

Research Paper

Documentary analysis of Persian papers published on rural housing in Iran in the recent decade

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ABSTRACT

A careful study of the dimensions of human life in rural areas and its accurate recognition for the design and construction of suitable houses require a special look at rural housing research in terms of physical, technical, economic, cultural, social and environmental aspects. This research analyzes the records in the literature on rural housing by referring to scientific journals in the field. The findings of the study indicate that most of the research has been conducted in a descending order in the provinces of North Khorasan, Fars, Zanjan, and Sistan and Baluchestan. The series of studies carried out can be classified under nine issues including rural house designing and modelling, sustainable housing, structural-functional changes in houses, native architecture of Iranian houses, planning and policy, facilities and credits, housing rehabilitation, analysis of housing indices, and geographic analysis of housing elements. The findings of this research indicate three main approaches adopted in the study of rural housing in Iran. As much as 83.58% of all the research has been conducted with quantitative methodology, 13.43% with qualitative method, and just 2.98% (two cases) with combined methodology. Also, as the results show, of all the rural housing research in the country, 34.22% is retrospective, 11.94% is prospective, and 53.73% has addressed the existing housing situation.

Key words:

Rural housing, Analysis of documents, Papers published, Scientific journals, Iran

Extended Abstract**1. Introduction**

Rural housing is of particular importance and of central focus due to its being the physical manifestation of the cultural, social and economic life in rural areas. In a macro dimension, housing can play an important role in socio-economic and cultural develop-

ment, be of effect especially in job creation and capital flows, and ultimately create psychological and mental welfare for residents. In a micro dimension, however, owing to the need for economic development (at both urban and rural levels), paying attention to rural housing seems indispensable. Due to its various functions, rural housing can have multi-dimensional impacts on human lives. A careful study of the design and construction of rural houses leads to certain insights into the physical, technical, economic, cultural, social and environmental aspects

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of rural life. Since the late nineteenth century, many architects, planners and socio-economic reformers have referred to the issue of housing to improve its quality and quantity. The studies reviewed in this research show that this issue in the academic circles of Iran dates back to early 2001 and has grown considerably in the past few years.

2. Methodology

The research was conducted mainly on a documentary approach. The study sample consisted of the research articles in the scientific journals published in the country. The scientific validity of the journals was confirmed by the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. The scientific sites addressed in this study are accessible in an indexed manner. The time span covered was from 2005 to the end of December 2015. First, through some library research in scientific journals related to rural housing, scientific databases and a comprehensive list of the corresponding published papers were derived. Then, by focusing on the study questions, the necessary data were extracted. The data contained information about the expertise of the researchers, the geographical scope of the research, the dominant approaches and methodology, the tools and methods used for data collection, and data analysis techniques. Finally, with regard to the issues raised, the data were categorized and analyzed.

3. Results

The results of this study showed three-month periods of research work mostly done in the rural areas of the provinces of North Khorasan, Fars, Zanjan, and Sistan and Baluchestan. The set of these studies can be divided into nine categories including design and pattern of rural houses, sustainable housing, housing development, structural-functional aspects, native architecture of houses, planning and housing policies, housing and credit facilities, and retrofitting housing. Of the examined surveys of rural housing, 68.65% have focused on the physical dimensions of houses, 8.95% on the social aspects, 10.44% on the economic dimension, and 11.94% on other related aspects.

4. Discussion

The data indicate a lack of balance in research on various aspects of housing. While housing has different dimensions, poor macro-strategies for research on housing coupled with the lack of proper distribution of research on various aspects of the issue hinder the development and sustainability of rural housing. Removal of these defects is essential for the future orientation of research policies. Next to geographers, architects have dedicated

only 29.85% of the studies to the field. The situation is by far more disappointing with regard to the cooperation in interdisciplinary fields such as urban development, agricultural extension, and art and agricultural economy.

5. Conclusion

This research was conducted through library studies and a documentary field-oriented approach. A quantitative analysis was also done based on questionnaires. According to the results of the study, although the research in the field of rural housing is still in its infancy, rural geographers and architects do not seem to be active enough to do studies on the subject. However, more of the research has so far been done by geographers through quantitative and statistical methods.

Meanwhile, the housing issue is multi-faceted, and there should be participatory and qualitative techniques to deal with it, such as using semi-structured interviews and structured quantitative models. Next to geographers, architects have dedicated 29.85% of the studies in this field. The findings also showed that there are three main approaches for the study of rural housing in Iran. As much as 83.58% of all the research has been done with quantitative methodology, (13.43%) with qualitative methodology and only 2.98% (two cases) with combined methodology.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest