

**PROJECT REPORT**  
**CHANGING FOLK & TRADITIONAL**  
**ARCHITECTURE OF PUNJAB**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**SANDEEP KAUR CHAHAL**  
**(ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR)**

**DEPARTMENT**

**FOLK ART & CULTURE**  
**KHALSA COLLEGE, PATIALA**

## OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The main objective of this study is to identify the changes that have taken place in the form, function and structure of the rural house type of Punjab since last few years and to explain them in the context of contemporary socio-economic and cultural changes. It is also expected that the study will draw the attention of researchers to a very important dimension of rural which has not been properly addressed so far. The main questions that this study seeks to answer are:

- i. What kind of changes has taken place in the rural house type of Punjab since Independence, and what will be its future form?
- ii. To what extent are these changes in the rural house type of Punjab associated with the contemporary socio-economic and cultural changes in the area?
- iii. Can changes in the rural house be used as reliable indicators of socio economic and cultural change?

### **Introduction:**

The study is based on the changing architecture of Punjab. The culture of Punjab encompasses the architecture, traditions, values and history of Punjabi people. I personally experienced that due to capitalism the changes in the architecture are accruing very fast. The regional forms are changing and losing its identity due to many influences from our values & beliefs to our thoughts, communication style and behaviour. I thought that this needs to preserve and understand the traditional architecture by capturing them in pictures. Largely on personal observation, and focuses primarily only on those changes in the rural type of Punjab, which occurred after Independence. At the outset it shall be relevant to state that there exist in Punjab marked local and regional variations in the rural house type, and that it was not possible to cover all types in this study, which focuses its attention only on the dominant house type of the common farmers (middle and lower middle class). It has been observed, however, that the house types not covered in this study too have undergone changes similar to the selected house type. The changes enumerated in this study are based on the personal visits and observations made in the villages – Chet Singh Wala, Bargari, Gondara, Mandwala, Moranwali, Pakhi Kalan, Sibbbian,

Rajowala, Sayianwala, Inayat Ke, Kasubegu, Nawan Qila, Loham, Rattakhera of Ferozpur and Faridkot Districts.

The climate-friendly homes of Punjab have taken place of monotonous concrete and glass have replaced climate friendly traditional houses of Punjab. We are losing out on aesthetics and warmth of the houses. The beauty of living in Punjab is completely changed. The people change – their clothes, their language their lifestyle everything changes and so is true of the architecture of Punjab. If we travel to the countryside from the dense cities the houses seems thinly scattered. Their designed, material, planning and orientation changes; and one can sense the increasing influence of urbanization. And this influence has damning effects. In our quests globalisation, by transforming our cities to make them the next Shanghai and Dubai, we are leaving behind very strong part of our cultural identity. The shift in architecture – from the traditional, unique, and contextual to the modern, monotonous, and general – has become more rapid than ever. Home strengthens the man-nature bond. If we sought inspiration from our roots, we would evolve our own unique forms of architecture instead of imitating others. In villages, people have successfully built their shelters and dwellings using local materials, through trial and error over time, with their own skill sets. They have done this in harmony with nature while understanding the climate. Now a distinct change is evident – cement and concrete are replacing lime and stone, tin sheets are replacing clay tiles, buildings are replacing houses and they are unfriendly. The true understanding of the word ‘Parampara’ or “tradition” is an evolution – of culture lifestyle, and rituals – and if this evolution of our architecture had taken place through the years rather than a jump. Cement & steel have replaced the traditional items.

The rural houses of Punjab have attracted the attention on the changes in house types. It may be true that in most areas rural houses are resistant to change, but there are also areas where rural houses have experienced rapid changes. The rural house type of this area has been experiencing notable changes in its form, function and structure, since last few years. In fact, within just five decades, the rural house type of Punjab has been transformed almost completely.

It may also be stated that in this study the focus is changes which have been incorporated when building a new house at a new site or rebuilding a house after demolishing the previous one at the same site. The changes which are continuously taking place in the existing house by way of sub-division or roofing of available open space inside or outside the house to meet the ever increasing need for housing in families are not covered in this study. The focus is mainly on the changes which have taken place in the building material, ground plan, vertical plan, and architecture. For a proper appreciation of these changes it was considered necessary to provide first a brief outline of the form, functions and structure of the traditional, that is, the pre-Independence house of the area.

