

Foreword

The Census figures based on religion released recently have come as a rude shock to the so-called self-styled secularists in the country. It is good that the disclosure that population of Muslims in the country was rising at a rate faster than that of Hindus in the country, was made by the figures released by the Census commissioner of India when a 'Secular' government was in the saddle at the centre. So far these monopolists of secularism had been dubbing such disclosures as RSS sponsored propaganda. But now they are at their wit's ends. Now they are not able to decide what to say, what to do.

To hide the facts they are trying to say that something went wrong here and something there. To falsify the stark reality, some revised figures were released and unconvincing explanations were offered. Yet the fact remained as prominent as ever that the rate of population growth of Muslims is much higher than that of the Hindus, particularly in some areas where majority is on the verge of being reduced into minority.

History is witness to the fact that whenever majority has been pushed to a position of minority, that country had to face the curse of partition. To which direction is India, already stung by partition, heading? It is the first duty of every vigilant citizen of this country to gauge the dangers which lay ahead because of the growing imbalance in the complex of our population and to work out a contingency plan to face this situation.

BJP publication has taken upon the task of presenting the views of some leading thinkers and writers of the country in a booklet form to draw the attention of the people towards the dangers of this imbalance in the complex of the population. We hope this attempt of ours go a long way in stirring up the minds of people to the dangers which lie ahead. This collection has culled a number of articles from leading newspapers of the Country.

Publisher

Brief Analysis

ONE of the unique features of Indian Census is that it captures the diverse cultural heritage of the country at the population enumeration and keeps its identity intact while collating and tabulating basic population data. The Primary Census Abstract for the Total Population, the Scheduled Castes Population and the Scheduled Tribes Population released earlier provided basic population characteristics of the total population by residence and sex for India, state, district, town and city level. The first report on religion data succinctly brings out the salient population characteristics by different religious affiliations of the population. Some of the key findings are summarized below.

Population of religious groups and their distribution and growth rate

At the national level, of 1028 million population, 828 million (80.5 percent) have returned their religion as Hindus followed by 138 million (13.4 percent) as Muslims and 24 millions (2.3 percent) Christians. 19 million (1.9 percent) persons follow Sikh religion; 8 million (0.8 percent) are Buddhists and 4.2 million (0.4 percent) are Jains as per the 2001 Census. In addition to these, 6.6 million belong to 'Other Religions and Persuasions' including tribal religions which are not part of the six main religions stated above. About seven lakh (or 0.7 million) persons have not stated their religion. This census presents the distribution by male and female population following different religions and persuasions since the 1961 Census and brings out trends for the last four decades and five censuses.

It also provides data on distribution and growth rate of

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population of religious communities since 1961, one based on data without making any adjustments and the other by excluding the figures for Assam and Jammu & Kashmir, where census could not be conducted in 1981 and 1991 respectively. When analyzed on the basis of adjusted data it may be seen that the Sikh population has recorded the lowest decadal growth rate of 16.9 percent during 1991-2001 and has also shown declining trend in growth since 1961-1971. The adjusted growth rate of Hindu population has come down from 22.8 percent in 1981-91 to 20.0 percent in 1991-2001. Similar trends are observed among Buddhists which declined from 36.0 percent in 1981-1991 to 23.2 percent during 1991-2001. If adjusted data is considered, the Muslim growth rate will decline from 32.9 percent during 1981-91 to 29.3 percent during 1991-2001, while for Christians it would

increase from 17.0 percent to 22.1 percent during 1991-2001. In addition, Jain population also has registered growth rate of 26.0 percent against very low growth rate of 4.6 percent during 1981-1991. Abnormally low population growth of Jains in the last decade appears to be an aberration when compared with the previous decades. Overall adjusted growth rate among the 'Other Religion and Persuasions' has been very high during 1991-2001 Census at 113.1 percent followed by 'Religion Not Stated' (75.1 percent). In brief, emergence of 'Other Religions and Persuasions' is one of the key findings of Census 2001. No effort has been made to interpolate the religion data for Assam in 1981 and Jammu and Kashmir in 1991, although this could have been another way of making comparisons. **The data**

users, therefore, should adopt caution and be careful before drawing any conclusions in respect of trends in the proportions and growths at All India level. It present population distribution by different religious communities among states and union territories since 1961 and bring out patterns of cultural diversity in the Indian Union. It may be highlighted here that all the major religious communities are enumerated in all the States and union territories except Jains which were not returned in the smallest Union territory of the country, the Lakshadweep, at the 2001 Census.

At the national level among all religions the proportion of child population stands at 15.9 percent in 2001 Census. Muslim population records the highest proportion of population in the age group 0-6 at 18.7 percent followed by Other Religions and Persuasions (18.0 percent).

Percentage of child population in the age group 0-6 to total population

It presents the proportion of population in the age group 0-6 to total population by religious communities at India, State and Union territories for 2001 Census. This provides a proxy estimate of the relative position of fertility among different religious communities within the state as well as across the states. At the national level among all religions the proportion of child population stands at 15.9 percent in 2001 Census. Muslim population records the highest proportion of population in the age group 0-6 at 18.7 percent followed by Other Religions and Persuasions (18.0 percent). The lowest proportion of population in this age group is seen among Jains at 10.6 percent preceded by Sikhs at 12.8 percent. In fact barring the Muslims and Other Religions and Persuasions, remaining religious communities have returned lower proportion in this age group as compared to the national average.

The given figures attempt to explore if there exists a

relationship between female literacy rate and proportion of child population age 0-6 among various religious groups. The variable child population can be assumed to be a reasonable proxy for fertility levels for the recent period preceding the census. Generally it has been argued that in developing countries high female literacy rate usually has a positive dampening effect on lowering fertility, other factors being constant. Thus there is a negative relationship between female literacy (a minimum level of educational level) and fertility. The slope would move from left to right and the gradient steep when the female literacy rate moves from a low to a high level if the fertility declined. This is clearly brought out for all the six religious groups. The level of proportion of child population age 0-6 is not the same for each of the religious groups for corresponding female literacy rate but is definitely showing a negative relationship as female literacy rate increases for all the religious groups. This indeed is a positive sign and shows that irrespective of religious affiliations, investments, creation of background environment and facilities leading to improving female literacy would prove to be beneficial in lowering fertility faster and as a long term stable solution.

Jain population, have clearly demonstrated that high female literacy has been a significant contributing factor among others, such as, their high urbanization and ascetic beliefs, leading to the lowest overall proportion of child population age 0-6 (10.6 percent). In several districts this proportion is well below 10 percent. The Sikh population also shows a similar trend and their fertility appears to be lower than other populations except possibly Jains. On the other hand Muslim population has higher proportion of children age 0-6 (18.7 percent) and the slope is less steep, say for example, when compared to Hindus. This is clearly reflected in the overall lower female literacy rate for Muslim women and possibly of its improvement in recent years. The past legacy of low female Muslim literacy, which is to some extent true even for segments of the Hindu population, such as the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes among them, has had possibly a (negative) role to play in not accelerating the pace of fertility decline. It is therefore imperative that

governments invest in improving the overall female literacy, particularly for the Muslims and sections of the Hindu society and these communities in turn need to respond positively and faster than ever before and remove if there exists any female bias in educating their women - girls and adolescents both. This is one definite proactive step to improve the status of women in India by empowering them across the religious group in the long run. While these trends on the relationship between female literacy and proportion of child population age 0-6 are clearly visible and discernible from the 2001 Census data on religion, it would be prudent for the policy makers and planners to examine such issues in greater depth and isolate the influence of various other factors before jumping to firm conclusions.

In fact barring the Muslims and Other Religions and Persuasions, remaining religious communities have returned lower proportion in this age group as compared to the national average.

At the state level, proportion of population among Hindus brings out the fact that the highest proportion of population in the age group 0-6 is in Bihar followed by Rajasthan at around 20 percent and the lowest is in Kerala at 10.8 percent. Among Muslims, Haryana has the highest proportion of population in the age group 0-6 (24.5 percent). Eight states namely Uttaranchal, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Meghalaya, have more than 20 percent child population among Muslims. Muslims in Tamil Nadu have the lowest proportion of population in the age group 0-6 (12.9 percent). Jammu & Kashmir (15.4 percent), Sikkim (13.2 percent), Mizoram (10.8 percent), Chattisgarh (15.5 percent), Gujarat (15.8 percent), Andhra Pradesh (14.9 percent), Lakshwadeep (15.5 percent), Kerala (15.0 percent) and Pondicherry (13.8 percent) have recorded below national average proportion of population in the age 0-6. Among the major states Orissa accounts for maximum child population in

the age group 0-6 (17.8 percent) while Maharashtra has the lowest (10.3 percent) among Christians.

Low fertility among the Sikh population can be gauged by the fact that twenty one states and union territories have child population proportion below 12 percent among Sikhs. Of these, nine states have less than 10 percent child population. Sikhs in Rajasthan account for the highest proportion of child population (15.1 percent). All the states fall below the national average of 15.9 percent of the child population.

