

PATTERNS AND PROCESSES OF URBANISATION IN A HIMALAYAN STATE: A CASE STUDY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH (INDIA) 1881-1981

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ABSTRACT: The process of urbanisation in many of the Third World countries and former colonies was initiated during the colonial period and bears a strong imprint of the effects of these exogenous factors. The regions with little economic use and less integrated with the colonial spatial organisation, such as the Himalaya, experienced a unique form of urbanisation reflecting the indigenous and the colonial factors. The paper analyses the comparative response of the colonial and Indian towns in the Himalaya to the exogenous and endogenous forces by focussing on the State of Himachal Pradesh. The analysis reveals a preferential dichotomy in the establishment of British and Indian towns in different elevation zones. The former comprising of cantonments, health resorts, and administrative centres, were located in the upper reaches of the healthy middle elevation zones. The Indian towns located in the lower and middle elevation zones developed as religious and trade centres, halting places on caravan routes, and capitals of native states. The trans-Himalaya has remained devoid of an urban place. The physical constraints are evidenced in the time lag in the origin of impulses of urbanisation in the plains and their diffusion in the hills. The multi-functional towns and those related to Indian and colonial bases have grown faster than the uni-functional ones. The transverse valleys functioning as arteries of impulses of urbanisation have created the linear pattern of towns. The contribution of the small towns in the urbanisation of the region has been considerable. Urbanisation has been sustained by the tertiary sector functions rather than secondary of the economy. The new towns have emerged in an inverted chronological sequence in which the hill-foot towns are younger than those of the interior.

The process of urbanisation, in the modern sense of the term, was initiated in India, as in other former colonies, during the colonial period and was to a great extent the result of colonial spatial planning. However, the colonial mode of production, and the enclave development generated by it in India, failed to provide the necessary balance and feedback relationship between the process of urbanisation and economic development. This caused rapid urbanisation in areas which were economically important in the colonial spatial organisation. The spatial expressions of urbanisation, in the form of growth of urban places and urban population, do display an integration of the overall economic and

market creating development, and a gradually increasing differentiation of social and economic living, however partial or lopsided these may be.

It is expected that the areas devoid of economic potentials in the colonial economic framework should have been neglected. The Himalaya, a chronically backward region characterised by high mountain topography, hostile climate over a large part, and a feudal spatial organisation, had little economic importance in the colonial organization. However, the absence of economic utility was greatly compensated by the hilly terrain and attractive climate in some altitudinal zones.

The Europeans were quick to recognise the utility of these advantages in the creation of physical and social environment suitable to the colonial way of living. These environments were created through the establishment of hill stations, health sanatoria, and cantonments. The living conditions in these places were *inter alia* comparable to those 'at home' (King, 1976).

In the context of the operation of the British colonial ecosystem (Mitchell, 1972) in the establishment, functioning and growth of urban places in the Himalaya, it is easy to understand the process of urbanisation and its resultant spatial patterns. It would be interesting to compare these with the previously existing patterns and processes and study the impact of the simultaneous operation of the native and the colonial influences. For this purpose Himachal Pradesh, comprising the central part of the Western Himalaya has been selected.

REGIONAL PERSONALITY

Physiographically, the region is characterised by rugged topography, predominance of mountain ranges with snow clad peaks, and network of valleys containing narrow flat lands. The river valleys, river terraces, and flat stretches of ground on ridge crests have played a significant role in the urbanisation of the region by providing sites for settlements.

The altitudinal zones of the region roughly correspond with the Outer, Lower, Lesser, Greater and Trans Himalayan regions. The Trans Himalaya suffering from cold winters, short summers and inaccessibility has always been a town poor area (Fig.1). The implications of the altitudinal zones are best reflected through their climates. The altitudinal zone best suited for the development and growth of towns is located between 600 to 3000 metres. Within it, the upper levels, between 2000 to 3000 metres, are characterised by

hill stations, sanatoria and cantonment towns established by the British. The trading and transport centres are mainly located at 600 to 2000 metres of elevation. Pleasant climate and suitable access from the plains are the major determinant in the upper reaches, and the location between the plains and hills, the two economically contrasting regions, in the lower zone.

