

**CHANGES IN THE DISTRIBUTIONAL PATTERN
OF THE SIKHS IN INDIA – 1881-1971
A GEOGRAPHICAL APPRAISAL**

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INTRODUCTION

Religion has been defined as a system of faith and worship.... a body of institutionalised sacred beliefs, observances and social practices.¹ It is a great dynamic force in social life and vital changes in civilisation are always linked with changes in religious beliefs and ideals.² It is basic to the foundation of any society, source of balance and stability.³ There are hardly any areas in the world where social and demographic characteristics of the population do not bear the imprint of religion.⁴ Among the phenomena causing and reflecting areal differences in cultures, religion is a potent and sensitive element.⁵

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- ¹ D. E. Sopher : Geography of Religions, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967, p.1.
 - ² C. H. Dawsons : Progress and Religion, Sheed and Ward, New York, 1934, p. 234.
 - ³ H. A. Phelps and D. Henderson : Population in its Human Aspects, Appleton, New York, 1958, p. 298.
 - ⁴ G. S. Gosal and A. B. Mukerji: "The religious composition of India's population - a spatial analysis," Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie, 61 (1970), p. 91.
 - ⁵ W. Zelinsky : "An approach to the religious geography of the United States: pattern of church membership in 1952," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 51 (1961), p. 139.

Statement of the Problem

In a country like India where religion has been of great relevance in all aspects of life and where the different religious communities have developed through time characteristics of their own, the importance of the study of the religious composition in totality or of a specific religious group cannot be overemphasized. Among the four major religious communities of India, the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians and the Sikhs, the last one is the most recently evolved. Its growth has been the function of the past about five hundred years. Though numerically small in the Indian context, only 10,378,797 out of a total population of 547,949,809 in 1971 and accounting for 1.9 per cent of the country's total population, the Sikhs have been occupying places of disproportionately great importance in the nation's social, economic and political life.

Over three-fourths of the total Sikh population was recorded within the confines of the present Punjab state where they were in a majority in eight districts out of a total of eleven in 1971. The position of the Sikhs among the major religious minorities is unique in that no other minority group

is so overwhelmingly concentrated in a small compact area as the Sikhs. It is also true that the Sikhs are one of the most mobile among the various groups of people in India. Not only are they found practically in all parts of the country and in all spheres of life but they also have shown a great sense of adventure in moving to other parts of the world. Though so few in numbers in the context of the world's population, they enjoy universal reputation for being adventurous, innovating, and hard working. There were several periods in the history of this community when its members moved from their native land to relatively distant areas of culturable wastelands and converted them into 'grain bowls' of the sub-continent. They became famous for their capacity to adjust to new conditions.

The present distributional pattern of the Sikhs has been the result of manifold processes of continual shifts and redistributions in the past. The partition of the country in 1947 made phenomenal changes in the pattern of their distribution. It was only after Independence that the area covered by the present Punjab became a Sikh majority region for the first time in the Indian history. In addition to the impact of migrations,

the distributional pattern of the Sikhs changed from time to time also because of conversion from other faiths. Thus, the evolution of the pattern of distribution of the Sikhs, involving a variety of processes as it does, presents an interesting field of inquiry. The objective of the present study is to do that investigation. Of course, it will be done in the spirit of a geographic analysis of diffusion of a religious community.

Previous Investigations

Geographical studies pertaining to religious composition of India's population are only a few. The various characteristics of the individual religious communities have received still far less attention. Nor has any scholar examined the place of various religious groups in the geographic personality of any part of India. A few scholarly publications dealing with religious composition of India's population include papers by Brush⁶ who presented the picture as obtaining in 1951, and by Gosal and Mukerji⁷ who based their study on detailed

⁶ John E. Brush : "The distribution of religious communities in India," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 39 (1949), pp. 81-98.

⁷ Gosal and Mukerji : op. cit., pp. 91-100.

districtwise data provided by the 1961 census. In another paper, Gosal⁸ examined the changes in the religious composition of Punjab's population during 1951-61. Krishan⁹ analysed the distributional pattern of the Sikhs outside Punjab as in 1961 and Dutt and Devgun¹⁰ examined the spatial patterns of the Sikh population as in 1971. An attempt at population geography of the Muslims in India was made by Siddiqui.¹¹ Abercrombie¹² and Raza¹³ also contributed papers on the spread of Islam and on population characteristics of the Muslims in India.

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- ⁸ G. S. Gosal : "Changes in the religious composition of Punjab's population during 1951-61," The Economic Weekly, 17 (1965), pp. 119-124.
- ⁹ Gopal Krishan : "Distribution of the Sikhs outside the Punjab," Indian Geographical Journal, 46 (1971), pp. 35-41.
- ¹⁰ A. K. Dutt and S. Devgun : "Diffusion of Sikhism and recent migration patterns of Sikhs in India," GeoJournal, 1 (1977), pp. 81-90.
- ¹¹ Hafis Ahmad Siddiqui : Population Geography of Muslims of India, S. Chand, New Delhi, 1976.
- ¹² Thomas J. Abercrombie : "The sword and the sermon" National Geographic, 142 (1972), pp. 3-44.
- ¹³ Moonis Raza and Others : "Indian Muslims - some aspects of regional demography," Colloquium on Problems of Muslims in India, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Systematic and comprehensive studies on the Sikhs by geographers are distinctly lacking. The historians, theologians and philosophers have made greater contributions in this regard. Among the outstanding works on the history of the Sikhs were the studies by Gupta,¹⁴ (Ganda) Singh,¹⁵ (Teja) Singh and (Ganda) Singh,¹⁶ Court,¹⁷ (Khushwant) Singh,¹⁸ M'Gregor,¹⁹ and Cunningham.²⁰ Mcleod²¹ made a study of evolution of the Sikh community by using census data for

¹⁴ Hari Ram Gupta : History of the Sikhs, Minerva Book Shop, Lahore, 1944.

¹⁵ Ganda Singh : History of the Sikhs, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1950.

¹⁶ Teja Singh and Ganda Singh : A Short History of the Sikhs, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1950.

¹⁷ Henry Court : History of the Sikhs, Sushil Gupta, Calcutta, 1959 (Reprint).

¹⁸ Khushwant Singh : History of the Sikhs, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, Vol. I, 1963, Vol. II 1966.

¹⁹ W. L. M'Gregor : A History of the Sikhs, Department of Languages, Punjab, Patiala, 1970 (Reprint).

²⁰ Joseph Davey Cunningham : A History of the Sikhs, S. Chand, New Delhi, 1972 (Reprint).

²¹ W. H. Mcleod : The Evolution of the Sikh Community, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1975.

the years 1881 and 1931. Similarly Macauliffe,²² Dorothy,²³ (Sher) Singh,²⁴ Archer,²⁵ (Teja) Singh,²⁶ (Bhai Jodh) Singh,²⁷ Narang,²⁸ (Khushwant) Singh,²⁹ (Harbans) Singh,³⁰ Gordon,³¹ and Gill,³² brought out important publications relating to

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- 22 Max Arthur Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion, Clarendon, Oxford, 1909.
- 23 Field Dorothy : The Religion of Sikhs, John Murray, London, 1914.
- 24 Sher Singh : Philosophy of Sikhism, Sikh University Press, Lahore, 1944.
- 25 John Clark Archer : The Sikhs, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1946.
- 26 Teja Singh : Sikhism, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1951.
- 27 Bhai Jodh Singh : Some Studies in Sikhism, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1953.
- 28 Gokul Chand Narang : Transformation of Sikhism, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1956.
- 29 Khushwant Singh : The Sikhs Today, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1959.
- 30 Harbans Singh : The Heritage of the Sikhs, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964.
- 31 J. J. H. Gordon : The Sikhs, Department of Languages, Punjab, Patiala, 1970 (Reprint).
- 32 Pritam Singh Gill : Heritage of Sikh Culture, New Academic Publishing Co., Jullundur, 1975.

the philosophy of Sikh religion. Scholars like Ray,³³ Sahni,³⁴ Nayyar,³⁵ and Malhotra³⁶ made studies pertaining to the political aspects of this community.

All the studies referred to above were historical, theological or political in nature but rarely paid any attention to the spatial aspects of the Sikhs. The present study is an effort to fill this gap. It would examine the changes in the distributional pattern of the Sikhs during 1881-1971, the years coinciding with the first regular and the latest censuses in India. An attempt has been made to utilise all the available data collected by all the ten decennial censuses from 1881 to 1971. Even for the pre-1881 period, the available information from historical records has been made use of to build a picture of the spatial diffusion of the Sikhs. This is not a duplication of what has been done by historians, theologians and political scientists. It is

³³ Niharranjan Ray : The Sikh Gurus and Sikh Society, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1971.

³⁴ Ruchi Ram Sahni: Struggle for Reforms in Sikh Shrines, Shiremani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar (Non-dated).

³⁵ Baldev Raj Nayyar : Minority Politics in Punjab, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1966.

³⁶ S.L.Malhotra : Gandhi- An Experiment with Communal Politics, University Publication Bureau, Chandigarh, 1976.

an attempt at examining the Sikhs in the spatial perspective, consistent with the philosophy of geography.

Methodology

As already mentioned, the present study is based primarily on the available census data on the Sikhs for all the censuses since 1881. These data have been mapped by suitable cartographic techniques. Patterns emerging on the maps have been described and interpreted with the help of published material on the matter as well as on the basis of information collected through two questionnaires circulated for this purpose. The first questionnaire sought to obtain information on out-migration of the Sikhs from various parts of Punjab and the second questionnaire collected information on the process of Sikh in-migration to various areas outside Punjab. The information on conversion to Sikhism, within and outside Punjab, was gathered largely from historical studies on the Sikh community.

The study has been somewhat constrained by the non-availability of all the requisite data. The decennial census data on the Sikhs for the years 1881 to 1941 were available by provinces and princely states and not by districts for the country as a whole. Happily

for the Punjab, where more than 90 per cent of the Sikhs were concentrated, these data were available at district level. This ensured the depth of analysis that this study aimed to maintain. The changes in administrative boundaries of the provinces, states and districts from time to time also introduced some difficulties. Necessary adjustments were made in each case to make the data comparable. Above all, the definition of the Sikh itself was subject to change at some censuses. Such definitional alterations had to be kept in view while tracing the growth of this community. In any case, the census definition of a Sikh has remained constant since 1911 and as such the problem was confined only to the period preceding that year.

Organisation of the Material

The material in this study has been organised in twelve chapters. The first chapter describes the origin, evolution and diffusion of Sikhism till 1881 when the first regular census was taken in India. The discussion in this chapter was based on the scanty historical records available on the theme. The second chapter provides a description and interpretation of the distributional

pattern of the Sikhs in India as in 1881. The spatial patterns of the growth of the Sikhs as well as changes in their distributional patterns during the succeeding decades have been dealt with in Chapters III to XI. Chapter XII consolidates the whole picture and presents a description of the distributional pattern of the Sikhs as in 1971. The closing pages provide a summary of conclusions arrived at in the study.

CHAPTER I

THE SIKHS : PRE-1881 PERIOD

Sikhism is the youngest major religion of India. Hinduism, which is the basal, is the most ancient. Islam and Christianity are also quite old. The origin of Sikhism goes back only to the later part of the fifteenth century. It had its beginning in the Punjab as a reform movement enunciated by Nanak, the first Sikh Guru.¹ The movement which was carried on by the succeeding nine Gurus, ultimately culminated in the establishment of a distinct and progressive religious group during the time of the tenth and the last Guru, Gobind Singh. The spatial spread and numerical evolution of the Sikhs would therefore be better understood if a brief account is given of each of the ten gurus in terms of the places they lived in, visited or got associated with, in addition to their preachings and impact thereof.

Nanak was born on 15th April, 1469. His father Mehta Kalan Das, who came from the Bedi sub-caste of the Hindu Khatri, was an accountant in village Talwandi Rai Bhee, now Nankana Sahib, located nearly seventy

¹ The custom of accepting a person as guru (the spiritual leader) by a number of people who in turn described themselves as shishya (disciple) is an age old tradition in India. The term 'Sikh' is a derivation form of the word 'shishya'.

kilometres west of Lahore in Pakistan. At the age of twelve, Nanak was married to Sulakhini, daughter of Mool Chand Chona of Batala in Gurdaspur district. He got the job of an accountant with Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi at Sultanpur in Kapurthala district. Here he met a Muslim minstrel, Mardana, and the two began to organise the singing of hymns. During one of the early morning ablutions by the river, Nanak had his first mystic experience. The Janamsakhi² describes it as communion with God, who gave him a cup of amrit (nectar) to drink and charged him with the mission.³ The mysterious voice spoke : 'Nanak, he whom you bless will be blessed by Me, he to whom you are benevolent shall receive My benevolence. I am the Great God, the Supreme Creator. Thou art the Guru, the Supreme Guru of God.'⁴

Soon after this incident, Nanak undertook extensive travels to different parts of India and abroad. The first

² Janamsakhi : It is a biography of Nanak, the earliest version of which was written by an anonymous author some time about 50 years after the death of Nanak.

³ Khushwant Singh : History of the Sikhs (Vol. I) Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1963, p.31.

⁴ Bhai Vir Singh : Puratan Janamsakhi, Khalsa Samachar, 1948, p. 18.

tour was to the east where he went to places of pilgrimage like Mathura, Benaras, Gaya, and on to Bengal, Assam and Dacca.⁵ On his way back he visited Jagannathpuri in Orissa. His second tour was towards the south. He went to what is now Tamil Nadu and then to Sri Lanka. He is said to have come back along the western coast through Malabar, Konkan, Bombay and Rajasthan. The third tour was in the Himalayan regions, as far as Ladakh. The Guru's fourth and last long journey was to Mecca and Madina. He also went to Baghdad where he spent some time with the local fakirs (saints).

After his return to the Punjab, Nanak went around preaching at different places and then settled down with his family in a place named Kartarpur on the bank of Ravi, now in Pakistan. People would come in hundreds to hear his preachings. He made them observe a strict routine that set a pattern of daily life of his followers who by then had come to be known as his Sikhs (disciples). The same routine was followed by the Sikhs in other places. Nanak's hymns were copied and sent to them. Every centre had a leader to instruct new faithfuls. Thus each such centre became a centre of diffusion of what Nanak stood for and preached.

⁵ G. B. Singh : "Sikh relics in Eastern Bengal", Punjab Past and Present, 1 (1967), p. 74.

Nanak's message made a great impact on the minds of people in the Punjab. His ideas can be summarized as follows: God is formless, therefore, no idol worship; God is both truth and reality and to Him all human beings are equal, therefore a casteless society; a belief in human will, therefore, denial of fate or predestination; the detachment of a yogi while living among his fellow beings, therefore, not a life of ascetic isolation (like Hinduistic Vanaprastha), nor one of torturing of one's body (like Jain Itavara) but one of tempered moderation.⁶ The Bani of Nanak, that is his hymns, comprise prayers, admonitions and counsels, and most of the sayings are on the greatness of God Most Holy. Many persons, dissenting both from Hinduism and Islam, became his disciples. His teachings appealed especially to the socially down trodden Hindus and to the poor Muslim peasantry.

Nanak took practical steps to break the vicious hold of caste by starting free community kitchen (Guru Ka Langar) in all centres and persuading his followers, irrespective of their caste, to eat together. No wonder, his message of commonality among the people became popular and drew them towards his mission.

⁶ Khushwant Singh : op. cit., pp. 41-42.

The places and areas covered by Nanak in his travels and his preachings provide the earliest spatial network for the spread of Sikhism. The establishment of a large number of Sikh shrines (gurdwaras) at places which Nanak visited sowed the seeds of propagation of the Sikh faith in the times to come (Map 1).⁷ These were the earliest hearths from where Sikhism spread in the Punjab as well as in some other areas. Of course, not all the places that Nanak visited outside the Punjab continued adherence to his message. Some isolated centres did maintain the links up till now, as in Assam and Karnataka. Even within the Punjab, the growth of Sikhism was neither contiguous spatially nor continuous temporally. It had many impediments and interruptions, both in terms of space and time, to which reference will be made later.

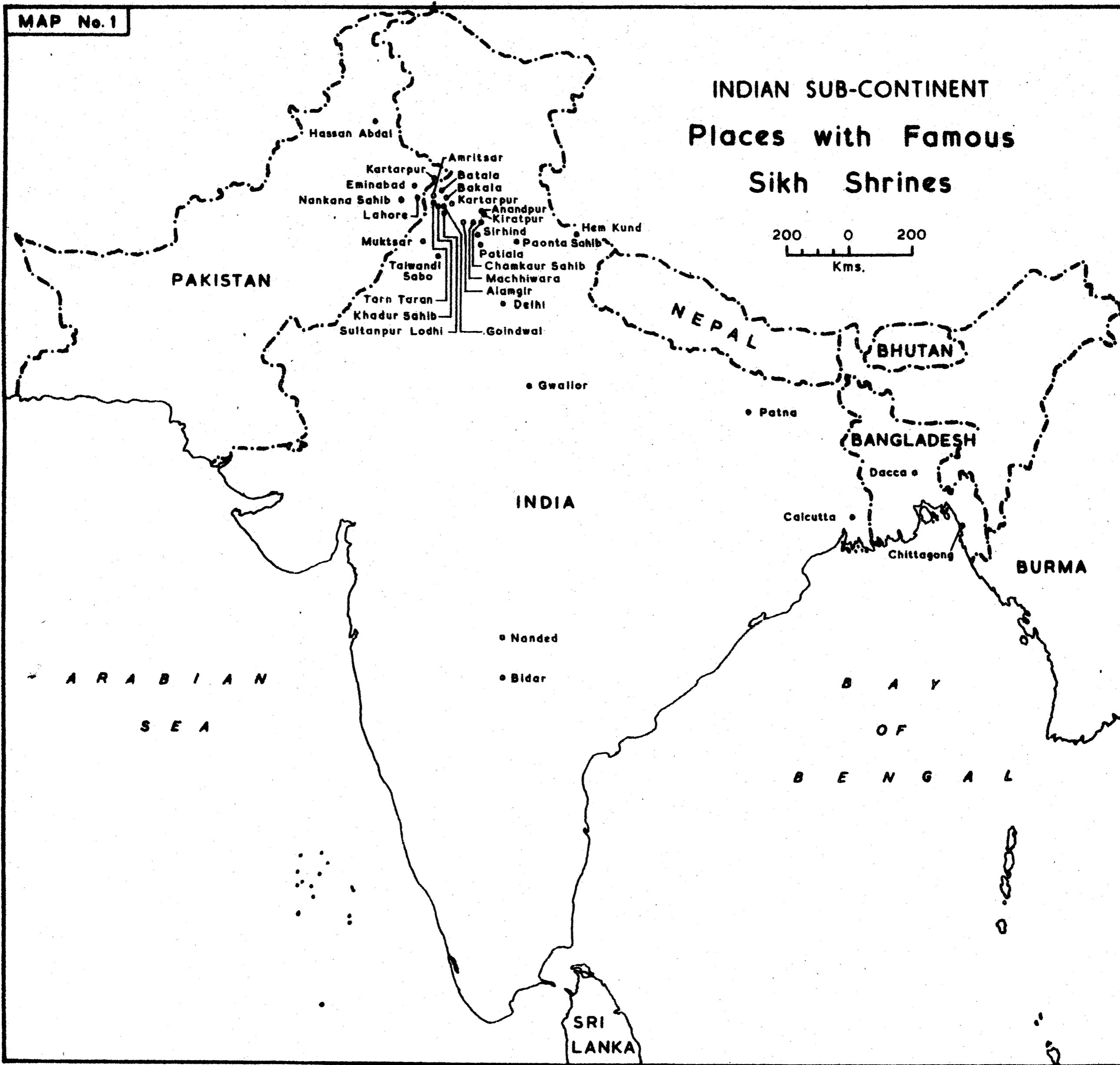
The spatial spread and numerical increase of the Sikhs subsequent to the passing away of Nanak in 1539 corresponded with the travels and places of residence of the succeeding nine Gurus. Nanak was followed by Angad as the second Guru. He held the Gurudom for thirteen years: 1539-1552 A.D. After coming under the

⁷ See Surinder Singh Johar : The Sikh Gurus and their Shrines, Vivek Publishing Company, Delhi, 1976.

MAP No. 1

INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT Places with Famous Sikh Shrines

200 0 200
Kms.



spell of Nanak's message, he devoted himself to the service of the Sikh community at Kartarpur in Lahore district. Later on he shifted to Khadur in Amritsar district. The extension of the Sikh faith during the time of Angad was largely within the Majha tract of which Amritsar district was the main constituent. He took the thirty five letters of the acrostic composed by Nanak, selected the appropriate letters from other scripts current in northern India, and called it Gurumukhi⁸ (from the mouth of the Guru). This step had far reaching implications. It gave the Sikhs a written language distinct from that of the Hindus or the Muslims. It fostered among the Sikhs a sense of being a separate linguistic group.

Angad was succeeded by Amar Das (1552-74 A.D.) as the third Guru. He was a Khatra of the Bhalla sub-caste and an inhabitant of Goindwal in Amritsar district. He preached Sikhism from this very place which grew gradually into a sizable town from a small hamlet. The place assumed greater significance with the visit of the Mughal Emperor Akbar who was impressed by the way of life at Goindwal. He assigned the revenue of several villages

⁸ Khushwant Singh : op. cit., pp. 50-52.

to Amer Das's daughter, Bhani, as a marriage gift.⁹ This royal patronage gave further momentum to the diffusion of Sikh religion. Thousands of people converted to the Sikh faith. The Guru organised additional centres of religious preaching within the region for the convenience and benefit of the new followers. Since the anthology was in Punjabi, it gained enormous popularity among the masses who did not understand either Sanskrit texts of the Hindus or the Arabic texts of the Muslims. Thus, Sikhism grew as a spatially well organised faith, rooted in the soil of the region.

Amer Das chose his son-in-law, Ram Das, a Khatri of the Sodhi sub-caste, as the fourth Guru (1574-81 A.D.). Ram Das also received a gift of some hundred acres of land from Emperor Akbar for construction of a tank at the present site of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. On assuming Gurudom he shifted from Goindwal to the neighbourhood of the site and started building the tank there. Gradually, the place grew as the major religious centre of the Sikhs, known as Guru Ka Chak, or Chak Ram Das or Ramdaspora.

⁹ Khushwant Singh : op. cit., p. 53.

Ram Das was followed by his son Arjun Dev (1581-1606 A.D.) as the fifth Guru. Arjun Dev's first task was to complete the construction of a gurdwara in Chak Ram Das. The place was given a new name - Amritsar (the pool of nectar). It became the principal centre of religious preaching on Sikhism. It was more central to the Majha tract, nay to the whole of the Punjab region, and provided a more convenient locus for the diffusion of Sikhism. The Guru invited tradesmen also to set up business in the town. Within a short time, Amritsar grew into a major centre of religion and trade.

Arjun Dev undertook tour of the central parts of Punjab in 1590. He got a tank dug at a place about 18 kilometres south of Amritsar. He named it as Tarn Taran (pool of salvation). It grew into another place of pilgrimage. Later he went to the Bist Doab and raised another town called Kartarpur situated in district Jullundur. From Kartarpur he went to Lahore and from there to a site on the Beas river where he built still another town named after his son as Sri Hargobindpur. During his travels for five years in the central parts of Punjab, he brought into his fold thousands of Jats of the Majha country, the sturdiest peasants of the Punjab.

Being a builder of towns with gurdwara as the nucleus, he widened the urban base of Sikhism in addition to expanding its rural sphere.

It may be noted that after Nanak, Arjun Dev did relatively extensive travelling, though confined to the Punjab region. The spatial diffusion of Sikhism during his time was more extensive than that during the times of Angad, Amar Das or Ram Das. As a result of the cumulative effect of the preachings of the five Gurus, the Majha region became an established core region of Sikhism, with small off-shoots in the Bist Doab.

Till the death of Akbar in 1605, the spread of Sikhism was fairly smooth and uninterrupted, though slow and spatially short-ranged. With his passing away, a turning point came in the political conditions in which the struggle for survival as well as expansion for the Sikhs became hard for a long time to come.

After Akbar his son, Jahangir, began persecuting the Sikhs. He disapproved the growing popularity of Arjun Dev who died in 1606 under torturing conditions. The Mughal governors stationed at Lahore had no difficulty in initiating punitive action against the Sikhs when directed to do so by the Delhi rulers. The easy accessibility of the Punjab plains brought initial success to the vindictive Mughals who had a much superior army.

Hargobind, the sixth Guru (1606-1645 A.D.), adopted a militant strategy for the preservation and enhancement of the Sikh faith, apart from continuing its spiritual heritage.¹⁰ This marked the beginning of a martial tradition among the Sikhs. A large number of peasants as well as others in the Majha tract, the Bist doab, and the foothill zone responded to the call to arms under Hargobind. He also travelled quite widely in the Punjab and the Gangetic plain as far as Pilibhit. He went northwards into Kashmir. He built GURDWARAS and appointed missionaries on the route for spiritual as well as martial preachings. He settled finally at a place named Kiratpur, located strategically in the foot of the Siwalik hills in the Punjab.

Jahangir's son Shah Jahan continued the policy of persecution of the Sikhs. The Mughal army clashed with the Sikhs in the central Punjab twice but failed to overpower them. Fearing that a larger force would be sent by the Delhi Emperor, Hargobind retired to the arid tract near Bhatinda in the Malwa region of the Punjab. Wherever he went, numerous people became his followers. As such, the Malwa tract was initiated into Sikhism for the first time by Hargobind.

¹⁰ J. D. Cunningham : A History of the Sikhs, S. Chand, Delhi, 1972, p. 50.

The Mughal policy of religious intolerance became more severe under Aurangzeb, son of Shah Jahan. Har Rai, the seventh Guru (1645-61 A.D.) and Har Krishan, the eighth Guru (1661-1664 A.D.) were not much successful in expanding the frontiers of Sikhism.

Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru (1664-1675 A.D.), was compelled to retire into wilderness by his envious cousins, nephews and masands (bishops). He bought a hillock near the village of Makuwal, eight kilometres north of Kiratpur. He raised a new village and called it Anandpur. Even here his kins would not leave him alone. Tegh Bahadur decided to leave the Punjab until the atmosphere became more congenial. He left Anandpur with his wife and mother under difficult and challenging conditions. He travelled through Agra, Allahabad, Benaras, Gaya and reached Patna. He further crossed the Brahmaputra and visited the Sikh centres in Sylhet, Chittagong and Sundip and again came back to Patna. Many of these places, which the Guru visited, grew into centres of Sikh faith. It led to extension of Sikhism, sporadic though it might have been.

Tegh Bahadur was blessed with a son, Gobind, at Patna on December 26, 1666. In the meantime, Aurangzeb had embarked on a policy of religious persecution. There were stories of demolition of temples, forcible

conversions and imposition of taxes on the non-Muslims. The Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab were in a state of turmoil. The Guru's followers in the Punjab asked him to return to the region and instil confidence in his people. The Guru undertook a tour of the Punjab region. The Sikhs as well as the Hindus gathered around him wherever he went and sought his protection from the tyranny of the rulers. The Guru's travels were instrumental in consolidating the Sikhs and the Hindus against the Mughals.

At about this time Tegh Behadur was summoned to Delhi by the Emperor. He was apprehended along with a band of devotees at Agra, brought to Delhi and made to appear before the Kazi's court. Tegh Behadur was sentenced to death and executed on November 11, 1675. Before his body could be quartered and exposed to public view, it was stolen under the cover of dark by one of his devotees. The body was cremated a few kilometres from the place of execution, and the head was brought to Anandpur and cremated by his son, Gobind. This incident widened the gap between the Sikhs and the Muslims but brought them closer to the Hindus. In times to come, the conversion to Sikhism was mainly from among the Hindus and rarely from among the Muslims.

Gobind was only nine years old when his father Tegh Bahadur died. He assumed the Gurudom at a tender age. The leaders of the Sikh community were concerned about the safety of the young Guru for they feared his kidnapping to Delhi as a hostage. To avoid any such possibility, Gobind and his entourage were shifted from Anandpur to Paonta on the banks of Yamuna river in Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh. The Rajput chiefs of the hills did not like the growing popularity of the Guru. Nor did they approve of the increasing insubordination of the lower castes who were turning to the casteless fraternity of the Sikhs for leadership. So they attacked the Guru and tried to throw him out. Despite the numerical superiority of the Rajputs, the Sikhs won the battle at Bhangani, a place located at a distance of 10 kilometres west of Paonta.

Later Gobind shifted to Anadpur around 1637. He built a chain of fortresses, Anandgarh, Keshgarh, Lohgarh and Fatehgarh in the neighbourhood of this place. This made the GURU more powerful but in the process he earned an intense hostility of the Rajput chiefs. A clear and crucial implication of this was the great resistance to the spread of Sikhism in the hilly and mountainous region ruled by the Rajput chiefs.

In 1699, Gobind invited all his followers to Anandpur on the Baisakhi¹¹ day. He demanded five persons for voluntary sacrifice. Those who came forward belonged to different castes, one Brahmin, one Kashtriya and the remaining three from low castes. They were made to drink amrit (nectar) out of one bowl to signify their initiation into the casteless fraternity of the Khalsa (the pure). They were given a family name 'Singh' meaning a lion. He asked persons of all the castes to receive baptism, eat out of the same vessel and feel no disgust or contempt for each other. About twenty thousand persons stood up and promised to obey him as they had the fullest faith in his divine mission.¹² This occasion was of historic importance for the Sikhs. It led to the formation of a casteless group of brave people. It inspired people from low as well as high castes to adopt Sikhism and stand up against all that was untrue, inhuman and cruel. Henceforth the number of the Sikhs increased rapidly. The bulk of the converts were the Jat peasants of central districts of the Punjab who were considered low in the caste hierarchy of that time.

¹¹ Baisakhi is a Hindu and Sikh festival coinciding with the first day of their calendar year.

¹² Khushwant Singh : op. cit., p. 86.

The Mughals continued their persecution of the Sikhs. The battles of Chamkaur and Fatehgarh resulted in a heavy loss of the Guru's forces. Gobind Singh shifted to Kotkapura where thousands of Sikhs flocked to his camp to help him in successfully checking the advance of the Mughal forces. The Guru spent almost a year in the country around Muktsar in western Malwa. Hundreds of thousands of Jats of Malwa tract adopted Sikhism and joined the Khalsa fraternity. Among them were the ancestors of the houses of Patials, Nabha and Jind. This was the time when the people of the Malwa tract converted into Sikhism in a major way, modifying greatly the distributional pattern of the Sikhs in the Punjab area.

At about this time, Gobind Singh retired for some time to the village of Talwandi Sabo in Bhatinda district. Here he, along with his disciple Mani Singh, prepared a definitive edition of the holy book: Granth Sahib.¹³ Later in 1708, the Guru went to Nanded, now in Maharashtra state, a small town on the bank of the Godavari. Here he was stabbed by a Pathan as a result of which he died after a few days. Nanded, though far removed from Punjab, became an important centre of the Sikhs, many of whom were converts from amongst the local people. The

¹³ Granth Sahib is the holy book of the Sikhs.

Sikhs from all over the world continue to visit Nanded to pay their homage to the tenth Guru up till now.

It follows that during the span of about two centuries from Nanak's time to the death of Gobind Singh, the Sikhs grew into a distinct religious group established firmly in the Majha tract, the Bist Doab and the Malwa region of the Punjab. This became the hearth of Sikhism. Outside this hearth there were only a few widely scattered places which had followers of the Sikh faith. While the first five Gurus preached for peace and non-violence, the sixth and tenth Gurus infused a militant spirit in their followers.

Before death, Gobind Singh ordered that there would be no Guru after him. The Sikhs would in future take guidance from the Granth Sahib in which were collected the hymns of all the nine Gurus preceding him. The Granth was the Guru henceforth.

For almost a hundred years after the death of Gobind Singh, the conditions in the Punjab remained disturbed and fluctuating as far as the Sikhs were concerned. One thing that emerged unmistakably was the militant spirit of the Khalsa with a zeal not only to defend themselves from outside invasions but also to

provide protection to their countrymen in the Punjab. Despite internal rivalries and jealousies, the Sikhs became a force to reckon with.

With the coming of Ranjit Singh (1799-1839 A.D.) into power, the things started taking a new turn in terms of social, economic and political stability. Through his ingenuity and statesmanship, Ranjit Singh was able to consolidate his empire west of the Sutlej. He proclaimed himself as the Maharaja (Emperor) of Punjab in 1801 and started organising the Sikhs into a strong political force. He was powerful enough to check the advance of the Afghans and to confine the British through treaties to the area east of the Sutlej. Ranjit Singh was a man of practical wisdom. He treated his subjects alike, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The population in his empire included the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs and even some Buddhists. His aim was not to set up a Sikh kingdom but a Punjabi state. Nevertheless the very existence of a Sikh ruler gave a significant boost to the consolidation of Sikhism in the area of its original development, with some expansion in the tribute paying areas. The tribute paying areas extended as far east as the Yamuna river and as far west as the Indus river. Similarly, they extended

southward very close to Bahawalpur state. In the north, it reached almost as far as the Kashmir valley. The extension in the areas of influence under Ranjit Singh created new possibilities for the expansion of Sikhism far and wide. There was also some Sikh migration to towns in Ranjit Singh's kingdom. These Sikhs held positions of political and economic power.

The death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 generated an internal war of succession resulting in the eventual subjugation of the territory of the deceased Maharaja by the British in 1849. The British, unlike some of the previous rulers, did not persecute the Sikhs because of their religious persuasion. The Sikhs could worship in peace and propagate their religion. The political unity of the British India and the introduction of rail roads throughout the country from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards gave the Sikhs an opportunity to migrate to different parts of India. In view of the recognition of the Sikhs as a militant group, the British started recruiting them into their army, and in fact, preferred them to many other groups of people in the country. This policy of the British, as also the adventurous spirit of the Sikhs itself, made them look to places outside the Punjab for future settlement.

It follows that the Sikh religion passed through various phases of a peaceful theocracy during the time of Guru Nanak, a kind of spiritual military organisation during the life of Guru Gobind Singh, a firm political power during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and a distinct culture during the British rule. As a result, the Sikhs grew in numbers and got well entrenched in the central Punjab, comprising the Majha, Doaba and Malwa tracts, by 1881. Outside this core area, there were only small scattered pockets of the Sikhs.

CHAPTER II

THE SIKHS : 1881

The discussion on the diffusion of Sikhism during the pre-1881 period in the previous chapter was based on whatever could be gleaned from scanty historical records on the subject. An analysis of changes in the distribution of the Sikhs since 1881 has, however, been greatly facilitated by the availability of census data from then onwards. India had its first complete census in 1881. Data on religious composition of population were also included in the census enumerations. The present chapter makes use of the data on the Sikhs and presents a discussion on their distributional pattern as in 1881.

An examination of 1881 data on the major religious groups in India brings out that no community was spatially so concentrated and restricted to a small area as the Sikhs were at that time. The Hindus were ubiquitous almost throughout the subcontinent. The Muslims had a fair spread over the eastern, northern and northwestern regions of the subcontinent, apart from their minor pockets in peninsular India. The Christians had a few zones of concentration, rather distantly spaced from each

Table 2.1
India: 1881
Religious Composition of Population by
Provinces and Princely States

Province/ princely state	Percentage of the					in total population
	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Others	
Ajmer	81.6	12.5	0.5	*	5.4	
Assam	62.7	26.9	0.1	*	10.3	
Bengal	65.4	31.2	0.2	*	3.2	
Berar	90.7	7.0	*	*	2.3	
Bombay Presidency	76.2	16.1	0.6	0.5	6.6	
British territory	74.8	18.4	0.8	0.8	5.2	
Princely states	79.6	10.8	0.1	*	9.5	
Burma	2.3	4.5	2.2	-	91.0	
Central Provinces	75.4	2.5	0.1	*	22.0	
British territory	74.3	2.8	12.1	*	10.8	
Princely states	81.0	0.6	*	*	18.4	
Madras Presidency	91.4	6.2	2.3	-	0.1	
North West Province and Oudh	85.9	13.7	0.1	*	0.3	
British territory	86.2	13.4	0.1	*	0.3	
Princely states	67.6	32.3	*	-	0.1	
Punjab	40.7	51.3	0.1	7.5	0.4	
British territory	37.8	55.8	0.2	5.9	0.3	
Princely states	54.9	29.4	*	15.4	0.3	
Coorg	91.1	7.0	1.8	-	0.1	
Baroda	84.8	8.0	*	-	7.2	
Central India Agency	84.2	5.5	*	*	10.3	
Cochin	71.5	5.6	22.7	-	0.2	
Hyderabad	90.3	9.4	0.1	*	0.2	
Mysore	94.5	4.8	0.7	*	-	
Rajputana	86.0	8.4	*	*	5.6	
Travancore	73.1	6.1	20.8	-	-	
INDIA	66.3	19.7	7.4	0.7	5.9	

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Indian Empire, Vol. II, pp. 10-13.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

- Nil

other (Table 2.1). By contrast, the Sikhs were almost exclusively confined to central part of the Punjab.¹

The Sikhs in India

In 1881, the Sikhs numbered 1,853,426 as against a total population of 253,891,821 in India. This represented only 0.7 per cent of the country's total inhabitants. Of all the Sikhs, as many as 92.6 per cent were concentrated in the Punjab province and its princely states (Table 2.2). Over three-fourths of them were confined to the area which is the present Punjab(India). When compared to the present situation, interesting facts came to light. In 1971, 78.6 per cent of the Sikhs in India were concentrated in the present Punjab. This was almost the same percentage as in 1881. The proportion of the Sikhs to the total population was, however, about

¹ The boundaries of India and Punjab have been changing. To avoid ambiguity, it may be noted that India in this study stands for the territory as it was constituted at the time under discussion. In the case of Punjab, some distinction was made. Punjab with a prefix of 'the', i.e. 'the Punjab' stands for the territory as it was constituted before the Partition or Independence in 1947. It was the land of five rivers. It included the erstwhile Punjab province and its princely states. Punjab without the prefix of 'the' is the post-Independence Punjab. With successive reorganisations during the post-Independence period, the boundaries of the state changed from time to time. The state of Punjab was last reorganised in 1966 on linguistic basis, leaving it much shrunk in area (Map 1-A).

MAP No. 1A

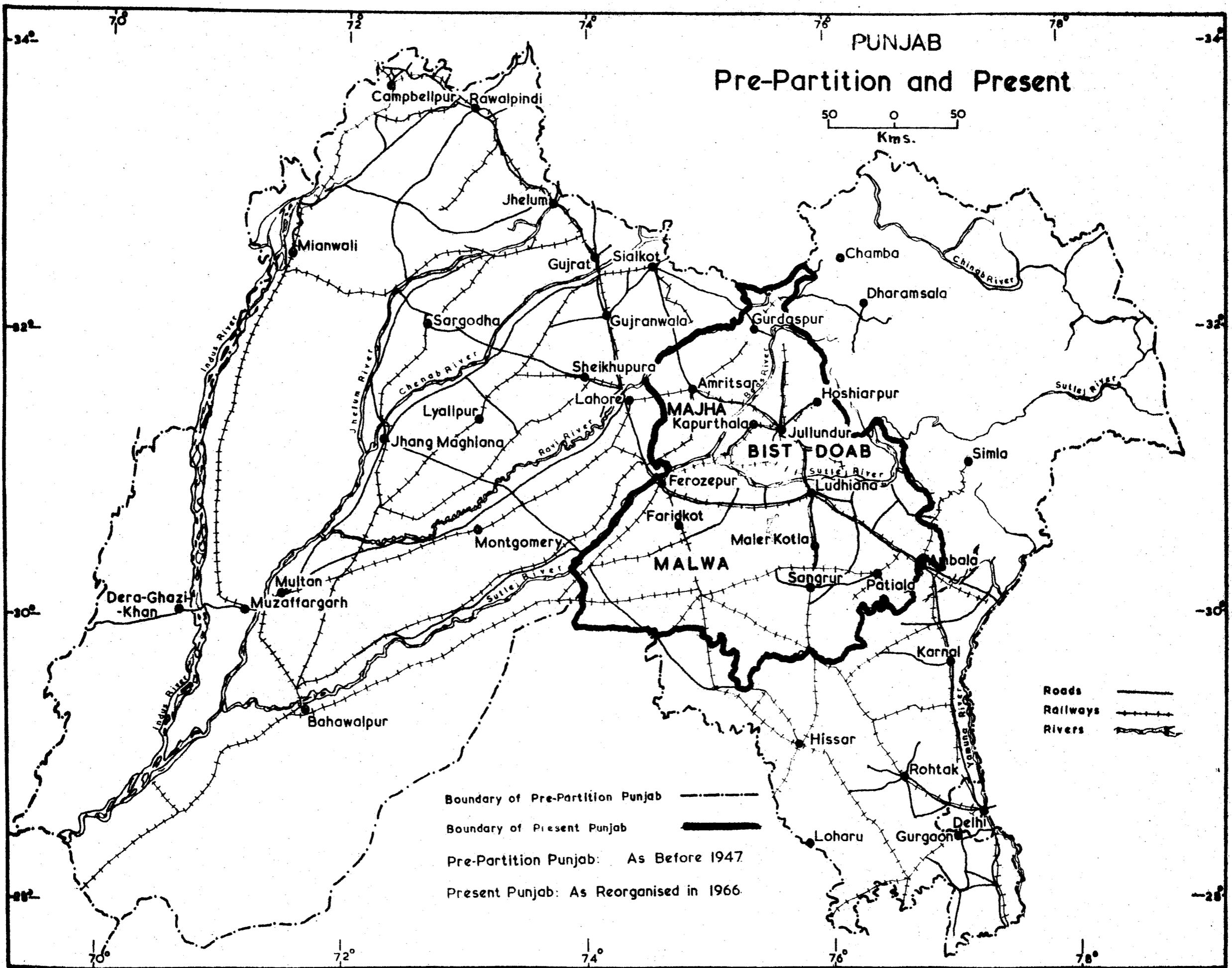


Table 2.2
India : 1881

The Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/princely state	Number of the Sikhs	Percentage in	
		Total population of the province/princely state	The Sikh population in India
Punjab	1,716,114	7.8	92.6
British territory	1,121,004	5.9	60.5
Princely states	595,110	15.4	32.1
Bombay Presidency	127,130	0.8	6.8
British territory	127,100	0.8	6.8
Princely states	30	*	*
Hyderabad	3,664	*	0.2
North West Province and Oudh	3,644	*	0.2
British territory	3,644	*	0.2
Princely states	-	-	-
Central India Agency	1,455	*	0.1
Bengal	549	*	*
Berar	525	*	*
Ajmer Merwara	182	*	*
Central Provinces	99	*	*
British territory	97	*	*
Princely states	2	*	*
Mysore	41	*	*
Assam	14	*	*
Rajputana	9	*	*
Burma	-	-	-
Coorg	-	-	-
Madras Presidency	-	-	-
Baroda	-	-	-
Cochin	-	-	-
Travancore	-	-	-
INDIA	1,853,426	0.7	100.0

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Indian Empire, Vol. II, pp. 10-13.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

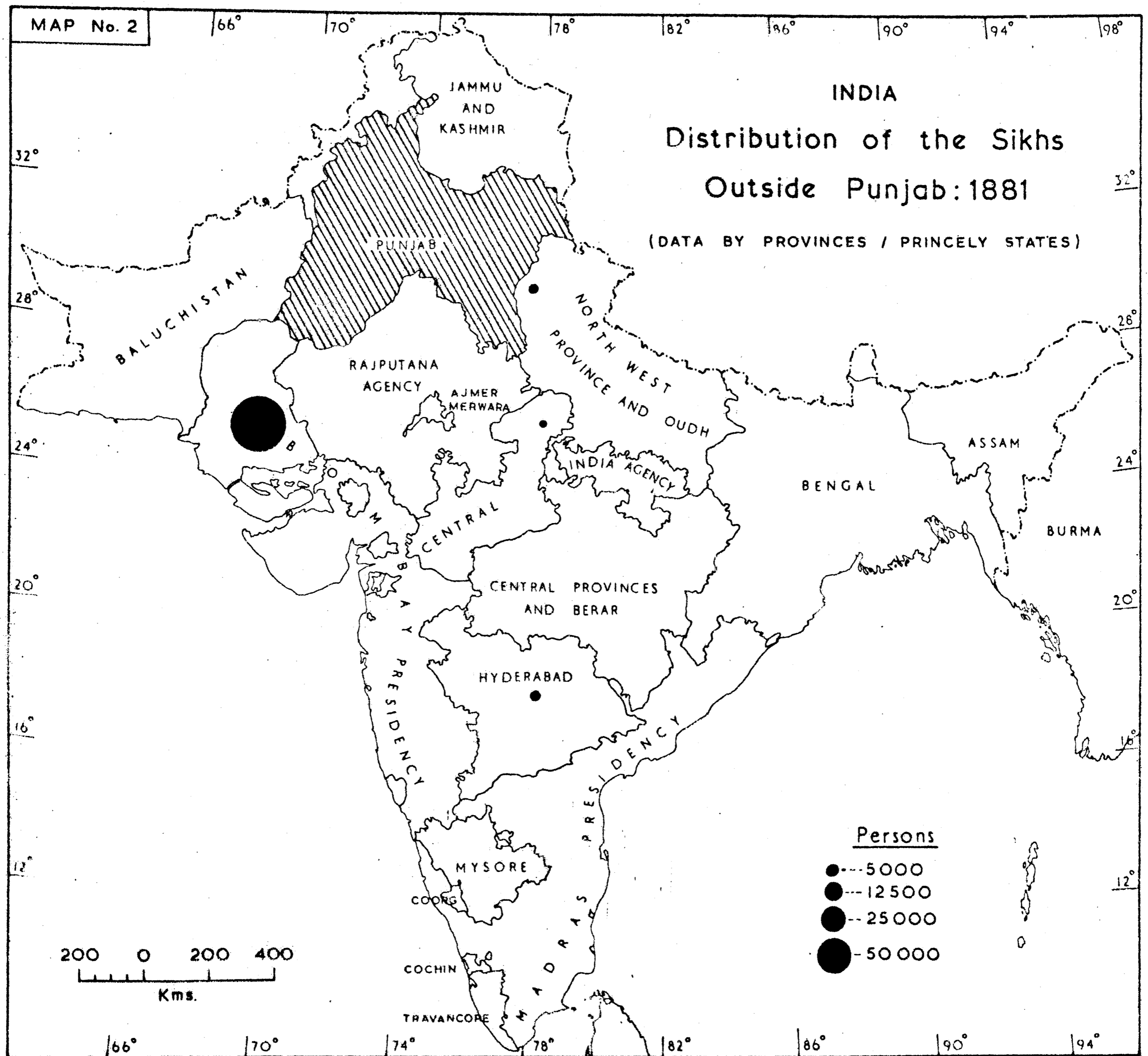
- Nil

60 per cent in 1971 and nearly 20 per cent in 1881. This radical change has been due partly to the exodus of the Muslims to Pakistan with simultaneous inflow of the Sikhs to this tract at the time of partition in 1947, and partly to continued conversion to Sikhism during the present century. Indeed the migrational patterns of various religious groups and regional variations in conversion to Sikhism have been the main factors behind the change in distribution of the Sikhs.

The Sikhs Outside the Punjab

Outside the northwestern part of India, the Sikhs were few and far between (Map 2). Only 7.4 per cent of them were recorded outside their home state of the Punjab. Among these, more than 90 per cent were residents of the Bombay presidency. Within the presidency, the Sind region, adjoining the Punjab, had most of the Sikhs. Sikhism had old roots in this area going back to Guru Nanak's time.

There were hardly any Sikhs in the rest of the sub-continent. All the areas outside the Punjab and Bombay presidency did not together have even one per cent of the total Sikh population.



Of the 3,644 Sikhs enumerated in North West Province and Oudh, a majority was in the Upper Ganga-Yamuna doab.² The Sikhs in this tract moved in toward the beginning of the eighteenth century.³

Hyderabad state, with a Sikh population of 3,664, provided a far removed pocket of the Sikhs. Here the main concentrations were in Hyderabad city and in the districts of Nanded and Aurangabad. The concentration of the Sikhs in Hyderabad city could be traced to the migration of the Sikhs at the instance of the Nizam during the first half of the nineteenth century. The then Nizam of Hyderabad sought the help of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army in 1830 in order to quell an internal revolt in his state. The presence of the Sikhs in Nanded was intimately connected with the visit and stay till death of Guru Gobind Singh at that place. The disciples of the Guru multiplied in numbers ever since in the locality as well as in the nearby areas, including Aurangabad district.

A large part of the sub-continent was without any Sikh population. The Madras presidency and the princely states of Travancore, Cochin, Baroda and Coorg did not

² The Imperial Gazetteers of India, Vol.XIX, Clarendon Press, London, 1908, p. 285.

³ Ibid., p. 308.

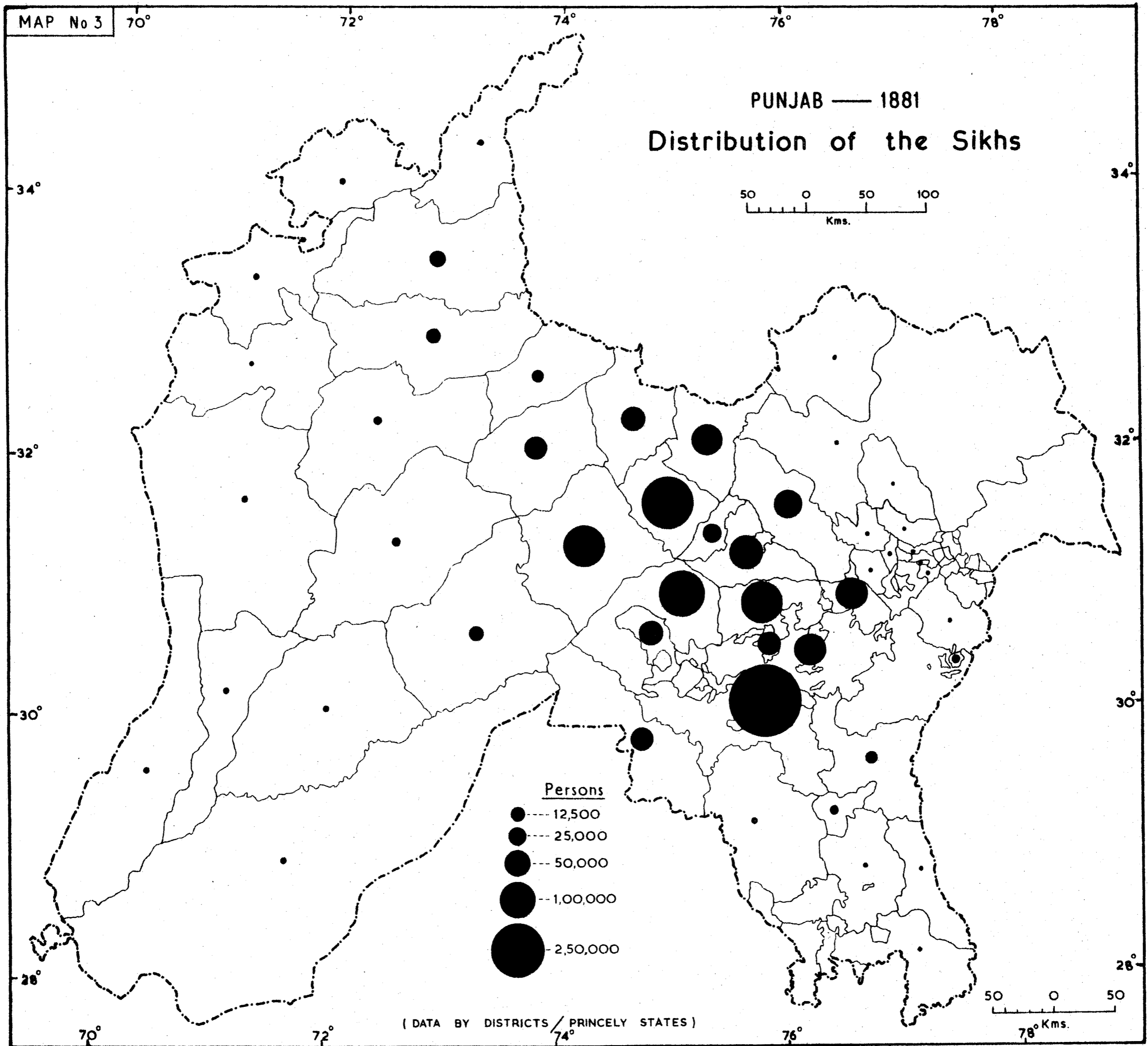
have even a single Sikh. Even the Rajputana state adjoining the Punjab had only 9 Sikhs in all.

It follows that the Sikhs in 1881 were confined to their original hearth, more or less. Their distributional pattern in 1881 was an outcome of the aggregate developments in the evolution and diffusion of Sikhism since the time of Guru Nanak. A combination of factors like religious history, political control, physical resource base and cultural tradition gave rise to unusual concentration of the Sikhs in the Punjab.

The Sikhs in the Punjab

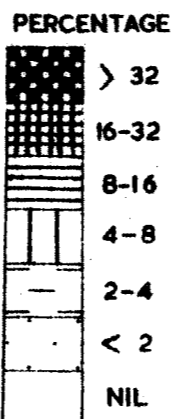
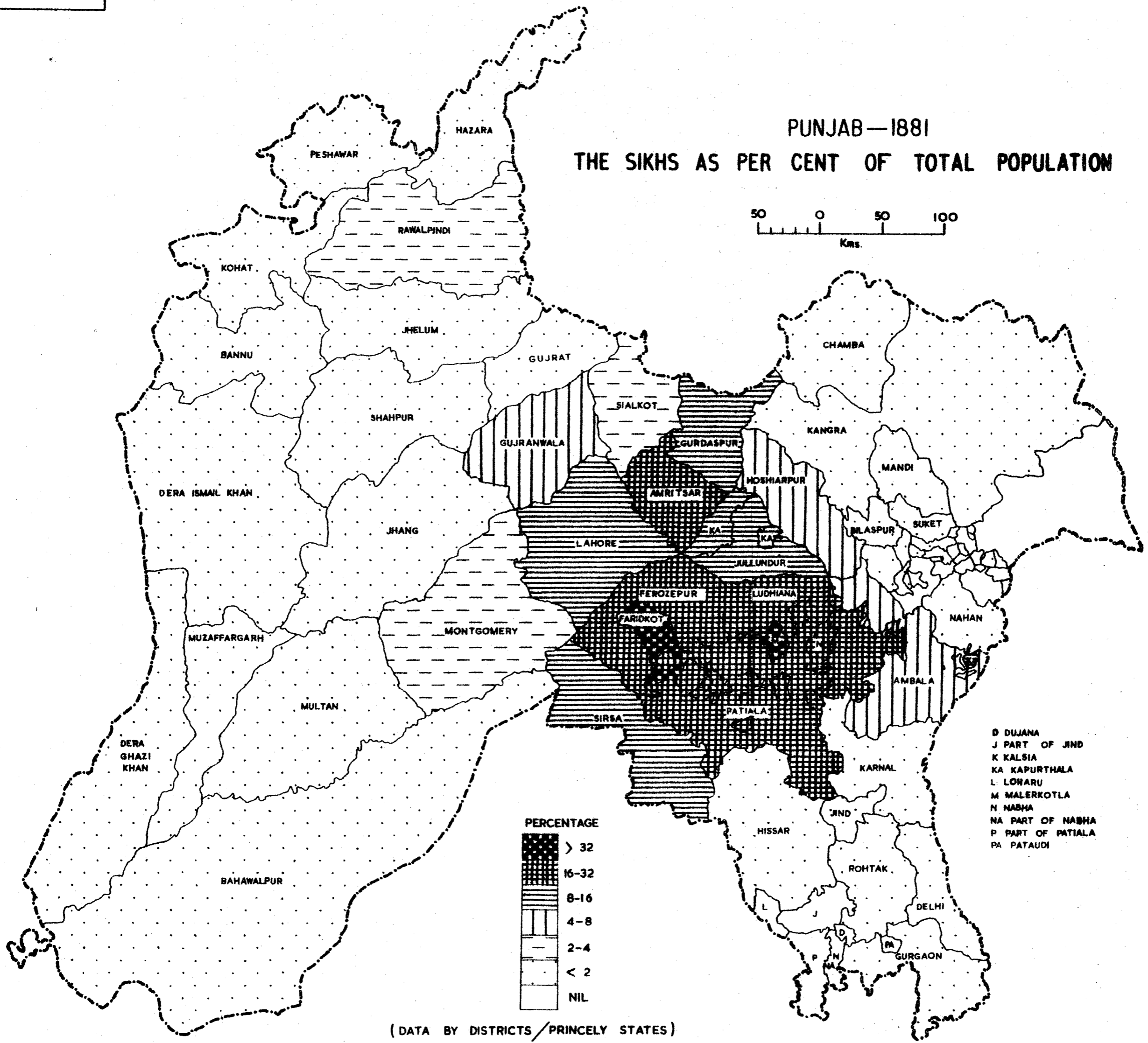
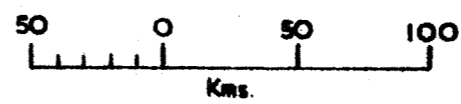
Although the Sikhs in the Punjab accounted for 92.6 per cent of the total Sikhs in India, their distribution within the region was highly uneven (Maps 3 and 4). The Patiala state alone accounted for as much as 23.8 per cent of the Sikhs, followed by Amritsar, Ferozepur, and Ludhiana districts with 12.6, 9.8 and 7.4 per cent respectively (Table 2.3). Comprising a large part of the Malwa and the Majha tracts, these four units alone shared more than a half of the Punjab's Sikh population.

Lahore district, now in Pakistan, had a Sikh population of 125,591. This number was almost equal to that of the Sikhs in Ludhiana district. Sialkot,



MAP No 4

PUNJAB—1881 THE SIKHS AS PER CENT OF TOTAL POPULATION



D DUJANA
J PART OF JND
K KALSIA
KA KAPURTHALA
L LOWARU
M MALERKOTLA
N NABHA
NA PART OF NABHA
P PART OF PATIALA
PA PATAUDI

(DATA BY DISTRICTS/PRINCELY STATES)

Table 2.3

The Punjab : 1881The Sikh Population by Districts and Princely States

District/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs	Percentage in The Sikh population of the Punjab	Total population of the district/ princely state
Patiala	408,141	23.8	27.8
Amritsar	216,337	12.6	24.2
Ferozepur	168,816	9.8	25.6
Ludhiana	127,143	7.4	20.5
Lahore	125,591	7.4	13.6
Jullundur	90,320	5.3	11.4
Nabha	77,682	4.5	29.6
Gurdaspur	72,395	4.2	8.8
Ambsla	68,442	4.0	6.4
Hoshiarpur	59,784	3.5	6.6
Sialkot	40,195	2.3	4.0
Faridkot	40,187	2.3	41.1
Gujranwala	36,199	2.1	5.9
Malerkotla	28,931	1.8	40.7
Sirsa	28,303	1.6	11.1
Kapurthala	26,493	1.5	10.5
Rawalpindi	17,780	1.0	2.1
Montgomery	11,968	0.7	2.8
Jhelum	11,188	0.6	1.9
Gujrat	8,885	0.5	1.3
Karnal	8,036	0.5	1.3
Kalsia	5,923	0.3	8.7
Shahpur	4,702	0.2	1.1
Jind	4,335	0.2	0.9
Jhang	3,477	0.2	0.9
Hissar	3,143	0.2	0.6
Peshawar	3,103	0.2	0.5
Muzaffargarh	2,788	0.2	0.8
Kohat	2,240	0.1	1.3
Multan	2,085	0.1	0.4
Siala Hill States	1,740	0.1	0.2
Dera Ismail Khan	1,691	0.1	0.4
Bahawalpur	1,678	0.1	0.3
Hasara	1,381	0.1	0.3
Dera Ghazi Khan	1,326	0.1	0.4
Delhi	970	*	0.1
Fanna	790	*	0.2
Khaiber Pass	744	*	*
Kangra	738	*	0.1
Siala	202	*	0.5
Rehtak	159	*	*
Gurgaon	127	*	*
PUNJAB	1,716,114	100.0	7.5

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Punjab, Vol.II, Appendix A, pp. 1-4 and Vol.III, Appendix B, pp. 1-4.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

- 111

Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, all in Pakistan at present, followed but quite distantly. Sirsa district, now a part of Haryana, had a sizable Sikh population of 28,303. The number of the Sikhs was very small elsewhere. It is noteworthy that the Sikhs were in absolute majority in none of the districts or princely states in the Punjab of 1881 (Table 2.4).

It follows that the Sikhs were overwhelmingly concentrated in the central Punjab. This was the zone which was transitional between the Muslim predominant area to the west and the Hindu dominant area to the east and south (Map 5). This was inherent in the birth of Sikhism which initially intended to be a bridge between Hinduism and Islam. The actual course of events was, of course, different due to certain political developments as described in the previous chapter.

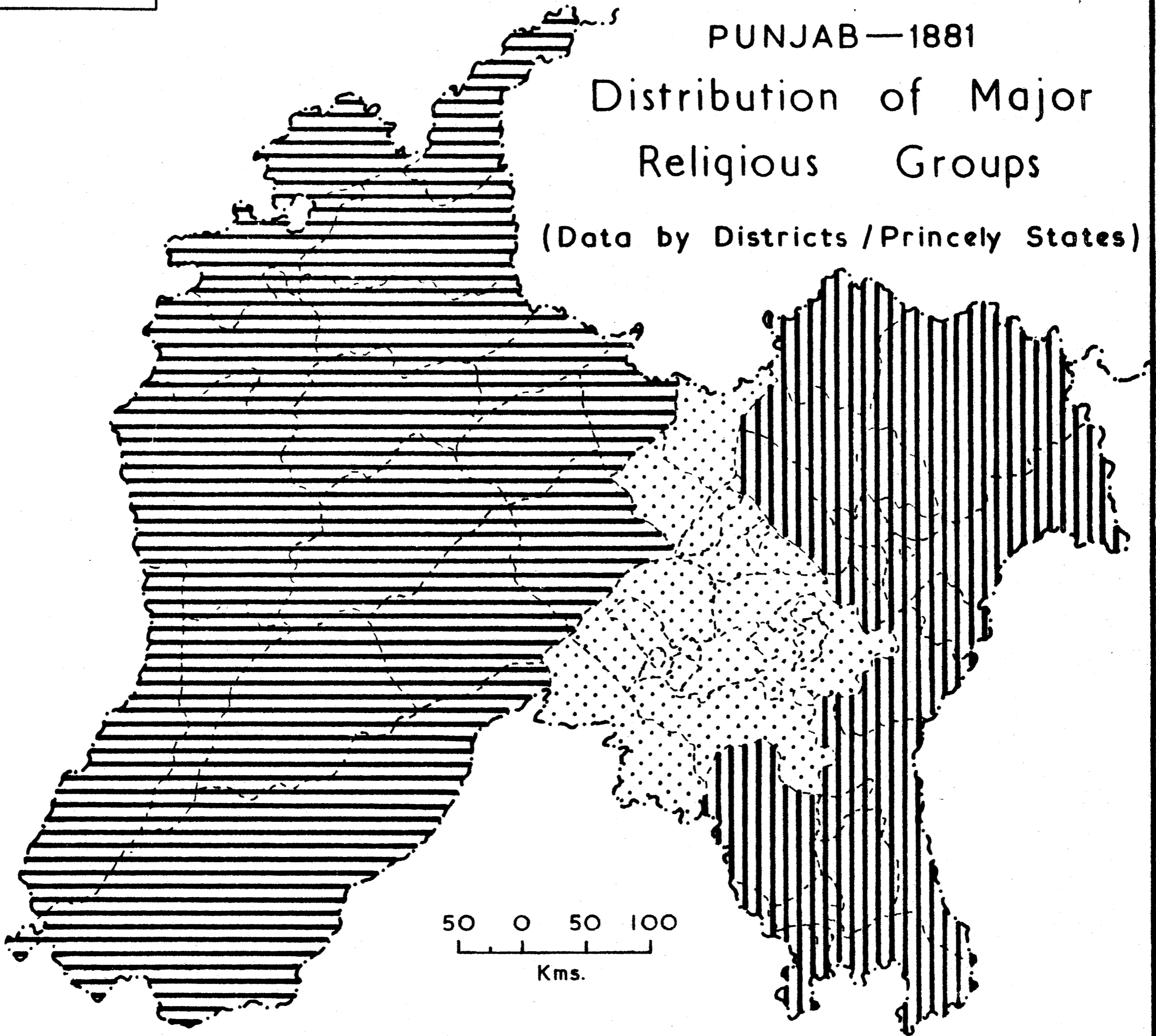
It may be mentioned that within the plains of the then Punjab the Sikhs were crowded mainly on upland plains in contrast to their virtual absence from the floodplains or the bets in local parlance. It was a curious feature of riverain tracts that they were inhabited mainly by the Muslims at that time. There were rival theories to explain this. Some say that when the Sikhs ruled, they

MAP No.5

PUNJAB—1881

Distribution of Major Religious Groups

(Data by Districts / Princely States)



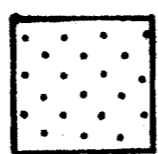
DOMINANTLY MUSLIM

(Over 60% in Total Population)



DOMINANTLY HINDU

(Over 60% in Total Population)



NO RELIGIOUS GROUP

IN DOMINANCE

Table 2.4
The Punjab : 1881
Religious Composition of Population by
Districts and Princely States

District/ princely state	Percentages of the			
	Sikhs	Hindus	Muslims	Others in total popu- lation
Faridkot	41.1	28.3	30.0	0.6
Malerkotla	40.7	22.8	34.6	1.9
Nabha	29.6	51.0	19.1	0.3
Patiala	27.8	50.0	21.9	0.3
Ferozepur	25.6	25.9	47.7	0.8
Amritsar	24.2	29.4	46.2	0.2
Ludhiana	20.5	44.5	34.6	0.4
Lahore	13.6	20.9	64.8	0.7
Jullundur	11.4	42.8	45.4	0.4
Sirsa	11.1	51.5	36.8	0.6
Kapurthala	10.5	32.8	56.6	0.1
Gurdaspur	8.8	43.6	47.5	0.1
Kalsia	8.7	61.5	29.4	0.4
Hoshiarpur	6.6	61.0	32.2	0.2
Ambala	6.4	64.6	28.5	0.5
Gujranwala	5.9	20.6	73.4	0.1
Sialkot	4.0	29.6	66.2	0.2
Montgomery	2.8	19.7	77.4	0.1
Rawalpindi	2.1	10.5	86.7	0.7
Jhelum	1.9	10.3	87.7	0.1
Jind	1.7	84.3	13.7	0.3
Karnal	1.3	72.8	25.0	0.9
Kohat	1.3	5.4	93.2	0.1
Gujrat	1.3	10.5	88.2	-
Shahpur	1.1	14.0	84.9	-
Jhang	0.9	16.1	83.0	-
Musaffargarh	0.8	12.8	86.4	-
Hissar	0.6	76.3	22.5	0.6
Peshawar	0.5	6.6	92.1	0.8
Simla	0.5	75.5	16.1	3.9
Dera Ismail Khan	0.4	12.3	87.2	0.1
Multan	0.4	20.3	79.0	0.3
Dera Ghazi Khan	0.4	12.6	87.0	-
Hazara	0.3	4.7	95.0	-
Bahawalpur	0.3	16.0	83.7	-
Bannu	0.2	9.2	90.5	0.1
Simla Hill States	0.2	96.4	3.2	0.2
Delhi	0.1	75.1	23.3	1.5
Kangra	0.1	94.0	5.3	0.6
Gurgaon	*	68.4	30.9	0.7
Rohtak	*	84.6	14.4	1.0
Dujana	-	77.3	22.7	-
Pataudi	-	81.0	18.4	0.6
Loharu	-	83.9	11.0	0.1
PUNJAB	7.5	40.7	51.3	0.5

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Punjab, Vol. II, Appendix A, pp.1-4 and Vol. III, Appendix B, pp.1-4.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

- Nil

seized the securer uplands for themselves and drove the poor Muslims down into the hats. Whether instinctively or out of a deliberate design the Sikhs struggled the hardest to occupy the most fertile regions.⁴ Others going further back say that this was exactly what the Muslims did, only vice-versa. In those days, when wells were few and canals not at all, the low lying lands along the river were the best and were greedily seized by the Muslim invaders who were more of shepherds than farmers.⁵

Rural-Urban Composition

The Sikhs were predominantly rural by residence. As many as 92.7 per cent of them in the Punjab were living in the countryside. The corresponding figures for the Hindus and Muslims were 87.2 and 89.0 per cent respectively. Hardly one in fourteen Sikhs was a town dweller. The corresponding figures for the Hindus and Muslims were one in eight and one in nine respectively.

