

## Growth of Urban Centres in a Hill State: A Case of Himachal Pradesh

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### Abstract

### Original Research Article

An increase in the number of people living in towns and cities is referred to as urban expansion. It is the result of population concentration in reaction to the availability of a wide range of amenities and services in the city center. Himachal Pradesh, as India's least urbanized state, experienced a significant increase in the number of urban settlements between 1951 and 2011. Understanding the stages of urban development in a country/state can be aided by studying urban growth by size class of towns. As a result, the current paper is a modest attempt to look into Himachal Pradesh's urban growth by size class from 1951. It is based on data of the Census of India from 1951 to 2011. Himachal Pradesh's urban population increased by 4.5 times, from 1.53 lakh in 1951 to 6.88 lakh in 2011. The creation of new towns, which increased the overall number of towns to 59 in 2011 from 29 in 1901, is responsible for a substantial portion of the rise in urban population. The state's urbanization statistics suggest that the state's urban population is growing at a relatively slow pace. The prevalence of smaller towns can be seen in the structure pattern. The state has only one class I town, Shimla. Shimla's primacy among Himachal Pradesh's towns may be seen in the fact that the city accounts for approximately one fifth of the state's total urban population during the research period. In the districts of Kinnaur and Lahul Spiti, there are no towns; these districts are void of any urban population.

**Keywords:** urban development, urban population, demographic, geographical boundaries.

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## INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is the result of a complex set of economic, demographic, social, cultural, technological and environmental processes that result in a higher proportion of a territory's population living in towns and cities (Knox, 2009). There are two methods for measuring urbanisation: demographic and geographic. In a demographic approach, the level and growth of the urban share of the total population, as well as its distribution by size by size classes of cities and towns, are considered, while in a geographic approach, the number and growth of urban centres, as well as the expansion of geographical boundaries of existing cities, are considered (Tripathi, 2013).

Globally, more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 55 per cent of the world's population residing in urban areas in 2018. In 1950, 30 per cent of the world's population was urban, and by 2050, 68 per cent of the world's population is projected to be urban (UN, 2019). India is witnessing rapid

urbanization. The total urban population in the country as per Census 2011 is more than 377 Million constituting 31.16% of the total population. 264.9 million Persons, constituting 70% of the total urban population, live in these Class I UAs/Towns. The urban population is projected to grow to about 600 million (40%) by 2031 and 850 million (50%) by 2051.

The Himalaya, which is tectonically active, densely populated and one of the planet's most underrepresented mountain regions has seen accelerated urban growth over the last three decades (Anbalagan, 1993). However, the urbanization process in the Himalayan region has been primarily unregulated and unplanned (Walker, 2011). If we contrast the urbanization of India's hilly states. We discovered that Mizoram is at the top with 51.5% of its inhabitants living in urban areas, followed by Uttarakhand (51.5%), Manipur (30.2%), and so on. Himachal Pradesh ranks eleventh among India's eleven hilly states.

States	Urban Population
Mizoram	51.5%
Uttarakhand	30.6%
Manipur	30.2%
Nagaland	29.0%
Jammu & Kashmir	27.2%
Tripura	26.2%
Sikkim	25.0%
Arunachal Pradesh	22.7%
Meghalaya	20.1%
Assam	14.1%
Himachal Pradesh	10.0%

**Source:** Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MOSPI), 2011 Census from HIS

According to Census of India (2011), Himachal Pradesh is least urbanized state of India and has 10.03 percent of her population living in urban areas in comparison of 31.16 per cent in India as a whole. Himachal Pradesh has 59 towns in 2011. Among these the state has only one class-I town, which is Shimla. It constitutes, for approximate, one fourth of total urban population of Himachal Pradesh.

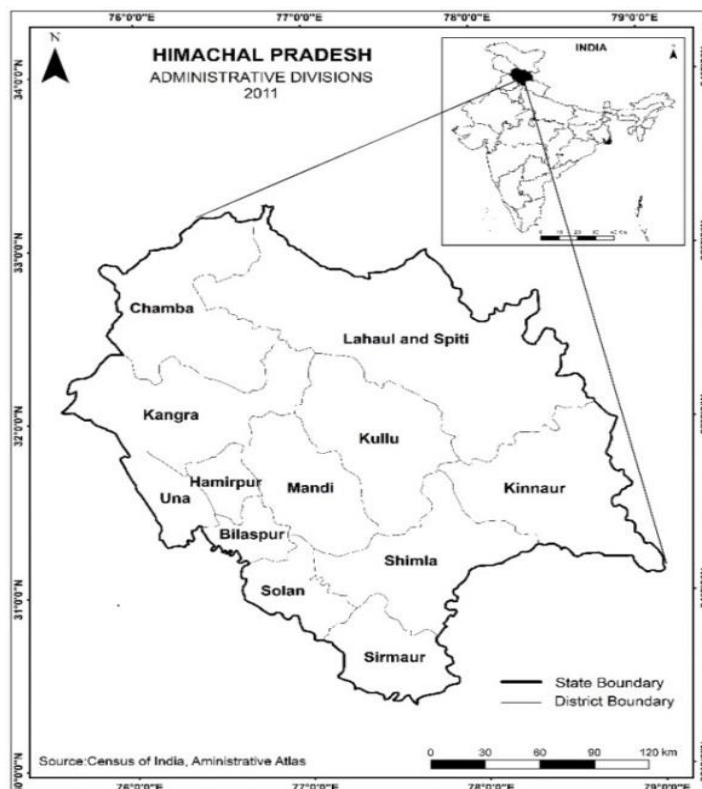
**Significance**

It is evident from the review of literature that the research on different aspect of urbanization in Himachal Pradesh is sparse as compared to the research in India as well as on Global level. Thus, purpose of the present study is to assess the growth of urban center and their population in Himachal Pradesh. This study will

