CHAPTER XIV

POPULATION GROWTH

Although population seems to have been growing mostly by natural means in the region as a whole; yet it is full of interest to study it in view of its socio-economic development during recent periods.

In the two decades ending 1971, both the inter-regional and intra-regional movements of people have assumed significance. In contrast to the plains, more temporary migrations from one local part to another have resulted in higher growth in one at the expense of lower in another.

In 1961, the rise in the region's population over that of 1951 has been 15.8% (absolute rise of 130918)\(^1\) far lower than 21% at the national level.

In comparison with other areas, it kept closer to 15% of Uttar Pradesh mountainous districts and 13-16% of Hoshiarpur-Gurdaspur-Hemirpur (adjoining tracts of Punjab and of Siwalik zone), was lower than 12% found in the state of Himachal Pradesh in the west and Sikkim in eastern Himalayas. The growth rate of 9% recorded in adjoining Jammu-Kashmir areas was lower than that of this region.

In the period under discussion, fresh in-migrants formed 2.2% of the absolute rise in numbers meaning that 22% of decennial growth was the result of in-migrants and 78% of natural means.

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\(^1\) In 1961-71, the rise in population came to 23\% (absolute rise 289043) as compared to 22\% of the average growth of Himachal Pradesh and 24\% at the national level.
To cite a single instance on the basis of separate figures included in primary census data of inner area of Lahaul, its growth of population in 1951-61 decade was 59.4% but minus the main bulk of road labourers from outside, it came down to 27.4%.

We are greatly handicapped by the lack of reliable data on births and deaths, even the district level figures given in the vital statistics of India being under-recorded. Still it is frequently reported from a number of villages that a trend towards declining mortality and increasing rate of developmental activities in recent years have been the two major causes contributing to rapid growth of population in many areas of the region. While health and sanitation activity has gone a long way in cutting down the death rate in many localities in the countryside, the percolation of receptivity for population control in the period under discussion has been virtually absent.

**POPULATION CHANGES**

The population curves plotted for different areas for the whole span of 1901 to 1971 show a general absolute rise, periods of steady growth alternating those of rapid increase. After 1951, there has been a steeper rise in the case of most of the outer valleys, a tendency towards a greater concavity of the...
GROWTH OF POPULATION
(data BY DIRECTIONS /
1951-61)
(In Lakhs)
DHIJAL popu.

CHANDIABO
PAIWA
KANRA
LHIOUL

GROWTH OF POPULATION
(data BY DIRECTIONS /TECHNICAL)
(In Lakhs)
DHIJAL popu.

CHANDIABO
PAIWA
KANRA
LHIOUL

PERCENTAGE INCREASE
0 - DECREASE
ABSOLUTE INCREASE

FIG. 3
curve in the case of those included in mid-zone, the innermost valley of Lahaul showing a steady rise throughout except in the period from 1951 to 1961 (Fig. 21).

The region has recorded a general trend towards rapid rate of population growth since the turn of present century. As computed from population figures of the region in old census records, the initial slow rate of a little over 1% in 1901-21 was followed by a rapid rise of 15.2% till there was a general lowering to 2% in 1941-51 as a result of displacement of population from parts of the region on the eve of partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947. After this, it has again been increasing rapidly, as already described.

**Table II**

**Periodical Changes in Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>% Variation in 1901-21</th>
<th>% Variation in 1961-71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>+ 27</td>
<td>+30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulu</td>
<td>+ 32</td>
<td>+32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>+ 33.4</td>
<td>+44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>+ 32.2</td>
<td>+65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahaul</td>
<td>+ 39</td>
<td>+61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A broad comparison of increase in population has clearly brought out that in individual districts, total increases in
the last two decades have been much higher as compared to
slackening or steady rates in earlier periods, more in eastern
parts of the region in Mandi and Lahaul than elsewhere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tahsils</th>
<th>% Variation in 1961-61</th>
<th>% Variation in 1981-71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>+ 21</td>
<td>+ 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmour</td>
<td>+ 32</td>
<td>+ 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhattiyat</td>
<td>+ 14</td>
<td>+ 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pangi</td>
<td>+ 14</td>
<td>+ 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churah</td>
<td>+ 17</td>
<td>+ 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>+ 10</td>
<td>+ 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palampur</td>
<td>+ 11</td>
<td>+ 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chichiot</td>
<td>+ 16</td>
<td>+ 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karsog</td>
<td>+ 21</td>
<td>+ 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>+ 29</td>
<td>+ 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogindernagar</td>
<td>+ 25</td>
<td>+ 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulu-Seraj</td>
<td>+ 15</td>
<td>+ 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahaul</td>
<td>+ 59.5</td>
<td>+ 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region as a Whole</td>
<td>+ 15.5</td>
<td>+ 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before discussing the spatial variations on local levels for 1951-61, it is useful to visualise the trends in different areas with the help of tahsil level data for the last twenty years as summarised in the above table.

