INTERPRETING THE SENSE OF HOME THROUGH A SELF-BUILT HOUSING EXPERIMENT IN MADRAS, INDIA

by

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

The need to house millions of urban poor in the cities of today's developing countries has become a major problem in the last few decades. This problem has most often been solved by a "heteronomous housing" delivery system. The phrase "heteronomous housing" was coined by the British architect John Turner, who, in Housing by People, defines the term as "subjection to the rule of another being or power...subjection to external law; opposite to autonomy."[1] He further implies that the policy making, planning, construction and management in heteronomous housing systems are all given over to a centralized governing body, usually made up of technocrats and bureaucrats.[2]

Turner claims that, in the effort to produce a large amount of housing in relatively short periods of time, these heteronomous efforts are often rejected by their residential users.[3] A classic example is St.Louis' award winning Pruitt Igoe public housing, which was intended by its designers to provide more interior space, good light, open spaces, and other amenities. Unfortunately, the project was strongly disliked by its residents and was wrecked, abandoned and finally torn down.[4]

This thesis will examine an alternate solution to heteronomous housing. The hope is that this alternative might prove to be fruitful with regard to user needs and satisfaction. The solution illustrated will be drawn from specific programs for low-income housing in Madras, India.

This thesis takes the following order. First, there is a description of two contrasting types of housing systems--heteronomous and autonomous. Next, there is an introduction to the Madras study site and the presentation of the conceptual framework and themes used to study the Madras example. In addition, there is discussed the methodology to conduct this housing system evaluation, and, finally, the practical and philosophic implications of this research.

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[1] John F C Turner, Housing by People, (London: Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd., 1976), 17.

[2] Ibid.

[3] ibid., 14-18.

[4] Peter Wilsher and Rosemary Righter, The Exploding Cities, (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1975), 92-93.

Autonomous and Heteronomous Systems of Housing Delivery

As mentioned earlier, the terms autonomy and heteronomy were coined by Turner, whose work on housing, especially participatory housing, has become well known. I will use his definitions to distinguish between the two housing systems and will study their effects with reference to low-income housing in Madras, India.

Turner defines a heteronomous system of housing delivery as a system where the administration, production, distribution, servicing or maintenance of the housing delivery is highly centralized.[5] This system of housing has been widely used over the past several decades by almost all countries in response to the problem of public housing because of the system's potential to produce a large amount of housing in relatively short periods of time. In this system, a pyramid with the administrators at the top and a much larger number of actual users at the bottom may be envisaged. To control and objectively handle this very large base by the very small controlling apex, technological solutions like large-scale mass produced housing and the mastery of urban-industrialism is often, if not always, brought to use.

Such a system of production, although well-intended, might have certain profound effects on its users which cannot always be foreseen. For example, in his Freedom to Build, Peter Grenell introduces the phenomenon of planning for "invisible people". He writes that "people become invisible in the housing process to the extent that offialdom either does not see them at all or sees them only in terms of quantities of stereotyped human beings".[6] It is this attitude of designing for stereotyped people that overlooks the fact that particular human individuals and groups of individuals are always unique.[7] In Architecture for the Poor, Hassan Fathy expresses this view as he describes the community at Gourna, Egypt: "I had a living society in all its complexity and I could either force it into a few standard-size dwellings, leaving it to experience all the cramps and blisters of a recruit getting used to its boot, or I could measure it and produce a village that would accommodate it in all its irregularities and quirks...".[8]

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[5] Turner, Housing by People, 14-18.

[6] Peter Grenell, "Planning for Invisible People: Some Consequences of Bureaucratic Values and Practice," Freedom to Build, eds. John Turner and Robert Fichter (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), 97.

To design for every single family in a city might seem impossible, but the opposite, which is producing replications of a master-unit, is often seen to be insensitive to the specific users' demands and needs. According to Turner, an autonomous system of housing delivery could be introduced as an answer to this need to have large amounts of sensitive housing. Turner refers to autonomous housing as a system where all the functions of housing production are decentralized. As Christopher Alexander explains in Production of Houses, autonomous housing may be one solution to the apparent "alienation and despair," that the dwellers feel due to mass-housing.[9] Efforts at autonomous housing design have been done predominantly involving the users by participation in the housing process. Examples of such a system may be seen in Alexander's own Mexicali, Mexico project and in Hassan Fathy's work in Gourna, Egypt.[10] In fact, Fathy's work is very significant here because, although he was designing for a people homogenous culturally, individual differences at a micro-level were brought to light and designed for.[11]

It is to accommodate this sensitivity in designing for the masses that "autonomy" is seen as an alternative to the conventional heteronomous system. To explain the functional differences between the

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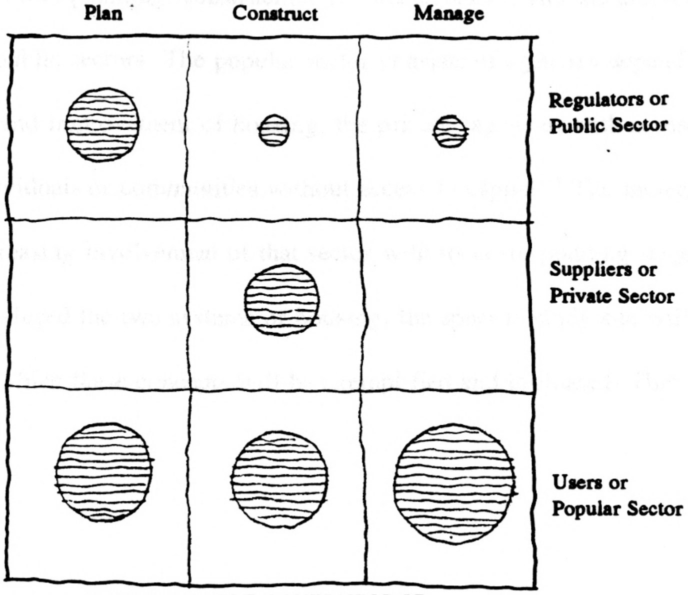
[7] Hassan Fathy, Architecture for the Poor, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 50.

[8] Ibid. 51.

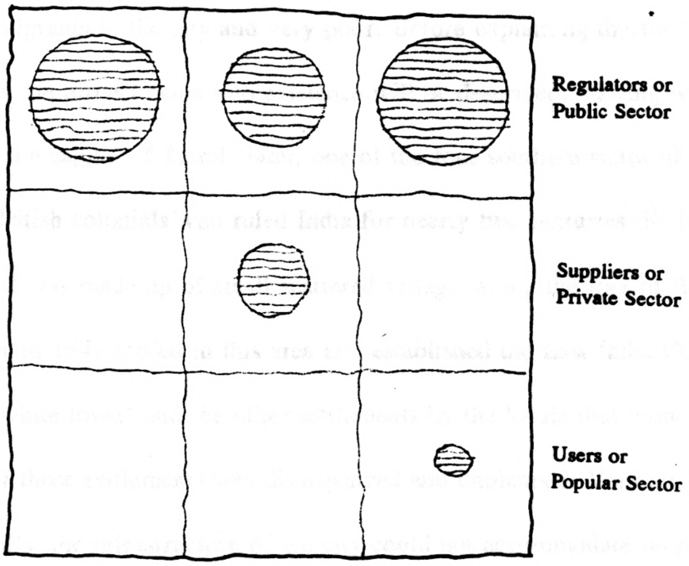
[9] Christopher Alexander et al, Production of Houses, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 22.

[10] Alexander, Production of Houses.
Fathy, Housing for the Poor.

[11] Ibid. 51.


Plan
Construct
Manage
Regulators or Public Sector
Suppliers or Private Sector
Users or Popular Sector

LOCALLY SELF-GOVERNING OR
AUTONOMOUS HOUSING SYSTEMS


Regulators or Public Sector
Suppliers or Private Sector
Users or Popular Sector

CENTRALLY ADMINISTERED OR
HETERONOMOUS HOUSING SYSTEMS

Fig. 1.1: MATRIX DEVISED BY JOHN TURNER

two systems, one may draw on a the matrix devised by John Turner (fig.1.1). The process of delivery here has been divided into planning, construction and management; and the deliverers into the popular,private and public sectors. The popular sector consists of agencies depending on public funds for the development and improvement of housing; the private, agencies with access to private capital; and the popular, individuals or communities without access to capital.[12] The increasing diameter of the dot relates to the increasing involvement of that sector with its corresponding stage of delivery.[13]

Having introduced the two systems of housing, the specific study site will be used as the empirical context in which these concepts will be exemplified and evaluated. That site is now described in detail.

The Study Context

The study context, an autonomous housing project called the Sites and Services Scheme, is located in the large Indian city of Madras, which has a population of about eight million people, many of whom are recent migrants to the city and very poor. Before explaining the functions of this scheme, a brief history of how the project came into existence will be described, starting with the history of the city itself. Madras is the capital of Tamil Nadu, one of the four southern states of India (fig.1.2).

Before the British colonials who ruled India for nearly two centuries till 1947, the area where Madras is now located was made up of small scattered villages along the Bay of Bengal coast (fig. 1.3). The British later in 1641 settled in this area and established the East India Company and called their settlement the "white town" and the other settlements by the locals that grew around it the "black town". The growth of these settlements was disorganized and unplanned. Very soon, due to increased migration by the 1930's, the infrastructure of the city could not accommodate its population. Today

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[12] Jan Turksta and Mark Wolffe, "Madras Housing and People," (Report, School of Architecture and Planning, Madras, 1983), 36.

[13] Turner, Freedom to Build, 29.

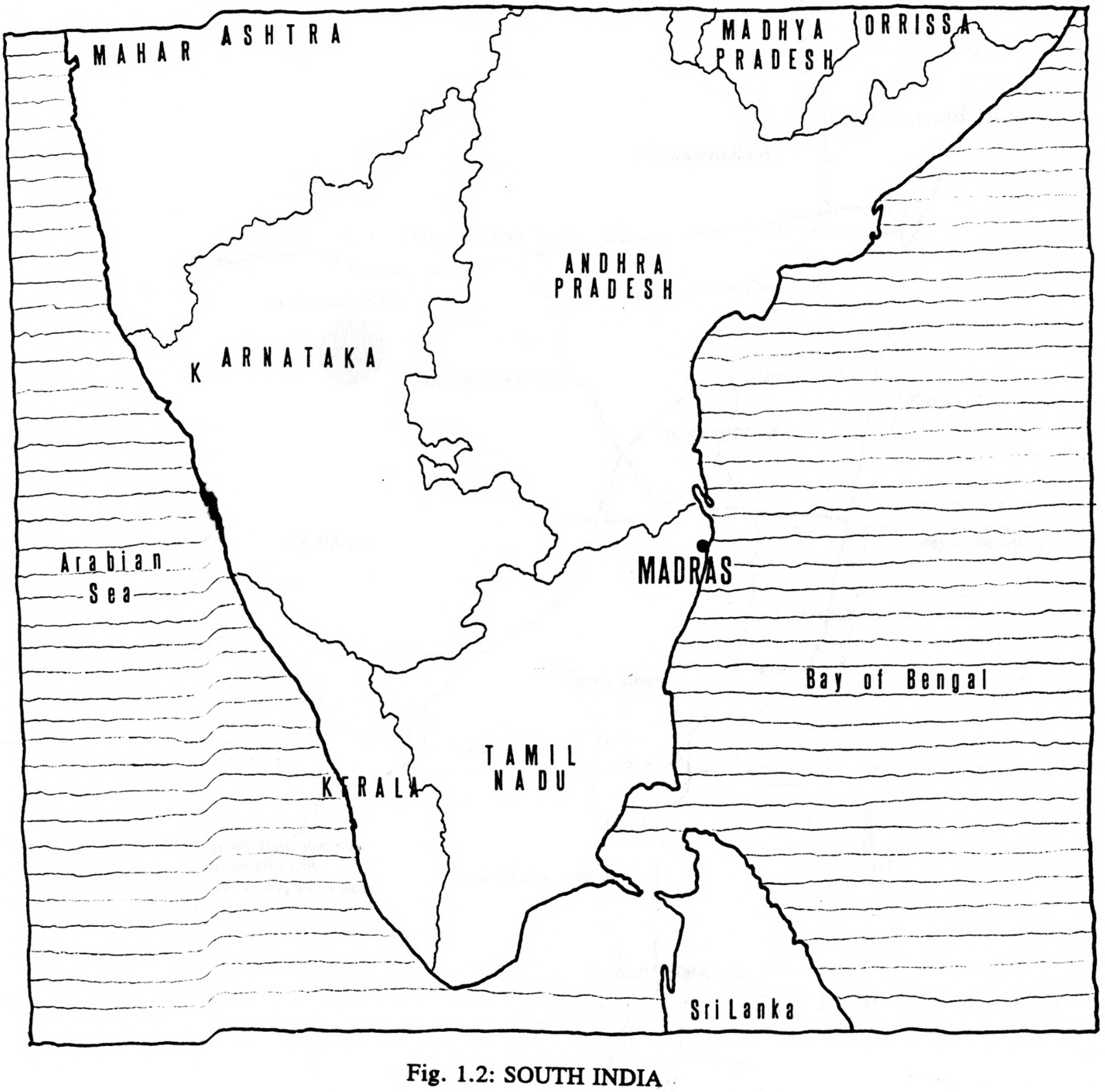
MAHARASHTRA
MADHYA PRADESH
ORRISSA
ANDHRA PRADESH
KARNATAKA
Arabian Sea
MADRAS
Bay of Bengal
TAMIL NADU
KERALA
Sri Lanka

Fig. 1.2: SOUTH INDIA

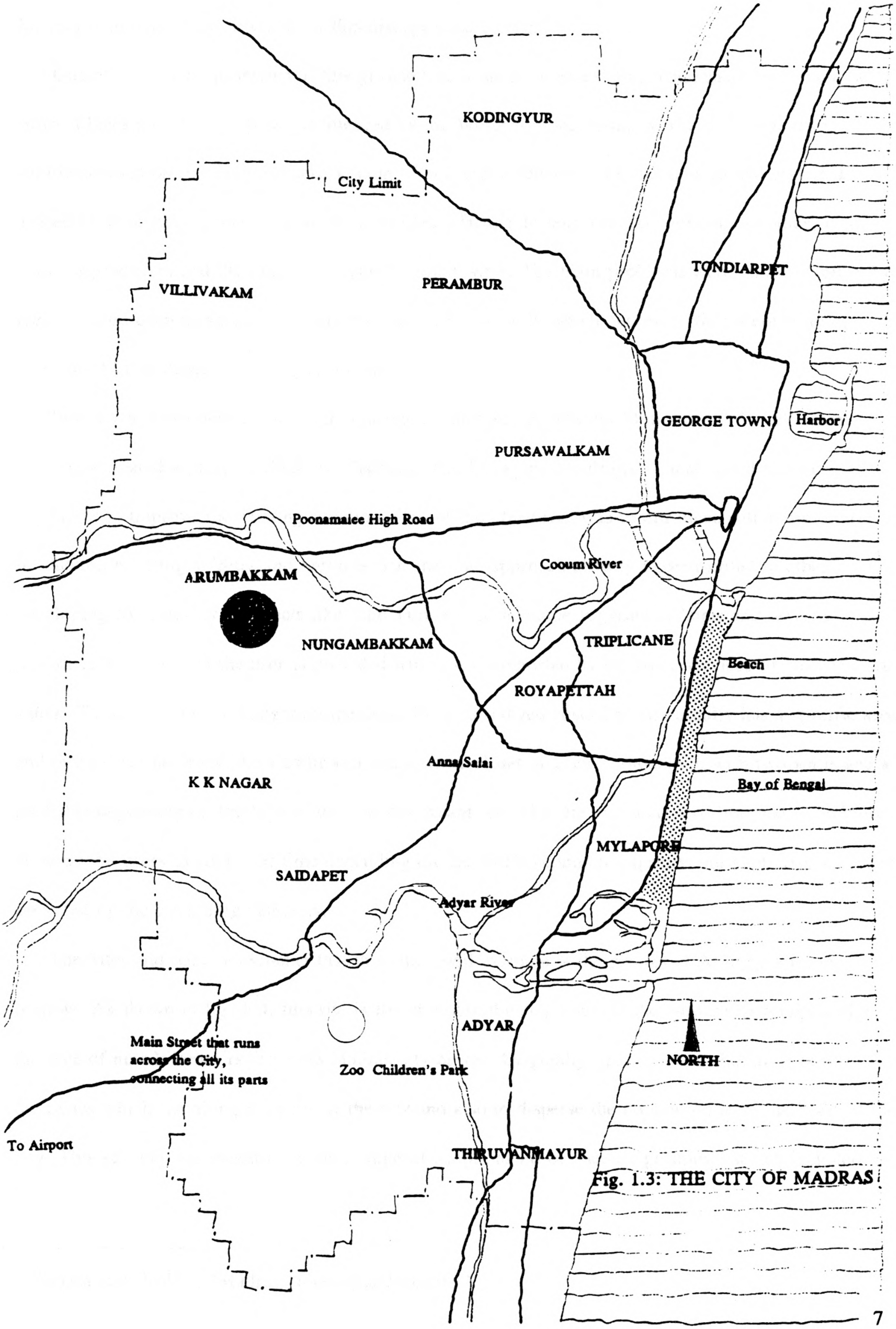
KODINGYUR
City Limit
VILLIVAKAM
PERAMBUR
TONDIARPET
GEORGE TOWN
Harbor
PURSAWALKAM
Poonamalee High Road
Cooum River
ARUMBAKKAM
NUNGAMBAKKAM
TRIPLICANE
Beach
ROYAPETTAH
Anna Salai
K K NAGAR
Bay of Bengal
MYLAPORE
SAIDAPET
Adyar River
ADYAR
NORTH
Main Street that runs across the City, connecting all its parts
Zoo Children's Park
To Airport
THIRUVANMAYUR

Fig. 1.3: THE CITY OF MADRAS

Madras is in many ways a victim of this disorganized growth.[14]

One of the crucial problems of this growth was to house both existing Madrasians and immigrants from villages outside of Madras. Influenced by the Western modernizing world, several housing solutions based on the heteronomous system of housing production were introduced and executed. Tested by time, these solutions proved to be unsatisfactory to both Madras' governing bodies, who were its producers and the users in several different ways. The main problems were unaffordability by the users and decreasing cost recovery by the governing body which decreased the future level of investment in succeeding housing programs.

In order to overcome a setback in housing production, the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority created a project called the Madras Urban Development Project 1 that stated a list of objectives to improve the existing situation. One of the objectives was to introduce autonomy in housing production by using a "Sites and Services Scheme", an approach already experimented in other developing countries by architects like John Turner. As the name suggests, a "sites and services" project is one in which the user is provided with a site supported by the basic services of electricity and water. These services are bought by the users for a subsidized cost. The site usually has a specific area and other basic facilities like a bathroom and a water closet or even a foundation with two walls and a roof slab depending on the type of users it was meant for. The site provided was designed to be built upon by the users in course of time depending on the user's economic capacity and supported by loans provided by the governing authority.

The Sites and Services scheme that this study will examine is the project at Arumbakkam in Madras. As shown in fig. 1.4, this site is found within the city limits at the western extremity and at a distance of nine kilometers from the Madras city center. Originally, this site was chosen to cater to industries which ran along the edge of the city and also to disperse the population from the heart of the city. This scheme was meant to serve a range of people based on income groupings which included: (a)

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[14] Turksta and Wolffe, "Madras Housing and People."

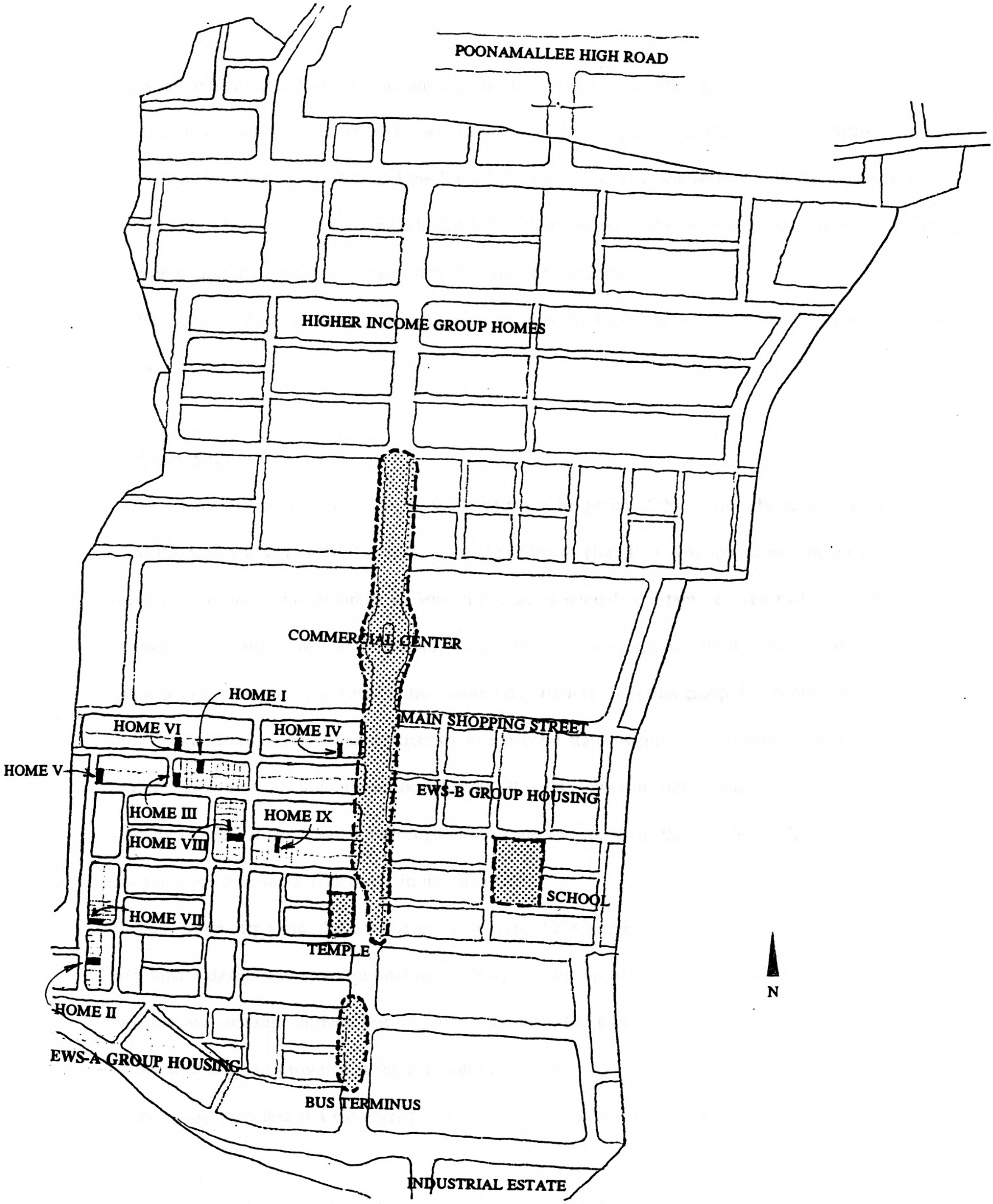
POONAMALLEE HIGH ROAD
HIGHER INCOME GROUP HOMES
COMMERCIAL CENTER
HOME I
HOME VI
HOME IV
MAIN SHOPPING STREET
HOME V
HOME III
HOME IX
EWS-B GROUP HOUSING
HOME VIII
SCHOOL
HOME VII
TEMPLE
N
HOME II
EWS-A GROUP HOUSING
BUS TERMINUS
INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Fig. 1.4: ARUMBAKKAM NEIGHBORHOOD

a high-income group [HIG]; (b) a middle-income group [MIG]; (c) a low-income group [LIG]; and (d) an economically weaker section or the very lowest income group [EWS]. The EWS was further subdivided into EWS-A, EWS-B and the EWS-C, the EWS-A being the section with the lowest income level of ten to twenty dollars per month; EWS-B with an income between twenty and thirty five dollars per month; and the EWS-C between thirty five and fifty dollars.[15]

Having described the Arumbakkam project, the specific study site and the houses to be studied will follow.

The Study Site

The study will focus specifically on the lowest income group of the entire scheme, technically called the economically weaker section "A" or the EWS-A (fig. 1.4). The lowest income group in Arumbakkam, just as in any urban society, are those individuals and families who have absolutely minimal social status. Their low economic status affects factors such as education level and lifestyles that help to achieve a future status in the modern-day society. It is this group that is most in need of an identity in a heterogenous urban community to achieve a status within it. The home is an important environment where this identity can be achieved. It is this lowest income group of people that is critically in need of consideration through observation and research, the results of which could help policy-makers plan more effectively in the future.

This group of people, the EWS-A group, occupy 1058 single plots which each have an area of forty square meters and cover in total nearly forty-six percent of the total area of the site. These plots are linear and measure thirteen feet by thirty three feet. The plots are unbuilt on, except for a bathroom and water-closet unit provided at the rear end of each plot (fig. 1.5). Basic amenities of water and electricity are provided at a subsidized cost by the city, which also gives a small loan to initiate

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[15] S.Kumeresan, "Implementation Experience with Sites and Services Programmes, Madras," (Report, Bowcentrum International Education, Rotterdam, 1982), 31.

In April 1990, One dollar is approximately equal to seventeen rupees.

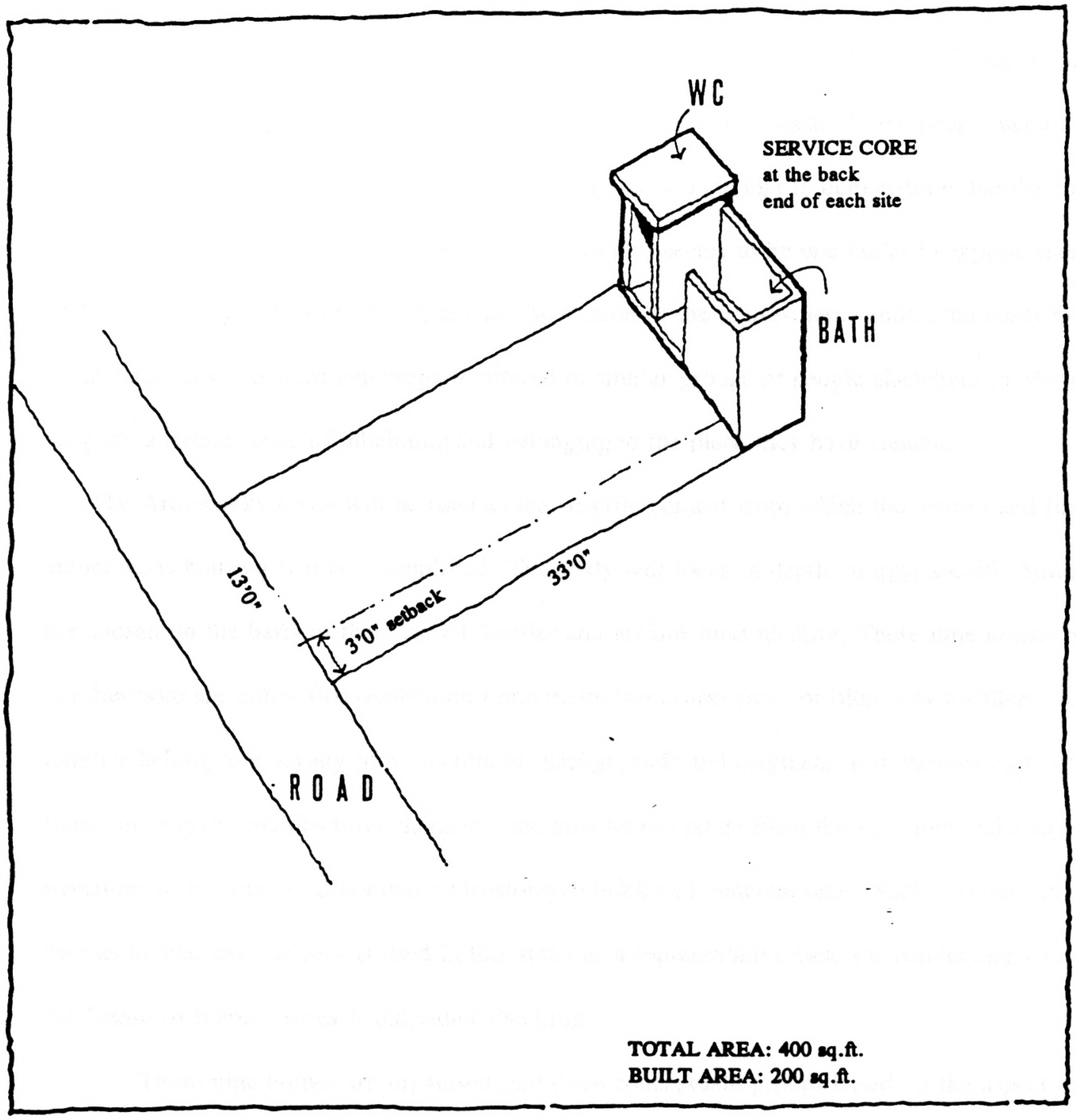
WC
SERVICE CORE
at the back
end of each site
BATH
13'0"
3'0" setback
33'0"
ROAD
TOTAL AREA: 400 sq.ft.
BUILT AREA: 200 sq.ft.

Fig. 1.5: MODEL OF EWS-A SITE

preliminary construction on the site. Depending on the affordability and current economic status, families use these loans to build houses ranging from temporary "kutcha" houses made of bamboo and thatch, to more permanent "pucca" houses of brick and mud or cement wall and tile or even concrete roofs. This range exists even within the technically lowest income group due to factors such as family size, inheritance from previous generation, and dishonest procedures in the allocation of sites and materials.

The study site occupied by the EWS-A group (fig. 1.4) carries a wide range of people of different languages, religions and castes, bringing along cultures typical of each. These people need to render their identity in the place they inhabit. In this thesis, I will attempt to demonstrate that the freedom for these people to build their own houses at Arumbakkam seems to be one outlet to express their identity, both individually and culturally. A casual observation of the houses here, unlike the multi-storied heteronomously produced counterparts offered to similar groups of people elsewhere in Madras, suggests a strong sense of inhabiting and belonging to the place they have created.

The Arumbakkam site will be used as the specific context from which the virtues and limitations of autonomous housing will be exemplified. The study will focus in depth on nine specific homes which are chosen on the basis of their varied dweller and architectural identity. These nine homes belong to families who are either first-generation immigrants from rural areas or older city dwellers. Also these families belong to a variety of sociocultural backgrounds and originate from various parts of south India. In terms of architectural character, the nine homes range from the very minimal coconut-thatch structures to elaborately decorated multi-storeyed brick and concrete ones. Such diversity in the built as well as human environment is used in this study as a representative base for conducting a research on the "sense of home," of each individual dwelling.

These nine homes are organised into three conceptualh groups based on the aspect of identity and how the homes establish their identity through the spatial characteristics of their homes. A detailed description of the families, their homes and how they are grouped will be given at the end of chapter II. Through these groups of homes, this thesis will strive to understand: (i) how the home becomes a stage on which the dwellers display their identities; (ii) whether such a displayed identity is a direct representation of the identity of the dweller; and (iii) the role of autonomous housing in the dweller's expression of identity.

The first two questions will be discussed within the body of the research found in chapters II, III, IV and V. The last question involves the larger issue of autonomy and its role in the dweller's expression of identity. This question deals with the virtues and limitations of an autonomous system of housing, and will be the focus of the concluding chapter of this thesis.

The research on the nine homes of Arumbakkam will be done using the conceptual framework of Kimberley Dovey's "Home and Homelessness", an article discussing the properties of home as an experiential phenomenon. Chapter II presents Dovey's arguments in detail and then describes the three groups of Arumbakkam homes.

CHAPTER II:

A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING THE NINE HOMES: KIMBERLEY DOVEY'S CONCEPTION OF "HOME AND HOMELESSNESS"

To understand the identity of the nine homes described in chapter I would essentially involve the understanding of the symbols and significance in each of them. This would involve an exercise of keen observation as an empathetic insider described by Edward Relph as one who is "willing to be open to significance of a place, to feel it, to know and respect its symbols."[1] In this thesis, I will work to become an empathetic insider in regard to the nine houses. My aim is a clear description of the houses' experiential qualities through use of photographic, observational and interview materials. While physical symbols and significance can be brought out by photographs and observation, certain other qualities which involve the support of the emotions of the dwellers also will be understood by initiating a dialogue with them through interviews. But, in order to put forth these physical and experiential descriptions in a logical and clearly expressive manner, a conceptual framework pertaining to the subject of identity in these nine homes needs to be developed.

The conceptual framework used will be drawn from Kimberley Dovey's article, "Home and Homelessness", an article that seeks to identify various general themes relating to homes, at-homeness and homelessness.[2] The main underlying theme in this article is the explication of the home as an "experienced meaning," which Dovey believes is what distinguishes it from a house, which is merely a physical environment. With this as the base argument, he brings out the **properties of home**, which include three dimensions: (1) "home as order", (2) "home as identity" and (3) "home as connectedness." He draws these properties together through the concept of the "dialectics of home", which brings about and intensifies the meaning of the home by relating it to the larger world of which it is a part.

---

[1] Edward Relph, Place and Placelessness, (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 54.

[2] Kimberly Dovey, "Home and Homelessness", Home Environments, Human Behavior and Environment, Vol.8, Edited by Irwin Altman and Carol Werner, (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 33-64.

We can now look at each of these organizational themes in turn. With the understanding of each theme, its relevance in the study of the nine Arumbakkam houses will be discussed.

Home as Order

Dovey defines order as something that orients an individual and group to the world. From this angle, home becomes a point of orientation, the foothold from which one sees the rest of the world. Dovey brings out three kinds of order through which such orientation takes place: spatial, temporal and sociocultural.

By spatial order, Dovey refers not merely to that which is prescribed by the house's physical space, but to the richness of the "lived space" of the house. By this he means the qualities of space not as material, geometric entities, but as an experienced volume carrying the richness of meaning in it. He breaks spatial order into three structures, through which a clearer grasp of the space can be made. The first is the "triaxial structure" of the human body as up/down, front/rear and left/right, that articulates the nature of space. For instance, a corridor meant to transport one from one point in space to another moves along with the person, obeying his up and down in terms of the ceiling and the floor, his front and rear in terms of its entry and exit and his left and right in terms of its sides. This architectural articulation arises as a dialogue between the human body and the space.

The second structure that Dovey identifies in regard to spatial order is that of actions performed in space or the bodily movement in space--for example "grasping, sitting, walking, manipulating, looking, hearing, smelling." This structure is created by an ordering in space due to actions. These actions may be single broken ones like those mentioned above or an interconnected series over time resulting in bodily routines, which creates a temporal order. The expression of such time-space routines and body ballets[3] in a space involves a process of the molding of space in accordance them, resulting in spatial order that is "lived" in the sense that the individuals of the home experience these routines regularly in their everyday lives. For example, the process of cooking involves movement between the kitchen appliances and the shelves where the ingredients are stored. How this movement can be done efficiently is not our concern but rather, a careful description of what routine is and how it contributes to a sense of at-homeness is needed. Here, we see how the person when cooking, unconsciously moves within an invisible confined space performing the act thereby creating a spatial order that is familiar and ingrained within the person's life-world. This association with a space as a result of the actions performed within it brings about such an order which is retained in one's memory and helps one to orient oneself in regard future dwelling places.

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[3] David Seamon, A Geography of the Lifeworld, (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1979), 54-69.

The third structure that Dovey discusses is a broader pattern based on the physical structure of the world. This is not only due to basic bodily givens like up and down, right and left and so forth but to the very nature of the ground we build on. This relates to the geographical structure of the earth. Although this broad structure follows the universal experiential quality of emerging from a horizontal plane, it brings out an order due to differences in the regional geography of the specific place. For instance, the dwellings in the desert areas of northern India's Rajasthan region found in the northern part of India contributes to certain aesthetic gestures like brightly painted walls or even darker rooms indoor.

It is through these structures that individuals and families are ordered within a space which becomes a foothold from which they are orientated to the rest of the world. These three structures will be used as a conceptual framework to study the spatial order in each of the nine Arumbakkam homes.

The first structure based on the ordering of space due to the triaxial structure of the human body is applied to the nine homes by closely looking at the spaces of the homes as they are molded by bodily requirements. The study of the physical nature of corridors, doors, openings, and especially limited spaces, like toilets and bathrooms that respond to the triaxial nature of the human body. The second structure, which brings out an order in space as a function of bodily movements in it, will be described by looking at regular bodily movements like walking, opening and closing and moving objects; and wider routine activities that involve a series of movements like cooking, performing rituals, cleaning, and so forth. How the space of the home supports or inhibits these movements will then be described.

The third structure, relating to the specific geographic environment, will examined in terms of each house's built form, materials, spaces and its relationship to where it is found. Although this may be in some ways similar all the nine homes at Arumbakkam, careful observation will indicate certain hidden differences. For example, a home next to a asphalt street might be very different from one next to a mud one. Or a site that is oriented along an east-west axis might contain a home that is more sensitive to the amount of sunlight penetration than one oriented along a north-south axis.

With a clear understanding of the spatial symbols and significance of the home as structured around these three themes, the spatial order which orients the dweller to the world outside can be brought out.

Besides spatial order, Dovey speaks of home in terms of temporal order, by which he means the pattern created due to experiences created as a function of time. Here, Dovey develops three sub-themes. The first sub-theme is that of an order brought about by experiences within the same place over time. Similar experiences within the same place over a period of time, which may result in a routine and bring about a familiarity with place. Such routines create a temporal order through which the dwellers order themselves within the home and through which they meet the larger world.

Dovey points out that this familiarizing order is so ingrained within a person that past memories in other homes become footholds from which the present is viewed. Such associations of routines or rhythms in activities influence the present order and bring out a present order grounded in the past. In the nine Arumbakkam homes, this sub-theme will be understood by a description of the daily routines of each member of the family and each family as a whole in each of the nine homes.

In his second sub-theme, Dovey describes the creation of an order by experiences from familiar places in the past. Such an order might be one that orients the person to the present new dwelling to which he is trying to appropriate himself. Such an order need not necessarily be one that is brought out by a single previous dwelling. It might be a culmination of many dwelling experiences, aspirations and preferred memory. Although such learning might involve a deep understanding from the past, Dovey points out that the researcher must work to understand why certain symbols and significance exist at the present home.

In the nine Arumbakkam homes, this can be done by identifying symbols and significance that might be important to the dwellers and questioning them about the significance of these with respect to their past homes. An understanding of the dwellers' place of origin, traditions and routines will be useful to identify these symbols and significance. For example, the dwellers of home VIII, who come from Kerala, a state found on the south-western tip of the Indian peninsular, have a backyard that is crowded with plants and trees. The significance of such an expression can be determined by questioning the dwellers and unravelling the landscape's relationship with the family's background.

Another type of temporal order that Dovey describes involves situations where associations are formed without an experiential knowledge but through a vicarious knowledge of how certain things have become what they presently are. A knowledge of how things are made in the environment brings about a sense of confidence in its existence. For instance, a well in the backyard of a home at Arumbakkam relates to a traditional method of digging and walling out of the earth around it. The dweller is aware of this process that made it what it is now. To know that a pail when sent in will fall on water because the earth walled out to allow this, brings about a confidence in using it and in its reason for being there.

It is this aspect of having confidence in the making of the things in the environment that helps the dweller to feel comfortable or at-home with it. Dovey gives the example of wood as a material to demonstrate this feeling of at-homeness. He explains how the knowledge of "climbing trees, sawing wood, chopping, nailing and carving", all reflect its strength and a confidence in its the function it serves. This confidence is not due to a proven test that the material will hold up to heavy use but more due to the simple knowledge that this material can be used for making a chair. Or that a chair made of wood can be sat upon unlike a chair made of foam. In other words, any thing has its place and a knowledge of the process that made it, helps one to mentally assign a place for it and to feel at-home with it when it is in its right place.

This feeling of at-homeness extends beyond just the things of the environment, to the environment itself when the dweller is familiar with how the environment came into being. This phenomena is very important in bringing out the overall argument of this thesis, dealing with the issue of the feeling of at-homeness in autonomous housing as contrasted with the alienation created by heteronomous housing. It is important to consider how the familiarity with the process of making things in the environment or the environment itself contributes to a sense of temporal order. One example of how an environment created by heteronomous housing may overlook this order is the process of building multistoreyed structures. This process may be alien to a villager who is not aware that more than three floors can be stacked one over the other. To the villager a structure that is plastered with cement and painted is one that is made of brick and cement. And a building made of such material cannot carry more than three floors one on top of the other. He is not familiar with the versatility of concrete and hence does not feel at-home with a structure that is seven or eight storeys high, just as one would feel with a chair made of foam. As the Arumbakkam home types are self-built except for the service units at the rear of the site, an experiential knowledge of how to make a house is required and this knowledge imparts a sense of confidence, of comfort and of at-homeness. This sub-theme will be brought out in each of the nine homes by a clear description of the materials used and their construction process. An understanding of the dwellers' involvement in this process and their reactions to the program of self-help housing will help to clarify this type of association with their homes and its parts.

For instance, the dwellers of home I did not actually participate in constructing their single floored tile roofed home, but supervised the process carefully. The father of the home was aware of the construction process due to experiential knowledge in the past and he believed that he could be assured of the quality of construction only if he supervised it himself. Although he showed some lack of trust in the builders, there was a clear exhibition of trust over the materials and the type of construction which was chosen by him. This is brought about by a familiarity with the material and construction which is part of a temporal order.

The third component of Dovey's discussion of order is the sociocultural order, by which he means the spatial-temporal pattern expressed by the resident's socio-cultural environment. This sociocultural order is often influenced by the surrounding sociocultural environment and its expectations of him. As a member of a community, the dweller is obligated to express a shared social and cultural order in order to relate to the rest of the community. This also gives him an identity of his own. Dovey explains how most patterns--for instance the posture taken while eating, or daily routines in food consumption--are related to sociocultural order. The sociocultural order in a vernacular community is homogenous in its beliefs and practices, and therefore, tends to be shared by all its members. As all the families within a homogenous community share an uniform spatial-temporal patterning, their sociocultural ordering orients them as a group to other similar communities and the world. Here, we might see an order that orients individual families in regard to that larger sociocultural community.

In the case of an urban environment like Arumbakkam, however, the diversity in the backgrounds of the dwellers brings out individual cultural orders that are special to each home. For instance, the site in which home IV is built is located at the end of a street. This location is not favorable due to the resident's beliefs that evil spirits moving along the street will pass through the home. To prevent this, an idol of a Hindu deity, Ganesha, is found on the external wall of this home facing the street. Other examples of cultural ordering may be seen in the decoration of the front door with a string of mango leaves or differences in the eating habits and routines. All of these sociocultural patterns have their effects on the spatial and temporal rhythms of the homes.

As most of the residents of Arumbakkam are second-generation or third-generation immigrants from the rural areas of South India, there is a certain level of influence in their sociocultural ordering by the present heterogenous urban environment. This ordering is based on a mixture of social values, but its acceptance and incorporation into the individual family's order varies from one family to the next. This may depend on how strongly the family is oriented to its past order and how open they are to a new order. In an urban environment the need to climb to a higher social station is often a very important social aspiration. This need among the Arumbakkam residents who fall into the economically weaker section of the society is often limited by the lack of monetary resources. However the richer residents within this income group do exhibit this aspiration and this aspect will be understood and brought out in the nine Arumbakkam homes as part of creating and accepting a new urban social order.

The two types of sociocultural order, one based on the individual family's past order and the other based on the present urban social order, need not exist independently. Both these types of ordering might exist together in the same home. In regard to the nine homes, the manifestation of a socio-cultural order is often expressed through spatial patterning and temporal routines. This theme will be understood by describing relevant spatial and temporal patterns as functions of sociocultural influences. This will be done by identifying religious, cultural and social symbols in each home and bringing out its specific significance.

Home as Identity

In the next section of his article, Dovey discusses a second major dimension of the home: identity. Here, Dovey talks about home not only as something that orients one to "space, time and society," but also that which helps in identifying himself with these conditions. Dovey explains that while "order is concerned with "where" we are at home, identity broaches the question of "who" we are as expressed in the home and "how" we are at home." The home here becomes the manifestation of the dweller's identity, an expression of what the dweller is and wants to be. The dweller imparts his identity to the home during the course of his stay there and draws his identity from it due to this association. This is a two-way relationship which is constantly developing and intensifying his association with the home and deepening its meaning. This intensification Dovey expresses is an integrity between the dweller and the dwelling. As with order, Dovey uses spatial and temporal themes as fields where identity is manifested.

In describing spatial identity, Dovey emphasizes the manifestation of identity as it is expressed the spatial patterning of the home. The grouping of spaces, the arrangement of furniture, or even the external appearance of the home, are all expressions of spatial identity. Unlike spatial order, where Dovey brings out the patterning of space as an unconscious and inherent property, here in spatial identity he identifies an expression that is more conscious in the sense that the dweller may be more aware of how the house reflects who he is. He describes how the dweller interprets his identity in terms of the home's built form. This interpretation may be rooted in the values of the individual's surrounding society or in the individual himself, i.e., social or personal interpretations.

Social interpretation of identity is one that is expressed through a "shared symbolic language". The American flag on the porches of a row of houses on a street may be an example of one such expression of identity. This, Dovey believes may be an identity that is socially prescribed and not one that is necessarily felt in the person. Rather the individual interpretation of identity is one which is backed by an "authentic personal experience".

While Dovey brings out that several theorists separate these two interpretations--social and individual--he himself believes that these two are inextricably together. Dovey argues that both aspects of identity are interwoven and cannot be seen one apart from the other. He explains that the home is both a "statement" and a "mirror" of social and individual identity, which respects both the ideologies of the society and the dweller. As explained in sociocultural order, the effects of an identity that is based totally on social interpretations may have its ethical inadequacies, but that is another field of research which will be briefly spoken of in the conclusion of this thesis.

In the nine Arumbakkam homes, the expression of such identity in spatial patterning will be brought out by a understanding of what the dweller wants to expose to the world and how. Unlike order, which is oriented towards the dweller for the sake of his need to orient to the rest of the world, identity is directed toward the outside world and how that world perceives the dweller. In a way, "who" we are and "how" we are at home is primarily so in order to express to the world our identity.[4]

It is for this reason that spatial patterning to express identity is often found in those parts of the home that are visible to the outside world. The arrangement of furniture within the living room and the landscaping around the home are examples of such identity. The visible parts of the home--i.e., those spaces that are exposed to people other that family members--express the dwellers' identity and can be identified and understood in terms of social or individual interpretations.

Dovey brings about another dimension of spatial identity which is based not on individual or social interpretations but on a universal identity. This is seen in the metaphor of the home as body, where just as a person is identified by his physical body, he is also identified by his next skin, which is the home.[5] For instance, just as the human body is dressed with garments that suit the person's identity

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[4] Clare Cooper, "The House as Symbol of the Self", Designing for Human Behavior: Architecture and the Behavioral Sciences, Edited by Jon Lang, Charles Burnette, Walter Moleski, David Vachon, (Pennsylvania: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc., 1974), 130-146.

[5] Bernd Jager, Theorizing, Journeying, Dwelling., Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology (Vol.2), eds. A. Georgi, C. Fisher, & E. Murray, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1975), 235-260.

(which may be an individual expression, based on trends in society, or a culmination of the two) the facade of the home may bring out a similar character. This can be seen even in the relation between personal cleanliness and that of the home. There is an integrity between the identity of the dweller and that of his home. The home here becomes an extension of his bodily identity.

This dimension of home that is universal yet special to that particular dweller and home will be brought out by taking a closer look at the identity of the family members and their reflection in the spatial patterning of the nine homes.

The second theme which brings out identity is what Dovey calls temporal identity. In this theme, Dovey refers to an identity that is expressed to establish the dweller's past. The addition of the name of one's birth place before his or her first name, as is done by several groups in South India, is one simple example of such an expression of identity. Home serves as a field where the dweller exhibits to the world his identity that he has cultivated through the past. The example of the Kerala family in home VIII is an apt example for such a display of temporal identity. The lush vegetation in their small backyard at Arumbakkam is an expression of their past, since the land they came from is filled with such plants and trees.

Home, Dovey explains, not only has connections with the past but also with the future. The home as a stable and secure place encourages the dweller to imagine a future with it. The home becomes a setting for future plans not only for the built form of the house itself, but for all the happenings in the family. This is the aspect of temporal identity that Dovey discusses: home as a place that promises the dweller a satisfactory future. The home gives the dweller the sense of security that one finds in a possessed place, a place that gives him the feeling of permanence, of always being there. It is this sense of stability and autonomy that helps him build his dreams on it and his identity. Dovey ends this section by explaining: "Knowing that we have the power to remain in a place and change it permits us to act upon and build our dreams."[6]

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[6] Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," 43.

To summarize, temporal identity is brought out in two ways, according to Dovey: first, through expressing the past; and second, through holding promises for the future. Both of these dimensions are extremely important in understanding the nine Arumbakkam homes. Just as in spatial identity, all the visible parts of the home--i.e., those which are exposed to outsiders--will be seen with regard to the dwellers' past. The first way of revealing temporal identity through expressing the family's past will be brought out by understanding their own personal past. This will be followed by discussing with the dwellers the significance of such visible features, which bring out a temporal identity that is connected to the past.

The second aspect of temporal identity points to that quality of home that makes it a secure place, a place that holds promises for the future, a place where our identity is built and allowed to grow is one of the primary intentions of this thesis. The underlying theme behind the Arumbakkam "Sites and Services" self-help project is to establish this security in the homes of low-income people. By building homes on their own piece of land, according to their needs and affordability, these people are less fearful of loosing their dwelling place due to insecurity in tenure or unaffordability.

The expression of such security and autonomy will be identified and interpreted in each of the nine homes by careful observation and understanding the future plans of its dwellers. For instance, home VI is a reinforced cement concrete column and beam structure, infilled with brick and cement walls. This home has its columns extending to a height of three feet on its roof. This is to facilitate a future expansion on the second floor. This may be a symbol of security, autonomy and possession--all of which expresses a temporal identity.

Home as Connectedness

In the next section of his paper, Dovey discusses what he calls connectedness, through which he tries to integrate the properties of order and identity. In connectedness the home is seen as a place which connects the dweller with: (a) place which relates to spatial order/identity; (b) people who are part of a sociocultural order; (c) the past, which relates to temporal identity and order and; (d) the future, which carries the past and present ahead in time.

Each of these types of connectednesses will be discussed in turn.

(a) Connectedness with people

Here, the home can be interpreted as a stage where the dwellers relate themselves to the outside world. They both express and strengthen their identity with such display. Such an identity expressed through spatial patterns and temporal rhythms brings about an order that orients the dwellers to the surrounding social environment. It is through such a social order that the dweller is connected to the society: he understands the society and absorbs what he chooses to from it. This may be true especially in the case of a new environment as in Arumbakkam whose residents are mostly immigrants from surrounding rural areas.

(b) Connectedness with the place

In this kind of connectedness, the home orients the dweller to a place. Dovey explains how the place where the home is located in creates a spatial order through which the dweller views the rest of the world. Such a spatial order that is rooted in a place relates primarily to the geography of the terrain. Its slopes, its ridges and valleys, its flatness, its texture, all reflect upon the ordering of the home. The brightly painted desert homes, mentioned above, are a good example to explain how the home is connected to the geographical place.

Another dimension to home as connectedness to place is seen in the creation of temporal order through associations with a place over time or past memories. Here, the place in the past becomes the main force in orienting the dweller to a new environment. Such places in the past also plays an important role in bringing out the dwellers identity. It is through a connectedness with place that the dweller orders himself and then draws an identity which is unique of his experiences with place.

(c) Connectedness with the past

Dovey explains that in this connectedness the past becomes the ground from which the dweller draws an order and identity. This is seen in the explanation of temporal order and identity. A connectedness with past experiences, places or people is expressed by creating an order and identity that is related to it.

(d) Connectedness with the future

Connectedness with the future relates to the idea that the home as a secure place that is possessed by the dweller helps him to dream of a future with it. The home becomes a stage where his dreams will come into play. In this light the home holds a connectedness with the future. Such a connectedness is created through the power of autonomy that the dweller holds over the home. This is an important property of the home as one that imparts security and protection to the dweller.

The Dialectics of Home

The home as connectedness with people, place, past and future becomes meaningful only when there is process of moving out of the home and coming back in. This is defined by Dovey as a dialectic process. The process of journeying out and returning that enriches the home's connectedness with people, place, past and future and intensifying the meaning of home.

The dialectics of home is the fourth major section of Dovey's article and incorporates the theme of home as connectedness. In the interpretation of the nine homes of Arumbakkam, therefore, connectedness will not be discussed as a separate interpretative theme but, rather integrated in the presentation of the dialectics in the nine homes.

Dovey explains that the dialectics of home occur in regard to a set of interactions that involve "a series of binary oppositions,"[7] whose continual back-and-forth movement enriches those qualities that mold the home. In other words, it is through a process of journeying out and re-entering that the meaning of the home is established.

Dovey describes this reciprocity as a dialectic process between the home and the environment, and he defines it in two themes: spatial and social dialectics. Spatial dialectics relate to those processes that occur between the home itself and the environment: between its inside and outside. Social dialectics relates to the opposition between the inside and outside in terms of people: the dwellers inside and the society outside. With respect to a larger context, the community where the dwellers feels at home stands in opposition to the next larger section of the society. The journey into the outsider's world here again strengthens the identity of the insiders' home place.

Because the dialectical theme is important with regard to the nine homes, the next section discusses spatial dialectics and social dialectics in greater detail.

In spatial dialectics, Dovey describes the spatial qualities of inside and outside in terms of three basic oppositions: (i) the physical inside versus the outside; (ii) the order of the inside versus the chaos of the outside; and (iii) the being-at-home of the inside versus the journeying associated with the outside.

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[7] ibid. 44.

In regard to the physical inside and outside, Dovey explains that the home has been described time and again as the core of human realm. It is here that the dweller's behavior is unaffected by the pressures of the surrounding social environment. Here, only the primary relationship of the person to a home space exists. This freedom brings about an intimacy to the inside realm. The home as a protector and a stronghold is a guardian of the dweller's most intimate self. But the dweller cannot live only within this realm; there is a need to go outside to truly appreciate the inside.

What is really the private realm or home can be understood by exploring where the dweller feels like an insider. This can be a room or a house or a town or even a nation. The degree of insideness at each stage might increase as the dweller moves inward towards the core of his realm which might be his home. However, the meaning of home is strengthened by the experience of moving out into the larger context in which the home is found and returning to savor its insideness.[8]

In the nine Arumbakkam homes, this strengthening of the insideness of the home may be understood by observing how the dwellers feel about returning to the home immediately after being outside. For instance in home I, the children after a day's work at school, run into the home throwing their bookbags on the bed and their shoes at the door and take off their shirts to lay on the floor. This series of actions all respond to a certain quality of insideness that will be examined in each of the nine homes.

By Order and Chaos, Dovey refers to the fact that the home is an inside that is orderly and under control to the eyes of the dweller. The outside world beyond the dweller's realm of autonomy is more chaotic for the dweller as he is not usually in control of its making. This does not mean that the dweller rejects the outside world; rather, Dovey explains that such an opposition is important in that it helps the dweller to appreciate the order within the home.

To sub-divide order and chaos further into finer oppositions, Dovey distinguishes four primary characteristics of the home and their respective opposites: familiar and strange, secure and dangerous, sacred and profane, and autonomous and heteronomous. The primary characteristics of familiarity, security, sacredness and autonomy within a home strongly contrasts with the strangeness, danger, profanity and heteronomy of the outside world. Being in a place over period of time releases a sense of familiarity that helps the dweller to order himself within it. It is such familiarity that brings about a feeling of at-homeness and trust in the home place. The home becomes a secure place where the dweller is safe and protected against the outside world.

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[8] ibid. 46.

But in order to realize this inherent quality that the home imparts, Dovey argues that a knowledge of the opposite imparted by the world outside is required. There is a need, Dovey explains, to go outside to experience the strangeness of the outside. The vastness of the world beyond exposes more and more new places that one has never seen before. These are strange and to the one meandering out into the world there is a sense of apprehension not merely due to a lack of trust but due the lack of previous association. The world as strange and dangerous, serves as an opposite in order to appreciate the familiarity and security of the home.

The home is a place that the dweller draws an order from and through which he displays his identity. This is one special place in the world that dweller is in intimate contact with. He builds his hopes and dreams on it and it he sees it as a special place amidst all the other ordinary places. Dovey expresses this quality as the sacredness of the home, the world beyond being profane in the eyes of the dweller.

This is the place that he is familiar with, secure in and providing an expression of his autonomy. All these qualities make the home a sacred place. The movement out of this sacred place into the profane world, Dovey explains, makes these inherent characteristics of the home, meaningful. "Indeed, many people are more at home among their own 'disorder' than within someone else's 'order'."[9] This fact might be true of all the homes at Arumbakkam, although their homes, from photographs, might appear to be unappealing as dwelling places the members of the families draw their sense of familiarity, security, sacredness, autonomy from their homes.

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[9] ibid. 37.

These characteristics that give meaning to the home will be identified and understood with respect to each of the nine homes. Here the main approach will be a careful observation of the dweller's relationship to these qualities in terms of day-to-day behavior or spatial expressions in the built form.

