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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Author Name	Title	Page No.
ENGLISH PART – III			
1	Dr. G. Madhukar	Influence of Study Habits on Scholastic Achievement of Children with Visual Impairment	1-9
2	Dr. Maya Sanjay Khandat	Computational Skill	10-18
3	Dr. S. B. Chandanshiv	Brand Image and its Impact on Buying Behavior	19-22
4	Bhagwat Kharat	Accurate Theoretical Prediction of Transition Metal Mononitride using Density Functional Theory Method	23-30
5	Dr. Govind D. Adhe	Information Communication Technology (ICT): An Overview	31-36
6	Rahul Keda Shewale	Cloud Computing in Libraries: An Overview	37-40
7	Dr. Syeda Rizwana Tabassum	Gulam Ali Azad Bilgrami – A True Representative of Composite Indian Culture	41-45
8	Dr. Vedprakash A. Malwade	Dowry System in India	46-52
9	Dr. Vandana Junghare Manjiri Chopade	Female Entrepreneurs in Apparel Making	53-56

10	Gangasagare P. T.	Impact of Seasonal Feeding on Milk Production of Marathwadi Buffalo	57-60
11	Dr. Kailash D. Tandel	International Standard Book Number (ISBN)	61-68
12	Mr. G. S. Ubale Dr. R. B. Patil	General Land – Use Pattern in Kolhapur District, Maharashtra: A Geographical Analysis	69-75
13	Dr. P. Susheela Sriram	The Themes of Alienation and Identity Crisis in the Select Novels of V.S. Naipaul	76-80
14	Dr. Aman Bagade	Budhism and the Meaning of Life : A Study of the Buddh's Concept of Nirvana	81-89
15	Karruna Santoshasing Pardeshi	Prevalence of Gastro-Intestinal Parasite in <i>Labeo rohita</i> at Pune M.S. India	90-94
16	Dr. Benny M. J.	My Adventures with the Bard of Avon: A Memoir	95-100

CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Author Name	Title	Page No.
ENGLISH PART – IV			
1	Dr. Navdeep Kaur	Modern playwrights and Samuel Beckett's Trace of Lost Self in Drama	1-10
2	Dipak Shivaji Jamdhade	Important Factors Responsible for Learning and Teaching English Language at Undergraduate Level in Maharashtra - A Review	11-14
3	Dr. Bankat Yadav	A Comparative Study on Common Injuries among the Greco Roman and Free Style Wrestlers among University Wrestlers	15-18
4	Dr. Sunil Yuvraj Narke	Geographical Analysis of Rural Sex Ration: A Case Study in Ahmednagar District	19-26
5	Nilesh S. Kadu	Effect of Teak and Mixed Plantation on Fertility of Soil in East Melghat	27-32
6	Miss Rashmi S. Doke Dr. Aruna Prakash	Fictional Autobiographical Touch and Peripheral Narration in Yann Martel Novels: Self, Life of Pi and Beatrice and Virgil	33-39
7	Dr. Sachin Dattatraya Bhandare	An Analysis of Politeness Principle in Girish Karnad's <i>Hayavadana</i>	40-45

8	Mr. Vijay Jaysing Dalvi	Distribution of Rural Settlements in Shrigonda Tahsil: A Geographical Analysis	46-50
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‘अजिंठा’ या त्रैमासिकात प्रसिध्द झालेली मते मुख्य संपादक, संपादक मंडळ व सल्लागार मंडळास मान्य असतीलच असे नाही. या नियतकालिकात प्रसिध्द करण्यात आलेली लेखकाची मते ही त्याची वैयक्तिक मते आहेत.

तसेच शोधनिबंधाची जबाबदारी स्वतः लेखकावर राहिल. हे नियतकालिक मालक मुद्रक प्रकाशक विनय शंकरराव हातोले यांनी अजिंठा कॉम्प्युटर अँड प्रिंटर्स जयसिंगपूर विद्यापीठ गेट औरंगाबाद येथे मुद्रित व प्रकाशित केले.

