

Christianity among the Scheduled Tribes of the Northeast: Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland

The Scheduled Tribes of Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland have been nearly completely converted to Christianity. This has happened already two or three decades ago.

In Mizoram, Christians now form 90 percent of the ST population. Besides the Christians, there are 8.8 percent Buddhists among the STs; most of them are Chakmas, who are unlikely to convert. Christians have a presence of nearly 99 percent in all other tribes, excepting the Kuki and the unclassified Generic tribes. The share of Hindus in these two tribes is now 5 percent and 3.4 percent respectively, sharply down from their share of 24 and 13 percent in 1991. Before 1991, there was also a considerable number of the Hindu Bru Reang tribe in Mizoram; all of them are now living in refugee camps in north Tripura, where there are larger numbers of that community.

In Manipur, Christians have a share of 97 percent in the ST population. Christianity has penetrated deep into every numerically significant tribe of the State. Christian presence is near 98 percent in 15 of the 17 tribes with a population of more than 1,000 in 2011. The two exceptions are the Kabui and the unclassified Generic Tribes, among whom the share of Christians is 90 and 94.5 percent, respectively. The Kabui have 1,491 Hindus and 7,657 ORPs in their population of 1.04 lakh. Of the ORPs among the Kabui, 5,949 are followers of the Heraka faith.

In Nagaland, Christians form more than 98 percent of the ST population. The share of Christians is near or above 98 percent in all of the numerically significant Naga tribes, except the Zeliang. Among them, the share of Christians is 95 percent. This is because there continue to be about 2.5 thousand followers of the Heraka faith among them.

In each of the three States, there are a very large number of diverse tribes often inhabiting geographical distinct districts or regions. All this diversity of beliefs, practices and ways of life has now been reduced to the uniformity of Christianity. Only a few followers of the Heraka faith remain among the Kabui of Manipur and the Zeliang of Nagaland as reminders and remnants of that diversity.

With the level of Christianity among the Scheduled Tribes having reached saturation levels, the direction of conversion seems to have shifted towards the non-Scheduled Tribes populations. In the last two decades, the share of Christians in the non-ST population of Mizoram has increased from 4.7 to 37.7 percent and that of Nagaland from 9.3 to 22.1 percent. In Manipur, it is the share of the ORPs rather than Christians that has recorded extraordinary increase from nearly nil to 13 percent in these two decades. The ORPs, as we have seen, are often a half way house between Hinduism and Christianity. The share of Hindus in the non-ST population has declined everywhere, from 72.3 to 39.7 in Mizoram, from 87.7 to 69.5 percent in Manipur and from 74.5 to 59 percent in Nagaland.

MIZORAM

Religious Demography of the Scheduled Tribes and Others in Mizoram, 2011

	Total	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Other
Total Pop	10,97,206	9,56,331	93,411	30,136	14,832	2,496
ST Population	10,36,115	9,33,302	91,054	5,920	4,209	1,630
Non-ST Pop	61,091	23,029	2,357	24,216	10,623	866
% of Total Pop	100.00	87.16	8.51	2.75	1.35	0.23
% of ST Pop	100.00	90.08	8.79	0.57	0.41	0.16
% of non-ST Pop	100.00	37.70	3.86	39.64	17.39	1.42

The Scheduled Tribes of Mizoram are either Christian or Buddhist

Of the total population of 11 lakh counted in Mizoram in 2011, 9.6 lakh, forming 94.4 percent of the total is from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities and 90.1 percent of the Scheduled Tribes are Christian. There are also about 91 thousand Buddhists among the STs; they form 8.8 percent of the ST population. Besides the Christians and Buddhists, there are 11.8 thousand STs in the State; of them half are Hindu.

Religious demography of the non-ST population

There are only about 61 thousand non-Scheduled Tribe persons counted in Mizoram in 2011; they form 5.6 percent of the population. Christians have a share of 37.7 percent even among them. Muslims form another 17.4 percent. Only 39.7 percent of the non-STs are Hindu. In 1991, the share of Hindus in the non-ST population was 72.3 percent.

Sudden rise of Christianity in the non-ST population

As in Meghalaya, the number and share of Christians in the non-ST population of Mizoram has risen suddenly during the last two decades. In 1991, there were only 1.7 thousand Christians in the non-ST population; their number has now risen to more than 23 thousand and their share in this

Rise of Christians in the non-ST population, 1991-2011

	Total	Christian	%C
1991	36,191	1,701	4.70
2001	49,263	13,027	26.44
2011	61,091	23,029	37.70

population has gone up from 4.7 to 37.7 percent in the last two decades. The share of Muslims in this period has also risen from 11.6 to 17.4 percent. The share of Hindus in the non-ST population has consequently declined from 72.3 to 39.6 percent.

