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Impact of Physical and Cultural Factors on Place-Names of Rural Settlements in Shrigonda Tahsil

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Abstract

A study of rural settlements is of immense help for rural planning and development. Analysis of the place-names of rural settlements reveal an interesting fact and give suggestion or hint about the origin of settlements as set in local legends, culture, history, ecology, and epic stories. The study of place names is of great help in the present analysis as the names bear identifiable associations with the physical and cultural features of the region. The present paper focuses on the impact of physical and cultural factors on the place names of rural settlements in Shrigonda Tahsil.

Keywords: Rural settlement, placenames, physical cultural, factors, flora, fauna.

Introduction

'Settlement geography, a branch of human geography, is the study of the cultural landscape. It is a science of systematic inquiry of occupancy features distributed over space with differentiation in relation to man.

The form of settlement in any region represents man's relationship with environment; therefore, the study of settlement is an important aspect of Human Geography. The forms of cultural landscape spread over the surface of the earth are studied in settlement geography. Recently researcher, administrators, social workers and planners 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. Place names of settlements a fascinating issue for reserach. In this study, it is observed that some physical and cultural factors are associated with names of Rural Settlements. Physical factors like relief, waterbodies, fauna, flora and cultural factors like surname, diety, caste and religion have impact on the placenames of rural settlements.

Choice of the Study Region

For the present research work Shrigonda tahsil of Ahmednagar District is selected as a study region. The Ahmednagar district has historical heritage. 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. In Ahmednagar district Shrigonda tahsil is selected as a study region. Shriganda is located south west part of district. It lies between 18° 21' 18" N to 18° 54' 07" N latitude and 74° 23' 11" E to 74° 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 population of tahsil is 284841 consisting 114 villages and 8 cirles.

Objectives of the Study

- 1. To study the impact of physical and cultural determinants on place names of rural settlements.
- 2. To find out the origin and history of the place names of the selected rural settlements.

Data Base and Methodology

For the present research paper data has been collected through both the sources, primary and secondary. Primary data has been collected through questionnaires, interview methods and observations. Secondary data is the collection from district census hand book, district statistical abstract, Gram Panchayat Office, Tahasil, Panchayat Samiti Office, Zilla Parishad Office, reference books, journal internetand topographical sheets NO.47J/5,47J/6,47J/9,47J/10,47J/11, 47J/13,47J14.

The primary and secondary data thus collected is processed. The processed data is presented in the form of table, graphs, and diagrams.

Placenames of Rural Settlements:

Analysis of the place-names of rural settlements reveal an interesting fact and give suggestion or hint about the origin of settlements as set in local legends, culture, history, ecology, and epic stories. The study of place names is of great help in the present analysis as the names bear identifiable associations with the physical and cultural features of the region. It serves as a basic source of information about geographical surroundings. Bruhnes (1920: 239) thinks of place names as the fossils of human geography. Knowledge of the regional language is helpful in finding out the significance of place names. According to Bruhnes (1920: 33), an examination of prefix and suffix of the names are essential to reveal the past associations and affiliations of settlements. Though such analysis is complex, it provides some clues to the early human habitats of the area concerned. The linguistic elements in the rural areas give clear evidence regarding the movement of people, area of their colonization and their relations with the earlier and subsequent groups. They also help in indicating the period of their establishment as well as the reason for their nomenclature. The affixes of names of settlements such as -nagar (town), -gram (village), -pur (settlement) etc. have been derived from Sanskrit language which represents Aryan settlements. On the other hand the suffixes like -ganj (marketplace), - bazaar (daily or weekly market), Abad (settlement), Bag (Garden attached to village) etc. are typical of Muslim settlements.

Circlewise Placenames Associated with Various Natural and Cultural Factors:

In large number of instances, the place names are associated with the natural features like hill, river, forest, tree, tank or character of the soil or slope of the land.

