakistan. The coastal area is relatively less hot with average temperature of 31.4°C at Karachi in the hottest month, June.

The winter remains cool (Map 2.4). The mean monthly temperature in January, the coolest month, remains 18.1°C. Inland lower temperatures are recorded with 15.1°C at Jacobabad, 16°C at Chhor and 15°C at Sukkur (Map 2.5). The average temperatures conceal the winter chill experienced by Sindh. There in no station in Sindh where the temperature has not dropped to freezing point. Karachi located at the coast recorded zero degrees temperature on 31 January 1934. Hyderabad recorded minimum temperature of -1°C on 31 January, 1929, Chorr -2.00°C on January 12, 1967, Jacobabad -4°C on 23th January 1905, and Sukkur -4°C in 31 January 1929. In the interior low temperature in winter is common. The chilly winds make the situation worse.
Rainfall

Sindh is an arid area. Badin is the wettest place with mean annual rainfall of 222.1 mm (Map 2.6). Most of the rainfall comes from the Monsoon (July to September). Some rainfall comes from the Western Disturbances from December to March. The intervening periods (April to June) and (October to November) remain very dry. But these are periods of thunderstorms when strong winds and heavy rainfall takes place. During the Monsoon season also cloudbursts take place occasionally and cause heavy downpour. All the meteorological stations have received rainfall of more than 180 mm in 24 hours (Map 2.7). The highest recorded rainfall within 24 hours was 184 mm at Sukkur on 15.7.1978 and at Jacobabad 251.5 mm on 7.8.1988. Thus the houses must be so built that they withstand heavy showers.

Wind

Houses with good air circulation are comfortable. Therefore, in southern Sindh the houses are south facing where the winds are sout-westerly in summer. They have also built ‘badgirs’ (wind catchers) to get fresh air. But occasionally very strong wind blows. If the house is not strong enough, it may be damaged by the wind. The winds are stronger in northern Sindh than those in southern Sindh. In June 1974 winds with speed of 56 knots per hour blew at Jacobabad in June, 1976, 44 Knots at Sukkur in July 1975 and 43 Knots at Nawabshah in May 1975. Such conditions are kept in mind when houses are constructed (Map 2.8).

The houses provide shelter from chilly nights in winter and scorching sun in summer. Rainfall is not heavy but cloud bursts, thunderstorms and dust storms take place occasionally. While building the houses these realities have to be kept in mind.
VEGETATION

Trees provide house posts and beams and grasses are used as thatching materials for houses. Therefore the vegetation of Sindh is of particular relevance.

Sindh is an arid area. Vegetation consists of limited verities of plants. Sindh is divided into four vegetation belts (Map 2.9).

Tropical Thorn Forests; the most dominant

Bela or Riverine Forest – along the banks of River Indus

Mongrove Forest – along marshy coasts

Desert vegetation – covers the Thar desert in the eastern part of Sindh

Tropical Thorn Forest

The major part of Sindh is covered with tropical thorn forests. These forests are patchy and open. They do not cover vast stretches of land. They carry thorny hard wood trees like acacia, tamarisk and salvadora. They can be used for making house posts, beams, doors and windows.

Bela or Riverine Forests

Narrow belts along the Indus River are covered with “Bela” or riverine forests. These forests are comparatively thick but cover a narrow belt along the Indus. The most common trees are “babul” (Acacia arabica) and “shisham” (Dalbergia sisoo). In waterlogged areas there are willow “dhak” (Butea forondosa). “Shisham” is a well-known furniture wood. Windows and doors are also made of “Shisham” by men of means. “Babul” is commonly used to make house-posts and beams.
**Mangrove Forest**
Mangrove forest covers the marshy narrow belt along the coastal areas of Sindh. Owing to the lack of freshwater, the trees are stunted. “Timur” (Avicennia officinalis), “chauri” or “kirami” (Ceriops), and “Kunni” (Rhizophorras) are the main species found. They are primarily used for firewood and secondarily as thatching material for huts.

**Desert Vegetation**
The greater part of Sindh is covered with an extensive desert called, Thar. Most of it is treeless with clumps of bushes and shrubs and a few trees in favoured spots. When and where rainfall takes place, lush green grasses grow which are either eaten by animals or whither away. The trees provide materials for house construction.
CHAPTER 3

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Cultural History

Sindh has been the abode of man from the Stone age. Farming had started in Sindh long before the Moenjodaro Civilization. Small scattered villages practised agriculture in favourable areas. It was from the midst of these villages that the Indus Valley Civilization emerged around 5000 year ago. Moenjo-daro was the seat of the government. Artifacts collected from that site speak of a great civilization that had developed. But that civilization disappeared suddenly and much details about its disappearance are not available.

More continuous details about Sindh are available from 12-13th century when Jayadartha, King of Sindh, supported Pandvas against Kauravas whose wife was abducted by the Kauravas (Aitkins, 1907,) This was the time when Hinduism and Sanskrit language spread over Sindh. That remained the religion and language of Sindh for a long time. The annexation of Sindh to the empire of Darius in 515 BC and the invasion of Sindh by Alexander in 326 did not bring any appreciable change in the culture of Sindh. Their stay was short-lived and they were not interested in disturbing the cultural set-up of Sindh.

Scythians came to Sindh from north about a century before the Christian era. They did not bring much cultural change but racial change did take place. Jats and Meds are said to be Scythians.

Noticeable social change in the Sindh was witnessed after the occupation of Sindh by Chandargupta and his successor Asoka (who became a Buddhist). Buddhism started to spread in Sindh. A conflict started between Hindus and Buddhists. Buddhism was fully entrenched and flourishad along with Hinduism. Asoka died in 244 BC after that the
revival of Hinduism again started in Sindh. The recession of Buddhism started. A Hindu dynasty occupied Sindh and ruled Sindh for five generations. Its kingdom extended from Multan to the sea and included Jhalwan (a part of Balochistan). Rajputs were then the rulers.

In 631 AD, Chach, a Brahman, seized the throne and married the widow of Rajput king Shasla II who was then the ruler. Chach was a strong man. He extended his empire upto Las Bela (Balochistan). Hinduism started to spread like a fire. Buddhism was almost wiped out. The rule of Chach and Dahir, the son and successor of Chach continued upto 711 AD. It was then that the Muslims occupied Sindh.

**Muslim Occupation of Sindh**

The Muslims had started to come to Sindh from the time of Chach as traders. An Arab vessel was attacked and plundered, and some women were taken as captive during the reign of Dahir. That enraged Hajaj, the governor of Iraq who sent his nephew, Muhammad Bin Qasim, a youth of twenty, to conquer Sindh. In less than six months he conquered Sindh.

Arabs were true to their words. They allowed the Hindus to retain all their rights and privileges, including liberty to practice their religion (Atkin, 1907). Merchants and craftsman pursued their profession freely and with dignity in pursuance of Islamic Law. The Hindus were greatly impressed by this. Conversion to Islam on a large scale started to take place. The Hindus who preferred to retain their religion enjoyed complete freedom.

Arab rule in Sindh ended with the occupation of Multan in 1026 by and his deputy Abdur Razzaque conquering Sindh. Thus the Arab rule which lasted for more than three hundred years ended. But Islam brought to Sindh by the Arabs continued to play its role as a religion and in the social life of Sindh. In food and in social habits, hospitality and tolerance, Islamic influence still reigns supreme. In house structure also Islamic influence
can be recognized. About the end of the 12 century Sindh became part of the Delhi Kingdom during the times of Shahabuddin Ghori. From that time onwards till the occupation of Sindh by the British in 1843 Sindh remained under the Muslim rulers. Sometimes these rulers were fully under the Delhi Kings. Sometime they acquired limitless autonomy and temporarily they also became independent.

Samahs, Sammas, the Jams, Arghuns, the Tarkhan, Daudpotas, Kalhoras and Talpurs ruled Sindh one after another, sometimes as an independent ruler and sometimes under the umbrella of Delhi Kings. During this entire long period Sindh was never an isolated territory. Waves of settlers entered Sindh mostly from the west.

Arabs continuously came to Sindh from 711 AD onward for three hundred years. After that also their entry within Sindh continued intermittently.

Another large group to enter Sindh was the Balochi. Sometime they came as soldiers in large numbers along with invading army as in the time of Arghuns and Talpurs. In other times they come as settlers in the fertile valley of the Indus.

Besides the large groups entering Sindh there had been small waves of immigrants who came from central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan. For example, on invitation Lal Shahbaz Qalander came with his disciples and settled in Sehwan. His spiritual and cultural influence spread far and wide in Sindh.

The British period

The British formally annexed Sindh in 1843. Their rule continued up to 1947 when Pakistan was created.

The British brought many changes into Sindh including changes in rural houses. The British had developed canal and railway colonies in the interior of Sindh. Their houses had pattern of their own. The villagers living close to these colonies introduced some features of these houses in their ancestral houses.
Pakistan Period

Pakistan was created in 1947. A large number of Sindhis moved to other parts of the province for job, business and other work. A still larger number of persons came to Sindh from other parts of Pakistan and also India. Besides agriculture and pastoral activities the Sindhis entered government jobs, and become teachers, lawyers, doctors businessmen and adopted many other professions. They came into contact with new things, new ideas and new house types. Slowly the rural houses started to change.

The cultural history clearly brings out that Sindh is in possession of a very old and rich culture. It is inhabited by people of different tribes and religions. They have lived together for centuries and in a long process of cultural interaction Sindhi village and house types have emerged. A brief description of the people living in Sindhi Village may explain some aspects of their relationship with the various house types.

The People

Sindh is inhabited by people of different races who came from different places. The Dravidians, the Aryans, the Arabs, the Iranians, the people from Punjab, Balochistan and Kutch came and settled in Sindh. They belonged to different races.

The Jats came to Sindh from Punjab and Rajasthan long before the Muslim invasion of Sindh. They were largely camelmen spread all over Sindh. Later they adopted farming.

