

## A Geographical Study of Rural Settlements in Satara District of Maharashtra

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### Abstract:

*Settlement Geography is recent most sprats from the venerable tank of human geography. It is considerations have however run like a thread through almost the whole fabric of geographic thought. Settlement graph deals with the facilities built in the process of human occupancy of the land and their grooving the nature and distribution of these facilities are related to the art made of living and on physical factors. In the present study rural settlements of Satara district have been considered the distribution of growth characteristics and size and location of rural settlement have been studied.*

### Introduction :

Settlement is considerations have run like a thread through almost the whole fabric of geographic thought. Settlements graph deals with the facilities built in the process of human occupancy of the land and their grooving the nature and distribution of these facilities are related to the art made of living and on physical factors. In the present study rural settlements of Satara district have been considered the distribution of growth characteristics and size and location of rural settlements have been studied. The study of rural settlements plays an important role in the life of people whether the settlements are small or large. Hence, for the study of spatial distribution of rural settlements, the size, spacing and density of rural settlements and at the same time their relation with physiographic elements has been observed.

### Objectives :

1. To study the distributional elements of rural settlements like number, density, size and spacing in the Satara District of rural settlements.
2. To understand the relationship and these distribution elements with physiographic, population and other factors.

### Study Area :

The Settlement study is very important in the hilly and drought prone area hence Satara district has been selected for the present study. It lies between 17° 05' north to 18° 11' north latitude and

73° 33' east to 74° 54' east longitude comprising 10,484 km<sup>2</sup> area. Which is 3.4 percent of the Maharashtra state consists of eleven tahsils.

### Data Base And Methodology :

For the present study the secondary data have been used to analyses the distribution of rural settlements and also used various quantitative methods. The data and information for the present study is taken from various sources like District Gazetteer of Satara District, District Census Hand Book of Satara District 2001, the Socio –Economic Review and District Statistical Abstract of Satara District, 2001.

### Physiography And Distribution of Rural Settlement :

In the present analysis distribution of rural settlements and its relationship of physiography has been shown. The study region has been divided into four categories according to height from sea level. Different distribution characteristics various considerably in different physiographic region.

### The River Basin Region (Below 600 M)

In the study region, the northern, southern and some eastern part comes below 600 m. height, which is occupied by the Nira Basin, the Krishna, the Koyana river Basin and Man river. The region has got more fertile soils, irrigation facilities, developed agricultural practices and good transportation network, so the big sized rural settlements are found in this region, River basin area

covers nearly 27 percent of total, which accounts for 21 percent of rural settlements. It means that, most of the rural settlements have concentrated in this region and this part of the study region is most economically prosperous.

**The Low Land Region (600 M To 900 M)**

The low land region of the study region is the part of plateau area of the Sahyadrian mountain and Mahadeo hill ranges. The low land region covers nearly 56 percent of total area and accounts for 60 percent rural settlements of medium to big size. This region has fertile soils and irrigation facilities. So, more number of rural settlements are found in this part of the study region. Most of the central and eastern parts of the study region have been covered by such type of rural settlements.

**The Foot Hill Region (900 M To 1200 M)**

This region lies between 900m to 1200m altitude from sea level. Most of the Sahyadrian hill ranges and the parts of the Mahadeo hill range stretches into north-south and east – west direction in the study region. This region covers nearly 12 percent of the total area and 15 percent of the total rural settlements which are mostly small in size. In this area, monsoonal type of climate has influenced on the rural settlements. The region has steep slope, more monsoonal rainfall, terraced farming of rice and ragi is practiced extensively. So the rural settlements are found at the foot hill region and small in size which are situated on the spurs of the hill ranges.

