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**Map Series No. X**  
**PUNJAB- HARYANA REGION: FEMALE WORKFORCE, 2011**

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Punjab-Haryana region constitutes one of those few areas of the country where female participation in economically gainful activities is the lowest. While, in India, one in every four females was at work, in Punjab-Haryana region one in every six females was economically engaged. Large parts of our country, including the study region, were considered areas of strong traditional patriarchal system of society, its incidence being strongest in the north-western parts of the country. The north-western parts of India, of which Punjab and Haryana states constitute a major part, has historically been the area of low female mobility outside the four walls of the house due to historical factors. Strong prejudices against female participation in outdoor activities still continue to persist more so among some select segments of rural society of the study region such as Jats, both among the Hindus and Sikhs alike. Suffixed on such historical background are the factors like limited educational facilities for girls in the rural areas, limited availability of jobs for females both in organized and unorganized sectors in rural as well as urban areas and competition among males and females for jobs that still remain limited under the prevailing conditions of unemployment in the country. The recent (post-2014) efforts of the government in the form of such schemes as startups may take at least a decade or so to show

an impact. Three maps prepared for displaying the regional pattern of varying aspects of female participation in work in the study region reveal as under:

**Map 1:** Western and south-western parts of the Punjab-Haryana region, covering large parts of western Haryana and Mansa district of Punjab, constitute the areas of comparatively high female participation in work but only matching fairly well with Indian situation in general; the female participation rate in the study region declines as one moves from west to east both in Haryana and Punjab sub-regions; districts of Ambala and Yamunanagar in Haryana constitute the area of lowest female participation in the study region; female workers are generally engaged in other/miscellaneous activities in the non-agricultural sector with the exception of a few districts (Mahendragarh, Mewat, Bhiwani, Jind etc.) in Haryana sub-region where cultivation was the main activity among females.

**Map 2:** Punjab-Haryana region constitutes an area of wide disparity between the incidence of male and female workforce with male-female differential index nearing 0.4, implying an average difference of about 40 per cent in the incidence of male-female participation in the region; Punjab sub-region displayed comparatively higher male-female differential index (0.41) in comparison to

