
A Study Of Some Characteristics Of Religious Composition Of Religious Regions In India

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Abstract : "Religion" is defined as a set of basic ideas and practices that unite people together and are linked together in a universe, in an orderly world. It has roots in the Latin word "ligare" to bind all aspects of the life of its adherents and permeates them. As an immense country, India has a number of people with different faiths that represent a rainbow of religion. In an Indian's daily and socio-economic and political life, religion plays a vital role. This paper discusses seven Indian religious groups' spatial concentration. For each religious group, areas of majority and minority (<50% share) are established by taking the district as a space unit to detail the concentration at a district level. The location quotient is also measured for each religious group by spatial concentration. At district level, minority and binary majority are explained. Secondly, this paper tries to develop religious regions of India for seven religious groups, using a cluster analysis technique, to examine religious cohesion and segregation of the Indians. The Hindus are the largest group followed by Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists, while Jains are insufficient to demonstrate their presence in India's religious regions.

Keywords: Religion, Spatial concentration, Core and Peripheral areas, Religious regions, Religious clusters

INTRODUCTION

Christianity prevails among the world's largest religions with the most supporters, 33 percent (2.4 billion out of a total population of 7.2 trillion in 2012), with a Christian majority in at least 126 countries. The second is Islam, which accounts for 24 percent of its population, with 1.7 billion people. Thirty-two countries have a Muslim population of more than 90%. Hinduism ranks as the third largest population in the world with 1.1 billion and makes up approximately 15% of the world's population. It has been around 4000 years ago the oldest religion to emerge among the Indo-Gangetic communities. The majority of the population of the Hindu countries is in India alone (78.3%), Nepal (81.3%) and Mauritius (48.3%). The rest of the world's citizens adhere to Buddhism or organized religions such as Sikhism and Judaism or traditional regional or local beliefs. The Indian subcontinent was a crossroad of cultures and religions from its earliest millennia (Clothey, 2006). It was a land of vibrant culture and many faiths. The oldest being Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and the newest one as Sikhism is birthplace of many of the world's religions. Some geographers in India had been working on religion. Religion has a strong impact on India's socio-economic and political life as part of cultural geography. Jon Brush (1949), followed by Davis, was the first social scientist who provided an overall spatial analysis of religious communities in India (1951). By drawing choropleth maps based on Indian census data in 1961, Gosal and Mukerji (1970) analyzed the relative importance of different religious groups. Dutt and Davgun (1979) learn about the factorially regionalized religious regions of India. They found Hindus spread throughout the country but have a lower periphery concentration. Gopal Krishan wrote about the expansion of minority population space in India in 1995. The demographic perspective of the religion of India was examined by Premi (2004). Different techniques have been used in the United States for the carving of religious areas, Zelinsky, Sopher, Shortridge, Webster, Crawford, Jordan, Bauer and many other areas, at different times. Recently Bauer (2012) has been using cluster analyses to revisit religious regions of the United States.

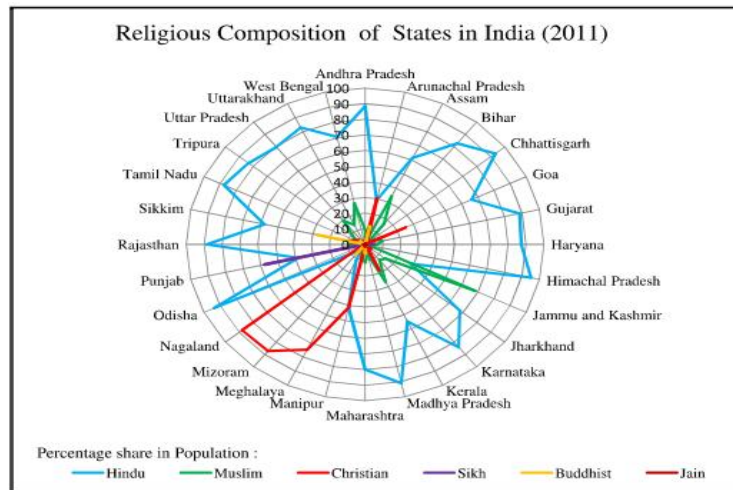


Fig.1:Religious composition of states in India

This paper examines the spatial concentration of various religions at district level in India as a majority minority and explores the religion by using a technique of cluster analysis. It also reveals the ineffective technique of factor analysis to regionalize religious groups in India. A radar diagram shows the religious tapestry of India (figure 1)

Trends in growth of different Religions in India

People from different religions do not occupy India's sacred land uniformly. Hinduism, the main religion, has a share of the total population of approximately 80%. The Hindu population has fallen by 5,19% since independence in 1947, while the Muslims increased their proportion of people by 4,27% in 1951-2011. (Table 1). Nothing else Certainly India's religious tapestry has shrunked Hindus, expanded Muslims and experienced a considerable change in almost stagnating Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, and the Jains Religion.