What explained the rural-bias of the Sikhs? This was attributed to the long and close association of the Sikhs with the farming profession. A majority of the

⁴ Indu Bange : Aggrarian System of the Sikhs, Manohar, New Delhi, 1978, p. 10.

⁵ Malcolm Darling : The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1947, pp. 62-63.

Sikhs were Jats and from rural areas.⁶ Why did the Jats enter this new faith in such large numbers? It is one of the peculiar features of Sikhism that while all the Gurus were Khatri by caste, most of their followers were Jats.⁷ In the caste hierarchy of the Hindus, the Jats had a low rank.⁸ They found an elevation in their social status by conversion to Sikhism. Rather the Jats grew to the status of being at the top of the Sikh caste hierarchy.⁹ The Sikh Gurus were exceptionally gifted teachers and their tirade against casteism had a great appeal.¹⁰ Their chief masands (bishops) were Jat by caste, a factor that had a strong impact on popularity of the new faith among the Jats.¹¹ The preachings of the Gurus as well as of their masands were also in the language of the Jats. In the process, conversion of Jats to Sikhism was greatly facilitated.

⁶ A Jat, in the vocabulary of the Punjab, is a villager and a peasant.

⁷ Khushwant Singh: The Sikhs, Allen and Unwin, London, 1963, p. 181.

⁸ Ethne K. Mareneo : The Transformation of the Sikh Society, Heritage Publishers, New Delhi, 1976, p. 141.

⁹ Ibid., p. 295.

¹⁰ W.H.Meleod : The Evolution of the Sikh Community, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1975, p. 11.

¹¹ Ganda Singh: "Nanak Panthis", Punjab Past and Present, 1 (1967), p.57.

There were regional variations in the proportion of the Sikhs living in rural areas. Malerkotla, Ludhiana, Karnal, Sirsa, Montgomery and Muzaffargarh districts had more than 95 per cent of the Sikhs living in villages. A majority of the Sikhs in Chamba, Delhi, Gurgaon, Rohtak, Simla, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Bannu and Kohat districts were, on the contrary, living in urban places. The percentage of the Sikhs living in towns ranged from 5 to 10 in the remaining districts. There was a negative correlation between the number of Sikhs in a district and the percentage of urban dwellers among them.

A large section of the Sikhs in towns was in trade and money lending. Small towns had a considerable number of the Sikhs in agriculture. Towns associated with Sikh religion, such as Tara Taran, Dera Baba Nanak and Muktsar, had the highest percentage of Sikh population (Map 6). Some commercial towns, especially in the western Punjab, also had a considerable number of the Sikhs. A negative relationship existed between the size of a town and the percentage of its Sikh population.

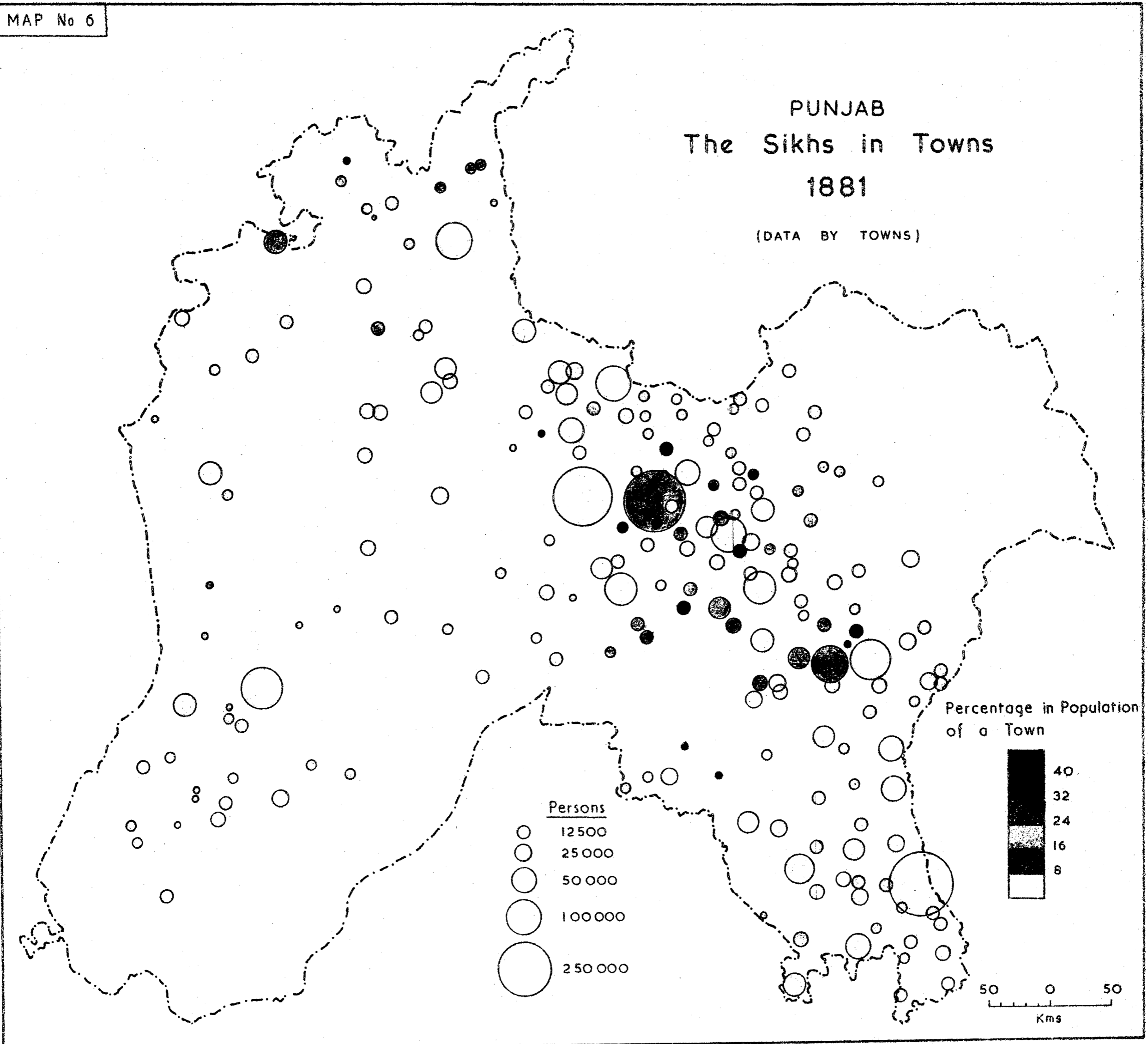
Caste Composition

Although Sikhism detested casteism yet the Sikhs were divided among a number of castes. The change in

MAP No 6

PUNJAB
The Sikhs in Towns
1881

(DATA BY TOWNS)



religion was not accompanied by abdication of caste. The Sikhs, in line with the Hindus, had castes like Jat, Chamar, Tarkhan, and Khatri. The castes of the Sikhs were indeed a part of their social structure.¹²

There was a strong association between caste and occupation, as typical of the Indian situation in general. The Sikh castes could be grouped into a few major classes on the basis of dominant occupations. Some castes were agricultural (Jat, Kamboh, Rajput and Saini), some agricultural labourer (Chamar and Chuhra), some artisan (Tarkhan and Lehar), some service (Jhinwar, Nai and Chimba) and some trading (Khatri and Arora). This signified that Sikhism drew its adherents from a variety of Hindu castes (Table 2.5).

Among the agricultural castes, Jats predominated (Map 7). They constituted about two-thirds of the total Sikh population. They were found in almost all the districts of the Punjab but their main concentration was between the rivers Ravi and Ghaggar.¹³ About three-fourths

¹² Marenco : op. cit., p. 36.

¹³ Denzil Ibbetson : Punjab Castes, Department of Languages, Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 118 (Reprint)

MAP No.7

PUNJAB — 1881

Distribution of the Sikhs by Caste

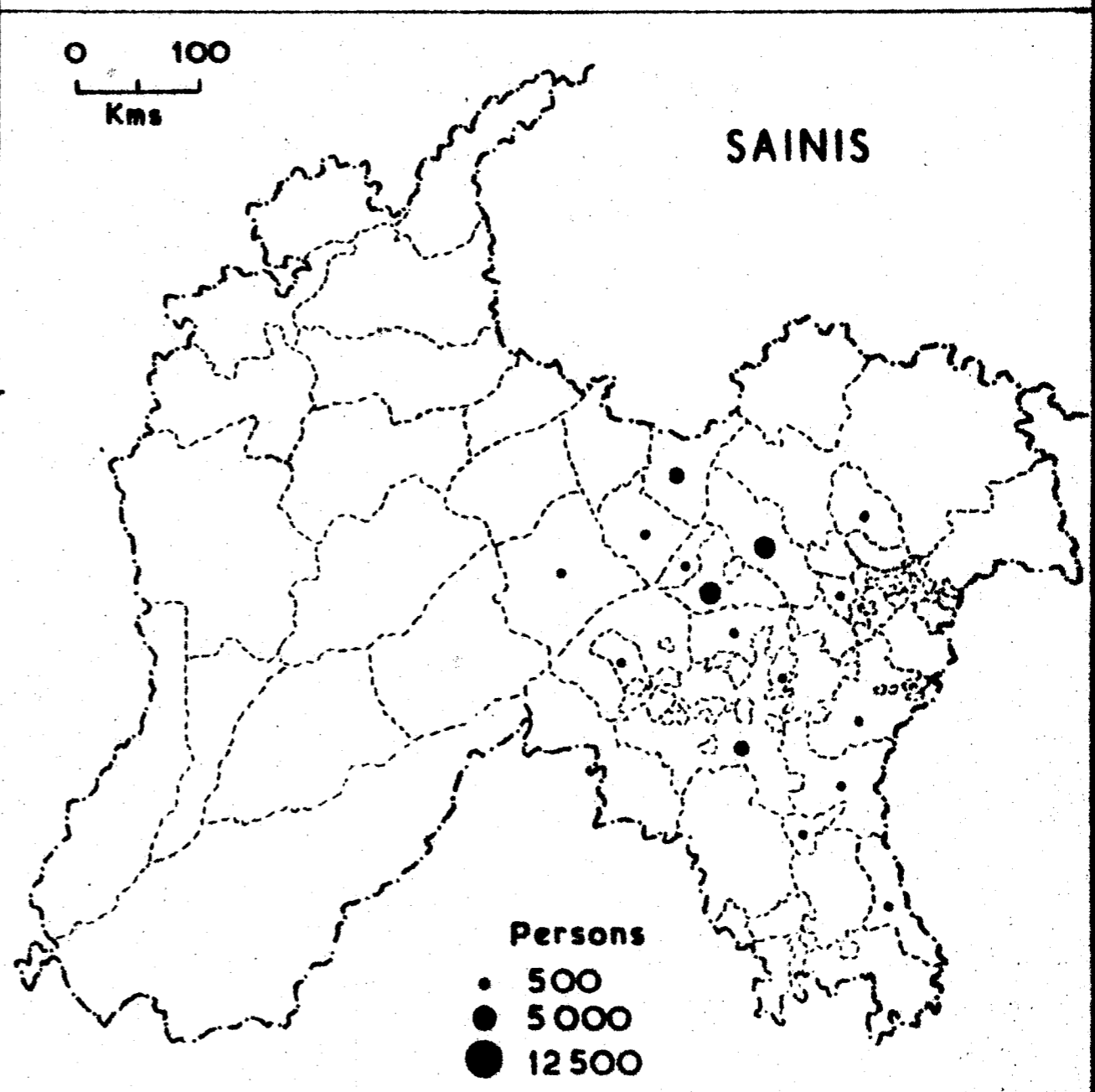
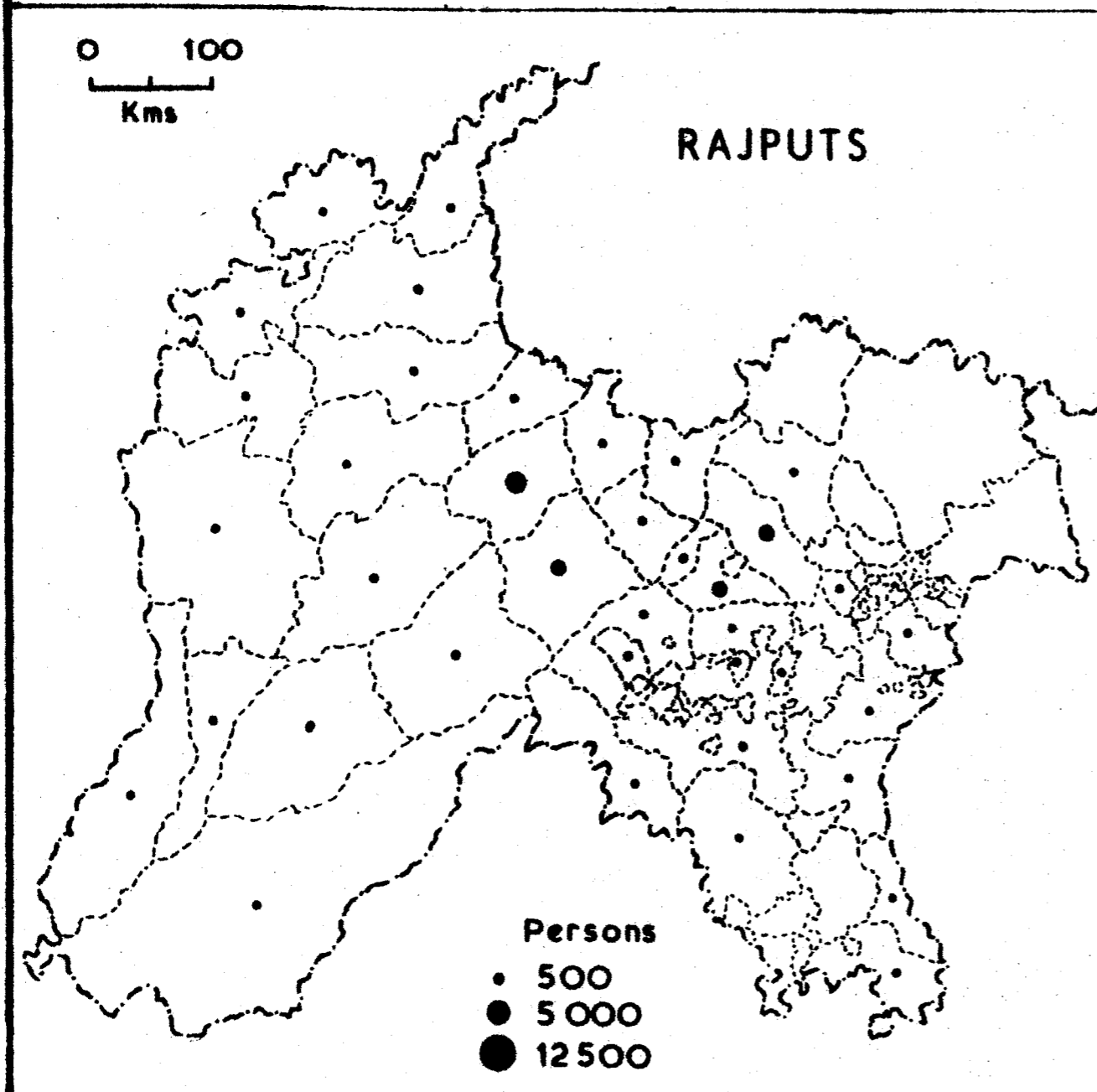
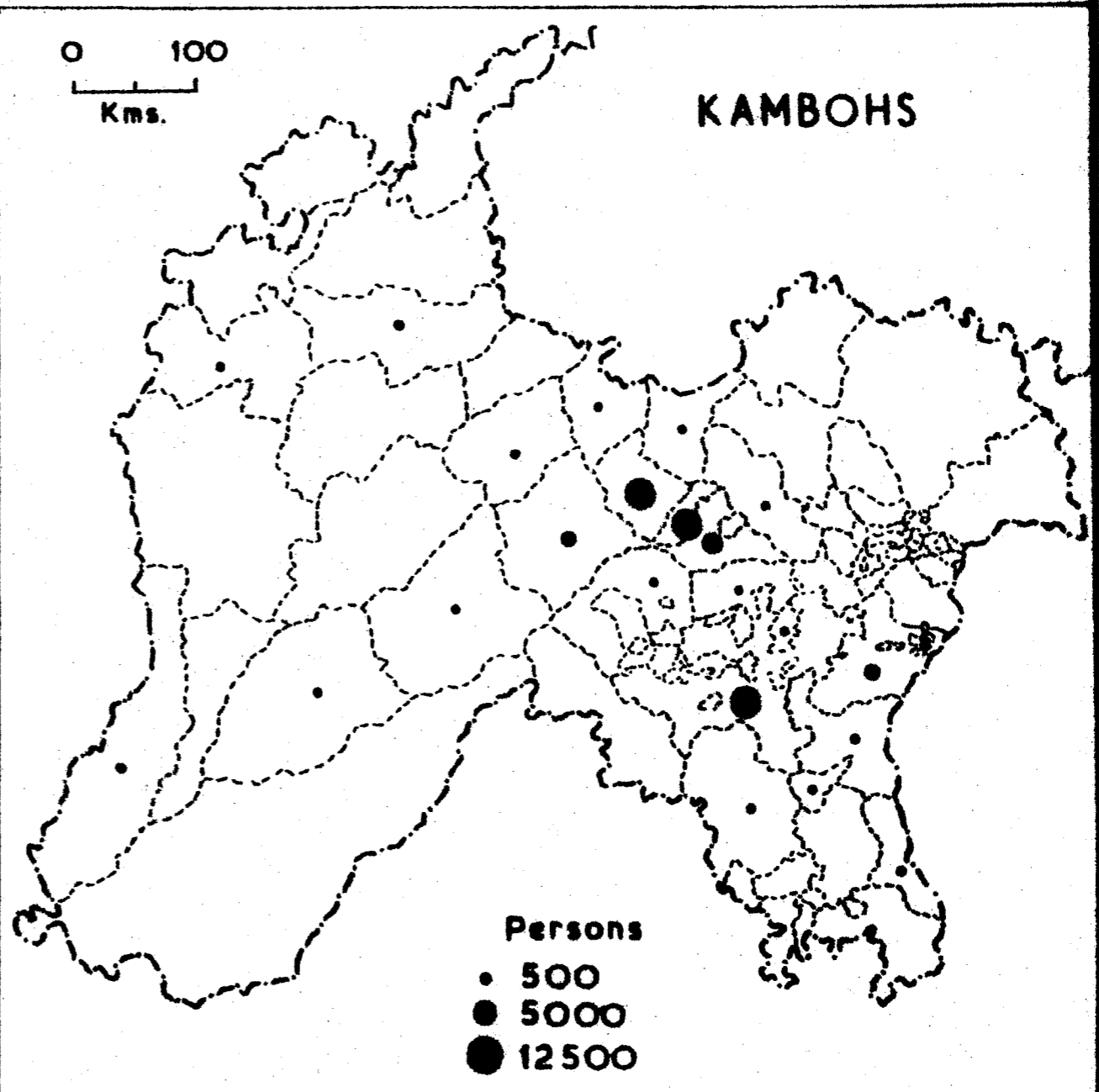
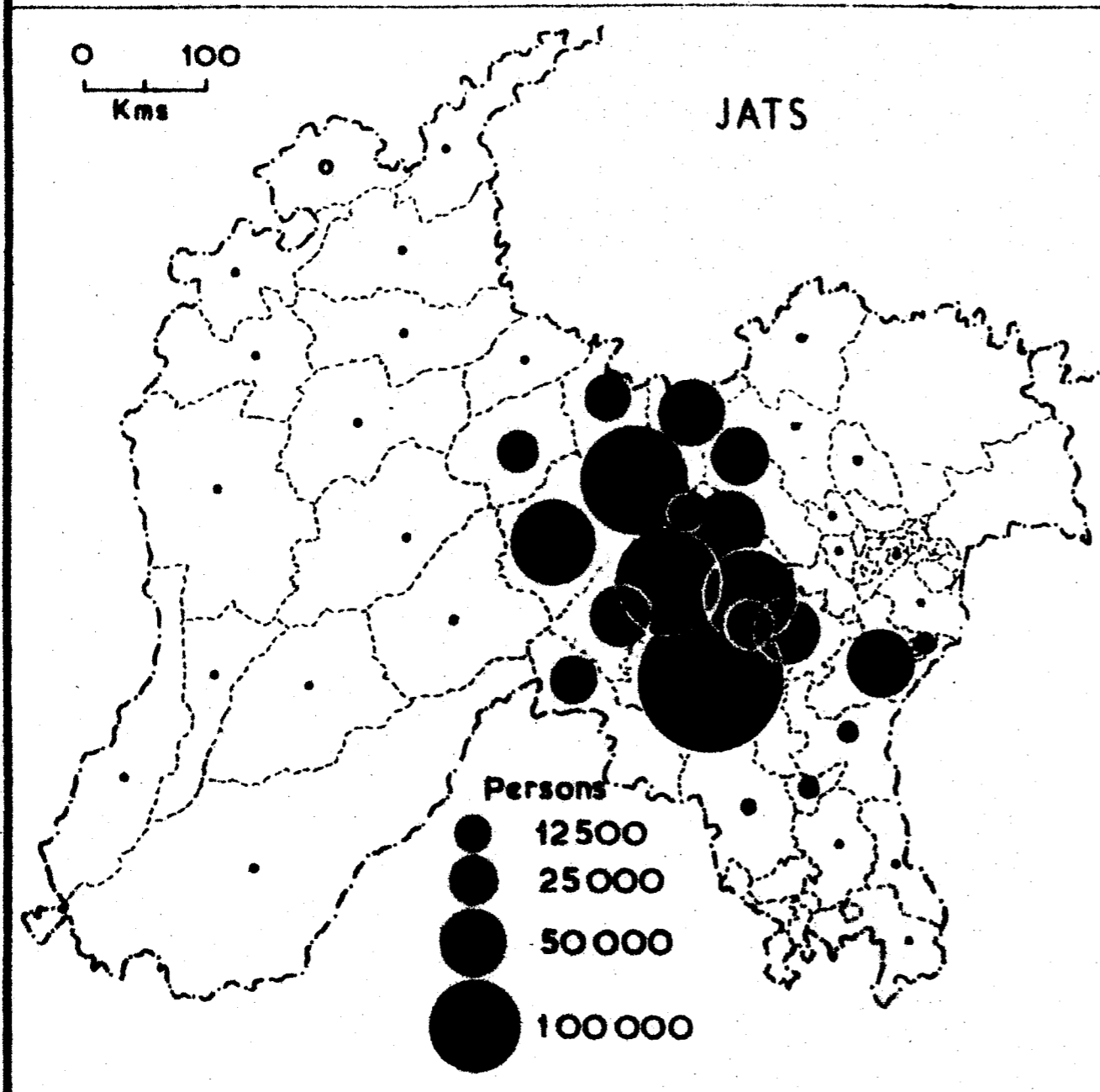


Table 2.5
The Punjab : 1881
Distribution of the Sikhs by Caste

Caste	Number of the Sikhs	Percentage Sikh population
Jat	1,125,856	65.6
Tarkhan	113,869	6.6
Chamar	100,310	5.8
Chuhra	45,834	2.6
Arora	37,917	2.2
Khatri	37,521	2.2
Kamboh	29,910	1.7
Lohar	24,614	1.4
Jhinwar	21,754	1.3
Nai	21,500	1.2
Rajput	17,761	1.0
Chimba	17,748	1.0
Saini	14,463	0.8
Others	6,443	0.4

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Punjab, Vol. II, Appendix A, pp. 1-59 and Vol. III, Appendix B, pp. 1-40.

of the Sikh Jats were recorded in just seven districts / princely states of Patiala, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Lahore, Jullundur and Nabha. This was the central zone of the Punjab sandwiched between the Muslim Jat area to the west and the Hindu Jat area to the south and east. Jats were overwhelmingly agricultural and rural.

The other agricultural castes were Kamboh, Rajput and Saini. Kambohs constituted only 1.7 per cent and Sainis hardly 0.8 per cent of the total Sikh population.

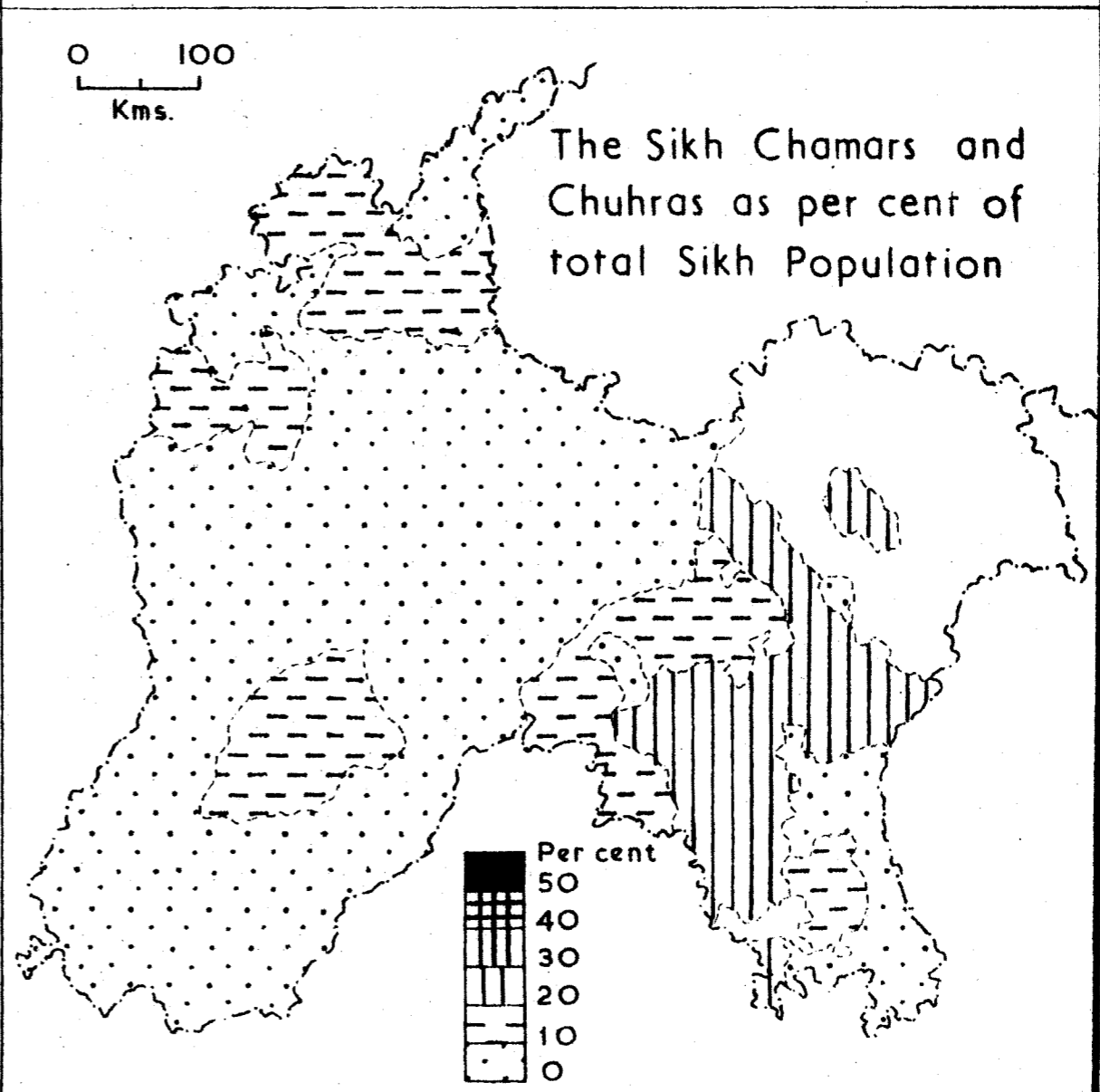
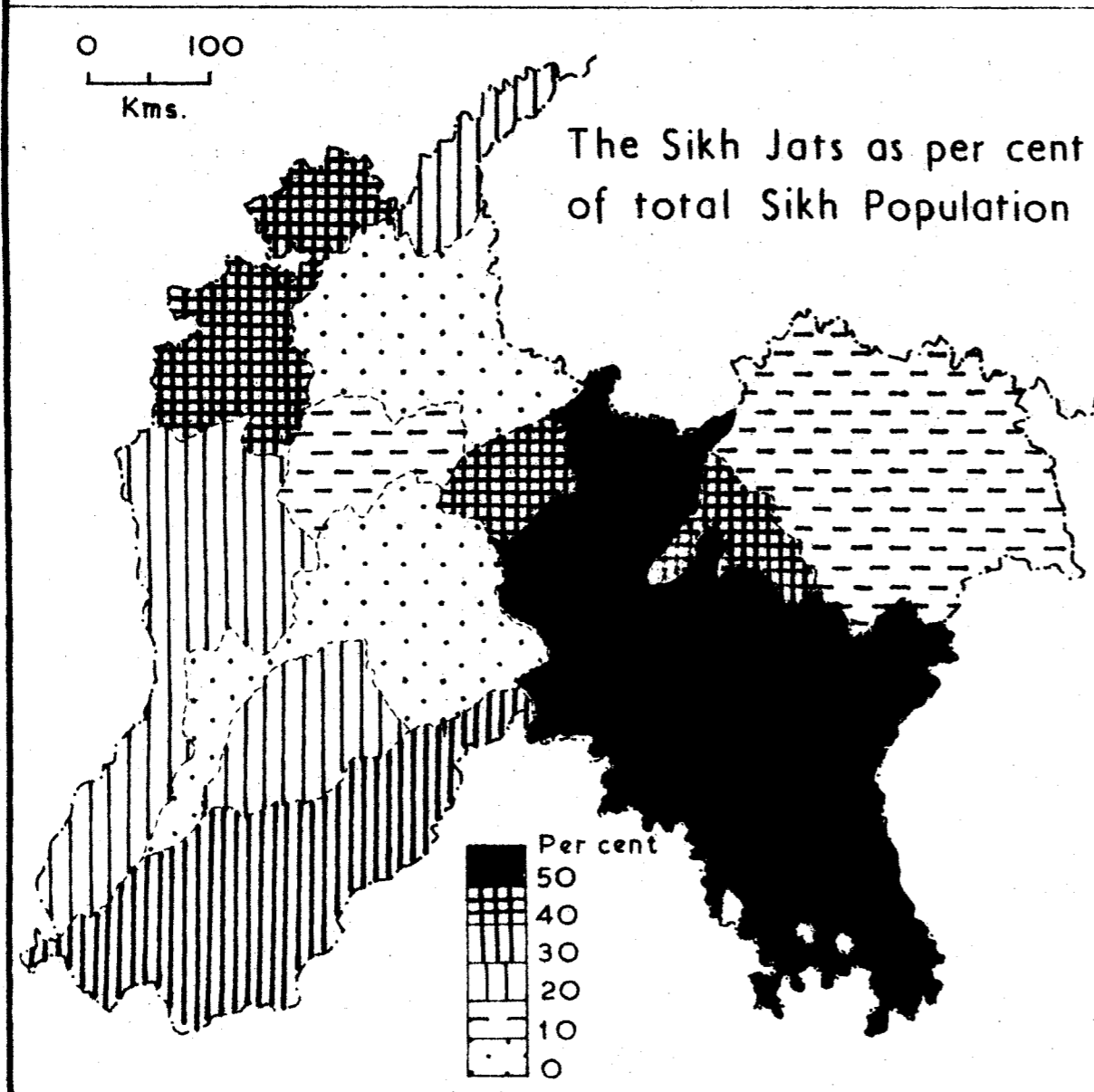
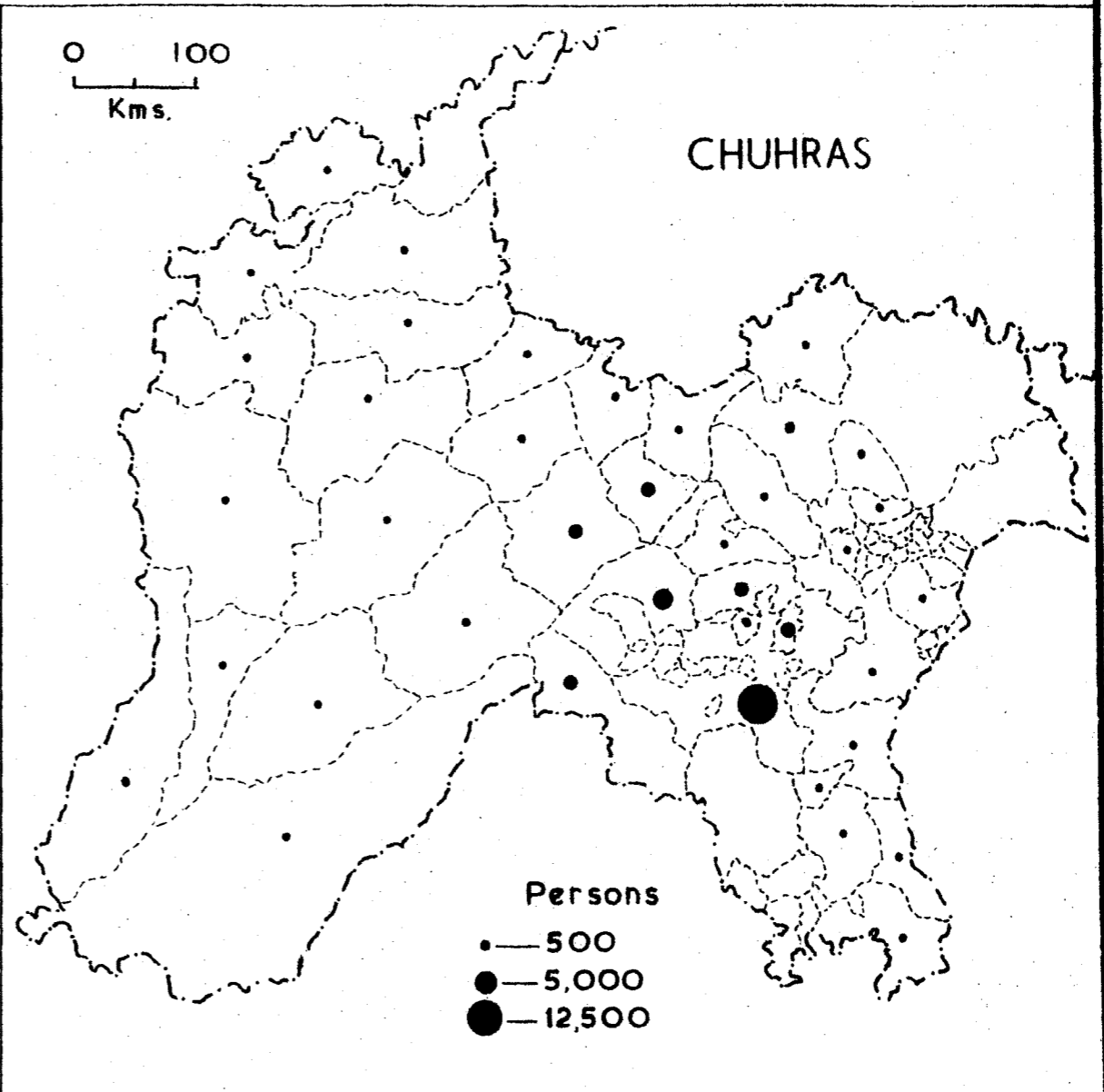
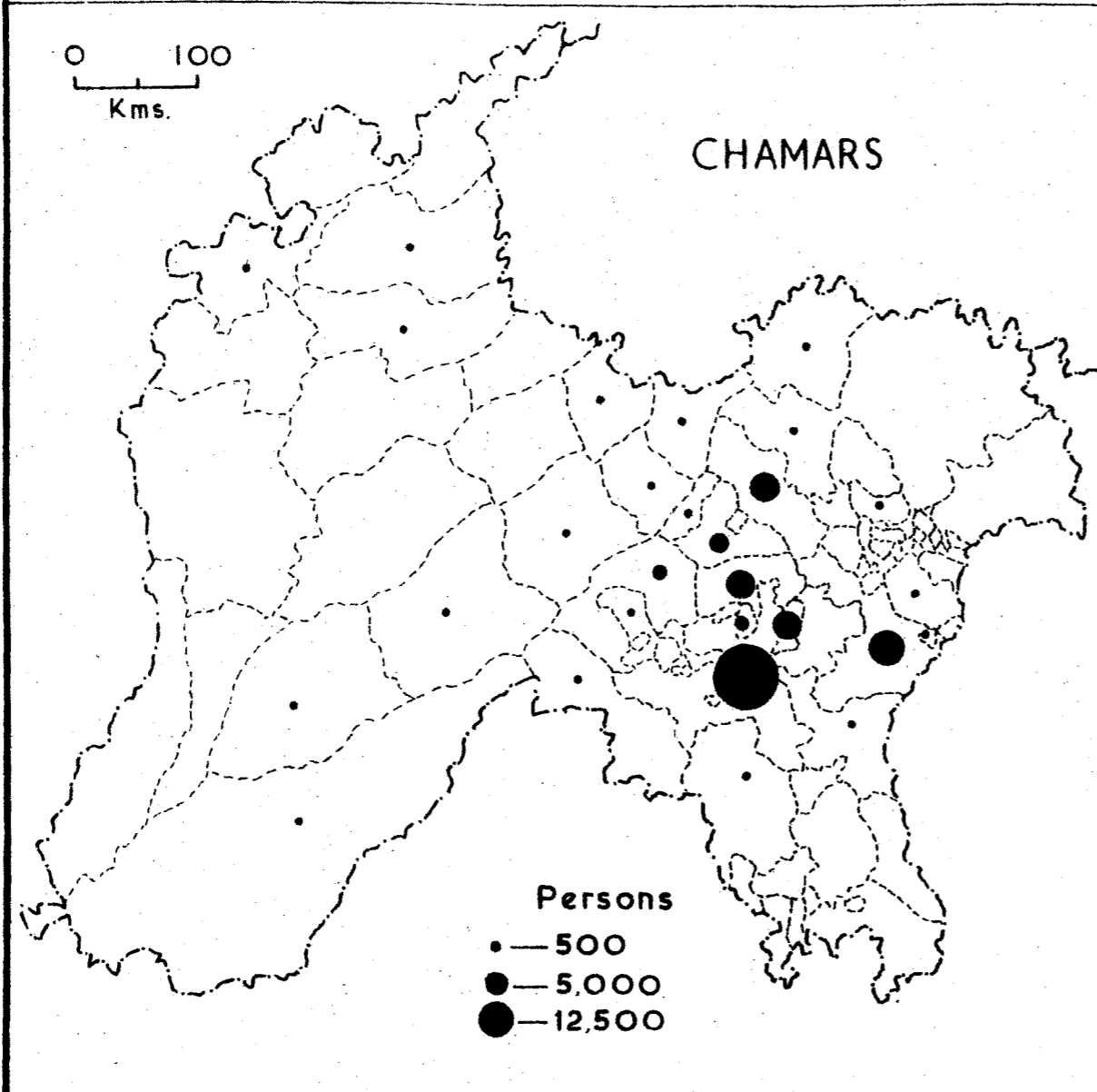
Both these castes were small landholders known for their intensive cultivation. They were originally tenants or landless labourers but gradually became landowners.

Rajput Sikhs were noted for their concentration in Gurdaspur and Sialkot districts. More than 80 per cent of the Kamboh Sikhs were in Patiala, Kapurthala, Amritsar and Jullundur districts / princely states. A little less than half of the Sainis were in Hoshiarpur district alone and another one-fourth in Jullundur district.

The agricultural castes discussed above were assisted by some engaged primarily in agricultural labour. These included Chamars (leather workers) and Chuhras (sweepers). Chamars formed 5.8 per cent of the Punjab's Sikh population. They were traditionally engaged in leather work but did agricultural labour during the peak farm seasons. Their concentration was relatively strong in the princely states where landholdings were large and feudal system strong (Map B). More than half of the Chamars were confined to the then princely state of Patiala where they worked as agricultural labourers or share-croppers. The Sikh Chamars were also called Ramdasia. The name Ramdasi was taken from Guru Ram Dass, the fourth Sikh Guru who first brought Chamars into

PUNJAB—1881

Distribution of the Sikhs by Caste



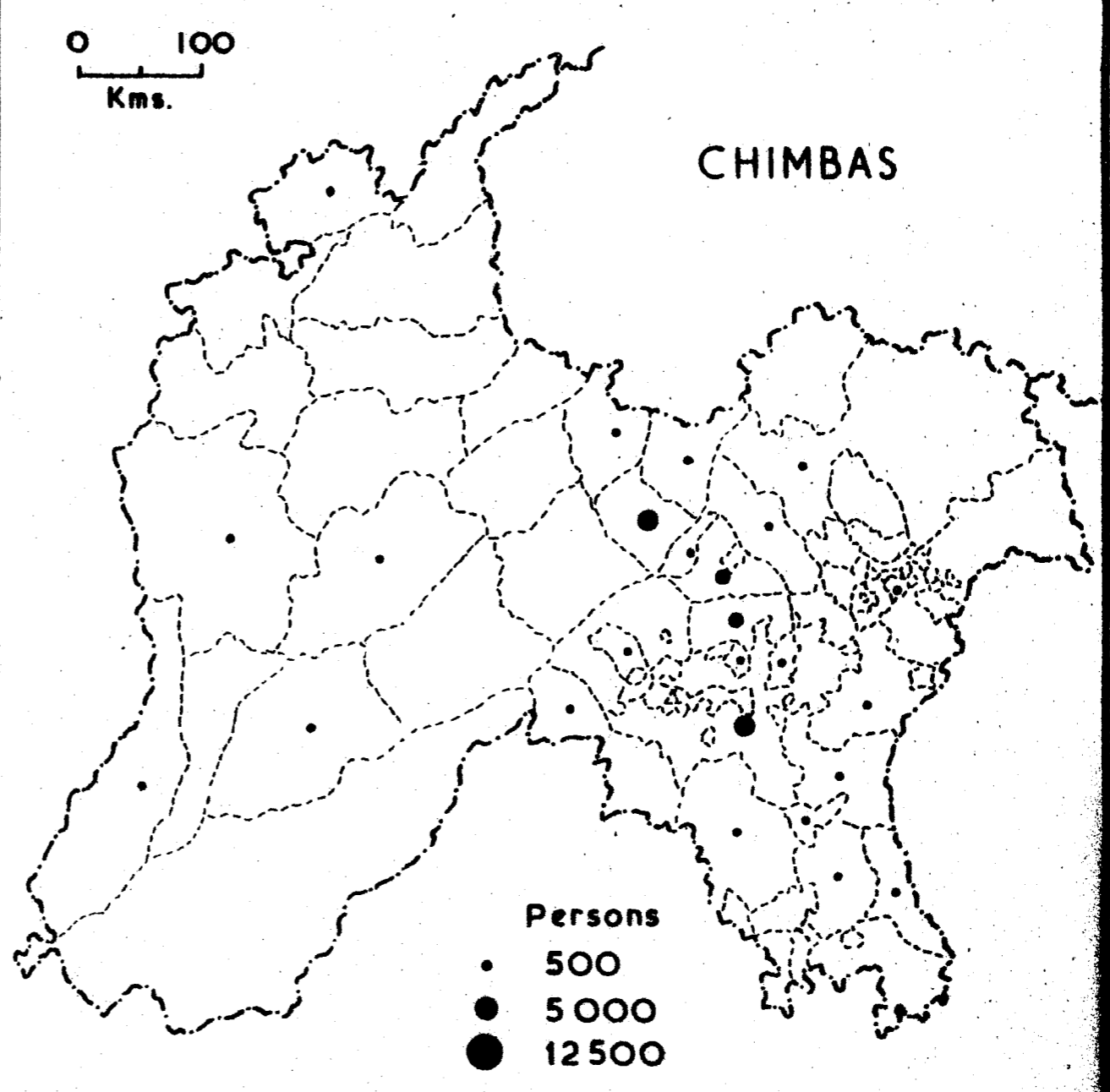
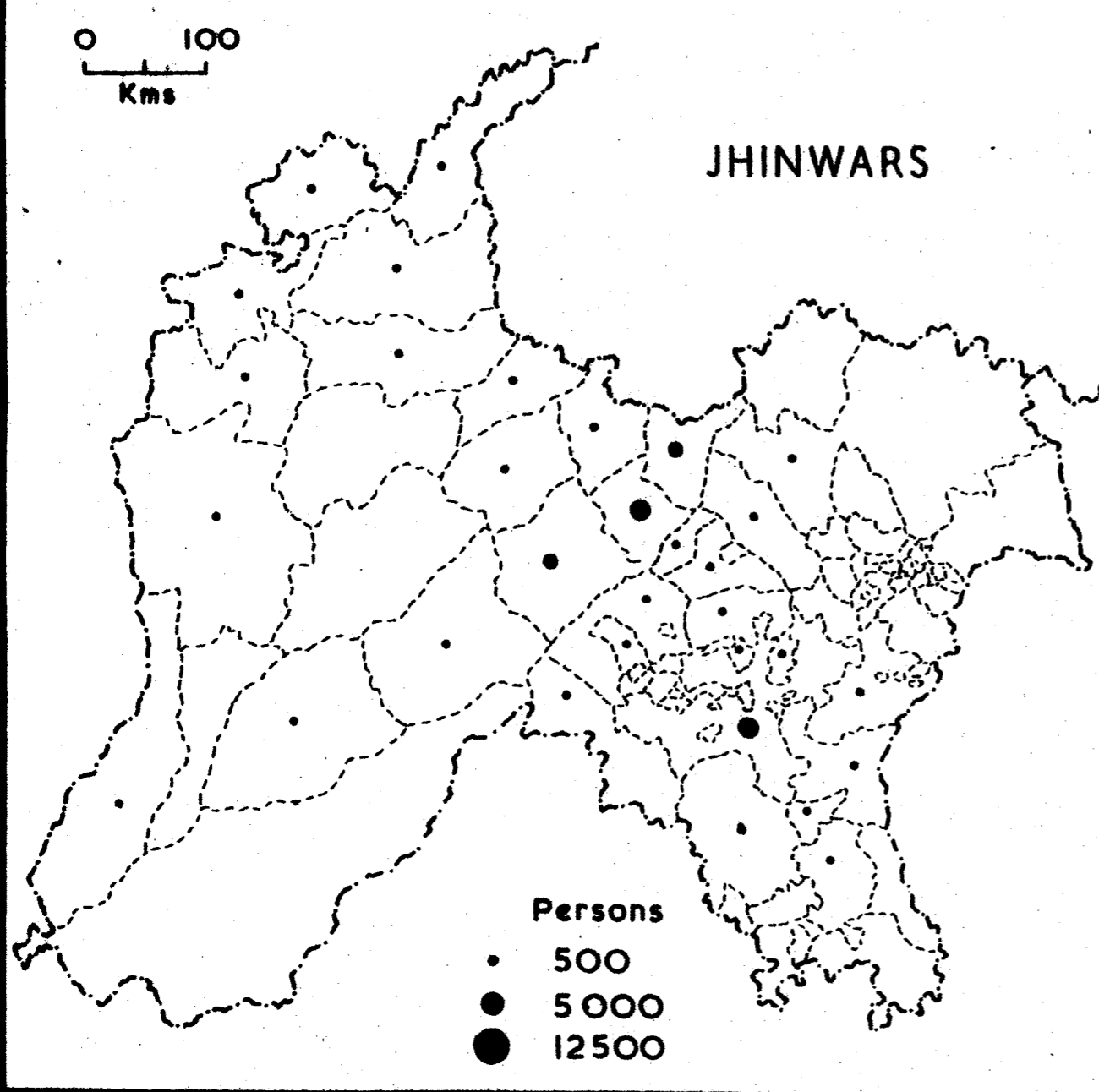
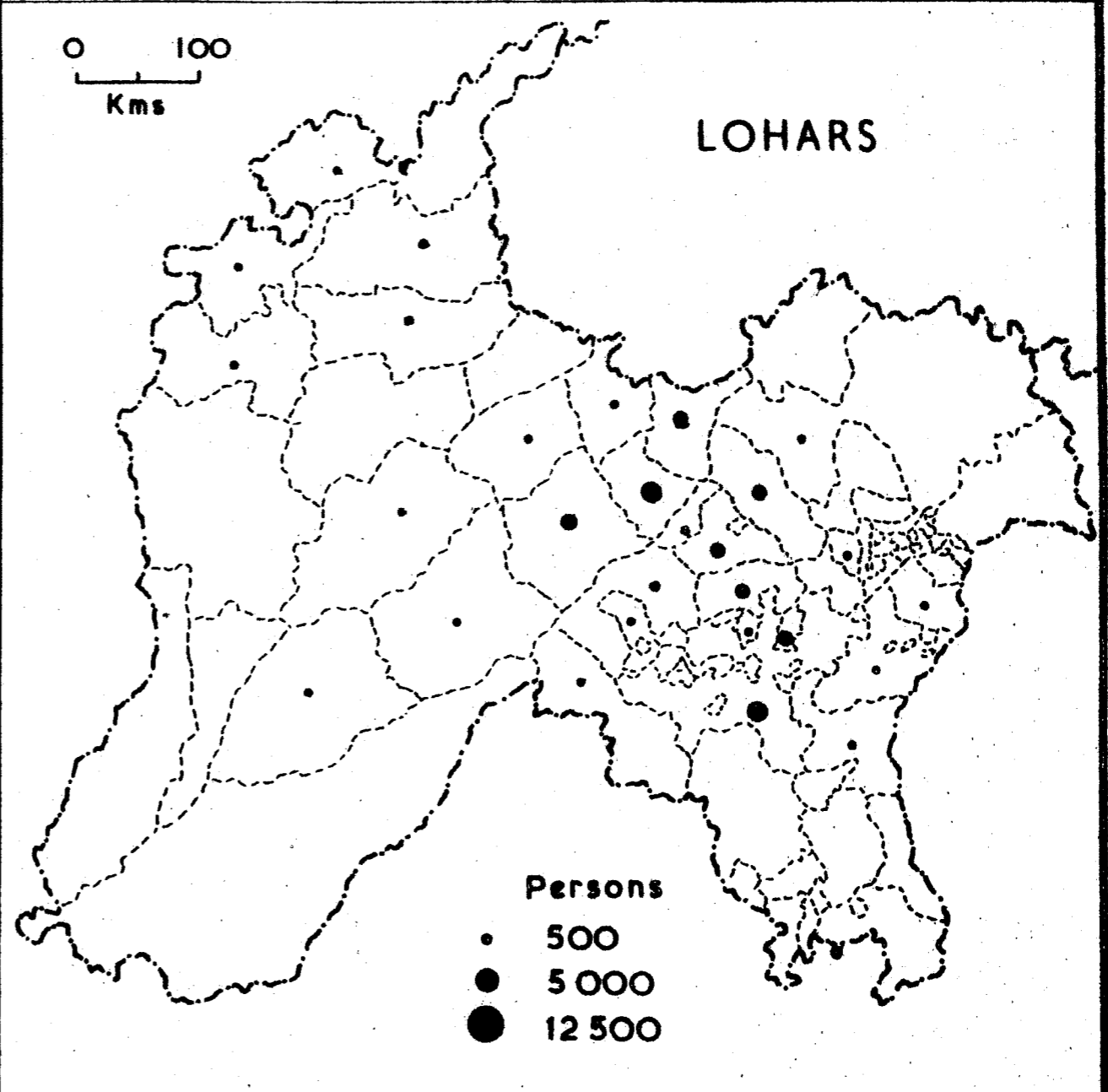
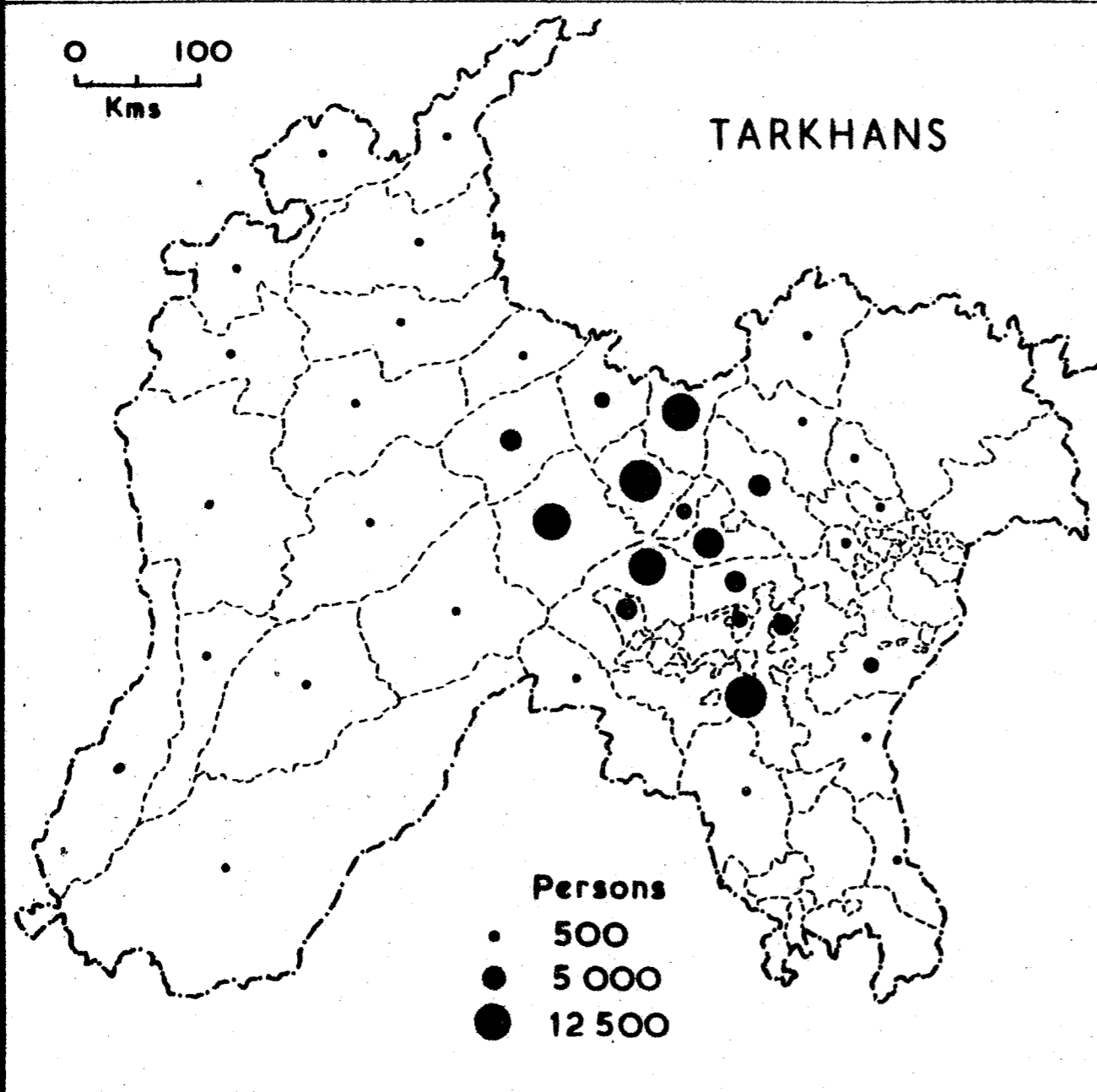
Sikhism. Chuhras, constituting 2.6 per cent of the Sikh population, were also engaged in agricultural labour in addition to their traditional vocation of sweeping. They were also known as Mazhabi and Rangreta. About two-thirds of them were recorded in the five districts / princely states of Patiala, Ferozepur, Nabha, Lahore and Amritsar.

The peasantry also required the services of some artisan castes, such as carpenter (Tarkhan) and blacksmith (Lohar). They were engaged mainly in making and mending the agricultural implements for the agriculturists. Some of the Tarkhans were in wood business and masonry works. Tarkhans formed 6.6 per cent of the total Sikh population and were the second largest caste among the Sikhs. Their greatest concentration was in the very areas where the Sikh Jats were in large numbers, particularly in the British territory of the then Punjab (Map 9). On the other hand, the Sikh Lohars constituted only 1.4 per cent of the Sikh population. Most of them were distributed in the area between the Ravi and the Ghaggar. Amritsar district alone accounted for one-fifth of them. Lohar was one of the true village menials, receiving customary dues in the shape of a share of the produce in return for which he made and repaired all the iron implements of agriculture.