Distribution of Rural Settlements in Shrigonda Tahsil: A Geographical Analysis

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Abstract

A study of distribution of rural settlements is of immense help in rural planning and development. There is great impact of physical factors on the distribution of rural settlements. Wherever in rural areas the land, topography, adequate water supply, relatively plain region and fertile soil plays vital role in the distribution of rural settlements in Shrigonda Tahsil of Ahmednagar district. There are 114 rural settlements in the study area. The study of the rural settlements is of great help to understand the reasons of various types, size and shape of villages of the study region. The present paper makes a geographical study of the distribution of rural settlements in eight circles of Shrigonda Tahsil.

Keywords: Rural settlements, Circle, Distribution, Physiography.

Introduction

Human settlements are, in fact the first adjustment of man with environment. Therefore, the distribution of rural settlements is closely linked with the basic ecological environment. Hence in the selection of settlement sites man is usually guided by both the attractive and restrictive forces of physical setting such as topography, geology, relief, drainage climate, soil types and natural vegetation. The main forces for the distribution of rural settlements in the study region are the hilly ranges in the north eastern part and low land area of southern part of the tahsil.

The form of settlements in any region represents man's relationship with environment therefore, the study of settlements is an important aspect of settlement geography. Rural settlements geography, systematic and scientific analysis is still in initial stage. Recently administrators, geographers, researchers are paying more attention on the study of rural settlements. The systematic and scientific study of rural settlements may give rise to a new aspect of settlements geography.

Choice of the study Region

For the present research paper Shrigonda tahsil of Ahmednagar district is selected as a study region. The name of the district Ahmednagar has come from the name of the founder of the town by Ahmed Shah Nizam Shah. The district Ahmednagar has many places of historical importance. In today's content Ahmednagar is most advanced district having maximum number of sugar factories, perhaps to spread the message "rural prosperity through co-operation" The first co-operative sugar factory in Asia was established at Pravaranagar.

Ahmednagar district has 14 Talukas. The district has 1581 villages out of which 2 villages are deserted. Shrigonda tahsil of Ahmednagar is selected as a study region. Shrigonda is located south west part of district. It lies between $18^{\circ} 21' 18''$ N to $18^{\circ} 54' 07''$ N latitude and $74^{\circ} 23' 11''$ E to $74^{\circ} 56' 40''$ E longitude. The total geographical area of tahsil is 1605.61 sq. Km which contributes 9.22 per cent of the district. According to 2011 census, the total rural population of tahsil is 284841 consisting 114 villages.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the impact of topography on the distribution of rural settlements.
2. To analysis the relationship between physiography and settlements.

Database and Methodology

For the present research paper data has been collected through sources of primary and secondary primary data has been collected through questionnaires, interview method and secondary data has been collected through Toposheets, census hand book, socio-economic abstract of Ahmednagar district, Grampanchayat office, Tahsil office, books, research paper. The primary and secondary data thus collected is analysed. The processed data is presented in the form of table and diagram.

Physiography of the Study Area

The overall general slope of the tahsil is spread north to southward part of the study region. Geologically the whole area is covered by the Deccan trap lava flows of upper cretaceous to lower Eocene age. Chikhali (693 m), Koregaon (681 m), Pandharewadi (670m), Vadul (665 m) are the highest elevation villages locates, Northern & northern eastern part of Tahsil. This is part of ranges of harichandragad. The average height of northern eastern part of study region is more than 650m. The middle part of the study region average height between 550m to 650m, this region known as plateau region and southern parts average height is below 550m. According to physiography study region is divided into three parts. Lowland area, plateau area & hilly ranges.