The third set of oppositions in the spatial dialectics of the home that Dovey describes is the home and journey. Here, Dovey describes the actual process of finding rest in the home versus the active movement required outside the home. He explains: "The sense of home is heightened when we are warm in bed yet can hear the rain on the roof and the wind whistling under the eaves."[10] Such a dialectic may be useful in understanding the intermediate area where the change from the home to the journey happens. This is what Dovey describes as an interface--the place between the depths of the inside and the open outside. Here, he explains, one is "at home yet with a sense of reach, to have a refuge and a prospect."[11] The interface illustrates the meaning of spatial elements like the threshold, door, window and the front veranda. In relation to these architectural elements, the dweller is still within his territory but extends himself to the outside. This possibility Dovey says, "accentuates the meaning of being inside."[12]

Such a transition space is very important for the Arumbakkam homes, where a sense of sacredness is attached to this physical transition. The homes' entries and exits are associated with symbolic meanings and superstitions that cannot be belittled or overlooked. For instance, the ground just in front of the entrance door of the homes is often decorated with designs made out of limestone powder. This might be intended to welcome a guest or to keep germs from the street off the home, but experientially such a decoration evokes a feeling of departure and return.

Such symbols at the interface bring out the importance of the inside/outside boundary. These architectural elements and symbols at the interface will be identified, described and understood with respect to the nine Arumbakkam homes.

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[10] ibid. 46.

[11] ibid.

[12] ibid.

In this section on social dialectics, Dovey explains the dialectic process of expressing social identity. He argues that while expressing a social identity, the dweller is fully aware of the surrounding social environment, its ideologies and expectations. Here there usually exists more than a need to represent the dwellers' inherent identity--a need to accommodate the society's expectations. This is especially true of an urban environment like Arumbakkam.

Dovey explains that during this process of development and growth of a social identity, the dweller often leaves his own perception of his home to imagine how the society perceives it. Dovey argues how the dweller negotiates with his own identity to accommodate such a perception of the social world. The outcomes of such a dialectic is seen expressed in what Dovey calls, the interface. The house front, the threshold and the openings into the home all bring out the effects of this dialectic--the mixture of the dwellers inherent identity and that brought about by his acceptance of the expectations of the society.

Such an expression of social dialectics at Arumbakkam will be examined by understanding the identity of the homes through the parts that are exposed to the society, like house fronts and thresholds. These will be studied with reference to the identity of the dwellers and the influence of the urban environment on them. Such an external influence is seen to be much lower in the case of the poorer homes for whom the project was designed for and it is here that the inherent identity is brought out. However each of the nine Arumbakkam homes will be examined in terms of such a negotiated process.

Using Dovey's Framework to Interpret the Nine Homes

The next major section of the thesis--chapters III, IV and V--interprets the nine Arumbakkam homes, using Kimberley Dovey's framework as a conceptual basis. The aim of this interpretation is to understand the experiential qualities that demonstrate the significance of Dovey's two themes--order and identity--in the nine homes.

As explained above, order is that which the dweller finds in a homeplace and through which he orients himself to other places. Identity is a property of the home through which the dweller demonstrates who he is and expresses that fact to the rest of the world. While order is oriented largely inward towards the dweller and the privacy of the home, identity is more often oriented to the external social environment beyond the home. Identity especially involves what the dweller reveals of himself to the society in which he finds himself. There is a need for him to identify himself as he is part of the larger social environment.

In other words, the dweller makes a home place that identifies him. Although he may not be the actual builder of the house, the dweller tends to be the creator of the identity of the home. The identity is a reflection of who he is, and, as Dovey explains, often the dweller draws his identity back from his home. But such an identity may not express simply the inherent identity of the dweller. Often the "collective ideologies" of the society have a role to play in the display of identity.[13] Dovey explains that the spatial identity of a home reflects both the collective ideologies of the society and also the authentic personal experience of the dweller.

The display of identity is, therefore, a combination of an inherent identity and one acquired from the larger social environment. Edward Relph argues that when the identity of a place is overpowered by the display of an acquired identity--a "dictatorship of the **they**," i.e. the ideologies of the society--identity becomes less "authentic."[14] What he means here is that a place which reflects, not the inherent identity that follows "genuine responses and experiences," but one that is "borrowed or handed down from some external source," weakens the identity of a homeplace.[15] Relph calls places that are dominated by the expression of a "collective ideology" rather than an inherent one, inauthentic. Relph points out that this phenomenon is sometimes more readily associated with individuals and groups who strive for a higher social or economic status.

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[13] ibid. 40.

[14] Relph, Place and Placelessness, 80-81.

Whether a homeplace is "authentic" or "inauthentic" is a debate by itself, but this thesis will use the argument of a homeplace exhibiting stronger or weaker identity based on Relph's interpretation. The degree of identity will be used to divide the nine homes into three descriptive groups. From the preliminary description and photographs of the nine families and their homes, a broad picture of their identities may be drawn. Certain basic observations related to a portrayal of the dweller's identity is used to divide the nine homes into three groups, which are described as follows.

Group A

This group involves four of the nine homes, and includes the families whose incomes genuinely fall within the income bracket of the Economically Weaker Section as suggested by the Sites and Services program. The four homes that apply to group A include homes I, II, III and IV, (figures 2.1, 2.2. 2.2 and 2.4) all of which have an average income of less than thirty five dollars. These four homes, it will be argued, carry stronger identities. This is because they are less influenced by the "collective ideologies" of the society and more influenced by the identities of the families as these identities have arisen over time in the traditional worlds from which the four families originally came. These four homes will be described and discussed in chapter III.

These four families own homes that have only very basic necessities. The houses are made of very simple building materials like brick, mud, cement, thatch and tile. They are usually devoid of any fancy ornamentations or facades. The house itself is simple in plan, with one or two rooms and not more than a single floor. In terms of identity this means that the poorer homes who can afford only a

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[15] ibid.

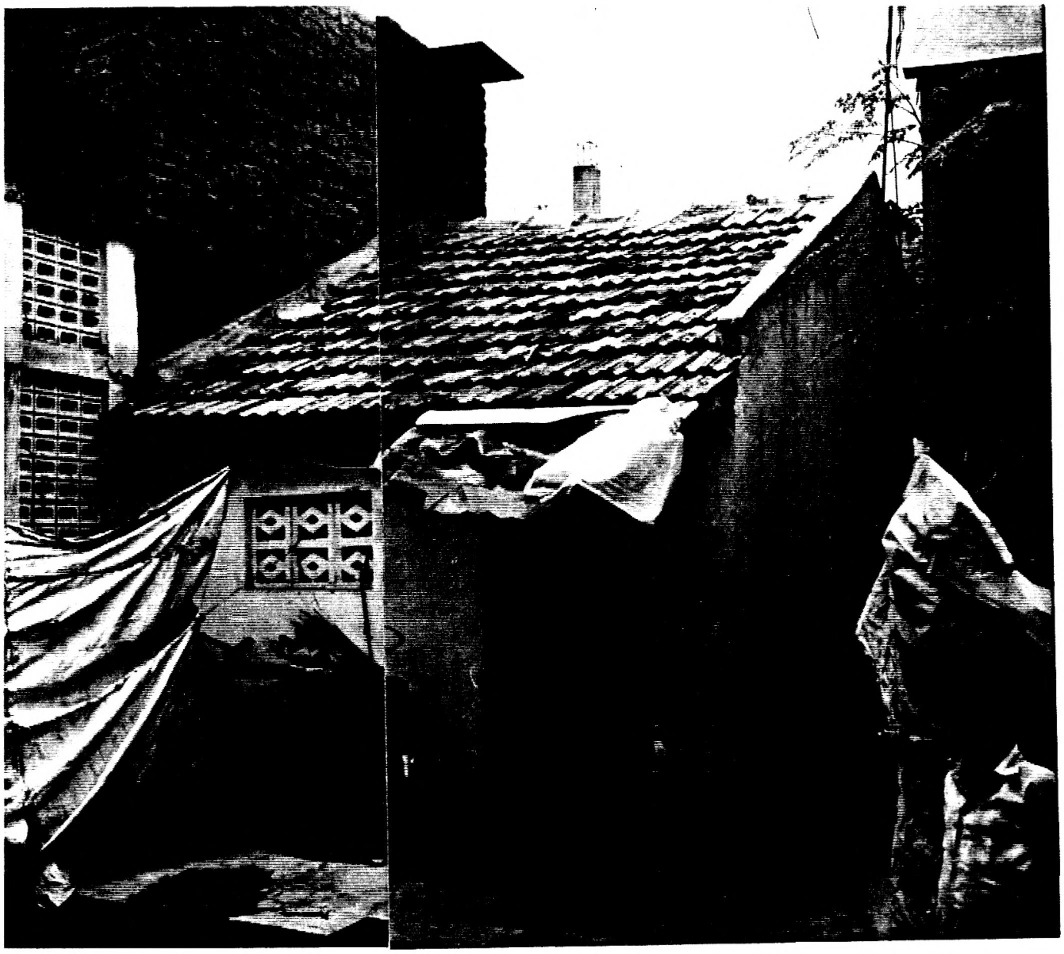

Fig. 2.1: HOME I

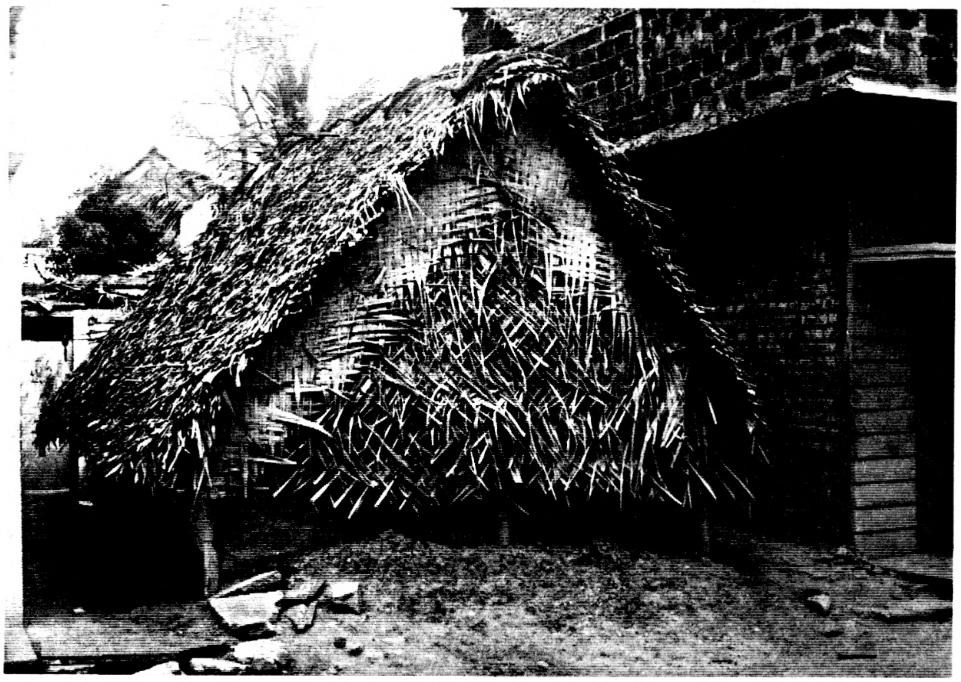

Fig. 2.2: HOME II

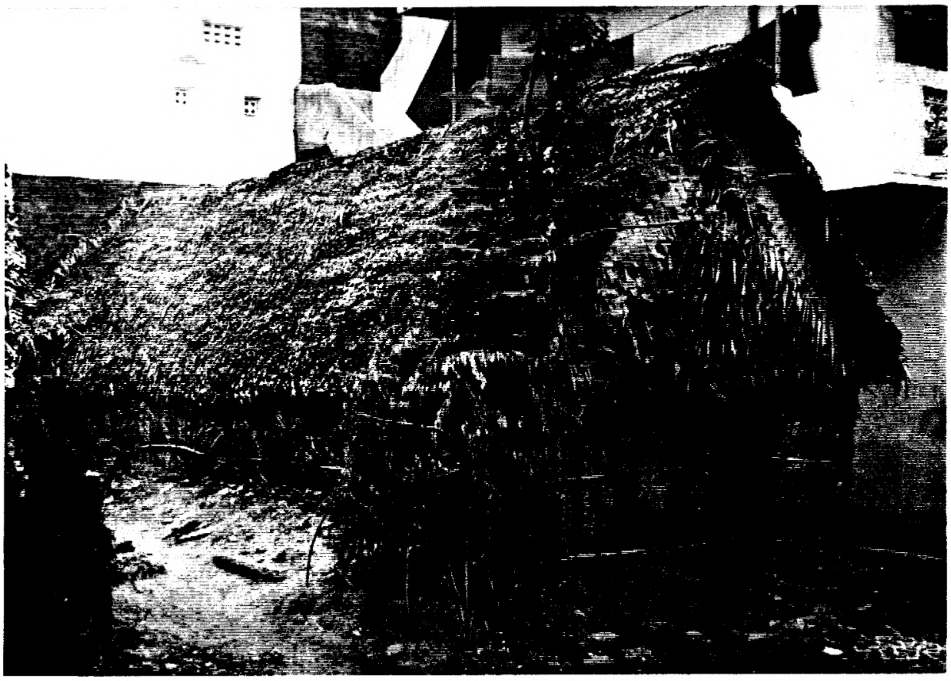

Fig. 2.3: HOME III

basic shelter often express an identity that is inherent to the family. It seems here that their monetary standing plays a restrictive role in their display of any acquired identity in their housefronts or interiors.

Group B

This group involves three of the nine Arumbakkam homes and include families that fall slightly above the income level of the Economically Weaker Section. The three homes that fall under group B include homes V, VI and VII, all of which have an income below forty-five dollars a month (figures 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7). These three homes, it will be argued, carry less strong identities than the homes of group A. In other words these families are influenced to a certain extent by the "collective ideologies" of the society and hence display an identity that is slightly different from their identity more grounded in the past and the continuity of firsthand personal and group experience, arising their traditional cultures and experiences. These homes will be described and discussed in chapter IV.

The three families of group B, are more expressive of their aesthetic and status values and own homes that are larger than those in group A. The houses are generally made of brick, cement and timber/tiled roofs and usually have more than a single floor. The planning of the inside of the houses is more complex with several rooms and spaces delineated for storage, sleeping and other home activities. The interiors are better finished but the houses themselves display an overall conservative quality.

The three homes seem to display a certain level of borrowed identity from the larger urban environment of Madras. This is seen especially in the planning of the interiors and the design of their housefronts. Although the homes of group B differ from group A in the above mentioned spatial patterns, both groups, at cursory glance, seem to carry spatial/physical features that fall within a broad range of homes. This broad range varies from a temporary yet well-built thatched hut to a permanent yet minimal brick and concrete structure. This range of homes are mostly houses that perform the primarily task of sheltering, although the quality of the shelter varies from temporary to more permanent. All the seven homes of group A and B, seem to fall within this broad range, and hence

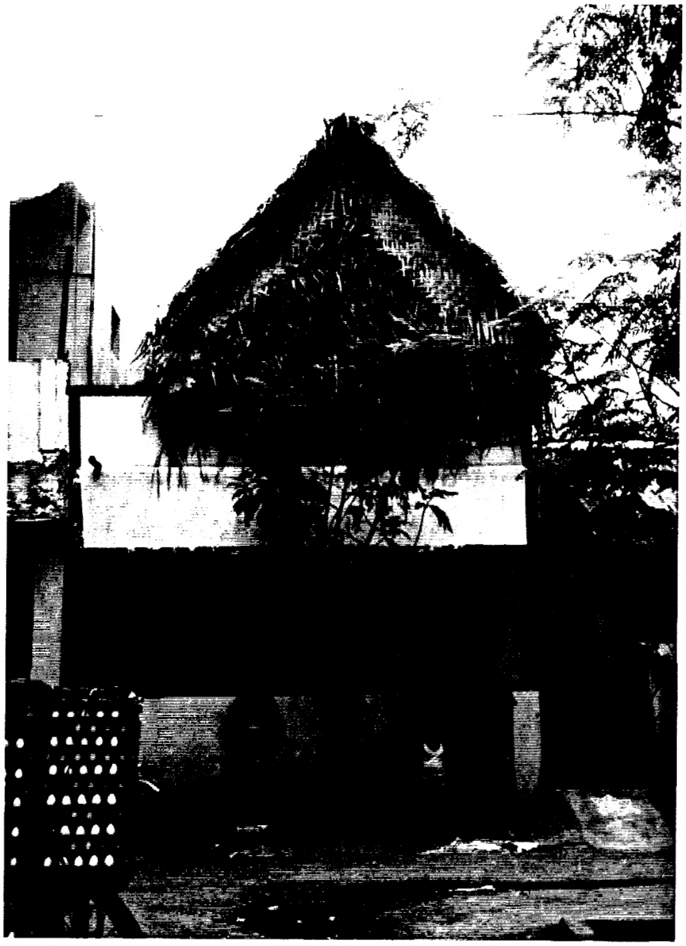

Fig. 2.5: HOME V

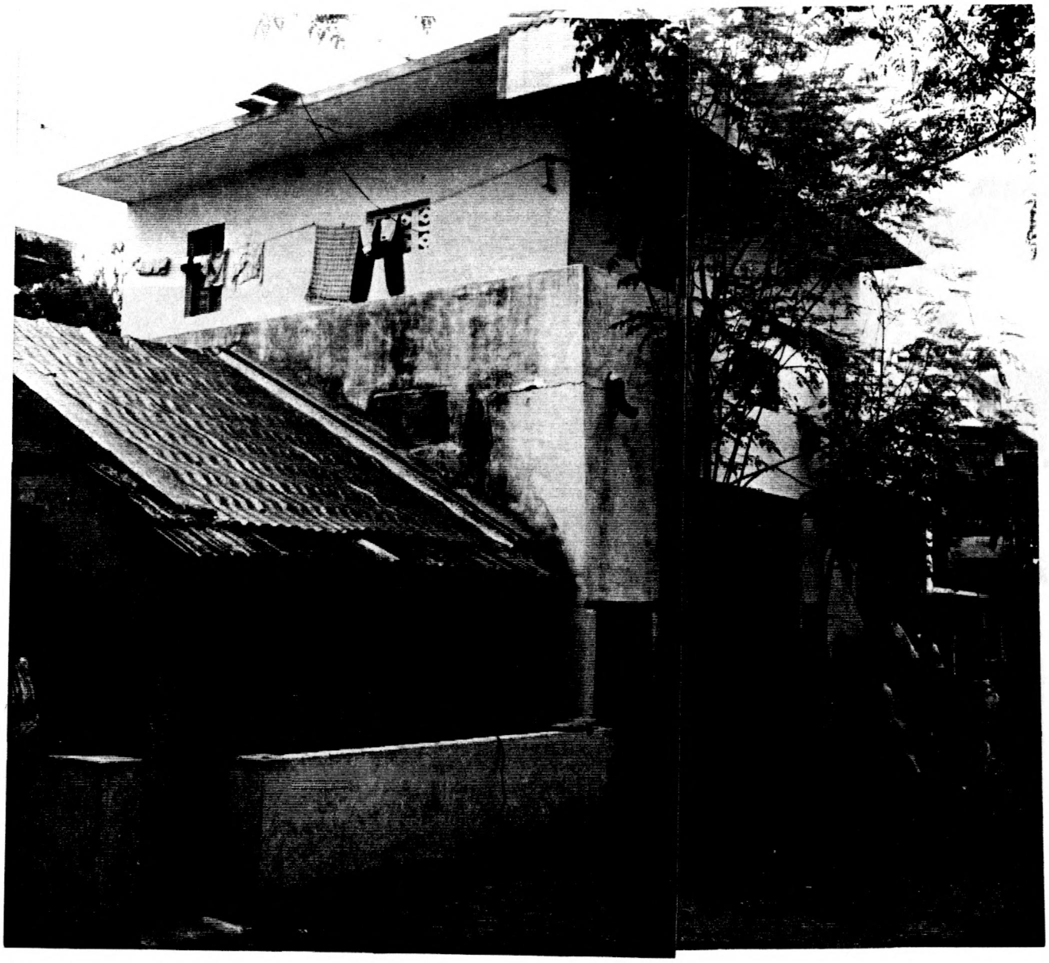

Fig. 2.6: HOME VI

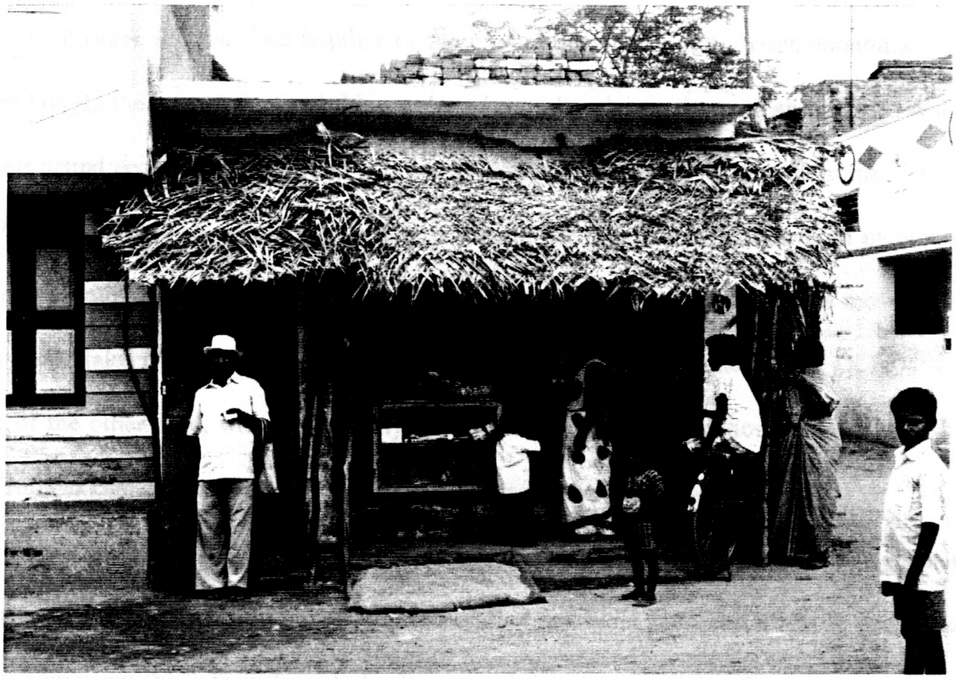

Fig. 2.7: HOME VII

appear to of one large community.

The last group of homes--Group C--unlike these two groups, seem to stand apart from this large community and these two homes will be presented next.

Group C

This group involves the last two of the nine homes and include families that fall much above the Economically Weaker Section. The families of these two homes have either risen economically since they first bought the site or acquired this site based on false claims showing an income level much lesser than their actual economic status. The two homes that apply to group C include homes VIII and IX, (figures 2.8 and 2.9) which are the richest homes among the nine homes and have an income above seventy dollars a month. Home VIII is representative of the group of families who have moved into Arumbakkam under false claims of having a lower income than their actual one. Home IX is representative of the other type, where the family has climbed up the socioeconomic ladder after having moved into Arumbakkam, thereby acquiring a changed identity over the years.

Both houses exhibit an overall sense of extravagance in the design and construction of their homes, which are made and finished with expensive building materials and exhibit highly decorated facades. These homes are the extremely rich dwellings, and the identity of the physical features of the home often is very different from the other homes of Arumbakkam. These homes seem to stand apart from the surrounding socioeconomic community, since they belong to a higher economic stratum of the urban society. These homes do not carry the general homogenous spatial identity of group A and B and hence do not belong to the EWS community of Arumbakkam. These two homes--VIII and IX--will be discussed as a separate group of homes, in chapter V. How they stand apart and do not fit into the community of Arumbakkam, will be discussed.

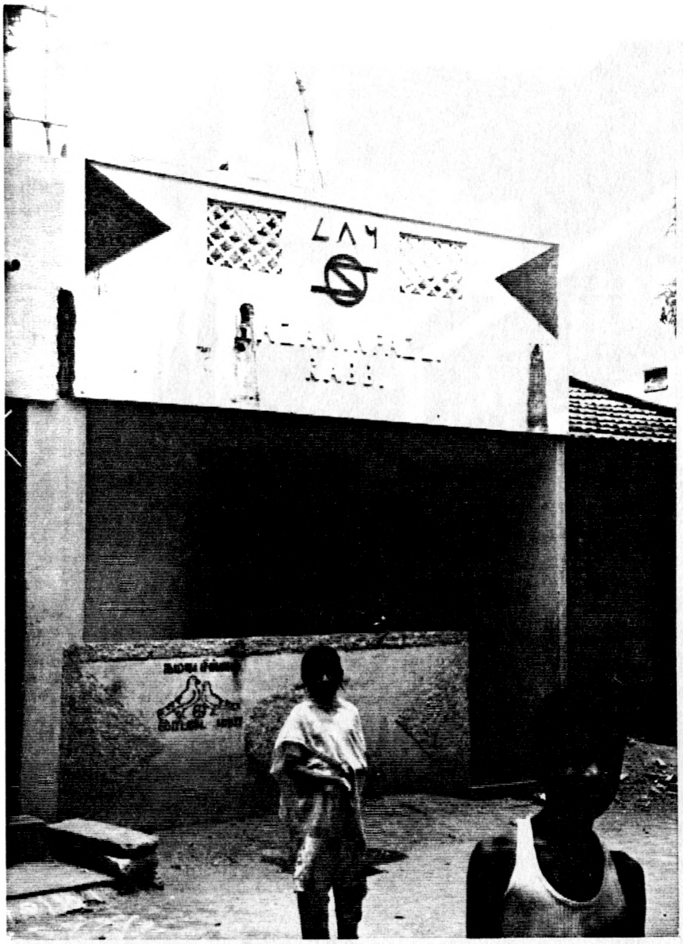

Fig. 2.8: HOME VIII

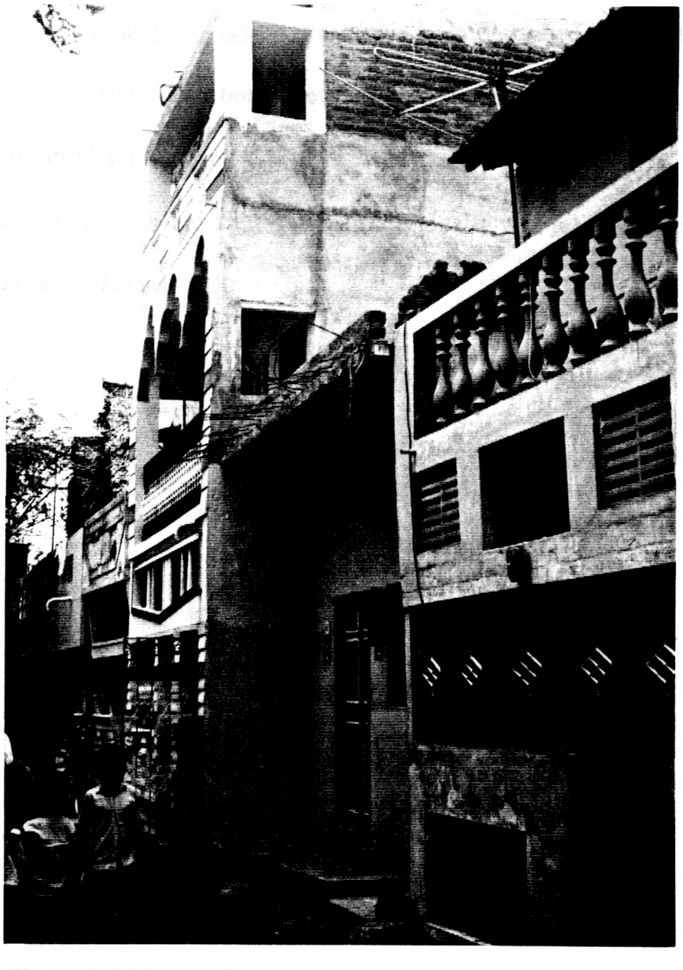

Fig. 2.9: HOME IX

The Organisation of the Following Three Chapters

From the above discussion, the first group of homes, group A--homes I, II, III and IV--that suggest the strongest sense of identity, will be approached in the following chapter. First a description of their experiential qualities will be made, based on Dovey's themes. Such a description will hope to unravel the properties of home as order and home as identity that have been described above. This discussion will also justify the grouping of these four homes into a group that expresses the strongest sense of identity among the nine Arumbakkam homes.

The description of the two other groups and their homes, individually will follow the first group in the same manner under the same themes.

CHAPTER III:

INTERPRETING THE FOUR HOMES IN GROUP A

In this chapter the first group of homes--Group A--will be interpreted, using Kimberley Dovey's three themes of order, identity and dialectics. As described in the previous chapter, group A includes four homes, and the argument is made that these homes carry the strongest identity among the nine homes in Arumbakkam. This strong sense of identity may be related to the fact that these four homes are the poorest and can afford no more than very basic shelter. In other words, the monetary standing of these four homes plays a restrictive role in the display of any identity that might represent a "collective ideology" of the larger urban environment.

The presentation of the four homes of group A will be done in the following manner: First, a brief description of the four homes, their dwellers, backgrounds of the families, and the basic physical features of the home will be given. Second, a detailed description of the four houses, their exteriors, rooms and spaces, furniture and the activities of the dwellers inside it will be presented, drawing on Dovey's first theme home as order. This description will work to understand the ordering of the four homes through their spatial and temporal qualities.

Thirdly, after a presentation of the spatial and temporal order of the four homes, these patterns will then be examined in regard to meanings that relate to the dwellers' sense of identities for the four homes. Last, the third dimension of Dovey's conception--dialectics of home--will be considered. His three dialectics of inside and outside, order and chaos, and home and journey will be probed in regard to each home in turn. This exercise will work to identify and clarify the inherent qualities of the four homes in group A.

Description of the Four Homes of Group A

Home 1 is illustrated in figure 2.1. This Hindu family is made up of a father and mother with two children. The father, the only working member, is employed as a technician and earns about thirty dollars a month.[1] He works for a private firm at Ayanavaram, about ten kilometers from Arumbakkam. Their forefathers were originally from Andhra Pradesh, a state north of Tamil Nadu (fig. 1.2), but this family and its two former generations has lived in Madras.

Of the nine homes, this home provides the prototypical example of what group A should be in terms of the Sites and Services Program. The characteristics of this home are typical of the family type for which this particular site was intended; these characteristics include: (a) household size - four to five members; (b) monthly income - eighteen to thirty dollars; (c) Second or third generation immigrants from rural south India residing in slums or squatter settlements; (d) economically capable of buying the offered services of electricity and water and building at least semipermanent house.

Home II is illustrated by figure 2.2, and houses a family of seven members, including a father, mother and five children. This Hindu family has its origins in Madras. Their earlier generations were one of the very early settlers who have lived in the slums of the city since the end of colonial rule over fifty years back. The father is the major breadwinner; he works sporadically as a laborer (coolie) at construction sites around Arumbakkam. The mother and the oldest daughter work at home occasionally, on small handicraft jobs to support the family. The total monthly income of the family averages around twelve dollars a month. A low, unreliable income level combined with the many children has made it difficult for this family to acquire the basic services or even the loan provided for initial construction. However, the family has built their own hut of thatch and mud and has lived in it for the past eight years.

Home III is shown in figure 2.3. This family has fewer members than home II and includes a father, mother and three children. This Hindu family, like home 2, has its origins in Madras. The father works as a service person for the Corporation of Madras' office at Kelleys, a neighborhood close to Arumbakkam. He earns about eighteen dollars amonth. His income combined with job stability has allowed the family to buy a water connection and to take the loan of sixty dollars offered by the government.

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[1] As per exchange rates in April 1190, one dollar is approximately equal to seventeen rupees.

Home IV is illustrated in figure 2.4. Coming from Kerala, a state east of Tamil Nadu, this family of a father, mother and three children have been in Arumbakkam for the last nine years. The father works as a life insurance agent, and the mother is a home tutor for children. Together the couple make an average of only thirty five dollars a month.

With this as a basic description of the four families, these homes will now be interpreted in terms of order,identity and dialectics.

HOME AS ORDER

The Four Homes and Spatial Order

As was explained in chapter II, order includes spatial, temporal and sociocultural dimensions. Spatial order involves the patterning of the home space with respect to the following: (i) inherent structure of the human body's up/down, front/back and left/right; (ii) the movement of the body within it; and (iii) the effect of the geography of the earth where it is found. The four homes of group A, all have a certain order in their spatial qualities. In this section, these features are broadly identified and then each theme is elaborated in greater detail. This way of presentation will bring out the common order around which these four homes orient themselves. However, there may exist certain differences in spatial and temporal patterns due to the differences among the four homes' dwellers. These are brought out in sociocultural order.

Each site at Arumbakkam is a linear thirteen-by-thirty-three foot plot with a thirteen-by-three-foot service strip in the rear (fig. 2.5). Since the houses are found in rows, a three feet strip on one of its longer sides is to be left unbuilt, as a setback prescribed by the development authorities. This leaves an area of ten-by-thirty feet on which to be built. The size of the plot combined with the monetary affordability by the dwellers, plays a role in all four homes by restricting the house to a single floor. With this as the basic limitations each home is ordered by certain patterns and a comparative study, using the following plates as reference, will be drawn.

As illustrated in fig. 3.1, each of the four homes are built very differently, yet each has an underlying spatial order. Home I, where the front part of the house is leased out to a tenant, is divided primarily into three spaces: the main room, the multipurpose and the three-foot lateral setback that is used as the corridor. Home II is based on the same pattern without the rented front space but a larger main room and with the back multipurpose space open to sky. Home III, in contrast to homes I and II, is simply composed of a single large space incorporating the entire site, including the service core within its thatched roof. This home has pushed its eastern wall over the setback limit, leaving a setback of only one foot instead of three (fig 3.2). The last house, home IV, belonging to a slightly wealthier

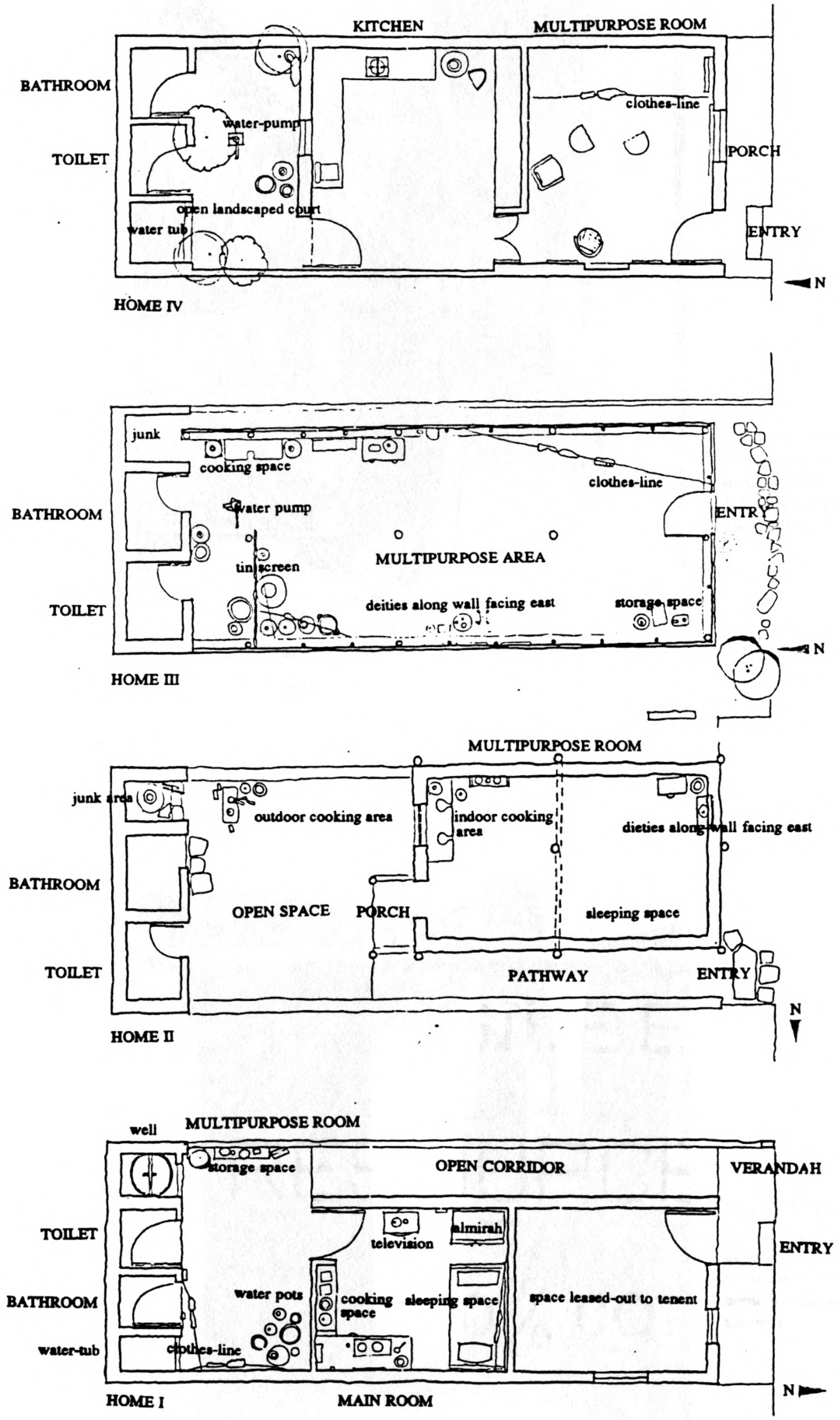
KITCHEN
MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
BATHROOM
water-pump
TOILET
clothes-line
PORCH
open landscaped court
water tub
ENTRY
N
HOME IV
junk
cooking space
clothes-line
BATHROOM
water pump
ENTRY
tin screen
MULTIPURPOSE AREA
TOILET
deities along wall facing east
storage space
N
HOME III
MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
junk area
outdoor cooking area
indoor cooking area
dieties along wall facing east
BATHROOM
OPEN SPACE
PORCH
sleeping space
TOILET
PATHWAY
ENTRY
N
HOME II
well
MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
storage space
OPEN CORRIDOR
VERANDAH
TOILET
television
almirah
ENTRY
BATHROOM
water pots
cooking space
sleeping space
space leased-out to tenent
water-tub
clothes-line
HOME I
MAIN ROOM
N

Fig. 3.1: FLOOR PLAN–GROUP A
SCALE 1'0" = 1/8"

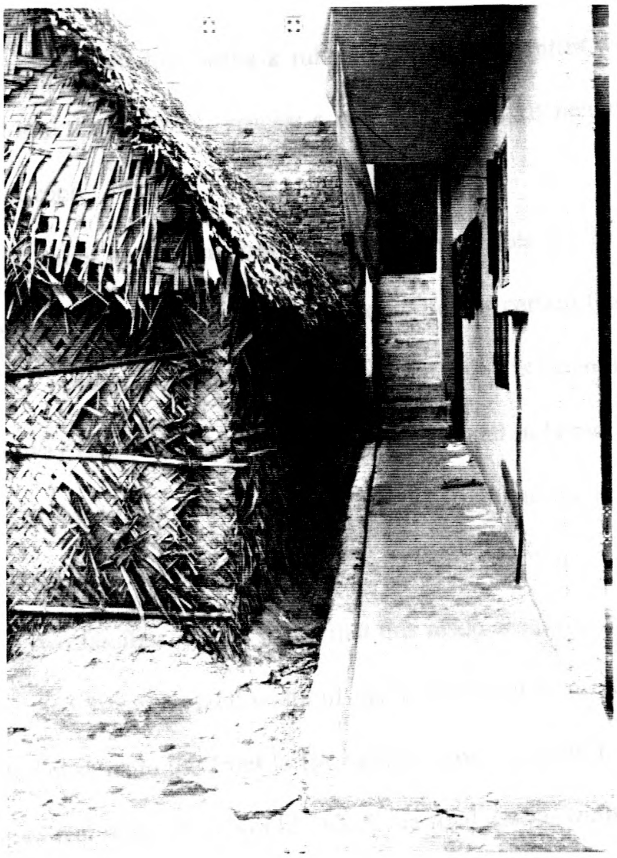

Fig. 3.2: HOME III
Only leaving a 1'0" set-back instead of 3'0", using the space within the home

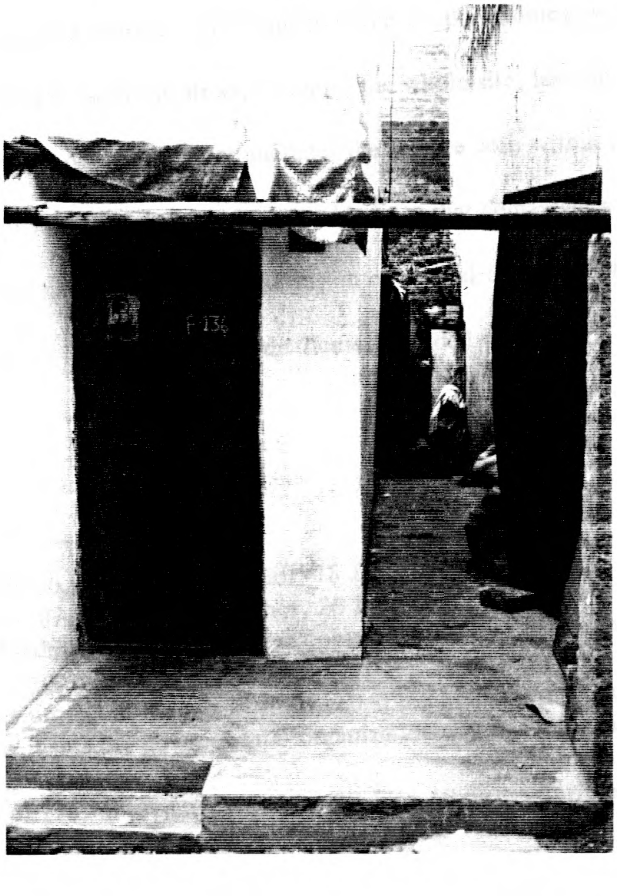

Fig. 3.4: HOME I
3'0" set-back used as an open corridor to connect to the home's entrance at the back

household, is seen to have violated the setback rules, occupying the entire width of thirteen feet. The house itself is divided into three primary spaces: a multipurpose, a kitchen and a landscaped backyard, with a narrow porch infront.

Next, the similarities and differences among the four homes can be considered in detail. From the floor plans on fig. 3.3, each home is seen to be composed of certain basic spaces. The dwellers of home I occupy the back portion the home. The entry to the home is essentially through the three feet setback used as a pathway (fig. 3.4). Such a pattern is also found in home II, where the entire house is oriented to the back, with the main entrance not facing the street but the open space behind (fig. 3.5). Here again the setback is used as the pathway that leads one to the home (fig. 3.6). In interviews with the members of these two families, it was found that this made access to the service core, which was located at the rear better.[2] Since the total width of the house could be no more than ten feet, the circulation within the house from the front to the back in order to reach to the service core would occupy a passage three feet wide. This would reduce the total usable width to seven feet which could restrict the movement and gearing of the four to seven people residing within the homes.

Home III which faces the street, occupies the whole site, leaving just a setback of one foot, building within it one large space which includes the service core within it. The spaces here are seen to be divided not by physical barriers but by invisible lines that demarcate activities within this large space (fig. 3.7). The house here is molded by the fusion of several different activities and is found at a lesser level in the other three homes in each of the homes' divided spaces.[3]

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[2] Home I-House #F136, Interview by author, 18 June 1989,
Home II-House #I107, Interview by author, 26 June 1989;
Transcriptions, Madras Metropolitan Development Authority Colony, Arumbakkam, Madras, India.

This Sites and Services project at Arumbakkam is called the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority or the MMDA colony, as it this the governmental organization that has initiated this program here.

[3] Home III-House #F175, interview by author, 20 June 1989; transcripted from dialogues and direct observation, MMDA colony, Arumbakkam, Madras, India.

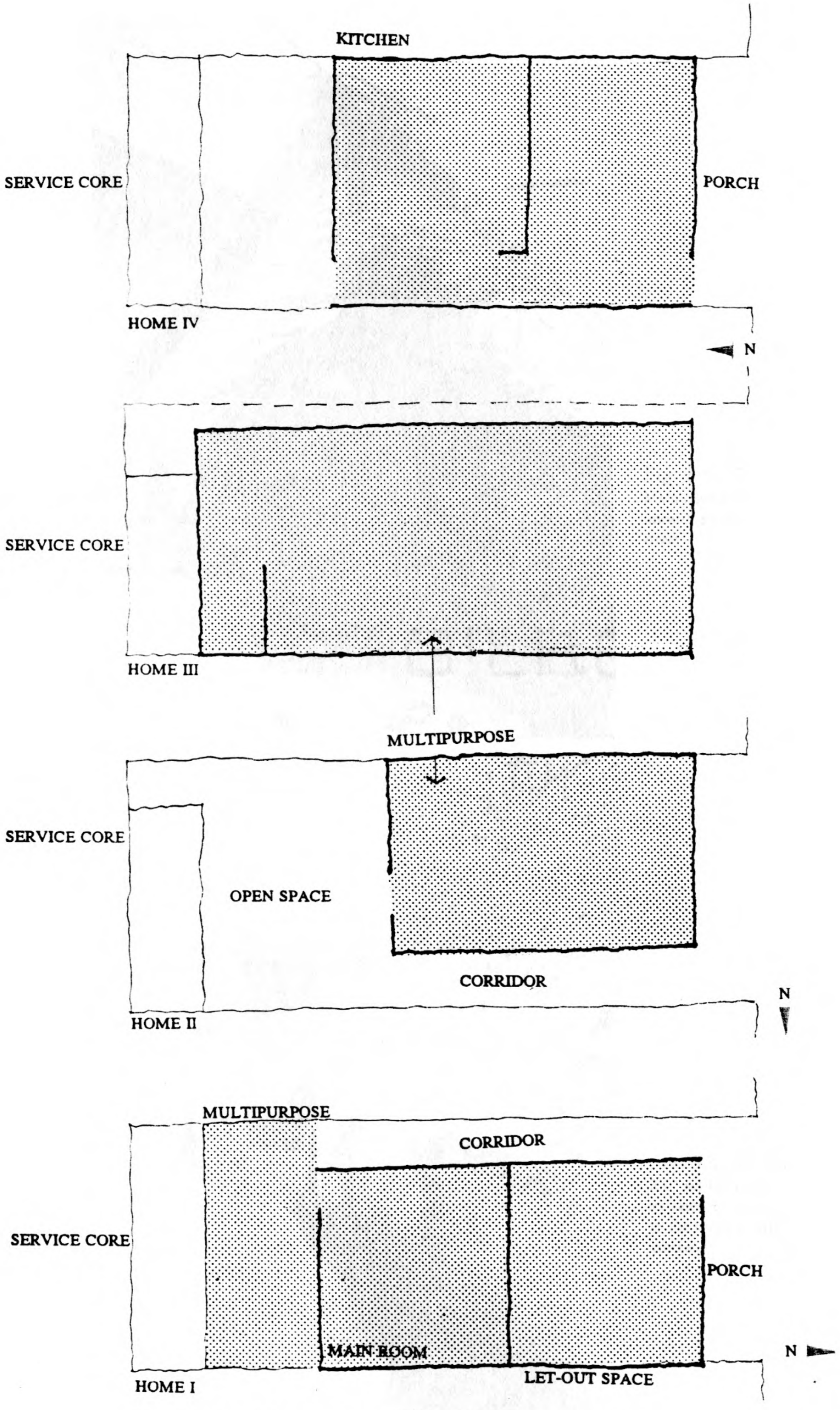
KITCHEN
SERVICE CORE
PORCH
HOME IV
N
SERVICE CORE
HOME III
MULTIPURPOSE
SERVICE CORE
OPEN SPACE
CORRIDOR
HOME II
N
MULTIPURPOSE
CORRIDOR
SERVICE CORE
PORCH
MAIN ROOM
N
HOME I
LET-OUT SPACE

Fig. 3.3: BASIC SPACES OF THE GROUP-A HOMES
SCALE 1'0" = 1/8"

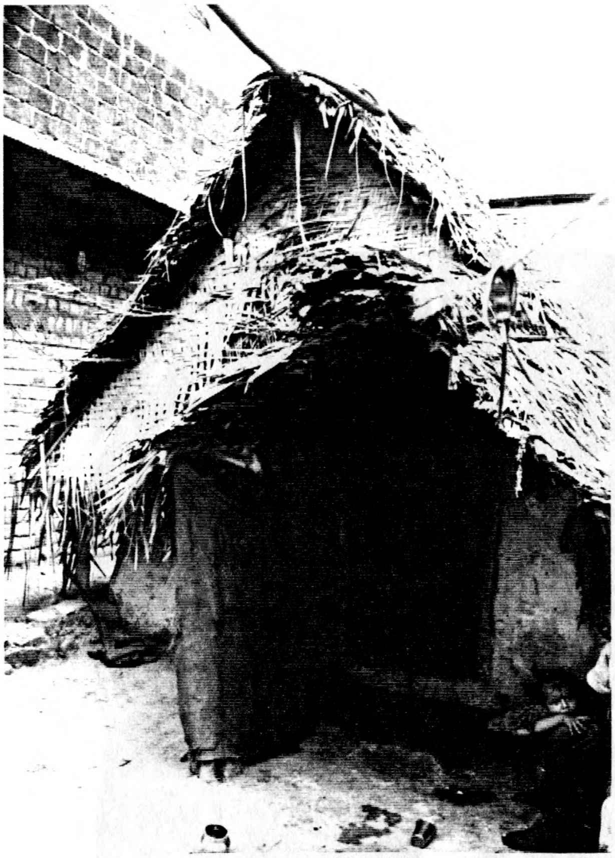

Fig. 3.5: HOME II
Main entrance turned inward, away from the street

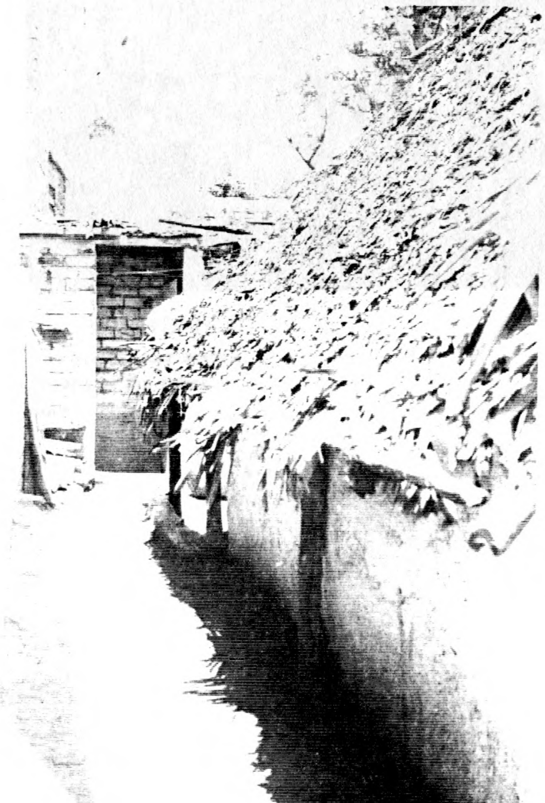

Fig. 3.6: HOME II
3'0" set-back used as pathway to connect to the home's main entrance

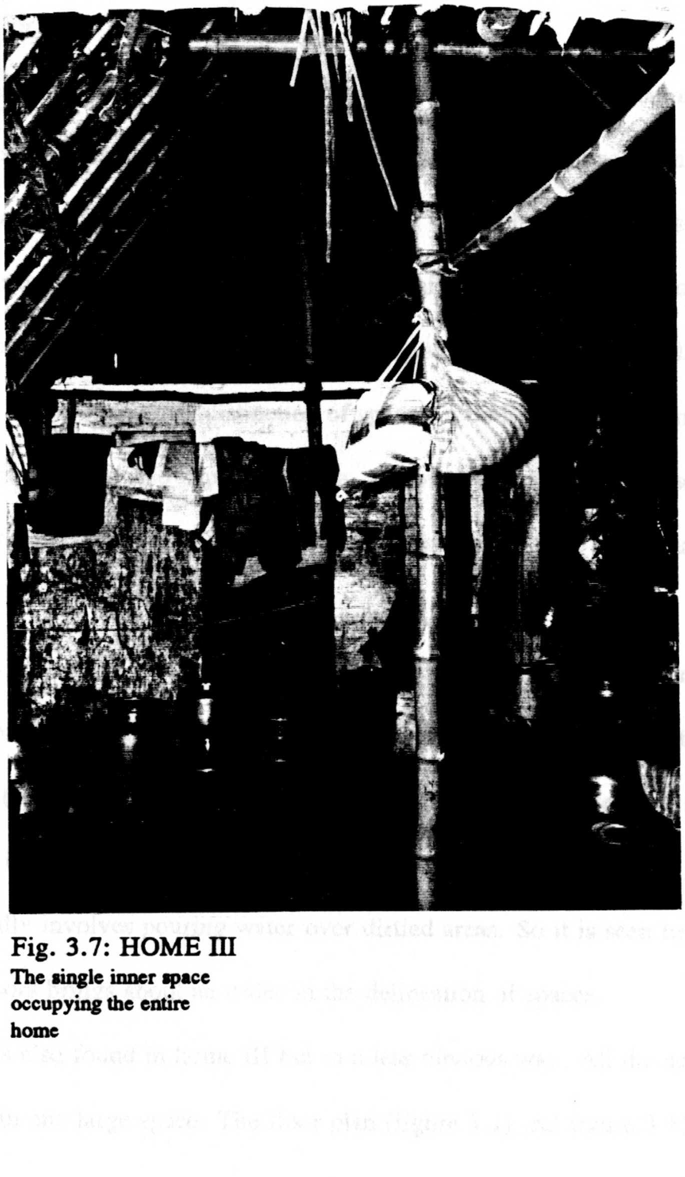

Fig. 3.7: HOME III
The single inner space occupying the entire home

Home IV also faces the street and is composed of two rooms with doors leading from the street, through the two rooms to the backyard. Here a circulation passage is found, unlike in homes I and II, which reduces the usable width to seven feet. In an interview with the owners, it was found that such an arrangement allowed the use of the front room as a tutoring space during the day, leaving the back of the house for other activities.[4]

Having described the basic grouping of spaces, each space will be compared and contrasted in the four homes. As figure 3.8 and 3.9 demonstrate, the multipurpose space in home I and the open space in home II, are used for similar kinds of activities that include washing, storing water, cleaning, drying and sometimes cooking and sleeping. Although this area is covered in home I by a thatch roof (fig. 3.10), this space evokes a sense of temporariness and openness, very similar to the quality of the spaces in home II. There is no clear distinction of spaces in both homes and some activities like storing, cooking and sleeping also happen indoors. Although this multipurpose area only supplements the main area where most of the activities take place, this space is very important in the functioning of the household.

Interviews with these families suggest that they created this space to perform these specific functions because of the use of water from the service core--the tap from the bathroom in home II and the well in home I (fig. 3.11).[5] Moreover, there is seen a need to separate wet areas from the dry living spaces. This is very important, as washing and cooking take place on the ground and the final act of cleaning essentially involves pouring water over dirtied areas. So it is seen here that the separation of wet from dry floors brings about an order in the delineation of spaces.

This idea is also found in home III but in a less obvious way. All the activities in this home are performed within one large space. The floor plan (figure 3.1) and figure 3.12 suggest that, apart

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[4] Home IV-House #F106, interview by author, 16 June 1989; transcripted from dialogues and direct observation, MMDA colony, Arumbakkam, Madras, India.

[5] Home I, Interview by Author, 18 June 1989.
Home II, Interview by Author, 26 June 1989.