MAP No. 9

PUNJAB—1881

Distribution of the Sikhs by Caste



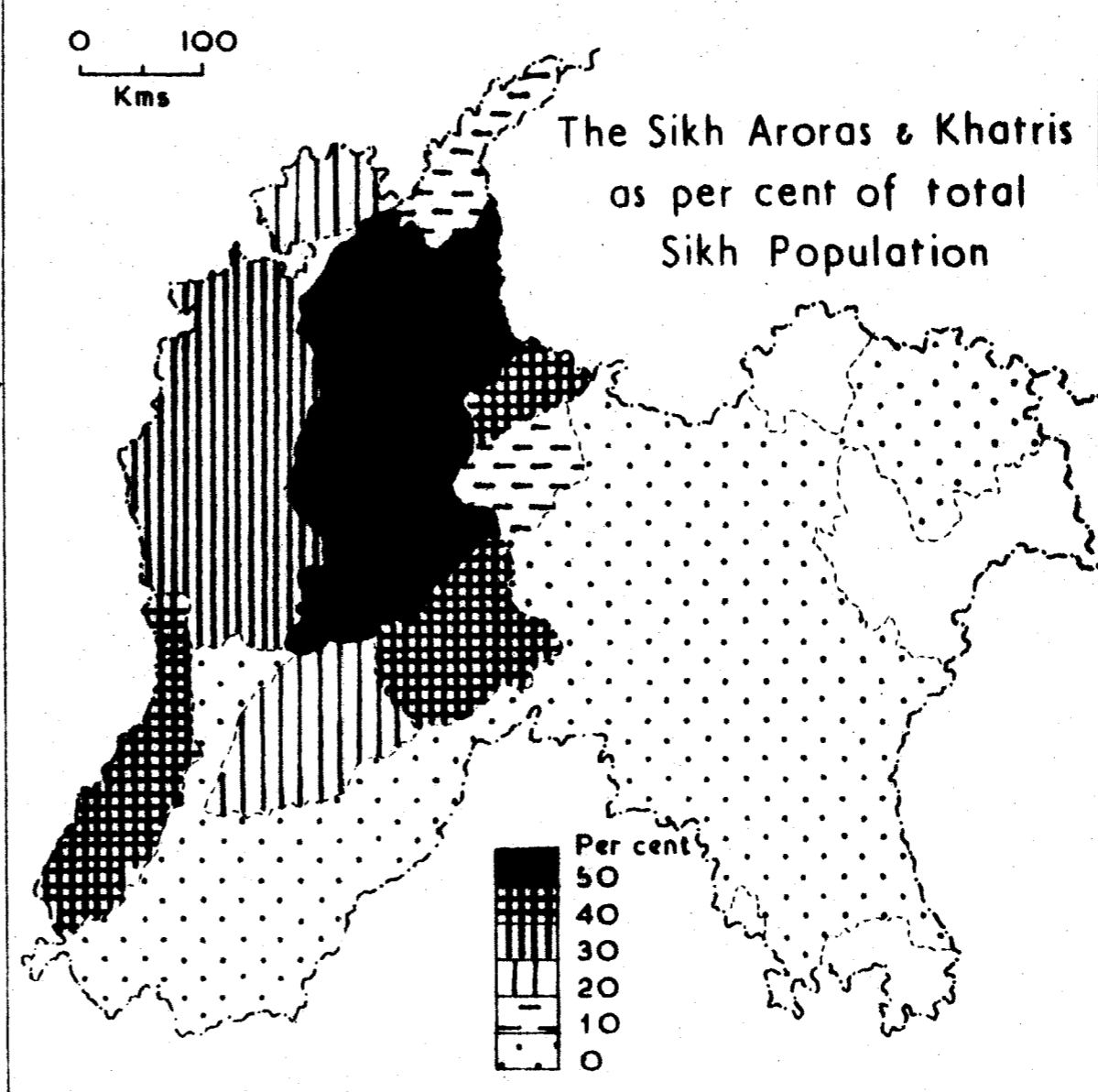
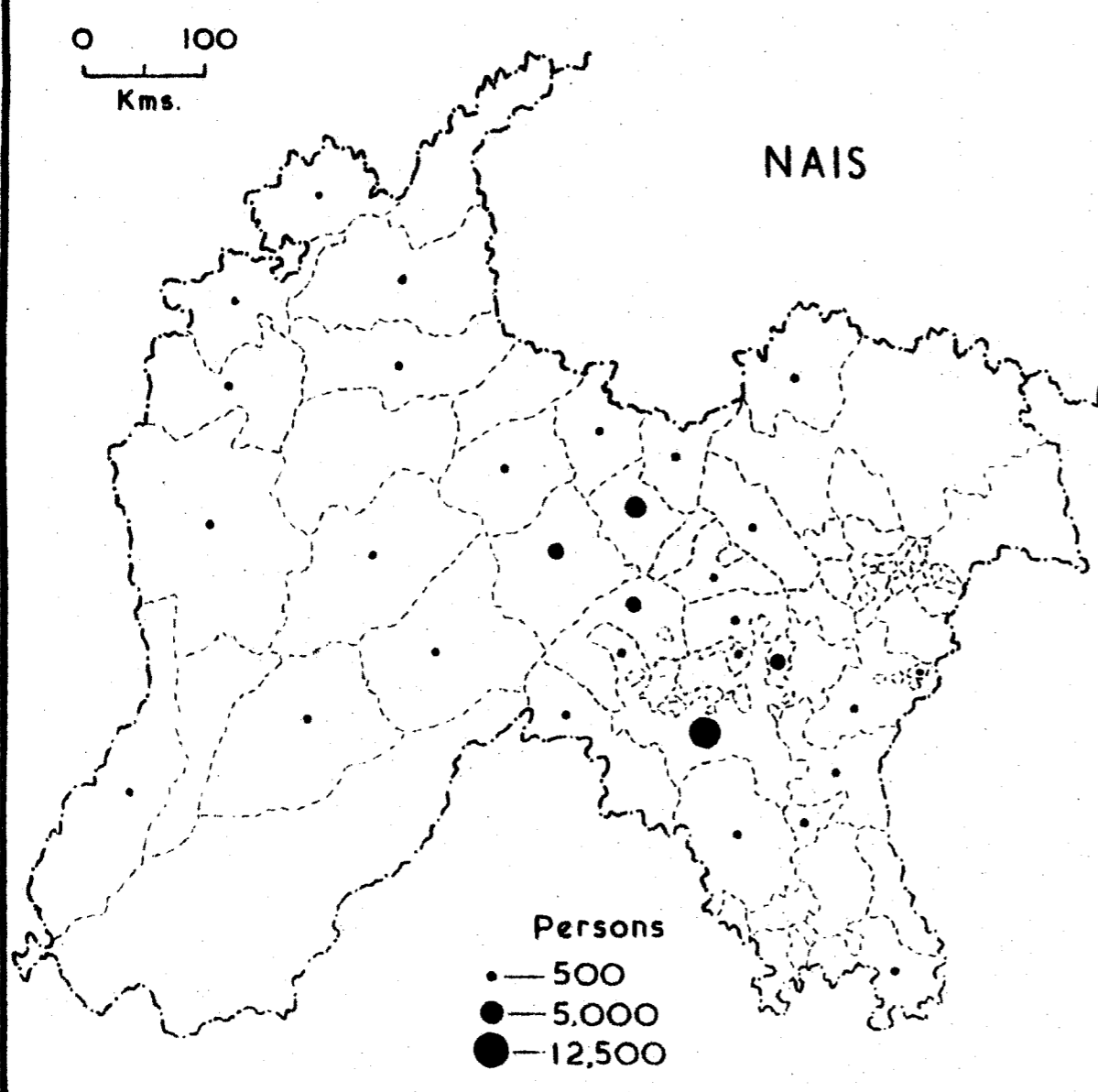
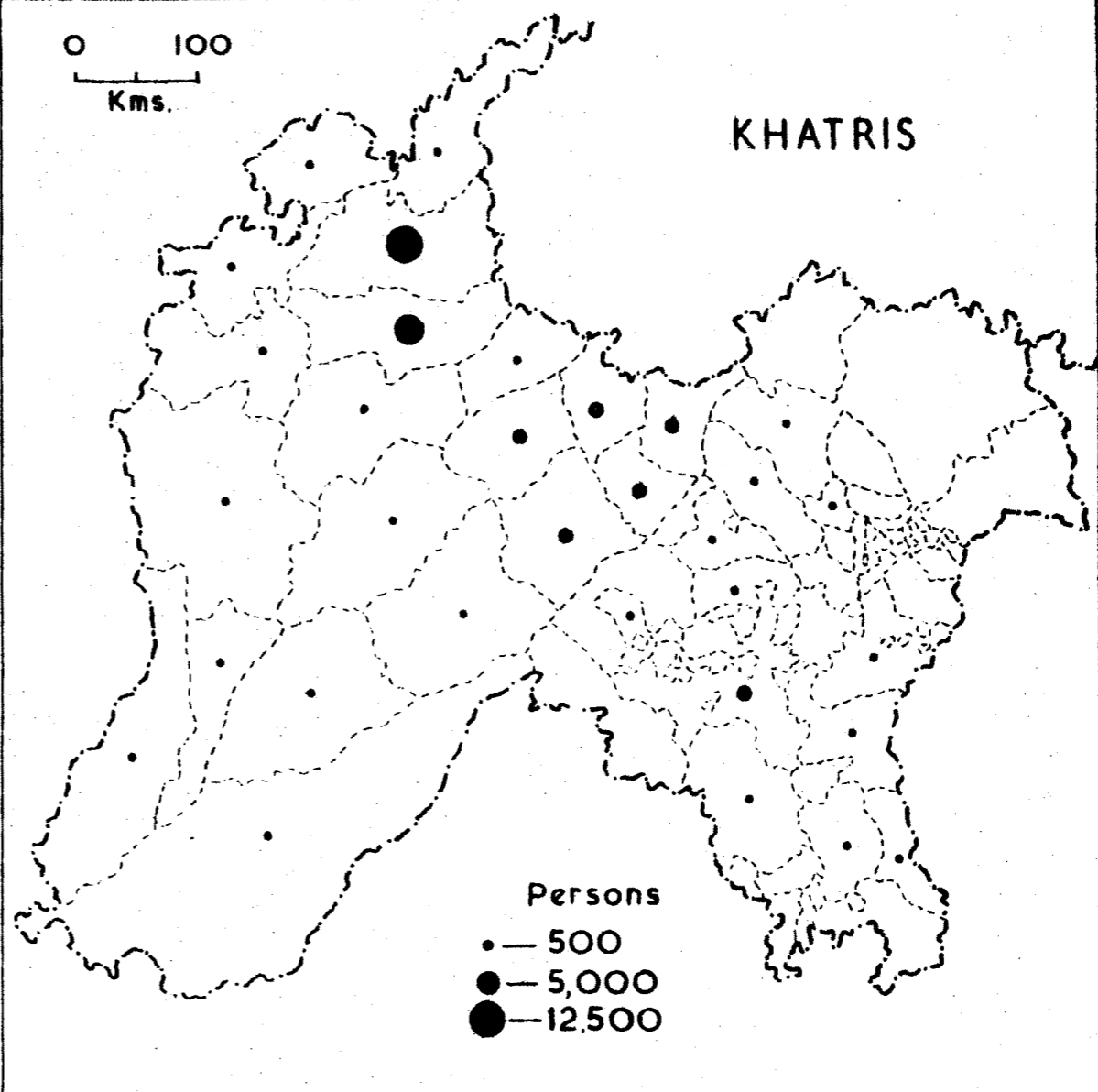
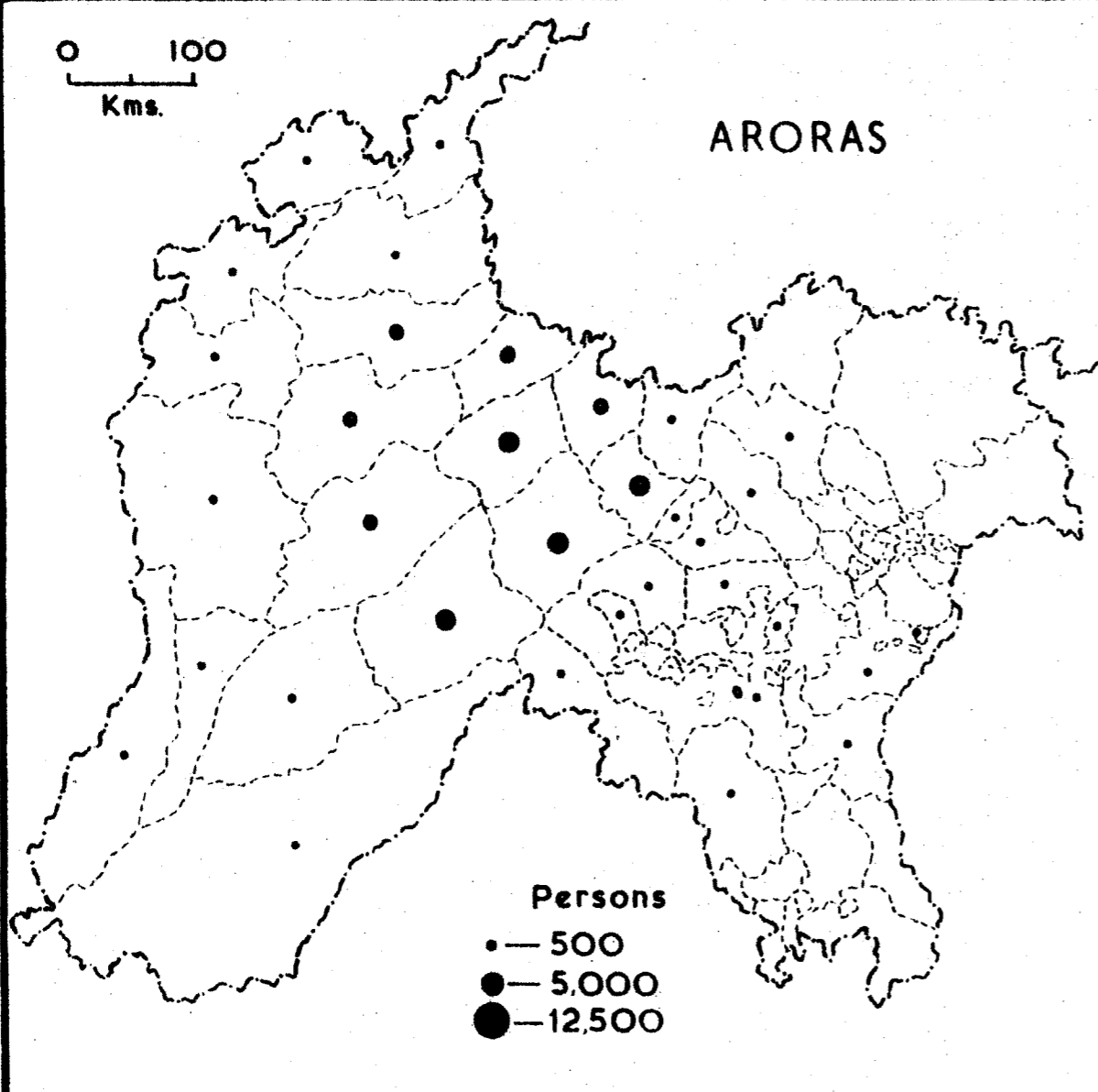
Jhinwars (water carriers), Nais (barbers) and Chinbas (tailors) were in the service of land owners and other castes. Out of the total Sikh population 1.3 per cent were Jhinwars and 1.2 per cent were Nais by caste. The hereditary vocation of Nais was not merely hair cutting, which is prohibited among the Sikhs, but also carrying of formal messages, especially relating to auspicious events like marriages. About 35 per cent of Nai Sikhs were in the princely state of Patiala alone (Map 10). The rest were distributed largely in Amritsar, Lahore, Ferozepur, Nabha, Ludhiana, Faridkot and Gurdaspur districts. Chinbas were comparatively more in the eastern districts. Thus, most of the service castes among the Sikhs had a distributional pattern that corresponded to that of Jats.

Aroras and Khatrias, each constituting 2.2 per cent of the Sikh population, were the two trading communities operating mostly in towns. An overwhelming majority of them was confined to the areas lying between the Jhelum in the west and the Beas in the east. A large part of this region now falls in Pakistan. Within this area, the distribution of the Aroras and Khatrias was exclusive of each other (Map 10).

MAP No. 10

PUNJAB — 1881

Distribution of the Sikhs by Caste



The main points emerging in the present chapter may be succinctly put. In 1881, the Sikhs constituted only 0.7 per cent of population in India. As many as 92.6 per cent of them were concentrated in the Punjab; about 76.7 per cent in the area covered by the present Punjab (India). The Sikhs were evidently to be found largely within the beat of their religious hearth which was transitional between the Muslim predominant area to the west and the Hindu dominated area to the south and the east. Almost invariably, they were concentrated in the upland plains in contrast to their virtual absence from the floodplains.

No less than 92.7 per cent of the Sikhs in the Punjab were rural by residence. An overwhelming majority was deriving its livelihood from agriculture and services associated with farming. The urban Sikhs were confined mainly to the towns connected with Sikh religion and history. They were more numerous also in small towns, many of which were simply overgrown villages. An inverse relationship between the size of a town and the percentage of its Sikh population was observed.

The Sikhs were divided among a number of castes. Jats were at the top of the Sikh caste hierarchy and they enjoyed a numerical superiority. Most of them were

concentrated in the present Punjab area. They lived mainly in the countryside. Tarkhans were scattered in the Jat dominated areas. Chamars and Chuhras found a stronger concentration in the princely states where they were working as tenants, share-croppers and agricultural labourers on the large agricultural holdings of the feudal lords. Khatrias and Aroras, belonging to trading castes, were confined to towns mostly in western Punjab. The distribution of the Sikh castes, thus, found a meaningful association with the economy and society of different areas.

CHAPTER III

THE SIKHS : 1881 - 1891

Any analysis of growth and redistribution of the Sikhs during 1881-1891 is somewhat handicapped by a more rigid definition of a Sikh adopted at the 1891 census. While in the 1881 census any person claiming to be a Sikh was recorded as such, at the 1891 census a person had to satisfy certain conditions if he wanted to be enumerated as Sikh. He should be a Khalsa (a follower of Guru Gobind Singh), should wear uncut hair and abstain from smoking.¹ The best practical test of a Sikh for the purposes of the census was to ascertain whether he wore uncut hair and abstained from smoking. Only those persons who conformed to these requirements were classed as Sikhs. Many persons recorded as Sikhs at the previous census became Hindus in 1891.

An increase by only 2.9 per cent (from 1,853,426 in 1881 to 1,906,512 in 1891) in the Sikh population during the decade, as against a growth rate of 11 per cent in the country's population, was to be understood in the context of this definitional change. All the Sahaidharis²

¹ Census of India, 1891, Punjab and Its Feudatories, Report, Vol. XIX, Part I, p. 91.

² Sahaidharis, also known as Nanakpanthis, were Sikh by religion. They were followers of Guru Nanak, the first Guru. They did not wear long hair. Hence they were not Khalsa as enunciated by Guru Gobind Singh.

were enumerated as non-Sikhs in 1891. Its greatest impact was seen in the Sind area of Bombay presidency where the number of Sikhs fell precipitously to 818 in 1891 from 127,100 in 1881. The new definition, thus, not only affected the overall growth rate of the Sikhs but also had its impact on the spatial variation in the growth rate of this community.³

Meanwhile some Sikh organisations had come into existence to revive the teachings of the Gurus, to produce literature in Punjabi and to check the relapse of the Sikhs into Hinduism. The faith had earlier been weakened by the influx of a large number of those who had adopted Sikhism to gain worldly advantage but whose allegiance to its principles and traditions was tentative.⁴ The Singh Sabha, which was formed at Amritsar in 1873, was the most prominent among the reform movements. It gave a new life to the religion, apart from bringing a large number of new converts into its fold.

Spatial Patterns

There was a contrast in the growth patterns of the Sikhs within the Punjab and in areas outside it. While

³ If an allowance is made for the change in definition, the growth rate of the Sikh population was about 10 per cent. This corresponded roughly to their rate of natural increase.

⁴ Harbans Singh: "Origins of the Singh Sabha," Punjab Past and Present, Essays in Honour of Ganda Singh Volume (1976), pp. 275-276.

Table 3.1
India: 1881-1891

Growth of the Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Absolute change	Percentage change
	1881	1891		
Punjab	1,716,114	1,870,481	154,367	8.9
British territory	1,121,004	1,389,934	268,930	23.9
Princely states	595,110	480,547	-114,563	-19.2
Bombay Presidency	127,130	912	-126,218	-99.3
British territory	127,100	818	-126,282	-99.3
Princely states	30	94	64	213.3
Hyderabad	3,664	4,637	973	26.5
North West Province and Oudh	3,644	11,382	7,708	211.5
British territory	3,644	11,347	7,703	211.4
Princely states	-	5	5	∞
Central India Agency	1,455	1,825	370	25.4
Central Province and Berar	624	350	- 274	-43.9
British territory	622	349	- 273	-43.8
Princely states	2	1	- 1	-50.0
Bengal	549	417	- 132	-24.0
British territory	549	412	- 137	-25.1
Princely states	-	5	5	∞
Ajmer Merwara	182	213	31	17.3
Madras Presidency	-	128	128	∞
Mysore	41	29	- 12	-70.7
Assam	14	83	69	492.8
British territory	14	83	69	492.8
Princely states	-	-	-	-
Rajputana	9	1,116	1,107	12,300.0
Burma	-	3,164	3,164	∞
Coorg	-	-	-	-
Bihar and Orissa	DNA	DNA	-	-
Baluchistan	DNA	DNA	-	-
Andaman and Nicobar	DNA	395	-	-
Baroda	-	11	11	∞
Cochin	-	-	-	-
Travancore	-	-	-	-
Kashmir	DNA	11,399	-	-
INDIA	1,853,426	1,906,512	53,086	2.9

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Indian Empire, Vol. II, pp. 10-13 and Census of India, 1891, General Tables for British Provinces and Feudatory States, Vol. I, p. 90.

DNA Data Not Available

- Nil

the Sikh population in the Punjab increased by 8.9 per cent (from 1,716,114 in 1881 to 1,870,481 in 1891), the number of the Sikhs in other parts of India declined by about 73 per cent (from 137,312 in 1881 to 36,031 in 1891) during the same period (Table 3.1). There were, however, striking regional variations in growth of the Sikh population in the Punjab as well as in other provinces and princely states. The actual number of persons involved in the latter group of areas was certainly small.

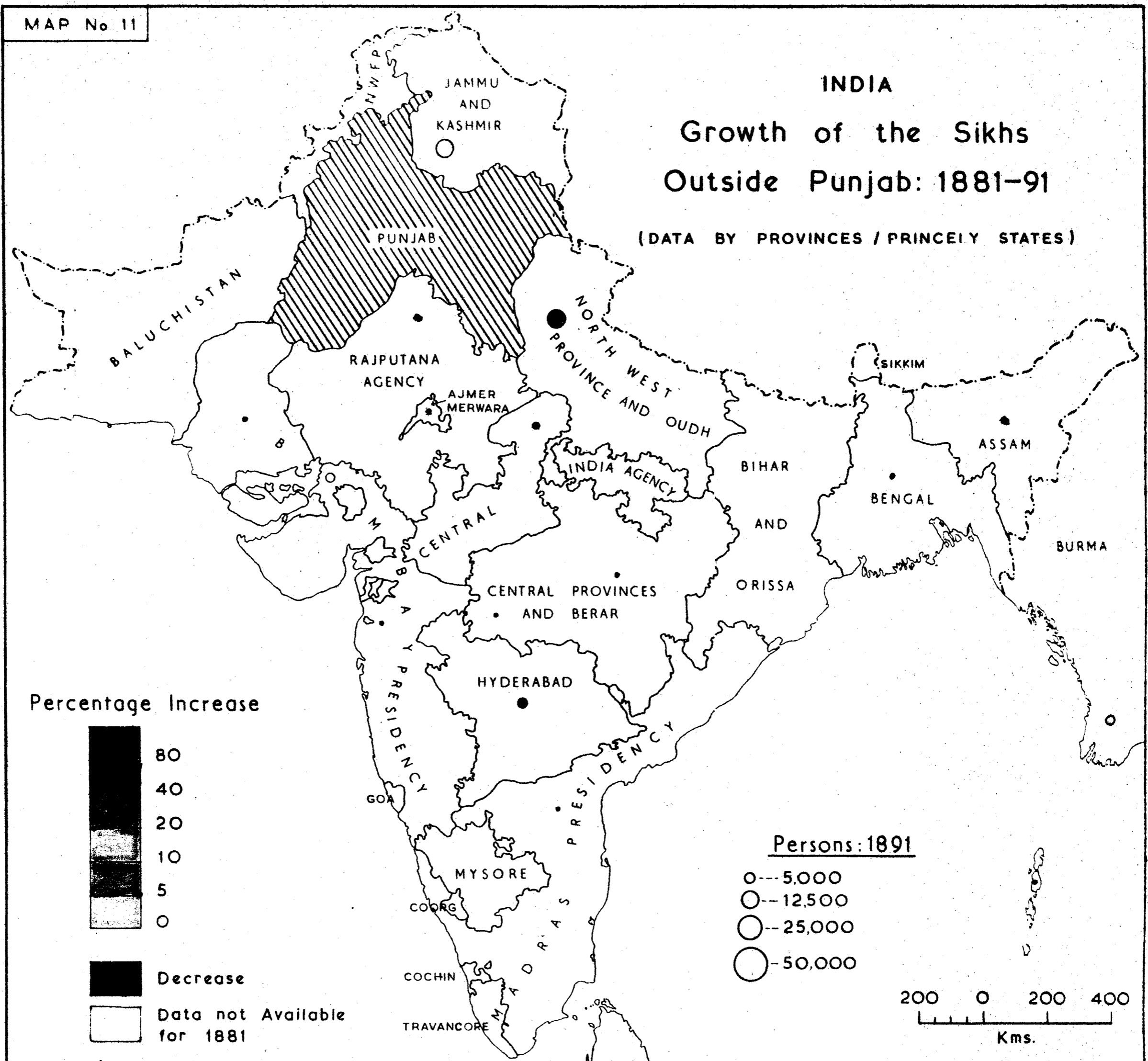
Outside the Punjab, the Sikhs increased from 3,644 in 1881 to 11,352 in 1891 in North West Province and Oudh; from 9 to 1,116 in Rajputana states; from 3,664 to 4,637 in Hyderabad state; and from 1,455 to 1,825 in Central India Agency (Maps 11 and 12). The in-migration of even a small number of Sikhs in military, trade or other activities to these areas produced exceptionally high growth rates since the existing base was modest. On the other hand, a steep fall in the number of Sikhs in Bombay presidency from 127,130 in 1881 to only 912 in 1891 was the outcome of the declassification of the Sahajidhari Sikhs of this area. It was because of this heavy loss in Sikh numbers that the percentage of the Sikhs outside the Punjab was reduced from 7.4 in 1881 to only 1.9 in 1891 (Table 3.2).

MAP No 11

INDIA

Growth of the Sikhs Outside Punjab: 1881-91

(DATA BY PROVINCES / PRINCELY STATES)



MAP No. 12

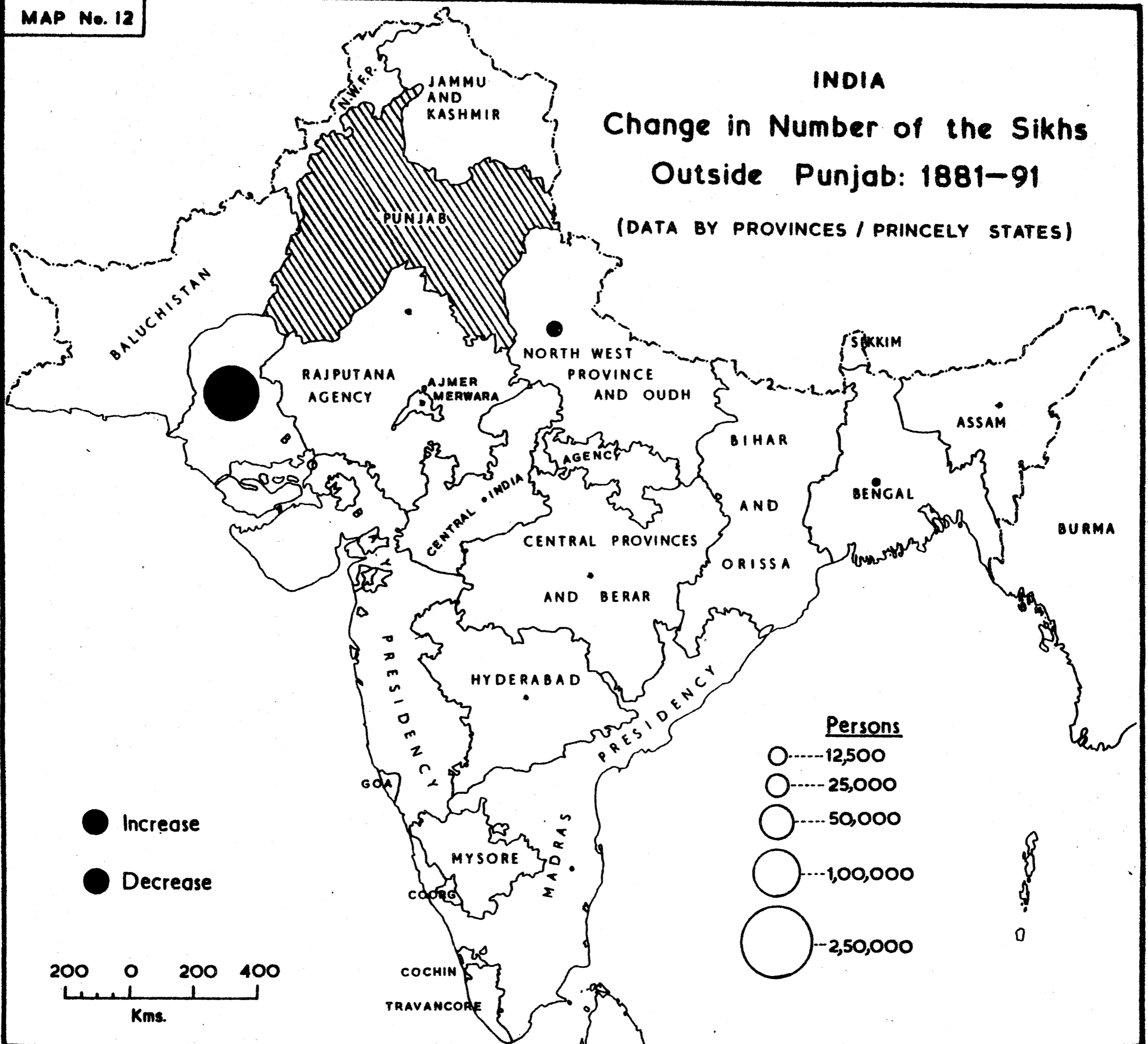


Table 3.2
India : 1891
The Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs	Percentage in	
		Total population of province / princely state	The Sikh population of India
Punjab	1,870,481	8.9	98.1
British territory	1,389,934	6.6	72.8
Princely states	480,547	2.3	25.2
Kashmir	11,399	0.4	0.6
North West Province and Oudh	11,352	*	0.6
British territory	11,347	*	0.6
Princely states	5	*	*
Hyderabad	4,637	*	0.2
Burma	3,164	*	0.2
Central India Agency	1,825	*	0.1
Rajputana	1,116	*	*
Bombay Presidency	912	*	*
British territory	818	*	*
Princely states	94	*	*
Bengal	417	*	*
British territory	412	*	*
Princely states	5	*	*
Andaman and Nicobar	395	*	*
Central Province and Berar	350	*	*
British territory	349	*	*
Princely states	1	*	*
Ajmer Merwara	213	*	*
Madras Presidency	128	*	*
Assam	83	*	*
Mysore	29	*	*
Baroda	11	*	*
Coorg	-	-	-
Bihar and Orissa	DNA		
INDIA	1,906,512	0.7	100.0

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1891, General Tables for British Provinces and Feudatory States, Vol. I, p. 90.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

- Nil

DNA Data Not Available

Growth of the Sikhs in the Punjab

The Sikh population in the Punjab, accounting for 98.1 per cent of the Sikhs in India, grew by 8.9 per cent during 1881-1891. This growth rate was less than that of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians who grew by 10.7, 10.8 and 60.0 per cent respectively (Table 3.3). As noted earlier, there was some relapse of the Sikhs to Hinduism.

Table 3.3

The Punjab : 1881-1891
Growth of Population by Religion

Religion	Population in		Percentage change
	1881	1891	
All religions	22,712,120	25,130,127	10.7
Muslims	11,662,434	12,915,643	10.8
Hindus	9,252,295	10,237,700	10.7
Sikhs	1,716,114	1,870,481	8.9
Christians	33,699	53,909	60.0

SOURCE : Census of India, 1891, Punjab and Its Feudatories, Report, Vol. XIX, Part I, p.93.

Within the Punjab, the province and the princely states contrasted with each other in this respect (Maps 13 and 14). While the Sikhs in the province increased from 1,121,004 to 1,389,934 representing a growth rate of 23.9 per cent, their number suffered a steep decline

from 696,110 to 480,547 in the princely states signifying a decrease by 19.2 per cent during the decade. This contrast was explained mainly by some new conversion to Sikhism in the province and a high incidence of declassification of the Sikhs in the princely states. It is quite likely that the census enumerators carried out the new definition of a Sikh rather more rigidly in the princely states.⁵

On any count, the growth rate of the Sikhs in the Punjab province by 23.9 per cent was significantly higher than the rate of natural increase by 10 per cent. Some conversion to Sikhism was indicated by the growth of the individual Sikh castes. Khatri Sikhs increased by 17,700; Aroras by 22,185, Chamars by 25,719, Tarkhans by 29,302, and Jats by 56,632.⁶ The most remarkable increase was in the number of Chuhras. In Ferozepur district alone, their number rose from only 7,237 in 1881 to 64,333 in 1891. Similarly, their numerical strength went up in Lahore district from 2,874 to 4,352; in Amritsar district from 2,351 to 4,832; and in Gujrat district from 52 to 1,625.

⁵ Census of India, 1891, Punjab and Its Feudatories, Report, Vol. XIX, Part I, p. 95.

⁶ Ibid., p. 96.

Within the province, the growth rate of the Sikhs varied significantly from one district to another (Table 3.4). Districts like Multan, Montgomery, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Shahpur, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Ambala, Ferozepur and Hissar recorded exceptionally high growth rates ranging from 24 to more than 200 per cent. Most of these districts were located in the western part of the Punjab, now in Pakistan. Some conversion, especially from amongst the urban trading class, and a small degree of inflow of the Sikhs to cantonments in this region explained this phenomenon. The actual numbers involved, however, were small as the base of the Sikh population in these districts was meagre. An increase of 604.7 per cent in the Sikh population of Hissar district was attributed to merger of Sirsa district where the numbers of the Sikhs was considerable.

The growth of the Sikhs was moderate, 10 to 24 per cent, in the districts of Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Lahore, Amritsar and Gurdaspur. These were the districts where the Sikhs were already in large numbers and where the actual increase rate of the Sikhs was higher than their natural rate of increase. All indications are that the migrational factor was insignificant. The growth in

Table 3.4

The Punjab : 1881 - 1891

Growth of the Sikh Population by Districts and Princely States

District/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Percentage change
	1881	1891	
Amritsar	216,337	261,452	20.8
Ferozepur	168,816	226,361	34.1
Indiana	127,143	141,603	11.4
Lahore	125,991	152,023	21.0
Jullundur	90,320	110,790	22.6
Gurdaspur	72,395	85,837	18.6
Ambala	68,442	93,679	36.8
Hoshiarpur	59,784	70,709	18.3
Sialkot	40,195	49,872	24.1
Gujranwala	36,199	45,316	25.3
Sirsa	28,303	X	X
Rawalpindi	17,780	27,470	54.4
Montgomery	11,968	16,032	34.0
Jhelum	11,188	15,169	35.6
Gujrat	8,885	19,018	114.0
Karnal	8,036	8,037	*
Shahpur	4,702	9,777	107.5
Jhang	3,477	3,941	13.3
Hissar	3,143	22,151	604.7
Peshawar	3,103	9,125	194.1
Museffargarh	2,788	2,715	-2.6
Kohat	2,240	4,474	99.7
Multan	2,085	2,832	35.8
Dera Ismail Khan	1,691	2,840	67.9
Hasara	1,381	3,609	161.3
Dera Ghazi Khan	1,326	1,424	7.4
Delhi	970	382	-60.6
Pamu	790	1,062	34.4
Khaibar Pass	744	XI	XI
Kangra	738	1,461	97.9
Siala	202	517	155.9
Rohtak	159	154	-3.1
Gurgaon	127	102	-1.9
Dujana	-	-	-
Pataudi	-	-	-
Leharu	-	-	-
Princely States	595,110	480,547	-19.2
PUNJAB	1,716,114	1,870,481	8.9

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Punjab, Vol. II, Appendix A, pp. 1-4 and Vol. III, Appendix B, pp. 1-4, and Census of India, 1891, Punjab and Its Feudatories, Vol. XX, Part II.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

- Nil

X Sirsa district had been merged in Hissar district by the 1891 census.

XI Khaibar Pass division was shown as a separate unit in the 1881 census.

excess of the natural increase was due to conversion to Sikhism. This conversion was more from among the low castes in rural parts of these districts.

Likewise, there were wide variations in the growth rate of the Sikhs in the various princely states. While all of them put together suffered a decline in their Sikh population by 19.2 per cent, Faridkot and Kapurthala showed increases by 17.4 and 49.0 per cent respectively (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5
The Punjab : 1881-1891
Growth of the Sikh Population

Princely state	The Sikhs in 1881	1891	Absolute change	Percentage change
Patiala	408,141	285,348	122,793	- 30.1
Nabha	77,682	63,047	14,635	- 18.8
Faridkot	40,187	47,164	6,977	17.4
Malerkotla	28,931	7,625	21,006	- 72.6
Kapurthala	26,493	39,493	13,000	49.0
Jind	4,335	15,020	10,685	246.5

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1891, Punjab and Its Feudatories, Report, Vol. XIX, Part I, p. 95.

By contrast, Patiala, Malerkotla and Nabha states recorded decreases by 30.1, 72.6 and 18.8 per cent respectively. These were the states where a rigid application of the new definition of a Sikh, declassified the less

conscientious faithfuls. The hold of Sikhism, in its ritualistic observances, was less strong in these states.

Changes in the Distributional Pattern of the Sikhs

The decade 1821-1891 brought about an 'apparent' disappearance of Sikhs from Sind because of the declassification of the Sahajdharis from the category of Sikhs. Similarly the distribution of the Sikhs in the Punjab princely states became thinner as a result of the impact of the new definition. This was true particularly of Patiala, Nabha and Malerkotla states (Table 3.6). By contrast, the concentration of the Sikhs became more dense in central districts of the Punjab where new conversion was considerable. This conversion was from among the low castes in rural parts of the eastern districts and from among the trading castes in the towns of the western districts. The floodplain areas, which were marked by the predominance of Muslims, remained without any Sikh population.

Some distributional change was attributed to migration. With the opening of the Ganga canal in the then Rajputana state, a small trickle of migration started from Punjab to areas along the canal. Hyderabad city also received a number of migrants. The same was true of some cantonments, scattered over the whole country, where the Imperial army was stationed.

Table 3.6
The Punjab: 1881-1891
Change in Distribution of the Sikh Population by
Districts and Princely States

District/ princely state	The Sikhs in a district/princely state as per cent of the Sikhs in the Punjab in		Change in per cent points
	1881	1891	
Amritsar	12.6	14.0	1.4
Ferozepur	9.8	12.0	2.2
Lahore	7.4	8.1	0.7
Ludhiana	7.4	7.6	0.2
Jullundur	5.3	5.9	0.6
Ambala	4.0	5.0	1.0
Gurdaspur	4.2	4.6	0.4
Hoshiarpur	3.5	3.8	0.3
Sialkot	2.3	2.6	0.3
Gujranwala	2.1	2.4	0.3
Rawalpindi	1.0	1.5	0.5
Hissar	0.2	1.2	1.0
Gujrat	0.5	1.0	0.5
Montgomery	0.7	0.8	0.1
Jhelum	0.6	0.8	0.2
Shahpur	0.2	0.5	0.3
Peshawar	0.2	0.5	0.3
Karnal	0.5	0.4	- 0.1
Kohat	0.1	0.2	0.1
Jhang	0.2	0.2	0
Hazara	0.1	0.2	0.1
Dera Ismail Khan	0.1	0.1	0
Multan	0.1	0.1	0
Muzaffargarh	0.2	0.1	-0.1
Kangra	*	0.1	*
Dera Ghazi Khan	0.1	*	*
Bannu	*	*	*
Simla	*	*	*
Rohtak	*	*	*
Gurgaon	*	*	*
Delhi	*	*	*
Punjab Princely States	34.7	25.7	-9.0

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Punjab, Vol. II, Appendix A, pp. 1-4 and Vol. III, Appendix B, pp. 1-4, and Census of India, 1891 Punjab and Its Feudatories, Vol. XX, Part II.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

In brief, growth pattern of the Sikh population during 1881-1891 was a net outcome of three factors: rate of natural increase, definitional change in case of a Sikh, and localised conversion to Sikhism. The role of migration was very insignificant. The changes in the distributional pattern of the Sikhs during the decade were mainly in situ. These did not involve any displacement or movement of the Sikhs from one area to another.

The decade 1881-1891 was marked by a rather slow growth of the Sikhs as compared with other religious communities. The growth rate of the Sikhs was consistently higher in all the subsequent decades than the one experienced during this decade. A strict definition of a Sikh adopted at the 1891 census was mainly responsible for this.

The regional variations in the growth rate of the Sikhs were determined primarily by the incidence of declassification or by the degree of new conversion. The provincial part of the Punjab contrasted with the princely states in this regard. The former recorded high growth rates by virtue of new additions through conversion and the latter recorded sizable loss of Sikhs due to declassification of many of them. The control of Sikhism, in terms of the observance of the tenets of the religion, was stronger in the British part of the Punjab than in princely states.

The concentration of the Sikhs became more dense in the former area and comparatively thinner in the latter.

CHAPTER IV

THE SIKHS : 1891-1901

While the growth of the Sikhs by 2.9 per cent was far slower than the growth of India's population by 11 per cent during 1881-1891, the trend was reversed in the following decade. During 1891-1901 the Sikh population increased by 15.1 per cent (from 1,906,512 to 2,195,439) as against a mere increase of 2.5 per cent in India's population. The Hindus decreased by 0.3 per cent, the Muslims grew by 8.9 per cent and the Christians recorded the fastest increase rate of 27.9 per cent (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

India : 1891-1901

Growth of Population by Religion

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Population by religion in</u>		<u>Percentage change</u>
	<u>1891</u>	<u>1901</u>	
Hindu	207,731,723	207,147,026	-0.3
Muslim	57,321,164	62,458,077	8.9
Christian	2,284,380	2,923,241	27.9
Sikh	1,906,512	2,195,439	15.1

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1891, General Tables for British Provinces and Feudatory States, Vol. I, pp.88-92 and Census of India, 1901, India, Vol. I-A, Part II, pp. 58-61.

The birth and death rates of the Sikhs being not materially different from those of other major communities, the relatively fast growth of this community was attributable to continuing conversion from other faiths as an outcome of the efforts of the Sikh organisations. The Singh Sabha, in particular, proved a great regenerating force.¹ Not only it cultivated a sense of pride among the Sikhs but also helped them in getting new converts to their fold.

This development may be understood in the context of activities of the Christian missionaries to spread their faith among non-Christians and of the Muslim and Hindu organisations to check erosion of their adherents. An English newspaper of that time reported that the Christian faith was making rapid progress in the Punjab. It was prophesied that one-third of the Majha would be Christian within the next twenty five years, and the Malwa would follow suit. "Just as one does not see any Buddhists in the country except in images, in the same fashion the Sikhs who were visible in their turbans and their other religious forms like steel bangles and swords would be seen only in pictures in museums. Their own sons and grandsons turning Christians and clad in coat and

¹ Harbans Singh : The Heritage of the Sikhs, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964, p. 146.

trousers and sporting mushroom like caps would go to see them in the museums and say in their pidgin Punjabi: Look, that is the picture of a Sikh - the tribe that inhabited this country once upon a time. Efforts of those who wished to resist the onslaught of Christianity would prove abortive like a leper without hands and feet trying to save a boy falling off a roof top." This note which appeared in the Khalsa Akhbar (Lahore) dated May 25, 1894 worked as a catalytic agent to the activities of the Singh Sabha. It became a mass upsurge, unlike other reform movements which were the creation of outstanding individual leaders. The encounter in the Punjab was marked by aggressiveness. The closing decades of the nineteenth century were filled with abrasive religious polemic in which the Christians, the Muslims, the Arya Samajis and the Sikhs freely participated.² The effort of the each group was to gain more adherents. The Sikhs met a greater success mainly because of their effective appeal to the low castes, especially in rural areas.

Spatial Patterns

The rate of growth of the Sikh population was far from being uniform in the country (Maps 15 and 16).

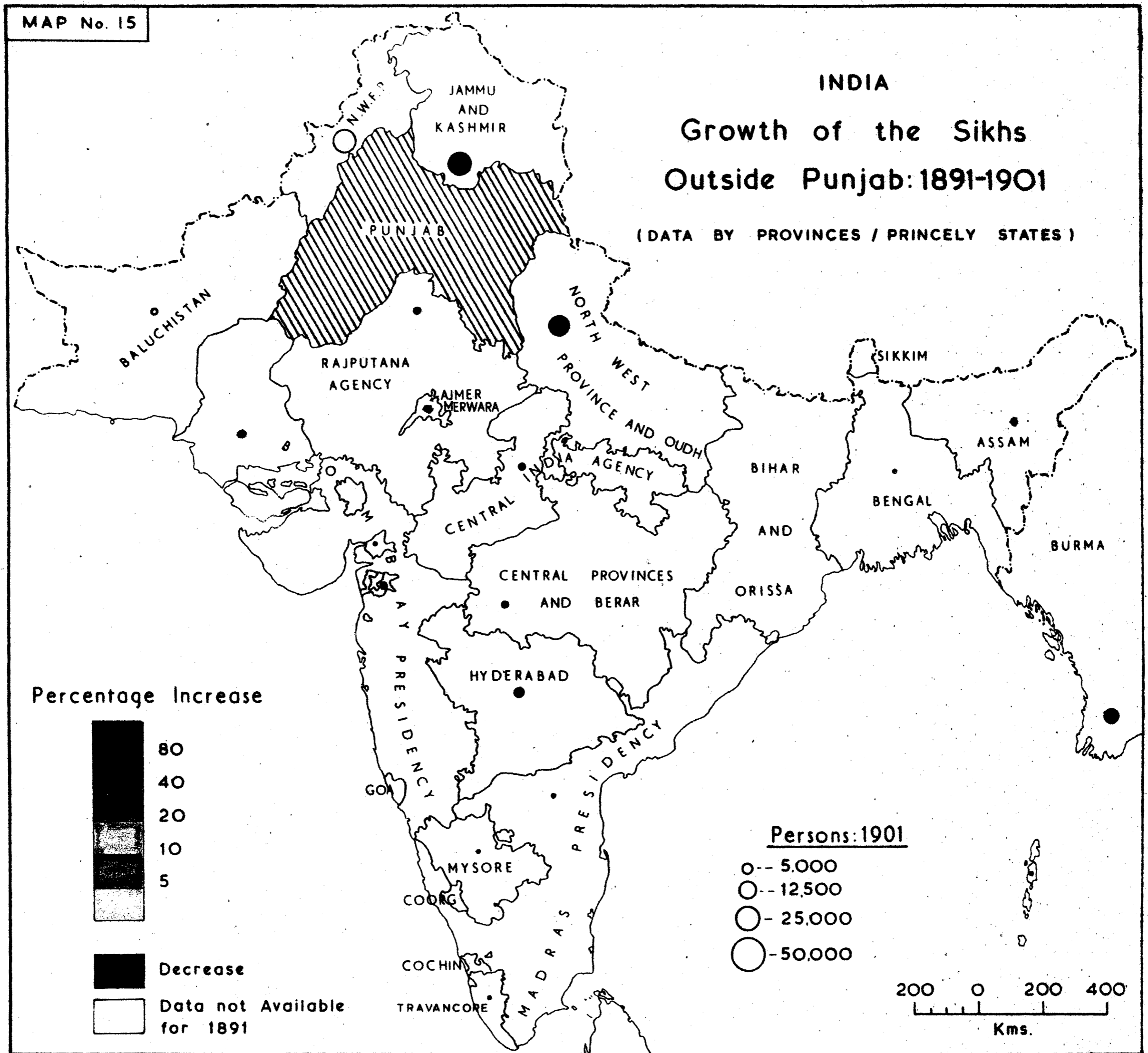
² Harbans Singh : "Origins of the Singh Sabha," Punjab Past and Present, Essays in Honour of Ganda Singh Volume (1976), p. 279.

MAP No. 15

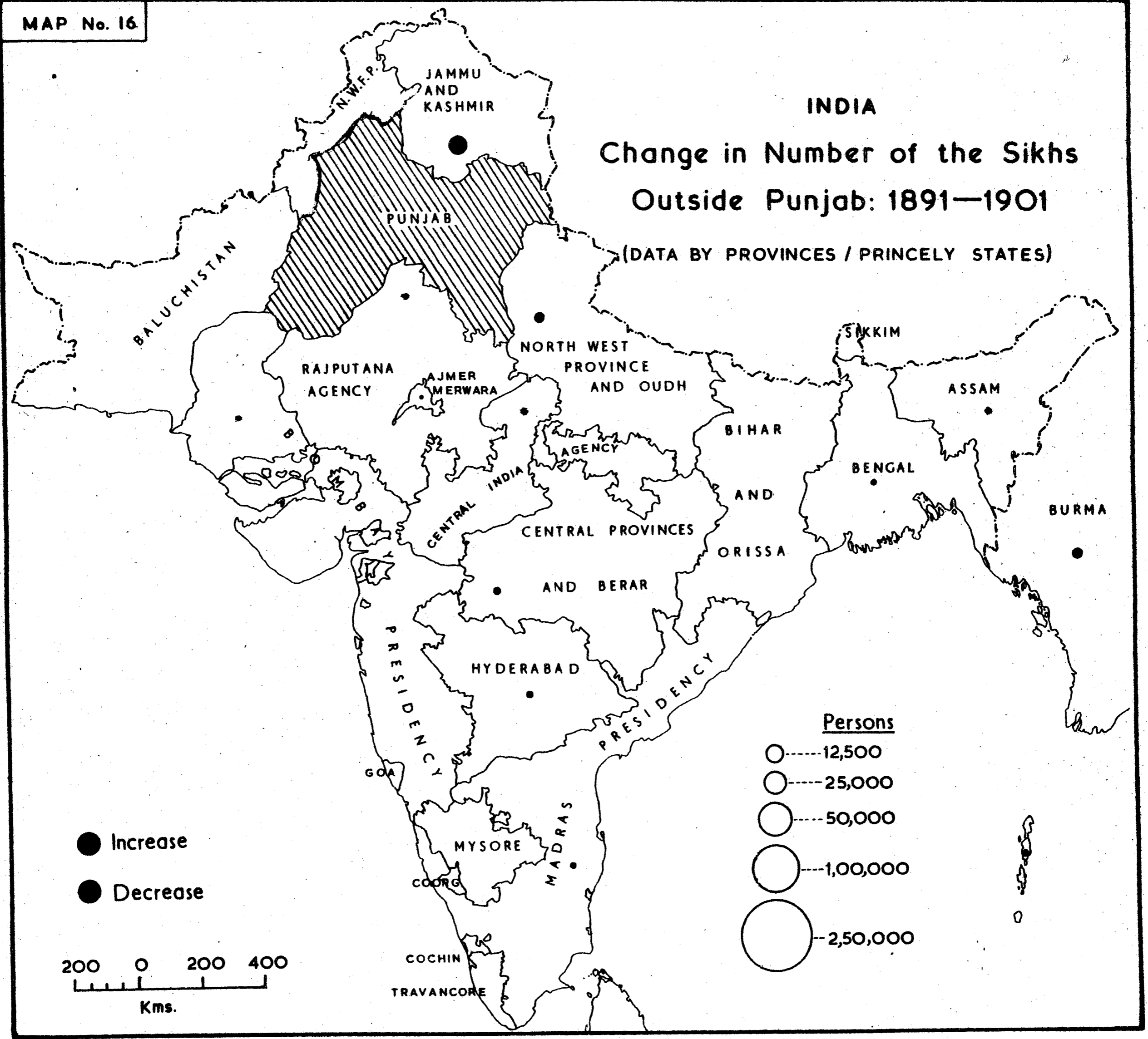
INDIA

Growth of the Sikhs Outside Punjab: 1891-1901

(DATA BY PROVINCES / PRINCELY STATES)



MAP No. 16



Numerically the maximum increase took place in the Punjab region where the number of the Sikhs increased from 1,870,481 in 1891 to 2,102,896 in 1901 representing a growth rate of 12.4 per cent (Table 4.2). There was considerable amount of conversion to Sikhism from among the backward classes in the region. In terms of percentage, however, the growth rate of the Sikhs was faster in areas outside the Punjab where their number multiplied almost 2.5 times. As a result, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of the Sikhs in the Punjab from 98.1 in 1891 to 95.8 in 1901 (Table 4.3).

The provinces and states where the number of Sikhs increased significantly were the North West Province and Oudh (11,352 in 1891 and 15,333 in 1901), Rajputana states (1,116, in 1891 and 2,054 in 1901), Kashmir state (11,399 in 1891 and 25,828 in 1901) and Burma (3,164 in 1891 and 6,596 in 1901). Migration of the Sikhs, particularly from the Punjab province, played a significant role. Among the factors stimulating migration were some opportunities for more remunerative employment outside their home region. Importance of the Sikhs in army grew with time. They were stationed at cantonments scattered throughout the country. Availability of cultivable land in North West Province and Oudh as well as in Rajputana

Table 4.2
India : 1891-1901

Growth of the Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Absolute change	Percentage change
	1891	1901		
Punjab	1,870,481	2,102,896	232,415	12.4
British territory	1,389,934	1,517,019	127,085	9.1
Princely states	480,547	585,877	105,330	21.9
Kashmir	11,399	25,828	14,429	126.5
North West Province and Oudh	11,352	15,333	9,819	35.0
British territory	11,347	15,319	3,972	35.0
Princely states	5	14	9	180.0
Hyderabad	4,637	4,335	-302	-6.5
Burma	3,164	6,596	3,432	108.3
Central India Agency	1,825	2,004	179	9.8
Rajputana	1,116	2,054	938	84.0
Bombay Presidency	912	1,573	661	72.4
British territory	818	1,122	304	37.1
Princely states	94	451	357	379.8
Bengal	417	340	-77	-18.9
Andaman and Nicobar	395	370	-25	-6.3
Ajmer Merwara	213	264	51	23.9
Central Province and Berar	350	2,021	1,671	477.4
British territory	349	1,926	1,577	551.8
Princely states	1	95	94	9,400.0
Madras Presidency	128	107	-21	-16.4
British territory	128	92	-36	-16.4
Princely states	-	15	15	∞
Assam	83	505	422	508.4
British territory	83	505	422	508.4
Princely states	-	-	-	-
Mysore	29	12	-17	-58.6
Baroda	11	95	84	727.1
Travancore	-	15	15	∞
Baluchistan	DNA	2,972		
British territory	DNA	2,947		
Princely states	DNA	25		
North West Frontier Province	X	28,091	X	X
British territory	X	28,091	X	X
Princely states	X	X	X	X
Gwalior	-	25	25	∞
West India Agency	-	-	-	-
Coorg	-	-	-	-
Bihar and Orissa	DNA	DNA		
INDIA	1,906,512	2,195,439	288,927	15.1

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1891, General Tables for British Provinces and Feudatory States, Vol.I, p.90 and Census of India, 1901, India, Tables, Vol.I-A, Part II, pp. 58-61.

- Nil

DNA Data Not Available

X North West Frontier Province had been separated from the Punjab by the 1901 census.

Table 4.3
India : 1901

The Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs	Percentage in	
		Total population of the province/ princely state	The Sikh population in India
Punjab	2,102,896	10.3	95.8
British territory	1,517,019	7.5	69.1
Princely states	585,877	2.9	26.7
North West Frontier Province	28,091	1.3	1.3
Kashmir	25,828	0.9	1.2
North West Province and Oudh	15,333	*	0.7
British territory	15,319	*	0.7
Princely states	14	*	*
Burma	6,596	*	0.3
Hyderabad	4,335	*	0.2
Baluchistan	2,972	*	0.1
British territory	2,947	*	0.1
Princely states	25	*	*
Rajputana	2,054	*	0.1
Central India Agency	2,004	*	0.1
Central Province and Berar	2,021	*	0.1
British territory	1,926	*	0.1
Princely states	95	*	*
Bombay Presidency	1,573	*	*
British territory	1,122	*	*
Princely states	451	*	*
Assam	505	*	*
Andaman and Nicobar	370	*	*
Bengal	340	*	*
British territory	328	*	*
Princely states	12	*	*
Ajmer Merwara	264	*	*
Madras Presidency	107	*	*
British territory	92	*	*
Princely states	15	*	*
Baroda	95	*	*
Gwalior	25	*	*
Travancore	15	*	*
Mysore	12	*	*
Cochin	-	-	-
West India Agency	-	-	-
Sikkim	-	-	-
Bihar and Orissa	DNA	-	-
Coorg	-	-	-
INDIA	2,195,439	0.7	100.0

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1901, India, Tables, Vol. I-A, Part II, pp. 58-61.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

- Nil

DNA Data Not Available

states was the other incentive for their migration. The opening of a rail link of the Punjab with Kashmir in 1890 and an increase in trade avenues induced some movement of the Sikhs, among others, to this princely state. The wheel of migration of the Sikhs for economic reasons had evidently set in motion by the close of the last century. Since the base of Sikh population in many of these provinces and states was meagre, even a small number of Sikh migrants caused a high growth rate of their population.

Growth of the Sikhs in the Punjab

As mentioned earlier, the Sikh population grew by 12.4 per cent in the Punjab. Within the region, however, there was a wide difference between the province and the princely states in this respect. While the former recorded an increase of only 9.1 per cent in its Sikh population, the latter was marked by an increase of 21.9 per cent. This was exactly the opposite of the spatial patterns of growth of Sikh population during 1881-1891. The earlier loss of Sikh population to other religions in the princely states was viewed with alarm and the Sikh organisations made earnest efforts to win back those persons to their faith who had been declassified at the 1891 census.

Within the Punjab province, the growth rate varied (Maps 17 and 18). The increase rate of the Sikhs was

exceptionally low in the Punjab's central districts of Amritsar, Lahore and Ferozepur (Table 4.4). Likewise, the hillfoot districts of Ambala, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Sialkot recorded sluggish growth of the Sikh population. These were the districts where the proportion of the Sikhs was relatively large and from where some out-migration had taken place under the conditions of pressure on land resources. By contrast, the west Punjab districts of Gujrat, Bannu, Kohat and Peshawar showed high growth rates for this community. Conversion, particularly from amongst the urban trading communities, was the chief underlying factor.

Multan, Shehpur and Montgomery districts were also noted for a fast increase in the number of the Sikhs. These were the areas where the first experiment in colonisation was made during the last decade of the nineteenth century. One hundred and seventy seven thousand acres of wasteland in the Multan district was irrigated from the Sutlej and colonised with immigrants from the surrounding country. The Chenab was also harnessed and over a million acres irrigated and colonised. This experiment proved a brilliant success and the opening of the lower Chenab canal in 1891 was a turning point in the economic history of the Punjab. Since then making of canals has gone apace. The Jhelum was attached in 1897 and five years later the second great canal

Table 4.4
The Punjab: 1891-1901
Growth of the Sikh Population by Districts
and Princely States

District/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Percentage change
	1891	1901	
Amritsar	261,452	264,329	1.1
Ferozepur	226,661	228,355	0.9
Lahore	152,023	159,701	5.0
Ludhiana	141,603	164,919	16.5
Jullundur	110,790	126,817	13.6
Ambala	93,679	58,073	-38.0
Gurdaspur	85,837	91,756	6.9
Hoshiarpur	70,709	71,126	0.6
Sialkot	49,872	50,982	2.2
Gujranwala	45,316	51,607	13.9
Rawalpindi	27,470	32,234	17.3
Hissar	22,151	28,642	29.3
Gujrat	19,018	24,893	30.9
Montgomery	16,032	19,092	19.1
Jhelum	15,169	15,070	-0.6
Shahpur	9,777	12,756	30.5
Peshawar	9,125	11,318	24.0
Karnal	8,037	12,294	52.9
Kohat	4,474	3,344	25.2
Jhang	3,941	3,526	-10.5
Hazara	3,609	4,036	11.8
Dera Ismail Khan	2,840	4,362	53.6
Multan	2,832	4,662	64.6
Muzaffargarh	2,715	3,225	19.8
Kangra	1,461	1,220	-16.5
Dera Ghazi Khan	1,424	1,027	27.9
Bannu	1,062	2,673	151.7
Siala	517	544	5.2
Delhi	382	294	-23.0
Rohtak	154	94	-38.9
Gurgaon	102	99	- 2.9
Lyallpur	X	88,044	X
Mianwali	X	2,633	X
Punjab Princely States	480,547	585,877	21.9
PUNJAB	1,870,481	2,102,896	12.4

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1891, Punjab and Its Feudatories, Vol. XX, Part II and Census of India, 1901, Punjab and North west Frontier Provinces, Vol. XVII A, Part II.

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X Lyallpur and Mianwali had been constituted as separate districts by the 1901 census. Earlier these were parts of Jhang and Dera Ismail Khan districts respectively.

colony, the Lower Jhelum, began to appear in the wastes of Shshpur.³ Most of the migrants, including the Sikhs, to these colonies were from the central Punjab districts. This accounts to the slow growth of the Sikhs in the central districts of the Punjab as mentioned earlier.

There was some mobility of the Sikhs, in the Punjab province as well as in its princely states, in association with construction of railways during the latter part of the nineteenth century. A number of rail links were opened during 1891-1901.⁴ This generated a movement of a considerable number of Punjabis, including the Sikhs, artisans, contractors and labourers.⁵ The impact of this migration was mainly in local areas.

The foregoing discussion on regional variations in the growth of the Sikhs in the Punjab may be summed up by stating that this community grew faster in the princely states than in the province, and within the province its growth was faster in the western districts than in the eastern.

³ Malcolm Darling : The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1947, pp.112-113.

⁴ G.S.Khosla : "The growth of railway system in Punjab", Punjab Past and Present, Essays in Honour of Ganda Singh Volume (1976), p. 285.

⁵ Satish Sabherwal : "Status and entrepreneurship: the Ramgharia case " in M.A.Srinivas and Others (eds.); Allied Publishers, ew , , p. .

Changes in the Distributional Pattern of the Sikhs

During the decade 1891-1901 the pattern of distribution of the Sikhs underwent some changes which in terms of magnitude were small but significant for local areas. There was an increased sprinkling of the Sikhs in areas outside the Punjab as a result of migration. This created new nuclei of concentration of persons belonging to this faith and these became the points for further concentration later on. In any case, this spread of the Sikhs was thin and sparse. More voluminous increase took place within the Punjab. The changes in the distributional pattern of the Sikhs within the region were, however, minor. As a result of new conversion, the degree of their concentration increased a little bit within areas. Some districts in the western Punjab where canal irrigation was being introduced and some local areas of railway construction experienced inflow of Sikhs from the eastern districts. While this migration did not make any notable change in the distribution and density of the Sikhs in the areas from where it originated, it did make a great deal of difference to areas into which they moved in.

Three points clearly emerge from the discussion in this chapter. First, the increase in the Sikh numbers outside the Punjab was quite impressive. It was the

result of in-migration in response to new economic opportunities in parts of India. Second, within the Punjab, the growth of the Sikhs was faster in the princely states than in the Punjab. This was due to the difference in degree of conversion in the two areas. Third, in the Punjab province itself the western districts recorded faster growth of the Sikhs than their eastern counterparts. This was the outcome of the Sikh migration from the eastern districts to the newly opened canal colonies in the west Punjab.

CHAPTER V

THE SIKHS : 1901-1911

The first decade of the present century was distinguished by a rapid growth of the Sikhs. Their number increased from 2,195,439 in 1901 to 3,014,511 in 1911. This signified an increase by 37.3 per cent. The population of India grew by only 7.1 per cent during the same period. The increase rate of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians was 5.0, 6.7 and 32.6 per cent respectively (Table 5.1). Evidently the growth rate of the Sikhs was not only far above the national average but also was higher than that of any other religious community.

Table 5.1

India: 1901 - 1911

Growth of Population by Religion

Religion	<u>Population by religion in</u>		Percentage change
	1901	1911	
Hindu	207,147,026	217,586,892	5.0
Muslim	62,458,077	66,647,299	6.7
Christien	2,923,241	3,876,203	32.6
Sikh	2,195,439	3,014,511	37.3

SOURCE : Census of India, 1901, India, Vol. I-A, Part II, pp.58-61, and Census of India, 1911, India, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 38-41.

This phenomenal rise in the numerical strength of the Sikhs was attributable partly to liberalisation of the definition of a Sikh at the 1911 census. The 1891 census stipulated that only those who wore kesh (uncut hair) and abstained from smoking would be recorded as Sikhs. The same definition was retained in 1901. In 1911, however, it was replaced by the ordinary provision of a statement of a person about his religion. This resulted in a spectacular increase of the Sikh population in 1911.¹ Many persons, who during the previous census were classed as Hindus (especially the Mazhabi Sikhs who did not wear kesh and had no scruples about smoking), were enumerated as Sikhs. The same was true of the Sahajdharis who had faith in Sikhism but did not wear kesh. But for the change in definition of a Sikh, the growth rate of the Sikh community would have been reduced to 15 per cent.²

Even a growth rate of 15 per cent was substantially higher than the rate of natural increase of population.³

¹ In Bombay presidency, for example, 127,100 persons were returned as Sikh in 1881. The number dropped to less than one thousand in 1891 and it was a little over one thousand in 1901. It became about twelve thousand in 1911. These variations in the number of the Sikhs were related to the changes in the census definition of a Sikh.

² Census of India, 1911, Punjab, Report, Vol. XIV, Part I, p. 153.

³ The Population of the Punjab suffered a decline by 2.3 per cent during 1901-11. This was the outcome of an exceptionally high mortality rate caused by the epidemics of plague, smallpox and cholera. The natural increase rate of the Sikhs, in line with that of general population, could be assumed as negative during the decade.

Acceleration in the process of conversion to Sikhism was the other factor responsible for the rise in the numerical strength of the Sikhs. The Sikh revivalism got a further impetus from the birth of Chief Khalsa Diwan in 1902.⁴ It was an associate organisation to the Singh Sabha founded in 1873. The two organisations set up several branches all over the Punjab and they were very active in propagating the tenets of Sikhism.⁵ They also opened many Sikh schools which provided not only education but also served as strongholds of Sikhism wherever they were established.⁶ The biggest gains in the Sikh numbers were in the areas with predominance of the Sahaidhari and Mazhabi Sikhs.⁷ Some Muslims also got converted to Sikhism. The best known example was of a Muslim divine, Karim Fakhsh, who adopted Sikhism in 1903 and later became famous as Sant Lakhbir Singh. A number of his disciples followed suit.

⁴ Pritam Singh Gill : Heritage of Sikh Culture, New Academic Publishing Company, Jullundur, 1975, p. 54.

⁵ Census of India, 1911, India, Report, Vol. I, Part I, p. 125.

⁶ Teja Singh : Essays in Sikhism, Sikh University Press, Lahore, 1944, p. 142.

⁷ Census of India, 1911, Punjab, Report, Vol. XIV, Part I, p. 153.

Spatial Patterns

The growth of the Sikhs in the Punjab as well as in other parts of India was impressive. The Sikhs in the Punjab increased by 37.1 per cent and outside the Punjab by 41.3 per cent (Table 5.2). The Sikh members got a boost both within and outside the Punjab by virtue of reclassification of many persons as Sikh as well as by new conversion to their faith. Migration from the Punjab was also partly responsible for causing big increase in the Sikh numbers in some provinces and princely states.

In the Bombay presidency, the Sikhs increased by more than ten times. This was mainly due to the inclusion of Sahaidharis among the Sikhs. In Bengal, the Sikh population grew by nearly seven times, in the Rajputana states by more than four times and in Baluchistan by almost two times (Maps 19 and 20). The role of migration was more prominent in their case. It is evident that main areas of significant increase in Sikh numbers were in northwestern India. Elsewhere the numbers were too small.