The building material used for the traditional Kutchra rural house of Punjab was mud, thatch and wood. The walls of the house were built using sun dried mud blocks, unbacked bricks or mud in wet form itself. These walls were plastered with mud paste mixed with wheat chaff. The floor of the house too was kutchra. After leveling the ground a thick layer of mud mixed with wheat chaff was applied on it. Once this mud layer dried up, a thin coating of mud and cow dung paste was applied to give the finishing touch. The roof of the house was made of wood, thatch, dry earth and mud. Since the most common roof type of this area, is the flat roof, a very strong frame was required for its support. In the traditional house this frame was made of wood. It comprised of shateers (logs, about 3 metres in length and having a diameter of about 30 cm) and balas (rafters, 1.5 metres in length and 7.5 cm x 7.5 cm in thickness) or Karis (twisted rafters of uneven thickness which are cheaper than balas). The shateers were placed on the walls in a horizontal position parallel to the walls along the width of the room at a spacing of about 1.5 metres. Balas or the Karis were then arranged across the shateers at a spacing of about 15 cm from each other. For a large sized room this wooden logs of greater thickness (about 45 cm diameter) called latains, were used. Usually two, and sometimes four latains were used for this type of roof. One end of these latains was placed on the walls and the other end on a pillar located in the centre of the room. The other two layers of this frame were constructed using shateers and balas in the same manner as described above. On the wooden frame was then placed a layer (about 15 cm thick) of thatch, usually of sarkanda grass

(Sachcharum Sarkara). The thatch was then covered with a layer of dry earth and finally by a thick coating of mud mixed with toori (wheat chaff) or chopped grass to prevent it from cracking up.

A farmer's house in Punjab (the house type under investigation in this study) usually comprises of two physically separated units. While one of these units is used for residential purposes by the family and is called the vasughar, the other is primarily meant for cattle and is known as the bara (enclosure). The vasughar is commonly located with the abadi (settlement), while the bara is invariably found on the periphery of the abadi. The ground plan of the traditional vasughar comprised an elongated room, called deodi in front of the vasughar, behind which lay the verah (courtyard) enclosed on two sides by high walls. Beyond the verah were the living quarters comprising a large sized living room, an elongated storage room behind the deodi constituted the private space? The deodi had two doors, one of the opened onto the street and the other into the inner part of the house. However, these doors were positioned in such a manner that direct view into the inner part of the house from the street was completely blocked. The primary function of a deodi was to provide parda (privacy) to the private space in the house. Outsiders, especially the males, were not supposed to enter the house beyond this room, wherein lay the females domain. In a way the deodi served as a ghungat (veil on the face of a woman) for the house as both perform the same function.

In the traditional house the verah, a most essential element of every rural house, was generally squarish or rectangular in shape and covered about one third to two-thirds of the total area of the house. Most of the daily chores were performed in the verah by the women, which were also used for purposes of sleeping by the family for most part of the year. Although the verah in a traditional house constituted the private space yet on certain occasions such as birth, death or marriage, it served as a social space, as most of the rituals related with the rites de passage were performed here. In addition, as an open space, the verah served as the lungs in the body of the house.

As mentioned earlier the actual living area in the house was located beyond the verah. A large sized multifunctional room occupied a pivotal position with the living

quarters. The in the eastern Malwa tract of Punjab this room was also referred to as latain (probably because latains were used in the construction of its roof). It was generally squarish in shape and fairly large (about 6x6 metres or more) in size. The distinctive feature of a latain was a central pillar which provided the necessary support to the roof. Latains with two pillars were also not uncommon. However, in some areas of Punjab, such as the Bist

Similar to the verah, the latain/dalan too served a variety of functions, such as storage of grain, putting things of daily use, placement of large sized wooden boxes etc, but most significantly it served as a dormitory for the females of the family, all of whom, whether young or old, married or unmarried, slept in this room during winter. It may not be out of place here to mention that in the traditional rural house in Punjab there were no separate bed-rooms – not even for the married couples. Infact, till very recently, sleeping of husband and wife in a separate room to themselves or even in close proximity to each other, except in the case of newly married couples, was considered indecent and thus, undesirable. The husband and wife slept at a distance from each other, a distance which generally increased with a advancing age. As such all the female members in a joint family, slept at one place, that is, the latain/dalan in winter, and the central courtyard during the summer. The male members, on the other hand slept away from the females at different places, in the bara, the deodi, or on the roof top. Thus, the prevailing value system in society which segregated women even within the family influenced the ground plan of the house in that it necessitated the construction of a dormitory (dalan/latain) in the vasughar, but discouraged the contraction of separate bed-rooms.

