

POPULATION PRESSURES IN SHIMLA: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Shimla is popularly known as the queen of hills and it is declared the summer capital of colonial India in 1864 to 1947. After 1947 Shimla became the capital of East Punjab and was later made the capital of Himachal Pradesh. Shimla known as Simla, the official name until 1972. Simla was derived from word 'Shyamla' meaning take it another name of the Goddess Kali. It has been blessed with all the natural bounties of seven hills in the northwest Himalayas. Shimla announced the capital of the Himachal Pradesh in 1966 and emerge as a center of cultural, educational, tourism, commercial and administrative activities. Rapidly growth of these activities Shimla become over-crowded city and major urban hubs. Massive immigration from rural areas and unplanned growth of urban Shimla creates many problems as overcrowding, disposal of garbage and sewerage problems, degradation of environment, pollution of waterfalls and streams, illegal mining activity insufficient water availability in summer time, deforestation and illegal encroachment in forest land, problems of monkeys and languor, poor air and water quality, insufficient water availability, waste disposal problems, and high energy consumption, slums settlements problems, high rate of crime, housing and transportation, parking issues. Transportation and traffic is immense issue cause of the tourist spot as well as the capital of Himachal Pradesh. Research paper analyzing the challenges and exploring pathways for solutions.

Key words: Himachal Pradesh, Capital, Shimla, Urbanizations, Overcrowd

Recently overpopulation is the major severe problem in front of India. At present population explosion create many problems especially for the upcoming generation. But there is only few of the people are aware and responsive to conserve this planet ecologically. Increasing rate of urbanization is rapidly high. Indian population is get in touch with 1.41 billion. Over the past two decades, many countries in Asia have experienced rapid economic growth. This has led to a rapid rise in their urban population. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of India lays the foundation for a sustainable urban governance system in the Country. While the national governments pursue the goals of economic development, it is generally left for the local governments to manage the rapidly growing urban areas, and to provide the basic services to the residents. In India, urban local bodies are the constitutionally provided administrative units, who provide basic infrastructure and services in urban areas.

Shimla is one of the incredible tourist spot not only in India but also worldwide. Shimla is rich by culturally, environmentally and historical legacy. Pleasant weather of Shimla, panoramic beauty of Himalayan region creates a center of attention. The ridge & mall road, Jakhoo hill, Tara Devi temple, Kali Bari temple, green valley, Annadale playground, Viceregal lodge, state museum, Johnnie's wax museum, Himalayan bird park, wildlife sanctuaries and waterfalls glorious and charm places attract the tourists from every corner of the World.

Objectives of the Article: Study investigates the problems of urbanization and overcrowded especially in urban Shimla. Paper also examine the various problems arises in Shimla by the rapidly growth of overpopulation. Paper

suggests the remedial measures to overcome the problems created through overpopulation. To identify the factors that are more responsible for the overpopulation. Paper discuss the remedial measures and to recommends some highly effective policy which can improve the current unorganized situation of the study area.

Research Methodology: The survey is primary resources as well as observatory, analytical descriptive in nature. The systematic study discusses the problems of Shimla city. The present study is purely meaningful provide the knowledge and awareness of large public regarding the urbanizations problems in hill area. Paper makes an attempt to suggest the remedial measures, strategies and techniques to control the problems generated by overpopulation in Shimla city.

The Different Key Challenges and Concerns in Shimla City

Tourism generates employment in Shimla city through as hotel and hospitality industry, service sector and entertainment industry, transport industry and contribute in GDP. But every year the city is facing various problems caused by; major administrative offices, rapid urbanization and uncontrolled practice of migration of peoples. Tourism and commercial activities are responsible for environmental and infrastructural degradation of Shimla. Water crises, deforestation, environmental pollution, rapid pollution growth, lack of accommodation facilities, transportation and traffic problem, parking issues etc. are the serious issues in city. So, overcrowd and tourism practices in such a way affected the beauty and charm of the city.

