

Pockets of Intense Christian Presence in Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh

Presence of Christians in the country is not quite as widespread or intense as that of Muslims. The change in their share has also been modest; between 1951 and 2011, their share in the population has remained nearly unchanged at around 2.3 percent. It had risen to about 2.6 percent in 1971 and has since declined back to 2.3 percent.

Notwithstanding this modest share of Christians in the total population of the country, their presence is quite intense in several regions and pockets and in many of these their growth has also been quite high. We have earlier discussed the Christian presence in a small pocket in [Gurdaspur of Punjab](#) and in [Kerala](#). We have also discussed the great spurt in Christianity witnessed in [Arunachal Pradesh](#) during 2001-11. In this and the following notes, we describe other regions of high Christian presence in the country.

We begin with the pockets of high Christian presence in Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Of 2.78 crore Christians counted in 2011, 25.80 lakhs are in these three States; and, within these States, they are concentrated in a few districts forming three distinct pockets. The oldest and the largest of these pockets comprises much of the earlier undivided Ranchi district of Jharkhand, the adjoining Sundargarh district of Odisha and Jashpur component of the earlier undivided Raigarh district of Chhattisgarh. There is another pocket centred on Gajapati and Kandhmal districts of Odisha. The third pocket comprises parts of the earlier undivided Santhal Pargana district of Jharkhand.

There are 14.8 lakh Christians in the Ranchi-Sundargarh-Raigarh pocket. Their share in this pocket, especially in the larger Ranchi component, stopped growing after 1951. But further rise in Christian influence in this part has been achieved by carving out Christian-dominated areas into separate districts and sub-districts. This process has led to the creation of Simdega as the first Christian-majority district outside the northeast. Notwithstanding the moderation of Christian growth in the pocket as a whole, they have recorded high growth in many of the newly created component districts.

The second pocket of high Christian presence in this region comprises Gajapati and Kandhamal districts of Odisha, both of which have been carved out of larger districts after 1991. Growth of Christianity in the area corresponding to these two districts has been phenomenal. Their share in Gajapati has increased from 11.8 percent in 1971 to 38 percent in 2011 and in Kandhamal, from 9.4 percent in 1981 to 20.3 percent in 2011. There has been similarly high growth of Christianity in the neighbouring Rayagada also.

The third pocket of high Christian presence in this region comprises Godda, Sahibganj, Pakur and Dumka components of Santhal Pargana. The share of Christians in this pocket has risen from 2 percent in 1971 to 6 percent in 2011.

Christians thus have acquired an area of very high influence in the Ranchi-Sundargarh-Raigarh pocket as well as in Gajapati-Kandhamal pocket. And their share is growing rapidly in many parts of Odisha and in much of Santhal Pargana in Jharkhand.

Christians Pockets of Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh

Christians have a significant presence in these three States

Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh comprise one of the major regions of Christian presence in India. Of 2.78 crore Christians counted in India in 2011, 25.80 lakh are in these three States; they form 9.3 percent of all Christians in India.

Share of Growth of Christians in Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh

	Number of Christians		% Share		% Growth	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	T	C
INDIA	2,40,80,016	2,78,19,588	2.34	2.30	17.72	15.53
Jharkhand	10,93,382	14,18,608	4.06	4.30	22.42	29.74
Odisha	8,97,861	11,61,708	2.44	2.77	14.05	29.39
Chhattisgarh	4,01,035	4,90,542	1.92	1.92	22.61	22.32
Total	19,91,243	25,80,316	3.12	3.44	17.59	29.58
% Share in India	8.27	9.28				

Note: The last two columns give decadal growth of the Total (T) and Christian (C) population in 2001-11. The last row gives percent share of Christians of this region in the total Christian population of India.

Christians in this region have grown faster than the total population during 2001-11

Unlike in India as a whole, where the share of Christians in the population has slightly declined during 2001-11, their share in this region has recorded some increase. In this decade, Christians in India have grown by 15.5 percent, while the total population has grown by 17.7 percent. In Jharkhand-Odisha-Chhattisgarh region, the growth of total population at 17.6 percent has been similar to the Indian average, but Christians have grown by 29.6 percent. In Odisha, their growth has been more than double that of the total population, in Jharkhand also their growth has been distinctly higher. It is only in Chhattisgarh that the Christians have grown at a rate marginally lower than that of the total population. As a consequence, the share of Christians in Jharkhand and Odisha has improved during 2001-11, while it has remained unchanged in Chhattisgarh.