The Baluchis are yet another tribe in Sindh. They claim their origin from Syria from where they moved eastward in Balochistan. They entered Sindh in the 12th century. From that time onward they had come to Sindh in interrupted waves as invaders and also as settlers in the fertile Indus Valley. Long ago they were integrated in Sindhi society and culture.

The Samras and Sumros are important Sindhi Muslim tribes. The Sammas were largely agriculturists, while the Sumros were craftsmen. Mallahs were the fisherman who lived along the Mancher Lake and the river bushes. They still follow their old life pattern.
Non-Muslim Tribes
Among the non-Muslim tribes were the Sudhas. They are a branch of Rajputs and are widely distributed. The Chohans of Nagarparkar and the Brahmans are important groups. The Brahmans were the religious leaders.
There were some aboriginal tribes like the Bhils and Koli who were confined to Tharparkar.
The various tribes have contributed to the development of Sindhi culture. The religious differences are reflected in their eating habits and to some extent in their houses. The integration seems to be complete within all parts of Sindh except the Thar Desert.

SINDHI VILLAGE (GOTH)
Sindhi villages are located close to a road, river, canal or water channel. Usually the village is not located on the road but at a close distance from the road. However it tries to remain as close to the water channel as possible. From a distance the village looks like a cluster of trees which are grown invariably around the village. The trees protect the village from gusty winds and safe blast. It provide shade to villagers and the privacy that the villagers greatly value.

Village Structure
A Sindh village is constituted of a cluster of houses, ‘Otaq’ and a Mosque (Map 3.1). ‘Otaq’ is primarily a guest house. It is owned usually by a landlord and some time by a ‘Pir’ (a religious leader). It is in Otaq that the guest are entertained and it is there that they sleep. The guests do not go within the village. It is in Otaq that the village disputes are settled. It is there that the villagers assemble in celebrations of Eid, marriage or child birth. A large village may have more than one Otaq.
Apart from Otaq the village may have a few grocery shops which carry a variety of goods. It may also have tea shops. As the villages grows in size, its functions also increases. It may have a school. A larger village many have a separate boys and girls school. It may have a few craftsmen, a carpenter and a blacksmith. In large villages there may be a clinic and a few government offices. All the ancillary establishments are invariably located at the periphery of the villages. For the outsiders and visitors, the village where houses are located is a forbidden area.

A Sindhi village may be uni-tribal or multi-tribal. It can be occupied by a group of one religion or several religions. Each group either ethnic or religious forms a separate clustor within the village. For example, Junejo and Jokhio will be living within a separate cluster of houses built by its tribe. Similarly religious group will have separate cluster of houses. There is a hardly any road within village proper. Winding open passages between house clusters are used for movement. A cluster of houses may signify a group of close relatives living together. The hedges which separate the houses are such that movement from one house to another is not impeded. The houses built within the clusters will be of different types and are made of different materials, depending upon their cultural affinity and resources.
CHAPTER 4

CHAPPER HOUSE

Chapper is a rudimentary house type of Sindh. Its walls are made of grasses and leaves. Sometimes they are mud plastered. It has a thatched roof. The materials of which it is made, “Sar”, “Kana” and wooden logs are locally available. It seems to have its origin in southcentral Sindh probably in Thatta District. It is widely distributed in Nawabshah, Naushahro Feroze, Badin, Thatta, Mirpurkhas and Dadu Districts (Fig 4.1). It is associated with a number of tribes like Samma, Sirki, Syed and Bania. With the passage of time changes in the original house have taken place. Today three types of Chapper house are recognized.

Bamboo Chapper House (photo 4.2 & 3)

Mat and Log Chapper House

Mat and Mud Chapper House

Construction

Bamboo Chapper House

The construction of bamboo chapper house involves the use of “Kana”, “Sar”, “pattar” and bamboos. Except bamboos all other construction materials are locally available. Bamboos have to be purchased from the market. The use of bamboos signifies the change that has occurred in the original chapper house.
The house construction begins with digging the ground about two feet deep, which forms the plinth. A net of bamboo sticks are placed in the plinth and continued upward up to a height of 12 feet. The net of bamboo sticks is then filled with a mixture of mud and husk. The roof is laid over wooden logs, which are erected at the four corner of the room. A horizontal log is also placed to hold the roof frame, which is made of “pattar”. Then a layer of “Sar” and “Kana” about two feet thick forms the roof. It is plastered with a thin layer of mud.

The walls are made of leaves and grasses and are plastered with mud.

**Mat and Log Chapper House**

The mat and mud houses are constructed with mat, wooden log, “Sar”, “Kana” and mud (Photo 4.4). The land selected for house is covered with a layer of mud two to three feet thick (Photo 4.5). To construct the walls, a number of poles are fixed about four feet apart. The poles are made of tree branches. Further horizontal poles are tied to the vertical poles to impart strength. The wooden frame thus constructed is covered with mat which is plastered with mud. For the construction of roof a row of poles are erected lengthwise in the central part of the rooms. These poles are interconnected with a number of horizontal poles. From the central horizontal pole, a number of poles are laid out up to the frame of the walls. The whole frame of roof is covered with mat. The mat in its turn covered with “Sar” and “Kana” to protect the room from heat and rain. Thus a hip-roof is constructed, sloping in opposite directions from the central part of the room.

**Mat and Mud Brick Chapper House**

Mat and Mud Brick House is a large house of three or four rooms. It has hip-roofs sloping in opposite direction from the central part of the room (Photo 4.6).

For the construction of mat and mud brick house the first step is to make mud bricks. For this mud and rice straw are mixed together. Then bricks are made from this mixture and dried in the sun for three or four days. Ground is then dug about 2-3 feet deep for the
construction of walls. In the long ditch made for the foundation of the walls mud bricks are placed. The bricks are joined together with a mixture of mud and lime. From the foundation mud brick walls are raised to a height of 12 to 14 feet. The walls are plastered with a mixture of rice straw and mud. This imparts strength to the walls.

For the construction of rooms a net of wooden bars are placed over the walls covering the rooms. Over this net a thatch mat about 6 inches thick is placed. This is plastered with mud and straw to the protect upper surface of the roof.

**LAY OUT**

The chapper house comprises the following components (Fig. 4.7, 8 & 9):

Rooms

Landhi

Veranda

Courtyard

Kitchen

Cattle Pen

Some variations occur in the various types of Chapper House.

**Rooms**

Bamboo Chapper house has one or two rooms. The rooms are usually 10 by 12 feet or 12 by 14 feet. One or two cots are placed inside the room (Photo 4.10). The rooms are used for sleeping in winter (Photo 4.11). In that season cooking is also done inside the room. In summer the rooms are used as shelter from scorching sun in the day-time. At night courtyard is used for sleeping. Rooms do not have windows but they have ventilators.
**Mat and Log Chapper House**

The distinctive feature of mat and log chapper house is that besides rooms it has “Landhi”. Rooms are usually of 12 by 14 feet. To every room a “Landhi” is attached. “Landhi” is a large hall 10 x 18 feet in size. An open entrance about 5 to 6 feet is provided with no door. But it has no window. During summer day-time activities are confined in the “Landhi”. It is also used in winter. The family member sit and gossip there. It is the playing place for the children. Food items are kept there. Meals are taken there. There is also a hearth for cooking food.

A room and a “Landhi” are owned by every family. The number of families in a house varies from one to three. If there are three “Landhis”, that means three families are living in that house.

**Mat and Mud Brick Chapper House**

Mat and mud-brick house is a large house with three or four rooms. The rooms are so laid out that they form a “U” with rooms on three sides opening in the courtyard. The rooms are large 12 x 20 in size. It has a door in the central part of the walls opening inside the house. Rooms are properly ventilated with windows opening in the veranda and also at the back of the house. It may be pointed out that Bamboo Chapper House and Mat and log Chapper House have no window.

**Veranda**

Veranda is a common but not a necessary features of Bamboo Chapper House. Some of the houses have no veranda. The veranda is built by the extension of the roof of the
rooms. The roof the veranda rests upon wooden pillars, which are erected for that purpose. Occasionally a room is built on one side the veranda.

Veranda is built in Mat and Log House also by extension of the roofs. Landhi also has a veranda. Veranda is a more prominent feature of Mat and Mud-brick House. Once again the veranda is covered the extension of roofs of the rooms.

Veranda is put to multipurpose uses. It acts as the living place. It is the sleeping place in summer. It acts as a dining place. It is there that female guests are received and entertained.

**Courtyard**
A specious courtyard extend out from the built up part of the house. It is there that in summer the male members sleep at night and the evening meal is taken there. Functions like wedding are held there.

The kitchen is also there. In summer during day time cooking is done in “Landi” or in the veranda.

**Cattle Pen**
Cattle are also kept in one corner of the courtyard. They also usually live in open. A flimsy shed is provided to protect them from intensive summer heat and winter cold.

The courtyard is surround by a thorny bush with one opening acting as entrance to the house (Photo 4.12 & 13).
CHAPTER 5

KOTHI HOUSE

Kothi is basically a mud house with thatched roof. It originated in Jacobabad and Larkana Districts. It is associated with some Balochi tribes like Khosa, Magsi and Sirky (Ansar, 1980). From Jacobabad and Larkana, the Kothi house migrated to Shikarpur, Sukkur and Khairpur. Later it entered into Hyderabad and Mirpur Khas (Fig 5.1).

With the passage of time, the Kothi house not only diffused to new area but also changes in its structure took place. The original mud Kothi house was later built of mud brick and then of baked brick. On the basis of their construction three types of Kothi House can be recognized.

Mud Kothi House (Photo 5.2 & 3)

Mud Brick Kothi House

Baked Brick Kothi House

Construction

Mud Kothi House

Mud Kothi House has mud walls and thatched roof. Later some improvement in the roof was made.