Christian share in the STs has stabilised

As seen in the Table here, the share of Christians in the ST population has remained stable at about 90 percent for the last two decades. This is because nearly all of the STs of Mizoram—except the Buddhists who constitute about 9 percent of the ST population—have already converted to

Share of Christians in the ST population, 1991-2011

	Total	Christian	%C
1991	6,53,565	5,89,641	90.22
2001	8,39,310	7,59,782	90.52
2011	10,36,115	9,33,302	90.08

Christianity. Christians and Buddhists together thus account for more than 98 percent of the ST population. Further accretion to Christianity is therefore possible only in the non-STs, which seems to have happened in the last two decades, as we have noticed above.

Buddhist share has slightly improved

While the share of Christians in the ST population has remained stable, that of the Buddhists has slightly improved. This is mainly because the population of the Buddhist Chakma tribe has grown faster than the total ST population

Share of Buddhists in the ST population, 1991-2011

	Total	Buddhist	%B
1991	6,53,565	52,243	7.99
2001	8,39,310	69,441	8.27
2011	10,36,115	91,054	8.79

of the State. Total population of STs has grown by 58 percent between 1991 and 2011; the Chakma have grown by 79 percent in the same period.

Christianity among the individual tribes of Mizoram

Christianity among the individual tribes of Mizoram			
	Total	Christian	%C
All Scheduled Tribes	10,36,115	9,33,302	90.08
Mizo (Lushai) Tribes	7,34,910	7,26,999	98.92
Pawi	51,406	51,039	99.29
Kuki Tribes	45,754	43,075	94.14
Lakher	42,855	42,586	99.37
Hmar	29,587	29,289	98.99
Paite	23,183	22,950	98.99
Generic Tribes etc.	7,340	6,908	94.11
Man Tai	1,263	1,247	98.73
Khasi and Jaintia etc.	1,034	1,022	98.84
Chakma	96,972	7,121	7.34

All tribes except the Chakma are now predominantly Christian

As seen in the Table above, all the Scheduled Tribes of Mizoram, except the Buddhist Chakma, are now nearly fully converted. The Mizo or Lushai are the largest tribal group in the State; of the total 10.4 lakh STs, 7.3 lakh are Mizo (Lushai) and nearly 99 percent of them are now Christian. Christians have a share of 99 percent or more in the smaller tribes of Pawi, Lakher, Hmar and Paite also. The share of Christians in these tribes had reached this level already in 1991. The level of Christianisation is somewhat lower at around 94 percent in the Kuki and the unclassified Generic Tribes. There is some Hindu presence in these two groups; about 5 percent of the Kuki and 3.4 percent of the Generic Tribes are still Hindu. In 1991, the share of Hindus in these two groups of tribes was about 24 and 13 percent, respectively. There was once considerable number of the Hindu Bru Reang in Mizoram; they are now living in refugee camps in northern Tripura.*

Even the Man Tai in Mizoram have become Christian

The Table above lists all tribes with a population of 1,000 or more. Surprisingly, the small community of the Man Tai in the State, who are nearly all Buddhists in Meghalaya, seem to have been entirely converted. Of 1,263 Man Tais counted in 2011, 1,247 are Christian. Incidentally, only 3 Man Tais were counted in Mizoram in 2001.

Only the Chakma have escaped conversion

The Chakama are the only significantly numerous tribal community of Mizoram to have largely escaped conversion to Christianity. In 2011, total population of the Chakma is about 1 lakh, of which only about 7 thousand are Christian. There are also 526 Hindus, 183 Muslims and 177 Jains among them. The remaining 91.7 percent of the Chakma are Buddhist. It is indeed a measure of their commitment to Buddhism that they have continued to follow the path even when all others around them have been converting to Christianity.

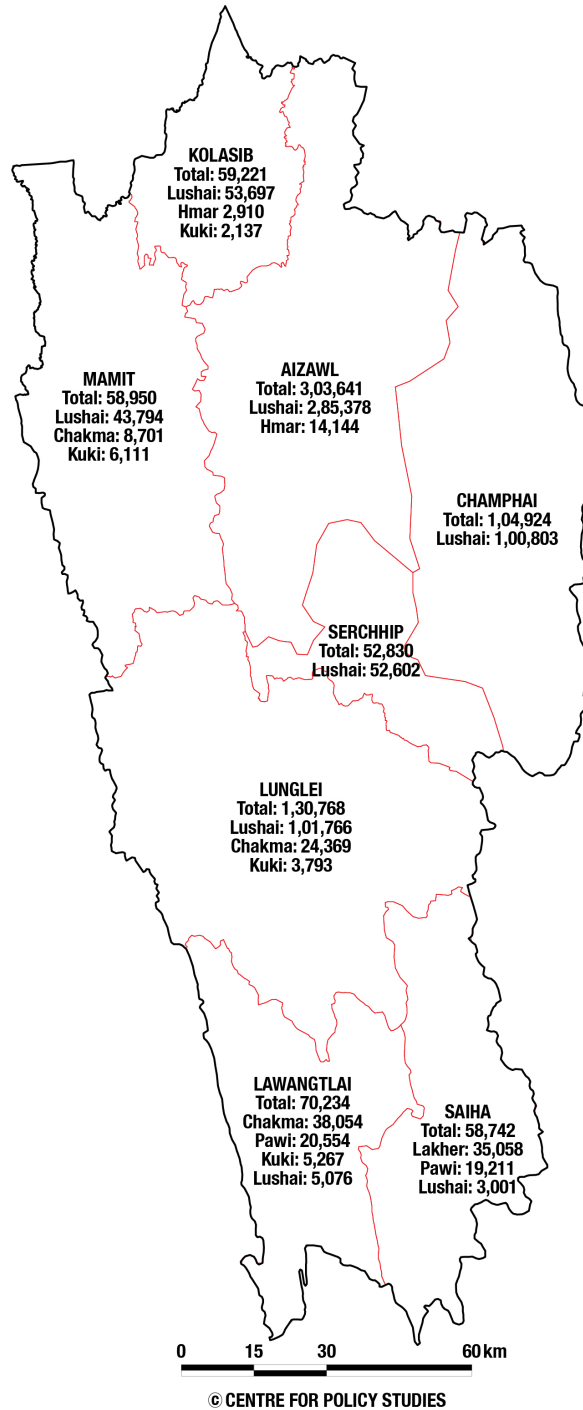
RDI of the Chakma, 2011		
	Population	%Share
Total	96,972	100.00
Buddhist	88,885	91.66
Christian	7,121	7.34
Hindu	526	0.54
Muslim	183	0.19
Jain	177	0.18

