



RESEARCH ARTICLE

FACETS OF HOUSING GEOGRAPHY: A MICRO LEVEL ANALYSIS OF CITY CORE (ZONE OF DISCARD) OF SRINAGAR METROPOLIS, J&K

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ABSTRACT

City core has always been a spatial location of significance, though its characteristic qualities are varied considerably both spatially and temporally. This nucleus area is the heart, the brain and the soul of the entire urban system; and is also the oldest part of the city which is continuously worked upon by a set of centripetal forces and centrifugal forces. Being the central part of the city, the core area reflects the historical background of a city. Most of the core area or downtown of cities suffers from economic decline, physical decay and adverse social conditions and is referred to as 'Zone of Discard'. The problems of City core of Srinagar metropolis are becoming critical with the increase in population and deterioration in existing level of services which are assuming serious propositions in all aspect of urban life which requires immediate attention, and would assume challenging propositions in case not addressed at proper time. Apropos to this, the present study tries to analyse the socio-economic characteristics of city core of the Srinagar metropolis- the zone of discard. The study concludes that city core of the Srinagar city is gradually declining in all respects of *urbane* living. The authors suggested some revival measures for better urban management of the city downtown.

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INTRODUCTION

On the basis of demographic size, United Nations Demographic Agency (UNDA) has put forward 9-tier or 9-order classification of human settlements. According to that classification, Srinagar metropolis falls in third last class i.e. in 7th order settlements, with a demographic size of 1.2 million souls (Census of India, 2011). Downtown- the city core of Srinagar metropolis has always been a spatial location of significance, though its characteristic qualities are varied considerably both spatially and temporally. This nucleus area is the heart, the brain and the soul of the entire urban system; which is continuously worked upon by a set of centripetal forces (concentration of activities, greater accessibility, proximity to work areas etc.) and centrifugal forces (old and dilapidated housing conditions, degraded environmental conditions, stress and strain, inadequate infrastructure etc.) Being the central part of the city, the core area reflects the historical background of the city. Being a dweller of this urban core is thought as a Status symbol. But, most of the core area or downtown of city suffers from economic decline, physical decay and adverse social conditions and is referred to as 'Zone of Discard'

Study Area

The lion's share of the present study pertains to the city core of Srinagar metropolis, however Srinagar Metropolis as a whole has also been analysed.

Location: 74°56' - 75°79' E Longitude & 33°18' - 34°45' N Latitude

Srinagar metropolis as a whole recorded a population of around 1.2 Million souls, with an area of about 280 Km²

(2011). The city constitutes around 2/3rd of the state's urban population. Whereas, city core of Srinagar city recorded a population of around 3.6 Lakh souls, with an areal extent of about 20 Km² or about 2000 hectares, in year 2011 (Srinagar Municipal Corporation, 2011).

Objective

The prime focus of the present study is to analyse the City core of the Srinagar metropolis- the zone of discard, in terms of its

- a) Internal Morphological Structure
- b) Socio-economic Profile

DATABASE & METHODOLOGY

Sources of Data Collection: The methodology adapted in the present study was of integrative, supplementary and complementary nature, to fulfil the set objective; initiating from the procuring of ward-wise base map of the metropolis of Srinagar city from Srinagar Municipal Corporation (S.M.C.); and subsequently by geo-referencing making it compatible for demarcating & delimiting the City core of the Srinagar metropolis from it.

Methods used for the data collection included documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations etc. The present study is based on both primary and secondary data sources but largely on empirical primary survey which involves thorough field study, interviews and personal observation for better insight.

Data Collection Technique: The primary data collection was done using Stratified Random Sampling (proportionate allocation) method covering all the wards of study area. At

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Random, 550 sample households were covered for Household Survey from different areas within core of Srinagar city. The selection of samples for field survey is nearly representative and conforms to the spatio-geographic distribution. For obtaining the required data and information a total of 550 questionnaires were framed, distributed, collected and analysed for the purpose, keeping in view the predefined procedure. Nevertheless, wherever the households were illiterate, the questionnaires were filled by the investigator himself by gathering the required information orally.