Table 1: Percent adherents to various Religious faiths in India (1881-2011)

Census	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Buddhists	Jains	Other Religions
1881*	75.1	19.97	0.71	0.74	0.07	0.49	2.92
1891*	74.2	20.41	0.77	0.68	0.09	0.51	3.34
1901*	72.9	21.88	0.98	0.77	0.1	0.47	2.9
1911*	71.7	22.39	1.21	1	0.11	0.41	3.18
1921*	70.7	23.23	1.47	1.06	0.12	0.39	3.03
1931*	70.7	23.49	1.77	1.28	0.23	0.37	2.16
1941*	69.5	24.28	1.91	1.4	0.12	0.37	2.42
1951*	84.99	9.93	2.3	1.74	0.45	0.36	0.23
1961**	83.4	10.7	2.4	1.8	0.7	0.5	0.3
1971**	82.7	11.2	2.6	1.9	0.7	0.5	0.4
1981**	82.3	11.8	2.4	1.9	0.7	0.5	0.4
1991**	81.5	12.6	2.3	1.9	0.8	0.4	0.4
2001**	80.5	13.4	2.3	1.9	0.8	0.4	0.6
2011***	79.8	14.2	2.3	1.7	0.7	0.4	0.9

Expression of Religiosity in India - The Places of Worship

A brief introduction to the spatial expression of religiosity will not be out of context before a descriptive account of the spatial distribution of the Indian population on religious basis. Human beings create sacred landscapes by linking sense to places where they can actively connect and talk with God. These are manifested in temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras and other worship sites. Such places are the focus of religious activity and become expressions of religiousness throughout the world. There are 3,013,140 places of worship in India with 1.21 billion people in diversity (Census 2011, H-1series). There is a place of worship per km² of land which is in rural India (2,419,700, or 80.6 percent) proportionately greater than in urban India (593,440 or 19.4 per cent). Interestingly, India has more places of worship than the combined numbers of schools and hospitals (2,106,709).

(683,228). It can be seen here that district wise worship places in percent are strongly equivalent to percentage of the district wise population (coefficient of correlation = 0.767). Religion is an important part of the life of an Indian.

India's Religious Landscape

On the basis of religion heterogeneous Indian population can be divided in seven major religious groups. Here the religious landscape of India is seen with the spectacles of majority (> 50 per cent share) and minority (< 50 per cent share) by taking district wise population data in percentage. Location quotient as a measure of spatial concentration is also used by comparing the district concentration of each religion with the national concentration.

The Hindus

Hinduism is India's most ancient religion. The origins of Hinduism go back to a distant past, and from the beginning of Hinduism to the present form a permanent account can hardly be given (Nag, 2007). The Hindu population in 2011 was over three-fourths and thus has a greater impact on the country's cultural landscape. The analysis of the inter-state data confirms that the majority of 21 states and six union territories are Hindu while the religions of Hindus are minority in 7 states and in one union area. Although Hindus are in the absolute majority in only 530 municipalities at district level with a confirmed slow and steadily decreasing population share. The core area of Hindu concentration comprises 403 areas with a percentage share of 79.8 percent higher than its national average (see figure 2). In addition, 200 districts with over 90% of Hindu population are mainly concentrated. Only 81 districts make up over 95% of the Hindu population and just 7 districts make up 99% of those. Four are in Odisha State (Dhenkanal, Boudh, Nayagarh, Subarnpur), three in Uttrachand, two in Mahendergarh and two in Haryana in Rudraprayag. In these 7 districts there are four of them.