Pockets of concentrated Christian presence within the region

As seen in Map XXII-1 and in XXII-Appendix below, within this larger region of the three States, Christians are highly concentrated in three distinct pockets.

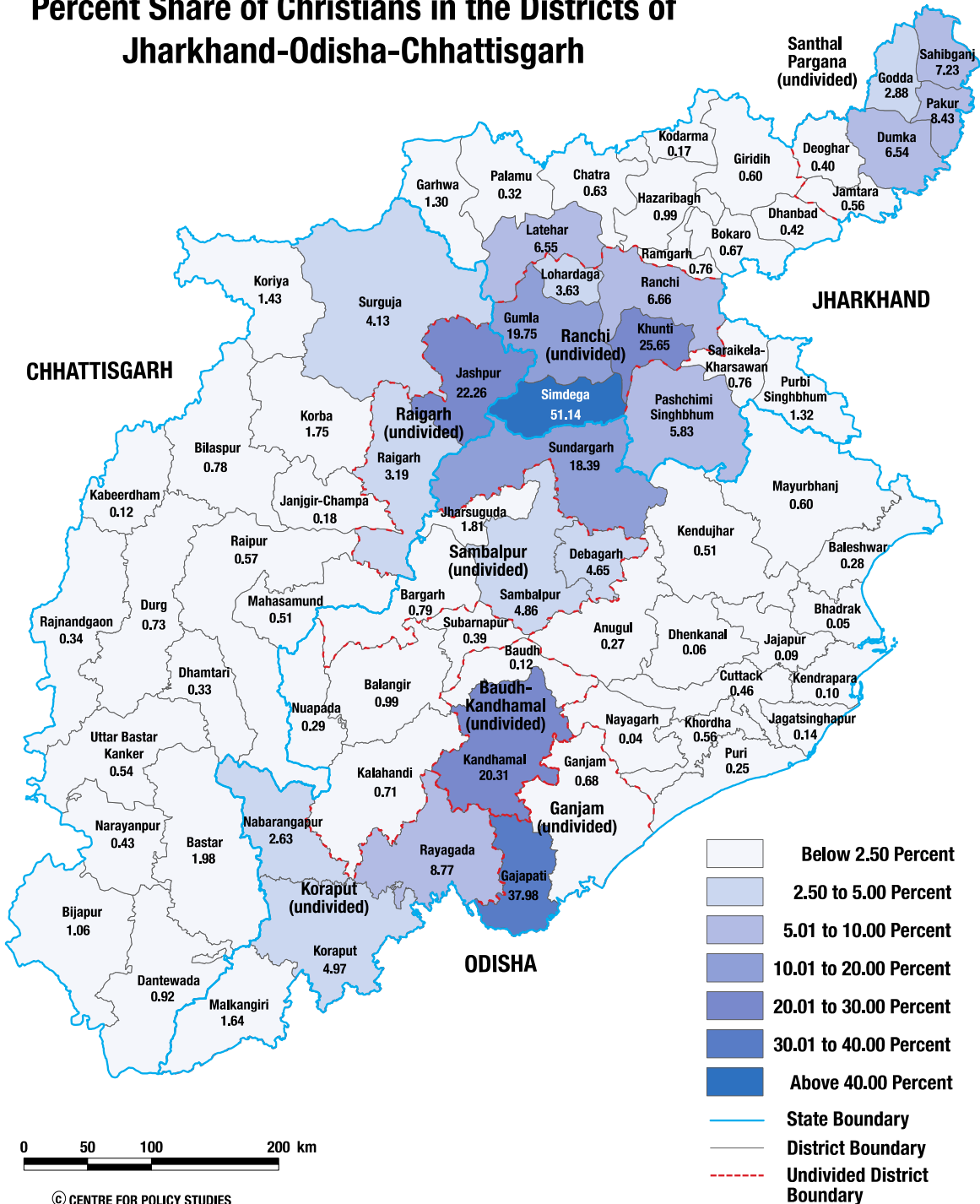
The most intense of these pockets of high Christian presence comprises the earlier undivided district of Ranchi in Jharkhand, the adjoining Sundargarh district in Odisha and Jashpur component of the earlier undivided Raigarh in Chhattisgarh. Christian influence in this pocket seems to have spread into several neighbouring districts also.

The second pocket of high Christian presence in this region comprises Gajapati and Kandhamal districts of Odisha. Christian influence in this pocket seems to have spread to the neighbouring districts of Rayagada, Koraput and Nabarangpur also.

