

Religion Data of Census 2011: VI

The ORPs add to the religious demographic contention in Jharkhand

In the previous post, we have noted that the decline in the share of Indian Religionists (IRs), and the corresponding rise of Muslims and Christians, has stalled in all regions of Jharkhand, except in Santhal Pargana, though the rise of the latter in this region is large enough to amount to a considerable decline in the share of IR in the population of the State as a whole. Indian Religionists in Jharkhand, however, include considerable proportion of persons counted in the category of Other Religious Persuasions (ORPs), and it is important to know about the changes in the relative share of Hindus, ORPs and others falling within the larger category of IRs. In addition, the changes in the proportion of Hindus and ORPs on the one hand and of Muslims and Christians on the other have been much sharper in many of the individual districts of the State than in the larger region in which they are situated; these changes at the district level give a glimpse of the intensity of the contention for demographic space among different communities that seems to be going on in much of India. We discuss these two issues in this post.

Hindus, ORPs and Others in Jharkhand

Unlike in most other States, there is a considerable number of ORPs in Jharkhand. In 2011, in the total population of 33 million, 4.2 million are counted in this category; they form more than half of the 7.9 million ORPs counted in the country. In Jharkhand, they form the third largest group after the Hindus and

Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, ORPs and RNS, 2001-2011

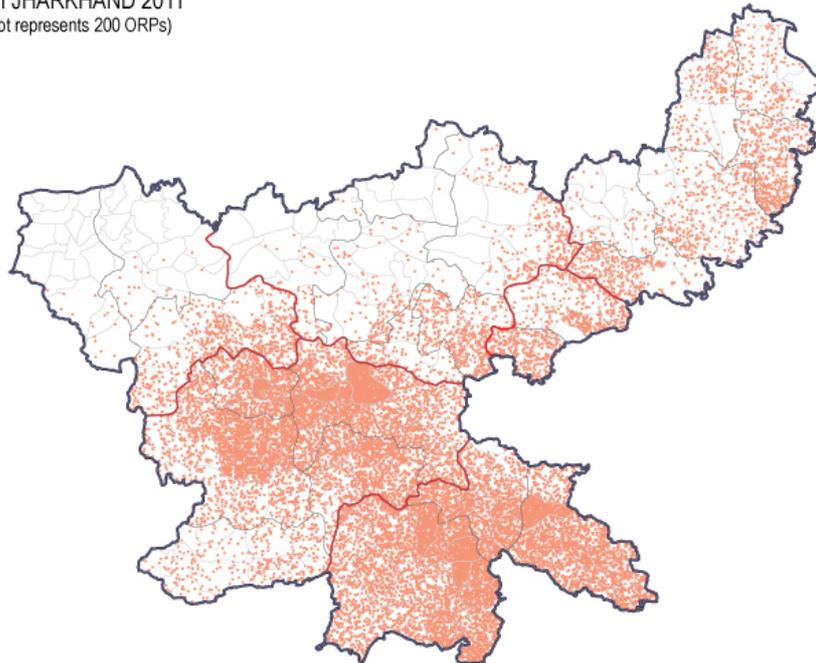
	Population in 1,000s		Share in Percent		Decadal
	2011	2001	2011	2001	Growth % 2001-2011
Total	32,988	26,946	100.00	100.00	22.42
Hindus	22,376	18,476	67.83	68.57	21.11
Muslims	4,794	3,731	14.53	13.85	28.48
Christians	1,419	1,093	4.30	4.06	29.74
Sikhs	71	83	0.22	0.31	-14.32
Buddhists	9	6	0.03	0.02	50.77
Jains	15	16	0.05	0.06	-8.14
ORPs	4,236	3,514	12.84	13.04	20.52
RNS	68	25	0.21	0.09	169.20

Muslims, with a share of 12.84 percent in the population. Taking into account changes in their numbers and share is, therefore, important while looking at the religious demography of Jharkhand and its districts. Incidentally, ORPs of Jharkhand are mainly the followers of Sarna Dharma, a religious practice popular among the Scheduled Tribes. The detailed religious affiliation of ORPs in the 2011 Census is not yet available. Of 35.1 lakh ORPs counted in 2001, 34.5 lakh were Sarnas; and 31.4 lakh of the Sarnas were from the Scheduled Tribes.