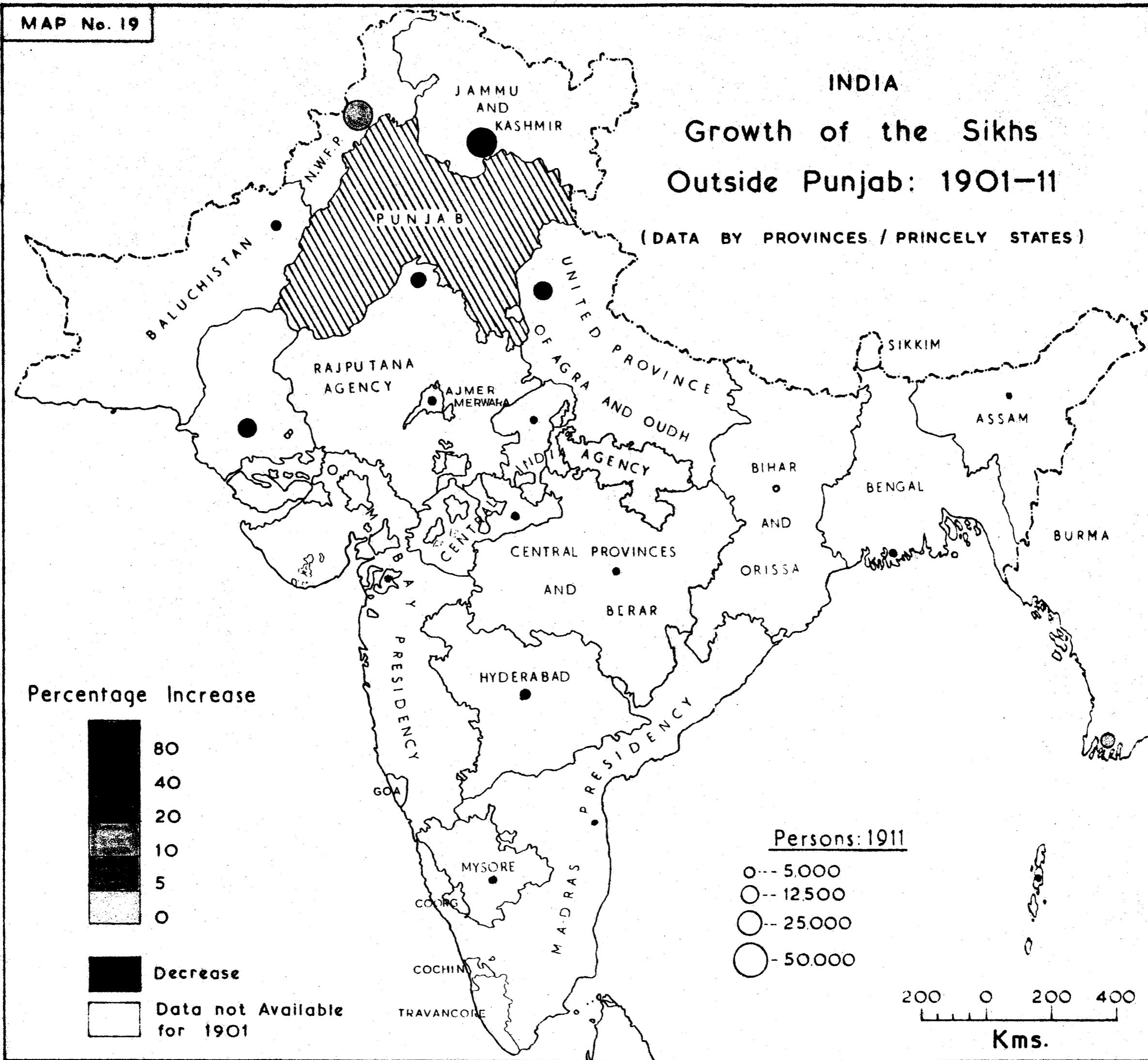
Within the Punjab too, there were striking regional differences in the increase rate of the Sikhs (Maps 21 and 22). Broadly speaking, the growth of the Sikh population was

MAP No. 19

INDIA

Growth of the Sikhs Outside Punjab: 1901-11

(DATA BY PROVINCES / PRINCELY STATES)



MAP No. 20

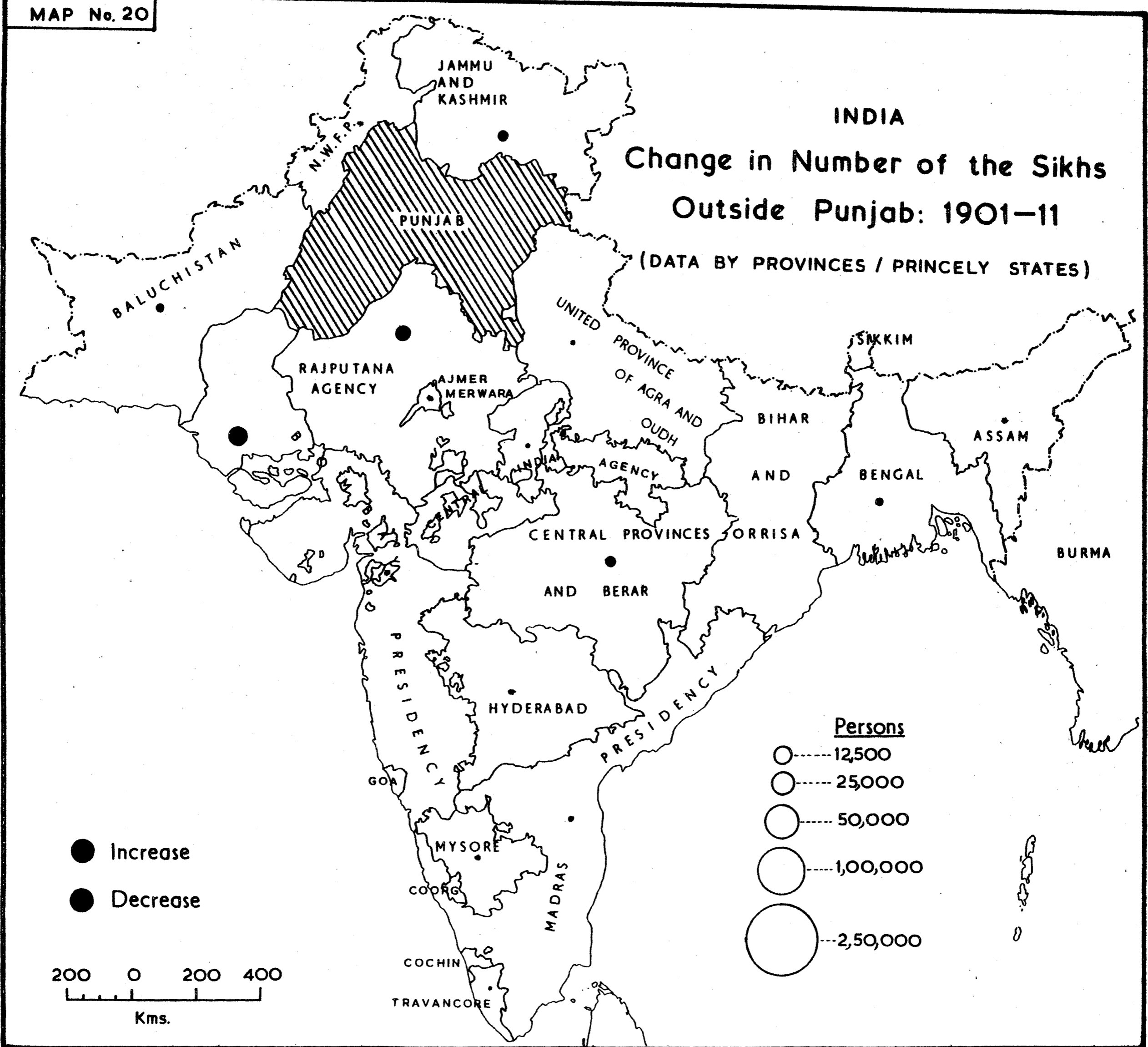


Table 5.2
India, 1901-1911

Growth of the Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Absolute change	Percentage change
	1901	1911		
Punjab	2,102,896	2,883,729	780,833	37.1
British territory	1,517,019	2,093,804	576,785	38.0
Princely states	585,877	789,925	204,048	34.8
North West Frontier Province	28,091	31,459	3,368	11.9
British territory	28,091	30,345	2,254	8.0
Princely states	-	1,114	1,114	∞
Kashmir	25,828	31,553	5,725	22.2
North West Province and Oudh	15,333	15,186	- 147	-0.9
British territory	15,319	15,160	- 159	-1.6
Princely states	14	26	12	85.7
Burma	6,936	6,693	97	1.5
Hyderabad	4,335	4,726	391	9.0
Baluchistan	2,972	8,390	5,418	182.4
British territory	2,947	5,290	2,343	81.9
Princely states	25	3,100	3,075	12,300.0
Rajputana	2,054	8,998	6,904	336.1
Central Province and Berar	2,021	2,337	316	15.3
British territory	1,926	2,201	275	14.2
Princely states	95	136	141	43.1
Central India Agency	2,004	1,384	-620	-30.9
Bombay Presidency	1,573	13,078	11,505	731.4
British territory	1,122	11,887	10,765	959.4
Princely states	451	1,191	740	164.0
Assam	505	757	252	49.9
British territory	505	750	245	48.5
Princely states	-	7	7	∞
Andaman and Nicobar	370	455	85	22.9
Bengal	340	2,221	1,881	555.0
British territory	328	2,217	1,889	575.9
Princely states	12	4	- 8	-66.7
Ajmer Merwara	264	922	658	249.2
Madras Presidency	107	7	100	93.4
British territory	92	7	- 85	-92.4
Princely states	15	-	- 15	-100.0
Bihar and Orissa	DNA	2,228		
British territory	DNA	2,177		
Princely states	DNA	51		
Baroda	95	136	31	32.6
Gwalior	25	-	- 25	-100.0
Travancore	15	-	- 15	-100.0
Mysore	12	293	281	234.1
Cochin	-	-	-	-
Coorg	-	-	-	-
West India Agency	-	-	-	-
Sikkim	-	-	-	-
INDIA	2,195,439	3,014,511	819,072	37.3

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1901, *India, Tables, Vol. I-A, Part II*, pp. 58-61, and Census of India, 1911, *India, Tables, Vol. I, Part II*, pp. 38-41.

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DNA Data Not Available

distinctly faster in western Punjab than in its eastern counterpart. Not only the conversion rate was higher in the former area but also it received considerable number of in-migrants to its newly developing canal colonies from the latter. The western Punjab was a more active scene of cultural revival and economic life.

Despite a slow growth of Sikh population in general in the eastern part of the Punjab, significant areal variations did exist within. Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Ferozepur districts and Patiala state recorded relatively high rates of growth (Table 5.3). The number of the Sahajdhari Sikhs was large in these districts (Map 23). They were enumerated as Hindus in 1901 but as Sikhs in 1911. On the other hand, Amritsar district recorded a decrease in its Sikh number due to net out-migration. This district was a major source of out-migration to the newly developing canal colonies. Out of the total in-migrants to the Chenab colony, 15,830 were Sikh Jats from Amritsar district alone.⁸ The princely states of Nabha and Jind also suffered a decrease in their Sikh population. Out-migration to the canal colonies was again responsible for this.

⁸ Ibid., p. 83.

MAP No. 23

PUNJAB
Distribution of the Sahajdhari Sikhs
1911

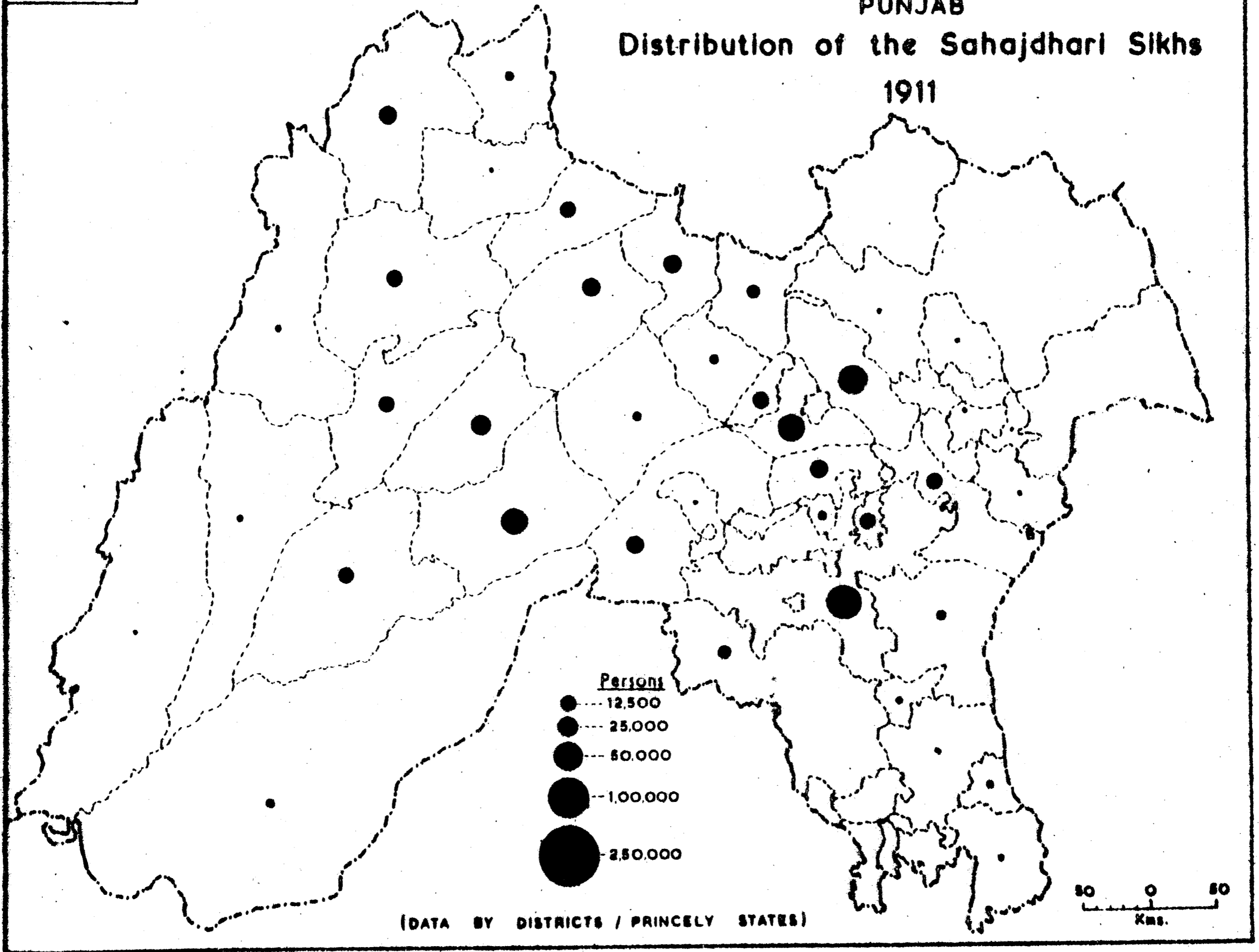


Table 5.3
The Punjab: 1901-1911
Growth of the Sikh Population by Districts
and Princely States

District/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Percentage change
	1901	1911	
Patiala	355,649	532,292	49.6
Amritsar	264,329	253,941	-3.9
Ferozepur	228,355	262,511	14.9
Ludhiana	164,919	207,042	25.7
Lahore	159,701	169,008	5.8
Jullundur	125,817	176,227	40.0
Gurdaspur	91,756	121,078	31.9
Lyallpur	88,044	146,670	66.6
Nabha	78,361	76,198	-2.8
Hoshiarpur	71,126	134,146	88.6
Ambala	58,073	94,471	62.7
Faridkot	52,721	55,397	5.0
Gujranwala	51,607	107,748	108.8
Sialkot	50,982	81,761	60.4
Kapurthala	42,101	54,275	28.9
Rawalpindi	32,234	31,839	-1.2
Jind	29,975	22,566	-24.7
Hissar	28,642	38,508	34.4
Gujrat	24,893	44,693	79.5
Montgomery	19,092	68,175	257.0
Jhelum	18,070	24,436	62.1
Shahpur	12,756	33,456	162.3
Karnal	12,294	13,531	10.0
Malerkotla	10,495	21,018	100.3
Bahawalpur	7,985	16,630	108.3
Kalsia	6,453	6,258	3.0
Multan	4,662	19,881	326.4
Jhang	3,525	19,427	450.9
Muzaffargarh	3,225	6,322	96.0
Mianwali	2,633	4,881	85.4
Simla Hill States	1,862	2,911	56.3
Kangra	1,220	1,910	56.5
Dera Ghazi Khan	1,027	1,042	1.5
Nahan	683	2,142	211.3
Simla	544	693	27.4
Delhi	294	2,985	915.3
Gurgaon	99	342	245.4
Rohtak	94	161	71.2
Chamba	80	141	76.2
Mandi and Suket	47	97	106.4
Attock	X	26,914	X
PUNJAB	2,102,896	2,883,729	37.1

SOURCE: Calculated from Census of India, 1901, Punjab and North West Frontier Provinces, Vol. XVII A, Part II and Census of India, 1911, Punjab, Tables, Vol. XIV, Part II pp. 28-29.

X Attock had been formed as a new district by the 1911 census. It incorporated parts of Rawalpindi and Jhelum districts.

By contrast, the whole of western Punjab experienced explosion in Sikh members. There was a great rush of in-migrants to its newly developing canal colonies. The in-migrants trailed mainly from Ambala, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Sialkot districts and Patiala states.⁹ The most prominent districts of in-migration were Montgomery, Jhang and Multan where the Sikh population increased by 257.0, 450.9 and 326.4 per cent respectively. The Sikhs in Gujranwala and Shahpur districts grew by 108.8 and 162.3 per cent, respectively. The corresponding figure for Lyallpur district was 66.6 per cent. In addition to in-migration, some conversion to Sikhism was also instrumental in causing a big increase in the number of Sikhs in this region.

Thus, rapid growth of Sikh population in the western part of the Punjab was the result of considerable amount of in-migration and substantial conversion to Sikhism. In-migration was mainly from the densely populated central and eastern districts of the Punjab. The canal colonies, thus, continued causing redistribution of Sikh population within the Punjab.

⁹ Ethne K. Marengo : The Transformation of the Sikh Society, Heritage Publishers, New Delhi, 1976, p.126.

Sikhs in Canal Colonies

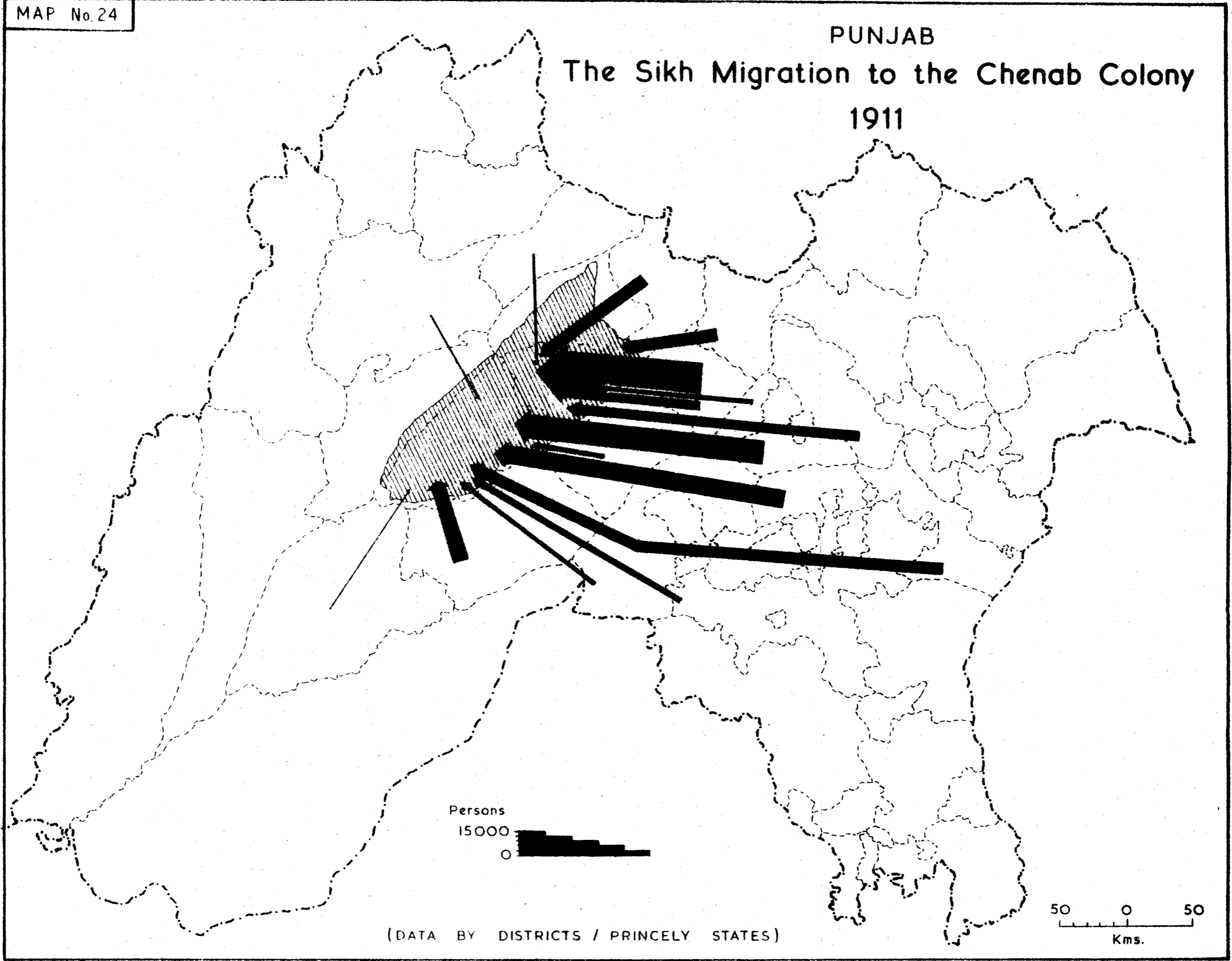
The development of canal colonies in the closing years of the nineteenth century provided fresh tracts of cultivable land enjoying the facility of irrigation, large as well as compact holdings, and a network of market linked roads. These proved bonanzas to the land hungry peasants in the densely populated parts of the Punjab. The Sikh migrants, like the migrants belonging to other faiths, went in streams to these newly reclaimed wastelands (Maps 24 and 25).

Among the migrants to the canal colonies, the caste distribution, irrespective of their religion was, as follows : Jats 23.2 per cent, Arians 11.7 per cent, Chuhras 6.9 per cent, Aroras 2.5 per cent, Kambohs 1.9 per cent and Tarkhans 1.4 per cent.¹⁰ Among the Jats who moved to the most prominent Chenab colony, 57 per cent were Muslims, 40 per cent Sikhs and 3 per cent Hindus. Most of the Jat Sikhs hailed from the districts of Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jullundur, Sialkot, Gurdaspur, Ambala, Hoshiarpur and Patiala state (Table 5.4). The

¹⁰ Census of India, 1911, Punjab, Report, Vol. XIV, Part I, p. 83.

MAP No. 24

PUNJAB
The Sikh Migration to the Chenab Colony
1911



MAP No. 25

PUNJAB
The Sikh Migration to the Jhelum Colony
1911

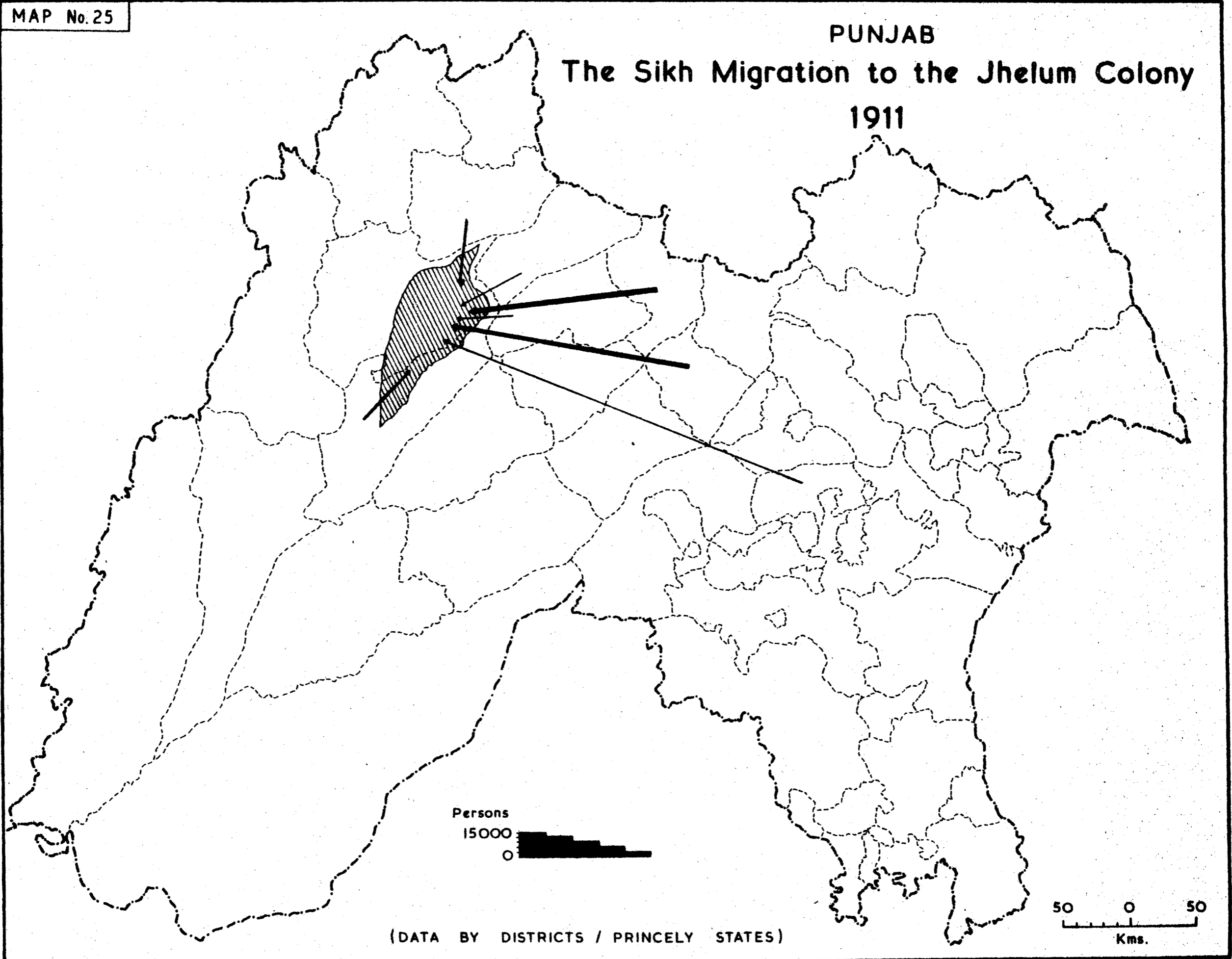


Table 5.4
The Punjab: 1911
The Jat Sikh Migrants to the Chenab and Jhelum Colonies

District/princely state of out-migration	Number of the Jat Sikh out-migrants	Percentage in total out-migrants from the district/princely state
<u>To Chenab Colony</u>		
Amritsar	15,830	19.5
Ludhiana	8,808	31.1
Jullundur	7,123	10.0
Sialkot	5,831	6.0
Gurdaspur	5,272	10.0
Ambala	4,142	24.0
Hoshiarpur	3,082	6.9
Patiala States	1,953	23.5
Lahore	1,925	6.9
Ferozepur	1,472	13.6
Kapurthala	488	6.0
Gujrat	452	1.2
Montgomery	109	0.2
<u>To Jhelum Colony</u>		
Sialkot	1,612	5.5
Amritsar	1,432	23.0
Ludhiana	629	37.7
Gujranwala	493	4.1
Gujrat	66	0.2

SOURCE : Census of India, 1911, Punjab, Tables, Vol. XIV, Part II, pp. 210-218.

Note : The Chenab colony covered mainly the Lyallpur and Sheikhupura districts. The Jhelum colony was spread over parts of Shshpur and Jhelum districts.

Mazhabi, Chamar and Kamboh Sikhs were the other groups significantly represented in the canal colonies. They accounted for 2.5, 5.2 and 11.5 per cent of the Sikh migrants respectively to the Chenab colony. Mazhabis were mostly from Ferozepur, Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts; Chamars from Ambala, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Gurdaspur districts and Patiala state; and Kambohs from Jullundur and Amritsar districts. In the case of the Jhelum colony, most of the migrants were the Muslim Jats and the Aroras from Gujrat, Jhelum and Jhang districts. There was a predominance of the Hindus among the Aroras.¹¹ It was, thus, the Chenab colony that received most of the Sikh migrants.

Changes in the Distributional Pattern

A comparative study of the maps showing distribution of Sikhs in 1901 and 1911 points to some significant redistribution of the members of this community. The most striking feature was the dispersal of the Sikhs from their traditional area of concentration in the central and eastern parts of the Punjab to the new canal colonies in the west. While this dispersal did not make such difference

¹¹ Ibid., p. 83.

to the degree of concentration of the Sikhs in the areas from which they had out-migrated as the gap was soon filled up both by natural increase and continuing conversion to Sikhism, the migration of the Sikhs into the canal colonies established new pockets of their concentration in the western districts. The mean centre of distribution of the Sikhs moved further westward. This was a major development in the history of dispersal of the Sikhs in this part of the Indian sub-continent.

New nuclei of Sikh population emerged as a result of conversion also. This was typical of the areas with large number of Sahaidhari Sikhs. Conversion resulted in further densification of the Sikhs in areas of their concentration.

The concentration of the Sikhs, whether in their original areas or in the new canal colonies, remained exclusively confined to the upland plains. The floodplains were still conspicuous by the absence of Sikh population. Within the upland plains, the Sikhs were overwhelmingly in rural areas. Towns were still not the stronghold of the Sikhs.

The salient features of the growth of the Sikh population during 1901-11 may be restated. This religious

community made impressive gains in the number of its adherents both within and outside the Punjab.

Reclassification of many persons as Sikh under the revised definition along with substantial new conversion were responsible for this. Within the Punjab, an enhanced westward dispersal of this population was unmistakable. The lure of the fresh agricultural land in the canal colonies proved irresistible for this hard-pressed-for-land community concentrated in the central and eastern parts of the Punjab.

CHAPTER VI

THE SIKHS : 1911-1921

Compared to its growth by 37.3 per cent during 1901-11, the Sikh population grew by only 7.4 per cent (from 3,014,511 to 3,238,803) during 1911-21 indicating a great deal of slackening in the dynamics of its numbers. The growth rate was, however, considerably higher than that of India's total population which increased by barely 0.8 per cent. An abnormally high death rate of over 47 per thousand as compared to a birth rate of 48 per thousand explains the marginal increase in population during this decade. The year 1918, in particular, was notorious for the universal occurrence of influenza epidemic that took a toll of millions of lives in almost all parts of the country.¹

Among the various religious communities, the Sikhs showed a faster growth rate than the Hindus (-0.4 per cent) and the Muslims (+ 3.1 per cent). The Christians, however, grew the fastest by 22.6 per cent (Table 6.1). Evidently, Sikhism and Christianity were the only two religions to gain from continuing conversions. The conversion to Sikhism had, of course, distinctly slowed down during 1911-21.

¹ Kingsley Davis : The Population of India and Pakistan, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1951, p. 48.

Table 6.1
India : 1911-1921
Growth of Population by Religion

Religion	Population by religion in		Percentage change
	1911	1921	
Hindu	217,586,892	216,734,586	- 0.4
Muslim	66,647,294	68,735,233	3.1
Christian	3,876,203	4,754,064	22.6
Sikh	3,014,511	3,238,803	7.4

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1911, India, Tables, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 38-41, and Census of India, 1921, India, Tables, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 514-520.

This development has to be understood in the context of the extensive involvement of India, particularly of the Punjab and more especially of its Sikh population, in the World War I. The proselytizing activities of the Sikh organisations suffered a set back as under the new situation the thrust of the Punjabi society was toward recruitment in Indian army. At the start of the War in August, 1914, the Indian army had 152,496 combat soldiers out of which about 100,000 were from the Punjab alone. At the close of the War in November 1918, the number of the Indian combatants had risen to 563,091 out of whom about 400,000 were Punjabi soldiers.² As many as one-third of

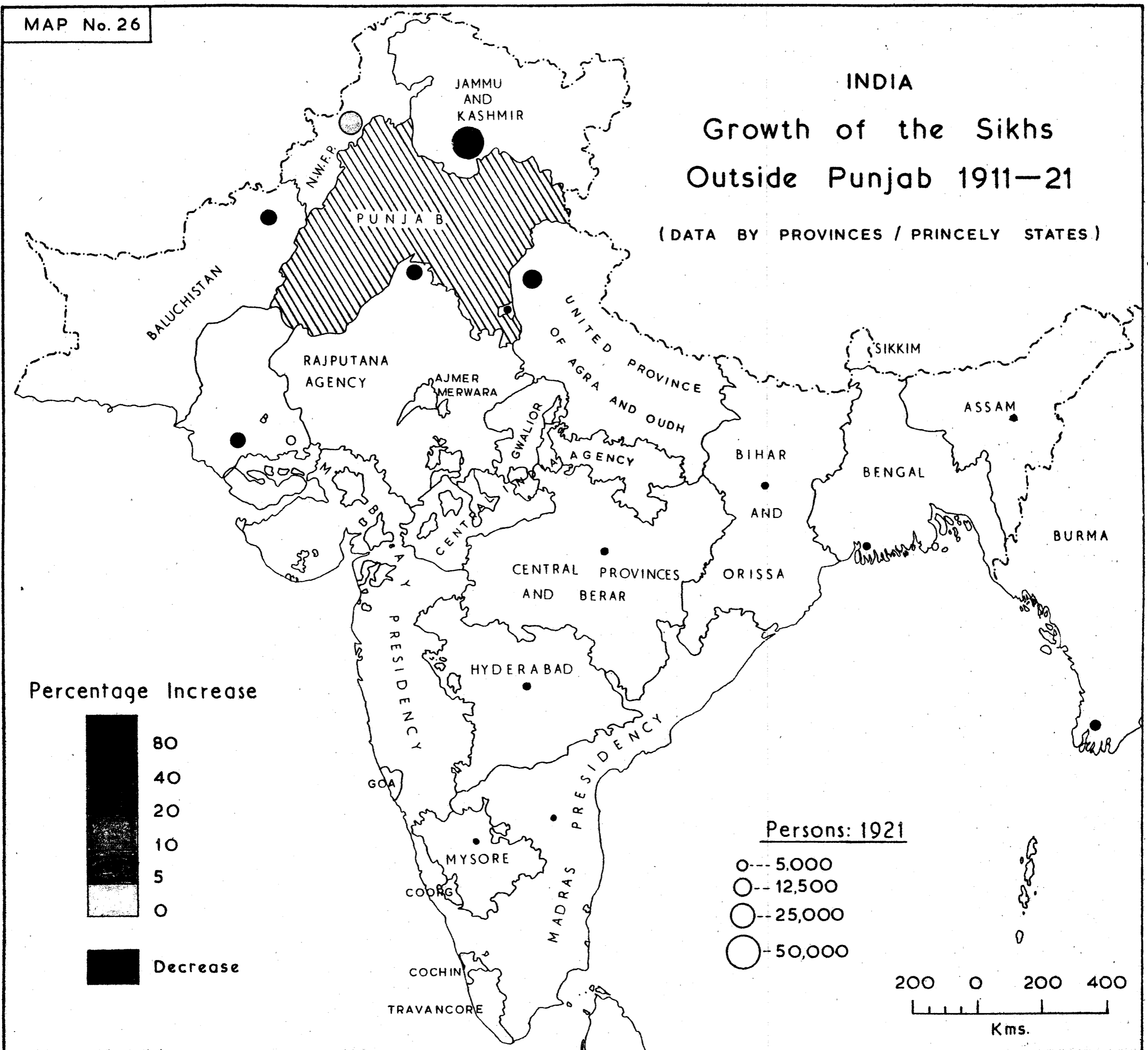
² Dewitt C. Ellinwood : "An historical study of the Punjab soldier in War I" Punjab Past and Present, Essays in Honour of Ganda Singh Volume (1976), pp.340-341.

the soldiers from the Punjab were Sikhs who otherwise made less than one-eighth of the total population. They were posted in distant lands like Mesopotamia, Egypt and East Africa. Some of them were kept at strategic cantonments in India. This caused considerable change in their distribution.

Spatial Patterns

The Sikh population did not increase at a uniform rate in the country (Table 6.2). There was a net decline in the number of the Sikhs in the United Province of Agra and Oudh, Rajputana states, Baluchistan, Bombay presidency, Hyderabad and Burma where they were in considerable numbers (Maps 26 and 27). On the other hand, they recorded some increase in Bengal, Assam, North West Frontier province and Kashmir. The role of migration was important in all these areas. An important segment of the migration to Assam, Baluchistan (British territory) and Kashmir was associated with the movement of the army during the World War I. Calcutta in Bengal and Jamshedpur in Chota Nagpur induced in-migration for economic reasons, particularly for the development of transport and industry. Anyhow, the Sikhs outside the Punjab increased by hardly 0.6 per cent.

MAP No. 26



MAP No. 27

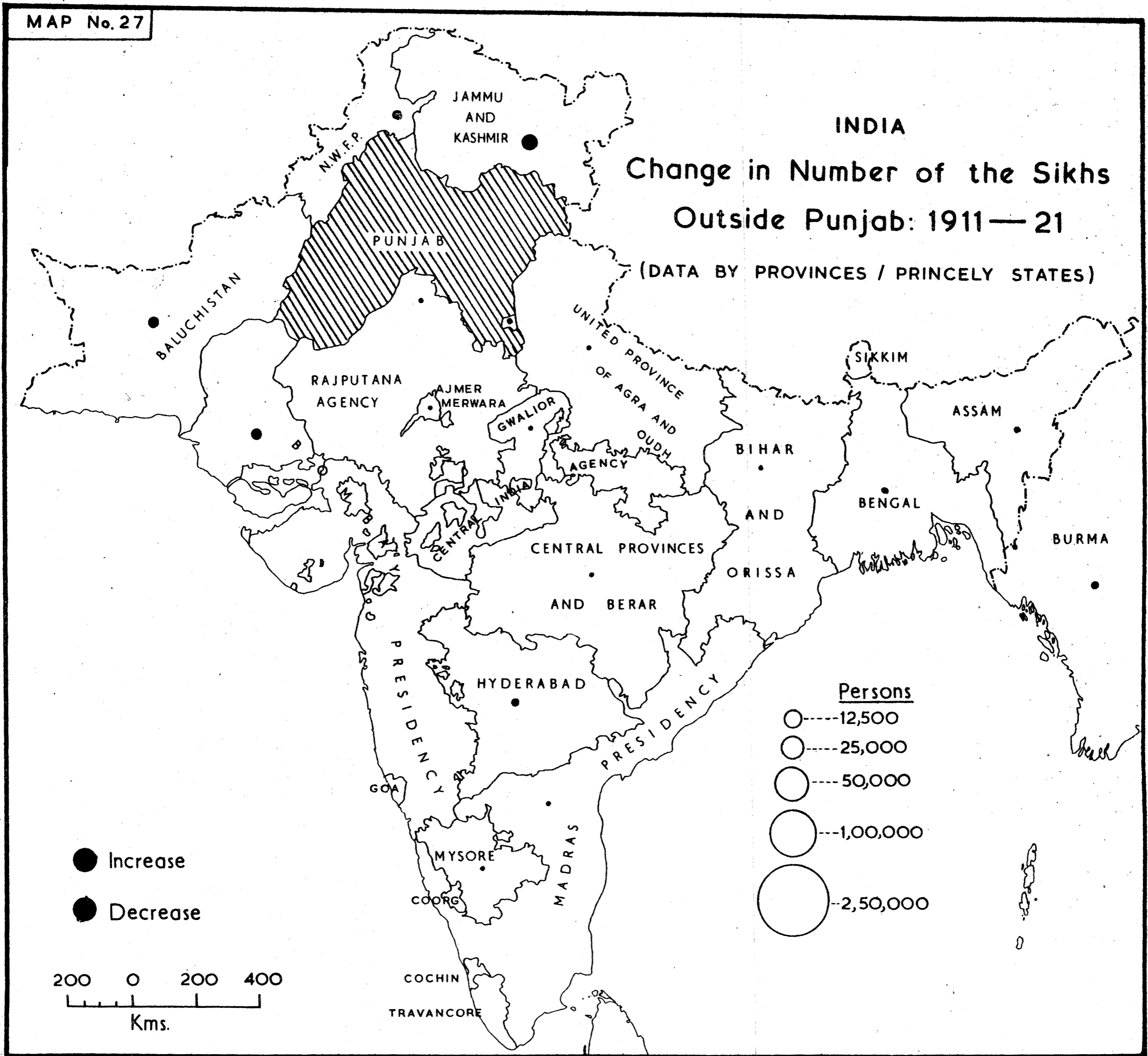


Table 6.2
India : 1911-1921
Growth of the Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Absolute	Percentage
British territory	2,093,804	2,294,207	200,403	9.6
Princely states	789,925	813,089	23,164	2.9
Kashmir	31,553	39,507	7,954	25.2
North West Frontier Province	31,459	32,898	1,439	4.5
British territory	30,345	28,040	- 2,305	- 7.6
Princely states	1,114	4,858	3,744	336.1
United Province of Agra and Oudh	15,186	14,266	- 920	- 6.0
British territory	15,160	14,234	- 926	- 6.1
Princely states	26	32	6	23.1
Bombay Presidency	13,078	9,106	-3,972	-30.4
British territory	11,887	8,319	-3,568	-30.0
Princely states	1,191	787	- 404	-33.9
Rajputana	8,958	8,703	- 255	- 2.8
Burma	6,693	4,843	1,850	-27.6
Baluchistan	8,390	7,741	- 649	- 7.7
British territory	5,290	7,645	2,355	44.5
Princely states	3,100	96	-3,004	-96.9
Hyderabad	4,726	2,705	-2,021	-42.7
Bengal	2,221	2,381	160	7.2
British territory	2,217	2,364	147	6.6
Princely states	4	17	13	325.0
Central Provinces and Berar	2,337	1,681	- 656	-28.0
British territory	2,201	1,529	- 672	-30.5
Princely states	136	152	16	11.7
Bihar and Orissa	2,228	1,558	- 670	-30.1
British territory	2,177	1,475	- 702	-32.2
Princely states	51	83	32	62.7
Central India Agency	1,384	827	- 557	-40.2
Ajmer Merwara	922	219	- 703	-76.2
Assam	757	1,009	252	33.3
British territory	750	988	238	31.7
Princely states	7	21	14	200.0
Andaman and Nicobar	455	390	-65	-14.3
Mysore	293	174	- 119	-40.6
Baroda	126	70	- 56	-44.4
Madras Presidency	7	5	- 2	-28.6
British territory	7	5	- 2	-28.6
Princely states	-	-	-	-
Delhi	X	2,764	X	X
Gwalior	XX	661	XX	XX
Coorg	-	-	-	-
Cochin	-	-	-	-
Travancore	-	-	-	-
West India Agency	-	-	-	-
Sikkim	-	-	-	-
INDIA	3,014,511	3,238,803	224,292	7.4

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1911, India, Tables, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 38-41 and Census of India, 1921, India, Tables, Vol. I, Part II, p. 41.

X Delhi, which had been one of the districts of the Punjab since 1857 became a separate administrative unit in 1911.

XX Gwalior was shown as a separate state by the 1921 census.

Note : North West Province and Oudh had been renamed as United Province of Agra and Oudh by the 1911 census.

The Sikhs in the Punjab grew by 7.7 per cent. The Muslims and the Hindus recorded increase rates of 5.5 and 4 per cent respectively. The Sikhs evidently grew faster than the other major religious communities in the region. This was accounted for by continuing conversion to Sikhism. The premium on recruitment of the Sikhs to the army helped in the conversion of many Hindus to Sikhism.³ The previous trend of conversion from the low castes also continued. By 1921, 98.5 per cent of the Mazhabis, 87.2 per cent of Ramgharias and 67 per cent of Mahtans had become Sikhs.⁴

The growth of the Sikhs in the Punjab was also not uniform. Their rapid growth in the eastern districts contrasted with their sluggish growth in the western districts (Maps 28 and 29). This spatial pattern of the growth of the Sikh population was a complete reversal of what happened during the preceding decade of 1901-11.

There were variations in the growth of Sikh population in both the eastern and western parts. The eastern districts of Ludhiana, Jullundur, Kapurthala, Amritsar, Gurdespur, Ferozepur and Hissar recorded an increase of 13.0 to 18.5 per cent in their Sikh population (Table 6.3). The corresponding increase in Faridkot

³ Baldev Raj Nayyar: Minority Politics in the Punjab, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1966, p.64.

⁴ Census of India, 1921, Punjab and Delhi (Report), Vol. XV, Part I, p. 345.

Table 6.3
The Punjab : 1911-1921

Growth of the Sikh Population by Districts and Princely States

District/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in 1911	1921	Percentage change
Patiala	532,292	522,675	- 1.8
Ferozepur	262,511	302,761	15.3
Amritsar	253,941	287,004	13.0
Ludhiana	207,042	235,721	13.8
Jullundur	176,227	206,130	16.9
Lahore	169,008	179,975	6.5
Iyallpur	146,670	160,821	9.6
Hoshiarpur	134,146	132,958	- 0.9
Quardaspur	121,078	137,625	13.7
Gujranwala	107,748	50,802	-52.8
Ambala	94,471	97,614	3.3
Sialkot	81,761	74,939	- 8.3
Nahha	76,198	78,389	2.9
Montgomery	68,175	95,520	40.1
Faridkot	55,397	66,658	20.3
Kapurthala	54,275	64,074	18.0
Qajrat	44,693	49,496	10.6
Hissar	38,503	45,615	18.5
Shehpur	33,456	30,361	- 9.2
Rawalpindi	31,839	31,718	- 0.4
Attock	26,914	19,809	-26.4
Jhelum	24,436	18,626	-23.8
Jind	22,566	28,026	24.2
Malerkotla	21,018	21,828	3.8
Multan	19,881	18,562	- 6.6
Jhang	19,427	9,376	-51.7
Behawalpur	16,630	19,071	14.7
Karnal	13,531	12,230	- 9.2
Muzaffargarh	6,322	4,869	-23.0
Kalsia	6,258	8,014	28.0
Mianwali	4,881	2,986	-38.8
Delhi	2,985	X	X
Sinla Hill States	2,911	2,040	-29.9
Nahan	2,142	1,449	-32.3
Kangra	1,910	2,083	9.0
Dera Ghazi Khan	1,047	932	-10.5
Sinla	693	1,173	69.3
Gurgaon	342	924	170.2
Rohtak	161	602	273.9
Bilaspur	XX	437	XX
Chamba	141	242	71.6
Suket	71	44	-40.8
Mandi	26	142	446.1
Biloch Trans Frontier	-	-	-
Sheikhpura	XXX	82,965	XXX
PUNJAB	2,883,729	3,107,216	7.7

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1911, Punjab, Tables, Vol. XIV, Part II, pp. 28-29, and Census of India, 1921, Punjab and Delhi, Tables, Vol. XV, Part II, pp. 30-31.

- X Delhi, which had been one of the districts of the Punjab since 1857, became a separate administrative unit in 1911.
- XX Bilaspur was included in Sinla Hill States by the 1911 census. In the 1921 census data were given separately.
- XXX Sheikhpura had been formed as a new district by the 1921 census. It was constituted by taking out parts of Gujranwala and Lahore districts.

and Jind states was by 20.3 and 24.2 per cent respectively. Despite some migration of the Sikhs to the canal colonies, the actual growth of the Sikhs in the eastern districts outrated their natural increase. The component of conversion to Sikhism from Hinduism made the difference. Statistics of conversion were not available but figures for the Sikh Chamars in Ferozepur and Amritsar districts indicated fast conversion of untouchables to Sikhism.⁵

In eastern part, Hoshiarpur district and Patiala princely state recorded a marginal decline in Sikh population. Out-migration to canal colonies from Hoshiarpur district and heavy recruitment in army from the Patiala princely state were the chief factors underlying this decline. One of the most active mobilizing force for recruitment of the Sikhs into the British army at the time of World War I was the Maharaja of Patiala, a leading Sikh ruler.⁶ He held a special recruiting court at Bhatinda in 1916. About 15 per cent of all eligible males in this state joined army at his behest.

The western part of the Punjab was noted for a decrease in the Sikh population in general. The heaviest

⁵ Ibid., p. 184.

⁶ Ellinwood : op. cit., p. 344.

recruitment in army at the time of World War I came from the districts located here.⁷ More than one-fourth of the combat forces recruited in the Punjab hailed from the Rawalpindi division alone. Coupled with the effect of high mortality during the influenza epidemic of 1918, this factor led to sluggish growth of the Sikh population.

Some districts emerged as an exception to this pattern. Montgomery, which continued receiving in-migrants to its canal colonies, recorded an increase of 40.1 per cent in its Sikh population. The Sikhs increased by 10.6 per cent in Gujrat district and by 14.7 per cent in Bahawalpur state. This was attributable to the opening of the lower Bari Doab canal colony that attracted a large number of Sikh migrants from the eastern districts of the Punjab. The development of this colony was a part of the triple canal project completed in 1917. Under the first project, the spare waters of the Jhelum were poured into the Chenab through the Upper Jhelum canal irrigating 350,000 acres on its way. Under the second project, Chenab and Ravi were linked together by the Upper Chenab canal which irrigated a large part of Gujranwala and Sheikhupura

⁷ Ibid., p. 343.

districts. Under the third project, the water that remained was carried across the Ravi through the Lower Bari Doab canal which irrigated parts of Montgomery and Multan districts.⁸ The construction activities associated with this triple project and reclamation of new agricultural lands attracted migration from the local areas as well as from the eastern districts of the Punjab.

Nevertheless the eastern districts of the Punjab were noted for a faster growth of the Sikhs than the western districts, with a few exceptions in each case.

Changes in the Distributional Pattern of the Sikhs

The decade 1911-21 witnessed some changes in the distributional pattern of the Sikhs. Outside the Punjab, there was a thinning in the distribution of the Sikhs in the United Province of Agra and Oudh, Bombay presidency, Rajputana states, Hyderabad and Burma. This was due to the high mortality rate caused by the influenza epidemic of 1918. Simultaneously there was an increase in Sikh numbers in the towns of Bengal, Assam and Chota Nagpur areas offering new economic opportunities. Cantonments scattered throughout the country also received the Sikhs in increased numbers.

⁸ Malcolm Darling : The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1947, p.113.

Within the Punjab, the degree of concentration of the Sikhs increased in the eastern districts including Ludhiana, Jullundur, Kapurthala, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Ferozepur, and Hissar due mainly to conversions from the low Hindu castes. The incidence of conversion more than compensated the loss caused by out-migration to canal colonies and by recruitment in army at the time of World War I. The impact of this recruitment was, however, greater in the west Punjab districts many of which recorded decrease in their Sikh numbers.

The discussion in the present chapter leads us to two main findings. First, the world war I made a discernible impact on the growth and scatter of the Sikhs in various parts of India during 1911-21. Second, there was a reversal in the spatial patterns of the growth of this community during the decade. The Sikhs grew faster in the Punjab than in other parts of India. Within the Punjab, the eastern districts recorded higher growth rate than their western counterparts. This was exactly the opposite of what happened during the preceding decade.

CHAPTER VII

THE SIKHS : 1921-1931

The year 1921 marks a significant divide in the census history of the Indian subcontinent. Before 1921, natural growth of population was either negative or marginally positive depending upon fluctuations in mortality rates that were running neck to neck with the fertility rates. After 1921, population started increasing at an accelerating pace with gradual decline in mortality rates through control on famines and epidemic diseases like plague, smallpox and malarie. The population of India grew by 10.8 per cent during 1921-31 as compared with a growth rate of 0.8 per cent during 1911-21 and 6.5 per cent during 1901-11.

The various religious groups also picked up the increase rate of their numbers. There were, however, significant differences among them in this regard. While the Hindus and the Muslims increased by 10.4 and 13.0 per cent respectively, the Sikhs and the Christians grew by no less than 33.8 and 22.5 per cent respectively (Table 7.1). The actual number of the Sikhs went up from 3,238,803 in 1921 to 4,335,771 in 1931. The rate of natural increase being almost the same in case of various religious groups, differences in the rates of their actual growth were related to the patterns of conversion. The Sikhs and the Christians were evidently getting more of converts to their fold.

Table 7.1
India : 1921-1931
Growth of Population by Religion

Religion	Population by religion in		Percentage change
	1921	1931	
Hindu	216,734,586	239,195,140	10.4
Muslim	68,735,233	77,677,545	13.0
Christian	4,754,064	6,296,763	22.6
Sikh	3,238,803	4,335,771	33.8

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1921, India, (Tables), Vol. I, Part II, pp. 40-44, and Census of India, 1931, India (Imperial Tables), Vol. I, Part II, pp. 514-520.

Conversion to Sikhism took place not only from the low caste Mahabhis but also from the land owning Jats and trading class of Aroras. This conversion was due partly to the impression that there was something to gain from a community that was getting preference in government jobs, especially in defence forces, and in allotment of agricultural land in the canal colonies.¹ Cases were reported where a family would bring up some sons as Sikhs and the others as Hindus. Some Hindu families brought up their eldest son as a Sikh to invoke the grace of the Sikh Gurus. No wonder, there was an actual decrease in the number of the Hindus in the Punjab.

¹ Ethne K. Marence : The Transformation of Sikh Society, Heritage Publishers, New Delhi, 1976, p. 139.

Part of the credit for the enhancement in conversion to Sikhism during 1921-31 went to the Akali movement. This movement was a religio-political struggle of the Sikhs directed against the priests and other vested interests in the Sikh gurdwaras (shrines).² The objective was to bring the management of the gurdwaras under the popular control of the Sikh community. Its successful culmination involved an intense struggle for the years 1920-25. It brought about political awakening among the Sikh masses, particularly the peasantry. It also gave birth in 1920 to the Shiromani Akali Dal, a religion based political organisation of the Sikhs.³ The Dal gradually acquired the necessary resources and popular support to carry out its activities, including the spread of Sikhism.

It may be added that the distinction between the Sikhs and the Hindus was not sharp due to their close religious affinity. A considerable number of persons would return themselves as Hindu at one census and Sikh at the next census. Some returned themselves as belonging to both the religions. These tendencies were reflected in somewhat fluctuating number of the Sikhs from census to census.⁴

² Mohinder Singh : The Akali Movement, Macmillan, Delhi, 1978, p. 137.

³ Ibid., p. 150.

⁴ Census of India, 1931, Punjab Report, Vol.XVII,Part I, p. 290.

The things started getting crystallised as the 1931 census approached. The various communities realised that their share in government jobs and other privileges was related to their numerical strength. The various sectarian organizations, including the Akali Dal, vied with each other in increasing the numbers of their adherents.

Spatial Patterns

There was a spectacular increase in the number of the Sikhs both within and outside the Punjab during the decade (Maps 30 and 31). The respective rates of growth in the two areas were 31.0 and 10.7 per cent. Some of the provinces and states recorded phenomenal rise in their Sikh numbers. The Bombay province, for example, was noted for an increase of 151.1 per cent (Table 7.2). This was the outcome of conversion to Sikhism, particularly in Sind area. A big increase in the Sikh population as a consequence of in-migration was experienced by United Province of Agra and Oudh, Rajputana states and Burma. Delhi, Chota Nagpur plateau, Assam, Central Province and Berar, and Hyderabad were also marked for in-migration of the Sikhs. Reasons for in-migration differed in each case. While the culturable wastelands in the adjoining regions of the United Province of Agra and Oudh and

Table 7.2
India : 1921-1931
Growth of the Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Absolute Percentage	
	1921	1931	change	change
Punjab	3,107,296	4,071,624	964,328	31.0
British territory	2,294,207	3,064,144	769,937	33.6
Princely states	813,089	1,007,480	194,391	23.9
Kashmir	39,507	50,662	11,155	28.2
North West Frontier Province	32,898	47,935	15,037	45.7
British territory	28,040	42,510	14,470	51.6
Princely states	4,858	5,425	567	11.7
Burma	4,843	10,907	6,064	125.2
United Province of Agra and Oudh	14,266	46,610	32,344	226.0
British territory	14,234	46,500	32,266	226.6
Princely states	32	110	78	243.7
Bombay Presidency	9,106	21,607	13,288	145.9
British territory	8,319	20,893	12,574	151.1
Princely states	787	714	-73	-9.3
Rajputana	8,703	41,605	32,902	378.0
Baluchistan	7,741	8,425	684	8.8
British territory	7,645	8,368	723	9.4
Princely states	96	57	-39	-40.6
Delhi	2,764	6,437	3,673	129.3
Hyderabad	2,705	5,178	2,473	91.4
Bengal	2,381	7,334	4,953	208.0
British territory	2,364	7,320	4,956	209.6
Princely states	17	14	-3	-17.7
Central Provinces and Berar	1,681	4,520	2,839	168.8
British territory	1,529	4,241	2,712	177.4
Princely states	152	279	127	83.6
Bihar and Orissa	1,558	5,869	4,311	276.2
British territory	1,475	5,653	4,778	283.2
Princely states	83	216	133	160.2
Assam	1,009	2,729	1,720	170.4
British territory	988	2,497	1,509	152.7
Princely states	21	232	211	1004.8
Central India Agency	827	1,426	599	72.4
Gwalior	661	681	20	3.0
Andaman and Nicobar	390	649	259	66.4
Ajmer Merwara	219	341	95	55.7
Mysore	174	100	-34	-25.4
Baroda	70	521	451	644.3
Cochin	-	-	-	-
Travancore	-	12	12	x
Western India Agency	-	62	62	x
Sikkim	-	-	-	-
Madras Presidency	-	549	549	x
British territory	-	537	537	x
Princely states	-	12	12	x
Coorg	-	-	-	-
INDIA	3,238,803	4,335,771	1,096,968	33.8

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1921, India, Tables, Vol. I, Part II, pp.40-44 and Census of India, 1931, India, Tables, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 514-520.

Rajputana states attracted the Sikh farmers, the distant regions of Bihar, Assam, Hyderabad and others were recipients of Sikh traders, transporters, mechanics and skilled labourers. A noticeable feature in connection with the Ramgharia Sikhs was their migration to lands distant from the Punjab to seek employment as mechanics.⁵ New Delhi, in the process of construction at that time, attracted many Sikh masons belonging to this caste.

The Sikhs in the Punjab

Among the various religious communities in the Punjab, the Sikh grew the fastest. They recorded an increase rate of 31.0 per cent during the decade. This was attributed to conversion from amongst the Hindus who decreased by 0.2 per cent during the same period. The Muslims and the Christians increased by 16.5 and 25.9 per cent respectively (Table 7.3).

Within the Punjab, the province experienced a faster increase in its Sikh population by 33.6 per cent than the princely states where the corresponding increase was by 23.9 per cent. This difference was explained by a higher degree of conversion to Sikhism in the province. The activities of the Akali Dal were more intense in this area.

⁵ Census of India, 1931, India, Report, Vol. I, Part I, p. 389.

Table 7.3
The Punjab: 1921-1931
Growth of Population by Religion

Religion	Population by religion in		Percentage change
	1921	1931	
<u>Punjab (British Territory and Princely States)</u>			
All Religions	25,101,060	28,490,857	13.5
Muslim	12,813,383	14,929,896	16.5
Hindu	8,799,651	8,599,720	- 0.2
Sikh	3,107,296	4,071,624	31.0
Christian	332,939	419,353	25.9
Others	47,791	470,264	884.0
<u>Punjab (British Territory)</u>			
All Religions	20,685,024	23,580,852	14.0
Muslim	11,444,321	13,332,460	16.5
Hindu	6,579,260	6,328,888	- 4.0
Sikh	2,294,207	3,064,144	33.6
Christian	329,050	414,788	26.0
Others	38,186	440,872	1054.5
<u>Punjab (Princely States)</u>			
All Religions	4,416,036	4,910,005	11.2
Hindu	2,220,391	2,271,132	2.3
Muslim	1,369,062	1,597,436	16.7
Sikh	813,089	1,007,480	23.9
Christian	3,889	4,565	17.4
Others	9,605	29,392	206.0

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1921, Punjab and Delhi, Tables, Vol. XV, Part II, pp. 30-31 and Census of India, 1931, Punjab, Tables, Vol. XVII, Part II, pp. 278-279.

The growth of the Sikhs within the province and the princely states was again uneven (Maps 32 and 33). Practically all the districts located in the central part of the Punjab province recorded a big increase in their Sikh numbers (Table 7.4). Districts like Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur and Ambala were marked by growth rates exceeding 30 per cent, despite some out-migration, in respect of their Sikh population. The Sikh increase in Ferozepur district was no less impressive. All these were the districts where the impact of the Akali movement was the strongest and conversion ubiquitous. All of them were characterized by a relatively high proportion of the low caste Hindus.

The growth rate of the Sikhs was significantly higher than the rate of their natural increase in the princely states of Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot and Malerkotla. The proselytizing activities of the Akali Dal had secured many converts to Sikhism in these states.

The canal colonies in the west Punjab continued recording phenomenal increase in their Sikh population. This development was associated more with in-migration from the eastern districts than with local conversion. The Sikh population in Montgomery district increased by 55.1 per cent,

Table 7.4
The Punjab : 1921-1931
Growth of the Sikh Population by Districts and Princely States

Districts/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Percentage change
	1921	1931	
Patiala	522,675	632,972	21.1
Ferozepur	302,761	388,108	28.2
Amritsar	287,004	399,951	39.3
Ludhiana	235,721	312,829	32.7
Jullundur	206,130	249,571	21.1
Lahore	179,975	244,304	35.7
Lyallpur	160,821	211,391	31.4
Gurdaspur	137,625	178,471	29.7
Hoshiarpur	132,958	173,147	30.2
Ambala	97,614	155,555	59.3
Montgomery	95,520	148,155	55.1
Sheikhupura	82,965	119,477	44.0
Nabha	78,389	97,452	24.3
Sialkot	74,939	94,955	26.7
Faridkot	66,658	92,880	39.3
Kapurthala	64,074	72,177	12.6
Gujranwala	50,802	71,595	40.9
Gujrat	49,455	59,188	19.7
Hissar	45,615	55,169	20.9
Rawalpindi	31,718	41,265	30.1
Shahpur	30,361	40,074	32.0
Jind	28,026	33,290	18.8
Malerkotla	21,828	28,982	32.8
Attock	19,809	19,522	- 1.4
Bahawalpur	19,071	34,896	82.9
Jhelum	18,626	22,030	18.3
Multan	18,552	39,453	112.5
Karnal	12,280	16,928	37.8
Jhang	9,370	8,476	- 9.6
Kalsia	8,014	9,035	12.7
Muzaffargarh	4,869	5,287	8.6
Mianwali	2,986	4,231	41.7
Kangra	2,083	2,396	15.0
Simla Hill States	2,040	1,817	-10.9
Sirmur	1,449	2,413	66.5
Simla	1,173	760	-35.2
Nalagarh	1,056	1,396	32.2
Dera Ghazi Khan	932	760	-18.4
Gurgaon	924	500	-84.8
Rohtak	602	596	0.9
PUNJAB	3,107,296	4,071,624	31.0

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1921, Punjab and Delhi, Tables, Vol. XV, Part II, pp. 30-31 and Census of India, 1931, Punjab, Tables, Vol. XVII, Part II, pp. 278-279.

in Multan district by 112.5 per cent, and in Bahawalpur state by 82.9 per cent. Additional agricultural land had been developed in these areas during 1921-31.

By contrast, the foothill districts of Sialkot, Jhelum and Gujrat in the west Punjab were noted for sluggish growth of the Sikh numbers. These districts were marked for low agricultural productivity and lack of irrigational facilities. They also sent a number of migrants to the canal colonies.

It follows that the Sikh population in the Punjab grew fast in general due to sizable conversion during the decade. This development was more pronounced in the British administered territory than in the states ruled by local princes. The canal colonies showed impressive gain in their Sikh population due to the continuation of the previous trend of in-migration.

Growth of Sikh Population by Caste

The Sikh population increased by 137.2 per cent during the fifty-year period : 1881-1931. India's population grew by nearly 35 per cent during the same period. A far higher rate of growth among the Sikhs was explained by substantial conversion to the Sikh fold from time to time.

A perusal of the census data on religion for the years 1881 and 1931 revealed some significant changes in the religious composition of the Punjab during these fifty years. The proportion of the Sikhs in the total population increased from 7.5 per cent in 1881 to 14.3 per cent in 1931 while that of the Hindus decreased from 40.7 per cent in 1881 to 30.2 per cent in 1931 (Table 7.5). The Muslims improved their position from 51.3 to 52.4 per cent. The change in the percentage of the Christians was marginal. They were only 1.5 per cent of the total population in 1931. Thus, the Sikh increase was mainly at the cost of the Hindus. This trend was more pronounced in the British territory than in the princely states of the Punjab.

The availability of the castewise data for the years 1881 and 1931 facilitated a more detailed analysis of the structure of the growth of the Sikh population. Wide differences were noted in the increase rate of various castes, commensurate with the degree of conversion in each caste. The greatest increases were recorded in the case of (i) small-land owning castes, such as Sainis and Kashohs, (ii) low castes, such as Chuhra and Jhiwars, and (iii) some of the trading castes, such as Aroras (Table 7.6). The Sikh Sainis increased by 449.3 per cent and Kashohs by 240.5 per cent. Chuhra grew by 269.3 per cent and

Table 7.5
The Punjab : 1881-1931

Changes in the Proportion of Major Religious Communities in Total Population

Religious community	Percentage in total population in	
	1881	1931
<u>Punjab (British Territory and Princely States)</u>		
Hindu	40.7	30.2
Muslim	51.3	52.4
Sikh	7.5	14.3
<u>Punjab (British Territory)</u>		
Hindu	37.8	26.8
Muslim	55.8	56.5
Sikh	5.9	12.9
<u>Punjab (Princely States)</u>		
Hindu	54.9	46.3
Muslim	29.4	32.5
Sikh	15.4	20.6

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Punjab Vol. II, Appendix A, pp.1-4, and Vol. III, Appendix B, pp. 1-4, and Census of India, 1931, Punjab, Tables, Vol. XVII, Part II, pp.278-279.

Table 7.6The Punjab : 1881-1931Growth of the Sikh Population by Castes

Caste	Number of the Sikhs in		Percentage change	Percentage in the total Sikh Population in	
	1881	1931		1881	1931
Jat	1,125,856	2,134,598	89.5	65.6	52.4
Tarkhan	113,869	159,103	39.7	6.6	3.9
Chamar	100,310	153,753	36.8	5.8	3.8
Chuhra	45,827	169,247	269.3	2.6	4.1
Arora	37,917	114,329	201.5	2.2	2.8
Khatri	37,521	55,112	46.8	2.2	1.3
Kamboh	29,910	101,866	240.5	1.7	2.5
Lohar	24,614	16,935	-31.1	1.4	0.4
Jhinwar	21,754	57,683	165.1	1.3	1.4
Nai	21,500	41,820	94.5	1.2	1.0
Rajput	17,761	50,312	183.3	1.0	1.2
Chimba	17,758	17,898	0.7	1.0	0.4
Saini	14,463	86,688	499.3	0.8	2.1

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1881, Punjab, Vol. II, Appendix A, pp. 1-59 and Vol. III, Appendix B, pp. 1-40 and Census of India, 1931, Punjab, Tables, Vol. XVII, Part II, pp. 282-302.

Jhinwars by 165.1 per cent. The Sikh Aroras multiplied three times in their numbers. All these castes, except Aroras, were rural based. New conversions to Sikhism, thus, densified the concentration of this community in rural tracts.

The Sikh Jats, by comparison, witnessed an increase of 89.5 per cent. This growth rate was considerably lower than the growth rate of the Sikhs as a whole but it was higher than the rate of their natural increase. This was due to conversion of many Hindu Jats to Sikhism. It was confirmed by a continuous decline in the number of Hindu Jats simultaneous with a rise in the number of Sikh Jats (Table 7.7). Many Hindu Rajputs also got converted to Sikhism.

Table 7.7

The Punjab : 1881-1931
Changes in Hindu and Sikh Jat Population

Census Year	Hindu <u>Jats</u>	Sikh <u>Jats</u>
1881	1,445,374	1,125,856
1891	1,697,177	1,116,417
1901	1,539,475	1,388,877
1911	1,000,085	1,617,532
1921	1,046,396	1,822,881
1931	992,309	2,134,698

SOURCE : Census of India, 1931, Punjab, Report, Vol.XVII, Part I, p. 340.

This was reflected in the increase of the Rajput Sikhs by 183.3 per cent during the fifty years period under reference.

The growth rate of the Tarkhan Sikhs was one of the lowest. This community was noted for considerable out-migration not only to other parts of India but also to other countries, like East Africa. They moved out mainly for construction of railways. They worked as mechanics and contractors.

Apart from the common factor of pure faith, considerations behind conversion varied in case of different castes. The conversion to Sikhism from amongst the low castes was explained by their desire to earn a higher social status even without any economic gain whatsoever. Their constant association with the high Sikh castes like the Jats, in whose fields they worked, was also a factor behind their conversion. The small land owning castes were also motivated, among other factors, by a hope of raising their social status in relation to the high caste Sikhs. The conversion to Sikhism from amongst Jats and Aroras was with the motive of getting some benefits in terms of allotment of land in the canal colonies, recruitment in the army or employment in government service.

