

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.

A. Population of religious groups and their distribution and growth rate

02. 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. **Statement-1** 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.

03. **Statement 1a** provides data on distribution and growth rate of 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.** **Statements-2, 2a to 2g** 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. The distribution of population by religious communities and residence is given in **Statements 3 and 4**. 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.

B. Sex ratio of population (number of females per thousand males)

04. **Statement-5** presents sex ratio of population classified by different religious communities at state and union territory level. It may be discerned from the statement that at

the national level, Christian population has the highest sex ratio of 1009 females per thousand males at the 2001 Census followed by 'Other Religions and Persuasions' (992), Buddhists (953) and Jains (940). Sex ratio of Sikh population is 893, which is the lowest among the different religious communities. Sex ratio among Muslim population at national level is 936 which is just above the national average of 933 for all religions while a shade lower is the Hindu population sex ratio of 931.

05. Among the states, the highest sex ratio (1058) has been reported among the Hindu population in Kerala followed by Chhattisgarh (990) and Pondicherry (987). Kerala is again at the top of the rank (1082) followed by Pondicherry (1097) and Tamil Nadu (1020) among Muslims. It may be noted that 13 states and union territories recorded a sex ratio of over 1000 among the Christians. Goa has returned the higher sex ratio of 1107 among Christians followed by Pondicherry and Delhi. Delhi has returned the highest sex ratio among Sikh population (925) followed by Chandigarh (910). Punjab having the maximum Sikh population, has a low sex ratio of 897. In other states and union territories also sex ratio among the Sikh population is below 900. Chhattisgarh has the highest sex ratio among the Buddhist at 1012 followed by West Bengal (981). Maharashtra and Jammu & Kashmir reporting substantial Buddhist population have sex ratio of 961 and 941 respectively. Majority of the states and union territories (twenty) returned the sex ratio of less than 900 among the Buddhist population. Among the major states Kerala has returned the highest sex ratio of 996 for Jains. In Gujarat and Rajasthan also sex ratio of Jains is high at 969 and 960 respectively. In twenty states Jain population has sex ratio between 901-950 while this pattern is seen in ten states for Hindus and twelve for Muslims.

06. **Maps 1 to 6** bring out spatial distribution of sex ratio in broad ranges among states/ union territories at district level and depicts the districts with preponderance or deficit of women among different religions

C. Sex ratio in the age group 0-6 (number of female children to the male children in age group 0-6)

07. One of the alarming facts that emerged at the 2001 Census is declining Child Sex Ratio in the age group 0-6 in many states and union territories. **Statement-6** presents the sex ratio at the age group 0-6 in the states and union territories by religious communities and depicts intra and inter religious variations in this regards. At the All-India level the Sikh population has recorded the lowest child sex ratio of 786 at the 2001 Census preceded by Jains at 870. Christians have reported the highest child sex ratio of 964 followed by Muslims at 950 and Buddhists at 942. Hindus have reported a child sex ratio of 925 which is slightly lower than the national average of 927 for the total population. Persons professing 'Other Religions and Persuasions' have recorded the highest child sex ratio of 976 at the national level. This pattern is also evident in majority of the states and union territories.

08. Among the major states Chhattisgarh has the highest value of child sex ratio 975 while Haryana the lowest at 816 for the Hindu population. Hindus child sex ratio in Gujarat, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Jammu & Kashmir is below 900. Among Muslims, Jammu & Kashmir has the highest child sex ratio of 980 whereas Punjab has the lowest 879. Haryana has also reported Muslim child sex ratio of 895. As regards Christians, in 20 states and union territories the child sex ratio is above 951. As opposed to this, in 27 states and union territories, the child sex ratio of Sikh population is below 900. The picture is further depressing, as in 9 states and union territories including Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi and Haryana wherein the child sex ratio is below 800 among Sikhs. Sixteen states and union territories have a child sex ratio below 850 among Jains while nine states and union territories fall in this range among Buddhists. Among the major states having large Jain population sex ratio in the age group 0-6 is low at 832 in Gujarat and 878 in Rajasthan and 906 in Madhya Pradesh. Northern states of Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan have reported child sex ratio among Buddhist below 900 while, in Jammu & Kashmir it is 961. It may be seen that sex ratio in age group 0-6 is very depressed in northern states for all the religions barring a few exceptions. It would be pertinent to point out that due to small numbers