The third such pocket comprises parts of the undivided Santhal Pargana district of Jharkhand. As we have seen in an earlier note, this pocket is also witnessing a very rapid rise in the share of Muslims along with the adjoining districts of Bihar and West Bengal. The Christian influence, however, does not extend to those areas.

High Christian presence has a somewhat longer history in the first of these pockets; but their presence in Santhal Pargana and Gajapati-Kandhamal pockets has risen to a high level only in the recent decades. We discuss each of these pockets in detail below.

MAP XXII-1 Percent Share of Christians in the Districts of Jharkhand-Odisha-Chhattisgarh



Ranchi-Sundargarh-Raigarh pocket

This is the largest of the three pockets of high Christian presence in this region. Of the total 25.8 lakh Christians in the whole of Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh, 14.8 lakh are in this pocket, where they have a share of 14.8 percent in the population. There has been a slight increase in their share during the last decade; this is largely because of a substantial spurt in the Christian presence in Sundargarh during 2001-11. Otherwise, the share of Christians in this pocket has not been changing significantly for the last few decades. Below, we describe the development of Christianity in the three districts, separately.

	Number and Share of Christians, 2001 and 2011			
	Number of Christians		%Share	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Ranchi	6,93,174	8,56,232	15.42	15.48
Sundargarh	3,08,476	3,85,011	16.85	18.39
Raigarh	2,05,707	2,37,241	10.24	10.11
Total	12,07,357	14,78,484	14.48	14.83

Ranchi had a significant Christian presence already in 1901

Ranchi was an early centre of Christian proselytization in India. Undivided Ranchi district, which is now split into six components, had 1.25 lakh Christians already in 1901, when they formed 10.6 percent of the population. At that stage, there were only a few other regions of the country where Christians had achieved that kind of presence. These included, south Kerala, where Christians formed nearly a quarter of the population; adjoining districts of Tamil Nadu, particularly, Kanniyakumari and Tiruvnelveli in the south and Nilgiris in the west; and, the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya.

Share of Christians in Ranchi kept rising up to 1951 and has declined since then

In the pre-Independence period, the share of Christians in undivided Ranchi kept rising consistently from decade to decade and reached 18.65 percent in 1951. After that, their share began slowly declining to reach 15.42 percent in 2001; there has been a marginal rise in their share during the last decade of 2001-11.

	Percent Share of Christians in Ranchi, Sundargarh and Raigarh											
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Ranchi	10.61	12.90	14.90	16.90	17.27	18.65	17.71	17.69	16.57	15.71	15.42	15.48
Sundargarh			9.95	14.69	16.15	13.03	14.02	16.55	15.91	16.49	16.85	18.39
Raigarh						1.51	8.68	10.34	10.03	9.92	10.24	10.11

Note: The figures refer to undivided Ranchi and Raigarh districts. Religious break-up for Sundargarh is available from 1921 and for Raigarh from 1951 onwards.

Sundargarh of Odisha

Christianity seems to have arrived relatively early in Sundargarh of Odisha also. We have the earliest religious breakup of the population of this district for 1921; at that stage there were nearly 10 percent Christians there already. In the course of the next two decades, the share of Christians in this district rose sharply to reach 14.7 percent in 1931 and 16.2 percent in 1941. After that, there were erratic changes in the Christian presence, but from 1981 onwards, their share has been rising consistently; and, the largest jump has been recorded in the last decade of 2001-11.

Raigarh of Chhattisgarh

Christianity seems to have arrived rather late in this district. In 1951, less than 14 thousand Christians were counted in the then undivided Raigarh (including Jashpur) district, and they formed 1.5 percent of the population. At the end of the next decade,

however, their population had multiplied 6.5 times to reach 90 thousand and their share had reached 8.7 percent; there was another spurt in the Christian population of the district in the following decade, which took their share in 1971 to 10.3 percent. Since then, Christian presence in this district has remained around 10 percent.

Christian presence is much more intense and rising sharply in the component districts

The share of Christians in this pocket works out to be less than 15 percent, if we include the whole of the undivided districts of Ranchi and Raigarh. But, their share in many of the current component districts, carved out from these larger districts, is much higher, as can be seen in Map XXII-1 above.

Ranchi has been divided into six smaller districts. Of these six, two have been created after 2001. During 2001-11, Simdega has been carved out from the Gumla component of undivided Ranchi district, and Khunti from the Ranchi component, as it existed in 2001. Christian presence is the highest in these two newly created districts. Simdega, with 51.1 percent Christians in its population of 2.5 lakhs, forms the centre of this pocket of high Christian influence. Khunti, Gumla, Jashpur component of undivided Raigarh district and Sundargarh form the immediate periphery of the central Christian district of Simdega.

