



punjab geographer



A PEER REVIEWED AND REFEREED JOURNAL OF APG AND ISPER INDIA

VOLUME 15

ISSN- 0973-3485

OCTOBER 2019



Map Series No. XII
PUNJAB-HARYANA REGION:
SPATIAL PATTERN OF WORK FORCE, 2011

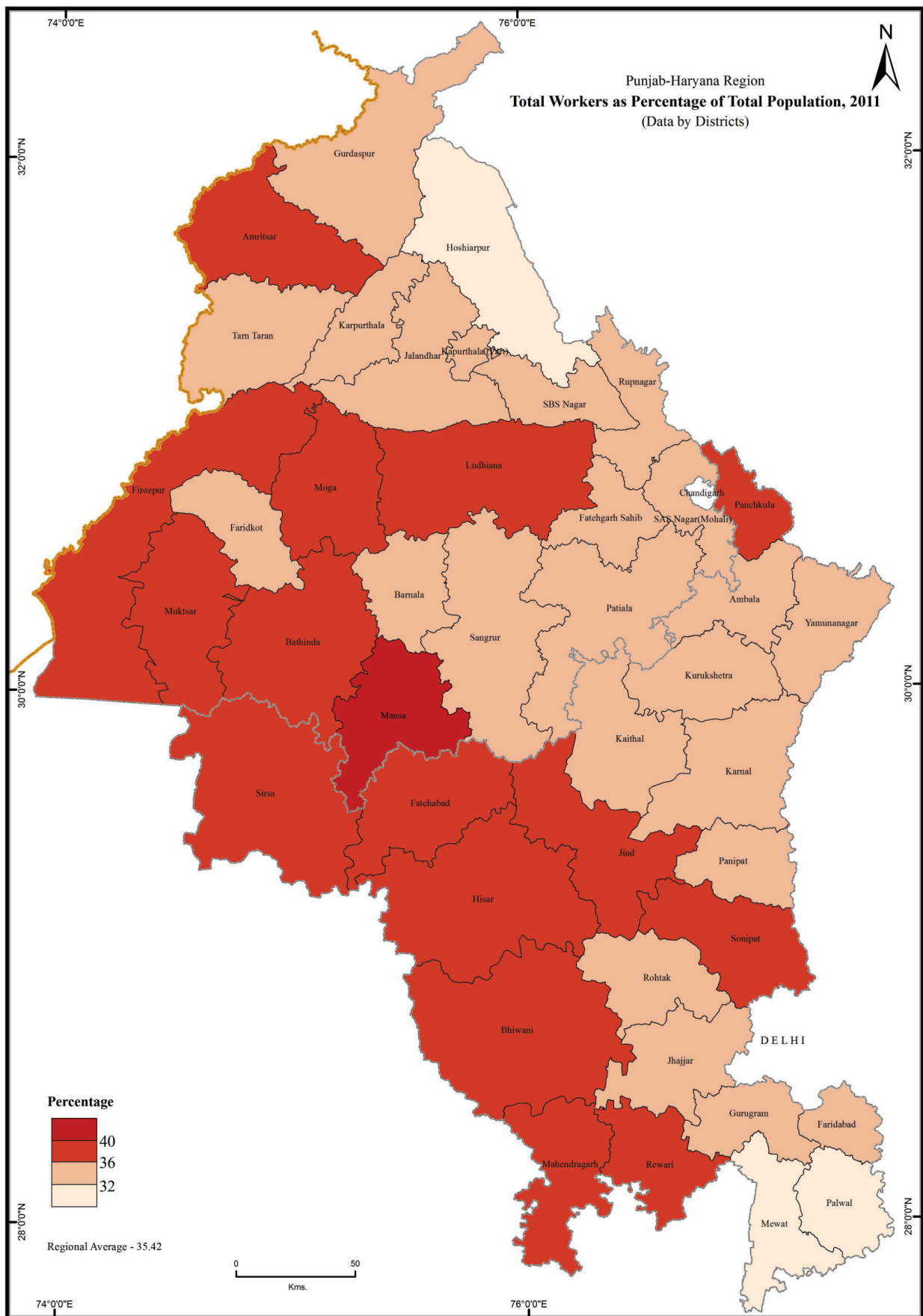
R. C. Chandna

In tune with other less developed countries of the world, India continues to have high dependency ratio as a by-product of poor participation rate. Only 4 out of every 10 persons could claim a working status. This low proportion of workers in the country was partly associated with country's continuing high rate of natural increase of 1.4 per cent per annum (2018). It results in bulging out at the base of population pyramid. Prejudices against female participation in work outside the four walls of the house especially among some segments of India's populace (Muslims) could be another important factor. No wonder, one major factor that differentiates India from the developed world is this wide disparity between participation rates of males and females. While in the developed countries, the females are equal partners in economic struggle, in case of India female participation is only nominal, only half that of males.