Mud, rice straw and wooden logs constitute the main materials for the constructions of the Kothi mud house. Mud and rice straw are locally available in abundance, and the wooden logs are collected from nearby forests. Firstly, a wooden frame is prepared for
the construction of walls. Wooden logs are fixed 4 feet apart to a depth of 3-4 feet. The height of logs is about 10 feet above the ground level. Wooden frames are erected at the four corners of the rooms; logs serving as pillars are fastened to horizontal logs up to roof height. The wall frame so formed is thick. It is then filled with mixture of mud and rice straw, leaving spaces for provision of doors, windows and ventilators.

The roof of a Kothi mud house is normally flat. A net of wood logs is made and tied with strong, thick logs of the walls. Wooden planks are tied to the frame on the downward side over which a bunch of about 2 feet thick, is tied with steel wire on the roof frame. Over the frame a layer of mixture of mud and straw is laid and left to dry. When it becomes dry, another layer is laid, and the process is repeated until it gains a thickness of almost 2 feet. While plastering the roof with a mixture of mud and straw, a slight slope is maintained for the rain-water to flow out.

**Mud Brick Kothi House**

The materials used in the construction of the Kothi mud brick house consist of mud bricks, tiers, girders, mud plaster, and straw locally called “kua” (Photo 5.4). There are several phases in the construction processes from mud brick casting to roof laying and erection of boundary wall. First, sun-dried bricks are prepared. Mud and straw (kua) is mixed with water and kept over a week for good mixing essential for desired strength. Thereafter the mixture is poured into a casting frame which give shape to bricks to a required size. Next the plinth, four feet deep and two feet wide, is raised. The rooms are
16-18 feet in length and generally 14 feet in width, while the roof height varies from 12 to 14 feet. The mud bricks in the plinth are placed horizontally and joined together with mixture of mud and lime. From the ground level about two feet wide walls are constructed to maximum height of doors and windows, over which girders and wooden planks are placed to fix doors and windows. On walls which reach 12-14 feet height, girders are placed lengthwise 5 to 6 feet apart. Tiers are then laid over the girders along the width of the room. A layer of sun-dried bricks covering the entire roof is placed on the network formed by girders and tiers. Further, mixture of mud and straw is pread over the layer of bricks to attain thickness of about two feet, with top slanted towards the front for easy drain of rain water (Photo 5.5 & 6).

**Baked Brick Kothi House**
The Baked Brick Kothi house is built of baked brick, cement, iron tiers and girders, wooden logs, timber and ‘Kana’. Columns of bricks, 2 to 3 feet deep, are raised at the corners of rooms and also in the centre of walls in the case of large rooms. Placed horizontally, bricks are joined at the wider sides with cement in a way that the centre of the column is left vacant. When column reaches a height of 12-14 feet, the blank space is filled with mixture of sand, lime, baked brick powder and cement. Between columns walls space is kept to facilitate wiring for electricity. When the wall construction is completed a frame of tiers and girders is placed over the walls to form the base of the roof. Over this frame, mixture of sand, cement and brick powder is laid to one foot
thickness. Roof is supported by placing thick wooden logs for a few weeks till it becomes dry and strong. Doors are made generally of timber and are fixed with iron-bar. In some houses have steel doors and windows.

The walls and roofs are plastered with cement and the floors are also cemented. Other units of the house like kitchen, animal shed etc., are constructed with patter, kana, and mud, logs and stems of trees.

The stairs leading to roof tops is a characteristic feature of this house type. There is however, no room or any other structure on the roof except a 4 feet high parapet raised for privacy. The stairs ascend from the courtyard. The front side of parapet is decorated with beautiful network made of cement. The veranda has ventilation running from one end to the other just below its roof. The windows and doors also have similar ventilators painted in yellow and white colours. Use of colours is also a distinctive feature. On the front walls generally there is a motif rich in colours and carved in the time-honored tradition of Sindhi culture. The cornice is a very common structure inside the rooms on which flower pots and decoration items are arranged (Photo 5.7 & 8).

The Lay Out
The components of Kothi House; (Fig 5.9, 10 & 11)

Room

Veranda

Kitchen

Courtyard

Cattle Pen

Grain Storage

Fence
**Rooms**

Kothi Mud House is generally a two-room structure with rooms standing in a row and having a common front. Each room has a door in the centre of the front wall and one window on each side of the door. Gratings of iron bars are fixed to the windows. One notable feature is the ventilator above the doors and windows about one to two feet below the roof level. The ventilators are either simple opening or have with cement and iron bar gratings.

The rooms are inter-connected with inner doors. The front of the room is covered by a veranda which stretches across the entire front of the room. The room walls are mud-plastered.

**Veranda (Padhar)**

A veranda about 12 feet wide is built in front of the rooms. It is a common feature of all the three types of Kothi houses. It serves as family living room. It is these that meals are taken. Family guests are entertained in the veranda.

The room in the mud-brick Kothi house are similar to those in mud Kothi house. However, baked-brick Kothi houses have generally three rooms. They are move spacious and generally have electricity.

**Kitchen**

The mud Kothi house and the mud-brick Kothi house has no permanent structure for kitchen. A small platform about 16 to 20 square feet, two feet above ground is built for
keeping utensil. Cooking is done in the courtyard or in the veranda depending upon the weather condition (Photo 5.12).

In backed brick Kothi house a permanent structure for kitchen is constructed with mud-brick and is plastered with mud (Photo 5.13). Cooking is done there. A wooden stand is made to keep utensils and water pitchers.

**Courtyard**

Courtyard is an open space of a comparatively large dimension in front of the veranda. Usually a tree is planted there for shade. A few cots are kept there where the family members may sit, gossip and take breakfast and supper.

**Cattle Pen**

In mud Kothi house cattle are kept in the open courtyard. In mud-brick and baked brick houses, cattle pen is constructed in the courtyard close to the built up area (Photo 5.14). The pen is usually 30-40 feet long and 12-14 feet in breath. It is raised on wooden pillars and is covered with attached roof (Photo 5.15). Fodder pans are provided inside the pen. The animals are kept in the pen and in the courtyard depending upon the weather conditions.

**Grain Storage**

The grains are kept in an earthen structure shaped like a funnel. At the base it is 5 feet wide. It tapers towards the top. It is generally six feet high. It is made of mud and straw (Photo 5.16).
**The Fence**
The mud and mud-brick Kothi houses are usually surrounded by a hedge with an opening which is used as a passage. In baked brick Kothi house besides the hedge a brick wall is contracted along the front part of the courtyard.
CHAPTER 6

THE WAUNG HOUSE

The word ‘waung’ in Sindhi means an arch. The Waung House is the one which has arches. Construction of arches requires high skill and is therefore expensive. It is normally adopted by well-to-do families and men of fine tastes. Arch is also a symbol of Islamic architecture. It is a common feature of mosques and palaces. Its adoption in ordinary dwelling lends prestige to the house and the household.

The traditional Waung house is found mainly in the upper Sindh districts of Jacobabad, Larkana and Khairpur, and in the lower Sindh district of Hyderabad (Fig 6.1).

The Balochis have lived in Sindh for several centuries, but their number increased greatly during the Moghal and Kalhora regimes. By the time the Kalhora yielded power to the Talpurs, the Balochi tribes had become a power of considerable strength. The Balochis did not intermingle much with
other racial groups in the valley and never lost contact with their collaterals in Balochistan.

Phases in Evolution of Waung House

Waung house has gone through a number of phases. In the first phase, the Waung was semicircular in shape. It was constructed with mud without proper pillar and arch. It had also no parapet on roof. In the second phase, a mud brick parapet was added and it contained rectangular gaps for air passage. It was in the third stage that the Waung design changed from semicircular shape to an elongated curve and with pillars looking like ring. The sun-dried brick parapet replaced the mud brick parapet.

Finally, in the fourth phase, baked bricks began to be used for construction of the Waung house.

Waung Facade

The facade presents a series of arches in perfect geometrical shape. Floral designs decorate the upper portion of the arch with brickwork designs stretching throughout the front above the arches. Parapet show rectangular, geometrical patterns, on the top of each arch. The supporting pillars of the arch are decorated with ring-work extending from the base up to the arch.

In a variant case which represents rather an up-to-date version of Waung, the arches are semicircular projecting upward with edges projecting outward. In
the space between the arches there are circular floral designs in white colour. There is a ring-work around the pillars of arches. The parapet is also beautifully designed. Also, there are rectangular air holes at each parapet wall.

To construct roof, firstly a frame of wooden beams is placed on walls and is supported by the longer front and side walls. Girders are placed at suitable interval to give greater strength to roof. Over this frame wooden slabs are placed to cover the entire roof. A layer of mixture of cement, lime, clay and brick pieces is laid to a thickness of about one foot and is covered with another layer of mud. These are compacted into a strong surface.

Types of Waung

Based on their mode of construction, there are two types of Waung: Waung made with mud and semi-dried bricks, and that made with baked bricks and cement.

a) Waung constructed with mud and mud bricks are normally simple. For Waung construction in the front wall of veranda, pillars are raised at a distance of 5 to 6 feet. In between the pillars a frame of steel arch is fixed and is filled with a mixture of mud and wheat stalks. After the mixture dries up it is plastered with thick mud paste. Further, after about two weeks the frame is detached, and finally mud plaster is applied over the
“waung” throughout the front elevation. For air passage into the rooms and veranda, a small gap of about six inches is made above the “waung”. It is commonly seen that mud-built Waung has no parapet wall.

b) Waung constructed with baked bricks and cement shows a delicate design on the pillars, “waung” and parapet. Pillars of baked bricks are erected up to 6 feet height and at a distance of 5-6 feet. A wooden arch frame is then fitted to the pillars up to 4 feet, and is filled with mortar, which is allowed to dry at least for two weeks. Then, baked bricks are placed up to the roof over the “waung” and are plastered with cement. Designed cemented net and mural work is carved on the pillars of the “waung” and above the “waung” up to the roof. In between the pillars bricks are laid to form rectangular designs which are painted in different colours. There is a parapet wall which is also beautifully designed with cement carvings.

