

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF URBANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (A CASE PREMISE TO SOLAN TOWN OF HIMACHAL PRADESH)

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Abstract: The process of society's transformation from a predominantly rural, to a predominantly urban population is defined as 'Urbanization'. This includes two things, an increase in the number of people living in urban settlements and an increase in the percentage of the population engaged in non-agricultural activities, whilst living in such places. The present study is an attempt to describe the urbanization of Solan, for the period of 1947 to 2003. study focuses mainly on the town of Solan, which is considered to be a relatively progressive and populous area of Solan District, locate in the Indian hill state of Himachal Pradesh. The concerned study has highlighted the main factors those appeared to be responsible for the urbanization of Solan town during Pre-Independence and Post-Independence period.

Keywords: Urbanization, Pre-Independence, Post-Independence, transformation, Solan District, non-agricultural activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The process of society's transformation from a predominantly rural, to a predominantly urban population is defined as 'Urbanization'. This includes two things, an increase in the number of people living in urban settlements and an increase in the percentage of the population engaged in non-agricultural activities, whilst living in such places. Many anthropologists, historians, sociologists and geographers have argued that urban transformation and urban settlement are the product of a long evolutionary process. "Urbanization" is thus a process by which rural areas become transformed into urban areas and also refers to the process by which rural areas become urbanised as a result of economic development and industrialisation. The present study is an attempt to describe the urbanization of Solan, for the period of 1947 to 2003.

This study focuses mainly on the town of Solan, which is considered to be a relatively progressive and populous area of Solan District, locate in the Indian hill state of Himachal Pradesh. It lies in the lower part of the Shimla Hills of the Lesser Himalayas. According to Stanley K. Shultz; Professor of Wisconsin University of the United States, urban areas can be classified into fundamentally the following types:

1. Administrative centres.
2. Religious centres.
3. Market centres.
4. Cultural centres.

Any particular centre may fulfil any one of these function, or any combination thereof.

Solan town, however initially grew as a centre of strategic importance, due to which it also developed into an administrative centre. It was not a centre of pilgrimage, nor did it have any distinguishing cultural importance. Its cultural growth was only an outcome of its strategic and administrative development.⁵ There has been a relatively rapid expansion of Solan town in recent years, which has led to a scarcity of land. Therefore, physiographic boundaries formed by the complex topography play an important role in allocating development resources.

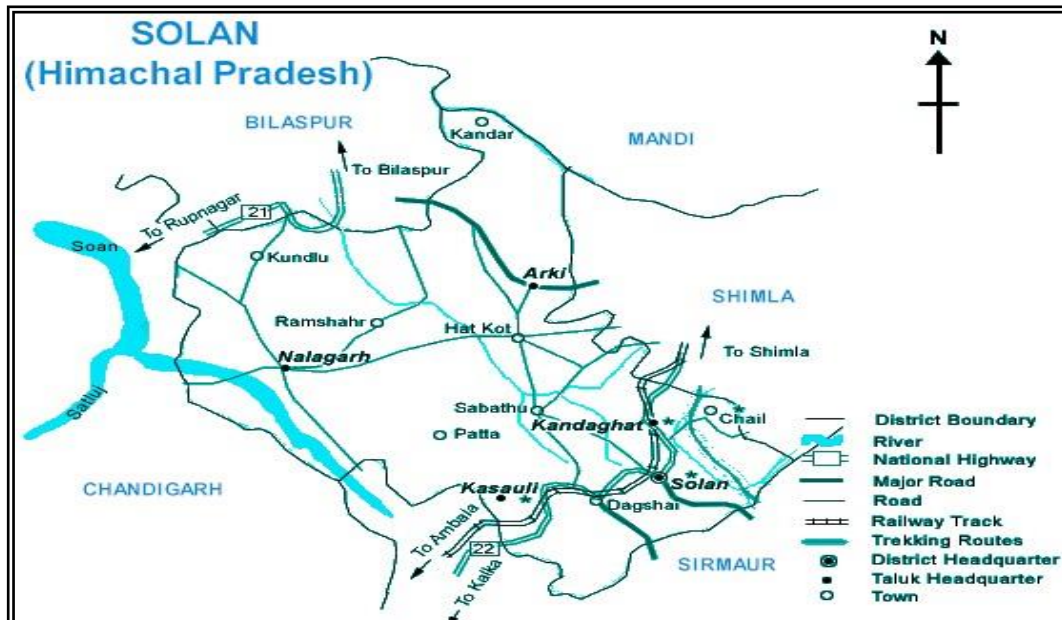
It is also pertinent to point out that a notable feature of urbanisation that has been observed in this area is a rural-urban interaction, which has also increased the rate of growth of urban settlements.⁷ This present study examines those key elements of the urban expansion of Solan town, which can be attributed to being the main features and reasons of growth and development, leading to urbanization in this area, within the stated period.

2. PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA: SOLAN TOWN

Solan town is situated at an altitude of 1,453 meters above mean sea level and is geographically situated at 77°6' longitude and 30°54' latitude. The eastern side of the town is covered by 'Matiul' peak which is approximately 1,986 meters (6,516 ft) high. The 2,000 meter (6,562 ft) 'Karol' peak is located on the northern side of the town.

Since Solan town has an abundance of hill formations, only 30 to 40 percent area is suited for building activity. Steep slopes, forested area, cultivated land, developed land, ravines, seasonal streams, nallah formations, loose, sinking or otherwise unstable sites account for most of the land in the area. The municipal limits of Solan are spread over an area of 33.43 km², covering a residential population of 34,206 as per the census of 2001.

It is the largest Municipal Council of Himachal, but now it is being upgraded to Municipal Corporation which will be second in the state, after the capital, Shimla MC. The town is located on the Kalka-Shimla National Highway, NH-21, at a distance of about 50 Kms from Kalka and 48Kms from Shimla. It is well connected and conveniently linked to Nalagarh, Bilaspur, Shimla, Rajgarh, Nahan and Chandigarh. Solan is a base for the nearby tourist destinations including Chail, Dagshai, Subathu, Kandaghat and Churdhar peak.