(population) ratios tend to fluctuate and show erratic patterns, for example, in many small states and union territories either the values are abnormally high or low, particularly, for Sikhs and 'Other Religions and Persuasions'. The child sex ratio patterns among the major religious communities in some of the states such as Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat depict similar but pronounced bias against the girl child irrespective of their religious affiliations.

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

09. **Statement-7** 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.

10. [Figure 1a to 1f](#) 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 in figures 1a to 1f. 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.

11. Jain population, Figure 1f, 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 (figure 1d) also shows a similar trend and their fertility appears to be lower than other populations except possibly Jains. On the other hand Muslim population (figure 1b) has higher proportion of children age 0-6 (18.7 percent) and the slope is less steep, say for example, when compared to Hindus (figure 1a). 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. **Maps 7 to 12** exhibit different patterns of proportion of population in the age group 0 to 6 years among the religious communities at district level.

E. Literacy Status

18. **Statement-8** presents literacy rate by religious communities as well as for the total population at the 2001 Census. Literacy rate for the population age 7 years and above for the country as a whole stands at 64.8 percent. As compared to this, the literacy rate among the Jains is the highest at 94.1 percent followed by Christians 80.3 percent and Buddhists 72.7 percent. Hindus and Sikhs have returned a marginally higher literacy rate than the national average. The lowest literacy has been recorded for 'Other Religions & Persuasions' at 47.0 percent. Muslims are the other religious community returning lower than the national average literacy rate at 59.1 percent.

19. The Hindus have returned an average national literacy rate of 65.1 percent. There are seven state/union territories, which have returned a literacy rate of over 80 percent among the Hindus. Lakshadweep stands out with the highest Hindu literacy at 96.4 percent. Among the major

states, Kerala continues to lead the literacy race among the Hindus with 90.2 percent followed by Delhi. Among the major states Karnataka and Gujarat have a Hindu literacy rate just above the national average. There are ten states/ union territories, which have recorded Hindu literacy rate below the national average. Bihar has recorded the lowest literacy of 47.9 percent. In other words more than half of the Hindu population in Bihar is illiterate. Fifteen states and union territories have recorded more than three fourth of the Hindu population as literate.

20. There is no state/ union territory in the country, which has a Muslim literacy rate of 90 percent or over. At the state level the highest literacy rates among Muslims has been recorded in Andaman & Nicobar Islands at 89.8 percent closely followed by Kerala at 89.4 percent. Although the national average Muslim literacy rate is low at 59.1 percent, yet as many as 16 states and union territories have returned a lower figure than this. Haryana has recorded the lowest literacy rate of 40 percent among Muslim population. This is closely preceded by the states of Bihar, Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland and Assam, all below 50 percent. Fifteen states and union territories recorded more than 70 percent literacy among Muslims, for example, the major states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

21. Literacy scenario among the Christian population is quite bright as twenty-one states and union territories have more than three fourth of their population as literate in the 2001 Census. Lakshadweep, Kerala, Delhi, Mizoram and Maharashtra have recorded a Christian literacy rate of over 90 percent. The national average Christian literacy rate is high at 80.3 percent and as many as 19 states/union territories are placed above this mark. Only one state Arunachal Pradesh recorded literacy below 50 percent among Christians.

