



punjab geographer

A JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
PUNJAB GEOGRAPHERS, INDIA

VOLUME 2

OCTOBER 2006



**OLD PUNJAB: NEW FACTS
(Introductory Note)**

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Punjab also known as the land of five rivers, namely, the Sutluj, Beas, Ravi, Chenab, and Jhelum is a geographical region located in the northwestern part of the Indian Sub-continent. The region is broadly confined between the Yamuna river in the east, the Indus river in the west, the Thar Desert in the south and the Himalayan Mountain System in the north. The abundance of water and responsive soils of the area nurtured two of the oldest civilizations on the earth, namely the Indus Valley and the Harappan Civilizations. Even earlier to these, the Stone- Age culture also originated in Punjab. The region was so prosperous that it had to experience aggressive assaults by various invaders from time to time. Punjab was economically, socially and culturally a prolific region. Therefore, it played an important role in creating the history, culture and commerce in the Indian Sub-continent.

The region has been experiencing various historical, political and administrative upheavals from time to time particularly, in the 20th century

when it was sub-divided on the basis of religion in 1947 and again on the bases of language in 1966. Thus the geographical Region associated with five rivers was politically sub-divided into three major parts known as Punjab (Pakistan), Punjab (India), and Haryana. These three political entities are predominantly occupied by three distinctive religious groups. Pakistan Punjab is a Muslim state, Indian Punjab is predominated by Sikhs while Hindus out-number other religions in Haryana. In fact, these religious groups played their own role in the disintegration of this otherwise cohesive geographical region. Now these political boundaries are functioning as bottlenecks towards socio-economic progress of these states, particularly taking into account the utilization of waters of the rivers.

Political awakening, administrative skill and religious consciousness play very important role in the cultivation of a distinct cultural landscape in an otherwise homogeneous geographical environment. Therefore, it is not surprising to find regional variations in

the socio-economic setting of various sub-divisions of old Punjab. Such variations can also be more conspicuous even at micro-level not only due to administrative and cultural divergences but also due to local physical potentialities of the areas.

Although the region has been sub-divided yet the people have sentimental attachments with each other. It is just like the sub-division of a land holding among the three sons of a landlord on the principle of inheritance, who while living separately remain bonded to each other but start competing to attain prosperity.

Keeping this premise into account the objective of this title (Old Punjab: New Facts) is to project comparative picture of various socio-economic indicators of the sub- divisions of the old Punjab, so that the people in general and the politicians, administrators and policy-makers in particular know about the ground realities and act accordingly. It will also generate healthy competition and strengthen sentimental attachment as well as communal harmony that have

been shattered due to the disintegration of Punjab.

To introduce the region a general picture of various socio-economic indicators associated with three sub-divisions of old Punjab has been presented in table 1. The locational relationship of the three sub-divisions (states) has been depicted in Fig. 1. Since it is not possible to present all the indicators and their micro-level spatial variations in a single write up, therefore, all the socio-economic aspects of the region will be presented one by one in the coming Issues of the Punjab Geographer where spatial variations will be depicted with the help of maps prepared on the basis of district level data followed by brief interpretation.

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Table 1

Old Punjab: Levels of Important Socio – Economic Indicators

Indicator	Punjab (India)	Punjab (Pakistan)	Haryana	India	Pakistan
Area (Sq.Km.)	50362.00	205345.00	44212.00	3287240.00	796096.00
Population (Lakhs)	243.59	736.21	211.44	10287.37	1323.52
Urban Population (Per cent)	33.92	31.30	28.92	27.82	32.50
Density of Population (Persons/Sq. Km.)	484.00	359.00	478.00	325.00	166.00
Literacy Rate	69.70	46.60	67.90	64.80	43.90
Sex Ratio (Female per 000 male)	876.00	1072.00	861.00	933.00	1085.00
Net Area Sown (Per cent to total area)	83.90	63.13	78.20	46.37	27.04
Percentage of net area Irrigated to net area sown	95.00	DNA	82.40	39.50	DNA
Yield of Wheat (Kg./Hect.)	4207.00	2500.00	3966.00	2713.00	2373.00
Yield of Rice (Kg./Hect.)	3694.00	1701.00	2749.00	2077.00	1970.00
Yield of Cotton cleaned (Kg/Hect.)	556.00	549.00*	454.00	309.00	572.00*
Road length (Km.) (per 100 Sq. Km. of area)	122.00	DNA	64.00	78.00	DNA
Road length (Km.) (Per lakh of population)	253.00	DNA	133.00	239.00	DNA
Population per bank (in 000)	9.00	DNA	13.00	16.00	DNA
Number of Hospital beds (Per lakh of population)	109.00	62.00	59.00	93.00	DNA

Sources: Statistical Abstract of Punjab 2005, Statistical Abstract of Haryana 2004-05, Pakistan Statistical Year Book-2005 and Census of Pakistan 1998.

* Cotton uncleaned.

DNA — Data not available.