Census of India, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Srinagar Master Plan (2000-21), and Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), for the undertaken study.

Methods of Analysis: The collected data were processed and the results and inferences were attained by taking aid of different statistical tools, quantitative techniques & methods; for analysis, classification, tabulation and representation of data regarding spatio-temporal analysis of socio-economic profile of city core of Srinagar metropolis. **LIKERT** Scale (4 point) has been used and the collected data has been statistically analysed. Final analysis and representation of data was performed in GIS environment using Arc GIS software.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) or floor Space Index (FSI) was computed by following formula:

$$\text{FAR or FSI} = \frac{\sum \text{Total covered area on all floors of all buildings on a certain plot}}{\sum \text{Total Area of the plot}}$$

Highlights of the Study

- The problems of inner city or City core of Srinagar metropolis are becoming critical with the increase in population and deterioration in existing level of services which are assuming serious propositions in all aspect of urbane living which requires immediate attention, and would assume challenging propositions in case not addressed and taken care of at proper time.
- The city core of Srinagar metropolis has under gone a socio-economic degeneration which can be accessed from decreasing trend of participation ratio (30.6 % in 1981 to 26.3 % in 2013).
- The city core of Srinagar metropolis has majority of the building structures in poor or derelict conditions which may nearly turn it into a regulated slum or blight zone, in a decade or so.
- Nevertheless, this inner core of the city ought not to be left to decay. Fortunate enough, typically Slums don't exist in city core of Srinagar metropolis, but in only one locality of Mukhdoom Sahib (Hawal) that too a regulated one.
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) or floor Space Index (FSI) for city core of Srinagar metropolis is more than 3, thereby indicating that the total floor area of building structures is more than 3 times the gross area of the plot on which structures are constructed.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Demographics & Housing

City core or Downtown of Srinagar Metropolis is home to 3.6 Lakh souls or about 30 percent of the city's total population; with an areal extent of about 20 Km² or about 2000 hectares which amounts merely to about 10 percent of the city's total geographic area (Srinagar Municipal Corporation, 2011), as has been depicted in Figure 2. Furthermore, Table 1 also indicates that the population density of City Core is 4 Times (17600 Persons/km²) in comparison to that of Srinagar City (4126 Persons/km²). Similarly, housing density of City Core is 6 Times (4000 Houses/km²) in comparison to that of Srinagar City (640 Houses/km²). The average household size is more than 7 persons per household, which is very high as compared to the rest of the City. Similarly, persons per room is

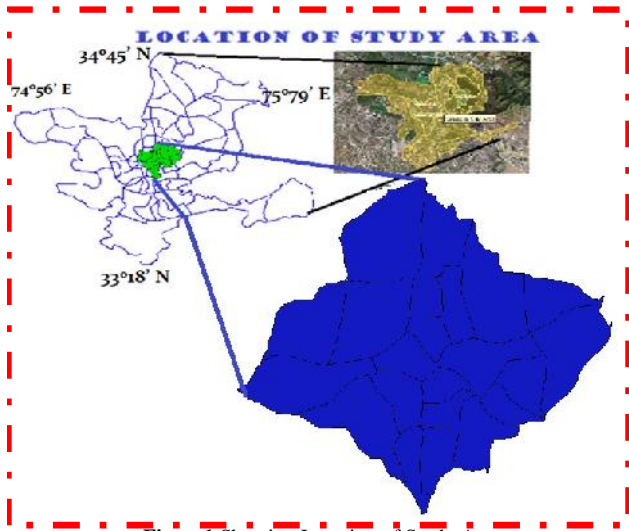


Figure 1 Showing Location of Study Area

Secondary Data: Supplementary data comprising reports and publications relevant to the present study were obtained from different sources mainly including the publications of different organizations and offices of urban local bodies in Srinagar city viz.