These five component districts form the core of this pocket of high Christian presence. Of 14.8 lakh Christians in the larger pocket comprising the undivided districts, 12.2 lakh are in this core area. The share of Christians in this smaller pocket of more intense Christian presence has risen from 23.1 percent in 2001 to 23.9 percent in 2011. More importantly, while the share of Christians in undivided Ranchi district increased marginally during 2001-11, from 15.42 to 15.48 percent, it has registered a rise of more than two percentage points in both of the new districts of Simdega and Khunti.

	Christians in the central part of the Pocket			
	Number of Christians		%Share	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Simdega	2,51,635	3,06,601	48.93	51.14
Khunti	1,02,886	1,36,438	23.66	25.65
Gumla	1,73,472	2,02,449	20.84	19.75
Jashpur	1,69,609	1,89,588	22.82	22.26
Sundargarh	3,08,476	3,85,011	16.85	18.39
Total	10,06,078	12,20,087	23.10	23.91

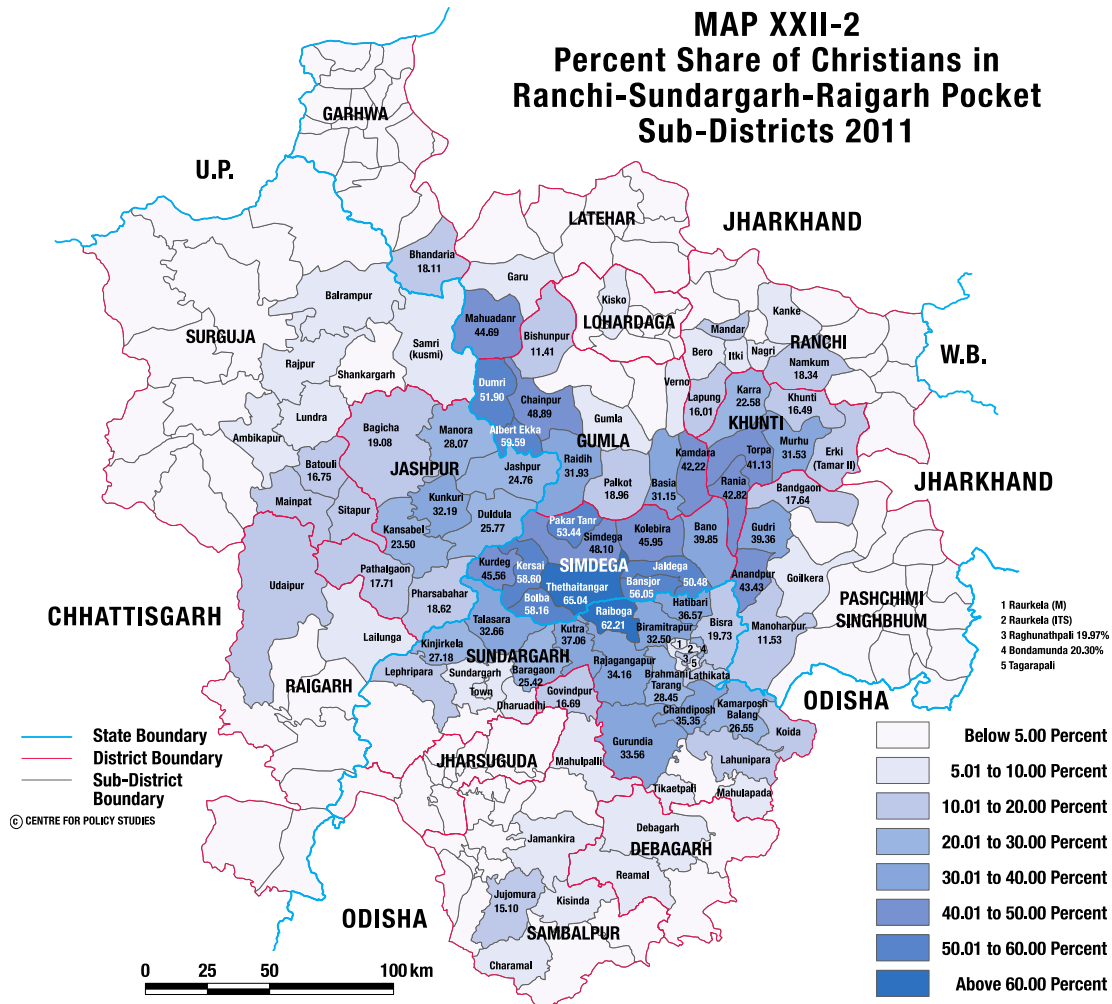
Christian presence is even more intense at the level of the sub-districts