Sub- types of Waung House:

On the basis of construction, the Waung house may be categorized into the following sub-types:

(a) Mud Brick with Mud Plaster (Photo 6.2 & 3)
(b) Baked Brick without Plaster
(c) Baked Brick with Cement Plaster
(a) **Mud Brick with Mud Plaster.** This type of house is constructed with mud bricks which are plastered with mixture of hay and mud. The floor is mud plastered. A layer of thick bricks is laid to form the floor. Roof is flat and tiers and girders are used in its construction. It is plastered with mixture of rice husk and mud on the interior and exterior surface.

The arch (Waung) in this case is simple; it is semi-circular in shape and rests directly on walls rather than on distinct pillars. There are generally two or three arches forming the front of the veranda. The arches are almost equally spaced to impart a symmetrical appearance to the façade.

(b) **Baked Brick without Plaster.** This category of the Waung house is built with baked bricks, cement, tiers and girders (Photo 6.4 & 5). Wood is used for door and windows. Walls are made with baked bricks. Beautifully carved arches in series cover the entire length of veranda and are built on pillars. Roofs are laid on tiers and girders and are plastered with the mixture of sand and cement, both externally and internally. Walls are cemented for smooth finish. The courtyard floor is laid with baked bricks, but its surface is not covered with plaster. A large segmented of the courtyard is demarcated by a low brick wall which separates the muddy ground from the brick-made floor of the
courtyard. The muddy ground is given to planting of a few trees, barn and open storage for some essential items.

Although the construction materials are the same for the above-mentioned categories, yet differentiation into two further sub-division is provided from the elevation as marked by arch design or style. In the first category the arch is a semi-circular, elongated upward and based on pillars, while in the second sub-type the veranda front consists of a series of arches resting on pillars. The arch is semi-circular and is projected upward.

The other notable difference lies in the structure of kitchen. In the first category an open kitchen is surrounded by a low mud wall and has an attached platform, about two feet wide, for keeping cooked food and utensils. In the second category the kitchen is an in-built structure with provisions for shelf and enough space for serving meals. Also in the first category house, the courtyard is open i.e. without enclosure, but in second category the courtyard is enclosed by a low brick wall, separating the space for trees, cattles and storage.

(c) Baked Brick with Cement Plaster, and Coloured. This sub-type is further divided on the basis of Waung design as under: (Photo 6.6 & 7).
(i) Arches decorating the veranda front are semi-circular (Fig 6.8), and are supported on columns, each with three rings around it. These houses also have parapet walls with small columns going slightly above the top of parapet wall (Photo 6.9).

(ii) Arches in the veranda front rest on columns and are elongated upward. In-built designs decorate the triangular space above the columns and between the arch apexes (Fig 6.10).

In sub-division (c-i) the courtyard is a raised platform, almost two feet high; it is cemented and open, with kitchen structure outside the raised platform in the courtyard. In the other sub-division (c-ii) the courtyard has mud floor, and is enclosed by a low mud wall, about 1.5 to 2.0 feet in height.

**Layout and Functions of Waung Houses**

The Waung house contains the following components: (Fig. 6.11, 6.12 & 6.13)

a. Rooms  
b. Veranda  

c. Kitchen  
d. Bath-room  

e. Store  
f. Cattle pen  

g. Courtyard
Rooms
The size of the room is normally 14 to 18 feet and its height is 12 to 14 feet. It has four windows and two doors each on opposite side. There is a ‘cot’, and a cupboard of steel in one corner. An open carved wooden shelf is hung on the wall at a height of about 7 feet, and tea sets, photographs and scenic paintings are displayed on it. In this type of house rooms are white-washed in blue and yellow tints. There are normally 3 or 4 rooms, depending on the number of families. Normally two or three families share a house. For three families, generally there are four rooms, one for each couple and one extra room for unmarried girls, children and old persons. The only purpose of the room is for sleeping and keeping jewlery and important items, documents etc. The location of the rooms is such that it is at the farthest distance from the main entrance. Rooms generally have their backs facing south. Rooms are considered to be safe. Since summer is quite hot, rooms are used in the day time also. At night the family members sit and sleep in the veranda and courtyard. In winter, rooms are used for sleeping during day and night.

Veranda
In Waung houses, veranda is located in front of the rooms and covers the whole length of the rooms. It is normally 20 to 25 feet in length and 10 to
12 feet in width. The height of its roof is the same as that of the rooms. Inside the veranda, there are a few chairs, a table and three or four cots (charpais) to serve the female guests. This is a common sitting place where female visitors are served. Children, young and old persons pass their leisure time. During daytime meals are also served in the veranda. In one corner of the veranda, water pots are kept on a wooden stand. In summer season people sleep at night and in winter day time activities are performed inside the veranda. Veranda provides adequate ventilation, and keeps away sun-rays from direct contact with walls of rooms. It keeps the rooms cool, and during heavy showers it also shelters the rooms.

**Courtyard**

A large open space adjacent to the veranda makes up the courtyard (Photo 6.14). It is surrounded by a 6-7 feet high boundary wall. In one corner of the courtyard a hand-pump (Berma) is installed and it is surrounded by a low wall, about four feet high. Here family members take bath and wash clothes. This open space has several functions for different occasions. It is here that children play and the old gossip. It is here that the marriage functions are held. When any member dies, the body is placed in the courtyard for a short period before the funeral procession sets off. Other functions are directly related to farming. There
are cane crushers, bullock carts and host of farm implements. During sowing and harvesting seasons the courtyard is utilized for keeping heaps of corn, and for winnowing and threshing. In the summer evenings, the family members gather in the courtyard for meals, and during hot summer they sleep as well. Normally there are no trees in the courtyard.

**Kitchen**

In Waung house, more than one kitchen is provided, according to the number of families sharing the house. The kitchen is located outside the veranda or adjacent to the rooms. There is only one door which opens toward the room. It is noted that in Waung house kitchen is a permanent structure, which is rare in any other house-type throughout Sindh. Inside the kitchen, in one side wall wooden shelves are fixed for keeping articles of daily use and utensils. Wood and cow dung cakes are used as fuel. The hearth is made of mud, and is normally directed south. A raised platform is constructed beside the hearth, about 4 feet high and 4 x 4 feet in dimension; over it cooked food is kept.

**Store**

Store is a notable feature in this type of house. It is located close to the room, and has a single door. Its size is about 8 x 8 feet. Food grains, animal fodder and implements are stored in it.
**Bathroom**

Bathroom is located just at one end of the courtyard. They are usually two in number, one for males and the other for females. Permanent structure of bathroom is a feature which characterizes the Waung house.

**Cattle Pen**

It is a place where domestic animals like cows and buffaloes are kept (Photo. 6.15). Its four sides are open, with thatch forming its roof. A large wooden bowl is kept at one side of the pen (Mannah) for serving fodder and water to the animals. Forage cutting machine is installed just near the pen for easy access (Photo 6.16).

**Summation**

The Waung house originated in upper Sindh districts of Shikarpur, Jacobabad and Larkana as characteristic dwelling of Balochis. A number of well-to-do and land owning Balochis from the upper Sindh tribes migrated to Khairpur and Hyderabad districts and introduced the Waung house there. As these migrants were economically well-off and enjoyed respectable positions in government and other important organizations, they were able to bring modifications and improve the quality of their house.
CHAPTER 7

CHAUNRO HOUSE TYPE

Chaunro is a rural house of Thar Desert. It has a round structure topped by a conical thatch roof. It is built over a plastered platform. It has a spacious courtyard enclosed by a fence of thorny bushes. Outside Thar, Chaunro has been introduced in adjoining areas of Badin, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar and Khairpur Districts (Fig 7.1).

Chaunro is associated with Muslim tribes of Rajput, Soomra, Khosa and Sodha. Hindu tribes namely Kohli, Bheel, Lohana, Rajput and Thakur and the low caste Hindu tribes called Shikari and Menghwar (Ali, 1901). Rajput tribes migrated to the Thar from Rajputana in the 12th Century (Atkin, 1907). Sodha tribes migrated in 1276 from Ujjain under the leadership of Parwar Sodha, who after a fierce battle occupied Umarkot and established himself as Rana there. Kohlis migrated from Gujrat in India (Ali, 1901).

PHYSICAL SETTING OF CHAUNRO HOUSE

Chaunro house belongs to desert area. It is found all over the Thar Desert (Sindh) and extends into Cholistan Desert in Punjab. High temperature over
a large part of the year characterizes the climate. During short winter lasting from November to February temperatures come down and cool condition prevails. The main maximum temperature of the hottest month, May, is $44^0\text{C}$ while the mean maximum temperature of the coldest month January is $28^0\text{C}$. Mean minimum temperature of January are often quite low around $4^0\text{C}$. The average annual rainfall is less than 200 mm, 80 percent of which comes in July-August, the Monsoon months. This is responsible for extreme arid conditions giving rise to serious scarcity of water and vegetation. Rainfall is highly variable form year to year. In 1988, a rainfall of 556 mm was record and only 98 mm in 2000. The dominant feature of the Thar landscape is presented by the vast barren tracts of sand dunes which stretch for miles without a blade of grass or bush. No trace of any running water is to be found.

The short rainy season brings a sudden festive look to the Thar. The showers bring almost every thing to animation. As soon as the showers start the villagers take out bullocks and ploughs and set to work on land and fields in low-lying areas. The rain water soaks into shallow depths and provides support to grains like bajra and jowar (millets). Cattle are the mainstay of the Thari people who treat them as friends and the most prized asset. Camels used for transport over long distances are kept all over the Thar.
Site Selection

Selection of site for Chaunro is invariably based on physical, social and religious considerations. The procedure takes the form of a ritual. The construction start with digging of a pit 2-3 feet deep. The soil extracted from the pit is put back into it. If the pit is filled with no remains left then the site would be considered undesirable. In the other case, if the pit is filled with some soil left, the site would be adopted for construction. On selection, the dug-out portion is filled with ‘gur’ (sweet) and green fresh leaves. Gur symbolises the love within the family and the green leaves signify the prosperity of the family members.