Sources: Census of India, Administrative Atlas of Himachal Pradesh, 2001

The transformation of the fringe villages into town has been the key factor of urbanised growth of Solan town. There are many reviews that have explained the reasons behind the town's growth. This review has focused on three major themes which emerge repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed. These themes are:

1. Agricultural growth
2. Industrial growth
3. Educational growth.

Agnihotri & Vora (2002) has determined that the main agricultural crops grown in and around the areas of Solan town were tomatoes, capsicum and cauliflower. However, according to the findings of this present study, cultivation of these crops on a commercial basis only began in earnest in the late sixties and Solan now has claim to a unique variety of off-season tomatoes, known as 'Solan Gola' that are grown during rainy season, when tomatoes are not harvested in the plains.

Azad (1988) has observed that local farmers of the Saproon valley area, in and adjacent to Solan town, were now inclined to grow off-season vegetables like tomatoes, cauliflower, cabbage, peas, hill capsicum, cauliflower seed. Chand (1997) observed that the farmers engaged in cauliflower seed production in Deothi, Kotho and Dharot sold an average quantity of 26-25 kg seed annually. These were a combination of local sales in the village, roadside sales in Solan town and in the wholesale markets of Delhi, Punjab and Haryana. Deol (2005) identified that within a total area of 1,936 sq. kms of the Solan region comprises of five tehsils namely, Solan, Kasauli, Kandaghat, Nalagarh and Arki. Although these areas are characterised by rugged mountain topography, much of this is fertile land and in combination with a moderate climate provide, this makes for good conditions for agricultural development. Goodrich (1987) has identified that the studies conducted on villages around Solan town reveal that the town is an important vegetable producing area. These are mainly tomatoes, cauliflower, capsicum, green peas and beans, both for consumption and seed purpose. Saproon valley was identified first for the commercial production of cauliflower seed in 1964-65. Grewal (2005) identified that the number of towns and the percentage of urban population increased after Independence as a result of an influx of refugees in 1947, the grant of full statehood in 1971 and the graduation of Solan to a class III town. Gupta, (1996) explained that in 1946, ruler of the erstwhile princely state of Baghat, opened a library at Solan. A Central State Library also came into being, which was an important event in the history of library development services in the State. Kant & Krishan (2004) observed that with the division of Punjab in 1947, Lahore, capital of the erstwhile united Punjab, was lost to Pakistan. The university's administrative office was then temporarily located at Solan, till 1956 while other departments were scattered in different towns. Roy (1983) has stated that in India mushroom growing was first attempted at Solan (H.P.) under an I.C.A.R. Scheme. This was an important development in mushroom research and was followed by the growers immediately. Some growers started marketing their produce in Delhi and other adjoining towns of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Sajnani (2001) has submitted that Solan is known as the home of the Mohan Meakan brewery, built in 1835. The town is serving as a wholesale market for the export of off season vegetables and stone fruit's and is an up-coming industrial area of the region. Sharma (1987) stated that 1947 only six out of about thirty capital towns could boast of having been electrified and Solan town was one of them, while in 1944, the Punjab National Bank and the Narang Bank of India had each opened branches in Solan. Singh & Brard (2007) observed that University of Punjab at Lahore was shifted to Solan town in the Simla Hills, after the partition of the country. Singh (1990) has identified that the vegetable production is another newly growing dimension of the economy of Solan. Cauliflower, cabbage, capsicum and various green vegetables are grown in this area and these seed farms and nurseries developed in recent years have considerably helped the process of vegetable growth of isolated and secluded economies, wherein each village operated as self-contained and self-sufficient enclaves, with communal goals. Singh & Sharma (1996) has observed that the migrants from the adjoining areas of Punjab entered into the State at different times. Many people have also come at the time of India's partition in 1947 and are colloquially known as "Refugees". Also, the main concentrations of the 'Khatris' are seen in the towns of the districts of Bilaspur, Solan, Kangra, Hamirpur, Una, Mandi, Kullu, Chamba and Shimla, but their exact population was not known at the time of partition. Sharma (2004) observed that mushroom research in India started in the sixties in a small town of Himachal Pradesh, viz. Solan. In the year 1961, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi sanctioned a project named "Development of Mushrooms" in the Chambaghat area of present day Solan town.

Objectives Of The Study

- To study the main factors those appear to be responsible for the urbanization of Solan town during Pre-Independence and Post-Independence period.
- To study the core historical developmental elements leading to the urbanization during 1947-2003.
- To study various approaches to rural-urban linkage development that supported the expansion of urbanization of Solan town.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was carried through a comprehensive secondary data exploration, In the first step, background, purpose and objectives of the research are described using limited sources of literature review. This phase aims to give the main direction and the scope of research. This step will consist of selecting and studying relevant facts that will become the bases of the research and will be used to support the initial research design and subsequent works. Literature relates to the research process, as well as literature about urbanization, that has been searched and studied throughout the research. The data has been collected both from secondary sources as well as primary sources. The secondary data consists of both published and unpublished information in the form of government departments, books, journals, symposium, documents/plans and academic research reports. The important sources, which form the basis for secondary data are, District Census handbooks, Economic Census, District Planning Reports, Revenue Records and Industrial Policies. Secondary data sources include information and figures from census documents, local land records, publications and the media. Census data provide useful information at the village level and, more generally, about the land and population in the area. Census data are used to categories the research villages within the rural-to-urban continuum on the basis of land use and occupational characteristics. The Indian census takes place every 10 years. Because the focus of this study is on developments over the last 25 years, the census figures that are used mostly are from 1971, 1991, 2001 and occasionally 1981. Local land records, Reports, Newspapers and Maps. A village revenue officer (Patwari) keeps records on village land, including it's use and ownership. Some background information about the villages is derived from government publications, as they provide a historical perspective. Therefore, these sources have been used to depict the local situations and to describe the villages and surrounding areas. Articles from various newspapers have been collected throughout the research period. This is a way to keep track of important events, policy measures, conflicts, environmental issues and political developments.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The name, 'Solán' is derived from the name of a local deity, 'Shulni Mata', who is of significant importance to the people of the area. Solán has now developed into a cosmopolitan town but its identity is still closely linked to 'Shulni Mata'. The concerned study has covered the history of urbanization in the township of Solán. The township at Solán was initially originated during the pre-British and post-Independence period. Topographically, there are four types of towns in the state.

