

Administrative Structure of Punjab

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ABSTRACT

Punjab state, sometimes pronounced as Panjab, is geographically found between the border of India and Pakistan. The literal meaning of Punjab is land of five rivers. These five rivers are Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab, Jhelum. All these rivers are tributaries of Indus river. As of today, only two rivers Sutlej and Beas flow through Punjab state in India. Ravi flows partially in Punjab, mainly along the international boundary of India and Pakistan and then enters Pakistan. Punjab used to be known as Sapat Sindhu before the arrival of Aryans in India. The word Sapat Sindhu means the land of seven rivers. These seven rivers were Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab, Jhelum, Saraswati and Sindhu. In Puranas and Mahabharata, it is named as Pancha-nada which means land of five rivers. During the rule of Mughals in India, the region was known with the name Suba-E-Lahore. Greeks referred to Punjab as Pentapotamia, which means an inland delta of five converging rivers. In 1966, owing to the demands made by the Akali Dal and various other organisations to create a Punjabi speaking state, the Government divided Punjab into a Punjabi-speaking state of the same name, and Hindi-speaking Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The state has achieved tremendous growth over the years due to the success of the Green Revolution in the early 70s. For a major period in the second half of the 20th century, Punjab led the other states in India to achieve self-sufficiency in crop production.

Keywords: Districts, sub-divisions, tehsils, sub-tehsils, blocks

In 1947, the Punjab province of British India was divided along religious lines into West Punjab and East Punjab. The western part was assimilated into the new country of Pakistan while the east stayed in India. This led to massive rioting as both sides committed atrocities against fleeing refugees. The partition of India in 1947 split the former Raj province of Punjab; the mostly Muslim western part became the Pakistani province of West Punjab and the mostly Sikh and Hindu eastern part became the Indian province of Punjab. Many Sikhs and Hindus lived in the west, and many Muslims lived in the east, and so partition saw many people displaced and much inter-communal violence. At the time of independence in 1947 and due to the ensuing horrendous exchange of populations, the Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus from western Punjab, in modern-day Pakistan, migrated to India. Punjabi Muslims were uprooted similarly from their homes in East Punjab which now forms part of India.

From 1952 to 1966 (the year Haryana was carved out of Punjab) Chandigarh was the capital of Punjab. Citizens of the city were represented in the state's

Legislative Assembly and a Chief Commissioner headed the local administration. While Punjab had remained undivided, Chandigarh, like other large cities of India, fitted into the larger framework of the state administration. When Punjab was divided, both Punjab and Haryana claimed the new city for its capital. Pending resolution of the issue, the Central Government made Chandigarh a Union Territory (under Section 4 of the Punjab Re-Organisation Act, 1966, with effect from November 1, 1966) with its administration functioning directly under the Central Government. Under the provisions of this Act, the laws in force in the erstwhile State of Punjab prior to November 1, 1966, continue to be applicable to the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

The most truncated portion of current Punjab is divisible into 3 natural regions such as the Malwa, the Malwa and the Doaba and Majha.

Malwa Region

The Malwa region belonging to Punjab along with some parts of Haryana lay between the rivers Yamuna and Sutlej. Malwa area comprises of most

of the parts of Punjab region having 11 districts. Mohali and Ludhiana found to be situated in Malwa region are the richest cities as well as the one of the most expensive cities in Punjab. Most of the Sikh Jats, about 92% of the population live in Malwa region and the rest are sub divided as Chamars and Tarkans. This Malwa region controls political power in the Punjab state since decades. Malwa has 10 parts out of the 20 Punjab districts. The districts of Malwa are as follows: Fatehgarh Sahib, Bhatinda, Ferozpur, Faridkot, Ludhiana, Mogha, Mansa, Muktsar, Patiala, Nawan Shahar, Sangrur and Ropar.

DOABA REGION

The region of Punjab called as Doaba has rivers Sutlej and the river Beas in its surroundings. "Doaba" has a literal meaning "land of two rivers". Jalandhar has been one of the most popular cities of Doaba. The city comprises of highest number of hospitals across Asia.

MAJHA REGION

The historical region, Majha belongs to Punjab and consists of modern districts such as Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Tarn Taran whereas Kasur and Lahore are found in Pakistan. Majha has a lot of historical significance and consists of ancient settled parts of the Bari Doab basically Sheikhpura and Rechna Doab and newly settled parts falling under canal colonies. Most of the towns in this region are Amritsar, Kasur, Batala, Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Tarn Taran Sahib and Sheikhpura. The biggest part of Majha is known as Bari Doab. It is located between 2 of the 5 prominent rivers of Punjab: Sutlej and Ravi. Majha is said to be located at the center of ancient region of Punjab. Majha means 'the central plains' or also called central country. People belonging to Majha are referred to as 'Majhis'.