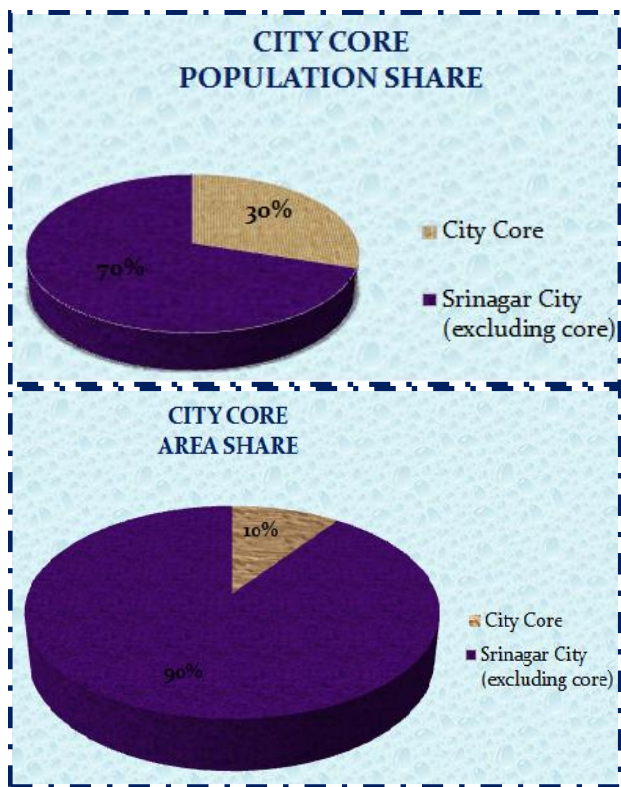


Figure 2 Showing City Core Population share and Area share

Source: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (2011)

also high (>3) in the core areas of the city, which implies that on an average 3 persons share 1 room.

gives a poor and shanty impression about the image of the city core of the city, as has been epitomized in Plate 1 & 2.

Table 1 Housing Condition of City Core of Srinagar Metropolis (2013)

Area / Locality Name	Number of Houses	Housing Density (Houses/km ²)	Poor (livable) Houses (%age)	Dilapidated Houses (%age)
Syed Ali Akbar (Fatehkadal)	16229	5208	26.8	24.8
Nawab Bazar	14469	4360	24.2	22.6
Islamyarbal	11494	3756	28.4	26.6
Ali Kadal	8765	2568	27.2	25.8
Ganpathyar (HabbaKadal)	13132	4326	29.6	29.8
Malik-Agan	15,622	7110	26.2	26.8
Khan-khai-Moulla	15,724	2954	29.8	28.8
S.R.Gunj (ZainaKadal)	18,121	8257	28.8	27.4
Aqil-Mir Khanyar	18,043	5716	26.6	21.6
Khawaja-Bazar	17,429	2118	25.8	22.4
SafaKadal	19907	2773	27.2	24.4
Idgah	26564	1763	22.4	21.2
Tarabal	9,168	1163	20.4	18.8
Jogilankar (Rainawari)	21,949	1766	20.2	22.4
Zindshah-sahib	12,421	4224	20.4	21.8
Jamia-Masjid (Nowhata)	8,215	6345	29.8	30.8
Mukhdoom Sahib (Hawal)	18,755	1498	27.6	24.6
Kawdara (RajouriKadal)	23,141	1708	28.2	23.6

Source: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (2011); Primary Survey (2013)

About 3.6 lakh population of core area lives in 2000 hectares only, which works out population density to 176 persons/hectare or 17600 persons/km², against the maximum standard of 17500 persons/ km²for Metropolitan cities. Hence, majority of the wards of city core of Srinagar metropolis experience high population pressure or crowding density, as has been illustrated by Figure 3.