1. Valley towns
2. Hill/ridge towns
3. Spur towns
4. Gap towns.

There are a total of 13 hill/ridge towns out of 57 towns in the state and these came into existence mainly during the British period, as hill resorts towns. Valley towns, which have indigenous origin, are quite old in their origin and they number 41, accounting for nearly 72.0 per cent of all towns in the state. Of the remaining 3 towns in the state, two are spur towns and remaining one is a gap town.

Solan town is a gap town (A town located in a pass to an upland area which benefits from being a focus of routes). In terms of growth, gap towns grow the fastest (57.1%) against the slowest (11.2%) growth of spur towns. However, there are wide variations in growth behaviour of hill towns at individual level. Following table 2.1& figure 2.1 illustrates the status of township during Pre-British period.

Status of Solan town during Pre-British and Post-Independence period.

Name of Town	Site attribute	Period of evolution	Dominant function	Population in 2001	Rank in 2001
Solan	Gap	Pre-British	Administrative	34,206	3

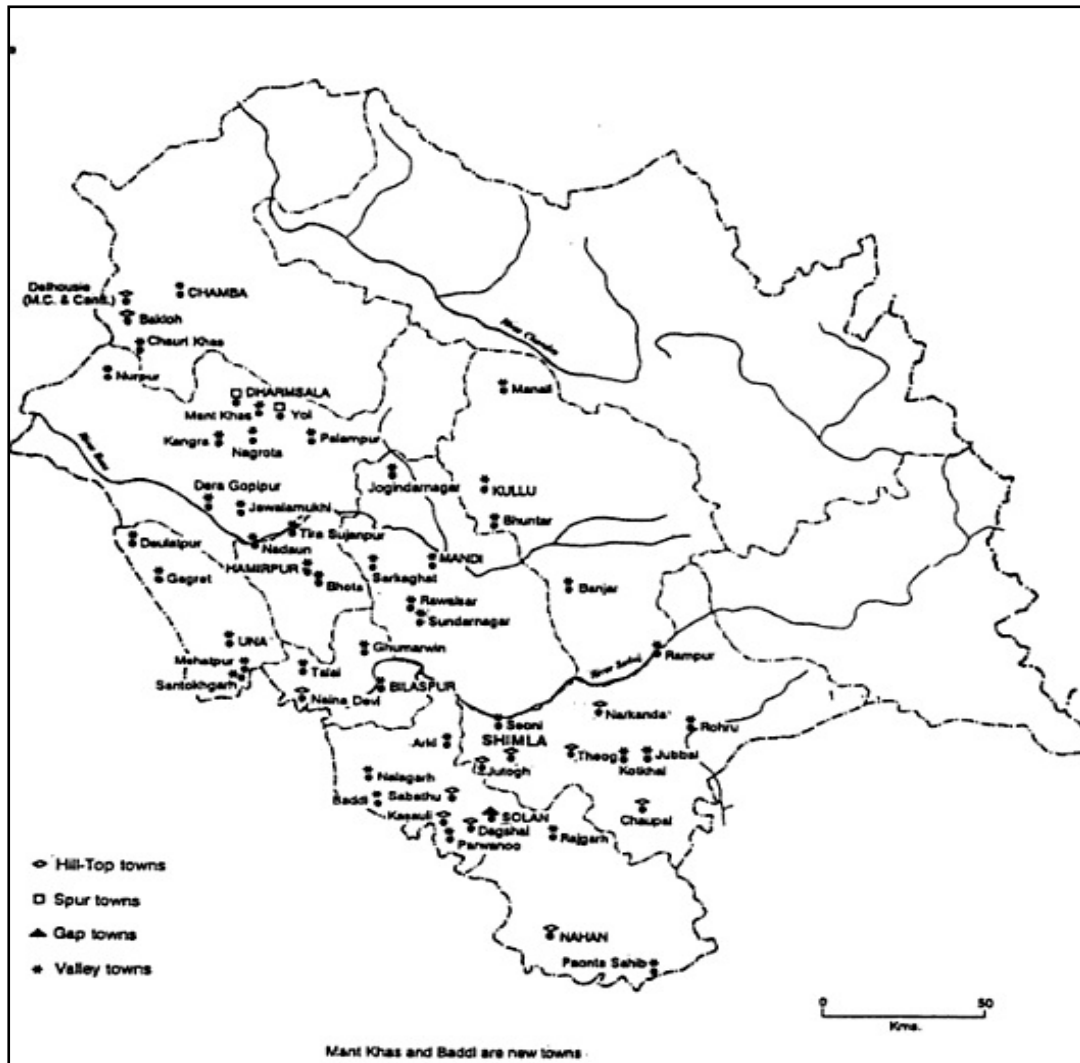
Himachal Pradesh; Classification of Towns by Site Attribute

Sources: Krishan, G. and Verma N.R. (1980), "Site Analysis of Hill Towns". *Transaction of the Institute of Indian Geographers*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 101-109.

In the following a detailed analysis of the history of urbanization in Solan town is made by dividing the study period into two sub periods;

- Pre-Independence
- Post-Independence.

Pre-Independence Period (During Baghat Princely State)



During the entire period from 1800 A.D. to 1947, there were some Independent Princely States outside the jurisdiction of the British rule. When the British came, they defeated Gorkhas and entered into treaties with some Rajas and annexed the kingdoms of others. The situation more or less remained unchanged till 1947. Himachal Pradesh came into existence on 15th April 1948 with the merger of twenty six Shimla Hill States and four Punjab Hill States into a centrally administrated area; Baghat Princely State was one among these.

- The state of Baghat was established in the late thirteenth century by Rana Vijay Dev, the younger brother of the first ruler of Baghat, although in some reports the dynasty is purportedly from the Deccan and there are seventy generations between the founder and Rana Raghunath Pal, who began his reign in 1787; this would have established the state sometime in the fourth century, which is hardly credible.
- With Rana Mohinder Singh, Son of Rana Dalel Singh, one enters the historical times. Being an ally of Raja of Bilaspur, Rana Mohinder Singh remained in possession of his territory under the Gurkha rule. In consequence of this association he had to lose five parganas which the British made over to Patiala state. The remaining three lapsed to the British on the death in 1839 of Mohinder Singh without issue. In 1842 it was restored to Bije Singh, the brother of

Mohinder Singh. In 1849 Baghat State was annexed by the British Government, due to a lack of direct heirs. In 1861 it was restored to Dalip Singh.