There were striking regional variations in the growth rate of various Sikh castes. A rapid increase in the number of the Sikh Jats was typical of almost all parts of Punjab (Map 34). This was the result of conversion of many Hindu Jats to Sikhism. The Hindu Jats almost disappeared in the districts of Ludhiana and Gurdaspur as well as in the states of Faridkot and Malerkotla. The growth of the Sikh Kambohs was more marked in Lahore and Montgomery districts whereas the number of the Sikh Sainis multiplied significantly in Hoshiarpur and Jullundur districts. The Chamar and Chuhra Sikhs showed large increases in all the areas of Sikh Jat concentration (Map 35). Arora and Khatri Sikhs grew fast in the western districts (Map 36). Of all the Sikh castes, Tarkhans were noted for a sluggish growth, especially in areas of their original concentration like the Amritsar district (Map 37). They showed a great mobility by migrating to distant lands as mechanics, masons and carpenters.⁶

⁶ Satish Sabarwal : "Status and entrepreneurship : the Ramgharia case," in M.N.Srinivas and others (eds.) : Dimensions of Social Change in India, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1977, p. 160.

Changes in the Distributional Pattern

The map showing the distribution of the Sikhs in 1931 indicated some further redistribution of this community since 1921. The most notable change related to an enhanced flow of the Sikhs toward areas of economic opportunities both within and outside the Punjab. The canal colonies in the west Punjab continued receiving more of the Sikh migrants from the eastern districts. Outside the Punjab also, areas of earlier Sikh in-migration received more of in-flow. Hardly any new nuclei of the Sikh concentration emerged but the densification of the already established points was remarkable. The agricultural wastelands in the United Province of Agra and Oudh as well as in the Ganganagar district of Rajputana continued attracting more of the Sikh farmers from the Punjab. In other provinces and princely states, cities and towns were the main recipient of the Sikh migrants. Most of these places were located on the Lahore-Calcutta railway line.

The process of conversion affected the spatial pattern of the Sikh numbers. Their concentration intensified in areas where they were already in large numbers. This was the outcome of additional conversion from amongst the low caste Hindus. The conversion of

many Hindu Sainis in Hoshiarpur district and of Rajput Hindus in Gurdaspur and Sialkot established new areas of conversion in these foothill districts of the Punjab.

The main observations in this chapter may be recapitulated. The Sikh numbers recorded impressive increase by 31.0 per cent during the decade 1921-31. One-third of this increase was attributed to the factor of natural increase and two-thirds to the element of conversion. The credit for this sizable conversion went largely to the Akali movement which was instrumental in bringing about political awakening among the Sikh masses. In spatial terms, the growth of the Sikhs was rapid in practically all areas of their concentration. Localities of new concentration were only a few. Outside the Punjab, the Sikh increase remained confined to newly developed agricultural lands in the neighbouring regions or to fast growing cities situated on Lahore-Calcutta railway line.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SIKHS : 1931-1941

The years 1931-41 witnessed the continuation of the trend of rapid growth of the Sikh population during the preceding decade. The numerical strength of this community grew from 4,335,771 in 1931 to 5,691,447 in 1941 representing an increase of 32.2 per cent (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1

India : 1931-1941
Growth of Population by Religion

Religion	<u>Population by religion in</u>		Percentage change
	1931	1941	
Hindu	239,195,140	254,939,506	6.6
Muslim	77,677,545	92,058,096	1.9
Christian	6,296,763	7,427,243	5.9
Sikh	4,335,771	5,691,447	32.2

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1931, India, (Imperial Tables), Vol. I, Part II, pp.514-520, and Census of India, 1941, India, (Tables) Vol. I, Part I, pp. 98-101.

The Hindus recorded a growth rate of 6.6 per cent, the Muslims of 1.9 per cent and the Christians of 5.9 per cent.

The growth rate of the Sikhs was evidently higher than that of other religious groups. Their percentage in the total population rose from 1.3 in 1931 to 1.5 in 1941. The numerical strength of this community had multiplied threefold since 1901. The process of conversion to Sikhism, which has been gaining momentum since the closing years of nineteenth century, continued during 1931-41.

The relatively slow growth of other religious communities deserves an explanation. The 1941 census treated the tribals as a separate category and did not assign any specific religion to them. In point of fact, most of them had been classified as the Hindu, Christian, Buddhist or Muslim at the previous censuses. The new census procedure of lumping all the the tribals under one category of 'tribal religions' resulted in some loss of adherents to various religious groups. The data given in Table 8.2 would clarify this point.

Table 8.2
India : 1941
Adjustment of Data on Tribal Population

Tribals as enumerated	25,441,489
Tribals as assumed*	8,791,354
Surplus	<u>16,650,135</u>
Tribals found to be Hindus	15,256,777
Tribals found to be Christians	1,110,694
Tribals found to be Buddhists	225,548
Tribals found to be Muslims	57,116
Total	<u>16,650,135</u>

* 'Assumed' is the number of tribals that would have been recorded at the 1941 census if there were no addition to their number by declassification of the religion of other tribals.

SOURCE : Adapted from Appendix J in Kingsley Davis : The Population of India and Pakistan, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1951, p. 251.

None of the tribes had Sikhism as its religion. The Sikhs were, therefore, spared of any loss of their numbers through declassification of religion of the tribals.

They were rather successful in gaining converts, especially from amongst the low caste Hindus. Being predominantly in cultivation, the Sikhs were in a favourable position to get new faithfuls from amongst the landless labourers, carpenters, and weavers who were directly dependant upon them for their livelihood. Thus, the conversion to Sikhism was more popular in rural areas.

Spatial Patterns

There was a more than twofold increase in the number of the Sikhs outside the Punjab from 264,167 in 1931 to 573,622 in 1941. This represented an increase rate of 117.1 as compared to their growth by 25.7 per cent in the Punjab. There was considerable out-migration of the Sikhs from their home region to other areas during 1931-41. This mobility was stimulated by rapid growth of industrial cities like Calcutta, Jamshedpur and Kanpur and was further accelerated by heavy recruitment of the Sikhs in army on the eve of the World War II.

The various provinces and states displayed sharp differences in the growth rate of their Sikh population (Maps 38 and 39). The Sikh numbers increased by 399.9 per cent in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, by 125.1 per cent in Bihar and Orissa, by 122.3 per cent in Bengal

and by 151.0 per cent in Delhi. The Sikh population increased by 231.7 per cent in Central Province and Berar and by 96.8 per cent in Rajputana (Table 8.3). This phenomenal growth of the Sikhs in the northern and central parts of the country was due mainly to migration of the Sikhs from the Punjab province. The new opportunities of employment in growing industrial and transport establishments in cities located in these areas were responsible for attracting the Sikhs. The presence of some cultivable wastelands in the terai region of the United Province of Agra and Oudh and in northwestern Rajputana states worked as another pull factor for the Sikhs to move out from the Punjab. The stationing of the Sikh soldiers at various cantonments in north India led to their further scattering. The Sikhs were, thus, leaving their home state in increasing numbers in response to promising economic opportunities.

Growth of the Sikhs in the Punjab

The growth rate of the Sikhs was higher than that of the Hindus and Muslims not only in India as a whole but also within the Punjab. The Sikhs here recorded an increase rate of 25.7 per cent while both the Hindus and the Muslims grew by 20.0 per cent each during 1931-41.

Table 8.3
India : 1931-1941
Growth of the Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in 1931	1941	Absolute change	Percentage change
Punjab	4,071,624	5,117,825	1,046,201	25.7
British territory	3,064,144	3,757,401	693,257	22.6
Princely states	1,007,480	1,360,424	352,944	35.0
Kashmir	50,662	65,903	15,241	30.1
North West Frontier Province	47,935	62,411	14,476	30.1
British territory	42,510	57,939	15,429	36.3
Princely states	5,425	4,472	- 953	-17.6
United Province of Agra and Oudh	46,610	233,176	186,566	400.2
British territory	46,500	232,445	185,945	399.9
Princely states	110	731	621	564.5
Rajputana	41,605	81,896	40,291	96.8
Bombay Presidency	21,607	8,011	-13,596	-62.9
British territory	20,893	8,011	-12,882	-61.6
Princely states	714	-	- 714	-100.0
Burma	10,907	X	X	X
Baluchistan	8,425	12,046	3,621	42.9
British territory	8,368	11,918	3,550	42.4
Princely states	57	128	71	124.6
Bengal	7,334	16,309	8,975	122.3
British territory	7,320	16,281	8,961	122.4
Princely states	14	28	14	100.0
Delhi	6,437	16,157	9,720	151.0
Bihar and Orissa	5,869	13,368	7,498	125.1
British territory	5,653	13,213	7,560	133.7
Princely states	216	155	-61	-23.3
Hyderabad	5,178	5,330	152	2.9
Central Province and Berar	4,520	14,996	10,476	231.7
British territory	4,241	14,996	10,755	253.6
Princely states	279	-	-279	-100.0
Assam	2,729	3,845	1,116	40.9
British territory	2,497	3,464	967	38.7
Princely states	232	381	149	64.2
Central India Agency	1,426	2,731	1,305	91.5
Gwalior	681	2,342	1,661	243.9
Madras Presidency	549	423	-126	-22.9
British territory	537	418	-119	-22.2
Princely states	12	5	-7	-58.3
Baroda	521	566	45	8.6
Ajmer Merwara	341	867	526	154.2
Andaman and Nicobar	649	744	95	14.6
Mysore	100	269	169	169.0
West India Agency	62	239	177	285.5
Travancore	12	31	19	158.3
Sind	XI	31,011	XI	XI
Cochin	-	9	9	∞
Sikkim	-	1	1	∞
Coorg	-	-	-	-
Deccan and Kohlapur	-	22	22	∞
Chhatisgarh	-	507	507	∞
INDIA	4,335,771	5,691,447	1,355,676	32.2

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1931, India Tables, Vol.1, Part II, p.516 and Census of India, 1941, India Tables, Vol.1, Part I, p.100.

- Nil

X Burma was separated from India in 1935.

XI Sind was formed as a separate province by the 1941 census. Earlier it was part of Bombay Presidency.

The spatial patterns of the growth rate of the Sikhs were the same as during the preceding decade (Maps 40 and 41). The fastest increase of 24 to more than 60 per cent was characteristic of districts like Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Rawalpindi, Mianwali, Jhang, Lyallpur, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur in western Punjab where agricultural land and newly emerging agro-based industries, such as cotton processing, rice shelling and oilseed pressing, were attracting many a Sikh. The Satluj valley and the Haveli projects were the new canal systems completed during the decade.¹ There was some in-migration for trade and transport as well. It may be stressed that the canal colonies in the western Punjab were gaining in Sikh numbers not only because of in-migration but also due to increasing conversion within local areas.

The role of conversion to Sikhism was more pronounced in the central Punjab districts where the Sikhs were already in large numbers. The Sikhs increased by 20 to more than 40 per cent in districts like Amritsar and Ferozepur and in princely states like Patiala and Faridkot (Table 8.4). These were the areas where the efforts of the Sikhs for conversion to their faith met with less resistance from other religious groups.

¹ B.S.Saini : The Social and Economic History of the Punjab: 1901-1939, Ess Ess Publications, Delhi, 1975, pp.214-215.

Table 8.4
The Punjab : 1931-1941
Growth of the Sikh Population by Districts and Princely States

District/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in 1931	Number of the Sikhs in 1941	Percentage change
Patiala	632,972	896,021	41.5
Amritsar	399,951	510,845	27.7
Ferozepur	388,108	479,486	23.5
Ludhiana	312,829	341,175	9.1
Jullundur	249,571	298,741	19.7
Lahore	244,304	310,646	27.1
Lyallpur	211,391	262,737	24.3
Gurdaspur	178,471	221,261	24.0
Hoshiarpur	173,147	198,194	14.5
Ambala	155,555	156,543	0.6
Montgomery	148,155	175,064	18.2
Sheikhupura	119,477	160,706	34.5
Nabha	97,452	122,451	25.6
Sialkot	94,955	139,409	46.8
Faridkot	92,880	115,070	23.9
Kapurthala	72,177	88,350	22.4
Gujranwala	71,595	99,139	38.6
Gujrat	59,188	70,233	18.6
Hissar	55,169	60,731	10.1
Rawalpindi	41,265	64,127	55.4
Shahpur	40,074	48,046	19.9
Multan	39,453	61,628	56.2
Bahawalpur	34,896	46,945	34.5
Jind	33,290	40,981	23.1
Malerkotla	28,982	30,320	4.6
Jhelum	22,030	24,680	12.0
Attock	19,522	20,120	3.0
Karnal	16,928	19,887	17.5
Kalsia	9,035	12,235	35.4
Jhang	8,476	12,238	44.4
Muzaffargarh	5,287	5,882	11.2
Mianwali	4,231	6,865	62.2
Simla Hill States	3,267	3,967	21.4
Sirmur	2,413	2,334	-3.3
Kangra	2,396	4,809	100.7
Simla	760	1,032	35.8
Dera Ghazi Khan	760	1,072	41.0
Rohtak	596	1,466	145.9
Gurgaon	500	637	27.4
PUNJAB	4,071,624	5,117,825	25.7

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1931, Punjab, Tables, Vol. XVII, Part II, pp.278-279, and Census of India, 1941, India, Tables, Vol. I, Part I.

The growth of the Sikhs was relatively slow in the foothill districts of Ambala, Hoshiarpur and Jhelum which were recording considerable out-migration impelled by their low agricultural productivity. Out-migration and consequent slow growth of the Sikh population was also characteristic of the densely populated districts of Jullundur and Ludhiana. The Muslim predominant state of Malerkotla was noted for only a small increase in its Sikh population.

Changes in the Distributional Pattern

Despite a big increase in the Sikh population during 1931-41, there were only minor changes in the distributional pattern of the Sikhs. About two-thirds of the increase in the Sikhs was attributed to the process of conversion and most of this conversion took place in areas of their concentration. Their characteristic concentration in the upland plains of the Punjab remained undisturbed. Also the preponderance of this community in rural areas as against only a small proportion in towns continued as before.

There was indeed some spatial dispersal of the Sikhs in areas outside Punjab. There was an extension of the Sikh settlement in the terai region of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh where some agricultural

wastelands had been reclaimed. The Sikhs who moved into this tract during the thirties belonged to the Upper Ganga-Yamuna Doab. Some hailed from the crowded central Punjab as well. The Sikh farmers moved also to the Ganga canal irrigated tract of Rajputana states. Migrants came mainly from the adjoining districts of the Punjab. There was some Sikh migration to distant cities like Calcutta, Jamshedpur and Kanpur for industry, trade and transport. Delhi also attracted more of the Sikhs. The movement of the Sikhs to cantonments spread all over India was another noticeable feature of this decade.

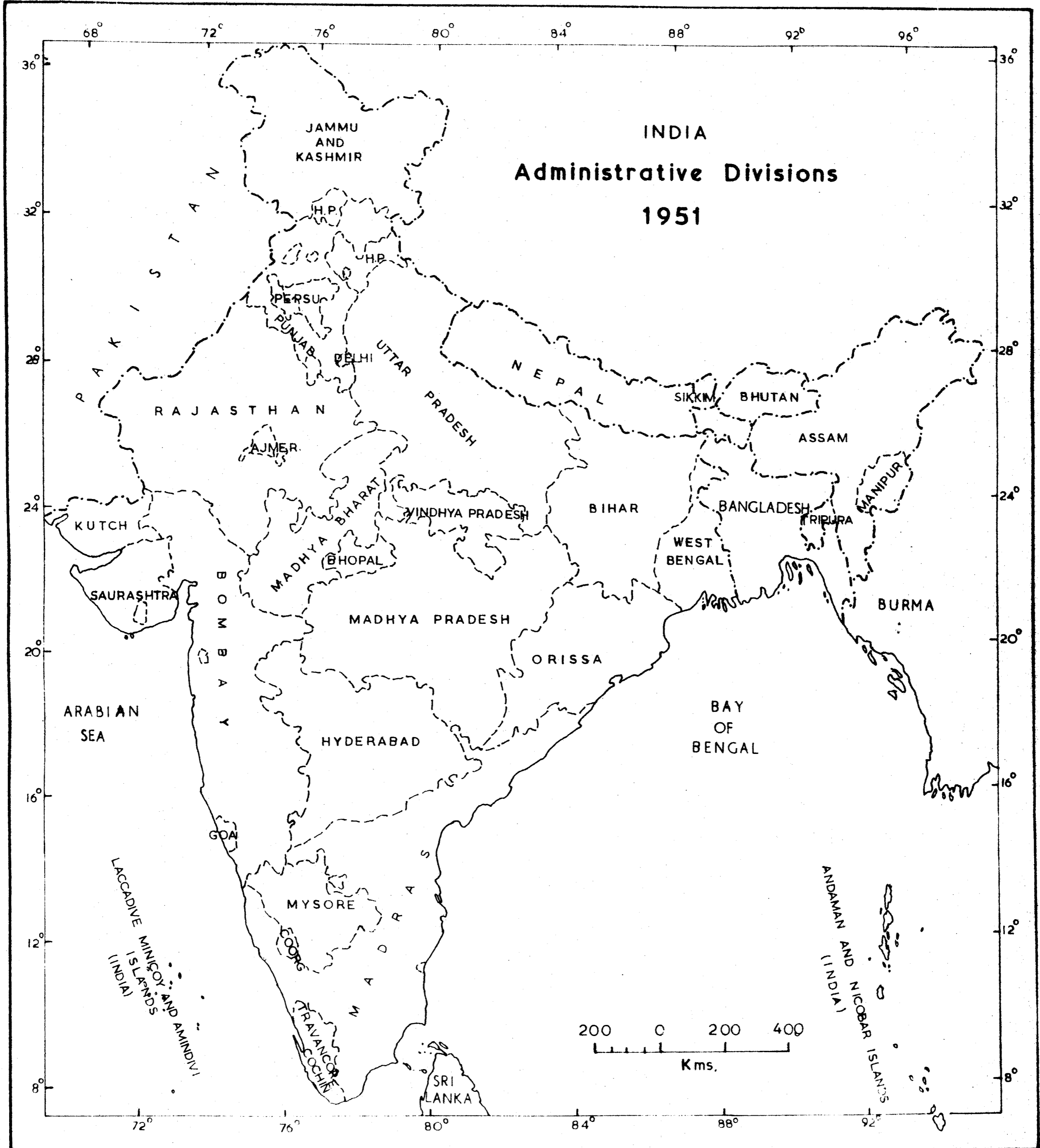
The outstanding features of dynamics of the Sikh numbers during the 1931-41 may be summed up. First, the Sikhs recorded the fastest growth among all the religious communities. This was due to continued conversion. Second, their increase was more rapid in areas outside the Punjab than within. This was the outcome of the Sikh migration for economic reasons. Third, the previous trend of westward migration of the Sikhs from the central districts of the Punjab continued but simultaneously their eastward migration to other provinces for industry, trade and transport assumed significant proportion during the decade.

CHAPTER IX

THE SIKHS : 1941-1951

The decade 1941-51 was an unusual one. The Indian subcontinent was partitioned in 1947 into two countries, India and Pakistan, on religious lines. The Hindus accounted for 69.5 per cent of the total population in the undivided India, the Muslims 24.3 per cent and the Sikhs 1.5 per cent. The fact that made partition possible was the predominance of the Muslims in certain parts of the undivided country. The Punjab was bifurcated into East Punjab (India) and West Punjab (Pakistan). The Bengal province was also divided into two parts : the western wing becoming West Bengal as a part of India and the eastern wing designated as East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The provinces of Sind, North West Frontier, Baluchistan and the sixteen western districts of the Punjab were formed into West Pakistan (now Pakistan). Seven provinces of Bihar, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Central province and Berar, Bombay, Madras, Orissa and Assam as well as the western half of Bengal and the thirteen eastern districts of the Punjab became parts of India (Map 42). Likewise, there was merger of the princely states into the two countries at the option

MAP No. 42



of their rulers.¹

The partition was preceded as well as followed by intense communal rivalry between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. There were widespread riots resulting in the massacre of thousands of people on both sides. The intensity of communal killings was especially abnormal in the Punjab in view of the competing numbers and peculiar distributional pattern of the various religious groups. The Sikhs were the worst sufferers in this respect. They made majority hardly in any area but were spread over many districts.² Their relative concentration in the newly developed western districts of the Punjab was a recent event. Hundreds of thousands of them had to flee from these areas which fell in Pakistan. In the process thousands of them were killed. No wonder, the growth of the Sikhs by 9.3 per cent was low as compared to 13.3 per cent increase in India's population as a whole. They made 1.7 per cent of the total population in new India in 1951 (Table 9.1).

¹ O.H.K. Spate : India and Pakistan, in W. Gordon East and O.H.K. Spate (eds.): Changing Map of Asia, Methuen, London, 1953, p. 153.

² O.H.K. Spate : "The partition of the Punjab and of Bengal," Geographical Journal, 110 (1947), p. 205.

Table 2.1
India: 1941-1951
Growth of Population by Religion

Religion	<u>Population by religion in</u>		Percentage change
	1941	1951	
Hindu	254,939,506	303,186,986	18.9
Muslim	92,088,096	35,400,117	61.5
Christian	7,427,243	8,157,765	9.8
Sikh	5,691,447	6,219,134	9.3

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1941, India, Tables, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 98-101 and Census of India, 1951, India, Religion, Paper II, pp. 8-15.

The short period within which a complete depopulation of the Sikh community took place from all parts of western Pakistan was an unprecedented event not only in the history of this region but also in the history of the whole subcontinent. The canal colonies of western Punjab that had attracted streams of Sikh migrants from eastern Punjab during the preceding decades became suddenly devoid of Sikh population. This was the area to whose development the Sikhs made outstanding contribution. Their numerical representation was also large in some of the local areas. There were tracts in Lyellpur and Sheikhpura districts where the Sikhs were in a majority.³

³ Ibid., p.208.

The return of the Sikhs from the canal colonies and other districts to the new Indian side in a way completed the circle. The Sikhs returned to those Indian areas from where they had migrated in large numbers to the canal colonies. The western and northwestern parts of the Punjab which were generally devoid of Sikh population before 1881 again became empty of persons belonging to this religious community.

Rehabilitation of the Displaced Persons

The Sikhs who were displaced from West Pakistan belonged to two categories. The first category of the Sikhs were native to areas which were part of West Pakistan and the second category included those persons whose ancestors had migrated from the eastern districts of the Punjab to the canal colonies. Both the categories were rehabilitated on the land or in the houses evacuated by the Muslims in Punjab or its adjoining states on the Indian side. A plan for a proper settlement of the displaced peasantry in the various districts of the East Punjab was drawn up.⁴ Those who had migrated from East Punjab to West Punjab as colonists returned generally to

⁴ M.S.Randhawa : Out of the Ashes, Public Relations Department, Punjab, 1954, p. 67.

their ancestral villages or at least to their original home districts. Others went to specific districts assigned to them. Displaced landholders from Lahore and non-colonists of Montgomery were settled in Ferozepur, those from Rawalpindi, Sheikhupura and Gujranwala in Kernal and in Patiala and East Punjab States Union, those from Shehpur and Gujrat in Ambala, those from Multan in Hissar, those from Dera Ghazi Khan and Mianwali in Gurgaon and those from Sialkot in Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts.⁵ In case adequate evacuee land was not available in a district, as was the case with Amritsar, the overflow was accommodated in neighbouring districts. The temporary allotments of evacuee land were given to groups of families in preference to individuals. Relatives and friends, because of insecurity and uncertainty about the future, collected together and formed small groups. Government also found it easier to deal with groups than with individual families.

Movement of the Sikhs to States outside Punjab

Several of the non-agricultural Sikhs from west Pakistan settled in large cities like Delhi. Within the cities they concentrated in specific areas, usually

⁵ Ibid., p. 80.

earlier inhabited by the Muslims. The Sikh population increased by more than 8 times in Delhi, from 16,157 in 1941 to 137,096 in 1951. In Bombay province also, the Sikh population grew from 8,011 in 1941 to 38,430 in 1951, giving an increase rate of 379.7 per cent. In West Bengal, the Sikhs increased from 16,309 to 29,864. This represented a growth rate of 83.1 per cent. In Bihar and Chota Nagpur, the Sikh population increased nearly three times from 13,368 in 1941 to 42,866 in 1951. In Central Province and Berar, the increase was again substantial from 14,996 in 1941 to 33,396 in 1951. In Rajasthan, the Sikh population increased by 76.1 per cent from 81,896 in 1941 to 144,233 in 1951 (Table 9.2). This rapid growth in all these areas was the result of inflow of the displaced Sikhs from West Pakistan (Maps 43 and 44). Most of them settled in towns and cities. Some of them were rehabilitated in the rural parts of Bharatpur and Alwar districts of Rajasthan and in the western districts of Uttar Pradesh.

Growth of the Sikhs in Punjab

An overwhelming majority of the Sikhs displaced from West Pakistan was rehabilitated in Punjab (Map 45). Punjab along with Patiala and East Punjab States Union

MAP No. 45

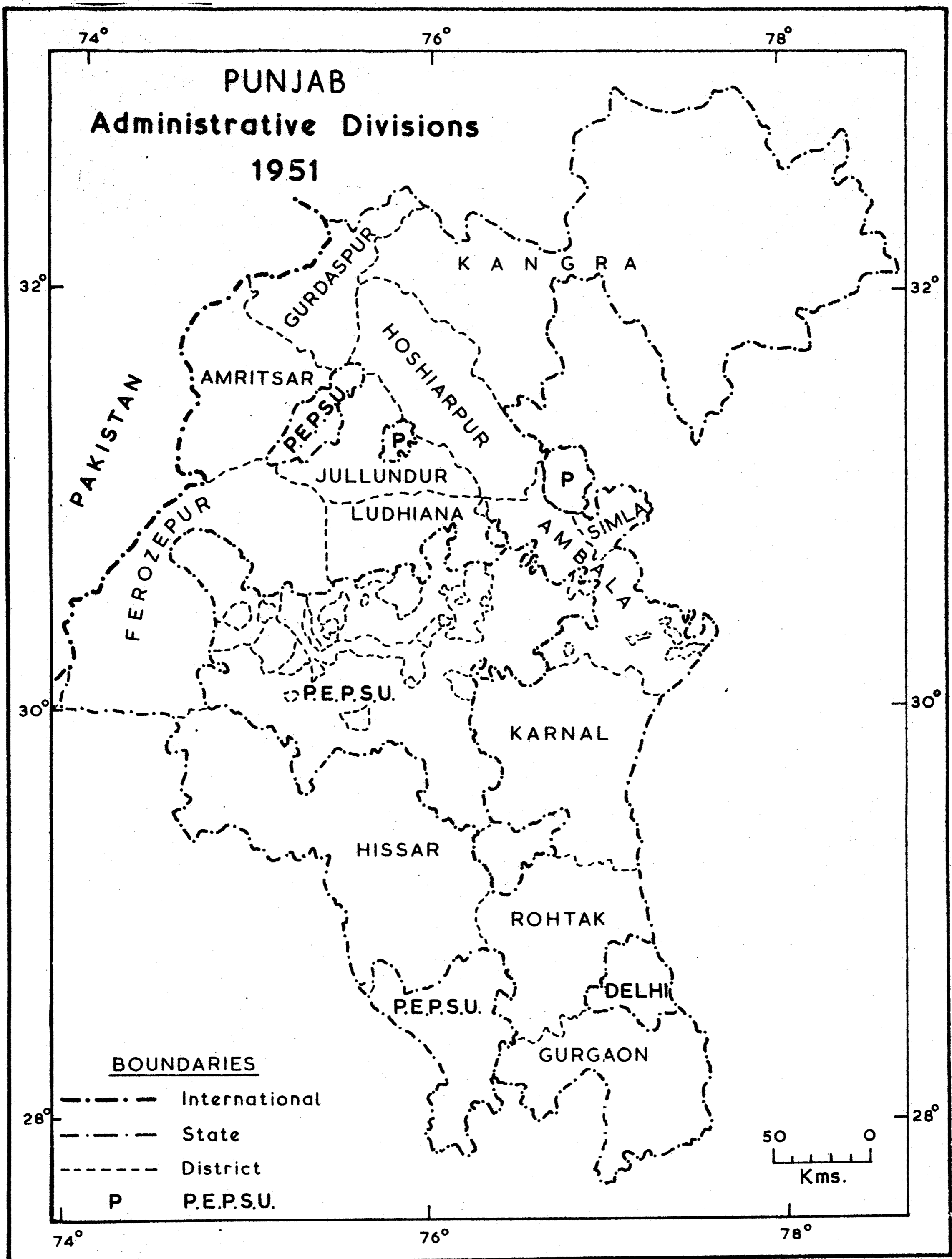


Table 9.2
India : 1941-1951
Growth of the Sikh Population by Provinces and Princely States

Province/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Absolute change	Percentage change
	1941	1951		
Punjab	5,117,825	5,553,918	436,093	8.5
British territory	3,757,401	3,831,983	74,582	1.9
Princely states	1,360,424	1,721,935	361,511	26.5
United Province of Agra and Oudh	233,176	197,612	-35,564	-15.2
British territory	232,445	197,612	-34,833	-14.9
Princely states	731	-	-731	-100.0
Rajputana	81,896	144,233	62,337	76.1
Kashmir	65,903	DNA		
North West Frontier Province	62,411	X	X	X
British territory	57,939	X	X	X
Princely states	4,472	X	X	X
Sind	31,001	X	X	X
Bengal	16,309	29,864	13,555	83.1
British territory	16,281	29,864	13,583	83.4
Princely states	28	-	-28	-100.0
Delhi	16,157	137,096	120,939	748.5
Central Province and Berar	14,996	33,396	18,400	122.9
British territory	14,996	33,396	18,400	122.9
Princely states	-	-	-	-
Bihar and Orissa	13,368	42,866	29,480	220.5
British territory	13,213	42,866	29,653	224.4
Princely states	155	-	-155	-100.0
Baluchistan	12,046	X	X	X
British territory	11,918	X	X	X
Princely states	128	X	X	X
Bombay Presidency	8,011	38,430	30,419	379.7
British territory	8,011	38,430	30,419	379.7
Princely states	-	-	-	-
Hyderabad	5,330	8,449	3,119	58.5
Central India Agency and Gwalior	5,073	12,521	7,448	146.8
Assam	3,845	4,107	262	6.8
British territory	3,464	4,107	643	18.5
Princely states	381	-	-381	-100.0
Ajmer Merwara	867	3,964	3,097	357.2
Andaman and Nicobar	744	126	-618	-70.0
Baroda	566	-	-566	-100.0
Madras Presidency	423	2,859	2,436	575.8
British territory	418	2,859	2,441	583.9
Princely states	5	-	-5	-100.0
Mysore	269	3,247	2,978	1,107.0
West India Agency	239	-	-239	-100.0
Trevancore and Cochin	40	275	235	587.5
Deccan and Kohlapur	22	-	-22	-100.0
Sikkim	1	18	17	1,700.0
Himachal Pradesh	XX	5,019	XX	XX
Coorg	-	9	9	a

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1941, India, Tables, Vol.I, Part I, pp.98-101, and Census of India, 1951, India, Religion, Paper II, pp.8-15.

DNA Data Not Available. - Nil

X These provinces and princely states became part of Pakistan after partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947.

XX Himachal Pradesh became a separate state by the 1951 census earlier it was part of Punjab.

recorded an increase of 41.9 per cent in its Sikh population during 1941-51. This growth rate would have been still higher had a large number of displaced Sikhs not moved to Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and other areas.

There were striking disparities in the growth rate of the Sikhs within Punjab (Maps 46 and 47). Differences in magnitude of inflow of the displaced Sikhs was the main determinant of these variations. The border districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Ferozepur recorded increase of 60.2, 75.6 and 62.6 per cent respectively (Table 9.3). The increase was as high as 91.6 and 112.2 per cent in Jullundur and Kapurthala districts. The Sikh population increased by 45.7 and 43.4 per cent in Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur districts. An increase rate of 30.6 per cent was witnessed in the Patiala and East Punjab States Union. Notably the growth rate of the Sikhs was rapid in those parts of Indian Punjab which had a substantial number of the Muslims before partition. Also it had some correspondence with the magnitude of out-migration which had earlier taken place to the canal colonies from the areas in eastern Punjab.

The growth rate of the Sikhs was impressive also in Hindu predominant districts of Punjab which now form parts of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The Sikh population

Table 9.3
The Punjab: 1941-1951

Growth of the Sikh Population by Districts and Princely States

District/ princely state	Number of the Sikhs in		Percentage change
	1941	1951	
Amritsar	510,845	897,309	75.6
Ferozepur	479,486	788,024	62.6
Ludhiana	341,175	497,419	45.7
Lahore	310,646	X	X
Jullundur	298,741	572,493	91.6
Lyallpur	262,737	X	X
Gurdaspur	221,261	354,681	60.2
Hoshiarpur	198,194	284,320	43.4
Montgomery	175,064	X	X
Sheikhupura	160,706	X	X
Ambala	156,543	232,456	48.4
Sialkot	139,409	X	X
Gujranwala	99,139	X	X
Kapurthala	88,350	187,568	112.2
Gujrat	70,233	X	X
Rawalpindi	64,127	X	X
Multan	61,628	X	X
Hissar	60,731	80,394	32.3
Shahpur	48,046	X	X
Bahawalpur	46,945	X	X
Jhelum	24,680	X	X
Attock	20,120	X	X
Karnal	19,887	96,458	385.0
Jhang	12,238	X	X
Kalsia	12,235	X	X
Mianwali	6,865	X	X
Muzaffargarh	5,882	X	X
Kangra	4,809	18,401	282.6
Sinla Hill States	3,967	1,663	-58.0
Sirmar	2,334	2,626	12.5
Rohtak	1,466	7,907	439.3
Dera Ghazi Khan	1,072	X	X
Siala	1,032	7,417	618.7
Gurgaon	637	6,390	890.5
Patiala	} 1,204,843	} 1,518,546	} 26.0
Faridkot			
Nabha			
Jind			
Malerkotla			8.5
PUNJAB	5,117,825	5,553,918	

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1941, India Tables, Vol. I, Part I and Census of India, 1951, Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh, Bilaspur and Delhi, Vol. VIII Part II A, pp. 298-299.

DNA Data Not Available

X These districts became part of Pakistan after the partition of India in 1947.

increased by 32.3 per cent in Hissar District. It recorded a seven fold increase in Simla district. It multiplied four times in Kangra district. Indeed the absolute numbers of the Sikhs involved were not large in all such cases.

It follows that most of the inflow of the displaced Sikhs was received mainly by the districts from where they had migrated earlier and which already had a dense concentration of the Sikhs. Consequently many of the districts falling in the present Punjab area acquired a majority of the Sikhs (Table 9.4). In 1941, only

Table 9.4
Punjab: 1951

Percentage of the Sikhs in Some Select Districts

<u>Name of the district</u>	<u>Percentage in total population</u>
Bhatinda	78.1
Amritsar	70.7
Kapurthala	63.6
Ludhiana	61.7
Ferozepur	59.6
Jullundur	56.5

SOURCE : Census of India, 1951, Punjab, Vol. VIII, Part II-A, pp. 298-300.

Faridkot state had an absolute majority of the Sikhs.⁶ This development had a far reaching effect on the political geography of India. The case for a separate linguistic state of Punjab was strengthened by this further concentration of the Sikhs in this area.

Simultaneously there was considerable scattering of the Sikhs in other parts of India. The new points of concentration became nuclei for future migration of the Sikhs from the Indian Punjab during the post-Independence era. These Sikhs made significant contributions to the development of agriculture, industry, transport and trade of the areas of their new settlement, both within and outside Punjab.⁷

Changes in the Distributional Pattern

The decade 1941-51 witnessed dramatic changes in the distributional pattern of the Sikhs. The areas that now constitute Pakistan became suddenly and almost completely devoid of any Sikh population. The Indian Punjab, on the

⁶ O.H.K. Spate : "The partition of India and the prospects of Pakistan," Geographical Review, 38 (1948), p.9.

⁷ Stephen L. Keller : Uprooting and Social Change: The Role of Refugees in Development, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1975, p. 232.

other hand, was the recipient of a majority of the displaced Sikhs. Consequently, the area which by 1881 had developed more or less as the main hearth of the Sikhs experienced an intense concentration of the people adhering to Sikhism.

The post-partition pattern of the Sikh concentration in Punjab exhibited some differences from the pattern obtaining in 1881. While the Sikhs in 1881 were in minority in most of the areas constituting present Punjab, they emerged as a majority group in most parts of this tract during the post-Independence period.

The urban component of the Sikhs also grew significantly by 1951 because many of the displaced persons engaged in non-farm occupations settled in the towns and cities. Nevertheless, the Sikhs remained predominantly a rural community as the inflow to rural areas was much larger.

The displaced Sikhs moved to other parts of India as well. The big cities like Delhi, Bombay, Kanpur, Calcutta and Jamshedpur showed large increases in the Sikh numbers. The western districts of Uttar Pradesh as well as Alwar and Bharatpur districts of Rajasthan received some agriculturist Sikhs. The dispersal was practically to all parts of India, though in small numbers.

Apart from these macro- and meso-regional trends in the distribution of the Sikhs after 1947, significant changes took place in their distributional pattern at local levels. Before partition, the floodplains were inhabited mainly by the Muslims and were practically devoid of the Sikhs. After partition, many of the displaced Sikhs were settled in floodplains evacuated by the Muslims. It was for the first time that many of the floodplains became the abode of the Sikh farmers.

In brief, the political developments during 1941-51 made an extraordinary impact on the redistribution and growth of the Sikhs. Consequent upon the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, the Sikhs were almost completely evacuated from the newly formed West Pakistan, their concentration in the present Punjab area grew significantly making it a Sikh majority region, and they scattered remarkably to other parts of India for both agricultural and non-agricultural purposes.⁸ Their growth during the decade was relatively slow due to unusual mortality caused by communal killings on the eve of partition.

8

Gopal Krishan : "Distribution of the Sikhs outside the Punjab (India)", Indian Geographical Journal, 46 (1971), p. 37.

CHAPTER X

THE SIKHS : 1951-1961

While the decade 1941-51 was full of turmoil with its far reaching impact on distributional pattern of the Sikhs, the decade 1951-61 witnessed their settling in many new areas, within and outside Punjab on the Indian side (Map 48). Their growth rate of 25.1 per cent (Table 10.1) during the decade was slightly higher than the increase rate of India's population by 21.5 per cent. The difference was explained not by any new conversion but by a higher rate of natural increase of the Sikhs. The estimated rate

Table 10.1

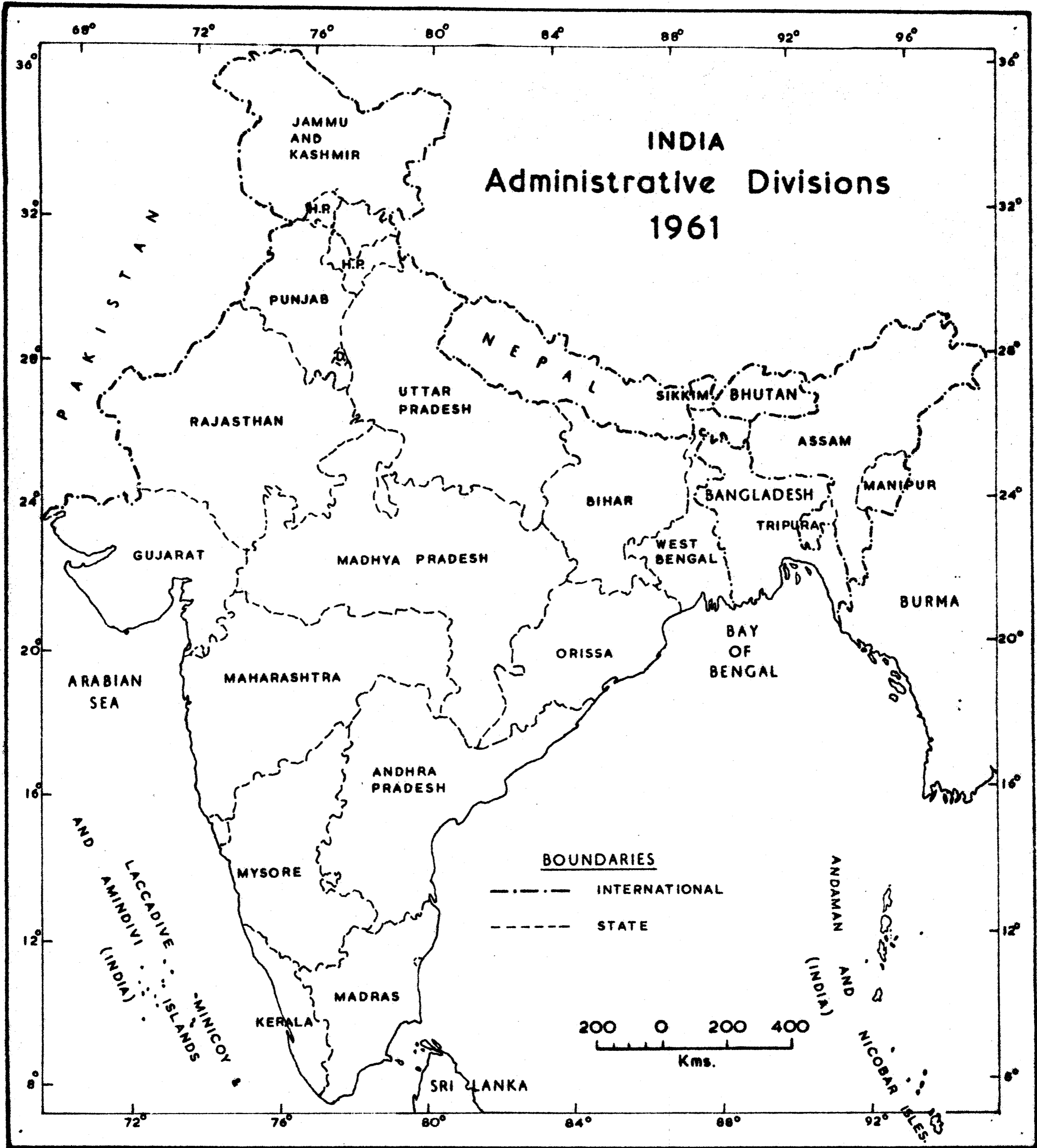
India : 1951-1961

Growth of Population by Religion

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Population by religion in</u>		<u>Percentage</u>
	<u>1951</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>change</u>
Hindu	303,575,474	366,502,878	20.3
Muslim	35,414,284	46,939,357	25.6
Christian	8,392,038	10,726,350	27.4
Sikh	6,219,134	7,845,170	25.1

SOURCE : Census of India, 1961, India, Religion, Paper I, pp. iii-v.

MAP No. 48



of natural increase for this community was around 28 per cent during the decade.¹ Indeed there was some loss in Sikh numbers due to sizable emigration to other countries like the United Kingdom, Canada and East Africa. The emigration was estimated to have involved nearly a quarter million of the Sikhs,² mainly from the three districts of Hoshiarpur, Jullundur and Kapurthala in the East Doab of Punjab.³

The Sikhs migrated from their home state of Punjab not only to foreign lands but also to other states of India. About 220,000 Sikhs moved from Punjab to other parts of the country.⁴ This migration was selective in terms of source as well as destination areas. As a result, striking disparities were observed in the growth pattern of the Sikhs, both within and outside Punjab.

Spatial Patterns

Punjab, as constituted in 1961, was noted for an increase in its Sikhs population from 5,553,918 in 1951 to 6,769,129 in 1961 (Map 49). This gave a growth rate of

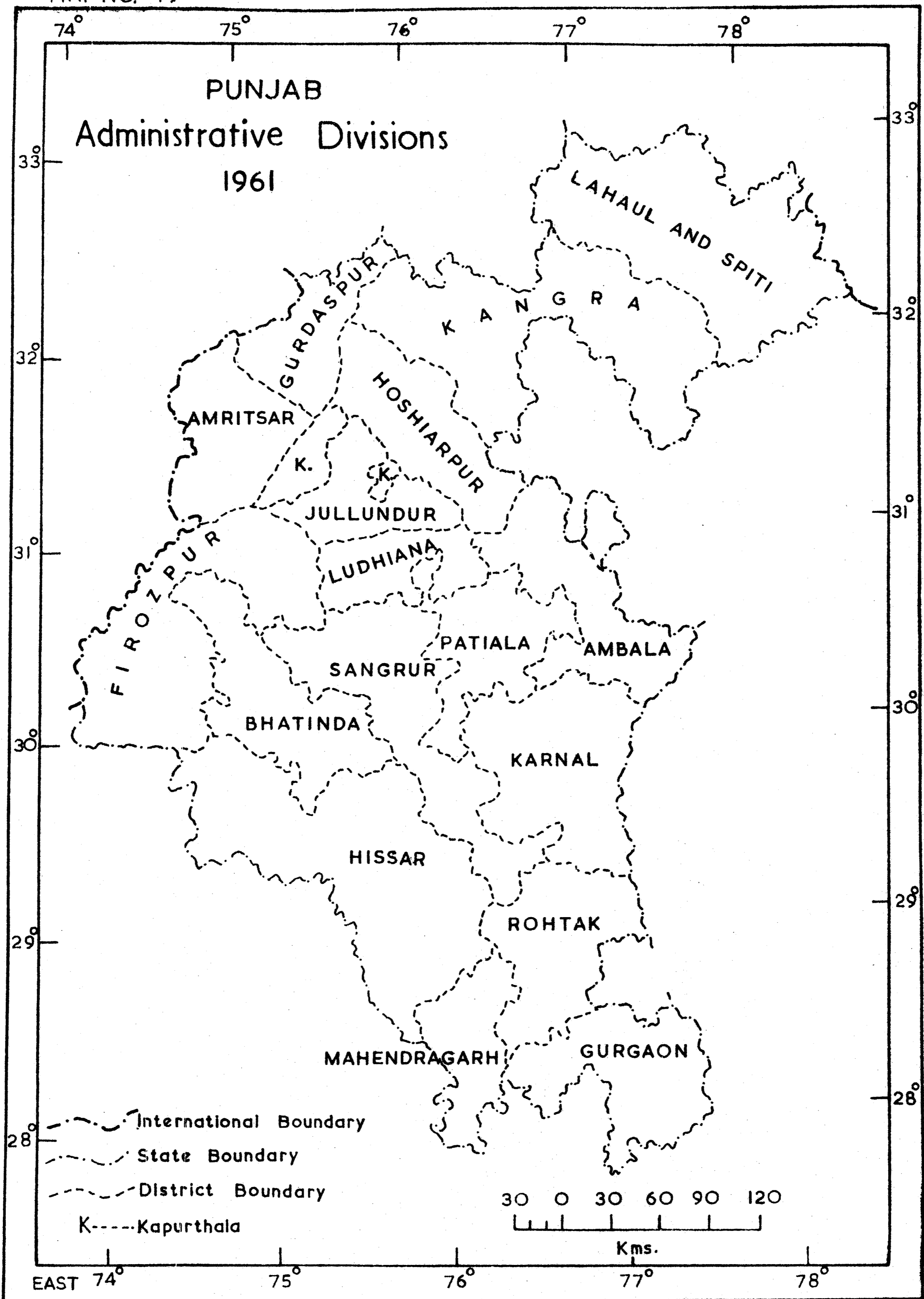
¹ G.S.Gosal: "Religious composition of Punjab's population: changes, 1951-61" Economic Weekly, 17(1965), p. 119.

² Ibid., p. 119.

³ Reshmi Desai : Indian Immigrants in Britain, Oxford University Press, London, 1963, p. 13.

⁴ Gosal : op. cit., p. 119.

MAP NO. 49



21.9 per cent for this community as against an estimated natural increase rate of 28 per cent. There was a substantial outflow of the Sikhs from Punjab as already noted. The increase rate of the Sikhs in Punjab was not uniform. They showed a sluggish growth in all the north Punjab districts (Maps 50 and 51). Large scale out-migration practically neutralised the natural increase of the Sikhs in Amritsar and Gurdaspur district.⁵ It caused a decrease of 9.1 per cent in the Sikh population in Jullundur district (Table 10.2). These were the districts where the density of rural population was high, land holdings were comparatively small, and waterlogging in parts was increasing alarmingly. The gradual deterioration of the farm economy under the pressure of increasing population impelled the peasants to seek economic opportunities elsewhere.⁶ A sizable proportion of the out-migrants went to those areas in Punjab where extensive wastelands were being brought under

⁵ Gopal Krishan: "Regionalism in growth of population in Punjab's border districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur," Geographical Review of India, 30 (1968), p. 13.

⁶ G.S.Gosal and B. S. Ojha: "Pattern of population growth in Punjab, 1951-61" Punjab University Research Bulletin, 15 (1964), p. 60.

Table 10.2
Punjab : 1951-1961
Growth of the Sikh Population by Districts

Districts	Number of the Sikhs in		Percentage change
	1951	1961	
Ferozepur	780,024	936,953	25.3
Amritsar	897,309	903,401	2.6
Bhatinda	520,045	762,677	23.5
Ludhiana	497,419	644,266	29.3
Sangrur	595,834	622,227	16.8
Patiala	414,873	553,438	35.9
Jullundur	569,480	550,232	-9.1
Gurdaspur	354,681	424,190	6.9
Hoshiarpur	283,735	381,965	33.5
Ambala	237,310	340,968	43.6
Kapurthala	187,568	200,117	6.7
Karnal	96,125	177,602	84.7
Hissar	80,395	152,719	89.9
Kangra	18,388	8,856	-51.8
Gurgaon	6,309	8,362	32.5
Rohtak	7,806	6,438	-18.5
Simla	10,658	5,392	-49.4
Mahendragarh	2,615	2,222	-15.0
Lahaul Spiti	5	162	3140.0

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1951, Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh, Bilaspur and Delhi, Vol. VIII, Part II-A, pp. 298-299 and Census of India, 1961, Religion, Paper No. I, pp. 33-35.

Figures calculated from 1951 and 1961 census data after making an allowance for the 1951 census slips burnt at Jullundur on proportionate basis.

cultivation with the introduction of canal or tubewell irrigation. These included the districts of Patiala, Sangrur and Bhatinda in the middle of Punjab, and Hissar, Karnal, and Jind in eastern and southern Punjab.⁷

The districts of Hissar and Karnal were distinctly Hindu majority. The Sikh population in these districts increased by 89.9 and 84.7 per cent respectively during 1951-61. In-migration of the Sikhs to these districts was invariably from the northern districts of the present Punjab. Many of the in-migrants included the displaced persons from West Pakistan who had temporarily settled there to begin with.⁸

The above discussion points to considerable redistribution of the Sikhs within Punjab. They moved across linguistic, religious and regional boundaries in pursuit of their economic welfare. Their growth rate was notably low in the Sikh majority districts of Punjab but impressively high in the Hindu majority districts.⁹

⁷ G.S.Gosal : "Redistribution of population in Punjab during 1951-61" in Ashish Bose (ed.) : Patterns of Population Change in India, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1967, p. 116.

⁸ Swarnjit Mehta : "Patterns of migration in the Bist Doab", Punjab University Research Bulletin, 4 (1973), p. 33.

⁹ G.S.Gosal and A.B.Mukerji : "The religious composition of India's population," Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie, 61 (1970), p. 97.

Growth of the Sikhs outside Punjab

The Sikhs grew by 61.7 per cent in Indian areas outside Punjab (Table 10.3). This increase rate was almost three times of that in their own home state. Sizable outflow of the Sikhs from Punjab explained this. Most of this flow was received by the adjoining states and union territories of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh (Maps 52 and 53).

The Sikhs in Uttar Pradesh increased from 197,612 in 1951 to 283,737 in 1961 giving a growth rate of 43.8 per cent. The greatest increase took place in the terai districts. There was nearly a sevenfold increase in the number of the Sikhs in Nainital district, about sixfold in Pilibhit district and more than fivefold in Kheri district. The growth of the Sikhs in other districts of this tract was also phenomenally rapid. The terai of Uttar Pradesh witnessed a large scale reclamation of its agricultural wastelands in the early fifties. The availability of new cultivable lands attracted streams of the Sikh peasants from the densely populated parts of Punjab. Thus, migration to areas with agricultural potentialities persisted as one of the characteristic features of the Sikhs.

Table 10.3
India : 1951-1961
Growth of the Sikh Population by States

State	Number of the Sikhs in		Absolute change	Percentage change
	1951	1961		
Punjab	5,553,918	6,769,129	1,215,211	21.9
Uttar Pradesh	197,612	283,737	86,125	43.8
Rajasthan	148,229	274,198	125,969	84.9
Delhi	137,096	203,916	66,820	48.7
Maharashtra	41,434	57,617	16,183	39.0
Madhya Pradesh	39,914	65,715	25,801	64.6
Bihar	37,947	44,413	6,466	17.0
West Bengal	30,623	34,184	3,561	11.6
Gujarat	7,029	9,646	2,617	37.2
Andhra Pradesh	5,169	8,663	3,394	65.6
Himachal Pradesh	5,019	8,437	3,418	68.1
Orissa	4,163	5,030	867	20.8
Mysore	3,951	3,287	- 664	-16.8
Assam	3,949	9,686	5,737	145.3
Madras	2,386	2,567	181	7.6
Kerala	308	822	514	166.9
Nagaland	158	255	97	61.4
Andaman and Nicobar	126	241	115	91.3
Manipur	50	523	473	946.0
Tripura	35	49	14	40.0
Sikkim	18	72	54	300.0
North East Frontier Agency	DNA	DNA		
Jammu and Kashmir	DNA	63,069		
Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands	-	-	-	-
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	-
Goa, Daman and Diu	-	-	-	-
Pondicherry	-	14	14	∞
INDIA	6,219,134	7,845,170	1,626,036	25.1

SOURCE : Census of India, 1961, Religion, Paper No. 1, pp. 5-7.

DNA Data Not Available

- Nil

The Sikhs moved also to towns and cities in Uttar Pradesh. Kanpur, Lucknow and Varanasi districts showed an increase of 37.7, 45.7 and 95.8 per cent respectively in their Sikh populations. A large part of this Sikh increase in cities was attributed to migration from towns in western Uttar Pradesh itself. A decrease in the Sikh population in many of the towns in the Ganga-Yamuna doab was distinct. The Sikhs displayed a tendency of migration not only from rural parts of the Punjab to rural terai of Uttar Pradesh but also from towns in Uttar Pradesh to cities in the same state. In 1961, more than a half of the Sikhs in Uttar Pradesh were living in rural areas.

Rajasthan, another state adjoining Punjab, recorded a Sikh population of 274,198 in 1961. This marked an increase of 84.9 per cent over their numbers in 1951. Almost three-fourths of the Sikhs in Rajasthan were confined to the district of Ganganagar. The Sikh migration to this district had started since the closing years of the nineteenth century. The district recorded an increase of 95.2 per cent in its Sikh population during 1951-61. This was the outcome of migration to its agricultural lands newly developed with the help of irrigation from the Bhakra canal system. Alwar and Bharatpur districts also showed a rapid increase

in their Sikh numbers by 76.0 and 43.2 per cent respectively. This was attributed to rehabilitation of displaced persons on the Muslim evacuated lands available in these districts. There was some inflow of Sikhs to cities like Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur. The migrants were mostly displaced persons from West Pakistan and were small in numbers. Almost 90 per cent of the Sikhs in Rajasthan were living in rural areas.

The union territory of Delhi had a Sikh population of 203,916 by 1961. It represented an increase of 48.7 per cent in their numbers since 1951. In marked contrast to what was observed in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, almost all the Sikhs in the Delhi union territory were urban by residence. Delhi acted like a magnet for displaced persons, especially for those hailing from urban places in West Pakistan. These persons found vocation in trade, industry, transport and services. Many of the displaced persons had earlier settled in small towns of Punjab and its neighbouring states but later moved to Delhi.

The Sikh population increased by 68.1 per cent in Himachal Pradesh, north of Punjab. The actual number involved was small; the Sikh population being 5,019 in 1951 and 8,437 in 1961. The increase was largely in towns like Mandi, Bilaspur and Chamba as well as in the rural tracts of Paonta valley in Sirmur district.

The Sikhs recorded an impressive increase in Madhya Pradesh where their numbers grew from 39,914 in 1951 to 65,715 in 1961 signifying an increase by 64.6 per cent. Their growth rate was more than 100 per cent in twenty four out of forty three districts of this state, though the actual numbers involved were small. About two-thirds of the Sikhs in Madhya Pradesh were in urban places. Their migration to cities like Jabalpur, Indore, and Bhilai was for trade, transport and industry. The inflow to rural areas was in response to the availability of new agricultural land in Gwalior, Bhind and Morena districts in northwestern Madhya Pradesh. Thus, the Sikhs undertook even long-distance migration for agriculture.

The urban concentration of the Sikhs was conspicuous in case of Maharashtra. Out of 57,617 Sikhs in the state in 1961, 93 per cent were confined to towns and cities. Bombay alone accounted for more than 40 per cent of the total Sikhs. Pune, Thana, Nagpur, Nasik, Ahmednagar and Nanded were the other cities where the number of the Sikhs was considerable. The state had experienced an increase of 39.0 per cent in its Sikh population during 1951-61. Bombay showed an impressive increase of 75.8 per cent. The migration of the Sikhs to Maharashtra was primarily in response to urban opportunities. Likewise, the Sikh migration to Gujarat was again mainly to cities like Ahmedabad, Baroda and Surat.

Assam, on the eastern end, also offered some incentive to the Sikh migrants. The number of Sikhs grew here from nearly four thousand to about ten thousand. Activities like trade, transport and industry took precedence over others as the main pursuits of the Sikhs.

By contrast, the Sikhs were noted for their sluggish growth in West Bengal and Bihar where they increased by hardly 11.6 and 17.0 per cent respectively. The actual numbers grew from 30,623 to 34,184 in West Bengal and 37,947 to 44,413 in Bihar. These states were under heavy pressure of the influx of displaced persons from the former East Pakistan. Economic avenues for migrants from other regions were limited.

The Sikh migration to south Indian states was small in magnitude and highly localised in distribution. The factor of distance from Punjab and lack of familiarity with the economic opportunities were among the factors behind this trend. Hyderabad district alone had more than 40 per cent of the Sikhs in the whole of south India. Its Sikh population grew by 84 per cent during 1951-61.

Changes in the Distributional Pattern

The distributional map of the Sikhs recorded interesting changes during 1951-61 as a result of their considerable redistribution within Punjab as well as migra

to other parts of India. The outflow emanated from the densely populated areas of the Sikh concentration. It was directed to newly reclaimed agricultural lands, both within and outside Punjab, and to various cities situated on Delhi-Bombay and Delhi-Calcutta railway lines. In a sense, there was some thinning out of the Sikh population from areas of their original concentration and dispersal to areas with new economic opportunities.

The most salient aspect of the Sikh dispersal during this decade was their migration for agriculture. This was a continuation of a tendency which they exhibited during the pre-Independence period also. Destination areas were now different. They moved in large numbers to parts of Malwa region of Punjab, northern and northwestern areas of present Haryana, Ganganagar district of Rajasthan and terai districts of Uttar Pradesh. These were the tracts which had experienced large scale reclamation of agricultural wastelands through leveling of the land, extension of irrigation and clearance of forests.

In addition to the dispersal of the Sikh peasants, there was a large scale movement of the Sikhs to urban areas almost all over the country cutting across linguistic and cultural boundaries. These Sikhs in their new abodes were

engaged in a variety of activities: trade, transport, construction and different kinds of technical and skilled jobs. The Sikhs, for the first time in their history, displayed the maximum areal coverage in terms of dispersal. This was in sharp contrast to their concentration in small part of the Indian subcontinent upto the beginning of the present century.

In nutshell, the great Sikh mobility, both within and outside Punjab and for both agriculture and non-farm pursuits, was the hallmark of the dynamics of the Sikh community during 1951-61. Their share in the population of their own home state declined due to sizable outflow. This decrease was more characteristic of the Sikh majority districts of Punjab.

CHAPTER XI

THE SIKHS : 1961-1971

Without any discernible effort at new conversion and in spite of a continued emigration to other countries in large numbers, the Sikh population in India recorded a big increase by 32.3 per cent during 1961-71. The numerical strength of this community rose from 7,845,098 in 1961 to 10,378,797 in 1971. Its share in the country's population moved up from 1.8 to 1.9 per cent. The comparative growth rates of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians were 23.7, 30.8 and 32.6 per cent respectively (Table 11.1). The Sikhs experienced a characteristically fast increase comparable to that of the Christians.

Table 11.1

India : 1961-1971
Growth of Population by Religion

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Population by religion in</u>		<u>Percentage</u>
	<u>1961</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>change</u>
Hindu	366,393,102	453,292,086	23.7
Muslim	46,938,584	61,417,934	30.8
Christian	10,723,560	14,223,382	32.6
Sikh	7,345,098	10,378,797	32.3

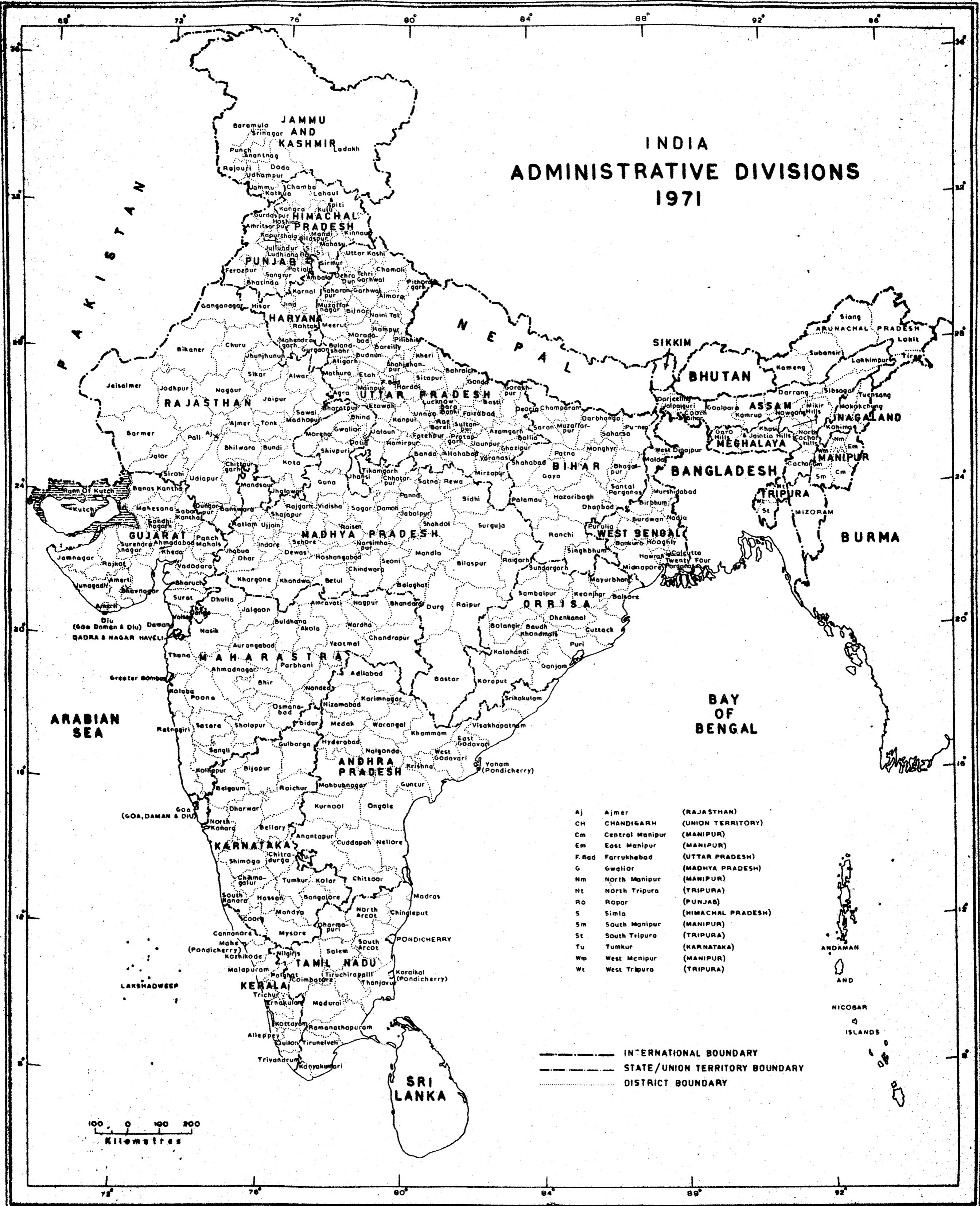
SOURCE : Census of India, 1971, India, Religion, Paper II, pp. 2-3.

The growth rate of the Sikhs was far above the rate of their natural increase estimated at 25.8 per cent during the decade.¹ The excess of the actual over the natural increase was explained by a change in recording of religion by many scheduled caste persons in Punjab. Several of them had declared themselves as Hindu at the 1961 census but as Sikh at the 1971 census. This change in attitude seems to have taken place subsequent to the formation of Punjab as a separate state in 1966 (Map 54).

The census data revealed that the Hindu population in Punjab grew by hardly 8.1 per cent during 1961-71. This rate was far below the rate of their natural increase by about 25 per cent. This difference was explained by declaration of Sikhism as their religion by many Hindu scheduled caste persons. There was a fall in the share of the Hindus in Punjab's population from 42.3 per cent in 1961 to 37.5 per cent in 1971 and a corresponding rise in the

¹ For the period 1961-71, the estimated birth rate for Punjab was 40 per thousand per annum and death rate 14.2 per thousand per annum giving a natural increase rate of 25.8 per cent during the decade. See United Nations : Asian Population Studies Series No. 23, Comparative Study of Population Growth and Agricultural Change : Case Study of India, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 1975, pp. 14-16.