Distribution of the various tribes in Mizoram

Census of India lists 16 Scheduled Tribes in Mizoram, including the unclassified or Generic Tribes. We have listed 10 of the larger tribes in the Table above; these ten have a population of more than a thousand in 2011. The remaining 6 include Dimasa (Kachari), Garo, Hajong, Mikir, Synteng and Naga tribes. Of these, Garo and Naga have a population of around 760; population of the other four is less than a hundred each.

In the Map here, we have given the population of the major tribes in different districts for 2001; such district level data is not yet available for 2011. As seen in the Map, the Mizo or Lushai tribes have a significantly high presence in all districts except the two southernmost districts of Lawangtlai and Saiha. The Chakma and the Pawi dominate Lawangtlai, and the Lakher and the Pawi dominate Saiha. Both the Lakher and the Pawi are now nearly fully converted. The Chakma, of course, remain Buddhist; they form a majority of the ST population in Lawangtlai. There are substantial numbers of the Chakma in Lunglei and they have a notable presence in Mamit also. The Hmar, who are also nearly all Christian, have a notable presence in Aizwal. There are significant numbers of Kukis in Mamit, Lunglei and Lawangtlai. Other tribes do not have a notable presence in any district.

MIZORAM 2001
Distribution of different tribes
across the districts



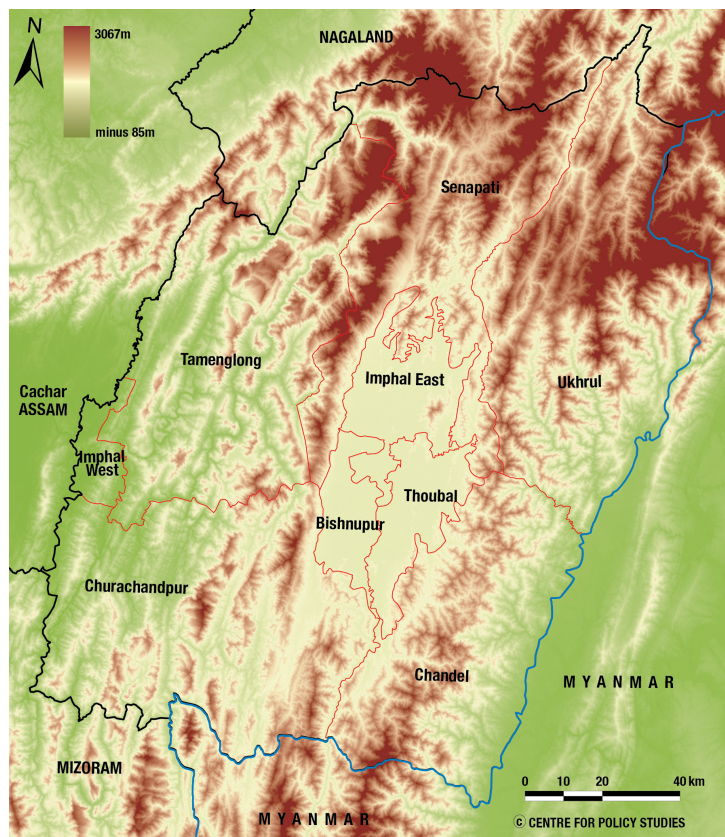
MANIPUR

Religious Demography of the Scheduled Tribes and Others in Manipur, 2011

	Total	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	ORP	Other
Total Pop	28,55,794	11,79,043	11,81,876	2,39,836	2,33,767	21,272
ST Population	11,67,422	11,37,318	8,784	4,296	11,174	5,850
Non-ST Pop	16,88,372	41,725	11,73,092	2,35,540	2,22,593	15,422
% of Total Pop	100.00	41.29	41.39	8.40	8.19	0.74
% of ST Pop	100.00	97.42	0.75	0.37	0.96	0.50
% of non-ST Pop	100.00	2.47	69.48	13.95	13.18	0.91

