

Demographic Changes in Punjab: A study of Jalandhar in Historical Context

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ABSTRACT

Present Punjab came in to being on November 01, 1966, at the culmination of Punjabi Suba Morcha with the Punjab Reorganization Act passed by the Indian Parliament. It became a unilingual state but became the smallest ever size in its history. Its Southern parts became Haryana whereas the North-Eastern hilly areas were merged with Himachal Pradesh. Thus, present Punjab is predominantly a plain region state with the Sikh as the major inhabiting group and Punjabi as the main and the official language of the state. Punjab is located 29o 30' N to 32o 32' N latitude 73o 55' E to 76o 50' E longitude in North-West of India. It shares its North-South distance is about 335 Km and it extends for 300 Km in East-West direction. Punjab shares its international border with Pakistan in the western region. It also shares its boundary with Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu Kashmir as neighbouring states. It is triangular in shape. The base lies in the south along the Haryana border. The western side is formed by the Pakistan border and the Himachal Pradesh border forms its Eastern side. The apex lies in the North in the Dharkalan block of district Gurdaspur.

The total area of Punjab is 50, 362 square km. Punjab has 22 Administrative districts. As per the census report of 2011, it is ranked 16 among all the States in the Country in terms of population. Punjab is ranked 1st in percentage of Scheduled Castes population, 7th in the density of population, 14th in literacy rate, 23rd in decadal growth, and 26th rank in sex ratio among all States of India as per the census of 2011. The population of Punjab has also increased over time from 20800995 in 1881 to 27704236 in 2011. For smooth conduct of administration, the present Punjab is divided into 5 divisions and 22 districts. Each district has been divided into many tehsil and sub-tehsil. At present, there are 81 tehsils and 86 sub-tehsils in Punjab. Each tehsil is further divided into blocks. The blocks are the basic planning units. There are now 145 blocks in Punjab. Each block comprises several villages. A village is the smallest and the basic unit of administration. There are 12581 inhabited villages in Punjab as per the census report of 2011. There are also 143 towns of various sizes in Punjab.¹ The population of Punjab since its creation as Punjabi Suba from 1971 to 2011 is described in Table No: T – 1 as below:

Table No: T – 1

Population of Punjab 1971 to 2011						
Sr. No.	Year	Population	Male	Female	% Variation	Density per Sq. KM
1.	1971	13551060	7266515	6284545	--	269
2.	1981	16788915	8937210	7851705	+ 23.89	333
3.	1991	20281969	10778034	9503935	+ 20.80	403
4.	2001	24358999	12985045	11373954	+20.1	484
5.	2011	27743338	14639465	13103873	+13.89	551

Source: Census Report, 2011.

After the creation of Punjabi Suba, it has a total population of 13551060 out of which 7266515 male and 6284545 female members with a density of population at 269 per Square Kilometer. The population in Punjab increased as per the Census Report of 1981 at the rate of 23.89% with a density of population at 333 persons per Square Kilometer. In the Census Report of 1991, it again rose to the rate of 20.80% increase in population in comparison to 1981 with the density of population at 403 per Square Kilometer. As per the Census Report of 2001, the population in Punjab again increased at the rate of 20.1% with the density of population at 484 per Square Kilometer. Presently, as per the census report of 2011, the population has increased at the rate of 13.89% with the density of population in Punjab as 551 per Square Kilometer. It is visible in the above-described table that the population in Punjab as per its percentage of variation is in decreasing order however the density of population as per Square Kilometer is in increasing order.

Jalandhar - The demographic changes in historical context:

Jalandhar is the district's headquarter which initially comprised the whole of the upper Doabs from the Ravi to the Sutlej Rivers. It has taken this name from the great *Daitya King Jalandhara*, the son of the Ganga by Ocean. His kingdom was also called *Trigarta* which means the country watered by the three rivers Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi.² This name is also mentioned in the Mahabharata.³

¹ Census Report, 2011

² Deepak Jalandhari, Ek Shahar Jalandhar (Hindi), Jalandhar: Nitisha Publications, 2004, p.