At the rear end of the latain / dalan was an elongated room (of the same length as the latain/dalan and about 3 metres in width) known as the Kothari or pichhla ander (rear room). Its rear position led this room to be considered as the most secured room, and thus most suitable for storing household valuables. It was also used for sleeping purposes in winter.

The front end of the latain / dalan was generally covered with an elongated chhapar which served the purpose of a verandah. It was just a slanting thatch roof

which sloped forward from the front wall of the *latain / dalan*, the other edge was held in position on wooden or brick supports.

A characteristic feature of the traditional rural house in Punjab was the absence of any covered kitchen area. Cooking was done in the open, a practice still prevalent in a large number of rural houses in Punjab. Thus, instead of a *rasoi* (a proper covered kitchen), one generally finds an uncovered cooking space called *chaunka* in these houses. A *chaunka* is a slightly raised platform varying in size from 2x2 metres to 3x3 metres, with one or two fixed U-shaped *chulas* (hearths). An additional pit formed a circular hearth, known as *hara*, used for slow cooking of *dal* (pulses) and *sag* (green leafy vegetable) or for day long slow boiling of milk, may also be found. A *chaunka* is usually located in the open courtyard along some wall, but always near or adjacent to the main residential part of the house. A low wall (about 0.75 metre high) is usually erected both to demarcate it, as also to provide *parda*. The entrance to the *chaunka* never faces the inner door of the *deodi* but is normally accessed from either side of the living quarters. In the hot summer afternoons or during the rainy season when cooking in the open is either inconvenient or impossible, a temporary roof may be provided on the *chaunka* or else the *Chula* is shifted temporarily under the *chhapar / verandah* or to some other sheltered place. It may be pointed out that the use of the word *rasoi* is not very common in rural Punjab. In day-to-day conversation, during rituals and ceremonies associated with religious beliefs and customs, especially at the time of birth, death and marriage, or in Punjabi folk songs and folk tales, the word *Chaunka* rather than *rasoi* is used. This is indicative perhaps of the absence of a tradition of constructing a covered kitchen in rural Punjab. It may be interested to probe this absence but that is beyond the scope of this study.

Further, the absence of a bathroom and toilet in the traditional rural house type of Punjab is another characteristic feature. Men, who spent most of their time in the fields or the *bara*, probably never felt the need of these two facilities in the house. It was only the women who faced inconvenience. They had no option but to bathe in the open courtyard by making a temporary enclosure with the help of cots and also go to the fields for purposes of defecation either before sunrise or after sunset.

Thus, the ground plan of the traditional vasughar reveals the strong impact of the status of women in rural Punjab. The presence of the deodi in front of the house, the entrance to the house through the deodi, offset positioning of the inner and outer doors of the deodi, the central location of the courtyard, and the provision of dalan/latain (an exclusive dormitory for the females), all indicate that women were restricted and kept strictly under parda. Similarly, the absence of a covered kitchen, bathroom, toilet and separate bed-rooms also reveals the insensitivity towards the needs of the women indicating thereby that women were accorded a very low status in the rural society of Punjab.

In traditional farming societies cattle are indispensable to man and thus, a farmer plans not only for the needs of his family but also cattle. A bara, which literally means an enclosure, in this context an enclosure for cattle, therefore, is as essential as the vasughar for farmers. A bara may be nothing more than an open space enclosed by a fence, although in most cases a bara includes some built-up structures. A large part of the bara, however, is kept as an open space used for penning cattle, stocking dry fodder, making cow-dung cakes, drying and storing them, threshing minor crops after harvesting, drying grains, dumping cow-dung etc. The commonly found built-up structures in the pre-Independence bara included a cattleshed, a fodder room, a chhappar and a baithak (sitting room). These structures were arranged within the bara in a very simple manner. The cattle shed and the fodder room were elongated and generally constructed adjacent to each other along any one side of the bara or in an L-shaped arrangement. Their size depended upon the number of cattle. The front of these rooms was covered by an elongated chhappar. Generally both rooms had flat roofs, although in certain cases the gabled thatch roof too was used. Such a structured then was known as chhan.

The cattleshed and the chhappar in front of it, were used for stall-feeding cattle. However, depending on the weather conditions, the cattle were sometimes kept in the cattleshed, while at other times under the chhappar, or in the open. The fodder room, also used, as indicated by the name itself, for the storage of toori or other dry fodder. The part of the chhappar in front of this room was used for functions such as



installation of toka installation of toka machine (fodder chopper), keeping of agricultural implements, or then parking of bullock cart during the rainy season.