highlight the temporal aspect of growth of urban centers between the frameworks from 1951 to 2011. Understanding the stages of urban development in Himachal Pradesh requires a study of urban expansion by size class of towns.

**Study Area**

The area of study is the Himalayan state, Himachal Pradesh, which is located in the Himalayan mountain range. On April 15, 1948, Himachal Pradesh was established as a Chief Commissioner's Province, and on January 25, 1971, it became a full state. During this 23-year era, the state was subjected to numerous administrative manoeuvres. It was only in 1972 that the state took its current form (Himachal Pradesh Development Report).



**Map 1: Location of Himachal Pradesh and its districts**

Himachal is geographically located in the western Himalayas between latitudes 30°22'N and 33°12'N and longitudes 75°47'E and 79°4'E. It has a land area of 55,673 km<sup>2</sup>, accounting for 1.69 percent of the country's total area. Himachal Pradesh is divided into twelve districts administratively (Administrative Atlas Himachal Pradesh 2011). The districts are, further subdivided into 73 subdivisions, 78 blocks, and 172 Tehsils (Himachal Pradesh Development Report). The total population of the Himachal Pradesh was 68,64,602 in 2011 and the urban population was 6,88,552 that consist of 10.03 percent of the total population and lives in the 59 towns, among which Shimla, Solan, Dharamsala, Baddi, and Nahan are the top five towns in Himachal Pradesh (Statistical Abstract of Himachal Pradesh 2018-19).

## OBJECTIVES

To pursue the current research activity, the following basic objectives have been established:

1. To explain the trajectory of demographic change in urban settlements.
2. To characterize the distribution of urban population by town size class.
3. To examine the variability in the number of urban settlements by size class.

## DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The current study is based on secondary data from the 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, and 2011 census. Some factors of urbanization, such as size and growth, structural pattern and concentration of towns, level of urbanization, and so on, have been utilized to analyse urbanization trends and distribution of urban population by town size class. Maps are prepared with the help of software ArcGIS. Methodological strategies such as ratio and percentage are used to arrive at significant conclusions in this assignment.

### Background of Himachal Pradesh's Urbanization

Himachal Pradesh has a long and complex history of urbanization, despite the fact that the state still has a microscopic population of urbanized people and is one of India's least developed urban states. Himachal Pradesh was formed in 1948 as a result of the merging of 30 princely entities. On January 26, 1950, Himachal Pradesh was admitted as a part C state. Himachal Pradesh became the Indian Union's eighteenth state on January 25, 1971. Himachal Pradesh has gone through a series of administrative changes following independence until it became a state.

Urbanization was sluggish in the pre-independence decades. Since 1901, the growth rates of urban population, both in terms of people and the number of towns, have fluctuated from decade to decade. In 1901, the urban population of Himachal Pradesh was only 77332 persons, accounting for about 4.02 percent of the state's total population. In absolute

terms, the state's urban population declined by 18139 individuals from 1901 to 1911 (-23.456 per cent). Similarly, the proportion of people living in cities has dropped to 3.12 percent in 1911 and number of towns which were 21 in 1901 was also reduced to 11 during the same period. The urban population has risen steadily since 1911. It grew slowly until 1941, when it reached 86,099 people. The urban population increased marginally in three decades (1911-21, 1923-31, 1931-41), from 3.12 percent in 1911 to 3.44 percent in 1921, 3.62 percent in 1931, and 3.8 percent in 1941, while the number of towns jumped from 11 in 1911 to 22 in 1941.

In 1901 there were 21 town in state out of which 1 was in class-IV, 4 were in class-V and 16 were in class-VI towns and they share 18.05%, 35.4%, 46.55% of total urban population. Towns in size-class III account for 12.54 per cent of the total urban population. According the census of 1911 the number of town was reduced to 11 in which there was 1 class-IV, 4 class-V and 6 class-VI towns. Towns in size-class V account for 45.08 per cent of the total urban population. In 1921, the number of towns raised to 12. For the first time any town was classified as a size-class III town, that shared 40.91% of total urban population. In 1921, there was no town in size class IV; there were 3 class V towns and 8 class VI towns. In the next censuses of 1931 the class III town was declassified and treated as class IV town, there were total 19 town in 1931 Towns in size-class V were 5 in number but account for highest share in the total urban population that was 45.08 percent. In 1941 the total number of town were increased to 22 out of these there was only 1 class-IV, 5 class-V and 16 class-VI towns. These towns shared 21.31%, 44.85%, 33.84% of total urban population respectively.

