

A pocket of intense Muslim presence and growth in Uttar Pradesh

After discussing the share and growth of Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir, in Malerkotla of Punjab and in Mewat of Haryana, we deviated from the proper sequence to discuss the extraordinarily rise in their share in Assam, West Bengal and Kerala. In the process, we left out the large and densely populated pocket of Muslim dominance in West UP. This pocket comprises eight districts in the northwest part of UP and the adjoining district of Hardwar in Uttarakhand; it accommodates 30 percent of the Muslims of UP and nearly half of the Muslims of Uttarakhand. Total number of Muslims in this pocket is 1.23 crore, which is more than the number of Muslims in Assam and is comparable to Maharashtra.

Muslims now form 41 percent of the population in this pocket; this is nearly 2 percentage points above their share of about 39.2 percent in 2001. Longer time-series data is available for a slightly larger area that includes at least one more adjoining district; the share of Muslims in this area has risen by more than 10 percentage points since Independence and Partition. They formed less than 30 percent of the population in 1951. Of the accretion of 10 percentage points in the share of Muslims since 1951, more than nine have been added in the four decades after 1971. It puts this pocket among the regions of sharpest growth in the share of Muslims in India. Incidentally, 1971 seems to mark a turning point in Muslim growth in many parts of India.

Outside this pocket, Muslims have a considerable presence in some sub-districts of Bahraich, Sharawasti, Balrampur and Sant Kabir Nagar districts of UP. In the earlier decades, the share of Muslims in this eastern belt bordering Nepal was also growing rapidly; but their growth in this part seems to have become more moderate during the last couple of decades. The growth in the northwest pocket in the vicinity of Delhi, however, remains very robust.

The West UP pocket of high Muslim presence

	2001		2011		2001	2011
	Total	Muslims	Total	Muslims	%M	%M
Uttar Pradesh	16,61,97,921	3,07,40,158	19,98,12,341	3,84,83,967	18.50	19.26
Saharanpur	28,96,863	11,32,919	34,66,382	14,54,052	39.11	41.95
Muzaffarnagar	35,43,362	13,49,629	41,43,512	17,11,453	38.09	41.30
Bijnor	31,31,619	13,06,329	36,82,713	15,85,210	41.71	43.04
Moradabad	38,10,983	17,35,381	47,72,006	22,48,392	45.54	47.12
Rampur	19,23,739	9,45,277	23,35,819	11,81,337	49.14	50.57
Jyotiba Phule Nagar	14,99,068	5,90,308	18,40,221	7,50,368	39.38	40.78
Meerut	29,97,361	9,75,715	34,43,689	11,85,643	32.55	34.43
Bareilly	36,18,589	12,26,386	44,48,359	15,36,534	33.89	34.54
West UP Pocket	2,34,21,584	92,61,944	2,81,32,701	1,16,52,989	39.54	41.42
Hardwar (Uttarakhand)	14,47,187	4,78,274	18,90,422	6,48,119	33.05	34.28
Entire Pocket	2,48,68,771	97,40,218	3,00,23,123	1,23,01,108	39.17	40.97

