CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

Kullu has emerged as a leading district in hill area development of Himachal Pradesh. There has been a horticulture revolution, and it has become an ideal destination for investment in various industries like handloom industry, tourism industry and power sector. The competence and value systems with civilisational heritage, trade liberalization and other measures provided to increase the competitive environment in the economy has produced good results for Kullu district. Better infrastructure has lead to robust performance in all the spheres of the development. The development of the district has been progressing almost at uniform pace over the last forty years.

Having charted the course of development and progress of Kullu district in the previous chapters, we also need to understand many lacunae in its holistic development. We can not close our eyes towards them. In the political field, from the first general elections in 1952, a two-party system in the region has developed. The two-party system has its both advantages and disadvantages. The first advantage is that political leaders are well known and familiar faces. But the disadvantage of two party system is that the voter has limited choices.

An air of complacency sets in, both Congress and Jana Sangh now Bhartiya Janta Party are pursuing similar politics. They know each will be replaced by the other in the elections. As people have little choice, the scenario is tweedledee and tweedledum, people have no other choice but to vote for one of them. Knowing this the parties only look towards self-agrandisement and not bother much about the people as they know that if this time they lose, next time they will win. The bureaucracy has also become committed to one or the other party. The favourites get good posts when their party comes to power.
The political scenario is not robust and a lot of corruption has crept into the system. For example, at times the MLAs of the ruling party give preference to the people of their own constituency in various government jobs and even transfer more monetary funds to their constituency than the others. Even corruption cases are never solved or anyone punished as after 5 years the same party comes to power and buries the cases instituted against them.

The local self government at the block and village level has not been given enough powers and finances. The Panchayati Raj system had envisaged grass root participation in politics. This system is more close to the common people. Therefore grant for schools, hospitals, agriculture, animal husbandry, public work should be handled by the panchayats for better and effective results, which has not happened. Grant-in-aid should be increased, for better and effective functioning at the local level.

In the last few decades, the population growth in Kullu district has increased at a very constant rate. Many factors have contributed in the population growth like migration, better infrastructural facilities, medical facilities, better education, job opportunities and transportation network, specially low rate of infant deaths and higher life expectancy.

If we look at the migration pattern, we notice that more and more people from tribal areas are being settled in the district, specially from Lahul Spiti and from the tribal areas of Kinnaur. This shifting pattern is in search of better jobs and better infrastructure facilities. People are shifting to Kullu because of government jobs. People coming to Kullu for the purpose of jobs have started settling in the district by building permanent residences.

With the increase in population and their growing demands, the basic resource base supporting life sustaining systems such as agricultural, pastoral and forest land is facing a retrogression and induced imbalance in nature. The growing population places a constrain on land resources and
physical configuration of the zone. This aspect deprives the zone of sufficient food resources for increased population. The stabilization of the population growth is very necessary to overcome the problem which leads to impaired natural resources and exhaustion of the renewable ones.

In social sphere, especially in education and health, Kullu district has done immensely well. Kullu district was considered an illiterate region before 1966. In 1961, the literacy rate of Kullu district was only 13.10 percent. Within a span of forty years, the literacy rate reached to 73.36 percent. It is undoubtedly a big achievement. But if we compare it with other districts of the state. Kullu still has a long way to go in achieving full literacy, especially female literacy which is only 61.24 per cent. Kullu district lags behind many of her counter districts like Shimla, Hamirpur, Mandi and Kangra which are far ahead of Kullu district in the literacy rate.

Education is one parameter which is capable of bringing change in the thinking and attitude of the people. It is responsible for eradicating superstitions and making people more rational and logical. In Kullu district, education has helped in the eradication of the old age systems of Polyandry and Reet. These systems had undermined the position of the woman in the society. With the spread of education, these customs have been discarded by the people, not by law but with the mutual consent. It is important that a law or an act comes in force against these customs, so that these customs can be eradicated from the root.