Proportion of population in the age group 0-6 among the Jains reveals that among the major states, Karnataka accounts for highest proportion of 12 percent which is far below the national average. Gujarat has the lowest proportion of 9.2 percent. Low fertility trend among the Jains is evident from the fact that except two states all other states have child population proportion below 14 percent. Jains have reported the lowest child population 9.2 percent in Gujarat followed by West Bengal (9.6 percent) among the major states. As regards 'Other Religions and Persuasions', in Bihar, this proportion of population in the age group 0-6 is 20.3 percent while in 16 states and union territories proportion of child population is above 15.0 percent.

Mizoram has returned highest proportion of child population among Buddhists (20.5 percent) in the age group 0-6 followed by Uttar Pradesh (19.9 percent). As many as twelve states and union territories have higher proportion of child population than the national average among the Buddhists population. However in Maharashtra the Buddhists have child population of 14.1 percent while in Jammu & Kashmir this proportion is 11.7 percent.

Among the major states, Tamil Nadu has a distinct and secular fertility pattern as none of the religious communities are having more than 13 percent population in the age group 0-6 and the range varies from the lowest 10.4 percent among Sikhs to 12.9 percent in Muslims. Thus the message and practice of fertility limitation is widely dispersed and proportion of child has permeated to all religious communities. □

Right on course

Arun Shourie

Readers will recall that after the reports that he had sent to the President and to successive prime ministers as governor of West Bengal had failed to adduce even letters of acknowledgement, TV Rajeswar, at present the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, had gone public with his warnings. He had warned that the way we were shutting our eyes, a real prospect had arisen that, after Pakistan and Bangladesh, a third Islamic Republic would be carved out in the sub-continent. In important articles in *The Hindustan Times*, he had drawn pointed attention to the districts bordering Bangladesh, and the vast and strategic region whose demographic composition was getting changed.

He had written, *inter alia*, "Muslims in India accounted for 9.9 per cent (of India's population) in 1951, 10.8 per cent in 1971 and 11.3 per cent in 1981, and presumably about 12.1 per cent in 1991. The present population ratio of Muslims is calculated to be 28 per cent in Assam and 25 per cent in West Bengal.

In 1991, the Muslim population in the border districts of West Bengal accounted for 56 per cent in South and North Parganas, 48 per cent in Nadia, 52 per cent in Murshidabad, 54 per cent in Malda and about 60 per cent in Islampur sub-division of West Dinajpur.

A study of the border belt of West Bengal yields some telling statistics: 20-40 per cent villages in the border districts are said to be predominantly Muslim. There are indications that the concentration of the minority community, including the Bangladesh immigrants, in the villages has resulted in the

majority community moving to urban centres. Several towns in the border districts are now predominantly inhabited by the majority community but surrounded by villages mostly dominated by the minority community. Lin Piao's theory of occupying the villages before overwhelming the cities comes to mind, though the context is different. However, the basic factor of security threat in both the cases is the same."

Furthermore, he had urged us to look beyond Bengal and Assam, and to look at the region as a whole: "...Figures have been given showing the concentration of Muslim population in the districts of West Bengal bordering Bangladesh, starting from 24 Parganas and going up to Islampur of West Dinajpur district, and their population being well over 50 per cent of the population.

The Kishanganj district (of Bihar), which was part of Purnea district earlier, which is contiguous to the West Bengal area, also has a majority of Muslim population.

The total population of the districts of South and North 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, Nadia, Malda and West Dinajpur adds up to 27,337,362. If we add the population of Kishanganj district of Bihar of 986,672, the total comes to 28,324,034. (All figures are based on the 1991 Census.) This mass of land with a population of nearly 2.8 crores has a Muslim majority. The total population of West Bengal in 1991 was 67.9 million and of these, 28.32 million are concentrated in the border districts, with about 16-17 million population of minority community being concentrated in this area. This crucial tract of land in West Bengal and Bihar, lying along the Ganges/Hughly and west Bangladesh, with a population of over 28 million, with Muslims constituting a majority, should give cause for anxiety for any thinking Indian."

From these figures, he had advanced two warnings. First, "There is a distinct danger of another Muslim country, speaking predominantly Bengali, emerging in the eastern part of India in

the future, at a time when India might find itself weakened politically and militarily." And second that the danger is as grave even if that third Islamic State does not get carved out as a full-fledged country:

"Let us look at the map of Eastern India-starting from the North 24 Parganas district, proceeding through Nadia, Murshidabad, Malda and West Dinajpur before entering the narrow neck of land lying through Raiganj and Dalkola of Islampur sub-division before passing through the Kishanganj district of East Bihar to enter Siliguri. Proceed further and take a look at the north Bengal districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar before entering Assam, and its districts of Dhubri, Goalpara, Bonaigaon, Kokrajhar and Barpeta. A more

Table I
Percentage growth of population between 1991 and 2001 in Assam districts bordering Bangladesh

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Dhubri	29.5	7.1	22.9
Goalpara	31.7	14.4	23.0
Hailakandi	27.2	13.3	20.9
Karimganj	29.4	14.5	21.9
Cachar	24.6	16.0	18.9

sensitive region in Asia is difficult to locate...."

The figures of the 2001 Census show that the dreaded prospect is right on course. Take first the districts of Assam that border Bangladesh. Table I gives the decadal growth of Muslim and non-Muslim population in the districts that Rajeswar had listed.

Reports have also pointed out that Bangladeshi infiltrators have been making their way into four other districts-Barpeta, Naogaon, Marigaon and Darrang.

The Census bears out the intelligence reports. Table II gives the percentage growth of Muslim and non-Muslim population in these districts.

In Assam as a whole, the number of Muslims has increased between 1991 and 2001 by 29.3 per cent. The number of non-Muslims has increased by 14.8 per cent. The result is that the percentage of Muslims to the total population in these areas, and

Table II
Percentage growth of population between 1991 and 2001 in four other districts of Assam

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Barpeta	25.8	10.0	18.9
Naogaon	32.1	11.3	22.2
Marigaon	27.2	16.3	21.2
Darrang	28.9	9.6	15.8

therefore in Assam as a whole, has increased exactly the way Rajeswar had apprehended. Table III indicates the figures.

Table II
Muslims as a percentage of population in districts of Assam

Districts bordering Bangladesh	1991	2001
Dhubri	70.4	74.3
Goalpara	60.2	63.6
Hailakandi	54.8	57.6
Karimganj	49.2	62.3
Cachar	34.5	36.1
Four other districts		
Barpeta	56.1	59.4
Naogaon	47.2	51.0
Marigaon	46.0	47.6
Darrang	32.0	35.6
TOTAL ASSAM	28.4	30.9

Next, recall the districts in West Bengal to which Rajeswar had drawn attention-South and North Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad, Malda, Dinajpur and the rest. The figures for these are truly alarming. Table IV indicates the way population of Muslims and non-Muslims has grown in these districts between 1991 and 2001.

As a consequence, Muslims now constitute 64 per cent of the population in Murshidabad, close to 50 per cent in Malda, close to 40 per cent in South and North Dinajpur...

Table IV
Percentage growth of population between 1991 and 2001 in districts of West Bengal

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
South 24 Parganas	34.2	11.5	23.8
North 24 Parganas	23.0	22.6	22.7
Nadia	21.9	18.8	19.5
Murshidabad	28.4	16.4	23.8
Malda	30.7	19.4	24.7
Kolkata	19.0	0.7	3.8
South & North Dinajpur	31.9	22.7	26.1
Jalpaiguri	31.3	20.4	21.5
Cooch Behar	18.5	12.8	14.2
TOTAL WEST BENGAL	25.8	16.3	17.8

And the districts that Rajeswar had listed in Bihar present the same forbidding picture. In Kishanganj, the place that has sent Taslimuddin to Parliament, Muslims now constitute close to 68 per cent of the population. In Purnea, Araria and Katihar they are 37 to 42 per cent. In these districts the population of Muslims is growing a quarter to three-quarters faster than the population of non-Muslims. And these are precisely the districts in which Bangladeshis are settling down. Table VII shows who

Table V
Muslims as a percentage of total population in districts of West Bengal

	1991	2001
South 24 Parganas	29.9	33.2
North 24 Parganas	24.2	24.2
Nadia	24.9	25.4
Murshidabad	61.4	63.7
Malda	47.5	49.7
Kolkata	17.7	20.3
South & North Dinajpur	36.8	38.4
Jalpaiguri	10.0	10.8
Cooch Behar	23.4	24.2
TOTAL WEST BENGAL	23.6	25.2

determines who shall win elections.

What accounts for the differences in the growth of Muslim and non-Muslim population? That the Muslims of these areas are exceptionally fecund? Is it that non-Muslims of these areas are suddenly seeing the light and embracing Islam? Is it that Muslims from other parts of India are flooding these non-too-prosperous districts?

Table VI

Percentage growth of population between 1991 and 2001 in districts of Bihar

	Non-		Total
	Muslims	Muslims	
Kishanganj	35.2	25.0	31.7
Araria	36.1	32.4	34.0
Purnea	44.1	30.8	35.4
Katihar	39.7	25.4	31.1

Or that the growth in their numbers is being topped by inundation from Bangladesh?

You may quarrel over the answer, but you can be certain of one thing: secularists will dump the figures themselves! India: the State of Denial.

