

**PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF LOW-COST HOUSING ;  
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS AND USERS**

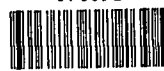
A DISSETATION PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE,  
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## ABSTRACT

Housing is a very basic human need. Many developing countries including Sri Lanka are experiencing housing inadequacies and backlog mainly due to spiraling increase in population, fast pace of urbanization and other socio-economic factors.

The above has created heavy demand for conventional building materials in the construction industry. Scarcity of building materials and the unlimited use of them has made a rapid increase in their costs. Persons of low and middle-income families have only limited funds at their disposal for building construction. As a result people are looking for ways to cut cost.

During the recent past, a lot of low-cost building materials, construction techniques and products have been introduced by housing professionals. But it seems that still those are not very popular among house builders. Acceptability is an important factor in low-cost housing as it is intimately related to the needs of the people and their way of life, as well as their expectations and aspirations. A mismatch between the supply and demand is identified and this study was intended to find out causes for this situation.

The present study reveals that people are not prepared to accept a low quality product for the simple reason of reduction in cost; instead they expect them to be standard quality and to be cost effective. This also reveals that a person's educational background and awareness play a major role in synthesizing various requirements and deciding upon the suitability and applicability of the product. Ultimately this study presents that it needs proper supportive ways to disseminate knowledge and to increase the awareness of low-cost innovations among professionals and beneficiaries.

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