

## Vehicular traffic inflow in Gateway Town Lakhanpur (J&K): A Geographical Analysis

Verinder Singh

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**Abstract:** Gateway town is the major town of the state or country which plays a crucial role in developing socio-economic condition of that country or region. It is an important town which serves as an entry and exist point of the state. The growth of the Lakhanpur town which is the entry point of J&K has grown from a small tax collecting centre to a very highly commercialized traffic hub of the state of J&K. Approximate figures indicate that the total traffic imports before 1981 were approximately 20% of the total import traffic entering into J&K, while these figures increases to on all time high of more than 80% in 2001 – 2002 which needs serious thinking. The main focus of the present study is to highlight the traffic inflow of the gateway town Lakhanpur in Jammu and Kashmir state which includes the transshipment of goods as well as movement of passenger traffic both import and export and the resultant impact of national highway on the growth of study area. The whole study is depending upon the information collected from primary as well as secondary data. The simple statistical techniques are used to analyze the data. The study reveals that there is tremendous increase in the vehicular traffic in the study area with time.

**Key words:** Gateway town, Crucial, Traffic, Hub, Transshipments.

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### 1. Introduction

The study of towns is a pivotal point of human geography. It has been defined by various geographers in numerous ways, which vary from each other in one way or the other. In fact, town has been defined on the basis of various characteristics such as, their size, population lay out, functions etc. Emrys Jones (In towns and cities) has rightly stated that a town seems to be all things to all men: a Physical agglomeration of streets and houses, a centre of commerce and administration, a kind of society, even a cultural frame of mind of urbanite or a way of life (Mandal, 2000).

Gateway town is a location offering accessibility to a large system of circulation of freight and passengers. Gateways reap the advantage of a favourable physical location such as highway junctions, the confluence of rivers, a good port site, and have been the object of a significant accumulation of transport infrastructures such as terminals and their links. A gateway is commonly an origin, a destination and a point of transit. Gateway City is a settlement that links one area with another. Usually the settlement, such as St. Louis, Occupies a favourable physical situation which allows it to command entrance to exist from the hinterland. As control centers, such settlement often develops into Primate City (Audrey, 1990).

Gateway cities arose at the entrance points, usually favourable physical locations, to producing regions and functioned as collecting centres for the basic products from surrounding. The gateway functions therefore involve such bulk assembly break of bulk, trans-shipment activities as are normally associated with ports also known as portal city (Brian, 1987). The present study primarily deals with the movement of passenger traffic and transshipment of goods carrier vehicle both import and export in gateway town Lakhanpur from 2001 to 2011.

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Virender Singh(✉)

P.G Department of Geography,  
Govt. Degree College Kathua,  
Email: verindersingh8@gmail.com

The growth of Lakhapur town which is the entry point of J&K has grown from a small tax collecting centre to a very highly commercialized traffic hub of the state of J&K. Objectives of the present study were (i) to analyse the movement of vehicle in the study area, (ii) to highlight the resultant impact of National Highway on the growth of study area, and (iii) to study the Transshipments of goods as well as movement of passengers traffic both import and export.

## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1 Study Area

The area under study lies in the west of Kathua town at the foothills of Shiwaliks. It is situated on the right bank of river Ravi. It touches the border of Punjab in the east while Magar Khad

in the West towards Jammu. Where as it is bounded by foot hills of kandi Shiwaliks belt in north and river Ravi in the south. The study area stretches between  $32^{\circ} 24' 38''$  north to  $75^{\circ} 36' 52''$  east longitude. The town is well knitted with national highway and link roads which are supposed to be the arteries of economic development of the area. The study area act as a gateway of J&K because of its linkage with neighbouring state i.e. Punjab. According to the census of 2001 the total area of Lakhapur town was 0.74 sq. km. the total population of study area according to census of 2011 is 1,759 persons. The study area has its own importance in the state as it is the gateway to Jammu & Kashmir state and help in generating revenue for the state due to imposition of certain taxes.