(The author is a former Union Minister)

... And the Congress says

IT is because of poverty and illiteracy that some sections of the society belonging to all religion do not follow family planning. It has nothing to do with patriotism and religion.

- Ms Grija Vyas
(Congress Spokesperson)

FINALLY, the time is now ripe to consider national legislation, after generating broad consensus, to control population growth. All the individual and state-level policy mixes should be threaded together in one national comprehensive legislation. It would contain legislative measures to motivate poor couples to marry late, provide incentives for male and female sterilisation, denial of government jobs to those marrying before 18 and so on and so forth.

-Abhishek Singhvi
(Indian National Congress)

Don't Blame the Census men

Balbir K Punj

THERE is no worse example of shooting the messenger rather than the message in the Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil giving a dressing down to the Census Commissioner Jayant Kumar Banthia for what the 2001 census figures have revealed. Forget the Census Commissioner. Why is the Government and the fellow travelers so hell bent on propagating the myth that the Muslim growth rate is not high and whatsoever increase has taken place in their numbers is because they are poor, backward and lack in education?

Facts. In Kerala, Muslim literary rate is 89.4 percent, a little below 90.9 percent of overall literacy but their growth rate is enormously high at 16 percent as against nine percent for Kerala as whole and 7.29 per cent for Hindus. In Maharashtra Muslim literacy is 78.1 percent better than over all literacy of 76.9 percent, yet Muslims are growing at 35 percent as against 23 for Maharashtra as whole. In Chattisgarh, Muslim literary is way ahead at 82.5 percent as against state's overall 64.7 percent; but so is there growth rate at 37 percent nearly more than double of state's average 18.3 percent.

In case of Orissa, the Muslim rate of growth is 31.88 per cent, almost twice the corresponding figure of 15.86 for Hindus. For West Bengal the figures for Hindus and Muslims are 14.18 and 25.91 per cent respectively. The Hindus' rate of increase in population against that of Muslims in brackets for some other States is: Tripura 14.86 (29.49), Assam 14.95 (29.30), Uttar Pradesh 17.82 (27.50), Madhya Pradesh 10.43 (17.02), and Gujarat 22.13 (27.33).

Are poverty and illiteracy alone responsible for this phenomenon? No. The growth of Muslim population is a universal phenomenon. The monumental study Religious Demography of India (Centre for Policy Research, Chennai), notes: "The share of Muslims in the population of the world has grown significantly from 12.4 percent in 1900 to 18.7 percent in 1990. They are the only religious group to have made such a large gain in their share of the world in the course of 20th century".

In fact, Muslims are the only community, who are extremely conscious of the "merits" of this population burgeoning (they are least interested in its demerits). You must have come across statement from Muslims priding Islam as the fastest growing religion of the world. Fastest growing, however, doesn't mean the religion is so fascinating that people are thronging to join it as people in Punjab joined Khalsa of Guru Govind Singh during the Mughal rule. Fastest growing means either reproducing fast or gaining recruit through marriages, a mode of proselytization encouraged in Islam as holy duty.

Nor is this phenomenon something new to India. When Census of India was introduced by the British in 1881 Hindus measured 75.093 percent (79 percent along with other religionists of Indian origin) in undivided India, a percentage that declined slowly 69.457 (73 along with other religionists of Indian origin) percent in 1941. The Muslim percentage share, in the corresponding period, shot up from 19.97 percent to 24.28 percent. (Religious Demography of India. P.21) Thus within 60 years, the Muslim Hindu-Muslim difference was lessened by 10 percentage points. No wonder, this had extremely important role in causing the partition of country.

However, many Muslims hold that government of India has always kept the real number of Muslims a secret. Ahmed Bukhari, when he spoke of launching an all-Muslim party last year in New Delhi's Ram Lila Maidan, exhorted that Muslims who constitute 25 percent of India's population can't be left at

the mercy of 'Secularism'. But what happens when such views come from mainstream Muslims?

K.M. Yusuf, former judge of Calcutta High Court on being appointed the Chairman of West Bengal Minority Commission was interviewed by Rasheeda Bhagat (The Hindu- Friday, October 1, 1999).

K.M. Y- When the Census is done; large chunks of Muslim population are left uncounted... in the last three census exercise.

R.B. - Would you agree with the point of view that the real percentage of Muslim population in India is about 25 percent?

K.M.Y- There is no denial. It may be more. Anyway, it cannot be less than 20 per cent. It could be 25 percent. I don't say like some others that it is 30 per cent. It is a quite substantial chunk.

The pseudo secularists may claim that as Hindu population is over 80 crores while Muslim is only 13 crores, the higher growth figure for the latter would not radically change this demographic gap for quite some decades. But it is not the demographic change alone that we are concerned. **The reason behind the continuing poverty levels of Muslim population that these and other figures reveal, is damaging to the Muslims themselves if the community's leaders do not come forward and think out of the groove to which they are accustomed.**

The small family norm alone could enable them to afford better education, better nutrition and better life. This does not require any statistics to confirm. It is part of our national population policy. But while Sikhs, Jains, Christians, Buddhists etc have all more or less followed it, only the Muslim community refuses to do so? Worse, 'secular' outfits like the Congress by maintaining a huge silence about this refusal for fear of vote bank loss, continually push the Muslim community into the ghetto of poverty and deprivation.

The census statistics reveal more about the dismal situation

of the Muslim community. For instance, the percentage of child population (age 0 to six) at 18.7 is the highest among Muslims as compared to all other communities. Significantly that percentage is lowest (10.6) per cent among the Jains who also form one of the better off communities in the country. The link between population norm and prosperity (lower the population growth the greater the level of prosperity) is significantly established by comparing the factors like the proportion of the child population, working population, female literacy rate, work participation rate and income levels. So far as child population ratio is concerned it is very low among Jains, Sikhs and Christians. Among all these three communities the female literacy rate is very high (90.6, 63.1 and 76.2).

The picture all this draws up should alarm any civil society if it is truly concerned about the welfare of Muslim community. How much is its self-isolation its refusal to send girls to schools, its madrasa centered education, its comparatively large child population (that is the family size) responsible for this? Why are the 'secularists' reluctant to raise these questions? Why is it Muslim leadership alone is blaming others while other minorities (Jains, Christians, Buddhists, Parses) do not enter the blame game? Even among the Muslims, why is it sections like the Dawoodi Bohras (normally very conservative in their religious beliefs) are industrious, enterprising and better off and not other Muslims? Does it not show that it is not any perceived grievance rather than refusal to take to modern education and enterprise that is at the heart of the issue for Muslim community?

In fact the Census exercise should be modified to gain far more knowledge on the economic, educational and attitudinal status of people so that we could gain more in depth knowledge about the real issues that make some people go forward while others go backward in the same environment. If you claim that your religion forbids you from having a bank account because that involves accepting interest, can you blame the state for your isolation from modern economic enterprise?

There are several such attitudinal issues among different communities and the country has a right to know which of them add to their isolation. For instance, it has been revealed that in Moradabad district among the Muslim population there has been a deliberate refusal to get their children vaccinated against polio. As a result polio has already struck the area but there is a conspiracy of silence and even acquisition by community and political leadership instead of heading off this superstition boldly.

Then there is the question of immigration. The demographic situation in several sensitive areas is changing radically - you cannot blame the census officials for revealing this truth. The case of Assam is already well known over the last 30 years. It is now evident that in some Border States like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, the Muslim population growth could only be explained by huge illegal immigration. In HP it is 34.08 per cent, in both Tripura and Assam it is above 29 per cent. In Nagaland Muslim population has grown by 150 per cent, in Arunachal by 180 per cent mainly due to illegal immigration. In some districts of Assam like Goalpara and Morigaon, Hindus have already been reduced from majority to minority due to Bangladeshi infiltration.

The AASU General Secretary A.K. Bhuyan had commented "Indigenous Assamese students who form 28 per cent of population are facing a demographic attack" in these districts. He says in 40 out of 126 Assembly constituencies Muslims call the shots; it would be in 50 per cent of these constituencies at this rate. This is not a question of Hindus versus Muslims, but Indians versus Bangladeshis. In the context of the rise of fundamentalism in Bangladesh, the continuous high decibel anti-India rabble rousing that is going on there almost every day, should we shoot the Census Commissioner or calmly analyze what the reality he presents?

(The author is a journalist and MP in Rajya Sabha)

We must come to our Census

A Surya Prakash

COMING under pressure from a government that has made minorityism its credo, the census authorities have made 'adjustments' to the religion census data released by them a week ago, thus enabling fraudulent misinterpretation of census data by a few pseudo secular mischief makers in our media and politics. However, despite the mischief, there are some stark facts vis-a-vis the Muslim community that is staring us in the face.

While it is true that the census officials goofed up while calculating the decadal growth rate of different religious groups between 1991-2001, there can be no dispute about the data in regard to India's total population, the population of each state and the percentage share of each religious group in the national population as of 2001. These figures can easily be compared to the religion data available after the census of 1961 and 1971 when, like in 2001, no state was left out of the census operation.