Christian presence turns out to be even more intense when we look at the religious profile at the sub-district level as given in Map XXII-2 below. As seen there, Christians form a majority in 9 sub-districts of this pocket. Five of these Christian-majority sub-districts are in Simdega, 2 in Gumla and 1 in Sundargarh. In Thethaitangar of Simdega, the share of Christians is as high as 65 percent, and it is 62.2 percent in Raiboga of Sundargarh.

This high Christian presence has seeped into some neighbouring sub-districts

Map XXII-2 also shows the high Christian presence in the core part of this pocket seeping into several sub-districts in the neighbourhood. There are another 9 sub-districts in this region where the share of Christians is between 40 and 50 percent; two of these are Mahuadanr in Latehar and Anandpur in Pashchimi Singhbhum of Jharkhand, both of which are not part of undivided Ranchi. Among 13 sub-districts with Christian presence of 30 to 40 percent, 7 are in Sundargarh, 2 in Gumla, one each in Simdega, Khunti and Jashpur, but there is also Gudri of Pashchimi Singhbhum. There are several sub-districts

with Christian presence of more than 10 percent in districts outside the main pocket, including in Garhwa of Jharkhand, Sambalpur of Odisha and Surguja of Chhattisgarh.



Christian share has increased in Surguja and Sambalpur

In the last few decades, there has been little increase in the share of Christians in Ranchi or Raigarh parts of this pocket. Only Sundargarh has recorded a significant rise, especially during 2001-11. The adjoining districts of Surguja in Chhattisgarh and Sambalpur in Odisha also have witnessed significant increase in the Christian presence in this period. Thus, there is a perceptible seeping of the Christian influence into the neighbouring areas.

Percent share of Christians in Surguja and Sambalpur, 1951-2011

	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Surguja	0.07	0.85	1.88	2.34	2.31	3.12	3.54
Sambalpur	0.70	0.79	1.48	1.63	2.03	2.24	2.56

Numbers here are for composite Surguja and Sambalpur districts before these were split into several components during 1991-2001.

Carving out of Christian-majority districts and sub-districts

With the growth of Christianity having moderated within the core pocket, increase in the Christian influence is being achieved by carving out smaller pockets with relatively higher presence of Christians as separate districts and sub-districts. This process is what

has led to the creation of the Christian majority district of Simdega and also several other districts and sub-districts with very high Christian presence.

Gajapati-Kandhamal Pocket of high and growing Christian presence

The second pocket of high Christian presence in this region is centred on Gajapati and Kandhamal districts of Odisha, which have been carved out of the larger Ganjam and Baudh-Kandhamal (Phulbani) districts during 1991-2001. Of 25.8 lakh Christians in the whole of Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh and of 11.6 lakh Christians in Odisha alone, 5.5 lakh are in Gajapati, Kandhamal and the adjoining districts of Ryagada, Koraput and Nabarangpur. As seen in the Table here, the proportion of Christians in this pocket has risen from 10.1 to 11.3 percent during 2001-11; the rise is much more pronounced in Gajapati, Kandhamal and Rayagada districts.

	Number and Share of Christians, 2001 and 2011			
	Number of Christians		%Share	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Gajapati	1,73,663	2,19,482	33.47	37.98
Kandhamal	1,17,950	1,48,895	18.20	20.31
Rayagada	55,220	84,916	6.64	8.77
Nabarangapur	26,118	32,152	2.55	2.63
Koraput	51,323	68,550	4.35	4.97
Total	4,24,274	5,53,995	10.09	11.35

These districts of very high Christian presence have been carved out of larger districts

As in the case of Simdega, Khunti, Gumla in Jharkhand and Jashpur in Chhattisgarh, Gajapati and Kandhamal have been carved out as pockets of high Christian concentration from larger districts. The earlier undivided Ganjam district had 1.88 lakh Christians in 2001; of these, 1.74 lakh went to the newly created Gajapati district and only about 14 thousand were left in the remaining much larger Ganjam component. Share of Christians in undivided Ganjam was only 5.12 percent; in the new Gajapati district, they had a share of 33.5 percent. Similarly, undivided Baudh-Kandhamal (Phulbani) district had 1.18 lakh Christians in 2001; nearly all of them were in the newly created Kandhamal district, while Baudh component was left with only 239 Christians. Share of Christians in undivided Baudh-Kandhamal was 11.2 percent; in the newly created Kandhamal district, they had a share of 18.2 percent and just 0.06 percent in the remaining Baudh district.