**The Sahyadrian Ranges (Above 1200 M)**

Most of the western part of the Sahyadrian hill ranges and some western part of Mahadeo hill ranges covered by this region, which is above 1200m from sea level. These regions cover only 5 percent of the total area and have 4 percent of the rural settlements. The rugged topography, steep slope, high rainfall, less land under cultivation, more forest land etc. affects on the distribution of rural settlements in this region. Most of the rural settlements of this region are situated on the hill tops which are small in size.

Table.1

**Satara District: Distribution of Rural Settlements**

Sr. no.	Name of the Tehsils	No. of Rural settlements (2001)
1	Satara	200
2	Wai	113
3	Khandala	65
4	koregoan	110
5	Phaltan	120
6	Man	98
7	Khatav	132
8	Karad	178
9	Patan	269
10	Javali	207
11	Mahabaleshwar	55
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1547</b>

Source: Based on Socio-Economic Abstract and Census Hand Book of Satara District 2001.

It is observed that in the study region, the area which lies below 900m. covers nearly 83 percent of the total and accounts for 81 percent of the rural settlements. It means that there is a positive co-relation between areas covered by the settlements and the number of rural settlements. It is also further observed that, the area which lies above 900m. covers less percent of the total area and few percent of the rural settlements. It also shows a positive co-relation between area covered and number of rural settlements.

Table. 2

**Satara District: Physiographic Region and Distribution of Rural Settlements**

Sr. no	Height (m)	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	% to total	No. of rural settlements	% to rural settlements
1	Above 1200 m	500	5	65	4
2	900-1200 m	1200	12	238	15
3	600-900 m	2700	27	925	60
4	Below 600 m	5730	56	319	21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10130</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1547</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Based on Socio-Economic Abstract and Census Hand Book of Satara District 2001.

In the study region it is observed that, where density of rural population below 100 persons per km<sup>2</sup> is found in the western part, eastern part and few part of the northern area of the study region, which covers an area nearly 27 percent of the total and accounts for 13 percent of the total rural settlements. In this area the size of rural settlements is very small.

The density of population between 100 to 200 persons per km<sup>2</sup> is observed mainly in eastern part and western part of the study region which covers an area about 35 percent of the total area and accounts for 28 percent of the total rural settlements. The western part of the study region is mainly cover with Sahyadrian hill ranges and eastern part which is observed by Mahadeo hill ranges and its off-shoots which has low population density and low rural settlement density.

The central, north - eastern, north – western and some southern part of the south where the density of rural population is observed between 200 to 300 persons per km<sup>2</sup> . Covers an area about 24 percent, which accounts for 21 percent of the total rural settlements. The area has got better soils, irrigation facilities, so it is agriculturally prosperous region, where road network is also developed.

The density of rural population between 300 to 400 persons per km<sup>2</sup> . Is observed in the central west zone of the study region, which is occupied by mainly Krishna river system, covers an area nearly 11 area and accounts for 24 percent rural settlements. The more fertile soil, irrigation facilities, developed agricultural techniques, which attracts more number of populations.

The southern and some part of the north central part the rural population density is above 400 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. Covers an area only 3 percent of the study region, which accounts 14 percent of rural settlements of the total. This part is fertile land of the study region, where more than 80 percent of the land is under irrigation and is also agriculturally prosperous region, where the density of population and the density of rural settlements are also found more.

It is observed that, in the study region where the density of rural population is found less than 200 persons per km<sup>2</sup> . covers an area about 62 percent of the total, which accounts for 41 percent of

rural settlements. It is also observed that, the density of rural population above 300 persons per km<sup>2</sup> . covers an area about 14 percent of the total, which accounts for 38 percent of the rural settlements. It means that, the density of rural population is more which covers less percentage of total area and accounts more number of rural settlements (38percent) of large and medium size because agriculturally and economically prosperous area.

### Conclusion:

The study reveals that, the rural settlements of the hilly part of the study area are more in number, with high density, low size and spacing. This hilly part also characterized with low cultivated land, less transportation network, low population density etc. This situation is become contrast in the plain area where rural settlements are high in number with density, high size and spacing.

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