### Demographic Change in Urban Settlements of Himachal Pradesh

In 1951, the total urban population of himachal Pradesh was 1,53,827 and it was 6.45 percent of the total population. The decade of 1941-51 can rightly be called a landmark in the history of growth of urban population in Himachal Pradesh. The decadal increase in urban population (78.66 per cent) in Himachal Pradesh was the highest recorded expansion in urban population. In 1951, urban population registered a sharp growth and the proportion of urban population rose to 6.45 percent from 3.80 percent in 1941. Moreover, as many as 12 new/ reclassified towns emerged and urbanisation entered into the new locations and 5 were declassified/merged with other. The number of towns at 1941 Census stood at 22 in the decade of 1941-51, whereas two places of Dalhousie cantonment and Shamsherpur were detached from their respective units Kusumpti and Bakloh treated as towns at 1941 were declassified, Jutogh was taken as part of Shimla in 1951 and 12 places of Kullu, Yol, Kangra, Nagrota, Nurpur, Paonta sahib, Palampur, Dharmpur, Kandaghat, Garkhal, Arki and Theog acquired the urban status in

1951 Census, thus raising the total number of towns to 29. In all, there were 29 towns in himachal Pradesh comprising total urban population of 1.53 lakh persons in 1951. Even in 1951, there were no Class I and Class II town in the state. There were only 1 town in size Class III at that time, but they accounted for the 30 per cent of total urban population of Himachal Pradesh. Towns in Class IV were one in number. Though the number of small towns was quite large, there were 26

small towns in which 6 class V towns and 21 class VI towns and together they accounted for more than 60 percent of the total urban population. Shimla was the largest town in 1951, with a population of 46,150, and classified as a size-class III town (only town in this class). Yol, with a population of 13,520, was the second largest town. Both towns shared roughly 40% of the overall urban population.

**Table 1: Himachal Pradesh: Urban Population by Size-Class of Towns/Cities 1951, 1961 and 1971**

Size-Class of Towns/Cities	1951		1961		1971	
	No. of town	Percent of Urban population	No. of town	Percent of Urban population	No. of town	Percent of Urban population
Class I	0	0	0	0	0	0
Class II	0	0	0	0	1	22.89
Class III	1	30	1	23.89	1	8.81
Class IV	1	8.79	4	25.81	5	27.18
Class V	6	29.77	7	25.49	6	17.51
Class VI	21	31.44	18	24.81	23	23.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Census of India (1951). Subsidiary tables, Part I-B, Vol. VIII: Punjab, Pepsu, Himachal Pradesh, Bilaspur and Delhi

Census of India. (1971). Town Directory, Part-VI-A, Series-1, Himachal Pradesh

Census of India. (1981). Town Directory, Part-IX-A, Series-7, Himachal Pradesh

In 1961, total urban population of state was 1.78 lakh. During the decade of 1951-61, though the urban population registered a notable absolute increase of 24.4 thousand persons, but the proportion of urban population decreased marginally to 6.33 per cent in 1961 from 6.44 per cent in 1951. In 1961, four towns namely Dharampur, Garkhal, Kandaghat, Sanawar were declassified for not satisfying the new definition laid down in 1961 census. Five towns namely Shri Naina Devi Ji, Dalhousie Cantonment, Bakloh, Narkanda, Jutogh were added to the list of towns in 1961. Thus number of towns increases to 30 in 1961. In 1961, there were 30 towns in different size class. Among these only 1 town in class III, 4 towns in class IV, 7 towns in class V and 18 towns were in class VI. This different size class town shared approximately equal share of urban population.

In 1971, total urban population of state was increased by 63615 and it became 2, 41,890. During the decade of 1961-71, the growth rate of urban population registered with 35.68 percent. According to the 1971 census, 6.99 percent of total population lived in the urban areas. With the addition of 7 towns and declassification of 1 town, there were total 36 towns in the state. The towns added in 1971 were Gumarwin, Hamirpur, Manali, Pondoh, Dhalli, Sarahan and Santolgarh. The only town Narkanda was declassified. As a significant development, the first and foremost Class II town emerged in the state in 1971. Shimla has achieved this distinction containing 22.89 per cent of the total urban population in the state in 1971 and Shimla was the only town in size class II towns in the state. The class IV towns had the highest proportion (27.18 percent) of urban population. However, the number of class VI (23) was highest followed by class V (6), class IV (5) class III (1) class II (1).

**Table 2: Himachal Pradesh: Urban Population by Size-Class of Towns/Cities 1981 and 1991**

Size-Class of Towns/Cities	1981		1991	
	No. of town	Percent of Urban population	No. of town	Percent of Urban population
Class I	0	0	1	22.75
Class II	1	21.66	0	0
Class III	2	12.54	4	19.42
Class IV	5	22.08	7	21.73
Class V	9	19.83	10	15.81
Class VI	30	23.89	36	20.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Census of India. (1981). Town Directory, Part-IX-A, Series-7, Himachal Pradesh

Census of India. (1991). General Population Tables, Part-II-A, Series-9, Himachal Pradesh

During the decade of 1971-1981, the urban population increased by 34.76 percent and in absolute number the urban population increased by 84081. The total urban population of 1981 was 3,25,971 and which was 7.61 percent of total population of the state. In 1981, with the addition of 11 new towns, total number of towns increased to 47 that were 36 in 1971. In this census, no town was declassified. The towns that were added in 1981 were namely Churi Khas, Tira Sujampur, Nadaun, Jawalamukhi, Dera Gopipur, Bhuntar, Rohru, Parwanoo, Garget, Mahtpur Badsehra, and Baulatpur. However, the number of Class VI towns (30) was more than two times that of Class V (9) and Class IV (5) Class III (2) Class II (1) combined together. A large majority of the urban population lived in class VI towns, which accounted for 23.89 percent of the total urban population. Shimla, the only class II town, accounts for 21.66 percent of the urban population.