Here are some cold facts about which there can be no dispute: According to census authorities, India's total population as of 2001 is 1028 million. The total number of Hindus in the country is 827 million, which works out to 80.50 per cent. The number of Muslims in India is 138 million, which is 13.40 per cent of the population. Now compare these figures with census data of 1961 and the following figures and trends emerge:

In 1961, India's population was 439 million, of which 83.40 per cent were Hindus. In 2001, the country's population is 1028 of which Hindus constitute 80.50 per cent. In other words, there is a three percentage point drop in the Hindu population in India over the last 40 years. On the other hand, there were

The demographic behaviour of the Muslims and their resistance to the national family planning programme is strange particularly when one looks at the demographic behaviour of other religious minorities who are much smaller in number.

46.90 million Muslims in India constituting 10.70 per cent of the population in 1961. Their number has since risen to 138 million in 2001 and they now account for 13.40 per cent of the population. Which means that while Hindus have registered a three per cent drop, the percentage of Muslims in the national population has risen by 2.70 per cent during this period.

The demographic behaviour of the Muslims and their resistance to the national family planning programme is strange particularly when one looks at the demographic behaviour of other religious minorities who are much

smaller in number. For example, there were 10.70 million Christians in 1961 constituting 2.40 per cent of the national population. There are now 24 million Christians and their share in the national population has dropped to 2.30 per cent. Similarly, the Sikhs constituted 1.8 per cent of the population in 1961 and 40 years hence their share in the national population has risen marginally to 1.9 per cent. The Buddhists' share in the national population has risen from 0.7 per cent to 0.8 per cent while that of the Jains has shrunk from 0.5 per cent to 0.4 per cent.

The less said about the Parsis the better. This religious community, which is a minuscule minority, is now an endangered species with its population dwindling alarmingly from 76,000 in 1991 to just 69,000 in 2001. The decline in Parsi population is so precipitous that it has prompted the Census Commissioner to recommend some urgent governmental action to save the community.

So, if the Hindus, who constitute the majority and religious

minorities like the Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Parsis can take to family planning and bring down their respective percentages in the national population or at least contain it to 1961 levels, why cannot the Muslims do it? A standard pseudo-secular argument is that religious minorities breed at rates much higher than the majority.

It is also argued that religious minorities suffer from insecurities, and that in turn triggers higher growth rates. If this be true, how come none of this applies to Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Parsis? And how is it that Muslims have the highest growth rates even in Muslim majority areas like Jammu & Kashmir and Lakshadweep?

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The other argument is that female literacy has a direct bearing on fertility rates. Empirical studies show that where female literacy is high, fertility rates are low. But where do the Muslims stand vis-a-vis literacy? Census data show that the overall literacy rate and the female literacy rate is the lowest among Muslims. This community is below the national average on both counts. While female literacy is over 60 per cent in all other religious minorities, it is just 50 per cent among Muslims.

Strangely, this trend is apparent even in Jammu & Kashmir and Lakshadweep. In J&K the literacy rate among Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and Jains, who are all religious minorities in the State, is over 70 per cent, but the Muslim literacy rate is a pathetic 47.30 per cent. The female literacy rate is around or over 60 per cent among Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and Jains but just 43 per cent among Muslims. The Muslims are lagging behind others in the literacy charts in Lakshadweep as well.

The release of religion census data by the Census Commissioner has shocked the pseudo-secular establishment that is generally averse to dissemination of information that would, in its shortsighted view, disturb its cosy relationship with the minorities.

This is because gender equality, which is at the core of our constitutional scheme, has not permeated the Muslim community. When will Indian Muslims fulfill this constitutional mandate?

The arguments being advanced in defence of the demographic behaviour of the Muslims are, therefore, spurious. How is it that the Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists who each account for two per cent or less of the nation's population are part of the national effort to contain population growth but the Muslims are not? For how many more centuries will we be hearing about Muslim grievances and reasons for being outside the mainstream?

The release of religion census data by the Census Commissioner has shocked the pseudo-secular establishment that is generally averse to dissemination of information that would, in its shortsighted view, disturb its cosy relationship with the minorities. The Congress too has been regurgitating bogus data to show Muslims in better light. Its spokespersons need to be reminded of the fascist measures adopted by the party to forcibly sterilise Muslim men in the mid 1970s. Fellow Muslim citizens should read the findings of the Shah Commission to know more about the quick fire methods adopted by the Congress to check them demographically.

A ruthless administration under Indira Gandhi's dictatorship launched the infamous "nasbandi" programme and imposed family planning targets on Government employees including school teachers and policemen in 1975-77. The result was the forced sterilisation of citizens in the reproductive age group, in particular Muslims. In many areas, like in Nuh village in

The Government's pusillanimity on the family planning front has perilously affected India's economic growth. This is the single biggest reason why nearly 300 million people are still below the poverty line. The time has come to end this pussyfooting.

Haryana, police battalions surrounded entire villages, pulled out Muslim men and led them to vasectomy camps. Such was the terror unleashed by the Indira regime that many Government officials and chief ministers not only struck at hapless rural communities but also fudged figures to show how successful they were in sterilising the population in their states. It is strange to see spokespersons of this very same party wear the pseudo-secular garb and fudge figures yet again, this time to show that the Muslim growth rate is "coming down"!

The Government's pusillanimity on the family planning front has perilously affected India's economic growth. This is the single biggest reason why nearly 300 million people are still below the poverty line. The time has come to end this pussyfooting. The Census Commissioner's report is not a wake up call as the cliché goes; it is an alarm bell.

Leaders of the Muslim community must be made accountable. The Indian state must ignore the imaginary grouses of this community and the fraudulent explanations offered by its spokespersons and their pseudo-secular cohorts, and chalk out a plan to enforce family planning uniformly across communities. If it fails to do so, the demographic evidence that is now before us will only widen the chasm between the majority and this maladjusted minority.

(The author is a renowned columnist)

Courtesy : 'The Pioneer'

Census and Hindu sensibilities

S Gurumurthy

NATION wide census has, for the first time, come out with statistics on religious demography in India. That the Muslim population in India is moving ahead of the rest is undeniable. Whether it is rising by 36 per cent in a decade or 29 per cent, that is the question.

That all others - Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists put together - have risen only two-thirds as fast, too, is undisputed. The result: Continuous decline of those adhering to Indian religions. Plain arithmetic tells us that the numbers of those adhering to Indian religions are going down decade after decade. From 87.24 per cent in 1951, the followers of Indic religions came down to 86.87 per cent in 1961; 86.60 per cent in 1971; 85.86 per cent in 1981; further down to 85.09 per cent in 1991, and now even less at 84.21 per cent.

In contrast, the share of Muslims is rising. It has risen from 10.43 per cent in 1951 to 13.43 per cent in 2001, a growth of three per cent as against a fall of 3.03 per cent among the adherents of Indian religions. In absolute numbers, Islamists have gone up from 3.76 crore to 13.82 crore. The story has another side, a contrast, across the border. Look at Pakistan, a declared Islamic state to our west, and Bangladesh, an undeclared one on the east. The adherents of Indian religions in the population of Pakistan are down from 11 per cent before 1947 to less than one per cent today. In Bangladesh, they are down from 29 per cent to just about 10 per cent, that is, to one-third in just four decades. Result, Pakistan is totally Islamic and Bangladesh, almost totally. We need not go to a seer to know

Yes, given their experience, Hindus have a reason to feel greatly concerned by this trend. For Hindus, India is the only geography left on earth. Muslims populate 16 countries totally and in as many and more, they dominate. A non-Muslim cannot practice his faith with honour in these Islamic states.

the grave implications of these developments near our compound wall.

Just five decades back, the Hindus lost a third of their territory because of changes in the religious demography of undivided India. Yet the idea of religious demography still remains alien to the Hindu DNA. Religious demography is the theological manifest of Christianity and Islam and is so natural to them. They invented the critical idea of head count in religion, something which the Hindus never knew and have never understood. Headcount as part of religious faith, from where the idea of religious demography originated, resulted in unbelievable changes in the geography

and even history of nations.

The Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), a Chennai-based research organisation, brought out the first ever book on religious demography in India. Taking undivided India as one geographic unit, the CPS found that in the first nine decades of the 20th century, those who adhere to Indian religions in the subcontinent came down by a whopping 11 per cent. The CPS had classified as adherents of Indian religions all Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists aggregated in the Indian Constitution for common civil law. Such steep decline in less than a century is unprecedented. The latest census confirms the decline is a continuing story.

Yes, given their experience, Hindus have a reason to feel greatly concerned by this trend. For Hindus, India is the only geography left on earth. Muslims populate 16 countries totally and in as many and more, they dominate. A non-Muslim cannot

practice his faith with honour in these Islamic states. If that Muslim world is too remote, look at something nearer home, Pakistan and Bangladesh, part of the Hindu geography till yesterday. Look at Iran, where Zend Avesta, the fifth Veda, was born; Afghanistan, the home of Gandhari; Iraq where Buddhism reigned. That Hinduism and Buddhism existed there is evidenced by dead and decaying monuments.

Why, look at Kashmir, which has become fully Islamic, cleansed off Hindus, all under "secular" India and its Constitution! So, even the Constitution turns impotent against Islamic demographic invasion. Clearly, that the Islamic tradition tends to eliminate other faiths is not a story of the past. Islam continues to be what it was despite times becoming modern and constitutions turning "secular".