From among different states of India, the study region constitutes an area of low participation rates in general. Hardly 35.42 per cent of region's population could claim working status in 2011 and the situation in Punjab sub-region (35.67 per cent) and Haryana sub-region (35.17 per cent) was not very much different. The low participation rate in the study region could be associated, among other factors, with (i) declining but still continuing prejudices against female

participation in economically gainful activities especially among Muslims and Jats; (ii) comparatively low literacy rates among females; (iii) limited job opportunities for female employment; and (iv) generally slow growth rate of economy resulting in high incidence of unemployment. However, it needs to be stressed here that the extent of work force in the study region would have been still lower but for high percentage of scheduled castes population here, who have in-migrated from far off areas in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh etc. to work as farm labour in this comparatively agriculturally prosperous region. With the increasing pace of socio-economic development in these distantly located states, the migratory pattern of labour force may undergo a significant change by the end of current decade 2011-21 or say by the time we have our next census in 2021 affecting the availability of labour force in the study region. How far it will force the natives to return to their farms will be interesting to watch in the coming decade.

In tune with overall Indian situation, vis-à-vis rural/urban differential, the study region also displayed marginally higher (36.36 per cent) participation rate in the countryside in comparison to urban (34.35 per cent) areas. Such a rural-urban differential in participation rates could be the product of (i) their differential in nature of economy; (ii) their differential in