Construction of Chaunro

The Chaunro is a circular or round structure with conical roof (Fig 7.2). Its circular wall is constructed with cotton plant sticks, dry grass and mud (Fig 7.3). The frame of cone shaped roof is made of “kikar” wood (acacia), which is locally available. The floor is mud-plastered.

For the construction of walls, a circular trench, about 3-4 feet deep, is dug for foundation, and mud bricks or wood called parehae are put in the trench to form the foundation of the walls. The diameter of the circular wall is about 3-4 meters. A single door is provided in the circular wall. Top of the door is made firm by putting a strong thick log over which two or
three layers of mud bricks besmeared with mud are laid, with extension up
to 2-3 feet on both ends. To build a cone shaped roof four pieces of strong
logs are tied together at the top end. The frame so formed is called *Dhoori-
mal*. On the inner side about three feet long sticks are tied to the ends of *mal*
to prevent slipping from the wall. The supporting sticks are called *hooha*.
Mustard plant wood is used in this frame because it does not break under
heavy load and is not destroyed by white ants and other insects (Fig 7.4).
To *Dhooriamal* (two pairs of logs) are further added to form a total of eight
wood logs as support for the cone, and this frame with a total of eight
supporting logs is named ‘*athria-mal’*. Thereupon-thin wood sticks are
placed and fastened with ropes. A common grass, *Sinr*, is put around and
upon the reeds or stalks of barley and millets are kept and tied up with ropes
so that a round or circle, called ‘*Kitch’* is prepared. Using a wooden stick
shaped like needle, straw, hay and grass all are tied together. Upon the ‘*Sinr’
roof is placed, and on the layers of ‘*Sinr’ another kind of grass, called
‘*Murl’* is placed. Further, a stick is inserted into the heap of grass. Half of
the stick is encircled with rope and the remaining part drived into the tip of
roof. This binding device is termed ‘*Surti’*. Around the “*surti”*, a circle of
rope, called ‘*Soothio’* is made. In the “*Soothio” 15 to 20 ropes are tightened
together and the ropes are spread around the Chaunro. The remaining end of
each rope is passed through ‘Soonhum’. This process is called ‘Doria’. Further, the ‘Doria’ ropes are pulled from inside. A man sitting on top of Chaunro tightens the grass pushing it hard with long sticks. Then the pulled “dories” are tied up to strong wood inside. In this manner all ropes are tied up; the process is called ‘Doria Bandhan’. Arrangement of straw hay and grass over the Chaunro is termed ‘Chajjo’, and the person who does is called ‘Chajjora’.

**PREPARATION OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL**

Rope making is one of the main tasks in the construction of Chaunro. *Khip* and *Sinr*, which are locally available grasses, are moistened with water and twisted into ropes. The ropes are rolled up and are kept wet. The process of making ropes is called ‘soothis’.

For preparation of mud plaster, *murt* and *Sinr* chopped into small pieces, and the husk of millet and thrashed donkey dung are mixed with *doughed* clay. Water is poured into the mixture for 3 or 4 days to be ready for use as plaster. The process of preparing plaster in this way is called ‘Pakko Rago’. Women knead the mixture and plaster with hands in such a way that the thatched wall is fully covered. To provide a smooth finish, watery white clay is besmeared with a piece of cloth. The procedure is called ‘Potho’.
Construction of Fence

Almost all Chaunro houses have fence around them which demarcates the open space or courtyard of the house. The fence is made up of bush wood and small branches cut from thorny trees and plants available in Thar (Photo 7.5 & 6). Branches of berry trees are considered more suitable than any other plant. A fence is erected in early hours of dawn because the bush would crumble into pieces under the warming effect of the sun rays.

Description of the House

“Chaunro” generally comprises one or two rooms, a courtyard and encircling bush fence (Fig 7.7 & 8). People generally sleep in Chaunro in the day time and at night they sleep in the courtyard. Two khats are placed in the Chaunro and placed parallel to each other a few feet apart (Photo 7.9). At one corner there are a few steel boxes for expensive dresses, jewelry and cash. At the upper portion of Chaunro wall an elevated carnice, 4 to 5 feet and 2 feet wide, is built for keeping utensils of daily use. An earthen jar is put in another corner and food grains are stored in it. A rope for hanging clothes is tied to both ends of Chaunro roof.

During the season a layer of straw of wheat or rice is spread on the Chaunro floor about 2 feet thick to keep it sufficiently warm.

Normal daily activities are carried out in the courtyard. There is no kitchen
structure. Only one hearth is made in the courtyard (Photo 7.10). Drinking water is kept in the earthen pot inside the Chaunro. Sometimes, food is cooked inside the Chaunro so that the smoke produced from burning wood may kill the insects and thus protect the Chaunro from the destructive effects of white ants and other insects.

An entrance in the shape of a gap is left in the fence. On both sides of this gap two strong wooden logs are driven into the ground. At night the gap is closed by putting bush wood, called Kharrah. Some people would fix thin posts or wooden pillars in the ground and close the gap with a wooden stick, called Arly, placed across.

No lamp is lit during the night throughout the Thar region. Villagers depend upon the moon and stars for light. People go to bed early and rise up at the crack of dawn. So no fuel is required for lighting the house. Fuel is needed for cooking food only. Dried bush and cow dung cakes are used as fuel for cooking. Cattle are important asset. They are not kept inside the house. They are commonly kept in a pen (Warho) on the outskirts of the Goth or village (Fig 7.11). Thorny bushes surround the Warho protect the cattle from the attacks of wild animals (Photo 7.12).

**TRIBAL AND SOCIAL AFFILIATION OF CHAUNRO**

According to the villagers this type of construction has a long history going back to times immemorial. The origin and diffusion of Chaunro is believed to be associated with nomadic herding groups. As a general practice.
Chaurno is re-furbished after 2-3 years because of fragility of its material.

There is a marked difference between the Muslim and Hindu Chaunros. A Hindu Chaunro is distinguished by a pole about 5 feet high at the apex of the conical roof called *choti*, whereas a Muslim Chaunro is distinct by the absence of such a *Choti*. Regarding the *Choti*, the people hold superstitious belief that sitting of an owl is prevented by the *Choti*, since the sitting of owl would be a bad omen for the family.

The Chaunro of the Thar Desert has many sided relationship with climate, culture and economy. Climatic influences scorching heat, hot and strong winds, and rainfall affect its shape, size, construction. The roundness of the structure breaks the wind speed. To avoid the entry of sun rays. Doors are of small size. The conical roof mats allow rain-water to drain of beyond the walls. The *Khip* mat and grass structure of roof acts as a screen preventing gush of wind and at the same time allowing air to pass though.

High sand dunes are invariably adopted as the site for Chaunros so that they are not washed out by flash-floods under heavy rains. Such sites always remain dry and un-affected by ephemeral water flows.

In long dry season, the Chaunro dwellers migrate to nearby districts of Badin (Photo 7.13) and Mirpurkhas, and as a result the Chaunro is then added temporarily to the landscape till their return to The Thar after the rainfall.
The Chaunro is a physical and cultural feature. It has changed little since long. The houses are like those built and occupied by the ancestors of the villagers. The descendants are doing what their ancestors did, grazing their herds in the same way, following the same customs and daily routine. In the village there are virtually no artisans. A villager himself is a carpenter or skilled labourer. Cooperation from family and tribal members is available when needed.

**INTRUSION OF KOTHI HOUSE IN THE CHAUNRO DOMINATED AREAS**

In the traditionally Chauriro dominated areas, Kothi house is seen to be making a gradual intrusion. Such areas are *Mithi* and Umar Kot which are at the periphery of the Thar (Photo 7.14). Those who have adopted Kothi in place of traditional Chaunro are government employees and better of individuals having opportunities of contact and cultural interchange with nearby towns arid cities. For them the Kothi symbolizes status and prestige, though the comfort and convenience of Kothi may be the main reason for its preference to the Chaunro. A general adverse opinion with regard to Kothi and its continuity is that the cyclonic and gusty winds, and at times sudden abnormal torrential rains, cause sudden collapse of the house. Beside, maintenance of the Kothi is much costly, needing constant care and efforts,
as the skilled labour has to be brought from towns. Since the adoption of the Kothi is quite recent, it is rather early to predict its future (Photo 7.15).

**CHAUNRO COMPARED WITH GOPA OF CHOLISTAN**

Chaunro gives way to markedly similar structure of Gopa of Cholistan across Sindh’s border where the Thar merges with the Cholistan desert in the Bahawalpur Division of the Punjab (Fig 7.16).

Like Chaunro, Gopa has a rounded structure with dome-shaped roof and small opening for entrance (Fig 7.17, Photo 7.18 & Fig 7.19). The construction materials are also a great extent similar i.e. thatch, bush wood and mud. The size of Gopa is almost the same as Chaunro, though in some places it may somewhat bigger.

A major difference lies in layout of the house and its components Chaunro has no permanent kitchen, whereas in Gopa a permanent kitchen is built, and it is about 8 x 10 feet in size, bounded by a low wall about 3-4 feet high with no roof over it. Another component of Gopa which makes a visible difference is the raised platform called ‘Thalla’, used for sitting, sleeping and taking meals. The average size of thalla is about 8 x 10 feet and its maximum height is 3-4 feet. A small stair of 2 or 3 steps is attached to the Thalla (a raised platform). Thalla is kept closer to the Kitchen. Thalla is made for reasons of safety from insects some of which may be poisonous.
Unlike Chaunro, Gopa is open without any fence or enclosure.