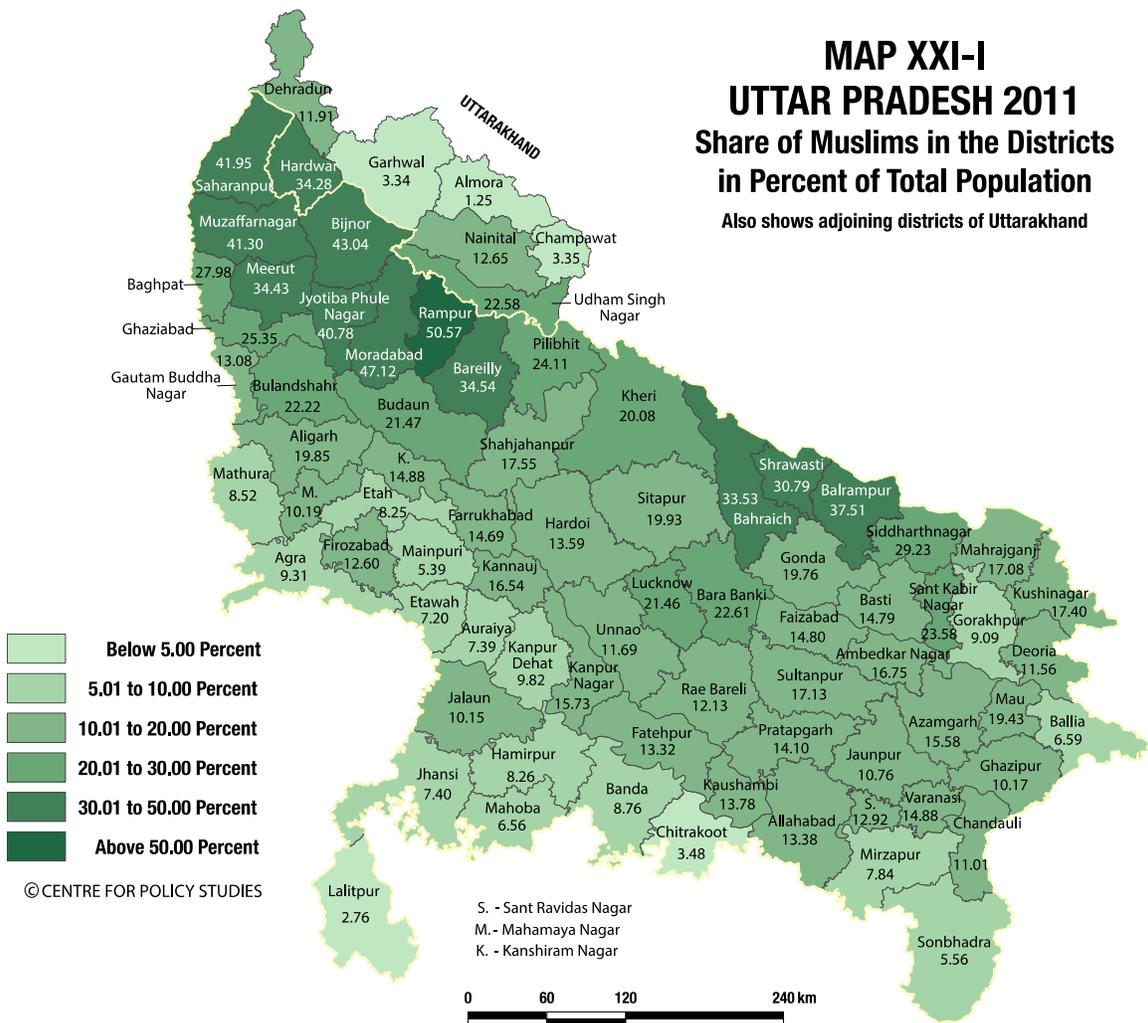
UP accommodates 22 percent of all Muslims in India

Of 17.22 crore Muslims counted in India in 2011, as many as 3.85 crore, forming 22 percent of all Muslims, are in Uttar Pradesh. But, Uttar Pradesh, often abbreviated as UP, is very large and densely populated; it accommodates 16.5 percent of the total population

of India. The share of Muslims in UP is certainly higher than in India as a whole; they form 19.26 percent of the population of the State and only 14.23 percent of India. Within UP, Muslims are particularly concentrated in a few districts, while their presence in many other districts, especially in the southwest is considerably below the average of the State.

They are particularly concentrated in eight districts of the northwest

As seen in Map XXI-I below of the share of Muslims in the districts, the most intense of the pockets of high Muslim presence in UP comprises eight contiguous districts of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Moradabad, Rampur, Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Meerut and Bareilly. These districts lie in the northwest of the State and are in the near vicinity of Delhi. Hardwar, which was carved out of Saharanpur after 1981, forms an integral part of this belt and has a similarly high and growing presence of Muslims.



This pocket accommodates 30 percent of the Muslims in UP

These eight districts accommodate 30 percent of the Muslims and only 14 percent of the total population of the State. The total number of Muslims in the UP part of this pocket adds up to 1.17 crore. The share of Muslims in each of these eight districts is near or more than 35 percent; in six of these, Muslims form more than 40 percent of the

population and they form a majority in Rampur. Their share in the population of these eight districts together works out to be 41.4 percent. Hardwar accommodates another 6.5 lakh Muslims, which forms 46 percent of all Muslims in Uttarakhand.

Muslims in this pocket have added 2 percentage points in the last decade

As seen in the Table above, share of Muslims in the UP part of this pocket has risen by 2 percentage points in the last decade, from 39.5 percent in 2001 to 41.4 percent in 2011. Their share has increased by more than one percentage point in each of the eight districts in this pocket and also in Hardwar. The quantum of increase has been relatively higher in Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar districts. Later, we shall see that Muslims in this belt have been experiencing a high level of accretion to their share for several decades now.

