INTRODUCTION

The area under study is part of the state of Himachal Pradesh, adjoining Punjab and Jammu-Kashmir in north-western India. By location it forms a part of the west Himalayas and extends generally within 15 miles on either side of Dhaura Dhar and Pir Panjal ranges. For this reason, heretofore it is called the Dhaura Dhar Pir Panjal region.

The present study proposes to undertake a spatial analysis of some of the important attributes of its population. It pertains to 1951-61 period with needful references to earlier and the following decades.

Such a study is expected to be a median point of reference for looking through chain relations between cultural patterns, stages of socio-economic development, external influences and population-resource relationships. The knowledge of spatial patterns of various attributes of population and the temporal changes they have undergone is of vital significance in an Himalayan environment with varying degrees of accessibility, differential locations, resources and cultural settings. They reflect the modes of human adjustment and help to make use of them for fixing plan-priorities and strategies of development in local areas.

Location, Area and Extent:

The Dhaura Dhar Pir Panjal region is bounded by high Himalayan ranges on its north, north-west and east and mostly by low Himalayas on the south and south-west.
By such a location, the area of study lies midway between Siwalik districts of Himachal Pradesh to its south and trans-Himalayan Ladakh and Spiti to the north. It is enclosed by 31°15' to 33°30' N. latitude and 75°50' to 77°30' E. longitude.

Administratively the region includes the whole district of Chamba in the west, parts of Kangra-Mandi districts in the south and Kulu-Lahaul in the east and north. The adjacent state of Jammu and Kashmir lies to its north and west, Punjab to south and various parts of the home state on its east and south (Fig. 1).

In length it extends south-east to north-west for 136 miles from Karsog (Mandi) along borders of Simla district to Faxi (Chamba) along Kashmir borders. In breadth from northeast to nearly southwest, it spreads for about 90 miles from borders of Spiti to those of Kangra. Within about 9000 sq. miles area of the region, slightly more than one-third of the total population of Himachal Pradesh is contained. It has 5993 villages, 80% of which have less than 500 people, and about half of its rural population, while another 15% are returned as uninhabited. While the great mass of people are distributed in numerous valleys at the foot of two mountain ranges passing through the length of this region, its location holds a demographic significance with respect to the surrounding areas as well.

1 Based on Census estimates of 1971.
THE PROBLEM

The areal identity of local regions in Himalayas for a detailed study is generally missed in a country like India dominated by great plains. The dominance of physical environments in a geologically young mountainous area, lower size of population in relation to total areas, isolated or discontinuous nature of its concentrations in various valleys and glens and its apparent immobility give an impression as if the hill regions do not have the problem of human numbers to the extent it is faced in plains. On the other hand, it is observed that in relation to the directly usable area occupied by man and the known resources, the region is fairly well-populated. In view of its mountainous relief, greater expenses are required for economic development which aggravates the population-resource problem. Thus the problem of population requiring a study in its areal framework exists.

As low pressure of population stands in the way of economic development of a hill area, it needs to be examined as how large numbers create not only a problem of numbers in some parts but at the same time have also made the intensive use of their local resources possible.

The period 1951-61 stands as a historical divide between long-persisting era of indifference towards the needs of the region preceding 1951 and faster tempo of economic development following 1961. In the course of years, the preservation of
local cultures co-varying with distinct attributes of population will receive a setback under the broader sway of socio-economic changes undertaken on modern lines. For understanding the long-standing modes of adjustment between people and the regional environment and for finding the impact of changing practices in coming years, the choice of 1951-61 decade is meaningful for a population study of the region.

The population of the region has long been considered virtually immobile, fixed to a place by geographic compulsions and caste taboos. Since the fifties of this century, field observations, enquiries and reports tell a change pointing out all sorts of migratory trends caused by growing environmental pressure. The migration patterns as a link between the scattering of resources and that of population in this type of region are worth studying.

From various viewpoints, the study presents a research problem as for the role of physical environment influencing socio-economic forces which in turn affect the characteristics of population.

THE NATURE AND CHOICE OF AREAL UNIT:

Usually a river basin in the Himalayas is an easily marked unit for a regional study. But in the present case, purposely, a Himalayan circuit round the main axis of two mountain ranges has been selected. Although they act as divides in several respects, at the same time they have supplied a unique
unifying cord by permitting inter-communication between the two valleys through their passes and by vertically inter-relating their people upon the mountain pastures. A single river basin may be convenient because of its easy handling and a relatively fair degree of uniformity within its various sections. The introduction of a mountain divide brings in a far greater diversity of conditions affecting population and patterns of its distribution on the two sides. This affords a greater scope for comparative analysis and for delineation of various inter-relationships in a bid to expose the areal personality of different valleys.

After the statement of problems, its topical and regional significance, it is worth pointing out that while there is a lot of literature scattered about on natural setting, history, culture and regional habitats available in different forms, there have been few advanced systematic studies on aspects of population from the viewpoint of a geographer.

