SECTION : A
A study of rural settlements conducted within the framework of culture-nature interaction must begin with the analysis of site, which is the most significant of the three locational attributes, site, situation, and location. The significance of the study of sites was expressed early in the writings of human geographers. Vidal de la Blache stressed that the first element to be considered in the study of human establishments is the site, for it is the one in which geographical influences seem to stand out most prominently. (1)

Human geographers have, for long time, recognised the significance of site in the study of rural settlements but they have made little efforts to analyse the sites of any region in a detailed and systematic manner. Neither have they formulated generalisations on the nexus of relationships existing between culture and site, nor have they made a distinction between site, situation, and location. Also as Mukerji has pointed out 'neither the fine nor the gross distinctions that exist, logically and empirically, between the three principal conceptual and normative attributes, site, situation, and location have been given their due consideration.' (2)
There is a widespread confusion flowing from the illogical assumption that the three terms are synonymous. Kniffen has suggested that situation and location are the attributes of site and has attempted to clarify the issue by stating, 'included in the site are not only such obvious qualities as relief, climate, plant and animal life, soil, water, and other resources, but also situation, that is, location and position with respect to other places and things.' (3) Simply stated, while the settlement possesses all the three attributes, site, situation, and location, the site subsumes the references of situation and location.

The clearest and most logical definitions and areal associations of site, situation, and location of rural settlements of India have been given by Mukerji. (4) The present chapter has been developed in accordance with the main statements given by him.

Location is a precise measurement and can be expressed in terms of latitude and longitude or distance and direction from some established points. In other words, it specifies the position of a settlement in relation to geographically fixed reference points. It is a unique, non-repetitive attribute immune to historical events and has horizontal dimensions. As such it cannot be classified.
Situation refers to the physical and cultural conditions of the local region and is perceived as the culturally bounded habitat of a people, responding little to the historical forces operating in a region. It is partially unique, and hence, can be generalised to a limited extent.

Site, on the other hand, is a piece of earth's surface on which stands a settlement. It includes all the features of terrain where the settlement was established and over which it subsequently spread. In contrast to both location and situation, site can be classified easily. Its classification is facilitated by the following facts: (1) sites express the relationships between culture and ecology; (2) similar types of sites occur repeatedly in many regions, and (iii) sites shift in response to changing historical processes.

It is in this context that site can be defined as 'the sum of natural conditions available for the inhabiting people to work with.' (5) For Vidal de la Blache, Brunhes, and Sauer, the term site connotes the natural endowments in relation to their utilisation by a culture group. (6) One could infer from their statements that site may be considered a culture-ecological niche in which the reciprocal relationship between man and land is initiated and sustained. It is on the site that natural landscape is transformed into a cultural landscape characteristic
of the culture. An elaborate distinction between the three attributes has been presented by Mukerji in the following table.(7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Historical component</th>
<th>Degree of generalisation</th>
<th>Areal focus</th>
<th>Planning significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Largest, topographical Map of 1&quot; to 1 mile, 1&quot; to ½ mile, and area large scales changes</td>
<td>Most responsive to historical processes</td>
<td>Generalised settlements as possible area</td>
<td>Settlement planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Medium, Chorographical Maps of 1&quot; to 4 miles, 1&quot; to 16 miles scales.</td>
<td>Less prone to historical stimuli</td>
<td>Moderately generalised area</td>
<td>Settlement planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Smallest, Geographical Maps of 1&quot; to 32 miles, smaller than 1&quot; to 32 miles scales</td>
<td>Most resistant to historical processes</td>
<td>Almost invulnerable</td>
<td>Unique Settlement in area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1
Site, ab initio, is given by nature but it derives its settlement meaning only when man relates himself to it. A piece of land becomes a site only after it has been selected by a cultural group for the dual purposes of settling and attaching itself to it for sustenance. In every region are to be found potential sites which would help in the realisation of the major objectives of settling. At the outset the sites must provide resources for sustenance. 'Without the qualities of site man cannot exist.'(8) However, unless the resources are actually exploited and the settlement complex features created on it, the piece of land cannot be considered a site. In other words, nature prepares the site and culture group organises it to satisfy its needs.