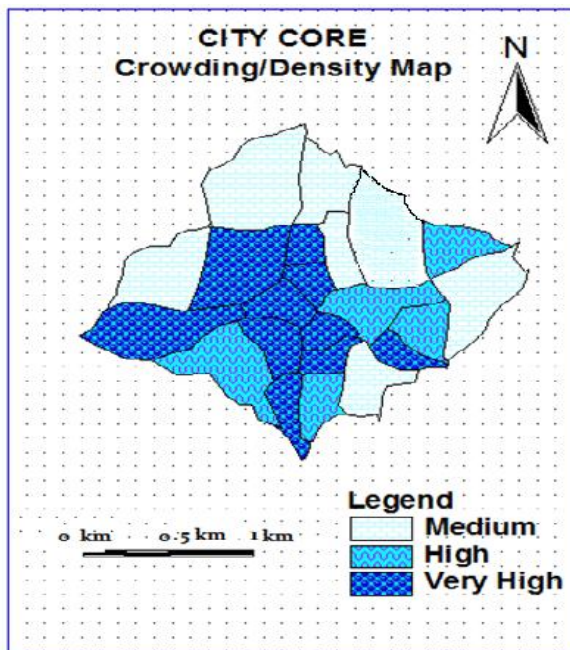


Figure 3 Showing Srinagar City Core Crowding/Density Map
Source: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (2011); Primary Survey (2013)

Socio-economic profile of the Srinagar city core

The core being the oldest part which once was the hub of socio-economic activities is now one of the most densely populated areas of Srinagar city. The statistical data collected by primary survey from field study pertaining to the housing condition of the city reveals that about three-fourth of the total buildings in the city core are of poor or derelict conditions. With about 47% of the buildings of kutcha or semi-pucca type, the city core of Srinagar metropolis has turned into a regulated slum or urban blight (Figure 4). The poor quality of structures

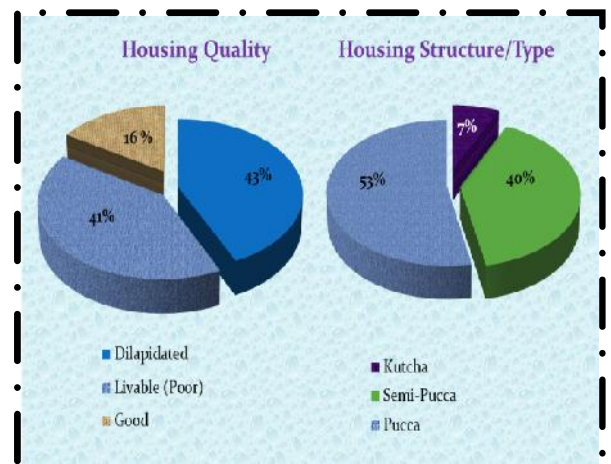


Figure 4 Showing Housing Quality of City Core of Srinagar Metropolis (2013)

Source: Primary Survey (2013)



Plate 1&2 Depicting the Quality of Housing in City core of Srinagar Metropolis (2014)

Source: Field Survey (2014)

Economic Profile of City Core of Srinagar Metropolis (1981-2013)

There is a contrast in the occupational structure of the Srinagar metropolis and its core area because the percentage of workers in the city core has decreased from 1981 to 2013 whereas the city has witnessed a positive growth rate, as has been revealed by Table 2 and Figure 5. In similar fashion, the participation ratio of city core of Srinagar Metropolis has shown negative growth from year 1981 upto 2013, as is clear from Figure 5 and Figure 6. In 1981, the percentage of workers in the city core was 30.6 % against the 30.5% of the whole city. The core has witnessed a decrease in total number of workers from 30.6 % in 1981 to 26.3 % in 2013, whereas the city as a whole witnessed a marked growth from 30.5 % to 33.4 % during the same period of time (Table 2 & Figure 5, 6). The migration of the upper elite class from the city core towards the periphery areas was mainly due to the fact that the inner city or city core of Srinagar is continuously worked upon by a set of centripetal forces (concentration of activities, greater accessibility, proximity to work areas etc.) and centrifugal forces (old and dilapidated housing conditions, degraded environmental conditions, stress and strain, inadequate infrastructure etc.).