22. As regards Sikhs, it is seen that literacy rate in 32 states and union territories is above 70 percent – a good sign. Of these, the Sikh literacy rate in 14 states is above 90 percent. Surprisingly in Punjab, the state with the maximum number of Sikhs (over 70 percent) the literacy rate of this community is 67.3 percent, lower than the Sikh national average of 69.4 percent. As a matter of fact in the two other states of Haryana and Rajasthan with high Sikh population, the Sikh literacy is very close to Punjab. However, Delhi another important state has a high Sikh literacy rate of 92.1 percent.

23. The Buddhists have recorded a national literacy rate of 72.3 percent and as many as 16 states and union territories are above this mark while Punjab is exactly at the national level. 5 states and union territories have recorded Buddhist literacy rate of above 90 percent while another five are between 80 and 90 percent. Maharashtra, which has the highest Buddhist population in the country, has a literacy rate of 76.2 percent. The lowest Buddhist literacy rate was recorded at 44.9 percent in Arunachal Pradesh, the state with almost one fourth of its population returning as Buddhist.

24. Jain population have also returned very high national literacy rate of 94.1 percent and in 29 states and union territories, their literacy rate is above 90 percent. It is one of the most literate religious communities in India and likely to reach the goal of universal literacy for its total population anytime now. It is also important to remember here that most of the Jain population lives in urban areas and its main economic activities are in the field of business, industry, commerce and professionals.

25. The group of 'Other Religions and Persuasions' has a national literacy rate of only 43.5 percent. It follows inconsistent patterns among states and union territories. Bihar has substantial proportion of population returned as 'Other Religions and Persuasions' and has recorded the lowest literacy of 28.7 percent while Mizoram recorded the highest, 95.5 percent. Four states including the high literacy state of Kerala recorded more than 90 percent literacy in this group while in six states the literacy rates are below 50 percent.

26. It may be interesting to point out that Kerala, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry have very high literacy rate for all the religious communities (above 80 percent) while in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Tamil Nadu also literacy is above 70 percent for all the religious communities. In Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh the literacy rates are rather depressed and below 60 percent for Hindus, Muslims and others. Thus there are regions in the country where all religions have a high

literacy rate or low literacy rate. It appears that the religion effect may be weak in several parts of country and the overall regional milieu and state of low or high development may be contributing to improvement or stagnancy in literacy rates. These effects now need to be identified, quantified and also tackled leading to improvement of overall literacy and elimination of gender gap in literacy rate, legacies notwithstanding.

Literacy rate – male and female

27. The male and female literacy by religious communities are presented in **Statements 8(a) and 8(b)**. It may be seen that both males and females among the Jain population have very high literacy rate of 97.4 percent and 90.1 percent respectively at the national level followed by Christians at 84.4 percent for males and 76.2 percent for females. Thus the gender gap in male female literacy for these two religions is less than ten percentage points. Female literacy rates among those recorded as 'Other Religion and Persuasion' are very low at 33 percent. Incidentally, the gap between the male and female literacy at the national level is also maximum in this religious community. It may be seen that among the six major religions at the national level the maximum gap between the male and female literacy is in Hindus 23 percentage points followed by Buddhists 21.4 percentage points and Muslims 17.5 percentage points. It is interesting to note here that Muslims have the lowest level of overall literacy rate while both Hindus and Buddhists have much higher overall literacy rate.

28. At the state level among the Hindus, the highest female literacy has been recorded in Lakshadweep 95.8 percent followed by Kerala 86.7 percent. The Hindu females in Bihar have a very low literacy rate of 33.4 percent. Twenty states recorded literacy rate between 60 to 80 percent among the Hindu females while seven including the large states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, the female literacy rate was less than 50 percent. Among the Muslims, Andaman & Nicobar Islands has returned the highest female literacy rate of 86.8 percent followed by Kerala at 89.5 percent. Haryana has recorded the lowest literacy rate of 21.5 percent among the Muslim females preceded by Bihar at 31.5 percent. In 15 states and union territories the female literacy among the Muslim females is less than 50 percent while in 14 states and union territories it is more than 60 percent. The other six states/ union territories fall in the range of 50.1 to 60 percent.