Distribution of ORPs in Jharkhand

ORPs in the State are concentrated mainly in the Ranchi and Singhbhum regions of the State. Of the total of about 42 lakh ORPs in the State, 34 lakhs are in these two regions. And within these regions, they are particularly concentrated in certain districts and sub-districts, as seen in the Map VI-A below. Outside these two regions, there is significant presence of the ORPs only in Latehar, where their proportion has increased considerably during 2001-11, and to a lesser extent in Pakur. In all other districts, their share in the population is less than 10 percent and in many it is negligibly small.

MAP VI-A
ORPs in JHARKHAND 2011
(Each dot represents 200 ORPs)



Decline in the proportion of ORPs in Jharkhand

One of the more significant aspects of Census 2011 is the slight, but noticeable, decline in the share of ORPs in the population, as seen in the Table above, their proportion has gone down from 13.04 percent in 2001 to 12.84 percent in 2011. This is significant, because the number of ORPs in the previous decade of 1991-2001 had multiplied by two and a half times, from 14.4 to 35 lakhs. During the last several decades, there has been much campaigning among the Scheduled Tribes to get them counted outside the larger umbrella of Hinduism, which of course has always accommodated the diverse religious beliefs and practices of different groups. This time also, there was a vociferous campaign in this direction carried out among the Janjatis across India during the preparatory phase of Census 2011. The campaign has not succeeded, at least in Jharkhand. This is also probably a consequence of the nascent Hindu resurgence that we have been noticing in the religious demographic numbers of 2011. We shall discuss the countrywide changes in the proportion of ORPs in the following post.

Decline of Sikhs and Jains

Another remarkable aspect of the data compiled in the Table above is the decline in the absolute number, not merely the share, of Sikhs and Jains. Both these communities have registered a negative rate of growth. The number of Sikhs has declined from 83 thousand in 2001 to 71 thousand in 2011; that of Jains has declined from 16 to about 15 thousand. The number of Buddhists has increased from about 6 to 9 thousand. The change in the numbers counted as RNS (Religions Not Stated) is also remarkable; this population has increased from 25 to 68 thousand. Such large changes in the population of Sikhs, Jains and RNS seem to have happened across the country. We shall discuss these in due course. We continue the discussion below, of district-wise changes in the religious demography, especially from the perspective of the ORPs.

Changes across different districts of Jharkhand

Changes in the share of ORPs, and other communities, have not been uniform across the districts. In several districts, the share of one community or the other has increased considerably and in several others, there has been a sharp decline. Below, we consider the districts that have undergone the most significant changes:

Santhal Pargana Region

Percentage share of different communities in Santhal Pargana

	Deogarh			Godda			Sahibganj		
	2011	2001	Diff	2011	2001	Diff	2011	2001	Diff
Hindus	78.09	78.12	-0.03	71.34	71.11	0.23	54.59	56.33	-1.75
Muslims	20.28	19.02	1.26	22.02	20.11	1.91	34.61	31.26	3.35
Christians	0.40	0.36	0.04	2.88	2.07	0.81	7.23	6.33	0.90
Sikhs	0.01	0.03	-0.02	0.01	0.04	-0.03	0.02	0.03	-0.01
Buddhists	0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02
Jains	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00
ORPs	1.08	2.34	-1.26	3.58	6.49	-2.91	3.34	5.95	-2.61
RNS	0.11	0.08	0.02	0.16	0.16	-0.01	0.18	0.08	0.10
	Pakur			Dumka			Jamtara		
Hindus	45.55	45.70	-0.15	79.06	75.70	3.36	69.60	74.39	-4.79
Muslims	35.87	32.36	3.51	8.09	7.25	0.83	20.78	18.91	1.88
Christians	8.43	5.86	2.57	6.54	4.76	1.78	0.56	0.50	0.06
Sikhs	0.04	0.06	-0.03	0.02	0.05	-0.03	0.07	0.07	-0.01
Buddhists	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.04	-0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
Jains	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.10	0.21	-0.11
ORPs	9.86	15.77	-5.91	5.95	11.97	-6.02	8.67	5.78	2.89
RNS	0.21	0.22	-0.01	0.31	0.22	0.10	0.21	0.14	0.07

As seen in the Table above, the share of ORPs has declined in five of the six districts of this region. The loss of ORPs in four of these districts, Deogarh, Godda, Sahibganj and Pakur, has been almost entirely towards the gain of Muslims and Christians, though in Godda, there has been a slight increase in the share of Hindus also.