As compared to the regional increase of 15.8% in 1951-61, the growth in two inner areas of Brahmdur and Lahaul was considerably above it, ranging between 32 to about 60%. It was the lowest, ranging between 10-11% in the outer valleys of Kangra-Palampur and was generally between 15 to 30% in rest of the region.

In many parts of higher Himalayas, because of their sparse population, the higher percentile growth constituted a small absolute rise while a relatively smaller rise in populous lower Himalayas proved quite heavy consequent upon their larger population base in 1951.

Broadly the population has grown rapidly in eastern (Mandi-Kulu-Lahaul) than in western part (Chamba-Kangra) of the region by more than two times the latter in 1951-61.

In the next decade of 1961-71, the western part has shown an increase of more than five times as compared to the eastern zone, also by an inclusion of 7046 persons residing in Dalhousie-Bakloh enclaves of erstwhile Punjab state in Chamba district.

In another way, about, the absolute growth has remained more than two times higher in southern outer zone of lower Himalayas in both the periods vis-a-vis the northern inner zone of higher Himalayas. The big rise in the population of Brahmdur.
and Lahaul in 1961 was followed by low growth rate in 1971 with the departure of outside workers just after 1961. Clearly the population growth tends only to be more fluctuating in sparsely settled higher Himalayan region of the study area.

It is estimated in general census report of Himachal Pradesh of 1961 that more than 25% rise in population is indicative of in-migration in such areas. It helps us to conclude that higher growth in eastern and inner parts of the region has been caused by temporary in-migration. It is commonly concurred at the other end that it has been lowered by out-migration from parts of the densely populated outer region with less than 20% of population growth in the period under study.

Table 12
Variation in Urban Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Tracts</th>
<th>% Variation in 1951-61</th>
<th>% Variation in 1961-71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>+ 48.3</td>
<td>+ 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>+ 33</td>
<td>+123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>- 1.3</td>
<td>+ 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulu</td>
<td>+ 32.27</td>
<td>+120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region as a Whole</td>
<td>+ 23</td>
<td>+ 54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaving aside the towns of Kangra in 1961, the increase in urban population has everywhere been higher as compared to rural areas because of greater mobility of people and faster economic development. As many of them started with a low population base, even a small rise in it pushed the percentage increase to a very high figure. The variations in the population of different towns, influenced more by migrations have been considerable in different periods.

The population of Mandi and Kulu has increased tremendously during the last decade by inclusion of new townships. In Kangra, a 23% decrease in population of Sol town in 1961 resulted in an overall fall which has been made up during the following decade. In case of Chamba zone, five times increase in the population of Dalhousie in 1961 and declassification of Balloch in 1951 led to bigger overall increases.

The various causes responsible for a trend towards rapid urban growth in the region over the period of two decades are summarised below.

Till 1951 many of these towns remained local administrative and service centres for their sprawling hinterlands. With greater attention being paid to the development programmes in recent periods accompanied by efforts to create an infrastructure for their systematic operation, the towns took up commercial, educational and more of service functions at a rapid rate. In 1971, besides the out growth of old towns, the villages like Pandoh near Mandi and Manali in Kulu were also
considered urbanised under the term 'Urban agglomerations.'

The construction of Beas-Sutlej tunnel at Pachoh and conversion of Manali into a popular hill resort have been responsible for imparting urban character to these inconspicuous villages in 1951. The development of road transport has tended to make many others in all parts of the region into 'urbanised' centres with growth of population.

