

Distribution of Population by Religions

Religious profile of the populace is an important socio-cultural and demographic feature noticeable from the first Census in 1872 till now. The data of religions or religious groups for which information was collected had some variations in the pre-Independence period. But after Independence, particularly since 1961 there has been some uniformity in the collection and the generation of the religious data. Besides the six major religions, e.g. Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh, census also collected data on other religious faiths and denominations. Some of the religious faiths and persuasions are variants or varied manifestation of the major religious groups. The huge list of these other religions were checked, edited, classified and processed to get the precise picture of the data.

In the past information on religion as provided in Census was very limited but in the last Census 2001, a number of cross-tabulations were made available. The data showing distribution of religious groups in 2001 provide is available at State and district levels down to sub-divisions and towns. Cross-tabulation of different religious groups by literacy, classification of workers and non-workers provided new insights. These are additional information compared to those published data of past Censuses.

Distribution of Population by religious groups and their sex ratios

Of the total population of India in 2001, 80.5 per cent are Hindus while Muslims account for 13.4 percent and Christians 2.3 percent respectively of the total population. In absolute numbers, approximately 828 million are Hindus while Muslims are around 138 million out of India's total population of approximately 1,029 million. Sikhs account for 1.9 per cent of the total population. The proportion of Buddhists, Jains and other religions are 0.8 per cent, 0.4 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively.

Name of Religion	Percentage to total population	Sex ratio
Hindus	80.5	931
Muslims	13.4	936
Christians	2.3	1009
Sikhs	1.9	893
Buddhists	0.8	953
Jains	0.4	940
Other religions	0.6	992
India	100	933

Sex ratio which is the number of females per one thousand males is 933 for all the religious groups at the national level. Hindus and Sikhs are below the national average while the rest are above the average. The highest sex ratio is seen among Christians with 1009 females while the lowest is among Sikhs (893). Constituting the largest segment of the population, the Hindus have a sex ratio of 931 while Muslims, the second largest religious community have 936.

Child population in the age group 0-6 years and their sex ratios

Proportion of population in the age group 0-6 to total population offers a general picture of the relative fertility status among the religious groups, a higher proportion meaning a higher fertility. While the proportion for all-India is 15.9 per cent, five religious communities, namely, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains exhibit rates lower than the national average, the lowest being 10.6 per cent for the Jains. Proportion of 0-6 population for the Sikhs (12.8 per cent) is also lower than the national average by more than 3 percent. Hindus have 15.6 per cent. On the other hand, Muslims have the highest proportion of 18.7 per cent while other religious groups have a rate of 18 per cent

The child sex ratio which is 927 for all India is lower than that of the total population by 6 per cent. The decline in the child sex ratio in 2001 Census is a major cause of worry among the planners, demographers and researchers. Lower sex ratio among children is indicative of more females than males among child population which may lead to demographic imbalance over time if the trend continues in future. Sex ratio among Sikhs (786) in 0-6 population is the lowest among the major religions groups. Among Jains also the ratio is only 870 which is 57 points below the national average of 927. The child sex ratio among Hindus is 925. Other religious communities with sex ratios higher than the national average include Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and other religions, the highest being recorded against Other religions with sex ratio of 976. The sex ratio of the Christians with 964 females per 1000 males comes next. The next highest ratio is found among Muslims with 950. Muslims are also the only major religious group having a child sex ratio higher than that of the total population of the religious group.

Name of Religions	Percentage of 0-6 population to total population	Child Sex Ratio
Hindus	15.6	925
Muslims	18.7	950
Christians	13.5	964
Sikhs	12.8	786
Buddhists	14.4	942
Jains	10.6	870
Other religions	18.0	976
India	15.9	927

Literacy rate by religious communities

The rate of literacy of the population computed for 2001 Census after excluding the population less than 7 years of age is found to be 64.8 per cent for the whole country, male literacy percentage being 75.3 per cent while the percentage for female being 53.7 per cent. Except Muslims and other religions, all the rest of the major religions have literacy rates higher than the national average. Jains have the highest total literacy rate of 94.1 per cent followed by Christians with 80.3 per cent. Buddhists with 72.7 per cent occupy the third position. The lowest total literacy rate of 47 per cent is found among other religions. Hindus have a total literacy rate of

65.1 per cent which is slightly above the national average while Muslims have a total literacy rate of 59.1 per cent, below the national average.

The pattern of the total literacy rates emerged among the major religious communities is followed in general among males and females also. Jains have the highest literacy rates for both males (97.4 per cent) and females (90.6 per cent). In the second place Christians have 84.4 per cent for males and 76.2 per cent for females. While for males, Buddhists (83.1 per cent) occupy the third position, for females the position has gone to Sikhs (63.1 per cent). In the case of the Hindus, the male literacy rate (76.2 per cent) is above the national average of 75.3 per cent whereas the female literacy rate (53.2 per cent) is slightly below the national average of 53.7 per cent.