The major means of communication in the region has always been road transport. Due to difficult terrain and uncomfortable long journeys, the interaction between the plains and the hills was almost exclusively restricted to pilgrims and traders. Many of the routes were really parts of the ancient Indo-Central Asian trade routes. Many of the small settlements located on these routes later emerged as towns and reflect the impact of this factor in their growth and functioning. The British constructed roads to link the hill resorts and sanatoria established by them. The impact of these roads was therefore restricted largely to the pockets containing these towns while the surrounding areas were left untouched. In the absence of a general lack of the routine of visiting the hills during summer months by the Indians, the two sets of towns, the ones established by the British and those with indigenous origins, remained unintegrated for quite sometime.

Like the roads, the influence of the railways was also restricted to the sections penetrated by these (Fig.1).

Historically, no major empire was established in the area now included in Himachal Pradesh. Its complex physiography and inaccessibility prevented any outside ruler to hold annexed territories for long. The region comprised of several dynasties among which the Katoch dynasty of Kangra is of great antiquity. There were many Muslim incursions and the territory often changed hands between the Muslim rulers and Rajput chiefs.



Often, the hills provided shelter to the rebels of the adjacent regional and imperial chiefs. The break-up of the Mughal Empire encouraged the strengthening of the local Rajput chiefs. By 1773, Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra emerged as the supreme ruler. He was defeated by dRaja Ranjit Singh in 1804, and later by the Gurkhas. In 1842, the region of Lahaul and Spiti became a part of the Sikh empire. However, by mid of 19th century after the Anglo-Sikh war, large parts of Himachal

Pradesh had come under the direct rule of the British while some hill states were allowed to be ruled by the native rulers in lieu of payment of tribute to the British. In 1864, Simla became the summer headquarters of the Government of India and that of the Punjab Government as well in 1871 (Imperial Gazetteer, 1908). The British established many hill stations and cantonment towns to perform administrative, recreation and military functions in the region. In the territory not under

direct British rule, the site for the establishment of these towns was often acquired from native states and in return the amount of tribute paid by them was reduced. Thus the urban centres, whether native or established by the British, originated in response to administrative and political needs, rather than economic initiative. The capitals of the erstwhile native states and principalities, district or tahsil headquarters and military centres provided the nuclei for the growth of urban functions. The religious centres and places of pilgrimage continued to function as a separate set and were recognised as urban centres only in the post-Independence period (Bharadwaj, 1973).

Himachal Pradesh became a Union Territory on April 15, 1948 after the merger of 30 former Punjab Hill States. The state of Bilaspur was merged with it in 1954. On November 1, 1966, as a result of the reorganisation of Punjab State, the districts of Kangra, Kulu, Simla, Lahaul and Spiti, and a few tahsils of Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Ambala districts were transferred to Himachal Pradesh. It was declared the 18th state of India on July 25, 1971. The acquisition of independent status and the incorporation of additional territory to it have provided an impetus to the rate of urbanisation in the state during recent decades.

The economic resources of the region comprise of water power, forests and horticulture. Tourism has emerged as an important industry only recently. The development of horticulture in some pockets of the region has promoted commercial activity in market towns located within the region as well as between the region and the plains. This has promoted industry related to the fruit canning and packing processes and initiated the growth of nuclei for future urban growth located on main road or railway routes. The developmental activities related to the utilisation of water

power have contributed to the process of urbanisation in the state to some extent and the taking up of additional hydroelectric projects in the state is expected to do so in future also.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses related to the process and pattern of urbanisation in the Himalaya have already been stated in detail by the author in his study on Uttarkhand (Sharma, 1981). Briefly restated these are :

1. In a mountainous region the major transportation arteries, aligned with the valleys would promote the emergence of a linear pattern of distribution of urban places.
2. The impulses of urbanisation, originating in the plains, slowly and steadily diffuse through the mountainous region. The settlements located along the contact zone between the hills and the plains are the first to experience the impact of these impulses and would develop as urban centres sooner than the settlements located in the interior.
3. It follows from the above that the towns located in the interior and originating under the impact of the impulses of urbanisation generated in the plains would be younger to the contact point urban settlements. This is termed as exogenous urbanisation. In contrast the capitals of native states and principalities which had been attracting merchants and artisan classes due to the percentage provided by the native rulers would promote an autochthonous and indigenous urbanisation.
4. The spatial distribution of towns in the region would reveal both, the operation of external influences through the location of a few small towns in the shadow zone of a large city (Mukerji, 1975; Raza and Habib, 1976), and the influence of internal processes through a large number of small towns surviving on a weak and generally non-functional base (Mukerji, 1973).