Problems of Overcrowding and Congestion

In present time Shimla city facing overcrowded in railway station, road, highway, bus stations, hospital, school, colleges, offices, shopping mall, market, and temples has social gathering in all places. This is a clear indication of overpopulation in the city. Environmental and infrastructural crisis takes place due to over population and practice of mass tourism. A significant increase in the population due to migration can strain the existing infrastructure, including housing, transportation, healthcare facilities, and public services. It may lead to overcrowding and put pressure on the city's resources.

Disposal of Garbage and Sewerage Problems

In Shimla city tourism industry and commercial activities generate the problem of solid waste disposal. Tourism generates a large amount of single-use plastic waste, food package waste, transports, cars, trains, boats, hot air balloons and high consumption energy pollute environment. Hostels and restaurants generated waste and sewerage problems are growing commonly in the city. It destroys beauty and health of the place. Single-use plastic wastes pollute the forest areas and degrade the mountain's soil. Poor waste management causes soil contamination, water and air pollution, infection and transmits diseases. Open and unsanitary landfills contribute to contamination of drinking water and can cause infection and transmit diseases. Waste and pollution have far-reaching impacts on environments, forest and wildlife, visitors, and local-communities.

Degradation of Environment and Land Sliding

The overpopulation emphasis on construction and lack of land resources manufacture improper and unplanned construction in the city. Unplanned construction of buildings disturbances in the natural stability of the hill slope and become reason of landslide. Unplanned construction of buildings also creates the problems of drainage of rain water and it trigger landslides. disposal of garbage and sewerage problems, degradation of environment, pollution of waterfalls and streams, illegal mining activity insufficient water availability in summer time, Deforestation and illegal encroachment in forest land, poor air and water quality, insufficient water availability, waste disposal problems, and high energy consumption, slums settlements problems, high rate of crime, housing and transportation.

Pollution of Waterfalls and Streams

Chadwick, Taradevi Waterfall Zone, Dhar Waterfall (Seasonal), Sound Water Fall, Abhiya waterfall falls is the most visited waterfall. It is located in the Glen Forests of the beautiful city of Shimla. The name Chadwick is derived

from 'Chidku Jhaar' where Chidku means sparrow and Jhaar or Jharna means waterfall in the local language. It was named so because the locals thought only sparrows could reach the top of the waterfall and not humans. Waterfalls purify the water and pure water helpful for the diverse aqua life to live. Waterfalls also help in turning waste that runs in the water into nutrients which help plants to grow. Water pollution depletes aquatic ecosystems and triggers unbridled proliferation of phytoplankton in waterfall eutrophication and contamination of the food chain. The biggest cause of water pollution in Shimla is untreated sewage, dump a lot of waste into the waterfall, particles plastic pollution like as plastic plastic-cups, bottles, bags food wrappers, plastic straws, glass- cups and bottles.

Illegal Mining Activity

Shimla is located particular place in hilly area and mineral production in the state consists of limestone, It is mainly found in Barmana (Bilaspur), Gagaj (Kangra), Solan, Mandi, Chamba (Broh, Sindh, Dhundiara), Kinnaur, Kullu and Shimla districts. Shimla districts also highly leading Construction actives and mining of land. Mining contributes to erosion, sinkholes, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, significant use of water resources, dammed rivers and ponded waters, wastewater disposal issues, acid mine drainage and contamination of soil, ground and surface water, all of which can lead to health issues in local populations

Insufficient Water Availability in Summer Time

The city is getting water supply from seven sources located in three watersheds, namely, Nauti khad theog, Ashwani and Giri watershed. Overpopulation also leads the water shortage in Shimla. Poor management of resources and lack of government attention, non-maintenance of the eco-system, climate change, lack of infrastructure and hilly area (ground water is very low), supply being made after three to four days and affected areas supply is being made through water tankers. These days, Shimla city requires around 47 million litres of water per day (MLD), but due to less availability at the source only 35-36 MLD is being made available. The huge rush of tourists has also led to rise in demand for water. Urbanization causes of water pollution, this pollution creates public and environmental health hazards. Day by day construction of buildings, forest fires and traffic making poor air quality.

