

Settlements and Land-Use Patterns in the Lepcha Reserve - Dzongu Zone in the Sikkim Himalaya, India

Veena Bhasin

Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, Delhi 110 007, India

KEYWORDS Man and Biosphere. Sikkim Himalaya. Lepchas. Dzongu Zone. Settlements. Land Use

ABSTRACT This paper discusses settlements and land use patterns in the Lepcha reserve-Dzongu zone and is a part of the study undertaken under the Research Project entitled "Impact of Human Activities on the Ecosystems and vice-versa with reference to the Sikkim Himalayas" under MAB (Man and the Biosphere) Programme, UNESCO (Bhasin et al. 1984). The Lepcha people inhabit the forested hill tracks of North Central Sikkim. The Proper use of natural resources and efficient management are the only means by which the increasing food, fodder and fuel requirements of increasing population can be met. In the Dzongu zone, the lack of proper management, together with cultural, historical, and ecological factors have resulted in the low productivity. This paper examines the shift under Bhutia and British rule from food gatherers to cultivators and lack of meaningful exploitation and management of resources.