Although meant primarily for cattle, the bara is also used by humans. In fact, man and cattle generally live together in the bara, with man's presence here being justified by the fact that cattle are the precious possession of every farmer and require careful tending. However, another, and a more compelling reason of man's presence in the bara was the prevailing social milieu, which till very recently was highly influenced by the parda system. Elderly males in the family generally avoided going to the vasughar. They rarely crossed the inner door of the deodi because, as mentioned earlier, the area beyond was the domain of the females. Male guests too were not taken to the vasughar. This necessitated the partial use of the bara for human beings, particularly males. In fact, for the elderly males, the bara was their virtual home. Even the other male members in the family spent most of their leisure time in the bara. Friends and male guests were generally received in the bara, which is why the females avoided visiting the bara, especially in the mornings and in the evenings when most of the males were present there. Surprisingly, not many structures were constructed in the bara for human use. Often a single, medium sized (about 3x4.5 metre) room known as the baithak, which functioned as male dormitory cum-male guest room alone was constructed. Located not too close to the cattleshed, it was positioned in a manner that while sitting in the baithak proper vigil on the cattleshed and other structures could be maintained. A characteristic feature of the baithak was the presence of windows in front as also along the side walls, which made it airy and comfortable in summer.

While the traditional rural house type of Punjab was and is a single storied structure, the two storey house was not unknown in the region. Even prior to Independence, such houses did exist in rural Punjab, but their number was very small and they were found only in large sized villages. Secondly, such houses did not belong to the common farmers. The second storey in the two storied house generally comprised a single room, known as the chaubara. It was viewed as a status symbol and served almost the same function as the baithak. It was also used as a bed-room by the newly married couples.

## **The Architecture of the House**

As in other folk houses, the most striking feature of the architecture of the traditional rural house type of Punjab was its simplicity of design as well as of the material used for its construction. The said house type was basically a single storey flat – roofed structure, except in the case of the chhappar and chhan which had slanting roofs. The most important characteristic of the house, however, was that it was constructed using only the locally available materials. Mud was used for the construction of walls as well as for the laying of the floor. The roof was made using wood, thatch, dry earth and mud. The chaukhats (frame) and the palas (panels) of the doors and windows were made of locally available wood.

Most of the rooms in the house were rectangular or elongated in shape, with the exception of the latain which was generally squarish in shape. The width of the rooms was generally maintained between 3 to 3.5 metres. The size of the rooms was commonly expressed in terms of Khans (spans), that is, the divisions between the adjacent shateers, which were placed generally about 1.5 metres apart. Although the size of rooms generally varied between 2 to 8 khans, the four khan room was most common. However, the latain generally comprised of 8 khans which were arranged in two rows. The thickness of mud walls in most cases was about 50 cm. The height of the flat roof from the floor level was around 2.75 metres. The width of most doors, which had two panels and a threshold, was about 1.2 metres.

As mentioned earlier the design of the house reflected the deep impact of the parda system and the low status accorded to women. This is further emphasized by the location of the sitting room for males, that is, the baithak, in the bara. Interestingly, whereas rooms in the unit where ladies lived were devoid of windows and ventilators, those which were exclusively used by males, such as, the baithak and the chaubara had window in almost all the walls.

Earlier not much change took place in the social, cultural and economic life of the people of rural Punjab. Likewise very little change took place in the rural house type of Punjab. The most noticeable change during this period was the beginning of the trend to replace mud walls with brick walls. The Kiln fired bricks were earlier

used only by the rich but after Independence even common farmers started using pucca bricks for their houses. Initially bricks were used only for the construction of pillars erected along the load bearing walls at points where shateers were placed to take the load of the roof. In case of latain an additional pillar was also constructed in the centre of the room for the support of the roof. Soon the use of bricks was extended to the construction of some select walls, such as those of the baithak, the front wall of the deodi, or the load bearing walls of other rooms. Gradually bricks came to be used for the construction of all the walls of the house. However, the number of brick houses and walls remained limited till the late 1950s, and mud walls continued to dominate the rural scene. Moreover, even for the construction of bricks walls, mud paste continued to be used as a cementing material. In many cases even the plastering of brick walls especially on the inner side, was done with mud paste. Use of cement till then was very limited. It was used only for covering the grooves between the brick layers or at the most plastering of walls from the outside. Apart from these changes in the building material no other significant change took place in the house till the late 1950s.