29. It may further be seen that female literacy scenario among Sikhs and Jains is very encouraging, as compared to other religions, wherein except one state all the other states have reported female literacy rate above 60 percent. Twenty-nine states and union territories among the Jains, 16 states and union territories among Sikhs and 13 states and union territories among Christians are having female literacy above 80 percent. The 2001 Census data brings out clearly a high literacy rate among the females of the Jains, Sikhs and Christians. In Lakshadweep female literacy of Buddhists is 100 percent and in another 5 states it is above 80 percent. There are still 11 states where Buddhist female literacy rates are below 50 percent. The position of 'Other Religions and Persuasions' is also following more or less similar pattern as that of Buddhist population.

30. One of the better ways to understand the gap in male and female literacy rates is through the scatter plots. If the gap between the two sexes does not exist then it is represented by the line of equity; if female literacy rate is lower, then the point is below the diagonal while it would be above the diagonal if female literacy rate is higher than male literacy. This situation is irrespective of the level of literacy rate. Under ideal conditions of low gender gap and high literacy, the points should be close to the diagonal and on top right hand corner. [Figures 2 a to 2 f](#) clearly depict the gender gaps along with the level of literacy among the six religious groups in India at the district level. Those districts which have very small population have been taken out of the scope of these scatter plots to deal with the outliers and therefore for different religious groups the number of districts (n) is not the same. Figures 2a to 2f clearly show that among Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists the dispersion of districts varies considerably from low levels of literacy rates to very high levels and the gender gap appears to be most pronounced among Hindus. The Sikhs have a visible gap in male

female literacy particularly when the levels are not high. Jains appear to have the least gap in male female literacy and that too at very high levels of literacy rate, a near ideal situation. The real question is how long it will take for a similar state to be achieved by other religious communities in the country, particularly the Hindus and the Muslims.

31. **Maps 13 to 18** presents literacy rate among the districts and brings out inter and intra state variations in total and female literacy rates religion wise separately.

F. Work Participation Rate (WPR)

32. Work Participation Rate or percentage of workers to total population for all religion is 39.1 percent in the 2001 Census (**Statement-9**). The group of 'Other Religions and Persuasions' have recorded the higher WPR of 48.4 percent followed by the Buddhist at 40.6 percent, Hindus 40.4 percent and Christians at 39.7 percent. The lowest WPR of 31.3 percent at the national level are seen for the Muslim population, preceded by Jains at 32.9 percent and Sikhs at 37.7 percent. The proportion of urban population, female work participation rates and proportion of workers in non-agricultural activity directly influences low WPRs among other factors.

33. Among the Hindus, there are fifteen states and union territories that have returned a WPR of below 40 percent. The highest WPR of over 60 percent for them has been returned from Mizoram and Lakshadweep. At the state level eight states and union territories have registered more than 50 percent WPR for Sikhs. Similar pattern is noted for seven states and union territories among 'Other Religions and Persuasions'. The lowest WPR of less than 35 percent has been recorded in 23 states and union territories among Jains and in 22 states and union territories among Muslims. In fact WPR is less than 30 percent in 8 states and union territories, lowest around 23 percent for Lakshadweep and Kerala. Sikkim and Mizoram, Muslim WPR is more than 50 percent. Interestingly, Lakshadweep has very high WPR of cent percent among Sikhs, Buddhist and more than 70 percent WPR of Hindus and Christians whereas predominant religious group Muslims of the union territory has the lowest WPR of only 23 percent. The WPR among different states and union territories by the different religious affiliations especially in the case of smaller states and union territories indicate that religious communities, which have higher WPR are usually having small and more male populations, possibly indicating their migrant status.