Deforestation and Illegal Encroachment in Forest Land

Since 2007, 11,200 cases of encroachment on over 26,500 bigha (2,148 hectare) of forest land have been detected in Himachal Pradesh. Since 2017, has cleared over 6,500 bigha of land in nearly 800 cases and the process is continuing. It is the question mark and negligence of government. Overpopulation is the main cause of deforestation and ecological damage, infrastructure expansion such as road building, forest fires, illegal structures and land sliding is big problem in Shimla city. On encroached forest land cutting of a large number of trees damage of the environment as, it may cause deforestation.

Transportation, Traffic Problem and Parking Issues

Traffic is one of the major problems in Shimla city. The traffic congestion cause accidents, traffic overload and arouse problems to pedestrians and vehicles holders, wastage of time and fuels and become the causes of air pollution. The roads of Shimla city are not enough wide cause of hill area and geographical condition. The number of vehicles is increasing every day and the existing roads are not enough and the traffic problem is growing. Less public transportation and crowd in buses leads private vehicles, less parking spaces and street and road parking increase the traffic problem. Costly paid parking leads to encourage street and road parking.

There are ten thousand vehicles were registered in Shimla urban in the last decade. The numbers of vehicles in Shimla town have increased from 32,228 in 2005 to 77,945 in 2018. Hill area and parking problem is one of the big problems in Shimla, narrow roads and parking problems often leads to jams. Nearly one lakh vehicles are on road in Shimla town daily and the number increases subsequently during the weekends and holidays due to tourist.¹ Sanjouli to summer hill only 9 km areas is highly crowded and Sanjouli, chhota-shimla, and victory tunnel, lakkar-bazaar and totu is the main jam spot

¹Hindustan Times, Shimla By Gaurav Bisht, Shimla Published on July 08,2019, Retrieved from www.hindustantimes.com Monday 16, August, 2021

Housing and Migration Problems

Poor housing conditions often manifest in the high proportions of people living in one room and paying exorbitant rents. This is physical overcrowding, which is a determinant of two major types of problems, namely, a health hazard and harmful social behaviour. Lack access to safe and secure housing, overcrowding leads to faster and wider spread of diseases due to the limited space in slum housing. Poor living conditions also make slum dwellers more vulnerable to certain diseases. The increasing migration of rural immigrants to the city, and the inflated prices of land beyond the urban poor contribute to the rise of slums and squatters in the city. Cause of demographic condition of Shimla is the pleasant climate condition, educational and health institutes and virtuous basic facilities, tourist place and capital of the state. A sudden influx of migrants can create a demand-supply imbalance in the housing sector, leading to a shortage of affordable housing options. This can result in increased housing prices, inadequate living conditions, or even homelessness for some individuals and families. Overpopulation lead high rents, and the price of properties has risen rapidly double or triple in few years. The existing urban planning strategies may not have accounted for the sudden surge in population, resulting in haphazard growth, inadequate infrastructure, and encroachment on green spaces. It becomes crucial to develop comprehensive urban planning frameworks that consider population growth, affordable housing, and sustainable development. Migration can result in increased competition for jobs and economic opportunities. The local workforce might face challenges in finding employment as migrants enter the job market. Additionally, if job opportunities do not keep pace with the rising population, it can contribute to unemployment or underemployment.

Infrastructural Problems/Strain on Infrastructure

The existing infrastructure, such as roads, water supply, electricity, and waste management systems, may not be adequately equipped to handle a sudden surge in population. This can lead to inadequate services, congestion, and infrastructure deficiencies. Overpopulations also create socio-economic disparities and lack of resources among peoples. The existing residents and migrants may have different socio-economic backgrounds, leading to inequality in access to resources, education, healthcare, and other essential services.