Share of Christians has been rising rapidly in Gajapati and Kandhamal

New administrative units with very high Christian presence have been created recently in this pocket as also in the Ranchi-Sundargarh-Raigarh pocket; but unlike in the latter, the share of Christians in this pocket, and particularly in the newly created districts, has been rising rapidly for several decades. Fortunately, it is possible to construct a time series for both Gajapati and Kandhamal district from 1971 onwards by adding the appropriate sub-districts, even though these two districts have been created only during 1991-2001.

As seen in the Table here, between 1971 and 2011, the number of Christians in Gajapati has multiplied by more than five times, from 41.7 thousand to 2.19 lakh and their share in the population has increased from 11.8 in 1971 to 38 percent in 2011. In Kandhamal, the rapid rise in the Christian presence began after 1981.

Between 1981 and 2011, their number there has multiplied by 3.5 times, from 42 thousand to 1.49 lakh, and their share in the population has gone up from 9.4 to 20.3

Year	Number and Share of Christians			
	Gajapati		Kandhamal	
	Number	% C	Number	% C
1971	41,677	11.82	40,406	10.26
1981	74,052	18.24	42,152	9.39
1991	1,21,585	26.48	75,597	13.84
2001	1,73,663	33.47	1,17,950	18.20
2011	2,19,482	37.98	1,48,895	20.31

percent in these three decades. It is remarkable that the carving out of these pockets of high Christian presence and growth as separate districts happened soon after their numbers began to undergo a significant expansion.

There were few Christians in this pocket prior to 1971

Christianity began to acquire a foothold in this region only about a couple of decades prior to 1971. There were only 17.5 thousand Christians in undivided Ganjam in 1961 and 12 thousand in 1951. In undivided Baudh-Kandhamal, their number was 16 thousand in 1961, 11 thousand in 1951 and only 281 in 1941. From those tentative beginnings, Christianity indeed has grown to very high levels in this pocket.

Growth of Christianity in the adjoining districts

In addition to Gajapati and Kandhamal, Christianity has now begun to spread to the adjoining districts that have been carved out from the undivided district of Koraput. The rise in Christian presence is the most pronounced in Rayagada, where Christians now form 8.8 percent of the population. This district was formed after 1991, but we have been able to compile religious profile of Rayagada from 1971 onwards by adding the data at the sub-district level. As seen in the Table here, there were only 8 thousand Christians in Rayagada in 1971; their number has multiplied by more than 10 times to reach near 85 thousand now. The share of Christians in the population of the district has increased from 1.6 percent in 1971 to 8.8 percent now. Rate of growth of Christianity in Rayagada seems even faster than in Gajapati or Kandhamal. It is not possible to get similar time-series data for Nabarangpur or Koraput. The number of Christians in those districts is yet small, but their growth in Koraput has been quite robust during the last decade; their share in the population has risen from 4.3 to nearly 5 percent in 2001-11.

