

Kangra District

Kangra is situated in the Western Himalayas between 31°2 to 32°5 N and 75° to 77°45 E, a town in Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh state in northern India, and lends its name to the district of the same name. The altitude of the district ranges from 427 to 6401m above mean sea level, with the lowest being in the plains areas bordering Gurdaspur district of Punjab in the west and Una and Hamirpur districts of H.P to the south while the highest being amidst the Dhauladhar mountain range which forms the border with Chamba and Kullu districts. The district has considerable diversity in its soils, physiography, land use patterns and cropping systems. On the basis of these, the district has further been divided into five sub-regions i.e. Pir Panjal, Dhauladhar, Kangra Shiwalik, Kangra Valley and Beas Basin.

Kangra was called Nagarkot in ancient history. It is a town at the confluence of the Bener River and Majhi River. The head quarter of the district is in Dharamshala which is also a tourist spot and is now home-in-exile to the Dalai Lama. Another important town is Palampur which is 40kms away from Dharamshala and famous for its picturesque tea gardens. Many ancient temples like the Jwalaji temple, Brijeshwari temple, Chamunda temple, Baba Baroh and Baijnath temple are situated here. Kangra fort is also a popular tourist attraction. In 1905, District Kangra experienced one of the giant earthquakes of the recorded seismic history of India having a magnitude of 8.0 on Richter scale in which 20,000 persons lost their lives. The towns of Kangra and Dharamshala were razed to the ground and no Government functionary there was left alive even to reports the happenings to the higher authorities. The district lies in Earth-Quake Zone V and Zone IV and has total population of the district was 1,507,223, which is the highest in the state showing the level of risk.

The picturesque valley of Kangra sheltered by the sublime Dhauladhar range is nestled in the Western part of the lower Himalayas. The varying altitudinal range provides a mosaic of physiographic features resulting in highly diverse natural vegetation intercepted by serpentine perennial streams at times. These natural resources constitute the lifeline of the people. The importance of the forests for the livelihood of the hill people in providing them firewood, timber, fodder, herbs and several other raw materials for certain industries can hardly be overemphasized. In addition to these direct benefits, the forests help in perpetuating the ecological sustainability through lessened soil erosion and flash floods. Further, the natural vegetation augments the aesthetic value of Kangra valley when gushing streams traverse these greenwoods at places. Eco-tourism and adventure sports are other spillover of these natural resource endowments. The Economy of Kangra District consists mostly of agriculture and farming. Tea cultivation plays a vital in the economy. "Kangra Tea" is famous worldwide for its rich aroma, colour and taste. A few other industries that have been established in the region, including water packaging, construction materials, and potato chips. The areas of Palampur and Baijnath are surrounded by lush, green tea estates. Tourism is also an important part of the economy, with Bir in particular becoming a strong hub for ecotourism and aero sports.

The climate varies from sub-tropical in low hills and valleys to subhumid in the mid hills and getting temperate in high hills, it receives an average annual rainfall of about 205 cm out of which 80 per cent, is received during June to September months of monsoon. Snowfall is also received in northern parts around Dharamshala, Palampur and Baijnath areas.