Natural and cultural phenomena have influenced the nomenclature of settlements/villages of the region. Many names are originated after the names of gods or goddess and surnames. Some settlements do take their names from flora, fauna, waterbodies and relief. Shrigonda tahsil has total 114 number of settlements. Out of which, names of 43 settlements from eight circles are associated with various natural and cultural factors. In Belwandi circle, total 5 settlements are associated with natural and cultural factors. Two settlements Erandoli and Belwandi are associated with flora. Ghargaon is associated with fauna, Pargaon is associated with waterbody, and Kharatwadi is associated with surname. In Mandavgan circle too, 5 settlements take their names from natural and cultural factors. Two settlements -Ruikhel and Banpimpri are related with flora, Mahandulwadi is related with fauna, and Bangarde and Chavarsangvi are related with the surnames. In Shrigonda circle out

of six three settlements namely Gavhanewadi, Dokewadi and Chorachiwadi are linked with surnames. Two settlements - Deulgaon and Mahadeowadi are linked with deity and one - Ghodegaon is linked with fauna. In Kasti circle, 6 settlements share their names with the natural and cultural factors. Four settlements namely Chormalewadi, Domalewadi, Janglewadi and Masalwadi take their names from surnames. Dhokraimala is linked with relief and Nimgaon with flora. In Pedgaon circle, out of 5 settlements three - Shipalkarwadi, Mundhekarwadi and Kansewadi are related with the surnames and two - Hiradgaon and Kautha are related with flora. Chimbhale circle has 6 settlements taking their names from natural and cultural factors.

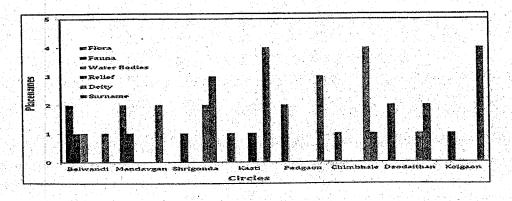
Hangewadi, Loni Vyanknath, Mahadeowadi and Parwatwadi are associated with the deities. Shirasgaon is linked with surname and Bori is related with flora. Deodaithan circle has got 5 settlements sharing their names with natural and cultural phenomena. Two settlements namely Nimbvi and wadgaon Shindodi are associated with flora other two settlements - Sarola Somwanshi and Gavhanewadi are linked with surnames and Deodaithan is associated with deity. Kolgaon circle includes 5 settlements taking their names from natural and cultural phenomena. Four settlements - Bhapkarwadi, Ghutewadi, Lagadwadi and Pandharewadi are linked with surnames and one namely Vethekarwadi is associated with fauna.

Table 1: Place names of Settlements Associated with Various Natural and Cultural Factors

Sr. No	Circle	Flora	Fauna	Water Bodies	Relief	Deity	Surname	Total	Percentage
1	Belwandi	2	1	1	0	0	1	5	11.62
2	Mandavgan	2	1	0	0	0	2	5	11.62
3	Shrigonda	0	1	0	0	2	3 (6	13.95
4	Kasti	1	0	0	1	0	4	6	13.95
5	Pedgaon	2	0	0	0	0	3	5	11.62
6	Chimbhale	1	0	0	0	4	1	6	13.95
7	Deodaithan	2	0	0	0	1	2	5	11.62
8	Kolgaon	0	1	0	0	0	4	5	11.62
	Total	10	4	1	1	7	20	43	100

Source: Compiled by Research Scholar

It shows that out of 43 settlements, 10 settlements are associated with fauna and 4 with fauna. Only one settlement is related with the name of water body and one with the relief. Seven settlements take their names from deities and 20 settlements do take their names from surnames. About 38% settlements are associated with the names of these various phenomena. Dominance of Hinduism is also reflected through the names of the settlements.



Source: Compiled by Research Scholar

Conclusion:

After making the geographical analysis of placenames of rural settlements in Shrigonda tahsil, it is concluded that the place-names of rural settlements of Shrigonda tahsil have its relations with physical and cultural factors of the region. Out of 114 rural settlements in Shrigonda tahsil 43 (38%) settlements have their names related with physical and cultural factors. Out of 43 settlements, 20 (47%) settlements bear their names from surnames or cultural factors, 10 (23%) settlements' names are related with flora, 4 (9%) settlements are named after fauna, 7 (16%) settlements take their names from deity and from water bodies and relief one each settlement bear the name. Majority of the settlements bear their names from the surnames of the people who are more in numbers in those settlements.

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