Since the intrinsic qualities of site are derived from the complex of ecological setting and the mode of living mediates between the ecological resources and the fulfilment of man's universal needs, site needs to be interpreted in relation to natural endowments and cultural utilizations.

Site is not only a physical but also a cultural imperative, because for some culture groups the notion of site, or rather permanent site is unknown. The relationship to site, of some groups, such as Gujars, is only tenuous and temporary. For others, such as Jats, it is strong,
permanent and very important. Every culture group except
the Palaeolithic, in every cultural stage has tried to
identify itself with a territory through specific sites.
The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hunters, who in the pursuit
of game were traversing vast areas, did have a vague notion
of their territory or sites within it. Nor was it necessary
for them to do so. The notion of a territory owned exclusively
by a culture group developed during a particular stage in
cultural evolution. It is during this stage that the other
important necessity, of having a specific site, was generated.
Thus, the notion of site reflects the particular stage in
cultural evolution when the group had become sedentary or
at least identified itself with a fixed territory. In the
light of this discussion again site emerges as a cultural
concept.

Every culture group has a traditionally sustained
preference for certain sites where it can maximally realise
the objectives of settling. Kniffen alone among the rural
settlement geographers has emphasised the role of perception
of the initial settlers of the inherent natural qualities and
the ecological setting and resources of the sites in their
selection for establishing settlements.(9) In most cases they
select a site where their mode of living can be practised
in the best possible way. It is not that the site determines the mode of living. On the other hand, it is the mode of living, already being practised by a cultural group, which influences the selection of site. In certain cases historical circumstances drive a culture group to an area and towards selecting certain sites whose physical endowments and attributes of situation do not match the continuing traditional norms. On such sites, with the technology available to it, the culture group modifies many aspects of the ecological setting. Hence, in both contexts of settling the site actually functions as a cultural entity.

The continuity of settlement on the same site over a long period is possibly related to the exigencies of the patterns of living and to the ideas that people inherit from their predecessors. In this context *ex post facto* relationship between man and land acquires a major significance. 'But though the geographer is concerned with man-land relations, he knows of no universal laws of human behaviour whereby he can explain them. Therefore, the study of man in a particular site must be historical.'(10) We have to adopt a historical approach in the understanding of different types of sites.
While all the settlements have sites, not all the potential sites are covered with settlements. But, once selected and covered with a settlement a site tends to perpetuate itself for a long time. In the selection of sites, some are ignored by chance while others are selected rationally. It is not possible, at present, to go into the details of the rationality involved in the initial selection of the site. This is due to the complete absence of any type of living historical tradition or contemporary documentary evidence. We can only postulate, on logical grounds, a few principles which the first settlers might have followed.

The very fact of settlement is selective, because man weighs several mutually conflicting factors before making his final choice. (Fig. 10) Often he is not aware of all the advantages or disadvantages, and sometimes his actions are apparently irrational and erratic. He cannot always predict. Before a settlement becomes established, trial and error play an important part in evolving a decision. Even then the balance between man and nature may be upset by fresh technological advances. (11)

Sauer, Chisholm, and others have observed that the most important factors in the initial selection of sites are proximity to water, availability of arable land, defence,
Potential settlement sites


Fig. 10
and an easy access to the sources of fuel and building material. (12) Throughout the human history nearness to water has been the strongest determinant. In the study area, however, which is predominantly a hilly tract, where water is available from streams and springs, and also where farming is the preponderant mode of living, workability of land seems to have been an all-powerful factor.