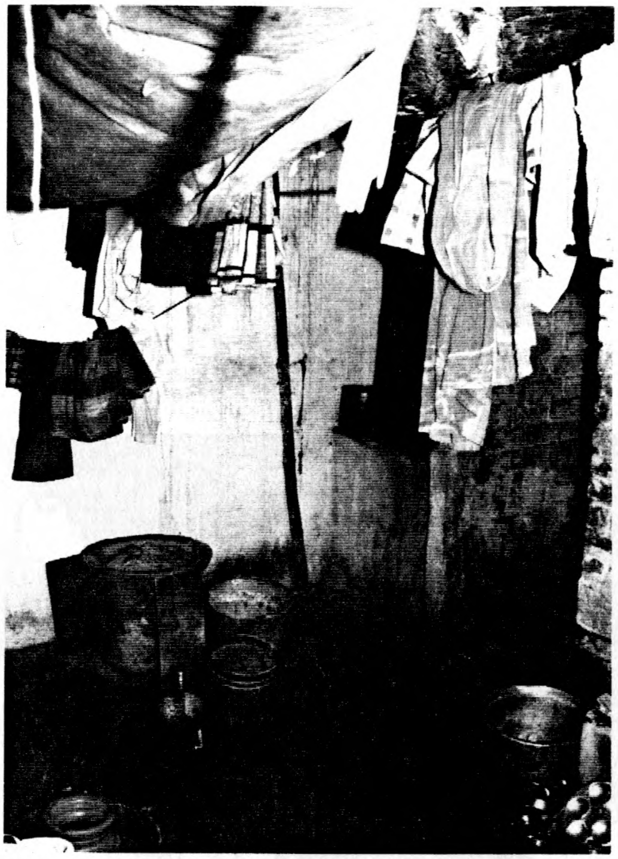

Fig. 3.8: HOME I
Multipurpose Room

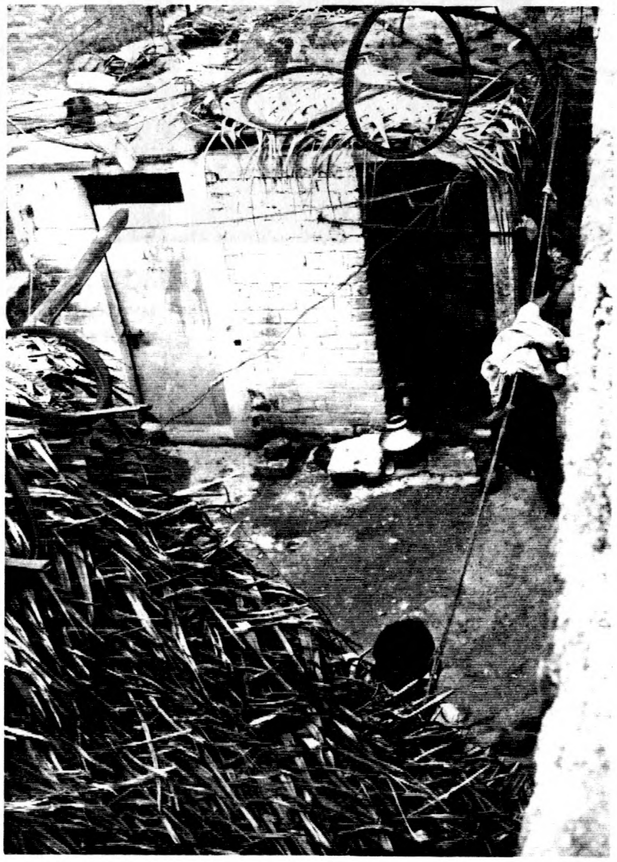

Fig. 3.9: HOME II
Open Space

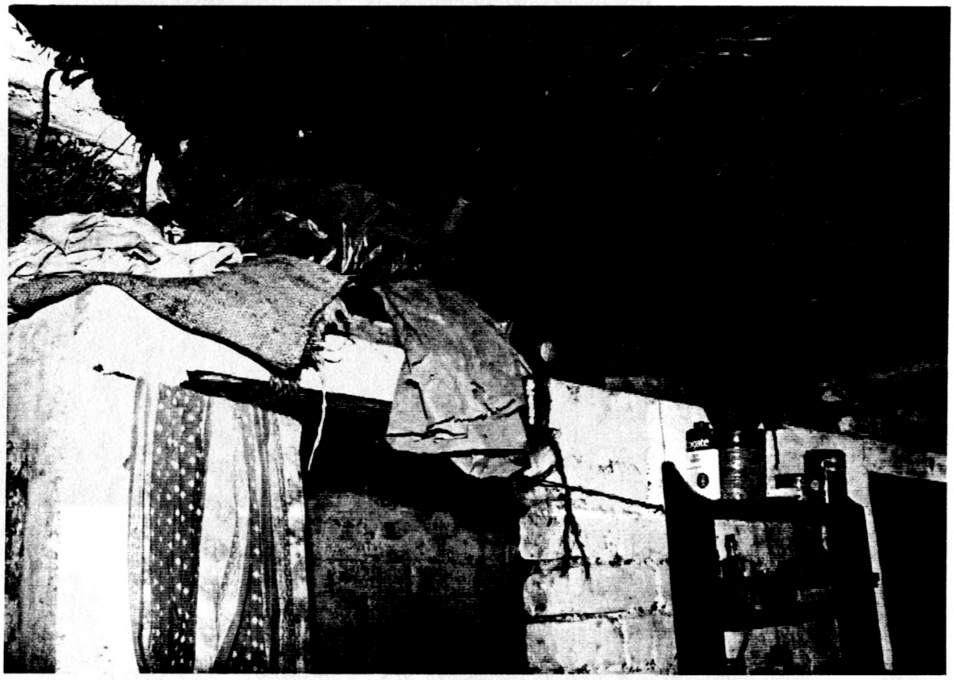

Fig. 3.10: HOME I
Thatched Roof over Multipurpose Room

Fig. 3.11: HOME I
Well found at the south-west corner of the site

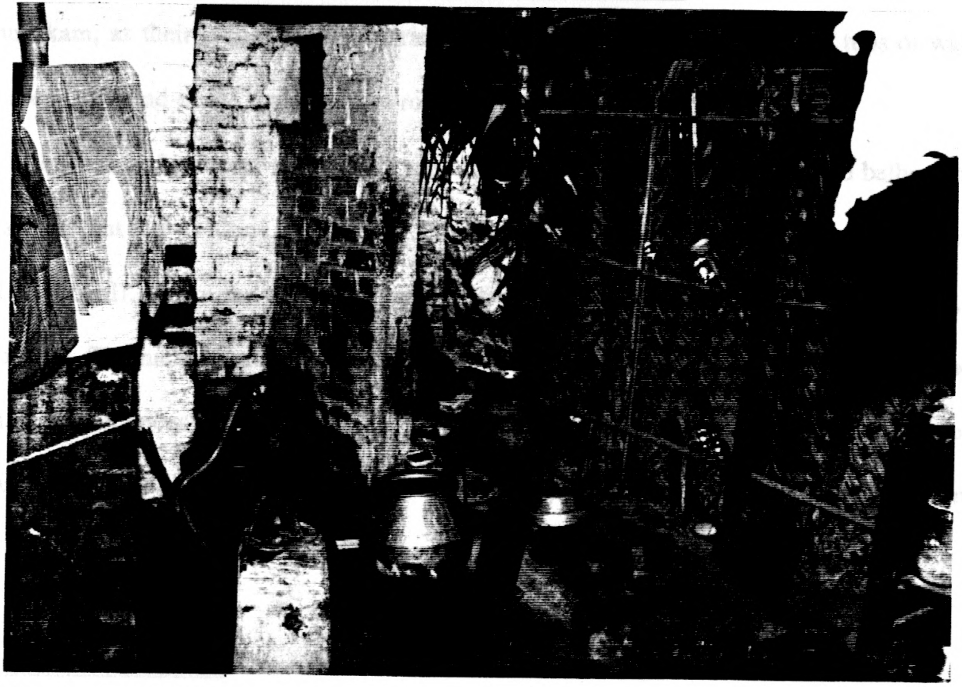

Fig. 3.12: HOME III
Water pump found along with other water related spaces

from the service core, there is a water pump about two feet from the bathroom door. The cooking space is found immediately on the right of the pump (fig. 3.13) and water pots behind the tin screen are on its right. Although such an arrangement is very different from that of the homes I and II, there is seen a concentration of water related activities to the service core, and an invisible floor separation from the living floor which is in front.

In home IV, the distinction between wet and dry areas is more developed physically. Here, the waterbased activities are divided into those that do not involve the wetting of the floor and those that do. The kitchen, which often serves as a living space, is one where cooking and storing of water are done, and the open space behind is used for washing and cleaning. Unlike the rammed earth floors ofhome I and II, the floor of the kitchen is cement and non-absorbing; it allows mopping of any water patches (fig. 3.14).

Next, the service core in each home will be described. The two basic aspects here are the use of water and the need for privacy. In home I (fig. 3.1), the core is seen to have been altered to accommodate a well and a water tub. Interviews with the dwellers, found the need for water to before most in the family's list of necessities.[6] This was one of their primary reasons for being in Arumbakkam, as their earlier home experienced a serious water shortage. Huge tubs of water (fig. 3.15) are also found in the multipurpose room.

In terms of privacy, the toilet is seen to have a five foot tin door and the bathroom simply a cloth screen that moves along a string (fig. 3.16 and fig.3.11). This difference in privacy levels is also found in home II, where the toilet has a similar five foot tin door (fig. 3.9). The bathroom, however has no door. The niche created by the three walls serves as a barrier here, although the space on to which bathroom opens out is exposed to sky. Interviews suggest that the women used a jute string, seen in figure 3.17, that runs across the door, to hang the family's fresh clothes, mostly long sarees and

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[6] ibid.

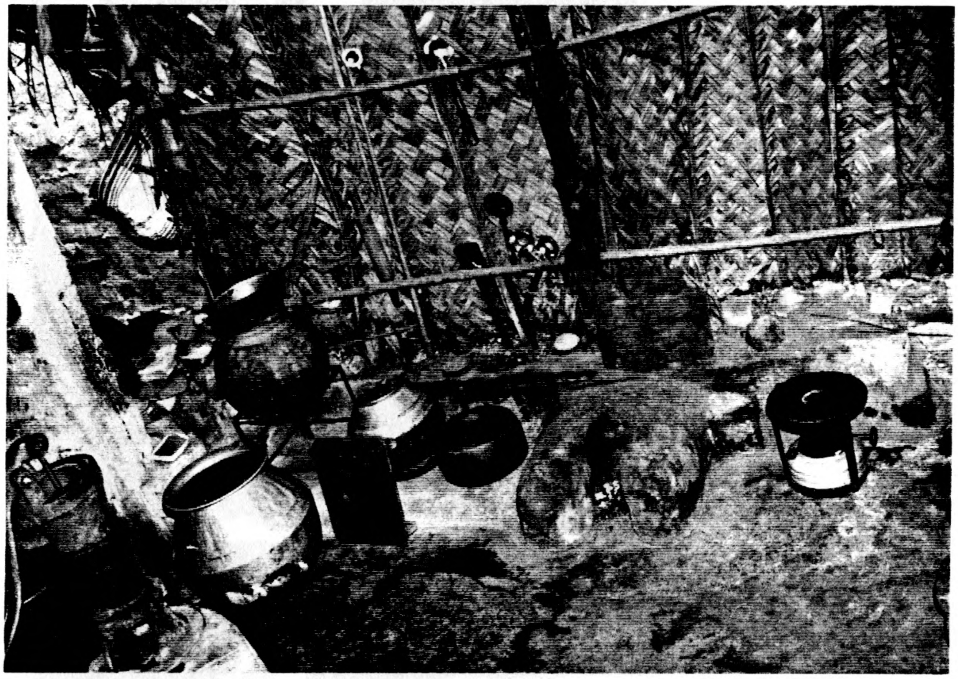

Fig. 3.13: HOME III
Cooking Space

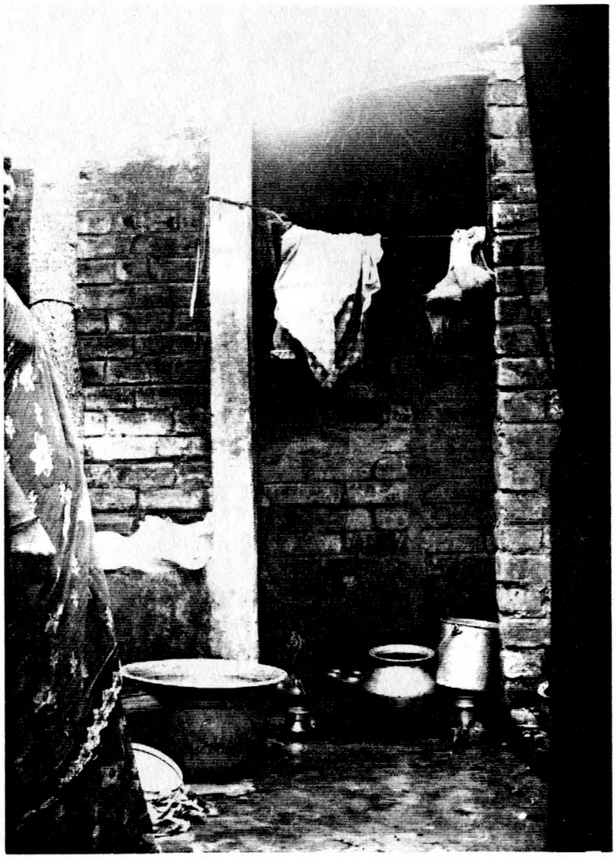

Fig. 3.14: HOME IV
Cement-Floored
Service Space

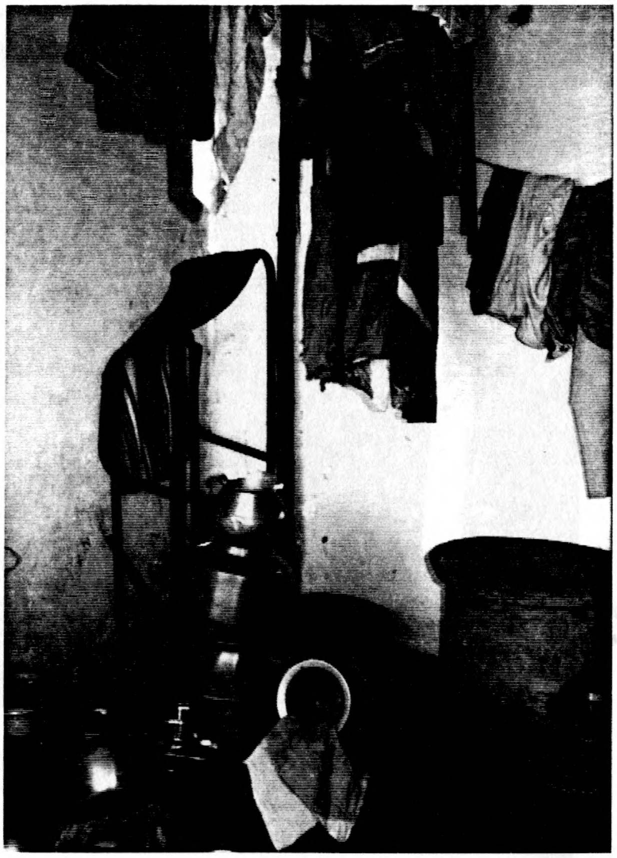

Fig. 3.15: HOME I
Water pots found
in the
Mutipurpose Room

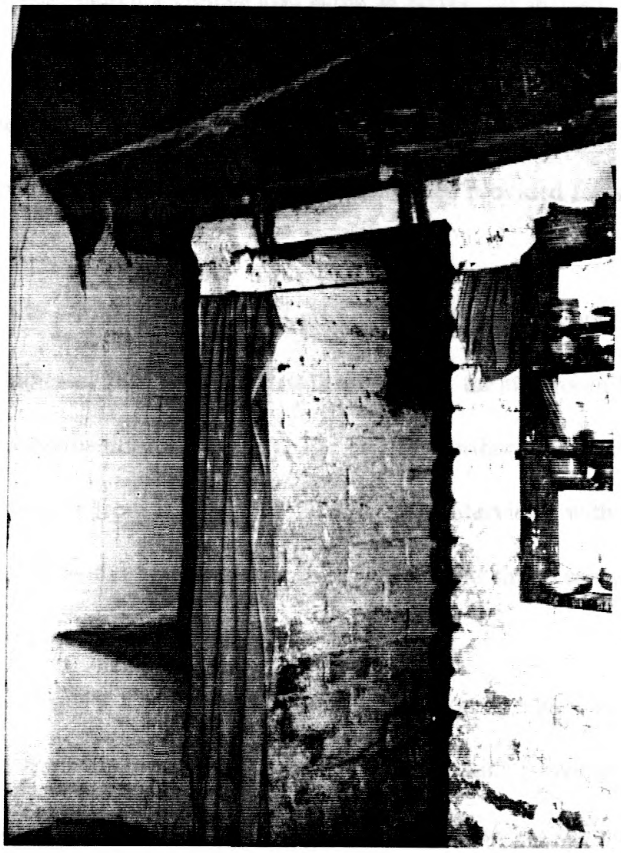

Fig. 3.16: HOME I
Bath/Toilet unit

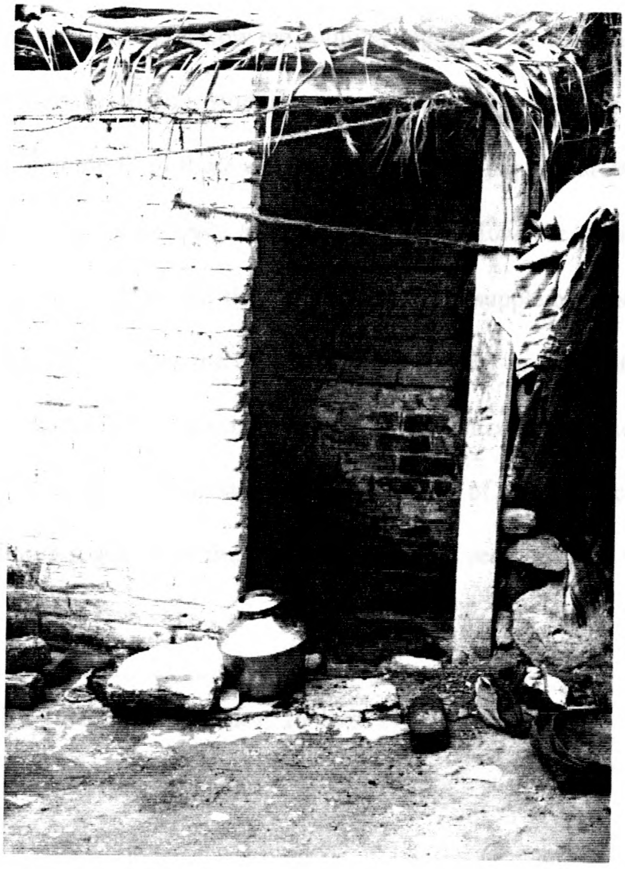

Fig. 3.17: HOME II
Bath/Toilet unit

towels. These hanging clothes also acted as screen for privacy.[7] Unlike in home I, however, where water sources and storage is important to the home, home II does not have any source of water within the home. The family cannot afford to have a water connection and they store water collected from a nearby pump for their day to day use. The space provided for storing water here, is used as junk store (fig. 3.18).

Like in home I, home III also requires large amounts of water as the pump, water pots and tubs all indicate. Just as in the first three homes, the bathroom has no door and the toilet is seen to have an asbestos door (fig. 3.19). The toilet is further protected by a tin screen parallel to its doorway, about three feet from it (figures 3.20 and 3.1). Interviews with the dwellers suggest that such privacy was required as the house was composed of a large single space where all activities including entertaining outsiders was done.[8]

Home IV has the most developed solution in regard to water and privacy. The service core is separated from the house by a landscaped court which provides greater privacy than the other three homes have. The space provided for water storage serves the purpose it was meant for and the overall arrangement is seen to follow the solution suggested by the sites and services program. Next, the living spaces--dining, studying, praying, dressing, relaxing and sleeping--in each home will be studied. In home I, all these activities, except praying and dressing, are performed by the family in both the multipurpose space and the main room. However, as already mentioned, the main room houses all the major activities and the multipurpose only supplements some of them during certain times. For instance the family uses the area as a sleeping space in times of power failure or while entertaining guests. It is, therefore, the main room that concentrates activities. The kitchen counter is located here (fig. 3.21), along with the storage shelves. Most of the major cooking happens here with the floor used as the dining space. This floor also serves as the seating space while viewing television (fig. 3.22) and

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[7] Home III, Interview by author, 26 June 1989.

[8] Home III, Interview by author, 20 June 1989.

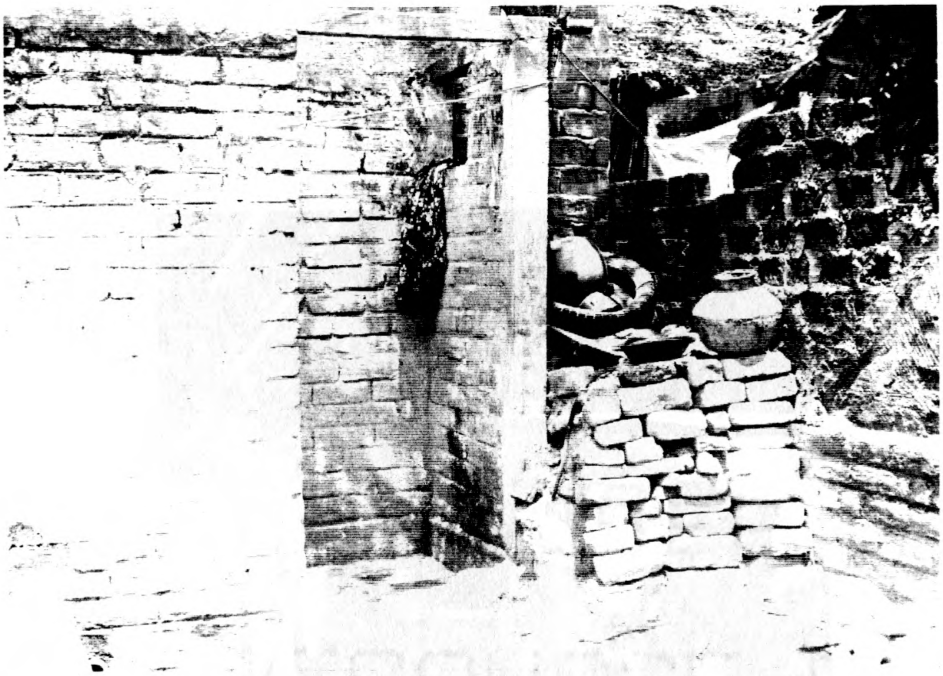

Fig. 3.18: HOME II
Junk storage space found instead of a well or water-tub as found in other group-A homes

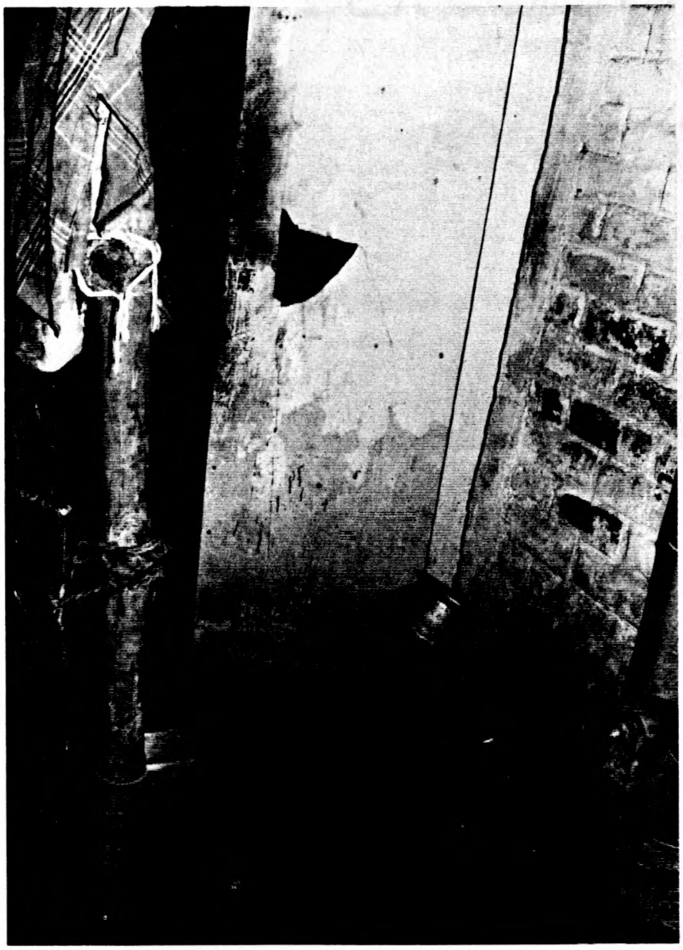

Fig. 3.19: HOME III
Asbestos toilet door found behind tin screen providing privacy to the toilet

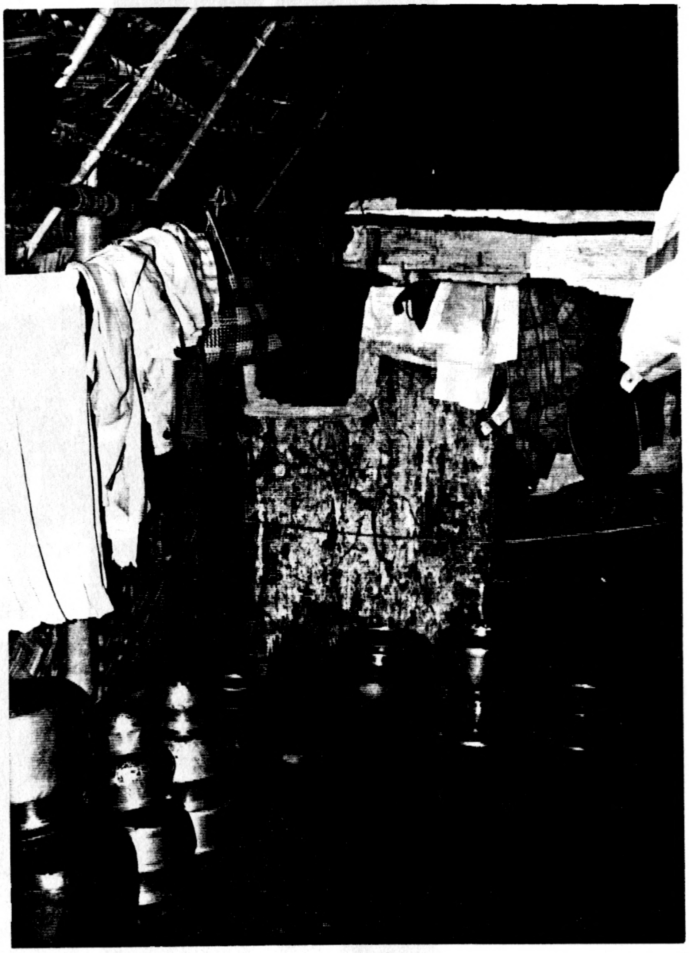

Fig. 3.20: HOME III
Tin Screen offering privacy to the toilet behind

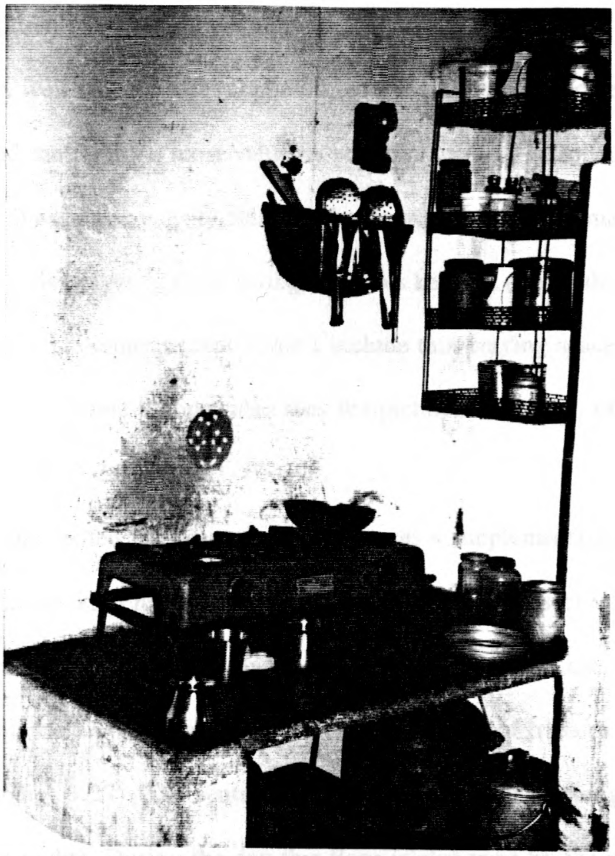

Fig. 3.21: HOME I
Kitchen counter
within the main room

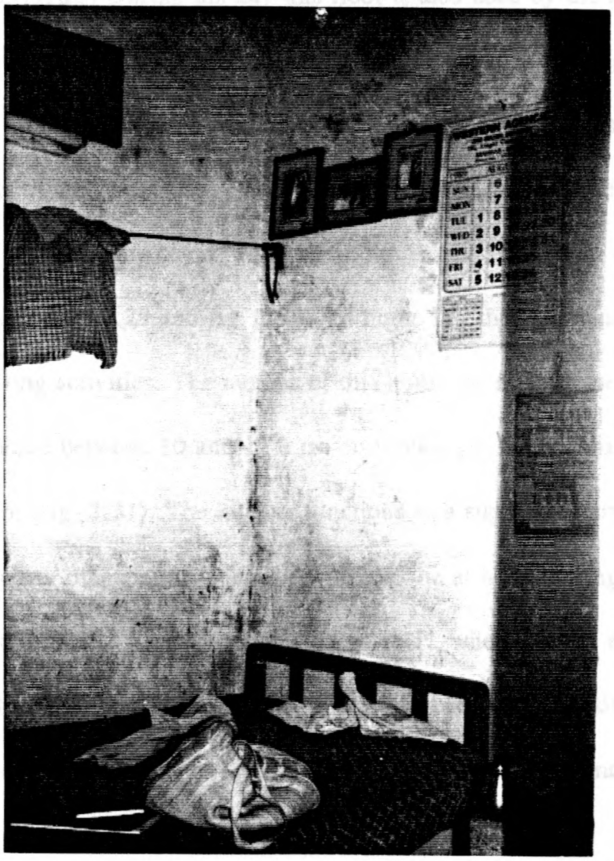

Fig. 3.22: HOME I
Main Room

as the children's nightly sleeping space.

A well secured steel cupboard, called an almirah, located in front of the main door, stores clothes and the family's most valuable possessions (fig. 3.23). A mirror behind its door is used while dressing. Dressing is usually followed by praying, which is usually done before leaving the home in the morning. This prayer is done facing the idols kept on one of the storage racks next to the kitchen counter. All the homes except home I include this praying space next to the dressing area and the idols facing east. In home II, ones also sees the pictures of deities, on the back wall facing the entrance of the house (fig. 3.24).

The roofed multipurpose room houses a supplementary earthen stove indoors (fig. 3.25), as most of the cooking happens outdoors except during times of rain (fig. 3.26). This room also has storage racks for vessels and spices which are found above the earthen stove and along its right wall. Other household possessions are located above the roof truss or in bags tied to the rafters of the roof structure (fig. 3.27). The center of the floor is used for sleeping, although some family members sleep outside at nights. During the day this floor is also used by the mother and the daughter who earn a small living by making handicrafts for a local temple or chatting in the afternoon when it is hot outside.

Home III is also seen to have array of pictures of godson its western wall facing the east in the front part of the house (fig. 3.28). The dry floor in front is used as the living space where sleeping, relaxing and studying occur. Here again the bamboo truss and rafters are used to store the household's possessions (fig. 3.29 and fig. 3.30). In home IV, the family uses the multipurpose room for all the major living activities. The mother of this home, as already mentioned, tutors children below the age of five at home between 10 and 12 a.m. on weekdays. During this time the multipurpose serves as a classroom (fig. 3.31). The kitchen functions as a supplementary room for sleeping or relaxing for the father or any other family member who may be at home during this time. The kitchen is divided from the multipurpose by a large brick storage shelf, where almost all the households's possessions are found (fig. 3.1). However, it is observed that clothes are found handing on lines (fig. 3.32 and 3.1) along some walls in both rooms. Idols and pictures of gods are found in the

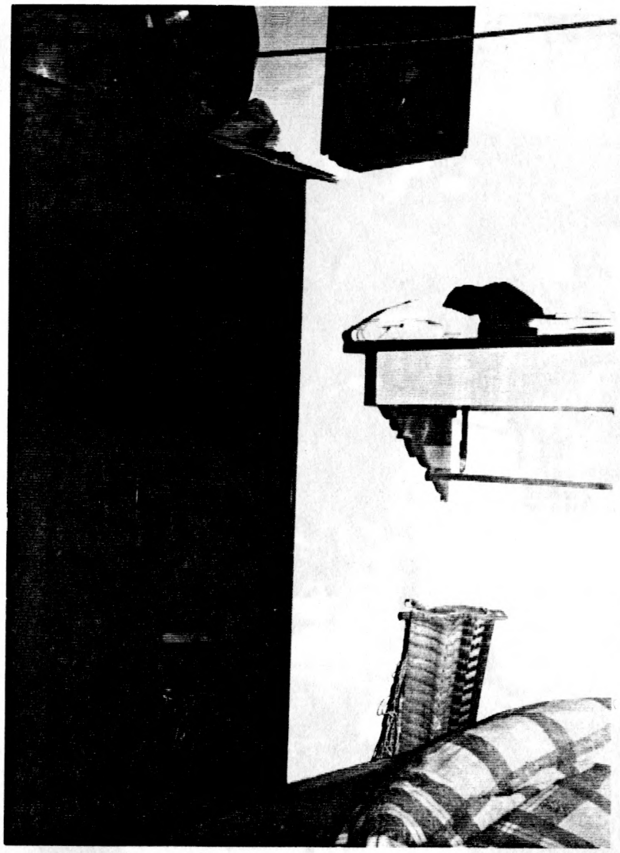

Fig. 3.23: HOME I
"Almirah" found in
the main room

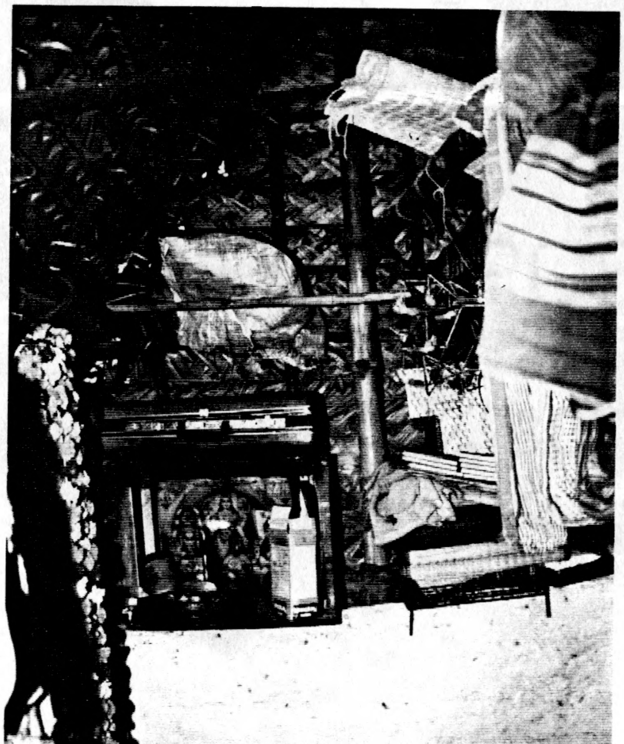

Fig. 3.24: HOME II
Deities on wall
facing east

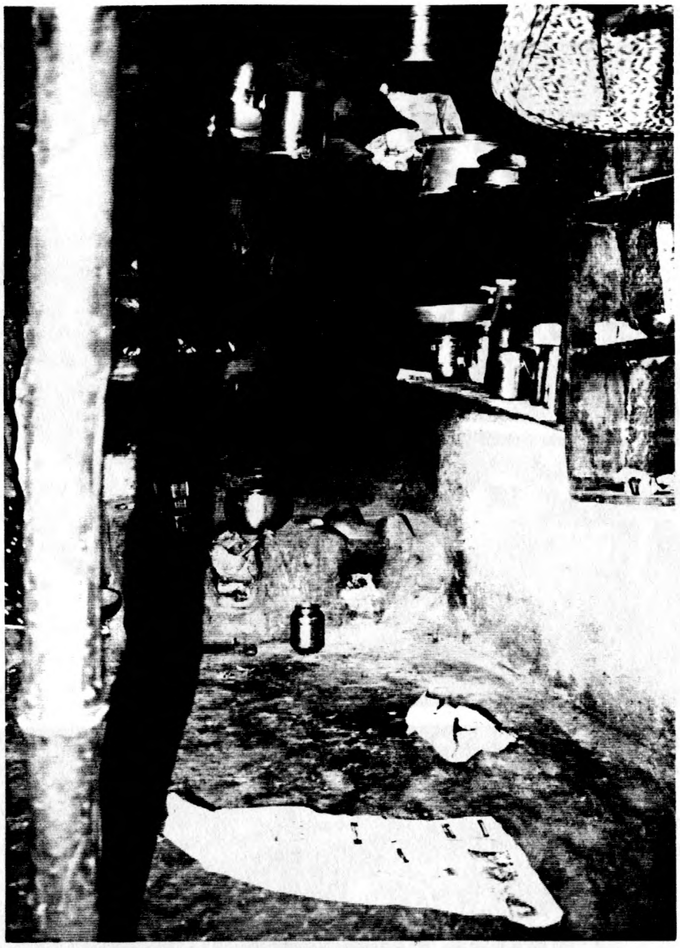

Fig. 3.25: HOME II
Indoor cooking space

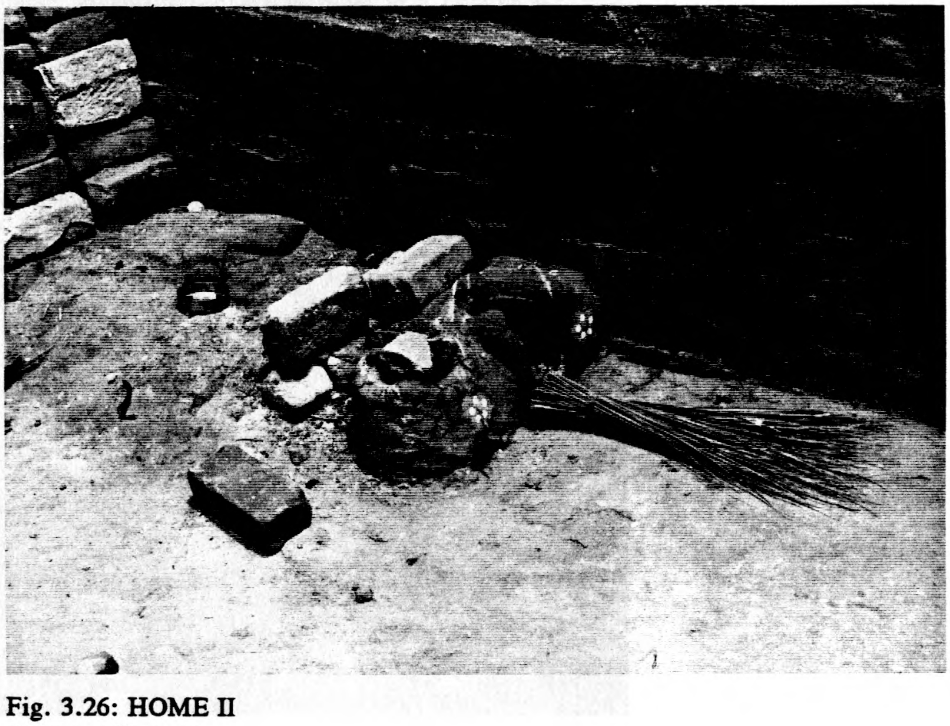

Fig. 3.26: HOME II
Outdoor cooking space

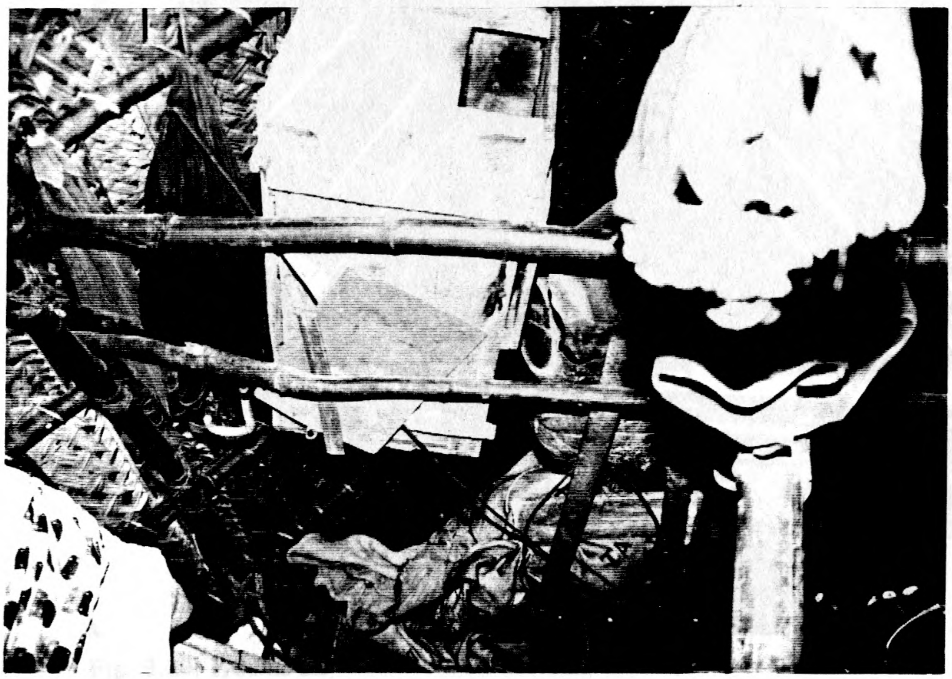

Fig. 3.27: HOME II
Space between roof and tie beams supporting the roof used as loft

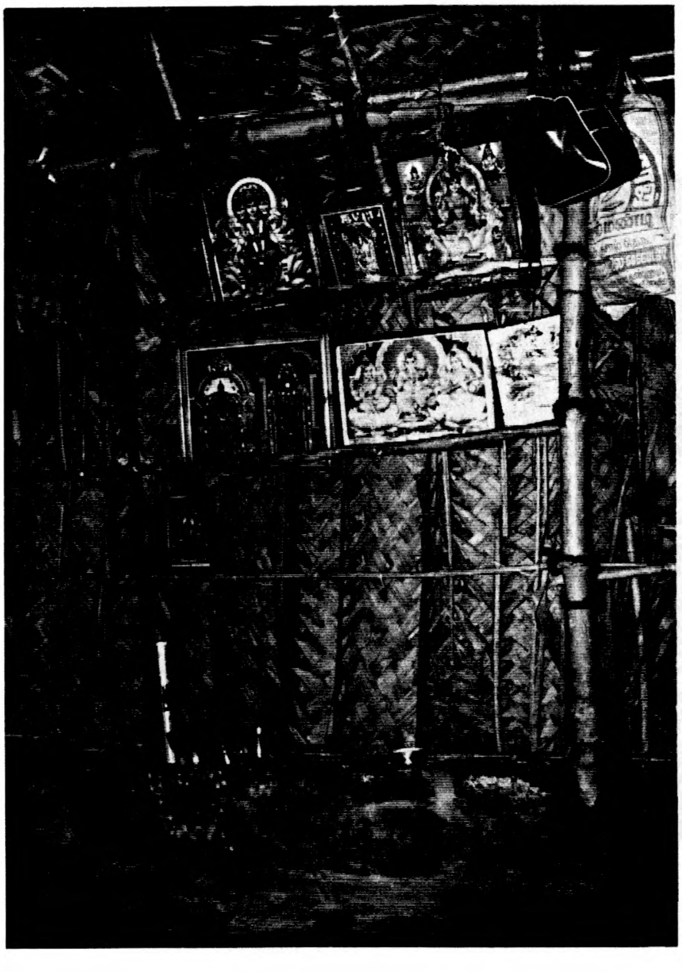

Fig. 3.28: HOME III
Deities on the inner wall facing east

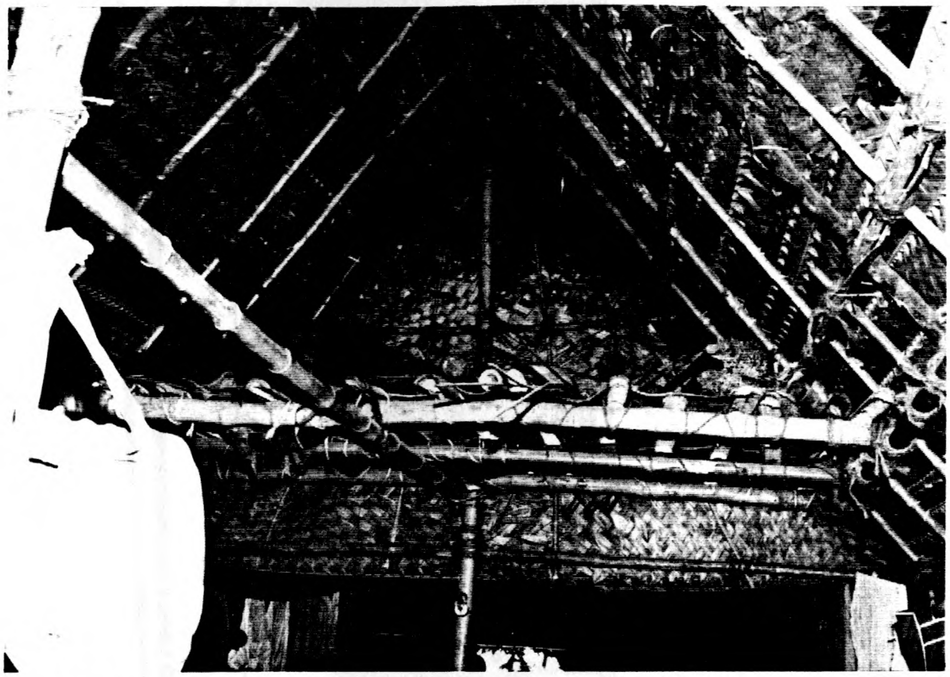

Fig. 3.29: HOME III
Space between roof and
tie beams used as loft

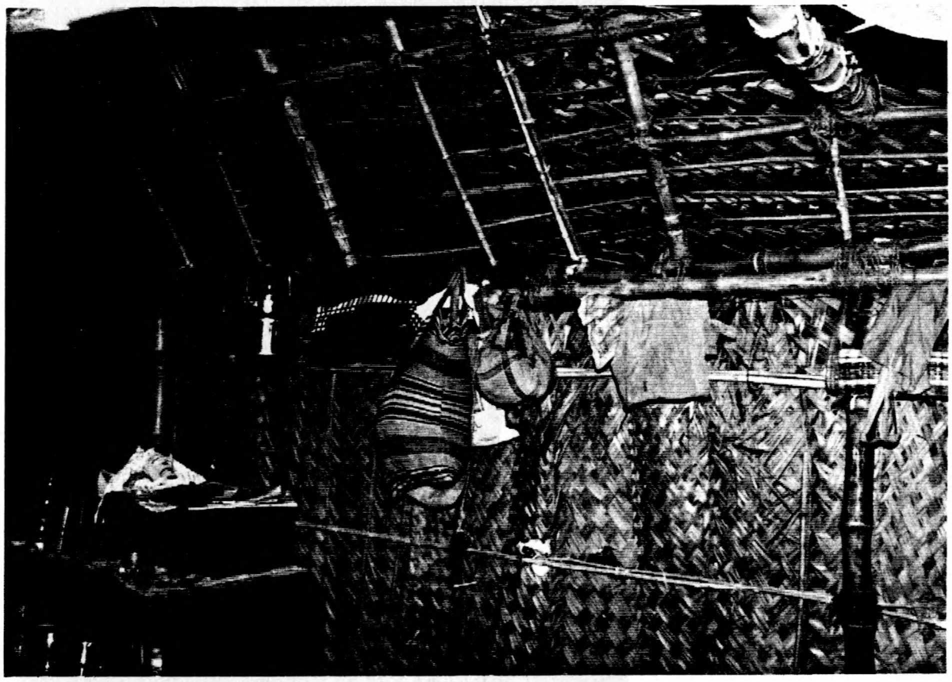

Fig. 3.30: HOME III
Rafters used to hang
storage bags and vessels

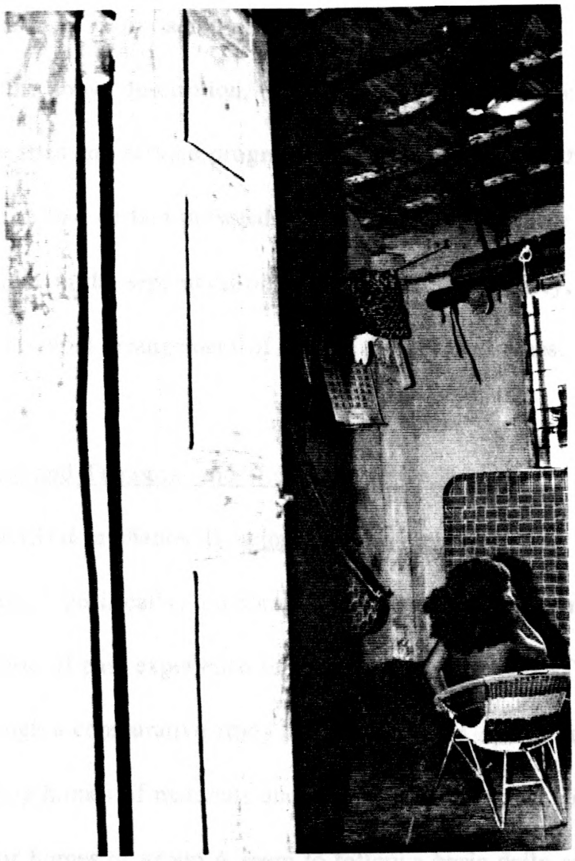

Fig. 3.31: HOME IV
Multipurpose Room

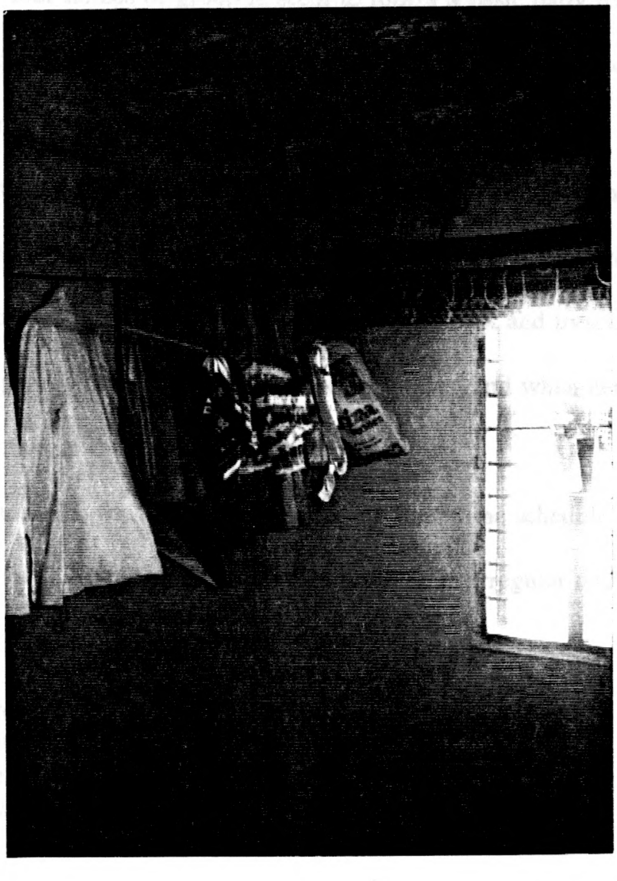

Fig. 3.32: HOME IV
Indoor clothes-line found in the multipurpose room

west wall of the front room facing east(fig. 3.33).

From the above description, the ordering of spaces is seen to be defined by the restrictions imposed by the sites and service programs's development rules, the materials and construction that each family can afford, and certain personal preferences. Despite these differences, however, there is a certain basic order in the separation of the wet from dry, privacy, sequence of activities, cultural beliefs and experiential arrangement of spaces, in all four homes.

The Four Homes and Temporal and Sociocultural Order

As described in chapter II, temporal order relates to how the home provides order through the regularity of time. Specifically, temporal order relates to cyclic patterns resulting from daily routines and the expression of past experience in present spatial patterns. These themes will be understood in the four homes though a comparative study of daily routines, spatial features that reflect the past, and the dwellers' building homes of materials and construction methods with which they were familiar earlier.

All four homes of group A seem to follow a basic daily routine. These routines have been recorded through observations made through a day and through interviews with the families members.[9] Major differences appear related to the number of family members and the type of occupation. Home I, where the mother is a housewife, is seen to have a rhythm that is oriented around her activities. Her morning routine involves showering, dressing, saying prayers,cooking breakfast and lunch, serving breakfast, and sending her husband and children to work and to school. The father's and children's morning preparation takes place around her activities, and when her family leave the home by 8:30 a.m., the mother is the only person left at home.

In home II, the father does not have a fixed time schedule in regard to his work. Also, only two of the five children go to school. The result is an irregular daily routine to which the household

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[9] Home I, interview by author, 18 June 1989;
Home II, interview by author, 26 June 1989;
Home III, interview by author, 20 June 1989;
Home IV, interview by author, 16 June 1989.

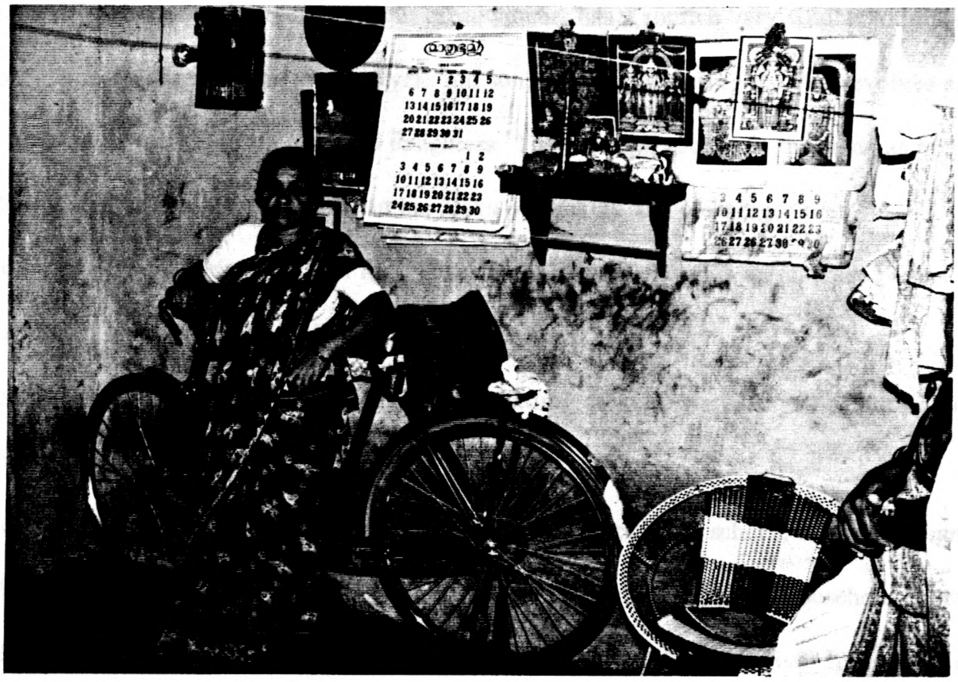

Fig. 3.33: HOME IV
Deities on Multipurpose
Room wall facing east

orients itself. The father, who is a laborer, on days of works leaves the home early by 6:00, while on other days stays at home till about 10:00, after which he goes to a nearby cafe to meet his friends for a chat. The mother and the oldest daughter earn a small income by making garlands for the local temple (fig. 3.34). However, their work is not constant and the daily routine depends on the job. During the mornings, on days when there is work, the mother or daughter spends her time cooking for the family while the other works on the garlands. The two older boys, aged ten and thirteen, leave for school, while the younger girl and the baby stay at home with the mother and older sister.

Home III, where the father is the main breadwinner, has a routine very similar to home I. Since the only school going child is the nine year old son, the routine during the day revolves around the mother and the sixteen and four year old daughters. The morning routine is the same as home I, but with the older daughter helping the mother in her tasks of cooking and cleaning.

Home IV also functions around a regular schedule, but the father is an insurance agent and has an irregular schedule. Just as in home I, the mother does her morning chores, sending off her husband and children and then settling down to start her job of tutoring children at 10:00a.m.

During the day, till it is time for the children to come back from school, the mothers and the children who stay back home in all the homes except home II and IV, engage in household chores, relaxing, chatting with neighbors, shopping and preparing for the children to arrive. In home I, apart from doing their daily chores, the mother and daughter work on the garlands while the mother of home IV tutors children till noon and rests after noon, then preparing for the children and father to arrive.

At all four homes, the evenings during the weekdays involve cooking, feeding the fathers and children, washing and cleaning, and chatting with the rest of the family outside the house, till it is time for bed. Home I and IV have televisions and spend many of their evenings watching it. The children go out to play with their friends in the evening and come home to do their work before dinner. Parents sometime spend the evening visiting neighbors and friends and during the weekends take their children out to the beach or to the cinema. During festival or special days, the families visit their nearby places

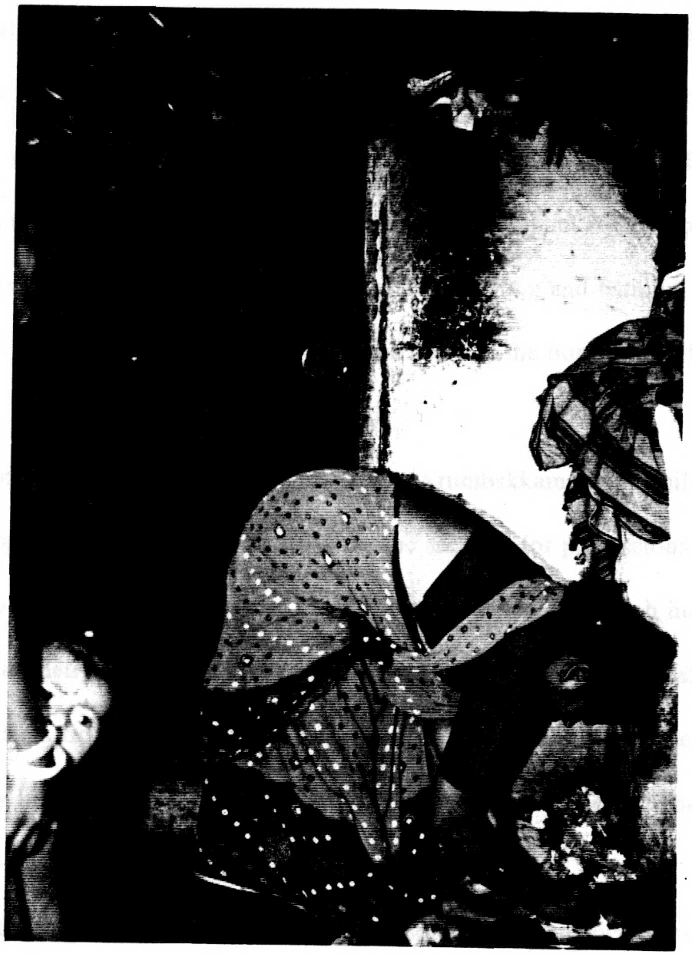

Fig. 3.34: HOME II
Making Garlands

of worship.