Scheduled Tribes form only two-fifths of the population

Among the smaller States of the Northeast, Manipur is unusual in having a low share of the Scheduled Tribes (STs) in its population. Of the total population of 28.55 lakh counted in 2011, 11.67 lakh is from the STs. They form only about 41 percent of the total population. This is because the STs inhabit mainly the hilly districts of the State, while the non-STs dominate the much more densely populated districts in the valley and the plains. As seen in the topographic map of Manipur here, Manipur is divided into Manipur Valley comprising Bishnupur, Thoubal and Imphal East and the surrounding hills that comprise Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel, Charachandpur and Tamenglong districts. Parts of the last two and the whole of Imphal West also fall in the flat plains. The valley and plains districts are naturally more densely populated than the hills; the latter are inhabited mostly by the Scheduled Tribes, the former by the non-ST populations.



Scheduled Tribes have almost all been converted

As seen in the Table above, nearly all of the Scheduled Tribes have been converted to Christianity. Of 11.7 lakh STs counted in 2011, 11.4 lakh are Christian. Of about 30 thousand non-Christian STs, 11 thousand are ORPs—mainly Sanamahis, about 9 thousand Hindus and about 4 thousand Muslims. There are also 2.3 thousand Buddhists among the STs and 3 thousand STs have been counted under the category of Religion Not Stated (RNS). Christians now form more than 97 percent of the ST population of Manipur; this proportion has remained more or less unchanged since 1991.

Decline of Hindus in the non-ST population

As in Meghalaya and Mizoram, the share of Hindus in the non-ST population has declined considerably in the last two decades. They formed 87.7 percent of the non-STs in 1991; their share in 2011 is near 69.5 percent. But unlike in Meghalaya and Mizoram, this decline is largely because of the increase in the share of the persons counted as ORPs. There were less than 3 thousand persons counted under this category in 1991, the number in 2011 is 2.2 lakh; the share of the ORPs in the non-ST population has therefore gone up from almost nil to more than 13 percent; much of this increase in the share of the ORPs had occurred during 1991-2001. The Muslims and Christians have also improved their share in the last two decades. The share of the former has gone up from about 11 percent in 1991 to 14 percent in 2011 and that of the latter from less than 1 percent to about 2.5 percent. All this has been at the cost of Hindus, who have lost 18 percentage points off their share between 1991 and 2011.

Changing Religious Demography of the non-ST*

	Non-ST Population		%Share	
	1,991	2,011	1,991	2,011
Total	12,04,976	16,88,372	100.00	100.00
Hindu	10,56,811	11,73,092	87.70	69.48
Muslim	1,33,165	2,35,540	11.05	13.95
ORP	2,886	2,22,593	0.24	13.18
Christian	8,832	41,725	0.73	2.47

* Religious breakup of the population for 2001 is not available for three divisions of Senapati division and hence for the whole of Manipur.

The rise of Sanamahis in the non-ST population

Most of the ORPs counted in 2011 are followers of Sanamahi, an ancient faith of the Meities; during the twentieth century there has been much concerted effort to represent the Sanamahi way as a religion separate and distinct from Hinduism. Of 2.34 lakh ORPs counted in 2011, 2.22 lakh are Sanamahis. The number of persons identifying themselves as Sanamahis, as distinct from Hindus, rose suddenly during 1991-2001, but their number in 2011 is almost exactly the same as in 2001.

Christianity among the individual tribes of Manipur

Christianity among the individual tribes of Manipur

	Total	Christian	%C
All Schedule Tribes	11,67,422	11,37,318	97.42
Thadou	2,15,913	2,11,272	97.85
Tangkhul	1,78,568	1,75,200	98.11
Poumai Naga	1,27,381	1,26,092	98.99
Kabui	1,03,908	93,416	89.90
Mao	93,343	92,602	99.21
Kacha Naga	66,158	64,357	97.28
Paite	55,542	54,815	98.69
Hmar	48,375	47,804	98.82
Vaiphui	42,957	42,224	98.29
Any Kuki tribes	28,342	27,784	98.03
Maram	27,524	27,221	98.90
Maring	26,424	25,858	97.86
Zou	24,294	23,718	97.63
Anal	23,509	23,107	98.29
Generic Tribes etc.	20,806	19,668	94.53
Gangte	17,178	16,859	98.14
Kom	14,528	14,345	98.74

Almost all tribes of Manipur have become nearly entirely Christian

As we have seen earlier, nearly all of the ST population of Manipur has been converted to Christianity; and this seems to be true of every individual tribe. The Census of India lists a total of 34 Scheduled Tribes in Manipur, including the category of Generic or

Unclassified tribes. In the Table above, we have compiled data for the 17 tribes that have a population of more than 10,000. The proportion of Christians in the population of 15 of these 17 tribes is around or above 98 percent. The two exceptions are the Kabui and the Generic Tribes. The Kabui have 1,491 Hindus and 7,657 ORPs in their population of 1.04 lakh. Of the ORPs among the Kabui, 5,949 are followers of the Heraka faith.