Unlike Mandi-Kulu part of the region, growth of towns in Kangra some lagged behind, the highest increase of 31% was observed in Palampur in 1961 and in three others it was only between 3-13% over their population in 1951. A small cantonment town of Yal had a 23% fall in its population in 1961 when displaced persons and temporary workers residing there had left. The towns in this part are relatively smaller and have not displayed any phenomenal growth as the rate of economic growth has been slow. Chamba is similarly placed and the rise in its urban population is due to the inclusion of two more towns which were previously part of Gurdaspur district of Punjab.

It will be of interest to remark that temple towns, the hill resorts and urban bases for tribal people living at high elevations, experience peak growth in their population lasting for the pilgrim, tourist and winter season. This aspect of their development needs to be kept in mind while gauging their importance from the standpoint of population growth.

The rise in population of the old towns of Mandi and Kulu in the eastern zone has been considerably higher. Being singularly major towns in their local areas, they have grown at a rapid rate with increase in commerce, transport and educational facilities.
SPATIAL VARIATIONS ON LOCAL LEVELS:

The details of population changes in the 1951-61 period have been worked out and put in two maps (Figs. 30 and 21) showing absolute changes in numbers and proportionate changes over the base year of 1951. All grades of variations in population are observed in each of the inner, middle and outer belts of the region depending on size of earlier population, accessibility of local areas, the success of medical and health services in fighting deaths and diseases and the stage and rate of economic development.

1. **Rural Areas with Relatively Very High Growth of Population (Over 40%)**:

   (i) The central portions of Chamba-Churah valleys, a confined tract in Kangra and sizeable pockets of Mandi-Jogindernagar and Inner Seraj valleys, all already carrying a dense population have recorded this category of growth rate.

   (ii) In mountainous areas of interior and inner areas, such tracts are also found in Manali and adjoining parts of Lahaul along mountain ranges of eastern Kulu, north-central Brahmoor and mountain borders of Kulu-Mandi areas.

   By way of mutual comparison, such high growth is observed over large parts of Mandi-Jogindernagar, sizeable tracts of Chamba-Churah and in relatively smaller pockets in other valleys. The areas in first group are favourably located from the point of view of history of human settlement and opportunities of economic development and are found to be the destinations of permanent family-migrants from other parts of local and of neighbouring regions.
The development of communications, availability of food, its manageable distribution, almost a complete eradication of malaria once taking a big toll of human life and decrease in children's diseases, like child spleen, have contributed to rapid growth in population. It has generally tended to encourage economic development in many localities at the existing stage of economy.

In the second group of high Himalayan areas, on the one hand, the people are generally place-bound and on the other a heavier import of outside male workers in road construction and state services (in view of their border location) is witnessed. It is the temporary stay of such types of people which goes to increase the growth of population and lowers down the sex ratio, the permanent settlement of outsiders neither allowed nor tempting enough.

Likewise the increase in the number of orchards and tourist attractions around Manali along southern slopes of Pir Panjal, laying of irrigation channels and carrying out forest operations in other parts of the mid-zone have been inviting people from different local areas and other regions to settle on land or stay during the working period. This trend enhances the general welfare and per capita use of land resources in such areas in the course of time.

2. Areas with Relatively High Growth Rate of Population: (30-40%):

Although limited to small pockets in various parts of the region, these are most widely distributed in central Kangra
and Bhattiyat, in upper Churah, Brahmour, north-western Pangi valleys extending right upto their margins. These are also marked at places in Mandi-Jogindernagar, whole of south-central belt of Karsog and in a band running from outer Seraj to Chichiot in south east-west direction.

While in already densely populated Kangra-Bhattiyat, this increase has proved strong enough, in some moderately populated eastern areas of Karsog-Chichiot, it has gone to stimulate economic and agricultural growth where ample land is found suitable at present for raising temperate fruit orchards. This land is yielding encouraging returns with easier initial investments.

In high Himalayan valleys of Upper Brahmour, Churah and Pangi, although in view of scant resources of sustenance, high rate of proportional increase (with low absolute growth) is indicative of growing pressure of population or ecological imbalance, yet it can yield dividends if accompanied by very much possible expansion of local resource-base within a foreseeable future.