In 1991, the total urban population of Himachal Pradesh was 4,49,196 that was the 8.68 percent of the total population of the state. In the decade of 1981-1991, the urban population grow with the rate of 37.8 percent. In the 1991, total number of towns was 58. There was no town declassified in 1991. There were 11 towns added in the list of total towns namely Talai, Bhota, Banjar, Sarkaghat, Rawalsar, Narkanda, Seoni, Kothhai, Chaupal, Jubbal, Rajgarh. The first and foremost Class I town emerged in the state in 1991 that was Shimla. It was accounted for the highest proportion i.e. 22.75 percent of the total urban population of the state. Narkanda, which had been declassified in 1971 census and got the status of a town again in 1991 census. There was no town in the class II towns. The large number of towns listed in class VI (36) and they shared 20.29 percent. There were 4 towns in class III, 7 in class IV, and 10 in class V, with 19.42 percent, 21.73 percent, and 15.81 percent of the total urban population respectively.

**Table 3: Himachal Pradesh: Urban Population by Size-Class of Towns/Cities 2001 and 2011**

Size-Class of Towns/Cities	2001		2011	
	No. of town	Percent of Urban population	No. of town	Percent of Urban population
Class I	1	23.93	1	24.62
Class II	0	0	0	0
Class III	6	25.86	7	29.74
Class IV	7	19.06	7	16.15
Class V	16	19.09	15	16.8
Class VI	27	12.06	29	12.69
Total	57	100	59	100

**Source:** Census of India. (2001). General Population Tables, Series-3, Himachal Pradesh. 2001 Statistical Abstract of Himachal Pradesh 2018-19

The decade (1991-2001) took urban population in the state to 5.95 lakh, registering an increase of 32.58 per cent. The proportion of urban population also increased to 9.79 per cent from 8.68 per cent in 1991. In 2001, there was decrease in total number of town to 57 that were 58 in 1991 in the state because 3 towns were declassified and only 2 new towns were added. Newly added towns were namely Mant Khas, Baddi and declassified town were namely Pondoh, Dalli, and Sarahan. Out of the total of 57 towns, 27 were class VI towns, revealing their predominance in the hierarchy of towns in the state but they share only 12.06 percent of the total urban population that was lowest proportion. 16 towns were in Class V, 7 towns in class IV, 6 in Class III and 1 town in class I towns. They shared 19.09, 19.06, 25.86 and 23.93 percent in total urban population.

During the first decade (2001-2011) of 21st century, there was an increase of about 92.9 thousand persons in the urban population of Himachal Pradesh recording, the decennial growth rate of 15.61 per cent that was less than half of the last decade. In 2011, the total urban population of the state was 6,88,552 and its proportion to the total population was 10.03. 2 new

towns namely Shamshi and Jhakri were added and 1 town Mant Khas was declassified, which took the number of towns to 59 in 2011. Out of these 59 towns, there were 1 class I, 7 class III, 7 class IV, 15 class V and 29 class VI, these towns containing 24.62, 29.74, 16.15, 16.8, 12.69 percent respectively of the total urban population of Himachal Pradesh.

#### Variation in the Number of Urban Settlements

Changes in the status of towns are caused by unequal employment possibilities, functional distinction, and differences in physical surroundings. Between 1951 and 2011, Himachal Pradesh had a significant increase in the number of urban settlements. Table shows that the total number of towns in different size of class and their temporal variation. When compared size classes of towns, Class V and VI towns outnumber in numerical strength and are steadily expanding in number, albeit with ups and downs. In 2011, the Class V and VI towns accounted for more than 70% of the total number, compared to more than 90% in 1951. In 1951 there was no town in class I and II towns, Shimla was the only town in class III towns and Yol was in class IV town. In 2011, Shimla was only town in class I towns, approx. 50 percent town lies in



class VI towns. However, the low level of urbanisation is reflected in the fact that only one town has been

elevated to Class I status, and small towns continue to dominate the territory.