Even the nomadic Gujars have taken up permanent cultivation, as an important component of their mode of living, since the time they settled here about 200 years ago. For them also, the availability of arable and grazing land was of prime importance in the selection of site. Furthermore, since agriculture is of barani type, the nearness of water is not indispensable. The influence of such determinants as building material and fuel has also been insignificant because of their ubiquity. Defence has played only a secondary role. (Fig. 11)

An ideal site is the one where agricultural land and water are found in close juxtaposition of each other, as for example, the sites in the middle segment of an alluvial fan and on the river terraces.

Further, the value system of people and existing technology have a strong bearing on the selection of site. Whether people occupy a river terrace or a mountain top is
Determinants of site selection

Agricultural land

Building material

Settlement site

Fuel

Water

Grazing land

Defence

Fig. 11
not always an expression of their agricultural suitability or unsuitability. It may, on the other hand, indicate the attitude held towards them.

Lastly, the choice of site may also be determined by the religious norms of a cultural group. The initial settlers chose the location not only for the geographical advantages of an area but by seeking to conform to the decision of their gods.

The preceding discussion establishes that the significance of different factors in the selection of site varies from place to place depending upon the genres de vie, of cultural groups and the ecological resources and settings.

There might have been a tradition among a culture group of selecting sites the memory of which might have been lost. It might be a part of a larger culture and hence be prevalent among several constituent sub-cultures.

All sites are topographic in landscape expression. As an entity in the landscape a site has a scale which can be observed and studied. This scale is very large and, thus, topographic. But, on the largest topographic scale of observation, each site becomes unique and non-repetitive.

The classification of and the generalisations about site will be based on the interpretation of the relationship between the traditional mode of living and the ecological
resources. On this basis sites can be broadly classified at the highest level of generalisation into two categories, physiographic-topographic and cultural-topographic. The physiographic-topographic category is comprised of those sites which are associated with physiographic features: landforms, vegetation, soil, and hydrographic surfaces. The study area contains a large variety of physiographic-topographic sites. Indeed so large is the variety that some of the types of sites are represented by only a few settlements. Cultural-topographic sites are those which are associated with such cultural features as roads, wells, forts, and religious structures.

In order to make meaningful generalisations, the sites displaying the same topographic location have been grouped together and named after its location. Hence their nomenclature as terrace sites, slope-foot sites and forest-edge sites. By doing so the exact pieces of land are not classified. It is their topographic location with reference to topographic features which can be made the basis of differentiating them or determining their similarities, thus, enabling one to construct a rational typology.

The site types identified in the study area have been shown in table 2.
Table 2

Site

Physiographic-topographic Cultural-topographic

Hydrographic Geomorphic Vegetational Secular Religious

Springs Forest Edge Forest Core Wells Roads Fort Temple Chhatri

Slope-foot Terrace Alluvial Fan Amphitheatrical Ravine Ridge Saddle site basin crest upland site

Siwalik Himalayan Choe River Khad Apex Middle Lower Peak Peak-Crest Hill Hill foot

Upper Middle Lower slope slope slope
Physiographic-Topographic Sites

Spring Site

For survival and continuous occupancy in any area certain basic conditions are indispensable. One such condition is proximity to a perennial source of water. Sauer, realising its importance as the main factor in the selection of sites states, 'as professional camper, he chose his camp first by water, next by the available fuel.'(13)

The significance of water is easily discernible by the analysis of place names. Generics such as nali, nala, sar, tal, rani, choi, khai, and khol occur throughout the area, especially in the Lesser Himalaya. Contrary to the general impression of the Himalaya as abounding in water resources, this region suffers from water scarcity. As a matter of fact, the scarcity of water has imposed a basic constraint on the spread of settlements.

