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FRAMING GUIDELINES FOR SETTLEMENT AT THE HILLS : case of Valparai, Tamil Nadu.

One of the most major concern faced by settlements in INDIA is the environmental quality of a settlement , which is with time being subjected to random degrees of changes due to the various contributions of both built environment and the built induced natural environment .

These in turn form a crucial element for sustainable, development and maintaining ecological balance.

The Western Ghat regions over the tenure of two decades or so have been subjected to immense pressure for development , especially on the preferred location due to varied parameters , some of the prominent ones being :

- Urbanization,
- Population increase,- migrating for better jobs.
- High influx of tourists.

These chosen locations are eventually transferred into aesthetically appealing hill towns, listing them to be the most preferred tourist destinations, thereby initiating the main economic activity generators of the hill regions of India.

As an outcome of these factors, during the last few decades development activities have tremendously surged higher in these seismically vulnerable and environmentally sensitive hill towns.

This unprecedented development has thereby resulted in deterioration of the living conditions, and environmental and thereby the visual quality at the hill towns.

Hill towns however are also experiencing numerous problems and concerns due to inappropriate and non-contextual urban development buildings. With this study a humble attempt is made at documenting the existing development scenario and issues to accommodate future development in hill towns located in the Western Ghats region- case of Valparai, Tamil Nadu. .

Thereby listing out guidelines to mitigate the probable negative impact the proposed development would have on natural environment ,while maintaining the quality at the the hill towns, by achieving an environmentally sound and sustainable developments in ecologically fragile hill towns.

Key Words: Hillstations, urbanization, landuse, migration, population, built intervention , ecological issues .