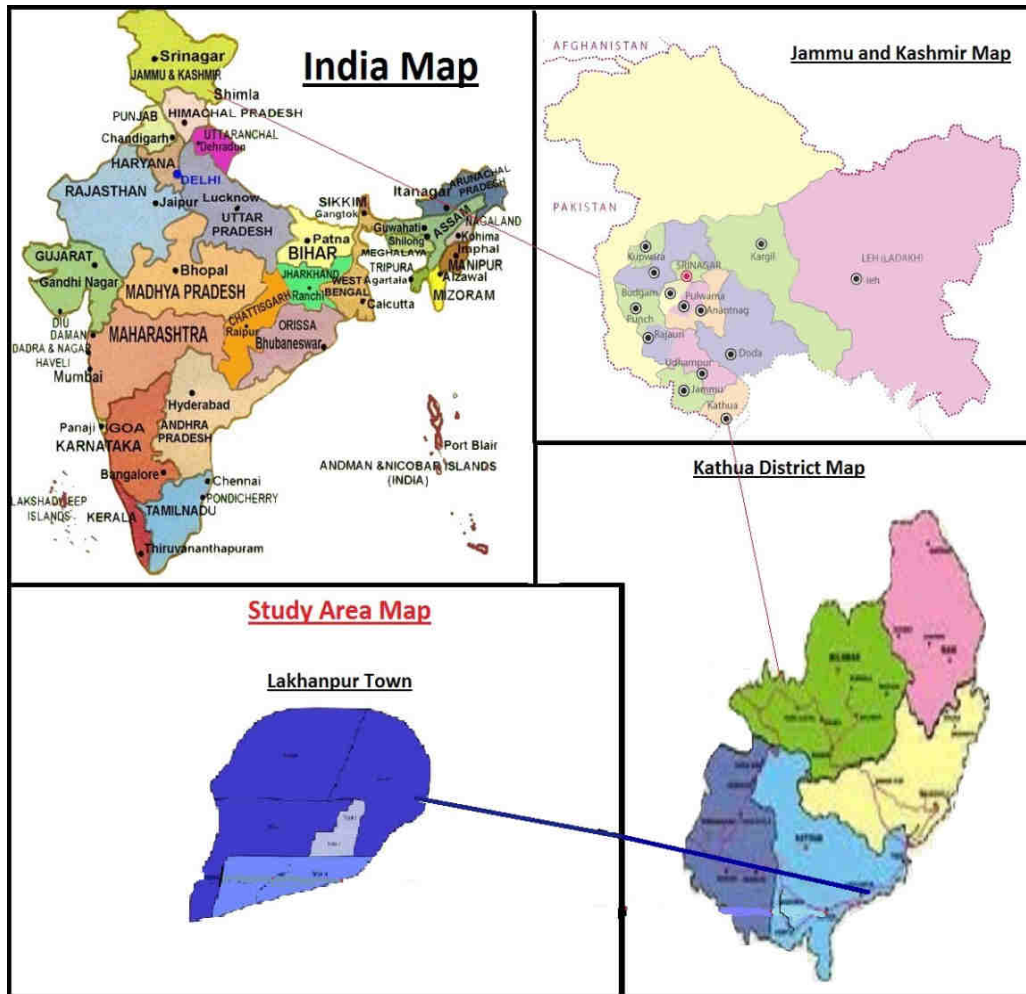


Figure 1. Location Map of Study Area

## 2.2 Methodology

Philosophy behind the basic methodology of this study is to assess how human welfare is determined by economic and spatial development which in the modern age is largely gauged through speed. To make the study more precise certain quantitative techniques, graphs, tables and simple statistical techniques are to be processed.

As for the data collection of the present study is concerned it is mainly from secondary sources i.e. from Town and Planning organization Jammu, Municipal committee Lakhanpur town, District office Kathua, Excise and Taxation office Lakhanpur. In spite of secondary survey the data is also collected through primary survey by conducting personal investigation survey based on questionnaires.

## 3. Result and Discussions

### Impact of National Highway

The National Highway authority of India established by the government of India has divided the country into number of Highways connecting the entire country. Specially, in the context of J&K as well as area under study, National Highway is the most dominating indicator selected for purpose of study. The area under study is primarily concerned with National Highway which enters into the state of Jammu and Kashmir from the entry point at Lakhanpur from where it heads to Jammu and Srinagar through Kathua. Therefore both the towns Lakhanpur and Kathua are immensely affected by any movement, goods or passenger taking place on this National Highway. The growth of Lakhanpur town which is the entry point of J&K has grown from a small tax collecting centre to a very highly commercialized traffic hub of the state of J&K.