Source: Census of India, 2011

Fig. 1

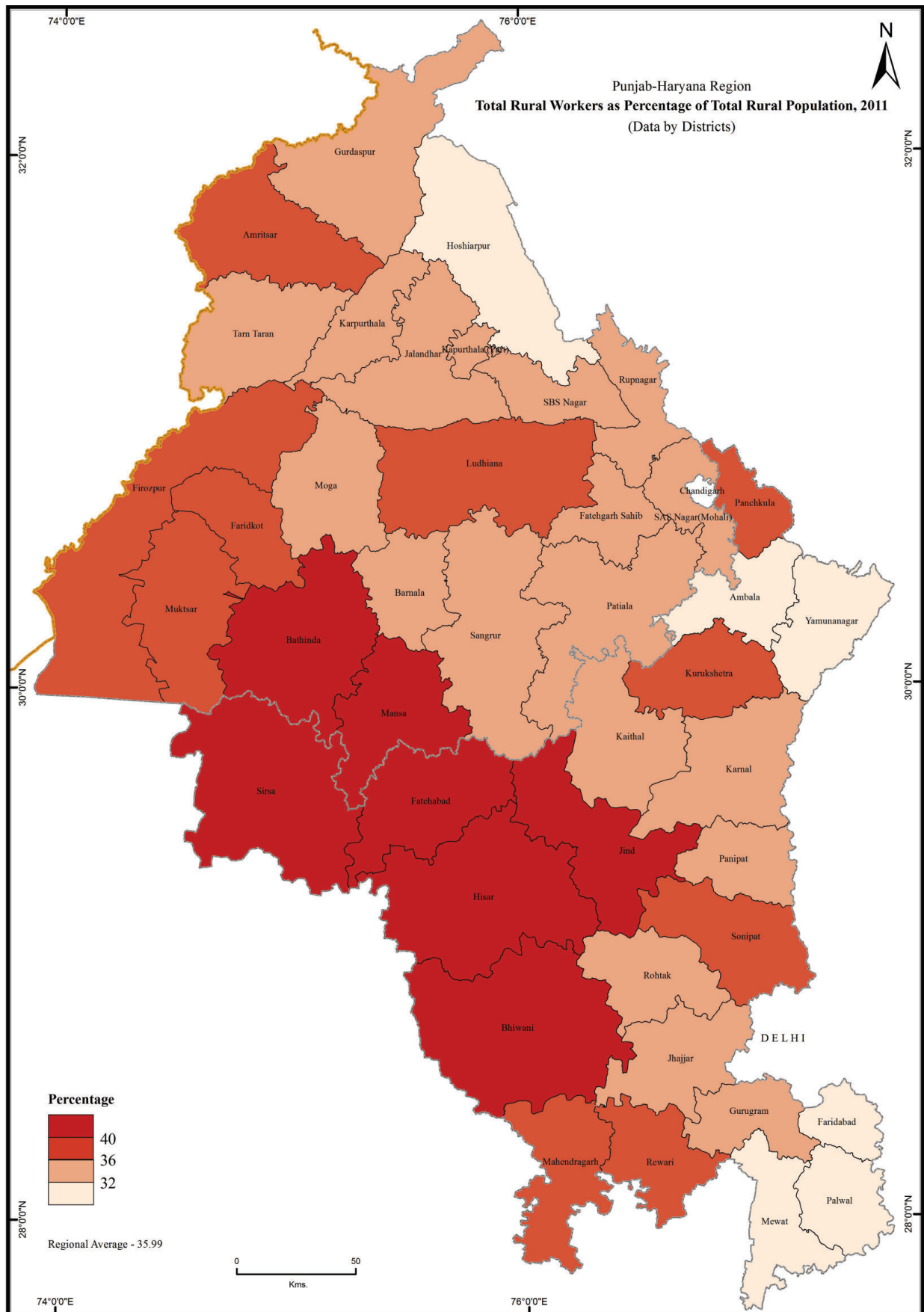
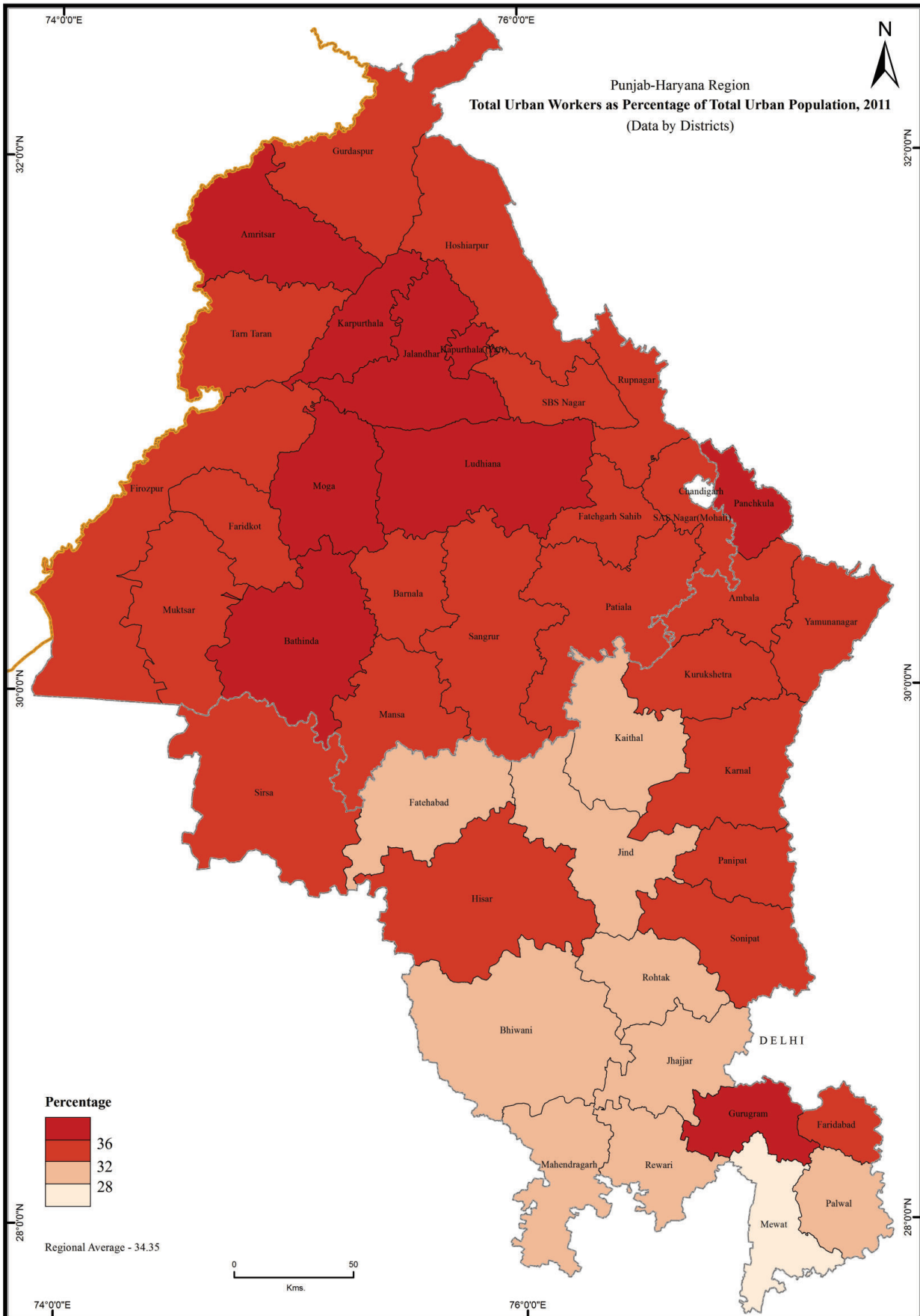