Of these four districts, the largest change has occurred in Pakur. Here, the share of ORPs has declined from 15.77 percent in 2001 to 9.86 percent in 2011. The share of

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Christians and Muslims has correspondingly increased by 2.57 and 3.51 percentage points, respectively. The share of Hindus has declined only slightly from 45.70 to 45.55 percent.

Jamtara has been carved out of Dumka in the course of 2001-11. The changes in the proportion of Hindus and ORPs in these two districts have been drastic. In Dumka, the share of ORPs has declined by 6.02 percentage points, and that of Hindus has increased by as much as 3.36 percentage points. The rest of the loss of the ORPs has been towards the gain of Muslims and Christians, both of whom have considerably improved their share. In Jamtara, on the other hand, the share of ORPs has increased by 2.89 percentage points, while that of Hindus has declined by 4.79 percentage points. The remaining loss of Hindus is towards the gain of Christians and Muslims.

The changes that have happened in Dumka and Jamtara districts can be seen happening even more sharply at the sub-district level; for example, in Dumka taluk, the number of ORPs has declined from around 17.3 thousand in 2001 to 7.4 thousand in 2011, while in Jamtara taluk it has gone up from 18.8 to 31.0 thousand.

Thus, Muslims and Christians have improved their share in every district of the Santhal Pargana region at the cost of either the Hindus or the ORPs, and there seems to have been much inter-change between the latter two. This gives an indication of the intensity of contention for demographic space that is happening at the ground level in the country.

Singhbhum Region

	Purbi Singhbhum			Pashchimi Singhbhum			Saraikela- Kharsawan		
	2011	2001	Diff	2011	2001	Diff	2011	2001	Diff
Hindus	67.58	66.49	1.09	28.22	30.29	-2.07	66.57	60.91	5.66
Muslims	8.89	9.32	-0.43	2.54	2.87	-0.33	5.97	4.31	1.66
Christians	1.32	1.42	-0.10	5.83	5.13	0.70	0.76	0.76	0.00
Sikhs	1.68	1.91	-0.23	0.06	0.10	-0.03	0.10	0.20	-0.09
Buddhists	0.04	0.05	-0.01	0.03	0.05	-0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00
Jains	0.07	0.10	-0.02	0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.01	0.02	-0.02
ORPs	20.29	20.62	-0.33	62.96	61.47	1.49	26.33	33.59	-7.26
RNS	0.14	0.10	0.03	0.36	0.08	0.28	0.23	0.18	0.05

In Purbi Singhbhum, the share of ORPs and all other communities, including Muslims, has declined and the share of Hindus has increased by 1.09 percentage points.

In Pashchimi Singhbhum, the share of ORPs has increased by 1.49 percentage points; the share of Christians has also increased by 0.70 percentage points; while the share of all other communities, including Muslims, has declined. The Hindu share here has declined by 2.07 percentage points.

In Saraikela-Kharsawan, carved out of Pashchimi Singhbhum during 2001-11, the share of ORPs has declined sharply by 7.26 percentage points; correspondingly, the

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share of Hindus in this district has gone up by as much as 5.66 percentage points. The share of Muslims has also increased by 1.66 percentage points.

The sharp decline in the share of ORPs in Saraikela-Kharsawan seems largely because of the number of ORPs declining from about 59 thousand to 27 thousand in the three taluks of Ichagarh, Nimdi and Kukru. The number of Hindus in these has increased from 1.17 to 1.79 lakh. The sharp increase in the share of Muslims in this district seems mainly because of their number rising suddenly from 17.7 to 39.8 thousand in Chandil taluk.

