

Religious Composition of India

India is a **secular and religiously diverse country**, home to almost all major religions of the world. Religion plays a significant role in the cultural, social, and political life of the country. The religious composition of India, as per the **Census of India 2011**, reflects this diversity.

Major Religions in India (Census 2011):

1. Hinduism – 79.8%

- The majority religion in India.
- Widely practiced across all states, especially dominant in northern, central, and southern India.

2. Islam – 14.2%

- Second largest religion.
- Significant populations in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, and Kerala.

3. Christianity – 2.3%

- Concentrated in states like Kerala, Goa, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya.

4. Sikhism – 1.7%

- Primarily concentrated in **Punjab**, with smaller communities in Delhi, Haryana, and abroad.

5. Buddhism – 0.7%

- Present in Maharashtra (especially among Dalit communities), Himachal Pradesh, and Ladakh.

6. Jainism – 0.4%

- Mainly found in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

7. Others and Not Stated – 0.9%

- Includes tribal and indigenous religions, and people who did not state their religion.

Significance:

- India's religious diversity promotes **pluralism and multiculturalism**.
- The **Constitution of India** guarantees **freedom of religion**, making India a secular state.
- Religious composition affects social dynamics, political representation, and cultural practices.
- It also plays a role in shaping policies related to minority welfare, education, and inter-community relations.

Linguistic Composition in India

India is one of the most **linguistically diverse countries** in the world. Its population speaks a rich variety of languages belonging to several major language families, primarily **Indo-Aryan** and **Dravidian**, with others like **Tibeto-Burman** and **Austroasiatic** also represented.

1. Official and Scheduled Languages

The **Eighth Schedule** of the Indian Constitution recognizes **22 scheduled languages**. **Hindi** (spoken by ~41% of the population) is the **official language** of the Union Government. **English** is also used for official purposes alongside Hindi.

2. Major Language Families

Indo-Aryan Languages (about 74% of the population):

- Predominantly spoken in **North, West, and Central India**.
- Examples: Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu, Assamese, Odia.

Dravidian Languages (about 24% of the population):

- Dominant in **South India**.
- Examples: Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam.

Tibeto-Burman Languages:

- Spoken in parts of the **Himalayan region and Northeast India**.
- Examples: Bodo, Manipuri, Lepcha, and other tribal languages.

Austroasiatic Languages:

- Found among tribal groups in **Central and Eastern India**.
- Examples: Mundari, Santali, Khasi.

3. Linguistic States and Diversity

- India's **states were reorganized in 1956** largely on linguistic lines.
- Despite having official languages at the national level, **states can have their own official languages** for administrative purposes.

4. Significance

- Language is a key element of **cultural identity** and **regional pride** in India.
- The linguistic diversity also presents challenges in **education, administration, and national integration**, but is managed through constitutional and policy frameworks.