**ROUND HOUSES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD:**
Chaunro has close similarity with round houses in many parts of the world. The round huts of the coastal plain in Asir and Yemen of southwest Arabia (Beaumont, 1984) have rounded structure similar to Chaunro. The East Africa Masai also a round dwelling and so have the African Tswana in the shape of conical hut (Hudson 1996). Round dwellings are also a feature in the South American Andes and some parts of Africa such as making a pygmy huts, Kenya and Khoistan huts (Rapoport, 1969). Other examples are the round houses of Sudan Savanna in Africa (Mushtaqur Rahman, 1973). These round structure have mud plastered wall and conical roof with thatch matting (Anita, 1984). The Mangol Yurt in Xing Jiang province of China, which low rounded shelter made of felt skin, short pole and rope, serves as a housing solution adapted to the needs of nomadic herdsmen of Asian steppes (Fellman 1997).

**CONCLUSION:**
The Chaunno as round structure built with common but restricted material available in the desert environment and is well adapted to endure the harsh weather conditions as well as the extreme scarcity of suitable materials for houses building. It stands well against gusty winds which are quite frequent
at various times of the year, particularly hot summers. The round structure helps to deflect the forceful winds and drastically reduce their destructive power. Further, the round wall lends ease and facility to roof construction with the available material from the local environment. The conical roof is built with shrubs tied around a central pole made of wooden log, thus reducing the need of wood or timber to the bare minimum, and adjustment with the problem of short supply of wood under the desert conditions. In its construction and ingenuity in use of material, the Chaunro is but a natural response to the climatic and physical conditions, as are most of round dwelling types in other parts of the world.

A traditional indigenous house is a least cost or no cost structure erected with the skills of the dweller. No purchase of material or hiring of labour for building the house is involved. All material is collected from the local surroundings, which are shared as commons belonging to the community. Likewise, skills and techniques in house building are home learnt and are acquired by all male and female members as a cultural tradition. Chaunros are, therefore, built with little expense and the experience is further gathered through repetition or practice on houses constructed for the kith and kin. As such Chaunro is a social experience and an instrument of collective action or cooperation in a socially restricted environment with few such opportunities.
CHAPTER 8

OTAQ

Otaq, an integral part of Sindhi Village, is a communal guest house. It is owned by an individual, generally by the landlord of the village. But it is used by all the villagers. In Sindh the male guests are neither entertained nor kept in home. Otaq is the place where they can stay for a few hours or a few days.

Origin of Otaq

In the past travellers and peddlers used to move about on foot, camels, horses or donkeys. They would take rest or spent the night in the shade of trees near a village. Sindhis are very hospitable people. The villagers will extend hospitality to the travels by providing food and water. After some time it was felt that the travelers needed protection from blazing sun in summer and sever cold at night in winter. For this purpose shades were erected in some villages (Photo 8.1). Most of the time the sheds were lying unused and social functions began to be held there. Later some benevolent and rich landlord (wadera) built a guest house to be used by the travellers, his own guests and guests of all other villagers. Otaq is a Turkish word-meaning guesthouse. Its doors are always open in the literal sense. Guests are welcome day and night.
As soon as a guest enters the Otaq he is cordially welcomed and promptly attended for which there are one or more attendants (Photo 8.2). A cot is reserved for him and bed is spread over it. He is entertained with tea or “lassi” (a drink made of yoghurt). Tea is prepared in Otaq and lassi is brought from home. The guest of an individual is entertained and fed by the individual but the guest will utilize all the facilities of Otaq. A stranger becomes the guest of wadera. In that case the wadera feeds and entertains the guest.

Sindhis are very hospitable and friendly. A guest is hardly left alone. There is always some person to talk to him and give him company. One or more attendants are always there to look after the guest.

Every Otaq has a number of cots, bedding and quilts or blankets (Photo 8.3). A carpet or mat is spread to eat and gossip. Recently carpeted rooms with sofa and settee and dining rooms with table and chairs have become part of Otaq.

The attendants are the employees of the wadera who owns the Otaq. But the attendants serve every guest whether he is the guest of wadera or any other person.
Other Functions of Otaq

Otaq also serves as a community centre. Functions like marriage, aqiqa and circumcision are held there. After funeral those who attend the funeral are served with meals in Otaq. It is in Otaq the male members of the bereaved family meet those who come to express their sympathy. This continues for forty days.

Otaq is also place of entertainment. Marriage wrestling and weight lifting are held there.

Otaq is also used for official purposes. The officials of agricultural extension service meet in Otaq and impart instruction and advice to the villagers. On the spot enquiry is held the Otaq. Some data about farms or families if needed are collected there. Otaq also serves as an eye camp, vaccination centre and a centre for other social services.

Otaq also serves or local court where village disputes are decided. The wadera presides and gives decision on the dispute. In case the dispute is very complicated the wadera refers the case to the courts.

Daily Life in Otaq

Otaq always hums with life but the attendance varies from hour to hour, day to day and season to season. On working days individuals stop at Otaq for a glass of water or “lassi” on their way to the fields. Many appear during the middle of the day for relaxation before returning to their fields. After taking
evening meals many villagers prefer to go to Otaq to relax and gossip or to discuss some personal matter and matter related to the village (Photo 8.4). During harvesting season there will be hardly one or two persons in day time. In off season the Otaq hums with life throughout day and night until the bed time.

**Otaq As An Institution**

Otaq is the place where Sindhi life and culture are imparted to the youngsters. The young learns to respect and obey. He is told what is good and what is bad. He learns what to do and what not to do. It is than Sindhi life and culture are inculcated in the youngsters. It is there that a young man is groomed into a perfect Sindhi.

Young, old and adults all visit Otaq. In both formal and informal gathering social hierarchical orders are strictly obeyed. The elders are respected and obeyed.

**Location**

Otaq is located invariably outside the village. It is usually located near the main route of transport. It occupies a large open space in a prominent place so that it can easily be recognized. Otaq is generally located close to a mosque. Sometime a mosque is built inside an Otaq (Fig 8.5 & 6).
**Layout**
A small Otaq has a large room and a veranda. A few cots are placed in the room and the remaining part is covered with mat. This serves as the bedroom, drawing room and a dining room. The verandah can also be partly covered with mat. A corner of the verandah has water pots.

A large otaq has several rooms. There are separate bed rooms, dining room and drawing room. Some otaqs home several bed rooms. They are furnished with modern furniture, comfortable beds, tables, chairs and sofa. The drawing room is often carpeted.

Some otaqs are so large that two suites of bed rooms drawing rooms and dining rooms are maintained. One of the suites is well furnished and well maintained. It is reserved for persons of high position. The other suite furnished with relatively poorer furniture and furnishings are meant for common persons (Fig 8.7 & 8).

**Distribution**
Otaq is an integral part of Sindh culture. As such it is found all over Sindh except in areas with “chaunro” houses. Sindhi who live in adjoining of Balochistan and Punjab also have otaqs.

**Recent Changes in Otaq**
Wadera (the landlord) owns and maintains the otaq. He feeds all the guests except there who are the guests of another villager. All social functions in
otaq are held under his patronage. He presides over important functions and decides village disputes.

The otaq is named after him. The guests talk about the hospitality extended in the otaq. This adds to his prestige. He feels proud in being the custodian of the otaq. He preaches his sons to maintain the honour and prestige of the family by taking special care of the otaq and the guests.

The Social System remained stable in Sindh for a long time. Since 1970’s changes began to take place. The supremacy of wadera remained unchallenged for long, differences were there but public expression was rare. Today wealth is trickling down in the rural area. It is now common to come across several wealthy persons in a village. If some of them also have political support, he starts to challenge the authority of the wadera. As a manifestation of their wealth, they establish new otaqs. Thus in some villages there are more than one otaq. However the stage of proliferation has not reached. In some villages every tribe has an otaq of its own.

The appearance of more than one otaq has not adversely affected the function of otaq as a guest house. Probably it has improved. As the pressure on a single otaq has been relieved, the guests are better looked after. However otaq as an institution of imparting Sindh culture has deteriorated.
CHAPTER 9

PUNJABI HOUSE

Punjabi house is a dwelling of the Punjabi settlers, who are migrants from East Punjab districts of Jallandhar, Ludhiana and Amritsar, and belong to Arain, Rajput and Jat clans. Notable concentrations of the Punjabi settlers occur in Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Badin, Panno Aquil and Gothki (Fig 9.1). Punjabi immigrants started settling in Sindh in 1932 when the Sukkur Barrage became operational. They preferred to live in the newly developed canal irrigated areas. In the Sanghar district, the Punjabi settlement started in 1945. The settlers were employees of the British army and fought against the Hur rebels. After the World War II, every family was given 16 acres of agricultural land and half an acre for dairy farming and residence. In the Badin district, the Punjabi farming community came to settle in 1968 during the Ayub regime under a settlement plan. Besides, people from different regions of the Punjab Province purchased agricultural land in Sindh. The Punjabi village is formed by the people belonging to a single clan. In Sanghar, the ‘haris’ are Punjabis, but in Mirpurkhas and Badin districts, besides Punjabi, Sindhi ‘haris’ are also employed on farms.
A Punjabi house is distinguished from other house-types in that it is entirely made up of baked bricks and R.C.C. construction (Photo 9.2 & 3), with permanent structures for bathroom and kitchen, and with a small flower beds or a small orchard in the centre of the courtyard (Photo 9.4).

Internal Pattern of Punjabi Settlement

The Punjabi settlements have a grid or semi-grid street pattern. The house boundaries run along the streets and the gates opening directly on the street. Drains also run along the street. The geometrical pattern gives the impression of a planned settlement. This pattern is a common feature of all Punjabi settlements in Sindh (Photo 9.5), (Fig. 9.6).

The Sindhi settlements on the other hand, appear as cluster of houses with irregular street pattern, and intervening open space for inter house movement.

Construction

Baked bricks, cement, girders and timber constitute the construction material of the Punjabi House. Timber is commonly used in making doors and windows.

Rooms

Almost 4-5 feet deep excavations are made, and the dug-out portion is filled with mixture of cement, lime and broken pieces of baked bricks. The
foundation is about 2-3 feet wide. When the foundation is filled up to the level of surface, construction of walls follows. Walls are erected with baked bricks up to a height of 12-14 feet. Bricks are cemented with a mixture of sand and cement. Both inner and outer sides of the walls are plastered. At every corner there is a column to lend support to the roof and at the same time to make the walls strong. The walls are generally painted in white and grey colours.