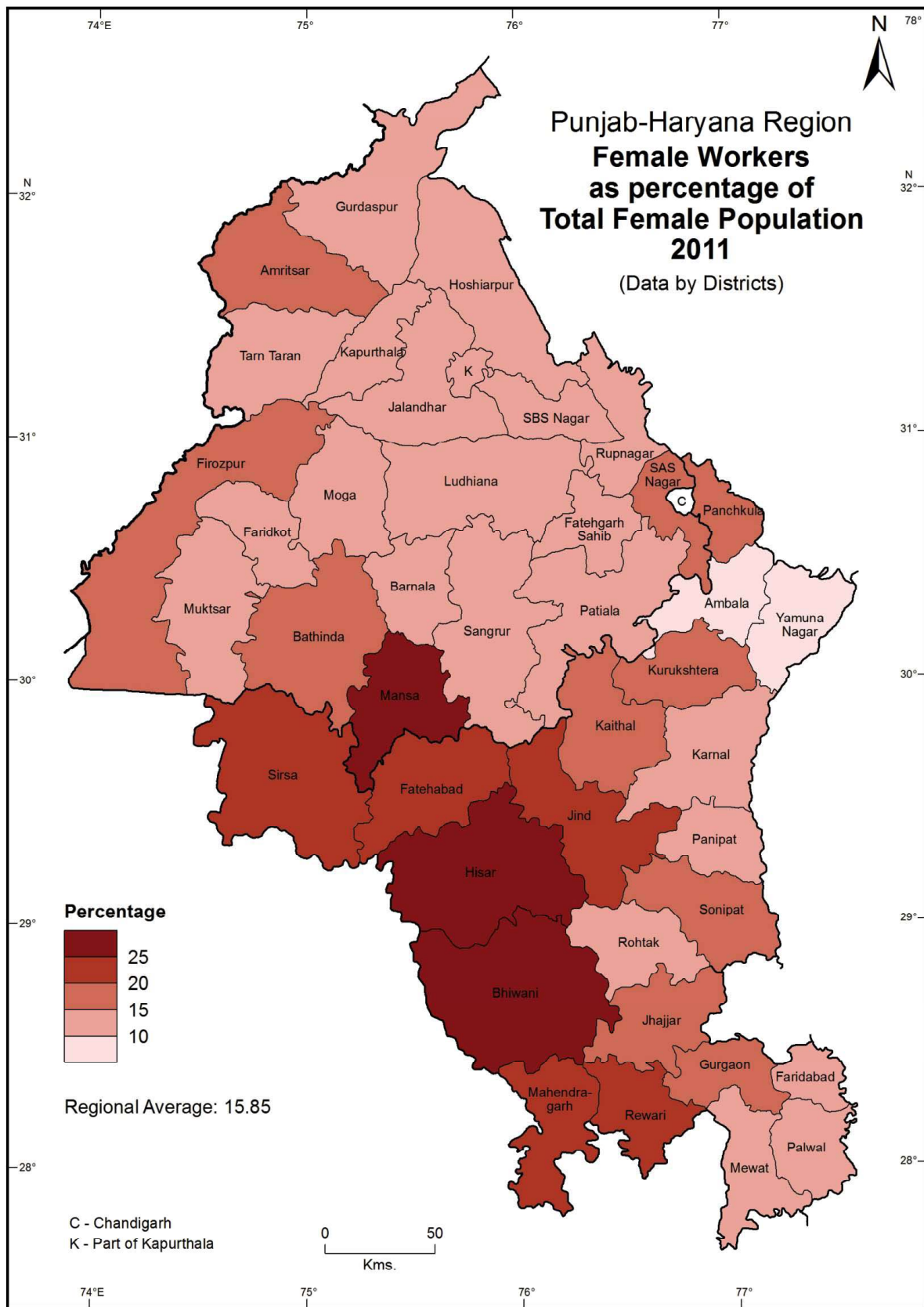


Fig. 1

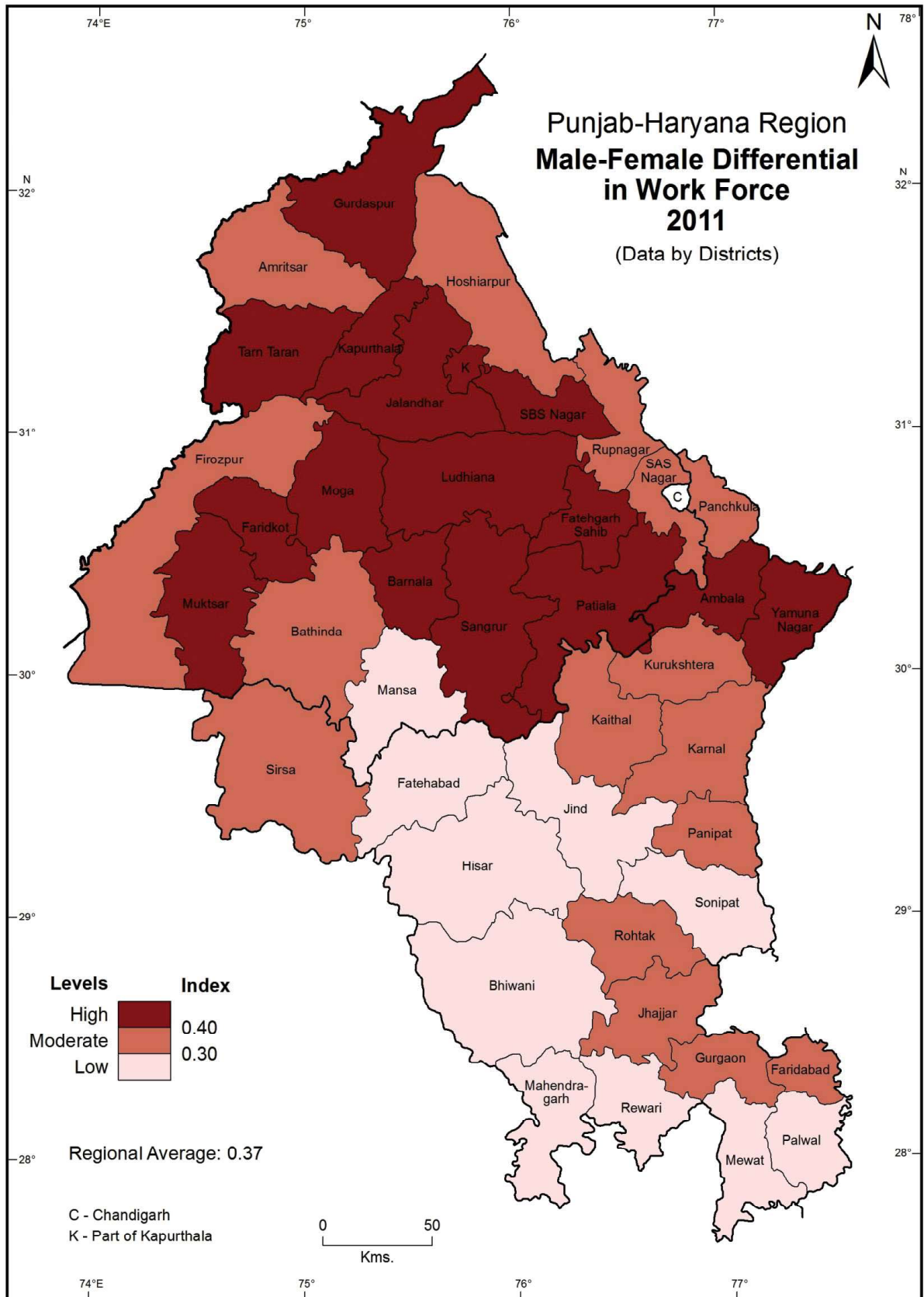


Fig. 2

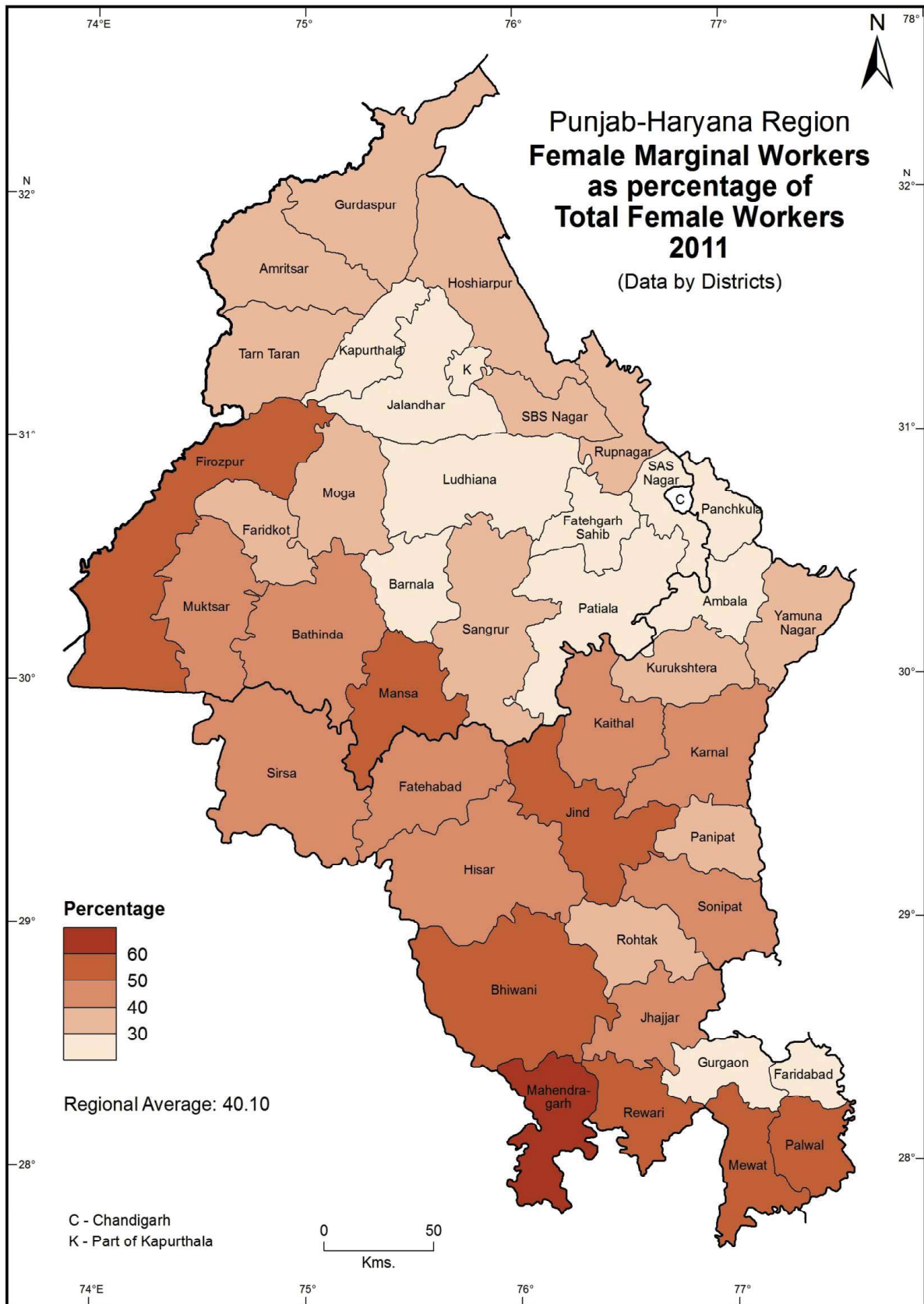


Fig.3

Haryana (0.33) implying that the prejudices against female's outdoor activities were still prevailing high in Punjab than that in Haryana; in Haryana sub-region the index was less than 0.3 in most of the districts except those located either on the Grand Trunk road or on the periphery of National Capital region of Delhi; in Punjab sub-region only the district of Mansa, located close on the Haryana border, had differential index of less than 0.3; rest of Punjab had high male-female differential index of more than 0.4 in most of the districts.

**Map 3:** Four out of every 10 female workers in the study region were marginal workers; the incidence of marginal workers was high in Haryana sub-region (45.27) in comparison to that in Punjab sub-region (34.93); spatially speaking, Punjab's Bist-Doab and districts surrounding Chandigarh as also the districts of Ludhiana, Barnala, Patiala etc. had the lowest incidence (less than 30 per cent) of marginal female workers; large parts of Malwa, Bist-Doab, and Foot-hill zone had comparatively higher incidence of marginal workers among females