Distribution of Rural Settlements in the Study Region

The distribution of settlements in the tahsil is uneven. The main important factors of the distribution of rural settlements in the tahsil are well drained and fertile soil, southern low land area, Ghod river, Ghod canal, Bhima river, Visapur tank & Hanga river basin and hilly range of Kolgaon and Mandargaon circles. Being followed the above factors the distribution of settlements in the tahsil is more convenient to study in the following three groups (table no. 1). Physical environment affects the density and distribution of rural settlements. Physiographical elements such as relief, climate, drainage, plateau and fertile soil are the prime factors in shaping and thronging the settlements in rural areas. Physiography plays a vital role in agricultural activities which is the leading source of income for the rural population. People make adjustments in their farming and agro based activities according to the utility of physiographical factors.

Physiographical structure of the study region is as follows.

Table 1. Physiographical Divisions of Shrigonda Tahsil

Height Group	Area (Sq Km)	% of Area	Settlements	% of Settlements
Below 550m (Low land region)	403.76	26.52	37	32.46
551 m-650m (Plateau region)	991.55	65.08	68	59.65
Above 651m (Hilly region)	128.11	8.4	9	7.89
Total	1523.42	100	114	100

Source: Compiled by Researcher.

The Low Land Region (Below 550 m)

Out of total 1523.42 Sq Km area of Shrigonda tahsil, 403.76 Sq Km area is below 550m. Its percentage is 26.52. It is the low land region of the study area. 37 settlements have occupied this area. The low land area has spread over the south west to south region. This is the fertile land portion of the basin of Ghod and Bhima rivers. Sangavi Dumala, Nimgaon Khalu, Ajnuj, Angare, Kavtha, and Kasti are the major settlements of this region. This region is good for agriculture and sugarcane cultivation due to optimum availability of water from Ghod and Bhima rivers. This region has also the high density of settlements. It shows that topography of the region has an impact on the compactness of settlements.

The Plateau Region (Height 551 – 650 m)

In Shrigonda tahsil, the Plateau area has the height between 551 - 650 m covering the maximum 65.08 % area i.e. 991.55 Sq Km out of total 1523.42 Sq Km. area. This part is occupied by the highest number of settlements i.e. 68, its percentage is 59.65. It is the most suitable area where people settle permanently. This region covers mostly the central as well as the northwest and northern part. This part is good for agriculture and cultivation of various crops like onion, jowar, bajra, wheat, , and groundnut. These crops are seasonal. This region has medium density of settlements as compared to the low land region. Kukadi project and Visapur dam are the prime irrigational sources of this area. Major settlements in this area are Deodaithan, Dhawalgaon, Pimpalgaon Pisa, Visapur, Belwandi, Chimbhale.

The Hilly Area (Height Above 651 m)

The hilly area in Shrigonda tahsil is spread on 128.11 Sq Km. It covers 8.4 % area. Nine settlements are situated in the hilly ranges. Its total percentage is 7.89. This region has widened in the north east part of tahsil. The density of settlement is low. This is dry area and no permanent water source is available and agriculture totally depends upon monsoon. Chikhali, Koregaon, Mungusgaon, Thite Sangvi, Dorje, and Mandavgan are the major settlements.

Conclusion

The rural settlements distribution in the study area is uneven. In Southern part of study region, density of settlements is more compared with central part and northern part of the region. Physiography of the study region plays vital role in the distribution of rural settlements. Low land area lies below 550m height and contribute 403.76 Sq.Km. area (26.52%) 37 settlements distributes among this area (32.46%), settlements distribution percentage is more than other two groups. Second physiographical group lies 550m to 650m height find contribute 991.55 Sq.Km. (65.08%) area, 68 settlements distributed on this region (59.65%). Third and last group area height above 651m and contribute 128.11 Sq.Km. (8.4%) area, 9 settlements distributed on this region and 7.89% of settlements out of total 114.

In Northern and northern east part of the study region, settlements distribution percentage is less than southern part, because these northern part lies under hilly ranges and also maximum villages are non-irrigated, means permanent irrigation facilities are not available, soil is also not so fertile due to this settlements distribution is less. In other hand southern part is well irrigated as well as good fertile soil and slope of area is also low to gentle, transportation network is also

good. Majority large size rural settlements lies southern and central part of the study region. These are Kasti, Limpangaon, Belwandi Velpane Madhewadgaon.

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