

# URBAN EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT IN PUNJAB'S MAJOR CITIES

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**Abstract-** This study delves into the development of major urban centers within Punjab's urbanization landscape. There's a notable lean towards class I cities in Punjab's urban growth, a trend that should be monitored to prevent imbalances across regions. Specifically, the study highlights Ludhiana and Amritsar as the primary metropolitan areas in Punjab. It examines various factors, including historical significance, geographical connections, and economic drivers, which have contributed to these cities achieving metropolitan status.

## Introduction

Situated in northwestern India, Punjab stretches from 29° 30' N to 32° 32' N latitude and from 73° 55' E to 76° 50' E longitude. The 2011 Indian Census records that 37.49% of Punjab's population is urban. Post-independence, Punjab has experienced substantial economic growth, positioning it as one of India's wealthiest states (Singh and Singh, 2014). Among Indian states, Punjab ranks highly in urbanization, following Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka. The state's growth surge can be attributed to the Green Revolution beginning in 1966-67, marked by the adoption of advanced agricultural technologies. Additionally, the economic liberalization and globalization policies of the 1990s significantly boosted Punjab's economy.

According to the Indian Census, cities with a population exceeding one million are categorized as metropolitan. The rise of such cities in Punjab is primarily due to the concentration of economic, administrative, and political influences. Ludhiana and Amritsar are the state's two major metropolitan areas, with populations of 1,618,879 and 1,159,227, respectively, as per the 2011 Punjab Census. This paper aims to investigate the underlying reasons for these cities' evolution into Punjab's major metropolitan hubs.

## Urbanization in Punjab

Since gaining independence, Punjab has seen a notable increase in urban residents. The urban population in Punjab saw a significant rise post-1970. At the onset of the 21st century, Punjab's urban population had risen to 33.95%, compared to the national average of 27.78% (Planning Commission). The 2011 census reports

Punjab's urban population at 37.49%, contributing approximately 60% to the state's GDP.

Table no.1 compares the growth rate of Punjab's urban population to India's national average, highlighting that Punjab's urban growth rate surpasses the national rate. This table also indicates that Punjab has consistently outpaced the national average in urbanization levels since 1951. The decade from 2001 to 2011 saw 60 villages evolve into census towns, a significant factor in the rise of the urban population, alongside natural population growth, alterations in municipal boundaries, and migration (Sharma S.L., R.S. Sandhu & Manoj K. Teotia, 2012).

**Table 1: Urbanization in Punjab and India during 1951-2011**

Year	Percentage of Urban population	
	Punjab	India
1951	21.0	17.29
1961	22.9	17.97
1971	23.7	19.41
1981	26.1	23.34
1991	29.7	25.72
2001	33.95	27.78
2011	37.49	31.16

Source: Census of India 2011

As of 2011, Punjab's population reached 27.70 million, with rural inhabitants accounting for 17.32 million and urban dwellers totaling 10.39 million, as indicated in table 2. Representing 37.49% of the total population, Punjab ranks as one of the most urbanized states in India. In 1991, the urban population stood at approximately 6 million, making up 29.7% of the state's total population, a figure that rose to 37.49% by 2001. The growth rate of the urban population between 2001 and 2011 has been notably higher compared to that of the rural population, exceeding it by over three times, and nearly doubling the overall population growth rate.

**Table 2: Rural and Urban Population in Punjab**

	Population Distribution			Decadal Growth rate	
	1991	2001	2011	1991-2001	2001-2011
<b>Total Population</b>	20,281,969	24,358,999	27,704,236	20.10	13.73
<b>Urban Population</b>	5,993,225	8,262,511	10,387,436	37.86	25.72
<b>Rural Population</b>	14,288,744	16,096,488	17,316,800	12.65	7.58

Source: Census of India (1991-2011)

In order to do further analyses Table 3 show the growth of different class of towns. From table it can be observed that the total number of towns have been increased from 106 in 1961 to 217 in 2011.

**Table 3: Number of different class towns in Punjab**

Year	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V	Class VI	Total
1951	3	2	17	20	36	2	110
1961	4	5	23	20	35	19	106
1971	4	8	2	31	29	12	106
1981	7	10	27	36	40	14	134
1991	10	18	25	46	14	7	120
2001	14	19	35	54	28	7	157
2011	17	23	49	60	50	18	217

Source: Census of India (1951-2011)