OBJECTIVES

The paper attempts to (i) examine the impact of the impulses of socio-economic development in the creation of new towns and in promoting the growth of indigenous urban places; (ii) compare the influence of different regional constraints and the diffusion of impulses of urbanisation in shaping the distribution pattern of towns; and (iii) examine the extent to which the processes and the patterns conform to the general spatial and temporal pattern identified in other parts of the country.

GENERALITIES

The urban population of the region increased by 323.06 per cent as compared to the 120.67 per cent increase recorded in the total population during 1901-1981. This suggests that despite physical inaccessibility, historical isolation, and socio-economic backwardness, the towns in the region have responded favourably to the impulses of urbanisation, external as well as internal.

The small towns in the region, as in other socio-economically backward areas of India have contributed significantly in the growth of urban population in the state. The proportion of urban population living in Class IV, V and VI towns was never less than 50 per cent of the total urban population of the state during 1901-1981, and with the singular exception of the decade 1911-21 the entire urban population of the state lived in Class IV, V and VI towns in the pre-Independence period. After Independence, the lowest proportion of urban population living in these size categories has been 65.97 per cent recorded during 1971-81. Interestingly, the region does not have a Class I city even at present. The largest urban place in the region and the state capital. Simla, emerged as a Class II town in 1971 and recorded a population of 70,479 persons in 1981. It became

a Class III town first in 1951 (46,150 persons) and maintained its primacy in 1961 (42,597 persons) also.

Thus, the model in which urbanisation is reflected through a large number of small towns is valid for the earlier decades whereas the model of urbanisation expressed through one large city surrounded by small towns is applicable for the post-Independence decades only. However, the small towns have continued to contribute to the growth of urban population in the post-Independence period also, although to a lesser extent.

The trends which characterise the Great Demographic Divide for the rest of the country were evidenced in the region not in 1921-31 but 1931-41. This is related to the time lag in the diffusion of impulses of urbanisation originating in the plains. Thus urbanisation in the region while following the national pattern has lagged behind temporally.

DECADAL URBAN PATTERN AND GROWTH

The 17 settlements which were given urban status in the census of 1881 can be classified into capitals of native states, administrative headquarters of British ceded districts, cantonments, hill stations, and market centres. In some cases an overlap of origin and functions is identifiable. Kasauli was a hill station and a cantonment town while Sundernagar was both a market centre and a native state capital.

The British influence was more effective in creating the infrastructure for urbanisation in the directly administered Simla Hill States in which four towns namely Simla, Sabathu, Dagshai, and Kasauli were established by the British. Dalhousie and Bakloh were established by the British outside the Simla Hill States (Fig.1). The establishment of these towns is a typical example of colonial urban

development by the unique method of acquiring a site through purchase. Roads were constructed to connect these towns to other settlements and to the plains. This provided stimulus for cultural and economic interaction between these towns and other regions.

Simla established in 1819 was among the first modern hill stations in the country. Located on a saddle ridge, it was well connected to Ambala through Kalka, a small settlement at the foot of the hills which emerged as a major transport centre in later decades. The easy accessibility and an attractive climate strengthened its summer resort functions and a few years later it became the summer headquarters of the then Imperial Government of India.

Sabathu, Dagshai and Kasauli were cantonments which also functioned as convalescent depots and hill stations located along the Kalka-Simla highway (Fig.1).

A unique relationship existed between the hill station and its supply town located at the foot of the hills. As in other hilly regions it is repeated in the interacting pairs of Simla-Kalka, Kasauli-Kalka and Dalhousie-Pathankot.

In addition to the urban growth generated by urban centres established by the British, the region had a strong base of indigenous urbanisation comprised of the capitals of native states and inter-regional commerce. In 1881 eight native state capitals were given urban status. Most of these had a population larger than towns established by the British except Simla. In addition to administrative functions, these capital towns also served as market centres.