Fig. 2



Source: Census of India, 2011

Fig. 3

literacy rates; (iii) their differential in degree of socio-economic awakening; (iv) their differential in child participation rates; and (v) their differential in proportion of scheduled castes persons. In rural areas, the nature of economy was such that allowed associate workers from within the family; literacy rates were comparatively low allowing early entry into work force especially when there was no basic educational qualification requirements to work on the farm; socio-economic awakening was low with limited knowledge about varied opportunities available; child participation was high and proportion of scheduled castes persons was high, all permitting higher work participation. In urban areas, on the contrary, type of economy required skills/education that delayed the entry into work force, socio-economic awakening was high permitting high level of information about opportunities and hence acquiring of skill/education accordingly; child participation was under scanner and hence under control and proportion of scheduled castes population was low dipping child participation further as child participation in work is normally high among scheduled castes population.

In this background of overall poor participation rate, one could not miss intra-regional variations in the participation rate from one part of the study region to another. It varied from the lowest 26.62 per cent in Mewat district of Haryana in the south to the highest of 42.68 per cent in Mansa district of Punjab. Mewat in Haryana had a considerable segment of Muslim population and females in their case are still not permitted to work outside the four walls of the house. However, spatially speaking, one could observe a general northwest to southeast divide (Fig. 1 and 2). Areas west of this divide have comparatively higher participation rate in comparison to the areas located east of this divide. Spatial pattern

of total and rural workers is no different from each other. Amritsar and Ludhiana districts in Punjab and those of Panchkula, Kurukshetra and Sonapat in Haryana are the only exception of comparatively higher participation rates located east of the above said divide. However, Fig. 3 displaying spatial pattern of urban work force, one can observe a north-south divide where areas of south of divide have low participation rates in comparison to areas located north of this divide. It needs to be stressed here that the spatial variations are marginal only in terms of quantum of work force. Spatially, one could observe (i) a positive correlation between proportion of scheduled castes population and the quantum of work force due to higher participation rates among this segment of Indian population; and (ii) a negative correlation between proportion of Muslim population and the work force due to negligible female participation in economically gainful activities in this segment of Indian population.

In fine, the study region constitutes one such area of the country which has low participation rates in general and more so in its urban areas and among its females. While, the urban-rural variations may be associated with the difference in the nature of economy of the two areas, among other factors; the spatial variations may be associated with the proportion of Muslim population and/or of scheduled castes population. However, keeping in view the fast expanding information network, changing socio-economic scenario, increasing literacy and education, revolutionary changes in the value system of Indian society with emergence of clearly assertive new generation, expanding web of opportunities more so in urban areas, rising cost of living, fast increasing purchasing power, one should not be surprised to see a sea change in the work force scenario of the study region by the time we have

our next census in 2021.

R. C. Chandna, Formerly Professor,
Department of Geography,
Panjab University, Chandigarh

punjab geographer