So, justifiably, Hindus feel concerned. They will be fools if they do not. But the secularists are not just un-concerned; seem happy in fact. For, even if Muslim vote bank swells by infiltration, the seculars just see it as accretion to their political capital. This worries the Hindus even further. For, their history has established that when the Hindu population reduces in a geographic unit, that part disconnects them and also disconnects from India. Not only did they lose that geography, but so did India. This was true of Gandhari's Afghanistan, where Maharaja Ranjit Singh ruled 200 years back, equally true of Pakistan and Bangladesh yesterday, and as true of Kashmir today.

As a matter of fact, wherever the Muslim population attains dominance, the seculars themselves gladly recognise it as Islamic territory. The purest of seculars, the Marxists, carved out Malapuram for Islamists. Recognising the Islamic character of a territory within "secular" India is in itself "secular" and opposing it, communal! So see how district after district in the border areas of Assam and Bengal are changing in demographic profile, to Muslim majority ones because of Bangladeshi infiltration.

In line with the traditional Islamic way, Bangladesh has

cleared itself of most of its Hindus. They are now refugees in India. This cleansing has been continuously supplemented by mass illegal export of Muslims from Bangladesh into India, particularly into Assam and Bengal, turning districts after districts into Muslim majority ones. The only dispute about the number of Muslim infiltrators is whether they are 10 millions or 20. The nuclear warheads which Pakistan had put on missiles targeted at India are not the real danger to India. It is war risk. The real danger is the mass human bombs from Bangladesh which has concentrated in Islamic ghettos in India.

It is a demographic issue yes, but not just that. It is a grave security issue as well. With Bangladesh turning more Islamic and, therefore, militant, infiltrators from there are potential recruits for global and local jihad. The strike power of even a few thousand recruits for jihad can cause unmitigated damage to the nation, even to the world. Yet, the fraudulent secularism in India will not allow even an open discussion on infiltration as a security issue.

If "secular" polity is the safeguard for Muslims, is this good for them? Obviously, not. For, secularism cannot survive without a dominant Hindu majority. A nominal Hindu majority will not be able to protect secularism. Only a secure Hindu majority will trust secularism, an insecure Hindu majority will abandon it. That is why, rightly, on release of the census data, Mr Tarlochan Singh, the chairman of National Commission on Minorities, promptly advised Muslims leaders to persuade their followers to adopt family planning. It is time Muslims listened to people like Tarlochan Singh, who are their real friends, not their "secular" exploiters who treat them as ballot papers. We must congratulate Mr Tarlochan Singh for telling the truth bluntly. Will some enlightened Muslim leadership emerge to understand what the NCM chief says?

(The author is an economist)

Canards can't hide Muslim population explosion

By Shyam Khosla

HALF truths and blatant lies can't hide the stark reality that the Muslim population in India has shown a disproportionate growth as compared to Hindus and followers of other faiths of Indian origin, more so in the sensitive areas bordering Bangladesh and Nepal. The fierce political debate provoked by the religious demographic figures pertaining to Census 2001 has unfortunately obfuscated this significant aspect. The secular-liberal brigade has spread canards and indulged in RSS-bashing to derail the public discourse on massive infiltration from Bangladesh during the past two decades and more. They tried to hijack the issue by blaming the NDA government for collecting religion-based data during the last Census to serve the BJP's 'hidden agenda'. This charge is a manifestation of their closed minds and the liberty they take with facts. The fact is that the question about one's religion has been asked in each and every Census since the first regular Census conducted in 1881. What has happened in the latest Census is that because of the advanced technology available, the authorities were able to cross-tabulate data on religion by other variables like literacy, sex ratio, work-force status and the like. Although religion-based data was collected every 10 years, successive governments had suppressed the information on the premise that it was too explosive and sensitive. This time round, the Congress-led government released the data presumably because it couldn't apprehend its implications. How else to explain the alacrity with which it ordered that the data be "revised" (manipulated?) and sacked the Registrar General.

The Census report is replete with data showing that the growth of Muslim population in districts bordering Nepal and Bangladesh in UP, Bihar, Assam and West Bengal is alarming. That can't be only because of higher fertility rate among Muslims. The distorted secularism of NPA government prompted it to go back on its announcement on the floor of Parliament that there were 1.5 crore Bangladeshi infiltrators in the country on the laughable excuse that the information was based on "unofficial sources". NPA's sophistry convinced no one. The fact remains that millions of infiltrators live not only in states bordering Bangladesh but also in metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai. The government is in the denial mode because the Bangladeshi infiltrators constitute vote banks for the Congress and communist parties. It would be naïve to expect the communist-dominated "secularist" government to identify the infiltrators and deport them. The least the government can do is to identify and issue work permits to them. The migrants should not be allowed to acquire Indian citizenship by managing to get ration cards with the help of obliging political leaders. Let no one forget that at the current rate of growth, the Muslim population in the country will be more than that of Hindus in another 50 years. The Chennai-based Centre for Policy Studies has made this prediction based on facts and figures in its seminal study of Religious Demography of India. Who will then stop them from demanding another partition of the country on the ground that they can't live with kafirs?

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The allegation that the Registrar General "manipulated" the

data because he was an NDA-appointee is absurd and malicious. He was short-listed for the job when a communist-the late Inderjit Gupta-was the Union Home Minister. The Registrar General committed no crime. However, he did err in releasing data without underlining the fact that there was no Census in J&K in 1991 and in Assam in 1981 because of disturbed conditions in these states. He faithfully obeyed the government orders to release "revised" data that is no less disturbing. Even the "revised" data shows that Muslim population grew by 29.3 per cent during 1991-2001 as against 20 per cent growth in Hindu population. That means the Muslim population is increasing at a little less than 50 percentage points higher than the Hindus and will in due course overtake the latter. There is a strong case for taking effective measures to check the population explosion. Although there are fake Hindus like Lalu Yadav, who are proud of producing more than half a dozen children, no Hindu religious or social leader has dismissed family planning as un-Hindu. In fact, the BJP- whose mascot is Hindutva-is strongly in favour of family planning albeit without coercion. The BJP-led government had come up with several schemes of incentives and disincentives to make family planning a mass movement without any resistance from any Hindu outfit. To start with no one with more than two children should be allowed to seek any public office and government job.

Unfortunately, the Muslim community is still in the grip of mullahs who are dead set to keep them backward and uneducated. They want the Muslims to "produce more"-children, not food-so that they have a more strident voice in the polity on the strength of their numbers. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) that claims to represent Muslim interests has snubbed its Vice Chairman, Maulana Syed Kalbe Sadiq for daring to suggest that the Muslim community was willing to discuss steps to promote family planning. The Chairman of the AIMPLB, Maulana Raby Hasni Nadwi lost no time in declaring that family planning has no place in Islam. He went to the extent of making a palpably false claim that the

growth of Muslim population in India was lower than other communities. If he is referring to the higher rate of growth among Jains, let him be informed that more and more Jains are getting themselves registered as such, instead of under the larger social group of Hindus. Islamists go the extent of declaring family planning un-Islamic on the basis of their own interpretation of Shariat. Muslims can't have two sets of laws. National laws for their rights and Shariat laws to violate national policies. To say that Muslims produce more children because they are socially and educationally backward is to beg the question. Aren't they backward and illiterate because they have too many children to take care of? If the community fails to respond to the national needs, the government must move in to defuse the population bomb.

And a small question for the government to answer. Why has it not released figures of Kashmiri Pandits that were driven out of the Valley because of religious persecution? Most Kashmiri Pandits enrolled themselves as such during the Census and the records would show how many of them are still languishing as refugees in their own country.

(The author is a columnist)

Right from the 'Left's' mouth

THERE is certainly a problem in the presentation of the data. To present the data in an isolated manner, obfuscating the very facts the census brought out can provide an extremely misleading picture. The problem is not the data. The presentation was misleading, as the census appeared to be contradicting its own findings.

—Brinda Karat
(CPI-M)

Religious Demography of India'

A. F. Joshi, M. D. Srinivas and J. K. Bajaj

THE great timeless fact about India, besides the extraordinary fertility of her lands and numerousness of her people, is the homogeneity of her civilisation and culture. Perceptive observers of India from the earliest times have often acknowledged and commented upon the uniqueness of Indian ideas and institutions that pervade nearly every part of India. This cultural homogeneity has come under stress during the last several centuries. The stress has been especially acute during the last two hundred years or so with the ascendance of modern ideologies that tend to look upon the homogeneity of India as a source of oppression and backwardness. This ideological prejudice manifests in the public life of India in the name of protection of distinctive ways of life of religious minorities, especially those belonging to Islam and Christianity. Such influences have led to Partition of India into three separate political entities; religious heterogeneity of certain parts of India formed the sole basis for this.

In this article we present an overview of the growth of religious heterogeneity in India in the course of the twentieth century. Rigorous data are available for this period from the decennial censuses that have been regularly carried out since the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The article is based on a detailed study, which presents an exhaustive compilation of the available census data on the religious composition of Indian population.