- Baghat State comprised of eight 'parganas' and was practically surrounded by the erstwhile Patiala State on all sides. Until the nineteenth century, during the Gurkha wars, Baghat supported the Gurkhas and as a result was deprived of five of the eight parganas which once constituted the principality. The State ranked tenth amongst the Punjab hill States.
- Solan was built as the capital of Baghat State in 1878- Since then; it remained headquarters of the princely state. After the merger of States into Himachal Pradesh the town became headquarters of Solan tahsil.¹⁰The area now comprising Solan town was just a small village known as 'Solan' till the middle of the second half of the nineteenth century and the aforesaid village was part of the erstwhile Princely State of 'Baghat' which had its capital at village Bhoch, in Bhochali Pargana.
- From the history of 'Baghat' Princely State it is evident that Solan began to develop after shifting of the capital from 'Bhoch' in 'Bhochali Pargana' around the middle of the nineteenth century during the reign of Rana Dalip Singh particularly after the construction of cantonment at that place. Solan town however was not a well-known place until the advent of British rule.

Some main facts those contributed urban effect to Solan town during this period were:

Construction of Cantonment (Solan Rifle Range)

- In the year 1862, Baghat State was restored to its minor ruler, Rana Dalip Singh. In that year the commanding officer of Dagshai directed that he required some land in the vicinity of Solan, for rifle ranges and negotiations for the acquisition of the land and the selection of sites were opened with the Wazir (Prime Minister) of the Government of Baghat, which had at this time established a small tehsil building at a Solan.
- In 1863 suitable land for rifle ranges at Solan was selected and handed over to the military authorities and the matter of compensation to Baghat state for the acquired land was taken up.
- In lieu of compensation, an annual remission of Rs. 500/- from the tribute payable by the State to the Government of India was granted with effect from 1st January, 1864. Ground acquired for a rifle range in 1863-64; barracks afterwards erected, which accommodated in 1874 a battalion of European troops. This remission of Rs. 500/- annually was to be continued so long as the land remained occupied by the military.
- Uptill 1874 the boundaries of Solan cantonment were considered to be poorly defined and a committee was appointed in that year with the Superintendent of Hill States as its President, to re-define the boundaries of Solan cantonment.
- Until 1876 the ruler of Baghat did not accept the award for the land in question, but in that year the boundaries were finally determined. These new boundaries were accepted by the ruler, on the payment of arrears at Rs. 500/- annually. The details of the award given being as under the statement ;
- A promise was also given to the Government of Baghat State that no bazaar would be constructed within the cantonment limits, since such an act would prove a powerful rival to the town of Solan and deprive the State of its revenue.
- The British had a strong affinity with the Solan area and established several small towns, such as Dagshai, Kasauli and Subathu in this region. All of these towns were built with an adjoining cantonment area on their outskirts. The arrival of the British and the consequent setting up of a chain of cantonments at Kasauli, Dagshai, and Solan helped created a new class of wealthy builders, transport contractors and suppliers who provided supplies to soldiers. The construction of Hindustan Tibet road was started in 1850-51 commencing from Kalka and first stretch was upto Shimla. The Road upto Shimla came to be used for wheeled traffic by 1860.

Establishment Of Mohan Meakin's Brewery

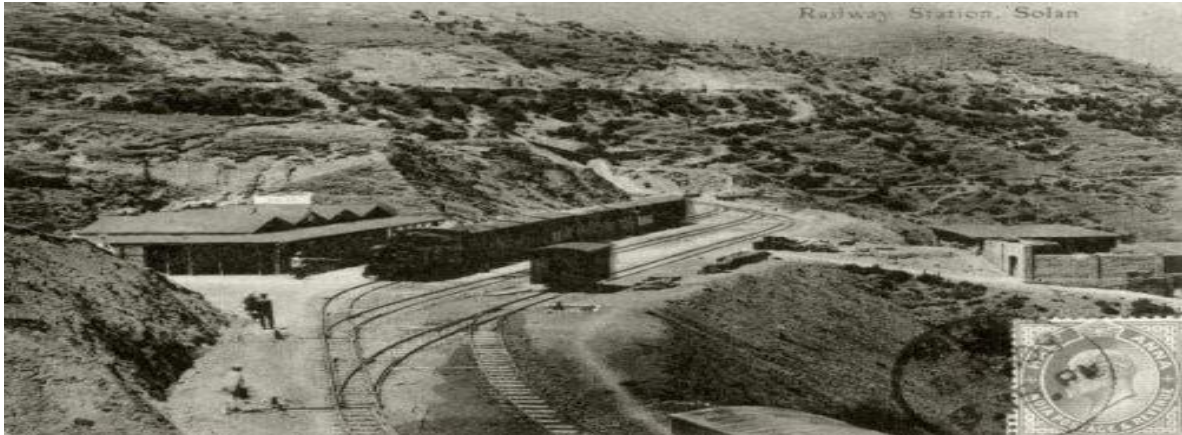
- Asia's oldest brewer, Mohan Meakin Limited, traces its history back to the late 1820s, when Edward Dyer brought brewing and distilling equipment from England and Scotland. This equipment came by sailing ship as far up the Ganges River as possible, before being loaded onto ox drawn carts and taken up to the Himalayas via the route to Shimla. Some of the original equipment including the copper pot is still in use today.

