RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN ANALYSIS OF URBAN PRIMACY IN HIMALAYAN SETTLEMENTS: THE CASE OF SRINAGAR CITY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

Tawseef Yousuf and Shamim Ahmad Shah

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of primacy is extremely strong in Jammu and Kashmir state; since, the single largest city i.e. Srinagar constitutes around two-thirds of the state’s urban population and is two times larger than the second largest city of the state- Jammu. Srinagar, a primate and characteristically diversified as well as unique city, unanimously serves as a regional centre in the vast catchment and is not only the largest urban centre both in terms of demographic size and areal spacing but also rapidly growing city amongst all Himalayan urban centres. It is larger in population than all the urban centres put together and most of the urban centers fall in its sphere of influence, which could be ascertained from the fact that Srinagar is the only Metropolitan city of the state. Apropos to this, the present study tries to examine the nature and characteristics of primacy of the Srinagar city using Index of Primacy for analysis of urban centres of the state. The study concludes that primacy of the Srinagar city is gradually declining in the state but is still prevalent within the Kashmir region.

INTRODUCTION

“A primate city is the leading city in its catchment region, disproportionately larger in demographic size and significance than any others in the urban hierarchy” (Jefferson, 1939). Over the last couple of decades, Jammu and Kashmir State in general and Kashmir Valley in particular has recorded massive urbanization. On one hand, major urban centres of valley experienced substantial growth, while some of the small and medium sized urban either recorded sluggish growth or have shown signs of stagnation. These factors have made urban growth a complex phenomenon and a challenging task for urban planners. The percentage of urban population in the valley has considerably increased with 31.6% of the population living in urban areas (2011).

The number of urban centres in the Valley increased to 46 in 2011 from mere 33 in 2001. Furthermore, the urban population and settlement distribution exhibit a highly uneven pattern due to the influence of physiographic and environmental factors (Bhat, 2008). Kashmir valley which is functionally a city-centered region, for the geographical, historical, socio-political and economic forces of urbanization have shaped and contributed to the emergence of urban primacy of Srinagar city. The phenomenon of primacy is extremely strong in the Jammu and Kashmir state; since, the single largest city i.e. Srinagar constitutes around two-thirds of the state’s urban population and is two times larger than the second largest city of the state, Jammu. Srinagar, a primate and characteristically diversified as well as unique city, unanimously serves as a regional centre in the vast catchment with limited yet small urban centres. It is not only the largest urban centre both in terms of demographic size and areal spacing but also rapidly growing city amongst all Himalayan urban centres. It is larger in population than population of all the urban centres put together and most of the urban centers fall in its sphere of influence. The pressure of urbanization on Srinagar city can be drawn from the fact that the city had an area of 12.8 km² in 1901 which increased to 83 km² in 1971 to 278 km² in 2011.

Theoretical Background

According to Jefferson the proponent of primary concept, “…once a city is larger than any other in its country, this mere fact gives it an impetus to grow that cannot affect any other city, and it draws away from all of them in character as well as in size”. He focused on the forces of agglomeration and cumulative effects of agglomeration in the growth of large cities (Jefferson, 1939). Primate cities are significant features of the Third World countries and especially those which are small (where economies of scale do not require middle size cities) and which have recently achieved independence from Colonial rule (Clarke, 1971). Some good examples of such cities are Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, Seoul, Kolkata, Mumbai, Casablanca and Cairo. He considered urban primacy as hyperpecephalism which refers to the concentration of population within the single city, which is usually the capital and invariably concentrate a large proportion of the administrative, economic, educational and cultural functions. However, this key concept has not gone without criticism. The theory has been criticized by on three grounds. Firstly, that the notion of national integrity, to be forwarded by the primate cities, is hampered by the fact of political instability. Secondly, Jefferson (1939) failed to explain the matter of occupational diversification. And finally, thirdly, he has neglected the factor of social production in different time periods to explain emergence of the city (Das and Dutt, 1993).

In some countries, the urban population is highly concentrated in a single city or urban agglomeration. The most populous city of each country accounts for the highest proportion of the urban population in that city which such a city is called primate city and the phenomenon is called primacy. Its degree of primacy is measured by the proportion of the urban population living in that city (Badrawaj, 1974). The extent of
primacy of an individual city’s, a few cities depends on a country’s size and stage of development. Large countries tend to have small primacy indices than the smaller ones (Brush, 1977).

In recent years, a number of cross-country studies on urban primacy have appeared in literature across the globe. These papers generally reveal that urban primacy is not mono-causal but that economic, demographic and geographic factors all seem to contribute to explaining the complex phenomenon of urban primacy. In context to that, (Das and Dutt, 1993) an analysed and interpreted the historical change in city size distribution in India from the perspectives provided by Zipf and Jefferson, whereby Rank-size distribution at national level and primate city-size distribution at regional levels have been examined. The study also examines, in the Indian context, the relation between rank-size distribution and an integrated urban system, and the normative nature of the latter as a spatial organization of human society. Finally, their work is a modest attempt to locate the research on city-size distribution, especially Berry’s system-theoretic interpretation of rank-size distribution, on the realm of the political economy of urbanization.