For the sake of simplicity of analysis, we have divided the population into three large groups: Muslims, Christians, and

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the rest, who are collectively termed as Indian Religionists. Indian Religionists, as defined here, include Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains, and several smaller groups, some of whom, like Parsis and Jews, are not of Indian origin. The numbers of these latter groups are however negligibly small.

In our analysis, we employ the term "India" for the geographical and historical India that encompasses the three countries into which India was partitioned in the course of the twentieth century. The individual countries separately are referred to as Indian Union, Pakistan and

Bangladesh. The last census for which detailed religious composition of populations is available is that of 1991; therefore, we carry all collation of data and analysis up to that year.

The religious profiles of the three units into which India was partitioned at the time of Independence are quite different and have shown disparate changes over time. Therefore, we first present the data for the three units separately, before compiling the profile for the whole of India.

Religious Composition of Indian Union: 1901 1991

In Table 1 we have compiled the religion wise population of Indian Union for 1901 1991, The proportion of Indian Religionists in this part of India declined 'from 86.6 in 1901 to 84.4 percent. in 1941. Between 1941 and 195 1, their proportion rose by about 2.8 percentage points as a result of the forced and violent transfer of populations that occurred at the time of Partition. And in the following four decades their proportion has declined by the 2.2 percentage points.

TABLE I

Religious Composition of Indian Union, 1901 1991

Year	Indian R.	Muslims	Christians	Total
1901	206,518 (86.640)	29,102 (12.209)	2,744 (1.151)	238,364
1911	218,252 (86.585)	30,269 (12.008)	3,547 (1.407)	252,068
1921	216,343 (86.067)	30,739 (12.229)	4,283 (1.704)	251,365
1931	237,164 (85.148)	35,818 (12.860)	5,548 (1.992)	278,530
1941	269,119 (84.438)	42,645 (13.380)	16,953 (2.182)	318,717
1951	315,001 (87.237)	37,661 (10.430)	8,426 (2.334)	361,088
1961	381,567 (86.871)	46,940 (10.687)	10,728 (2.442)	439,235
1971	472,517 (86.201)	61,418 (11.204)	14,225 (2.595)	548,160
1981	586,681 (85.856)	80,003 (11.708)	16,645 (2.436)	683,329
1991	720,100 (85.088)	106,552 (12.596)	19,651 (2.322)	846,303

Note: Population in thousands. Figures in parentheses indicate percentage of the total.

Source: Refer to Table 2.6 and 2.7a of Joshi et al (2003).

Religious Composition of Pakistan: 1901 1991

In Table 2 we have, compiled religious composition of the population of those areas of India that form Pakistan today.

Ideological prejudice manifests in the public life of India in the name of protection of distinctive ways of life of religious minorities, especially those belonging to Islam and Christianity. Such influences have led to Partition of India.

TABLE 2**Religious Composition of Pakistan, 1901 1991**

Year	Indian R.	Muslims	Christians	Total
1901	2,641 (15.932)	13,904 (83.875)	0,032 (0.193)	16,577
1911	2,898 (14.953)	16,364 (84.433)	0,119 (0.614)	19,381
1921	3,274 (15.511)	17,620 (83.475)	0,214 (1.014)	21,108
1931	4,427 (18.805)	18,757 (79.678)	0,357 (1.517)	23,541
1941	5,568 (19.687)	22,293 (78,924)	0,421 (1.489)	28,282
1951	0,646 (1.596)	39,286 (97.119)	0,520 (1.285)	40,451
1961	0,754 (1.469)	49,889 (97.169)	0,699: 1. 3 62)	51,343
1971	1,208 (1.791)	65,254 (96.755)	0,981 (1.454)	67,443
1981	1,454 (1.649)	85,371 (96.796)	1,371 (1.555)	88,197
1991	2,018 (1.649)	118,475 (96.796)	1,903 (1.555)	122,397

Note: Population in thousands. Figures in parentheses indicate percentage of the total.

Source: Refer to Tables 2.4a and 2.8a of Joshi et al (2003).

The Table shows that the proportion of Indian Religionists in this part of India was rising considerably during the pre Partition period; their share went up from 15.9 percent in 1901 to 19.7 percent in 1941. This was the only part of India, where Indian Religionists were growing at a rate higher than that of Muslims.

This phenomenon had the potential of modulating the overwhelming Muslim majority of the region and making it part of the mainstream of India. However, Partition brought this possibility to a swift end. At Partition the region was, purged almost clean of Indian Religionists. Their number came down from 5.57 in 1941 to 0.65 million in 1951, and their proportion

in. the, population declined from 19.7 to 1.6 percent; it has remained around that figure since then. Christians in the region have increased their proportion from about 0.2 to 1.6 percent in this period.

Religious Composition of Bangladesh: 1901 1991

In Table 3 we have compiled religious composition of the Population of the areas that form Bangladesh today.

In 1901, Indian Religionists formed 33.9 percent of the population of Bangladesh; their proportion declined to 29.6 percent in the forty years from 1901 to 1941, Their proportion declined further to 22.9 percent in 1951 as a consequence of Partition; and in the forty years from 1951 to 1991, the proportion of Indian Religionists has been cut down to almost half, at 11.4 percent.

Religious Composition of Bangladesh, 1901 1991

Year	Indian R.	Muslims	Christians	Total
1901	9,814 (33.927)	19,113 (66.073)	neg.	28,297
1911	10,353 (32.809)	21,202 (617,191)	neg.	31,555
1921	10,608 (31.900)	22, 646 (68.100)	neg.	33,254
1931	10,812 (30.367)	24,731 (69.461)	0,061 (0.171)	35,604
1941	12,437 (29.613)	29,509 (70.261)	0,053 (0.126)	41,999
1951	10,110 (22.891)	33,943 (76.854)	0,113 (0.255)	44,166
1961	10,646 (19.278)	44,41 (80 ' 429)	0,162 (0.293)	55,223
1971	10,138 (14.302)	60,533 (85.306)	0,214 (0.302)	70,885
1981,	11,722 (13.037)	77,906 (86.647)	0,284 (0.316)	89,912
1991	12,6712 (11.370)	98,420 (88.305)	0,363 (0.325)	111,455

Note: Population in thousands. Figures in parentheses indicate percentage of the total.

Source: Refer to Tables 2.5 and 2.9a of Joshi et al (2003).

Religious Composition of India: 1881 1991

Having discussed the religious composition of the three components units of India, we now compile religious composition of whole of India for the census period of 1881 to 1991 in Table 4 below.

As seen in the Table, the proportion of Indian Religionists in the population of India has declined by 11 percentage points during the period of 110 years for which census information is available. Indian Religionists formed 79.32 percent of the population in 1881 and 68.03 percent in 1991.

A decline of 11 percentage points in the share of the majority community in a compact geographical and civilisational region like India is an extraordinary occurrence to happen in the course of just about a century. At the peak of Mughal rule at the time of Akbar, after nearly four hundred years of Islamic domination, the proportion of Muslims in India was said to have reached no more than one sixth of the population. As we shall see below, if the trend of decline seen during 1881 1991 continues, then the proportion of Indian Religionists in India is likely to fall below 50 percent early in the latter half of the twenty first century.

The proportion of Indian Religionists in the population of India has declined by 11 percentage points during the period of 110 years for which census information is available. Indian Religionists formed 79.32 percent of the population in 1881 and 68.03 percent in 1991.

We can make an assessment of the plausibility of this conclusion by analysing the United Nations projections of the population of India. The latest United Nations estimates published in World Population Prospects, 2000 Revision, place the medium estimates for the population of Indian Union, Pakistan and Bangladesh in 2050 at 1572, 344 and 265 millions, respectively.

TABLE4

Religious Composition of India, 1881 1991

Year	Indian R.	Muslims	Christians	Total
1881	198,424 (79.320)	49,953 (19.969)	1,778 (0.711)	250,155
1891	220,343 (78.814)	57,068 (20.412)	2,164 (0.774)	279,575
1901	218,973 77,139	62,119 21.883	2,776 0.978	283,868
1911	231,503 (76,403)	67,835 (22.387)	3,666 (1.210)	303,004
1921	230,225 (75.304)	71,005 (23.225)	4,497 (1.471)	305,727
1931	252,403 (74.747)	79,306 (23.486)	5,966 (1.767)	337,675
1941	287,124 (73.812)	94,447 (24.279)	7,427 (1.909)	388,998
1951	325,756 (73.088)	110,890 (24.880)	9,059 (2.033)	445,705
1961	392,968 (71.998)	141,244 (25.878)	11,589 (2.123)	545,801
1971	483,863 (70,484)	187,205 (27.270)	15,420 (2.246)	686,488
1981	599,858 (69.634)	243,280 (28.241)	18,300 (2.124)	861,438
1991	734,791 (68.026)	323,447 (29,944)	21,917 (2.029)	1,080,155

Note: Population in thousands. Figures in parentheses indicate percentage of the total. Source: Tables 2.10 and 2.11 of Joshi et al (2003).

