

## **Socio-Cultural Adaptations in Cold Deserts**

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**ABSTRACT** In India, cold desert are arid tracts lying in the rain shadow areas of the main Himalayan range. In remote and inaccessible valleys these areas are specialized ecological niches. Adaptation to such harsh environment reflects success of human species. In high altitude area biochemical, physiological and anatomical features of acclimatization become progressively more pronounced. Man-environment relationship is influenced by genetic make-up, socio-eco-sensitivity and cultural factors. The various high altitude populations are exposed to different degrees of stress, some of the stresses may be unique to each high altitude area. It is now clear that human beings can combine their bio-cultural capabilities to encounter environmental stresses. Some of these stresses are easily manageable by the socio-cultural factors while others are not. Cold deserts offers great cultural and social diversity as well as rich variety of social processes. Cold deserts are inhabited by distinct people having a distinct language, special social and political institutions as well as traditions, art forms, religious practices and cultural values. These areas remained isolated and lagged behind in social and economic progress. In the present study an attempt is made to report three areas namely, Bharmour tehsil of Chamba District, Himachal Pradesh; Lachen and Lachung of North Sikkim and Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir inhabited by Gaddis; Bhutias and Buddhist and Muslim groups, respectively.