The above description exhibits a certain broad order of daily activities. The similarity in socioeconomic conditions creates a sequence of activity that is somewhat similar. In this sense, temporal rhythm is very important for the four homes of group A.

To understand spatial patterning due to past experiences, certain symbols that exhibit temporal continuity will be identified and discussed. As already mentioned, the need for abundance of water for home I is illustrated in the making of a well, water tub, and the storage tanks in the multipurpose room. Here is also seen the need for privacy and security in the way the main room is organized. This room is a fully equipped space performing all the functions except washing and bathing, with a strong door and a permanent roof. This main room may be called the heart of the home and reflects security and permanence.

Home II, on the other hand, is very poor. Although at Arumbakkam, this family has found a sense of security in the property they own, they do not have the security for possessions that home I holds. However, having no valuable possessions and having lived in temporary thatch huts, this family spends much of their time in their open court. This home's lack of orderliness and cleanliness, unlike homes I, III and IV, also stems from the family's past experiences when they were forced to live in slums.[10] Such an order may look like "chaos to the outsider," but it is "the order that constitutes the experience of the home" to its dwellers.[11]

Home III, on the other hand, is extremely well kept inspite of the temporariness of its allthatch roof and walls which are replaced once every three years. Interviewing reveals that the family has rented well-built houses in the past. In need of the permanence of a property of their own, the family moved to Arumbakkam, but could not afford to build a permanent house and did not want to be indebted by a loan. A combination of these facts resulted in a neat thatch hut that cost only about a hundred and fifty dollars per replacement, and yet is built on land the family owns.[12]

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[10] Home II, interview by author, 26 June 1989.

[11] Dovey, "Home and Homelessness", 37.

Home IV seems to carry the strongest temporal order in terms of exhibiting past experiences. This family, which moved to Arumbakkam nine years ago from Kerala, a south eastern Indian state, east of Tamil Nadu, seems to bring out an order that is characteristic of their background. As already mentioned, the clear distinction of the wet and dry areas, the dining and living areas and the privacy for the bathroom and toilet--all these qualities orient this home to a past order. However the most significant symbol is the landscaped court (fig. 3.35), which represents of the land from which they come. This feature is one of the most significant examples of incorporation into a new environment through a temporal order created by the expression of past experiences.

The last aspect of temporal order involves "familiarity with the past processes through which the forms of the environment have come into being.[13] This dimension will be understood by describing the four houses' materials and construction and the dwellers' relationship to them. All four homes are made of the simplest building materials--thatch, tile, mud, brick, cement, limestone and stone. None of the houses have reinforced concrete, which among the economically weaker section of Madras is a fairly unfamiliar construction system. To the families concrete is symbolic of a richer class although home I aspires to construct a concrete roof for their house in the future.

Homes II and III were built by the dwellers themselves.The families of homes I and IV had laborers build the houses but actively participated in the construction process. Here, an order is created by an active involvement in construction and the confidence in the building materials.

The last theme, sociocultural order, involves patterns molded by the sociocultural environment of the past or ofthe present. The order brought about by the past sociocultural order has already been discussed above in regard to time. Here, the influence of the present sociocultural order on the four

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[12] Home III, Interview by author, 20 June 1989.

[13] Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," 37.

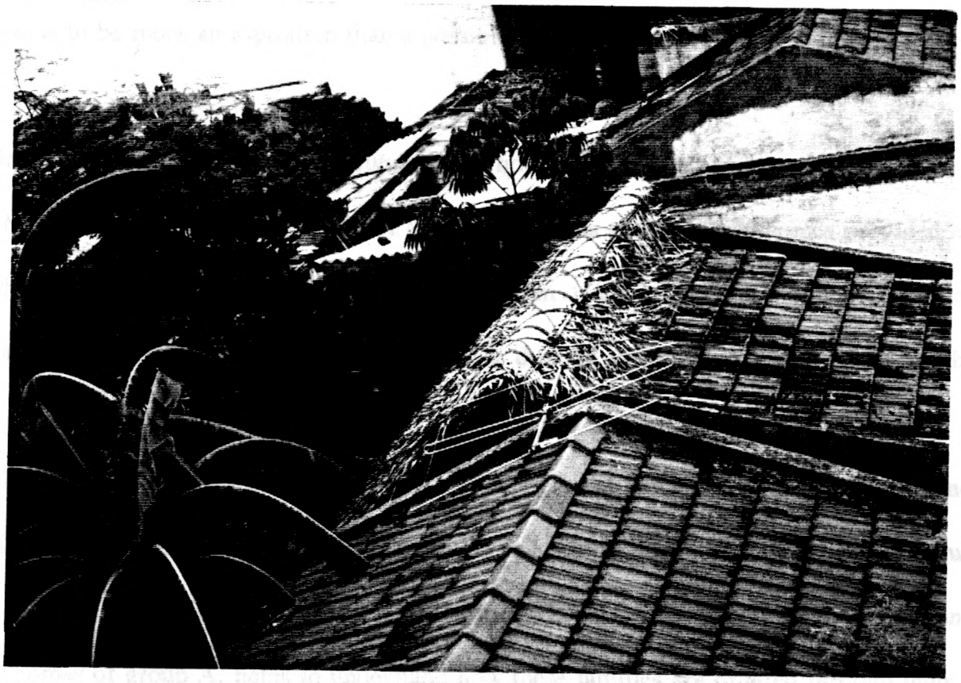

Fig. 3.35: HOME III
Landscaped court
found between the
main built space and
the service core

homes will be compared and contrasted.

Located in Madras, Arumbakkam is seen to carry all the characteristics of large urban settlement, particularly the need for families to express individuality and the aspiration to climb to a higher social level. In the four houses of group A, however, this status seeking appears to have little influence on spatial patterns. All four homes seem to be oblivious to the conditions of the urban sociocultural environment. Interviews with the families nevertheless suggest that they are attracted to the prospectof being able to own better and more fashionable homes inthe future.[14] This desire however seems to be more an aspiration than a possibility and is not yet evident in the existing spatial order.

However, the influence of the occupations of home I,III and IV, seem to play a role in temporal rhythms. Through the description of the daily routines in these three homes provided earlier, it is seen that the daily schedules of the fathers and children order the home in terms of a particular rhythm. Each home is familiar with its rhythm and it is through this that the homes orient to other rhythms.

All these themes exhibit places where the dwellers are at home. The familiarity with and the incorporation in such a place, though spatial, temporal and sociocultural order, is what "constitutes the experience of the home."[15] The above elaboration of these themes, through comparisons and contrasts of the four homes of group A, helps to understand how these families are ordered through their homes at Arumbakkam.

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[14] Interview cited in notes above.

[15] Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," 37.

HOME AS IDENTITY

Identity, as Dovey explains, "broaches the questions of "who" we are, as expressed in a home, and "how" we are at home."[16] As was explained in chapter II, identity can be understood in terms of spatial identity and temporal identity. Both of these structures are manifested through spatial symbols that reflect the identity of the dwellers.

The Four Homes and Spatial Identity

As Dovey illustrates, spatial identity involves two subthemes--identity as a reflection of (1) bodily identity and personal experience, and (2) collective ideology. These two subthemes are presented here. The first subtheme is extremely important in understanding home as identity in urban environments. It is argued that homes I, II, III andIV express the strongest sense of identity among the nine Arumbakkam homes.

As was emphasized in chapter II, identity is largely directed to the outside world. It is for this reason that its manifestation is usually found in those parts of the home that are visible to the outside. In home I, as illustrated in figure 2.1, the house seems to evoke a sense of simple solidness. Its thick white walls, the simple pitched form, the protected tile roof, the few openings, minimal ornamentation, and dark door, all suggest satisfactory but minimal sustenance.

Personal knowledge of the family and its identity helps to explain this spatial pattern. This household illustrates what might be called an "ideal low-income family." The father has a permanent job, the children are schooled in the public schools and the mother takes care of all the domestic needs. Interviews with the mother suggest the family's desire for a longterm stability. All through this study, this family was extremely cautious in regard to what was said. The mother and father were concerned about the author's identity and whether she might use information against them in some way. The family appears to be one that protects itself from the outside world and is very individualistic ideologically. It may be that this inherent identity that is reflected in the home.

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[16] ibid. 40.

Home II, as seen in figure 2.2, is more simple than home I in its expression. The home, as described in the earlier section on spatial order, has a simple rectangular plan that is bounded by a low mud wall. The coconut thatch pitched roof, supported by bamboo corner posts, hangs over the mud walls. The house form is dominated by the roof because of its size and simplicity. The form of the house represents basic shelter.[17]

The temporariness of its materials, yet its intense meaning as a shelter brought out through its archetypal form, reflects an identity that is inherent to its dwellers. In other words, unlike home I, which exhibits the family's need for permanence and security, the dwellers of home II cannot afford to build a permanent house. Yet even so, in the form of their home, they express their longing for a secure homeplace.

In terms of materials, home III (fig. 2.3) appears to resemble home II (fig. 2.2). On closer inspection however, ones sees a clear difference in the two houses. The linear thatched form, although temporary in its construction method, evokes a sense of completeness and orderliness. The careful bracing of the thatch layers, the well maintained exteriors, and the fullness of the form all express this feeling. This family is close knit and with certain strict principles in their way of life.[18] The creation of one large common space instead of divided spaces is expressive of the family's closeness. The simplicity and self content nature of the family is seen through the completeness and orderliness of the house.

Home IV, as illustrated by figure 2.4, is a simple brick-walled and tile-roofed house. Only the front part of the roof is tiled, and the back is thatched. Just as in home I, the low roof surmounts a thick brick wall, a feature suggesting a certain simplicity. This house, however, does not carry the solemn strength that home I expresses. The size of the openings and their arrangement joins the inside to the outside, unlike home I, which holds the inside in. The attachment of the back thatch to the front tile roof also loosens the solidity of the uniform tile roof, as seen in home I. As was emphasized earlier, the family of home IV recently migrated to Arumbakkam and are in the process of incorporating themselves in the new environment. This adjustment process is seen in the family's openness to the outside world, which is displayed both by their behavior[19] and the openness of the spatial pattern of the house. The temporariness of the house, as seen in the thatch roof, is also expressive of the family's changing identity.

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[17] Murray Silverstein, "The first roof: Interpreting a spatial pattern," Dwelling, Seeing and Building, ed. David Seamon, (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1992, forthcoming).

[18] Home IV, interview by author, 16 June 1989.

The photographs and descriptions of all four homes reflect the congruity between the identity of the dwellers and their homes. Although located in an urban environment which is imbued with a need to display a borrowed identity, these four homes are seen to be largely unaffected by such a need. This may not necessarily reflect any conscious moral stand taken by the dwellers, but more, their low economic standing. Their not being affected by a borrowed identity means that these four homes carry the strongest sense of identity among the nine Arumbakkam home.

The Four Homes and Temporal Identity

As explained in chapter II, temporal identity reflects the dwellers' past and their possibilities for the future. Interviews with the dwellers of home I, reveals a certain closedness and individuality in their attitudes.[20] Further probing indicated that this family has always resided in quiet and well secluded dwellings. This experience is seen in the family's preference for the back part of the house, away from the street, leasing the front to a tenant. They display their past by creating a similar spatial pattern in this present home.

Home II, which also faces inward away from the street is made by a family that has always lived in slums where dwellings are built at high densities and offer no privacy. The family's orientation towards the rear part of the house, therefore, is not due to a need for privacy like in home II. A closer understanding of such a spatial pattern bring to light that this is created to enclose an open court. Most of the family's activities take place in this court, tightly sandwiched between the hut and the service core, bringing about a sense of enclosure in spite its openness to sky. This pattern may be associated with a similar patterning of open spaces in slums. The family of this house may have unconsciously expressed this past pattern in their present home.

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[19] ibid.

[20] Home I, Interview by author, 18 June 1989.

The family of home III, comes from a background that includes residence in well-kept houses. Although the family cannot afford to rent, thereby exhibiting their past identity, the underlying theme of orderliness is seen represented by their present home. The family of home IV, on the other hand, seems to have made a serious attempt at emulating the landscape of the state they come from in their backyard. The small backyard of this house is seen to be landscaped with plants that are typical of Kerala, their home-state, that are well-maintained. Although the house itself does not carry any spatial patterns that are typical of their background, this landscaped court expresses their past in a very strong way. This is the identity of Kerala, an identity that even an outsider is able to recognize. Here is seen an example of a direct expression of the past through spatial features.

The four homes of group A also are seen to hold promises for the future. As Dovey explains, such promises are evident both directly, in the future plans made for the house's development; and, indirectly, through envisioning the house as the backdrop for the family's future lifeplans. Interviews with the father of home I show clear plans for the future.[21] The family eventually hopes to occupy the front room also, which is now rented out, with a door-opening connecting the two rooms. The family's long-term plans include replacing the tile-roof with concrete and building another floor above that can be rented to a tenant.

The family of home II, which is the poorest and unsettled of the four homes, seems to be more pessimistic in planning their future. Interviews suggest that the family does not have any major future plans with regard to the development of the house. They hope, however, to complete payments on the loan they had taken from the government to purchase their property. This repayment seems to be more a concern to them than improving the condition of the home. Although the family does not hope to make any major improvements to the existing house, due to their present economic condition, the need to own the property seems to be very important to them.

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[21] ibid.

The family of home III, just like home II, demonstrates a certain complacency in making future house plans. This family already owns the property and hopes to maintain their present house by replacing the thatch every three years. They hope to pass on to the house to their children in the future. This attitude, when asked about in the interviews, seems to stem from the fact that the father, who is the only breadwinner, is fairly old and cannot make any serious financial commitments with regard to the future.[22] Home IV is seen to be very different from home II or III. The young couple, both of whom work, have several house plans for the future. They hope to replace the back thatch roof with tile, furnish the house better, and build another floor.

All the homes, despite the elaborateness or promise of future plans, reveal a sense of hope. Even the family of home II, who are not sure if they can afford any improvement in the house itself, visualizes a future in their present home. There is a sense of security that the families experience with regard to their houses, which prompts them to imagine a future with it. It is this autonomy that partly involves the home, that is brought by a temporal identity that releases the fullness of the future. This aspect of autonomy due to possession and ownership will be brought out later in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

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[22] Home III, Interview by author, 20 June 1989.

DIALECTICS OF HOME

In discussing the dialectical aspects of home, Dovey explains that the meaning of home "emerges from its dialectic interaction along a series of binary oppositions."[23] These binary oppositions are included within two areas--spatial and social. Each of these will be elaborated as follows.

The Four Homes and Spatial Dialectics

Spatial dialectics include those binary oppositions which manifest themselves in spatial patterns. Spatial dialectics, Dovey explains, may be seen in the opposition between the inside and outside, the order of the home and the chaos outside, and the being-at-home and journeying out. Each of these three oppositions will be studied in regard to the four homes.

The experience of the inside as intensified by that of the outside, may be understood by observing how the members of the family become at home after a journey outside. These observations were made between 3:00 p.m and 5:00 p.m in each home, when the father and children return from their day's work. As it was described in the researcher's journal:

> "The children of home I, after a day's work at school, run into the home throwing their bookbags on the bed and their shoes at the door and take off their shirts to lay on the floor. An hour later, the father returns home, leaves his bicycle on the porch, removes his sandals, takes off his wallet, watch and glasses and goes to wash himself in the bathroom."[24]

This description depicts a sense of undoing or peeling off a layer of uptightness, as if shrugging away an armor put on for the outside. Here the children and the father find themselves unaffected by the pressures of the outside, which requires them to wear footwear, shirts, watches or carry a wallet. This is not to suggest that these pressures are wrong, but here is seen how the meaning of home is felt in the act of undoing, because of the outside.

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[23] Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," 44.

[24] Home I, Interview by Author, 18 June 1989.

Such behavior is observed in home II, III and IV, when the children and fathers return home. In home IV, a different set of actions take place.

> "The father enters the home, giving his briefcase to his wife, takes off his shoes and lies on the couch for about fifteen minutes. Only after this small nap, does he proceed to perform his other cleaning-up processes."[25]

Here there is a sense of rest exhibited immediately after entry into the home. The restfulness emphasized by the exit outside. In each home, how they respond on coming back home is not of major concern here, but to know that such a behavior is evident itself, explains the dialectic process between the inside and outside that strengthens the meaning of home.

The next dialectic involves the opposition between the order of the inside and the chaos of the outside. The order of the inside results in the home being a familiar place, a secure place, a sacred place and a place where the dwellers exerts his autonomy. But these are found when the chaos of the strange, dangerous, profane and heteronomous are experienced on a journey outside. Each of these may be seen in the four homes.

In each of the four homes, the family members are seen to exhibit a certain intimate knowledge of the things of the house. The entry into the home after a day's work is always followed by a pattern of movement through the house in an almost blindfolded way. The set of actions that the children or the father of home I, described earlier follows a specific spatial path that is followed naturally. Unlike preparation for school, when the children are given strict advise on which street to take or where to cross a road, here at home, the children display great ease in their movement with the home. This may not be unusual in a home, but there is exhibited here a certain familiarity that is not found when one wanders into the outside world. This contrast in a very unselfconscious way makes the familiarity of the home a more meaningful property.

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[25] Home IV, Observations by author, 16 June 1989.

The home as a secure place as realized by the opposite--dangerous, outside world is very evident in all the four homes. A secure place is not necessarily one that is under lock and key and under tight security. Here in each home is seen the true meaning of security. In other words, these homes that are not really secure in the physical sense, brings about a sense of security which is peculiar to the dweller. The children of home I often sleep in the multipurpose room, which is open to the street through the corridor. The parents are confident that the children are safe here in comparison to sleeping on the street. Although both are accessible to a wandering drunkard, the security brought about by the sense of order in the home, encourages such behavior.

This is found in a stronger way in home II, which is aweakly built thatch hut. Here the family often sleeps outside in the open court at nights. The mere fact that this open court is one that is familiar and their own results in this security. Home III and home IV, however display a different sense of security. Here both houses are well protected from outsiders and during nights, all the openings are shut. Such an act of shutting off the outside, and being comfortable within the house after it, brings to light the confidence that the family exhibits in their homeplace. It also suggests the lack of trust in chaos of the outside, and it is this lack of trust, that gives meaning to the trustand security found within the home.

In regard to this theme of a sacred place within a profane world, Graber writes that, "Space becomes a place when man selects a position from the vast extent of the world, occupies it, and takes a stand.... Sacred space is exceptionally strong and impressive, making profane space seem formless in comparison. When the sacred reveals itself in space, man gains a fixed point of orientation in the chaotic relativity of the world."[26] These homes, as indicated earlier are seen to be each family's point of orientation. It is through this intimate space that the family sees the world. Such an intimacy brought about by ordering and identifying themselves through their homes, brings about a sense of sacredness to the dwelling.

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[26] Linda Graber, "Sacred Space and Geopeity: Wilderness as Sacred Space," Association of American Geographers, (1976): 4.

In home I, as the family enters the home after journeying out, they take off their footwear at the door. The inside is seen to be protected from the dirtiness of the outside through this act. This is also done in all parts of India, while entering a temple. There is a certain sacredness attached to the place that urges one to remove his footwear. This is analogous to how the family in home I sanctifies their home.

A similar act is seen in home II. The open court that is used for several different activities including cooking, drying, sleeping and working, is seen to be very well kept and clean. This mud floor is sprinkled with water everyday and broomed. Once every week, the oldest daughter sprinkles the wet earth with a coat of cow-dung water, which is meant to serve as a purifier to the ground. This is a sacred actand it is usually done on the ground at the entry to any house. This is to keep away the impurities from the outside from attacking the home. Here again is exhibited a dialectic between the sacredness of the inside and the profanity ofthe outside.

Home III, on the other hand is seen to cut out the entire outside by sealing off the entire house from it. It is seen that there are no openings on the walls, although the porous nature of the thatch allows a certain connection with the outside world. Interviews suggest that this was done to prevent the dust from the streets into the home. Home IV, unlike home III, has several openings, but their protective measure was to raise the floor above the street level and remove footwear at the porch.

All these are examples of how the homes are protected from the dirtiness of the outside world, illustrate the sanctity the families have attached to the inside. Such a display may be the result of the sacredness the home releases to its dwellers that goes hand in hand with the act of inhabiting a place.

The aspect of the home being a place of autonomy in a heteronomous world was introduced in the last part of temporal order. The home is seen here as a place that promises a future. This promise brings about a sense of autonomy, as the home is something that is possessed by the dweller, who has the power to establish his control over it. As explained earlier, the home becomes an extension of the body, and the freedom express autonomy over it may not be very different from that over the self. This is the property of a homeplace and the outside world where the dweller has no control over contrasts the autonomy in his home, increasing its meaning.

As illustrated in temporal order, the future plans made by each home in its development all express this autonomy over the home. As these low-income people fall very low on the social scale, where most decision making processes are made by people of higher social level, the meaning of home as an autonomous place is emphasized. Each family, when posed with the question about what they liked at Arumbakkam, expressed this autonomy over their homes.[27] The meaning of home as autonomy, will be further brought out in the conclusion of this thesis.

The last dialectic involves the oppositions between the act of being at home to that of journeying out; the restful state and the movement out. An understanding of the dialectic, Dovey explains, can be brought out in the meanings attached to the areas attached to the interface between the two--porches, doors, windows and thresholds. This will be seen in each home.

Home I demonstrates this interface in the door of the main room and the corridor that connects the inside to the street. The door of the main door, seen in figure 3.36, is seen to be decorated with saffron paints, holy powder and a string of mango leaves. These symbols bless and protect the home and experientially characterize the entry or departing from a home. As one moves through a doorway decorated as such, he or she feels a sense of departure from the dwelling place into the mysterious outside. This feeling is also brought out in the open corridor that prepares the dweller for the world outside by the movement through it. It is here, the home seems to no longer protect, letting the openess of the outside meet the insider.

In home II, this interface is observed in the path that leads one from the open court to the street. Here, although the court is open to sky, the flanking of the house and the service core, brings about a sense of enclosure within this space. The path here becomes the space where one suddenly feels the absence of an enclosure. One is prepared to set out, leaving behind the protection of the home and ready to face the world.

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[27] Home I, Interview by Author, 18 June 1989; Home II, Interview by Author, 26 June 1989; Home III, Interview by Author, 20 June 1989; Home IV, Interview by Author, 16 June 1989.

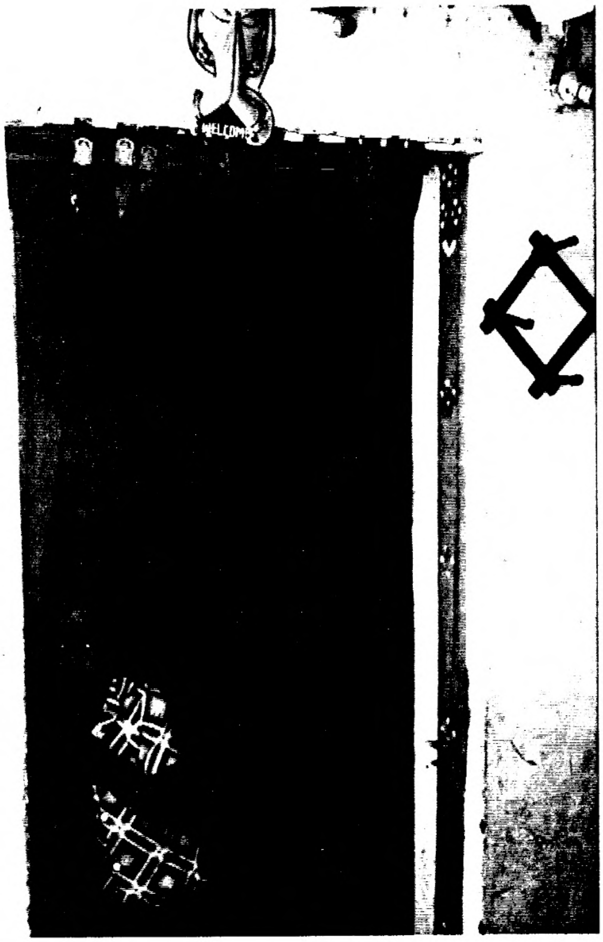

Fig. 3.36: HOME I
Entrance door

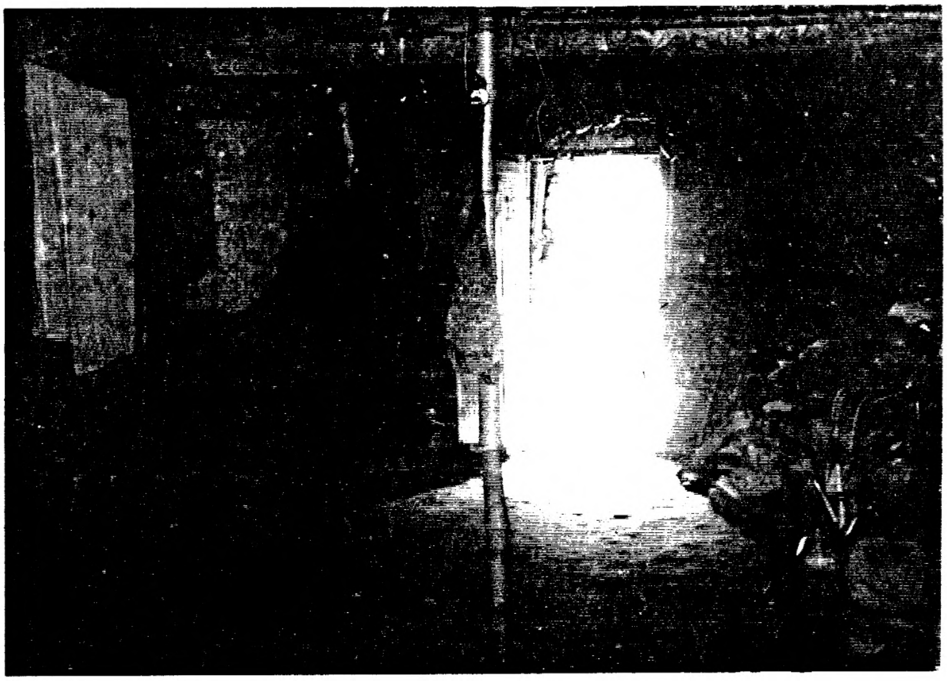

Fig. 3.37: HOME III
Entrance door

Unlike homes I and II, home III does not exhibit any major interface. The interface here may be the small timber door, that pours light into the home when opened (fig. 3.37). The light from the outside, through the small door, brings about the realization of the outside, the sense that the journey outside begins and the comfort of the inside is denied. Home IV establishes such an interface not in the large openings but in the narrow porch infront of the door. As the openings are open at all times of the day except night, the outside as seen through it is taken-for-granted. The act of opening the door to leave the premises of the house is denied, as it remains open always. It is only when one steps on the porch that one is aware of his journeying out.

All these may be seen while entering the home also. The home receives and protects the dweller who returns from the outside. However, in each case it is seen that the presence of both the inside and the outside is brought to light through the interface that brings both together creating a link that accentuates the meaning of the inside. As Dovey explains, "the sense of home is heightened when we are warm in bed yet can hear the rain on the roof and the whistling under the eaves."[28]

The Four Homes and Social Dialectics

In his section on social dialectics, Kimberley Dovey discusses the aspect of home as social identity, which is highlighted in its opposition with the outside world. The oppositions may be seen between the "self/other, identity/community, and private/public."[29] While the first two opposites deal with social dialectics themselves, the last--private/public--deals with the spatial dialectics through which the social opposites are manifested. These three dialectics carry out the function of "representing" the homes' identity, and they often involve negotiation"--a process of taking the role of a 'generalized other' and changing ourselves in response to how we imagine we are seen."[30] In regard to the

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[28] Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," 46.

[29] ibid. 47.

[30] ibid.

Arumbakkam homes, this term will be used to describe the process of gathering a spatial identity not from their own family world, but from the larger, from the urban environment.

It is these two aspects of social dialectics--i.e., representation and negotiation--that will be studied in the four homes of group A. As mentioned by Dovey, these dialectics are reflected in the private/public threshold of the house front and entrance, both of which involve the interface that the home has with the public world. To understand these dialectics, the following questions will be asked in regard to each home:

(1) What outsiders are permitted within the home and how far into the home? This theme will demonstrate the dweller's control over his boundary and also his representation of identity.

(2) What is the social circle of the home? In other words, what is the family's range of movement within the larger community? This theme also represents the family's identity.

(3) What is the interface between the house and the larger environment and how does this interface reflect upon the family's social status. This question will help to understand the degree of negotiation for the family.

Such an exercise might help understand the process of social dialectics through the journeying out of the home and returning to it. Let us now consider each of the four homes of group A with respect to these questions.

As described earlier in the section on spatial identity of home I, this family withdraws from the outside partly through the inward orientation of its spaces. Figure 3.38 illustrates how far neighbors, visitors and relatives, respectively, are allowed within the home. As seen here, except for a few relatives, most of the outsiders are not allowed into the main room, which is the heart of the home. It is also evident through interviews with the mother and through the author's observation, that, most often, neighbors who come to visit sit along the corridor or near the entrance to the home. As mentioned earlier, the author was permitted into the home only after explaining at length the purpose of the study. It may be gathered from these observations that this home exhibits a strong boundary which may be characteristic of the strong individuality presented by the family.

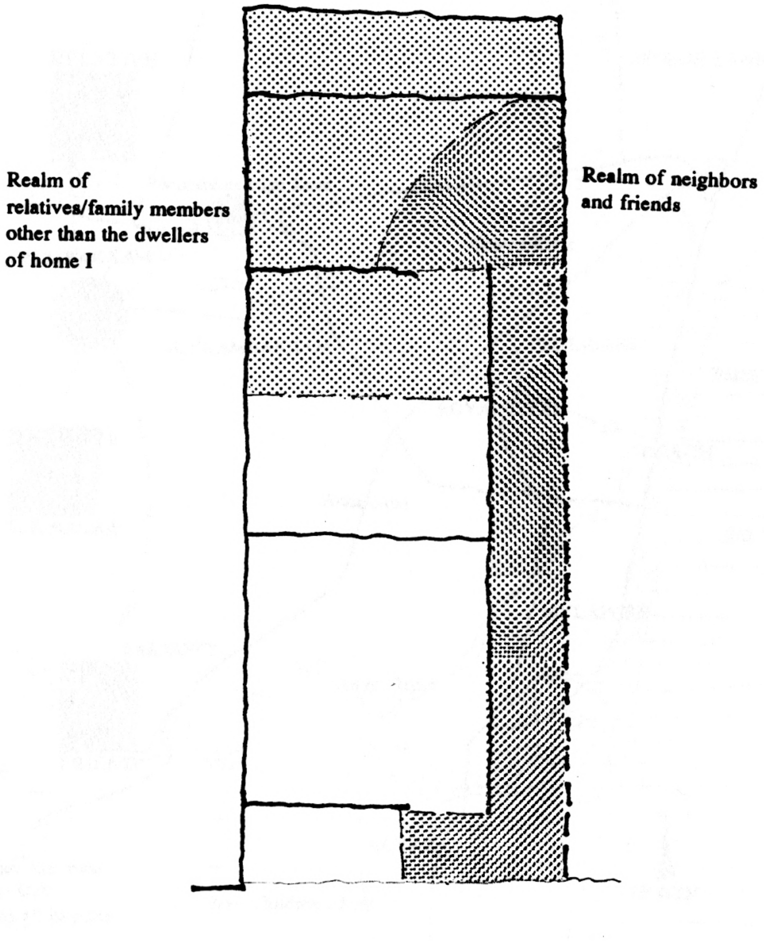
Realm of
relatives/family members
other than the dwellers
of home I
Realm of neighbors
and friends

Fig. 3.38: HOME I

Outsider's Realm within the Home

Scale 1'0" = 1/8" N

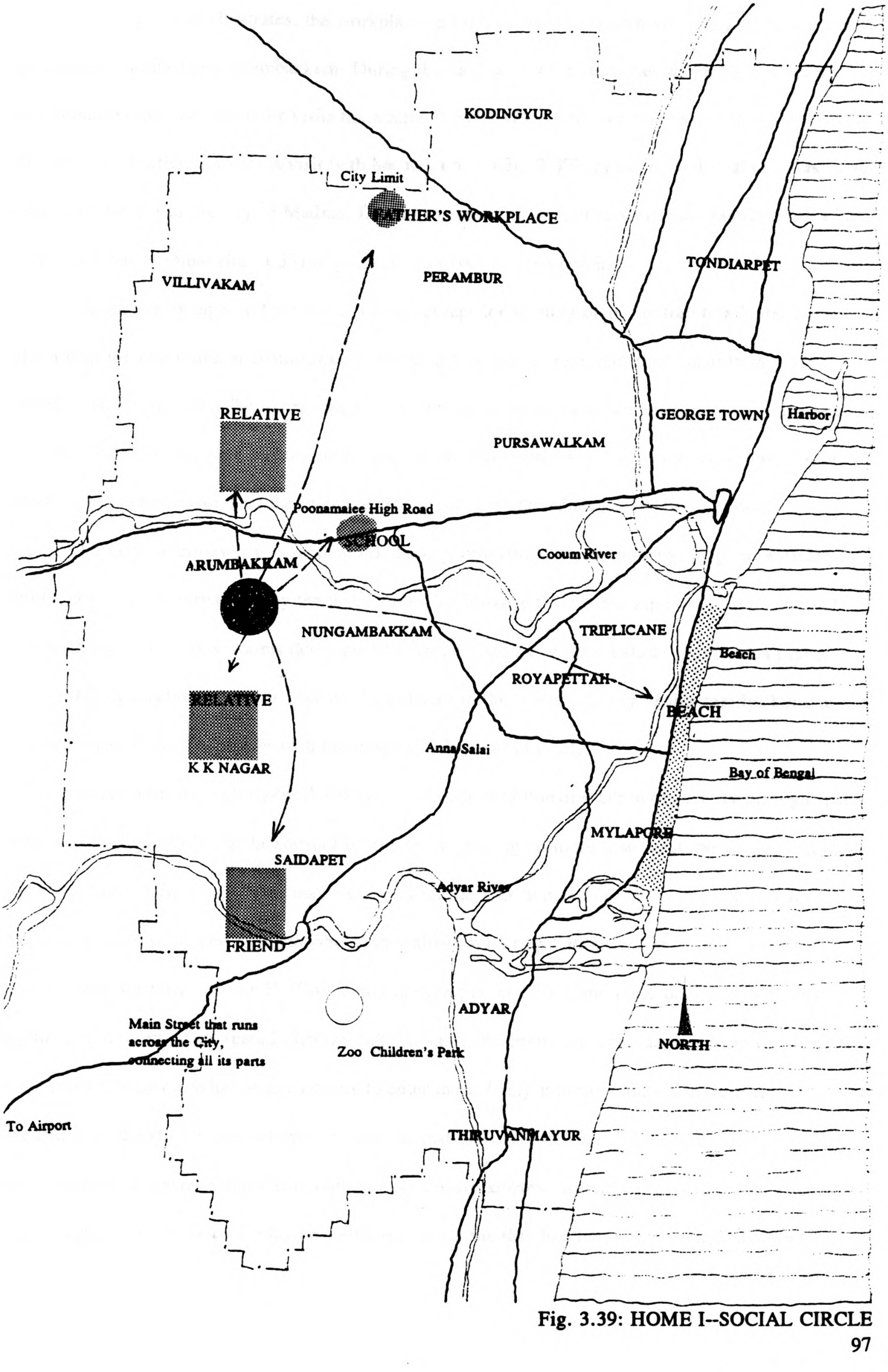
KODINGYUR
City Limit
FATHER'S WORKPLACE
TONDIARPET
VILLIVAKAM
PERAMBUR
RELATIVE
GEORGE TOWN
Harbor
PURSAWALKAM
Poonamalee High Road
SCHOOL
ARUMBAKKAM
Cooum River
NUNGAMBAKKAM
TRIPLICANE
Beach
ROYAPETTAH
RELATIVE
BEACH
K K NAGAR
Anna Salai
Bay of Bengal
MYLAPORE
SAIDAPET
Adyar River
FRIEND
ADYAR
NORTH
Main Street that runs across the City, connecting all its parts
Zoo Children's Park
To Airport
THIRUVANMAYUR

Fig. 3.39: HOME I--SOCIAL CIRCLE

As figure 3.39 illustrates, the workplace and school of the children are found in localities that are a distance away from Arumbakkam. During the day, the mother does her shopping at a nearby store found on the main street or visits the temple closeby along with her neighbors. She often leaves her home in the afternoons for a visit with her neighbors (fig. 3.39), or occasionally takes a bus to visit a friend elsewhere in the city of Madras. During weekends or special festivals, the family takes a bus at the main bus terminal (fig. 3.39) to go to the movies or to the beach.

Being very simple in their social habits, except for sending their children to a better public school than the one found at Arumbakkam, the family is seen to represent their identity in a very straight forward manner. The journeying out into the metropolitan surroundings and returning seems to have affected their changing identity in the process of negotiating with the wider urban one, not in terms of the spatial features of the interface, but in terms of the education of their children.

Through interviews, it is evident that these journeying out processes has inspired a dream to build a home that is influenced by the urban city. For instance the mother aspires to have a second floor with more individual rooms designated for specific activities, like a study room and a prayer room. Such delineation of spaces may not be inherent to the spatial identity of this family, but one acquired through the association with the present wider environment.

But as seen through figure 2.1 however, this desired transformation of identity through spatial features is still minimal. The housefront is simple, suggesting no more than what the house needs to protect its interior (fig. 3.1). This may be true of all the four homes in group A for the very reason that they are all the poorest families who cannot afford such negotiation with the urban environment.

Now we turn to home II. This family is even poorer than home I and does not show any negotiation in terms of its spatial identity. Like home I, this home turns itself away from the street but is observed to allow neighbors and visitors to enter more freely into the family's inner realm. Even the orientation of the sloped sides of the roof and the materials of construction (fig. 2.2) seem to reflect their openness. Interviews show that visiting relatives are allowed into all parts of the home, but most often it is the only the female relatives that sleep inside the thatched hut with the other women of the

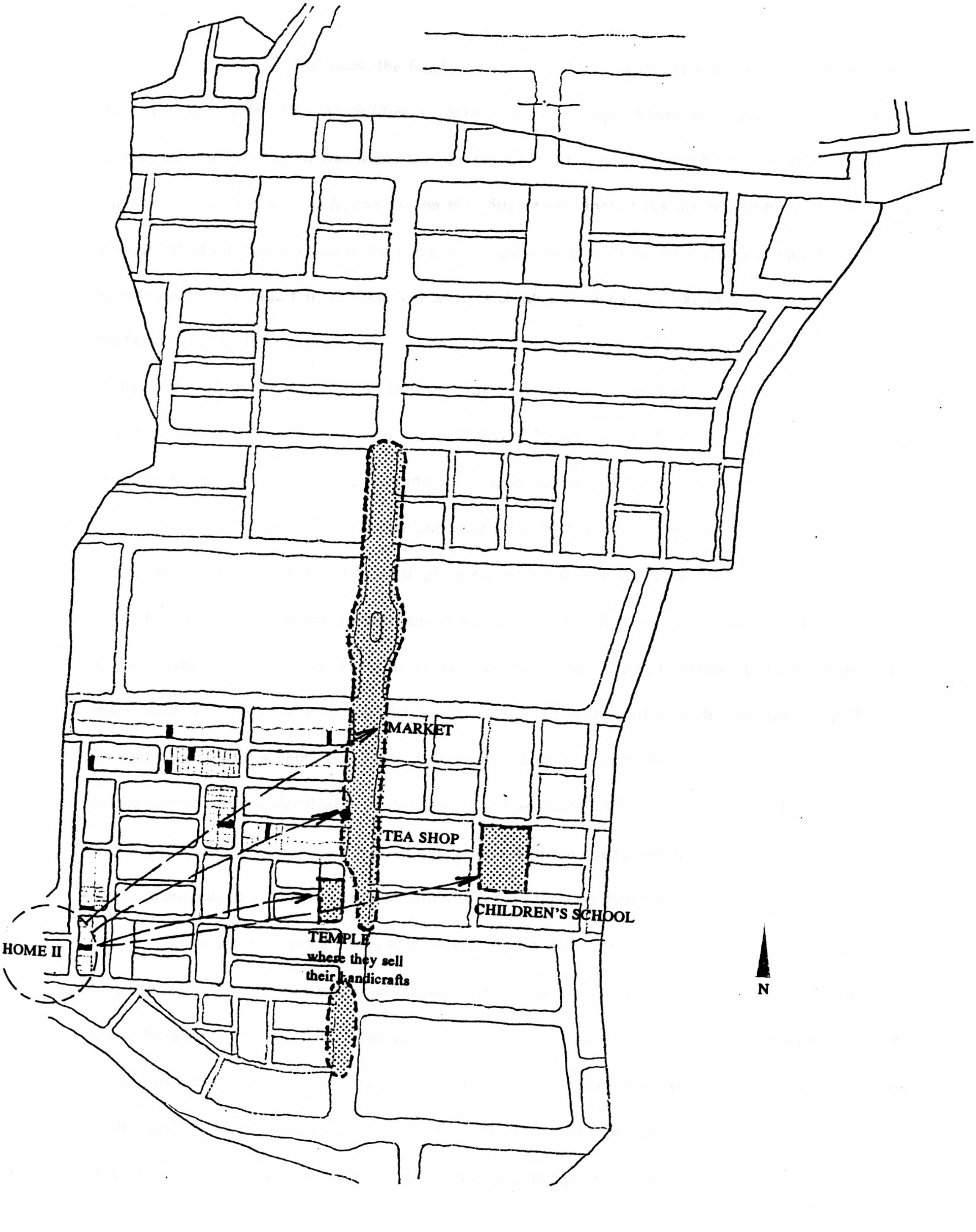
MARKET
TEA SHOP
CHILDREN'S SCHOOL
HOME II
TEMPLE
where they sell
their handicrafts
N

Fig. 3.40: HOME II--SOCIAL CIRCLE

household.

As figure 3.40 illustrates, the family's range of movement includes the tea shop that the father often visits during the day, the children's school, the cheaper open stores at the main street and the temple. On interviewing, it was found that the family rarely leaves the neighborhood, as they cannot afford to do so, except for a festive day on the 15th January that marks the beginning of the year. On this day all of the family dress in their best attire and visit a few important places of entertainment that include the tourist trade fair, the beach, the city's children's park and snake park. It is observed that the family, except for the father, is quite unaware of the outside world and hence demands very little in terms of absorbing new information from it. This is evident in the interface--the housefront and threshold--(fig. 2.2) which is no more than a thatch and mud facade, the simplicity and low cost of the materials themselves representing the family's identity in terms of their monetary affordability.

Home III reflects the co-dependence and unity within the members of the family through the homes' spatial identity. The one large single space with only a small front door seems to shut itself off from any outsider. The author's observations found that a neighbor was allowed only at the entrance and often sent off after a brief chat. However, the family often allowed friends and relatives into the space inside that does not have any barriers except for one in front of its bath room door (fig. 3.20). This shows a certain acceptance of a well known outsider into the home's realm, which may be demonstrative of the individuality of this family, whose outer realm is limited to just the neighborhood (fig. 3.41). Here, also, is seen a lack of negotiation with the spatial identity of the larger social environment and more a direct representation of what might be their own.

The last home--home IV--is seen to have a very different identity from the previous homes. This contrast is clearly seen in spatial identity as it is represented at the house's interface. Because this young Keralite couple are fairly educated and have had experiences in more places than one, they seem to be more open to the ousider. Their front wall with its large openings and the front room, where the mother tutors children, seem to allow this (fig. 2.4). It is also found through interviews that the family very often leaves the neighborhood to visit friends in other parts of the city (fig. 3.42) and are fully

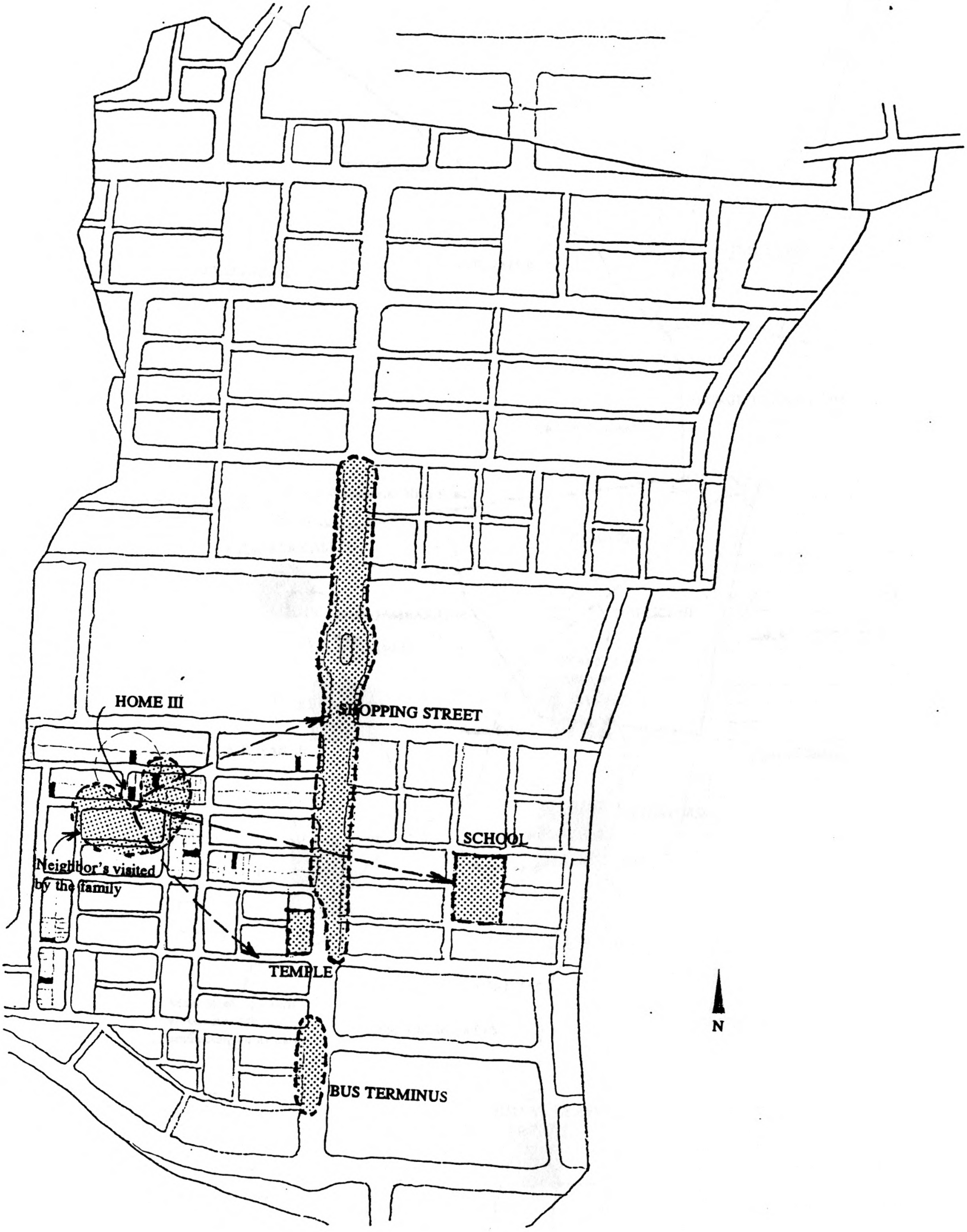
HOME III
SHOPPING STREET
SCHOOL
Neighbor's visited by the family
TEMPLE
BUS TERMINUS
N

Fig. 3.41: HOME III--SOCIAL CIRCLE

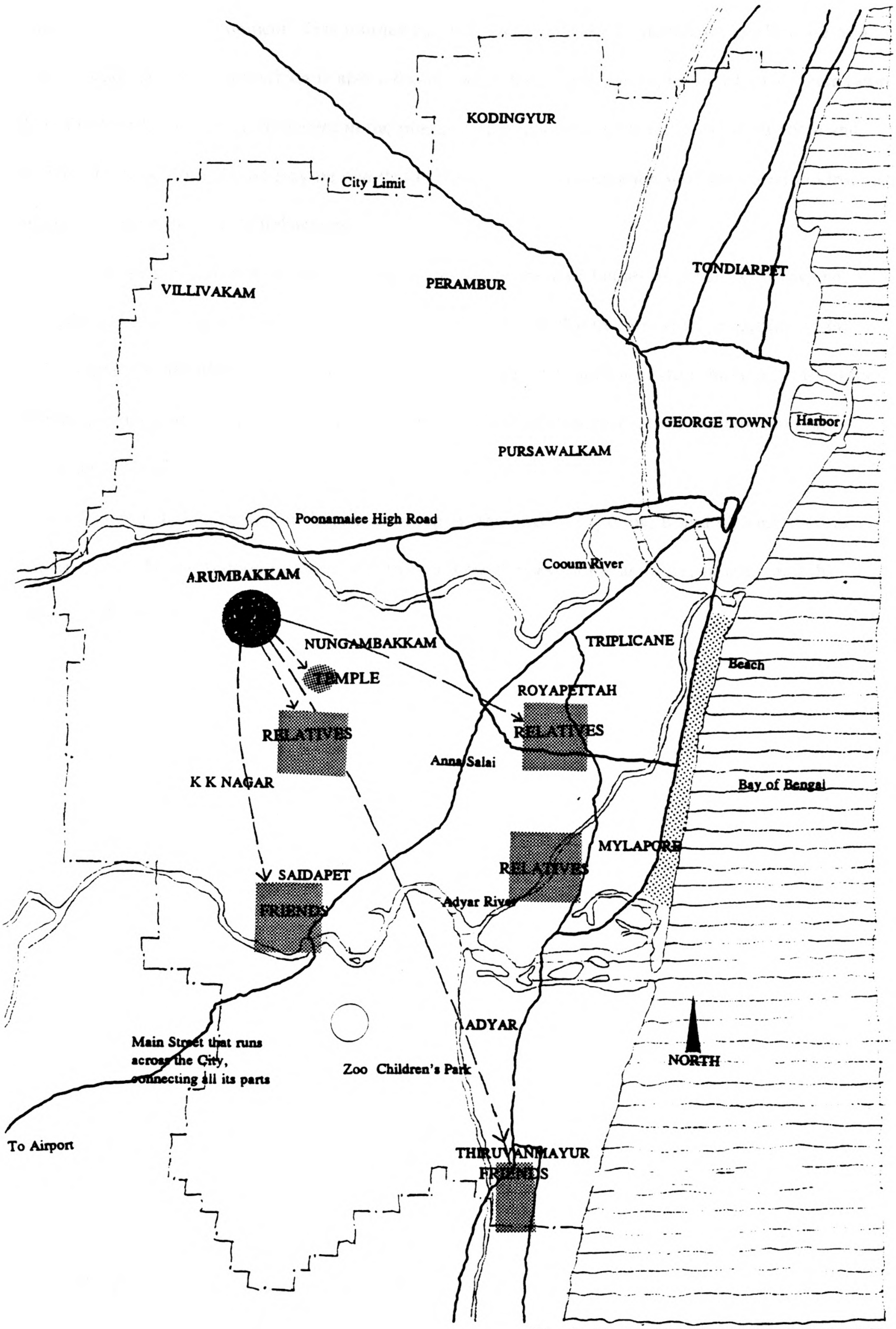
KODINGYUR
City Limit
VILLIVAKAM
PERAMBUR
TONDIARPET
GEORGE TOWN
Harbor
PURSAWALKAM
Poonamalee High Road
Cooum River
ARUMBAKKAM
NUNGAMBAKKAM
TRIPLICANE
Beach
TEMPLE
ROYAPETTAH
RELATIVES
RELATIVES
Anna Salai
K K NAGAR
Bay of Bengal
MYLAPORE
RELATIVES
SAIDAPET
FRIENDS
Adyar River
ADYAR
Main Street that runs across the City, connecting all its parts
Zoo Children's Park
NORTH
To Airport
THIRUVANMAYUR
FRIENDS

Fig. 3.42: HOME IV--SOCIAL CIRCLE

aware of the urban environment. This journeying out, just as in home I, indicates a need to rise to a higher social station--a need which is also indicated when the couple were questioned about their future plans for their home.[31] This is evident in the present home to a certain extent in the front room and the housefront, and this home may be one that exhibits the most negotiation with the social environment among the four homes at Arumbakkam.

Through this discussion on the social dialectics of the four homes of group A, it may be concluded that these four homes reveal a spatial identity that is closely related to an identity of the family's own world rather than that ofthe larger outside one. It is such a relationship that justifies the clustering of these four homes into one group that exhibits the strongest identity among the nine Arumbakkam homes.

Having studied these four homes of group A, the next two groups, B and C, described in chapter II, will be understood in terms of Dovey's three themes--home as order, identity and the dialectics of home.

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[31] Home IV, Interview by Author, 16 June 1989.

CHAPTER IV

INTERPRETING THE THREE HOMES OF GROUP B

The second group of homes--Group B--will be discussed in this chapter. These homes involve families that fall slightly above the income level of the Economically Weaker Section. These three homes are illustrated in figures 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7, which illustrate that the families seem to be more expressive in their aesthetic and status values and build homes that are larger than those of Group A. Although the families of group B come from an almost similar cultural background as those from group A homes, the families' higher monetary standing seems to play a role in expressing an identity that is different from the group-A families. Here, the identity exhibited in terms of spatial qualities, seem to belong more to the larger urban environment than to that of the family's own private world. The homes of group B therefore seem to carry an identity that is less strong than those of group A. This chapter will focus on interpreting these three homes using Dovey's three themes in order to understand this phenomenon.

Similar to the earlier presentation of the group-A homes, a brief introduction to the three homes will first be given, followed by a detailed description of each of home in terms of Dovey's three themes--home as order, home as identity and the dialectics of home. Each of these three themes will be studied with reference to spatial, temporal and socio-cultural dimensions. This exercise will strive to understand the inherent qualities of homes V, VI and VII, and clarify how they seem to possess an identity that reaches beyond the family to the larger world beyond.

Description of the three homes of group B

Home V is illustrated in figure 2.5. The family is extended and composed of three brothers and their three wives. The oldest brother has two children and therefore totals eight, three of whom work as technicians in nearby industries. The monthly income of home V is an average of forty five dollars.[1] Built three years ago, this house is permanent brick and cement with a Madras terrace roof and with an additional upper floor.[2] This extended family has resided in Madras over the last several generations and has lived in a rented apartment close to Arumbakkam before the construction of the present home.

Home VI (fig. 2.6) includes a father, mother and four children. Working for the Tamil Nadu Co-operative Society as a salesman, the father earns about forty five dollars a month.[3] The family has been able to built a permanent house constructed in four phases within the nine years it has lived at Arumbakkam. Just like home V, this family is an early city settlers and have lived in several rented apartments before moving into Arumbakkam.

Home VII is illustrated in figure 2.7, and houses a family that is composed of a father, mother and three children. They come from Thirunelveli, a town in the far southern part of the state of Tamil Nadu. The house is divided into a living room at the back and a grocery/sweets shop in front, facing the road. The shop is the only source of income for the family and all the members help out. They receive an income of nearly forty five dollars a month. The house itself is a simple brick/cement and madras-terraced unit, but with spaces articulated to accommodate the shop and its store.

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[1] Home V-House #F165, Interview by author, 24 June 1989, Transcriptions, MMDA Colony, Arumbakkam, Madras, India.

[2] "Madras terrace" is the name given to a roof construction involving a brick and lime roof supported on closely placed wooden purlins and finished either with floor tiles or cement/red-oxide.

[3] Home VI-House #F82, Interview by author, 2 July 1989; transcripted from dialogues and direct observation, MMDA Colony, Arumbakkam, Madras, India.