Overloading in Buses and Public Transport:

Overloading in buses can be a common problem in many cities, including Shimla. When buses exceed their designated seating capacity and carry more passengers than they are designed to accommodate, it can lead to several issues and risks, such as; safety hazards, passenger discomfort, health and hygiene issues etc. Overloaded buses become unstable and are more prone to accidents, especially during sharp turns or sudden braking. The excess weight can affect the vehicle's maneuverability and braking distance, increasing the likelihood of collisions and injuries. Overcrowded buses can be extremely uncomfortable for passengers. Lack of space and seating availability can lead to inconvenience, physical discomfort, and increased stress levels during the commute. Overloading in buses can result in poor ventilation, which can lead to stuffy and suffocating conditions for passengers. Moreover, overcrowding can facilitate the spread of contagious diseases and compromise public health and hygiene.

Over Population of Monkeys, Languor, cows and street dogs

Languor and street dogs can indeed create various problems in urban areas. Some of the common issue includes aggression and attacks by stray dogs that are not properly socialized or have a history of abuse may display aggressive behavior towards humans or other animals. This can pose a threat to public safety, particularly to children or vulnerable individuals. Street dogs may carry and transmit diseases such as rabies, ticks, fleas, and other parasites. This can pose a significant risk to public health, as these diseases can be transmitted to humans or domesticated pets. Lead annoyance especially during the night time Stray dogs and cows roaming near busy roads and highways increase the risk of traffic accidents. They may dart across streets unexpectedly, leading to collisions and injuries for both the animals and motorists.

Both tourists and local people have informed about the disturbance of monkeys and Languor, Monkey are become serious problem in city of Shimla. They becomes so fearless that they can rob anyone anywhere basically kids and female: In 2010 situation was so bad that Govt. allowed farmers to kill monkey to protect their crops. In 2011 Mr. Devki Nandan Koushik made a public litigation over the issue in high court and wrote a letter to Chief Justice. High Court suggested that State Govt and Municipal Corporation of Shimla should obey The Wild Life Protection Act

and do the needful steps. Now Shimla Municipal Corporation (SMC) has decided to make a monkey camp in Tutikandi, over one acre area. Now, present there are near about six lakh monkeys and Languor in Shimia and surrounding areas, Monkeys are not only creating problems to local people and tourist, but also hampering crops of the farmers.

Other major problems in the city is high energy consumption of electricity, Slums settlements problems, increasing high rate of crime. The increased demand for electricity can strain the power supply infrastructure. Power outages, load shedding, and voltage fluctuations may become more frequent. Expanding power generation capacity, upgrading distribution networks, and promoting energy-efficient practices can help ensure a reliable and sustainable energy supply. The increased energy consumption, waste generation, and carbon emissions associated with office activities contribute to environmental degradation. The construction of office buildings may lead to deforestation and encroachment on natural habitats, affecting the ecological balance of the region.

The Factors Driving Overpopulation in Shimla City

The Shimla city has experienced significant population growth over the years. Some common factors that contribute to overpopulation in cities. These factors may also apply to Shimla: urbanization, tourism, lack of urban planning, Center of economic opportunities, Capital of the state and eco-friendly environment.

Rapid Urbanization: Urbanization is a major driver of overpopulation in cities. As rural areas undergo economic and social changes, people often migrate to urban centers in search of better employment opportunities, education, healthcare, and improved quality of life. Shimla, being a popular tourist destination and the capital of Himachal Pradesh, has attracted a large influx of people from both rural areas and other states.

Tourism and Seasonal Influx: Shimla's popularity as a tourist destination attracts a significant number of visitors throughout the year. The city's infrastructure, including accommodations and services, may not be equipped to handle the sudden surge in population during peak tourist seasons, leading to overcrowding.