Women education is an important indices in the growth and development of the society, as women are the main contributor to the home and economy. The female literacy rate in Kullu district is 61.24 per cent, which is not very good when compared with the male literacy rate which is 84.55 per cent. The fact that the use of education facilities has not been available or not made available to both the sexes is evident. Further improvement is required in the female literacy for better development of the area.
People have now also started questioning the old age tradition of Devtas, especially the rational people. But there are certain instances where even today the social and political lives of the people are being governed by the Devtas. Even political leaders in some instances seek the Devta’s permission for the formulation of certain projects. It is evident that these customs have not been abandoned totally; people still have faith in them And lot of superstition is still prevalent in the district.

In the health sector Kullu district has achieved great success. Number of hospitals and dispensaries has increased. Death rate in Kullu has decreased due to better medical facilities. Many diseases which could prove hazardous have been brought under control. Family Welfare Programmes have been a success in the district. Still there are various aspects which need to be attended for further development of the area. As there is lack of proper transportation facilities in remote villages, which are at the height of above 5000 feet, in case of emergency it takes a lot of time in reaching the hospital. Health centers should be opened in those villages which are above the height of 5000 feet, so that basic health services can easily reach the people. To provide them relatively advanced health facilities, air lifting of patients should be provided. The expenditure on the health, which was 53767.98 lakhs in 2001, should be increased so that better health facilities could be provided to the people. Modern and latest techniques in the medical sector should be introduced. Equipments that are required for advanced treatment should also be brought in. Trained and skilful doctors should be employed for better services. It is evident from the data available that there was a shortage of medical personnel to run various medical institutions. Despite the improvement recorded in 1990’s, in 2000, 16.42 percent of sanctioned posts for doctors were still lying vacant, 22.42 percent posts of staff nurses and 10.68 percent posts of midwives were lying vacant. It will not be presumptuous to suggest that a disproportionately large percentage of the vacancies are still vacant in rural
and tribal/hill areas. Thus, there is a need to ensure accountability of existing staff with in the Health Department.

Economically also Kullu district has developed at a fast rate from 1966 to 1990. Since 1990, it has been progressing at a very uniform pace and has reached a plateau. Many factors like horticulture, tourism, power projects, industry and animal husbandry have contributed in strengthening the economy of the district. Though new fields like Information Technology, need to be brought in to again kickstart the development of the region and to create more jobs.

Horticulture is a very important factor in the economy. People in the Kullu district are shifting from agriculture and turning towards horticulture. More production in horticulture means better, which means more money. Thus there is a direct relationship between production of fruits and the economic development. But this has a negative aspect also. For increased production, strong pesticides, insecticides and fungicides are being used; excessive use of fertilizers is done which is causing health hazards and also destroying the environment. Marketing of the produce is also not very good. Big arhatias (middle men), a few of them control the market and the prices of the produce, which is detrimental to the farmers. They charge more commission from the producers to sell his product in the market.

Facilities for the transportation of the produce are also not adequate and modern. Even in 21st century, it takes 48 hours to reach the produce in the big markets like Delhi and Chandigarh. Trucks are not equipped with cold storage facility due to which a lot of produce gets destroyed.

If we look at the development in Animal Husbandry, there are some shortcomings which are required to be overcome. First of all, in view of the difficult terrain, it is very inconvenient to carry sick animals over long distance for treatment. At present there are 81 dispensaries in the district.
The number of dispensaries should be increased so that each dispensary can cover about 5000 animals.

As brought out earlier there is a chronic shortage of fodder in hilly areas. Due to small holdings, the cattle feed is not available for the large number of livestock population. To overcome the fodder shortage it is suggested that the average area under pastures and grass lands should be increased in the hilly areas. The climate and other factors peculiar to hill areas are ideal for poultry development. Poultry has proved to be very successful up to 10,000 feet elevation. Although a start has been initiated in this direction, the scope of the present schemes is very small and the development is slow. There is a requirement for more incubators and refrigerators in each veterinary hospital and one poultry expert to be kept at each of these hospitals. Steps should be taken to establish factories in hilly area for the manufacture of poultry feed and depots of these feeds should be established at places which are easily accessible.