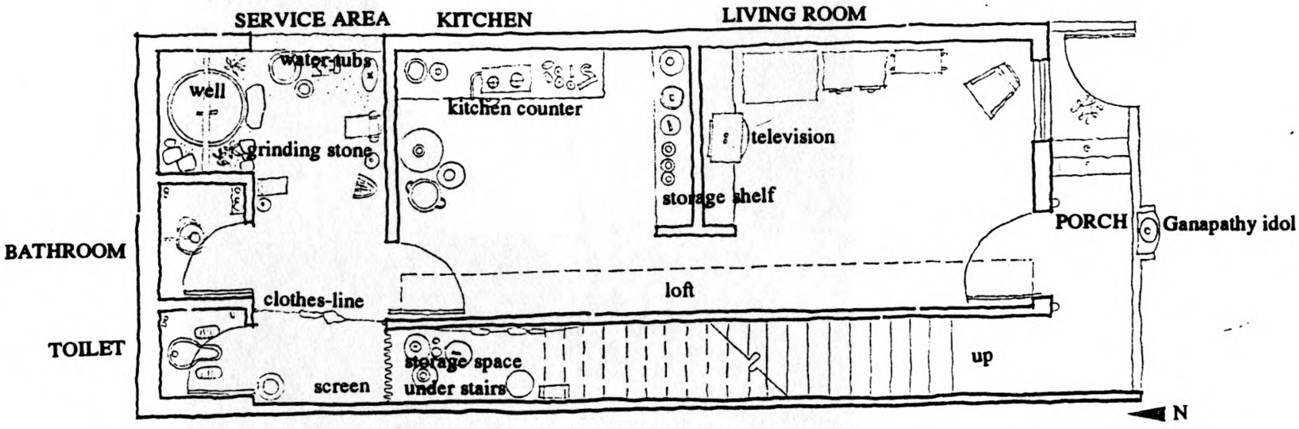
HOME AS ORDER

The Three Homes and Spatial Order

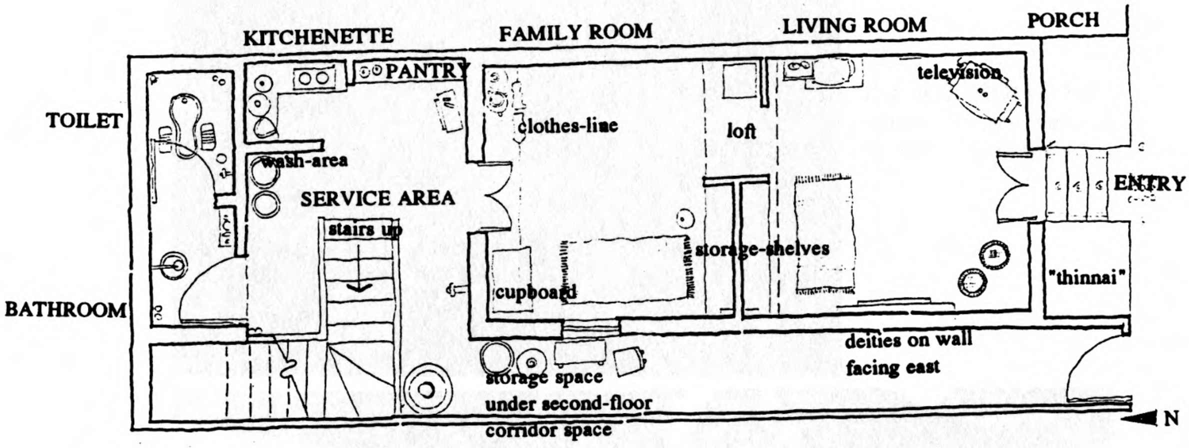
As was explained in chapter II, spatial order involves the patterning of space with respect to: (i) the inherent structure of the human body's up/down, front/back and left/right; (ii) the movement of the body within space; and (iii) the effect of the geography of the earth where the home is found. Although the first two homes--homes V and VI--carry strong similarities in terms of spatial order. They also both exhibit their uniqueness that arises from the differences in the structure of the individual families. Home VII, although belonging to the same income group, expresses a spatial order that more resembles that of the group A homes. There are, however certain, distinct features like the reinforced cement concrete roof expressing a sense of permanence and higher affordability that makes this building one of the group B homes. These similarities and differences will be described and explained below.

Unlike the single-storied homes of group A, homes V and VI, are fully-built two-storied homes as seen in figures 2.5 and 2.6. It is seen from the house plans (fig. 4.1) that there is a certain level of complexity that is not found in the simple two-to-three-roomed layouts of the homes of group-A. The three feet setback that was used as corridors by the group-A homes, is used here to house the stair connecting the floors (fig. 4.1). This is true even in home VII, where a half-built staircase is found (fig. 4.2). Except for this linear setback strip and the service core, each of these houses have dealt with the remaining space in their own individual ways. The discussion below will describe and compare the similarities and differences between these homes, with fig. 4.3 to 4.7 as references.

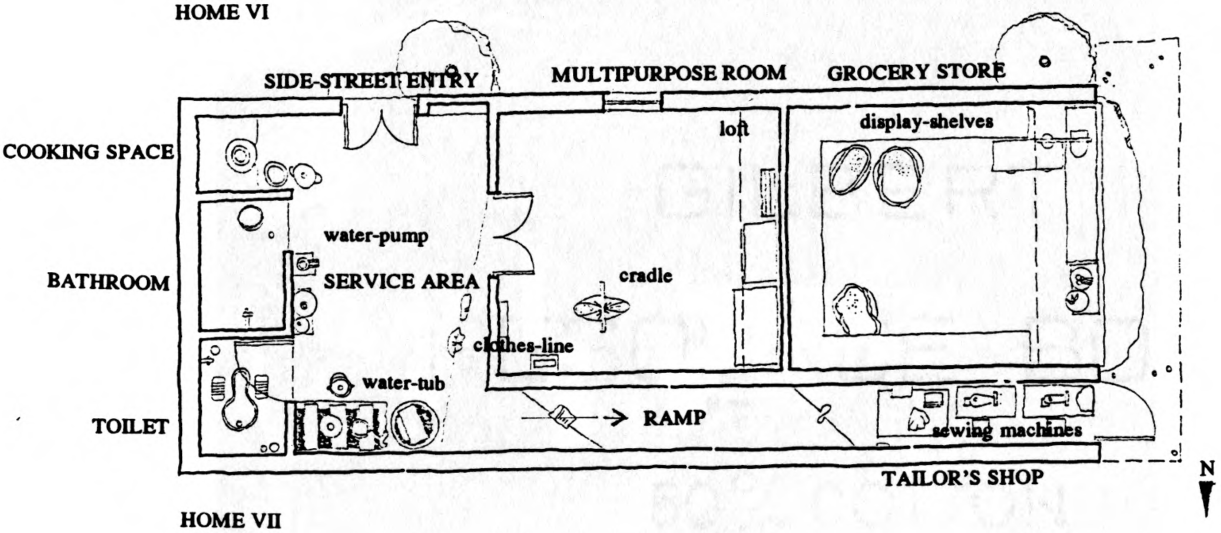
Home V, housing three couples and two children, is made up of five basic spaces, excluding the staircase and toilet core. These spaces include a front veranda, that leads to the staircase and the living room; a living room; a kitchen; a service veranda; and a semi-permanent multipurpose room made of thatch on the second floor (fig. 4.3). Home VI (fig. 4.3) where the family of mother, father and four children live, is divided into many more spaces designated to serve specific functions. The spaces include a porch, a living room, an inner family room, a kitchen, a service area and a storage space on the first floor and a bedroom, a multipurpose room with an open terrace on the second.


SERVICE AREA
KITCHEN
LIVING ROOM
water-tubs
well
grinding stone
kitchen counter
television
storage shelf
BATHROOM
PORCH
Ganapathy idol
clothes-line
loft
TOILET
storage space
under stairs
screen
up
N

HOME V


KITCHENETTE
FAMILY ROOM
LIVING ROOM
PORCH
PANTRY
television
TOILET
clothes-line
loft
wash-area
SERVICE AREA
ENTRY
stairs up
storage-shelves
"thinnai"
cupboard
BATHROOM
deities on wall
facing east
storage space
under second-floor
corridor space
N

HOME VI


SIDE-STREET ENTRY
MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
GROCERY STORE
loft
display-shelves
COOKING SPACE
water-pump
cradle
BATHROOM
SERVICE AREA
clothes-line
water-tub
RAMP
TOILET
sewing machines
TAILOR'S SHOP
N

HOME VII

Fig. 4.1: FLOOR PLANS--GROUP B

SCALE 1'0" = 1/8"

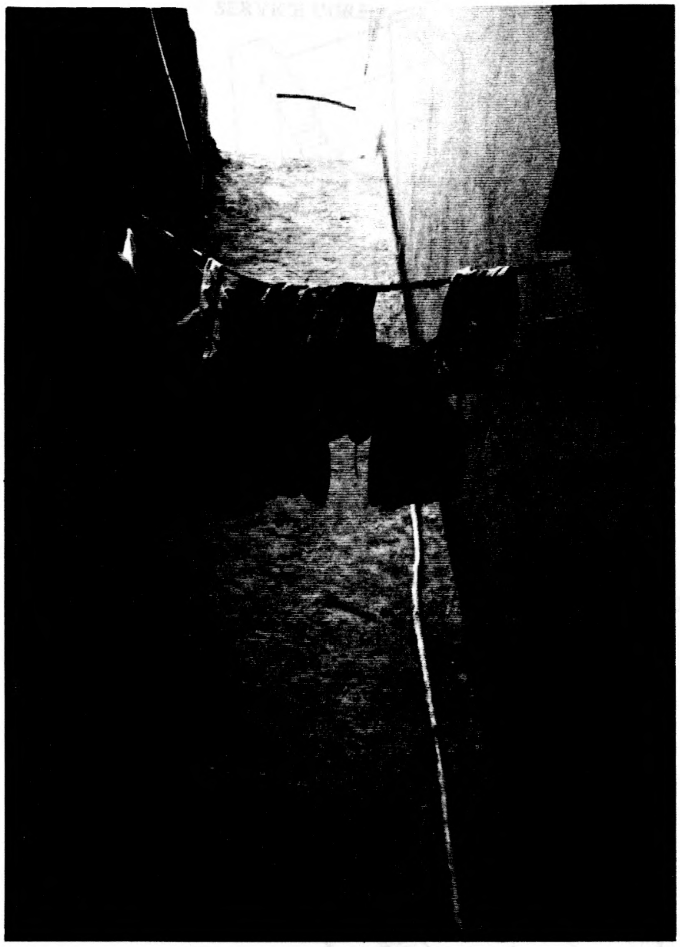


Fig. 4.2: HOME VII
Unbuilt stair, now used as ramp to open terrace

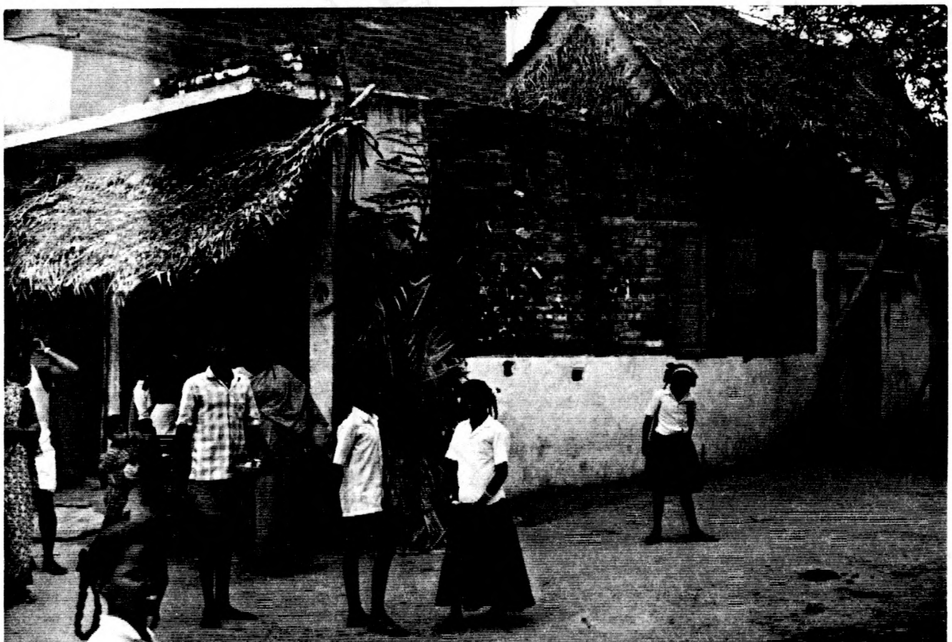
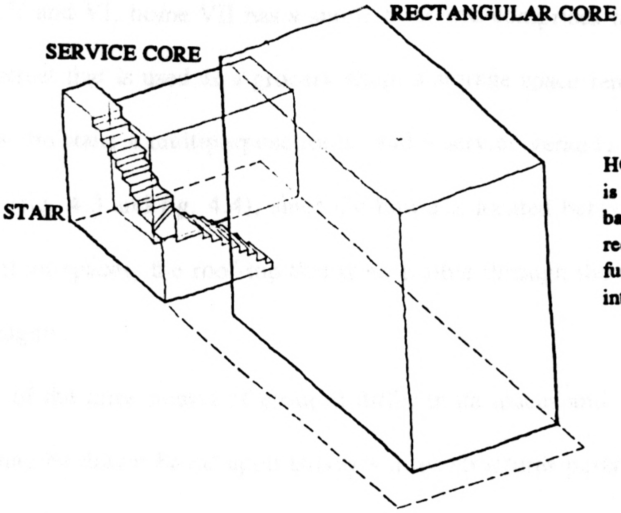
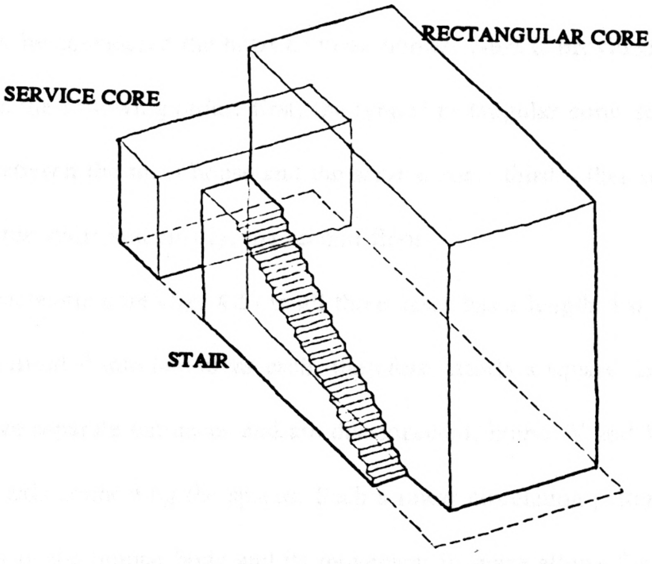


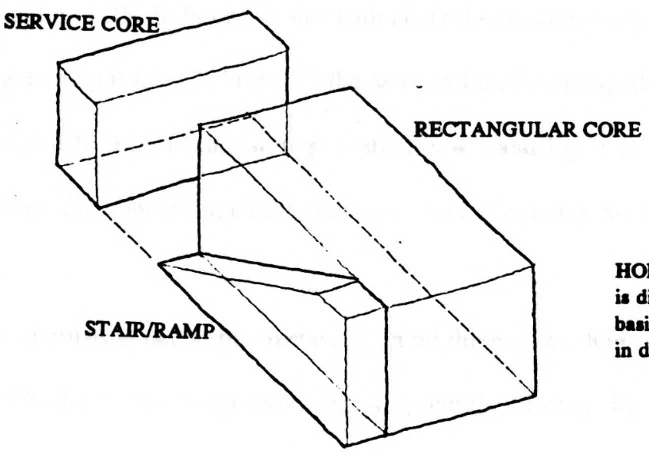
Fig. 4.4: HOME VII
View showing entrance to home from side-street


RECTANGULAR CORE
SERVICE CORE
STAIR

HOME V
is divided into three basic volumes, the rectangular core further divided into two floors


RECTANGULAR CORE
SERVICE CORE
STAIR

HOME VI
is divide into three volumes with the rectangular core further divided into two floors and the stair assuming an L shape, breaking the flight up into two parts


SERVICE CORE
RECTANGULAR CORE
STAIR/RAMP

HOME VII
is divided into three basic volumes as shown in drawing

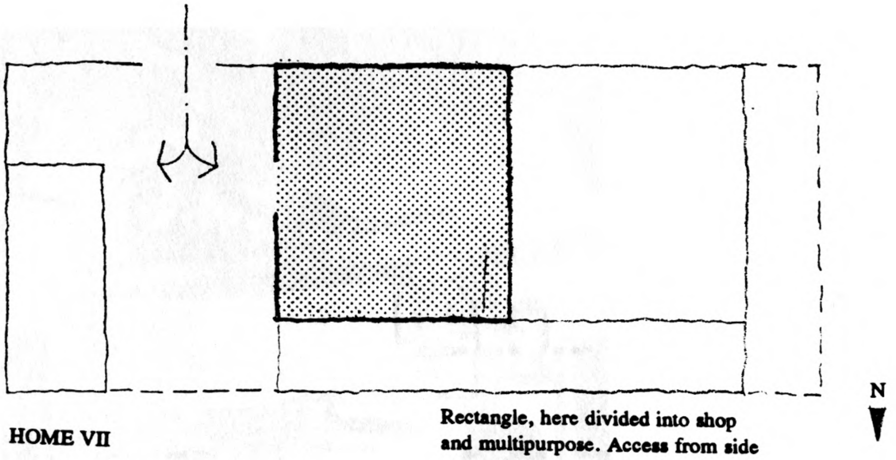
Fig. 4.3: ISOMETRIC DRAWINGS--GROUP B

Unlike homes V and VI, home VII has a single floor and comprises four distinct spaces--a space facing the main street that is used as a grocery shop; a storage space rented out to a tailor, abutting the shop below the stair; a multipurpose room; and a service veranda at the back end that opens to the side street (fig. 4.3 and fig. 4.4), since the house is located between two streets (fig. 1.4). In addition to the first-floor spaces, the roof-top that is accessible through the semi-built stair, is used as a sleeping space at nights.

Although each of the three homes of group-B differ in its spaces and the functions they serve, an underlying pattern may be drawn based upon Dovey's three structures pertaining to spatial order. The first floor of all three homes--restricted by the three-foot stair on the longer side, the toilet core and an adjoining space (fig. 4.3) reserved for water-based activities--are left with a typical rectangular space that may be considered the heart of these homes. Next is provided a comparison of spaces of the three homes in the following order: first, the typical rectangular core; second, the service core and the service area between the main house and the service core; third, other supporting spaces on the first floor; fourth, the stair; and finally, the second floor.

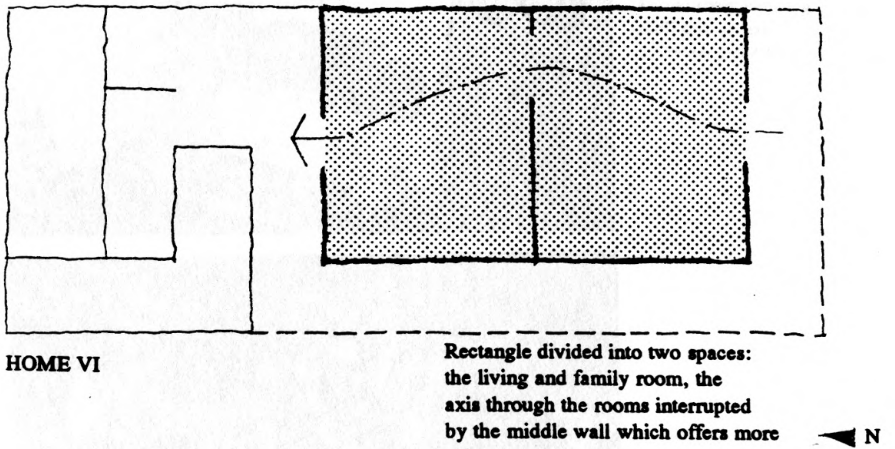
The rectangle core (fig. 4.5) in all three cases has a length that is almost equal to twice its breadth and is divided into two areas each, therefore, nearly a square. Except in home VII, where these two spaces have separate entrances and are disconnected, homes V and VI involve a series of openings along a single axis connecting the spaces. Such a linear circulation pattern brought about by the front/back axis of the human body and its movement in space allows for other activities to take place uninterrupted by a circulation path. In home V, this path abuts the western wall with the openings uninterrupted and along a straight line. In home VI the same is found running along a central axis but the linear path is interrupted by a projecting storage shelf (fig. 4.1 and fig. 4.6) that provides some privacy for the inner room. Such an arrangement creates a sense of privacy for the inner/back rooms of house.

Apart from the circulation paths, this rectangle, in all three cases, houses the main spaces of the home. In the case of home V, the living room (fig. 4.7) and the kitchen (fig. 4.8) are found here.



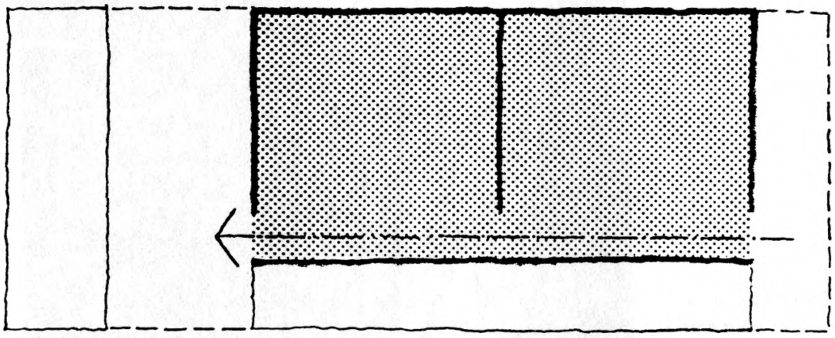
HOME VII

Rectangle, here divided into shop and multipurpose. Access from side street saving circulation length found in homes V and VI



HOME VI

Rectangle divided into two spaces: the living and family room, the axis through the rooms interrupted by the middle wall which offers more privacy to inner room



HOME V

Rectangular body divided into two individual rooms: the living and kitchen with the three doors along a single axis

Fig. 4.5: RECTANGULAR CORE--GROUP B

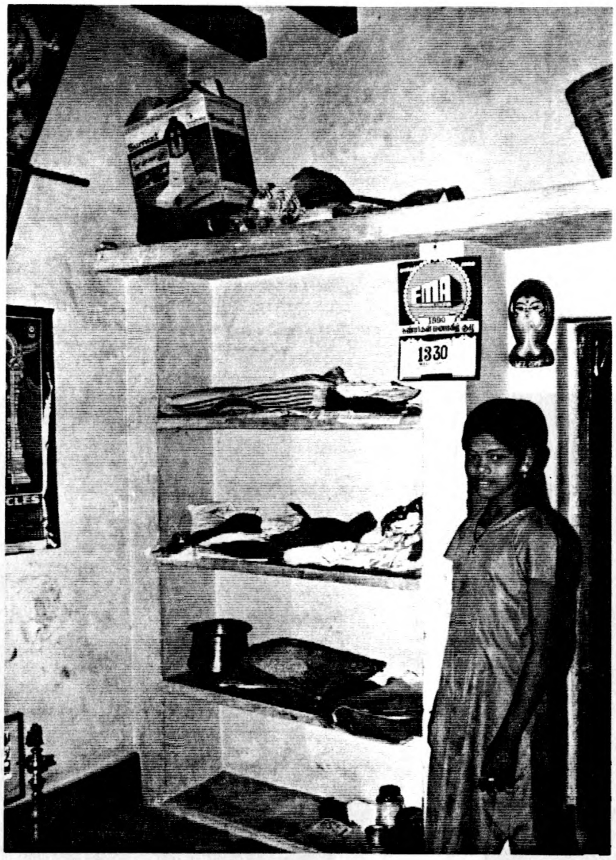


Fig. 4.6: HOME VI
Living room showing shelf that divides the rectangular core

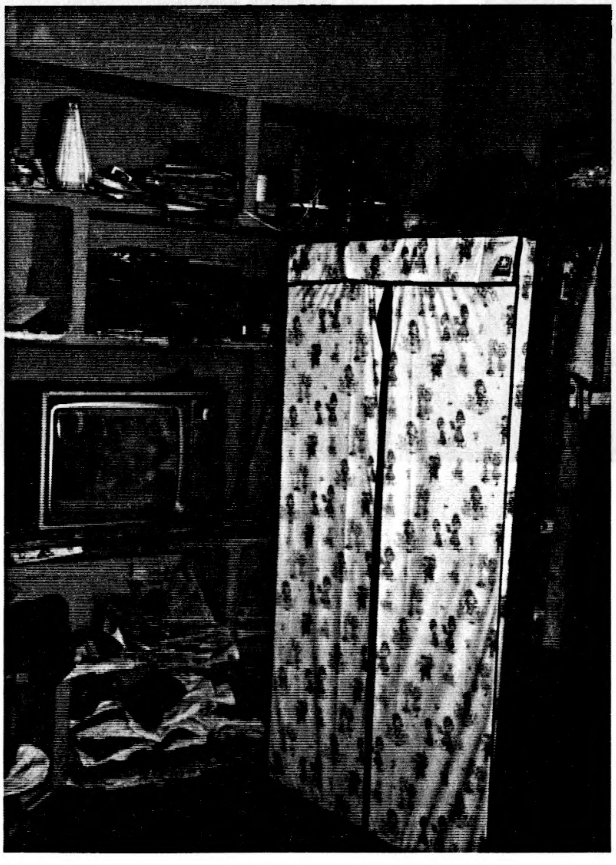


Fig. 4.7: HOME V
Living room showing shelf that divides the rectangular core

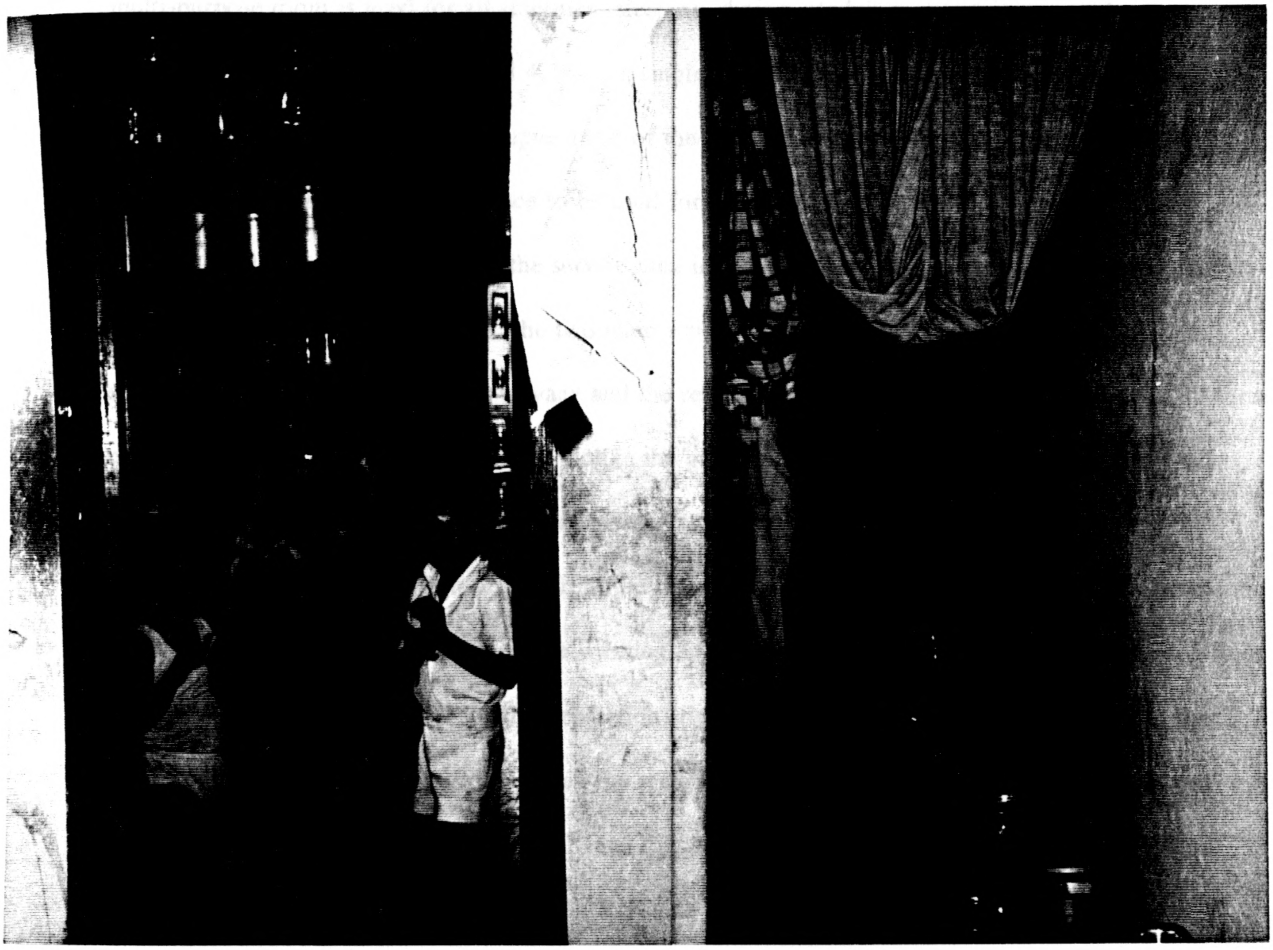


Fig. 4.8: HOME V
Kitchen and space below stairs found adjacent to it

These rooms are also used for sleeping at night by the two younger couples of the household. The older couple and their two children use the large multipurpose space (fig. 4.9), another rectangle that sits over the lower one on the second floor. In home VI, this rectangular core has the living (fig. 4.10) and family room on the first floor and a bedroom (fig. 4.11) and multipurpose room on the second. These four spaces are used by all members of the family. In home VII, the rectangular core houses the single enclosed multipurpose room (fig. 4.12) and the shop, both very important spaces to the family. The multi-purpose room is used for all activities--sleeping, dining, studying, entertaining guests etc., except cooking. The shop (figures 4.13 and 4.14) is a single room that stores and exhibits grocery items. Although the shop in this home occupies most of the covered area of the home, the second entrance from the side street allows more space to be used for purposes other than circulation.

Next, the service core and the service area in these homes will be described using fig. 4.15. As mentioned earlier in chapter III, the two main aspects to be considered in the case of the service/toilet core are the need for privacy and the separation of the dry from the wet areas. In all three cases, the service area plays a key role. Unlike the group-A homes, here is seen a more developed sense of privacy and the separation of water-based areas. In home V, for example, the service core includes a well and is clearly separated from the rectangular core by an intermediate service space. Although other water-based activities like washing and cleaning take place here, the dry cemented floor and the lower floor level allow for this separation (fig. 4.16). This service space also enhances the sense of privacy acting as a buffer between the main living space and the toilet/bathroom. Through interviews with the women of the home, it was found that often the kitchen door is shut, so that the service space can be used as a dressing room outside the bathroom.[4]

In home VI, these two aspects of privacy and separation of wet and dry areas seem are further refined in terms of design. As seen through the drawings (fig. 4.15), the toilet and bathroom are connected, with the toilet reachable only through the bathroom. Here, only one door (fig. 4.17) of the

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[4] Home V, Interview by author, 24 June 1989.

Fig. 4.9: HOME V
Multipurpose room on the second floor

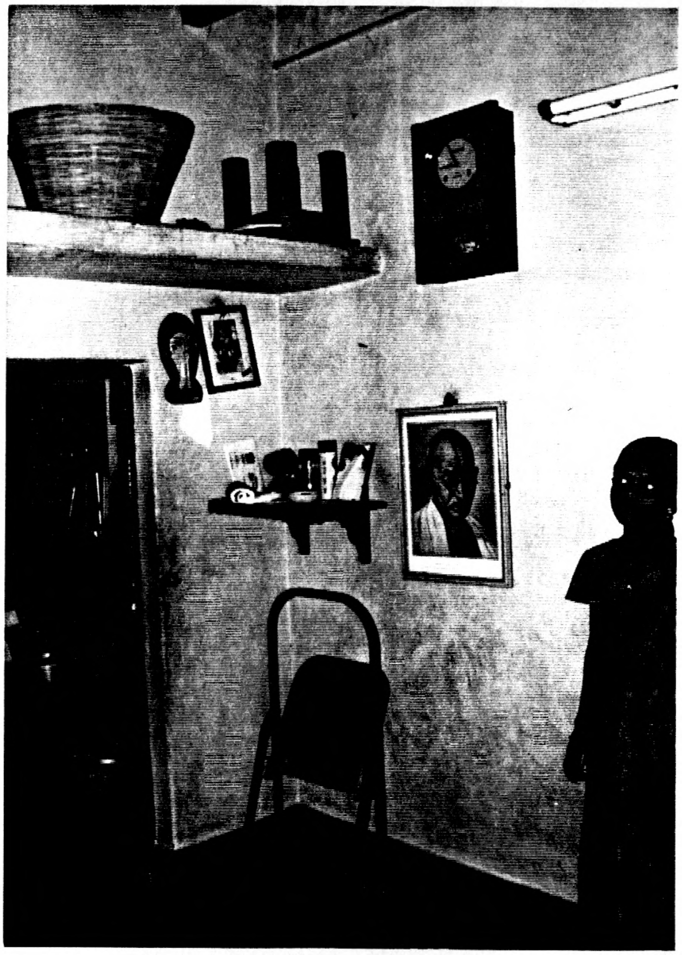


Fig. 4.10: HOME VI
Living Room

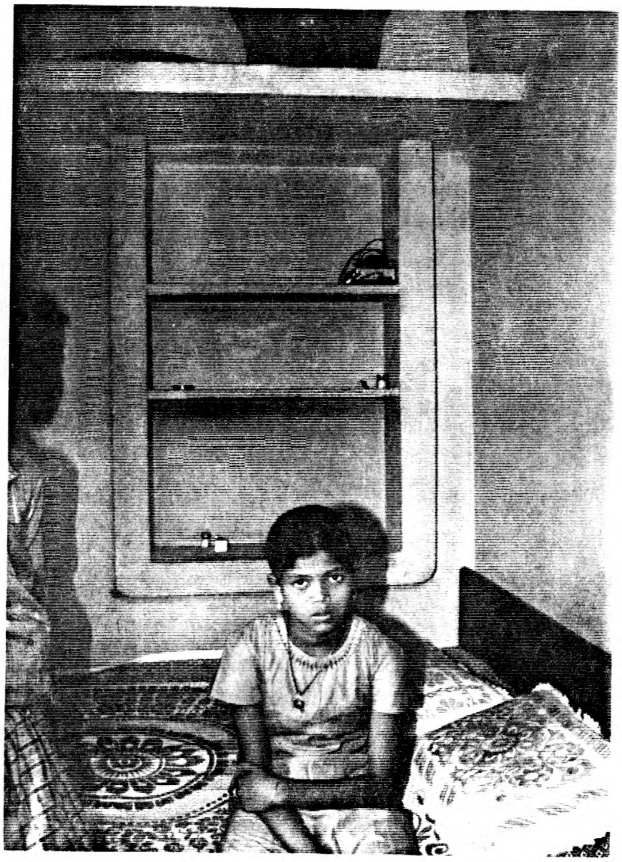


Fig. 4.11: HOME VI
Bedroom on second floor

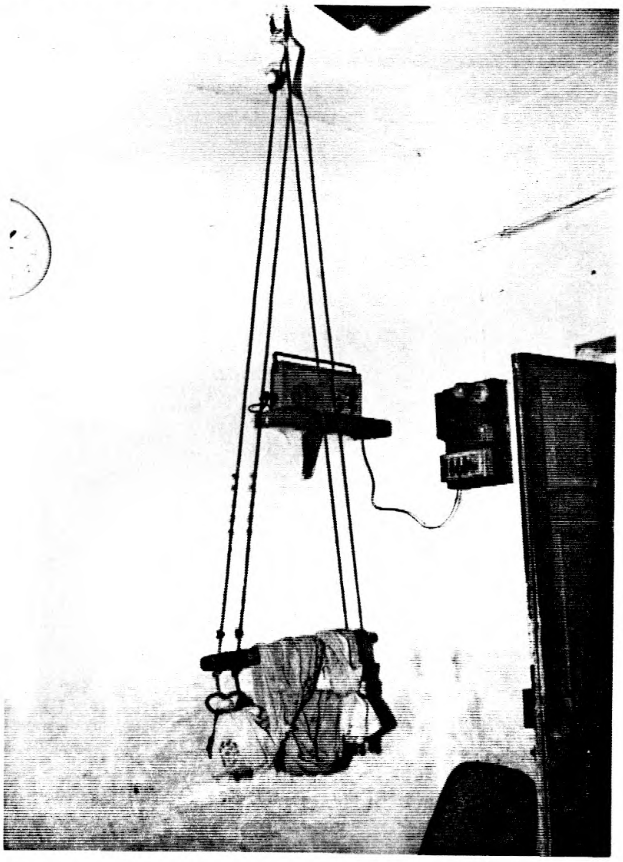


Fig. 4.12: HOME VII
Multipurpose Room

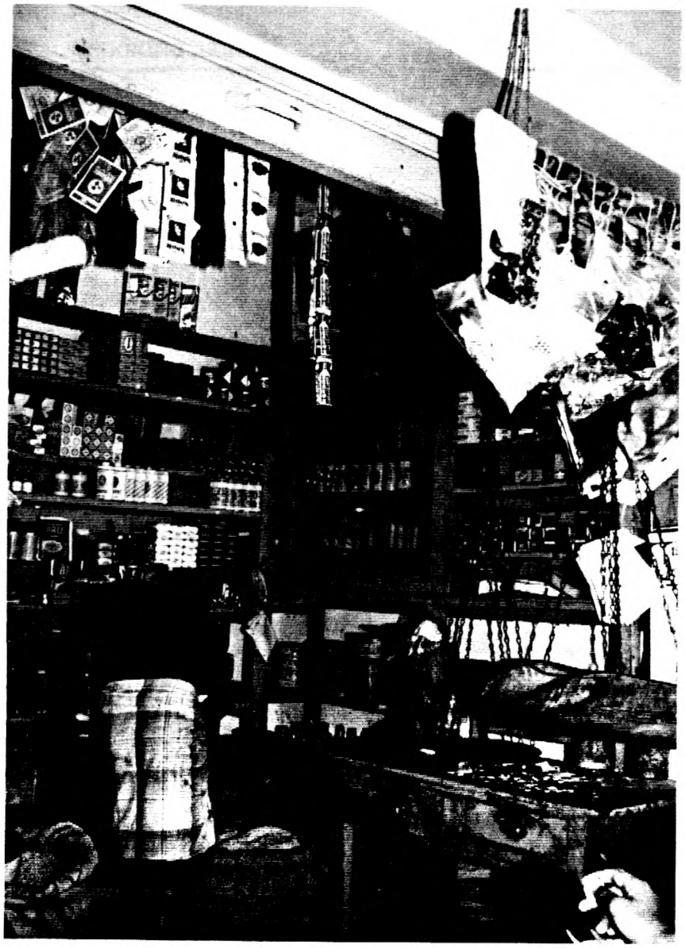


Fig. 4.13: HOME VII
Grocery Shop

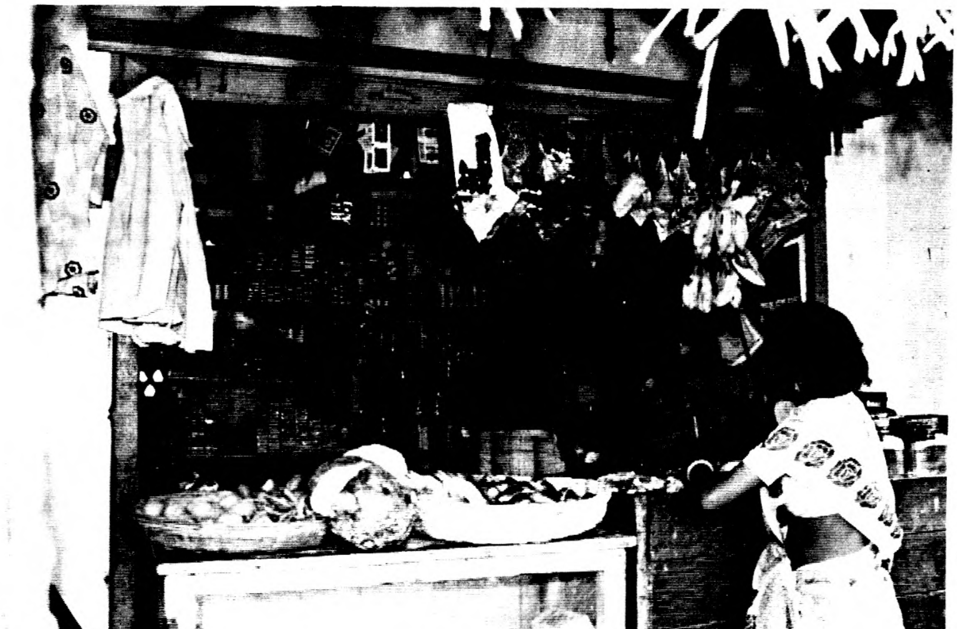
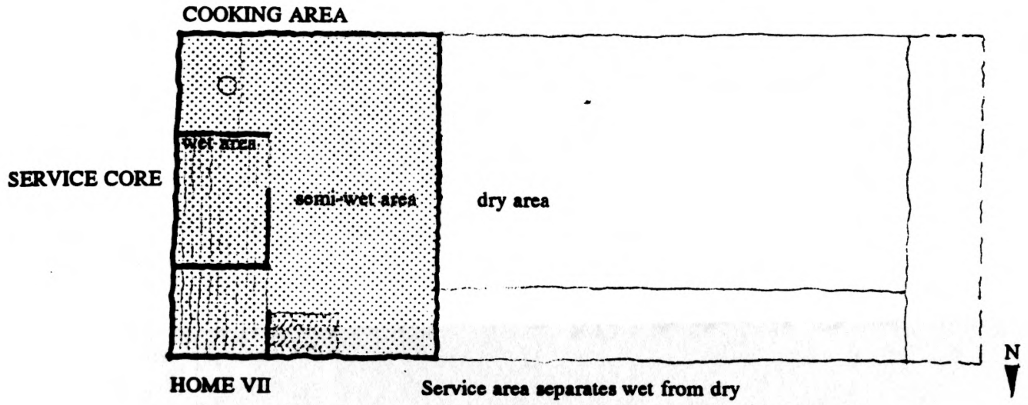
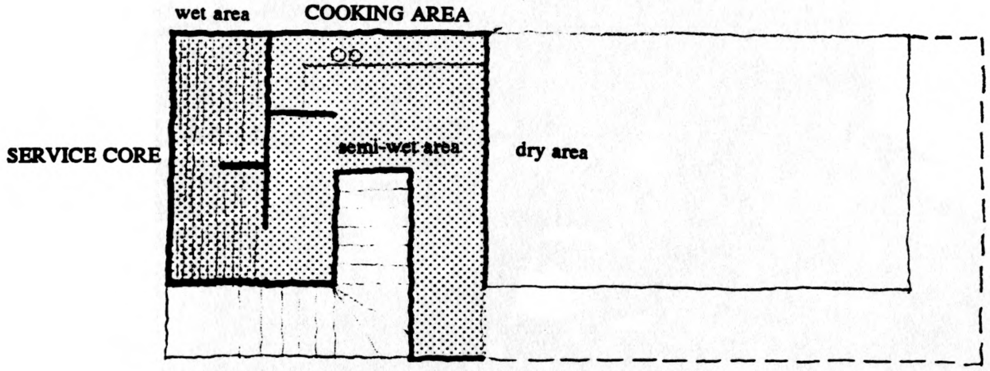


Fig. 4.14: HOME VII
Grocery Shop


COOKING AREA
SERVICE CORE
wet area
semi-wet area
dry area
N

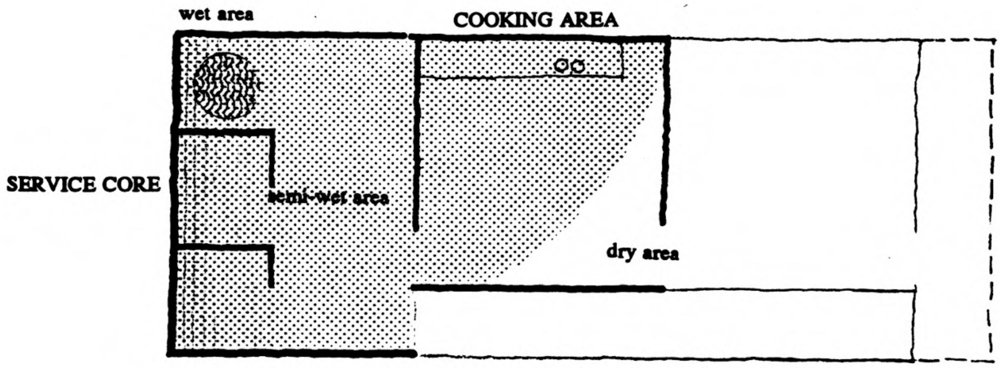
HOME VII

Service area separates wet from dry and since kitchen is located outside, living spaces are fully dry


wet area
COOKING AREA
SERVICE CORE
semi-wet area
dry area
N

HOME VI

Service area separates wet from dry and since the cooking area is located within the service area, the living spaces are fully dry


wet area
COOKING AREA
SERVICE CORE
semi-wet area
dry area

HOME V

Service area serves both to separate wet core from dry living spaces and offers privacy to the bathrooms

Fig. 4.15: SEPARATION OF WET/DRY AREAS--GROUP B
SCALE 1'0" = 1/8"

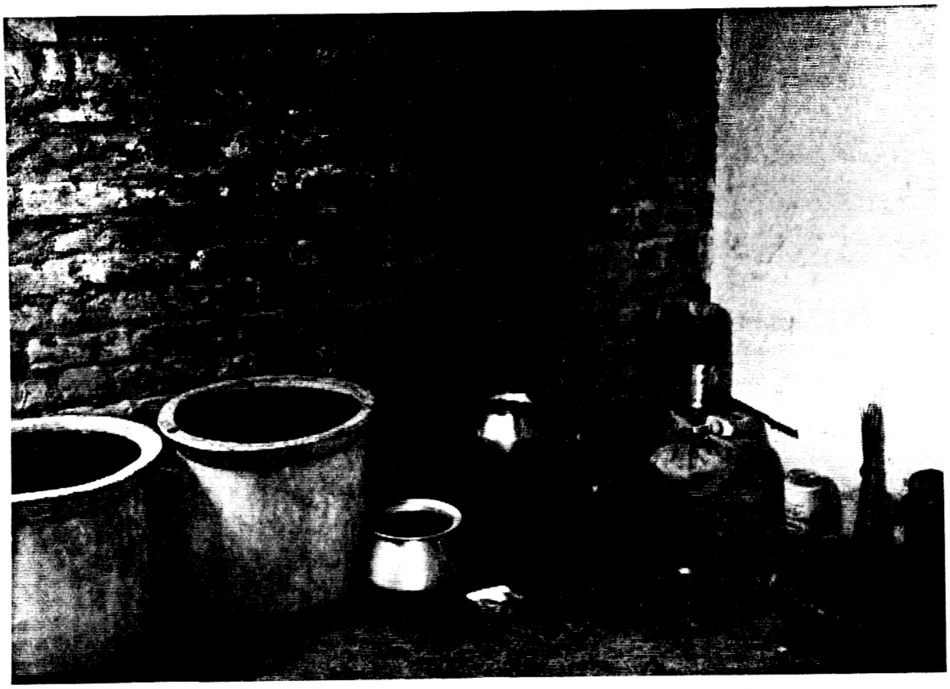


Fig. 4.16: HOME V
Cemented service-area floor

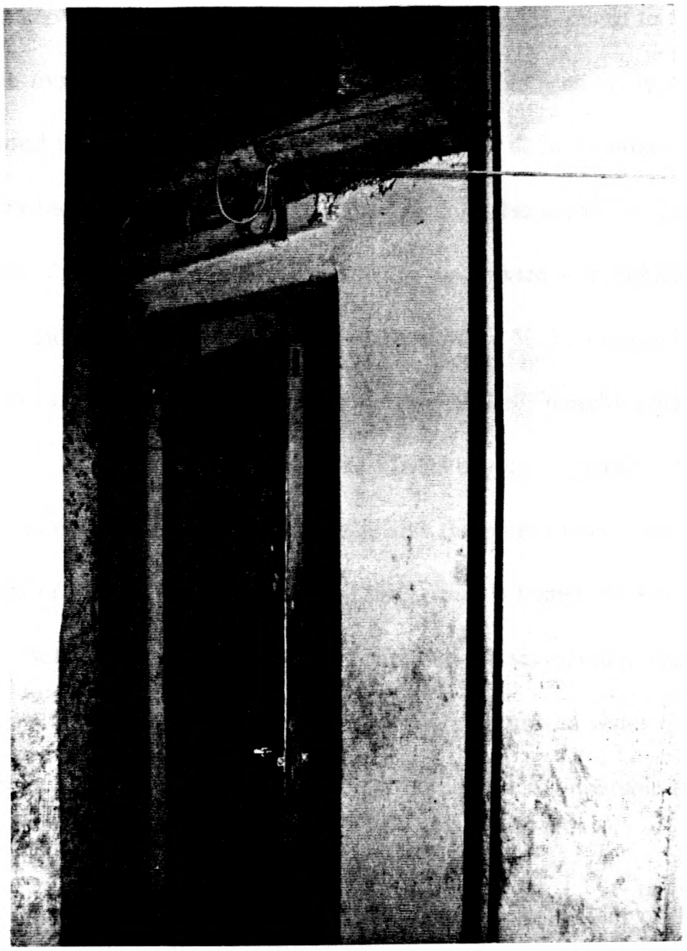


Fig. 4.17: HOME VI
Door to Service Core

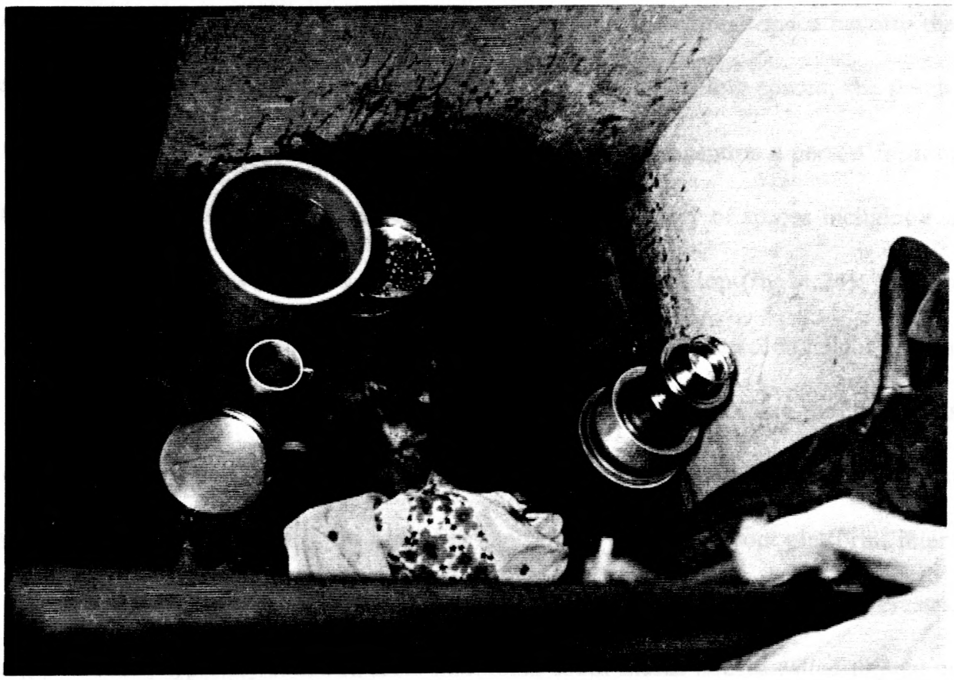


Fig. 4.18: HOME VI
Dish-washing Space

two service core rooms--the toilet and the bathroom--opens to the outside unlike all other homes where both rooms have openings to the outside. Also, as seen in fig. 4.3, the first flight of the stair to the second floor serves as a screen to the bathroom door, creating a three-foot cubicle between, which often becomes a dressing space. This space is also used as a dish washing space (fig. 4.18). Just as in home V, the wet spaces are restricted to the service area, which serves as a buffer between the toilet core and the inner living space. Unlike in home V, however the kitchen (fig. 4.1) is not found with the main rectangular core, but within the service core, thereby removing any water-based activity from it.

Home VII resembles home I in its degree of privacy and separation of dry from wet areas. Just as in home I, the service area is also the point of entry in the home and hence cannot afford the sense of privacy found in the other two group B homes. Unlike in home I, however cooking activities (fig. 4.19) are brought out of the house and the service area and is found along with the service core (fig. 4.20) in place of the well as in home I. In turn, a water tub for storing water is found in the service area along with a water-pump that is now not operable (fig. 4.21). This thatch roofed space is used to hang clothes (fig. 4.22).

