



Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India
 Ministry of Home Affairs,
 Government of India

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हिंदी अनुवाद

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Religion returns in Indian census provide a wonderful kaleidoscope of the country's rich social composition, as many religions have originated in the country and few religions of foreign origin have also flourished here. India has the distinction of being the land from where important religions namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism have originated at the same time the country is home to several indigenous faiths tribal religions which have survived the influence of major religions for centuries and are holding the ground firmly Regional co-existence of diverse religious groups in the country makes it really unique and the epithet unity in diversity is brought out clearly in the Indian Census.

Ever since its inception, the Census of India has been collecting and publishing information about the religious affiliations as expressed by the people of India. In fact, population census has the rate distinction of being the only instrument that collects the information on this diverse and important characteristic of the Indian population.

TABLE 21: DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RELIGION

Religion	Number	%
All religious communities	1,028,610,328	100.0
Hindus	827,578,868	80.5
Muslims	138,188,240	13.4
Christians	24,080,016	2.3
Sikhs	19,215,730	1.9
Buddhists	7,955,207	0.8
Jains	4,225,053	0.4
Others	6,639,626	0.6
Religion not stated	727,588	0.1

Source : Religion, Census of India 2001

At the census 2001, out of 1028 million population, little over 827 million (80.5%) have returned themselves as followers of Hindu religion, 138 million (13.4%) as Muslims or the followers of Islam, 24 million (2.3%) as Christians, 19 million (1.9%) as Sikh, 8 million (0.80%) as Buddhists and 4 million (0.4%) are Jain. In addition, over 6 million have reported professing other religions and faiths including tribal religions, different from six main religions.

Hinduism is professed by the majority of population in India. The Hindus are most numerous in 27 states/UTs except in Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab.

The Muslims professing Islam are in majority in Lakshadweep and Jammu & Kashmir. The percentage of Muslims is sizeable in Assam (30.9%), West Bengal (25.2%), Kerala (24.7%), Uttar Pradesh (18.5%) and Bihar (16.5%).

Christianity has emerged as the major religion in three North-eastern states, namely, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya. Among other states/UTs, Manipur (34.0%), Goa (26.7%), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (21.7%), Kerala (19.0%), and Arunachal Pradesh (18.7%) have considerable percentage of Christian population to the total population of the State/UT.

Punjab is the stronghold of Sikhism. The Sikh population of Punjab accounts for more than 75 % of the total Sikh population in the country. Chandigarh (16.1%), Haryana (5.5%), Delhi (4.0%), Uttaranchal (2.5%) and Jammu & Kashmir (2.0%) are other important States/UTs having Sikh population. These six states/UTs together account for nearly 90 percent Sikh population in the country.

The largest concentration of Buddhism is in Maharashtra (58.3%), where (73.4%) of the total Buddhists in India reside. Karnataka (3.9 lakh), Uttar Pradesh (3.0 lakh), west Bengal (2.4 lakh) and Madhya Pradesh (2.0 lakh) are other states having large Buddhist population. Sikkim (28.1%), Arunachal Pradesh (13.0%) and Mizoram (7.9 %) have emerged as top three states in terms of having maximum percentage of Buddhist population.

Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi have reported major Jain population. These states/UTs together account for nearly 90 percent of the total Jain population in the country. The percentage of Jain population to the total population is maximum in Maharashtra (1.3%), Rajasthan (1.2%), Delhi (1.1%) and Gujarat (1.0%). Elsewhere in the country their proportion is negligible.

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