POWADH REGION

Powadh or Puadh is a region belonging to Punjab and some parts of Haryana are located between Ghaggar and Sutlej rivers. The part falling towards south, east of Rupnagar, south eastern parts beside the district of Ambala of Haryana is Powadhi. Powadh encompasses parts of district Rupnagar lying in the proximity of Ghaggar River towards east separating the states of Haryana and Punjab. Some parts of district of Fatehgarh Sahib along with few parts of district of Patiala like Rajpura also contribute to parts

of Powadh. The language of Powadh region is quite famous in the entire state of Punjab and is spoken by the people over a large area even in the state of Haryana.

In the Punjab state, Ropar, Kharar, Pail, Kurali, Nurpur Bedi, Rajpura and Morinda are some of the places where the language of Puadhi is being spoken and this area itself is believed to be included in Bangar, Pinjore and Kalka area in the Hisar district including Patiala and even Nabha in it. The region of Powadh is actually a wide region spread over a vast area and comprises of the district Panchkula in Haryana as well as areas of Chandigarh along with a large area lying in south-eastern Malwa and also consists of Patiala, Ropar and Mohali districts. Most of the population here in the Powadh region is of Sikhs and unlike majority of the areas of Punjab, the major portion of the population is not contributed by the Jats.

As compared to Majha, having Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Tarn Taran districts while Doaba consisting of Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Nawanshahr and Kapurthala districts whereas Malwa having Barnala, Faridkot, Bhatinda, Firozpur, Ludhiana, Mogha, Fatehgarh Sahib, Mansa, Muktsar, Sangrur, Patiala and few parts of Ropar. Powadh consists of districts of Mohali, Rupnagar and district in the surroundings of Ghaggar River and some parts of district Fatehgarh and Chandigarh.

On 15 July 1948, eight princely states of East Punjab grouped together to form a single state, Patiala and East Punjab States Union. The Punjab State Legislature was a bicameral a house in April 1952, comprising the Vidhan Sabha (lower house) and Vidhan Parishad (upper house). In 1956 the state was reorganised and renamed Punjab, the strength of the Vidhan Parishad of the new State of Punjab was enhanced from 40 seats to 46 seats and in 1957, it was increased to 51. Punjab was tri-furcated in 1966 to form Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. The Vidhan Parishad was reduced to 40 seats and the Vidhan Sabha was grown by 50 seats to 104 seats. On 1 January 1970, the Vidhan Parishad was abolished leaving the state with a Unicameral legislature. At present, it consists of 117 members directly elected from 117 single-seat constituencies. The tenure of the Legislative Assembly is five years, unless dissolved sooner.

DISTRICTS

The Government of Punjab also known as the State Government of Punjab, or locally as State Government, is the supreme governing authority of the Indian state of Punjab and its 22 districts. A district of the Punjab state of India is an administrative geographical unit, headed by a Deputy Commissioner or District Magistrate, an officer belonging to the Indian Administrative service. The district magistrate or the deputy commissioner is assisted by a number of officers belonging to Punjab Civil Service and other state services. A Senior Superintendent of police an officer who belongs to the Indian Police service is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order and related issues of the district. He is assisted by the officers of the Punjab Police Service and other Punjab Police officials. A division forest officer, an officer belonging to the Indian forest service is responsible for managing the forests, environment and wild-life related issues of the district. He is assisted by the officers of the Punjab Forest Service and other Punjab Forest officials and Punjab Wild-Life officials. Sectoral development is looked after by the district head of each development department such as PWD, Agriculture, Health, Education, Animal husbandry, etc. These officers belong to various State Services.

The state of Punjab has 22 districts which comprise subdivisions, Tehsils and blocks.

- Amritsar
- Barnala
- Bathinda
- Ferozepur
- Fazilka
- Fatehgarh Sahib (Sirhind-Fatehgarh)
- Faridkot
- Gurdaspur
- Hoshiarpur
- Jalandhar
- Kapurthala
- Pathankot
- Ludhiana
- Mansa
- Moga
- SAS Nagar (Mohali)
- Muktsar
- Patiala
- Rupnagar
- Sangrur
- Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshahr)
- Tarn Taran

DIVISIONS

There are total five divisions in Punjab. A division is a cluster of districts, created for the purpose of civil administration. The administrative head of a division is called as Divisional Commission or simply commissioner. An officer from Indian Administrative

Service (IAS) is appointed as the commissioner of a division. When the today's state of Punjab was created in 1966, the state was divided into only two divisions — Jalandhar and Patiala. The names of all the 5 divisions are given below:

- **Jalandhar:** There are total 7 districts in this division. The names of these districts are - Jalandhar, Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Kapurthala and Hoshiarpur.
- **Patiala:** There are 5 districts under this division. Ludhiana, the largest district of Punjab is also in Patiala division. The other districts are - Patiala, Sangrur, Barnala, Fatehgarh Sahib and Ludhiana.
- **Firozpur:** Firozpur division has 4 districts. These districts are - Firozpur, Moga, Shri Muktsar Sahib and Fazilka. All these four districts were once the tehsils of the Firozpur district.
- **Faridkot:** Faridkot has 3 districts under it and names of these districts are Faridkot, Bathinda and Mansa.
- **Ropar:** The Ropar (or Rupnagar) division has 3 districts in it - Ropar (Rupnagar), Ajitgarh (Mohali) and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawan Shahr).

TEHSILS AND SUB-TEHSIL

There are total 82 tehsils in Punjab and 87 sub-tehsils in Punjab. For civil administrative purpose, the state of Punjab is divided into 5 divisions, divisions are divided into 22 districts and the districts are further divided into sub-divisions (tehsils). Some of the latest changes to the tehsils and sub-tehsils in Punjab is given below:

- i. Maur in district Bathinda is the latest addition to the list of tehsils.
- ii. Zirakpur in Mohali district is the newly created sub-tehsil.

Banur sub-tehsil was earlier in Patiala district and now it is shifted to Mohali

In Punjab, we can say that there is no difference between a tehsil and a sub-division. Every tehsil of Punjab is also a sub-division and vice-versa. They share the same boundary. But this is not the case for all states of India. The tehsils and sub-divisions are different in some states of India. In general, districts are divided into Sub-Divisions for the civil administration purpose. A Sub-Divisional Magistrate

(SDM) is the officer in-charge of a sub-division and is selected from the State Civil Services (like Punjab Civil Services or PCS) cadre. In most of the states, the sub-divisions are further divided into Tehsils or Talukas for the purpose of land records and revenue. The revenue officer, who is in-charge of a tehsil is called as "Tehsildar".

DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS IN PUNJAB

There are total 22 districts in Punjab and for the purpose of rural development, each district is further divided into development blocks or simply called as block. There is block development and panchayat office (BDPO Office, generally pronounced as BDO) in each block and there is also a Block Samiti. The in-charge of this office, block development and panchayat officer (BDPO), is also executive officer of Block Samiti. There is also a chairman of the block samiti, which is a political leader elected through voting. The number of total development blocks in Punjab is 147. The latest addition to this list is the Malaud block under Payal constituency in Ludhiana district, which is given the status of block in February 2016. Earlier new addition to list of blocks is Arniwala Sheikh Subhan in Ferozpur district, chairman of the block samiti, which is a political leader elected through voting.

CONCLUSION

Punjab is one of the most fertile regions in India. The state has been awarded the National Productivity Award for agriculture extension services for ten years, from 1991–92 to 1998–99 and from 2001 to 2003–04. In recent years a drop in productivity has been observed, mainly due to falling fertility of the soil. This is believed to be due to excessive use of fertilisers and pesticides over the years. Another worry is the rapidly falling water table on which almost 90% of the agriculture depends; alarming drops have been witnessed in recent years.

According to the 2011 Indian Census, the population of Indian Punjab is 27,704,236 (14,634,819 males and 13,069,417 females). The literacy rate is 75%, with male literacy being 80.23% and female literacy 68.36%. As of the 2011 census, the sex ratio of Punjab was 895 females per 1000 males. On account of female

foeticide Punjab has the second lowest sex ratio amongst all Indian states. Being an agricultural state, a large part of the population lives in rural areas. Punjab witnessed a decade and half of militancy from 1981 till 1994, in which tens of thousands youth are said to have been killed or gone missing. Since then, the state has been peaceful but residents say it has failed to reap the gains of peace. Most of the villages in the district of Gurdaspur, where Dinanagar is located, are well connected to cities by roads and have multi-storied rural houses that speak of prosperity. But there is a crisis among most households.

These districts along Punjab's border with Pakistan – Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran – which witnessed the worst violence during the militancy years are now the worst affected by drug trade. For years, the Badal government blamed a rising drug addiction among Punjab's youth on international drug cartels active along an axis running from Afghanistan and Pakistan to opium-growing areas in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The system of Punjab Government had its strengths and weaknesses. This system offered many opportunities and it faced a number of pressures. These would be important to ensuring community participation and development. It would be up to District, Tehsil and Union Administrations to make ensure that an enabling working environment was created for the development of Local Development.

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