Next, the other supporting spaces on the first floor of the three homes of group-B will be considered (fig. 4.23). In home V, the other spaces include the storage space beneath the stair accessible through the service area and the front porch (fig. 4.8). Both spaces, the porch that leads one from the street to the inside and the space under the stair that transports a person from one end to another, are linear stretches. In the case of home VI, this category of spaces includes a small kitchenette made up of two shelves and a counter with a stove on top (fig. 4.24), and a porch at the entrance and the storage space along the three-foot setback below the second floor corridor (fig. 4.25). The kitchenette seems to fit itself within the service area, thereby releasing the main house for other activities. Through fig. 4.10 and 4.24, it is clear that this space fits closely around the human body, yet obeying its structure. The porch, on the other hand, is an open three foot platform, interrupted by the three steps rising from the floor of the street to that of the inside (fig. 4.26). This creates two square seating platforms, typically found in most traditional south Indian houses called thinnai in Tamil. Both

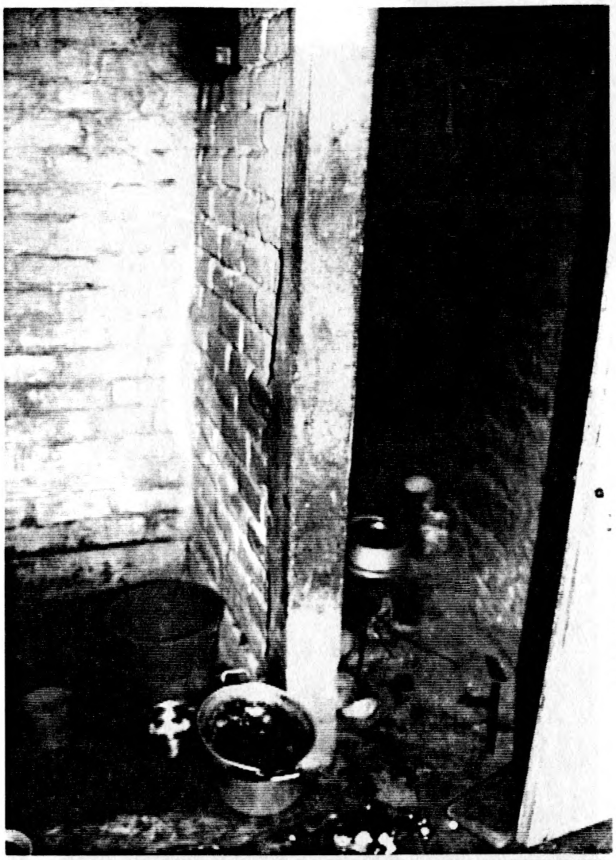


Fig. 4.19: HOME VII
Cooking space found instead of a well or water-tub in the south-east corner of site

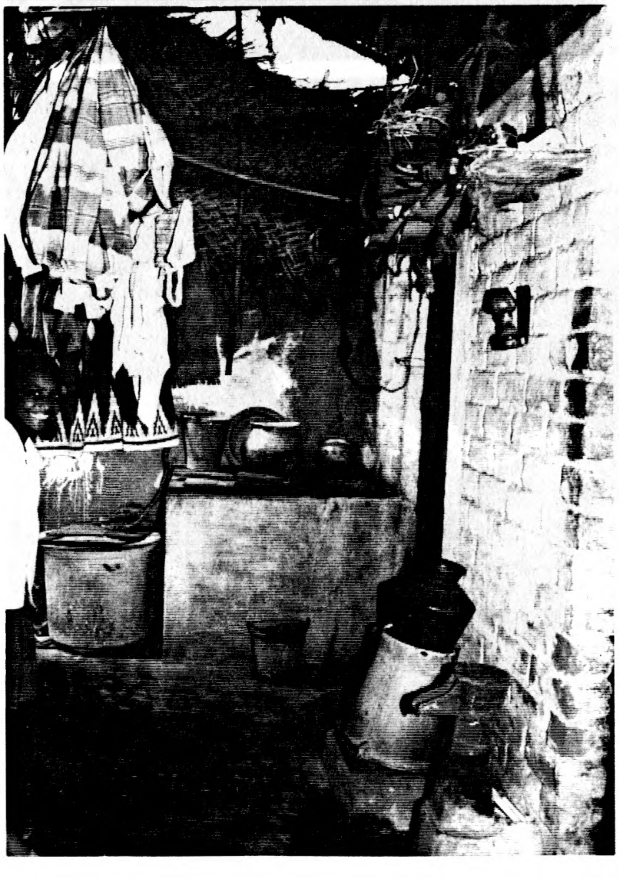


Fig. 4.20: Home VII
Service Area

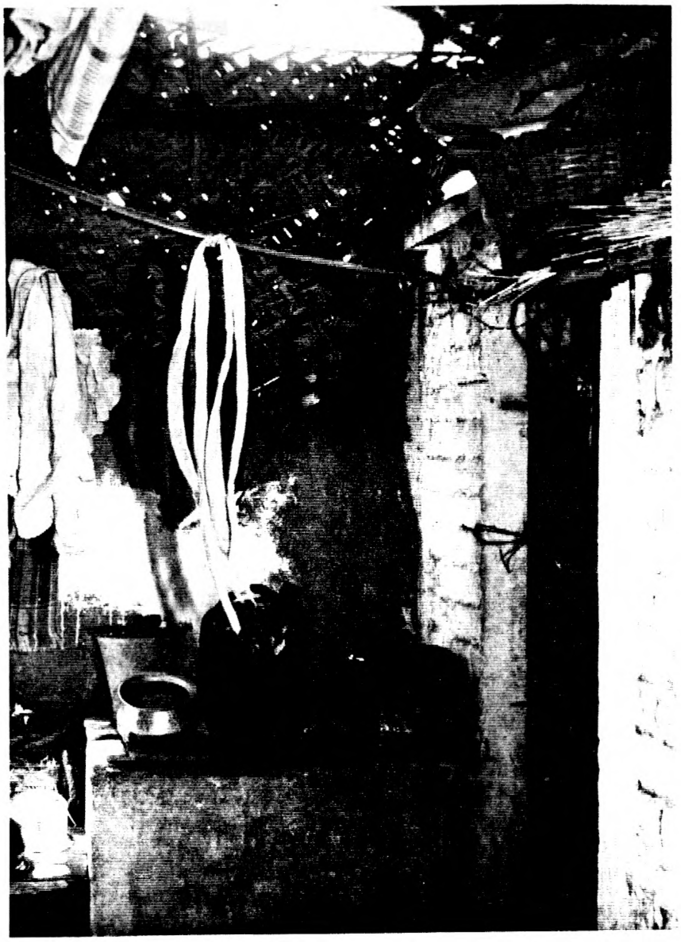


Fig. 4.21: HOME VII
Water-tub in found within the service area

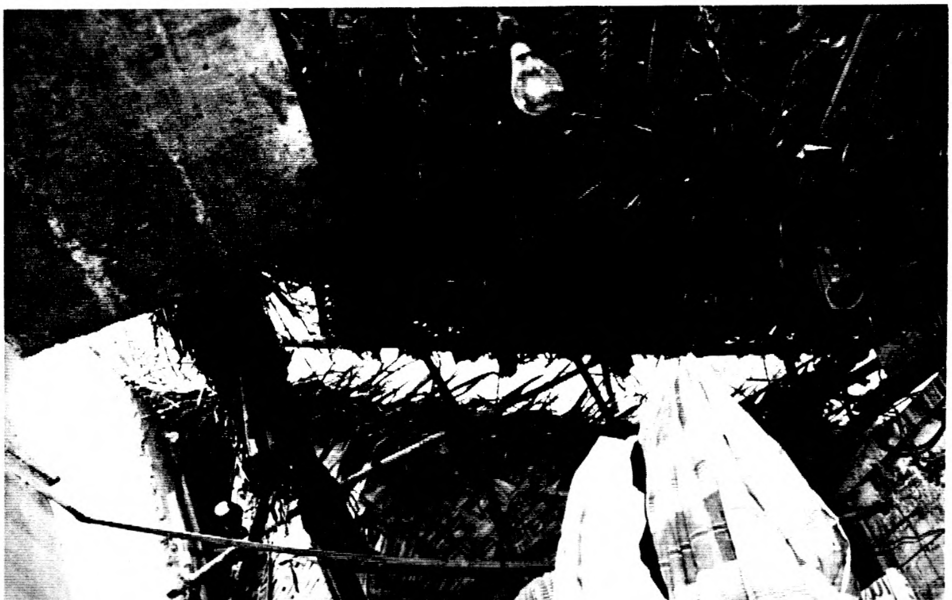
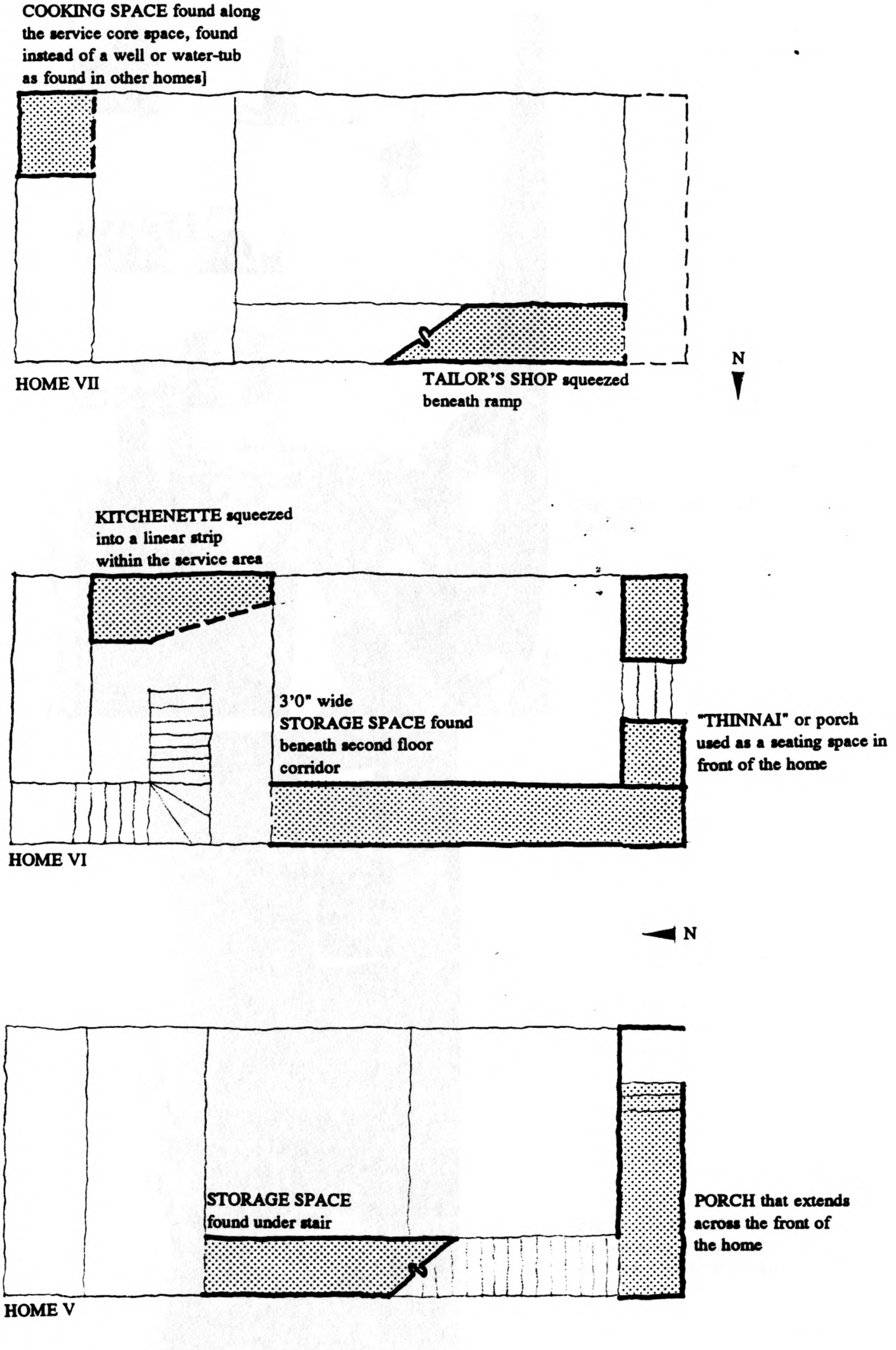


Fig. 4.22: HOME VII
Clothes-line in Service Area


COOKING SPACE found along the service core space, found instead of a well or water-tub as found in other homes]

TAILOR'S SHOP squeezed beneath ramp

KITCHENETTE squeezed into a linear strip within the service area

3'0" wide STORAGE SPACE found beneath second floor corridor

"THINNAI" or porch used as a seating space in front of the home

STORAGE SPACE found under stair

PORCH that extends across the front of the home

Fig. 4.23: SUPPORTING SPACES--GROUP B
SCALE 1'0" = 1/8"

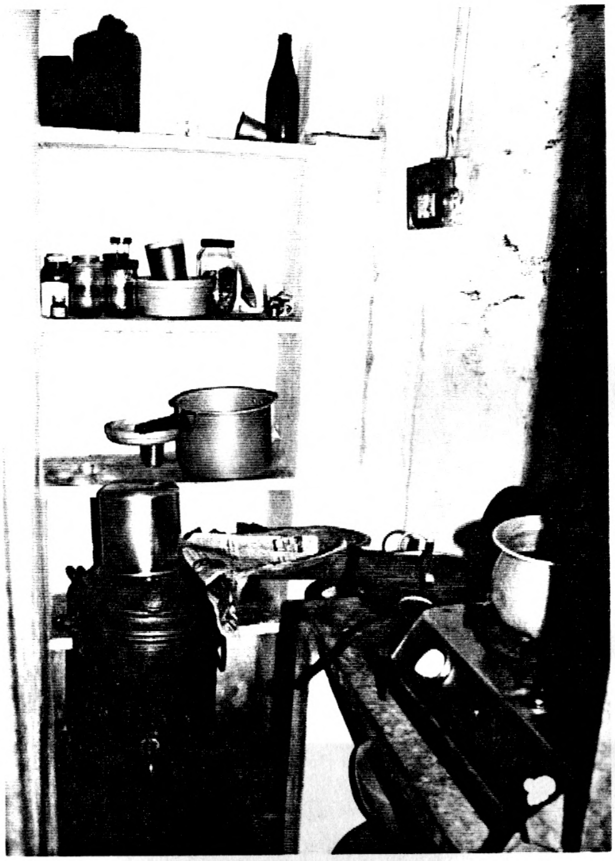


Fig. 4.24: HOME VI
Kitchenette

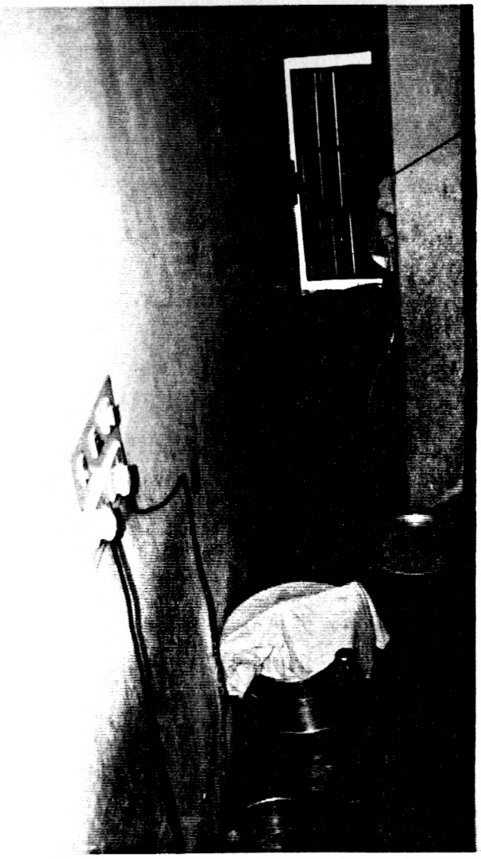


Fig. 4.25: HOME VI
Set-back space used a storage space and is roofed by second floor corridor

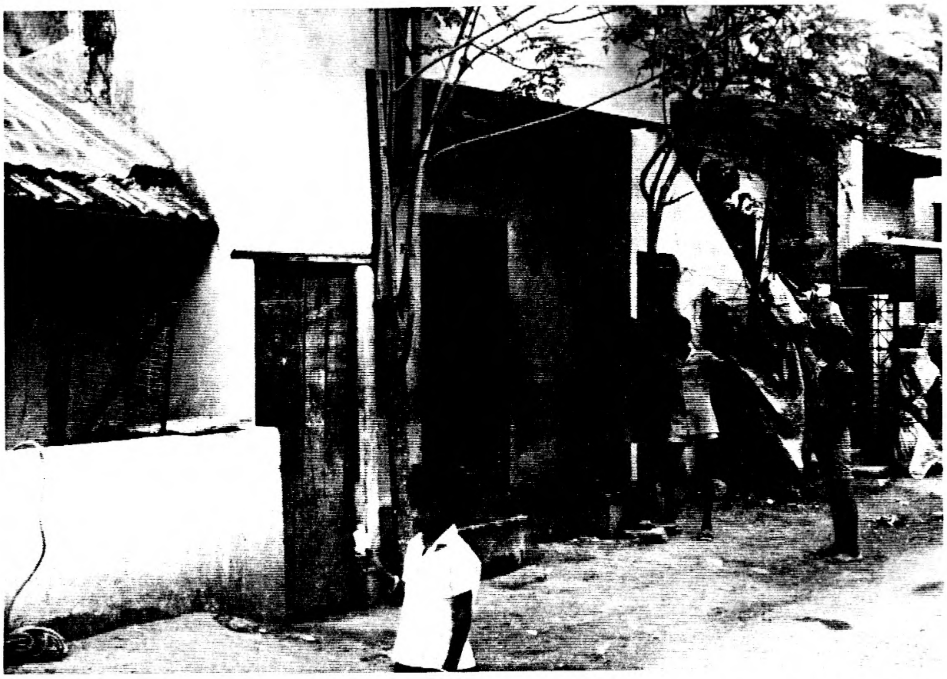


Fig. 4.26: HOME VI
Porch

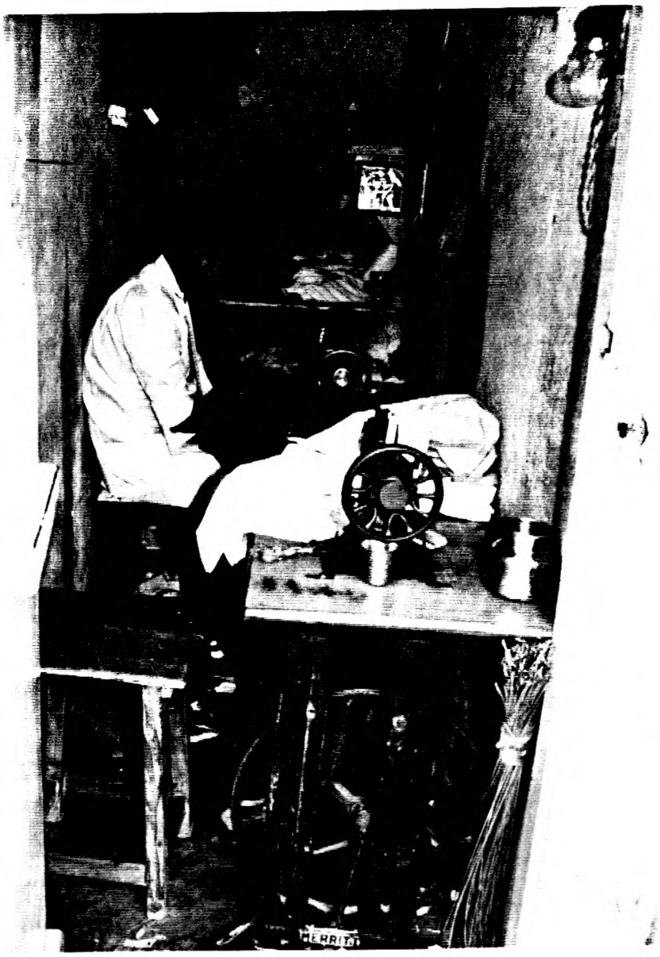


Fig. 4.27: HOME VII
Tailor's shop found below ramp

of these unique elements of design in terms of area and volume.

The supporting spaces of home VII comprise the space under the stair opening out to the road. Unlike home V, however, this space opens inward to the service area (fig. 4.23). This narrow space, whose dimensions follow the function of the stair, is used as a tailor's workshop (fig. 4.27). All these supporting spaces in homes V, VI and VII, are found to be the "left over" spaces of the home. However, these spaces seem to be put to good use, fitting snugly around the function it serves and the human body functioning in it.

Stairs, found in each of the three homes of group B, will be described next (fig. 4.28). All three homes, have made use of the three-foot setback to locate the stair. In home V, the stair is a single flight of twenty steps that is accessible through the front porch. Such an entry allows the second floor to be used separately as another individual space, uninterrupted by the lower floor. Through interviews, it was found that the brothers who are all owners of the home, wish to divide the home into three individual units ultimately.[5] Home VI which is made up of a single family with four children, is seen to respond to this family structure by pulling the staircase into the back of the house and creating a two flighted 'L' shaped stair. The location of the starting point of the stair within the heart of the home seems to unify the first and second floor and this on interviewing with the parents seems to have been done so that the parents downstairs could have an eye on the children, upstairs.[6] In home VII the stair consists only of a concrete ramp without the brick steps (fig. 4.28). This stair reaches an open terrace from the service area below. As described earlier, the house is oriented inward, with the service area acting as a lobby from which all spaces are reached. The stair here, integrates the two floor instead of separating them as in home V.

This description helps to illustrates the stair and its positioning with respect to the other spaces of the home, and how the stair releases its inherent quality of connecting or separating floors (fig. 4.2).

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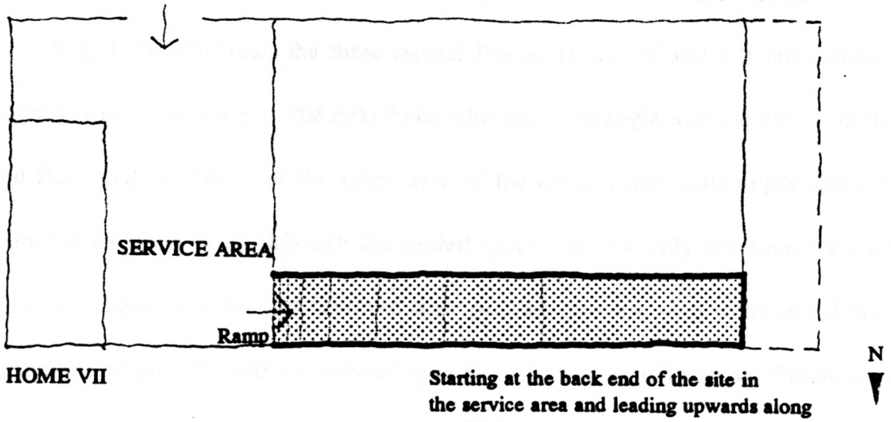
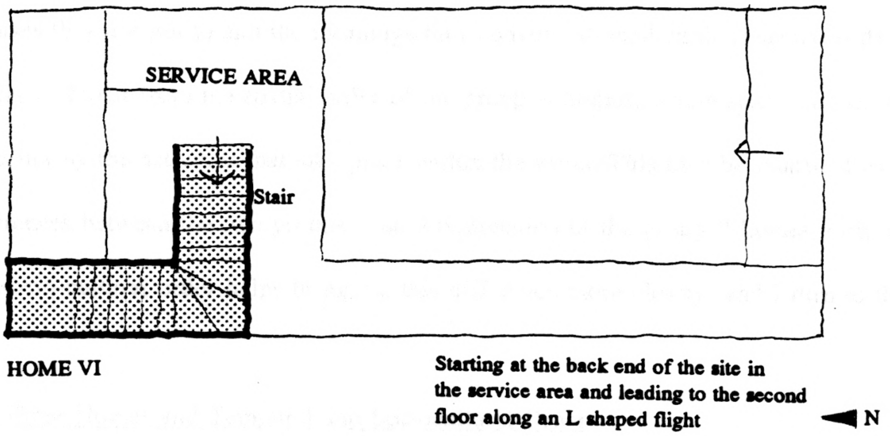
[5] ibid.

[6] ibid.


SERVICE AREA
Ramp
N

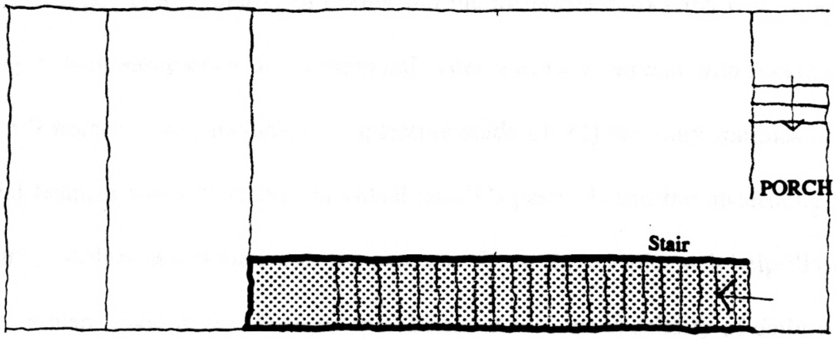
HOME VII

Starting at the back end of the site in the service area and leading upwards along the 3'0" setback


SERVICE AREA
Stair
N

HOME VI

Starting at the back end of the site in the service area and leading to the second floor along an L shaped flight


PORCH
Stair

HOME V

Starting from the front part of the site in the porch and running upward along the 3'0" setback

Fig. 4.28: STAIRS--GROUP B
SCALE 1'0" = 1/8"

Having presented each of the three stairs, the spaces they lead to--the second floors--will be described.

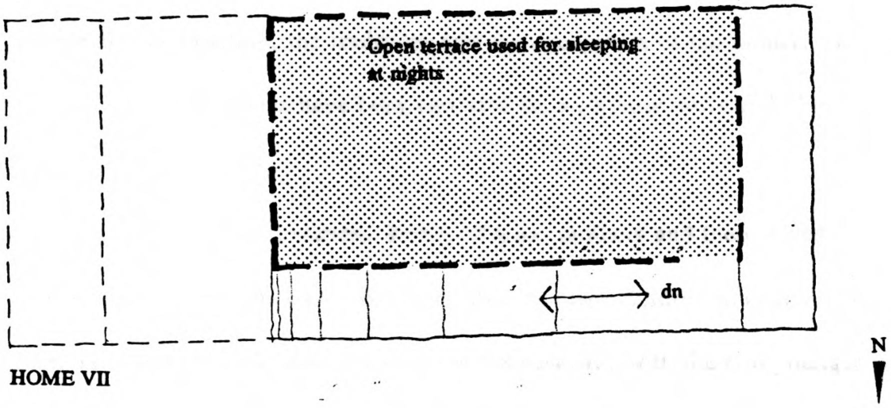
Fig. 4.29, illustrates the three second floors. Homes V and VII are similar in that they carry the same lower-floor space to the next floor--the main rectangle and the front porch. Home VI has a second floor that extends over the entire area of the lower floor. This upper space occupies an area of thirteen feet by thirty feet, although the roofed spaces include only the main rectangle as in the other two homes. These three second floors in their present state are seen to be in different stages of construction: home VII, with an unbuilt open floor; home V, with an all-thatch multipurpose space; and home VI, with two permanent rooms and open terrace.

Despite the varied levels of completion and refinement in terms of design, these three homes are tied together by a certain common spatial order. The division and grouping/separation of spaces, the uses they are put to and the meanings they convey, all explain their spatial order. This order is clearly different from the spatial order of the group A homes, where spaces are divided not by visible walls but by the activities that take place within the walls. This may be related directly to the economic differences between the two groups. The interpretation of the group B homes with respect to temporal and socio-cultural order helps bring out this difference more clearly, and I turn to these themes next.

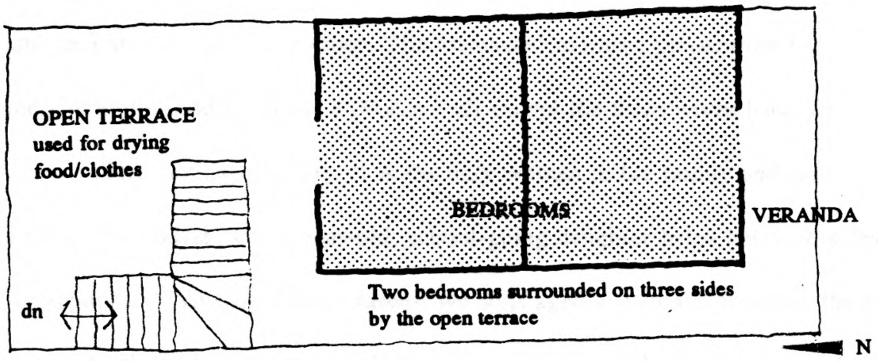
The Three Homes and Temporal and Sociocultural Order

As explained in chapter II, temporal order relates to the order the home provides due to the factor of time. The regularity of events and the memories associated with time, supports such order. Dovey's three sub-themes under temporal order will be examined with regard to each of the three group-B homes. I will include a comparative study of: (1) the daily routines of the three homes; (2) spatial features that reflect the individual family's past; (3) and the materials/construction of the homes and the dwellers association with the process. These three topics will help illustrate how a temporal order is manifested in the three group-B homes due to the regularity of daily routines, associations with the past and association with their specific home-building process.

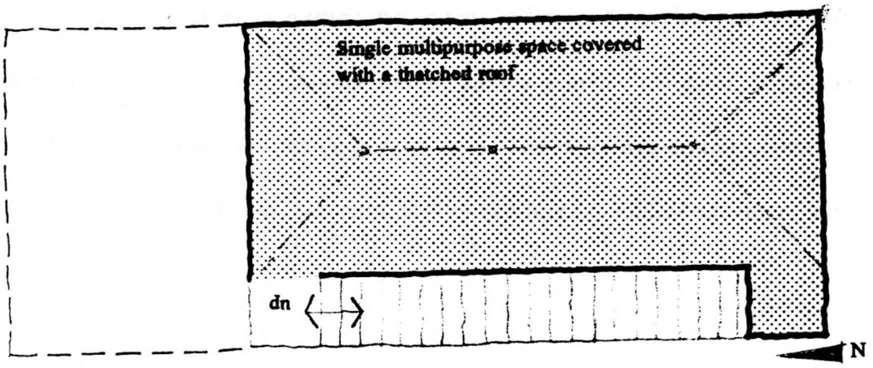
The basic daily routine of the three group-B homes is very similar to that of the group-A


Open terrace used for sleeping at nights
dn
N

HOME VII


OPEN TERRACE
used for drying
food/clothes
BEDROOMS
VERANDA
Two bedrooms surrounded on three sides
by the open terrace
dn
N

HOME VI


Single multipurpose space covered
with a thatched roof
dn
N

HOME V

Fig. 4.29: SECOND FLOOR--GROUP B

SCALE 1'0" = 1/8"

homes. This is because of the strong socio-cultural background in which they all participate. The differences that arise are therefore related to the idiosyncracies of the individual families--the number of members, the structure, the traditions and the occupation of the family. The following daily routines of the three group-B homes have been recorded through interviews and observations made through an entire day.[7]

Home V is an extended family of three brothers and their wives and has three women who stay at home during the day. The oldest wife has two children--a daughter who is six and a son who is five. This woman looks after most of the house-work, with the two younger wives helping her. In the morning at around 6:00 a.m., the three women engage in showering and saying prayers while the oldest wife begins cooking breakfast and lunch for the others of the family. The second brother's wife helps the children with their shower and getting ready for school. The youngest wife, helps in cooking and packing lunches for the men. The husbands' morning preparation for the day takes place around these activities and by about 8:00 a.m., all except the three wives leave the home.

The mother of home VI is the only woman in the family and does most of the household chores. The oldest twelve-year-old, school-going daughter helps her with a few chores before leaving for school at 8:30 a.m. The children--two sons aged eleven and thirteen, the youngest daughter aged seven and the oldest daughter, all, go to a nearby school by walk, leaving home by 8:30 a.m. The father whose workplace is about twenty five miles from Arumbakkam leaves at 8:00 a.m. to the Arumbakkam bus station which is about a ten minute walk.

Home VII has a routine that is very different from the first two homes of group B. This is because all members of the home except the ten-year-old daughter, who goes to the nearby school, stay at home through the day managing the shop. The mornings do not involve a rush of activities like in homes V and VI. Instead, the mother after sending her oldest daughter, who takes care of her own needs, begins her morning chores and tends her nine-month baby. The father who wakes up early at 6:00 a.m. to open his shop, comes into the house for an occasional coffee or drink. At around 10 a.m. the father takes a break for a shower, while the mother looks after the shop. She leaves her baby, whom she has already fed and put to bed with her second seven year old son who stays at home.

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[7] Home V, Interview by author, 24 June 1989; Home VI, Interview by author, 2 July 1989; Home VII-House #H101, Interview by author, 6 July 1989; transcripted from dialogues and direct observation, MMDA Colony, Arumbakkam, Madras, India.

During the day, the three wives of home V spend their time doing household chores like cleaning, washing clothes, sweeping and mopping the floor and chatting with each other. They often visit the nearby temple or a relative or shop during the day, while atleast one of them stays back at home waiting for the children to come home. The mother of home VI has a routine almost similar to home I, where the mother stays by herself through the day. Here, also, she is involved with the usual household chores before noon, after which she has her lunch and visits her neighbor for an afternoon chat. Often she invites them to her home for a snack and coffee. Later in the afternoon, she takes a short nap and then prepares for the children who come back around 3:30 p.m.

The father manages the shop through the day, taking short breaks till the daughter arrives at around 3:30 p.m. The mother looks after the baby and with the help of her son cleans the house and washes clothes. In the afternoon the three of them--mother son and baby--take a short nap after which the son goes out to play with his friends and the mother prepares an evening snack. The daughter comes home at about 3:30 p.m and after having a snack and changing her clothes takes over from the father and continues managing the shop till about 5:30 p.m. after which she goes out to play with her friends.

The children of home V come home at around 3:00 p.m. and also take a snack and go out to play. The men come home later around 5:30 p.m., change and relax, chatting with each other and the women relating their day's experiences. The children come home by 6:30 p.m. and are ready to begin their homework with the help of their father or their aunt. The oldest and second brothers' wives, begins to cook dinner at around 6:00 p.m while the others watch TV or read. Home VI has a similar schedule, where the children come back from school, have a snack, go to play and return at about 7:00 p. m. for their homework. The father returns home by 6:00 p.m., takes a shower, relaxes and is ready for dinner, which the mother begins preparing by about 7:00 p.m.

All the families have dinner by around 9:30 p.m. after which families of home V and VI watch the TV or, as in home VI and VII, sit outside on their open terrace enjoying the cool sea breeze of the night. The father of home VII keeps his shop open for an occasional customer till around 9:00 p.m., after which he joins the family. These families just like those of group A, sometimes spend their evenings visiting friends or a nearby temple and during week-ends go out to the movies or the beach.

From the description of the daily routines of the three families, it is seen that these homes have a similar temporal orders. All families have schedules that revolve around the timings of the members leaving home for work or school, and the day is divided into morning activities before they leave, day-time activities of tending the house, evening activities after they are back and late evening relaxing time. What may be different is bound by the families' peculiarity and not by a serious difference in their background. However, there are certain subtle differences in the temporal rhythm like the mother of home VI inviting her neighbors for a coffee or the women of home V going out to shop in the afternoon, that suggests a certain economic status that is different from the other homes. Such similarity in temporal rhythm within the homes of this group and its difference with the homes of group-B orders them into two distinct groups within the larger framework of the Arumbakkam community.

The next topic deals with the understanding of spatial patterns as they derive their roots from past experiences in each of the four group-B homes. In home V, the joint family system, traditional to this particular family in the past generations, is seen as the order that reveals itself in the spatial patterning of the home.[8] As already mentioned, the joining of certain common spaces like the kitchen, dining space, service area and toilets to serve all the couples and the separation of the intimate spaces like the bedrooms, are characteristic of such a past order. The ordering of the kitchen as the heart of the entire household and the dividing of the house into smaller home-rooms exhibits a pattern that is rooted in the past, where such patterns were commonly found.[9] Also, such well-established patterning reveals a sense of permanence and stability that they share with home VI.

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[8] Home V, Interview by author, 24 June 1989.

Home VI, where the father has a permanent employment with a government based organization (Tamil Nadu Cooperative Society), exhibits the same sense of well-being. The family, through interviews, seem to originate from a background that is fairly well to do and which seeks such stability in its place of residence.[10] This is also seen through the family's planned approach at building this home that was constructed in four phases during the family's nine years of stay at Arumbakkam.[11] The patterning of spaces into areas serving distinct functions, the separation of adult from children areas, the open terrace designed exclusively for the luxury of sitting out in the open, all seem to exhibit the sense of well-being and comfort. This is the pattern the family is associated with in the past and this orders them in the present environment.

The last of the group-B homes, home VII, seems to be the strongest in exhibiting a spatial pattern associated with the family's past. Coming from a family tradition that made its living by selling groceries, this family, whose head is not trained for anything but managing a shop, migrated to Madras only in 1985, in hope to set one up.[12] The shop now dominates the home, around which the other spaces take their place. The shop here becomes the most important spatial feature of this home. The kitchen that is tucked to a corner away from the main home and the open terrace used as a sleeping space are other minor patterns that display a temporal order. The former which characterizes a separation of wet from dry and the later which seem to express the family need for openness, typical of their rural background, both are remnant patterns of the past.

The last theme under temporal order is each family's association with its specific home-building process--with its materials and construction. This will serve to interpret Dovey's sub-theme of temporal order through "familiarity with the past processes through which the forms of the environment have come into being."[13] In this regard, the three homes all share a common building process. All three are brick and concrete houses, unlike the group-A homes that are made from simpler materials and vary from home to home. This unity found among the houses of group B directly relates to the family's income level and stability in terms of economic standing in the long run. Families of homes V and VI, who have always lived in such houses in Madras are familiar with brick and concrete and trust the process through which their homes have come into being. Although the dwellers of home VII come from a rural area where brick and concrete are construction materials available only to the affluent homes, the desire for the family of home VII to afford a house of these materials someday seems to have been the reason for the family's brick and concrete house.[14] Such a desire is rooted in the belief that such materials are more permanent and long-lasting and therefore expensive and unaffordable. Here is seen a confidence and trust in a particular material brought about by an association made with its inherent qualities--strength and durability--that expresses a temporal order that Dovey talks about in this section.

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[9] ibid.

[10] Home VI, Interview by author, 2 July 1989.

[11] ibid.

[12] Home VII, Interview by author, 6 July 1989.

The last theme--sociocultural order--relates to the spatial patterns that spring from certain sociocultural conditions either of the past or the present. With regard to the three homes of group B, those conditions from the past have already been discussed in temporal order, but patterns associated with the present sociocultural climate will be discussed here. It was pointed out in chapter III that the homes of group A all aspired to reach higher social stations, but this wish could not be translated into design due to the fact that the families could not afford better houses. In contrast, the families of group B are a group of homes that have been able to afford better homes--atleast to a certain extent. The family of home VII lived in a tiled house in their native village, and they now have a permanent brick and concrete structure; also they plan to construct a second floor soon. The families of homes V and VI, who have lived in permanent homes, but rented homes, now participate in home ownership.

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[13] Kimberly Dovey, "Home and Homelessness", Home Environments, Human Behavior and Environment, Vol.8, Edited by Irwin Altman and Carol Werner, (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 37.

[14] Home VII, Interview by author, 6 July 1989.

It is seen that the families of homes V and VI, (fig. 2.5 and 2.6) display their present social status to the outside world in terms of spatial patterns in their house-fronts. The second floors of these homes are located in the front end of the house, overlooking the street, so that the side facing the street has a two-storied facade--a status-symbol among the economically weaker section of the society. Other such symbols include the use of colored paint instead of a plain white lime-wash in home VI; and the dark-brown trim around the wall surfaces in home V.

It is such a display of spatial, temporal and sociocultural order that differentiates these homes from those of group A and ties these three homes together. This group's power to reach to a higher social status is what brings about a shift from its own past traditional identity towards an identity that belongs to a broader and more modern urban context.

HOME AS IDENTITY

As explained earlier, Dovey's second theme illustrates how the home becomes a stage where the identity of its dwellers is enacted in terms of spatial patterns and temporal rhythms. Patterns and rhythms displayed thus are oriented towards how they are perceived by the outside world. This becomes the underlying theme for such display and how each of the three group B homes articulate themselves for such display will be seen now.

The Three Homes and Spatial Identity

Dovey argues that spatial identity is a reflection of: (1) bodily identity and personal experience, and (2) collective ideology of the society.[15] These two aspects are not mutually exclusive and are often found together. As mentioned in Chapter II, the group-B homes will be shown to express less strong identity than those of group A, due to the greater reflection of a collective ideology than that of bodily identity and personal experience. This is argued to weaken the personal identity of the family. This argument will be supported by a description and interpretation of spatial identity with respect to each of the three group B homes.

As explained earlier, a study of spatial identity will involve the examination of the parts of the home that are open to the outside world--house-fronts, thresholds, windows, porches--are examples of such elements. Home V as seen in fig. 2.5, is a house that has a fully-built first floor on top of which is found a temporary thatched hut. These two parts reflect two separate identities. The lower floor represents a complete construction with walls, plastered and painted; openings, finished; well-placed sunshades that are decorated with a trim; and a front three-foot compound wall to mark the house's boundary. The second floor, on the other hand is an elementary thatch hut and represents a simple structure, devoid of any pretensions and present only to serve the basic function of sheltering.

The second floor portrays the character of a group-A home while the first floor one of group B. On interviewing the dwellers of home V, it was found that the house was built all at the same time, but due to insufficient funds, the second floor could not be completely built as a permanent structure. However, the family intends to complete the house in the near future.[16] Here is seen how, despite the lack of funds for the second floor, the first floor is finished with more than what is required for a basic permanent shelter. This may be compared with homes I and III, where the houses are complete as full-built structures made of simple materials and basic forms to serve the basic function of sheltering. The difference here is that the families of group A, who are not as well of as those of group B, know what their financial limitations are and so restrict themselves to what is essential. In contrast, the group B families are confident about a future investment through savings or other sources and distribute their investments in a different fashion--in this case by finishing the first floor.[17]

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[15] Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," 40.

This argument illustrates how home V is able to afford the luxury of more than an elementary house and give room for the family's aethetic expression. Such an advantage also allows room for expressing an identity that is derived more from a collective ideology in the outside society than from within the world of the family, in terms of what the home wants to portray as its identity.

It is this monetary advantage that is reflected in the facade of home VI. As seen in fig. 2.6, the articulation of the facade represents a certain style prevalent among the urban lower middle income homes. The patterns that demonstrate this include: the wall of the first floor that is pulled out to the street; the setting in of the front door to create a porch; the darker color of paint on the inner walls of the porch; the placing of the second floor so that it is visible from the street; the sunshade on the upper floor that has a drop to form a wide band just on the side that faces the street; the simple trim above the sunshade; and the smooth finish devoid of ornamentation (fig. 2.6). All these patterns express a certain aesthetic preference that cannot be afforded by the homes of group A and has been afforded by this particular home, mainly due to its economic standing.

Home VII, on the other hand, seems to care less for its aesthetic appearance as fig. 2.7 illustrates. Although the house is made of brick and concrete, the family has restricted itself to constructing a simple yet durable house. In interviews, it was found that the house was still under construction which was done in stages and that having a house made of brick and cement itself was a proud possession.[18] Unlike homes V and VI, home VII is a case where the basic house itself, due to the materials it is built with, becomes a symbol of identity that the family wants to express.

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[16] Home V, Interview by author, 24 June 1989.

[17] ibid.

Through the above description of the external characteristics of the group B homes, it is seen that all three display a spatial identity that reflects more a collective ideology of the wider social environment in which they are located. The need to reflect such borrowed identity instead of one imbued with the family's own identity and personal experience, may be due to the pressure of the larger urban environment. This will be discussed later in the conclusion of this thesis. What is important here is that this need for expressing a wider identity is satisfied only when the dwellers are economically able to respond to it and this ability is what differentiates group A from group B.

The Three Homes and Temporal Identity

The two aspects of temporal identity, according to Dovey's argument, include: (1) home as a reflection of identity from the past and, (2) home as the place that reflects promise of the future. The family of home V, as already mentioned, has always lived in houses similar to this one. Through interviews, it was found that their previous home in Madras was a detached, single-unit independent house set within a small plot of land in Perambur, a suburb of the city of Madras. The family also seem to show a strong dislike for multi-storied apartment buildings. It is for this reason that they preferred to buy an empty plot, even if it were small and built an independent house on it, instead of a fully built apartment unit from the Housing Board of Madras.

This family in the past have also had the luxury of having a separate room for each couple along with other rooms meant for special activities like living, dining and cooking. These were affordable in the past, as the families had been renting homes. Although their present home does not afford as much privacy as the former homes, since the living room and kitchen double as bedrooms at night, the brothers hope to improve their homes to the standards o their past ones. Here is seen both aspects of temporal identity--the expression of past associations and future plans of the family. The spatial pattern reflecting such an identity is evident in the level of completion of the first floor, and the unfinished second floor, suggesting a sense of transition and movement towards its completion in the near future.

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[18] Home VII, Interview by author, 6 July 1989.

Home VI, which is the most complete house among the three group-homes, houses a family that just--as in home V--has always lived in such homes. This family has, however, lived in smaller rental units in the past. Their earlier home was a single-bedroom apartment on the second floor of a two storeyed detached house. This family then was smaller than it is now and the father earns more through his permanent employment due to several promotions over the years. As mentioned earlier, this house also was built in four stages. The first was simply two rooms, as with home I, but with a flat concrete roof. All activities took place within the two front rooms. Later, the service area was reorganized, with the toilet and bathroom connected and the kitchen pulled out into the service area (fig. 4.3). Next the stair to the second floor was built, followed by the construction of two more rooms on the second floor.

The family plans no further construction, but is open to making covering the open terrace with a roof and walls, if the need arises to house more people.[19] The parents intend to pass the house on to the children when the parents decide to retire to their native village. Here, again, is seen how experiences from the past have been instrumental in setting an identity that the family wants to portray in their present home through its spatial patterns. The second aspect of projecting future promise through the home is seen in their dream to leave the home for their children and build further if needed. These are promises relate not only to the home's physical qualities, but because of the sense of permanence the home extends to its dwellers. The promise of being there always for the family is the quality that is brought about by the making of a home-place.

The last of the group-B homes, home VII, is similar to home V in that it remains in an unfinished state. However, it is different from home I of group A in that it is more clearly in a period of transition. The half-plastered walls, the unweather-proofed roof, the unbuilt stair and the bricks on the roof, all suggest this active transition, but unlike home I, where the transition is slower and there is a sense of passiveness in the construction process. Home VII is different also from home V, because the family residing here has never lived in a house of this type before. Here the association with the past is restricted to non-house features like the shop and the internal arrangement of spaces. The shop, however, is the main feature that reflects the family's identity in the past. This is not a borrowed identity or what the family prefers to identify with, but the true identity of the family because of their tradition of shop-keeping.

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[19] Home VI, Interview by author, 2 July 1989.

Although the reflection of the past is seen now through parts of the house, the family intends to convert the shop into a room in the future and intends buying a small shop along the shopping street of the MMDA colony (fig. 1.4). Their future plans include building a second floor with rooms for the children and converting the shop into a living room. The father says, these dreams for future development of the house are possible now because they own the ground on which they are free to build.[20] It is this hope that their home promises and, as explained earlier, it is this sense of promise for the future both due to its physical and emotional presence that relates these meanings to temporal identity.

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[20] ibid.

DIALECTICS OF HOME

The last of Dovey's three themes illustrate the properties of home involves dialectics. By this, he means that the meaning of home is brought out through a dialectic process of experiencing a series of binary oppositions. These oppositions are found in both spatial dialectics and social dialectics and the following sections will discuss each in regard to three homes of group B.

The Three Homes and Spatial Dialectics

The binary oppositions included in spatial dialectics are: (1) inside/outside; (2) order/chaos; (3)being-at-home/journeying out. The first opposition between the inside and the outside relates to the experience of outside that makes the inside meaningful and vice versa. In terms of the three homes, this can be examined by observing how the family responds to the inside after having journeyed to the world outside. To clarify this spatial pattern, I will describe the set of events that occur between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., during which time the family members of group B return home after the day's work. This description is taken from the researcher's journal:

> "After a long day the two children of home V walk back home, tired, give their school-bags to their aunt who is waiting for them at the gate, and walk in to seen their mom. They remove their shoes before entering the house, the five year old son, removing his shirt off and running to his mom who is in the kitchen to give her a hug. The daughter sits on the sofa for a while, after which she goes to the kitchen to get a drink. The men came home later one after the other walking from the nearby bus stop. Just like the children, they remove their footwear and the first brother goes upstairs to his part of the home to take change into a more comfortable sarong, the traditional south Indian wrap for men. The second brother removes his shirt and takes of his watch before he goes into the bathroom for a wash. The youngest brother relaxes on the sofa, pulling his tucked in shirt out and watching the TV show begin."

The family of home VI has a similar set of activity patterns, only they occur in a different order. For example, the father who returns from work, first relates the day's incidents to his wife and has a snack before changing into casual clothes and listening to songs on the radio. The underlying theme that is evident here is how a dweller comes back into the inside after a trip outside, to express the comfort and casualness of the inside. As mentioned earlier, the removing of clothes and footwear, the relaxing without a care of what an outsider might think all express an undoing of what was carved in from from the outside. It is this act in the transition from outside to the inside or even the act of putting on one's coat in the case of leaving for the outside, emphasizes the meaning of both inside and outside--in this research that of the inside, the home.

Home VII where, except the daughter, all other family members stay home essentially through the day, does not experience the same set of events everyday. This happens when the father leaves once a week when he goes out to order bulk stock for the shop. However, a transition is seen when the father, who leaves the home-part of the house to the shop during the day, returns after shutting down his shop late at night.[21] There is a sense of not having to perform for his customers anymore. The relaxed comfort of the home where the pressures of having to sell his wares and make his living is what makes the inside of the home meaningful.

The second dialectic that will be examined with respect to the three homes of group B is the opposition between the order of the inside and the chaos of the outside. The inside as a place of order includes the properties of being a familiar place, a secure place and an autonomous place where the dweller is free to exert control. The oppositions that relate to these inside/outside properties include the outside as a strange, dangerous and a heteronomous place where one is subject to the pressures of society. Each of these oppositions can be seen with regard to the three Arumbakkam homes.[22]

As described also in the group-A homes, the family members of all the group-B homes are familiar with the things of their home--the entry, the rooms, the place where things are kept, how each home-equipment functions and have an intimate knowledge of the home environment. Through observations, it is seen that both adults and children weave their way through the spaces of the house in an almost blind folded manner. Even in home VII, where the house is under construction with only a steep ramp serving as a stair and the roof unfinished, the mother feels confident to allow her seven-year-old to run around the house. This confidence is not seen when she sends him out to play or run an errand, before which she gives a string of advice about what he should be careful about and what he should not do. This exemplifies the property of the inside being a place in order that is familiar to its dwellers compared to the strange outside.

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[21] Home VII, Interview by author, 6 July 1989.

[22] Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," 46.

Unlike the four homes of group A, the group-B homes are made of permanent construction materials and are more secure in terms of physical qualities. But what is more important here is the sense of security the home offers that reaches beyond its mere physical protection. This was exemplified earlier in chapter III, where the dwellers of home II found the sleeping at nights in the courtyard which was open to sky and to the main street, more secure than the street adjacent to it, although both were accessible to a stranger on the street. In the homes of group B, all spaces are well secluded from the street outside, and here it is this need to contain the home into a secure space that seem to show that its dwellers are afraid of the dangerous outside. This need is clearly due to the fact that the families of this group possess more valuables that have to be protected from the outside. But for them to be at rest having taken physical measures to secure them, expresses a certain sense of security with the home itself.

The next property of the home being a sacred place within a profane world was introduced in the previous chapter, using Graber's argument that a sacred place becomes "strong and impressive, making the profane space formless in comparison... man gains a fixed point of orientation in the chaotic relativity of the world."[23] This has been explained in home as order, when each group-B home was described as a point of orientation through which the rest of the world is seen. Each home thereby become special to its dweller and hence releases a sense of sacredness that Graber talks about. This can be seen with reference to the group-B homes.

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[23] Linda Graber, "Sacred Space and Geopeity: Wilderness as Sacred Space," Association of American Geographers, (1976): 4.

Home V is important here as it expresses this sense of sacredness through the idol of Lord Ganesh, a Hindu deity mounted on its front wall (fig. 2.5). This is done in the belief that being a house that directly faces a street in front, this deity would protect any evil spirit travelling along the street from entering directly into the home. A similar symbol is found also in home VII (fig. 2.7), where the second floor balcony wall carries a rectangular motif of the goddess Lakshmi who symbolizes wealth and well-being for the family. In the case of home VII, the shop, which may be the cause of jealousy of the neighbors or a passer-by, is protected from the evil thoughts of such people by the symbol of a piece of alum rock tied to the front of the shop with a black rope. All these symbols found at the threshold of the homes clearly demarcate the outside from the inside, the inside being the place that is protected and sanctified by these symbols.

Other examples signifying the sanctity of the home have been explained with regard to the four group-A homes and are found in these three homes also. They include removing footwear before entering the home, cleansing and decorating the ground in front of the home with cow-dung and water and decorating the doorway with strings of mango leaves and sacred powder. As all these homes share a basic cultural belief, these symbols are commonly found through out this community.

The home as an autonomous place in the heteronomous world was brought out earlier in the discussion of temporal order when explaining how the home promises hope for the future. This hope of being able to see a future is due to a sense of autonomy the dweller establishes with his/her home. Dovey describes the home as an extension of the self and, as with his or her own body, the dweller feels a sense of freedom with the body of his/her home.[24] The plans to remodel and make further additions or improvements on the house are parallel to the way one seeks to develop himself.

In a heteronomous urban society where rules and laws are imposed by external factors, the home as a place where the dweller has the freedom to express himself, emphasizes the meaning of home as an autonomous place. Such autonomy is important here at Arumbakkam as the dwellers are free to build and improve on their homes, unlike pre-constructed apartment buildings for the poor. This aspect of the Arumbakkam homes will be discussed later in the conclusion.

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[24] Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," 43.

The last spatial dialectic--the opposition between being-at-home and the journeying--will be discussed next. This opposition, according to Dovey, essentially involves the act of being at rest at home and the act of movement while journeying out form it. Dovey also explains how this dialectic is illustrated through the meanings attached to the parts of the home that act as interfaces to the outside world--porches, doors, windows, thresholds, balconies etc.

In home V, the thin porch that is covered only with a roof and a short wall with only a gate to protect it, exhibits a sense of opening into the world. This space is not sealed off completely, like the rooms inside, but it becomes an essential part of the building. This welcomes a family member or a visitor into the realm of the home, yet removes him from its heart. This may be considered a point of transition which prepares an insider to the world beyond and envelopes an outsider into the home. Here the body in movement and unrest comes to a stop to enter the place where he/she can be at home, at rest.

Home VI includes an example of an interface that is represented by the thinnai, the front porch that acts as a seating place. This again is protected partially from the sun and rain by the three walls and roof, but is quite open to the street thereby expressing the same quality that the porch of home V does. Home VII does not have a porch at its entrance on the front facing the main street but has a doorway facing the side street (fig. 4.4). The doorway, here, expresses this transition point. The door is a simple wooden door that is decorated with a string of mango leaves and painted with red and yellow powder with a gorgoyle fixed at the head of the door to ward off evil spirits from entering the house(fig. 4.30). This is believed to symbolically sanctify the house at the same time invite one into the heart of the home. The threshold here becomes the point of transition expressing a sense of leaving or a sense of returning to the place of rest after a journey out. The noise and light this door brings into the

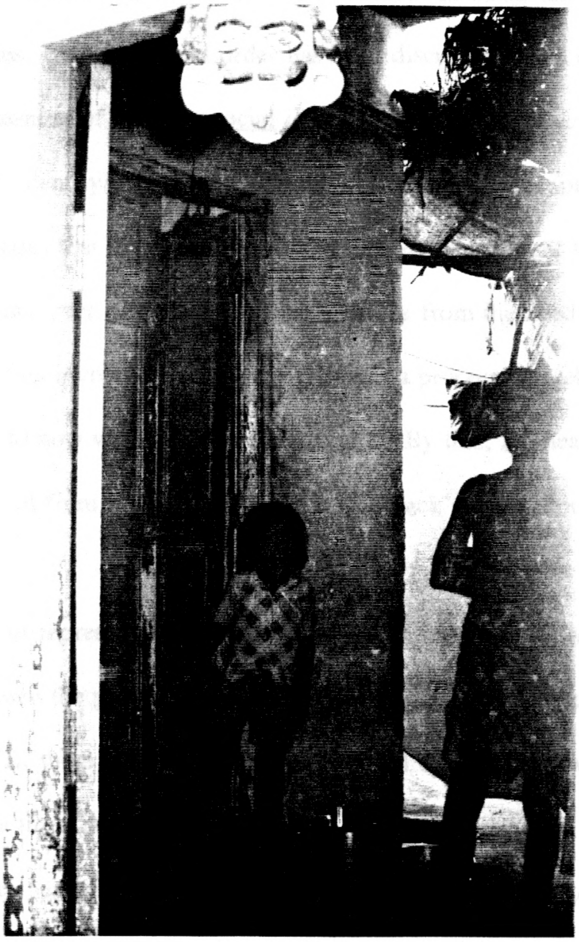

Fig. 4.30: HOME VII
Entrance Door

inside all depict the oppositions between the restful inside and the moving outside. It is this property of the home that emphasizes the meaning of being inside.

The Three Homes and Social Dialectics

This section will deal with the dialectics involved between the home and the outside world, with regard to social properties. Home as social order has been discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter. In this section the meaning of home as social identity is understood through a study of the dialectics between "self/other, identity/community, and private/public."[25] As explained in chapter III, it is through these three dialectics that the dwellers realize the need to represent their identities through their homes. Dovey explains that such representation that emerges from the need to establish oneself within a social environment often involves a certain negotiation--a process whereby the identity of the dweller changes "in response to how we imagine we are seen."[26] By this, he means that the dweller draws an identity that comes not from personal experiences and back ground alone, but also from the larger urban context.

These two processes of representation and negotiation, as argued by Dovey, are usually reflected at the interface between the private world of the dwelling and the public world outside. As already explained in chapter III, there are three questions that will be examined with respect to the social dialectic for each of the three homes of group B:

(1) What outsiders are permitted within the home and how far into the home? This will demonstrate the dweller's control over his boundary and also his representation of identity.

(2) What is the social circle within which the family operates? Or what is the range of movement within the larger community? This will also help understand the family's identity.

(3) What is the interface between the house and the larger environment and how does this reflect upon the family's social status? This last question will reveal the family's degree of

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[25] ibid. 47.

[26] ibid.

negotiation.

In the homes of group A it was found that although most of the homes' dwellers were well aware of the surrounding larger world and had dreams and aspirations about how they wanted to be seen by the world, most of them could not realize their dreams. In the homes of group B, however, this may not be so. The following answers to the questions posed above will help illustrate this difference between the homes of group A and B.

Group B's home V, where three couples reside, has many relatives from their hometown who visit them regularly. Often this home becomes a temporary place to stay for relatives visiting Madras. The mother of the three brothers resides at home V for about three months of the year and other relatives in Madras visit her, while she is with her sons. Relatives are permitted into all parts of the home including the room upstairs that is used by the family of the oldest son. Other visitors who are merely acquaintances or friends are entertained in the living room, which is well-furnished for this purpose. The living room also has the family's TV, which is a proud possession.[27]

The next question about the social circle of the family of home V will be illustrated through fig. 4.31, which indicates the workplace of the brothers, the school of the children and the parts of Madras that the women visit during the day. The brothers also visit these places with their wives during holidays and weekends. They often take a bus from the nearby bus terminus or hire a motorized rickshaw occasionally. This family, which is exposed through constant interaction, to the larger urban world is aware of the values of the society and the meanings attached to certain broad aesthetic values in terms of social status. The family thereby aspires to identify itself with what they would want to be if they were better off economically and socially. Such an expression of borrowed identity is found to a certain extent in this home. This is seen in the home's facade, which has been discussed earlier in spatial identity. The living room that is well-furnished and often kept clean and in order seem to exhibit such representation of identity.

The next home to which the three questions will be posed is home VI. The mother of home

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[27] Home V, Interview by author, 24 June 1989.