INDIA ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS 1971



Aj	Ajmer	(RAJASTHAN)
CH	CHANDIGARH	(UNION TERRITORY)
Cm	Central Manipur	(MANIPUR)
Em	East Manipur	(MANIPUR)
F. Sad	Farrukhabad	(UTTAR PRADESH)
G	Gwalior	(MADHYA PRADESH)
Nm	North Manipur	(MANIPUR)
Nt	North Tripura	(TRIPURA)
Ro	Ropar	(PUNJAB)
S	Simla	(HIMACHAL PRADESH)
Sm	South Manipur	(MANIPUR)
St	South Tripura	(TRIPURA)
Tu	Tumkur	(KARNATAKA)
Wp	West Manipur	(MANIPUR)
Wt	West Tripura	(TRIPURA)

————— INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
 - - - - - STATE/UNION TERRITORY BOUNDARY
 DISTRICT BOUNDARY

100 0 100 200
 Kilometres

proportion of the Sikhs from 55.5 to 60.2 per cent. But for considerable Sikh migration to other parts of India as well as emigration to other countries like the United Kingdom and Canada, their proportion in the state's population would have been still larger.

Spatial Patterns

As many as 78.6 per cent of the Sikhs in India were concentrated in Punjab in 1971. The remaining 21.4 per cent were scattered in other parts of the country. The growth rate of this community within and outside Punjab was practically the same, being in the proximity of 32 per cent (Table 11.2). The reasons in the two cases were, however, different. While in Punjab the rapid growth of the Sikhs was the outcome of a change in the reporting of religion by many scheduled caste persons, in case of other parts of India the continuing in-migration was the main factor.

The growth rate of the Sikhs varied within Punjab in conformity with their percentage in the total population in various districts. Their growth rate was as high as 60.1 per cent in Ropar district, 37.6 per cent in Amritsar district and 33.3 per cent in Patiala district where they made 55.6, 74.2 and 54.2 per cent respectively of the total population(Maps 55 and 56). They increased by more than

Table 11.2
Punjab : 1971

Growth and Distribution of the Sikh Population

District	Number of the Sikhs in		Percentage change	Sikhs as per cent of total Population
	1961	1971		
Ferozepur	936,953	1,240,218	33.0	65.0
Amritsar	903,401	1,362,291	37.6	74.2
Bhatinda	762,677	1,014,091	30.5	76.9
Ludhiana	644,266	932,712	33.2	65.7
Sangrur	622,227	767,071	30.0	66.9
Patiala	553,438	659,020	33.3	54.2
Jullundur	550,232	653,018	18.8	44.9
Gurdaspur	424,190	550,996	30.2	44.8
Hoshiarpur	381,965	414,323	24.8	39.4
Kapurthala	200,117	263,130	31.5	61.3
Ropar	189,367	303,102	60.1	55.6

SOURCE : Census of India, 1971, India, Religion, Part II, p. 103.

30 per cent in the southwestern districts of Ferozepur, Bhatinda and Sangrur where they accounted for about two-thirds to more than three-fourths of the total population. Their growth was relatively modest in districts like Hoshiarpur (24.8 per cent) and Jullundur (18.8 per cent) where the Hindus were in a majority. Obviously the change in recording of religion was greater in areas where the Sikhs made a large majority.

Some redistribution of the Sikhs within local areas of Punjab was also noted. This was the result of migration from the upland plains to the adjoining floodplains. With agricultural frontiers practically closed in the neighbouring states, Punjab farmers had to look for culturable wastelands within the state. The floodplains of the Sutlej, Beas, Ghaggar and Ravi rivers came to their rescue. With provision of flood protection, extensive lands were made available in these tracts. Migration from the adjacent crowded upland plains followed. Some newly developed land was allotted by the government to the scheduled (low) castes whose numbers grew rapidly in these areas. It may be added that with this occupation of the floodplains comes a practical end to agricultural migration within Punjab.²

² G.S.Gosal : "Population change in Punjab, 1961-71 : a study in spatial patterns" in Leszek A. Kosinski and John W. Webb (eds.) Population at Microscale, Rice Printers, Hamilton (New Zealand), 1976, p. 188.

The Sikhs outside Punjab

There were regional variations in growth rate of the Sikhs outside Punjab too (Maps 57 and 58). The Sikhs increased significantly in those states and union territories where their numbers were small (Table 11.3). Their rate of increase was low in regions of their concentration. It indicates some redistribution of the Sikhs in areas outside Punjab.

The Sikhs grew by only 22.0 per cent in Haryana (from 517,102 in 1961 to 631,048 in 1971) and by 24.4 per cent in Rajasthan (from 274,198 to 341,182). These were the states which had earlier accommodated a large number of the Sikhs on their newly developed agricultural lands. After the separation of Haryana from Punjab in 1966, the former intra-state migration assumed the character of inter-state migration. There was a visible resistance to inter-state migration for agriculture. The same trend was developing in Rajasthan. The availability of agricultural land had also become scarce in both the states. The scope for migration of the Sikhs was curtailed. Likewise, there was an absolute decrease in the number of the Sikhs from 54,146 to 44,914 in the adjoining state of Himachal Pradesh. The transfer of some of the districts of the erstwhile Punjab to this state had a negative impact on the Sikh migration to this area.

Table 11.3
India : 1961 - 1971
Growth of the Sikh Population by States and Union Territories

State / union territory	Number of the Sikhs in		Percentage change	The Sikhs as per cent of total population in	
	1961	1971		1961	1971
Punjab	6,177,997	8,159,972	32.1	55.5	60.2
Haryana	517,102	631,048	22.0	6.8	6.3
Uttar Pradesh	283,737	369,672	30.3	0.4	0.4
Rajasthan	274,198	341,182	24.4	1.4	1.3
Delhi	203,916	291,123	42.8	7.7	7.2
Madhya Pradesh	65,715	98,973	50.6	0.2	0.2
Jammu and Kashmir	63,069	105,873	67.9	1.8	2.3
Maharashtra	57,617	101,762	76.6	0.1	0.2
Himachal Pradesh	54,146	44,914	-17.0	1.9	1.3
Bihar	44,413	61,520	38.5	0.1	0.1
West Bengal	34,184	35,084	2.6	0.1	0.1
Chandigarh	28,321	65,472	131.2	23.6	25.4
Gujarat	9,646	18,233	89.0	*	*
Andhra Pradesh	8,563	12,591	47.0	*	*
Assam	8,353	12,347	47.8	*	0.1
Orissa	5,030	10,204	102.8	*	*
Mysore	3,287	6,830	107.8	*	*
Tamil Nadu	2,567	4,355	69.6	*	*
Meghalaya	1,333	1,262	- 5.3	0.2	0.1
Kerala	822	1,284	56.2	*	*
Manipur	523	1,028	96.6	*	0.1
Nagaland	255	687	169.4	*	0.1
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	241	865	258.9	0.4	0.7
Tripura	49	318	549.0	*	*
Pondicherry	14	51	264.3	*	*
Arunachal Pradesh	DNA	1,255		DNA	0.3
Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands	-	4	∞	-	*
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	-	3	∞	-	*
Goa, Daman and Diu	-	885	∞	-	*
INDIA	7,845,098	10,378,797	32.3	1.8	1.9

SOURCE : Census of India, 1971, India, Religion, Paper II, pp. 94-108.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

- Nil

DNA Data Not Available

Agricultural migration of the Sikhs to Uttar Pradesh continued though at a decelerating rate. The state recorded an increase of 30.3 per cent in its Sikh population from 283,737 to 369,672 during the decade. Most of the increase was confined to the terai districts of Nainital, Pilibhit, Kheri and Shahjahanpur where the Sikh numbers grew by 52.3, 91.1, 121.8 and 136.0 per cent respectively. On the contrary, growth of Sikh population was slow in the towns located in western Uttar Pradesh and in cities like Kanpur, Lucknow, Varanasi, Allahabad, and Agra. The Sikhs had started settling in smaller towns and even in big villages of the region for trade, industry and transport.

The union territory of Delhi continued attracting the Sikhs in growing numbers. This influx comprised of the Sikhs not only from Punjab but also from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Many of them were the displaced persons from Pakistan who had earlier been rehabilitated there. The Sikh in-migration was associated with activities like trade, industry, transport and services. An increase from 203,916 to 291,123 in Sikh numbers in the territory gave a growth rate of 42.8 per cent for this community.

The Sikhs recorded an impressive increase by 76.6 per cent in Maharashtra where their number went up from 57,617 to 101,762 during the decade. They grew by 68.5 per cent

in Bombay city. Other cities like Pune, Nagpur, Thana, Nasik and Ahmednagar also displayed all time high in the growth rate of the Sikhs. The migration field of the Sikhs was indeed widening to distant and dispersed places.

On the contrary, there was only a marginal increase by 2.6 per cent in the Sikh population of West Bengal from 34,184 to 35,084. The Sikhs recorded a decrease in Calcutta city. With its aggravating problems of population pressure and unemployment, West Bengal did not offer much scope for in-migration from other areas. Rather there was a tendency for out-migration from among the non-Bengalis due to unfavourable political climate of the state during the sixties. The Sikhs moved out in large numbers to the adjoining states of Assam, Orissa and Bihar where their numbers recorded an appreciable increase. Most of this migration was directed to towns of all sizes. Towns in Madhya Pradesh also received some in-migrants not only from the cities like Calcutta, Kanpur and Agra but also from Punjab. The state recorded an increase of 50.6 per cent, from 65,715 to 98,973 in its Sikh population during the decade.

The preceding discussion lays bare significant spatial variations in the growth pattern of the Sikhs both within and outside Punjab. In Punjab their numbers grew

Impressively in areas of dominant concentration while outside Punjab an opposite pattern prevailed. The Sikh increase was comparatively slow in all the neighbouring states of Punjab. Several big cities, with a large number of the Sikhs, showed the same trend. On the contrary, the Sikhs showed fast increase in some of the distant states and in many a small town. In spatial terms, all this was virtually opposite of what happened during the last decade. A further dispersal of the Sikhs from the places of their earlier concentration was unmistakable.

Changes in the Distributional Pattern

The preceding discussion was a testimony to the significant changes that took place in the distributional pattern of the Sikhs during 1961-71. Within Punjab, there was some movement of the Sikh farmers from the densely populated upland plains to the adjoining thinly settled floodplains. These floodplains had generally been avoided by the Sikh farmers in earlier decades. The agricultural technology and the crops with which they were associated for centuries were not suited to the conditions prevailing in these riverain tracts. Nor were they used to the reclamatory practices essential for agriculture in these areas. Hence they were always looking to other regions, such as the canal colonies in West Pakistan before Independence

or the newly reclaimed wastelands in Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh after Independence, for new settlement. With a gradual closing of the agricultural frontiers outside Punjab, the Sikh farmers shifted their attention to culturable wastes within Punjab. These wastelands were mainly in the floodplains which by now had been protected against floods. The hard-pressed-for-land farmers of the upland plains moved in large numbers and converted these sparsely populated areas into prosperous agricultural lands. The spatial disparities in distribution and density of population in Punjab were somewhat reduced with this redistribution of population.

Outside Punjab also there was some redistribution of the Sikh population. The tendency was to scatter to smaller towns from cities of their earlier concentration in almost all parts of India. Hardly any district in India remained without Sikh population in 1971.

In brief,

(1) Among the various religious groups in India, the Sikhs recorded one of the highest growth rates during 1961-71. This was attributed not to any deliberate conversion to Sikhism but to change in recording of religion by many scheduled caste persons in Punjab. They had declared themselves as Hindu at the 1961 census but as Sikh in 1971.

(2) The growth of the Sikhs both within and outside Punjab was equally rapid. The reasons, of course, differed. Their impressive increase in Punjab was attributed to declaration of Sikhism as religion by many of the erstwhile Hindu scheduled caste persons and their fast growth outside Punjab was accounted for by migration from Punjab.

(3) The Sikh increase was relatively slow in all the adjoining states of Punjab. The resistance to Sikh inflow, particularly to agricultural wastelands, was growing. Comparatively distant states were receiving more of Sikh in-migrants. This migration was more to towns and cities, particularly in western and central India.

(4) A tendency toward Sikh migration from cities to smaller towns and even to big villages was observed in many areas outside Punjab. This led to further scattering of the Sikhs.

CHAPTER XII

THE SIKHS : 1971

The spatial patterns of growth and redistribution of the Sikh population during the various decades since 1881 have been described and interpreted in the preceding chapters. The present chapter purports to consolidate the entire discussion by way of providing a description of the existing patterns of the distribution of the Sikhs. Indeed these patterns are to be understood in the context of origin and subsequent diffusion of Sikhism largely within the territorial limits of the old Punjab as well as in the light of migration of the Sikhs both within and outside Punjab.

The Sikhs, with a numerical strength of 10,378,797 in 1971, accounted for 1.9 per cent of India's population. They ranked next to the Hindus, Muslims and Christians who made 82.7, 11.2 and 2.6 per cent of the country's population respectively. They evidently constituted a minority community.

Nevertheless the Sikhs made a majority in their home state of Punjab where they accounted for 60.2 per cent of the total population. Punjab was the only Sikh majority state of India in 1971 (Table 12.1). As many as 78.6 per cent of all Sikhs in India were confined to this state alone (Table 12.2). Nearly the same proportion

Table 12.1
India: 1971

**Religious Composition of Population
by States and Union Territories**

State/union territory	Percentage of the				
	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Others in total population
Andhra Pradesh	87.6	8.1	4.2	*	0.1
Assam	71.0	24.0	4.6	0.1	0.3
Bihar	83.4	13.5	1.1	0.1	0.2
Gujarat	69.3	8.4	0.4	0.1	1.8
Haryana	89.2	4.0	0.1	6.3	0.4
Himachal Pradesh	96.1	1.4	0.1	1.3	1.1
Jammu and Kashmir	30.4	65.8	0.1	2.3	1.4
Kerala	59.4	19.5	21.0	*	0.1
Madhya Pradesh	93.7	4.3	0.7	0.2	1.1
Maharashtra	81.9	8.4	1.4	0.2	8.1
Manipur	58.9	6.6	26.0	0.1	8.4
Meghalaya	18.5	2.6	46.9	0.1	31.9
Mysore	86.4	10.6	2.1	*	0.9
Nagaland	11.3	0.6	66.7	0.1	21.3
Orissa	96.2	1.5	1.7	*	0.6
Punjab	37.5	0.8	1.2	60.2	0.3
Rajasthan	89.6	6.9	0.1	1.3	2.1
Tamil Nadu	89.0	5.1	5.7	*	0.2
Tripura	89.5	6.7	1.0	*	2.8
Uttar Pradesh	83.7	15.5	0.1	0.4	0.3
West Bengal	78.1	20.4	0.6	0.1	0.8
Andaman and Nicobar	60.9	10.1	26.3	0.7	2.0
Arunachal Pradesh	21.9	0.2	0.8	0.3	76.8
Chandigarh	71.7	1.4	0.9	25.4	0.6
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	95.8	1.0	2.9	*	0.3
Delhi	83.8	6.5	1.1	7.1	1.5
Goa, Daman and Diu	64.2	3.7	31.7	0.1	0.3
Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands	4.8	94.4	0.7	*	0.1
Pondicherry	84.9	6.2	8.6	*	0.3
INDIA	82.7	11.2	2.6	1.9	1.6

SOURCE : Census of India, 1971, India, Religion, Paper II, p. 6.

* Less than 0.1 per cent.

Table 12.2
India, 1971

The Sikh Population by States and Union Territories

State/union territory	Number of the Sikhs	Percentage in the S kh population in India
Punjab	8,159,972	78.6
Haryana	631,048	6.1
Uttar Pradesh	369,672	3.6
Rajasthan	341,182	3.3
Delhi	291,123	2.8
Jammu and Kashmir	105,873	1.0
Maharashtra	101,762	0.9
Madhya Pradesh	98,973	0.9
Chandigarh	65,472	0.6
Bihar	61,520	0.6
Himachal Pradesh	44,914	0.4
West Bengal	35,084	0.3
Gujarat	18,233	0.2
Andhra Pradesh	12,591	0.1
Assam	12,347	0.1
Orissa	10,204	0.1
Mysore	6,830	0.1
Tamil Nadu	4,355	*
Kerala	1,284	*
Meghalaya	1,262	*
Arunachal Pradesh	1,255	*
Manipur	1,028	*
Goa, Daman and Diu	885	*
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	865	*
Nagaland	687	*
Tripura	318	*
Pondicherry	51	*
Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands	4	*
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	3	*
INDIA	10,378,797	100.0

SOURCE : Census of India, 1971, India, Religion, Paper II, p. 8.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

of the Sikhs were living in this area in 1881. There was, however, a vast change in the full context of the two situations. While the Sikhs made less than one-fifth of the region's population in 1881, their proportion had risen to over three-fifths by 1971. Almost a complete exodus of the Muslims to West Pakistan and their replacement by displaced non-Muslims from there at the time of Independence was the chief factor behind this transformation of religious composition of Punjab. In spatial terms, the Sikhs were in majority in eight out of eleven districts (Table 12.3). At the level of tahsils, they enjoyed

Table 12.3

Punjab: 1971

Religious Composition of Population by Districts

District	Percentage of the				
	Sikhs	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Others in total population
Bhatinda	76.9	22.6	0.3	0.1	0.1
Amritsar	74.2	23.4	0.2	2.0	0.2
Sangrur	66.9	27.1	5.6	0.1	0.3
Ludhiana	65.7	33.2	0.4	0.2	0.5
Ferozepur	65.1	33.6	0.3	0.8	0.2
Kapurthala	61.3	38.0	0.2	0.4	0.1
Ropar	55.6	43.5	0.6	0.2	0.1
Patiala	54.2	44.4	1.1	0.1	0.2
Jullundur	44.9	53.9	0.2	0.7	0.3
Gurdaspur	44.8	48.0	0.6	6.8	0.1
Hoshiarpur	39.4	59.2	0.3	0.8	0.3

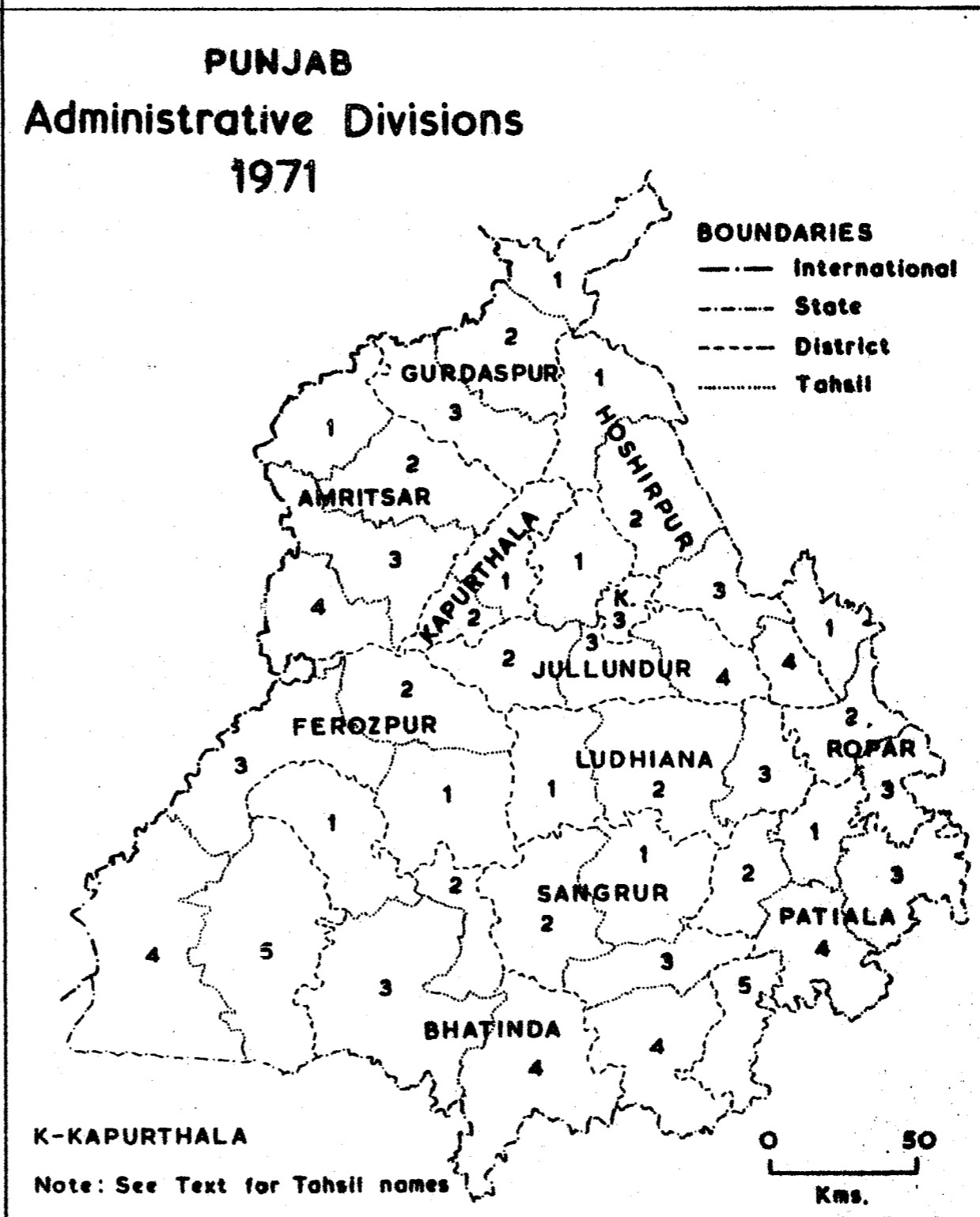
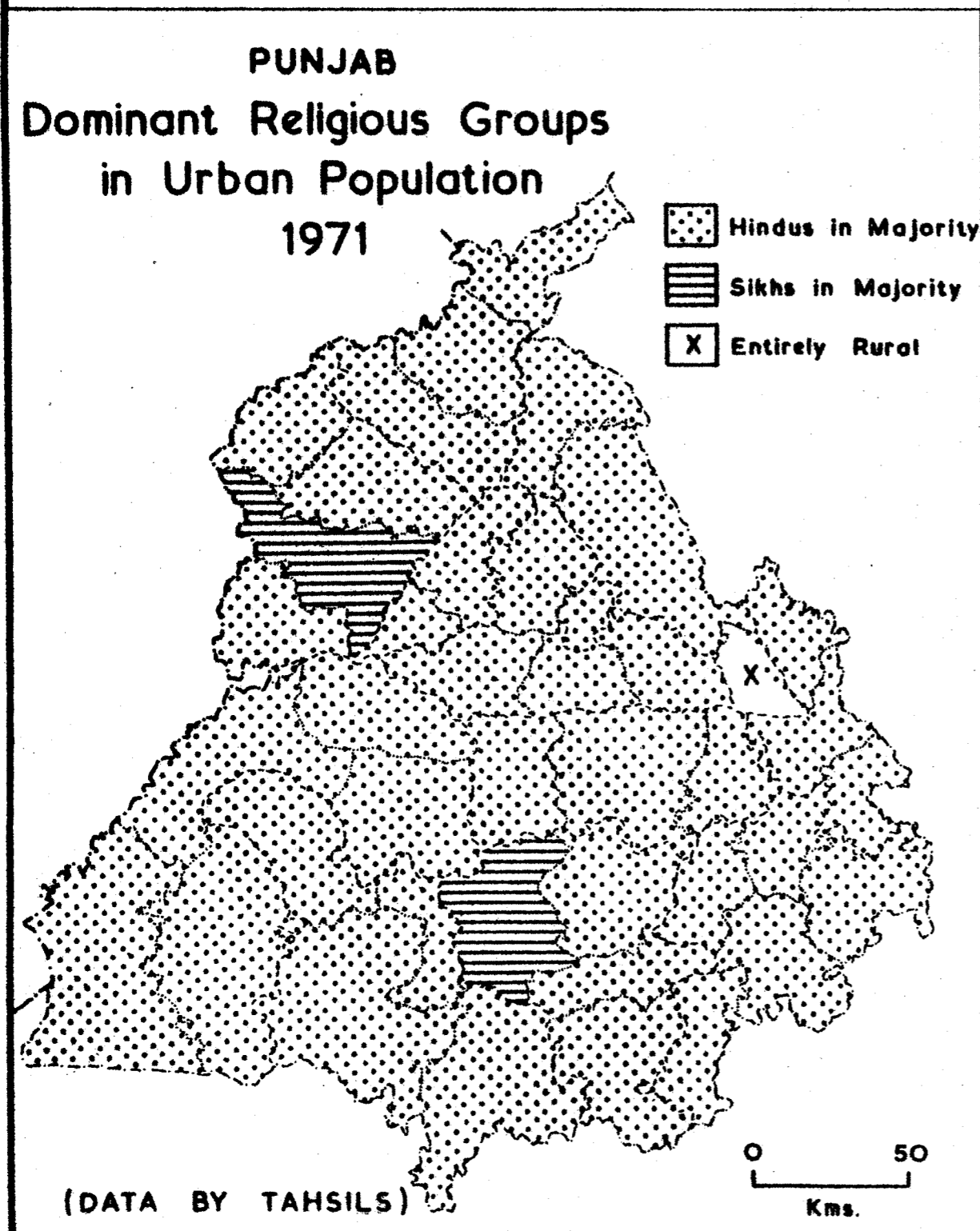
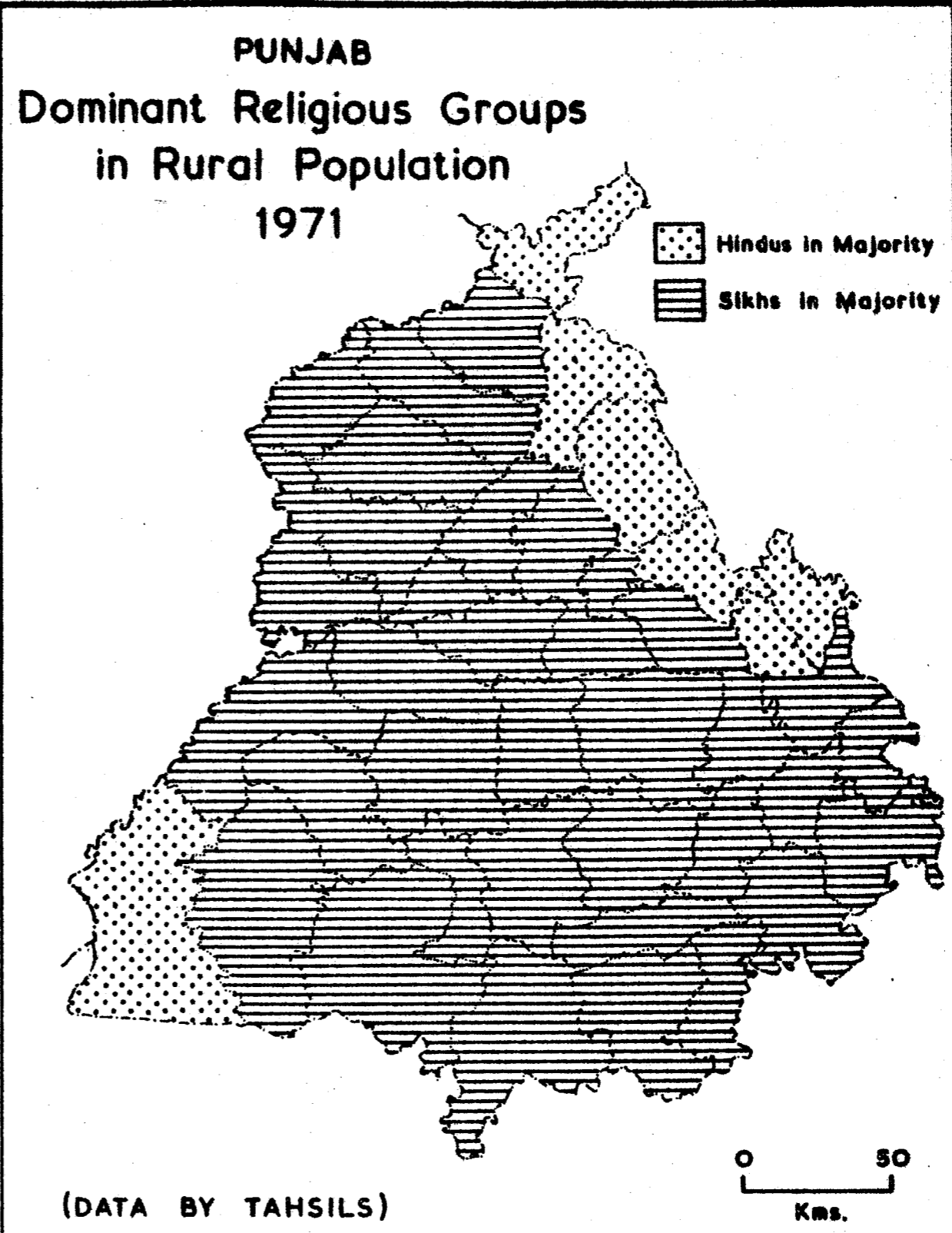
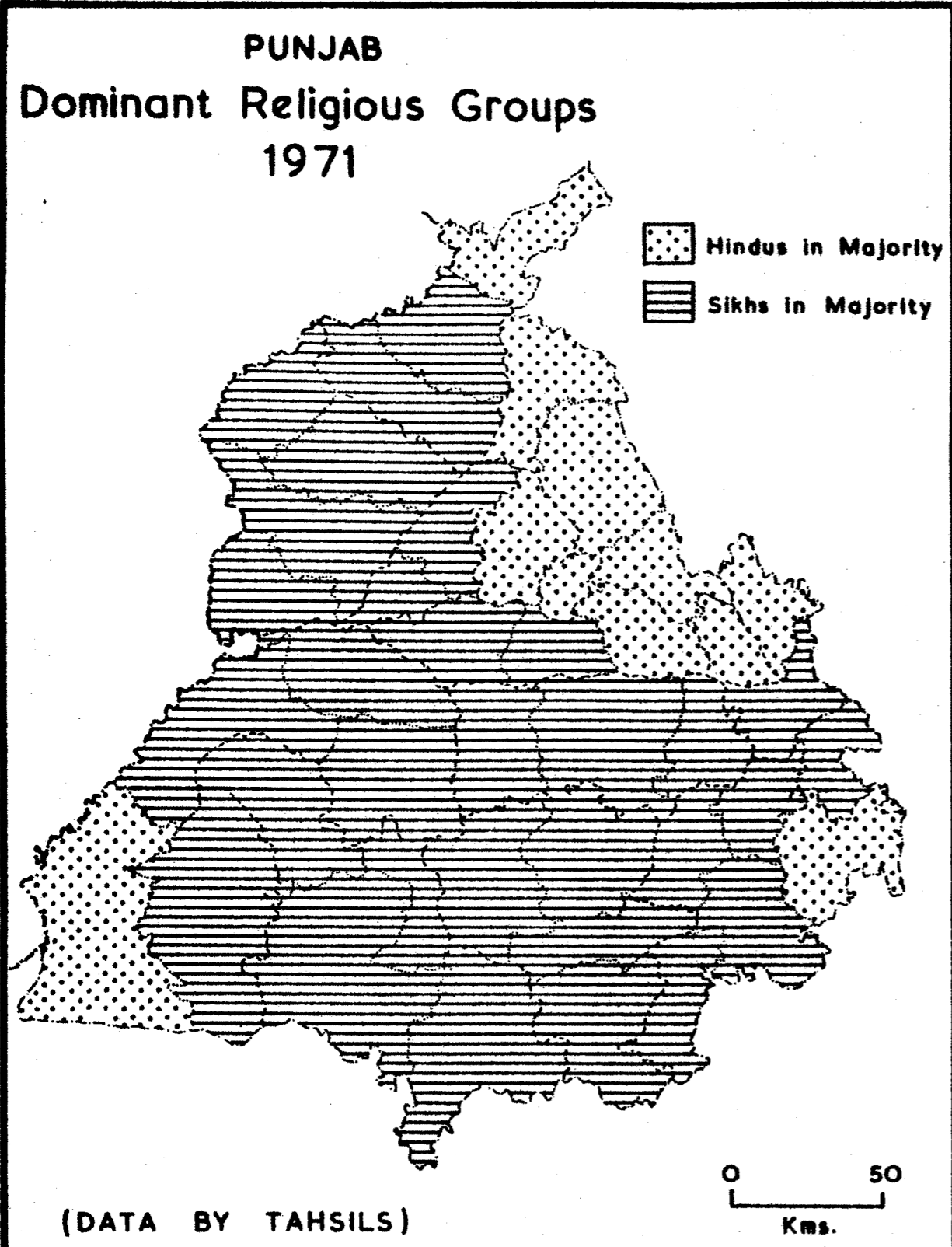
SOURCE : Census of India, 1971, India, Religion, Paper II, p. 103.

majority in thirty one out of forty two units in all (Map 59). The remaining eleven tahsils with Hindu majority were located mainly in the northeastern hilly and foothill zone. The proportion of the Sikhs in total population increased as one moved from this northern region to the southwest.

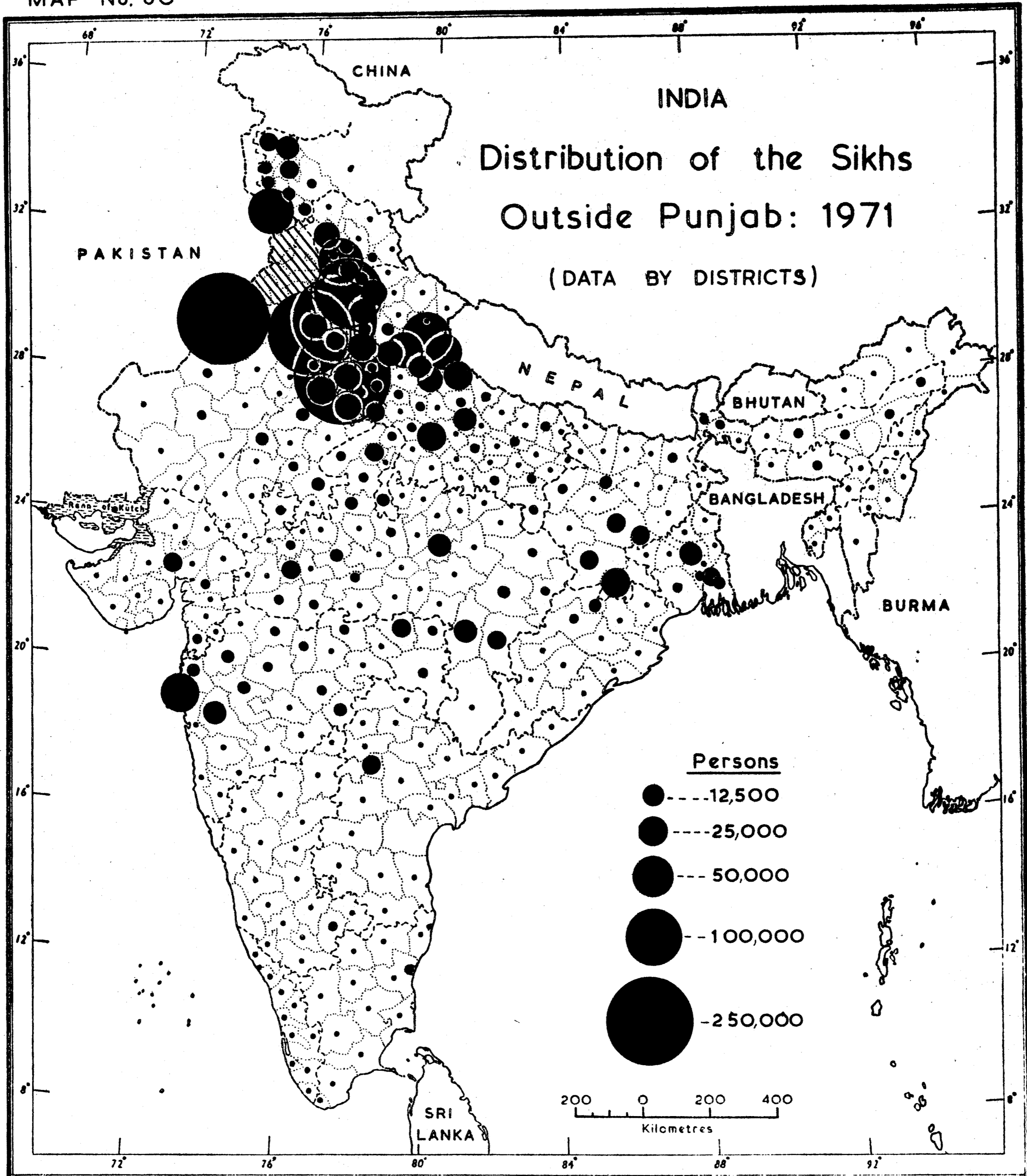
The Sikhs were predominantly rural by residence. No less than 87.9 per cent of them were living in villages. They had a majority in rural parts of as many as thirty five tahsils. By contrast, they were in majority in only ten towns out of 108 towns in the state. A characteristic feature of Punjab's population has been the rural predominance of the Sikhs and the urban dominance of the Hindus in consonance with their vocational heritage. The Sikhs showed a marked concentration in small towns with a pronounced agricultural base and in towns associated with the Sikh religion and history.

The Sikhs outside Punjab

As many as 2.2 million Sikhs or 21.4 per cent of the total were recorded as living outside their home state in 1971 (Map 60). This figure was exceptionally high for any population group in India where only 3.2 per cent of the population was found residing outside the state of their birth. This was a testimony to a tendency among the



MAP No. 60



Sikhs to migrate in search of new economic pastures. They moved to newly developed areas for trade, transport and industry. About 55 per cent of the Sikhs outside Punjab were rural and the remaining urban by residence.

The rural concentration of the Sikhs outside Punjab was characteristic mainly of the adjoining states and union territories. These included Ambala, Karnal, Jind and Hissar districts in Haryana, Kangra district in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu district in Jammu and Kashmir, Ganganagar, Alwar and Bharatpur districts in Rajasthan, and Nainital, Rampur, Pilibhit, Kheri, Bijnor and Shahjahanpur districts in Uttar Pradesh. The Sikh migration on a large scale to these areas was partly historic as in the case of Ambala, Kangra and Jammu districts and partly recent as in the case of Karnal, Hissar, and Nainital districts. The names of the districts located outside Punjab and having a Sikh population of at least 10,000 in their rural parts are given in Table 12.4.

44.4 per cent of the Sikhs outside Punjab were concentrated in towns and cities. They were noted for their prominence as taxi drivers in Calcutta, mechanics in Jamshedpur and transport operators in Kanpur. A large number of them were government employees in Delhi and Chandigarh. There was a fair representation of the Sikhs

Table 12.4
India, 1971

Districts in States/Union Territories other than Punjab with more than 10,000 Sikhs in Rural Areas

District	State/union territory	Number of the Sikhs
Ganganagar	Rajasthan	250,077
Hissar	Haryana	204,656
Karnal	Haryana	200,771
Ambala	Haryana	90,647
Nainital	Uttar Pradesh	65,163
Jammu	Jammu and Kashmir	40,896
Rampur	Uttar Pradesh	30,713
Pilibhit	Uttar Pradesh	30,300
Kheri	Uttar Pradesh	27,536
Alwar	Rajasthan	25,459
Kangra	Himachal Pradesh	16,642
Bijnor	Uttar Pradesh	15,642
Bharatpur	Rajasthan	15,462
Shahjahanpur	Uttar Pradesh	13,445
Jind	Haryana	12,876
Chandigarh	Chandigarh	10,168

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1971, India, Religion, Paper II, pp. 42-74.

in timber trade in Jabalpur and cloth business in Bangalore. The environs of Hyderabad had a number of the Sikhs in grape cultivation and surroundings of Jamshedpur had many of them in dairying. In general, the Sikhs specialised in taxi service, truck driving, dhaba (indigenous restaurant) running and business in cloth, auto-spares and liquor in many of the cities in India. The names of cities located outside Punjab and having a Sikh population of at least 5000 are given in Table 12.5

In order to analyse the distribution of the Sikhs outside Punjab, annules were drawn around the boundary of Punjab (Map 61). The first annule covered all the districts touching the boundary of the state. The second annule enclosed the districts adjoining those in the first annule. The third annule was composed of the districts adjoining those in the second annule and so on. Calculations were made to find out the number and proportion of the Sikhs in each annule. Separate calculations were done for the total, rural and urban populations. The results so obtained are presented in Table 12.6.

It was learnt that 43.9 per cent of the Sikhs outside Punjab were concentrated in the districts just adjoining Punjab. This percentage was 64.5 in case of the Sikhs living in rural areas. The position was different

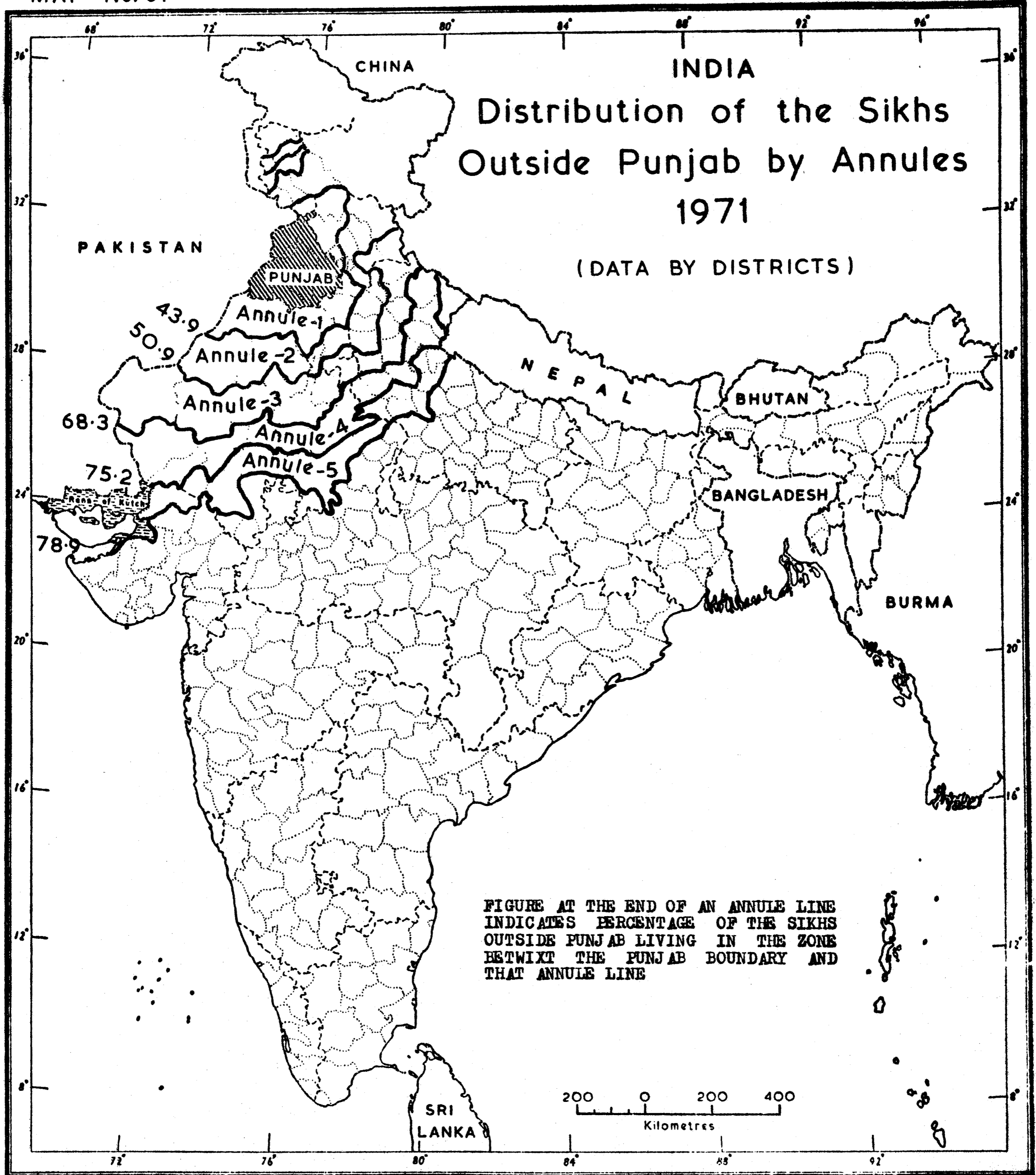


Table 12.5
India, 1971

Cities in States/Union Territories other than Punjab with more than 5,000 Sikhs

<u>Name of the city</u>	<u>State/union territory</u>	<u>Number of the Sikhs</u>
Delhi	Delhi	266,710
Chandigarh	Chandigarh	51,542
Greater Bombay	Maharashtra	42,862
Kanpur	Uttar Pradesh	24,620
Jamshedpur	Bihar	19,484
New Delhi	Delhi	15,552
Jammu	Jammu and Kashmir	12,076
Calcutta	West Bengal	11,323
Ambala Cantt	Haryana	10,708
Dehra Dun	Uttar Pradesh	10,600
Lucknow	Uttar Pradesh	9,507
Indore	Madhya Pradesh	8,062
Jabalpur	Madhya Pradesh	7,463
Agra	Uttar Pradesh	6,537
Bhilainagar	Madhya Pradesh	6,063
Srinagar	Jammu and Kashmir	5,576

SOURCE : Census of India, 1971, India, Religion, Paper II, pp. 82-91.

Table 12.6
India : 1971
The Sikh Population outside Punjab by Annule

Annule number	Percentage in		
	Total population	Rural population	Urban population
1	43.9	64.5	18.2
2	7.0	5.9	8.4
3	17.4	5.6	32.1
4	6.9	10.2	2.9
5	3.7	4.7	2.6
6	3.6	3.5	3.8
7	1.8	0.4	3.6
8	0.8	0.3	1.5
9	2.0	0.6	3.8
10	1.5	0.9	2.3
11	4.6	1.1	9.0
12	2.7	0.7	5.3
13	1.2	0.5	2.1
14	0.4	0.2	0.7
15	0.8	0.2	1.6
16	0.3	0.1	0.5
17	0.2	0.1	0.4
18	0.2	0.2	0.2
19	0.3	0.2	0.5
20	*	*	*

SOURCE : Calculated from Census of India, 1971, India, Religion, Paper II, pp.34-79.

* Less than 0.1 per cent

in respect of urban population as the first annule accounted for only 18.2 per cent of the urban Sikh population outside Punjab. The area betwixt the Punjab boundary and the third annule line, which enclosed the district of Delhi also, had more than two-thirds of the Sikhs outside Punjab. This proportion was over three-fourths in case of rural areas and nearly three-fifths in respect of urban areas. It showed that most of the Sikh migration was to neighbouring areas, notwithstanding their considerable scattering to distant places. Beyond Delhi, the Sikh concentration became progressively urban with increasing distance from Punjab.

In brief, the distribution map of the Sikhs has undergone remarkable change since 1881 when they were confined mainly to the old Punjab. By 1971, they were widely distributed throughout India, their continued concentration in Punjab notwithstanding. In terms of spatial spread over the entire country, the Sikhs outdid the Muslims and the Christians who were otherwise more numerous than the Sikhs.

SUMMING UP

The present study is a geographic appraisal of the changes in the distributional pattern of the Sikhs during 1881-1971. The evolution and spread of Sikhism since its inception till 1881 has also been examined briefly. Consistent with the philosophy of geography, a spatial analysis of the diffusion of a religious community was attempted.

The study was based primarily on the available census data on the Sikhs for all the censuses since 1881. These data were mapped by suitable cartographic techniques. Patterns emerging on the maps were described and interpreted with the help of published material on the matter. Some information collected through two questionnaires pertaining to the Sikh migration was also put in service. The first questionnaire sought information from source areas of the Sikh migration in Punjab and the second from their destination areas outside Punjab. The information on conversion to Sikhism, within and outside Punjab, was gathered largely from the historical accounts of the Sikh community.

The study was somewhat constrained by the non-availability of all the requisite data. The decennial census data on the Sikhs for the years 1881 to 1941 were available only by provinces and princely states and not by districts for the country as a whole. Happily for the Punjab, where more than 90 per cent of the Sikhs were concentrated, these

data were available at district level also. Districtwise data for India could also be obtained for all the three post-Independence censuses of 1951, 1961 and 1971. This ensured the depth of analysis that this study aimed to accomplish. The changes in administrative boundaries of the provinces, states and districts from time to time also introduced some difficulties. Necessary adjustments were made in each case to make the data comparable. Above all, the definition of a Sikh itself was subject to change at some censuses. Such definitional alterations had to be kept in view while tracing the growth of this community. In any case, the census definition of a Sikh has remained constant since 1911 and as such the problem was confined only to the period preceding this year.

With a numerical strength of nearly 10.4 million in 1971, the Sikhs accounted for 1.9 per cent of India's total population. They ranked next to the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians who made 82.7, 11.2 and 2.6 per cent of the country's population respectively. Nevertheless they made a majority in their home state of Punjab where they formed 60.2 per cent of the total population. As many as 2.2 million Sikhs or 21.4 per cent of the total were recorded as living outside their home state. This figure was exceptionally high for any population group in India where only 3.2 per cent of the population was found residing outside the state of their

birth. The Sikhs were found in practically all parts of India. It was a measure of their great mobility in pursuit of economic ventures in any type of area.

The existing distributional pattern of the Sikhs in India is to be understood in the context of a number of phases in the history of evolution, growth and redistribution of this religious community. The initial phase coincided with the life span of the ten Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. It covered a period of over two hundred years from the closing years of the fifteenth century to the early years of the eighteenth century. Sikhism found its original hearth in the transitional zone between the Muslim predominant area to the west and the Hindu dominant area to the east and south. This was inherent in the birth of this religion which initially intended to be a bridge between Hinduism and Islam. The actual course of events was, of course, different. The political developments of that time brought the Sikhs closer to the Hindus and in direct confrontation with the Muslim rulers. The conversion to Sikhism was largely from amongst the Hindus. The bulk of converts were the Jat peasants of the Majha, Bist Doab and Malwa tracts of the Punjab. They were considered low in caste hierarchy but found an elevation in their social status by conversion to the new faith. The Sikh denial of caste, its emphasis on social equality and grant of freedom from

superstitions were the salient features of the new religion that held a great attraction for the peasantry and low castes.

For about a hundred years after the death of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708, there was a virtual stagnation of Sikhism. A revival commenced with Ranjit Singh coming into power at Lahore in 1799. He established a secular state but the very fact that he was a Sikh lent encouragement to the adoption of Sikhism in new areas of North West Frontier Province, Kashmir and the western parts of the Punjab. He was also instrumental in sending his army units to Hyderabad at the request of its Nizam. The place ultimately grew into a nucleus of the Sikh concentration far removed from their homeland.

It was during the British rule over the Punjab since 1849 that redistribution of the Sikhs took place on a significant scale. The British, unlike many of the previous Muslim rulers, did not persecute the Sikhs. The political unity imparted by them to India and the introduction of rail-roads throughout the country from the middle of the nineteenth century onward gave the Sikhs an opportunity to migrate to various areas. In view of the recognition of the Sikhs as fine cultivators and brave soldiers, the British gave them preference in colonisation of agricultural wastelands as well as in recruitment in army. This policy of the rulers combined with the adventurous spirit of the Sikhs made this community move to new economic pastures, both within and outside the Punjab.

The first massive migration of the Sikhs from the densely populated eastern districts to the western districts of the Punjab took place during the closing years of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. This was in response to the opening of canal colonies providing fresh tracts of cultivable land enjoying the facility of irrigation, large as well as compact holdings, and a network of market linked roads. Streams of able bodied Sikh peasants, retired army personnel and other categories of awardees moved into these colonies. The lure of fresh agricultural land proved irresistible for this hard-pressed-for-land community concentrated in the central parts of the Punjab.

Simultaneous with this westward shift of the Sikh population was a phenomenal rise in the Sikh numbers due to new conversion. This happened under the impact of proselytising activities of the Sikh organisations like the Singh Sabha and the Akali Dal. Conversion to Sikhism took place mainly from low castes like Chuhra, Chamara and Jhiwars and small land owning castes, like Sainia and Kamboha. Conversion from amongst the Jat peasants and Aroza traders also continued. Apart from the common factor of pure faith, considerations behind conversion varied in each case. The low castes converted with a view to gaining a higher social status even without any economic gain whatsoever. Their association with higher castes like the Jats, in whose fields

they worked as labourers, was an ancillary factor behind their conversion. The small land owning castes were also motivated by practically the same consideration of raising their social status in relation to the high caste Sikhs. The conversion of Jats and Aroras to Sikhism was with a view to getting some benefits in terms of allotment of land in canal colonies, recruitment in army or employment in government services. Since the new conversion was mainly in the areas where the Sikhs were already in large numbers, their degree of concentration increased in situ. Some new nuclei of the Sikh concentration as a result of conversion did emerge in the peripheral areas.

A gradual rise in the rate of natural increase also made a significant contribution to the fast growth of the Sikhs since 1921. This was in line with the demographic dynamics of India's population in general. The years preceding 1921 were marked by stagnant population growth due to high death rates cancelling out high birth rates. The post-1921 period witnessed a continuous decline in death rate with birth rate staying on high. From a situation of a virtual parity between birth and death rates in 1921, the gap between the two widened to around 25 per thousand in 1971.

The economic and social developments during and intervening the World Wars I and II had a bearing on the dispersal of the Sikhs to different parts of the Indian sub-continent. The stationing of the Sikh soldiers at various cantonments in north India led to their considerable scattering.

The new opportunities of employment in fast growing industrial cities, especially on the Lahore-Calcutta railway line, attracted a number of the Sikhs. The availability of some cultivable wastelands in parts of Rajputana states and the United Province of Agra and Oudh was yet another factor causing the Sikh migration. The previous trend of westward migration of the Sikhs to the canal colonies continued but at the same time their eastward movement to other regions was assuming greater importance.

The partition of the Indian sub-continent into India and Pakistan in 1947 brought in dramatic changes in the distributional pattern of the Sikhs. The areas that fell in Pakistan became suddenly and almost completely devoid of any Sikh population. This was the result of an en masse migration of the non-Muslims, including the Sikhs, to the Indian side. The canal colonies of western Punjab that attracted streams of the Sikh migrants from eastern Punjab during the preceding decades were bereft of the Sikh population. This in a way completed the circle. The Sikhs returned to those Indian areas from where they had migrated earlier. The western and northwestern parts of the Punjab, which were generally without the Sikh population before 1881, again became empty of persons belonging to this religious community.

The displacement of the non-Muslims was accompanied by an exodus of the Muslims from many parts of India,

particularly the Indian Punjab. The non-Muslim displaced persons from Pakistan were rehabilitated on the lands evacuated by the Muslims. Since the Sikh inflow was accommodated in the districts falling in present Punjab, this region acquired a Sikh majority for the first time in its history. This development had a far reaching effect on the political geography of India. The case for a separate linguistic state of Punjab was strengthened by the densification of the Sikh concentration in this area.

Simultaneously there was considerable scattering of the displaced Sikhs to other parts of India. They settled in several urban places in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Their influx into cities like Delhi, Bombay and Kanpur was notable. The Sikhs made significant contribution to development of trade, industry and transport in areas of their new settlement.

The post-Independence era witnessed further redistribution of the Sikhs for economic reasons rather for political compulsions as at the time of partition. The most salient aspect of their dispersal was migration for agriculture. This was a continuation of a tendency which they exhibited during the pre-Independence period also. The destination areas were now different while the source areas remained the same densely populated parts of Punjab. The Sikhs moved in large numbers to Malwa within Punjab, northern and

northwestern parts of Haryana, Ganganagar district in Rajasthan and the terai districts of Uttar Pradesh. These were the tracts which had experienced large scale reclamation of agricultural wastes through levelling of the land, extension of irrigation and clearance of forests.

In addition to this dispersal of the Sikhs for agriculture, there was considerable migration to urban places almost all over the country cutting across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Many of the cities situated on Delhi-Bombay and Delhi-Calcutta railway lines acquired sizable number of the Sikhs. In their new urban abodes, the Sikhs were engaged in a variety of activities like taxi driving, dhaba (indigenous restaurant) running and business in cloth, auto-spares and liquor.

The reorganisation of Punjab on linguistic lines in 1966 had its own bearing on the Sikh migration. They became unwelcome settlers for agriculture in the neighbouring states of Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh to where they had moved in impressive numbers after Independence. With a gradual closing of the agricultural frontiers outside Punjab, the Sikh farmers started looking for any culturable wastes within Punjab. These wastelands were mainly in the floodplain which by now had been protected against floods. The land hungry farmers of the upland plains moved in large numbers

and converted these sparsely populated areas into prosperous agricultural tracts. Outside Punjab also there was some further scattering of the Sikh population. The tendency was to move to smaller towns or even villages from cities of their earlier concentration in almost all parts of India. Hardly any district in India remained without the Sikh population in 1971. Comparatively distant states were receiving more of the Sikh in-migrants than the states neighbouring Punjab.

The spatial manifestation of all the aforesaid factors of conversion, migration and natural increase of the Sikh population is their present distributional pattern. The processes referred to above indicate how the Sikhs have been led into a spatially much concentrated and yet a widely dispersed community.

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- I. General Studies on Religion and Religious Communities,
- II. Studies on Religion and Religious Communities in India,
- III. Studies on Sikh History and Religion,
- IV. Studies on India and Punjab.