The prevalence of joint family and closed community structure still persisting in high Himalayan and other isolated areas stands in the way of changing the social and marital conditions. It has encouraged early marriages and frequent child bearing without allowing some fall in the birth rate. The difficulty of growing or importing food exists but improvement in health services has brought about some decrease in incidence of diseases and death. Even in a highly isolated
tribal area like Brahmour, besides one ayurvedic dispensary, three more were added, a primary health centre, a maternity home and a road connection with district town were made available during this period. The venereal diseases rampant in all such areas have declined from 30 to 12% on an average between 1952-62. These improvements have encouraged the trend towards high population growth in these less populated areas but placed in existing socio-economic conditions, emergence of long range resource development still awaited, it has brought in a fresh set of problems to solve.

3. Areas with Moderate to Low Growth of Population (Below 20%) :

The tract bearing such rates are marked firstly within the outer zone comprising main parts of Kangra-Palampur-Bhattiyat valleys extending into the parts of Chamba-Brahmour in the north and a larger area of Chicholt-Karsog in the southeast.

Out of the four tracts turning-out less than one per cent increase in rural population, the central valley of Palampur is most well-marked. It is the single major instance where less than one per cent increase has taken place in the central-most valley. This singular instance of its type is the result of far greater male-selective outmigration, normally characterising many such middle and outer zone tracts.

turning-out a high sex ratio. A relatively greater pressure of population, greater education, the tradition of joining the armed forces and picking-up jobs outside, have been making people strive for better opportunities.

In larger areas of Karsog, despite its horticultural resource-potential, there is little scope of absorbing heavier growth on cultivation of land; the need for accelerating the economic development and diversifying the occupational base is greater so that the people are capable of intensifying the occupation of usable land and of earning their living from varied activities.

In the middle-inner zones of higher Himalayas, the whole of the central valley of Kulu and Inner Seraj, most of eastern Pangi plus neighbouring parts of Lahaul and localised pockets in adjoining Bramour-Churah, belong to this category of areas.

Apart from causes hinging upon slow tempo of economic development, it is commonly observed that in areas possessing isolated locations in the interior, growth rate has tended to be low and population increases have evened out, where they opened out to a major river valley of importance. It leads up to postulate, as if such locations have encouraged people to move out to relatively better pockets in the main valleys, bringing about a redistribution. In other tracts which are mountain-locked and have little access to any significant valley, the increase in the rate of population growth is as high as the degree of isolation.
As for the two low growth areas lying on the fringes of Pangi-Lahaul in the inner zone, the added disadvantages of such a location have invited little attention towards their development, equally inaccessible from main transport lines both from Pangi and Lahaul and suffering frequently from scarcity of foodgrains. Such parts in higher Himalayas have rarely shown even the temporary periodic rise in their population in the absence of attracting people from outside in the interest of their development. Rather the local people have gone to better parts in adjoining areas, lowering both the rate of population and the pace of economic growth.

4. Areas with Decrease in Population:

The map brings out negative variations in the population of some local tracts scattered all over the region, mostly to the south of Pir Panjal range. Many of such areas are marked in western part of the region in Chamba. One forms about 24 x 8 miles north-south strip extending from the south of Pir Panjal range across Dhaulagiri Dhar towards eastern edge of Chamba valley. Another irregular parallel line of such tracts extending from western margins of Bhattiya towards north Churah is met with close by. In the middle of this region two such areas are found skirting the immediate southern slopes of Dhaulagiri Dhar in Kangra, in addition to the isolated village of Bara-Banghal situated in the vast wilderness of high mountains and glaciers.

In the eastern part of the region, rural population has shown a fall in three smaller tracts of Kulu-Seraj, two
of them close to the major mountain ranges, another two along the gorges between Kulu-Mandi and a few towards the edges of Jogindernagar tahsil. The percentage of decrease has been as low as less than 5 and as high as a little more than 25.

As far as the causes, there is a trend towards natural decrease reported during recent years as well as sizable internal male migration from these pockets to vicinal parts of the study area generally leaving behind a high sex ratio.