ORPs among the Scheduled Tribes

Of about 11 thousand ORPs counted among the Scheduled Tribes of Manipur in 2011, more than 6 thousand are followers of the Heraka faith and of about 2 thousand of Judaism. There are also 710 Sanamahis and 604 Pagans among them, besides small numbers of followers of numerous other faiths. The Heraka are mostly among the Kabui and the Judaists mostly among the Thadou, though there are a few followers of these faiths among several other tribes. As in Meghalaya and Mizoram, the great diversity of religious practices that prevailed among the tribes of Manipur has been more or less replaced entirely by Christianity. The numerous practices and faiths of the diverse tribes of Manipur that had survived within the benignly protective and tolerant mainstream of Hinduism are now largely extinguished; only the memory of those seems to have been preserved among a few families and villages here and there.

Hindus among the Scheduled Tribes

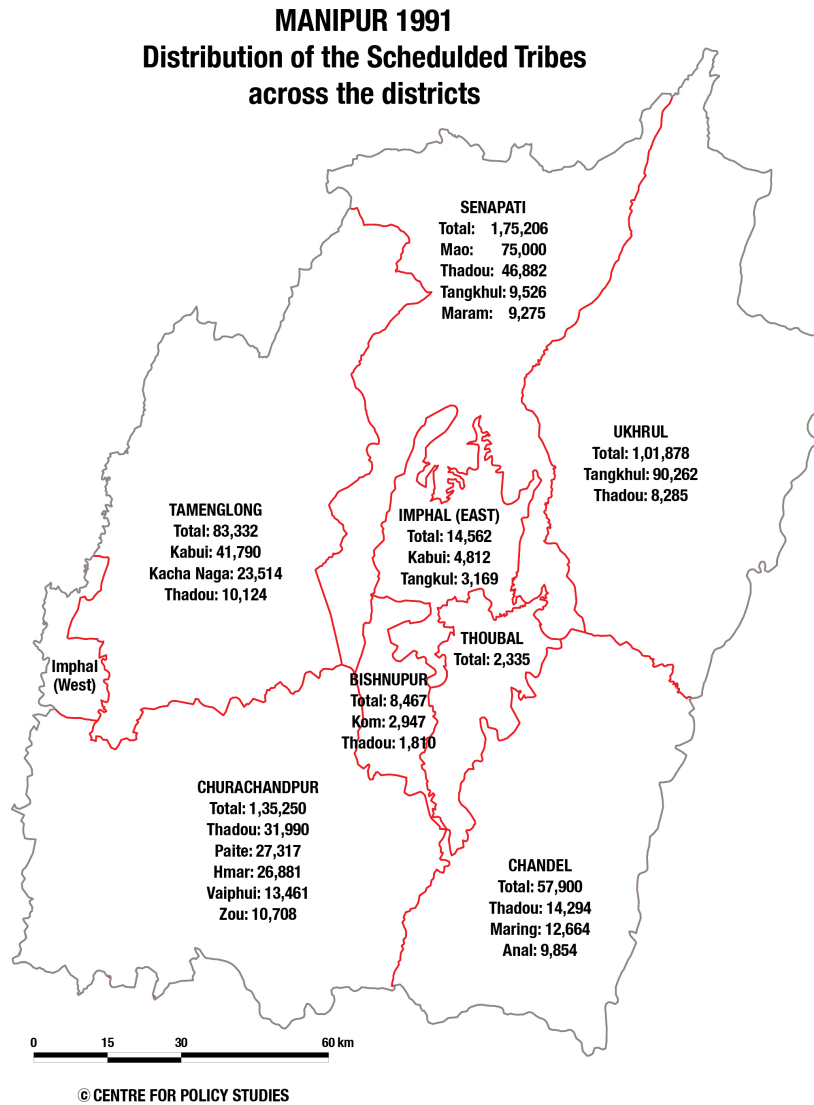
The few Hindus that survive among the Scheduled Tribes of Manipur are mostly among the Tangkhul, Kabui, Thadou and Kacha Naga; all of these have more than a thousand Hindus among them and the share of Hindus in the population of Thangkhul, Kabui and Kacha Naga is near or a little above 1 percent, it is only 0.5 percent among the Thadou. Hindus have a higher share in some of the smaller tribes; the highest is of about 12 percent among the Purum, who number only 278. Hinduism among the STs, like many of the traditional faiths of the diverse tribes of Manipur, now survives only as a remnant.

Distribution of different tribes in Manipur

In the Map here, we show population of the major tribes in different districts of the State as counted in the Census of 1991. Similar data for 2011 is not yet available, and the data for 2001 is not complete because no census was conducted in parts of Senapati district. In 1991, Imphal East and Imphal West were not yet separated; the data given here is for the combined district.