Longer term growth in the share of Muslims in the West UP Pocket

Growth in the share of Muslims in Percent in the West UP Pocket, 1941-2011

	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Saharanpur (incl. Hardwar)	33.59	30.40	31.08	31.11	31.57	34.14	37.09	39.24
Muzaffarnagar	29.10	27.34	27.95	28.83	28.74	34.52	38.09	41.30
Bijnor	37.04	36.50	36.54	36.66	39.45	40.35	41.71	43.04
Moradabad (incl. Jyotiba Phule Nagar)	38.51	37.06	37.25	38.15	38.06	42.70	43.80	45.35
Rampur	49.36	48.99	45.02	45.76	47.22	47.95	49.14	50.57
Meerut (incl. Baghpat)	23.43	20.03	20.97	22.14	25.30	27.49	30.36	32.66
Bareilly	28.42	27.14	29.88	29.21	27.15	32.69	33.89	34.54
Total for the West UP Pocket	32.10	29.93	30.61	31.17	32.82	36.34	38.52	40.43

Time-series data is difficult to estimate because of the reorganisation of districts

It is difficult to obtain long-term data for the nine current districts that form the northwest pocket of very high Muslims presence. Many of the districts in the region, and even several sub-districts, have been reorganised several times in the recent past. The area of Saharanpur (including Hardwar), Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor and Moradabad (including Jyotiba Phule Nagar) remains more or less unchanged, though while carving out the new districts of Jyotiba Phule Nagar and Hardwar, some villages have been taken from Moradabad and Bijnor and added to Saharanpur. Rampur and Bareilly districts have remained largely unchanged. Meerut is the most difficult to deal with. Ghaziabad was carved out of Meerut after 1971 and Baghpat was separated from Meerut after 1991. We can get the time-series data from 1971 to 2011 for Meerut plus Baghpat. For the period prior to that we shall have to include Ghaziabad; but that district has been reorganised while creating Gautam Buddha Nagar by taking parts of Ghaziabad and Bulandshahr. This means that we must add Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr and Gautam Buddha Nagar in order to get long time-series data. This would make the exercise meaningless. Therefore, we have added only Meerut and Baghpat. This makes the time-series accurate for 1971-2011. For the earlier period, we make the not too unreasonable assumption that the share of Muslims in undivided Meerut, which included Ghaziabad, was similar to their share in the area that now constitutes Meerut and Baghpat.

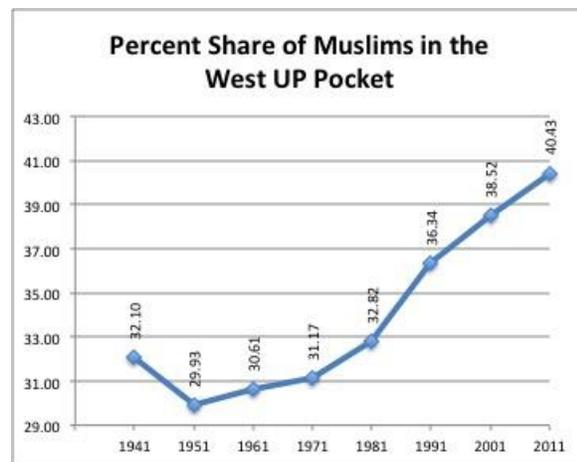
Share of Muslims in this pocket has risen from 30 percent in 1951 to 40 percent now

The growth of Muslims in this pocket has been extra-ordinarily rapid. They had a share of less than 30 percent in 1951 after Partition; their share now is 40.4 percent . The change has not been similar in different districts in this pocket. Saharanpur (including

Hardwar) has been experiencing a rise of more than 2 percentage points in the share of Muslim every decade after 1981. Muzaffarnagar experienced a spurt of nearly 6 percentage points during 1981-91, and there has been an accretion of nearly 7 percentage points in the two decades after that. Bijnor had a spurt of nearly 3 percentage points during 1971-81, but the rise since then has been more modest. Moradabad experienced a spurt of more than 4.5 percentage points in the share of Muslims during 1981-91, and there has been an accretion of another about 3 percentage points after that. Rise in the share of Muslims has been somewhat modest in Rampur, but the district experienced a spurt of about 2 percentage points in 1971-81 and there has been considerable accretion in the Muslim share during the last two decades. In Meerut, the Muslim share has been rising consistently by more than 2 percentage points every decade since 1971. In Bareilly the rise in Muslim share has been relatively modest and rather uneven.