Rampur, Chamba and Mandi, located in higher elevation zones had limited access from the plains. By comparison Nahan, Bilaspur and Nalagarh enjoyed better accessibility (Fig.1). Kangra had the distinction of being the capital

of probably the oldest native state and enjoyed considerable importance as a political, cultural and religious centre of the region (District Gazetteer, 1924-25).

Rampur, the capital of Bashahr state, located on the old Hindustan-Tibet road, was an important centre of collection and redistribution of products and attracted trade from great distances. In addition, it was also an important Hindu and Buddhist religious centre. Chamba, the capital of the state of the same name, was located on the route followed by the Gaddi herdsmen during their transhumance to the lower reaches of the Himalayas. It also had considerable commercial activity and local artisan industry.

Nurpur, Nalagarh and Nahan located in the hill-foot contact zone also functioned as important supply centres and market towns. Una, located on the northern bank of Soan river functioned as an important market and a halting place on the trade route that extended into the interior parts of the Himalaya (Fig.1).

The process of indigenous urbanisation thus operated mainly through administrative, religious and trade centres in the region. It was common for an indigenous town to function as a state capital, a religious centre and a market town at the same time. The towns established by the British also often performed more than one function but the functions performed by these had little base within the region. Consequently, these towns have been considered as 'parasite' towns (Spate and Learmonth, 1967). In addition, these towns had a distinct civil or military purpose in the spatial organisation of the British Empire.

The example of a town where the civil and military functions were superimposed is provided by Dharmasala. Even though the two realms do not interact functionally, together they promote and strengthen the tertiary

activities which contribute to the process of urbanisation. The larger population size of most of the capitals of native states in 1881 is an example of this process. Dharmasala, located on a spur of the Dhaoladhar was occupied as a military station in 1849 and formally recognised as the district headquarters in March 1885 (Imperial Gazetteer, 1908a).

THE DECADE 1881-91

The census of 1891 did not record any new town while all the towns recognised in 1881 maintained their urban status. There was no consistent pattern of the percentage decadal change in the population of towns according to their size, location or function. Some of the capitals of native states, namely Mandi, Nahan, and Chamba recorded an increase in their population while the population of others, Bilaspur, Kangra, Nurpur and Nalagarh decreased.

Among the towns established by the British only Simla, Dharmasala, Bakloh recorded an increase in population, the first two of these were largely administrative towns and Bakloh was a cantonment. Interestingly, Dalhousie, another cantonment town located close to Bakloh declined as did all the other cantonment towns in the region. This suggests not only an absence of a uniform operation of the same factors over the entire region but also the differences in factors themselves from one town to another.

In the absence of industrialisation and developmental activities in the region most of the growth was associated with natural increase. There was a trickle of in-migration to the capitals of native states and market centres. In the hill stations as well as cantonment towns the temporary occupance inhibited permanent in-migration.

THE DECADE 1891-1901

The census of 1901 is significant in the

study of urbanisation in the region because it brings out the impact of the extension of the railway line to Simla. Solan was added to the list of towns existing in 1891. It was an important chowki on the earlier Kalka-Simla cart road and had been the capital of Baghat State since 1878. Its administrative function coupled with the location of rest houses of the Viceroy and his officers and its subsequent importance on the Kalka-Simla rail track provided a good base for its future growth and it was declared a town in 1901 though its population was only 61 persons.

The towns identified in 1891 maintained their urban status in 1901. All the cantonment towns except Dagshai recorded an increase in their population. Among the capitals of native states Kangra, Nurpur, and Nalagarh continued to decline. The phenomenal increase in the population of Bilaspur (+ 105.93 per cent) was due to faulty enumeration in 1891 when the floods of the Sutlej had caused temporary out-migration of almost half of its inhabitants. The subsequent return of these people and their enumeration in 1901 reveals the enormous increase in the population of Bilaspur.

The absence of any relationship between the pattern of growth and size, location and function of the urban places identified in the previous decade continued during this period also. The addition of Solan as a new town did not change the pattern of distribution of urban places identified in the the previous decade.

THE DECADE 1901-11

The decade recorded a decline in the urban population of the region. The increase registered by larger towns was more than negated by the decrease in the population of most of the smaller urban places. Of the eighteen towns identified in 1901 as many as 8 were declass-

sified. All of these were native in origin and most of these were capitals of native states. The native state capital towns which recorded a decrease in their population but were not declassified were Mandi and Chamba. This is as much reflective of a weak economic base of these as of the political conditions which were constantly changing due to conflicts between the native princes and the British.