There are a few spring settlements in the Dun. With the increase in elevation, the number of and dependence on springs increases.(Fig.12) In the Himalaya occur a large number of streams of various orders, most of which are seasonal. Also, it is difficult to approach deeply entrenched streams carrying trickles of water.
The springs have always attracted the settlers and the attraction has negated the repulsive influences of other ecological factors. An example is provided by the village Gurdaspur located deep in the forest. (Fig. 13) All the springs serve the settlements though all the settlements are not served by the springs. The correlation between springs and number of settlements (calculated grid by grid) computed by Spearman's rank correlation method comes to 0.02. The correlation is positive though very weak. This is due to the fact that springs are not the only source of water in the region.

The settlements cling even to minor sources of water and, at places, are aligned with rivers. There is a concentration of settlements on the terraces near the springs. The antiquity of the relationship of the settlements and the springs is well known even in early historical documents. (14) The springs must have influenced the social organisation of sites.

In general, the settlements nearest to spring belong to upper caste families. Members of other caste groups walk greater distances to fetch water from the same spring and can be refused access to the spring by the upper castes who wield larger social power. Thus, caste discrimination also
Spring and forest-edge site

![Map of Spring and forest-edge site](image13)

Himalayan slope foot site

![Map of Himalayan slope foot site](image14)
affects the siting of settlements near the spring. As a scarce resource, the supply and distribution, the ownership, control and use of water promote both horizontal and vertical unity of groups of families and of villages.

Slope-foot Site

The slope-foot sites, having two categories, Himalayan and Siwalik Hill, are the most numerous. The first variety occurs mainly at the foot of moderate to steep slopes with their production territory spread below the ebadī. Most of the settlements of these sites are inhabited by the Kanets.

At several places the Kanets moved downwards from the settlement sites to clear the woodlands and create agricultural fields. This is exemplified in Kalyanpur, Tikri, Palasra Charanun, Retor and Jhandian settlements. (Fig. 14) These are primarily refuge sites in which the attraction of water has played a marginal role. Few of these sites such as Seri are related to springs. In the enormous thickness of coarse soil in the upper parts of the adjacent alluvial fans the water table is very deep. However, the soil, a rich clayey loam with pebbles, was the great initial attraction. Wood for fuel and grazing lands were available in the adjoining Himalayan slopes.
Slope-foot site, the most recurrent type in the Siwalik Hill zone, is located at the back of terrace or at the apex of colluvial cone at some distance from Sirsa Nadi, beyond the reach of the unusually high floods. In most parts the stream is entrenched to a depth of more than 15 feet so that the exceptionally high and extensive flooding of adjacent terrace is infrequent.

The location of sites at the junction of the slopes and the flattish terraces or gently sloping lower colluvial surfaces enable the practice of two kinds of land utilisation. While the former has a cover of thorn scrub, shrubs and short grass and is, therefore, used mainly for cattle grazing, the latter is entirely covered with cultivated fields. Thus the ecological junction promotes the practice of permanent field cultivation and grazing, which are the two basic components of the Gujar mode of living in the area.

Thus, these sites are indicative of two phases of occupancy. Initially, the Gujars retained grazing as an integral component of their economy and were, therefore, concerned more with the vegetation cover for their livestock than land for cultivation. In the second phase, with the enactment and enforcement of forest preservation measures, grazing lands became scarce and they were forced to depend
increasingly upon cultivation. In the past the Gujars did not possess the technology of digging and preserving wells in the flood plain area. Ever since occupying these sites, they have been utilizing the water of Sirsa Nadi for domestic purposes. The typical examples of this site type are Sitalpur, Kalianpur, Kaindowal, Beriyan and Rampur. (Fig. 15)

Terrace Site

The river terraces have provided sites for settlements from almost the beginning of human history. (Fig. 16) They enjoy natural advantages of proximity to water, protection from floods, relatively flat terrain conducive to chasing and hunting, development of means of transport, and cultivation. In the region the settlements have been established near the hill scarp on the highest level of the terrace sequence so that most of the arable land is preserved and conveniently watched.