In 110 districts there are Hindus in the minority. In Kashmir and Punjab in the north, in most of the northeast states and in some districts of southern Kerala, there are less concentrations. There is also scant concentration in a central patch consisting of few districts of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, East West Bengal along the border with Bangladesh. There is little Hindu population on Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. The smaller concentration still follows the general declaration that Hindus are less focused on the periphery, although their distribution is throughout India. Hindus' pattern of distribution shows that forested and rough areas like Madhya Pradesh and Northern India have always been Hindu, probably due to their undesired and inaccessible terrain that made Muslim invaders and foreign officials unattractive (Dutt et al., 1996). Likewise, in southern Indian India, including parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, Muslims and Christians have remained away. Due to Moslem influence in northern India, Jammu and Kashmir and west-Uttar Pradesh have a long low percentage of the Hindu population. As a Sikh country, Punjab has low Hindus concentrations. In Northeast India, the Christian missionary tasks were more frequent in all the tribal majority areas, whereas the low proportion of Hindu people was due to conversion to Islam in Bengal since the beginning of the 13th century up until country independence in 1947. (Gill & Bhardwaj, 2010). In the south, Kerala's western coast is less concentrated mainly because of the significant number of Muslims and Christians who live there. The coasts of Kerala have been connected to the Arab-Christian world since ancient history. In due course, the religion of the mariners and traders was largely influenced. The state of Jharkhand is another area of low Hindus, with people living there belonging to animists or other religions. During and after British rule in India this area had a profound influence on the Christian missionaries. Place Quotient is the relative share measurement in the total distribution of a spatial unit. Hindus have a Top QL of 403 districts, numerically speaking, which indicate their relative concentrations in approximately 62 percent. These areas are central to the Hindu religion (Table 2 & figure 2).

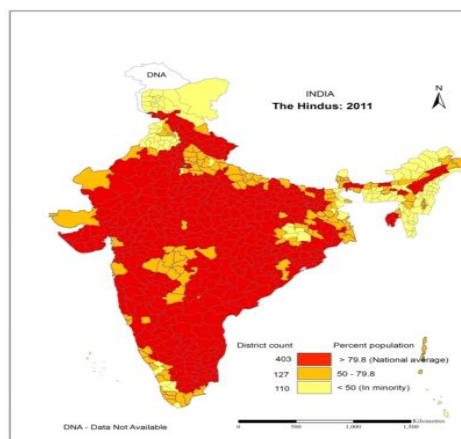


Fig.2:Hindus in India (2011)

Table 2: Measure of Concentration, Location Quotient (LQ): The results of LQ for 640 districts for all Religions

LQ values	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Buddhists	Jains	Others
LQ \geq 1 in no. of districts	403	163	156	60	82	134	97
LQ < 1 in no. of districts	237	477	484	580	558	506	543

The Muslims

In decades of its founding, Islam arrived on the Indian subcontinent (Clothey, 2006). In medieval India, Muslims remained and ruled in large parts of the country, especially in the 12th century. They extend to the Assam Valley from the Punjab plains. The conversion of other religions into Islam was promoted by most Muslim rulers. Most Muslims are now the progeny of Hindu people who have become Muslim in India. Muslims were the second largest religious community in India in 2011. It made up 14.2% of the total population of the country. The Muslim population in 32 districts enjoys absolute majority, while in 131 districts the national average is lower than the absolute majority. Jammu & Kashmir has a majority of 16 Muslim neighbourhoods in the extreme north. It is India's only country with a Muslim majority. Rampur district in the northern plains of Uttar Pradesh and Mewat (Nuh). There are 70.24% Muslims in southern Mallapuram, Kerala. The border with Bangladesh lies another remarkable area of Muslim majority districts. It comprises 12 western Bengal, Assam and Bihar districts. Outside the mainland, 96.58 per cent of Muslims have a vast majority of Lakshadweep.

Distributive patterns of Muslims show that they are concentrated in several pockets that are sparsely concentrated in Punjab-Haryana, in the Himachal Pradesh, Uttrakhand, north-eastern states (other than Assam), in India, and in the eastern Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha, in the larger central-eastern part of India. The areas with higher concentrations were either Muslim-dominated areas for long periods (West Uttar Pradesh, Bengal) or those with longer trade contacts with traders from countries in the Middle East. The combination of Muslim rule and Sufist influence played a significant role in religious conversion to Islam in the Kashmir region (Gill & Bhardwaj, 2010). In the medieval period of Indian history (1206-1757), the tract of Bengal and neighboring areas had been witness to Muslim rule. Following the division of India in 1947 and the Liberation War in 1971, large-scale migration to India took place (Dutt & Davgun, 1979). Muslims from Kerala and Malabar Coast have been transformed by sea contacts between local people and Middle-East Muslim traders. In 163 districts Muslims have a LQ Title 1 and confirm their relative concentration in 25% districts. In 477 districts, they have fewer than one LQ (Table 2). Their distribution confirms the general statement that hindus in the peripheral areas of India are less concentrated. Remarkable concentrations of Muslims in the North, Northeast and South of India are small.