Name of Religion	Literacy Rate (Total)	Literacy Rate (Males)	Literacy Rate (Females)
Hindus	65.1	76.2	53.2
Muslims	59.1	67.6	50.1
Christians	80.3	84.4	76.2
Sikhs	69.4	75.2	63.1
Buddhists	72.7	83.1	61.7
Jains	94.1	97.4	90.6
Other religions	47.0	60.8	33.2
India	64.8	75.3	53.7

The gap of male-female literacy rates is the lowest among Jains which is only 6.8 per cent points against the national gender literacy gap of 21.6 per cent points. Among Christians also the gap is as low as 8.2 per cent points. The biggest gap is found against other religions (27.6 per cent points) followed by Hindus (23 per cent points) and Buddhists (21.4 per cent points).

Work Participation Rate by Religion

Work participation rate, i.e., the percentage of workers to total population for the country is 39.1 per cent in 2001 Census. Religious groups which have work participation rate above the national average in descending order are Other religions (48.4 per cent), Buddhists (40.6 per cent), Hindus (40.4 per cent) and Christians (39.7 per cent). Muslims have the lowest participation rate of 31.3 per cent followed by Jains with 32.9 per cent and Sikhs with 37.7 per cent.

Name of Religion	Work participation Rate		
	Total	Male	Female
Hindus	40.4	52.4	27.5
Muslims	31.3	47.5	14.1
Christians	39.7	50.7	28.7
Sikhs	37.7	53.3	20.2
Buddhists	40.6	49.2	31.7
Jains	32.9	55.2	9.2
Other religions	48.4	52.5	44.2
India	39.1	51.7	25.6

Male work participation rate for the country in 2001 is 51.7 per cent. Male work participation rate for Hindus, Jains and other religions are above the national

level. The highest was among Jains with 55.2 per cent which is followed by Sikhs (53.3 per cent) and Hindus (52.4 per cent). Muslims, Christians and Buddhists are the other major religious communities which have rates below the national level. The work participation rate for Muslims which is 47.5 per cent is the lowest. The second lowest of 49.2 per cent is found among Buddhists.

Wide variations are found in the female work participation rate among the major religions. The rate varies from the lowest of 9.2 per cent among Jains to 44.2 per cent among other religions, work participation rate at the national level being 25.6 per cent. Female work participation among Muslims is found to only 14.1 per cent. Besides other religions, Buddhists (31.7 per cent), Christians (28.7 per cent) and Hindus (27.5 per cent) have female participation rate above the national level.

The gender gap in the work participation rate is particularly very large among Jains (46 per cent points), Muslims (33.4 per cent points) and Sikhs (33.1 per cent points), even as the gap at the national level being 26.1 percent points.

Proportion of Workers by Category

Workers are broadly divided in 2001 Census as cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industry workers and other workers. Other workers include workers in service, manufacturing, trade and commerce and allied activities.

Percentage distribution of workers by category				
Name of Religion	Percentage to total workers			
	Cultivators	Agricultural labourers	Household industry	Other workers
Hindus	33.1	27.6	3.8	35.5
Muslims	20.7	22.0	8.2	49.1
Christian	29.2	15.3	2.7	52.8
Sikhs	32.4	16.8	3.4	47.3
Buddhists	20.4	37.6	2.9	39.2
Jains	11.7	3.3	3.3	81.7
Other religions	49.9	32.6	3.2	14.3
India	31.7	26.5	4.2	37.6

As much as 49.9 per cent of the total workers among other religions are cultivators which is much higher than the all-India rate of 31.7 percent. Next highest is among Hindus with 33.1 per cent of the total workers. Sikhs with 32.4 per cent is also above the national average of 31.7 per cent. Among Jains, cultivators account for only 11.7 per cent which is very much below the national average. Agricultural labourers constitute 26.5 per cent of the total workers at the national level. The percentage is highest among Buddhists (37.6 per cent), other religions with 32.6 per cent comes in the second highest position. The percentage of agricultural labourers among Jains is as low as 3.3 per cent. In fact only 15 per cent of the total workers among Jains work as cultivators and agricultural labourers.

In household industry, the participation of workers among Muslims which is 8.1 per cent is almost double that of the national average of 4.2 per cent. In the category of other workers, 37.6 per cent of the total workers at the national level are

in this group. Among Jains 81.7 percent of the total workers are categorized as other workers, the highest among all the major religious groups. The proportion of other workers among Christians and Muslims are 52.8 per cent and 49.1 per cent respectively. Hindus with 35.5 percent is below the all India figure.

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