- Edward Dyer selected the location of his brewery/distillery due to the fine spring water available there and because the climate at this altitude was somewhat reminiscent of Scotland. Edward Dyer incorporated his company in 1855, following the full establishment of British East India Company rule over the Punjab with the annexation of Punjab in 1849. Companies.
- The Company was incorporated as Dyer Breweries Limited and it later merged with Meakin Breweries Limited to become 'Dyer Meakin Breweries Ltd'. The company still exists today under the name 'Mohan Meakin Limited'. In colonial times it was called the 'Dyer-Meakin Brewery'. Incidentally, Edward Dyer was the father of the same General Dyer who ordered the Amritsar Massacre in 1919.
- The Memorandum of Agreement made between the Government of Punjab and the State of Baghat, on January 22nd, 1911 states that, "A Memorandum of an agreement made this day the twenty second of January, 1911, between the Governor of the Punjab (here in after referred to as the Punjab Government) of the one part and the Raja of Baghat, which expression includes his successors in office (hereinafter referred to as the Baghat State) of the other part with the approval of His Majesty's representative for the exercise of the functions of the crown in its relations with the Indian States.
- Whereas the parties have decided in view of the mutual benefit to secure to the Punjab Government, in consideration of the payment hereinafter stipulated the full right of control over the production, storage and issues of liquors [as defined in clause 14 of section 3 of the Punjab Excise act, 1914(I of 1914) manufactured in the promises of the Distillery and the Brewery at Solan now occupied by Messrs.
- Dyer Meakin and Company, Limited (hereinafter referred to as the said Distillery and Brewery) and of enjoying the revenue derived from such production, storage and issues during the period specified so long as these premises continue to be so used either by the said Company or by any other person.
- Around 1887 the Solan and Simla breweries were sold to a rival Englishman, H.G. Meakin. By the 1920s the two firms had merged their businesses completely to form, 'Dyer-Meakin'.
- After Independence, the British promoters decided to exit Scotsman by the name of H.G. Meakin. In 1935 this company merged with the Meakin brewery, set up by Mr. H.G. Meakin to become Dyer Meakin Breweries Limited. Dyer Meakin was registered in 1934 at Simla Hills.
- After the First World War the two firms merged and formed Dyer Meakin & Company. In 1935, when Burma was separated from India the company was reconstructed with its Indian assets under the name and style of Dyer Meakin Breweries Ltd. Narendra Nath Mohan was an employee of Dyer Meakin Breweries Limited. Subsequently, in 1949, N.N. Mohan took over the management of the company. Under his stewardship, the company's assets and profits registered a manifold increase.
- To mark the contribution of Mohan, the company's name was changed from Dyer Meakin Breweries to 'Mohan Meakin Breweries', in 1967. On the death of N.N. Mohan in 1969, his eldest son V.R. Mohan took over as managing director. He introduced a number of new products that are brand leaders even today.
- According to a report in Business Standard, (Mohan Meakin on the Rocks), the nineties have not been kind to Mohan Meakin, the report says, "They flourished as long as there was no competition. UB and Shaw Wallace have been moving fast to make inroads into the market." Mohan Meakin's principal brands are Old Monk rum and Golden Eagle beer.
- In the seventies the manufacturing activities of the company were diversified into other fields under the leadership of Brigadier Kapil Mohan, who became the managing director of the company in 1973. Subsequently the word brewery was dropped in 1982 to remove the impression that the company was engaged only in beer making. Uptill the study period of time, Solan brewery has been converted into distillery and is presently run by the name of Mohan Meakin's Ltd. The brewery offers employment to many local residents.

Role of Kalka-Shimla Rail Line

- The contract for construction was awarded to the Delhi-Umbala Company in 1898 at an estimated cost of Rs.86, 78,500 however, the cost doubled during execution of the project and it was finally purchased by the State in 1906, for Rs.1, 71,07,748.

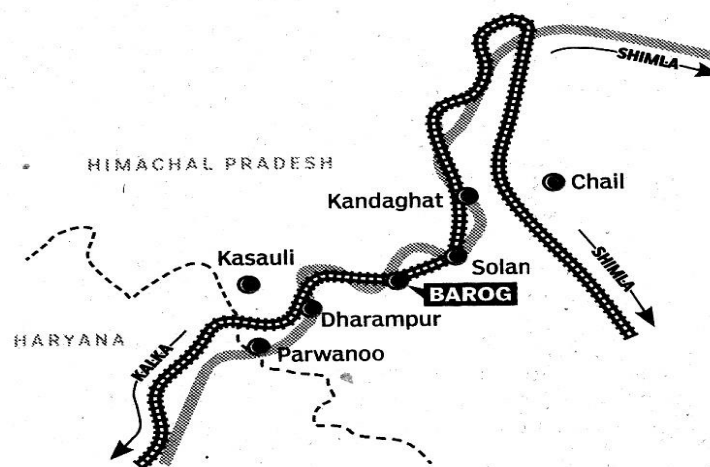
- The 96.54km line was opened to traffic on 9th November, 1903. Because of the high capital and maintenance cost, coupled with peculiar working conditions, the Kalka-Shimla Railway was allowed to charge fares that were higher than the prevailing tariffs on other lines. A railway line (Kalka-Shimla rail line) was also built in Solan in 1903 making the place commutable with nearby cities.



(Sources: State Archives Shimla)

Solan Railway Station In 1912

- Archives on the subject reveal that the first reference regarding the drawing of this proposed railway line was made during the year 1848, but the final project was completed more than 50 years later that is, in 1903 and was inaugurated by the British Viceroy, Lord Curzon.

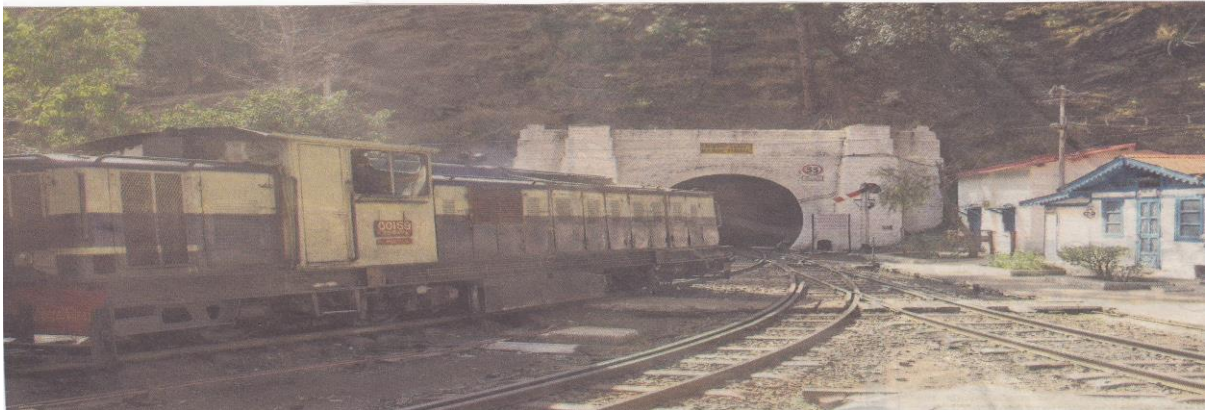


(Sources: State Archives Shimla)