The rise has been mainly after 1971

As is clear from the table and analysis above, there has been a distinct rise in the share of Muslims after 1971. In the two decades between 1951 and 1971, their share in this pocket had risen by just about 1.2 percentage points, from 29.93 to 31.17 percent. In the four decades since 1971, it has increased by more than 9 percentage points. There was an increase of as much as 3.5 percentage points in the single decade of 1981-91; and, there has been an accretion of 2 percentage points in each of the two decades since then. It is remarkable that there was not much change in the Muslim presence in this pocket at Partition. Between 1941 and 1951, their share declined by only 2 percentage points. That decline was made up already by 1981; the increase after that has been extraordinary.



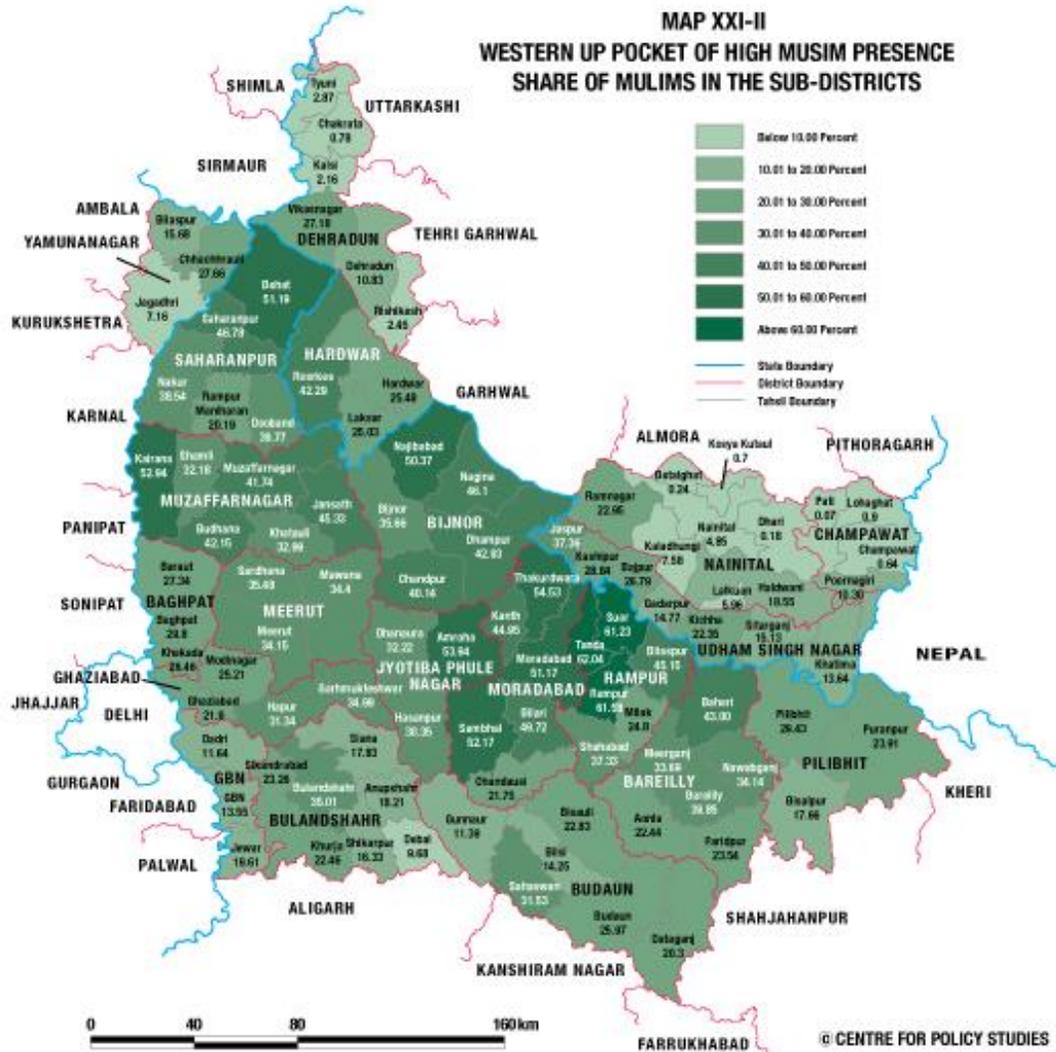
The growth of Muslims was subdued in the pre-Partition period