While the terrace sites occur in the Lesser Himalayan zone, Siwalik Hill zone, and the Dun, the larger ones are typical of the Dun. In the Siwalik Hills and the Dun they are occupied predominantly by the Gujars and in the Lesser Himalayan zone by the Kanets.
When they occupied these sites, the Gujars were mainly cattle rearers, practising extensive grazing on the adjacent hilly and grassy slopes. Through time they started cultivating the relatively level surface covered by fertile soils. The enactment of Land Preservation (choes) Acts of 1902, 1911, and 1920 put heavy restrictions on widespread grazing. This forced a shift in economic activity from grazing to cultivation, in which the former became subsidiary to the latter.

The Kanets, for whom cattle grazing is a secondary activity, have from the beginning, been cultivating the terraces. Hence, they have always preferred terrace site to any other.

Alluvial Fan Site

In the alluvial fans the enormous thickness of previous detritus permits the digging of the wells at many places. The settlements touch the fan streams. Field observations and examination of topographical sheets and written documents indicate that since a long time only a few streams have been perennial. Most of them carry flood-water discharge in the rainy season for a few days and during rainy days for a few hours. Therefore, there is no functional relationship of settlement site with the proximity to stream.
Alluvial fan can be divided into segments, upper, middle and lower, according to location and breaks in slope. The surfaces of the fan segments form bands of approximately uniform slope, which are concentric about the fan apex. Settlements are sited on all the three segments. Typical examples are Bari Batsuli, Bauni, Dhaulaghat in the upper fan segment; Bilanwalian, Haranara, Gularwala, Sandholi, Judi Upperwali and Malpur in the middle fan segment; and Nichli Sandholi, Malka Majra, and Baddi in the lower fan segment of Baled alluvial fan. (Fig. 17)

Although the apex does not mean any topographic prominence, it enables the people to have nazara (a panoramic view) of the countryside. The nazara of the countryside has an aesthetic appeal, and commanded an extensive view of the movement of potential enemies, raiders, and marauders in the earlier disturbed times. (15)

The Gujars settled the forest-free areas in the Siwalik Hills and Dun without much difficulty and practised both cultivation and grazing. The alluvial fans were settled through dispersal of families of one clan or lineage from a few parent settlements. At some places a settlement near the apex of alluvial fan has functioned as the first-generation unit.
Diffusion followed the drainage pattern as is suggested by paired-name settlements in which there is one specific and two generics. An example is provided by Batauli settlements, in which the prefixes chhoti (small) and bari (large) connote difference in age of occupancy, size, site, clan and lineage. (Fig. 17)

The upper segment settlements are not really located at the point of debouchment of the stream on to the alluvial fan, but at some distance from it in the section of uniform slope. The axial stream located in a fan-head trench cannot be reached easily from the site. In this part the fertile soil has been the major attraction while grazing is practised on the adjacent Himalayan slopes.

In the middle segment occur the most fertile and extensive flat lands for cultivation. Here, agriculture is the main occupation of the people. The lower segment is the most vulnerable to flooding. The minor channels often damage roads, paths and agricultural operations on fans. Nevertheless some settlements are sited in the lower segment where the seasonal flooding recharges the ground water reservoir and leaves a fresh layer of fertile alluvium every year.
Amphitheatrical Basin Crest Site

These sites occur a little below the water divide and are easily approachable from the crest road but not from the lower parts where the land is broken by steep slopes and scarps. (16) The descent to the river and the access to the other side of the ridge are indicated by the generic suffix ghat (a pass).

Many parts of these basins were settled in the earlier phases of occupance. The upper parts of the basin were occupied first. Subsequently there was a movement towards the crest. The lower slopes suffered from foggy and damp climate and dense forest cover, and were avoided. The forests, owned by the government, could not be removed.

The upper slopes are covered with cultivated fields while the lower rugged parts contain open pine forests and rich grassy undergrowth used mainly for grazing which sustains the local pastoral activity. The typical example of the site type is Nashal. (Fig. 18)

Ravined Upland Sites

Sites in the ravined upland, everywhere inhabited by the Sikh Jats, have been selected for their distance from the waterlogged and marshy lands which spread below it and
high water-table which enables easy digging of wells. They can be classified into two types, (a) edge sites and (b) interior sites.