The Christians

Christianity ranks third after Hindus and Muslims as the biggest religion in the world in India. In 2011, they accounted for 2.3% of the total population. They exceed the national average in 156 districts but only in 35 districts represent an absolute majority (more than Muslims). In northeastern India, the largest majority of the population is composed of 33 districts. Simdega (51.14%) in the Yharkhand districts and Nicobar (70.78%) in Andaman & Nicobar Island are also two districts of absolute majority. The regions are the north-east Hill States: the Jharkhand and Odisha districts, and the Malabar (Kerala-Goa) Coast; They occupy three distinct areas. The States of Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland in the Northeast are truly Christian, with a Christian majority in all 26 districts. In five districts, Manipur has the absolute majority of Christians. The two major Christian neighborhoods of Arunachal Pradesh are Kurung Kumey and Tirap. There are Christians in every district in India. In North-West India, 7.68% of the population is Christian only in Gurdaspur district in Punjab. The population of India's Christianity is mostly the result of the Christian missionary activity during and after the colonial rule and the contacts between the world and Christians in the pre-colonial periods. Tribals were drawn to missionaries in north-eastern and central-eastern Indian tribal belts. Both regions were highly inaccessible and physically isolated from the rest of the population of India and provided Christian missionaries with a large opportunity to propagate their religion. Kerala was marked by early Christian migration from the West towards Malabar, which currently leads to a larger Christian population in south-western India. Christians have a LQ of 1 in 156 districts and confirm the relative concentration of the districts in 24 percent. They are less than one of the LQ in 484 districts (Table 2). Their spatial distribution again confirms the general statement in the southern and north east outskirts of India that Hindus in the peripheral areas of India are less concentrated.

The Sikhs

With a total population of 2.08 crores, the Sikhs are India's fourth largest religious community. It accounts for just 1.72% of India's total population. In only 15 districts of Punjab they are in absolute majority. They have a population of 60 districts greater than their national average, whereas they are below their national average in 580 districts. In Punjab and its surrounding areas Sikhs concentrate. Punjab as a whole is a country of Sikhs, in the 18th century rulers such as Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1680-1739). Partitioning of the country has led to a major rehabilitation of the population across borders, leading to the concentration of Sikhs in today's Punjab. In addition to that, there are also 2% to 26% Sikh people in some districts of Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. Punjab experienced the massive migration of Sikh farmers to the Uttar Pradesh's thinly populated Terai belt in the 1950s and early 1960s (Gill & Bhardwaj, 2010). One of India's most recent religions is the Sikhism which is native to the country of Punjab. They may be small but in all 640 districts in India they exist from north to south and west, with the exception of the Malapuram district of Kerala where their share of percent is negligible. Sikhs have extensive access to distant countries, especially Canada and the US, even during international migration.

The Buddhists

The national population of the Buddhists in 2011 was just 0.7% (84.4 lakhs). In 82 districts, they are above the national average. The absolute majority is 50 percent in just 04 districts. The largest percentage of Buddhists in Arunachal Pradesh (69.87 percent) is followed by 66.4 percent (53.35 percent) in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir district of Leh-Laddakh, LahulSpiti (62.01 percent) and Sikkim district of Northern. Although 39 districts have a negligible share of Buddhists, 519 districts have their presence below the national average. The second area is made up of four states of Northeast: Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripuro, Mizoram and Darjiling District of West Bengal. The Tibetan territory is close to all these districts. The State of Maharashtra, in which many low caste Hindus embraced Buddhism in the 1950s due to the Baba Sabebe Ambedkar movement, is another area of Buddhist concentration (Dutt & Davgun, 1979). Their concentration in Akola district varies between 0.75% in Ahamednagar and 18.08%. In 82 districts the Buddhists are given a LQ = 1 while in 558 districts they are = 1 LQ < 1 (Table 2). Buddhists are also concentrated in peripheral India, and the statement that Hindus are less concentrated in peripheral areas is further consolidated.

The Jains

From 1881 to 2011, Jains' percentage share remained more or less stagnant, from 0.49% to 0.4%. In 2011 they only had 44.5 lakh inhabitants. Jains in no district are in the majority and therefore both at the state and district level are the national minority community. In 134 districts in India, mostly urban districts as people of business class are present above the national average. In Mumbai, the highest concentration is 5.38% of the population. In only 11 districts of India Jains have more than 2% population share. However, 66 districts have very small or negligible percentages of Jains. It shows that the Jains in western and central India are concentrated (parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra). The Jains live mainly in urban areas and are mainly involved in trade. In villages they reside mainly in commercial activities, such as food processing facilities, oil mills, meal mills or small-scale industries.