As we have seen, the share of Muslims in this pocket has risen by more than 10 percentage points since Partition, and much of this accretion has occurred after 1971. Rise in the share of Muslims in some of the individual districts has been even more remarkable; Muzaffarnagar has experienced an accretion of 14 and Meerut of 13 percentage points since 1951. But, rise in the share of Muslims in this region, as well as in the individual districts, was much more modest in the pre-Partition period. In this whole pocket, the share of Muslims rose from 30.8 percent in 1911 to 32.1 percent in 1941. Much of this rise could also be attributed to the unusual rise in Moradabad in 1931-41 and to a lesser extent in Bijnor during 1921-31 and Bareilly during 1921-41.

	Share of Muslims in the pre-Partition Period			
	1911	1921	1931	1941
Saharanpur	33.36	32.90	33.83	33.59
Muzaffarnagar	28.68	28.50	28.73	29.10
Bijnor	34.79	35.86	37.59	37.04
Moradabad	46.05	47.14	46.71	49.36
Rampur	28.68	28.50	28.73	29.10
Meerut	22.70	22.86	23.25	23.43
Bareilly	25.23	25.92	27.42	28.42
Total	30.82	30.97	31.77	32.10

Share of Muslims in the sub-districts

In Map XXI-II below, we have shown the share of Muslims in the sub-districts of the pocket of high Muslim presence in northwest UP that we have been discussing above; some of the districts and sub-districts in the immediate vicinity of this region have also been added for the sake of completeness and comparison.



Muslim dominance is more marked in the sub-districts

As seen in the Map, Muslim dominance seems much more marked at the level of the sub-districts. There are a total of 46 sub-districts in the eight districts of northwest UP and Hardwar of Uttarakhand that comprise this pocket. Muslim presence in 10 of these sub-districts is above 50 percent; in three of these, Muslims form more than 60 percent of the population.

These 10 Muslim-majority sub-districts are spread over seven districts: Rampur, Moradabad, Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Bijnor, Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur. In another 12 of the 46 sub-districts in the region, Muslim presence is between 40 and 50 percent, and it

Muslim Share %	No of Tahsils
>50	10
40-50	12
30-40	14
20-30	10

is between 30 and 40 percent in 14. The share of Muslims in the remaining 10 sub-districts of this region is between 20 and 30 percent.

Muslim presence is high in some of the neighbouring sub-districts

The share of Muslims is above 30 percent in another 5 sub-districts in the vicinity of this pocket. These five include Hapur and Garhmukteshwar of Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr of Bulandshahr, Sahaswan of Budaun and Jaspur of Udham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand.

Share of Muslims in the towns of the West UP pocket

Muslims have a higher presence in the towns of the UP part of the pocket

The share of Muslims in the towns of this pocket is generally higher than their share in the total population. Census 2011 counts 154 towns in the eight districts of northwest UP that we have been discussing here. Muslims form 51.76 percent of the population of the towns as compared to their share of 41.42 percent in the total population of these districts. They are in a majority in 103 of the 154 towns; their share is above 90 percent in 11 of these and between 70 and 90 percent in another 44.

Muslim Share %	No of Towns
>90	11
80-90	20
70-80	24
60-70	21
50-60	27
40-50	12
30-40	11
20-30	11
<20	17

Muslim share in urban areas is higher in eight districts

Proportion of Muslims in the urban population is considerably higher than in the total population in the eight districts in the UP part of this pocket; in six of these, Muslims form a majority of the urban population. It is only in Meerut and Bareilly that the share of Muslims in the urban population is less than 50 percent; even there, their share is around 47 percent in both districts.

District	Muslim Share %	
	Urban	Total
Saharanpur	51.28	41.95
Muzaffarnagar	51.19	41.30
Bijnor	50.30	43.04
Moradabad	63.61	47.12
Rampur	72.64	50.57
Jyotiba Phule Nagar	50.66	40.78
Meerut	46.78	34.43
Bareilly	47.10	34.54

Share of Muslims in the urban population of Hardwar

Unlike in the eight districts of Uttar Pradesh, in Hardwar of Uttarakhand, the ninth district of this pocket, the share of Muslims in the urban areas is lower than in the total population. They have a share of 27.37 percent in the urban population of the district compared to 34.28 percent in the total population. But Muslims form a majority in 7 of the 24 towns of this district; and, in six of these, their share is above 70 percent.