Settlements of the edge sites are younger than the ravine itself, which is both natural and man-induced. The presence of the former is suggested by a spring in the middle of the ravine infested area. If the ravine was not natural then in the initial occupation of the area people would have been attracted towards the spring. Also, it is unrealistic to believe that the initial settlers first occupied the spring site and then after creating the ravines moved towards the edge of the upland. The ravine has prevented the inhabitants of Dhabota, Majra and Bhangla from moving into the interior. The other edge settlements are Phalahi, Kotla Kalan, and Androla. (Fig.19a)

Settlements in the interior of the ravined upland are exemplified by Charoti, Barapind, Charoti and Malhawan Uperli. (Fig.19b) These are older than the edge settlements and the ravines themselves.

The existence of relict forest patch, now being maintained as protected forest by the government, suggests the presence of a much more extensive cover spreading on the upland till recent past. This cover has been removed by the Sikh Jats in the process of settling. In this process they have
unintentionally created the ravines. They have not moved out even after the settlements were engulfed by the ravines, a striking example of the perpetuation of a settlement even though the initial advantages available at the time of its founding are lost at a later stage.

Ridge Sites

On a ridge its crest, peak, and peak-foot are the three sites on which settlements have been established. The ridge crest has provided the best site with relatively large area under gentle slope which can be brought under cultivation. The crest site settlements are the largest.

The ridges in the Lesser Himalayan zone have limited arable land and small agricultural fields. The peasants practise subsistence farming. Every bit of cultivable land is brought under cultivation. Cattle are grazed on the grassy undergrowth of the adjacent forested slopes.

Invariably, these settlements have served as nuclei for the evolution of settlement fabric. The largest settlements occurring on the ridge crests are also the oldest. Expansion of parent settlement and contraction of arable land have promoted the dispersal of settlements towards the peak-foot. Under similar circumstances, the peaks came to be occupied too. Consequent upon this form of dispersal, the
crest site settlement emerges as the largest, with its satellites dwindling in size with increasing distance from it. An idealised, three-phased dispersal of the multi-lineage uni-clan crest settlement has been shown by means of a model (Fig. 20).

In some settlements the second phase has been skipped over and a lineage has moved directly to the peak and founded a settlement there. Khariyana is a good example. (Fig. 21) Similarly, at places the dispersal has ceased with the founding of the peak-foot settlements, such as, Qabar, Bhai, Khadli and Phala. (Fig. 22) On the other hand, Thar and Panjali display the characteristics of all the three stages. (Fig. 23)

Where the ridges are separated by short and very steep scarps the crest settlements are not related in the evolutionary process to those of the lower parts of the valley. The scarps are succeeded in the downslope direction by uniform but moderate slopes followed, at still lower elevations, by comparatively gently sloping river terraces. The parent settlement in this case is sited on the terrace and it is from here that the diffusion of the farming families takes place in a leap-frog process towards increasingly higher elevations. The parent settlement may be comprised either of different clans or of different lineages of the same clan. The optimum utilization of scarce as well as scattered arable land
A model of settlement diffusion

Fig. 20

Crest and peak site

Crest and peak-foot site

Fig. 21

Fig. 22
necessitates the occupance of lands located away from the terrace settlement. (Fig. 24) The figure shows that the disintegration of agglomerate terrace settlement has led to the emergence of four tiny settlements between the terrace and scarp. There is an abrupt change in the slope as a result of which the spread of settlement ceases at the foot of the crest scarp. Such a sequence of diffusion is true of a large number of settlements in the study area.