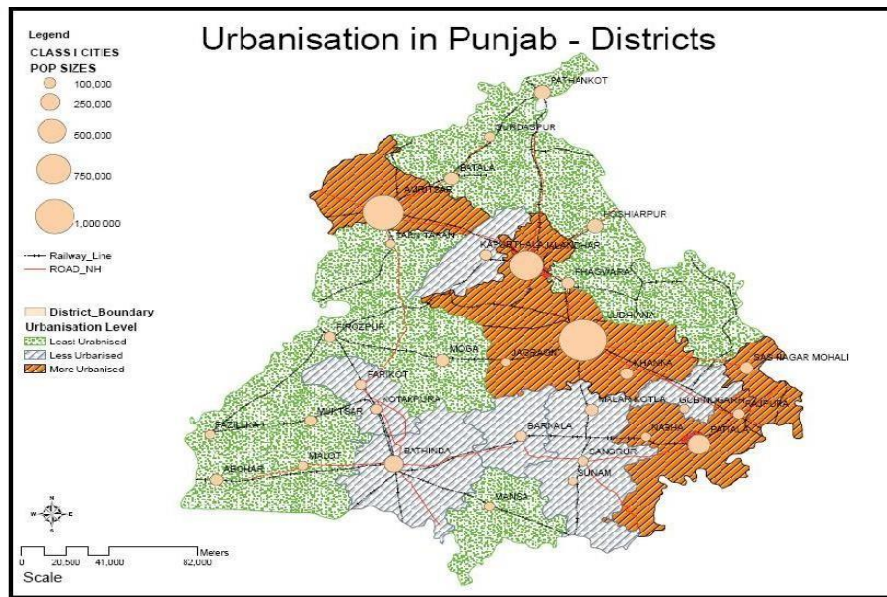
An examination of the data reveals a consistent increase in the number of towns classified as Class I, Class II, and Class III over each decade. The 2011 census reports 17 Class I towns, 23 Class II towns, and 49 Class III towns. This is a significant increase from 1961, which recorded only 4 Class I towns, 5 Class II towns, and 23 Class III towns. Conversely, the number of towns classified as Class V and Class VI has been on a decline over the same period. This trend suggests a growing preference for higher-tier urban settlements, likely driven by the availability of employment opportunities and superior amenities in areas such as education and healthcare.

**Table 4: List of Class I towns in Punjab**

S.no.	Name of Town	District	Population (2011)
1.	Ludhiana	Ludhiana	1613878
2.	Amritsar	Amritsar	1132761
3.	Jalandhar	Jalandhar	862196
4.	Patiala	Patiala	405164
5.	Bathinda	Bathinda	285813
6.	Hoshiarpur	Hoshiarpur	168443
7.	S.A.S Nagar	S.A.S Nagar	146104
8.	Moga	Moga	150432
9.	Batala	Gurdaspur	156400
10.	Pathankot	Pathankot	148357
11.	Abohar	Fazilka	145238
12.	Malerkotla	Sangrur	135330
13.	Khanna	Ludhiana	128130
14.	Muktsar	Muktsar	117085
15.	Barnala	Barnala	116454
16.	Firozpur	Firozpur	110091
17.	Kapurthala	Kapurthala	101654

Source: Census of India, 2011 and Cities in Punjab, <http://www.punjabdata.com/Cities-in>

According to the information presented in Table 4, approximately 57% of Punjab's urban population resides in Class I towns. It is noteworthy that most of these Class I towns also serve as the district headquarters and are situated along the state's primary roadways. This strategic location enhances accessibility, which in turn facilitates the aggregation of economic activities. The extent of urbanization across different districts is illustrated in the accompanying map.



Source: Sharma S.L., R.S. Sandhu & Manoj K. Teotia, 2012

**Metropolitan Cities in Punjab**

Punjab is home to two major metropolitan areas: Ludhiana and Amritsar, both situated along National Highway-1. Ludhiana was the first to attain metropolitan status in Punjab in 1991, followed by Amritsar in 2001. Tracing the urban growth history of these cities reveals that in 1901, Amritsar was Punjab's largest city with a population of 162,429, while Ludhiana's population stood at 48,649. Up until 1941, Amritsar maintained a higher population than Ludhiana. However, by 1981, Ludhiana surpassed Amritsar in terms of population. According to the 1991 census, the populations of the Ludhiana and Amritsar Municipal Corporations were 1,042,740 and 708,835, respectively. A comparison of the decadal population growth of Ludhiana and Amritsar with that of the entire state of Punjab, as shown in Table 5, reveals that Ludhiana's growth rate has been significantly higher.

**Table 5: Percentage of Urban Population**

Year	Percentage of urban population in Punjab	Population of Ludhiana Municipal Corporation as Percentage of Total Urban Population of Punjab	Population of Amritsar Municipal Corporation as Percentage of Total Urban Population of Punjab
1981	27.68	13.06	12.79
1991	29.55	17.40	11.82
2001	33.95	16.92	12.32

2011	37.49	15.53	10.90
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Source: Computed Values from Census of India, 2011

### **Metropolitan Status of the Cities**

The rise of Ludhiana and Amritsar to metropolitan status is attributed to several factors, including their historical development, strategic locations, enhanced accessibility, and the aggregation of economic ventures. These factors are further explored below:

### **Ludhiana's Geographic and Historical Context**

Positioned geographically within the coordinates of 30°34' N to 31°01' N latitude and 75°18' E to 76°20' E longitude, Ludhiana boasts excellent connectivity via the National Highway-1 and the Amritsar-Ambala railway network. Located northwest of Chandigarh, Ludhiana's foundations were laid in 1481 A.D. during Sikander Lodhi's rule with the establishment of a fort. Over time, the city expanded and was initially known as "Lodhi-ana," which later evolved into Ludhiana. The city's industrial growth was significantly enhanced with the introduction of the railway in 1870, marking the beginning of its journey as a prominent industrial and commercial hub. Notably, Ludhiana's development into a major center for machine knitting in the late 19th century played a pivotal role in its economic expansion.

