CARVING OUT RELIGIOUS REGIONS OF HARYANA

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ABSTRACT

Religion is an important cultural trait of human beings. Haryana being located in the north-western part of India, has gone through numerous historical turmoil due to foreigners attacks. It has impacted its religious composition. The present paper carves out the religious clusters in the state of Haryana to know the distribution of people as per religion. The database is taken from the Census of India 2011. The numbers of religion-wise population were standardised for each district. The standardised data was reduced to three religious clusters/regions by using the Cluster Analysis technique with the help of SPSS. Predominantly Haryana is a Hindu-dominated state. The results verified the presence of Hindus with people of other faiths in most districts. Mainly Hindus concentrated in 16 districts making the largest religious cluster. In four districts Sikhs have a considerable presence, hence Hindus+Sikhs made the second largest cluster. Only one district Nuh (Mewat) had domination of Muslims but here also presence of Hindus cannot be ignored. So, irrefutably Haryana can be assigned as a Hindu majority state with a few pockets of Sikh and Muslim concentration. The findings can be used for various planning purposes specifically related to religious harmony and religion-specific developmental activities.

Key words: Religious regions/clusters, cluster analysis, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims.

INTRODUCTION

Historically Haryana is the region where the Vedic civilisation began and flourished along the banks of river Saraswati (Wheeler, 1968). The place is well known for the writing of sacred Vedas and the historical war of Mahabharata. Pal (2021) stated that "seven seals having the same text and found only at Kalibangan seem to report a war in the vicinity that is probably the great Bharata War". Haryana is located in northwest India (27° 39′ N-30° 35′ N and 74° 28′ E- 77° 36′ E) encompassing an area of 44212 sq Km. Geographically it is composed of Shivalik foothills in the north, Yamuna-Ghaggar plain in the east, semi-arid desert in the south-west and Aravali hills in the south. It was carved out of the state of Punjab on November 1, 1966, as this eastern region was relatively dissimilar from the western one in

terms of religion as well as the linguistic composition of the population. In 2011, it had a population of 2.53 crore people (census 2011) of which 87.5 per cent were Hindus, 07 per cent Muslims, 4.9 per cent Sikhs, and 0.6 per cent were including the Jains, Buddhists and others. This paper finds out the religious clusters in the state of Haryana in order to know the distribution of people according to religion.

Data Sources and Methodology

The Census of India provides data on religion for all states separately. The data set belongs to the census 2011 (C-1 Population by Religious Community). For statistical use, the data has been standardised by converting the district-wise population for each religious group into percentages. To carve out religious regions/clusters, a data reduction technique (Cluster Analysis) was employed using SPSS (Rogerson, 2015).

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Religious Composition of Haryana

Haryana is the land of the Indus people as the herald of the Indus Valley civilisation. The region had gone through tremendous historical turmoil encompassing the great Mahabharata war to the advent of foreign looters and invaders (Basham, 1954). The land has witnessed three decisive wars at Panipat. It has seen the power centres changing from indigenous tribal communities, and great sovereign Kings to foreign Muslims and British rules (Rizvi, 1987). All these have impacted its demography and hence the religious composition as well. In 2011, Haryana had 21 districts and Mahendergarh was the district with the highest percentage share of the Hindu population while Nuh (Mewat) had the lowest. The Muslim population was highest in Nuh (Mewat) and the lowest percentage was in Mahendergarh. The third religious community, the Christians had the highest and lowest percentages in Gurugram and Mahendergarh districts respectively. As Haryana was carved out of the state of Punjab, the Sikhs had the highest percentage in Sirsa while the lowest in Nuh (Mewat). By percentage, the Buddhists and Jains had the highest share in Panchkula and Gurugram districts respectively (Table 1).

Table 1: District wise population (in per cent*) for religious communities in the state of Haryana.