**Table 4: Number of urban center and temporal variation in number in town (1951-2011)**

SIZE CLASS OF TOWN (POPULATION SIZE)	Number of Urban Center							Temporal Variation in Number in Town					
	2011	2001	1991	1981	1971	1961	1951	2001 - 2011	1991 - 2001	1981 - 1991	1971 - 1981	1961 - 1971	1951 - 1961
<b>I</b> (1,00,000 & above)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>II</b> (50,000-99,999)	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	Nil	Nil	-1	Nil	1	Nil
<b>III</b> (20,000-49,999)	7	6	4	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	Nil	Nil
<b>IV</b> (10,000-19,999)	7	7	7	5	5	4	1	Nil	Nil	2	Nil	1	3
<b>V</b> (5,000- 9,999)	15	16	10	9	6	7	6	-1	6	1	3	-1	1
<b>VI</b> (Below 5,000)	29	27	36	30	23	18	21	2	-9	6	7	5	-3
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>

**Source:** Census of India. (1991). General Population Tables, Part-II-A, Series-9, Himachal Pradesh  
Census of India. (2001). General Population Tables, Series-3, Himachal Pradesh, 2001  
Statistical Abstract of Himachal Pradesh 2018-19

### Spatio Temporal Distribution of Town

In 1951, there were 29 towns, out of which Solan and Kangra Districts combined had 16 towns, accounting for more than half of the overall number of towns. Except for Lahaul, Spiti, and Kinnaur, all other districts have 1-3 towns. These town districts have no

urban population as of yet. In 1961, the overall number of towns was 30, with Solan and Kangra district having the most, with six towns each. Solan district, which had ten towns in 1951, was reduced to six towns in 1961. In 1961, the Shimla district consisted of five towns, with the inclusion of two additional settlements.

**Table 5: Spatio-temporal distribution of towns (1951-2011)**

District	2011	2001	1991	1981	1971	1961	1951
Bilaspur	4	4	4	3	3	2	1
Chamba	5	5	5	5	4	4	2
Hamirpur	4	4	4	3	1	0	0
Kangra	9	9	8	8	6	6	6
Kullu	5	4	4	3	2	1	1
Mandi	5	5	6	4	4	3	3
Shimla	11	10	11	6	5	5	3
Sirmaur	3	3	4	3	3	2	2
Solan	8	8	7	7	6	6	10
Una	5	5	5	5	2	1	1
<b>Total Town</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>

**Source:** Census of India. (1971). Census Atlas, Part-IX, Series-7, Himachal Pradesh  
Census of India. (1981). Census Atlas, Part-XII, Series-7, Himachal Pradesh  
Census of India. (1991). Census Atlas, Part-XI, Series-9, Himachal Pradesh  
Census of India. (2011). Administrative Atlas, Himachal Pradesh

In 1971, the number of towns in the Solan, Kangra, and Shimla districts remained unchanged. In 1971, the district of Hamirpur received its first town. In 1981, the total number of towns was 47, in which Kangra district topped the list, with eight towns. Kangra was followed by Solan and Shimla, with 7 and 6 towns, respectively. In 1991, district Shimla stand on top with 11 towns followed by the district Kangra and Solan. In 2001, district Shimla had the highest number of towns.

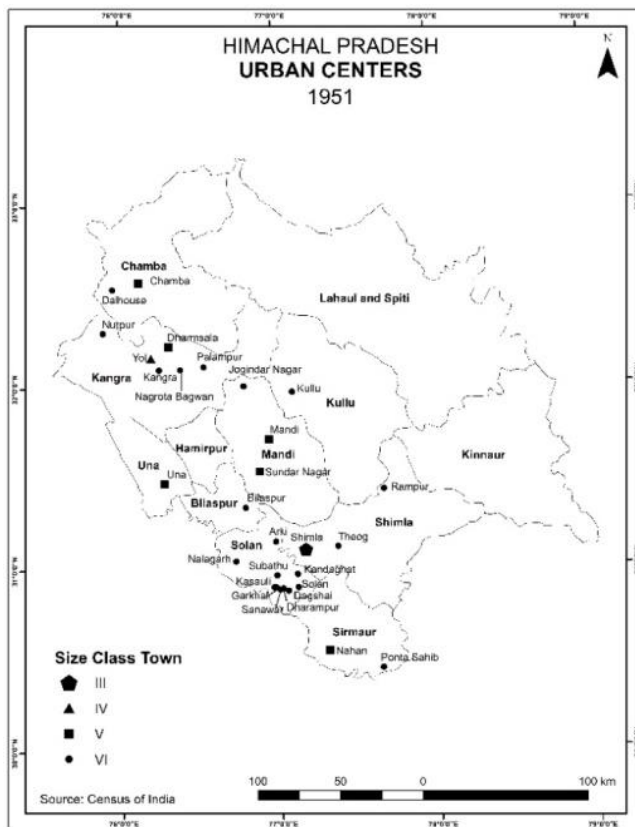
In Shimla district, the number of towns decreased to 10 in 2001 from 11 in 1991. District Shimla followed by district Kangra and Solan. In 2011 total number of towns increased to 59 from 29 towns in 1951. Shimla district got a new town and stand on top with 11 towns. Shimla followed by district Kangra and Solan with no change in number of towns 9 and 8 respectively in 2011 and 2001. When we compares the total number of towns in 2011 to the total number of towns in 1951, we

see that the total number of towns rose in all districts except Solan.