Approximate figures indicate that the total traffic imports before 1981 were approximately 20% of the total import traffic entering into this J&K, while these figures increases to on all time high of more than 80% in 2001 – 2002 which needs serious thinking. This can be attributed through the following factors:

1. Net increase in goods and passenger traffic due to free trade relations of J&K with the neighbouring states in North India.
2. Government incentives provide to entrepreneurs for importing quality good

material into the state through the town of Lakhanpur specially fruit from Himachal Pradesh, milk and milk products from Amritsar and Gurdaspur, agricultural commendable from neighbouring states which are lacking in cultivation in J&K, seasonal variability of rainfall and subsequent traces of minor dual cropping instead of multiple cropping.

3. Special derives to boost indigenous small and medium scale industries by importing large amount of raw material like cement, yarn, marble, foot loose industries like bus and truck body building and related ancillary industries, which helps in boosting the economy of the state.
4. Besides government incentives like vat, sales tax, exemption from excise duty on certain industrial raw material which have helped to boost the economy of the state.

### Transshipments of Goods both Import and Export

The goods carrier vehicles are to be considered as the back bone of the industries of the state or a region. The trade and commerce of the Jammu and Kashmir State is totally depend upon road transport as railway has not reached to the higher reaches of the state. The entry and exit point of the road transport of Jammu and Kashmir State is Lakhanpur town as it is the gateway to Jammu and Kashmir State which connects the Jammu and Kashmir State with rest of India. It is interesting to notice that the daily average of loaded and empty trucks increasing with the passage of time both in import and export. The daily average of loaded and empty trucks both in import and export was approximately 542 in 1981 which arose to 2252 in 2001 – 02. This shows that there is tremendous increase in goods traffic both in import and export from 1981-2001. The loaded trucks which are entered in the state bring industrial raw material, food grains and other necessary material into the state. On the other hand the trucks export finished industrial goods and fruits outside the state. The table given below shows the total number and daily average of loaded and empty trucks both import and export passing through Lakhanpur town.

Table 1 show that in the year 2001-02 there were 824384 numbers of loaded and empty trucks both import and export crosses the gateway town Lakhanpur.

**Table 1.** Year Wise Goods Traffic Crossing Gateway Town

Years	Loaded Trucks		Empty Trucks		Total Trucks	Daily Average
	Import	Export	Import	Export		
2001 – 02	399561	139030	16850	268943	824384	2259
2002 – 03	405733	133102	17825	279277	835937	2290
2003 – 04	438873	141413	17820	287085	885191	2425
2004 – 05	438218	146112	18414	295318	898062	2460
2005 – 06	468498	166092	21937	308950	965477	2645
2006 – 07	446293	175968	24429	274448	921138	2524
2007 – 08	440535	201139	23841	244063	909578	2492
2008 – 09	413783	213611	28099	225696	881189	2414
2009 – 10	462668	224748	21220	264183	972819	2665
2010 – 11	467543	233445	33432	269951	1004371	2752

Source: Toll Post Lakhanpur

The daily average of goods carrier’s trucks in 2001- 02 was 2259. This average exceeds with the passage of time. In 2002-03 the daily average of empty and loaded trucks were 2290. This figure gradually increase in 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, which reveals a constant increases in goods traffic enter in to the state of J&K through Lakhanpur. It is interesting to analyse that in the year 2008- 09, there is a decline of goods traffic in Lakhanpur town. The daily average of goods traffic in that year was 2414 which is low to other years mentioned in table. This is because of two months bandh of J&K state due to Amarnath Land Row dispute. After decline in daily average of goods traffic in the year 2008-09, there is again rise in daily average of goods traffic in the year 2009-10 and 2010-11. The daily average for both the years was 2665 and 2752 trucks, respectively. All this lead us to think that the gate way town of Lakhanpur provides ancillary, logistic, infrastructure and service facilities which has helped in the spatial growth of the town.