Another pocket of high Muslim growth in Uttarakhand

Rapid growth of Muslims in Hardwar and Udham Singh Nagar of Uttarakhand

As we have mentioned above, Hardwar of Uttarakhand is an integral part of the northwest UP pocket, and as in the rest of that pocket, share of Muslims in Hardwar has been rising rapidly. There is a similarly high growth of Muslims in Udham Singh Nagar, which was carved out of Nainital after 1991. Since districts of Uttarakhand have been extensively reorganised in the last several decades, long time-series data is available only for the whole Kumaon region including the districts of Udham Singh Nagar, Nainital, Champawat, Almora, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar. As seen in the Table

Share of Muslims in Kumaon	
Year	%M
1961	5.24
1971	5.92
1981	6.43
1991	8.24
2001	10.10
2011	12.22

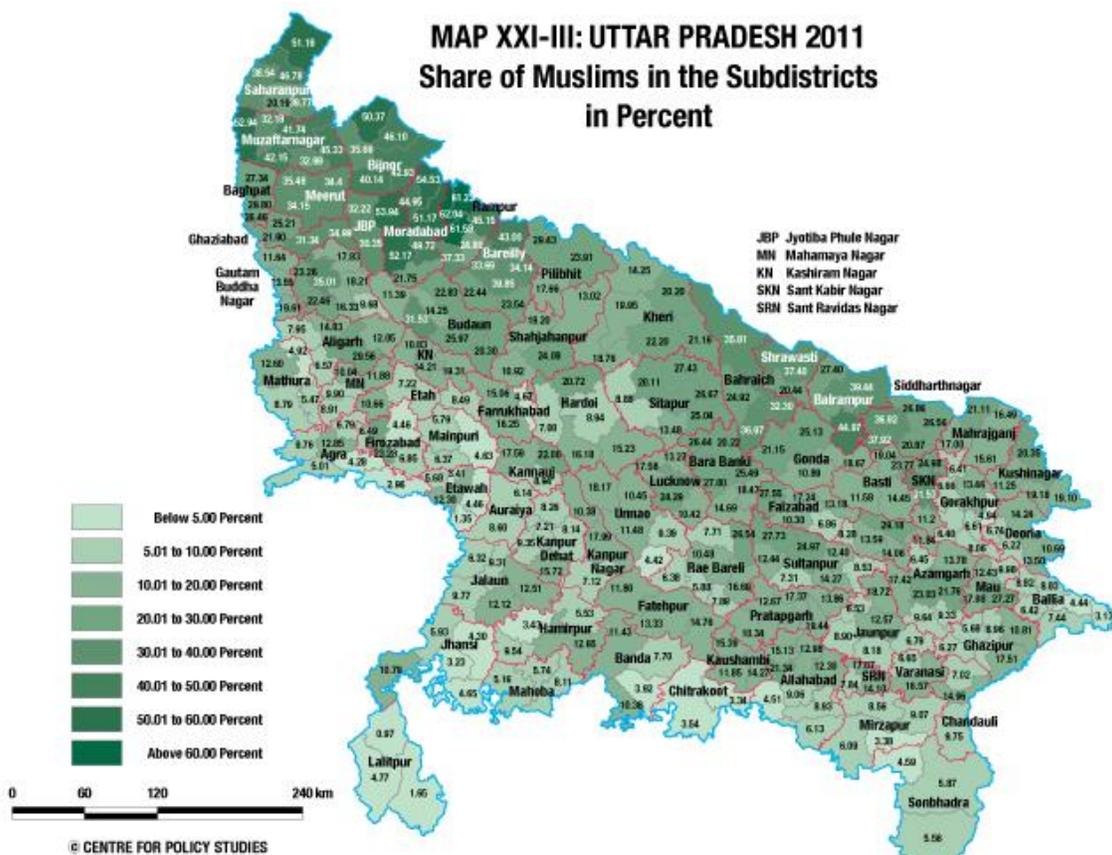
here, Muslim presence in this region has been rising by about 2 percentage points every decade since 1981 and has now reached above 12.2 percent; in 1961, there were only 5.2 percent Muslims in Kumaon. The presence of Muslims is thus growing rapidly in both parts of Uttarakhand; Hardwar of Garhwal and Udham Singh Nagar of Kumaon are the focal districts of this growth.

