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DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE HIGH HIMALAYAN REGION: A CASE STUDY OF HAR KI DUN

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ABSTRACT

The distribution settlement in the high Himalayan region is governed by interacting factors of both nature and culture. These factors are both attractive and restrictive. Thus, these factors create constraints or offer opportunities and possibilities. A combination of all these factors affects the site (location) and distribution of the settlements. It also defines the size of settlements and the economy of settlements. Har ki Dun is one of the remote mountain valleys in the high Himalayan region. It is known as 'The Valley within Mountains'. It is a distinct geographical entity besides it has a distinct socio-cultural 'identity'. The land of Har ki Dun has a very thin population with few scattered settlements. About 47 settlements with an estimated population of 22000 are concentrated in this region. A few of these settlements are located even above 3000 m in height. Unfortunately, information about the spatial distribution of settlement in this region is not available adequately. This research is an attempt to measure the location and analyse the spatial distribution of settlements in this region. The present research reflects that the elevation and slope are the basic but influential factors that affect the distribution of settlements and its size. These factors also affect the nature and form (economic character) of settlements.

KEYWORDS: *Distribution of Settlements, Har ki Dun, High Himalayan Region*

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