³ Punjab District Gazetteers, Jullundur, Chandigarh: Revenue Department Punjab, 1980, pp. 17-20

The capital of this kingdom generally remained at Jalandhar. In the period of Ghiyas-ud-din Balban, there was a danger from the Mongols so Jalandhar was therefore established as a big cantonment which for the rest of the period even up to the British, made Jalandhar a significant center both politically and strategically.⁴ Under the Mughals, Jalandhar became a major city. Later on, Ranjit Singh took over it from Faizullpuria chief Buddh Singh and made it headquarter of the Jalandhar Doab region, and it remains so until the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849. The British formed it into a Commissionership, under John Lawrence. He further made cantonments at Jalandhar, Phillaur, Nakodar, and Kartarpur, but later on, up to the uprising of 1857, the cantonments of Kartarpur, Nakodar and Phillaur were abandoned.⁵ On the outbreak of the uprising of 1857, the 3rd Native Infantry occupied Phillaur and also tried to capture Jalandhar. The district was of importance, as one of the main lines of communication between the Punjab and Delhi passed through it. The British with their best efforts succeeded to save the district from the yoke of the mutineers. They separated district Jalandhar from Hoshiarpur in 1861 for the settlement work. It became the smallest district in Punjab under the British with 1,321 villages.⁶ The triangular territory of Jalandhar district was divided into four tehsils namely Rahon (later on called Nawanshahr), Phillaur, Nakodar, and Jalandhar. As per the census report of 2011, it has now five tehsils namely, Jalandhar-I, Jalandhar-II, Phillaur, Nakodar, and Shahkot. There is a total of 11 blocks and 954 villages in the district.

The population of Jalandhar has risen with a big percentage from 789555 in 1881 to over 2193590 in 2011, giving a total rise of about 1404035 in the respective period. Table No: T – 2 showing the total population, male, female, decadal variation, and density per sq. Km in District Jalandhar from 1881 to 2011 is given below:

Table No: T – 2

Population of district Jalandhar 1881 to 2011						
Sr. No.	Year	Population	Male	Female	% Variation	Density per Sq. KM
1.	1881	789555	431435	358120	–	231
2.	1891	907583	492877	414706	+ 14.9	265
3.	1901	916675	496144	420531	+1.00	266
4.	1911	801303	449470	351833	– 12.59	233
5.	1921	822020	454829	367191	+2.59	243
6.	1931	943438	512509	430929	+14.77	274
7.	1941	1126900	606079	520821	+19.45	327
8.	1951	1054136	566241	487895	– 6.46	306
9.	1961	1226182	654833	571349	+16.32	353
10.	1971	1454501	772416	682085	+18.62	428
11.	1981	1734574	916379	818195	+19.25	510
12.	1991	1649205	869279	779926	– 4.92	624
13.	2001	1962700	1040177	922523	+19.00	746
14.	2011	2193590	1145211	1048379	+11.76	836

Source: Census Report 2011 and District Gazetteer Jalandhar

As described in the above table, in 1881 the population of district Jalandhar was 789555 which in 1891 rose to 907583 with a decadal increase of 14.9%. In 1901, it became 916675 with an increase of 1%. In 1911 the population of Jalandhar was 8018303 with a decrease in the population at 12.59%. It was due to the epidemics of cholera in 1904-05 which might have distorted the natural increase in population. In 1921 the population in Jalandhar was 822020 with a decadal increase of 2.59%. In 1931 the population in district Jalandhar rose to 943438 with an increase of 14.77%. In this census, the Dalit in Punjab first time got their names entered in the census under the head of Ad Dharmi. In 1941 the population in Punjab was 1126900 with a rise of 19.45%. But the population of district Jalandhar in 1951 was 1054136 with a decrease of 6.46%. It was due to the partition of India and the migration of a sizeable number of populations from district Jalandhar to Pakistan. In 1961, the population in district Jalandhar was 1226182 with a decadal increase of 16.32%. In 1971 it rose to 1454501 with an increase of 18.62%. The population in district Jalandhar rose to 1734573 in 1981 with a decadal increase of 19.25%. In 1991 the population in district Jalandhar was 1649205 with a decrease of 4.92% in the decade, as a new district of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar was formed out of two districts of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur. In 2001 the population of district Jalandhar was 1962700 with a decadal growth of 19%. As per the census of 2011, the population of district Jalandhar is 2193590 with a decadal growth of 11.76%. In 1881 the density of population in district Jalandhar was 231 which as per the Census Report of 2011 is 836 and shows the significant demographic changes in the population profile of district Jalandhar.