The phenomenon of higher death rate on account of physical exhaustion, malnutrition and accidents on difficult mountain paths and very low scale of socio-economic development in these extremely isolated tracts (in sharp contrast with the 'blisters' of economically active parts of the main valleys) is not new to these areas. But it has grown acute in the recent past on account of a set of reasons yet to be explained.

Their greater isolation and low size of population has kept them far removed from nearest productive parts of the region and centuries behind in matters of medical facilities. The poverty of these areas and backwardness of their people have increased in face of the introduction of cash economy, vehicular traffic and faster rate of socio-economic measures adopted in the main valleys of the region in recent decades. The most typical example illustrating how such rural pockets are neglected and cut off from current lines of development in every respect is provided by a lone village of Bari-Banghal in the whole 390 sq. miles of mountain area shut in on all
sides by outer and middle Himalayan ranges. Partly the higher mortality rate, frequent difficulty of food and partly migrations for shorter or longer periods have worked together towards declining population in all such tracts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

The region has experienced a decennial growth of 15.5% during 1951-61, risen further to 23% in the following 10 years' period. Estimated from the number of fresh immigrants arrived in 1951-61, 22% of growth was contributed by them, mostly staying for shorter periods as skilled and unskilled labour.

The growth rate in the last 20 years in various districts of the region was higher as compared to earlier 50 years of this century. Within two recent decades, in a number of different main parts of the region proportionate rural growth of population has been generally highest in inner and lowest towards the outer zone but the absolute addition in numbers has been the other way about. Similarly the growth of population has tended to be slower in larger part of the western Chamba zone as compared to eastern half of the region.

There are two general causes responsible for a steeper rise in the population of many areas of this region since 1951. Besides a reportedly declining mortality in rural countryside, the prevalence of joint family structure encouraging early marriages and frequent child-bearing in most of the villages
have contributed to it. A faster rate of economic development in parts of the region has gathered internal, as well as in-
migrants making them appear as nodes of higher growth of population. A labour influx in inner areas experiencing 
chronic shortage of manpower during summer working season caused phenomenal rise in their population in 1961-61 followed 
by a prompt slackening in the next decade with the departure of out side workers. Thus a high growth of population in many parts of high Himalayas has been short-lived and fluctuating 
while greater permanency of the trend towards its increase characterises the low Himalayan valleys.

Urban growth has been much higher than the increase in rural areas, 23% in 1951-61 and 64% in 1961-71 on the regional level.

Besides such a phenomenal increase in urban population caused by expansion, emergence or inclusion of new townships, 
peak growth is recorded during the tourist and pilgrim seasons.

Areas with low growth of population are marked with both in educationally, economically and demographically favoured tracts as well as undeveloped pockets at other end of the scale. In former type of areas found in parts of outer low Himalayan valleys, the challenge posed by large size of population has encouraged male-selective out-migration turning them into low-moderate population growth, high sex ratio areas.
The latter type is spotted in high Himalayan tracts which suffer from general hardships of life, frequent inadequacy of food supply, increasing compulsions and lack of social facilities in consequence of their isolation from mainstream of development. Within them the population growth has touched a high mark in more isolated glens in contrast to others which have a relatively easier opening towards the main valley inducing people to move out to better parts of the latter.

Population has recorded a decrease in some extremely isolated or uninviting pockets mostly in the interior of middle and inner zones either because of the temporary migration of people to areas of greater development in the neighbourhood or because of physical exhaustion, accidental deaths along mountain paths, continuing malnutrition and poverty in face of growing cash economy and lack of social welfare provisions.

To sum up, the rapid inter-censal growth in the population of inner high Himalayan zone although short-lived has generally been an indicator or strengthening of the needful supply of manpower. While in some parts of isolated interior of the region, heavy proportionate rise posed a challenge, in others the socio-demographic compulsions of the sparsity of population get reduced, usability of land is improved, economic potential and growth nurtured.
Larger absolute increases (with lower proportionate rise) in already heavily populated low Himalayan valleys have placed strains on their growing scantiness of existing agrarian base.

There is no one unique relationship between slow or rapid population growth and high or low rate of economic development as rising numbers have stimulated the growth of resources in one and have created problems in its way in other set of areas.

Answer to slow rate of socio-economic development are not always and everywhere to be found in higher growth of population but in how far its human qualities have reduced the physical and social handicaps.