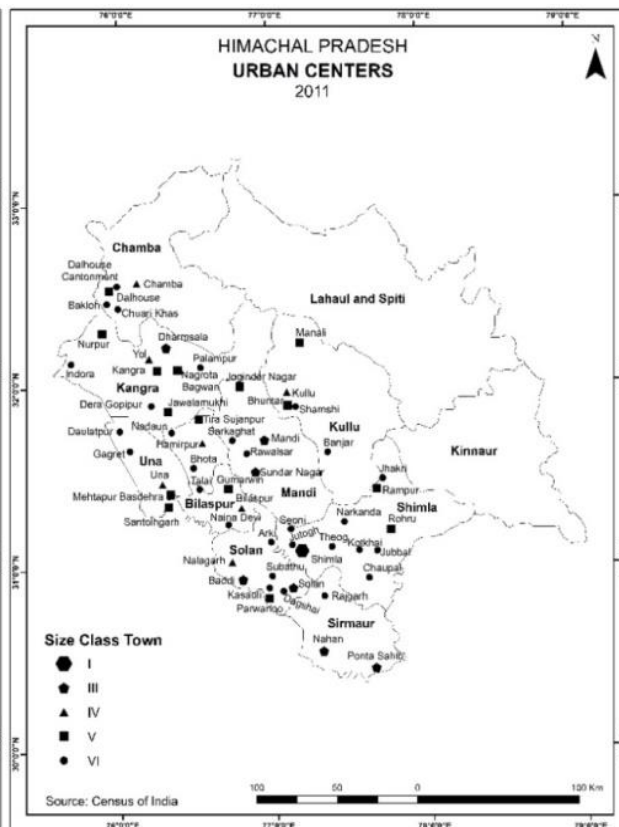
**Size class wise distribution of urban centers of Himachal Pradesh: 1951 and 2011**

A glance at the map reveals that distribution of urban center is most uneven in the state. The urban

centers are mainly concentrating in western, central and southern parts of the state. While eastern, northern and north-western parts of the state are devoid of urban centers. District Solan had maximum concentrations of town in 1951 and District Shimla, Kangra and Solan had large number of town respectively 11, 9 and 8 towns in 2011.



Map 2: Urban center of 1951



Map 3: Urban center of 2011

**Distribution of Urban Population by Size Class of Towns**

During the period of 1951-2011, the distribution of urban population in various size classes

of towns indicates variance and higher concentration of urban population from small to large size class of urban centres.

**Table 6: Proportion of urban population in different classes of town**

SIZE CLASS OF TOWN (POPULATION SIZE)	2011	2001	1991	1981	1971	1961	1951
I (1,00,000 & above)	24.62	23.93	22.75	0	0	0	0
II (50,000-99,999)	0	0	0	21.66	22.89	0	0
III (20,000-49,999)	29.74	25.86	19.42	12.54	8.81	23.89	30
IV (10,000-19,999)	16.15	19.06	21.73	22.08	27.18	25.81	8.79
V (5,000- 9,999)	16.8	19.09	15.81	19.83	17.51	25.49	29.77
VI (Below 5,000)	12.69	12.06	20.29	23.89	23.61	24.81	31.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Census of India. (1991). General Population Tables, Part-II-A, Series-9, Himachal Pradesh  
 Census of India. (2001). General Population Tables, Series-3, Himachal Pradesh, 2001  
 Statistical Abstract of Himachal Pradesh 2018-19