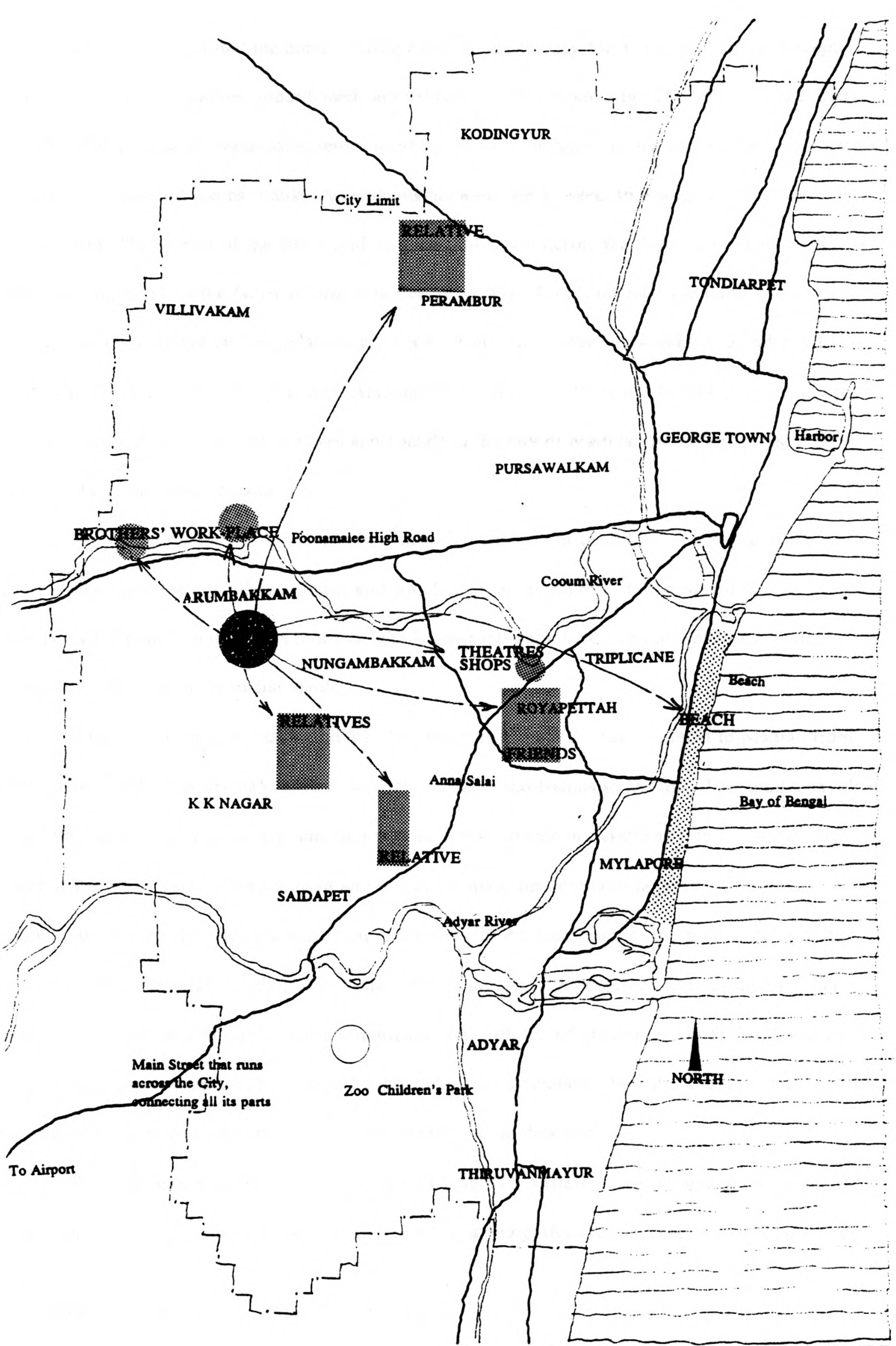
KODINGYUR
City Limit
RELATIVE
PERAMBUR
TONDIARPET
VILLIVAKAM
GEORGE TOWN
Harbor
PURSAWALKAM
BROTHERS' WORK PLACE
Poonamalee High Road
Cooum River
ARUMBAKKAM
THEATRES
SHOPS
NUNGAMBAKKAM
TRIPLICANE
Beach
ROYAPETTAH
RELATIVES
BEACH
FRIENDS
Anna Salai
K K NAGAR
Bay of Bengal
RELATIVE
MYLAPORE
SAIDAPET
Adyar River
ADYAR
NORTH
Main Street that runs across the City, connecting all its parts
Zoo Children's Park
To Airport
THIRUVANMAYUR

Fig. 4.31: HOME V--SOCIAL CIRCLE

VI, invites her neighbors into the home's living room during the day for a chat and coffee. Except family members and relatives, other friends are restricted to this room only. The family's organized and well-planned lifestyle seem to represent itself by the way the house is organized. The neat interiors and the well-organized rooms, unlike the previous home--home V--seem to emerge from within the family-world. The mother of the house seldom leaves the home during the day to go out alone. She is always accompanied by the father or one of her children. Fig. 4.32, illustrates the father's work-place, the children's school and the few relatives the family visits during weekends and the neighbor's houses that the mother frequents during the day. Although this family's circle seems to be tighter than home V, where the family has several relatives and friends in the city of Madras, the father seems to be well aware of the urban world outside.

The spatial features of home VI is a clear representation of the father's exposure to the world. Although the basic features of orderliness and simplicity that are inherent to the identity of the family are seen in the home's interior, its interface--the housefront--expresses a certain level of negotiation, explained in the section on spatial identity.

Unlike the former homes V and VI, the family of home VII, who migrated to Madras from their native village only in 1985, have a very few relatives and friends in Madras. The family, involved in its own business, is very closely knit and seldom allows friends or neighbors into the home. The inside of the house itself, does not have any organized space for entertaining guests. Close relatives who visit them from the family's hometown, often sleep in the multipurpose room or upstairs on the terrace. It is only through the shop that the family intermingle with neighbors and customers. Their children, however are less introverted and mingle freely with the neighborhood children. The family's range of movement extends to the nearby shops, the main city market, the older daughter's school, the bus terminus and occasionally the beach or the nearby movie theater.[28]

This description suggests that the family of home VII's life revolves around the shop and the home. The home as a representation of such identity is a straightforward expression. The house front

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[28] Home VII, Interview by author, 6 July 1989.

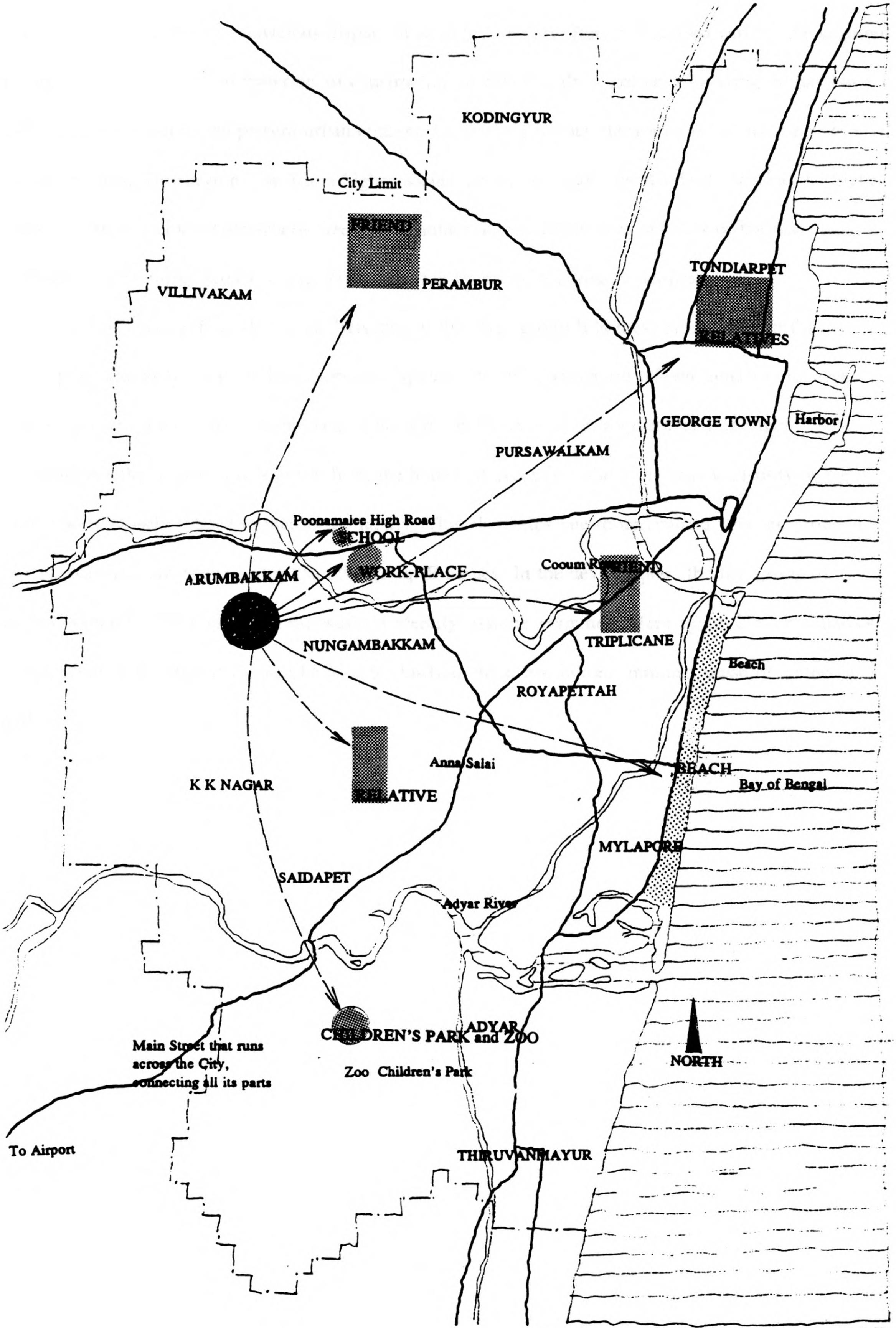

KODINGYUR
City Limit
FRIEND
PERAMBUR
VILLIVAKAM
TONDIARPET
RELATIVES
GEORGE TOWN
Harbor
PURSAWALKAM
Poonamalee High Road
SCHOOL
WORK-PLACE
ARUMBAKKAM
Cooum River
FRIEND
NUNGAMBAKKAM
TRIPLICANE
Beach
ROYAPETTAH
Anna Salai
BEACH
Bay of Bengal
K K NAGAR
RELATIVE
MYLAPORE
SAIDAPET
Adyar River
ADYAR
CHILDREN'S PARK and ZOO
Main Street that runs across the City, connecting all its parts
Zoo Children's Park
NORTH
To Airport
THIRUVANMAYUR

Fig. 4.32: HOME I--SOCIAL CIRCLE

and the interface lacks any conscious display of acquired identity. But as discussed earlier, the acquired identity found in the use of materials of construction that the family is not used to living in may have derived its roots not in the present urban context, but in their former environment, where the rich lived in such houses. This urge to reach to a higher social station that draws its standards of what the higher station is, from a context elsewhere, here, their homeplace, is found here in terms of the materials of the home itself, unlike homes V and VI, where it is found in its aesthetic features.

This discussion on the social dialectics of the three group-B homes, brings to light the underlying similarity between their respective spatial identities, which are related more to the larger identity of the society than to their own. It is such a prevalence of an acquired identity than differentiates the homes of this group from the homes of group A, where the spatial identity of the homes were closely related to that of the family. This also helps one to understand why the group-A homes express a stronger identity than the group-B homes. In the next chapter, the last group of homes--group C and homes with the weakest identity--will be examined. Here again, Dovey's themes--order, identity and dialectics--will be used to illustrate these two homes' minimal sense of collective self.

CHAPTER V:

INTERPRETING THE TWO HOMES IN GROUP C

The last group of homes involves the richest families of Arumbakkam. In a way similar to the homes of groups A and B, these two homes will be interpreted using Dovey's three themes of order, identity and dialectics. These homes have dwellers whose income is more than seventy dollars a month. These families appear to be able to afford much more than the families of group A and B. I argue that this economic advantage plays a central role in the two homes' having an identity that stands apart from the identity of the group A and B homes of Arumbakkam. In other words, the identity of the two homes--VIII and IX--as expressed through its spatial patterning is one that relates more to that of a different stratum of the urban society than the surrounding EWS Arumbakkam community.

Following the pattern of chapters III and IV, I begin with a brief description of the two homes and their families; then I illustrate Dovey's three themes as they describe and interpret the homes.

Description of the Two Homes in Group C

Home VIII is illustrated in figure 2.8. This family is made up of a father, mother and their seven children. The family owns a grocery shop at a market in Nungambakkam, an area about fifteen kilometers from Arumbakkam. The father makes about seventy dollars a month, after having established the trade over the last two generations. This Muslim family recently migrated from Vaniyambadi, a town close to Madras. Due to both their economic status and their religion, their brick-and-cement single-floor house is designed to accommodate separate living spaces for men and women that may be accessed independently, thereby segregating the men and women according to their cultural beliefs.

Home IX, illustrated in figure 2.9, houses a family of five, including parents and three children. The father owns an electrical-supplies shop located in Arumabakkam itself. He brings home an average of ninety dollars a month. This family is Muslim and comes from Kerala, a neighboring state east of Tamil Nadu. Over the past five years, the family has built a permanent three-storied house of brick, cement and concrete (thereby violating development rules). The family lives on the upper two floors, and rents the ground floor to tenants, who have a separate access to their portion of the house.

HOME AS ORDER

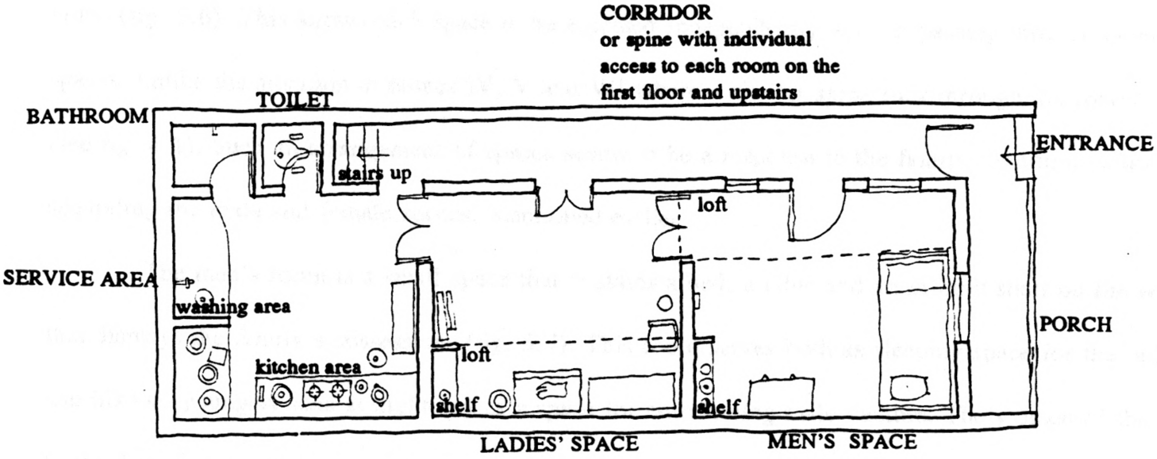
The Two Homes and Spatial Order

Dovey's three aspects that define spatial pattern are: (i) the inherent structure of the human's up/down, front/back and left/right; (ii) the movement of the body within space; and (iii) the effect of the geography of the earth where the home is found. The two group-C homes are seen to express very strong similarities in terms of spatial order. Their common cultural, religious and economic backgrounds seem to underlie these similarities. However, as we shall see shortly, the subtle difference in their monthly income seems to play a role in the time taken in the home-building process.

As seen in fig. 2.8 and 2.9, the two homes are permanent buildings made of brick and concrete with home VIII comprised of one storey and home IX of three stories. This is their most significant physical and spatial difference. Since the family of home IX resides only on the second and third floor, only these two floors will be used for discussion. As found in all sites of this particular type of Arumbakkam houses, a site of thirteen feet by thirty-three feet with a setback of three feet on one side and a service core four feet deep and thirteen feet wide on the back end, forms the basic structure of these two homes. Unlike all the former homes of groups A and B, where spaces are formed and evolved around this basic structure, in homes VIII and IX is seen a disregard for the formal restrictions imposed by the development authorities and an independent manipulation of spaces.

A detailed description of house plans is illustrated in figure 5.1. Home VIII, which bears a slight resemblance to homes V and VI of group B, is divided into a similar group of spaces as found in the group-B homes. The spaces include: (i) the rectangular core; (ii) the supporting spaces--porch, corridor and stair; and unlike the homes of group B; and, (iii) a service center which includes all the wet areas of the home--the kitchen, the wash area, the bathroom and the toilet. Here the service core--bathroom and toilet--prescribed by the development authorities of Arumbakkam is displaced to the side of the house instead of towards the rear.

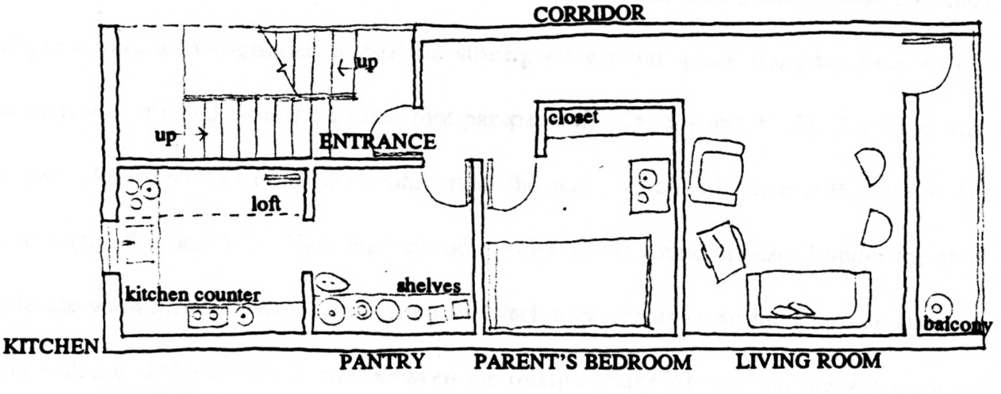
The family of home VIII, who are staunch Muslims, follow a very strict segregation of male and female living quarters. The three-foot setback found in all the Arumbakkam homes is found to be


CORRIDOR
or spine with individual access to each room on the first floor and upstairs
BATHROOM
TOILET
stairs up
ENTRANCE
loft
SERVICE AREA
washing area
PORCH
kitchen area
loft
shelf
shelf
LADIES' SPACE
MEN'S SPACE

HOME VIII

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
(first floor occupied
by tenants)

N


CORRIDOR
up
up
ENTRANCE
closet
loft
kitchen counter
shelves
balcony
KITCHEN
PANTRY
PARENT'S BEDROOM
LIVING ROOM

HOME IX

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

N ►

Fig. 5.1: FLOOR PLANS--GROUP C

SCALE 1'0" = 1/8"

useful in this home for this purpose. The rectangular core is divided into two rooms, the front room for men and the rear space for women. Although these two rooms are connected to each other, each has an individual entrance from the long corridor that runs along the side of the house (fig. 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4). The service center described earlier is found at the back end of the house, after the women's room (fig. 5.5). This is also connected to the corridor, which serves as a spine connecting all the spaces within the home (fig. 5.6). This allows each space to be accessed independently without passing through other spaces, unlike the situation in homes IV, V and VII where a similar spine runs through the spaces itself (see fig. 4.1). Such an arrangement of spaces seems to be a response to the family's cultural values of separating the male and female spaces, mentioned earlier.

The men's room is a small space that contains a bed, a table and an in-built shelf on the wall, that displays the family's possessions (fig. 5.7). This room serves both as sleeping space for the father and his two youngest sons at night and as a space for entertaining male visitors. The women of the home, however use this space while the men are away. Otherwise the women use the women's room, which is furnished with a wooden shelf that carries the women's valuable possessions, an inbuilt shelf, a table and a stool (fig. 5.8). The mother and her two daughters sleep on the floor on mats, at nights.

The service center where all the water-based activities take place include a kitchen counter along one wall, a food-grinder, a shelf for storing vessels and spices along the back wall, and a wash area next to it divided by a short three foot parapet wall (fig. 5.9 and 5.10). The toilet and bathroom also part of the service center, are found under the stair, which is located at the end of the main corridor (fig. 5.2 and 5.1). Here the bathroom/toilet unit is found displaced under the stair instead of where the wash area is now located. Here the wash area serves as an intermediate space within the larger volume of the service center between the relatively dry kitchen and the wet bathroom/toilet.

The supporting spaces of home VIII include the front porch, which is a narrow space that is used only for storing things or parking the son's bicycle. This porch, unlike those of homes V and VII, where they are also used as living spaces, seems to be cut off from the main house as the door into the home and the other spaces inside is independent of its location (fig. 5.11). The stair which is found at

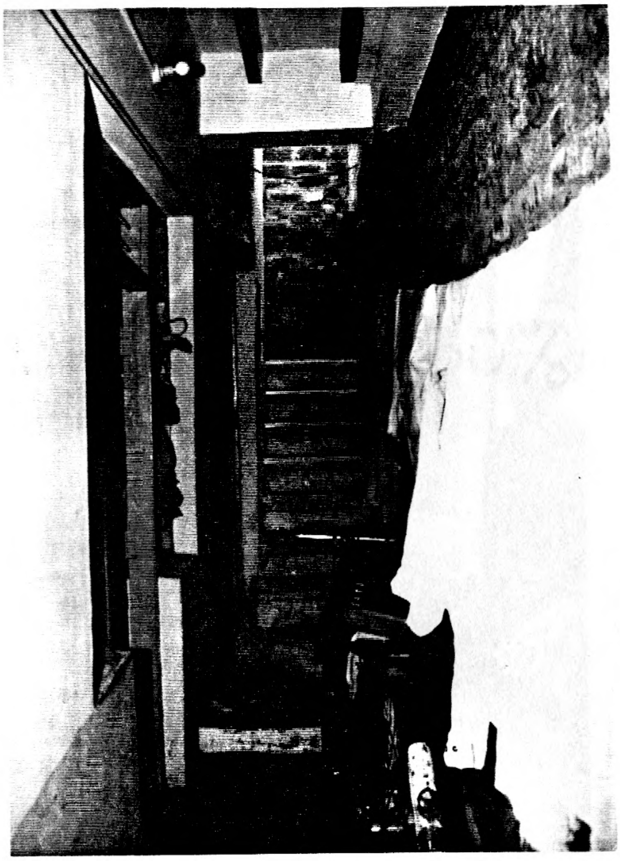


Fig. 5.2: HOME VIII
Main internal corridor used a spine to connect individually to all rooms inside

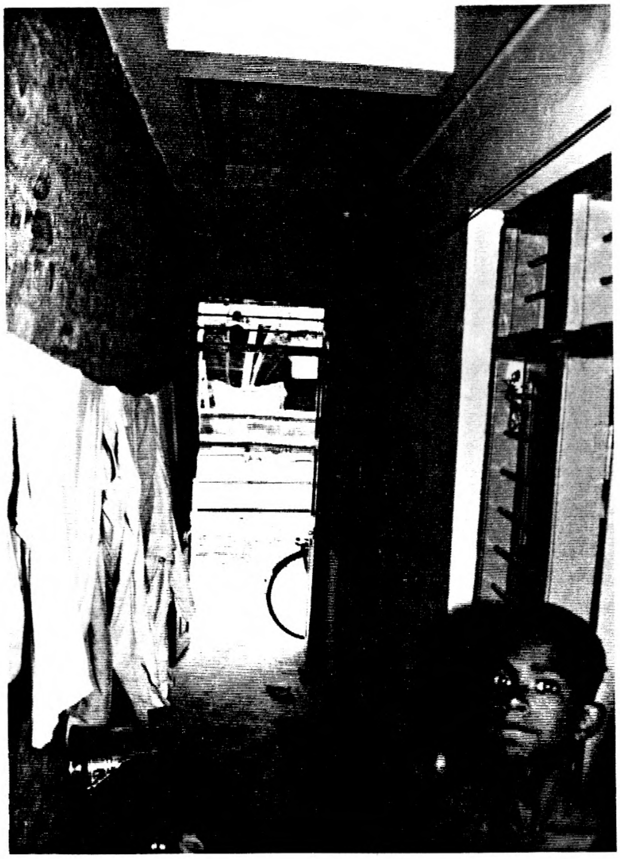


Fig. 5.3: HOME VIII
Internal Corridor

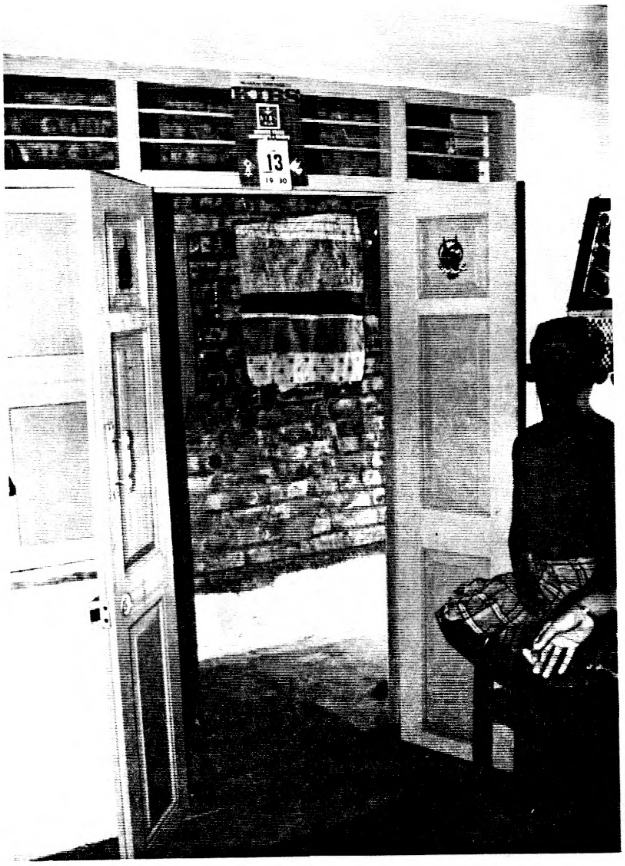


Fig. 5.4: HOME VIII
Men's space opening into corridor

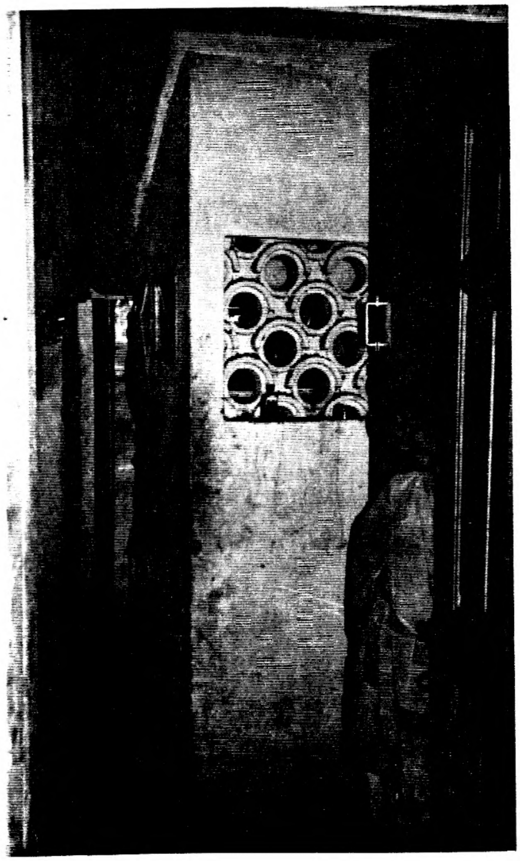


Fig. 5.5: HOME VIII
Service area showing bathroom/toilet located below stair

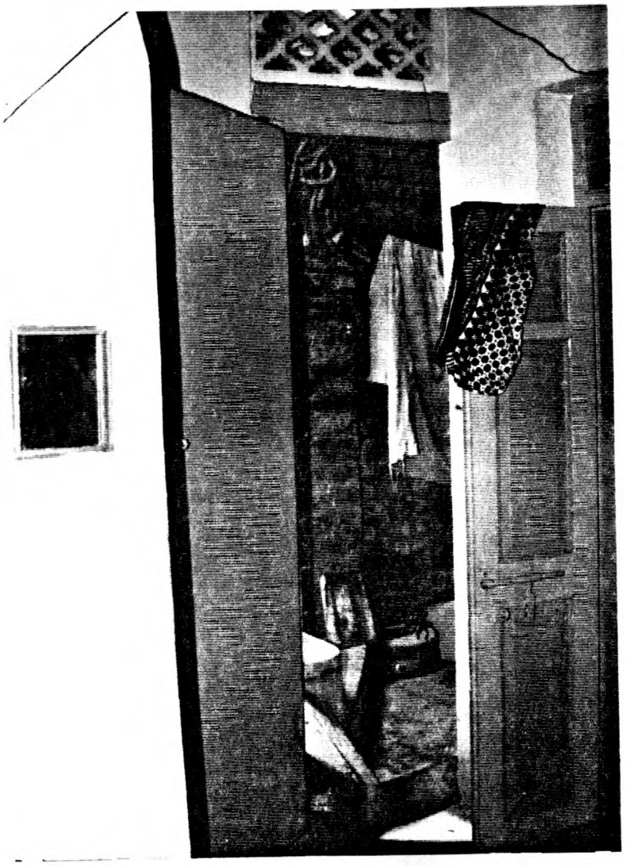


Fig. 5.6: HOME VIII
Service space opening into corridor

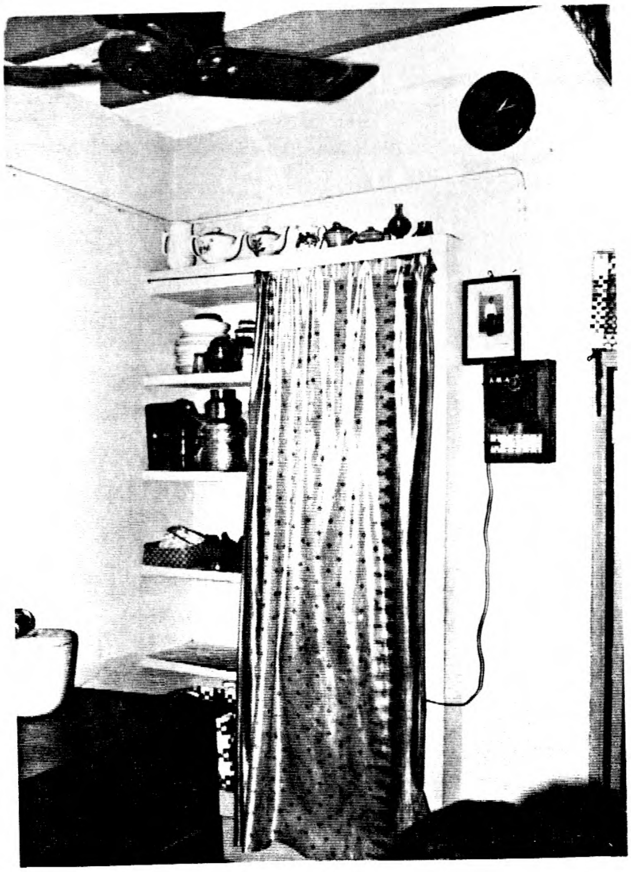


Fig. 5.7: HOME VIII
Display shelf found in the men's space

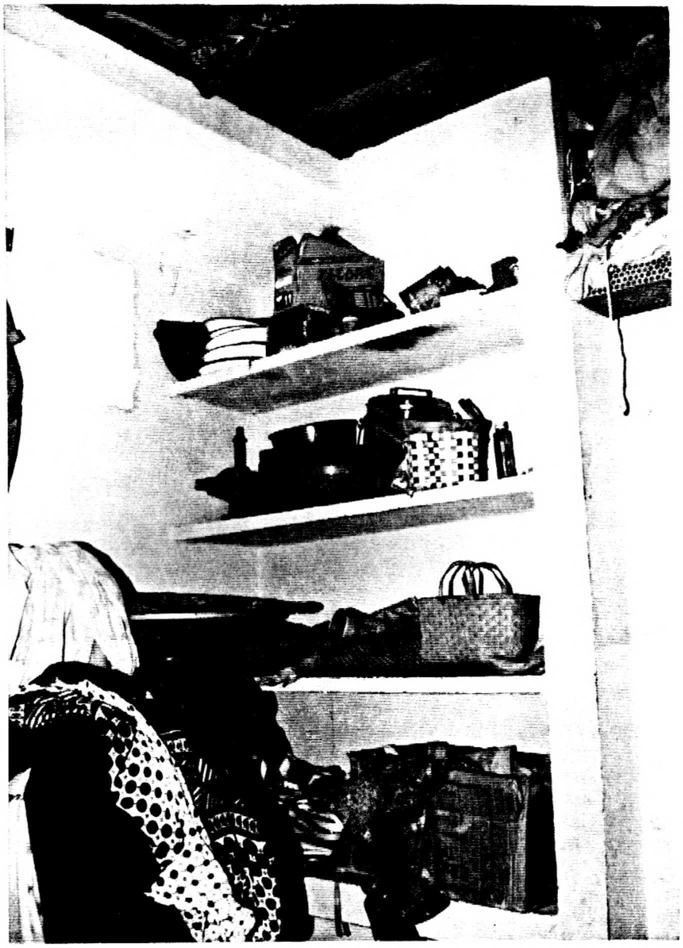


Fig. 5.8: HOME VIII
Shelf in the ladies' room

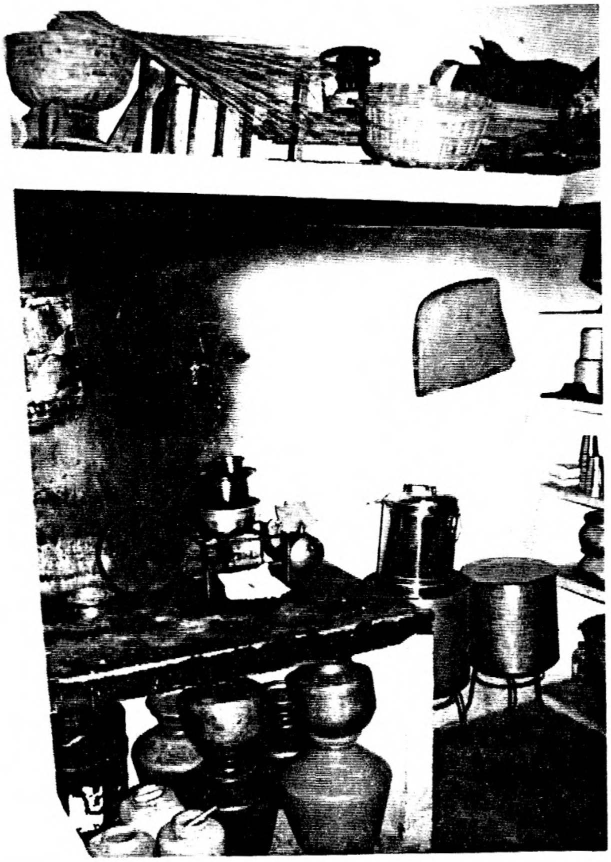


Fig. 5.9: HOME VIII
Kitchen counter

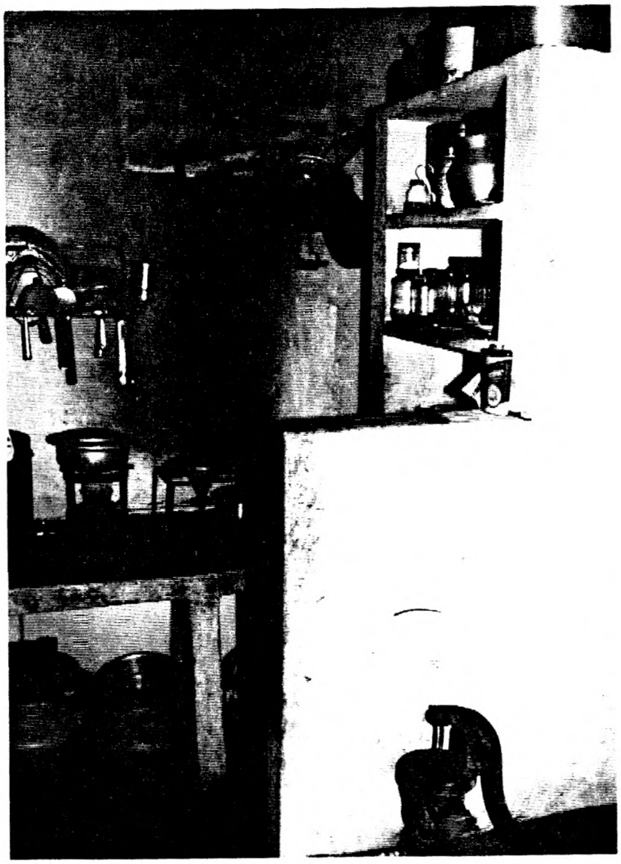


Fig. 5.10: HOME VIII
Kitchen space showing a short parapet wall that divides the kitchen area from the washing area and the toilet/bathroom

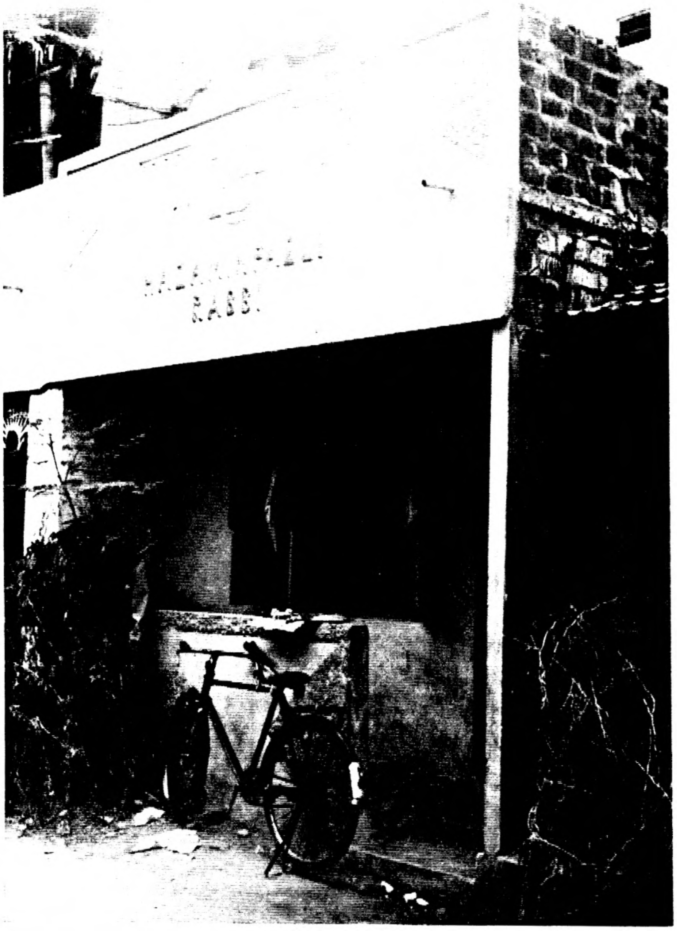


Fig. 5.11: HOME VIII
Porch

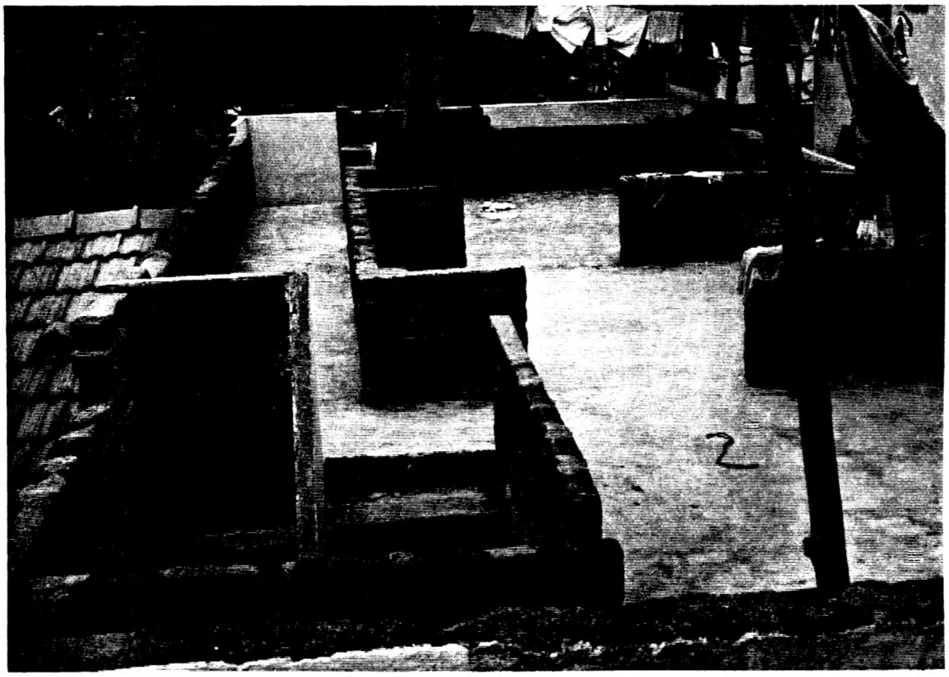


Fig. 5.12: HOME VIII
Terrace showing half-built walls of the rooms yet to come. Space is now used to dry clothes or food-stuff as seen

the end of the main corridor leads one to the open terrace where the family plans to add a few more rooms. A photograph (fig. 5.12) of the terrace shows the short two foot walls of the rooms of the second floor. Here the staircase takes the rear right corner of the home, allowing the two rooms of the rectangular core and the service center to be repeated similarly on the second floor. The semi-built open terrace is used for drying clothes and food-stuff during the hot summer days.

Home IX, on the other hand, has three completed floors. Just as in home VIII, the long corridor on the right side of the site is used to reach to the staircase found on the far right corner (fig. 5.1 and 5.13). This stair leads to both the second and the third floor. The second floor that occupies the entire site area including the setback, uses this linear three-foot path as a spine connecting the rooms on this floor (fig. 5.14). The rooms include an array of four rooms one behind the other running along the entire length of the plot. These rooms become the rectangular core of home IX, although unlike the former homes--I to VIII--this floor does not include a service core which is instead found on the back end of the third floor (5.14).

The four rooms of the rectangular core include the well-furnished living room (fig. 5.15), a small bedroom for the parents (fig. 5.16), a pantry for groceries and food-stuff which leads to a spacious kitchen at the back end of the second floor. This kitchen falls right above the service core on the first floor, this allowing pipelines from the floor below to reach upstairs for water supply and drainage. The supporting spaces on this level includes the balcony in front that faces the street and found right above the porch on the lower floor (fig. 5.17). It is this space and the living room that are used by the male members of the family. The bedroom and the kitchen are predominantly used by the mother and her relatives who often visit her. Unlike the clear separation and access of male and female spaces of home VII, home IX is seen to allow more interaction between men and women of the household. On interviewing the mother of this home, it was found that the family was more relaxed about this aspect of separation than others of her community.[1]

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[1] Home IX-House # G50, interview by author, 30 June 1989; transcripted from dialogues and direct observation, MMDA colony, Arumbakkam, Madras, India.

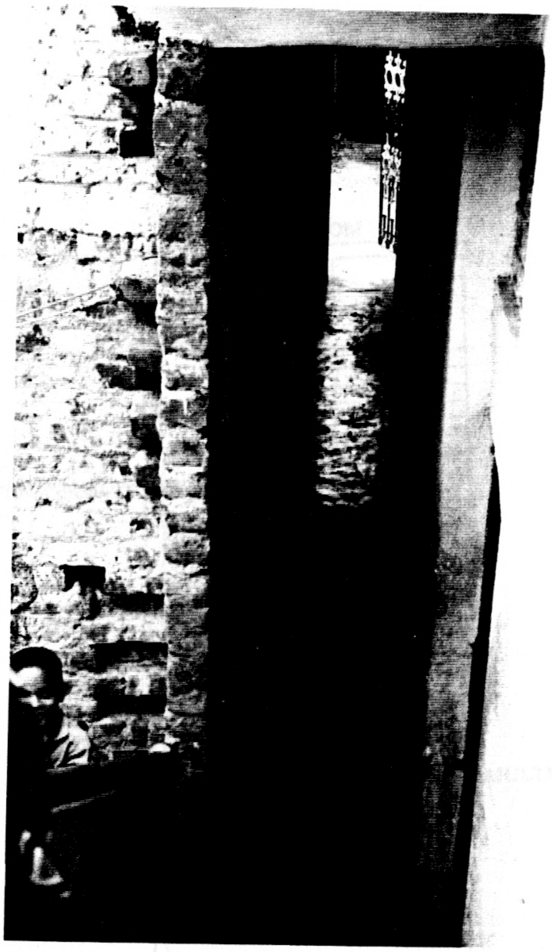

Fig. 5.13: HOME IX

Set-back space used as corridor to connect to stair that leads to the second floor

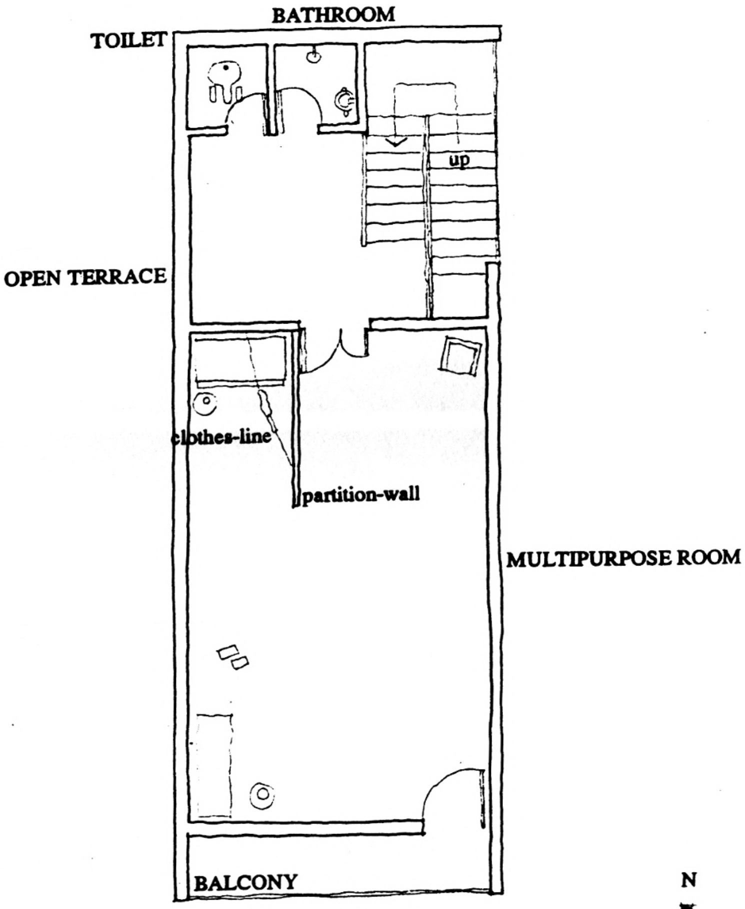
BATHROOM
TOILET
up
OPEN TERRACE
clothes-line
partition-wall
MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
BALCONY
N

Fig. 5.14: HOME IX--THIRD FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1'0" = 1/8"

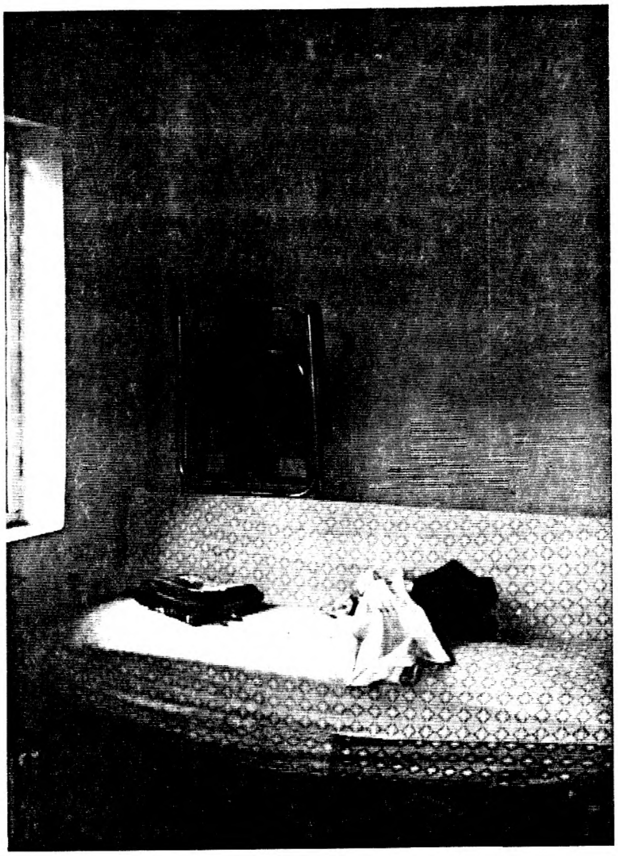

Fig. 5.15: HOME IX
Living room on the second floor

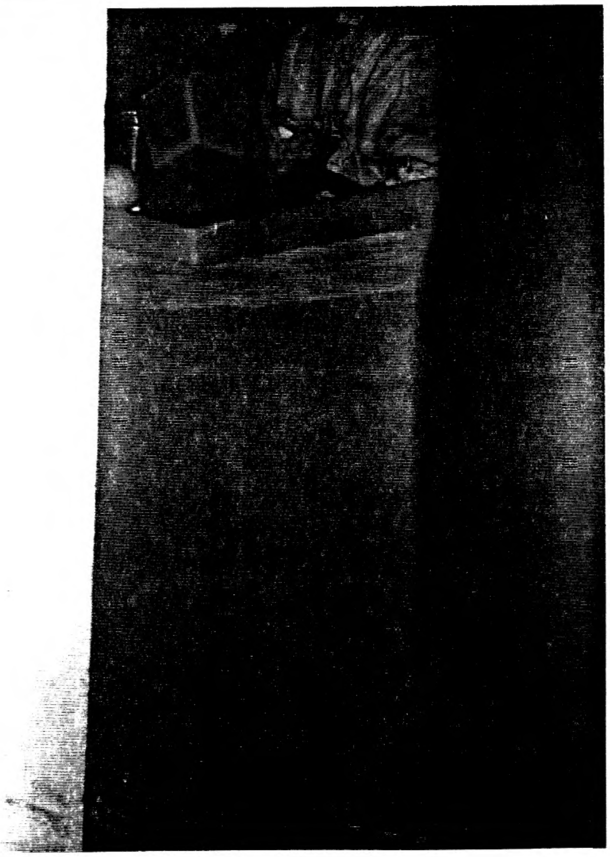

Fig. 5.16: HOME IX
Bedroom showing the loft above

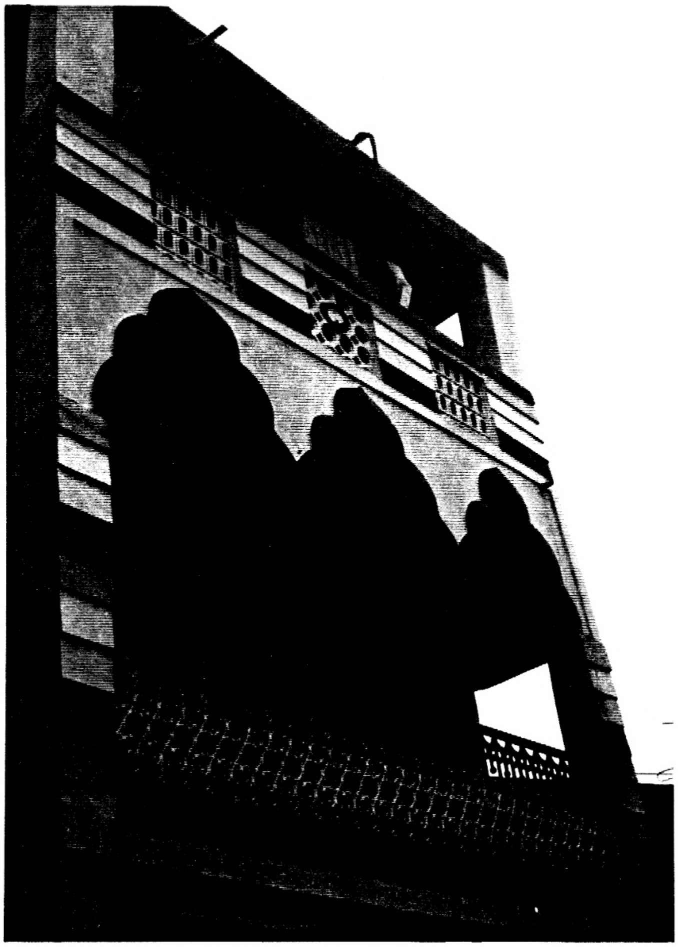

Fig. 5.17: HOME IX
Second floor balcony facing street below

The third floor of home IX is made up of four spaces. The staircase from the second floor reaches an open space that is flanked by a large multi-purpose room for the three children on one side (fig. 5.18) and the service core found right above the kitchen, on the other. This floor is predominantly used by the children who use the multipurpose floor for studying, playing and sleeping at nights. This room is often used as a visitor's room or even a large dining room, when the family is entertaining guests for a festival or special event. This floor also has a balcony facing the street found right above the one found on the second floor (fig. 5.19).

The Two Homes and Temporal and Sociocultural Order

Although homes VIII and IX are very different in terms of the number of floors they occupy, there is evident an underlying complexity in the division of spaces that relates to the families cultural and economic background. This section will further move to describing the homes in terms of their temporal and sociocultural order in order to understand their similarities and differences and also the order that ties them together.

The three sub-themes that will be considered to explicate the property of home as temporal order are: (i) temporal order as a result of daily routines; (ii) temporal order through the expression of a past experience/order; and (iii) temporal order through associations and knowledge of the building materials and processes. First the daily routines of the dwellers in both homes VIII and IX, will be described.

The following description has been recorded through observations made through the period of a typical working day and through interviews with the families of home VIII and IX.[2] Both homes seem to have a similar daily routine owing to their common occupation and religious background. Home VIII, where the family is made up of a father, mother and seven children, have only four of

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[2] Home VIII-House #G59, interview by author, 27 June 1989; transcripted from dialogues and direct observation, MMDA colony, Arumbakkam, Madras, India.

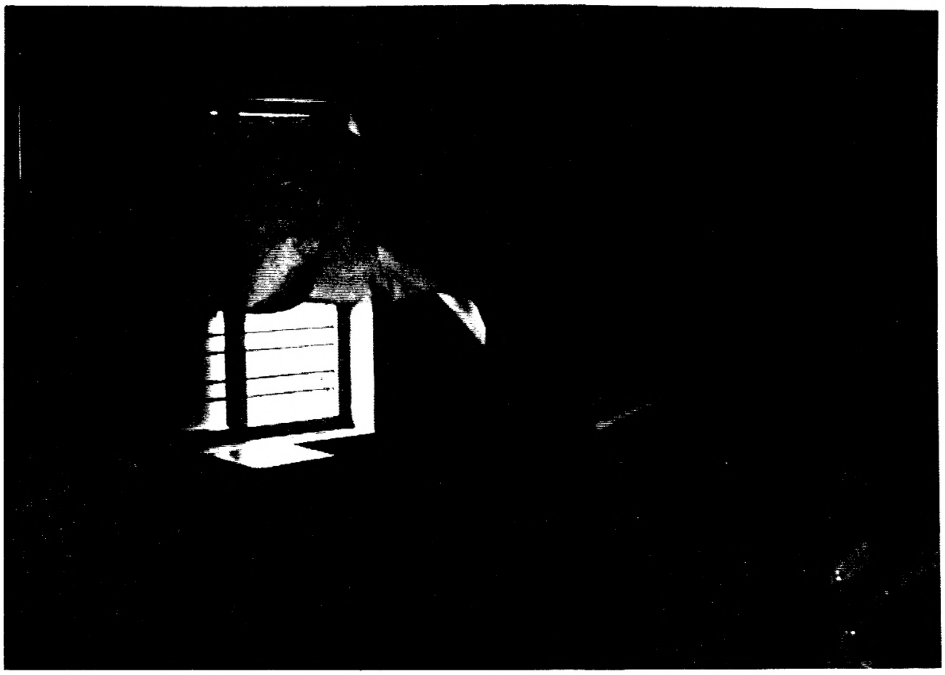

Fig. 5.18: HOME IX
Multipurpose room on the third floor

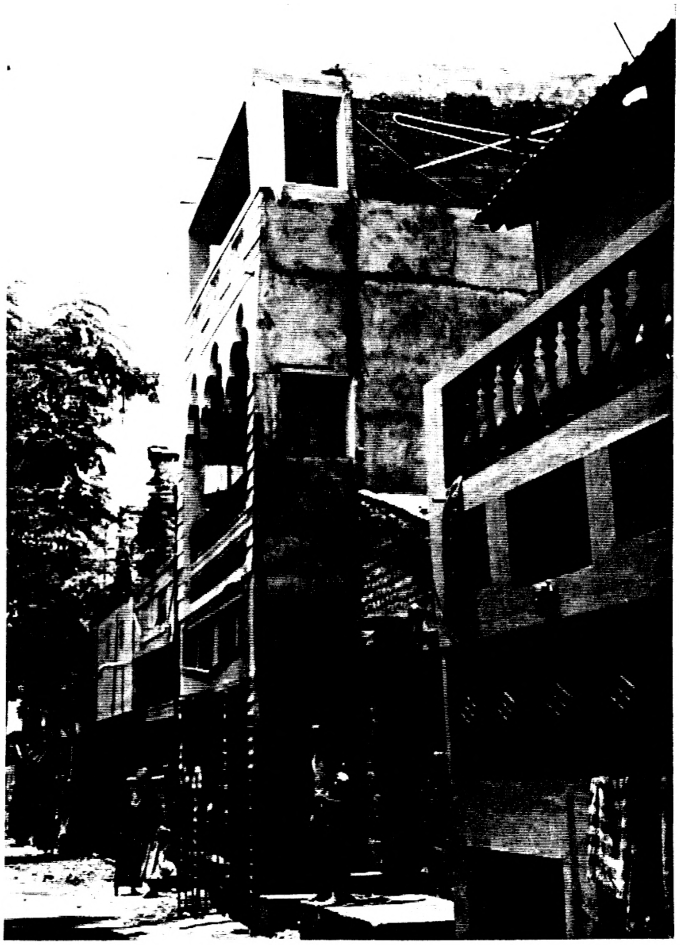

Fig. 5.19: HOME IX
Third floor balcony facing the street below

their children living with them now. Their two older daughters who are now married live with her husbands and their oldest son lives in a different city, where he works. The children who live with them now include: (i) their sixteen year old son who works along with the father in the shop; (ii) their ten year old son who goes to school; (iii) their two daughters aged--thirteen and nine--who stay at home helping the mother with household chores. The parents intend getting their daughters married once they are sixteen.

The father and son leave home early at about 6:00 a.m. The mother and the thirteen year old daughter wake up at 4:30 a.m., and start preparing for the day, after their morning shower and cleaning up. The father and son, after cleaning up and preparing for the day, say their prayers, have breakfast and leave home, carrying with them their lunch prepared by the mother. The two younger children wake up at about 7:00 a.m., and the ten year old son begins to prepare for his day at school. He cleans, showers himself, says his prayers, has his breakfast, packs his school bag and leaves home at around 7:45 a.m., carrying with him his lunch.

