

Rural Settlement in South Kosi Plain: An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

South Kosi Plain bears the major influence of River System and Flood Disaster so the rural settlement is one of the important matters of concern in this area. It could be very relevant to see its influence on the nature and pattern of population. Generally there are two sets of parameter viz. physical and cultural which affect settlement in rural areas. Though the physical factor is dominant in rural settlement but the cultural factor also plays an associative role. The south Kosi Plain dominantly comprised of five districts viz. Purnea, Katihar, Madhepura, Saharsa and Khagaria consists of 59 C.D Blocks bearing 4041 revenue villages with 1707594 households. The rural population is 10955970 out of the total population i.e. 11904957. Viewing this population geography it comes to us that the area is dominant to rural population and thus the rural settlement comes as a matter of concern. The study attempts to focus on South Kosi Plain with all pros and cons of the rural settlement.

Keywords: Rural Settlement, Pattern of Population, Rural Population

Introduction: South Kosi Plain is dominantly comprised of five districts viz. Purnea, Katihar, Madhepura, Saharsa and Khagaria. If we observe the population geography of this plain through different sources then it comes to us that this area dominant to rural population. Around 92% population is rural in this plain in which Madhepura shares the highest percentage of rural population i.e. 95.57 while Purnea shares the lowest i.e. 89.49. This shows that among these districts, Purnea contributes highest i.e. 10.51% urban population in this plain. To understand the settlement we should also see the caste distribution and their professional inclination of some communities by which we can get an idea of their work interest. A number of castes coming from different religion dwell in this plain. Schedule caste contributes their population percent in Purnea, Katihar, Madhepura, Saharsa and Khagaria respectively 11.98, 11.82, 17.30, 16.69 and 14.83. About 2.84% Schedule Tribes dwell in this plain. There is nearly 35% of the total population can be said engaged in work in which 20.03% can be said as main worker while the rest can be said as marginal worker. There is a big percent of agricultural labourer could also be seen in this plain. Agricultural labourers are those who are based on the wage return either in money form or in other types of share against their work on others land. In South Kosi Plain nearly 11% of the total population can be placed in this category in which Purnea, Katihar, Madhepura, Saharsa and Khagaria contributes about 14.54%, 13.02%, 11.93%, 06.25% and 08.74% respectively. The literacy rate of this plain is near about 53.34 which far below than national literacy rate and even can be said poorer from its concerning state (Bihar) literacy rate i.e. 63.82 as per the latest census of India. South Kosi Plain bears the major influence of River System and Flood Disaster so the rural settlement is one of the important matters of concern in this area. It would be very relevant to see its influence on the nature and pattern of population. Generally there are two sets of parameter viz. physical and cultural which affect settlement in rural areas. Though the physical factor is dominant in rural settlement but the cultural factor also plays an associative role.

Objective of the Study: This study proceeds with the following major objectives:

To study the dominant settlement types in the study area

To study the influence of River System and Flood Disaster on the nature and pattern of population and rural settlement in the study area

To study the influence of Physico-socio-economic aspects on the types and patterns of rural settlement in the study area

To study the influence of the morphology of the villages on Settlement pattern in sample villages of the study area

To study the Labour migration and its impact on economy in the study area

To study the causes of population growth in the study area

Methodology of the Study: The present study is based on two types of analysis: one on empirical assessment and the other on a physical assessment i.e. Physico-socio-economic aspect of the area. Primary data of this research has been made available from intensive field survey of the study area and secondary

data has been made available from published sources like Census handbooks of Purnea, Katihar, Saharsa, Madhepura and Khagaria. Total 56 villages have been taken as the sample from the study area by random sampling technique.

Major Settlement and its Types:

Compact Settlements: In Such settlement type the houses are piled at one place or well bind along streets simply almost all the dwellings of the village in one place. In small hamlets the concentration of houses varies from 30 to 40 while in large villages this concentration reaches to hundred or more than that. In most of the dense populated area where houses are commonly built closer to each other this type of settlement could easily be seen.