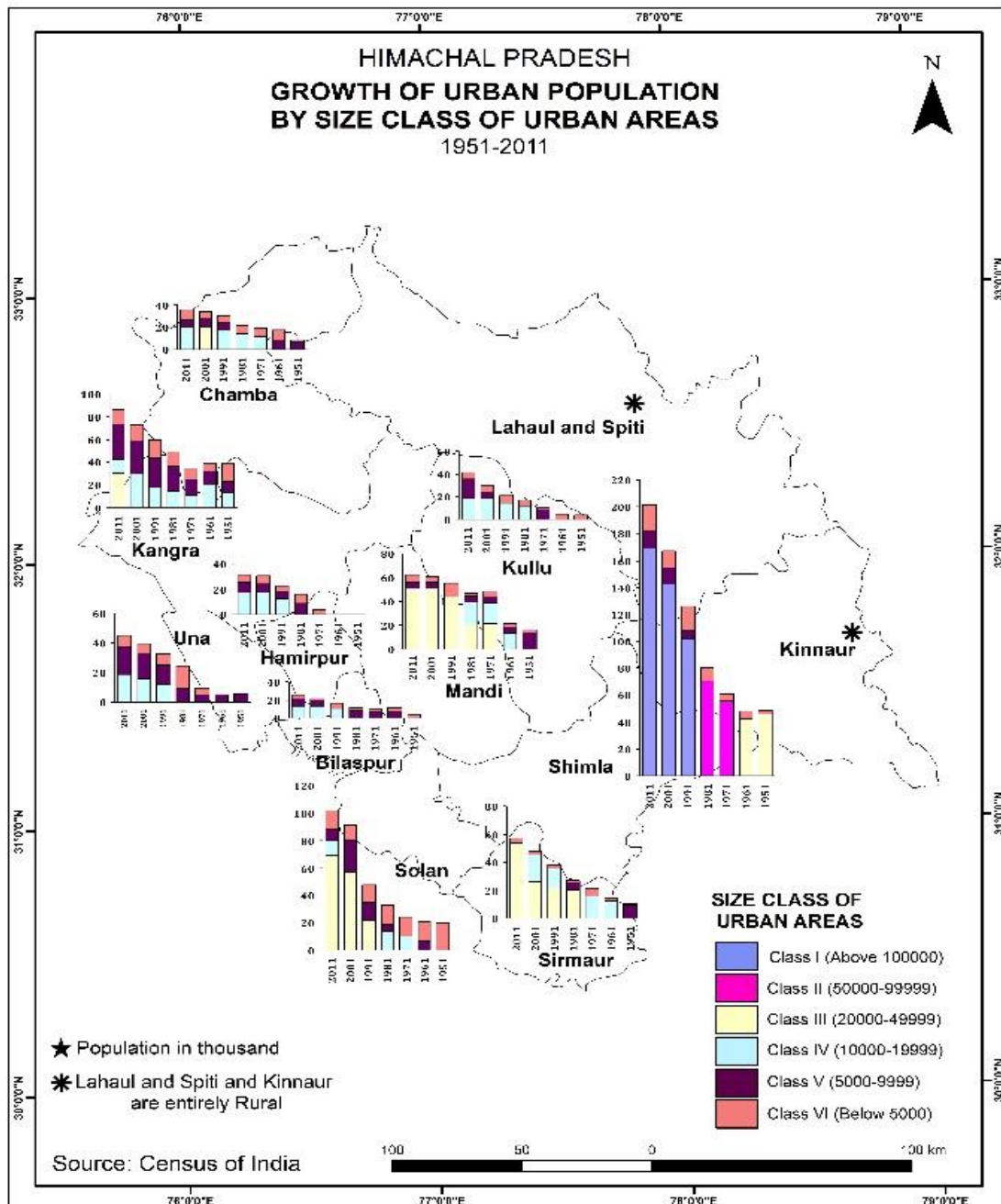
The table shows that the preponderance of the inhabitants in 1951 lived in small towns whereas large towns did not exist at the time (class I and II towns). Shimla, which was in class III towns in 1951 and 1961,

was promoted to higher class due to population expansion and became the first size-class II town in 1971 and class I town in 1991. Since 1951, the proportion of the urban population living in small towns

of class V and VI has steadily fallen, with some ups and downs. The share of urban population in class IV increased from 1951 to 1971, then fell until 2011. The share of urban population that lived in class III fell during 1951-1971 and it started increasing in following years. Large town showed continuous increment in the share of total urban population after 1981.

This map shows growth of urban population by size class of urban centres of the state at district level. Bar diagrams showing class wise urban population for each census year from 1951 to 2011. Each bar is further divided according to population of size class of urban centres duly differentiated with different colours as explained in the legend. The districts of Kinnaur and Lahul & Spiti are entirely rural.

**Growth of Urban Population by Size Class of Urban Areas 1951-2011**



**Map 4: Growth of urban population by size class of urban areas 1951-2011**

Urban population of the state increased from 153827 persons in 1951 to 688552 persons in 2011. During 1941- 51, it had a rapid growth and remained

steady during 1951-61 also. After 1961 urban population in the state registered a steep growth which is mainly due to spread of urbanisation in the state with



the increase in number of towns from 30 in 1961 to 59 in 2011. In districts of Kullu and Hamirpur, urban population was reported for the first time in 1951 and 1971, respectively. All the district experienced rise in urban population form 1951 to 2011. In districts of Shimla, Kangra, Bilaspur and Mandi, fall in urban population was reported in 1961, 1971, 1971 and 1981 respectively. The district of Shimla and Solan had experienced a sharp rise in urban population in the last three decades; all other district experienced the gradual rise in total urban population.

The towns of India were divided into six categories by the Census of India. These six categories of urban centres are further grouped together in three categories in order to provide a meaningful analysis of the map viz. large towns (Class-I and Class-II); medium towns (Class-III and Class-IV); and small towns (Class-V and Class-VI).

As per graph shown in the map, majority of urban population in the Shimla district lived in medium towns, during the census years of 1951 and 1961. Throughout the following decades, the majority of the urban population has lived in large towns, where it remains to this day. The Scenario occurred, due to population growth the town of the lower category upgraded to higher class. During 1951 and 1961, the majority of the urban population in the district of Chamba was concentrated in small towns. However, in terms of urban population, medium towns have surpassed small towns since 1971. From 1951 to 1991, the majority of the urban population in Solan district lived in small towns. Meanwhile, over the next census years, the primary concentration of urban population was recorded in medium-sized towns. Throughout the

years 1951 to 2011, small towns prevailed in the concentration of urban population in the Kangra and Una districts. The majority of the Kullu district's urban population was concentrated in small towns until 1971, and then in the medium-sized towns until 2001, and in 2011, the majority of people lived in small towns. The majority of the urban population in the district of Bilaspur accumulated in small towns until 1981, and thereafter in medium-sized towns. Until 1961, the district of Hamirpur had no urban population. For the first time, urban population was recorded in 1971, and it was concentrated in small towns until 1981; after that, a major proportion of urban people lived in medium-sized towns.