The following style has been adopted in listing an entry :

a) Books

Name of the author (s)
Title of the book (underlined)
Name of the publisher, place and
year of publication.

b) Research Articles

Name of the author (s)
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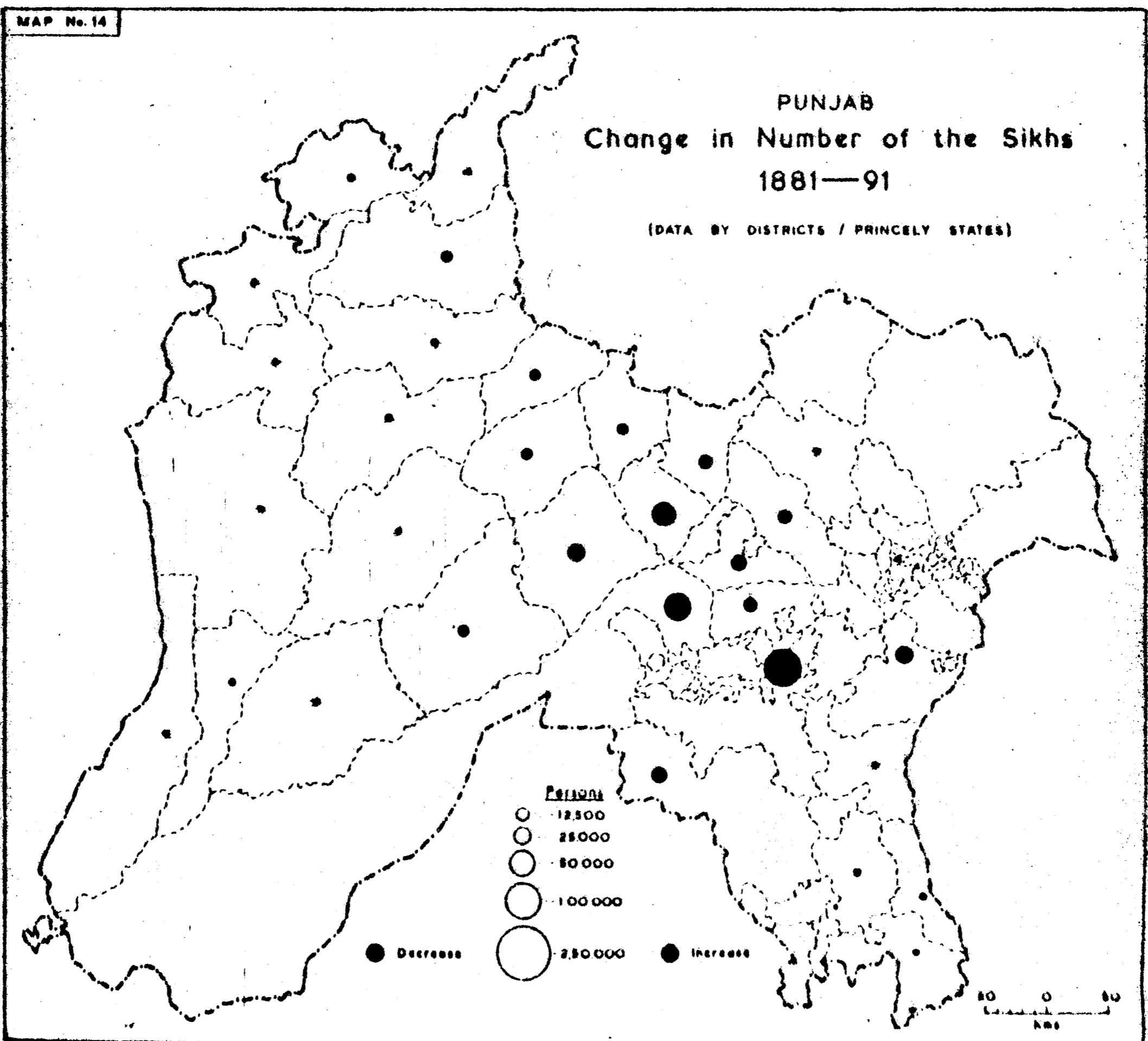
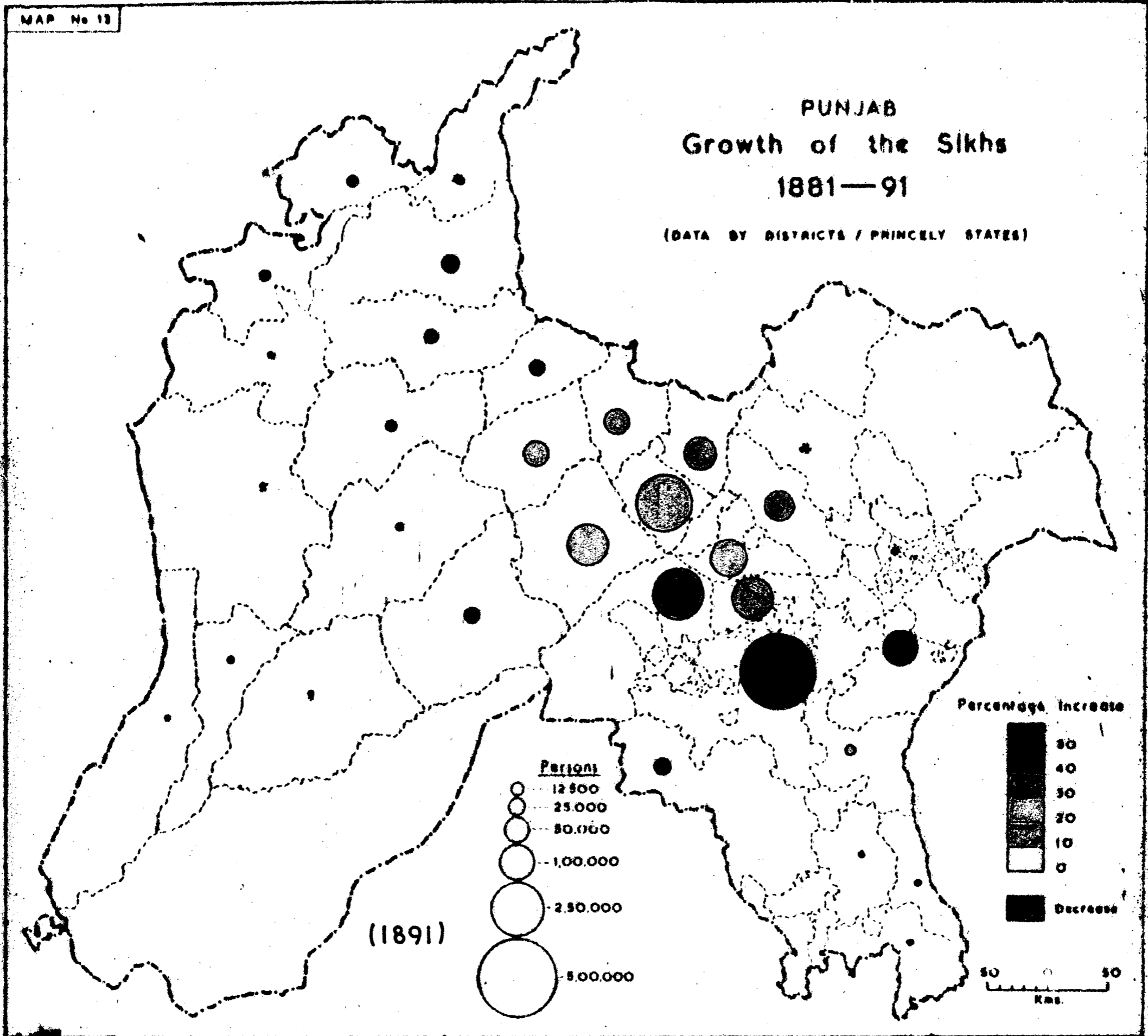
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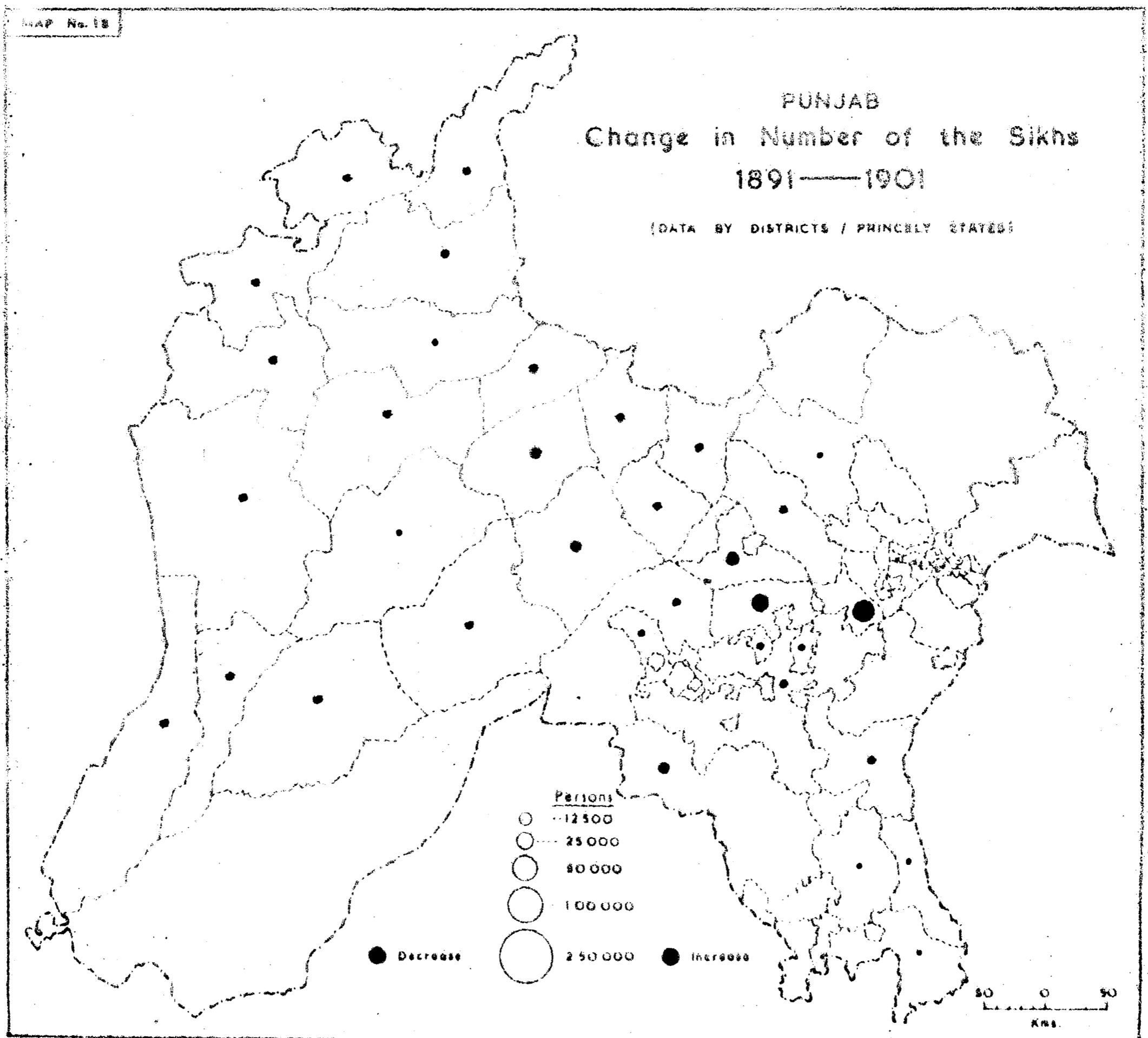
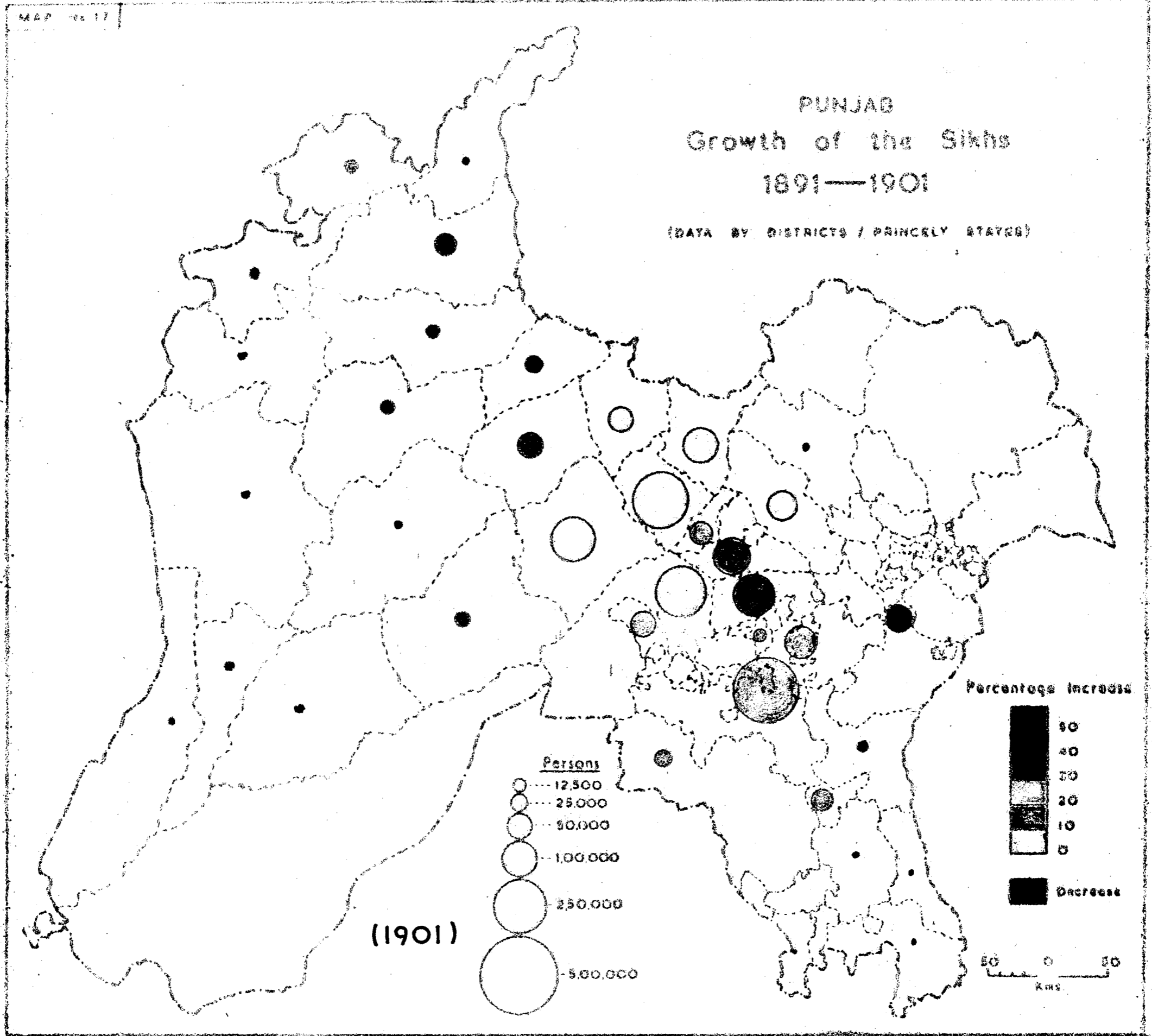
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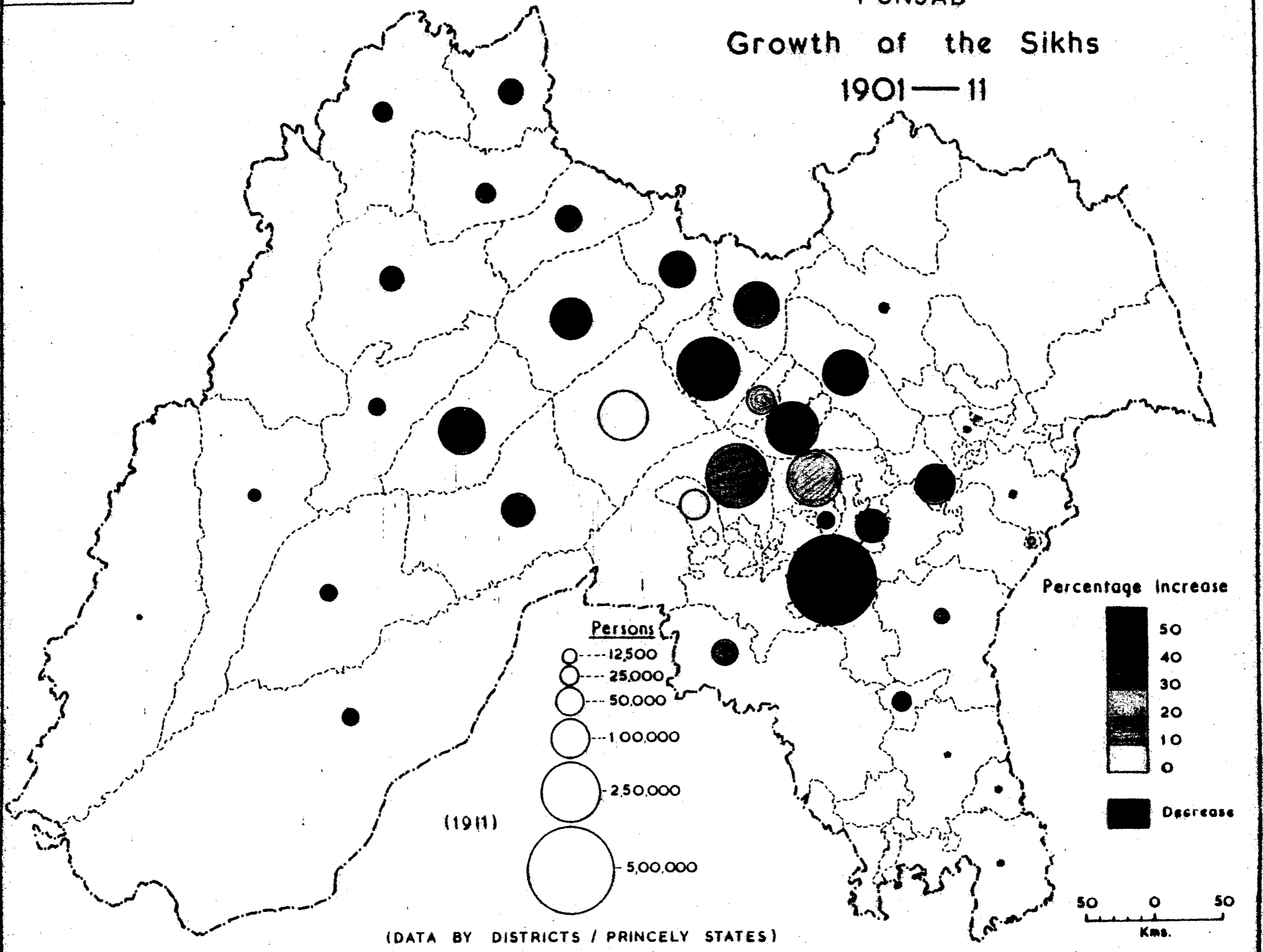
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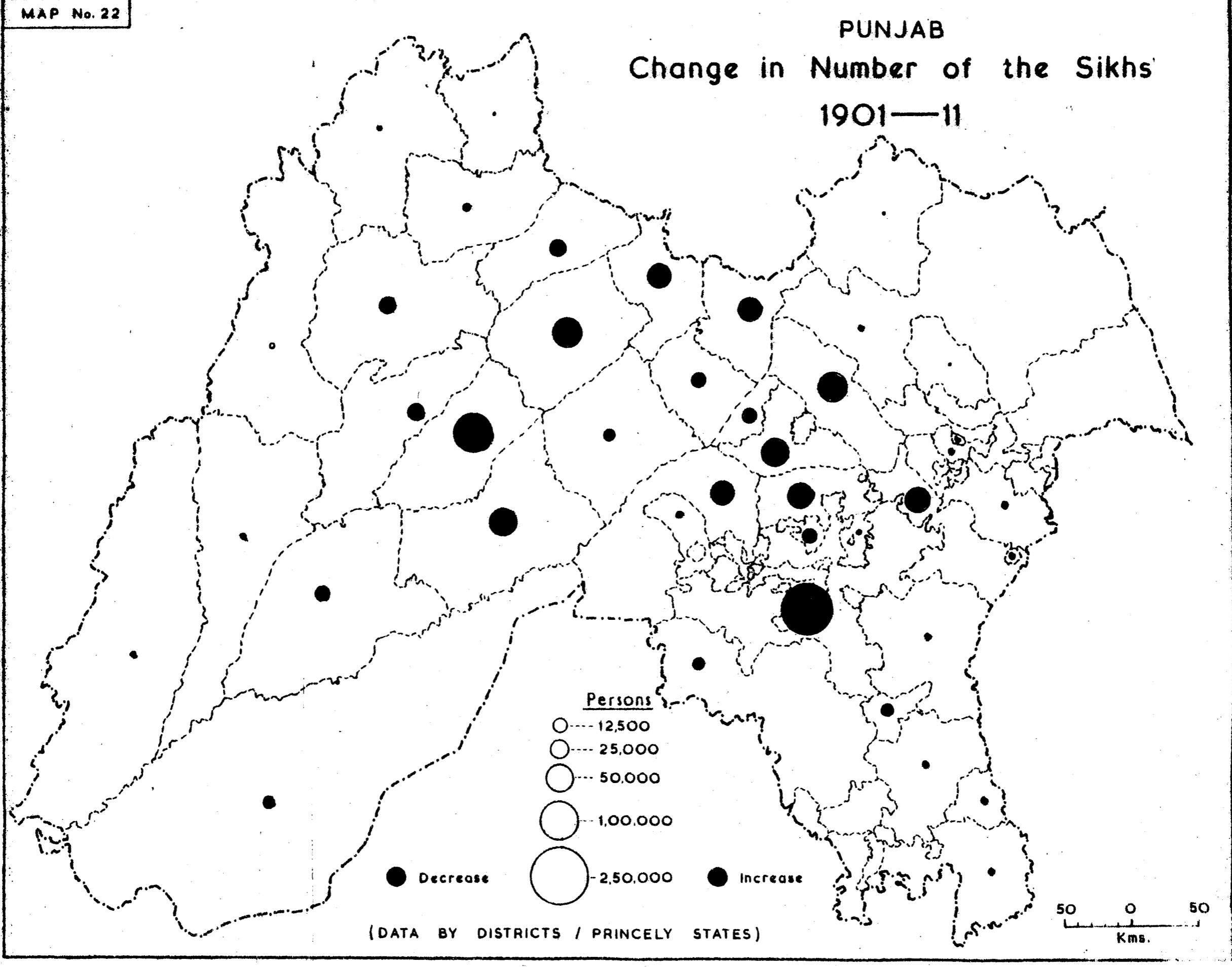
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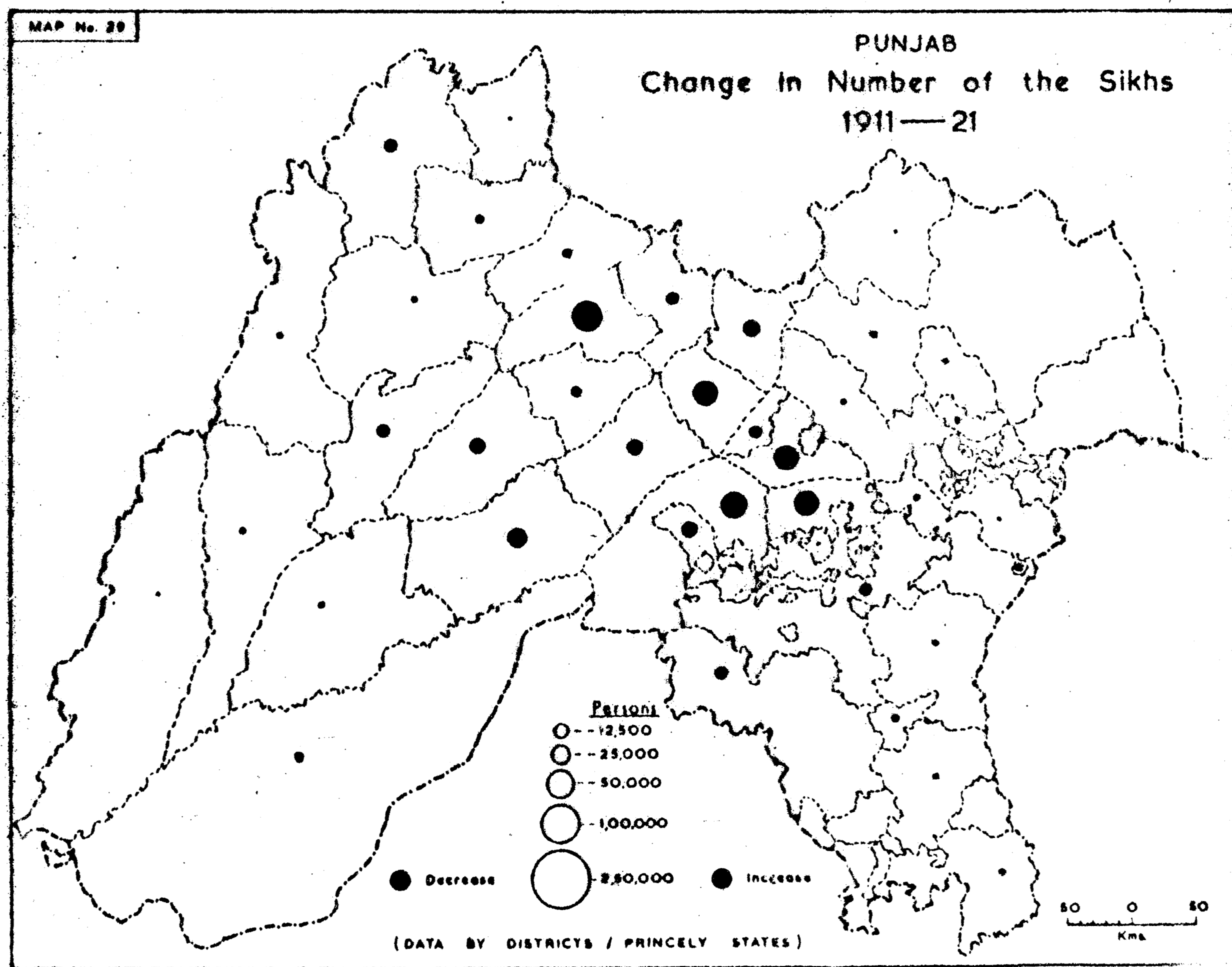
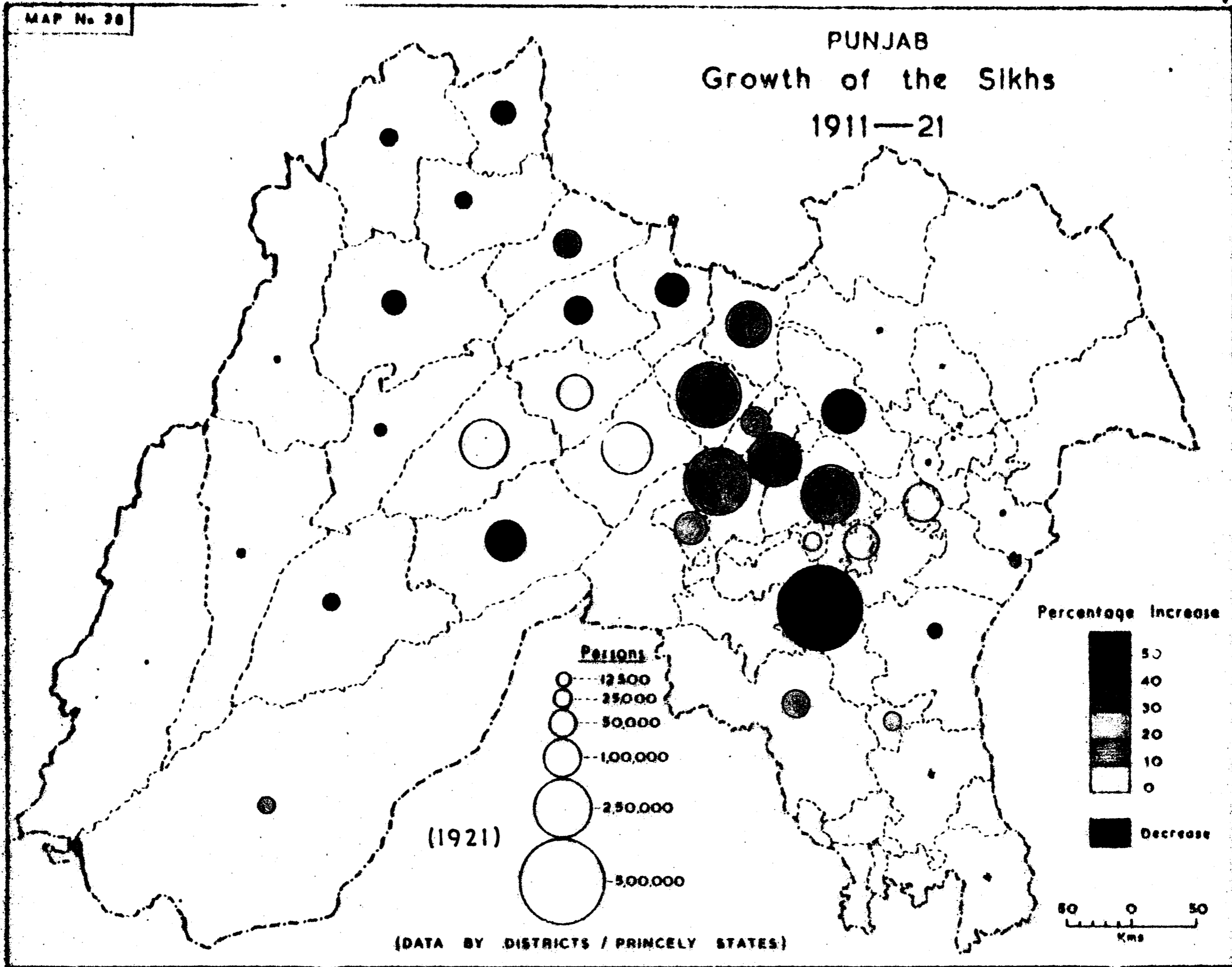
PUNJAB Growth of the Sikhs 1901—11



MAP No. 22

PUNJAB Change in Number of the Sikhs 1901—11

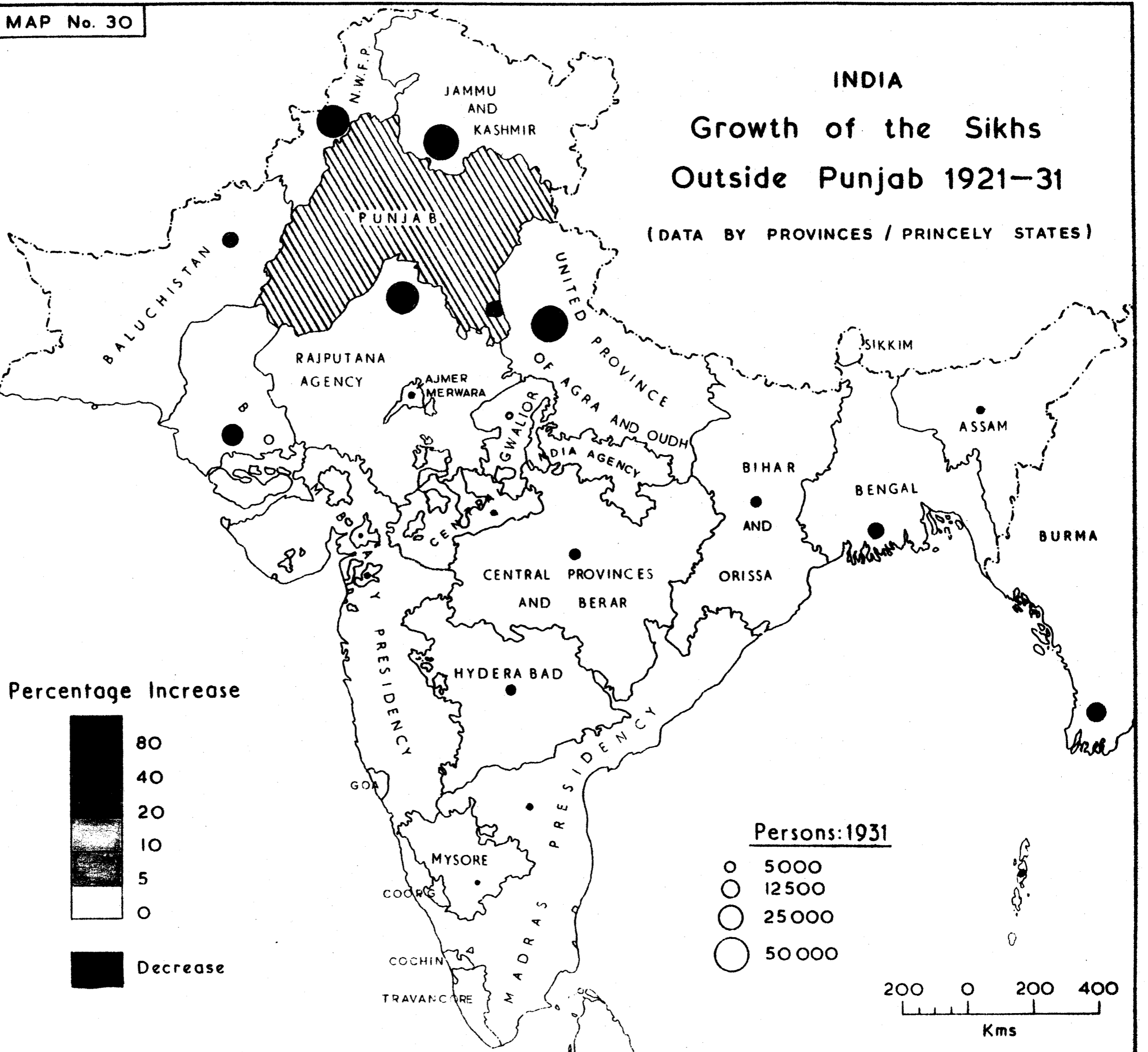




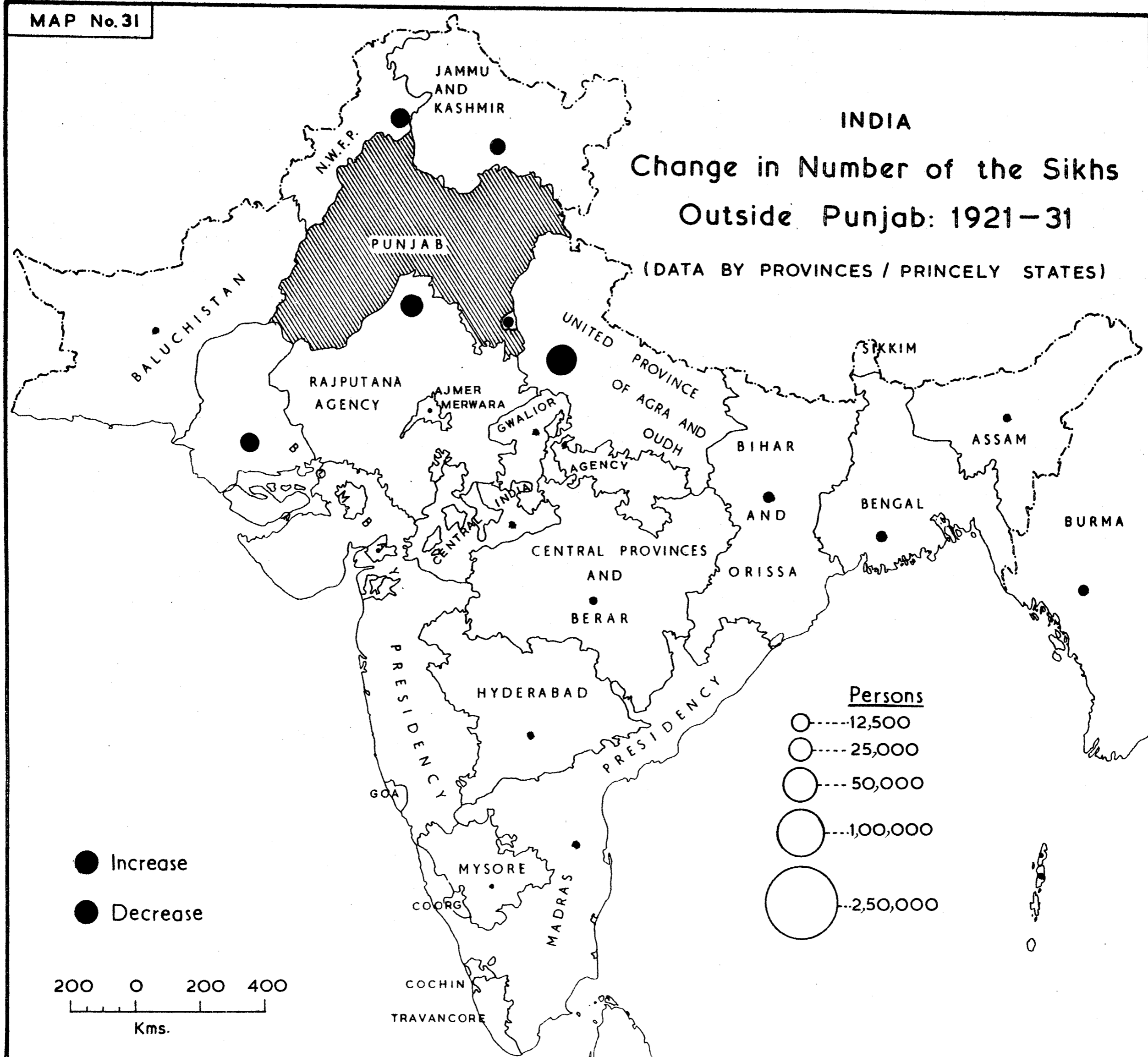
MAP No. 30

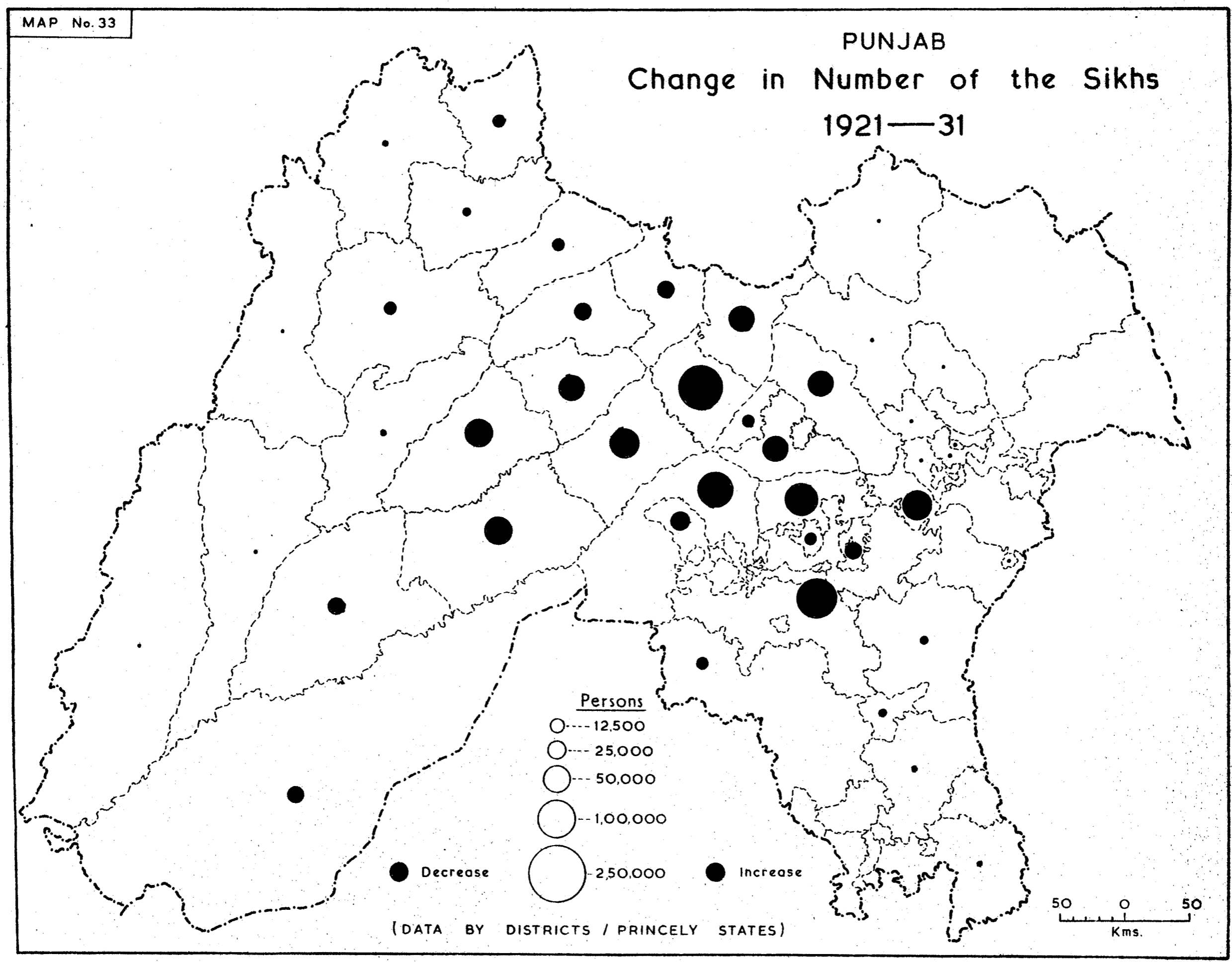
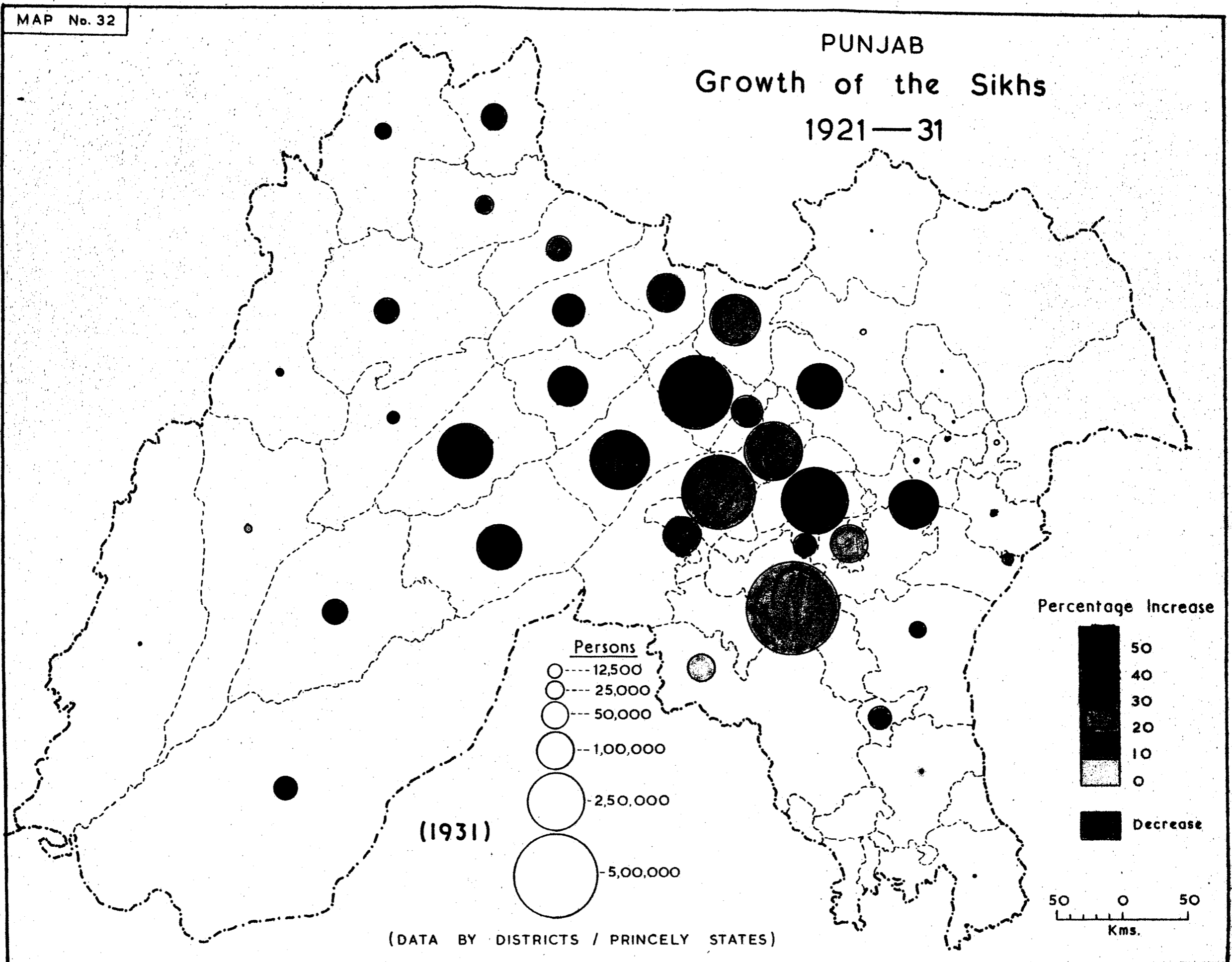
INDIA Growth of the Sikhs Outside Punjab 1921-31

(DATA BY PROVINCES / PRINCELY STATES)



MAP No.31

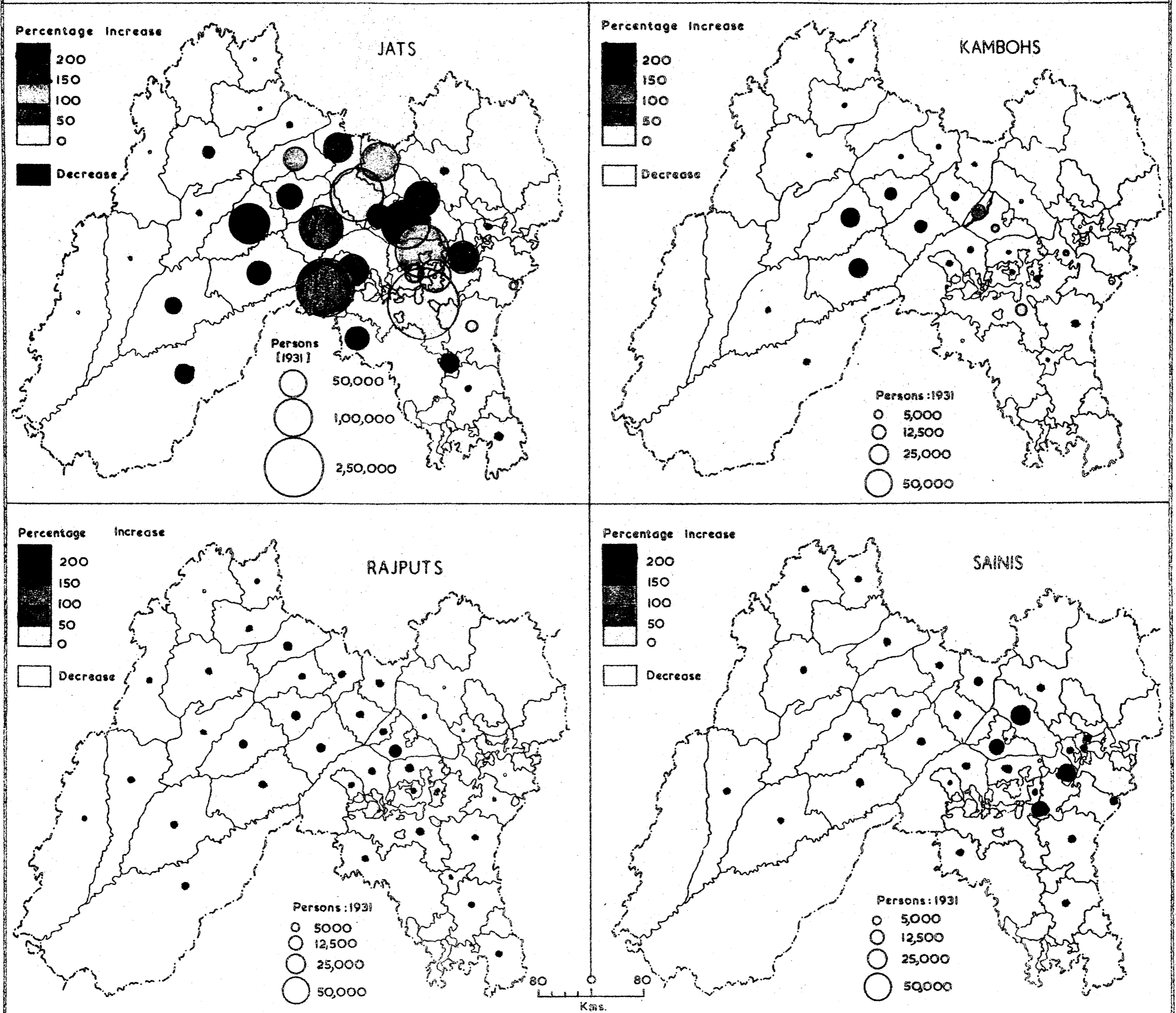




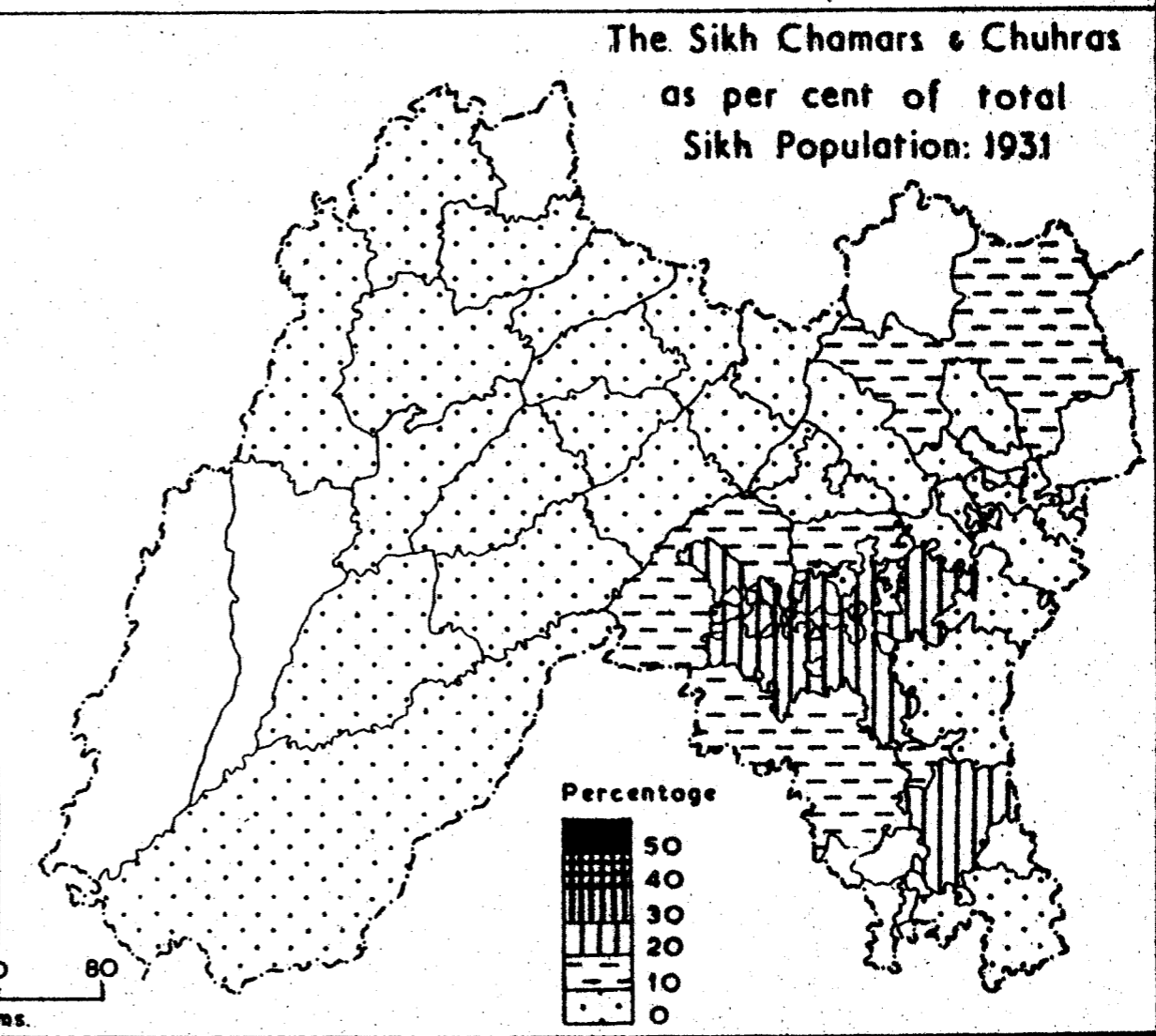
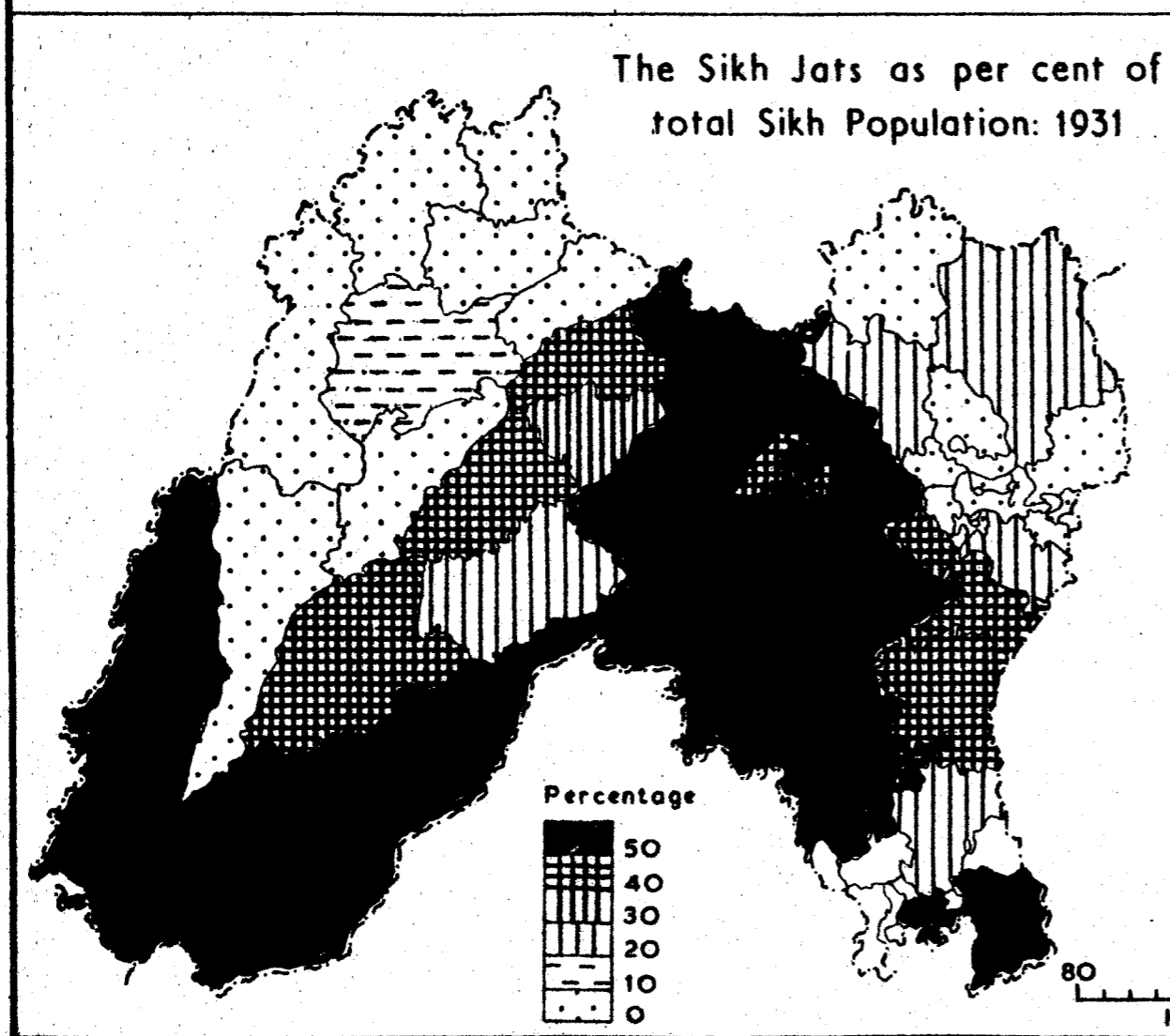
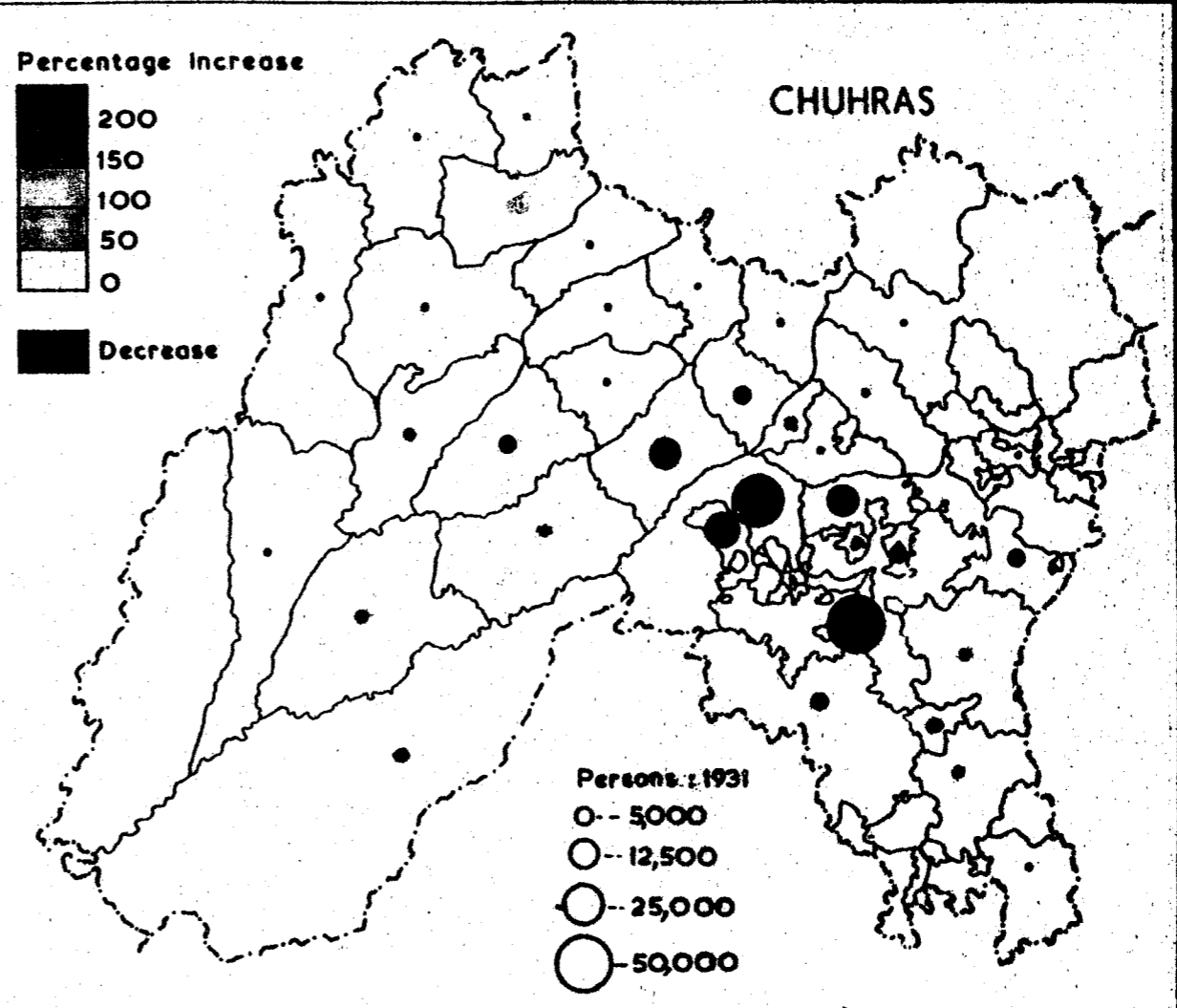
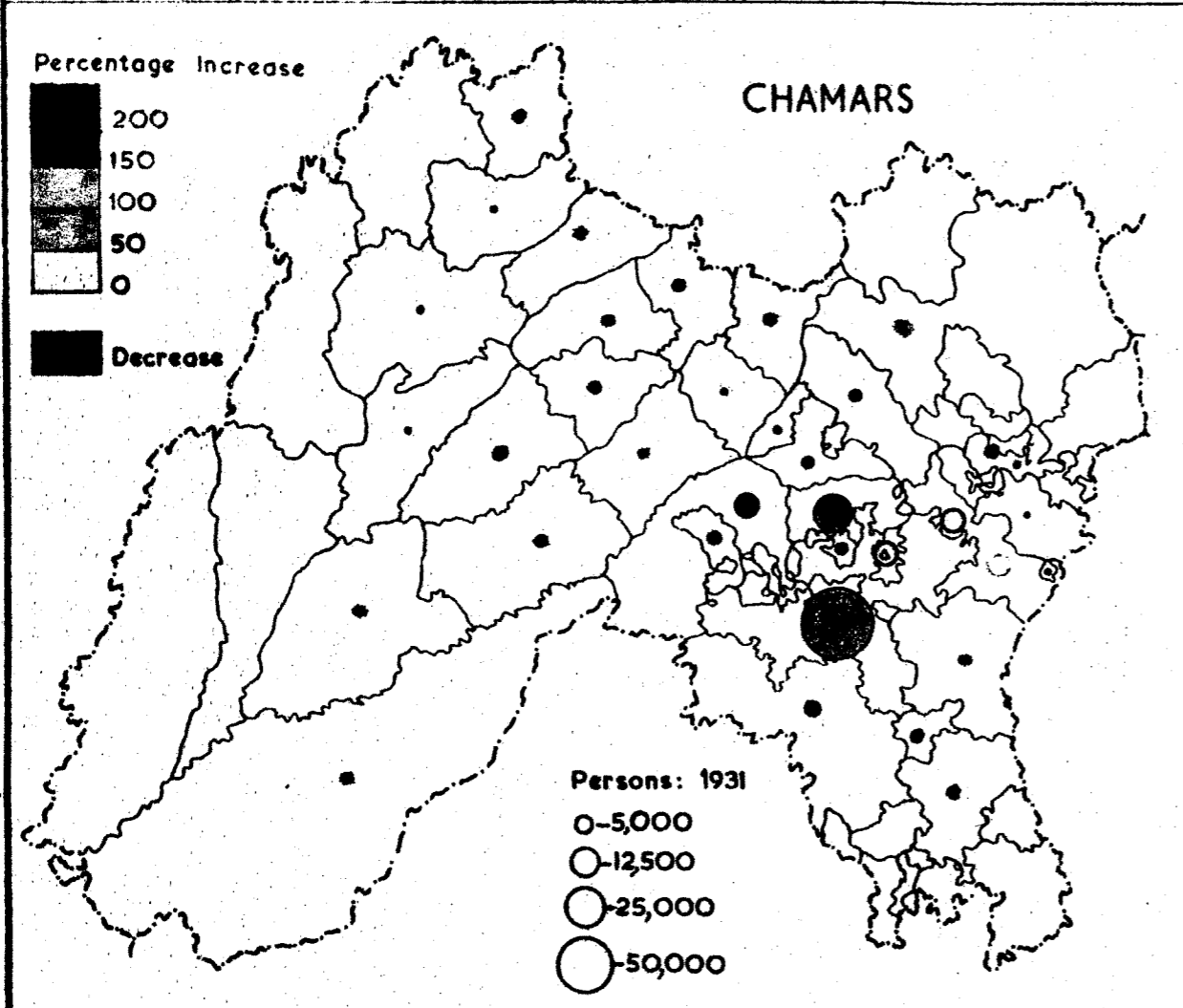
PUNJAB

Growth of the Sikhs by Caste

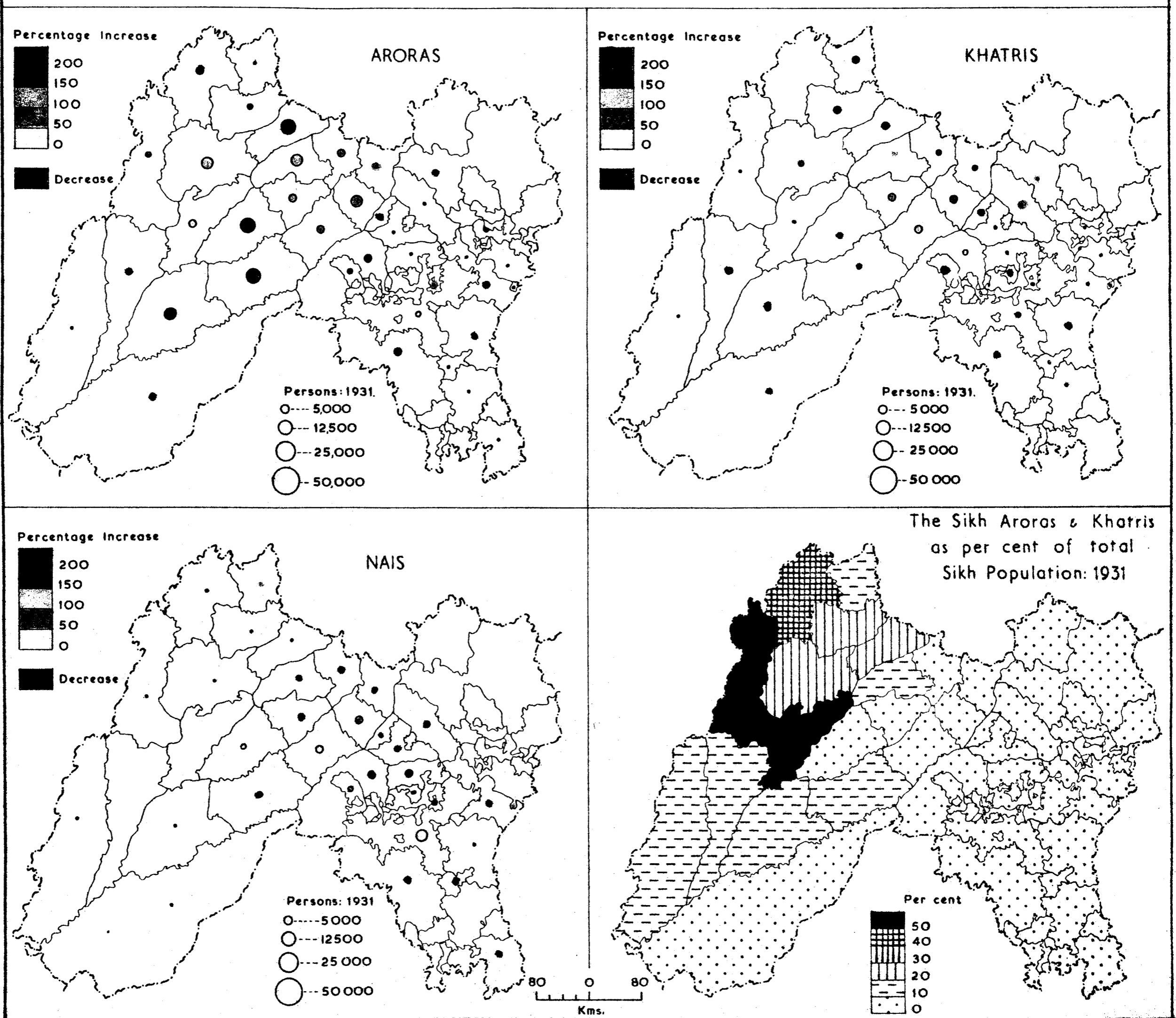
1881—1931



PUNJAB Growth of the Sikhs by Caste 1881—1931



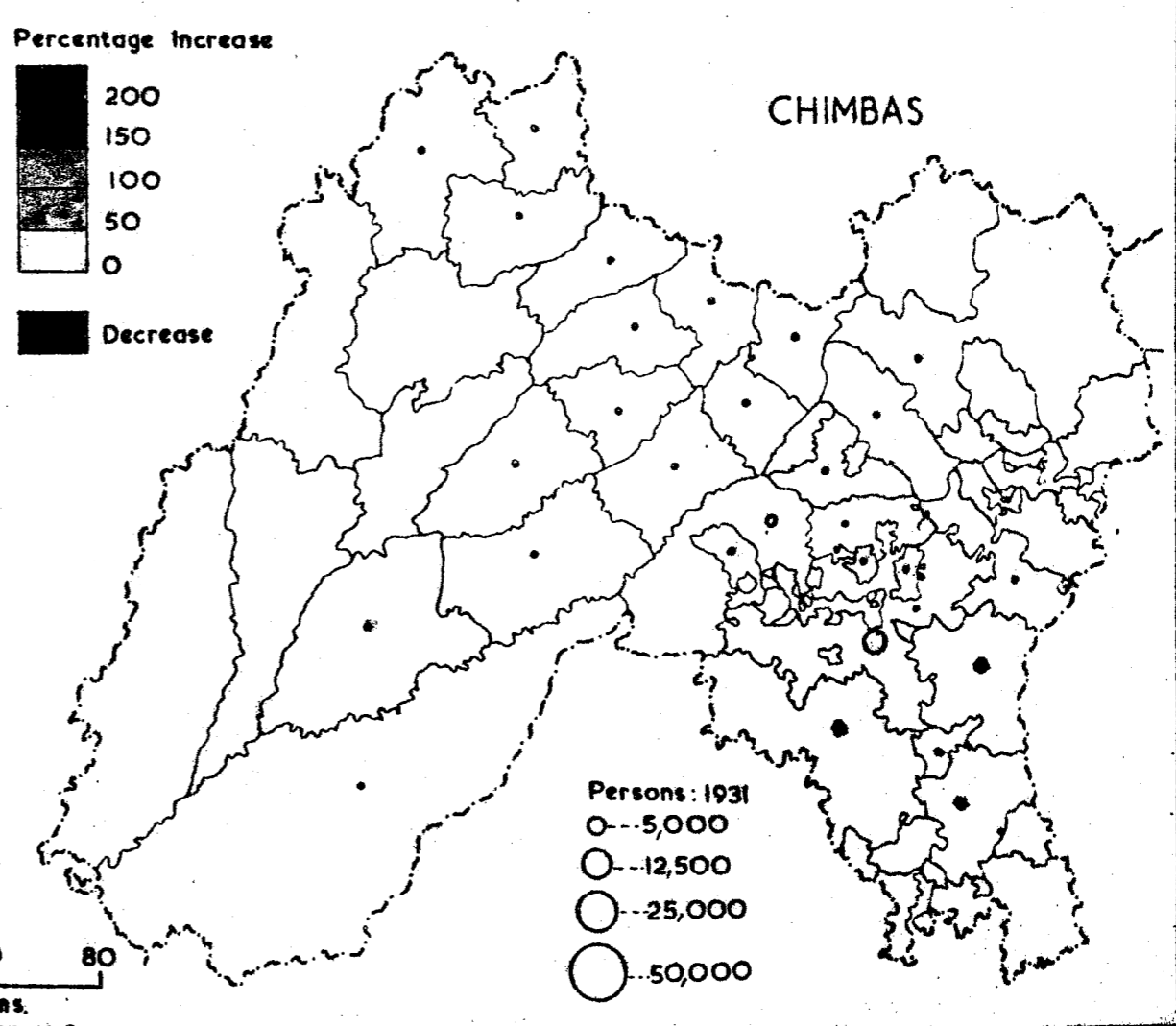
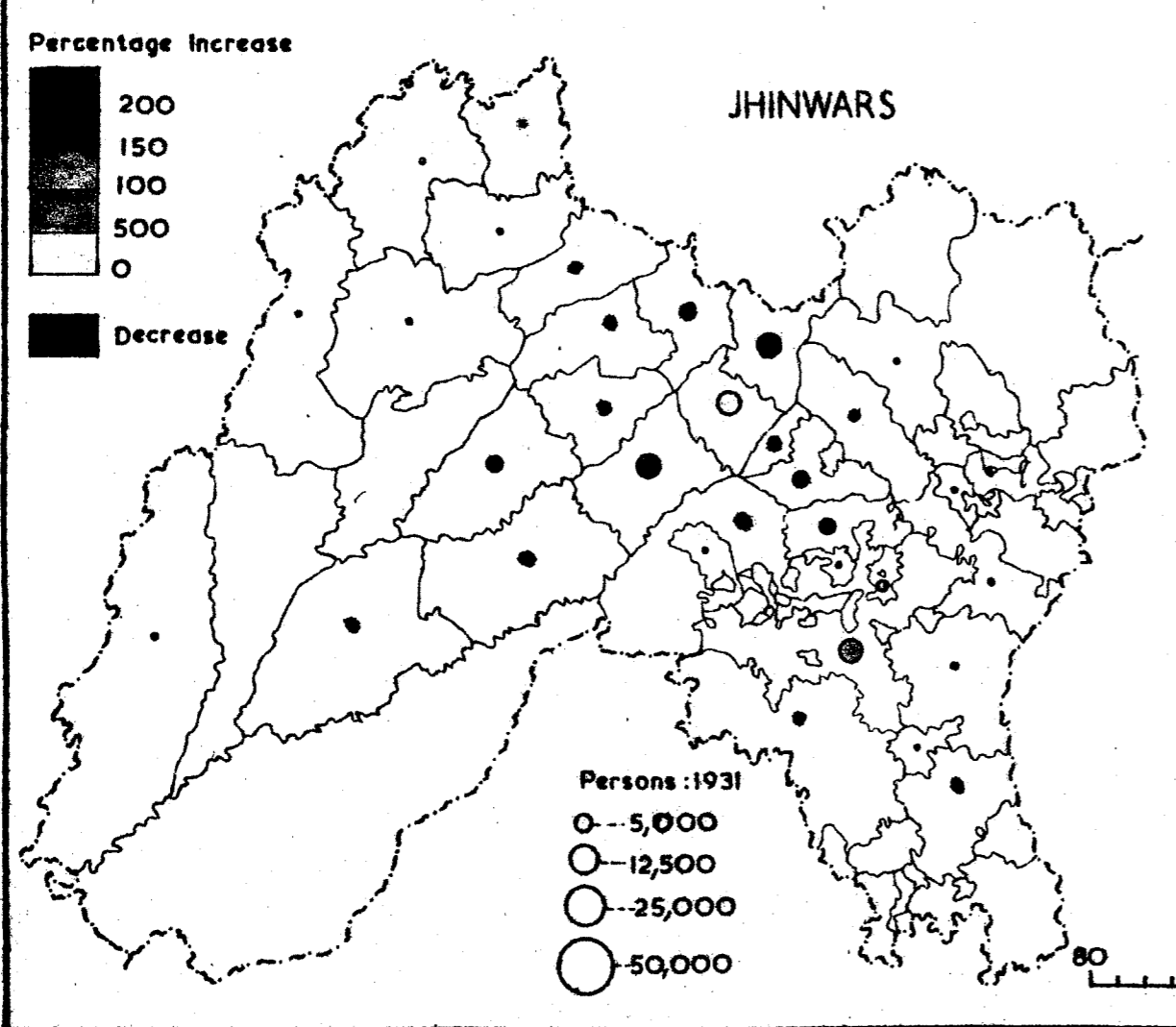
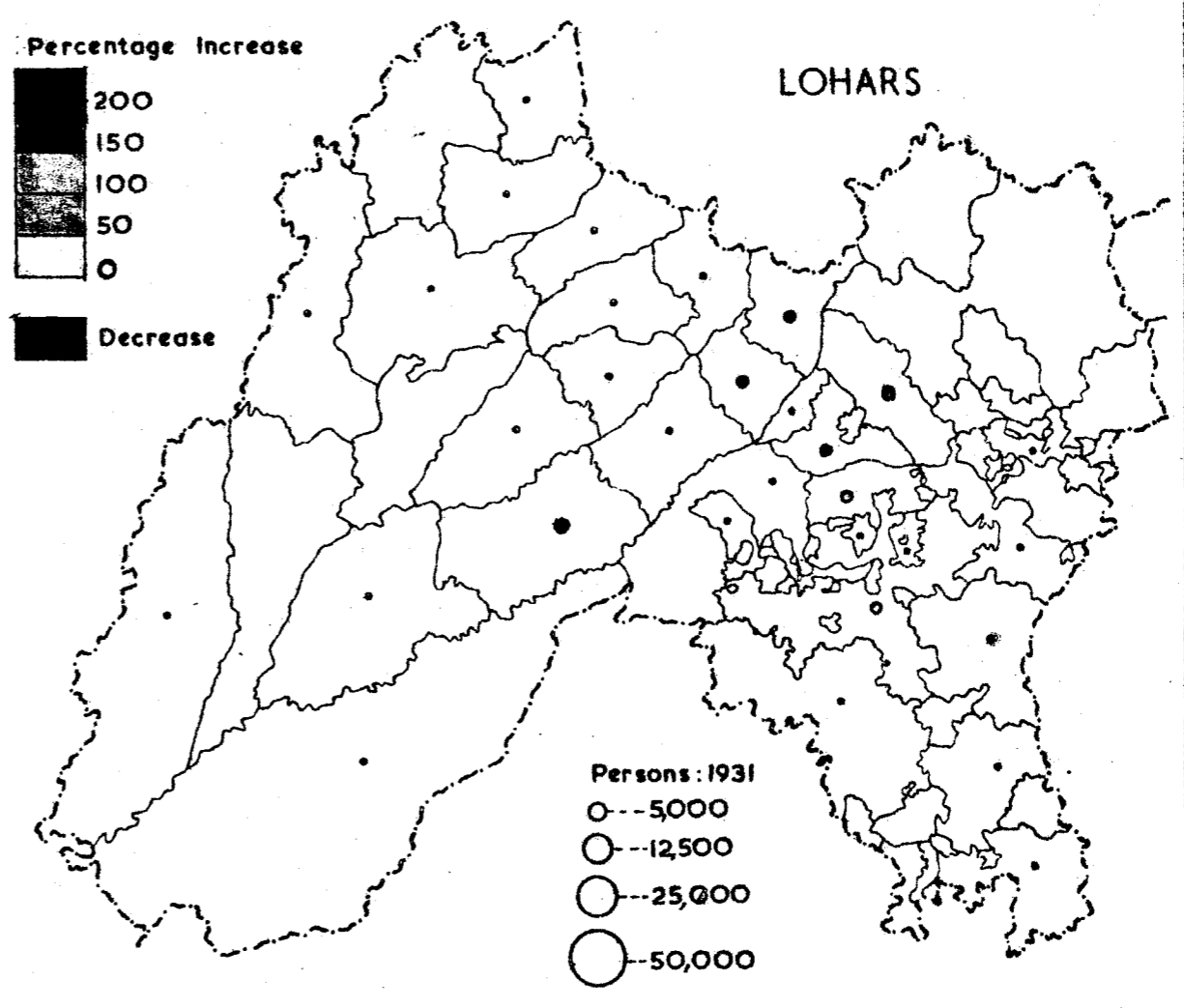
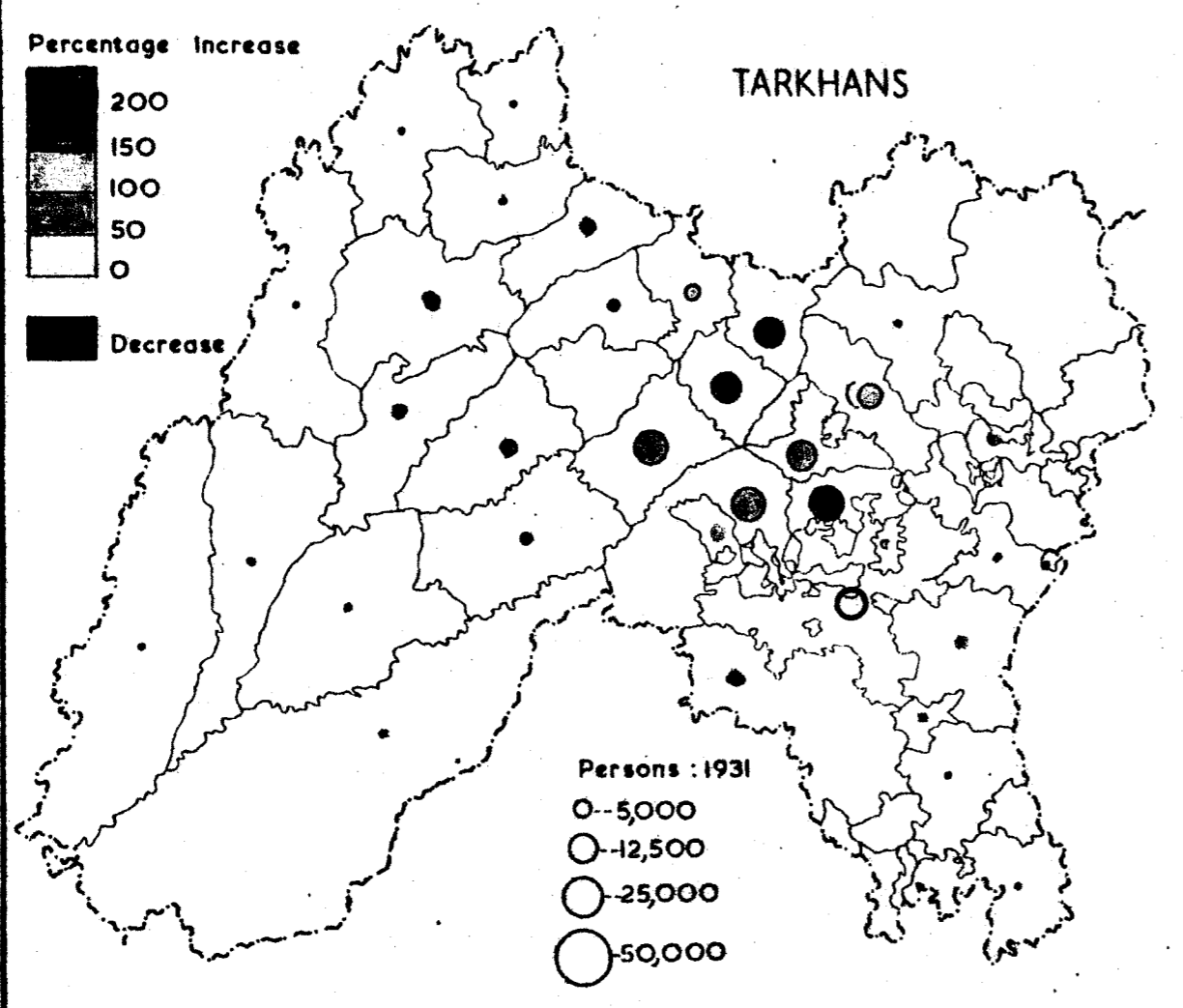
PUNJAB Growth of the Sikhs by Caste 1881—1931