Peak settlements contain only three to four houses generally belonging to the same lineage. At times, however, the houses built on the peak or at its foot are owned by the people belonging to a multi-lineage, uni-clan or multi-clan settlement of the crest. Thus, in successive phases of occupance people choose either peak-foot or the peak according to their perception of the physical qualities of the site.

In the broad patterning of the relationship between the sites of the settlements and slopes, the major breaks do not play a significant role. On the other hand, the minor breaks, not conspicuous on the topographical sheets, greatly influence the establishment of a settlement when observed in the field. Besides, people everywhere avoid steep slopes which occur near the river channel and below the edge of ridge crest. The lower corresponds to the terrace scarp or the valley side of
Ridge crest peak foot and peak site

Fig. 23

A model of family dispersion

Fig. 24

Peak and saddle site

Fig. 25

Saddle site

Fig. 26
entrenched stream and the upper one coincides with the free face of the hillside slopes.

**Saddle Site**

Saddle site occurs mostly in the Lesser Himalayan region. Saddle is a broad depression in the ridge line and is flanked by hills. Settlements are sited either in the centre, such as Mandi (Fig. 25) or a little away from it, such as Kotha Kanaon. (Fig. 26) The site is long and narrow and at places has a gentle slope. It has good accessibility. The roads, foot-paths, and cart-tracks criss-cross through the saddle connecting the settlements on the two sides. Though easily approachable, it is well defended because of its vantage point location.

In the initial selection the saddle sites attracted the settlers due to their favourable location, sunny aspects receiving sun from two opposite sides, and large, gently sloping cultivated land spread all around them. Bhaun, Kotla, and Kot are other examples of saddle sites.

**Forest Sites**

The presence of forests and the efforts made to preserve, use, subdue, and remove them have constituted a major theme of man's occupancy of land down the centuries. This struggle
has left a distinct mark upon the general character of the landscape particularly upon the form and intensity of human settlements.

The present forested lands in the study area bear the mark of long exploitation and differ considerably from the natural forest which, had there been no interference by man, would have covered almost the whole region. (17) The process of removal of forests, woodlands, and scrubs began in the proto-historic times and has continued slowly up to the present times. Repeated references to this process occur in epic literature and contemporary documents of Muslim and Mughal periods. (18) It was during the British period that a specific policy for forest conservation was adopted, not because Christianity forbade the removal of forests, but because of the revenue yielded by this resource. Since then the practice of conserving and preserving forest cover has been encouraged. With the growth of population the wood has given way to pasture and arable land. (19)

The culture trait of preserving forest is still prevalent in many parts of the study area, even though the farmers are surreptitiously removing parts of the forest cover. The widespread practice is documented in the forest working plans of the region, which yield information on the total number of illicit felling, lopping, grass cutting and grazing.
Combined with the practices of felling and burning for the removal of forests are those of grazing and selective timber extractions. At the same time, realising the destruction of ecological resources and the difficulty in replenishing them, the culture groups living adjacent to or within the forests evolved prescriptive norms of preferential preservation of selected trees, while clearing, selective planting of particular tree species, and avoidance of practices related to taboos and religious beliefs which tend to protect certain species, have resulted either in partial preservation of the initial forests or the re-establishment of new forest areas through groves, suggesting a historically evolved protective attitude towards forests. (20)

In the value system of each culture group, forests have been regarded as an integral element of primordial nature, object of worship and not of fear. (21) It is not an adversary to be vanquished. This ambivalent attitude of fear and mystical reverence towards the forest explains both their destruction and preservation. Even though the desire to possess one more bit of it for secular needs has always been fierce, the attitude derived from religio-symbolic needs restrains them from exercising it and also from penetrating deep into the interior. This explains why we find enormous
number of settlements at the edge and a few in the core of the forest. Thus, forest sites are of two types: (1) forest-edge and (2) forest-core sites.