With the spread of education, increased rural-urban interaction, consolidation of land holdings, extension of irrigation, reclamation of wastelands, increase in net sown area and increase in total cropped area. Almost simultaneously the rural house of Punjab also underwent notable changes in the ground plan, vertical plan and its architecture, in addition to the changes in building material.

The beginning of this sub-phase almost marked the end of the age old practice of constructing mud walls in most areas of Punjab. From that time onward bricks became almost an exclusive material for the construction of walls although the use of mud-paste for laying bricks continued throughout this phase and even beyond. The use of cement for plastering of walls was, however, gradually increasing. Apart from the walls, the building material of the roof as also floor too began to change during this phase. The most significant change in the building material of the roof was the replacement of wooden shateers by steel girders, and the thatch layer by a tile layer. This change not only made the roof sturdier and long lasting, but also elegant in appearance. Similarly, the kitcha mud floor was replaced by a semi pucca brick floor.

The above mentioned changes not only improved the quality of the house and increased its life span considerably, but also enhanced the prestige of the family. By the late 1960s, a fairly large proportion of houses had been affected by this change. In almost all the new houses constructed or in the renovated portions of the old houses, during the late 1950s and during the 1960s, bricks were used for the construction of walls and steel girders and tiles for the roof, especially in case of construction or renovation of the baithak and the latain / dalan. As far as the brick floor is concerned only a small proportion of houses experienced the change. Again the baithak and the latain / dalan were the most favored areas for laying the brick floor. Thus, at the onset of the Green Revolution, houses, built partly with modern and partly with traditional building materials, dominated the rural scene.

The offset positioning of the two doors of the deodi, which provided the entrance to the vasughar rendered it impossible for the bullock cart or the tractor-trolley to be taken into the courtyard (located behind the deodi). Thus, arose the need to provide a separate passage from the deodi and hence, to fulfill this requirement a straight wide corridor was carved out of the deodi, as a result of which the deodi lost much of its intended purpose of blocking free entrance to the inner part of the house. The truncated deodi then came to be used for other purposes and in most cases was converted into a baithak, but without any door or window opening towards the inner side of the house. Entrance for the guests was provided from the outside. It had an additional door opening into the corridor but that was used only for serving tea or food to the guests. In other words, this baithak was designed in such a manner that the privacy of the inner part of the house was fully preserved.

This change in the ground plan of the vasughar although apparently a trivial one, affecting only a single element of the house, that is, the deodi, was indeed a very significant one. With this change the deodi, which till then was accorded a very important position in the house, lost much of its significance. The separation of the corridor from the deodi or the conversion of the truncated deodi into a baithak was not merely an act of re-alignment or replacement of one element by another, it was much more than that, it signified a change in the attitude of the people towards the parda system. The emergence of the baithak in the vasughar which was earlier located in the

bara marked a major departure from the old value system. Another important change in the ground plan of the vasughar during the pre-Green Revolution period was the replacement of chhapar by a flat-roofed verandah. Viewed as a symbol of poverty, the chhapar was removed at a very early stage, a change associated with the improvement in the economic condition of the people. No major change took place in the ground plan of the bara during this phase.

The most significant change in the vertical plan of the house was the emergence of the chaubara in a fairly large number of houses. Viewed at that time as a status symbol, many farmers added chaubara to their houses for the enhancement of their status in society.

### ***The changing Rural House type of Punjab***

The architecture of the house underwent no major change during this phase except that the thickness of the walls decreased to about 35 cm, and in many cases to even 23 cm, following the use of bricks. There was also an increase in the number of windows and ventilators in the house. However, the fact that no door, window or ventilator from the baithak of the vasughar/modified deodi opened into the central courtyard suggests that the design of the house continued to be influenced by traditional values, especially the observance of parda.

### **Priorities in the Choice of Construction Material**

However, no doubt modern construction materials came to be preferred for the construction of new houses or the renovation of the old ones, it has been observed that paucity of resources forced their use in a phased manner. In such a situation, priorities for their use were fixed. Top priority for the use of these materials was given to the construction of walls, followed by the roof. The laying of the floor was given the lowest priority. Such a fixing of priorities for the use of modern building materials is not difficult to understand, in that the component of the building, the construction material of which was replaceable most conveniently at a later date (e.g. the floor), was given the lowest priority. On the other hand, that component for which replacement of material was most cumbersome (as in the case of the walls) received the highest priority. Similarly, priorities for the use of modern building material for different constituents of the house were also fixed. As such the baithak received top priority, while the kitchen received the lowest priority. The practice of using semi-modern and even traditional materials along with the modern materials therefore, remained quite common not only during the pre-Green Revolution phase, but also during the early years of the Post-Green Revolution phase. Thus during the 1960s and 1970s many houses were constructed partly using modern building materials and partly the semi-modern or traditional materials. However, the number of such houses began declining around the mid – 1970s.