As seen in the Map, the Mao dominate Senapati district, while there is also a considerable presence of Thadou. The Thadou, who are the largest tribe of Manipur, do not seem to dominate any district, but they have a presence in almost all of the districts. The Tangkhul, who are the second largest tribe of Manipur, dominate Ukhrul district. The Poumai Naga, the third largest tribe in 2011, were counted along with the Mao in 1991 and 2001. The Kabui seem to dominate Tamenglong along with the Kacha Naga. In Churachandpur and Chandel several tribes are present in large numbers; among these the Paite, Hmar, Vaiphui and Zou are mainly in Churachandpur and Maring and Anal in

Chandel. Manipur hills are thus inhabited by a great diversity of tribes, all of whom have now been absorbed into the uniformity of Christianity.



NAGALAND

Religious Demography of the Scheduled Tribes and Others in Nagaland, 2011

	Total	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Other
Total Pop	19,78,502	17,39,651	1,73,054	48,963	16,834
ST Population	17,10,973	16,80,424	15,035	5,462	10,052
Non-ST Pop	2,67,529	59,227	1,58,019	43,501	6,782
% of Total Pop	100.00	87.93	8.75	2.47	0.85
% of ST Pop	100.00	98.21	0.88	0.32	0.59
% of non-ST Pop	100.00	22.14	59.07	16.26	2.54

Nagaland like Meghalaya and Mizoram is now a Christian tribal State

Of the total population of 19.78 lakh counted in Nagaland in 2011, 17.11 lakh is from the Scheduled Tribes. The STs thus form 86.5 percent of the total population and 98.2 percent of the STs are Christian. This makes Nagaland even more of a Christian tribal State than Meghalaya or Mizoram. There are only 30.5 thousand non-Christians among the Scheduled Tribes; of them, 15 thousand are Hindus, 5.5 thousand Muslims and 10 thousand others. The last include about 5 thousand Buddhists and 3 thousand ORPs.

Christians form more than one-fifth of the non-ST population also

In the non-ST population of about 2.68 lakh, there are 1.58 lakh Hindus. But there are also more than 59 thousand Christians, forming 22 percent of the non-ST population; this makes them the second largest religious community in that group. Besides them, there are 43.5 thousand Muslims and about 7 others. Among the last, there are around 2 thousand each of Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs.

The recent rise of Christianity in the non-ST population

As in Meghalaya and Mizoram, the rise in the share of Christians in the non-ST population in Nagaland is a recent phenomenon. There were less than 14 thousand Christians in the non-ST population of Nagaland in 1991; their number now is more than 59 thousand. Christians formed 9.3 percent

	Total	Christian	%C
1991	1,48,724	13,803	9.28
2001	2,16,010	43,087	19.95
2011	2,67,529	59,227	22.14

of this population in 1991; their share now is above 22 percent. A large part of this rise in their share has occurred during 1991-2001. With this rise in the share of Christians, and with the Muslim share rising from 13.5 to 16.3 percent, the share of Hindus in the non-ST population has declined steeply from 74.5 percent in 1991 to 59 percent now.

Share of Christians among the STs is now stable

As seen in the Table here, the share of Christians in the Scheduled Tribes has now stabilised at above 98 percent. It is probably not possible to make Christianity penetrate beyond this level. It needs to be noted that there has been a decline in the ST population, as also in the total population

	Total	Christian	%C
1991	10,60,822	10,44,137	98.43
2001	17,74,026	17,47,262	98.49
2011	17,10,973	16,80,424	98.21

of Nagaland, during 2001-11. But this decline has come after an extraordinary growth during 1991-2001, when the ST population rose from 10.6 lakh to 17.7 lakh. The decline seen during 2001-11 is perhaps a consequence of some over-counting that might have happened during the previous decade.

Christianity among the individual tribes of Nagaland

The Census of 2011 lists 19 Naga tribes and 4 non-Naga tribes among the Scheduled Tribes of Nagaland. Of the total ST population of 17.1 lakh, 16.7 lakh is of the Naga tribes; there are only about 34 thousand persons of the non-Naga tribes and another about 9 thousand of the unclassified “Generic” tribes. Among the non-Naga tribes, the major population is that of the Kuki and the Kachari. Among the Kuki 98.6 percent are

Christian. Of the Kachari, 69 percent are Hindus and the remaining largely Christian. Of about 15 thousand Hindu STs in Nagaland, 9 thousand are Kacharis.