**Roofs**

For construction of roofs firstly, long beams are tied along the four columns. The girders are then placed at suitable distance, and are tied with steel wires. In the space between the girders, wooden planks are placed temporarily so that a layer of 6-9 inch thick layer of mixture of lime, cement and sand is spread over the roof. Over this layer, mud-straw mixture is applied, making the roof almost one foot thick. After 2-3 weeks the wooden planks are taken off, leaving the roof in the firm state. The inner side of the roof is plastered with a mixture of cement and sand.

**Floor**

Baked bricks are laid on the mud floor. Thereafter they are covered with a mixture of sand and cement. The floor of the veranda is similarly laid and
plastered. In the courtyard about half of the ground is left muddy and the rest is covered with baked bricks.

**Kitchen**

The Punjabi house possesses a permanent structure for kitchen. The kitchen walls are made up of baked bricks up to a height of 8-10 feet. Its roof is prefabricated and then mounted on the walls. The walls, roof and floor are plastered with cement.

**Cattle Pen**

A cattle pen stands at the outer side of the courtyard by the side of the house boundary wall. It is a long, wide-open structure, having a length of about 25-30 feet and width around 10-12 feet. Its roof is supported by baked brick pillars, and is made of thatch which is laid on a wooden frame.

**Bathroom**

Bathroom is also constructed with baked bricks with walls about 6-8 feet high. The walls are rarely plastered. Generally, the bathroom has small size of about 5 x 5 feet. The roof, like that of kitchen, is fabricated.

**Boundary Wall**

A baked brick wall surrounds the house. Its height is generally 6 to 8 feet. There is a wide steel gate, 10 to 12 feet long, for entrance. Boundary walls are rarely plastered (Photo 9.7).
The Components of the Punjabi House

a. Rooms       e. Bathroom
b. Baithak     f. Cattle Pen
c. Veranda     g. Store
d. Kitchen     h. Courtyard (Fig 9.8, 9 & 10)

Rooms

The size of rooms is generally 12 x 14 feet. Each room has a door and two windows on either side of the door. Inside the rooms there are a few cots and a few pieces of furniture such as chairs, tables and show-cases of side-boards for keeping crockery and items of decoration. Boxes containing dresses, jewellery and expensive items are placed over wooden ‘takhat’ and are kept covered with sheets of cloth. On the walls, photographs and calligraphy of Quranic verses are displayed (Photo 9.11).

There are normally 3 or 4 rooms in a house and are used for sleeping and keeping valuable items.

Baithak (drawing room)

Baithak is generally located at one end of the courtyard, and has a separate entrance opening directly outside the house. It has door also which opens into the courtyard. A ‘baithak’ is generally placed laterally to the rooms and the courtyard. It is normally a large room, with a length of about 18-20 feet
and a width of 14-16 feet. A few cots, chairs and tables as well as a steel almirah are provided for use by guests and visitors. Male visitors are received at the ‘baithak’, while the female visitors are entertained inside the house in the veranda or rooms. Visitors may stay overnight in the baithak. It serves as the meeting place for male members of the family.

**Veranda**

The veranda covers the whole length of the rooms. It is normally 25-30 feet in length and 12-14 feet in width. The floor is cemented. Some cots, a table and a few chairs are placed. There is also a ceiling fan or a pedestal fan. A string for hanging clothes is provided in one side of the veranda. A stair is constructed in the veranda to go to the first floor.

The veranda is a proper place where day to day activities are carried on. Women guests are received and entertained in the veranda. Veranda remains usable for domestic activities throughout the year.

**Kitchen**

It is normally located beside the rooms. It is a permanent structure with door and windows. Its floor is cemented, but in some houses, baked brick floors are not cemented. Kerosene oil and wood are used for cooking. An earthen platform is made to keep the utensils. There is a wooden shelf for keeping crockery, cooked meals and other kitchen appliances.
**Bathroom**

Bathroom is located at the back of the house. Washroom and latrines are separate, but stand side by side. In the latrine Pakistani commode is provided. This type of latrine is a rare feature and is seen only in the Punjabi house. There is a water-tap beside the bathroom (Photo 9.12).

**Cattle Pen**

It is located beside the bathroom at one end of the courtyard. About 10-15 cows and buffaloes can be kept. A fodder cutting machine is installed at one side. A large fodder bowl is placed in the centre to serve the animals.

**Courtyard**

The courtyard is an open muddy ground with bathrooms, cattle pen, store and a small flower bed and a few large trees generally in the centre to keep the house cool and protect it from scorching heat in summer.

Owing to agrarian nature of society, agricultural implements are essential possessions of every household. At one corner, there is a hay store. Farm implements as well as bullock-carts are kept in the courtyard. Cars, motor cycles and cycles are also parked inside the courtyard, mainly under the shade of trees. A few trees are grown in the corner for taking rest and sleeping during the summer afternoons.
Overhead Tank

Most houses have overhead tanks, as they are supplied with piped water (Photo 9.13).

Punjabi House Compared with Sindhi House

There are some essential differences between Punjabi and Sindhi houses in their layout and in mode and material of construction.

All Punjabi houses normally have an orchad in the centre of the courtyard, a feature absent from Sindhi house. Second, kitchen is a permanent structure in a Punjabi house as an incorporated element of the building and which is not the case in a Sindhi house. Third, bathrooms and latrines are, as a matter of design, located at the back of the Punjabi houses, and the water is supplied to the bathrooms through pipes or hand pumps. But in Sindhi houses both the bathroom or the bathing place and the latrine are sited in a corner of the courtyard. Fourth, almost all the Punjabi houses are supplied with electricity, which is normally not found in the Sindhi houses. Fifth, boundary walls made of mud bricks and baked bricks with wooden and steel gates differentiate a Punjabi house from a Sindhi house which has bushes or mud wall as its enclosure. Sixth, in a Punjabi house the cattle pen is as a general practice in placed outside the house preferably at the back side, while in a Sindhi house the cattle pen is a part of the courtyard.
As for the use of construction material, the Punjabi houses use only the baked bricks to lend greater permanency to the construction (Photo 9.14), whereas a considerable variety of the materials ranging from thatch to mud, mud bricks and baked bricks are noticed in the Sindhi houses. Since all the Punjabi houses are constructed with baked bricks, the method of their construction is markedly uniform. As against this the Sindhi houses employ different construction method, because of a variety of material used.

Most of the Punjabi speaking groups migrated from the Indian Punjab before the Partition. While settling in Sindh they adopted Sindhi as their link language, but in constructing their houses they did not adopt any Sindhi tradition. They have introduced their own traditional house-type which is quite distinct from the Sindhi rural houses. Baithak as an exclusive element in the Punjabi house marks the cultural difference between the Punjabi and Sindhi traditions, since the guests are received in the baithak, whereas in the Sindhi tradition they are entertained in the otaq located at the fringe of the village far from the residences.
CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

House provides shelter from heat, rain and wind. The weary and tired man forgets about the worries of life once he enters home and is in the midst of his dear ones.

However, home is more than a shelter. It is physical form given to the desire and dreams of a people that inhabits it. It represents the cultural heritage of its occupants. The igloo of the Eskimos, the Matmata House of North Africa, the Platform House of Southeast Asia, the Courtyard House of South Asia, and the Round House of Nigeria speak a lot about the physical set-up of the area and culture of the people. Sindh is no exception. A number of house types have developed in Sindh. They speak of the people who live there.

The central part of Sindh is a large alluvial plain built by the Indus River. This is the most fertile part of the province. It is there that most of the migrants have come and settled. It is most densely inhabited. It is there that a number of house types have developed. Southwestern part of Sindh is hilly and rugged where the outliers of the Kirthar Mountains are found. It does not possess many house types. The eastern part of Sindh is occupied by an
extensive desert, Thar. Life there is difficult and is largely dependent upon animal keeping. An isolatory house type, Chuanro is found in that area.

Sindh experiences extreme climate. It is cool in winter and hot in summer. In January, the coolest month, mercury drops below $16^0\text{C}$ in most places. The mean minimum temperature over most places in January remains $6^0\text{C}$. There is no station in Sindh (including Karachi located at the coast) where the temperature has not dropped below freezing point.

Summer in Sindh is very hot. Mean temperature in June, the hottest month, remains $35^0\text{C}$ and the maximum temperature reaches $42^0\text{C}$. Jacobabad in Sindh has recorded the highest temperature in Pakistan.

Sindh is an arid area. The annual rainfall varies from 100 to 200 mm over most parts. Therefore, for house rainfall is not much of a problem. However, occasionally there is heavy downpour. Over most of Sindh rainfall of more than 250 mm in 24 hours has taken place. The houses must be so built that they may provide shelter from downpours.

Strong winds reaching hurricane speed is yet another climatic hazard. Maximum wind speed over most parts has reached 40 knots per hour.

Sindh being an arid area vegetation cover is minimal. The eastern part of Sindh is occupied by desert. It is a sandy waste. Clumps of trees and bushes are found wherever some moisture exists. The rains usually are spotty and
infrequent. But whenever they come lush grasses grow much to the delight of livestock and jubilation among the inhabitants.

Over most parts of Sindh other than Thar Desert tropical thorn vegetation is found. Clumps of trees are found here and there. But largely it is covered with bushes. Grasses dominate the scene when and where rainfall takes.

The banks of the Indus River are covered with riverine forests and the coastal areas by the mangroves. The riverine forest supply wood for construction of houses and the mangroves for thatching of houses.