It is beyond doubt that the study area was covered initially by forests and later, in settling it, the culture groups made small clearings and established tiny settlements along streams, on the spurs, and on other sites. The examples of forest edge sites are Bidi, Baseri, Dabli, Dabloti, and Jumlapur. (Fig. 13) There are numerous examples of forest edge sites in the region. The core sites were selected only under compulsion. Its ecological setting would not have promoted the culture nor provided attractive conditions for the farmers adapted to open environment. The other examples of forest core sites are Gurdaspur, Ashnala, Badiyana Kohla, Bahu and Modia. (Fig. 27)

Cultural-Topographic Sites

Cultural-topographic sites are related to such material features of the landscape as roads, wells, forts, temples and chhatris. They form an associational category in the classification of sites, since some sites are adjacent to these features. It is very difficult to ascertain whether a site related to a cultural feature is antecedent to that feature or vice-versa. It is difficult to discover this relationship
and reconstruct the cadastral setting of the earlier stages of settling. Probably, the site was initially selected primarily for the purpose of establishing a cultural feature, around which a settlement would grow in later periods. On the contrary, a cultural feature created in the initial stage of settling might not have been the primary determinant in the selection. However, its awareness, utility or strategic significance might have influenced the establishment of the settlement.

Sites Related to Secular Structures

(a) Roads, foot-paths and cart-tracks

In this hilly and rather inaccessible region people have tended to select settlement sites in areas which can be easily reached from the roads, foot-paths, and cart-tracks. It also seems probable that initially the settlement was at some distance from the road but in course of time it spread towards the road. The roads might have been the pilgrim routes or those followed by itinerary traders, connecting different parts of the area of acquaintance of the culture group. The settlements might have been established consequent upon the acquiring of the knowledge of sites and certain routes.
functioning as the necessary links. Such routes, essentially pedestrian, even in their primitive forms, are cultural features and might be considered antecedent to the settlement sites. Garu, Bakhaila, Bakesu, Bashal, Mahog, Tikri, Dhiaula and Sairighat are typical examples of this site type. (Fig. 28)

(b) Forts

Forts might have been constructed essentially for temporal exigency, but, through time, the advantages that the feature created encouraged the growth of a settlement. Here cultural feature has been antecedent to the settlement. Examples of fort settlements are Palasi Kalan, Kundlu, Malaun and Ramshahr. (Fig. 29)

(c) Wells

In the field as also on the topographical sheets, wells appear to have been the points of attraction. This may be true in many but not all cases. It is generally observed that where sub-surface water table is deep and digging of wells is difficult and expensive, wells do attract settlements. But where the water table is high and digging easier, the pre-existence of wells is immaterial. Well site is characteristic of the Dun, exemplified by the villages like Bhud, Malpur, Makhnu Majra, Bilanwali, Baddi and Malka Majra. (Fig. 17)
Sites Related to Religious Structures

Religious structures have also attracted settlements. In this attraction can be observed man's relationship with God. Sites developed in relation to temples or chhatris become preferred and sacred. Through time the religious structure becomes a nucleus around which a settlement develops. A temple or a chhatri bestowed with religious sanctity necessitates the creation of certain advantages such as the construction of a tank or paths leading to it. Here again, a temple becomes antecedent to the settlement. Examples of temple and chhatri settlements are Tujhar, Chat, Patta, Khodli, Bhai and Haripur. (Fig.30)

References and Notes


5. See ref. 3, p. 22.


7. See ref. 4, p. 66.

8. See ref. 3, p. 22.


10. See ref. 3, p. 22.


16. The concept of site as thought of in the Plains is not applicable to the Himalaya. Here, the settlements are a mixture of a large number of single dwelling units forming the smallest unit of agglomerate settlement and a few clusters. Since the agglomerate settlements do have only one site the concept of site has to be modified.

17. Prashar has very rightly observed about the forested area in Barog 'what was an invigoratingly cool and beautiful forest now looks bald. Even growing trees have been mercilessly hacked down and taken away,' Prashar, A.S. (1979). The Tribune, August 27, p. 1.