Lack of Urban Planning: In some cases, inadequate urban planning and governance can contribute to overpopulation. Insufficient infrastructure, including transportation, water supply, sanitation, and healthcare facilities, can strain the existing resources and services, making it difficult to cater to the needs of a growing population.

Center of Economic Opportunities: Cities often serve as centers of economic activities, offering employment opportunities across various sectors. If Shimla experiences a strong economic growth, it can attract more people seeking livelihoods, resulting in population growth. The availability of employment opportunities in Shimla has resulted in a significant influx of people from neighboring regions and rural areas. Many individuals migrate to the city in search of jobs in government offices, educational institutions, and private companies. This migration contributes to the growth of the city's population and adds to the crowd in Shimla.

Capital of the State

Shimla, the capital city of the beautiful Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, has long been renowned for its scenic beauty, pleasant climate, and rich cultural heritage. However, over the years, Shimla has faced the daunting challenge of managing an ever-increasing crowd and grappling with the consequences of overpopulation. Shimla serves as a hub for government and private offices, attracting employees from various sectors. The establishment of government departments, administrative offices, banks, educational institutions, and corporate offices has led to an influx of workers and increased population density. The demand for office spaces and the subsequent rise in employment opportunities have been key contributors to the crowd in Shimla. The presence of offices and the subsequent increase in population density place immense strain on the city's infrastructure. The existing infrastructure, including transportation systems, roads, water supply, and waste management, often struggles to cater to the growing demands of the office-going population. Traffic congestion, limited parking facilities, and inadequate public transport are common issues faced by residents and office employees alike.

Eco-Friendly Environment

The eco-friendly environment, sustainable living standard and climate of the Shimla city attracts the people and has contributed to the crowd and overpopulation challenges in the city. Shimla's picturesque landscapes, lush greenery, and clean air have long been a magnet for tourists and those seeking a tranquil and eco-friendly lifestyle. The city's commitment to preserving its natural resources, coupled with the proactive measures taken to promote sustainable living, has garnered widespread attention. This focus on eco-friendliness has resulted in an increased interest from individuals and families to settle in Shimla, leading to a growth in population. The city's commitment to sustainable living, coupled with its natural beauty, has drawn residents and visitors seeking a greener lifestyle.

Remedial Measures and Strategies for Resolving Issues as well as Ensuring Sustainable Solutions

To overcome the problems of overcrowding and congestion, several remedies can be implemented. Here are some potential solutions:

1. **Improved Public Transportation System:** Provide free public transportation facilities within Shimla city or very economical transport facilities. Enhancing public transportation systems by increasing the number of buses and improving the frequency of services can help accommodate the passenger demand more effectively, reduce the number of private vehicles on the road. This can be achieved by expanding public transportation networks, increasing the frequency of services, and improving the overall efficiency and reliability of the system.
2. **Traffic Management and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS):** Implementing intelligent traffic management systems can improve the flow of vehicles and reduce congestion. This can include the use of smart traffic signals, real-time traffic monitoring, dynamic lane control, and adaptive traffic management techniques to optimize the utilization of road capacity.
3. **Alternative Transportation Modes:** Promoting alternative modes of transportation such as cycling, walking, and electric scooters can help reduce congestion and overcrowding in urban areas. Should open the restricted road for cycling and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure can encourage people to choose these options for shorter trips.
4. **Flexible Work Hours in Offices and Telecommuting:** Encouraging telecommuting and flexible work hours can help spread out the demand for transportation and reduce congestion during peak periods. Employers can offer remote work options or flexible schedules to reduce the number of commuters during rush hours.
5. **Offices and intuitions should be shifted to other city or villages to overcome the capital burden.**
6. **Sterilization and vaccination programs for stray dogs and control the population of stray dogs and reducing the risk of diseases like rabies.** Support animal welfare organizations and collaborating with local animal welfare organizations to rescue, rehabilitate, and rehome stray dogs. These organizations can provide medical care, socialization, and adoption services. Municipal regulations and enforcement to animal control, licensing, and responsible ownership.
7. **Movement of people from their home to another city, state or country for a job, shelter, medical facilities, better education opportunities.** Provide these facilities for the public at the local level.
8. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Conducting awareness campaigns to educate passengers about the risks associated with overloading and encouraging them to report instances of overcrowding to the relevant authorities. Public awareness and education regarding implementing and enforcing regulations, quality of life, sanitation or water management, waste management and cleaning habits, planning of housing and infrastructure. Educate tourists about the importance of waste reduction and responsible tourism practices. Provide information through brochures, signage, and digital platforms, emphasizing the need to minimize waste generation and the proper disposal of waste.
9. **Strict Enforcement of law:** Authorities should enforce regulations regarding bus seating capacities and traffic rules and waste management, impose penalties for violations. Regular monitoring and inspections can help deter bus operators from overloading their vehicles.
10. **Improved eco-friendly infrastructure and housing facilities.** Enhance the planning management of urban growth. To address these problems, it is crucial for local authorities and the government to anticipate and plan for the impacts of migration. This may involve urban planning, infrastructure development, affordable housing initiatives, skill development programs, and employment generation measures. Effective

