

C835500 : MAJOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

KEY WORD: LIVING CONDITION / BOAT HOUSES / HOUSING PLANNING

CHATCHAI ANGARUNKORN : LIVING CONDITION IN BOAT HOUSES IN BANGKOK METROPOLIS.

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This research aims to study the living conditions, the fundamental economic and social problems and the housing plans of boat-house dwellers anchoring along the banks of the Chao Phraya River in Bangkok Metropolis in order to set up some guidelines for housing development. It has been conducted by using statistical random samplings with a sample size of 303 who were presented with questionnaires.

The main points of the study can be concluded as follows. Most boat-house dwellers have relatively low incomes; most of them earn 7,000-10,000 Baht a month while their monthly expenses are about 5,000 - 7,000 Baht, and they have no savings. From the survey, the average member in each family is two although the actual size of the family is bigger since some of the children are sent to study on land with their relatives. Most of the samples came from the central part of Thailand. They only have primary school education and have lived on board for over 25 years. Most of them are workers, not owners of the boats and they have no house on land. The average living space on board, which is 15-20 sq.m., is smaller than standard but it is enough to accommodate 2 people. Although boat-house dwellers always face difficulties concerning electricity and water supplies, they find it easy to cope because they are used to the situation. Their common problems are the security of their personal belongings and where to anchor in the center of the municipal area. As for the housing trend in the future, they would like to go back to their hometowns and stay on land. Very few would wish to own a house in Bangkok Metropolis.

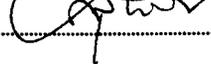
The outcome of the research shows that a boat is used as a mobile house and a place to conduct business. This benefits the dwellers in many ways. First of all, the cost of living is low because there are no water and electricity bills. Another good point is that one doesn't have to waste time travelling to work. However, living on boat-houses can cause both social and environmental problems. One of the problems is water pollution caused by the dwellers' dumping of waste into the water. The way boat-house dwellers anchor their boats can also obstruct water traffic. As for social problems, members of families have to live separately as some members need to stay on land. Moreover, the dwellers cannot have their boat-houses registered in the way that owners of houses on land can; thus, making it impossible to develop, their present accommodation into permanent accommodation. The number of families living on boat-house is still small compared to the housing sector as a whole. And lastly, when workers or employees no longer work on board, they tend to have housing problems since they lack housing plans and have no savings. Therefore, the (government's) development plan for boat-housing should focus on the temporary use of accommodation during the working period. This can be done by improving the standard of living, especially in sanitation. At the same time, boat-house dwellers should be encouraged to find opportunities to own a house on land. They should be provided with alternatives and assistance to achieve this.

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