34. Male and female WPR among the different religious communities is presented in the **Statement 9(a) & 9(b)**. The distinct feature of predominant male WPR among all religious communities is brought out sharply in these statements. Male WPR is highest among Jains 55.2 percent followed by Sikhs 53.3 percent and Hindus 52.4 percent. The lowest WPR for the male population is seen among the Muslim males, which is healthy 47.5 percent. The female WPR on the other hand does not present that consistent pattern across the different religious communities. Female WPR is highest among the Other Religions & Persuasions 44.2 percent followed by Buddhists 31.7 percent and Christians 28.7 percent. The lowest female WPR is noted among Jains 9.2 percent preceded by Muslims 14.1 percent. 27.5 percent of Hindu and 20.2 percent Sikh females have been reported as worker. In other words the gap between the male WPR at the national level was about 7 percent between the lowest and highest values among different religions. The gap between the female WPR is very sharp to the tune of 35 percent between the lowest and highest values. Even among the major religions the gap is sharp, for instance, Jain and Buddhists.

35. **Statement 10** presents proportions of workers by four broad categories, namely, cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industry workers and other workers by religious communities for India and the State/ Union territories. It may be seen that at national level percentage of cultivators is the highest at 49.9 percent among the followers of 'Other religion and Persuasions'. Of the six main religions, 33.1 percent of the Hindu workers are cultivators, followed by 32.4 percent for Sikhs and 29.2 percent for Christians. Only one fifth (20 percent) of the Muslim workers are cultivators while among Jains this is only 11.7 percent, much below the national average of 31.2% for total population.

36. At the aggregated level 26.5 percent of workers are Agricultural labourers (AL). The pattern among the six religious communities reveals that Buddhists with 37.6 percent have maximum workers as AL followed by 'Other Religion and Persuasions' with 32.6 percent and Hindus with 27.6 percent. On the other hand 22.1 percent workers among Muslims, 16.8 percent among Sikhs, 15.8 percent among Christians, and only 3.3 percent among Jains are in the category of AL. In fact all four fall below the national average. In brief 82.5 percent workers among the 'Other Religion and Persuasions' are engaged in agricultural activities either as cultivators and/or agricultural labourers, followed by Hindus (60.7 percent) and Buddhists (58 percent). Among others this percentage is below 50 percent. In other words majority of workers among them are engaged in non agricultural pursuits.

37. In the category of Household Industry (HHI) workers, artisan character of Muslim workers is reflected in the data, where 8.1 percent Muslim workers are engaged which is almost double than the national average of 4.2 percent for total population. Among Hindus 3.8 percent workers are in HHI and around 3 percent Sikh and Jain workers are in this category. Christian and Buddhist workers constitute 2.7 percent and 2.9 percent respectively as HHI in the 2001 Census.

38. Lastly Indian economic structure is showing a shift towards non-agricultural sector. The category of 'Others' (OW) includes all those workers, who do not fall under the three distinct categories above. This includes workers in tertiary sector, such as, service, manufacturing, trade and commerce and allied activities. Jains with 81.7 percent workers are classified as others, followed by 52.8 per cent Christians, 49.1 percent Muslims. Groups belonging to Other Religions and persuasions have the lowest OW. Hindu OW are 35.5 per cent. The business character of the Jain workers and the service sector work of the Christians are evident in this dataset.

G. Parsi population in India – The writing on the wall 'Signs of definite decline'

39. The Parsi population deserves an exceptional but definite mention and place in this volume due to their very small numbers not only in India but also in the world. As per 2001 census the Parsi population in the country is 69,601 (33,949 males and 35,652 females) as against their population of 76,382 (37,736 males and 38,646 females) in the 1991 census. This is a clear visible but extremely unfortunate decline of a rich civilization of Zoroastrians and its people. It is apparent from 2001 census results that urgent and drastic interventions are required by all concerned including possibly by the government and definitely the Parsi community leaders to ensure survival of Parsi population in India. Fertility improvement innovative initiatives rather than fertility control measures adopted by the community so far are possibly the need of the hour before it reaches a point of no return. It is expected that this loud and clear message from 2001 census results awakens the country and the Parsi community from the deep slumber it is possibly in and have a beneficial effect for them.