

## The Sikh Population declines in India?

INFERTILITY IS LINKED TO THE decline in population of different religious communities in India, with Sikhs being the worst affected by childlessness, a census report on religions says.

The drop in the growth rate of Sikhs, from 24.3 per cent in 1981-91 to only 18.2 per cent in 1991-2001, was worrying, the report said, linking it to fertility problems. "While infertility played a major role in the downward spiral of population, other factors such as increased mortality rate and poor lifestyle conditions also contributed to the trend," Census Commissioner, J.K. Banthia said.

Muslims registered the highest growth rate at 36 percent in 1991-2001 as against 34.5 per cent in 1981-91, even as the growth rate of most other religious groups declined in the last decade.

Despite having the lowest proportion of child population linked to childlessness, the population of Jains registered the most impressive growth rate - from 4.6 per cent in 1981-91 to 26 per cent in 1991-2001, he noted.

Though the child ratio among Jains indicated fertility-linked problem, the official felt the increase in their growth rate could have simply been because more people would have participated in the census survey than before.

The census report has rung alarm bells for Parsis, whose population dwindled to 69,601 during 1991-2001 from 76,382 in 1981-91.

The census has gone out of the way by urging the community to adopt fertility improvement and innovative initiatives rather than fertility control measures practiced by it so far.

"We hope this warning shakes the community out of its deep slumber before it reaches a point of no return," Banthia said.

In terms of growth of different religious communities, Hindus showed a decline over the previous decade, their population dipping to 20.3 per cent in 1991-2001 from 25.1 per cent in 1981-91.

Among Buddhists also there has been sizeable decline in the growth rate - from 35.3. to 24.5 per cent. The growth rate of Muslims touched 36 percent in 1991-2001, up from 34.5 per cent in 1981-91, while that of Christians slightly went up from 21.5 per cent to 22.6 per cent.

Population expert P.P. Talwar said since Muslims form only 13.4 per cent of the population, even a migration of about 100,000 Muslims from Bangladesh could have boosted the community's growth rate significantly.

**[Courtesy: Indo Asian News Service]**



## Sikhs Have The Worst Sex Ratio!

Here is India by the numbers. And by religions. Hindus continue to comprise an overwhelming majority - 80.5% - though their growth rate has fallen 4.8% in the period 1981-91 to 1991-2001, from 25.1% to 20.3%. Muslims account for 13.4% of

the population, but their growth rate has nudged up by 1.5%, from 34.5% to 36%. In other words, for every Muslim there are six Hindus in the country.

The highest, and perhaps puzzling, growth rate has been among Jains - from 4.6% to 26%. In the same period, Sikhs' growth rate declined by a significant 6.1%, from 24.3 to 18.2%; that for Buddhists dipped even more sharply - by 10.6%, from 35.1% to 24.5%. The Christian growth rate has, however, gone up by 1.1% from 21.5% to 22.6%.

These figures were released on census commissioner of India J.K. Banthia. For the first time, data on population, number of literates, category and types of workers for each major religious groups have been collated to give valuable insights into the developmental patterns of each major community.

Literacy-wise, Jains top the list with 94.1%, followed by Christians at 80.3%, Buddhists 72.7%, Sikhs 69.4%, Hindus 65.1% and Muslims 59.1%.

The national average for literary is 64.8%. For female literacy, the national average is expectedly lower at 53.7%. Jains take the lead with a female literacy figure of 90.6%, followed by Christians at 76.2%, Sikhs 63.1%, Buddhists 61.7%, Hindus 53.2% and Muslims 50.1%.

**Coming to sex ratio, Sikhs, as was also noted by the Census while releasing the data on Punjab, have the lowest ratio at 893.**

The sex ratio is the highest among Christians: for every 1000 males, there are 1009 females.

**[Courtesy: Times of India]**