management of migration can help ensure sustainable development and a balanced socio-economic environment in Shimla.

11. Rain Water Harvesting could be good alternative for water conservation in Shimla. Shimla is receiving adequate amount of rainfall and that should be preserved. Government could take necessary action and should encourage the hotel owner, house owner and people to water harvesting. Administration issued necessary instructions regarding water management in Shimla city.
12. Establish Bioenergy Technologies plant and convert waste management into bio-energy resources.
13. Electrical and CNG is good alternative of fuel in place of petrol and diesel. Pollution check system of the vehicles must be introduced in place to place. Moreover, green tax must be introduced on other state vehicles to control excess movements of vehicles.
14. More employment opportunities, health facilities, education, development of agriculture and industry and improve standard of living in rural areas to break the immigration. Need to upgrade the area for better living condition so that people will not move in urban areas.
15. Panchayats should be take incentive to develop the strong infrastructure facilities in village, work properly and establish strong institutional mechanism. Government should assign the budgeted and work for Panchayats. Living standards are should be equal to urban areas, example (quality of life, access to electricity, sanitation or drinking water, transportation job opportunities) etc.
16. Improve Waste Management Infrastructure: Enhance waste management infrastructure in tourist areas, including an adequate number of waste bins with clear signage for proper waste separation (recyclables, compostable, and non-recyclables). Implement effective waste collection and recycling systems to ensure proper disposal and minimize litter. Encourage sustainable practices, such as using eco-friendly packaging, sourcing local products, and minimizing waste generation. Highlight environmentally responsible businesses through tourist guides, websites, and social media platforms.
17. Collaborate with NGOs and Tour Operators: Engage tourists, local communities, and organizations in regular clean-up drives to remove litter and waste from tourist sites. Raise awareness about the importance of keeping the environment clean and encourage active participation in these initiatives.
18. Administration arrangements for forestation and preventing encroachment.

Relevancy of the Paper and Conclusion

Purpose of this article to find out the collective solution for overcoming the problems through the overcrowding. The research create awareness among general public and would be highly relevant given the context of Shimla's crowd and overpopulation challenges. It could serve as a comprehensive resource for policymakers, urban planners, researchers, and stakeholders involved in addressing the population-related issues in Shimla. The paper would contribute to the existing body of knowledge by focusing specifically on Shimla and providing a detailed analysis of the factors contributing to population pressures in the city. It would explore the various aspects such as urbanization, tourism, housing shortages, infrastructure constraints, and their impact on the quality of life for residents and the overall development of the city. Article has identify the social, economic, and environmental implications of overpopulation and offer insights into potential strategies, policies, and perspectives for managing and mitigating these pressures effectively. It arouse discussions, debates, and collaborations among academics, policymakers, and experts working on urbanization, population management, sustainable development, and related fields.

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