Although several factors led to the changes in the building material, the prime factor responsible for this transformation was the economic change which took place

in Punjab after the onset of the Green Revolution. In addition to increased agricultural incomes following the Green Revolution, the state also experienced huge flow of remittances from foreign lands especially Gulf countries, U.K., Canada and U.S.A., made by the NRI's. Also those who succeeded in getting jobs in government or private or private sectors also contributed significantly to rural incomes. A substantial portion of this money was spent on the construction of new houses or on the renovation of old ones.

In addition to economic change, the willingness on the part of the people to spend a sizeable proportion of their earnings on the use of modern building materials too has played an important role in bringing about this change. The reason for this willingness to opt for modern building material and incur the extra expenditure involved, lies in the fact that a house in rural Punjab is viewed not only as a shelter but also as a status symbol. There is a direct relationship between the kind of material used in the construction of the house and the socio-economic status of the family. Thus despite its higher cost, people most willingly opted for the use of modern building material because that significantly enhanced their status in the society. Moreover, it has been observed that in most villages of Punjab a very strong since of competition between different families prevails. The adoption of any new thing especially that which is associated with affluence or modernity by one family generally leads to the adoption of that soon by others also. Thus, the use of modern building materials by a single or few selected families triggered the trend in favour of these materials in almost every village in Punjab.

Similarly, the beginning of the 1970s also witnessed significant changes in the ground plan of the vasughar and bara. Many elements of the old vasughar such as the deodi, the dalan/latain, and the Kothari started losing out to newly incorporated elements such as separate bed-rooms, covered kitchen, a hand pump with pucca platform around it, and bathroom. The spatial location and size of some of the elements such as the verah, the baithak, and the verandah was shifted and changed, especially the verandah which was modified in both its size and shape. Thus, the arrangement of the various elements in the new ground plan of the vasughar was markedly different from that in the old.

The deodi, in its original or modified form no longer occupied the front of the house, just as the verah was moved from its central location to the front of the house. As a result now, one directly steps into the verah from the street which is separated from it simply by a wall. The built-up structures, excluding the verandah, in the new plan are positioned in a U shaped arrangement. Two rectangular or elongated rooms, placed side by side, form the base of the U. These rooms which are used as bed-rooms occupy the position which was occupied by the Kothari in the old plan. A set of another two rectangular rooms, positioned at right angles to the rooms mentioned earlier, form the two vertical limbs of the U. One of these rooms is used as baithak and the other as a kitchen. In many cases the latter may be used for some other purpose, such as a store or a bed-room. In such cases, one of the vertical limbs of the U is extended further to accommodate the covered kitchen. The space between the three limbs of the U is covered by the verandah. All the rooms open onto the verandah. In the new ground plan not only has the verandah been shifted, but its size and shape have also been modified. Enclosed within the three limbs of the U, the verandah in the new house is not only smaller in length but also less airy than in the old house. A staircase is usually provided from the open courtyard alongside one of the walls. Surprisingly one still finds an open kitchen in the new house, which is often located adjacent to the covered kitchen. In many houses, partly covered and partly open kitchens are found under the staircase. The hand pump and the bathroom are generally located adjacent to each other near or along the wall which separates the courtyard from the street.

Such changes in the ground plan of the vasughar clearly reflect a substantial decline in the parda system and a significant improvement in the status of women. The shifting of the baithak to that part of the house which till very recently was considered a female's domain is the most remarkable change which supports the above hypothesis. Also, from a time when elderly male members even from one's own family avoided stepping into the courtyard, to now when male guests are taken right into the living quarters without any inhibition reflects a major change in the attitude of the people. The elimination of the dalan/ latain is also associated to a great degree with the decline in the parda system. It may be mentioned here that these changes,



especially the disappearance of deodi from the ground plan of the house began around the same time when women in rural Punjab started discarding the veil from their faces. The emergence of the covered kitchen, bathroom, hand pumps and especially toilet in the house indicate that the people have started caring for the needs and comforts of the women. Infact, the status of these elements in a house can serve as a fairly reliable indicator of the status of women in that house.