Kalka – Shimla Railway Track

- The Kalka Shimla railway line not only boasts of a scenic journey, but has a resplendent history related with its construction as well. The railway line during its journey of 96 Km traverses through 103 tunnels (both small and big), numerous lofty arched viaducts, over 800 small and big bridges and continuous succession of as many as 919, in and out reverse curves.
- An interesting feature of the Kalka-Shimla Railway is the almost complete absence of girder bridges. Another special feature of the Kalka-Shimla Railway is that as many as 27 cutovers serve as different gradient crossings. Due to this technical expertise, this line is included in the 'Guinness Books of World Facts & Feats', as a narrow gauge engineering achievement of India. However, even this was not good enough to sustain the company and the Government acquired the company, on its request in January, 1906. The railway line serves the town through three halting stations one each at Solan, Salogra and Solan Brewery.

- The longest tunnel is at Barog, this tunnel is 1,143.61 meters (3,752ft) long and for a long time remained the second longest tunnel on the Indian Railways.



Longest Tunnel Barog

- According to legend, Colonel Barog, a British railway engineer, after whom the place was named, had begun work to build the tunnel by digging from both the sides. However, his desire to complete the job expeditiously could not be fulfilled, as an error of judgment led to a major and irreparable misalignment on both sides of the tunnel.
- Taking serious note of the mistake, the British Government imposed a nominal fine of Re.1 on him, as punishment. Upset over the loss to state exchequer and damage to his professional reputation, Col. Barog became aloof and went into a depression.
- Legend has it that one evening, the Colonel wandered to the end of the doomed tunnel and shot himself as a result of the humiliation. Although it is at a distance of just 1 km from Barog railway station, which comes to life every time the toy train passes through, the original tunnel has been lost into obscurity.
- Around four to five years ago, a British national, claiming to be related to Col. Barog, visited Barog. He wanted to make some form of memorial near the incomplete tunnel and grave yard and tried to contact the local authorities, but nothing has happened in this regard.
- Today, the tunnel is used as a water stream that caters to the needs of a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) training centre at Dharampur. After Col. Barog's tragic death, a Mr. Harrington was appointed as the succeeding Chief Engineer.

There is recorded history of a holy person named of 'Bhalkoo', an illiterate genius who possessed an extraordinary gift to discern the correct alignment for the construction of the railway line. 'Bhalkoo' maintained this gift was on account of divine intervention and it is a matter of fact that his miraculous assistance played a vital role in the construction of the Kalka-Shimla rail line and this has since been recognised.

Role of Bhalkoo:

- According to the Bhalkoo legend, despite his unkept looks and unclean habit's, he earned the respect of the British for the manner in which he pin-pointed the exact sites for boring a tunnel or constructing a bridge with a long staff he always carried with him, they even started believing that he possessed supernatural powers. He had matted hair infested with lice, which he used to feed by pouring flour and sugar over his head. He claimed that his deity (devta) communicated with him through the lice. The difficult hill terrain forced the engineers to repeatedly alter the alignment of and invariably it was this enigmatic individual, Bhalkoo who put them on the right track. There were occasions when the British came close to abandoning the project, but for this fascinating and rather mysterious man, who claimed that the trace of the rail track had been revealed to him by his devta. The faith and confidence that the British engineers had in his abilities could be judged from the numerous certificates issued to him by them. He was not only associated with the construction of the Kalka-Shimla rail track, but was also instrumental in laying out the alignment of the Hindustan-Tibet road while serving in the hills road division. This mysterious character then mysteriously vanished. No one really knows what became of him afterwards.

- The presence of British troops in summer months, because of its location on Hindustan-Tibet road, due to its location on Kalka Shimla railway line and with the establishing of Dyre Meakins (now Mohan Meakins) Brewery and commercial activities added to the importance of Solan town. Being located at the confluence of the Kalka- Shimla Highway, commands great importance for the British on various grounds- military, administrative, commercial and industrial.

Post-Independence Period (1947-2003)

Some of the important historical events and development in Solan town during 1947-2003 are listed below chronologically. The net impact of all these developments was a boost to the process of urbanization in the town.

Relocation of Punjab University Campus to Solan Town for the Period Of 1947-1956

- At the time of Independence, there were twenty universities left in the country. Punjab University was, however, reorganised after the partition. In September 1947, the East Punjab University was set up with its camp at Simla. Later on, its campus shifted to Solan (1947-1956) and in 1957-58 the University was shifted to its present place at Chandigarh.
- This period witnessed a reversal in urbanization trend in the history of migration. With the division of Punjab in 1947, Lahore, the capital of the united Punjab, was lost to Pakistan. Prior to its local in Chandigarh, the University's administrative office was located at Solan, while departments were scattered in different towns.

Influx of Hindu Sikh Refugees

- Partition also brought along with it, a huge problem of the migration of population. An important reason for rapid increase in urban population which showed up in the 1951 census returns, was the influx of Hindu and Sikh refugees from the newly created Pakistan, while the establishment of small scale industries gave an added fillip to the town.

Municipal Committee Solan Came Into Existence

Municipalities were established in a number of town/cities from 1881 onwards invested with a large amount of power for the civic administration like collection of local taxes, maintenance of roads, removal of garbage and supplying drinking water, road lights and in some cases parks and playgrounds etc. Till the time of independence these facilities, catered to the need of Cantonment areas. In 1949 Solan was declared as a notified Area Committee and in 1953 it was upgraded to a class I Municipal Committee.

Identification of Wards

- Ward 1 is commonly known as Laxmi Cinema and Sunder Cinema area. Apart from residential houses this area has a number of shops dealing in various types of business.
- Ward 2 comprises of the Mall road and Chambaghat area and it is also residential and has as well business market.
- Ward 3 comprises of Solan brewery and apart from residential complexes, there are retail shops.
- Ward 4 comprises of a part of the Brewery area and Salogra village.
- Ward 5 consists of Lower Bazar Mohan Colony/Shakti Nagar and society area.
- Ward 6 is commonly known as "Upper Bazar" area.
- Ward 7 comprises of Laxmi Devi Jain High school and Sanskrit College area.
- Ward 8 is known as Jama Masjid area.
- Ward 9 comprises of the area opposite to the Gurudwara and includes Gandhi Nagar and Bindal Colony.
- Ward 10 has Solan Graon and Palace Road.
- Ward 11 is known as Lakkhar Bazaar, Hospital road area.
- Ward 12 covers the area below Rajgarh road and up to Harimandir.
- Ward 13 which is at the fag end of the town towards village Saproon is known as sunny side area.