Sindh is proud of its rich cultural heritage. From Mohenjodaro Civilization onward Sindh has remained the meeting ground of many cultures. The Greeks came with Alexender, the Meds with Scythians, the Hindus and Buddhists from northern India and Gujrat, the Arabs from Iraq, and the Balochis from Balochistan. They came as conquerors and refugees. But soon they were absorbed in the Sindhi society and became part of Sindhi Culture. Therefore the house types which developed in Sindh are of local origin. Some elements of the houses may have been borrowed but they have been fully synthesized and have become part of Sindhi Culture.

A number of house types have developed on Sindh: Chapper, Kothi, Waung, Chaunro and a few house types of small communities like fishermen. The house of the Punjab settlers differ from all other house types.
Chapper is a rudimentary house type of Sindh. It developed in Thatta District and spread over central Sindh. To begin with its walls were made of grasses plastered with mud and the roof was thatched. Today three types of Chapper houses are recognized. (i) Mat and Bamboo Chapper House (ii) Mat and Log Chapper House and (iii) Mat and Mud Chapper House.

In Mat and Bamboo Chapper House bamboo frames wrapped with a mud plastered mats constitute the wall. The roof is laid over wooden logs erected at four corners of the wall. The roof is thatched and mud plastered. It slopes on one side. Sometimes the roof is extended to form a veranda. Wooden logs support the veranda.

Mat and Log Chapper is constructed with logs, mat and grasses. The roof slopes in opposite direction and thus forms into a hip-roof. “Landhi” is the distinctive feature of Mat and Mud House. “Landhi” is a large hall without any door. Sometimes the “Landhi” may have room. Landhi has a small kitchen also. Children play and sleep there. It is used as the living room. The food is cooked there when the weather is severe outside.

Mat and Mud Chapper House has walls made of mud with rooms thatched with mat and other materials. The roof slopes in two directions. In one direction it is extended to cover a veranda. Mat and Mud House is a
relatively large house with three or four rooms. The rooms are arranged to form a “L” or “U”.

Chapper house has a courtyard in which there is kitchen and a cattle pen. A flimsy shed protects the cattle from heat, cold and rain.

Kothi house is essentially a mud house with thatched roof. It originated in Jacobabad and Larkana and then moved to other areas, Shikarpur, Sukkur and Khairpur. Later it entered into Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas with the passage of time Kothi house changed from mud to mud brick and then to baked brick.

Mud Kothi House has mud walls and thatched roof. Walls are constructed with help of wooden planks which is filled with a mixture of mud and rice straws. The roof is made of wooden planks which is plastered with a layer of mud and straw. Roof remains flat with a slight tilt to allow the water to flow.

Mud Brick Kothi House is one which has the walls and roofs made of mud brick. A layer of mixed mud and straw are plastered over the roof to impart strength.

Baked Brick Kothi House is similar to mud brick Kothi house except that in this house baked brick is used and the roof is concrete. In this type there is a stair to go on the roof but there is no room on the roof.
Kothi houses usually have two rooms with one door in the central part of the walls and two windows on either side of the wall facing the courtyard. Baked Brick Kothi usually have three rooms.

All the three types of Kothi houses have veranda about 12 feet wide in front of the rooms. Mud Kothi House and Mud Brick Kothi House have no permanent structure for kitchen. But the Baked Brick Kothi House has a permanent structure for kitchen built in the courtyard close to the rooms.

In Mud Kothi house cattle are kept open in the court. In Mud Brick and Baked Brick Kothi Houses a cattle pen is constructed in the courtyard close to the room.

In front of the built-up part of Kothi House a courtyard stretches out. In Mud and Mud Brick House the courtyard is enclosed by hedges but in the Baked Brick Kothi house usually a brick wall replaces the hedge.

The Waung House is the most prestigious among the Sindhi houses. Its characteristic feature is that it has arches. Construction of arches requires high skill. It is therefore expensive. It is adopted by well to do families and men of fine tastes.

The traditional Waung House is found in Upper Sindh. The districts of Larkana, Jacobabad and Khairpur are specially notable. It has extended southward and has entered Hyderabad and adjoining districts. It is primarily
associated with Balochi tribes like Khosa, Mastoi and Chandio. Among Sindh tribes Chachar is notable.

Like other house types, Waung has gone through three phases. In the beginning waung houses were constructed of mud brick and were plastered with mud. Later baked bricks were used and were left unplastered. In the final phase baked bricks were used and were plastered with cement. According by three types of Waung Houses are recognized.

Mud Brick with mud plaster Waung House has semi-circular arches made in the wall.

In Baked Brick Waung houses the arches are made on the pillars. In Baked Brick Waung houses the arches are made in the columns supporting the veranda. These houses have parapets. They are decorated with different types of designs carved in the parapet.

Waung Houses have three to four rooms full ventilated with windows and doors. Rooms open out in the veranda.

Veranda in Waung Houses is located in front of the rooms and covers the whole length of rooms which are built in a row. The veranda is fully ventilated but it is so built that it keeps away the sun-rays. In Waung houses the kitchen is built in the courtyard close to rooms. There is a permanent structure for the kitchen. Each family has a kitchen of its own.
Waung has also a store where food grains, animal fodder and implements are kept. It is usually 8 x 8 feet in size.

In the courtyard of Waung Houses a hand pump is installed. The hand-pump is enclosed within walls. The enclosed space is used for taking baths. The Waung House has bathrooms located in a corner of the courtyard. There are two bathrooms one for the females and the other for the males.

Cattle pen is located in another side of the courtyard. It is a walled structure with thatched roof.

The courtyard extends out from the rooms. It is surrounded by 6-8 feet high walls. It is multipurpose. It is used for sleeping and taking evening meals in summer. In winter it is used to bask in the sun and very often to take lunch in winter.

Chaunro is the typical house of Thar Desert on the eastern part of Sindh. It is a round house with a conical roof. The whole house structure is thatched. Both the Muslims and Hindus living in Thar Desert built Chaunro house. It is of interest to note that Cholistan Desert, the north ward extension of desert in Punjab, has also circular thatched houses.

Site selection for Chaunro is a ritual which is done by elderly religious people. For construction of the house a pit is first dug which is then filled
with earth, “gur” (unrefined sugar) and green leaves. “Gur” symbolizes love among family members and green leaves, the prosperity of the family.

The circular structure of the house is raised with dry stick of cotton plant, dry grass and mud. The frame of conical roof is made of wood obtained from acacia. The roof is covered with grasses of different types. From the central part of the roof a pole 2 to 3 feet high projection. This is called “Choti”. This is found in the houses of the Hindus only. They think that the “Choti” prevents the owl from sitting on the house. The owl is a symbol of bad omen. The Muslims do not have any such superstition. There is no “choti” in their houses.

The chaunro house usually has one room. Sometimes there are two rooms. There is small door in the circular wall of chaunro.

The chaunro houses are built on a raised ground. Old sand dunes which are now fixed is a preferred site. Chaunro sits on a sufficiently large platform.

Cooking is done in the open. Occasionally cooking is done inside the chaunro to keep it free from insects and pets. Cattle are the main asset of the desert dwellers. They are kept in “warho” (pen) at a small distance from the house. Thorny bushes surround the “warho” to protect the cattle from the wild animals.
Chaunro has no lamps. In entire Thar Desert, there is no practice of lighting the house. The moon and stars are the only source of light. The food is taken early. They go to bed early and rise up early in the morning.

Round houses are found in several parts of the world particularly in Central Africa. It is difficult to say whether the round houses of chaunro and those of other parts of the world have any relationship.

Otaq is a common guest house in Sindhi villages. It is owned and maintained by the village landlord but used by all the villagers. In Sindh it is not the practice to keep male guests in houses. Male guests live in Otaq, are fed in otaq and are entertained in otaq.

Besides being a guest house otaq is also used for holding functions. At times it acts as an eye comp or a vaccination center. Official visitors who come to the village for some work also stay in the otaq. It is in otaq that Sindhi youths learns Sindhi culture.

Recently some of the villages have established more than one otaq. This has improved the service offered to the guests but has decreased the value of otaq as a social institution.

Otaq is invariably located outside the village close to a road. It is surround by trees with a mosque inside or near otaq.
Punjabi House

Punjabi settlers came to Sindh from 1932 onwards after the construction of the Sukkur Barrage. They came to Sindh under the plan of the government from Ludhiana, Jallandhar and Amritsar districts of East Punjab. In 1968 under a settlement plan a number of Punjabi families came and settled in Badin. Besides these settlers a number of Punjabi families have come from Punjab and are now living in different parts of Sindh. Most of the Punjab settlers live in Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Badin, Pano Aquil and Ghotki Districts. Punjabi Houses and settlements are distinctly different from those of Sindhis.

Punjabi Village presents a well planned settlement with a grid pattern of roads. They are not more cluster of houses like a Sindhi villages.

Punjabi house are invariably built of baked brick with R.C.C. structure. The floors are cemented. Walls are well plastered and painted in white or grey colour. Punjabi house have normally three to four rooms. They also have a guest rooms built on the opposite side of living quarters. The guest room has two doors one opening inside the house and the other opening outside in the street. The guest room is usually larger than the bed rooms. It also serves as the drawing room. If any guest comes from overnight stay he lives there. In Punjabi settlement there is no Otaq, a common guest house.
In Punjabi houses kitchen has a permanent structure with doors and windows and an earthen platform to keep the utensils.

Bathroom is invariably located at the back of the Punjabi House with a hand-pump outside the bathroom. A well construction cattle pen is a feature of the Punjabi House.

Invariably a Punjabi House has an overhead tank from where water is supplied to kitchen and bathroom through pipe. The courtyard on Punjabi Houses is enclosed with mud or baked bricks. A small flower bed in the courtyard is part of the Punjabi House. Thus Punjabi House is very different from Sindhi Houses.
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Personal Bio Data

Mohammad Safruddin was born on 01.01.1958 in Karachi. He completed his Master’s Degree in Geography in 1982 from Karachi University. He served as an Assistant Professor (Geography) in Karachi from 1983 to 2003. Presently he is on deputation in Federal Government Post-Graduate College, Islamabad., as an Assistant Professor (Geography).