Other Religions

Religious listings in the census are 'Additional Religions and Persuasions, including Unclassified Sect.' and 'Religion, not stated' as seventh and eighth religion categories. These two categories have been added here to form the seventh category called "Other religions." In most studies, this category is actually hardly given any attention. It comprises persons of different faiths such as Animists, naturalists or other sects except traditional religious faiths such as Hinduism. More than one crore (1.08 crore), more than the Buddhist and Jains number, were numbered. In 2011, they accounted for 0.9% of the population of the country. There is an absolute majority of only 7 districts. They exist in the North-East Hill Countryside and the central-East plateau region (Meghalaya, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim) (Jharlkand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha). These areas are home to tribal people who live and follow other religions in wooded areas.

India: Religious Regions

In geographical studies, the concept of regionalisation is the most fundamental. Regionalisation is a special classification procedure in which the end result of contiguous spatial units (region) is the persons classified as spatial units (usually regions) (Gregory, 2009). In an effort to determine the feasible identification of the religious regions of India, Dutt and Davgun (1979) examined the scope of the religious regions of India and attempted to verify that this type of research would be compatible with factor analysis. In the total population of 356 districts they have used the percentage of each religion, as per the 1971 census. For the derivation of the religious regions of 'Quartimax rotation' factor analysis technique was used. Data were reduced to four factors by their work. (i) High: Christian & Others, Low: Hindus & Jains (ii) Muslim (iii) Sikh and (iv) Buddhist. Based

on these factors India was subsequently divided into five important religious regions: Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh and Mixed. Factor analysis breaks down the dataset columns to build a smaller number of new factors or indices, the original variables being linear combinations. In the present study, it is found that the technique of factor analysis does not yield adequate results since the seven religious groups have a very poor correlation. The analysis factor technique also appears to be working on the given problem as a minimum value of 0.043 (>0.50) is not available for the KMO (KaiserMeyer-Olkin - Measure of Sampling Adequacy) test. The results show that the technique of factor analysis in this case is not feasible. Cluster analysis breaks down the data row in a similar way by finding rows of data. This creates clusters of similar findings (Rogerson, 2015). These are the two most common methods of geographical research data reduction. The purpose of regionalization can be the cluster analysis here. The geographic cluster analysis is widely used in the geodemographic field. In a small number of cases, it reduces many spatial data variables. Cluster analysis suffices for the purpose of regionalisation in studies where a large region is to be divided into small numbers of continuing subregions. The use of Hierarchical Cluster Analysis was also designed for the optimal number of clusters. The results of the grouping process are below (Table 3).

Table 3: Results of cluster analysis for seven religious groups based on 640 districts' data

Religion	Cluster					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hindus	30.89	6.55	86.13	39.64	34.00	35.11
Muslims	1.96	1.88	9.55	2.88	63.61	5.94
Christians	.89	86.85	1.60	8.39	1.12	29.23
Sikhs	65.77	.08	.76	.67	.42	.07
Buddhists	.07	2.55	.74	44.97	.33	.95
Jains	.12	.04	.32	.06	.05	.04
Others	.30	2.06	.91	3.39	.46	28.66

CONCLUSION

The clustering operation gave four clearly defined and two mixed religious clusters. The Sikhs, Christians, Hindus and Muslims make sharp boundaries of their dominant areas while two mixed religious regions are: the Buddhists+Hindus and the Hindus+ Christians+Others. The Jains are so small in number and share that their attendance is not recorded in the final results of religious regions. Hindus constitute the biggest religious region, the heart of the country being widely spread in the country. In peripheral areas they have lower concentration. They focus in 508 districts (79 per cent districts of India). In Jammu and Kashmir only Jammu, Udhampur, Kathua and SAMBA represent four south districts. Muslims were forcefully evacuated during the 80s in the valley of Cashmir, where they have lived since generations. During that time, the country saw Kashmiri pandits expelled on a large scale. Three Hindu districts in Punjab (Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Nagar), dominated by the Sikh, are located in the Sikhs' hub. With the exception of Punjab, only a few districts of Uttar and northern Bengal, the Hindus constitute a more or less contiguous region covering almost the entire northern plains. In the west, they have monopoly, while in the east; few districts of Jharkhand State are breaking this monopoly. In the south, excepting the districts along the Malabar Coast, there is notable homogeneity. Hindus thus become India's largest and most spectacular religious region.

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