Solan town has 18,993 males against 15,206 females. It exhibited a growth rate of 57.23% during the decade 1991-2000. It reported an overall literacy rate of 91.84% and a sex ratio of 801. The urban local body here is not very sound from financial point of view. It has limited resources but vast areas of expenditure. The sewerage system is yet to start in the town. Proper water supply system is existing over here. The council has a waste recycling plant at Salogra which receives solid waste from the entire town.

Formation Of Solan As An Independent District

- In 1972 Solan was created as a new district with the reorganisation of Mahasu and Shimla Districts. Since September, 1972 the town is serving as the tahsil and district headquarters by the same name and prior to that it was just the headquarters of tahsil Solan of the erstwhile Mahasu district of Himachal Pradesh. (Map: 2.2.3.1). The State attained full statehood in 1971, and Solan town was designated as a class III town.

In the period from 1947 to 2003, Solan town witnessed a significant change and is remembered as the phase when infrastructural development took place. For examples:

Common Training Centre Was Started At Solan

The state of Himachal Pradesh came into existence on April 15, 1948 following the integration of the Princely States of Chamba, Mandi, Suket, Sirmour and 26 small hill states of Shimla Hills. Financial resources of these Princely States were not adequate enough to maintain regular police force and the existing police force had to perform several multifarious duties entirely unconnected with the police work. In the late thirties a common police force with a joint Police Adviser, who was an officer of the Indian Police, was created and a common training centre was started at Solan in Baghat State.

Section of Plant pathology H.P, Solan: The section of plant pathology started functioning in October, 1954. The work of the section is mainly devoted to:

- Carrying out survey of important diseases in different zones of the Pradesh and to study their occurrence and economic status.
- Investigations on major diseases of field crops and fruit trees with the object of devising suitable control measures.
- Examination and diagnosis of diseased specimens received from various sources and undertaking advisory work.
- Issuing of advisory notes, leaflets, pamphlets and bulletins on important diseases for the guidance of cultivators and the extension staff.

Crop and Vegetable research station, Chambaghat: This was established in August, 1957 for carrying out research on crops and vegetables. Experiments in seed multiplication and other crop diseases are carried out and the results are circulated among all the agriculture laboratories in Himachal Pradesh.

Civil Hospital: This was a very old hospital. Formerly it was run by the Baghat State and after merger it was taken over by the Himachal Pradesh Government. In 1959, when its new building, constructed at a cost of rupees two lakhs was completed. And the hospital was shifted there. However, during and even prior to the regime of Rana Dalip Singh, Ayurvedic, Unani, Sidha and Tibbi system of medicines and treatment was available to the members of the ruling family as well as the public. The vaid and hakims that treated the ailing members of the royal family used to be styled as "Raj Vaid" or "Raj Hakims". However, as per need and keeping in view the utility, quick relief and advanced treatment provided by the allopathic system of medicines/treatment, Raja Durga Singh started an allopathic hospital in the town headed by Dr. Joshi, a qualified doctor, around the year 1933. After the formation of Solan district, the hospital was upgraded and is serving as the district hospital. Presently this hospital is providing specialized medical facilities to a vast hinterland. Patients even from Sirmour do come to this hospital. Earlier there was a proposal to shift the hospital to a new site adjoining police lines on Solan bye pass at Kather. Land for this purpose too was allotted by the State Government and foundation stone for the proposed complex had been laid in the year 1998. However the proposal in question has been reversed and the existing hospital building on tank road is being renovated at a huge cost. Besides the Zonal Hospital, an E.S.I. dispensary at Chambaghat and sub centres at Salogra, Anji, Jatoli & Shamti are also providing facilities. The town proper has many private clinics providing specialized facilities like Orthopaedics, Dentists, Gynaecology, ENT, and Paediatrics etc. A homeopathic unit is also functioning within the hospital complex itself. The town has many private

Ayurvedic & homeopathic clinics. Apart from this hospital, Veterinary facilities are also in existence since 25th May, 1950 in the town.

Small Industries service Institutes Extension Centre Manufacturing Thermometers: This institute located at Chambaghat was started in June 1961. It was run by the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Government of India. The main function was to coach trainees in making different types of thermometers. Each session was of one year's duration and for every session thirty candidates was selected. Stipends of Rupees fifty per month each were given on merits or on the basis of poverty.

High Altitude Regional Centre of Zoological Survey of India

The High Altitude Regional Centre of Zoological Survey of India, Solan came into existence in September 1968, under the fourth Five Year Plan of the Government of India, with the main objective of exploring high altitude fauna. The centre is engaged in documentation of the rich, diverse faunal resources and reviewing the status of significant text of the fragile western Himalayan ecosystem in the states of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh by carrying out field explorations and scientific studies.