Ranchi Region

	Ranchi			Khunti			Simdega		
	2011	2001	Diff	2011	2001	Diff	2011	2001	Diff
Hindus	55.32	54.61	0.71	26.11	26.65	-0.54	33.61	33.04	0.57
Muslims	14.09	14.27	-0.17	2.47	3.08	-0.61	2.52	3.59	-1.07
Christians	6.66	6.41	0.25	25.65	23.66	1.99	51.14	48.93	2.21
Sikhs	0.17	0.31	-0.14	0.01	0.04	-0.02	0.01	0.03	-0.03
Buddhists	0.03	0.06	-0.02	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.13	0.03	0.10
Jains	0.09	0.10	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.03	-0.02
ORPs	23.25	24.08	-0.83	45.37	46.42	-1.05	12.33	14.24	-1.91
RNS	0.39	0.17	0.21	0.32	0.11	0.21	0.25	0.11	0.14
	Gumla			Lohardaga					
	2011	2001	Diff	2011	2001	Diff	2011	2001	Diff
Hindus	30.19	32.49	-2.29	24.34	28.56	-4.22			
Muslims	5.02	4.96	0.05	20.57	20.11	0.46			
Christians	19.75	20.84	-1.09	3.63	3.98	-0.35			
Sikhs	0.02	0.04	-0.02	0.01	0.03	-0.02			
Buddhists	0.05	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.00			
Jains	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			
ORPs	44.62	41.54	3.08	51.10	47.20	3.90			
RNS	0.34	0.12	0.23	0.33	0.10	0.23			

In Ranchi district, the share of ORPs has declined by 0.83 percentage points and that of Hindus has increased by 0.71 percentage points. The share of Christians has also increased by 0.25 percentage points; but that of Muslims and also Sikhs has declined.

In the newly created districts of Khunti and Simdega, the share of Christians has increased considerably, by 1.99 and 2.21 percentage points, respectively. The share of Muslims, on the other hand, has declined considerably in both districts, though the decline is much sharper in Simdega. In addition, the shares of both the ORPs and Hindus have declined in Khunti; in Simdega, the decline in the share of ORPs has been much larger, but that of Hindus has improved by 0.57 percentage points. Thus in these newly created districts, which have the highest share of Christians in the State, Christians have gained at the cost of both Indian Religionists and Muslims.

In Gumla and Lohardaga, the proportion of ORPs has increased considerably at the cost of both the Hindus and Christians. The rise of 3.08 percentage points in their share in the former is compensated by a decline of 2.29 percentage points in the share of Hindus and of 1.09 percentage points in that of Christians. The rise of 3.90 percentage points in the share of ORPs in Lohardaga is compensated by a sharp

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decline of 4.22 percentage points in the share of Hindus and a slight decline in that of Christians. The district has also witnessed an increase in the share of Muslims.

Hazaribagh-Dhanbad Region

	Bokaro			Latehar		
	2011	2001	Diff	2011	2001	Diff
Hindus	79.35	83.92	-4.57	65.07	71.78	-6.71
Muslims	11.71	10.95	0.75	9.60	9.79	-0.19
Christians	0.67	0.72	-0.06	6.55	7.61	-1.06
Sikhs	0.20	0.32	-0.11	0.02	0.06	-0.04
Buddhists	0.09	0.02	0.08	0.02	0.00	0.02
Jains	0.10	0.11	-0.01	0.00	0.01	-0.01
ORPs	7.78	3.89	3.89	18.37	10.70	7.66
RNS	0.10	0.06	0.04	0.37	0.05	0.32

In this region, notable changes in the religious demography have taken place in Bokaro and in the newly created district of Latehar. In Bokaro, the share of ORPs has increased by 3.89 percentage points; that of Muslims has also increased by 0.75 percentage points. Correspondingly, the share of Hindus has declined by as much as 4.57 percentage points.

In Latehar, the share of ORPs has increased by 7.66 percentage points; this represents the largest change in their proportion of all districts in Jharkhand. Correspondingly, the share of all other major communities has declined. The greatest decline is in the share of Hindus, which has come down from 71.78 percent in 2001 to 65.07 percent in 2011. There has been a decline of 1.06 percentage points in the share of Christians also.

Thus in different districts, the nature and direction of changes in the proportion of different communities have been quite different. The above analysis seems to underline the fact that the relatively small changes that we see at the district, State or national levels often comprise of fairly substantial changes in the religious demography at the lower levels of the taluk and the village or town. Such substantial and diverse changes, of course, cannot be the consequence of any natural demographic processes. These can only happen as a result of serious contention for demographic space between different communities; which community gains and which loses seems to depend on the peculiar situation of each district and region. Such contention seems to be happening in every part of India. It is perhaps somewhat more intense in Jharkhand. But this contentious situation becoming so visible is probably also the result of Hindus gaining some confidence. The earlier censuses displayed a monotonous trend of decline in the share of Hindus and that largely covered up the actual contention happening at the grass-root levels.

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