**Study Area**

The lion’s share of the present study pertains to the analysis of Srinagar city; besides, few urban centres within Jammu & Kashmir state have also been taken up in the study.

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

Srinagar city recorded a population of around 1.2 Million souls with an area of about 280 Km² (2011). Constitutes around 2/3rd of the state’s urban population and is 2 times larger than the second largest city of state- Jammu.

![Figure 1 Showing Location of Study Area](image)

**Objectives**

The prime focus of the present study is to analyse the urban primacy of Srinagar city of J&K state. It shall involve

a) The analysis of nature & degree of primacy of Srinagar city.

b) Study of the influence of Srinagar city upon its catchment.

**Database & Methodology**

**Collection of data**

Table 1 Temporal Trends in Population Growth of Srinagar City (1901-2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Density (persons/km²)</th>
<th>Growth Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>122618</td>
<td>9579</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>126344</td>
<td>9832</td>
<td>+3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>141735</td>
<td>9788</td>
<td>+12.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>173573</td>
<td>9862</td>
<td>+22.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>207787</td>
<td>11806</td>
<td>+19.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>246222</td>
<td>8351</td>
<td>+18.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>285257</td>
<td>6884</td>
<td>+15.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>403413</td>
<td>4867</td>
<td>+34.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>606602</td>
<td>2912</td>
<td>+40.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>788680</td>
<td>5244</td>
<td>+30.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>971357</td>
<td>3492</td>
<td>+30.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1147513</td>
<td>4126</td>
<td>+18.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (2011)
Census Data of 1991 computed by Interpolation

Table 2 Population-wise Rank of two biggest Urban Centres of J&K

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Srinagar</th>
<th>Jammu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computed from Population data records of Census of India (1981-2011) Census Data of 1991 computed by Interpolation

Srinagar city all along its history has maintained the status of being largest urban centre in J&K state, followed by Jammu, as is been depicted in Table 2.
which amounts to be 16,800 Km², while as the total area Primary Zone of influence, Secondary Zone of influence and Tertiary Zone of influence amounts to about 1240 Km², 4780 Km² and 16,800 Km² respectively.

Srinagar City / Primate City (PC): The primate city of Srinagar situated at center of urban space is 24-25 Km in North-South direction and 15-16 Km in East-West direction.

**Primary Zone of influence/ Zone of High Sphere of Influence (HSI):** This zone extends upto 30 Km both in North and South directions and 25 Km towards West. The urban centres falling in this zone are Ganderbal, Pampore, Pulwama, Budgam.

**Secondary Zone of influence/ Zone of Medium Sphere of Influence:** This zone extends upto 60, 40 Km (SE-SW). The urban centres falling in this zone are Anantnag, Shopian, Baramulla, Sopore, Bandipora, Bijbehara

**Tertiary Zone of influence/ Zone of Low Sphere of Influence (LSI):** This zone extends upto 60-80 Km (N, S,W, NW,SW,SE) The urban centres falling in this zone are Kupwara, Handwara, Kulgam, Uri, Pahalgam.

The results of table 4 & figure 4 reveal that the hinterland or zone of influence of Srinagar is shrinking with passage of time. From this it can be inferred that since other small towns are giving more priorities for development, ultimately the influence zone of Srinagar has been reduced in comparison to past.

### CONCLUSION

- The phenomenon of primacy is extremely strong in J&K state; since, the single largest city i.e. Srinagar, a primate and characteristically diversified city, serves as a regional centre in the vast catchment.
- The primacy of the Srinagar city is gradually declining in the state, but is still prevalent within the Kashmir region. A sort of ‘Dual Primacy’ exist in form of two cities of Srinagar and Jammu.
- Srinagar City and its countryside have strong functional linkages in one way or the other, directly or indirectly.
- Degree of influence relationship is inversely proportional to distance from the city
- Sphere of Influence of Srinagar City is vast (17000 Km²)
- There exists a zonation in hierarchy of urban centres around Srinagar city, in descending order – Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Zones of Influence.
- The zone having direct as well as major influence is the Primary Zone of Influence located in the immediate surroundings of Srinagar city

### SUGGESTIONS

- An Urban Policy with an impetus on decentralization through Decentralised Planning is mandatory for uniform and balanced development of urban centres of Kashmir valley.
- Impetus must be provided to generate newer growth centres and the existing ones must be revived.
- Proper investments in developmental sectors like infrastructure, education, occupation is needed, which will relieve existing pressure on Srinagar city.

### REFERENCES

Bibliography


Webliography