Accretion in Muslim share in Uttarakhand is the second highest in India

The rise in the share of Muslims in these two pockets is so high that Muslim presence in the whole of Uttarakhand has risen by 4 percentage points since 1991, after the State was carved out of UP. In 1991, Muslims had a share of 10.00 percent in the population of the State; it rose to 11.92 percent in 2001 and has increased further to 13.95 percent in 2011. This makes Uttarakhand the State with the second highest accretion to the share of Muslims in the country, after only Assam.

Share of Muslims in Uttarakhand	
Year	%M
1991	10.00
2001	11.92
2011	13.95

**Another pockets of high Muslim presence and growth:
Bhraich-Balrampur-Siddharthnagar-Sant Kabirnagar belt of East UP**



Besides the 41 sub-districts in the northwest part of UP that we have discussed above, there are another 8 sub-districts in the State with Muslim presence of more than 30 percent. As seen in Map XXI-III above of the share of Muslims in the sub-districts, these 8 sub-districts form a more or less contiguous region within Bahraich, Shrawasti, Balrampur, Siddharthnagar and Sant Kabirnagar districts lying along the border of Nepal in east UP. Muslim presence in the whole of this border belt was rising quite rapidly up to 1991. The growth in their share seems to have stalled after that. During 2001-11, the share of Muslims in the five districts that we have mentioned here has increased only marginally, from 30.9 percent in 2001 to 31.5 percent in 2011. We have discussed this moderation of Muslim growth in the neighbouring Bihar and Jharkhand in earlier notes, [RDI Blog III](#), [RDI Blog IV](#) and [RDI Blog V](#). Their growth, however, continues to be robust in the West UP pocket that we have discussed here and in Uttarakhand.

Number of Children in the Muslim population remains high in the West UP Pocket

Gap in the number of children per hundred of the population among Hindus and Muslims seems to be narrowing in Uttar Pradesh; in several districts of UP and also Uttarakhand, this number has in fact become negative, with the number of children per hundred of the Muslim population being lower than the corresponding number for Hindus. But, in most of the districts in the West UP Pocket, this gap remains rather wide. Thus, in Muzaffarnagar, there are 13 children per hundred of the population among Hindus and 19 among Muslims, leaving a gap of 6 children in favour of Muslims. The gap is of 4.6 children per hundred in Saharanpur, of 5.6 children in Meerut, 7.5 children in Baghpat and of 5.2 children per hundred of the population in Hardwar. This wide gap between the Hindus and Muslims indicates that the rapid rise in the share of Muslims in this region that has been happening since 1971-81 is not going to slow down anytime soon.

Summing Up

1. There is a pocket of very high Muslim presence and growth in northwest UP. It comprises eight districts of Saharnpur, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Moradabad, Rampur, Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Meerut and Bareilly in UP and the adjoining district of Hardwar in Uttarakhand.
2. This pocket accommodates 1.23 crore Muslims; they account for 30 percent of the Muslims of UP and nearly half of the Muslims of Uttarakhand.
3. The share of Muslims in this belt now is above 40 percent; it was less than 30 percent in 1951. This level of rise in the share of Muslims puts this pocket among the regions of the greatest imbalance in the growth of Muslims and others.
4. Of the accretion of more than 10 percentage points in the share of Muslims since 1951, more than 9 have been added after 1971. That year marks a turning point in the growth of Muslims in several parts of India.

5. Muslims form a majority in several sub-districts and towns of this pocket. Muslim presence in the UP part of this pocket is considerably higher in the urban areas. This, however, is not true for Hardwar of Uttarakhand.

6. Muslims presence is relatively lower in Uttarakhand. But the growth in their share has been rather rapid during the two decades since the formation of the State. Share of Muslims in Uttarakhand rose from 10.00 percent in 1991 to 11.92 percent in 2001 and has further risen to 13.95 percent now. This accretion of more than 2 percentage points in the share of Muslims during 2001-11 is the second highest in the country after Assam.

7. There is also a pocket of relatively high Muslim presence in the eastern part of UP involving Bahraich, Shrawasti, Balrampur and Sant Kabir Nagar. Growth in the share of Muslims used to be high in this region that borders on Nepal. But, the rise has been fairly moderate during the last two decades.

8. There is no similar moderation seen in the West UP pocket. On the other hand, growth in the share of Muslims in this pocket seems to be becoming more robust. This is reflected in the wide gap between the number of children per hundred of the population of Hindus and Muslims in many districts of this pocket.