Projecting the Trends into the Future

Our analysis of the religious composition of the population of India provides us with a sufficiently long time series to statistically project the trend into the near future. In Figure 1, we attempt such a projection by obtaining the best possible fit for the available data points and letting the resulting trend line extend further into future. The upper curve in the graph plots percentage of Indian Religionists as recorded in Table 4; the

lower curve plots percentage of Muslims and Christians, obtained by subtracting on the percentage of Indian Religionists from 100, or by adding the percentage of Muslims and Christians in Table 1.

The available data fits best to a polynomial equation of third order. As is obvious from Figure 1, the fit obtained is quite good; R2 value for the, fit at 0.9977 is almost near 1. Projections based on this fit should therefore be fairly reliable.

The best fit curve for the percentage of Indian Religionists is smoothly moving down from. About 77 percent in 1901 to about 68 percent in 1991, the curve for the percentage of Other Religionists correspondingly keeps moving up, and the two curves projected into the future intersect at the 50 percent mark just before 2061, Thus, if the trends of the last hundred years continue to persist in the future, then Indian Religionists shall become a minority in India in the near future.

We can make an assessment of the plausibility of this conclusion by analysing the United Nations projections of the population of India. The latest United Nations estimates published in World Population Prospects, 2000 Revision, place the medium estimates for the population of Indian Union, Pakistan and Bangladesh in 2050 at 1572, 344 and 265 millions, respectively. Following the current trends, we may assume that in 2050 Indian Religionists shall have a share of 80 percent in the population of Indian Union, 1.5 percent in that of Pakistan, and 5 percent in Bangladesh. Then, in 2050, the share of Indian Religionists in the population of India turns out to be 58.5 percent. If we take the share of Indian Religionists in the population of Indian Union at that stage to be 75 percent, which seems more likely, and apply, it to the United Nations estimates for the total population, then the share of Indian Religionists in the population of India comes down to about 55 percent in 2050.

RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF DIFFERENT REGIONS OF INDIAN UNION

Indian Religionists have lost heavily in their share of the population of India as a whole. The decline in their proportion within Indian Union has not been nearly as high. Detailed state wise and district wise data, however, reveals that the loss in the share of Indian Religionists has been fairly steep in certain geographically well defined pockets of the country. Looking at the data, it is possible to discern, three broad yet distinct regions of Indian Union with distinct religious profiles.

Region I. Where, Indian Religionists Dominate

A very large part of Indian Union, comprising almost all of the northwestern, western, central and southern states, has seen little decline in the proportion of Indian Religionists. They form an overwhelming dominance in this vast region that includes almost two thirds of the geographical area and about 57 percent of the population in 1991. Their proportion in the region is more than 91 percent. Within the region there are only a few small pockets, where Christians or Muslims have any significant presence.

Indian Religionists form more than 85 percent of the population in every state of this vast region, extending from Punjab in the north to Tamilnadu in the south. Proportion of Indian Religionists in the northwestern states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh and in the central states of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa is around or above 95 percent. In Delhi, in the western states of Rajasthan and Gujarat and in the southern states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, they form nearly 90 percent of the population. In Karnataka their share is above 86 percent.

Muslims and Christians constitute significant presence in only a few well defined pockets of this region. The most significant of these is, a belt centred on Aurangabad district of Maharashtra and Hyderabad city district of Andhra Pradesh.

Between these two centres, and stretching, somewhat north and south of these, this belt encompasses, East Nimar district, of Madhya Pradesh, several districts in the central part of Maharashtra, northern districts of Karnataka and northwestern districts of Andhra Pradesh. Muslim share is more than 12 percent in every district of this belt, and in some of the districts it is considerably higher.

In some of the scattered pockets of high Muslim or Christian influence in this region, there has been a considerable rise of these religionists during the last four decades. Thus, the share of Muslims has shown abnormally high rise in Delhi; in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh; Sangrur of Punjab, Gurgaon of Haryana; neighbouring Alwar district of Rajasthan; Thane, Nashik, Aurangabad and Akola districts of Maharashtra; Hyderabad and Nizamabad districts of Andhra Pradesh; and Uttar Kannad, Dakshin Kannad and Kodagu districts of Karnataka. Christians have registered a high growth in the Dangs district of Gujarat Suridargarh and Phulbani districts of Orissa and Kanniyakumari of Tamil Nadu.

Region II. Where Indian Religionists are under Pressure

In the heartland and eastern regions of Indian Union, comprising Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam (See Map 1) Indian Religionists are under great pressure. This region encompasses the most fertile lands of India and accommodates about 37 percent of the population in 1991 on about 19 percent of the geographic area of Indian Union. In this region as a whole, Indian Religionists have a share of only about 80 percent in the population; and, they have suffered a decline of about 4 percentage points in their share in the four decades between 1951 and 1991. The rest of the population is formed mainly of Muslims, who have a share of nearly 19 percent in the population.

Christians in this region are few; they have a share of less than 1 percent in the population. Christians have a significant presence only in two limited pockets: One, the pocket formed

by the undivided Ranchi district of Bihar and neighbouring districts of Raigarh in Madhya Pradesh and Sundargarh in Orissa; and two, the North Cachar Hills district of Assam.

Muslims form a significant presence in the whole of this region; and, there are several districts, where they form a preponderant majority. Their presence is especially high in a northern border belt (see Map 2) that starts from Bahraich district of eastern Uttar Pradesh and moves through Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur and Deoria districts of the state; to Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Saharsa, Purnia and Santhal Pargana districts of Bihar; West Dinajpur, Maldah, Birbhum and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal; and Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Nagaon districts of Assam.

Muslims form about 28 percent of the population of this border belt; their growth here has been high enough to add almost 7 percentage points to their share of the population in the four decades since Partition. The districts we have counted above are undivided districts, as they existed in 1971. Since then, the districts have been divided several times. The proportion of Muslims in the new smaller border districts is even higher.

In addition to this border belt, Muslims also have a high and fastgrowing presence in an interior region centred on Muzaffarnagar district of western Uttar Pradesh, in Calcutta and Haora of West Bengal, and in Cachar district of Assam.

Region III. Where Indian Religionists are turning a Minority

Finally, there is a third region of Indian Union (see Map 1) comprising the extreme border areas including Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Goa and Kerala in the West, Lakshadweep and Nicobar Islands off the Indian coast, and the states of the northeast where Indian Religionists do not have a dominating presence. Indian Religionists form only about a third of the population of Jammu and Kashmir; their presence in the valley districts of the state is insignificant. In Goa, Indian Religionists constitute about two thirds of the population; of the rest about

30 percent are Christians and 5 percent Muslims. This is one of the rare states, where Indian Religionists have considerably improved their share.

Kerala

In Kerala, Indian Religionists have been losing ground throughout the twentieth century. They had a share of 57 percent in the population in 1991, about 12 percentage points less than their share in 1901. They have lost about 6 percentage points to Christians and about the same to Muslims; the gains of Christians occurred largely during 1901-1961 and those of Muslims during 1961-1991. This loss of about 12 percentage points in the twentieth century has occurred on top of the substantial losses that Indian Religionists in Kerala suffered due to large scale conversions to Islam during the later part of eighteenth century and to Christianity during the nineteenth.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

In the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the share of Indian Religionists dropped from about 81 percent in 1901 to about 68 percent in 1991. Indian Religionists registered a marginal rise in their share, from about 72.5 percent in 1901 to about 75 percent in 1991 in the Andamans Islands district of the Territory. This rise has been offset by the precipitous decline in the share of Indian Religionists in the Nicobar Islands district, their proportion in the district declined from about 98 percent in 1941 to about 27.5 in 1961, and has remained around that figure since then. The Islands, forming the southernmost tip of India, have turned almost 70 percent Christian.

Northeastern States (excluding Assam)

The most dramatic story of the twentieth century, however, is that of the north eastern states, not including Assam which we have already discussed above. These states that form a mountainous wall around the Brahmaputra valley and thus offer a protective cover along the eastern borders of India with China, Myanmar and Bangladesh are experiencing an intense

movement of conversion towards Christianity. In many of these states, entire populations have been converted in quick spurts. One such major spurt took place during the Independence decade of 1941-1951, and involved all states of the region, except Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura.

In Nagaland, this spurt took the share of Christians in the population of the state to nearly 54 percent from almost zero in 1941 and less than 13 percent in 1931, the year for which the census recorded the highest proportion of Christians for the pre Independence period in all these states. In 1991, Christians in the state constitute about 88 percent of the population and the few Indian Religionists are mostly confined to Kohima district.

In Mizoram, conversion to Christianity began somewhat earlier, around 1921, but like in Nagaland, there was a major rise in Christian presence during the Independence decade of 1941-1951, more than 90 percent of the population was converted to Christianity at the end of the decade. Their proportion was recorded to be nearly zero in 1941 and 48 percent in 1931. In 1991, Christians constitute 86 percent of the population of the state; of the remaining Indian Religionists in the state a little more than half are Buddhists, who are concentrated in the sparsely populated southern districts,

The Christian spurt of 1941-1951 had a relatively milder impact on Meghalaya; only about a quarter of the population of the state got Christianised at the end of the decade. Conversion efforts have proceeded steadily since then. In 1991, share of Christians in the population has risen to about 65 percent; their share is much higher in East Garo Hills and West Khasi Hills forming the central part of the state.