than the rest of Punjab; while most of the marginal female workers in Punjab sub-region were engaged in other/miscellaneous services like their compatriot main workers; in the case of Haryana sub-region, most of the marginal female workers were still engaged in agricultural sector; the share of non-agricultural sector among female workers was on the increase in Punjab sub-region comparatively.

In fine, the most important typical feature of female participation in outdoor economically gainful activities in Punjab-Haryana region, was at its low incidence, probably lowest in the country, due to (i) continuing prejudices against female's

participation in outdoor economic activities more so among select segments of rural Indian society such as Jats both among Sikhs and Hindus alike; (ii) comparatively little development of non-agricultural sector especially in rural areas, the impact of new initiatives of startups introduced in post-2014 period might get reflected in the next Census of 2021; (iii) comparatively low literacy rate among the females coupled with low age at marriage of girls in general specifically in rural areas; (iv) limited availability of jobs suitable for females in the rural areas; and (v) growing competition among males and females for jobs which still remain scarce under the prevailing conditions of unemployment, specially in the organized sector and in rural areas.

Thus, incidence of female participation in work was the product of deep rooted socio-cultural-historical and economic factors. Historical factors apart, Punjab Jat female especially, the Jat-Sikh, was more shy of taking up a job in the agricultural sector in rural areas than Hindu Jat female of Haryana placed in the similar situation, although measured on indices of status of women, the Punjabi Jat-Sikh females may rank higher than their compatriots in Haryana. The new initiatives of providing loans for self-employment to needy youth, both males and females, under the government's startup schemes started after 2014 will take a few more years to make an impact and hence may get reflected in 2021 Census. It is being claimed that once it picks up, it may succeed in generating self-employment on a scale not seen before in the country. In this respect, it needs to be stressed here that there was a dire need to provide most required impetus to the non-agricultural sector that can provide a boon for female workers in the region.

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