THE DIFFICULTIES

The region being wide and spread over great range of altitudes (even its populated valleys reach 10,000 ft. above mean sea level), exposed the author to difficulties of crossing over mountain and hill ranges in different seasons.

Although field knowledge is a sine qua non in every geographical study, in the case of this region, it was the most vital starting point to visualise conditions and to obtain
fair results. It could equally not be left out only as a final
check in order to achieve better judgements. With this end
in view, except a few tracts in parts of the hilly interior,
the whole field area was visited, sometimes more than once.
It involved foot journeys which had to be undertaken in
different years starting even before the formal undertaking
of this investigation.

The data collection from official and non-official
sources from all over the region proved time-taking for an
individual working under numerous limitations.

The primary census data on village and tahsil bases
for 1961 and 1961 have mostly been used. The total number
of inhabited villages reached over 5000 and revenue circles
(administrative group of villages) adopted for a majority
of the choropleth maps were as many as 290. In 1961 census,
in old areas of Himachal Pradesh, the data processed for the
village was not reliable because the basic revenue unit was
'Pargha' in many parts. A number of village- hamlets appearing
as a revenue village in 1961 were found missing in 1961 returns.
Probably they formed part of other hamlets grouped together
artificially for some sort of administrative purposes. For
this reason, the data arranged pargna-wise was found more
reliable for preparing maps for 1961 or where a decennial change
was required to be found. To find out the revenue circles or
Kothis included in a particular Pargna, an effort was necessary
in contacting old experienced revenue official conversant with earlier conditions. At least two-three such persons were searched out to resolve the points of disagreements as for the inclusion of areas in particular pargnas.

By the time, the preparations for 1971 census were in the offing, I would have failed in my aims if the picture emerging out of this latest enumeration would have been completely ignored. The census officials were not prepared to pass on even the broadly tabulated data at tahsil level till August 1972. Afterwards as soon as it was at hand, it had to be incorporated suitably in relevant chapters where its reference was most vital.

Besides this official data, it was considered essential to give its due importance to intensive study of relationships marked within a small village-universe both for quantitative and qualitative analysis. For the use of a number of village monographs was made and additional enquiries, interviews and questionnaires were undertaken. The utter lack of reliable data on many important aspects of population was resolved partly by tapping indirect sources of information, formal and informal meetings with knowledgeable persons of varied fields.

Next to the peculiar difficulties of collection of data and gathering of field observations, its processing and mapping presented a set of its problems at various stages. The scattering and large variations of population, absence of many
hamlet-villages on Survey of India maps (issued after about two years of struggle), discrepancies in number and areas of villages given in revenue and census records, created fresh difficulties.

Boundaries of village-groups included their total areas, but recorded area figures pertained only to inhabited portions measured at the time of land settlement. Such cadastrally surveyed parts were required to be marked out expeditiously and carefully from vacant chucks around them in order to attempt a realistic depiction of density variations in relation to directly usable inhabited areas. The different sizes of administrative villages not worked out in certain cases in the absence of any regular settlement operation till 1961, increased the quantum of work. Once the village-wise density of population map was ready on one inch to four mile scale (with the help of Survey of India maps and series of adjustments), it was a problem to reduce it to a uniformly adopted size without sacrificing the mosaic of variations in multiple-sized villages.

As the variations in ratios of different elements were too great, categorisation was often a problem. As far as possible, the final selection was based keeping in mind the important natural and cultural areas, the breaking or merging points, the regional averages, the span of figures and their frequency within a range. Out of these difficulties, deficiencies and personal shortcomings, this work has emerged more as an attempt to suggest the scope of this field and portray an area which stands as a case study of Himalayan region.
THE SCHEME OF CONTENTS:

The first two chapters are respectively on (I) Landforms including sections on drainage, climate, vegetation and local soils, (II) Caste-tribal and religious composition. They have been oriented to their significance for man and his life. Together they complete the needfully detailed background of physical and cultural environments of the region. In its natural course, the third chapter that follows is on numbers, distribution and density of population. After knowing the size, distribution and density patterns of population, our interest shifts towards growth of population, in and out, internal as well as seasonal migrations.

The sixth and seventh chapters deal with biological traits and qualitative aspects of the region's population, one discussing sex ratio and age-structure in its two parts and the other progress of literacy.

The study of occupational structure has been taken up in eighth chapter as it needs the background familiarity with, and reference to, all regional characteristics discussed earlier. The socio-economic characteristics of each of the following important occupational groups in this region have been discussed in detail: 1. Agricultural classes (cultivators and agricultural labourers), 2. Graziers, 3. Forest dwellers, 4. Industrial workers, and 5. Non-agricultural workers of all types. The chapter has been developed both in spatial and temporal perspectives to obtain a fair understanding.
The next brief chapter is on population regions taking
cognizance of all attributes, the vital ones chosen as criteria
for the scheme of regionalization. A final summing up of the
main conclusions of this study is contained in the closing,
tenth chapter.