Further, with the formation of Solan district consequential to the re-organization of the districts in 1972, the pace of development in the town went up manifold. Since then the size of the town increased with the setting of various government offices, educational institutions and industrial unit's coupled with commercial establishments. Some important public institutions established in Solan town during this period. The Municipal Committee of Solan established in 1949 to inculcate an administrative functionary to the town. Further, in 1958, Border & Road Division was established under Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department near Railway Station at Solan to construct Roads and buildings for the town. Further in 1964, Superintending Engineer Operation Circle was also established under Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board, near Saproon, Solan in order to build the electricity oriented infrastructure in the town. In 1968, Land Acquisition Office was established under Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department for the purpose of Acquiring land for construction of various roads and building work in Solan and Sirmour district dealing with the workmen's compensation cases. In 1971, District Statistical Office was established in Solan for the purpose of Collection, Analysis and interpretation of statistical data. Further in 1972, Senior Sub-Judge-Cum Chief Judicial Magistrate was appointed in Solan for Judicial work civil and criminal cases. Later in 1972, Executive Engineer, H.P. Housing Board was established in Saproon at Solan for the purpose of development and sale of houses and land plots to general public. Further in 1972, office of Superintendent of Police was established for executive and enforcement of law and order in the town. Further in 1972, District animal husbandry Office was established at Kotla Road, Rajgarh Road in Solan in order to control the animal husbandry action. Further in 1972 Treasury office was established with the appointment of Asstt. Excise & Taxation Commissioner for the purpose of managing Government monetary Transactions and Revenue collection under the act. Later in 1972, Office of Deputy Commissioner was established for managing the works related to District Administration. Further in 1972, Office of Superintendent Engineer Operation Circle was established under Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Solan, to Administer the electricity works. Further in 1973, Superintendent of Post office (postal Division Office) was established at the Mall, Solan for connecting town with the basic communication infrastructure. Later in 1973 Office of Post Master was established near P.W.D. Rest House at Solan for managing the administrative pertained to Communication works. Further in 1973, Labour Officer south zone was established at Circular Road, Solan for the purpose of Implementation of labour law. Later in 1973, District Food & supplies Controller office was established at Ganj Bazar, Solan to regulate the distribution of essential commodities amongst the masses at the reasonable rates. Further in 1974, Commandant Home Guards 11th Battalion was established at Tank Road, Solan, in order to assist the police personnel in maintaining law and order. To extinguish fire of all type. Later in 1974, Executive Engineer, I&PH Div. No.1 was established at The Mall, Solan for Providing Irrigation and water supply. Further in 1975, Secretary market Committee was established at Solan for the regulation of marketing activities. Further in 1975, District Panchayat Office Solan, Rajgarh Road was established at Solan, to look after the working of gram Panchayat control and necessary guidance to those bodies. Further in 1977, Zila Sainik Welfare Office was established at The Mall Solan in order to provide financial assistance to needy ex-servicemen/widows, serving soldiers and their families and other welfare activities. To readdress grievances and assist them in approaching authorities etc. Further in 1977, Income tax Office was established at The Mall Solan, for the enforcement of income and wealth tax laws. Further in 1977, Executive Engineer transmission and Construction Division HPSEB was established at Saproon, Solan, for the construction of transmission lines and erecting of 132/66 kv. Electric Station. etc. Further in 1978, Sub-Divisional Office Telegraph was established at

Solan in order to maintain of telephones and to provide new connections, Opening new telephone exchanges and dealing day-to-day work i.e. trunk call/ wireless station, Railway and defence etc. Further in 1979, Block development Office, was established at Solan Block, Near Jawahar Park, Solan, for the purpose of development and extension work such as agriculture and horticulture. Further in 1980, State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd. was established at Jaonaji Road, Solan in order to maintain supply line of all essential commodities identified under public distribution system and also controlled items. Further in 1981, HIMFED, Rajgarh Road, was established at Solan, for the purpose of marketing of agricultural produce. Further in 1983, Assist HP state CO-operative Milk Produce Fed. Ltd. was established at Solan for the purpose of milk procurement and sale of milk. Later in 1986, Entomology and Wildlife Ecology, was established at Solan for the main purpose of zoological Survey of India.

Initially, Solan Town was founded as a centre of strategic importance, and it quickly became the administrative centre. During World War-II the town was the principal military base and was used as a transit camp for the evacuees of Gorkhas. Apart from its importance as strategic location; town attracts the Britishers with its natural wealth greatly. Brewery was established by the British as early as 1855, today also this is the major industry of the town. Industrially the town is in an advantageous position and has witnessed rapid development since 1960.

- In the post-independence period, urbanization has entered a new and more important phase. In contrast with the British period, which witnessed a period of urban stagnation, the post-independence period is notable for rapid urbanization, despite planned efforts, the pattern of growth and distribution has not changed much. Although, the urbanization of Solan town is not ordinarily linked with a growth of industrial activity, there are instances of an increase in industrial activity preceding urban expansion, the Chambaghat suburb area being a case in point.

5. CONCLUSION

The concerned study on the 'Urbanization of Solan (1947-2003)' mainly focused on the historical facts which are connected to the economic and administrative aspects related to the core urbanized expansion in Solan town, which is considered to be a relatively populous and progressive area in the district of Solan in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. The study has concluded that the history of Urbanization of Solan town has transformed itself through a vast change of development and growth.

This study has observed that the increase in concentration of population in the town, the demands resulting from this and the resultant increase in economic and commercial activities have been key factors in the urbanization process in the town. This has also resulted in an increase of public infrastructure (roads, water facilities and utilities), housing and industrial and commercial resources, to cater to the needs of this population in the town. The expansion and improvement of the transport network in the 1970s and 1980s has played a key role in tying urban markets to rural producing regions, in and around the Solan town area. Solan town has expanded along major roads and highways, although the linear expansion taking place along these routes has its own demerits and is a cause of consequent problems of a secondary nature. The application of the HP Town & Country Planning Act, 1977 to Solan Planning Area in the year 1998, has played a significant role in administrating the expansion of the town. The National Highway No. 22 is a prominent road passing through Solan town. It is an important road and lifeline of a state. Not only is this is an important defence road connecting Delhi, Dehradun, Ambala and Chandigarh to the Chinese border, but most essential commodities, raw materials, products, building materials, passengers and goods find their way to Solan town and beyond, through this route. This study has observed that the most important aspect of urban growth in the Solan town area has been the growth of population in the town and surrounding suburbs. The main factors for high growth in urban population were the unique location of Solan town along the Kalka-Shimla highway and railway line, the accessibility of progress enabling facilities to the population, a moderate climate, the growth and diversification of agriculture, the establishment of a military cantonment during British times and proximity to Shimla, the erstwhile summer capital of British India and current state capital. This study has further revealed that Solan town has now become the hub for three main service utilities these being, for education in colleges, universities, for health facilities, residential housing and for specialised commercial facilities e.g. sabzi mandi, limestone and stone mines, other building material, cinemas, and commercial space. The process of urbanization in the Solan town area has had a significant impact on the characteristics of the area and way of life of the people in this area, over the period of this study. It is fair to conclude that this process is set to continue in Solan in the long term, although it may slow down, it certainly does not show any signs of stopping in the foreseeable future.

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