Christianity among the individual tribes of Nagaland

	Total	Christian	%C
Naga	16,67,712	16,47,480	98.79
Konyak(ST)	2,37,568	2,32,619	97.92
Sema(ST)	2,36,313	2,34,762	99.34
Ao(ST)	2,26,625	2,24,525	99.07
Lotha(ST)	1,73,111	1,71,771	99.23
Chakhesang(ST)	1,54,874	1,53,740	99.27
Angami(ST)	1,41,732	1,39,781	98.62
Sangtam(ST)	74,994	74,439	99.26
Zeliang(ST)	74,877	71,305	95.23
Yimchaungre(ST)	66,972	66,514	99.32
Chang(ST)	64,226	63,603	99.03
Rengma(ST)	62,951	62,285	98.94
Khiemnungan(ST)	61,647	61,246	99.35
Phom(ST)	52,682	52,255	99.19
Pochury(ST)	21,948	21,704	98.89
Tikhir(ST)	7,537	7,468	99.08
Naga (ST)	5,843	5,780	98.92
Viswerna(ST)	3,664	3,536	96.51
Chirr(ST)	138	138	100.00
Makware(ST)	10	9	90.00
Non-Naga	34,366	24,418	71.05
Kuki	18,768	18,514	98.65
Kachari	13,034	3,938	30.21
Garo	2,346	1,834	78.18
Mikir	218	132	60.55
Generic	8,895	8,526	95.85

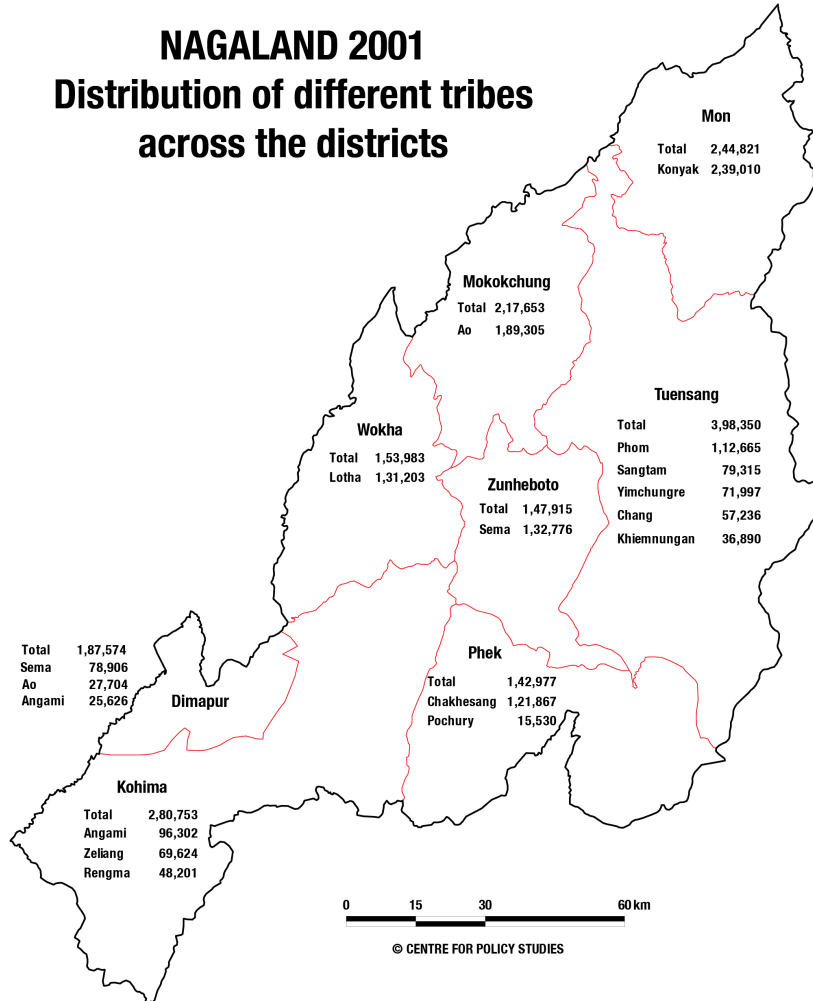
Christians have a share of more than 98 percent in 15 of the 19 Naga tribes. The share is somewhat lower only among the Zeliang, Viswerna, Makware and Konyak. Of these, Viswerna is a very small tribe with a total population of less than 4 thousand; presence of only a few Hindus and Muslims among them has resulted in a somewhat lower share of Christians. Makware is even a smaller tribe with a population of 10 of whom 1 is a Hindu. The Konyak are the largest Naga tribe; the number of Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists among them is relatively high, but Christians still form nearly 98 percent of their population. The share of Christians among the Zeliang is relatively low because of a significant presence of the ORPs; of a total of 3,096 ORPs among the STs in Nagaland, 2,478 are from the Zeliang. They form 3.3 percent of the Zeliang population. Incidentally, 2,441 of the 2,478 ORPs among the Zeliang are followers of the Heraka persuasion. Thus, one of the numerous faiths of the Naga seems to be still surviving among the Zeliang; all others seem to have become nearly extinct.

Distribution of different tribes in Nagaland

Different Naga tribes dominate different parts of Nagaland. Mon is the district of Konyak Nagas, Mokokchung of the Ao, Wokha of the Lotha, Zunheboto of the Sema and Phek of the Chakhesang. The Angami are distributed mainly in Dimapur and Kohima. But in Dimapur, the Sema have the largest numbers and there are almost as many of the Ao as of the Angami. Kohima has considerable numbers of the Zeliang and Rengma besides the Angami. Tuensang seems dominated by the Phom, but there are also considerable

numbers of the Sangtam, Yimchungre, Chang and Khiemnungan. Phek has a noticeable presence of the Pochury besides the dominant Chakhesang. This great individuality and diversity of the Naga tribes seems to have now been subsumed within Christianity.