The mother and the two girls, begin their household chores at about 10:00 a.m., after their breakfast. The mother and the older daughter sweep and mop the floor and the younger daughter helps organize things in place. This home is seen to be very well-kept and organized (fig. 5.8 and 5.20). At about 11:00 a.m., the mother starts preparing lunch, while the two girls handwash the family's dirty clothes and take the wet clothes to the open terrace to dry them under the midday sun (fig. 5.12). The three of them have lunch at around 12:30 p.m. after which the mother takes a short nap till 2:00 p.m. The daughters wash the dishes and clean up the kitchen, where they have their lunch. The youngest daughter then leaves to play with her friends in the neighborhood and often the mother visits her friend who lives three house away. The older daughter guards the house while the mother is away, since the family is cautious about leaving the house unguarded.

At about 3:00 p.m. the mother returns and she and the older daughter, then start preparing for the men to return home. The younger son comes home at around 3:30 p.m., changes out of his school uniform, leaves his school bag in his shelf, has a snack and a glass of milk and rushes out to play with

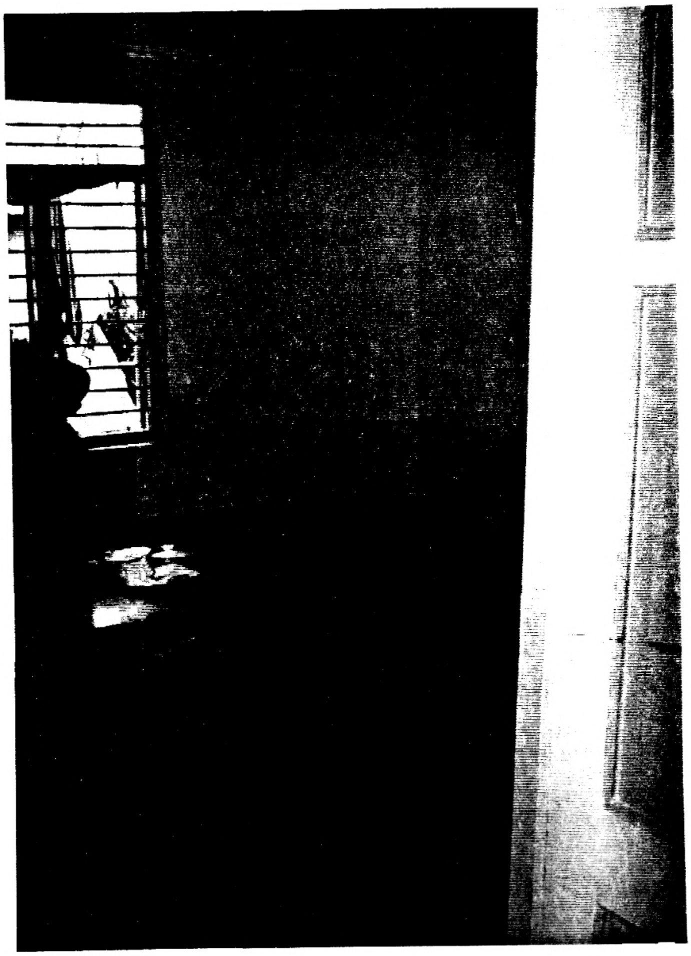

Fig. 5.20: HOME VIII
Men's space

his friends. The mother starts preparing dinner at about 6:00 p.m. and waits for the two others to return. The older daughter also leaves the house to meet her friends who live next door. The three children return by 6:30 p.m., when the sun sets. The son works on his homework while the two daughters help their mother with dinner. The father and the older son come home by 7:30 p.m., have a shower and change into a comfortable wrap. The family has their dinner at around 8:30 p.m., and while the mother and oldest daughter clean up the kitchen the others go up to the terrace, enjoying the cool sea breeze till it is time for bed at 10:00 p.m.

The family of home IX is a smaller family and is composed of a mother, father and three children--two sons aged fourteen and eleven and a daughter aged twelve. This family owns an electrical supplies store in the main street of Arumbakkam (fig. 1.4), and its the closeness to the place of work that changes the pattern of activity of home IX from home VIII. Here, just as in home VIII, the father and the oldest son go to work each day. However the two take turns looking after the shop, thereby reducing the amount of time spent away from home for the both of them. The younger children attend a private school located about two miles away from their home and they take the city bus every morning from the nearby bus terminus (fig. 1.4).

The mother wakes up at around 5:30 a.m., cleans up, has a shower and begins to prepare for the day. She starts cooking breakfast for the family at around 6:30 a.m., while the others take turns using the bathroom and preparing for the day. The father and the two sons say their prayers and the two younger children get ready to go to school. They pack their bags, wear their school uniforms, take their lunch that their mother has packed for them and leave home at 7:45 a.m. The oldest son who has also had his breakfast and changed into day clothes, takes then to the bus terminus and sends them off to school. He then goes to the shop and opens it at 8:00 a.m. The father stays at homes till about 8:30 a.m. and leaves to work after having his breakfast and coffee.

The mother then begins her household chores with the help of a maid that the family has hired to work for two hours a day. The maid sweeps and mops the floor and does the laundry. The mother supervises her and after she leaves at 10:30 a.m. starts preparing for lunch. The father comes at around this time for a coffee break, while the son takes care of the shop. Often the father goes to the wholesale market which is about six miles from Arumbakkam, by bus, to order supplies for the shop. The father and son close the shop at noon to return home for their prayers and lunch. The mother and the two men have lunch and relax till around 1:00 p.m. The son goes back to work a little earlier and the father follows him at about 1:15 p.m.

During the afternoon, the mother often invites a group of friends in the neighborhood who are all Muslim women, for a chat or goes to their homes, as the men are away in the afternoons. She then prepares for her children to arrive from school. The younger children come home at around 3:45 p.m., after a long and tiring day. They throw their bags on the floor, change out of their uniforms and while the son runs up to his room to play with his toys, the daughter relates the day's incidents to her mother. The children have their tea and leave to play with their friends. The father returns home at about 5:00 p.m. while the son closes the shop and goes to play a game of cricket with his friends in the nearby playground (fig. 1.4).

The children come home by sunset at 6:30 p.m., and the three men say their prayers after cleaning up. The younger children begin their home work and preparing for the next day at school, while the mother starts cooking dinner for the family. the father and the older son relax and discuss what needs to be done for the next day at work. Often after the children are done with their homework, the family sits around the TV to watch a favorite program. The family has dinner then, at around 8:30 p.m., after which the mother and the daughter clean up and do the dishes. The children go upstairs after dinner to play or talk to each other in the open terrace. The family goes to bed at 10:30 p.m., the parents in the bedroom on the second floor, the children in the multipurpose room or the open terrace on the third floor.

The above description of the two family's activities during the day resemble each other in several ways. The daily activity of the father and a son going to their shop, some children going to school, the mother staying at home and the way the men say their prayers five times a day are examples of some. The differences in daily patterns however arise from the two families cultural preferences and economic status. The family of home VIII, where the daughters stay at home along with the mother and help in the household chores, unlike the daughter of home IX, results in certain changes in daily rhythms. Also, home IX, due to their higher monthly income are able to afford a maid to perform certain chores which in home VIII are performed by the women of the house. As already explained, another key difference in the two families daily rhythm arises from the fact that the workplace of family IX is located much closer than that of family VIII.

Having examined the similarities and differences between the daily routines that create a temporal order, the next aspect of temporal order--the spatial patterns molded by past experiences--will be discussed.

The family of home VIII, who came to Madras in 1986 from Vaniyambadi, a suburb of Madras, first rented a small apartment in a very congested locality of Madras called Thousand Lights. Since this family had lived earlier in a spacious two bedroomed house in Vaniyambadi with their seven children, their rented apartment at Thousand Lights was very inconvenient to the family.[3] The family decided to build their own house in 1987 and since they did not like the idea of buying an apartment in a multistoried building but could not afford a piece of land in the kind of neighborhood they were used to, moved to Arumbakkam.

Here at Arumbakkam, although the family has the luxury of having their own independent home and building it in stages, when they are able to afford it, they are not familiar with the surrounding social environment. The new socioeconomic environment, where the majority of residents belong to the Economically Weaker Section of the urban community, unlike their earlier suburban Low-Income Group environment, seems to cause a certain concern within the family of home VIII.[4] This is explicit in their fear of leaving their home unguarded. The spatial expression pertaining to this fear is seen in interface between the inside and outside. The porch is seen excluded from the living areas of the house, unlike in home V, where the porch becomes an active living space. Also the windows and doors are well secured with metal grilles and strong wooden doors.

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[3] Home VIII, interview by author, 27 June 1989.

[4] The hierarchical order of categorizing income groups, established by the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority is as follows:

1. Economically Weaker Section (EWS)
2. Low-Income Group (LIG)

The family of home IX, who has lived in Arumbakkam for the past five years, comes from a similar socioeconomic environment, i.e., a neighborhood where residents belong to the Economically Weaker Section of the urban community of Madras. This environment is therefore not new to this family. This family, however, rented a very small single bedroomed unit, in a large apartment complex before they bought this site at Arumbakkam. The children were much younger and the father worked as an assistant in another electrical supplies shop. Five years back, when the family was allotted this site at Arumbakkam, the father rented a shop that they own now and through the profits built this home. Over the years, the family of home IX, whose identity, five years back was similar to the identity of the rest of the neighborhood homes, has now risen to a higher economic category and hence have acquired a new identity. Here is seen a case where the present spatial patterns of the home have not arisen out of past experiences, but have evolved through a climb in economic level.

The last aspect of temporal order involves the "familiarity with the past processes through which the forms of the environment have come into being."[5] By this Dovey illustrates how the mere knowledge of the materials and the building process of the home, evokes a temporal order that the dwellers relate to and feel at home with. In the homes of group C, both home VIII and IX are made of permanent materials--brick, cement and concrete--that signifies qualities such as strength and durability. This symbolic meaning is gathered through having witnessed these qualities in other buildings and also

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3. Middle-Income Group (MIG)
4. High-Income Group (HIG)

[5] Kimberly Dovey, "Home and Homelessness", Home Environments, Human Behavior and Environment, Vol.8, Edited by Irwin Altman and Carol Werner, (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 37.

through the knowledge that these are expensive materials that are used by people of a higher social status. It is such a knowledge of the properties of the materials both physical and symbolic that brings about a temporal order in these two homes of group C.

The last theme under Dovey's home as order sociocultural order, relates to the order created in the spatial patterning of the home that is molded by the sociocultural environment, both past and present. How the past sociocultural environment plays a role in molding the present spatial patterns have already been discussed in the second sub-theme of temporal order. Here the effect of the present sociocultural order will be examined.

The present sociocultural environment of home VIII, as already described is very different from their past one and in both homes--VIII and IX--this is very different from the families' present socioeconomic status. The surrounding neighborhood of Arumbakkam has families belong to a broad range of temporary to permanent homes that are very simple in their spatial structure, unlike the more flamboyant homes of group C. These simpler homes and their poorer residents affect the richer homes, who tend to be cautious of their poorer neighbors and express this cautiousness in terms of spatial patterning. For example the heavy window grillework and doors found in both homes VIII and IX, and tendency for the family of home VIII to leave at least one person taking care of the house while the others are away (fig. 5.21 and 5.11).

These homes however seem to relate or want to relate to the a different urban sociocultural environment which is more affluent than that at Arumbakkam. It is such a higher socioeconomic environment of the city of Madras that inspires the spatial order found in homes VIII and IX. This spatial order that belongs to a higher economic group than the EWS Arumbakkam community that separates the two homes of group C from the other two group--A and B--and the surrounding community of Arumbakkam.

This aspect of expressing a strikingly different identity will be further discussed in the next section which examines these two homes and the property of home as identity.

HOME AS IDENTITY

Identity of the home as a expression of who the dweller is, is seen in dwelling's spatial and temporal patterns as spatial and temporal identity respectively. Both these themes will be discussed in terms of the two homes of group C--home VIII and home IX.

The Two Homes and Spatial Identity

This theme, the identity as expressed spatially, will be examined with respect to the two homes of group C. While expressing "who" the dweller is, through spatial patterning of the home, the dweller reflects not only his own inherent identity and personal experience, but also an identity which he acquires from the surrounding sociocultural environment. Although both these exists together in a dwelling, often the identity prescribed by the "collective ideologies" of a community, dominates over home's inherent identity.[6] In this section, two examples, one--home VIII--where the homes identity is rooted in its dweller's past and personal experiences; and another--home IX--where the "collective ideologies" of a higher economic group prevails over their past identity, will be described.

In order to examine spatial identity, the parts of the home which is visible to the outside world and through which the dweller exhibits his identity, will be illustrated. Both homes--home VIII and home IX--as seen through figures 2.8 and 2.9, are permanent brick and concrete houses that are in two different stages of completion. Home VIII, where only one floor is complete, with the next floor under construction, resembles home V or VI, in its spatial features. The flat roof, the decoration of the facade, the woodwork of the door and window facing the street are examples of this. These features are very different from those of the houses that are found around this home. As explained with reference to home VII, home VIII carries an identity that is typical of a middle income group urban home.

This is true of home IX, which unlike home VIII, is more expressive not only in the number of completed floors, but also in the decoration of the facade. Here is seen three floors of ornamental cement and metal work, all compressed within a width of thirteen feet. The first floor is composed of three openings--two doors, one for the tenants on the first floor and the other for the owners upstairs; and a window--covered with ornamental grillework (fig. 5.21). The walls of this floor is textured in broad bands colored in greens, white and brown (fig. 5.22). The second floor, which has a balcony overlooking the street below, has a very ornate metal handrail with three trifoliate arches above as a sunshade (fig. 5.17). The third floor, which also has a balcony, is more simple with a molded cement parapet painted in the same theme as the lower two floors (fig. 5.19).

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[6] ibid. 40.

Here is seen an aesthetic expression that may find its origins in the outside more affluent urban environment. The family of home VIII, belonging originally to a such a society outside Arumbakkam, seems to have brought into Arumbakkam such an identity. While the family of home IX, whose initial identity was the same as the Arumbakkam community seems to have adopted this changed higher economic-group identity.

The Four Homes and Temporal Identity

Dovey's two aspects under temporal identity include reflection of the dweller's past and the promise the home holds for the future as expressed in the spatial qualities of the home. In home VIII, where the family lived in a spacious house in a suburb of Madras, the present spatial identity reflects the cleanliness and order of a suburban home. Despite the chaos and dirtiness of the street outside, this home is seen to be very well-kept.[7] A more significant characteristic that reflects the identity of the dwellers of home VIII, is the expression of their religious beliefs. This is seen through the pictures and photographs of Mosque at Mecca, and symbols on the doors and walls that represent their islamic background. Even the facade bears a symbol (fig. 5.11) of their faith.

This is seen in a more exaggerated manner in home IX. Not only the interior but also the exterior wall reflects the family's origin. In the facade, the multicolored wall, the very ornate

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[7] Home VII, interview by author, 27 June 1989.

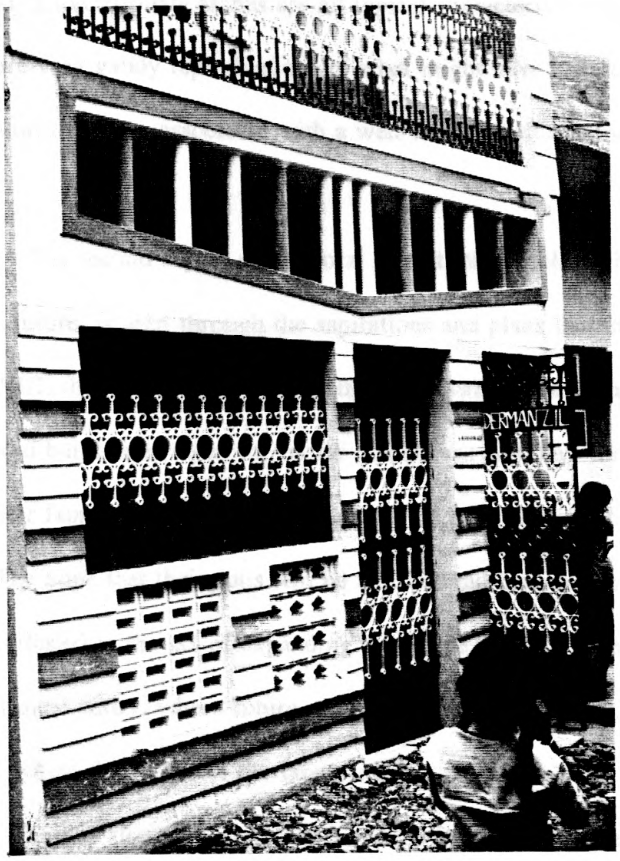

Fig. 5.21: HOME IX
Grillework on the facade

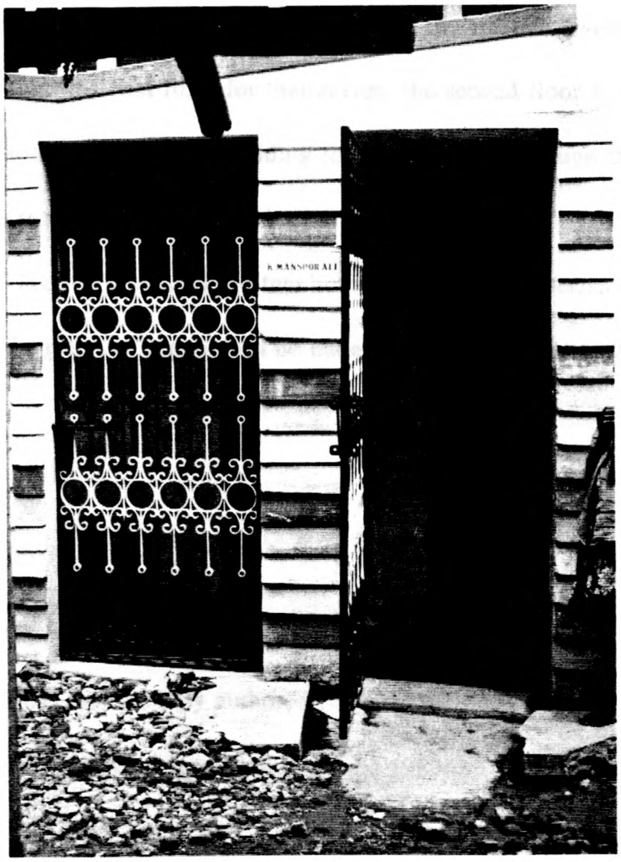

Fig. 5.22: HOME IX
Facade decoration

grillework,the trifoliate arches are all typical characteristics of an affluent Muslim home. Although these are very gaudy reproductions of what might have been of middle eastern islamic origin, these are the features that are associated with a well-to-do Muslim home.[8]

The second aspect of temporal identity that deals with the home as a place that holds promise for the future, is seen through the aspirations and plans that the dwellers have made for their future. In home VIII, this is clearly evident in the short walls erected on the second floor, where the family intends to build three more rooms for themselves and their three sons, who might live in this home with their families.[9] The parents intend to live downstairs and build three individual rooms for their sons. The hope that their sons will be married and have a family, and live together with the parents, are manifested in the act of expanding this home. Here is seen, not only, the promise held by the home as a physical entity, where future construction plans are made, but also the promise the home holds as a place where the future of the family itself, is located.

This is also seen in home IX, which is almost complete in its spatial development. The family does not intend expanding the house further, but intends dividing the house into three parts along the three floors--the first floor for themselves, the second floor for the oldest son and the third for the second son.[10] This act of providing for the two boys through the spatial entity of the home is the promise the home gives to its dweller.

Having discussed the two homes of group C in terms of their temporal identity, Dovey's last theme--dialectics of home--will be understood with respect to the two homes--home VIII and IX.

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[8] Home IX, interview by author, 30 June 1989.

[9] Home VIII, interview by author, 27 June 1989.

[10] Home IX, interview by author, 30 June 1989.

DIALECTICS OF HOME

As discussed earlier in chapters III and IV, with respect to the homes of group A and B, here the group C homes will be understood in terms of the binary oppositions involved in its spatial and social experience, in order to emphasis the meaning of home.

The Two Homes and Spatial Dialectics

The three oppositions involved in the spatial experience of the home are: (i) inside/outside; (ii) order/chaos; and, (iii) the act of being-at-home/journeying out. The first opposition--inside/outside--will be understood through a description of the events that occur immediately after the members of the family return home, from a journey outside. These observations are taken from the researchers journal, recorded between 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m on a working day:

> "The youngest school-going son returns home at about 3:30 p.m., walking back from school. He takes off his slippers at the door, leaves his school bag in his shelf, changes out of his school uniform in more comfortable home clothes, has a glass of milk and a snack and runs out to play with his friends. The father and the older son return later, the son in his bicycle and the father by bus, at about 7:30 p.m. The father takes off his footwear, sits down for a few minutes and takes off his shirt. The mother brings him a hot cup of coffee which he sips slowly, before he changes into a more comfortable wrap. The son parks his bicycle in the front porch, takes off his slippers and goes into the bathroom for a quick shower, before he relaxes to have a coffee and a snack."[11]

In home IX, the act of unwinding after a day's work is more subtle, since the father and son who go to work, take breaks every three or four hours and return home. This, however, is seen with the two children who come back from school after a journey in a crowded bus, at around 3:45 p.m.

"The children come home tired, take off their heavy bags from their shoulders and throw them on the living room floor, the son takes off his wet uniform and changes into a pair of shorts, the daughter has a drink in the kitchen and relates the day's incidents to the mother. The son runs up to play with his toys till the mother urges him to have a snack and some milk."[12]

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[11] Home VIII, interview by author, 27 June 1989.

Both families just like all other Arumbakkam families, exhibit a sense of rest, when the come inside their home. The meaning of the inside intensified by the outside which expects one to be cautious and aware of the surroundings, unlike the inside where the dweller is unconscious of the outside and relaxed within his/her own territory.

The next dialectic involves the opposition between the order of the inside and the chaos of the outside. The four aspects that will be illustrates with regard to each home include the homes as a familiar place, a secure place, a sacred place and a place where the dweller exerts his autonomy, in opposition to the outside as a strange, dangerous, profane and heteronomous place respectively.

As mentioned earlier with respect to the seven homes of group A and B, even in the two homes of group C, the family members are seen to have established a certain knowledge of the things of the home and know intimately the experience of being within the walls of their own home. This intimate experience is further emphasized when the dwellers go out of their homes into the outside world where one needs to be directed to a destination.

The mother of the family of home VIII, who is very protective about her daughters, does not allow them to go alone to the market or the main street without an escort. The daughters are allowed to go only to well-known neighbors homes and certain streets in their neighborhood. The mother is not only cautious of the people of this neighborhood which is very different from her earlier more safer one, but also unsure of the outdoors which she is not familiar with.[13] In home IX, this is witnessed through the act of the oldest son escorting the younger children to the bus terminus. He takes care to take them to the right bus and directs them on where to unboard the bus and how to get back home.[14] This caution is brought about by the unfamiliarity with the outside, that emphasizes the meaning of home as a familiar place.

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[12] ibid.

[13] Home VIII, interview by author, 27 June 1989.

The home as a secure place is witnessed at the interface of the two homes--VIII and IX. Both home are seen to be secured from the dangerous outside by strong metal grilles and thick wooden doors that are well bolted and locked. In home VIII, the mother who as explained earlier, is very protective of her daughters, leaves them behind at home, alone while she visits her friends, knowing that the home is a secure place. The family of home IX, who own several valuable possessions, keep it with them in the home, trusting in the security that the home offers due to the order that exists within it.

The third aspect of the home being a sacred place within a profane world is emphasized by the way each of these homes, establish their identity through the spatial features of their homes. Home VIII, where the women of the household spend time organizing the inside and taking care to keep it clean, is a clear example of how the home is a special space. It is this place among all places in the world that they feel compelled to keep clean and in order. This sense of possession over a homeplace makes the space sacred to the dweller. In the case of home IX, the same sense of possession and wanting to be associated with, both through the clean insides and the decorated outside, exhibits the sacredness of the home. It is only here that the family wants to express their identity, whether it is their own or borrowed. And such a specialness to one particular place--here their home--makes this place sacred in comparison to the profanity of the places outside it.

The last aspect of home as an autonomous place with an heteronomous world outside, is seen very significantly with regard to the last two richest homes of Arumbakkam--homes VIII and IX. Here just like all homes of Arumbakkam, the dwellers are in control of the spatial patterning of their own homes. This encourages the dweller to express himself unhindered by the pressures of a prescribed design or program. However for the sake of controlling development within these sites, the development authorities impose a reasonable set of restrictions that include leaving a setback of three feet on one side, unbuilt and limiting the number of floors built to two.

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[14] Home IX, interview by author, 30 June 1989.

In home VIII, the setback restriction is unheeded and the covered spine-corridor that serves all spaces within their home is found in its place. In home IX, although this space is found unbuilt on the first floor, is used as an essential interior space of the second floor and part of the multipurpose room on the third (fig. 5.14). Here is seen not only a violation of the setback rule but also the restriction of the number of floors. This act, although illegal, seems to stem out of a certain sense of autonomy that the home evokes, which is an important meaning of a homeplace.

The last spatial dialectic includes the opposition between the act of being-at-home and that of journeying out. These can be understood by describing the meanings attached to the interface which is the point where the one transforms into the other.

Unlike the hindu homes of group A and B, the muslim homes of group C, are seen to be devoid of any symbols at the threshold, like the saffron paint or the string of mango leaves or the gargoyle that casts evil away. Here the transformation is seen in the spatial patterns at the interface. In home VIII, entrance door found at the end of the corridor is the point of departing from the inside of the home. Here, the porch which is covered only on its two sides and the top, seems to prepare the insider for the open outside. While entering into the home, this porch reverses its role and evokes a sense of welcoming, drawing the dweller back to the inside of the home (fig. 5.11).

In home IX, where the porch in front, although has three openings to the street, cuts itself off from the outside by the metal grilled doors and window. It seem to either shut the dweller in or remove the dweller out, despite its porous physical quality (fig. 5.22). The dweller, once the gate is open is let out rudely into the street outside. And while entering waits out in the street without a roof over his head, unlike home VIII, to be let in through the gate that is locked from within. Such a transition reveals the restfulness of being-at-home only after moving further into the heart of the home, unlike in home VIII, where the one is aware of the comfort of the inside even through the welcoming quality of the porch.

Having discussed the spatial dialectics involved in homes VIII and IX, which emphasizes their meanings to the two families dwelling in them, the next theme--social dialectics--of the two homes will be illustrated and understood.

The Two Homes and Social Dialectics

The three oppositions that will be discussed here include: (i) self/other; (ii) identity/community; and, (iii) private/public. As explained earlier the two aspects that will be considered in order to illustrate these oppositions are representation and negotiation. These two processes whereby the dweller exhibits his own identity and an identity that he imagines himself to have, will be understood by asking the following questions with regard to homes VIII and IX. The questions include:

(1)What outsiders are permitted within the home and how far into the home? This theme will demonstrate the dweller's control over his boundary and also his representation of identity.

(2)What is the social circle of the home? In other words, what is the family's range of movement within the larger community? This theme also represents the family's identity.

(3)What is the interface between the house and the larger environment and how does this interface reflect upon the family's social status. This question will help to understand the degree of negotiation for the family.

In home VIII, the visitors to the home include a few neighbors that the family is familiar with and relatives found in other parts of Madras. During the day, however, only women friends and relatives visit the female members of the family. The male visitors are always accompanied by female visitors as this group of people do not find it appropriate for a male visitor to enter the home when the men of the home are away.[15] Home IX, follows a very similar tradition but in a less rigorous manner.

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[15] Home VIII, interview by author, 27 June 1989.

Since the father and son work very close to their home, male visitors are usually directed by the mother, who stands behind a curtain, to the father's place of work. Often the visitor waits in the living room while the mother, who sends word to the father through a neighborhood kid, waits in the kitchen.[16]

The female visitors of both homes are allowed to enter into the women's space and the kitchen as they have to separated from the men, and being small homes, have to allow them into these inner parts of the home. It is seen however that it is only the living room/men's room in both homes--VIII and IX--that is treated as a formal space for visitors. These rooms have organized seating arrangements, are well kept and decorated, and houses the TV in home IX, while the ladies spaces are usually in the women's bedroom or the kitchen.[17]

The figure 5.23 will be used to answer the second question about the family's social circle. The family of both homes VIII and IX, have a very limited social circle within Arumabakkam. The family of home VIII being unfamiliar with the socioeconomic group of their present neighborhood limit their circle to a few muslim families which the mother visits during the day. On weekends and holidays, the family accompanied by the father, with the women dressed in a black robe that covers their whole body, visit the beach or a few relatives who live in the city of Madras or their friends in their earlier suburban neighborhood. This family, although very conservative in their social habits, are well aware of the larger urban world, especially the low income society (who are more affluent than the Arumbakkam EWS community) which they were a part of earlier.[18]

The family of home IX, who are better-off economically than that of home VIII, spend their evenings and weekends visiting places (fig. 5.24). Often the father hires a private taxi to take his family to the beach or the movies. The mother often visits her neighbors or even leaves home in the afternoon

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[16] Home IX, interview by author, 30 June 1989.

[17] Home VIII, interview by author, 27 June 1989;
Home IX, interview by author, 30 June 1989.

[18] ibid.

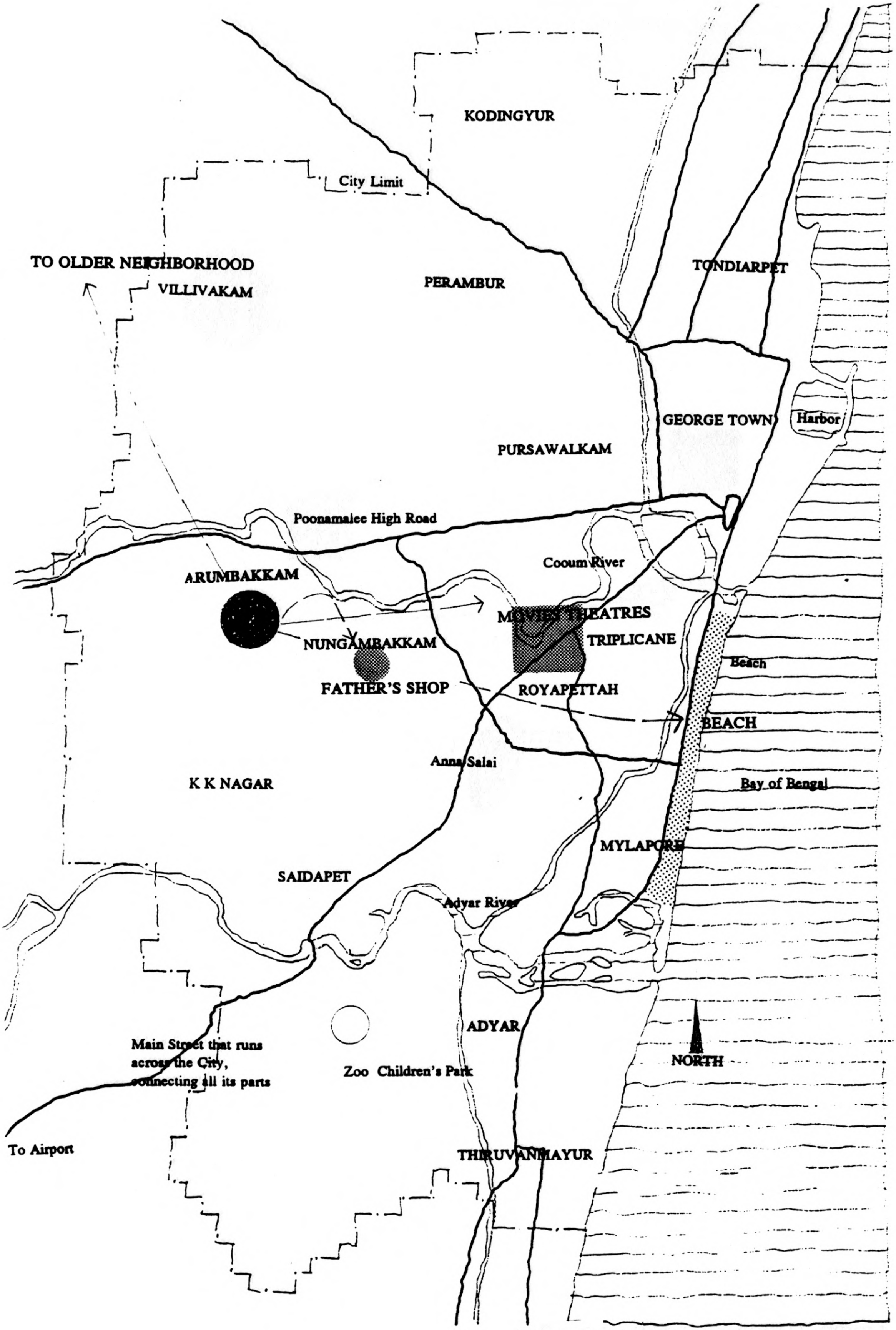
KODINGYUR
City Limit
TO OLDER NEIGHBORHOOD
VILLIVAKAM
PERAMBUR
TONDIARPET
GEORGE TOWN
Harbor
PURSAWALKAM
Poonamalee High Road
Cooum River
ARUMBAKKAM
MOVIES THEATRES
TRIPLICANE
NUNGAMBAKKAM
Beach
FATHER'S SHOP
ROYAPETTAH
BEACH
Anna Salai
K K NAGAR
Bay of Bengal
MYLAPORE
SAIDAPET
Adyar River
ADYAR
NORTH
Main Street that runs across the City, connecting all its parts
Zoo Children's Park
To Airport
THIRUVANMAYUR

Fig. 5.23: HOME VIII--SOCIAL CIRCLE

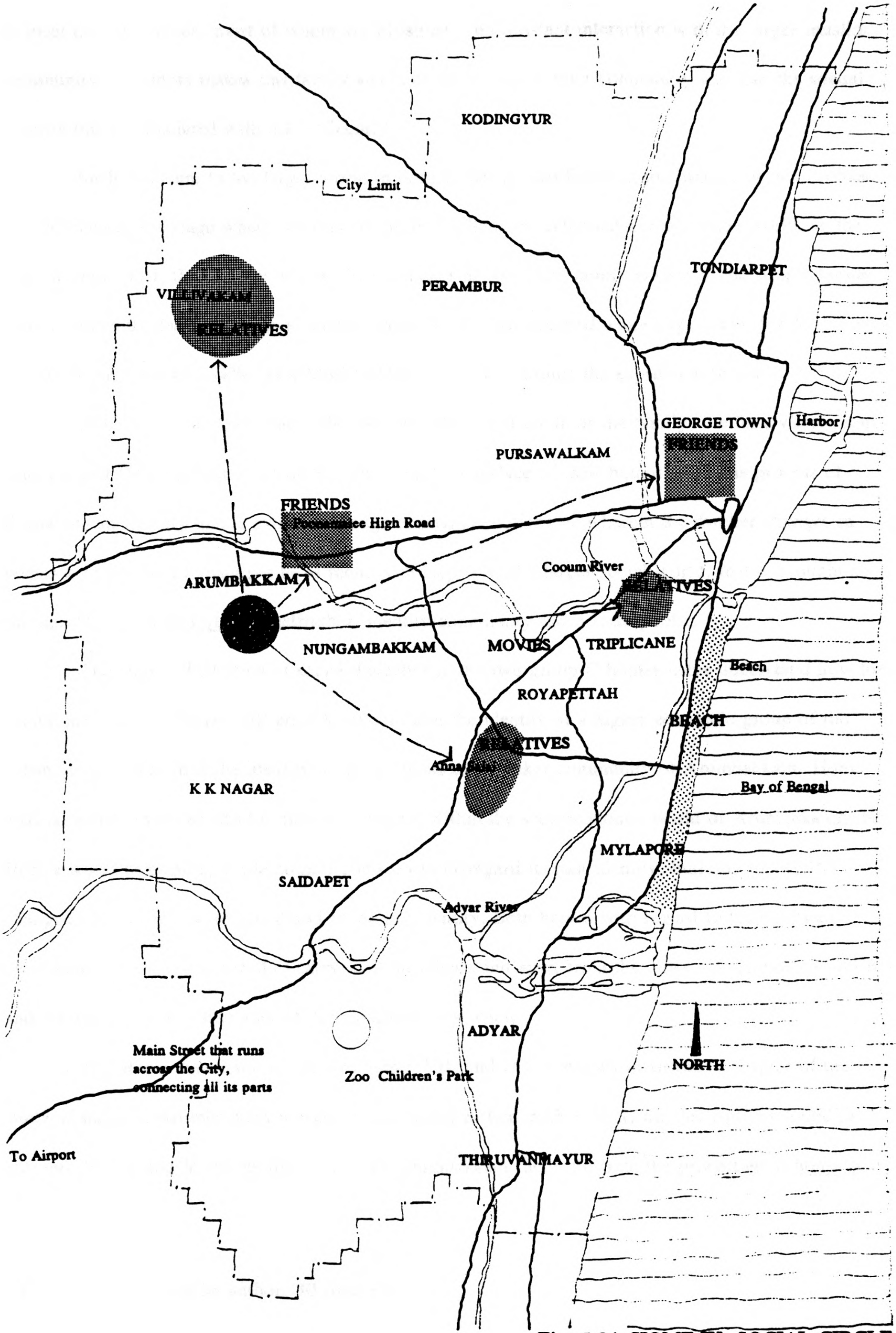
KODINGYUR
City Limit
VILLIVAKAM
RELATIVES
PERAMBUR
TONDIARPET
GEORGE TOWN
Harbor
FRIENDS
PURSAWALKAM
FRIENDS
Poonamallee High Road
ARUMBAKKAM
Cooum River
RELATIVES
NUNGAMBAKKAM
MOVIES
TRIPLICANE
Beach
ROYAPETTAH
BEACH
RELATIVES
Anna Salai
K K NAGAR
Bay of Bengal
MYLAPORE
SAIDAPET
Adyar River
ADYAR
Main Street that runs across the City, connecting all its parts
Zoo Children's Park
NORTH
To Airport
THIRUVANMAYUR

Fig. 5.24: HOME IX--SOCIAL CIRCLE

to meet her old friends, most of whom are Muslims. The constant interaction with the larger muslim community of Madras makes this family aware of the values of their community and also the spatial identity that is associated with the affluent.[19]

Such exposure to the larger world in both homes is manifested in the facades of their homes, which becomes the stage where the identity of its dwellers are exhibited to the outside world. In the case of home VIII, the identity of a well-to-do lower middle class family is seen in the simple facade that is minimally decorated with a simple islamic symbol and painted white (fig. 5.11). While in home IX, the more affluent middle class Muslim identity is seen through the expressive facade (fig. 5.17).

Here is seen a clear relationship between the social circle of the family, the family's economic standing and their expression of identity through the interface of their homes. It is this process of displaying an identity that is evolved through constant negotiations, wherein the dweller changes in response to how to he imagines he is seen, with respect to the larger social world, that is brought about through the social dialectics of self/other, identity/community and private/public.

The above illustration of social dialectics in the two group-C homes helps understand how the spatial identities of homes VIII and IX reflect more the identity of a higher economic group of the urban environment than the identity of the economically weaker community of Arumbakkam. Home VIII is seen to carry an identity that is found not within the socioeconomic world of Arumbakkam, but from a world elsewhere, while home IX is seen to disregard its past identity, building for itself a changed identity related to social and economic identity. Both homes with regard to their present environment therefore are said to carry identities that stand apart from the other two groups--A and B--and the larger EWS community of Arumbakkam as a whole.

The above discussion of the two home--VIII and IX--is the last interpretive chapter of the study of the nine Arumbakkam homes. As explained earlier in chapter II, the descriptions found in chapters III, IV and V, of the nine homes of Arumbakkam, help illustrate the properties of home as order and home as identity. These self-built homes of Arumbakkam help release these two properties clearly since the dwellers are in control of the spatial expression of their own homes. But whether such an autonomous approach allows the dweller to express more than his/her inherent identity if the dweller is not restricted economically will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this research.

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[19] Home IX, interview by author, 30 June 1989.

CHAPTER VI:

CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter deals with the concept of "autonomous housing" in general and more specifically, with the concept of "home as identity." These two aspects of housing and home are closely connected, to each other and the following conclusion will be used to explain this interrelationship using the three Arumbakkam home-groups as a context for discussion.

For this explanation, I first discuss the three issues that this thesis strived to unravel: (1) how the home becomes a stage on which the dwellers display their identities; (2) whether such a displayed identity is a direct representation of the identity of the dweller; and (3) the role of autonomous housing in the dweller's expression of identity will be elaborated individually. After this discussion, I present some design and policy implications, both for the Arumbakkam project itself and in terms of wider housing issues.

Home Identity and Autonomous Housing

The first issue to be discussed deals with the aspect of home as a place expressing identity. This theme has been discussed by Clare Cooper in her paper "The House as Symbol of Self," in which she illustrates how the home can be interpreted as a second skin that expresses the "self."[1] In this sense, the home becomes an extension of the human body in terms of representing identity that may be one's own or what one might want to be. Her examples include the extroverted Californian suburbanites who live in "ostentatious mock-colonial homes", the more introverted professionals who live in "inward-looking architect-designed styles conforming to standards of good-design" and the 1960's "hippies" who live in mobile homes.

In the Arumbakkam homes, all three groups exhibit such a display of identity quite clearly. As chapter III demonstrates, the homes of Group A--the poorest homes of Arumbakkam--reveal a quality of simplicity and straight-forwardness both in their materials and construction. These families for whom, even the owning of a home is a luxury, lead a simple life desiring only the fundamental necessities of food, clothing and shelter. Although their homes range from the more temporary and badly kept (eg. home II), to the more permanent and well-built (eg. home I), the direct reflection of these families' personal identity in the spatial patterns of their homes is evident.

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[1] Clare Cooper, "The House as Symbol of the Self", Designing for Human Behavior: Architecture and the Behavioral Sciences, Edited by Jon Lang, Charles Burnette, Walter Moleski, David Vachon, (Pennsylvania: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, Inc., 1974), 132-34.

The families of group B are better off than those of group A and lead a more comfortable life in terms of their financial needs. This freedom of being able to afford a little more than the families of group A and a desire to climb the social ladder is seen in the spatial identity of their homes. The more permanent materials and construction, the subtle expression of aesthetic preferences in house-fronts and the yearning to develop the home into a somewhat larger house, all speak of the present identity of the families of group B.

The last group of homes--group C--belong to a very different category of families. These families do not conveniently fit into the economic structure of the Arumbakkam community and hence carry an identity considerably different from the families of group A or B. The higher economic status of the group-C families, unlike the families of group B, is distinctly marked and this identity is conspicuous in the spatial identity the group-C homes portray. The decorations on the facade, the structure of the homes, the number of rooms within, the furniture and the appliances in the homes--all suggest a financial advantage, which is representative of the families' own identity. The concern about these homes is not whether they project an identity that is true to their personal identity, but whether such an identity befits the Arumbakkam community.

The next issue that will be considered is whether such an identity portrayed in the spatial patterns of the homes is one that is imbued with what Relph describes as "genuine responses and experiences" or colored by the "adoption of fashionable mass attitudes and actions".[2] This question revolves around Edward Relph's argument of place-making as being authentic or inauthentic. The aim is to understand the Arumbakkam homes as they stand within the larger framework of public housing and their role in place-making.

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[2] Edward Relph, Place and Placelessness, (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 80.

From chapter III and the explanation above, it is quite clear that the identity portrayed through the homes of group A, closely relates to the identity of the families residing in them. There is an established sense of continuity in how the families continue their old traditions and values, their past experiences in their earlier homes, their own personal beliefs and their trust in the past. All of these themes of continuity are seen in the spatial pattern of their homes. This phenomena may be noted in Edward Relph's words as "authentic" place-making.[3] The simple stability and protection of home I, the minimal enclosure of home II, the simple but neat thatch envelop encasing a protected space of home III, and the slowly growing shelter of home IV, all express such "authentic" place-making. Each of these homes genuinely reflect upon the past and present, order and identity of its dwellers, bringing about a sense of belonging and inhabiting.

The B group of homes, however, may not fall as easily within the places Relph calls authentic. Here is seen a hint of what he might call an identity that is "planned by others, rather than being direct and reflecting a genuine belief system encompassing all aspects of existence".[4] As chapter IV demonstrates, the group-B homes bring out the character of a house which seeks to change in terms of social and economic status. The spatial patterns of the homes seem to want to express an identity that is of a slightly different social group than their own. The neatly plastered and painted walls of homes V and VI, with only a subtle decoration, the narrow brown trim in home V's facade or the single ornate panel of a Hindu Goddess in the case of home V, all of these features reflect such a desire.

These families cannot, however, presently be successful in establishing this external identity completely, because they are constrained financially. Such a situation however, makes these homes less

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[3] ibid.

[4] ibid.

"authentic" than the earlier homes since they do not reflect fully, an order and identity that belongs to the family, and tend to assume an identity that is slightly different from their own. It is for this reason that they are said to have a less strong identity that the homes of group A.

The last group of homes--group C--seem to reflect the dweller's identity primarily in terms of the families' financial and cultural backgrounds but in a certain ambiguous way. Just as in group A, a sense of continuity through past experiences, traditional values and cultural preferences are quite obvious in the spatial making of these homes. However as home IX indicates this group seeks a distinct climb in economic status that breaks such continuity and results in the acquisition of a changing identity, usually one that belongs to a different economic group. Home IX is seen to exhibit this new-found identity through the decorations on its facade, the need to divide the house into a number of rooms assigned to perform specialized functions, and raising the house to three floors, all characteristic of a richer home.

Such an attitude towards place that springs from an external source rather than experiences and values ingrained with the family, may be regarded from one angle, according to Relph, as "inauthentic."[5] He goes on to describe two types of inauthentic attitudes--kitsch and technique. Kitsch, he explains, is brought about unconsciously, "stemming from an uncritical acceptance of mass values."[6] In other words, by kitsch he means an attitude resulting from the need to be with the rest of the world by accepting a prevalent trend or fashion.

The second attitude--technique--is more consciously brought about and is "based on a formal espousal of objectivist techniques aimed at achieving efficiency."[7] What he means here is a selfconsciously evolved attitude adopted usually by decision-makers who are involved in the production of living spaces, in order to obtain the most efficient results in production and delivery of space. They are often seen in the process of housing delivery, especially in situations that call for housing large groups of people within relatively short periods of time. Such attitudes have resulted in a meaning of "home" either as a pseudo-sentimental relationship with a materialistic object, as in the case of real-estate developers who deliver "beautiful homes" or as a housing unit fit into an array of boxes given to the homeless by the bureaucrats of the society.

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[5] ibid.

[6] ibid. 82.

[7] ibid.

Home IX may be regarded from one angle as an example of "kitsch." Here the dwellers have broken from the continuity of their own identity and have built an identity based on the mass values of the urban society, in which a home such as theirs will reflect on the well-being of its residents.

The second attitude of inauthencity which Relph calls technique is relevant in regard to the third issue mentioned in the beginning of this chapter--the role of autonomous housing on the dweller's display of identity. Housing delivery, as explained in chapter I, is prevalently performed through two systems--autonomous and heteronomous. It has been noted however, that most of the world's mass housing is handled through a heteronomous system, where houses are made and delivered to its dwellers in a completed form. Such houses are seen to be examples of "technique", where a self-conscious attempt aimed at achieving efficiency, both toward solving the larger housing problem of the community and the more specific functional problem of the single housing unit. Such attempts of "technique," as Relph points, out ignore "place as a center of existential significance" and merely focus on how they can be manipulated for efficiency.[8]

Autonomous housing, on the other hand, strives to decentralize the housing system and to divide groups that need to housed, so that the distance between the dwellers and decision-makers is reduced. This approach to housing is designed to allow a closer relationship between the dweller and the design, which might result in creating homes that are more sensitive to the dwellers needs in terms of their basic orientation and identity. Two recent examples of autonomous housing are Hassan Fathy's housing project at New Gourna and Christopher Alexander's Mexicali.[9]

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[8] ibid. 87.

Hassan Fathy in Gourna, Egypt, tried to achieve a housing design that was sensitive to the socio-cultural identity of the dwellers, intergrating with it a technology that was vernacular, easily produced and efficient, and a architectural language that brought out the symbolism and geometry of Islamic architecture. Alexander sought a similar goal with a small group of Mexicans, bringing together the dwellers to participate in the decision-making and construction of their own homes. Both architects in their housing designs have made ingenious attempts at ignoring the modern trends of mass production and understanding the specific order and identity of the communities, trying to integrate them in the design of their homes.

These two housing projects are very different from, for example, the mass-produced homes that is seen in Le Corbusier's Pessac, where he built about seventy housing units that were designed as "machines to live in."[10] Le Corbusier's goal in this housing project was to produce a large number of houses with a relatively low cost, taking into consideration the social and economic conditions that prevailed. Through such an approach, he believed, he could create homes that people could reside in and live their lives. Although such an attitude towards housing production was different from the more sensitive dweller-involved approach of Alexander's or a tradition-involved approach of Fathy's, all three architect seem to have failed in one way or the other.

In all three cases, the individual house designs have taken their toll with the dwellers recreating either parts of it or altering the entire structure of the home. The papers "New Gourna: Vernacular Remodeling of Architectural Space" by Fekri Hassan and Christine Plimpton; "Mexicali

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[9] Hassan Fathy, Architecture for the Poor, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); Christopher Alexander et al, Production of Houses, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[10] Philippe Boudon, Lived-in Architecture: Le Corbusier's Pessac Revisited, (London: Lund Humphries and Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1972).

Revisited: Seven Years Later" by Dorit Fromm and Peter Bosselmann;[11] and the book by Philippe Boudon Lived-in Architecture: Le Corbusier Revisited[12] , all suggest how these homes grounded in the principle of autonomy have been changed and altered by their dwellers. It is seen that the Gournis have altered the vaults and domes of Fathy's design with pitched roofs supported on wooden rafters and have covered up the openings that were meant to open and light the house, to create darker and ill-ventilated spaces. These are the tendencies of the Gournis and it is such an identity that they relate to.

Similarly, in the case of Alexander's Mexicali project, the five families that worked towards building a small community of their own within seven years had built barriers between themselves, altered the orientation of their homes, and thus live independently, altering and expanding their individual homes with minimal concern for their neighbor.[13] In the case of Pessac, the residents seem to have altered the cubist housing units designed by Le Corbusier (almost unrecognizably in certain cases) to homes that befits the dwellers own image of home--one that is true to his/her meaning of home and embedded in the experiences and values related to its making.[14]

Although Fathy's and Alexander's experiments have taken an important step towards understanding the sociocultural order and identity of the prospective dwellers, these projects may have failed to respond to a personal order and identity of the individual dweller, as the major building modification by individual families indicate.

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[11] Fekri A Hassan and Christine Plimpton, "New Gourna: Vernacular Remodeling of Architectural Space," Traditional Dwellings and Settlements: Working Paper Series, Vol. XVI (1989): 49-77; Dorit Fromm and Peter Bosselmann, "Mexicali Revisited: Seven Years Later," Places, Vol. 1, Number 4 (19): 78-97.

[12] ibid.

[13] Fromm and Bosselmann, "Mexicali Revisited," 93-96.

[14] Boudon, Lived-in Architecture, 87-106.

Design and Policy Implications

In this light, as supported by Dovey, one direction towards making homes where the dwellers feel "at home", following the properties of order and identity that it evokes, may be participatory/self-built housing. The Arumbakkam housing project may be a very important example here. This project was planned by the Madras Metropolitan Development Authority, in order to alleviate the major housing problem Madras was facing at time, was primarily designed to help the dwellers and the housing authorities economically.

The aim of the Development Authorities, who could not provide dwelling units commensurate to the incomes of the poor people, was to only support and facilitate home-building through the provision of land and basic services. Such a scheme helped both the housing authorities, who did not have to make large investments on low-income housing, and the poor city dwellers, who could not afford to buy pre-constructed units even if they were offered at subsidized costs. The Sites and Services Scheme allowed the poor to buy land alloted to them at low costs (or even through an installment plan), and build on it as and when they could afford to.

The nine homes of Arumbakkam are seen to have used these facilities depending on their personal means and preferences. For instance the family of home I, were able to afford the cost of the site but had to avail the loan of a thousand rupees in order to build what they have today. This is true also of home IV. Home II on the other hand, have taken a loan even to buy the site and since they cound not afford any more, built a temporary thatch structure, themselves. Home III, whose dwellers are extremely cautious about their financial commitments, were only able to buy the plot with their savings, and since they did not want to be indebted by a loan decided to built a thatch hut, which they plan to refurbish every three years.

The families of group B, who are better off than those of group A, have been able to buy the site and start some sort of permanent construction during the years they have lived at Arumbakkam. Home V, for instance, has managed to fully construct one floor and has built a temporary thatch roof on the next, waiting to convert it into a permanent floor after a few years. Home VI who have lived at

Arumbakkam longer have almost finished constructing the entire house, while home VII is in the same stage as home V. The families of group C, however, do not express any difficulties as far as monetary affordability is concerned and seem to be constructing and expanding their homes as they needed to. These are considered exceptions to the group of people this site was targeted for.

The success of the Arumbakkam project can be illustrated by returning to the three groups of Arumbakkam houses. The three groups represent three different conditions for successs that exist in self-help housing and will be explained in turn. Group A--explained earlier as the homes that are most intune with the program aims expressing the strong identities--may be described as the most successful among the Arumbakkam homes. Here, the dwellers belong to the target group these sites were designed for and have built their homes according to their economic capacity, reflecting their personal identities directly into the homes. The site, its size, its development restrictions (setbacks, number of floor, maximum floor area) and its immediate surroundings, all relate to this income group and hence the rendering of spatial patterns by its dwellers seems to fit these sites.

Group B, in contrast, seems to be at a transitional example. The families are reaching towards a higher economic and social status, but still seem to fit within the EWS-site aims. These homes are almost fully developed in terms of the limits imposed by the development authorities, and this is the identity the families carry. They represent a group that is on the verge economically and socially, of moving to a site meant for a higher income group. Such a condition may be a crucial with regard to the success of a self-help program. As the program does not have any control over the phases at which construction can be carried out and the time period between each expansion, the homes of richer families develop at a more rapid pace. The result of such varied development patterns results in the community being divided by some homes that are extremely well-developed (eg. home VI) and others that are very poorly developed (eg. home II). Such variations within the community is due to the varied financial status and personal preference even between a broad range of similar income group families. Such an imbalance in growth patterns can be relieved if the dwellers are prescribed with a basic pattern of development suggesting a broad framework of growth/renovation. While implementing such a pattern it is imperitive however, that the people who are capable of building their homes faster should be provided with an alternative scheme where the pattern suits their personal affordability and preferences. Families whose economic status has risen during the course of their stay at Arumbakkam, should also be shifted to another scheme, relieving their site and home for a suitable occupant.

The program's failure to accomodate for such growing families is what the unsatisfactory condition of group C portrays. They are the richest homes and have clearly expanded their homes to much more that the limitations set by the development authorities. The do not fit into the program of these sites and, in this sense , are not thus providing reason for their lack in keeping with the aim of the Arumbakkam project. Such homes may be described as one of the drawbacks of the Arumbakkam projects. These homes may be examples of either a family that has grown economically over the income level of the EWS or has bought these sites illegally.

These three groups help highlight some important aspects of self-built housing, through which certain implications may be drawn. With reference to the specific Arumbakkam project, it can be quite clearly inferred that the first group of homes exhibits the most ideal condition. Here the identity of the people and the expression of their homes fits the progam of the site and hence exposes not only the operational success of this scheme, but also the success of the group-A homes as experiential entities, where the dweller fits his/her home.

This scheme, however, is by no means completely successful because the housing authorities have no control over a fast expanding home which at a stage becomes unfit for the specific program of the present site. This may be an important problem that might have to be dealt with in the program of the sites and services scheme, not only in Arumbakkam but in self-built housing programs in general. The solution suggested earlier may be useful to solve this problem of imbalance.

With adequate and sensitive development control and proper site allocations, such a self-built housing scheme might prove to be successful not only to solve the large housing problem of many nations in the world, but also the "homelessness" problem that is faced by many who are provided with "houses" instead of "homes."

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INTERPRETING THE SENSE OF HOME THROUGH A SELF-BUILT HOUSING EXPERIMENT IN MADRAS, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis strives to understand the concept of "home" in qualitative terms in the particular context of large-scale public housing for urban low-income groups in the developing nation of India. This study examines the effect of participatory housing in strengthening the sense of home. The study uses the conceptual outline provided by Kimberley Dovey (1985) as a guide to explicate the environmental, architectural and experiential properties of home. The empirical context is a self-built housing experiment in Madras, India, through which the sense of home is interpreted. Three of Dovey's themes--home as order, home as identity and dialectics of home--are used to explicate the essential experiential qualities of nine specific homes within the Arumbakkam, Madras housing project. Madras housing authorities call this housing program the "Sites and Services Scheme."

These nine homes are presented conceptually in terms of three groups identified on the basis of economic standing and a range of individual and socio-cultural differences. The study illustrates such similarities and differences among the three groups of homes and gives particular attention to the families' spatial patterns and temporal routines. The resulting interpretation of the nine homes has important design and policy implications in that the nine dwellings exhibit experiential qualities that emerge through a process of close association with the making, building and residing within a home place.

This study seeks to bring to light the importance of a family's personal and active association with a dwelling place in the making of a home and the need to facilitate this first-hand identification and attachment through a program of self-built housing. Such facilitation might provide homes for low-income groups, rather than just housing.