



Values and Conservation of Rural Landscapes

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Abstract

The present paper is the outcome of the research focussed at studying the architecture and landscape of villages of Pune district. This research had two fold aims - to study the relationship between the landscape and settlement pattern at the macro level and the effect of natural and cultural variables on architecture and manmade landscape at the micro level. To study the landscape characteristics and settlement pattern, GIS mapping was used. The distribution of villages, house density, forests and agricultural land is found to be associated with the slope and relief of the district. Interviews with the villagers, mapping and observations helped to study the associations of people with landscape. The cultural landscape of the rural settings is shaped by the socio-religious associations of the people with the natural landscape elements viz., landform, water and vegetation. The paper highlights the traditional knowledge systems which may prove useful in today's context of resource scarcity. The rural landscapes are valuable resources to understand the man-nature relationships. Value based conservation of these landscapes is essential for preserving the traditional knowledge systems and guiding the development of these areas.

Key words: Nature, culture, traditional knowledge, settlement pattern, cultural landscape