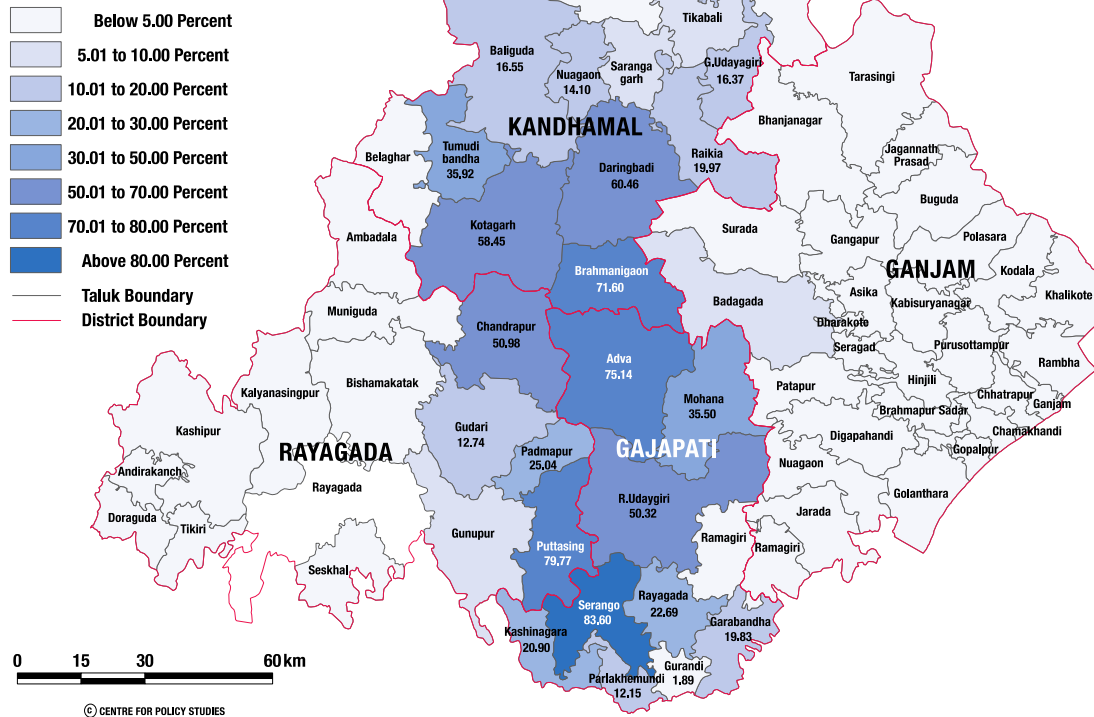
Christians in Rayagada		
Year	Number	% C
1971	8,057	1.58
1981	13,903	2.28
1991	29,191	4.09
2001	55,220	6.64
2011	84,916	8.77

Christian presence in the sub-districts of this pocket is much more intense

As seen in Map XXII-3 below, Christians form a majority in 8 sub-districts of this pocket. Of these, 3 are in Gajapati district, 3 in Kandhamal and 2 in Rayagada.

The highest share of Christians in this pocket is in Serango of Gajapati, where they form 83.6 percent of the population. Their share is near 80 percent in the adjoining Puttasing of Rayagada. It is above 70 percent in Adva of Gajapati and in the adjoining Brahmanigaon of Kandhamal. And, their share is 60.5 percent in Darangibari of Kandhamal that adjoins Brahmanigaon on the north. These five sub-districts, along with the remaining 3 Christian majority sub-districts of R. Udaygiri in Gajapati, Chandrapur in Rayagada and Kotagarh in Kandhamal form a contiguous belt of very high Christian presence running through the centre of this pocket. (Please refer to the Map below). This belt, except for the intervening district of Baudh, where there are almost no Christians, seems to join the Ranchi-Sundargarh-Jashpur pocket, making a distinct belt of high Christian presence running from south to north through the middle of Odisha.

**MAP XXII-3
Percent Share of Christians in
Gajapati-Kandhamal Pocket
Sub-Districts 2011**



Christians in Santhal Pargana Pocket

	Number of Christians					Percent Share of Christians				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Godda	6,572	7,705	6,583	21,645	37,795	1.09	1.08	0.76	2.07	2.88
Sahibganj	12,443	16,429	19,437	58,723	83,208	2.45	2.67	2.64	6.33	7.23
Pakur	9,174	12,249	15,832	41,099	75,865	2.28	2.64	2.81	5.86	8.43
Dumka	16,931	20,557	29,887	52,681	86,404	2.37	2.63	3.14	4.76	6.54
Total	45,120	56,940	71,739	1,74,148	2,83,272	2.03	2.21	2.30	4.60	6.05

This is the third and the smallest of the three pockets of high Christian presence and growth that we have been considering. We have discussed the high growth of Muslims and Christians in this pocket earlier in [Blog V](#). As in Gajapati-Kandhamal region of Odisha, expansion of Christianity in this region seems to be a phenomenon of the last two or three decades. In the Table above, we have compiled the numbers and shares of Christians in four of the six component districts into which Santhal Pargana has been divided. There are not many Christians in the remaining two components, Deoghar and Jamtara. Of 2.94 lakh Christians counted in undivided Santhal Pargana in 2011, 2.83 lakh

are in Godda, Sahibganj, Pakur and Dumka and there are less than 10.5 thousand of them in Deoghar and Jamtara.

The number and share of Christians in this pocket is rising very rapidly

As seen in the Table above, the number of Christians in these four component districts of Santhal Pargana has multiplied 6.3 times in the four decades between 1971 and 2011, rising from 45 thousand to 2.83 lakhs. Their share in this pocket has consequently risen from 2.03 percent in 1971 to 6.05 percent in 2011. Their growth has been particularly rapid after 1991; they recorded decadal growth of 143 percent during 1991-2001, and have grown again by 63 percent during the last decade of 2001-11.