Certain changes in the ground plan of the new house are also associated with the breaking up of the joint family system. In a joint family, everything is planned for the collective needs of the entire family, while needs of individual members generally get ignored. This is why in the traditional house there is a marked absence of any room which is exclusively meant for any individual. However, their presence in the new house is fairly common. The elimination of *latain / dalan* and the *Kothari* are also associated, to some extent, with the breaking up of the joint family, as these units were meant for the collective needs of the joint family.

Surprisingly the *bara* has undergone practically no change in its ground plan except that a few more built-up structures to accommodate the new agricultural machinery, such as, tractor-trolley, cultivators, discs, drills threshers, etc, and for storage of grain, and fertilizer, have come up. However, the number of *baras* being used exclusively as *baras* declined very sharply during this phase. Most of the former *baras* got converted into *bara-cum-residential* houses. In the new arrangement, the ground plan of the unit used as *bara* remained almost unchanged except that now there was no *baithak* in the *bara*. The placement of the two units that is, the *bara* and the *vasughar vis-à-vis* each other however differed from house to house. In some cases the built up structure of the two units faced each other with the open courtyard in the middle, while in others they were placed side-by-side with the courtyard in the front. This change in the *bara* is largely associated with the rapid increase in population and the breakup of the joint family system.

The peripheral location of the *bara* which provided easy and direct access for the tractor and trolley also encouraged the people to shift to the *barras*.

It follows, therefore, that most of the changes in the rural house type of Punjab during the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, were the result of the decline in the

parda system, improvement in the status of women, break-up of the joint family system, rapid increase in population, and mechanization of farming and the consequent change in the value system of the people and their housing needs. Accordingly, the relative importance of the deodi, the lataan / dalan and Kothari declined sharply, leading to their virtual disappearance from the ground plan of the new house, constituents such as the covered kitchen, bathroom and separate bedrooms gained importance and thus, became regular features of the house.

The practice of constructing a chaubara, which started mainly in the 1960s and became more common after the onset of the Green Revolution, now, came to be replaced by the construction of a pair of bed-rooms on the first floor above the rooms which formed the rearmost part of the house. Unlike the chaubara, these bed-rooms on the first floor were no longer viewed as a status symbol, but were largely linked with the changing housing needs of the people.

Whereas use of locally available building materials and emphasis on simplicity in design were the main characteristics of the traditional rural house type of Punjab, the new house type which emerged in the post Green Revolution phase was built mostly with the factory made materials, such as cement, steel, crushed stones, kiln made bricks, glass, cast iron pipes, plastic pipes and with wood brought from outside the region, and displayed complexity in its design, which reflected considerable influence of modern architecture, especially that of Chandigarh style. Several features, generally associated with modern architecture, such as, the cantilever, fascia, lintel, tile or brick face work, mantelpiece, niches, stylist parapets on the roof edge, recessed rain water pipes, grills, wire-meshed doors, cupboards, etc, came to be incorporated in the new rural house. The rooms were now provided with windows and ventilators, as a result of which the house became airy and better lit. Thus, while features associated with the observance of parda and general prevalent poverty almost disappeared, those linked with modernization and affluence became regular features. The casualty in the process was the folk element in the rural house architecture, although the process also indicated the end of the isolation of the rural society which was increasingly coming under the influence of urbanism and modernization. The isolation of villages was further broken with the construction of village roads linking almost every village with

the nearby urban centre, and there on with other urban centres. These changes also suggest a significant change in the attitude of the people and their value system. With this, the house came to be viewed as a most reliable indicator of one's economic condition and status in society. Hence anything which looked traditional was avoided and that which appeared modern was incorporated in the design of the house.

After the mid – 1980s, house construction activity in the state slowed down considerably, primarily because by then most farming families in Punjab had already built a new house or got the old one renovated. Secondly, conditions in Punjab during that period were highly disturbed which discouraged all type of construction activity. Hence, not many changes took place in the rural house of Punjab from the mid- 1980s to around mid 1990s. The only note worthy change which took place during this phase was the addition of a toilet in the house, a move initiated by incentives provided by the government as also the change in the attitude of the people. The disturbed conditions in the state led to high priority being given to the security dimension of the house, which led to an increase in the height of the boundary wall, putting high iron gates on the entrance to the house, and fixing of iron grills on the windows, all for security reasons. However, despite the disturbed conditions, the process of modernization continued unabated. As a result gadgets, such as, refrigerator, television, electric fan, room cooler, washing machine and furniture items such as sofa set, dining set, box type beds, almirah and crockery and cutlery items, hitherto considered as the exclusive preserve of urban houses, made their appearance in the rural houses of Punjab. Entry of these goods into the rural houses attracted more costlier building material such as glazed tiles, modern sanitary fittings, plywood, marble chips and slabs, fancy electrical fittings, paints and varnishes etc. Greater emphasis of the look of house was another important development of this sub-phase.