Semi-Compact Settlements: This type of settlement could be seen as an in-between type of compact and hamleted settlements. With reference to Blach (1952) in this settlement type one main village could be marked with some of the linking of small hamlets by foot paths or other types of tracks. The hamlets linked to the main village usually formed by the outgrowth of main villages and derives its name from the predominant caste residing therein which we call in our near locality as Mohalla or tola. The growth of such hamlets is usually being encouraged by development of transportation facilities. This type of settlement could be seen as dominant in south kosi plain.

Hamleted Settlements: In this type of settlement several smaller hamlets as well as the separate individual habitations could be seen spread over the entire mouza. These hamlets are closely linked with each other by footpaths or cart-tracks and shares most of the common cultural and social activities. This type of settlement could also be widely seen in the study area.

Dispersed Settlements In this settlement type, scattered huts or homesteads could be seen all over the village area and relatively long distance between dwellings. The trace of this type of settlement can also be seen in the study region.

Village Pattern:

Without knowing the village pattern the rural settlement could not be understood properly. There are some of the important types of village pattern is discussed below through which deeper understanding of the village pattern could be grasped.

Square Pattern: In agricultural region such pattern of villages are usually found. In parallel streets the houses are arranged in two or more rows. Such villages are found having various groups of people from diverse background on the basis castes and religions. Sometime villages are protected by walls. It can be said that the entire village is comprised of Small Square of houses where different castes dwell in.

Rectangular Pattern: This is one of the most common types of village pattern where most of the houses remain rectangular having main axis from north to south and west to east because of being friendly with sunlight and fresh air. The study region also bears witness of such types of villages.

Elongated Pattern: In such village pattern the simple arrangement of houses are found along a river banks, or roads. Because of physical and cultural factors such settlement pattern prolongs in one direction and restricts in another.

Circular and Semi-Circular Pattern: In this type of village pattern most of the houses can be seen at one site. This sometimes creates the unequal distribution of population density because of falling more choices at some specific site like market, religious buildings and local landlords

Triangular Pattern: In such type of pattern the growth of settlement seen as restricted from three sides. Sometimes at the confluence of river triangular pattern of rural settlement develops.

Checkerboard/Chess-board Pattern: In such types village pattern main streets meet each other at right angles and some of the subsidiary lanes run parallel to this. According to Dickinson this pattern denotes a right angled mesh of streets sometimes having central rectangular market place and even sometimes not.

Linear Pattern: In this settlement single row of houses along the roadside, river bank, canal or railway line are seen. Such types of house arrangement are also found at mountainous tops or hill slopes.

Radial Pattern: In such types of patterns the central area gets occupied by religious institutions or landlords and the streets or the paths cover it.

Double Nuclei Pattern: Such patterns bear two settlements by a division line. In this village pattern river, roads and even drainage system act as a boundary between the two settlements.

Amorphous Pattern: This type of pattern is said as an irregular one where entire village territory seems scattered and a number of hamlets linked with the central hamlet by rough paths.

Findings of the Study: Major findings of the study can be placed as following:

The dominant settlement types are compact, semi- compact and hamleted in the study area

River system and flood disaster have influenced the nature and pattern of population and rural settlement in the study area.

Types and patterns of rural settlement in the study area have been influenced by Physico-socio-economic aspects

Settlement pattern in sample villages of the study area is majorly influenced by morphology of the village.

Labour migration is treated as the curse for agricultural practices and boon for economy in the study area.

High birth rate and low death rate are main causes of population growth in the study area.

Result and Discussion:

The south Kosi Plain consists of 59 C.D Blocks bearing 4041 revenue villages with 1707594 households. The rural population is 10955970 out of the total population i.e. 11904957. There are two factors, physical and cultural, responsible for various settlement types in rural areas. In physical factors relief, fertility of soil, amount of rainfall, dry land are included, while in cultural factors Land use, land tenure, cropping pattern, clan and caste system, social relationships and means of transportation are included. In south kosi plain the dominant settlement types are compact, semi- compact and hamleted. The three fourth of this region reveals the dominance of compact and semi-compact types of settlement having different types of village patterns. We can see a limited area bearing disperse settlement also like Diara tract and swampy or Marshy lands.

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