Table 2 Spatio-temporal Trends in Economic Profile of City Core of Srinagar Metropolis (1981-2013)

Year	Primary workers to total workers (%)	Secondary workers to total workers (%)	Tertiary workers to total workers (%)	Participation Ratio	
				City Core (%)	Srinagar City (%)
1981	12	35	53	30.6	30.5
1991*	13	33	56	29.2	31.8
2001	16	30	54	27.2	32.6
2011	15	31	54	26.5	32.8
2013	13	37	50	26.3	33.4

Source: Census of India (1971; 1981; 2001; 2011) & Primary Survey (2013)*Data of year 1991 computed by Interpolation

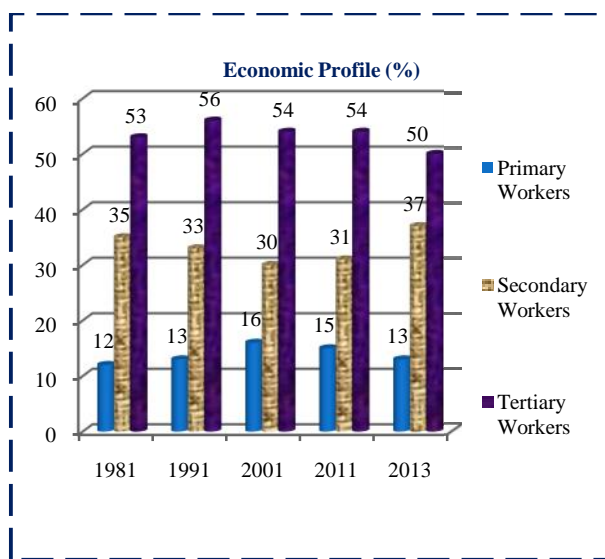


Figure 5 Showing Economic Profile of City Core of Srinagar Metropolis

Source: Census of India (1971; 1981; 2001; 2011) & Primary Survey (2013)
*Data of year 1991 computed by Interpolation

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

The problems of inner city or City core of Srinagar metropolis are becoming critical with the increase in population and deterioration in existing level of services which are assuming serious propositions in all aspect of urbane living which requires immediate attention, and

would assume challenging propositions in case not addressed and taken care of at proper time.

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What is Needed?

1. There is a need for Protecting and revitalization of the natural quality of city core of Srinagar metropolis for economic efficiency including urban renewal and re-development, up-gradation of infrastructure, poverty reduction, employment creation, promotion of trade and
2. It is observed that the house structures in the inner core or city core of Srinagar metropolis are extensively old and dilapidated requiring immediate repairs or renovation or re-development at war footing basis.
3. An effective and efficient Downtown Master Plan (DMP) for Srinagar Metropolis is need of the hour, which should be framed on priority basis.
4. An Urban Housing Policy with an impetus whereby, inner city areas would systematically decrease in population, the middle areas remain almost static and the surrounding outer areas increase.
5. There is also the need for inclusion of Housing Geography as a specialised field of Urban Studies.

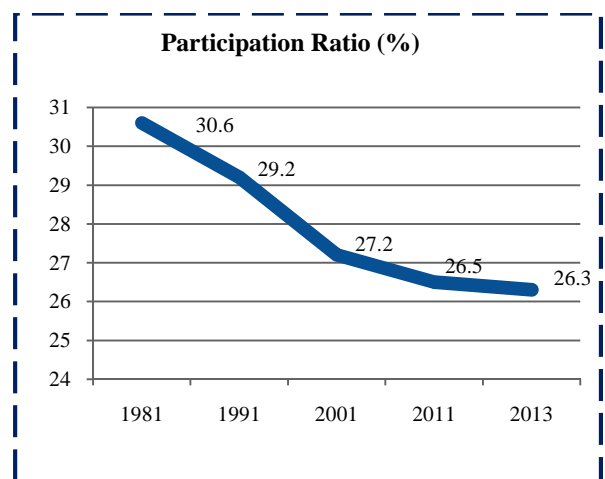


Figure 6 Showing Participation Ratio of City Core of Srinagar Metropolis

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