Summing Up

Ranchi-Sundargarh-Raigarh Pocket

1. There are three distinct pockets of high Christian presence in Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. The first, the largest and historically the oldest of these comprises contiguous parts of the earlier undivided Ranchi district of Jharkhand, Sundargarh of Odisha and undivided Raigarh district of Chhattisgarh.
2. There are 14.8 lakh Christians in this compact pocket and they form 14.8 percent of the population here.
3. Rise in the share of Christians in this pocket seems to have now slowed down; in Ranchi, the share of Christians has been declining since 1951, and in Raigarh, it has been nearly stable since 1971. But in Ranchi, their share had increased from 10.6 percent in 1901 to 18.6 percent in 1951 and in Raigarh it had suddenly spurted from less than 2 percent in 1951 to more than 10 percent in 1971.
4. In Sundargarh, the share of Christians had risen from less than 10 percent in 1921 to nearly 16.6 percent in 1971. This was followed by three decades of slow growth; but there has been a sudden spurt in their share during the last decade.
5. Though growth of Christianity has slowed down in parts of this pocket, especially in Ranchi, yet further rise in Christian influence is being achieved by carving out smaller regions of high Christian presence as separate districts and sub-districts.
6. During 2001-11, two new districts, Simdega and Khunti, have been created within the earlier undivided Ranchi district. The share of Christians in Simdega now is 51.1 percent, making it the only Christian-majority district in India outside the northeast. The share of Christians in Khunti at 25.6 percent is the second highest in Jharkhand.
7. Though the share of Christians in undivided Ranchi has somewhat declined during 2001-11, it has risen by more than two percentage points in these two new districts.
8. In Chhattisgarh, the Christian dominated parts of Raigarh have been carved out as the separate Jashpur district during 1991-2001. The share of Christians there is 22.3 percent. Growth of Christianity in this part also seems to have slowed down; during 2001-11, there has been some decline in the share of Christians in Jashpur.
9. In Sundargarh, however, the share of Christians has increased from 16.8 to 18.4 percent during 2001-11. This rise is a reflection of the robust spread of Christianity in different parts of Odisha during the last two or three decades.

10. There has been some spread of Christianity from the Ranchi-Sundargarh-Raigarh pocket to the neighbouring districts of Latehar and Garhwa in Jharkhand, Surguja in Chhattisgarh and undivided Sambalpur and its component districts in Odisha.

Gajapati-Kandhamal Pocket

11. Gajapati and Kandhamal districts comprise the second pocket of high Christian presence in this region. This pocket has developed as a consequence of the very rapid rise of Christianity in these districts in the recent past, mostly after 1981.

12. Both Gajapati and Kandhamal have been carved out of larger districts of Ganjam and Boudh-Kandhamal, respectively. Christian presence in the larger districts was not very significant.

13. The share of Christians in the parts that now form Gajapati district has risen from 11.8 percent in 1971 to 38 percent in 2011; in Kandhamal, it has increased from 9.4 percent in 1981 to 20.3 percent in 2011.

14. There is a similarly rapid rise in the share of Christians in the adjoining districts of Rayagada, Nabarangapura and Koraput; especially in Rayagada, where the share of Christians has risen from 1.6 percent in 1971 to 8.8 percent in 2011.

15. The rise of Christianity in this part of Odisha thus seems very rapid.

Santhal Pargana Pocket

16. There has been very distinct increase in the share of Muslims in Santhal Pargana and the neighbouring regions of Purnia in Bihar and Dinajpur-Murshidabad in West Bengal. This we have discussed earlier in Blog V.

17. But there also has been very rapid rise of Christianity in a pocket formed by Godda, Sahibganj, Pakur and Dumka components of Santhal Pargana. The share of Christians in these four districts together has risen from 2.03 percent in 1971 to 6.05 percent now. The share has increased from 4.60 to 6.05 percent during the last decade alone, indicating that the process of rise of Christianity in this pocket is becoming stronger.

Sub-districts of very high Christian presence

18. Within the Ranchi-Sundargarh-Raigarh and Gajapati-Kandhamal pockets of high Christian influence, there are several sub-districts where Christian form a majority; and some of them are becoming exclusively Christian, with their share touching 80 percent and above in at least two of them and near or above 60 percent in another six.

Appendix

MAP XXII: Appendix
Distribution of Christians in
Jharkhand-Odisha-Chhattisgarh
[Each dot represents 200 Persons]