The decade experienced an erratic pattern of growth. Nahan and Nalagarh, both capitals of native states and hill-foot contact zone location, recorded contrasting growth. The population of Nahan grew by 1.36 per cent while Nalagarh was declassified. The cantonment towns established by the British also do not display a consistent pattern. Dalhousie, Bakloh and Kasauli recorded an increase in their population whereas Dagshai and Sabathu declined. In general, during this decade the growth in urban population was restricted to the towns created by the British with the sole exception of Nahan which had an indigenous origin. The declassification of a large number of towns in 1911 also reveals the pattern of clustering of towns around Simla.

THE DECADE 1911-21

During this decade the pattern of urbanisation was a contribution of the pattern of the previous decade. Except Sundernagar, all the towns declassified in 1911 remained so in 1921 also. Sundernagar was reclassified and two towns Nagar and Bhajpur treated as separate towns in 1901, were merged in it (Census of India, 1971). The high growth recorded by Simla (+ 40.23 per cent) was partly due to the inclusion of the population of Jutogh (1064 persons) in its population (Census of India, 1971). The growth of different towns reveals an erratic pattern. Chamba, which had recorded a decrease in its population in 1911 recovered in 1921 (+ 2.63 per cent). In the cantonment towns the trend evidenced in 1911

was apparent with the exception of Bakloh which declined in 1921. The changes in the population of cantonments were strongly related to the movement of the army reducing not only the major population but also the associated cantonment supporting population.

The distribution pattern of towns in 1921 was the same as that of 1911.

THE DECADE 1921-31

During this decade the growth in urban population was smaller than the one recorded during 1911-21 (+ 10.72 per cent as compared to + 12.37 per cent). This is not consistent with the growth expected by the trends of the Great Demographic Divide and supports the proposition of a time lag involved in the origin of the impulses of urbanisation in the plains and their impact in the hilly regions.

Three new towns Jogindernagar, Jutogh and Dalhousie cantonment were identified in 1931 (Fig.1). While the population of Jutogh and Dalhousie cantonments was included in that of Simla and Dalhousie towns respectively in 1921, Jogindernagar grew with the implementation of Barot Hydroelectric Project in 1924. The construction activity during 1926-31 gave a considerable boost for its growth.

Two towns, Bilaspur and Una were reclassified, the former was a native state capital, the latter a small market and trade-route town. Of the five towns which remained declassified four, Kangra, Nurpur, Nalagarh, Rampur were capitals of native states. For the first time since 1881 Simla and Sundernagar registered a decline in their populations. A decrease in population was recorded by all the cantonment towns also. Interestingly, the towns which increase their population were capitals of native states with the sole exception of Dharmsala.

The over all pattern of distribution of towns in this decade was not much different from that

of 1921 except some infilling due to the emergence of new towns.

THE DECADE 1931-41

In spite of comparative economic backwardness, and inaccessibility the impact of the operation of impulses of urbanisation was evident in 1941. The urban population in the region increased by 16.90 per cent. The largest proportion (+ 34.75 per cent) of this increase was contributed by Class VI towns in the region. Three towns, Solan, Nalagarh and Rampur, were reclassified. Of these Nalagarh and Rampur were capitals of native states. Two towns, Kangra, and Nurpur which were also capitals of native states remained declassified. Jogindernagar, which had emerged as a new town in 1931 recorded a decrease in its population (- 35.90 per cent). This suggests the short lived spurt provided by specific development projects to the process of urbanisation. The impact of a more stable, though low level base, provided by tertiary activities is evidenced in the continued growth in the populations of Chamba, Mandi, Nahan and Bilaspur, all capitals of native states. Some of the cantonment towns, Dagshai and Kasauli, declined while others registered an increase. The maximum increase was recorded by an old cantonment, Sabathu (+ 64.36 per cent) and a new one, Dalhousie cantonment (+ 59.25 per cent). The change in the population of cantonment towns was induced by military movement of a semi-permanent nature and not as an expression of regional development.

The distribution pattern of towns in 1941 was a continuation of the pattern existing in 1931. The addition of reclassified towns did not bring any marked change in it.