Renowned as the 'Manchester of India', Ludhiana is a central hub for small-scale industries, particularly in the hosiery sector. The city is also celebrated for its numerous Gurudwaras, esteemed educational institutions like Medical and Engineering Colleges, and the renowned Punjab Agricultural University. It's also recognized as the "Small Scale Industrial Capital of India."

### **Physical Connectivity**

Ludhiana enjoys robust physical connectivity, with NH-1 traversing through it. Key road networks link Ludhiana to other parts of Punjab and the country, including routes to Ambala, Amritsar, Chandigarh, Ferozepur, Malerkotla, and Bhatinda. The city, a vital railway junction, is served by major lines such as the Amritsar-Delhi, Delhi-Jammu, Ludhiana-Ferozepur, and Ludhiana-Dhuri lines. These infrastructural linkages are crucial in supporting the city's economic growth.

### **Economic Dynamics**

Ludhiana's economy and local planning area predominantly revolve around manufacturing sectors like hosiery, bicycles, sewing machines, textiles, among others. Approximately 37% of the city's population is employed,

with a notable shift from primary to secondary and tertiary sectors. In 1991, 79.6% of workers were engaged in these sectors, increasing to 84.4% by 2001. The city witnessed the establishment of 35,897 small scale industrial units in 2001, representing an investment of Rs. 95,663.78 lakhs. Additionally, Ludhiana is a significant hub for textile manufacturing in the state. Of the 32 mega housing projects in the state, eight are located in Ludhiana, developed by major firms like DLF, Ansal, Omaxe, and others, indicating a strong demand for high-end residential properties, including villas.

## **Amritsar**

### **Historical and Urban Development:**

Founded by the fourth Sikh guru, Guru Ram Das Ji, in 1577 AD, Amritsar, often referred to as the “Pool of Nectar,” initially bore the name “Guru Ka Chak.” It ranks as Punjab’s third-largest border district, trailing only Ferozpur and Gurdaspur. The British era saw significant developments in Amritsar, including the establishment of a railway station in 1931, which became a pivotal element in the city's economic growth. Amritsar was designated as a District Headquarters in 1849, witnessed the inception of the Civil Hospital in the same year, and the district court in 1877. By 2001, Amritsar's population had reached 1,016,079, including its outskirts, marking its status as Punjab's second metropolitan city and placing it 33rd among India’s 35 metropolitan areas. Amritsar is not only the District Headquarters but also a major tourist hub, drawing nearly 100,000 visitors daily to attractions like the Golden Temple, Durgiana Mandir, Jallianwala Bagh, etc. The city's proximity to the International Border presents unique challenges and opportunities for development (Draft Master Plan Amritsar, 2011-2031).

### **Physical and Economic Linkages**

Amritsar boasts extensive connectivity through roads and railways, including National Highways 1 and 15, three state highways, four major district roads, and twenty-four other district roads. This network links the city domestically and nationally, further enhanced by its railway line and airport. According to the draft master plan of Amritsar 2010-2031, the city's economy is primarily service-oriented, with about 93% of workers engaged in tertiary activities, 4% in household industries, and 3% in primary activities. The district is home to around 25,000 industrial units.

### **Real Estate and Industrial Development**

Amritsar is a city steeped in history and religion. In the real estate sector, three out of thirty-two major housing projects in Punjab are situated in Amritsar, with plotted developments spearheaded by Ansals and other local

developers. Malls by Today Homes and Omaxe are also underway. Additionally, Bathinda is emerging as an industrial center with significant government project investments, where Omaxe and Ansal are leading the development of major residential projects.

## **Conclusion**

Punjab is among the most urbanized states in India, with 37.49% of its population residing in urban areas. The state's urbanization is predominantly concentrated in Class-I, Class-II, and Class-III towns, while smaller Class-V and Class-VI towns are dwindling, leading to regional imbalances. To address this, development schemes such as the Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UDSSIMT) are essential. The historical roots of cities like Ludhiana and Amritsar have been fundamental to their evolution into Punjab's major metropolitan areas. The British period notably improved physical connectivity, paving the way for economic concentration along major transportation corridors. Ludhiana has evolved into an industrial hub, whereas Amritsar's economy thrives on tertiary activities, primarily tourism. Managing the growth of these cities necessitates the development of surrounding towns.

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