



Spatial Pattern of Urban Population in Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to examine the spatial pattern of urban population on the basis of the analysis of data from Primary Census Abstract of Himachal Pradesh, 2011. The unit of analysis is district. The results of this study are presented in the form of tables and maps. The result shows that Shimla was highly urbanized district in the state. Further, each valley has a large number of scattered towns. Most of these urban centres continued to perform predominantly rural functions besides providing market and other facilities.

KEYWORDS : Urban, Towns

Introduction

India has experienced rapid urban growth in the 20th century. The total urban population increased tenfold between 1901 and 2001. The share of urban population to the total population increased from less than 11 per cent to over 28 per cent in the same period. Similarly the total number of urban agglomerations increased from 1827 to 7935 in 1901 to 2011. The total urban population in the country as per Census 2011 is more than 377 million constituting 31.16 per cent of the total population. Himachal Pradesh is an overwhelmingly rural part of India having only 8.64 per cent urban population as per 2011 census. Natural growth was practically the only determinant of urban development. Stagnant urbanization was associated with the predominantly subsistence nature of agricultural economy. Industry, commerce and general services which provide the major stimuli for urban change had not made a breakthrough.

Objective and Methodology of the Study

The main objective of the present study is to analyze the levels of urbanization and the spatial pattern of towns. The analysis is based on data from Primary Census Abstract of Himachal Pradesh, 2011. *District* is taken as the unit of analysis. The collected data is tabulated and processed with the help of simple statistical techniques. The processed data is represented by various tables and maps. For prepare maps Arc GIS 9.3 has been used.

Discussion

Spatial Pattern of Urban Population

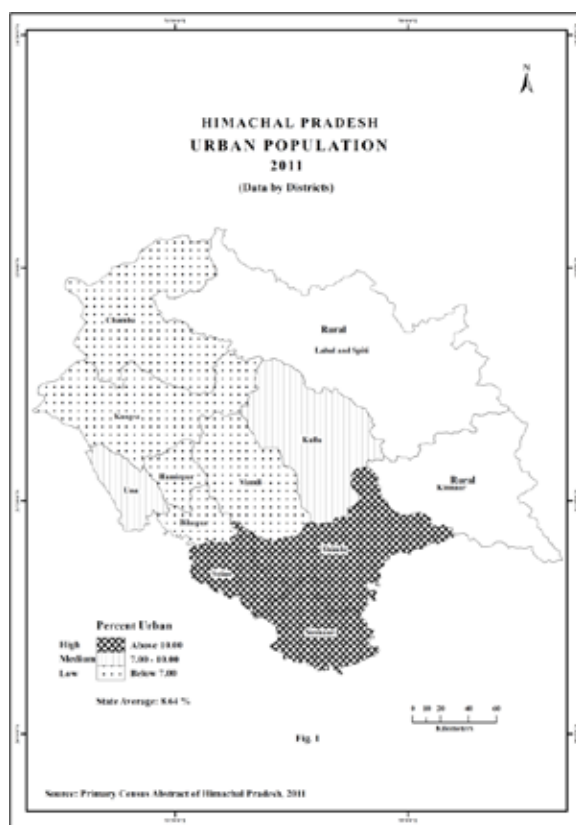
The twelve hill districts together account for only 8.64 per cent of urban population to total population of Himachal Pradesh. In the state the highest proportion is concentrated in three districts viz., Shimla (24.74 per cent), Solan (17.6 per cent), and Sirmaur (10.79 per cent) where as the low level of urbanization was found in the districts of Kangra 5.71 per cent, Mandi 6.27 per cent, Bilaspur 6.58 per cent, Hamirpur 6.91 per cent and Chamba 6.96 per cent. The two districts Una and Kullu were lies in the moderate category (Table-1).