At present little attention is paid to the giving of technical advice to the farmers who get chicken from poultry extension centers for starting poultry. Similarly, even in poultry development there is absence of proper advice and guidance to the farmers who allow the improved hens to wander free in their fields with Desi hens (local breed of hens) and cocks resulting in uncontrolled cross breeding, resulting in poor egg yield. In view of the above problem, the training period of the poultry technical personnel should be increased and that qualified persons should be used for giving technical advice to farmers.

Undoubtedly we notice growth and development in Kullu, but it is taking place at the expense of environment. Tourism industry which is the most important aspect of the economy of the district is destroying the environment. Like major sectors of human activity, tourism has posed both positive and negative effects upon physical environment. Positive effects are
preservation of physical features, cultural heritages, and natural flora and fauna. Negative effects are congestion, deterioration of aesthetic, grandeur, and unscrupulous replacement of natural landscape with human built areas, water imbalance, and wild life extinction.

The shift from mountain economy based on agriculture and forests, to tourism economy and industrial development has caused the growth of nearby villages and settlements to tourist resorts with heavy traffic. Excessive construction of hotels and guest houses is taking place on the river banks and mountain slopes. These hotels and resorts do not follow any zoning laws.

There are more than 350 hotels to accommodate the growing number of tourists. Infact, there is still no stoppage to the number of hotels coming up. More and more hotels are being constructed. By claiming more land, hills are leveled, valleys quenched, farmlands paved, trees and grasses flustered, and the random quality of the recreational resorts become more predictable by disappearance of aesthetically attractive landscapes, and sprouting of more concrete structures.

The temperature of the Kullu valley is also increasing due to over crowding, traffic and pollution. The temperature of the district has increased by 2 to 3 degrees. Now the temperature in summers goes up to 28 °C (82 °F) to 32 °C (90 °F). Due to increase in the temperature snow bound areas are decreasing. Earlier, Manali town used to get 4 to 5 feet of snowfall, but now it has been reduced to only 1 to 2 feet. Increase in temperature is also affecting the production of various fruits especially apple.

Likewise, forests have also been an important part of the economy of Kullu. Wood from the forests has been used for commercial as well as for household purposes. In the absence of coal gas or other alternative source of energy, the people have to depend upon scarce cattle dung and fuel wood
obtained from nearby forest for their energy requirement. The people of villages also have lopping rights for collection of fuel wood and fodder from nearby forests. Since colonial times, wood has been a main source of income to the government. Due to the high rate of exploitation of these forests, there are vast patches of deforested land. It further leads to soil erosion, landslides and floods etc.

Though the forest department has taken the responsibility of replantation of the trees. To replant the area there is always a shortage of nursery stock. Due to which various forests of Spruce and Fir have degenerated. The government needs to provide enough stock of the seedlings for the regeneration of the forests.

The indiscriminated grazing by livestock has also adversely affected the forests. During the past decade, overgrazing has caused intensive depletion of vegetation cover, combined with deforestation and impediment of forests regeneration, introducing a type of rudimentary vegetative cover incapable of soil protection. Landslides, torrent like patterns, gullies, and increased surface erosion are also attributed to the effects of overgrazing besides general land misuse. Thus government and forest department should take strict measures to control the over exploitation of the forest areas.

An area of concern in the Kullu district is the selling and buying of the narcotics. It has become an industry now. Village Malana has become the center for drugs. Drug trafficking is directly related to the heavy tourist influx of the foreigners in the district. Not much is being done to control this menace, as it is very lucarative, it can destroy the youth of the region.

In the present study we have analysed many factors that are responsible for the growth and development of the Kullu district. Still, the researcher feels there are many aspects that need to unfold for further development. For example I.T. (Information Technology) sector, is required
in the region, which can play a major role in the economy of the region. Even in the field of tourism, international tourists need to be catered to.

This study has tried to cover most areas of the development of the region but still some lacunae might exist. A study of a district over 50 years possesses its own problems because every decade has its own ethos and to study we require facts, analysis and summarization. This research has been an attempt to come on target but the district is so rich geographically, culturally and traditionally that some aspects have been neglected though it has been the researchers endeavour to bring out the contemporary development in a historical context.