District/Community	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Buddhists	Jains	Others
Ambala	84.65	1.96	0.33	12.25	0.03	0.43	0.35
Bhiwani	98.57	0.95	0.05	0.15	0.02	0.06	0.21
Faridabad	87.77	8.93	0.54	1.91	0.04	0.27	0.54
Fatehabad	82.72	0.89	0.11	16.03	0.02	0.12	0.12
Gurgaon	93.03	4.68	0.64	1	0.06	0.49	0.1
Hisar	97.54	1.24	0.11	0.7	0.02	0.21	0.17
Jhajjar	98.67	0.86	0.08	0.11	0.01	0.07	0.2
Jind	95.69	1.73	0.07	2.18	0.01	0.19	0.13
Kaithal	90.71	0.77	0.16	8.15	0.02	0.03	0.15
Karnal	89.08	2.1	0.14	8.38	0.04	0.1	0.16
Kurukshetra	83.47	1.66	0.2	14.55	0.02	0.04	0.06
Mahendergarh	99.04	0.61	0.03	0.19	0.01	0.07	0.05
Mewat (Nuh)	20.37	79.2	0.11	0.05	0.05	0.13	0.09
Palwal	79.25	20	0.09	0.38	0.03	0.09	0.16
Panchkula	87.42	4.18	0.46	7.3	0.18	0.29	0.17
Panipat	89.92	7.19	0.19	2.08	0.02	0.39	0.22
Rewari	98.76	0.63	0.08	0.2	0.02	0.17	0.14
Rohtak	98.37	0.77	0.07	0.37	0.02	0.33	0.07
Sirsa	72.6	0.74	0.17	26.17	0.03	0.17	0.13
Sonipat	95.87	3.11	0.1	0.31	0.02	0.42	0.17
Yamunanagar	81.12	11.41	0.3	6.96	0.01	0.13	0.07

Source: Census of India- PC11_C-01 Religion (Census 2011). *Numbers standardised in percentages.

Carving out Religious Regions/Clusters

Geography as a discipline rests on spatial distributions and analysis as its pivotal concepts (Krishan & Singh, 2017). The population of various religious groups in a district was reduced row-wise to get a single cluster value by employing data reduction technique (Cluster Analysis). Cluster analysis collapses the data row-wise by finding rows of data that are similar to one another (Rogerson, 2015). The most important decision when using k-means clustering is choosing the number of clusters (Bauer, 2012). Singh (2019) while carving out religious regions for India (district level), worked out six religious clusters namely the

Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, the Buddhists+Hindus and the Hindus+Christians+Others. So while carving out religious regions of Haryana only three clusters were finalised (Table 2). In this text, the clusters were used simultaneously for regions, as regions are larger areas. Here, only one district was making a separate cluster, so it was geographically more appropriate to use the word cluster instead of region.

Table 2: Final Cluster Centers (result of cluster analysis by using SPSS)			
	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Hindu	80.86	92.55	20.37
Muslim	1.31	4.32	79.20
Christian	.20	.19	.11
Sikh	17.25	2.52	.05
Budh	.03	.03	.05
Jain	.19	.21	.13
Others	.17	.17	.09