Table – 1

Percentage of Urban Population to Total Population in Himachal Pradesh, 2011

District Name	Percentage of Urban Population to Total Population
Chamba	6.96
Kangra	5.71
Lahul and Spiti	0.00
Kullu	9.45
Mandi	6.27
Hamirpur	6.91
Una	8.62
Bilaspur	6.58
Solan	17.60
Sirmaur	10.79
Shimla	24.74
Kinnaur	0.00
Himachal Pradesh	8.64

Source: Computed from Primary Census Abstract of Himachal Pradesh, 2011



The spatial distribution of urban population in Himachal Pradesh is shown in fig. 1. The result shows that the Shimla district has highest proportion of urban population (24.74 per cent) in the region. It is adjoined by districts high values viz. Kullu and Sirmaur districts whereas low proportion is found in district Kangra (5.70 per cent). The low level of urbanization in the region is reflected in a large number of districts. The districts in Himachal Pradesh, i.e., Lahul & Spiti and Kinnaur, are entirely rural.

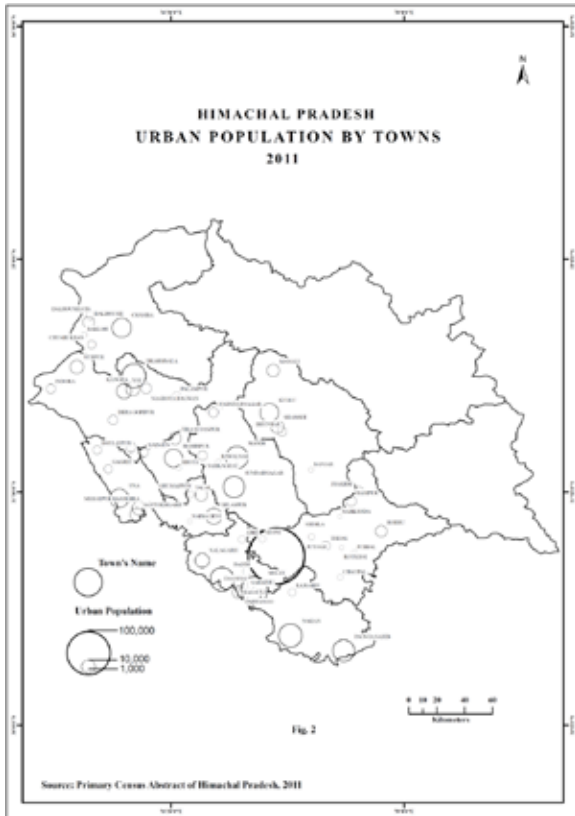
Table-2

Number of Towns and Per cent Urban Population according to Size Class

Sized Class Towns	No. of Towns	Population (in per cent)
Class I	1	23.1
Class II	2	14.7
Class III	5	19.5

Class IV	7	15.6
Class V	14	15.7
Class VI	28	11.4
Total	59	100.00

Source: Computed from Primary Census Abstract of Himachal Pradesh, 2011



Size Class Distribution of Towns and Population

Table 2 shows the number of towns according to population size classes, and the per cent distribution of urban population in different size class categories of towns in the state. In Himachal Pradesh the only Class I town accounts for 23.1 per cent of the state's urban population, there are two Class II towns which occupy 14.7 per cent urban population, and twenty eight Class VI towns contain 11.4 per cent of urban population of the state. The state has fourteen Class V towns which account 15.7 per cent urban population and 15.6 per cent urban population lives in Class VI towns which is quit high proportion of urban population.

Fig. 2 shows that the spatial pattern and location of towns by their population size in Himachal Pradesh. This depict that each valley has a large number of scattered towns. Most of these urban centres continued to perform predominantly rural functions besides providing market and other facilities. Infected, many of these towns emerged as administrative headquarter religious centres and tourist centres. It has been found that many of the towns were aligned to traditional trade routes which passed through valleys. These towns had a linear spread along the route. It may be mentioned that some important settlements also emerged in the foot hill region along trade routes. Such towns provided the gateway or entry point into the mountains.

Conclusion

The state present sharp contrasts in terms of spatial pattern of urban population. The result shows that the Shimla district has highest proportion of urban population in the state. It is adjoined by districts having high percentage also. Shimla is the capital town of the Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh which occupies high percentage (84.2 %) of urban population of the district. The high proportions of urban population are found in Solan and Sirmaur district whereas low proportion is found in district of Kangra.

REFERENCES

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