THE DECADE 1941-51

This decade is characterised by maximum growth of urban population in the region

(+ 78.66 per cent) since 1881, following the gaining of Independence by the country in 1947, and the large scale redistribution of population in its wake. The ramifications of the gaining of Independence were mainly in the form of a broader spectrum of social and economic developments, without an external constraint. The increased diversification of urban economy initiated a district process of rural to urban migration. The displaced persons from Pakistan also settled in some towns in the region. A number of new towns were identified while some older declassified towns were reclassified as urban places. Most of the towns clustered around Simla recoded a high growth. Jutogh was merged in Simla and two new towns Theog and Arki, both former capitals of native states, emerged in 1951 further strengthening the cluster around Simla (Fig.1). Simla itself recorded a phenomenal growth (+ 151.52 per cent). The growth was related to the shift of the capital of East Punjab to Simla.

With the identification of Yol, Nagrota Bagwan and Palampur as new towns and the reclassification of Kargra which had remained declassified since 1911 another cluster centred at Dharmasala emerged (Fig.1). A camp for displaced persons from Kashmir, established at Yol in 1949 contributed to its large size (13520 persons). Nagrota, had developed as a commercial and road and rail transport centre.

Interestingly, Jogindernagar continued to decline in this decade also. Three former native state capital towns, Mandi, Nalagarh and Rampur also declined. Solan, reclassified as a town in 1941 recorded a high increase (+114.89 per cent). This was associated with the settling of the displaced persons and the shift of the Punjab University administrative functions from Lahore in Pakistan.

For the first time in the state, a religious centre Paonta Sahib emerged as a town (Fig.1).

Located on the Simla-Nahan-Dehradun road it also attracted considerable trade.

THE DECADE 1951-61

This decade is important in the study of urbanisation in the region because the impulses of urbanisation not only originated within the region but were also stronger than ever before due to the extensive development in socio-economic infrastructural components. This is evidenced in the growth recorded by its various towns except Simla, Yol, and Una. The population of Simla declined due to the shift of the administrative functions of Punjab state to its new capital, Chandigarh (Census of India, 1961). Yol declined because the camp for displaced persons established in 1949 was disbanded in 1952 (Census of India, 1961). The decline in Una occurred due to the migration of a large number of families to Nangal and Naya which offered a better scope for livelihood (Census of India 1961).

Three towns, Bakloh, Jutogh and Dalhousie cantonment were reclassified. The only new town to emerge in 1961 was a religious place, Shri Naina Devi Ji.

THE DECADE 1961-71

This was a decade of rapid urbanisation in the wake of a proliferation of the tertiary and developmental activities in the region. Due to the Chinese and Pakistani aggressions in 1962 and 1965 respectively, the region received special attention from the Central Government particularly in the field of road building. The extension and improvement of roads in the region provided a boost to the expansion of trade and commerce. The new towns emerging in this decade were Hamirpur, Ghamarwin, Saharan, Manali, Santokhgar, Dhalli and Pandoh (Fig.1). Of these, Hamirpur and Ghamarwin were tahsil headquarters. Manali a major tourist centre located on the left bank of Beas river enjoyed direct access

to Simla, Chandigarh and Delhi. Pundoh represents urban growth generated by specific developmental activities. It was the only place without an urban local body (Census of India, 1971).

THE DECADE 1971-81

In this decade as many as eleven new towns emerged further consolidating the urbanised zones in the region through infilling (Fig.1.). The slightly lower growth recorded by Simla (+ 27.29 per cent) as compared to the one in the previous decade (+ 29.98 per cent) was mainly caused by the shift of some Central Government offices from Simla (Census of India, 1981). The decline in the population of Sundernagar (- 2.49 per cent) and Pandoh (- 54.75 per cent) was related to the dispersal of population in the wake of the winding up of the activities of the Beas Suttlej Link Project after completion of the construction activity.

Among the new towns were religious centres such as Jwalamukhi and newly emerging industrial centres such as Parwanoo (Fig.1). The location of the airport at Bhuntar, providing air link to Kulu from Delhi, and its adjacent location to Kulu were mainly responsible for its emergence as a town (Fig.1). Some of the new towns were tahsil headquarters such as Rohru, Sujampur, and Nadaun (Fig.1).