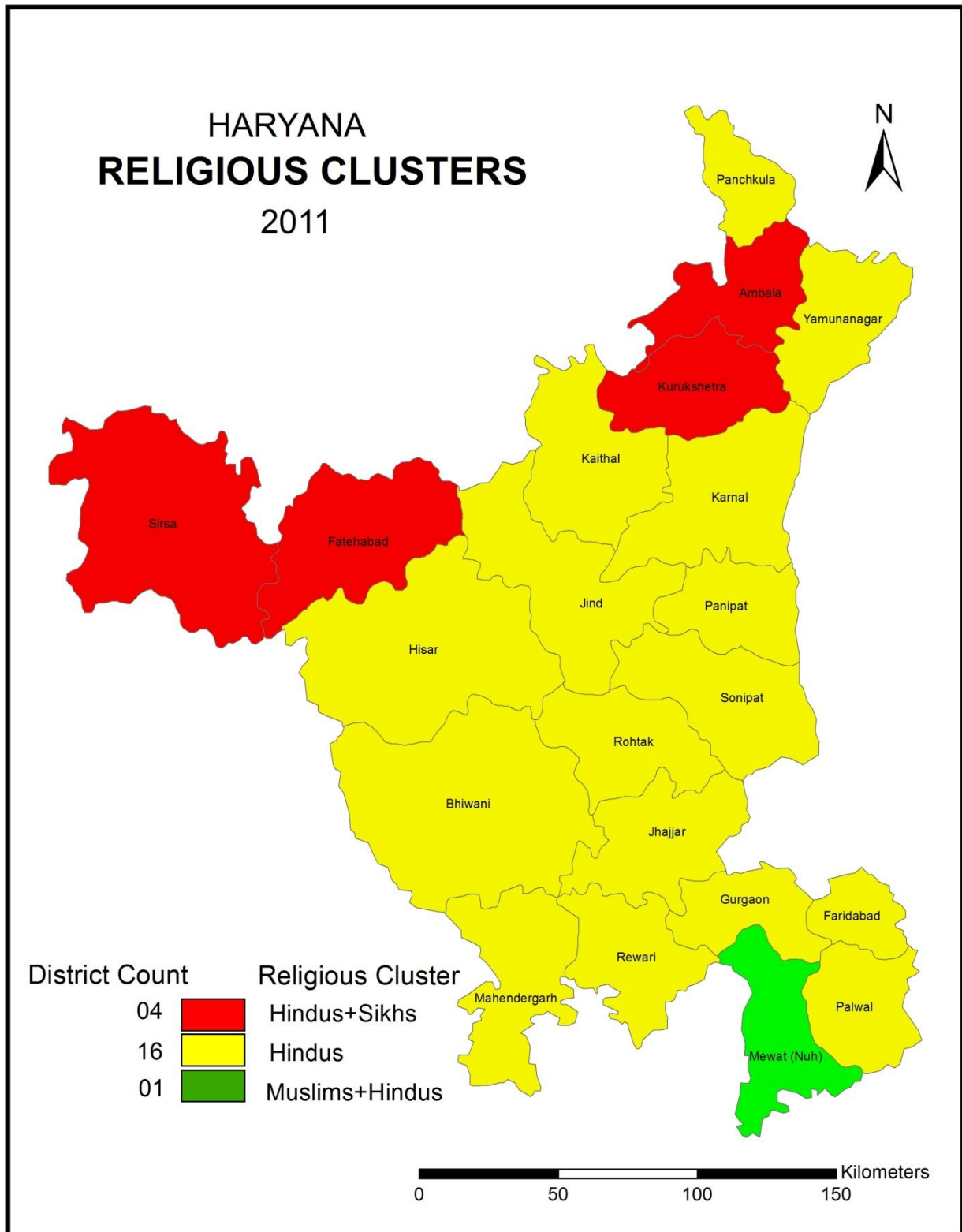Cluster 1: Hindus+Sikhs

Cluster 2: Hindus

Cluster 3: Muslims+Hindus

Source: Author (calculated by using SPSS)

Predominantly Haryana is a Hindu-dominated state as a result of the clustering process. It verified the presence of Hindus with people of other faiths in most districts. Mainly Hindus concentrate in 16 districts making the largest religious cluster. In four districts Sikhs have a considerable presence but the presence of the Hindu population is also an important demographic attribute. Hence Hindus+Sikhs made the second largest cluster. Only one district Nuh (Mewat) was dominated by Muslims but here also presence of Hindus cannot be ignored. So indisputably Haryana can be assigned as a Hindu majority state with a few pockets of Sikhs and Muslim concentration. However, Muslims were in the majority in Nuh.

Map 1 shows religious clusters/regions of Haryana. From the eye bird view, one can say that core of the Haryana is populated by Hindus while the western periphery along the border of Punjab has significant Sikh concentration in Ambala, Kurukshetra, Fatehabad and Sirsa. Muslim concentration in Mewat (Nuh) was the outcome of the partition (1947) process. Later on, their population grew at a faster rate than other communities and the Muslims overwhelmingly formed their majority cluster.

Map1: Religious Regions/Clusters of Haryana, 2011.
Source: Author

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