**Movement of Passenger Traffic both Import & Export**

Passenger traffic is an important means of transporting human population from one place to another. The passenger traffic of Lakhanpur town includes the busses and cars/ jeeps which enter and exit from this gate way town. The passenger traffic helps in developing the economy of the town as well as state by imposing certain tax like toll tax and passenger tax on entry and exit of the vehicles from this entry point. Apart from this, it also helps in providing employment opportunities to *rehriwala*, shopkeepers and transport agents

who help in clearing the tax of the vehicles and get commission on it. Most of the shopkeepers and *rehriwala* earn their livelihood only because of the vehicular traffic of Lakhanpur town either passenger or goods vehicular traffic. As every vehicle have to stay at Lakhanpur town to clear toll tax, passenger tax, sale tax and other commercial tax etc. on entry or exit from this point as this is the gate way to J&K State.

It is evident that passenger traffic had been increased from 1555 in 2001-02 to 1965 in 2010-11. This shows that there is increase in passenger traffic with passage of time in Lakhanpur town. This not only shows the increase in number of passenger traffic which is the indicator of spatial growth but more important is the generation of revenue from imposing certain taxes on such vehicular traffic to the state. The year wise passenger traffic crossing Gateway town is shown through Table 2.

Table 2 tends to analyses the passenger traffic which enters and exits from Lakhanpur town over a period of time from 2001- 02 to 2010-11. The passenger traffic of Lakhanpur town includes busses and car/ jeeps and the average of passenger traffic is calculated both on import and export of passenger vehicle. The daily average of passenger traffic both import and export which crosses over Lakhanpur town in the year 2001-02 was 1555, which slightly decline to 1438 in 2002-03. But the daily average of passenger traffic again increased to 1662 in the year 2003- 04 and which going on increase in the year 2004- 05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 etc.

**Table 2.** Year Wise Passenger Traffic Crossing Gateway Town

Years	Buses		Car/Jeeps		Total Passenger Traffic	Daily Average
	Import	Export	Import	Export		
2001-02	81638	93688	204439	187929	567694	1555
2002-03	72855	81149	193179	177820	525003	1438
2003-04	82644	89598	231738	202614	606594	1662
2004-05	88681	95409	224054	209694	617838	1693
2005-06	88329	106569	234749	213249	642896	1761
2006-07	87839	97884	259550	229245	614518	1848
2007-08	83334	89743	275480	246921	695478	1905
2008-09	67259	67906	236809	216362	588336	1612
2009-10	73696	81586	281869	255309	692460	1897
2010-11	78075	90303	287752	260933	717063	1965

Source: Toll Post Lakhanpur

It is interesting to note that there is a sharp decline in the daily average of Passenger traffic both import and export in Lakhanpur town from 1905 in the year 2007- 08 to 1612 in the year 2008- 09. This is only because of 60 days bandh in J&K state on the land row dispute of Amarnath Shrine Board. The daily average of passenger traffic again arises up to 1897 in the year 2009- 10 and 1965 in the year 2010- 11 respectively, which is higher in the table. The increase in passenger traffic not only shows the movement of vehicles in the town but it also helps in developing the economy of the cess township of Lakhanpur to a highly commercialized collection of toll plaza.

### Conclusion

Lakhanpur as gateway to J&K state is a great hub for the movement of passenger and goods traffic in the state. It is interesting to notice that the daily average of both passenger and goods carrier vehicle increasing with the passage of time from 2001-2011. It is to be analysed that the total passenger traffic both import and export which crosses over Gateway Town was 567694 passenger vehicles in 2001-02, which increases up to 717063 vehicles in 2010-11. On the other hand if we talk about goods carrying vehicle which crosses over Gateway Town then we will find that there were 824384 numbers of trucks enters exits from this town in 2001-02 which increases up to 1004371 trucks in 2010-11. This shows that there is tremendous increase of movement of passenger and goods traffic in Gateway Town from 2001-02 to 2010-11. Due to traffic inflow this tax collection centre

become very highly commercialized traffic hub of the state and there is also long hour jams in this area which creates problem for the locals as well as for the tourist from other states.

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