NAGALAND 2001 Distribution of different tribes across the districts



CONCLUSION

Mizoram

1. Of the total population of 11 lakh counted in Mizoram in 2011, 9.6 lakh, forming 94.4 percent of the total is from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities and 90.1 percent of the Scheduled Tribes are Christian.
2. Besides the Christians, there are 8.8 percent Buddhists among the STs. Most of the Buddhists are Chakmas, who are unlikely to convert.
3. The possibilities of further expansion of Christianity among the STs of Mizoram are now exhausted. Since 1991, their share in the ST population has remained unchanged at slightly above 90 percent.
4. There has however been considerable growth of Christianity in the non-Scheduled Tribes population of Mizoram in these two decades. There were only 1.7 thousand Christians in the non-ST population in 1991; their number in 2011 is above 23 thousand and their share in this population has risen from 4.7 to 37.7 percent.
5. The main Mizo or Lushai tribe of Mizoram is nearly 99 percent Christian. The share of Christians is near or above 99 percent in 6 of the remaining 10 tribal groups with a population of more than a thousand. The only exceptions are the Chakma, the Kuki and the unclassified Generic tribes.
6. Christians form 94 percent of the population of the Kuki and the Generic tribes. There are still some Hindus left in these two communities; they form 4.8 percent of the population of the former and 3.4 percent of the latter. In 1991, the share of Hindus in these two groups of tribes was much higher at 24 and 13 percent, respectively.
7. There also used to be considerable number of the Hindu tribal community of the Bru Reang; they are now living in the refugee camps of north Tripura, where there is a larger population of the Hindu Bru Reang.
8. Surprisingly, 7.3 percent of the Chakma also have been converted; in 2011, 7 thousand Christians have been counted in their population of about 97 thousand.
9. A large part of the Chakma population is concentrated in the southern Lunglei and Lawangtlai districts.

Manipur

10. Scheduled Tribes form only 41 percent of the total population of more than 28 lakh in Manipur. This is because Manipur is geographically divided; the Scheduled Tribes

inhabit the hills, others inhabit the more densely populated but much smaller area of the valley and the plains.

11. Christians have a share of more than 97 percent among the Scheduled Tribes of Manipur.

12. The Census lists a total of 34 tribes in Manipur. Of these 17 are sufficiently numerous to have a population of 10 thousand or more in 2011.

13. Christians have a share of around or above 98 percent in the population of 15 of these 17 tribes. The only exceptions are the unclassified Generic tribes and the Kabui.

14. The Kabui have 1,491 Hindus and 7,657 ORPs in their population of 1.04 lakh. Of the ORPs among the Kabui, 5,949 are followers of the Heraka faith.

15. As in Mizoram, the possibility of further expansion of Christianity among the Scheduled Tribes of Manipur seems to have been exhausted.

16. Major changes have, however, taken place in the religious demography of the non-ST population. In Manipur, it is not so much the share of Christians, but that of the ORP that has risen from 0.2 to 13.2 during 1991-2011.

17. More than 2.2 lakh non-STs have been counted as followers of the Sanamahi faith in 2011; their number was almost the same in 2001, but there were only a few Sanamahis in Manipur in 1991.

18. As in other States of the region, the share of Hindus in the non-ST population has come down from 87.7 to 69.5 percent. The share of Hindus in the ST population is in any case less than 1 percent.

Nagaland

19. Nagaland, like Meghalaya and Manipur, is now a Christian tribal State. Of the total population of 19.8 lakh, 17.1 lakh are from the Scheduled Tribes, and of the latter more than 98 percent are Christian.

20. The share of Christians in the ST population has remained stable at somewhat above 98 percent since 1991. The possibility of further expansion of Christianity into the Scheduled Tribes is now exhausted.

21. However, there has been considerable expansion of Christianity in the non-ST population. Their share in the ST population has risen from 9.3 percent in 1991 to 22.1 percent in 2011.

22. Christians have a share of around or more than 98 percent in almost all but 3 of the Naga tribes inhabiting Nagaland. The only numerically significant tribe among these three is the Zeliang. Christians form 95 percent of the Zeliang population of about 75 thousand. There are about 3.3 percent ORPs among the Zeliang; most of the ORPs are followers of the Heraka faith.

General

23. Thus of the innumerable religious beliefs and practices of the numerous Scheduled Tribes of Mizoram, Manipur and Meghalaya, only the Heraka survives as a remnant and reminder of that rich diversity.

24. Hinduism also now survives as a mere remnant among a few tribes like the Kabui of Manipur. And even among the non-Scheduled Tribes populations of this region, Hinduism is in rapid retreat. The share of Hindus in the non-ST population has sharply declined since 1991 in all the three States that we have considered here, as also in in Meghalaya that we have described in an earlier note.