With the restoration of normalcy in the states by the mid 1990s, construction activity picked up slowly once again. The house form which emerged during this phase displays greater similarity with the modern urban house. It is a bungalow type house with a courtyard in the front as well as at the back and sufficient open space along the other two sides. All built-up structures, which generally comprise bed-rooms with attached bathrooms, drawing room, dinning room, kitchen, store, verandah etc.

are organized in compact form, but they do not have any common ground plan. Most of these houses are two storied structures hardly displaying and characteristic of the folk architecture as they are not designed by the people who live in them, but by qualified urban architects. In fact, they are modern urban houses located in the rural area. Such houses, generally emerging either on the periphery of the village or on the farms belong to affluent and educated land owner farmers with fairly high incomes. However, the number of such houses as yet is not very large.

### **The Future Form**

Although it is very difficult to visualize exactly the future form of the rural house type of Punjab, yet in the light of the changes taking place in the rural society of Punjab, some conjectures can be made. It seems that in many respects the design of the future rural house of Punjab will be closer to that of the urban house. However, it will still retain some of its distinctive features. The differences in the building material, ground plan, and architecture of the urban and residential unit of the rural house, are likely to narrow down further. Some of the constituents of the urban house, such as bed-rooms, drawing room, dining room, guest room and store, are likely to become regular features of the rural house. The relative position of the kitchen, bathroom, and toilet is bound to improve further. Thus use of glazed tiles, mosaic flooring, marble slabs, tapped water supply, and modern sanitary fittings etc., for these units will become common. The conventional modes fuel such as kerosene oil, bio-gas, L.P.G. and electricity. Consequently, the traditional Chula may disappear from the rural kitchens in times to come. The present manner of cooking while squatting on the floor is likely to be replaced by standing type working system on a slab. The size of the house may become comparatively smaller, but there will be more judicious use of space. The standard architectural and construction norms are likely to be followed more seriously. Consequently, proper provision will be made in the new house for sunlight and air circulation.

However, so long as farming remains the main occupation of the rural people, and cattle continue to be their indispensable companions, the rural house will retain some of its distinctive features. As in the past the courtyard will continue to retain its

prime position in the house. Its size is likely to remain large. Likewise the bara along with its constituents will remain an essential part of the rural house. The future rural house of Punjab shall most likely be a multi-storeyed structure in a composite bara-cum-residential form. However the future model will be different from the present bara-cum-residential form. However, the future model will be different from the present bara-cum-residential model, in that while the constituents of the bara are likely to occupy the ground floor the upper stories will serve as the residential part. However, bungalow type houses, designed by architects and similar to the modern urban house may be preferred by the more educated and affluent, simply an urban, modern house in a rural environment.

### **Conclusion**

It may be concluded that the rural house type of Punjab has experienced notable changes in its form, function, and structure in the recent few years. These changes have been the result of the socio-economic and cultural changes which this area has been experiencing since Independence. Whereas changes in the building material of the house are largely associated with economic change, those which have occurred in the ground plan of the house are mainly the manifestation of social and cultural changes. The changes in the vertical plan and architecture are linked with economic changes as also with the social and cultural changes.

The main factors responsible for the changes in the rural house of Punjab include, consolidation of land holdings, extension of irrigation, expansion of land under cultivation, mechanization of farming, and marked increase in agricultural incomes after the onset of the Green Revolution. Construction of rural roads, electrification of villages, spread of education – especially among the female, increased rural-urban interaction, exposure to modern urban life style through electronic and print media, invasion of rural houses by the goods and articles generally associated with modern, urban living, breakup of the joint family system, marked increase in the status of women, decline in the parda system, notable changes in the value and priorities of the people, and the consequent changes in the housing needs of the people.

The transformation of the rural house in Punjab has taken place through different stages, each associated with some phase of socio-economic development stages each associated with some phase of socio-economic development in Punjab. A period which saw rapid socio-economic and cultural change coincided with more rapid and significant changes in the form, function, and structure, of the house. As compared to the pre-Green Revolution phase the changes in the rural house type in Punjab took place more rapidly after the onset of the Green Revolution. The real transformation of the rural landscape of Punjab is noticeable earlier the kutchha houses were converted into pucca houses and many new houses appeared on the periphery of the villages and now monotonous concrete and glass structures a taking place in the villages.