PUNJAB

Growth of the Sikhs by Caste

1881—1931



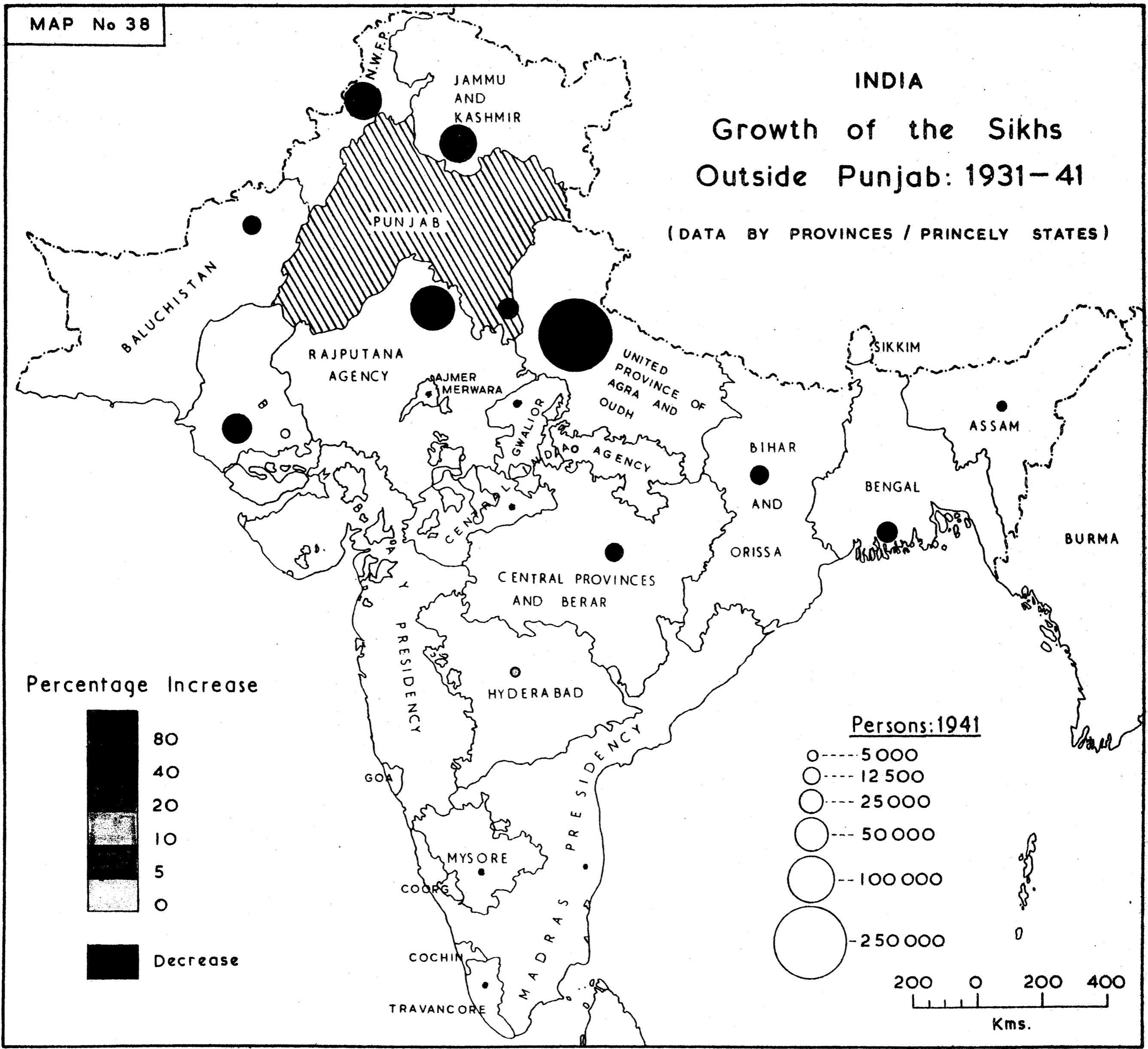
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Kms.

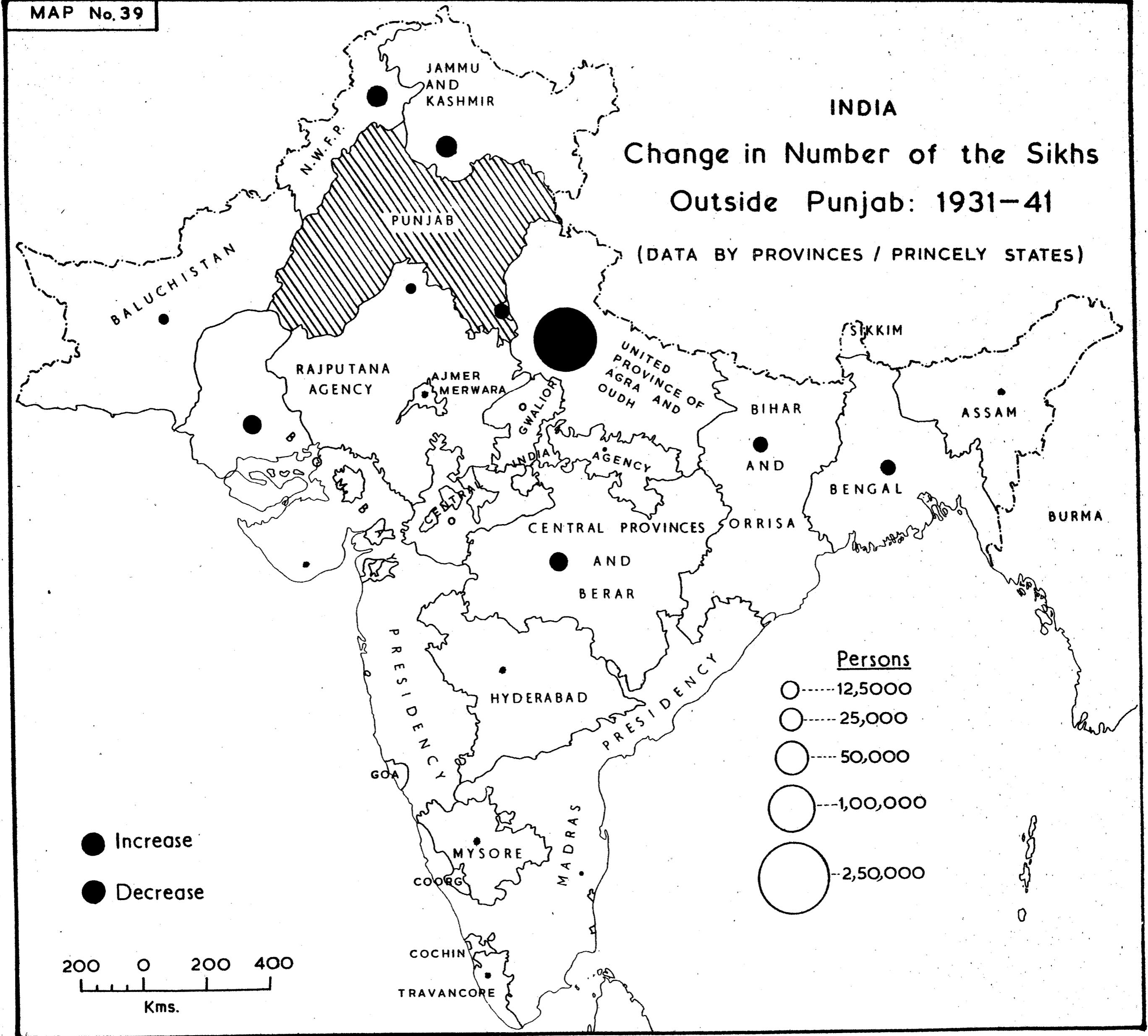
MAP No 38

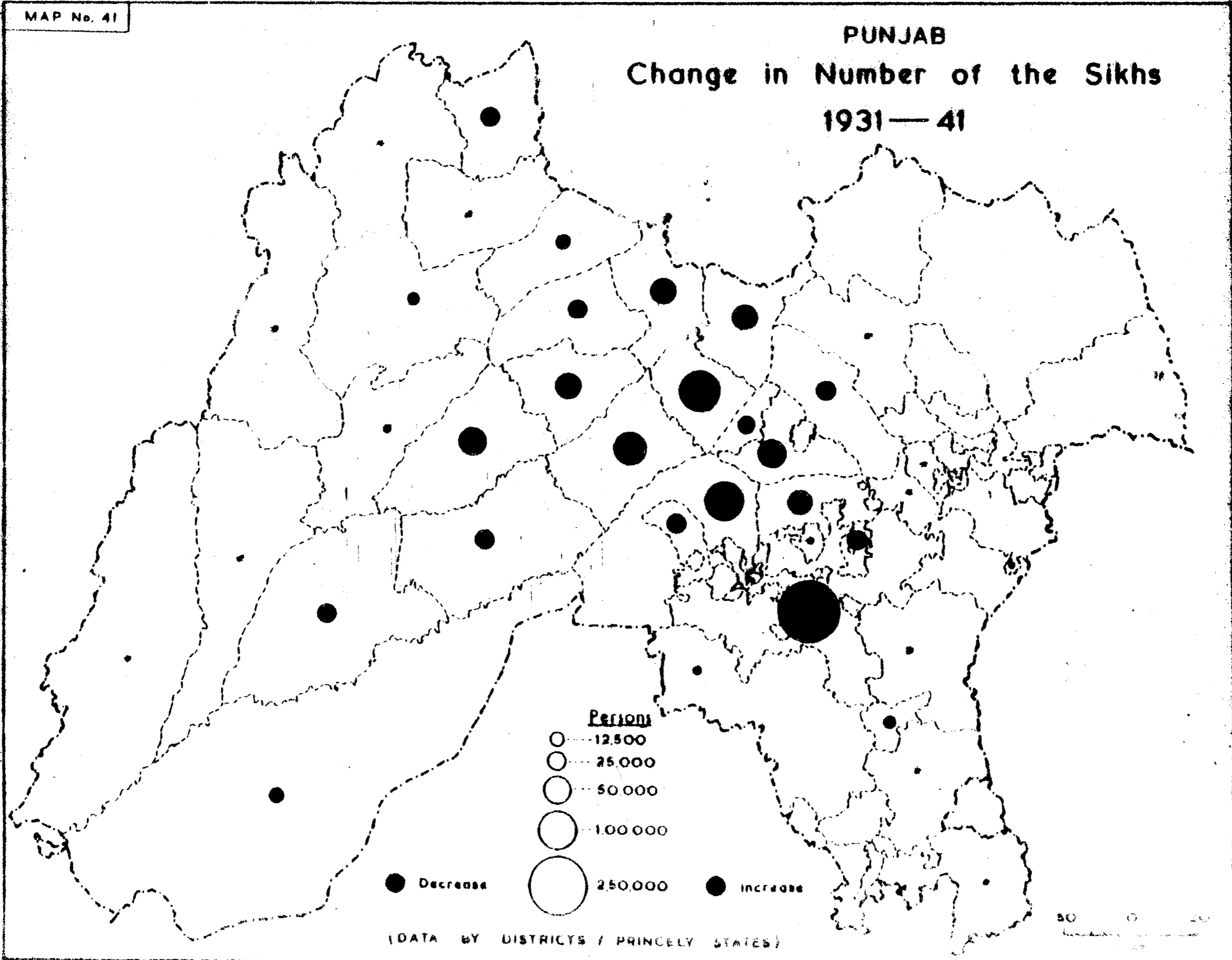
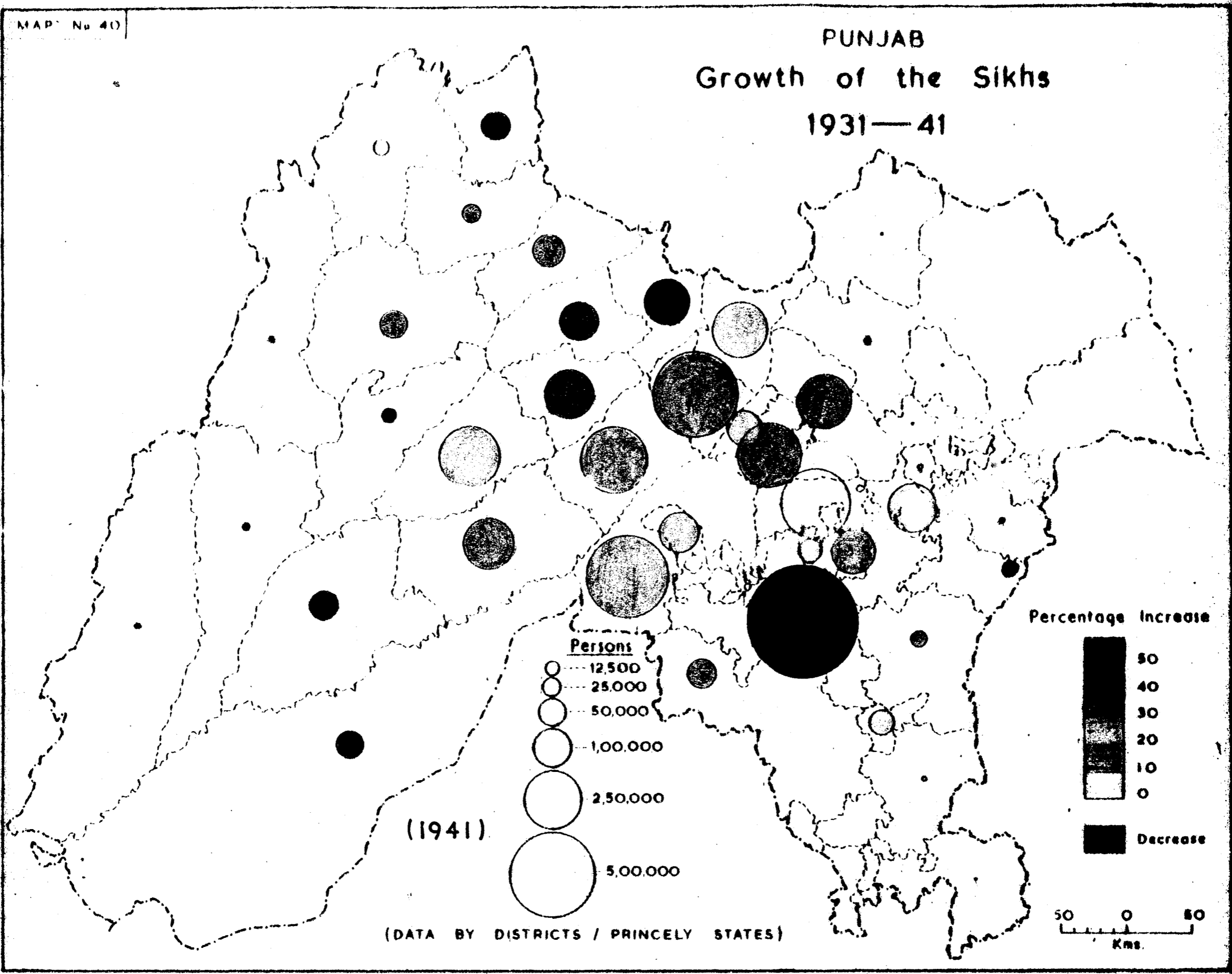
INDIA

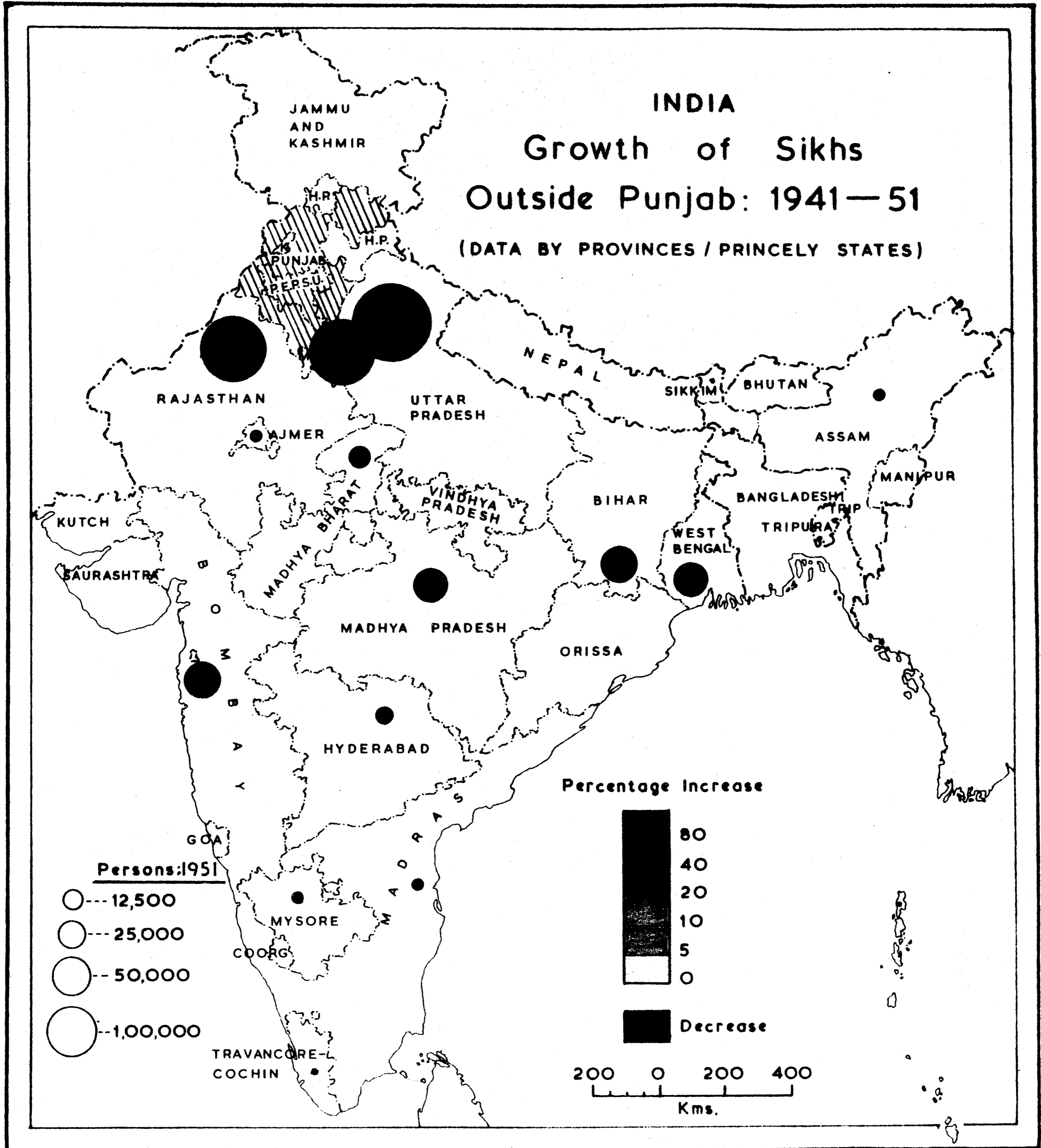
Growth of the Sikhs Outside Punjab: 1931-41

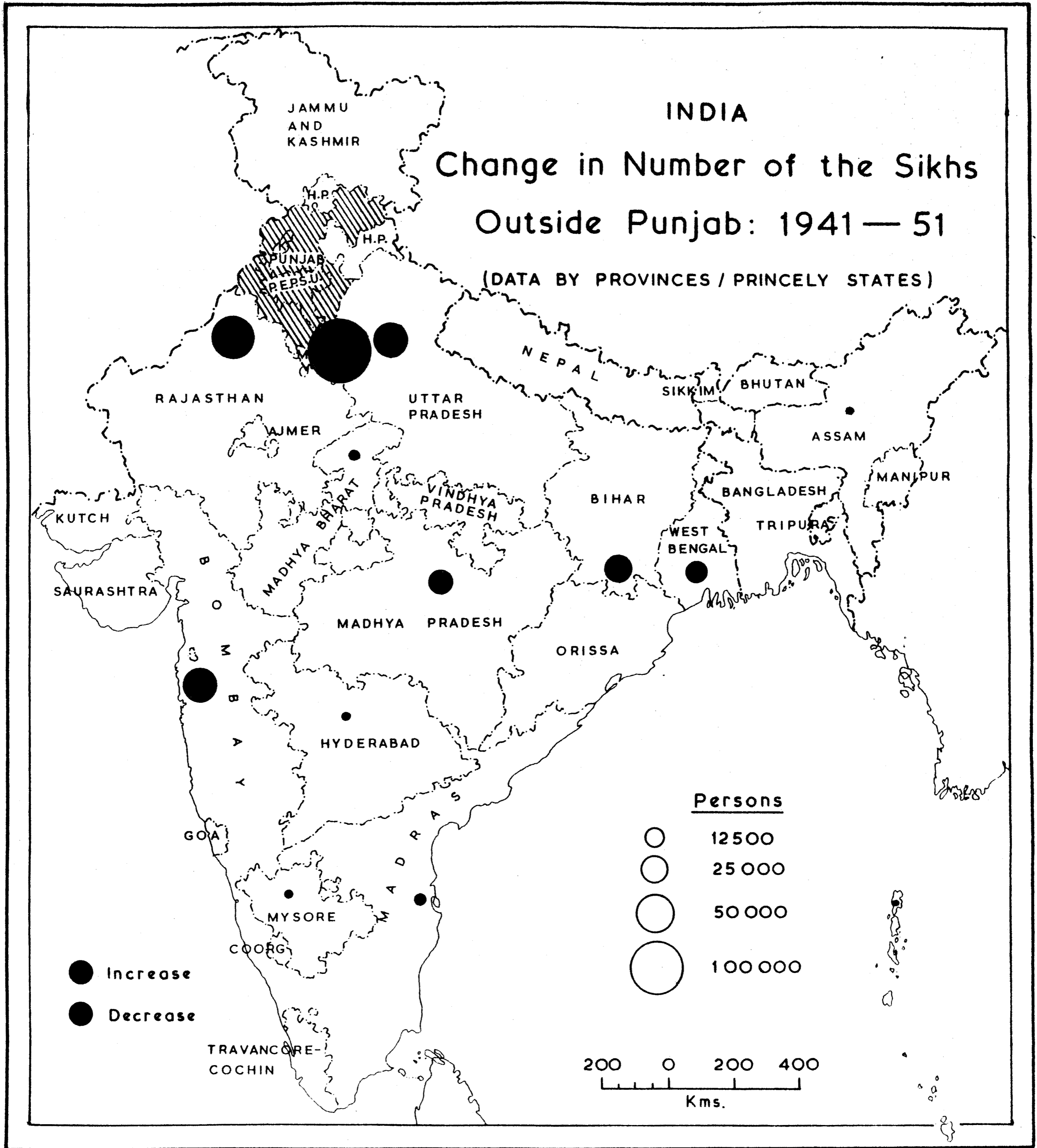
(DATA BY PROVINCES / PRINCELY STATES)





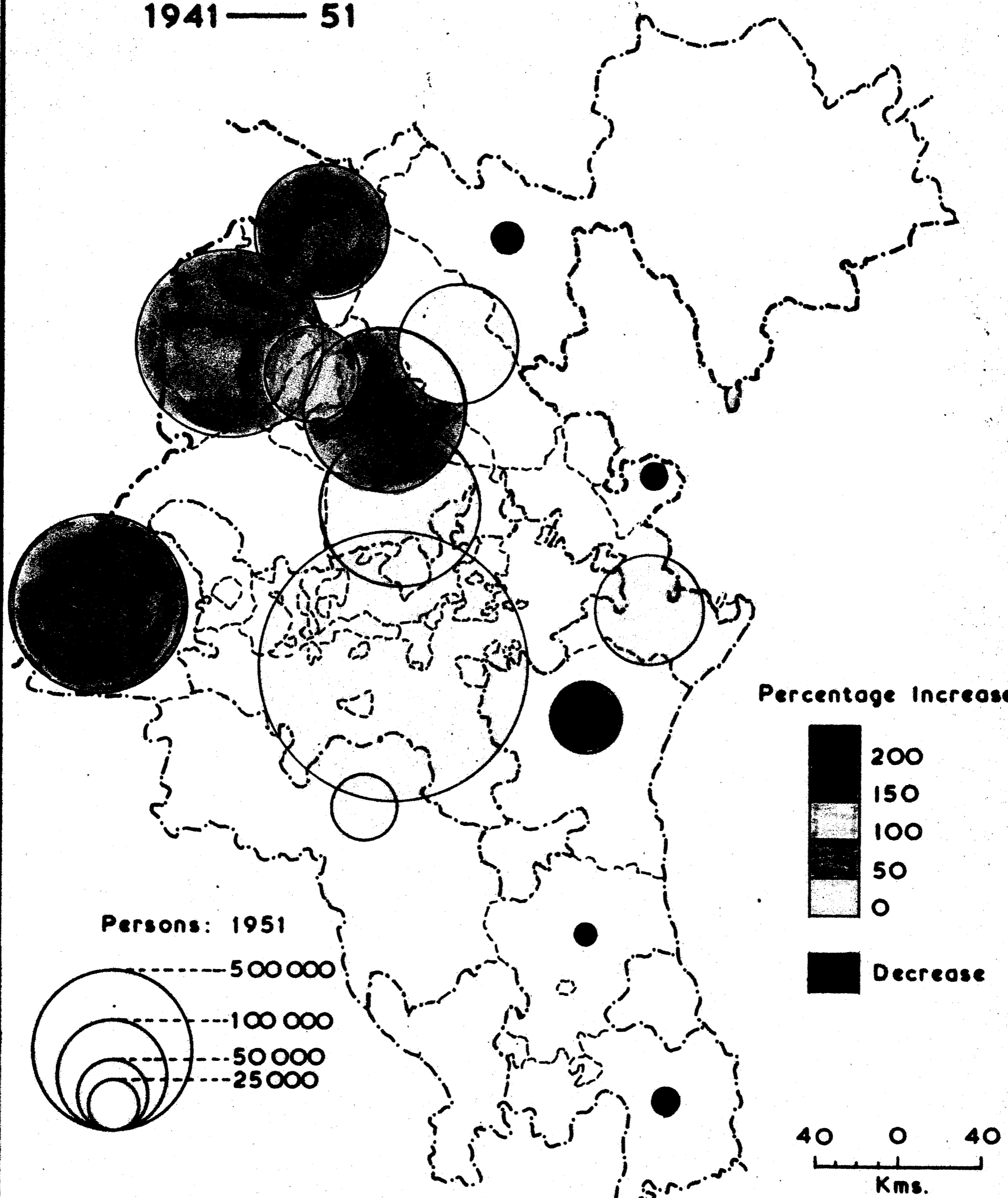






PUNJAB
Growth of the Sikhs
1941 — 51

MAP No.46

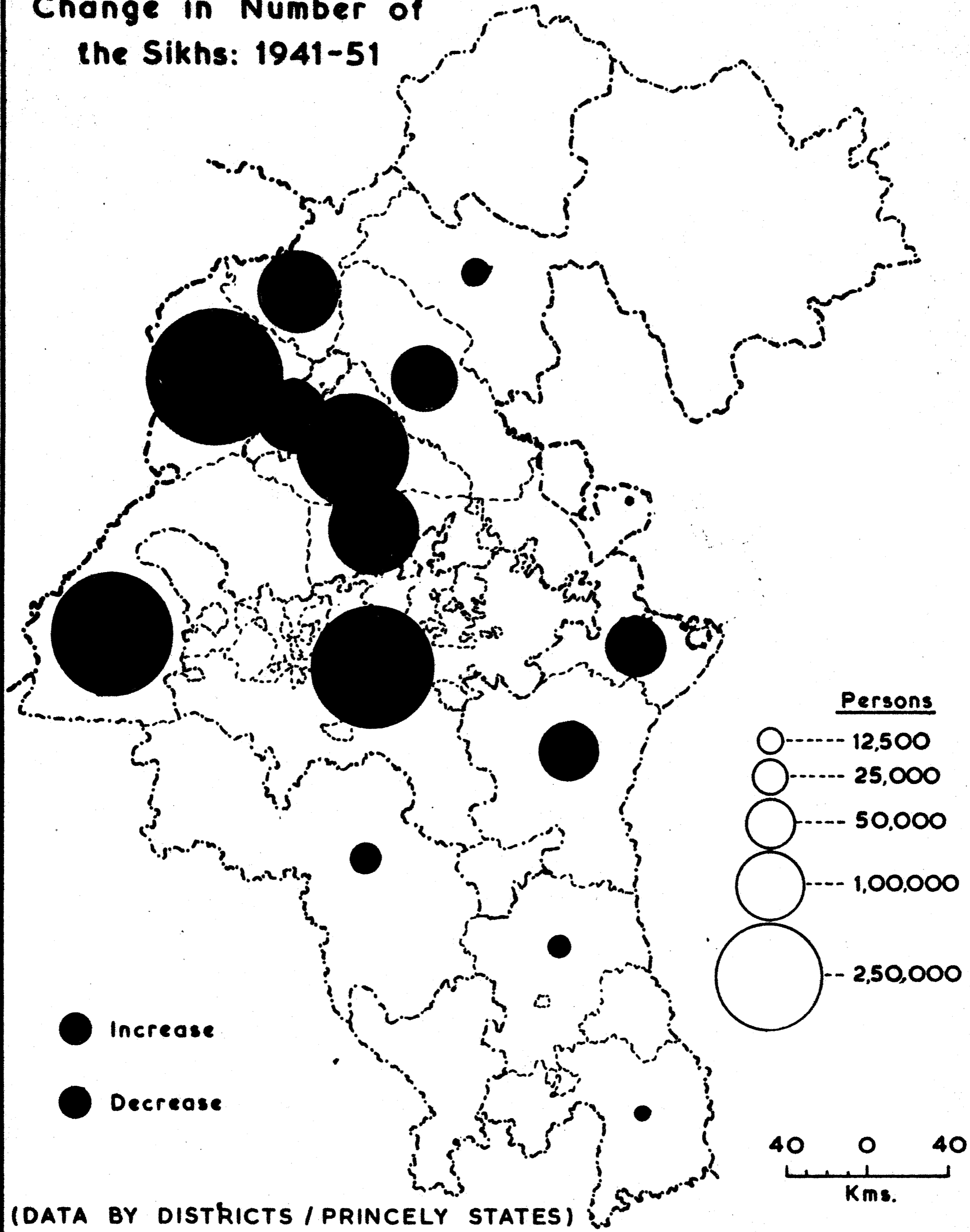


(DATA BY DISTRICTS / PRINCELY STATES)

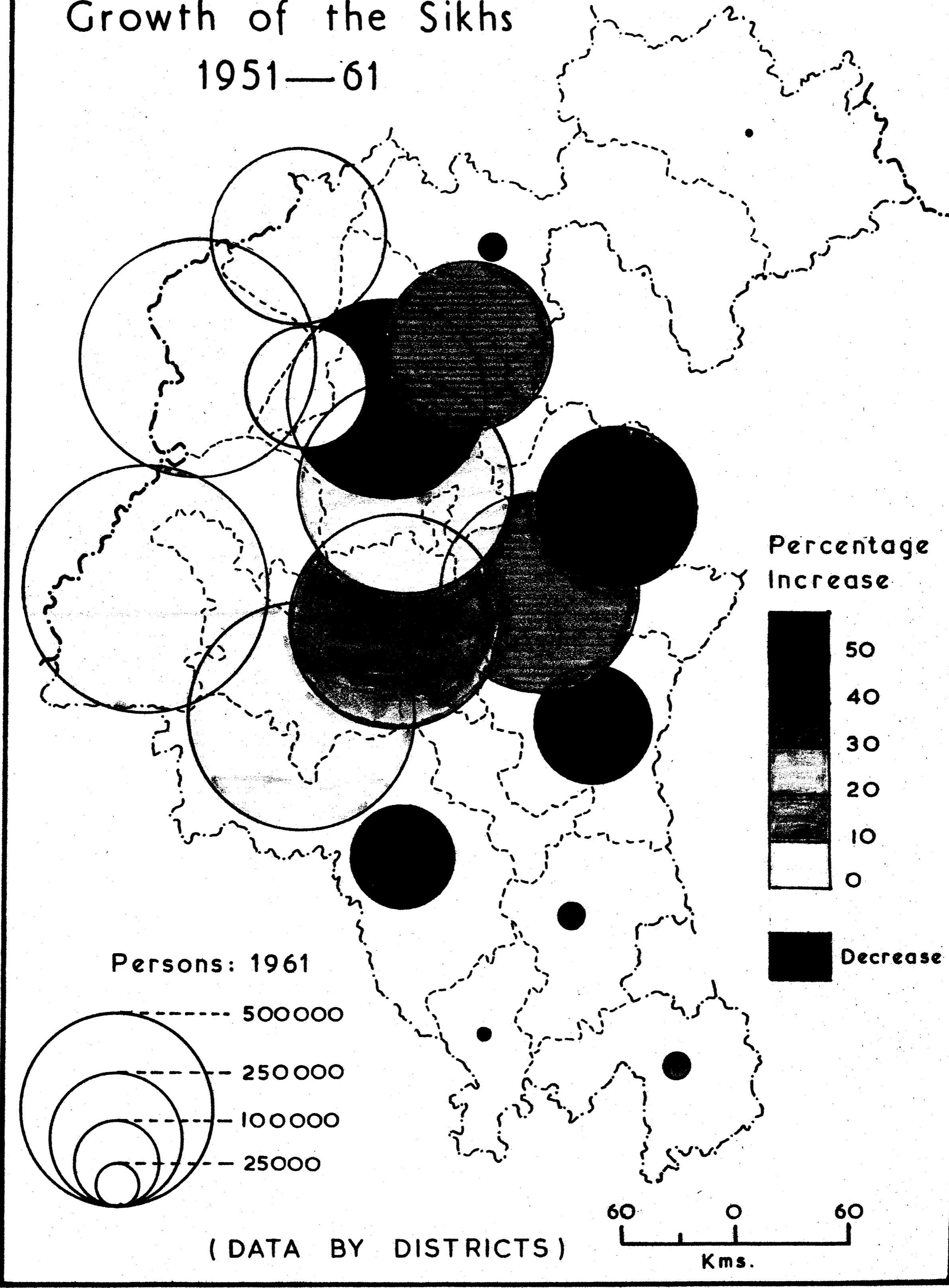
PUNJAB

MAP No.47

Change in Number of
the Sikhs: 1941-51

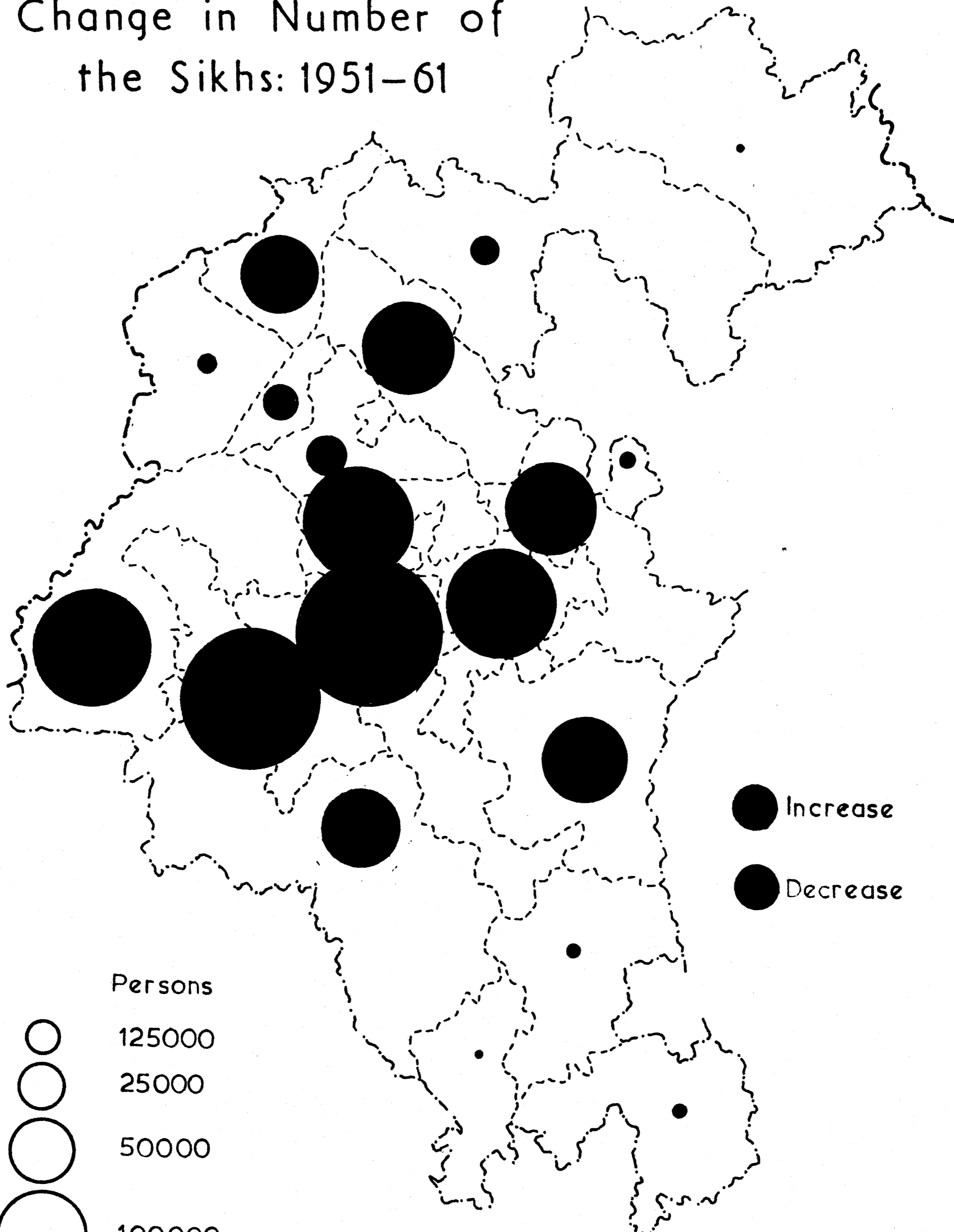


PUNJAB Growth of the Sikhs 1951—61



PUNJAB

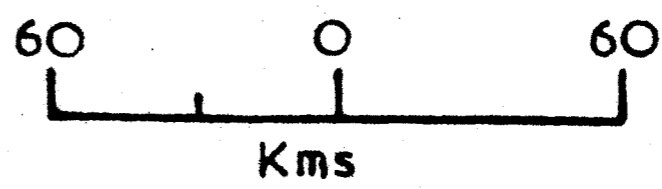
Change in Number of
the Sikhs: 1951-61

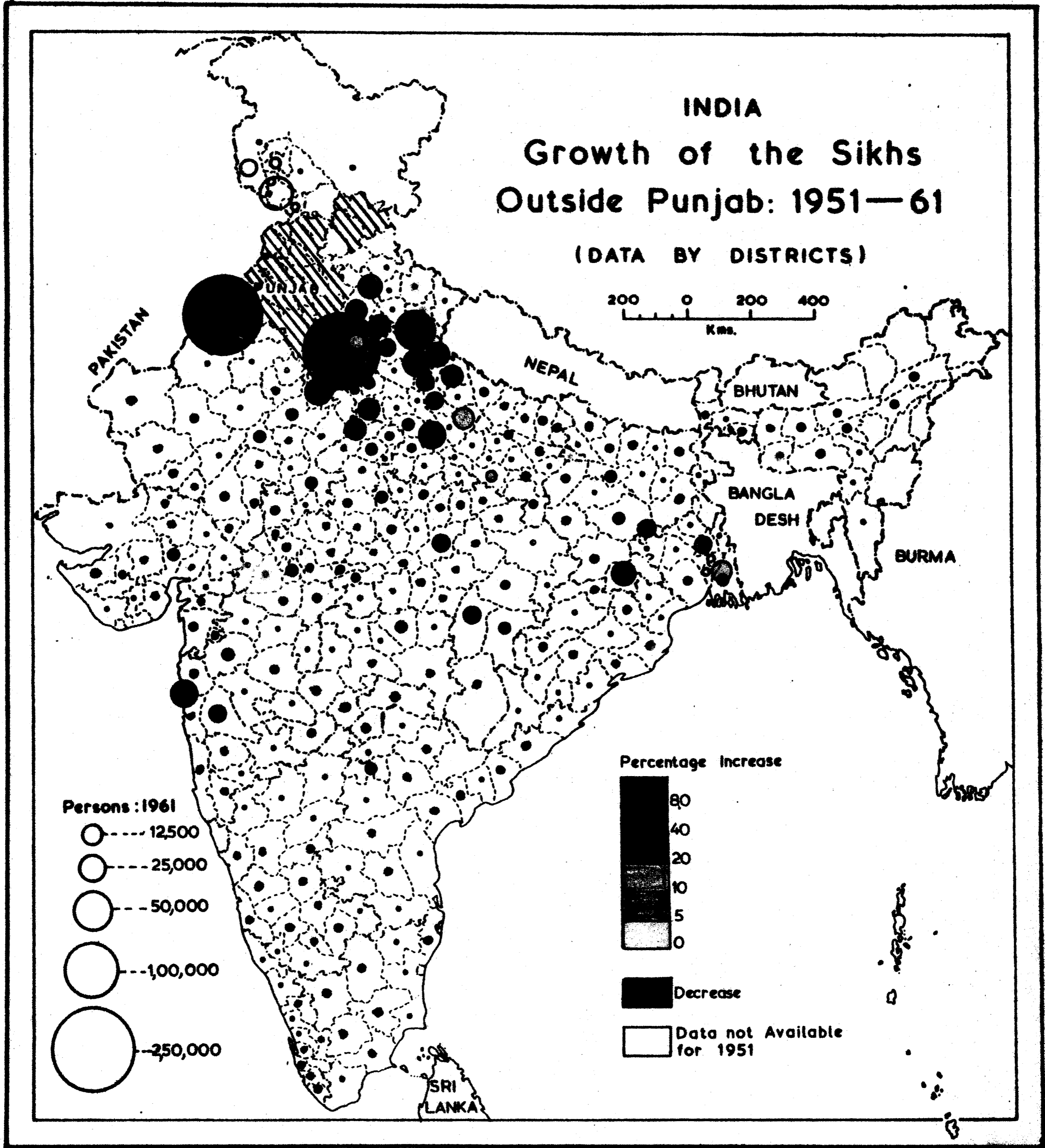


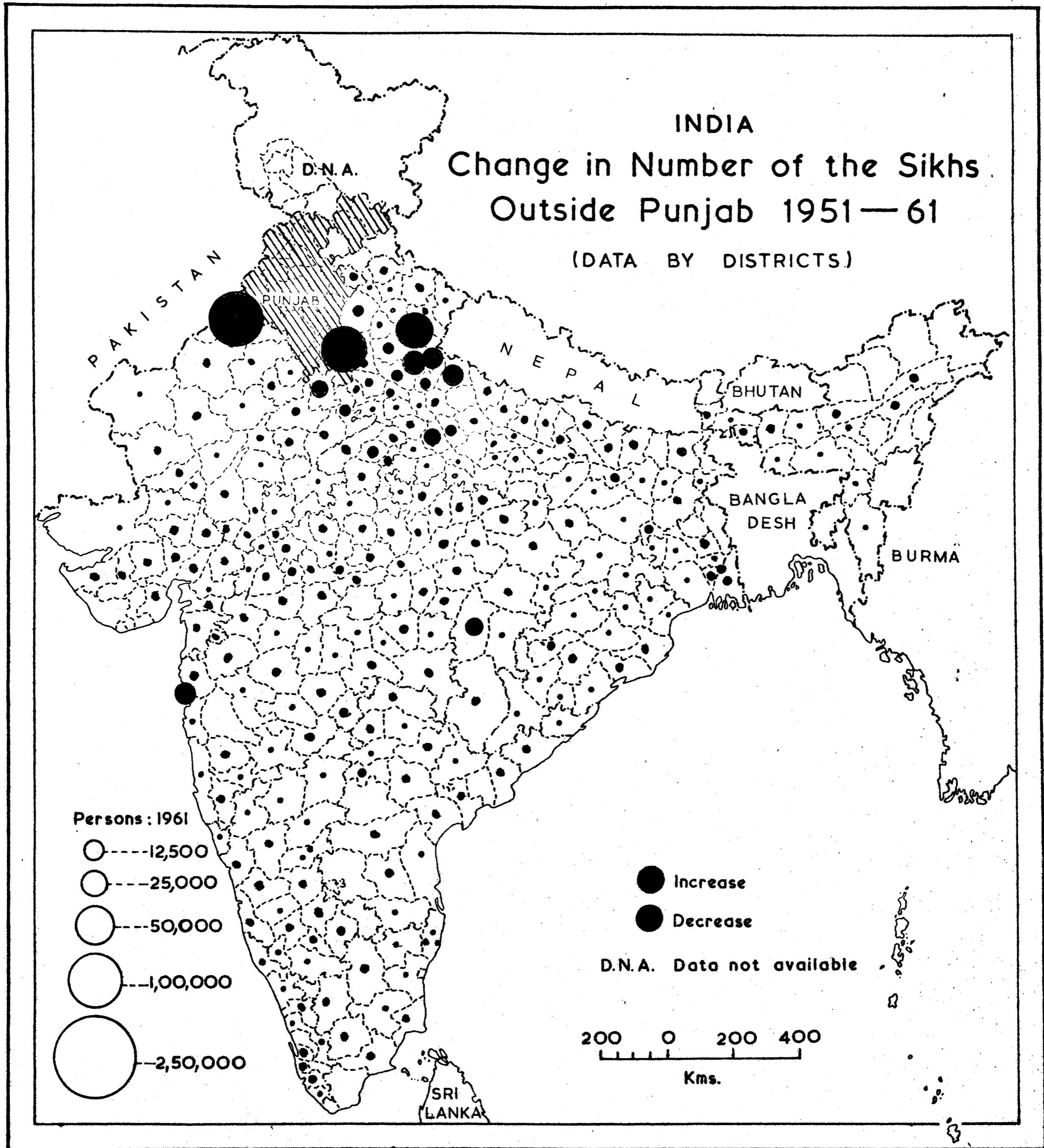
- Persons
- 125000
 - 25000
 - 50000
 - 100000

(DATA BY DISTRICTS)

● Increase
○ Decrease

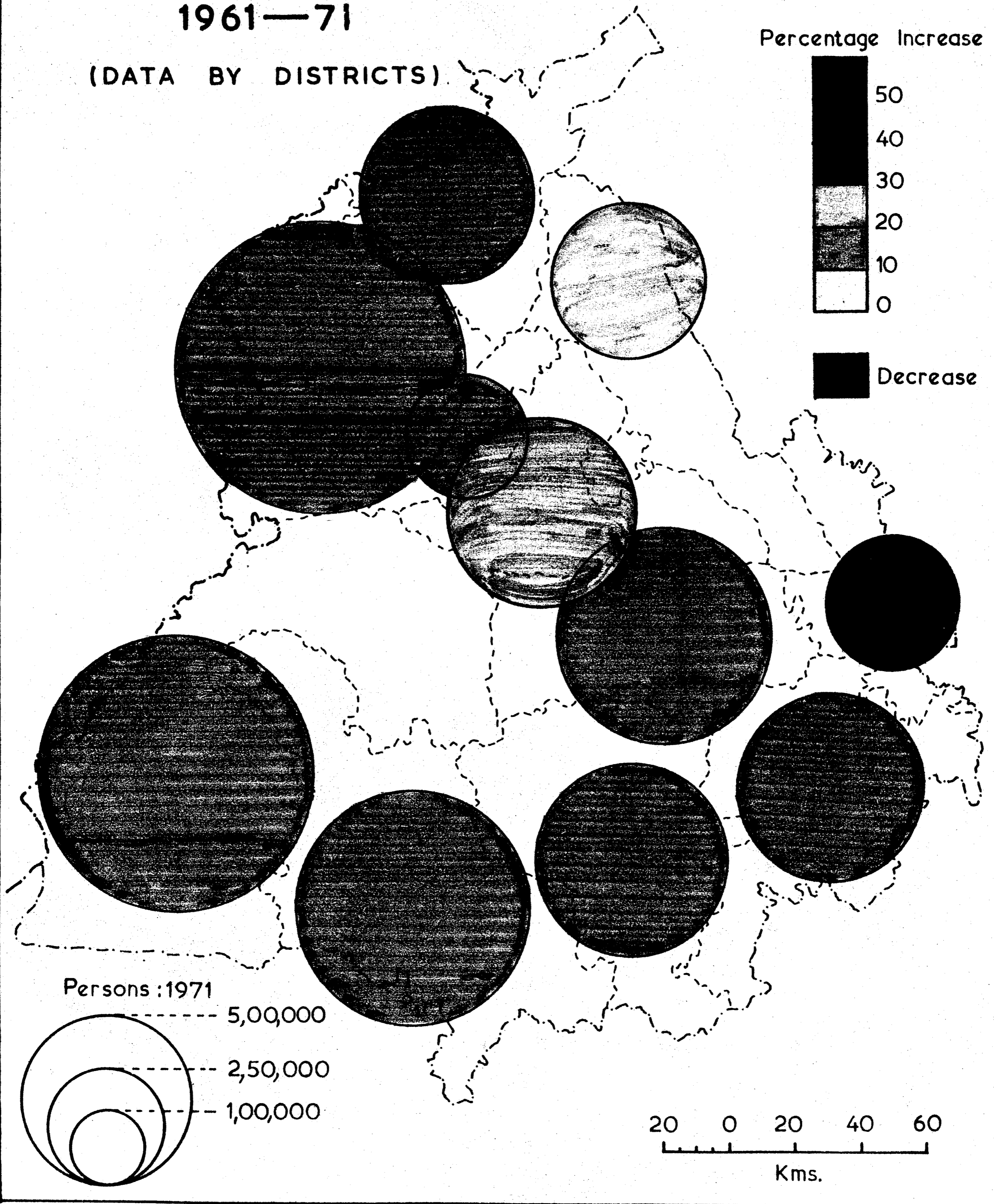






PUNJAB Growth of the Sikhs 1961—71

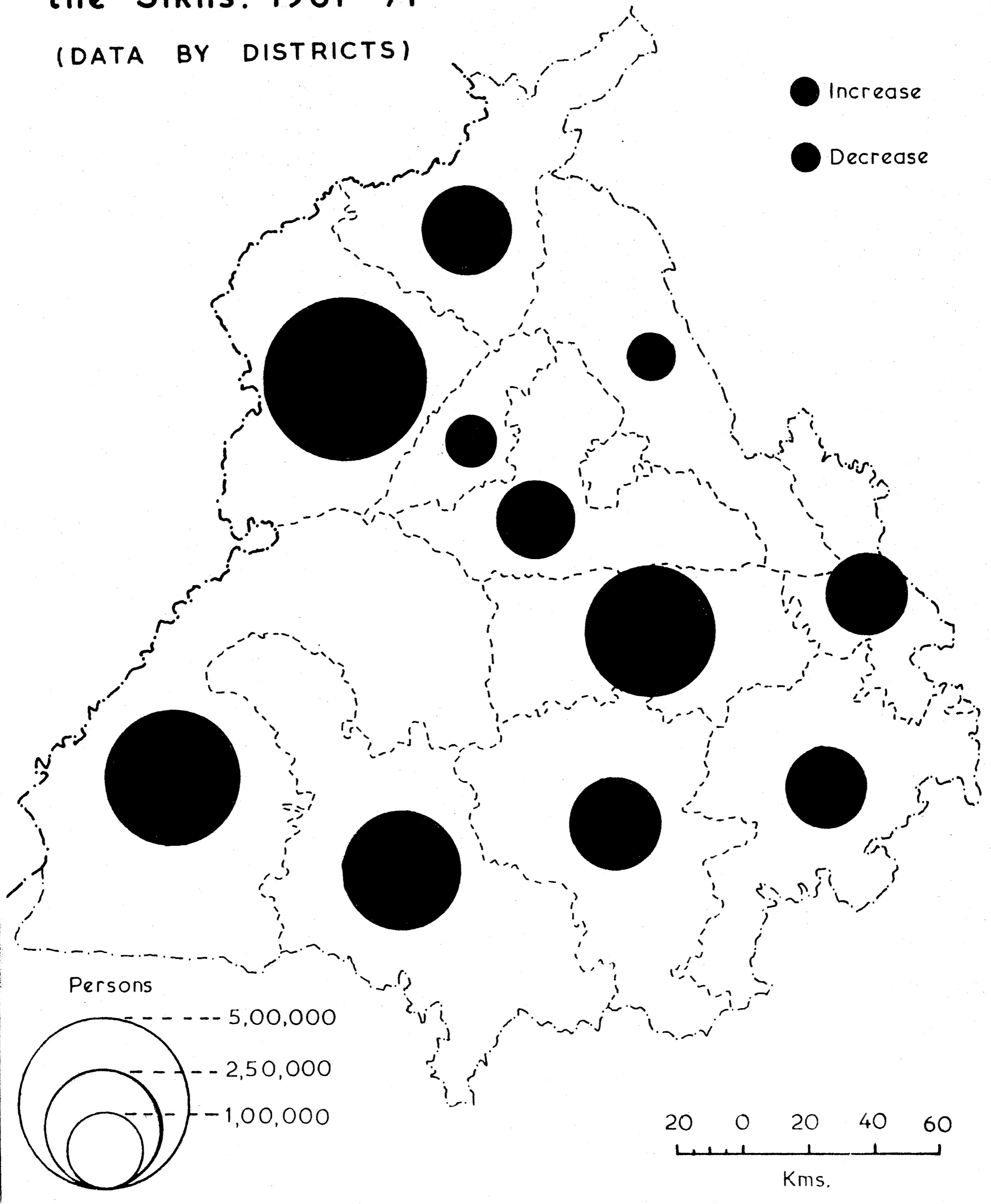
(DATA BY DISTRICTS)



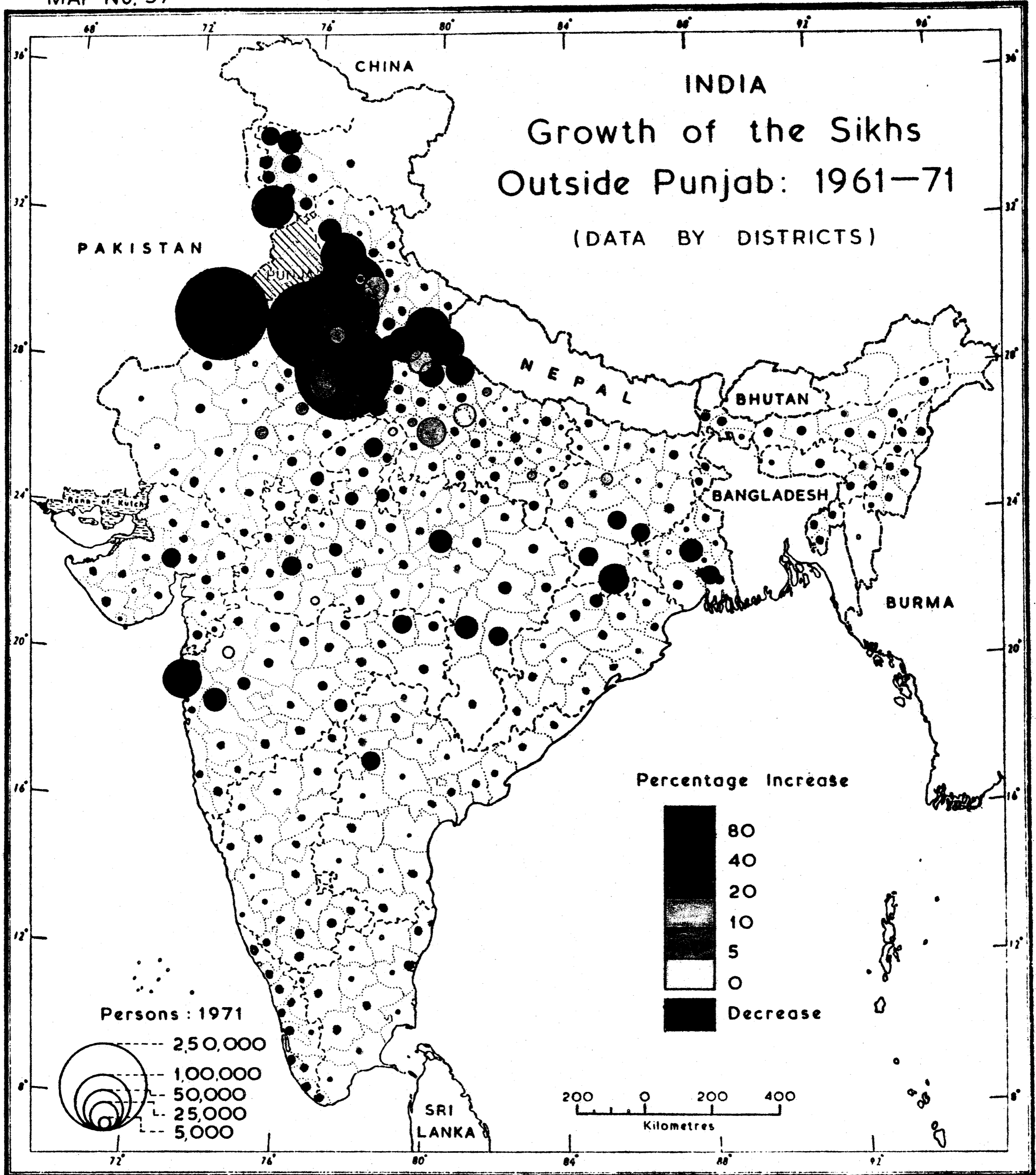
PUNJAB

Change in Number of the Sikhs: 1961-71

(DATA BY DISTRICTS)



MAP No. 57



MAP No. 58