The impact of the 1941-1951 phenomenon of large scale Christianisation in the northeast was even less pronounced in Manipur. In 1951, only about 12 percent of the population of Manipur was Christianised. By 1991, the proportion of Christians has risen to 34 percent; but the outer districts of the state have been almost fully Christianised. Indian Religionists

in the state are concentrated in the densely populated inner three components, Imphal, Bishnupur and Thoubal, of the undivided Manipur Central district.

Arunachal Pradesh, geographically the largest state of the region, has begun experiencing Christianisation only during the last two decades. In these two decades, Christian share in the population has risen to more than 10 percent starting from an almost negligible presence, and in Lower Subansiri and Tirap districts Christians already form around a fifth of the population.

Tripura alone amongst these six states has resisted the trend; presence of Indian Religionists in the state has significantly increased during the decade of 1961-71. But Tripura is not a mountainous border state like the other five. The populations of the northeastern states of India bordering on China and Myanmar are fast converting away from their Indian Religionist moorings; much of this conversion has occurred in the last few decades, and the phenomenon is spreading to the areas that are not yet converted.

To sum up our discussion so far, the religious demography of India has changed significantly during the twentieth century. Between 1891 and 1991, the share of Indian Religionists in the population has declined from 79 to 68 percent. This loss of more than 11 percentage points has been largely to the gain of Muslims, whose share has risen from less than 20 to about 30 percent, and who have consequently been able to carve out two separate countries for themselves, taking away almost one fifth of the population and more than one fifth of the area of pre-partition India. Since Independence and Partition, Indian Religionists have been losing further ground. A pocket of high Muslim influence seems to be now developing in a northern border belt covering the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam. And, Christians have carved out significant pockets of Christian dominance on the northeastern and southern borders of India.

To understand the significance of these changes, it is important to place the Indian situation in the context of the

changes in the religious demography of the world during the twentieth century. The changes everywhere, as in India, involve a decline in the share of native religionists, as Islam and Christianity, the two great proselytising religions of our times, make deeper inroads into different regions of the world.

RELIGIOUS PROFILE OF THE WORLD

In Table 5 below, we present the changes that have taken place in the religious profile of the world in the course of the twentieth century, based upon the data available in the World Christian Encyclopaedia. While compiling this table, we have counted the Buddhists of India, East Asia and Southeast Asia with the Native Religionists of the

TABLE 5
Religious Profile of the World

	1900	1970	1990
Total Population	1,615,789	3,686,416	5,252,256
Christians	527,387	1,145,720	1,396,242
(Europe, Americas and Oceania)	(32.64)	(31.08)	(26.59)
Christians (Asian and African)	27,833	220,323	421,878
	(1.72)	(5.98)	(8.03)
Christians (Total)	555,220	1,366,043	1,818,120
	(34.36)	(37.07)	(34.62)
Muslims	200,204	575,974	983,606
	(12.39)	(15.62)	(18.73)
Native Religionists (Indian)	217,654	513,418	771,026
	(13.47)	(13.93)	(14.68)
Native Religionists (East Asian)	506,398	955,483	1,307,325
	(31.34)	(25.92)	(24.89)
Native Religionists (Southeast Asian)	54,942	175,500	240,620
	(3.40)	(4.76)	(4.58)
Native Religionists (African)	64,346	74,863	93,948
	(3.98)	(2.03)	(1.79)
Jews	11,875	14,485	12,889
	(0.73)	(0.39)	(0.25)
Others	5,150	10,651	24,722
	(0.32)	(0.29)	(0.47)

Note: Population in thousands; figures in parentheses refer to percentage of the total population. Source: Table 8.24 of the detailed text.

respective regions. Persons counted as crypto Christians, New Religionists,, Non Religious and Atheists in Europe, North America, Latin America and Oceania have been included' amongst Christians along with the professing Christians of these continents. "Others" in the Table include Indian Religionists, Chinese Religionists, Buddhists and Native Religionists of Europe, North America, Latin America and Oceania; "Spiritists" of Latin America; and other minor religionists of the world that we have not counted separately.

Christians

During the twentieth century, Christians have retained their share the world almost unchanged at around 34 percent. This has been made possible because of the inroads made by Christianity into previously non Christian regions of the world, especially in Africa and to some extent in Asia. In 1990, about a quarter of 1.8 billion Christians in the world are in the previously non Christian continents of Africa and Asia.

Of 422 million Christians outside Europe and the continents claimed by Europeans, 268 million are in Africa, where they form 44 percent of the population.

In Asia, Christian success has been relatively limited. There are only 154 million Christians in Asia, forming less than 5 percent of the population. Of these, 55 million are in Philippines, which was Christianised already at the beginning of twentieth century. Other countries of Asia with substantial Christian populations are Indonesia with 18 million Christians, South Korea with 17 and India with about 33 million. These three countries had few Christians in 1900.

Muslims

The share of Muslims in the population of the world has grown significantly from 12.4 percent in 1900 to 18.7 percent in 1990. They are the only religious group to have made such a large gain in their share of the world in the twentieth century.

During the course of the twentieth century, Muslims seem to have enhanced their presence in almost every part of the world, excepting only, China, where even their absolute numbers have declined, Their gains have been the most spectacular in Africa, Indonesia and India.

West Asia, Central Asia and North Africa have been the early homelands of Muslims. Of about 980 million Muslims in the world about 375 million, forming nearly 38 percent of the total, are in these three contiguous regions.

India, including Indian Union, Bangladesh and Pakistan, accommodates the next largest number of Muslims in the world. There are around 310 million Muslims here, divided almost equally between the three countries into which India has been divided during the twentieth century, Muslims in India today form about one third of all Muslims in the

world; and as we have discussed earlier, their share in the population of this region has improved greatly in the course of the century.

Indonesia in Southeast Asia accommodates another about 100 million Muslims. There are another 18 million Muslims in Southeast Asia, a majority of them in Malaysia and Philippines. They form about half of the population of Malaysia.

There are about 125 million Muslims in parts of Africa other than North Africa. There are about 30 million Muslims in Europe, where their share in the population has almost doubled to 4 percent since 1900. About 20 million of them are in those countries of East and ,South Europe where they have had a substantial presence for long But they have also significantly enhanced their presence in several countries of West and North Europe, particularly in France and Germany, which together accommodate about 7 million Muslims in 19,90.

Of the remaining about 25 million Muslims, about 18 million

are in China and the rest are spread across other parts of the world. During the course of the twentieth century, Muslims seem to have enhanced their presence in almost every part of the world, excepting only, China, where even their absolute numbers have declined, Their gains have been the most spectacular in parts of Africa, and in Indonesia and India.

Jews

Jews have lost heavily in their share of the population of the world. There were 11.9 million Jews in 1900; they amount to 12.9 million persons in 1990. During the course of the century their presence in Europe has declined from 2.5 percent to less than, half a percent Most of the Jews today live in North America and Israel.

Native Religionists of Asia and Africa

Native Religionists of Indian and Southeast Asian region have managed to slightly improve their share in the population of the world. The share of Native Religionists of East Asian region has, however, declined from about 31 to 25 percent. This is a reflection of the fact that the population of the countries of East Asia, mainly China, has grown slower than that of the rest of Asia and Africa.

The share of Native Religionists of Africa in the population of the world has declined from about 4 to less than 2 percent. This decline has occurred even though the population of Africa has grown rapidly, Africa has succumbed to Christianity and Islam; the two seem to have divided the continent between them.

Thus, seen in the perspective of the changing religious demography of the world, Indian Situation does not seem too alarming, Christianity and Islam have both made substantial gains in the world in the course of the twentieth century. But it is Africa, and some relatively smaller countries of Asia, that have experienced the impact of growth of these religions the most. On the other hand, an ancient civilisation like that of

China has countenanced no change in its religious profile, nor have the relatively more recent civilisational regions of the world like West Asia, North Africa and Europe swayed from their adopted faiths.

India, however, has not remained unaffected. Both Islam and Christianity have recorded significant gains, more importantly, the increase in the Muslim and Christian population has been geographically localised. This has led to Partition of the country to carve out two separate Islamic states. Only a few countries of the world, notably Indonesia in, recent times, and some relatively unsettled countries of Africa, have had to undergo similar partitioning because, of changing religious profile of the population. And, there are new pockets of significant Christian and Muslim influence that are developing in the post partition India.

Notwithstanding this continuing erosion of the share of Indian Religionists in specific pockets and regions, lying on the northern, eastern, northeastern and southwestern borders of Indian Union, much of the country has remained largely immune to the advance of Christianity or Islam. Indian Religionists have maintained a dominant presence in almost all of the northwestern, western, central and southern parts of Indian Union. These parts together comprise nearly two thirds of the area and three fifths of the population of Indian Union. In this vast region, Indian Religionists have shown great vitality; any tendency towards significant erosion of their share in any pocket of this region has often been swiftly neutralised. Such vitality, however, has not helped them in defending their presence on the borders of the country where the efforts of the society, to be effective, necessarily need the vigilance and support of a state committed to protecting and preserving the civilisational identity, pride and genius of the nation. We have so far failed to fashion such a state for ourselves.

(The authors are leading demographers of the country)