Simla continued to contain a large proportion of the urban population of the state (21.54 per cent). However, the largest proportion was still in the Class VI towns (24.08 per cent).

CONCLUSIONS

The capitals of native states and principalities, trading centres located in the hill-foot contact zone, pilgrimage centres and halting places for caravans have provided the initial *raison de etre* of urbanisation in the region. The cantonments, hill stations and sanatoria created by the British were later implanted

on this base. Together, these created a marked diversification of the urban complex of functions performed by different towns in the region. However, the segregation of functions was more pronounced in the colonial settlements and where two or more functions combined, the subsequent growth was relatively high. Most of the colonial towns failed to develop adequate hinterlands and economic viability due to the temporary nature of their occupation and a distinct orientation of their function and structure towards the requirements of the colonial community. It is not surprising therefore that these settlements as contrasted to the indigenous ones, were better integrated with the towns in the plains, and for long functioned as an independent set contributing little to the towns of the other genre, and were as alien to the intra-regional system of indigenous towns as their creators.

The often proposed hypothesis of altitudinal zonation in the mountainous regions such as Himachal Pradesh needs to be modified. The terrain controlled pattern of transport lines and linkages following the different transverse valleys actually promotes the development of a north-south extending sub-regional system comprised of a linear pattern of interlinked towns. A similar zonation in the east-west direction is less marked and valid if only the colonial towns are considered. Thus the hypothesis that the urban places in mountainous regions would form a linear pattern orthogonal to the Himalayan grain is validated.

The functioning and survival of the British towns were heavily dependent upon easy access and continuous supplies from the hill-foot towns, facilitated by the construction of roads and railways to interlink these with the British patronised hill crest settlements. The two types of towns thus formed interacting pairs in which the hill-foot towns were younger

to the ones located in the interior. However, the early and independent emergence of interior towns, native or British, is contrary to the logically expected chronological order in which the hill-foot town should be older. The pattern of emergence of towns in the region suggests an inverted chronological sequence.

The Trans and Great Himalayan regions have consistently remained devoid of any town. The district level administrative functions in these regions continue to be located in the settlements without an urban status. In the lower altitudinal zones containing almost the entire urban population of the region, the random distribution of suitable sites has resulted in a random distribution pattern of towns in which each linear belt is separated by an intervening stretch of rugged terrain forming an interaction barrier.

One of the consequences of this development has been the absence of the emergence of a higher order node with the characteristics of a primate city in the region as a whole. The primacy of the state capital, Simla, established by the British remains largely administrative. This is a striking characteristic of the urbanisation in the region and suggests limited economic, social and cultural interaction within it and with the adjacent plains.

The diverse rates of growth of towns located in the same general area or belonging to the same genre and a random pattern of distribution of towns defeats any attempt to precisely delineate regions of urbanisation. The term connoting a homogeneity in terms of rate of urban growth loses any significant meaning in Himachal Pradesh.

The process of urbanisation in economically backward regions, such as Himachal Pradesh, functioning in an inherited and continuing colonial spatial organisation must operate through three basic facets of regional economy; secondaryisation, tertiaryisation and

developmental activities. The first has started contributing only recently; the second has already been attempted to a considerable level and in order to be more effective its further proliferation should be linked to the progress made in the other two fields. The impact of some of the developmental activities, specially the construction work associated with the hydroelectric projects is short-lived. The initial pattern of sudden growth at the start of the construction activity and the subsequent massive decline in population and economic collapse, till their revival through developments in some other sector suggests one kind of model which needs to be investigated in depth. The best approach would thus seem to be to implement schemes that can generate sustained and continuous growth.

In overall assessment, in spite of a long period

of relative isolation, both cultural and physical, caused by severe terrain, climatic handicaps, relatively sparse transport network and a low level of the exploitation of natural resources, the urbanisation in the region has been considerable although most of the towns are small in size. The indigenous base of urbanisation in the region is much older than its colonial counterpart which was initiated mainly in response to the stimuli originating from the North Indian Plains. In recent decades, the two have merged into each other. Wherever this has happened, the towns have grown at a faster rate. An analysis of the process of urbanisation, pattern of growth, and distribution of towns suggests the absence of universal application of many of the common propositions of urbanisation.

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