The Punjab Municipal Act of 1867 proved a base for the foundation of local administration in Jalandhar. It provided for the elected majority of two-thirds. The Jalandhar Municipal Committee had sixteen members of whom ten were non-official members. The Deputy Commissioner and Civil Surgeon were the ex-officio members. For elections, the city was divided into five electoral

⁴ Punjab District Gazetteers, Jullundur, Chandigarh: Revenue Department Punjab, 1980, p.22

⁵ Punjab District Gazetteers, Jullundur, Chandigarh: Revenue Department Punjab, 1980, pp. 40-43

⁶ Richard Temple, Settlement Report of the Jullundur District, 1852, pp. 7.

wards returning two members each.⁷ The number of members was raised to 17 in 1896, 22 members in 1920, 25 members in 1923, and 29 members in 1946. Presently, Municipal Corporation Jalandhar has 80 elected Councilors and the city is divided into 80 wards. Before the partition of India, the municipality of Jalandhar was dominated either by the Muslims or by the upper caste Hindu but in general, the politics of Jalandhar municipality revolved around the Balmikis, as they work there in large number.⁸

The physical growth of Jalandhar from 1881 to 2011 was initially quick which was followed by a slack growth as more attention was paid to the development within the wall.⁹ There were twelve gates in the different parts of the city namely Mai Hiran gate, Balmiki gate, Neela Mahal gate, Jaura gate, Khingran gate, Saidan gate, Phagwara gate, Sheetla gate, Khodian gate, Dehalvi gate, Shah Kuli gate, and Lahore gate. The city inside the gates is called the walled city but in the late 19th century, the inhabited area of Jalandhar expanded outside the gates. The city was divided into *Muhallas* at the beginning of the 20th century. Each *Muhalla* was a closed locality with its gate. The names of the *Muhallas* were derived differently as, after the name of the dominant caste such as *Muhalla* Sudan, Sehgalan, Purian etc., on the name of the profession like *Muhalla* Qazian, Julahian etc., on the name of the dominant person as *Muhalla* Imam Nasiruddin, Sayyid Kabir etc., or the name of a well-known building such as Kotwali etc. The town grew as a result of the construction of various public buildings to meet the administrative requirements of British rule. The people of the city lived in 12 Kots namely Kot Kishan Chand, Kot Lakhat Rai, Kot Sadat Khan, Kot Achhi, Kot Chimbian, Kot Pakshian, Kot Bahadur Khan, Kot Mohammad Amin, Kot Sadiq, Kot Badal Khan, Kot Fazal Karim, and Kot Asman Khan. Each of these Kot had its gate. The Muslim population of the city lived in the localities called Bastis. The number of the Bastis was also twelve and important were Basti Danishmandan, Basti Sheikh, Basti Guzan, Basti Bawa Khel, Basti Pirdad, Basti Shahkuli, Basti Shah Ibrahim, Basti Mithu, and Basti Nau. The partition of India in 1947 resulted in the distribution of the property of Muslims amongst the local people. The Hindu and the Sikh in a sizeable number came from Pakistan and settled down at Jalandhar. In 1966, Punjab became a new province of independent India which also resulted in some more demographic changes in the region.

The capital of this newly formed Punjab province is Chandigarh and Jalandhar district lies somehow equidistant from the capital Chandigarh and frontier district of Amritsar. It has become a significant district from a social, political, economic, and religious point of view. Jalandhar remained a center of education and publication of the newspapers even before the partition. Almost all the religious groups of the social order founded their educational institutions here. All such significant changes made Jalandhar a cultural, educational, and newspaper center which later on helped the educated elite to come forward to organize themselves for the overall progress of the vicinity.

If we study the details of demographic changes in Punjab in general and district Jalandhar particularly, we may conclude that the area of Punjab is changed a lot in the historical context and the same is the position of district Jalandhar. This ancient city from the *Puranic* times got various names but the name Jalandhar remained the most popular. The locality was developed physically from the walled city to the Muslim majority region of the *Bastis* in the south of the city. The establishment of local self-government since the foundation of the Jalandhar Municipality is also worthy to mention here. Jalandhar has seen many significant changes since its origin today and demographically it has changed a lot and succeeded to be a significant region of Punjab state even in the present context.

⁷ Jalandhar Municipal Committee, Record File No. W. 1., 3-13.

⁸ Pandit Bakshi Ram & Karnail Singh Sahota, *Balmik Sabha Da Itihas* (Punjabi), Chandigarh: Bhartiya Balmik Sabha (Regd.), 1999, p. 53.

⁹ Kanwaljit Kaur, *Business Communities of Jalandhar (1846-1947)*, (Unpublished M. Phil. Dissertation), Amritsar, Department of History G. N. D. U., 1990, pp. 5-8.