### Urban Population in Top Ten Town

There were 29 towns in the state in 1951. The town's population has grown steadily throughout the decades (excepted in 2001). During the years 1951-2011, a significant number of towns were classified, declassified, and reclassified. The total town in the state rose to 59 in 2011. In 1951 the top ten towns were Shimla, Yol, Dharamsala, Nahan, Mandi, Chamba, Una, Sundar Nagar, Kangra, and Palampur ranked first, second, and third, respectively. Shimla remained at the top in 1961, but Una and Kangra dropped out of the top 10, being replaced by Bilaspur and Solan. Kullu was added to the top ten towns in 1971, replacing Palampur. Una took the place of Bilaspur, which was in the top ten towns in 1981. In 1991, two towns, Yol and Una, were supplanted by Ponta Sahib and Hamirpur from the list of top ten towns. In 2001, Hamirpur was replaced by Baddi, securing their place among the top ten towns. In 2011, Kullu dropped out of the top ten, and Una was added to the list of top ten towns.

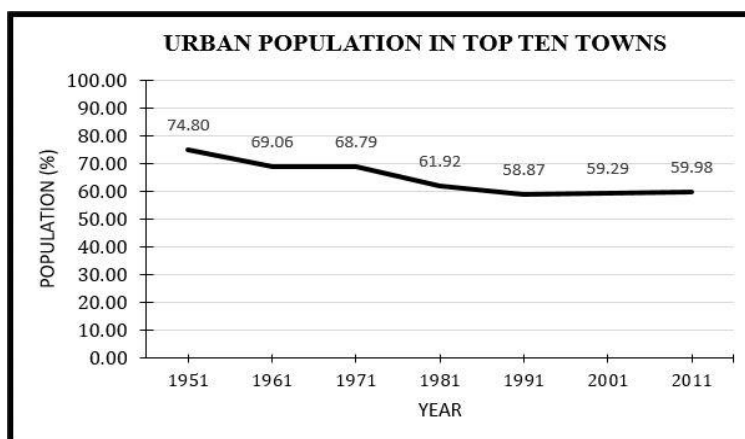
**Table 7: Top Ten Towns of Himachal Pradesh: 1951-2011**

2011	2001	1991	1981	1971	1961	1951
Shimla	Shimla	Shimla	Shimla	Shimla	Shimla	Shimla
Solan	Solan	Mandi	Sundar Nagar	Sundar Nagar	Mandi	Yol
Dharamsala	Mandi	Nahan	Nahan	Mandi	Nahan	Dharamsala
Baddi	Nahan	Solan	Mandi	Nahan	Yol	Nahan
Nahan	Sundar Nagar	Sundar Nagar	Dharamsala	Chamba	Dharamsala	Mandi
Mandi	Baddi	Dharamsala	Chamba	Dharamsala	Chamba	Chamba
Ponta sahib	Chamba	Chamba	Solan	Solan	Bilaspur	Una
Sundar Nagar	Dharamsala	kullu	kullu	kullu	Solan	Sundar Nagar
Chamba	Ponta sahib	Ponta sahib	Yol	Yol	Palampur	Kangra
Una	kullu	Hamirpur	Una	Bilaspur	Sundar Nagar	Palampur

**Source:** Census of India. (1991). General Population Tables, Part-II-A, Series-9, Himachal Pradesh  
Census of India. (2001). General Population Tables, Series-3, Himachal Pradesh, 2001  
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Shimla was the largest town and held the number one rank from 1951 until 2011. From 1951 to 2011, the six towns namely Shimla, Dharamsala,

Nahan, Mandi, Chamba, and Sundar Nagar remained on the top ten towns list.



**Figure 1: Urban population in the top ten towns**

The graph depicts the proportion of urban population in the top ten towns to the state's overall urban population. In 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, and 2011, the top ten towns had 74.80, 69.06, 68.79, 61.92, 58.87, 59.29, and 59.98 percent of the total urban population of the state. The share of the top ten towns decreased steadily until 1991, when it was 58.87 percent, which was a downfall from 74.80 percent in 1951. After 1991, the share of the top ten cities in terms of urban population climbed somewhat, reaching 59.98.

## CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that urban centres have grown in western, central and southern parts of the state Himachal Pradesh. There are many reasons of growth of urban centers including development of amenities, accessibility to resources, development of transport facility etc. Eastern, northern and north-western parts of the state are devoid of urban centers. Hilly terrain, rough topography and harsh climatic conditions result in the lack of accessibility, industrial development and complete utilization of resources. Due to these constraints, process of urbanisation is hampered in eastern, northern and north western parts of the state. The study has taken the time period of sixty years from 1951-2011. The census year of 1951 can rightly be called a landmark in the history of growth of urban population in Himachal Pradesh. In 1951, number of towns in Himachal Pradesh was 29 which increased to 59 in 2011. The major proportion of urban population in 1951 lived in the towns of class V and VI. But the scenario changed with the time and major urban population lived in class I and III towns in 2011. Shimla which is the capital city has recorded the highest urban population and has become only Class-I town in the state. The proportion of urban population in the top ten towns to the total urban population of state decreased with the time. Increasing number of towns in the state is also resulting in the changing land use dynamics of the Himachal Pradesh.

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